

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** JUNE 17, 2015

**TO:** OLD AND HISTORIC ALEXANDRIA DISTRICT  
BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW

**FROM:** HISTORIC PRESERVATION STAFF

**SUBJECT:** REVISED PLANS FOR 628 N. WASHINGTON ST, BAR CASE #2015-0064

---

### **BOARD ACTION ON APRIL 15, 2015: Deferred, 7-0.**

This item was removed from the consent calendar.

On a motion by Mr. von Senden, seconded by Mr. Neale, the OHAD Board of Architectural Review voted to defer BAR Case #2015-0064. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

### **SPEAKERS**

Mr. Skip McGinnis, architect, spoke on behalf of the applicant. He said that he was in agreement with staff's recommended conditions.

Ms. Gail Rothrock, Historic Alexandria Foundation (HAF), said that HAF supported the comments of the National Park Service (NPS) and opposed the design of the new stairs. She also encouraged the applicant to consider removing the paint on the brick façade.

### **BOARD DISCUSSION**

Ms. Roberts said that she opposed the design of the applicant's proposed steps and asked that they consider wood, steel or brick steps which would be more compatible with the immediate context.

Ms. Miller said that she didn't think the multi-pane window at the basement level was appropriate, especially with the proposed window changes on the upper floors.

Mr. Neale said that he liked that the upper windows were being returned to the historically appropriate 1-over-1 configuration and thought that it would be appropriate to change the basement window to a tripartite configuration to match the bay window mullions above. He said that the new stair was not compatible and suggested that the applicant consider integrating brick into the new stair, perhaps as tread pavers in a metal pan. He said that he supported leaving the building painted because the other buildings in the row are painted.

Mr. von Senden said that there seemed to be four items for discussion: 1. The original 1-over-1 windows were there for 55 years and the porch was there for just as long; 2. He said that he didn't support leaving the basement window in its current configuration; 3. He said that the stair

was too utilitarian and that it needed to be more ornamental. 4. He said that the other townhouses in this row were painted, so it was appropriate to keep this townhouse painted.

Mr. Carlin said that he agreed with both the NPS and HAF, and thought that the basement window should be replaced with a more appropriate window. He said that the stairs have been brick for 50 years and that if the applicant wanted to install metal stairs they should be more delicate and decorative.

Ms. Finnegan said that the case should be deferred for restudy and that the new railing will serve as a precedent for the other stairs in this row, so it is important that they be compatible.

Chairman Fitzgerald said that he would be supportive of metal stairs but believed that they shouldn't project more than they presently do, because a greater projection creates more of a perceived mass. He said that he thought the basement window was jarring.

Mr. McGinnis said that the brick stoops at the applicant's property and many others in the row were failing and that their style is inappropriate on the early 20<sup>th</sup> century townhouses. He also said that they weren't proposing to replace the basement window.

On a motion by Mr. von Senden, seconded by Mr. Neale, the Board voted to defer the application. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

## **REASON**

The Board felt that the front stair and railing should be restudied to be more compatible with the building and the importance of the GW Parkway, while still fitting within the context of the block of similarly altered rowhouses. The Board also requested that the applicant consider replacing the multi-pane window at the basement level with a new window that has mullions similar in proportion to the proposed bay window above and supported one-over-one sash windows on the first and second floors.

## **GENERAL NOTES TO THE APPLICANT**

1. **ISSUANCE OF CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS AND PERMITS TO DEMOLISH:** Applicants must obtain a stamped copy of the Certificate of Appropriateness or Permit to Demolish PRIOR to applying for a building permit. Contact BAR Staff, Room 2100, City Hall, 703-746-3833, or [preservation@alexandriava.gov](mailto:preservation@alexandriava.gov) for further information.
2. **APPEAL OF DECISION:** In accordance with the Zoning Ordinance, if the Board of Architectural Review denies or approves an application in whole or in part, the applicant or opponent may appeal the Board's decision to City Council on or before 14 days after the decision of the Board.
3. **COMPLIANCE WITH BAR POLICIES:** All materials must comply with the BAR's adopted policies unless otherwise specifically approved.
4. **BUILDING PERMITS:** Most projects approved by the Board of Architectural Review require the issuance of one or more construction permits by Building and Fire Code Administration (including signs). The applicant is responsible for obtaining all necessary construction permits after receiving Board of Architectural Review approval. Contact Code Administration, Room 4200, City Hall, 703-838-4360 for further information.

5. EXPIRATION OF APPROVALS NOTE: In accordance with Sections 10-106(B) and 10-206(B) of the Zoning Ordinance, any official Board of Architectural Review approval will expire 12 months from the date of issuance if the work is not commenced and diligently and substantially pursued by the end of that 12-month period.
  
6. HISTORIC PROPERTY TAX CREDITS: Applicants performing extensive, certified rehabilitations of historic properties may separately be eligible for state and/or federal tax credits. Consult with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR) prior to initiating any work to determine whether the proposed project may qualify for such credits.

**I. BACKGROUND**

On April 15, 2015, the Old and Historic Alexandria District Board of Architectural Review (BAR) unanimously deferred the case so that the applicant could restudy the proposed replacement stair, railing, and bay window replacement. The Board found the previously proposed stair too utilitarian in design and stated that this stair would set a poor precedent for future alterations to this row of historically identical townhomes. The Board also found that the multi-pane basement window should be replaced to be consistent with the one-over-one windows proposed for the rest of the building.

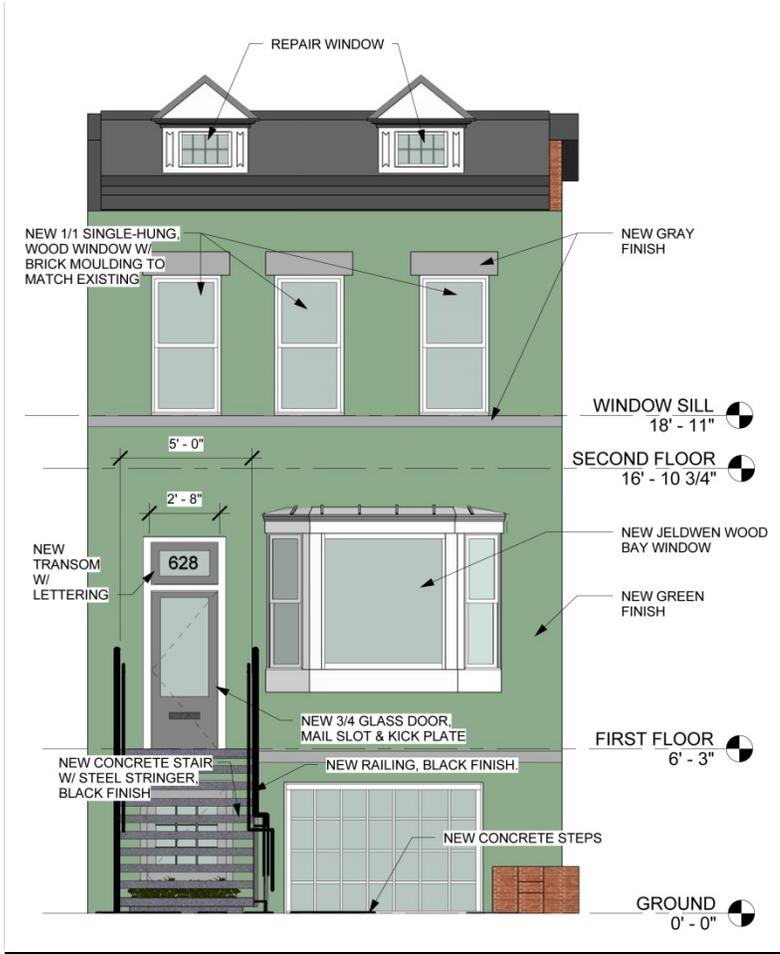


Figure 1: Previously proposed front facade (April 15, 2015)

**II. SUMMARY AND STAFF ANALYSIS**

The applicant has restudied the proposal and addressed the Board’s comments from the April 15<sup>th</sup> hearing. The applicant now proposes to replace the basement window with a fixed, single pane window flanked by two double-hung one-over-one windows to mirror the proposed bay window above. The bay window detailing is improved, with new wood brackets to be placed beneath.

The applicant now proposes a metal stair, as opposed to the previously requested concrete filled metal pan stair. The applicant has provided two styles of balusters, option 1 and 2, and staff finds both styles to be compatible to the building and neighborhood context. Overall the stair is consistent with the Design Guidelines; a metal stoop is appropriate to the age of the structure, and will better relate to the nearby context where both brick and metal stairs exist. Furthermore, this stair is a contemporary interpretation of a Victorian stair that adequately differentiates contemporary alterations from the historic materials. The Design Guidelines do not mandate replicative design or style, but compatibility.

The applicant has not addressed the rear elevation in this application, but has indicated that he intends to work with staff to repair and replace the windows, doors, and porch railings in accordance with the BAR administrative approval policies. Staff will also work with the applicant to ensure the inappropriate vinyl lattice and porch rail violation on the rear elevation is corrected.



Figure 2: Proposed front facade (June 17, 2015)

### **III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends approval of either railing, at the applicant's option, and the other proposed alterations to the east elevation, as submitted. Staff recommends that the applicant work with staff to correct the existing violation on the west elevation (vinyl lattice and inappropriate railing) as well as to repair or replace windows and doors, consistent with the BAR administrative approval policies.

