

Ann Arbor Historic District Commission Staff Report

Application Information

Address: 511 West Jefferson Street.

Application Number: HDC26-0064.

District: Old West Side Historic District.

Status: Contributing.

Report Date: June 11, 2026.

Report Prepared By: Mariana Melin-Corcoran, City Planner.

Review Committee Date: June 8, 2026.

Owner: Shelby Dewitt.

Owner Address: 511 West Jefferson Street, Ann Arbor, MI, 48103.

Owner Phone: (517) 599-0992

Applicant: Adam Zylka, Momentum Construction.

Applicant Address: 6707 Chilson Road, Howell, MI, 48843.

Applicant Phone: (734) 649-9390.

Background

Site History: This two-story vernacular house features brick on the first floor and wood shingles on the second floor, and a full-width stone front porch with Ionic columns. A one-story, single-bay garage is located in the southwest corner of the property. The garage features wood siding and double-leaf hinged wood doors with 6-pane windows. The house first appears in the 1916 City Directory. The first occupants of the house were Theodore Schmidt, the principal of Zion Evangelical Lutheran School, and his wife, Freda. A single-car garage of similar size to the current one appears on the 1925 Sanborn map.

In 2012, the HDC approved an application to construct a small rear addition and to install new cedar shake shingles in matching dimensions on the house. At the same meeting, the HDC denied a request to remove and replace the original garage door.

Location: The site is located on the south side of West Jefferson Street between Third Street and Fourth Street.

Figure 1: Location map showing 511 West Jefferson Street outlined in blue.



Application: The applicant seeks HDC approval to add a basement egress window near the front of the house and to remove and replace a non-original basement window in the existing opening, both on the west elevation.

Applicable Regulations

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

- (1) A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
- (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.
- Recommended: Identifying, retaining, and preserving buildings and their features as well as features of the site that are important in defining its overall historic character.
- 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.
- Not Recommended: 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.

Windows:

- Recommended: 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.
- Recommended: Protecting and maintaining the wood and architectural metal which comprise the window frame, sash, muntins, and surrounds through appropriate surface treatments such as cleaning, rust removal, limited paint removal, and reapplication of protective coating system.
- Not Recommended: Introducing a new design that is incompatible with the historic character of the building.

Health and Safety:

- Recommended: Identifying the historic building's character-defining spaces, features, and finishes so that code-required work will not result in their damage or loss.
- Recommended: Complying with health and safety codes, including seismic code requirements, in such a manner that character-defining spaces, features, and finishes are preserved.
- Not Recommended: Altering, damaging, or destroying character-defining spaces, features, and finishes while making modifications to a building or site to comply with safety codes.

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

Windows:

- Appropriate: Retaining and maintaining windows in good condition. Normal maintenance will include cleaning, sash cord replacement, limited paint removal, re-caulking where necessary, and new paint to make windows fully operable.
- Not Appropriate: Changing the number, location, and size or glazing pattern of windows by cutting new openings, blocking-in, or installing replacement sash which does not fit the historic opening.

Safety Codes:

- Appropriate: Complying with barrier free and safety codes in a manner that ensures the preservation of character-defining features.

Mechanical Equipment

- Appropriate: Attaching mechanical equipment so historic fabric is not damaged or destroyed.
- Appropriate: Installing mechanical equipment and wiring in locations on the roof, rear elevations, or in alleys, so they are not visible from the street.

Staff Findings:

1. The applicant proposes a new egress window well on the east elevation near the front of the house. It will be a composite casement window that matches the width of the existing opening in this location, which measures 32 in wide. The window well will be curved and will extend 3ft from the building plane. It will be composite.

This proposed location must be approved by the Commission because of its proximity to the front elevation.

The foundation has been replaced, so none of the basement windows are original.

2. The applicant also proposes to remove and replace the existing basement awning window on the west elevation closer to the rear. It will be replaced in the same opening with a composite awning window.

The window should be inset to the same plane as the current window glass, and a condition is included in the suggested motion.

3. Also included in this application are two new penetrations for mechanical systems, one on the east elevation and one on the west elevation. Both will be near the rear of the house, located within the non-original foundation, and not visible. These penetrations could be approved by staff but are included here to consolidate the number of Certificates of Appropriateness.
4. New basement egress windows are often necessary in historic buildings to meet contemporary building codes. Based on the drawings and earlier iterations of the design, it would be possible to convert the window closer to the rear on the west elevation into an egress window. This would be a more appropriate location because it would be less visible and farther from the character-defining front elevation. The applicant proposes this location near the front of the house for more light and air in the basement bedroom.

Because of stairs and mechanical equipment on the east side and rear of the house, locations on other elevations are not possible.

5. This is the first time that the Commission is considering composite as a material for a basement egress window and well and for a replacement basement window. Regarding the rear basement window on the west elevation, staff can approve the replacement of non-original windows with compatible windows. Replacing with an awning window in the same opening is a compatible design, but the Commission must decide if composite is an appropriate material for basement windows.

Possible Motions:

(Note that the motions support staff findings and are 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 511 West Jefferson Street, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to construct a new egress window and well on the west elevation near front of the house, remove and replace a rear basement window on the west elevation, and construct two new penetrations for mechanical equipment on the condition that the new windows are inset to the same plane as the current window glass. As conditioned, 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 1, 9 and 10 and the guidelines for building site, windows and health and safety, as well as the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines* for windows, safety codes, and mechanical equipment.

ATTACHMENTS: application, drawings, specifications

Image 1: 511 West Jefferson Street (2008 staff photo)



RESIDENTIAL REMODEL FOR ERIC AND SHELBY DEWITT

511 W JEFFERSON ST, ANN ARBOR, MI 48103

GENERAL INFORMATION:

PARCEL #: 09-09-29-319-012
 CITY OF ANN ARBOR, WASHTENAW COUNTY
 MICHIGAN RESIDENTIAL CODE, 2015
 ZONING: R2A
 OCCUPANCY/USE: SINGLE-FAMILY DWELLING
 HISTORIC DISTRICT: YES
 WETLAND: NO
 FLOODPLAIN: NO
 SOIL GROUP: F_oB (FOX SANDY LOAM, 2-6 SLOPES), F_oC (FOX SANDY LOAM, 6-12 SLOPES)
 SOIL NRCS CLASS: B: SILT OR LOAM

ZONING (R1D*):	R2A	EXISTING / PROPOSED
MIN. LOT AREA:	5,000 SQ. FT.	0.076 ACRES; 3,300 SQ. FT.
MIN. LOT WIDTH:	40'	+/- 50'
MIN. FRONT YARD**:	25'	+/- 14'-0" / (NO CHANGE)
MIN. SIDE YARD (ONE SIDE):	3'	+/- 5'-0" / (NO CHANGE)
MIN. SIDE YARD (TOTAL):	6'	+/- 24'-0" / (NO CHANGE)
MIN. REAR YARD:	20'	+/- 21'-0" / (NO CHANGE)
MAX. BUILDING HEIGHT:	30'	+/- 24'-0" / (NO CHANGE)

*R2A MAY USE R1D SETBACK & HEIGHT STANDARDS FOR SINGLE-FAMILY USE.
 **FRONT YARD SETBACK DETERMINED BY AVG. EXISTING SETBACKS.

