

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

<b>Address:</b>	5605 York Lane, Bethesda	<b>Meeting Date:</b>	3/11/2026
<b>Resource:</b>	Contributing Resource (Greenwich Forest Historic District)	<b>Report Date:</b>	3/4/2026
<b>Applicant:</b>	Sean Cronin Pagenstecher Group Inc., Agent	<b>Public Notice:</b>	2/25/2026
<b>Review:</b>	HAWP	<b>Tax Credit:</b>	n/a
<b>Permit No.:</b>	1149145	<b>Staff:</b>	Devon Murtha
<b>Proposal:</b>	Partial demolition, enclosure of rear stoop		

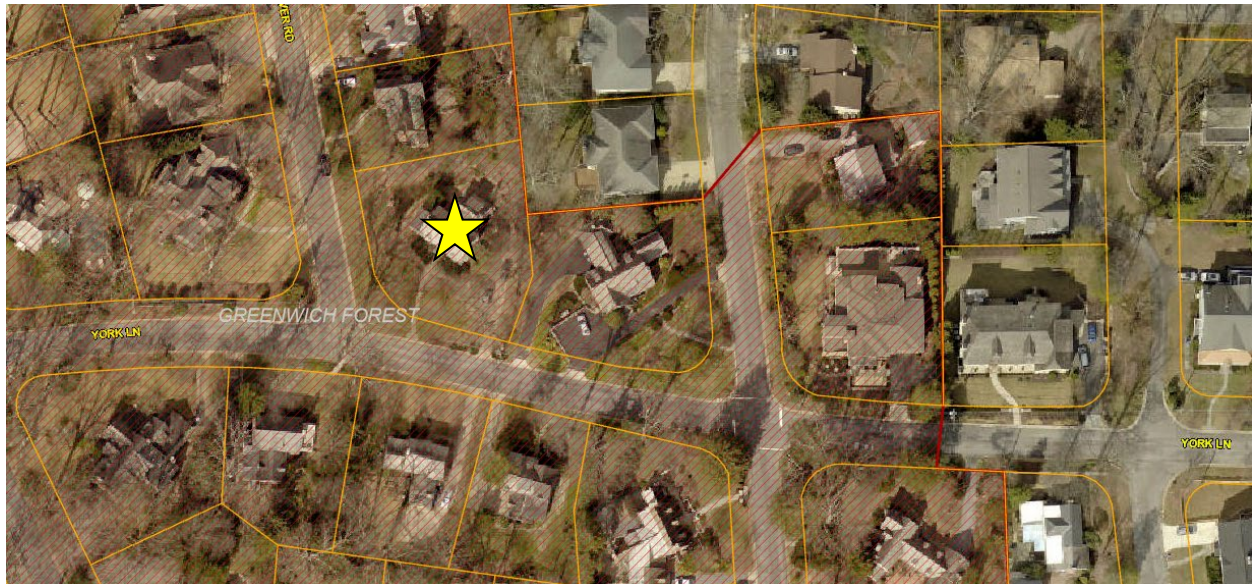
**STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission **approve with one (1) condition** the HAWP application with final approval delegated to staff:

1. The applicant must submit complete materials specifications for review prior to issuance of final approval documents, including specifications for the proposed door, new slate, and dimensional PVC.

**ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION**

**SIGNIFICANCE:** Contributing Resource within the Greenwich Forest Historic District  
**STYLE:** Colonial Revival  
**DATE:** 1938



*Figure 1: 5605 York Lane, as indicated by the yellow star, is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of York Lane and Westover Road.*

The subject property is located at the northeast corner of the intersection of York Lane and Westover Road. It is a two-story brick house executed in the in the Colonial Revival style. It features a rough stone façade, a side-gabled roof clad in slate, and a central front portico. It featured numerous additions to the rear and side of the house that were constructed prior to the designation of the district.



Figure 2: View of the subject property from York Lane.

## PROPOSAL

The applicant is proposing to enclose an existing covered stoop located on the side of the house. The proposed walls will be clad in wood siding with wood brackets and dimensional PVC trim. The roof form will be modestly altered and clad with either new or reclaimed slate. A new exterior door will be added, and will be painted wood with a half-glass panel. The applicant also proposed to install copper gutters and downspouts to match those already on the existing house.

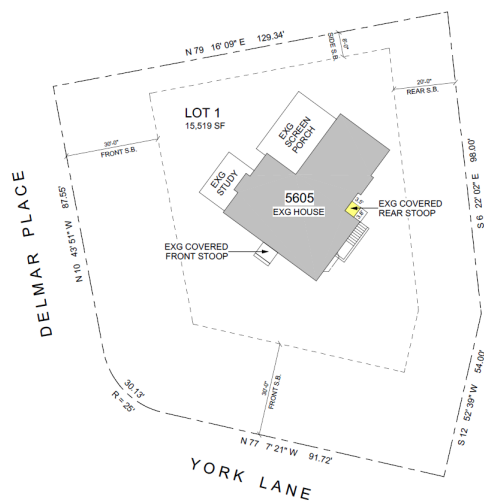


Figure 3: Site plan (left) and photo of existing stoop (right).

