

Historic District Commission Administrative Approval Application

October 24, 2022

Nick Cracknell, Principal Planner
City of Portsmouth
1 Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, NH 03801

RE: Request for HDC Administrative Approval for 553-559 Islington Street, Tax Map 157 / Lot 3

Dear Mr. Cracknell,

On behalf of 553 – 559 Islington Street, LLC we hereby submit the attached and enclosed documents for discussion at the November 2 Historic District Commission Hearing, as a continuation of the review of these items from the October 5 HDC meeting.

The project scope includes comprehensive interior alterations of the existing 6-unit apartment building and a small 2-1/2 story addition at the rear of the building, previously approved under LU-20-180 & LUHD-240. Construction is substantially complete.

HDC Administrative Approval is requested to resolve items listed in the Land Use Compliance Report dated 8/10/22.

Historic District Commission Administrative Approval Application

Here is a summary of these items and our responses with photos.

OWNER TO CORRECT:

- 18. Full screens installed. Please Note: Full screens are also noted on side and rear elevations. [OWNER TO REPLACE STREET-FACING SCREENS WITH HALF-SCREENS](#)
- 22. On side addition, door trim and corner board are one piece: [OWNER TO REWORK TRIM TO APPEAR AS A SEPARATE DOOR TRIM AND CORNER BOARD](#)

APPROVAL REQUESTED - OBJECTIONS NOTED IN 10/5 HDC HEARING:

- 14. (1x) chimney removed. [APPROVAL OF CHIMNEY REMOVAL IS REQUESTED.](#)
- 16. (2x) Dormer windows changed to 2/1 light and reduced in size. [OWNER HAS ADDED 3RD FLOOR DORMER TRIM \(SEE ITEM 15 BELOW\). APPROVAL OF INSTALLED WINDOW IS REQUESTED.](#)
- 24. Side addition saltbox roof changed to gable roof. [APPROVAL OF GABLE ROOF IS REQUESTED.](#)
- 25. Portico design altered (e.g. omission of pilasters, changed to gable roof, column details altered). [THE OWNER HAS ADDED PILASTERS AND ASTRAGAL TRIM BANDING AT COLUMNS. APPROVAL OF A PROPOSED DESIGN FOR A GABLE ROOF WITH ADDITIONAL TRIM DETAILING IS REQUESTED \(DRAWINGS ATTACHED\).](#)

APPROVAL REQUESTED - NO OBJECTIONS NOTED IN 10/5 HDC HEARING:

- 17. (5x) windows on main structure changed to 2/2 light. [HDC PREFERRED REPLACEMENT OF THESE WINDOWS.](#)
- 20. Ground level deck door changed to 9 light. [THIS IS THE EXISTING DOOR THAT WAS NOT REPLACED.](#)
- 21. Ground level deck railings omitted. [RAILINGS ADDED ON DRAWINGS WERE NOT NEEDED.](#)
- 23. Installation of basement window. [INSPECTOR REQUESTED BRICKING IN BOARDED-UP WINDOW OPENING AT GRADE.](#)
- 26. Window above portico moved further up. [REAR WINDOW RAISED TO ACCOUNT FOR DIFFERENT FLOOR HEIGHTS IN ADDITION.](#)
- 27. Deck omitted. [REAR EGRESS STAIR LANDING AT 559-1 SIDE UNIT WAS SIMPLIFIED AFTER BULKHEAD WAS RELOCATED.](#)
- 28. Portico door changed to 9 light. [INCORRECT, THIS IS A 4 LIGHT DOOR AT THE REAR PORTICO.](#)
- 30. Deck reduced in size. [WIDTH OF NEW 3RD FLOOR SIDE DECK WAS REDUCED TO AVOID CONFLICTS WITH EAVE RETURNS AND TO BETTER ALIGN WITH STRUCTURAL SUPPORT BELOW.](#)
- 31. Deck door changed to 4 light. [DOOR AT 3RD FLOOR SIDE DECK.](#)
- 32. Small window next to deck door omitted. [REMOVAL OF THIS WINDOW NEXT TO THE DOOR AT THE 3RD FLOOR SIDE DECK IMPROVES THE HISTORIC APPEARANCE.](#)

ITEM COMPLETED:

- 13. Refurbish and reinstall existing iron wrought fence. [COMPLETED.](#)
- 15. Extended dormer eaves and new wood trim omitted. [OWNER HAS ADDED 3RD FLOOR DORMER TRIM PER DRAWINGS.](#)
- 19. Second floor deck column does not match or align with column below. [OWNER HAS ADDED AN ASTRAGAL TRIM BAND AROUND COLUMNS BELOW THE CROWN](#)
- 29. Applicant to provide evidence Andersen 400 series windows were installed. [OWNER HAS PROVIDED THIS INFORMATION.](#)

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8/10	18. Full screens installed. Please Note: Full screens are also noted on side and rear elevations.	Owner to Correct
9/14	These are all new windows. Type of screens was not indicated on submitted drawings, and no direction was given by HDC regarding screens.	
10/5	HDC: Questioned whether half-screens had been discussed during approvals. Noted a preference for half-screens on street-facing windows.	
10/24	Owner to replace screens on street-facing windows (southeast / front elevation) with half-screens.	

