

# City of Alexandria, Virginia

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** SEPTEMBER 3, 2014

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

**FROM:** HISTORIC PRESERVATION STAFF

**SUBJECT:** UPDATE MEMO ON 515 NORTH WASHINGTON STREET  
(THE COTTON FACTORY) BAR CASE # 2014-0208 and 2014-0209

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### I. BACKGROUND

On July 16, 2014, the BAR reviewed a Permit to Demolish and Certificate of Appropriateness application for alterations to the existing historic building. The minutes and BAR member comments follow.

#### **BAR MINUTES – July 16, 2014**

##### **CONDITIONS**

The items below are **deferred** for further study:

1. Rear elevation dormers;
2. Site improvements related to the patios and entrances on the Parkway side of the project.

The remaining items in the application are approved with the following conditions:

1. That the shutters proposed to be removed that are in good condition be saved and stored on site for reinstallation in the future.
2. That the applicant provides details and specifications for the proposed railing at the south elevation and for all doors, with final approval by staff during building permit review, based on the BAR's guidance at the meeting.

##### **BOARD ACTION: Approved, as amended, 6-0-1.**

On a motion by Ms. Roberts seconded by Mr. Carlin, the Board voted to approve portions of BAR Case #2014-0209, as amended and defer portions for restudy. The motion carried on a vote of 6-0-1. Ms. Finnigan recused herself.

## **SPEAKERS**

Fred Lowther, owner at 609 Oronoco and representative for the Kingtons noted that they are very opposed to the proposed rear dormers.

Van Fleet, representative of Old Town Civic Association expressed that the association would like the shutters to remain on the building.

Poul Hertel, owner at 1217 Michigan Court, identified that the Washington Street Standards were intended to preclude 20<sup>th</sup> century warehouse motifs. This building is iconic from 1847.

Katy Cannady, owner 20 East Oak Street, testified that the building is large now and she feels it does not need to be “even larger.” She noted that she is opposed to the application.

## **BOARD DISCUSSION**

Ms. Roberts noted that the design needed to be careful. The dormers were too modern. They should relate to the historic building.

Ms. Miller noted that the subject building is surrounded by historic buildings [except the Saul Center] and the design will compromise the building and the adjacent building’s historic integrity.

Mr. Neale prefers Option 1. He notes that the shed dormers typology can be seen in London and Boston and finds it to be a handsome pattern if only used on a rear elevation. He feels that the proposed design is well composed and respectful.

Mr. von Senden recommended that the existing shutters are stored on site for future reinstallation. The applicant agreed with this suggestion. He also identified that there should only be open patios on Washington Street, no walls to obstruct or privatize the front yard. He also noted that an open picket fence would be okay along Washington Street. He also identified that he preferred the design in Option 1. He was most concerned with the demolition of historic fabric for the construction of new dormers. The north and south dormer designs are acceptable, yet he had strong opposition to the center dormer’s design and its proposed demolition, as presented.

Mr. Carlin concurred with Mr. von Senden that the North and South Dormers in Option 1 were acceptable. He recommended smaller dormers in the center to preserve the roof trusses and reduce the overall scale.

Mr. Fitzgerald noted that the dormers needed further restudy. Regarding the shutter, he identified that they had been installed since 1936, and feels that they should remain.

## **REASON**

The Board found that some items in the application met their criteria for approval and the *Design Guidelines* and other items that needed further refinement and restudy. Therefore they approved portions of the application and deferred others.

Previously, the BAR reviewed the proposed changes to the existing building and the proposed annex building at two concept review work sessions on March 19, 2014 and June 4, 2014.

As a reminder, the proposed annex building on Pendleton Street which was previously discussed by the BAR at two concept review work sessions is *not* a part of the current application. The applicant is continuing to pursue that project based on comments made by the BAR but is going through the development review process at this time. If a Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) is approved by Planning Commission and City Council, then the applicant will return to the BAR with an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the new construction.

## II. PROJECT CHANGES AND STAFF ANALYSIS

There are two distinct issues before the Board regarding the dormers. The first issue regards the preservation of the existing intact roof trusses. The second issue regards the design of the proposed dormers.

### Preservation of Heavy Timber Roof Trusses

The applicant's current proposal has not reduced the amount of demolition and alteration to the historic roof trusses. As mentioned in the previous report, nine out of 14 trusses currently remain intact and in relatively good condition. Because the three center dormers are singletons, there remain four completely intact roof beams in this portion of the roof. Four out of fourteen trusses will remain intact or repaired to the original condition in this proposal. The applicant plans to alter the top chords of the existing trusses such that, by through the top chord, it would be rotated at an angle that would visually support the new shed dormer roof. While such a scheme represents adaptive reuse of historic building material on the site, it is not sound preservation as it misrepresents the construction technology of the original roof framing system and features much larger elements than would be necessary for a simple shed dormer. However, reusing the heavy timber roof trusses on site is preferable to disposing of these remaining historic elements.

On the one hand, staff believes that a more limited program that retains the heavy timber trusses in their original configuration is the preferred preservation approach. However, as this building has minimal historic fabric intact beyond the exterior walls, and the roof structure has already been significantly altered during two separate construction efforts in the past, the current roof structure is not unadulterated. While staff would prefer a scheme that retained the remaining center trusses, it is understood that doing so makes for an unuseable adjacent space. Therefore, staff can support the proposed roof truss alterations with the condition that the applicant document and detail the historic roof framing system to the satisfaction of staff and provide a copy of the documentation to the Department of Planning & Zoning and the Local History Collection of the Alexandria Library.

### Design of Proposed Dormers

The applicant's current submission includes three dormer options. The first option, Option 1, reflects the original dormer proposal presented to the Board on July 16, 2014 which included three larger, modern shed dormers with balconies and NanaWall windows/doors. Based on the Board's comments, the applicant has studied and prepared two design alternatives, both of which

are approximately the same overall size but have smaller balconies and less visual mass by converting some doors to smaller window dormers. Both also show the end dormers to have two pairs of French doors separated by a pronounced mullion rather than a continuous NanaWall, as previously proposed. The light configuration was revised to reflect the smaller muntin pattern on the historic building. Option A features the modern approach but with a change to the center dormer to convert doors on the ends to windows –an area about six feet wide at each end—as well as reducing the size of the balcony. The dormer walls and trim will be clad in the same material as the roof to further make these elements recede. Option B draws its inspiration from the existing dormer design which appears as individual pedimented dormers with traditional Colonial Revival white trim. However, the dormer windows in this proposal do not feature a traditional light configuration. The end dormers each have two pedimented end dormers and the center dormer has five pedimented dormers within the overall shed dormer.

Staff supports the changes in both options that result in less overall visual mass and a smaller center balcony. Staff also supports the reduction in the continuous NanaWall on the end dormers. While Option B features a more traditional dormer expression with the use of individual pedimented dormers, it represents a modern interpretation of a traditional dormer form as it uses the appearance of individual dormers to mask the proposed shed dormer, much as the existing rear dormers do, however using a modern light configuration. While both Option A and Option B are generally acceptable to staff, the preference is for Option A as it will be less visually obvious and will recede more into the overall roof form, allowing the historic building mass and form to take precedence. Option B, although it has subtle distinctions from historic dormers, has more of an appearance of attempting to replicate a historic form with the series of Colonial Revival pedimented dormers. Staff prefers the differentiation and subservience of Option A.



Figure 1. PREVIOUS Submission to BAR on July 16, 2014.

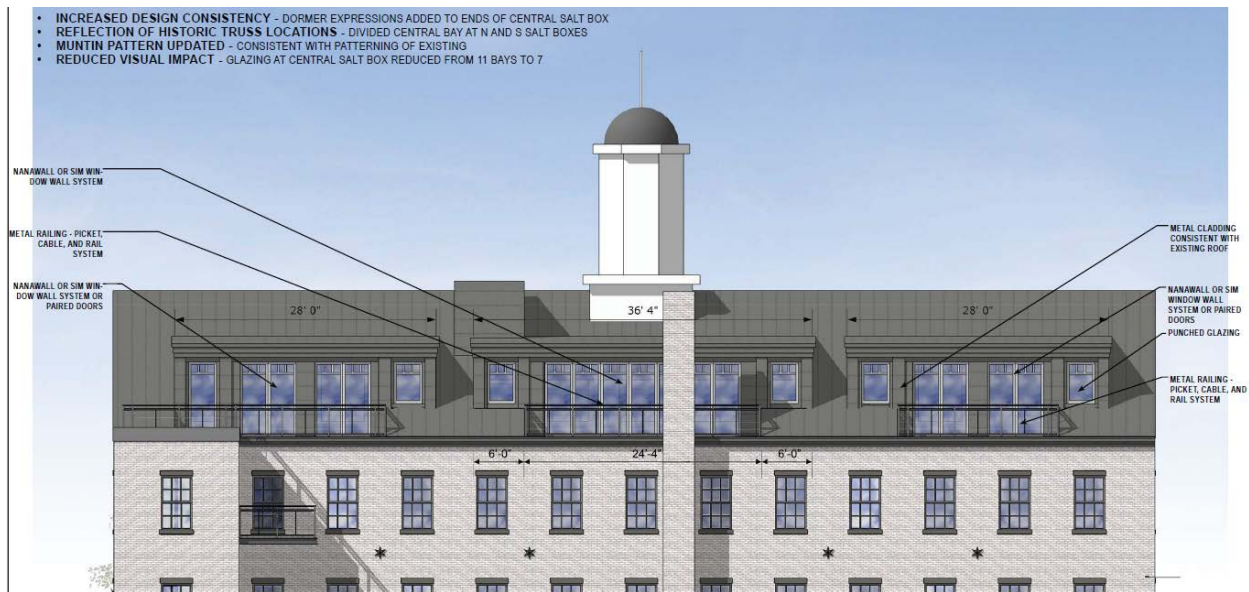


Figure 2. CURRENT Submission, Option A.

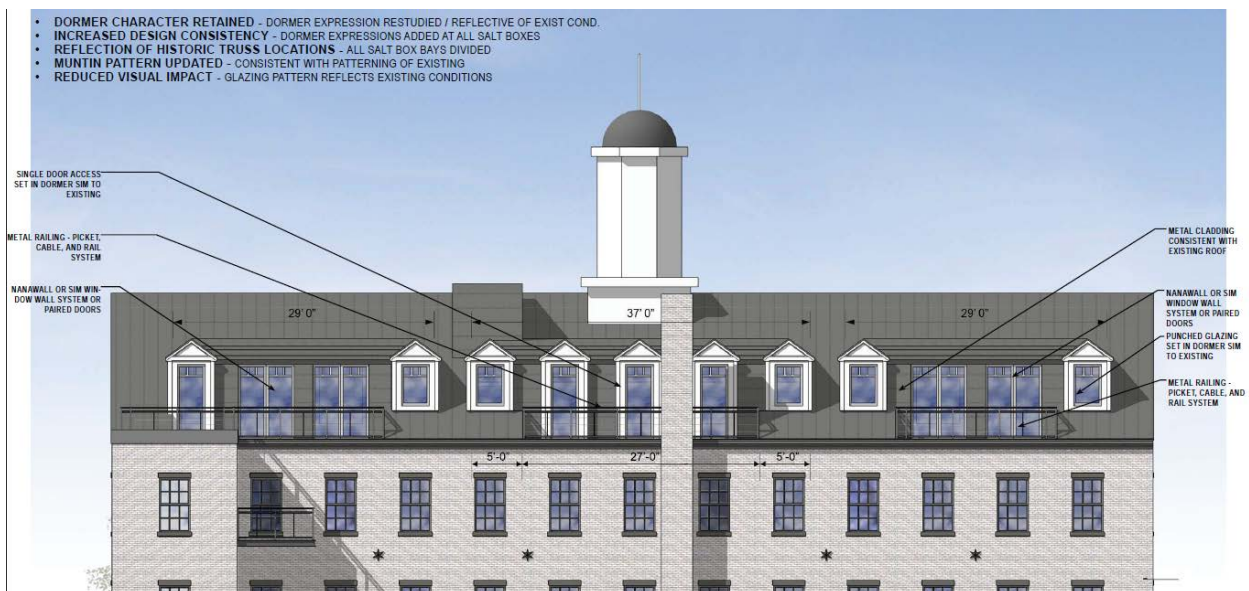


Figure 3. CURRENT Submission, Option B.

