

ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Staff Report

ADDRESS: 538 Fifth Street, Application HDC12-091

DISTRICT: Old West Side Historic District

REPORT DATE: June 4, 2012

REPORT PREPARED BY: Katie Remensnyder, Interim Historic Preservation Coordinator

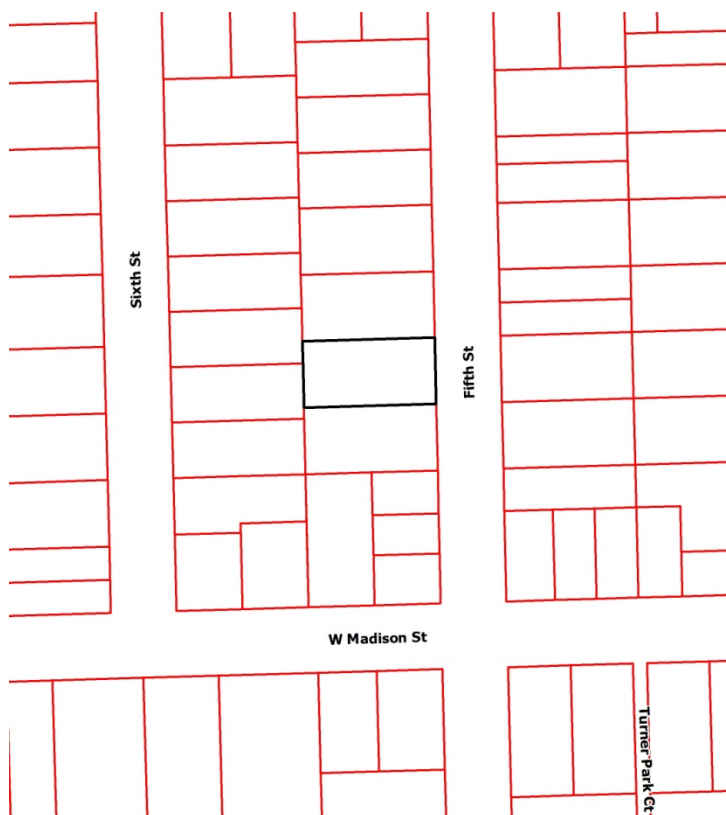
REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE: Monday, June 11 for the Thursday, June 14, 2012 HDC meeting

| | OWNER | APPLICANT |
|-----------------|---|-----------|
| Name: | John Rietz & Rachel Thompson | Same |
| Address: | 538 Fifth Street Ann Arbor, MI 48103 | |
| Phone: | (734) 930-0880 | |

BACKGROUND: This one-and-a-half story vernacular house features a front porch that spans approximately one-half of the front elevation, a cut stone foundation, wood window and door surrounds, and small rear and side additions. The house first appears in the 1886-1887 Ann Arbor City Directory and lists John Krauss, a carpenter at Luick Brothers, as the resident. Until 1898 the address of the house was 38 Fifth Street.

LOCATION: The site is located on the west side of Fifth Street between West Jefferson Street and West Madison Street.

APPLICATION: The applicant seeks HDC approval to 1) demolish an existing front porch and build a new, larger front porch, 2) construct a new addition along the west (rear) and south (side) addition, 3) construct a second floor addition on an existing rear addition, 4) construct a new screen porch on the west (rear) elevation, 5) rebuild the foundation on an existing addition on the west (rear) elevation to create a full basement, 6) relocate one window on the south (side) elevation addition, 7) resize a window in the west (rear) elevation of an addition, and 8) install a Solatube skylight in the roof on the main body of the house.



APPLICABLE REGULATIONS

From the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

- (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.
- (9) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
- (10) New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property will be unimpaired.

From the Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings (other SOI Guidelines may also apply):

New Additions

Recommended: Constructing a new addition so that there is the least possible loss of historic materials and so that character-defining features are not obscured, damaged, or destroyed.

Designing new additions in a manner that makes clear what is historic and what is new.

Locating the attached exterior addition at the rear or on an in-conspicuous side of a historic building; and limiting its size and scale in relationship to the historic building.

Considering the attached exterior addition both in terms of the new use and the appearance of other buildings in the historic district or neighborhood. Design for the new work may be contemporary or may reference design motifs from the historic building. In either case, it should always be clearly differentiated from the historic building and be compatible in terms of mass, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and color.

Not Recommended: Attaching a new addition so that the character-defining features of the historic building are obscured, damaged, or destroyed.

Designing a new addition so that its size and scale in relation to the historic building are out of proportion, thus diminishing the historic character.

Windows

Recommended: Identifying, retaining, and preserving windows--and their functional and decorative features--that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building.

Designing and installing additional windows on rear or other non-character-defining elevations if required by the new use. New window openings may also be cut into exposed party walls. Such design should be compatible with the overall design of the building, but not duplicate the fenestration pattern and detailing of a character-defining elevation.

Not Recommended: Removing or radically changing windows which are important in defining the historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

Changing the number, location, size or glazing pattern of windows, through cutting new openings, blocking-in windows, and installing replacement sash which does not fit the historic window opening.

Introducing a new design that is incompatible with the historic character of the building.

Roofs

Recommended: Designing additions to roofs such as residential, office, or storage spaces; elevator housing; decks and terraces; or dormers or skylights when required by the new use so that they are inconspicuous from the public right-of-way and do not damage or obscure character-defining features.

Radically changing a character-defining roof shape or damaging or destroying character-defining roofing material as a result of incompatible design or improper installation techniques.

District or Neighborhood Setting

Not Recommended: Introducing new construction into historic districts that is visually incompatible or that destroys historic relationships within the setting.

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. The existing front porch spans approximately one-half of the front elevation. The applicant states that a conversation with the previous owner in 1997 revealed that originally there had been a full-width front porch, but was demolished in the 1930s and replaced with the existing front porch. A Sanborn Fire Insurance Map from 1931 supports this, as a full-width wood frame front porch is depicted.

