

Docket Item # 4  
BAR CASE # 2011-0003

BAR Meeting  
February 23, 2011

**ISSUE:** Request for Approval of New Construction  
**APPLICANT:** Wanda Carter  
**LOCATION:** 219 North West Street  
**ZONE:** RB / Residential

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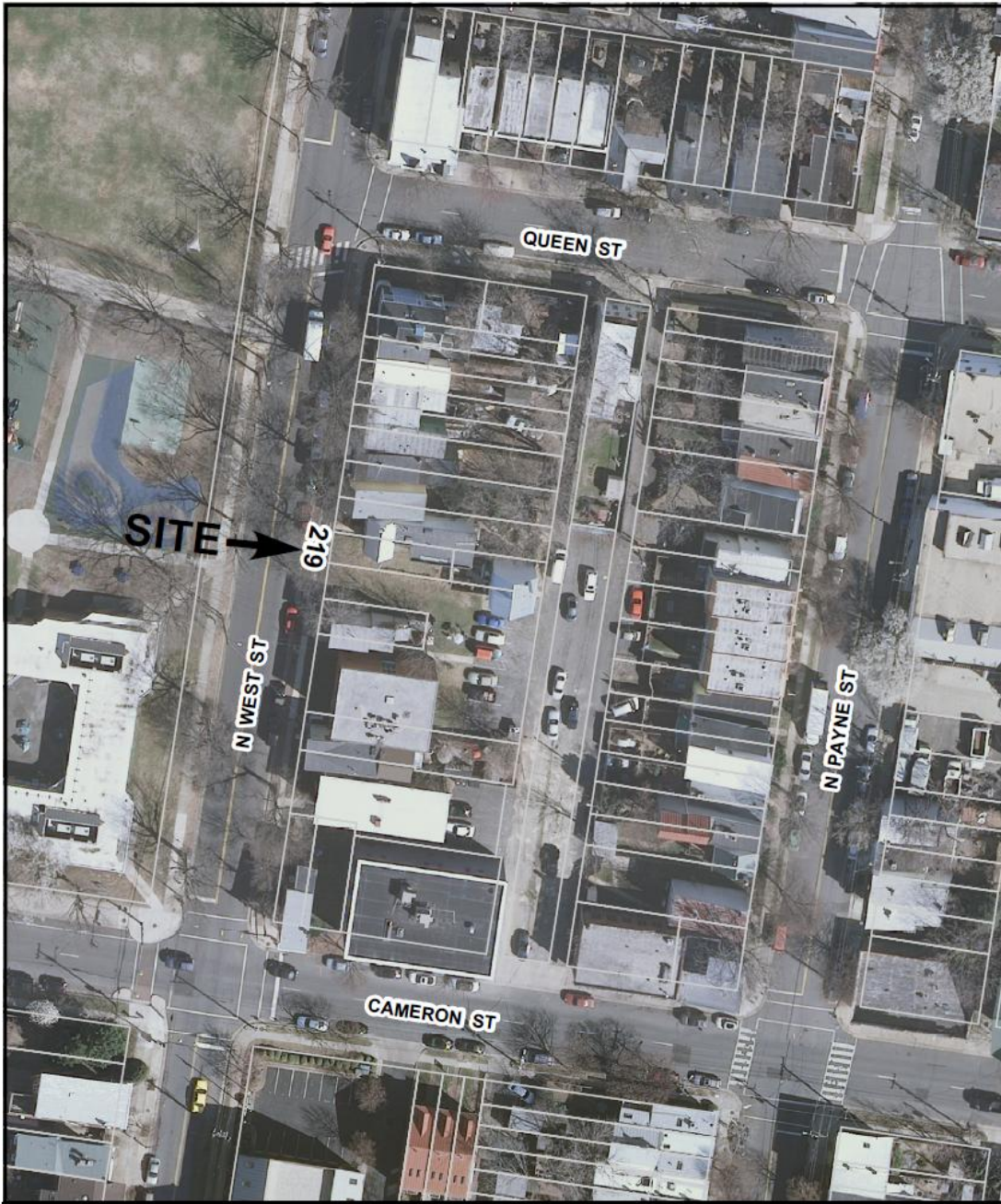
**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends approval of the application with the following conditions:

1. That only smooth fiber cement siding be used.
2. That PVC trim be solid throughout, millable and field painted.
3. 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 above statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including sheeting and shoring and grading) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.
4. That the applicant to continue to work with staff prior to approval of the building permit to review the iron railing detail and the Fypon brackets.
5. That the composite material of the terrace deck be a traditional 1x4 tongue and groove pattern.
6. That the height and details of the terrace railing be refined and approved by staff.
7. That the second floor windows on the east elevation may be shorter, as approved by staff.