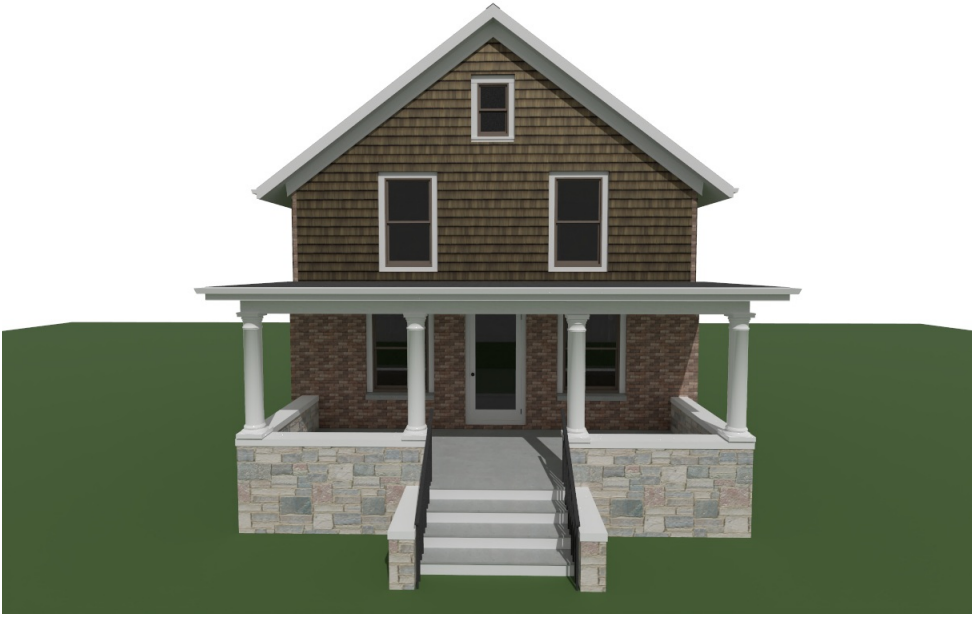
EXISTING/PRE-1945 FLOOR AREA/FOOTPRINT (MAIN LEVEL): 746 SQ. FT. (NO CHANGE)
 EXISTING/PRE-1945 FLOOR AREA (UPPER LEVEL): 676 SQ. FT. (NO CHANGE)
 EXISTING/PRE-1945 FLOOR AREA (TOTAL): 1,422 SQ. FT. (NO CHANGE)

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

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

CHANGES TO THE EXTERIOR INCLUDE:

1. Remove (2) basement hopper windows on the west side of the house and replace the south window with an awning window of the same size. The window to the north to be (1) egress window. Proposed materials for both windows to be composite.
2. Add a new penetration on the west side of the house for the proposed bathroom exhaust to vent.
3. Add a new penetration on the east side of the house to accommodate the proposed tankless water heater.



