

BAR Meeting
July 20, 2011

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and Alterations

APPLICANT: Janice Cuny & Steve Robinson by Tom Canning

LOCATION: 329 North Saint Asaph Street

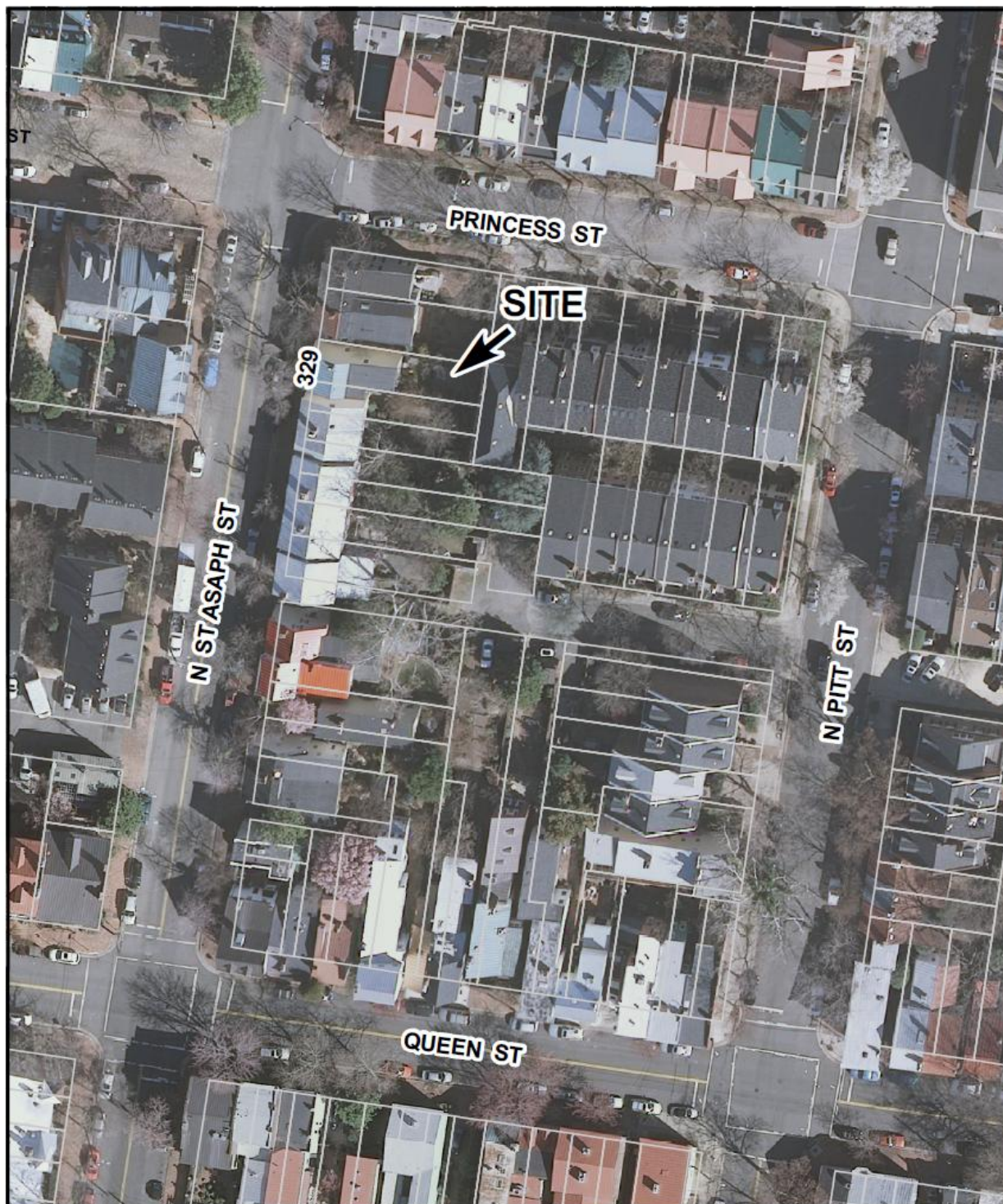
ZONE: RM / Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

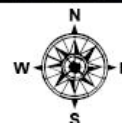
1. The statements in archaeology conditions below shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including Basement/Foundation Plans, Demolition, Erosion and Sediment Control, Grading, Landscaping, Utilities, and Sheeting and Shoring) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirements:
 - a. The applicant/developer shall call Alexandria Archaeology 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.
 - b. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.
2. That the applicant provide complete window specifications for the replacement windows and doors to verify conformance with Alexandria Replacement Window Policy at the time of building permit application.
3. That the proposed shutters be wood, sized to fit each window and operable.

