

BAR Meeting  
March 25, 2009

**ISSUE:** Addition and Alterations  
**APPLICANT:** Mo Movahed by Andrew Schiefer  
**LOCATION:** 426 North Alfred Street  
**ZONE:** RB/Residential

---

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends deferral of the application for further study with the following considerations:

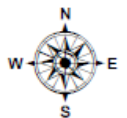
1. That only one dormer be added to the front elevation of the historic house.
2. That the applicant restudy the proposed rear (west) elevation to make the second and third story porches more open and transparent and in keeping with a traditional porch vocabulary.
3. That the applicant provide specifications for the proposed railing on the rear elevation for approval by Staff.
4. That the replacement modillions for the front cornice be made of wood and that the detailed profile be approved by Staff.
5. That the proposed front door be wood, painted or stained, and be approved by Staff.
6. That all proposed light fixtures be approved by Staff prior to installation.
7. That the proposed fiber cement siding be smooth (not simulated wood grain) and that the nails not show in the installation of the siding.

**\*\*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 #2009-0012, 0013 3/25/2009**



Update: This item was deferred at the February 25, 2009 BAR hearing. The applicant has since submitted a revised application to address the Board's concerns.

**I. ISSUE:**

The applicant is requesting approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness for a three-story rear addition and alterations at 426 North Alfred Street. The existing 15.3 feet by 15 feet one- and two-story rear addition is proposed to be demolished in order to construct a new three-story addition. In addition, a portion of the front roof is proposed for demolition to accommodate one or two new dormers on the front façade. The applicant also proposes several alterations and repairs to the historic main block of the building.

The current submission is a revision of the original application. This revised submission is intended to address the Board's concerns raised at the last hearing. In summary, the Board found the proposed height, scale and mass to be generally acceptable. The Board thought that the rear (west) and side (north) elevations should be simplified. Specifically, the Board favored a reduction in the windows on the north elevation. Several Board members noted that the design for the rear elevation seemed more appropriate for a beach setting and not for Alexandria.

Addition

The applicant proposes to construct a three-story rear addition measuring approximately 25 feet by 16 feet 7 inches at its widest and 15 feet at its narrowest. The ridgeline of the roof will be approximately 28 feet 10½ inches and will be a gable roof perpendicular to the gable roof on the historic building. A portion of the addition will cover the footprint of the existing rear portion proposed for demolition. The addition is proposed to extend 1 foot 7 inches beyond the existing building plane on the south elevation to the south property line. On the north elevation the addition will be immediately flush with the historic building main block and rearward for approximately 10 feet, where it will then step back 1 foot 7 inches. Adjacent to the west elevation will be a portico on the first story, with decking extending along a portion of the north elevation. The materials proposed for the addition include cementitious siding, a standing seam metal roof, wood columns and windows, and wood trim and railings.

The north elevation will be partially visible from Oronoco Street. This elevation has a three-bay configuration with a shed roof on the stepped-in portion and has one opening at the first story along the 10 foot section immediately adjacent to the historic house. At the rear, stepped-in portion of this elevation at the first story, there will be a single-light door and one wood window. The second and third stories each have two, two-over-two, double-hung wood windows. In the original submission, this portion of the north elevation had three windows on the second and third stories. A wood column on the rear portico will be visible from this elevation, as will profiles of the second- and third-story rear balconies and railings.

The west (rear) elevation will also be visible from Oronoco Street. The rear elevation has a gable form. The first story will have wood French doors with two-over-two, double-hung wood windows on each side. The first story has a columned portico supporting a

balcony above. The second story will have a center single-light door leading to the balcony, flanked by wood windows. The third story will have a single door leading out to a balcony with projecting arched rail. The balconies on the second and third stories are proposed to be almost entirely enclosed and clad in cementitious siding.

The south elevation, located on the south property line, will have no windows and will have face brick at concealed locations where the neighbor's house is located next to the adjoining property lines. This elevation will also have a projecting third floor shed roof portion to match the north elevation.

