

**MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**  
**STAFF REPORT**

<b>Address:</b>	7417 Baltimore Ave., Takoma Park	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	12/16/2020
<b>Resource:</b>	Contributing Resource <b>Takoma Park Historic District</b>	<b>Report Date:</b>	12/9/2020
<b>Applicant:</b>	Benjamin and Jess Bregman	<b>Public Notice:</b>	12/2/2020
<b>Review:</b>	HAWP	<b>Tax Credit:</b>	partial
<b>Case No.:</b>	37/03-20AAAAA	<b>Staff:</b>	Dan Bruechert
<b>Proposal:</b>	Porch Alterations		

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the HPC **approve with one (1) condition** the HAWP application:

1. The full height of the front porch columns needs to have a stucco finish with straight sides, eliminating the battered design. Staff will verify this condition has been met upon submission of the permit set of plans.

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Contributing Resource within the Takoma Park Historic District  
**STYLE:** Prairie Style  
**DATE:** c.1910



*Fig. 1: 7417 Baltimore Ave. is at the northeast corner of Baltimore and Cleveland Ave.*

## **BACKGROUND**

The applicant presented a Preliminary Consultation at the continuation of the October 14, 2020 HPC meeting.<sup>1</sup> The proposal presented was to remove the entire front porch, severely damaged by a tree fall, and reconstruct a Craftsman-style front porch. The HPC was nearly uniform in their position that the Prairie details of the existing porch needed to be reconstructed. The applicant has submitted revised plans based on that feedback and has returned for a HAWP.

## **PROPOSAL**

The applicant proposes to reconstruct the existing front porch.

## **APPLICABLE GUIDELINES**

When reviewing alterations and new construction within the Takoma Park Historic District several documents are to be utilized as guidelines to assist the Commission in developing their decision. These documents include the historic preservation review guidelines in the approved and adopted amendment for the *Takoma Park Historic District (Guidelines)*, *Montgomery County Code Chapter 24A (Chapter 24A)*, and *the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (Standards)*. The pertinent information in these documents is outlined below.

### ***Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines***

There are two very general, broad planning and design concepts which apply to all categories. These are:

- The design review emphasis will be restricted to changes that are all visible from the public right-of-way, irrespective of landscaping or vegetation (it is expected that the majority of new additions will be reviewed for their impact on the overall district), and
- The importance of assuring that additions and other changes to existing structures act to reinforce and continue existing streetscape, landscape, and building patterns rather than to impair the character of the historic district.

Contributing Resources should receive a more lenient review than those structures that have been classified as Outstanding. This design review should emphasize the importance of the resource to the overall streetscape and its compatibility with existing patterns rather than focusing on a close scrutiny of architectural detailing. In general, however, changes to Contributing Resources should respect the predominant architectural style of the resource. As stated above, the design review emphasis will be restricted to changes that are *at all visible from the public right-of-way*, irrespective of landscaping or vegetation.

Some of the factors to be considered in reviewing HAWPs on Contributing Resources include:

All exterior alterations, including those to architectural features and details, should be generally consistent with the predominant architectural style and period of the resource and should preserve

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<sup>1</sup> The Staff Report and application for the Preliminary Consultation can be found here: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/IV.E-7417-Baltimore-Avenue-Takoma-Park.pdf> and the recording of the meeting can be found here: [http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish\\_id=1411ee9e-12f9-11eb-80dd-0050569183fa](http://mncppc.granicus.com/MediaPlayer.php?publish_id=1411ee9e-12f9-11eb-80dd-0050569183fa).

the predominant architectural features of the resource; exact replication of existing details and features is, however, not required

While additions should be compatible, they are not required to be replicative of earlier architectural styles

Original size and shape of window and door openings should be maintained, where feasible

Some non-original building materials may be acceptable on a case-by-case basis; artificial siding on areas visible to the public right-of-way is discouraged where such materials would replace or damage original building materials that are in good condition

All changes and additions should respect existing environmental settings, landscaping, and patterns of open space.

***Montgomery County Code; Chapter 24A-8***

- (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 ensure 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
- (d) In the case of an application for work on an historic resource located within an historic district, the commission shall be lenient in its judgment of plans for structures of little historical or design significance or for plans involving new construction, unless such plans would seriously impair the historic or architectural value of surrounding historic resources or would impair the character of the historic district. (Ord. No. 9-4, § 1; Ord. No. 11-59.)

***Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:***

- 2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall 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 subject property is a modified two-story Prairie-style house with stucco siding on the first floor and fiber cement siding on the second floor. The first porch has a hipped roof with broad overhangs. The house was constructed as a one-story house that was expanded in 1995 when it received an approved HAWP for a second-floor addition. The second-floor pop up was setback two bays from the historic house form. Recently, a tree fell and damaged the porch rafters and exterior stucco (see below).





*Figure 2: Undated photo of the subject property prior to the 1995 addition.*



*Figure 3: The subject property showing tarps over the damaged roof and exterior stucco.*



Figure 4: 1954 Sanborn showing the subject property as a one-story house.

The existing front porch was recently evaluated and determined to be structurally insufficient (letter attached). The applicant proposes to remove the existing front porch. At the preliminary consultation, the HPC acknowledged the need to remove the existing front porch, and the discussion focused on what to be constructed in its place.

The revised proposal will construct a new front porch over the existing with a hipped roof matching the height and overhang of the historic hipped front porch. The stairs, stucco siding, and knee wall will be reconstructed in matching dimensions and Staff has determined that these are in-kind replacements. The three changes proposed are to the front roof pitch, the soffit treatment, and at the columns.

First, the applicant proposes to change the front roof slope. The existing roof framing has been found to be insufficient. Currently, the hip intersects two rafters to the rear of the front wall plane. The new proposal has a slightly steeper pitch on the front roof plain so the hip is directly above the front wall plane. This placement will utilize the front wall framing to provide additional support for the porch roof.