****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 final approval 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 siding or roofing over 100 square feet, windows and 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, 703-746-4200 for further information.



BAR CASE #2011-0182 & 0183



I. ISSUE

The applicant is requesting a Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and a Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations at 329 North Saint Asaph Street.

Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate to demolish the following:

- Encapsulate the existing rear porch on the south elevation with new windows and a door.
- Demolish portions of the south (side) and east (rear) elevations for new window and door openings.

Alterations

- Replace all existing windows with simulated divided light double-glazed wood windows. Install shutters on front elevation.
- Relocate front door and stoop from center bay to original location at the northernmost bay on the west (front) elevation. The front stoop design and railing will be reused. A six panel mahogany door with two lights at the top is proposed. A copper lantern is also proposed.
- Install one new window and shift two existing window locations on the south (side) elevation. Install two new basement windows beneath the enclosed porch on the south (side) elevation behind the existing gate (not visible from public right-of-way). Install a pair of French doors and below-grade steps on the east (rear) elevation at the basement level (not visible from public right-of-way).
- Reduce size of existing window on east (rear) elevation at second story and replace with a casement window (not visible from public right-of-way).
- New rear deck off enclosed porch on south (side) elevation to measure approximately 9' by 5'-7" and replace existing stairs from open porch to yard. The trim and columns will be made of Azek. The deck will have a wood handrail to match the existing stair railing. The area below the deck and porch will be HardiePlank to match the profile of the existing siding (area below deck and porch not visible from public right-of-way).
- Relocate HVAC units to north property line, screened by a 42" brick wall (not visible from public right-of-way).
- Excavate new English basement with access from rear yard (not visible from public right-of-way).

II. HISTORY

329 North Saint Asaph Street is a two-story, three-bay frame freestanding townhouse which was originally constructed in a Second Empire Victorian style between 1891 and 1896. In 1965, the Board approved an application made by the Old Alexandria Restoration Inc. to substantially alter and renovate this house. Photographs from before and after the renovation confirm that the townhouse was originally a typical late 19th-century Victorian townhouse with a small Mansard roof, with a side bay entry on the front facade, two-over-two windows and a pronounced door hood and window surrounds. The transformation of this townhouse to a Colonial Revival style "Polly House" included relocation of the front door to the center bay, changing the original shed roofline to a side gable roof, construction of a dentiled cornice, installation of a new chimney and replacement of all windows, siding and trim.

A "Polly House" is a term of endearment in the Alexandria community for a townhouse which underwent substantial renovation and "restoration" in the 1960s and 1970s by Marianne "Polly"

Hulfish, founder and President of Old Alexandria Restoration Inc. The work of Old Alexandria Restoration, Inc. was quite extraordinary and resulted in the preservation and restoration of over sixty properties throughout the Old and Historic Alexandria District and, in no small part, was responsible for stabilization and preservation of the historic district in these early years. While her alterations to these houses were not subject to the same preservation standards and Design Guidelines we would apply today, they have, nevertheless, acquired importance in their own right as an early record of an evolving national preservation ethic.

III. ANALYSIS

The proposed project complies with Zoning Ordinance regulations.

Staff has no objection to the proposed demolition and encapsulation and finds the proposed alterations to generally be compatible with the existing building and surrounding area. While much of the rear elevation is plainly visible from Princess Street, the majority of the proposed alterations are at the lower level and not visible from the public right-of-way. Staff notes that this case is particularly interesting in that the subject property, while originally constructed in the late 19th-century, is almost entirely a 1960s Colonial Revival style townhouse due to the extensive remodeling and renovation done at that time. The house's original design, character-defining elements and materials are almost entirely absent. Because of the changes over time, Staff, therefore, considers it a mid-20th-century Colonial Revival resource. Staff does not advocate a return to the original architectural design, noting that the 1960s alterations represent a distinct period of the local historic preservation movement and have achieved historic significance in their own right.

