

BAR Meeting  
July 20, 2011

**ISSUE:** New construction of a single family dwelling

**APPLICANT:** James and Christine Garner, Owners, by M. Catharine Puskar, Attorney

**LOCATION:** 122 Prince Street

**ZONE:** RM / Residential

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

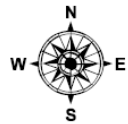
1. That this BAR approval is not effective until and unless the yard variances allowing the house to be placed where it is shown are approved.
2. That the statements in the archaeology conditions below shall appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition 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.
3. That the dormer window trim details be reviewed with staff prior to approval of the building permit to be more stylistically appropriate to the Federal period.

**\*\*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 and will expire with the expiration of the building permit.

**\*\*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 replacement of windows, signs and any siding or roofing over 100 square feet in area.). 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 #2011-0189



## **I. ISSUE**

The applicant is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for construction of a new freestanding two-and-one-half story brick, single-family dwelling at 122 Prince Street, a vacant, buildable lot. The case has a long history, including two prior variance requests, a BZA appeal and litigation against the City. This case is now before the Board of Zoning Appeal for two variances to allow the location of the house to be where it is shown in the BAR proposal. (BZA2011-0009) The BZA decision, originally planned to occur before the BAR consideration of the case, is now scheduled for July 28. Nevertheless, the BAR may proceed to review the case, as scheduled, provided that any BAR approval may not take effect unless and until variances are granted allowing the house to be located as shown. Should the proposed setbacks not be approved by the BZA, the case will need to return to the BAR for any necessary amendments.

The primary issues before the BAR are the height, width, scale, architectural design and location on the site on this very important historic block. Generally, the BAR does not consider a project which does not otherwise comply with all zoning requirements. However, the Board is charged in the zoning ordinance with passing on the appropriateness of the “Overall architectural design, form, style and structure, including, but not limited to, the height, mass and scale of buildings or structures;” and with the “Design and arrangement of buildings and structures on the site; and the impact upon the historic setting, streetscape or environs.” The legal matters of property line locations and how required setbacks are measured by the City are not before the BAR. However, in this case, staff believes the BAR’s recommendations as to building’s scale and compatibility in the historic setting would be useful to the BZA in their deliberations on the requested setback variances.

The proposed architectural design is a vernacular Federal Revival style. Brick jack arches located above the simulated divided lite wood windows are two courses tall on the main body of the house and one course tall on the ell. Window sills are precast on the front façade and brick on the sides and rear, typical of early Alexandria buildings. Louvered shutters are wood. Two blind windows are included on the south elevation of the ell. A sample of the dark red tumbled brick will be presented at the hearing. The cornice is a simple dog-tooth or saw-tooth style brick pattern common on early Alexandria buildings. The roof is standing seam metal. The 6-panel wood door is slightly recessed from the façade, as are several others on this block. An existing late 19<sup>th</sup> century iron fence will be reused and matched where extended, and as rooftop mechanical screening tucked between the dormers in the rear.

## **II BACKGROUND**

The subject property, a lot of record as of February 10, 1953, has 36.00 feet of frontage facing Prince Street, a depth of 44.33 feet and a lot area totaling 1,773 square feet.<sup>1</sup> A private alley 8.00 feet wide abuts the property along the east property line. An existing curb cut is located near the east side property line. It provided access to a small 20<sup>th</sup> century corrugated metal garage/utility structure which at one time provided off-street parking for the property at 130 Prince Street but was recently demolished by a tree in a wind storm. The curb cut will be closed as part of this project. BAR and zoning staff have met with the applicant on numerous occasions

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<sup>1</sup> The size of the lot and the property lines being used in this report are part of a settlement staying litigation. The applicants have agreed to consider the lot as terminating at the west edge of the alley for purposes of these BZA/BAR applications only. More information about the settlement is provided under the following “History” discussion.

to consider both zoning, preservation and design concerns. The current proposal is intended to address preservation and design concerns.

The proposed house will be a two-and-one-half story, three-bay, brick townhouse in a late Federal architectural style. The design of the house takes architectural cues from existing historic buildings on the block. The proposed house is narrow and short, in response to staff's ongoing comment that this new building should not be a visual anomaly on the block. Despite the unusual shape of the lot (shallow and relatively wide), BAR staff finds it essential that the proposed house be no wider and no taller than other buildings on the block and that it read as a background building. In addition, BAR staff has expressed concern about retaining the views of the east elevation of 126 Prince Street, one of the City's rare examples of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century frame structure with exposed early siding on the party wall and perhaps the only frame structure on this block which survived the fire of 1827. As a result, BAR staff has advocated that the proposed house be designed not to fill the lot according to the zoning envelope but rather to maintain historic building patterns on this block and to protect a historically open view-shed by keeping a wider open space on the west side of the subject lot.

The proposed single-family detached dwelling, as shown on the submitted plat, is located on the front property line facing Prince Street, 2.00 feet from the west edge of the private alley, 11.00 feet from the west side property line and 3.00 feet from the rear property line. A variance of 3.00 feet from the west edge of the private alley and 13.00 feet from the rear property line is required. As seen from Prince Street, the house is 28.75 feet in height to the mid-point of the gable roof; the overall building height as seen from Prince Street is a little over 34.00 feet to the roof ridge. The zoning allows a house of the proposed design to be 45 feet in height. The proposed house will, therefore, comply with the floor area, west side yard setback, building height and open space requirements for a new detached single-family dwelling in the RM zone.

In the Old and Historic District, parking requirements may be waived by the Director of Planning if access to off-street parking for a new house is not feasible from an alley or interior court. In this case, although there is an adjacent alley, the director has determined that vehicular access is not feasible given the narrow 8 feet width of the alley, and its historical use for pedestrian access only. The City typically requires a minimum of 10 feet of width for vehicular access. The applicants propose to close an existing curb cut apron on Prince Street to be consistent with the development pattern along the 100 block of Prince Street. New curb and gutter to match the adjacent sidewalk surface and character will be required.

### **III. HISTORY**

#### **Case History**

This case originated in 2003 when the applicants' sought to build a single-family house on the only vacant building site on the 100 block of Prince Street. The following BZA history is given only for the BAR's information on the background of the case.