VIEW FROM STREET - PROPOSED



VIEW FROM STREET - EXISTING



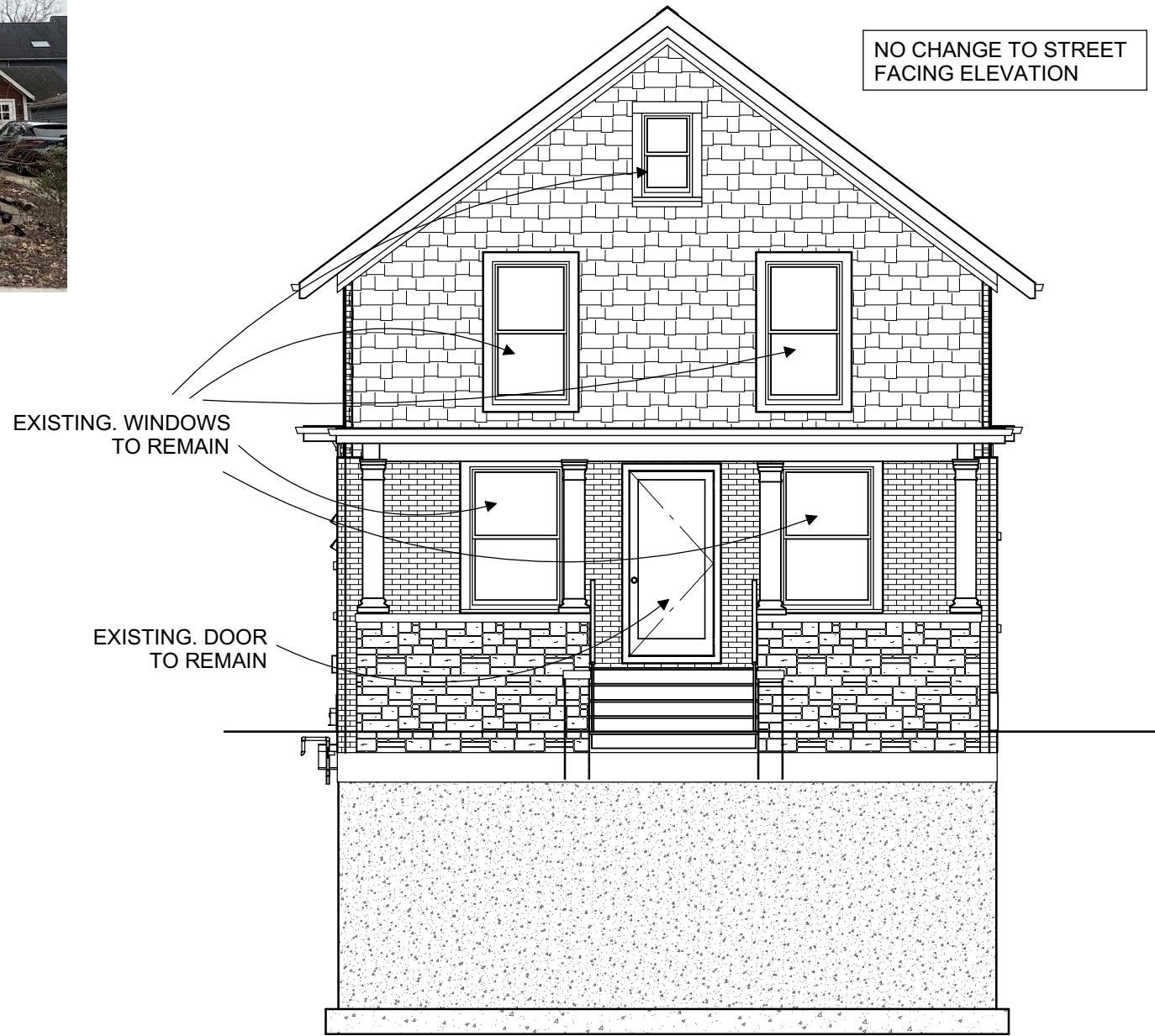
06/01/2026

DEWITT RESIDENCE
 511 W JEFFERSON ST, ANN ARBOR, MI 48103

DESCRIPTION

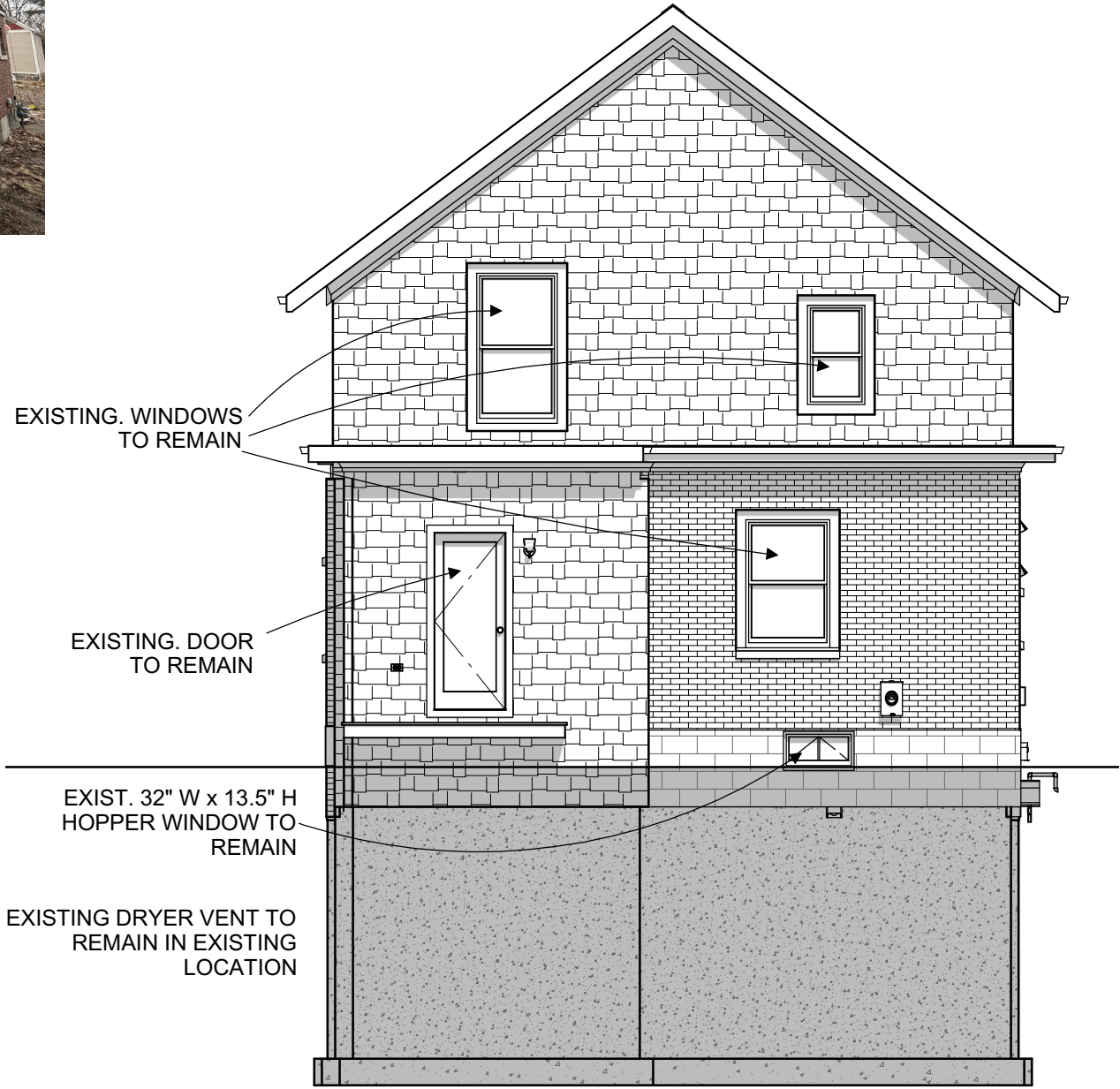
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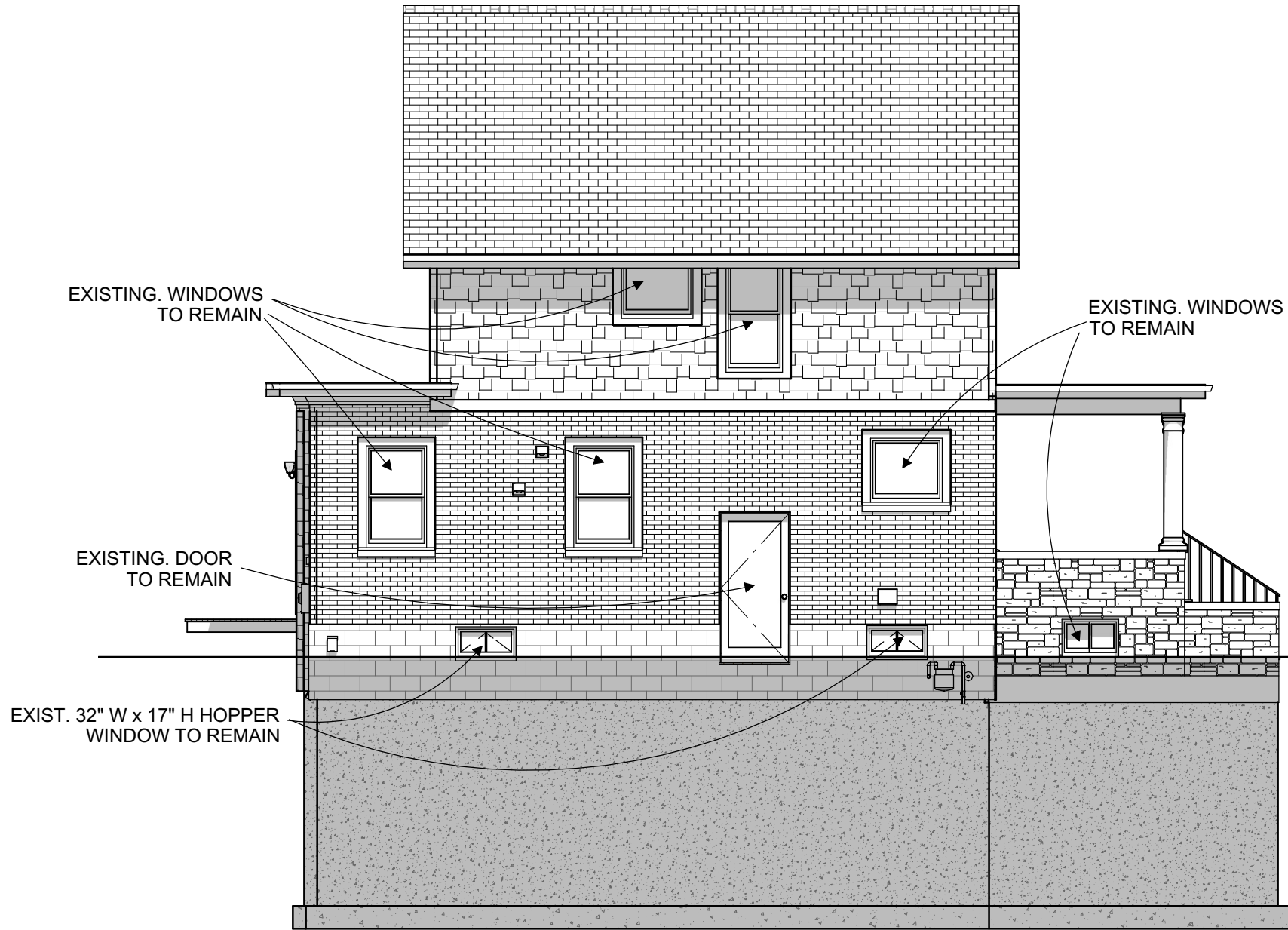


