

731 Williamson Street - The Rosen-Lee "Willy St." House

Dear Members of the Landmarks Commission,

Our names are Beth Rosen and Lindsey Lee and we are working on building a small green designed house for our family of five at 731 Williamson Street. We are working with local architects Todd Barnett and Sarah Canon.

We currently rent the house next door at 735 Williamson Street. We also own and operate Ground Zero Coffee at 744 Williamson Street, directly across the street. As you can see we are quite committed to the neighborhood in general and Williamson Street in particular.

We are writing this letter to give you a general introduction to our plans and to ask for your support at the October 11 meeting of the Landmarks Commission.

This letter is separated into three sections. The first section will provide some information concerning why the current house located at 731 can not be saved. The second section will outline what we are planning to build as a replacement house on the lot. The final section will provide a broader case for why what we desire to do on this site will be good for the neighborhood in general and for the cause of landmarks specifically.

The Condition of the House Currently at 731 Williamson St.

The city has the house currently located at 731 Williamson Street assessed at \$2000. It is not a stretch to say, given its condition, that this house is over assessed.

The house has a varied history. The front section of the house, which has about a 400 square feet foot print, was built in the 1870s by a carpenter. Many people have lived there since then and it has been in a state of decline at least since the 1960s. We have been told that a C.C. Rider was killed there during the late 1970s when confronted during a burglary attempt.

The house was owned for twenty five years by a man who struggled both physical and mentally. He lived in the 931 square foot house alone. He passed away in August 2006. We bought his house from his estate this past May. The estate had two other offers that fell through due to the fact that the house is not savable. It does not take a certified home inspector or a structural engineer to realize that every inch of this structure has problems.

Lindsey toured the house in August with Alder Marsha Rummel. At the end of the tour she said "I've done this tour dozens of times and there is usually at least something that can be save. Either a door or woodwork or something!" Lindsey saw an old wood hanger and grabbed it so that he could save at least on thing. The hanger is now on the coat rack at Ground Zero Coffee.

About two thirds of the house appears to be on a slab foundation. The older part of the house is on a foundation that is leaning. All of the floors are severely unlevel.

Most of the rest of the roof is half of a hip roof. Or, it could be considered a shed roof that wraps around. Finally, the roof for the top "bump up" room is an inverted gable roof or a "butterfly" roof. We desired to keep the massing to a minimum for our house. We did so because we want to keep the use of materials to a minimum and because we don't want the house to be too imposing on the immediate neighbor or adjacent park.

The wrap around shed roof will be sheathed in composite shingles which are the norm for most houses in this area.

4) Over all, we designed a house that fits the existing rhythm of masses and spaces that already exists on this block of Willy Street and the houses immediately behind it.

5) Finally, we would like to quote from a letter of support that former Landmarks commissioner Richard Wagner wrote.

"It is a real plus that you are building it for your family across from your small business. The pattern of homes by neighborhood small business owners was a strong historical trend in the neighborhood during the 19th and early 20th centuries. What a surprise to see it continued in the 21st Century."

The Rosen-Lee "Willy St. House" Speaks to the History of Our Near East side Neighborhood

Our house is not designed to replicate the cottages that were built during the forty years from 1860 to the latter part of that century. Instead, our house better speaks to the forty years from 1967 to the present. These years of "Willy St." have been characterized by a sense of bohemian creativity and non-conformity. Many would argue that the history of these past forty years are just as relevant, if not more important, as any other period of the street's relatively short existence.

We feel that we have been a part of that history and desire to add to it when we set up our home at the beginning of Willy Street.

We thank you for your consideration and would be happy to answer any questions before the meeting. We can be reach at 220-7910 or e-mailed at groundzerocoffee@yahoo.com

The flat roof part of the house is also sagging and severely leaks. The previous owner's attempt at repairing the roof was to just roll out tar paper as a way to stop the leaking. No reasonable person would argue that it would be economically feasible to save this structure. In the end this decision to remove this structure is pretty obvious.

We are planning on saving the gable verge boards and any other reuseable material that we find when we take the house down.

The Rosen-Lee "Willy St." House

We have spent many months talking to our neighbors, both immediate and from the broader neighborhood, and we have only heard positive feedback about our plans. We have also heard from many neighbors a dissatisfaction with the sorry state of architecture on Williamson Street as new buildings have gone up. There have been about a dozen new structures that have been built on Willy Street over the past decade. Can you point to one of them and honestly say that it will be considered a landmark fifty years from now? We believe that our design reflects the year that it will be built while also being historically compatible.

The staff person for Landmarks suggested that we address how our plans conform to the Landmarks ordinance for new construction.

Our design, while it is rooted in the present, is compatible with older structures in the following ways;

1) The major way our house conforms with Landmarks is the size of the house. The house we propose to build is only 1400 square feet. This includes space that is at the Williamson Street grade level. All other houses along the 700 block of Williamson Street use this level for substandard basement purposes.

As a comparison of how small our proposed house is, it is smaller than the house behind it at 732 Jenifer which has a full basement and is on a lot of the same size.

The house we are proposing to build is slightly taller at the highest point compared to the house next to it at 735 Williamson St. It is noticeably shorter than the house behind it.

Finally, our design has a smaller outer footprint than the house that is currently at this site. The current house is less than two feet from the house at 735 Williamson Street. The house we will build will be approximately five feet from this neighbor. We also set the house back two feet from the sidewalk and pulled the footprint in one foot from where the current house sits.

2) The materials we plan on using are also compatible. The foundation will be textured concrete. This can be found on several street level facades on Williamson street including many of those on the 700 block of Williamson Street.

We are using concrete because this block of Williamson is prone to be hit with graffiti. Most of the brick facades have been painted over due to this fact.

Most of the rest of the house is covered with vertical clapboard siding which is quite common in this area.

