

**Application to the Portsmouth Zoning Board of Adjustment  
for a Variance from the Building Coverage Dimensional Standard**

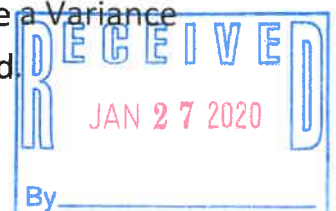
**Project Narrative – January 24, 2020**

Matthew Beal and Heidi Medlyn are co-owners of a single-family residence at 242 Leslie Drive in Portsmouth, NH. They purchased the property in 2016. The property is also listed as Lot 52 on Tax Map 209. The lot was created in 1955 by a Plan for Bersum Gardens, recorded at the Rockingham County Registry of Deeds at Plat 67, Page 14. The single story Ranch house was constructed in 1956. The house contains 924 square feet (sf) of living area, which is very small compared to typical houses today. There is also an attached 264 sf garage and a 240 sf shed on the property.

Matt and Heidi would like to increase the living space in the home by constructing an addition onto the back of the structure. The existing garage will be demolished to make room for the 829 sf addition that will provide new Kitchen, Bedroom, and Bath space on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and new garage space on the basement level. The existing driveway incline will be excavated to provide vehicle access to the new garage. This addition will allow the current small rooms of the home to be upgraded to today's standards.

The property is located in the SRB Zoning District. This zone has a minimum lot area of 15,000 sf and a minimum street frontage of 100 feet. The lot has an area of 7,000 sf and 70 feet of frontage. Setbacks to the house generally conform to the SRB standards. The building coverage currently totals to 20.4%, which exceeds the 20% standard for the zone.

The proposed addition has been designed to conform to the SRB Front, Side, and Rear Yard standards, the maximum height standard and the Open Space standard. This application seeks a Variance from the Building Coverage Standard only. The proposed coverage is expected to be 28.5%. If the BOA would approve a Variance to the Building Coverage of up to 30%, then the addition could proceed.



The following information is presented to satisfy the Variance Criteria:

1. *The variance is not contrary to the public interest.* Matt and Heidi intend to improve their home by constructing a single story addition onto the rear of the structure. This will not alter the character of the Leslie Drive neighborhood in any way, as the home will remain a single story ranch. Setbacks to the street and side lot lines will not change. The setback to the rear property line will conform to the 30-foot criteria for the SRB Zone. The height of the roof will not change. Abutting owners will not see any noticeable difference from the current structure.

Granting the Variance request to increase the Building Coverage from 20% to 30%, will not result in any perceivable change to the neighborhood or threaten public health, safety, welfare, or any public rights. Numerous abutting properties in the neighborhood (including Lots 54, 56, & 58) have constructed additions and/or decks onto the rear of their homes. Therefore, this proposed addition is exactly keeping in line with the essential character of the neighborhood.

2. *The spirit of the ordinance is observed.* The spirit of the ordinance is observed, as the proposed addition will conform to all of the minimum Front, Side, and Rear Yard Dimensions. It also will be much less than the maximum height restriction. The Building Coverage standard will increase from 20% to 30%. However, the lot will still have 63% of Open Space, compared to the SRB minimum standard of 40%. As a result, we submit that constructing the addition will be in keeping with the intent of the ordinance.

3. *Substantial justice is done.* The gains in additional living space that will be realized by Matt & Heidi will not cause any harm to their neighbors or the general public. Abutting owners will not see any noticeable difference from the current structure. The proposed addition will be similar to improvements that have been made by other residents on Leslie Drive.
  
4. *The values of surrounding properties are not diminished.* The proposed addition should not have any negative impact on the property values of other Leslie Drive property owners. If anything, the improvements may raise abutter's property values.
  
5. *Literal enforcement of the ordinance would result in unnecessary hardship.* The 20% Building Coverage requirement for the SRB Zone may be well suited for 15,000+ square foot lots, as listed on Table 10.521 of the ordinance. It means that 3,000 square feet of structure can be built on them. However, the requirement creates a Hardship for existing structures on smaller lots, like Matthew & Heidi's 7,000 square foot lot. The 20% standard is an arbitrary figure that does not relate to other Open Space or Yard Dimension standards. It does not allow owners the flexibility of using other measures to maintain the character of the neighborhood.