2. The applicant seeks approval to demolish the existing front porch and build a new front porch that will span the width of the front elevation. The proposed front porch would measure sixteen feet long, five feet deep, and approximately ten feet high. The porch will be built of wood, have fiber cement trim, and have a hipped roof covered in asphalt shingles. The space below the porch will be covered by slat lattice. A railing that is two feet high will consist of two-inch by two-inch cedar balusters, a two-inch by four-inch beveled cedar bottom rail resting on a two-inch by two-inch cedar brace, and a two-inch by four-inch beveled cedar top rail. The posts will be six-inch by six-inch turned cedar columns. However, the Design Guidelines state that it is not appropriate to create “a false historical appearance by adding a porch, entrance, feature, or detail that is conjectural or comes from other properties.” Given the relatively simple appearance of the house and a lack of evidence of the historical appearance of the posts, it is therefore more appropriate to use simple box columns.

3. The applicant also seeks approval to construct a new side addition that measures 180 square feet. The addition will be located at the rear of the house and project five feet and four inches past the existing north (side) elevation. This is approximately the same projecting width as an existing projection on the south (side) elevation. The addition will also project approximately ten feet towards the front of the house. In total, the addition will be twenty-eight feet and two inches long. It will have a hipped roof with asphalt shingles, fiber cement lap siding, and a hewn-stone concrete masonry unit foundation with one rectangular hopper window towards the rear of the addition. There is also a small entry porch located near the midpoint of the addition. This will project an additional three feet beyond the existing north (side) elevation of the house. The porch will be built of the same materials as the proposed front porch. The proposed addition will have four windows, all of which will be reconditioned salvaged windows from the house that must be removed in order to construct the addition.

4. The proposed addition will require the removal of three existing double-hung wood windows. One window is located in the original house, and two others are located in an existing rear addition. Although an exact date of construction could not be determined for the rear addition, it appears in the 1931 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map and falls within the period of significance. The applicant proposes to salvage the existing window materials and reuse them in the proposed addition.

5. The applicant also seeks approval to construct a second-story addition above the existing rear addition to create a new bedroom. The proposed second-story addition would require removal of the roof structure and two windows in the second floor of the rear elevation. The roof line is lower than the existing roof on the main block of the house, and will not project beyond the existing north and south (side) elevations of the house. The second-floor addition will have a gable roof with asphalt shingles, fiber-cement siding and trim, and a shed dormer. The shed dormer will be located on the south (side) elevation and have two square, single-pane casement windows.

6. The applicant seeks approval to construct a new rear porch. The porch is sixteen feet eight inches wide, and thirteen feet six inches deep. It will be built of wood framing with large screen panels and will have a wood and screen door on the rear. The roof will be a hipped asphalt shingle roof.
7. The applicant also seeks approval to rebuild the foundation on an existing addition on the south (side) elevation. The foundation is currently brick, and the applicant states that it is only one to two feet deep and unable to support a rear addition. The foundation will be rebuilt with hewn-stone concrete masonry units. The foundation will extend deep enough to support an addition and also create a full basement. Two small hopper windows will also be installed in the foundation on the south (side) elevation towards the rear of the house.
8. The applicant proposes to relocate a window in the south elevation by moving it slightly towards the rear. The window materials will be reused, and only the opening will change. The date of the window and the addition it is located in could not be determined, but the addition does appear in the 1931 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map. A window located on the west (rear) elevation of the same existing addition is also proposed to be made smaller. The sill height will be raised and a new double-hung window will be installed. Although the windows do fall within the period of significance, they are located in an addition and not the original main body of the house.
9. A new Solatube skylight is also proposed to be installed in the main roof. It will be located towards the rear of the roof and based on the provided drawings appears to be small and unobtrusive. Staff feels that the skylight will be relatively inconspicuous when viewed from the sidewalk.
10. The design and scale of the side addition, second-story addition, and rear back porch are compatible with the house, do not detract from it, and use distinct materials (such as cementitious lap siding) to further differentiate them from the historic structure. Although original openings will be covered by the additions, the applicant proposes to reuse the windows in the new additions. Overall, the historical integrity and character-defining features will not be harmed. The design and scale of the proposed front porch is appropriate as well, and appears to be a very similar size to that of the original front porch that was demolished in the 1930s
11. Staff recommends approval of the proposed new front porch, rear addition, second-story addition, rear back porch, alteration of windows, and Solatube since they meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for New Additions, Windows, Roofs, and District of Neighborhood Setting*.

POSSIBLE MOTIONS: (Note that the motion is only a suggestion. The Review Committee, consisting of staff and at least two Commissioners, will meet with the applicant on site and then make a recommendation at the meeting.)

I move that the Commission approve the application at 538 Fifth Street, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to construct a new rear addition, add a second story to an existing rear addition, demolish an existing front porch and build a new front porch, install a skylight, relocate one window, and resize one window as proposed. The proposed work is compatible in exterior design, arrangement, texture, material and relationship to the rest of the building and the surrounding area and meets *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 2, 3, 9, and 10 and the guidelines for new additions, windows, roofs, and setting.

MOTION WORKSHEET:

I move that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work at 538 Fifth Street in the Old West Side Historic District

_____ Provided the following condition(S) is (ARE) met: 1) STATE CONDITION(s)

The work is generally compatible with the size, scale, massing, and materials and meets the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, standard(S) number(S) (*circle all that apply*): 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

ATTACHMENTS: application, photos, drawings.

City of Ann Arbor
PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES — PLANNING SERVICES
100 North Fifth Avenue | P.O. Box 8647 | Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107-8647
p. 734.794.6265 | f. 734.994.8312 | planning@a2gov.org

ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION APPLICATION

Section 1: Property Being Reviewed and Ownership Information

Address of Property: 538 Fifth St.

Historic District: Old West Side

Name of Property Owner (If different than the applicant) _____

Address of Property Owner: 538 Fifth St.

Daytime Phone and E-mail of Property Owner: 734-930-0880 & rachel_thompson@yahoo.com

Signature of Property Owner: 

Date: 5-25-12

Section 2: Applicant Information

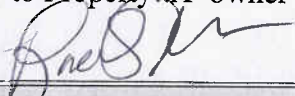
Name of Applicant: John Rietz & Rachel Thompson

Address of Applicant: 538 Fifth St.

