

BAR Meeting
December 1, 2010

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate, Alterations and HVAC Screening Waiver

APPLICANT: Rich and Lois Rawson

LOCATION: 113 South Lee Street

ZONE: RM / Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate, the Certificate of Appropriateness alterations and a waiver of the rooftop HVAC screening requirement with the following conditions:

1. The following archaeology conditions shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.
 - a. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) two weeks before the starting date of any ground disturbance so that a monitoring and inspection schedule for city archaeologists can be arranged.
 - b. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.
 - c. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection or artifact collection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

****EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE:** In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period.

****BUILDING PERMIT NOTE:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by Building and Fire Code Administration (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-838-4360 for further information.



BAR CASE #2010-0327/0328



Note: Staff coupled the reports for BAR #2010-0327 (Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate) and BAR #2010-0328 (Certificate of Appropriateness) for clarity and brevity. This item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations and an HVAC screening waiver at 113 South Lee Street.

Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate

- Demolish the existing side loading front stoop
- Encapsulate 86 square feet on west and east elevations for addition
- Encapsulate/demolish 143 square feet on north elevation of hyphen for addition
- Demolish portions of south elevation to widen an existing door opening at the first story and install an oculus window at the second story

Alterations

- Install two HVAC units on roof of new addition
- Construct a new sandstone front stoop with iron railing (new stoop to be reoriented to be front loading and will measure 5.5 feet by 4 feet, with a 3 foot encroachment into the public right-of-way)
- Install new copper lanterns on front (east) elevation
- Install wood shutters on side (south) elevation windows
- Replace existing doors on south elevation with wood simulated divided light French doors
- Install new oculus window on south elevation
- Install iron railing over the basement windows on the front (east) elevation
- Replace door on west elevation (rear of main block) adjacent to addition

The two-story addition will not be visible from a public right-of-way and therefore is not within the Board's purview. The proposed addition is relatively small with a 21 square foot footprint.

II. HISTORY

113 South Lee Street is a two-and-one-half story, three-bay brick residential townhouse constructed circa 1803 with later brick rear additions.

The rear section was apparently originally constructed as a two-and-one-half story addition with a one story connector to the main historic block sometime in the mid-19th century, probably post Civil War, based upon the brick coursing at the rear addition. The addition was raised to a full three stories and the connector to two stories sometime between 1891 and 1907. Thus, the house assumed its present height approximately 100 years ago.

A recent house history credits the original design, and presumably the construction, of the rear ell to William McVeigh (1803 -1889) on a stylistic basis, but provides no information on the date of construction. The unusual curved wall at the northeast corner of the rear ell has been identified as one of McVeigh's trademarks. We can confirm that the rear ell predates 1877 because it appears on the Hopkins Map of that date. No information is available regarding the designer or contractor of the revised design of the ell in the ca. early 20th century.

There were additions on the front of the adjoining lot at 115 South Lee Street which were attached to 113 from the mid-19th century until well into the middle years of the 20th century.

In 2007 the Board approved plans for alterations and an addition that was never constructed (BAR Case # 2007-0229/0230). In 2010, BAR Staff administratively approved an in-kind roof replacement.

III. ANALYSIS

Staff has no objection to the proposed demolition and encapsulation of portions of the walls and finds the proposed addition and alterations to be compatible with the existing building and surrounding area. The proposed project complies with zoning ordinance regulations.

Permit to Demolish

In considering a Permit to Demolish, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, §10-105(B):

- (1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic house?
- (3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway?
- (5) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
- (6) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage, and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

In the opinion of Staff, none of the criteria for demolition and encapsulation are met and the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate should be granted. The areas proposed for demolition and encapsulation are minimal in scope, located on secondary elevations, do not remove any portion of the building containing character defining features of uncommon design or historic merit, and do not compromise the integrity of the building as a whole. The proposed infill at the hyphen is, wood framed, easily reversible and maintains the exterior visibility of the characteristic curve in the corner of the ell. While the demolition of the stoop is on the front elevation, Staff does not find the existing stoop to be a historic or character-defining feature. Staff also notes that the total proposed area of demolition and encapsulation is less than what the Board previously approved in 2007.

