

2nd Preliminary Consultation
MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT

Address:	5419 Mohican Rd., Bethesda	Meeting Date:	8/14/2019
Resource:	Master Plan Site #35/29-2 R.A. Charles Castle	Report Date:	8/7/2019
Applicant:	J. Ross McNair	Public Notice:	7/31/2019
Review:	2 nd Preliminary Consultation	Staff:	Dan Bruechert
Proposal:	New Construction		

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the applicant make any revisions based on the HPC's recommendations and return for a HAWP application or an additional preliminary consultation.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

SIGNIFICANCE: Individual Master Plan Site (35/29-2)
 STYLE: Vacant
 DATE: N/A

From *Places from the Past*:

“This residence was built the same years as the more elaborate and larger scale Baltzley Castle, yet was also built of locally quarried stone, continuing the theme envisioned Rhineland on the Potomac. Both residences were built to take advantage of a dramatic view of the Potomac River. With its multi and diamond pane windows, hipped roof and polygonal wing, and turned porch posts, the Charles Castle is essentially a Queen Anne style house sheathed in stone. R.A. Charles, an employee of the Treasury Department, bought land from Edward Baltzley in February 1890 and built the house soon thereafter. The *Manufacture's Record* of 1891 stated that Mindeleff designed a Glen Echo Heights house for Edwin Baltzley for \$7,000.”

In 2015, the applicant proposed to resubdivide the subject lot and to shrink the environmental setting of the R.A. Charles Castle, so it excluded the subject property from the historic designation. The HPC recommended that the Planning Board not reduce the size of the property and not to shrink the environmental setting. The Planning Board followed the HPC recommendation and the environmental setting was retained. The proposed new construction will take place on this undeveloped lot to the southeast of the historic house. This lot has been platted since the late 19th century.



Figure 1: The proposed house will be constructed on the lot to the southeast of the R.A. Charles Castle.

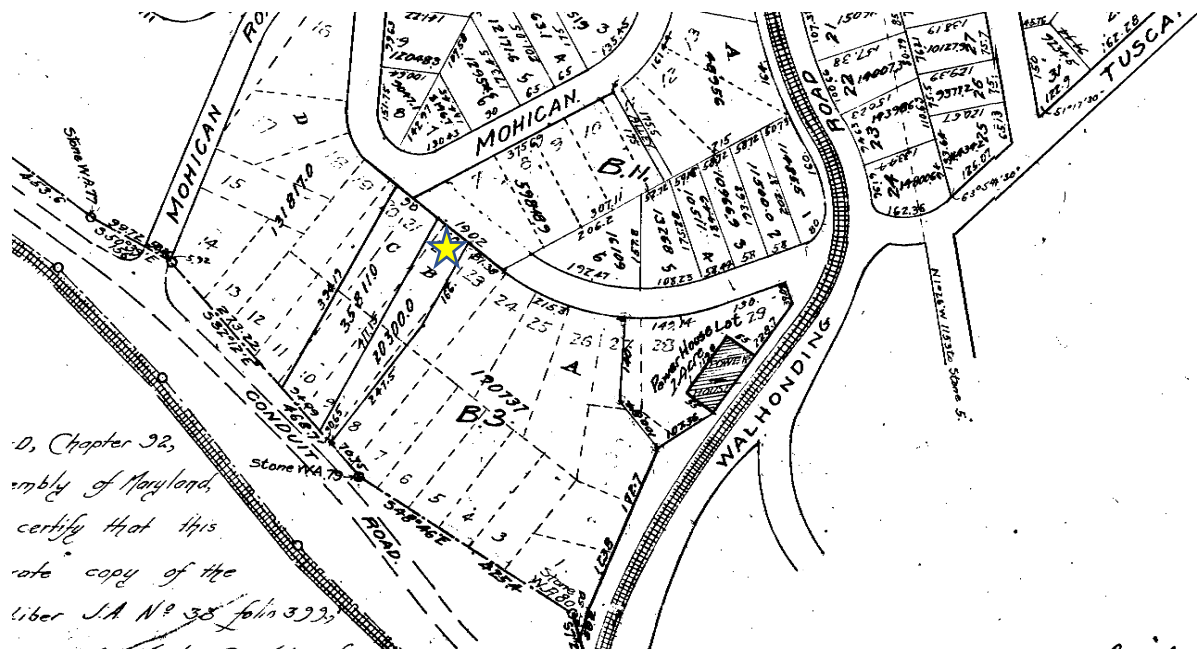


Figure 2: 1892 plat map showing the platted lots for the R.A. Charles Castle and the subject property (starred). Note: the dashed road to the north of the subject property was never constructed.

BACKGROUND

A first preliminary consultation was held on May 21, 2019 for this request.¹ The questions and comments from the HPC generally focused on the impact the proposed house would have on the R.A. Charles Castle and requested additional information and perspective views. There were additional questions about the hardscaping/landscaping and the compatibility of the size of the proposed construction compared to the historic. The applicant has provided additional information, made minor revisions to the house design and is returning for a second preliminary consultation for feedback on the current design.

Public comments were also provided both in writing and in person at the hearing. The comments were focused on preserving the views of the historic buildings from Mohican, the size of the proposed building and its compatibility with zoning requirements, preservation of the trees on the site, and consideration that the Mohican Rd. elevations are the primary views of the historic house.

PROPOSAL

The applicant proposes to construct a new house with a detached garage on the undeveloped Lot B shown in Figure 2 (above).

APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

Proposed alterations to individual Master Plan Sites are reviewed under Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A (Chapter 24A) and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (*the Standards*). Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values. The pertinent information in these documents is outlined below.

Montgomery County Code, Chapter 24A Historic Resources Preservation

(b) The commission shall instruct the director to issue a permit, or issue a permit subject to such conditions as are found to be necessary to insure conformity with the purposes and requirements of this chapter, if it finds that:

- (1) The proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of an historic site or historic resource within an historic district; or
- (2) The proposal is compatible in character and nature with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural features of the historic site or the historic district in which an historic resource is located and would not be detrimental thereto or to the achievement of the purposes of this chapter; or
- (5) The proposal is necessary in order that the owner of the subject property not be deprived of reasonable use of the property or suffer undue hardship; or

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, space and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

¹ The Staff Report from this preliminary consultation can be found here: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/II.B-5419-Mohican-Road-Bethesda.pdf>, with audio of the hearing here: http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=b1ece58c-7caa-11e9-a084-0050569183fa (consideration of this agenda item begins at the 6:20 mark).

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportions, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

STAFF DISCUSSION

The applicant proposes constructing a new house on the existing, narrow, wooded, steeply-sloped lot to the southeast of the R.A. Charles Castle. The subject lot and the Baltzley and Charles Castles are positioned high on a bluff overlooking the Potomac River. The three lots are heavily wooded which creates limited visibility of the houses; however, areas near the houses are cleared to provide vistas of the Potomac River. This viewshed is likely why the houses were constructed in this location and is a significant feature of the environmental setting and should be preserved. The historic houses are accessed from Mohican Rd. and have Mohican Rd. addresses and do not have direct access to Macarthur Blvd. However, the more elaborate, architecturally significant elevations of both historic houses face south, toward the river.

A number of questions were raised at the May 21, 2019 preliminary consultation about specific site conditions and Staff would like to address those before beginning a discussion of the design of the proposed construction. First, Staff identified a dirt and woodchip path that ran along the rear (northern boundary) of the subject property and along the eastern edge. Based on observations at the site, Staff was unable to determine which property this path was associated with. Information presented by the applicant indicates that he has a lease with the Mohican Swim Club for a 5' (five foot) wide access along the rear of the property for 60' (sixty feet). The path then turns south. After turning south, the path is entirely on the swimming club property and outside of the environmental setting of the R.A. Charles Castle. The entirety of the path is privately owned and views from it to the subject property are not considered as if it were from a public right-of-way.