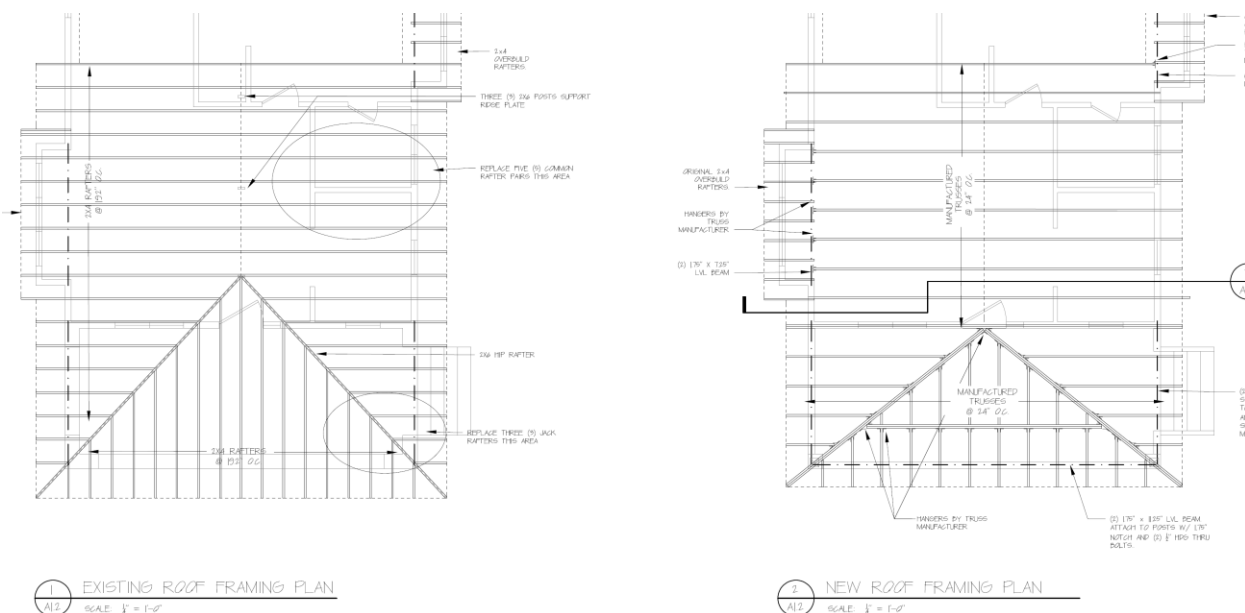


Figure 5: Roof framing showing the existing (left) and the proposed (right) and the intersection of the roof planes.

Staff finds that while this change will alter the roofline, the slope will have a lower pitch than the surrounding houses, it will still stand out as a Prairie design; thereby retaining the character-defining importance of this element. Staff supports approval of the change to the roof pitch under 24A-8(b)(2) and (d).

The second proposed change is at the porch soffit. The existing soffit is a combination of wood and stucco. The applicant proposes to install a vented vinyl soffit. Because of the deep roof overhang, the soffit will only be visible when one is directly underneath the roof. Staff finds that this is an appropriate use of a non-original material due to its placement and because the added ventilation will allow the roof to properly ventilate. Staff supports approval of the vinyl soffit under 24A-8(d) and the *Design Guidelines*.

Finally, the applicant proposes changing the porch columns. The existing columns are large square stucco columns with low openings under the beams. The applicant proposes to construct smaller columns, with square stucco bases and battered wood columns and to eliminate the stucco under the porch beams. Staff finds that the battered columns are more in keeping with a Craftsman-style house and while Craftsman and Prairie architecture share several elements, Staff does not find this to be a compatible alteration. Staff recommends the HPC include a condition on the approval that the full height of the front porch columns have a stucco finish with straight sides, eliminating the battered element. Staff will verify that this condition has been met when the permit drawings are submitted for review and stamping.

The HPC was split on the appropriateness of ‘opening up’ the front porch and removing the stucco under the porch beams. At the Preliminary Consultation, the Commissioners who supported opening up the porch cited the *Design Guidelines* which state design review should “emphasize the importance of the resource to the overall streetscape and its compatibility with existing patterns.” The Commissioners who objected did so because they determined the change would change the character of the house so that it no longer expressed the horizontality and “hugged the ground” to the degree found in Prairie architecture. As a Contributing Resource, Staff finds that preserving the dimensions of the porch and the finish texture is more important to the surrounding district than the detailing at the top of the porch opening. Staff recommends the HPC approve expanding the front porch opening by eliminating the stucco under the porch beams under Chapter 24A-8(d) and the *Design Guidelines*.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve with one (1) condition** the HAWP application:

1. The full height of the front porch columns needs to have a stucco finish with straight sides, eliminating the battered design. Staff will verify this condition has been met upon submission of the permit set of plans;

under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(2) and (d), having found that the proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of the historic resource and is compatible in character with the district and the purposes of Chapter 24A; the *Takoma Park Design Guidelines*;

and with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* #2, 9, and 10;

and with the general condition that the applicant shall present the **3 permit sets of drawings, if applicable, to Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) staff for review and stamping** prior to submission for the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services (DPS) building permits;

and with the general condition that final project design details, not specifically delineated by the Commission, shall be approved by HPC staff or brought back to the Commission as a revised HAWP application at staff's discretion;

and with the general condition that the applicant shall notify the Historic Preservation Staff if they propose to make **any alterations** to the approved plans. Once the work is completed the applicant will contact the staff person assigned to this application at 301-563-3400 or [dan.bruechert@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:dan.bruechert@montgomeryplanning.org) to schedule a follow-up site visit.



FOR STAFF ONLY:  
HAWP# 925081  
DATE ASSIGNED \_\_\_\_\_

# APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
301.563.3400

## APPLICANT:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Tax Account No.: \_\_\_\_\_

## AGENT/CONTACT (if applicable):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Contractor Registration No.: \_\_\_\_\_

**LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE:** MIHP # of Historic Property \_\_\_\_\_

Is the Property Located within an Historic District? Yes/District Name \_\_\_\_\_

No/Individual Site Name \_\_\_\_\_

Is there an Historic Preservation/Land Trust/Environmental Easement on the Property? If YES, include a map of the easement, and documentation from the Easement Holder supporting this application.

Are other Planning and/or Hearing Examiner Approvals /Reviews Required as part of this Application? (Conditional Use, Variance, Record Plat, etc.?) If YES, include information on these reviews as supplemental information.

