

## ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

### Staff Report

**ADDRESS:** 706 W Liberty Street, Application Number HDC25-0094

**DISTRICT:** Old West Side Historic District

**REPORT DATE:** July 10, 2025

**REPORT PREPARED BY:** Mariana Melin-Corcoran, City Planner

**REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE:** Monday, July 7, 2025

#### OWNER

**Name:** Alexander Whatley  
**Address:** 706 W Liberty St  
 Ann Arbor, MI 48103  
**Phone:** (734) 417-1981

#### APPLICANT

James Bevilacqua  
 1113 West Huron St  
 Ann Arbor, MI 48103  
 (917) 822-0108

**BACKGROUND:** The 1867 John Christian Burkhart house features a very symmetrical front façade, with a center entry and vertically aligned four-over-four windows. The porch is a reproduction from the late 1980s, when the missing porch was designed in part based on ghosting found under artificial siding. It also features a hip roof and dentils and decorative wall trim beneath the eaves. Per *Historic Buildings, Ann Arbor, Michigan*, Burkhart was a skilled carpenter who moved to Ann Arbor in 1848 to help build Bethlehem Church. He also built an earlier house across the street at 707 W Liberty.

Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps show that a one-story addition was constructed at the rear of the two-story house during the period of significance. In 1994, a new two-story rear addition was built that enveloped the majority of the earlier one-story addition.

**LOCATION:** The site is located on the north side of West Liberty Street, west of Fifth Street and east of Mulholland.

**APPLICATION:** The applicant seeks HDC approval to remove a post-1945 two-story addition at the rear of the house and then construct a new two-story rear addition, plus a one-story rear addition and a rear deck.

#### APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:

**From the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (other SOI Standards may also apply):**

- (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.

- (5) Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
- (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):**

### **Building Site**

*Not Recommended:* Introducing new construction onto the building site which is visually incompatible in terms of size, scale, design, materials, color and texture or which destroys historic relationships on the site.

### **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.

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

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

Placing new additions such as balconies and greenhouses on non-character-defining elevations and limiting and size and scale in relationship to the historic building.

Designing additional stories, when required for the new use, that are set back from the wall plane and are as inconspicuous as possible when viewed from the street.

*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.

Designing and constructing new additions that result in the diminution or loss of the historic character of the resource, including its design, materials, workmanship, location, or setting.

Constructing additional stories so that the historic appearance of the building is radically changed.

**From the *City of Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines*** (other guidelines from this document may also apply):

### **Guidelines for All Additions**

*Appropriate*: Locating a required addition on the least character-defining elevation and keeping it subordinate in volume to the historic building.

Placing a new addition on a non-character defining or inconspicuous elevation and limiting the size and scale in relationship to the historic property.

Designing the addition so it is compatible in terms of massing, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and proportion of openings.

Limiting the size and scale of the addition in relationship to the historic building so that it does not diminish or visually overpower the building or the district. The addition's footprint should exceed neither half of the original building's footprint nor half of the original building's total floor area.

*Not Appropriate*: Designing a new addition that requires the removal of significant building elements or site features.

Designing an addition to appear older or the same age as the original building.

Designing an addition that overpowers or dramatically alters the original building through size or height.

Constructing an addition that significantly changes the proportion of built mass to open space on the individual site.

### **Additions to Historic Residential Structures**

*Appropriate*: Placing new walls in a different plane from the historic structure in a subordinate position to the historic fabric.

### **STAFF FINDINGS:**

1. The applicant proposes to demolish the 1994 rear addition, which had enclosed the pre-1945 one-story addition, as well as the existing rear deck. The only remaining element of the pre-1945 addition appears to be the western building plane, which was expanded upward and northward during the 1994 construction.
2. The proposed rear addition has two parts – a two-story addition connected to the rear of the historic house and a one-story addition behind the two-story addition (to the north). The two-story portion is rectangular and measures 28 feet east-west and 14 feet north-south. The one-story portion is also rectangular and measures 22 feet 11 inches east-west and 16 feet 6 inches north-south. There is also a proposed entrance vestibule at the

northwest corner of the two-story addition (also the southwest corner of the one-story addition). It measures four feet two inches east-west and four feet six inches north-south and has a recessed entryway.

The two-story addition is inset one foot from the historic house on the east side. This is an improvement over the current condition, where the addition is in the same plane as the historic east wall. It is also inset on the west side, but the dimension is not labeled on the drawings. It appears to be more than one foot. The east side of the one-story portion aligns with the east elevation of the two-story addition portion, with a small bumpout to accommodate a fireplace. The west elevation of the one-story portion is inset 4 feet 6 inches from the west side of the two-story portion.

3. The two-story portion of the addition will feature a hipped roof that ties into the existing historic roof. While the height is unspecified, the ridge appears lower than the original roofline. The one-story portion will also have a hipped roof that integrates with the two-story portion. The roofing material for the additions is not indicated in the submitted drawings. The use of hipped roofs is compatible with the historic house's roof.
4. The additions are clad in smooth fiber-cement lap siding. On the drawings, the exposure is shown to be 5 inches to match the existing wood siding on the historic house. Trim throughout will be AZEK. The submitted plans show that the second-story frieze and dentil molding will replicate the detailing on the historic house. Staff has recommended that this design be changed to be compatible with, but not exactly match, the historic frieze and molding.
5. The proposed windows are clad wood with simulated divided lites and spacers. They are a mix of casements and double hung windows. As shown on the drawings, they are different sizes than the historic windows. Window trim on the additions will be 5/4 x 4 AZEK trim. The dimensions of the historic trim are not specified.

There will also be two egress window wells on the east side of the additions.

6. There will be two rear door openings on the additions – one leading from the one-story portion to the deck and the other leading from the two-story portion to the backyard (at the entrance vestibule). Both doors will be wood, either half- or 3/4-lite.
7. Per the submitted drawing set, the historic footprint of the house is 932 square feet, including 220 square feet of the addition constructed during the period of significance. The new footprint will be 1,359 square feet, constituting an increase of 45%. The historic floor area of the house is 1,638 square feet, and the proposed floor area is 2,457 square feet. This would be an increase of 50%.
8. The proposed rear deck will have composite decking and wood railings and balusters. The skirting will be AZEK tongue and groove vertical shiplap. The deck will be rectangular and measure 317 square feet. The height of the porch and railings is not specified on the drawings.
9. Included as part of the application are new mechanical units on the east side of the two-



story portion of the addition, at the rear of the historic house. This is an appropriate location for mechanical equipment.