Figure 3: Approximate boundaries of the unrecorded access path to the swim club.

Additionally, at the preliminary consultation a commissioner raised a question of how one would access the subject property. Staff has researched this topic and found a recorded ingress/egress easement at the rear of 5417 Mohican. The easement is 20' (twenty feet) wide and is roughly in the location shown on the site plan provided that shows the boundaries of the proposed hardscape.

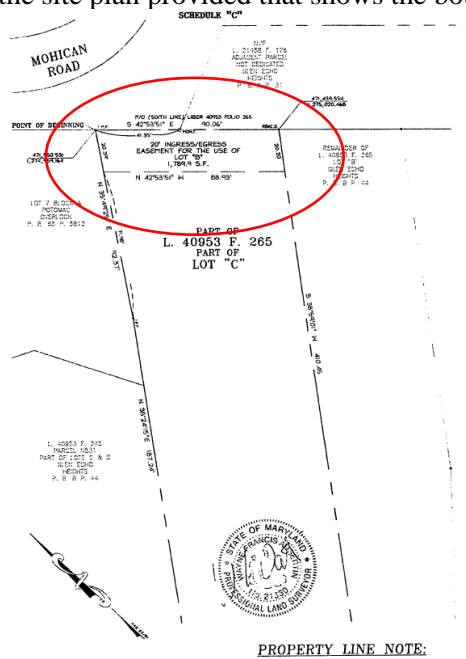
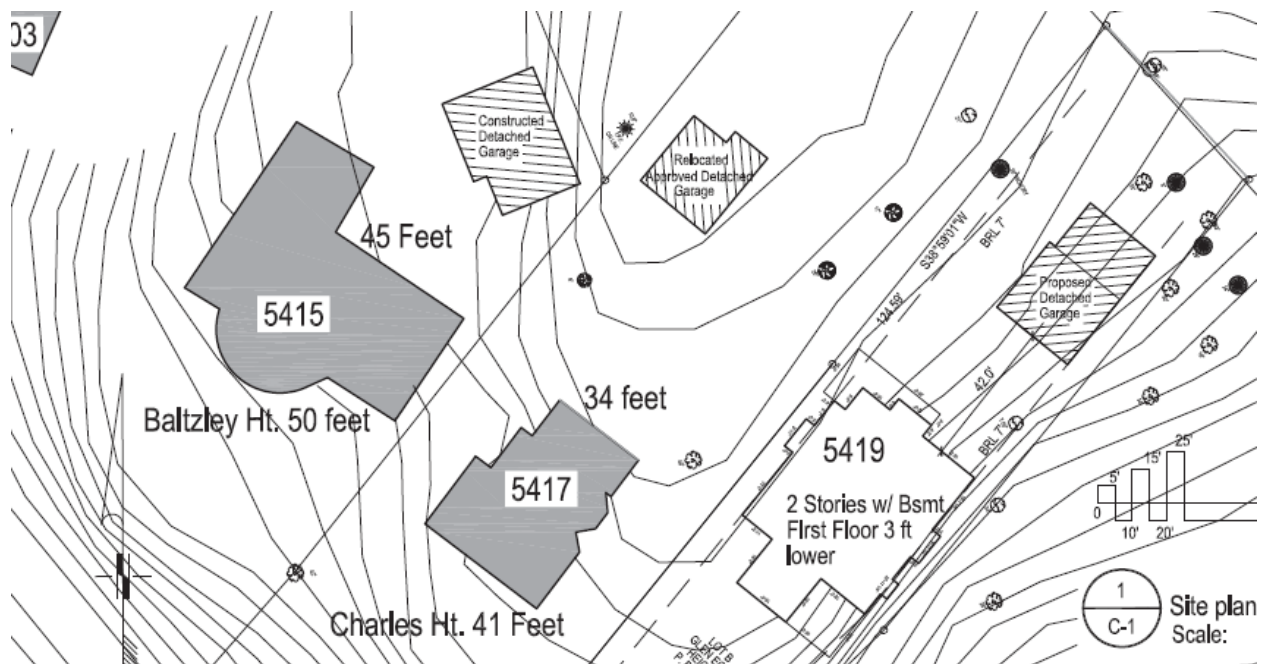


Figure 4: Ingress/Egress boundaries at 5417 Mohican Rd. shown in the recorded easement within the red circle.

At the preliminary consultation, a neighbor raised the issue of tree removal from the site. Staff has been unable to determine the resolution of this issue and will continue to review Staff files.

House Placement

The applicant proposes to place the new house approximately 120' (one hundred twenty feet) from the rear property line. The front wall plane of the new house aligns with the rear wall plane of the R.A. Charles Castle. The house is will be 45' (forty-five feet) wide, which allows for 7' (seven foot) setbacks to the east and west. This is the minimum code-required side setback.² Staff finds, in general, that the placement of the house is appropriate. In order to reinforce the primacy of the R.A. Charles Castle, Staff recommends that the applicant place the house towards the northern end of the lot so that the new construction would not visually compete with R.A. Charles Castle from the Macarthur Blvd. vista. This location will help to preserve the historic character of the property (Standard 2) and the viewshed when viewed from Macarthur Blvd.



House Size and Design

There have only been minor changes to the house design from the previous submission and the house size remains unchanged. The proposed house will be 45' × 51' (forty-five feet wide by fifty-one feet deep) with a 16' (sixteen feet) projection at the south end. The proposed house will be 30' (thirty feet) to the ridge height from the Mohican Rd. side of the house. The height on the eastern side of the house will be 40' (forty feet) from grade to ridge height. The footprint of the proposed house is larger than the R.A. Charles Castle at 30' × 46' (thirty feet wide by forty-six feet deep). The R.A. Charles Castle height from grade at the south is 41' (forty-one feet) tall, while it is 34' (thirty-four feet) tall to the north. The topo lines in Figure 3, above, show that the building grade of the proposed house will only be 2' (two feet) lower than the R.A. Charles Castle, meaning the ridge height of the proposed house will be 6' (six feet)

² Because this lot was platted in 1892 and has not been altered, it may be developed under the requirements of the 1928 zoning ordinance. The zoning ordinance only establishes the minimum and maximum requirements and does not bind the HPC to these limits. A DPS Zoning Reviewer will conduct a full review prior to issuing a building permit.

lower.

The proposed house will be a contemporary interpretation of the Craftsman style. The proposed architecture employs battered columns, brackets under roof eaves, and a shingled second floor. The largely rectangular house form will have a patterned concrete foundation with fiber cement clapboards on the first floor and fiber cement shingles on the second floor. The hipped roof of the proposal has been slightly simplified from the previous proposal by eliminating superfluous gables on the east, south, and west elevations. The windows throughout will be a mix of sash, casement, and picture windows. Staff finds that this style of house, with these architectural details is appropriate for infill construction in this location. The Queen Anne-style, R.A. Charles Castle is a rustic stone building with a vertical orientation. Staff supports the proposed materials, finding that constructing a new house out of stone could be mistaken as historic construction and potentially create a false sense of history, running afoul of Standard 9. The proposed building will have fiber cement siding with a horizontal orientation. Had the applicant proposed a house clad in exterior stone, even one in a different style, Staff finds that it could easily be mistaken as contemporary with the Baltzley and Charles Castles, particularly when viewed from Macarthur Blvd. Staff finds that using the proposed style, materials, and orientation will help differentiate the new construction from the historic.

