

Staff Report- July 9, 2013
825 South Bond Street
Baltimore City Historic District- Fells Point

Plan: Concept Review New Construction, Hearing 2- Continuation.

Staff Presenter : W. Edward Leon

Applicant : Mr. Hercenberg & Ms. Klein

Architects: James Shetler, Trace Architects

Consultant: Al Barry

Background

This two unit project is coming for a third Concept Review Hearing of a New Construction in the Fells Point historic district. It is being reviewed in accordance with the Major Project Review Procedure. The site is located in the eastern side of the Fells Point historic district.

At the April 9, 2013 hearing the Commission made the following decision: *The new information as presented by both the applicant and the neighbors at the April 9, 2013 hearing brought into question the actual location and visibility of the proposed structure. Given the discrepancies in the information that was being presented, the Commission was unable to determine whether and where a strict or lenient review should be applied. The Commission expressed a need for greater certainty about the actual appearance of the proposed construction when seen from public views. Views of the proposed height, massing, scale and form as seen from Bond Street, Shakespeare Street and adjacent public ways must be considered by the Commission.*

To resolve the questions regarding final appearance, the Commission requested the installation of story poles so that actual proposed dimensions may be determined and documented. The views of the poles or markers can be photographed and added to the record to provide clarity regarding visibility of the new construction. The Commissioners asked that the applicant and the neighbors coordinate in this effort, and that each assign a representative to participate in a site meeting when the story poles are in place. Several CHAP Commissioners have volunteered to be present, along with CHAP staff members, to observe and document the results of the story pole test.

Given the discrepancies in the new testimony, and the direction to conduct the story pole test on site, the Commission by motion tabled action on the concept at the April 9th hearing. Once the results of the story pole test are available to them, the Commission's review of the concept can resume with greater clarity.

On June 14, several commissioners and Planning Department staff met on site and reviewed a balloon test being conducted. Due to a low consistent breeze the balloons failed to maintain an upright position for both the 15 foot setback location or for the 20 foot setback location that the applicants are now submitting as a revision to their plans. On June 19, 2013, the project architect met with Planning Department staff architect, Anthony Cataldo, who confirmed that the measurements for the new proposal (20ft setback) are indeed correct and that the sketch up models are also accurate. The fourth story floor cannot be seen from the public right of way only from adjoining rear properties and from elevated positions across the street.

Plans

The plan is to construct a four story rowhouse on an empty lot site that had been demolished over 30 years ago. The original proposal included a ground floor front facade accessed garage, a contemporary rear construction with a three story front facade built with historically compatible masonry materials. (Reviewed and Dis-approved at CHAP hearing June 2012) There are two housing units proposed in the new construction. At the March 2013, hearing the Commission approved of plan scheme that had parking that was accessed from the alley from the north via Shakespeare St.

The applicants have revised and prepared a new proposal for the Height, Massing and Scale of the proposed project.

Analysis

The staff has reviewed the site and found that the site had a three story high brick residential structure which collapsed more than 30 years ago, which was built sometime before the 1880s. The design precedent on this site and in the immediate area is generally three story residential structures. The adjacent structure also includes a storefront. The staff applied the following Standards for the review of the project:

- *Standard 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment. Note: CHAP interprets standard nine in such a way that new work may be subtly different from the old, allowing for new additions and buildings to replicate historic architectural details.*
- *Standard 10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*

The staff applied the following Guidelines in the review of these projects: *11.1 Guiding principles for new design, 11.2 Site Design, 11.3 Scale and form, 11.4 Building Features, 11.3 Scale and Form and 11.5 Materials and Detailing.*

The size, scale and massing has been reviewed and approved by the BMZA. (see previous attachments for Dept. Planning comments and BMZA ruling)

Although the size, scale and massing of the original proposal was consistent with other precedents of new construction and additions that the Commission has previously approved in Fells Point, it was determined not to be consistent with the immediate surrounding buildings. There has been considerable concern raised by both neighbors and objections made by the Fells Point DRC regarding the height, scale and massing on the site (as allowed by the approved zoning). The applicants were advised by Motion at the June 2012 hearing to study other suitable height, massing and scale plans for the rear new construction.