10. The design for the proposed additions is compatible with the historic house. Although the massing is substantial, the additions will have minimal impact on the historic structure because they will fill the space of the 1994 addition. The rear of the house is an appropriate location for an addition. The additions will be inset, and the peak of the new roof will be lower than the historic roof ridge. Though because the lot is wide, parts of the proposed work will be visible from the right of way. By inseting the proposed additions, the project will restore the original northeast corner of the house.

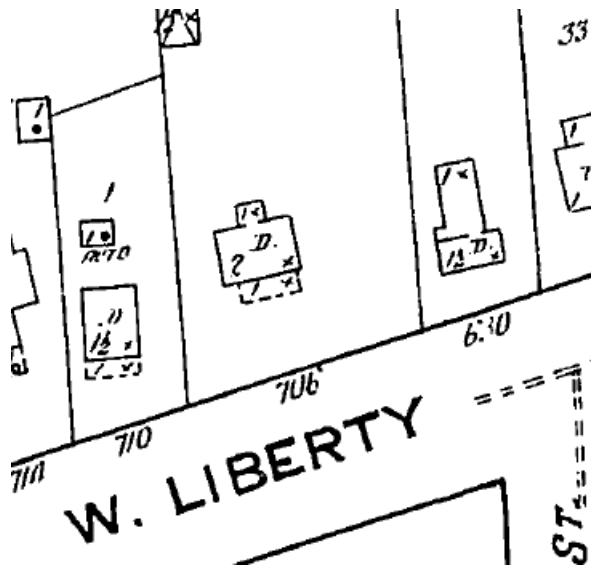
**POSSIBLE MOTIONS:** (Note that the motion supports staff findings and is only a suggestion. The Review Committee, consisting of staff and at least two Commissioners, will meet with the applicant on site and then make a recommendation at the meeting.)

I move that the Commission issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at 706 West Liberty Street, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to demolish the existing two-story rear addition and deck, construct a new two-story rear addition plus a one-story rear addition and a rear deck, and install mechanical units, as proposed. The 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, 5, 9, and 10 and the guidelines for building site and additions, as well as the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines*, in particular the guidelines for all additions and additions to historic residential structures.

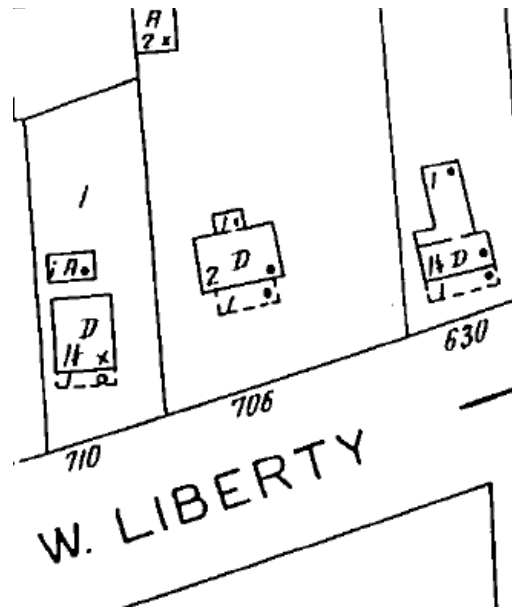
**ATTACHMENTS:** drawings, photos, materials information



(2008 staff photo)



1916 Sanborn Map



1948 Sanborn



1947 Aerial



RESIDENTIAL ADDITION & REMODEL FOR  
**ALEX WHATLEY & KELLY GRANITO**

706 W. LIBERTY STREET, ANN ARBOR, 48103

GENERAL INFORMATION:

PARCEL #: 09-09-29-305-005  
CITY OF ANN ARBOR, WASHTENAW COUNTY  
MICHIGAN RESIDENTIAL CODE, 2015  
ZONING: R2A (SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL)  
OCCUPANCY/USE: SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING  
HISTORIC DISTRICT: YES  
WETLAND: NO  
FLOODPLAIN: NO  
SOIL GROUP: FoB (FOX SANDY LOAM, 2-6 SLOPES), FoC (FOX SANDY LOAM, 6-12 SLOPES)  
SOIL NRCS CLASS: B: SILT OR LOAM

ZONING (R2A*):	R2A	EXISTING / PROPOSED
MIN. LOT AREA:	8,500 SQ. FT.	0.76 ACRES; 33,105.6 SQ. FT.
MIN. LOT WIDTH:	60'	+/- 100'
MIN. FRONT YARD**:	25'	+/- 34'-6" / (NO CHANGE)
MIN. SIDE YARD (ONE SIDE):	5'	+/- 17' / (NO CHANGE)
MIN. SIDE YARD (TOTAL):	10'	+/- 62' / (NO CHANGE)
MIN. REAR YARD:	30'	+/- 281' / +/- 268'
MAX. BUILDING HEIGHT:	30'	+/- 23'-6" / (NO CHANGE)

\*\*FRONT YARD SETBACK DETERMINED BY AVG. EXISTING SETBACKS.

PRE-1945 FLOOR AREA/FOOTPRINT (MAIN LEVEL): 932 SQ. FT.
PRE-1945 FLOOR AREA (UPPER LEVEL): 706 SQ. FT.
PRE-1945 FLOOR AREA (TOTAL): 1,638 SQ. FT.
EXISTING FLOOR AREA/FOOTPRINT (MAIN LEVEL): 1,002 SQ. FT.
EXISTING FLOOR AREA (UPPER LEVEL): 1,074 SQ. FT.
EXISTING FLOOR AREA (TOTAL): 2,076 SQ. FT.
HDC PERMITTED FOOTPRINT: 932 SQ. FT. X 1.5 = 1,398 SQ. FT.
HDC PERMITTED FLOOR AREA (TOTAL) = 1,638 SQ. FT. X 1.5 = 2,457 SQ. FT.
PROPOSED FLOOR AREA/FOOTPRINT (MAIN LEVEL): 1,359 SQ. FT.
PROPOSED FLOOR AREA (UPPER LEVEL): 1,098 SQ. FT.
PROPOSED TOTAL FLOOR AREA: 2,457 SQ. FT.

NOTE: ALL AREA CALCULATIONS ARE TAKEN TO OUTSIDE OF CONSTRUCTION.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**  
THE SCOPE OF WORK FOR THIS PROJECT INCLUDES A TWO STORY ADDITION ON A FULL BASEMENT & REMODEL OF EXTENSIVE AREAS OF THE EXISTING HOUSE.