3) The roof design, while compatible with other structures in the area, is also appropriate for

September 18, 2007

Dear Beth Rosen and Lindsey Lee

We write this letter in wholehearted support of your removal of the house on 731 Williamson Street and the construction of a new residence on the property for your family. We hope you will present this letter to the Preservation & Development Committee of the Marquette Neighborhood Association to support your endeavor. Below we outline our reasons behind our support.

We live at 734 Jenifer Street and our back lot shares a corner with the 731 Williamson Street house. The 731 Williamson Street house is a wreck and an eyesore. In the front, it is the worst house on Williamson Street and we have the privilege of seeing its back, which is only worse. It is the worst house in the "Willy Street" area and its removal will only improve the visual quality of the area.

We have seen the plans for the intended new home for 731 Williamson Street and like them very much. Not only are they externally pleasing, blending in the older styles of the neighborhood with the newer styles of structures recently erected just down the street, but also a unique new economical use of space. Given Madison's ever growing urban sprawl problem, plans like these are needed to increase living area without increasing ecological footprint. We actually think this house will serve as an inspiration for others seeking to reduce their impact on the earth and society and yet still find space in the inner city.

In closing, we would like to reiterate our support for the plans of the Rosen-Lee Family to you, Beth and Lindsey, and hope they are well received by the Preservation & Development Committee.

Sincerely

Drs. Anders Carlson & Emelyne Woessner
734 Jenifer St., Madison, WI 53703

9-19-07

TO: Lindsey Lee and family, residents and public officials of Madison

FROM: Kemper J. Maas

RE: Property located at 731 Williamson Street

I am writing this to express support of the plan Lindsey Lee and his family have to remove the existing structure at 731 Williamson Street and build a new single family home in its place. My property at 732 Jenifer Street is adjacent to this lot at the rear border.

The house that currently stands at 731 Williamson Street has some historical merit, as documented by Gary Tipler in *An Historical Survey and Walking Tour Guide*. Unfortunately, many years of neglect and a lack of maintenance have rendered it currently unusable for habitation. While it might be possible to attempt renovation to restore it to a satisfactory and livable condition, the cost could become prohibitive, and it is difficult to determine how much of a structure can be saved until you actually start working to restore it. It might prove more feasible to start at the beginning with a clear lot and construct something more practical and applicable to the present time. The needs of a family in the twenty first century are far different from the needs of a cabinetmaker in the late eighteen hundreds.

The design of the new structure is indeed modern and contemporary, and might be viewed by some as out of place in this neighborhood. I think this is mitigated to an extent by the location, which is essentially the border between the urban commercial district and the historical residential district. If this structure is built as intended, it should serve as an example of resourceful and efficient use of a small space. This model needs to be appreciated and expanded upon, especially in the limited usable space on the isthmus of Madison, and in all urban areas in general.

I myself do not like to see change and the loss of a piece of history, and I stand behind any effort to preserve historical buildings and landmarks. The house standing at 731 Williamson is unique and represents a different era of history, but it may be passed the point of salvage. I would applaud any effort to restore it, but it might prove more practical and prudent to replace it with something modern and innovative.

I understand the need that something has to be done with the property at 731 Williamson Street, and I am in agreement with the current proposal.

Kemper J. Maas

Dear Lindsey,

Thank you for showing me your plans for the 700 block of Williamson St.

As I mentioned to you I have no problems with the removal of the existing structure. Its deteriorating condition has been evident to those of us in the immediate neighboring blocks for decades. (A good huff and buff from some of those resurgent wolves up north would probably do it in.)

Your plans for a replacement house are quite attractive. The treatment of the split levels is a great way to make the small footprint work with light and air. I respect that you are proposing a house of a size that would be comparable to many in the neighborhood. The plan makes good use of what far too many would dismiss as a nonbuildable site, and when the present structure collapses only someone willing to do what you envision is likely to pull off a replacement building. A gap in the Williamson Street facade would be the worst outcome for the historic texture of the neighborhood.

It is a real plus that you are building it for your family across from your small business. The pattern of homes by neighborhood small business owners was a strong historical trend in the neighborhood during the 19th and early 20th centuries. What a surprise to see it continued in the 21st Century. Your personal commitment to reinvestment in the area is what makes the neighborhood work and can preserve it for the future.

