

# ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

## Staff Report

**ADDRESS:** 317 S Division Street Application Number HDC25-0115

**DISTRICT:** East William Historic District

**STATUS:** Contributing

**REPORT DATE:** September 11, 2025

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

**REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE:** September 8, 2025

### OWNER

**Name:** Ryan Pantaleo  
**Address:** 615 W Jefferson St  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103  
**Phone:** (978) 420-7655

### APPLICANT

David Lewis  
Lewis Greenspoon Architects  
440 S Main Suite 2  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103  
(734) 786-3757

**BACKGROUND:** This house began as a transitional Greek Revival-Italianate which can be ascertained both from the overall "cube" form, the four-over-four sash upstairs that were present until 2011/12, and especially from the original woodwork around the windows and front door inside (as city staff observed in 2004). The 1892 through 1908 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps show a yard between houses where 317 S Division is today. On the 1916 Sanborn, a large house at 315 S Division was replaced with two more modest houses numbered 315 and 319 S Division, the second of which is today's 317 S Division. 315 was replaced in the 1970s by a brick apartment house. In 1914, the house was moved to its present site, and the first occupants thereafter were Mrs. Lena Rennie and her three grown children. At that time a full front porch with heavy round half-columns on brick bases was added, the parlor window was changed, and a new, slightly higher hip roof with dormers on the west and north, was added. The slender brick chimney probably also dates from this time. Around 1988, the Mail Shoppe moved in and altered the building for commercial use, adding the handicap ramp on the south side, changing the porch railing and steps, and altering the bay window to a new entrance for the shop. There have been no additions to the house since 1914.

In 2004 the HDC approved applications to install a wood sign and replace the 1914 front door with a new wood door.



**LOCATION:** This site is located on the east side of South Division Street, south of East Liberty and north of East William Street.

**APPLICATION:** The applicant seeks HDC approval to:

1. Remove the existing ramp along the south elevation and add four egress windows in wells.
2. Remove a non-original door and steps on the north elevation.
3. On the second floor, remove four non-historic double-hung windows and replace them with casement windows with a false muntin.
4. On the front porch: restore the brick columns and posts; replace the front door in the historic opening with a new wood single-lite door; remove the business entry and return it to a bay window similar to the one the business entry replaced in 1988; replace the porch guardrails.
5. Install four new wall-mounted exterior light fixtures on the north elevation.
6. Install a trash and recycling enclosure along the north elevation.
7. Install 4' fences around the two new basement egress windows that are closest to the street.
8. Replace all vinyl windows with aluminum clad, one over one, wood windows in the existing openings.
9. New composite roof shingles.
10. Remove aluminum siding and restore the underlying siding.
11. Build a 2,598 square foot addition behind the house, to be connected by a 10' wide hyphen.

#### **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.

*Not Recommended:* 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.

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

### **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.

Locating and designing a new addition so that significant site features, including mature trees and landmark status trees, are not lost or damaged.

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

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

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 not exceed half of the original building's footprint, or half of the original building's total floor area.

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

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.

Not Appropriate: Designing an addition that overpowers or dramatically alters the original building through size or height.

### **STAFF FINDINGS:**

1. The project would return this house to residential use after nearly four decades of housing the Mail Shoppe. The project would result in four apartments: two four-bedroom units in the historic house and two six-bedroom units in the rear addition. Staff found applying the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* to be problematic: the house is part of a row of houses of a similar era (with the exception of the apartment building to the north), which would suggest applying the residential design guidelines. Its proximity to downtown and the area's dense development, however, calls for more flexibility than strict interpretation of the residential guidelines allows. Also, this block and surrounding area are zoned D1 Downtown Core which does not have side or rear setbacks or limit occupancy the way R residential zoning districts do.

### **Existing House**

2. Egress Windows. Four basement egress windows are proposed to be added: two on the north and two on the south elevation. The ones near the back of the house are appropriate. The two near the front of the house include a 4' fence and landscaping as screening. Their proximity to the front elevation requires HDC approval, instead of staff.

Four existing second floor vinyl windows are proposed to be replaced with aluminum clad wood casements with a false muntin. This is appropriate since the windows are not historic and the new windows will match the opening size.

New landscaping is noted on three sides of the building, without more specifics. It should be noted that these areas don't have to have lawn, but that lava rock, pea gravel, or similar non-decomposable materials are not appropriate for use in landscape areas.

3. North Elevation. A door with steps leading up to it is present on the north elevation. The architect reported that it did not correspond to basement steps on the interior, so it is unlikely that there was originally a door here. The drawings say that if a historic opening is found (once the aluminum siding is removed and/or the interior studs are exposed), it will be restored and a door installed. The applicants can work with staff if that is the case. If there is no historic opening found, the opening will be infilled to match the underlying siding.

The trash enclosure is appreciated. There will be a large number of trash and recycling carts and keeping them contained and out of sight is appropriate. The enclosure will be 4ft tall. Materials are not noted on the drawings.

The four new wall-mounted lights along the north elevation are on a wall plane that would



not have traditionally had lights mounted on it. (There is one modern one there now.) This is an urban site with pedestrian traffic from both this site and the large apartment building next door. Staff finds the lights acceptable and notes that if approved they must meet the city's outdoor lighting requirements in Chapter 55 of City Code.

4. Front Porch. The restoration proposal for the front porch is generally appropriate. Staff would prefer to see a lower guardrail that is closer to the height of the 1913 one, and which uses additional horizontal "booster rails" (typically painted black to make them recede) on top to make up the code-required height. [[This website](#) is a bit silly but has photos of good built examples near the bottom of the page.] Porch skirting is not called out but is shown as a square lattice instead of diamond, so staff assumes it will be replaced with new wood square lattice. Removing the business front door and restoring the front bay window is highly appropriate.
5. Windows. All vinyl windows are proposed to be replaced with aluminum clad, one over one wood windows in the existing openings. The style does not match the ones in historic photos, but the four over one style is appropriate since there are no surviving wood windows to use as a prototype.
6. Siding. Removing the aluminum siding and restoring the underlying siding is positively appropriate.

### ***Addition***

7. Addition. The proposed three story addition is at the rear of the house, connected by a 10' wide single-story room. The room will serve as a hyphen and will have a flat roof and vertical siding. There will be a covered porch on the north side of the hyphen that will extend in an L-shape to the west elevation of the addition. The porch will have simple square posts and no railing. At 31', the addition is 4" shorter than the ridge height of the historic house. It is cube shaped, with a low-slope roof that appears flat. Windows are one-over-one aluminum clad wood and siding is cementitious lap. Though the HDC does not regulate paint colors, the proposed scheme helps bring the lighter historic house to the forefront and the darker addition recede.
8. The application states that the existing footprint is 879 sf and the existing floor area is 1,749 sf. The floor area of the addition is 2,598 sf, an increase of 148%. The footprint of the addition is 940 sf, an increase of 107%. As stated above, staff believes the design guidelines for residential additions should not be strictly applied here because of the circumstances of this particular lot and block. The house is flanked on both sides by much larger, deeper buildings. This is not a block with traditional back yards. Most of the lots have either parking in the back or are built out to the rear lot line. The lots on Thompson Street, behind 317 S Division, are very shallow with minimal backyards.
9. Staff believes the size of the addition is appropriate for this particular site and setting, though the volume of the addition is pushing the size limits compared to the historic building. The design and materials are low-key and compatible, and the work proposed for the historic house is appropriate.

**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 317 S Division Street, a contributing property in the East William Historic District, to restore the historic house and add a 2,598-square foot rear addition. 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* for all additions.