#### *BZA Variance Applications*

Applications for variances were filed in 2003 and 2005 associated with a proposed new house at 122 Prince Street. In each of those cases, staff recommended denial of the applications. Because a reasonably sized house could be built without a variance, and based on the prior hardship standard of "approaching confiscation," staff was unable to find the requisite hardship. The BZA



cases were subsequently withdrawn. The two prior cases involved the following requests for variances:

1. BZA # 2003-0064: A request for a rear yard variance of 16 feet was filed. After a hearing, the matter was deferred and an additional variance was added for a 5 foot east side yard. The applicant deferred the case prior to a decision in order to resolve legal issues regarding ownership of the alley.
2. BZA # 2005-0023: A request for a side yard variance of 5 feet and rear yard variance of 14 feet was filed. After a hearing, the applicants withdrew the case, again, because of the legal issues raised regarding the alley.

In each of the above cases, and despite requests for side yard variances, there was discussion regarding the ability of the applicants to use land within the alley as a side yard. The applicants claim their deed and survey show that their lot extends to the center of the alley; they therefore claim the right to use alley land as the required side yard for the new house and to comply with the RM zone requirements.

#### *BZA Appeal*

The applicant then asked for a zoning determination about their ability to use land within the alley as the required setback. The Director of Planning and Zoning issued a determination on February 19, 2010, explaining that the zoning ordinance requirements for side yards preclude the use of alley land because a side yard must remain open, unoccupied and unobstructed, and a private alley used by adjoining owners does not meet this test. The applicants appealed the Director of Planning's decision. The BZA denied the appeal and upheld the Director of Planning and Zoning's determination

#### *Litigation and Agreement to Stay Litigation*

Subsequently, the BZA's decision was appealed by the applicants to the Circuit Court. Prior to trial, the parties met and determined that there was a mutually agreeable goal: the design and construction of a legally permissible house on the subject property. From the City's perspective, the lot is buildable; staff has a strong interest in working with an applicant to achieve the best design, orientation and siting of a new house at this important location. Without the settlement agreement, staff might have had much less input into the design and massing. In addition, under the settlement agreement the applicant has agreed to consider the east property line of the lot as terminating at the west edge of the alley. The lot, frontage, FAR, and open space dimensions change if the lot extends to the center of the alley.

From the applicants' perspective, if they can achieve a suitable house, even though it may be smaller than legally permitted (e.g., as to height and FAR), then they too avoid the time and expense of an unnecessary trial. Thus the parties agreed to delay litigation while they met to discuss a potentially mutually agreeable design of a new house. As to the side yard setback, the parties compromised on the dimension. The applicants agreed not to assert their arguable right to use the alley land for the set back, and to set the house back 2.0 feet instead of 1.0 foot from the western edge of the alley. The City Staff agreed that a side yard variance of 3.0 feet in this location could be acceptable *if* the applicants designed a house that staff otherwise could support – both as to BZA and BAR issues. The Staff's agreement in this regard is limited to staff support and does not and cannot in any way affect the BZA's ability to make a decision in this case.

The parties have worked through several iterations of a design for the single family home. The applicants have modified the size, location, height, roof form and architectural detail to reach the

proposal now before the BAR and scheduled to be heard by the BZA at a special hearing on July 28, 2011.

### **History of the Block**

The 100 block of Prince Street, also known as “Captain’s Row,” has what are believed to be original cobblestones in the street, and two of the earliest frame houses found in the City. Initial research on the subject property and the surrounding properties in the 100 block of Prince Street reveal that this is one of the most historic blocks in the City, with every building except one originally dating from the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Early *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps*, beginning in 1885, depict both the north and south sides of Prince Street in a configuration similar to what exists today with building heights at two, three or three and one-half stories. The original blocks of the 1749 plan of Alexandria were sold in quarters, with no public alleys. These quarter parcels were then privately subdivided in a variety of shapes and sizes. As typically narrow and deep parcels from two perpendicular streets approached the corner, the corner lots were often shallow, as 122, 126 and 130 Prince are here.

### *1827 Fire*

25 buildings, both brick and frame, two- and three-story in height, on both sides of the 100 block of Prince Street were largely destroyed by fire on January 18, 1827 in one of the City’s worst fires. According to the *Alexandria Gazette* of January 23, 1827, only two houses on this block survived intact. The fire initially started in a workshop near the southeast corner of the intersection of South Royal and King Streets. After devastating much of that block, the fire was contained in that area.

“However, the lighted shingles, borne by a powerful north-west wind, had kindled another, and a still more awful fire, in a separate part of the town...on the north side of Prince street, near the intersection with Water street. In a few minutes, both sides of Prince street, between Water and Union, together with a warehouse on the east side of Water street—four others on the west side of Union street south of Prince, and three others on the same side of Union, north of Prince—were all in flames, and every house except two was destroyed—many of them with their whole contents.” (*Alexandria Gazette*, January 23, 1827).

The fire in Alexandria was so severe that it was necessary to call on the “services of our friends of Washington and Georgetown...every engine and hose was sent to our aid, and every man that could be spared, was with us. Congress adjourned—The Navy-Yard and public offices were closed...the Secretary of War and many members of Congress worked in our ranks.”

An address from the City Souvenir of the Bicentennial, describes how during the Great Fire of 1827 “cinders weighing half a pound were swept from the place of fire into the river and the flames burned through the town to the foot of Duke Street destroying 53 houses and occasioning a loss of \$103,000.”

Mutual Assurance records from 1815 and 1823 show two frame houses at the southeast corner of Prince and Water (Lee) streets. The *Revaluation of Building declared for Assurance* describes a “Wooden House and Dwelling, House two story high 44 by 23 feet” and an adjacent property immediately to the east as “Anthony Rhodes’ two story wood house” (Mutual Assurance Records, Declaration No. 1790, 9083 #4950, 1823). The document also describes an additional 14 wood buildings and 9 brick buildings on the block “separated by a vacant space of 30 feet.” It is likely that the lot at 122 Prince Street was the vacant space referenced to in the record. The

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house currently located at 130 Prince Street has the same dimensions today as those cited in the policy.