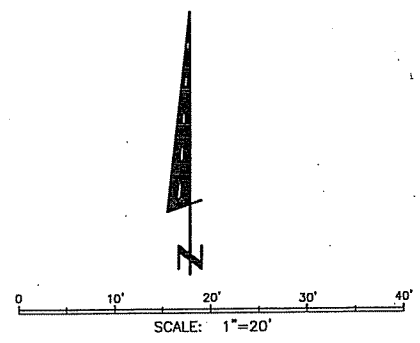
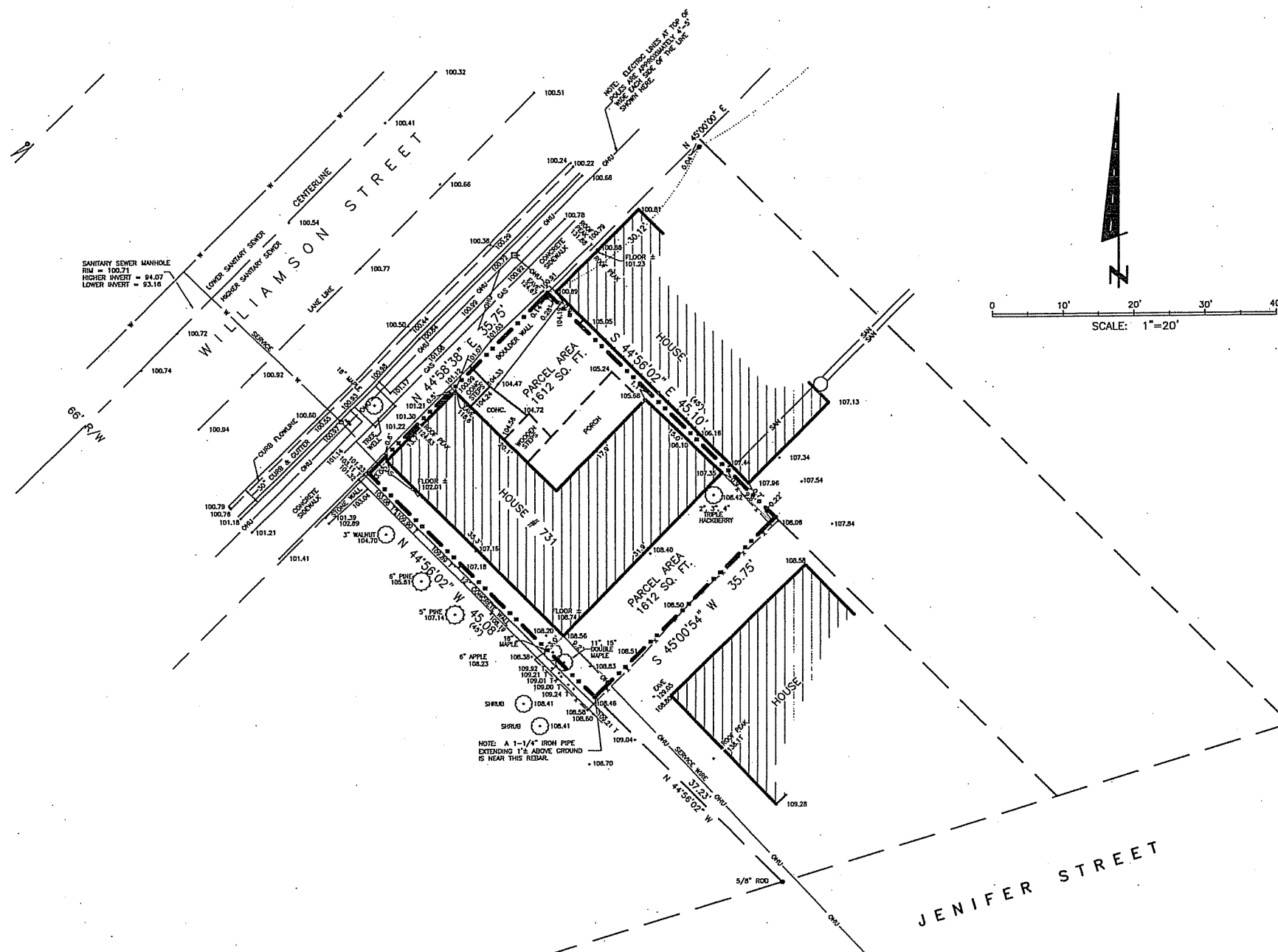
You are a welcome part of the city and neighborhood. Please feel free to share this with any others during your project development if it is helpful.

Sincerely,

Dick Wagner

739 Jenfier Street

Madison, WI



- DRAWING INDEX**
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 - 3 FLOOR PLANS
 - 4 ROOF PLAN
 - 5 NORTH ELEVATION
 - 6 WEST ELEVATION
 - 7 SOUTH ELEVATION
 - 8 EAST ELEVATION.

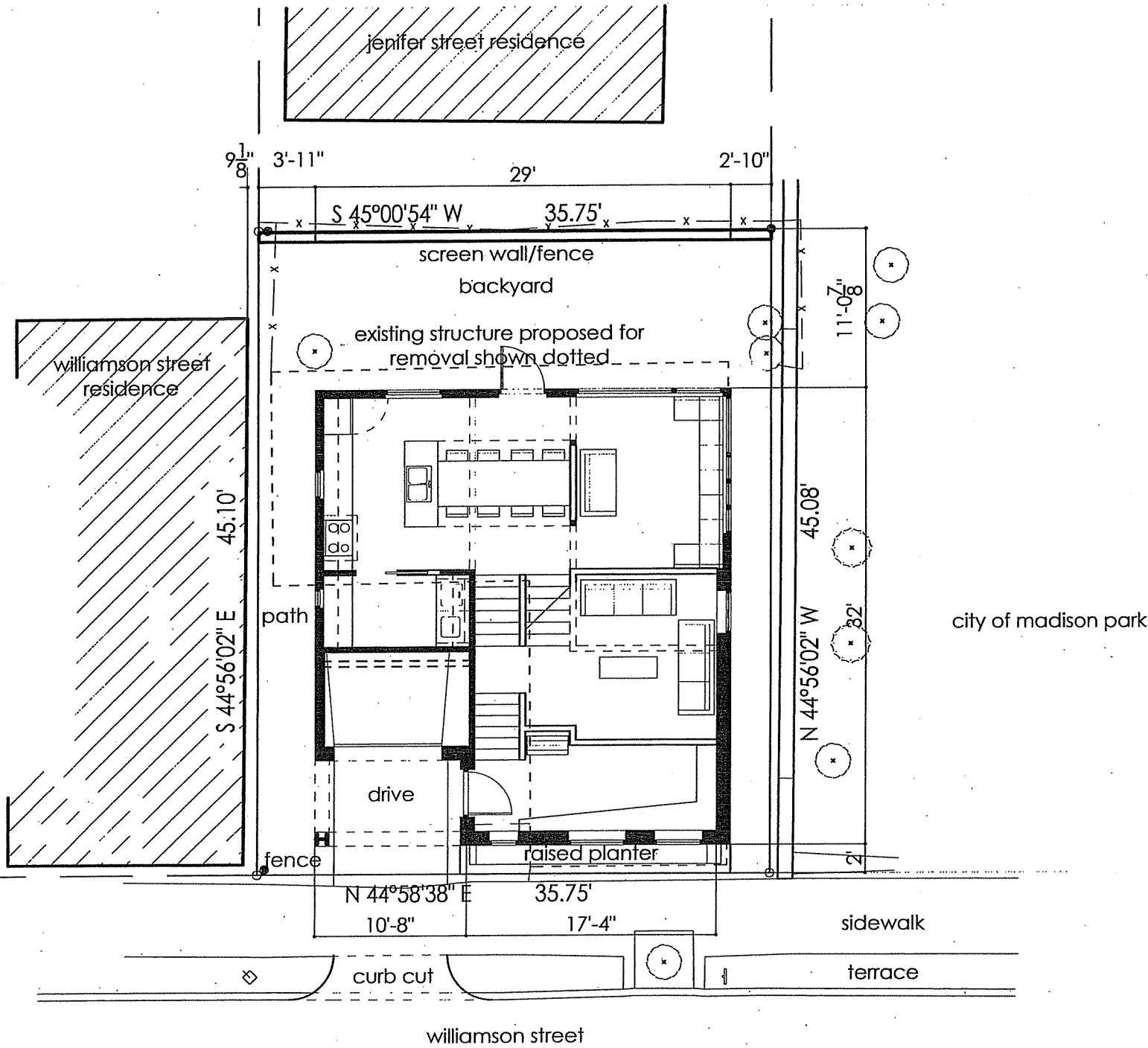
EXISTING SITE PLAN INFORMATION
 MODIFIED FROM PLAN PREPARED BY
 NOTBOHM MICHAELS SURVEYING

