

00 ANN ARBOR HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION**Staff Report****ADDRESS:** 549 S First Street, Application Number HDC23-0187**DISTRICT:** Old West Side Historic District**REPORT DATE:** November 9, 2023**REPORT PREPARED BY:** Jill Thacher, Historic Preservation Coordinator**REVIEW COMMITTEE DATE:** November 6, 2023**OWNER****APPLICANT****Name:** Nick CollinsKasey Vliet
In Parallel Architects
4621 Freedom Drive
Ann Arbor, MI 48108**Address:****Phone:** (646) 246-8246

BACKGROUND: This home first appears in City Directories in 1896 as number 99, the home of contractor Henry Koch and his wife Mary. Christian G. Koch, a mason, lived across the street at number 96, and both worked for Koch Brothers construction, which built many of Ann Arbor's most notable buildings. Henry and Mary's son Harold was a founding member of the Old West Side Association. The house is a two-story gable-fronter with corner returns, a brick chimney, a second-floor triple window facing the street, a stone front porch with wing walls and round, tapered half columns, a front window with a leaded glass transom, and a cut stone and natural stone foundation.

On 1931 and 1948 Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps the rear wing of this two-story house is a single story, with a small covered porch infilling the northeast corner (see end of staff report). At some point the one-story wing received a second-floor addition with a hipped roof.

LOCATION: The site is located on the east side of South First Street, north of West Madison and south of West Jefferson.

APPLICATION: The applicant seeks HDC approval to rebuild both the main roof and rear addition roof, alter a non-original window, remove the chimney, remove an attic vent in the front gable, remove the stone foundation and porch walls and rebuild the stone portion above grade, replace wood basement windows with aluminum-clad wood hopper windows, convert an existing basement window into an egress window, install a mini-split, and install a wood fence that is 6'-8' tall.

APPLICABLE REGULATIONS:**From the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:**

- (1) A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
- (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 shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

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

Alterations/Additions for the new use

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.

Additions

Not Recommended: Using the same wall plane, roof line, cornice height, materials, siding lap or window type to make additions appear to be a part of the historic building.

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

Windows

Not Recommended: Introducing a new design that is incompatible with the historic character of the building.

Roofs

Recommended: Identifying, retaining, and preserving roofs – and their functional and decorative features—that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building. This includes the roof-shape, such as cupolas, cresting, chimneys and weathervanes; and roofing material such as slate, wood, clay tile, and metal, as well as its size, color, and patterning.

Not Recommended: Introducing a new roof feature that is incompatible in size, scale, material and color.

Masonry

Recommended: Identifying, retaining, and preserving masonry features that are important in defining the overall historic character of the building such as walls, brackets, railings, cornices, window architraves, door pediments, steps, and columns; and details such as tooling and bonding patterns, coating, and color.

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

Roofs

Appropriate: Retaining and maintaining original historic roofing materials, roof shape, dormers, cupolas, chimneys, and built-in or decorative gutters & downspouts.

Safety Codes

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

STAFF FINDINGS:

1. The main roof structure consists of 2x4" rafters that are 24" on center. This is not unusual in the Old West Side, but the owner would like to loft the ceiling on the second floor and eliminate the attic by replacing the rafters with a scissors truss system. The roof pitch, ridge height, and eave overhangs would remain the same. Two skylights are proposed on the north face of the main roof. A modern attic vent in the front gable would be removed and patched with siding. Other kitchen and bath vents are appropriate as proposed.
2. The roof on the addition would be converted from a hip to rear-facing gable. Two of the eleven windows on this modern upper floor addition would be removed. While the roof is slightly asymmetrical since the addition does not run the entire width of the back of the house, it is compatible as proposed. A rear attic window would be lost to the new roof. The window appears to be modern.
3. The red brick chimney is not ornate but it is visible and, in staff's opinion, a character defining feature of the house. Leaving the exterior portion and building a shelf to support it in the attic would be preferable.
4. The basement windows are currently 2'9" x 1'11". The egress window is proposed on the south side of the house and would lower the sill to increase the height of the window to 5'5". An aluminum-clad wood casement window is proposed, with an aluminum well cover. The location of the window is not ideal since it is close to the front of the house, though it is preferable to cutting a new opening where none now exists.
5. A large modern picture window is located on the rear elevation. It is proposed to be shortened in height to allow kitchen cabinets below. The exterior would be trimmed with boral and flush with the wall instead of boxed out, and siding would be infilled below the windows as needed. Since the window is disproportionately large and not original, this work is appropriate.

6. The basement is failing and the applicant proposes to take down the cut stone, rubble and concrete basement walls, rebuild them with concrete masonry units, and reassemble the cut stone above ground level. Similarly, the stone front porch is proposed to be disassembled and reassembled with new mortar. Staff has concerns, especially about the cut stone foundation and its reassembly and whether the new appearance will match. Staff strongly recommends that the mason who will be working on the project attends the HDC meeting to explain the rationale behind this part of the project and how the walls will be put back together in a way that matches the historic appearance.
7. The current fence is wood and 6' or 8' tall. It is proposed to be replaced with a new, similar wood fence extends flush from the front of the house and follows parts of the south, east, and north property lines. A portion of the fence is currently 8', and the parts of the new fence behind the house are proposed to be 8'. This height requires HDC approval, not staff.
8. Two mini-split units are proposed on the north side of the house near the rear. These would replace an existing AC condenser. The line sets would run on the interior of the house.
9. Staff has concerns about the chimney removal and reconstruction of the stone foundation and porch Staff believes the rest of the work is compatible with the existing structure, neighboring buildings, and the surrounding historic district, and meets the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines* and the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines*.

POSSIBLE MOTIONS: (Note that the motions 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 549 South First Street, a contributing property in the Old West Side Historic District, to rebuild both the main roof and rear addition roof, alter a non-original window, remove the chimney, remove an attic vent in the front gable, remove the stone foundation and porch walls and rebuild the stone portion above grade, replace wood basement windows with aluminum-clad wood hopper windows, convert an existing basement window into an egress window, install a mini-split, and install a wood fence that is 6'-8' tall. 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 1, 2, 9 and 10 and the guidelines for alterations, additions, windows, masonry and roofs, as well as the *Ann Arbor Historic District Design Guidelines*, particularly as they pertain to additions and safety codes.

MOTION WORKSHEET:

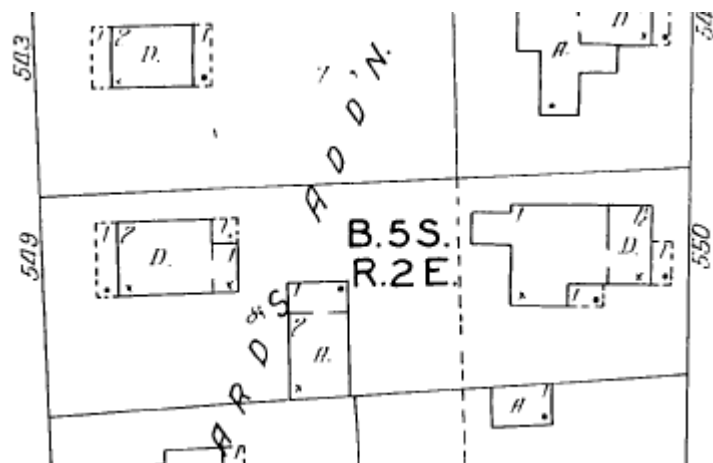
I move that the Commission issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for the work at 549 S First Street in the Old West Side Historic District

_____ 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, description of work, photos, drawings

1931 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, 549 S First



549 S First Street (2008 OWS Survey Photos)





SCOPE OF WORK

- 1A LOWER LEVEL - FOUNDATION
- 1B LOWER LEVEL - EGRESS WINDOW
- 2 MAIN LEVEL - REAR ELEVATION WINDOW
- 3A UPPER/ATTIC/ROOF - ROOF FRAMING AND SKYLIGHTS
- 3B UPPER/ATTIC/ROOF - REAR WING ROOF AND REAR WINDOWS
- 3C UPPER/ATTIC/ROOF - CHIMNEY
- 3D UPPER/ATTIC/ROOF - VENT
- 3E UPPER/ATTIC/ROOF - EXTERIOR CLADDING
- 4A LANDSCAPE - FENCE
- 4B LANDSCAPE - MECHANICAL

PROJECT SUMMARY

We propose to renovate the house and landscape at 549 South First Street in Ann Arbor, MI. This primarily interior renovation will include all three house levels (lower, main and upper) and also the landscape.

