

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

<b>Address:</b>	7018 Poplar Ave., Takoma Park	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	6/23/2021
<b>Resource:</b>	Non-Contributing Resource <b>Takoma Park Historic District</b>	<b>Report Date:</b>	6/16/2021
<b>Applicant:</b>	Caroline Tess Richard Vitullo, Architect	<b>Public Notice:</b>	6/9/2021
<b>Review:</b>	HAWP	<b>Tax Credit:</b>	n/a
<b>Permit No.:</b>	954760	<b>Staff:</b>	Dan Bruechert
<b>Proposal:</b>	Demolition and New Construction		

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**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the HPC **approve with two (2) conditions** the HAWP:

1. Either the membrane or metal roof is appropriate for the rear dormer and Staff may approve either when permit drawings are submitted.
2. The approved fiber cement shake on the second floor needs to be more than ¼” (one-quarter inch) thick. Final approval authority to ensure this condition has been met is delegated to Staff.

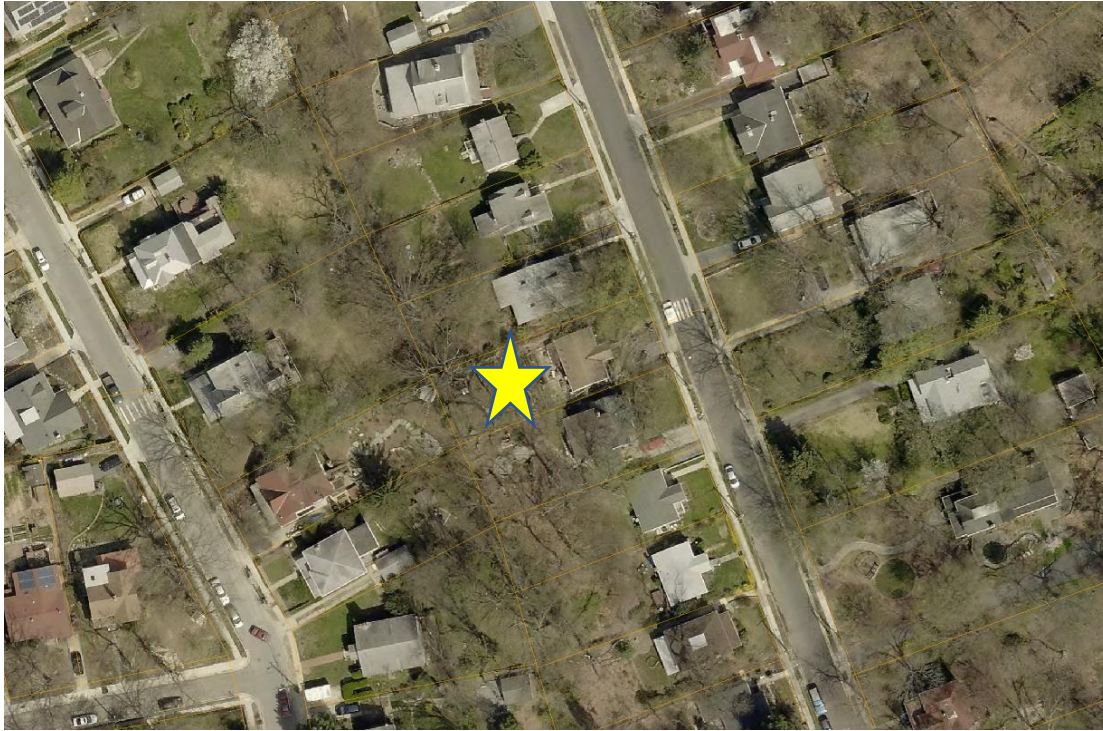
**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Non-Contributing Resource to the Takoma Park Historic District

**STYLE:** Ranch

**DATE:** c.1940s

The subject property is a one-story, brick, side gable ranch house with a small front porch.



**Figure 1: 7018 Poplar Avenue is located midblock on the western side of Poplar Avenue.**

## **BACKGROUND**

In 2020, the HPC heard two preliminary consultations for new construction on the subject lot. Those schemes have been abandoned and a new owner proposes to construct a house on the lot.<sup>1</sup> A previous scheme was presented and abandoned in 2019.

## **PROPOSAL**

The applicant proposes to demolish the existing house and construct a new house on the lot.

## **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 at all visible from the public

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<sup>1</sup> Those preliminary consultations were heard on May 27, 2020 <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/II.B-7018-Poplar-Avenue-Takoma-Park.pdf> and July 15 5, 2020 <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/III.B-7018-Poplar-Avenue-Takoma-Park.pdf>.

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 district.

Non-Contributing/Out-of-Period Resources should receive the most lenient level of design review. Most alterations and additions to Non-Contributing/Out-of-Period Resources should be approved as a matter of course. The only exceptions would be major additions and alterations to the scale and massing of Non-Contributing/Out-of-Period Resources which affect the surrounding streetscape and/or landscape and could impair character of the district as a whole.

Demolition of Non-Contributing/Out-of-Period Resources should be permitted. However, any new building constructed in the place of a demolished building should be reviewed under the guidelines for new construction that follow.

#### New Construction

“The goal of new construction within both residential and commercial historic districts is to be sympathetic to the traditional street and building patterns in that district, while allowing for creative new building designs. In addition to the approach of recalling earlier architectural styles in new buildings, it is appropriate for new structures to reflect and represent the period in which they are built. It is not the intention of these guidelines to inhibit or exclude creative design solutions that may be developed for new buildings in the Takoma Park district. Unique designs which may not adhere strictly to traditional neighborhood practices, but which are sensitive to and compatible with the fabric of the community should be supported.”

#### Residential Areas

In Takoma Park, there are a number of elements which define the streetscape and building patterns within the residential areas. New construction should consider some of these elements, such as:

- Rhythm of houses along the street, including patterns of height, massing, side and front setbacks, and roof pitch;
- Patterns of open space/landscaping and building coverage, including ample front and back yards, space between houses, preservation of important mature trees, etc.;
- Principal building facades oriented toward the street;
- Covered porches on the front or main facades;
- Patterns of openings in facades, especially doors and windows, which provide a sense of residential scale;
- Building and roofing material;
- High degree of building craftsmanship, as expressed in detailing and use of materials;
- Use of decorative stone retaining walls (where required by topographic changes) and occasionally fences to define a sidewalk line and separate yards from street;
- Sidewalk and planting strips along the street;
- Orientation of driveways and parking areas to the rear and sides of the buildings;
- Use of outbuildings (e.g. detached garages); and
- Extensive landscaping, including mature trees and flowering plants.

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

- (a) 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 applicant proposes to demolish the existing house and construct a new one on the site. Staff finds both elements of the proposal comply with the requisite guidance and recommends the HPC approve the HAWP.

