

Docket Item # 2
BAR CASE # 2010-0362

BAR Meeting
March 16, 2011

ISSUE: Alterations (Window Replacement)
APPLICANT: Norman and Judith Ann Lisy by John Savage
LOCATION: 313 South Columbus Street
ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends denial of the application to replace six original windows.

BOARD ACTION, January 5, 2011: Portion approved by a unanimous roll call vote, 7-0, and portion deferred for further study, 5-2

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL

Approval of the application, except for the six historic windows on the main block of the dwelling, with the following condition:

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.

SPEAKERS

John Savage, architect, presented the application and described the 6 windows in question, which were unchanged since they had been altered during the 1983 ARHA renovation. He described the alterations that had been made to the original sash to accommodate a new wood frame and aluminum jamb liner and filling the weight pockets with structural framing.

Mr. John Hynan, representing the HAF, supported the staff recommendation.

Mr. Lisy, owner since 1993, said his wife cannot open the bedroom windows and he is concerned about emergency egress.

BOARD DISCUSSION

Mr. Fitzgerald noted options for restoration and operation of the existing windows. He said the Board's mandate was to preserve the historic fabric of Old Town and that these window sash were original and appeared to be in good condition. He observed that the missing sash balance weights were not visible and not before the BAR.

Mr. von Senden commented that the recently approved window policy requires preservation of original windows. He said restoration is difficult but not impossible. He suggested that the sash balances could be installed behind the studs that filled the window pockets.

Mr. Smeallie noted that he has similar windows and no air conditioning. He said he needs to be convinced that the existing windows cannot be repaired and lacks the information to make a determination at this time. He preferred a deferral for restudy.

Mr. Keleher agreed with Mr. Smeallie but suggested that the owner compare the cost of new windows with restoration. He believed that restoration would be less expensive.

Mr. Neale asked whether the same condition existed in all six windows. Mr. Savage believed that it did. In that event, Mr. Neale felt that the windows may have been changed beyond saving.

Mr. Carlin suggested that the existing windows be made single hung with pins in the jamb to locate the lower sash. He commented that this appeared to be a case where a skilled painter or carpenter needed to sand the paint buildup from the jambs and make the existing sash operable.

Mr. Savage asked whether the application for historic window replacement could be separated from the remainder of the work.

Mr. von Senden moved the staff recommendation for all portions of the application except the six historic windows. Mr. Smeallie seconded the motion which passed by unanimous roll call vote.

Mr. Fitzgerald moved to require restoration of the six historic windows. Mr. von Senden seconded the motion.

Mr. Smeallie then offered a substitute motion to defer approval of the six historic windows for restudy. Mr. Keleher seconded the motion for deferral which passed 5-2.

REASON

The Board agreed with the analysis in the staff report but needed more information before making a determination whether the six historic windows could be replaced.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION, January 5, 2011: Staff recommends denial of the replacement of the six original windows on the main block and approval of the remainder of the application with the following condition:

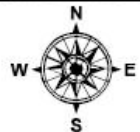
1. The following archaeology conditions shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements.
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****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 #2010-0362



Update: At the January 5, 2011 hearing, the Board approved a Permit to Demolish and a Certificate of Appropriateness for various alterations including a new storage shed attached to the rear of the house and replacement of windows on the rear addition. The Board deferred a decision on replacement of the six original windows on the main block (three on the front and three on the side), requesting further information from the applicant. Since that time, several Board members and BAR Staff have met with the applicant on site to examine the original windows. **The following updated report deletes prior discussion of the addition and focuses only on the windows.**

I. ISSUE

The applicant is currently requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace six two-over-two, single-glazed original wood windows on the main block (three each on the front and side elevations) with two-over-two, simulated divided light, double-glazed wood windows at 313 South Columbus Street. The proposed replacement windows are Weather Shield single-hung windows.

II. HISTORY

313 South Columbus Street is a two-story, two-bay, semi-detached townhouse constructed **circa 1870**, according to City real estate records. 311 and 313 South Columbus Street are depicted on the G.M. Hopkins *City Atlas of Alexandria, Va.* from 1877. While the townhouse was originally constructed with a rear ell and porch, it appears that the current rear ell was constructed between 1921 and 1941 according to Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. The property is located in the Dip Urban Renewal area.

In 2005, the owners submitted an application to the Board for an addition but the case was deferred due to outstanding zoning issues and later voided due to inactivity.

III. ANALYSIS

The proposed alteration is in compliance with Zoning Ordinance requirements.

