

Docket Item # 10 & 11
BAR CASE # 2011-0219 & 0220

BAR Meeting
September 7, 2011

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and Dormer Addition

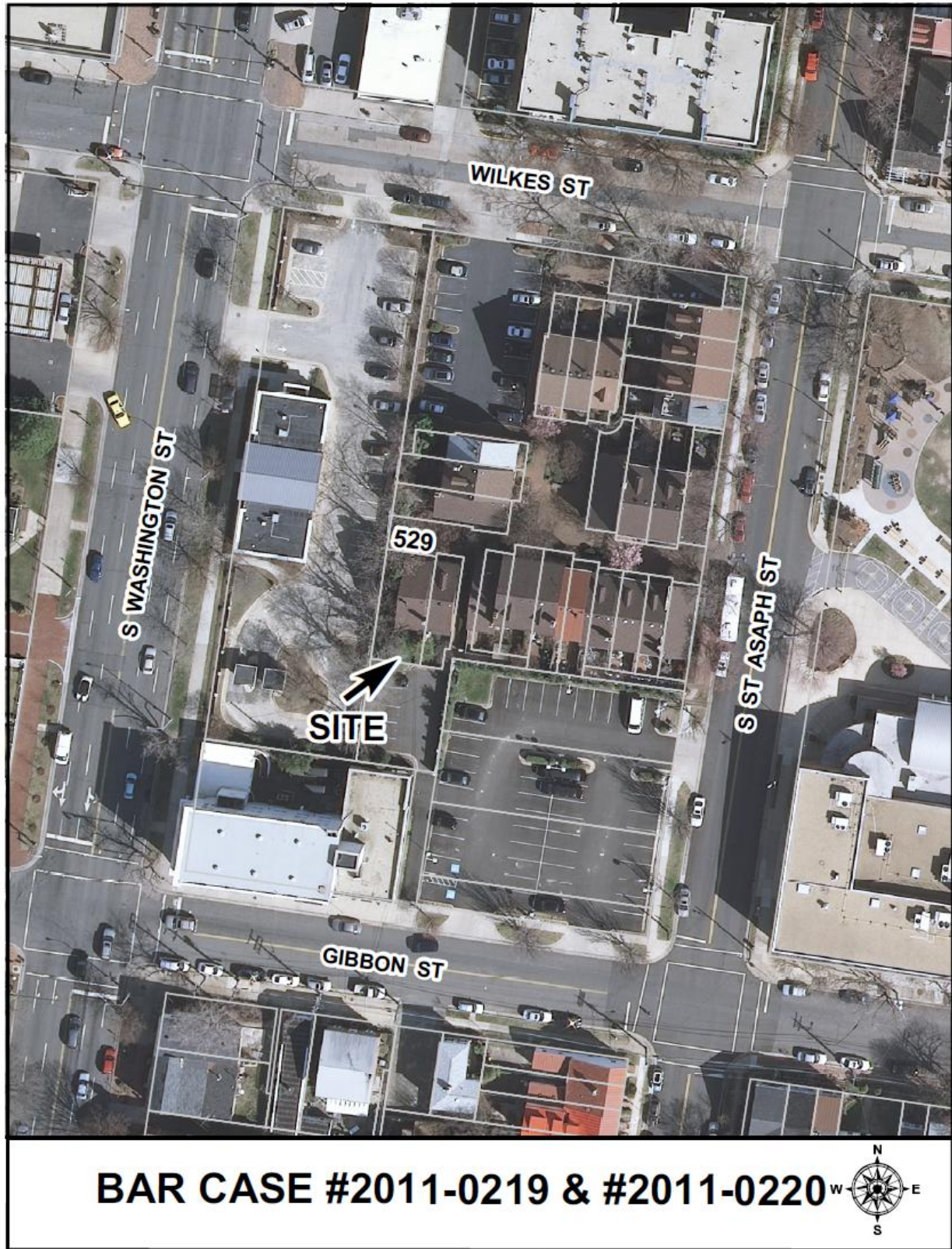
APPLICANT: Susan Bromm

LOCATION: 529 South Saint Asaph Street

ZONE: RM/Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and a Certificate of Appropriateness for a dormer addition, with the following conditions:

1. That the windows be six-over-six and be in conformance with the Window Policy; and,
2. That the applicant either use shingles or paint the siding a color that blends with the existing roof so that the center portion of the dormer recedes from view.