Daytime Phone: (734) 930-0880; Fax: (_____)

E-mail: rachel_thompson@yahoo.com

Applicant's Relationship to Property: owner ___ architect ___ contractor ___ other

Signature of applicant: 

Date: 5-25-12

Section 3: Building Use (check all that apply)

Residential Single Family _____ Multiple Family _____ Rental _____

Commercial _____ Institutional _____

Section 4: Stille-DeRossett-Hale Single State Construction Code Act

(This item **MUST BE INITIALED** for your application to be **PROCESSED**)

Public Act 169, Michigan's Local Historic Districts Act, was amended April 2004 to include the following language: "...the applicant has certified in the application that the property where the work will be undertaken has, or will have before the proposed completion date, a fire alarm or smoke alarm complying with the requirements of the Stille-DeRossett-Hale Single State Construction Code Act, 1972 PA 230, MCL 125.1501 to 125.1531."

Please initial here: 

Section 5: Description of Proposed Changes (attach additional sheets as necessary)

1. Provide a brief summary of proposed changes.

We are proposing four changes to the house. First, we would like to put on a full-width front porch, as consistent with historical evidence (see attached). Second, we would like to add 180 square feet to our downstairs in the form of a new room added to the more recent, back part of the home and a small bump-out on the side. Third, we would add 235 square feet to our upstairs, a bedroom that fits entirely under the original roof line. Fourth, we would add a screened back porch.

2. Provide a description of existing conditions.

Our home consists of a small original house, built around 1885, that is on a double-wide lot. It is one and a half stories, well-preserved and maintained, and is consistent with other homes in the neighborhood. There is also an existing one-story wing that was added to the back of the original home at some point.

3. What are the reasons for the proposed changes?

We have lived in this house since 1994 and have taken every measure possible to maintain the historic significance of the home, restoring both the inside and outside of the home as faithfully as possible (including restoring the interior with plaster, restoring the wood floors and woodwork, and stripping the outside clapboards down to the wood to preserve the original).

Now that we have two sons (5 and 8), who both share a very small upstairs room without a closet, we want to add a real second bedroom upstairs and some space downstairs, as many other families in the neighborhood have done.

4. Attach any additional information that will further explain or clarify the proposal, and indicate these attachments here.

We originally worked with an architect to try to find a side addition that could meet Historic District approval because of our wide lot and an inadequate foundation under the back part of the house. In addition, adding a bedroom at the back of the second floor does not gain us a bedroom, since one would need to pass through the existing bedroom to get to the new one.

After we developed initial plans and consulted with Jill Thacher, we came to understand that a side addition simply cannot be allowed. Jill did tell us that a small side bump-out might be possible (hence the bump-out in our current plans).

As we further considered how else to add a bedroom upstairs, we committed ourselves to bolstering the foundation under the back of the house and developed the current plan. When describing this possibility to Jill in yet another meeting in our back yard (we sure appreciate her help!), she indicated that such a plan would likely be approved.

Regarding the front porch, aside from the photographs included in our application, we have this additional evidence: In July of 1997, I interviewed Dorothy Zill, who purchased the home in the early 1930's, and she said that she and her husband tore off a full-width front porch ("wooden, but rotten")

and replaced it with the current porch.

5. Attach photographs of the existing property, including at least one general photo and detailed photos of proposed work area.

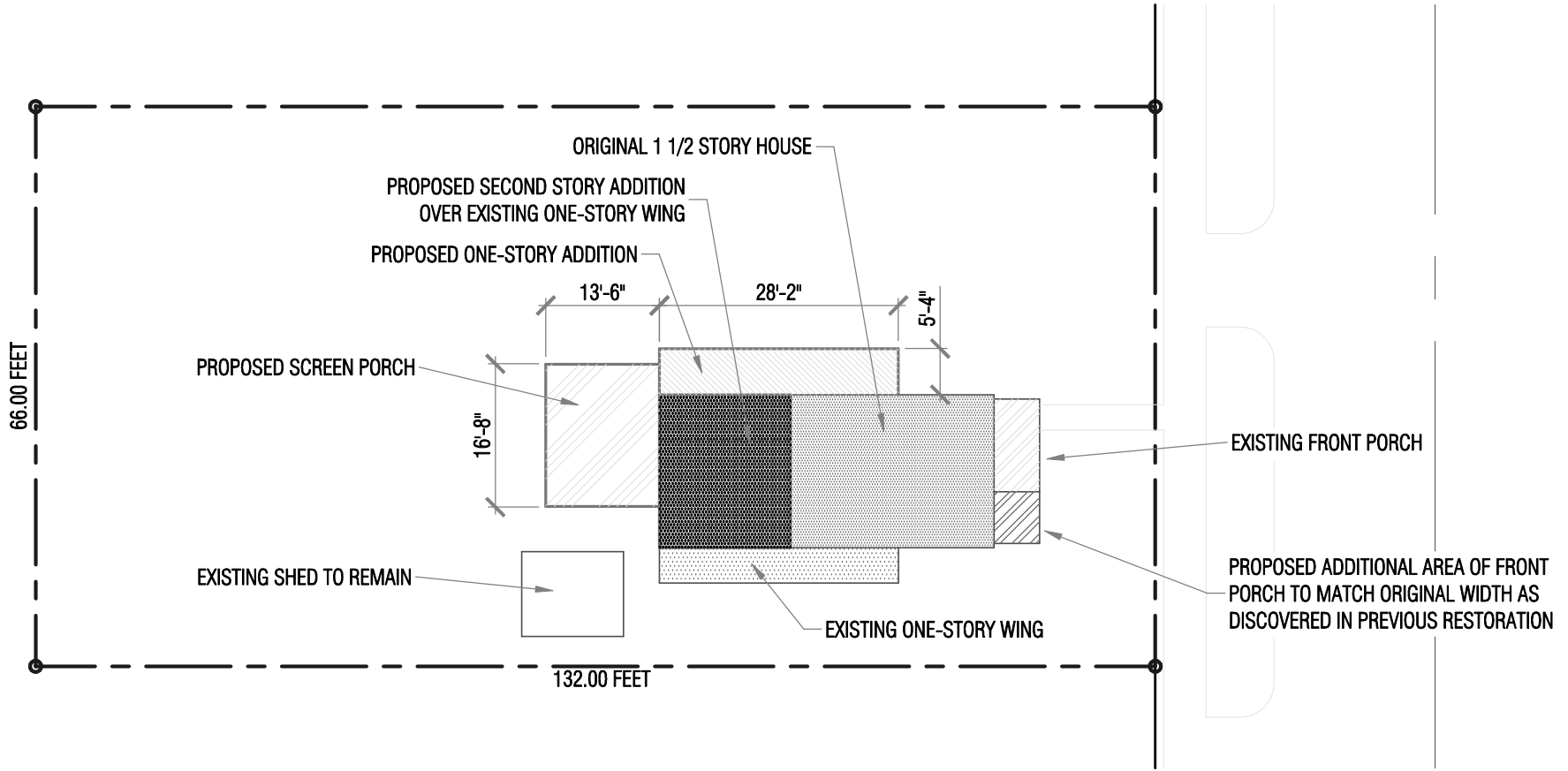
Please see attached.

