

BAR Meeting
January 19, 2011

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate & Certificate of Appropriateness
(Alterations and Enclosure of an Existing Open Porch)

APPLICANT: Mitchell Bober by Lewis and Associates

LOCATION: 325 South Lee Street

ZONE: RM / Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and Certificate of Appropriateness, as submitted.

BOARD ACTION January 5, 2011 Public Hearing: Deferred for further study, 5-2

SPEAKERS

Ray Lewis, architect, presented the application. He agreed with the recommendations in the staff report and noted that there would be no change to the historic roof. He understood that there was some concern about the design of the balustrade but said the owner preferred the batten design and offered to paint the wall between the battens a dark color to visually recede.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Chairman Hulfish stated that he did not like the batten design. He preferred that the porch remain open or have temporary glass panels mounted at the back of the posts. He had no problem with a lowered floor but did not want this to read as a glass wall.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked whether the use of tempered glass would eliminate the need for lowering the floor. Staff responded that the floor had to be lowered to comply with the headroom requirements of the code reasons. Once the space is enclosed with glazing, it becomes habitable space and must comply with the requirements of the new use.

Mr. Carlin said that open porches are artifacts of the past and that they are not used the same way today. He does not like the batten scheme and suggests storm sashes on the south side with ventilation openings on the west side.

Mr. von Senden did not care for the batten solution.

Mr. Fitzgerald preferred removable panels with the glass set behind the column.

Mr. Smeallie liked the applicant's original design with battens. Mr. Keleher agreed.

Mr. Neale did not like the battens and preferred that glass be set behind the balusters. He moved to defer for restudy.

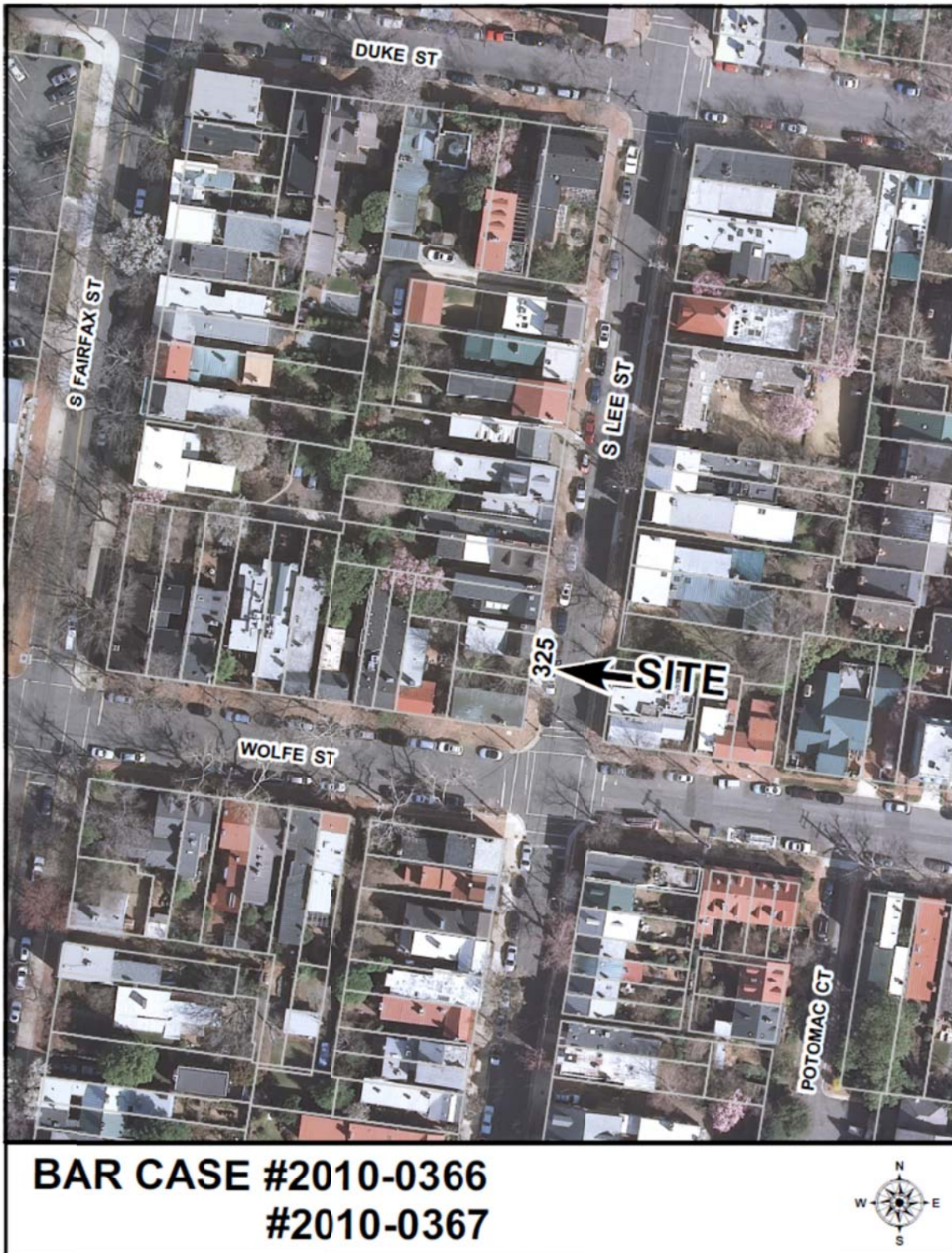
Mr. von Senden seconded the motion.