### Alterations

The applicant proposes a number of alterations to the historic portion of the townhouse, including:

- install a new four-panel wood door and replacement wood transom;
- repair, and, as necessary, replace the historic wood siding;
- replace non-historic windows with two-over-two, true divided light, double-hung wood windows and replace brick mould trim;
- install one or possibly two single dormers on the east (front) elevation;
- repair and restore brick foundation; and
- install a new standing seam metal roof

### **II. HISTORY:**

The G.M. Hopkins *City Atlas of Alexandria* from 1877 depicts a building on this property. The building is one of a pair located on the lot immediately to the south. The existing main block with gable roof possibly dates from this time. On the Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, this block and this building appear by 1891, though with a different rear form from the 1877 Hopkins map. In 1891, the rear portion was a traditional two-story rear ell. By 1921, the two-story rear ell had been replaced by a one-story rear ell, according to Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. The 1958 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map depicts a two-story rear ell with a one-story porch.

In 1997, the Board approved an application for a replacement roof of fiberglass shingles, citing economic hardship (BAR Case # 1997- 0172, 8/27/97).

The applicant has made several community outreach efforts in preparation for the BAR submission. On Monday, February 9, 2009, the applicant hosted an open house for surrounding neighbors at the project architect's firm. On Thursday, February 12, 2009, the applicant presented the project to Inner City Civic Association. At the February 25, 2009 BAR meeting, the Board deferred taking action on the Permit to Demolish/Encapsulate and Certificate of Appropriateness to encourage restudy of the proposed addition.

### **III. ANALYSIS:**

The proposed alterations and addition comply with the RB requirements of the Zoning Ordinance.

The *Design Guidelines* state that: “New and untried approaches to common design problems are encouraged and should not be rejected out of hand simply because they appear to be outside the common practices outlined in the guidelines.” While acknowledging that new design approaches are acceptable and encouraged, several Board members noted that the design for the rear elevation seemed more appropriate in a beach setting. They requested that the rear elevation be restudied and simplified.

#### Height, scale and mass

While the Board expressed that the proposed height, scale and mass were appropriate, Staff continues to have concerns regarding these items for the proposed addition. The *Design Guidelines* note that additions are sought which “are respectful of the existing structure and which seek to be background statements or which echo the design elements of the existing structure.” Furthermore, as a general principle, “Boards favor contextual background buildings which allow historic structures to maintain the primary visual importance.” This guidance applies to additions as well as new buildings.

#### Architectural style and detailing

While the *Design Guidelines* do not dictate a specific architectural style for additions, the *Guidelines* urge compatibility with the historic buildings found throughout the district. Generally, the architectural style of an addition distills elements from the historic building and strikes a balance between differentiation from and compatibility with the historic building. The addition should not be more complex or high style than the architectural expression of the historic building.

The Board recommended that the north elevation be simplified, with the possible elimination of some windows. The current scheme reflects this comment.

The *Design Guidelines* note that “architectural detailing such as cornices, lintels, arches and chimneys should express the traditional quality and quantity of architectural detailing found on historic structures throughout the district.” In addition, “side and rear walls which face open areas should be designed with as much attention as the primary façade.” Staff continues to find that, while balconies may be appropriate on the rear, the currently proposed details for railings and columns should be further revised in accordance with the Board’s comments. The balconies on the second and third stories are mostly enclosed. To be more compatible with traditional rear porches, the balconies should be more open and transparent. This can be achieved by opening the side portions of the balconies (north and south elevations) and by using clearly-articulated columns or piers instead of a clad wall. In addition, revising the rear balconies to make them more open will also reduce some of the bulk and mass on the addition where it extends beyond the structures on the adjacent parcels. In Staff’s opinion, the revised scheme does not yet satisfy the concerns expressed by the Board.

#### Materials

The proposed materials on the addition are appropriate for new construction in a historic district. The Board has consistently supported cementitious siding on new construction and additions in accordance with the adopted Fiber Cement Policy. In addition, the proposed wood windows and doors, wood trim, and wood railings are all appropriate materials.

#### Alterations

The majority of the alterations to the historic house are compatible with the simple vernacular design of this 19<sup>th</sup>-century townhouse. The proposal to repair the historic wood siding will ensure that historic fabric is retained. The proposed two-over-two, true divided light, double-hung wood windows are appropriate replacements for the non-historic existing windows. The proposed restoration of the modillions (previously removed but with visible ghosts), and repair of the existing frieze board, are appropriate treatments of the historic building.