**Building Demolition**

The existing building is a c.1940s Ranch house that has been designated as Non-Contributing. The *Design Guidelines* state that demolition of Non-Contributing Resources should be approved. Staff concurs and notes that the HPC found demolition of the subject property was appropriate when the previous preliminary consultations were reviewed with the prior owner in 2020.<sup>2</sup>

**New Construction**

The applicant proposes to construct a new house on the site measuring 34' 6" × 54' 6" (thirty-four feet, six inches wide by fifty-four feet, six inches deep). The house is 27' 6" (twenty-seven feet, six inches) from grade, which is generally consistent with the heights of the surrounding buildings. The design of the house is a side gable bungalow with several Craftsman elements, including multiple siding configurations and brackets in the eaves. On the front elevation, there is a front gable dormer. The nearly full-width front porch has a front gable roof, parged masonry column bases with square fiber cement columns. The porch will load from the right side.

The materials proposed for the house include fiber cement siding in a 7" (seven inch) reveal and fiber cement in a shingled pattern meant to resemble traditional shingles for the second floor. Windows and doors will be aluminum-clad wood sash and casement windows, most are either in a six-over-one or four-over-one configuration. The roofing will be asphalt shingles with a standing seam or membrane roof over the rear shed dormer. The foundation and chimney exterior will be parged CMU, and the rear screened-in

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<sup>2</sup> The Staff Report for the 2019 HAWP approval is available here: <https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/II.X-7018-Poplar-Avenue-Takoma-Park.pdf>. The HAWP was approved by consent, however there were multiple Preliminary Consultations for the proposal.



porch will be wood framed.

The proposed house is much deeper than the existing, Non-Contributing Resource. Staff notes that the existing house is only 816 ft<sup>2</sup> (eight hundred sixteen square feet) which is both small by contemporary housing standards, and also small for the surrounding district. To hide some of the house massing, the applicant proposes to inset the walls on the second floor by several feet. Staff finds the resulting appearance is akin to a historic house with a later rear addition and an appropriate design for the surrounding district.

Staff finds the design of the proposed house is generally compatible with the *Design Guidelines* and the surrounding district. The architectural vocabulary draws from the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Staff additionally finds the proposed house achieves several of the identified elements that define the residential streetscape within the district including reinforcing the streetscape pattern along Poplar Ave., matching the setback of the surrounding buildings, orienting the house toward the street, constructing a front porch, all in a scale that is compatible with the modestly-sized, surrounding buildings.

Staff finds the materials proposed for the new construction are all compatible with previous approvals for additions and new construction to Contributing resources in the Takoma Park Historic District. Staff finds the clapboard fiber cement siding generally mimics the appearance of wood clapboards and the aluminum-clad wood windows have profiles and finish that are appropriate in infill for historic districts.

There are two materials Staff finds that require additional evaluation. The application materials indicate that either a membrane roof or a metal roof will be used on the rear shed dormer because its 2:12 slope is not compatible with an asphalt roof. Typically, an applicant is required to select one material as part of their application, however, because this roof slope will not be visible from the public right-of-way, Staff finds that either roof material would be appropriate under the *Guidelines*. Staff recommends the HPC approve both roofing materials and delegate final approval authority to Staff who will verify an approved material on the drawings submitted for final permitting. The second material that requires additional evaluation are the fiber cement “cedar shingles” proposed for the second-floor exterior. The HPC and Staff has found that fiber cement shakes made by James Hardie result in an appearance that is too thin to be compatible. Those shingles are ¼” (one-quarter inch) thick. There are several other fiber cement shingles on the market that are thicker. Staff recommends the HPC approve a fiber cement shingle for the second-story, but add a condition that the shingle selected has to be thicker than ¼” (one-quarter inch).

### **Site Alterations/Hardscaping**

Several areas of hardscaping are also proposed for this HAWP. At the rear, the applicant proposes to construct a decorative CMU site wall with a stone patio. Due to the rise in grade from the right-of-way, these features will not be visible from the right-of-way and Staff finds they are appropriate.

At the front, the applicant proposes to construct a new CMU retaining wall adjacent to the sidewalk and around the parking pad. The applicant additionally proposes to demolish the existing front walk and construct a new concrete walk and steps. The walkway extends across the front of the house to access the porch stairs (to the right) and to the basement residential until (to the left). The steps will have a simple metal railing, specifications attached. Above the parking pad, the applicant proposes to construct a stone patio. The final proposed change is removing the cracked and broken concrete in the parking pad and installing permeable pavers.

Staff finds the changes to the hardscaping are appropriate for the site and surrounding district. As mentioned above, the changes to the rear of the house will not be visible from the surrounding right-of-way and should be approved as a matter of course. The concrete pad, block and concrete retaining wall, and concrete front steps have deteriorated due to deferred maintenance and need to be replaced. Staff finds the proposed materials are consistent with the site and surrounding district and recommends approval. Staff also notes that the location for the proposed alterations will not impact any of the trees in

the front yard.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Commission **approve** the HAWP application with the following **two (2) conditions**:

1. Either the membrane or metal roof is appropriate for the rear dormer and Staff may approve either when permit drawings are submitted.
2. The approved fiber cement shake on the second floor needs to be more than ¼” (one-quarter inch) thick. Final approval authority to ensure this condition has been met is delegated to Staff; under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(1) (2), and (d), and the *Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines*, 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;

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 an electronic set 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# 954760  
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:



# HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT CHECKLIST OF APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

	Required Attachments						
Proposed Work	I. Written Description	2. Site Plan	3. Plans/ Elevations	4. Material Specifications	5. Photographs	6. Tree Survey	7. Property Owner Addresses
New Construction	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Additions/ Alterations	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demolition	*	*	*		*		*
Deck/Porch	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Fence/Wall	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Driveway/ Parking Area	*	*		*	*	*	*
Grading/Excavation/ Landscaping	*	*		*	*	*	*
Tree Removal	*	*		*	*	*	*
Siding/ Roof Changes	*	*	*	*	*		*
Window/ Door Changes	*	*	*	*	*		*
Masonry Repair/ Repoint	*	*	*	*	*		*
Signs	*	*	*	*	*		*

DESCRIPTION OF ***EXISTING*** STRUCTURE,  
ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING AND HISTORICAL FEATURES  
AT:  
**7018 Poplar Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912**

*This is an "Non-Contributing Resource" house, built in 1953, and it is located in the Takoma Park Historic District.*

DESCRIPTION OF THE ***PROPOSED*** PROJECT AND ITS  
EFFECT ON THE HISTORIC RESOURCE:  
**7018 Poplar Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912**

*The existing Non-Contributing Resource house will be demolished and a new 2-story house with basement will be constructed.*

*These will be built using the following materials/details:*

- 1. Exterior Finish:** Painted 7" exposure fiber cement lap siding on most new façades of house; painted 7" exposure fiber cement "cedar shingle"-style siding on the upper areas on the front and sides of the main massing of the house. Window and door trim will be a 5/4 x 4 fiber cement trim. Water table/bandboard and bandboard at 2<sup>nd</sup> floor level to be PVC drip cap over 1 x 10 fiber cement. Angled wood outrigger-type brackets will be added on rake overhangs. Chimney will be parged fiber cement or CMU.
- 2. Roofing:** Asphalt shingles on all roofs, except rear shed dormer roof, which will be either metal standing seam or membrane roofing (due to its 2:12 slope and location facing the rear, this roof will be invisible from right-of-way).
- 3. Windows and Doors:** The new windows and doors will be aluminum-clad-on-wood casements, awnings and double hung windows; see elevations for mullion divisions. One basement window is a gliding window (for egress purposes).
- 4. Foundation/ Piers:** This will be parged CMU (or concrete).
- 5. Screen Porch:** Wood framed with black PVC screening.