Note: Staff coupled the reports for BAR #2011-0219 (Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate) and BAR #2011-0220 (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/Encapsulate in order to demolish a portion of the north elevation composition shingle roof to accommodate a dormer addition. The area proposed for demolition encompasses approximately 72.25 square feet (8.5' by 8.5'). The dormer addition, while located on the front elevation of this particular townhouse, faces the interior courtyard of this mews-style development. The proposed dormer will read as two individual gable dormers but will have a slightly recessed wall clad with siding between the two individual dormer windows.

II. HISTORY:

The three-story, two-bay brick townhouse at 529 South Saint Asaph Street was approved by the BAR on September 17, 1975 as part of the Tannery Row development pursuant to SUP1018 and BZA 1513 for vision clearance. Some of the townhouses were originally constructed with single dormers.

The Board of Architectural Review approved the new construction of the development on September 17, 1975

Staff did not locate any previous BAR approvals for the subject property. The Board recently approved a single shed dormer on the front elevation of 507 South Saint Asaph Street, also part of this development (BAR #2006-01779/20/2006).

III. ANALYSIS:

Staff has no objection to the proposed demolition and encapsulation of a portion of the existing roof. Furthermore, Staff conceptually supports a dormer addition on the north elevation, which is minimally visible from any public right-of-way.

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/Encapsulate should be granted. Staff finds that the proposed demolition and encapsulation do not compromise the integrity of this 1970s townhouse as the area of demolition is located on a secondary elevation minimally visible from a public right-of-way and is modest in scope.

Dormer Addition

The BAR regularly reviews applications for dormer additions as property owners throughout the district seek to improve and expand their houses by making an existing attic story into a habitable space. There are more than a few examples of less-than-successful dormers in the district, some of which were not reviewed by the BAR. Historically, dormers were single features often with windows smaller than those on the floors below. Today, because of the desire to maximize habitable area, the proposals often involve large dormers—shed dormers with triple windows, “Palladian”-style dormers, and the like. Unfortunately, many of the modern dormers are not stylistically appropriate to the building to which they will be attached nor proportionate to the existing building. While Staff’s preference would be a single dormer or possibly a pair of single dormers, such a scheme often does not meet the homeowners’ objectives for headroom or furniture placement. In addition, the majority of requests for dormers are for townhouses dating from the 1970s or later. Therefore, the primary concern is compatibility of the dormer rather than preservation of historic fabric. The response has been to allow larger dormers on rear elevations or areas that are minimally visible from the public right-of-way as long as they are in conformance with the *Design Guidelines*. For example, although the *Guidelines* state that “shed dormers are strongly discouraged,” the Board has found them to be acceptable in some instances when they are stylistically compatible or on elevations that are minimally visible.

Prior to the submission, BAR Staff met with the applicant to review the proposed scheme. Initially, the applicant proposed a triple window shed dormer on the south elevation. Staff was concerned about the visibility of this elevation from both Gibbon Street and South Washington Street. In addition, Staff advised that a large shed dormer would not be stylistically appropriate to this Colonial Revival townhouse and would overwhelm the existing building. The applicant revised the design and relocated the dormer to the north (front) elevation, which is much less visible from any public right-of-way. While the proposed dormer is larger than a traditional dormer, Staff finds that, in passing, it will read as two individual dormers if the center portion recedes, either by using matching roof shingles or painting the siding to match the roof color. This is similar to the dormer design used on the rear roof at the historic Cotton Manufactory building in the 500 block of North Washington Street. While Staff would not support this combined dormer on a front elevation, in this particular circumstance, the proposed dormer will only be seen obliquely and some distance from a public right-of-way. In addition, the dormer generally aligns with the windows below as recommended in the *Guidelines*. To make the dormer more compatible with the existing townhouse, Staff finds that six-over-six windows,

similar to what exists on the first and second floors, are more appropriate than one-over-one windows. Staff recommends approval of the dormer 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