Staff is concerned about the proposed addition of dormers on the front elevation as it will significantly alter the principal elevation of this historic building. The front elevation retains a strong sense of integrity lacking in other elevations of the building, which have been altered and added on to over the years, and so should be sensitively retained and restored. While the Board indicated that one or two dormers may be appropriate on the front, Staff recommends that a single dormer is most appropriate and compatible with the historic architecture.

#### **IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends deferral of the application for further study with the following considerations:

1. That only one dormer be added to the front elevation of the historic house.
2. That the applicant restudy the proposed rear (west) elevation to make the second and third story porches more open and transparent and in keeping with a traditional porch vocabulary.
3. That the applicant provide specifications for the proposed railing on the rear elevation for approval by Staff.
4. That the replacement modillions for the front cornice be made of wood and that the detailed profile be approved by Staff.
5. That the proposed front door be wood, painted or stained, and be approved by Staff.
6. That all proposed light fixtures be approved by Staff prior to installation.
7. That the proposed fiber cement siding be smooth (not simulated wood grain) and that the nails not show in the installation of the siding.

## **V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

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

### Code Enforcement:

- C-1 All exterior walls within 5 feet from an interior property line shall have a fire resistance rating of 1 hour, from both sides of the wall. As alternative, a 2 hour fire wall may be provided. This condition is also applicable to skylights within setback distance. Openings in exterior walls between 3 and 5 feet shall not exceed 25% of the area of the entire wall surface (This shall include bay windows). Openings shall not be permitted in exterior walls within 3 feet of an interior lot line.
- C-2 Prior to the issuance of a demolition permit or land disturbance permit, a rodent abatement plan shall be submitted to Code Enforcement that will outline the steps that will taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.
- C-3 Roof drainage systems must be installed so as neither to impact upon, nor cause erosion/damage to adjacent property.
- C-4 A soils report must be submitted with the building permit application.
- C-5 New construction must comply with the 2006 edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-6 Alterations to the existing structure must comply with the 2006 edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-7 Alterations to the existing structure and/or installation and/or altering of equipment therein requires a building permit. Five sets of plans, bearing the signature and seal of a design professional registered in the Commonwealth of Virginia, must accompany the written application. The plans must include all dimensions, construction alterations details, kitchen equipment, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical layouts and schematics.
- C-8 Construction permits are required for this project. Plans shall accompany the permit application that fully details the construction as well as layouts and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems.
- C-9 Permission from adjacent property owners is required if access to the adjacent properties is required to complete the proposed construction. Otherwise, a plan shall be submitted to demonstrate the construction techniques utilized to keep construction solely on the referenced property.

C-10 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

C-10 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.

Historic Alexandria:

No comments received.

Alexandria Archaeology:

**Archaeology Finding**

1. Tax records indicate that there was a residence on John Thompson's property, occupied by Robert Wilkes, near the corner of Oronoco and Alfred streets in 1850. During the Civil War, the block bounded by Oronoco, Alfred, Patrick and Princess probably served as a large wood yard; a Union Army Quartermaster's map shows the office for the woodyard and a mess house in the center of the northwestern quadrant of the block. The 1877 Hopkins insurance atlas indicates the presence of a portion of a frame structure in the rear of the lot at 426 N. Alfred; this building is gone later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The proposed development property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic and military activities in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Alexandria.

**Archaeology Recommendations**

\*1. 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.

\*2. The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

3. 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.

Transportation and Environmental Services:

**FINDINGS**

F1. 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.

