

*3rd Preliminary Consultation***MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**
STAFF REPORT

Address:	5419 Mohican Rd., Bethesda	Meeting Date:	9/25/2019
Resource:	Master Plan Site 35/29-2 R.A. Charles Castle	Report Date:	9/18/2019
Applicant:	J. Ross McNair	Public Notice:	9/11/2019
Review:	3 rd 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."



Figure 1: The proposed house will be constructed on the lot to the southeast of the R.A. Charles Castle, but within the established environmental setting.

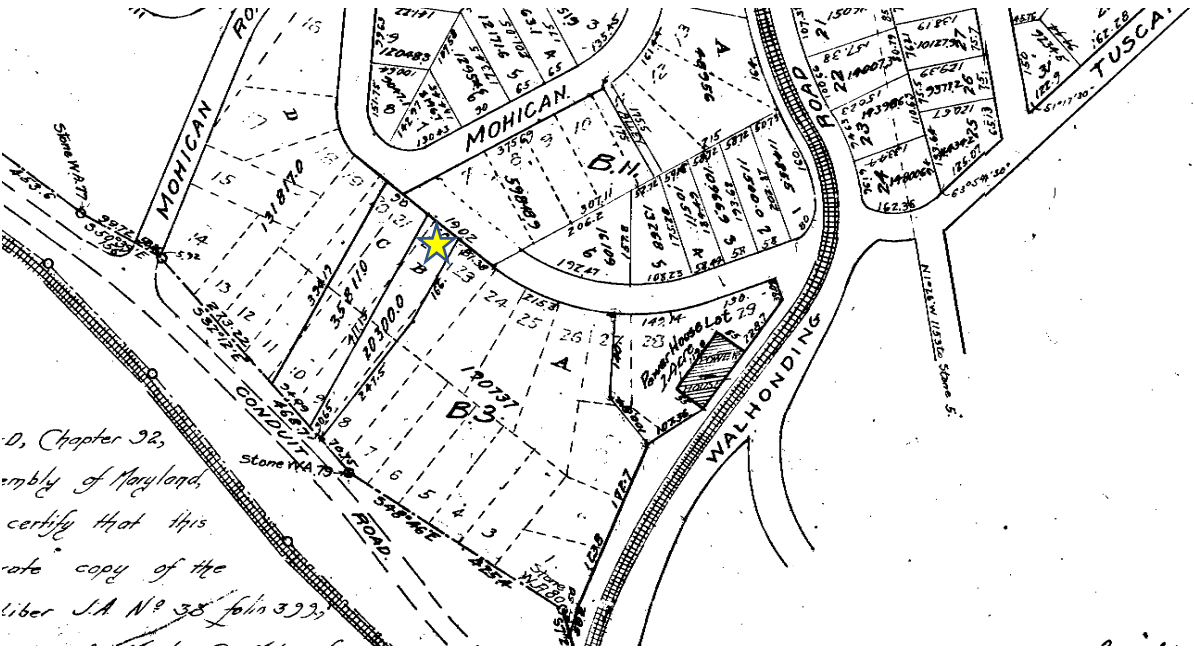


Figure 2: 1892 plat map showing the platted lots for the R.A. Charles Castle and the subject property (starred). Note: the dashed road to the north of the subject property was never constructed.

BACKGROUND

A first preliminary consultation was held on May 21, 2019.¹ 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 house. The applicant provided additional information, made minor revisions to the house design and returned for a second preliminary consultation for feedback on the design moving forward.

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.

A second preliminary consultation was held on August 14, 2019.² The applicant included updated perspective renderings of the property from both Mohican Rd. and Macarthur Blvd. The HPC's feedback was that the proposal was too large and detracted from the historic character of the R.A. Charles Castle. The HPC also voiced support for breaking up the massing of the proposed new construction to make the proposal more compatible. A staff write-up of the comments made by the HPC is attached to the application materials.

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 (*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

¹ The Staff Report from the May 21, 2019 Preliminary Consultation can be found here: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/II.B-5419-Mohican-Road-Bethesda.pdf>. The audio of this hearing can be found here: http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=b1ece58c-7caa-11e9-a084-0050569183fa.

² The Staff Report from the August 14, 2019 2nd Preliminary Consultation can be found here: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/II.A-5419-Mohican-Road-Bethesda-complete-report.pdf>. Audio of the hearing can be found here: http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=9a9748eb-bf66-11e9-b703-0050569183fa.

- (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.
- 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 Baltzley and R.A. Charles Castles are positioned high on a bluff overlooking the Potomac River.³ The placement of the proposed construction is also placed on this bluff to take advantage of this vista. 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.

The applicant has revised the previous submission by narrowing the house by 5' (five feet) and moving the house 5' (five feet) to the north, towards Mohican Rd. and away from the R.A. Charles Castle.

³ The R.A. Charles Castle and the Baltzley Castle were constructed as part of a larger development scheme called "Rhinelander on the Potomac" which was abandoned shortly after these two houses were complete. The two houses are each individually listed Master Plan Sites; and the proposed new construction is within the environmental setting of the Charles Castle Site.

