

Chief Executive Officer
Michael Thurmond

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

Interim Director
Cedric Hudson

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS APPLICATION FOR PUBLIC HEARING (VARIANCES, SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS, APPEALS OF ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS)

Applicant and/or
Authorized Representative: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City/State/Zip Code: _____

Email: _____

Telephone Home: _____ Business: _____

OWNER OF RECORD OF SUBJECT PROPERTY

Owner: _____

Address (Mailing): _____

Email: _____ Telephone Home: _____ Business: _____

ADDRESS/LOCATION OF SUBJECT PROPERTY

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

District(s): _____ Land Lot(s): _____ Block: _____ Parcel: _____

Zoning Classification: _____ Commission District & Super District: _____

CHECK TYPE OF HEARING REQUESTED:

_____ VARIANCE (From Development Standards causing undue hardship upon owners of property.)

_____ SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS (To reduce or waive off-street parking or loading space requirements.)

_____ OFFICIAL APPEAL OF ADMINISTRATIVE DECISIONS.

PLEASE REVIEW THE FILING GUIDELINES ON PAGE 4. FAILURE TO FOLLOW GUIDELINES MAY RESULT IN SCHEDULING DELAYS.

Email plansustain@dekalbcountyga.gov with any questions.

DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & SUSTAINABILITY

ZONING BOARD OF APPEALS APPLICATION

AUTHORIZATION OF THE PROPERTY OWNER

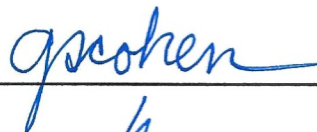
I hereby authorize the staff and members of the Zoning Board of Appeals to inspect the premises of the Subject Property.

I hereby certify that the information provided in the application is true and correct.

I hereby certify that I am the owner of the property subject to the application.

DATE: 24-Nov-2025

Applicant
Signature:



Gabrielle Rose
Sirner-Cohen

DATE: 24-Nov-2025

Applicant
Signature:



Morris Bernard Cohen

Morris Cohen and Gabrielle Sirner-Cohen
1112 Houston Mill Rd NE
Atlanta, GA 30329

November 24, 2025

Dear Colleagues,

We have been DeKalb County residents for 12 years and are grateful for the opportunity to make this request. Morris is a faculty member at Georgia Tech, and also serves as an election day poll worker at a DeKalb County precinct (Fernbank Elementary) since 2020. Gabby until recently worked in HR for an Atlanta-based technology company. We are raising two boys, currently in grade school, in our house at 1112 Houston Mill Rd, which is our primary/only residence.

We are requesting the following code variances from current R-85 zoning requirements:

Section 27-4.2.2(C)(3) - Reduce accessory structure side yard setback from 8.5 ft to 4.2 ft

Section 27-4.2.2(D) - Reduce accessory structure rear yard setback from 15 ft to 2.9 ft

The variance will allow the addition of a second level to our existing detached garage. The existing footprint will be maintained. The only expansion will be vertically. There will be no construction that would further reduce the setbacks of the current legally nonconforming garage, which was built in 1998. The main house was built in 1946, before the implementation of zoning codes in 1956.

The additional level will include office, storage, and play space. It may also be used as a guest suite for relatives who visit from time to time, since the main house does not have a guest room.

1. Physical Conditions of the site

Our lot abuts a cul-de-sac along the left side (As viewed from the street). The cul-de-sac has houses only on one side of it, so our property borders only the cul-de-sac street, not another house. There is a ~10.5' gap between the property line and the street curb of the cul-de-sac, which is lined with tall trees and a wood fence.

The property has a nonrectangular shape with a smaller width in the back than in the front. The property slopes upward from the street to the house, and then sharply downhill in the back yard. There is also a large old Oak tree in the front yard. As a result, the house is built far back from the street - 73 ft from the edge of the property to the front of the house. The available back yard space is thus relatively small given the lot size.