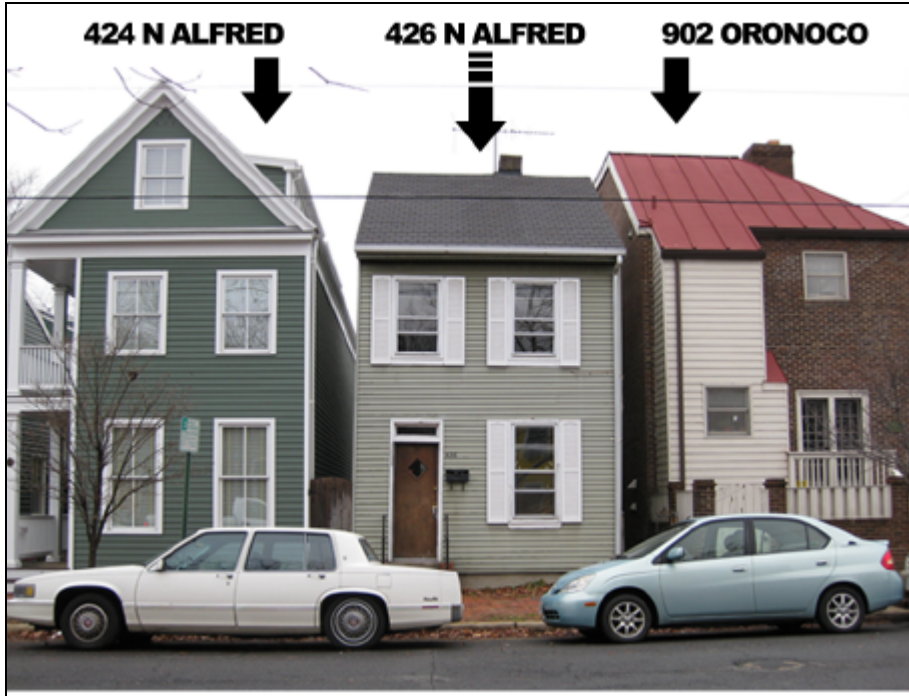
Questions regarding the processing of grading plans should be directed to the T&ES Site Plan Coordinator at (703) 838-4318. Memorandum to Industry No. 02-08 was issued on April 28, 2008 and can be viewed online via the following link.

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

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- R1. The building permit plans shall comply with requirements of City Code Section 8-1-22 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)
- R5. 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)

**VI. IMAGES**



**Figure 1. East elevation, 426 North Alfred Street.**



**Figure 2. West elevation.**



Figure 3. View from alley.



Figure 4. View from Oronoco Street.

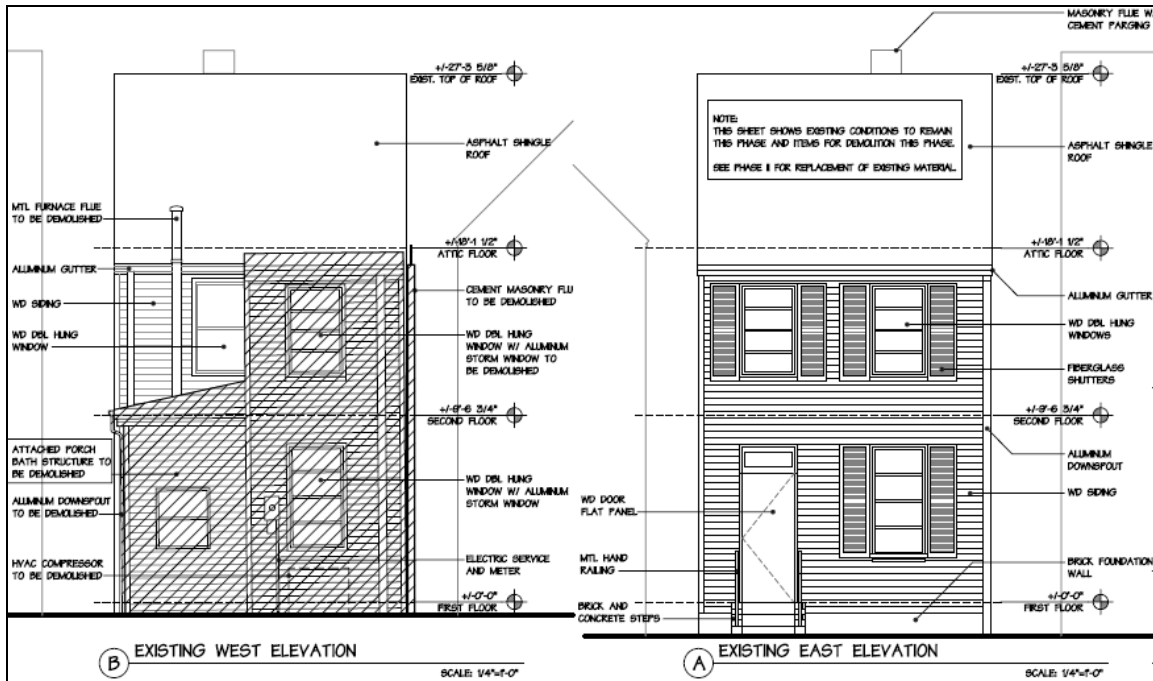


Figure 5. Existing conditions of east and west elevations.