#### **STAFF**

Mary Catherine Collins, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning  
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

### **IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

Legend: C- code requirement R- recommendation S- suggestion F- finding

#### **National Park Service Comments**

No updated comments received.

#### **Zoning Comments**

- C-1 The proposed stairs and railings are a permitted encroachment in accordance with section 5-2-29 of the City Code.
- C-2 Proposed bay window will comply with zoning.

#### **Code Administration**

- F-1 The following comments are for site plan review only. Once the applicant has filed for a building permit and additional information has been provided, code requirements will be based upon the building permit plans and the additional information submitted. If there are any questions, the applicant may contact Charles Cooper, Plan Review Division at Charles.cooper@alexandriava.gov or 703-746-4197.
- C-1 Building and trades permits are required for this project. A plan that fully detail the construction as well as layout and schematics of the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems shall accompany the permit application(s) The building official shall be notified in writing by the owner if the registered design professional in the responsible charge is changed or is unable to continue to perform the duties.
- C-2 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC).
- C-3 Required means of egress shall be maintained at all times during construction, demolition, remodeling or alterations and additions to any building.

- C-4 Provisions shall be made to prevent the accumulation of water or damage to any foundation on the premises or adjoining property.
- C-5 Construction equipment and materials shall be stored and placed so as not to endanger the public, the workers or adjoining property for the duration of the construction project, materials and equipment shall not be placed or stored so as to obstruct access to fire hydrants, standpipes, fire or police alarm boxes, catch basins or manholes,
- C-6 During Construction dwellings shall have approved address numbers, building numbers or approved building identification placed in a position that is plainly legible and visible for the street or road fronting the property.

### **Transportation and Environmental Services**

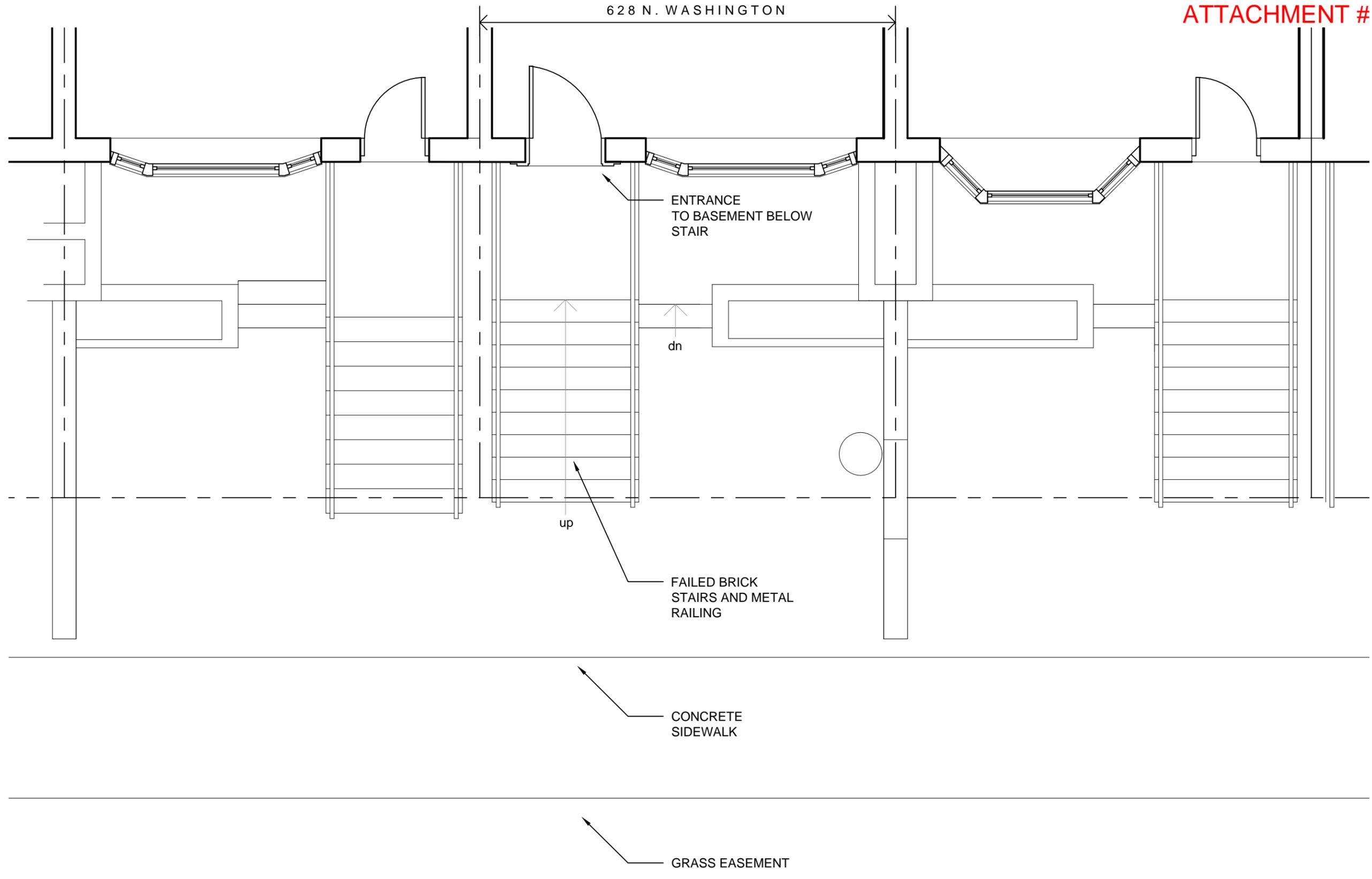
- R-1 Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)
- R-2 No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on the plan. (T&ES)
- F-1 After review of the information provided, an approved grading plan is not required at this time. Please note that if any changes are made to the plan it is suggested that T&ES be included in the review. (T&ES)
- F-2 No changes to comments per updated attachments received May21, 2015. (T&ES)
- C-1 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Solid Waste Control, Title 5, Chapter 1, which sets forth the requirements for the recycling of materials (Sec. 5-1-99). (T&ES)
- C-2 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line. (T&ES)
- C-3 All secondary utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3) (T&ES)
- C-4 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-2) (T&ES)
- C-5 All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (Sec. 5-2-1) (T&ES)

### **V. ATTACHMENTS**

*1 – Supplemental Materials*

*2 – Application for BAR2015-00064 : 628 N. Washington Street*

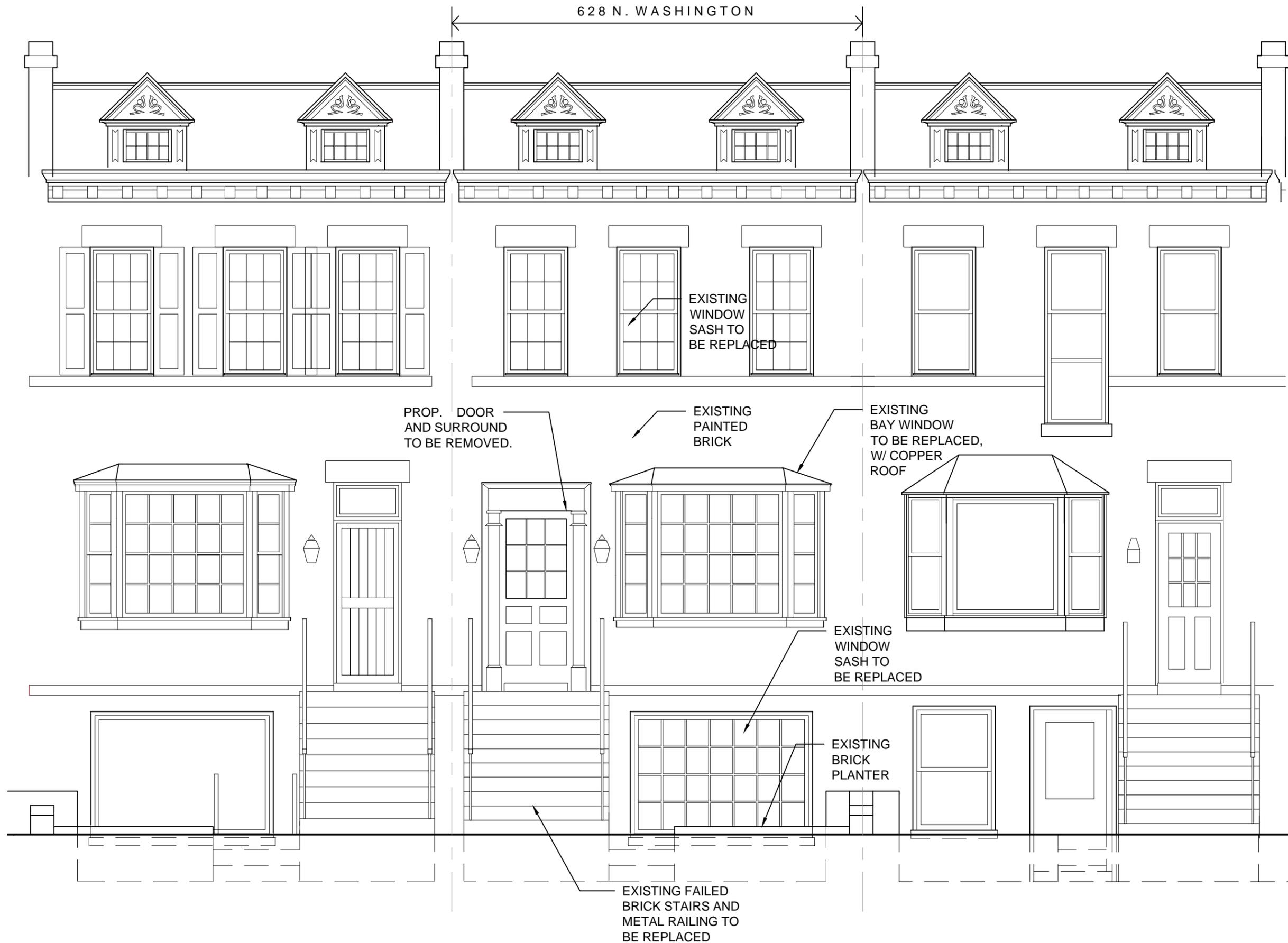
*3 – BAR Staff Report dated April 15, 2015*



