

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

<b>Address:</b>	51 Elm Ave., Takoma Park	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	1/22/2025
<b>Resource:</b>	Contributing Resource <b>Takoma Park Historic District</b>	<b>Report Date:</b>	1/15/2025
<b>Applicant:</b>	Aleksandra Johnson & Mark Murray	<b>Public Notice:</b>	1/8/2025
<b>Review:</b>	Preliminary Consultation	<b>Staff:</b>	Dan Bruechert
<b>Proposal:</b>	Partial Demolition and Construction of Rear Addition, Screen Porch, and Exterior Stair		

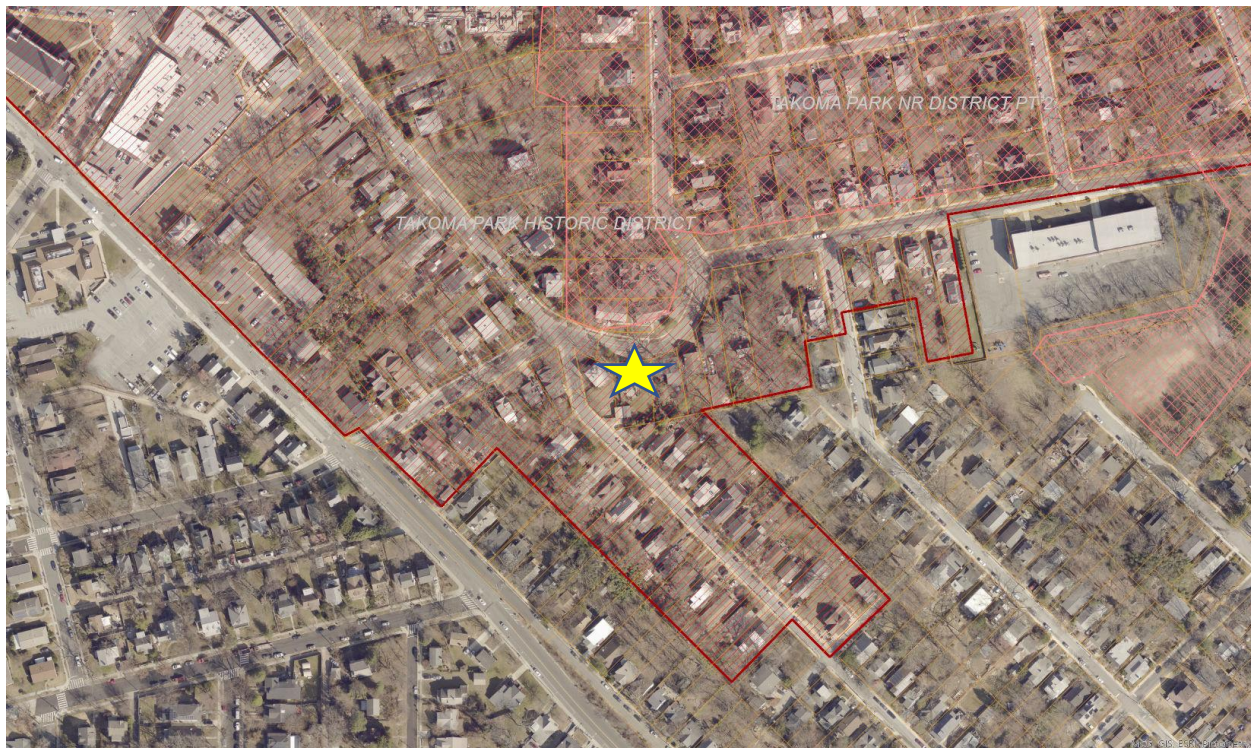
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**RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the applicant make any recommended revisions and return for a HAWP.

**PROPERTY DESCRIPTION**

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Contributing Resource to the Takoma Park Historic District  
**STYLE:** Craftsman  
**DATE:** c.1916



*Figure 1: The subject property is located near the intersection of Elm Ave. and Westmoreland Ave.*

## **PROPOSAL**

The applicant proposes to partially demolish a portion of the rear addition and construct a new rear addition, a screened-in porch, and a new exterior stair.

## **APPLICABLE GUIDELINES**

The Historic Preservation Office and Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) consult several documents when reviewing alterations and new construction within the Takoma Park Historic District. 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)*.

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

There are two 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.

A majority of the buildings in the Takoma Park Historic District have been assessed as being “Contributing Resources.” While these buildings may not have the same level of architectural or historical significance as Outstanding Resources or may have lost some degree of integrity, collectively, they are the basic building blocks of the Takoma Park district. They are important to the overall character of the district and the streetscape due to their size, scale, and architectural qualities, rather than for their particular architectural features.

Contributing Resources should receive a more lenient level of design 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.

The following guidance which pertains to this project are as follows:

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

Minor alterations to areas that do not directly front on a public right-of-way such as vents, metal stovepipes, air conditioners, fences, skylights, etc. – should be allowed as a matter of course; alterations to areas that do not directly front on a public way-of-way which involve the replacement of or damaged to original ornamental or architectural features are discouraged, but may be considered and approved on a case-by-case basis

Major additions should, where feasible, be placed to the rear of existing structures so that they are less visible from the public right-of-way; additions and alterations to the first floor at the front of a structure are discouraged, but not automatically prohibited

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

Alterations to features that are not visible from the public right-of-way should be allowed as a matter of course

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

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

The following guidance which pertains to this project are as follows:

- (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;
- (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***

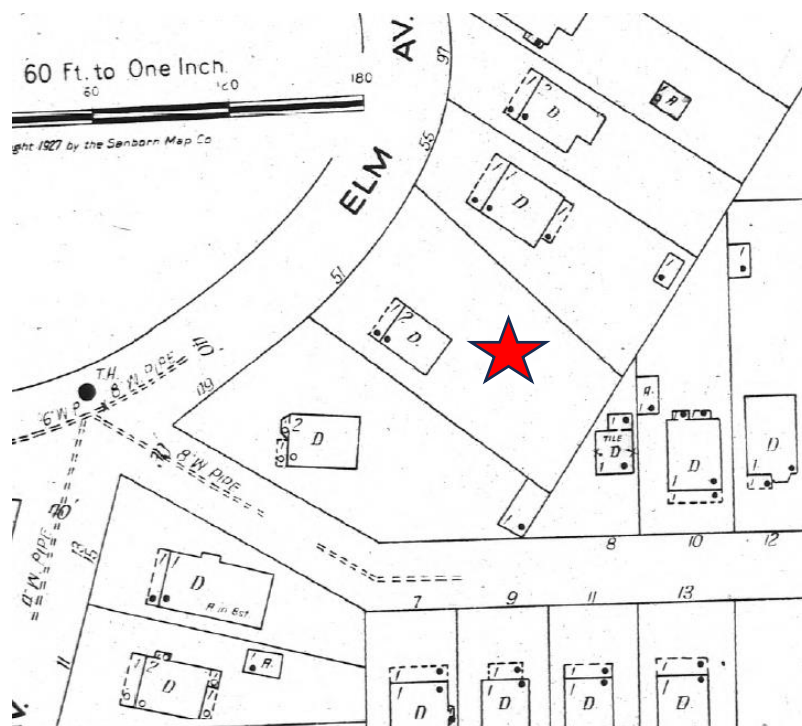
The Secretary of the Interior defines rehabilitation as “the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features, which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.” The applicable *Standards* are as follows:

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

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall 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 two-story, side gable Craftsman bungalow, with a large front gable dormer. The house has stuccoed walls with shingle siding in the gables and on the rear enclosed porches. Most of the existing windows are 6/1 wood sash and multi-light casement windows; however, there are some single-light casement windows on the rear and left elevations. Based on Staff's review of the relevant Sanborn Fire Insurance maps (see *Figure 2*, below), the rear and sleeping porches appear to have been enclosed with shingle siding sometime before 1927.



