

ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Staff Report

ADDRESS: 514 Sixth Street, Application Number HDC25-0147

DISTRICT: Old West Side Historic District

STATUS: House = Contributing. Garage = Non-contributing.

REPORT DATE: October 9, 2025

REPORT PREPARED BY: Jill Thacher, City Planner/Historic Preservation Coordinator

REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE: October 6, 2025

	OWNER	APPLICANT
Name:	Madison Goforth	Steven Varnum
Address:	514 Sixth Street Ann Arbor, MI 48103	Giraffe Design Build 108b South Main St Chelsea, MI 48118
Phone:	(734) 846-4282	(734) 330-0190

BACKGROUND: This 1 ¾ story gable-fronter features one-over one windows, a stone foundation, narrow wood lap siding and wood frieze board. The front porch was originally the width of the house (as seen on the 1948 Sanborn in the application attachments) and did not wrap around the corner. It is unknown whether the fancy porch brackets are from the period of significance. The house first appears in Polk City Directories in 1884; from 1894 until at least 1910 it was occupied by a Hening. The rear of the house was heavily modified with additions and alterations in the 1970s and 1980s, per aerial photographs.

The garage is a non-contributing structure that was built between 1984 and 1993 per aerial photographs.

At the April 8, 2021 HDC meeting an application for a 197 square foot rear addition, modifications to rooflines, window alterations, and other modifications to the rear of the house (HDC21-085). In 2023 an application was approved to add a 123 square foot screen porch on the back (HDC23-0009). In 2022 replacements for non-original front and side doors (HDC22-1158) and repairs to the front porch (HDC22-1092) were staff approved. In 2024 applications for screen doors (HDC24-0136) and a whole house generator (HDC24-0019) were staff approved.

LOCATION: The site is located on the west side of Sixth Street, south of West Jefferson and north of West Madison.

APPLICATION: The applicant seeks HDC approval to alter the non-contributing garage by adding a second floor and a two-story addition.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:

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

- (2) The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
- (9) New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
- (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

Recommended: Designing new exterior additions to historic buildings or adjacent new construction which is compatible with the historic character of the site and which preserve the historic relationship between a building or buildings, landscape features, and open space.

Retaining the historic relationship between buildings, landscape features, and open space.

Identifying, retaining, and preserving buildings and their features as well as features of the site that are important in defining its overall historic character.

Designing and constructing a new feature of a building or site when the historic feature is completely missing; or be a new design that is compatible with the historic character of the building and 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.

Removing or radically changing buildings and their features or site features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building site so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

Introducing a new building or site feature that is out of scale or of an otherwise inappropriate design.

District or Neighborhood Setting

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

Removing a historic building, building feature or landscape feature that is important in defining the historic character of the setting.

From the Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines (other Guidelines may apply):

Residential Accessory Structures

Appropriate: Retaining the historic relationship between buildings, landscape features, and open spaces.

Locating sheds and garages in the rear yard.

Using exterior wall and roof materials that are compatible with historic materials on the main structure and in the neighborhood.

Using a roof shape and pitch that replicates the shape and pitch of the roof of the main structure.

Using windows and doors that are compatible in proportion and style to the main structure and the neighborhood.

Not Appropriate: Introducing new structures or site features that are out of scale with the property or the district or are otherwise inappropriate.

Introducing new construction onto the building site, which is visually incompatible in terms of size, scale, design, materials, and texture or which destroys historic relationships on the site.

Introducing new structures or site features that are out of scale with the property or the district or are otherwise inappropriate.

Designing a garage or other accessory structure that is taller or larger than the main house.

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. The footprint of the garage is currently 18' wide by 22'2 1/2" deep, or 400 square feet. This is the size that staff typically recommend as a maximum for accessory structures on full-sized Old West Side lots (which are typically around 65' x 130' like this one). The addition has a 374 SF footprint behind (west) and on the south side for a total footprint of 774 SF and would result in a 1,466 sf structure (400 SF garage + 703 SF ADU + 293 SF workout studio + 70 SF entry/mudroom).

The height of the new building is 20'3" to the ridge; the height of the historic house's roof ridge is about 1' taller. The new building's height matches that of one of the modern additions.

The street-facing roof pitch is not indicated but appears to match or be close to the pitch of the front-facing gable on the house, which is appropriate.

2. Project materials include fiber-cement siding with 4" maximum exposure and wood grain finish. Since the structure is separate from the historic house, the wood grain finish is appropriate (though smooth side out would look more like a painted wood surface). Windows are clad casements, though the cladding material is not specified. Window trim is cedar and was intentionally varied slightly from the historic window trim dimensions on the house.
3. It is important to note that when analyzing an HDC application, each lot and its structures and features are treated as unique (because they are). Structures approved by the HDC do not set a precedent for other properties reviewed in the future. Each application is weighed against the Standards and Guidelines on its own merits.
4. In a review-of-drawings email to the architect, staff stated their opinion that the structure is too large and too close to the house and recommended shrinking the footprint and height and pushing the structure toward the rear of the lot to get more distance between the house and garage.
5. The current garage is large and would be unlikely to be approved in its current location under the *Standards* and *Guidelines* in use today. (The rear additions and garage were added at a time when not everything on the lot was reviewed and only changes to the front 15' of the house were decided by the Historic District Commission. Those rules changed around 2009.) Adding a second floor and a two-story addition creates a feeling that the garage is overwhelming the house. Wrapping the new structure around the rear corner of the house makes its front façade a more realistic size, but unfortunately makes the structure appear even larger and more solid by completely filling the void that exists between the house and garage, where you can currently look through to the back yard.
6. The SOI Standard (9) says:

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.