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**  
**CHANGES TO THE EXTERIOR INCLUDE:**  
1. REMOVE AN EXISTING 660 SQ FT 2-STORY REAR ADDITION, OF WHICH 220 SQ. FT. OF THE FIRST FLOOR IS PART OF THE CONTRIBUTING AREA THAT HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY ALTERED & EXTENDED AND A SECOND STORY BUILT ABOVE.  
2. REMOVE A NON-CONTRIBUTING REAR DECK & CONSTRUCT NEW 14'x23' REAR DECK.  
3. CONSTRUCT A NEW TWO-STORY REAR ADDITION THAT IS MORE HISTORICALLY APPROPRIATE TO THE ORIGINAL HOME. RE-ESTABLISH AN ORIGINAL EXTERIOR CORNER OF THE HOME THAT WAS LOST IN A PREVIOUS ADDITION. THE ADDITION WILL CONSIST OF A FAMILY ROOM, A REAR ENTRY, A POWDER ROOM, A PANTRY, AND TWO SECOND FLOOR BEDROOMS WITH A HALLWAY BATHROOM.



VIEW FROM STREET - PROPOSED



VIEW FROM STREET - EXISTING



NO CHANGE TO STREET  
FACING ELEVATION

**FRONT (SOUTH) ELEVATION - PROPOSED**  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



**FRONT (SOUTH) ELEVATION - EXISTING**  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



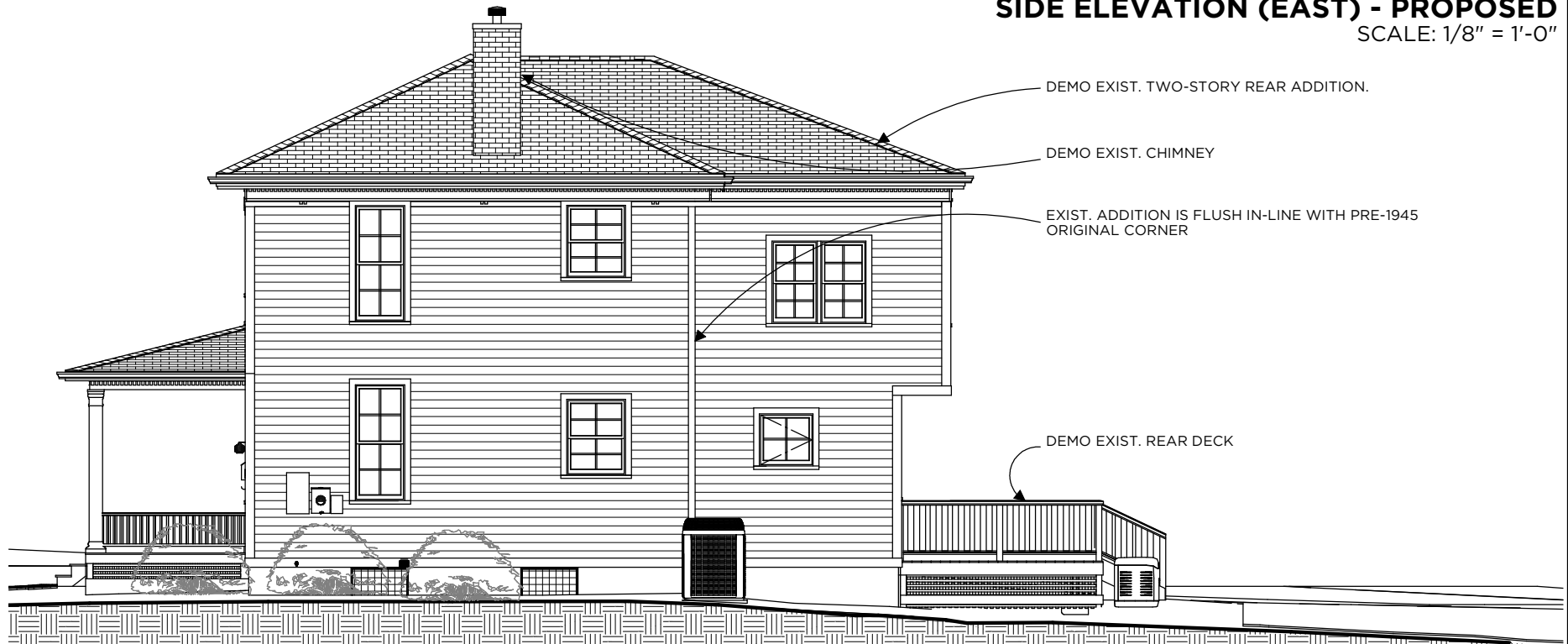
**REAR ELEVATION (NORTH) - PROPOSED**  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



**REAR (NORTH) ELEVATION - EXISTING**  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



**SIDE ELEVATION (EAST) - PROPOSED**  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



**SIDE ELEVATION (EAST) - EXISTING**  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

CONSTRUCT NEW TWO-STORY ADDITION. NEW  
ADDITION TO MATCH ORIGINAL FLOOR ELEVATIONS &  
INCLUDE FULL BASEMENT BELOW.