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8/10	22. On side addition, door trim and corner board are one piece:	Owner to Correct
9/14	The door trim piece is overlaid on top of the corner board piece. Extending the trim to the corner is a cleaner detail than stopping the door trim where it intersects the corner board.	
10/5	HDC: Noted a preference for a separate corner board and door trim. Discussed cutting a reveal into the trim board as one possible solution.	
10/24	Owner to rework trim to appear as a separate door trim and corner board.	

	
<p>Design drawing</p>	<p>Completed trim with reveal cut</p>
	
<p>Completed trim with reveal cut. Corner board trim to be added above.</p>	<p>Completed trim</p>

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8/10	14. (1x) chimney removed.	Approval Requested - Objections noted
9/14	This chimney had been removed and capped a few inches above the ridge of the roof prior to the Owner's purchase of the building. During demolition of interior finishes, the brick was found to be in poor condition and there was a large hole in the chimney (see photo). Due to safety concerns the remaining chimney was removed down to the basement.	
10/5	HDC: Concerns were noted about removal of the capped chimney, but there seemed to be a consensus to accept removal.	



Original chimney, capped at ridge



Hole in chimney, brick in poor condition



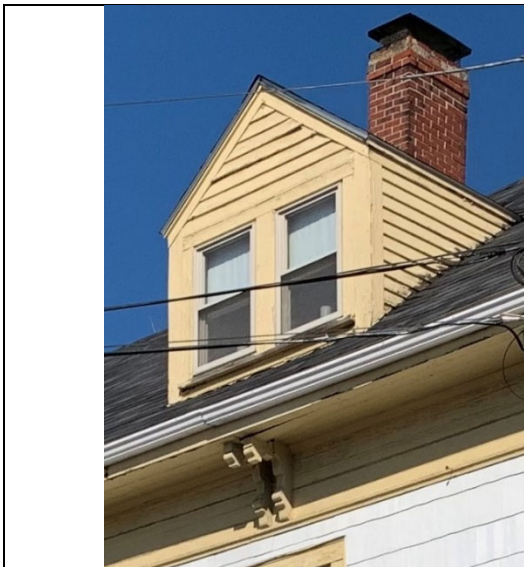
Chimney removed



Chimney removed

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8/10	16. (2x) Dormer windows changed to 2/1 light and reduced in size.	Approval Requested - Objections noted
9/14	Approved drawings showed these white vinyl windows as existing to remain, however the Owner decided to replace them with windows similar to other new windows in this project. New windows are the same size as the original windows.	
10/5	HDC: Concerns were noted about the new window pair appearing more modern than the existing separate double-hung windows.	
10/24	Owner requests approval of new window as installed, with additional trim work as noted in item 15 below.	



Original dormer – Double-hung windows separated by trim



Photo during demolition – No stud between windows



Completed dormer with added trim



Completed dormer with added trim

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8/10	24. Side addition saltbox roof changed to gable roof.	Approval Requested - Objections noted
9/14	The existing low-slope roofs in this back corner had been cobbled together through several small additions and were performing poorly. The Owner decided to remove and reframe this roof as a gable for better drainage and to look more consistent with other gables on the larger building.	
10/5	HDC: Some concerns noted about loss of history of these small additions.	



Rear of original side addition



Original low-slope roofs



Original low-slope roofs (looking down from above)



New roof with gable end

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8/10	25. Portico design altered (e.g. omission of pilasters, changed to gable roof, column details altered).	Approval Requested - Objections noted
9/14	This design was revised to be consistent with the gables on the main addition and the reworked gable on the side addition.	
10/5	HDC: Noted concerns about the rear portico looking too modern and not referencing the style of the building.	
10/24	Additional trim is proposed to improve the appearance of the rear portico, by adding pilasters at the exterior wall, a cornice across the front of the gable, and replacing clapboards with paneling. Approval of the revised design is requested.	