*Figure 2: 1927 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map showing the subject house.*

The applicant proposes to demolish portions of the house's rear porch and the sleeping porch and construct a rear addition and a screened-in porch at the basement level. Based on Staff's observations at a preliminary site visit, it does not appear that the proposed addition will impact any trees on site, but notes that a tree impact assessment should be completed before submitting the final HAWP.

#### **Rear Addition and Exterior Staircase**

At the rear of the subject property, the applicant proposes to selectively demolish portions of all three floors to accommodate the proposed rear addition. The addition will serve to create additional interior space for an enlarged kitchen and primary bedroom, but also includes space to install a new interior

staircase, as the existing staircase is very narrow and steep.

The applicant proposes to alter the existing fenestration in the basement sunroom. The windows on the left (east) elevation will be removed as will the French doors and one window on the rear (south) elevation. On the first floor, the applicant proposes to demolish most of the existing walls and windows, but will retain the existing wall on the left (east) and the left-rear (southeast) corner. On the second story, the applicant proposes to demolish all of the existing enclosed sleeping porch.

The applicant does not propose to expand the existing basement level, but does proposed to relocate the rear door, so it is centered on the elevation to construct a new wall along the left (east) elevation, to accommodate the new staircase.

On the first and second stories, the applicant proposes to construct a rear addition measuring approximately 7' × 14' 9" (seven feet deep, by fourteen feet, nine inches wide) with a rear gable roof with exposed rafter tails. The proposed staircase will widen the second story by approximately 2' (two feet) to the left (east) and will have a low-sloping shed roof (see *Figure 2*, below). Because the addition utilizes the existing enclosed porch footprint, the proposed addition will have a nominal inset, not the 1' (one foot) the HPC typically requires. One of the existing deck railings will be removed, as it will abut the proposed addition.



*Figure 3: The existing rear addition (left) and the proposed (right). Note the proposed stairs will be installed on the right side of this elevation (highlighted in red).*

The exterior of the addition will be covered in wood shakes to match the existing rear elevation. Proposed windows and doors will be a combination of aluminum clad wood casement and sash windows. The applicant identified the proposed window material, but has not identified a window specification at this stage. The proposed gable roof will be covered with architectural shingles; and the low-sloped roof over the stairs will be covered with a TPO membrane roof.

The proposed addition will be partially visible from the public right-of-way from Westmoreland Ave. when considered in the absence of vegetation (see *Figure 3*, below).



*Figure 4: The proposed rear addition will be partially visible from Westmoreland Ave.*

The addition will be visible from the right-of-way; however, the rear elevation has been substantially altered already. Staff finds the proposed modestly sized addition will not have a significant impact on the character of the surrounding streetscape.

Staff finds the design of the proposed addition is generally compatible with the character of the Craftsman resource and the surrounding district by using many of the same materials and architectural elements. Staff finds the shake siding, exposed rafter tails, 6/1 aluminum clad wood sash and multi-light casement windows are features found on the existing historic house and are typical of additions and new construction and are appropriate under the *Design Guidelines*.

Staff requests feedback from the HPC regarding:

- The appropriateness of the proposed partial demolition;
- The appropriateness of the proposed addition massing;
- Whether the lack of a side inset is acceptable; and
- Any other recommended alterations or revisions.

#### **Screened-in Porch Construction**

On the ground floor at the rear, there is a patio and pergola that were constructed as part of an approved

2014 HAWP.<sup>1</sup> The applicant proposes to demolish the existing pergola and to construct a screened-in porch, measuring approximately 14' 6" × 11' 6" (fourteen feet, six inches wide by eleven feet, six inches deep), and will be covered by a shed standing seam metal roof. The application materials do not indicate if this porch will have exposed wood or synthetic trim.

Staff finds this proposed porch will not be at all visible from the public right-of-way due to two factors. First, the porch is at the rear of the house and second, because the lot slopes away from the street so much that this porch is on grade. As a new feature, Staff finds that either wood or synthetic trim would be appropriate on the exterior under the *Design Guidelines*, but requests feedback from the HPC on this feature.

Staff requests feedback from the HPC on the appropriateness of the design and materials of the proposed screened-in porch.

### **Requested Materials**

In addition to the identified tree impact assessment, Staff also notes that more detailed material specifications including:

- Windows and doors;
- Trim profiles; and
- Metal roof specifications

Need to be submitted with the HAWP application.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends the applicant make any recommended revisions and return for a HAWP.

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<sup>1</sup> The file for the 2014 HAWP to construct the rear patio, pergola, and alter the run of the rear stairs is available here: [https://mcatlas.org/tiles6/06\\_HistoricPreservation\\_PhotoArchives/HAWP/HAWP\\_Archive/3703-14AA\\_TAKOMA%20PARK%20H.D.\\_51%20ELM%20AVENUE,%20TAKOMA%20PARK\\_08-14-2014.PDF](https://mcatlas.org/tiles6/06_HistoricPreservation_PhotoArchives/HAWP/HAWP_Archive/3703-14AA_TAKOMA%20PARK%20H.D._51%20ELM%20AVENUE,%20TAKOMA%20PARK_08-14-2014.PDF).



**APPLICATION FOR  
HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT**  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION  
301.563.3400

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

**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:**

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Construction   | <input type="checkbox"/> Deck/Porch          | <input type="checkbox"/> Shed/Garage/Accessory Structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Addition           | <input type="checkbox"/> Fence               | <input type="checkbox"/> Solar                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Demolition         | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardscape/Landscape | <input type="checkbox"/> Tree removal/planting           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Grading/Excavation | <input type="checkbox"/> Roof                | <input type="checkbox"/> Window/Door                     |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> 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



**HAWP APPLICATION: MAILING ADDRESSES FOR NOTIFYING**  
[Owner, Owner's Agent, Adjacent and Confronting Property Owners]

<b>Owner's mailing address</b>	<b>Owner's Agent's mailing address</b>
<b>Adjacent and confronting Property Owners mailing addresses</b>	

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:

# BENNETT FRANK McCARTHY

a r c h i t e c t s , i n c .