**ATTACHMENTS:** drawings, photos

317 S Division Street (April 2024 Google Street View)





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Division  
Street  
Townhomes

renovation  
and addition

317 South Division Street  
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21 AUG 2025

Ex1

PHOTOS: EXISTING  
project no. 25053



front / west



front & south side



rear & south side



rear & north side



front & north side



**Division  
Street  
Townhomes**

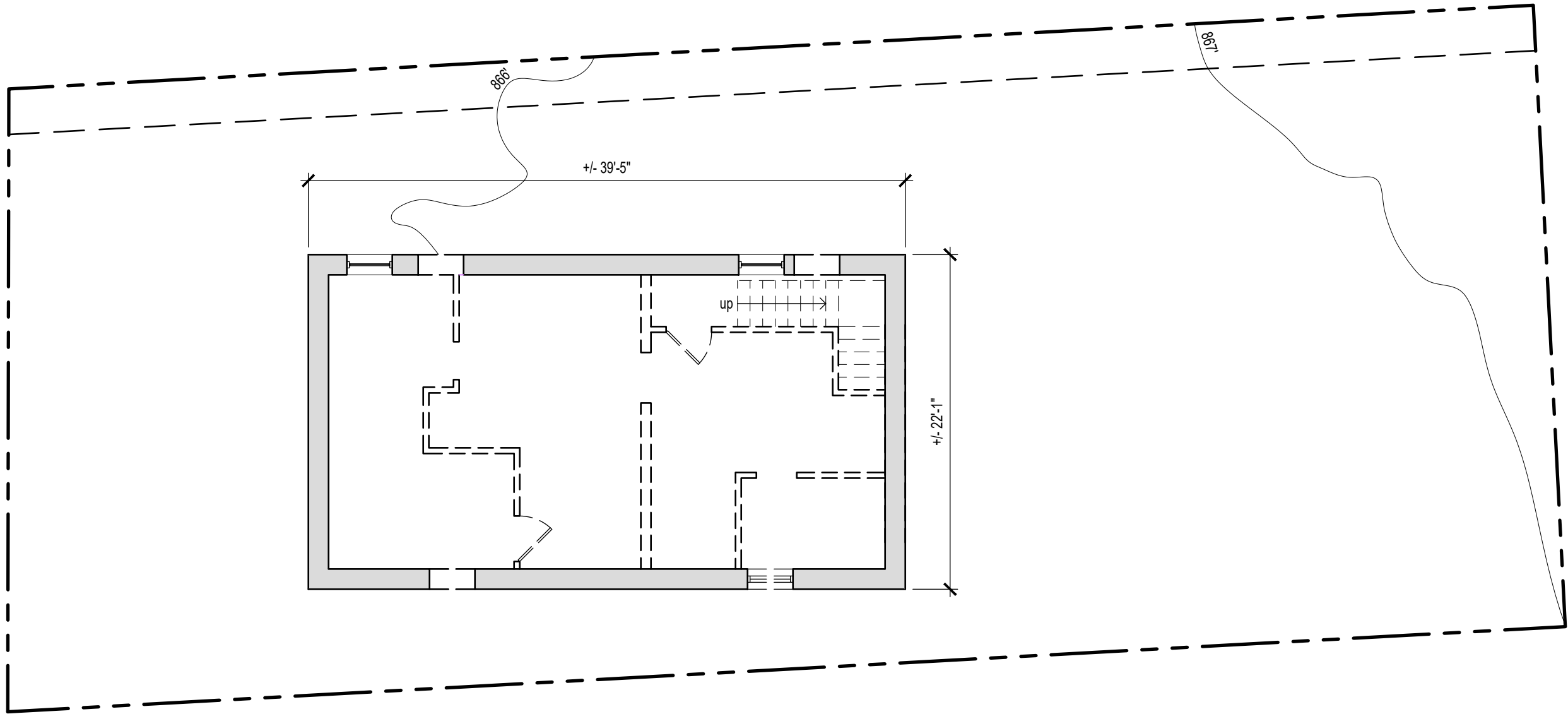
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and addition

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Ex2

DEMO PLAN  
project no. 25053



**LOWER LEVEL DEMOLITION PLAN**

1/8" = 1'-0"

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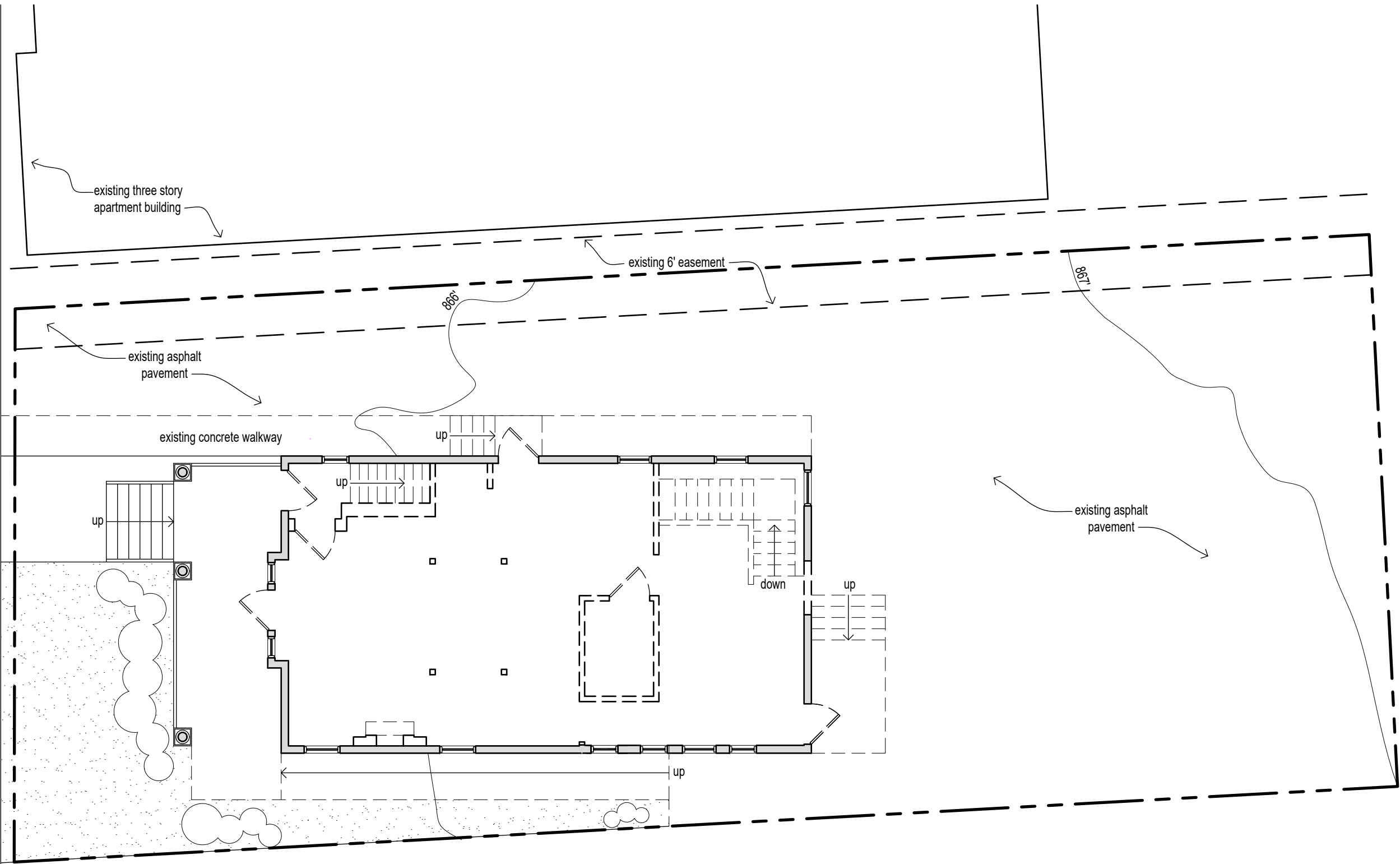
renovation  
and addition

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Ex3

DEMO PLAN  
project no. 25053



 **FIRST FLOOR PLAN**  
1/8" = 1'-0"

**Division  
Street  
Townhomes**

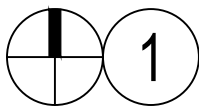
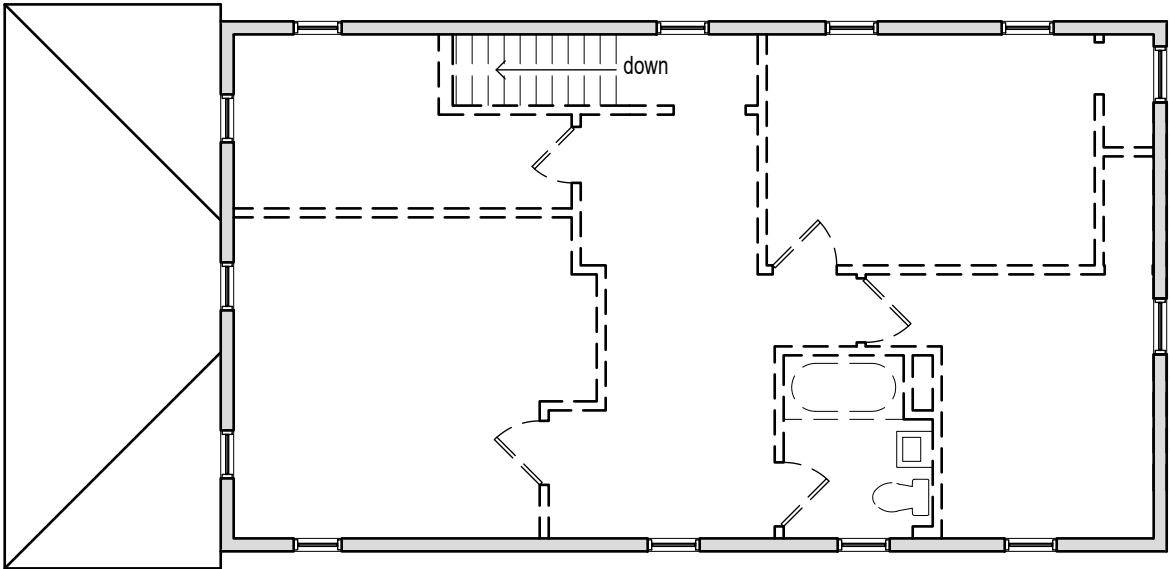
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Ex4