**Caroline Tess**  
**Thiago Reis**  
7018 Poplar Ave.  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

**Adjoining Property Owners**

**HAWP**

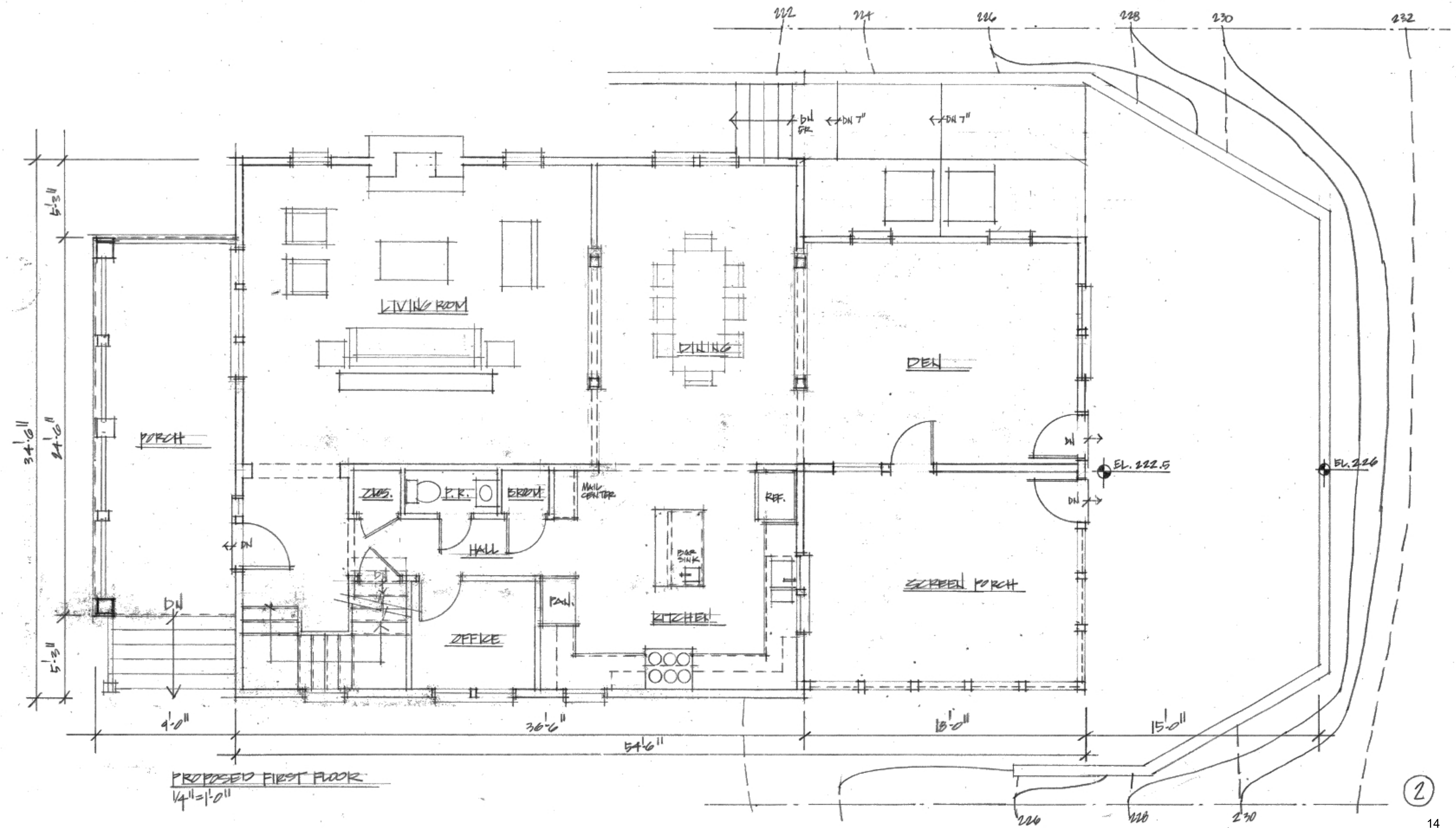
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**Elizabeth Pitcher**  
7016 Poplar Ave.  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

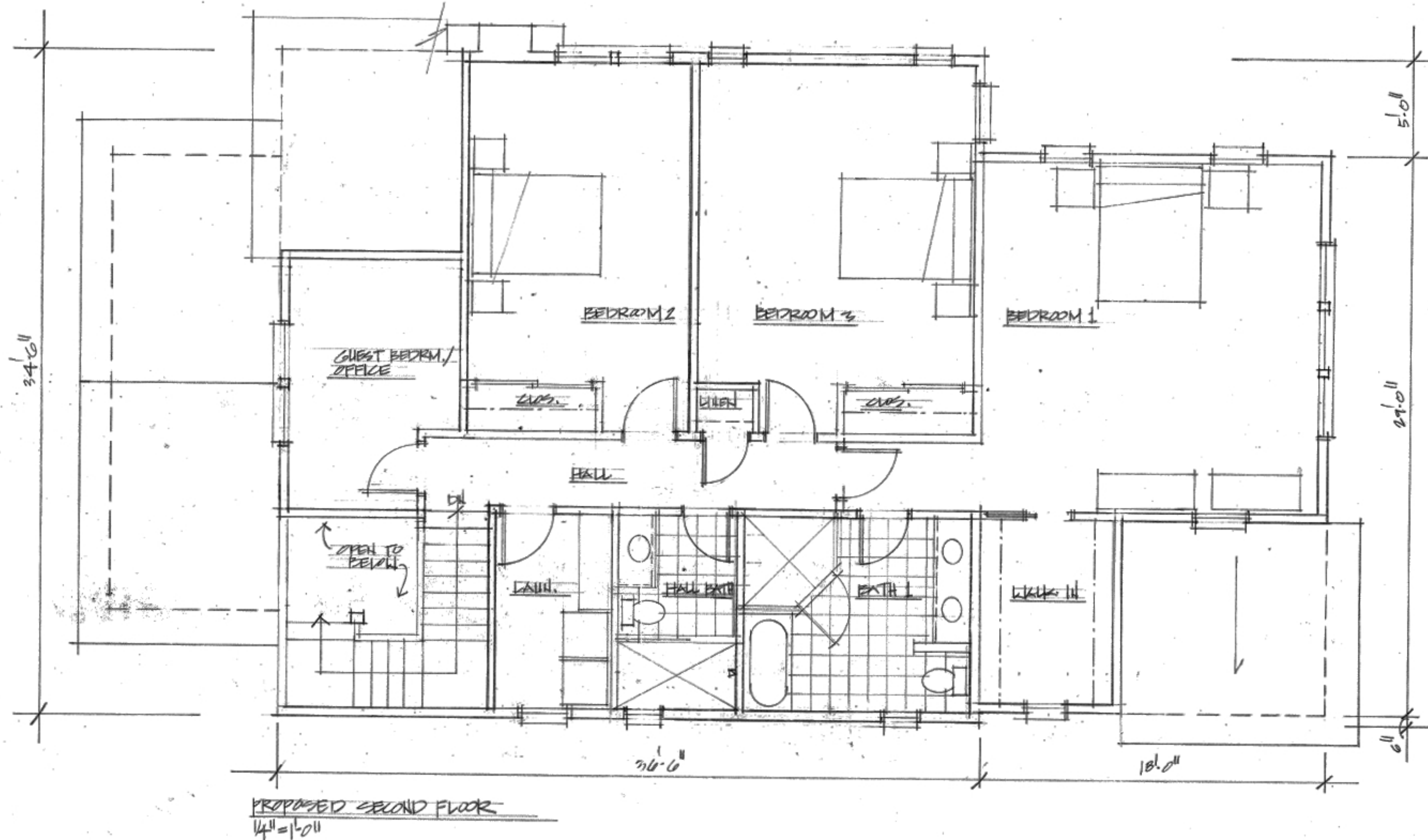
**Jon Frederick &**  
**Christopher Bernstein Joint Rev. Trust**  
7100 Poplar Ave.  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