The lot was created in 1955 and the single story house was constructed in 1956. These both happened years before Zoning Ordinances were added to City regulations. Therefore this requirement for the SRB Zone does create a Hardship for pre-existing lots. This Hardship exists for all the small properties on Leslie Drive. Due to that fact that abutting properties have constructed additions and decks onto the rear of their houses and that the houses on Leslie Drive are all similar, they must also have exceeded the 20% coverage limit and received City approval to do so. Therefore, granting the Variance to Matthew & Heidi to increase the coverage standard up to

30% will not alter the character of the neighborhood. It will maintain the current development practices and the existing character of the neighborhood.

Matthew & Heidi request that the BOA grant a Variance to increase the Building Coverage requirement for 242 Leslie Drive from 20% to 30%, to allow the construction of the proposed addition.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carl V. Beal, P.E.

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**EXISTING PHOTOS OF 242 LESLIE DRIVE, PORTSMOUTH, NH.**



*West Elevation looking from Leslie Drive.  
Garage will be removed and replaced with the proposed addition.  
New garage will be at the basement level and driveway will be excavated lower.*



*West and South sides of existing house.*

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*East Elevation looking from the Rear Yard.  
The proposed addition will be located from the north wall of the garage to the midpoint of the house.*



*Leslie Drive looking South from the property.*

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January 24, 2020

Portsmouth Board of Adjustment

To Whom it may concern,

We hereby authorize Carl V Beal to act as our representative with the City of Portsmouth and the Board of Adjustment.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Beal', with a stylized, cursive script.

Matthew Beal

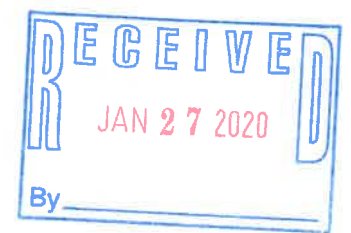
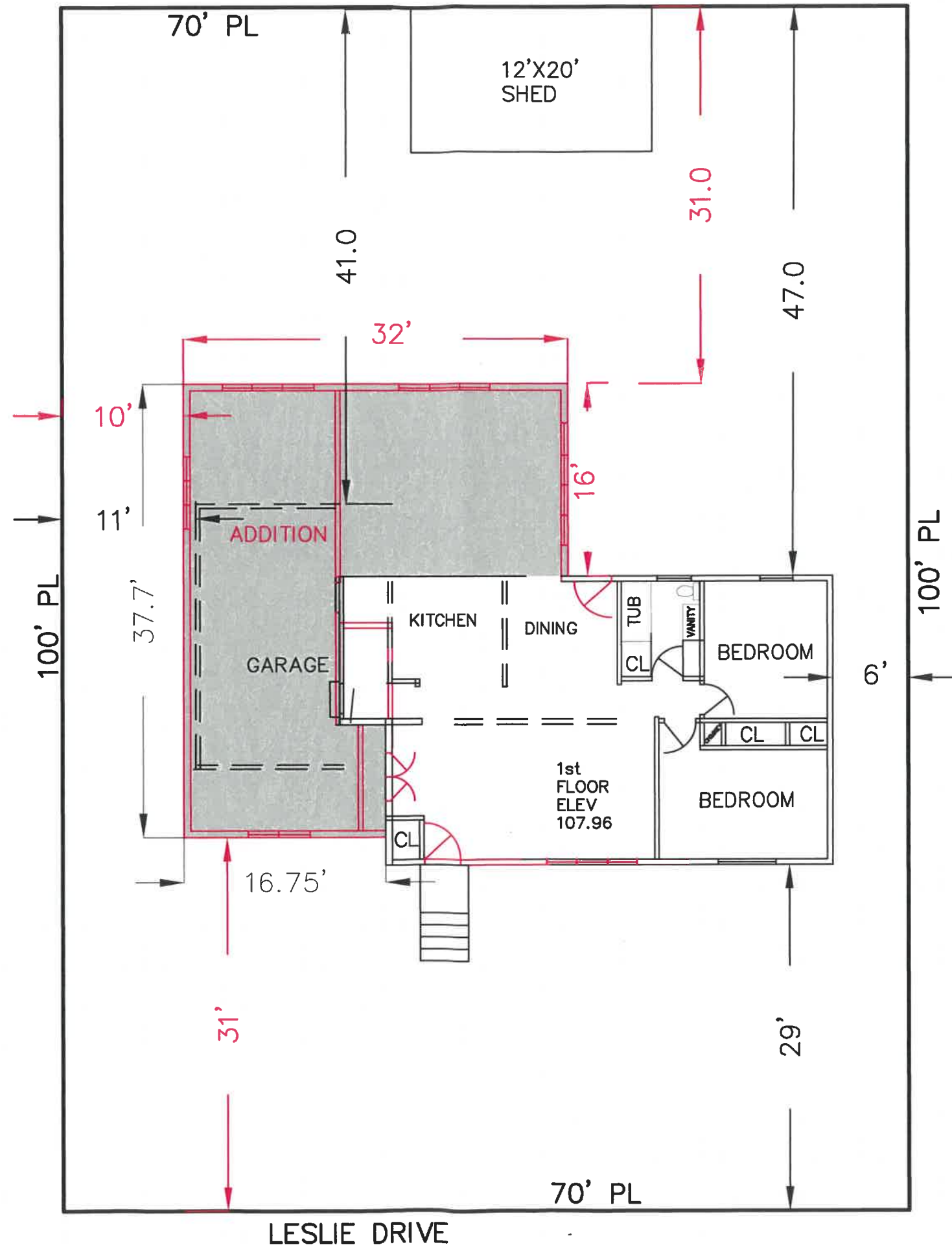
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heidi Medlyn', with a cursive script.