**\*\*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 #2011-0003**



## **I. UPDATE**

Upon further study, the applicant has returned to the Board to amend the previous approval of a dwelling and to shift the building toward the east 8'-0" in order to be in keeping with the setback of the adjacent houses and to provide a 23" tall, roofless front terrace. There is a wide variety of setbacks in this block of N. West Street. The zoning ordinance gives the BAR the authority to modify the front lot line "consistent with the character of the district..."

In order to move the previously approved dwelling to the rear of this shallow lot, the roof of the ell must be lowered to stay below the 1:1 rear yard setback slope required by the zoning ordinance. The applicant has, therefore, revised the side and rear elevations to eliminate the previous parapet wall (figure #2), exposed the low slope shed roof, and installed a large shed dormer. A row of four aluminum clad wood awning windows in the dormer align with the windows of the east wall below. An aluminum-clad-wood Velux roof window is also now shown in the east slope of the main roof. (figure #4)

In addition, the applicant shows a solid wood front door which will have a natural finish. A 36" tall railing with 3" x 3" balusters and 10" x 10" newel posts frame the front terrace which is constructed of a composite decking material. The remainder of the colors, materials and details are as previously approved by the Board.

## **ANALYSIS**

The Zoning Staff advises that the proposed alterations comply with zoning ordinance requirements, pending the BAR's finding that the proposed front lot line is consistent with the character of the district. In the BAR Staff's opinion, the requested setback is appropriate and consistent with this block face. An open front terrace surrounded by a balustrade was a common feature of early 20<sup>th</sup> century neo-Classical style dwellings and appropriate for the Italianate/neo-Classical style of this townhouse.

### **Front (West) Elevation**

Staff supports the proposed composite decking for the terrace in this instance, as it is needed to hide a basement access hatch, but recommends that it be a traditional 1 x 4 tongue and groove pattern material to avoid the appearance of a suburban deck. Staff also recommends that the railing around the terrace be only 30" tall, as this was a more historically appropriate height and a 36" tall guardrail is not required by the building code in this location. More historically appropriate, neoclassical cap and base details are suggested for the newels, as well. Staff supports the custom made, natural finish wood door, as previously suggested by the Board, in order to better identify the location of the pedestrian entrance from the street.

### **Rear (East) Elevation**

Staff prefers the new shed roof of the ell and dormer because it is more consistent with the vernacular rear elevations of Parker Gray townhomes. However, Staff believes that the 4' tall second floor windows on the east elevation would be more functional for future occupants if the sills were raised above the floor. The building code requires window sash to be fixed if the sills are less than 18" above the floor. A 2' tall casement or awning

window would still allow the traditional hierarchy and functional expression of large windows on the first, or public, floor; small windows at the attic level; and medium size windows in the middle.

Staff recommends approval of the revised application, with the comments noted above.

**BOARD ACTION: September 22, 2010** Approved as amended, 5-1

**CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

1. That only smooth fiber cement siding be used and that nails not show in the installation.
2. That PVC trim be solid throughout, millable and painted.
3. 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 above statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including sheeting and shoring and grading) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.
4. That the applicant to continue to work with staff prior to approval of the building permit to review the iron railing detail and the Fypon brackets.

**SPEAKERS**

Ms. Carter presented the application and reviewed the changes made in response to previous Board comments.

Ms. Sarah Allen, 221 N. West St., spoke in support of the application.

Mr. Jube Shiver, Jr., 7959 Richmond Highway #11, property owner of the adjacent apartment building, opposed the project and cited a lack of staging and maintenance area to construct this new house within its own lot.

Ms. Carter responded that they would stage on the yard to the north and would not impact the apartment building property.

**BOARD DISCUSSION**

Mr. Lloyd stated that he was impressed with the changes. Ms. Rankin agreed.

Mr. Meick commended the applicant for having a plan for staging this work. He asked which door would be the front entrance. Ms. Carter stated it would be the north pair. Mr. Meick then suggested that she remove the south porch light so guests would not be confused. Ms. Carter agreed.