1400 Spring Street, Suite 320, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910-2755

Memorandum

26 December 2024

To: Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)  
Maryland-National Capital Park & Planning Commission  
c/o Department of Permitting Services, Montgomery County

From: Brian McCarthy

Re: Preliminary Design Consultation  
51 Elm Avenue, Takoma Park Historic District  
**Written Description of Project**

## **Addendum a.**

The property is a 1-1/2-story wood frame Cottage-Bungalow (with finished walk-out basement) on an 8,260 square foot lot located at 51 Elm Avenue, near the cross street of Westmoreland Avenue. The site slopes gradually down to the rear. The house, built circa 1916, is designated as a contributing resource in the Takoma Park Historic District. The basic form is fairly typical of the bungalow style – a full width front porch under a dormered roof sloping up to a ridgeline that’s parallel to the street. The roof is punctuated by a very wide, gabled dormer that provides headroom for two small front bedrooms. Each bedroom has a tall, slender pair of casement windows that provide access to a balcony positioned over the porch.

A similarly wide dormer occupies the rear roof slope where the primary bedroom is located. However, the rear dormer has been extended, rather awkwardly, by a nearly flat roofed element with deep eaves supported on the sides by diagonal wood brackets. The perimeter of the extension, which was perhaps formerly a sleeping porch, consists of a continuous band of more tall, slender casements over a low, railing-height wood wall. The rear also features a modest wood deck off the kitchen with a wooded staircase down to a flagstone patio in the back yard.

The exterior finishes are a mix of aggregate textured stucco and painted cedar shingles. The roof features exposed rafter tails and architectural fiberglass composition shingles. The windows are mix of the aforementioned slender casements as well as double hungs with a 6 over 1 muntin pattern.

The first floor consists of the usual complement of living areas - foyer, living, dining and kitchen – as well as a half bath. The second floor has three bedrooms and one bathroom. There is a central masonry fireplace whose chimney emerges at the intersection of the dormers with the main ridge. Unfortunately, the placement of the L-shaped staircase next to the central fireplace results in a staircase that’s notably contorted and narrow (29.5”). The two landings are remarkably tight even by old house standards, with depths ranging from 16.5” to 25.25”. The upstairs hallway is a similarly uncomfortable 30.5” wide.

## **Addendum b.**

The owners would like to remodel the house to open up the compartmentalized interior, refinish wood floors, and restore existing windows. They would also like to resolve the stair deficiencies by building a new, code-compliant stair in the rear in the area of the current kitchen. This in turn necessitates a modest rear addition to accommodate the relocated kitchen over a new basement/yard level screen porch. The top/second floor of the rear addition will replace the flat roofed portion of the primary bedroom with an extension of the current gabled dormer roof form. The new stair will be capped with a flat roof of its own, visually subordinate to the steep pitches of the main house and the rear dormer.

The dormer extension/rear addition will feature painted cedar shingle siding, and exposed rafter tails and fly rafters to match the existing features. New windows will be a mix of aluminum clad wood double hungs and casements. The rear dormer roof will be laminated fiberglass composition shingles while the low slope stair tower roof will be TPO and the screen porch roof will be standing seam metal. New trim will be Boral TruExteriors.

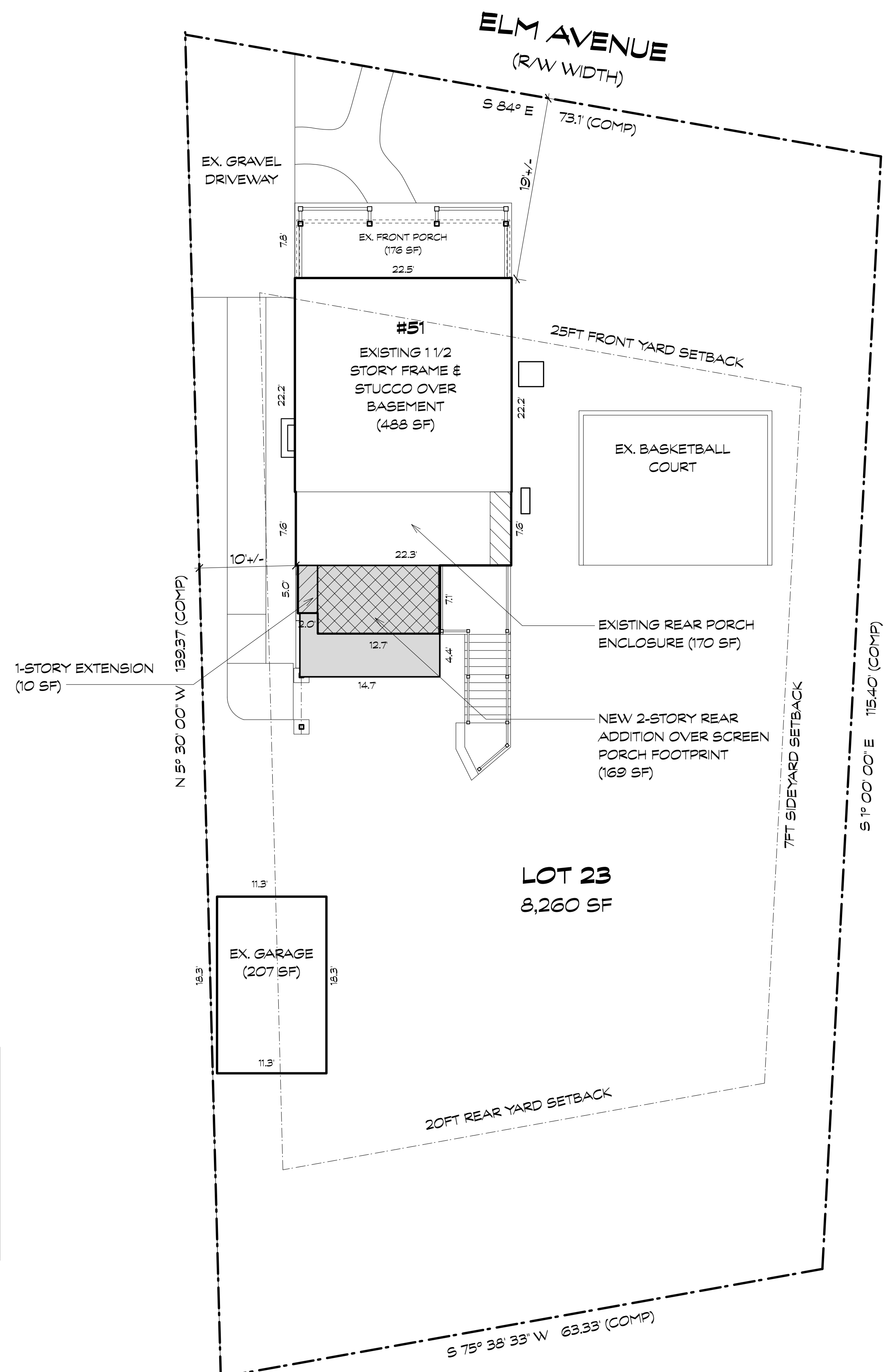
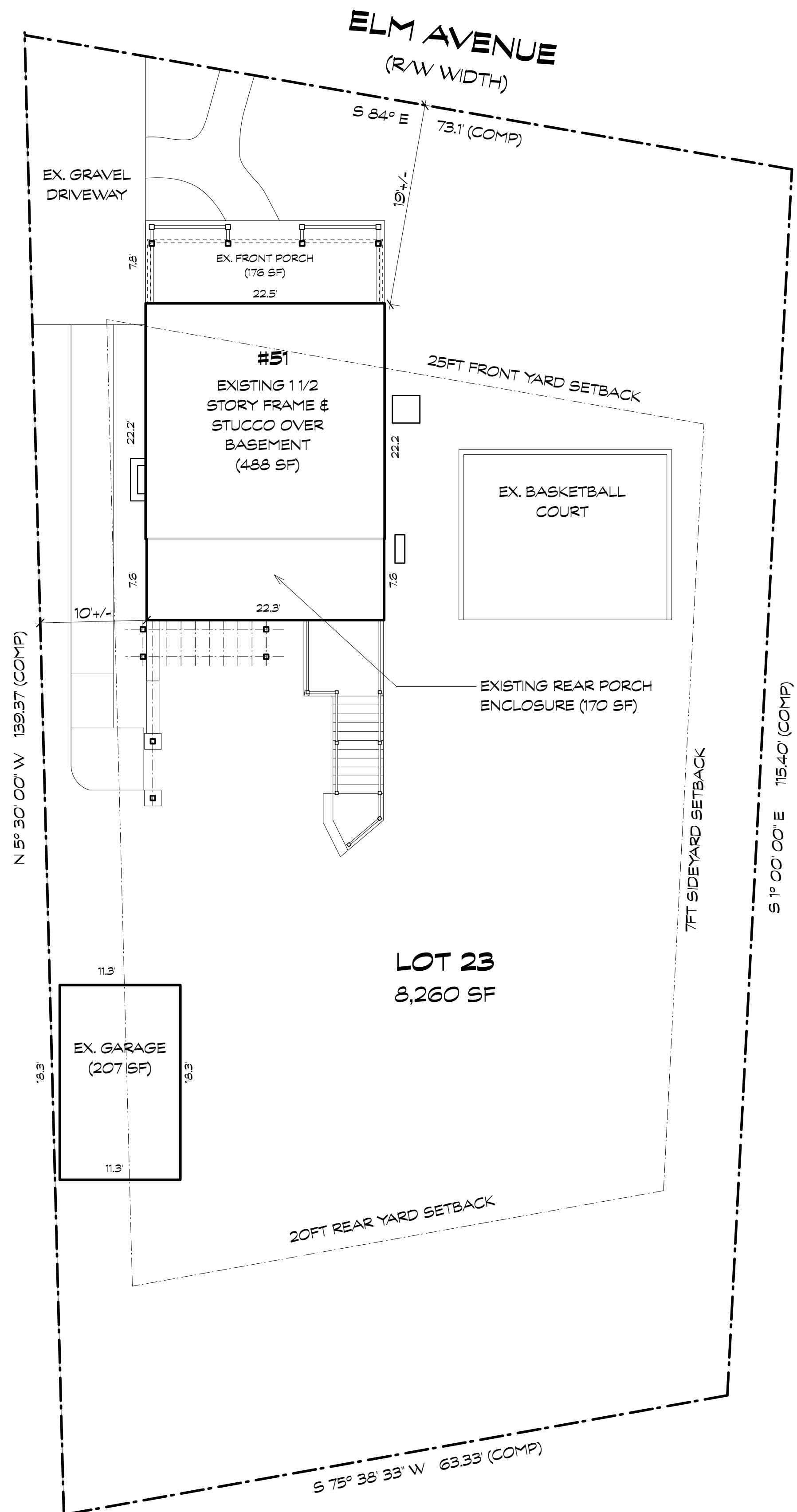
We feel the proposed expansions are consistent with and sympathetic to the resource, and the historic district at large.

