



# **Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission**

## **Regular Public Meeting**

June 18, 2024

6:00 p.m.

John McAdoo Room, 3rd Floor, Truist Building  
201 W. Market St., Greensboro, NC 27401

### **AGENDA**

- A.** Call to Order
- B.** Roll Call
- C.** Agenda Amendments
- D.** Approval of the April 16, 2024, Minutes
- E.** Old Business:
  - a. Consideration of Rules of Procedure Changes (recommendation to County BOCC for adoption – tabled from the April 16, 2024, meeting)
- F.** New Business:
  - Evidentiary Hearing Items:
    - a. Certificate of Appropriateness request for numerous interior and exterior changes to Grimsley House located at 408 Fisher Park Circle in Greensboro, NC, including a kitchen renovation, major landscaping, a garage relocation, and several exterior additions.
  - Public Hearing Items: None.
- G.** Other Business
- H.** Adjournment

Next Scheduled Meeting – July 16, 2024

**Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission  
Regular Public Meeting  
Carolyn Coleman Room  
Old County Courthouse  
301 W. Market St., Greensboro, NC  
April 16, 2024  
6:00 p.m.**

**AGENDA****A. Call to Order**

Chair Payne opened the meeting at 6:00 PM and thanked everyone for attending. She welcomed the new member of the Commission, Justin Cundall, and stated that everyone looks forward to working with him.

**B. Roll Call**

There was a Roll Call and the following members were present: Jane Payne, Chair; David Horth (late arrival); Terri Hammond; David Millsaps; Keisha Hadden; Abigaile Pittman; Justin Cundall; and Sean Dowell.

Members absent: Louis Gallien, Raul Cardona-Torres, Jerry Nix.

**C. Agenda Amendments**

Justin Snyder stated that the only Agenda amendment is also the only item of business aside from the minutes from the February 2024 meeting, which was the consideration of the Rules of Procedure changes at the request of the Planning Director who spoke with the County Attorney's Office and advised that they are not quite ready for that to come before the Commission. It will be presented at a subsequent meeting in May. They are trying to align the Rules of Procedure amongst all the Boards and Commissions, so they want the language to be the same.

**D. Approval of the February 20, 2024, Minutes**

Mr. Dowell stated that he has marked up his copy of the minutes and would turn that over to the Court Reporter to make the changes noted.

Mr. Horth moved to approve of the February 2024 minutes, as amended with Mr. Dowell's changes, seconded by Mr. Dowell. The Commission voted unanimously (8-0) in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Payne, Pittman, Dowell, Millsaps, Hammons, Cundall, Horth, and Hadden. Nays: None.)

**E. Old Business:**

None

**F. New Business:**

**Public Hearing Items:**

**Non-Public Hearing Items:**

**G. Other Business**

**a) Consideration of Rules of Procedure Changes (recommended to County BOCC for adoption) (DEFER TO MAY 2024 MEETING)**

Mr. Dowell moved that the Consideration of Rules of Procedure Changes be tabled to the May 2024 meeting, seconded by Hammond. The Commission voted unanimously (8-0) in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Payne, Dowell, Millsaps, Hammond, Pittman, Horth, Hadden, Cundall. Nays: None.)

**Evidentiary Hearing Items:**

None

Mr. Horth stated that he wished to raise something that may be of concern to everyone. There is a particular building that is under threat, but as a general thing that stands out to him, a lot of people both in his neighborhood and in the Irving Park neighborhood are concerned about historic buildings being taken down without due thought. The Commission needs to be more public about the benefits of actually getting the homes registered. He knows of several buildings that are in his neighborhood and also in the adjoining neighborhood that are beautiful buildings and should not just be torn down, willy-nilly.

Justin Snyder stated that they don't necessarily have to be a landmark. The landmark program is specifically geared towards those buildings that have special historical significance, not just historical significance, but truly special historical significance, whether it be the person was associated with it, or maybe the person who designed it. Because the County is offering a tax deferral, they don't want every building in the entire County to apply, so they have to be very selective about that, but to that point, expansion of historic districts in Greensboro, High Point, Jamestown, Gibsonville could be of great benefit. Greensboro has so many neighborhoods that could qualify for historic districts, one of them being an African-American neighborhood close to NC A&T University. What better way to celebrate African American heritage than to put in an historic district? It is important to get buy-in from the community, so things that each city can do, in addition to what they do as a County, are very important. Greensboro's HPC does a good job as do Preservation Greensboro and Preservation North Carolina, so getting the word out with those non-profits and trying to get preservation easements on properties is extremely important because that's truly what keeps it from being demolished. Staff can't keep it from being demolished, they have no control over that. Preservation easements or covenants do, so that's a really important program, and there's also tax benefits, too, depending on the level of easements that are put on properties. Staff does have pamphlets and things, they have the website, and at one point staff had sent something to TREBIC, which is the building community and the Realtor's Association, and staff has started getting involved with them through the Comp Plan Update effort because the cultural resources element is being drastically expanded in the Comp Plan. One of the things in the Comp Plan that staff is looking to do, forward-thinking, is a prevention of demolition by neglect ordinance, so they can prevent neglect to the point where it is leading to these properties having to be demolished. He encourages each individual jurisdiction to adopt a similar ordinance. Greensboro already has one.

Ms. Hammond stated that Oak Ridge is also very proactive. She is one of the first homeowners to apply for the grant that is being offered to pay for the long-term costs. They hope there will be many others following, but they just have to wait and see.

Mr. Dowell stated that the larger areas are seeing that HPC is one of many branches of Historic Preservation with 107 sites that they protect with special significance.

**H. Adjournment**

Mr. Millsaps moved that the April 16, 2024, meeting be adjourned, seconded by Mr. Dowell. The Commission voted unanimously (8-0) in favor of the motion. (Ayes: Payne, Dowell, Millsaps, Hammond, Pittman, Horth, Hadden, Cundall. Nays: None.)

There being no further business before the Commission, the meeting adjourned at 6:16 PM.

**Next Scheduled Meeting – May 21, 2024**

Respectfully submitted,

April 19, 2024

*Triad Reporting & Typing Services*



**Guilford County**

**Historic Preservation  
Commission**

**Rules of Procedure**

Revised  \_\_\_\_\_

Adopted by the County Board of Commissioners



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# **GUILFORD COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RULES OF PROCEDURE**

## **Section 1. Purpose of the Rules of Procedure and Duties of the Historic Preservation Commission**

### **1.1. Purpose of the Rules of Procedure**

To establish procedures for organizing and conducting the business of the Historic Preservation Commission in executing its duties and responsibilities.

### **1.2. Duties of the Historic Preservation Commission**

There is hereby created, pursuant to G.S. § 160D-303 a Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission (hereinafter referred to as HPC). The powers and duties of the HPC shall be those listed in Article 2 - Administration, Section 2.6 of the Guilford County Unified Development Ordinance (hereinafter referred to as UDO).

### **1.3 Jurisdiction**

The HPC's jurisdiction for approval of Certificates of Appropriateness within designated Historic Districts shall be delineated on the official zoning map.

## **Section 2. General Governing Statutes, Ordinances and Rules**

The HPC is governed by the applicable provisions of the NC General Statutes 160D, Article 19; the current UDO and all amendments thereto; other relevant policies established by the Guilford County Board of Commissioners (hereinafter referred to as *BOC*); and by these Rules to the extent that they do not conflict with the law. The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall govern the Commission in all cases to which they are applicable, and in which they are not inconsistent with applicable law and these rules. Additionally, the Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission shall operate in accordance with the Guilford County Board of Commissioners' Resolution Establishing Policy and Procedures for Appointments [to County Boards, Commissions, Committees and Councils], as well as by any other resolutions of the Board of County Commissioners relating to historic preservation in Guilford County. Furthermore, the HPC may also consult the most recent edition of *Suggested Procedural Rules for Local Appointed Boards*, published by the University of North Carolina School of Government. In instances where the HPC conducts quasi-judicial proceedings (i.e., Certificates of Appropriateness), the HPC will operate according to provisions of North Carolina General Statute 160D-406.

All Board members shall become thoroughly familiar with the provisions of the statutes

concerning historic preservation.

### **Section 3. Organization of the Historic Preservation Commission**

#### **3.1. Membership**

The HPC shall be made up of eleven (11) members (collectively, "members").

##### **3.1.1. Residency, Appointment and Qualification of Members**

All members shall be residents of the County and shall be appointed by the Guilford County BOC. Members representing Town or City jurisdictions shall be recommended by the pertinent governing body and appointed by the BOC. Members shall be trained in the fields of architecture; history; planning; archaeology or a related discipline; or have demonstrated experience or interest in preservation of historic structures.

### **3.1.2. Quorum**

A majority of the membership of the HPC constitutes a quorum. Vacant (i.e. unappointed) seats shall not be considered for purposes of determining a majority of the membership. Appointed seats which are filled but for whom members are absent shall be counted in the total number of commission members for calculation of a quorum. A quorum of the HPC shall consist of a majority of the set membership, excluding vacant seats, but not excluding absentees. A quorum must be present for the HPC to take any official action. If a member has withdrawn from a meeting without being excused by majority vote of the remaining members present, he or she shall be counted as present for the purposes of determining whether a quorum is present.

### **3.2. Term of Office**

Members' four (4)-year terms of office are set by the BOC and the City and Town councils of participating jurisdictions. Members may be appointed to fill an unexpired term of a previous member. Member terms should be staggered such that a similar number of members are appointed or reappointed each year. The terms of all members shall not expire at the same time. Terms are limited to two (2) consecutive four (4)-year terms; except, however, consecutive terms exceeding two (2) may be served if the incumbent is re-appointed by the BOC to represent a different jurisdiction. Additionally, the BOC may waive the two (2)-term limit at its discretion.

### **3.3. Officers**

#### **3.3.1. Election of Officers**

Election of officers shall occur as the last item of business before adjournment of the December meeting in each calendar year. Should the regularly scheduled meeting not be held for any reason, then the next regularly scheduled meeting shall include the election of officers as an agenda item in accordance with these Rules of Procedure. The HPC shall elect one of its members to serve as Chair and preside over the meetings and one member to serve as Vice Chair. The candidate for each office receiving a majority vote of the HPC members present shall be declared elected. Vacancies in these offices may be filled for the unexpired terms only. Voting may be done by acclamation (if only one member is nominated), show of hands, voice, or secret ballot and a majority vote.

#### **3.3.2. Chair**

The Chair shall be elected by the HPC from among its members and shall have the following duties:

1. The Chair shall serve and preside over the Commission's meetings for a term of one year, beginning as of the first meeting of January, and may be re-elected.
2. The Chair shall decide all matters of order and procedure, subject to these rules, unless directed otherwise by a majority of the Commission in session at the time.
3. The Chair shall appoint any committees deemed necessary by a majority vote of the Commission to investigate any matter before the Commission.
4. On all Quasi-Judicial matters (e.g., Certificates of Appropriateness), the Chair or any member acting as Chair is authorized to administer oaths to witnesses in any matter coming before the Commission. Additionally, the Commission through the Chair, or in the Chair's absence, anyone acting as Chair, may subpoena witnesses and compel the production of evidence. The Chair shall issue requested subpoenas he/she determines to be relevant, reasonable in nature and scope, and not oppressive. The Chair shall rule on any motion to question or modify a subpoena. Decisions regarding subpoenas made by the Chair may be appealed to the full Commission.
5. The Chair shall perform such other duties as may be directed by a majority of the Commission.
6. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair shall preside. In the absence of both the Chair and Vice Chair, the members present shall elect a temporary Chair.
7. The Chair shall have the same voting privileges as any other member.

### **3.3.3. Vice Chair**

The Vice-Chair shall be elected by the HPC from among its members and shall have the following duties:

1. The Vice-Chair shall serve for a term of one year, beginning as of the first meeting of January, and may be re-elected.
2. The Vice-Chair shall preside in the absence of the Chair, fill any unexpired

term of the Chair, and assume all duties and responsibilities delegated by the Chair.

3. In the event the office of Chair becomes vacant, the Vice-Chair shall serve the unexpired term of the Chair and a Vice-Chair shall be elected to serve the unexpired term of the former Vice-Chair as provided in Section 3.7.1 herein.

4. The Vice-Chair shall perform such other duties as may be directed by a majority of the Commission.

### **3.4. Staff Assistance**

#### **3.4.1. Secretary**

The Planning Director shall serve as Secretary to the HPC and may designate a Planning Department staff member for that purpose. The Secretary, subject to the direction of the Chair, shall have the following duties:

1. The Secretary shall keep all minutes and records of the HPC, provide notice of the regular and special meetings to members, and any other such duties normally carried out by the Secretary. The minutes shall show the record of all-important facts pertaining to every meeting and hearing, every resolution acted upon by the Commission, and all votes of Commission members upon any resolution or upon the final determination of any question, indicating the names of members abstaining from voting.
2. The Secretary shall conduct all correspondence of the Commission, and generally supervise the clerical work of the Commission and its *ad hoc* committees.
3. The Secretary shall not be eligible to vote.
4. On all quasi-judicial (e.g., Certificates of Appropriateness) matters, the Secretary to the HPC may also administer oaths to all witnesses.

#### **3.4.2. Additional Staff Support**

The Director or designee shall provide professional and technical support to the HPC, which may include preparation of meeting materials, presentations, recommendations, conducting official correspondence, and other staff support as requested by the HPC and determined appropriate by the Director or designee.

### **3.5. Special Committees**

Special committees may be established by a majority vote of the HPC to assist in studying specific issues. Special committee members shall be appointed by the Chair or a designated member. Special committees may contain persons who are not members of the HPC. The HPC may not delegate its official powers and duties to a special committee.

### **3.6. Attendance**



Persons accepting appointment to the HPC have made a commitment to serve the citizens of Guilford County. Applicants coming before the HPC deserve a full complement of members to be present to review and recommend/decide matters. Consistent attendance at meetings of the HPC is expected.

#### **3.6.1. Reporting Absences**

Any member who anticipates not being able to attend a meeting of the HPC must contact the Secretary upon receipt of the agenda (or earlier, if possible) and indicate the reason for the absence. In the event of an unforeseen emergency or illness, notification to the Secretary shall be given as early as is feasible.

### **3.6.2 Excused Absences**

Excused Absences due to sickness, death in the family, or other emergencies of a similar nature, as well as unexpected/unplanned work-related obligations, shall be regarded as excused absences and shall not affect the member's status on the HPC so long as the member the Board Chair and/or the County Staff liaison to the HPC in advance. Failure to inform the Board Chair or staff liaison as described herein shall result in an unexcused absence unless extenuating circumstances prevent the advance notice. In the event of a long-term illness or other situation resulting in a prolonged absence, the member may be replaced by the BOC.

### **3.6.3. Attendance Requirement**

A member who misses three (3) consecutive regular meetings 33% or more of the regular meetings held in a fiscal year due to unapproved absences loses status as a voting member until reinstated by the BOC and may be replaced by the BOC. Attendance records shall be periodically reviewed by the Director, who shall inform the member of any noncompliance with the attendance requirement.

### **3.6.4. Absence of Officers**

In the absence of both the Chair and Vice Chair, the HPC membership in attendance shall vote to determine an acting Chair for the meeting.

## **3.7. Vacancies**

### **3.7.1. Filling Vacancies**

A vacancy in the office of Chair shall be filled by the Vice Chair, succeeding to the office for the remainder of the unexpired one-year term of the Chair. A vacancy in the office of Vice Chair shall be filled by election of a new Vice Chair from the membership for the remainder of the one-year unexpired term of the Vice Chair. Member vacancies shall be filled by a new member appointed by the governing body to fill the remainder of the unexpired term.

### **3.7.2. Member Continuing Service Beyond Term**

Members completing a term of office, who have not been reappointed and for whose seat a new appointment has not been made by the governing body, may continue to serve until reappointment or a new appointment is made.

### **3.8. Resignations and Removal**

#### **3.8.1. Resignation**

**A.** HPC members who choose to resign before the expiration of their term must notify the Director or designee in writing (letter or email). This notice shall include the date upon which the resignation is effective, which should be at least thirty (30) days from the date of the notice.

**B.** If a member of the HPC relocates their residence outside of the County, the relocation constitutes a resignation effective upon the date of the move.

**C.** The Director shall promptly inform the County Clerk of any vacancy on the HPC.

#### **3.8.2. Removal**

**A.** HPC members may be removed by the Guilford County Board of Commissioners for cause, including but not limited to documented violation of these Rules.

**B.** The HPC may, by unanimous vote of the other members, recommend that a member be removed for cause and a replacement be appointed by the BOC. Such a recommendation shall be communicated in writing by the Director to Guilford County Board of Commissioners, and to the HPC member in question.

## **Section 4. Meeting Structure**

### **4.1. Open Meetings**

It is the public policy of North Carolina that the hearings, deliberations, and actions of public bodies that administer the legislative, policymaking, quasi-judicial, administrative and advisory functions of political subdivisions conducting the people's business be conducted openly. Therefore, all official meetings of the HPC, with very few exceptions that are allowed by state law, shall be open to the public, and any person is entitled to attend. The public's right to attend such meeting does not necessarily entitle the public to participate in the meeting. An official meeting means a gathering together at any time or place, or the simultaneous communication by conference telephone or other electronic means, of a majority of the members of the HPC for the purpose of conducting hearings, participating in deliberations, or voting upon or

otherwise transacting the public business that is within the jurisdiction, real or apparent, of the HPC.

## **4.2. Regular Meetings**

### **4.2.1. Date, Time, and Place**

Regular meetings of the HPC will typically be held on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m. Regular meetings may be established at an alternate time and date at the discretion of the HPC, as approved by the Chair, due to holidays or other reasons. The meetings shall be held in a location within the County as properly and legally advertised.

### **4.2.2. Meeting Schedule**

Regular meetings for the calendar year shall be made available to the public in paper or electronic format and posted on the Department's website. Changes in the regular meeting schedule shall follow the notice requirements of North Carolina law.

### **4.2.3. Meeting Notice**

Notices of meetings shall be provided in accordance with the notice requirements of current North Carolina law.

## **4.3. Special Meetings**

A special meeting of the HPC may be called at any time by the Chair or by a majority of the membership. Notice of the date, time and place of the special meeting, along with the purpose of the meeting, shall be provided by the Director to each member at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting. Only those items of business specified in the Notice may be transacted at the special meeting. The Notice must be posted on the Planning & Development Department website and shall comply with all other applicable notice requirements of North Carolina law.

#### **4.4. Continued Meetings**

Any regular or special meeting may be continued or postponed to another specific date, time and place without additional public notice by a majority vote of the HPC, in accordance with the deferral and continuance provisions of the Unified Development Ordinance, as applicable, and these Rules.

#### **4.5. Cancellation of Meetings**

Whenever there is no business for the HPC, the Director or designee may recommend that the Chair cancel a meeting with the presence of good cause, including a known lack of a quorum. Notice shall be given by the Director or designee at least twenty-four (24) hours before the meeting is scheduled to take place to all members and the press, applicants and other interested persons. In the case of severe weather, notice of cancellation shall be given at the earliest practical time.

#### **4.6. Agendas and Meeting Order of Business**

##### **4.6.1 Agendas**

Meeting Agendas and appropriate materials and reports shall be prepared by the Director and distributed to all members. No business may be considered by the HPC unless such item properly appears on the Agenda. A matter of business not subject to public notice requirements may be discussed as a non-agenda item if the HPC approves for consideration.

##### **4.6.2 Meeting Order of Business**

- Call to Order
- Roll Call
- Agenda Amendments
- Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting(s)
- Chair's Remarks and Instructions
- Old Business (continued cases; items previously discussed for which action was held or delayed; or work session items)
- New Business
- Announcements
- Adjournment

The order of the Agenda may be changed if there is no objection by any of the members.

## **4.7 Hearings**

### **4.7.1 Application Submittal**

In accordance with the Unified Development Ordinance, the Director or designee shall establish specific submittal requirements and review schedules for applications heard by the HPC.

### **4.7.2 Attendance by Applicant**

The Director or designee shall notify the applicant of the date, place and time of the hearing in accordance with the public notification requirements of the Unified Development Ordinance. The applicant, or a knowledgeable representative delegated to and authorized by the applicant in writing, is expected to attend the hearing to support the application. This attendee should be capable of addressing issues and answering questions. If no one is present to represent the application, the HPC may, in its discretion, continue the hearing to its next regular meeting. Should a property owner be an LLC or incorporated business entity, they shall be represented by an attorney authorized to practice law in the State of North Carolina.

### **4.7.3 Type of Hearing**

The HPC follows a quasi-judicial, evidentiary hearing process for formal review of Certificates of Appropriateness, which requires all testimony to be sworn, and which requires the HPC to conclude certain findings of fact before approving a Certificate of Appropriateness.

### **4.7.4 Hearing Procedure**

The HPC shall conduct its hearings in accordance with the quasi-judicial, evidentiary hearing procedures of the Unified Development Ordinance outlined below:

- Chair announces the item from the Agenda
- Swear-in or affirm witnesses
- Hear staff presentation and recommendation
- Hear applicant testimony
- Hear testimony from the public (for and against the application)
- Rebuttal/cross-examination of proponents/opponents
- Summary of the evidence by the Chair or by such persons appointed by the Chair
- Closing of testimony from the public by the Chair
- HPC asks questions of staff, applicant, persons who have testified
- Deliberation and decision

#### **4.7.5 Evidence**

**A.** In considering applications, witnesses may be called, and factual evidence may be submitted; however, the HPC is not bound by all the rules of evidence followed in judicial proceedings. Evidence upon which decisions are based should be material (directly related to the matter and likely to influence the decision), substantial (of real value, worth or importance) and competent (having legal capacity or qualification).

**B.** The HPC may, in its discretion, view the premises and obtain facts concerning any application before arriving at a decision. All decisions of the HPC shall be supported by appropriate Findings of Fact. Findings of Fact may not be based on hearsay evidence. Hearsay is a statement not made at the hearing that the proponent seeks to have admitted as evidence of the truth of the matter asserted in that statement.

**C.** The HPC, in order to make a defensible decision, should not rely on the opinion testimony of laymen to support a finding that requires information from those with expertise in the matter.

#### **4.8 Public Testimony**

The Chair may limit repetitive testimony on any item and may restrict anyone from making inappropriate or malicious remarks or remarks not pertinent to the matter under consideration.

#### **4.9. Advisory Review by Historic Preservation Commission**

For larger or more complex projects, such as new construction or certain accessory structures, an Advisory Review by the HPC is offered. The purpose of an Advisory Review is to provide helpful feedback to the applicant early in the design process.

There is no fee for this review. Projects that would benefit from an Advisory Review include but are not limited to:

- construction of an addition
- construction of accessory structure greater than 120 sq. ft. or 2 stories
- new construction
- relocation of a structure
- alternatives to original materials

#### **4.9.1 Scheduling an Advisory Review**

Advisory Reviews are held at the end of a regularly scheduled HPC public meeting which begin at 6:00 p.m. and occur on the third Tuesday of every month. An Advisory Review request form and required materials must be submitted according to the same application submittal deadlines as for formal Certificate of Appropriateness applications. Advisory Review submittals are advertised along with the regular HPC public meeting agenda.

#### **4.9.2 Completing an Advisory Review**

An Advisory Review request form must be completed, signed and submitted with drawings depicting a minimum of overall dimensions and design to the conceptual level (preferably printable at 8.5" x 11"). The Secretary may request that the following materials be included:

- site plan indicating proposed building footprint and setbacks with dimensions if known;
- photographs of the proposed site for any relocation of a structure including available historic photos and aerials;
- photographs of each façade of an existing structure; labeled with name of property, situs address, and viewpoint keyed to the site plan;
- elevation drawings of new construction/changed façades as needed with *at least overall* dimensions (drawings depicting three-dimensional views and physical models are optional);
- specifications and/or samples for materials, architectural details, and elements such as windows and doors (for applications to relocate a structure, provide information on proposed revisions to the structure that would result from the relocation); and
- while not required, a 3-D or modeling study of a streetscape if infill construction is proposed in a Historic District is helpful in the HPC's review.

#### **4.9.3 Advisory Review Public Meeting**

Although it is the goal of the HPC to provide comments that will help to result in a project that will be approved, comments provided during the Advisory Review are non-binding, and the final decision of the HPC shall not be based on these comments. The informal review format is as follows:



- Staff will make a brief presentation (5 minutes) identifying aspects of the project that should be addressed by the HPC.
- Applicant will make a presentation (5 minutes) describing the project.
- The HPC will provide general guidance regarding applicable Review Standards and the Secretary of Interior's Standards related to the project presented and provide reasons to the applicant.
- The HPC Chair will summarize aspects that were identified as not meeting applicable Review Standards and the Secretary of Interior's Standards.

## **Section 5. Conducting Business**

### **5.1. General Expectations of Members**

- Be generally familiar with the laws and ordinances relating to the work of the HPC, and with these Rules of Procedure;
- Be prepared for meetings by examining the information provided in the meeting packet, consulting staff with questions, and independently visiting each site to observe from right-of-way. At no point should a majority of the HPC convene for the purpose of HPC related business unless such convening has been properly noticed in accordance with open meetings laws;
- Ask questions as appropriate during the hearing and actively participate in deliberations;
- Consider all information on each matter as presented to the HPC to make an informed decision; and
- Make a decision in a fair, ethical, consistent and non-arbitrary manner.

### **5.2. General Conduct of Members**

When quasi-judicial decisions (e.g., Certificates of Appropriateness) are being considered, Commission members shall not participate in or vote on any quasi-judicial matter in a manner that would violate affected persons' constitutional rights to an impartial decision-maker. Impermissible conflicts include, but are not limited to, a member having a fixed opinion prior to hearing the matter that is not susceptible to change, undisclosed ex parte communications, a close familial, business, or other associational relationship with an affected person, or a financial interest in the outcome of the matter. If an objection is raised to a member's participation and that member does not recuse himself/herself, the remaining members shall by majority vote rule on the objection. Members of the Commission shall request to be recused from discussion, citing a conflict consistent with G.S. 160D-109(b) or 160D-109(d) when the Commission is sitting as a quasi-judicial Commission. Upon such a request, the Commission shall vote on the recusal. Members of

the HPC participating in a hearing and making a decision or a recommendation are expected to act in accordance with the following:

**5.2.1. No Prejudice**

Members shall consider the application/request without prejudice.

**5.2.2. No Commitment Prior to Review**

Members shall take no public position on an application or on any proposed condition prior to the meeting at which the application is heard.

**5.2.3. No Deliberation or Formulation of Decision Prior to Meeting**

Members shall refrain from deliberation with other members or formulation of a judgment or decision prior to the meeting at which the application is heard.

**5.2.4. No Ex-Parte Communication**

No HPC member shall, in any manner, discuss any Certificate of Appropriateness application with the applicant, other HPC members, or any other parties prior to the HPC's deliberations on the matter during the hearing. The HPC's quasi-judicial procedures are designed to ensure that all information and discussions regarding the matter under consideration take place during the HPC's evidentiary hearing, so that all parties hear the same testimony at the same time, and so that persons giving testimony can be questioned in person by the HPC and by opposing parties. Any communication regarding a pending application that does occur outside of the hearing must be fully disclosed by the member or members involved before the start of the appropriate hearing. Members may, however, seek or receive explanatory information or clarification pertaining to the application from the Director or designee prior to the hearing. Any such explanation or clarification shall be provided by the Director or designee to *all* members.

**5.2.5. Acknowledgement of Relationship or Association with an Applicant or Other Party**

Members shall, prior to or at the beginning of the public hearing, disclose any past or present close familial [spouse, parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent, or grandchild (and step, half, and in-law relationships)], business or associational relationship with an applicant or other party to the matter when any of the following circumstances occur:

- A. When the member is the applicant before the HPC;
- B. When the member owns property within close proximity of the subject property (this shall be interpreted as being within the required notification area); or

- C. When the member has a financial interest in the subject property or improvements to be undertaken thereon.

### **5.3. Violation of Due Process / Conflict of Interest**

- A member shall not participate in or vote on any matter that has a substantial and readily identifiable financial impact on the member, nor participate in or vote on any matter in a way that would violate the applicant's or an affected person's constitutional right to an impartial decision-maker.
- A member should not convey an opinion about a quasi-judicial decision by the HPC to any person or agency, including the press, until all appeal rights have expired.
- Members should consult the Director or designee regarding situations that may be considered an actual or perceived conflict of interest. If a member has a conflict of interest regarding any matter before the HPC, the member should inform the Director or designee as soon as possible in advance of the meeting to allow time for an alternate member to be contacted to participate as the regular member's replacement if necessary.

#### **5.3.1. Recusal (Excuse from Participation)**

No Commission member shall take part in any hearings, consideration, determination or vote concerning a property in which the Commission member or a close relative (spouse, parent, child, brother, sister, grandparent, or grandchild, including the step, half, and in-law relationships):

- A. Is the applicant before the Commission;
- B. Owns property within close proximity of the subject property (this shall be interpreted as being within the required notification area); or
- C. Has a financial interest in the subject property or improvements to be undertaken thereon.

In addition, a Commission member may request a vote of the Commission excusing the member from taking part in any hearing, consideration, determination or vote concerning a property in which a business associate or employer of the Commission member:

- A. Is the applicant before the Commission or;
- B. Owns property within close proximity of the subject property (this shall be interpreted as being within the required notification area); or

- C. Has a financial interest in the subject property or improvements to be undertaken thereon.

When a Commission member concludes that a matter before the Commission involves or could involve a conflict of interest on his or her part or his or her voting might not be in the public interest, he/she should promptly inform the Commission Chair. The Commission member shall physically vacate his or her seat during consideration of the matter, refrain from any discussion or comment on the particular case, and abstains from voting.

#### **5.4. Motions**

The HPC shall proceed in all matters by motion. Any member, including the Chair, may make or second a motion. A motion may be amended by any member, subject to the agreement of the member who made the motion. A motion may be withdrawn by the member making the motion at any time before a vote. Unless withdrawn, all seconded motions must be voted upon. A motion that does not receive a second fails automatically and is not voted upon.