NEW SINGLE CASEMENT (BEDROOM EGRESS)  
30"W x 59 1/8"H

NEW SINGLE CASEMENT (MUDROOM)  
30"W x 43 1/8"H

NEW DOUBLE-HUNG (LIVING ROOM)  
31 1/4"W x 59 1/2"H

EXIST. DOUBLE-HUNG (BEDROOM)  
29 1/2"W x 69"H

EXIST. DOUBLE-HUNG  
(DINING)  
29 1/2"W x 69"H

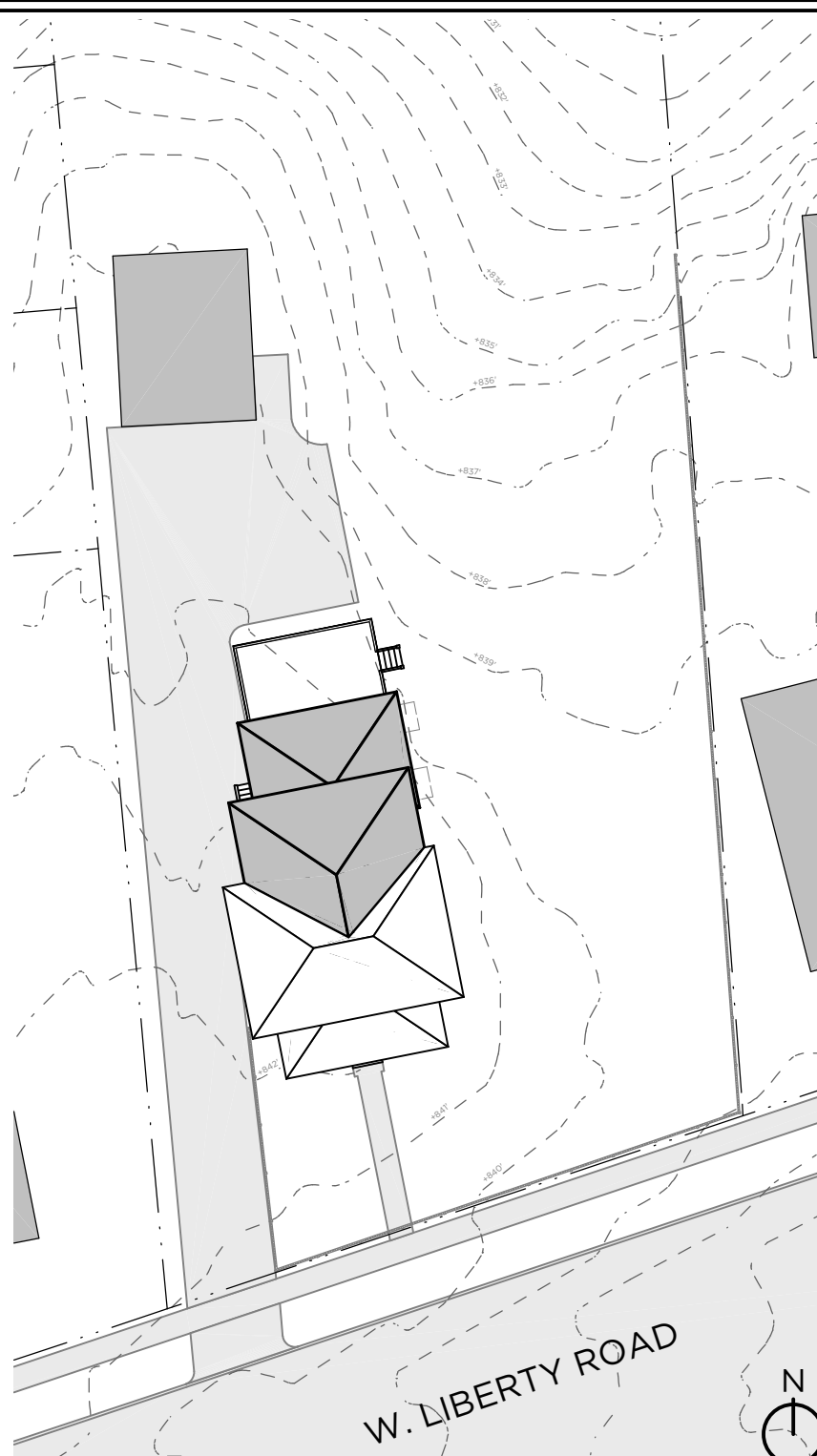
NEW AWNING (BASEMENT)  
30"W x 19 1/8"H

**SIDE ELEVATION (WEST) - PROPOSED**  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

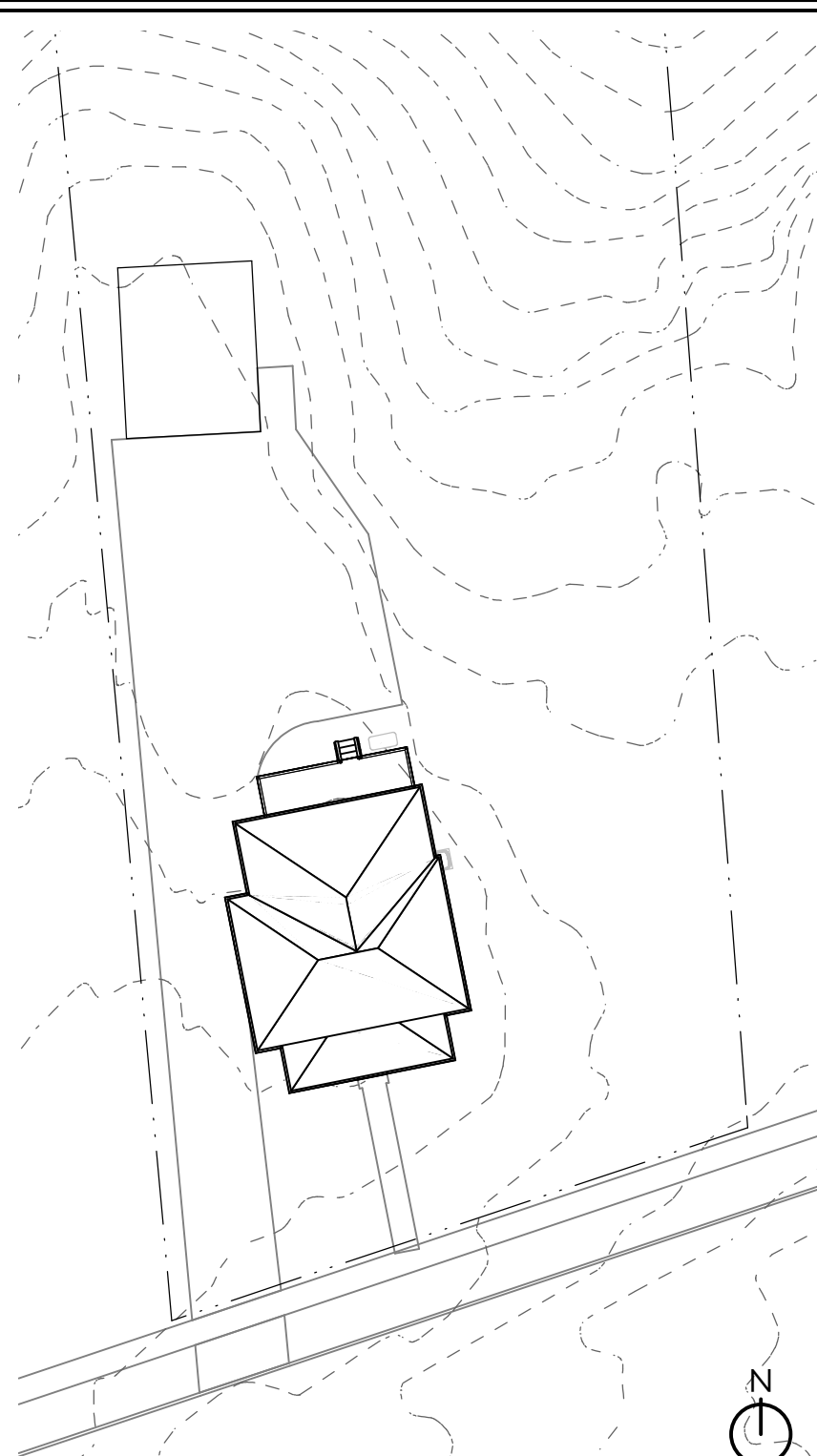
DEMO EXIST. TWO-STORY REAR ADDITION.