The proposed renovations have been categorized as indicated in the Scope of Work table at the left of this page. Each category is keyed numerically and with color, and graphically described on the drawings and photographs which follow.

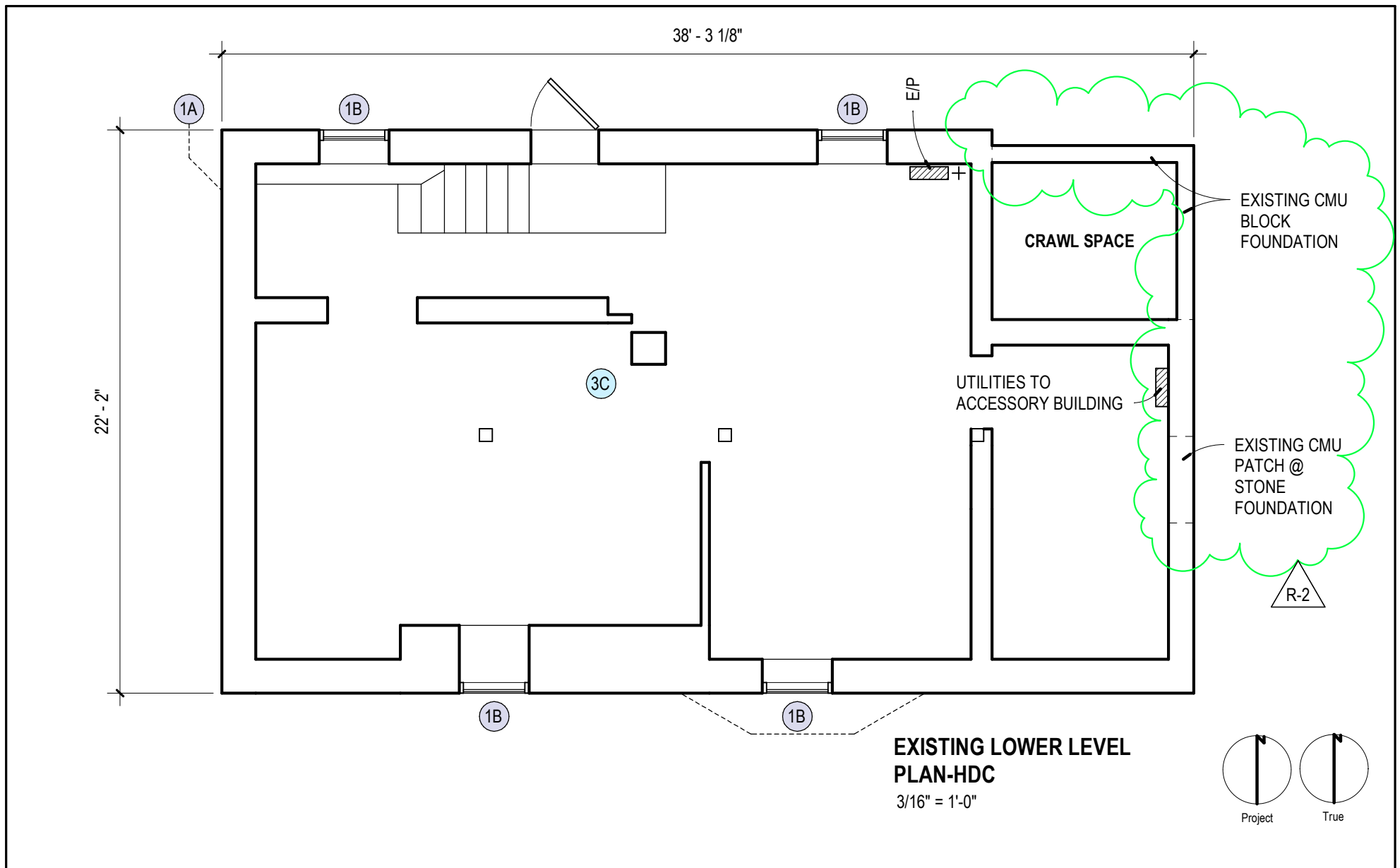
We thank you for your consideration of this proposal.