Project:  
**628 N. WASHINGTON**  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
**EXISTING CONDITION PLAN**

Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Date 05/19/14  
Project No. 140220  
Drawing No.  
**E 1.0**

**EXISTING CONDITION PLAN**  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



Project:

628 N. WASHINGTON  
Alexandria, VA 22314

EXISTING CONDITION EAST ELEVATION

Title

Date 05/19/14

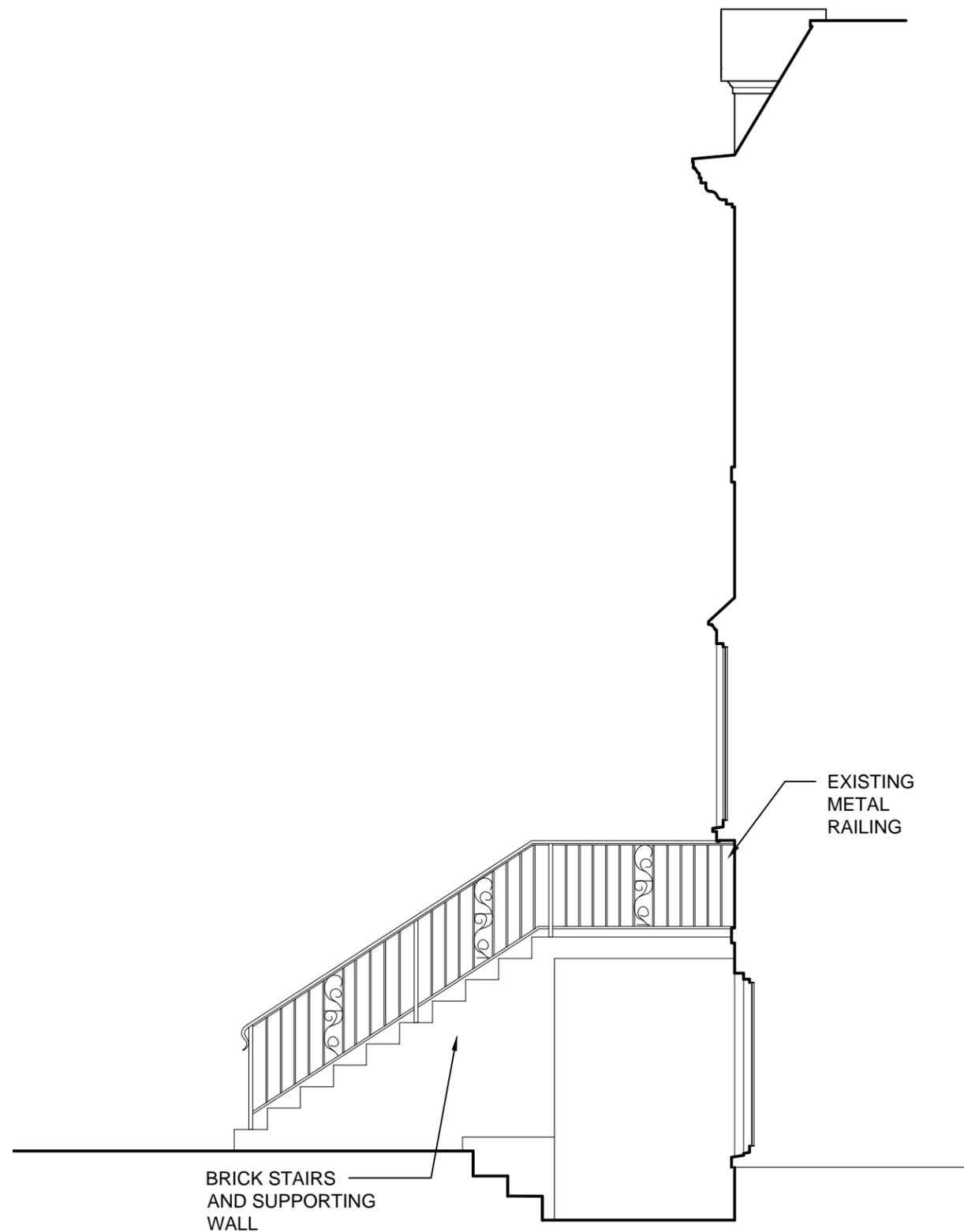
Project No. 140220

Drawing No.

E 2.0

EXISTING ELEVATION

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



**EXISTING SECTION**  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

Project:

628 N. WASHINGTON  
Alexandria, VA 22314

EXISTING CONDITION SECTION

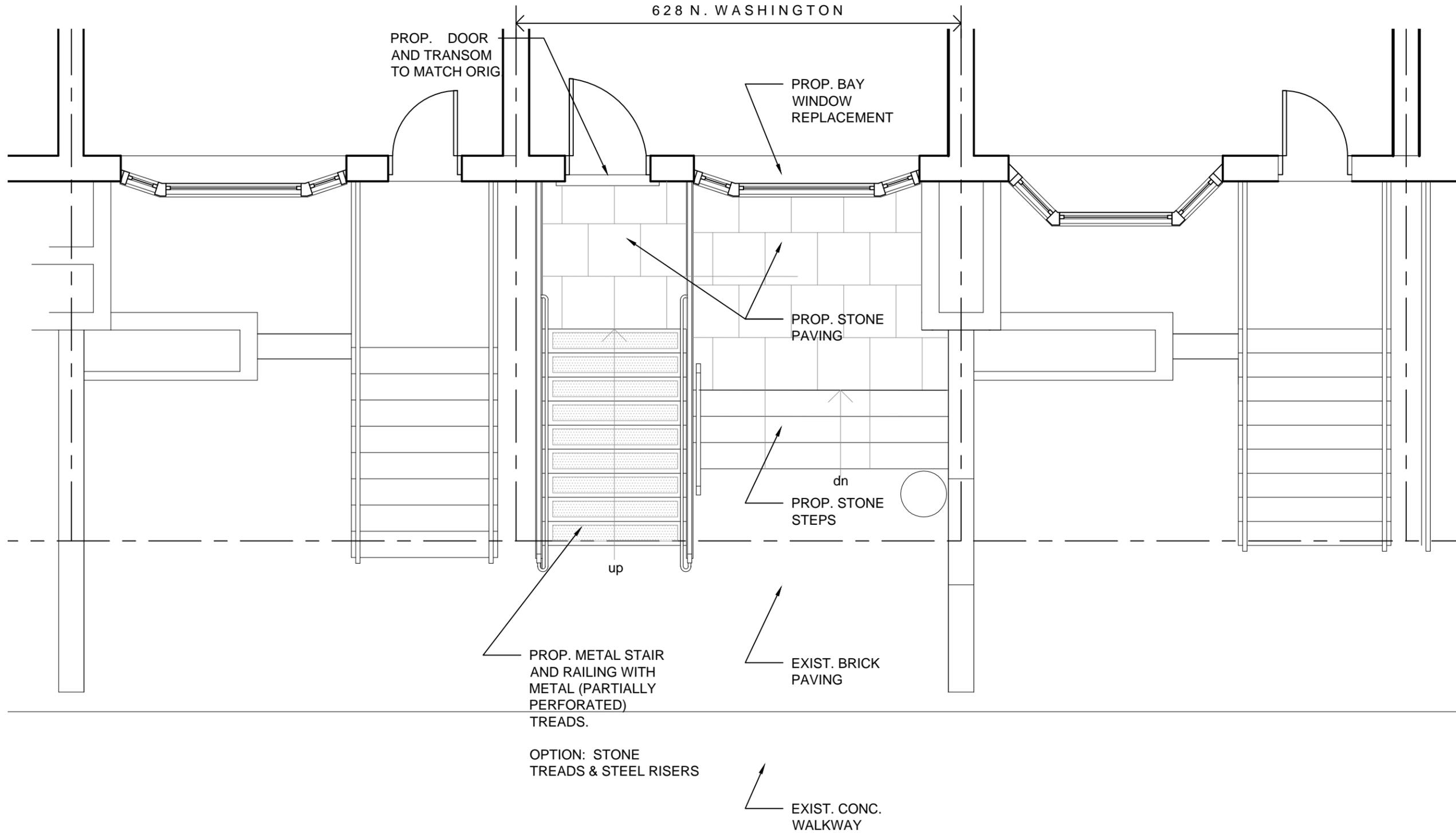
Title

Date 05/19/14

Project No. 140220

Drawing No.