DEMO PLAN  
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EXISTING SECOND FLOOR PLAN

1/8" = 1'-0"

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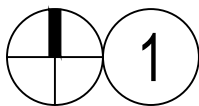
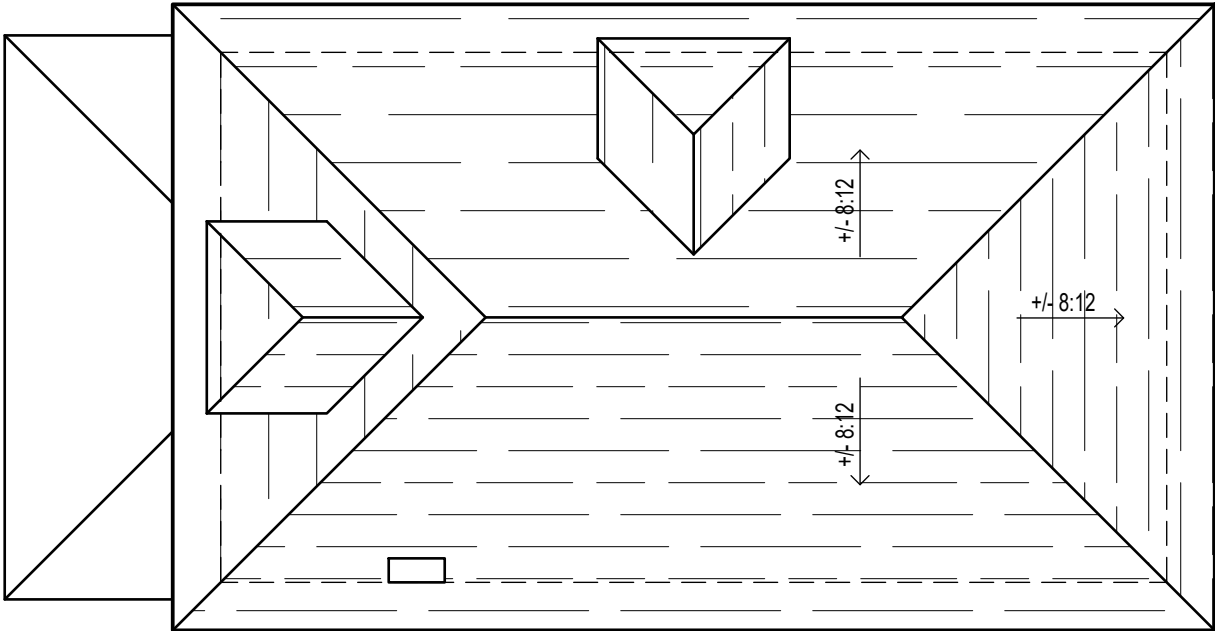
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Ex5

DEMO PLAN  
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EXISTING ROOF PLAN

1/8" = 1'-0"

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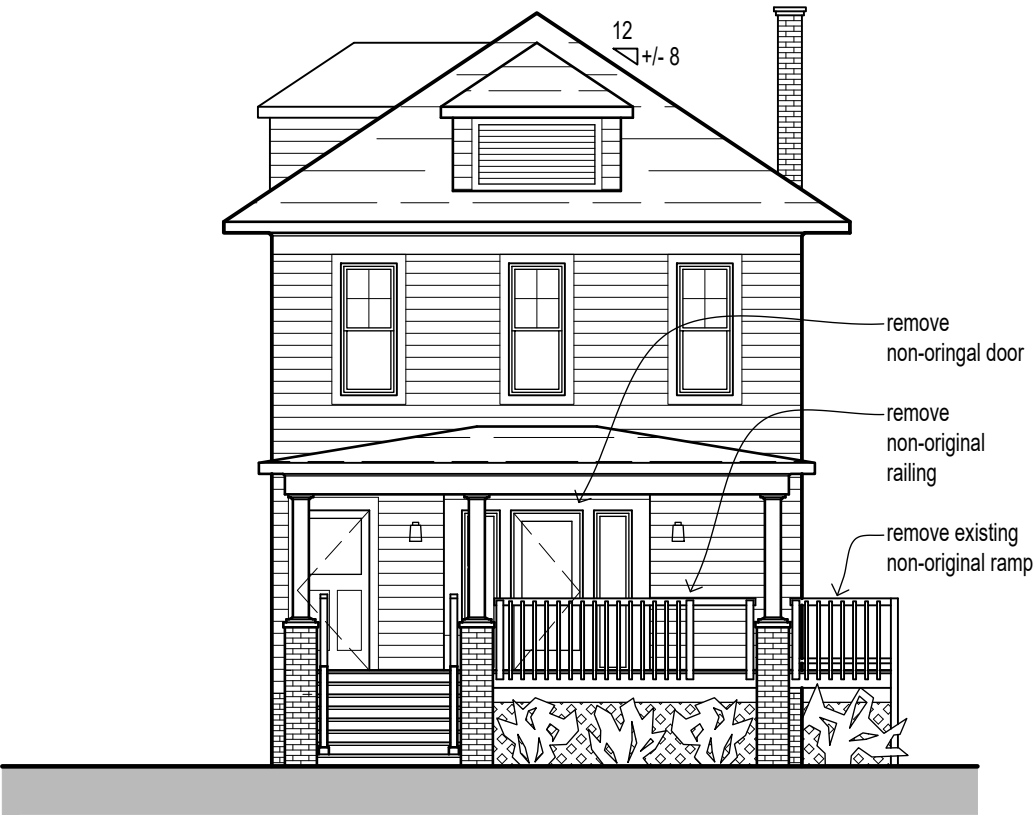
renovation  
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Ex6

EXTERIOR ELEVATION  
project no. 25053



1 EXISTING WEST ELEVATION (FRONT)  
1/8" = 1'-0"



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Street  
Townhomes**

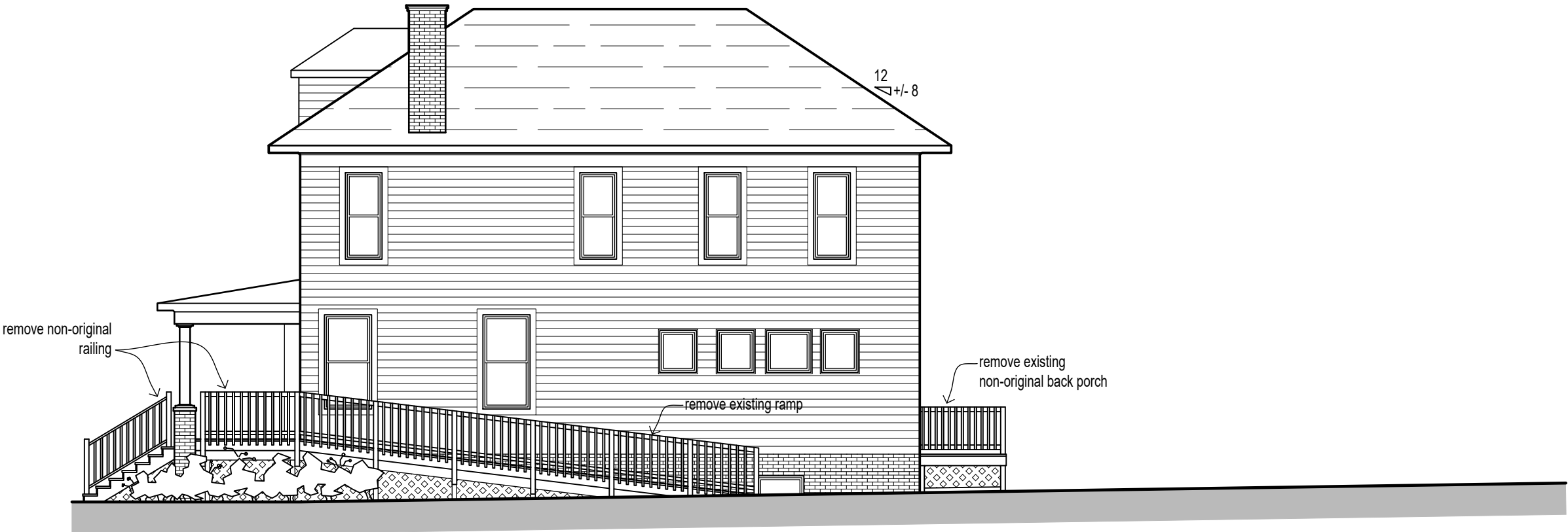
renovation  
and addition

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Ex7

EXTERIOR ELEVATION  
project no. 25053



1

**EXISTING SOUTH ELEVATION (SIDE)**

1/8" = 1'-0"