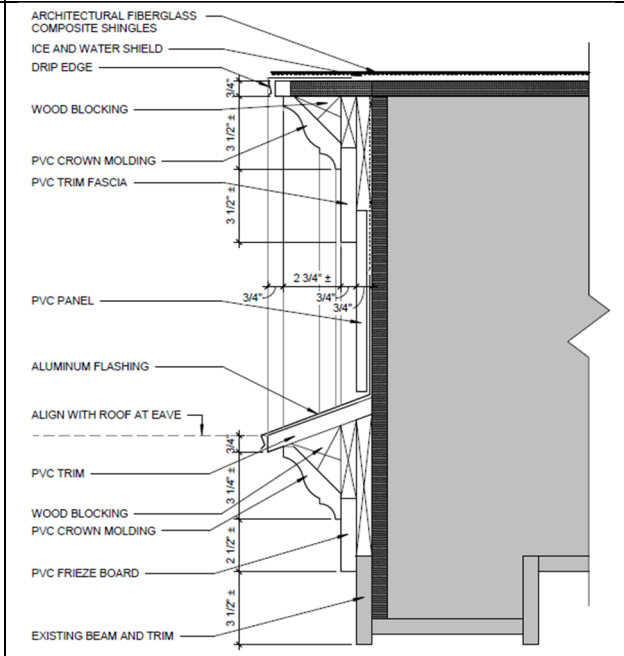
Completed Portico



Completed portico – Pilasters added



Proposed gable trim



Proposed gable trim

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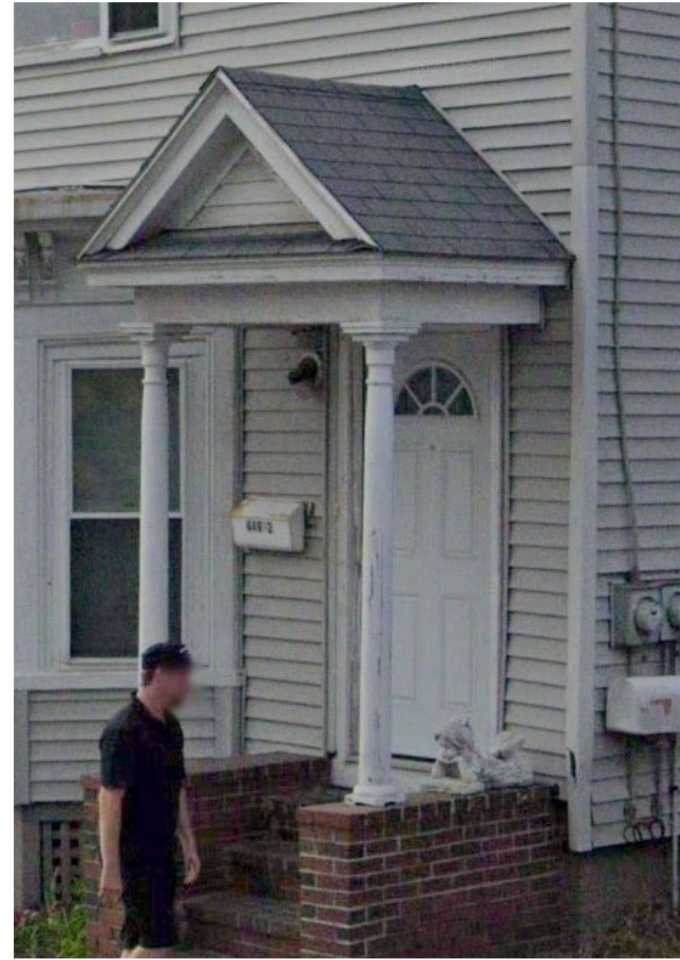
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275 ISLINGTON STREET



815 MIDDLE STREET



449 ISLINGTON STREET



TYPICAL PORTICO FEATURES:

- CROWN MOLDING
- RAKING CORNICE
- CORNICE / EAVE RETURN

STREET VIEW IMAGES FROM GOOGLE MAPS

adra ARCHITECTURE LLC
90 Government Street | Kittery Maine 03904
207-613-7036 | www.adraarchitecture.com



553-559 Islington Street, LLC

**553-559
ISLINGTON STREET
REDEVELOPMENT**

553 Islington Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801

DATE ISSUED: 10/19/22
 DATE REVISED:
 DRAWN BY: Tim Brochu
 SCALE: 12" = 1'-0"

**HDC ADMINISTRATIVE
APPROVAL**

**PHOTOS - TYPICAL PORTICO
FEATURES**

SKA-1

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SKA-1 ISSUED: 10/19/22 PHOTOS - TYPICAL PORTICO FEATURES SKA-1

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SKA-2



CURRENT PORTICO



PROPOSED PORTICO TRIM

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**553-559
ISLINGTON STREET
REDEVELOPMENT**