Code Administration:

- C-1 Alterations to the existing structure and/or installation of equipment requires construction/alteration permits. In addition to the specifications, five sets of architectural quality drawings shall accompany the permit applications that fully detail the construction/alteration, framing members and details, ceiling height and use of the new floor plan as well as layouts and schematics for electrical and/or mechanical/ plumbing systems.
- C-2 The specifications and plans included with the BAR application are not approved for construction.



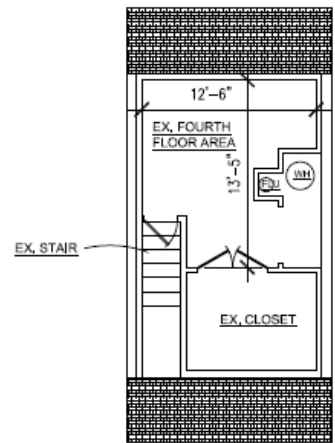
Figure 2: Existing front (north) elevation.



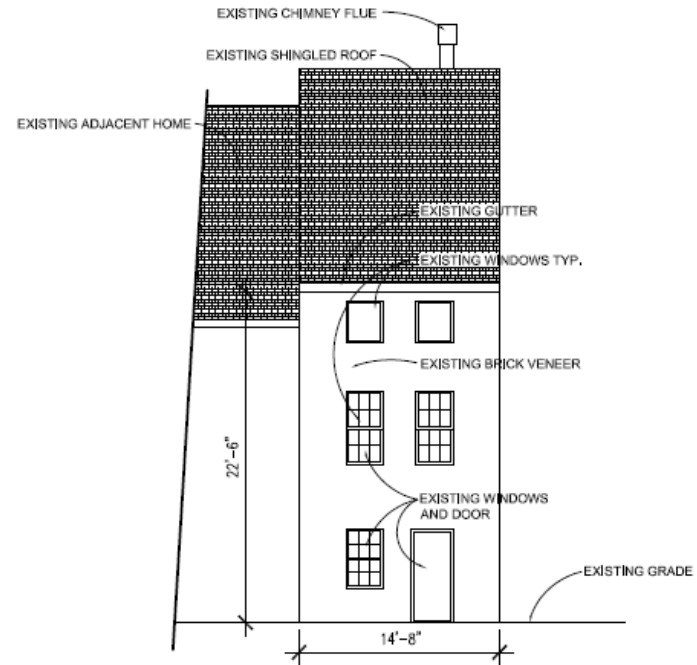
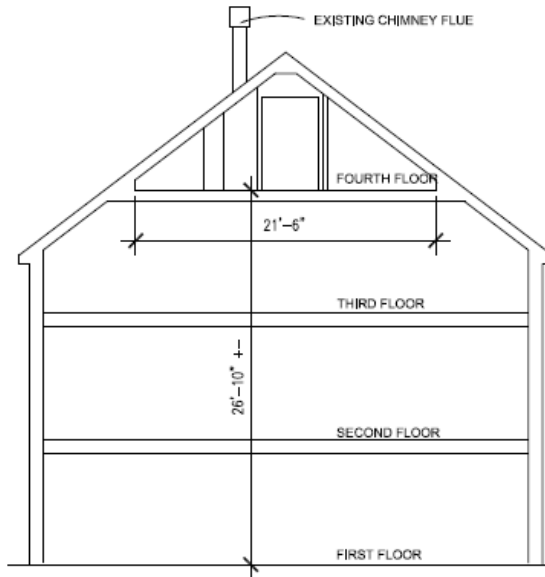
Figure 3: Existing rear (south) elevation from the Domain parking lot. Subject property on left.



Figure 4: View from South Washington Street, looking east over the bank parking lot.



1 EXISTING FOURTH FLOOR PLAN
A100 SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



2 EXISTING FRONT ELEVATION
A100 SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

3 EXISTING SECTION
A100 SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Figure 5. Existing conditions: plan, elevation and section.

