

CITY OF PORTSMOUTH REQUEST FOR VARIANCE

January 21, 2026

Property

140 Summer St
Map/Lot 137-2
Zoning GRC
Lot Area 0.11 Acres
Existing Land Use: Residential
Total Number of Dwelling Units: 2

Applicant

Nathaniel LeGros (Property Owner)
140 Summer St
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Designer

Chris Kiper / Reflective DesignWorks
109 Mill Lane
York, ME 03909

Dear Members of the Zoning Board of Adjustment,

My name is Nathaniel LeGros, and I am requesting dimensional relief from the zoning ordinance for the property located at 140 Summer Street. Specifically, I am seeking approval to reconstruct and modestly expand the existing garage by approximately 225 square feet, while maintaining its primary location relative to the existing structure.

I am currently employed as an air traffic controller at the Nashua ARTCC and commute daily in order to live in Portsmouth, the community I consider my permanent home. Outside of my professional career, I am a violin maker, furniture maker, aspiring small-boat builder, and lifelong woodworker. My long-term intent is to remain in Portsmouth and transition into these pursuits locally while continuing to maintain and invest in this 170-year-old home.

The proposed improvements are intended to enhance the functional use of the property while preserving and improving the character of both the site and the surrounding neighborhood.

Description of Proposed Project

The project would entail demolishing the existing garage which is already in need of repair. The new two-story garage would be similar in width, but extend toward the street in order to accommodate a full-size truck and stairs on the lower level. The upper level would provide space for my woodworking shop. The new garage would be connected to the existing house with a one-story structure that would provide a clean room for painting, a conditioned ½ bathroom, and rooftop deck. The driveway would be reconfigured to maintain open space coverage, and provide parking for four vehicles.

Please find the following materials enclosed in support of the Request for Variance:

1. Written statement explaining how the request complies with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance as provided in Article 2.
2. Drawing Package which includes:
 - a. Existing / Proposed Site Plan
 - b. Labelled photos of existing structures
 - c. Perspective drawing of existing and proposed structures
 - d. Rendering of proposed structure
 - e. Floor plans of proposed structure
 - f. Elevations of proposed structure
3. Letters of Support from Neighbors

Please place this matter on the February 18, 2026 hearing agenda.

Thank you for your time and attention, and please reach out with any questions if you need anything further.

Respectfully,

Nathaniel LeGros
140 Summer St
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Written statement explaining how the request complies with the requirements of the Zoning Ordinance as provided in Article 2

Section 10.521 – Dimensional Relief: Setbacks

The proposed garage would be located primarily within the footprint of the existing garage, which already lies within the required 20-foot rear setback and extends into the 10-foot side setback. As a corner lot with existing nonconforming conditions shared by neighboring properties, maintaining the location of accessory structures within these setbacks preserves the established development pattern of the area.

Reorienting the garage to strictly comply with setbacks would disrupt the historic layout and visual cohesion of the corner, resulting in a structure that would be more visually prominent and inconsistent with adjacent properties.

Section 10.521 – Dimensional Relief: Building Coverage

The existing building coverage on the lot is approximately 34.3%. The proposed project would increase coverage to approximately 39.0%, exceeding the 35% maximum by 4.0%.

The increase in coverage results from connecting the garage to the house and elongating the footprint to accommodate an interior stair and modern vehicle dimensions. These changes improve safety, usability, and accessibility while consolidating functions that currently occur outdoors. Importantly, the project preserves on-site parking and avoids increased reliance on street parking.

Section 10.233.21 – The Variance Will Not Be Contrary to the Public Interest

The intersection of Chatham and Summer Streets is a highly trafficked area used by neighborhood residents, local businesses, and visitors to nearby institutions including Farrell Funeral Home, Corpus Christi Parish, and Redemption Hill Church.

Providing adequate indoor workshop space allows project work to occur within enclosed structures rather than in the driveway, reducing noise and visual impacts on the surrounding area. Maintaining the existing nonconforming orientation of the structures preserves the familiar appearance of this prominent corner and avoids introducing new disruptions to the streetscape.

Section 10.233.22 – The Spirit of the Ordinance Will Be Observed

The intent of the GRC district setback requirements is to provide light, air, privacy, and usable yard space. Due to the unique orientation of 140 Summer Street—perpendicular to neighboring homes and located on a corner lot—strict adherence to the literal setback lines does not achieve these goals in a meaningful way.

Utilizing the already constrained rear and side setbacks allows the property to function in a manner consistent with neighboring homes while preserving usable open space elsewhere on the lot that more effectively serves the ordinance's intent.

Section 10.233.23 – Substantial Justice Will Be Done

140 Summer Street occupies a visually prominent position at the top of Chatham Street, adjacent to the Immaculate Conception Church and its landscaped grounds. It is the first residence encountered when traveling up Summer Street and down Chatham Street.

Granting the requested variance allows the property to be improved in a way that enhances its appearance, reduces outdoor disturbance during sensitive events such as funerals and weddings, and creates a cohesive courtyard-like garden space that complements the surrounding architecture and landscape.

Section 10.233.24 – Property Values Will Not Be Diminished

The proposed garage replacement will introduce a well-designed, architecturally compatible structure that improves the function and appearance of the property. These improvements are expected to support—and potentially enhance—surrounding property values by reinforcing the quality and character of this corner location.

Section 10.233.25 – Unnecessary Hardship

Pursuant to Section 10.233.32, the property is subject to special conditions that distinguish it from others in the area. As a corner lot with a perpendicular orientation to neighboring homes, 140 Summer Street is already nonconforming with respect to rear

and side setbacks. As a result, the functional “rear,” “side,” and “front” yards do not align with how those spaces are typically intended to be used.

Strict enforcement of the ordinance would require the garage to be placed in a location that is visually awkward, eliminates existing on-site parking, and increases reliance on street parking in an already busy area. The requested variance is therefore necessary to enable a reasonable and functional use of the property consistent with its surroundings.