Building Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Street: \_\_\_\_\_

Town/City: \_\_\_\_\_ Nearest Cross Street: \_\_\_\_\_

Lot: \_\_\_\_\_ Block: \_\_\_\_\_ Subdivision: \_\_\_\_\_ Parcel: \_\_\_\_\_

**TYPE OF WORK PROPOSED: See the checklist on Page 4 to verify that all supporting items for proposed work are submitted with this application. Incomplete Applications will not be accepted for review. Check all that apply:**

☐ New Construction

☐ Deck/Porch

☐ Shed/Garage/Accessory Structure

☐ Addition

☐ Fence

☐ Solar

☐ Demolition

☐ Hardscape/Landscape

☐ Tree removal/planting

☐ Grading/Excavation

☐ Roof

☐ Window/Door

☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of owner or authorized agent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



**Description of Property:** Please describe the building and surrounding environment. Include information on significant structures, landscape features, or other significant features of the property:

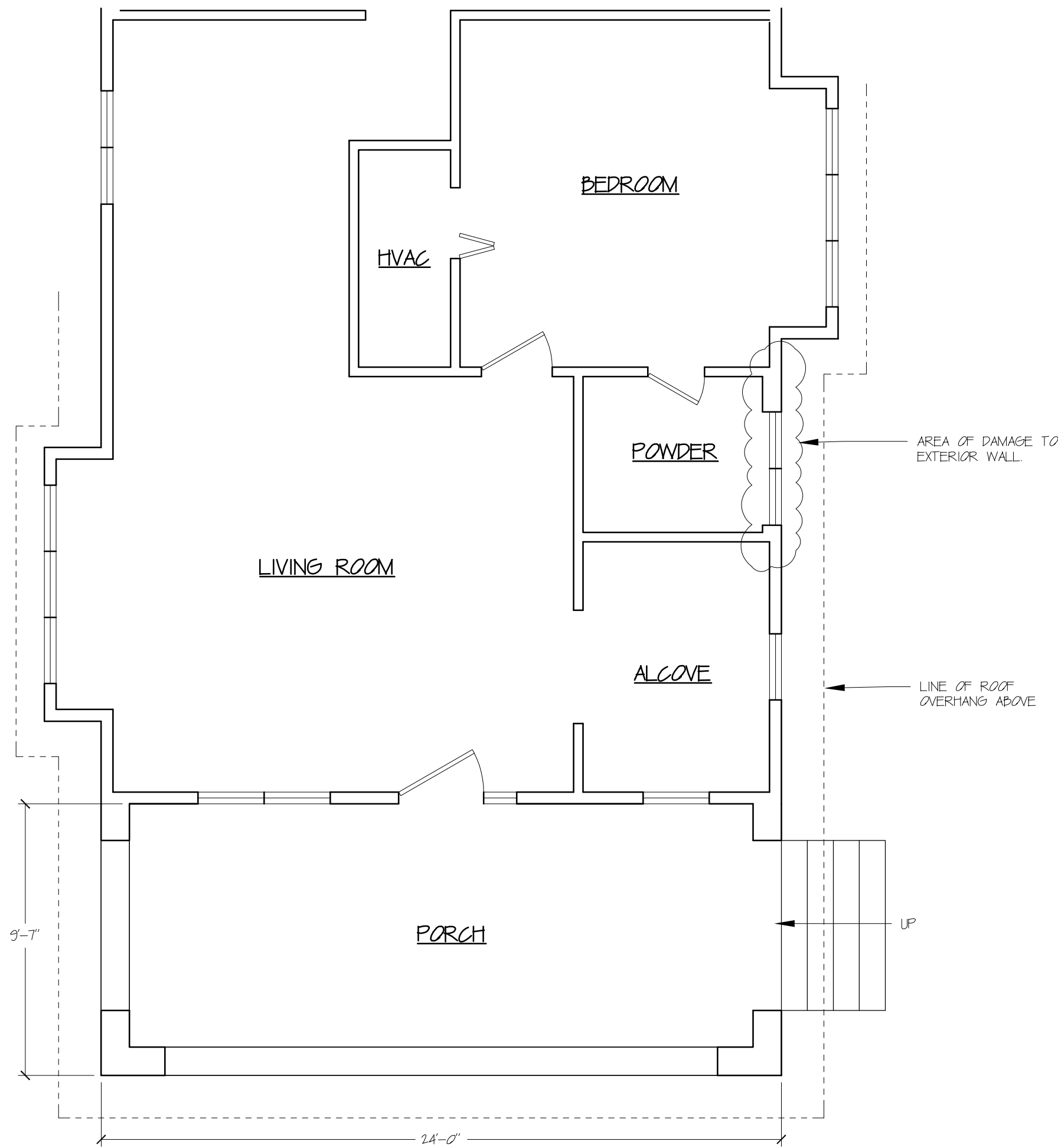
**Description of Work Proposed:** Please give an overview of the work to be undertaken:

Work Item 1: _____	
Description of Current Condition:	Proposed Work:

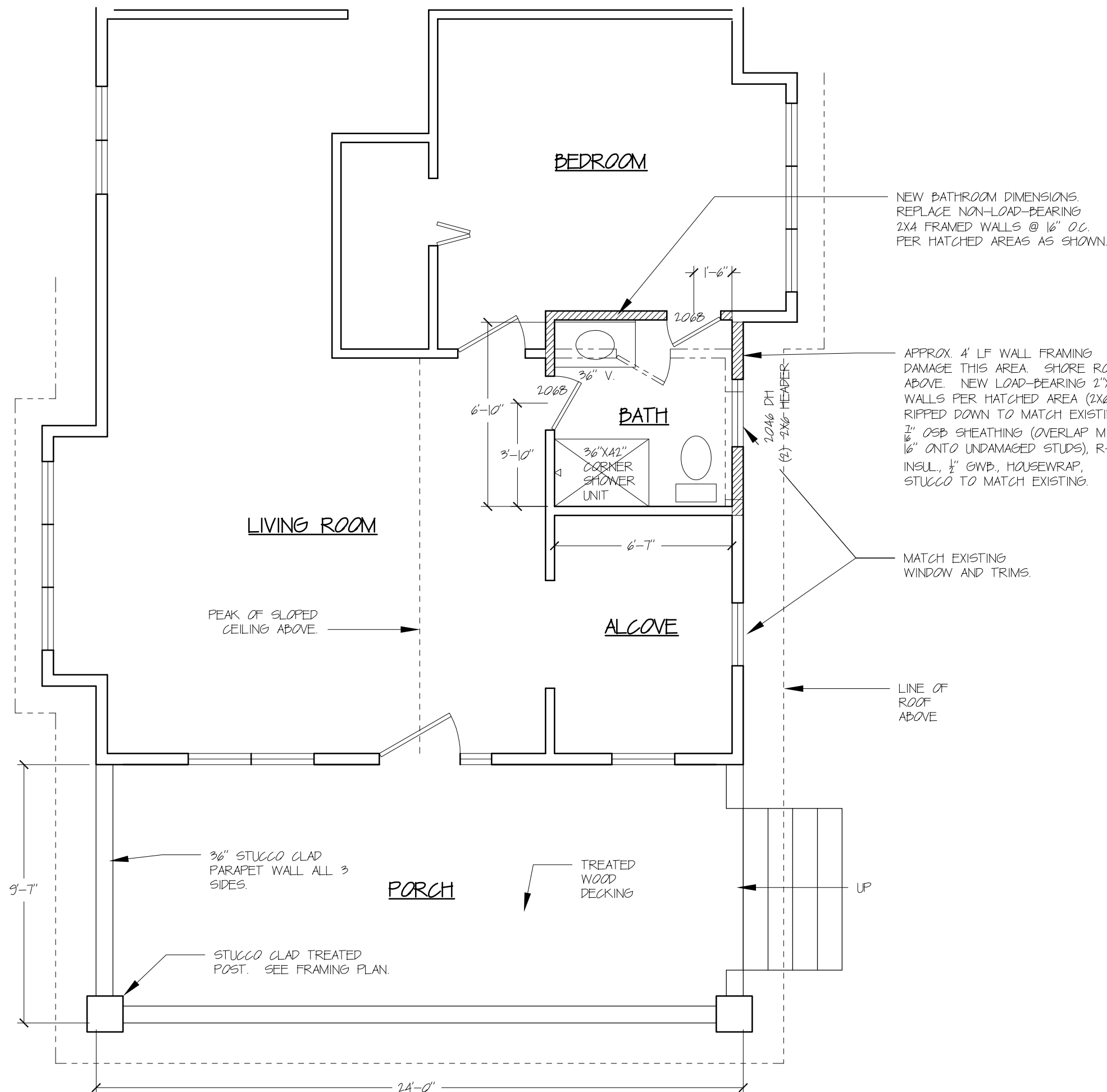
Work Item 2: _____	
Description of Current Condition:	Proposed Work:

Work Item 3: _____	
Description of Current Condition:	Proposed Work:

MONTGOMERY COUNTY RESERVED SPACE



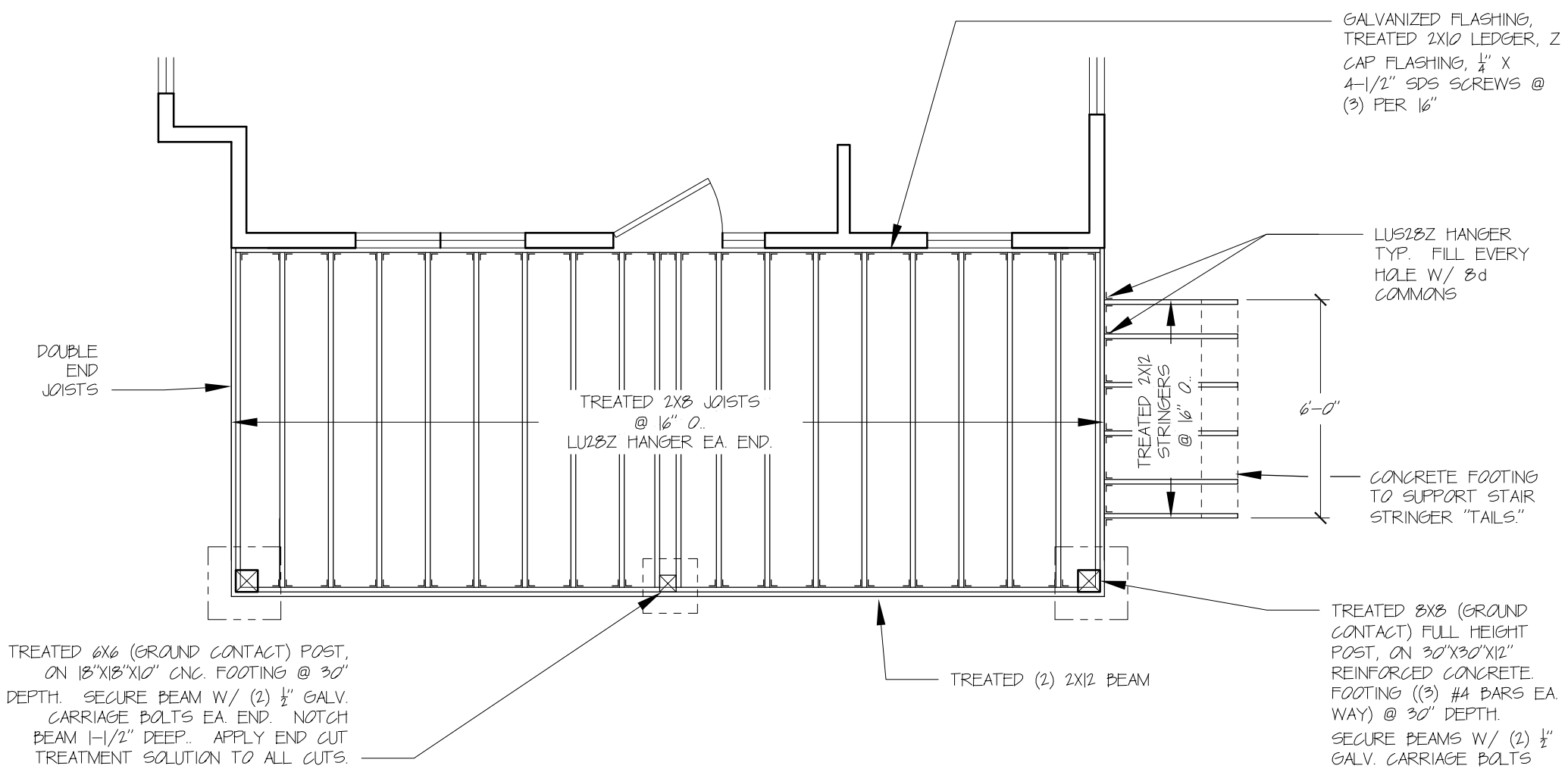
1 EXISTING MAIN FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



2 PROPOSED NEW FLOOR PLAN  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



3 PROPOSED NEW PORCH ELEVATION  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



4 PROPOSED NEW PORCH FLOOR FRAMING PLAN  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

MACKAY  
CONSTRUCTION  
SERVICES, INC.

