



**CITY OF COLUMBUS
BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
(April 28, 2026 Meeting)**

STAFF REPORT

Docket No. / Project Title: BZA-26-23 / England Multi-Family (Conditional Use)
BZA-26-32 / England Multi-Family (Development Standards Variance)

Staff: Melissa Begley

Applicant: England Property Management, LLC

Property Size: 5,040 square feet

Zoning: RE (Residential: Established)

Location: 1521 California Street, in the City of Columbus

Background Summary:

The applicant has indicated that the proposed conditional use request is to allow a multi-family use, resulting from 2 additional dwelling units being added to the property for a total of 3 units. Those 2 units are proposed to be added on the second floor of a new garage. The applicant is also requesting a development standards variance to allow an accessory structure to be taller than the primary structure and a development standards variance to allow the minimum living area to be smaller than the minimum 500 square foot dwelling size.

Key Issue Summary:

The following key issue(s) should be resolved through the consideration of this application: None

Preliminary Staff Recommendation:

Conditional Use – Approval, all criteria have been met.

Variance #1 (Accessory Structure Height) – Approval, all criteria have been met.

Variance #2 (Minimum Living Area) – Approval, all criteria have been met.

Zoning Ordinance Considerations:

District Intent: The intent of the RE (Residential: Established) zoning district is as follows: To ensure the continued viability of neighborhoods and developments in existence on the effective date of the zoning ordinance. This district should be used to maintain traditional, contextually appropriate setbacks, uses, and other standards in a manner consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Development Standards:

Section 3.12(C) Accessory Structure Height: 35 feet (or the height of the primary structure on the property, whichever is less)

Section 3.12(C) Minimum Living Area: Multi-Family Structure: 500 square feet

Current Property Information:	
Land Use:	Single-family residential
Site Features:	A single family dwelling
Flood Hazards:	No flood hazards exist on the property.
Street/Road Frontage:	California Street (Collector, Residential, Urban)

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use:		
	Zoning:	Land Use:
North:	RE (Residential: Established)	Single-Family Residential
South:	RE (Residential: Established)	Single-Family Residential & Two-Family Residential
East:	RE (Residential: Established)	Single-Family Residential
West:	RE (Residential: Established)	Single-Family Residential & Two-Family Residential

Interdepartmental Review:	
City Engineering:	No comments have been received at this time.
City Utilities:	No concerns.
Code Enforcement:	No concerns.
Fire Department:	No comments have been received at this time.

Planning Consideration(s):

The following general site considerations, planning concepts, and other facts should be considered in the review of this application:

1. The applicant is requesting a multi-family use – 2 new units in addition to the 1 existing unit (for a total of 3). The applicant has indicated they would like to demolish an existing garage and construct a new 2 story garage/apartment building on the property. The applicant's provided concept plans show a 38 ft. by 23 ft. (874 square foot) structure. The ground floor would be used for 3 garage parking spaces that would be accessed from the gravel alley to the south and the second story would have 2 dwelling units and would be accessed by stairs located on the north side of the structure.
2. The applicant has indicated that each dwelling would be a one bedroom unit and be approximately 434 square feet in size. The Zoning Ordinance states that in the RE (Residential: Established) zoning district that the minimum dwelling size for multi-family use is 500 square feet. The applicant has

indicated that the one bedroom is the most in-demand sized unit and that there is an economic benefit for two units in order for the project to be financially feasible.

3. The proposed structure will meet the required setbacks for an accessory structure. The stairs will encroach into the minimum required side setback, however Zoning Ordinance Section 3.3(B)(2)(b) allows steps to encroach by up to 5 feet.
4. Accessory structures are allowed to be up to 35 feet in height or the height of the primary structure on the property, whichever is less. The applicant is proposing the structure to be 26 feet in height; the primary structure on the property is 21 feet in height.
5. The applicant has indicated that the height is dictated by the slope of the roof and height required for a garage. Specifically, the roof slope is 3/12, which is the minimum slope allowed for architectural shingles. The garage height of 9' is very common height, which accounts for an overhead door that is 7' tall. Building codes require a 12" header beam above the garage door to allow for space for a functioning garage door opener.
6. The homes in the area are a mix of two story dwellings and single story dwellings.
7. The Zoning Ordinance requires 1.5 parking spaces per dwelling unit for multi-family dwellings. The addition of the 2 new dwelling units and conversion of the site to multi-family use with 3 total dwelling units results in a total of 5 off-street parking spaces being required. The new structure will provide 3 off street parking spaces, in addition, the applicant is providing an additional three off-street parking spaces located off the alley for a total of 6 off street parking spaces.
8. California Street is a one-way street but has on-street parking available on the west side of the street. Many of the neighboring properties use both on-street parking and parking off the alleys behind the dwellings.
9. This project represents infill development. Infill development is beneficial to the community because it makes use of vacant or underutilized lots, strengthens the real estate market and property values in the area, and utilizes existing infrastructure.
10. The subject property is in close proximity to an abundance of goods and services. The neighborhood is walkable and has a well-developed sidewalk network and is less than half a mile walking distance from the People Trail. Donner Park is just over a quarter of a mile away. The site is just over 1 mile from downtown which includes the public library, several restaurants, banking, employment and other retail services and the site is also just over a 1 mile from 25th Street Shopping Center. The Purple ColumBus route passes along the subject property on California Street, which provides excellent transit access to the site.
11. The Columbus Housing Study & Needs Assessment notes that there is a strong demand for lower priced rental housing options. The Housing Study recommends an approach for strategic density across the city.
12. The site is within 2 blocks of a nearby neighborhood commercial area, which would likely benefit from a higher density of nearby residents.