**Division  
Street  
Townhomes**

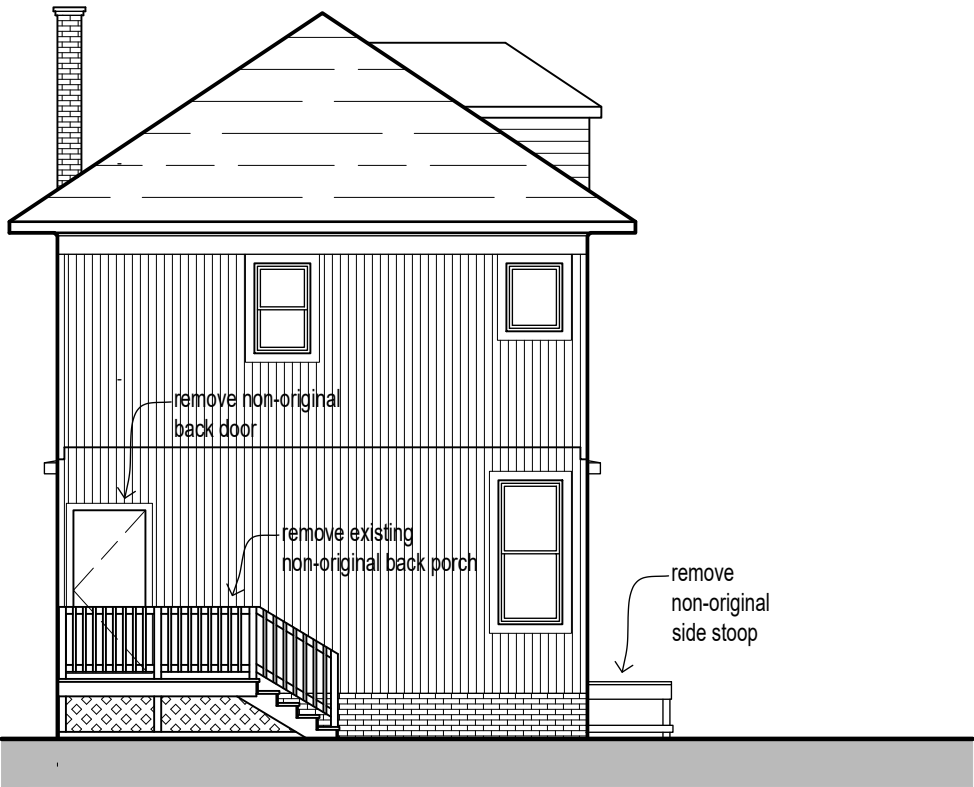
renovation  
and addition

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Ex8

EXTERIOR ELEVATION  
project no. 25053



1

**EXISTING EAST ELEVATION (REAR)**

1/8" = 1'-0"

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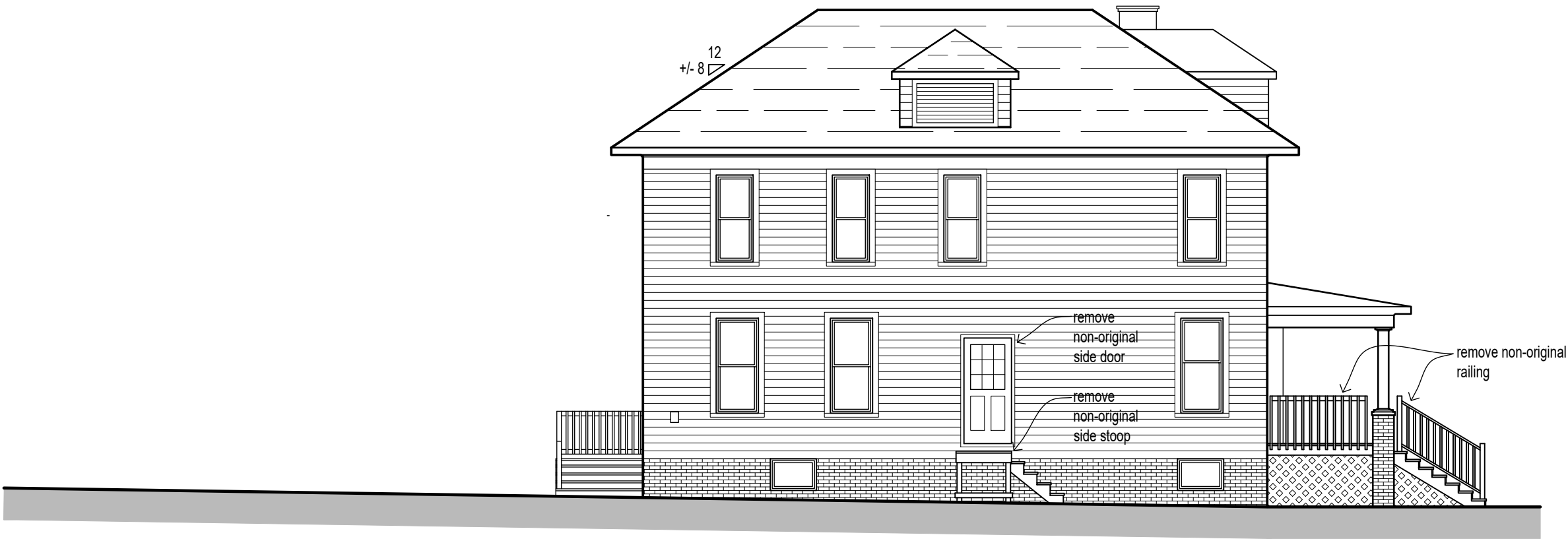
renovation  
and addition

317 South Division Street  
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21 AUG 2025

Ex9

EXTERIOR ELEVATION  
project no. 25053



1

EXISTING NORTH ELEVATION (SIDE)

1/8" = 1'-0"

**Division  
Street  
Townhomes**

renovation  
and addition

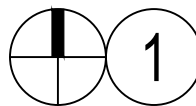
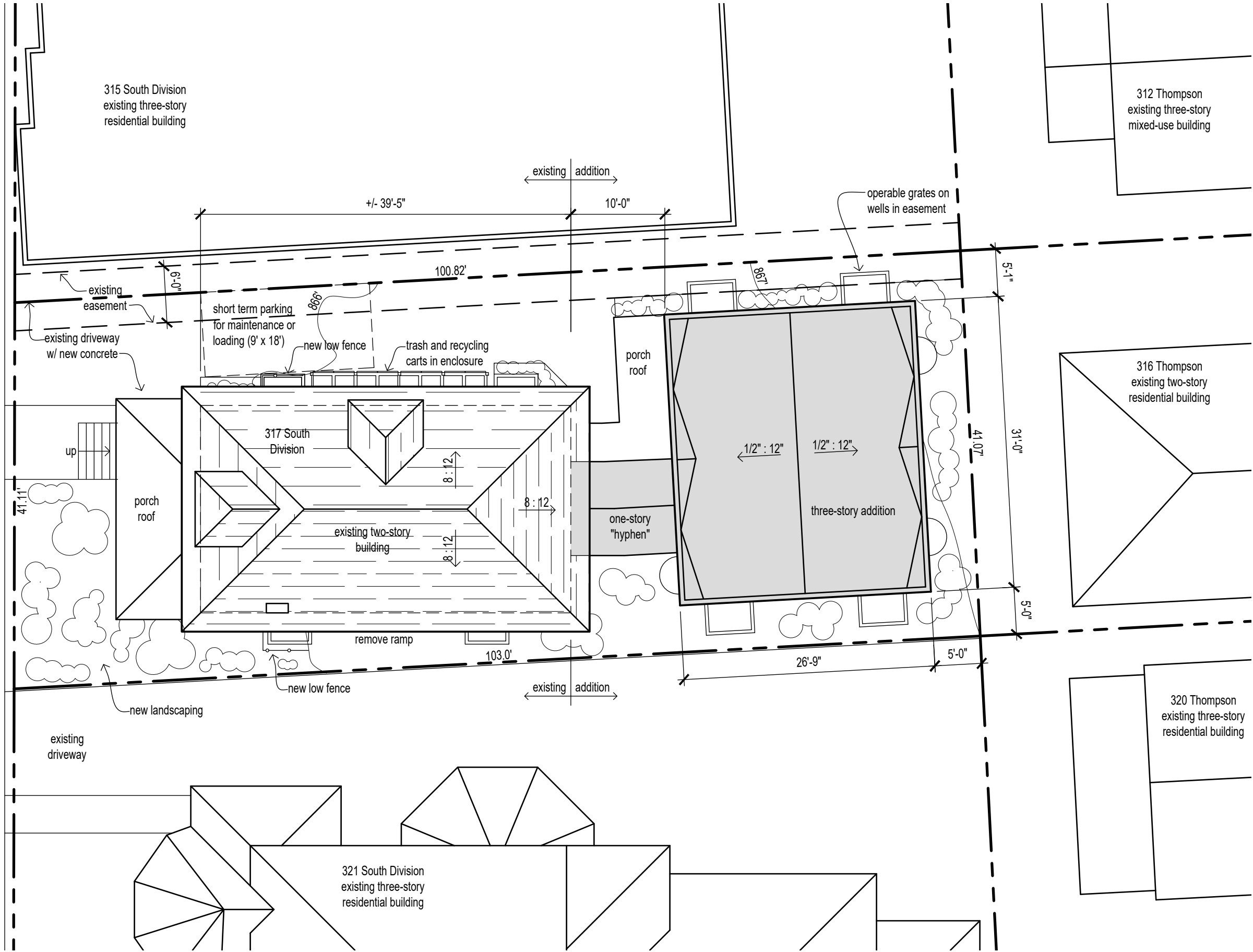
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A1

