

BAR Meeting
February 23, 2011

ISSUE: Permit to Demolish and Addition/Alterations
APPLICANT: Brendan Owens, Contract Purchaser
LOCATION: 411 North West Street
ZONE: RB / Residential

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the Permit to Demolish and Certificate of Appropriateness for the Addition/Alterations with the following conditions related to the historic portion of the house:

1. Any new windows should be historically appropriate wood windows in a one-over-one or two-over-two configuration. The windows must meet the *Alexandria Replacement Window Performance Specifications*.
2. All replacement trim/molding should be wood.
3. The four panel front door should be constructed of solid wood.
4. The applicant must coordinate with BAR Staff to inspect the siding/sheathing underneath the stone veneer and aluminum siding.
5. If the wood siding, or a portion of it, is in good condition and can be retained, the applicant must retain the historic wood siding on the main block of the house. The applicant will be required to retain any wood siding on the areas which are being demolished to use on the main block of the house.
6. If there is the need for new wood siding on the house, it should be German lap wood siding to match the other townhouses in this row.
7. That only a transom and not the proposed door surround, is installed.
8. The following archaeology conditions 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.
 - The applicant/developer 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.
 - The applicant/developer shall not allow any metal detection or artifact collection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology.

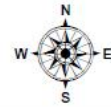
BAR CASE #2011-0027 & 0028
February 23, 2011

****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 #2011-0027
#2011-0028**



***Note:** Staff coupled the cases for 411 North West Street, BAR #2011-0027 (Permit to Demolish) and BAR #2011-0028 (Certificate of Appropriateness) for clarity and brevity. This item requires a roll call vote.

I. ISSUE

The applicant is requesting approval of a Permit to Demolish and a Certificate of Appropriateness to construct a rear addition and rehabilitate the property at 411 North West Street.

Permit to Demolish

The applicant proposes to demolish the following portions of the existing house in order to construct a new two-story rear addition:

- The existing one-story rear porch (5.5 feet by 12.5 feet).
- The entire 15.5 foot north wall of the two-story rear ell.
- The 4 foot by 21.5 foot section of the east elevation of the main block.

Addition

The proposed two story addition will enlarge the width of the existing rear ell by an additional three feet, while not projecting any further into the rear yard than the existing one story porch. There will be a one foot setback between the addition and the main block of the house. The footprint of the new rear ell will measure 15'6" by 20'9". Both the first and second floors of the north elevation will have a single window as well as a pair of windows. The rear elevation will have a pair of full light French doors on the first floor and a pair of windows centered on the second floor. The roof over the new addition will be an extension of the existing shed roof.

Alterations

The applicant also intends to rehabilitate the main block of the house by removing the stone veneer (similar to Formstone or Perma-stone) and aluminum siding, and replace the vinyl windows and front door. The BAR application states that the existing stone veneer/aluminum siding will be removed and that BAR Staff will assess the condition of any existing historic wood siding prior to the installation of any new wood siding. The application also references the installation of BAR approved wood windows and doors. However, the submitted plans and materials specifications show the use of synthetic materials: Hardieplank siding on the main block of the house, aluminum clad windows, AZEK trim and molding, and a fiberglass door. The Boards recently adopted policies generally allow new materials only on portions of a building constructed **after** those materials became commercially available.

The applicant also intends to construct a new door surround with a decorative cornice and a transom to match the adjacent house at 409 North West Street.

Materials

The following materials are proposed for the new addition and the existing house:

- Kolbe & Kolbe, aluminum clad, one-over-one windows.
- A 4 panel fiberglass door by Therma Tru for the front door.
- Full light aluminum clad French doors for the rear door.
- Hardieplank smooth clapboard siding with a 5" reveal.

- Aluminum downspouts and gutters.
- AZEK trim and molding.
- AZEK rails and stairs for the rear stair.
- EPDM self-adhering roofing membrane.
- Kichler Mount Vernon lights at the front and rear entrances.

II. HISTORY

The two-story, three-bay frame duplex at 411 North West Street dates from the **early 20th century**. The house is part of a small development of four duplexes built at the corner of North West and Princess streets (W.H. Peck received a building permit for 405-411 North West Street and 1315 & 1317 Princess Street on September 1, 1909). Sanborn map research suggests that the only change to the footprint of the house since its construction was the addition of the one story rear porch between 1921 and 1941. The most significant difference between 411 North West Street and the other houses in the development is the addition of the stone veneer on the front façade and the deletion of the transom over the front door.