Heidi Medlyn

SITE PLAN  
242 LESLIE DRIVE  
MAP 209 LOT 52  
SCALE 1 INCH = 10'

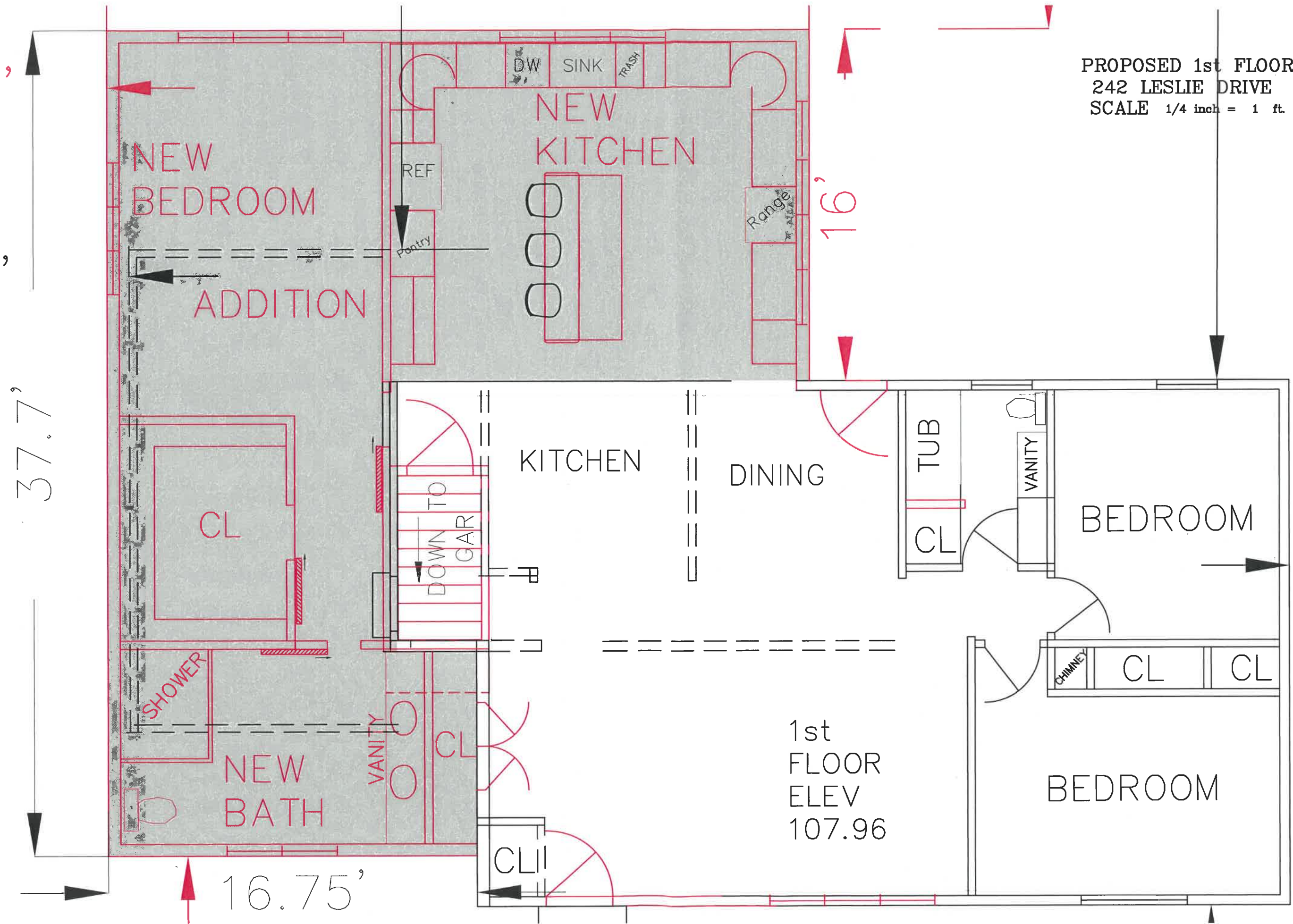