The proposed work is not compatible in massing, size and scale to the historic house on the property and to neighboring structures and does not meet SOI Standard 9. The historic house on this lot has previously had many additions on the sides and rear (which, it should be noted, the current owners have tried to make more compatible with the historic part of the house). Staff's opinion is that adding another structure that matches the size of many typical Old West Side houses in such close proximity to the house (8 ½ feet from the rear corner) makes the massing, size, and scale inappropriate under SOI Standard 9.

7. The SOI Guidelines for Building Site state that the following is recommended:

- Designing new exterior additions to historic buildings or adjacent new construction which is compatible with the historic character of the site and which preserve the historic relationship between a building or buildings, landscape features, and open space.
- Retaining the historic relationship between buildings, landscape features, and open space.

Staff believe the size and closeness of the structure to the house does not preserve the historic relationship between the house and yard, landscape features and open spaces.

Under District or Neighborhood Setting, not appropriate is:

- Introducing new construction into historic districts that is visually incompatible or that destroys historic relationships within the setting.

Staff believe the largeness of the structure makes it visually incompatible and that it also further destroys the relationship between the house and yard, where documentation to date does not show any outbuildings historically.

8. For Accessory Structures, the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* say that the following work is Inappropriate:

- Introducing new structures or site features that are out of scale with the property or the district or are otherwise inappropriate.
- Introducing new construction onto the building site, which is visually incompatible in terms of size, scale, design, materials, and texture or which destroys historic relationships on the site.
- Introducing new structures or site features that are out of scale with the property or the district or are otherwise inappropriate.

Staff believe that the new structure is out of scale with the property and surrounding properties and is visually incompatible because of its height and size.

9. Staff believe that the proposed work is out of scale with the historic house and located too close to it and does not meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Standard 9* or the *Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitation* or the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* and recommends denial of the application. The application can be improved by shrinking the footprint and height of the structure and pushing it to the rear of the lot.

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 issue a certificate of appropriateness for the application at

514 Sixth Street, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to add a second floor and a two-story addition to a non-contributing garage, 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 *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines*, especially those for residential accessory structures, and the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* and *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, in particular standards 2, 9 and 10 and the guidelines for building site and district or neighborhood setting.

ATTACHMENTS: photos, drawings, renderings.

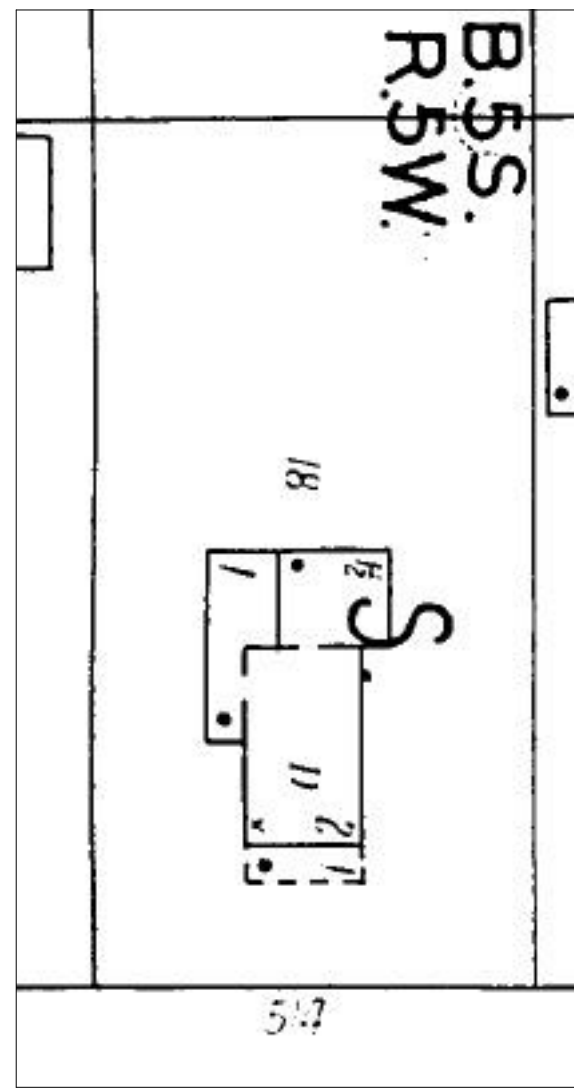
514 Sixth Street (OWS Survey photos, 2008)





1947 Aerial Photograph 514 Sixth:





1948 SANBORN FIRE INSURANCE MAP OF SITE

HISTORIC DISTRICT
OLD WEST SIDE

ZONING INFORMATION
CITY OF ANN ARBOR, R2A

ACCESSORY STRUCTURE SQ. FT.