Alterations

In some instances, the cumulative effect of several seemingly minor alterations begins to erode the historic integrity of a building. In this case, Staff is not concerned that the integrity of the

building will be compromised as a result of the proposed changes. Rather, some of the alterations, such as adding wood shutters where shutter hardware exists, installing ironwork over basement windows, and reconstructing a front stoop, are typical replacements and changes that inevitably occur over the lifespan of a building. The proposed enlargement of an existing door on the first story and the addition of an oculus window, both on the south elevation, are appropriate modifications and consistent with the *Design Guidelines*. Such changes reflect how historic buildings are adapted for modern needs and are on secondary elevations facing the garden. A Federal style building would more likely have had an elliptical window rather than a round window, and therefore Staff supports the use of either an elliptical or oculus window in this location, noting that either are typical of a window for a stairwell or utility space.

All of the proposed materials are historically appropriate and contribute to the compatibility of the alterations with the historic building. The use of wood simulated divided light French doors on secondary elevations are consistent with the Board's recently adopted policy on windows, which allows for simulated divided light windows on secondary elevations of historic buildings. A sandstone stoop with iron railings is appropriate for the Federal style of this building.

The placement of two HVAC units on the rooftop of the new addition is acceptable as it will be minimally, if at all, visible from the public right-of-way. Locating the HVAC units on this new roof rather than on the historic roof is the preferred alternative.

Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and the Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations and a waiver of the rooftop HVAC screening requirement with the conditions noted above.

STAFF

Catherine Miliaras, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

Legend: C - code requirement R - recommendation S - suggestion F- finding

Code Administration

No comments received.

Alexandria Archaeology (from previous BAR case for this property)

According to *Historic Alexandria, Virginia, Street by Street* by Ethelyn Cox, the house on this lot was completed by 1803. There is the potential for archaeological resources to be present that could provide insight into domestic activities in early Alexandria.

Conditions

1. *The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology (703/838-4399) two weeks before the starting date of any ground disturbance so that a monitoring and inspection schedule for city archaeologists can be arranged.

2. *The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-838-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds.
3. *The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection or artifact collection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
4. The statements in archaeology conditions above marked with an asterisk "*" shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.

V. IMAGES



Figure 1. Front (east) elevation.



Figure 2. Rear (west) elevation of main block and side (north) elevation of rear block.