The subject property is listed as a contributing resource to the Uptown Parker-Gray National Register Historic District.

Staff could find no record of any BAR approvals at 411 North West Street, but the Board has approved a number of alterations to the other townhouses in the past, including: window and roof replacement, siding replacement, the construction of rear additions and the addition of entrance features.

III. ANALYSIS

The proposed addition and alterations comply with Zoning Ordinance requirements.

Staff has no objection to the proposed demolition of portions of 411 North West Street in order to construct an appropriately scaled two-story rear addition. Staff also supports the rehabilitation of this vernacular townhouse. However, although Staff has no objection to the use of new and modern materials on the new addition, Staff has serious questions and concerns about the applicant's proposal to use synthetic materials on the historic main block of the house.

Permit to Demolish

In considering a Permit to Demolish or Capsulate, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, Sec 10-205(B):

1. Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its removal would be to the detriment of the public interest?
2. Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into an historic shrine?
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 and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?

5. 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 to live?
6. Would retention of the building or structure help maintain the scale and character of the neighborhood?

In the opinion of Staff, none of the criteria for demolition are met and the Permit to Demolish should be granted. The areas proposed for demolition are minimal and are located on secondary elevations. No character defining features of uncommon design or historic merit are impacted, nor do the small areas of demolition compromise the integrity of the building as a whole.

Addition

In the opinion of Staff, the design of the addition is compatible with the style, massing, scale and architectural expression of the historic house, and conforms to the *Design Guidelines* for residential additions. In keeping with the recommendations contained in the *Guidelines*, the addition is designed as a background building "...which allows historic structures to maintain the primary visual importance." The minor setback along the north elevation will help to distinguish the new construction from the historic house.

Alterations

Staff has had many discussions with the applicant regarding the proposed addition, as well as the rehabilitation of the historic house, and was disappointed to see that the submitted plans showed the use of synthetic materials on the historic portion of the house. Staff and the Boards have been working hard in recent months to clarify the Boards' policies as they relate to modern materials and historic preservation, identifying where the use of modern materials is appropriate and where it is not. One of the central tenets of preservation is the retention of original materials on historic buildings, and when that is not feasible, the use of historically appropriate replacement materials.

In keeping with the recently adopted and forthcoming policies, Staff makes the following recommendations related to the rehabilitation of the historic townhouse:

1. Any new windows should be historically appropriate wood windows in a one-over-one or two-over-two configuration. The windows must meet the *Alexandria Replacement Window Performance Specifications*.
2. All replacement trim/molding should be wood.
3. The four panel front door should be constructed of solid wood.
4. The applicant must coordinate with BAR Staff to inspect the siding/sheathing underneath the stone veneer and aluminum siding.
5. If the wood siding, or a portion of it, is in good condition and can be retained, the applicant must retain the historic wood siding on the main block of the house. The applicant will be required to retain any wood siding on the areas which are being demolished to use on the main block of the house.

6. If there is the need for new wood siding on the house, it should be German lap wood siding to match the other townhouses in this row.

This house represents a typical vernacular townhouse with minimal architectural detailing in the Parker-Gray Historic District. Although Staff understands the applicant's desire to create additional visual interest on the front façade by adding a door surround, there is ample evidence to suggest that the townhouses in this development on the corner of North West and Princess streets were constructed with only a transom and simple door trim. As a result, Staff recommends the addition of a transom over the front door only and not the proposed decorative door surround, unless future archival or physical evidence in the field suggests otherwise.

Although the applicant does not intend to replace the existing asphalt shingles on the front mansard roof, Staff reminds the applicant that when it is necessary to replace the roof that composition shingles are not appropriate under the new roofing policy and that either decorative slate or stamped metal shingles are recommended. Furthermore, in order to help reduce the urban heat island effect, Staff recommends that the new EPDM rubber roofing on the low slope, shed portion of the dwelling be a light color in keeping with the City's Green Building initiatives.

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

STAFF

Stephanie Sample, Historic Preservation Planner
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager

IV. 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 703-746-4901 or thomas.sciulli@alexandriava.gov.

C-1 A demolition permit is required for the proposed project (USBC 108.1).