EXISTING FOOTPRINT - 400 SQ. FT.
PROPOSED FOOTPRINT - 774 SQ. FT.

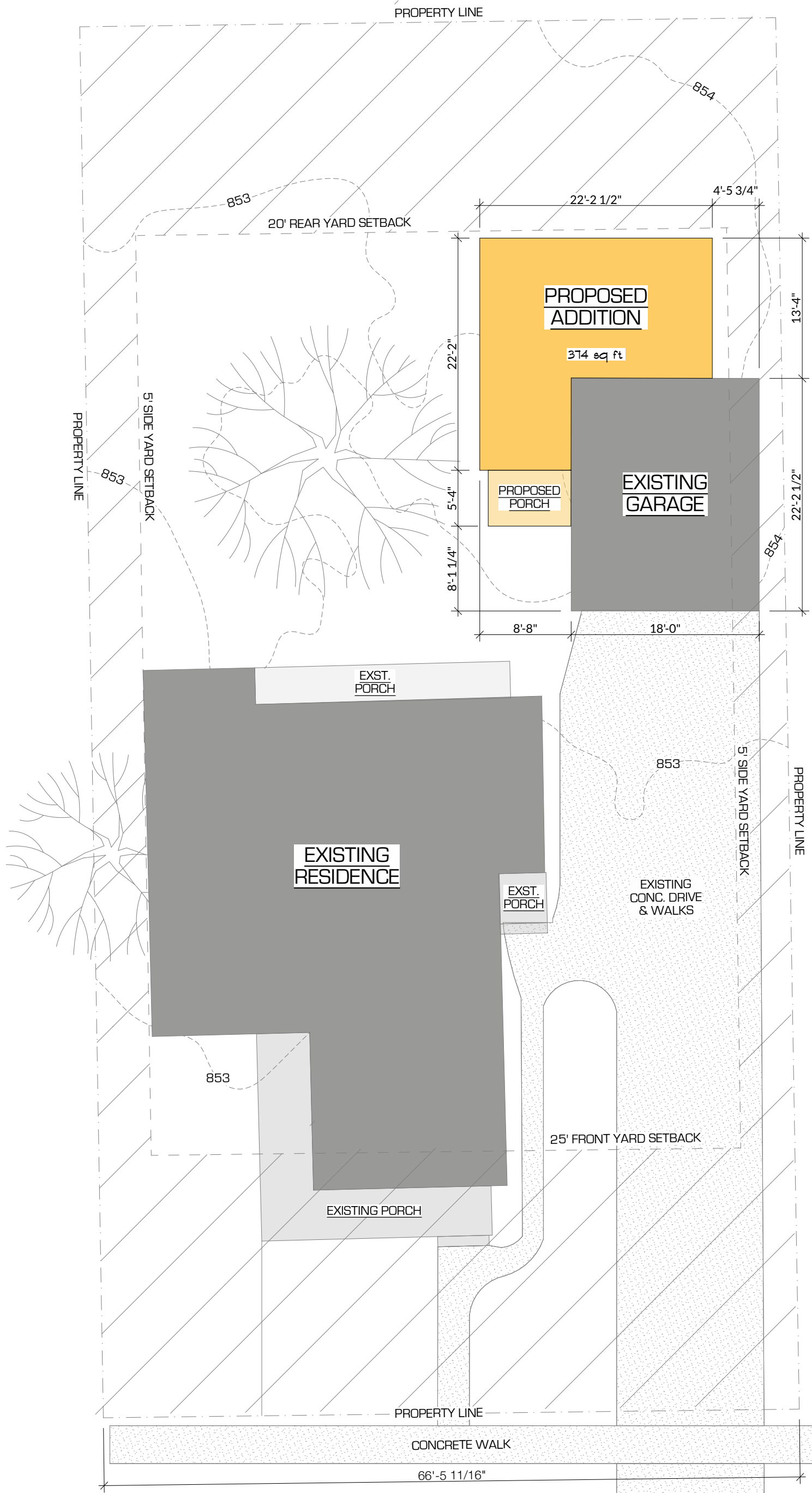
PROPOSED LIVING AREA:
WORKOUT STUDIO - 267 SQ. FT.
A.D.U. - 703 SQ. FT.



