# MONTGOMERY COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Address: 7411 Piney Branch Ave., Takoma Park Meeting Date: 10/08/2025

**Resource:** Contributing Resource **Report Date:** 9/17/2025

**Takoma Park Historic District** 

**Public Notice:** 9/10/2025

**Applicant:** Olive Mueller and Molly Young

(Richard J. Vitullo, Architect) Tax Credit: No

Review: HAWP Staff: Devon Murtha

Permit Number: 1129952

**PROPOSAL:** Demolition of screened patio, alterations to an existing rear addition, construction of a

new addition, and installation of a rear patio.

# **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the HPC **approve** the HAWP application.

# **ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

SIGNIFICANCE: Contributing Resource within the Takoma Park Historic District

STYLE: Colonial Revival

DATE: 1920s



Figure 1: Subject property is annotated with a yellow star.

The subject property is a two-story frame house constructed in the 1920s. It is a Contributing Resource within the Takoma Park Historic District. The house has a side gabled roof, gabled dormers, and a brick chimney (*Figure 2*). A one-story addition and screened porch extend from the rear of the house (*Figure 3*).



Figure 2: Facade of subject property from the right-of-way along Piney Branch Avenue.





Figure 3: Right/south elevation of the house (left) and enclosed porch on the rear (right).

## **PROPOSAL**

The applicant is proposing alterations to the rear of the property, including demolishing the existing screened porch and constructing a new rear addition in its place. The applicant is also proposing fenestration alterations on the side elevations and installation of a new bluestone patio in the rear. The applicant submitted this description of work:

This project scope of work is demolishing an existing 14'-0" x 18'-0" 1st floor screen porch structure, and constructing a new space. NOTE: This structure was built without a HAWP or a Mont. Co. building permit. The new structure will be a new 18'-0" x 19'-0" Family Room, with a small wood stoop and stairs to grade. At grade, a new stone and concrete patio will be added. On the 1st floor middle bedroom, a code-required rear window will be closed up, so 2 new side code-required egress/glazing windows will be added; on the 2nd floor, an existing mezzanine will be converted into a new Bedroom; a new French casement window matching the existing window will be added in order to increase the "aggregate glazing area" up to 8%. 1st Floor Family Room: A new 19'-0" long x 18'-0" wide (342 sf) Family Room space will be built at the rear of the house. The roof structure will a 5.5:12 roof slope on both sides of the gable, in keeping with the architecture of the existing house; eave and rake overhangs will both be extended to 2'-0". This structure will be built using the following materials/details:

- *Siding:* Painted fiber cement smooth lap siding (5" exposure) on all 3 façades, with a 5/4 x 4 Boral corner trim. A 5/4 x 10 Boral bandboard will be located at the head of the windows all around, and at the water table level.
- Roofing: Asphalt shingles.
- Windows and Doors: Windows and Doors: New windows in the 1st floor rear Family Room are all to be aluminum-clad wood casement windows (9-over-1 appearance), 2'-9" wide x 7'-8" high. There will also be two 90-degree triangular direct glaze alum.-clad wood windows at the rear wall inside the gable. New windows in the 1st floor Bedroom are to be aluminum-clad wood casement windows (6-over-1 appearance). On the 2nd floor, there will be a new aluminum-clad wood French casement window to match the existing French casement; each sash will have 6 lites. All casement windows with mullions (for a double hung appearance) will have standard 7/8" mullion sizes, with a 2" wide center bar, SDL. The rear aluminum-clad wood French door will be salvaged from the existing house and re-used. Above the salvaged French doors will be a 4'- 8" wide aluminum-clad transom window, divided into 5 lites. There will be painted 5/4 x 4 Boral trim at the windows head and jambs.
- Foundation Structure: Parged CMU foundation wall.
- *Wood Stoop and Stairs:* A PT wood stoop and stairs with ipe decking, and a wood railing along one side. (See details)
- *New Rear Stone/Concrete Patio:* A 27'-0" diameter patio will be built adjacent to the wood stoop. (See site plan).



Figure 4: Proposed right side elevation

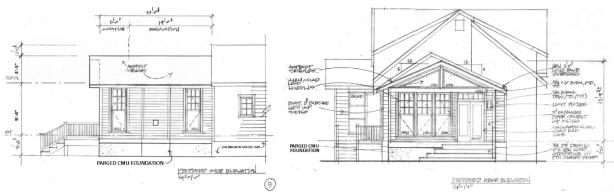


Figure 5: Proposed left side elevation (left) and rear elevation (right)

## **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 rightof-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 structures in the Takoma Park Historic District have been assessed as being "Contributing Resources." While these structures 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. However, they are more important to the overall character of the district and the streetscape due to their size, scale, and architectural character, 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 *Guidelines* that pertain 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.
- 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 from 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
  - (3) The proposal would enhance or aid in the protection, preservation and public or private utilization of the historic site or historic resource located within an historic district in a manner compatible with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural value of the historic site or historic district in which an historic resource is located; or
  - (4) The proposal is necessary in order that unsafe conditions or health hazards be remedied; 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

- (6) In balancing the interests of the public in preserving the historic site or historic resource located within an historic district, with the interests of the public from the use and benefit of the alternative proposal, the general public welfare is better served by granting the permit.
- (c) It is not the intent of this chapter to limit new construction, alteration or repairs to any 1 period or architectural style.
- (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* in this case are as follows:

- 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 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.

## PROJECT BACKGROUND

The two-story house on the subject property has undergone numerous alterations following its initial construction. It was constructed in the 1920s, and by 1946, the house was described as a "cute little white bungalow" with a full basement and five rooms. The Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (1927-1963) show that in 1963, the subject property included a small frame building with a rectangular footprint and a small side addition.

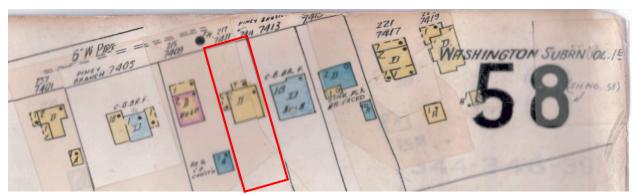


Figure 6: 1927-1963 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. The subject property is annotated with a red box.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Evening Star, June 30, 1946: 57; Times Harold, August 25, 1946: 35.