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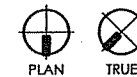
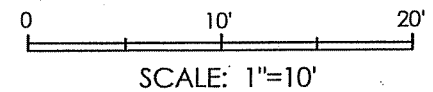
EXISTING SITE PLAN
 PROPOSED NEW HOME FOR:
LINDSEY LEE AND ELIZABETH ROSEN
 731 WILLIAMSON STREET
 MADISON, WI 53703

DATE: 9-19-2007
 REVISIONS: - L-R Site Landmarks KNS1.dwg

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LOT AREA: 1611.9160 SF
 BUILDING FOOTPRINT: 832 SF



CONCEPT SITE PLAN

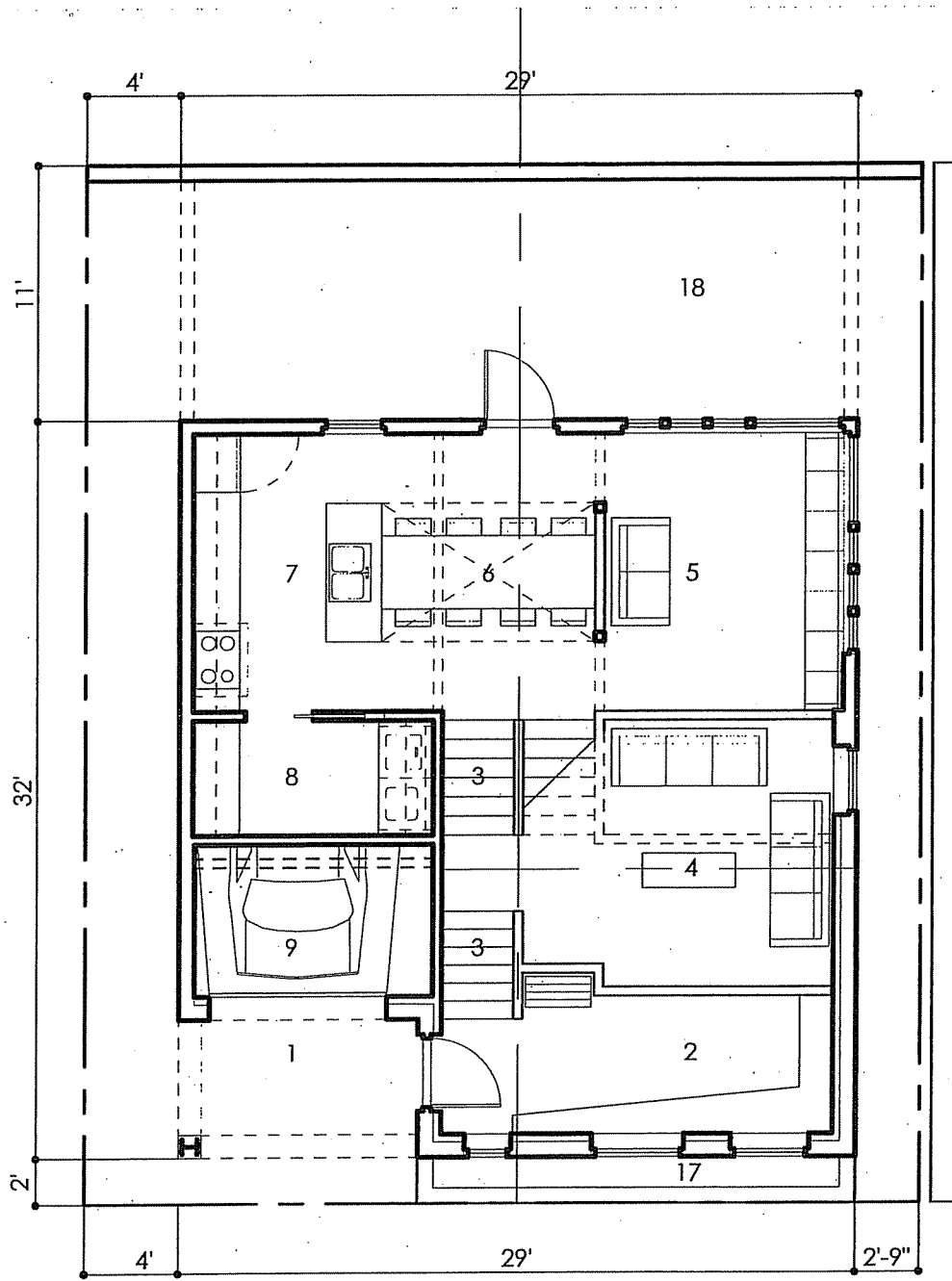
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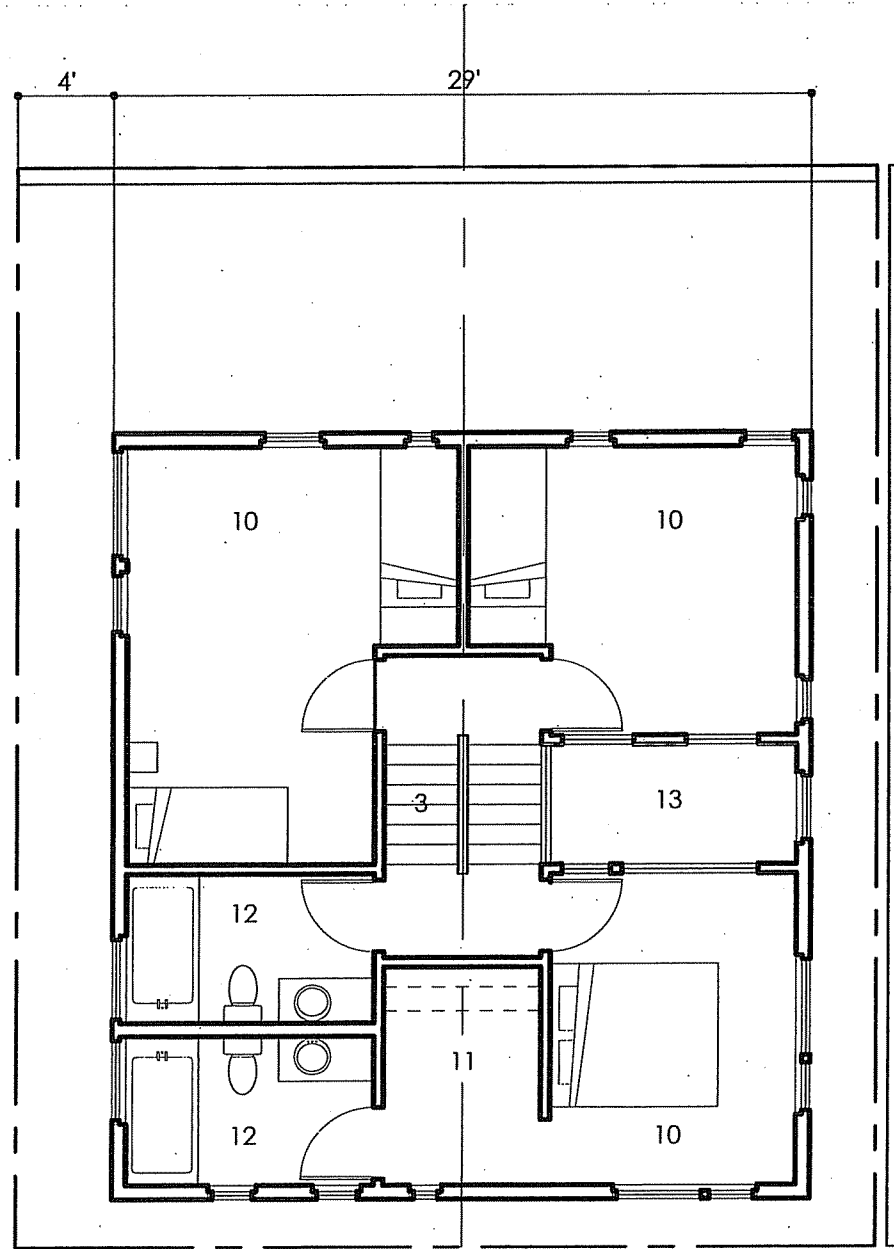
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proposed site plan