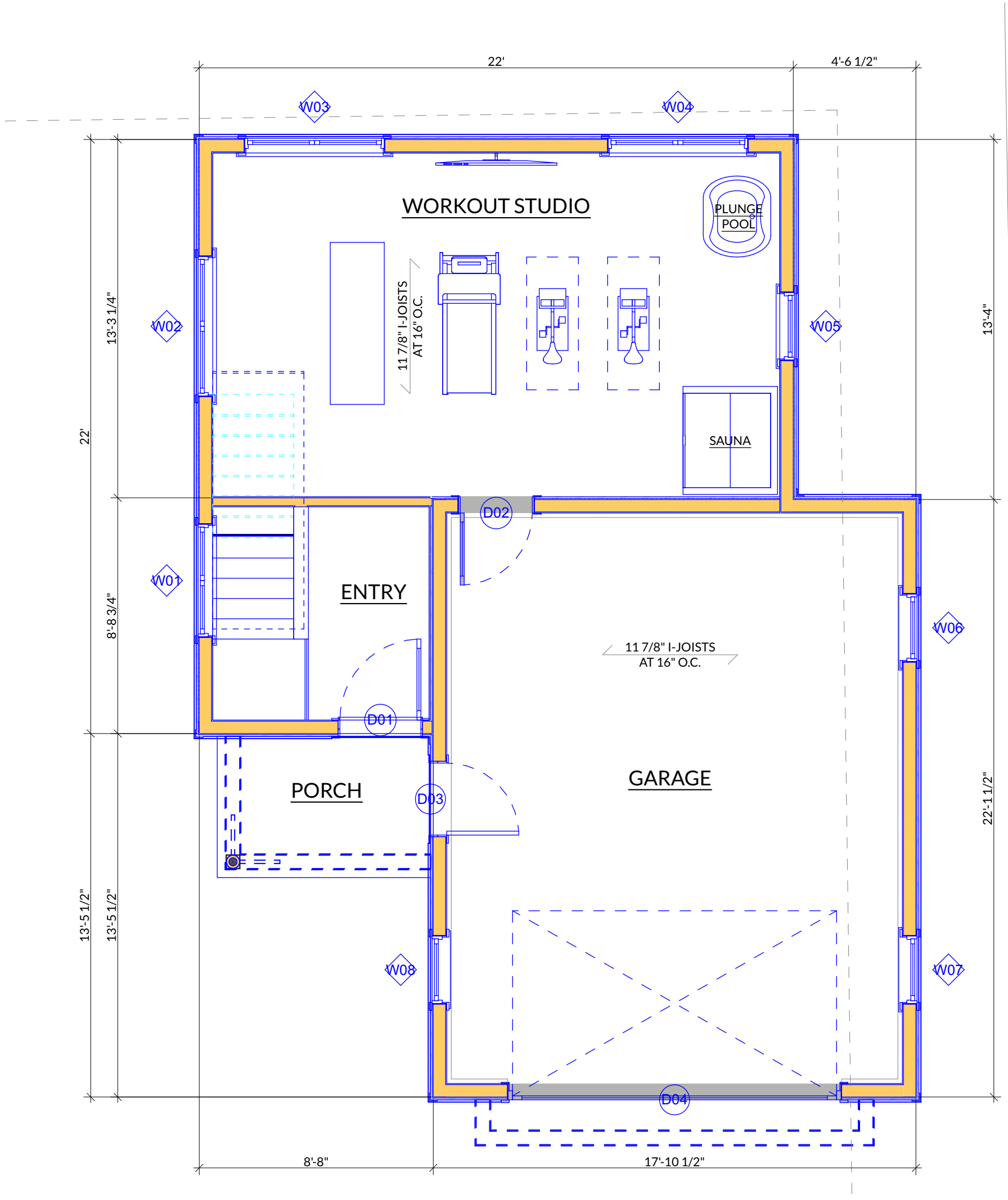
EAST VIEW



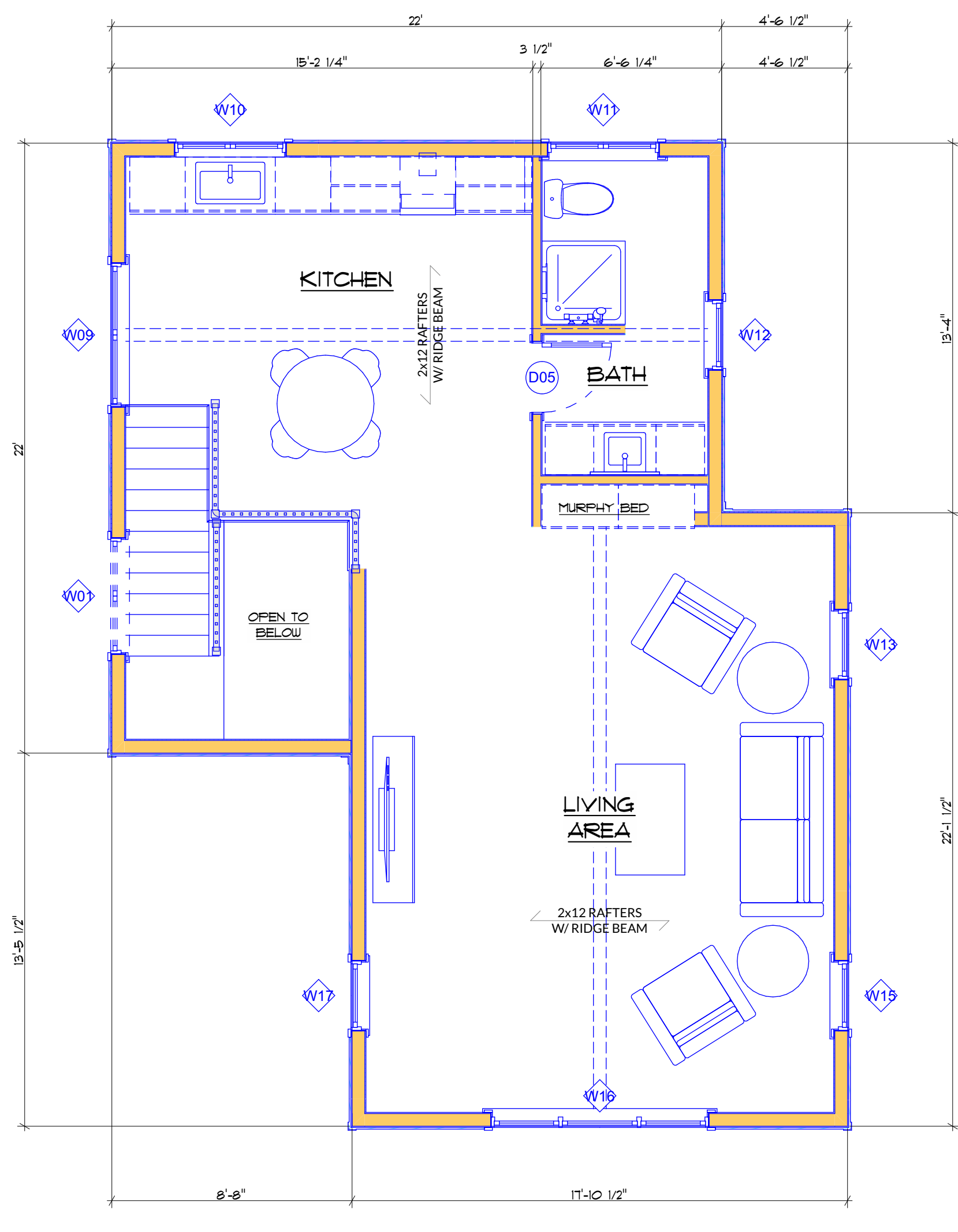
SOUTH VIEW



1 SITE PLAN
SCALE: 1" = 10'



2 MAIN LEVEL PLAN
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



3 UPPER LEVEL PLAN
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



1 EXISTING EAST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



VIEW FROM STREET



2 PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION W/ HOUSE
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



NOTE: ALL NEW TRIM TO BE BORAL OR SIMILAR FIBER CEMENT COMPOSITE

2 EAST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



1 EXISTING WEST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



2 PROPOSED WEST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

BRATCHER GOFORTH CARRIAGE HOUSE
514 6TH ST • ANN ARBOR • MICHIGAN • 48103
EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS

project number:
751
issued drawings:
9.12.25 SD PRICING
9.19.25 HDC

project phase:
DESIGN
DEVELOPMENT
sheet number:



1 EXISTING SOUTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



2 SOUTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

BRATCHER GOFORTH CARRIAGE HOUSE
514 6TH ST • ANN ARBOR • MICHIGAN • 48103
EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS

project number:
751
issued drawings:
9.12.25 SD PRICING
9.19.25 HDC

project phase:
DESIGN
DEVELOPMENT
sheet number:



1 EXISTING NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



2 PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

NOTE: ALL NEW TRIM TO BE BORAL OR SIMILAR FIBER CEMENT COMPOSITE



PHOTO OF EXISTING WOOD CORNER BOARD
PROPOSED FIBER CEMENT CORNER BOARDS TO BE 3 1/2" W/ SMOOTH FINISH



PHOTO OF EXISTING WOOD LAP SIDING
PROPOSED FIBER CEMENT LAP SIDING TO HAVE 4" MAX. EXPOSURE & WOOD GRAIN FINISH



PHOTO OF EXISTING WOOD WINDOW TRIM
PROPOSED SMOOTH CEDAR TRIM TO BE 3"



PHOTO OF EXISTING WOOD WINDOW SILL
PROPOSED SMOOTH CEDAR SILL TO BE MAX. 2"