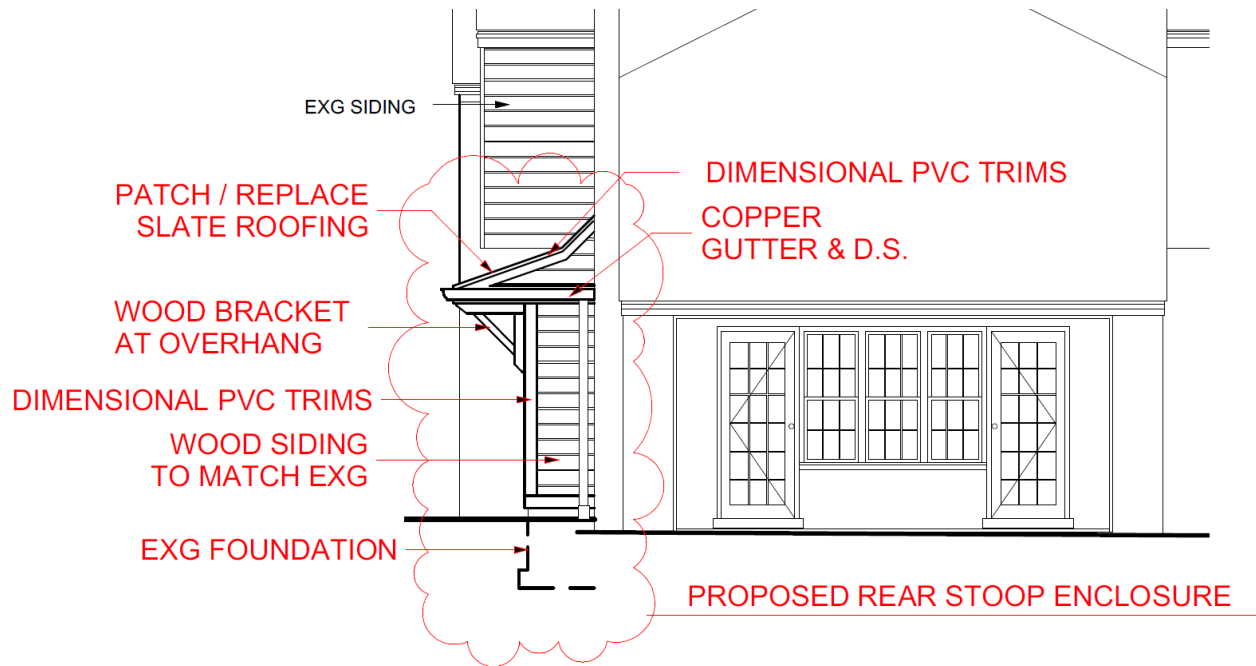


Figure 4: Elevation drawings for proposed enclosed stoop.

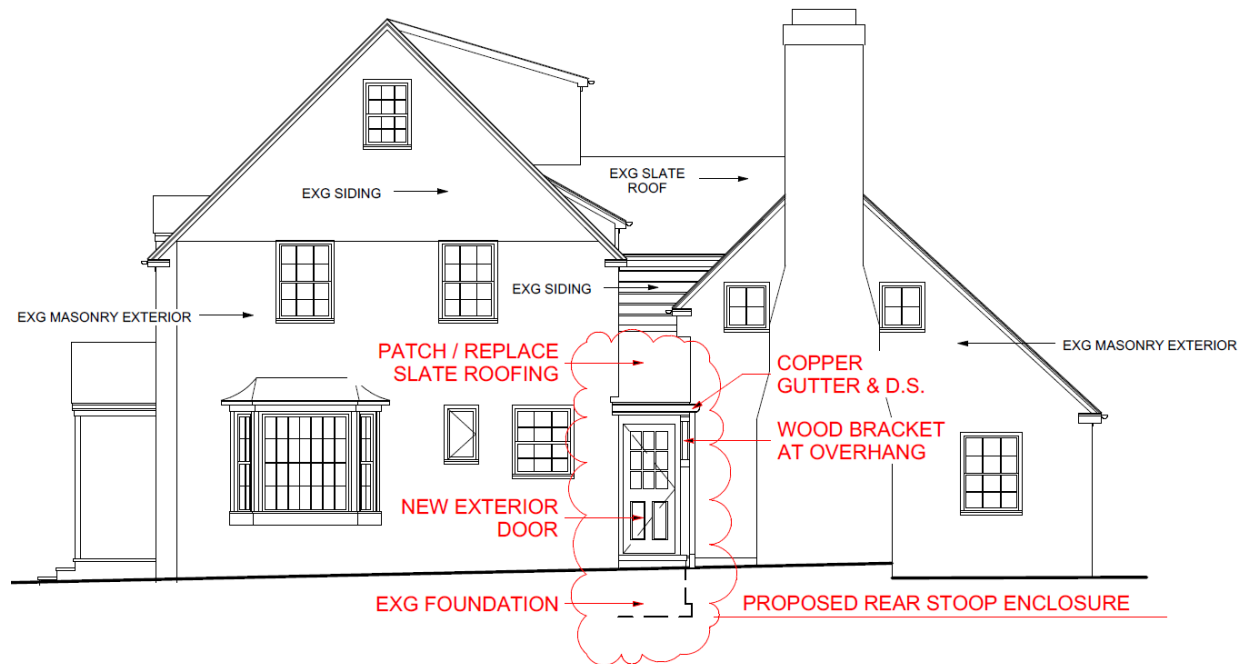


Figure 5: Elevation drawings for proposed enclosed stoop.