Recent BAR Staff field research suggests that portions, such as the front elevations of some houses, may date from the early nineteenth century. Stylistic details and brick patterns support this position. At the time of the fire, the dwellings, retail and warehouse structures on the 100 block of Prince Street ranged from two to three stories in height, with 14 of the 25 buildings constructed of wood frame. The *Gazette* article described the building content losses as “loss considerable”, “loss inconsiderable”, “loss very great”, or “loss very heavy.” These descriptions indicate that although the property losses were substantial they ranged in scope, and damage to the structures themselves would have varied, as well. What likely happened was extensive destruction of many frame buildings and considerable damage to brick buildings. Due to the higher cost of constructing brick buildings, typically whatever was salvageable was retained and repaired and, with the fire still fresh in their minds, new structures were constructed in the more expensive brick. Today, only two of the 26 buildings in this block are wood frame.

Charles H. Magnus’ 1863 *Bird’s Eye View of Alexandria, Va* shows the north and south sides of the 100 block of Prince Street with three story buildings at the corners on Union Street and predominantly two-story buildings moving westward up the block. The two frame houses noted above are also depicted here. It also appears that the lot at 122 Prince Street was open space at this time.



Historic map research, the GM Hopkins *Atlas of Alexandria, Va.* from 1877 and early *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* beginning in 1885, depict both the north and south sides of Prince Street in

a configuration similar to what exists today. The early *Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps* depict buildings from two stories to three or three and one-half stories in height. Tracing the development of the block with historic maps, it appears that only one building dates from the twentieth-century: that located at 102/4 Prince Street. Real Estate Records identify 1973 as the year of construction and the building appears on the 1977 *Sanborn Fire Insurance Map*.

Although this block was devastated by fire in 1827, several façades and materials likely date from the late 18<sup>th</sup>- and early 19<sup>th</sup>-centuries because original bricks and other materials were reused during post-fire reconstruction. Therefore, this block is an excellent representation of architecture and materials from the City's early period; maintaining and protecting the existing historic buildings, materials and context is of paramount importance in this particular location.

Significantly, the ca. **1786** two story frame dwelling at 126 Prince Street, immediately west of the subject lot, includes a wood frame building which may have survived the fire and one of the City's only remaining examples of late 18<sup>th</sup>- or early 19<sup>th</sup>-century up-and-down, machine sawn wood siding attached with cut nails. It is a very simple, two-story frame house and, while portions of the siding have been repaired, the east elevation, facing the new proposed house at 122 Prince, exemplifies historic building techniques. Specifically, during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was common practice in Alexandria to paint only the front, more refined facade of a frame dwelling, leaving the utilitarian stained or unpainted siding on side and rear sides of a house. This siding had been covered by stucco on metal lath in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and was uncovered in 1993 by then owner Nathan Sameth. BAR Staff convinced Mr. Sameth at that time to leave the siding uncovered because it was so unusual that it had survived. The only other location where this type of siding is easily visible to the public is the west elevation of 517 Prince, exposed several years ago under similar conditions.

In her 2002 study of the archival records of 126 Prince St., noted Alexandria historian Ruth Lincoln Kay surmised from a change in the tax value in 1830 that it did not survive the fire and that it was reconstructed using portions of the original exterior siding. However, BAR Staff examination of the house at 126 Prince (sometimes also shown as 128 Prince) in 1993 indicated that significant portions of the house likely survived the January 1827 fire. The studs of the east wall are hand hewn and mortise and tenoned into the sill beams. In Staff's field experience, timber framing largely disappeared in Alexandria after the 1820s with the availability of machine made nails and sawmill lumber. There was evidence of charring of some timbers, but the portions of the structural system Staff was able to view at that time appeared to be largely intact and first period. The weatherboard siding on the east elevation appears never to have been painted. Several years ago, restoration work was undertaken on this siding and severely deteriorated pieces were partially replaced with siding that was salvaged from the rear elevation and the rear of the house was re-sided with new replacement siding.

Regardless of its precise age, the structure at 126 Prince is at least 181 years old. Significant portions may be 225 years old and are remarkably intact. Therefore, Staff finds this structure to be worthy of special consideration as the "...impact upon the historic setting, streetscape or environs" of the proposed construction on the adjacent lot is considered. The new house at 122 Prince Street is placed 11.00 feet from the east elevation of the house at 126 Prince Street in order to provide the greatest reasonable view of the historic adjacent building.

The twin, three story brick houses at 116/118 Prince, on the east side of the subject lot, were constructed in **1828** to replace smaller structures burned during the fire, according to Ethelyn Cox in *Historic Alexandria, Virginia, Street by Street*. The entrance door of 118 Prince appears



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to have been moved to the west elevation in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and utilizes the pedestrian alley. The grand and historic structure at 118 Prince is significantly larger than the proposed house and does not have any unique features of historic or architectural merit that would be obscured from the street by the new construction 10' to the west, and it will still be visible via the relatively wide pedestrian alley.

### **History of the Site**

According to the Alexandria Gazette of 1827, the lot(s) at 122 Prince Street (then called 120/122/124 Prince) contained three, two-story wood frame houses which burned in the fire of 1827 and have been open space since that time. Until recently, there was a dilapidated, corrugated metal automobile garage building at the rear of the lot. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps indicate that it was constructed between 1912 and 1921. It was destroyed when a tree fell on it during a wind storm and Code Administration required its removal.

### **IV. ANALYSIS**

When the BAR reviews new construction in the historic district, it is concerned with the retention of historic fabric and the compatibility of new construction with nearby buildings of historic merit. Any new construction should not call attention to itself or detract from character-defining features of the adjacent historic buildings by being more ornate or of a higher style than they are. Thus in this case, for both BAR and BZA purposes, staff has been concerned that a new house at 122 Prince Street respect the importance of its neighbor to the west, at 126 Prince Street, and generally the 100 block of Prince Street as a whole. Any building constructed at 122 Prince Street should be a background building.

With these concerns in mind, staff has met with the applicants on multiple occasions and, encouraged the applicants to change their design in significant ways from prior applications. At staff's urging, they have reduced the height of the house from three stories to two-and-one-half stories, reduced the height of the rear ell from three stories to two, and simplified the architectural ornamentation. The negotiations yielded a building that both the BAR and zoning staff could support. After eight years, two variance cases, one BZA appeal and one court case, the opposing parties have negotiated a building design which staff finds to be appropriate for the 100 block of Prince Street from the standpoint of both zoning and historic preservation.