Mr. Keleher offered a substitute motion to approve the staff recommendation, seconded by Mr. Smeallie. That motion failed 4-3.

The original motion for restudy was approved 5-2.

***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.



Note: Staff coupled the reports for BAR #2010-0366 (Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate) and BAR #2010-0367 (Certificate of Appropriateness) for clarity and brevity. This item requires a roll call vote.

UPDATE:

The applicant has responded to the Board's requests and altered the design by:

1. Reconstructing the porch columns and balustrade. (The columns and railings will be painted to match the house trim.)
2. Constructing a new 2'4-1/4" high knee wall capped with fixed sash and casement windows behind the new porch columns and balustrade. (The knee wall and the window trim will be painted a dark color.)

Changes to the application are noted in **bold** in the report.

I. ISSUE:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and a Certificate of Appropriateness for the lowering of an existing second-story porch floor and the enclosure of the second floor of an existing open porch at 325 South Lee Street.

Permit to Demolish/Encapsulation

North (Side) Elevation:

- Demolish approximately 183 square feet of the porch floor and lower the floor by 1'-2" and reconstruct the floor utilizing new materials.
- Encapsulate approximately 38 square feet of wall surface on the lower level due to the lowering of the floor.
- Encapsulate approximately 248 square feet of wall surface on the upper level for the enclosure of the porch. The wall surface includes four original windows and a door opening.

Addition/Enclosure of a Open Porch

North (Side) Elevation:

- **Enclosure of the second story of the existing, two-story shed roof open porch along the north elevation of the ell. The 6 x 6 porch columns will be replaced in-kind and a 2' 4-1/4" high, square picket balustrade will be installed. The new enclosure will be assembled behind the reconstructed columns and new balustrade. It will be constructed with a 2'4-1/4" high knee wall capped with fixed sash and casement windows. The knee wall and the window trim will be painted a dark color.**

II. HISTORY:

According to Ethelyn Cox in Historic Alexandria, Street by Street, the three-bay, two-story frame townhouse at 325 South Lee Street was constructed by Mark Mankin in **1848**, after he bought the lot of 325 and a lot adjoining on the south. The two lots were divided in 1904 when

Mankin's estate was settled. A two-story ell extends from the rear elevation and is detailed with a two story open porch on the ell's north elevation. The building appears to have its original windows and original siding on the ell's north elevation below the porch roof.

Previous Approvals:

BAR 2009-0074 (May 6, 2009) Replacement of an existing garden gate and the construction of a new brick arch above the gate.
BAR 2010-0040 (March 8, 2010) Gas lantern Installation

III. ANALYSIS:

Staff has no objection to the proposed demolition or alterations to the porch's floor structure, columns, or first floor bead board ceiling. Staff's field investigations of saw marks on the framing have determined that the entire two-story porch below the roof was reconstructed in the 20th century and these materials are not within the building's period of significance. The investigation uncovered that the shed roof appears to be the only remaining feature of the mid-19th century porch, which is not being impacted by the proposed work.