### APPLICABLE GUIDELINES

When reviewing alterations and new construction within the Greenwich Forest 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 *Greenwich Forest 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.

### ***Greenwich Forest Historic District Guidelines***

#### **A. PRINCIPLES**

The preservation of the following essential elements of Greenwich Forest is the highest priority in making decisions concerning applications for work permits. These Principles are not meant to stop or create unreasonable obstacles to normal maintenance, reasonable modifications, and the evolving needs of residents.

A2. The houses in Greenwich Forest create an integrated fabric well-suited to its forest setting. These Guidelines are intended to preserve this environment by ensuring that approved work permits include appropriate safeguards that protect the following three essential elements of this fabric.

- a. An array of revival American architectural styles that, taken together, make a significant statement on the evolution of suburban building styles (see Appendix 2).
- b. The scale and spacing of houses and their placement relative to adjacent houses and the public right-of-way. The original developers made decisions on these three elements to understate the presence of structures relative to the forest. For example, minimum side setbacks at the time were 7' but placement and spacing produced distances between houses that far exceeded the minimum 14'. Additions and new houses have, in almost all cases, preserved generous space between houses and minimized visual crowding with plantings.
- c. High quality building materials and high level of craftsmanship.

#### **B. BALANCING PRESERVATION AND FLEXIBILITY**

Greenwich Forest represents a period in the evolution of Montgomery County worthy of preservation, but it has also changed in response to the needs of residents since it was created in the 1930s. These Guidelines seek a reasonable compromise between preservation and the needs of residents in several ways.

B1. Most of the houses in the Greenwich Forest Historic District are designated "contributing" because they contribute to the architectural and historic nature of the district. Contributing structures are shown in the map of the districts. These Guidelines are more specific for contributing structures.

B3. These Guidelines reflect the reality that nearly all houses in Greenwich Forest have been modified since their construction. Owners are not expected to return their houses to their original configurations. The modifications they are permitted to make under these Guidelines are based on the current reality in the neighborhood, provided that those modifications are consistent with the Principles in these Guidelines.

B4. Property owners have additional flexibility under these Guidelines to make more extensive changes to the parts of their houses that are less visible from the public rights-of-way in front of their houses. The Guidelines accomplish this by stipulating different levels of review for specific elements on different parts of houses.

## D. MAJOR GUIDELINES

D4. Additions: Additions to contributing and non-contributing houses are allowed. The style of an addition must be compatible and in keeping with the prevailing styles of that house. The style of the addition must be compatible with the style of the original house, unless the owner wishes to change the architectural style of both the house and addition to another style of a contributing house in Greenwich Forest (see Changes to architectural style, below). Additions to contributing houses must preserve as a recognizable entity the outline of the original house (not including subsequent additions). Side additions to contributing houses are allowed, but the limits of the original façade must be demarcated by stepping back the front plane of the addition and by a change in the addition's roofline. Rear additions to contributing houses are allowed within limitations on height and setbacks (see D5).

D7. Building materials: Replacement of roofs, siding, and trim with original materials is strongly recommended and is considered maintenance that will not require an application for a work permit. Use of non-original "like materials" such as architectural asphalt shingles requires a work permit to ensure that they match the scale, texture, and detail of the original materials and are consistent with the overall design of the existing house. For example, homeowners wishing to replace slate or tile roofs may use alternative materials that match the scale, texture, and detail of the roof being replaced. If an original slate or tile roof had been replaced with non-original material before July 1, 2011, the homeowner may replace the existing roof in kind or with another material consistent with the architectural style of that house.

D10. Porches: The addition of front porches is permitted if they are compatible with the architectural style of the house. Enclosures of existing side and rear porches have occurred throughout Greenwich Forest and they are permitted, subject to the decision-making body's review of the work permit, to ensure that they are compatibly designed.

According to the *Guidelines*, the three levels of review are as follows:

Limited scrutiny is the least rigorous level of review. With this level, the scope or criteria used in the review of applications for work permits is more limited and emphasizes the overall structure rather than materials and architectural details. The decision-making body should base its review on maintaining compatibility with the design, texture, scale, spacing and placement of surrounding houses and the impact of the proposed change on the streetscape.

Moderate scrutiny is a higher level of review than limited scrutiny and adds consideration of the preservation of the property to the requirements of limited scrutiny. Alterations should be designed so the altered structure does not detract from the fabric of Greenwich Forest while affording homeowners reasonable flexibility. Use of compatible new materials or materials that replicate the original, rather than original building materials, should be permitted. Planned changes should be compatible with the structure's existing architectural designs.