SITE PLAN  
project no. 25053

SOUTH DIVISION STREET



**SITE PLAN**

3/32" = 1'-0"

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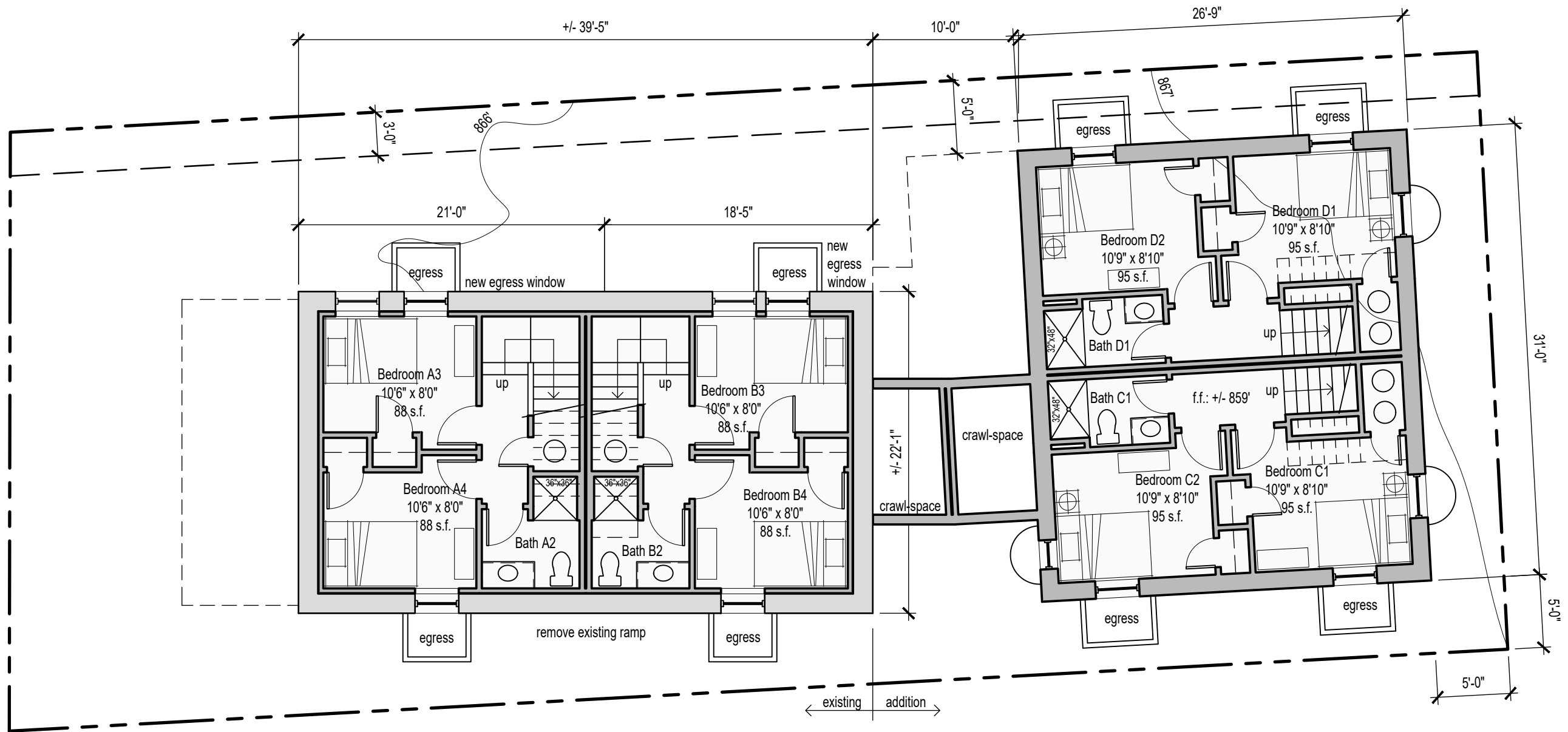
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A2

FLOOR PLAN  
project no. 25053



LOWER LEVEL FLOOR PLAN

1/8" = 1'-0"

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Division  
Street  
Townhomes

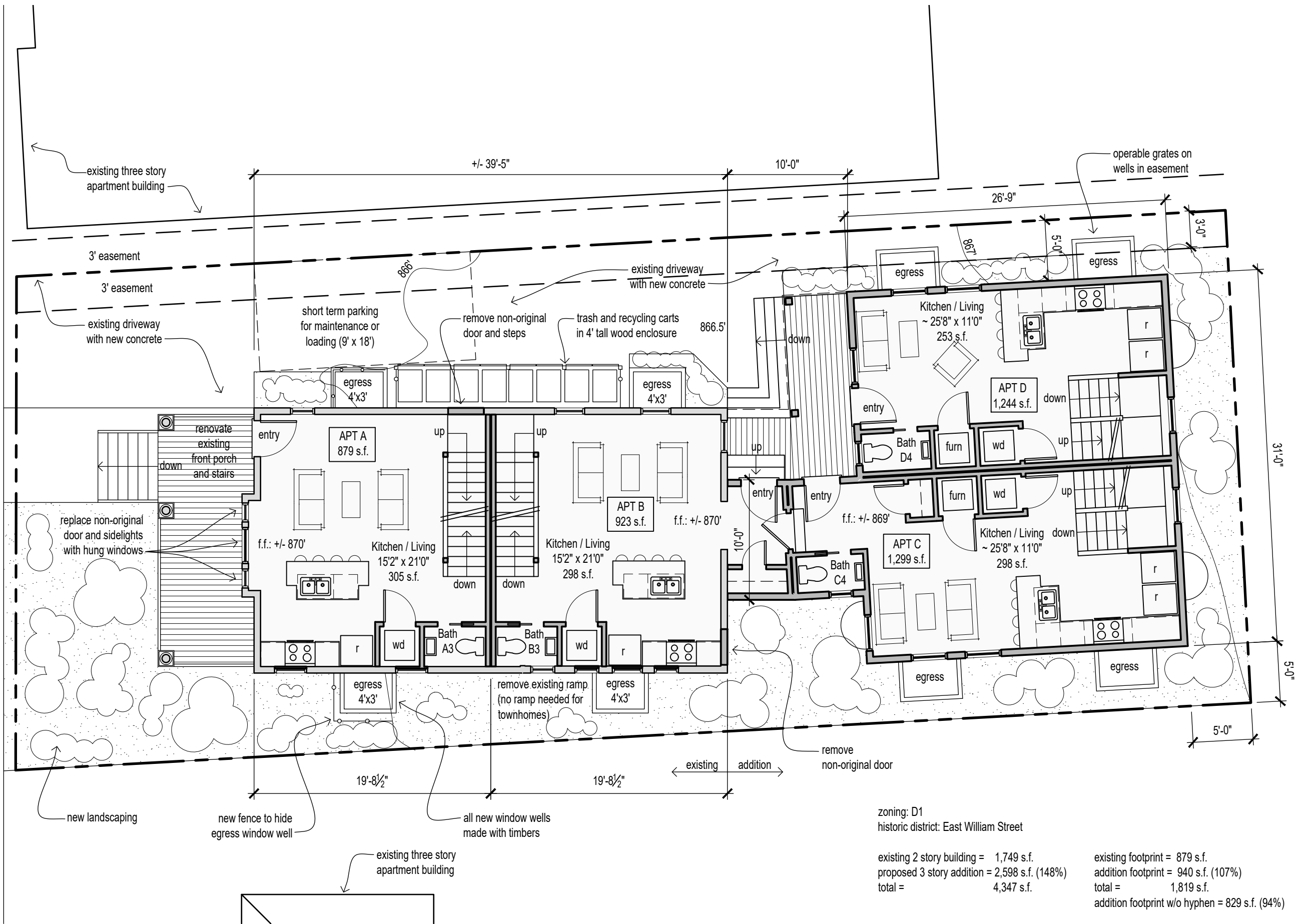
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and addition