**Thomas Luebke**  
7017 Poplar Ave.  
Takoma Park, MD 20912

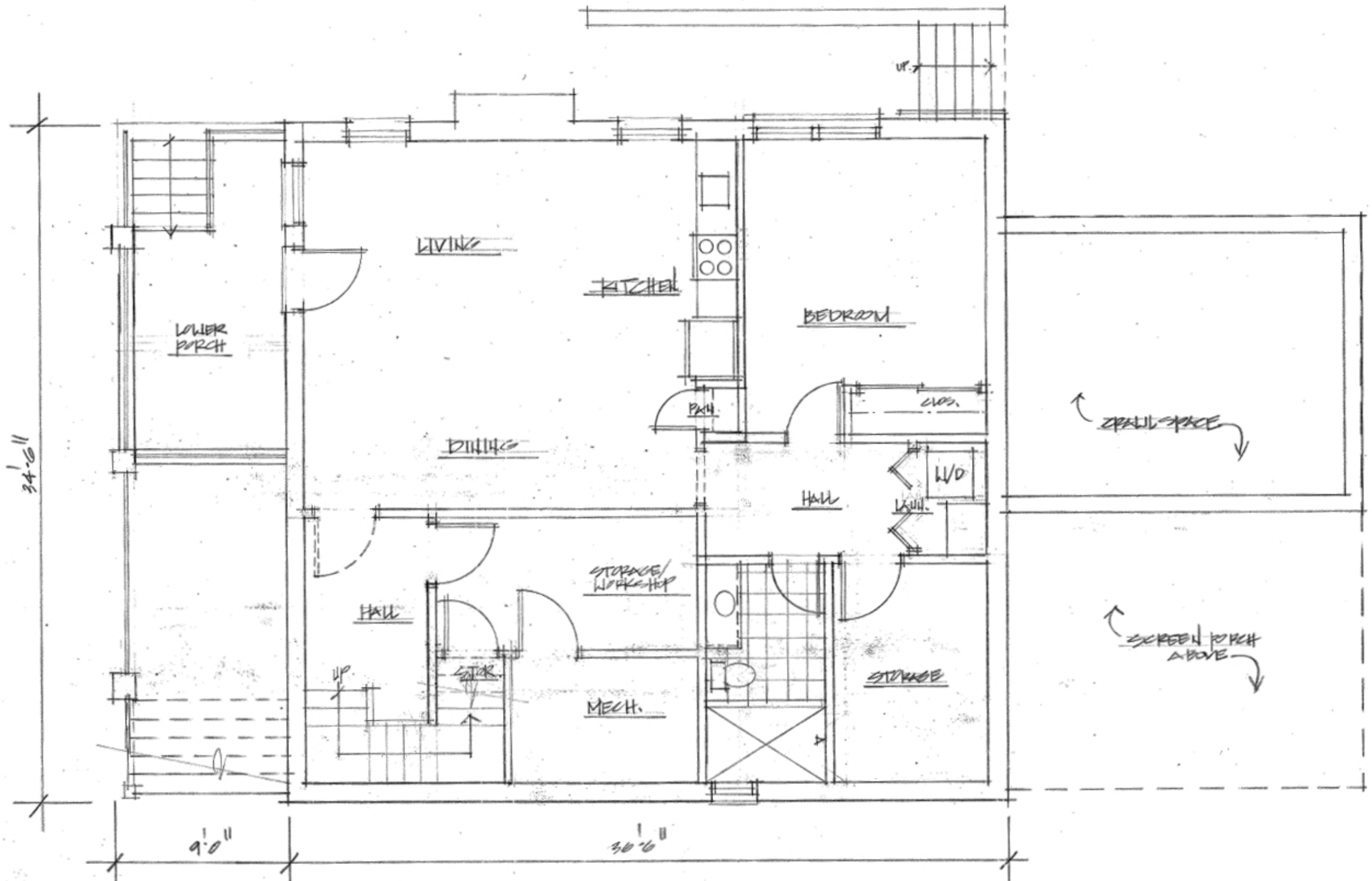
**Rasanjali Wickrema**  
7019 Poplar Ave.  
Takoma Park, MD 20912







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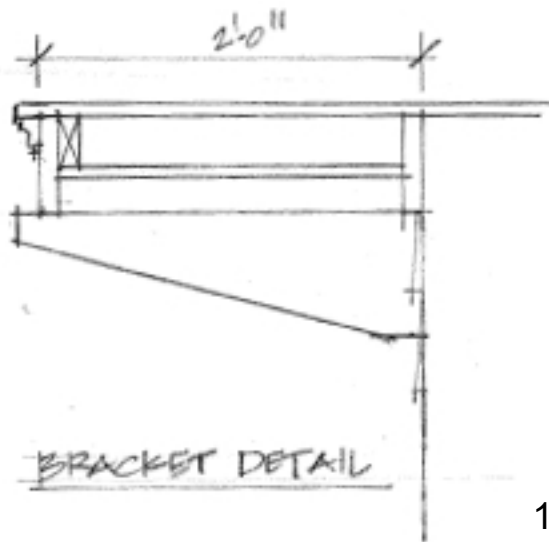