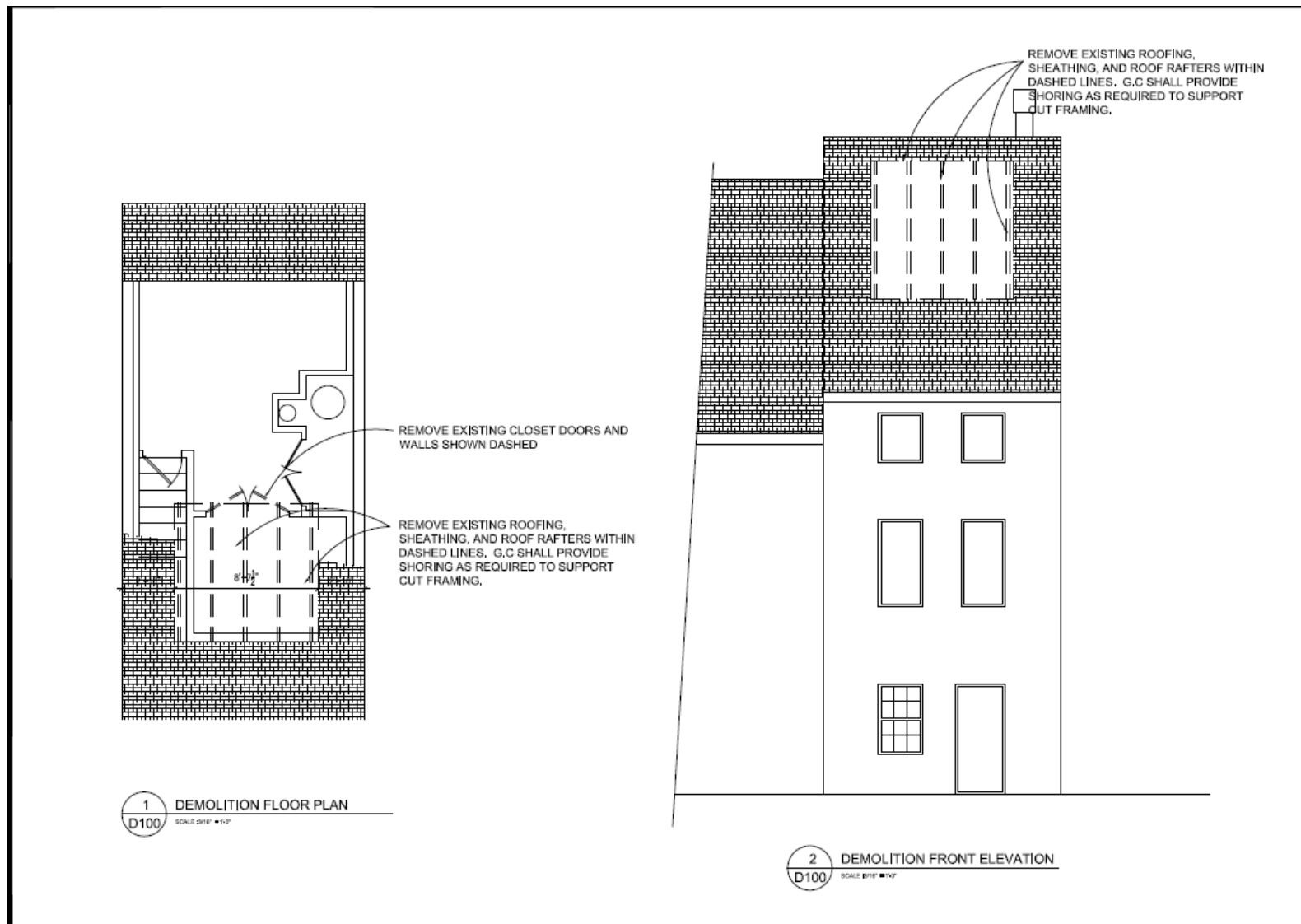


Figure 6. Proposed demolition area.