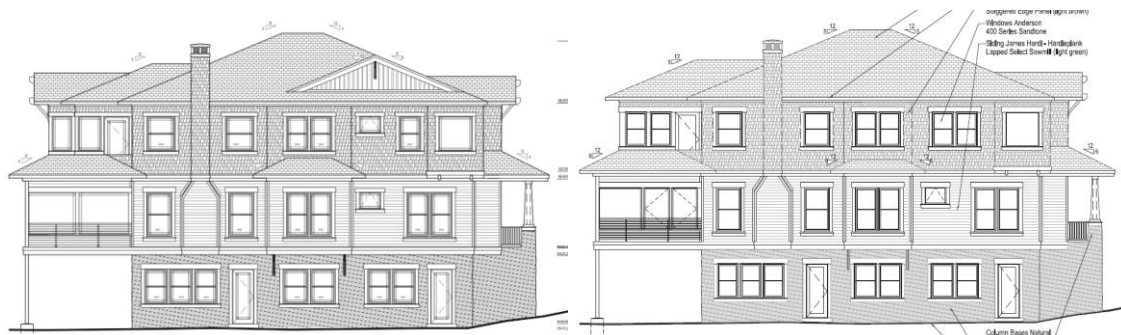


Figure 6: East elevation showing May 2019 submission (left) with current proposal with removed gables in the roof and reduced 1st floor bay.

Staff finds that the placement, height, and design of the proposed building make it appear subservient to the R.A. Charles Castle when viewed from Macarthur Blvd. However, Staff finds that the proposed house is too wide to be compatible with the R.A. Charles Castle. The applicant has taken steps to break up the massing of this elevation some with the tower in the northwest corner, rear second-story gable, and wrap around porch; but Staff does not find this to be enough to make the design compatible. There are a number of ways that the design could be altered to produce massing that is compatible with the historic construction. One possibility is to have the building step away from the R.A. Charles Castle so that the house gets narrower toward the north. Another alternative is the whole proposed house could be narrowed. A third possibility would be to swap the placement of the proposed house and proposed garage on the site. Placing the proposed house further from the historic R.A. Charles Castle would significantly reduce its visual impact on the historic resource.

Staff requests feedback from the HPC as to the appropriateness of the massing of the house, particularly when viewed from the R.A. Charles Castle as well as from Mohican Rd., and any specific revisions necessary to receive support for an approved HAWP.



Figure 7: Perspective rendering of the proposed house (left) and the R.A. Charles Castle (center).



Figure 8: Approximate view of the rendering showing the current appearance.

Garage and Hardscaping

The applicant submitted details for the hardscaping and detached garage as requested by the HPC. The applicant proposes to construct a gravel drive edged in cobblestones from the ingress/egress easement to the area adjacent to the garage and the walkway to the house. This treatment matches the existing drive at the R.A. Charles Castle and Staff finds it to be appropriate in this instance as well. The site plan does not indicate any alteration to the existing grade. If grading on the site will occur, plans need to be submitted with the HAWP or subsequent preliminary consultation demonstrating that condition. The plans should also mark the impact the on-site storm management infrastructure will have to the site.

The submitted tree survey shows a 24" d.b.h (twenty-four inch) hickory tree either in the area of the driveway or immediately adjacent (the tree survey also identifies this space as outside the limits of disturbance). Because the outline of the drive is hand drawn, it is difficult to determine the boundaries with any precision. Staff request the applicant provide additional details about the impact or removal of any trees on the site; and any proposed planting on the site.

The proposed detached garage is a three-bay, hipped roof garage constructed approximately 7' (seven

feet) from the east property boundary. It appears that this garage will be set back from the north property boundary by approximately 30' (thirty feet). The garage will have the same textured concrete foundation, fiber cement clapboard siding, and architectural shingle roof proposed for the new construction. No dimensions were included on the drawings, but the garage appears to be approximately 35' × 20' (thirty-five feet wide by twenty feet deep) and 16' (sixteen feet) tall. The garage will be 42' (forty-two feet) to the north of the proposed house. The applicant indicated in discussions with Staff that the placement of the garage was driven, in part, to avoid a 50" d.b.h. (fifty inch) pine tree to the north of the proposed house site. Commission members questioned the need to reinforce the garage to the east, but the applicant stated that no retaining walls would need to be constructed to support the garage.

Staff finds the proposed garage is far enough away from the R.A. Charles Castle so as to have virtually no visible impact on the historic building either from the right-of-way or from within the site. While the proposed garage is larger than what the HPC would usually consider in many of the County's historic districts, the size is consistent with the non-historic garage constructed to the north of the Baltzley Castle and the approved, but unbuilt garage to the north of the R.A. Charles Castle.

Tree Impact

In response to the request by the HPC at the May 21, 2019 preliminary consultation, the applicant has provided a tree survey with the current submission. The survey was undertaken in August 2013 and updates are notated in green (for planted trees) and red (for trees removed). The tree survey includes limits of disturbance (LOD) but does not have the outlines of the proposed buildings, nor does it identify trees proposed for removal as part of this development project. Staff has identified two trees that will likely be impacted by the proposed work, an 18" d.b.h. (eighteen inch) hickory in the northwest corner of the lot and a 24" d.b.h. (twenty-four inch) hickory along the western edge of the lot discussed above.

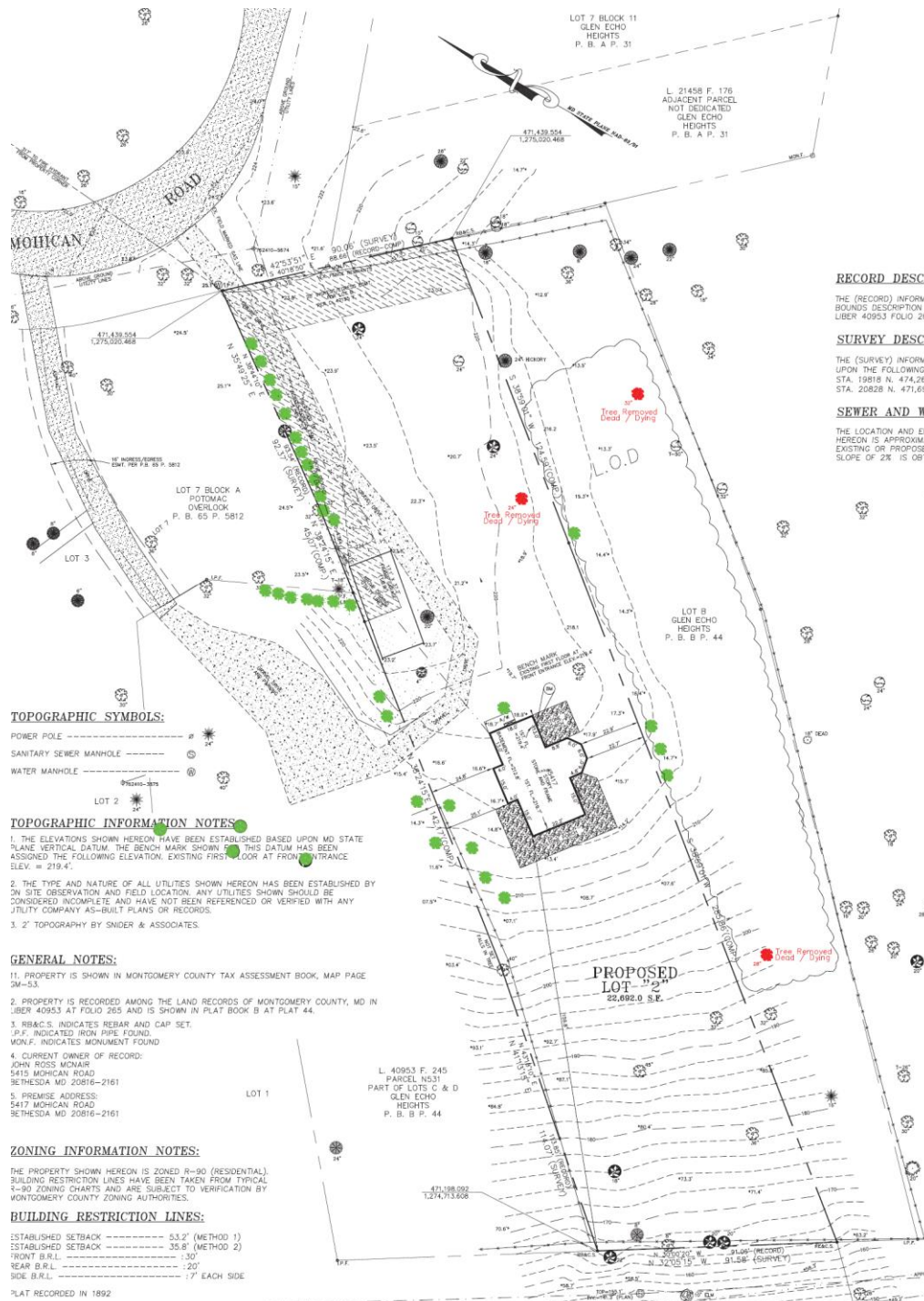


Figure 9: Tree survey showing trees planted since 2013 in green and trees removed since 2013 in red.