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 should be granted. The areas proposed for demolition and encapsulation are minimal in scope, 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. While at times, the cumulative effect of demolition and encapsulation can

compromise the integrity of a property, Staff does not find that to be the case in this instance. All of the proposed alterations are in the spirit of the Colonial Revival design constructed by Ms. Hulfish.

Alterations

Converting an open side or rear porch to an enclosed porch is common in the historic district. This type of alteration allows the porch element to continue to read as a porch while providing for expanded interior space without expanding the footprint of the structure. In addition, it is an easily reversible alteration. Staff finds that this alteration will be minimally visible from North Saint Asaph Street and is not visible from Princess Street. The proposed materials are appropriate for an enclosed porch and are compatible with the existing building. The Board has regularly approved fiber cement siding and high-quality and solid-through-the-core composite trim on new construction and additions and Staff believes its use here would help subtly differentiate between the historic body of the house and the newly enclosed porch.

Staff supports the return of the front door to its original location. In a narrow urban townhouse, a center door entry would have been highly unusual because of such a location's adverse effect on the interior furniture layout. Staff recognizes that the 1965 relocation of the door to the center was part of a larger effort to "Colonialize" this building and, perhaps, recall more grand, center-hall Georgian period structures. These center hall buildings were typically five bay, freestanding buildings such as the original Gadsby's Tavern, which is not the case here. Staff has no objection to the return of the door to its original location and notes that this change will not detract from the Colonial Revival architectural style of the building. The side entry is more appropriate for this urban townhouse form, regardless of the architectural period or style, and is what is found everywhere else on this street. Staff also supports the proposed door, lantern and reuse of the railing and stoop design.

As Staff considers the effective period of significance of this building to date from its complete alteration in 1965, Staff supports the installation of double-glazed, simulated divided light wood windows to match the existing Colonial Revival style windows, finding such an alteration to be in conformance with the Board's recently adopted Window Policy.

Staff has met with the applicant and neighbors numerous times throughout the design review process. Initially, the applicant proposed Craftsman-style windows on the south (side) elevation that Staff found to be stylistically inappropriate. The applicant, therefore, revised this elevation to eliminate two new openings, add one new double-hung window and slightly shift two windows at the rear.

The adjacent property owner at 327 North Saint Asaph Street, had expressed concerns to Staff and the owner about the size and design of the proposed rear deck, as well as the location of the AC condenser units. Although the HVAC units and new basement entrance are not visible from a public way and are not subject to BAR review, the applicant reduced the size of the rear deck by half, relocated the AC condenser units to the north property line and screened the AC condenser units with a low brick wall. The adjacent owner also originally expressed concern about the impact of construction and basement excavation. However, these constructability issues are not before the BAR and are addressed by Code Administration and T&ES as part of the building permit and inspection process.

Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and the Certificate of Appropriateness for alterations with the conditions noted above.

STAFF

Catherine Miliaras, 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 Division:

C-1 Proposed porch enclosure, window replacement and door relocation comply with zoning.

C-2 Applicant must submit proposed open space calculations and show improvements on a survey plat to determine if proposed rear deck and basement egress steps comply with the required open space.

C-3 Applicant should screen HVAC units under the deck facing neighbor.

F-1 Indicate on the plans submitted for building permit the location of any downspouts/gutters.

Code Administration:

F-1 The following comments are for preliminary review only. Once the applicant has filed for a building permit, code requirements will be based upon the building permit plans. If there are any questions, the applicant may contact Thomas Sciulli, Plan Review Supervisor at 703-746-4190 or thomas.sciulli@alexandriava.gov.

C-1 Building and trades permits will be required to be issued prior to any work at the site

C-2 Five sets of sealed plans shall be submitted for review with the permit application. The plans submitted for the BAR request are not approved for construction

C-3 Sequence of construction/excavation and methods to protect adjacent properties during construction/excavation shall also be submitted at the time of application.