The project now presents a height, massing and scale that conforms to the previous suggestions made by staff. The front section of the 4th story is now 20 feet from the front. The proposal has addressed the Commission motion by reducing the rear massing of the project, and compressed the structure on the site. It is now less visible from the alley to the north of the site where the intended vehicular access is being considered. The principal massing is behind the rear addition of the property to the north at 823 South Bond Street and mostly concealed from the south by the much larger (in mass) and longer rear of 827 South Bond Street. The rear of the proposed structure is cannot possibly be seen from the courtyard/sally port area of 827 South Bond Street.

The proposal is planning on using the following materials: Clad wood windows, hardie panel with batten strips, cedar or fiber cement siding, architectural shingles, brick, metal clad wood windows, four over four wood windows, and wood trim. The materials list follows and has been used throughout new construction in the Fells Point historic district and approved by the Commission.

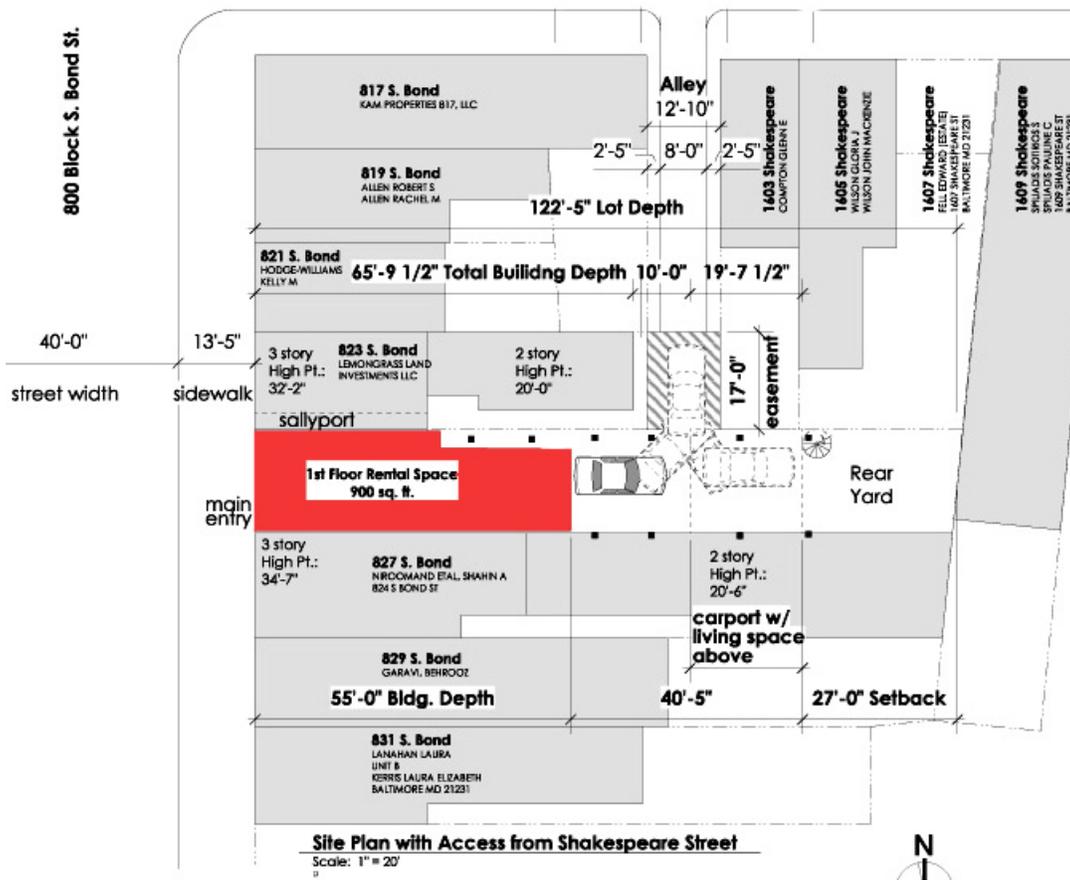
Revised plan Submitted 6/14/2013 (Summer 2013): The new plans as submitted have further reduced to massing of the proposal and has been setback an additional 20 feet and this becoming even less visible to pedestrians from both Bond and Shakespeare Streets. And plans and drawings have been verified by a Department of Planning staff architect.