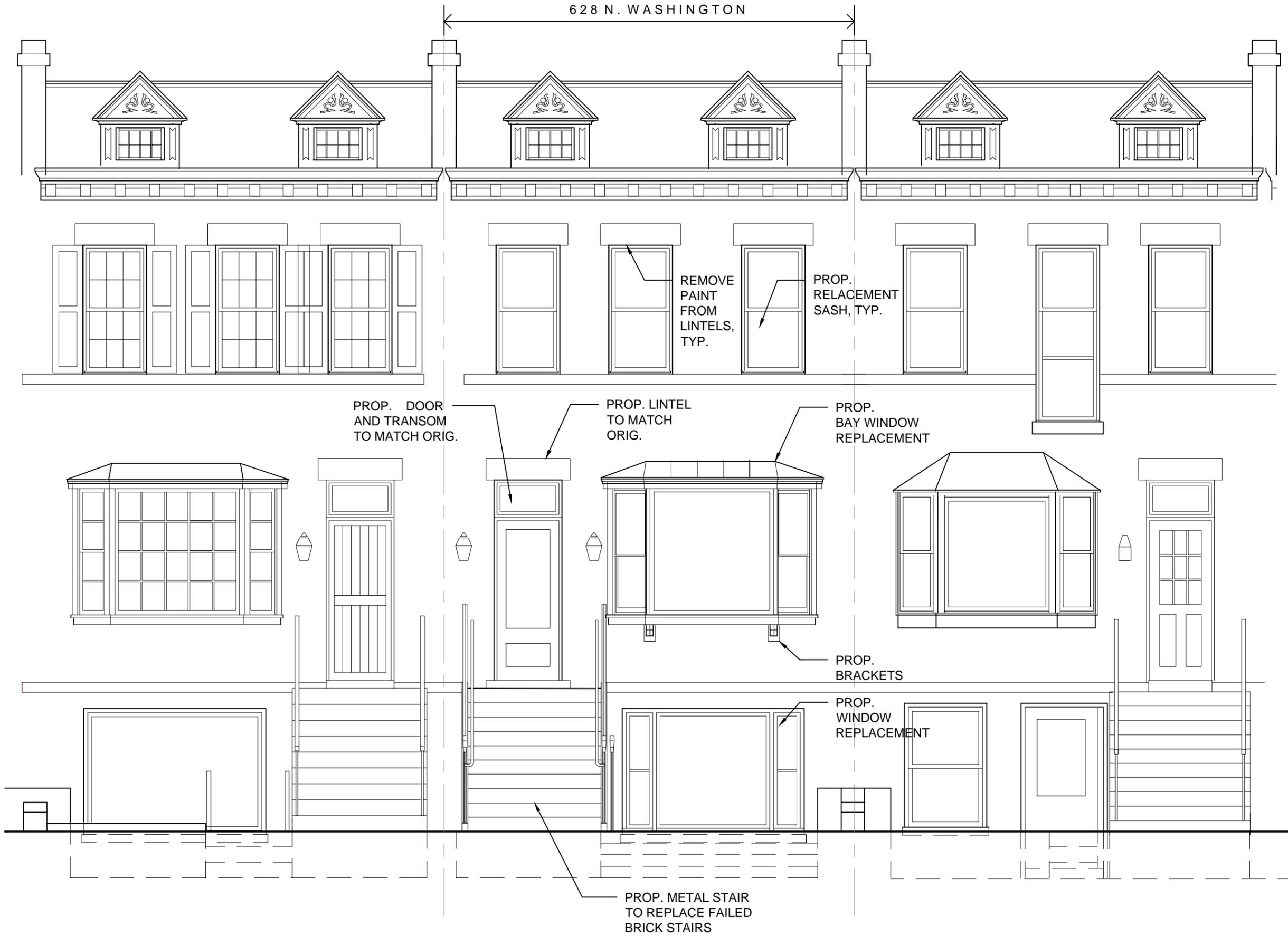
E 3.0



Project:  
**628 N. WASHINGTON**  
Alexandria, VA 22314  
**PROPOSED PLAN**

Title  
Date 05/19/14  
Project No. 140220  
Drawing No.  
**P 1.0**

**PROPOSED PLAN**  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



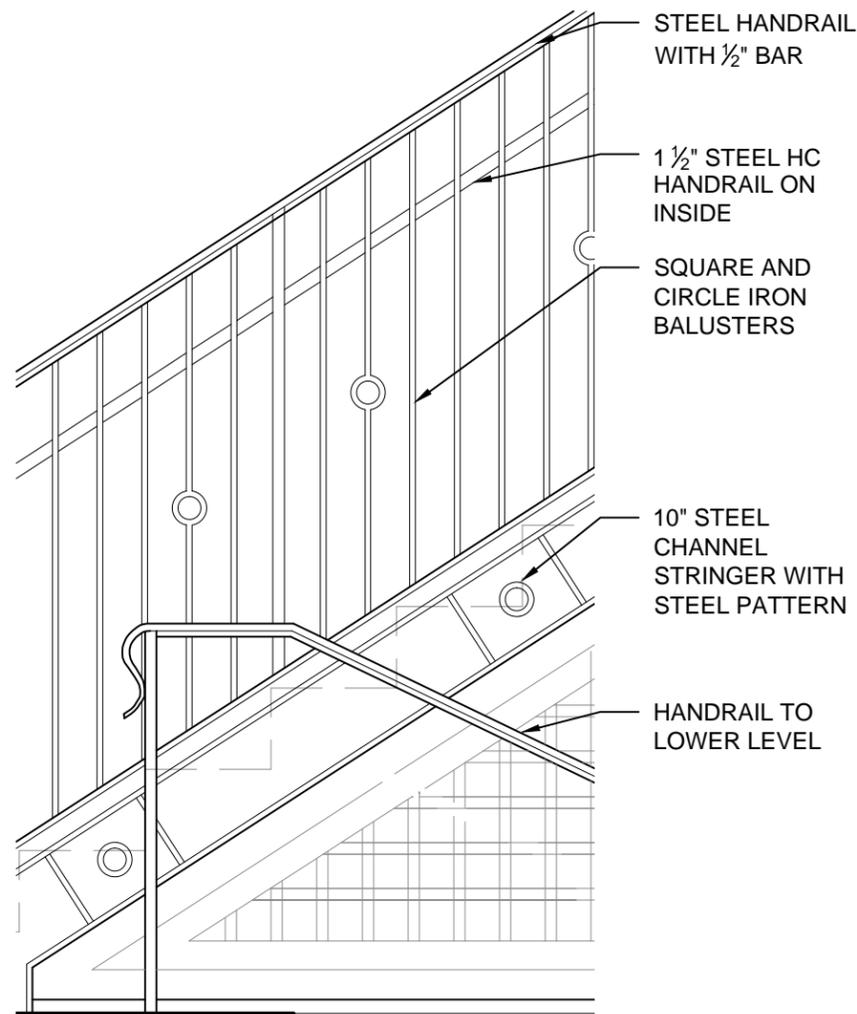
Project:

628 N. WASHINGTON  
Alexandria, VA 22314

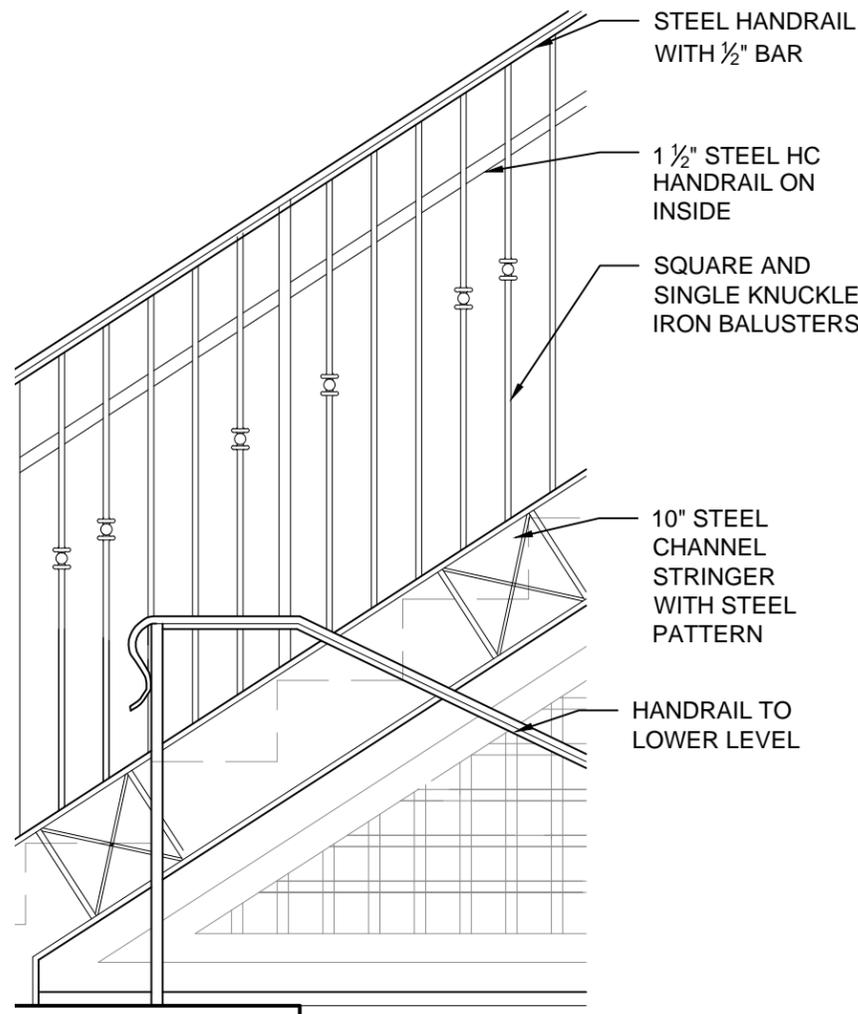
PROPOSED EAST ELEVATION

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

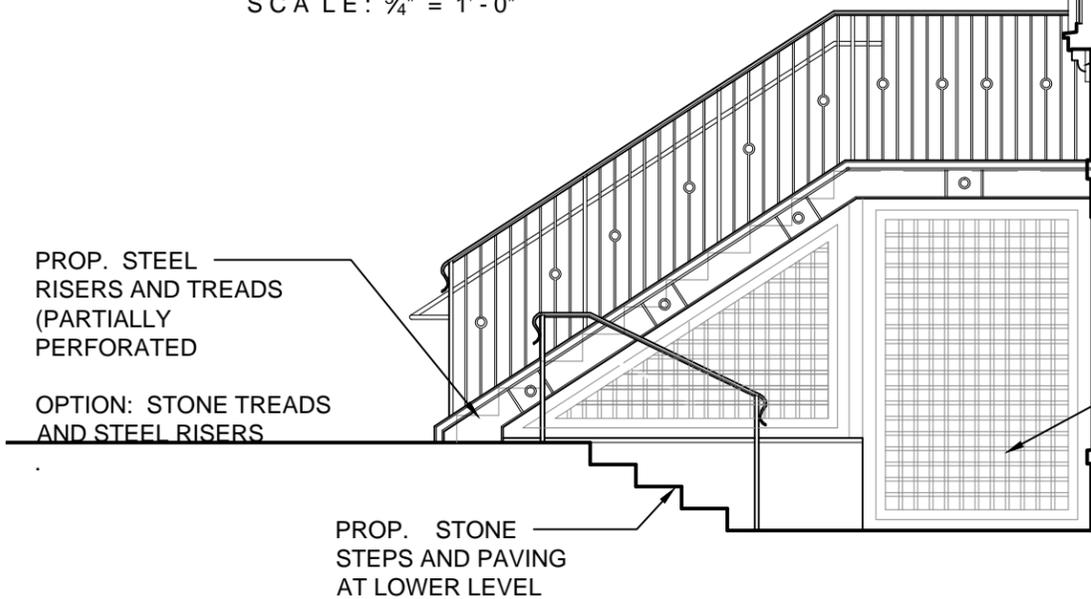
Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Date 05/19/14  
Project No. 140220  
Drawing No.  
**P 2.0**



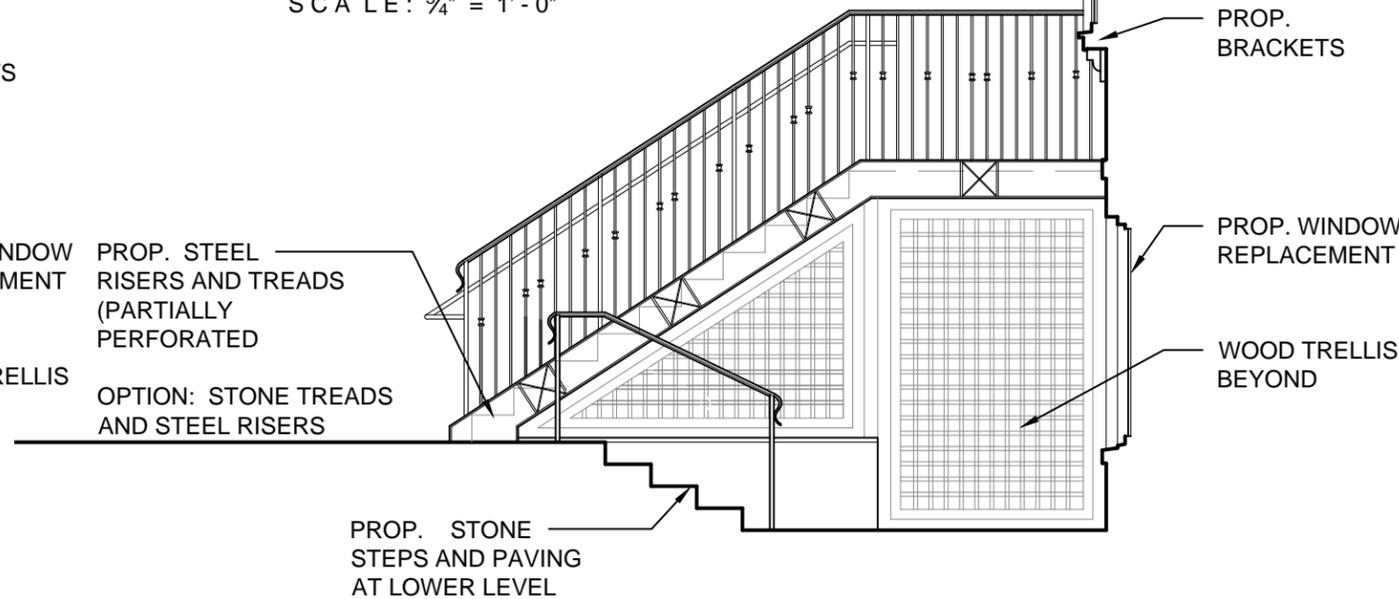
DETAIL  
SCALE: 3/4" = 1'-0"



DETAIL  
SCALE: 3/4" = 1'-0"



OPTION 2



OPTION 1

**PROPOSED SECTION**  
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

Project:

**628 N. WASHINGTON**  
Alexandria, VA 22314

PROPOSED SECTION

Title

Date 05/19/14

Project No. 140220

Drawing No.

**P 3.0**



**M305**  
OPTION 1

**M401**  
OPTION 2

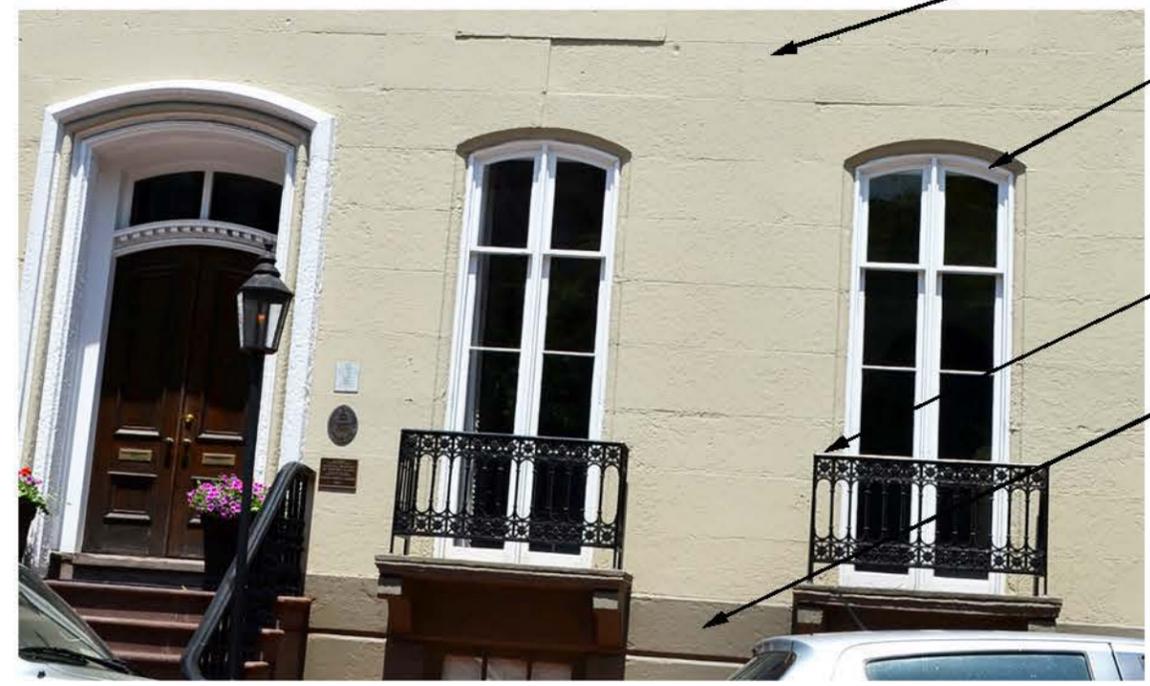
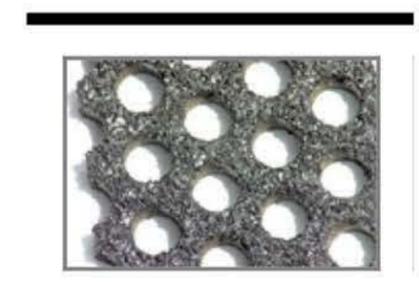
BALUSTERS



TYPICAL STEEL TOP RAIL

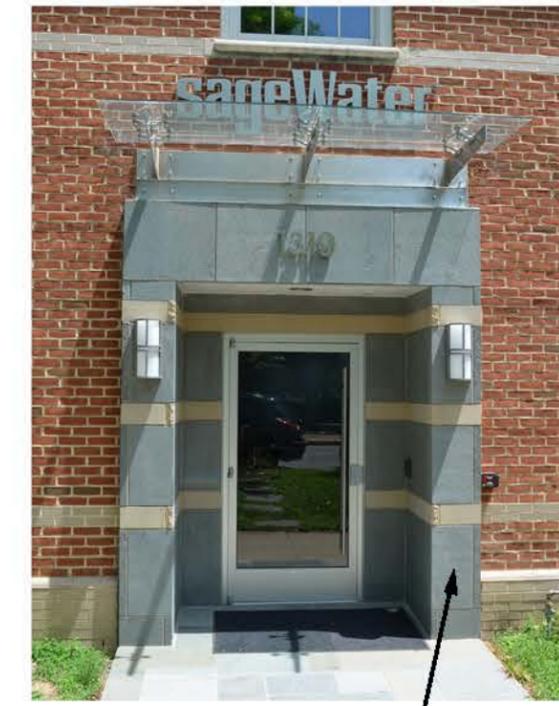


PERFORATED STEEL  
TREAD (OPTION 1)



PAINT COLORS

- BASE PAINT COLOR - GRAY/ BEIGE
- WINDOWS, DOOR TRIM, BACK PORCH, TRELIS - WHITE
- METAL WORK - DARK BLACK/BROWN
- DOOR, DORMER ACCENT AND BAY WINDOW BRACKET - GRAY/BROWN



PROPOSED STONE  
PAVING AND TREAD OPTION 2

Project:

**628 N. WASHINGTON**  
Alexandria, VA 22314

MATERIALS

Title \_\_\_\_\_  
Date 05/19/14  
Project No. 140220  
Drawing No.  
**P 4.0**

ADDRESS OF PROJECT: 628 N. Washington St.

