

Information for Town of Darien Zoning Board of Appeals

FROM: Kirtley Cameron, AIA

RE: Application for 180 Middlesex Road, Owners Tyler and Mary Connell Lifton

DATE: For meeting March 18, 2020

Firm Overview

Kirtley Cameron Design offers architectural and design services with a focus on residential architecture. Many projects combine the old with the new, balancing historic preservation with the latest technologies and materials in new construction and energy efficiency. Projects are predominantly in Westchester NY but also include recent work in Newport RI and Nantucket MA. Kirtley is active in local historic preservation, having served on the Bedford Village Historic District Review Commission, and as past President of the Board of Directors of the Bedford Historical Society.

She is also dedicated to education, as a past Trustee of Rippowam Cisqua School in Bedford NY, and St. Michael's Country Day School in Newport RI, and as a current Trustee of St. George's School in Newport, RI and Middlebury College in Middlebury VT. In her various roles as a Trustee she has overseen institutional projects ranging from campus wide renovations to new dorms to historic restorations. She is also a member of the Advisory Board of Bedford 2020.

Kirtley is a licensed Architect in New York and Connecticut and is an active member of the AIA. She earned her Master's in Architecture from Columbia Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation. She has a B.A. from Middlebury College and worked in the art auction business at Sotheby's New York and London for seven years prior to dedicating herself to architecture and design full time. The firm is based in Bedford NY where Kirtley lives with her husband and three daughters.

Project Overview

Renovate and add on to a 2,700 SF existing home with a historic 1,200 SF core dating back to c. 1730.

Design Process

I have been working with Mary Connell and Tyler Lifton for over a year now, and we have explored all options, including demolition and new construction. I was thrilled that they chose to renovate and add on to the existing historic home, despite the premium in both time and cost.

In schematic design, we looked at two types of additions:

1. Minimal impact "connected" addition – 1½ story addition extending off the back that would reduce the impact on the existing house and preserve more of the exterior of the original house. There were a number of reasons we did not choose this option, primarily that the original house became a relic that was connected to their new living space but not truly a part of it. This option was dismissed because it did not achieve what they wanted, which is to LIVE in the old house and to blend the new with the old - and to have the incredible original fireplace be a central part of their kitchen and their daily family life – with a priority on preserving historic elements of the interior.

2. "Integrated" addition –create additional square footage that is integrated with the existing house so that the primary living spaces would be incorporated and flow easily between the new and the old. This is the approach that we developed, and the existing original fireplace is now at the absolute core of the house and will be the center of their home.

Design Goals

- (A) Preserve historic elements including the front door and many of the original windows on the front façade, and the scale and finishes of the original rooms (2 rooms) on the interior including what remains of the original floor boards, the remaining original beams and the original functioning fireplace, including the additional two facades of that fireplace that are original to the home, but are not in use today.
- (B) Create living spaces that are functional, comfortable, and safe. This includes creating stairs that meet current building codes, remediating any environmentally hazardous materials, a modest but more functional kitchen, and enough bedrooms for each of their daughters to have their own modest room (they currently share one of the two bedrooms on the second floor) as well as a guest room.
- (C) Bring more light into the living spaces with more windows and better access to the outdoors in the back.
- (D) Improve the energy efficiency of the house with better insulation, more efficient windows and doors on the new addition, better weather proofing on existing doors and windows, and more efficient mechanical systems
- (E) To achieve this in the most cost effective – and space effective – way given the constraints of working with the existing historic home.

Scope of Changes

The proposed changes are not insignificant. But we believe the for the house to continue to be used as a residence, and hopefully maintained for many years to come, significant changes are needed.

Contrary to the letter submitted by Marian Castell on Feb. 11, 2020, the history of the house reveals a series of changes over time, some more significant than others. Beyond the written history, what you see when you look closely at the existing house, as outlined in Tim DeBartolomeo's report, is that what remains of the original structure has been modified, reinforced and altered extensively.