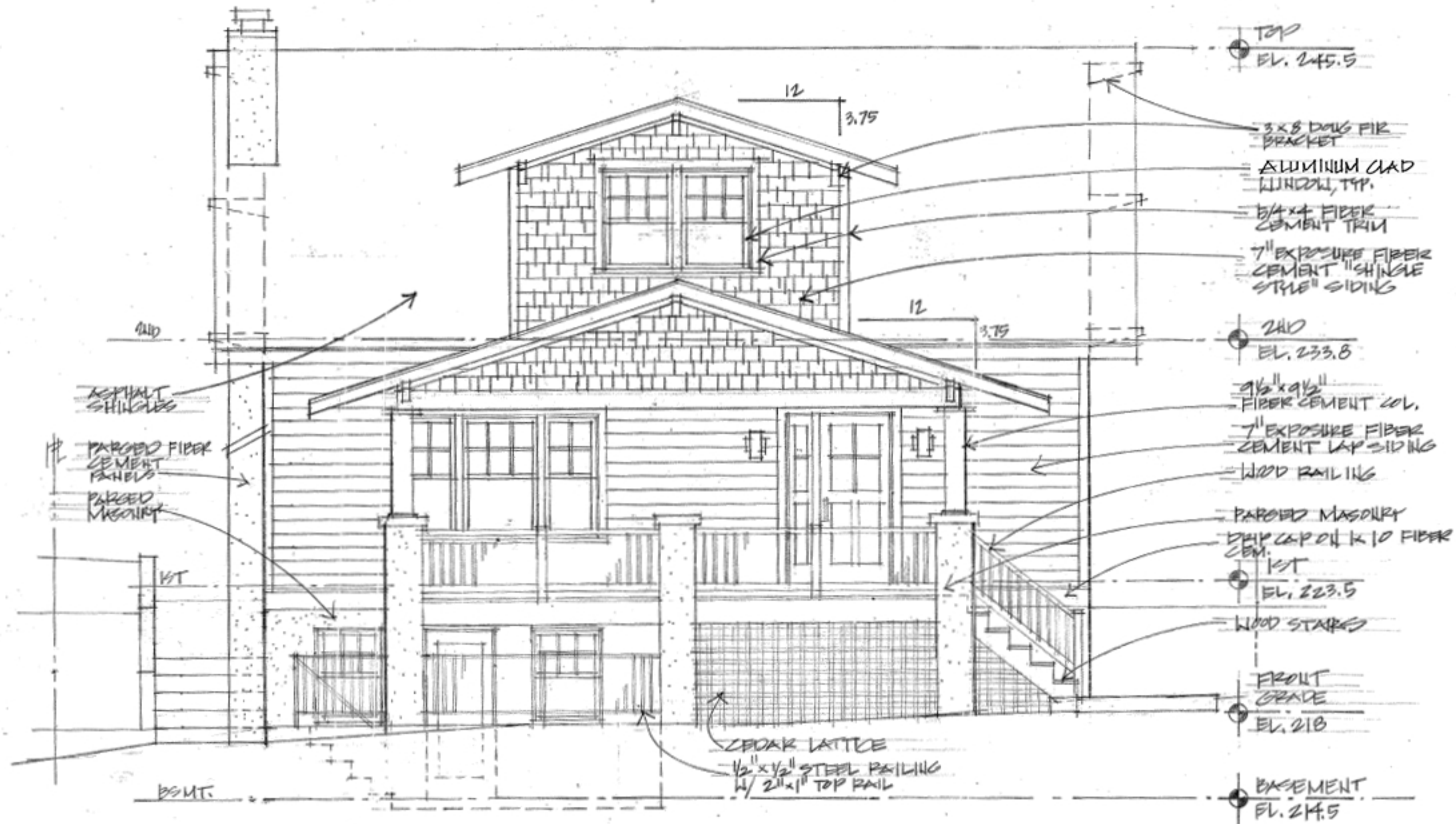
PROPOSED BASEMENT

1/4" = 1'-0"

7018 POPLAR AVE. TAKOMA PARK, MD

①





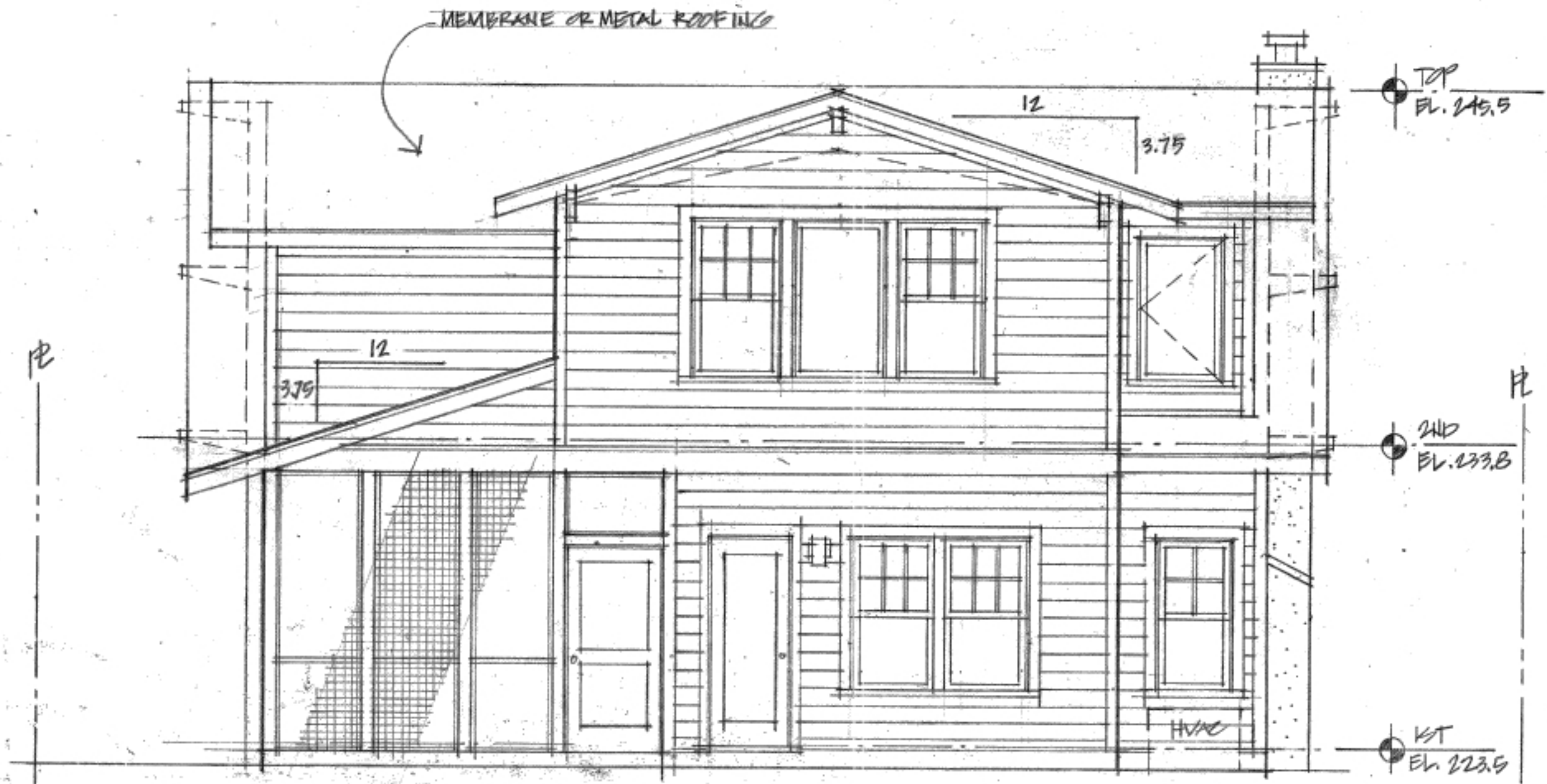
PROPOSED FRONT ELEVATION  
1/4" = 1'-0"