Staff finds that the wooded condition is a character defining feature of the Master Plan site. Staff recommends that an approved HAWP at this site include the condition that any trees removed need to be replaced one-for-one.



Figure 10: View from Macarthur Blvd. to the Baltzley and Charles Castle. The proposed construction will be built to the right of the two buildings (Note: this image was taken in December 2015).

Staff request the HPC provide feedback on:

- The revisions to the drawings and if the “simplification” of the proposal is sufficient;
- The appropriateness of the proposed size and massing in light of the perspective drawings;
- The appropriateness of the size and placement of the proposed garage; and
- Any other concerns or additional considerations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends the applicant make any revisions based on the HPC’s recommendations and return for a HAWP application or an additional preliminary consultation.



HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
301/563-3400

DPS - #8

APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

Contact Email: ROSSMCMANIS1@GMAIL.COM Contact Person: ROSS MCMANIS
Daytime Phone No.: 301-219-0380
Tax Account No.: 00508312
Name of Property Owner: J. ROSS MCMANIS Daytime Phone No.: 301-219-0380
Address: 5415 MCKINLEY RD Bethesda MD 20814
Street Number City State Zip Code
Contractor: MANAGE BUILDERS Phone No.: 301-228-8343
Contractor Registration No.: 4126545
Agent for Owner: _____ Daytime Phone No.: _____

LOCATION OF BUILDING PREMISE

House Number: 5417 Street: MCKINLEY RD
Town/City: Bethesda Nearest Cross Street: MACARTHUR BLVD
Lot: PART C Block: 3 Subdivision: GLAN ECHO HEIGHTS
Liber: 40953 Folio: 265 Parcel: _____

PART ONE: TYPE OF PERMIT ACTION AND USE

1A. CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:

- ☒ Construct ☐ Extend ☐ Alter/Renovate
☐ Move ☐ Install ☐ Wreck/Raze
☐ Revision ☐ Repair ☐ Revocable

CHECK ALL APPLICABLE:

- ☐ A/C ☐ Slab ☐ Room Addition ☐ Porch ☐ Deck ☐ Shed
☐ Solar ☐ Fireplace ☐ Woodburning Stove ☐ Single Family
☒ Fence/Wall (complete Section 4) ☐ Other: GARAGE + FENCE

1B. Construction cost estimate: \$ 28,000

1C. If this is a revision of a previously approved active permit, see Permit # _____

PART TWO: COMPLETE FOR NEW CONSTRUCTION AND EXTEND/ADDITIONS

2A. Type of sewage disposal: 01 ☒ WSSC 02 ☐ Septic 03 ☐ Other: _____
2B. Type of water supply: 01 ☒ WSSC 02 ☐ Well 03 ☐ Other: _____

PART THREE: COMPLETE ONLY FOR FENCE/RETAINING WALL

3A. Height 6' feet 0 inches

3B. Indicate whether the fence or retaining wall is to be constructed on one of the following locations:

- ☐ On party line/property line ☒ Entirely on land of owner ☐ On public right of way/easement

I hereby certify that I have the authority to make the foregoing application, that the application is correct, and that the construction will comply with plans approved by all agencies listed and I hereby acknowledge and accept this to be a condition for the issuance of this permit.

J. Ross McManis
Signature of owner or authorized agent

10-26-15
Date

Approved: _____ For Chairperson, Historic Preservation Commission

Disapproved: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Application/Permit No.: _____ Date Filed: _____ Date Issued: _____

Edit 6/21/99

SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR INSTRUCTIONS

735175

HAWP APPLICATION: MAILING ADDRESSES FOR NOTIFYING

OWNER'S MAILING ADDRESS

J. Ross McNair
5415 Mohican Rd
Bethesda Md 20816

HISTORIC SITE ADDRESS

5417 Mohican Rd
Bethesda Md 20816

ADJACENT AND CONFRONTING PROPERTY OWNERS MAILING ADDRESSES

Miguel Otero
5301 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816

Chris White
5409 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816

Maureen Jeffreys and Michael Bergsman
5303 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816

Miklos Gaal
5407 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816

Matthew Byrne
5405 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816

Stephen Seeber
5309 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816

William Barlow
5311 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816

Patrick Gates
5421 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816

Ned Miltenberg
5410 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816

John Lentz
5424 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816

Joy Brown
5408 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816

Whittington Lewis
5404 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816

Nathaniel Kendall
5420 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816

William Coolidge
5423 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816

James Ross
5425 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816

Philip Warker
5428 Mohican Rd
Bethesda MD 20816

5303

5421

5415

45 Feet

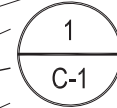
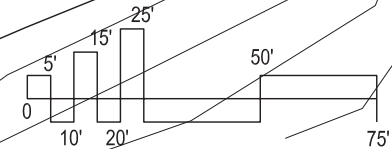
Baltzley Ht. 50 feet

5417

34 feet

Charles Ht. 41 Feet

5419

2 Stories w/ Bsmt
First Floor 3 ft
lowerLOT B
GLEN ECHO
HEIGHTS
P.B.B.P.44Constructed
Detached
GarageRelocated
Approved Detached
GarageProposed
Detached
GarageProposed
Open
PergolaSite plan
Scale: 50'

Zoning and Building Data

Project address:

5419 Mohican Road, Bethesda, MD

Location:

Lot B Glen Echo Heights PBBP44

Plat data:

Liber 40953 Folio 265

Zoning: R-90

Lot area:

20,853 Square Feet +/- (.48 Acres)