### Site Improvements

The Board deferred approval of site improvements as there was not sufficient information to determine how the proposed patios and terraces on the front elevation would function and what additional elements would be necessary. As the proposal for site improvements will be dependent upon approval of the DSUP for the annex building, the applicant would like to defer approval of these items at this time. Site improvements, including any steps, fences, railings and the like will all require approval by the BAR and can be approved as part of the final Certificate of Appropriateness for the annex building or as a separate application at a later time. The applicant has been made aware of staff's and the Board's concerns regarding privatization of the open space on Washington Street. The National Park Service has concurred that private patios along Washington Street are not consistent with the character of Washington Street.

### **III. STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

At this time, staff recommends **deferral** on all site improvements and **approval** of the rear dormers with the following conditions:

1. Documentation of the historic roof framing system and a final report shall be deposited at the Local History section of the Alexandria Library as well as the Department of Planning & Zoning; and
2. Option A be the selected option with final details regarding window and railing specifications to be approved by BAR staff as part of the building permit review process.

### **V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

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

#### **Open Space and Landscaping**

1. Hire a professional consultant to work with staff and the landscape designers to incorporate and interpret elements of the historical character and archaeological findings into the design of the open space and to prepare interpretive elements, which shall be erected as part of the development project. The site plan shall indicate themes and locations of interpretive elements. Prior to release of the final site plan, the consultant shall provide text and graphics for the signage subject to approval by the Office of Historic Alexandria/Alexandria Archaeology and the Directors of P&Z and/or RP&CA.\* (Arch)(P&Z)(RP&CA)

*The applicant has retained landscape design consultants for this project.*

#### **Archaeology**

### **COMMENTS**

1. EHT Tracerics has produced a historical overview report for the property (dated September 2013). The document is an excellent overview consisting mainly of maps and photographs of the primary building on the property, but it does not adequately address the archaeological integrity or potential contexts of the Cotton Factory. Therefore, we request that the applicant hire an archaeological consultant to complete a Documentary Study and an Archaeological Evaluation. If significant resources are discovered, the consultant shall complete a Resource Management Plan, as outlined in the City of Alexandria Archaeological Standards. Preservation measures presented in the Resource Management Plan, as approved by the City Archaeologist, will be implemented. (Archaeology)
2. The Final Site Plan, Grading Plan, or any other permits involving ground disturbing activities (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of the Zoning Ordinance) shall not be released until the City archaeologist confirms that all

archaeological fieldwork has been completed or that an approved Resource Management Plan is in place to recover significant resources in concert with construction activities. \*  
(Archaeology)

3. Certificates of Occupancy shall not be issued for this property until interpretive elements have been constructed, interpretive markers have been erected, and the final archaeological report has been received and approved by the City Archaeologist.\*\*\*  
(Archaeology)
4. Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-746-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds. The language noted above shall be included on all final site plan sheets involving any ground disturbing activities.  
(Archaeology)
5. The applicant shall not allow any metal detection and/or artifact collection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology. Failure to comply shall result in project delays. The language noted above shall be included on all final site plan sheets involving any ground disturbing activities. (Archaeology)

## FINDINGS

- F-1 The Mount Vernon Cotton Factory was built on the property in 1847. Over the next 50 years it passed through the hands of several different owners. During the Civil War the Union Army commandeered the building for use as a military prison. Immediately to the south of the Cotton Factory structure, on the lot at 513 N. Washington (also part of this proposed project) stood an office complex and barracks. In 1903 the Portner Brewing Company acquired the property and converted the main building into a bottling factory which operated for approximately a decade. In 1918 the building was transformed into a spark plug factory. In 1935 the building was renovated into an apartment complex, which was changed yet again into office space in the early 1980s. Given the history of the lots at 513 and 515 N. Washington Street, the properties have the potential to contain significant archaeological resources pertaining to the industrial growth of the City of Alexandria.
- F-1 If this project is a federal undertaking or involves the use of any federal funding, the applicant shall comply with federal preservation laws, in particular Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The applicant will coordinate with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the federal agency involved in the project, as well as with Alexandria Archaeology.

## CODE

- C-1 All required archaeological preservation measures shall be completed in compliance with Section 11-411 of the Zoning Ordinance.



**Code Administration** *(copied from previous report)*

**FINDINGS**

- F-1 The following comments are for concept review only. Once the applicant has filed for a building permit and additional information has been provided, code requirements will be based upon that information and the building permit plans. If there are any questions, the applicant may contact Ken Granata, Plan Review Division Chief at [ken.granata@alexandriava.gov](mailto:ken.granata@alexandriava.gov) or 703-746-4193.

**CODE**

- C-2 New construction must comply with the current edition of the Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC). This conversion of an office building to residential use with an expansion will require Building, trade permits and inspections.
- C-3 A Certificate of Occupancy will be required prior to occupancy due to this being a change of occupancy.
- C-4 Accessibility requirements shall be in compliance with the USBC and ANSI 117.1

**Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES)** *(copied from previous report)*

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

- R-1 Comply with all requirements of DSP2013-00023, which is currently under review. (T&ES)
- R-2 The Final Site Plan must be approved and released and a copy of that plan must be attached to the demolition permit application. No demolition permit will be issued in advance of the building permit unless the Final Site Plan includes a demolition plan which clearly represents the demolished condition. (T&ES)

**Development Division (P&Z)** *(copied from previous report)*

1. The subject property, two legal lots, totals 28,879 square feet is currently occupied by a four story office building and surface parking located in the Old Historic Alexandria District. The property is located in two zoning districts. The portion of the lot occupied with an office building is zoned OC, office commercial. The portion of the lot used for surface parking is zoned RM, residential with a proffer governed by Ordinance #2624.
2. Staff is reviewing the DSUP#2013-00023 proposal to convert the existing office building into a 28 unit residential apartment building and to construct a 6 unit annex building to



the north of the existing building facing Pendleton Street, for a total of 34 units on the site.

3. In order to approve the project as proposed, some or all of the following may be required:
  - a. Master Plan Amendment to change the land use designation as shown on the Small Area Plan maps;
  - b. Rezoning;
  - c. Development special use permit, with site plan, to construct a multifamily residential building;
  - d. Special Use Permit requests:
    - i. Increased floor area for residential development;
    - ii. Increased floor area and/or a parking reduction for the provision of affordable housing pursuant to Section 7-700 of the Zoning Ordinance;
    - iii. To reduce the number of required parking spaces.
  - e. Modification requests to:
    - i. Front yard setback, pursuant to Section 7-900.
4. The applicant is pursuing a separate application which would convert the existing building into 28 residential units, without the proposed annex. As part of that proposal, selective interior demolition has been approved, and is underway.

## **DEVELOPMENT COMMENTS FOR BAR CONCEPT REVIEW 2**

### Site Plan Design Comments

1. Sheet 7: We should have T&ES confirm that the three parking spaces at the southern end of the parking lot have adequate space for backing out.
2. Sheet 7: The curving ADA ramp at southern end of site leading to side entry is awkward as it does not relate well to other walkways which are much more angular.
3. Sheet 7: The raised sidewalk (patio area) at the rear has a large paved surface area. Additional design needed to provide greater purpose to this area (maybe outside seating) and the addition of landscaping or planters to break up the hard surfaces.
4. Sheet 7: Recommend that the private unit patios proposed on either side of the front portico be removed.
5. Sheets 11, 18, 21: Planted hedge should not block the central portico on the West façade.
6. Overall better coordination is needed between the landscape plan and the existing building and new building.

### Building Design

1. Sheet 11: Not convinced the steel connector beams are necessary. The addition to remain detached to preserve the original building in its purest form.
2. Sheet 11: The existing portico should not be blocked off by the hedge.
3. Sheets 12, 25: The retaining wall between the parking lot and the rear walkway/patio area appears tall and blocky. Similarly the two planters in this area bordering either side of the rear entry are also blocky. Consider alternative design solutions.

4. Sheets 15, 25: The new deck and metal rail at the top floor of the southeast corner projects slightly beyond the face of the historic building. It is recommended that this deck and rail be pulled back flush or behind the south building face.
5. Sheet 19: Ensure that window at the northeast corner of the first floor of the historic building is not obscured by the retaining/planter wall located between the existing building and the new building.

**ATTACHMENTS**

*1 – Supporting Materials*




*2 – Previous Report from July 16, 2014*



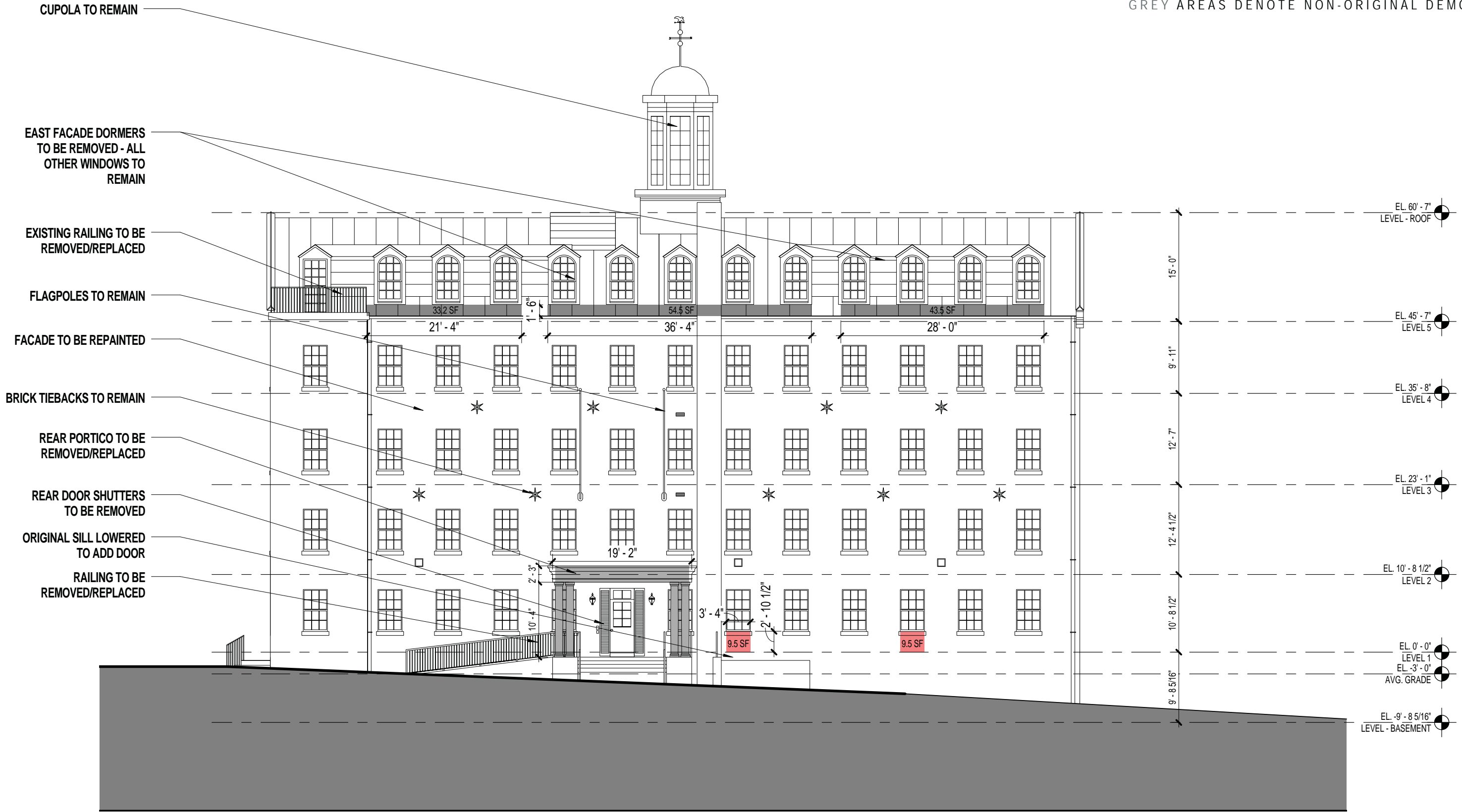
# 515 N. Washington Street Alexandria, VA