STAFF USE ONLY

Date Submitted: 5/25/12 Project No.: _____
HDC 12-091 Pre-filing Staff Reviewer & Date: _____
Application Filing Date: _____ Staff
signature: _____ Comments: _____
Application to _____ Staff or _____ HDC Fee Paid: 500.00
Date of Public Hearing: 9/14-2012 Action: _____ HDC COA _____ HDC Denial
HDC NTP _____ Staff COA

CUSHARD DESIGN ASSOCIATES

5793 UPDYKE ROAD GRASS LAKE, MICHIGAN 49240 734.260.9862 CUSHARD@VOYAGER.NET

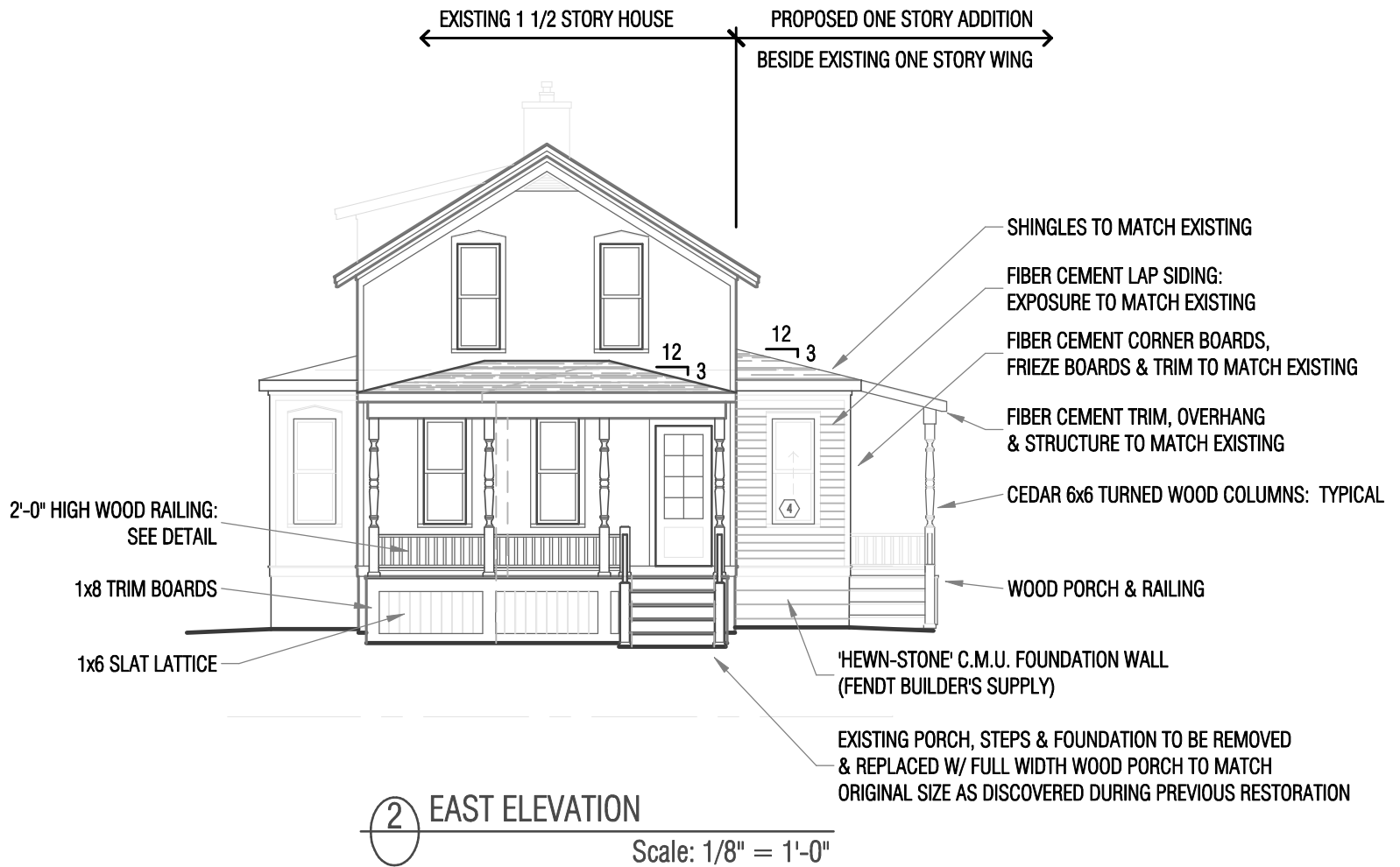


1 SITE LAYOUT DIAGRAM

Scale: 1" = 20'-0"