C-4 Window or door openings in the exterior wall shall comply with the following;

- Between zero and 3 feet of the lot line no openings are allowed
- Between 3 and 5 feet from the lot line openings are limited to 25% of the wall area
- Greater than 5 feet from the lot line the number is unlimited

Transportation & 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. No staging, stockpiling or storage of materials, to include equipment, is permitted in the sanitary sewer easement. A note to this effect shall be placed on the plat submitted with all building permit applications. (T&ES)
- R6. 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)
- R7. 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)
- R8. The building permit must be approved and issued prior to the issuance of any permit for demolition. (T&ES)
- R9. Construction of a new driveway entrance, or widening of an existing driveway entrance, requires separate application to; and approval from, the Department of Transportation and Environmental Services. (T&ES)

FINDINGS

- F1. An approved grading plan may be required prior to approval of building permit applications, per City code Section 5-6-224.
Questions regarding grading plans requirements should be directed to the T&ES Site Plan Coordinator at (703) 746-4064. Memorandum to Industry No. 02-08 was issued on April 28, 2008 and can be viewed online via the following link. (T&ES)
<http://alexandriava.gov/uploadedFiles/tes/info/gradingPlanRequirements.pdf>

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. 5-2) (T&ES)

Alexandria Archaeology

Archaeology Findings:

- F-1 Tax records indicate that a structure was present along this street face at least as early as 1810. By 1850, these records document a free African American household near the corner of Princess and St. Asaph streets in the vicinity of this development lot. On later nineteenth-century Sanborn Insurance maps, the area near this corner has structures labeled "Negro shanties." The property therefore has potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities in 19th-century Alexandria, perhaps relating to African Americans.

Recommendations:

- R-1 The statements in archaeology conditions below 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 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.
 - b. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

V. IMAGES



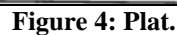
Figure 1: 329 North Saint Asaph, west (front) elevation.



Figure 2: South (side) elevation and shared alley showing the existing open porch in the rear.



Figure 3: East (rear) elevation as viewed from Princess Street.