DEMO EXIST. REAR DECK

**SIDE ELEVATION (WEST) - EXISTING**  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

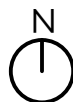


**SITE PLAN - PROPOSED**  
SCALE: 1" = 30'

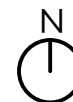


**SITE PLAN - EXISTING**  
SCALE: 1" = 30'





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



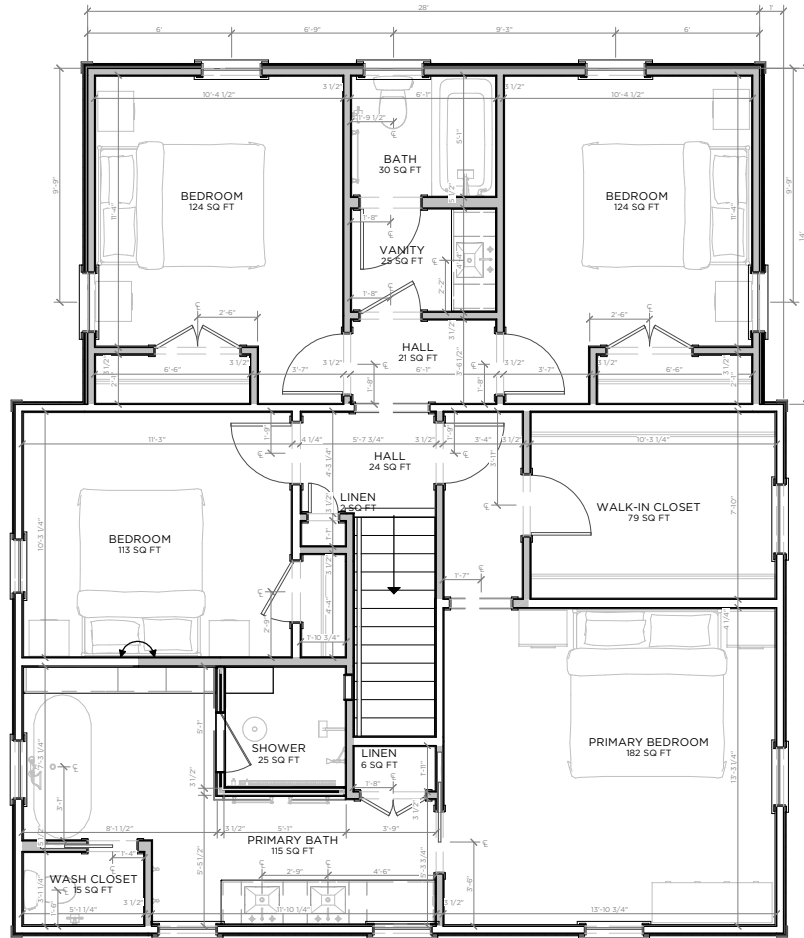
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



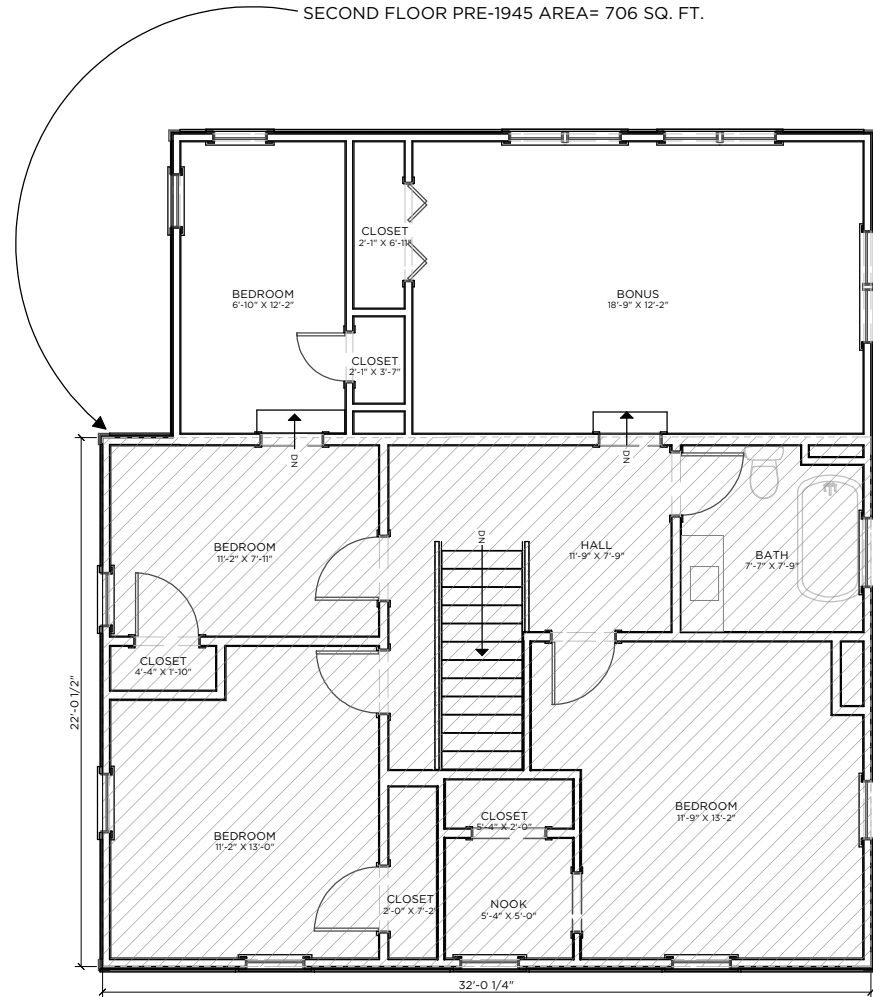
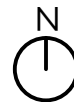
**MAIN LEVEL PLAN - EXISTING**  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



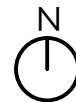
DENOTES ASSUMED CONTRIBUTING AREA BASED ON INFORMATION FROM 1947 AERIAL PHOTO, MISCELLANEOUS DISCOVERIES WITH DATE INFORMATION, AND VERIFYING CONVERSATION WITH CITY OF ANN ARBOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION COORDINATOR



**UPPER LEVEL PLAN - PROPOSED**  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



**UPPER LEVEL PLAN - EXISTING**  
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



## NOTE: SIDING & TRIM TO BE DIFFERENT MATERIALS FROM EXISTING

NEW SIDING TO BE JAMES HARDIE LAP SIDING OR COMPARABLE FIBRE-CEMENT PRODUCT  
TRIM TO BE AZEK OR COMPARABLE COMPOSITE PRODUCT

MATCH EXIST. FASCIA W/ AZEK 1x TRIM

CLOSE MATCH EXIST. 2ND FLOOR  
FRIEZE USING AZEK 5/4x TRIM & AZEK  
TO MILL PVC MATERIAL FOR DENTIL  
MOLDING

ADDITION INSET 1' FROM HISTORIC  
REAR CORNER

RE-ESTABLISH HISTORIC TWO-STORY  
REAR CORNER

5/4 x 6 AZEK CORNER BOARD

SIDING: FIBRE-CEMENT LAP SIDING  
(SMOOTH), 5" REVEAL TO MATCH EXIST.