CUSHARD DESIGN ASSOCIATES

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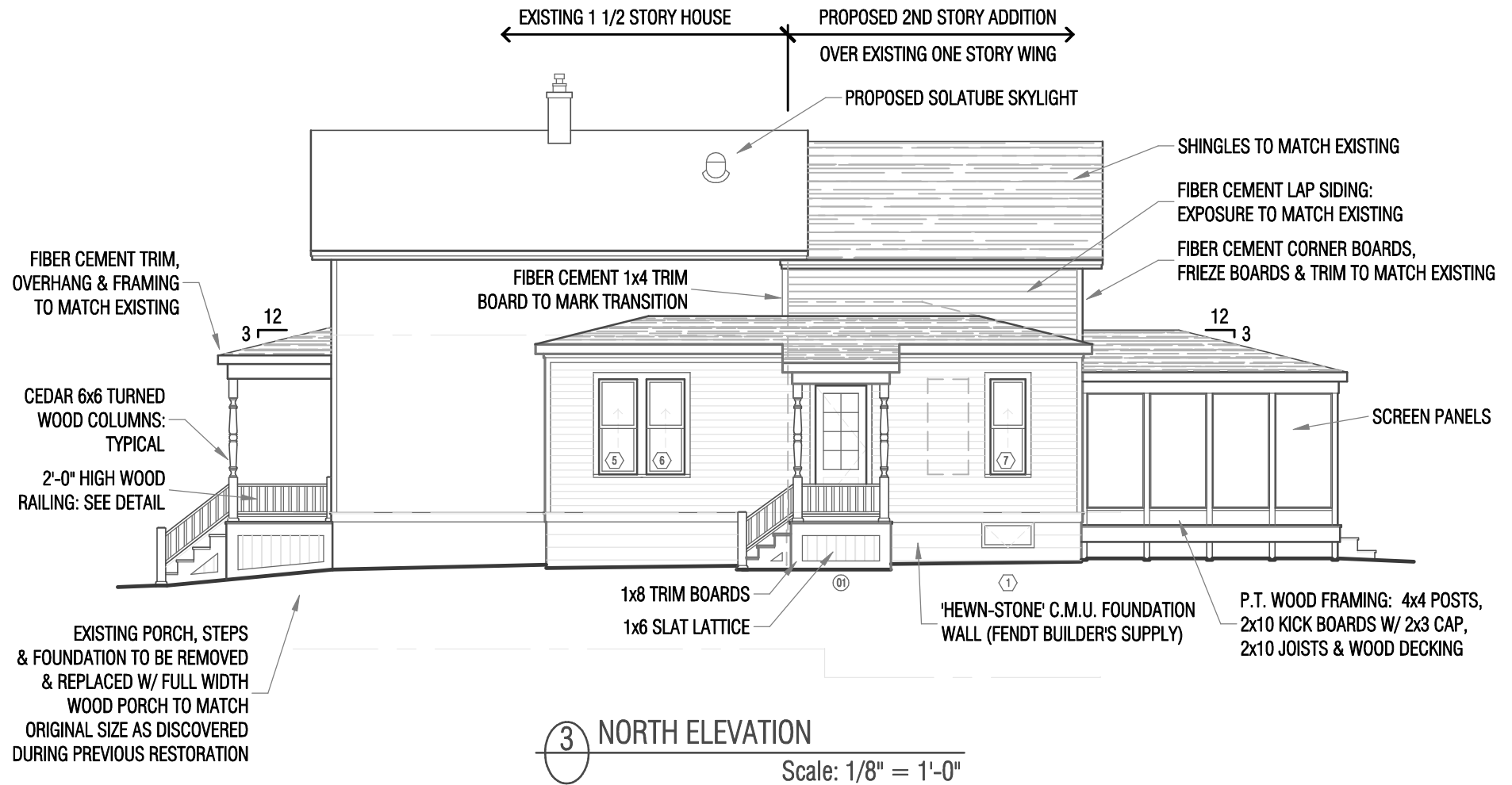