##### **5.4.1. Substantive and Substitute Motions**

Substantive motions are non-procedural motions that result in final disposition of the matter under consideration. The HPC motions are:

- Approval as submitted (no changes to the application)
- Approval as amended (with specific conditions or additions stated)
- Denial

All substantive motions are debatable and require a majority vote of members present to approve. While a substantive motion is pending, meaning that it has been seconded but not voted upon, a substitute motion regarding the same issue may be introduced. If seconded, the substitute motion shall be voted upon first. If the substitute motion is approved, the original motion is automatically deemed denied. If the substitute motion fails, then the original motion is voted upon, or another substitute motion can be made. Only one substitute motion can be under consideration at a time.

### **5.4.2 Procedural Motions**

Procedural motions in the collective provide a structure for conducting the business of the HPC and promote propriety of behavior. Below are procedural motions that may be utilized in meetings of the HPC:

- Approval of minutes
- Postpone consideration (to a date and time certain, with reasons stated)
- Take a recess (a short break)
- Call the question (to end discussion among HPC members)
- Refer to committee (where an appropriate committee exists)
- Re-open public testimony (after the Chair has closed it)
- Reconsider (re-open a case decided at the same meeting)
- Adjourn
- Excuse from participation (recuse) (voluntary - exclusion from participation in a matter)
- Remove from participation (involuntary - when an objection to participation is raised by another HPC member or a party to the matter and is found to be valid by the HPC)
- To consider an item not on the meeting agenda (if not subject to evidentiary notice requirements)
- To change the order of agenda items (when the Chair does not have unanimous consent).

All procedural motions are open to discussion with the exception of a motion to recess, adjourn or call the question, which are all voted on immediately. All motions require a majority vote of the members present.

### **5.5. Deliberation**

When a motion is introduced and seconded, the Chair should state the motion for the purpose of clarity and understanding, and then open the floor for discussion by the HPC members. The member who introduced the motion is entitled to speak first, and all members should be given the opportunity to speak. Any member may move to call the question when it appears that deliberations are concluded, or there is an impasse. A majority vote will then end deliberations. A vote is then taken on the original motion.

## **5.6. Decisions**

Provided a quorum is present, all decisions of the HPC shall be made by a majority of the members present.

### **5.6.1. Qualification to Vote**

No HPC member shall vote on any matter before the HPC unless that member shall have attended the previous deliberations on such matter or shall otherwise have the approval of the Chair to vote on such matter. The Chair's approval shall be contingent on the assurance by the member that the member has read or reviewed all material distributed to the HPC related to the matter, including any material presented by the applicant during the previous deliberations and the minutes of any meeting at which the matter was discussed.

### **5.6.2. Voting**

Forms of decisions:

- A.** No member attending the presentation and hearing on a matter shall be excused from voting except for cause by majority vote of the HPC.
- B.** A failure to vote by a member who is physically present at the hearing, or who has withdrawn without having been excused or recused by the HPC, shall be recorded as an affirmative vote.
- C.** A tie vote constitutes disapproval of the motion.
- D.** The method of voting shall be decided upon by the Chair, and may be by show of hands, "yes" or "no", or roll call. Any member may motion for a roll call vote on a matter, which shall require a majority vote to conduct.

### **5.6.3. Certificate of Appropriateness Decisions**

Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) decisions shall be certified and filed by the Director or designee and communicated to the applicant in writing within ten (10) business days of the decision. Decisions regarding COA applications must be based on whether the proposed activity is congruous with the special character of the historic district or historic landmark. Notification shall include any instructions or conditions relative to the action taken.

- A.** If an application for a COA is approved, the Secretary shall transmit to the applicant a COA in memo form clearly describing the nature of the work which

has been approved. Also, a copy of the COA shall be provided to the City or Town permits/ inspections department and notification given to the County Tax Supervisor.

- B. For properties within historic districts, the Secretary shall attach a placard form of a COA to be displayed on the property.
- C. If an application or Certificate of Appropriateness is denied, a copy of the minutes of the meeting and written reasons for denial shall be made available to the applicant.

#### **5.6.4 Expiration of Decisions**

A COA shall expire and become null and void if construction, any approved change, relocation, or demolition has not commenced for projects approved by the COA within 1 year (365 days) of its issuance.

### **Section 6. Record-Keeping**

The minutes of all meetings and other records of the HPC shall be maintained by the Secretary or other designee of the Director. Minutes of meetings shall be prepared by the Secretary or designee and should be transmitted to the HPC prior to the next regular meeting. Minutes are not official until approved by the HPC, at which time they become the official public record of the HPC's actions.

#### **6.1. Minute Contents:**

Minutes shall include the following:

- Date, time and place of the meeting
- Names of members in attendance and names of absent members
- Names of staff members in attendance
- Names and addresses of owner(s), agent(s), applicant(s) and others that spoke on each matter
- A summary of evidence presented to the HPC on each matter
- A summary of the discussion on each matter
- The wording of each motion or resolution, including which members made the member seconded the motion; and
- All votes of the HPC.

All application records and supporting materials are to be retained electronically by the Director in accordance with North Carolina records retention rules.

### **Section 7. Rehearing of Denied Applications**

The HPC has no legal authority or jurisdiction to hear the same matter a second time. Therefore, if an applicant desires to submit a second application regarding a previously denied request, the applicant must first appear before the HPC to present evidence that there has been a substantial change in the application, relevant ordinance provisions, evidence or material site conditions in the matter that presents new issues, hence allowing a second application to be heard as an entirely new proceeding. If the HPC determines no substantial change exists, it shall deny a rehearing on the matter. If the HPC determines that there has been a substantial change, it shall thereupon treat a subsequent application in the same manner as any other application.

#### **Section 8. Modifications to Applications**

An approved or pending application for a COA may be modified by a written request from the applicant to the HPC. Such a request shall include a description of the proposed change and shall be accompanied by elevations, plans or other drawings, where necessary. If the HPC finds that the modification constitutes a substantial change which might affect surrounding property owners, it shall notify affected property owners following the procedures set out in Section 4 of these Rules before taking action on the modification. The HPC shall thereupon treat the request in the same manner as any other application as outlined in Section 4 of these Rules.

#### **Section 9. Appeals**

An appeal from an HPC decision shall be taken to the Board of Adjustment. Appeals 1) may be requested by any aggrieved party, 2) shall be requested in accordance with procedures outlined in the UDO within thirty (30) days after the decision of the HPC, and 3) shall be in the nature of certiorari. Any appeal from the Board of Adjustment's decision in any such case shall be heard by the Superior Court of Guilford County.

#### **Section 10. Amendment of the Rules of Procedure**

These rules may, within the limits allowed by law, be amended at any time by an affirmative vote of a majority of members present, provided a quorum of members exists, and provided that the amendment to be voted on was presented in writing and entered into the minutes at a regular or special meeting preceding the meeting at which the vote is taken. Amendments adopted as above shall become effective at the next regular meeting of the HPC, following any required review and/or approval by the BOC.







**GUILFORD COUNTY  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Historic Preservation Commission  
Staff Report for  
Certificate of Appropriateness**

**Meeting Date: 06/18/2024**

**Name of Designated Landmark (Historic and/or Common): Grimsley House**

**Property Address/Location: 408 Fisher Park Circle, Greensboro, NC**

**Applicant / Owner Name: Alan and Lovelle Overbey**

**Tax Parcel Number: 1964**

**Project Summary:**

The current owners are requesting several interior and exterior changes at the Grimsley House, located at 408 Fisher Park Circle in Greensboro, NC. The elevations, architectural, and landscaping plans in the enclosed application package show the work to be done, and the narrative describes and justifies the changes and specifies the materials to be used.

**Exterior Changes Proposed:**

1. Three one-story additions to expand the living space on the main level of the home.
2. Relocation of the existing detached garage to a new location on the property.
3. Installation of new guard railings on the front porch to meet building code safety requirements. Details can be found on the elevations.
4. Extensive landscaping and hardscaping around the property per the attached landscaping plan.

**Interior Changes Proposed:**

1. A full renovation of the kitchen in the same location as it currently is.
2. Additional interior changes including tiles, changes to closets, new walls, etc., and these can be seen in bold on the enclosed floor plan.

**Background Information for the Project:**

1. The landmark designation includes the interior and exterior of the home and the lot.
2. It was designated as a historic landmark in September of 1984.
3. The architecture for the home is Colonial Revival, and the home dates to approximately 1915.
4. Numerous interior renovations have been made to the property, including an interior bathroom remodel with modern materials.
5. The applicant has provided photographic evidence of the former outbuilding location to the rear of the house to demonstrate compatibility and reasonableness of the proposed location on the lot.

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

The Standards (Department of Interior Regulations, 36 CFR 67) pertain to historic buildings of all



## **GUILFORD COUNTY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

## **Historic Preservation Commission Staff Report for Certificate of Appropriateness**

materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and the interior, related landscape features and the building's site and environment as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. The Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

The Standards for Rehabilitation are as follows:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
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.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
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 will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, 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 would recommend taking this application in four (4) parts:**

1. Interior changes to the kitchen, closets, etc.,
2. Exterior changes including construction of additions and guard rail additions,
3. Relocation of the existing garage along with new garage doors, and
4. Landscaping and hardscaping.



**GUILFORD COUNTY  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Historic Preservation Commission  
APPLICATION for  
CERTIFICATE of APPROPRIATENESS**

Name of Historic Landmark (Historic and/or Common):

Grinstey Fay House

Property Address/Location: 408 Fisher Park Circle, Greensboro NC 27401

Tax Parcel Number: 1964

*Staff Use Only*

Date Received: 5/21/2024 Case Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Major ☒ Minor ☐

For Certificates of Appropriateness for major work, this completed application must be received by 12:00 p.m. on the 3rd Tuesday of the month. The application may not be processed until it and any accompanying documentation is accepted as complete by Planning and Development staff. All materials submitted with the application become the property of the Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission and may not be returned.

*I hereby agree to conform to all applicable laws of Guilford County and the State of North Carolina and certify that the information provided is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I acknowledge that by filing this application, representatives from Guilford County Planning and Development may enter the subject property for the purpose of investigation and analysis of this request.*

☒ Applicant ☒ Owner

Lovelle Overbey

Name (please print legibly)

210 Kemp Rd. E

Mailing Address

Greensboro NC 27410

City, State and Zip Code

336.253.6482

Phone Number

lovelle.overbey@gmail.com

E-mail Address

Lovelle Overbey 5/17/2024

Signature

Date

☒ Applicant ☒ Owner

Alan Overbey

Name (please print legibly)

210 Kemp Rd E

Mailing Address

Greensboro NC 27410

City, State and Zip Code

336.587.4253

Phone Number

alan.overbey64@gmail.com

E-mail Address

[Signature] 5-17-2024

Signature

Date

## **Project Narrative for Proposed Work at the Grimsley-Fry House, 408 Fisher Park Circle**

### **I. Introduction**

The Grimsley-Fry House, located at 408 Fisher Park Circle in Greensboro, is considered to be one of the most notable surviving examples of Neoclassical Revival architecture in Greensboro. The house was constructed from 1907-1915 by the George Grimsley family. In 1937, it was purchased by the Fielding Fry family, at which time renovations and alterations were undertaken. Additional renovations and alterations, including to the kitchen, took place in 1984 when the home was purchased from the Frys by the Alan Strong family.

The home was purchased by Alan and Lovelle Overbey in 2023. The Overbeys are no strangers to historic preservation, having restored several historically and architecturally significant homes. This includes their current residence, designed by noted architect Edward Loewenstein. The Overbeys seek to embark on a comprehensive renovation of the Grimsley-Fry House, which will include restoration of historic features, investment in functional systems in the home, and additions and renovations to bring the home up to a 21st century standard of living while maintaining the essential historic character of the home.

### **II. Project Scope**

The proposed scope of work of the project includes the following:

1. Three one-story additions to expand the living space on the main level of the home,
2. A full renovation of the kitchen in the same location,
3. Relocation of the existing detached garage to a new location on the property,
4. Installation of new guard railings on the front porch to meet building code safety requirements,
5. Extensive landscaping around the property, and
6. General rehabilitation work on the interior of the home.

### **III. Summary of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings**

*Note: Page numbers reference the 2017 version of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.*

#### ***Justification for Additions***

*Rehabilitation is the only treatment that allows expanding a historic building by enlarging it with an addition. However, the Rehabilitation guidelines emphasize that new additions should be considered only after it is determined that meeting specific new needs cannot be achieved by altering non-character-defining interior spaces. If the use cannot be accommodated in this way, then an attached exterior addition may be considered. New additions should be designed and constructed so that the character-defining features of the historic building, its site, and setting are not negatively impacted. Generally, a new addition should be subordinate to the historic*

*building. A new addition should be compatible, but differentiated enough so that it is not confused as historic or original to the building. The same guidance applies to new construction so that it does not negatively impact the historic character of the building or its site. (p. 79)*

The owners desire to have a primary bedroom suite on the main level of the home. Along with the relocation of laundry facilities to the main level, this will enable them to conduct all of their daily living on one level. This arrangement will allow the owners to address long-term accessibility and aging-in-place considerations. The Standards direct users to examine alteration of existing secondary spaces as a first course of action. Other than the kitchen, there are no other rooms on the first floor of the home which could be considered “secondary”. The second floor is also not desirable for a primary suite. In addition to the aging-in-place considerations noted above, the historic bedrooms have a severe lack of closet space by modern standards. It would not be possible to increase closet space in the second floor bedrooms without compromising the integrity of the historic floor plan. The existing primary living spaces on the main level would also not be suitable for the desired uses without heavy alteration of the historic floor plan; therefore an addition is necessary to accommodate the bedroom suite.

The owners also desire a casual living space that is connected spatially to the kitchen, which is to be renovated in the current location. The kitchen is located at the rear of the existing home and is separated from the main living spaces by a fireplace and the rear staircase. It would not be possible to create the desired living space without heavy alteration to the historic floor plan. Therefore, the new living space will be located in another addition at the rear of the existing home, providing an open and private family gathering space.

#### ***Applicable Standards for Additions***

*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. (p. 76)*

*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. (p. 76)*

Design Response: The massing of the new additions is inspired by the one-story portions of the existing home. The primary suite and family room additions have pitched roofs, cornices, and dimensions similar to the front porch and porte cochere. The mudroom/pantry addition has a flat roof and simple overhang inspired by the (now partially enclosed) porch on the southwest corner of the house. Siding and trim details are similar to the main house, without mimicking the ornate corner pilasters of the primary house form. The three proposed additions are located on secondary elevations and to the rear of the main body of the house. The additions pull back from the corners of the existing house, so that their massing is clearly subordinate to the main house.

Where the additions meet the historic structure, minimal change has been made to historic elements. On the mudroom addition, the existing window and side entry door are reused on the addition, which provides the function of a side entrance in a similar location to what exists today. The doorway from the back stair hall into the current powder room was originally an exterior door to a side porch, which has



since been modified and partially enclosed. The door will be removed in this location, but the door opening and transom will remain as a cased opening passing into a new hallway. The most significant modification to an existing exterior wall occurs at the connection between the kitchen and the family room addition. A 15 foot wide cased opening is proposed at this location. This particular wall has already been heavily modified in previous renovations and does not retain any historic features; therefore, a more dramatic alteration is appropriate in this location. The family room addition will not impact the two historic second floor windows above on the rear elevation.

### ***Recommended Approaches for Alterations and Additions***

*Designing and constructing additional entrances or porches on secondary elevations when required for the new use in a manner that preserves the historic character of the building (i.e., ensuring that the new entrance or porch is clearly subordinate to historic primary entrances or porches). (p.112)*

Design Response: The new mudroom entry is in a small addition on a secondary elevation. The addition's massing is clearly subordinate to the original historic structure. The new entrance is not visible from the street, and brings visitors into the kitchen in roughly the same location as the existing side entrance which is being replaced.

*Designing new exterior additions to historic buildings or adjacent new construction that are compatible with the historic character of the setting that preserve the historic relationship between the buildings and the landscape. (p. 146)*

*Constructing a new addition on a secondary or non-character defining elevation and limiting its size and scale in relationship to the historic building.*

*Constructing a new addition that results in the least possible loss of historic materials so that character-defining features are not obscured, damaged, or destroyed.*

*Designing a new addition that is compatible with the historic building.*

*Ensuring that the addition is subordinate and secondary to the historic building and is compatible in massing, scale, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and color.*

*Using the same forms, materials, and color range of the historic building in a manner that does not duplicate it, but distinguishes the addition from the original building.*

*Basing the alignment, rhythm, and size of the window and door openings of the new addition on those of the historic building.*

*Distinguishing the addition from the original building by setting it back from the wall plane of the historic building. (pp.156-157)*

Design Response: As mentioned above, the proposed additions have appropriately subordinate scale due to their one-story massing, with proportions and roof forms broadly similar to existing one-story portions of the historic home. Materials are similar in scale and proportion to those found on the main

house. Window sizes are broadly similar to those found in the main house, and feature the same 1/1 light pattern and shutter design. Several original windows and doors will be repurposed in the new work. The current side entry door and adjacent window will be reinstalled on the mudroom/pantry addition. An arched-top double hung window, which originally was located in the upper portion of the main stairway, will be reinstalled in the hallway leading to the new primary bedroom. This window had been removed during a previous renovation and was stored in the garage rafters.

Care has been taken pull the additions back from the corners of the existing house so that they clearly read as additions, rather than extensions of the historic house. The original massing of the house remains clearly visible in relation to the additions.

### ***Rehabilitation of Secondary Spaces***

*Secondary spaces in historic interiors are generally more functional than decorative and, depending on the building's use, may include kitchens, bathrooms, utility rooms, attics, basements, mail rooms, rear hallways, and most office spaces. Although these spaces were important to how the building functioned historically, they are generally less significant than primary spaces and, thus, are usually the most appropriate places to make changes which may be necessary in a historic building, such as those required to meet code or to install mechanical equipment. (p. 19)*

The only proposed alterations to the existing floor plan are in the kitchen and rear stair hall. The kitchen will be remodeled with a new layout, and a new powder room will be added below the rear stairs by enlarging the existing storage closet and relocating the closet door. As noted above, it is appropriate to modify these secondary spaces to accommodate new functions. Additionally, the kitchen has been remodeled by previous owners, removing historic features (such as walls) and installing new, inappropriate features (such as the large picture window on the rear elevation). Therefore, more significant alterations are appropriate in these locations which have already lost their historic integrity.

### ***Relocation of Existing Detached Garage***

*Recommended: Retaining the historic relationship between buildings and the landscape.*

*Not recommended: Removing or relocating buildings or landscape features, thereby destroying the historic relationship between buildings and the landscape. (p. 138)*

We propose to relocate the existing detached garage to a new location on the site. The building would be rotated 90 degrees so that the garage door will face the street, and it will be located directly at the end of the driveway. This relocation facilitates the proposed family room addition, and its new location helps to define a sequence of outdoor spaces at the rear of the property. As noted above, relocation of a historic structure is typically not a recommended approach. However, we believe that there are mitigating factors which make it an appropriate action in this particular circumstance.

As seen in the below photograph, the current garage is not the original outbuilding on the site. There was originally a carriage house of a different design, in a very similar location to the proposed new location of the garage. We believe it is likely that the current garage was built in or around 1937, after the Frys purchased the house, a period when other alterations to the home are evident. Automobiles



would have been more widely adopted by then, and it's possible that the Frys found the original carriage house to be obsolete to their needs.

The proposed relocation of the garage is also consistent with historic siting patterns for garages and accessory buildings. It is quite common in the historic districts for detached garages to be located at the rear of the lot, directly at the end of the driveway, with garage doors facing the street. Relocating the existing garage to a historically appropriate location, one with precedent at this particular home, will allow for greater functional use of the garage, while also facilitating the overall design goals of the additions and landscaping.



Upon relocation, the garage structure will be placed on a new brick foundation. The new foundation will be approximately 14" shorter than the original foundation. This change makes the overall structure less than 15' tall, which allows it to be placed closer to the property line per the city of Greensboro's land development ordinance. This is preferable from an overall site design perspective. The existing carriage doors will be replaced with a custom built overhead garage door, designed to match the original carriage doors as closely as possible. The window on the left side elevation will be replaced with an entry door to allow access to the inside of the garage. The raised floor structure of the servant's quarter will be removed during the relocation. This space will be repurposed as an office, and the new floor level

will be level with the garage slab. The original entry door will remain in the same location at the new elevation. The existing lap siding will be patched and repaired as necessary to facilitate the new work.

### **Code-Required Work**

*Recommended: Complying with life-safety codes (including requirements for impact-resistant glazing, security, and seismic retrofit) in such a manner that the historic building's character-defining exterior features, interior spaces, features, and finishes, and features of the site and setting are preserved or impacted as little as possible. (p. 150)*

Building code requires the presence of a guard railing at the edge of all elevated walking surfaces which are greater than 30 inches above the adjacent grade. This guard railing must be at least 36 inches in height and must prevent the passage of a 4" diameter sphere. The front porch is approximately 40" above grade and approximately 54" above the driveway surface at the porte cochere. Even though historically there has never been a railing on the front porch, one is needed in order to meet code requirements and to provide for the owners' safety and utility. Referencing the above guideline, as well as Preservation Brief 45 and ITS Interpretation #9, we believe that the proposed metal railing is an appropriate solution. Each section of railing will be mounted directly to the porch deck, in between the porch columns and not attached to the columns. The design of the railing is simple and as unobtrusive as possible. The railing will be painted either gray or black so that it will recede visually in comparison to the adjacent columns.

### **Interior Finishes**

*Recommended: Protecting and maintaining historic materials (including plaster, masonry, wood, and metals) which comprise interior spaces through appropriate surface treatments, such as cleaning, paint removal, and reapplication of protective coating systems.*

*Not recommended: Changing the type of finish or its color, such as painting a historically-varnished wood feature, or removing paint from a historically painted feature. (pp. 128-129)*

Plaster walls and ceilings have been repaired throughout the primary spaces in the house. In the foyer, it is proposed to remove the paint on the paneled trim and wainscoting. This woodwork is made of oak and was originally stained. It was inappropriately painted over during a prior renovation, and the owners wish to restore the original stained paneled appearance. Exploratory work has confirmed the original appearance of the paneling, as well as the viability of removing the paint from the surface without damaging the wood.

### **Landscaping**

*Recommended: Identifying, retaining, and preserving features of the building site that are important in defining its overall historic character. Site features may include walls, fences, or steps; circulation systems, such as walks, paths or roads; vegetation, such as trees, shrubs, grass, orchards, hedges, windbreaks, or gardens; landforms, such as hills, terracing, or berms; furnishings and fixtures, such as light posts or benches; decorative elements, such as sculpture, statuary, or monuments; water features, including fountains, streams, pools, lakes, or irrigation ditches; and subsurface archeological resources, other cultural or religious features, or burial grounds which are also important to the site.*

*Not recommended: Removing or substantially changing buildings and their features or site features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the property so that, as a result, the character is diminished. (p. 137)*

In order to construct the primary suite addition, one live oak tree will need to be removed from the property. This tree has been estimated to be approximately 60 years old and is therefore not a significant feature of the original historical landscape. New trees will be planted elsewhere on the property per the landscape plan. Additionally, some of the existing stone landscape walls at the rear of the property will need to be removed for the construction of the additions. The material from these walls will be reincorporated into new landscape walls per the landscape plan.

#### **IV. Material Summary**

##### ***Exterior Materials***

Foundation – Modular brick, painted to match existing

Siding – 1x6 wood lap siding, 4" reveal, painted to match existing

Trim – Wood, size and profile per elevations. Composite material will be used for the skirt board to protect against moisture in proximity to the ground. All trim will be painted to match existing.

Windows – Tucker all-wood windows

Shutters – Louvered composite, paint and hardware to match existing

Exterior doors – all-wood, divided lite per elevations

Garage door – custom-built wood or composite to match design of existing carriage doors

Roofing – CertainTeed Grand Manor architectural shingles in Colonial Slate or Gatehouse Slate. Shingles will be installed on new addition roofs, and will also replace existing shingles on front porch and garage.

Gutters – built-in or copper half-round, per elevations. Round copper downspouts.

##### ***Interior Materials***

Flooring

- ¾"x2 ¼" oak flooring – kitchen, family room, hallways, primary bedroom and closets
- tile (selections per owner) – mudroom, pantry, powder room, laundry room, primary bathroom

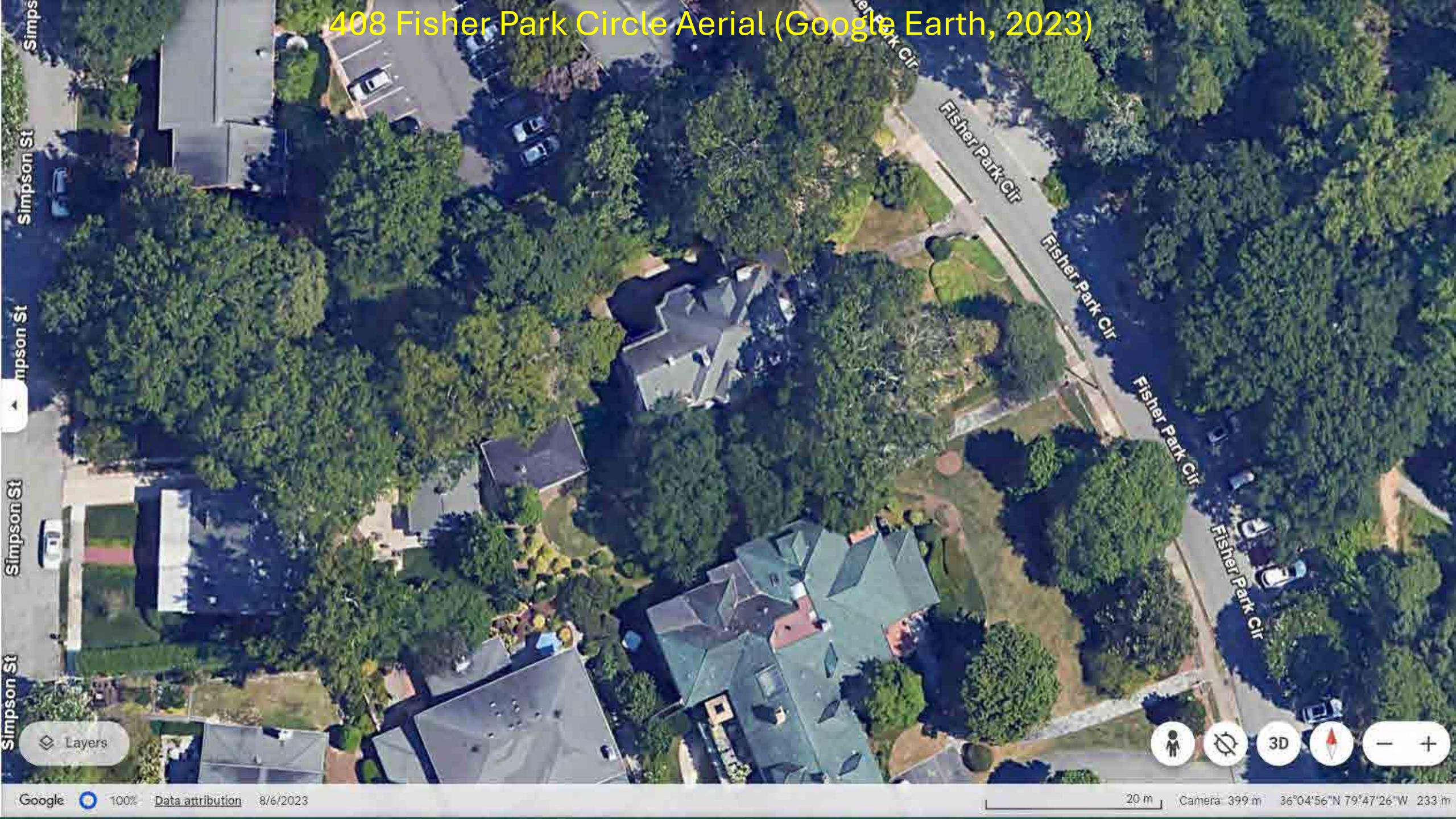
Walls/Ceiling – ½" gypsum wall board in all new work (existing plaster is being restored in existing portions of house)

Trim – wood, profiles custom milled to match existing as necessary. Reuse existing trim that has been removed where possible

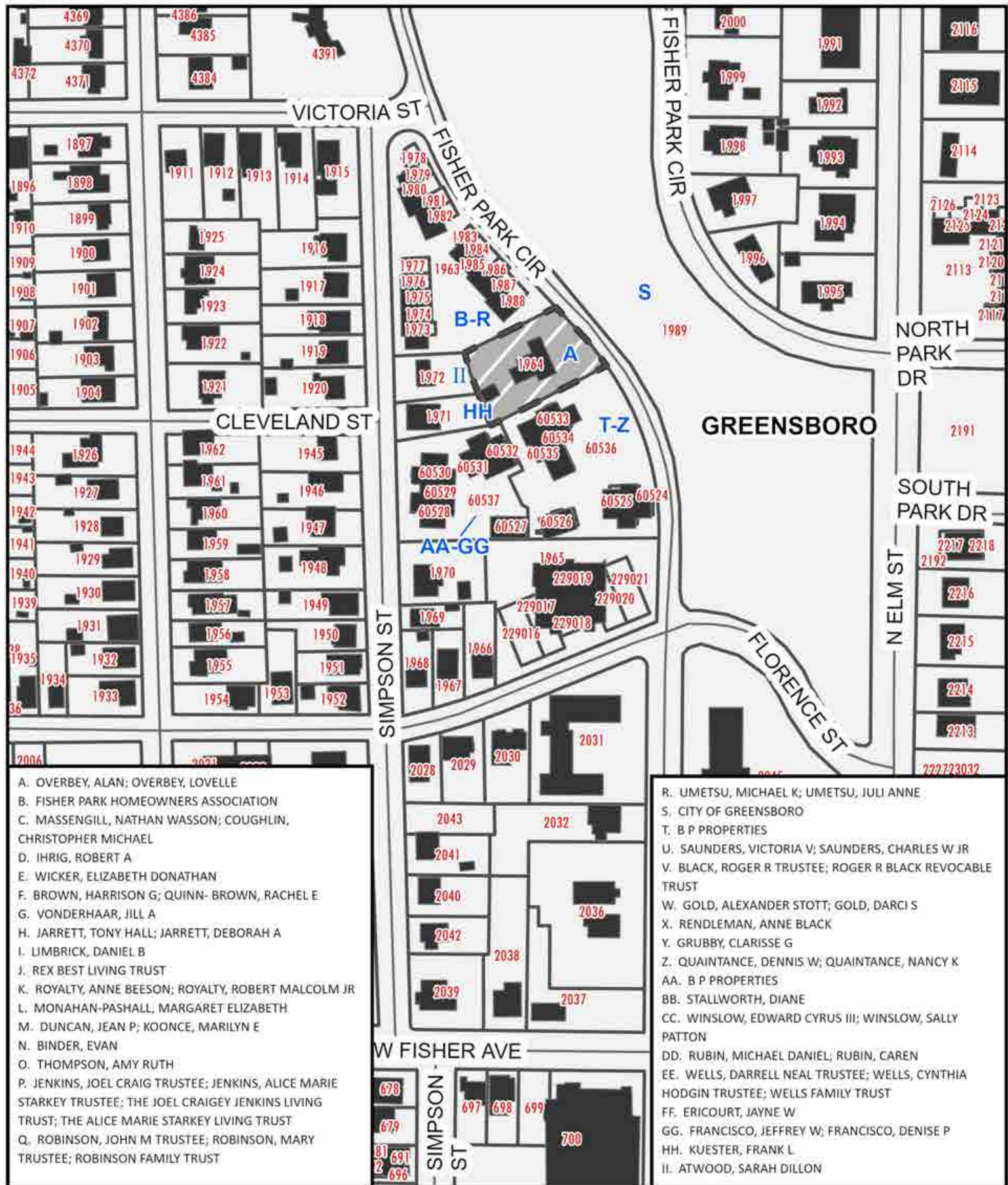
Interior doors – wood, 7-panel with raised panel. Reuse existing doors that have been removed where possible.