It is an understatement to say that Captain's Row is an especially important street in Alexandria. The streetscape, its buildings and the street itself typify the best of Old and Historic Alexandria Historic District, and contain key examples of the City and nation's architectural history. Because of the importance of the location, building a new single family house on the 100 block of Prince Street presents a significantly difficult challenge.

The current case is the result of 10 years of disputes, appeals and litigation. The City has vigorously opposed earlier proposals; it has opposed the property owners' legal and zoning interpretations and is willing to litigate them. Staff's steadfast interest over the history of this case reflects its understanding of the need for careful treatment of any proposed development at the subject location. The current cases before the BAR and BZA show the result of staff's efforts over time. It also shows the applicants' willingness to compromise their desires for the sake of the important context in which the new house will be located.

### Siting

Staff finds that, in this particular case, siting is equally as important as height, scale, mass or general architectural character. Nearly the entirety of the 100 block of Prince Street and much of the Old and Historic District predate the current RM zoning classification. Historic development patterns in Alexandria often did not have any side setbacks, as the majority of houses were townhouses constructed on the lot line and often attached to their neighbor on at least one side. This pattern, without side yards, is clear on the 100 block of Prince Street. Therefore, having two side yard setbacks of at least five feet, as required by the zoning ordinance, would actually call more attention to the proposed house because it would appear to be the only single family detached house on a block of row houses. Detached houses in Alexandria were generally the more grand buildings in the historic district and located on large lots that were  $\frac{1}{4}$  or  $\frac{1}{8}$  the size of a block. By reducing the side yard setback slightly on the east side and placing the house adjacent to the existing private alley and the taller brick houses on that side, more traditional development patterns are achieved and the position of the new house is diminished.

In addition, the proposed house location will maintain some of the historic sense of open space immediately adjacent to 126 and 130 Prince Street by setting back 11' from the historic rough sawn siding on that east wall, while still providing a relatively large 10' separation from 118 Prince. This space between the new townhouse and the existing late 18<sup>th</sup>-century buildings to the west emphasizes these well-preserved historic frame buildings while minimizing the visual impact of the new brick house.

The lot for the proposed house is unusual in that it is wider (36') and shallower (44') than most lots throughout the historic district. The shallowness of the lot means that in order to achieve a reasonably sized house, and keep the open space adjacent to the historic wall at 126 Prince Street, the house must extend to the rear. Staff supports the significantly reduced rear yard setback, noting that it is far preferable to have the public view of a house with a narrower, more historically typical width and depth, than a shallow house with an architecturally grand, four-bay wide frontage.

### Height, Scale and Mass

From 2003 to the present, the building height of the proposed house has been reduced by over 5.00 feet, reduced in depth by 3.00 feet and reduced in floor area by 146 square feet. The building has remained 23.00 feet wide facing Prince Street.

At 28.75 feet, and two-and-one-half stories, the proposal is modest and similar to most of the nearby historic buildings on Prince Street. Specifically, staff asked that the cornice of the proposed dwelling be no taller than the historic frame house at 126 Prince to the west. The applicant has reduced the height from its earlier submissions, including the rear portion of the house. The three-bay façade also echoes the architectural patterns found on the 100 block of Prince. The roof style and orientation is also similar to other buildings on the street. Staff finds the height, scale and massing to be appropriate and compatible with the adjacent area.

The average width of houses on the south side of the 100 block of Prince Street is approximately 20.5 feet, with a range from 15 to 29.5'. At a proposed width of 23', the new house, although slightly wider than the average, is generally appropriate for the block. A house that is significantly wider than others that exist on the street, as the zoning would allow, would detract from the historic building patterns on this block and, thereby, call attention to itself. Staff notes it is far preferable to have a house with a narrower, more historically appropriate width and depth, than a wide, shallow house that could be built under the RM zone. Traditionally, rear

additions on shallow lots in the historic district are supported even if close to the rear property line because it is preferable to have them there than in a side yard facing the street.

### Architectural Character

Because of contemporary property values in Old Town, BAR staff is always concerned that new construction will want to be a higher architectural style than nearby buildings of historic merit but vernacular detail. The original proposal was an attractive but larger and more robust design that would be more appropriate on Gentry Row. Throughout many design meetings, staff has requested that the applicant simplify the level of ornamentation, so as not to visually compete with high-style historic houses and confuse visitors with the original and simpler mixed commercial/residential uses of structures on this block, as opposed to the more grand buildings in the 200 block of Prince Street, known as Gentry Row. The applicant's design team has responded by scaling back some of the ornamentation, removing the previous cast stone lintels and cornice and simplifying the door surround.

The overall building proportions and replication of Federal Revival architectural details are very well done and specifically recall early dwellings in Alexandria, and this street in particular. Staff notes that there was no requirement that this be a revival style building, and there is some concern that the period details are so well done that the general public may be confused in the future as to its age. However, in this instance, Staff supports the applicant's proposal, believing that any contemporary architectural details or materials would call attention to themselves because of their uniqueness in this setting and, thereby, detract from the historic streetscape.

Staff's only remaining concern is that the framing and trim around the dormer windows are wider than normally found on historic dormers and that they look somewhat heavy sitting on the roof. According to the *Design Guidelines*, where a building is designed in a particular style, all of the architectural details should relate to that style. If so directed by the Board, Staff would be pleased to work with the applicant's architect to refine this final detail.

Staff supports the proposed location on the lot, the height, width and architectural design of the new dwelling and recommends approval of the application, conditioned on BZA approval of any necessary setback variances and with the conditions noted above. Staff finds that this design represents an evolution that respects an array of preservation and compatibility concerns while allowing a modern dwelling of reasonable size in this historic and highly visible block of Old Town.

### **STAFF**

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

## **V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

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

### **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](mailto:thomas.sciulli@alexandriava.gov).
- C-1 Building permits will be required to be issued prior to the start of any construction/demolition work at the site.
- C-2 Five sets of sealed plans will be required to be submitted for review with the building permit application

### **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. Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the public right-of-way, if removal is necessary; it recommended that the applicant **retain any cobblestone** that is removed during any excavation for this project. Please note that the *City* does not maintain cobblestone streets and has no replacement material on hand. (T&ES)
- R4. Applicant shall comply with weight limit requirements set for the 100 block of Prince Street for delivery of materials. (T&ES)
- R5. All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (T&ES)
- R6. 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)
- R7. 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)
- R8. 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)



- R9. The building permit must be approved and issued prior to the issuance of any permit for demolition. (T&ES)
- R10. 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 shall be required prior to approval of building permit applications. (T&ES)

In summary, City Code Section 5-6-224 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) 746-4064. 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>

- F2. Other current approvals; BZA2011-00009.