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A3

FLOOR PLAN  
project no. 25053



**FIRST FLOOR PLAN**  
1/8" = 1'-0"

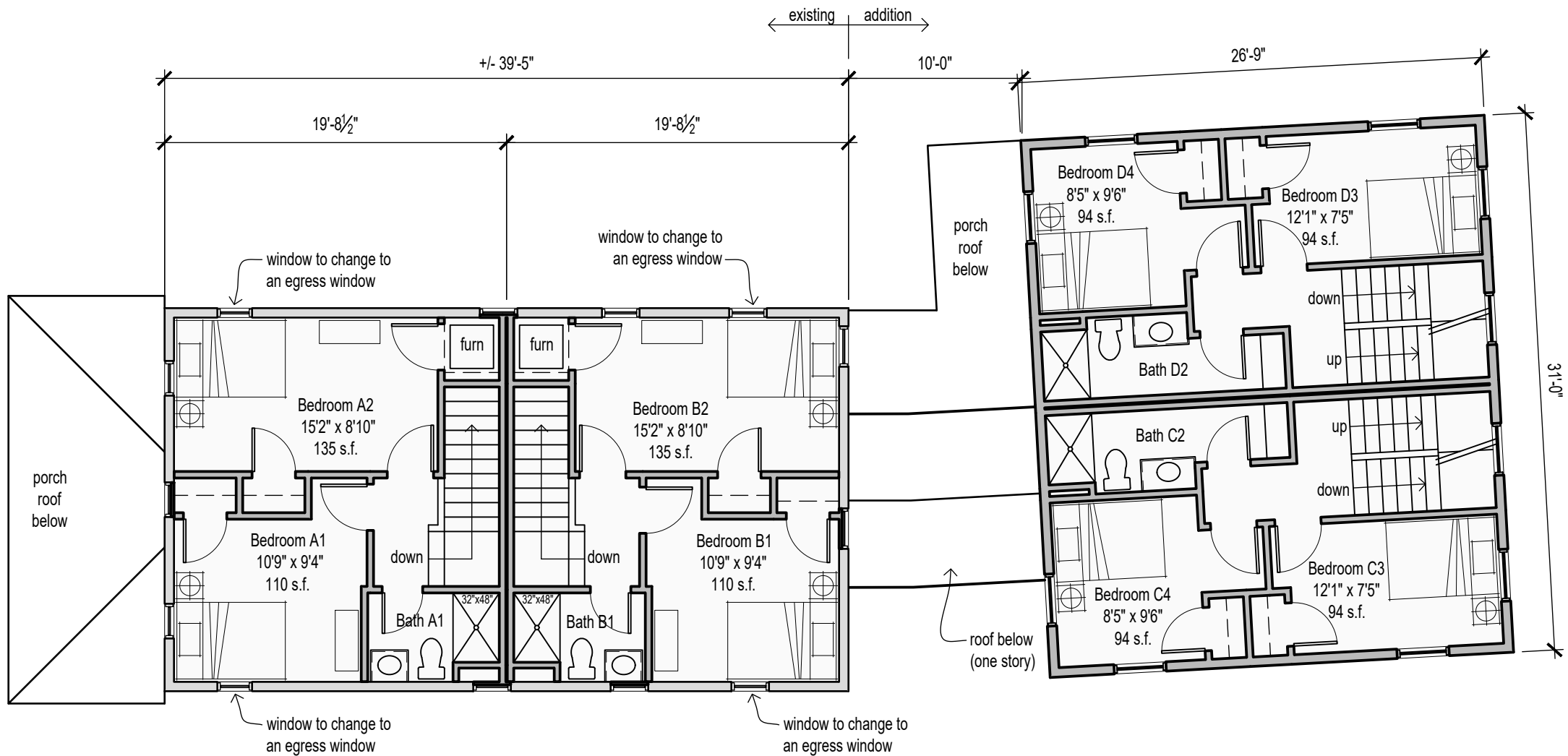
Division  
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renovation  
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A4



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

1/8" = 1'-0"

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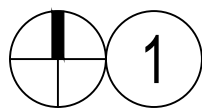
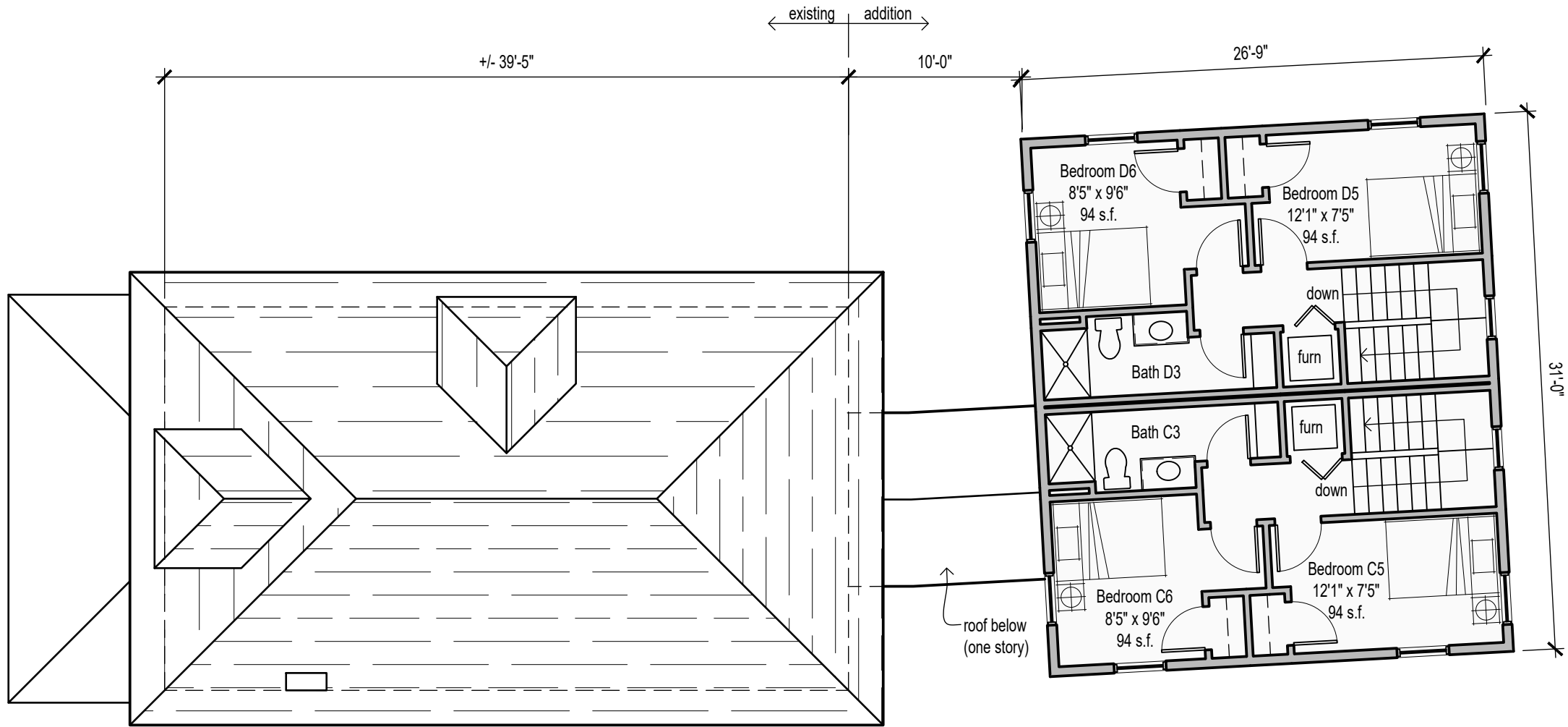
renovation  
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A5