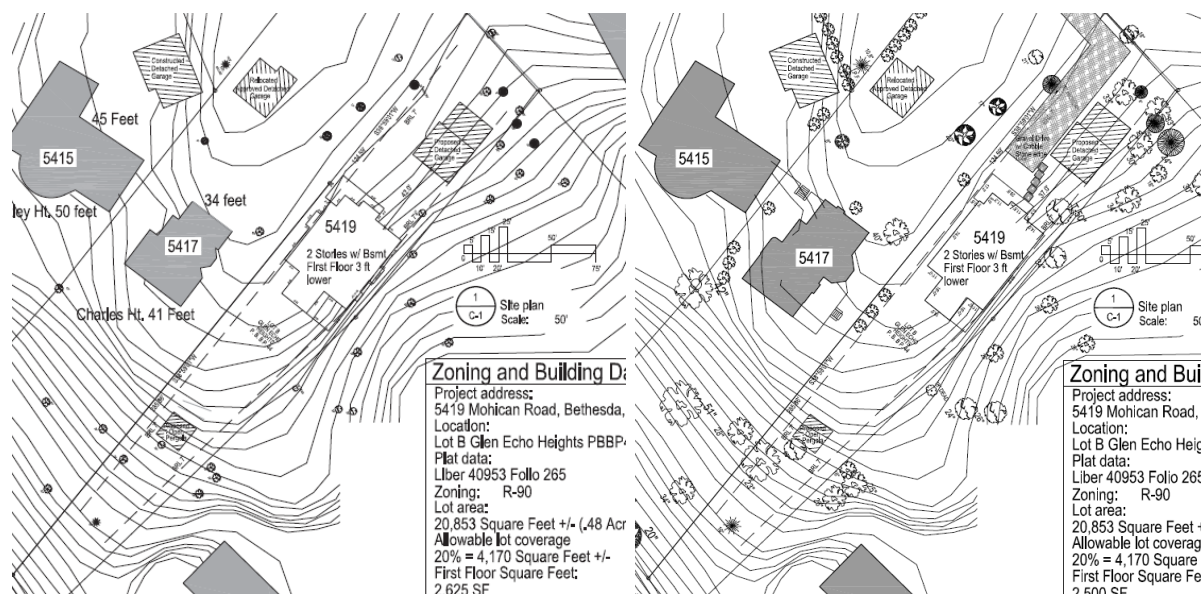


Figure 3: The August 14, 2019 submission (left) and the September 25, 2019 site plan (right).

House Placement

The applicant proposes to place the new house approximately 115' (one hundred fifteen 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 proposed house will be 40' (forty feet) wide, which is 5' (five feet) narrower than the previous design iteration. 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 recommend that the applicant place the house towards the northern end of the lot to the greatest extent practicable so that the new construction will not visually compete with R.A. Charles Castle from the primary 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. In discussion with Staff and as mentioned at the August 14th HPC meeting, moving the house any further to the north would require the removal of a 50" (fifty inch) d.b.h. pine tree.

House Size and Design

There have only been minor changes to the house design from the previous submission. The design revisions have been driven by the reduction in width from 45' (forty-five feet) to 40' (forty feet) and lengthening the house by 4' (four feet); from 51' (fifty-one feet) to 55' (fifty-five feet). The proposed house will be 45' x 55' (forty feet wide by fifty-five feet deep) with a 16' (sixteen foot) projection at the south end. The height of the proposed house has not changed from the previous submission and 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 approximately 40' (forty feet) from grade to ridge height. The footprint of the proposed house is larger than the R.A. Charles Castle. The footprint of the R.A. Charles Castle is approximately 30' x 46' (thirty feet wide by forty-six feet deep). This measurement does not include the substantial stone porch on the south elevation. 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 submitted perspective rendering shows the step-down of roof lines from the Baltzley Castle, to the Charles Castle, to the proposed construction.

The style of the proposed house remains unchanged from the previous submission and is 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 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. At the August 14th HPC meeting, the majority of the Commissioners present supported the use of this style as sufficiently differentiated from the historic house and indicated their support of the style and detailing moving forward.

The Queen Anne-style, R.A. Charles Castle is a rustic stone building with a vertical orientation. The new construction's proposed fiber cement siding will stress the horizontal orientation, further differentiating the proposed construction from the historic. 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. 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.

Staff finds that the placement, height, and design of the proposed building all help to make the new construction appear subservient to the R.A. Charles Castle when viewed from Macarthur Blvd. Even though Staff maintains that the most significant view of the historic house is from Macarthur Blvd., Staff finds that the proposed house still appears too wide to be compatible with the R.A. Charles Castle when viewed from the Mohican elevation. 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. At the August 14th Preliminary Consultation, several of the Commissioners recommended “exploding the box” to help break up the massing of the house, which could help to make the house appear less massive, even without a reduction in the overall dimensions. Other Commissioners suggested revising the design with a narrower, longer house. While the current proposal is both longer and narrower than the prior submission, Staff finds that these revisions are merely nibbling around the edges and do not constitute the substantive change recommended by the HPC.

Staff request guidance from the HPC regarding the size, placement, and massing of the proposed construction.