549 S 1st St 11/09/2023

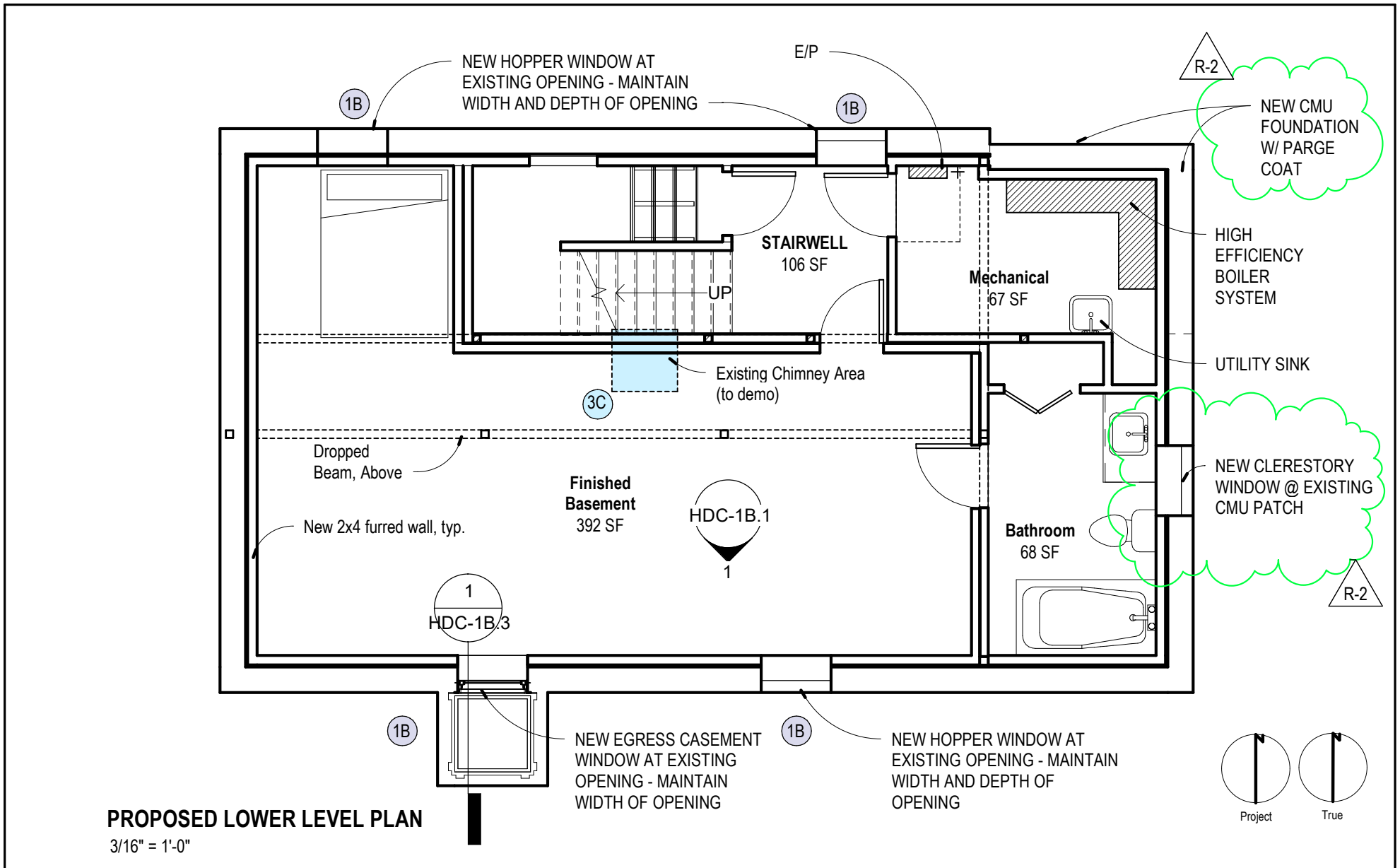
HDC SUBMISSION

HDC-00

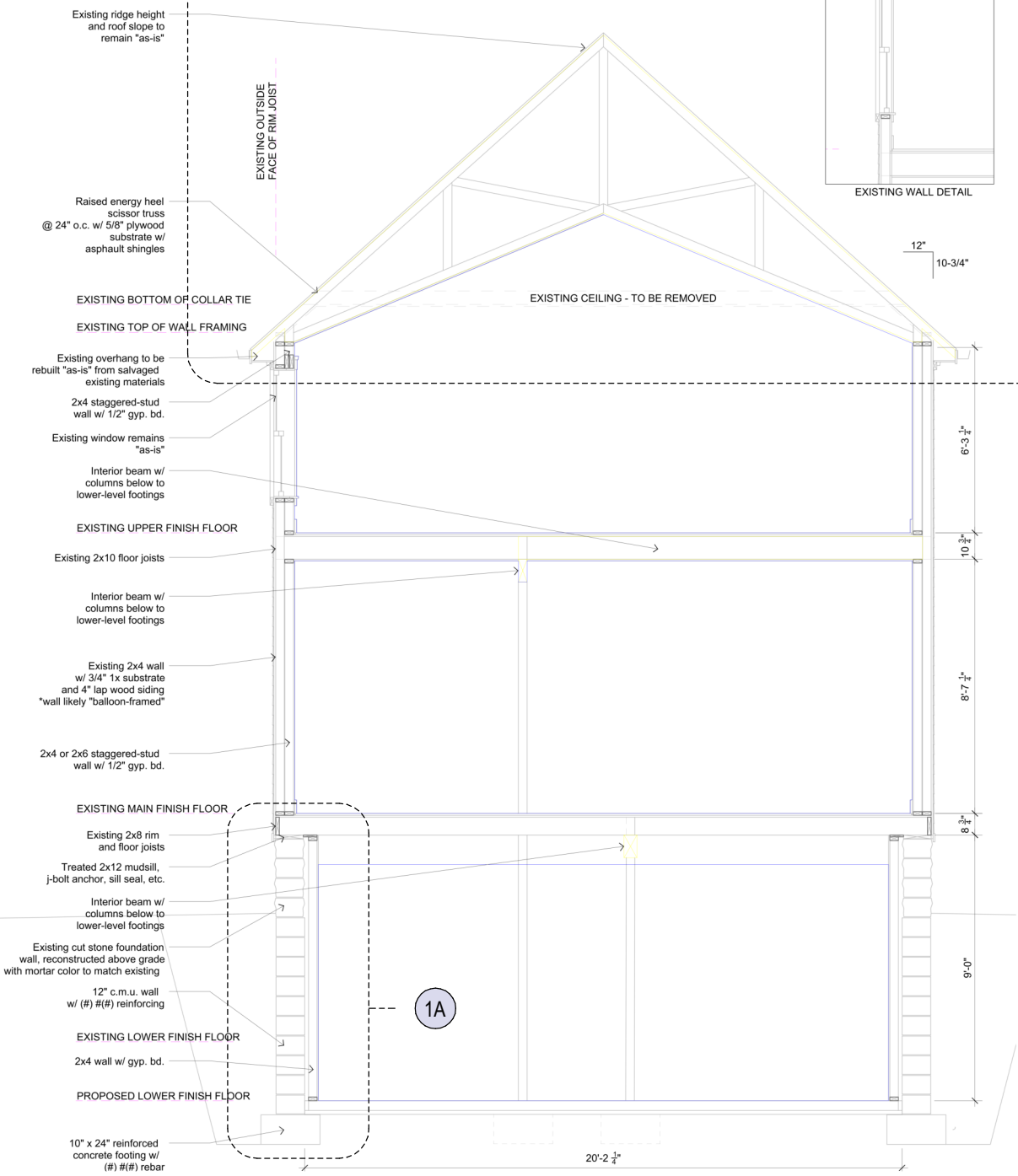


EXISTING LOWER LEVEL PLAN

HDC-1.0



3A



549 S 1st St

PROPOSED WALL SECTION

HDC-1.2



1A

SITUATION:

The scope of renovation work includes increasing lower level ceiling height by digging down and lowering foundation and basement floor slab. Existing foundation includes a combination of cut stone and cobblestone, which has been underpinned with concrete below grade at multiple locations. The existing foundation and porch are compromised and require repair. Considerable water damage can be seen at foundation interior. The existing foundation wall encroaches significantly into usable lower level space. Our consultation with several local masons has resulted in a consensus that additional tuckpointing will be insufficient in maintaining existing foundation and that further underpinning the existing already underpinned areas would be structurally unstable and also encroach even further into the usable lower level space, further reducing its function.

PROPOSAL:

We propose to reconstruct the existing house and porch foundation walls using reinforced concrete block below grade and the existing stones with mortar to match the existing color above grade. This would provide a structurally stable and waterproofed foundation wall, while giving back usable space to the lower level function and enabling a higher ceiling height. This higher ceiling height is desired for general function and also for the installation of acoustical panels needed for a semi-professional recording and music practice space.

SEE HDC 1.2 SECTION FOR MORE DETAILS



1B

SITUATION:

The scope of renovation work includes a new sleeping space on the basement level. As a result, a new egress window is required. An egress path at the rear of house would require a new opening in the foundation, and is otherwise non-conforming to code due to location of bath and mechanical space. The existing opening on the east end of the south wall is also ineligible as egress due to its location under main level bay window.

PROPOSAL:

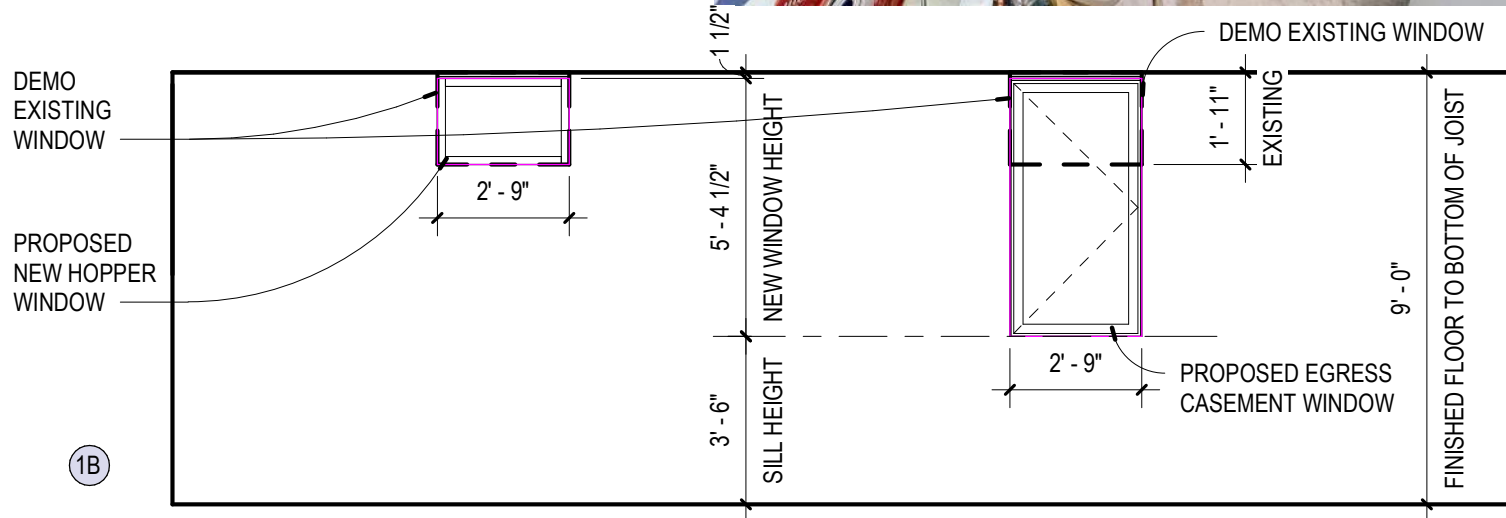
We propose to convert existing southwest window to an egress window by extending the opening downward and retaining the existing opening width. The existing operable unit will be replaced by an operable aluminum-clad wood casement window. This location is best-conforming to egress code, and its position on the south elevation will increase natural lighting in the basement.

If identified as non-historic, other basement windows are to be replaced with new aluminum-clad wood hopper window units at the same size as existing to improve thermal performance. If identified as historic, existing windows are to be salvaged and re-used.





