



Catherine E. Pugh
Mayor

**COMMISSION FOR
HISTORICAL & ARCHITECTURAL
PRESERVATION**

Tom Liebel, Chairman

STAFF REPORT



*Thomas J. Stosur
Director*

April, 10, 2018

REQUEST: Consent Agenda – Remove unapproved work; reconstruct original third floor; add deck to roof of reconstructed two-story addition

ADDRESS: 119 S. Gilmore Street (Union Square Historic District)

PETITIONER(S): Ramsey Aburdene, Owner
John H. Carter, AIA, Architect

STAFF: Walter W. Gallas, AICP

RECOMMENDATION: Approval, with rooftop deck details to be approved at staff level.

SITE/HISTORIC DISTRICT

General Area: The property is located in the Union Square Historic District on Gilmore Street between Lemmon Street to the north and W. Pratt Street to the south (*Image 1*). The Union Square local historic district is a dense area of rowhouses and commercial structures located in Southwest Baltimore. Two major features define the district: Union Square Park, a donation to the city in the 1840s, and Hollins Market with the city’s oldest market building. Generally bounded by South Schroeder, West Pratt, South Fulton, and West Baltimore Streets, the area of approximately 21 blocks is comprised of over 1,000 buildings. The district is built on a hierarchical street-grid system laid down over gently sloping terrain by engineer-surveyor Thomas H. Poppleton following the land’s 1816 annexation to the city.

Site Conditions

The existing property is a three-story brick rowhouse on the east side of Gilmore Street. It is one of a row between Lemmon Street and Pratt Street, which originally contained eight houses (*Image 2*). The two buildings nearest W. Pratt Street, 123 and 125 S. Gilmore Street, were demolished in 1997, leaving an empty lot at the corner. The three-bay building at 119 S. Gilmore Street has fine mortar joints, flat splayed brick lintels above the windows, and a segmental arched front entrance outlined in curved brick. The front door is a replacement metal door with 9 lites. The first floor windows and front door have been covered with metal grills installed without CHAP approval. A low cast iron fence encloses a shallow front flower garden. A fine wooden cornice tops the roof edge. The building rises to three stories on the Gilmore Street side. Like its neighbors, the original three-story section at the front had a depth of about 30 feet and then the building dropped to a two-story rear section of about 36 feet in length (*Images 3 & 4*).

Today, the site shows that substantial construction was started at the rear without CHAP review and approval (*Images 5 & 6*). Before this construction began, the rear elevation included a small deck at the second floor, and a large deck at the first floor. The building has been in a deteriorated condition. State real estate records (SDAT) show that the owner purchased the property in August 2017.

The 1890 Sanborn map shows 119 S. Gilmor as one of eight three-story rowhouses with two-story rear appendages in an intact row. (*Image 7*). The row was still intact in a 1977 photograph, with the corner storefront boarded (*Image 8*). Following a fire, the two southern most buildings of the row were demolished in 1997.

BACKGROUND

- June 20 and October 14, 1977—Paint Permits.
- October 14, 1977—Notice to Proceed to “install garden front.”
- June 20, 1978—Notice to Proceed to “chemically clean and repoint.”
- August 4, 1978—Notice to Proceed to install solid wood four-panel door.
- May 28, 1979—Paint Permit for exterior rear.
- April 10, 1987—Notice to Proceed for removal of existing non-original second story rear porch and construction of new decks at first and second floor.
- November 28, 2017—Building permit issued. Application states: “1) Demolish interior floors, stairs, partitions & finishes on party walls; 2) Construct stairs, partitions floors & new finishes on ex. party walls as per plans and per code.” Attached plans showed new construction along with demolition, but application was treated as interior only application, and was not referred for CHAP review.
- December 27, 2017—CHAP learned that grilles were installed at front door and windows without CHAP review; inspector asked to investigate. Once work is complete, applicants are to remove grilles.
- January 15, 2018—CHAP learned that the rear of the building is open to the weather.
- February 8, 2018—Extensive construction at rear to third floor was underway without CHAP review; inspector reached owner, and owner called CHAP staff.
- February 28, 2018—Site visit to property. Plan was to extend third floor to length of original two-story rear section and to construct deck on roof of third story.
- March 8, 2018—Meeting with architect about plans.
- March 21, 2018—After reviewing plans, CHAP staff determined that the third floor extension and the roof top deck with “doghouse” did not meet the design guidelines. Staff informed applicant that the plans would meet the guidelines if the third floor was reduced to the original length and the deck constructed on the roof of the two-story rear section.
- March 26, 2018—Applicants revised the plans per the staff comments and met with staff to review. Staff determined that revised plans met the design guidelines.