# 408 Fisher Park Circle Aerial (Google Earth, 2023)







Planning & Development  
Department

Jurisdiction:

GREENSBORO

Grimsley Fry House

Case Area:

Parcel - 1964

408 Fisher Park Circle



Scale: 1" = 200'





Planning & Development  
Department

Jurisdiction:

GREENSBORO

Grimsley Fry House

Case Area:

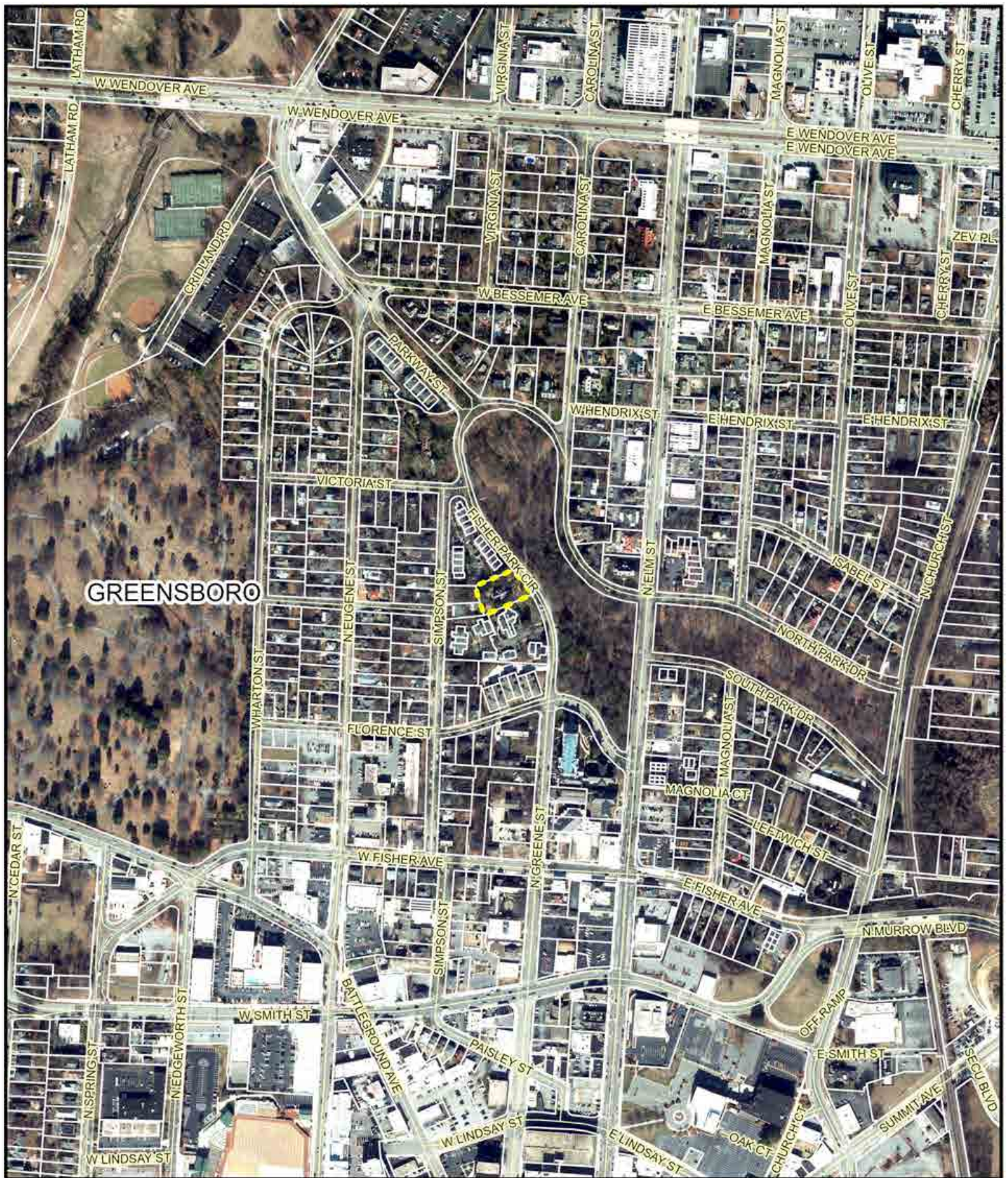
Parcel - 1964

408 Fisher Park Circle



Scale: 1" = 250'





Planning & Development  
Department

Jurisdiction:

GREENSBORO

Grimsley Fry House

Case Area:

Parcel - 1964

408 Fisher Park Circle



Scale: 1" = 500'



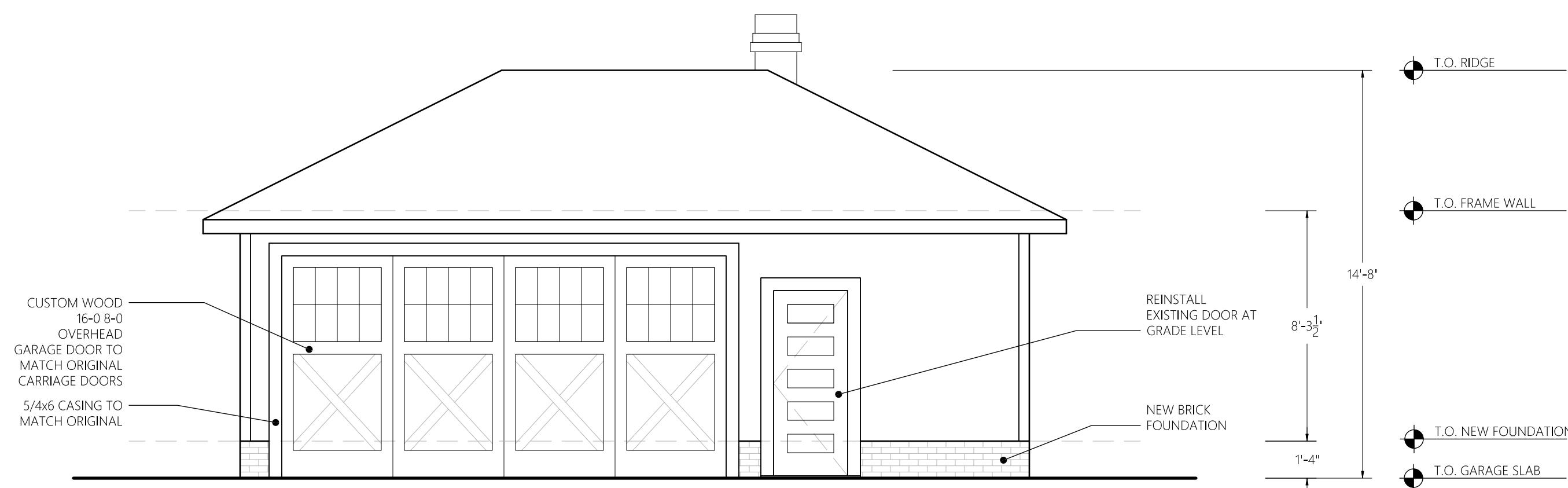


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1 EAST ELEVATION  
1/4" = 1'-0"



2 GARAGE EAST ELEVATION  
1/4" = 1'-0"



3 SOUTH ELEVATION  
1/4" = 1'-0"

PROPOSED ADDITION AND RENOVATIONS  
**OVERBEY RESIDENCE**  
408 FISHER PARK CIRCLE  
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

ELEVATIONS

PRELIMINARY PLANS  
- NOT FOR  
CONSTRUCTION

DATE:  
5/20/2024

PROJECT #:  
2023-068

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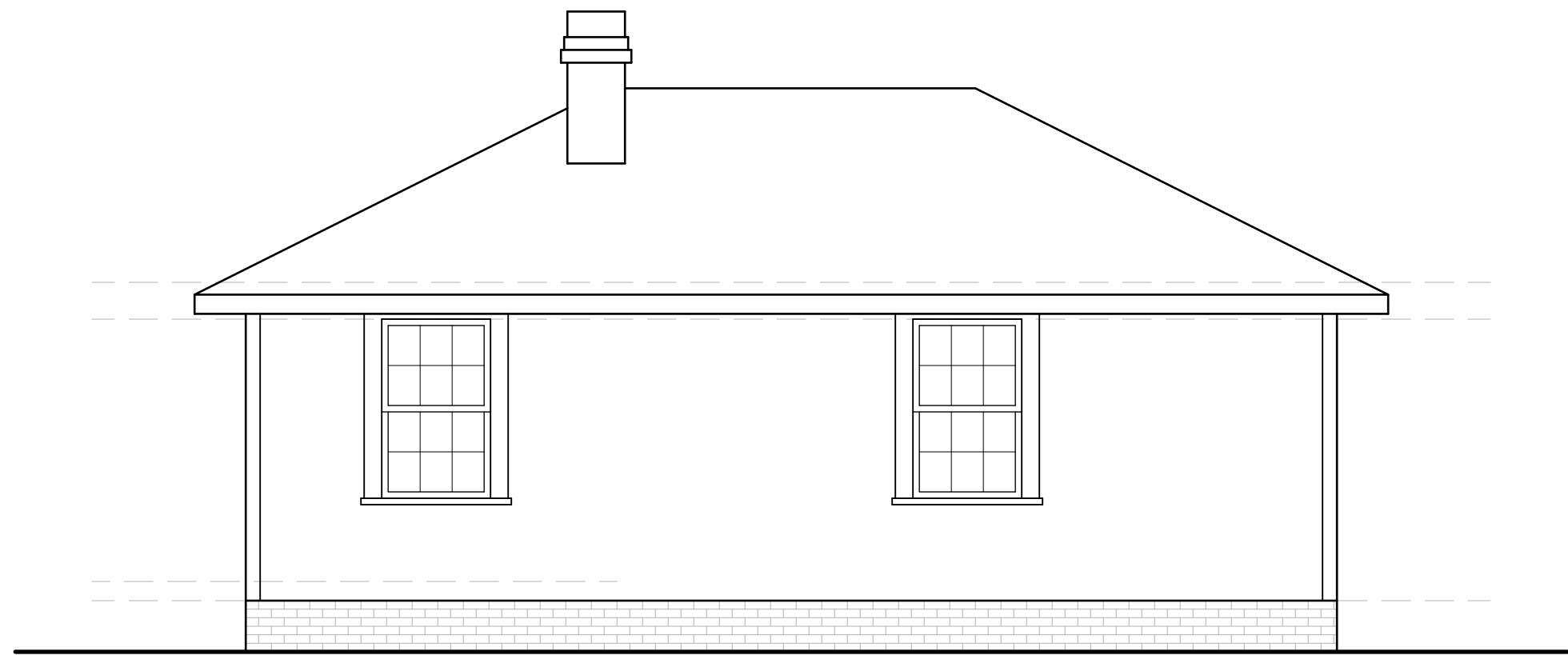


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1 WEST ELEVATION  
1/4" = 1'-0"



2 GARAGE WEST ELEVATION  
1/4" = 1'-0"



3 NORTH ELEVATION  
1/4" = 1'-0"

PROPOSED ADDITION AND RENOVATIONS  
OVERBEY RESIDENCE  
408 FISHER PARK CIRCLE  
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

ELEVATIONS

PRELIMINARY PLANS  
- NOT FOR  
CONSTRUCTION

DATE:  
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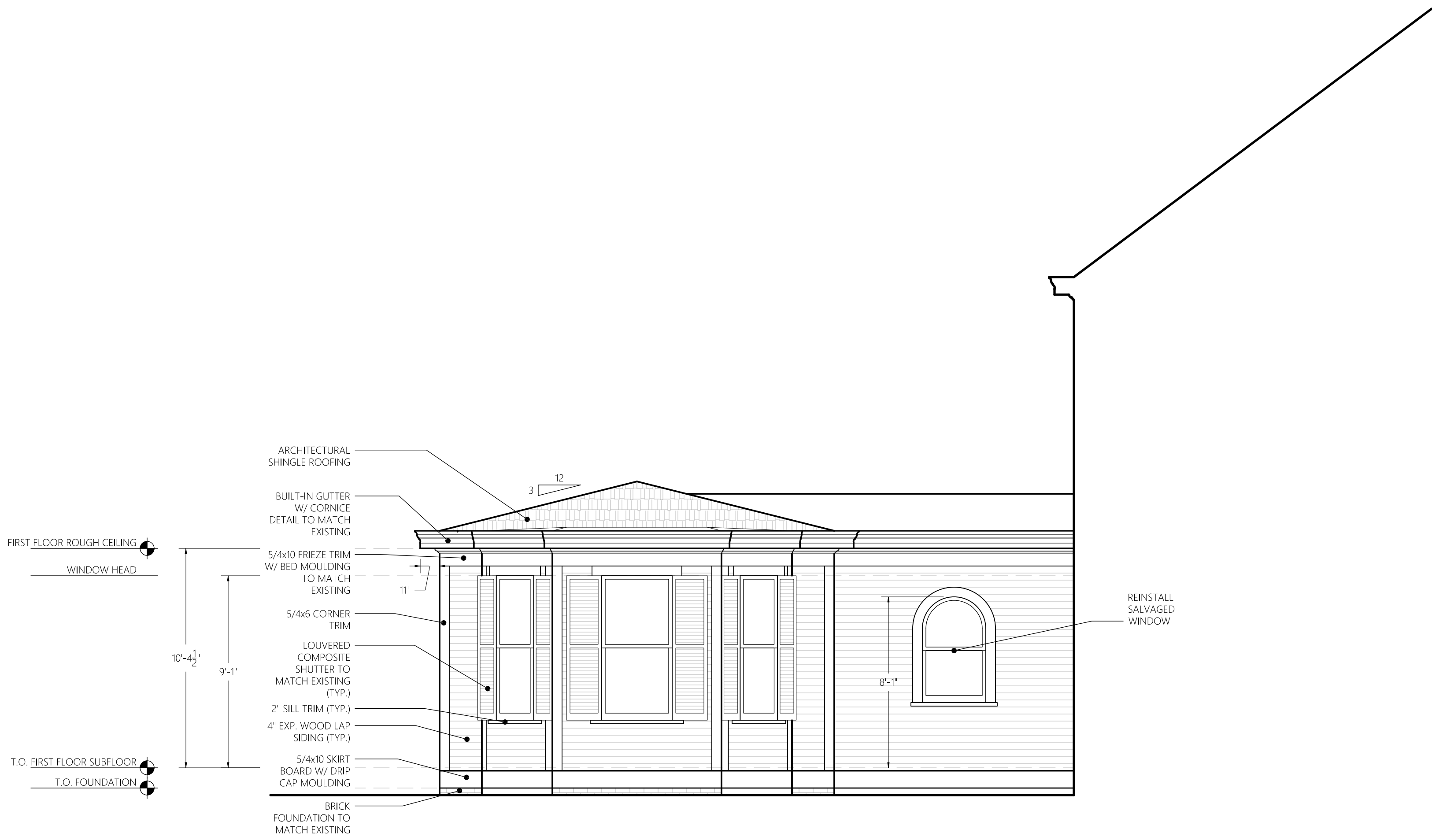
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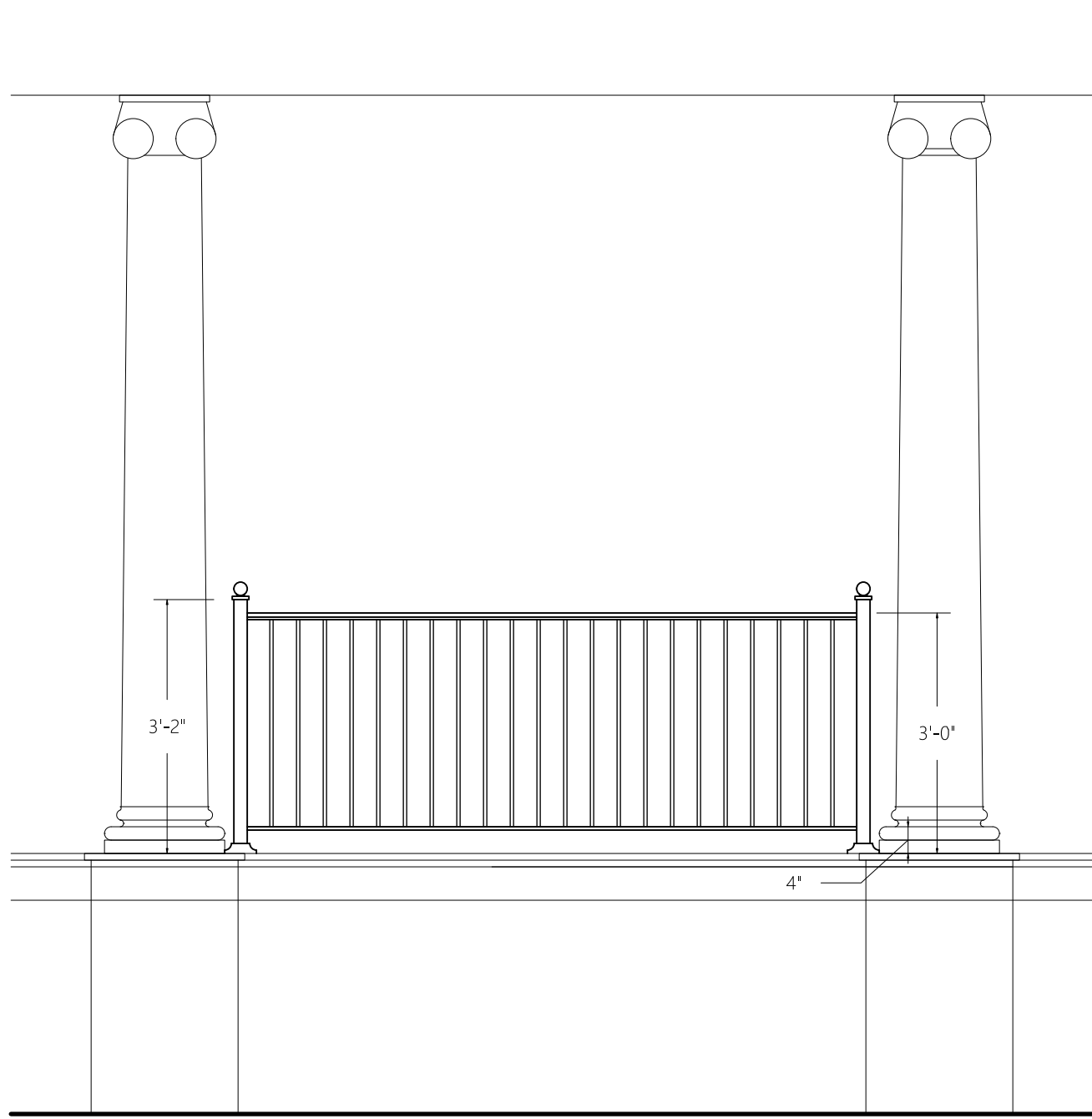


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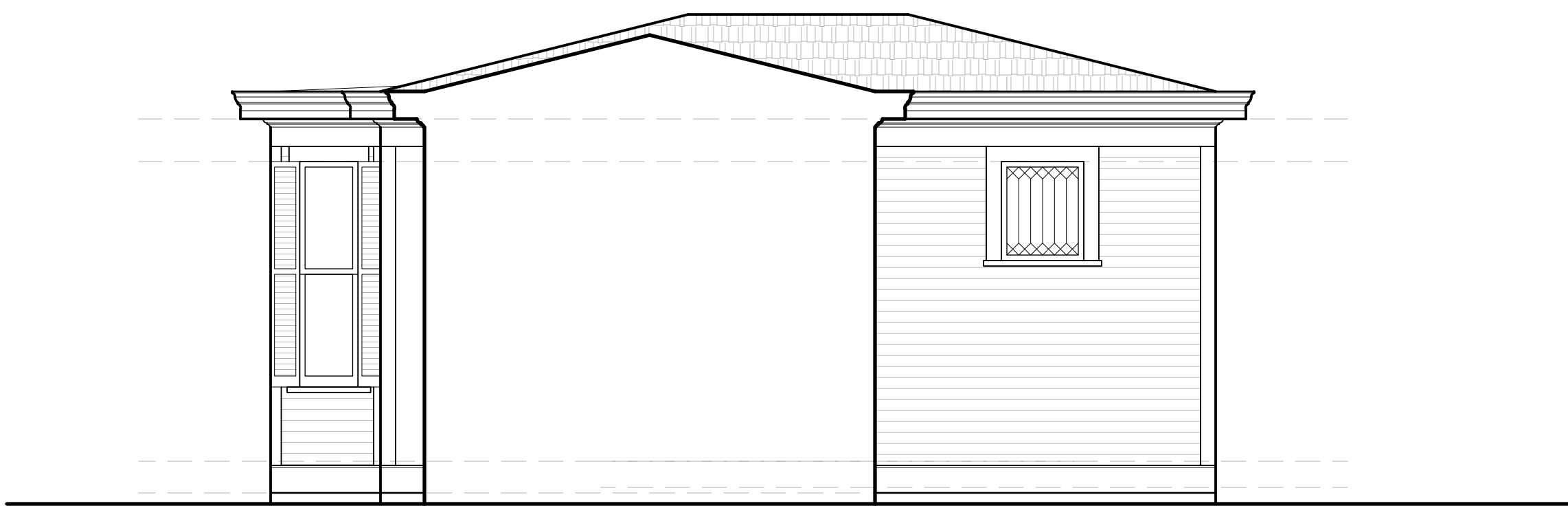
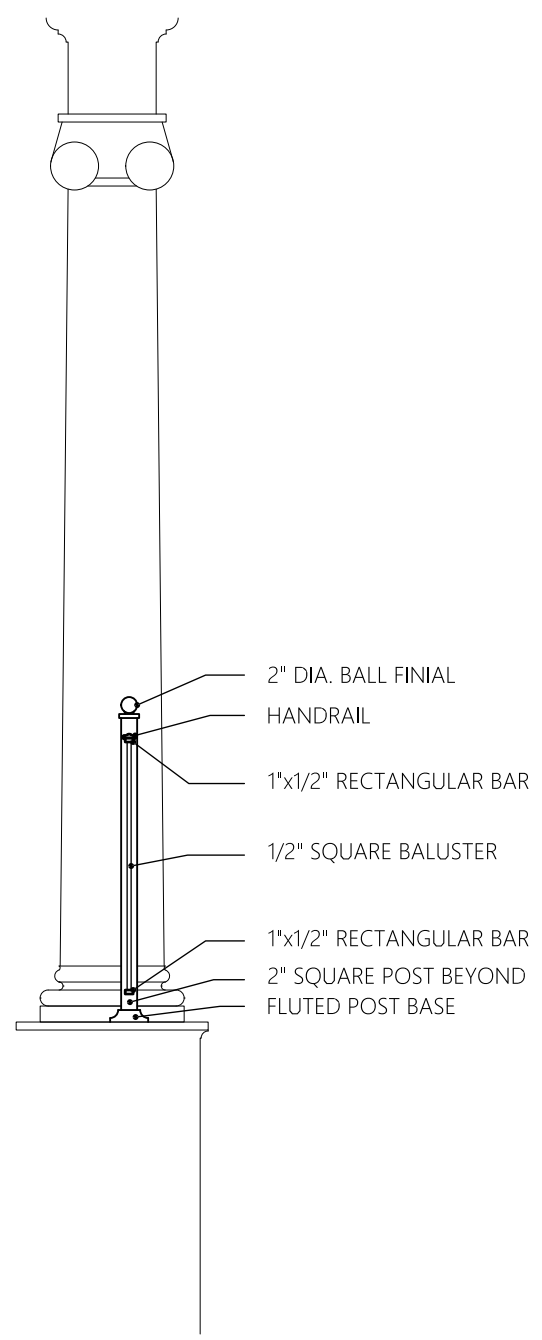
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1 PRIMARY ADDITION EAST ELEVATION  
1/4" = 1'-0"



4 PORCH GUARD RAILING DETAIL  
1/2" = 1'-0"



2 PRIMARY ADDITION NORTH ELEVATION  
1/4" = 1'-0"



3 LIVING ROOM ADDITION SOUTH ELEVATION  
1/4" = 1'-0"

PROPOSED ADDITION AND RENOVATIONS  
OVERBEY RESIDENCE  
408 FISHER PARK CIRCLE  
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

ELEVATIONS

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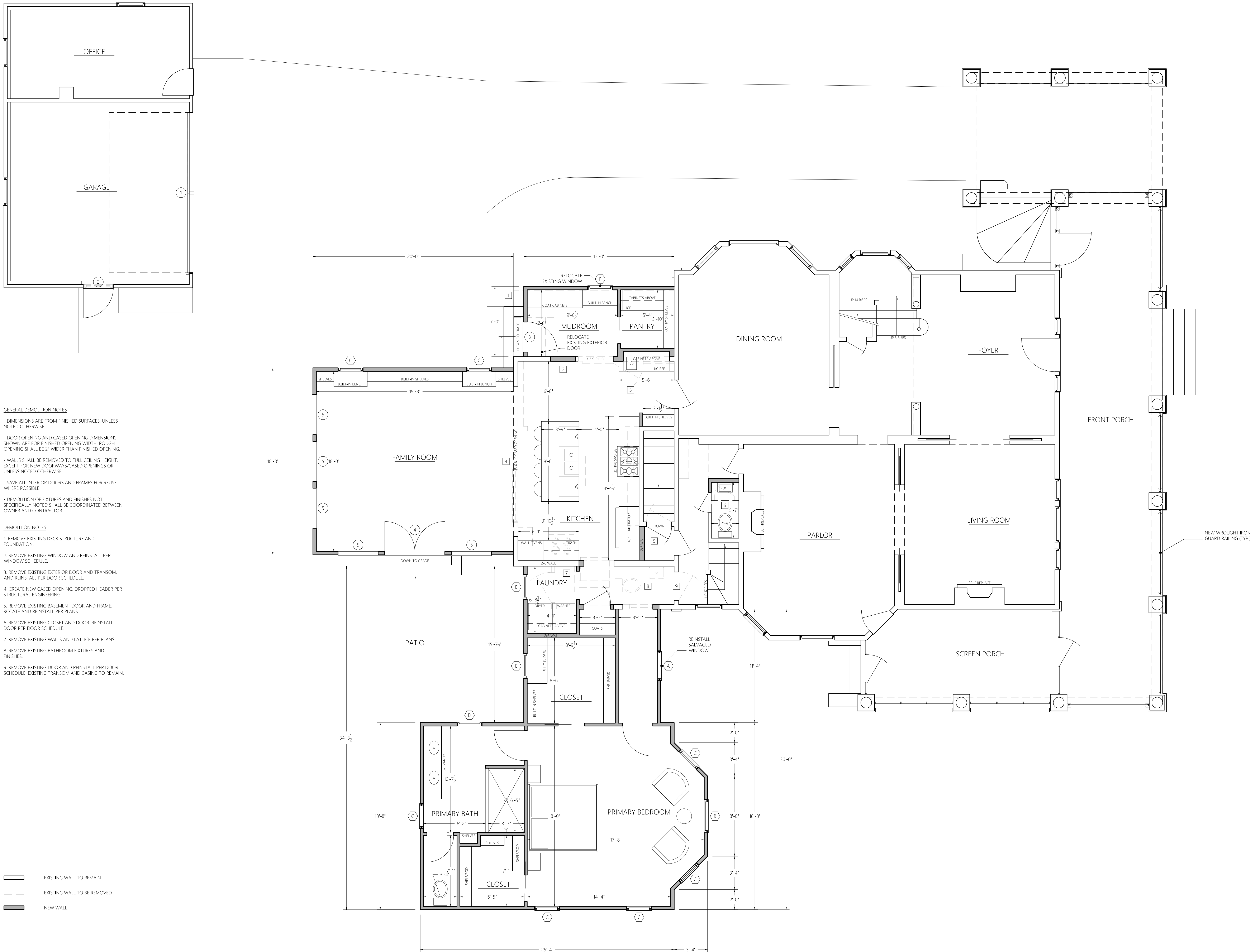
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PROPOSED ADDITION AND RENOVATIONS  
OVERBEY RESIDENCE  
408 FISHER PARK CIRCLE  
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