williamson street

level 1-2

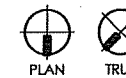


williamson street

level 3-4

LEGEND

- 1 COVERED ENTRY
- 2 ENTRY/OFFICE
- 3 STAIR
- 4 LIVING
- 5 FAMILY
- 6 DINING
- 7 KITCHEN
- 8 PANTRY
- 9 GARAGE
- 10 BEDROOM
- 11 CLOSET
- 12 BATH
- 13 LIGHT WELL
- 14 BUMP-UP ROOM
- 15 DECK
- 16 ROOF
- 17 PLANTER
- 18 YARD



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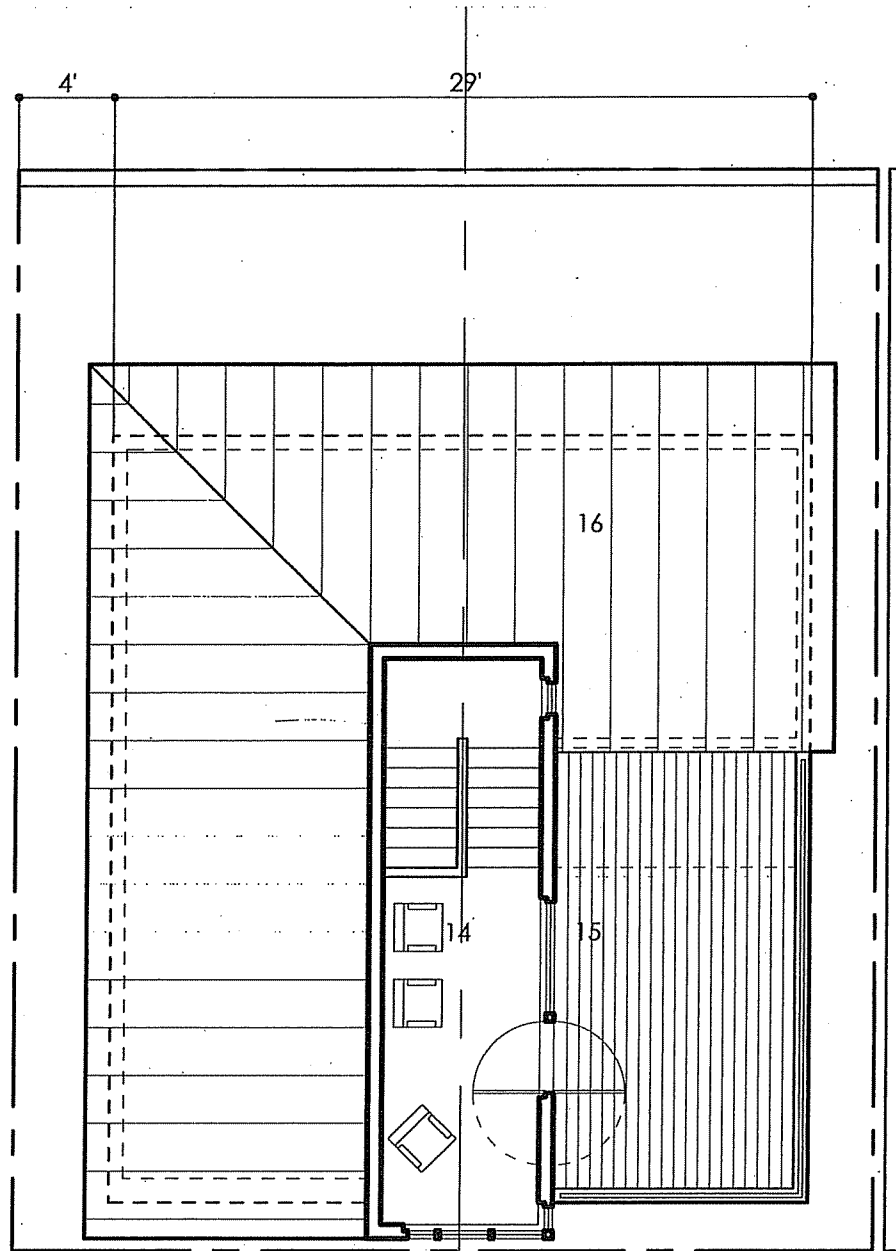
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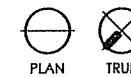