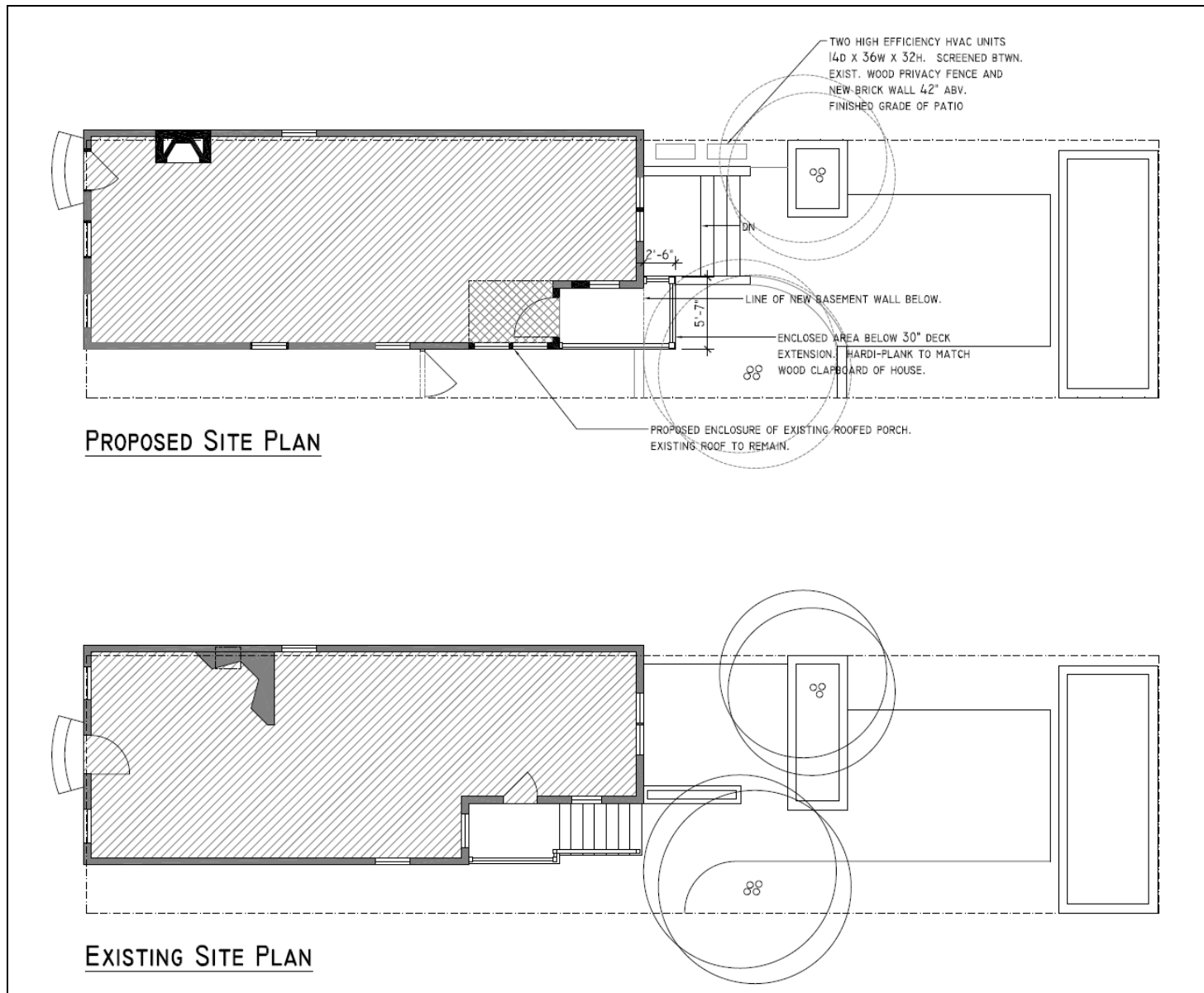


Figure 5: Existing and proposed site plan.