FLOOR PLAN

PRELIMINARY PLANS  
- NOT FOR  
CONSTRUCTION

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1 FIRST FLOOR PLAN  
1/4" = 1'-0"



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PROPOSED ADDITION AND RENOVATIONS  
OVERBEY RESIDENCE  
408 FISHER PARK CIRCLE  
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

FLOOR PLAN

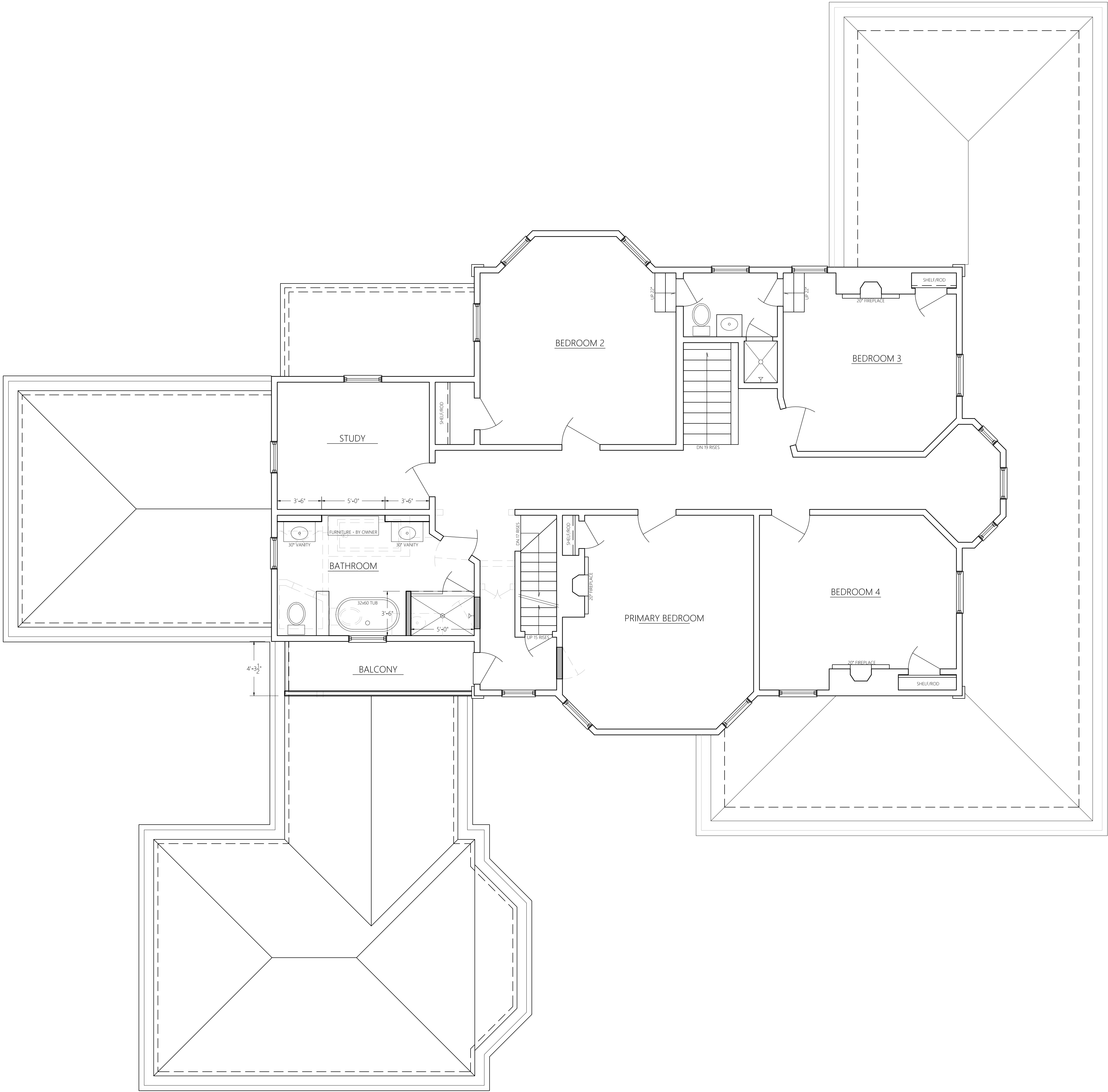
PRELIMINARY PLANS  
- NOT FOR  
CONSTRUCTION

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- EXISTING WALL TO REMAIN
- EXISTING WALL TO BE REMOVED
- NEW WALL



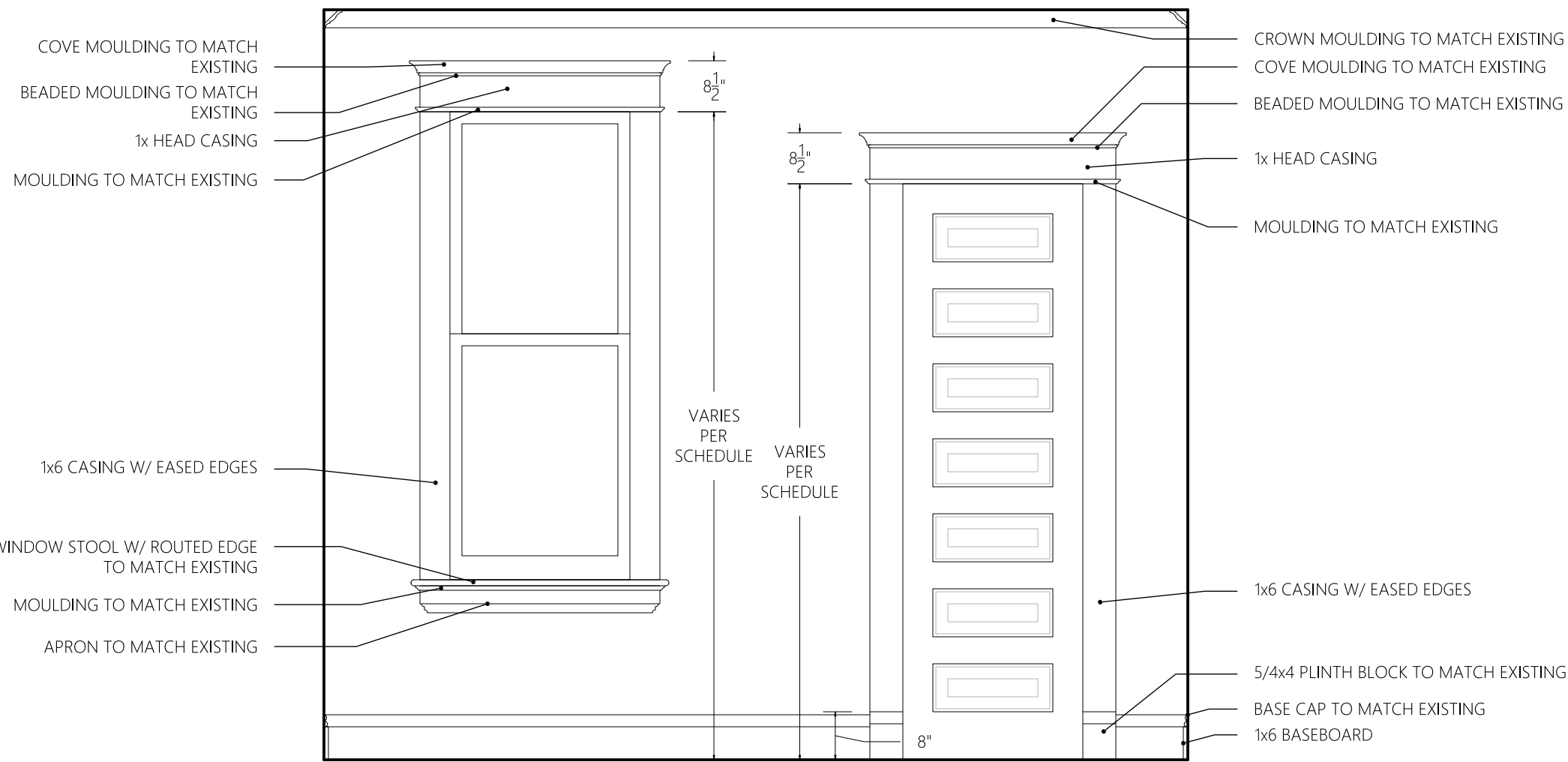
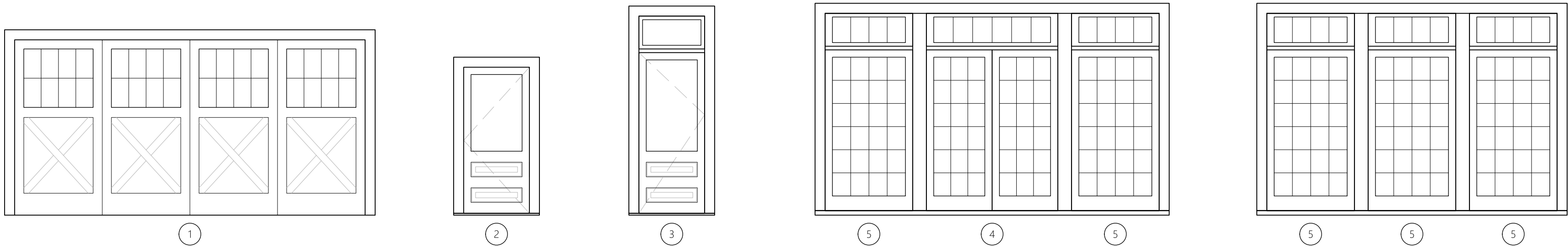
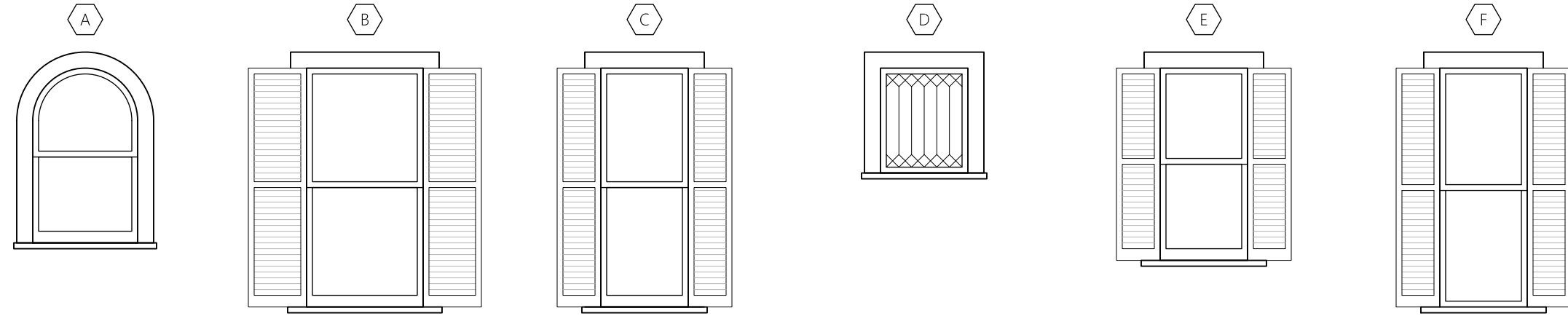
1 SECOND FLOOR PLAN  
1/4" = 1'-0"

WINDOW SCHEDULE				
MARK	CALL-OUT SIZE	WINDOW OPERATION	WINDOW CONSTRUCTION	NOTES
A	3'-0" 5'-0"	DOUBLE HUNG	WOOD	ARCHED SASH; SALVAGE AND REINSTALL EXISTING SASHES AND FRAME
B	3'-4" 6'-10"	DOUBLE HUNG	WOOD	
C	2'-6" 6'-10"	DOUBLE HUNG	WOOD	
D	2'-8" 3'-0"	FIXED CASEMENT	WOOD	LEADED OBSCURE GLASS - PATTERN PER ELEVATION
E	2'-6" 5'-6"	DOUBLE HUNG	WOOD	
F	2'-6" 6'-10"	DOUBLE HUNG	WOOD	EXISTING WINDOW IN KITCHEN TO BE REMOVED AND REINSTALLED

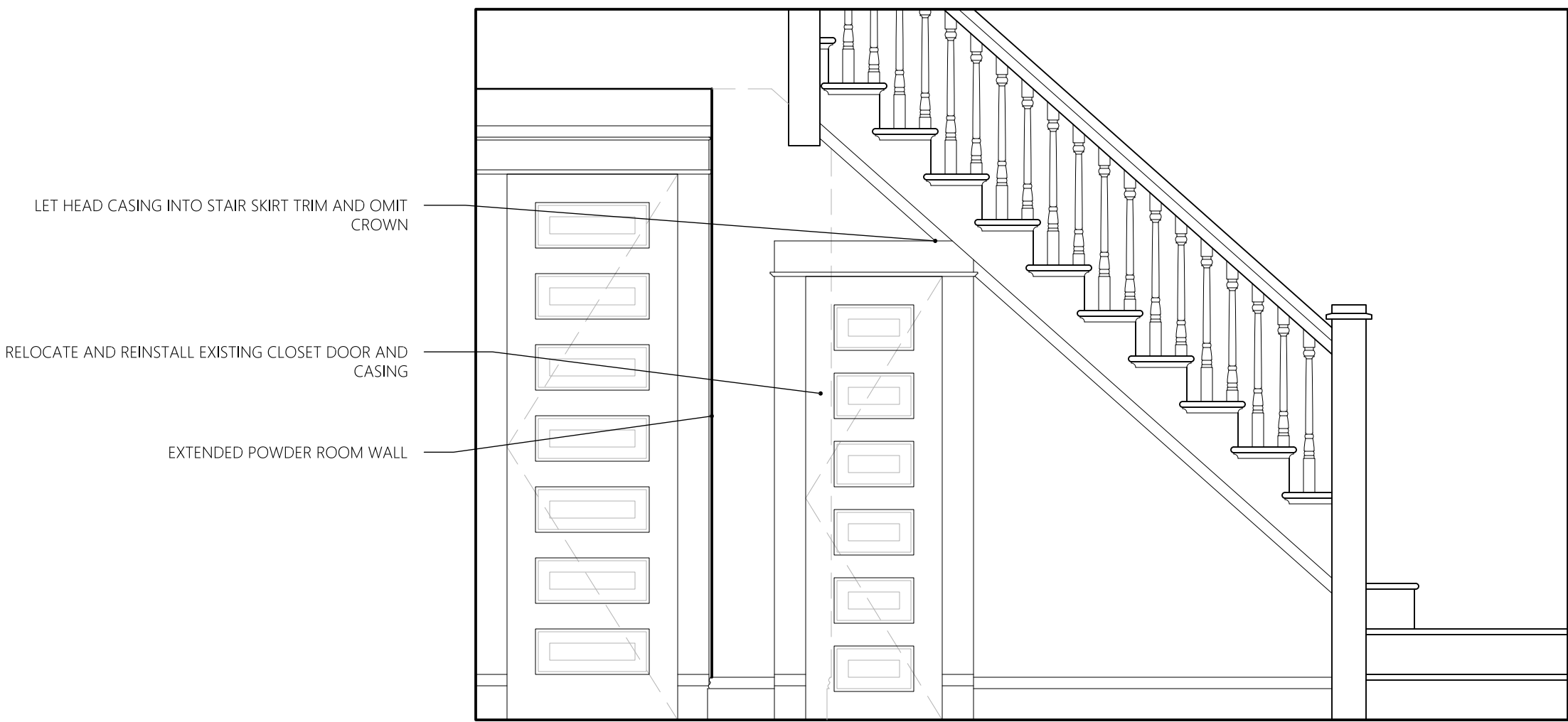
- WINDOW NOTES
- GLASS TO BE DOUBLE PANE INSULATED.
  - USE TEMPERED GLASS WHERE REQUIRED BY CODE.
  - COORDINATE ALL MULL AND STACK SPECIFICATIONS WITH MANUFACTURER RECOMMENDATIONS.
  - SEE ELEVATIONS FOR DIVIDED LITE PATTERN.
  - ALL NEW SHUTTERS SHALL BE CONSTRUCTED OF COMPOSITE MATERIAL AND SHALL BE SIZED TO COVER HALF OF THE WIDTH OF THE WINDOW OPENING.
  - NEW SHUTTERS SHALL MATCH EXISTING IN STYLE AND DIMENSION. NEW SHUTTER HARDWARE SHALL MATCH EXISTING.

EXTERIOR DOOR SCHEDULE				
MARK	CALL-OUT SIZE	DOOR OPERATION	DOOR CONSTRUCTION	NOTES
1	16'-0" 8'-0"	OVERHEAD GARAGE	WOOD OR COMPOSITE	DESIGN OF DOOR TO REPLICATE EXISTING CARRIAGE DOORS
2	3'-0" 6'-8"	HINGED - RH OUTSWING	WOOD	
3	3'-0" 3'-0"	HINGED - RH INSWING	WOOD	3'-0" 7'-4" DOOR W/ 18" TRANSOM. RELOCATE FROM EXISTING EXTERIOR WALL
4	6'-0" 9'-0"	FRENCH PATIO INSWING	WOOD	(2) 3'-0" 7'-4" PATIO DOORS W/ 6'-0" 1'-6" TRANSOM
5	4'-0" 9'-0"	FIXED	WOOD	4'-0" 7'-4" DOOR W/ 4'-0" 1'-6" TRANSOM

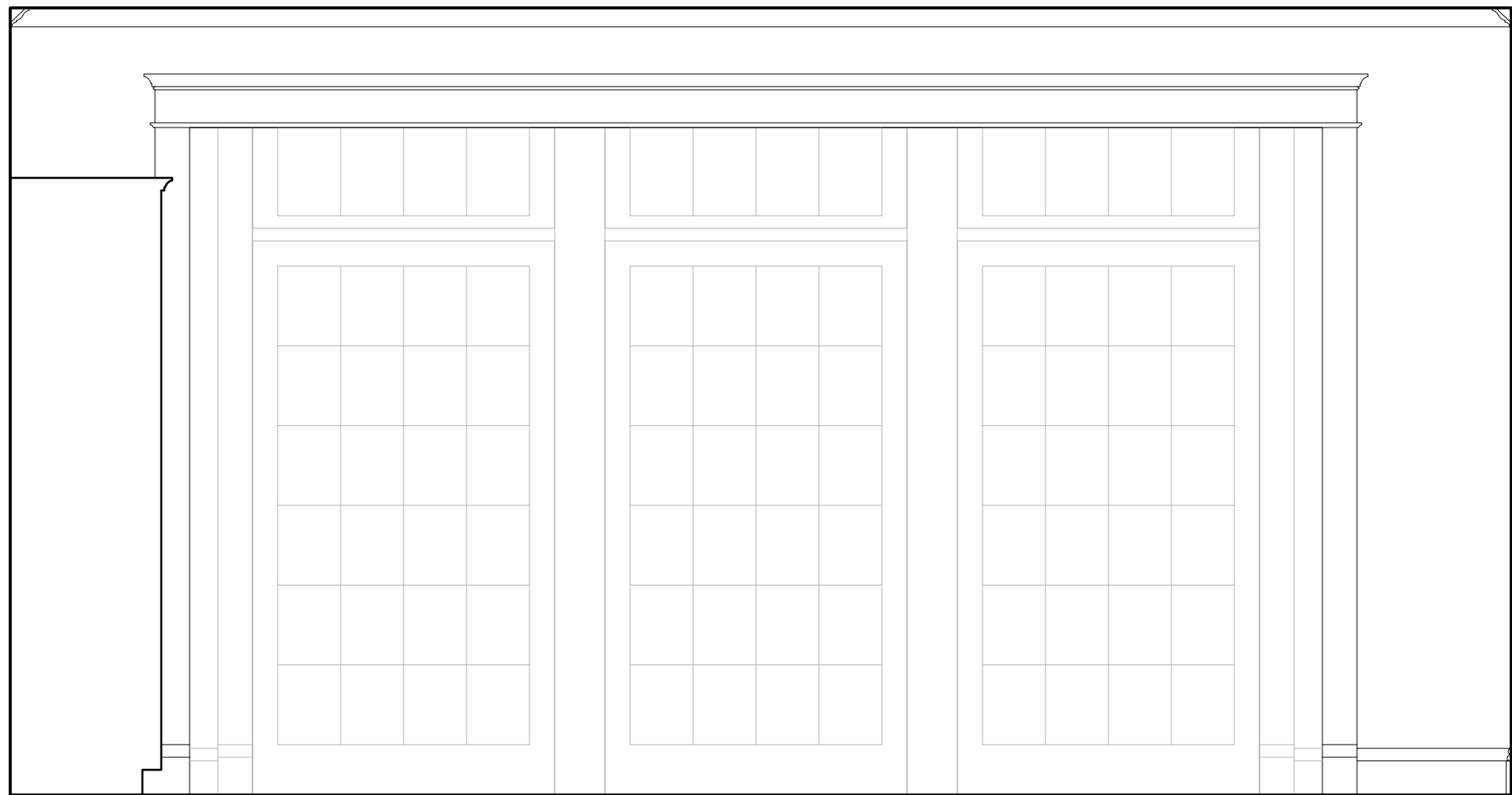
- EXTERIOR DOOR NOTES
- DIVIDED LITE TO TRUE DIVIDED LITE WITH  $\frac{1}{2}$ " MUNTINS.
  - GLASS TO BE DOUBLE PANE INSULATED.
  - USE TEMPERED GLASS WHERE REQUIRED BY CODE.
  - SEE ELEVATIONS FOR DIVIDED LITE PATTERN.



1 TYPICAL INTERIOR TRIM DETAILS  
1/2" = 1'-0"



2 STAIR HALL ELEVATION  
1/2" = 1'-0"



3 KITCHEN TO FAMILY ROOM ELEVATION  
1/2" = 1'-0"



4 WET BAR ELEVATION  
1/2" = 1'-0"



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PROPOSED ADDITION AND RENOVATIONS  
OVERBEY RESIDENCE  
408 FISHER PARK CIRCLE  
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

SCHEDULES AND  
INTERIOR  
ELEVATIONS

PRELIMINARY PLANS  
- NOT FOR  
CONSTRUCTION

DATE:  
5/20/2024

PROJECT #:  
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PROPOSED ADDITION AND RENOVATIONS  
**OVERBEY RESIDENCE**  
408 FISHER PARK CIRCLE  
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

ELEVATIONS

AS-BUILT PLANS -  
NOT FOR  
CONSTRUCTION

DATE:  
5/17/2024

PROJECT #:  
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1 FRONT ELEVATION  
1/4" = 1'-0"



2 LEFT SIDE ELEVATION  
1/4" = 1'-0"



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PROPOSED ADDITION AND RENOVATIONS  
**OVERBEY RESIDENCE**  
408 FISHER PARK CIRCLE  
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

ELEVATIONS

AS-BUILT PLANS -  
NOT FOR  
CONSTRUCTION

DATE:  
5/17/2024

PROJECT #:  
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PROPOSED ADDITION AND RENOVATIONS  
**OVERBEY RESIDENCE**  
408 FISHER PARK CIRCLE  
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

## FLOOR PLANS

AS-BUILT PLANS -  
NOT FOR  
CONSTRUCTION

DATE:  
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PROPOSED ADDITION AND RENOVATIONS  
**OVERBEY RESIDENCE**  
408 FISHER PARK CIRCLE  
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

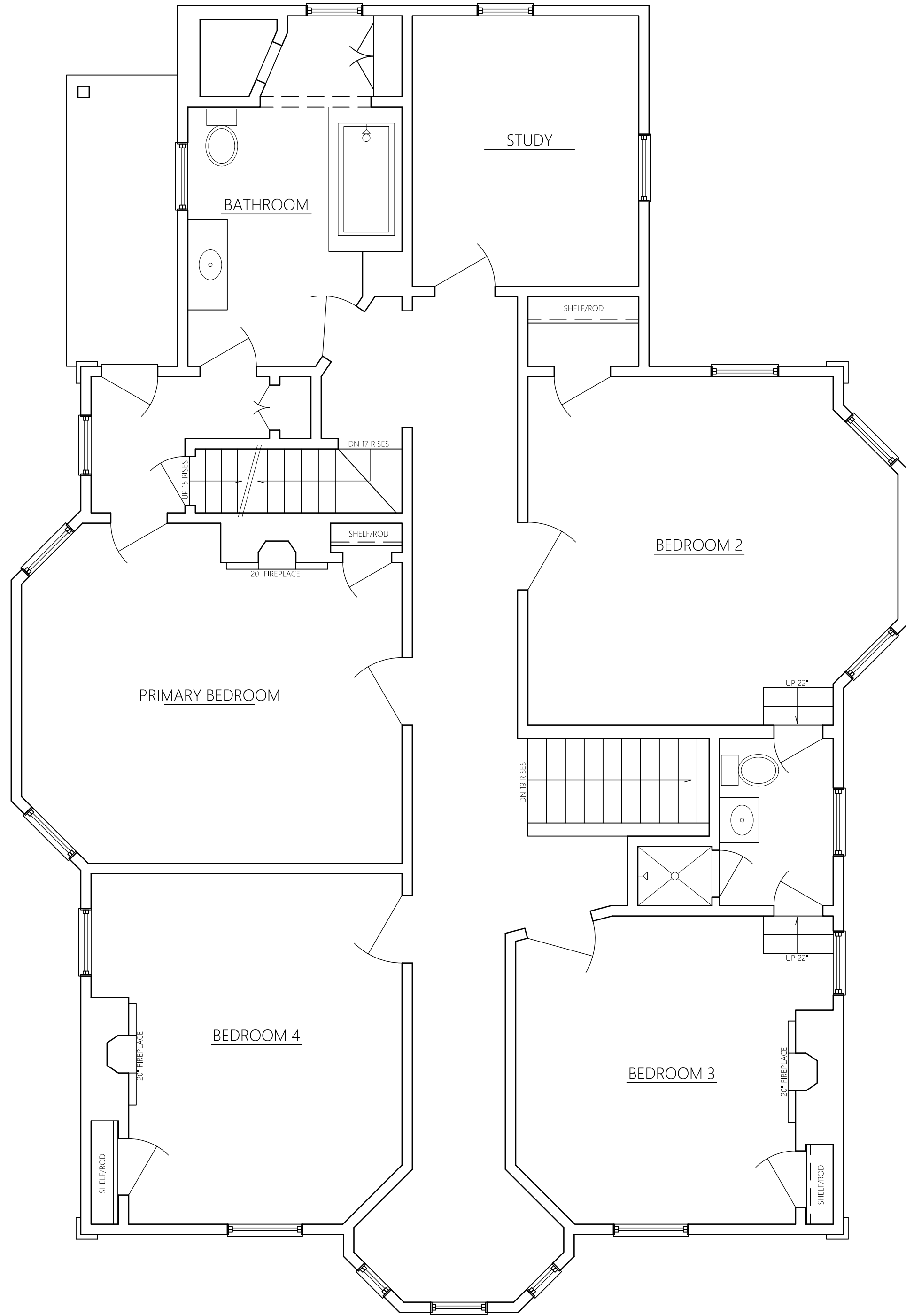
FLOOR PLANS

AS-BUILT PLANS -  
NOT FOR  
CONSTRUCTION

DATE:  
5/17/2024

PROJECT #:  
2023-068

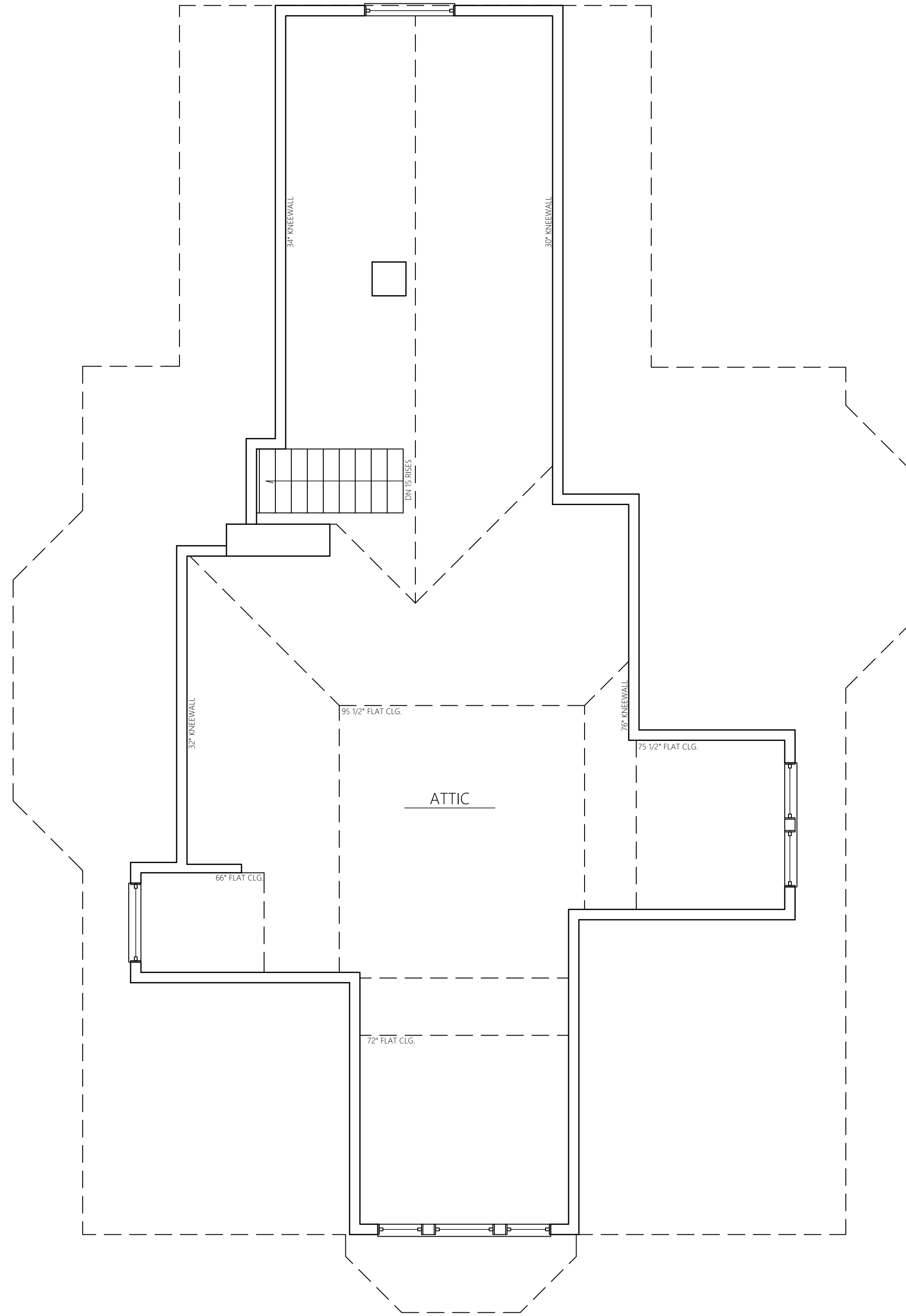
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1