As previously noted in the earlier report, Staff cannot support the replacement of the six original windows on the main block. The recently adopted *Window Policy* states that “all original or previously replaced windows with either mortise and tenon (“pegged”) sash joinery, or with cylinder (“wavy”) glass must be repaired and retained.” Staff visited the property twice, including reviewing the windows from the interior, and found that these original two-over-two sash windows are in very good condition and are protected by well maintained aluminum storm windows. The applicant has provided supplementary material as to why these windows must be replaced, stating that during previous renovations the windows were altered — the weight pockets were filled with blocking and small parts of the window sash were removed, preventing them from being easily operable. Staff does not think that historic preservation and operability are mutually exclusive and recommends that the applicant utilize an alternate balance system to make the windows operable. Two of the windows proposed for replacement are located in a bedroom; however, only one of the six subject windows window needs to be operable to comply with building code requirements for egress.

While the window sash have been modified, the sash balances removed, and new frames constructed, Staff does not find that the previous modifications warrant the wholesale

replacement of these historic windows. Staff maintains a list of historic window restoration specialists who are able to assist in repairing the existing sash and making them operable. As noted in the previous report, operable sash windows did not have pockets for sash balance weights until the second half of the 19th century and the sash were supported by jamb cleats or cams which could be adopted on these windows. One of the simplest solutions is to make the upper sash inoperable (therefore creating a single-hung window) and to add weather stripping or channels into the jamb so that the window will stay raised when opened. In addition, several products have been introduced that allow for alternate balance systems, such as products offered by SwifSash (<http://swifsash.com/moreswif.htm>) and WindowRenu (<http://www.windowrenu.com/main/why.asp>). While Staff does not have specific, local experience with either of these items, the product materials show that wood window sash can be made operable through a range of weather stripping and alternative balance systems when the traditional weight and pulley balances can no longer be used.

If, however, the Board finds this particular case to be an exceptional situation, finding that the existing windows have been so substantially altered that they are beyond reasonable repair and that window replacement is the only alternative, Staff believes that the replacement windows should match the size and profile of the historic windows exactly. The newly-adopted *Window Policy* allows double-glazed two-over-two windows for windows that have *already been replaced* but the *Policy* notes that original windows “be replicated to match exactly on a case by case basis.” In this case, Staff finds that if replacement windows are used, that they replicate the exact original dimensions (rather than the current modified dimensions) as well as be single-glazed.

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

C-1 A building permit will be required prior to start of alterations.

C-2 At least one window in the bedroom area will need to meet the requirements for emergency egress, sill height, openable area, etc.

V. IMAGES



Figure 1. East (front) elevation and south (side) elevation.



Figure 2. West (rear) elevation from public alley (not visible, third house in) and front window.

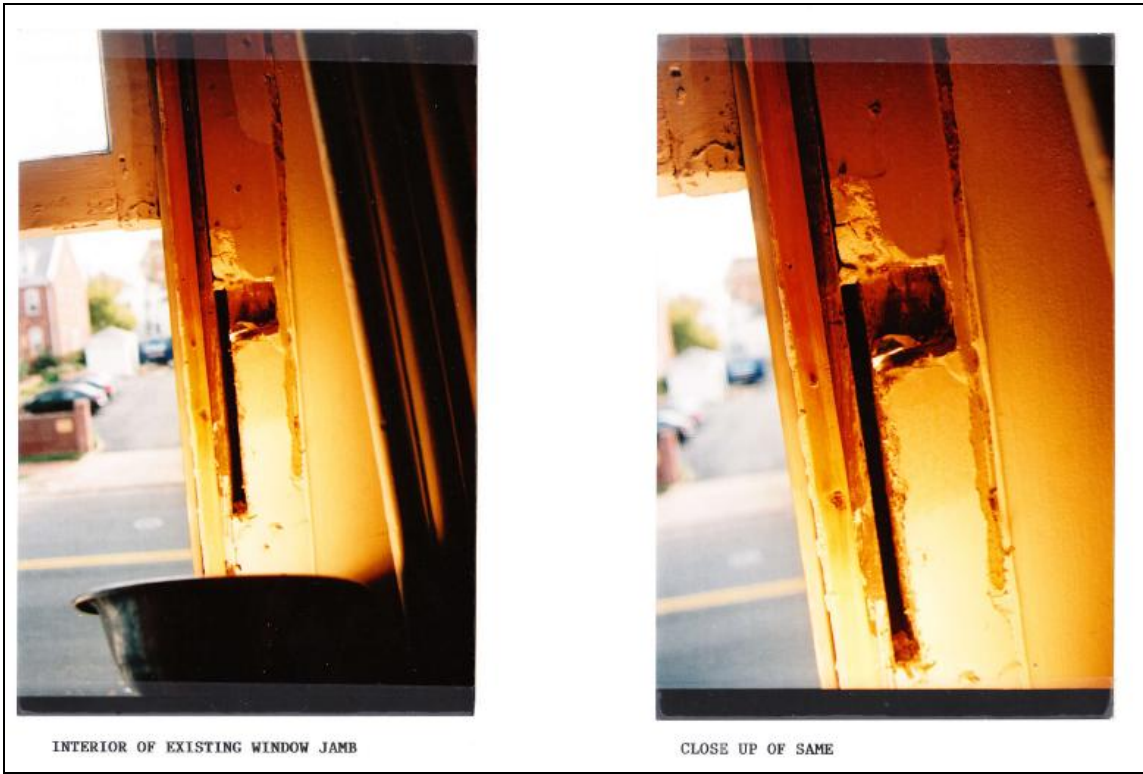


Figure 3. Details of existing window proposed to be replaced.