Between 1963 and 1995, the property owner constructed a one-story rear addition to the property. In 1995, the HPC approved a HAWP application to convert the one-and-a-half story house into a two-story house, raising the walls four (4) feet and altering the pitch of the gable roof (*Figure 7*).<sup>2</sup> According to the 1995 HPC Staff report, this renovation also added Colonial Revival elements that gave the house a more consistent architectural appearance. In 2023, the homeowners constructed a screened porch on the rear of the building the property without a HAWP (*Figure 8*). The property has since been sold to new owners.



Figure 7: Existing drawings for the side elevation of the subject property in 1995 (left) and proposed/as built drawings (right). The areas highlighted in yellow are additions/major alterations that are not original to the house.



Figure 8: Aerial view of the subject property in 2023 (left) and in 2024 (right).

## **STAFF DISCUSSION**

Staff is supportive of the proposal, finding it to be consistent with Chapter 24A-8, the *Guidelines*, and *Standards 2* and *9*. Staff supports the demolition of the screened porch, given that it not historic and was constructed without HPC review in 2023. Staff also supports the proposed addition and alterations, finding that they do not impact any historic fabric and are generally compatible with the character of the resource.

Per the *Guidelines*, major additions should be located at the rear of the building and design review should focus on alterations visible from the right-of-way. Staff finds that the proposed addition is located at the rear of the building and will be minimally visible from the right-of-way along Piney Branch Road (*Figure* 

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> For approval documents for HAWP #37/3-95O, see <a href="https://mcatlas.org/tiles/06">https://mcatlas.org/tiles/06</a> HistoricPreservation PhotoArchives/Padlock/HAR60640006/Box044/37-3-950 Takoma%20Park%20Historic%20District 7411%20Piney%20Branch%20Rd 05-25-1995.pdf.

9). Additionally, the proposed fenestration alterations to the right side (south) elevation are obfuscated by the one-story addition to the side of the house and not at all visible from the right-of-way. (*Figure 9*).





Figure 9: View from the right-of-way along Piney Branch Avenue. The approximate location of the proposed addition is annotated with a yellow arrow.

Per Standard 9, 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. Staff finds that the massing, size and scale of the addition is appropriate and will have little impact on the resource. The addition is only one story tall and inset from the historic main block, adding to its inconspicuous and deferential profile.

Staff finds that the proposed materials and features are compatible with the resource. The aluminum-clad windows/doors, boral trim, and asphalt shingle roof are consistent with the overall Colonial Revival style of the house. These features are subject to a less rigorous standard of review, as they are minimally visible from the right-of-way and located on non-historic rear additions. The proposed lap siding mirrors the overall appearance of the lap siding on the historic house but is differentiated by its small exposure (5" exposure as opposed to 8"). The fenestration is also consistent with the style of the house, but the substantial glazing also helps to differentiate the proposed addition from the historic main house.

Staff finds that the proposed bluestone patio is also generally appropriate. It is not visible at all from the right-of-way and will have no impact on the character of resource.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the HPC <u>approve</u> the HAWP application.

under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b), (1), (2) & (d) having found that the proposal is consistent with the *Takoma Park Historic District Guidelines*, and therefore 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 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 HPC staff if they propose to make **any alterations** to the approved plans. Once the work is completed the applicant will <u>contact the staff person</u> assigned to this application at 301-495-1328 or <u>devon.murtha@montgomeryplanning.org</u> to schedule a follow-up site visit.

.



Richard J. Vitullo AIA

DATE ASSIGNED APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT

FOR STAFF ONLY: **HAWP#** 1129952

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION 301.563.3400

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APPLIÇANI:				
Name: Oliver Muller & Molly Young	E-mail: muller.oliver@gmail.com			
7411 Piney Branch Rd.	city: Takoma Park zip: 20912			
Address: 7411 Piney Branch Rd. Daytime Phone: 301-806-6447	Tax Account No.:			
AGENT/CONTACT (if applicable):				
Name: Richard J. Vitullo AIA	E-mail: rjv@vitullostudio.com			
7016 Woodland Avenue	City: Takoma Park Zip: 20912			
Daytime Phone: 301-806-6447				
LOCATION OF BUILDING/PREMISE: MIHP # of I	Historic Property			
·	No/Individual Site Name ronmental Easement on the Property? If YES, include a			
(Conditional Use, Variance, Record Plat, etc.?) If Y supplemental information.	rovals / Reviews Required as part of this Application? 'ES, include information on these reviews as			
Building Number: 7411 Street:	Piney Branch Road			
Town/City: Takoma Park Neares	t Cross Street: Philadelphia Avenue			
Lot: Part of 9 Block: 83 Subdiv	sion: Parcel:			
TYPE OF WORK PROPOSED: See the checklist for proposed work are submitted with this ap be accepted for review. Check all that apply:	on Page 4 to verify that all supporting items pplication. Incomplete Applications will not  Shed/Garage/Accessory Structure			
New Construction				
✓ Addition ☐ Fence	Tree removal/planting			
☐ Demolition ☑ Hardscape/	· 😑 /			
☐ Grading/Excavation ✓ Roof	Other:			
	the foregoing application, that the application is correct ply 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

8-20-2025

Date

# **OWNERS:**

Molly Young & Oliver Muller

7411 Piney Branch Road Takoma Park, MD 20912

**AGENT FOR OWNER:** 

Richard J. Vitullo AIA Vitullo Architecture Studio, PC

7016 Woodland Ave. Takoma Park, MD 20912

# **Adjoining Property Owners**

**HAWP** 

7413 Piney Branch Road Takoma Park, MD 20912

7409 Piney Branch Road Takoma Park, MD 20912

7410 Piney Branch Road Takoma Park, MD 20912

7406 Piney Branch Road Takoma Park, MD 20912

7406 Holly Avenue Takoma Park, MD 20912

7404 Holly Avenue Takoma Park, MD 20912

# DESCRIPTION OF THE <u>PROPOSED</u> PROJECT AND ITS EFFECT ON THE HISTORIC RESOURCE:

# 7411 Piney Branch Road, Takoma Park, MD 20912

This project scope of work is demolishing an existing 14'-0" x 18'-0" 1st floor screen porch structure, and constructing a new space.