PROPOSAL

Applicant proposes to remove unapproved work, reduce the third floor to the original length, and construct a deck on the roof of the rear two-story section.

APPLICATION OF GUIDELINES

- *Guideline 1.1 Identifying and Preserving Historic Building Fabric:* The historic fabric at the front elevation is being preserved. Little, if any, historic fabric is present at the rear, and so the proposal meets this guideline.
- *Guideline 1.8.10 Roof Decks:* The deck will not be visible from the front elevation. The roof deck atop the second floor will extend about 20 feet and be set back about 14 feet from the rear of the two-story building. It will be enclosed by a glass rail, making it only slightly visible, so it substantially meets the design guideline.
- *Guideline 1.18 Alterations and Additions:* The proposed construction does not affect the historic character of the front elevation of the building which is in a relatively intact row. The proposal removes the construction on the third floor that was not approved by CHAP, and reduces the third floor to the original length—conforming with the neighboring houses in the row, and returning the envelope to its previous size. Thus it meets the guidelines.
- *Guideline 2.3 Scale and Form:* The proposed construction—as revised—is compatible with the height and depth of the surrounding buildings, and thus the scale and form meet the guideline.
- *Guideline 2.5.1. Doors and Windows:* The windows and door at the proposed rear elevation are different from that of the previous elevation. In addition sliding glass doors are introduced at the first and second floors, where French doors would be more appropriate. Because this is the rear elevation, the design guidelines are partially met.
- *Guideline 2.5.2 Materials:* The proposed exterior finish for the addition at the rear is cementitious lap siding which is compatible with the surrounding properties and therefore meets the guideline.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMENTS

The Union Square ARC was informed of the proposal and supports these modifications to the original plan—reducing the third floor to the original size and constructing the deck on the roof of the two-story rear section.

ANALYSIS

CHAP staff finds that the proposed rear addition:

- Meets *Guideline 1.1 Identifying and Preserving Historic Building Fabric*;
- Substantially meets *Guideline 1.8.10 Roof Decks*;
- Meets *Guideline 1.18 Alterations and Additions*;
- Meets *Guideline 2.3 Scale and Form*;
- Partially meets *Guideline 2.5.1. Doors and Windows*; and
- Meets *Guideline 2.5.2 Materials*.

RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends approval of the plan with rooftop deck details to be approved by staff.