ADDITION TO 538 FIFTH STREET
Ann Arbor, Michigan

25 May 2012

CUSHARD DESIGN ASSOCIATES

5793 UPDYKE ROAD GRASS LAKE, MICHIGAN 49240 734.260.9862 CUSHARD@VOYAGER.NET

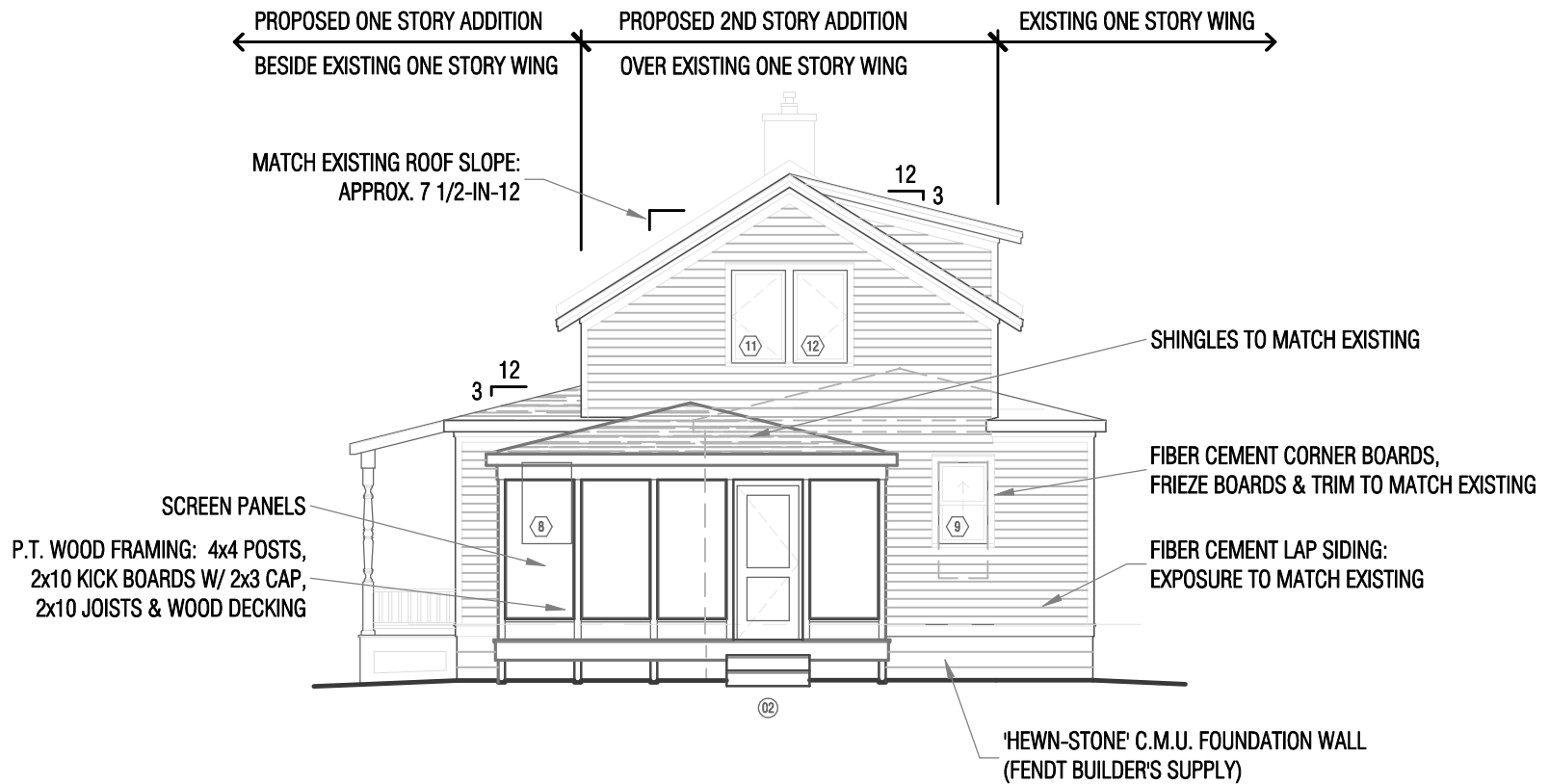


ADDITION TO 538 FIFTH STREET
Ann Arbor, Michigan

25 May 2012

CUSHARD DESIGN ASSOCIATES

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4 WEST ELEVATION

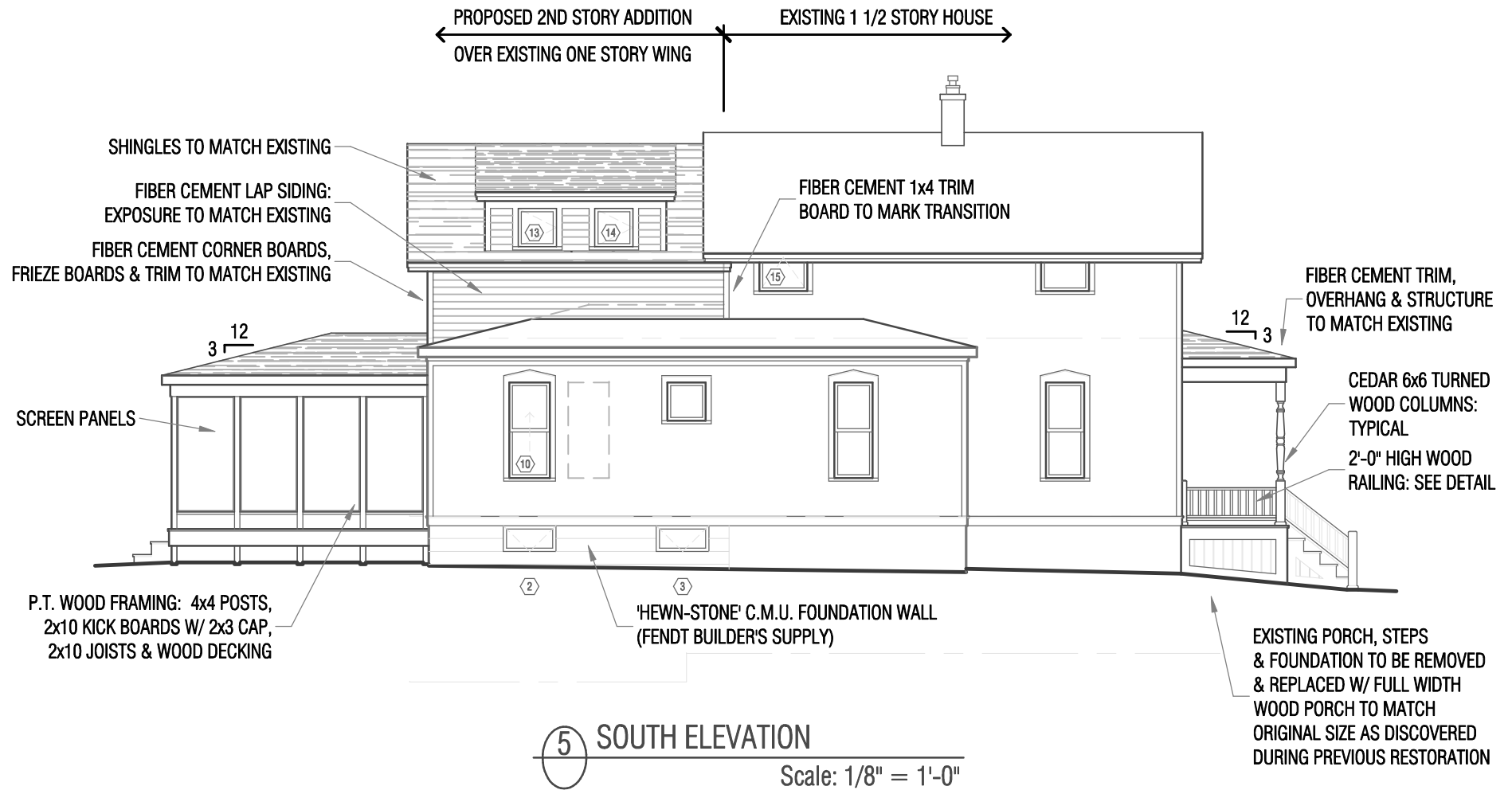
Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"