# NOTE: This structure was built without a HAWP or a Mont. Co. building permit.

The new structure will be a new 18'-0" x 19'-0" Family Room, with a small wood stoop and stairs to grade. At grade, a new stone and concrete patio will be added. On the 1st floor middle bedroom, a code-required rear window will be closed up, so 2 new side code-required egress/glazing windows will be added; on the 2nd floor, an existing mezzanine will be converted into a new Bedroom; a new French casement window matching the existing window will be added in order to increase the "aggregate glazing area" up to 8%.

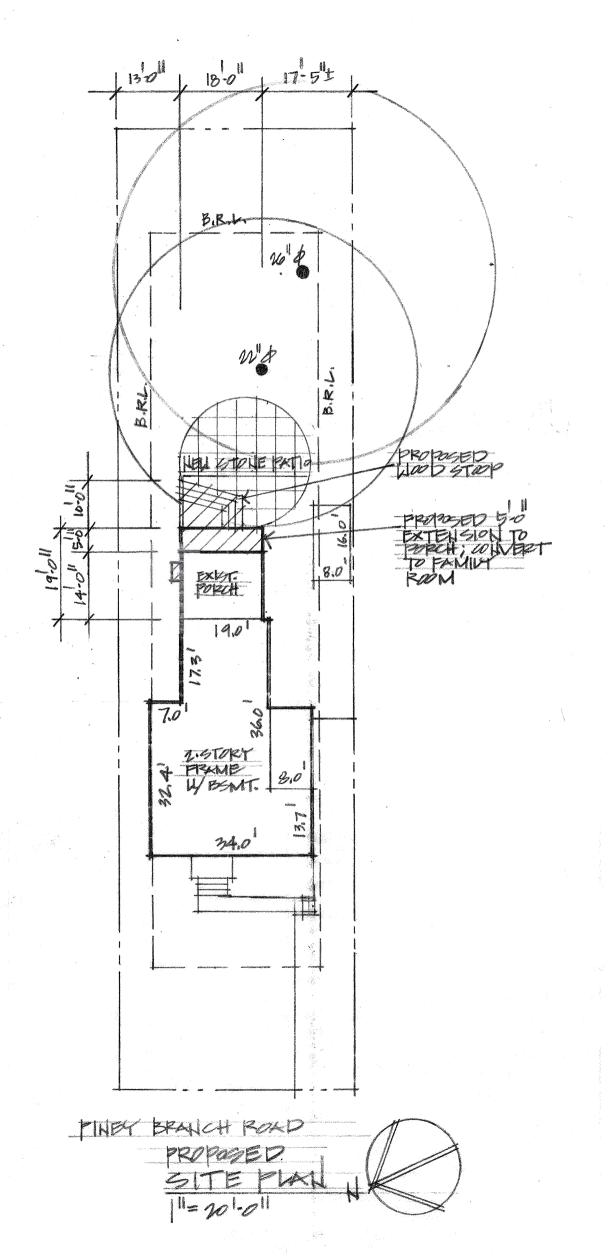
<u>1st Floor Family Room</u>: A new 19'-0" long x 18'-0" wide (342 sf) Family Room space will be built at the rear of the house. The roof structure will a 5:12 roof slope on both sides of the gable, in keeping with the architecture of the existing house; eave and rake overhangs will both be extended to 2'-0". There will be a 2'-0" x 5'-0" side extension to accommodate a direct-vent fireplace; this will be covered by the 2'-0" eave overhang so there will be no chimney extension above the roofline. This structure will be built using the following materials/details:

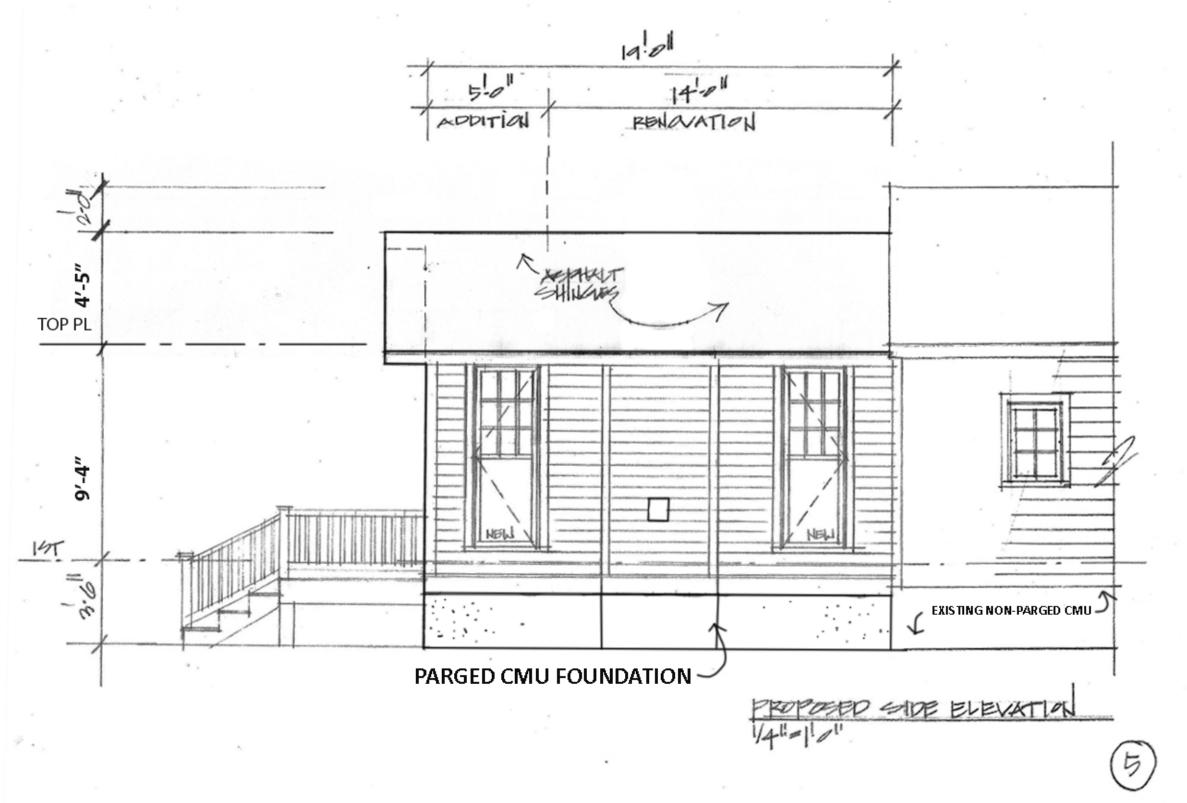
- a. **Siding:** Painted fiber cement smooth lap siding (5" exposure) on all 3 façades, with a 5/4 x 4 Boral corner trim. A 5/4 x 10 Boral bandboard will be located at the head of the windows all around, and at the water table level.
- b. Roofing: Asphalt shingles.
- c. Windows and Doors: New windows in the 1<sup>st</sup> floor rear Family Room are all to be aluminum-clad wood casement windows (9-over-1 appearance), 2'-9" wide x 7'-8" high. There will also be two 90-degree triangular direct-glaze alum.-clad wood windows at the rear wall inside the gable. New windows in the 1<sup>st</sup> floor Bedroom are to be aluminum-clad wood casement windows (6-over-1 appearance). On the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, there will be a new aluminum-clad wood French casement window to match the existing French casement; each sash will have 6 lites.