LEGROS GARAGE ADDITION

140 SUMMER STREET, PORTSMOUTH, NH



REFLECTIVEDESIGNWORKS.COM

YORK, ME | 207-977-4286

PROJECT

LEGROS ADDITION

PROPERTY INFORMATION

MAP/LOT/ID:	137-2	0.1	COVER
ZONING DISTRICT:	GRC	0.2	SITE PLAN
LOT SIZE:	0.11 ACRES (4,792 SF)	0.3	EXISTING PHOTOS
SETBACKS		0.4	PROPOSED PERSPECTIVE + ROOF PLAN
FRONT:	5 FT	0.5	PROPOSED RENDERING
REAR:	20 FT	1.1	FLOOR PLANS
SIDE:	10 FT	2.1	ELEVATIONS
MAX BUILDING COVERAGE:	35%	2.2	ELEVATIONS
MIN OPEN SPACE:	20%		

DRAWING LIST

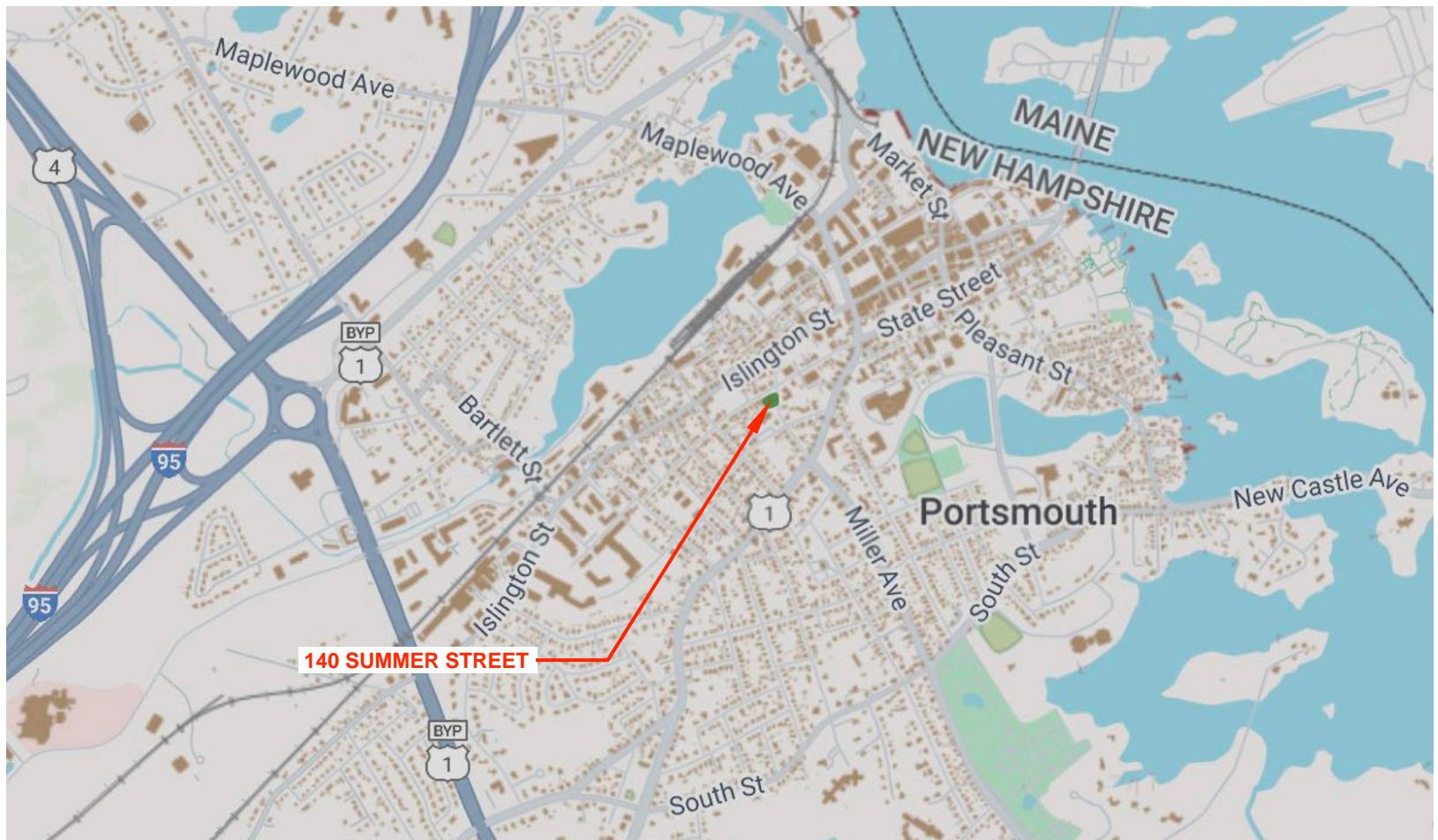
PROJECT SUMMARY

CONSTRUCTION OF ATTACHED, WOOD-FRAMED, UNCONDITIONED TWO-STORY GARAGE, AND ONE-STORY "CONNECTOR" TO EXISTING HOUSE. SLIGHT RELOCATION AND REPAVING OF DRIVEWAY. SMALL HARDSCAPE PATIO AND LANDSCAPE PLANTINGS.

GARAGE TO INCLUDE STAIRS, LOWER LEVEL VEHICLE AND TOOL STORAGE, AND UPPER LEVEL WORKSHOP WITH EXTERIOR DOOR TO ROOF TOP DECK.

"CONNECTOR" TO INCLUDE A ROOF TOP DECK, AN INSULATED, HEATED HALF BATHROOM AND FRENCH DOORS OPENING TO AN EXTERIOR LANDSCAPED COURTYARD.

PROJECT LOCATION



LOCATION
140 SUMMER ST
PORTSMOUTH, NH

NORTH SHEET
 11 X 17

PHASE

PERMITTING

DATE

20 JAN 2026

PAGE

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LOCATION
140 SUMMER ST
PORTSMOUTH, NH