553 Islington Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801

DATE ISSUED: 10/19/22
DATE REVISED:
DRAWN BY: Tim Brochu
SCALE: As indicated

**HDC ADMINISTRATIVE
APPROVAL**

**EXTERIOR ELEVATION - REAR
PORTICO**

SKA-2

SKA-2 ISSUED: 10/19/22 EXTERIOR ELEVATION - REAR PORTICO SKA-2

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SKA-3

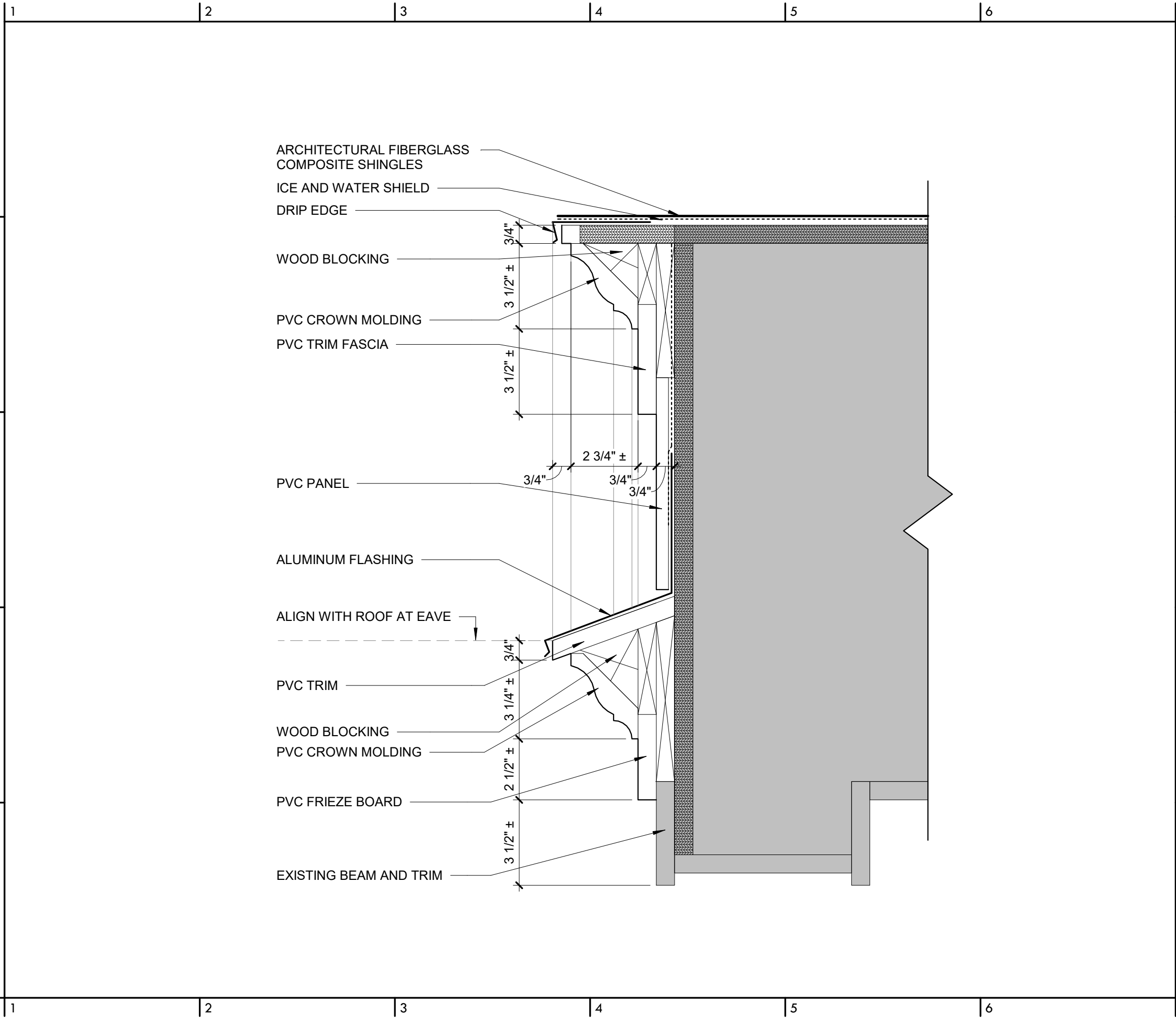
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553-559 Islington Street, LLC

553-559 ISLINGTON STREET REDEVELOPMENT

553 Islington Street
Portsmouth, NH 03801

DATE ISSUED: 10/19/22
DATE REVISED:
DRAWN BY: Tim Brochu
SCALE: As indicated

HDC ADMINISTRATIVE
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SECTION DETAIL - REAR
PORTICO TRIM

SKA-3

SKA-3

ISSUED: 10/19/22

SECTION DETAIL - REAR PORTICO TRIM

SKA-3

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8/10	17. (5x) windows on main structure changed to 2/2 light.	Approval Requested - No objections
9/14	Approved drawings showed these white vinyl 6/6 windows as existing to remain, however the Owner decided to replace them with windows similar to other new windows in this project. In earlier HDC hearings, the Commission had expressed a desire for these windows to be replaced to be similar to the other approved 2/2 windows, but the Owner was not ready to commit to this investment at that time. 2/2 windows are believed to be consistent with the original building, based on some older 2/2 windows that were still in place at the back of the building.	
10/5	HDC: No objections noted to new 2/2 light windows, this was seen as an improvement.	



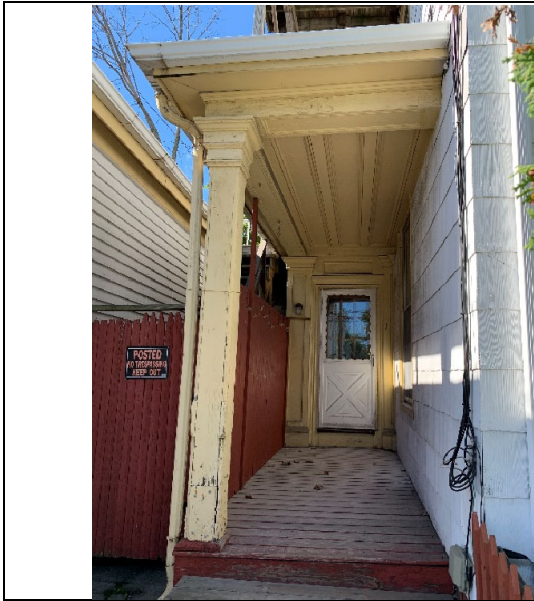
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8/10	20. Ground level deck door changed to 9 light.	Approval Requested - No objections
9/14	This was the existing door that was not replaced. It was painted to match other doors.	
10/5	HDC: No objections noted to existing door.	



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8/10	21. Ground level deck railings omitted.	Approval Requested - No objections
9/14	Railings had been proposed on the design drawings, however the original building did not have railings and this deck is only 17" +/- above grade, which does not require a guardrail by code.	
10/5	HDC: No objections noted.	