FLOOR PLAN  
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THIRD FLOOR PLAN

1/8" = 1'-0"



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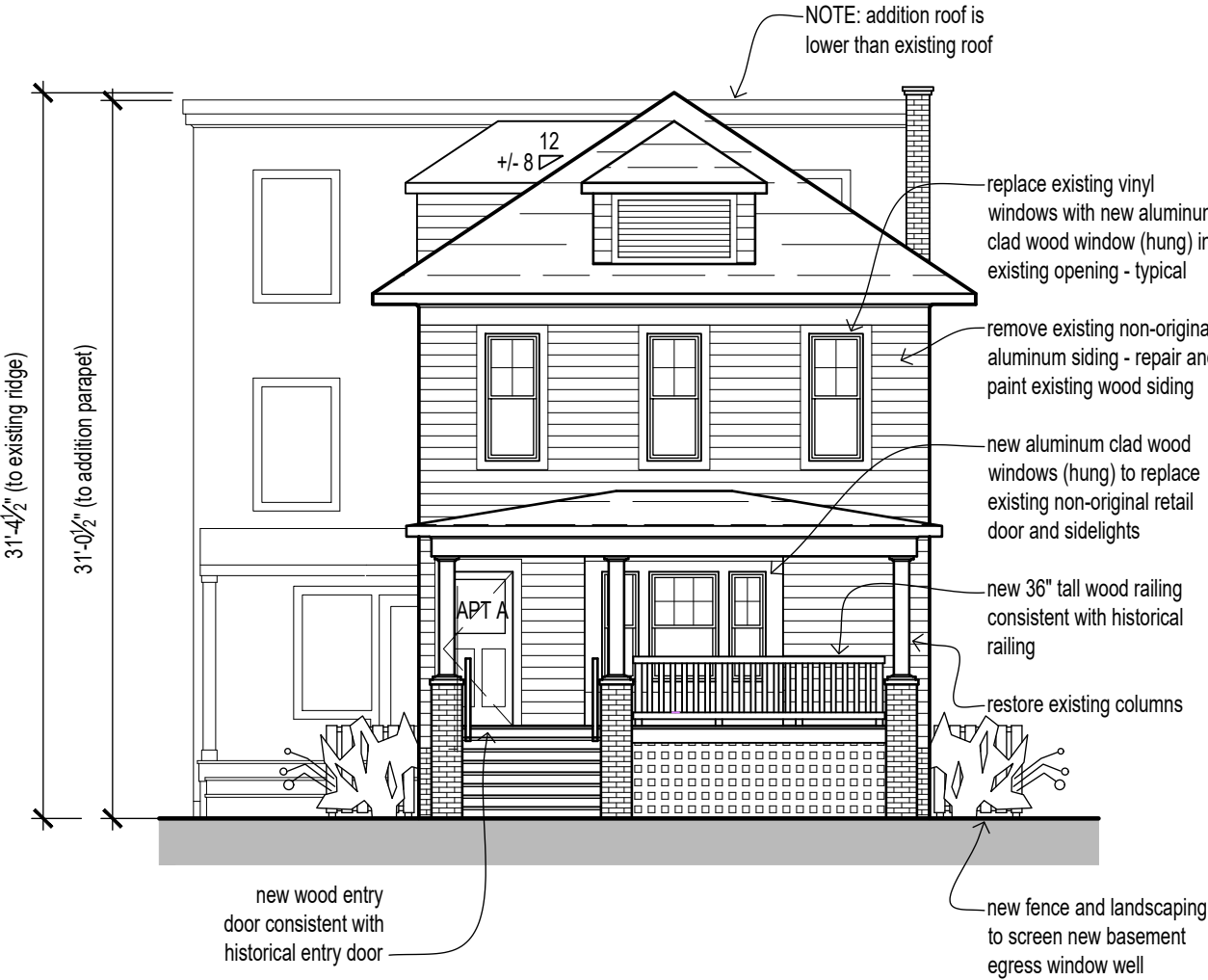
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A6

EXTERIOR ELEVATION  
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1 WEST ELEVATION (FRONT)  
1/8" = 1'-0"

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## Division Street Townhomes

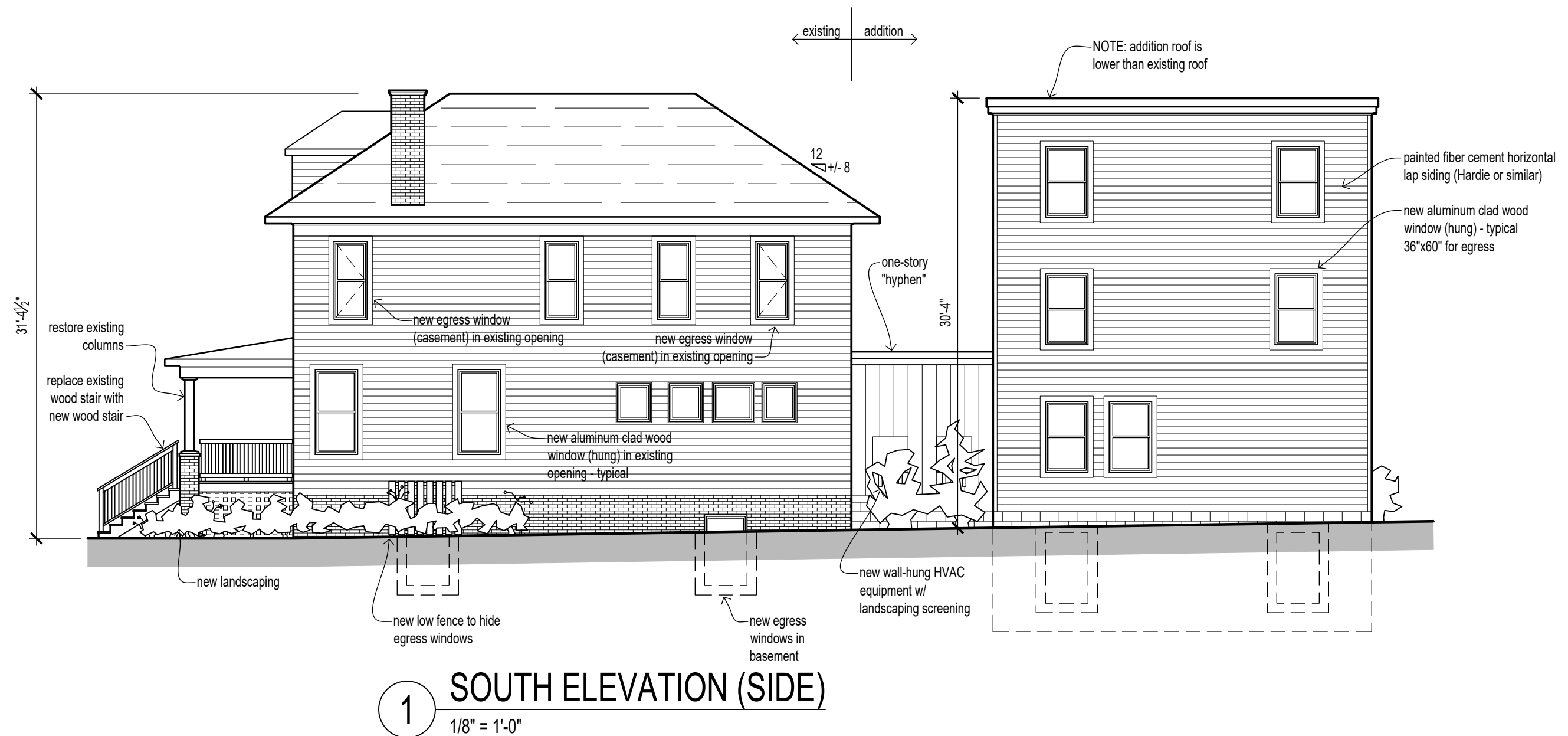
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# A7