Eric Holcomb
Director

MAP AND IMAGES

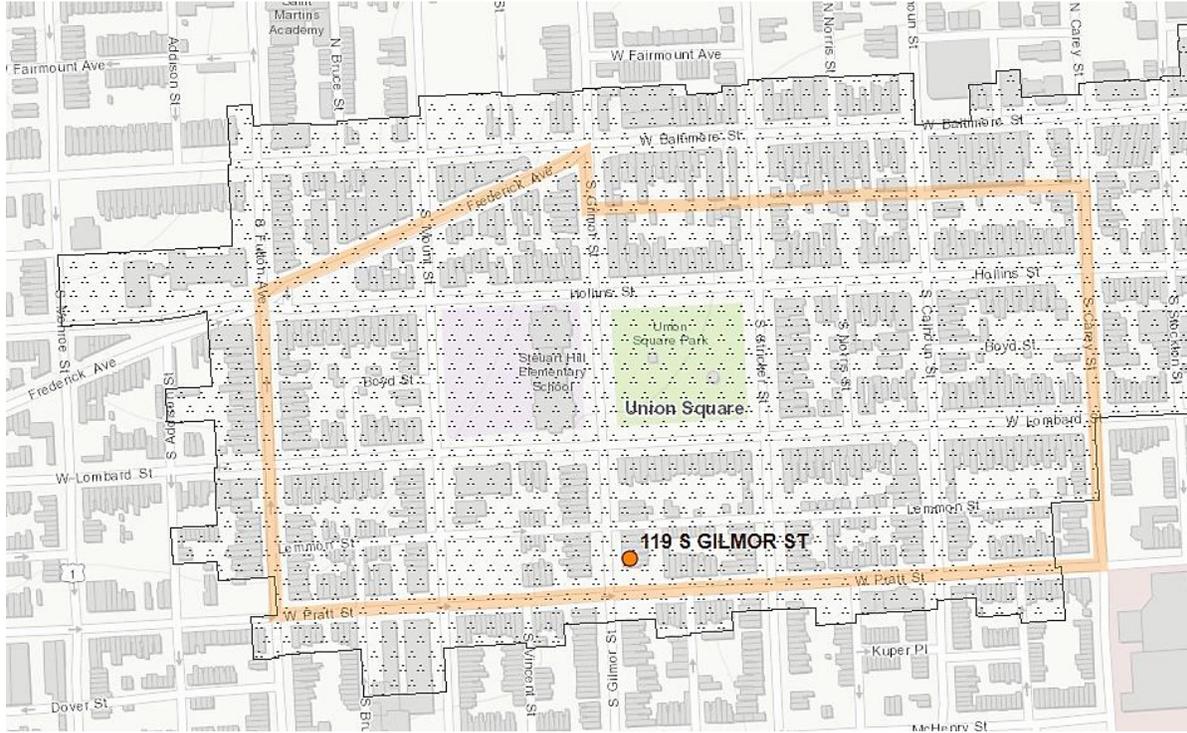


Image 1– 119 S. Gilmor Street in the Union Square Historic District.