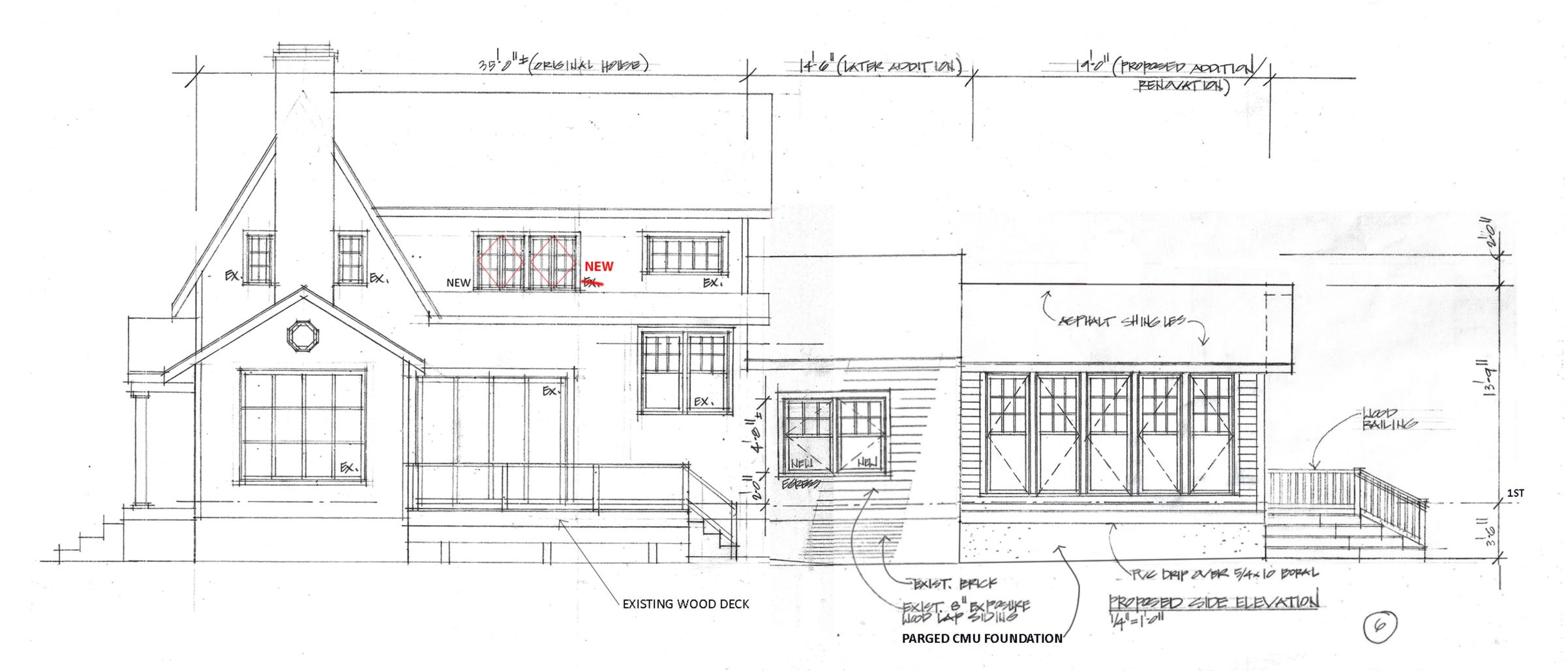
  All casement windows with mullions (for a double hung appearance) will have standard 7/8" mullion sizes, with a 2" wide center bar, SDL.

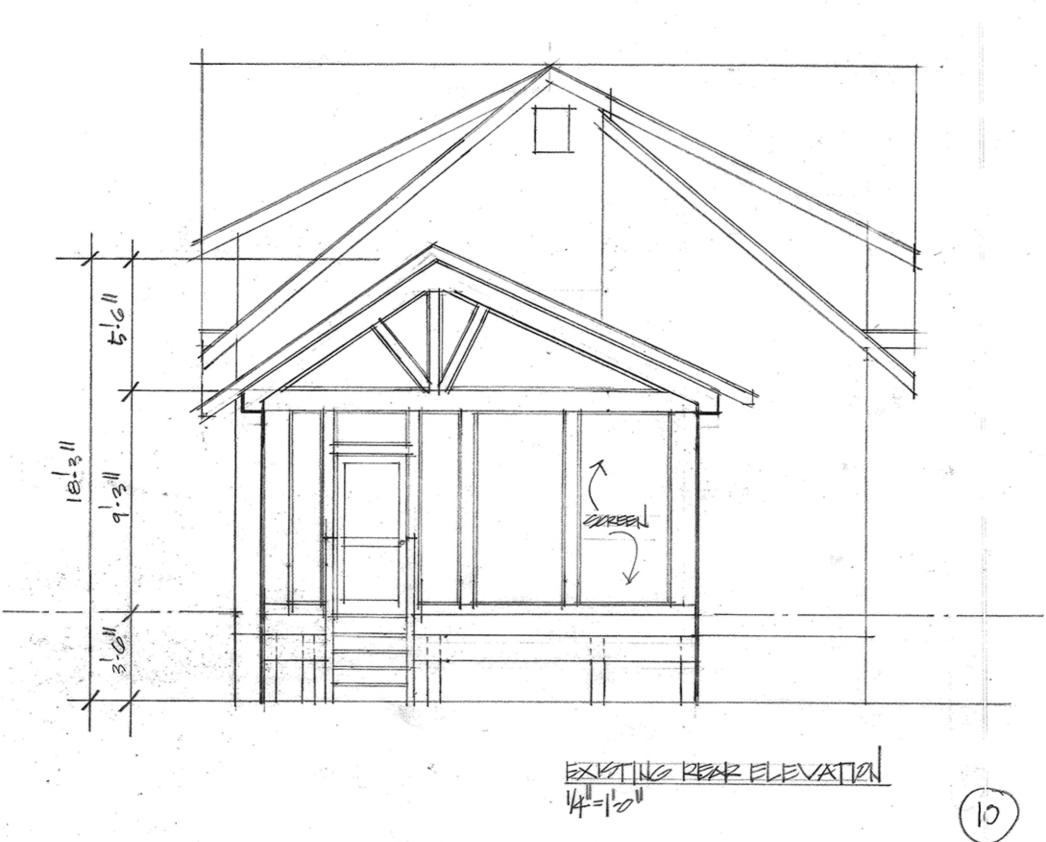
  The rear aluminum-clad wood French door will be salvaged from the existing house and re-used. Above the salvaged French doors will be a 4'-8" wide aluminum-clad transom window, divided into 5 lites. There will be painted 5/4 x 4 Boral trim at the windows head and jambs.
- d. Foundation Structure: Parged CMU foundation wall.
- e. **Wood Stoop and Stairs:** A PT wood stoop and stairs with ipe decking, and a wood railing along one side. (See details)