Staff Recommendation

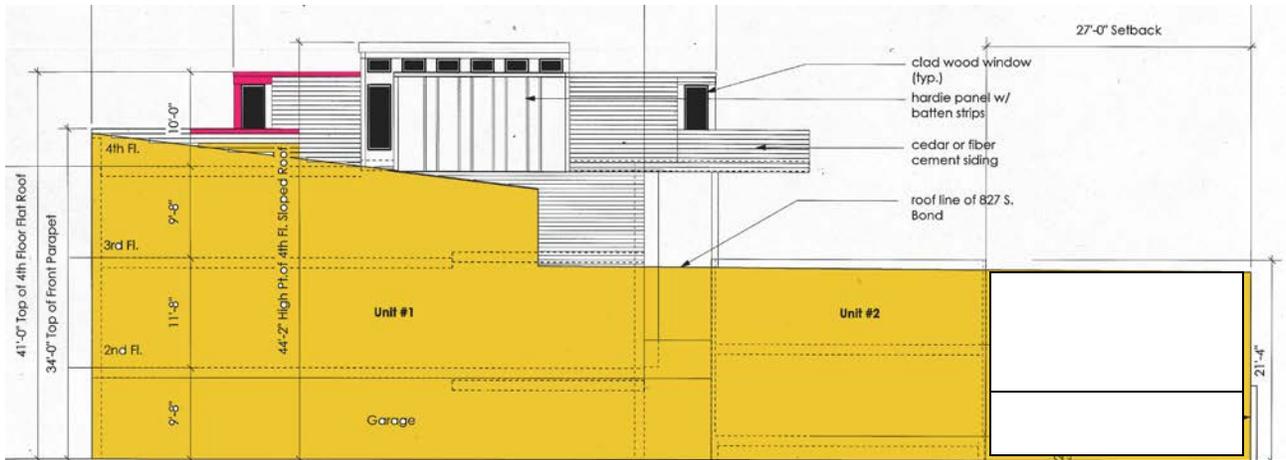
Staff recommends approval of the July 9, 2013 concept project (20ft setback and reduced rear) as the height, massing and scale have been revised in accordance with the CHAP Hearing Motion of June 2012. *(The following Guidelines were applied to this application: 11.1 Guiding principles for new design, 11.2 Site Design, 11.3 Scale and form, and 11.4 Building Features. And 10.1 Archeological resources (p.57)*

Site Plan

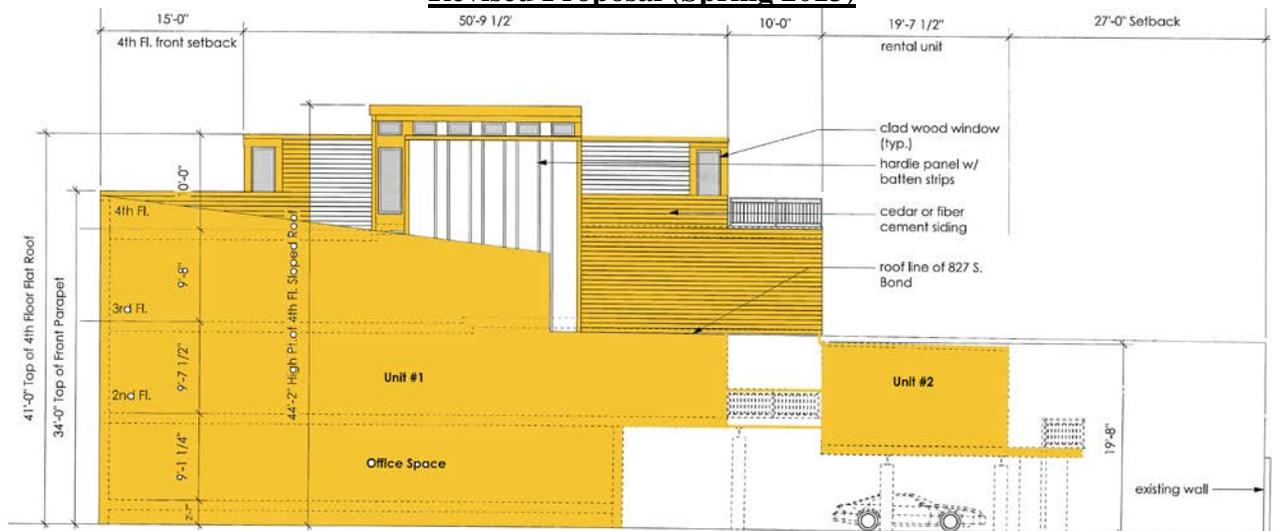
1600 Block Shakespeare St.