The proposed project complies with zoning ordinance regulations.

Permit to Demolish/Encapsulation

In considering a Permit to Demolish/Encapsulation 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, this mid-19th century townhouse is architecturally significant to the overall historic district and compatible with nearby historic structures and the streetscape. The proposed minor changes to the structure are located at the rear of the building, are minimal in scope, and effect features and materials which are outside the structure's period of significance.

Staff's main concern is the encapsulation of the second floor wall. Because the siding, windows and porch ceiling have been protected from the weather by the porch roof, they appear to be first period materials and in remarkably good condition. The drawings illustrate that the homeowner intends to retain the exterior walls and the historic windows. However, once the second floor wall becomes an interior wall, the Board has no further purview when/if the current or a future homeowner desires to make changes or alterations. For this reason, Staff recommends that a conservation easement be donated to a local preservation organization for the second floor walls, windows and porch ceiling, ensuring that they remain intact after becoming interior features and to provide a future homeowner the option to reverse the porch enclosure. If the conservation easement is donated, Staff supports the demolition/encapsulation application as submitted. This easement will protect the historic resource's character defining features and retain the overall integrity of the building and the district.

Addition/Enclosure of an Open Porch

As mentioned above, the applicant has been highly responsive to the BAR's comments while still maintaining their program for the porch. As revised, Staff continues to believe that the proposed alterations to the porch conforms to the *Design Guidelines*. The *Guidelines* specify porches as "important architectural elements especially on residential structures. They can serve as a defining element of an architectural style." The columns will be replaced in-kind as part of this revised design and the balustrade is being returned to a historically appropriate height. The new enclosure is a knee wall capped with single light casement and fixed sash wood windows painted dark installed behind the reconstructed columns and balustrade. This design provides for the open porch's detailing to be the architectural feature, while the enclosure a simple background detail. An example of a similar design can be seen on the enclosed porch below:



It is the opinion of Staff that the proposed porch enclosure's retainment of the historic shed roof, architectural detailing and use of an easement to preserve all of the identified historic material enables it to be a sympathetic solution for the current homeowners, yet a reversible change for a future generation.

Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and the Certificate of Appropriateness for an addition and alterations, as submitted.

STAFF:

Michele Oaks, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

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

Zoning Section:

C-1 The existing porch is noncomplying as to the required rear yard setback. However, the porch is currently covered and no expansion is proposed, therefore there is no increase in FAR or reduction of open space. The porch can be enclosed at the present square footage and height. As proposed the second floor enclosed porch will comply with zoning.

Code Administration:

C-1 A building permit is required to be issued prior to the start of work

C-2 Five sets of sealed plans are required to be submitted with the permit application. The plans must include, at a minimum, the proposed use of the newly enclosed porch with any new design loads; the existing floor framing, support columns, beams, spans, and connections.

C-3 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

Alexandria Archaeology:

There is no ground disturbance associated with this project. No archaeological action is required.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

RECOMMENDATIONS

- R1. The building permit plans shall comply with requirements of City Code Section 5-6-224 regarding the location of downspouts, foundation drains and sump pumps. Refer to Memorandum to Industry dated June 18, 2004. [Memorandum is available online at the City web site under Transportation\Engineering and Design\Memos to Industry.]. (T&ES)
- R2. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R3. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)
- R4. No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on the plan. (T&ES)

- R5. An erosion and sediment control plan must be approved by T&ES prior to any land disturbing activity greater than 2,500 square feet. (T&ES)
- R6. Compliance with the provisions of Article XIII of the City's zoning ordinance for stormwater quality control is required for any land disturbing activity greater than 2,500 square feet. (T&ES)

FINDINGS

- F1. A Grading Plan will not be required per submitted information. There is no proposed addition at the ground level.