Allowable lot coverage

20% = 4,170 Square Feet +/-

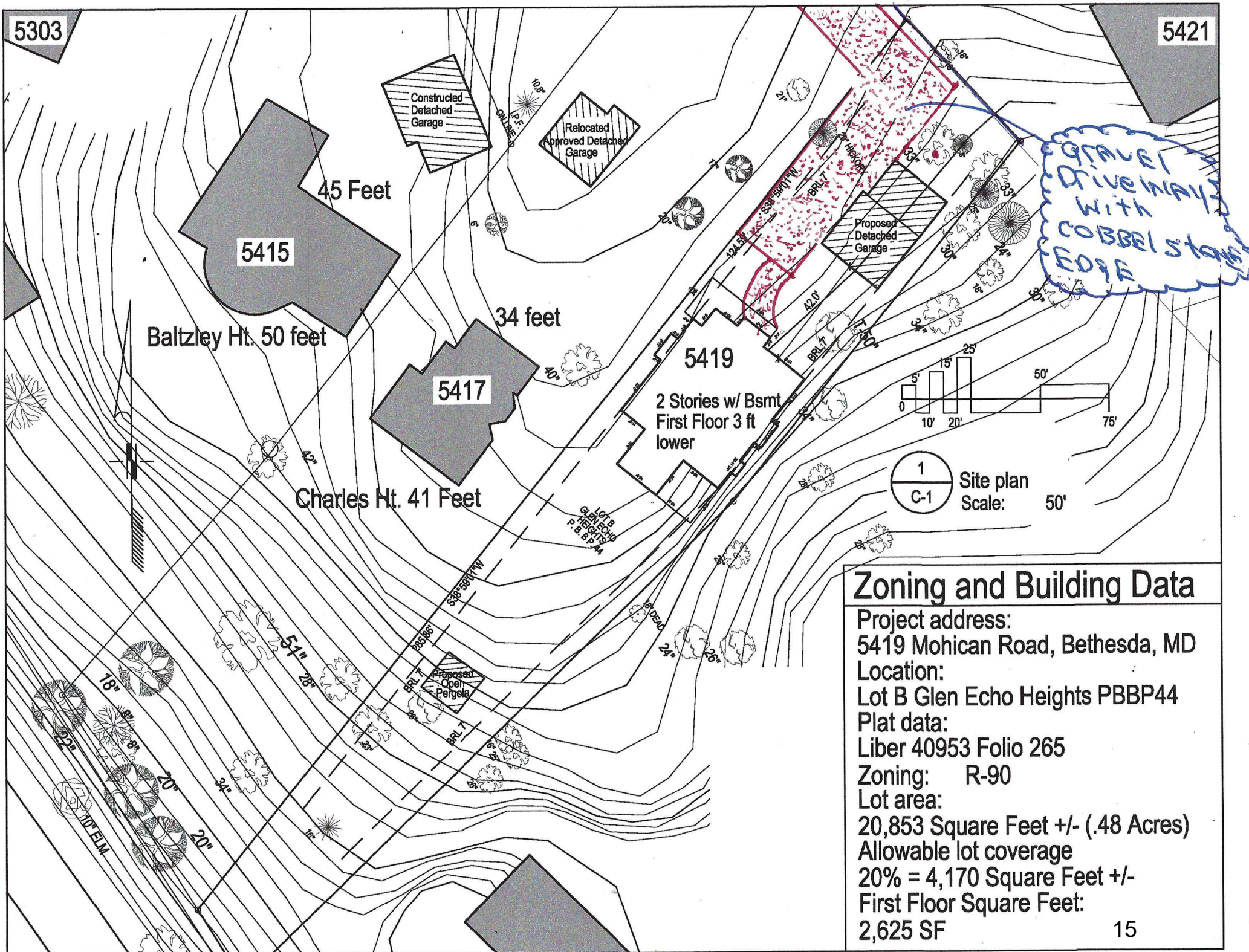
First Floor Square Feet:

2,625 SF

14

5303

5421



Zoning and Building Data

Project address:

5419 Mohican Road, Bethesda, MD

Location:

Lot B Glen Echo Heights PBBP44

Plat data:

Liber 40953 Folio 265

Zoning: R-90

Lot area:

20,853 Square Feet +/- (.48 Acres)

Allowable lot coverage

20% = 4,170 Square Feet +/-

First Floor Square Feet:

2,625 SF

15

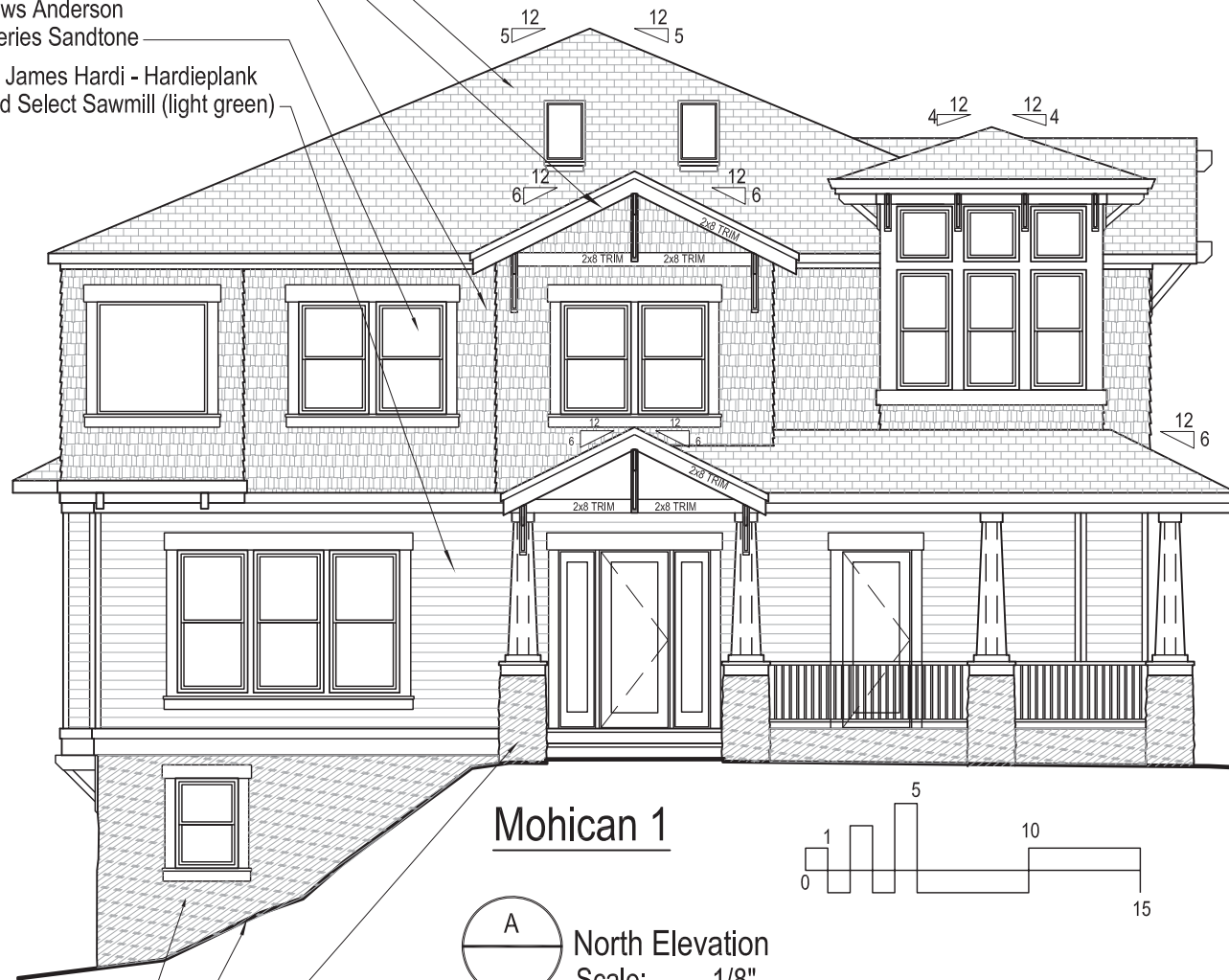
Roof Shingles GAF Timberline
40 year Williamsburg Slate

Trim - James Hardy (white)

Siding James Hardy - Hardieshingle
Staggered Edge Panel (light brown)

Windows Anderson
400 Series Sandtone

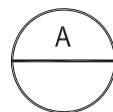
Siding James Hardy - Hardieplank
Lapped Select Sawmill (light green)



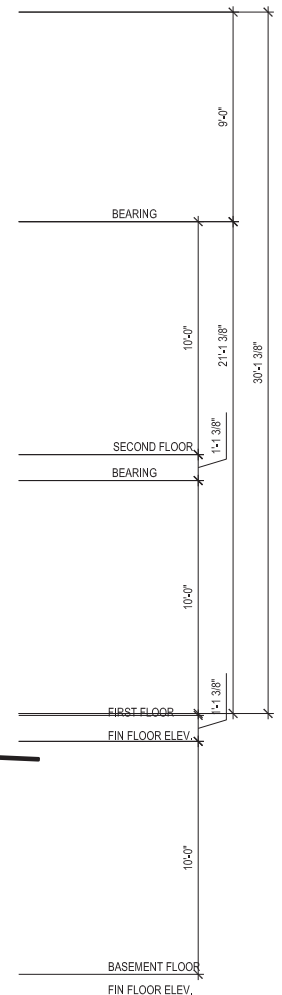
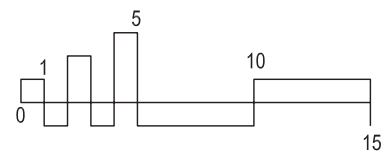
Textured Concrete