LOT 51

LOT 53





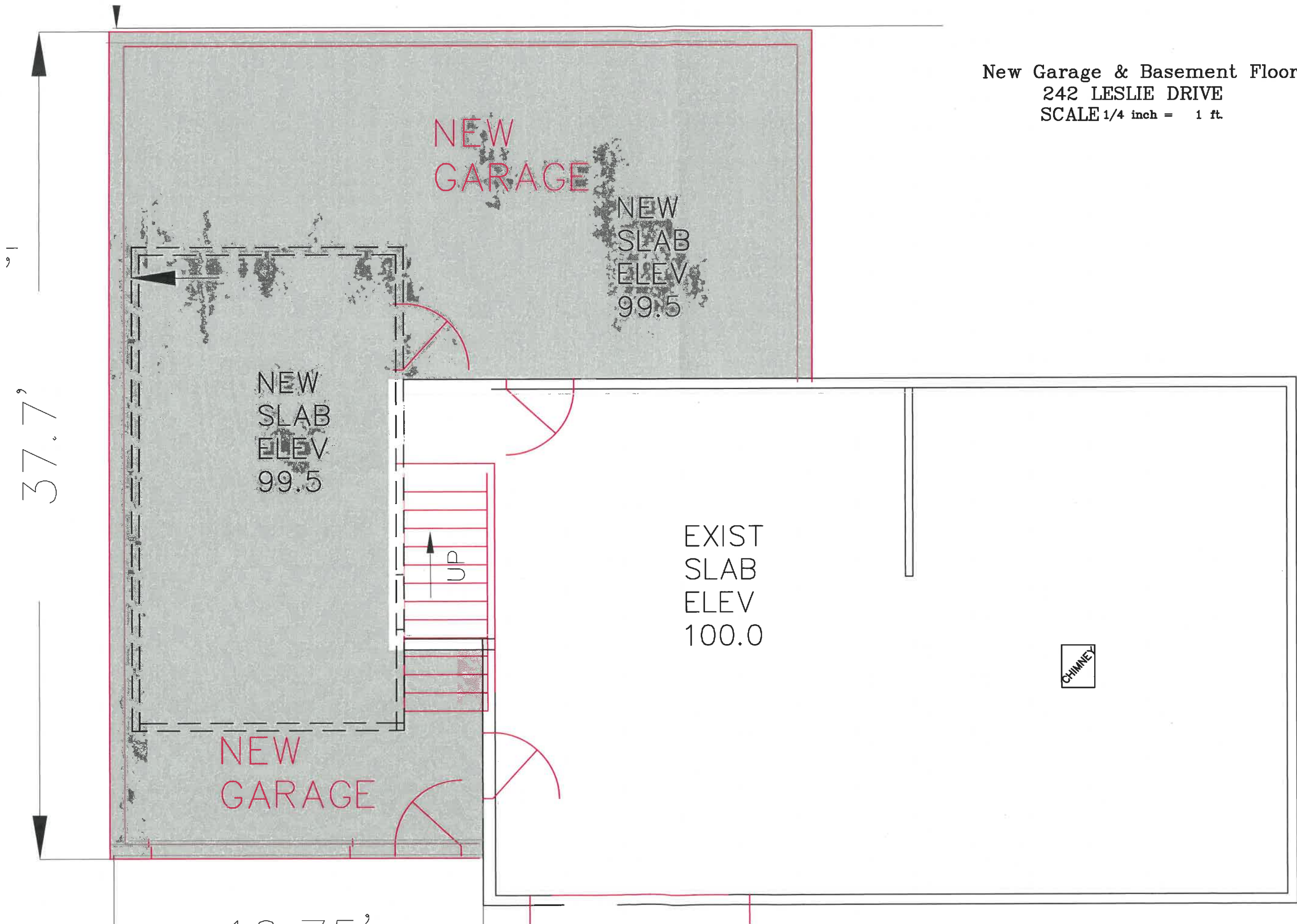
PROPOSED 1st FLOOR PLAN  
242 LESLIE DRIVE  
SCALE 1/4 inch = 1 ft.