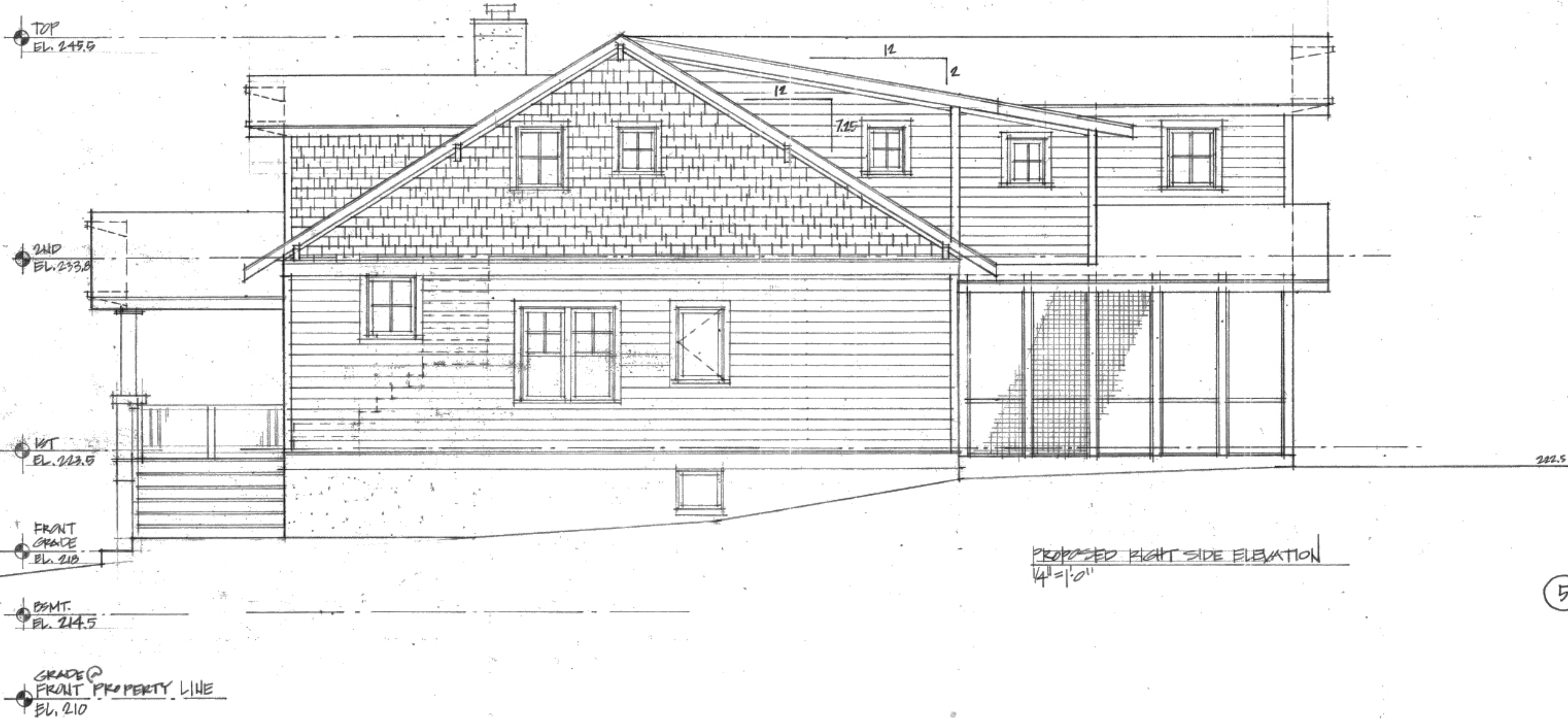
GRADE @  
FRONT FE  
EL. 210

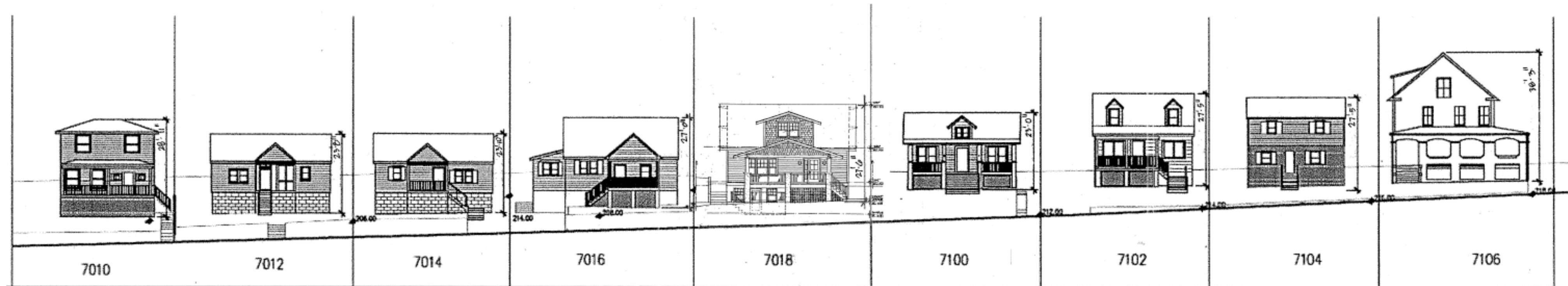
4

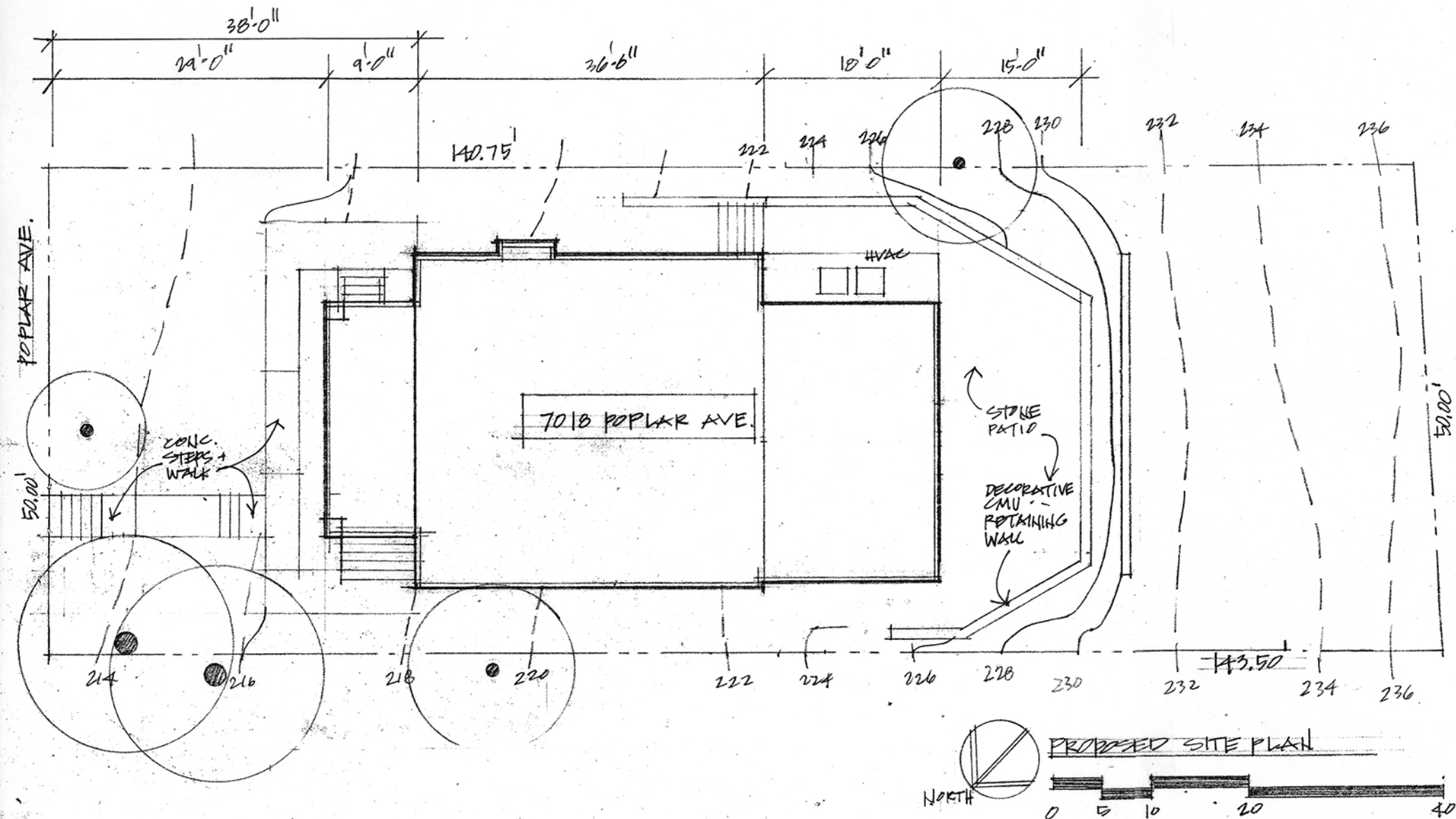


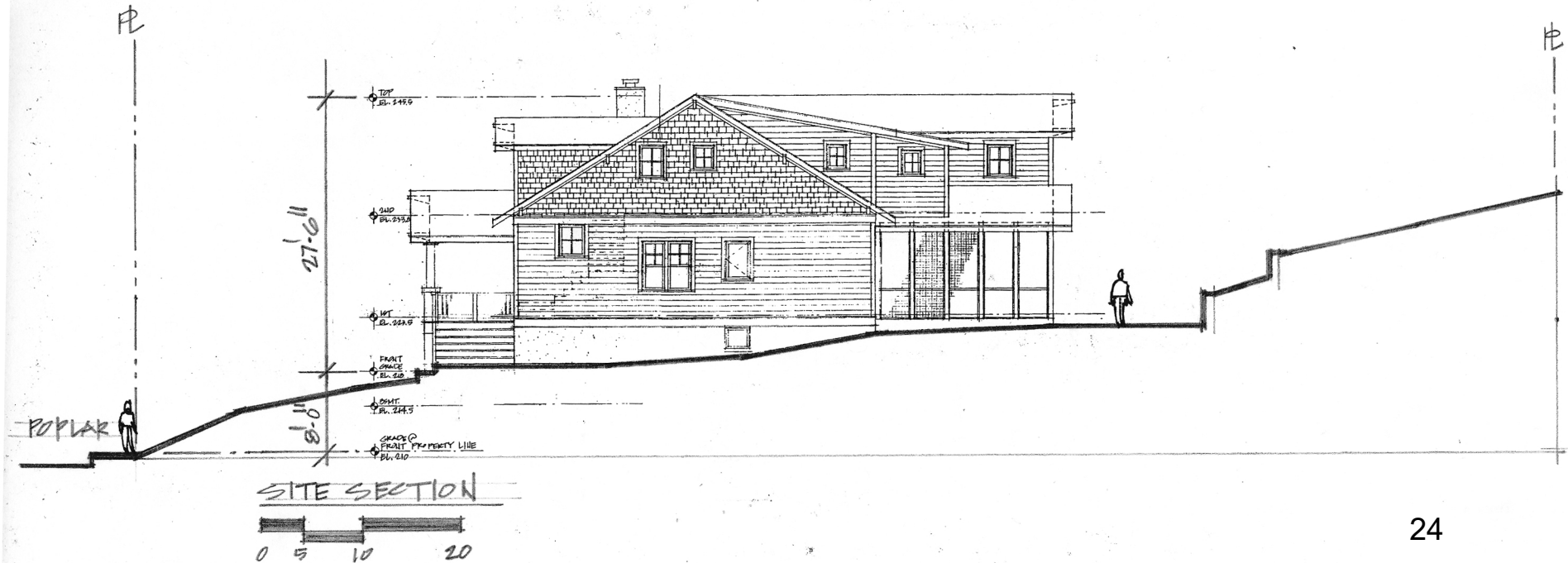








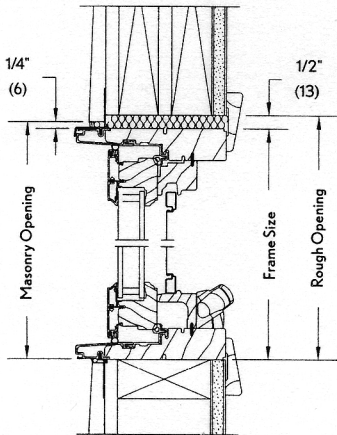