TAX MAP AND PARCEL: 054.04-14-05 ZONING: OC

APPLICATION FOR: (Please check all that apply)

- CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS
[X] PERMIT TO MOVE, REMOVE, ENCAPSULATE OR DEMOLISH
WAIVER OF VISION CLEARANCE REQUIREMENT and/or YARD REQUIREMENTS IN A VISION CLEARANCE AREA
WAIVER OF ROOFTOP HVAC SCREENING REQUIREMENT

Applicant: [ ] Property Owner [X] Business (Please provide business name & contact person)

Name: Skip (H.) Maginniss, Maginniss+del Ninno Architects pc.

Address: 209 Commerce St.

City: Alexandria State: VA Zip: 22314

Phone: 703-548 0460 E-mail: smaginniss@mdnarch.com

Authorized Agent (if applicable): [X] Attorney [ ] Architect [ ]

Name: Daniel Bucca Phone: 1-202 756 8612

E-mail: dbucca@mwe.com

Legal Property Owner:

Name: NOWA PROPERTY, LLC

Address: 8208 Treebrooke Lane

City: Alexandria State: VA Zip: 22308

Phone: 703 402-9442 E-mail:

- Yes No Is there an historic preservation easement on this property?
Yes No If yes, has the easement holder agreed to the proposed alterations?
Yes No Is there a homeowner's association for this property?
Yes No If yes, has the homeowner's association approved the proposed alterations?

If you answered yes to any of the above, please attach a copy of the letter approving the project.

NATURE OF PROPOSED WORK: Please check all that apply

- NEW CONSTRUCTION
- EXTERIOR ALTERATION: Please check all that apply.
  - awning
  - doors
  - lighting
  - other repainting painted masonry
  - fence, gate or garden wall
  - windows
  - pergola/trellis
  - HVAC equipment
  - siding
  - painting unpainted masonry
  - shutters
  - shed
- ADDITION
- DEMOLITION/ENCAPSULATION
- SIGNAGE

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED WORK: Please describe the proposed work in detail (Additional pages may be attached).

The proposed work to the front of the building includes cleaning and repainting the facade green and the trim gray, demolition and reconstruction of the brick stair and steps to the lower level, replacement of the bay window and the windows on the second floor and returning the front door to its original appearance. The new stair will be a concrete open stair with black steel stringers connecting to the concrete steps by a black railing. The 6/6 windows are to be replaced with 1/1 single-hung windows. The bay window will be replaced with a Jeld-Wen Tradition Plus Wood Bay Window.

The proposed work to the rear end of the building is to repair the porch, balcony and railing by replacing the deteriorated members with new wood elements. The windows on the side and rear end of the building on the first and second floor are to be replaced with 1/1 single-hung windows to match the existing. The window at the lower level will be replaced with a wood awning window. All doors on the rear side are to be replaced with wood panel doors to match the existing.

SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS:

Items listed below comprise the **minimum supporting materials** for BAR applications. Staff may request additional information during application review. Please refer to the relevant section of the *Design Guidelines* for further information on appropriate treatments.

Applicants must use the checklist below to ensure the application is complete. Include all information and material that are necessary to thoroughly describe the project. Incomplete applications will delay the docketing of the application for review. Pre-application meetings are required for all proposed additions. All applicants are encouraged to meet with staff prior to submission of a completed application.

Electronic copies of submission materials should be submitted whenever possible.

**Demolition/Encapsulation :** All applicants requesting 25 square feet or more of demolition/encapsulation must complete this section. Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.

- Survey plat showing the extent of the proposed demolition/encapsulation.
- Existing elevation drawings clearly showing all elements proposed for demolition/encapsulation.
- Clear and labeled photographs of all elevations of the building if the entire structure is proposed to be demolished.
- Description of the reason for demolition/encapsulation.
- Description of the alternatives to demolition/encapsulation and why such alternatives are not considered feasible.

**Additions & New Construction:** Drawings must be to scale and should not exceed 11" x 17" unless approved by staff. All plans must be folded and collated into 3 complete 8 1/2" x 11" sets. Additional copies may be requested by staff for large-scale development projects or projects fronting Washington Street. Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.

- N/A
- Scaled survey plat showing dimensions of lot and location of existing building and other structures on the lot, location of proposed structure or addition, dimensions of existing structure(s), proposed addition or new construction, and all exterior, ground and roof mounted equipment.
  - FAR & Open Space calculation form.
  - Clear and labeled photographs of the site, surrounding properties and existing structures, if applicable.
  - Existing elevations must be scaled and include dimensions.
  - Proposed elevations must be scaled and include dimensions. Include the relationship to adjacent structures in plan and elevations.
  - Materials and colors to be used must be specified and delineated on the drawings. Actual samples may be provided or required.
  - Manufacturer's specifications for materials to include, but not limited to: roofing, siding, windows, doors, lighting, fencing, HVAC equipment and walls.
  - For development site plan projects, a model showing mass relationships to adjacent properties and structures.

**Signs & Awnings:** One sign per building under one square foot does not require BAR approval unless illuminated. All other signs including window signs require BAR approval. Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.

- N/A
- Linear feet of building: Front: \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary front (if corner lot): \_\_\_\_\_
  - Square feet of existing signs to remain: \_\_\_\_\_
  - Photograph of building showing existing conditions.
  - Dimensioned drawings of proposed sign identifying materials, color, lettering style and text.
  - Location of sign (show exact location on building including the height above sidewalk).
  - Means of attachment (drawing or manufacturer's cut sheet of bracket if applicable).
  - Description of lighting (if applicable). Include manufacturer's cut sheet for any new lighting fixtures and information detailing how it will be attached to the building's facade.

**Alterations:** Check N/A if an item in this section does not apply to your project.

- N/A
- Clear and labeled photographs of the site, especially the area being impacted by the alterations, all sides of the building and any pertinent details.
  - Manufacturer's specifications for materials to include, but not limited to: roofing, siding, windows, doors, lighting, fencing, HVAC equipment and walls.
  - Drawings accurately representing the changes to the proposed structure, including materials and overall dimensions. Drawings must be to scale.
  - An official survey plat showing the proposed locations of HVAC units, fences, and sheds.
  - Historic elevations or photographs should accompany any request to return a structure to an earlier appearance.

**ALL APPLICATIONS:** *Please read and check that you have read and understand the following items:*

- I have submitted a filing fee with this application. (Checks should be made payable to the City of Alexandria. Please contact staff for assistance in determining the appropriate fee.)
- I understand the notice requirements and will return a copy of the three respective notice forms to BAR staff at least five days prior to the hearing. If I am unsure to whom I should send notice I will contact Planning and Zoning staff for assistance in identifying adjacent parcels.
- I, the applicant, or an authorized representative will be present at the public hearing.
- I understand that any revisions to this initial application submission (including applications deferred for restudy) must be accompanied by the BAR Supplemental form and 3 sets of revised materials.

---

The undersigned hereby attests that all of the information herein provided including the site plan, building elevations, prospective drawings of the project, and written descriptive information are true, correct and accurate. The undersigned further understands that, should such information be found incorrect, any action taken by the Board based on such information may be invalidated. The undersigned also hereby grants the City of Alexandria permission to post placard notice as required by Article XI, Division A, Section 11-301(B) of the 1992 Alexandria City Zoning Ordinance, on the property which is the subject of this application. The undersigned also hereby authorizes the City staff and members of the BAR to inspect this site as necessary in the course of research and evaluating the application. The applicant, if other than the property owner, also attests that he/she has obtained permission from the property owner to make this application.

**APPLICANT OR AUTHORIZED AGENT:**

Signature: Marilisa del Ninno

Printed Name: Marilisa del Ninno

Date: 3/16/15



Docket Item # 2  
BAR CASE # 2015-00064

BAR Meeting  
April 15, 2015

**ISSUE:** Certificate of Appropriateness  
**APPLICANT:** NOWA Property LLC by Maginniss + del Ninno Architects  
**LOCATION:** 628 North Washington Street  
**ZONE:** OC/Office

---

**BOARD ACTION on April 15, 2015: Deferred, 7-0.**

This item was removed from the consent calendar.

On a motion by Mr. von Senden, seconded by Mr. Neale, the OHAD Board of Architectural Review voted to defer BAR Case #2015-0064. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

**SPEAKERS**

Mr. Skip McGinnis, architect, spoke on behalf of the applicant. He said that he was in agreement with staff's recommended conditions.