Strict scrutiny is the highest level of review. It adds consideration of the integrity and preservation of significant architectural or landscape features and details to the requirements of the limited and moderate scrutiny levels. Changes may be permitted if, after careful review, they do not significantly compromise the original features of the structure or landscape.

***Sec. 24A-8. Same-Criteria for issuance.***

(b) The commission shall instruct the director to issue a permit, or issue a permit subject to such conditions as are found to be necessary to insure conformity with the purposes and requirements of this chapter, if it finds that:

(1) The proposal will not substantially alter the exterior features of an historic site or historic resource within an historic district; or

(2) The proposal is compatible in character and nature with the historical, archeological, architectural or cultural features of the historic site or the historic district in which an historic resource is located and would not be detrimental thereto or to the achievement of the purposes of this chapter; or

(5) The proposal is necessary in order that the owner of the subject property not be deprived of reasonable use of the property or suffer undue hardship; or

(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.

(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 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.” Standards 2, 9, and 10 most directly apply to the application before the commission:

#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 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 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**

Staff is generally supportive of the proposed enclosure of the existing side stoop, and recommends approval. The applicant must submit detailed materials specifications for the door, dimensional trim, and new slate prior to issuance of final approval documents.

Staff finds that the enclosure of a side stoop is generally permitted by the *Guidelines*. Major Guideline D10 specifically permits the enclosure of existing side and rear porches, subject to the decision-making body's review of the work permit to ensure compatibility. Staff finds that this the enclosure of the side stoop falls under the spirit of this principle. Principle B4 states that property owners have additional flexibility under these Guidelines to make more extensive changes to the parts of their houses that are less visible from the

public rights-of-way. Staff finds that the proposed alteration will be minimally visible, if at all, from York Lane (Figure 6) and should be reviewed with flexibility.



*Figure 6: View of subject property from York Lane. The location of the stoop, behind the rear wall plane of the house, is indicated with a yellow arrow.*

Staff finds that, per Chapter 24A-8 and the *Standards*, the overall footprint, design, and materials for the addition and compatible with the district and will not alter substantially alter the character of the resource or the district. The proposed wood siding, wood brackets, copper gutters, and slate roofing material match existing surrounding materials. The proposed wood door with a single lite is generally consistent with the style of the house. The dimensional PVC will not be visible from the right-of-way, and will not detract from the overall character of the resource. The enclosure of the stoop will result in the loss of one window and possibly one door; however, Staff finds that this is permitted under the additional flexibility afforded by Principle B4. Both features are not visible from the right-of-way, and their removal does not impact the overall form and integrity of the house, per the *Standards*.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Commission Staff recommends that the Historic Preservation Commission **approve with one (1) condition** the HAWP application with final approval delegated to staff:

1. The applicant must submit complete materials specifications for review prior to issuance of final approval documents, including specifications for the proposed door, new slate, and dimensional PVC.

under the Criteria for Issuance in Chapter 24A-8(b)(2) and (d), having found that the proposal is consistent with the *Greenwich Forest Historic District Guidelines* identified above, 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 *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 301-495-1328 or [devon.murtha@montgomeryplanning.org](mailto:devon.murtha@montgomeryplanning.org) to schedule a follow-up site visit.

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

5604 York Lane is a contributing structure in the Greenwich Forest Historic District in Bethesda, MD. The home is a 2-1/2 story center hall colonial that was built in 1938. The home sits on a corner lot with near continuous high canopy forest cover. The property has had a number of improvements and / or additions that have been previously approved by the Historic Preservation Commission.

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

We propose to enclose the existing 3'-6" x 3'-10" covered rear stoop. (see attached drawings and photographs).

Exterior finish details:

1. Exterior walls to be clad in new wood siding to match the existing house
2. All trim will be dimensional PVC as is allowed by the Greenwich Forest Historical Guidelines "modern scrutiny" for materials used on non forward-facing portions of rear and side additions.
3. Roofing will be reclaimed or new slate to match the existing house as close as possible
4. Gutters and downspouts will be copper to match the style of the existing house.
5. Rear stoop entry door to be painted wood with half glass panel (spec cab be provided upon request).

