

Docket Item # 5 & 6  
BAR CASE # 2011-0128 & 0129

BAR Meeting  
June 15, 2011

**ISSUE:** Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate &  
Certificate of Appropriateness (Addition & Alterations)

**APPLICANT:** Ted and Sandra Sullivan

**LOCATION:** 910 South Fairfax Street

**ZONE:** RM/Residential

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approve the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and Certificate of Appropriateness with the conditions:

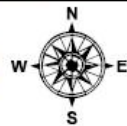
1. That the previously approved BAR Case 2010-0331/0339 is null and void.
2. That the dormers are clad in HardiPlank horizontal lap siding with a smooth finish.
3. That the roof will be architectural grade, composition shingles per BAR's roofing policy.
4. That the windows specifications will be in accordance with BAR's window policy.

\*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 #2011-0128 & #2011-0129



**Note:** Staff coupled the reports for BAR #2011-0128 (Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate) and BAR #2011-0129 (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 and a Certificate of Appropriateness for the construction of a third floor addition with dormers at 910 South Fairfax Street.

Demolition

The area of demolition consists of the entire gable roof structure on the main body of the house, an area of approximately 636 square feet.

Addition and Alterations

The applicant proposes to install a new, cat-slide roof form with a ridge height approximately 3 feet 4 inches higher than the existing gable roof, thereby changing the front roof pitch from an 6/12 slope to a steeper 10/12 slope. The new roof will appear to have a gable roof form from the front, but the rear will have a more gradual slope, with a 5.5/12 pitch. The front façade will be increased in height by approximately 3 feet 2 inches, which will be accomplished using a matching brick veneer. A brick soldier course will be added above the existing windows on the second floor and as just below the new, denticulated HardieTrim cornice. The gutters and downspouts will be constructed of copper. As a result of the proposed height increase, the chimney must also be raised, and fabricated of brick to match existing. The addition will have an asphalt shingle roof in slate gray. A skylight will be installed on the rear slope of the roof. The HardiTrim will be painted white.

On the front elevation of the addition there will be two pedimented dormers, each containing a 6/6 double-hung window. The simulated-divided-light, painted wood windows will contain double-insulated glass and 7/8 inch muntins. The walls of the front gable dormers will be clad in HardiPlank painted gray to match the color of the roof.

On the side elevation, the applicant proposes to remove the existing, applied shutters from the third floor and close an existing window opening with matching brick veneer. A new, egress window will be installed on the fourth floor which will align with the third floor window and the new roof ridge.

**II. HISTORY:**

The end unit townhouse at 910 South Fairfax Street was constructed as part of the Yates Garden subdivision in ca. **1960**. It is a three bay, two-and-one-half story brick townhouse in a row of six townhouses with alternately projecting and set back facades. The front (west) elevation is distinguished from its neighbors primarily by its paired window configuration on the second level. The construction of these rowhouses was approved by the Board on March 12, 1953.

The property is very visible, not only from South Fairfax Street but also from both Green and South Lee Streets, as well as a cul-de-sac street, Potomac Court, which cuts into the middle of the block near Jones Point Park.

*Previous Approvals:*

The Board unanimously approved, with conditions, the construction of new front and rear dormers on December 1, 2010 (BAR Case 2010-0331/0339).

The Board unanimously denied approval of a rear addition on June 21, 1995 (BAR Case #95-87). The applicant subsequently appealed the decision to City Council which overturned the Board on September 16, 1995 and approved the construction of the rear addition.

The Board approved revisions to previously approved rear addition and the construction of a fence along north property line on July 17, 1996 (BAR Case # 96-0135.)

**III. ANALYSIS:**

Staff has no objection to the proposed demolition.

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, while this mid-20<sup>th</sup> century townhouse is a successful background building and compatible with nearby historic structures, it is without individual historical interest or uncommon architectural merit and none of the criteria for demolition and encapsulation are met and the Permit to Demolish should be granted.

Addition

The proposed addition complies with the RM zone as defined in the City's Zoning Ordinance.

The construction of additions on any building within a historic district must be evaluated not only for its impact on the building to which it is being attached, but also for its effect on the historic district's scale and character.