SECOND FLOOR PLAN

1/4" = 1'-0"



2

ATTIC FLOOR PLAN

1/4" = 1'-0"



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**OVERBEY RESIDENCE**  
408 FISHER PARK CIRCLE  
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

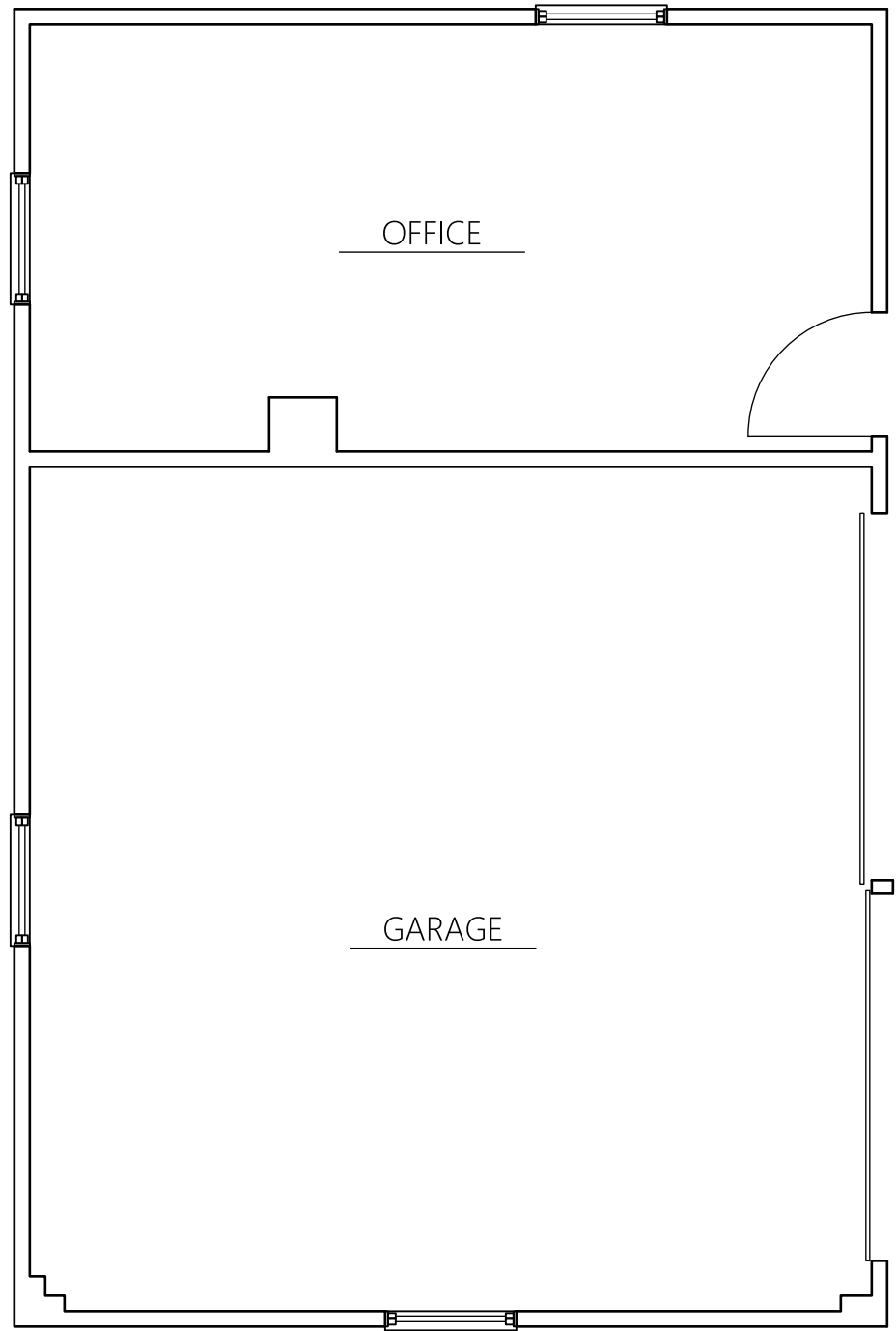
GARAGE FLOOR  
PLAN AND  
ELEVATIONS

AS-BUILT PLANS -  
NOT FOR  
CONSTRUCTION

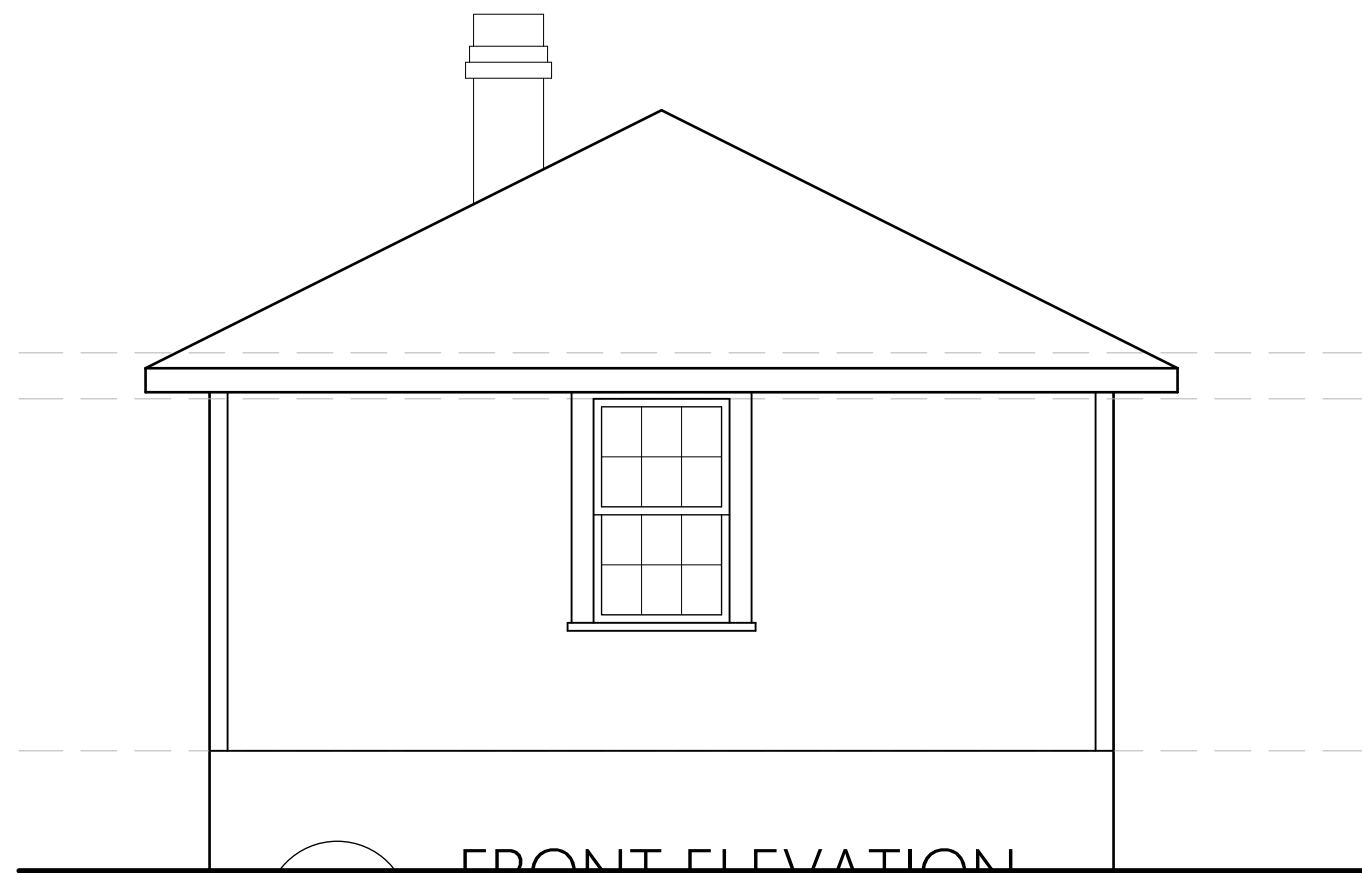
DATE:  
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2023-068

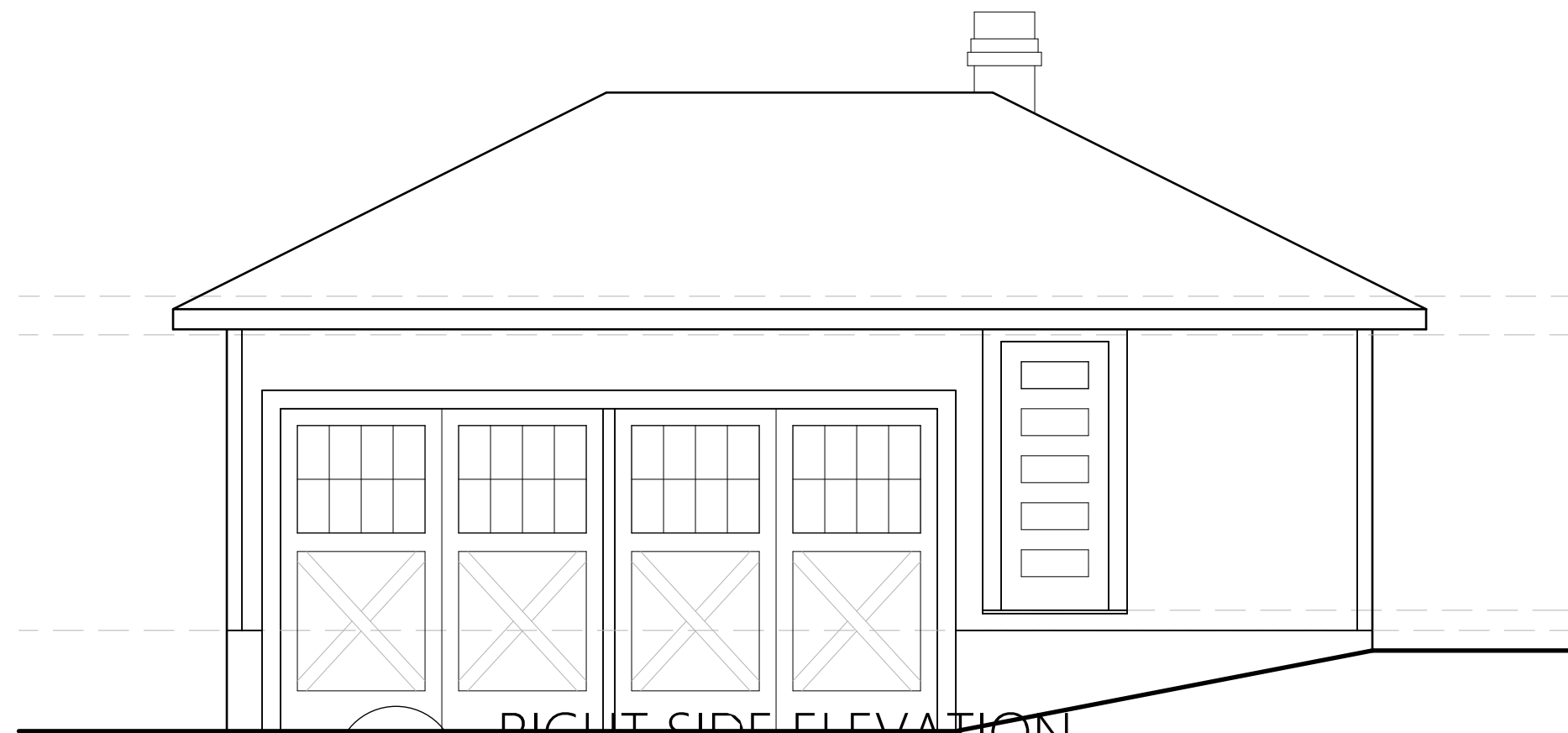
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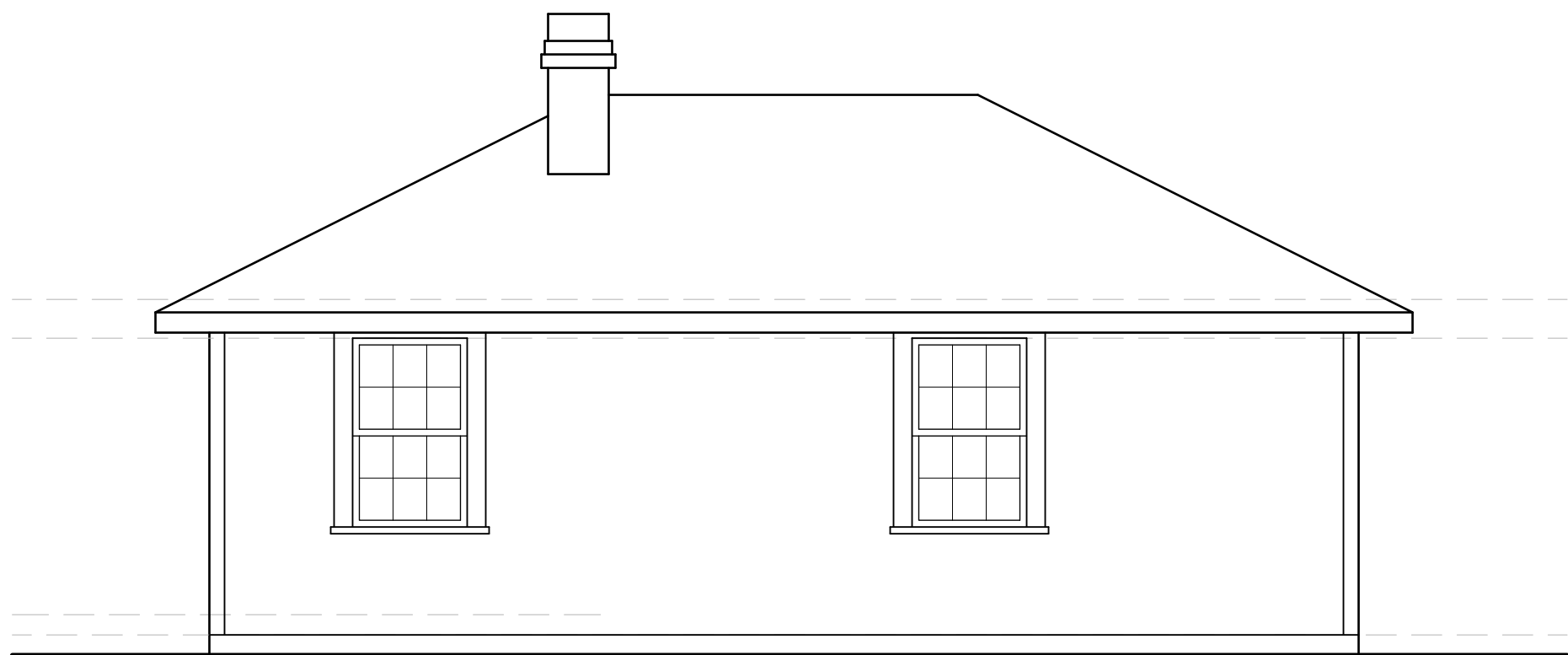
1 FLOOR PLAN  
1/4" = 1'-0"



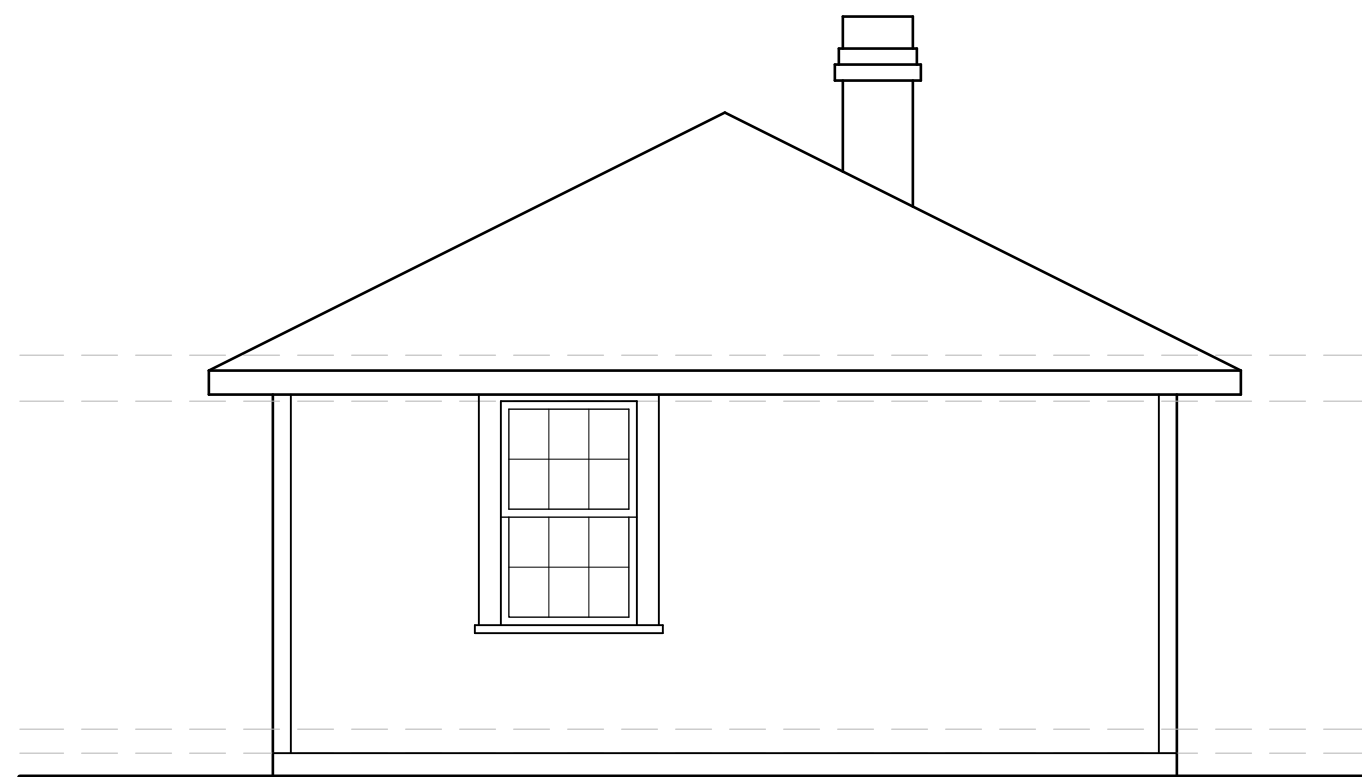
2 FRONT ELEVATION  
1/4" = 1'-0"



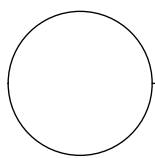
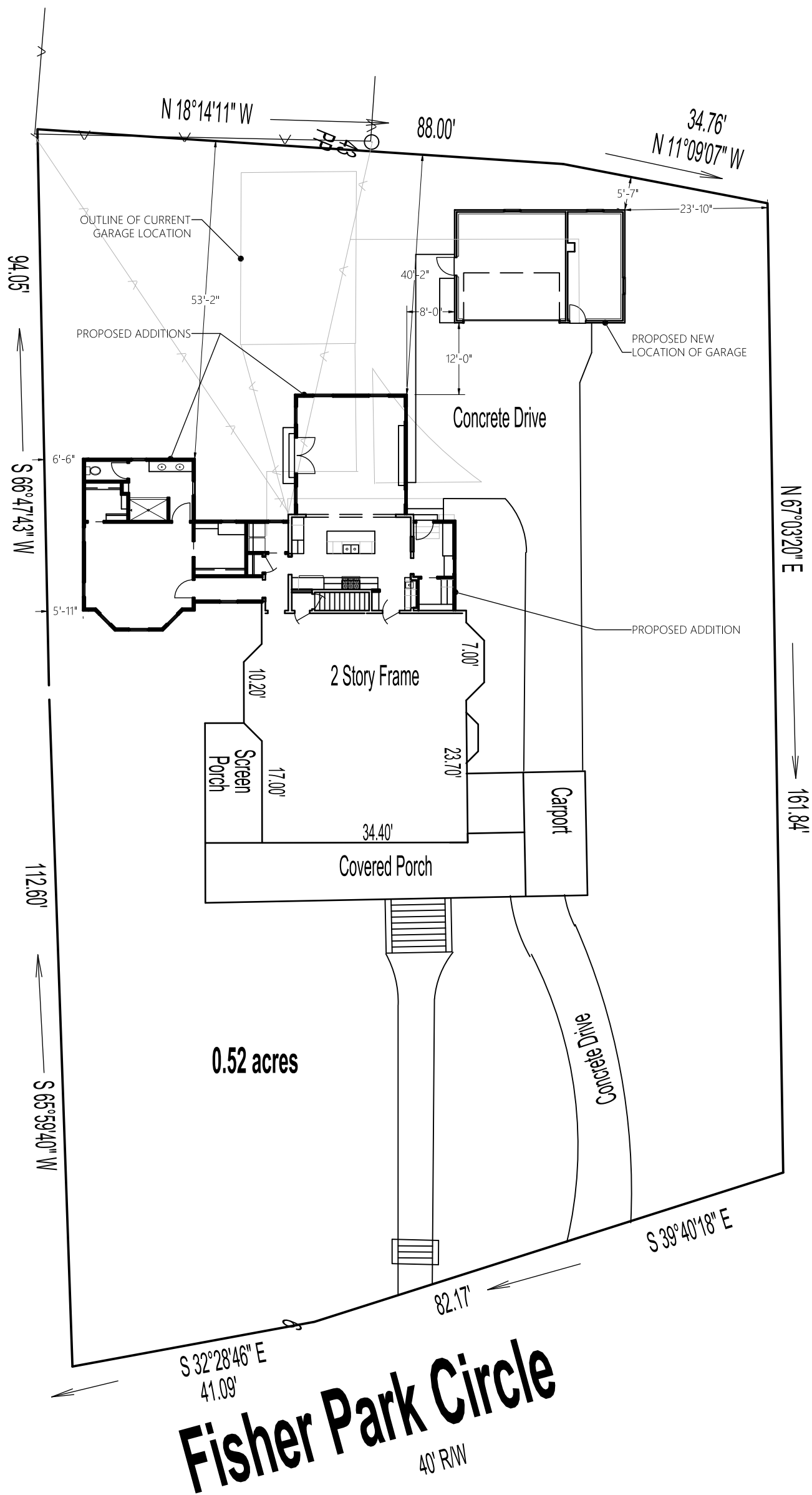
3 RIGHT SIDE ELEVATION  
1/4" = 1'-0"



4 LEFT SIDE ELEVATION  
1/4" = 1'-0"



5 REAR ELEVATION  
1/4" = 1'-0"



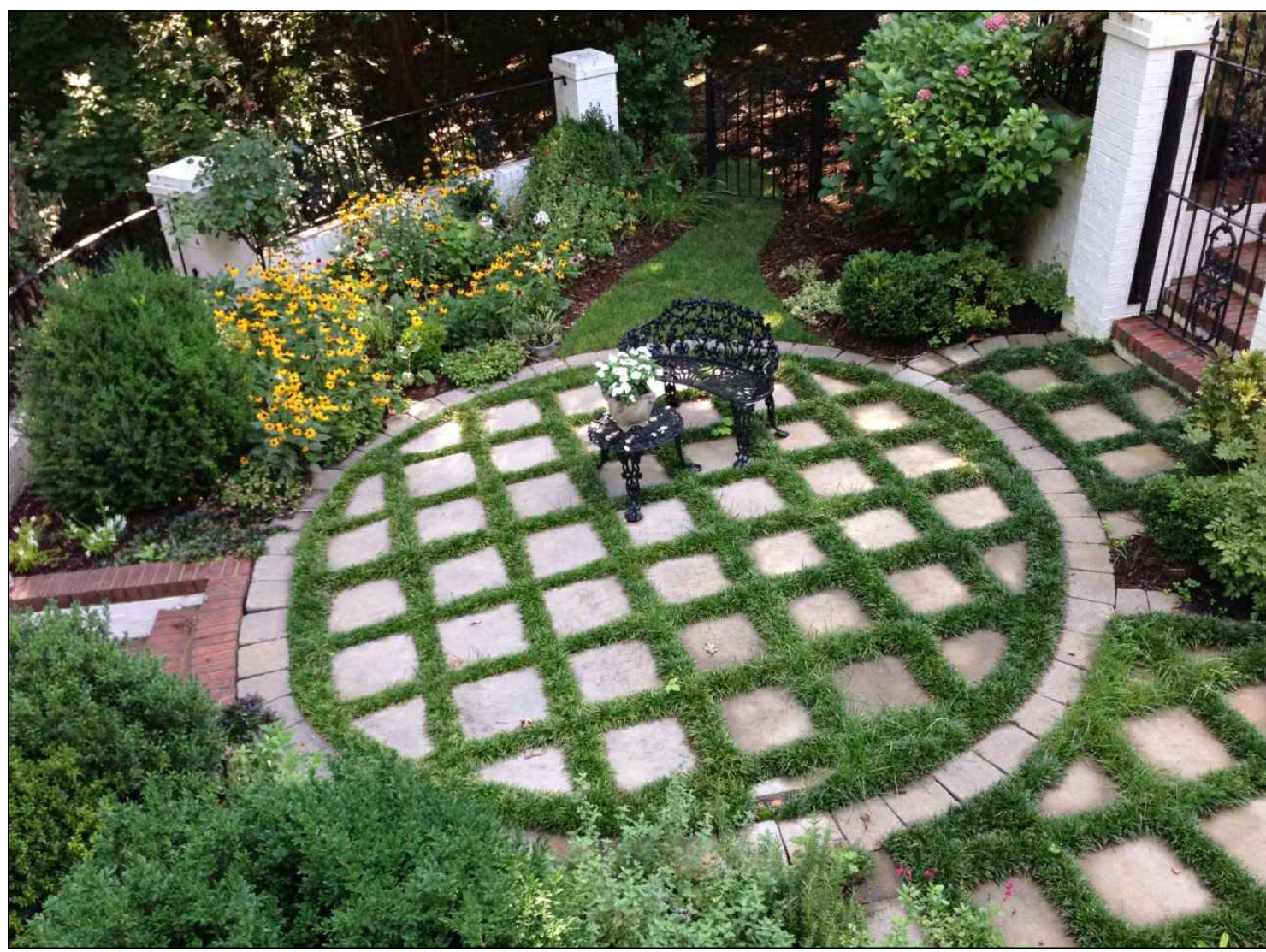
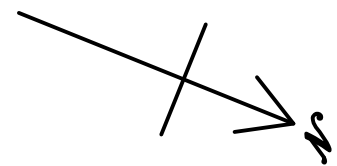
## SITE PLAN

1" = 20'



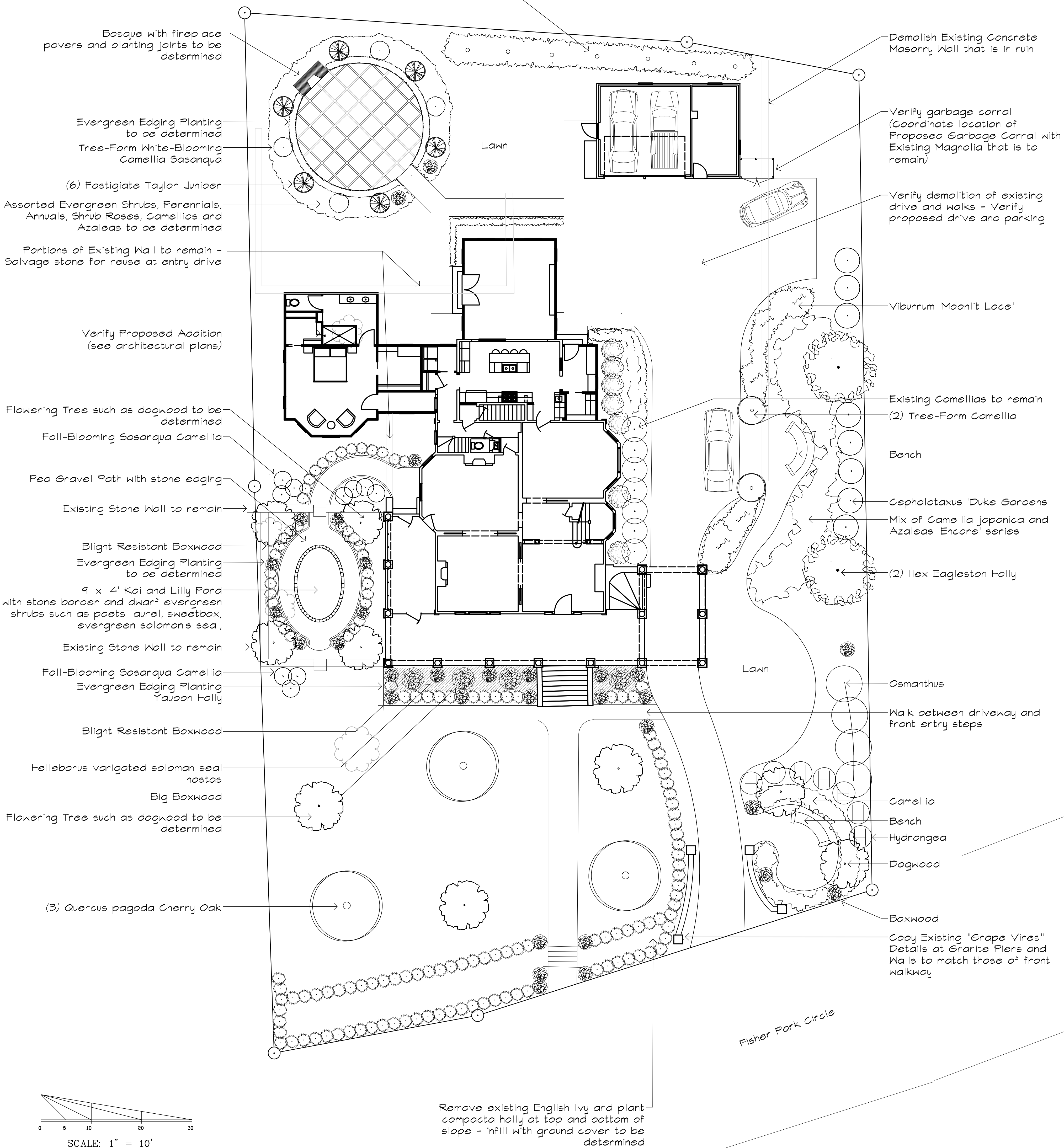
PROPOSED RENOVATION AND ADDITION  
408 FISHER PARK CIRCLE  
GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA