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**

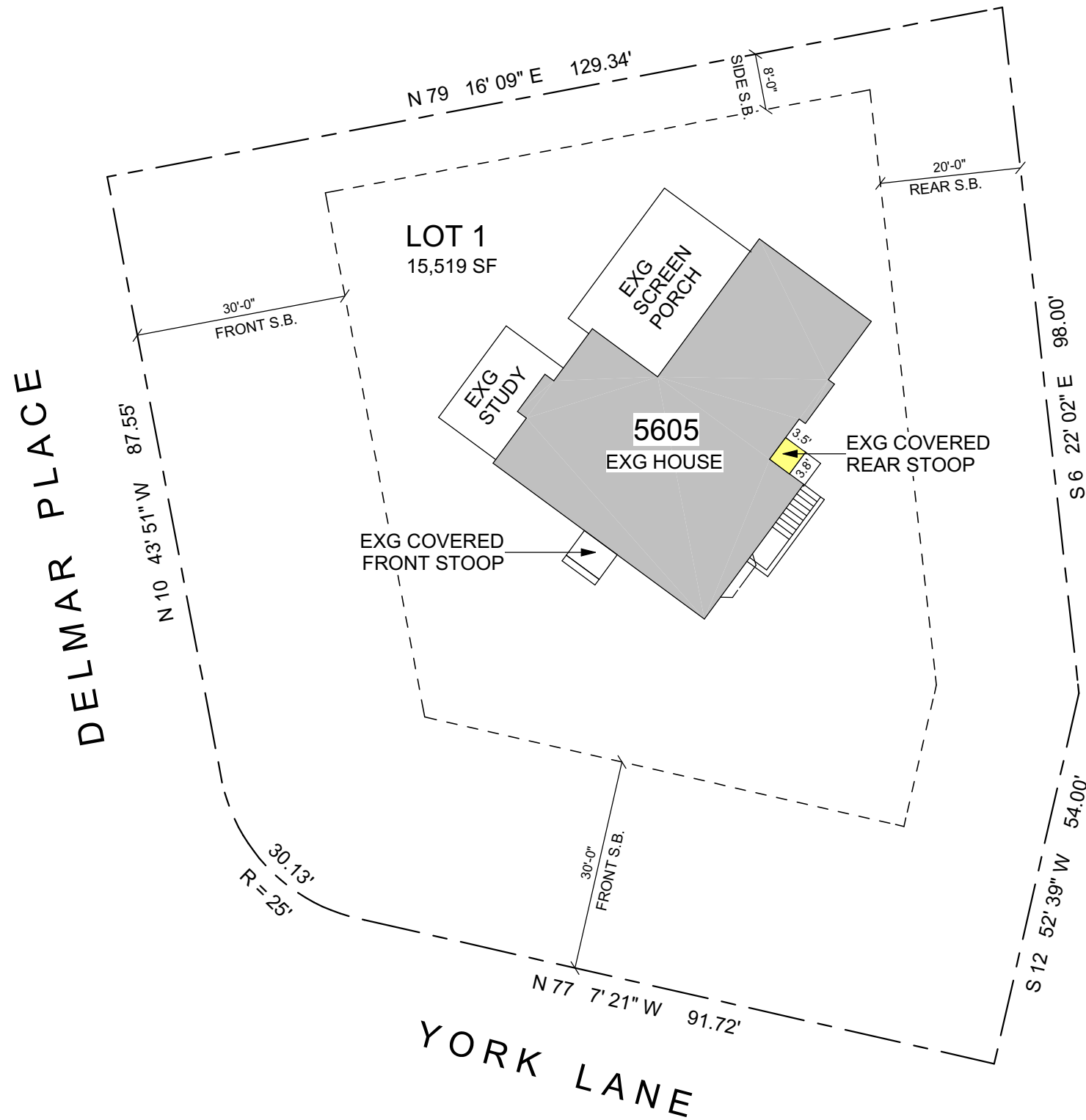
	Required Attachments						
Proposed Work	I. Written Description	2. Site Plan	3. Plans/Elevations	4. Material Specifications	5. Photographs	6. Tree Survey	7. Property Owner Addresses
New Construction	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Additions/Alterations	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Demolition	*	*	*		*		*
Deck/Porch	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Fence/Wall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



5605 York Lane photo of existing covered rear stoop (image #1)



5605 York Lane photo of existing covered rear stoop (image #2)



1  
A001

**SITE PLAN**

1" = 20'-0"