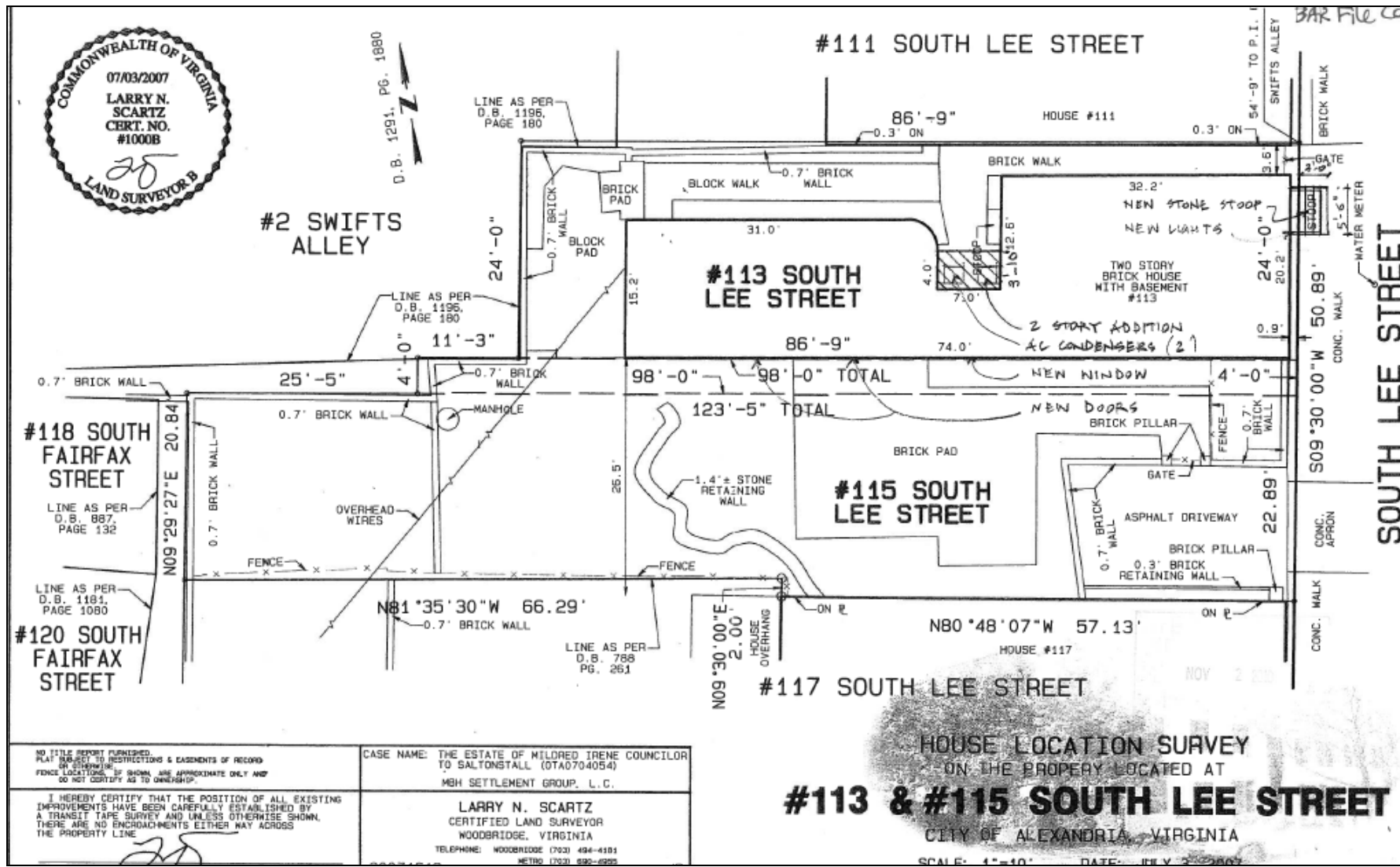


Figure 3. Plat showing existing house and location of proposed addition and alterations.