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 be taken to prevent the spread of rodents from the construction site to the surrounding community and sewers.

Transportation and Environmental Services (T & ES)

Recommendations

R1. The building permit must be approved and issued prior to the issuance of any permit for demolition. (T&ES)

City Code Requirements

C-1 Any work within or from the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-3-61) (T&ES)

Alexandria Archaeology

Archaeology Finding

1. This property is located in a late 18th/early 19th – century African American neighborhood. The lot therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources which could provide insight into domestic activities of African Americans in late 18th through early 19th-century Alexandria.

Archaeology Recommendations

*1. The applicant/developer 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 or artifact collection 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.

V. IMAGES

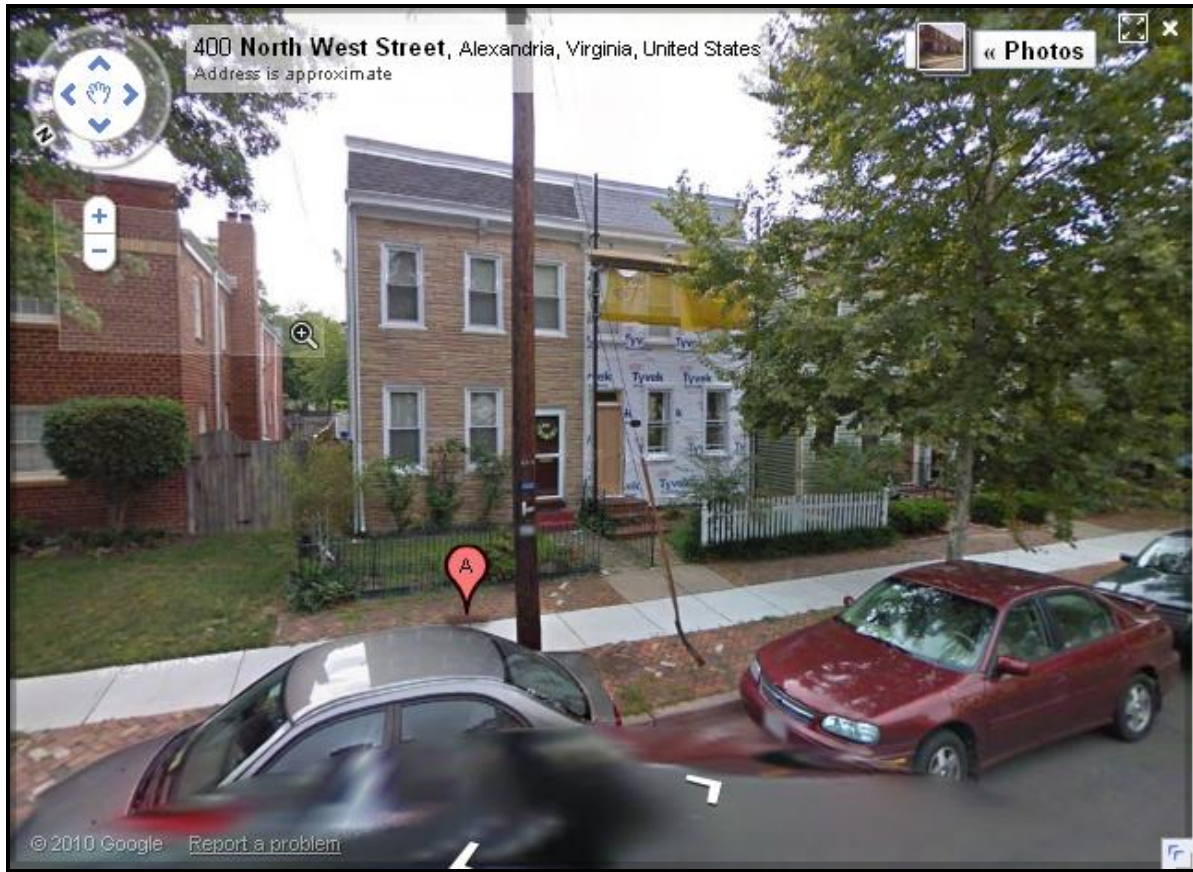


Figure 1: Google Map image of 411 North West Street.



Figure 2: Existing photos.