**SITE DETAILS:**

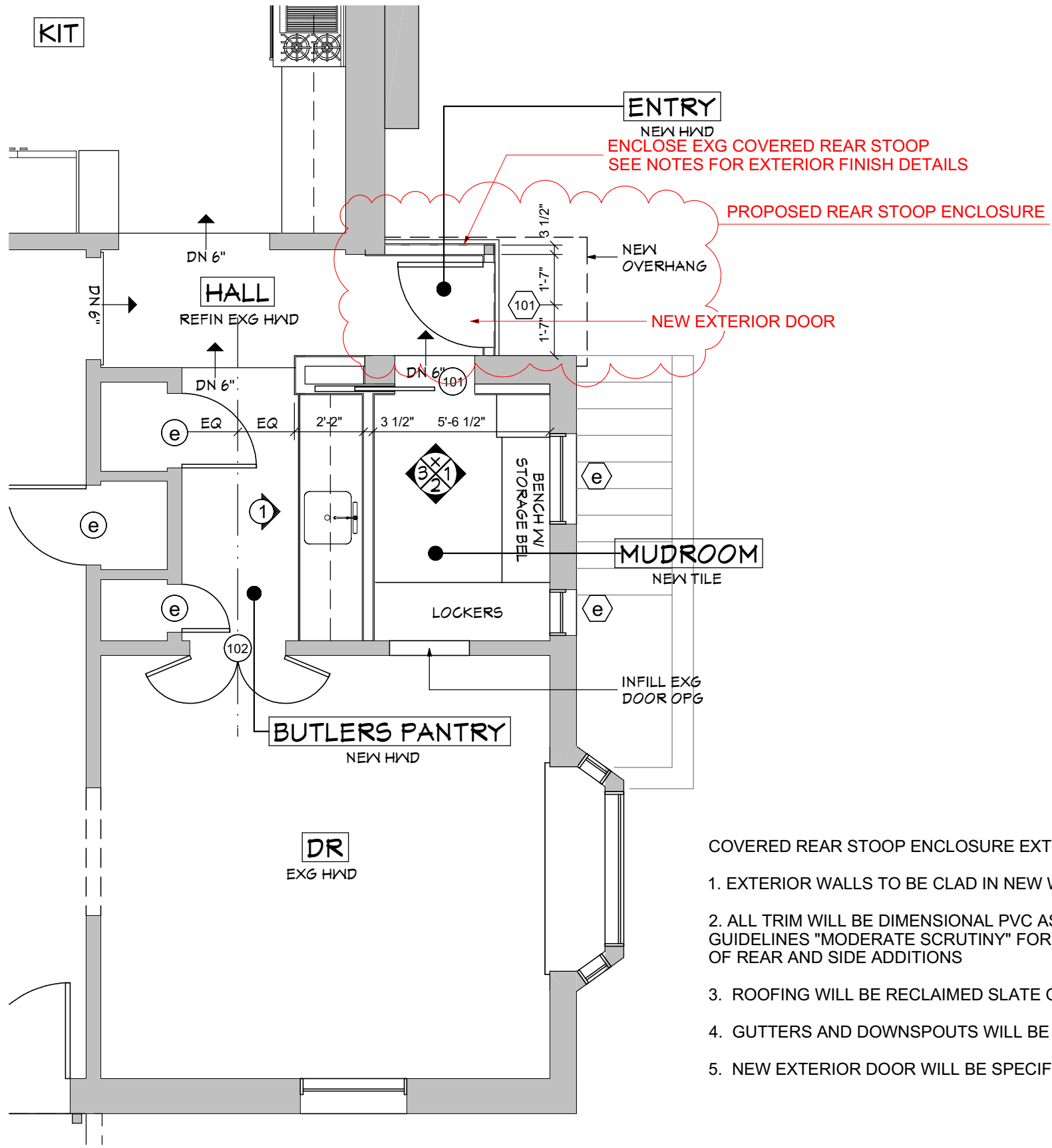
5605 YORK LANE  
BETHESDA, MD 20814

LOT 1, BLOCK J  
GREENWICH FOREST

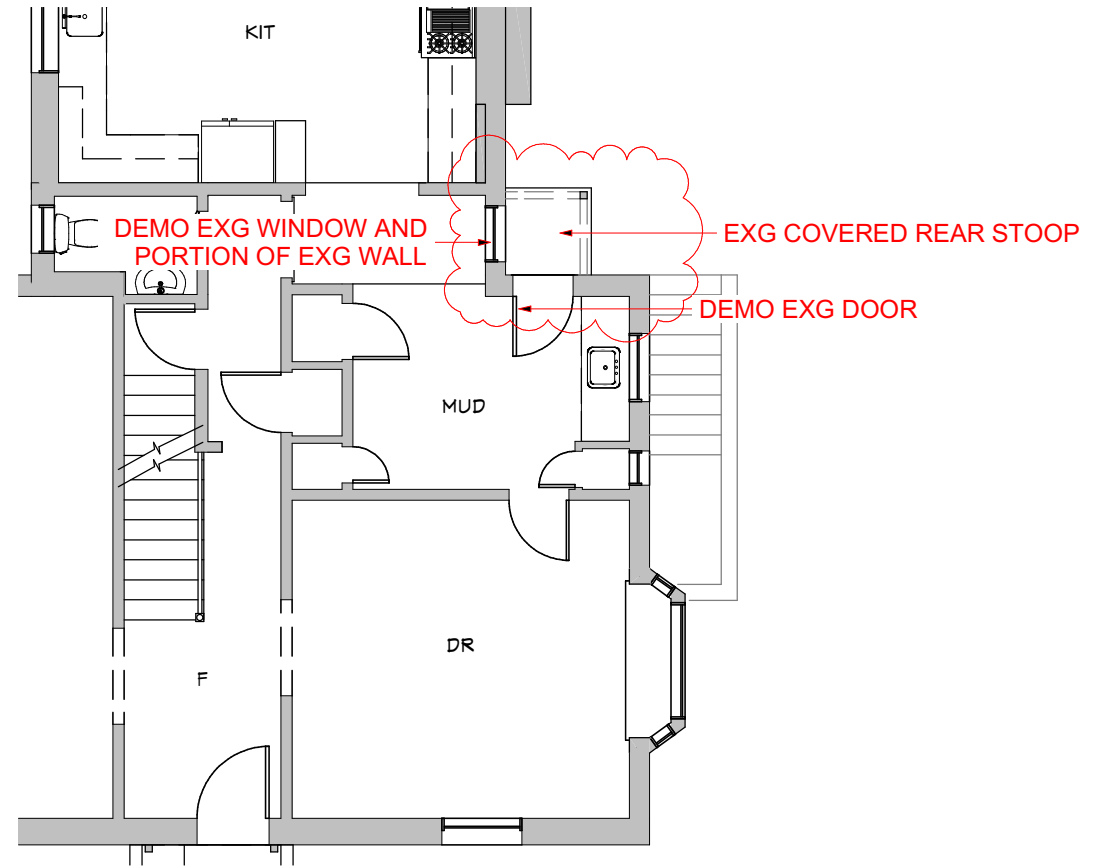
ZONING: R-90  
ORIGINAL PLATTING: PLAT 722  
RECORDED ON AUGUST 1, 1936

**PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK:**

1. ENCLOSE EXISTING COVERED REAR STOOP