Ms. Castell also indicated that only three original windows were being preserved which is not accurate. The drawings demonstrate that we intend to use nine existing windows. These include the three on the front façade (one will be swapped with the relocated front door), the one on the east façade of the original core of the house, and two of the three on the west façade of the 18th century addition. Additionally, we will keep the three existing windows on the front façade from the 1990's addition. We also plan to reuse one of the existing windows on the gable end of the second floor for the final window on the first floor of the west façade, resulting in entirely existing windows on the first floor of the original and 18th century portion of the house.

We also explored using some of the existing 19th century windows currently on the rear, south façade, on the second floor of the front – but these windows would have required a higher eave height and therefore roof height, so we chose to use new windows there in our effort to make the increased roof height as

minimal as possible. I also note that not all of the "original" windows have their original (hand blown) glass, and the windows in the oldest part of the house are currently a mix of new and old glass as well as some replacement frames and sashes. We hope to consider replacing some of the newer glass with hand blown or reclaimed glass to restore them to a more historical look, budget permitting.

Ms. Castell also raised a question of whether a solution may be to change the roof pitch. We have looked extensively at options around the roof pitch, and in every case I felt that changing the pitch was a greater departure from the look of the house and from the style of the colonial architecture than the increase in roof height. Further a change in the roof pitch would mean it did not match the pitch of the existing roof to remain, which could only be addressed by either raising the roof for the full length of the existing ridge (adding more bulk within the setback) or changing the pitch of both roofs, further departing from the look and style of the original house. Additionally, the 1995 addition was designed with the same 9/12 roof pitch so a change would also be a departure from that part of the existing house.

The plans and elevations at this phase of schematic design reflect the culmination of many iterations as we tried various roof lines, pitches, window placements and styles, and interior layouts. What they do not show as clearly is our intent to maintain and restore many of the original interior elements where we feel there is more of the character and value, including the fireplace, floors, beams, moldings and windows.

Proposed Roof Height as "Minimum Adjustment" Solution

EXISTING ROOF: 19' – 7" ABOVE GRADE

PROPOSED RAISED ROOF (WITHIN SETBACK): 23' – 6" ABOVE GRADE FOR INCREASE of 3' – 11"

MEAN OF HIGHEST EAVE AND RIDGE: +/- 18'

ROOF OF PROPOSED ADDITION: 22' – 0" ABOVE GRADE

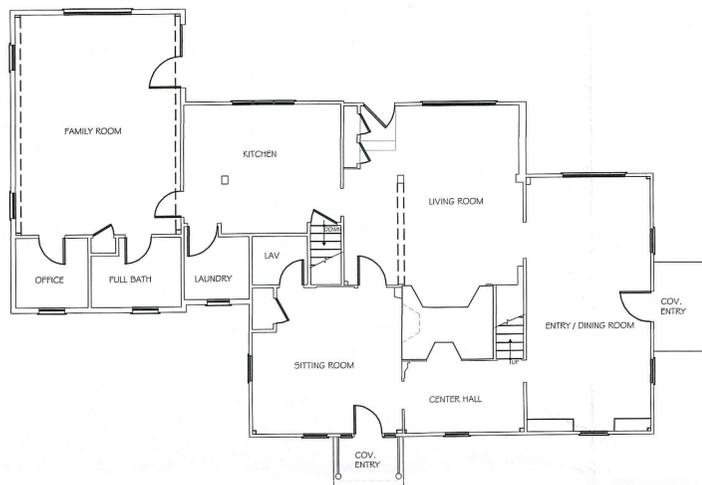
In an effort to make sure the original part of the house is not "dominated" by a higher roof line of the addition behind it, we wanted the roof of the original to be slightly higher, so that it could step down by 18" to the addition. This means that the minimum roof height of the raised roof is driven by the minimum roof height of the new addition behind it.