#### 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**

Given the location of this lot on the 100 block of Prince Street, where 18<sup>th</sup>-century structures are still extant, there is high potential for this property to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into activities in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Archaeology Recommendations**

- \*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.

**Zoning**

C-1 Proposed single family dwelling must comply with BZA2011-0009. (Scheduled for July 28, 2011.)

## VI. IMAGES



Figure 1: Staff montage of the context of the 100 block of Prince Street.



122 Prince  
Front view facing South to lot showing existing shed

**Garner Residence**  
*122 Prince Street*

**Figure 2: Existing vacant lot looking south**





View 1:  
View along East property line



View 2:  
View along West property line



View 3:  
View across Prince Street facing North



View 4:  
View into property toward Southwest



View 5:  
View across Prince Street facing Northwest



View 6:  
View across Prince Street facing North

**Figure 3: Views of the site and context**

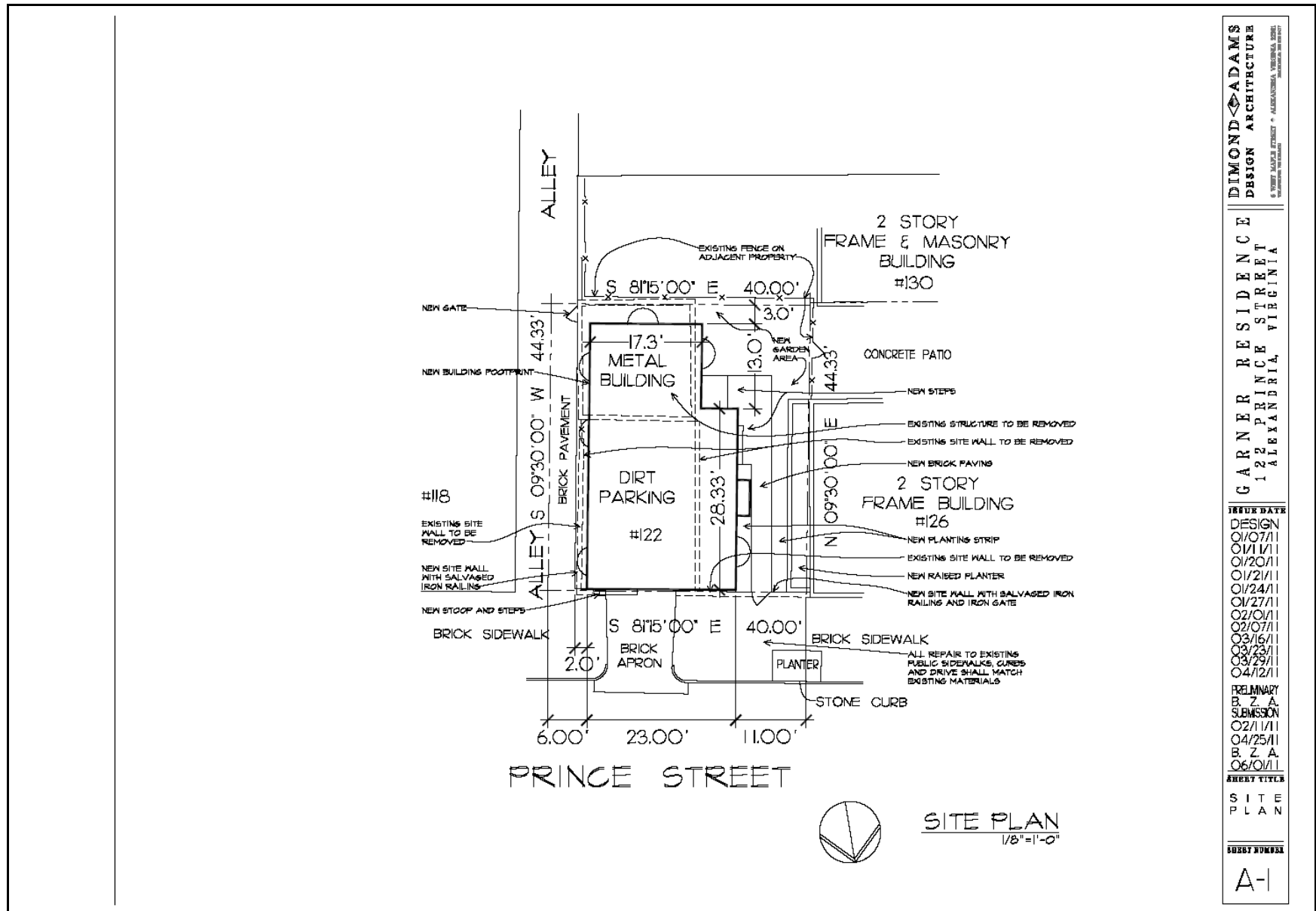


Figure 4: Site Plan

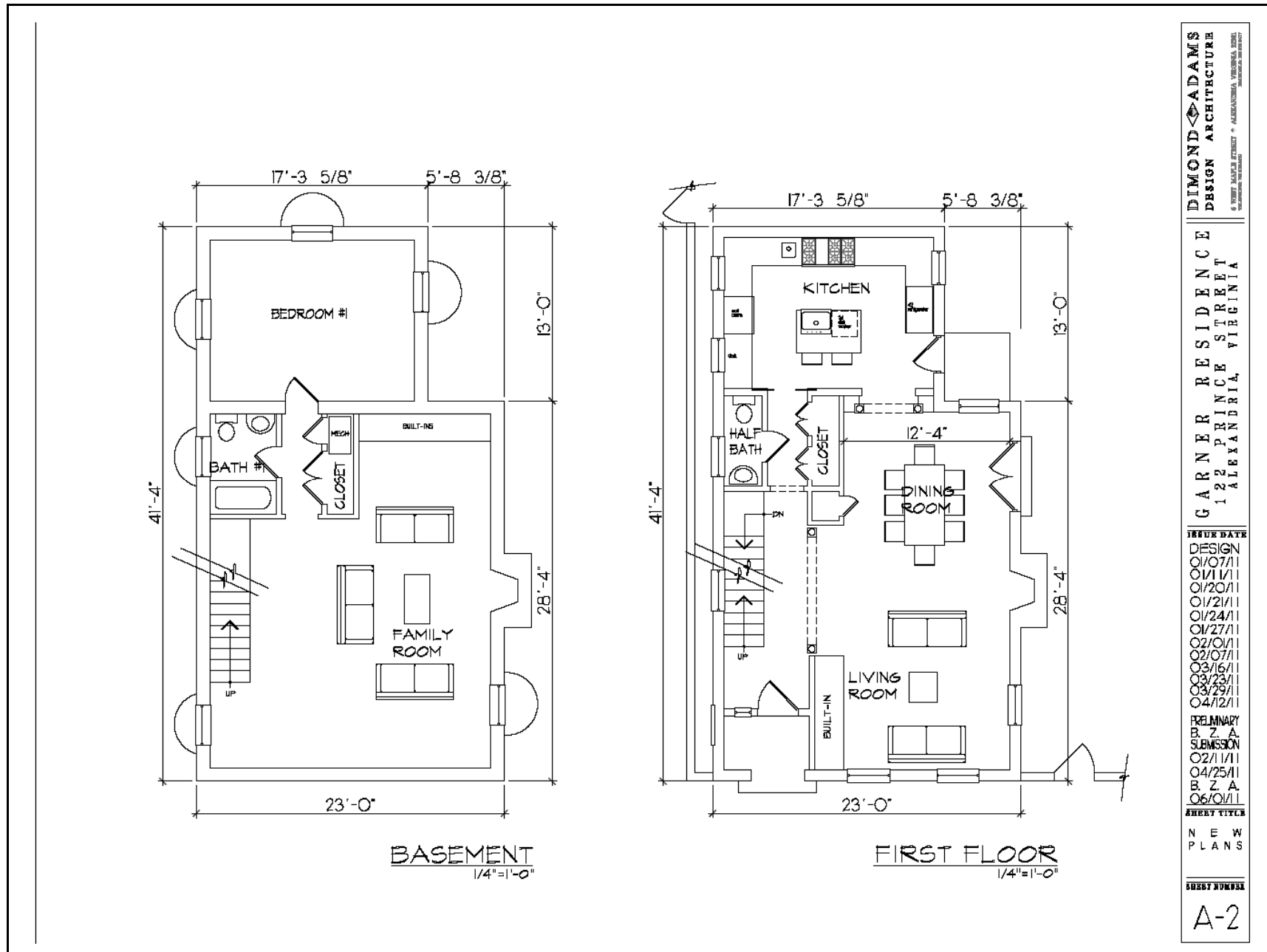


Figure 5: Floor Plans

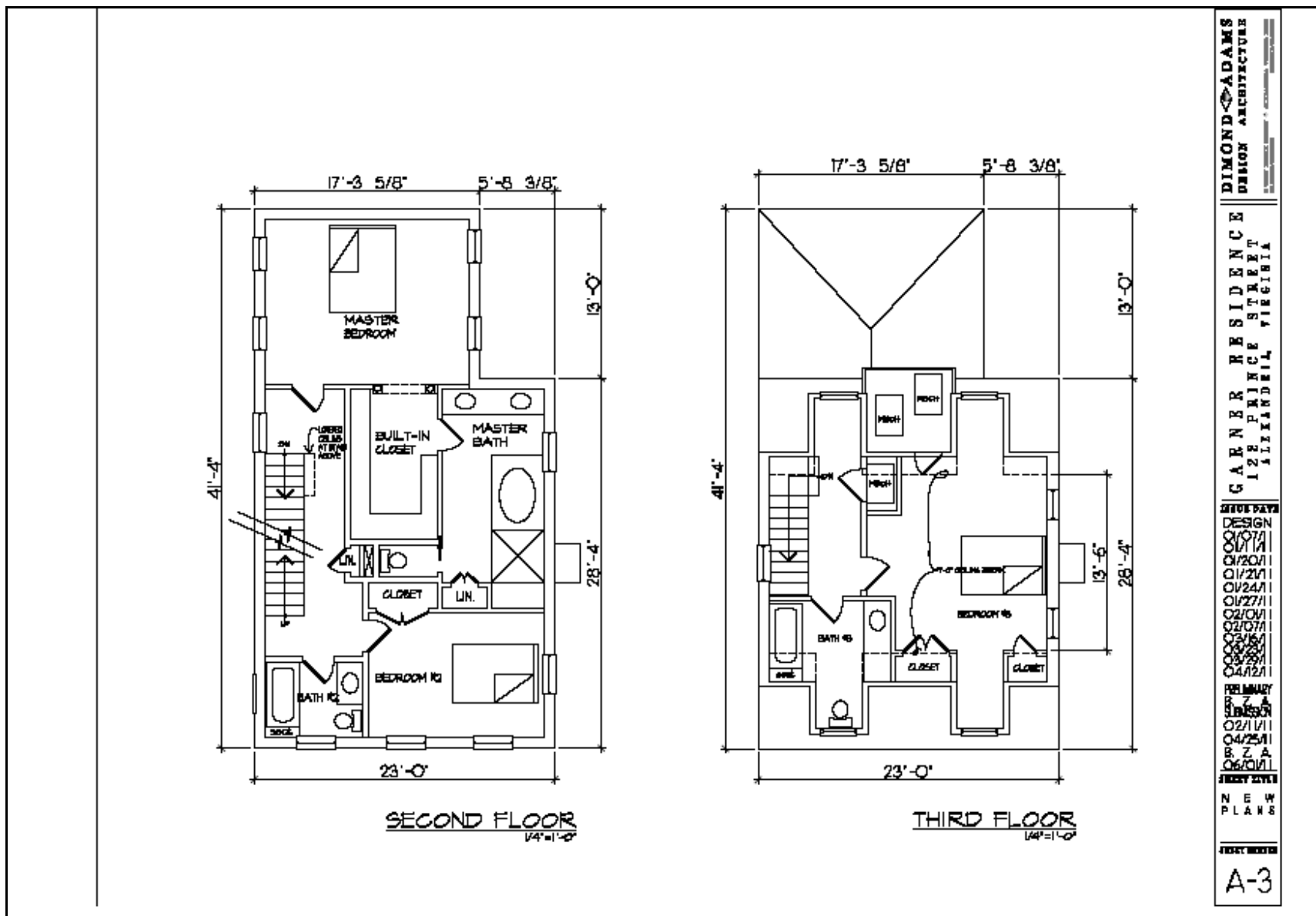


Figure 6: Floor Plans





Figure 7: Proposed elevation in context. Note cornice height alignment with the adjacent house at 126 Prince Street