NORTH SHEET
 11 X 17

PHASE

PERMITTING

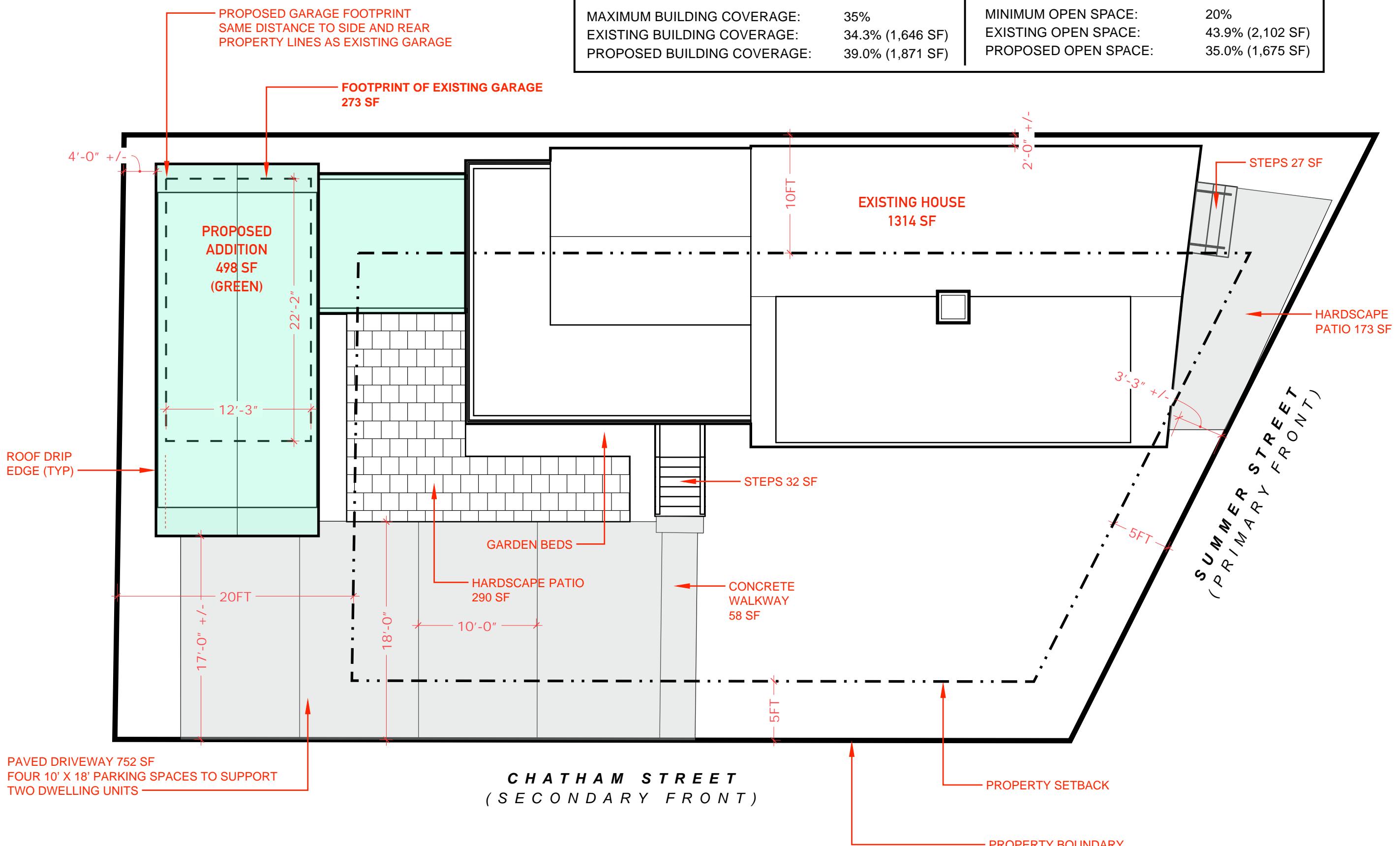
DATE
20 JAN 2026

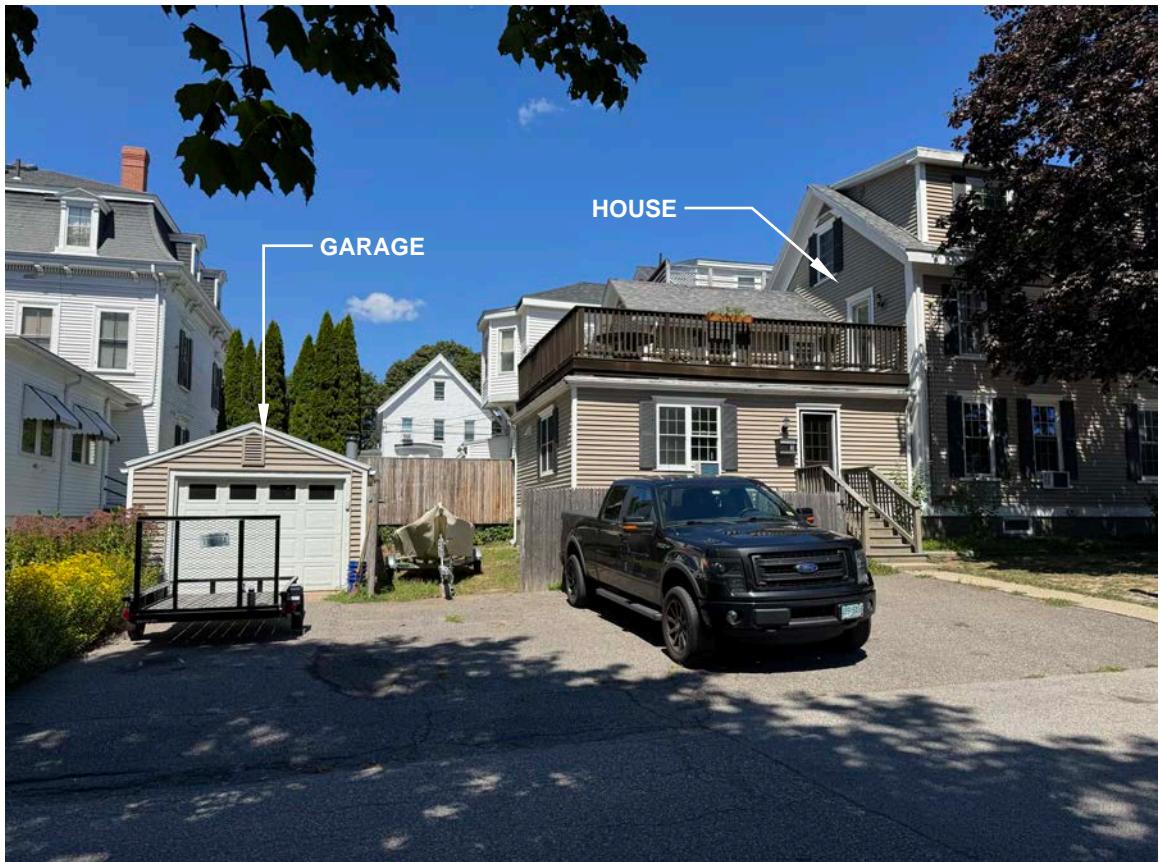
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PARCEL AREA: 0.11 ACRES (4,792 SF)