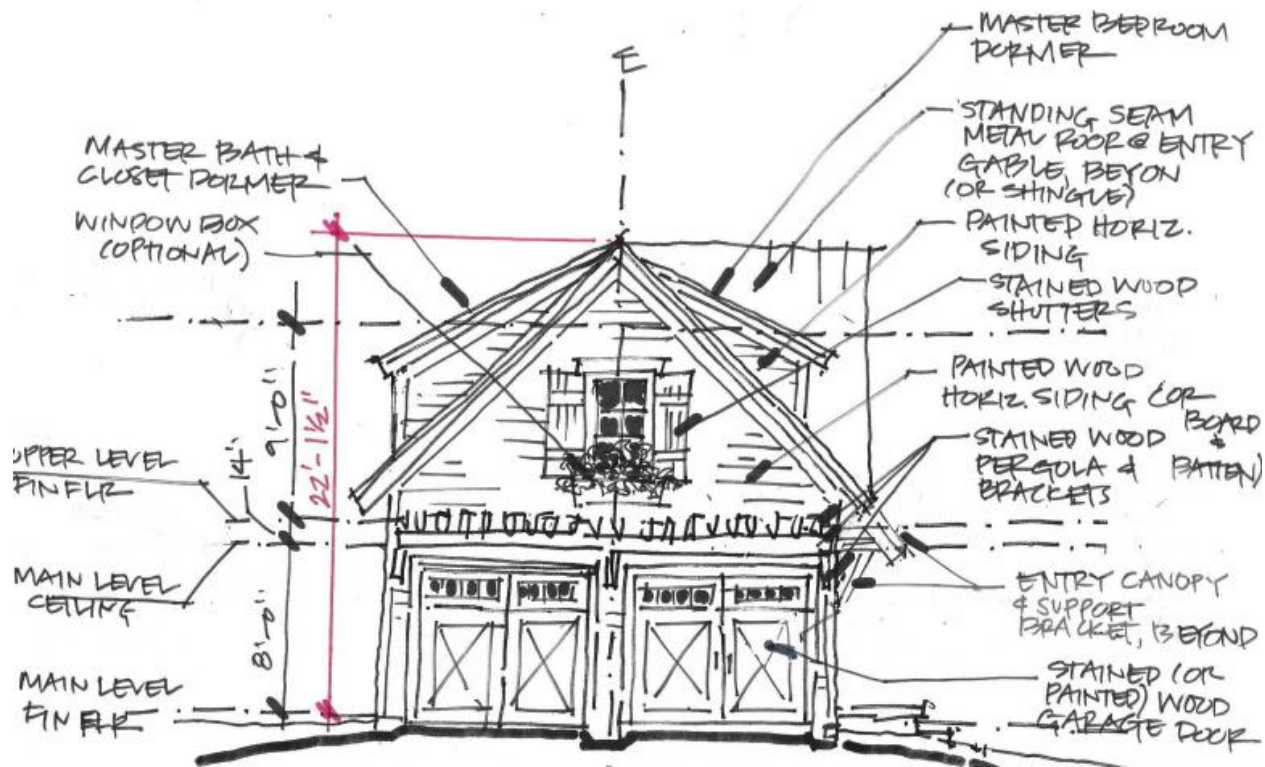


Photo 1: Architectural drawing of the expanded garage (Courtesy Dawn Bennett)

2. Minimum variance necessary

We are requesting only to maintain the existing footprint of the garage while adding a second floor. We are not requesting any additional variances. All other aspects of the design will conform with current building codes.

The expanded garage will use dormers to keep the level of the roof low, so it has a 1.5 story feel instead of 2 story. This also keeps the garage subordinate to the house. The conceptual drawing made by an architect, as shown in Photo 1, has a roof height of 22' 1.5".



Photo 2: The left of the house as viewed from the street. The corner of the garage can be seen behind the house.

3. Public welfare

The hilly shape of the property makes the garage difficult to see from the street. Photo 2 shows a view of the left side of the property from the sidewalk on the street. The garage can only barely be seen because of the slope.

The garage sits at the back corner of the property. The back edge borders the backyard of a neighbor who supports the variance, and a letter of support is included. Due to the structure of that neighbor's back yard, existing trees and retaining walls, the additional height of the garage would not noticeably affect the usability or privacy of that property. Photo 3 shows the existing garage as viewed from the back patio of that property, where only the edge the garage can be seen.

The side edge borders a cul-de-sac street, Hillshire Place, not another private property. The cul-de-sac is lined with very tall evergreen trees that are significantly higher than the garage, even after a second floor added. Photo 5 shows the existing garage from the main house.

Because of those tall evergreens, the garage is and would not be visible from the houses on the cul-de-sac, so there would be no impact to the privacy or usability of the properties on the cul-de-sac. Photo 4 shows the garage as viewed from the middle of the cul-de-sac.

4. Ordinance hardship

The existing garage is legally nonconforming, having received a variance in 1998. Denial of this request would make further improvements to the property very difficult.

As described in section 1, the shape and sloping of the property results in a smaller back yard compared to other properties in this neighborhood. Placement of the garage in the back yard but set back from the property line edges would greatly reduce the usable space in the back yard, as well as making access to the garage challenging, if not impossible, due to proximity to the existing house. Denying these variances would effectively deprive the property owners of a benefit available to most other similar lots in the neighborhood. The house was built before current building codes, which may otherwise had resulted in a different house placement on the property.