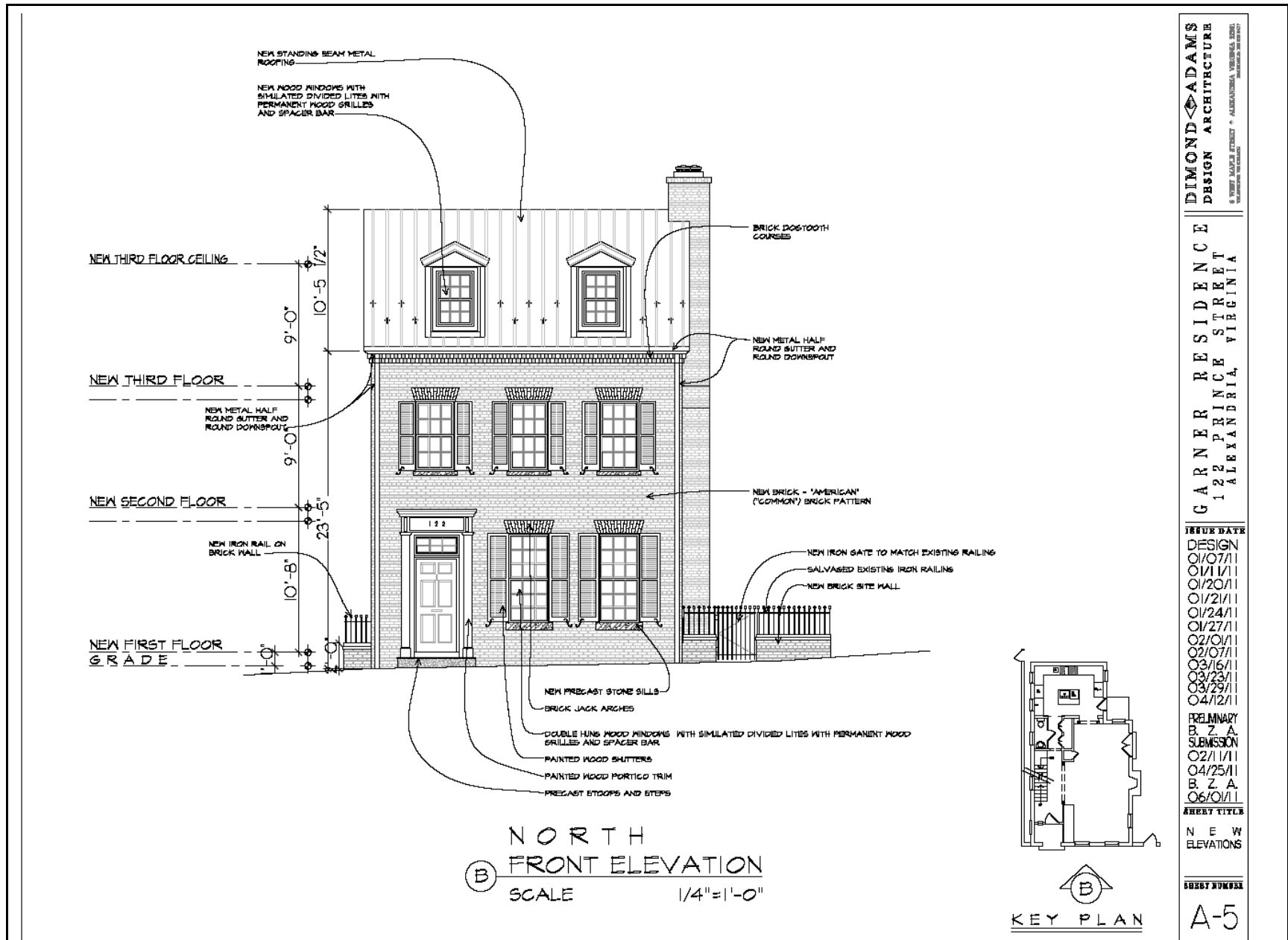
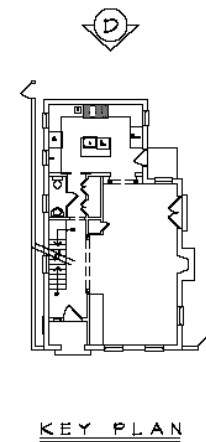
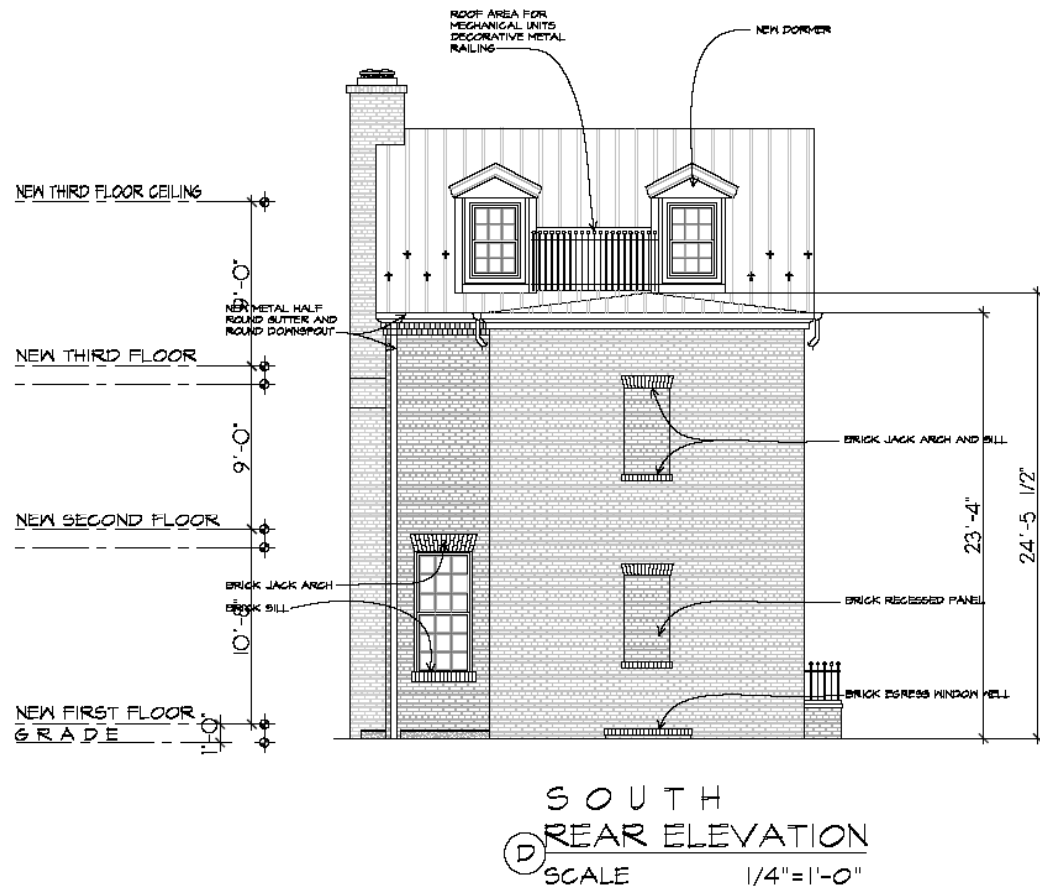