DATE	ISSUE - REMARKS
mm/dd/yyyy	Issue Name

I CERTIFY THAT THESE CONTRACT DOCUMENTS WERE PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION OR APPROVED BY ME AND I AM A DULY LICENSED REGISTERED ARCHITECT UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND.

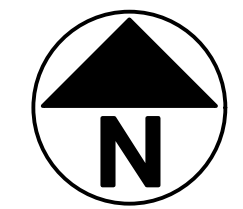
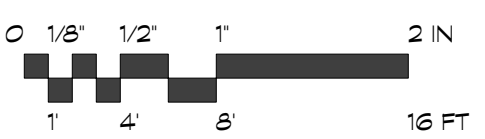
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**ZONING SITE PLAN / LEGEND**

WOOD FENCE	— — — — —
SETBACK LINE	- - - - -
PROPERTY LINE	— — — — —
EXISTING FOOTPRINT	□
FIRST FLOOR ADDITION	▨
SECOND FLOOR ADDITION	▩
SCREEN PORCH ADDITION	■



**JOHNSON-MURRAY ADDITION**  
51 Elm Ave, Takoma Park, Maryland 20912  
#2419

HISTORIC

27 DECEMBER 2024

EXISTING & PROPOSED SITE PLANS

**HP100**

WALL LEGEND	
	EXISTING WALLS AND PARTITIONS TO REMAIN
	EXISTING WALLS AND PARTITIONS TO BE REMOVED
	NEW WOOD FRAMED WALLS AND PARTITIONS
	NEW LOW WALLS
	NEW CMU WALLS