Garage and Hardscaping

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 submitted tree survey shows a 24” d.b.h (twenty-four inch) hickory tree in the area of the proposed driveway. In testimony provided by the applicant at the August 14th Preliminary Consultation, this tree will need to be removed as part of the site work associated with the new construction. Staff finds that the site limits the placement of the drive to this location and the tree needs to be removed to provide access to the site. Staff would recommend removal of this tree at the HAWP stage.

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 33’ (thirty-three 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 37' (thirty-seven 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. Staff requests any input on the proposed garage from the HPC.

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 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.

In the Staff Report for the August 14th Preliminary Consultation, Staff asserted that the heavily wooded lot was a character defining feature of the Master Plan site. It has since been brought to Staff's attention that immediately following the construction of the Baltzley and R.A. Charles Castles, the site – at least adjacent to the buildings – had been de-forested, likely to provide maximum views of the river below (see figure below). In the intervening century and a quarter, a mature tree canopy has grown around these houses and, while not historically significant, Staff finds should be retained to the maximum extent possible and notes that all trees in excess of 6" (six inches) d.b.h. need to be submitted for review and approval by the HPC. The HPC has the discretion to require additional plantings on the site to mitigate for removal as part of the development.



Figure 4: Historic photo of the Baltzley Castle, with R.A. Charles Castle in the background (date unknown).

Staff request the HPC provide feedback on:

- The revisions to the size and placement of the proposed construction;
- The appropriateness of the proposed massing;
- 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 2086
Street Number City State Zip Code
Contractor: MANAGE BUILDERS Phone No.: 301-228-8343
Contractor Registration No.: 426545
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
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

5417

5419

2 Stories w/ Bsmt
First Floor 3 ft
lower

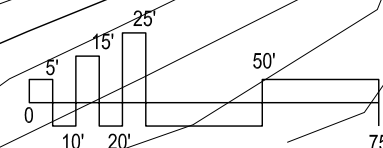
Constructed
Detached
Garage

Relocated
Approved Detached
Garage

Gravel Drive
w/ Cobble
Stone edge

Proposed
Detached
Garage

Proposed
Open
Pergola



1
C-1
Site 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:
2,500 SF

11

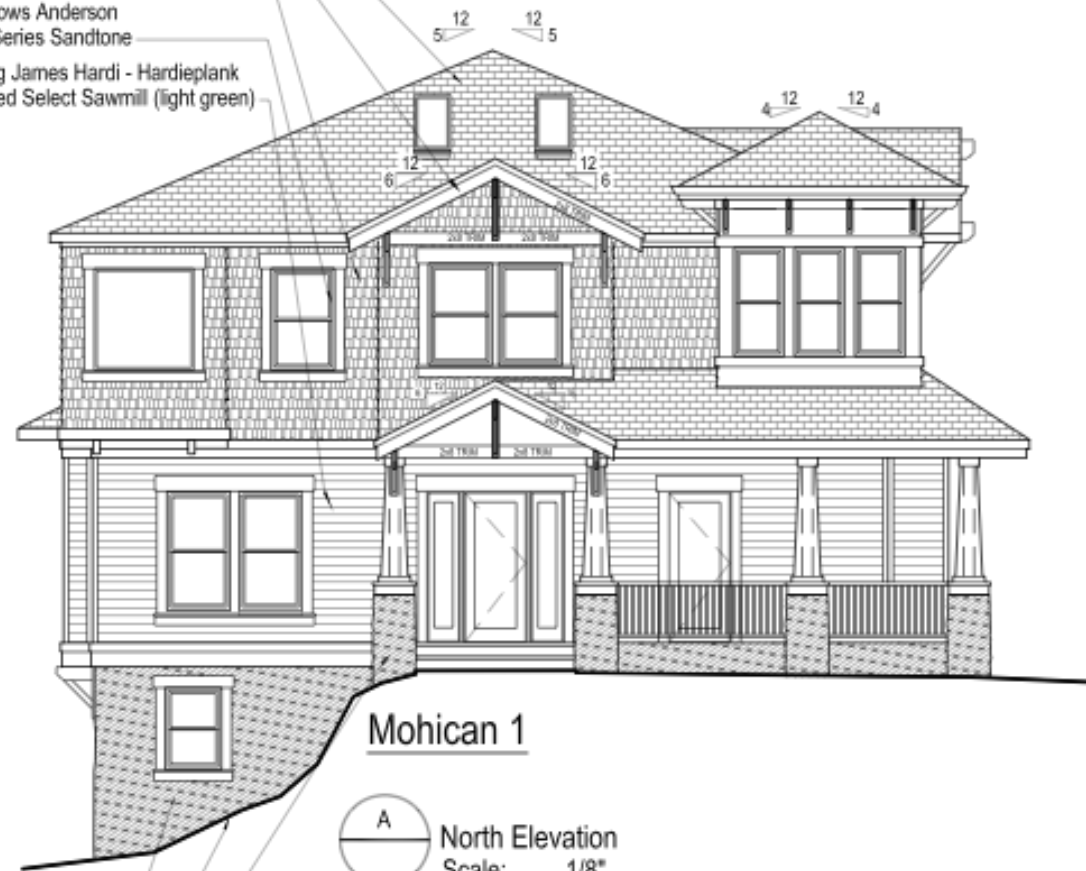
Roof Shingles GAF Timberline
40 year Williamsburg Slate

Trim - James Hardi (white)