July 20, 2011

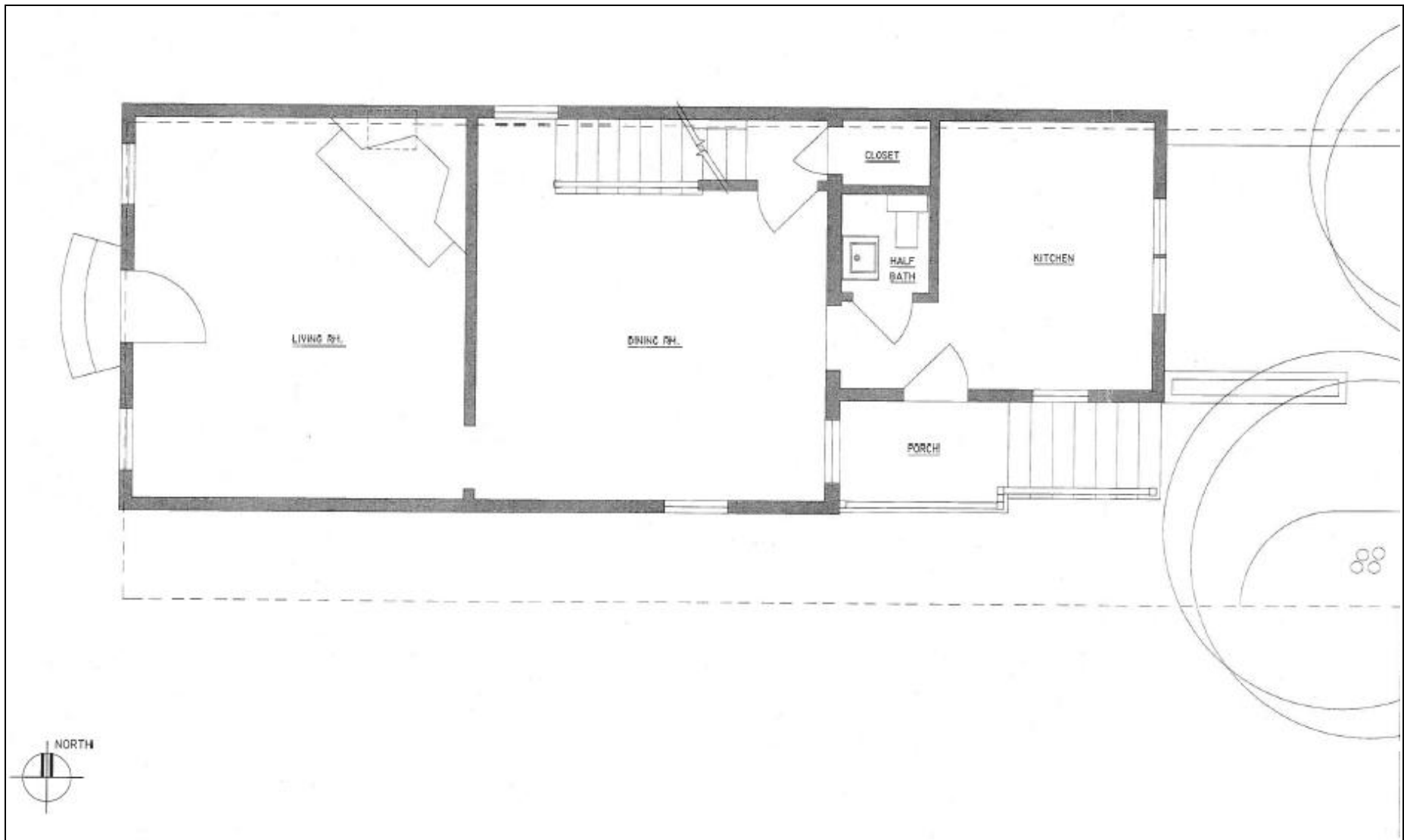


Figure 6: Existing first floor plan.

July 20, 2011



Figure 7: Existing east (rear) elevation.

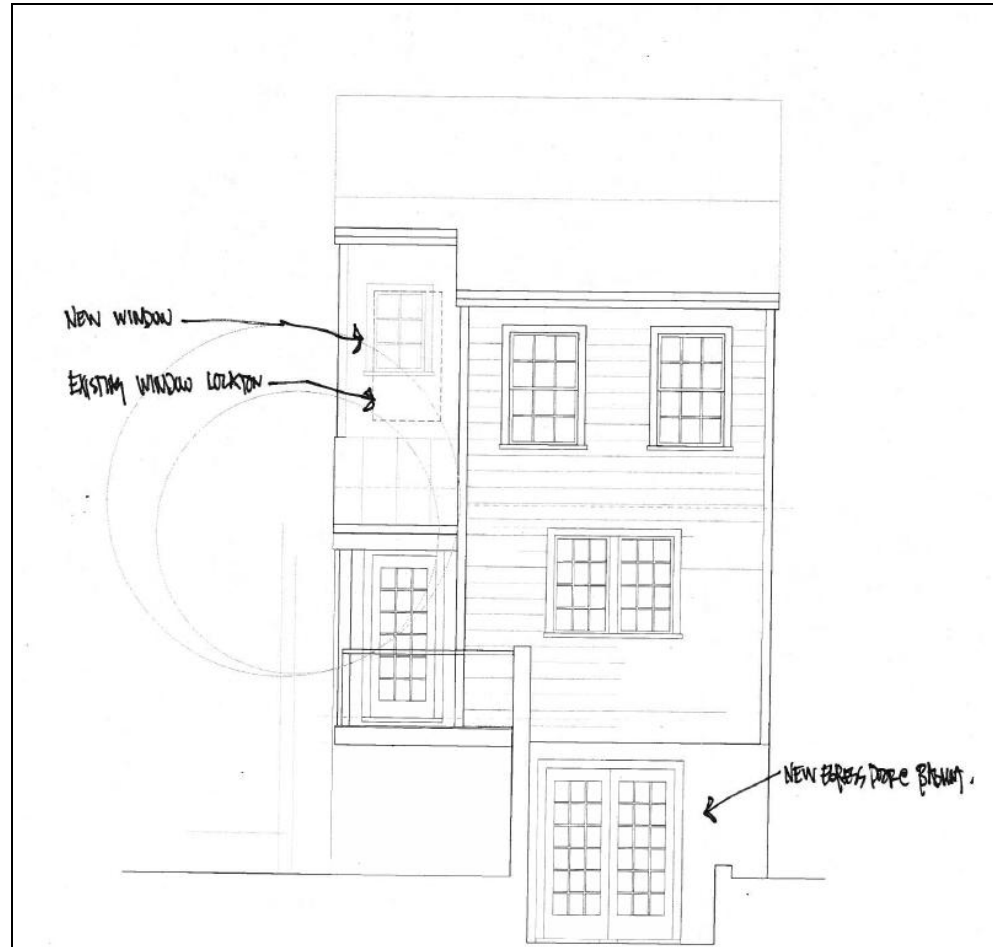


Figure 8: Proposed east (rear) elevation.

July 20, 2011



EXISTING WEST ELEVATION



PROPOSED WEST ELEVATION

Figure 7: Existing and proposed west (front) elevation.

July 20, 2011



Figure 10: Existing south (side) elevation.

July 20, 2011



Figure 11: Proposed south (side) elevation with proposed new windows shown surrounded by dashed red lines.