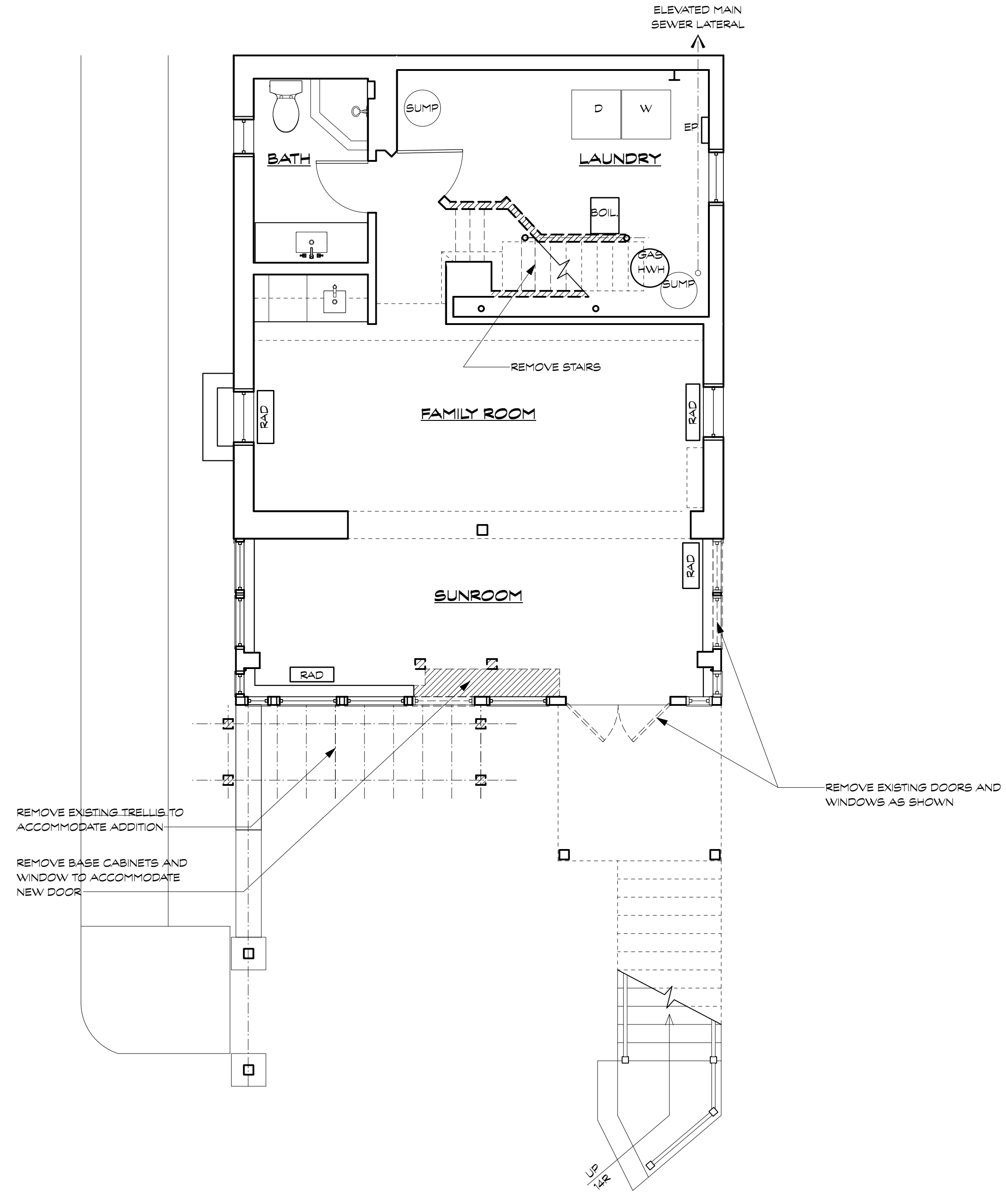
- GENERAL NOTES:**
- DO NOT SCALE THE DRAWINGS
  - NEW CONSTRUCTION DIMENSIONED TO FRAMING (U.N.O.)
  - EXISTING CONSTRUCTION DIMENSIONED TO FINISH (U.N.O.)

DATE	ISSUE - REMARKS
mm/dd/2023	Issue Name

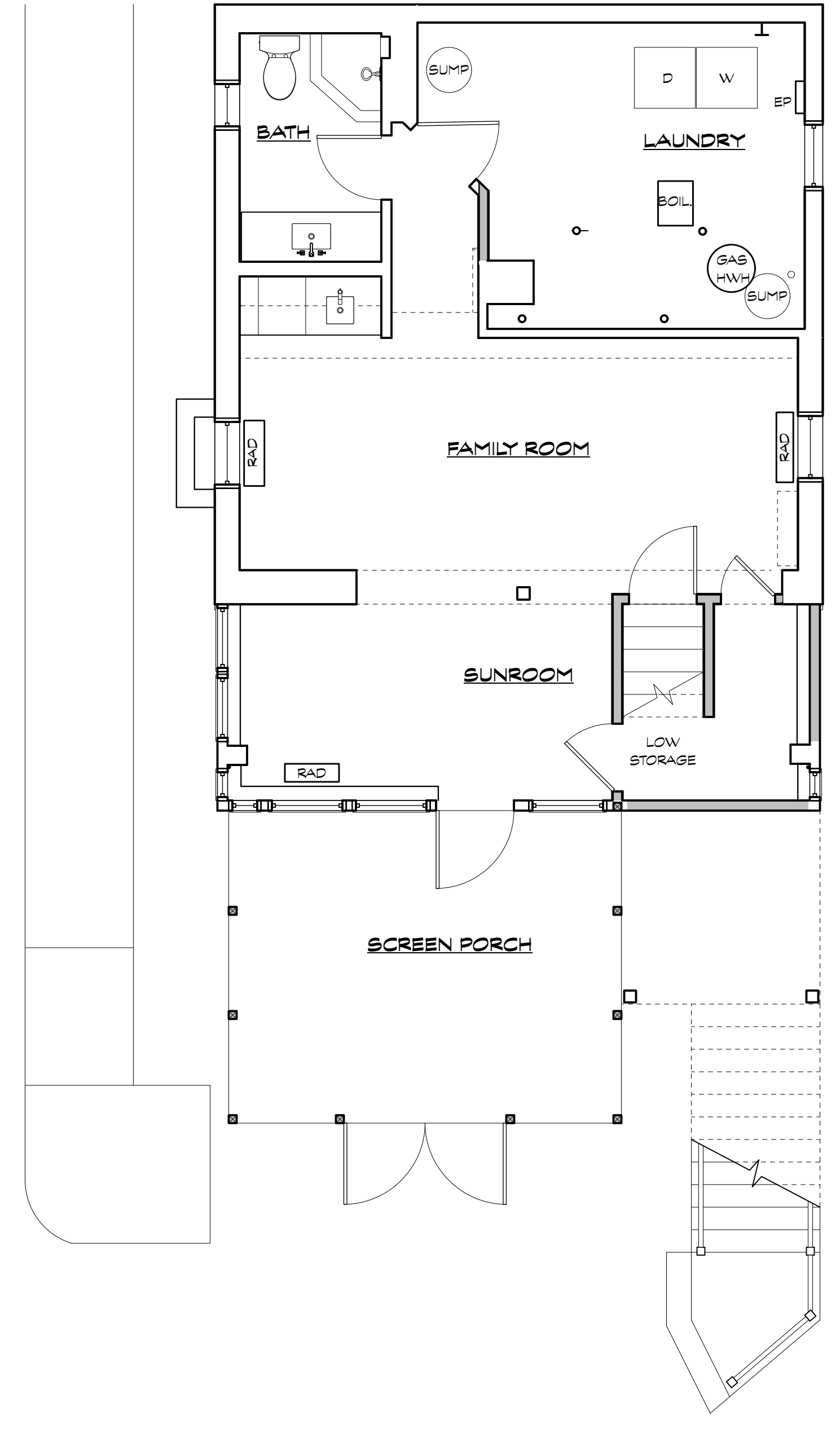
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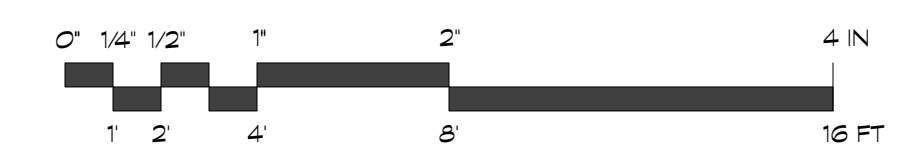
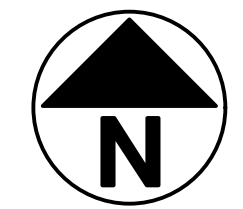
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**1 CELLAR DEMOLITION PLAN**  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