Original deck with no railing



Completed deck – 17" +/- above grade

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8/10	23. Installation of basement window.	Approval Requested - No objections
9/14	This window opening had been boarded up prior to the Owner's purchase of the building. It was bricked in as directed by the building inspector.	
10/5	HDC: No objections noted.	



Original Basement window opening boarded up



Basement window opening bricked in

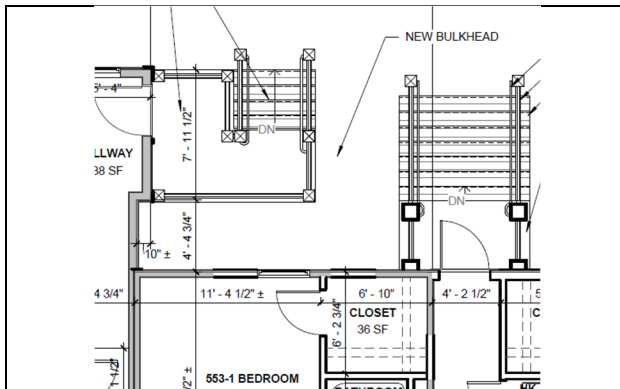
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8/10	26. Window above portico moved further up.	Approval Requested - No objections
9/14	The Second Floor is at different heights in the addition and adjacent existing building. This window was raised to make sill heights more consistent at different floor levels.	
10/5	HDC: No objections noted.	

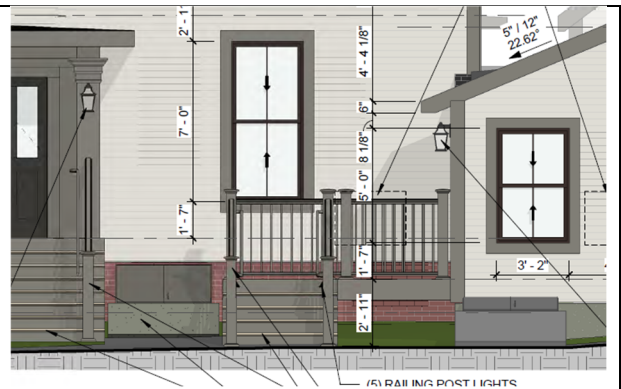
	
Addition windows higher than existing window due to different floor levels	

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8/10	27. Deck omitted.	Approval Requested - No objections
9/14	The original design for the stair and landing at the rear of the side addition was configured to provide egress without blocking the bulkhead. During construction we determined that the other side of the portico was a better location for the bulkhead (2/12/21 Amended Site Plan Approval). This allowed this stair and landing to be simplified, and provides better privacy and security for the bedroom in the adjacent unit.	
10/5	HDC: No objections noted.	



Design drawing – Landing from side addition to avoid bulkhead



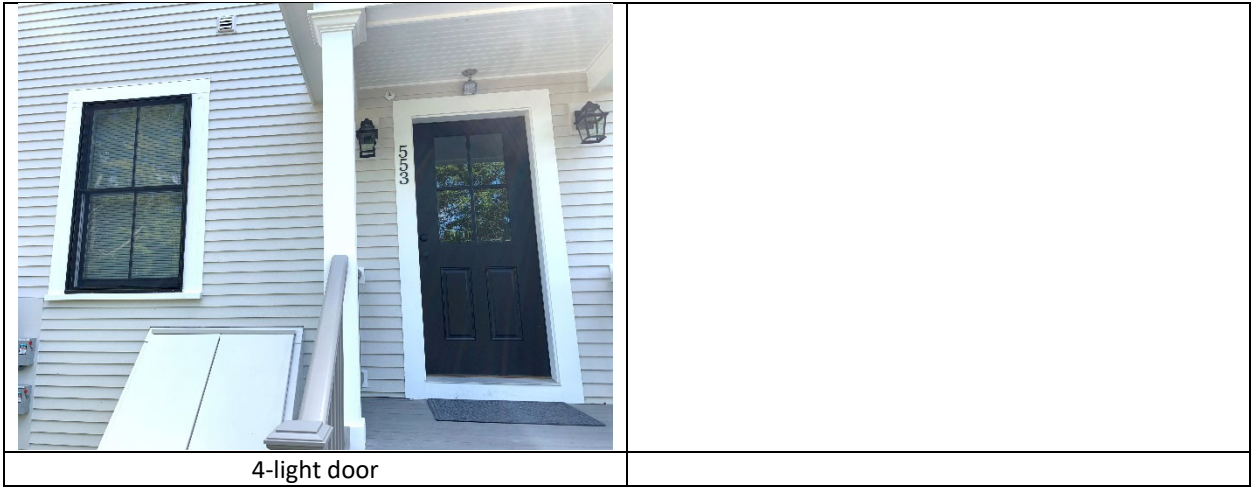
Design drawing – Landing from side addition to avoid bulkhead



Bulkhead relocated, stair landing simplified

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8/10	28. Portico door changed to 9 light.	Approval Requested - No objections
9/14	This is incorrect, this portico door is a 4-light (see photo). This is consistent with the appearance of the 2/2 windows.	
10/5	HDC: No objections noted.	