Photo 3: The garage as viewed from the back patio of the neighbor at 1669 Adelia Pl.



Photo 4: The garage and the tall trees on the edge of the Hillshire Place cul-de-sac

5. Alignment with the spirit of the law

Expansion of the garage allows improvement of the property while preserving the original house. At 2800 sq ft, the current house fills missing middle housing in a neighborhood where starter and midsize houses are gradually being replaced by much larger houses. Maintaining midsize housing is important to mitigate a housing crisis whereby starter or middle-size homes are increasingly hard to find.

The main house was built in 1946 and is one of the oldest houses in the neighborhood. The proposed plan would be a functional and aesthetic improvement to the property while still keeping this 80-year-old and well-maintained house in place.

The proposed second-level garage addition fits with typical suburban land use and other similar structures exist in the neighborhood.

The proposed project increases the density of housing space in the suburban neighborhood without detrimental impacts to the neighborhood feel or infrastructure.

Finally, we note that no significant trees on the property will be impacted or removed by the proposed expansion.

The second adjoining property owner to our house has also written a letter of support.

Conclusion

We close by again thanking you for your consideration. We hope we have shown that our proposed variance is reasonable, minimal, and not disruptive to our neighborhood. We are ready to answer questions.

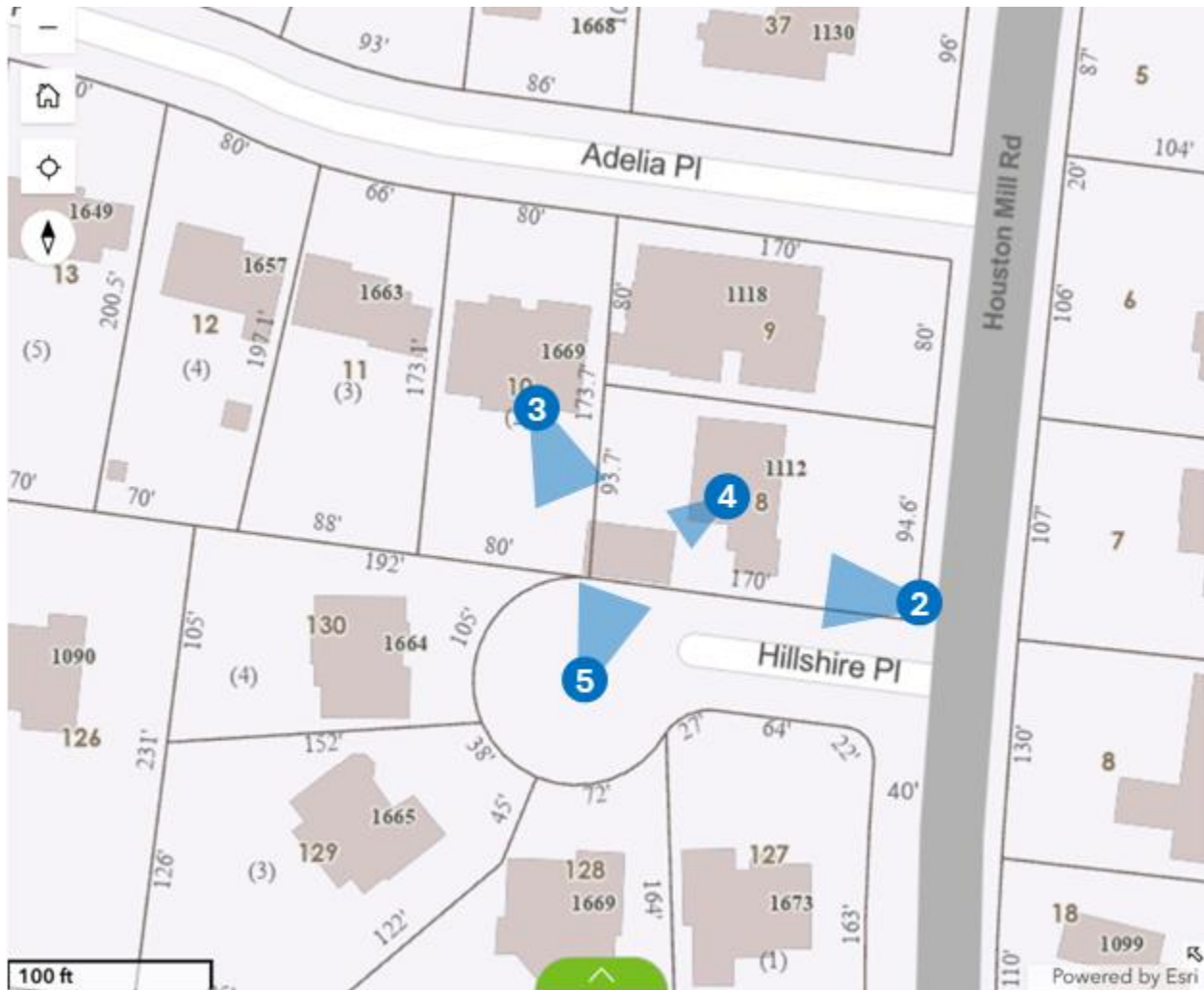
Sincerely,

Morris Cohen and Gabrielle Sirner-Cohen
morris.cohen@gmail.com



Photo 5: The view from the middle of the cul-de-sac facing the existing garage.

Appendix A: A map of the property areas, showing the location and direction of the photographs in this letter.



Survey

THIS BLOCK RESERVED FOR COURT CLERK

ZONING: R-85

SETBACKS