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

Windows Anderson
400 Series Sandtone

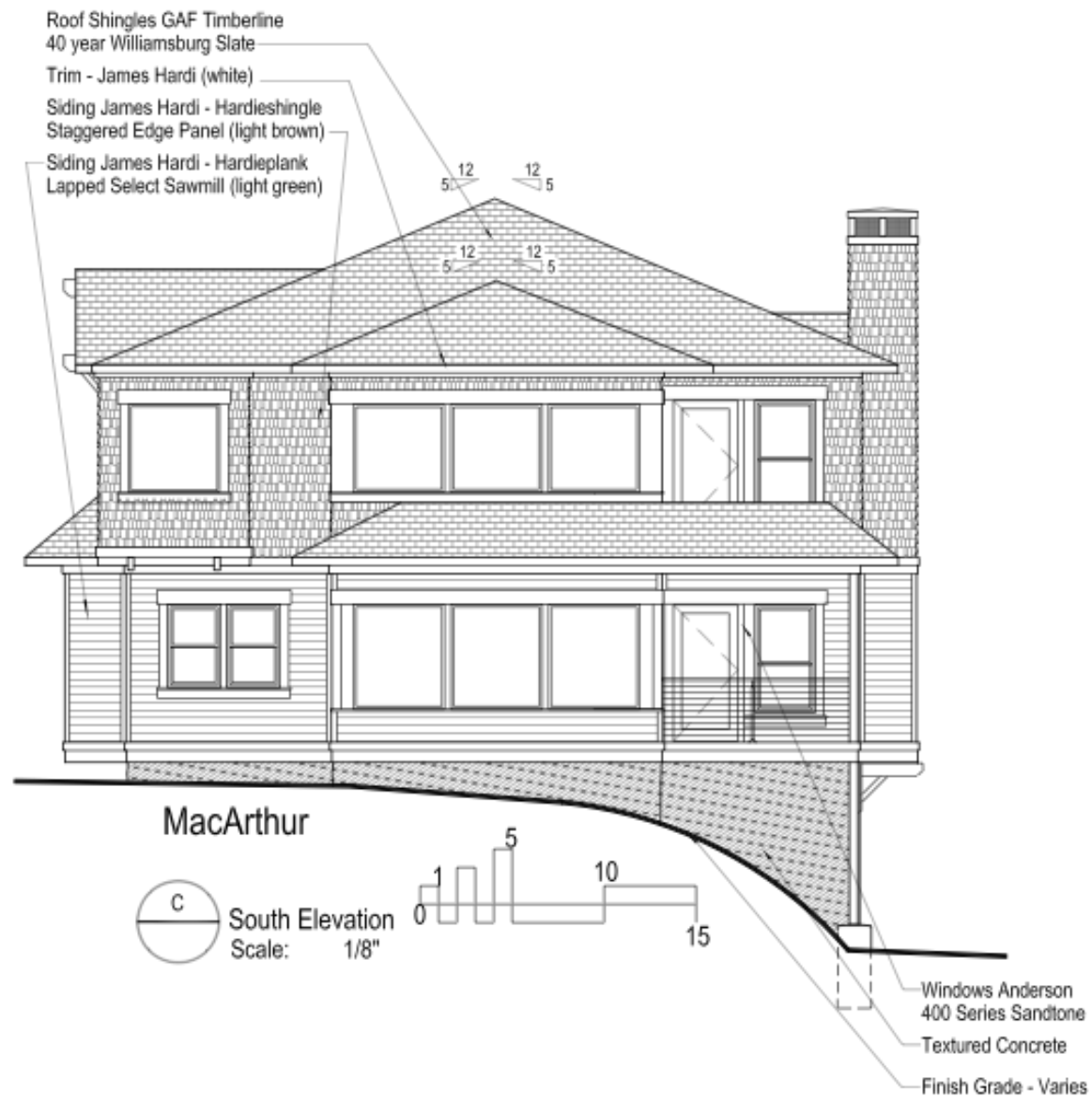
Siding James Hardi - Hardieplank
Lapped Select Sawmill (light green)