Board of Architectural Review  
SEPTEMBER 3, 2014

PROJECT N <sup>o</sup> 20130161.00	REVISION N <sup>o</sup> 000	DATE 08/04/2014	Notes	
<div><div><div>CAS Riegler VALUE   URBAN   CHARACTER</div></div><div></div></div>	1	<div>MOUNT VERNON COTTON FACTORY RESIDENTIAL RE-USE 515 N WASHINGTON STREET ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314</div> <div>© 2013 Cooper Carry, Inc. 625 North Washington Street, Suite 200, Alexandria, Virginia 22314 Tel. 703-519-6152 Fax: 703-519-7127</div>		<div> COOPER CARRY</div>

RED AREAS DENOTE ORIGINAL MATERIAL DEMO  
GREY AREAS DENOTE NON-ORIGINAL DEMO



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Notes

EXISTING EAST ELEVATION - DEMO

CAS Riegler  
VALUE | URBAN | CHARACTER

SNEAD  
CONSTRUCTION

2

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## PREVIOUS BAR SUBMISSION

PROJECT N<sup>o</sup> 20130161.00 | REVISION N<sup>o</sup> 000 | DATE 08/04/2014

*Notes*

EAST ELEVATION - OPT 1 - JULY 16, 2014 BAR

**CAS Riegler**  
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EAST ELEVATION - OPT A (3.5)

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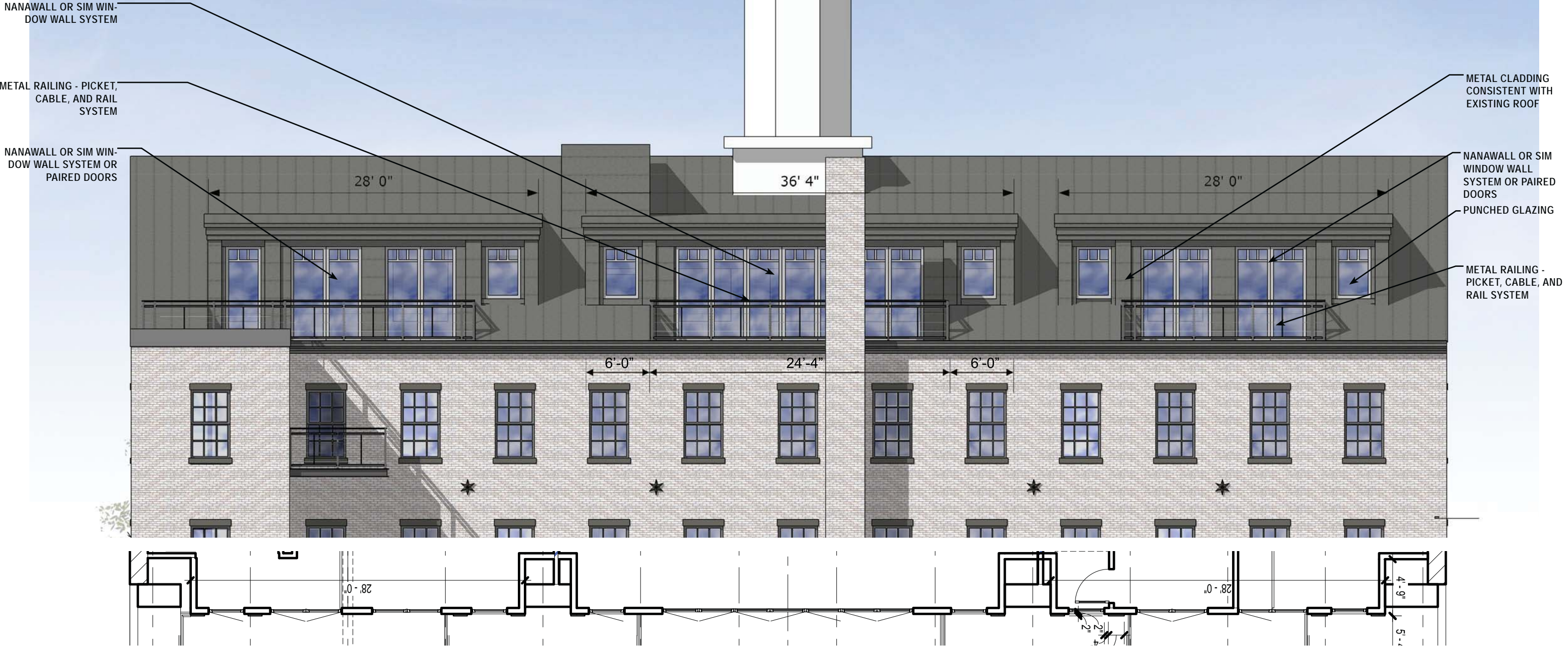
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- **INCREASED DESIGN CONSISTENCY** - DORMER EXPRESSIONS ADDED TO ENDS OF CENTRAL SALT BOX
- **REFLECTION OF HISTORIC TRUSS LOCATIONS** - DIVIDED CENTRAL BAY AT N AND S SALT BOXES
- **MUNTIN PATTERN UPDATED** - CONSISTENT WITH PATTERNING OF EXISTING
- **REDUCED VISUAL IMPACT** - GLAZING AT CENTRAL SALT BOX REDUCED FROM 11 BAYS TO 7



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EAST ELEVATION - OPT A (3.5)



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EAST ELEVATION - EXISTING OVERLAY - OPT A (3.5)

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EAST ELEVATION - OPT B (5)

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- **DORMER CHARACTER RETAINED** - DORMER EXPRESSION RESTUDIED / REFLECTIVE OF EXIST COND.
- **INCREASED DESIGN CONSISTENCY** - DORMER EXPRESSIONS ADDED AT ALL SALT BOXES
- **REFLECTION OF HISTORIC TRUSS LOCATIONS** - ALL SALT BOX BAYS DIVIDED
- **MUNTIN PATTERN UPDATED** - CONSISTENT WITH PATTERNING OF EXISTING
- **REDUCED VISUAL IMPACT** - GLAZING PATTERN REFLECTS EXISTING CONDITIONS



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EAST ELEVATION - OPT B (5)



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EAST ELEVATION - EXISTING OVERLAY - OPT B (5)

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#### NE AMENITY LOCATION

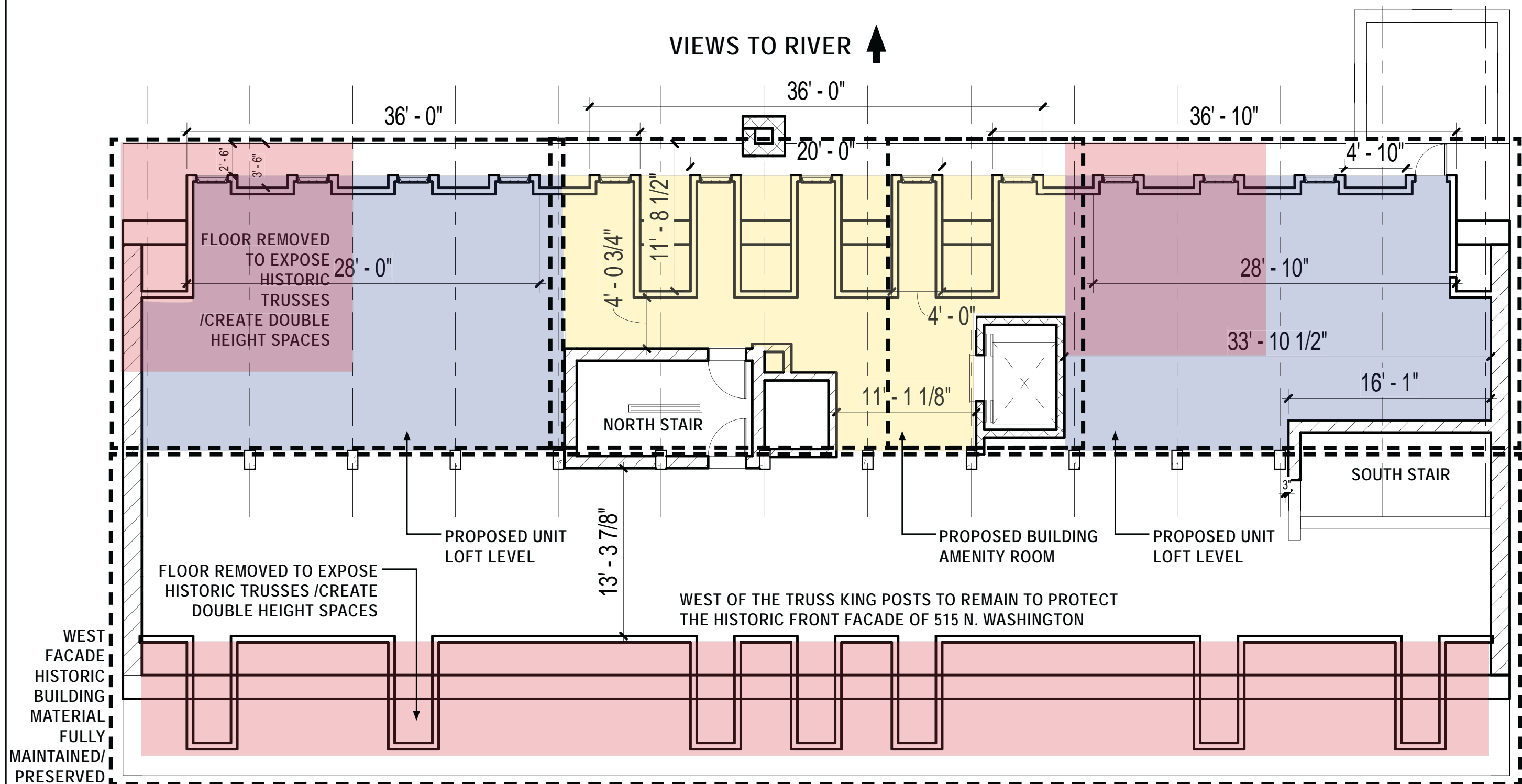
- REMOTE TO EXISTING EXITING CONDITIONS
- CODE COMPLIANCE UNLIKELY DUE TO HISTORIC EXIT LOCATIONS

#### CENTRAL AMENITY LOCATION

- REQUIRES HISTORIC TRUSS MODIFICATIONS TO CREATE USABLE SPACE OUTSIDE OF STORAGE/MECH FUNCTIONS
- PUBLIC FUNCTION MAINTAINS LOWERED VISIBILITY TO NEIGHBORS
- HAS EXISTING EXITING CONNECTIVITY TO ELEVATOR AND STAIR

#### SE AMENITY LOCATION

- SIZE OF SPACE TO MAINTAIN ELEVATOR AND STAIR ACCESS WOULD CREATE EXITING/CODE CHALLENGES THAT WOULD NECESSITATE TRUSS MODIFICATIONS SIM TO EXISTING TRUSS 10 (OR SIM TO CENTRAL AMENITY LOCATION PROPOSAL)