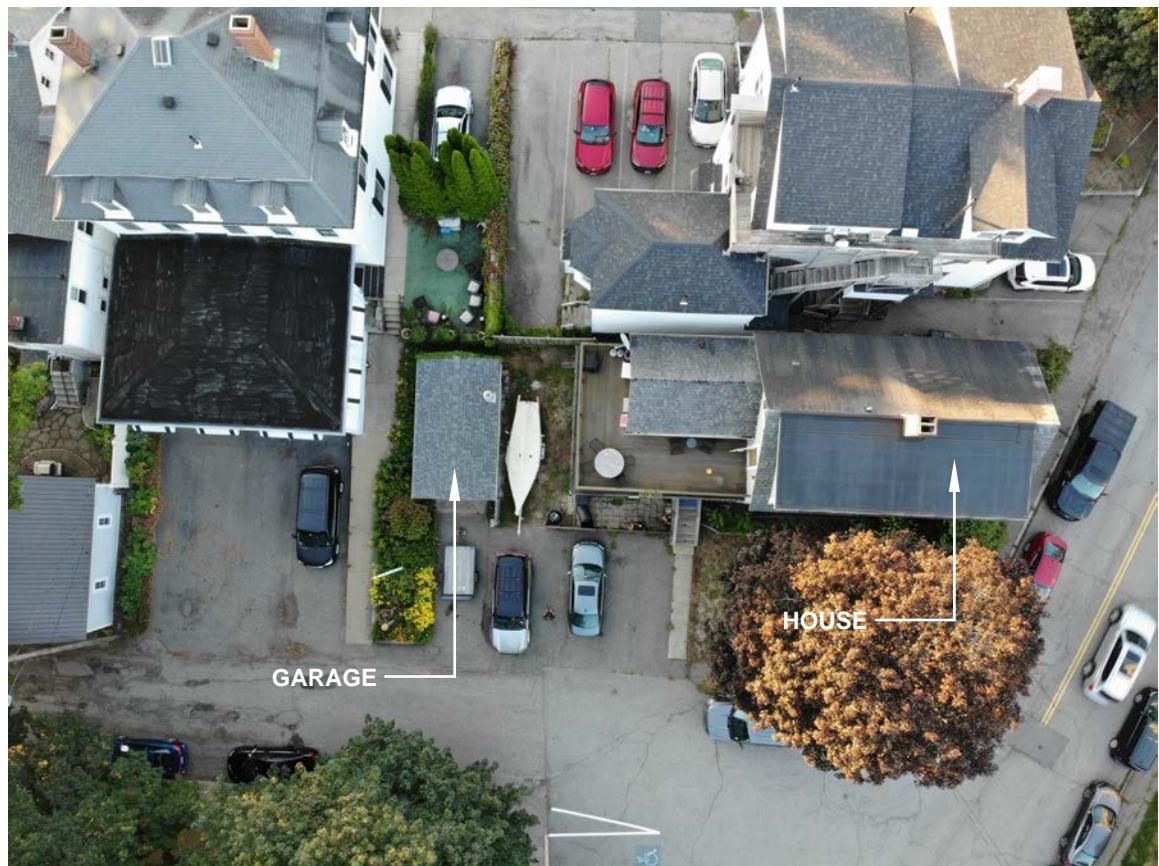
MAXIMUM BUILDING COVERAGE: 35%
EXISTING BUILDING COVERAGE: 34.3% (1,646 SF)
PROPOSED BUILDING COVERAGE: 39.0% (1,871 SF)

MINIMUM OPEN SPACE: 20%
EXISTING OPEN SPACE: 43.9% (2,102 SF)
PROPOSED OPEN SPACE: 35.0% (1,675 SF)





1 EXISTING HOUSE AND GARAGE - CHATHAM ST



2 EXISTING HOUSE AND GARAGE - AERIAL



3 EXISTING HOUSE - SUMMER ST



4 EXISTING HOUSE AND GARAGE - STREET CORNER

LOCATION
140 SUMMER ST
PORTSMOUTH, NH

NORTH **11 X 17**

PHASE

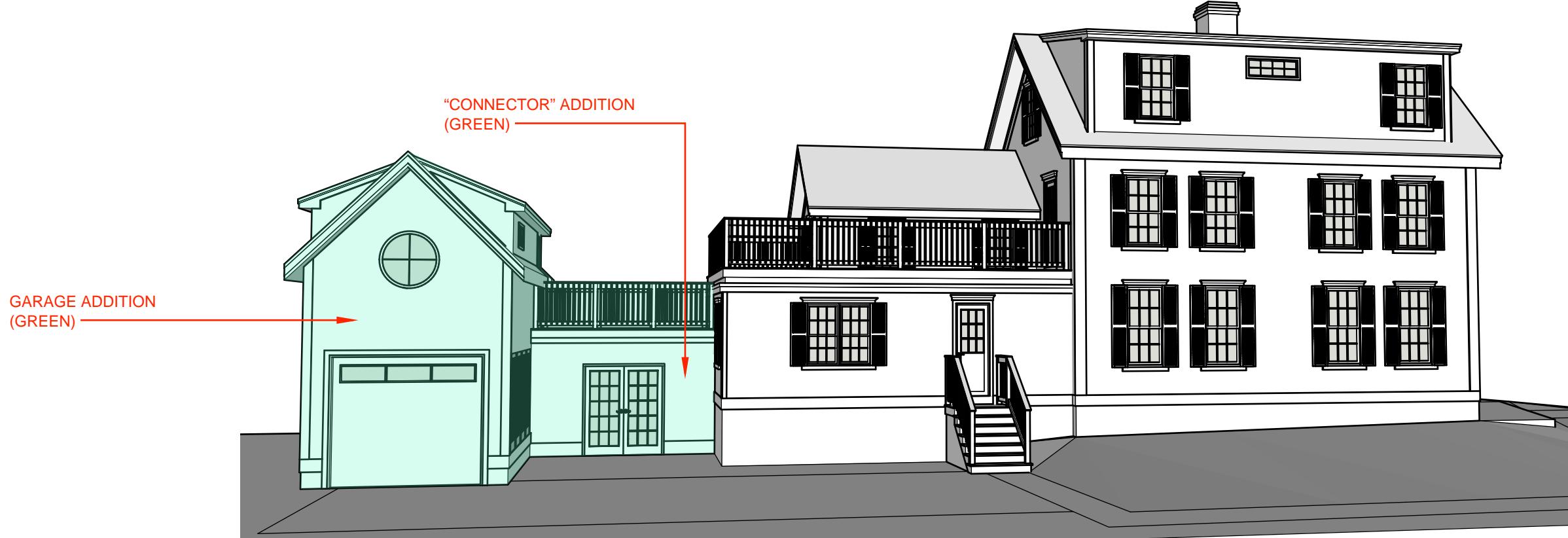
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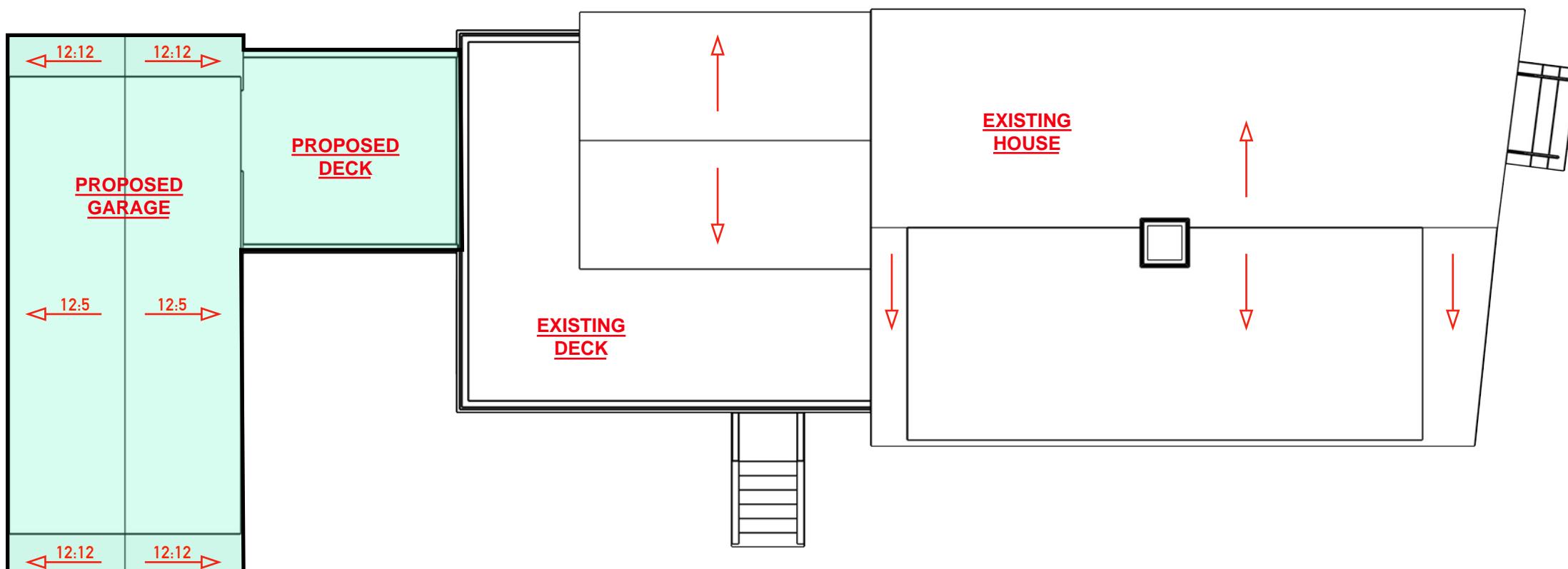
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① PROPOSED ADDITION PERSPECTIVE
NOT TO SCALE