FRONT (NORTH) ELEVATION - EXISTING / PROPOSED
SCALE: 5/32" = 1'-0"

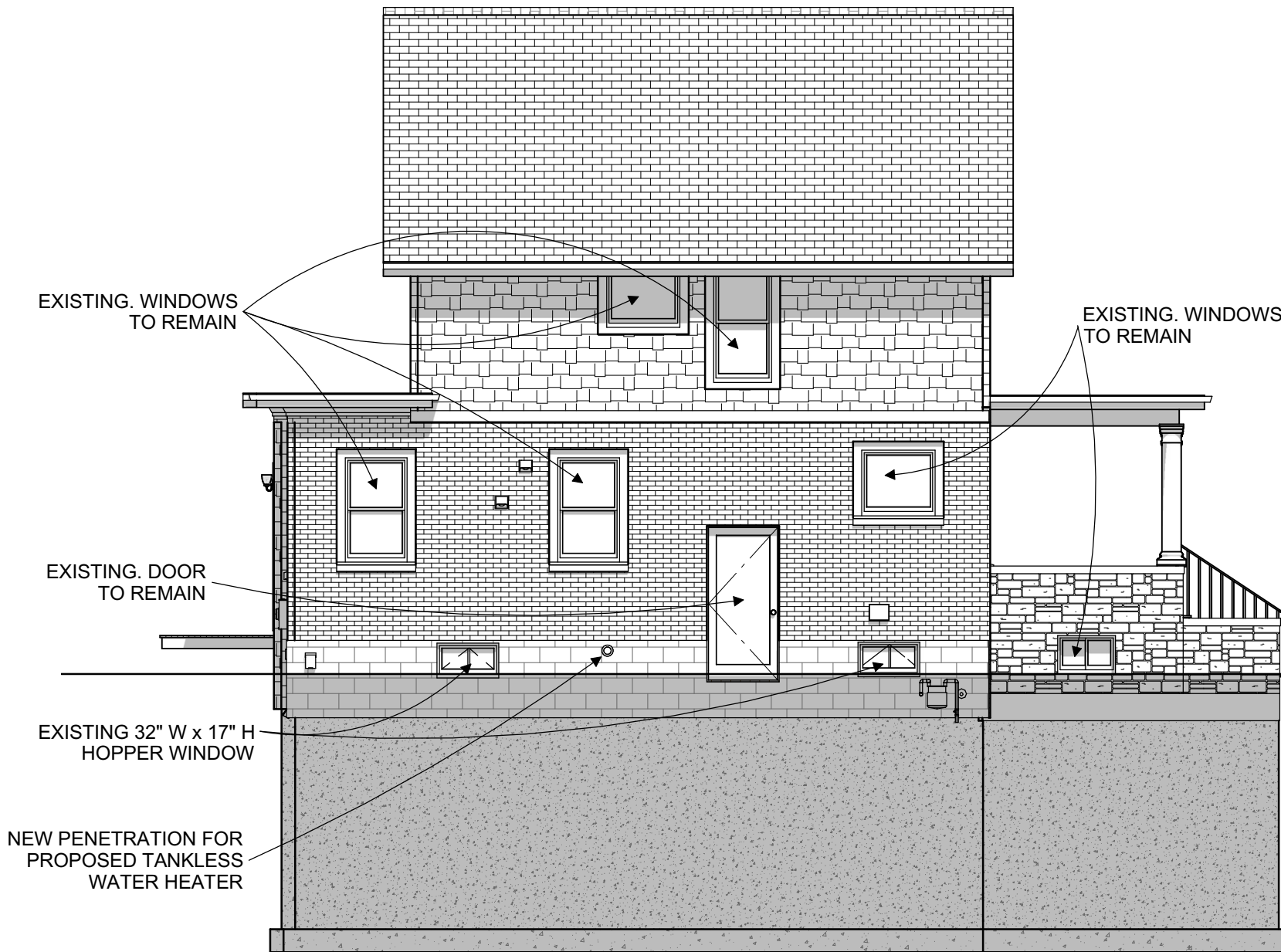
NO CHANGE - TO REAR ELEVATION



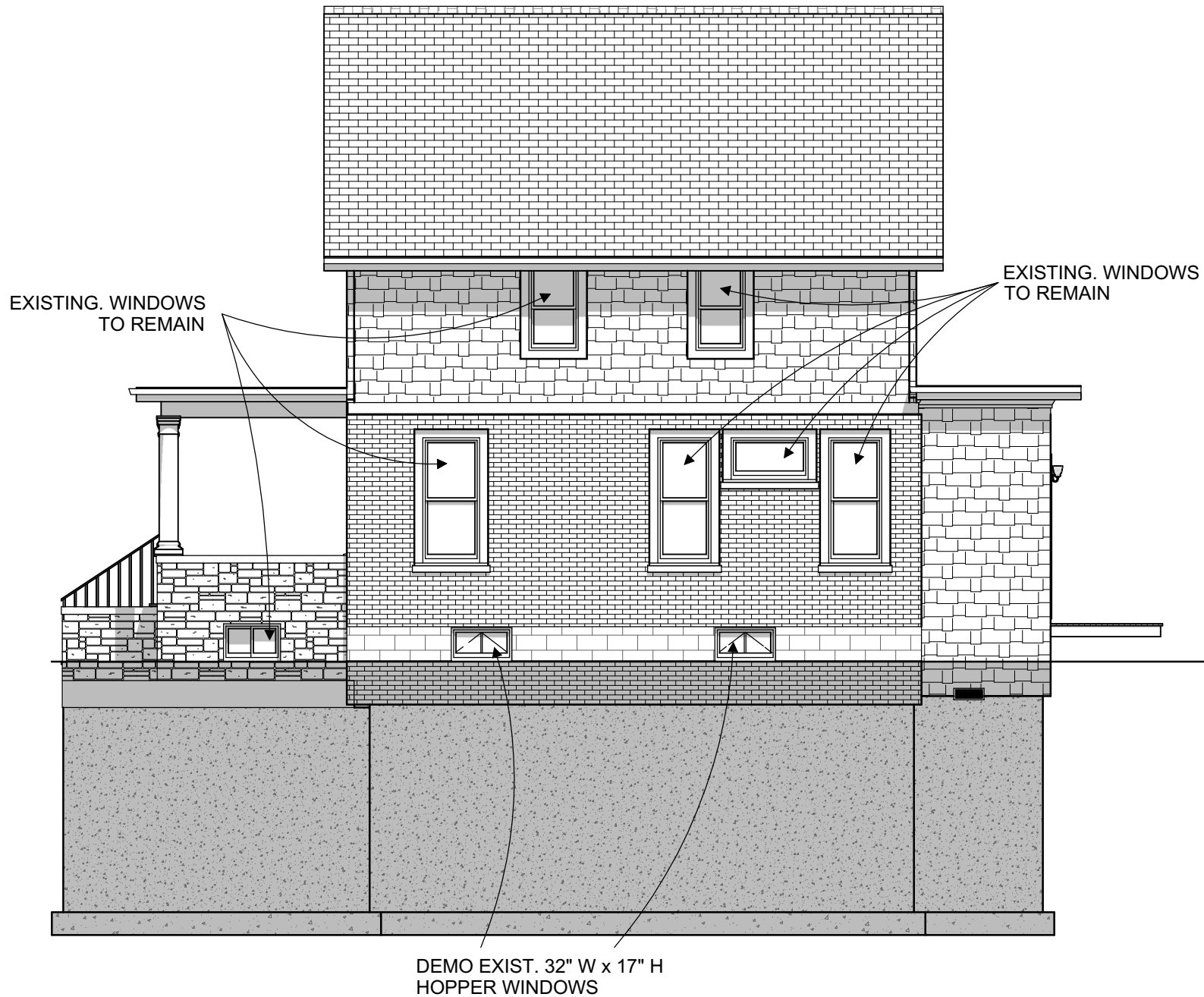