Textured Concrete

Finish Grade - Varies

Column Bases Natural
Stone - thin veneers



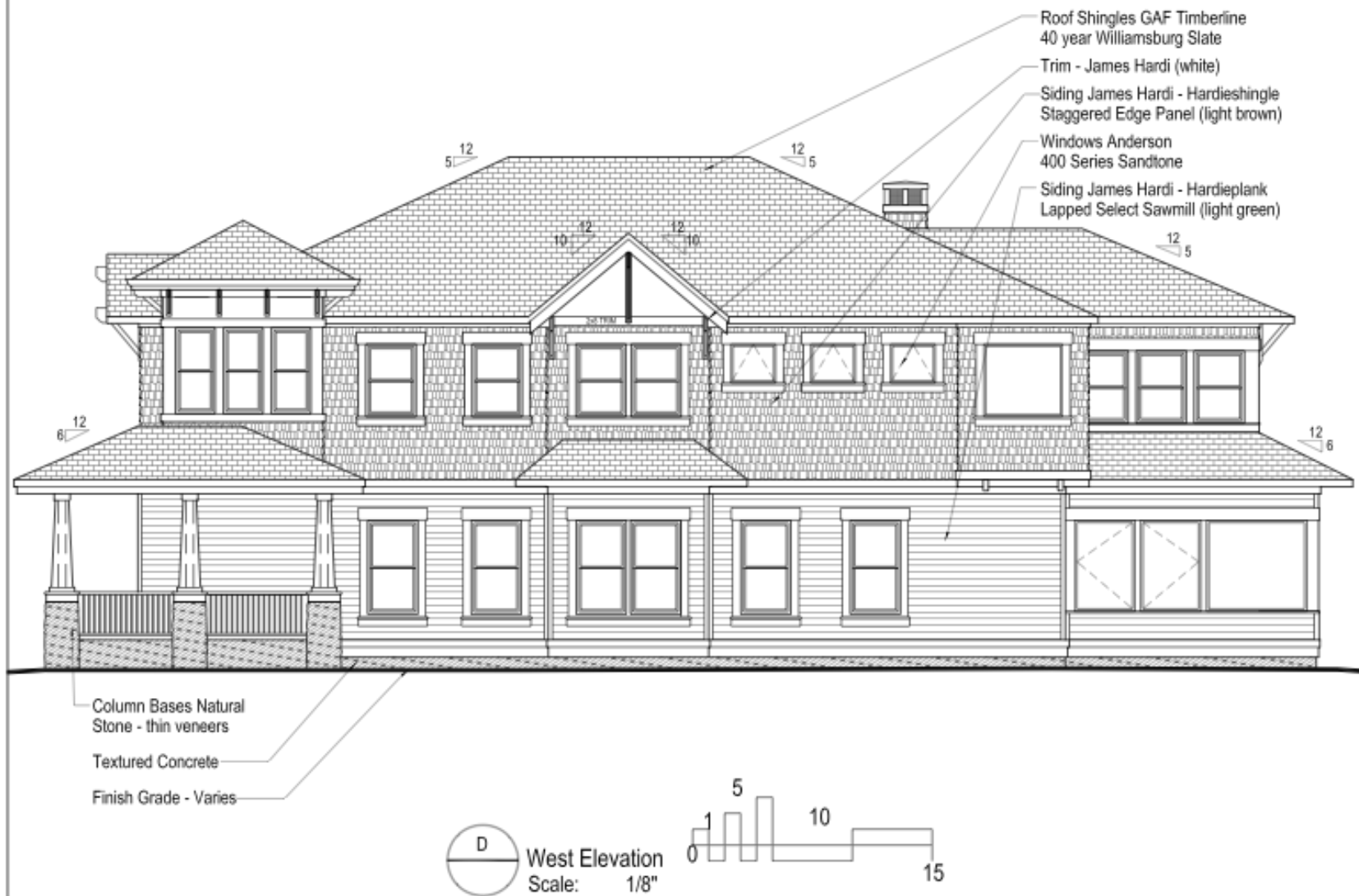




Figure 1: View from Mohican Rd. (white block, house at 5407 Mohican Rd.).