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8/10	30. Deck reduced in size.	Approval Requested - No objections
9/14	The size of the new deck was reduced to the size of the original deck to avoid conflicts with eave returns and to better align with structural support below.	
10/5	HDC: No objections noted.	

8/10	31. Deck door changed to 4 light.	Approval Requested - No objections
9/14	The 4-light door is consistent with the appearance of the 2/2 windows.	
10/5	HDC: No objections noted.	

8/10	32. Small window next to deck door omitted.	Approval Requested - No objections
9/14	This was a poorly placed small white vinyl window next to the original door that was show as existing to remain on the design drawings, but which the Owner chose to remove. Removal of this window is more consistent with the historical appearance of this building.	
10/5	HDC: No objections noted.	



4-light door at Third Floor Deck



Original window

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8/10	13. Refurbish and reinstall existing iron wrought fence.	Item Completed
9/14	Completed.	



Wrought iron fence repaired



Wrought iron fence repaired

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8/10	15. Extended dormer eaves and new wood trim omitted.	Item Completed
9/14	The third floor front dormer is not believed to be original to the building or historically significant. The existing trim was found to be in good condition so it was kept in place rather than reworking it.	
10/5	HDC: Concerns were noted about the dormer looking more modern than the rest of the building without the trim details as designed.	
10/24	The Owner has added trim as shown on the design drawings.	



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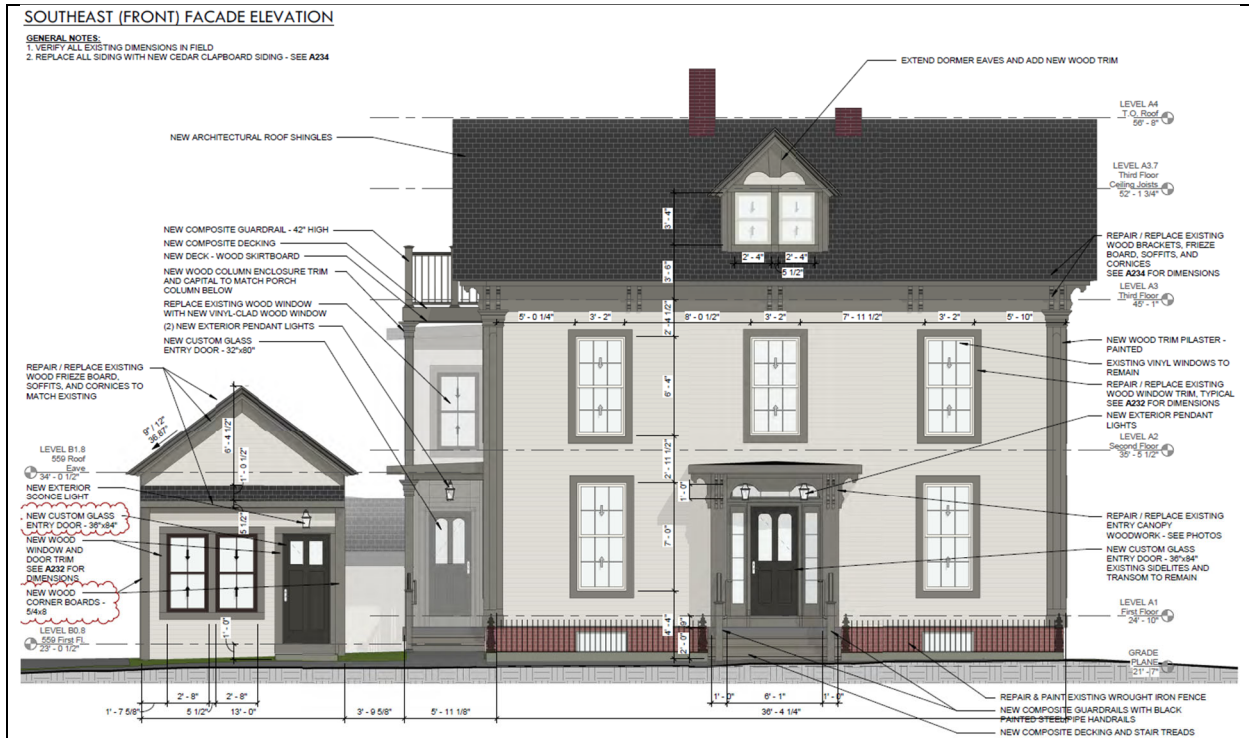
8/10	19. Second floor deck column does not match or align with column below.	Item Completed
9/14	The size of the new deck was reduced to the size of the original deck to avoid conflicts with eave returns and to better align with structural support below. With the smaller deck and columns set back, it is less important to match the column below. The column is thinner and has a less ornate capital trim, consistent with new columns at the rear portico.	
10/5	HDC: No objections noted to size of deck. Discussed adding an astragal trim piece around the columns below the crown molding.	
10/24	The Owner has added an astragal trim piece around the columns.	