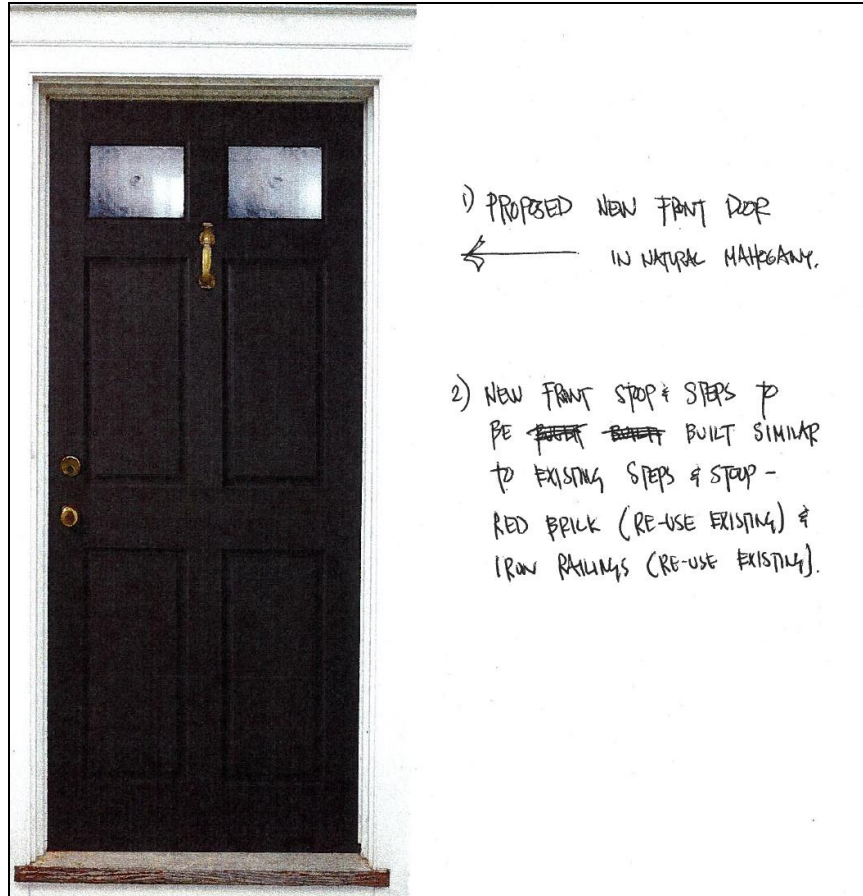


Figure 8: Proposed front door.

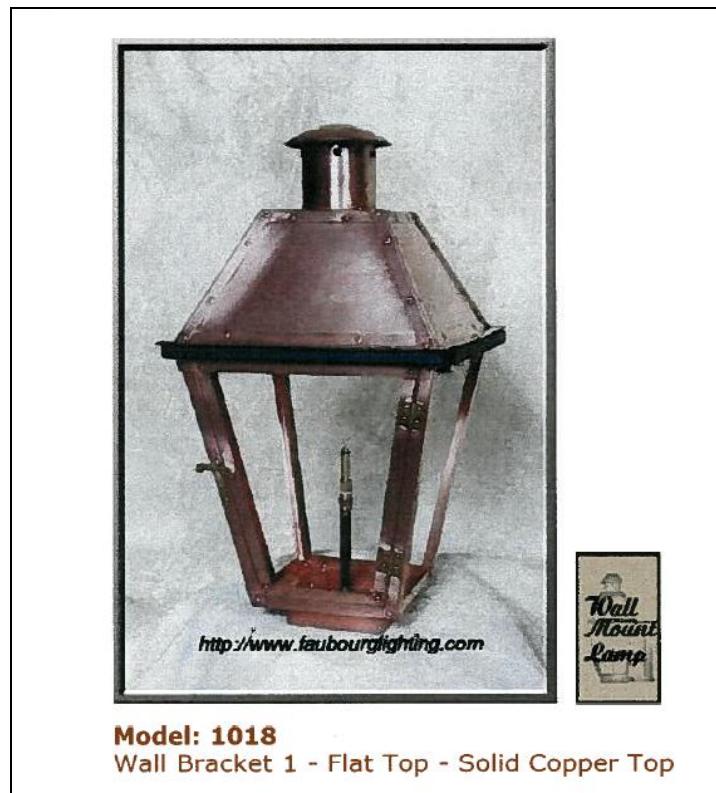


Figure 9: Proposed light fixture.