f. New Rear Stone/Concrete Patio: A 27'-0" diameter patio will be built adjacent to the wood stoop. (See site plan).



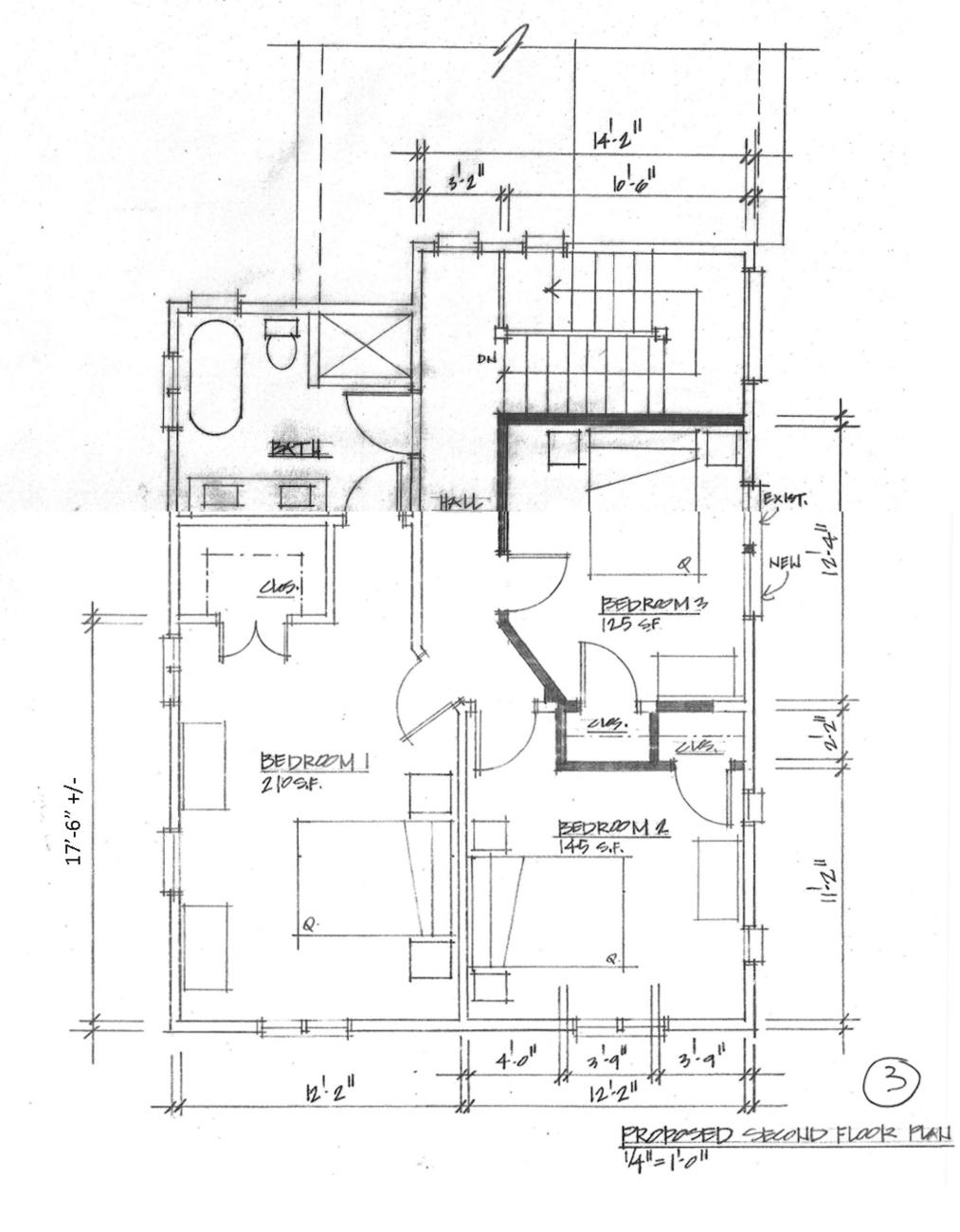


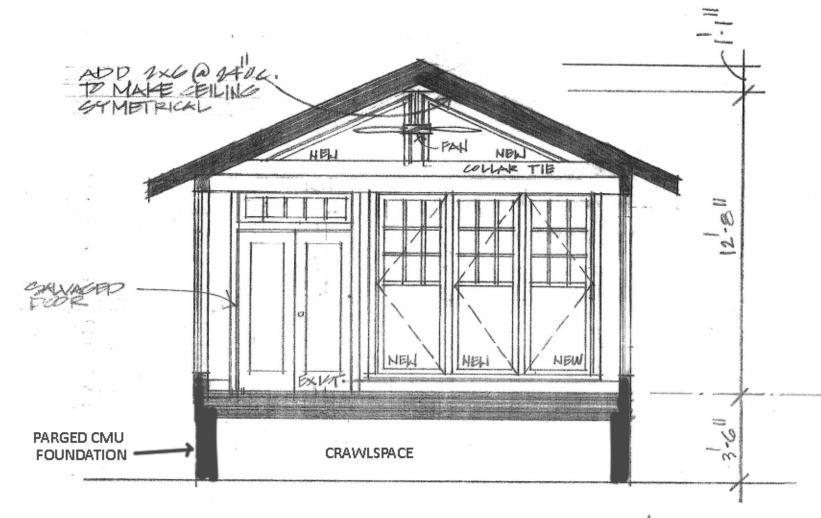






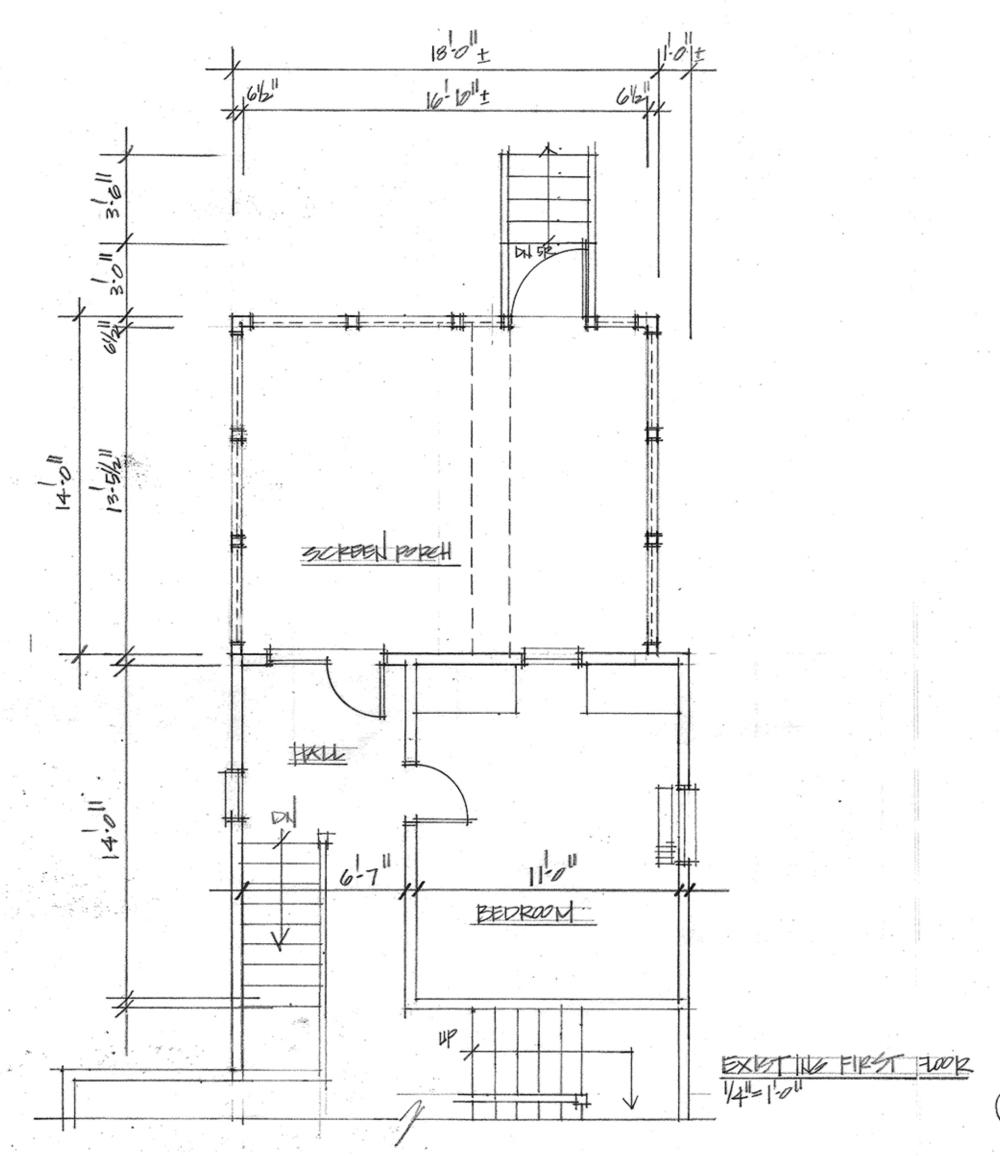
1/4"=10" REAR ELEVATION