Comprehensive Plan Consideration(s):

The Comprehensive Plan designates the future land use of properties in this area as residential.

The Comprehensive Plan includes this property in the Columbus Central Neighborhood character area. The following planning principles for that character area apply to this application:

1. Infill development that complements existing neighborhoods should be encouraged.
2. When conversion of single-family houses to multifamily is permitted, appropriate off-street parking should be required. Converting front yard areas to parking lots is not in the best interests of the area.

The following Comprehensive Plan goal(s) and/or policy(ies) apply to this application:

1. **POLICY A-2-9:** Preserve and enhance the character of neighborhoods.
Older neighborhoods have distinctive characteristics which should be retained. These vary from one neighborhood to another, but they include such things as smaller lots, lesser setbacks, service alleys, and a distinctive architectural style.
2. **POLICY A-2-11:** Encourage all new development to be in scale (height, area, mass, setback, etc.) with its surroundings, determined on a neighborhood-by-neighborhood basis.
New development should be designed in a manner that is sensitive to the surroundings.

3. **POLICY A-4-2:** Encourage infill development, and/or use of vacant parcels for projects such as parks or other amenities which complement the neighborhoods in which they are located.
Vacant parcels represent lost opportunities, and they can become neighborhood nuisances. These parcels should be used, either for development, or for other neighborhood assets such as parks or community gardens. It is less expensive to develop these parcels than to create new subdivisions.
4. **GOAL D-1:** Develop new housing where adequate public services can be provided economically.
5. **GOAL D-2:** Encourage development of a sufficient supply of diverse housing types, sizes, and price ranges in the community.
6. **POLICY D-2-1:** Encourage housing which is affordable to those whose incomes are below the median, particularly those significantly below the median.
A thriving community needs socio-economic diversity which in turn requires a range of housing prices. The city should encourage the development of housing in a variety of price ranges so that all citizens will have decent, safe, and sanitary housing at prices they can afford.
7. **POLICY D-2-2:** Allow for various housing types.
A diverse population needs diverse housing. The city should encourage a variety of housing types, including single-family detached houses, townhouses, and apartments.
8. **POLICY D-2-4:** Explore options for providing incentives for development of affordable housing which is consistent with these policies and conforms to an overall plan for community growth.
The private market produces a housing supply sufficient for those in middle- and upper-income categories, but land and development costs make it difficult for private entrepreneurs to produce houses that can be purchased by those in the lower income brackets. These incentives might include tax abatements and low-interest loans. The incentives would not include lower standards for houses or neighborhoods.
9. **POLICY D-2-5:** Encourage neighborhoods which contain a diverse socioeconomic mix.
Socioeconomic diversity is beneficial to the community. The city should encourage developments which contain a variety of housing types and prices. The diversity of neighborhoods affects the diversity in public schools, particularly elementary schools. Traditional development, such as in the downtown area, contains a socioeconomic mix of housing types (apartments, single-family houses, duplexes, townhouses) in different price ranges.
10. **POLICY D-2-6:** Encourage development of a sufficient supply of housing in all price ranges so that all citizens of the community can enjoy decent, safe, and sanitary housing in desirable neighborhood settings.
A diversity of housing prices and types accommodates a diverse population and differing preferences.
11. **GOAL D-3:** Provide high-quality residential neighborhood environments.

This property is within the study area for the Central Neighborhood Plan element of the Comprehensive Plan, which indicates that the central neighborhood is experiencing a demand for additional housing units and specifically recommends incorporation of an appropriate mix of residential types including “missing middle housing”.

Provisional Findings of Fact/Decision Criteria – Conditional Use:

Section 12.4(D) of the Zoning Ordinance permits the Board of Zoning Appeals to allow conditional uses that meet the criteria listed below. The Board may impose reasonable conditions as part of an approval.

1. The proposal will not be injurious to the public health, safety, and general welfare of the community.

Provisional Findings: The new structure will not block sight visibility for traffic and the new structure will be required to meet all applicable building codes. There is sufficient off-street parking for the additional units. Therefore, this proposal not be injurious to the public health, safety and welfare of the community. Neither the City Engineering nor Fire Departments nor County Code Enforcement Department reported any concerns with the proposed project. *This criterion has been met.*

2. The development of the property will be consistent with the intent of the development standards established by the Zoning Ordinance for similar uses.