Ms. Gail Rothrock, Historic Alexandria Foundation (HAF), said that HAF supported the comments of the National Park Service (NPS) and opposed the design of the new stairs. She also encouraged the applicant to consider removing the paint on the brick façade.

**BOARD DISCUSSION**

Ms. Roberts said that she opposed the design of the applicant's proposed steps and asked that they consider wood, steel or brick steps which would be more compatible with the immediate context.

Ms. Miller said that she didn't think the multi-pane window at the basement level was appropriate, especially with the proposed window changes on the upper floors.

Mr. Neale said that he liked that the upper windows were being returned to the historically appropriate 1-over-1 configuration and thought that it would be appropriate to change the basement window to a tripartite configuration to match the bay window mullions above. He said that the new stair was not compatible and suggested that the applicant consider integrating brick into the new stair, perhaps as tread pavers in a metal pan. He said that he supported leaving the building painted because the other buildings in the row are painted.

Mr. von Senden said that there seemed to be four items for discussion: 1. The original 1-over-1 windows were there for 55 years and the porch was there for just as long; 2. He said that he

didn't support leaving the basement window in its current configuration; 3. He said that the stair was too utilitarian and that it needed to be more ornamental. 4. He said that the other townhouses in this row were painted, so it was appropriate to keep this townhouse painted.

Mr. Carlin said that he agreed with both the NPS and HAF, and thought that the basement window should be replaced with a more appropriate window. He said that the stairs have been brick for 50 years and that if the applicant wanted to install metal stairs they should be more delicate and decorative.

Ms. Finnegan said that the case should be deferred for restudy and that the new railing will serve as a precedent for the other stairs in this row, so it is important that they be compatible.

Chairman Fitzgerald said that he would be supportive of metal stairs but believed that they shouldn't project more than they presently do, because a greater projection creates more of a perceived mass. He said that he thought the basement window was jarring.

Mr. McGinnis said that the brick stoops at the applicant's property and many others in the row were failing and that their style is inappropriate on the early 20<sup>th</sup> century townhouses. He also said that they weren't proposing to replace the basement window.

On a motion by Mr. von Senden, seconded by Mr. Neale, the Board voted to defer the application. The motion carried on a vote of 7 to 0.

## **REASON**

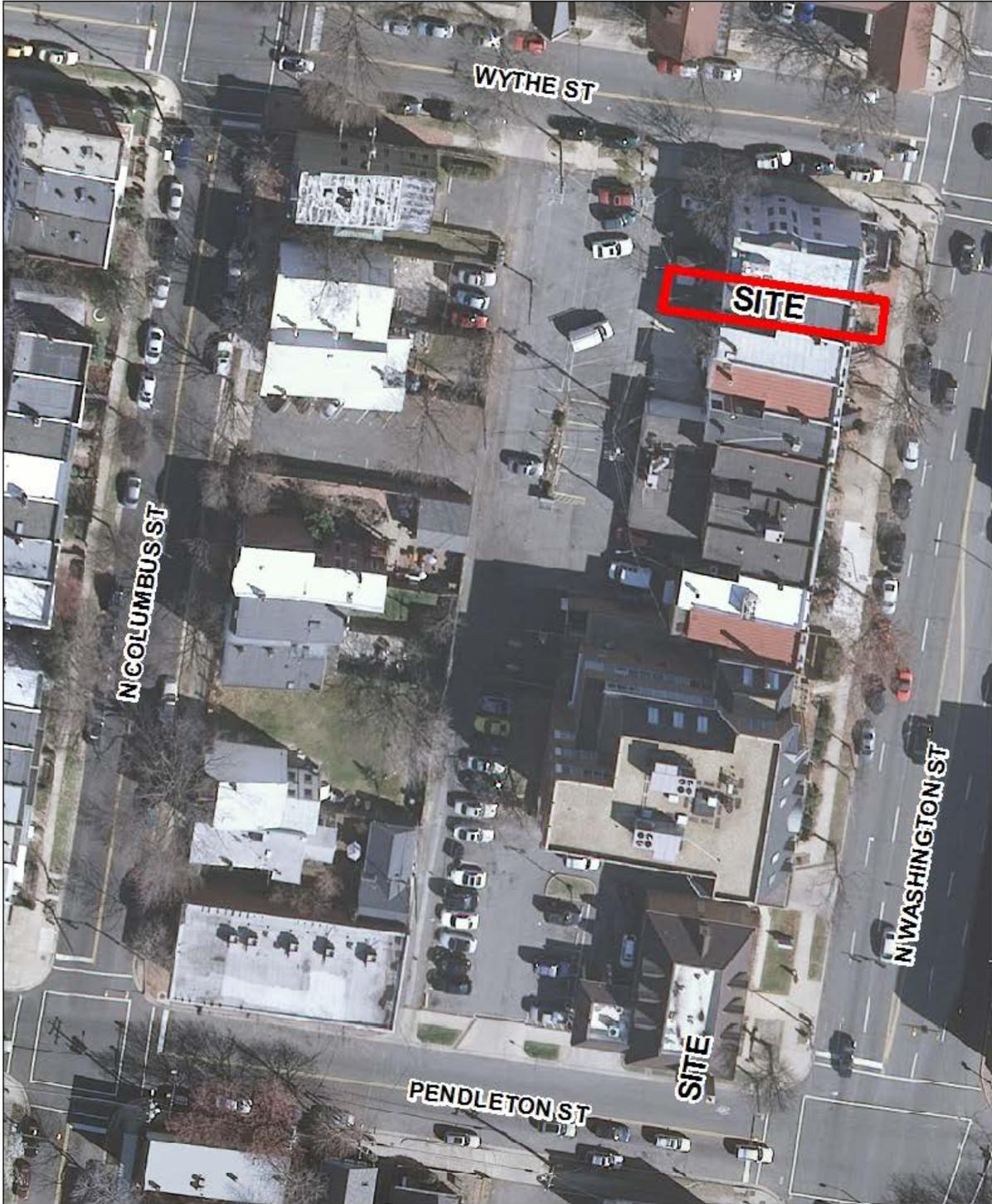
The Board felt that the front stair and railing should be restudied to be more compatible with the building and the importance of the GW Parkway, while still fitting within the context of the block of similarly altered rowhouses. The Board also requested that the applicant consider replacing the multi-pane window at the basement level with a new window that has mullions similar in proportion to the proposed bay window above and supported one-over-one sash windows on the first and second floors.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Staff recommends approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness with the conditions that:

1. The rear elevation porch rail and column design be in keeping with the Colonial Revival style of the building, with final approval by staff;
2. The plastic lattice on the north elevation of the rear porch be removed;
3. The proposed lattice on front porch must be wood;
4. The applicant coordinate with staff prior to applying for a building permit to assess the existing windows and replace or repair in accordance with the *BAR Window Policy*;

5. The applicant coordinate with staff prior to applying for a building permit to assess the existing doors on the rear elevation and repair if original features, or replace with an appropriate paneled door, in accordance with the *Minor Architectural Elements Policy*.
6. The applicant provide a plat to confirm zoning compliance prior to the submission of a building permit application.



BAR2015-00064



**I. ISSUE**

The applicant requests approval of a Certificate of Appropriateness to refurbish the existing front and rear elevations of 628 N Washington Street. The proposed alterations include:

*Front elevation*

- Enlarge the existing concrete stair to the basement level and install new handrail.
- Remove the existing brick stairs to the main entry on the first floor and replace with a concrete and steel stair.
- Replace the existing double-hung windows with one-over-one, full frame wood replacements.
- Replace the existing first floor bay window with a wood window without muntins.
- Remove the first floor door and surround to restore transom and brick mould with a new 3/4 view wood door.