Bosque

Chindo Viburnum Screening



A Conceptual Landscape Plan for:

**Overbey Residence**  
408 Fisher Park Circle  
Greensboro, North Carolina

**CALLAWAY & ASSOCIATES**

122 E. Fisher Avenue  
Greensboro, NC 27401  
(336)-274-8325 Phone  
(336)-274-4433 Fax

Project **Overbey**

Project Number  
**2024008**

Date  
**03-13-2024**

Scale  
**As Shown**

Sheet **Conceptual Landscape Plan**

Revision:  
**Rev 2 05-16-2024**

**CALLAWAY & ASSOCIATES**

















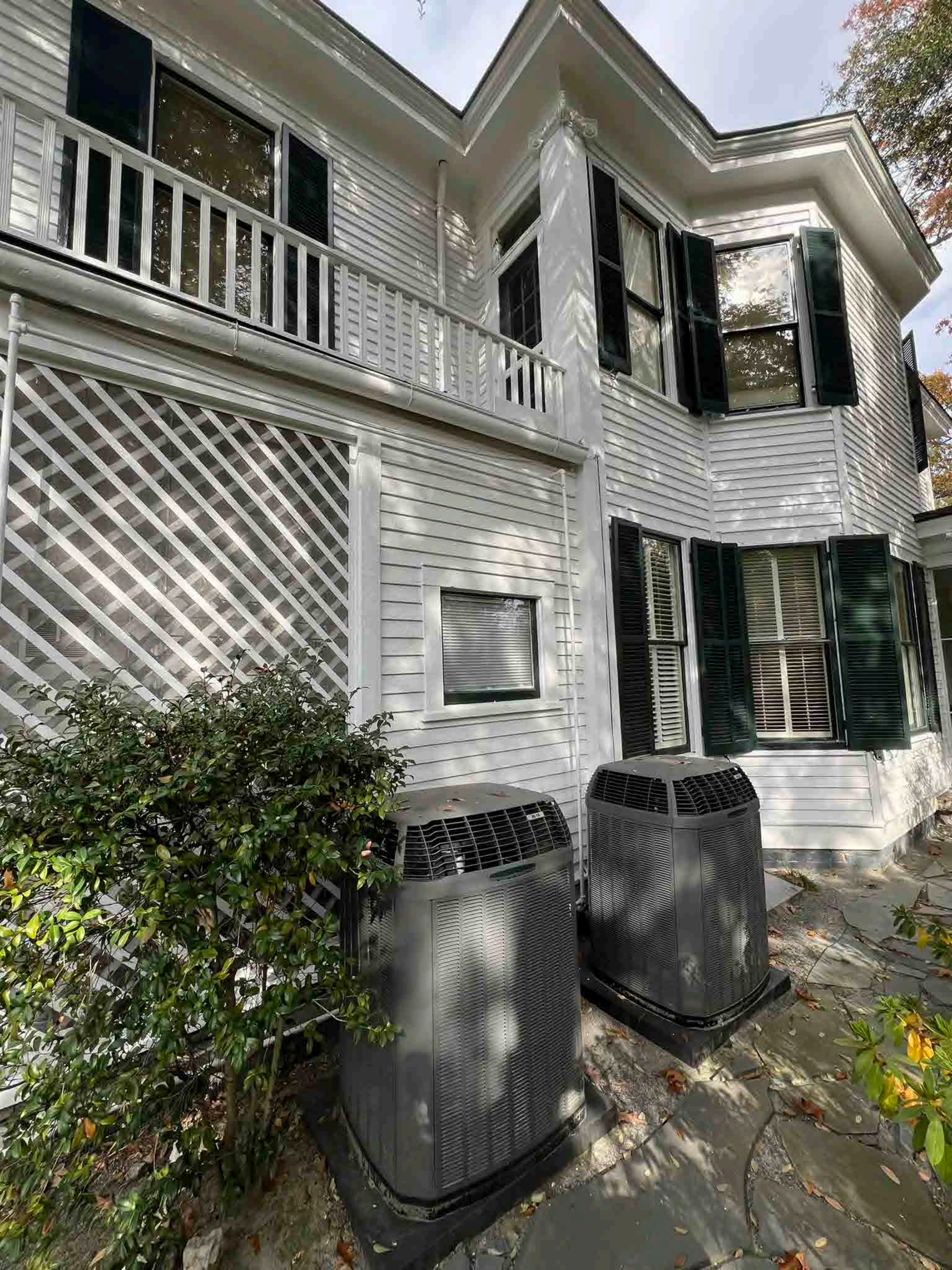




















































RESIDENCE OF GEO. A. GRIMSLEY, GREENSBORO, N. C.

RICHARD GAMBIER, ARCHITECT











































































































































































































































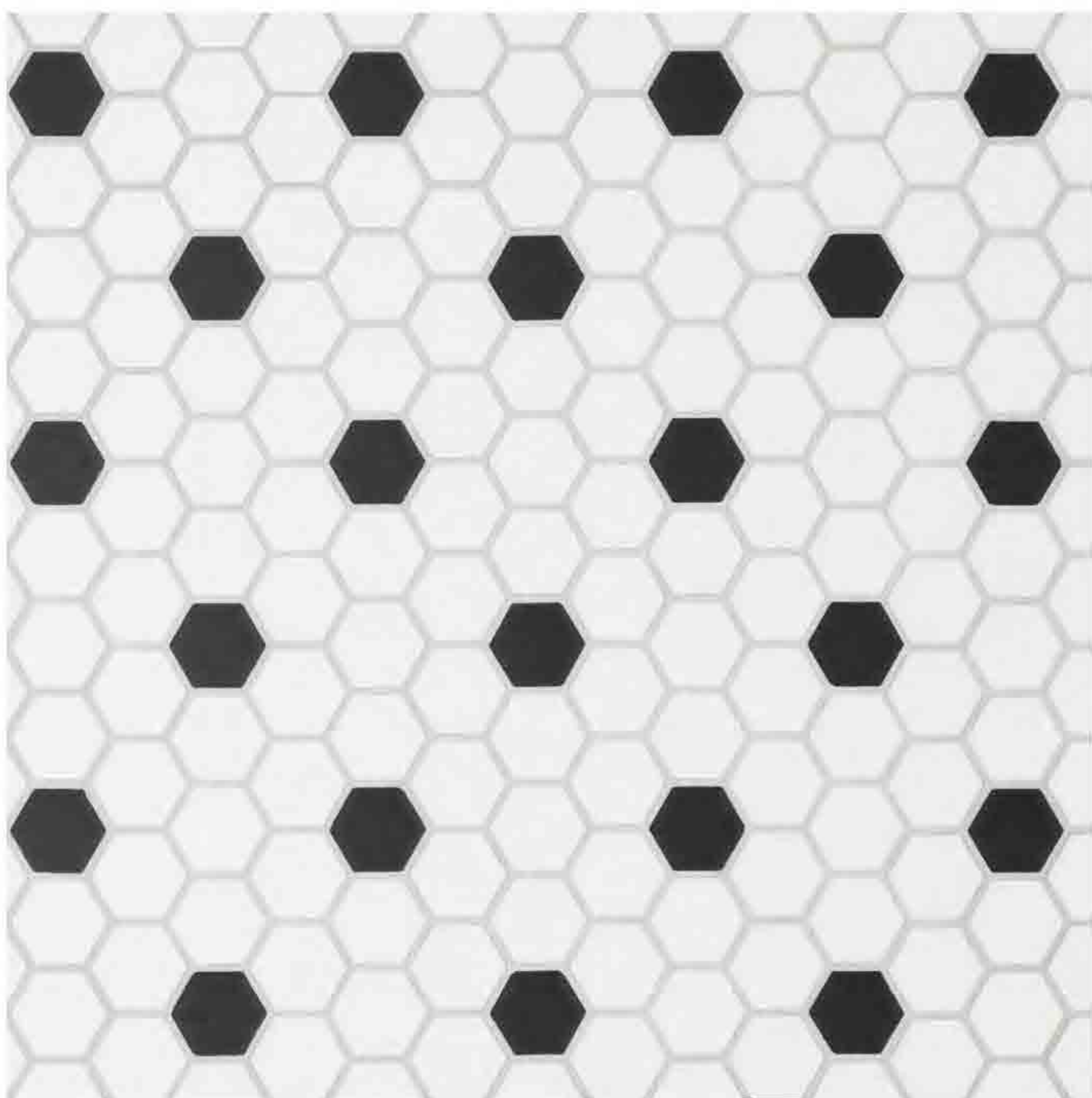




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# 45 PRESERVATION BRIEFS

## Preserving Historic Wood Porches

Aleca Sullivan and John Leeke



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
Heritage Preservation Services



Few architectural features evoke more romantic notions or do more to define a building's historic character than the American porch. The size, style, detailing, and location of a porch can tell volumes about the age and use of a building. Each component, from handrail or baluster to column or post, enhances the architectural character of the porch. Alter or remove the porch and a historic building or streetscape can lose its visual integrity and historic authenticity (Fig 1).

Functionally, a porch protects an entrance from the weather. Yet open porches are constantly exposed to sun, snow, rain, and foot traffic, and thus subject to deterioration, perhaps more than other parts of a building. Wood porches are particularly vulnerable.

Deferred maintenance and neglect account for the decay and loss of countless numbers of historic porches

each year. Deterioration from moisture and resultant wood rot, and damage caused by wood-eating insects are common problems that, when left unaddressed too long, can lead to the loss of significant historic fabric. Inappropriate repairs or insensitive alterations, such as the enclosure of a front porch, can be equally destructive and negatively affect the porch's appearance. All these things can alter a building's historic character. To preserve the character of the porch, as well as the historic building itself, it is essential to plan carefully before undertaking any work on a historic porch.

This Preservation Brief provides guidance for the everyday care of wood porches on older buildings. It focuses primarily on the maintenance and repair of wood porches, but acknowledges other, often challenging, work as well. This publication provides a brief history of the American porch and identifies its basic structural and decorative elements. It outlines how to assess the condition of a wood porch, how much work may be needed, and how to develop a specific scope of work. Detailed guidance on each level of work is provided, beginning with routine maintenance, followed by general repairs for various porch components, and concluding with replacement of parts that are beyond repair. Recommendations are provided for work that may require professional assistance. Although the Brief primarily addresses residential buildings, much of the information can be applied to wood porches on any structure.

### Evolution of the Porch

In colonial America, buildings in the northern colonies tended to echo British precedents with small gable-roofed extensions to protect main entrances. Whether open or enclosed, these extensions were called *porches* (from



*Figure 1. Distinctive yet different, these front porches are important features along the street. The rhythm would be diminished if the front porch from one of the houses was dramatically altered or removed. Photo: Aleca Sullivan.*





Figure 2. Porches not only help define the architectural character of a building but also serve as living areas. They can be designed to take advantage of surrounding views. Cedar Grove, the home of the nineteenth-century landscape painter Thomas Cole, has an L-shaped veranda on the front and a two-story porch on the rear, providing an enviable view of the Catskill Mountains. Photo: Marilyn Kaplan.

Medieval English and the French word *porche*, which stems from the Latin, *porticus*). Also known as *porticos* when supported by columns, these covered entrances were sometimes designed to respect classical order and details, especially on more stylish buildings. Hooded doors or small covered entryways flanked by benches, often called *stoops* (from the Dutch *stoep* for step) that served as short covered transitions to and from the outdoors were common features, especially in New York and the mid-Atlantic colonies.

During the late 1700s and early 1800s as longer shed-roofed porches became more common, they were typically called *piazas*, as they were then called in England. This term, still popular in some areas of North America, is adapted from the Italian word for open space or plaza. An alternate term for a long open porch, *veranda*, reflects British colonial design influence from the Indian sub-continent.

In French colonial areas, such as the Louisiana Territory, houses were often built with broad roofs extending well beyond the exterior walls to form surrounding porches, known as *galleries*. Porches were also important features of Spanish colonial buildings. In California, for example, many adobe ranches featured a *portal* with the roof supported by wooden posts. African and Caribbean influences can also be found in North American porch traditions.

By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, porches became more common in larger, wealthier areas such as Philadelphia, Boston and Charleston. In both the North and the South, formal colonnades with tall columns dressed in classical orders were sometimes added to help dignify public buildings, hotels, and mansions. This trend continued through the 1830s and 1840s, as the Greek Revival became the dominant architectural style in many areas of North America.

The social role of porches as a transition space between indoors and outdoors and as a link between private and public realms evolved during the 1800s. By offering grand entrances and sheltered landings with views of the surroundings, prominent porches became expected features of inns, hotels and resort spas, where they could serve as promenades, social gathering spots, and refuges for more private retreats. Porches were also added to private homes to serve many of these same functions (Fig 2). As the country began to thrive and expand, porches became more than just covered entrances or ceremonial features; they became an integral part of domestic social life.

Some of the most significant factors that aided this shift were America's industrialization and later suburbanization. As improvements to mass production methods helped spur industrial growth, many Americans had more money to spend and more leisure time. Meanwhile a growing middle class was moving to new suburban neighborhoods. Inspired by the pattern books of Andrew Downing and George Woodward and the published designs of such architects as Alexander Jackson Davis and Calvert Vaux, the homes of these mid-1800s suburban neighborhoods were typically ornamented by elaborate porches dressed with fancy millwork. By this time, millwork catalogues and builders' pattern books offered a wide variety of designs for porch parts. With mass production, these fancy brackets and other ornamentation became less expensive, making it easier and more affordable to construct decorative porches (Fig 3). With mechanized wood turning lathes, the cost of posts, balusters and decorative spindle work also decreased to a level affordable by many. Adding a porch with wood ornamentation could enhance even the smallest and simplest of houses. Even older homes could be modernized with a fancy porch addition, stylized to the latest fashion trends. Such changes culminated in the large, highly decorated wrap-around porches of the Queen Anne style.

The second half of the nineteenth century was the golden era of porches. The social role of the porch increased as it evolved into an outdoor parlor, a true extension of the house into the landscape. Often partially screened by shrubs, porches could provide occupants with discreet opportunities for social contacts that might otherwise be difficult to achieve in an age obsessed with manners and proprieties. For many, sitting on the porch became an important part of their daily routine. Perhaps President Rutherford B. Hayes best summed up the love that Victorian-era Americans felt towards their porches when he recorded in his journal in 1873: "The best part of the present house is the veranda. But I would enlarge it. I want a veranda with a house attached."

By the early twentieth century, the hygiene movement, which stressed that access to fresh air could help prevent or remedy such diseases as tuberculosis, contributed to the development and proliferation of the sleeping porch.



These porches were usually located on the second floor next to bedrooms. This era also saw the rise in use of insect screening on porches to guard against the discomfort of mosquitoes and the diseases they spread, such as yellow fever and malaria.

While innovations fostered the proliferation of porches in the nineteenth century, new inventions helped lead to its decline in the twentieth. As the automobile boom of the early twentieth century made it easier for people to get out of the house for entertainment and relaxation, porches began to lose popularity, especially as architectural styles and social attitudes changed. With the telephone, neighbors and friends could chat without personally meeting. And housing styles popularized in the construction boom after World War II often omitted front porches all together as backyard patios became the focus of private outdoor activities. Finally in the mid-twentieth century the broad availability of air conditioning and television enticed many people to stay inside at night and brought the golden era of the American porch to an end.

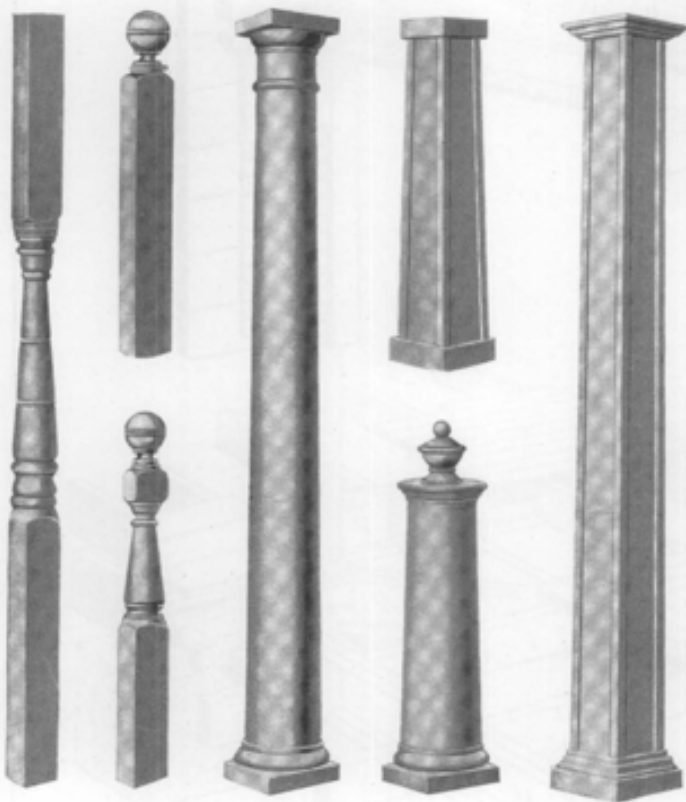


Figure 3. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, millwork catalogues offered a wide variety of designs for porch parts, including columns, newels, balusters, spindles and brackets. As extolled in the Cedar Rapid Sash & Door Company's Standards Design Book, stock parts made embellishments to porches affordable both for new construction and "updating" existing homes. Courtesy of Charles Fisher.

## Understanding the History and Significance of a Porch

In preserving historic buildings, it is important to understand the history and evolution of a particular structure and what features contribute to its historic character. This is especially applicable when working with historic porches since they usually are prominent features, significant to the character of a building.

Answers to the following questions will help establish the significance of a porch.

### What has the porch looked like in the past?

Early photographs, insurance maps, or tax records can provide useful information. These may be found at city or county offices, historical societies, libraries or even from former owners or neighbors. Such documents may indicate the footprint of the building or show long-lost details of the building's appearance. Physical evidence of historic porch footings may exist. Paint shadows of a former roofline or moldings can provide clues about details now missing. Old porch parts may have been "stored" under the deck during past repairs.

**What, if any, changes have taken place to the historic porch over the years?** On many porches elements such as columns, balusters, and finish details correspond with the design and detailing on the rest of the house. With other porches, the style of these features may differ from the rest of the building, but may reflect an important chapter in its history. Sometimes, parts of porches may have been lost due to neglect or remodeling. Questions about what historic fabric remains, what has been altered over time, and whether earlier changes are now an integral part of the historic character should be resolved before planning major porch work. Determining the historical evolution of the house may require both physical and archival research and in some cases the professional eye of an architectural historian.

### What are the character defining features of the porch?

The open qualities are one of the key features of most historic porches. Overall size, shape and design are obviously important components as well. There are numerous other contributing features which may exist, including the shape of the porch roof, the way a large porch is divided into distinct bays as with columns, the nature of the supporting foundation, the style and size of columns and balustrade, and whether the porch is raised or largely at grade. The simplicity of a porch or its richness in detail will also help define it. Materials are usually important as well, not just the wood features, but also whether other materials exist such as masonry columns and steps (Fig 4).

**How does the porch contribute to the building's overall appearance?** The size and location of a porch and how much of the historic features survive will help define its significance. A highly ornate porch across much of the front facade may be the most distinctive



## The Anatomy of a Porch

- a - Pier, penetrates ground, supports floor structural system and columns
- b - Fascia covering floor framing
- c - Floor (or deck)
- d - Bed Molding covering joint between fascia and floor
- e - Column supporting entablature above

### Entablature (f, g, h)

- f - Architrave of entablature
- g - Frieze of entablature
- h - Cornice of entablature

### Roof Railing (i, j, k, l)

- i - Newel (or Pedestal) of roof railing
- j - Balusters of balustrade
- k - Top rail of balustrade
- l - Bottom rail of balustrade

### Balustrade around floor (m, n, o)

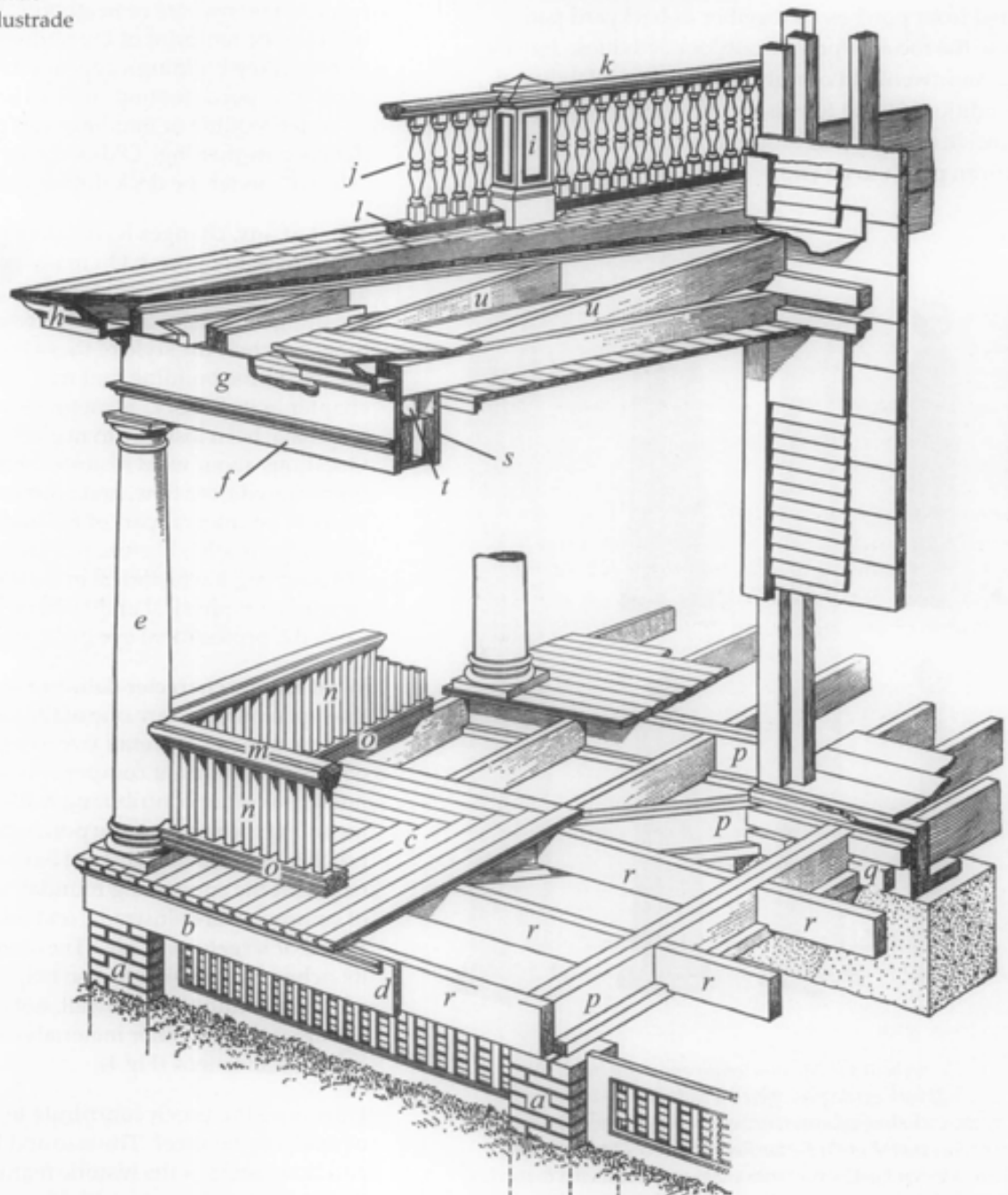
- m - Top rail of balustrade
- n - Balusters of balustrade
- o - Bottom rail of balustrade

### Structural system of deck (p, q, r)

- p - Girder rests on piers and ledgers, support joists
- q - Ledger fastened to house sill, supports girder
- r - Joist fastened to girder, supports floor

### Roof Structural System (s, t, u)

- s - Beams inside the entablature span from column to column, support plate
- t - Plate of the entablature rests on beams, supports roof rafters and ceiling beams
- u - Rafter of the roof structural system



Drawing courtesy of Thomson Education Direct.



feature of the entire house, while a small simple porch on an otherwise plain cottage may be equally significant. The architectural style of a porch may relate to the building and may help define its character. Sometimes a later style porch may have been added to a building or may have replaced an earlier porch. In such cases, the later porch may have acquired importance in its own right. On the other hand, a later porch may be of such poor quality that it detracts from the building's historic character. Because porches are so diverse in terms of style, size, shape and detail, their significance should be assessed on a case-by-case basis with an understanding of the overall importance and evolution of the building.

## Assessing the Condition

Before undertaking most repairs, it is important to assess the condition of the porch. The assessment is greatly facilitated if the porch has been regularly maintained and a record of past work is available. In most cases, however, a condition survey must rely almost exclusively on the physical examination of the porch, documenting the findings with notes, photographs or sketches.

Many older porches were constructed using good construction practices and materials. As a result, porches that are over 100 years old are not uncommon. Most porch deterioration can be attributed to the lack of proper maintenance. Important questions to address in assessing the condition of the porch include the following:

**How is the porch constructed?** A porch is rarely an independent, unattached structure. It may, however, have its own foundation, attached to the house only along the deck and the roof. Alternatively, it may be an included or engaged porch that is integrated with the actual structure of the house. The relationship between the porch and the house is important. If the outer support posts are decayed or if foundation piers are sinking, the roof structure may be pulling away from the house. Many porch decks are fastened to the main building on a ledger, a horizontal board along the house's foundation. A decaying ledger may compromise the structural integrity of the porch and can represent a major safety issue.

**Are the foundation and structural members of the deck sound and providing adequate support for the deck, posts and roof above?** The porch structure needs to be sound at every level. Therefore, a visual inspection of the underside of the porch is necessary to determine its condition. Major cracks in structural members, failed joints, significant wood rot, or evidence of widespread insect infestations (termites, carpenter ants or powder post beetles, for example) are usually signs of serious structural damage. Such conditions may require consultation with a professional architect,



*Figure 4. Celebrating the 4th of July in 1912, this gathering of family and friends reflects the popularity of the porch as a social gathering place. While not overly ornate, each detail of the porch from the roof balustrade to the turned columns to the simple lattice work facing the deck contributes to its character, creating in effect the dominant architectural feature of the building. Photo: © Utah State Historical Society*

engineer or building contractor familiar with old buildings. For an adequate assessment, it may be necessary to remove facing boards to check for potential decay in the structural sill behind (Fig 5).

**What is the condition of the porch?** Porch foundations may be a continuous wall of masonry, a series of masonry or wood piers or metal pipes, or a combination of these. Missing sections of the foundation, crumbling masonry mortar joints, or areas where the sill or joists no longer fully rests on the foundation may represent serious deficiencies. What appear to be deep foundation footings may only be stones or cement blocks sitting on top of the ground. The footings must be stable enough to adequately support the porch in its current or intended use. The smell of mold or appearance of fungal growth on wood beneath the porch is an indication of deficient air circulation and that conditions exist for wood decay. Recent changes that can contribute to deterioration should be identified for correction, such as a clothes dryer vent dumping warm moist air underneath the deck. The enclosure of original air vents in crawl spaces or the boarding up of latticework between piers are other changes that will usually promote an unwanted moist environment.

**Are the porch posts providing adequate support?** Posts, pillars or columns usually help support the porch roof or an upper deck. Establishing what the posts





Figure 5. Even historic porches that appear to be in total disrepair may be repairable. While the roof needed replacement, much of this porch was repaired, including such features as the decorative columns, ornamental brackets, and balustrade. Photos: John Leeke.

are made of and how they are constructed will aid in understanding how they function and may deteriorate over time (Fig.6). Although the posts on a wood porch are commonly made of wood, they may be of masonry or metal or a combination of materials. Large round columns usually are made of wood staves similar to the way barrels are constructed; smaller diameter columns may be solid. A sag in the deck below or a faltering foundation can impact the supporting role of a column or post above. Wood columns and posts are prone to water seeping into open joints, particularly in the base and the lower end of the shaft. It is not uncommon to find that older columns have had patches and replacement bases.