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Notes

EXISTING/PROPOSED 5TH FLOOR DIAGRAM



10

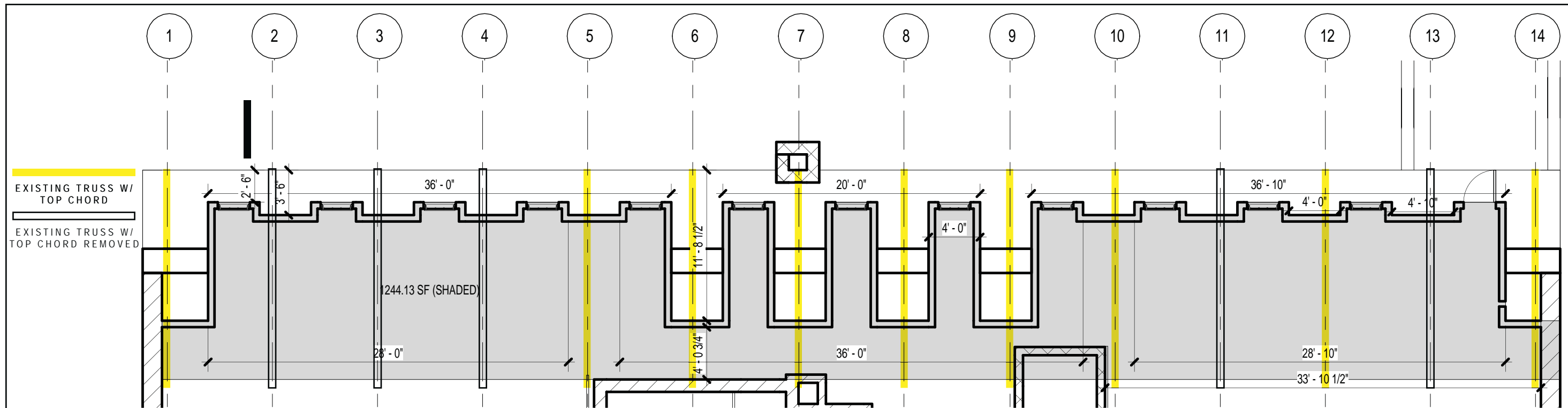
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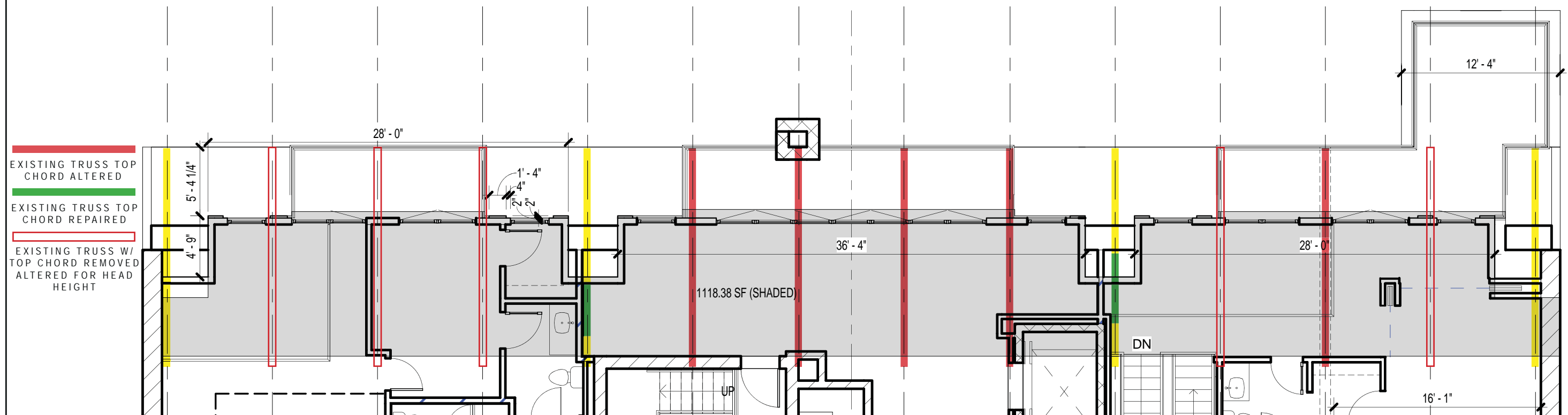
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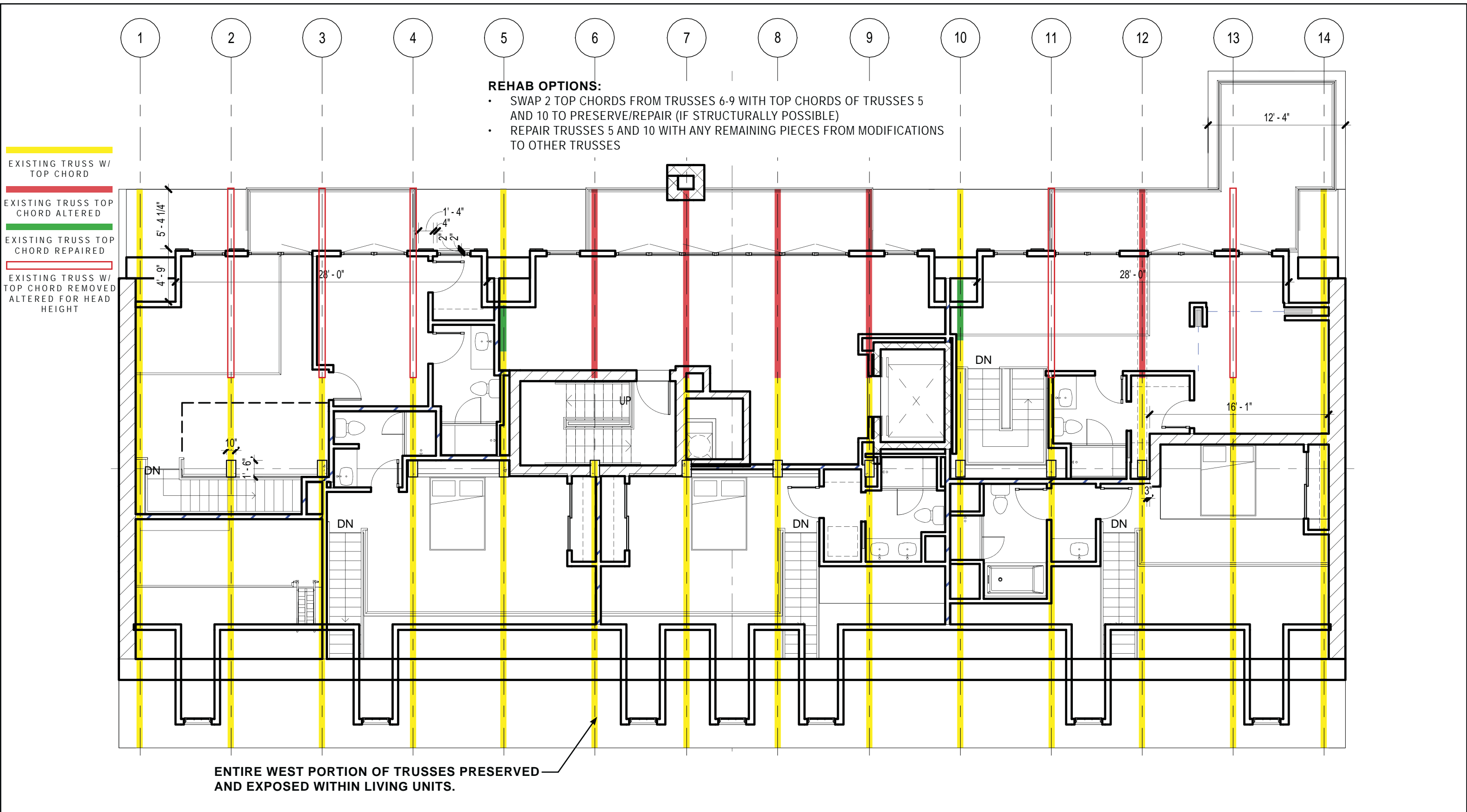
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**EAST ROOF - EXISTING**

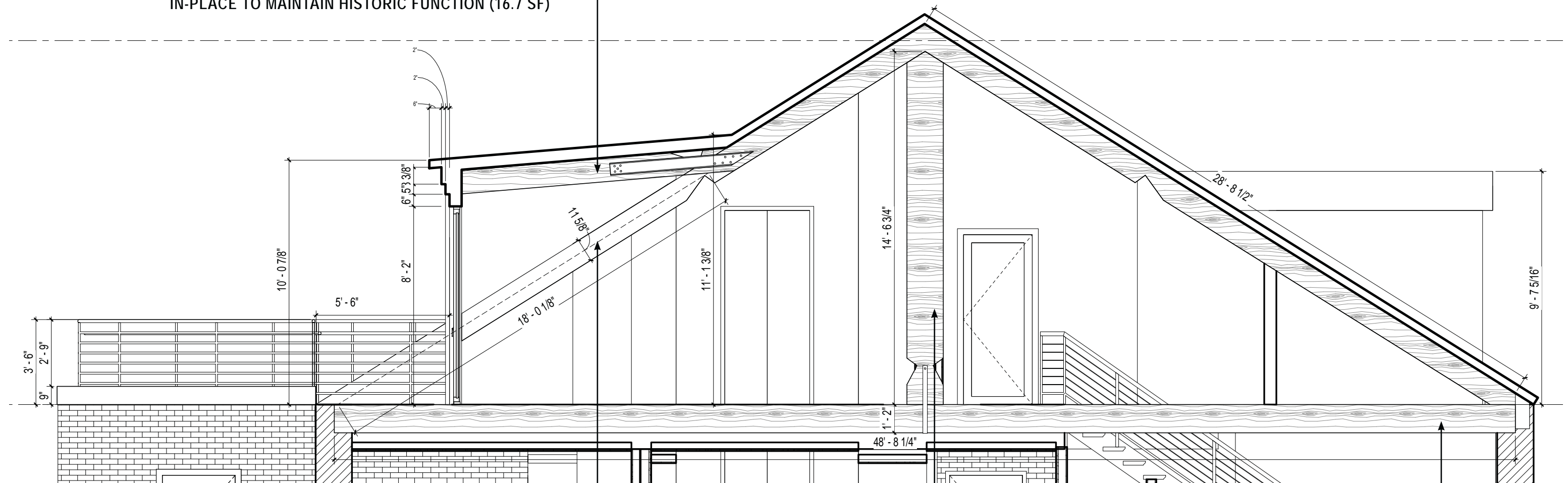


**EAST ROOF - PROPOSED**





ALTERED TRUSS CHORD RETAINED AND REPURPOSED  
IN-PLACE TO MAINTAIN HISTORIC FUNCTION (16.7 SF)



TRUSS WITH COMPLETE TOP CHORD SHOWN BEYOND  
(141.4 SF TOTAL WITH NO CROSS STRUTS)

KING POST EXPOSED

TRUSS CHORDS EXPOSED IN UNITS  
@ WEST FACADE

- 14 TRUSSES @ APPROX 141.4 SF EACH = 1979.6 SF TOTAL
- 5 TRUSSES ALTERED @ 16.7 SF EACH = 83.5 SF TOTAL ALTERED
- 2 TRUSSES RESTORED - PREVIOUSLY CUT TOP CHORDS (TRUSSES 5 AND 10)
- 4.2% OF TRUSSES ALTERED.