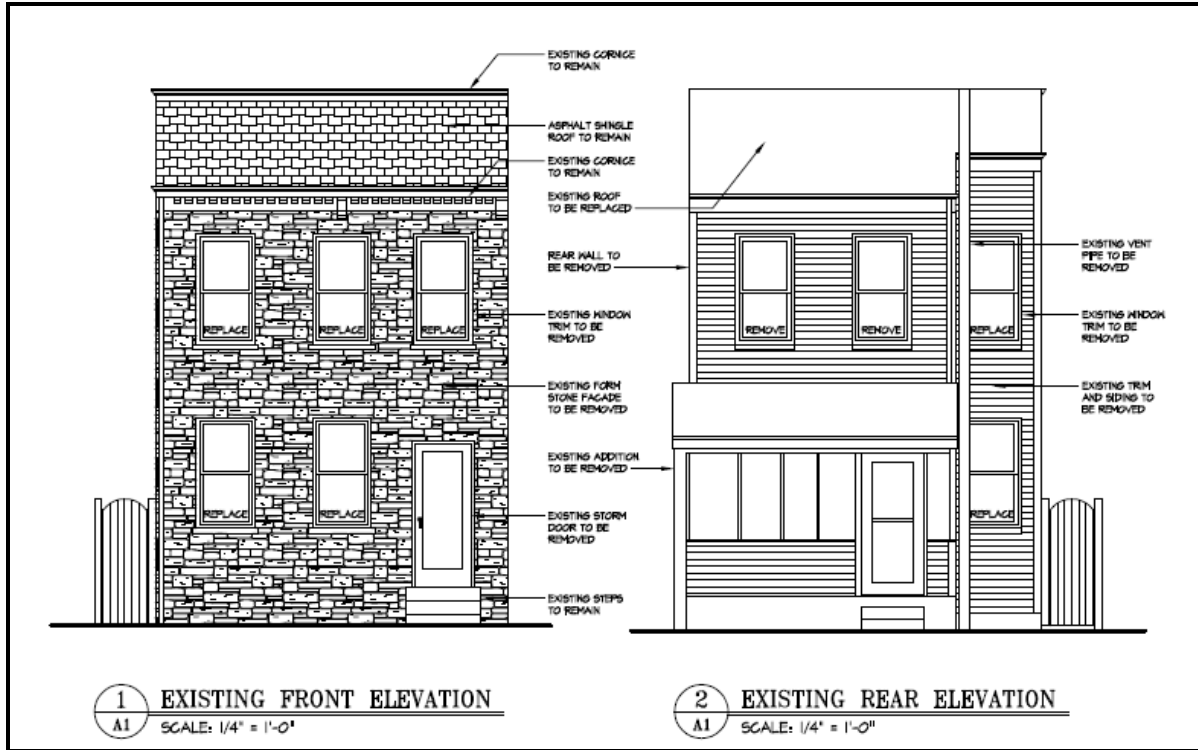


Figure 3: Existing elevations.