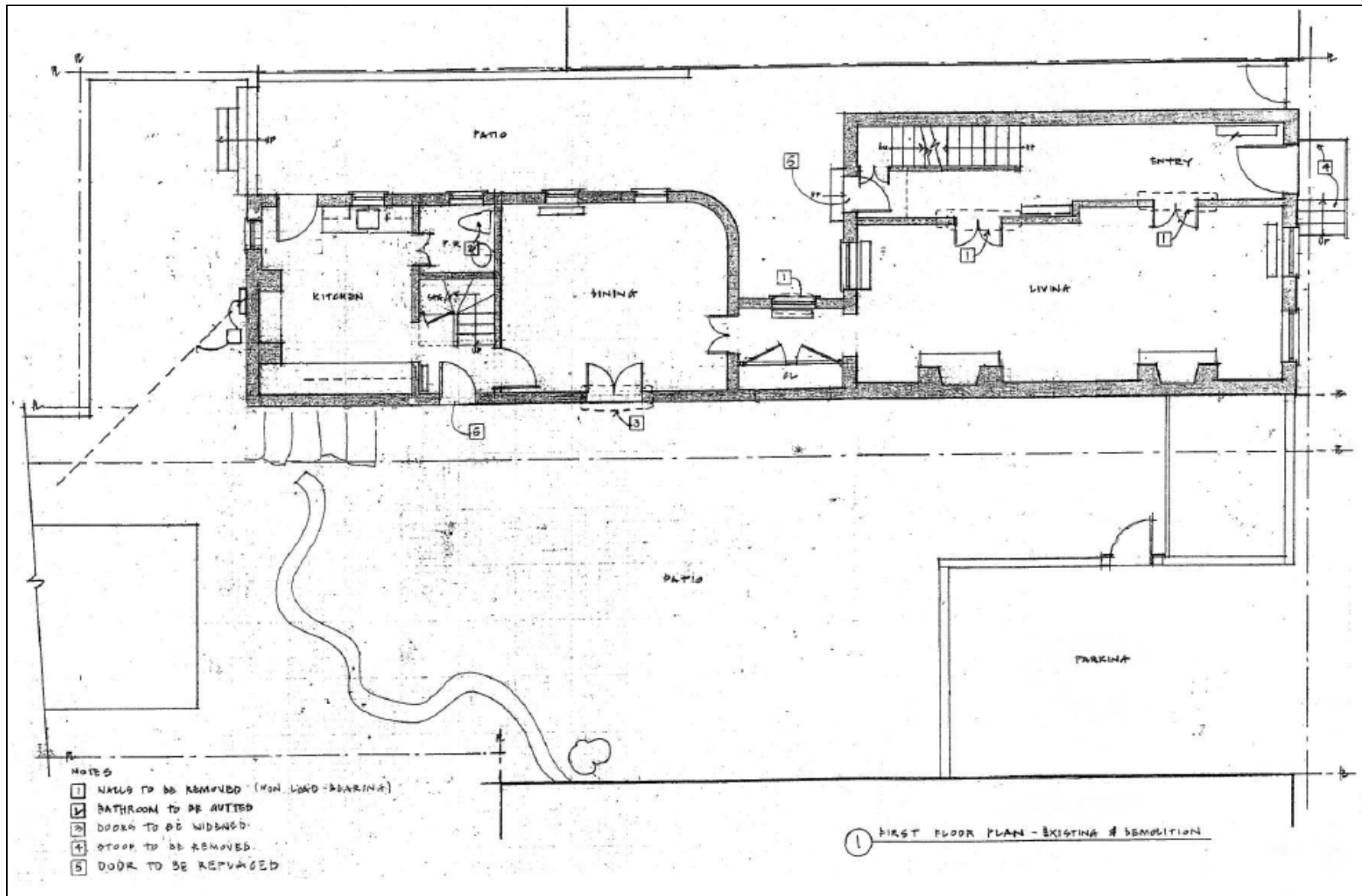


Figure 4. Existing first floor plan with proposed demolition.