PHOTO OF TYPICAL EXISTING WOOD WINDOW



PHOTO OF EXISTING NON-HISTORIC EXT. DOOR
PROPOSED NEW DOORS TO MATCH

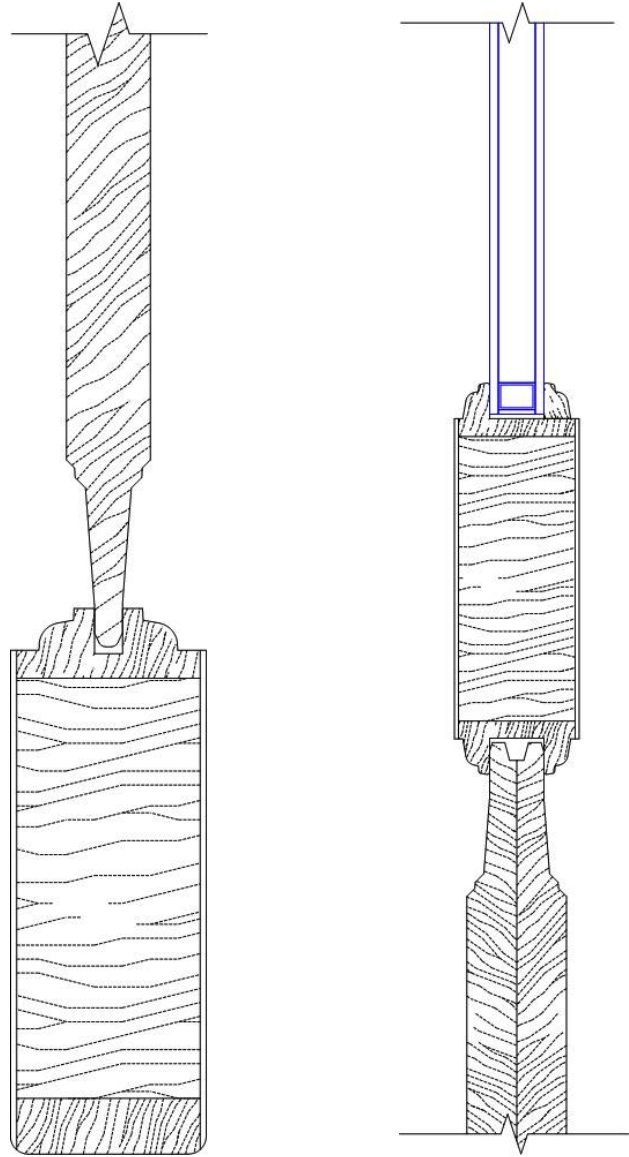


PHOTO OF EXISTING FRONT POCH COLUMN.
NEW COLUMNS TO BE 6"



PHOTO OF EXISTING NON-HISTORIC GARAGE STRUCTURE

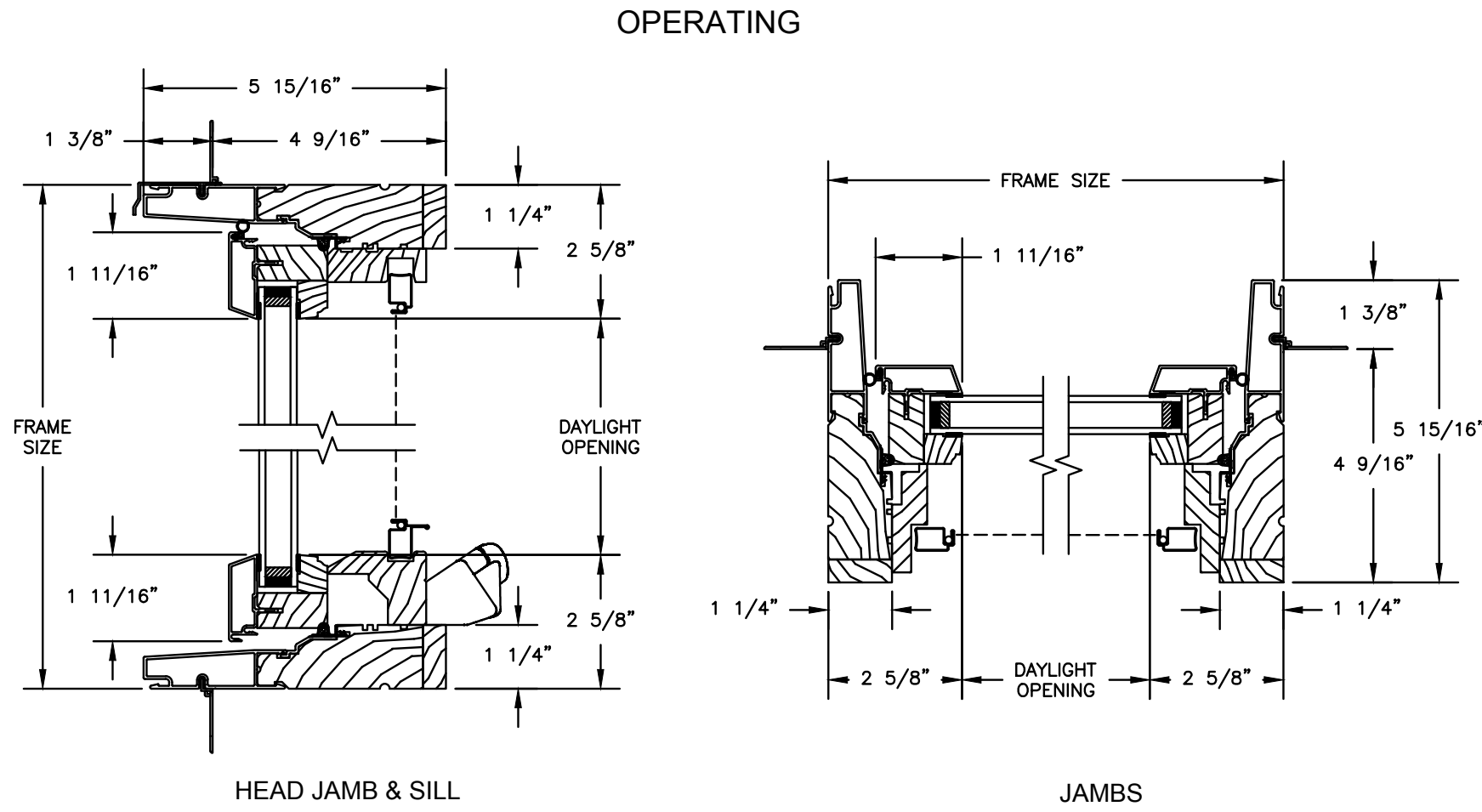
WINDOW SCHEDULE										
ID	QTY	TYPE	OVERALL FRAME		OVERALL RO		SILL HT ABV FF	HEAD HT ABV FF	GLAZING	NOTES
			W	H	W	H				
W01	1	CASEMENT	4'-2"	6'-0"			4'-6"	10'-6"	TEMPERED	
W02	1	CASEMENT	5'-2"	5'-0"			1'-9"	6'-9"		
W03	1	CASEMENT	5'-2"	5'-0"			1'-9"	6'-9"		
W04	1	CASEMENT	5'-2"	5'-0"			1'-9"	6'-9"		
W05	1	CASEMENT	2'-6"	5'-0"			1'-9"	6'-9"		
W06	1	CASEMENT	2'-6"	3'-6"			3'-3"	6'-9"		
W07	1	CASEMENT	2'-6"	3'-6"			3'-3"	6'-9"		
W08	1	CASEMENT	2'-6"	3'-6"			3'-3"	6'-9"		
W09	1	CASEMENT	5'-2"	5'-0"			2'-9"	7'-9"		
W10	1	CASEMENT	4'-0"	2'-9"			4'-4"	7'-1"		
W11	1	CASEMENT	4'-0"	2'-9"			4'-4"	7'-1"		
W12	1	CASEMENT	2'-6"	4'-6"			3'-3"	7'-9"		
W13	1	AWNING	2'-6"	3'-6"			2'-4"	5'-10"		
W15	1	AWNING	2'-6"	3'-6"			2'-4"	5'-10"		
W16	1	CASEMENT	7'-10"	5'-0"			2'-9"	7'-9"		
W17	1	AWNING	2'-6"	3'-6"			2'-7"	6'-1"		