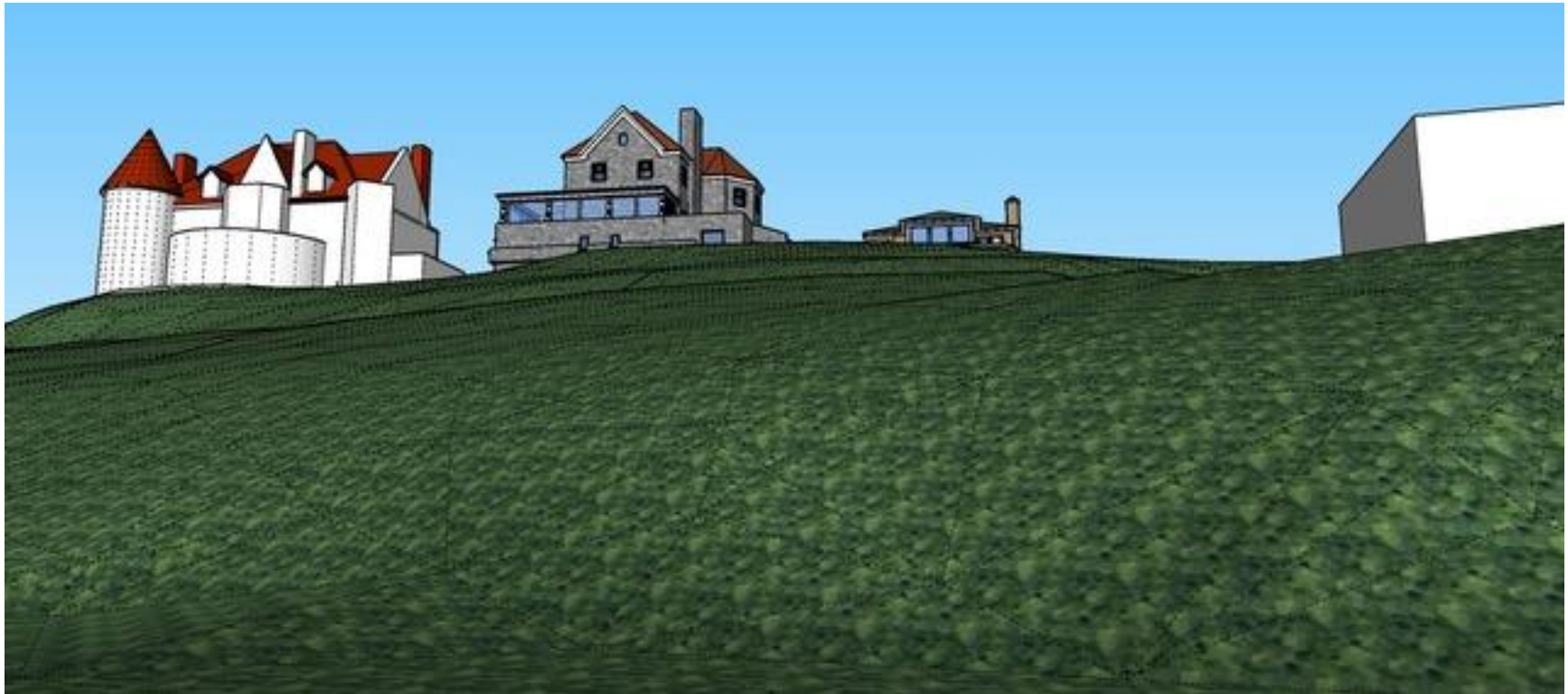
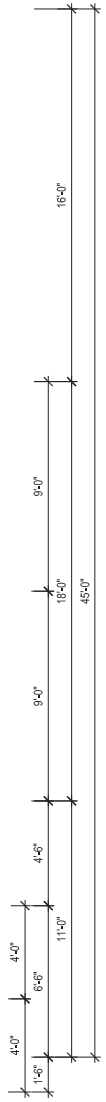
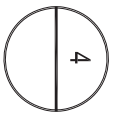
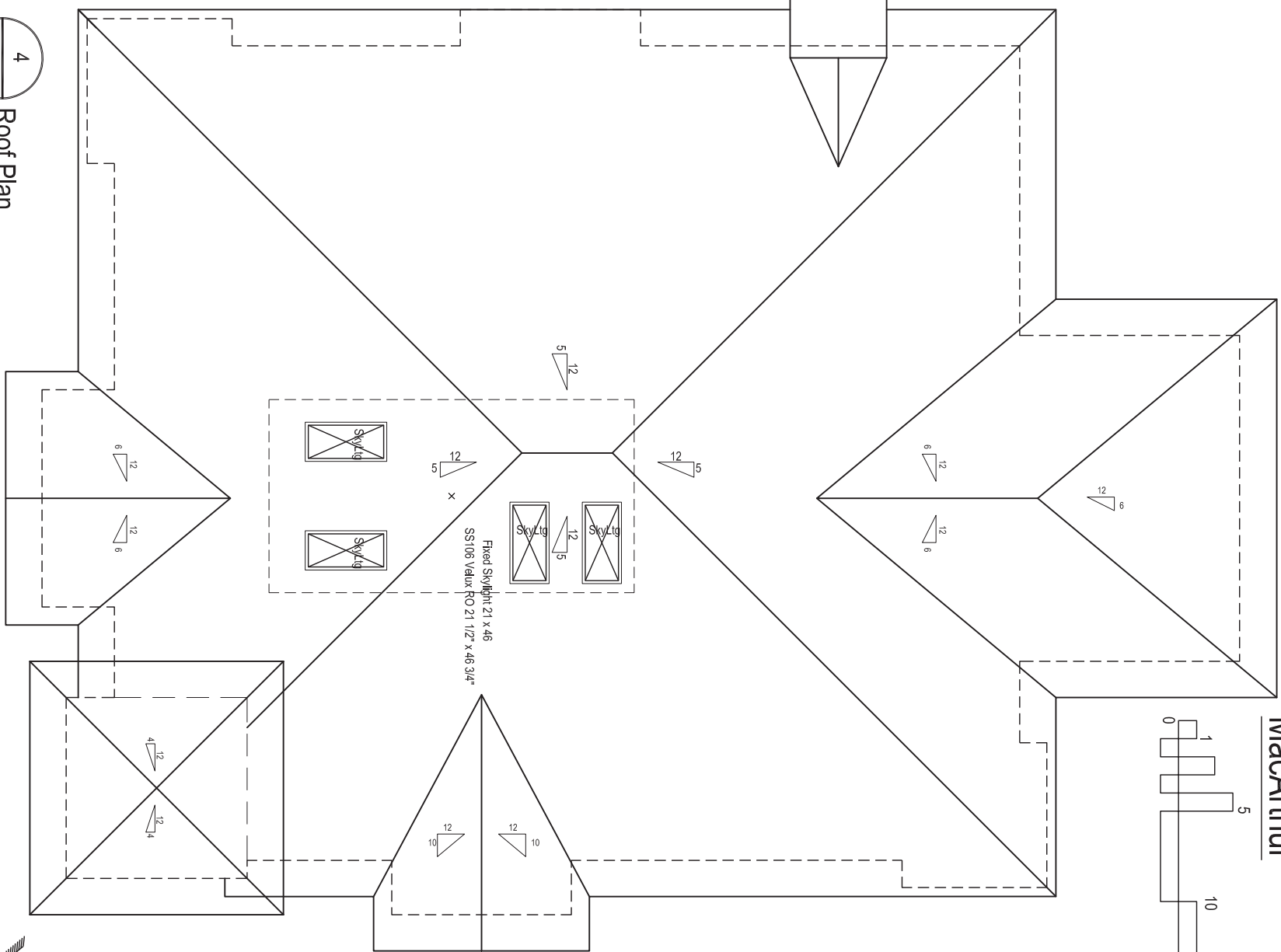