The Board recently approved front and rear dormer additions for this property but, upon additional study and working with contractors, the applicant found that this solution did not meet their needs and they have chosen to try a different architectural approach. Staff had a preliminary meeting with the applicant and their new architect prior to the submission of the proposal. At this meeting, Staff made some minor suggestions for the design which are reflected in the current submission. The present proposal to raise the roof slightly is a design parti which was proposed by this same architect at 812 S. Lee last year and approved there by the Board without reservation.

The *Design Guidelines* encourage “respectful additions” which “make use of the design vocabulary of the existing...structure” and supports additions that “reflect the building massing along the blockface.” It is also recommended that the form of the additions “express the prevailing shape of the residential building.” The *Guidelines* further explain that the “predominant building materials for residential buildings in the historic districts are wood and brick.” (*Design Guidelines*, Additions - Page 6 & 7).

It is the opinion of Staff, that the design of the addition is compatible in style and massing to the historic townhouses, and conforms to the *Design Guidelines* for additions. While this will be the first house on this particular block face to have dormers, the proposed dormers are consistent with the architectural vocabulary found throughout the neighborhood and compatible with the townhouse’s Colonial Revival style. Staff has no objection to the height increase (3’4”) and conversion of the attic into a habitable third floor, the extension of the gable roof, and the construction of the new dormers, as these alterations are relatively minor in scale and mass and similar changes have been made on numerous buildings in the neighborhood. As a result, 910 South Fairfax Street will continue to be compatible with its adjacent townhouses, all of which continue to be modest, background buildings. Staff believes that this project successfully demonstrates how a subtle addition can be implemented into a streetscape without adversely impacting the overall architectural integrity of the Yates Garden community.

Staff believes that the proposed addition conforms to the *Design Guidelines* for residential additions. The addition is compatible in style, material and fenestration with the existing brick townhouse as well as the surrounding Yates Garden development. Staff recommends approval of both the Permit to Demolish and the Certificate of Appropriateness for the third floor addition at 910 South Fairfax Street, 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

C-1 Proposed addition complies with RM zoning.

##### Code Administration:

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

C-2 Five sets of sealed drawings are required to be submitted for review with the building permit application

C-3 Plans submitted with the BAR request are not approved for construction

C-4 Plans shall include framing details of rafters, ridge, collar ties, and dormers.

C-5 Bedroom window to comply with emergency escape requirements of R311

C-6 Provide details of mechanical equipment located in the attic

C-7 Provide height above grade of finished first floor level to be used for story above grade determination.

##### Alexandria Archaeology:

This project is a third-story addition that does not involve ground disturbance. No archaeological action is required.

##### Transportation and Environmental Services:

##### **FINDINGS:**

F1. This property and building are located within the 100-yr floodplain. Due to the fact that these improvements do not amount to a "Substantial Improvement" as defined by City ordinance, this project is not subject to the Floodplain District regulations. However, the owner(s) of this property should be advised that flooding can and does occur at this location up to elevation 10' (City Datum) and to ensure safety, the project is advised to comply with Section 6-307 (D) "Water heaters, furnaces, electrical distribution panels and other critical mechanical or electrical installations shall not be installed below the 100-year-flood level. Separate electrical circuits that serve areas below the 100-year-flood level shall be dropped from above." (T&ES)

F2. It is also advised that no food storage or preparation areas be located below the 100-year-flood level (elevation 10'). (T&ES)

F3. An approved grading plan may be required at the time of building permit application. Insufficient information has been provided to make that determination at this time. In summary, City Code Section 8-1-22(d) requires that a grading plan be submitted to and approved by T&ES prior to the issuance of building permits for improvements involving:

- the construction of a new home;
- construction of an addition to an existing home where either
  - the addition exceeds the area of the existing building footprint by 100% or more;
  - or, the construction of the addition results in less than 50% of the existing first floor exterior walls, in their entirety, remaining;
- changes to existing grade elevation of 1-foot or greater;
- changes to existing drainage patterns;
- land disturbance of 2,500 square feet or greater.

Questions regarding the processing of grading plans should be directed to the T&ES Site Plan Coordinator at (703) 838-4318. Memorandum to Industry No. 02-08 was issued on April 28, 2008 and can be viewed online via the following link.