ADDITION TO 538 FIFTH STREET
Ann Arbor, Michigan

25 May 2012

CUSHARD DESIGN ASSOCIATES

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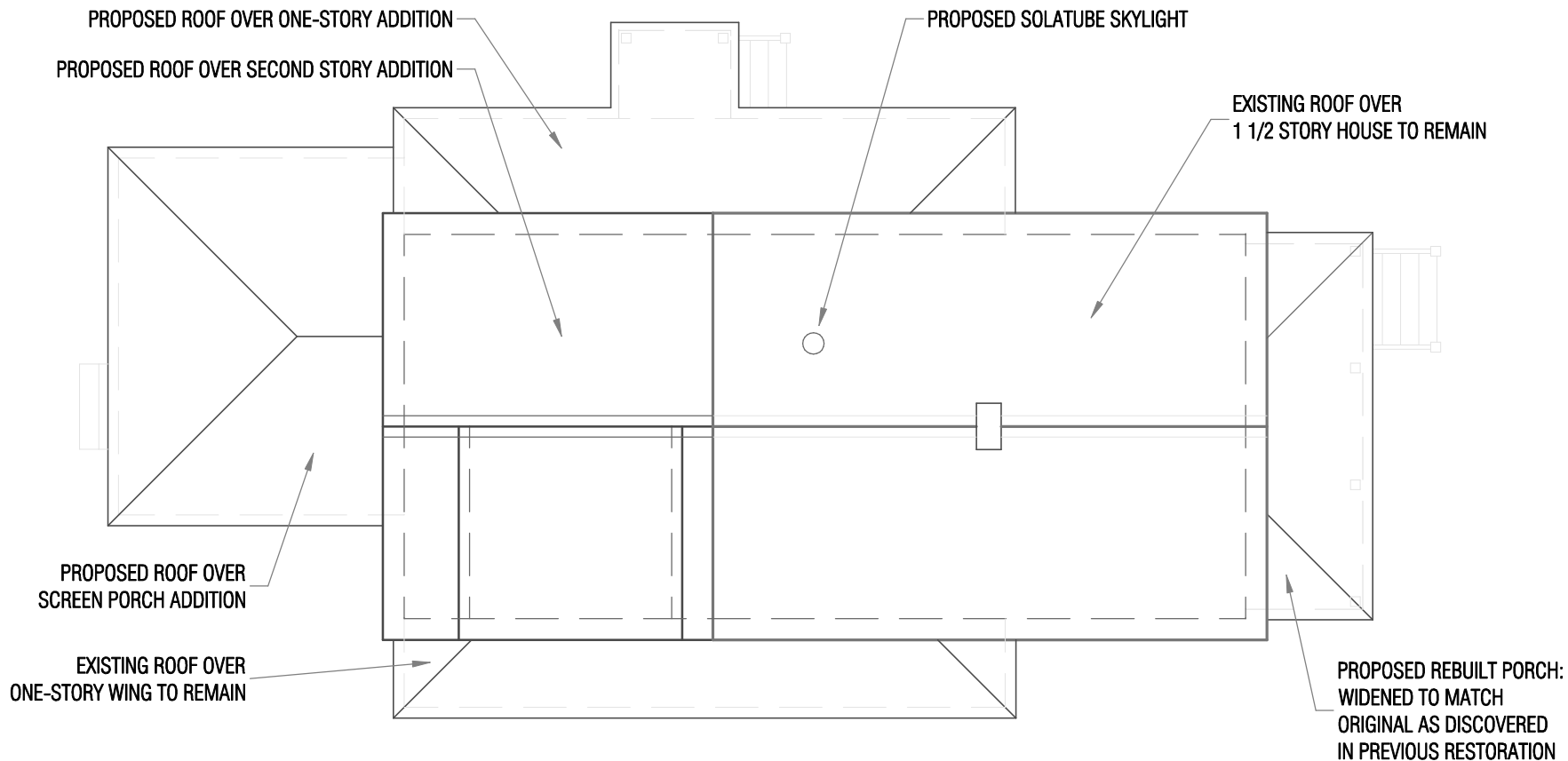


ADDITION TO 538 FIFTH STREET
Ann Arbor, Michigan

25 May 2012

CUSHARD DESIGN ASSOCIATES

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6 ROOF PLAN

Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"

CUSHARD DESIGN ASSOCIATES

5793 UPDYKE ROAD GRASS LAKE, MICHIGAN 49240 734.260.9862 CUSHARD@VOYAGER.NET

WINDOW SCHEDULE

| NO. | ROOM NAME | R.O. SIZE (WxH) | OPERATION | HEAD HEIGHT | NOTES |
|---------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------|----------------|--------------------------------|
| BASEMENT: | | | | | |
| 1. | UNFINISHED | 2'-8" x 1'-4" | HOPPER | 8'-0" A.F.F. | |
| 2. | UNFINISHED | 2'-8" x 1'-4" | HOPPER | 8'-0" A.F.F. | |
| 3. | UNFINISHED | 2'-8" x 1'-4" | HOPPER | 8'-0" A.F.F. | |
| FIRST FLOOR: | | | | | |
| 4. | DINING ROOM | 2'-0" x 5'-0" | DBL HUNG | 7'-0" A.F.F. | RECONDITIONED SALVAGED WINDOW. |
| 5. | DINING ROOM | 2'-0" x 5'-0" | DBL HUNG | 7'-0" A.F.F. | RECONDITIONED SALVAGED WINDOW. |
| 6. | DINING ROOM | 2'-0" x 5'-0" | DBL HUNG | 7'-0" A.F.F. | RECONDITIONED SALVAGED WINDOW. |
| 7. | OFFICE | 2'-0" x 5'-0" | DBL HUNG | 7'-0" A.F.F. | RECONDITIONED SALVAGED WINDOW. |
| 8. | OFFICE | 2'-2" x 3'-6" | DBL HUNG | 7'-0" A.F.F. | |
| 9. | KITCHEN | 2'-2" x 3'-6" | DBL HUNG | 7'-0" A.F.F. | |
| 10. | KITCHEN | 2'-2" x 5'-0" | DBL HUNG | 7'-0" A.F.F. | RECONDITIONED SALVAGED WINDOW. |
| SECOND FLOOR: | | | | | |
| 11. | MASTER BEDROOM | 2'-4" x 4'-0" | CSMT | 6'-8" A.F.F. | EMERGENCY ESCAPE WINDOW. |
| 12. | MASTER BEDROOM | 2'-4" x 4'-0" | CSMT | 6'-8" A.F.F. | EMERGENCY ESCAPE WINDOW. |
| 13. | MASTER BEDROOM | 2'-0" x 2'-0" | CSMT | 6'-8" A.F.F. | |
| 14. | MASTER BEDROOM | 2'-0" x 2'-0" | CSMT | 6'-8" A.F.F. | |
| 15. | BATHROOM | 2'-6" x 1'-8" | AWNING | MATCH EXISTING | SAFETY GLAZING. |

WINDOW NOTES:

01. ALL NEW WINDOWS SHALL BE ALUMINUM CLAD WOOD WINDOWS (JELD-WEN OR SIMILAR).

DOOR SCHEDULE

| NO. | ROOM NAME | DOOR SIZE | MATERIAL | NOTES |
|--------------|--------------|---------------|----------|-------------------|
| FIRST FLOOR: | | | | |
| 01 | MUD ROOM | 2'-8" x 6'-8" | WD/GLASS | HALF LITE. |
| 02 | SCREEN PORCH | 2'-8" x 6'-8" | WD/SCRN | WOOD SCREEN DOOR. |