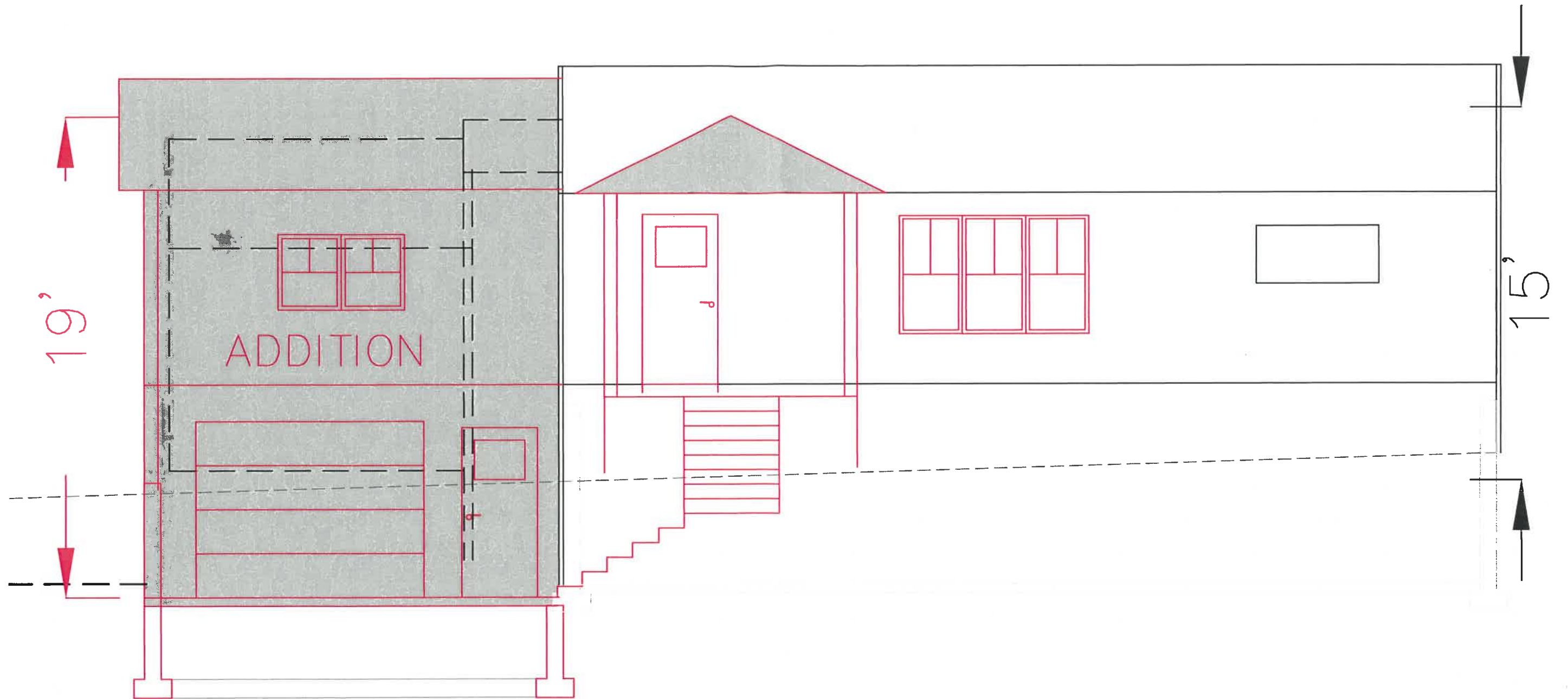


1st  
FLOOR  
ELEV  
107.96

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