2. EXTEND ROOF 2'-8" TO CREATE OVERHANG
3. ALL OTHER RENVOATIONS ARE INTERIOR WITH NO IMPACT ON FOOTPRINT OF EXISTING HOME OR CHANGE TO EXTERIOR FACADES



1  
A002  
**PROPOSED PLAN**  
1/4" = 1'-0"

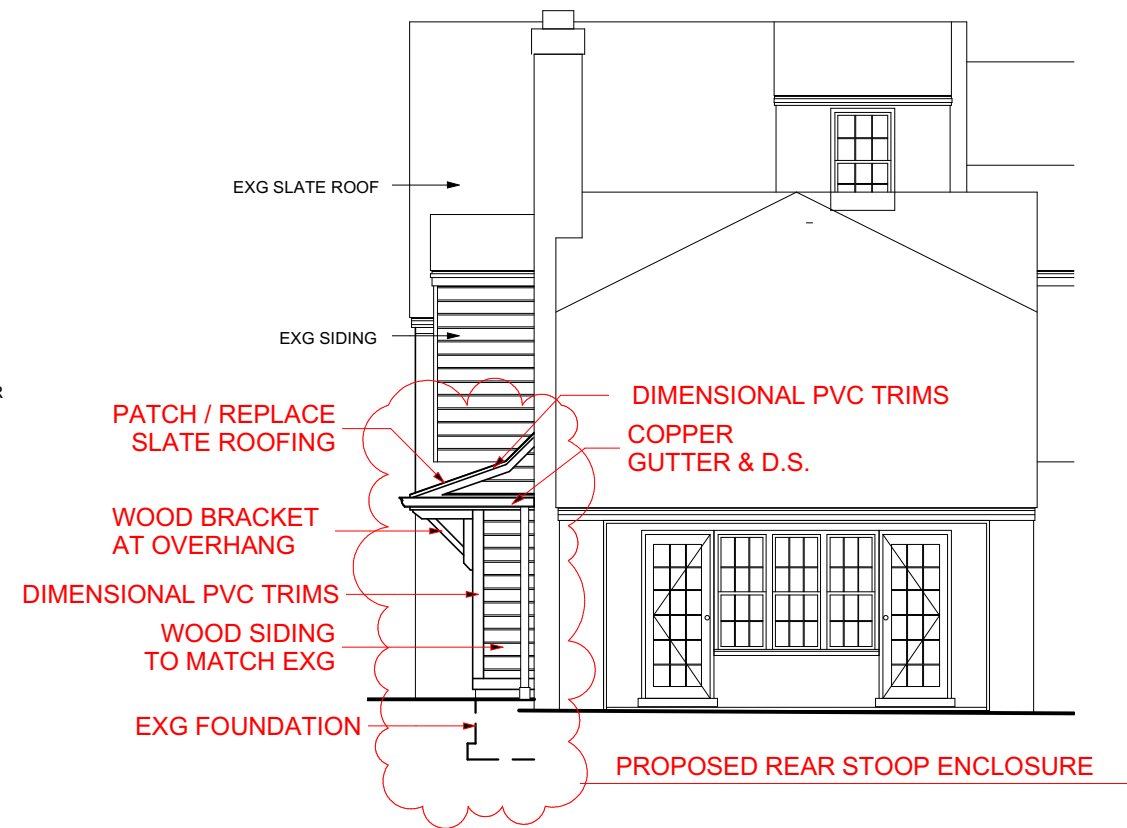
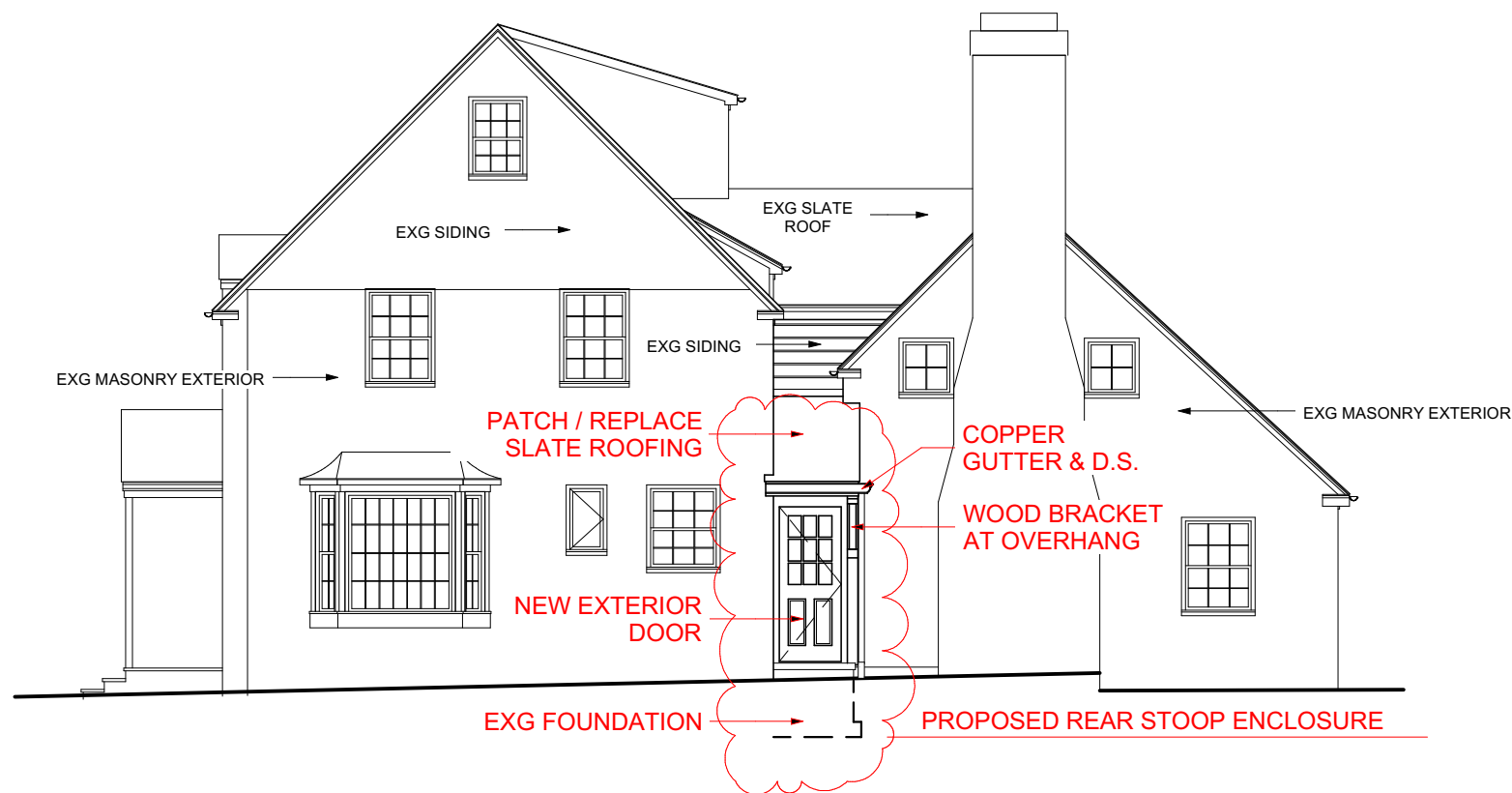