FRONT = 35'
SIDE = 8.5'
REAR = 40'
MIN. LOT SIZE = 12,000 SQ.FT.
MIN. LOT WIDTH = 85'
MAX. LOT COVERAGE = 35%

BOUNDARY REFERENCES:

- SUBJECT DEED BOOK 26704, PAGE 165
- PLAT BOOK 20, PAGE 46
- SEE ADJOINERS

ADDRESS(S)

1112 HOUSTON MILL ROAD
ATLANTA, GEORGIA, 30329

FLOOD NOTE

AS PER THE F.I.R.M. FLOOD INSURANCE RATE MAP DEKALBCOUNTY COMMUNITY PANEL NO. 13069 C 0062 K DATED AUGUST 15, 2019. THIS PROPERTY IS NOT IN AN AREA HAVING SPECIAL FLOOD HAZARDS.

BENCHMARK REFERENCE

ALL ELEVATIONS ARE GROUND RUN; ELEVATIONS ARE BASED OFF OF TRIMBLE NETWORK GPS MEAN SEA LEVEL MEASUREMENTS USING A TRIMBLE R12 LT BASE ROVER WITH VRS NOW RTK GNSS SERVICE.

ALLOWED IMPERVIOUS AREA

5,644.45 SQ. FT.

IMPERVIOUS SURFACE CALCULATIONS

EXISTING BUILDING FOOTPRINT	= 2,359 SQ.FT.
EXISTING CONCRETE DRIVEWAY	= 1,888 SQ.FT.
EXISTING FRONT PORCH/WALK	= 439 SQ.FT.
EXISTING DETACHED GARAGE	= 873 SQ.FT.
EXISTING DECKS (x2)	= 381 SQ.FT.
TOTAL	= 5,940 SQ.FT.

CALC. = $5940/16127 = 0.368$
= 36.8%

TREE LEGEND

- EX. HARDWOOD TREE
- PINE TREE
- PECAN TREE
- OAK TREE

LEGEND

<ul style="list-style-type: none">IPF IRON PIN FOUNDIPS IRON PIN SET (1/2"RB)CTP CRIMP TOP PIPEOTP OPEN TOP PIPER/W RIGHT OF WAYRB REBARPROPERTY LINECENTER LINET.B.M. TEMPORARY BENCHMARKBENCHMARKL.L.L. LAND LOT LINEN/F NOW OR FORMERLYPT PERC. TEST (BOREHOLE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">PROPERTY LINEFENCETELEPHONE LINEGAS LINEWATER LINESANITARY SEWER LINEOVERHEAD POWER LINEUNDERGROUND POWERTELEPHONE PEDASTALTELE COMM. MANHOLE LIDPOWER POLELIGHT POLEGA POWER MANHOLE LIDGUY WIRE3x3 TRANSFORMERAIR CONDITIONERGAS VALVEI.E. INVERT ELEVATIONSMH SANITARY SEWER MANHOLECO CLEANOUTD.I. DRAIN INLETCMP CORRUGATED METAL PIPEFES FLARED END SECTION
<ul style="list-style-type: none">WATER VALVEFIRE HYDRANTWATER STUB OUTWATER METERFIRE DEPT. LINE	

REVISIONS:

PLAT BOOK 20, PAGE 46

LAND LOT 105 of the 18th DISTRICT

DEKALB COUNTY, GEORGIA

DATE: 10/23/2025

SCALE: 1"= 20'