REAR (SOUTH) ELEVATION - EXISTING
SCALE: 5/32" = 1'-0"



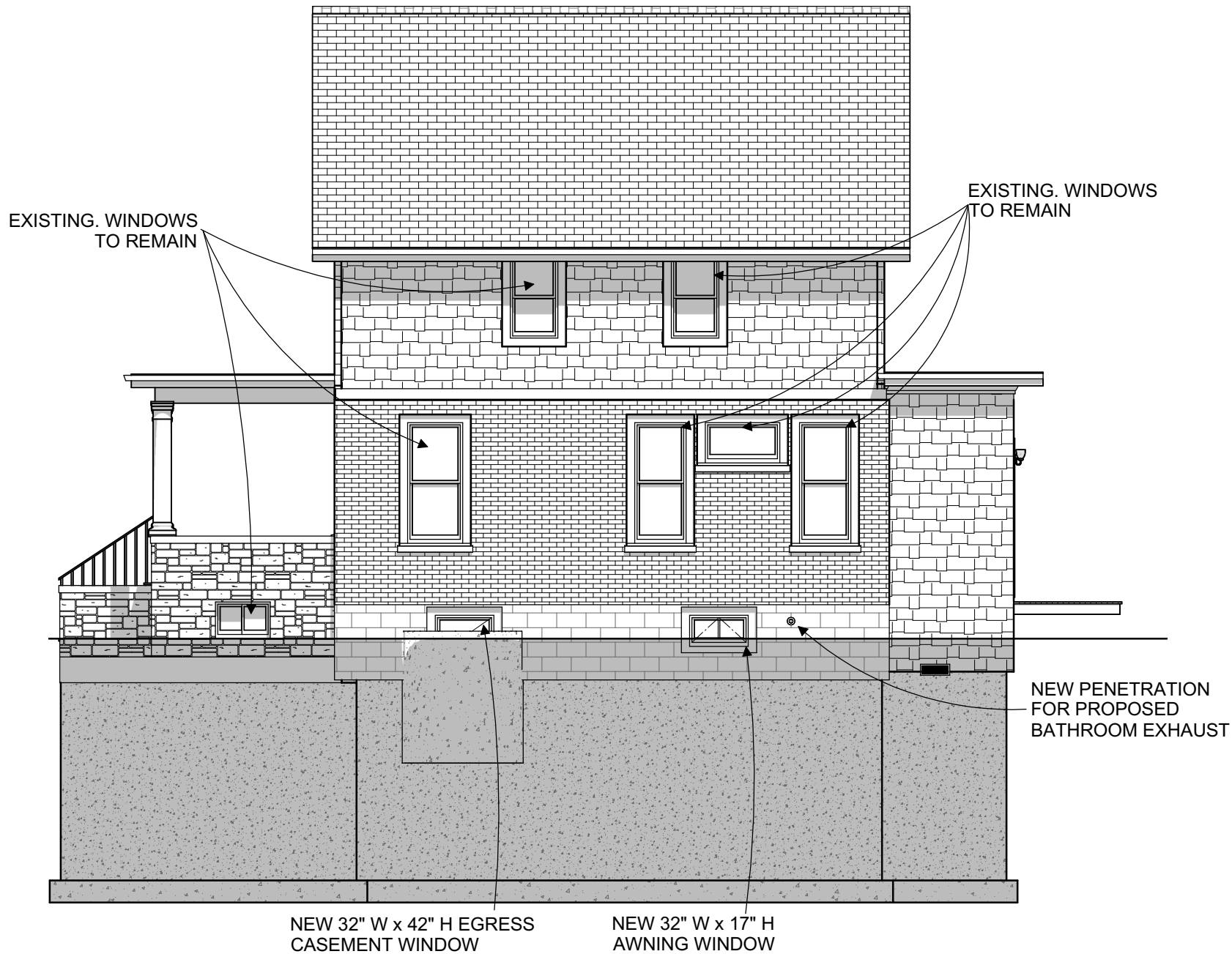
SIDE ELEVATION (EAST) - EXISTING
SCALE: 5/32" = 1'-0"