NEW WINDOW TRIM:  
5/4 x 4 AZEK CASING  
AZEK HISTORIC SILL

NEW DECKING  
MATERIAL: TREX OR  
SIMILAR COMPOSITE

NEW WOOD RAILING  
& BALUSTERS,  
PAINTED

THIRD EGRESS WINDOW &  
WELL NO LONGER INCLUDED  
IN SCOPE OF WORK DUE TO  
PLACEMENT OF A/C UNITS

AZEK WATER TABLE &  
1 x 10 AZEK TRIM BOARD

WINDOW WELLS (TREATED 6x6)

PORCH SKIRT: 1 x 6 AZEK TONGUE &  
GROOVE SHIPLAP (VETICAL)

AZEK 4x4 COLUMN WRAP

## EXTERIOR VIEW OF PROPOSED ADDITION

TRIM & SIDING DETAILS



07/03/2025

**GRANITO-WHATLEY  
RESIDENCE**  
706 W. LIBERTY STREET, ANN ARBOR, 48103

EXISTING PHOTO

HDC

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**EXTERIOR VIEW OF EXISTING HOUSE**  
VIEW FROM SIDEWALK LOOKING NORTHWEST







**EXTERIOR VIEW OF PROPOSED ADDITION**  
VIEW FROM SIDEWALK LOOKING NORTHWEST



07/03/2025

**GRANITO-WHATLEY  
RESIDENCE**

706 W. LIBERTY STREET, ANN ARBOR, 48103

EXISTING PHOTO

HDC

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**EXTERIOR VIEW OF EXISTING HOUSE**  
VIEW FROM SIDEWALK LOOKING NORTHEAST







**EXTERIOR VIEW OF PROPOSED ADDITION**  
VIEW FROM SIDEWALK LOOKING NORTHEAST





**EXTERIOR VIEW OF PROPOSED ADDITION**  
VIEW FROM NEIGHBOR LOOKING WEST





**EXTERIOR VIEW OF PROPOSED ADDITION**  
VIEW FROM REAR YARD LOOKING SOUTHWEST



07/03/2025

**GRANITO-WHATLEY  
RESIDENCE**  
706 W. LIBERTY STREET, ANN ARBOR, 48103

EXISTING PHOTO

HDC

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**EXTERIOR VIEW OF PROPOSED ADDITION**  
VIEW FROM DRIVEWAY LOOKING SOUTHWEST



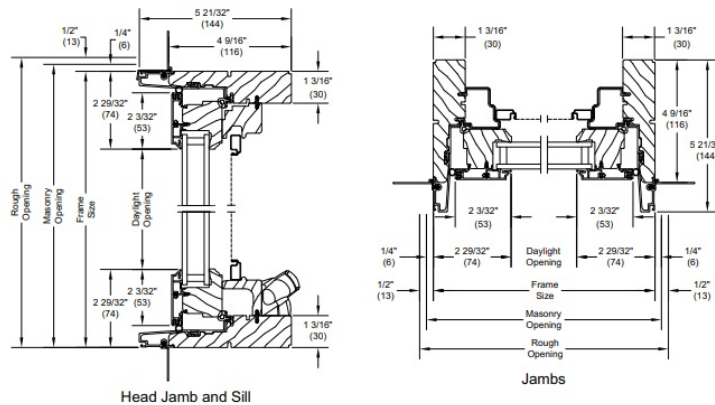


**EXTERIOR VIEW OF PROPOSED ADDITION**  
VIEW FROM DRIVEWAY LOOKING SOUTHWEST

Section Details: Operating/Stationary/Picture - 1" (25) IG

Scale: 3" = 1' 0"

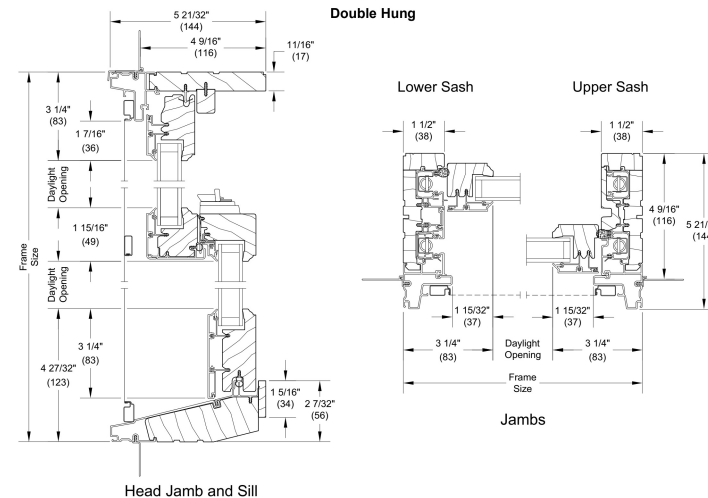
Operating



Section Details: Operating

Scale: 3" = 1' 0"

Double Hung



Simulated Divided Lite with Spacer Bar (SDLS)



Paired with SDL bars on the exterior of the glass, a spacer bar is installed between the glass, creating an even closer match to the Authentic Divided Lite look.