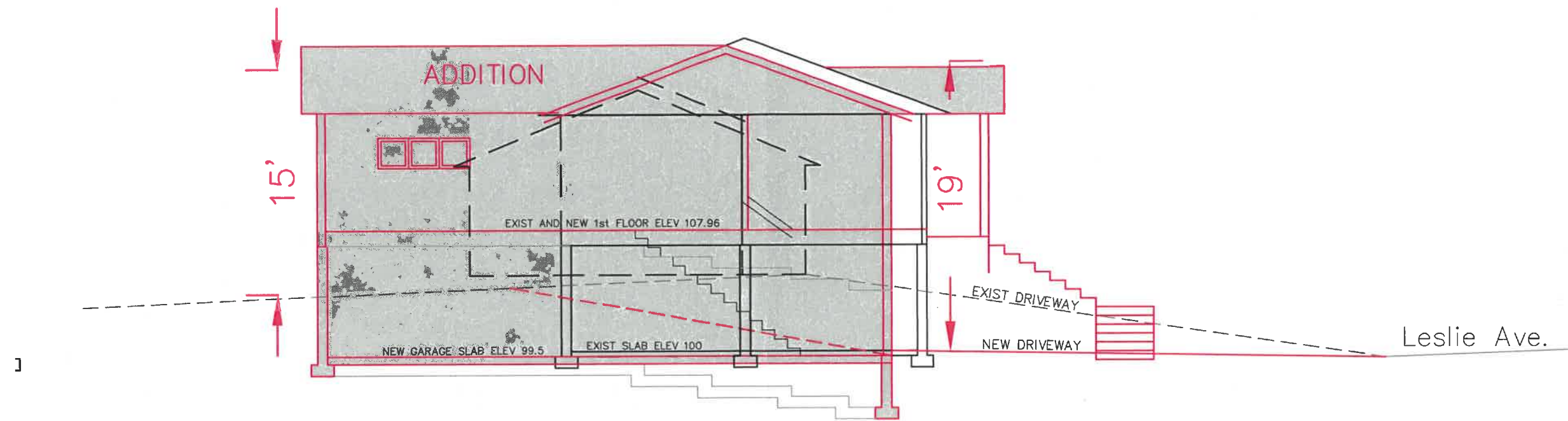
New Garage & Basement Floor Plan  
242 LESLIE DRIVE  
SCALE 1/4 inch = 1 ft.