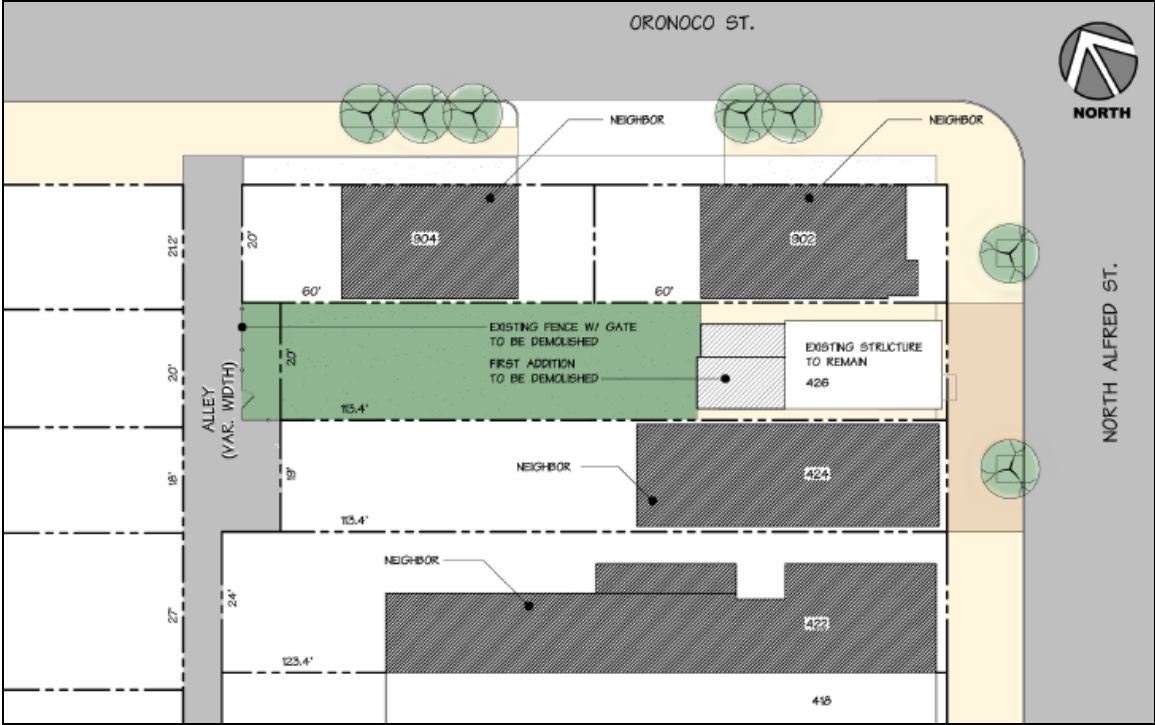


Figure 6. Site plan of existing conditions.