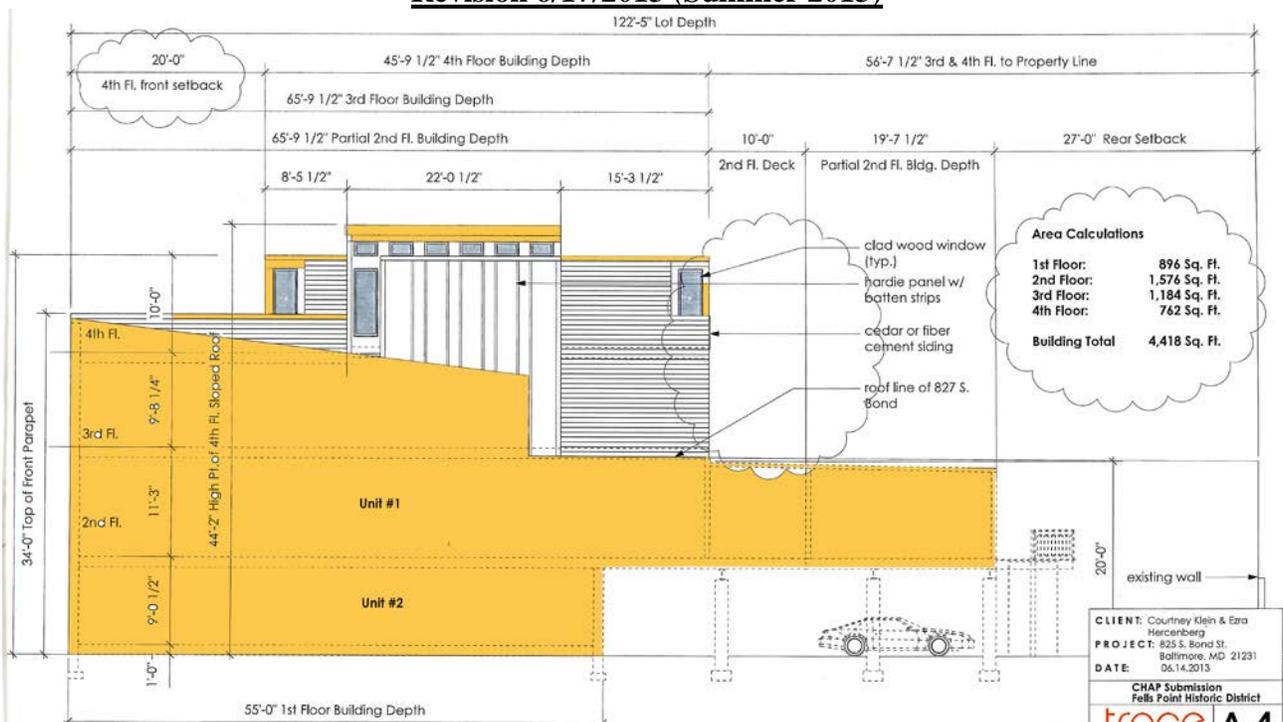
Original Proposal



Revised Proposal (Spring 2013)