ENGINEER

ROBERT MACKAY

PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION:  
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THESE  
DOCUMENTS WERE PREPARED  
OR APPROVED BY ME, AND THAT I  
AM A DAILY LICENSED  
PROFESSIONAL ENGINEER  
UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE  
OF MARYLAND.

LICENSE NUMBER 46366  
EXPIRATION DATE: 11/1/2021

FLOOR PLANS, PORCH FRAMING  
PLAN

7417 BALTIMORE AVENUE  
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

BREGMAN REPAIRS

REVISIONS:

Permit: 11-18-2020

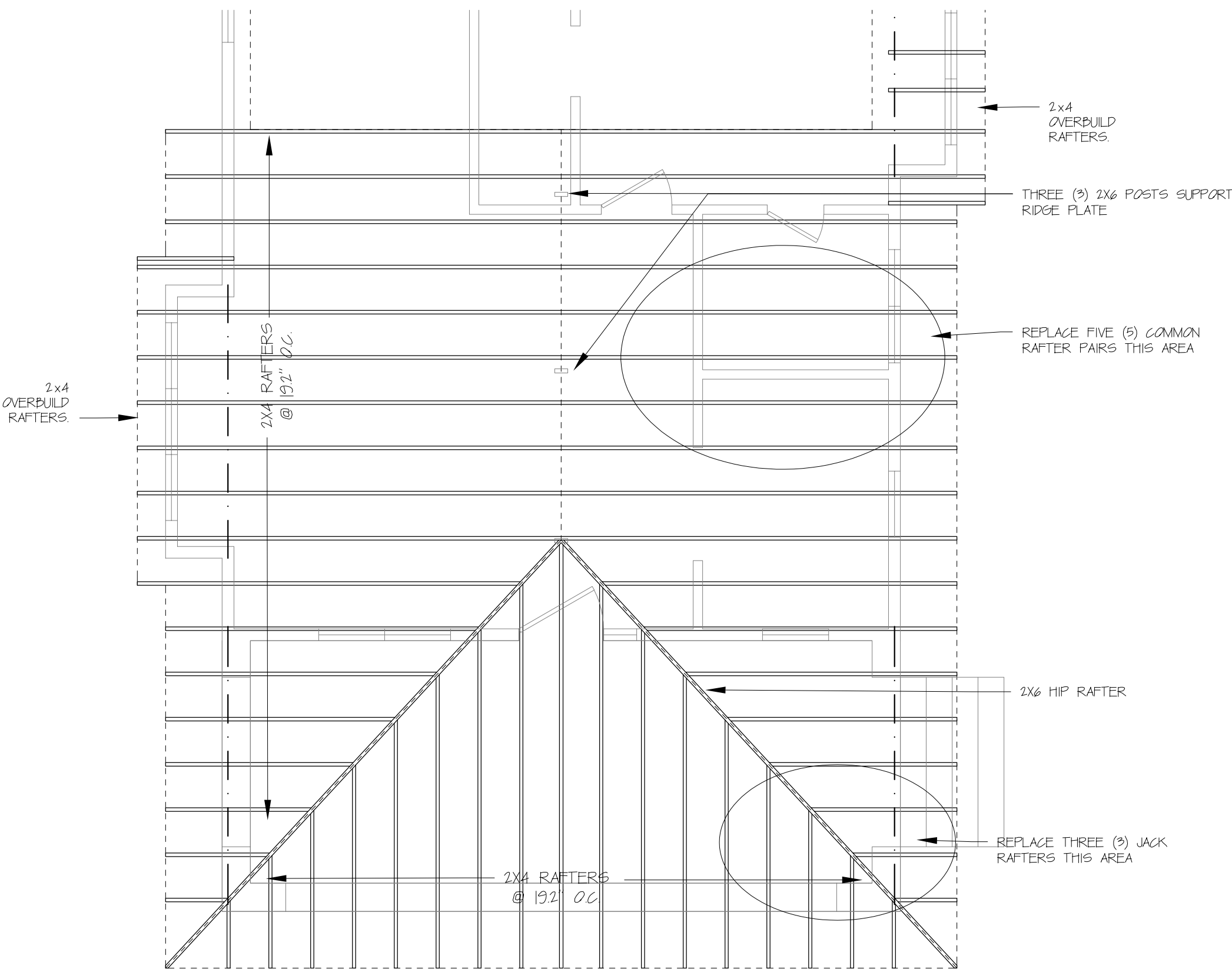
SHEET NUMBER:

A1.3

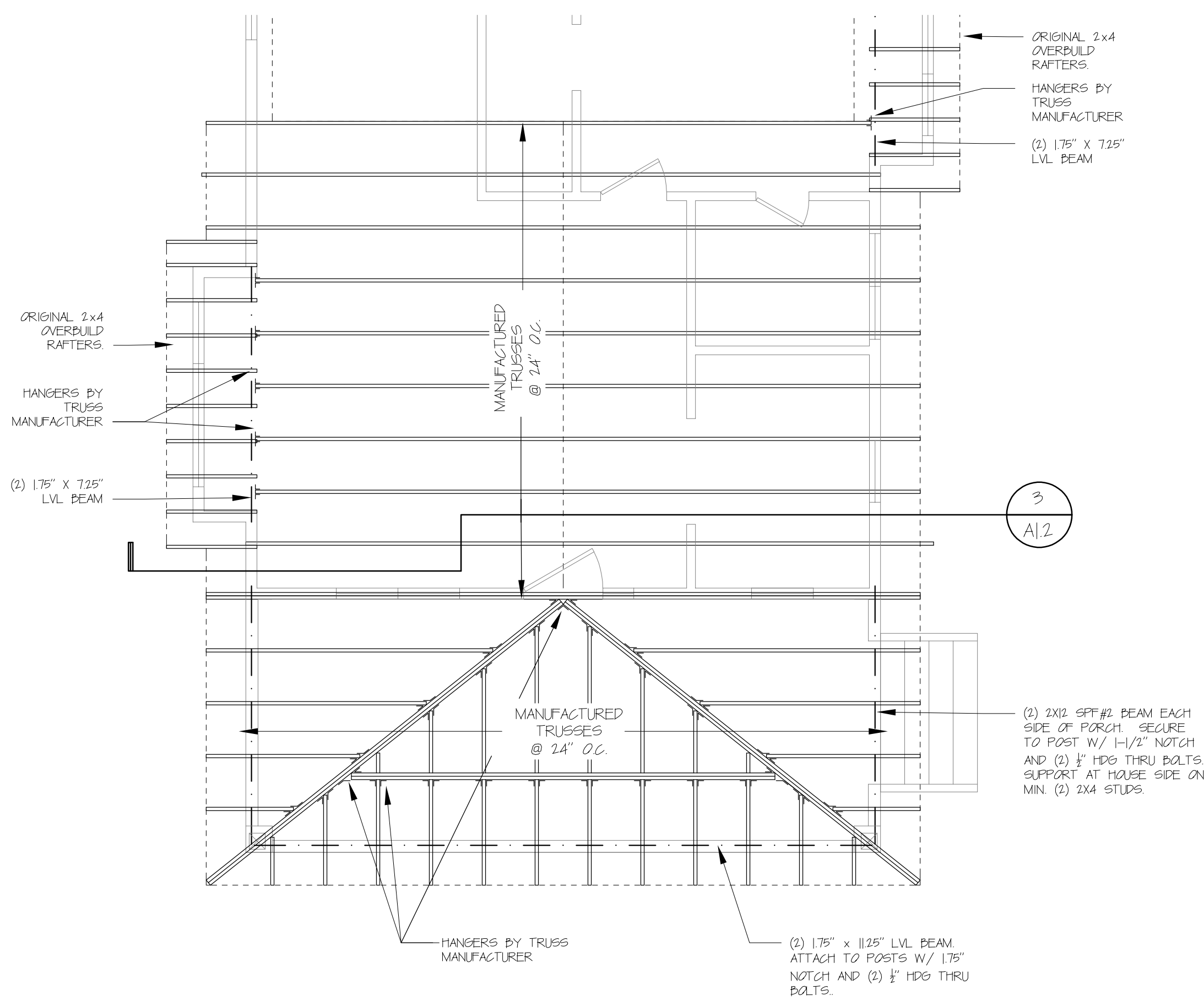
NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION

1 OF 3

MONTGOMERY COUNTY RESERVED SPACE

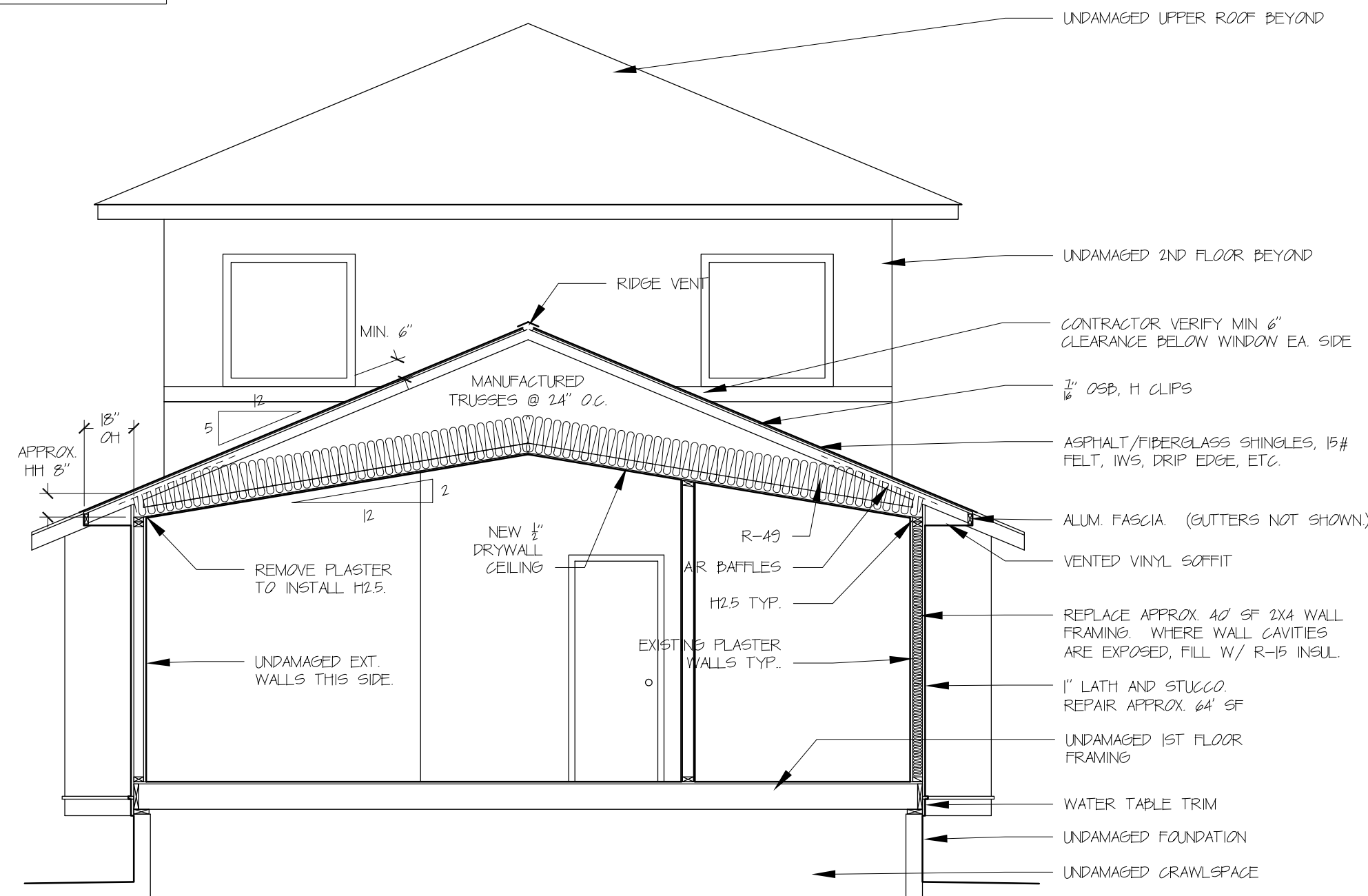


1 EXISTING ROOF FRAMING PLAN  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



2 NEW ROOF FRAMING PLAN  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

NOTE: TRUSSES SHOWN FOR PICTORIAL/ARCHITECTURAL PURPOSES. CONTRACTOR SHALL MEASURE AND VERIFY DIMENSIONS PRIOR TO ORDERING.