Figure 8: North Elevation





**DIMOND ADAMS**  
DESIGN ARCHITECTURE  
6 WHITE MARBLE STREET • ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA 22304  
(703) 746-1100

**GARNER RESIDENCE**  
122 PRINCE STREET  
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

**ISSUE DATE**

DESIGN  
01/07/11  
01/11/11  
01/20/11  
01/21/11  
01/24/11  
01/27/11  
02/01/11  
02/07/11  
03/16/11  
03/23/11  
03/29/11  
04/12/11

PRELIMINARY  
B. Z. A.  
SUBMISSION  
02/11/11  
04/25/11  
B. Z. A.  
06/01/11

**SHEET TITLE**

N E W  
ELEVATIONS

**SHEET NUMBER**

A-7

Figure 10: South Elevation

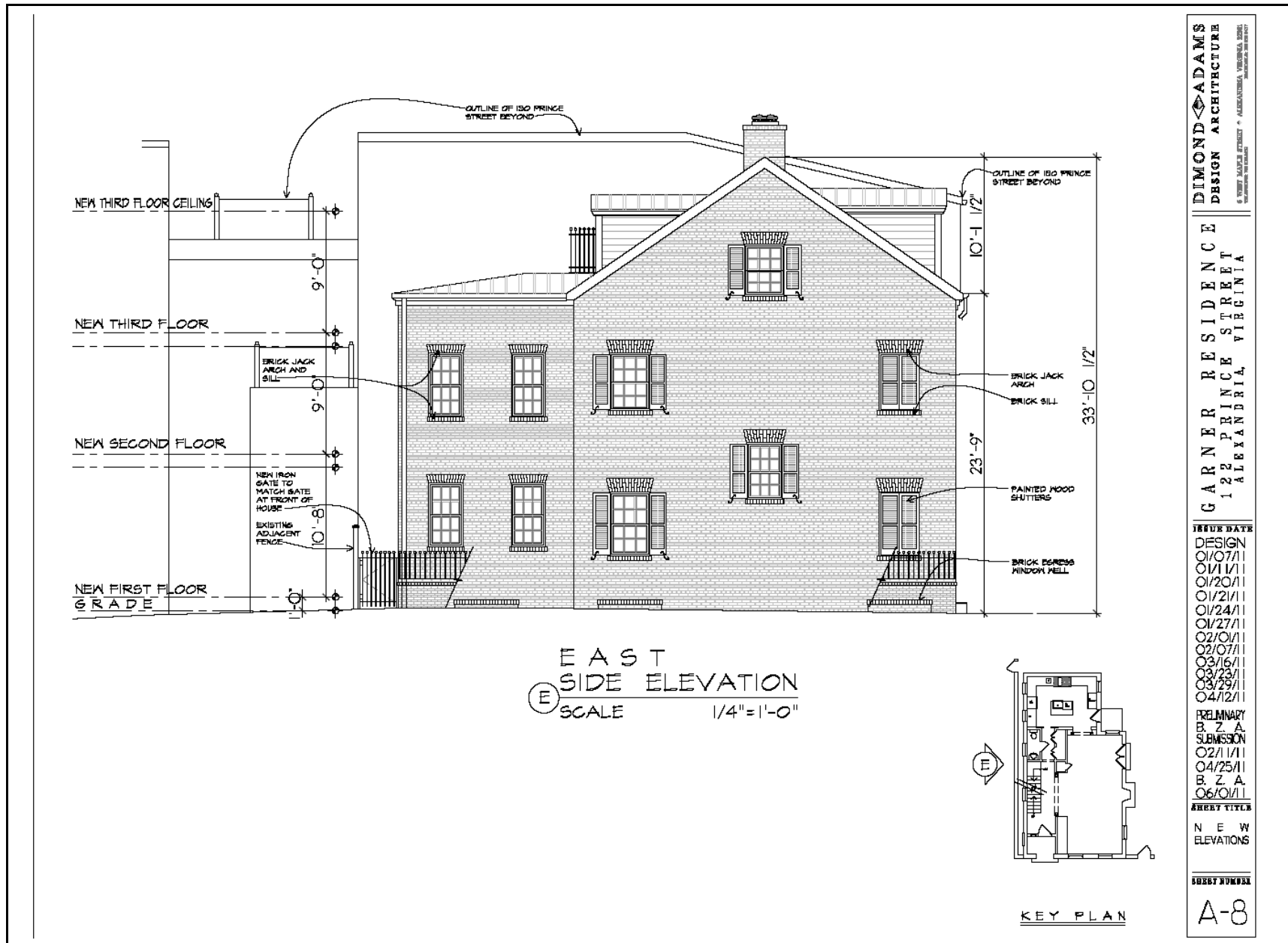


Figure 11: East Elevation





Figure 3: Design Alternatives of the Front Elevation submitted by the applicant over the past year  
Initial proposal      Second proposal with gable roof ell      Proposal with flat roof rear ell      Width allowed by the Zoning Ordinance