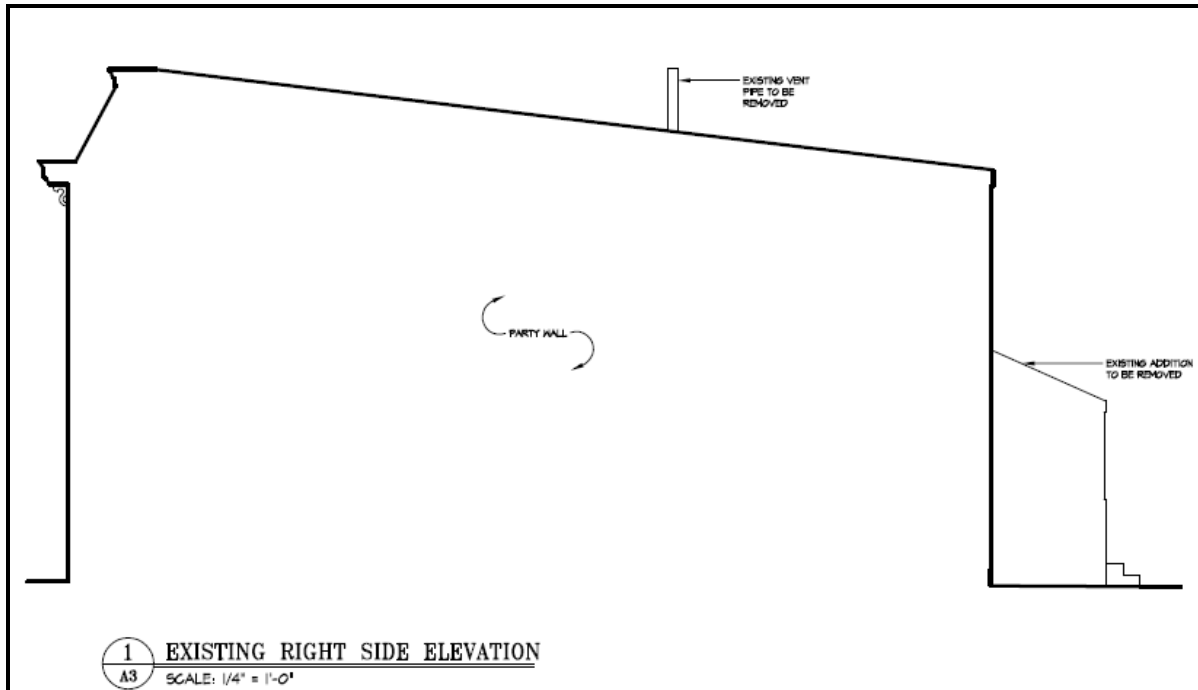


Figure 4: Existing south elevation.

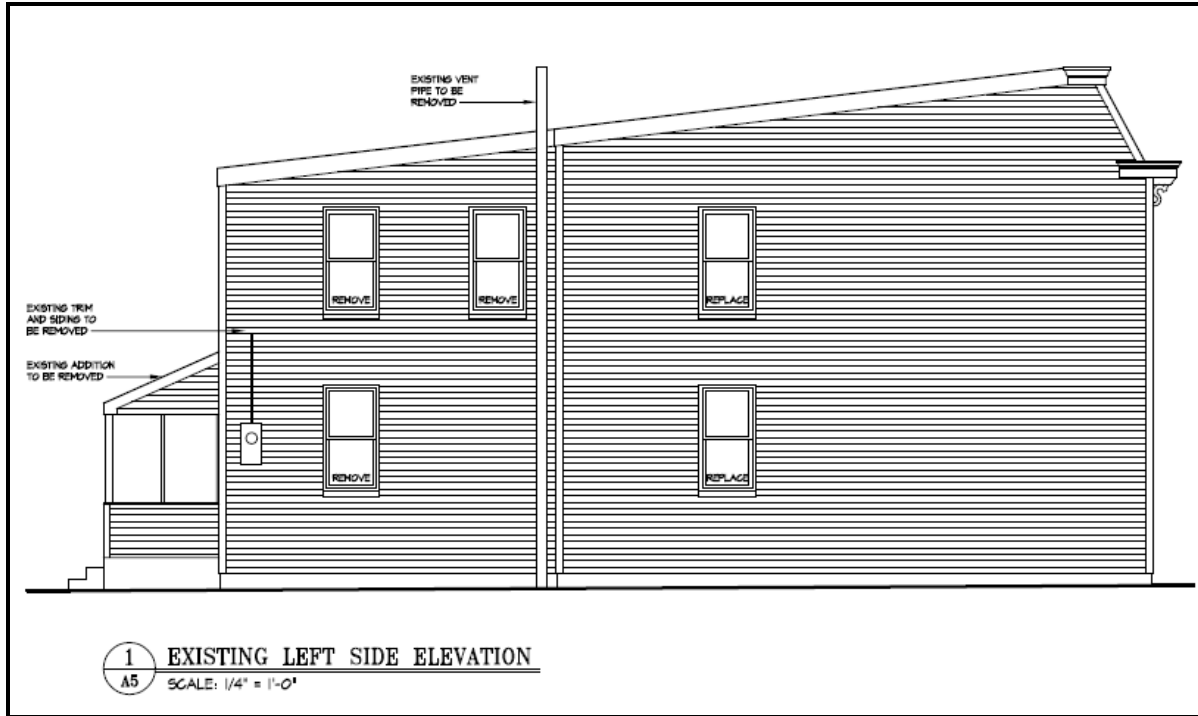


Figure 5: Existing north elevation.