SIDE ELEVATION (EAST) - PROPOSED
SCALE: 5/32" = 1'-0"



SIDE ELEVATION (WEST) - EXISTING
SCALE: 5/32" = 1'-0"



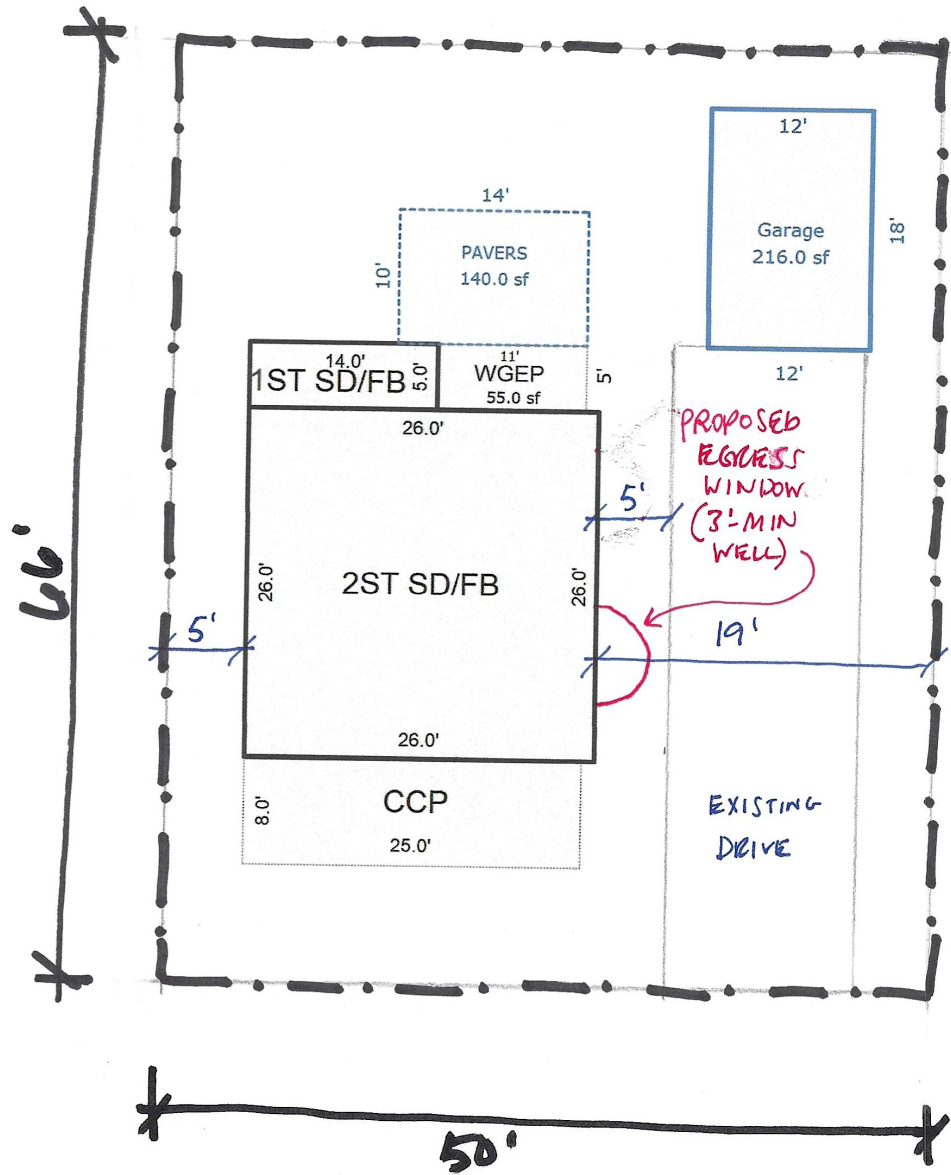
SIDE ELEVATION - PROPOSED

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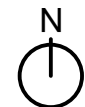
SIDE ELEVATION (WEST) - PROPOSED
SCALE: 5/32" = 1'-0"

NO PROPOSED STRUCTURES.



511 W. JEFFERSON

SITE PLAN - PROPOSED
NOT TO SCALE



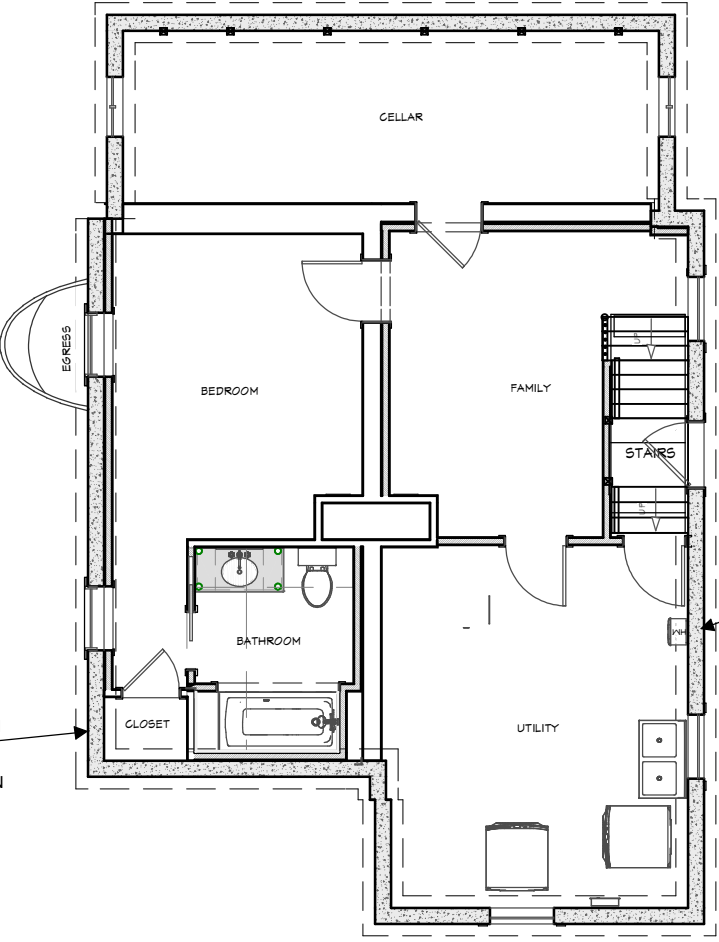
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DEWITT RESIDENCE
511 W. JEFFERSON ST., ANN ARBOR, MI 48103