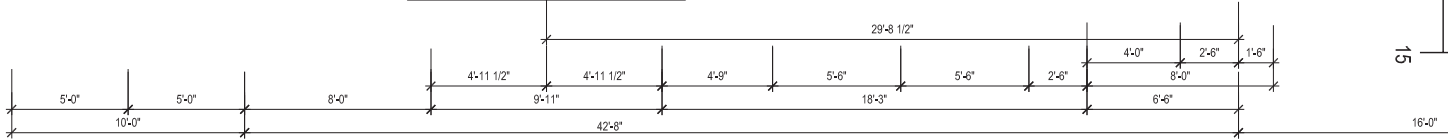
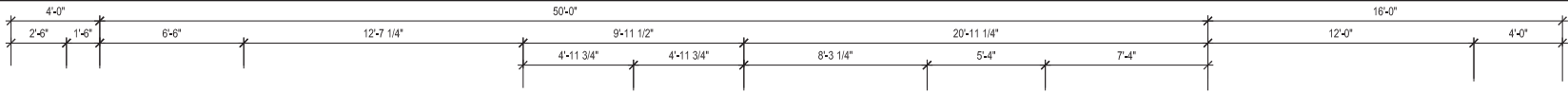
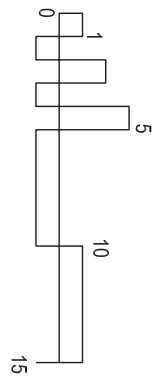