ALPHARETTA OFFICE

1875 LOCKEWAY DRIVE - SUITE 702

Alpharetta, Georgia 30004

Office: (770) 675-6197

WEBSITE: MERIDIANGEOMATICS.NET

EMAIL: SURVEYINGATLANTA@GMAIL.COM

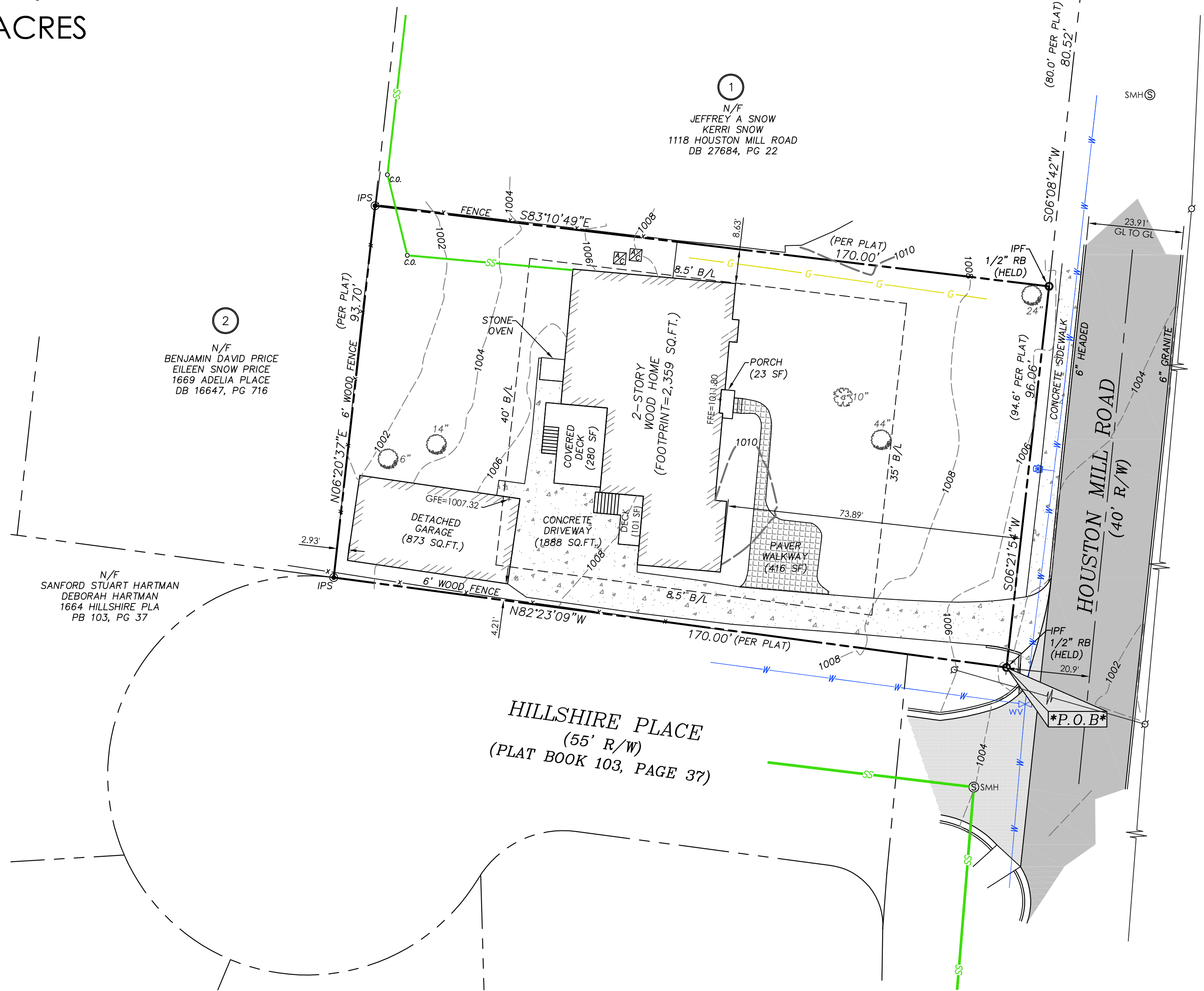
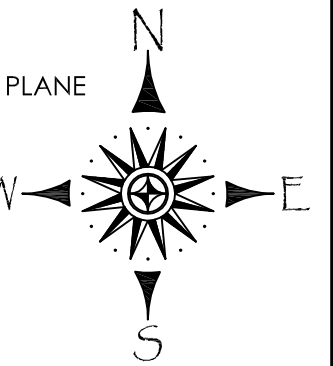
DRAWN BY

S.C.D.