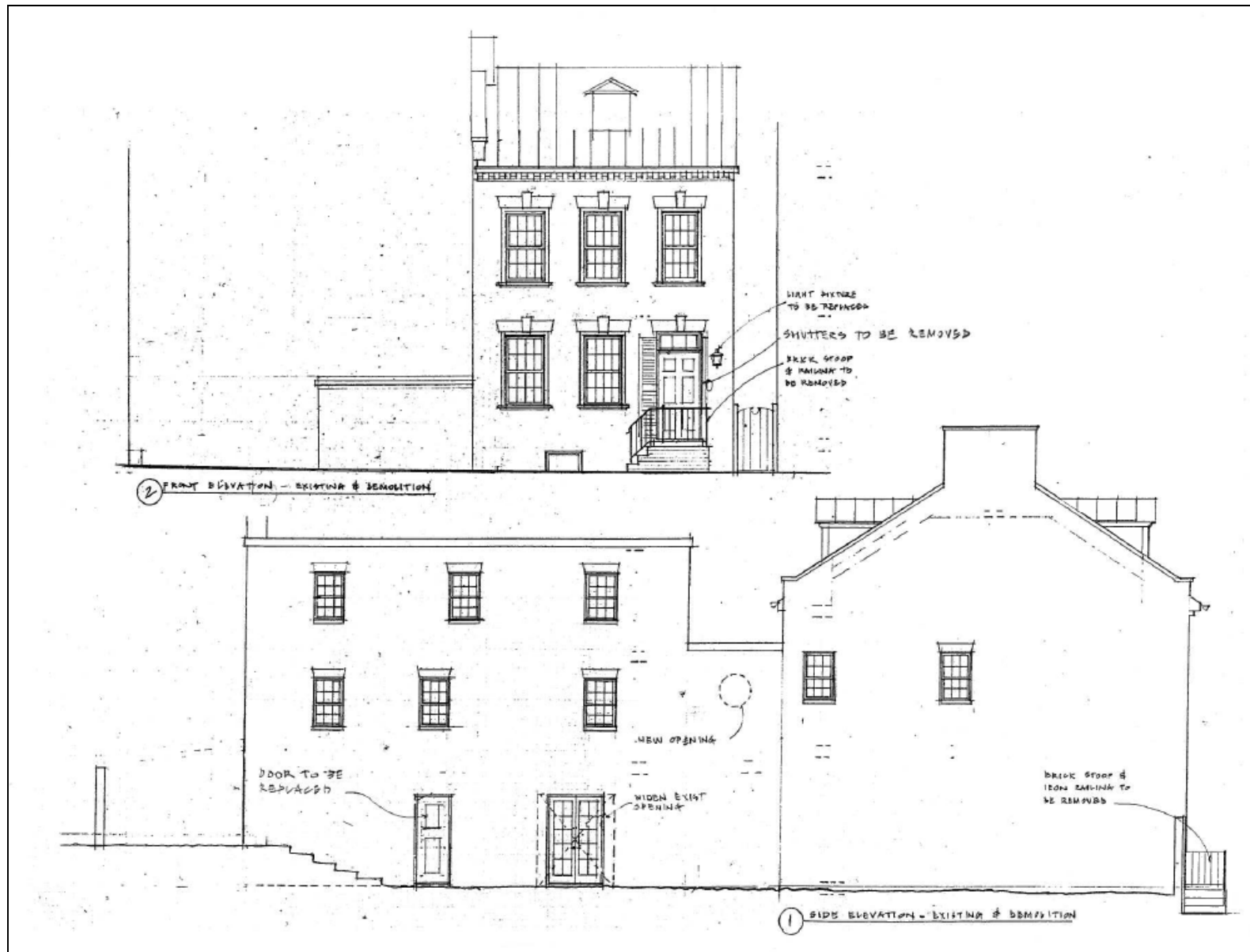


Figure 5. Existing front (east) and side (south) elevations with proposed demolition.