Ms. Kelly supported the revised design but asked for a restudy of the railing with staff to approve the final design. Ms. Carter agreed.

Chairman Conkey was uncomfortable with the high style front elevation with arches and pilasters, noting that it would be very flat when constructed, unlike the masonry example shown.

Mr. Duffy said he was ok with the west elevation and liked its transparency and openness.

Mr. Meick noted that this was a varied street face and moved approval of the staff recommendation with #4 to also include staff approval of the iron railing detail and the Fypon brackets. Mr. Lloyd seconded the motion which passed 5 – 1, Chairman Conkey being opposed.

### **REASON**

The Board believed this design to be an appropriate infill for this block in the District.

**BOARD ACTION: July 28, 2010** Approved portions and deferred portions for restudy, 7-0

### **CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL**

Deferral of the application until September with the condition that:

1. The applicant may file an excavation and foundation permit; and
2. That the applicant work with staff to address the Board's comments to simplify the design and to provide additional construction information for the Board's review.

### **II. ISSUE**

The applicant proposes to construct a new two story, wood frame, three bay, side gable Italianate Style townhouse dwelling on a currently vacant lot. The windows throughout are Marvin Ultimate French Casement, aluminum clad with one horizontal muntin. The French Doors are pairs of Marvin Ultimate, swinging, four light, aluminum clad in an Evergreen color. The semicircular transom above the French doors will not have muntins. The siding is James Hardie Artisan Lap, 5/8" thick, fiber cement composite clapboard siding with a smooth surface. Trim is a combination of cement fiber and Fypon solid core PVC. Segmental and semi-circular arch window head trim and cornice brackets will be Fypon. The railings on the side porch are a wrought iron with forged baskets at alternating heights. The proposed roofing is 5V crimp metal with a plain galvanized finish. The building will be painted Benjamin Moore Roxbury Caramel (medium gold) with Colonial Cream trim and with Hidden Falls (green) window/door trim. The front stoop is precast concrete. The proposed materials are high quality and have typically been approved by the Board for new construction.

### **III. HISTORY**

The *G.M. Hopkins Insurance Atlas* indicates that a house was present in this lot in 1877. The Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from 1891 shows a two-story frame dwelling with a one-story rear addition. By 1902 the Sanborn Fire Insurance shows a one-story shed in the middle/rear of the property. Between 1941 and 1958, the lot at 219 North West Street

was divided into two lots: one fronting North West Street with a small two-story building at the rear and one out-lot accessed by the alley (Hollis Alley) with a one-story shed. Beginning in 1942, the City recognized and taxed the property as two lots, one at the front and one at the rear. The City tax assessment records note no structures on the front lot and a small two-story, two room dwelling on the rear lot. The rear building may have been the ell that remained from the original house facing West Street or the 1912 stable. By 1959 the dwelling on the rear lot was demolished. A freestanding single-family dwelling was approved by the Board for this parcel on December 14, 2005 (BAR Case # 2005-0275).

The 1941 Sanborn map corrected to 1959 shows the subject lot at 219 North West Street as vacant, as also shown on later maps in 1965 and 1985. The Board of Zoning Appeals granted an open space variance for this lot, BZA CASE #2010-0004, on June 10, 2010.

#### **IV. ANALYSIS**

Zoning advises that the proposed single family dwelling complies with BZA2010-0004 and RB zone regulations.

The design of the proposed townhouse was changed in response to comments at the last Board meeting. The applicant has provided images of several historic buildings nearby and in other portions of Old Town that were used as inspiration but, as recommended by the *Design Guidelines*, has not copied any of these directly. The previous false windows and vents have been removed from the side elevations and the detailing of the spandrel between the first and second floor of the side porch has been simplified and improved. The tripartite windows on the rear elevation have been aligned on the first and second floor, as the Board requested.

The major visual change is in response to the Board's concern about the character of the previous front door and window design. The tripartite Renaissance Revival arches with French doors now proposed are both simpler and slightly more formal than the previous design. The applicant has provided an example of this style façade treatment on North Saint Asaph St., though this townhouse is not historic and was constructed in the early 1990s.

Overall, staff has no objections to this proposal. The Board has consistently asked that new construction be well designed and compatible with nearby buildings of historic merit without photocopying them. In this case, the architectural style and colors are typical of late Victorian Italianate style design elements shown in 19<sup>th</sup> century pattern books. The details are generally well proportioned and reflect a modest but somewhat aspirational wood frame dwelling. While the rigidly symmetrical arrangement of the front doors and windows is more formal than some of its neighbors, it is not as high-style as others.