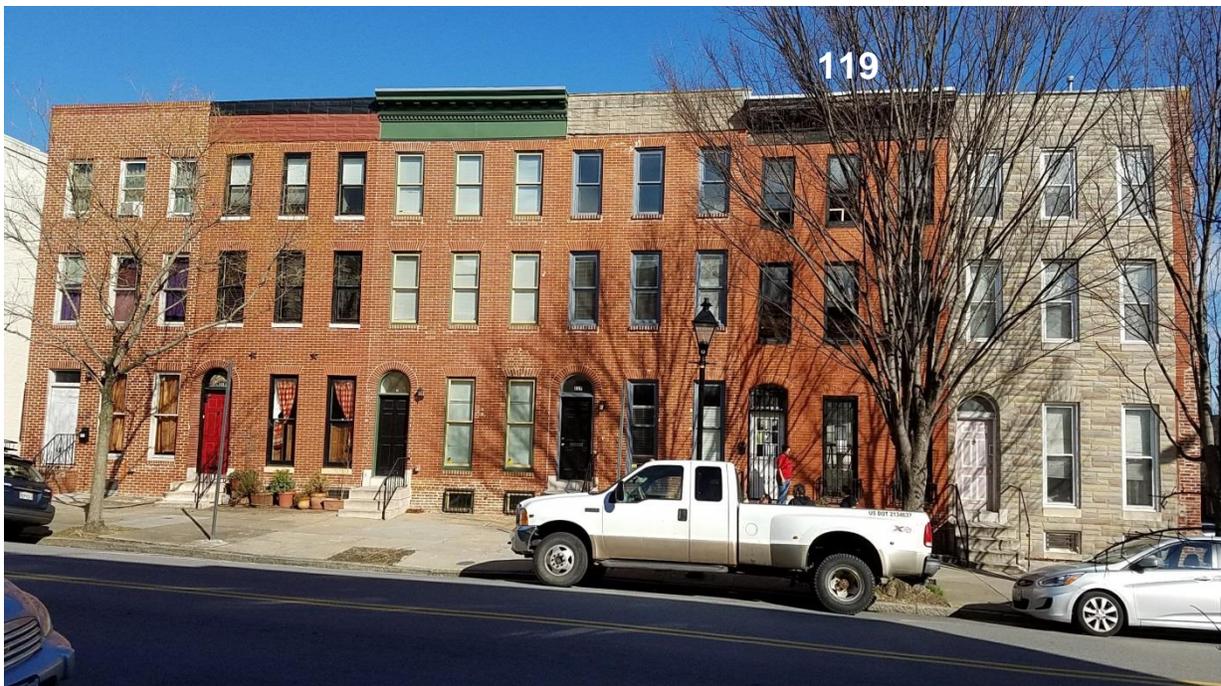


Image 2: 111 – 121 S. Gilmor Street, February 28, 2018



Image 3: Aerial view of 119 S. Gilmor Street from east, December 2017

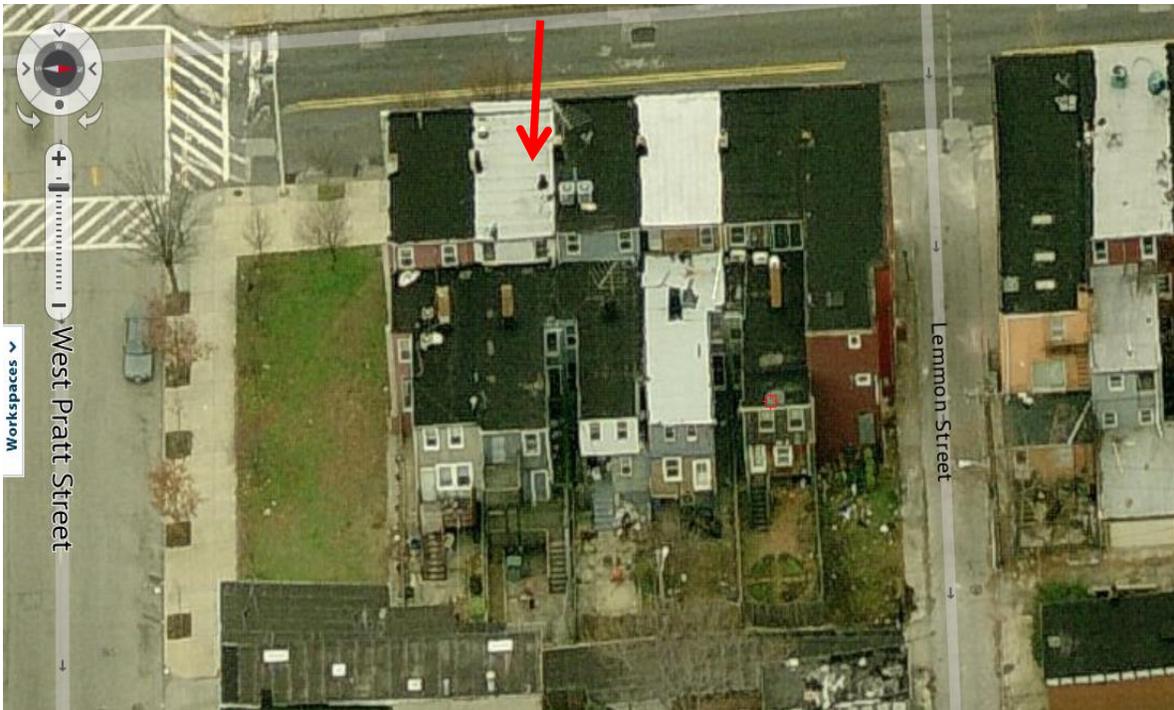


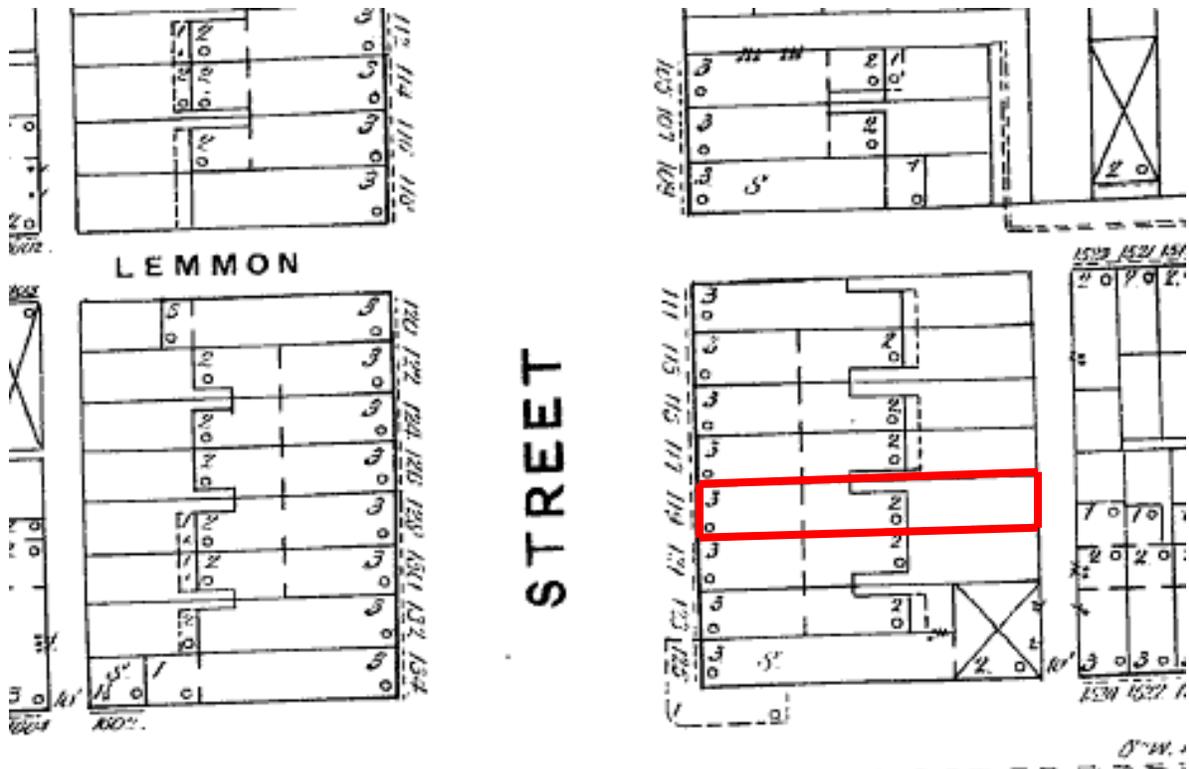
Image 4: Aerial view of 119 S. Gilmor Street, December 2007



Image 5: Rear of 119 S. Gilmor Street, unapproved work, February 28, 2018



Image 6: 119 S. Gilmor Street from W. Pratt Street, unapproved work, February 28, 2018



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Image 7: 119 S. Gilmor Street, 1890 Sanborn Map