CITY CODE REQUIREMENTS

- C-1 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Solid Waste Control, Title 5, Chapter 1, which sets forth the requirements for the recycling of materials (Sec. 5-1-99). (T&ES)
- C-2 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line. (T&ES)
- C-3 Roof, surface and sub-surface drains be connected to the public storm sewer system, if available, by continuous underground pipe. Where storm sewer is not available applicant must provide a design to mitigate impact of stormwater drainage onto adjacent properties and to the satisfaction of the Director of Transportation & Environmental Services. (Sec.5-6-224) (T&ES)
- C-4 All secondary utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3) (T&ES)
- C-5 Pay sanitary sewer tap fee prior to release of Grading Plan. (Sec. 5-6-25) (T&ES)
- C-6 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-3-61) (T&ES)

V. IMAGES



Figure 1: Existing Front Elevation



Figure 2: Existing Open Porch



Figure 3: Existing Open Porch



Figure 4: Existing Open Porch

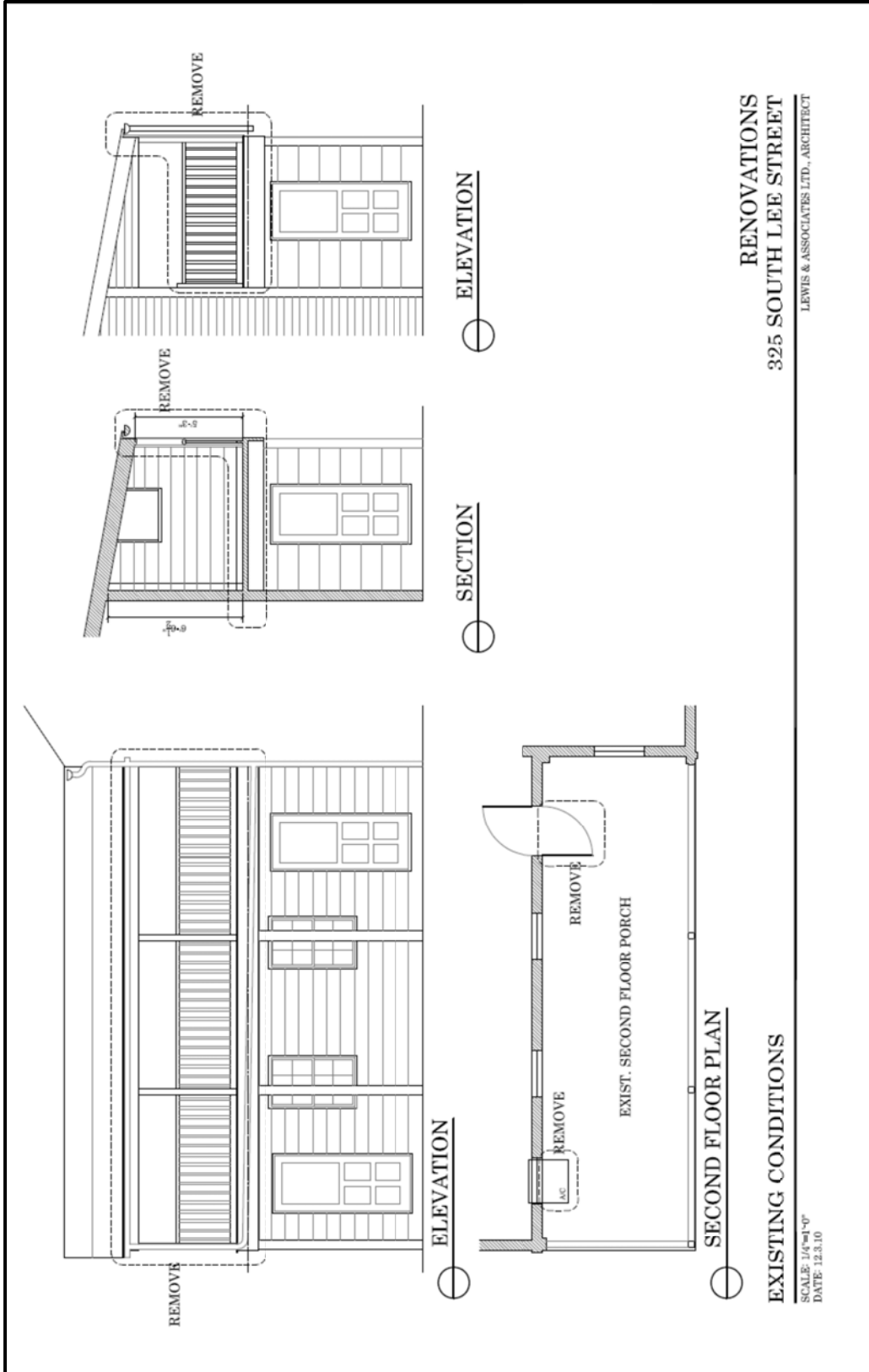


Figure 5: Existing Elevations

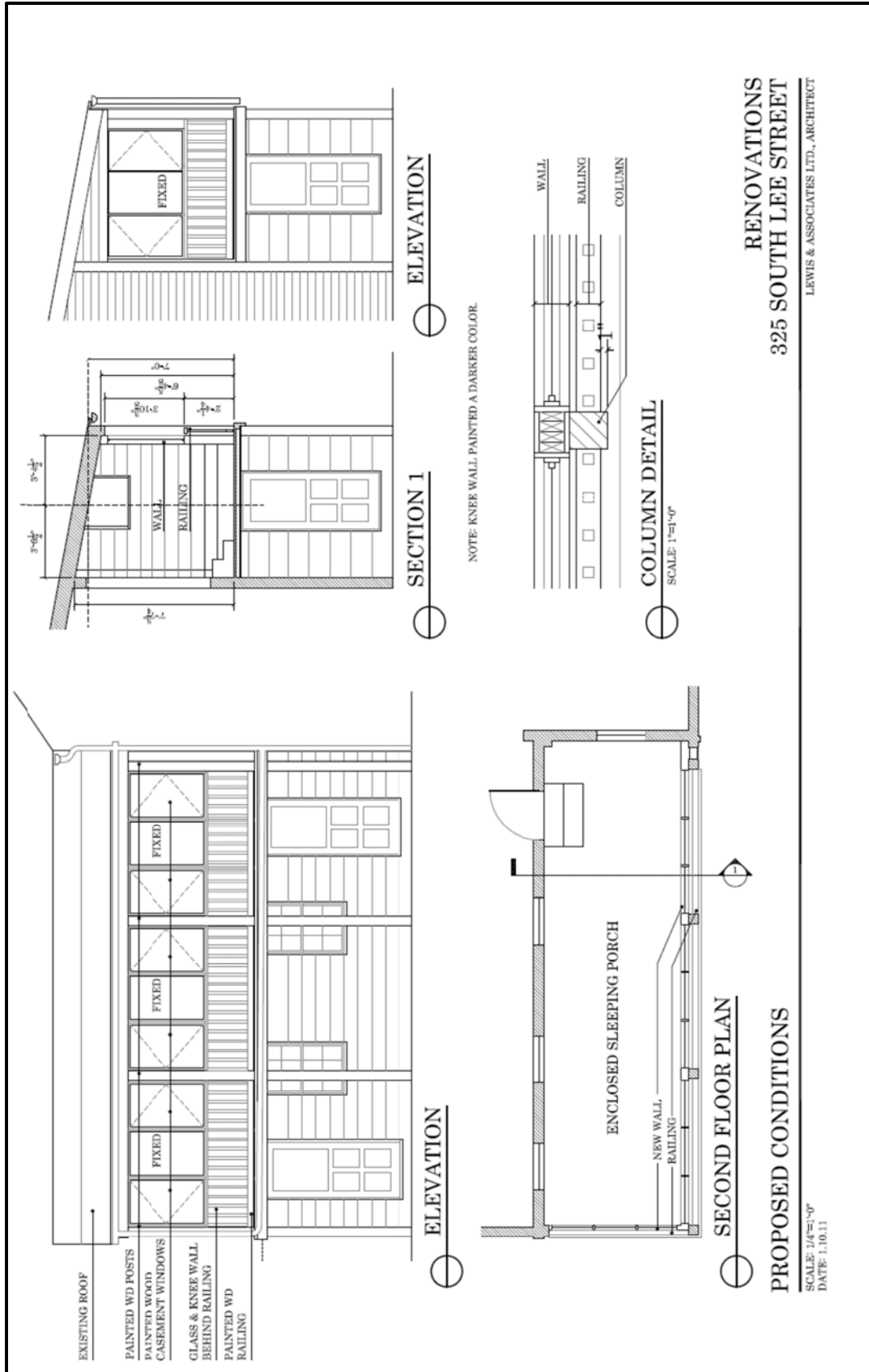


Figure 6: Proposed Elevations