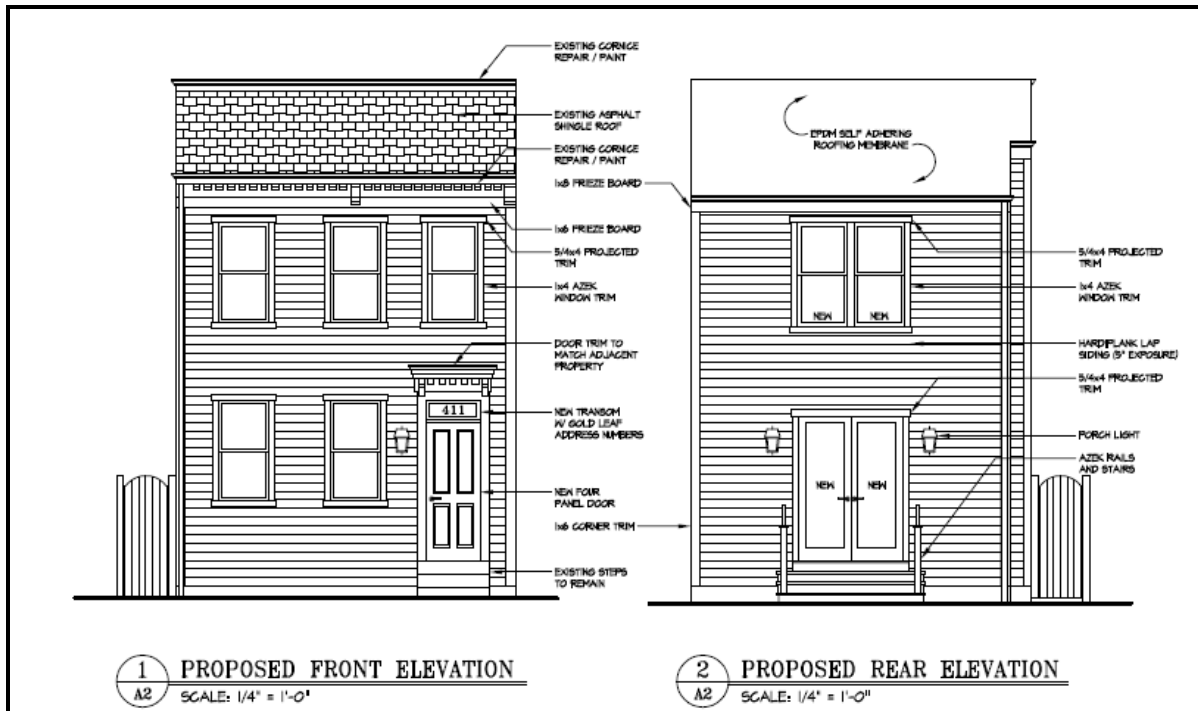


Figure 6: Proposed front and rear elevation.