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TRUSS ALTERATION DIAGRAM

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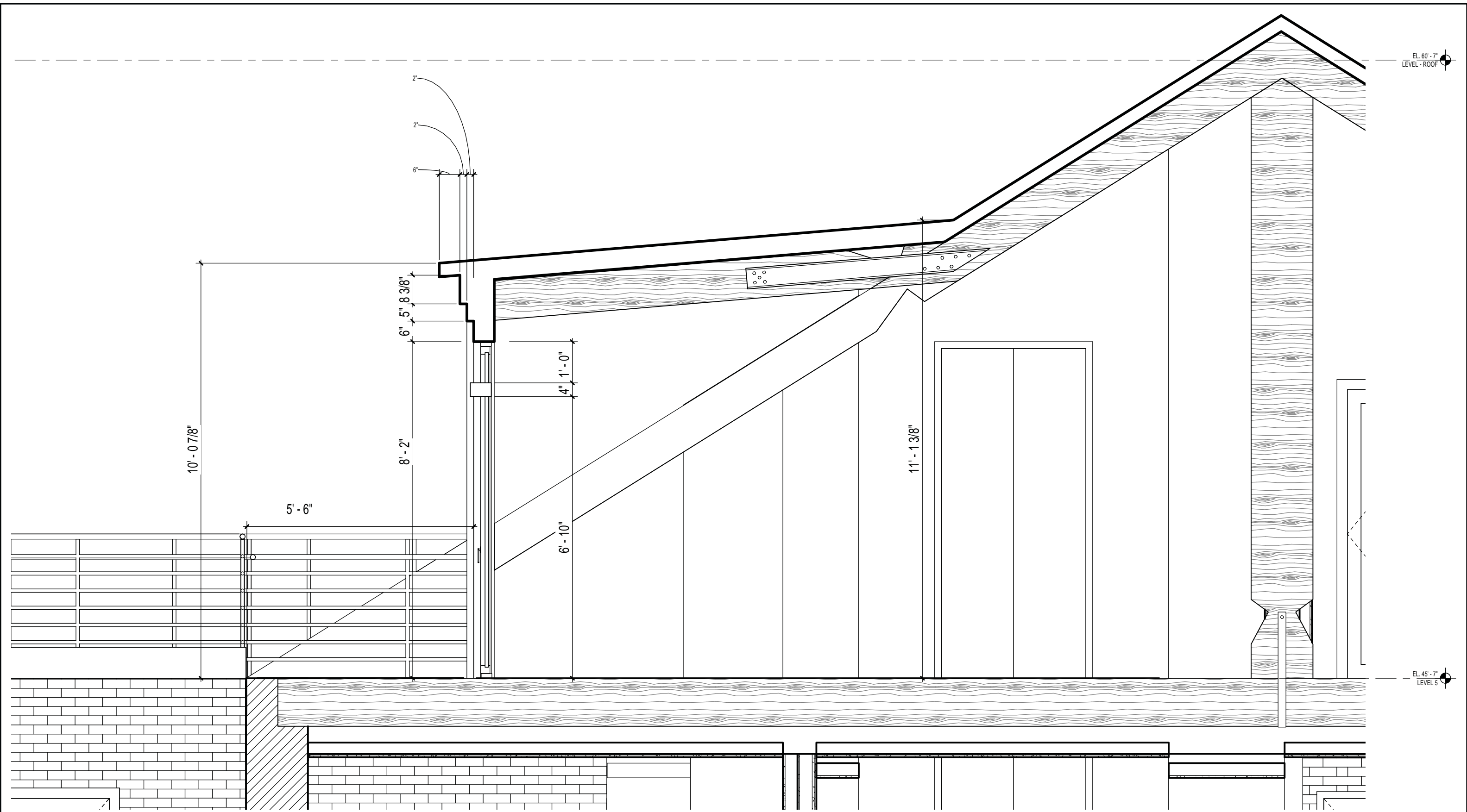
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EL. 60' - 7"  
LEVEL - ROOF

EL. 45' - 7"  
LEVEL 5





TRUSS 1



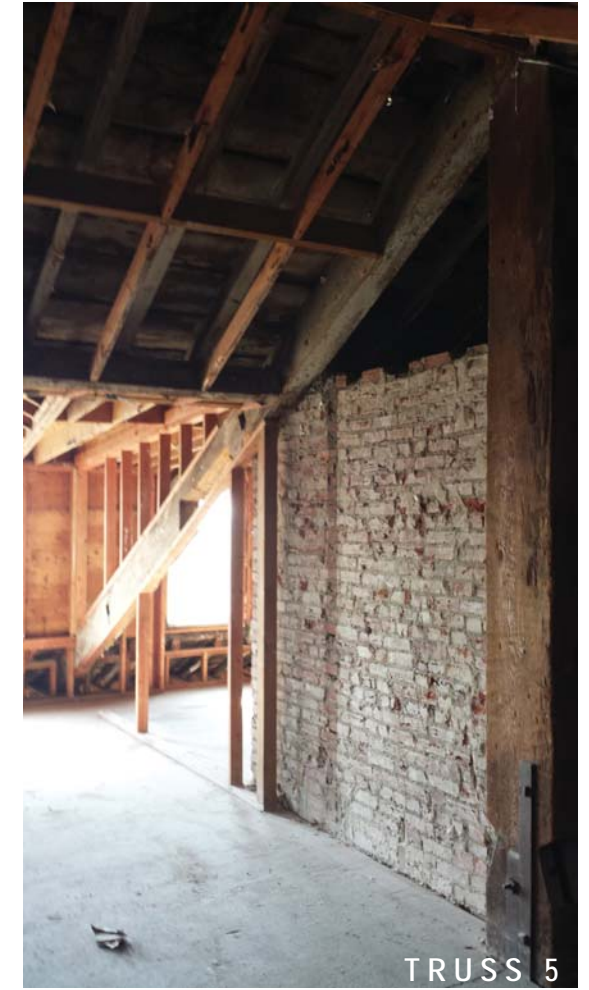
TRUSS 2



TRUSS 3



TRUSS 4



TRUSS 5



TRUSSES 1-4



TRUSS 5



TRUSSES 6-8

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Notes

## EXISTING TRUSS CONDITIONS

CAS Riegler  
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COOPER CARRY





TRUSS 8



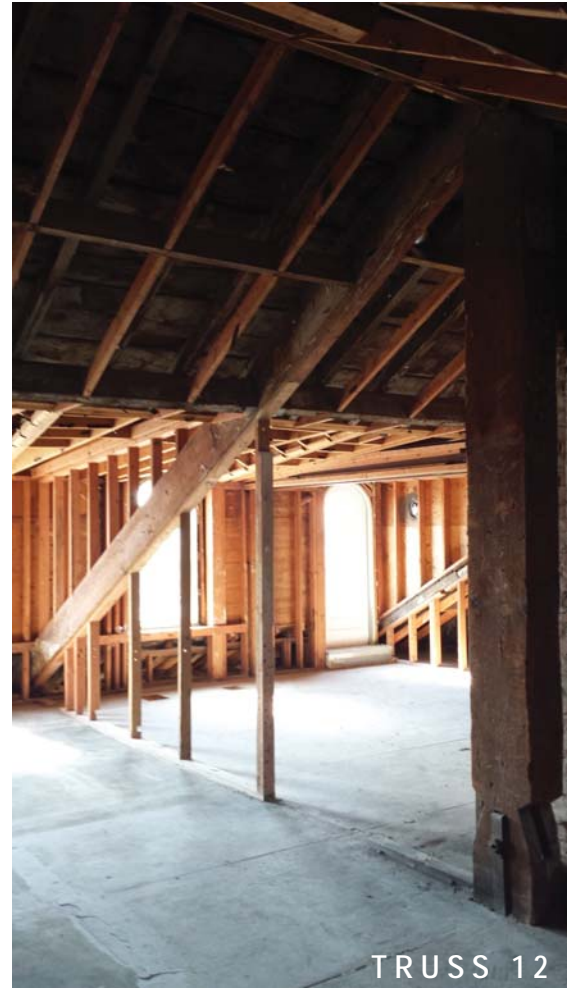
TRUSS 9



TRUSS 10



TRUSS 11



TRUSS 12



TRUSSES 10



TRUSSES 13 - 14



TRUSSES @ WEST FACADE

PROJECT N° 20130161.00 | REVISION N° 000 | DATE 08/04/2014

Notes

EXISTING TRUSS CONDITIONS

CAS Riegler  
VALUE | URBAN | CHARACTER

SNEAD  
CONSTRUCTION

16

0 16

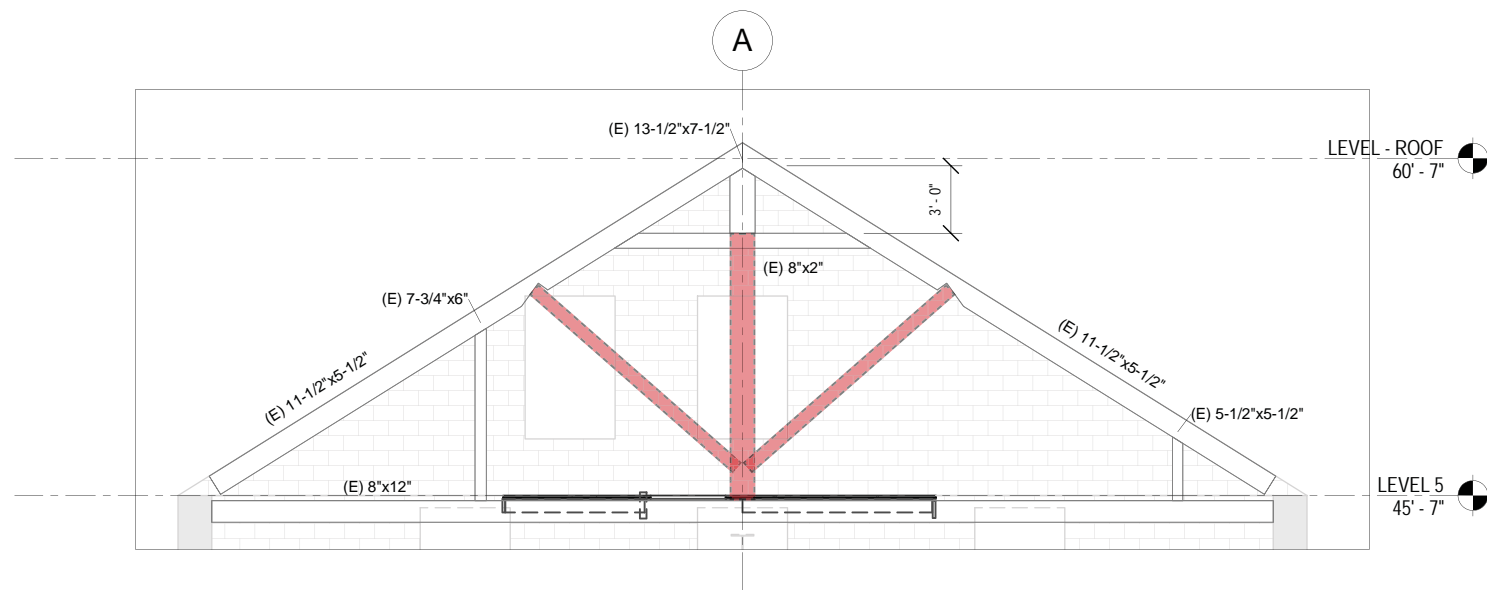
MOUNT VERNON COTTON FACTORY RESIDENTIAL RE-USE  
515 N WASHINGTON STREET  
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314

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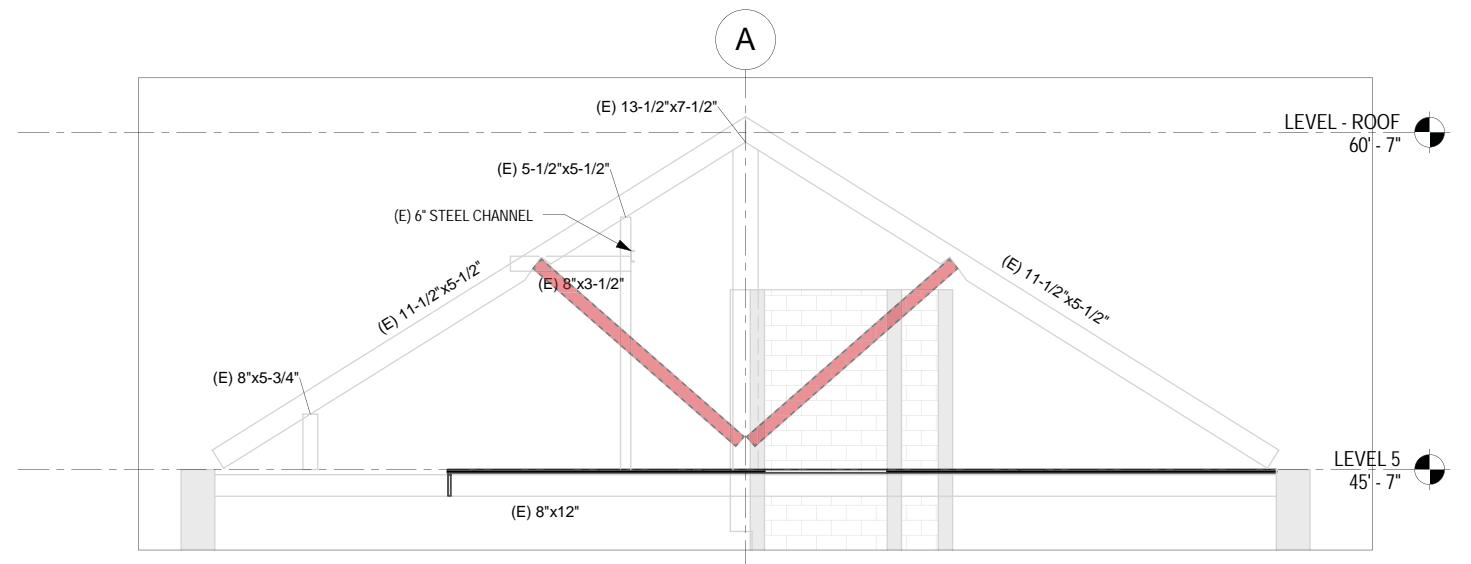