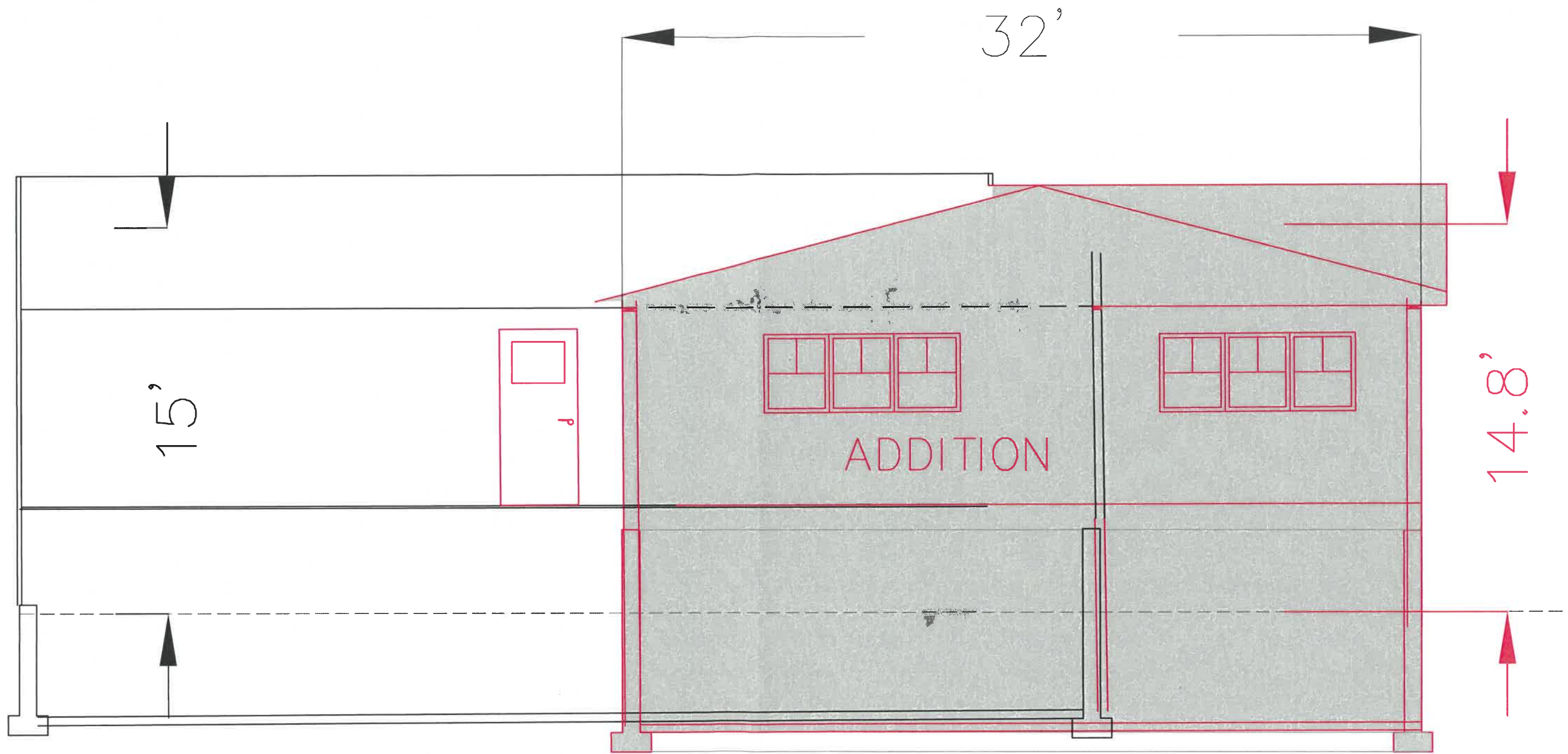
242 LESLIE DRIVE WEST ELEVATION

SCALE 1/4 INCH = 1'



NORTH ELEVATION

SCALE 1 INCH = 10'



EAST ELEVATION

SCALE 1/4 INCH = 1'