Figure 2: View from MacArthur Blvd. (Mohican Swimming Club Building on left).

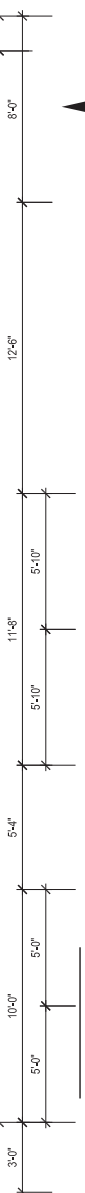
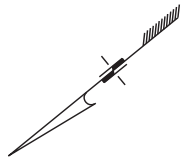


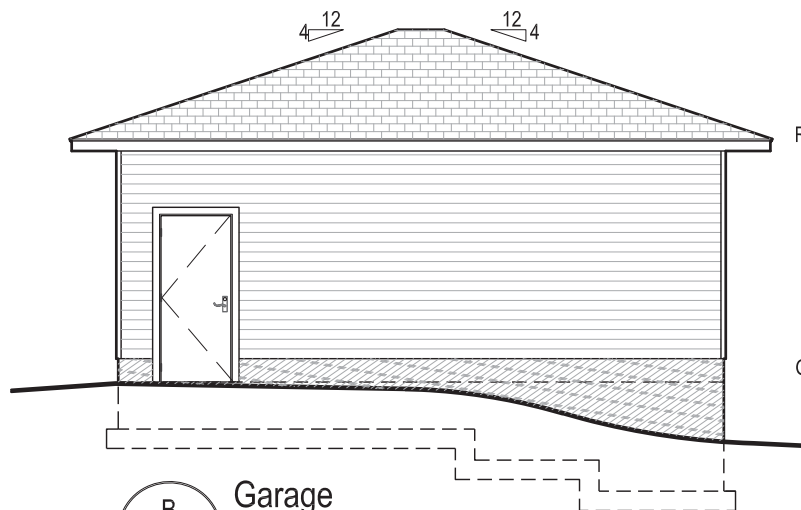
MacArthur



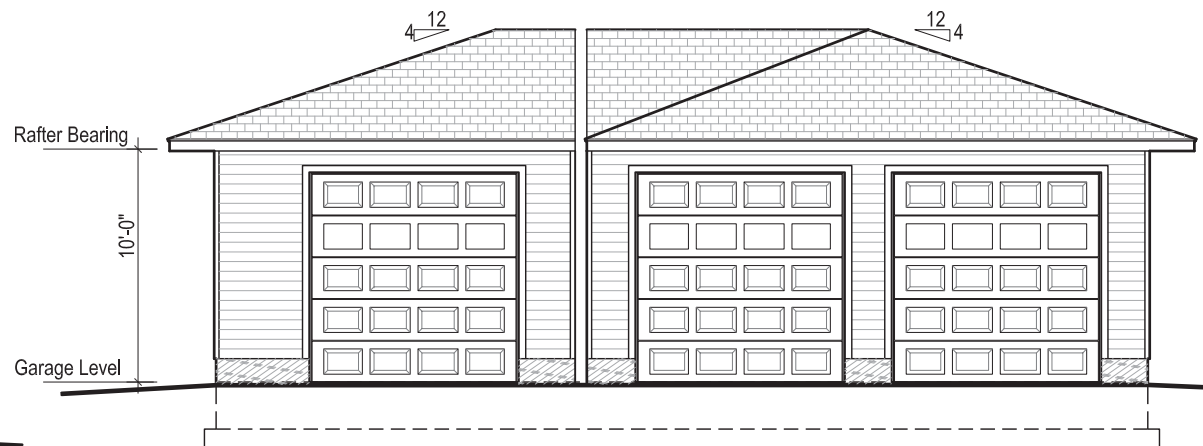
Roof Plan
Scale: 1/8"
Reference North

Mohican

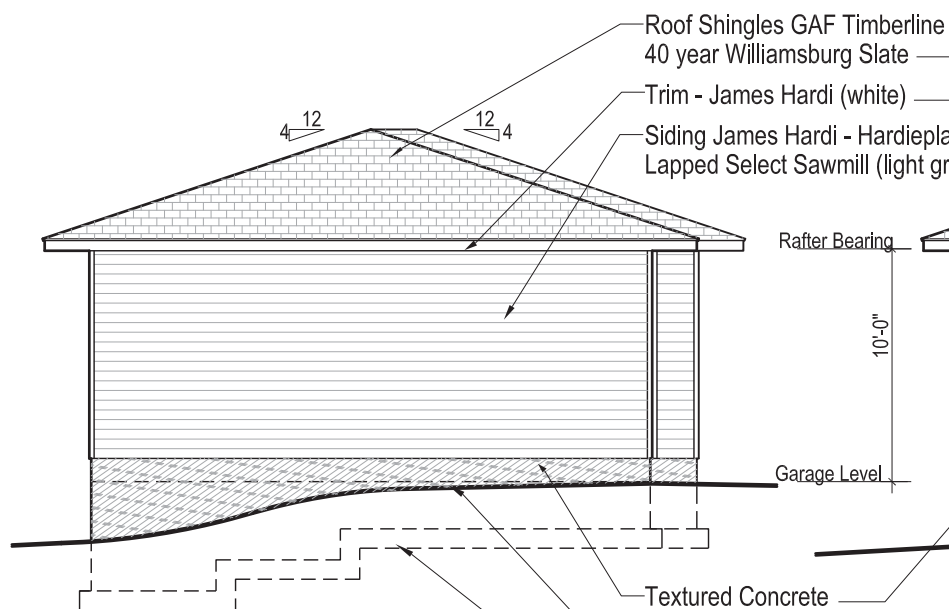
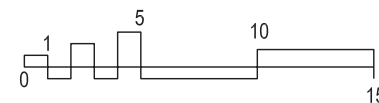




B Garage
South Elevation
Scale: 1/8"



A Garage
West Elevation
Scale: 1/8"



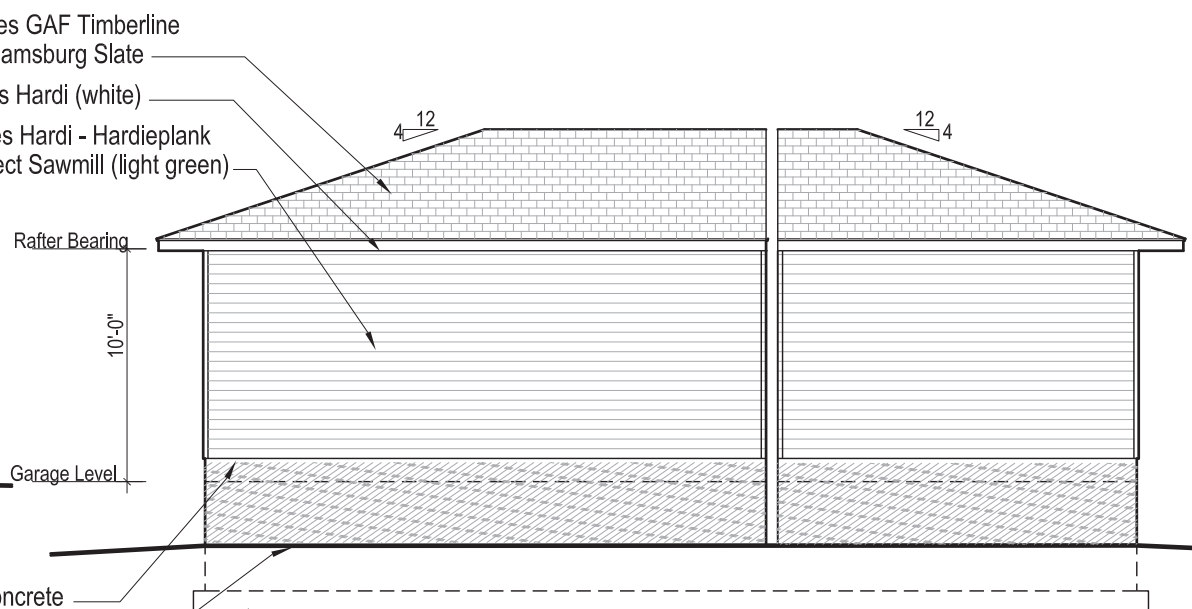
D Garage
North Elevation
Scale: 1/8"

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

Textured Concrete

Finish Grade - Varies

Line of frost footing



C Garage
East Elevation
Scale: 1/8"