COOPER CARRY

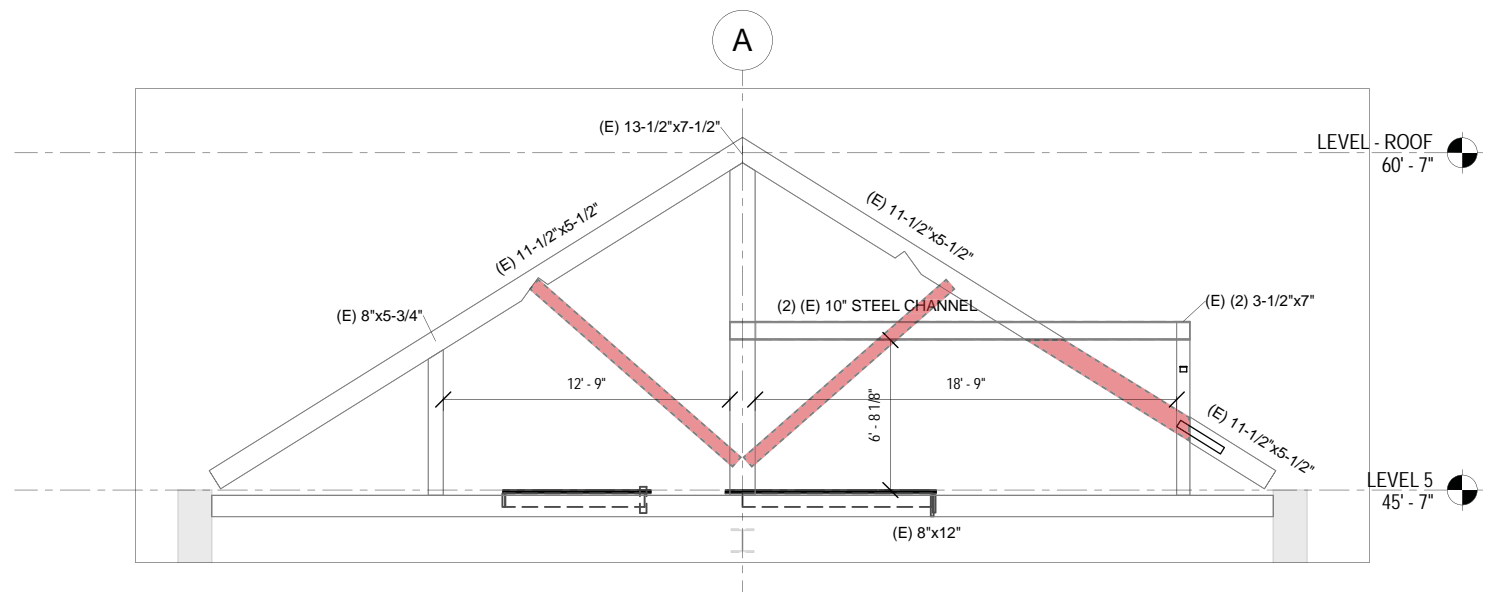




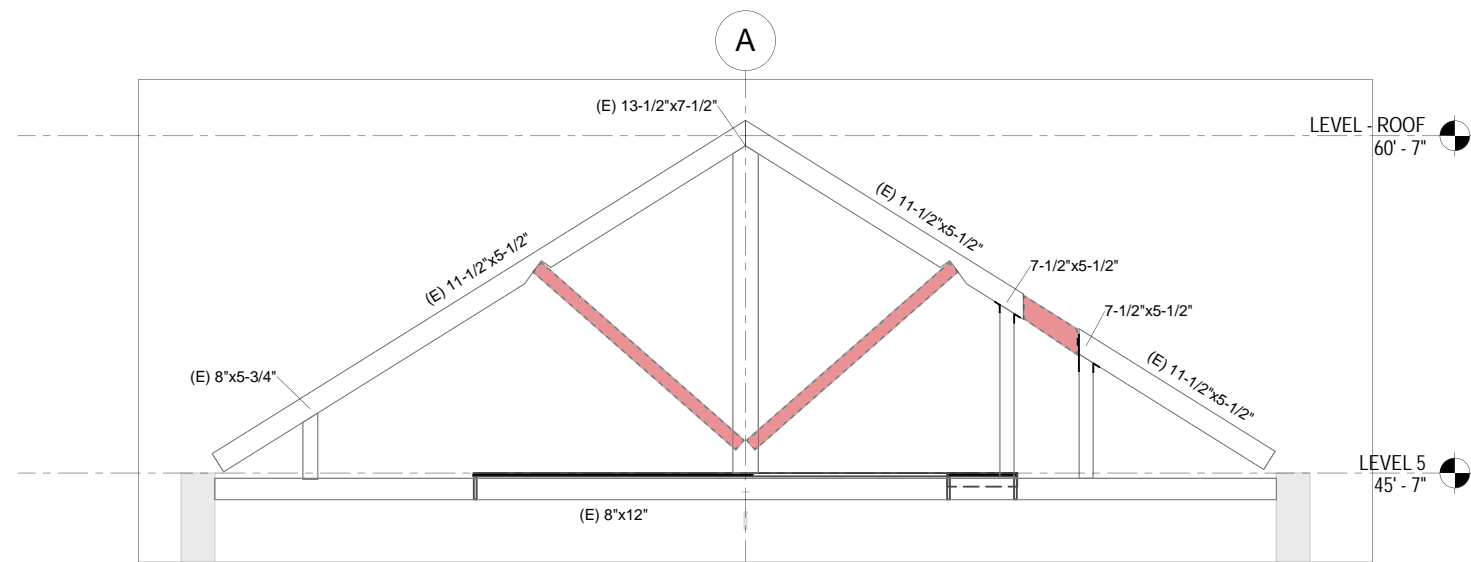
1 TRUSS 1  
3/16" = 1'-0"