EXISTING WINDOW
age: unknown
materials: painted wood
style: operable



PROPOSED LOWER LEVEL S.
ELEVATION

1/4" = 1'-0"

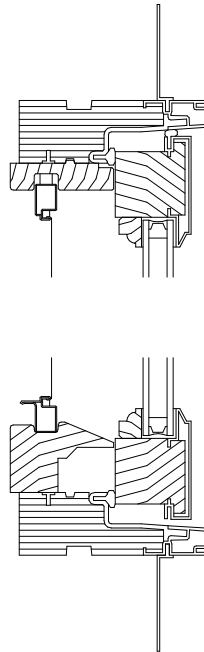


549 S 1st St

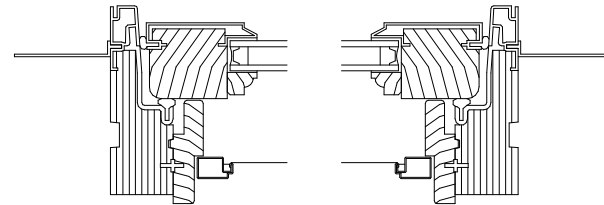
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PROPOSED EGRESS WINDOW
ELEVATION

HDC-1B.1



WINDOW HEAD AND SILL PROFILE



WINDOW JAMB PROFILE

1B

Window Schedule							
Mark	Function	Description	Width	Height	Rough Width	Rough Height	Comments
EW-01	Casement Egress	Aluminum-clad wood casement window	2' - 8 1/2"	5' - 4"	2' - 9"	5' - 4 1/2"	Basis of Design: Anderson E Series