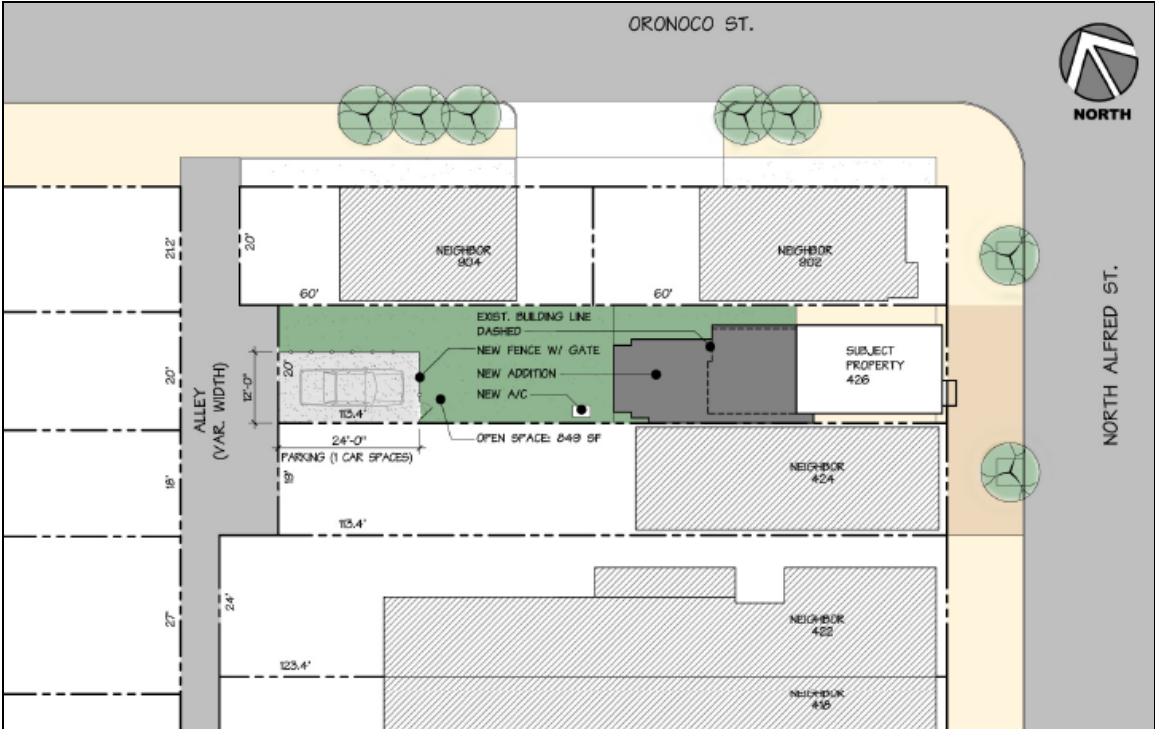


Figure 7. Site plan with proposed addition.

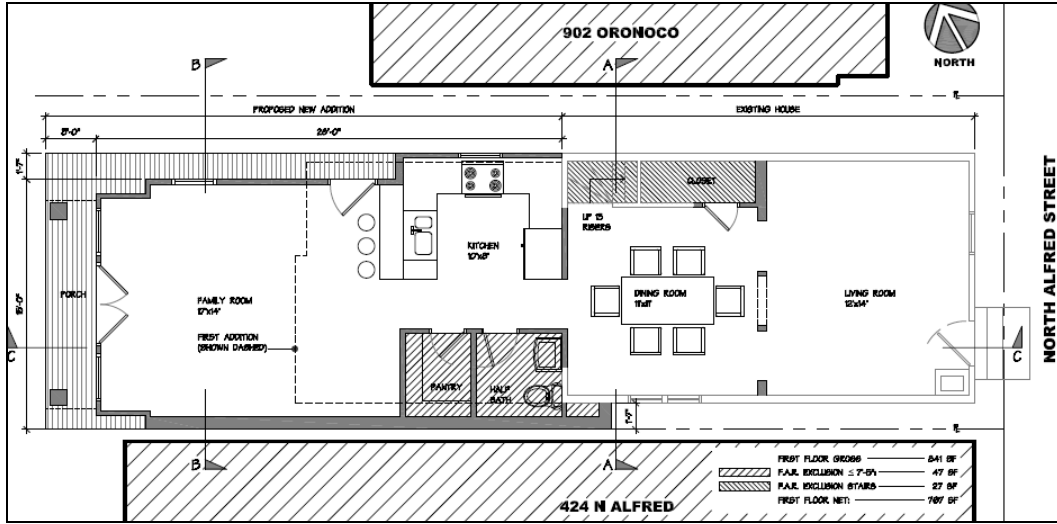


Figure 8. Proposed floor plan.



Figure 9. Color renderings of proposed alterations and addition.