5 TRUSS 7, 8  
3/16" = 1'-0"

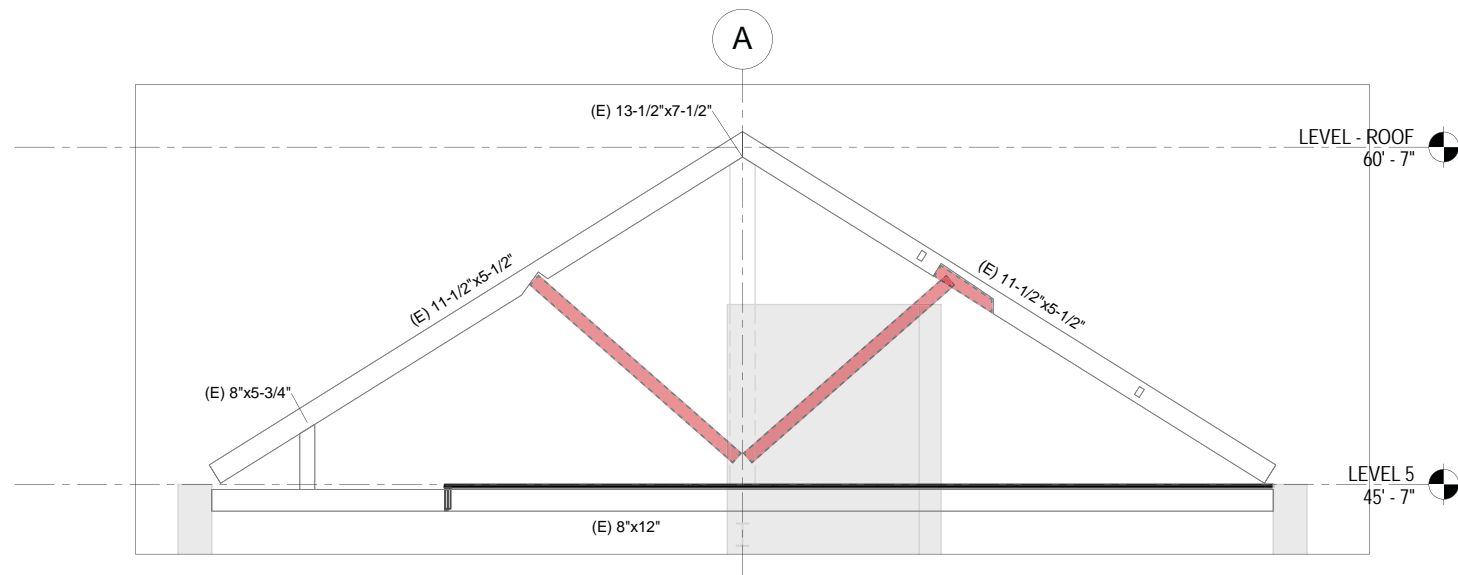


2 TRUSS 2, 3, 4, 11  
3/16" = 1'-0"

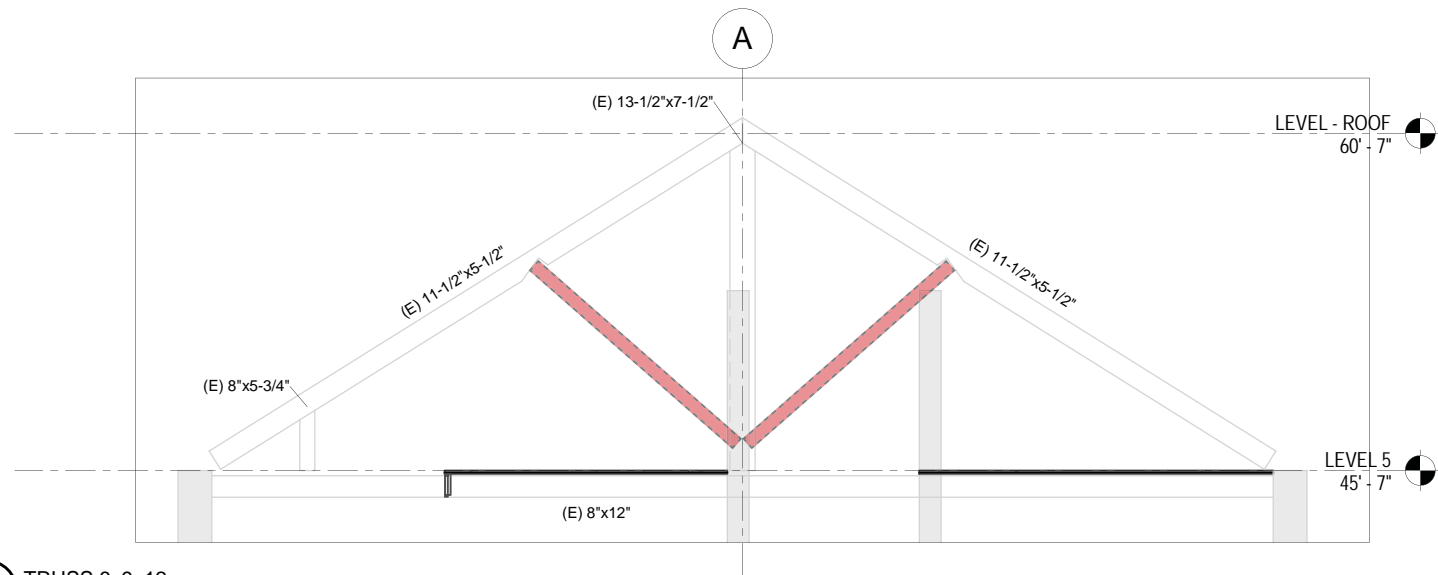


6 Truss 10  
3/16" = 1'-0"

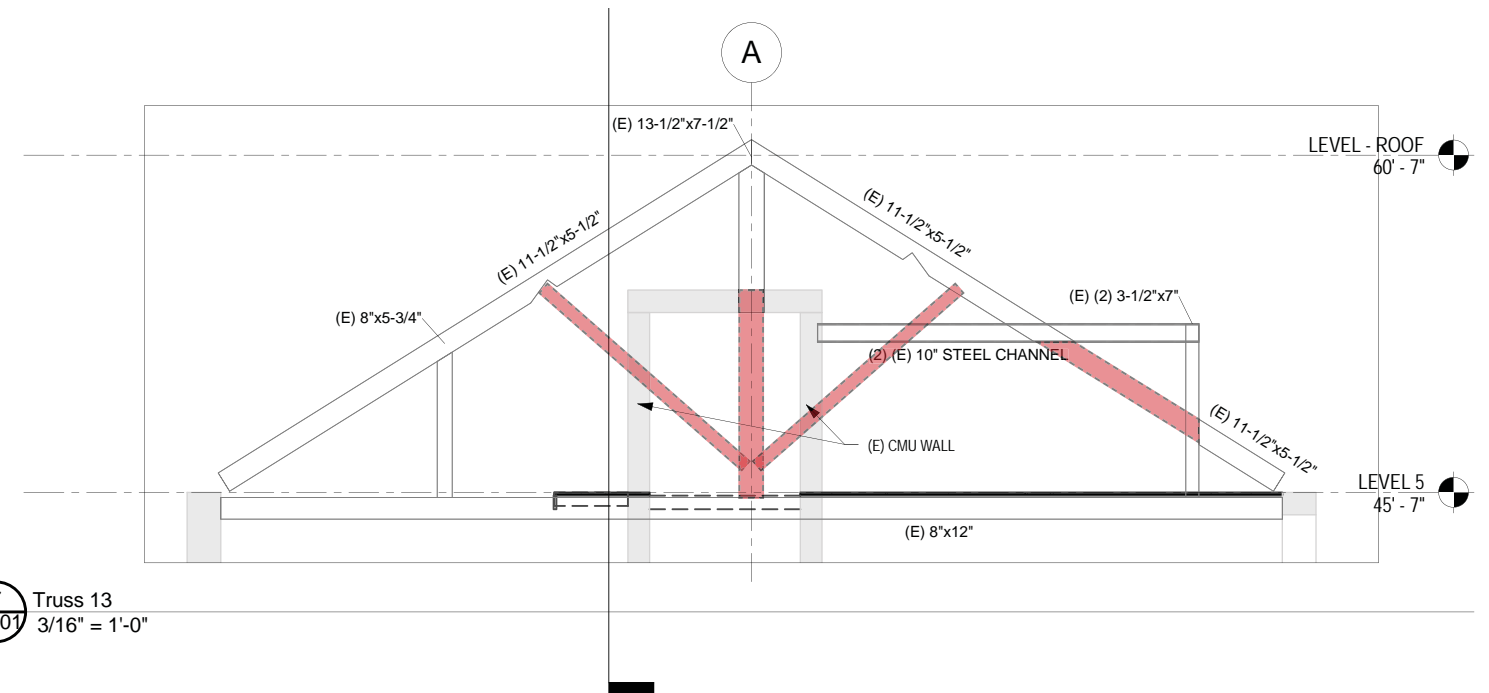
NOTE: NO TRUSSES IN THE BUILDING ARE COMPLETELY INTACT IN THEIR ORIGINAL FORM. ALL TRUSSES HAVE HAD THEIR CROSS STRUTS REMOVED WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE CROSS STRUT PRESENT ON TRUSS 14. RED PIECES DENOTE TRUSS SECTIONS PREVIOUSLY REMOVED/DISCARDED.



3 TRUSS 5  
3/16" = 1'-0"



4 TRUSS 6, 9, 12  
3/16" = 1'-0"



7 Truss 13  
3/16" = 1'-0"

#### TRUSS SECTION NOTES

1. (E) - INDICATES EXISTING FRAMING TO BE FIELD VERIFIED.
2. REFERENCE ARCHITECTURAL AND MEP DRAWINGS FOR ADDITIONAL DIMENSIONS, DEMOLITION, FINISHES, ETC AND INFORMATION NOT SHOWN, TO COORDINATE STRUCTURAL WORK.

NOTE: NO TRUSSES IN THE BUILDING ARE COMPLETELY INTACT IN THEIR ORIGINAL FORM. ALL TRUSSES HAVE HAD THEIR CROSS STRUTS REMOVED WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE CROSS STRUT PRESENT ON TRUSS 14. RED PIECES DENOTE TRUSS SECTIONS PREVIOUSLY REMOVED/DISCARDED.

PROJECT N° 20130161.00 | REVISION N° 000 | DATE 08/04/2014

Notes

EXISTING TRUSS CONDITIONS

CAS Riegler  
VALUE | URBAN | CHARACTER

SNEAD  
CONSTRUCTION

18

0 16

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## Attachment #2

Docket Items # 12 & 13  
BAR CASE # 2014-0208 &  
2014-0209

BAR Meeting  
July 16, 2014

**ISSUE:** Partial Demolition/Capsulation and Addition

**APPLICANT:** CAS Riegler Companies by Rory Byrnes

**LOCATION:** 515 North Washington Street

**ZONE:** OC / Commercial

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### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends **deferral** of the following for further study:

1. Rear elevation dormers;
2. Site improvements related to the patios and entrances on the Parkway side of the project.

Staff recommends **approval** of all other elements of the Permit to Demolish and Certificate of Appropriateness application with the following conditions:

1. That the shutters proposed to be removed that are in good condition be saved and stored on site for reinstallation in the future.
2. That the applicant provide details and specifications for the proposed railing at the south elevation and for all doors, with final approval by staff during building permit review, based on the BAR's guidance at the meeting.

**\*\*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.

**\*\*BUILDING PERMIT NOTE:** 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.

**\*\*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.





**BAR2014-00208 & BAR2014-00209**



**Note:** In the interest of clarity and brevity, staff has coupled the reports for the Permit to Demolish/Capsulate (BAR 2014-0208) and the Certificate of Appropriateness (BAR 2014-0209).

## **I. ISSUE**

The applicant requests approval of a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate for the following:

- Demolish rear dormers on east elevation
- Remove rear portico on east elevation
- Demolish 19 square feet of brick wall area on front (west) elevation to convert two existing windows to doors at first floor
- Demolish 19 square feet of brick wall area on rear (east) elevation to convert two existing windows to doors at first floor
- Demolish 93.7 square feet of brick wall area on north elevation of southeast tower for new doors

The applicant also requests a Certificate of Appropriateness to

- Construct three new shed dormers on rear (east) elevation with small balcony terraces (dormer widths will be 21'-4", 36'-5", and 28'-0"). The dormers will have a folding glass NanaWall or similar glazing and a simple modern railing system with metal pickets and cables. The dormers will be clad in standing seam metal to match the roof.
- Install dimensional steel balconies with railings and cables at rear elevation at intersection with southeast tower
- Install two new doors on front (west) elevation where there are currently windows
- Install new metal canopy over rear entrance
- Add private ground-level terraces on front (west) and rear (east) elevations
- Rear steps and walkways will be reconfigured and redesigned with a stone foundation.

The applicant also proposes to remove the existing wood shutters but to retain the hardware.

The proposed annex building on Pendleton Street which was previously discussed by the BAR at two concept review work sessions is *not* a part of the current application. The applicant is continuing to pursue that project based on comments made by the BAR but is going through the development review process at this time. If a Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) is approved by Planning Commission and City Council, then the applicant will return to the BAR with an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the new construction.

## **II. HISTORY**

The four-and-one-half story painted brick building at 515 North Washington Street was constructed in **1847**. This is one of a very few nineteenth-century industrial buildings on North Washington Street (the old Paff Shoe Factory at 520 South Washington would be another) and one of only a few large industrial buildings remaining anywhere in Old Town (the old Portner Brewery bottling building is 1/2 block away). The building has had a range of uses over the years, including its original use as a cotton factory, beer brewing house and spark plug factory, as well as an apartment building and most recently as commercial office space. Historic maps indicate that numerous smaller buildings were constructed and demolished on this property over the years. The building has had some alterations, including the addition of the front portico,

shutters, and dormers in 1935, when it was converted to an apartment building. However, the building retains a high level of historic integrity. The applicant completed a Historical Overview report which was previously provided to the Board. This report notes that the rear joined dormers were not part of the 1935 work and were in place by 1992.

In 1996, the Board approved a number of alterations to the building including enlargement of the portico on the east side of the building facing the surface parking area (Case BAR#96-0251, 11/20/96). In 2000, the Board approved fencing, paving and benches as part of overall site improvements (BAR #2000-0206, 9/20/2000).

The applicant purchased the property in 2013, has met with Planning & Zoning staff numerous times to consider various alternatives, and went before the BAR for two concept reviews in spring 2014.

The applicant is concurrently seeking historic rehabilitation tax credits. They recently received conditional approval of Part 2 of the tax credit application from the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR).

### **III. ANALYSIS**

#### **Permit to Demolish/Capsulate**

In considering a Permit to Demolish/Capsulate, the Board must consider the following criteria set forth in the Zoning Ordinance, §10-105(B):

- (1) Is the building or structure of such architectural or historical interest that its moving, removing, capsulating or razing would be to the detriment of the public interest?
- (2) Is the building or structure of such interest that it could be made into a historic house?
- (3) Is the building or structure of such old and unusual or uncommon design, texture and material that it could not be reproduced or be reproduced only with great difficulty?
- (4) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve the memorial character of the George Washington Memorial Parkway?
- (5) Would retention of the building or structure help preserve and protect an historic place or area of historic interest in the city?
- (6) Would retention of the building or structure promote the general welfare by maintaining and increasing real estate values, generating business, creating new positions, attracting tourists, students, writers, historians, artists and artisans, attracting new residents, encouraging study and interest in American history, stimulating interest and study in architecture and design, educating citizens in American culture and heritage, and making the city a more attractive and desirable place in which to live?

The Board regularly approves selective amounts of demolition and capsulation to allow for the construction of additions and alterations as historic buildings are adapted for modern occupation and use. Generally, such areas of demolition and capsulation are limited to rear or side elevations and do not significantly affect the main historic building components on street-facing elevations. Such areas approved for demolition or capsulation generally have unremarkable features or elements and allow for additions to clearly read as distinct background elements which are minimally visible from a public way.



The largest areas proposed for demolition—the existing rooftop dormers on the east elevation—are a later addition and therefore some original historic material has already been demolished or significantly altered. Due to the extensive interior changes over the life of this building, there remains little historic fabric on the interior with the exception of the roof framing system featuring heavy timber trusses. The existing northern dormer resulted in the almost entire demolition of three trusses and the southern dormer resulted in demolition or significant alterations to three trusses. Nine out of 14 trusses currently remain intact and in relatively good condition. Because the three center dormers are singletons, there remain four completely intact roof beams in this portion of the roof (see Figure 1 for view of existing dormers at east elevation). It appears that only four out of fourteen trusses will remain intact or repaired to the original condition in this proposal. The applicant plans to alter the top chords of the existing truss such that, by through the top chord, it would be rotated at an angle that would visually support the new shed dormer roof. None of the top chords would actually be removed from their existing location, just changed from the original form and construction. The portions of the trusses on the west roof slope are generally intact and none of those trusses are affected by this proposal.