# CLAD ULTIMATE AWNING

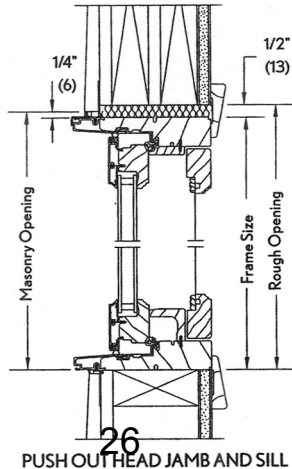
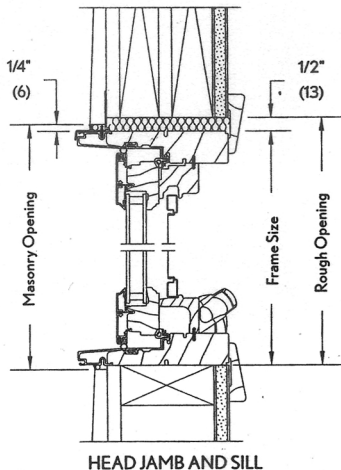
## CONSTRUCTION DETAILS



OPERATOR  
HEAD JAMB AND SILL

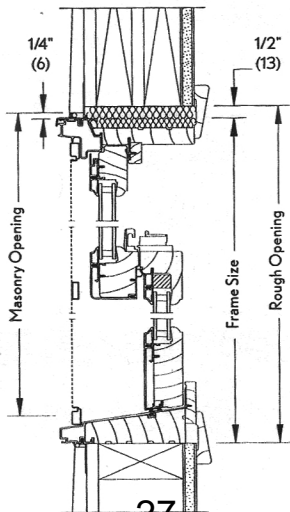
# CLAD ULTIMATE CASEMENT/PUSH OUT CASEMENT