PROPOSED EXTERIOR DOOR PROFILES

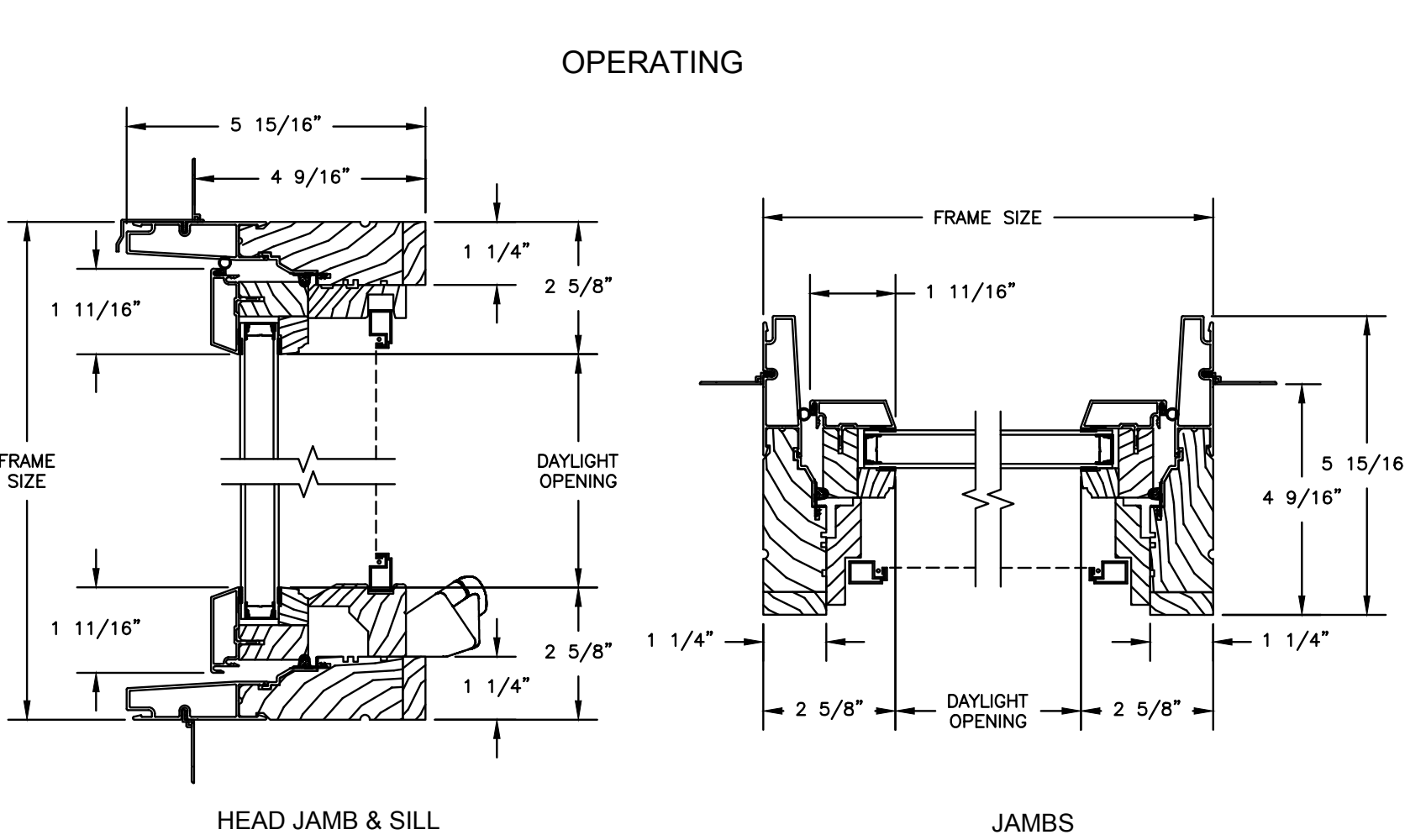
Pinnacle Series CLAD CASEMENT

SECTION DETAILS : OPERATING / STATIONARY
SCALE: 3" = 1'-0"

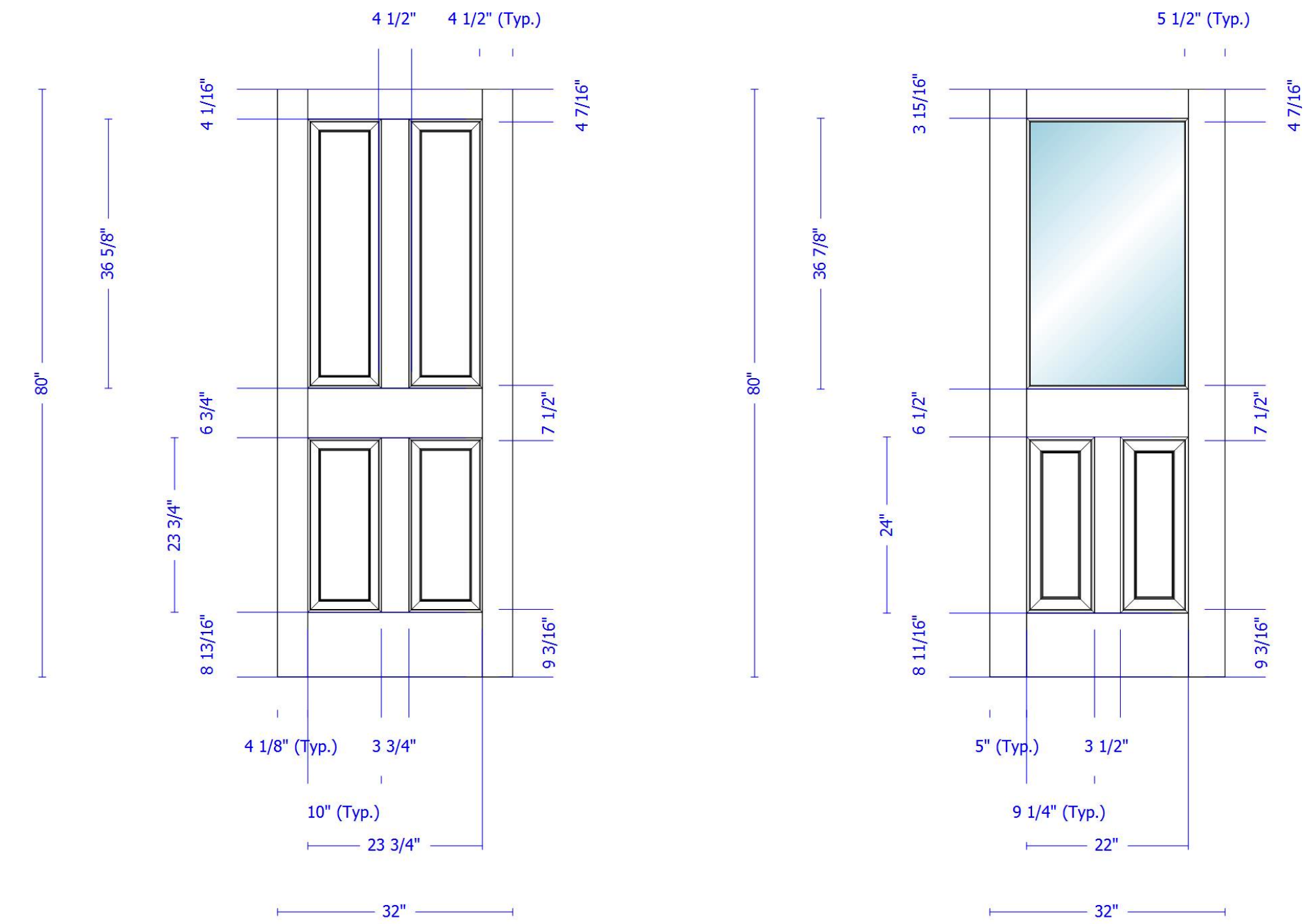


Pinnacle Series CLAD AWNING

SECTION DETAILS : OPERATING / STATIONARY
SCALE: 3" = 1'-0"



PROPOSED WINDSOR PINNACLE WOOD/CLAD WINDOW PROFILES



PROPOSED SIMPSON INSULATED EXTERIOR DOORS - DOUGLAS FIR