**2 PROPOSED CELLAR PLAN**  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



**JOHNSON-MURRAY ADDITION**

51 Elm Ave, Takoma Park, Maryland 20912  
#2419

HISTORIC

27 DECEMBER 2024

EXISTING & PROPOSED BASEMENT PLANS

**HP101**

WALL LEGEND	
	EXISTING WALLS AND PARTITIONS TO REMAIN
	EXISTING WALLS AND PARTITIONS TO BE REMOVED
	NEW WOOD FRAMED WALLS AND PARTITIONS
	NEW LOW WALLS
	NEW CMU WALLS

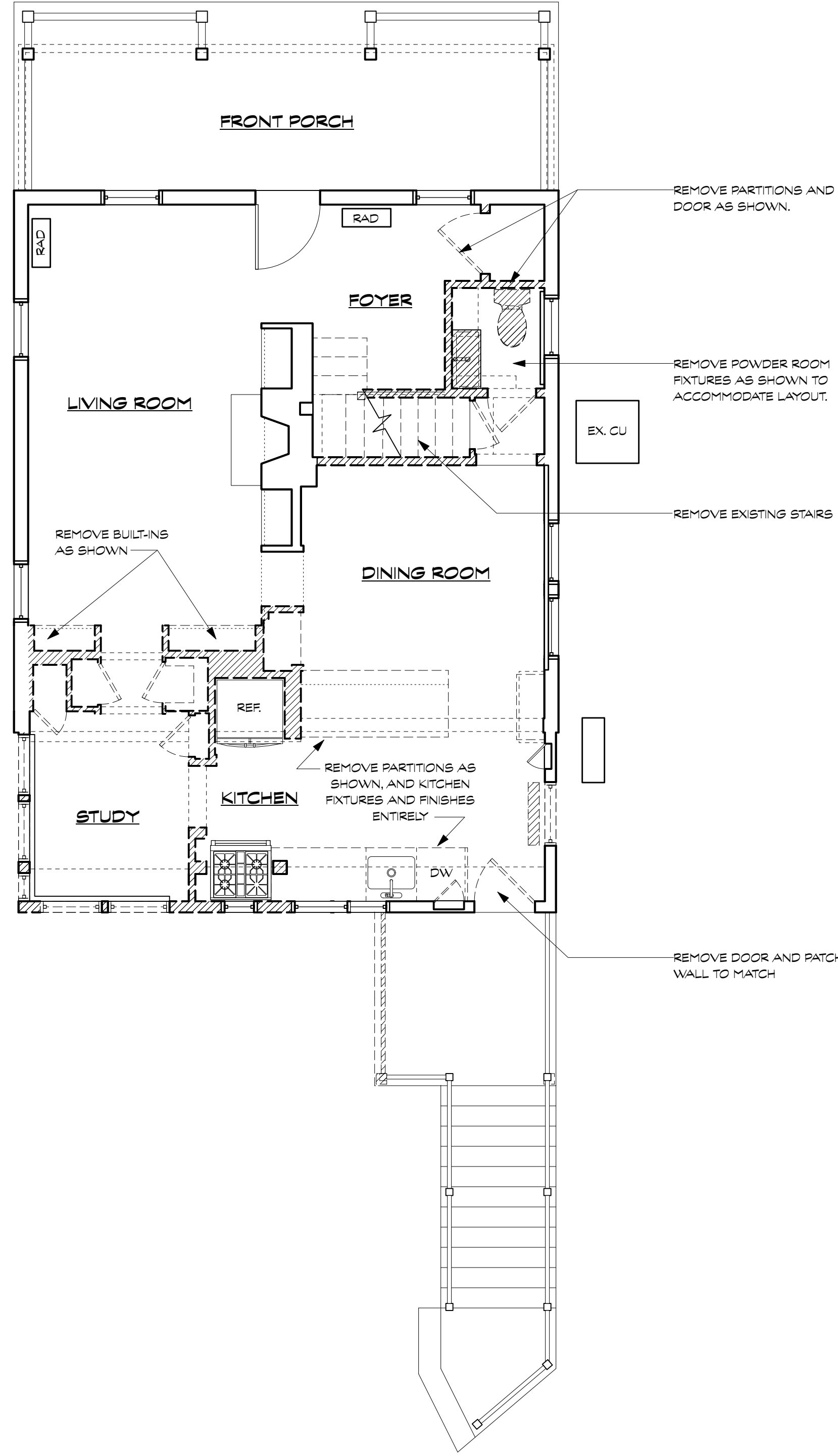
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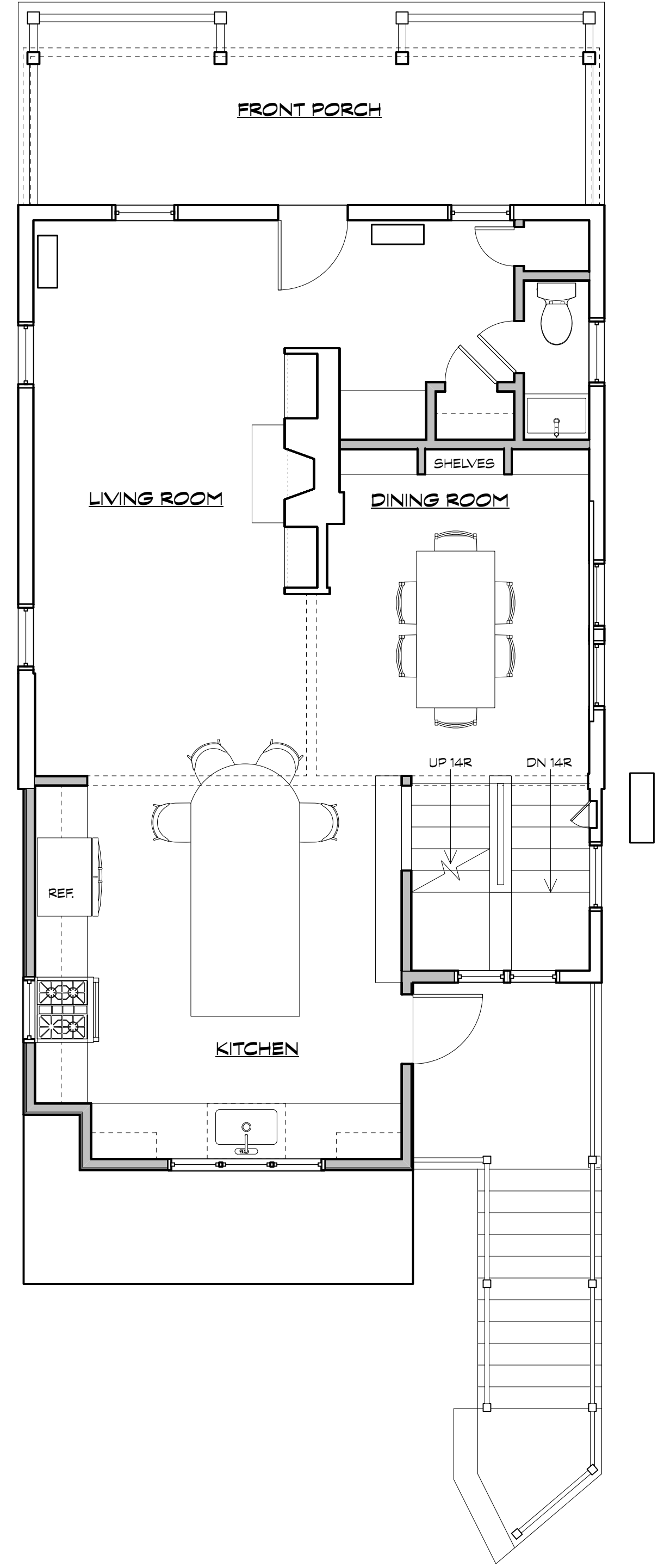
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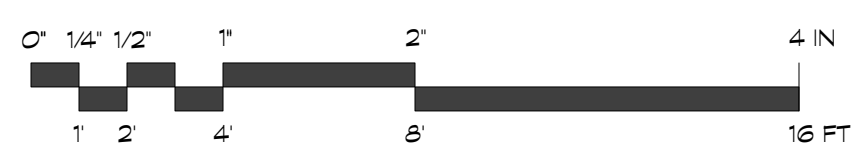
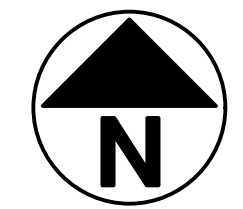
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**1** FIRST FLOOR DEMOLITION PLAN  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