R-2

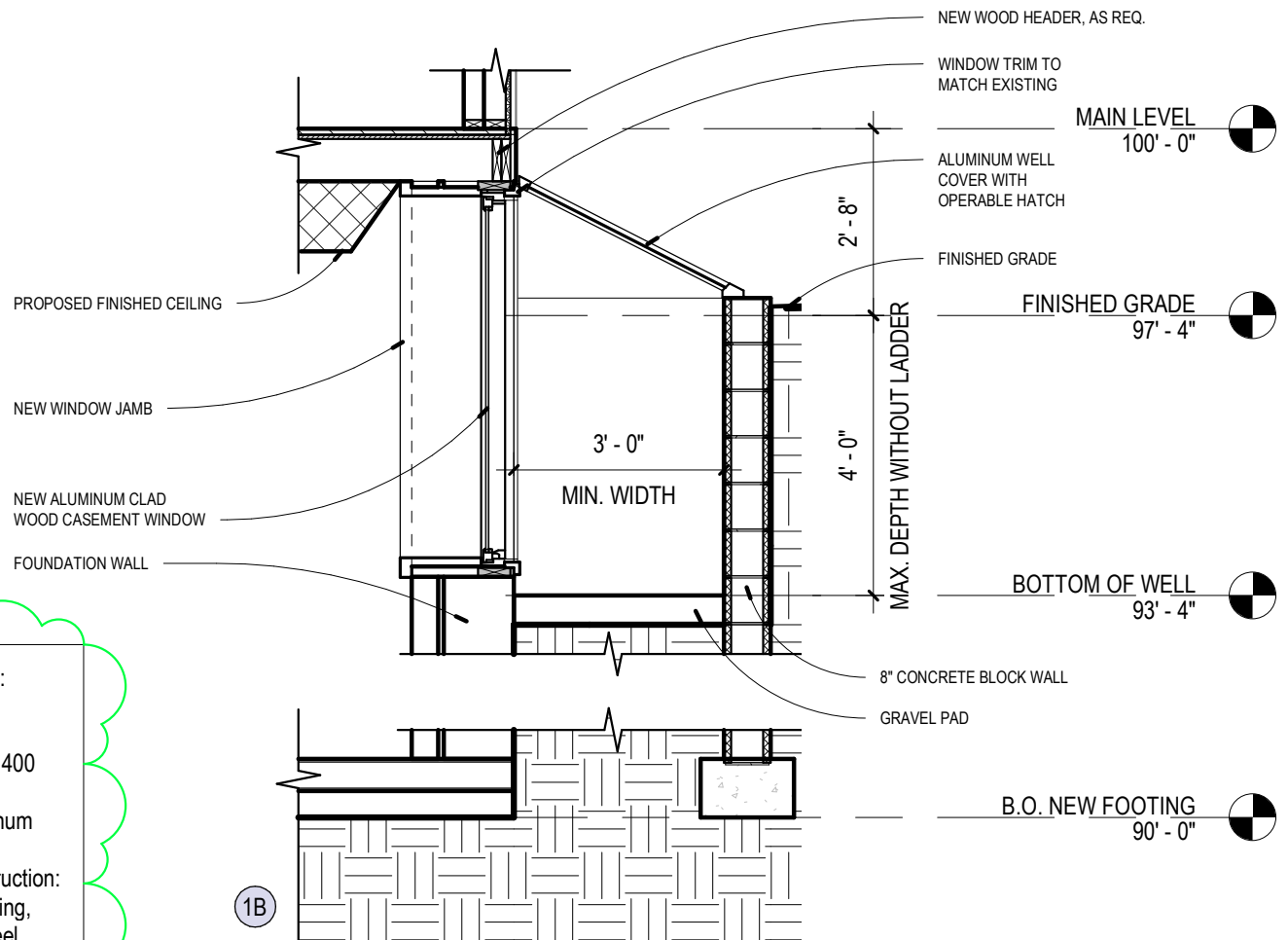


ALUMINUM WELL COVER WITH OPERABLE HATCH OPTION 1

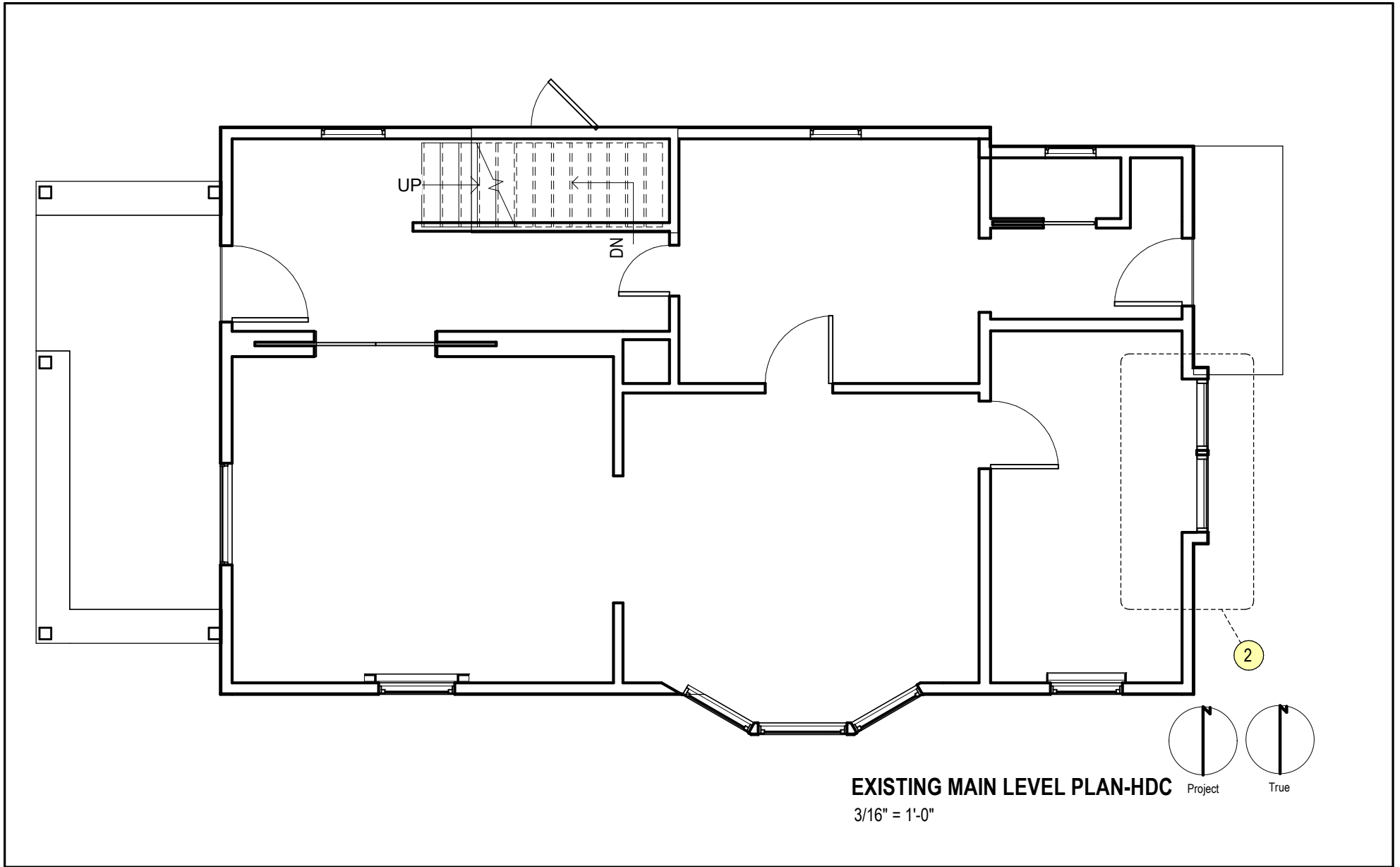


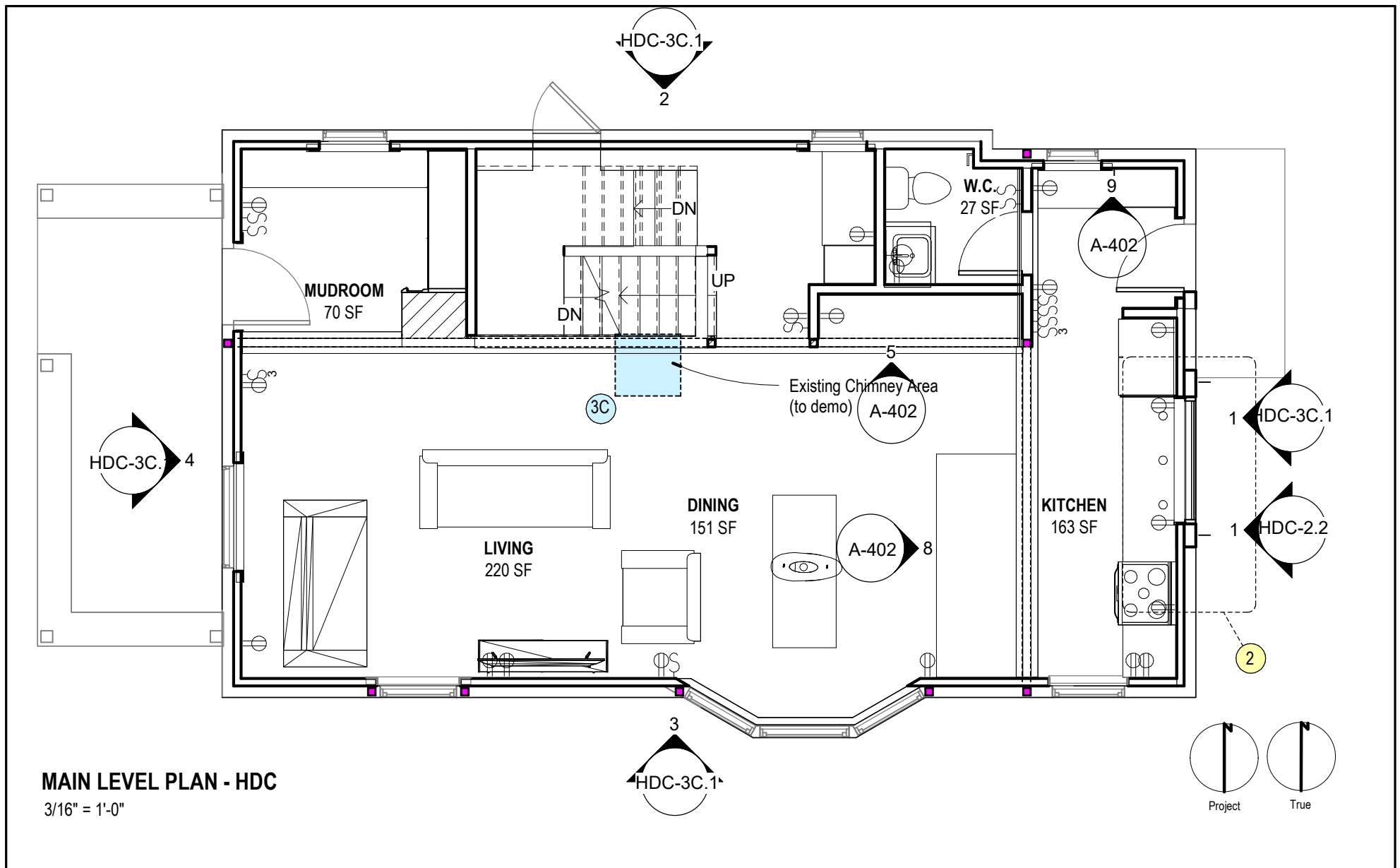
OPTION 2

Well Cover Spec:
 -Made from Polycarbonate
 -Safely supports 400 pounds.
 -Rust-free aluminum framing
 -Rust-free construction: aluminum – bracing, with stainless steel hardware



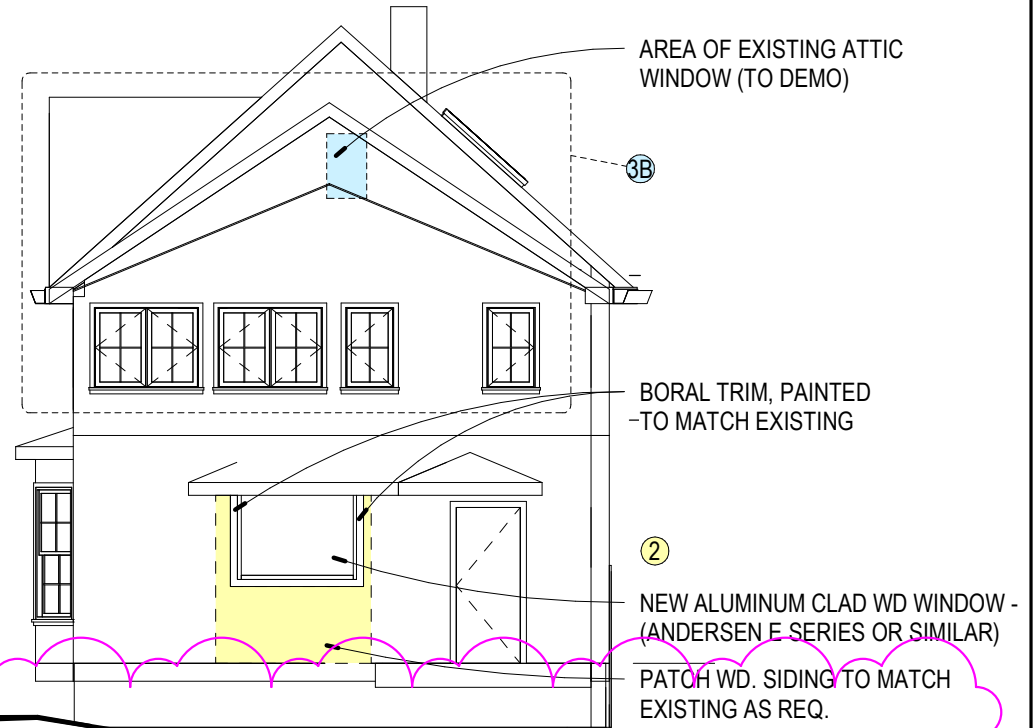
SECTION DETAIL @ NEW WELL
 3/8" = 1'-0"







R-1



2 SITUATION:

The existing rear (east) elevation features a non-historic full-height fixed wood window, with non-historic box-bay trim at the main level. This window appears to be site-built with an insulated glazing unit (IGU). Our design intent is to convert the east wing of the main level to a new kitchen, with counter that conflicts with existing window in question.

PROPOSAL:

We propose to replace existing fixed window with smaller aluminum-clad picture window, and eliminate non-historic box-bay, flushing out exterior rear wall. This window would be trimmed with new borat, painted to match existing typical aluminum wrapped wood trim. Wood siding would be patched and painted to match existing, as required.