2  
A002  
**EXISTING PLAN**  
1/8" = 1'-0"

- COVERED REAR STOOP ENCLOSURE EXTERIOR FINISH NOTES:
1. EXTERIOR WALLS TO BE CLAD IN NEW WOOD SIDING TO MATCH THE EXISTNG HOUSE
  2. ALL TRIM WILL BE DIMENSIONAL PVC AS IS ALLOWED BY GREENWICH FOREST HISTORICAL GUIDELINES "MODERATE SCRUTINY" FOR MATERIALS USED ON NON FORWARD- FACING PORTIONS OF REAR AND SIDE ADDITIONS
  3. ROOFING WILL BE RECLAIMED SLATE OR NEW SLATE LIKE THAT ON THE EXISTING HOUSE
  4. GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS WILL BE COPPER MATCHING THE STYLE OF THE EXISTING HOUSE
  5. NEW EXTERIOR DOOR WILL BE SPECIFIED AND SPECIFICATION PROVIDED IF NECESSARY

COVERED REAR STOOP ENCLOSURE EXTERIOR FINISH NOTES:

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3. ROOFING WILL BE RECLAIMED SLATE OR NEW SLATE LIKE THAT ON THE EXISTING HOUSE
4. GUTTERS AND DOWNSPOUTS WILL BE COPPER MATCHING THE STYLE OF THE EXISTING HOUSE
5. NEW EXTERIOR DOOR WILL BE SPECIFIED AND SPECIFICATION PROVIDED IF NECESSARY
6. PAINTED WOOD ORNAMENTAL OVERHANG BRACKET TO BE SPECIFIED AND SPECIFICATION PROVIDED IF NECESSARY



1  
A003

PROPOSED EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS

1/8" = 1'-0"