## CONSTRUCTION DETAILS

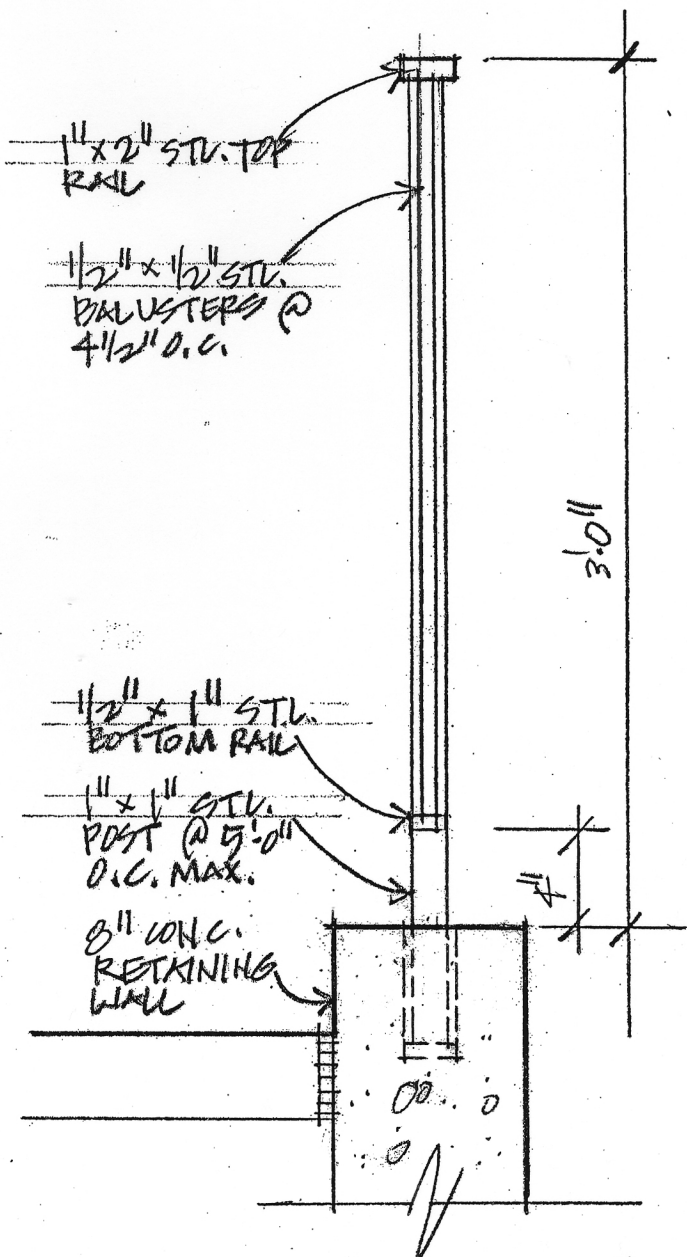


# CLAD ULTIMATE DOUBLE HUNG

## CONSTRUCTION DETAILS



27  
HEAD JAMB AND SILL



STEEL RAIL DETAIL  
 $1\frac{1}{2}'' = 1'-0''$

# HANDRAIL

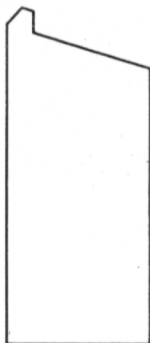
# STOCK PINE



SM-8840  
1-1/2 X 3-1/2  
TOP PORCH RAIL



LWM-237  
1-1/4 X 1-1/4  
BALUSTER STOCK

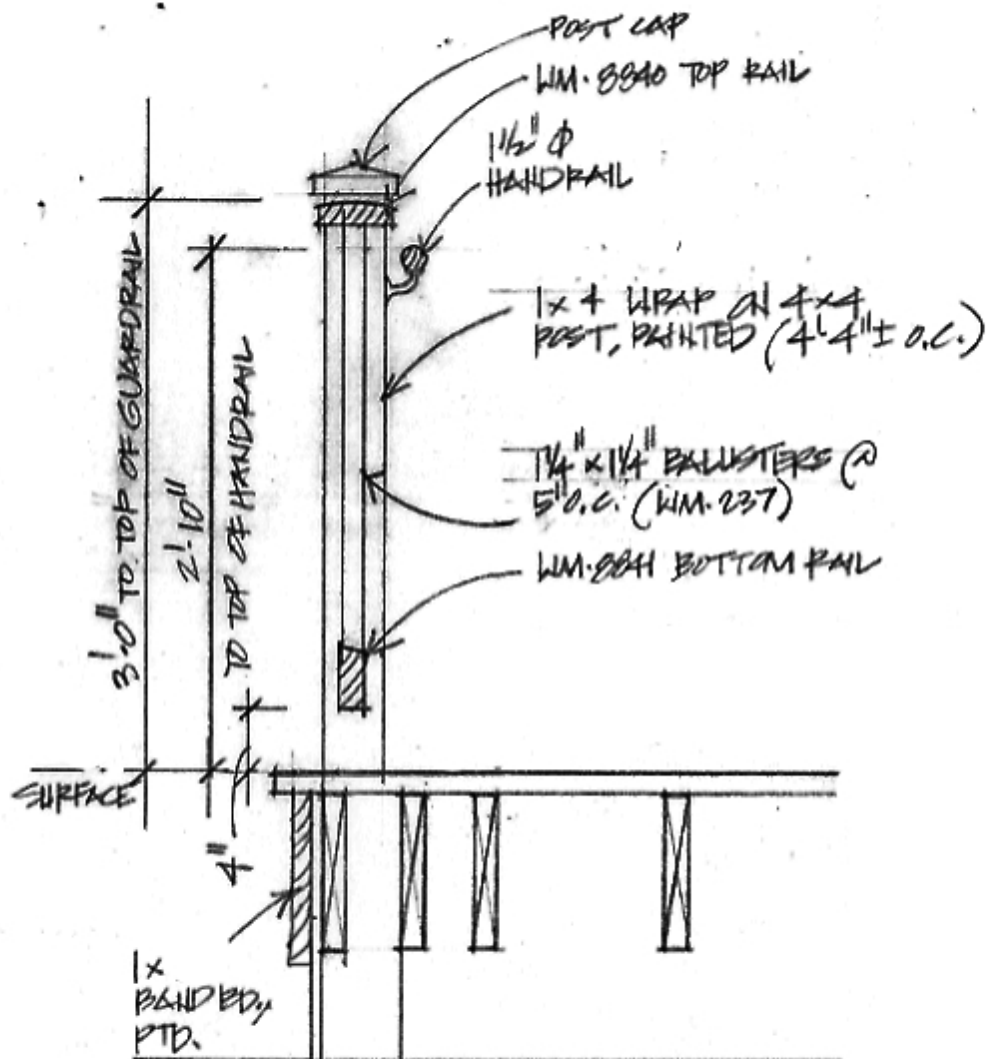


SM-8841  
1-1/2 X 3-1/2  
BOTTOM PORCH RAIL

SCALE: HALF SIZE

PAGE 29 OF A-54

BAR RAIL



1 RAIL SECTION  
A-1  
1" = 1'-0"