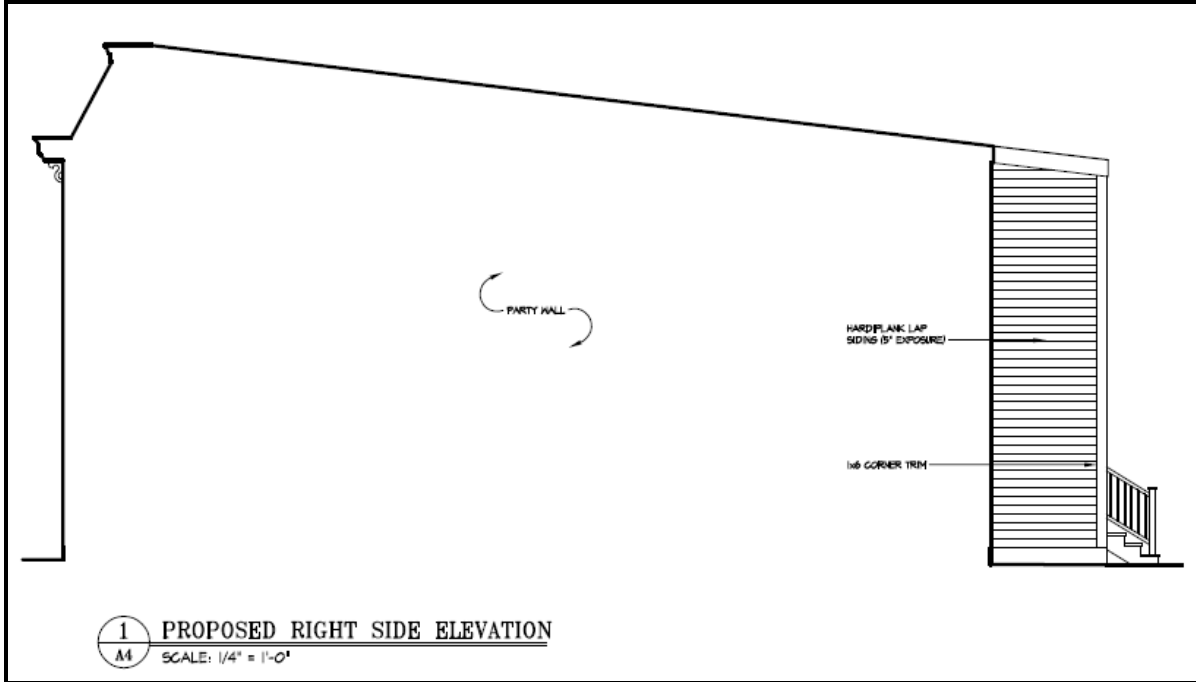


Figure 7: Proposed south elevation.

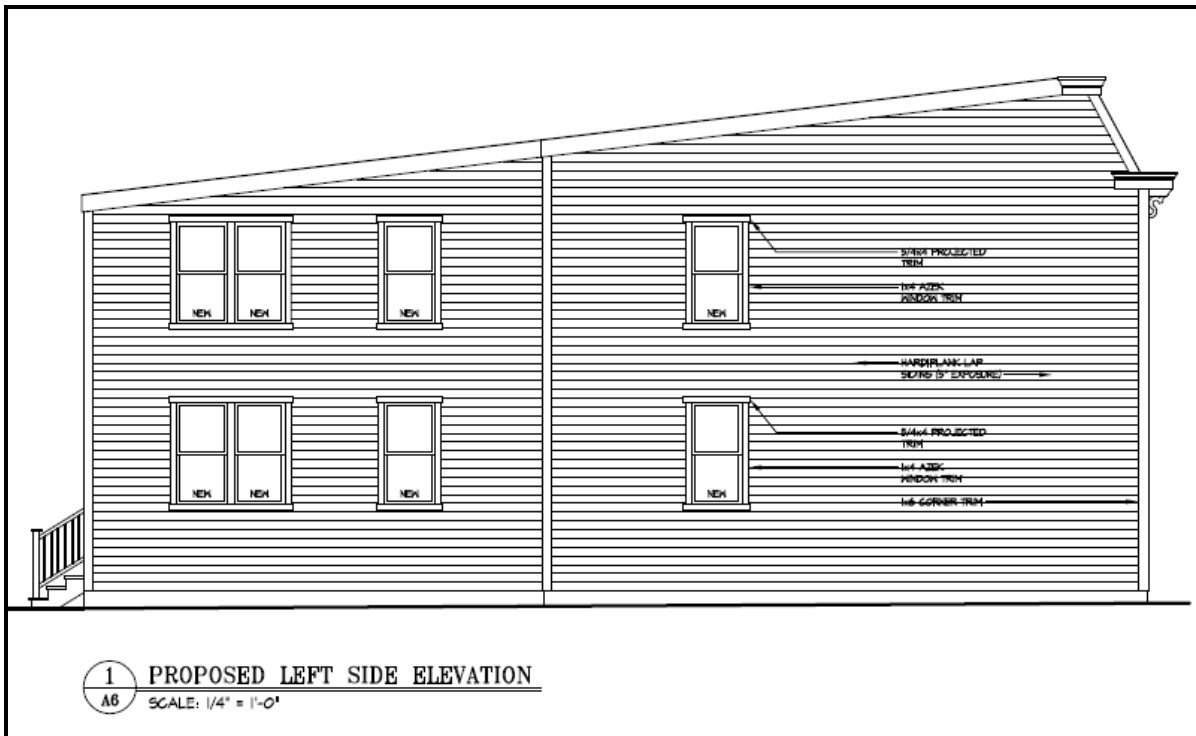


Figure 8: Proposed north elevation.