**Is the roofing and drainage system keeping the water away from the porch?** Porches were designed to shed water. This means water will move away both from the building and the porch and not pond and saturate the wood. Continuously high moisture levels promote fungal growth that eventually causes wood to decay. Peeling paint on ceiling boards in a specific location is a sign of a possible roof leak. Clogged or missing downspouts and gutters can cause erosion at the foundation and can contribute to reverse-grade draining that is directing water under the porch instead of into the yard. Inadequately sloped porch floors can result in improper drainage and promote deterioration as exhibited, for example, by cupping floorboards.

**What is the flooring condition?** The porch component most subject to decay is the flooring. Often decay starts at the exposed ends of the boards or where cracks, checks or open joints have occurred and are exposed to the weather. Flooring should be checked frequently for peeling paint, rotted wood, and for loose, cupping or splintery boards. Where water is ponding, there is insufficient slope away from the building, a condition that should be corrected. Floor deterioration can also start in unlikely places such as the result of frequent hose washing to remove dirt or the placement of plant stands directly on the floor without proper moisture barriers. Firewood stored on a porch may trap moisture on the floor and harbor active insect infestation that can be ruinous to a wood porch. Thick floor mats and carpeting also may trap moisture, leading to premature decay.

### Is there evidence of general wood decay?

Wood deterioration may take different forms such as fungal decay, insect infestation or even sunlight degradation of exposed unfinished wood. Decay may be present where two wood surfaces meet and are not adequately protected from water, such as along open joints or behind moldings. Dark streaks, discoloration, and widespread peeling paint on a finished ceiling suggest excessive moisture or water leakage. It may be necessary to remove several finished boards to properly identify the cause of the problem and to insure damage has not extended to structural members behind. Trails of carpenter ants are another sign of potential decay since they will infest moist decaying wood. Where inadequate painting has left wood exposed for a long time, damage to the wood surface from light itself will occur, typically indicated by wood discoloration. Without sanding or scraping back to a sound wood surface, repainting will result in premature failure of the paint film.

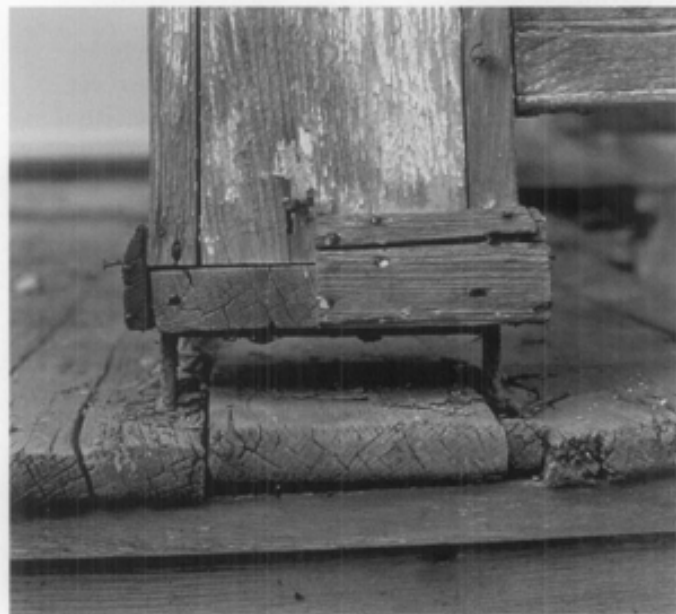


Figure 6. A traditional way to extend the life of porch posts was to place posts on metal feet, thereby providing a separation between the wood post and wood deck. This helped to prevent the wood post from rotting at the base. Early post feet were simple iron bars bent unto a stirrup shape. By the late nineteenth century manufactured cast-iron feet were common, consisting of a pair of disks separated by a short pipe. Post feet are still available today. Courtesy of Old-House Journal/Brian McNeil.



### Are there open cracks or joints in the woodwork?

Tightly sealed connections keep water out. Where individual boards come together, cracks in woodwork and joints can eventually become a major problem (Fig.7). Cracks are primarily caused by movement and water penetration. Movement of structural members beneath the finished woodwork can shift the position of individual boards and trim, breaking open the thin coating of paint over joints. This condition is common on porches with shallow foundations that are subject either to annual winter frost heaving or where soil conditions undergo major seasonal changes in moisture content. Changes in the moisture content of the wood itself due to repeated wetting and drying or changes in seasonal humidity can also cause noticeable expansion and shrinkage across the width of a board. This provides opportunities for water to penetrate unprotected areas.

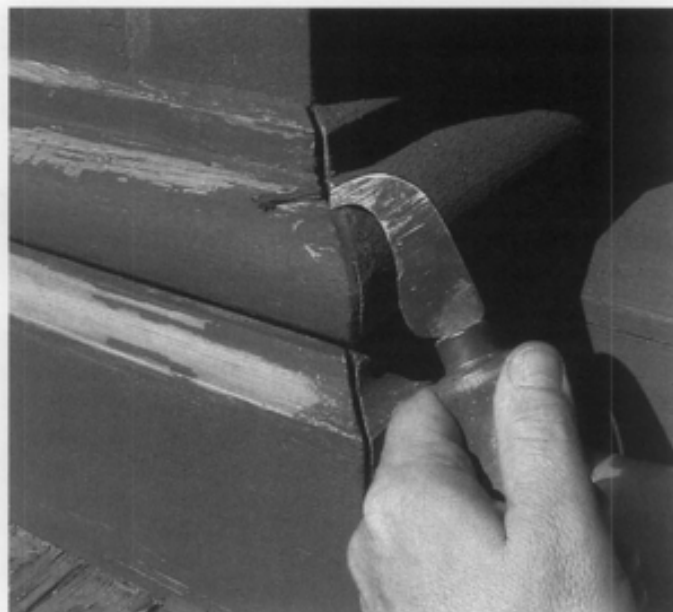
### Does peeling paint indicate deeper problems?

An unbroken layer of paint covering all wood surfaces is the first line of defense against moisture causing decay. Over time, even hairline paint cracks can allow water to penetrate, causing paint to peel down to bare wood. Such peeling occurs near breaks in the film, at opened joints, or where the paint has been scratched or scraped. Peeling can also occur over large areas where there is high moisture and insufficient ventilation. Areas of particular concern include the crawl space beneath the porch deck, inside columns that lack ventilation, and in a roof structure that has a finished ceiling and lacks ventilation. If heavy paint build-up exists on columns, floors and trim, moisture can be trapped within the wood, resulting in the loss of paint adhesions and eventual wood decay.

**Are trees, shrubbery and flowerbeds threatening the porch?** Shade trees can make the porch a cool oasis, but the branches of a nearby tree rubbing on the roof, gutters or wood trim often will cause damage. Tree roots may destabilize porch foundations or supports. Bushes growing against the porch and not trimmed back on a regular basis may block wood porch components from drying breezes, thereby letting moisture build up in the woodwork. Flowerbeds and mulch around the porch that are not properly sloped downward in a grade away from the house will promote moisture problems.

## Defining the Scope of Work

Once the historical and physical assessments are complete, it is important to define the scope of work. How much and what kind of work will need to be done to make the porch structurally sound while preserving its historic character, or to recover its historic appearance if portions are extensively deteriorated, altered or missing? Any part of the porch that defines its historic character should be repaired or replaced to match. Since the porch may display varied levels of deterioration, the spectrum of work in one project



*Figure 7. Common problems with porches that can contribute to serious wood decay include cracks in woodwork and joints that have opened up. Both provide an easy path for water seepage. Trapped moisture can foster peeling paint, wood decay and insect infestation. Open joints and cracks should be checked for evidence of more serious decay and marked for caulking or repair. Photo: John Leeke.*

can include maintenance, repair, and replacement. When laying out the scope of work for the project, each individual component and decorative element of the porch should be identified, and linked with the work needed for that item.

## Undertaking the Work

The highlighted work approaches in this section are based on *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* and the *Accompanying Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*. The *Standards and Guidelines* provide a sound philosophical and practical framework for achieving the highest retention of historic materials and character possible. Thus, the familiar hierarchy is applied: maintain, repair, and then replace only if necessary. Contemporary alterations are discussed in a separate section.

## Preservation and Maintenance

There are a variety of tasks that can be done on a regular basis to extend the life of a porch. In addition, a visual inspection of the porch should be made every spring and fall to determine if more in-depth repairs are necessary. Fortunately, ongoing maintenance significantly reduces both the need and cost for later repair work and represents good preservation practice. When properly maintained, a well-constructed porch can last for decades.

### Routine Cleaning and Other Surface Work

Since many porches are essentially another living space,



extending housekeeping to this space makes practical sense. Regular maintenance includes sweeping the wood porch decking, and, if needed, an occasional damp mopping. Removing dirt and leaves by sweeping is preferable to frequent hosing off the deck with water. The latter can saturate the woodwork, thereby promoting decay. Frequent sweeping will reduce the accumulation of abrasive materials, such as dirt and sand. While visually pleasing to some, vines and plants should be kept trimmed away and not be trained to grow onto or allowed to grow beneath porches. Plants and vines unfortunately reduce ventilation, promote a moist environment for insects and decay, accelerate open wood joints and impede cyclical maintenance. As an alternative, traditional freestanding trellises can be used to support plant growth away from the porch.

There are certain precautions that are recommended for wood floors. Rubber mats, rugs or indoor/outdoor carpeting can trap moisture and condensation on their underneath side and should not be used on a wooden porch floor. Keeping flower pots up off the wooden deck will help prevent moisture buildup and decayed spots – wood, clay or metal “trivets” that hold the pots an inch or more off the wooden deck are helpful, but the pots should be moved to different locations periodically. In colder climates, light snow can be swept off the porch. Snow shovels with a hard rubber leading edge or plastic shovels cause less damage to wood than metal, while paint in good condition helps ice to release more easily. Sand or clean kitty litter can be sprinkled on ice to prevent slipping; however, they should be later swept off the porch, as they are abrasive. Salt (sodium

chloride) is not recommended for ice removal on older porches as it can promote corrosion and failure of nails and other fasteners. Magnesium chloride is an alternate de-icing salt that is less corrosive and less damaging to masonry and plants. If any de-icing salt is used, be sure to scrub and rinse off the porch deck in the spring. Boot scrapers and brush-mats at the bottom of the stairs are recommended for muddy areas.

### Painting

Spot painting and resealing of open joints should be undertaken at least every other year (Fig. 8). Heavily used stair treads may require more frequent paint touchup. When peeling paint or bare wood is evident, inspect to ensure it is not signaling deeper problems, such as decay. With sound wood, scrape off the loose paint, sand, prime, and repaint the area. Where lead paint is present, appropriate lead hazard precautions and procedures apply. Only top-quality exterior primers and paints are recommended, selecting for the deck and stairs specially formulated paints. Where wood porch steps are exposed to moisture, grit added to the wet paint during application will help improve safety.

### Repair

Many repairs may be successfully undertaken by property owners, while major projects often require the special knowledge and equipment of an experienced contractor. Repairs generally include patching and reinforcement of historic materials. The roof and foundation are particularly important to the preservation and the structure of a historic porch yet they often receive much less attention than ornamental features. Their neglect will usually lead to more costly work. Repairs to features such as a balustrade or flooring can encompass limited replacement in kind when the porch part is severely deteriorated or when a part of a repeated feature is missing altogether. Some common porch repairs are discussed in this section.

#### Filling Open Cracks or Joints

To seal open cracks or joints, start by scraping off the paint back a few inches from the opening and removing old caulk to expose bare wood. The opening should be examined for any signs of wood decay, and to determine if the joint is loose due to a loss of connection, such as rusted nails. After correcting any problems, apply a water-repellant wood preservative that can be painted. Such preservatives are either an oil-based or waterborne solution of oils or waxes with mildewcide, fungicide and pesticide added. Then apply a high quality exterior wood primer to the wood surfaces where a sealant or caulk is to be used. Most open cracks or joints then can be filled with a sealant or caulk, while larger ones may need the addition of a backer rod. In some cases, small metal flashing over the crack or open joint may be more effective and longer lasting but, when used, care should be taken with proper installation. The final step is painting.



*Figure 8. Decay can start when wood is left exposed to the weather or where joints open up. An inexpensive way to extend the life of the existing porch paint without jeopardizing the historic material is spot paint and caulk where needed every year or two. This cost-effective procedure is particularly effective in maintaining wood porches where the exposure to weathering is high. Photo: John Leeke.*



### Patching with a Dutchman Repair

This traditional technique is often used to repair localized cases of decayed wood and, when undertaken with skill and care, will serve as a permanent repair (Fig. 9). If the damaged area has a structural function, temporary bracing or other support will be necessary. Otherwise the first step after removing any paint around the damaged area is to chisel or mechanically remove the decayed wood. It is best to use the same type of wood being replaced and the new or recycled wood should be seasoned to avoid shrinkage. The repair procedure involves cutting a piece of wood, called a *dutchman*, slightly larger than the area of damage that has been cut out. The *dutchman* then is laid over the damaged area and an outline scribed into the original wood surface below. Next, a chisel or router is used to follow the scribed line to form an opening in the existing wood for the new piece.

As a preventive measure, an appropriate fungicide should be applied to the surrounding old wood and allowed to dry. The *dutchman* is then glued into place with waterproof adhesive, such as an epoxy formulated for wood. The repair is finished by trimming or sanding the surface of the new wood down flush with the surrounding existing surfaces, priming and painting.

### Patching with Epoxy or Wood Fillers

There are a variety of commercial wood fillers. Cellulose based fillers consist of wood fiber and a binder and have been available in stores for many years. Only those suitable for exterior applications should be used and they will require a protective finish. Epoxies are a more contemporary product, commonly used by experienced contractors and woodworkers. Epoxies are petroleum-based resins created by mixing two components in accurate proportions that result in a chemical reaction. The result is durable, moisture-resistant consolidants and fillers that bonds tenaciously with wood, and can be sawn, nailed or sanded. Epoxies are for use only in areas that will be painted, as they do not take stain and deteriorate under sunlight. Since epoxies are more difficult to work with than other wood fillers, experience working with epoxies is needed for successful repairs.

### Repairing Railings and Balustrades

Balustrades and railings are not only practical and safety features, they typically are highly visible decorative elements. Unfortunately, balustrades and balusters are frequently altered, covered, removed or completely replaced even though in most cases they can be repaired in a cost-effective manner. To preserve historic fabric,



Figure 9. The ends of porch roof rafters are often susceptible to moisture decay. When concealed by a soffit or ceiling, rafters can be repaired by adding new sister boards. Where roof rafter ends are exposed, splicing new wood onto the old (*dutchman* repair) and use of epoxy consolidants and fillers both preserve sound historic fabric while retaining the historic appearance.

Photo: Paul Marlowe, Marlowe Restorations.

the repair of old balustrades and railings is always the preferred approach. A broken baluster usually is one in need of repair, not replacement.

Loose railings and balustrades present unsafe conditions and need to be repaired as soon as possible. Start by examining the points of attachment to determine exactly why the railing or balustrade is loose. Common reasons include rusted fasteners, decayed wood, or physical stress that has broken the fasteners or split the wood. Paint and decayed wood must be removed. Where fasteners are broken yet the wood is sound, the balustrade can be re-fastened using hot-dipped galvanized or stainless steel nails or screws, setting the heads of the fasteners below the surface of the wood and using a wood filler to cover and seal. Next repair deteriorated wood by using a *dutchman* or wood-epoxy repair. The repaired joints then can be sealed and painted.

### Replacing Missing Balusters

The balusters help comprise a wood balustrade and come in three general styles: simple rectangular shape; flat, pattern-sawn (usually a board with some decorative edge or cutout); and turned. It may be necessary to replace certain balusters that are beyond repair or missing altogether. Some are easy to replace with new matching balusters while others can be more challenging in terms of both design and costs. Finding or affording replacement balusters may take time since they should match the historic baluster as closely as possible. In the meantime, unsafe balustrades can be temporarily stabilized, introducing temporary new material that soon will be replaced.



In replacing individual balusters, simple, rectangular balusters should not be replaced with pattern-sawn or turned ones unless physical or pictorial evidence survives which indicate they previously existed historically on that particular porch. Such an alteration can change the historic appearance of the porch or be incompatible with the character of the building.

Determine the size and shape of the missing balusters either by examining adjacent ones or temporarily removing an existing baluster as a sample. Heavy paint buildup should be removed so that the original dimension can be established. Scrape and clean the joint locations and make repairs to any deteriorated areas. A new baluster is then fabricated to match the original in design and material, either on site or by taking a drawing or sample to a local woodworking shop. The new baluster should be made one-half inch longer than needed on both ends. Measurements are taken from the bottom surface of the top rail to top surface of the bottom rail. Joints on the new baluster can be laid out with a pencil, using a sliding bevel to transfer any angles, and the new baluster trimmed to fit with a handsaw. After test fitting, the ends and any exposed end-grain of the baluster need to be sealed with a high-grade primer or epoxy. Next, apply a paintable water-repellant coating to all exposed wood surfaces, and apply a primer. The baluster can then be fastened in place with hot-dipped galvanized or stainless steel nails, and the nails set. Finally, seal joints and fastener holes and paint the baluster.

### Repairing Column Plinths and Bases

Columns not only enrich the historic character of the porch, they provide support for the roof structure above. Because of their detail and complex construction they can be costly to repair or replace, making maintenance and minor repairs important. Column plinths and bases tend to deteriorate because of their exposed location on the outer edge of a porch (Fig. 10). Leaking gutters can result in water draining into the entablature and down into hollow columns, while clogged or capped gutters can allow water to pour down and splash

back onto the column bases. Open joints and limited wood decay can be repaired using methods previously discussed. Column repairs usually are undertaken by an experienced carpenter, since it may involve structural support of the roof above.

### Repairing Floorboards and Ceiling Boards

Floors should slope down toward the outer porch edge for proper drainage. If drainage is inadequate, moisture buildup will cause deterioration of the floorboards. Flooring can also deteriorate due to movement in the supporting structure below. If a floorboard is soft or broken, the extent of decayed or split wood can be determined by probing gently with an awl. The existing floorboard can then be removed, cutting the length if needed so that the end will center on the next nearest joist or girder. Once the board has been removed, the structural framing beneath should be examined for deterioration and to ensure it is sound. A new floorboard is then cut to length, and the outer edge shaped to match the adjacent boards. After priming the replacement board, nail it in place and repaint.

If a section of the ceiling is deteriorating, it is likely that there is a roof or gutter problem. To determine the cause of deterioration, inspect the ceiling, gutters and roof, including the internal roof structure. After making necessary repairs, the ceiling boards can be repaired in much the same manner as a deteriorated floorboard.

### Repairing the Porch Roof and Gutters

With roof leaks, the entire porch is at risk. Leaks can promote decay in roof rafters, ceiling joists, and columns as well as in areas more easily to detect such as the ceiling and fascia. Inspect the roof covering, gutters and flashing for deterioration and improper performance. They can then be repaired or replaced, as needed, to keep water out of the structure. Avoid having the gutters and downspouts on the main roof drain onto a porch roof.

### Repairing the Foundation

Unstable foundation supports can cause serious damage

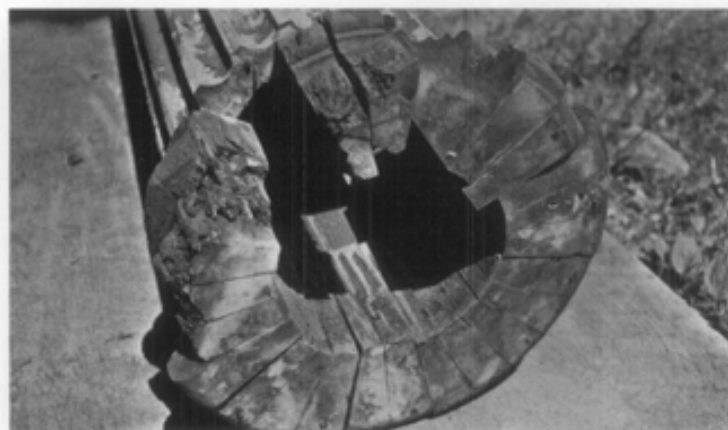


Figure 10. This nineteenth century porch column is made of wood staves, similar to the way a wood barrel is put together. After replacing the torus and making dutchman repairs to the apophyge along the base, the column and pedestal are ready to be reinstalled on the porch. Photos: NPS files.



to a historic porch. There are numerous causes and solutions. If the posts supporting the porch deck rest on stones or brick set directly on the ground, there can be seasonal shifts due to the changing moisture content of the soil or freeze/thaw conditions that will require regular attention. Under certain conditions, it may be advisable to extend footings for the posts below the frost line. Where moisture problems exist, improved drainage may be necessary. It is not uncommon to find that masonry joints in the foundation wall or piers have deteriorated as a result of rising damp, where moisture from the soil percolates up through mortar joints. This condition may lead to the eventual breakdown of the mortar and even old brick and soft stone. In such cases, it will be necessary to replace the areas of damaged masonry and repoint the mortar joints.

With wooden posts, insect damage or rot may necessitate corrective measures to strengthen the foundation. Techniques can include one or more of the following: epoxy consolidation; dutchman repair; or the addition of supplemental supports to the foundation posts and joists. In some cases damage may be extensive enough that the only real solution is rebuilding the foundation.

### **Repairing a Porch Apron**

The apron, skirt, or latticework is a highly visible and functional porch feature. An apron keeps animals out from under the porch, while at the same time allowing air to circulate, preventing unwanted moisture buildup. Aprons typically are made up of a wood frame, surrounding either a simple lattice or a repetitive pattern of decorative sawn boards. Because the frame is so close to the ground, decay is common. Other causes of decay include plantings around the house that are growing too close to the latticework and improper water drainage. An apron may require partial or complete disassembly for proper repair. One or more of the apron frames should either be hinged or secured with turn buttons for easy access to under a porch for inspection and maintenance.

## **Replacement**

When individual porch parts are deteriorated beyond the point of repair or missing altogether, replacement is necessary. To retain the historic character of the porch, the replacement parts should match the historic component as closely as possible in material, design, color, texture, and other qualities. To achieve this, existing evidence of the historic design, such as a baluster or column detail, or a tongue and groove floor design, should serve as a pattern for the replacement part. When replacing an element, it may provide a good opportunity to upgrade the wood to another species that is more decay resistant, or to one with a vertical grain that is more resistant to cupping or splintering. In limited cases, it may be appropriate to use a substitute material for the replacement material as long as it conveys a close visual match. Before replacing a deteriorated historic porch component, it is important to understand

how it was constructed and installed, and what lead to its deterioration. If the replacement part does not sufficiently match the historic part, the character of the porch may be diminished, or even lost. If the cause of material failure is not addressed, the replacement will also fail.

### **Replacing Porch Floorboards**

If a large section of the porch floorboards is deteriorated, the framing beneath may also be damaged and should be assessed. Replacing floorboards can often expand into repairing the structural sills, girders, and joists beneath. Complete floor replacement will likely require the removal of floorboards that are under structural posts or columns. This may necessitate the careful stabilizing in place or the removal of the posts or columns and the installation of temporary support for the roof structure. If the floor failure was caused by inferior wood, the wood quality can be improved at this time. However, the new wood flooring should match the existing in thickness, width, shape and texture. The slope of the floor should be maintained, or a slope may need to be created if none exists. A slope of  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch per foot or greater, away from the house, is needed for adequate drainage. Boards are usually laid in the direction of the slope, sloping down to the outer edge of the floor.

### **Replacing Steps**

Porch stairs receive heavy usage and are close to the ground, making them predictable candidates for deterioration. Stairs should be repaired or, if necessary, replaced by an experienced carpenter who understands the safety codes and is experienced in fabricating custom stair parts to match original detailing without depending only on store-bought parts.

### **Replacing Column Plinths and Bases, or Entire Columns**

When plinths and bases are deteriorated beyond repair, they can be replaced without replacing the column shaft, which may still be in good condition or require only minor repairs at the bottom. Such replacement will involve temporary shoring for the roof. One-story columns and shafts are often more easily removed during this work, while taller columns are sometimes supported in place. If only a few plinths or bases are deteriorated, it is often economical to have new ones made of wood to match. If numerous plinths and bases are deteriorated, replacing with bases made of rot-resistant materials can make economic sense; however, care must be taken to ensure that all the visual qualities including design, size, shape, color and texture of the historic part are matched (Fig. 11).

Entire columns may need to be replaced, but an owner should first consider all repair alternatives. Some contractors routinely recommend complete replacement of one or all columns due to the challenge of a clean repair (particularly with stave-built columns), or because they see the potential for more profit in complete replacement. If a contractor recommends complete





*Figure 11. The lower shaft of the porch columns had decayed as water wicked up through the end grain (top). The column shafts were repaired in place by cutting out the deteriorated wood and making repairs using epoxy consolidants and fillers. (bottom). The column bases were replaced. Photos: Paul Marlowe, Marlowe Restorations.*

replacement, other opinions should be sought to ensure repair is truly not feasible. Preserving the historic appearance of old columns is not the same as preserving historic columns.

Where a replacement turned or staved column is needed, a local millwork may be able to match the profile or pattern. Alternatively, the Internet is helpful in identifying potential sources of replacement columns that can match the appearance of the remaining ones.

## Replacement Materials

### Wood

When selective replacement is necessary, the key to success is the selection of suitable wood. Dimensional

stability, decay resistance and paint holding ability are wood characteristics that effect durability. Wood that expands and shrinks too much can cause paint to crack. Substances found naturally in certain kinds of wood repel fungi and insects that destroy wood. Selecting wood that is relatively stable and naturally decay resistant helps avoid problems.

The wood from trees cut one and two centuries ago was much different than most wood available today. The mature trees in older forests grew very slowly and, as a result, the annual growth rings were very close together. Today, trees grown by commercial companies for their lumber are fast growing so they can be harvested sooner. As a result, commercially farmed trees have annual growth rings much further apart, resulting in the cut lumber being less strong and decay resistant than older timber. These differences in quality are one of the reasons it makes sense to save old wood when possible.

**Wood Selection:** When choosing wood for repair and replacement work, the species, grade, grain and environmental impacts should be taken into consideration. This is especially applicable to historic porches because of their high exposure to the weather and vulnerability to decay. The best species are those with good natural resistance to decay, such as redwood, cypress, cedar or fir. A clear (knot free) grade of wood is best; however, if clear wood is not readily available or too expensive, a grade with small or tight knots is acceptable. Finally, the use of more stable vertical grain lumber is preferable to flat grain boards. Vertical grain lumber expands and contracts less with changes in moisture content, resulting in reduce warping and checks. Paint thus will hold better. The downside to using vertical grain boards is the cost, which tends to be as much as two to three times the price of flat grain lumber in the same grade and species. However, this expense is typically recovered through lower maintenance costs over the years. Thus, a decay-resistant, high-grade, vertical grain lumber is the best choice for the replacement of deteriorated porch elements, particularly flooring, stairs and milled elements such as balusters and moldings.

The best species to choose will vary depending on the region the house is located. For example, in the South, cypress is more available, making it the selection of choice in the region. Because of this wood's relative ease with which a carpenter can shape it, cypress is a good choice for replacing brackets and trim boards on a porch. In contrast, vertical grain Douglas fir is less workable, but is a very good choice for the replacement of porch floorboards in most climates. Although Douglas fir is from the Northwest, it is generally available throughout the country. For most protected trim boards on porches, white pine is a good choice as it is easy to work and is moderately decay resistant, especially if the wood is back-primed before installation. Availability of any specific wood will change annually based on market supply and demand.



## Wood Characteristics

Species	Cut or Grade	Cost	Workability	Resistance to Decay	Resistance to Cupping	Paint Holding Ability
Redwood	Clear, Vertical-grain, all-heart	\$\$\$	Fair	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
	"B" Select, flat-grain	\$\$	Fair	Excellent	Good	Good
Cedar	Clear	\$\$	Fair	Excellent	Good	Fair
Cypress	Clear	\$\$	Fair	Excellent	Fair	Good
Douglas Fir	"C" & better, Vertical-grain	\$\$	Fair to Poor	Good to Fair	Excellent	Fair
Southern Yellow Pine	"D" Select, flat-grain	\$	Fair	Fair	Good	Fair
	Vertical-grain	\$\$\$	Fair	Fair	Excellent	Fair to Good
Eastern White Pine	"D" Select, flat-grain	\$	Excellent	Fair	Excellent	Good
	Vertical-grain	\$\$\$	Excellent	Fair	Good	Excellent
Poplar	Firsts and Seconds	\$	Good	Poor	Good	Fair
American Mahogany	Clear	\$\$\$	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent	Good

*This table summarizes the characteristics of just a few of the different species available, including the workability of the wood (indicating a better wood for decorative porch pieces), the resistance to decay (an important feature for all porch components), resistance to cupping (a wood highly resistant to cupping is a better choice for floor board replacement) and paint holding ability. The Cut or Grade is also listed, as a low-grade wood can perform very differently than a higher grade in the same species. Cost will vary depending on region and market supply and demand. In general, it is best to contact two or three local lumberyards to find the available woods with the characteristics needed in the local market. Source: Practical Restoration Report, Exterior Woodwork Details.*

**Chemically Treated Wood:** Chemical wood preservative treatments are available to resist insect and fungal attack, but care should be taken to avoid using ones that may cause environmental or health risks. Borate preservatives can be applied to surfaces or injected to penetrate and protect the entire volume of the wood. Preservatives with zinc naphthenate can be applied to the wood surface, where necessary, especially to protect hidden joinery and the end grains of wood. Water-repellants can also be used to help seal out moisture. Finally, primers and paints should be applied to both protect the wood and to maintain the historic character of the porch. Note that these treatments are different than those used on most pressure-treated wood, which is typically a plantation-grown southern pine of lower quality that is impregnated with chemicals. Pressure-treated lumber can be effective when used for hidden structural members like posts, joists and sills. However, because typical pressure-treated wood is very susceptible to the deterioration of checks, warping and splitting, especially when left unpainted, it is not a good substitute for the better quality wood that is needed for visible finish porch parts.