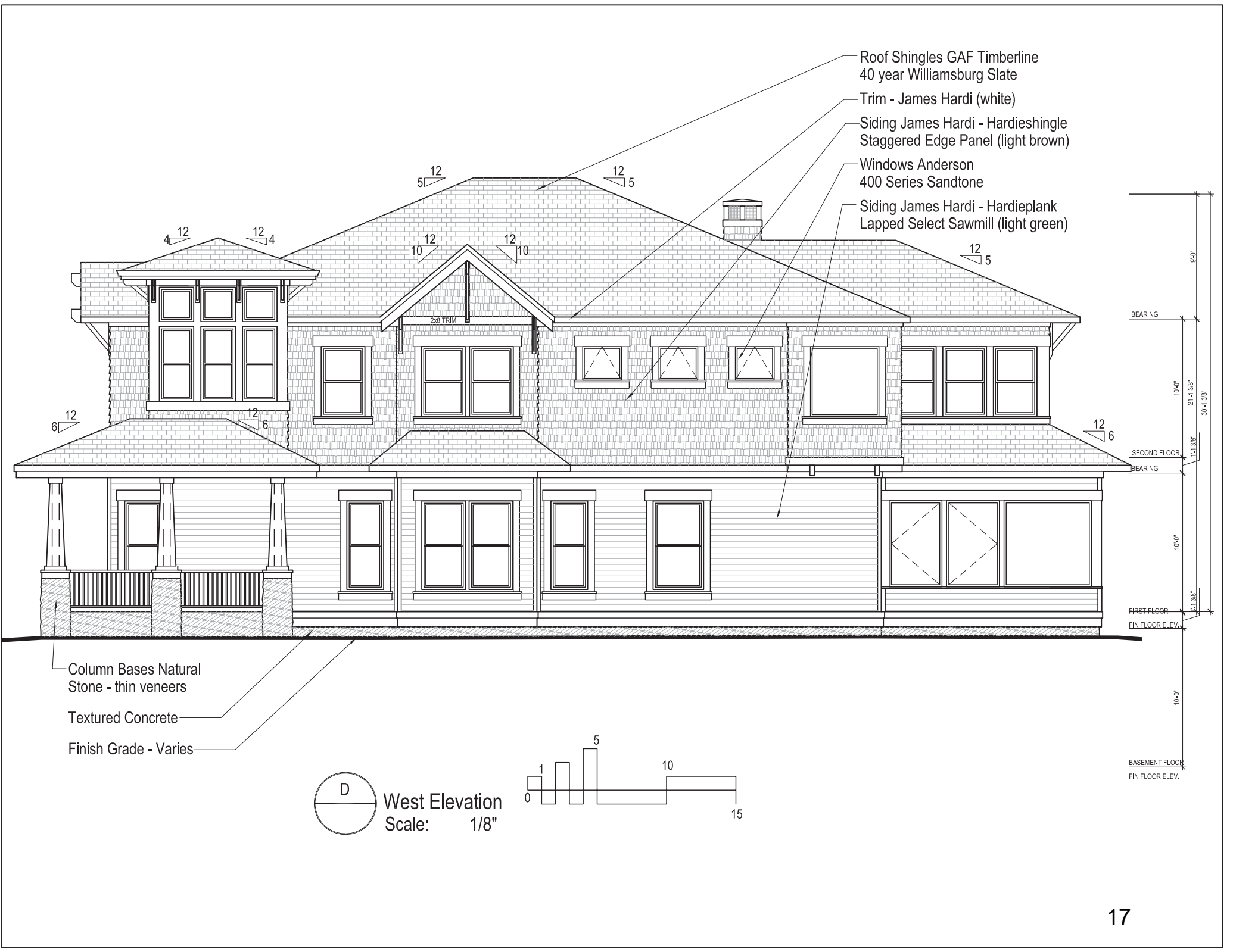
Finish Grade - Varies

Column Bases Natural
Stone - thin veneers

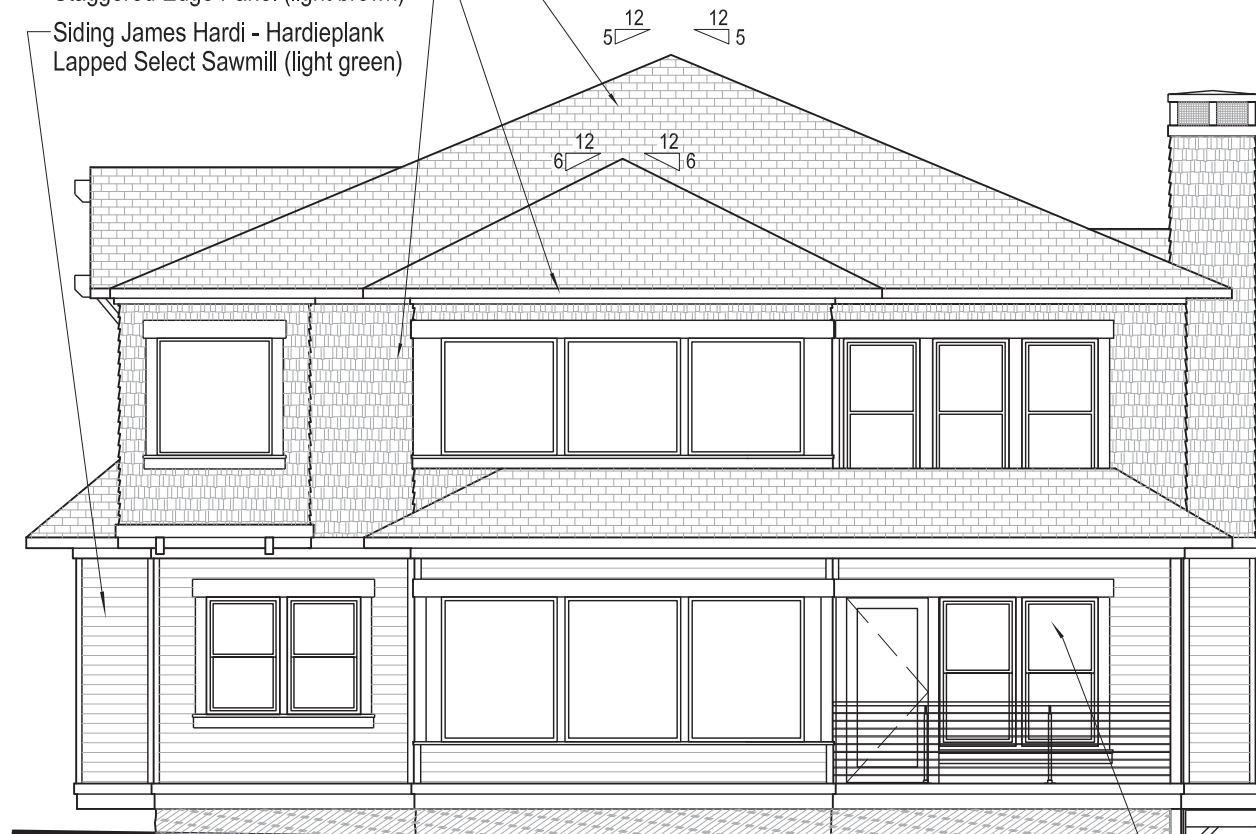


North Elevation
Scale: 1/8"