The roof height of the new addition is 22'. Keeping the existing second floor height, this gives us knee walls of just 3' – 3". The shed dormers create a ceiling height of 7'-0" at the eaves. In the area of the second floor without the shed dormers – only the 13' in the middle of the 24' wide addition have a head height of 6'-8" or above. This was the minimum space that allowed us to create a space in which adults can walk freely without bumping heads, as is the case in the current second floor, as well as to use full height doors between the hallway, bedrooms, and bathrooms etc.

The 18" increase from the 22'-0" was the minimum increase to create a noticeable step up from the addition, and to prevent it from reading as one monolithic block from the west (driveway) elevation.

The proposed roof heights are also the minimum height to create windows which we felt worked with the style of the double hungs below (otherwise they would have been horizontal windows more like transoms) on the front facade. The only other way to do this would have been raise the eaves significantly more than the ridge and use a lower roof pitch. We did not want to change the roof pitch (9/12) as it is in keeping with the colonial architecture, with the existing look of the house, and with the newer addition.

Ultimately, the roof height was determined by using the minimum height (for the minimum length along the front elevation) that allowed us to integrate a new addition into the existing structure with a design that satisfied a minimum functional program on the interior and that accomplished our design goals of maintaining the identity of the original structure and of keeping the overall scale and look as small as possible – placing a high value on the west elevation facing the driveway which is also the most visible elevation from Middlesex Road.



2 EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN

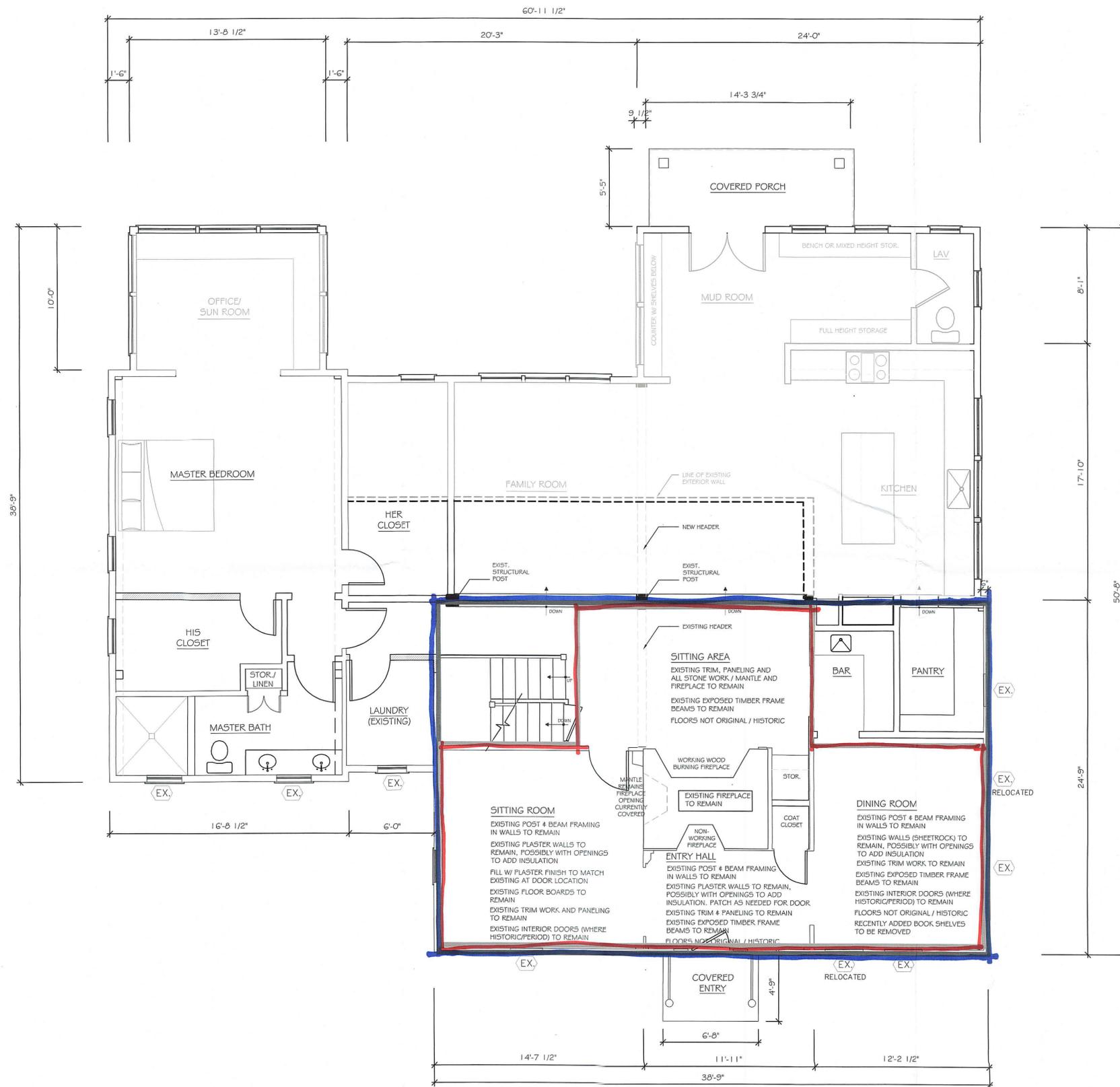
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"