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LEGEND

- 1 COVERED ENTRY
- 2 ENTRY/OFFICE
- 3 STAIR
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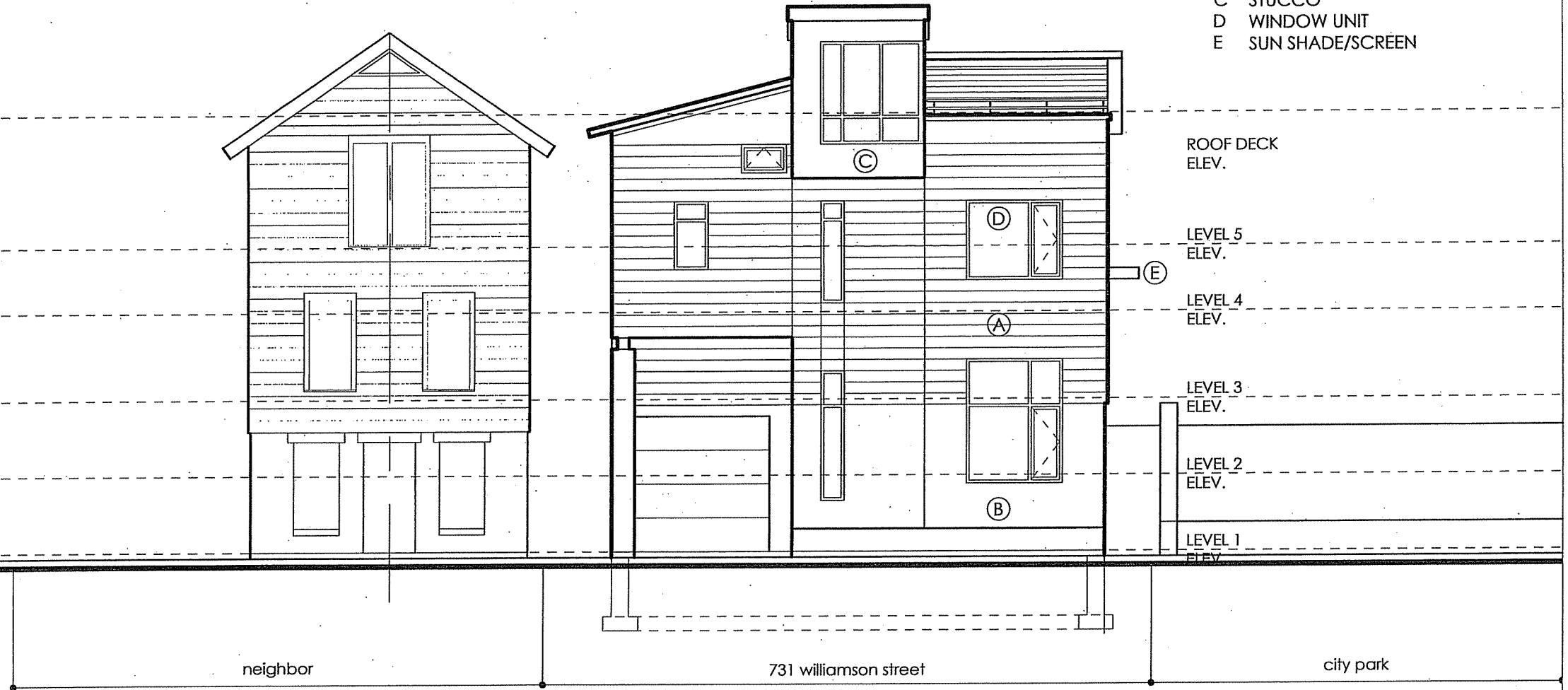
roof deck



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LEGEND

- A HORIZONTAL FIBER CEMENT SIDING
- B TEXTURED CONCRETE
- C STUCCO
- D WINDOW UNIT
- E SUN SHADE/SCREEN



ROOF DECK
ELEV.

LEVEL 5
ELEV.

LEVEL 4
ELEV.

LEVEL 3
ELEV.

LEVEL 2
ELEV.