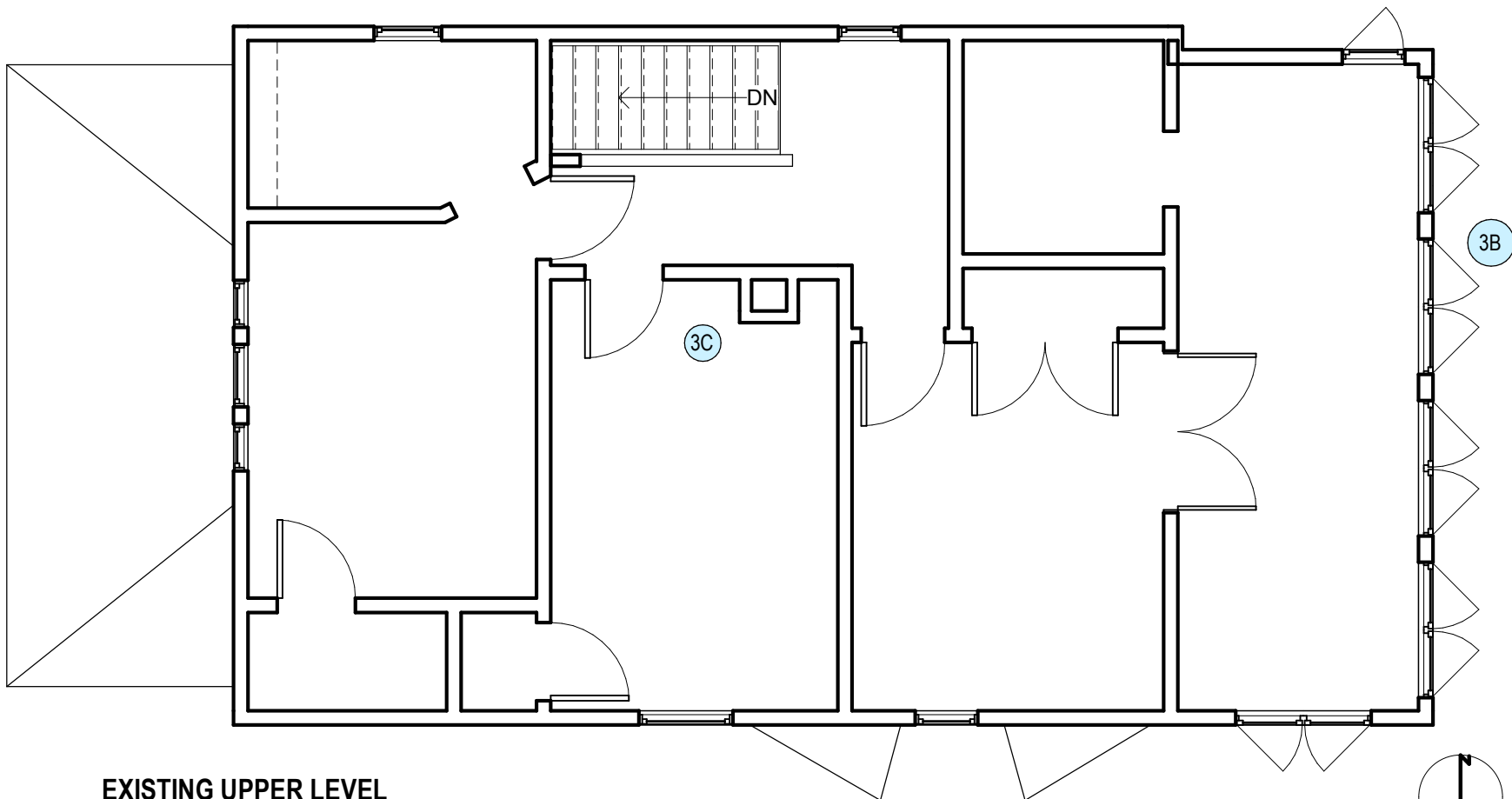
549 S 1st St

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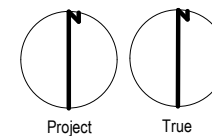
2 - MAIN LEVEL REAR WINDOW

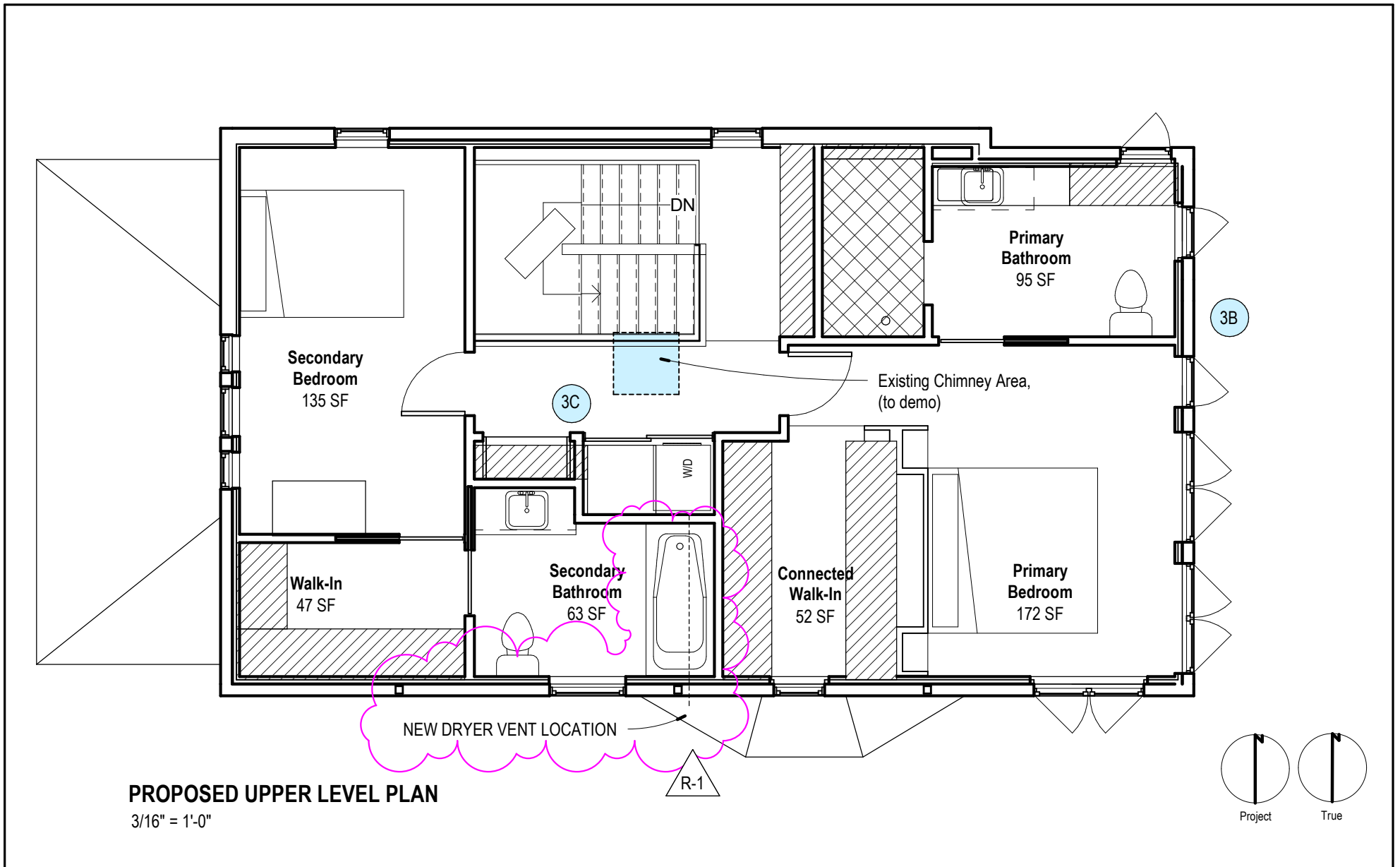
R-1

HDC-2.2



**EXISTING UPPER LEVEL
PLAN-HDC**
3/16" = 1'-0"







3A SITUATION:

The scope of interior work at the interior upper level includes the opening-up of attic volume to increase upper level ceiling height. The existing roof structure (2x4 rafters, 24" on center) is considerably undersized based on contemporary standards, and must be rebuilt to conform to code to support the proposed renovation.

PROPOSAL:

We propose to reframe the roof, replacing 2x4 rafters with new truss system. Existing roof pitch and ridge height is to remain the same. Existing soffit and trim details are to remain the same, with materials salvaged and re-used where possible. In case of rotted or otherwise compromised exterior features, new features will be used to match existing. Roof is to be finished with asphalt shingles, matching existing. Two new skylights are to be installed on north pitch to bring natural light into upper level volume.