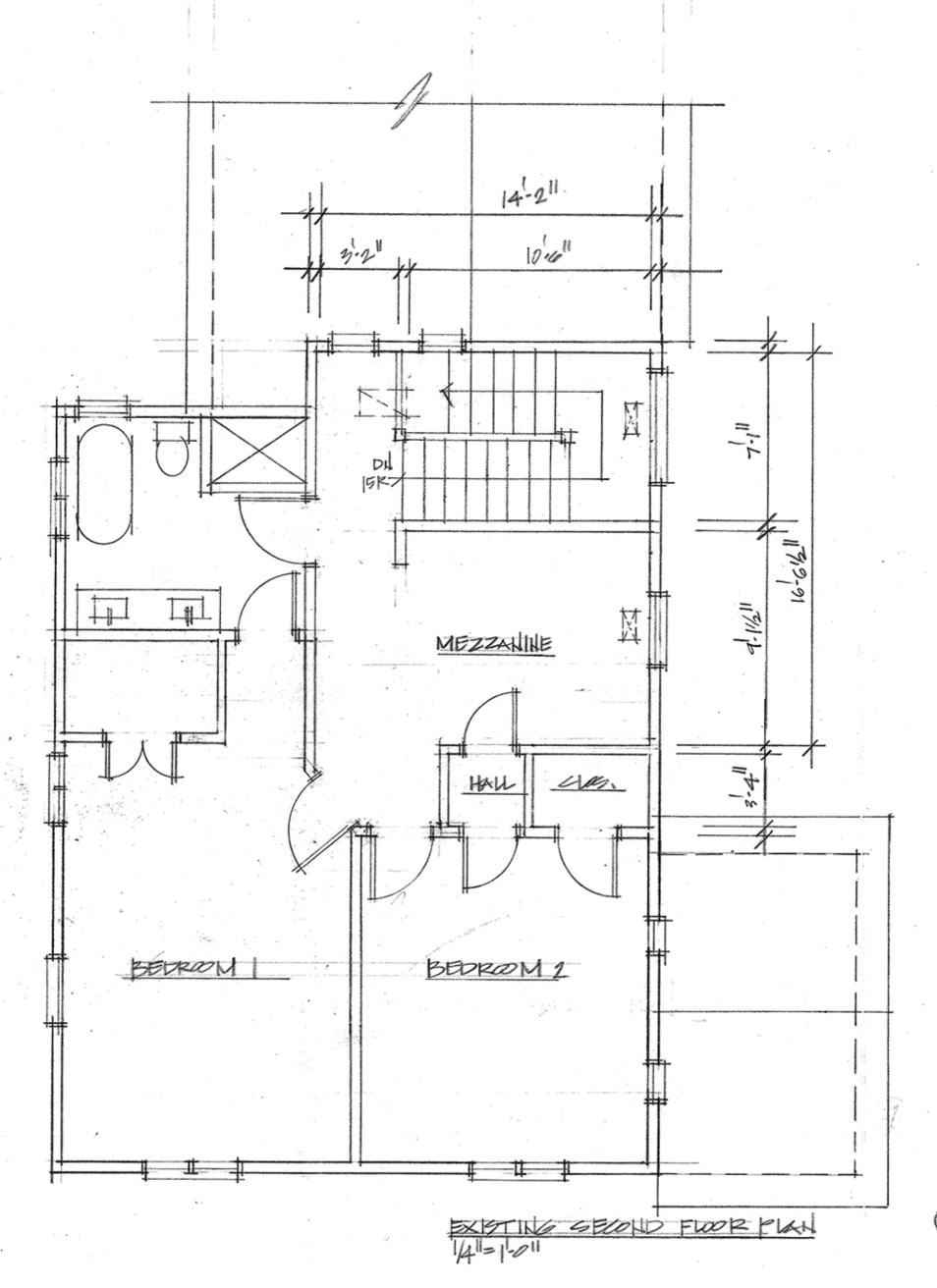


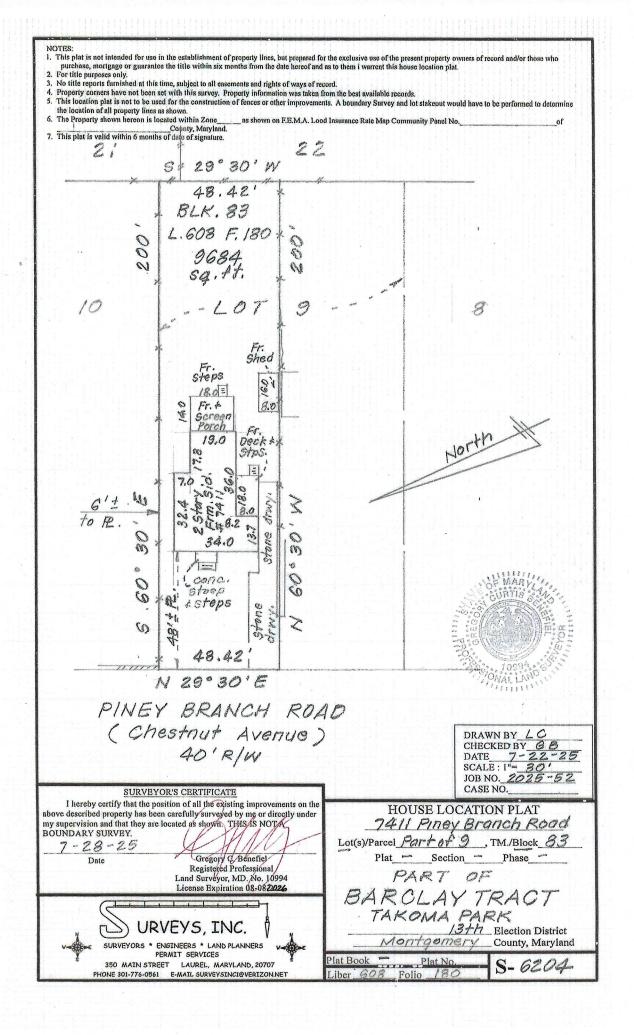


KMILY ROOM SECTION















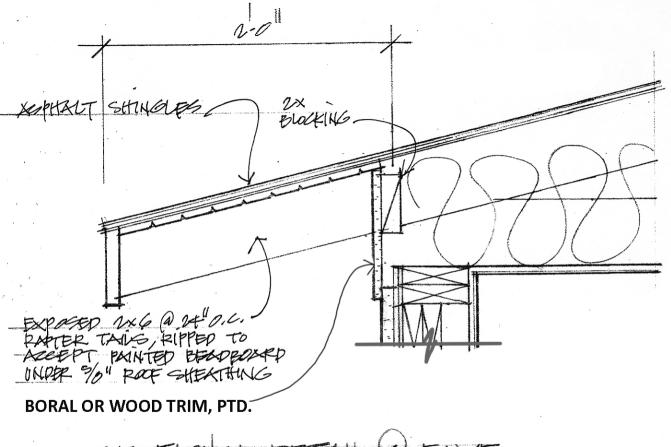












SECTIONAL DETAIL (2) EAVE

# ⟨ Products

# HARDIE® PLANK LAP SIDING

simplify the process of re-siding your home, so you can design with confidence. All products come with ColorPlus® Technology finishes for added beauty with lower maintenance.



Colors shown may vary due to screen resolution. Please see actual product sample for true color.