WALL LEGEND	
	NEW STUD WALL
	EXISTING STUD WALL
	FOR DEMOLITION

SHADING INDICATES NEW FOOTPRINT

ORIGINAL STRUCTURE & 19TH C. ADDITION TO REMAIN

MAINTAIN HISTORIC CORE/ REMOVE EXISTING STAIR



1 PROPOSED FIRST FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



LIFTON RESIDENCE
RENOVATION & ADDITION
 180 MIDDLESEX ROAD
 DARIEN, CONNECTICUT

KIRTLEY CAMERON DESIGN
 info@kirtleycamerondesign.com
 Box 605 Bedford NY 10506
 914-234-7635

ISSUED FOR ZONING BOARD APPLICATION

DATE: 1/13/20

SCALE: AS NOTED

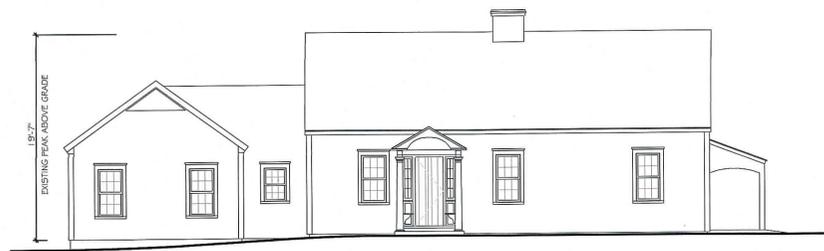
DRAWN BY: KC

REVISED BY:

DATE	DESCRIPTION
3/1/20	ADD'L NOTES

FLOOR PLANS

A-1



3 EXISTING FRONT / NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



1 PROPOSED FRONT / NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



4 EXISTING SIDE / WEST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



2 PROPOSED SIDE / WEST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

INDICATES STRUCTURE TO REMAIN

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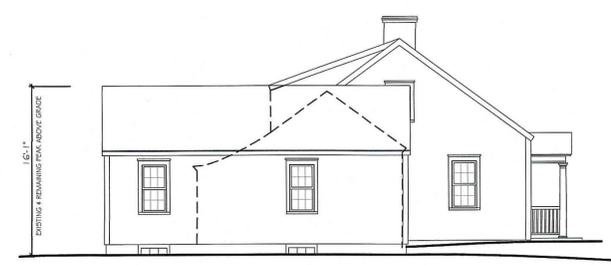
EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS



3 EXISTING REAR / SOUTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



1 PROPOSED REAR / SOUTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



4 EXISTING SIDE / EAST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"



2 PROPOSED SIDE / EAST ELEVATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

 INDICATES STRUCTURE TO REMAIN

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EXTERIOR ELEVATIONS

A-4