**2** PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



**JOHNSON-MURRAY ADDITION**  
51 Elm Ave, Takoma Park, Maryland 20912  
#2419

HISTORIC

27 DECEMBER 2024

EXISTING & PROPOSED  
FIRST FLOOR PLANS

**HP102**

WALL LEGEND	
	EXISTING WALLS AND PARTITIONS TO REMAIN
	EXISTING WALLS AND PARTITIONS TO BE REMOVED
	NEW WOOD FRAMED WALLS AND PARTITIONS
	NEW LOW WALLS
	NEW CMU WALLS

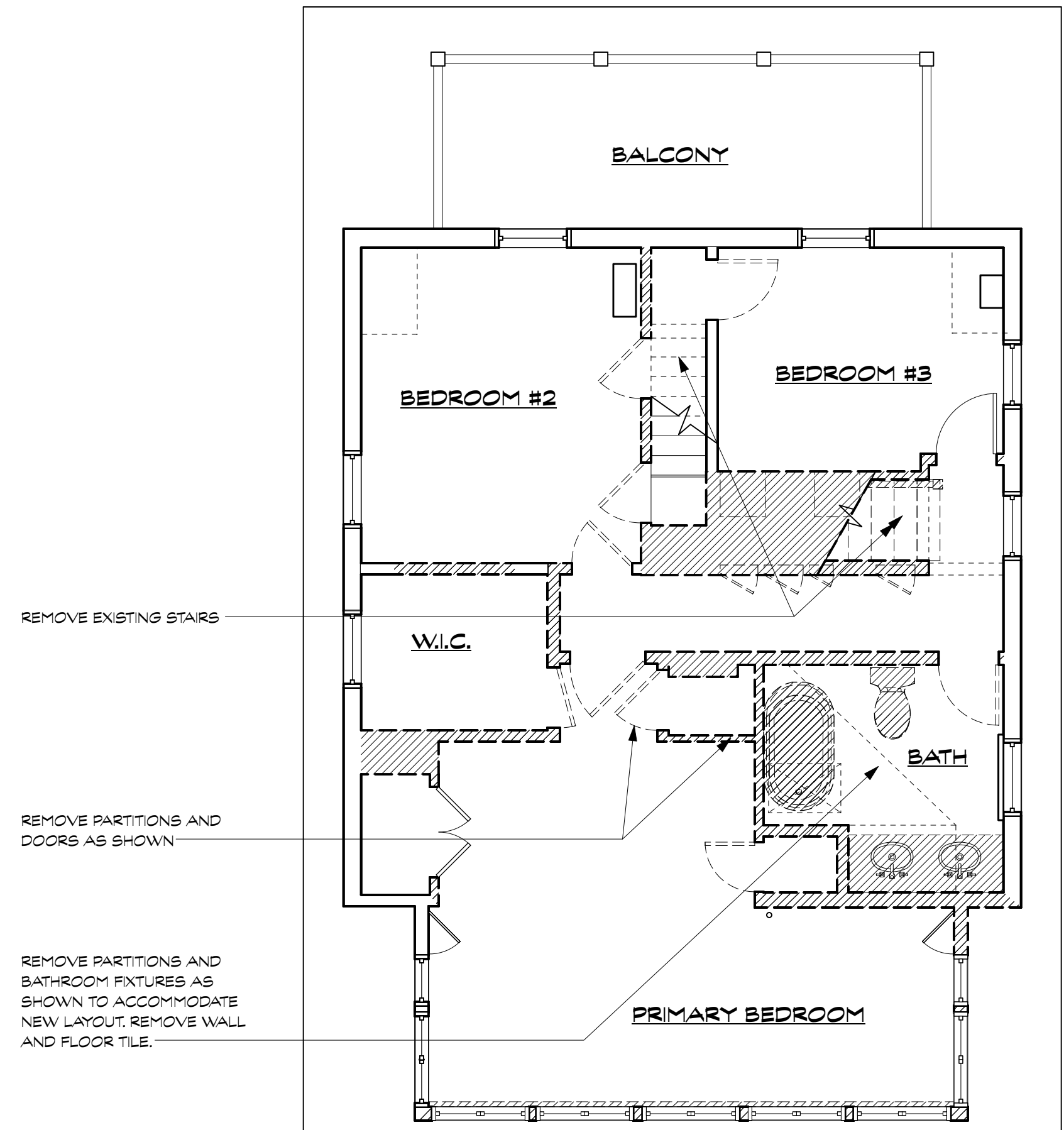
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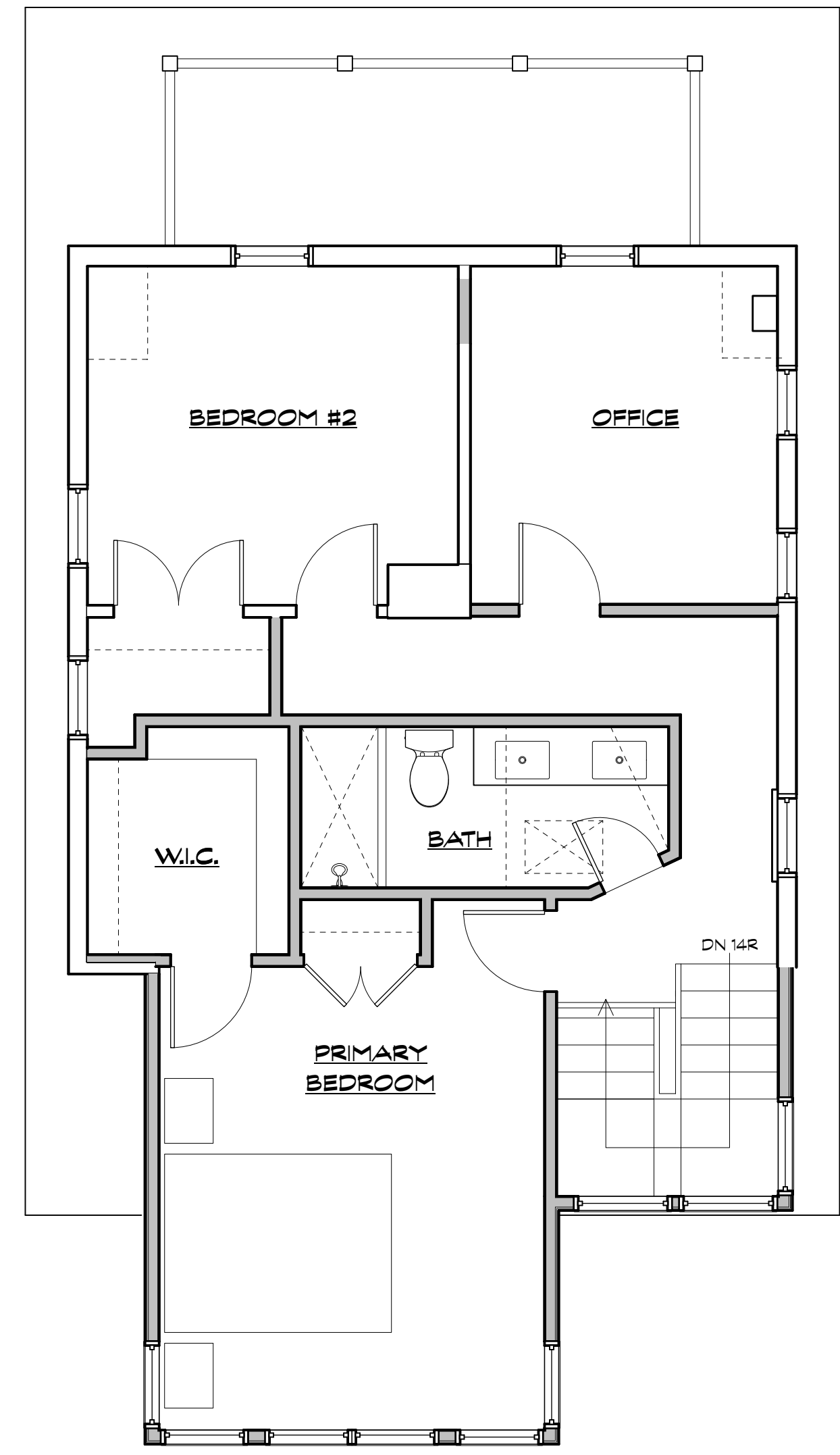
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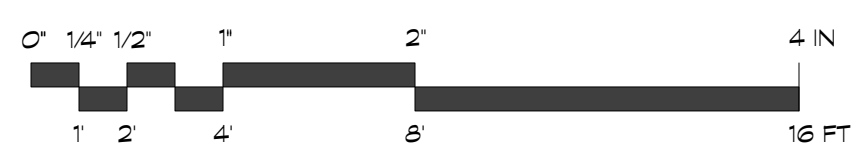
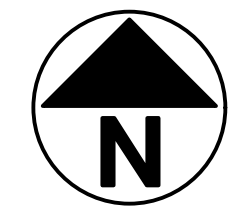
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**1 SECOND FLOOR DEMOLITION PLAN**  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