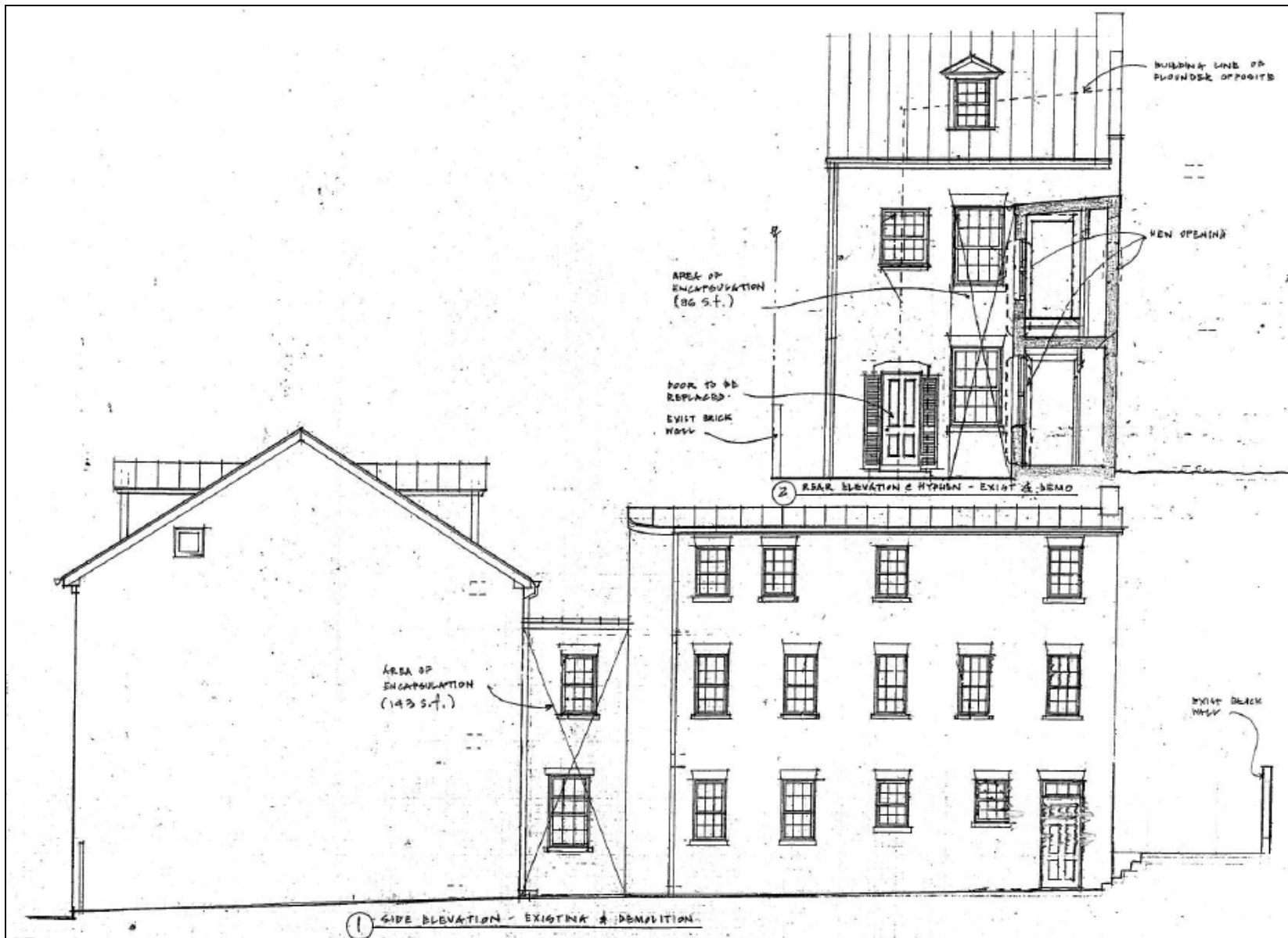


Figure 6. Existing rear (west) and side (north) elevations with proposed demolition and encapsulation.

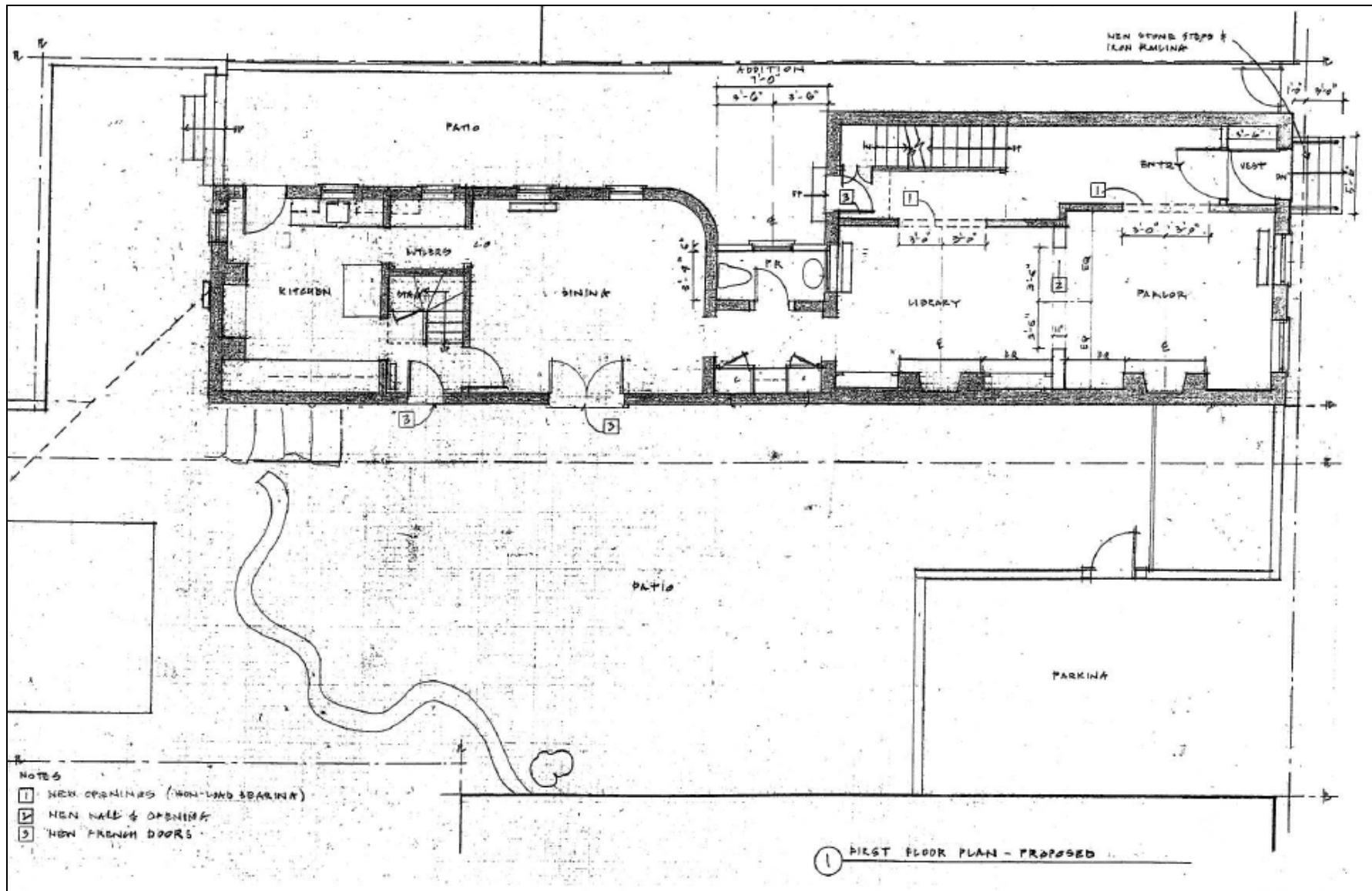


Figure 7. Proposed first floor plan.