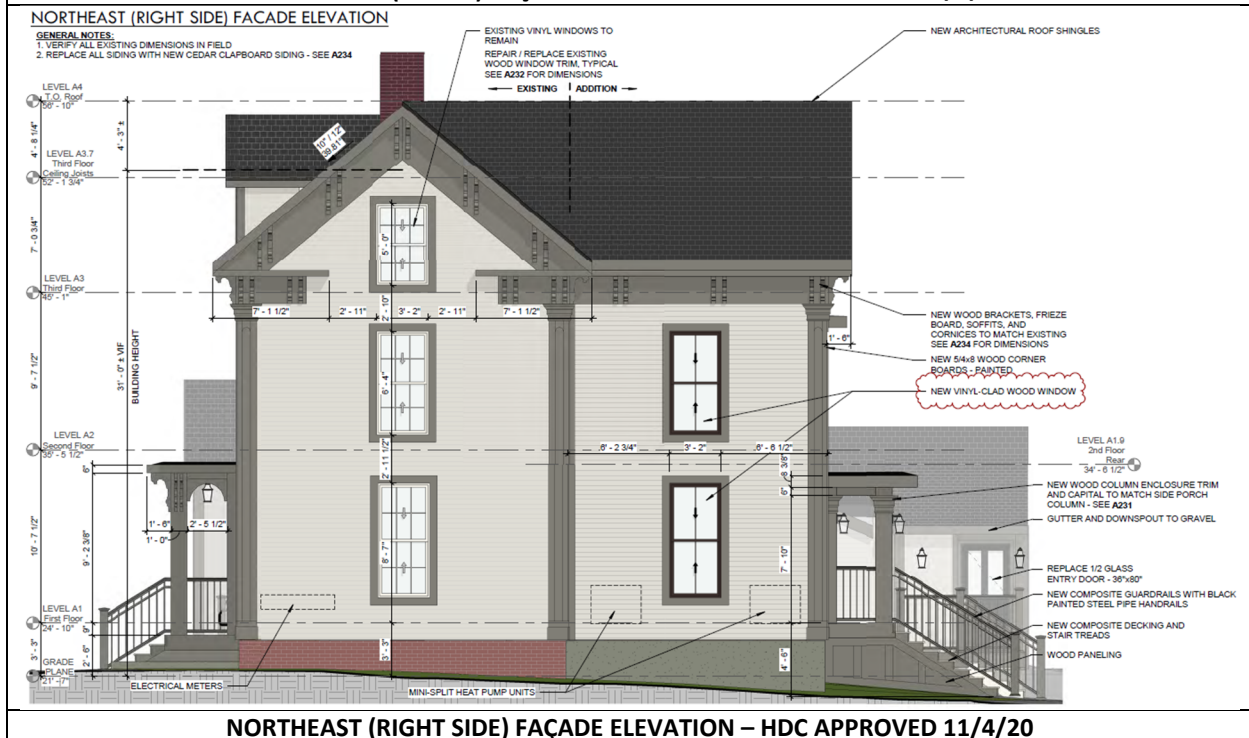
8/10	29. Applicant to provide evidence Andersen 400 series windows were installed.	Item Completed
10/24	The Owner has provided this information separately.	

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HDC APPROVED DESIGN DRAWINGS FOR REFERENCE:

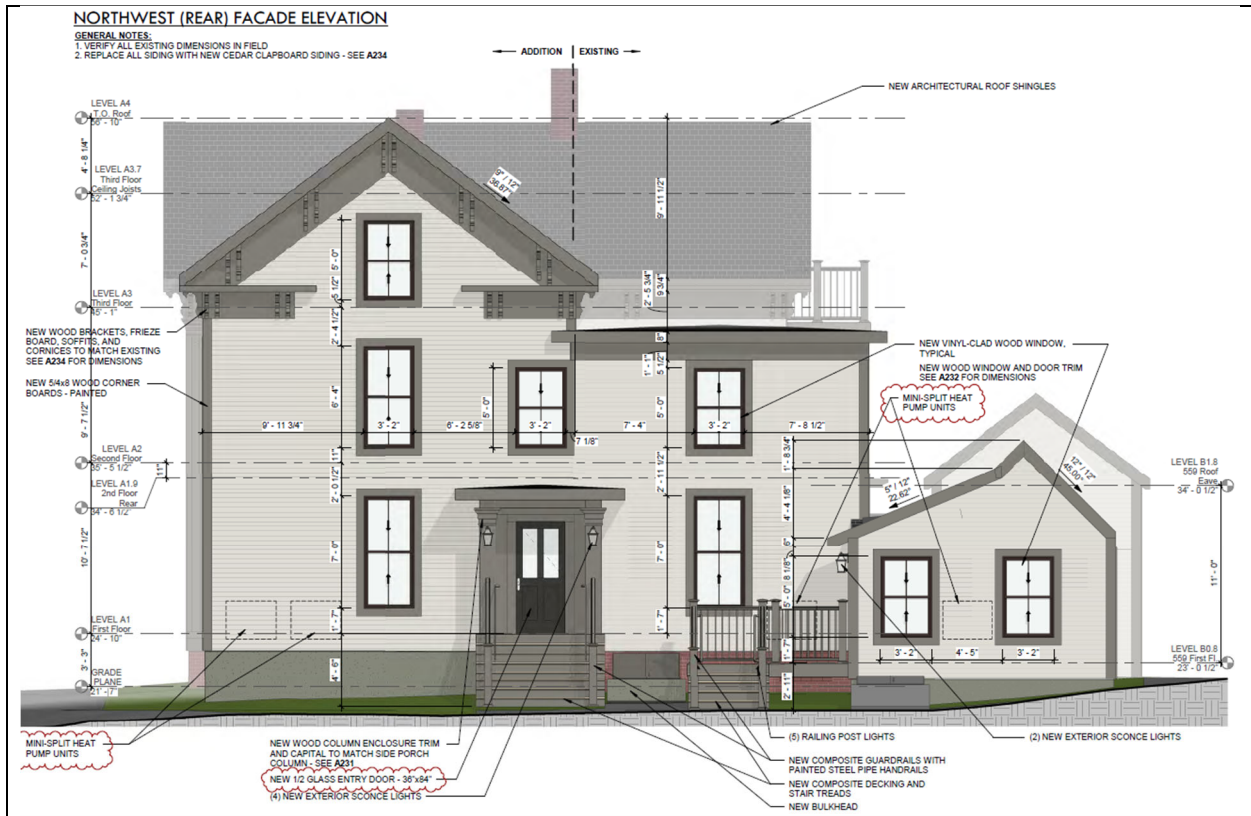


SOUTHEAST (FRONT) FAÇADE ELEVATION – HDC APPROVED 12/9/20

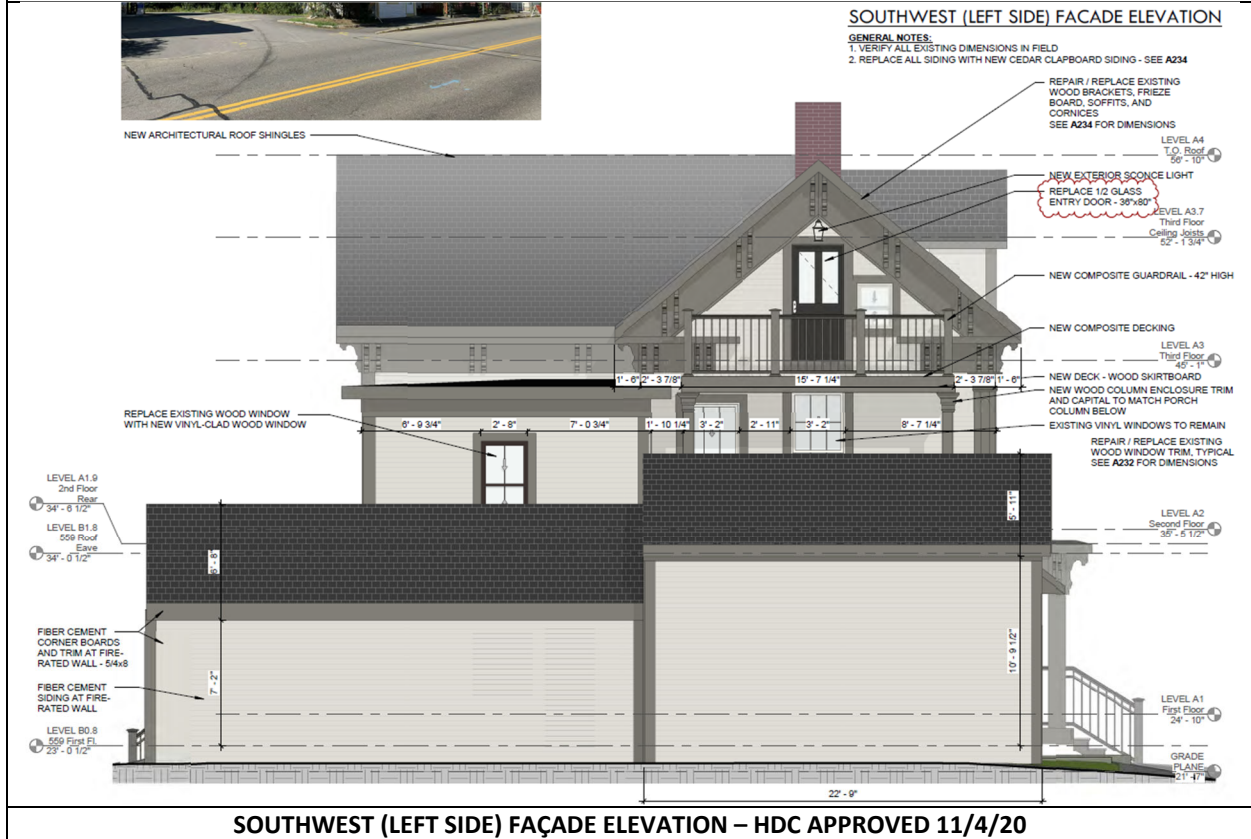


NORTHEAST (RIGHT SIDE) FAÇADE ELEVATION – HDC APPROVED 11/4/20

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NORTHWEST (REAR) FAÇADE ELEVATION – HDC APPROVED 11/4/20



SOUTHWEST (LEFT SIDE) FAÇADE ELEVATION – HDC APPROVED 11/4/20

Historic District Commission Administrative Approval Application

We look forward to the Historic District Commission's review of this submission. If there are any questions or comments please feel free to reach out to me.

Sincerely,



Tim Brochu, Principal and Manager
Adra Architecture LLC
NH Licensed Architect
tim@adraarchitecture.com