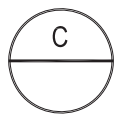




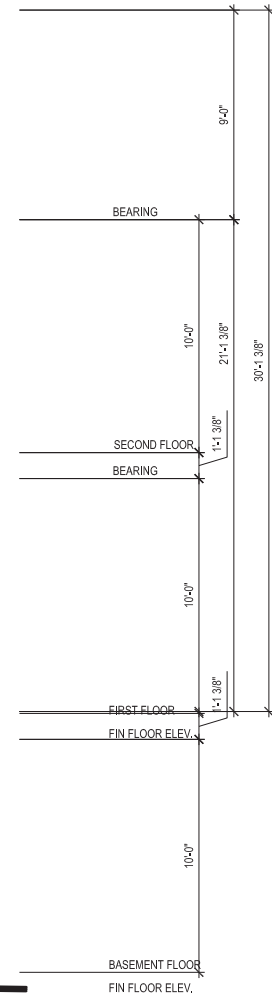
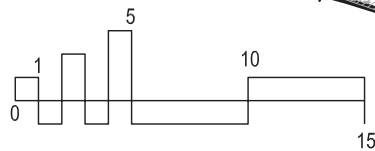
- Roof Shingles GAF Timberline
40 year Williamsburg Slate
- Trim - James Hardy (white)
- Siding James Hardy - Hardieshingle
Staggered Edge Panel (light brown)
- Siding James Hardy - Hardieplank
Lapped Select Sawmill (light green)



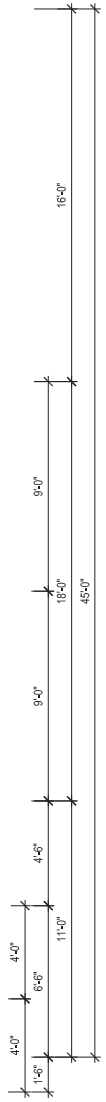
MacArthur



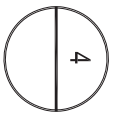
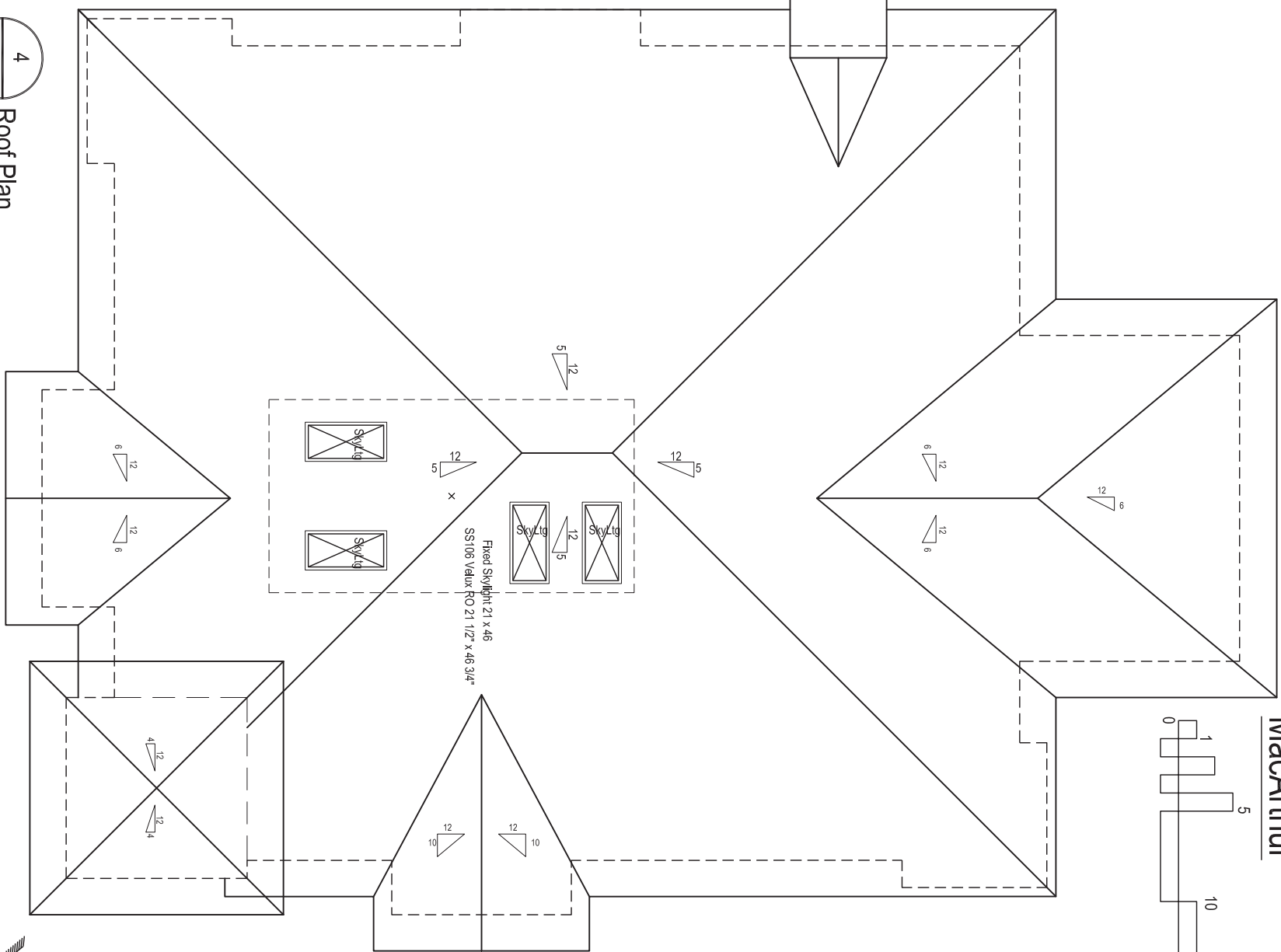
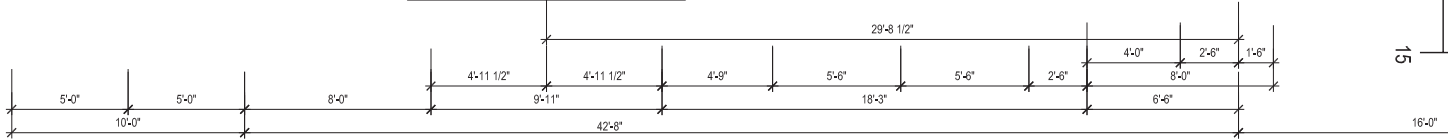
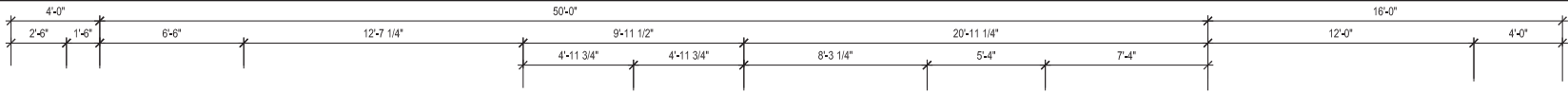
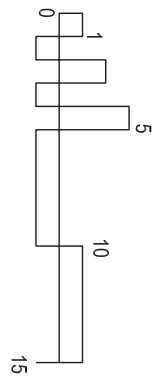
South Elevation
Scale: 1/8"



- Windows Anderson
400 Series Sandtone
- Textured Concrete
- Finish Grade - Varies

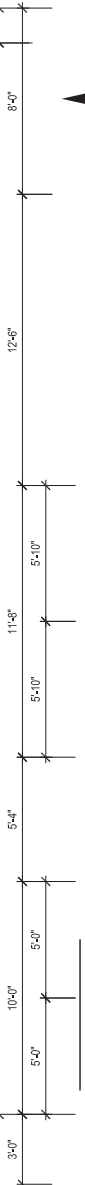
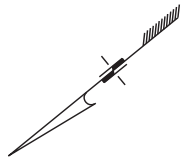