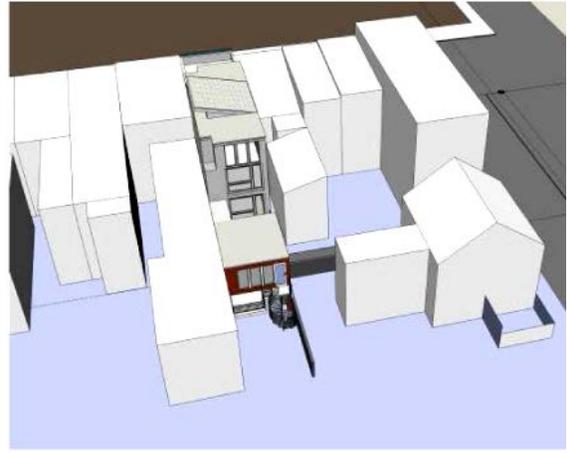


Revision 6/17/2013 (Summer 2013)



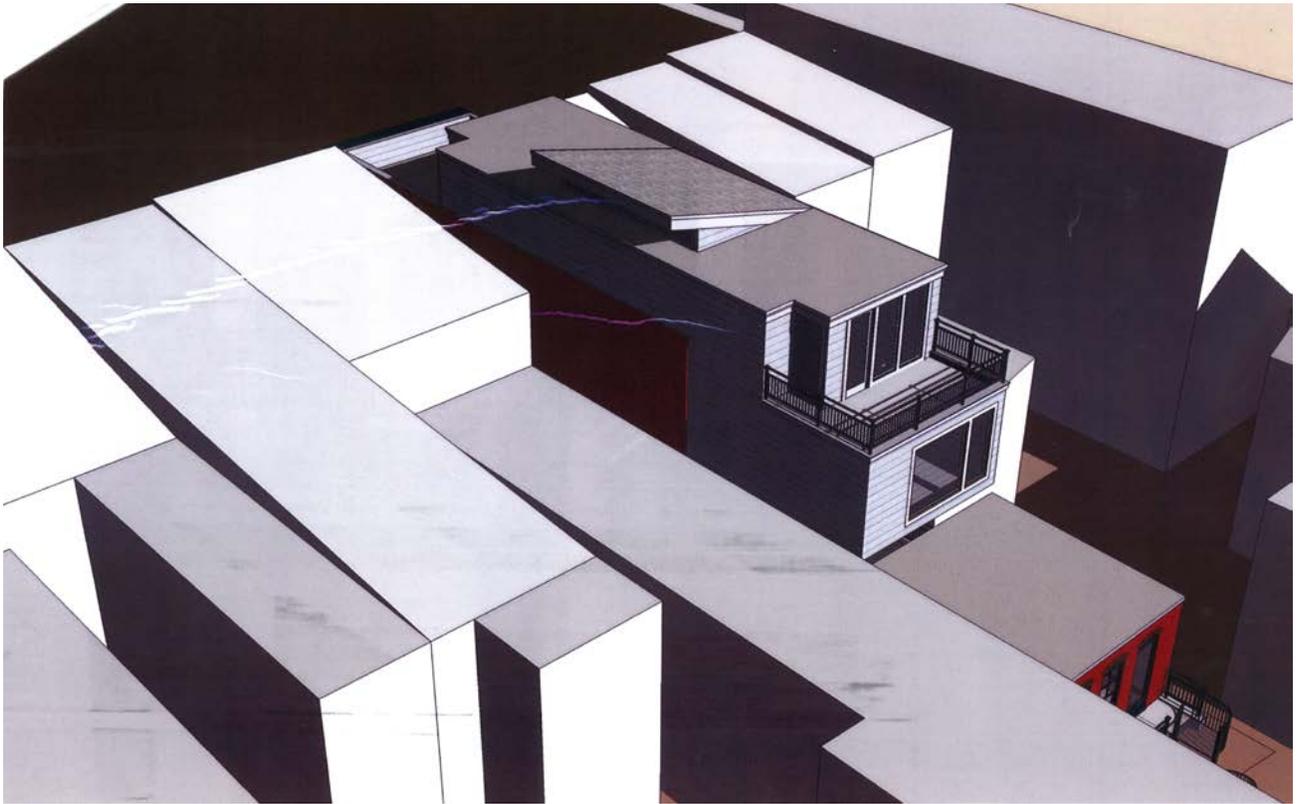


Spring 2013

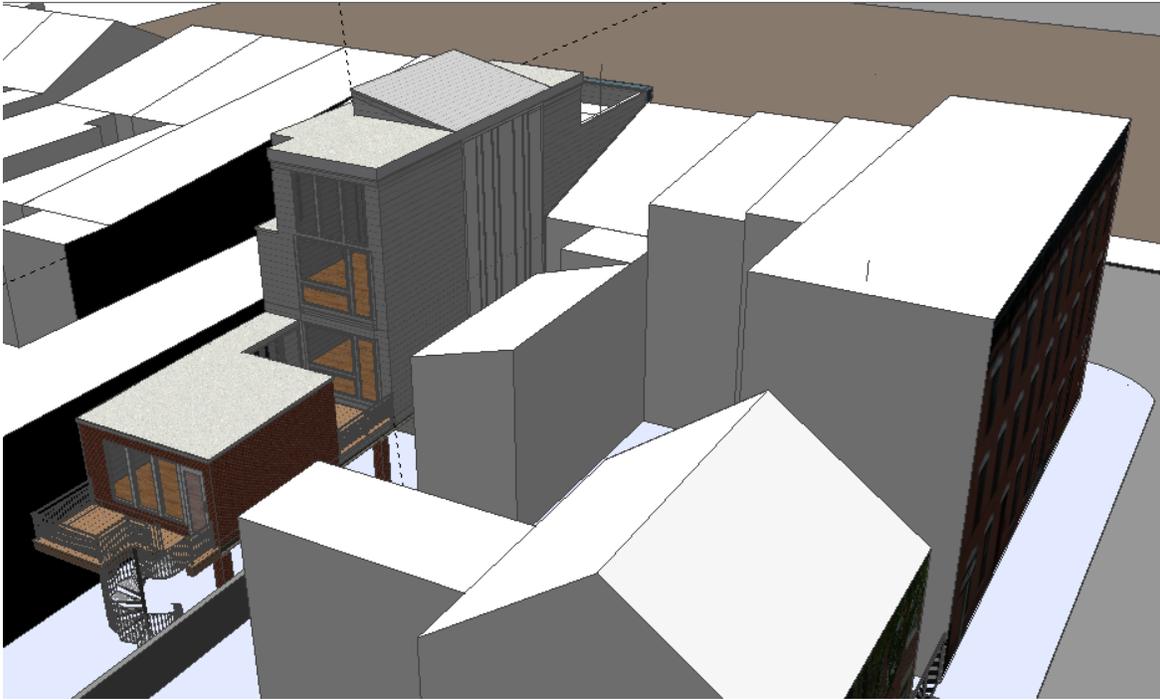