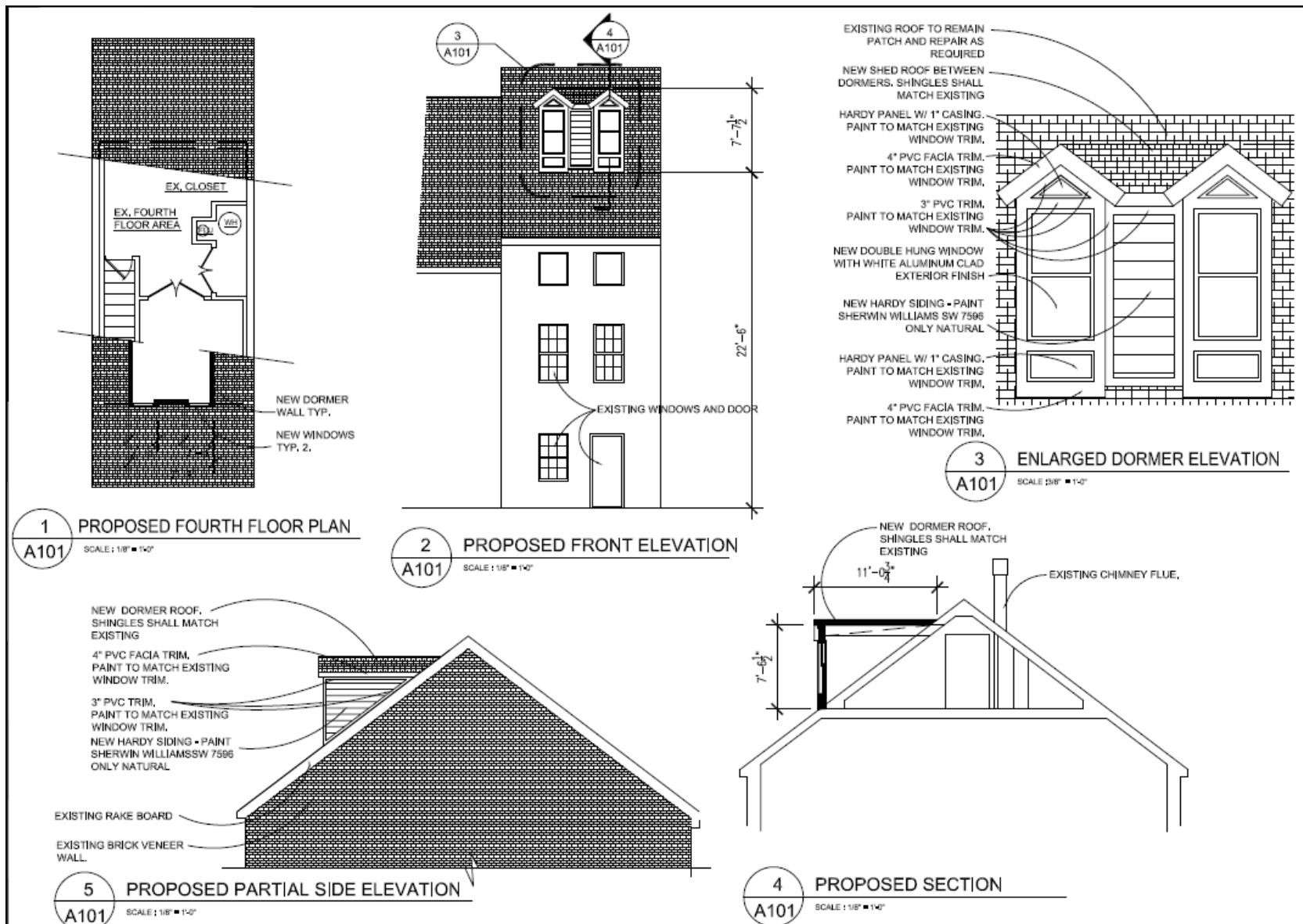


Figure 7. Proposed dormer addition: plan, elevation, detail, side elevation and section.



Figure 8. Proposed dormer photo simulation, viewed from the private mews.