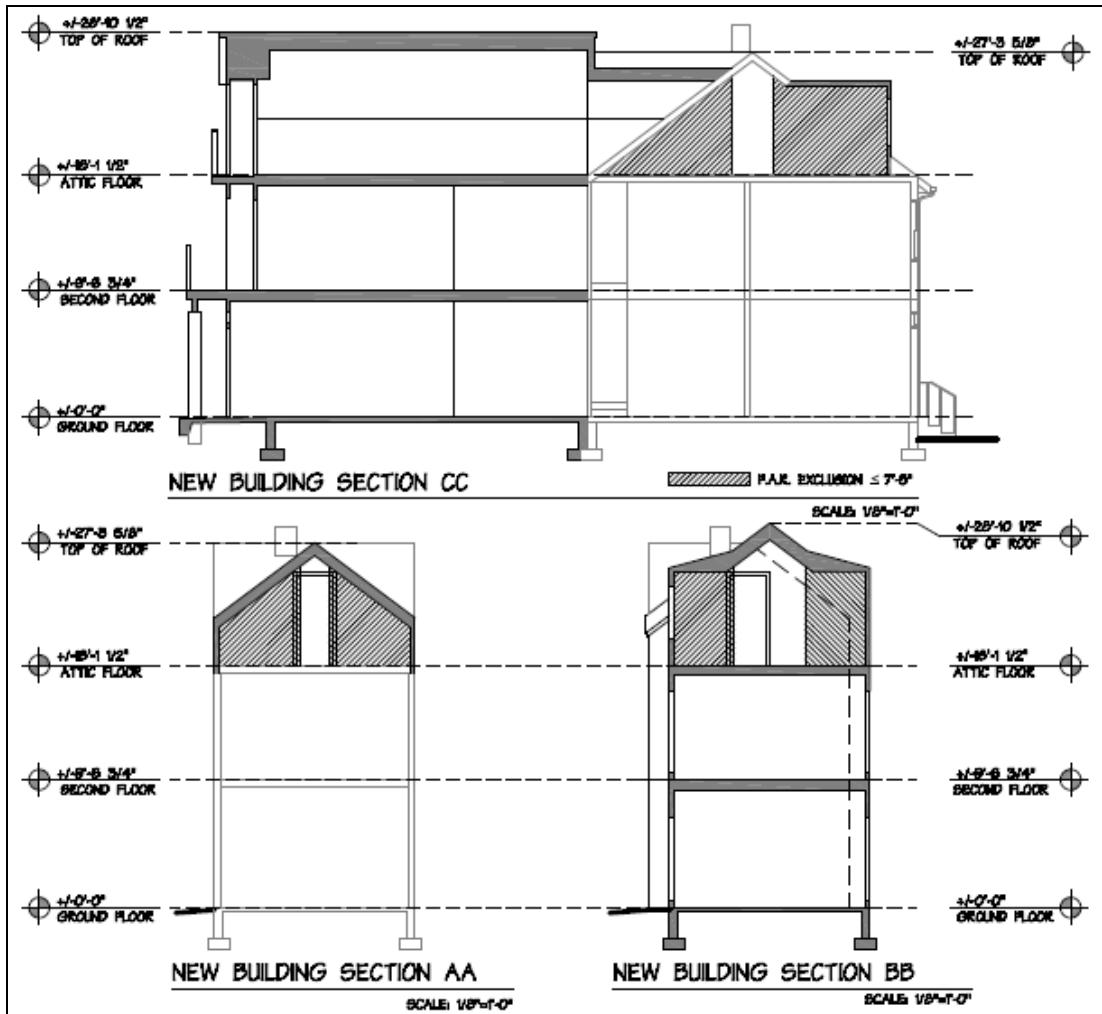


Figure 13. Section of proposed addition and alterations.