INTERIOR VIEW OF WINDOW SASH AT JAMB



DETAIL OF SAME

Figure 4. Interior conditions of windows proposed for replacement.

February 14, 2011

John B. Savage & Associates, P.C.
John B. Savage
218 N. Lee Street
Suite 204-a
Alexandria, VA 22314

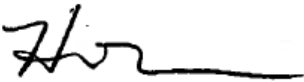
Reference: 313 S. Columbus St.
Subject: Custom Window Approval

Dear Mr. Savage:

Thank you for the opportunity to work with you on this project. Per your request, I have received approval for the non-standard windows for the project located at 313 South Columbus Street, Alexandria, VA. The Weather Shield Architectural Department has sent drawings for the HR-175 Single Hung windows with the custom stiles and rails, in order to match the existing windows. The new windows would be all wood, and have 1-7/8" stiles, and 3-1/2" bottom rails.

Please see the attached drawings number: 953377-1 and 953377-1

Thank you,



Howard Baker
Quality Window & Door
703.220.3839

Figure 5. Proposed replacement window specifications.

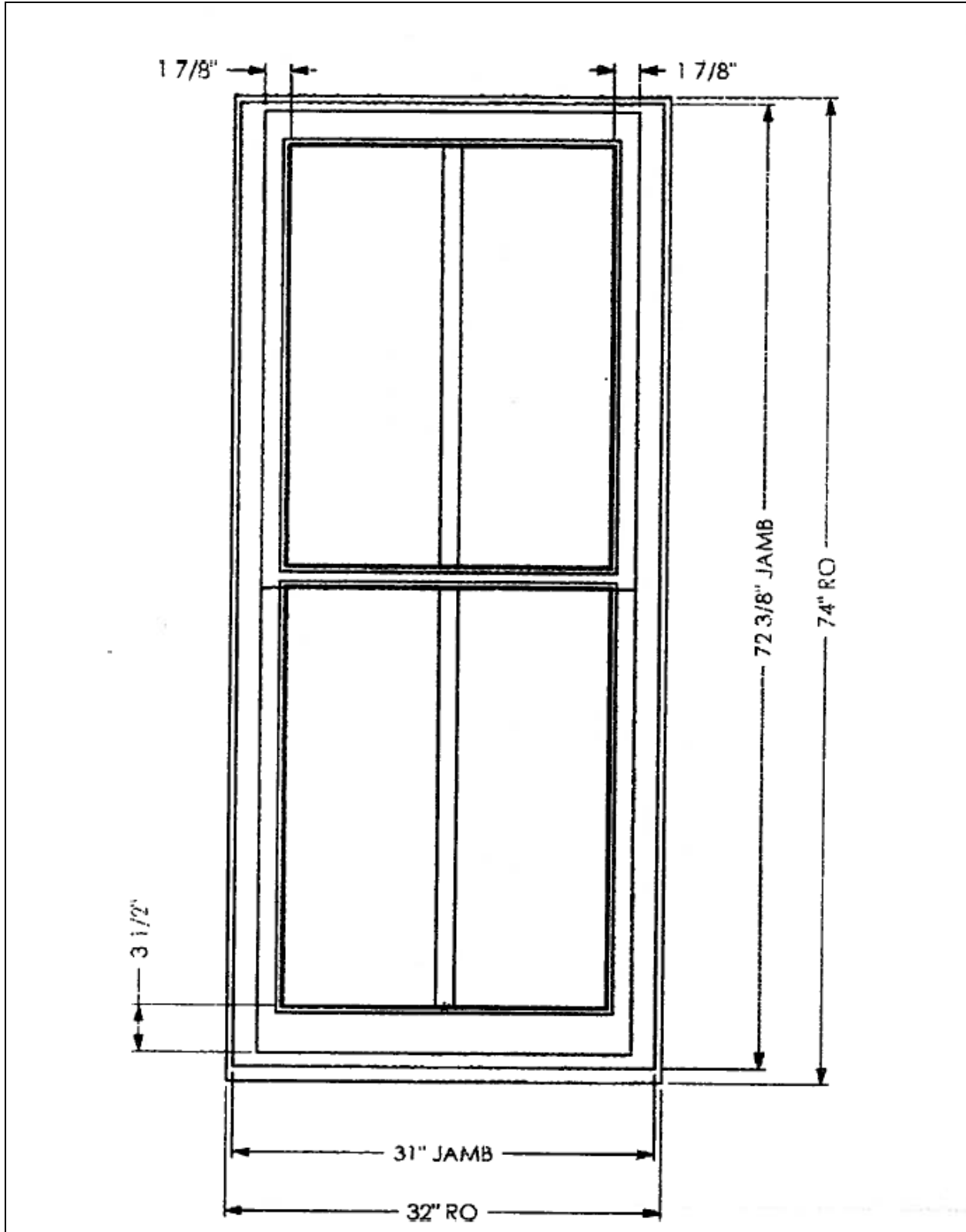


Figure 6. Proposed window replacement specifications.

Figure 7. Proposed alterations.

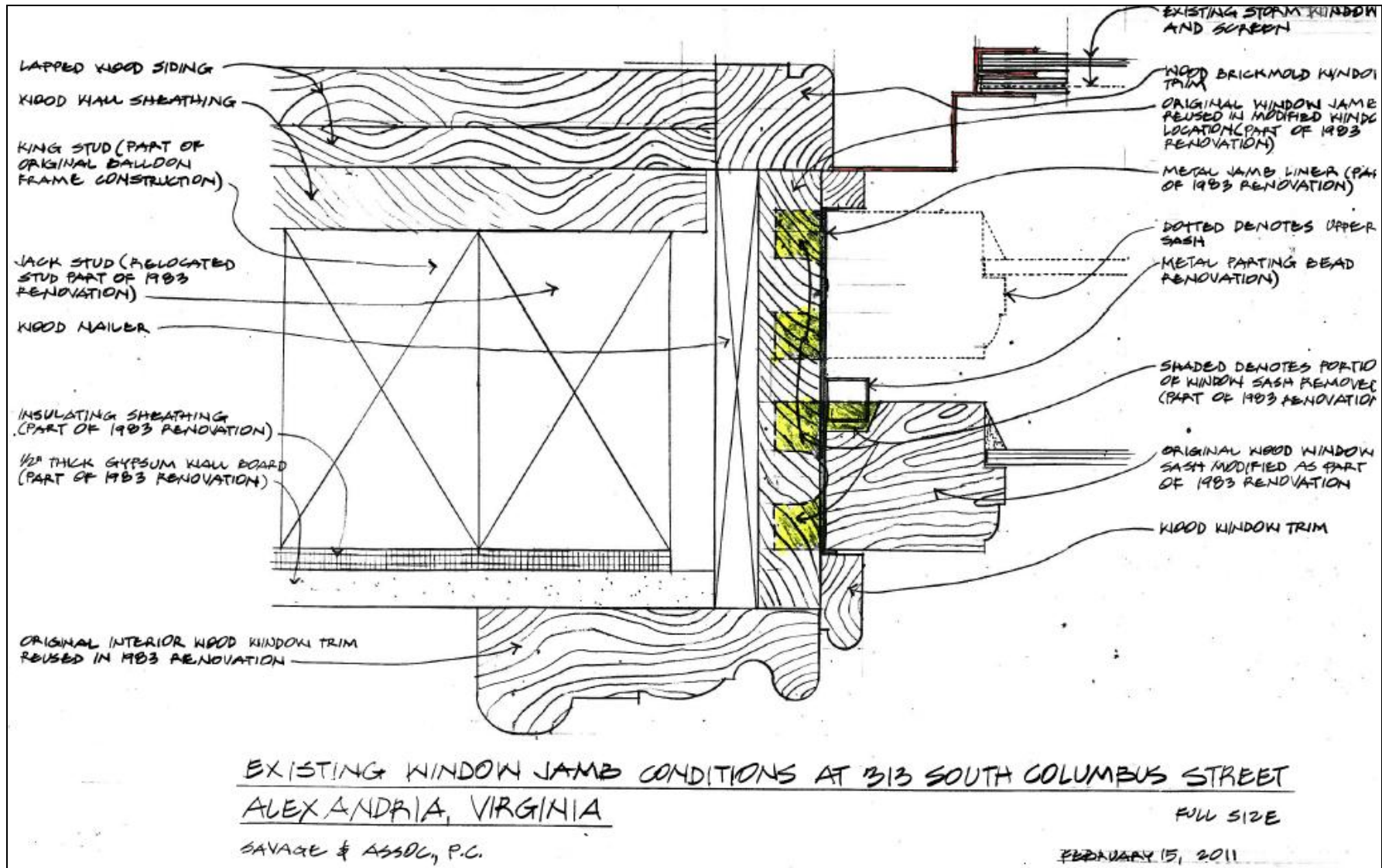


Figure 8. Detail of modifications made to original windows.