3 SECTION  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

MACKAY  
CONSTRUCTION  
SERVICES, INC.

ENGINEER

ROBERT MACKAY

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UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE  
OF MARYLAND.  
LICENSE NUMBER 46386  
EXPIRATION DATE: 11/12/2021

7417 BALTIMORE AVENUE  
TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

BREGMAN REPAIRS

REVISIONS:

Permit: 11-18-2020

SHEET NUMBER:

A1.2

1 OF 3

NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION



# MACKAY CONSTRUCTION SERVICES, INC.

## ARCHITECTURE, ENGINEERING & ESTIMATING

11867 Ropp Lane, Lovettsville, VA 20180

Gordon MacKay, Ph.D. – (540) 336-6197  
gordon@mackaycs.com

Robert B. MacKay, P.E. – (307) 742-6881  
rob@mackaycs.com

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*\*\*Note: this report updated 7/28/20. See additional/new comments below.*

9 May, 2020

On Monday May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020, a representative of MacKay Construction Services, Inc. inspected a 2-story single family home with finished basement located at 7417 Baltimore Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912, owned by Ben Bregman. Our assignment was to examine the existing structure for roof damage caused by a falling tree or large tree branch. All inspection work was done by visual means with no demolition.

The original home appears to have been constructed during the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a Craftsman style “pattern book” house, with light 2x wood-framed walls and rafters, and uninsulated plaster and “gunnite” stucco coated walls. A large modern 2-story addition has been constructed behind the small original house. Although there is some light damage to gutters and a few shingles on the upper roof, the true structural damage is only to the front 1-story older portion of the house. (See photos below).

The damage is in three locations: cracked/broken common rafters over a small powder room, broken/displaced jack rafters at the corner over top of the porch stairs, and the displaced/broken framed exterior wall of the powder room. See attached photos, plans, and diagrams. The five (5) cracked/broken common rafters are original 2x4 (actual 1-3/4" x 3-1/2") rafters connected to a 1x6 ridge plate at top. All rafters are noticeably bowed due to the fact that they are very undersized for local snow loads. Also, there are no collar- or bottom ties to restrain the outward movement of the common rafters. The 1x6 ridge plate is supported on three (3) 2x6 “posts” which are located over the ceiling of the Living Room below and are not directly supported by walls or framing. 2x6 ceiling joists run perpendicular to the rafters as shown in the framing diagram below. MacKay CS recommends replacing all five (5) rafter pairs and 1x6 roof deck sheathing above. Several repair challenges will be noticed immediately: the existing roof is quite bowed while the new rafters will be straight and much larger, which will cause sheathing to overlap awkwardly onto existing undamaged bowed rafters. Also, the “birds mouth” for the new larger rafters will intrude inside the building envelope awkwardly and require calculations as to the amount of allowable notching. In addition, 2x6 ceiling joists will have to be moved or altered to accommodate larger new rafters, to name a few challenges.

At the corner over the front porch steps, a very long (and also very undersized) 2x6 hip rafter supports 2x4 jack rafters, three (3) of which appear to be broken and/or knocked loose from the hip. The hip rafters themselves are supported by face nails to the ridge plate and rafters, which in turn rest on a 2x6 post and ceiling joist as described above. It was not possible to see whether or not the hip rafter may also have been cracked or broken, but it appeared intact. MacKay CS recommends replacing the jack rafters, along with roof decking above. Again, framing challenges are obvious: the hip rafter itself is very undersized, the peak of the roof is improperly supported, there are no hangers or hardware for the hips, among other problems which will need to be addressed in the repair drawings.

Finally, the exterior wall of the powder room has been pushed inwards approximately 1.5", with significant damage to the window and surrounding stucco. The framing of the wall in this area appears to be 2x4 studs (again actual 1-3/4" x 3-1/2"), 15-pound “tar paper” lath and stucco on the exterior and lath and plaster on the interior. There does not appear to be any wood sheathing on the exterior walls in this area. MacKay CS recommends removing all damaged

stucco and 2x framing, replacement with new studs, sheathing, housewrap, and stucco, along with interior R-15 insulation, plaster, and all finishes.

Clearly this repair presents many design challenges, due to the age and unusual design of the original roof. MacKay CS recommends that a qualified MD design professional devise a suitable repair for approval by City of Takoma Park and Montgomery County, Maryland.

Should any further damage -- or information which contradicts this report -- be revealed in the course of repairs, MacKay Construction Services, Inc. requests that we be notified immediately and allowed to reconsider the recommendations contained in this report.