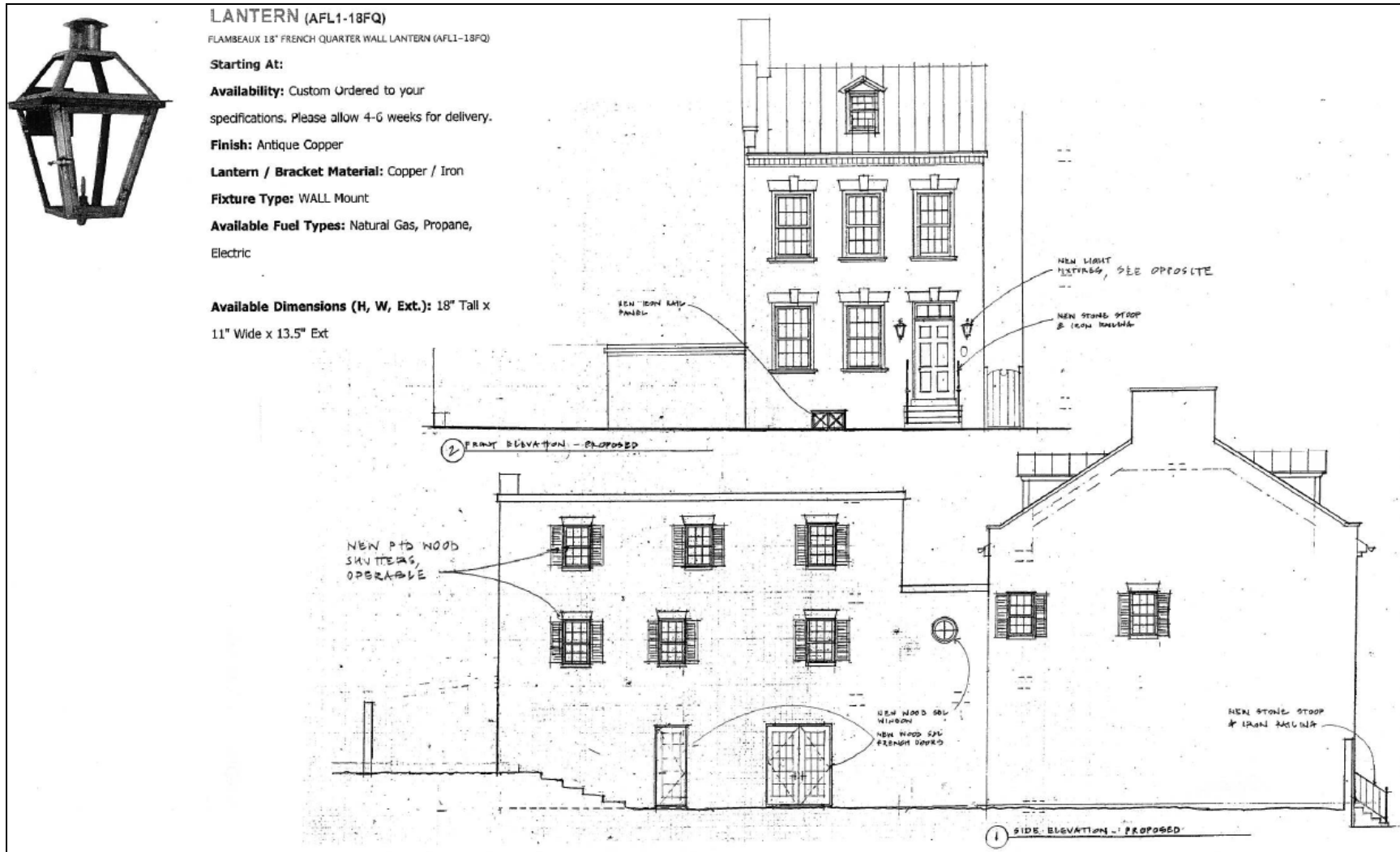


Figure 8. Proposed front (east) and side (south) elevations.