Image 8: 105 – 125 S. Gilmor Street, December 30, 1977

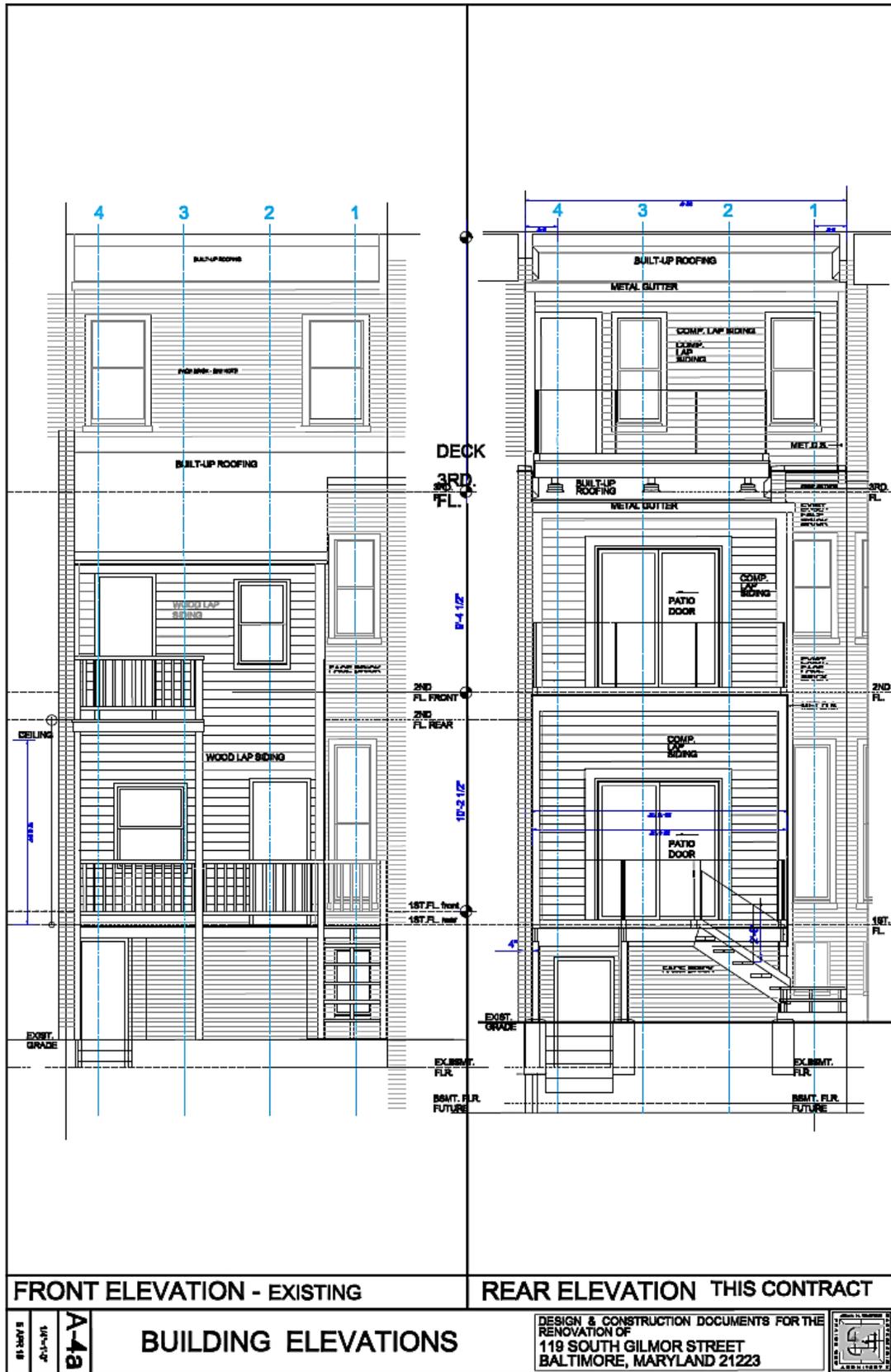


Image 9: Previous and proposed rear elevation, 119 S. Gilmor Street, April 5, 2018