② PROPOSED ADDITION - ROOF PLAN
SCALE 1/8" = 1' - 0"

 LOCATION
140 SUMMER ST
PORTSMOUTH, NH

 NORTH SHEET
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1 PROPOSED CONCEPT - CHATHAM ST

LOCATION
140 SUMMER ST
PORTSMOUTH, NH

NORTH SHEET
11 X 17

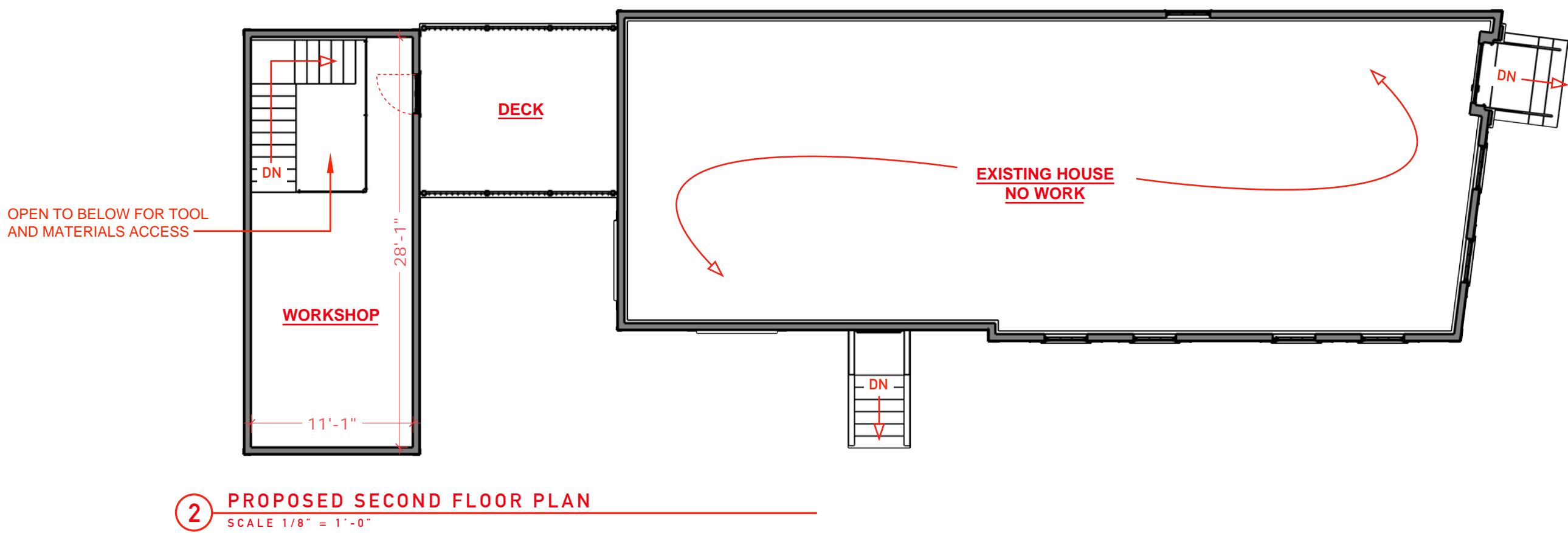
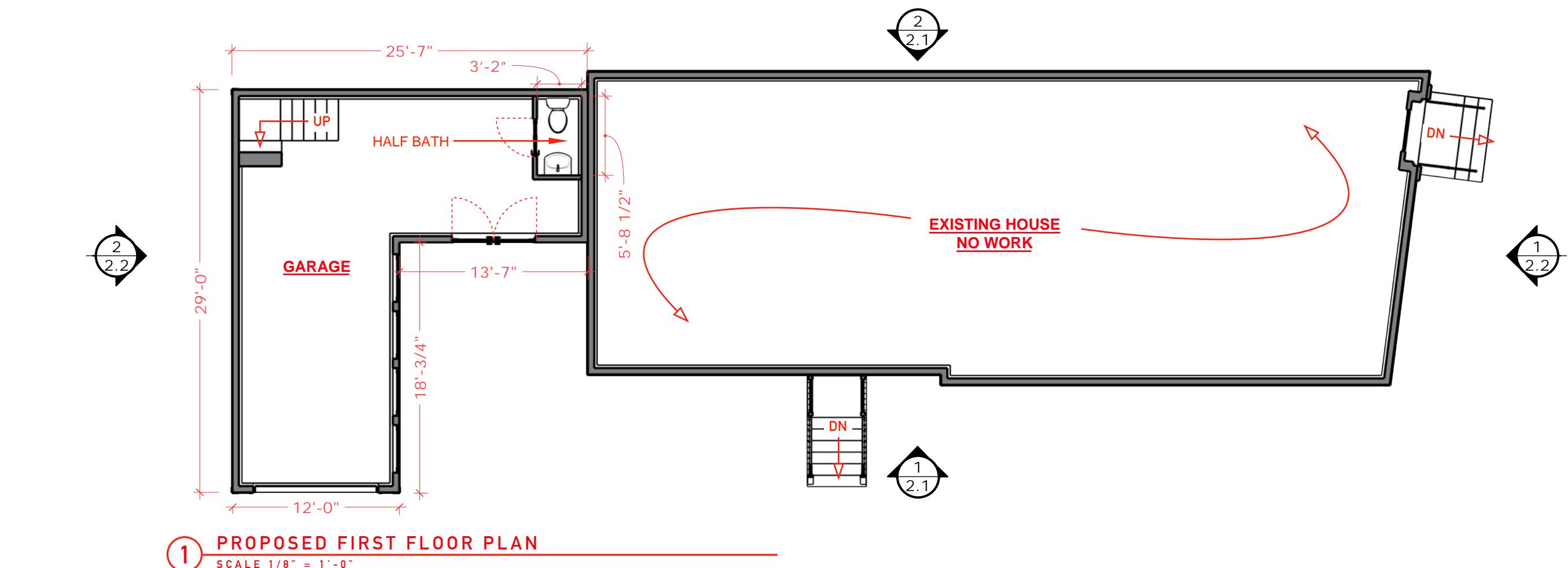
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PORTSMOUTH, NH