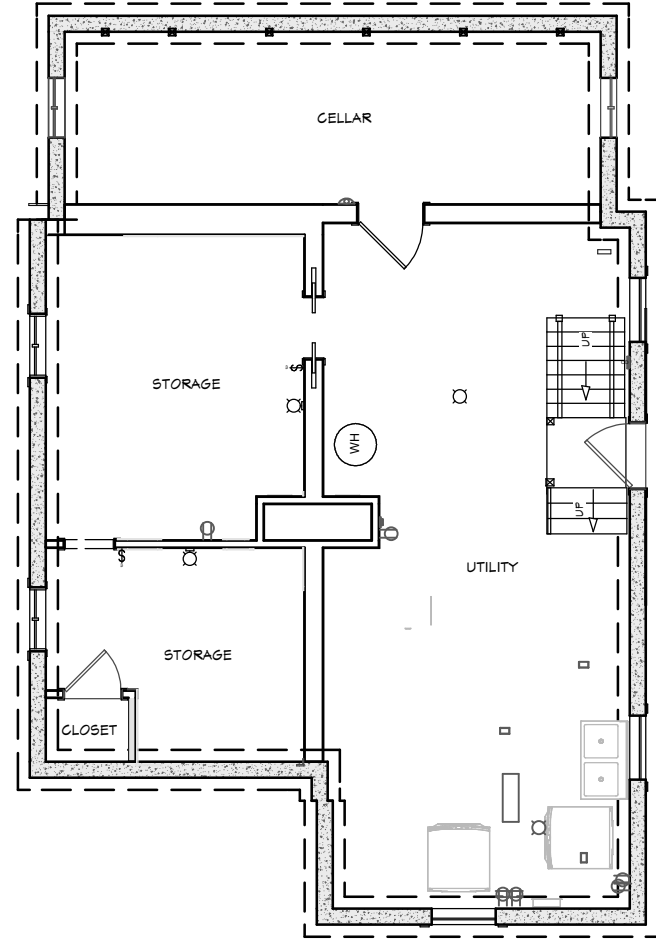
SITE PLAN

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BASEMENT PLAN - PROPOSED
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



BASEMENT PLAN - EXISTING
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



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511 W. JEFFERSON ST., ANN ARBOR, MI 48103

EXISTING PHOTO

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EXTERIOR VIEW OF EXISTING HOUSE
VIEW FROM SIDEWALK LOOKING SOUTH



EXTERIOR VIEW OF PROPOSED ADDITION
VIEW FROM SIDEWALK LOOKING SOUTH



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EXISTING PHOTO

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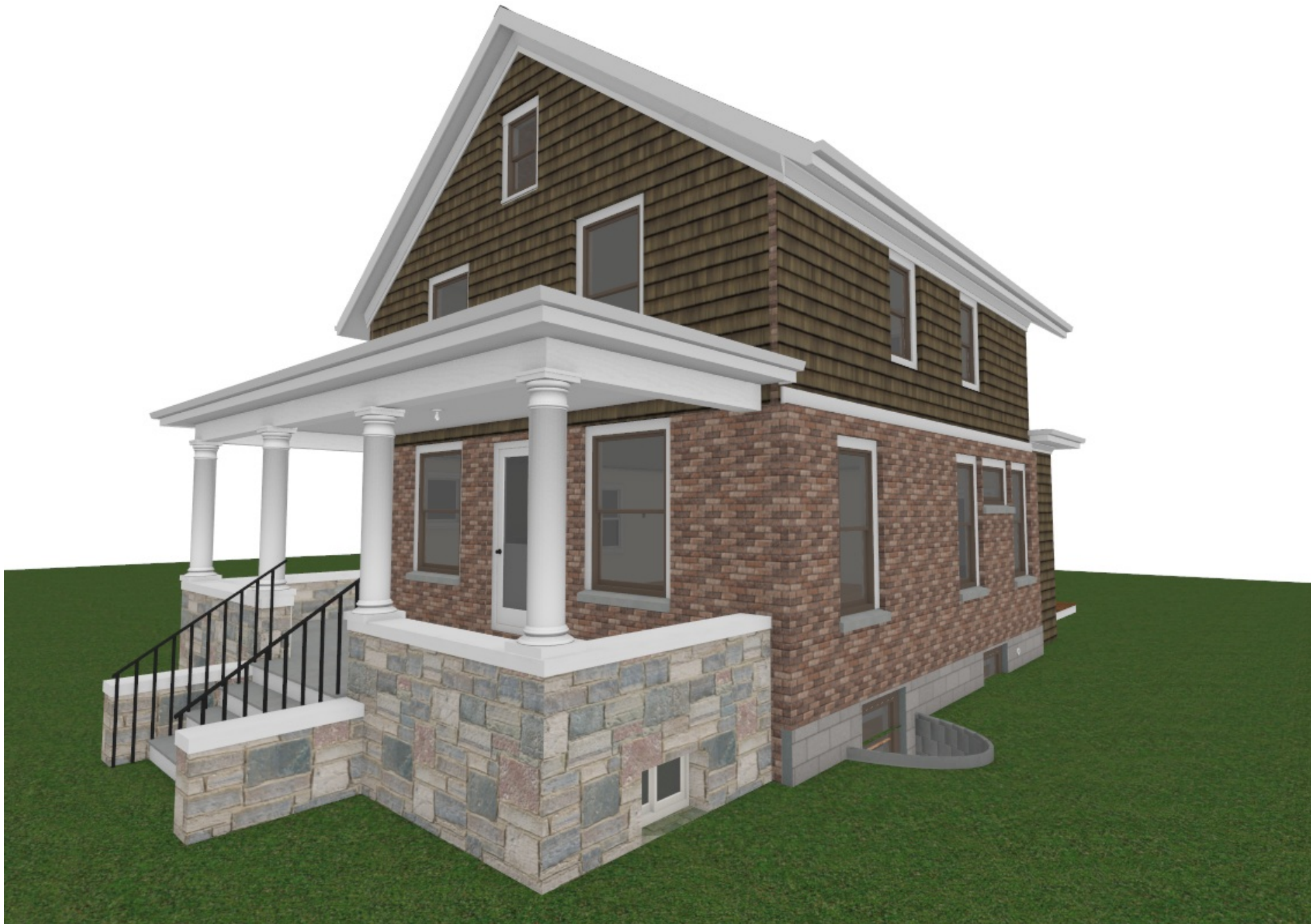
EXTERIOR VIEW OF EXISTING HOUSE
VIEW FROM SIDEWALK LOOKING SOUTHWEST