Sincerely,

Robert B. MacKay, PE



Figure 1. Front/right elevation



Figure 2. Right elevation

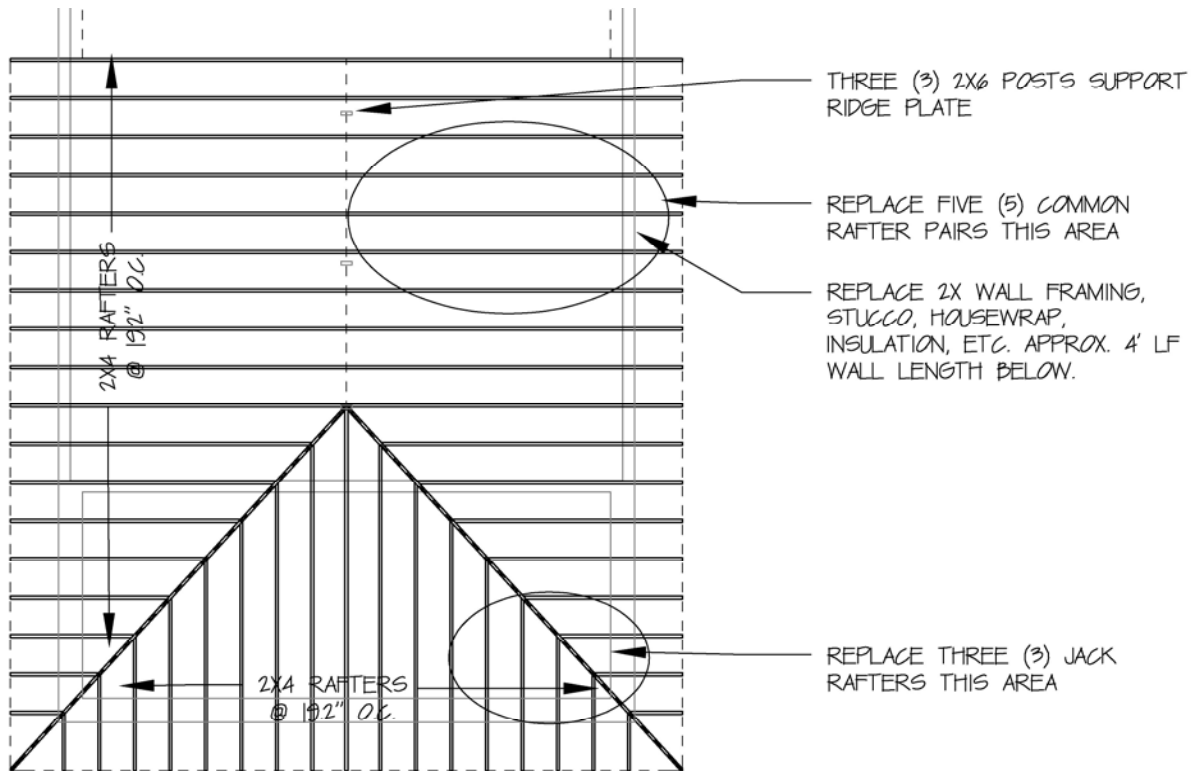


Figure 3. Framing Plan

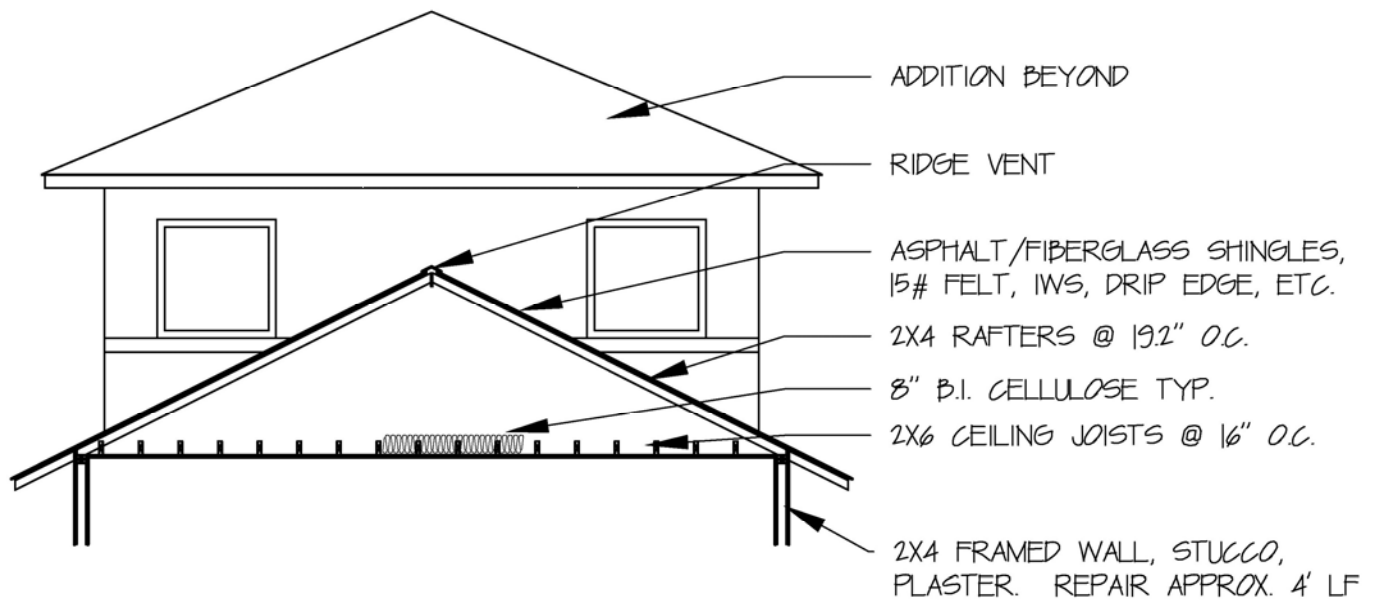


Figure 4. Section





Figure 5. View of roof



Figure 6. Broken/cracked common rafters



Figure 7. Broken/cracked common rafters



Figure 7. Broken/cracked common rafters





Figure 8. Broken/displaced hip rafters

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 \*\*New/updated information is below.

July 28, 2020

Following this original report, additional information has come to light which must be noted. As mentioned above, cracks were originally noticed in the stucco coating over what was assumed to be a beam above the stairs. The repair contractor, Paul Davis Restorations of Suburban Maryland carefully removed portions of the stucco, and discovered that the whole beam and post assembly is basically hollow. A sort of armature of 2x lumber forms a decorative box which is coated with lath and stucco. The only support for the rafters over the porch stairs are a single 2x6 on each side. The only support (and uplift resistance) for the hip rafters appears to be this stucco box. It may be assumed that the same conditions apply on the other (left) side of the porch, although no additional demo/exploratory work was done on that side. Although this style of construction was traditional in certain regions a century ago, there is no way to quantify the strength of the hollow stucco assemblies briefly described in this paragraph, and they certainly do not comply with modern building codes.

In order to properly support the hip rafters, and to prevent wind uplift, a solid new post should be installed at each corner. This post should rest on top of a properly sized footing, and should include hardware adequate to restrain  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the entire roof against uplift. Similarly, beams should be installed from the post back to the main house, and from post to post across the front, which are capable of supporting the full weight of the rafters which rest upon them, and which will resist withdrawal and wind uplift. The floor has not been assessed, as it does not appear to have been affected by the wind/tree damage which damaged the roof, but design and installation of the post must not make the floor support conditions worse.

Once again MacKay Construction Services, Inc., requests that should any further damage -- or information which contradicts this report -- be revealed in the course of repairs, we be notified immediately and allowed to reconsider the recommendations contained in this report.

Sincerely,

*Robert B. MacKay, PE*



Figure 9. Hole opened up in stucco box over stairs





Figure 10. Detail stucco "beam" box over stairs



Figure 11. Detail stucco “post” box