<http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/tes/info/gradingPlanRequirements.pdf>

### **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)

### **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).
- 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.
- 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.8-1-22)

C-4 All secondary utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3)

C-5 Pay sanitary sewer tap fee prior to release of Grading Plan. (Sec. 5-6-25)

C-6 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-3-61)



**V. IMAGES**



**Figure 1: Existing Front and Rear Elevations**



**Figure 2: Proposed Front Elevation**



**Figure 3: Existing Front and Rear Elevations**

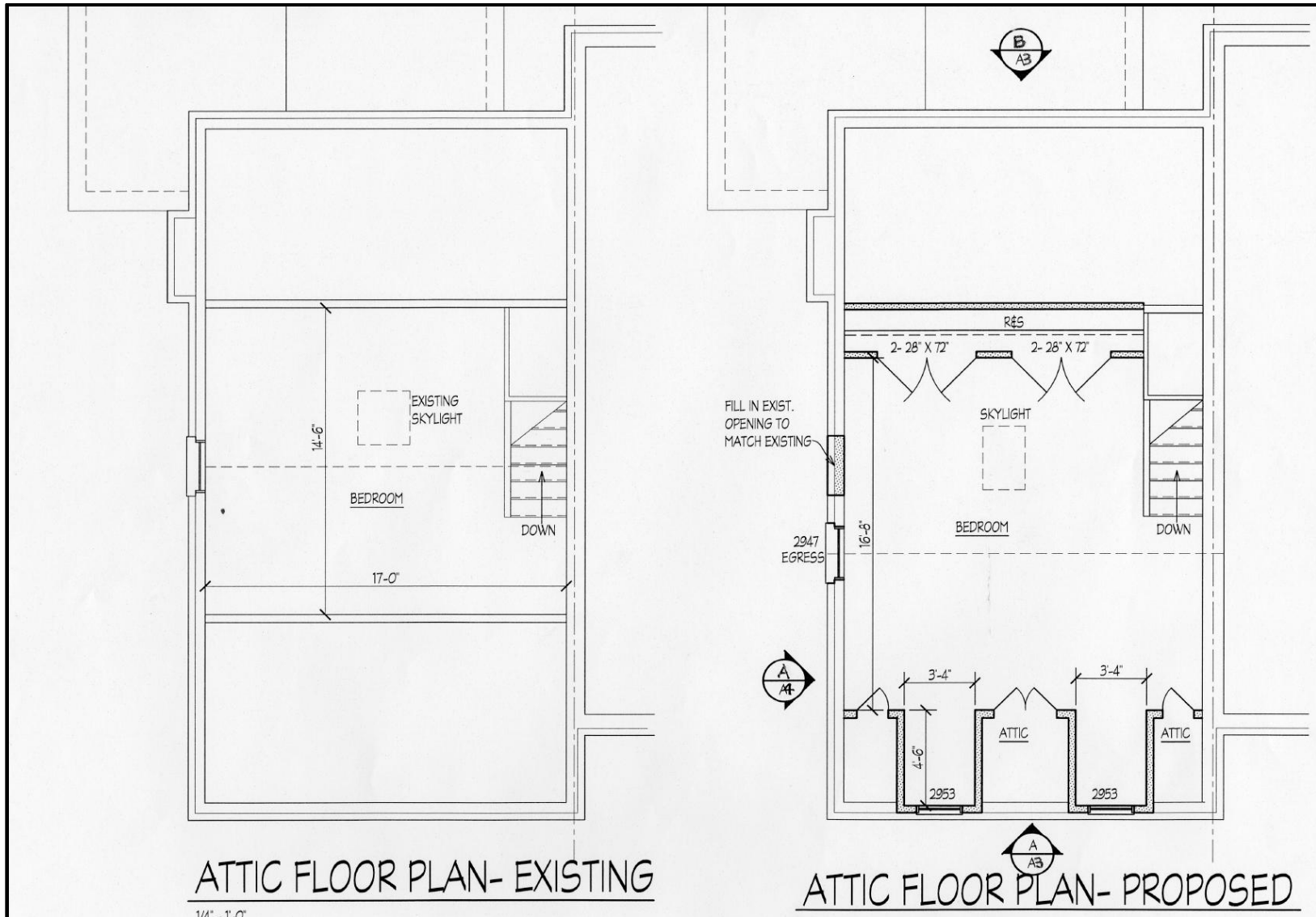


Figure 4: Existing/Proposed Attic Plans

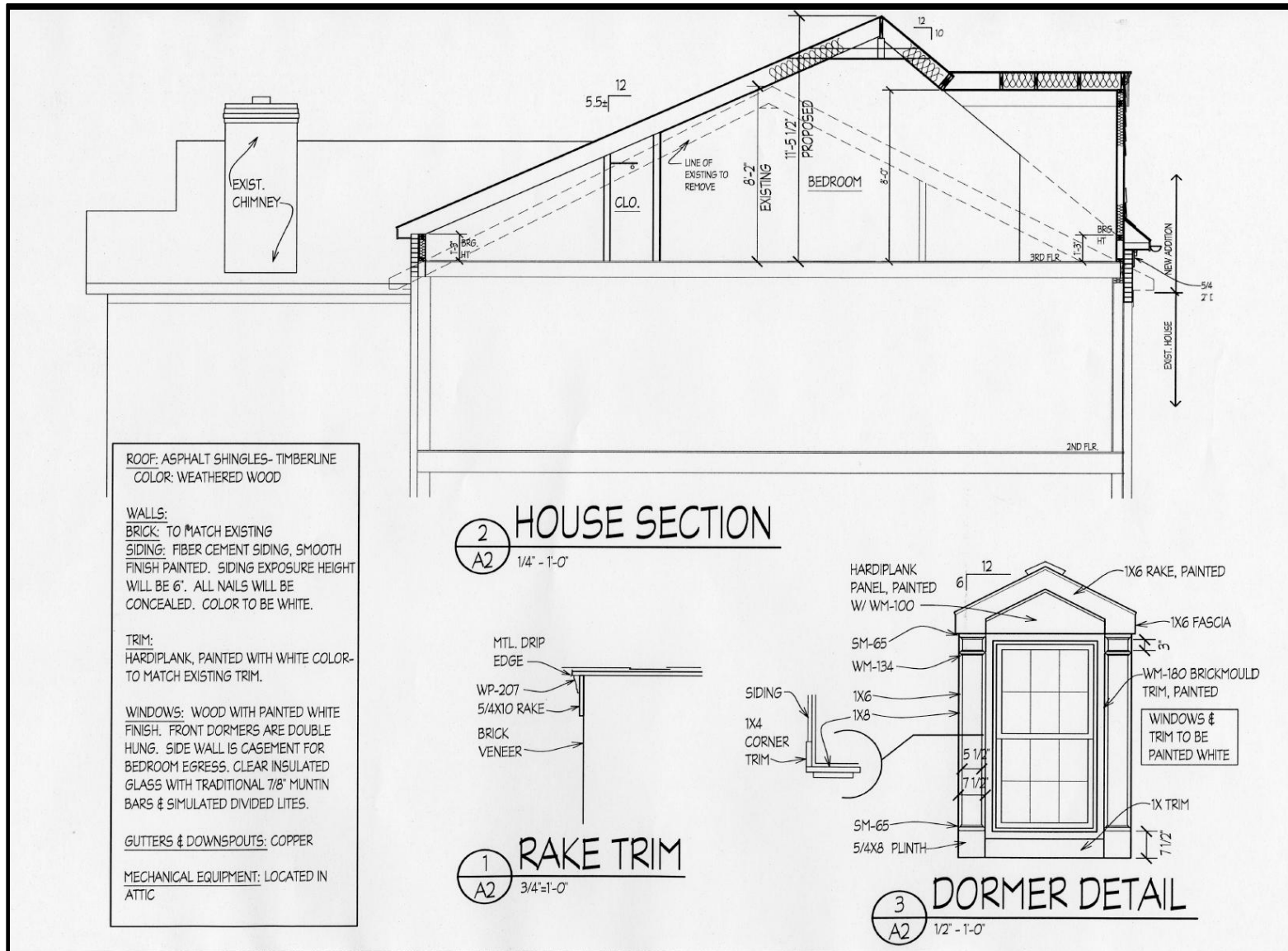


Figure 5: Proposed Section/Details

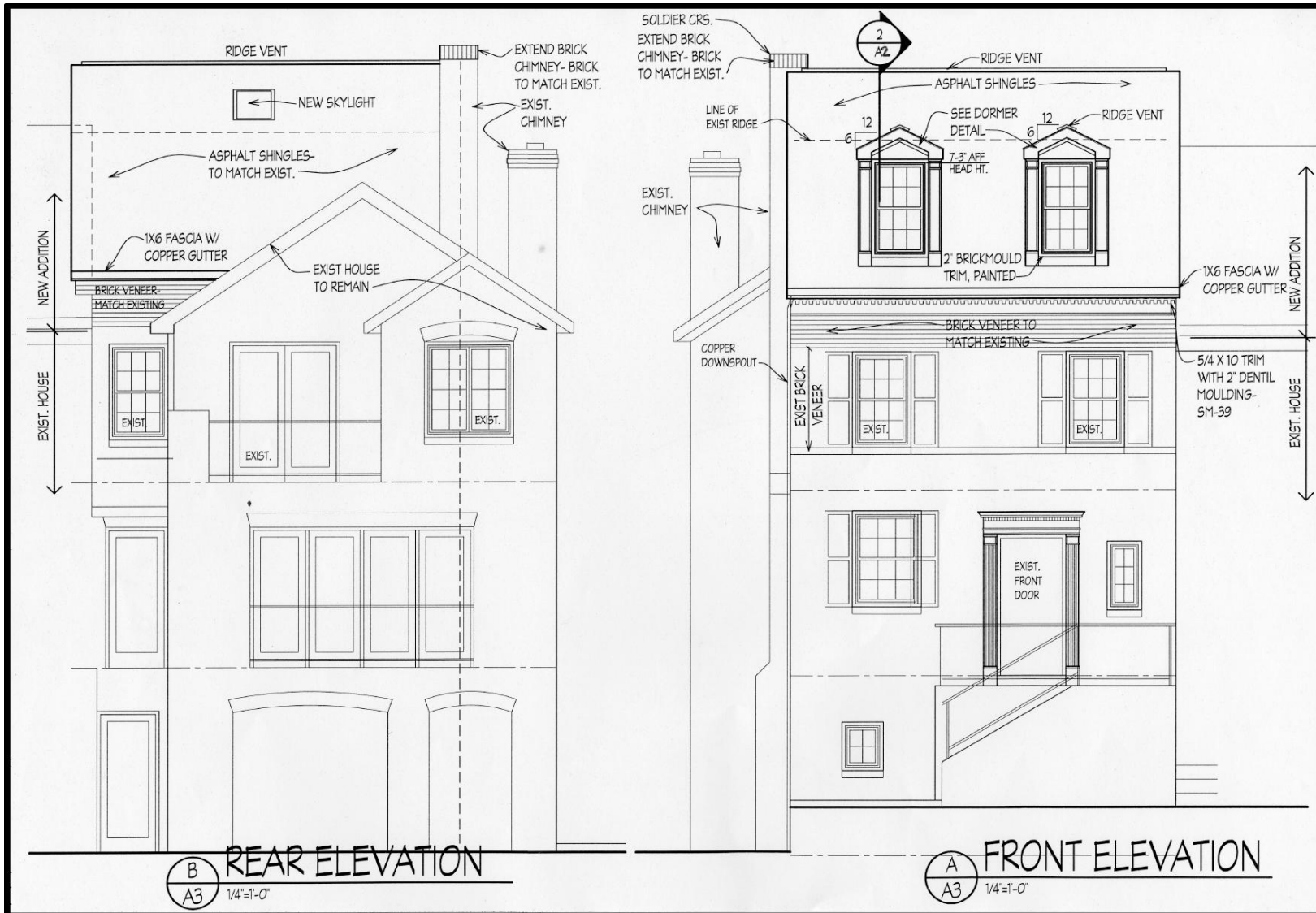


Figure 6: Proposed Front/Rear Elevations