This design has been through multiple submissions and design reviews with staff and received extensive comments from the Board at the last meeting. Many details have improved. However, numerous minor trim details are still unresolved. Staff, therefore,

recommends approval of the application, as submitted, with the applicant to continue to work with staff prior to approval of the building permit to implement any remaining refinements the Board may identify at the hearing.

**STAFF**

Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager

## **V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

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

### **Code Administration**

- 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 Administration 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 Construction and trade 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-7 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-8 A wall location plat prepared by a land surveyor is required to be submitted to this office prior to requesting any framing inspection.
- C-9 A Certificate of occupancy shall be obtained prior to any occupancy of the building or portion thereof, in accordance with USBC 116.1.

### **Historic Alexandria**

No comments received.



**Alexandria Archaeology**

- F-1 The G.M. Hopkins Insurance Atlas indicates that a house was present on this lot in 1877. The property therefore has the potential to yield archaeological resources that could provide insight into domestic activities in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Alexandria.
- R-1 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.
- R-2 The above statement must appear in the General Notes of all site plans and on all site plan sheets that involve demolition or ground disturbance (including sheeting and shoring and grading) so that on-site contractors are aware of the requirement.

**Transportation and Environmental Services  
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)
- R6. 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)
- R7. The building permit must be approved and issued prior to the issuance of any permit for demolition. (T&ES)
- R8. 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.

## 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) 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>**

## 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).
- 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.
- 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.8-1-22)
- C-4 All secondary utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3)
- C-5 Pay sanitary sewer tap fee prior to release of Grading Plan. (Sec. 5-6-25)
- C-6 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-3-61)

**VI. IMAGES**

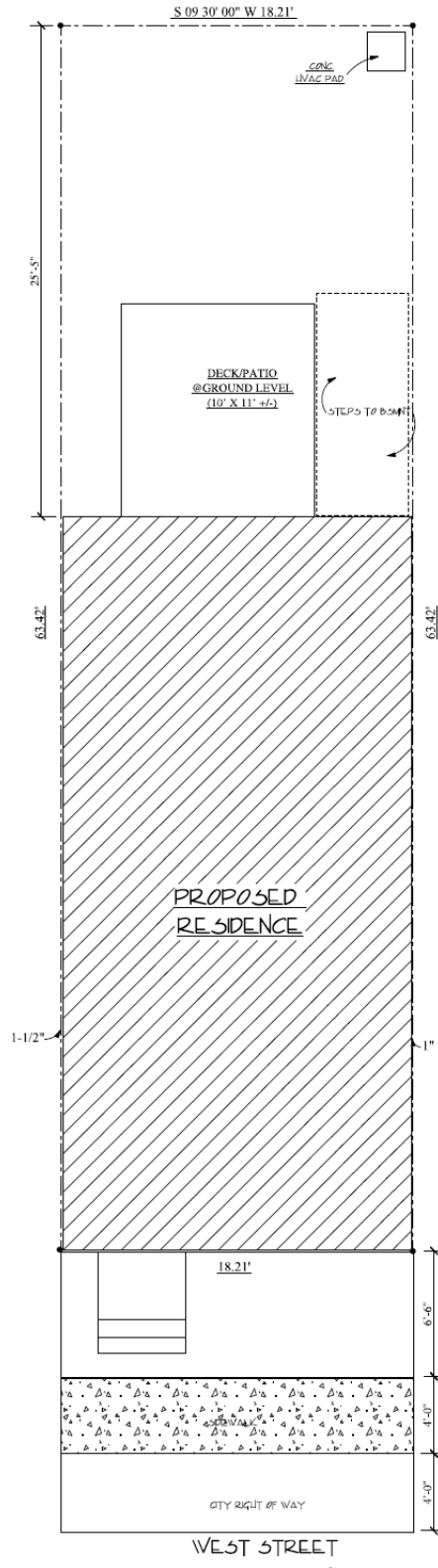
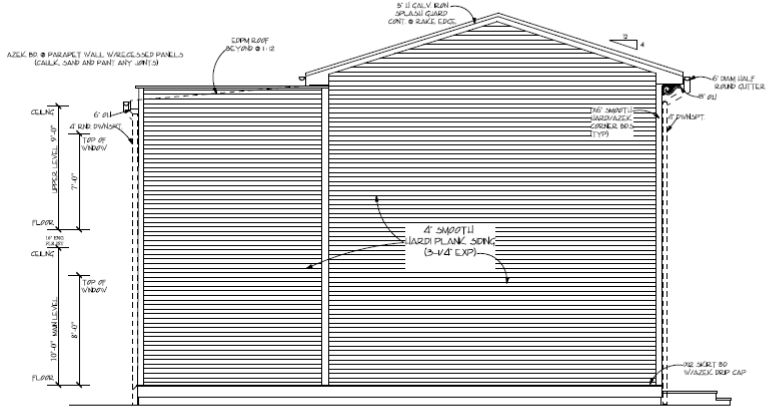
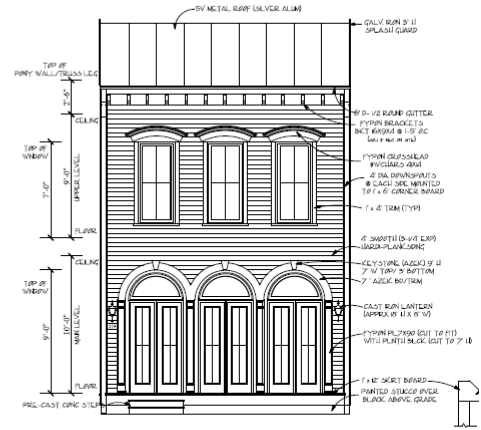