EXTERIOR VIEW OF PROPOSED ADDITION
VIEW FROM SIDEWALK LOOKING SOUTHWEST



EXTERIOR VIEW OF EXISTING HOUSE
VIEW FROM STREET LOOKING SOUTHEAST



EXTERIOR VIEW OF PROPOSED ADDITION
VIEW STREET LOOKING SOUTHEAST



EXTERIOR VIEW OF EXISTING HOUSE
VIEW FROM REAR YARD LOOKING NORTHEAST



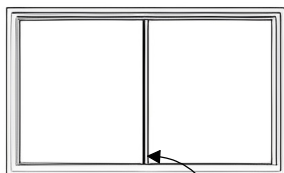
EXTERIOR VIEW OF PROPOSED ADDITION
VIEW FROM REAR YARD LOOKING NORTHEAST

**NEW AWNING + CASEMENT WINDOWS IN BASEMENT:
 AWNING 1 : ANDERSON 100 SERIES, 32" X17"
 CASEMENT EGRESS: ANDERSON 100 SERIES, 32" X 42"**

**-COMPOSITE INTERIOR (WHITE) / COMPOSITE EXTERIOR (DARK BRONZE) - AWNING + EGRESS/CASEMENT
 -LOCATION: BASEMENT**

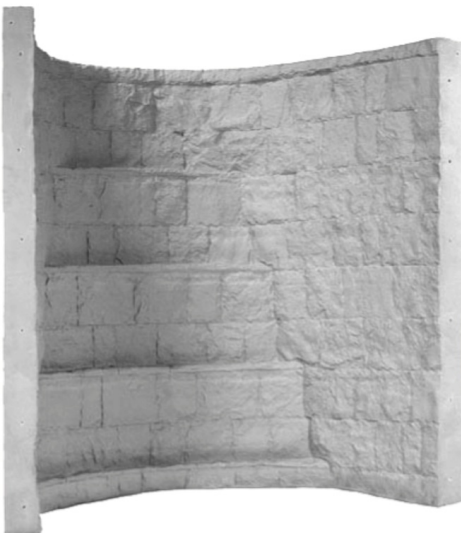
**What Is Fibrex®
 Material?**

Our composite windows and doors are made of Fibrex® material, which is exclusive to Andersen. A true composite combines the strength of two or more materials to make a new material that's greater than its parts. In this case, it's the combination of wood fiber and thermoplastic polymer that gives Fibrex material its long-lasting strength, durability, and beauty. Each cell of wood fiber is filled and encased with the thermoplastic polymer creating unique strength.

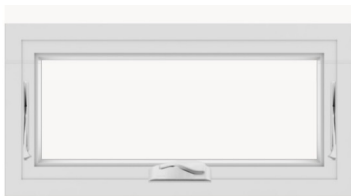


****NOTE : AWNING WINDOW TO HAVE VERTICAL GRILL****

EGRESS WELL :



**MANUFACTURER : ROCKWELL WINDOW WELLS
 WELL SIZE : 66" W x 44" D x 36" H
 WELL COLOR : GREY
 MODEL : ELITE EGRESS WELL**



**AWNING INTERIOR
 (WHITE)**



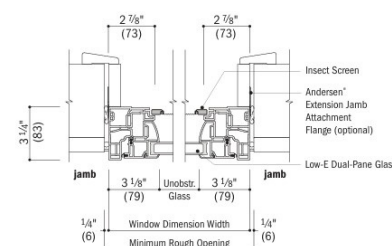
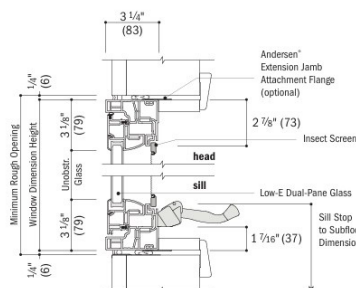
**AWNING EXTERIOR
 (DARK BRONZE)**

100 SERIES AWNING WINDOWS



Details for Awning Window With Dual-Pane Glass - Replacement
 Scale 1 1/2" (38) = 1'-0" (305) - 1:8

Dual-Pane - No Flange

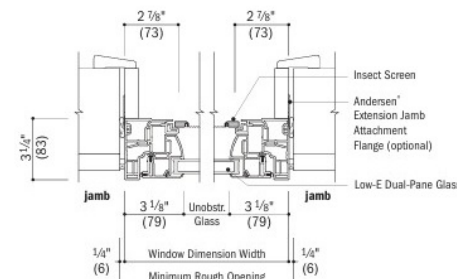
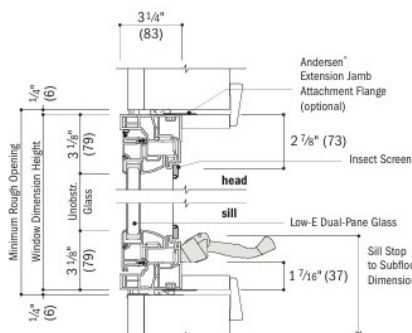


100 SERIES CASEMENT WINDOWS



Details for Casement Window With Dual-Pane Glass - Replacement
 Scale 1 1/2" (38) = 1'-0" (305) - 1:8

Dual-Pane - No Flange



NEW WINDOWS



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DEWITT RESIDENCE
 511 W. JEFFERSON ST., ANN ARBOR, MI 48103

WINDOW INFORMATION

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EXISTING PHOTOS

HDC

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PHOTOS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS
MULTIPLE PHOTOS OF EXTERIOR AND EXISTING WINDOWS