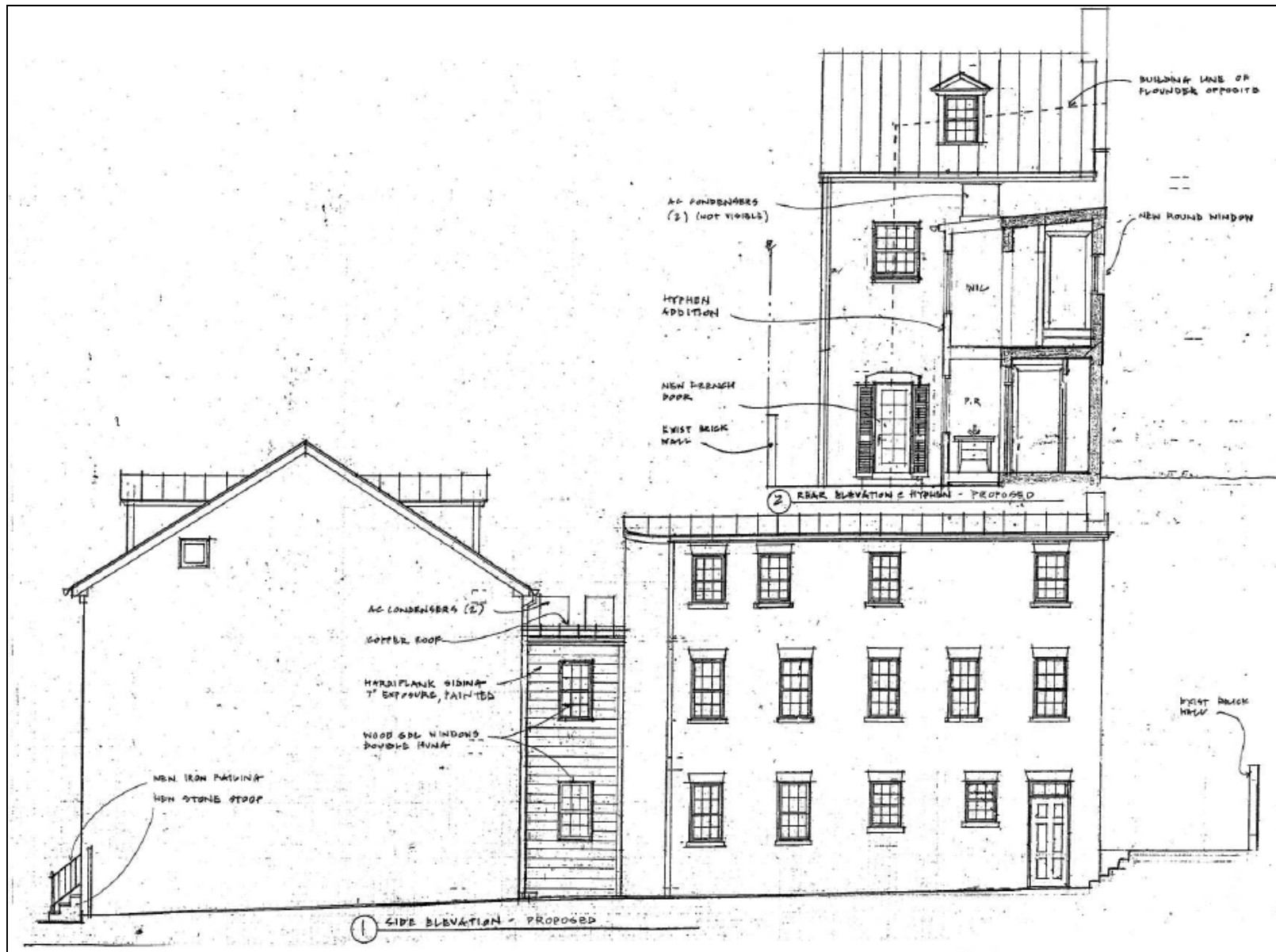


Figure 9. Rear (west) and side (north) elevation, proposed.