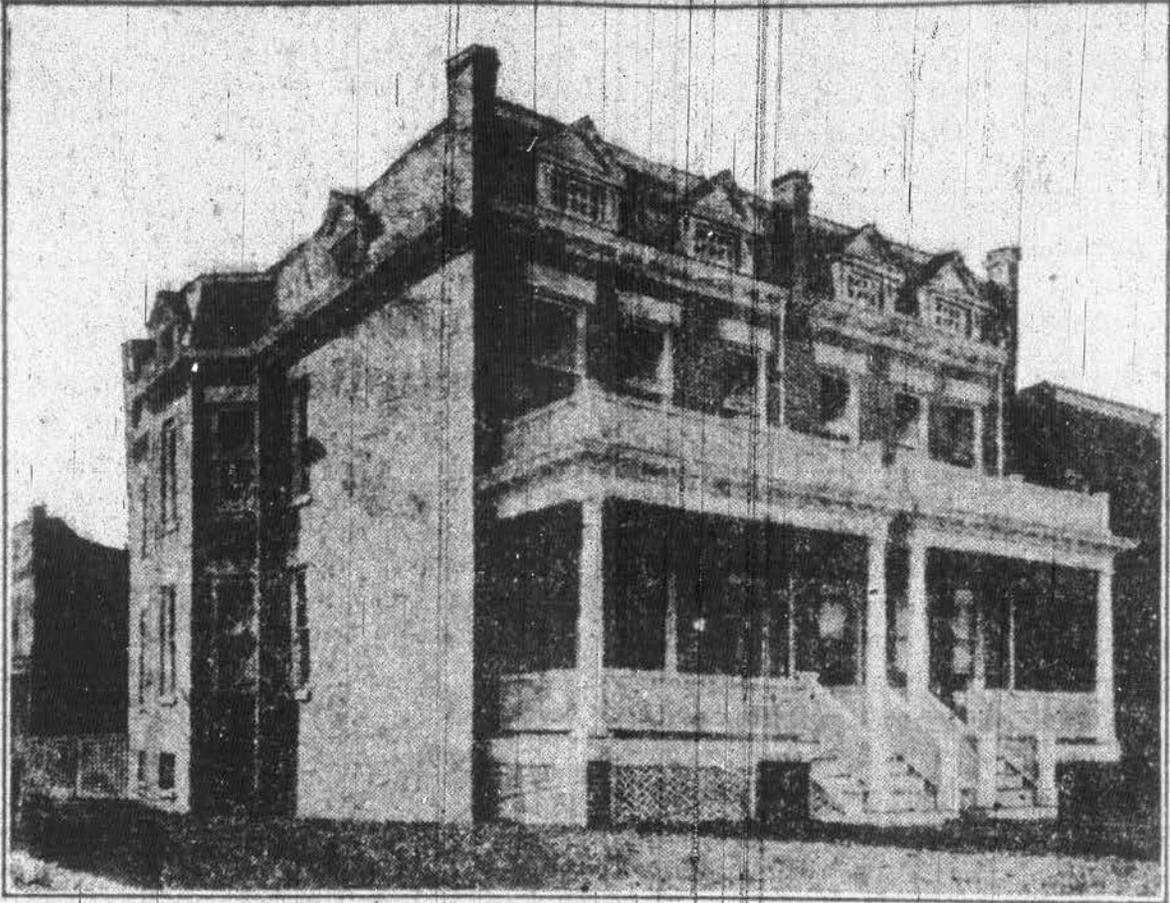
*Rear elevation*

- Replace the existing double-hung windows with one-over-one, full frame wood replacements
- Replace both doors with new wood doors to match the existing.
- Repair existing balcony and railing.

**II. HISTORY**

The subject property at 628 N Washington Street was constructed in **1912** as part of a residential development comprised of 10 rowhouses built by the Alexandria Construction Company. The applicant has located a historic image of the development, published in the April 13, 1912 issue of the *Alexandria Gazette* (see Figure 1, below). The BAR approved removal of the porch and changes to the front façade, including the bay window, on March 8, 1967 (associated building permit #24030, dated 3/22/67). This 1967 approval is unfortunate but consistent with the BAR's treatment of properties along Washington Street at that time. The early Sanborn maps show a group of largely intact Colonial Revival townhomes that had become increasingly commercial by 1958, with only fifty percent of the porches remaining. All of the properties that had converted to office use by 1958 no longer retained the original porch. The bay windows and other Colonial Revival details that the BAR consistently approved along N. Washington Street were popular among Alexandrians in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century as they sought to emphasize their 18<sup>th</sup> century heritage.

ALEXANDRIA GAZETTE SATURDAY, APRIL 13, 1912.



Cut Representing Two of the Ten Houses Nearing Completion, and  
Built on North Washington Street, by the

**Alexandria Construction Corporation**

THESE HOUSES WILL BE COMPLETED NEXT MONTH AND  
PLACED ON THE MARKET FOR SALE AT THE LOW-  
EST POSSIBLE PRICE AND ON EASY TERMS.

**MONROE & MARBURY**  
The Exclusive Selling Agents.

THEY DESIRE TO CALL YOUR ATTENTION TO THE FOLLOW-

Figure 1: Image of the residential development at 614 – 632 N Washington Street as shown in the *Alexandria Gazette* from April 13, 1912 (source: Special Collections).

### III. ANALYSIS

#### New Stair/Entrance

Staff laments the loss of the original front porches in this townhouse row. These were primary character defining features, as is evident from the 1912 photo and those similar rows with extant porches in the 500 block of North Washington or the 1400 through 1600 blocks of King Street. Unfortunately, given the present use of the building and the desire for additional light for the basement tenant, reconstruction of this porch is not an option at this time.

In general, staff finds the proposed renovation appropriate and consistent with Board policies and guidelines. The most significant alteration to the front is the replacement of the existing brick stairs, with a steel and concrete stair. The material and design is decidedly contemporary and will enhance visibility and light for the basement level tenant and create a friendlier streetscape for pedestrians. Staff notes that the proposed stair is roughly the same size as the existing and in scale with those at the adjacent properties.

The *Design Guidelines for Stoops, Steps, & Railings* suggest that these items be made of materials sympathetic to the building materials found in the historic district and compatible with the architecture of the building. While concrete was certainly available when this building was constructed, and in fact, many nearby buildings of similar age had precast stoops, the design proposed by the applicant is decidedly contemporary in its use of steel and concrete together. One might argue that the most appropriate material for a front stoop on this property would be wood, as the front porch and stair were originally constructed. However, the applicant has indicated they do not wish to rebuild the original front porch and seek to improve the visibility, light and ventilation to the basement entrance. The metal stair also recalls the cast iron front steps that were ubiquitous in Alexandria in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and does not try to appear to be something that was original to this Colonial Revival style structure.

The *Design Guidelines* state that stoops, steps, and railings should not make a building appear older than it actually is. While debatable, some preservationists suggest that contrasting new construction with the historic can be the preferred option, as it creates a transparent building chronology for the casual passerby. For these reasons, staff would not support a wood stair that could be mistakenly interpreted as an original and historic feature. For the purposes of differentiating and creating a friendlier streetscape staff supports the proposed concrete and steel stair as well as the enlarged patio stair.

#### Other Alterations

Staff supports the applicant's proposal to replace the existing multi-light window sash with single light sash, as shown in the 1912 photo. Staff recommends that the Board condition any approval with the requirement that all window replacements be consistent with the [BAR Window Policy](#). Staff believes the existing window *frames* on the front and rear elevation are original and that there may be original sashes on the rear. The [BAR Window Policy](#) calls for preservation of these original features, if staff determines in the field that they are not beyond reasonable repair. Relatively inexpensive sash kits are available from several manufacturers that retain the existing frames and replace only the operable parts of the window with modern glass and weatherstripping.

The applicant has conscientiously chosen historically appropriate paint colors for repainting, however staff notes that the front façade of this building was historically unpainted and the trim was white, which is typical of the Colonial Revival style. Staff recommends that the applicant consider stripping the existing paint, as was done recently at the Fish Market, Burke & Herbert Bank, and several residential properties in the district, in order to achieve a historically appropriate and more affordably maintainable appearance. At the very least, staff suggests that contrasting paint colors be used to call attention to the festoon or swag relief on the dormers.

The alley located behind the building is a public alley; therefore all exterior changes visible from this location require review by the Board. Staff is gratified that the applicant has chosen to preserve and rehabilitate the rear porch and windows, but recommends that the existing plastic lattice on the north elevation of the porch be removed as part of the renovation (see Figure 2, below). While lattice is appropriate for this age building (and actually part of the original construction – see historic image above), lattice of this quality and location is completely inappropriate and does not meet any of the BAR policies or *Design Guidelines*.

Furthermore, staff was unable to locate any previous BAR approvals for the existing porch railing, which appears to be a wood railing one would find in a suburban development's deck, not early 20<sup>th</sup> century rowhomes. Staff recommends that the Board condition any approvals for the rear porch to include a revised porch rail and columns, with final approval by staff. Staff has provided an example of stylistically appropriate porch details below.



**Figure 2:** Existing plastic lattice on north elevation of porch. Staff has not located record of any BAR approvals for porch alterations at this address.



**Figure 3:** Porch at 712 N Washington Street provides an excellent example of a stylistically appropriate rail and posts.

**STAFF**

Mary Catherine Collins, Historic Preservation Planner, Planning & Zoning  
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager, Planning & Zoning

**IV. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

Legend: C- code requirement R- recommendation S- suggestion F- finding

**Zoning Comments**

C-1 Applicant must submit survey plats with all existing and proposed conditions staff can confirm compliance.

**Code Administration**

No comments provided

**Transportation and Environmental Services**

R-1 Applicant shall be responsible for repairs to the adjacent city right-of-way if damaged during construction activity. (T&ES)

R-2 No permanent structure may be constructed over any existing private and/or public utility easements. It is the responsibility of the applicant to identify any and all existing easements on the plan. (T&ES)

F-1 After review of the information provided, an approved grading plan is not required at this

time. Please note that if any changes are made to the plan it is suggested that T&ES be included in the review. (T&ES)

- C-1 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Solid Waste Control, Title 5, Chapter 1, which sets forth the requirements for the recycling of materials (Sec. 5-1-99). (T&ES)
- C-2 The applicant shall comply with the City of Alexandria's Noise Control Code, Title 11, Chapter 5, which sets the maximum permissible noise level as measured at the property line. (T&ES)
- C-3 All secondary utilities serving this site shall be placed underground. (Sec. 5-3-3) (T&ES)
- C-4 Any work within the right-of-way requires a separate permit from T&ES. (Sec. 5-2) (T&ES)
- C-5 All improvements to the city right-of-way such as curbing, sidewalk, driveway aprons, etc. must be city standard design. (Sec. 5-2-1) (T&ES)

### **National Park Service**

We feel the proposed alterations including the removal of the 6/6 divided light windows, divided light bay window, wood door surround and brick stair, would not be in keeping with the memorial character of Washington Street and the Parkway. The modern concrete and steel open riser steps, concrete landings and pipe railings would be particularly detrimental to the historic character of the area.

### **V. ATTACHMENTS**

~~1 Supplemental Materials~~

~~2 Application for BAR2015-00064: 628 N Washington Street~~