Figure 1: Site Plan, 9/22/10 Submission

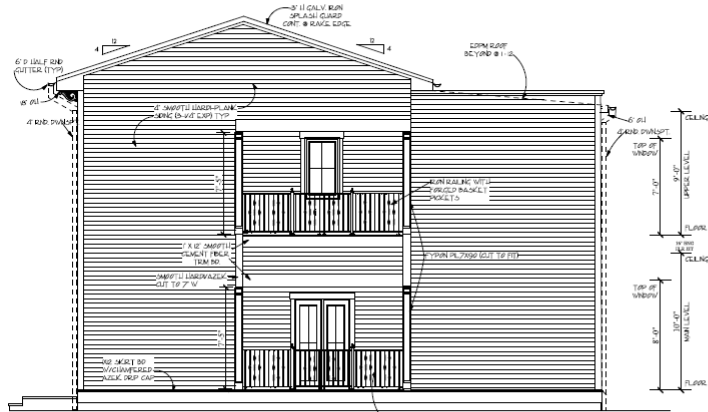


NORTH ELEVATION  
V4' = 1'-0"

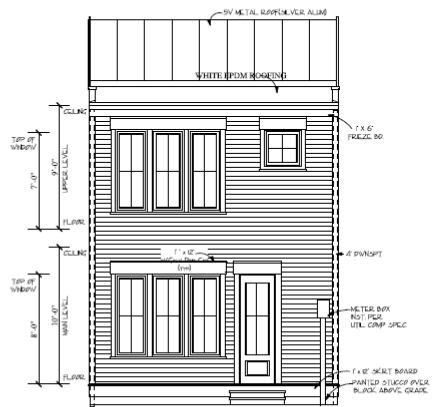


WEST ELEVATION  
V4' = 1'-0"