SEE HDC 1.2 SECTION FOR MORE DETAILS

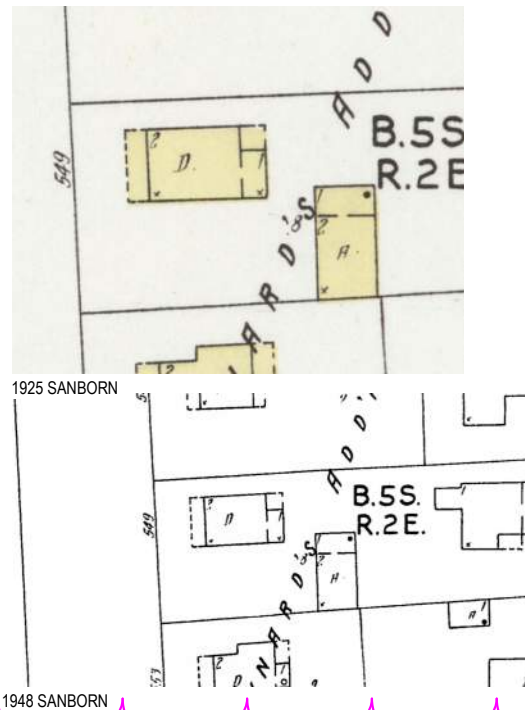


3B SITUATION:

The existing sleeping porch at the rear (east) wing of the upper level features a hip roof with considerable low-headroom area at the upper level. Based on Sanborn map data, this upper level wing is not yet built prior to 1948 and the existing hip roof is non-contributing to historic quality of the house. Above this roof is an attic window, and spanning across the sleeping porch is a ribbon of non-historic windows.

PROPOSAL:

We propose to replace existing hip roof structure with new gabled truss framing, mitigating low-headroom space on the upper level. This gable is to sit below the primary roof, with shallower pitch to maximize historic primary roof trim detail. The new roof line requires the demolition of existing attic window. New aluminum clad wood windows at the upper level will replace non-historic and energy inefficient sleeping porch windows. Wood trim, siding, and roof material are to match existing. New windows are to receive new boral trim, painted to match existing trim.



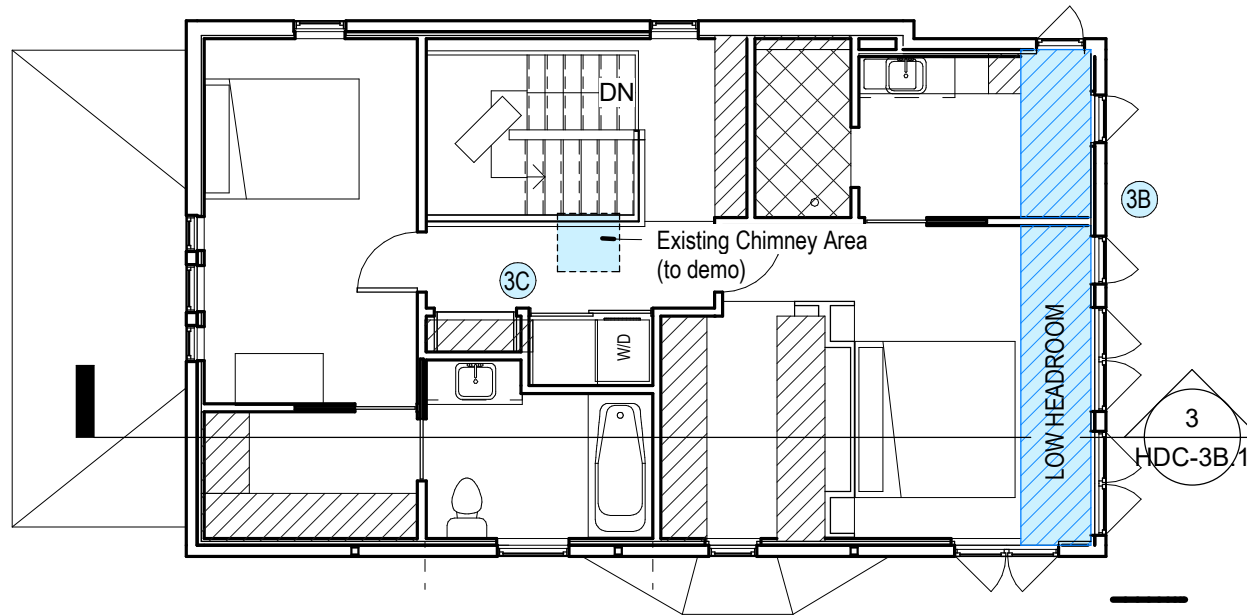
549 S 1st St

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3B - UPPER LEVEL REAR WING, WINDOWS



HDC-3B.0

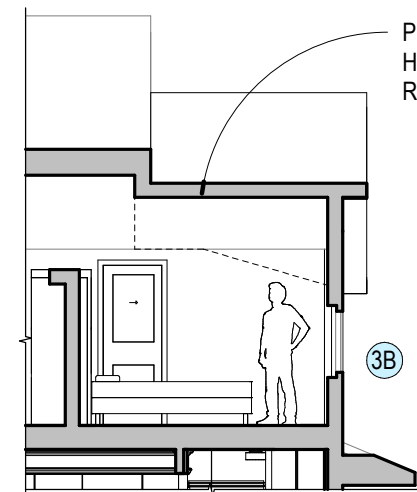


**PROPOSED PLAN WITH EXISTING
HIP ROOF**

1/8" = 1'-0"



PROPOSED SECTION
WITH EXISTING HIP
ROOF AT REAR WING



PROPOSED HEAD
HEIGHT WITH TRUSS
ROOF AT REAR WING



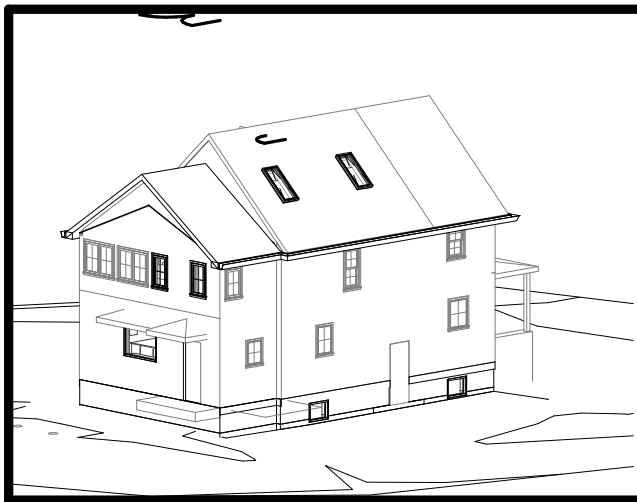
① NE - AXO EXISTING



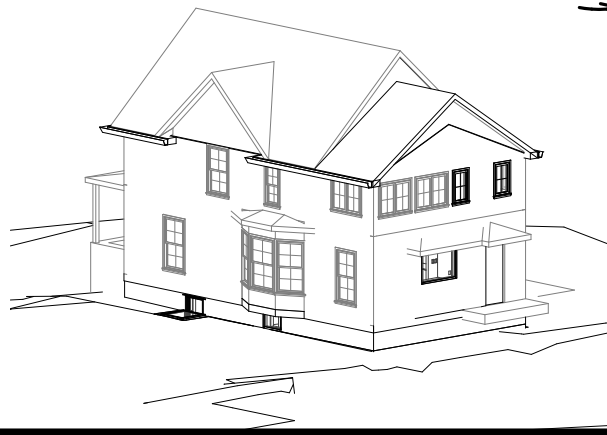
③ SE - AXO EXISTING



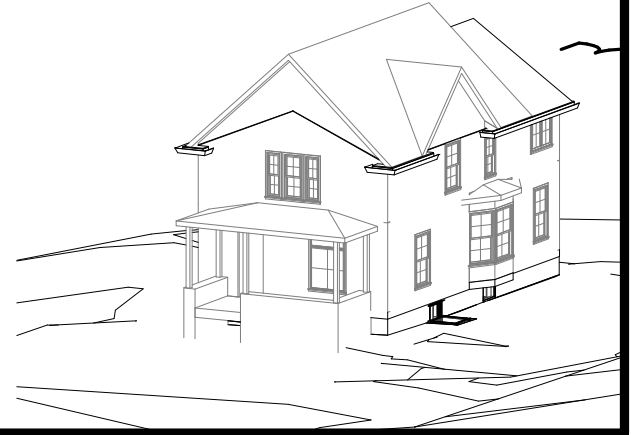
⑤ SW - AXO EXISTING



② NE - AXO PROPOSED



④ SE - AXO PROPOSED



⑥ SW - AXO PROPOSED

3C CHIMNEY - SITUATION:

As a part of the scope of interior renovation, we will be converting from a forced air system to a high-efficiency boiler and radiant heat. The existing brick chimney is not associated with any fireplace, is not ornate or decorative, and will become functionally obsolete with the conversion to radiant heat. By removing the interior chimney structure, we will gain considerable square footage and flexibility on the lower level and main level plans while enabling our design goals for the upper level (opening the attic for a larger upper level volume with accommodating ceiling height). Removing the non-functional chimney will improve the thermal envelope by eliminating a point of thermal bridging and allowing for more continuous insulation. It will also reduce risk of damage to, or infiltration of, the house and its historic materials by pests.