GENERAL SITE NOTES:

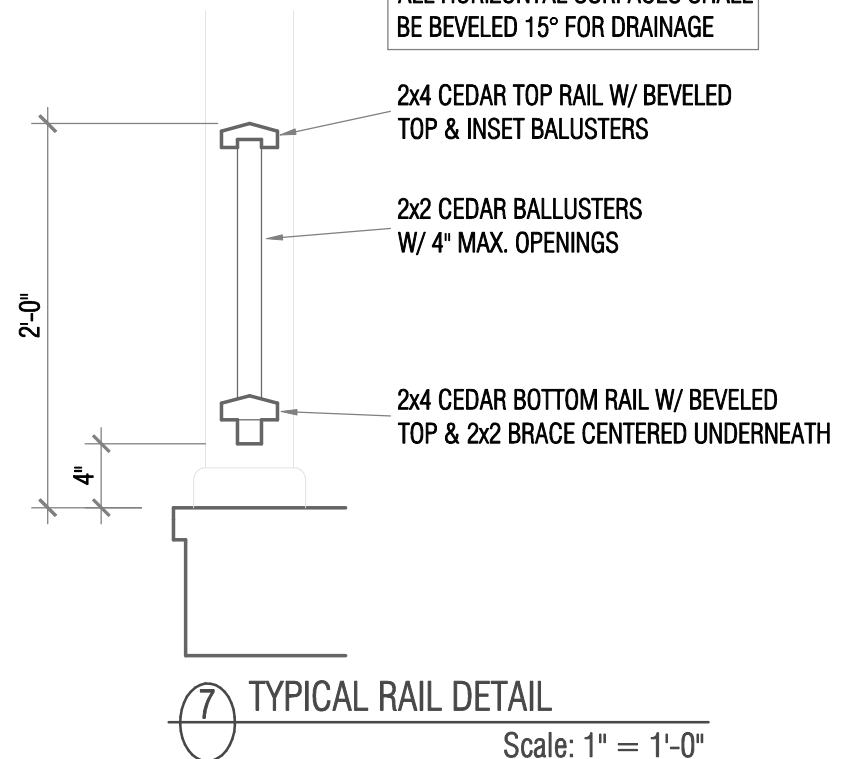
01. GRADE GENTLY SLOPES ACROSS THE LOT FROM WEST TO EAST.
 02. NO MAJOR SITE WORK IS ANTICIPATED. VERY SLIGHT REGRADING WILL BE REQUIRED IN THE AREA OF THE ADDITION TO ENSURE POSITIVE DRAINAGE AWAY FROM THE BUILDING.

PROJECT INFORMATION:

| | EXISTING | PROPOSED | CHANGE |
|---|----------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| FINISHED BUILDING AREA | | | |
| FIRST FLOOR | 745 GROSS SQ. FT. | 980 GROSS SQ. FT. | +235 GROSS SQ. FT. |
| SECOND FLOOR | 432 GROSS SQ. FT. | 612 GROSS SQ. FT. | +180 GROSS SQ. FT. |
| TOTAL: | 1,177 GROSS SQ. FT. | 1,592 GROSS SQ. FT. | +415 GROSS SQ. FT. |
| PROPOSED ADDITION = 35% INCREASE IN THE TOTAL AREA. | | | |
| LOT AREA | 8,712 SQ. FT. (0.20 ACRES) | | |
| LOT WIDTH | APPROX. 66 FEET | | |

NOTE:

ALL HORIZONTAL SURFACES SHALL BE BEVELED 15° FOR DRAINAGE









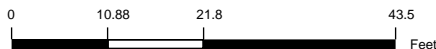
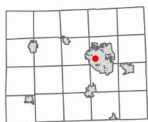






538 Fifth Street

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1: 261

2/2/2012

THIS MAP REPRESENTS PARCELS AT THE TIME OF PRINTING. THE OFFICIAL PARCEL TAX MAPS ARE MAINTAINED SOLELY BY THE WASHTENAW COUNTY EQUALIZATION DEPARTMENT AND CAN BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING THAT OFFICE AT 734-222-6662.



NOTE: Parcels may not be to scale.

The information contained in this cadastral map is used to locate, identify and inventory parcels of land in Washtenaw County for appraisal and taxing purposes only and is not to be construed as a "survey description". The information is provided with the understanding that the conclusions drawn from such information are solely the responsibility of the user. Any assumption of legal status of this data is hereby disclaimed.







DiLeo, Alexis

From: Jill Crader [jillcrader@ameritech.net]
Sent: Thursday, May 24, 2012 9:20 PM
To: HDC
Cc: Rachel, John, Charlie and Sam Thompson Reitz
Subject: Rietz/Thompson proposed addition in the Old West Side

I'm writing to express my support of the addition John and Rachel have had designed for their historic home. I am the neighbor to the south of their property. They had spent over a year thoughtfully planning the addition and remodel, working with 2 architects to get a design that would be acceptable to the historic district commission, and talking with neighbors to get input and opinions about the project. Over their years of ownership John and Rachel have taken care to preserve the historic features of the home, restored its interior, restored the original exterior siding, and done research to determine the appearance of the original porch that was part of the house.

Each of the homes to the north and south of John and Rachel's house has had an addition, so putting one on their house would not negatively effect any of the adjacent properties. The addition would allow this growing family to remain in the neighborhood they have come to love. I believe them to be good stewards of the historic district commission's goals.

Jill

DiLeo, Alexis

From: jonathan@urban-fairies.com
Sent: Thursday, May 24, 2012 1:06 PM
To: HDC
Subject: 538 5th Street addition

Hello~

Jonathan Wright here. We live next door to John Rietz and Rachel Thompson and have for many years now. They are very sensitive to the historic nature of their house and the street. Their house is meticulously maintained and painted in historically accurate (and yummy) colors. We have no doubts about any addition, change, improvement to the property that they make. It will be lovely and appropriate!

~Jonathan & Kathleen Wright
532 5th Street