### Stock Components

For over a century, prefabricated architectural parts have been sold through catalogues or at home improvement stores. Some companies still make generic, stock architectural components in the same general sizes and designs as those that were first manufactured. These components can be available in both wood and substitute materials. Thus, it may be possible to replace a historic stock component, such as an architectural grade column, with a new prefabricated column that matches the original. Unfortunately, these replacement parts are not designed to match the historic parts of any particular porch. Because traditionally there were many different porch elements, a wide range of styles and considerable regional variations, stock replacement parts available today are not often found to match what is needed in a specific porch repair project. When faced with deterioration of a few porch parts, all the historic material should not be removed in favor of a readily available stock design that does not match the historic appearance. The expressed goal may be to create a porch with a "consistent look," but this approach diminishes the building's historic character and authenticity.





*Figure 12. This old porch enclosure, located on the back side of a house, has acquired significance over time and is remarkable both in the appropriateness of its detailing for use by others today, as well as its high degree of maintenance. The enclosure is set behind the columns; the balustrade has been retained; and the light divisions and the size of the glass panes echo that of the windows above. Within each bay there are two well-crafted, inward swinging doors, providing for greater seasonal use of the porch. Photos: Charles Fisher.*

### Plastic and Composites

A variety of modern materials are marketed today as a substitute for wood. They are usually composite materials typically in the form of plastic resins, including vinyl (PVC), fiber-reinforced polymers and polyester resin. There are other products on the market as well, including medium density wood fiberboard and composite fiber-cement boards. The market is ever changing with the introduction of new synthetic materials and the re-formulation of existing ones. The more costly synthetic products tend to offer the best potential for matching historic features while offering good durability. This means that potential cost savings over new wood tends to be more long term than immediate. Such products generally are not carried in local home improvement stores but rather are available from building supply companies or direct through catalog sales.

The historical significance of a particular property and its porch influences decisions regarding possible use of substitute materials. In general, greater emphasis is placed on authenticity and material integrity when maintaining and repairing individually significant historic properties. However, a front porch that is repeated on rowhouses may be one of the defining characteristics of the historic district and thus of importance to the entire streetscape. So, too, can the location and appearance of a porch influence material decisions, as with, for example, a prominent front porch with ornate detailing as opposed to a small porch over a rear door.

Thus, when the historic porch contributes to the historic character of a building, the particular substitute material that is being considered should accurately match the appearance of the wooden feature being replaced. Composite materials that can be routed or shaped in the

field to match specific pieces being replaced have greater potential for use in repairing a historic porch. Materials that cannot be shaped to match the visual appearance of the historic pieces being replaced usually are not suitable for use on historic buildings.

Substitute materials need to be finished to match the appearance of the historic elements being replaced. In nearly all cases, this means that the material should be painted, or where historically appropriate, stained as with some porch ceilings. While there are substitute materials being marketed as pre-finished with either a plain flat surface or generic wood-grain texture, select those that can be painted or stained in the field.

When a substitute material is to be used in conjunction with existing or new wood material, it is important to consider the differences in expansion and contraction due to temperature and moisture changes. Before making a decision, it is also important to understand how a particular substitute material will age, what its maintenance requirements are, and how the material will deteriorate. For example, sunlight can break down exposed surfaces of plastic resins, so painting the surfaces is needed just as with wood. Low and medium density plastic foam parts are easily damaged by abrasion and physical damage, exposing the interior foam to weathering.

Wood porches are just that, porches made out of wood, just as a brick houses are made of brick and cast-iron porches are made of cast-iron. The type of materials used historically in the construction of a building helps define its character. Limited use of substitute materials that closely match missing or deteriorated features may not endanger this historic character, but wholesale replacement with substitute materials usually will.



## Considerations for Contemporary Alterations

### Enclosures

Much of the character of a historic open porch is clearly its openness. Therefore, in most cases, a historic open porch should not be enclosed. If a porch enclosure is being considered, its significance and location—as well as the nature of the planned enclosure—play key roles in whether it can be done without changing the porch's and building's historic character. While it is almost never appropriate to enclose a front porch on a historic building to create interior space, enclosing a less prominent porch on a less visible elevation could have less impact. In addition, an enclosure should retain as many of the historic porch features as possible (Fig 12).

### Insect Screening and Awnings

Traditionally, the seasonal use of porches was extended with screens and awnings. Screened porches have been popular since the advent of inexpensive and durable wire insect screening in late 1800s. Screens were often set unobtrusively behind railings and columns so the decorative components of the porch remained prominent and visible. Since screens can be damaged easily, the screening material was often set in slender, easy to repair, removable wood frames that could be installed during the warmer months, and stored in the winter. When screening a porch today, this historic precedent is recommended. Screened panels should have minimal wood framework painted either to match the porch or in a darker color to make the framing less visible. Decisions on whether screens should be installed inside the porch railings and posts, between the posts, or on the outside will depend on local traditions and on the design of the porch and trim. Screen doors on porches should be sized to fit proportionately with the porch, made of wood, and hung to swing out so insects are not brought inside with use.

Awnings, drop curtains, and valances were common porch accessories during the nineteenth and well into the twentieth centuries. Both functional and decorative, these canvas features helped shield porches from the sun's direct rays, while their colorful stripes embellished and complemented the house's exterior. Some awnings were fixed in place; others were of a roller assembly that allowed owners to easily lower or retract the awning, depending on weather conditions.

Today, modern solution-dyed acrylic fabrics—materials that resemble, but are more durable than canvas—are often used on porch awnings and drop curtains. When new awnings are installed on a historic porch, the selected awning should be appropriate in shape, material, size and color. Care should be used not to damage existing historic porch features such as columns or cornices.

### Temporary Enclosures

Temporary enclosures allow a porch to be used in colder

months while not permanently altering its appearance. In fact some have become historic features of buildings. Particularly in New England, there is a continuing tradition of installing relatively substantial glass and wood panels on porches during the winter, especially around an entrance door. These tended to have small divided lights. Sometimes porches were fully enclosed with a divided light glass door for entry, creating an enclosed vestibule that reduced the amount of cold air entering the house when the door was opened. Others consisted of simple sidewalls perpendicular to an existing entrance door, serving as a windbreak. Such enclosures were generally removed in the spring (Fig. 13).

In recent years, some porches have been enclosed during the winter with plastic sheeting (polyvinyl) for perceived energy conservation or for creation of an enclosed space. Such a treatment generally diminishes a building's historic character and is not recommended for highly visible porches.

### New Permanent Enclosures

Enclosure of a historic porch can result in significant changes in the appearance and character of the building. When considering the possible enclosure of a porch, a number of questions and concerns should be successfully addressed.

#### Is the porch on a significant elevation of the building?

A porch on a prominent elevation was there to be seen and its open qualities are visually important. Enclosing such a space should be avoided.



Figure 13. Particularly in New England, there is a cold weather tradition of installing temporary glass and wood panels at entrance doors, thereby creating an enclosed vestibule. These enclosures with their small divided lights were generally removed in the spring.

Photo: John Lecke.





*Figure 14. The enclosure of a prominent porch can dramatically change the historic character of a building. The L-shaped porch on this 1896 Shingle-style New England residence was later enclosed with aluminum windows and screens. Recent owners elected to reopen the historic porch. Among the other work, it was necessary to correct structural damage, as with this post, where beneath the wood casing carpenter ants had done serious damage. In reopening the porch, the historic character of the residence has been brought back and the traditional use of the porch is once again enjoyed. Photos: Mark Landry, Landmark Services.*

**Is the enclosure necessary?** An enclosure will undoubtedly change the porch as a historic feature and may result in damage or loss of historic materials. Depending on the significance of the porch and the nature of the building, a new porch enclosure may also change the historic character of the building. Consideration should be given to alternate solutions such as recapturing underutilized space in an attic or basement (Fig 14).

**Is the porch a highly distinctive feature of the building?** Even porches on secondary and rear elevations can be distinctive, such as a two-story porch on the side ell of a farmhouse. Porches ornamented with decorative trim that embellishes the house can also be distinctive. Enclosing these features should also be avoided whenever possible.

**Is the porch a feature repeated on a row of buildings in a historic district?** Open front porches on a block of row houses can be not only important to an individual building but can also make up a significant feature of the streetscape. Enclosing such a porch usually is inappropriate even if a porch on an adjacent building already has been enclosed.

**Will the proposed enclosure encompass the entire porch?** History has shown that the enclosure of a portion of a porch on a secondary elevation does not always alter the character of a building. In the past as indoor plumbing was introduced to old buildings, the partial enclosure of a one or two-story porch on a secondary elevation was a convenient means of providing new bathroom space while limiting disruption to the building's interior. Since early bathrooms were traditionally small in size, most of the existing porch could be retained as open space. It was common to create new walls set either between columns

or behind them, since the columns usually served a structural as well as decorative purpose. Where sleeping porches with full-length louver shutters were present, the new wall could simply be set behind and the shutters retained and fixed in place. In both cases the resulting effect minimized the impact of the partial enclosure on the appearance of the building. This also provides us with an approach that may be appropriate for a particular project today.

**Will the enclosure result in the loss of considerable historic fabric?** Unless the historic porch is so deteriorated that it is beyond repair, any consideration of enclosing all or part of a porch should incorporate retention of historic fabric. This may mean that the existing structural system needs to be augmented but generally not replaced. Distinctive features such as columns, brackets and balustrades should be retained and the new wall set behind them.

**Is the foundation adequate for the enclosure of the porch and the new use of the space?** Porches were often built on simple posts or piers, some with only minimum footings. Such structural supports may be inadequate to carry the added load of the proposed changes and the typical low space beneath a first floor porch may make installing a new porch foundation difficult and expensive. Such installations may result also in an extensive loss of historic fabric.

**How will the proposed enclosure be viewed from the outside once the interior space is furnished?** One of the approaches to enclosing a porch is to utilize near full glazing set behind existing columns in an attempt to retain a feeling of transparency. Whether such a treatment is successful depends on how it will look once it is constructed and how will the appearance on the outside be impacted by interior lighting,



mechanical systems and furnishings. The traditional use of plantings and porch awnings for shade also provided extended privacy. If historically appropriate, an existing or new awning and plantings may help to reduce the impact of a porch enclosure on a secondary but visible elevation.

### Is the design of the proposed porch enclosure in keeping with the historic character of the building?

Where the enclosure of all or part of a historic porch is appropriate, the selection of a compatible design and materials is important. Windows, doors, and wall material selection, along with how the new infill fits within the existing porch, are all factors to consider. A traditional technique of porch enclosures still used today involves the insertion in each column bay of one or more glass enclosures set in wood frames. The enclosures are located between or behind the columns, depending upon the nature of the porch, and mimic the pattern or size of glass panes found in historic windows on the building (Fig 15). An alternate treatment involves the use of much larger sheets of clear, non-reflective glass recessed behind the porch supports, balustrade and railing. This more contemporary treatment may be appropriate, depending upon the historic character of the building, location of the porch, and other factors (Fig 16). Windows, doors, and wall material selection, along with how the new infill fits within the existing porch, are all factors to consider.

### Safety and Building Codes

There are many building codes used by states and municipalities across the nation, with a majority of their requirements being very similar and focused on new construction. Building codes such as the International



Figure 15. A traditional technique of porch enclosures still used today involves the insertion in each column bay of one or more glass enclosures set in wood frames. This enclosure is properly set back an entire porch bay from the front of the house and utilizes traditional light divisions and wood frames. The balustrade, added here for illustration purposes, shows the importance of retaining this linear feature within the enclosed bays. Photo: Charles Fisher.



Figure 16. The use of near full glazing to enclose a porch may be appropriate depending upon the historic character of the building, location of the porch, how the interior space is to be treated, and other factors. This enclosure of a rear porch to create a conference room successfully utilizes large expanses of glass and narrow metal framing set behind existing porch elements (a through e). Where an additional horizontal support was needed (f), the frame was placed at a location that is found in many traditional insect screen enclosures. Photo: Charles Fisher.

Building Code and its companion, the International Existing Building Code, have been developed in recent years that are generally much more sensitive to existing and historic buildings, emphasizing the retention of historic fabric without jeopardizing life safety. These "proportional codes," as they are called, allow building inspectors greater flexibility to make decisions based on the specific circumstances of each building, and the type and extent of work planned.

Successful rehabilitation work achieves a balance between building and safety code considerations and the retention of historic design and materials. The porch is no exception. The most common porch elements affected by code requirements are railing/balustrade height, baluster spacing, stair geometry, and structural system. When a historic porch is so deteriorated that a substantial portion must be replaced, modern building code requirements are usually triggered. These requirements are often more stringent for multi-family or commercial structures than single-family houses.





Figure 17. The porch's structural system must be capable of supporting today's loads. In this case moisture led to the deterioration of the wood girder at the corner, creating a major structural deficiency (top). A new solid timber was installed to replace the girder (middle); alternatively a built-up girder could have been used since a fascia board would conceal it. The column base was repaired and portions replaced and the balustrade and column reset and secured (bottom). Photos: Paul Marlowe, Marlowe Restorations.

It is important to ensure that the code-required work be done in a manner that is sympathetic to the historic character of the building. If building code requirements threaten the historic character of the porch, alternatives that reconcile the two should be explored. Many local jurisdictions issue waivers or variances for historic buildings, allowing for historic elements to be retained, when it can be demonstrated that safety will not be compromised.

In the event that an alteration to a historic porch is required to make the porch safe to use, care should be taken in planning and undertaking the work. Fortunately, there are usually a number of options that are possible, although one is usually the most appropriate preservation solution.

### Structural Loads

Ensuring that the structure's foundation can support the specified load is a primary safety issue for porches. Fortunately, repairs and upgrades to improve structural stability are generally made to the foundation at or below grade, and can usually be concealed under the porch or behind finish details. Weakened joists can often be strengthened with the addition of sister joists, epoxy structural repair, or the insertion of new concealed structural members (Fig. 17).

### Stairs

Historic stair risers are sometimes too steep and treads too shallow to meet contemporary building codes or the special needs of the occupants. In the latter case, the addition of a simple handrail that meets code may suffice. In instances where there is another stairway that meets code, for example a side stair, it may be possible to retain the existing non-conforming historic stairway.

Modifications to bring porch stairs into conformance with code can be difficult. Where buildings are set close to the street, it may not be possible to rebuild the stairs in the same direction to meet code if they will have to extend onto a public sidewalk. Unless a variance is obtained, it may be necessary to turn the stairs to be parallel rather than perpendicular to a building. Where wood stairs need to be rebuilt, the historic finish details, such as moldings, cut work and edge detailing, should be reflected in the new construction. One common mistake is the replacement of wood stairs or brick steps with concrete, a material that may not be in keeping with the historic building.

Where a porch must be used as a wheelchair accessible entrance, two general issues arise. If there is an elevation difference greater than ½-inch between the porch deck and the front door threshold, a simple threshold ramp may suffice. In cases where the elevation difference is larger than can be accommodated by a simple threshold ramp, a level platform with sufficient turning radius at the door for a wheelchair may be necessary. The other issue is devising a means for wheelchair access from the grade to the porch deck when the porch is the only





*Figure 18. When a porch is used as a wheelchair accessible entrance, it may be possible to retain the historic stairs by adding a ramp parallel to the building. Through plantings and some re-grading, the new ramp built parallel to the building (left) allows retention of the historic stairs and does not impact the historic character of the entrance (right). Photo: Iowa State University Extension.*

entrance alternative. It may be possible to retain the historic stairs by adding another entrance to the porch with the construction of a ramp parallel to the building (Fig. 18).

#### **Baluster Spacing**

Codes generally require for children's safety that new balusters are spaced such that a four-inch sphere cannot fit through. Vertical balusters on older porches are often spaced farther apart than this. If modifications are required, inserting narrow metal rods between the existing balusters may be a compatible and inconspicuous solution, particularly if painted flat black or another dark color. This is generally preferable to moving the balusters closer together or adding more balusters to fill the gaps.

#### **Railing/Balustrade Heights**

Historic porches generally have handrails that measure 28 to 30 inches in height from the floor. Current code requirements for new construction generally mandate that railings be 36 to 42 inches in height (often 36 inches for single family dwellings, and 42 inches for multi-family dwellings and commercial buildings). Raising the historic railing by as much as 30% or more can have a major impact on not just the proportions of the balusters, but also on the overall appearance of a historic porch. Adding a simple rail above the historic railing and painting it to hide its presence as much as possible is generally the least intrusive solution when this safety requirement must be met. Similarly, an existing bottom rail is sometimes set too high off the deck to meet contemporary code requirements. The addition of a simple wood rail or even a narrow metal pipe below the bottom rail will usually suffice (Fig 19).

It is not uncommon to find historic porches with decks only several steps off the ground and with no railings. For owner-occupied residences undergoing rehabilitation, local codes usually will not require the

addition of railings to these existing porches, provided the porch deck is below a certain height off the ground—typically from 18 to 24 inches. Where greater safety is warranted even though no railing is required, alternatives such as planting an adjacent hedgerow, installing planter boxes between columns, or raising the grade are worth considering. Where not practical or acceptable, a railing might be added so as to not noticeably impact the appearance of the historic porch. Any solution, however, should be simple and based on the character of a specific porch, and its appropriateness considered on a case-by-case basis.



*Figure 19. Historic porches generally have railings that measure 28 to 30 inches in height from the floor. When additional height is necessary for safety, a simple rail, added for illustration purposes in this photograph, can usually be installed above the historic railing. Not only does this treatment allow retention of the historic balustrade, but it also has a minimum impact to the appearance of the porch. Photo: Charles Fisher.*



## Conclusion

Wood porches have made an enduring contribution to our built environment. Porches are significant because of the special character they impart to a historic building and their role in our social and cultural history. A porch is an open sheltered part of a building, providing a covered entrance and, where larger, serving as an outdoor activity room. It represents an outward extension of a building, a place guests can initially be sheltered from the weather, even welcomed and entertained.

Like all historic building features, wood porches require routine maintenance to prevent decay. Understanding how a porch is put together and the factors that cause deterioration will help considerably in carrying out both maintenance and needed repairs. Regular maintenance pays off not only with a good appearance but also by reducing the need for future repairs. With both maintenance and repairs, emphasis should be placed on preserving the historic fabric and significant features of a porch. Where components are deteriorated beyond repair or missing altogether, new pieces should be installed that match the historic ones. Fortunately, good craftsmanship and the use of quality replacement materials as needed will be rewarded with repairs that last. Attentive care will result in the historic porch retaining its charm both in appearance and in function.

## Acknowledgements

John Leeke is a Preservation Consultant in Portland, Maine; Aleca Sullivan is an Architectural Historian in Evanston, Illinois. Cover illustration: Indiana Historical Society, Jay Small Postcard Collection, Standard Cottage, 1886, Bethany Park, Indiana, Collection No. P0391, digital image C 2003.

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This publication has been prepared pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, which directs the Secretary of the Interior to develop and make available information concerning historic properties. Comments about this publication should be addressed to: Charles Fisher, Technical Preservation Publications Program Manager, Technical Preservation Services—2255, National Park Service, 1849 C Street, NW, Washington, DC 20240. This publication is not copyrighted and can be reproduced without penalty. Normal procedures for credit to the authors and the National Park Service should be provided. The photographs used in this publication may not be used to illustrate other publications without permission of the owners. For more information about the programs of the National Park Service's Technical Preservation Services see our website at [www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps](http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps)

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# ITS

NUMBER 9

## Interpreting The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

### Subject: Inappropriate Porch Alterations

- Applicable Standards:**
2. Retention of Historic Character
  5. Preservation of Distinctive Features, Finishes and Craftsmanship
  6. Repair/Replacement of Deteriorated or Missing Features Based on Evidence

**Issue:** A porch with its balustrade serves as both a decorative and practical feature that can be very important in defining the character of a historic building. However, it is sometimes necessary to alter or replace balustrades during rehabilitation. In some cases a lack of maintenance may have led to irreparable deterioration of this historic feature. In others, railings may be altered or replaced to meet building code requirements. During rehabilitation deteriorated or balustrades that do not meet code requirements, are frequently replaced with new features that completely alter the historic character of the building, and may sometimes also impact the district in which the structure is located.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation clearly address this type of alteration. First, Standard 2 requires that the historic character of the property be preserved, specifically prohibiting the alteration of features that distinguish a property. Standard 5 reiterates this point by requiring that distinctive features and finishes be retained and preserved. Finally, Standard 6 specifically addresses deteriorated features stating that these features should be repaired rather than replaced; however, "Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence."

**Application 1 (*Incompatible treatment*):** A late-19th century boarding house was rehabilitated for use as a bed and breakfast. Prior to rehabilitation the structure had a very simple porch balustrade with rectangular vertical posts, or balusters. Historic photographs provided documentary evidence that the balustrade had always had this appearance. During rehabilitation the balustrade was replaced with one completely different in design - sawn balusters with ornate cutout shapes. The replacement gives a historically inappropriate look to the building, and an appearance it never had. To meet the Standards the owner replaced the new balustrade with one that matched the simple historic design.



*Before rehabilitation - simple historical balustrade.*



*After rehabilitation - inappropriate replacement balustrade.*



**Application 2** (*Incompatible treatment*): A Colonial Revival-style apartment building, circa 1920, was rehabilitated for continued multifamily use. The front of the building was distinguished by two porches on the second story with low balustrades consisting of decorative, heavy turned balusters. As part of the rehabilitation, these balustrades, along with a non-original metal railing on the third floor level, were removed because their height did not comply with local building code requirements. They were replaced with taller balustrades with straight, narrow, rectangular balusters that did not replicate the visual qualities of the decorative historic balustrade and, therefore, resulted in dramatically altering the character of the building. These new, inappropriate balustrades were also added to the first floor porch.

The replacement balustrades are not only incompatible with the historic building itself, but they are also not in keeping with the historic district in which the building is located. Many similar apartment buildings in the district feature such porches which, with their rhythm, harmonious scale, size, and proportion, add a distinctive element to the district. Incompatible changes such as these new balustrades can cumulatively and negatively impact the overall character of a historic district.



*Before rehabilitation.*



*After rehabilitation.*

A more appropriate solution for meeting the safety requirements might have been to raise the existing second story balustrade, and modify the bottom of the railing to reduce the size of the opening. Another approach might have been to add a simple and inconspicuous pipe rail above the historic balustrade to meet the height requirements. From a distance this would not have been visible, and would have preserved the historic character.

There was no documentary evidence that there had ever been balustrades at the first and third floor levels. To satisfy both the Standards and code requirements it would have been preferable had the owner retained the modern metal railing that already existed on the third floor, and added a similarly simple railing on the first floor that was compatible with the building's historic character.



**From:** [Kirkman, Mike](#)  
**To:** [Justin Snyder](#)  
**Cc:** [Jesse Arnett](#)  
**Subject:** confirmation of meeting ordinance requirements for 408 Fisher Park Circle  
**Date:** Friday, May 17, 2024 3:28:59 PM  
**Importance:** High

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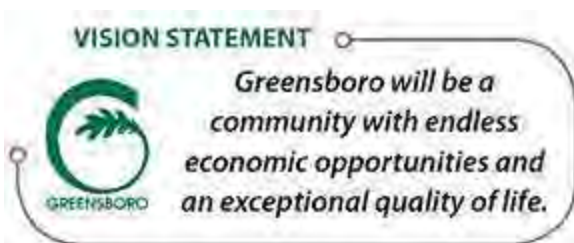
**\*WARNING\* This email originated outside Guilford County's email system. \*WARNING\***  
**Do not click unrecognized links or attachments. When in doubt, use the Phish Alert Report button.**

Good afternoon Mr. Snyder. Mr. Arnett has provided me with the proposed house addition and garage relocation plans for 408 Fisher Park Circle. I have reviewed these plans against the standards of the City's Land Development Ordinance (LDO). The proposed changes are consistent with the standards of the R-5 (Residential Single Family – 5) zoning district for the property and the standards for Accessory Buildings of Section 30-8-11.1 of the LDO. This property is located in the Fisher Park Historic Overlay District so these changes will also be required to secure a Certificate of Appropriateness from the City's Historic Preservation Commissions and Mr. Arnett has already been in touch with our historic preservation staff to begin those conversations.

Please let me know if you need any additional information from me related to this review and I hope that you have a nice weekend.

Thanks,  
Mike Kirkman

**Mike Kirkman, AICP, CZO**, Zoning Administrator  
Planning  
City of Greensboro  
Phone: 336-373-4649 Fax: 336-412-6315  
P.O. Box 3136 Greensboro, NC 27402-3136  
[www.greensboro-nc.gov](http://www.greensboro-nc.gov)







**GUILFORD COUNTY  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
GUILFORD COUNTY HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION**

**EVIDENTIARY HEARING NOTIFICATION**

**RE: Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission Regular Meeting**

**DATE: June 18, 2024**

**TIME: 6:00 PM**

**LOCATION: John McAdoo Room, 3rd Floor, Truist Building, 201 W. Market St,  
Greensboro, NC 27401**

To Whom It May Concern:

Please be advised that the Guilford County Historic Preservation Commission has received the following Certificate of Appropriateness application for an evidentiary hearing to consider changes to a Guilford County Landmark property:

**Evidentiary Hearing:** Certificate of Appropriateness request for numerous interior and exterior changes to Grimsley House located at 408 Fisher Park Circle in Greensboro, NC, including a kitchen renovation, major landscaping, a garage relocation, and several exterior additions.

You are being notified of this proposed action because you own property adjacent to the above-listed Guilford County historic property. The application is on file at the Guilford County Planning & Development Department. If you have any questions, please contact a member of the planning staff at 336-641-3334.

Sincerely,

*Justin Snyder*

Justin Snyder, AICP, CZO  
Senior Planner, Guilford County Planning and Development



# Affidavit of Mailing and Posting

I, Justin Snyder, do hereby certify that notice has been mailed via first class USPS mail to the following recipients for 408 Fisher Park Circle and a sign posted on the subject property in accordance with N.C.G.S. 160D-406(b):

FISHER PARK HOMEOWNERS  
ASSOCIATION  
400 FISHER PARK CIR  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

JARRETT, TONY HALL; JARRETT, DEBORAH  
A  
400 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT A  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

ROBINSON, JOHN M TRUSTEE; ROBINSON,  
MARY TRUSTEE; ROBINSON FAMILY TRUST  
402 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT E  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

OVERBEY, ALAN; OVERBEY, LOVELLE  
408 FISHER PARK CIR  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

LIMBRICK, DANIEL B  
400 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT B  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

UMETSU, MICHAEL K; UMETSU, JULI ANNE  
402 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT F  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

KUESTER, FRANK L  
800 SIMPSON ST  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

REX BEST LIVING TRUST  
400 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT C  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

CITY OF GREENSBORO  
PO BOX 3136  
GREENSBORO, NC 27402

ATWOOD, SARAH DILLON  
802 SIMPSON ST  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

ROYALTY, ANNE BEESON; ROYALTY,  
ROBERT MALCOLM JR  
400 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT D  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

SAUNDERS, VICTORIA V; SAUNDERS,  
CHARLES W JR  
422 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT B  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

MASSENGILL, NATHAN WASSON;  
COUGHLIN, CHRISTOPHER MICHAEL  
404 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT E  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

MONAHAN-PASHALL, MARGARET  
ELIZABETH  
400 E FISHER PARK CIR  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

BLACK, ROGER R TRUSTEE; ROGER R BLACK  
REVOCABLE TRUST  
422 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT A  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

IHRIG, ROBERT A  
19 GREEN MOUNTAIN CT  
DEFIANCE, MO 63341

DUNCAN, JEAN P; KOONCE, MARILYN E  
402 FISHER PARK A CIR  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

GOLD, ALEXANDER STOTT; GOLD, DARCI S  
420 FISHER PARK CIR  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

WICKER, ELIZABETH DONATHAN  
404 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT C  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

BINDER, EVAN  
402 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT B  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

STALLWORTH, DIANE  
418 FISHER PARK CIR  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

BROWN, HARRISON G; QUINN- BROWN,  
RACHEL E  
404 FISHER PARK B CIR  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

THOMPSON, AMY RUTH  
402 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT C  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

WINSLOW, EDWARD CYRUS III; WINSLOW,  
SALLY PATTON  
416 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT C  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

VONDERHAAR, JILL A  
404 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT A  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

JENKINS, JOEL CRAIG; JENKINS, ALICE  
MARIE STARKEY;  
402 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT D  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

RUBIN, MICHAEL DANIEL; RUBIN, CAREN  
416 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT B  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401



WELLS, DARRELL NEAL & CYNTHIA HODGIN TRUSTEES; WELLS FAMILY TRUST  
416 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT A  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

ERICOURT, JAYNE W  
414 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT B  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

FRANCISCO, JEFFREY W; FRANCISCO, DENISE P  
414 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT A  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

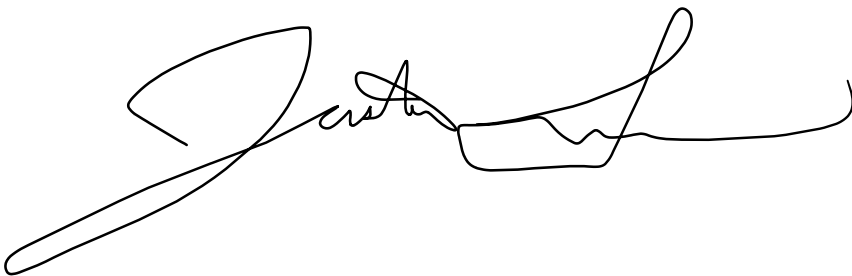
RENDLEMAN, ANNE BLACK  
412 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT A  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

GRUBBY, CLARISSE G  
412 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT B  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

QUAINTANCE, DENNIS W; QUAINTANCE, NANCY K  
412 FISHER PARK CIR UNIT C  
GREENSBORO, NC 27401

B P PROPERTIES  
PO BOX N-1  
GREENSBORO, NC 27402

This 3<sup>st</sup> day of June, 2024.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Justin", written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.