**2 PROPOSED SECOND FLOOR PLAN**  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



**JOHNSON-MURRAY ADDITION**  
51 Elm Ave, Takoma Park, Maryland 20912  
#2419

EXISTING & PROPOSED  
SECOND FLOOR PLANS

**HP103**

HISTORIC

27 DECEMBER 2024



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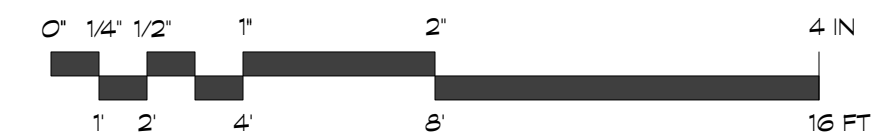
1 EXISTING FRONT (NORTH) ELEVATION  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



2 EXISTING REAR (SOUTH) ELEVATION  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



3 PROPOSED REAR (SOUTH) ELEVATION  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



**JOHNSON-MURRAY ADDITION**  
51 Elm Ave, Takoma Park, Maryland 20912  
#2419

HISTORIC

27 DECEMBER 2024

EXISTING & PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

**HP200**

DATE	ISSUE - REMARKS
mm/dd/yyyy	Issue Name

I CERTIFY THAT THESE CONTRACT DOCUMENTS WERE PREPARED UNDER MY SUPERVISION OR APPROVED BY ME AND I AM A DULY LICENSED REGISTERED ARCHITECT UNDER THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF MARYLAND.

LICENSE #: \_\_\_\_\_ EXPIRATION DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

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1 EXISTING SIDE (WEST) ELEVATION  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



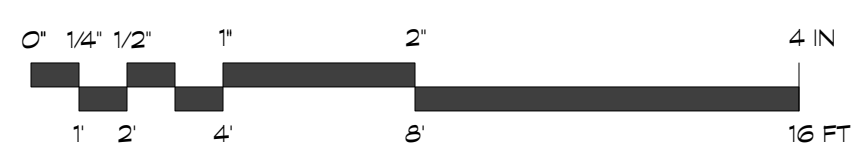
2 PROPOSED SIDE (WEST) ELEVATION  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



3 EXISTING SIDE (EAST) ELEVATION  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



4 PROPOSED SIDE (EAST) ELEVATION  
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"



**JOHNSON-MURRAY ADDITION**  
51 Elm Ave, Takoma Park, Maryland 20912  
#2419

EXISTING & PROPOSED ELEVATIONS

**HP201**

HISTORIC

27 DECEMBER 2024

Existing Property Condition Photographs (duplicate as needed)



Detail: 51 ELM AVE. APPROACH FROM EAST



Detail: 51 ELM AVE. FRONT (NORTH)

Existing Property Condition Photographs (duplicate as needed)



Detail: 51 ELM AVE. EAST

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Detail: 51 ELM AVE. SOUTH-EAST CORNER

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Existing Property Condition Photographs (duplicate as needed)



Detail: 51 ELM AVE. REAR (SOUTH)

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Detail: 51 ELM AVE. SOUTH-WEST CORNER

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Existing Property Condition Photographs (duplicate as needed)



Detail: CONTEXT: 49 ELM AVE.



Detail: CONTEXT: 55 ELM AVE.

Existing Property Condition Photographs (duplicate as needed)



Detail: CONTEXT: 6901 WESTMORELAND AVE.

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Detail: CONTEXT: 50 ELM AVE.

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Existing Property Condition Photographs (duplicate as needed)



Detail: CONTEXT: 54 ELM AVE.

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