NEW WINDOWS IN ADDITION:

LIVING ROOM WINDOWS - MARVIN DOUBLE HUNG: (9) UDHG2 2626: 2'-7 1/4"W x 4'-11 1/2"H

PANTRY & MUDROOM WINDOWS - MARVIN ULTIMATE CASEMENTS: (2) UCA3044: 2'-6"W x 3'-7 1/8"H

BEDROOM EGRESS WINDOWS - MARVIN ULTIMATE CASEMENTS: (4) UCA3060: 2'-6"W x 4'-11 1/8"H

UPSTAIRS BATHROOM WINDOW - MARVIN ULTIMATE CASEMENT: (1) UCA3044: 2'-6"W x 3'-7 1/8"H

-WOOD INTERIOR / ALUMINUM CLAD EXTERIOR (MATCH EXISTING COLOR)

-LOCATION: REAR ADDITION

-DIVIDED LITES PATTERN: SEE ELEVATIONS

NOTE: NEW WINDOWS IN ADDITION ARE DIFFERENT IN SIZE TO EXISTING WINDOWS

07/03/2025

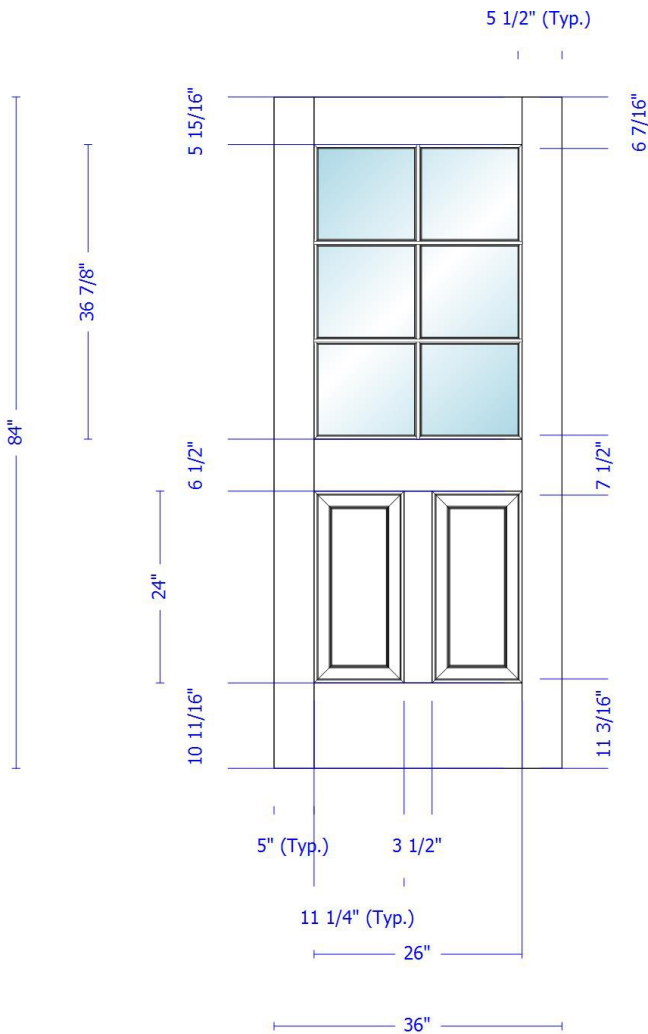
**GRANITO-WHATLEY**  
**RESIDENCE**  
706 W. LIBERTY STREET, ANN ARBOR, 48103

WINDOW INFORMATION

HDC

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**NEW WINDOWS**

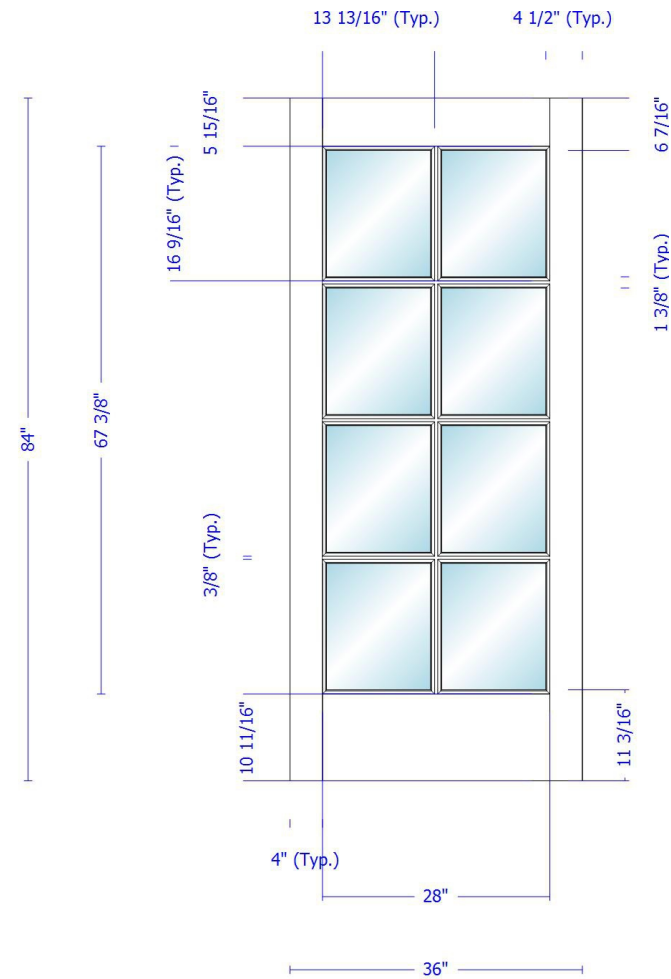


**REAR ENTRY DOOR**

NEW EXTERIOR WOOD DOORS IN ADDITION:

EXTERIOR ENTRY DOOR: 1/2 LITE, 2 PANEL, PAINTED FINISH, 3'-0"W x 7'-0"H

EXTERIOR FRENCH DOOR: 3/4 LITE, 1 PANEL, PAINTED FINISH, 3'-0"W x 7'-0"H



**LIVING ROOM FRENCH DOOR**

**NEW EXTERIOR DOORS**

DOOR INFORMATION

**GRANITO-WHATLEY  
RESIDENCE**  
706 W. LIBERTY STREET, ANN ARBOR, 48103

07/03/2025



**ROCHMAN**  
DESIGN | BUILD

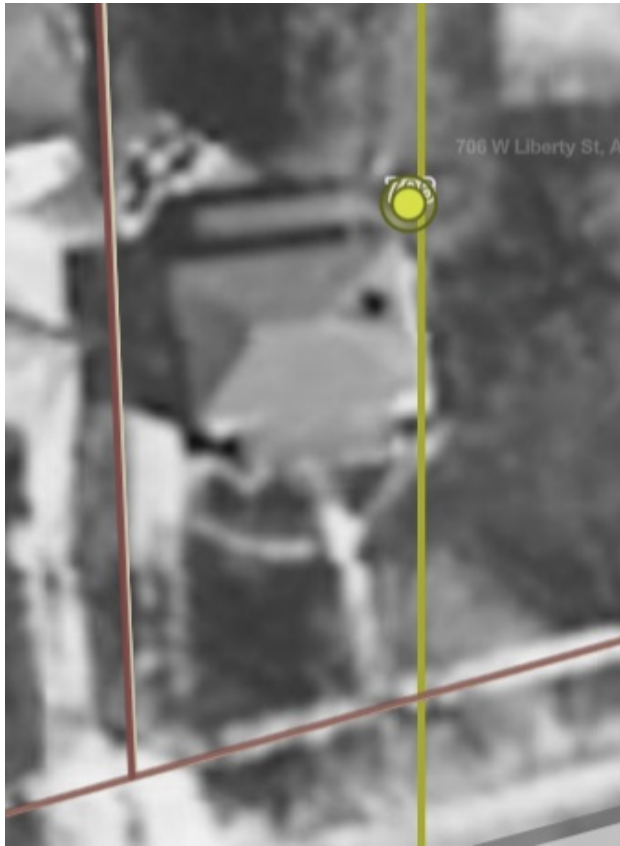
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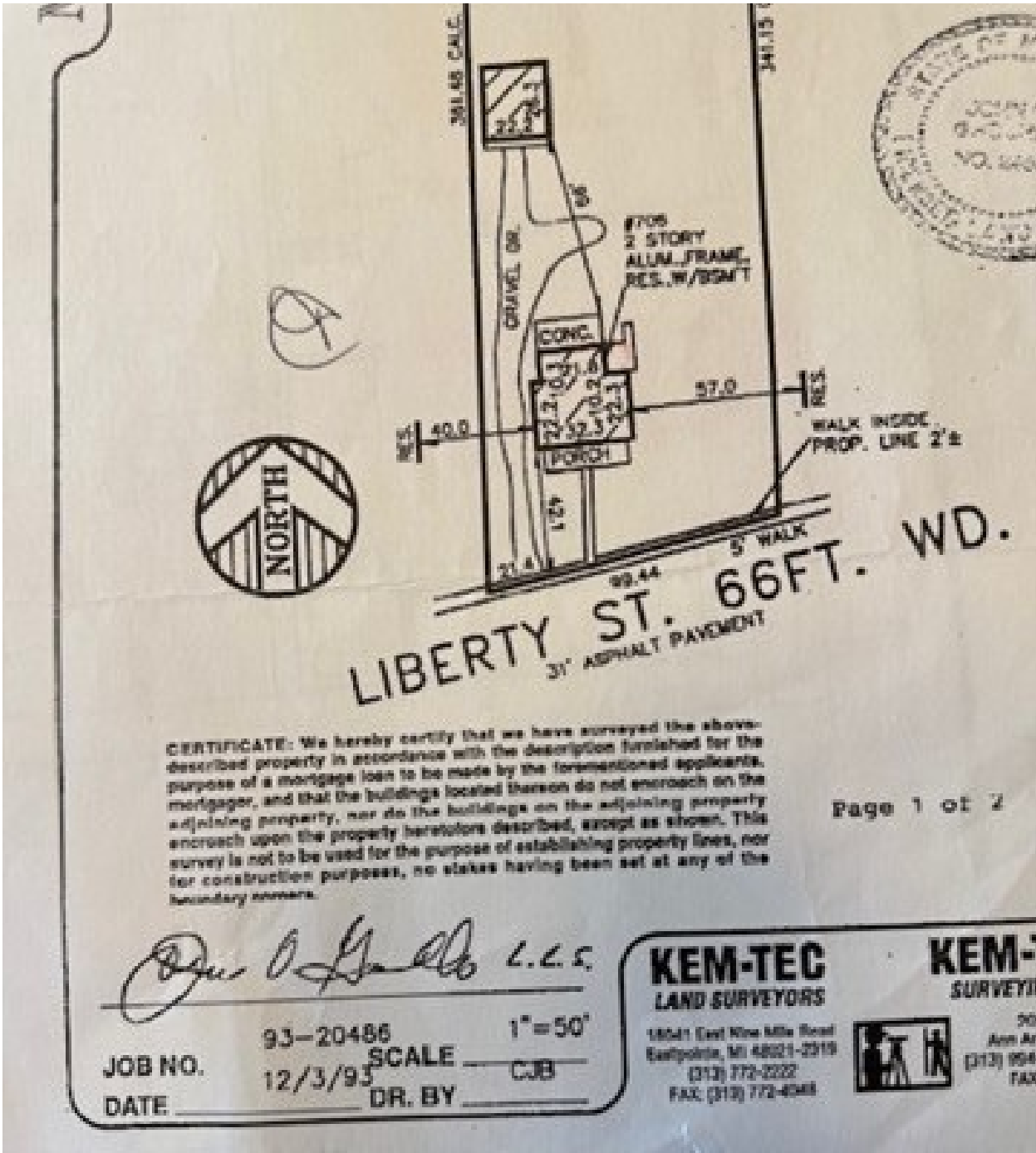




**NEWSPAPER UNDER FLOORING**  
 FOUND AT FIRST FLOOR REAR ADDITION



**1947 AERIAL PHOTO OF HOUSE**  
 SOURCE: MAPWASHTENAW GIS



**PREVIOUS SURVEY OF PROPERTY**  
 DATE: 12/3/1993

Mr. & Mrs. Greg Smith

Address: 706 W. Liberty

City: Ann Arbor

State: MI

Zip: 48103

Job name & location: same as above

Date: 1/20/94

Home: 663-8181

Work:

#### SPECIFICATIONS

Proposed two-story frame addition, to incorporate existing 1-story addition, with bath, entrance hall & bedroom on 1st floor, family room, closets & study on 2nd floor, all work to the following specifications:

1.) Building permit allowance & plan review fee	350.00
2.) Site measurements, preliminary design work & construction drawings	490.00
3.) Remove existing 7'-6"x10'-0" deck	350.00
Remove rubble from exist'g. crawl space	200.00
Remove roofing, rafters & siding from existing 10'-0"x22'-0" addition and siding from rear of main house as necessary, clean up & haul away	1,400.00
Tear down exist'g. block chimney	300.00
4.) Cut through existing stone foundation wall to provide access for plumbing pipes and heating ductwork (Time & Material approximate estimate)	2,000.00
5.) Container	950.00
6.) Fill in gap @ concrete steps to complete crawl space foundation wall, repair block, install screen on exist'g. access door	450.00
7.) Frame 2-story addition (2x4 stud walls)	18,795.00
8.) Asphalt shingles on new roof (includes re-roofing rear hip of existing main	

SCOPE OF WORK OF 1994 ADDITION



PHOTOS OF HOUSE PRIOR TO 1994 ADDITION