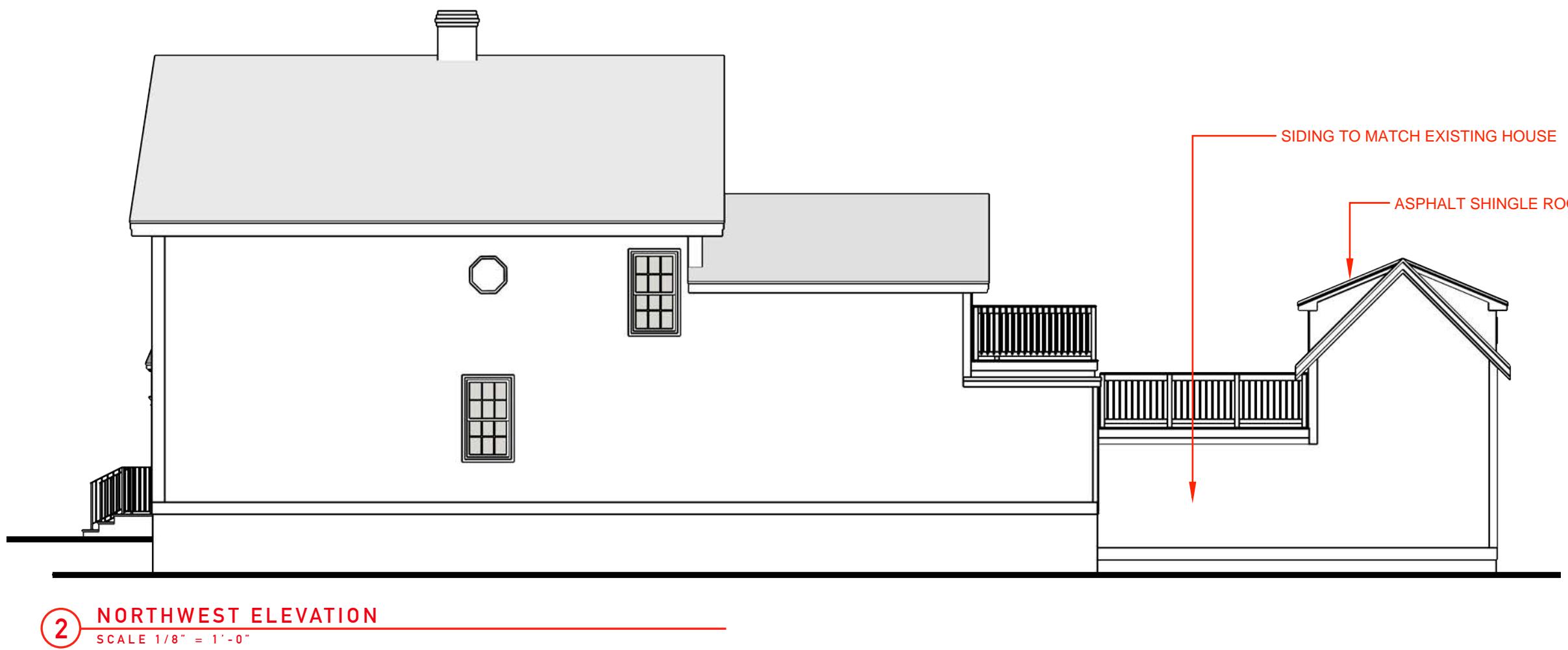
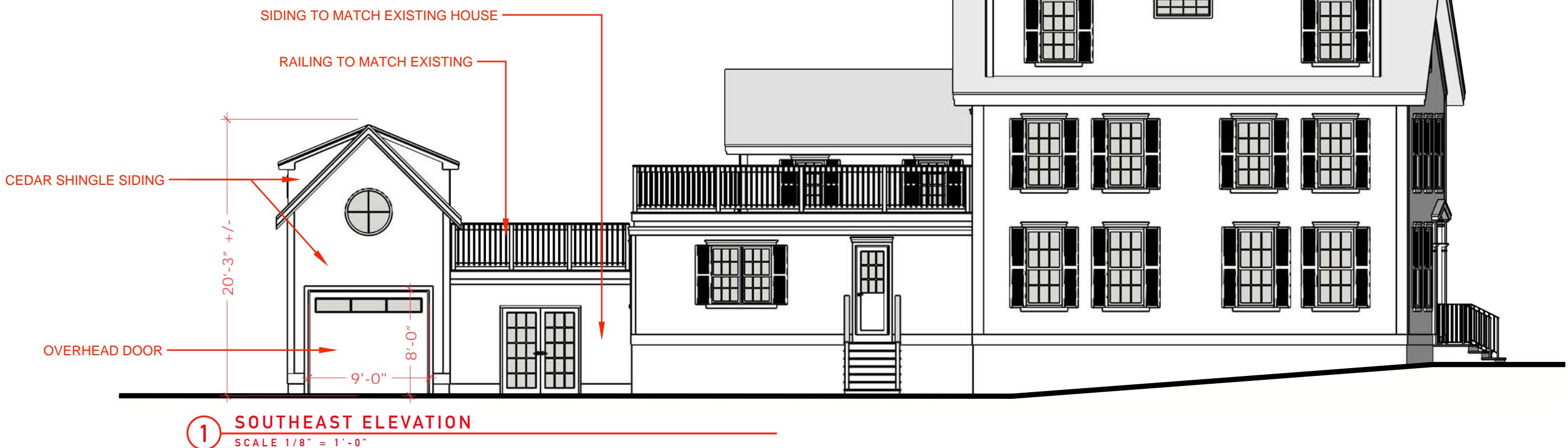
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