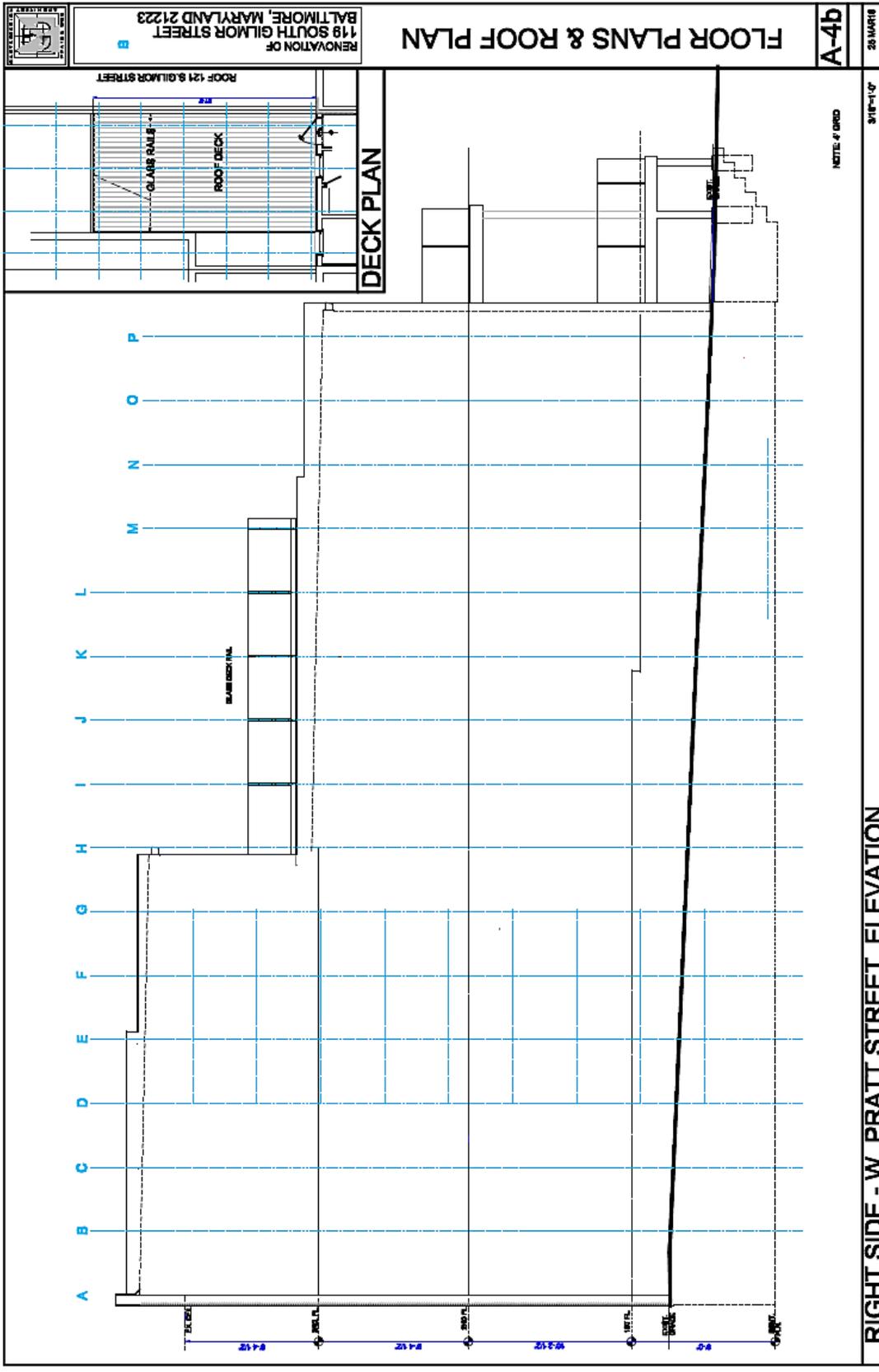


Image 10: W. Pratt Street (south) elevation and rooftop deck plan, 119 S. Gilmore Street, March 25, 2018