JOB. #

2025-216

GRID NORTH
GEORGIA WEST STATE PLANE
NAD 83



INSTRUMENT USED: TRIMBLE S5 3" DR PLUS (ROBOTIC/MOTORIZED)

WORK PERFORMED ON OCTOBER 23, 2025.

THE DATA SHOWN ON THIS PLAT HAS BEEN CALCULATED FOR CLOSURE AND WAS FOUND TO BE ACCURATE WITHIN ONE FOOT IN 169,652 FEET.

THE FIELD DATA UPON WHICH THIS PLAT IS BASED HAS A CLOSURE PRECISION OF ONE FOOT IN 10,000+ FEET AND AN ANGULAR ERROR OF 5" PER ANGLE AND WAS ADJUSTED BY COMPASS RULE.

THIS SURVEY WAS MADE WITHOUT THE BENEFIT OF A CURRENT TITLE COMMITMENT. EASEMENTS AND ENCUMBRANCES MAY EXIST WHICH BENEFIT AND BURDEN THIS PROPERTY.

THIS SURVEY ONLY INCLUDES OBJECTS THAT ARE VISIBLE AND IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR UNDERGROUND UTILITIES OR OTHER OBJECTS THAT ARE NOT APPARENT BY VISUAL OBSERVATION, I.E. UNDERGROUND GAS TANKS, GAS LINES, WATERLINES, SEWER LINES, ETC.

SURVEYOR'S CERTIFICATION

This plat is a retracement of an existing parcel or parcels of land and does not subdivide or create a new parcel or make any changes to any real property boundaries. The recording information of the documents, maps, plats, or other instruments which created the parcel or parcels are stated hereon. RECORDATION OF THIS PLAT DOES NOT IMPLY APPROVAL OF ANY LOCAL JURISDICTION, AVAILABILITY OF PERMITS, COMPLIANCE WITH LOCAL REGULATIONS OR REQUIREMENTS, OR SUITABILITY FOR ANY USE OR PURPOSE OF THE LAND. FURTHERMORE, THE UNDERSIGNED LAND SURVEYOR CERTIFIES THAT THIS PLAT COMPLIES WITH THE MINIMUM TECHNICAL STANDARDS FOR PROPERTY SURVEYS IN GEORGIA AS SET FORTH IN THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF THE GEORGIA BOARD OF REGISTRATION FOR PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND LAND SURVEYORS AND AS SET FORTH IN THE O.C.G.A. SECTION 15-6-67.