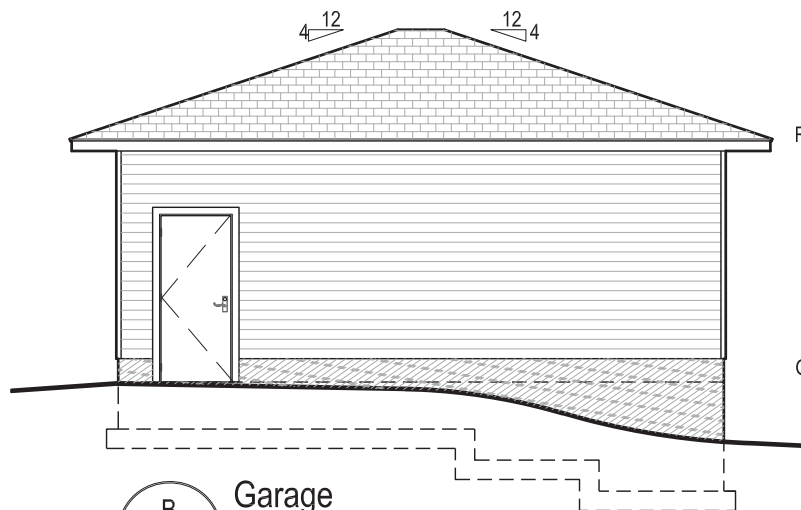
MacArthur



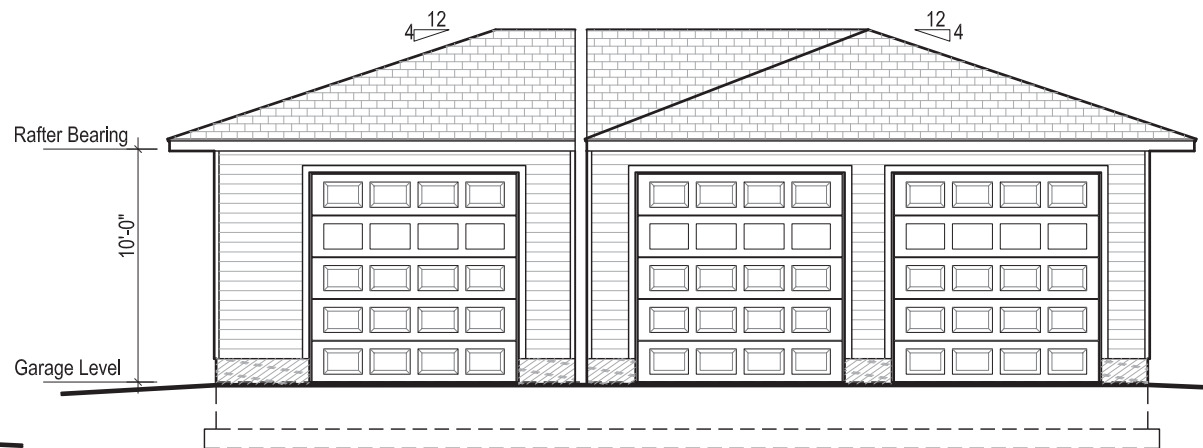
Roof Plan
Scale: 1/8"
Reference North

Mohican

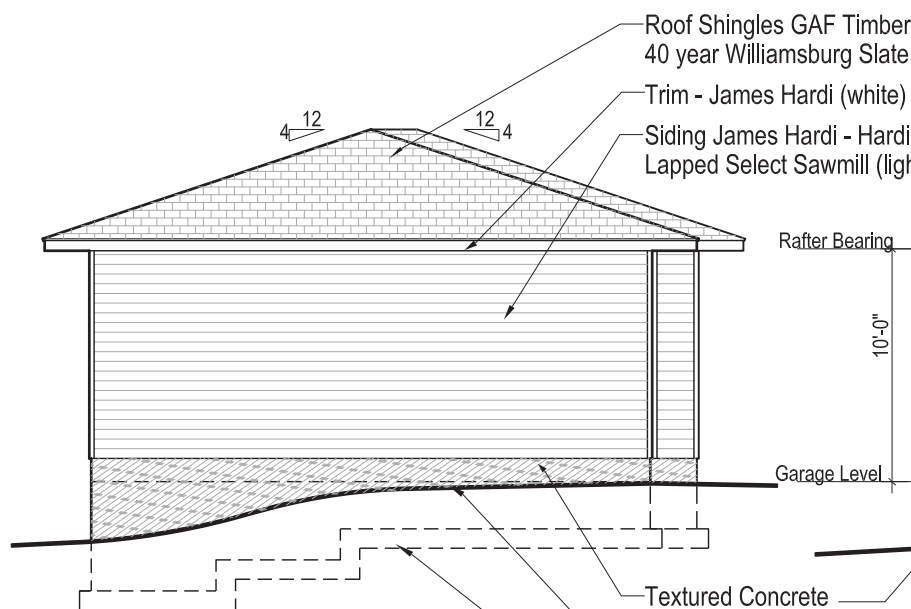
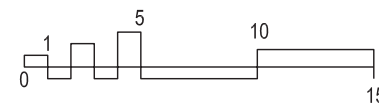




B Garage
South Elevation
Scale: 1/8"

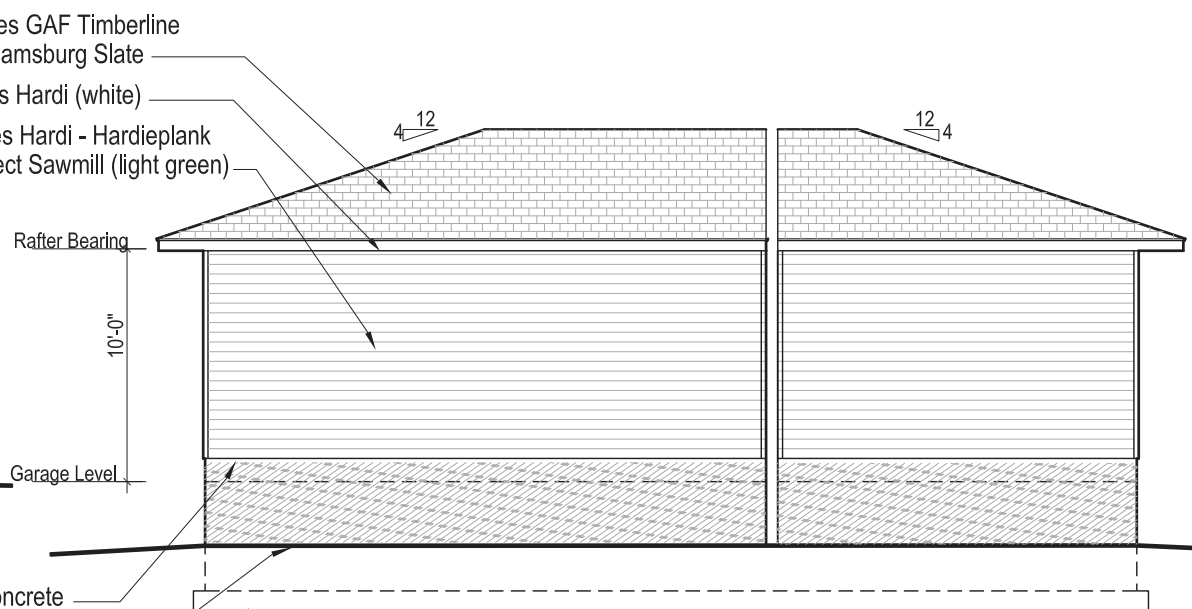


A Garage
West Elevation
Scale: 1/8"



D Garage
North Elevation
Scale: 1/8"

- Roof Shingles GAF Timberline
- 40 year Williamsburg Slate
- Trim - James Hardi (white)
- Siding James Hardi - Hardieplank
- Lapped Select Sawmill (light green)



C Garage
East Elevation
Scale: 1/8"

- Textured Concrete
- Finish Grade - Varies
- Line of frost footing