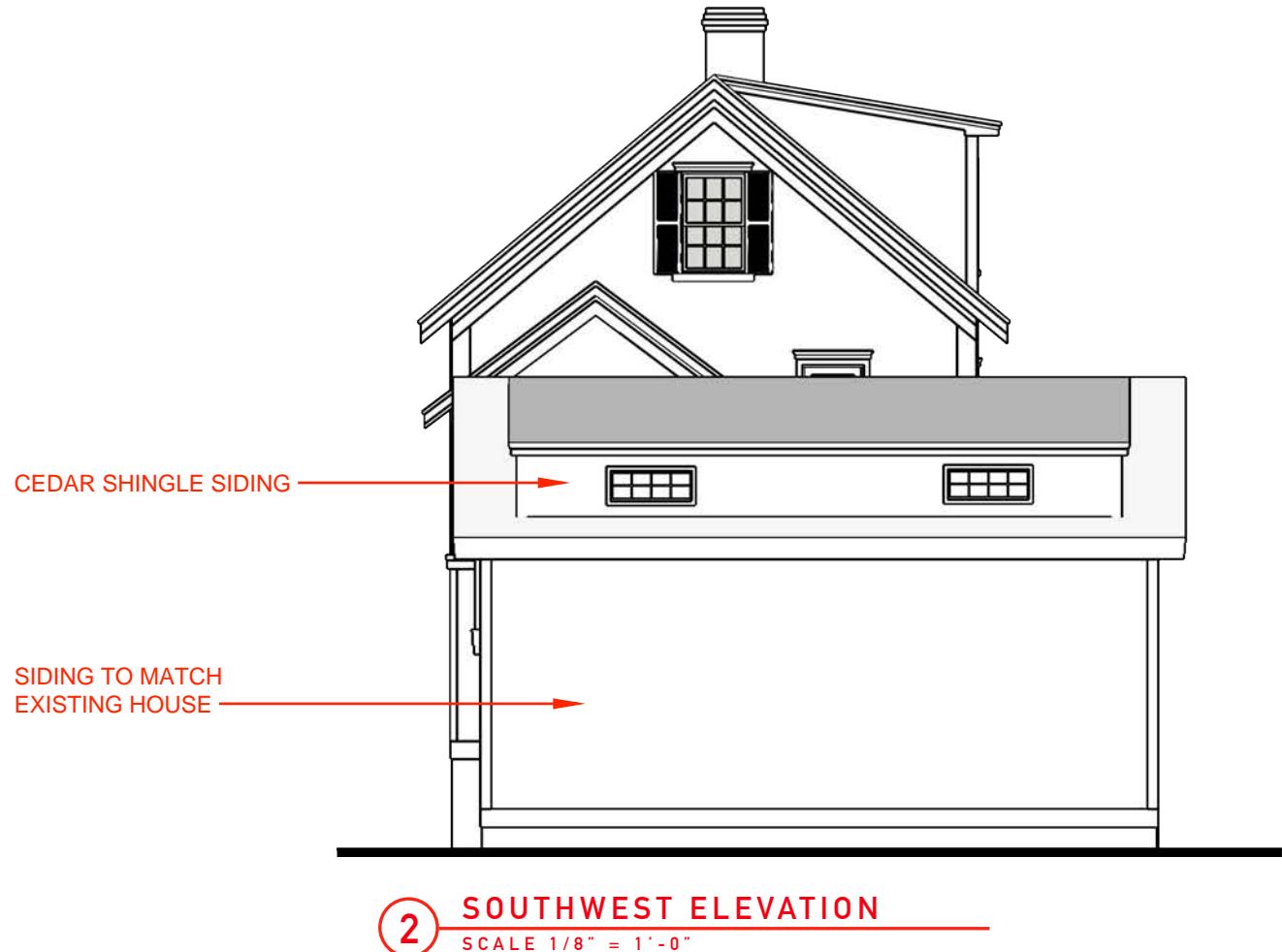
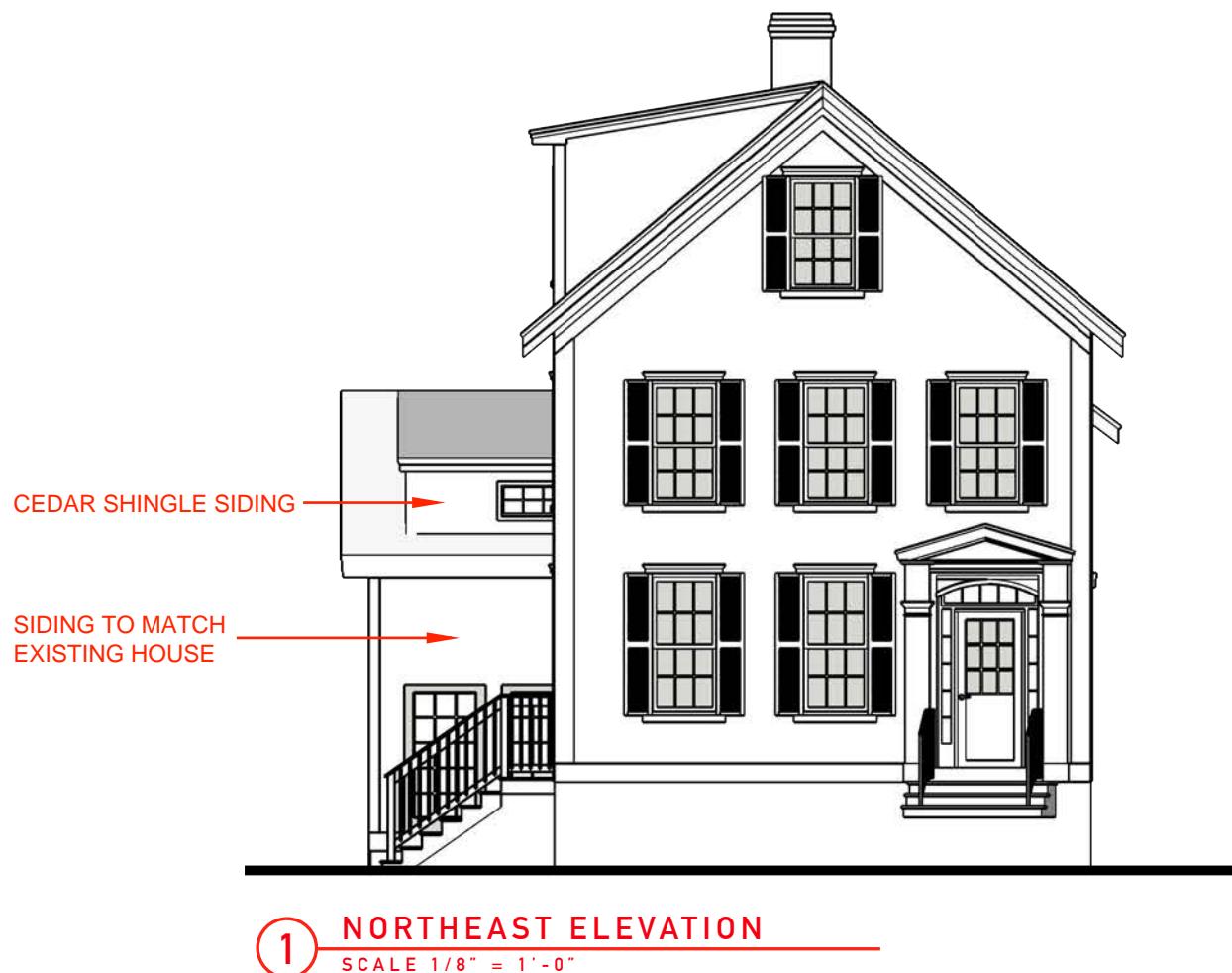
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PORTSMOUTH, NH