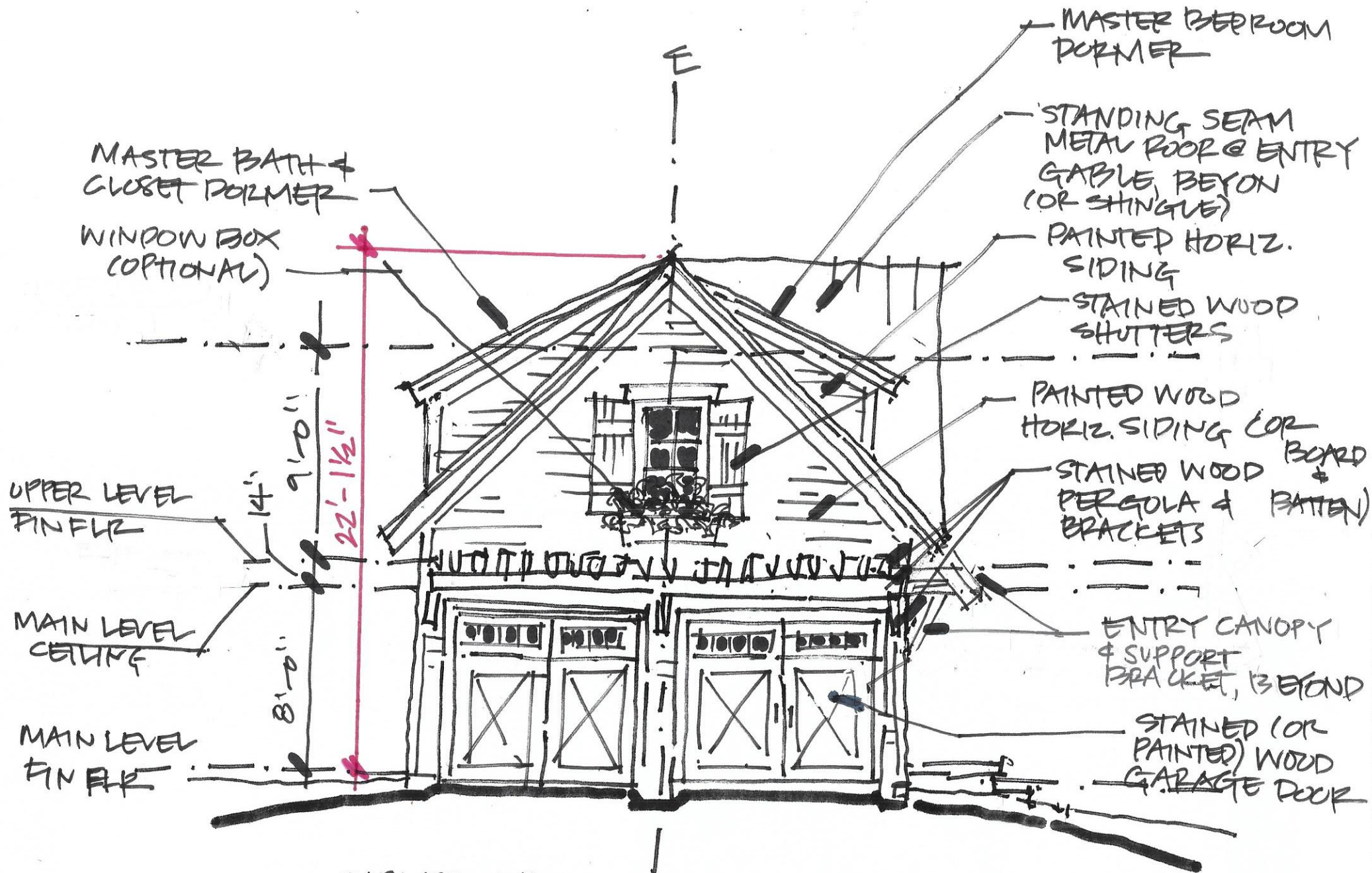


BOUNDARY, TOPOGRAPHIC, TREE & UTILITY SURVEY FOR

MORRIS COHEN

(PERMITTING MUNICIPALITY: DEKALB COUNTY)

Site Plan



①A SIRNER-COTTEN ADU- END ELEVATION 1

3/16" = 1/16"

db

7.31.2025

MASTER
BEDROOM
DORMER

(1B) SIRNER-COHEN ADU: SIDE ELEVATION 1

3/16" = 1'0"

db
7.31.25

STANDING-
SEAM
METAL ROOF

STANDING SEAM COR
ASPHALT SHINGLE
ROOF

STAINED
WOOD
SHUTTER

UPPER
CEILING

22'-1 1/2"

STANDING
SEAM
ENTRY
CANOPY

UPPER FLR
MAIN
CEILING

WOOD BRACKET

MAIN
FIN. FLR.