LEVEL 1
ELEV.

neighbor

731 williamson street

city park

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CONCEPT ELEVATIONS

PROPOSED NEW HOME FOR:

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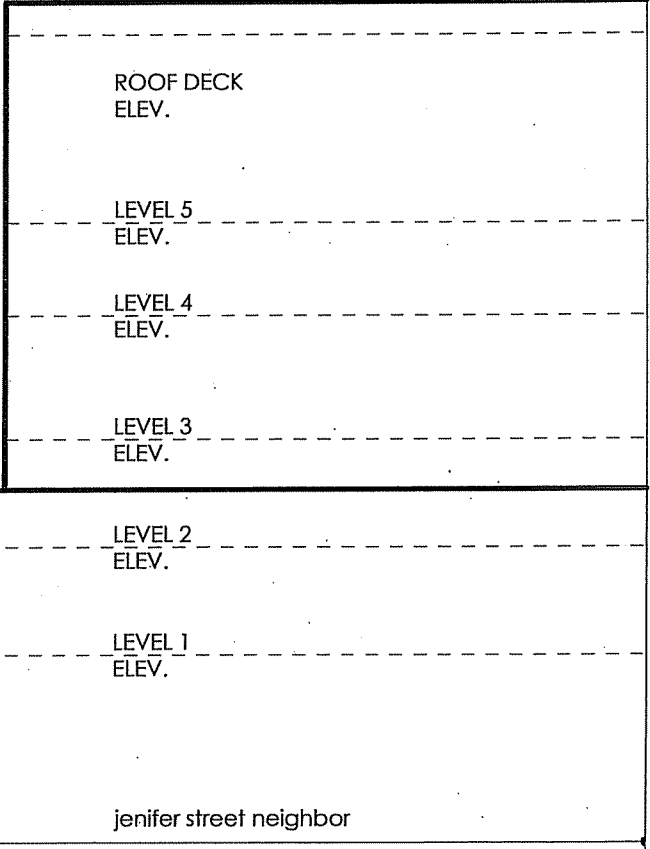
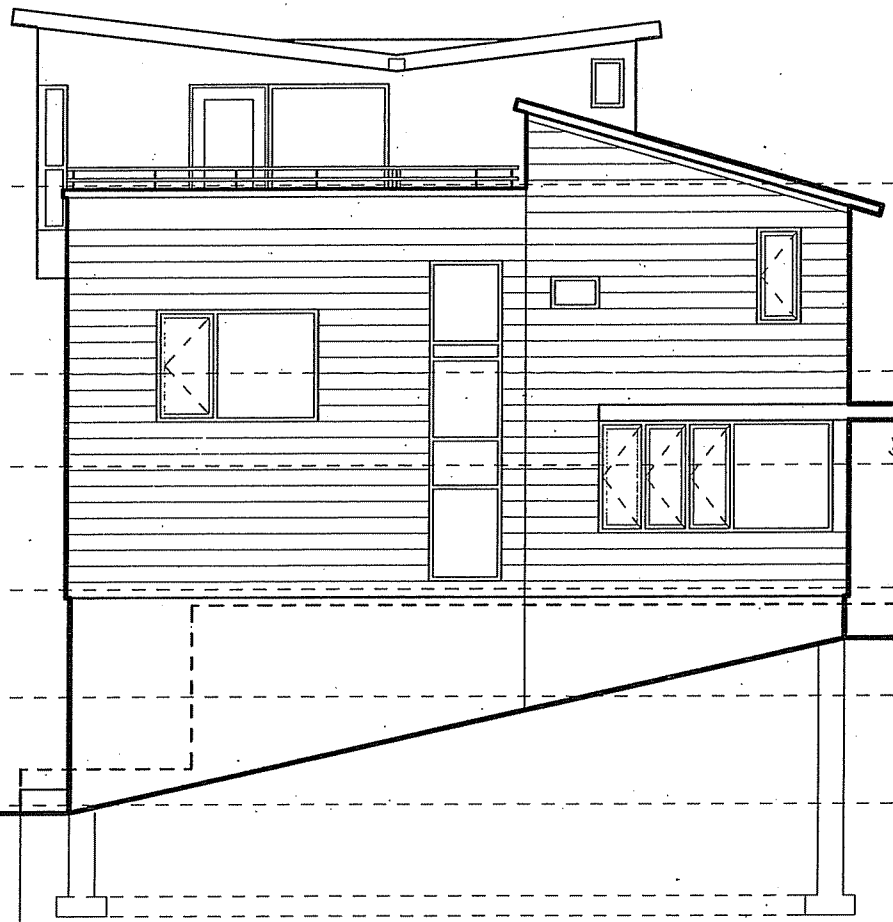
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5



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williamson street

sidewalk

45.08/45.10 property line

jenifer street neighbor

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north elevation



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ROOF DECK
ELEV.

LEVEL 5
ELEV.

LEVEL 4
ELEV.

LEVEL 3
ELEV.

LEVEL 2
ELEV.

LEVEL 1
ELEV.