PROPOSAL:

We propose to remove the existing chimney to improve the energy performance of the house, mitigate risk of damage and infestation due to pests, and increase the usable area and volume of the interior spaces.

3D ATTIC VENT - SITUATION:

The front elevation of the house features an attic vent. It is our assumption that this vent is not historical, and was installed as part of a venting system that includes the non-historic box vents on the roof. In opening up the attic space, this vent will become non-functional, and it will be necessary to seal the vent opening to condition the upper level sleeping space.

PROPOSAL:

We propose to remove the existing vent and patch the existing wood siding as required to match existing.

3E EXTERIOR CLADDING / VENTING - SITUATION:

In addition to conversion to radiant heat, fixtures including washer/dryer, bath fan vents and range are to be relocated as a part of interior renovation work.

PROPOSAL:

We propose to patch existing duct openings at the north elevation, as required, with painted wood siding to match existing. New ducting locations will be required at rear elevation, as drawn.

NEW SKYLIGHT @ PRIMARY
SHOWER AND STAIR

EXISTING CHIMNEY
LOCATION, TO DEMO

EXISTING VENT
LOCATION, TO DEMO

UPPER LEVEL
109' - 6"

MAIN LEVEL
100' - 0"

STAIR LANDING LEVEL
97' - 4"

REMOVE VENT AND PATCH AT
EXISTING DRYER AND RANGE HOOD

UPPER LEVEL
109' - 6"

MAIN LEVEL
100' - 0"

**PROPOSED NORTH ELEVATION
HDC**

1/16" = 1'-0"

**PROPOSED WEST ELEVATION
HDC**

1/16" = 1'-0"

GENERAL:
-REPAIR AND RE-PAINT
EXT. SIDING AS REQ.
-TUCKPOINT MASONRY
AS REQ.

PROPOSED NEW
RANGE HOOD
VENT LOCATION

UPPER LEVEL
109' - 6"

MAIN LEVEL
100' - 0"

**PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION
HDC**

1/16" = 1'-0"

PROPOSED NEW
DRYER VENT LOCATION

UPPER LEVEL
109' - 6"

MAIN LEVEL
100' - 0"

**PROPOSED SOUTH ELEVATION
HDC**

1/16" = 1'-0"



549 S 1st St

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**EXTERIOR CLADDING AND
VENTING**

HDC-3C.1



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EXTERIOR CLADDING AND VENTING

HDC-3C.2



549 S 1st St 11/09/2023

EXTERIOR CLADDING AND VENTING - CHIMNEY

HDC-3C.3

R-1

4A FENCE - SITUATION:

Existing fence transgresses property lines and subdivides side yard. Owner would like to expand rear/side yard space by moving fence location to align with front of house. Existing rear yard fence is 8' tall, which owner and neighbors would like to retain.

PROPOSAL:

We propose to replace existing fence, as illustrated, to conform to property boundaries, to obscure new egress well from view, and to expand the usable yard space for owner.

New fence will be designed to coordinate / match existing: Painted alternating wood board at 6' height in the side yards, retaining 8' height in rear yard



4B MECHANICAL - SITUATION:

The existing heating / conditioning system will be converted from forced air to radiant heat with a mini-split conditioning unit.

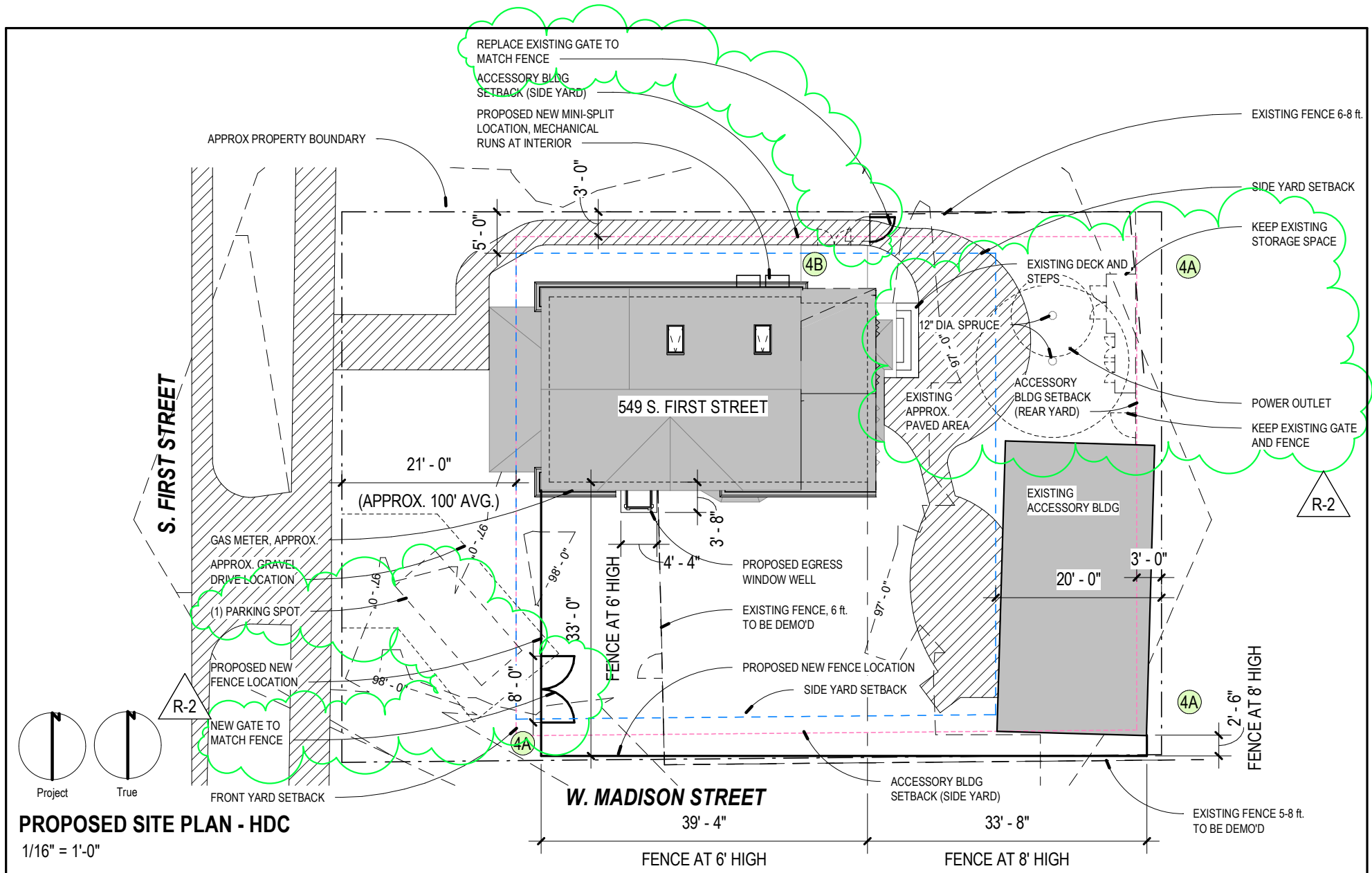
PROPOSAL:

We propose to place new mini split on the north wall of the house, toward the rear (east) end. This is the location of the existing conditioning unit, and is adjacent to the mechanical space on the lower level. New mechanical linesets will be run on the interior of north wall and not be exposed on the exterior.



Existing Front Gate

R-2



549 S 1st St 11/09/2023

SITE PLAN



HDC-4.1