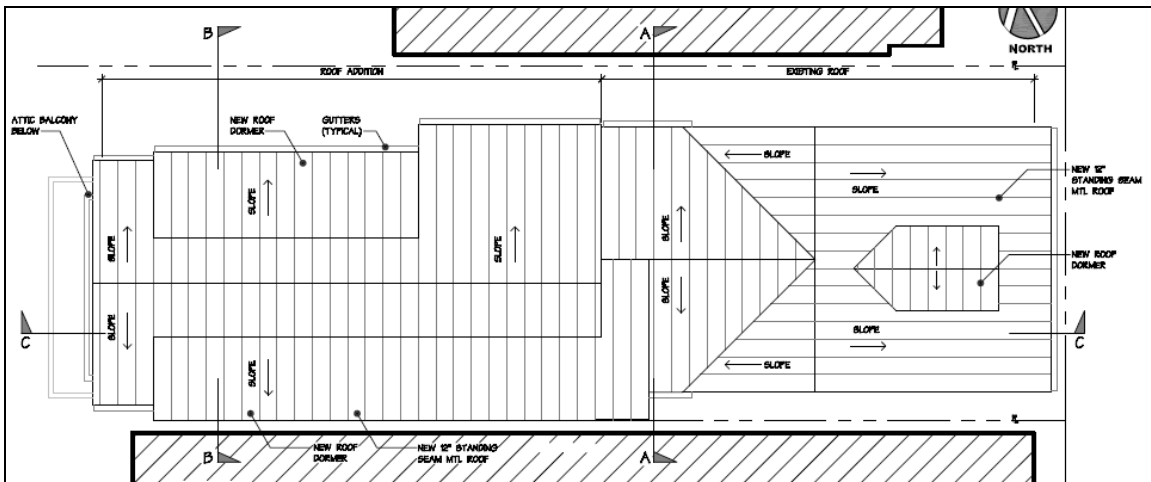


Figure 14. Proposed roof plan.



Figure 15. Evidence of original modillions for replacement.

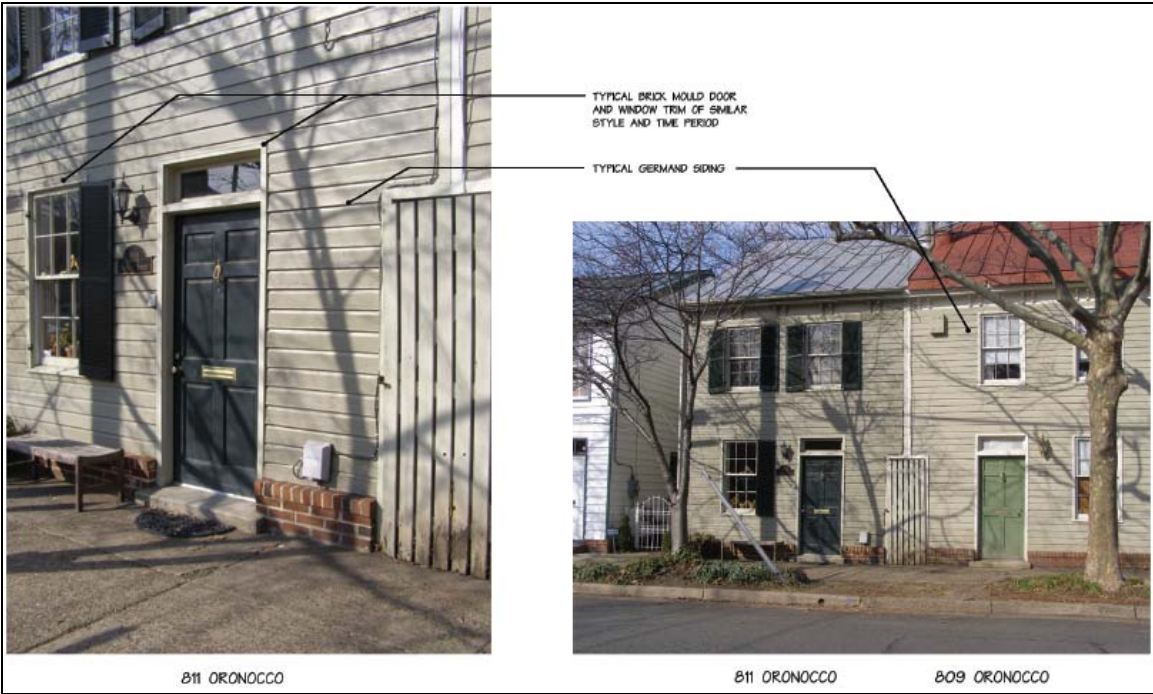


Figure 16. Examples of brick mould proposed for replacement.