city park

731 williamson street

733 williamson street

north elevation

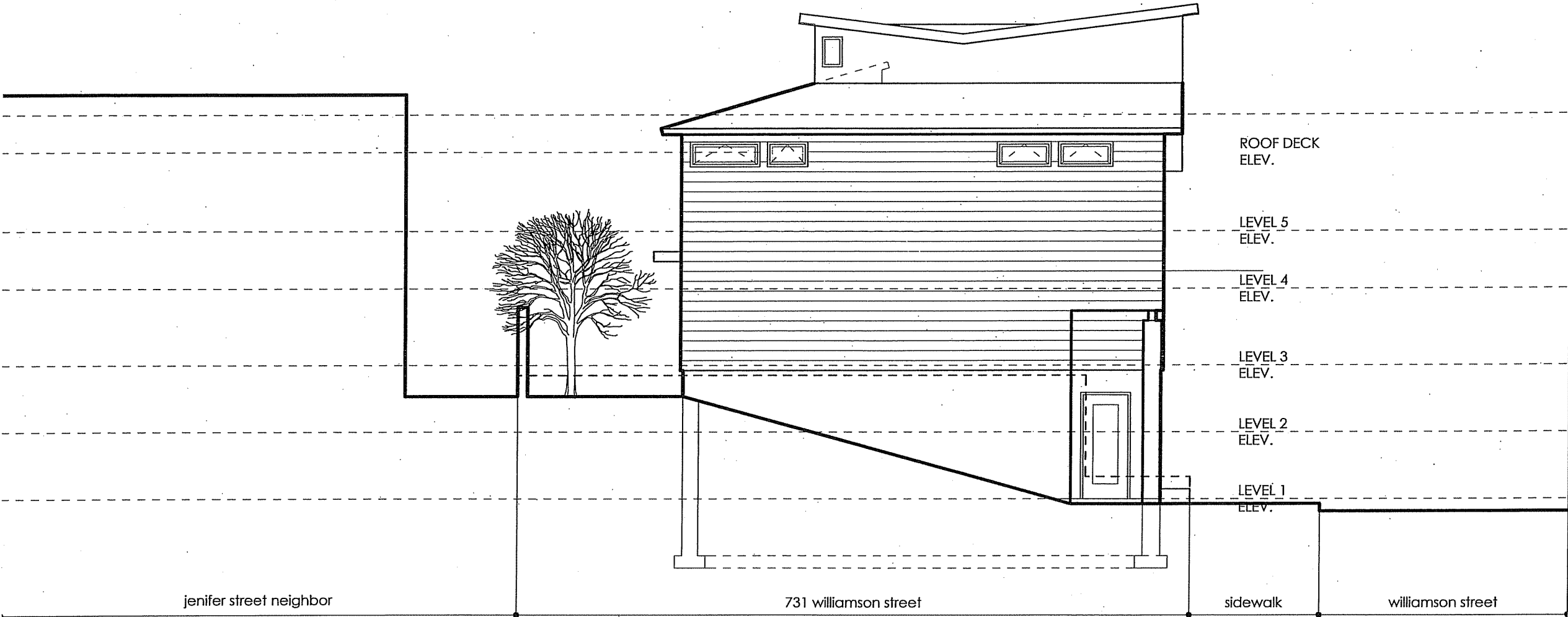
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east elevation

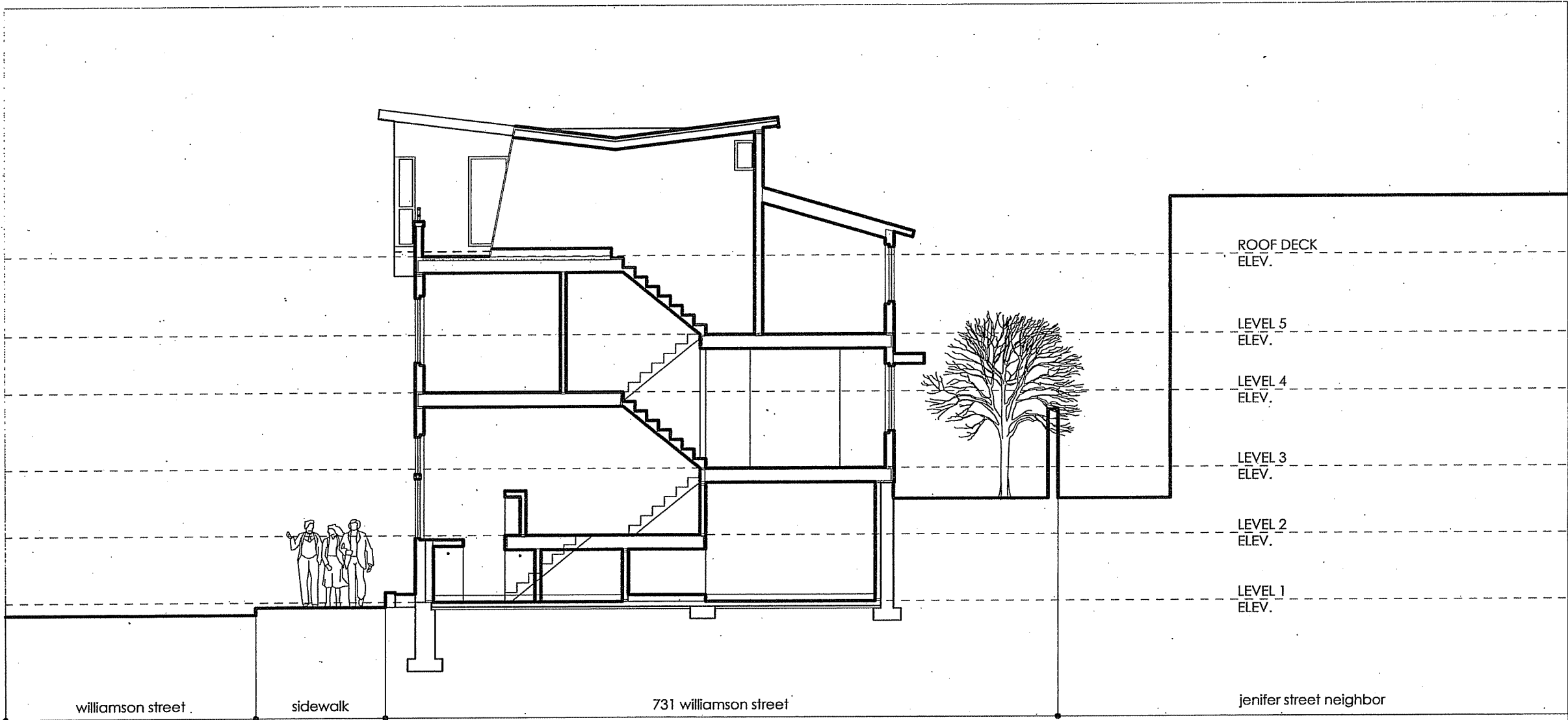
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ROOF DECK
ELEV.

LEVEL 5
ELEV.

LEVEL 4
ELEV.

LEVEL 3
ELEV.

LEVEL 2
ELEV.

LEVEL 1
ELEV.

williamson street

sidewalk

731 williamson street

jenifer street neighbor

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CONCEPT SECTION

PROPOSED NEW HOME FOR:

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