NOTE: ALL WINDOWS-DOORS TO BE MARVIN SML DIV. LITE (7/8) W/SPACER BAR

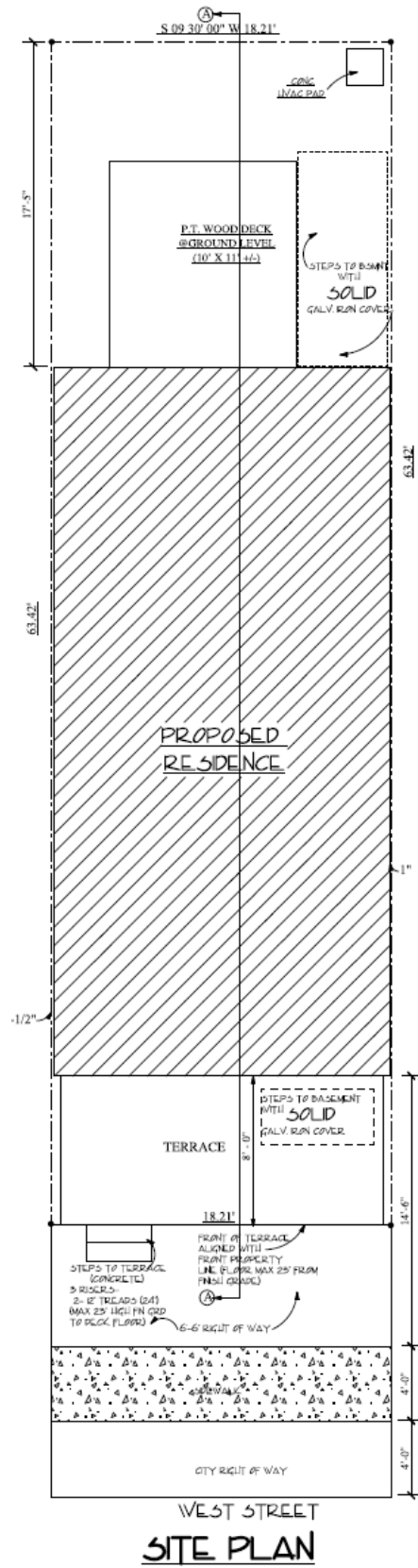


SOUTH ELEVATION  
V4' = 1'-0"



EAST ELEVATION  
V4' = 1'-0"