EXTERIOR ELEVATION  
project no. 25053



Division  
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Townhomes

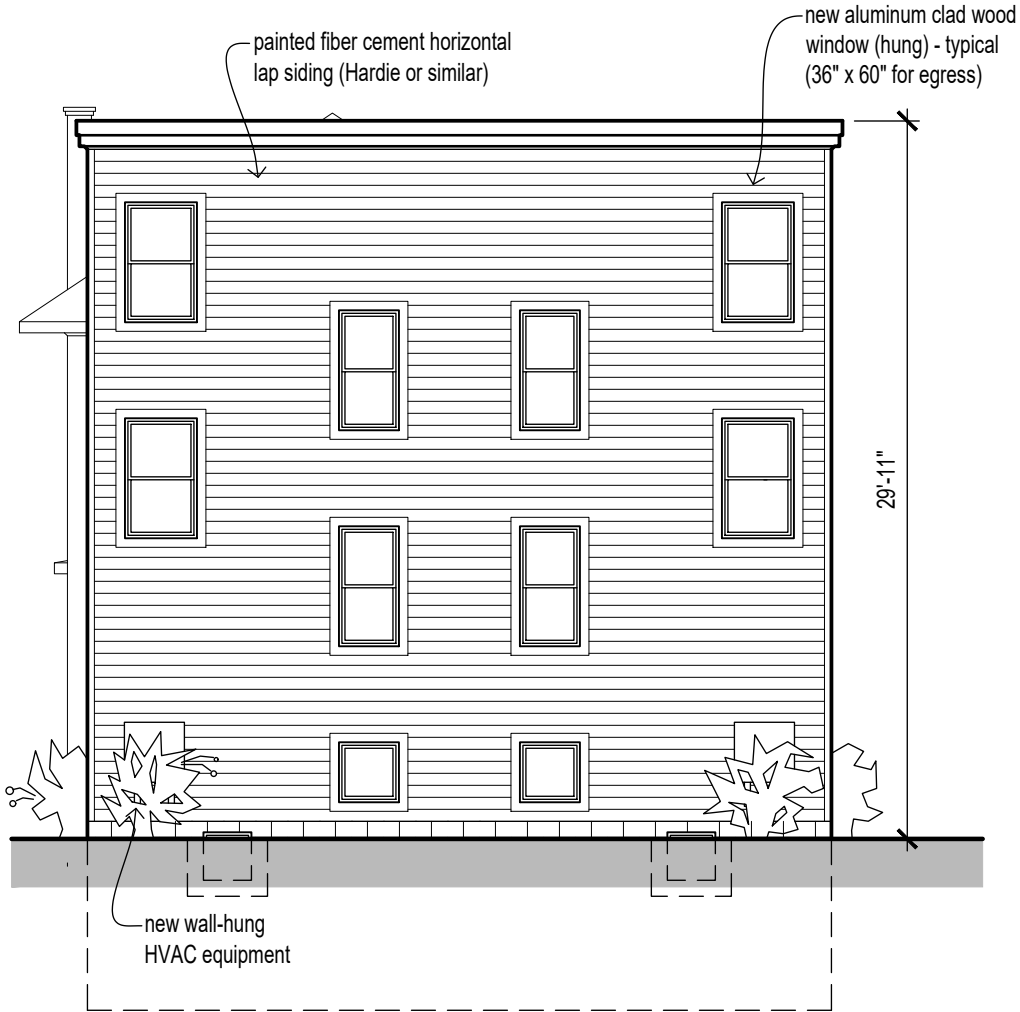
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317 South Division Street  
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A8

EXTERIOR ELEVATION  
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1 EAST ELEVATION (REAR)  
1/8" = 1'-0"

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Townhomes**

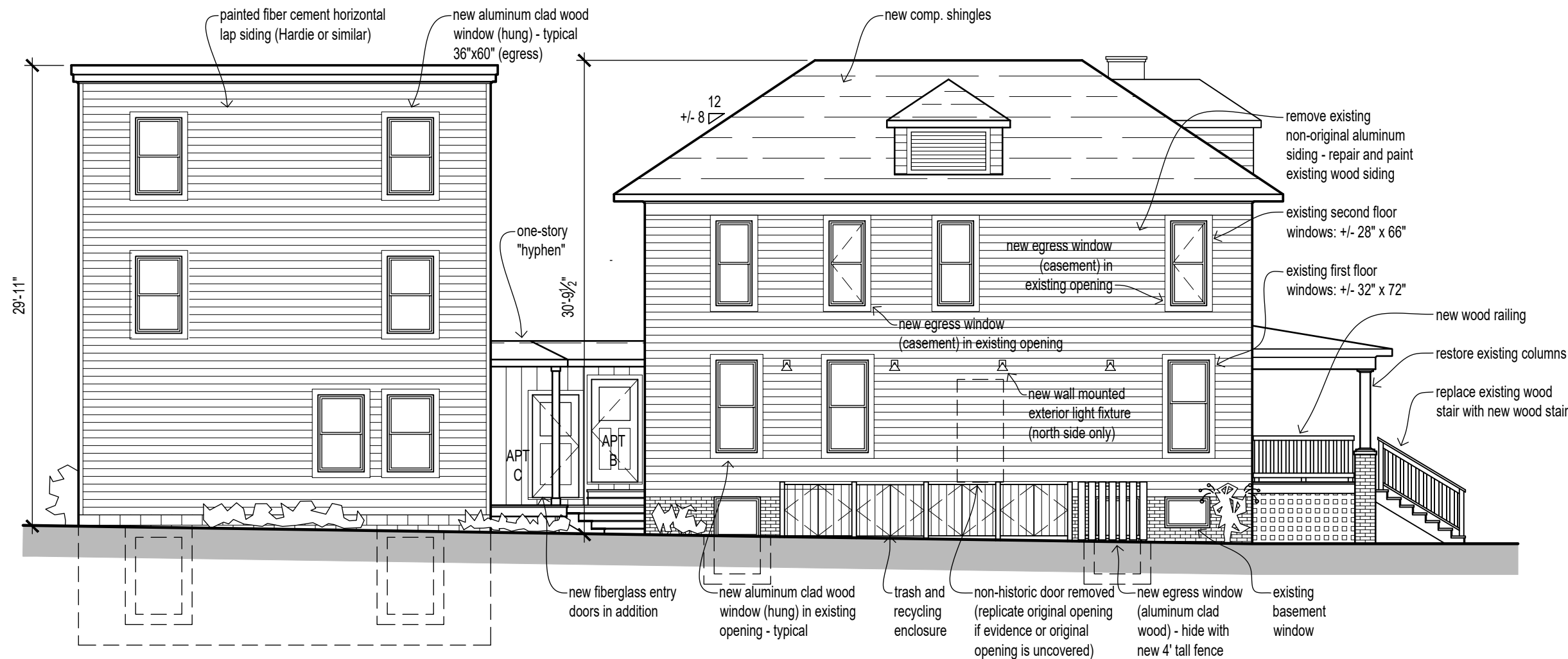
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A9

EXTERIOR ELEVATION  
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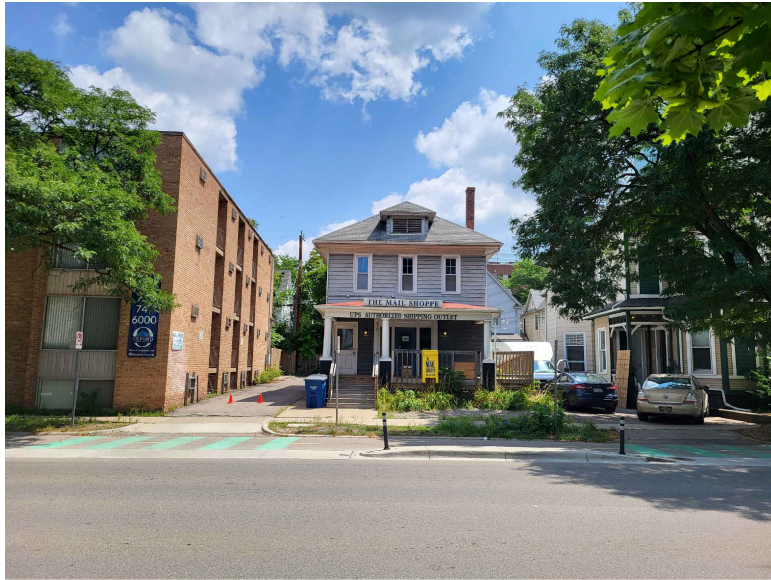


1

**NORTH ELEVATION (SIDE)**

1/8" = 1'-0"





315

317

321



317

321



321



317

321

327



321

327

331



327

331

**L • G • A**

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## Division Street Townhomes

renovation  
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# A10

CONTEXT PHOTOS  
project no. 25053



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**Division  
Street  
Townhomes**

renovation  
and addition

317 South Division Street  
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view looking south-east

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A11

RENDERINGS  
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**Division  
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view looking east

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A12

RENDERINGS  
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**Division  
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Townhomes**

renovation  
and addition

317 South Division Street  
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A13

RENDERINGS  
project no. 25053



view looking north-east