NORTH	SHEET
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Zoning Board of Adjustment City Hall
1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth NH

January 21, 2026

Support for Variance Request for property at 140 Summer St.

Dear Zoning Board Members,

I am writing to express my support for the variance request submitted by Nathaniel LeGros for property located at 140 Summer St.

I have reviewed Nathaniel LeGros' variance request in detail and believe that the proposed project is well conceived and will be a positive addition to our neighborhood. I am confident that he will take necessary steps to ensure the project is completed in a timely and efficient manner with minimal disruption to the neighborhood.

Nathaniel has my approval for this request, I hope that he'll have yours as well.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Rev. Gary Beliveau
Pastor, Corpus Christi Parish
Immaculate Conception Church
98 Summer St
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Zoning Board of Adjustment City Hall
1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth NH

January 21, 2026

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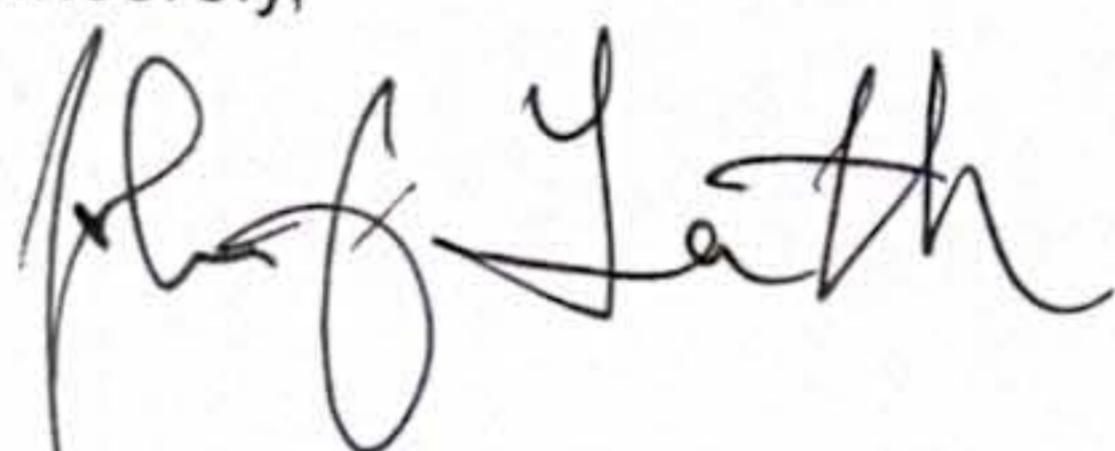
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Sincerely,



John Leith
Farrell Funeral Home
684 State St
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Zoning Board of Adjustment City Hall
1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth NH

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Sincerely,



Susan Cerro
119 Summer St
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Zoning Board of Adjustment City Hall
1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth NH

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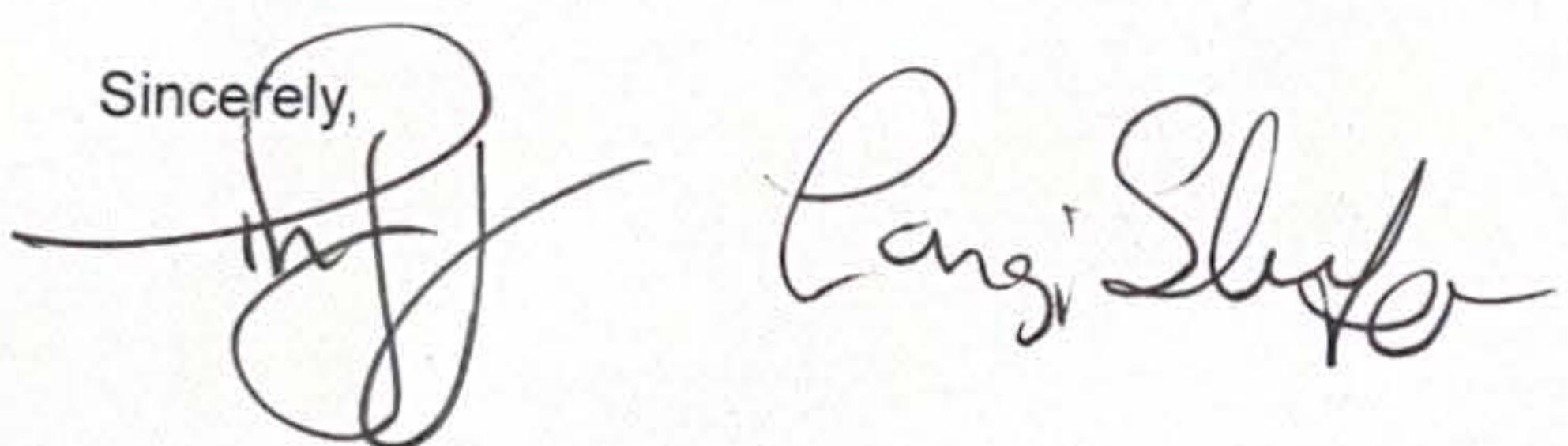
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Sincerely,

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Thomas and Longi Schladenhauffen
708 State St
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Zoning Board of Adjustment City Hall
1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth NH

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Sincerely,



Mark Griffin
728 State St
Portsmouth, NH 03801

Zoning Board of Adjustment City Hall
1 Junkins Avenue, Portsmouth NH

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Sincerely,

The image shows two handwritten signatures. The signature on the left is "Victoria Willingham" and the signature on the right is "Robert Bowser". Both signatures are written in black ink on a white background.

Victoria Willingham and Robert Bowser
692 State St
Portsmouth, NH 03801