Figure 2: Elevations  
Submission September 22, 2010 BAR Hearing



**Figure 3: Site Plan Showing 8' Setback  
Submission February 23, 2011 BAR Hearing**

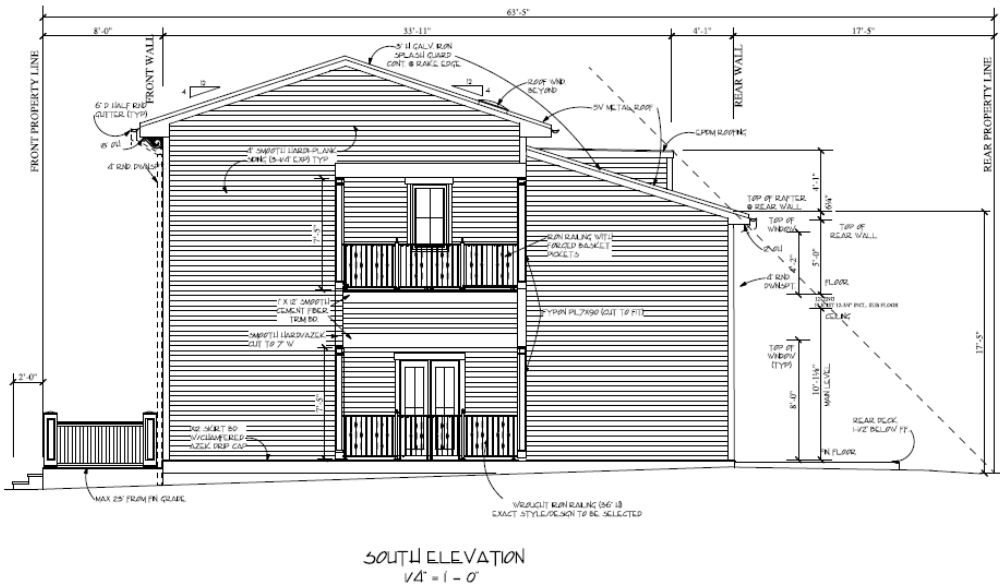
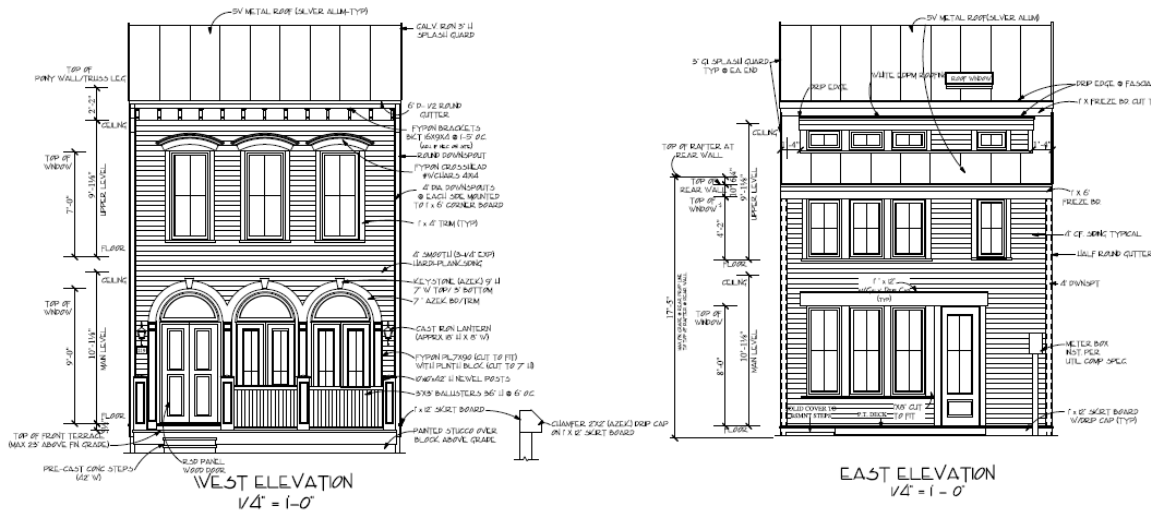
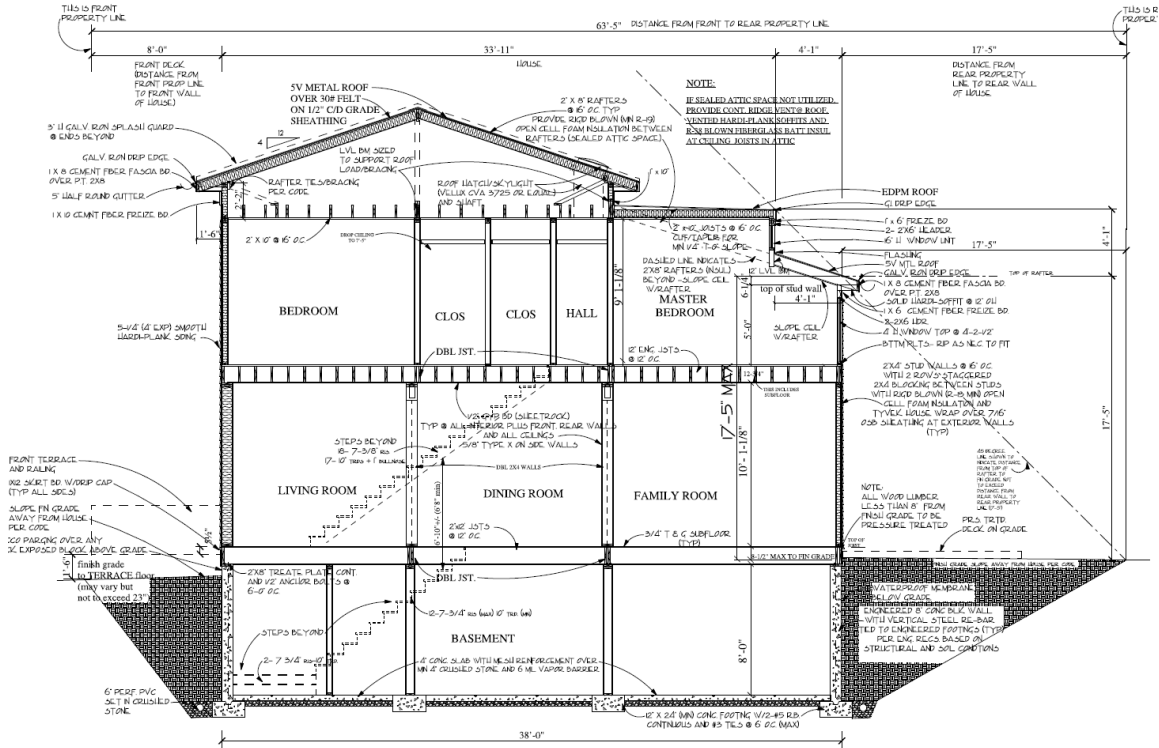


Figure 4: Elevations  
Submission February 23, 2011 BAR Hearing



**NOTE:**  
ALL CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL AND METHODS OF  
INSTALLATION SHALL COMPLY WITH CURRENT  
REGULATION AS ENFORCED PER LOCALITY  
AND WITH MANUFACTURER SPECIFICATIONS.

**BUILDING SECTION**

**Figure 5: Building Section**  
**Submission February 23, 2011 BAR Hearing**