**Figure 1. View of rear (east) elevation showing existing dormers. Red arrows indicate roof trusses remaining intact and yellow arrows indicate missing or extensively compromised roof trusses.**

Staff cannot support the proposed amount of demolition of intact heavy timber trusses, particularly the four or five near the center of the building which retain their original location and form. As the trusses at the existing late 20<sup>th</sup> century, ganged dormers at the north or south ends of the roof are either already demolished or significantly compromised, staff is less concerned with demolition in those locations. Staff appreciates the effort to reuse and reconfigure the historic trusses as part of the new roof, though notes that such a modification changes how the space is understood and interpreted. It preserves the material on site but not the context or technology.

The other areas proposed for demolition, including the removal of portions of the brick walls to convert windows to doors, the addition of balconies on the rear and the removal of the later rear portico (constructed in 1996), are all appropriate amounts of demolition and generally concentrated on the rear elevation. Staff supports the limited amount of demolition in these areas.

#### Certificate of Appropriateness

The new construction for the proposed annex building must be in conformance with the Washington Street Standards. The final Certificate of Appropriateness will consider each of the Standards. As what is proposed for the existing building are alterations and minimal amounts of demolition, the Washington Street Standards are not fully applicable for this case. As always, the Board's adopted *Design Guidelines*, policies and Zoning Ordinance Standards apply.

It should also be noted that if the Development Special Use Permit (DSUP) for a new annex building on Pendleton Street is constructed, the majority of the rear elevation alterations be visible only via through-block views from North Saint Asaph Street.

#### *Dormers*

The *Design Guidelines* state that "dormers should not be too large for the structure" and "if an unacceptable loss of existing historic fabric will result because of the installation of dormers, such installation is generally not appropriate." Additionally, "the style of the dormer should be appropriate to the architectural style of the existing structure," "dormer sashes should be operable and should be the same type as the other window sashes on the structure," and "dormers should match the existing proportions of the building and the windows."

Staff has no objection to the design of the proposed dormers, with some modifications noted below, noting that the new dormers will be set back from the rear wall farther than the current dormers. However, as discussed in the Permit to Demolish portion above, staff is unable to support the demolition of intact heavy timber trusses to construct the proposed center dormer. Staff can support the concept of two substantial dormers on the north and south ends of the east elevation. The applicant is proposing that each of these dormers be 28 feet in width, smaller than the existing ganged dormers which are each nearly 37 feet in width. The dormer size and overall form—a shed roof clad in roof material to match the main roof—are appropriate. The Portner Brewery complex included large industrial buildings with both roof monitors and shed dormers.



**Figure 2. Sketch of Portner's Brewery complex on N. Washington St., shown in a 1907 brochure.**

The dormers are generally aligned with the windows below but feature different window proportions and muntin patterns. The proposed dormers are an improvement over the existing dormers which feature arched windows and are a later addition though not clearly distinguishable from the historic portions of the building. This can be confusing to the public trying to understand the history and evolution of the building. The windows are proposed to be operable, as the applicant will be implementing a NanaWall or similar glazing system. Staff supports the use of the NanaWall technology, noting that historically, industrial buildings had the most technologically advanced light and ventilation systems to promote efficiency and productivity. The proposed muntin design for the new dormers, with two small lights above a large single light, does not relate to the light configuration or window proportions on the historic building. Due to the type of window, staff does not believe that the proposed muntins are necessary. Staff further recommends that the window and door frames and mullions be the same material and color as the roof to allow the dormers to visually recede into the roof as much as possible. A simplified window pattern without divided lights will further differentiate this new element and allow it to function as a background element.

Therefore, Staff recommends that the dormers be further studied in order to minimize demolition to the original roof truss system. There are a few options that the applicant can consider.

- Two large dormers at ends (28' wide) that are smaller than the existing end dormers with 3-5 individual dormers at the center;
- Two large dormers at ends approximately that same width (36'10") as the existing dormers with three individual dormers at the center.

In either case, Staff recommends that the intact roof trusses in the center be retained. Should the Board find the proposed amount of demolition of the original truss system is appropriate, then Staff supports the applicant's design with the modifications discussed above.

#### *Rear Balconies*

The applicant's proposal for balconies at the dormer face is generally appropriate, as the balconies will be minimally visible due to the proposed design with cables and slim balusters.

The rear elevation balconies proposed at the inset corner with the previous elevator tower are discreetly located and appropriately scaled. The proposed balconies are all located on the rear elevation and will continue to allow the original construction to remain visually prominent, particularly from the Parkway.

*Rear Canopy*

The proposed metal canopy at the rear elevation is simple and visually unobtrusive. It replaces a 1996 portico. Staff has no objection, finding that it allows more of the original design and wall material to remain visually prominent.

*Door to Window Conversions*

A common alteration in the historic district is to convert existing windows to doors or vice versa. This is most successful when the width of the opening remains the same as the existing. There will be six new doors in place of existing windows on the rear elevation and elevator tower which staff has no objection to. The applicant proposes to convert two windows to doors on the front elevation at the first floor. Staff understands the desire to create direct access from the units to the outside and notes that some modifications such as this are necessary for the adaptive reuse of historic buildings. The BAR approved similar alterations at the former Health Department building on N. Saint Asaph Street.

However, Staff remains extremely concerned about privatizing the open space adjacent to Washington Street and does not believe that picnic tables and barbeque grills are appropriate on the Parkway. Additionally, the existing main entrance, which it is understood will become private outdoor access for the associated unit, should continue to visually read as a primary building entrance. A site plan submitted as part of the development review process indicated that a solid vegetative hedge might be planted across the front of the property. Staff does not support such a scheme but notes that a well-thought plan that might include appropriate vegetation, low-fencing and the visual openness of the front portico should be provided. While the Board does not regularly review vegetation, staff finds that plant material could provide attractive screening for the two new patios and in this particular case, is necessary for understanding the appropriateness of these front elevation alterations.





**Figure 3. Current front elevation where new entrances and at-grade patios are proposed.**

#### *South Elevation*

Staff has no objection to the replacement door and removal of existing, non-historic railing here. The new door specifications should be in conformance with BAR policies.

#### *Shutters*

It should also be noted that the removal of the shutters does not require a Permit to Demolish or Certificate of Appropriateness, by Board policy. The Board has expressed mixed thoughts on whether the shutters should be retained or whether they may be removed. The National Park Service has expressed a preference for retention of the shutters. The applicant plans to remove the shutters but to retain the hinges and shutter dogs. Staff does not feel strongly that the shutters should remain, which were first installed as part of the 1935 alterations and conversion to an apartment building, as shutters are a relatively ephemeral building feature and often change with new owners. However, it is important to retain the existing hardware that will help tell the story of the evolution of the building. As the majority of the shutters appear to be in good condition, staff recommends that they be saved and stored on site so that a future owner may reinstall them if they wish.

#### *Site Improvements*

Staff has no objections to the reconfiguration of the ADA ramp and the new stone retaining wall at the rear of the property. As discussed above, there is concern about how private areas will be created adjacent to the units fronting on Washington Street. Staff supports a creative solution that will visually maintain this primary elevation and retain the prominence of the existing portico but is concerned about privatization of this space. Appropriate alterations, including the use of low walls or fences and gates, combined with vegetation, and discreet doors from the units should all be considered.

**STAFF**

Catherine Miliaras, Historic Preservation Planner  
Al Cox, FAIA, Historic Preservation Manager

**V. CITY DEPARTMENT COMMENTS**

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

**Archaeology**

C-1 All required archaeological preservation measures shall be completed in compliance with Section 11-411 of the Zoning Ordinance.

F-1 The Mount Vernon Cotton Factory was built on the property in 1847. Over the next 50 years it passed through the hands of several different owners. During the Civil War the Union Army commandeered the building for use as a military prison. Immediately to the south of the Cotton Factory structure, on the lot at 513 N. Washington (also part of this proposed project) stood an office complex and barracks. In 1903 the Portner Brewing Company acquired the property and converted the main building into a bottling factory which operated for approximately a decade. In 1918 the building was transformed into a spark plug factory. In 1935 the building was renovated into an apartment complex, which was changed yet again into office space in the early 1980s. Given the history of the lots at 513 and 515 N. Washington Street, the properties have the potential to contain significant archaeological resources pertaining to the industrial growth of the City of Alexandria.

*Acknowledged by applicant*

F-1 If this project is a federal undertaking or involves the use of any federal funding, the applicant shall comply with federal preservation laws, in particular Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The applicant will coordinate with the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and the federal agency involved in the project, as well as with Alexandria Archaeology.

*Acknowledged by applicant*

**Open Space and Landscaping**

1. Hire a professional consultant to work with staff and the landscape designers to incorporate and interpret elements of the historical character and archaeological findings into the design of the open space and to prepare interpretive elements, which shall be erected as part of the development project. The site plan shall indicate themes and locations of interpretive elements. Prior to release of the final site plan, the consultant shall provide text and graphics for the signage subject to approval by the Office of Historic Alexandria/Alexandria Archaeology and the Directors of P&Z and/or RP&CA.\* (Arch)(P&Z)(RP&CA)

*The applicant has retained landscape design consultants for this project.*

### Archaeology Comments

1. EHT Tracerics has produced a historical overview report for the property (dated September 2013). The document is an excellent overview consisting mainly of maps and photographs of the primary building on the property, but it does not adequately address the archaeological integrity or potential contexts of the Cotton Factory. Therefore, we request that the applicant hire an archaeological consultant to complete a Documentary Study and an Archaeological Evaluation. If significant resources are discovered, the consultant shall complete a Resource Management Plan, as outlined in the City of Alexandria Archaeological Standards. Preservation measures presented in the Resource Management Plan, as approved by the City Archaeologist, will be implemented.  
(Archaeology)

*Acknowledged by applicant*

2. The Final Site Plan, Grading Plan, or any other permits involving ground disturbing activities (such as coring, grading, filling, vegetation removal, undergrounding utilities, pile driving, landscaping and other excavations as defined in Section 2-151 of the Zoning Ordinance) shall not be released until the City archaeologist confirms that all archaeological fieldwork has been completed or that an approved Resource Management Plan is in place to recover significant resources in concert with construction activities. \*  
(Archaeology)

*Acknowledged by applicant*

3. Certificates of Occupancy shall not be issued for this property until interpretive elements have been constructed, interpretive markers have been erected, and the final archaeological report has been received and approved by the City Archaeologist.\*\*\*  
(Archaeology)

*Acknowledged by applicant*

4. Call Alexandria Archaeology immediately (703-746-4399) if any buried structural remains (wall foundations, wells, privies, cisterns, etc.) or concentrations of artifacts are discovered during development. Work must cease in the area of the discovery until a City archaeologist comes to the site and records the finds. The language noted above shall be included on all final site plan sheets involving any ground disturbing activities.  
(Archaeology)

*Acknowledged by applicant*

5. The applicant shall not allow any metal detection and/or artifact collection to be conducted on the property, unless authorized by Alexandria Archaeology. Failure to comply shall result in project delays. The language noted above shall be included on all final site plan sheets involving any ground disturbing activities. (Archaeology)

*Acknowledged by applicant*

**Code Administration**

- F-1 The following comments are for BAR. Once the applicant has filed for a building permit and additional information has been provided, code requirements will be based upon that information and the building permit plans. If there are any questions, the applicant may contact Ken Granata, Plan Review Division Chief at [ken.granata@alexandriava.gov](mailto:ken.granata@alexandriava.gov) or 703-746-4193.
- C-1 Building, trade permits and inspections are required for this project. Five sets of construction documents sealed by a Registered Design Professional 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.

**Transportation and Environmental Services (T&ES)**

- R-1 Comply with all requirements of DSP2013-00023 which is currently under view. (T&ES)
- R-2 The Final Site Plan must be approved and released and a copy of that plan must be attached to the demolition permit application. No demolition permit will be issued in advance of the building permit unless the Final Site Plan includes a demolition plan which clearly represents the demolished condition. (T&ES)

**ATTACHMENTS**

- ~~1 Supporting Materials~~
- ~~2 Application for 515 North Washington Street~~