# AVAILABLE SIZES

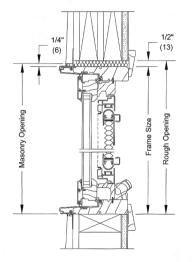
THICKNESS: 0.312"

LENGTH: 144" boards

WIDTHS: 5.25" 6.25" 7.25" 8.25" EXPOSURES: 5" 6" 7" 8"

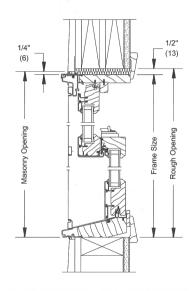
# **CASEMENT / CASEMENT PUSH OUT**

#### CONSTRUCTION DETAILS



HEAD JAMB AND SILL - OPERATOR WITH OPTIONAL INTERIOR SHADES

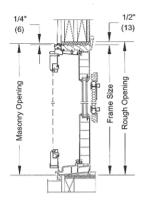
# **DOUBLE HUNG G2**



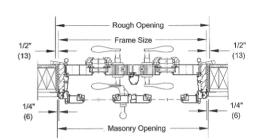
HEAD JAMB AND SILL - OPERATOR

# **Fiberglass-clad Wood Inswing Door**

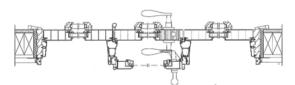
CONSTRUCTION DETAILS



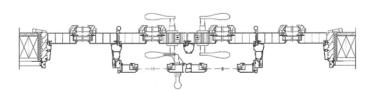
CLAD HEAD JAMB AND SILL WITH ULTIMATE SWINGING SCREEN -WITH OPTIONAL INTERIOR SHADES



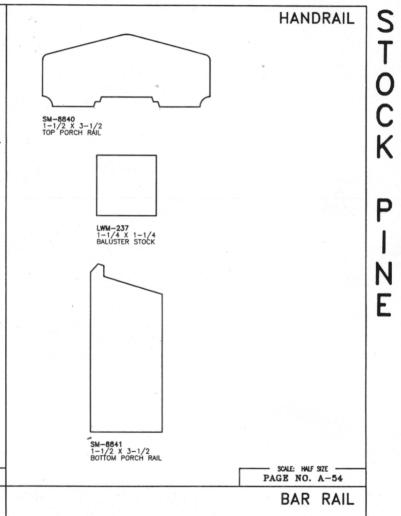
CLAD 2 PANEL JAMB
XX LHI WITH ULTIMATE SWINGING SCREEN WITH INTERIOR SHADES



CLAD 3 PANEL JAMB
OXO LHI WITH ULTIMATE SWINGING SCREEN WITH INTERIOR SHADES



CLAD 4 PANEL JAMB OXXO LHI WITH ULTIMATE SWINGING SCREEN -WITH INTERIOR SHADES



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EUTION



## DEPARTMENT OF PERMITTING SERVICES

Marc Elrich
County Executive

Rabbiah Sabbakhan Director

# HISTORIC AREA WORK PERMIT APPLICATION

Application Date: 8/20/2025

Application No: 1129952

AP Type: HISTORIC Customer No: 1534568

#### **Comments**

Also add new wood stoop, stairs to grade and a new stone on concrete patio at the rear.

## Affidavit Acknowledgement

The Homeowner is the Primary applicant
This application does not violate any covenants and deed restrictions

# **Primary Applicant Information**

Address 7411 PINEY BRANCH RD TAKOMA PARK, MD 20912

Othercontact VITULLO Homeowner Muller (Primary)

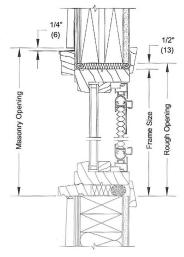
#### **Historic Area Work Permit Details**

Work Type ADD

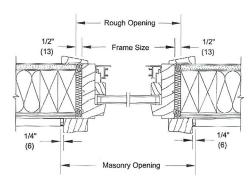
Scope of Work Build addition to and renovate existing screen porch into family room. Add windows to 2 bedrooms in order to add adequate glazing and egress.

# WOOD DIRECT GLAZE POLYGON / DIRECT GLAZE POLYGON

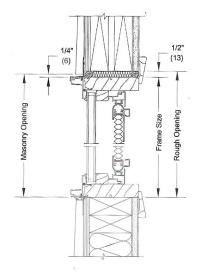
#### CONSTRUCTION DETAILS



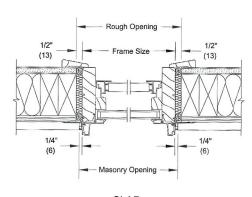
WOOD HEAD JAMB AND SILL - DIRECT GLAZE WITH OPTIONAL INTERIOR SHADE



WOOD JAMB - DIRECT GLAZE WITH SHADE



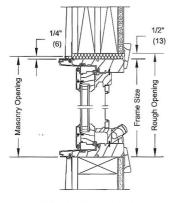
CLAD
HEAD JAMB AND SILL - DIRECT GLAZE
WITH INTERIOR SHADE



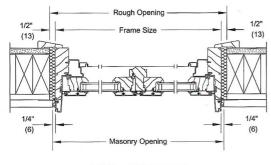
CLAD JAMB - DIRECT GLAZE WITH SHADE

# FRENCH CASEMENT

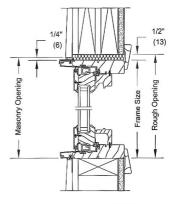
#### CONSTRUCTION DETAILS



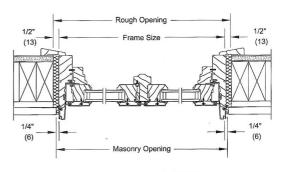
HEAD JAMB AND SILL -OPERATOR



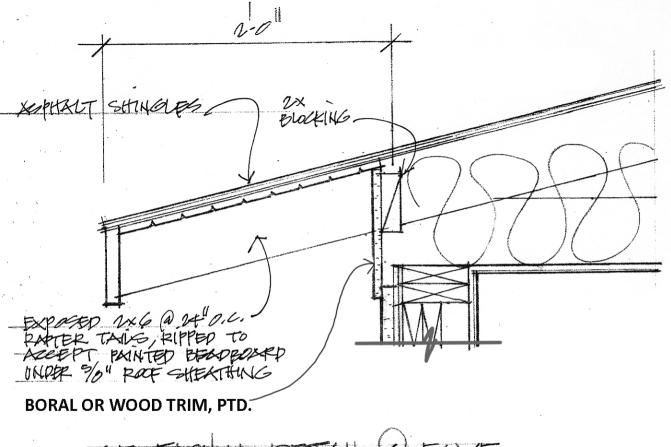
JAMB - OPERATOR



HEAD JAMB AND SILL -STATIONARY



JAMB - STATIONARY



SECTIONAL DETAIL (2) EAVE