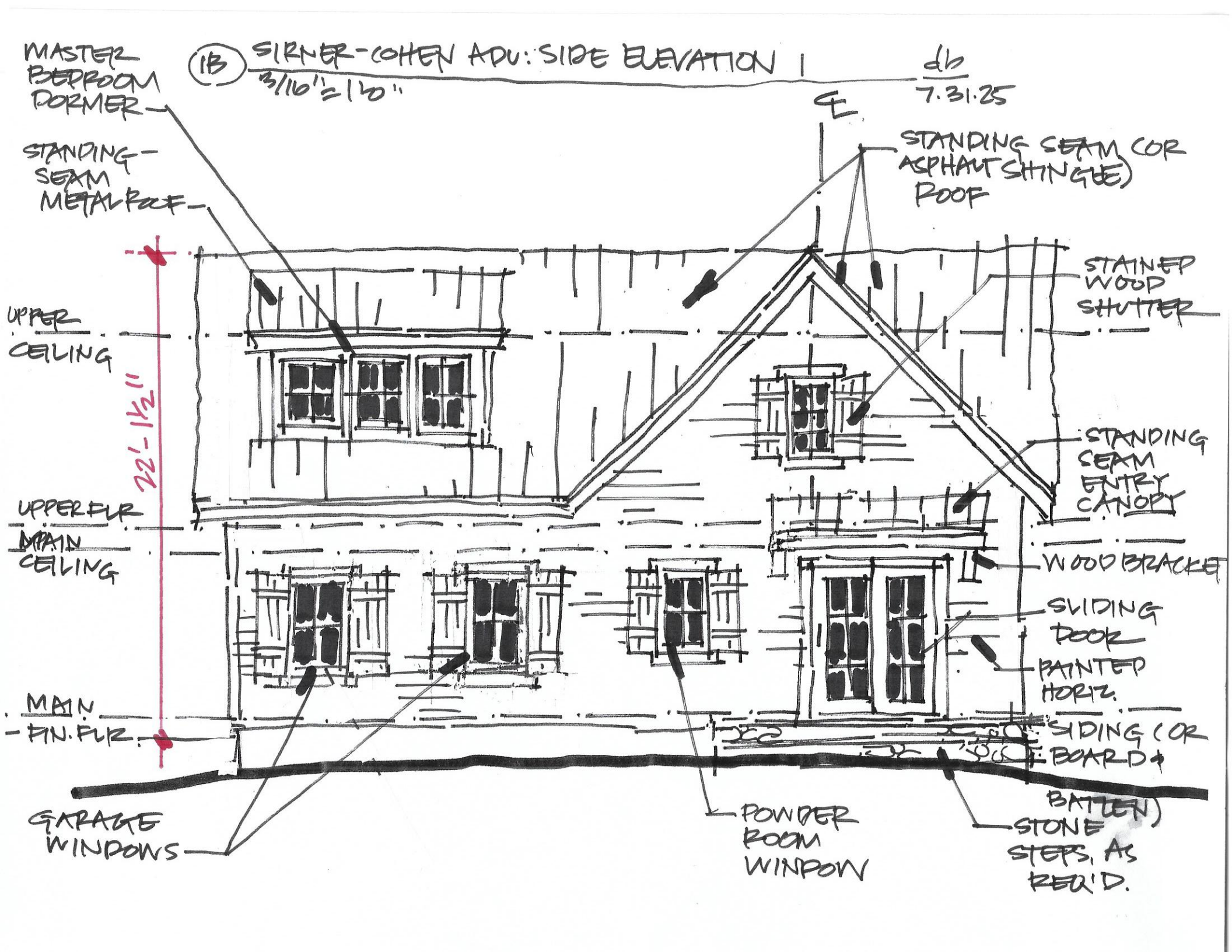
SLIDING
DOOR
PAINTED
HORIZ.

SIDING (OR
BOARD &

GARAGE
WINDOWS

POWDER
ROOM
WINDOW

BATTEN)
STONE
STEPS, AS
REQ'D.



Support Letters from Both Adjoining Neighbors

November 17, 2025

Dear DeKalb County Zoning Board of Appeals,

We write to express our support for the variance application of Morris Cohen and Gabrielle Sirner-Cohen, property owners of 1112 Houston Mill Rd NE, 30329.

We are the owner of 1669 Adelia Place, and our property line borders 1112 Houston Mill Rd NE.

I understand that the owners are interested in adding an additional level to the detached garage currently on the corner of their property. This garage is currently only a few feet from the boundary with our property, hence they are applying for a setback variance.

As viewed from the street looking toward our back yard, the location of the garage is along the left edge of the property, close to the back. However, due to the layout and grading of our back yard and its hill, including existing trees and a fenceline, the garage's expansion will not be detrimental to our property, including its usability and privacy. In fact it will barely be visible due to the layout.

Therefore, having discussed these plans with the owners, I support the construction of this garage expansion.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

David and Eileen Price

Handwritten signature of Eileen Price in cursive script, appearing as 'Eileen Price'.

November 18, 2025

Dear DeKalb County Zoning Board of Appeals,

We write to express our support for the variance application of Morris Cohen and Gabrielle Sirner-Cohen, property owners of 1112 Houston Mill Rd NE, 30329.

We are the owner of 1118 Houston Mill Rd NE, and our property line borders 1112 Houston Mill Rd NE.

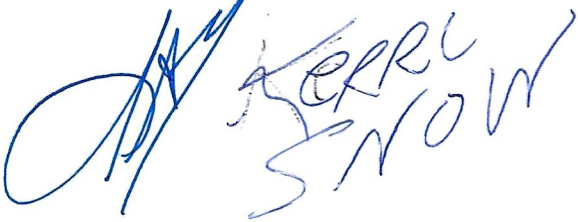
I understand that the owners are interested in adding an additional level to the detached garage currently on the corner of their property. I understand that the owners are applying for a setback variance.

The garage sits on the opposite of the property, and the existing trees and shrubs will maintain privacy and usability for my property even with the second level. Therefore, having discussed these plans with the owners, I support the construction of this garage expansion.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey and Kerri Snow

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Kerri Snow". The signature is stylized, with the first name "Kerri" written in a cursive-like script and the last name "Snow" written in a more blocky, capital-letter style. The ink is blue and the background is white.