Summer 2013



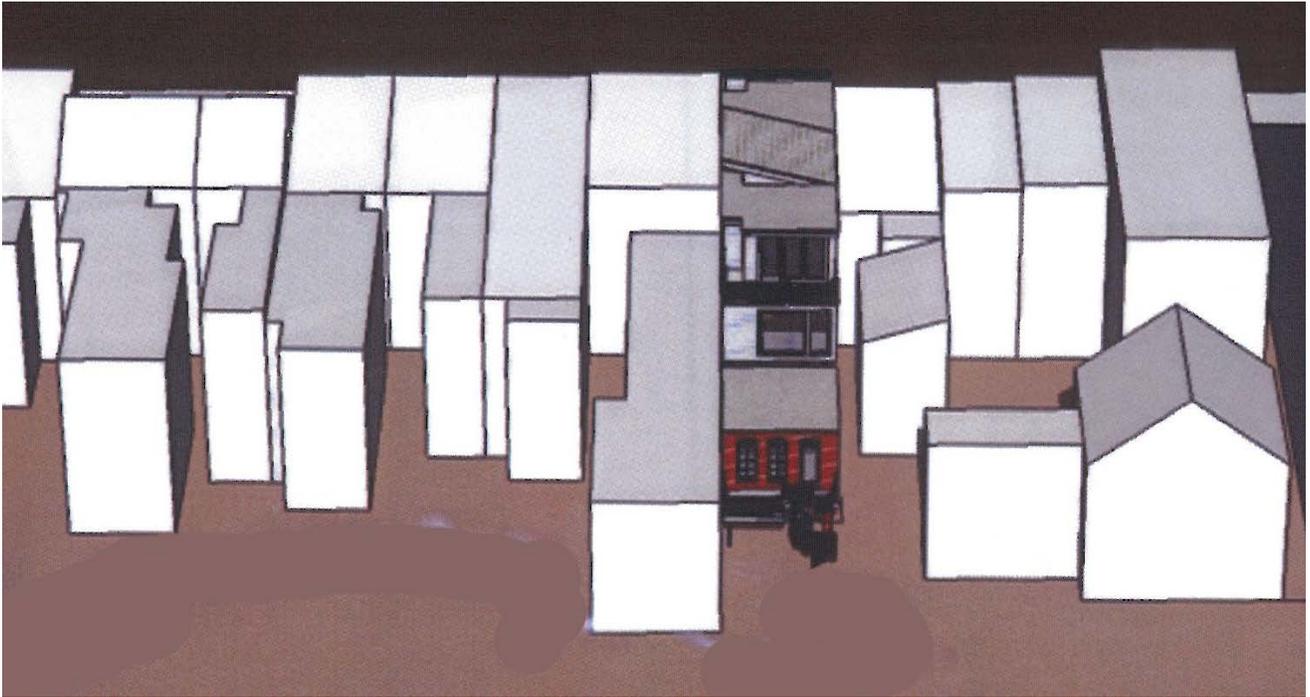
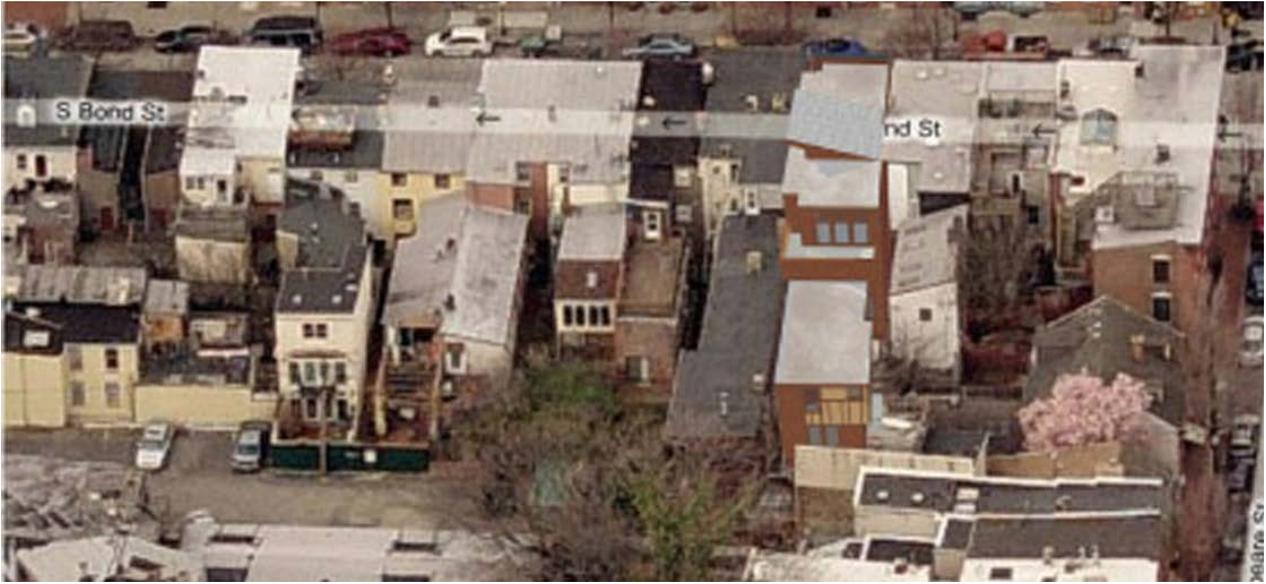


Revised Proposal



Summer 2013





Spring 2013

Current View-from Shakespeare Street



Summer 2013



View of Lot 825 S. Bond Street- Balloon Test



View outward from site



View looking outward and North towards Shakespeare Street