Provisional Findings: The property is located in an established neighborhood. The applicant has provided a concept plan and is requesting variances to allow the accessory structure to be taller than the primary structure and to allow dwellings to be smaller than the minimum living area per dwelling. Both variance requests can be supported. The project will be otherwise required to comply with the development standards of the zoning ordinance. *This criterion has been met.*

3. **Granting the conditional use will not be contrary to the general purposes served by the Zoning Ordinance, and will not permanently injure other property or uses in the same zoning district and vicinity.**

Provisional Findings: The proposed development is consistent with the development in the area which is a mix of single-family, two-family, and multi-family residential. This area is more urban in context with higher density living. The proposed multi-family development will not impede the adjacent residential properties from continuing in residential use. *This criterion has been met.*

4. **The proposed use will be consistent with the character of the zoning district in which it is located and the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.**

Provisional Findings: The Comprehensive Plan encourages infill development, a mix of housing types, and neighborhoods which contain a diverse socioeconomic mix. Further, the current character of the RE zoning district, especially in this area, includes a mix of single-family, duplex, and multi-family uses both as apartment homes and apartment developments. *This criterion has been met.*

Board of Zoning Appeals Options – Conditional Use:

In reviewing a request for *conditional use* the Board may (1) approve the petition as proposed, (2) approve the petition with conditions, (3) continue the petition to a future meeting of the Board, or (4) deny the petition (with or without prejudice). Failure to achieve a quorum or lack of a positive vote on a motion results in an automatic continuance to the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Provisional Findings of Fact/Decision Criteria (Variance #1 - Accessory Structure Height):

The Board of Zoning Appeals may approve or deny variances from the development standards of the City of Columbus Zoning Ordinance. The Board may impose reasonable conditions as part of an approval. A variance from the development standards may only be approved upon a determination in writing that:

1. **The approval will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community.**

Provisional Findings: The structure will be built to current building code, so approval of the additional height would not create a health or safety risk for the general community. Neither the Fire Department nor County Code Enforcement reported any concerns with the proposed accessory structure height. *This criterion has been met.*

2. **The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner.**

Provisional Findings: The proposed accessory structure will not impede the residential use of adjacent properties. The additional 5 feet in building height will not likely be noticeable with the existing tree vegetation and other two story structures in the area and will not negatively affect the property values of neighboring properties.. *This criterion has been met.*

3. **The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property. This situation shall not be self-imposed, nor be based on a perceived reduction of, or restriction on, economic gain.**

Provisional Findings: The proposed accessory dwelling provides garage spaces below the dwelling units, which in addition to a minimal roof slope, adds additional height to the building. The primary structure is a

single story building and the garage spaces are considered highly desirable by residents. The strict application of the ordinance would not allow a two unit structure with a garage on this site. *This criterion has been met.*

Provisional Findings of Fact/Decision Criteria (Variance #2 – Minimum Living Area):

The Board of Zoning Appeals may approve or deny variances from the development standards of the City of Columbus Zoning Ordinance. The Board may impose reasonable conditions as part of an approval. A variance from the development standards may only be approved upon a determination in writing that:

4. The approval will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community.

Provisional Findings: The dwelling units will each have a full kitchen and separate bathroom. Neither the Fire Department nor County Code Enforcement reported any concerns with the proposed dwelling unit living area. *This criterion has been met.*

5. The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner.

Provisional Findings: The dwelling units will each have a full kitchen and separate bathroom. The 434 square feet, rather than the minimum 500 square feet, of living area will likely attract single residents and help expand the housing offerings in the area and not affect the adjacent properties in an adverse manner. *This criterion has been met.*

6. The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property. This situation shall not be self-imposed, nor be based on a perceived reduction of, or restriction on, economic gain.

Provisional Findings: The strict application of the terms of the zoning ordinance would not allow two dwellings to be constructed or would require the applicant to construct an additional 200 square feet of livable area onto the building. The additional 200 square feet would be practically difficult in order to provide space for the off-street parking and meet the setback requirements. The size of the accessory dwelling is proportional to the primary dwelling and is in context with the area. The dwelling units will meet all necessary living needs with a full kitchen and separate bathroom and will meet all building codes. The applicant has indicated that the one bedroom is the most in-demand sized unit and that there is an economic benefit for two units in order for the project to be financially feasible and therefore the strict application of the ordinance creates a practical difficulty in providing additional density to the property. *This criterion has been met.*

Board of Zoning Appeals Options – Development Standards Variances:

In reviewing a request for development standards variance the Board may (1) approve the petition as proposed, (2) approve the petition with conditions, (3) continue the petition to a future meeting of the Board, or (4) deny the petition (with or without prejudice). Failure to achieve a quorum or lack of a positive vote on a motion results in an automatic continuance to the next regularly scheduled meeting.



Record No: BZA-26-23

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)
Application

Status: Active

Submitted On: 3/23/2026

Primary Location

1521 CALIFORNIA ST
COLUMBUS, IN 47201

Owner

ENGLAND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT LLC-S
E 100 S 11824 COLUMBUS, IN 47203

Conditional Use Request

I am requesting a Conditional Use per Zoning
Ordinance Section (insert the ordinance section
number below):*

3.12(B)

Please Describe the Proposed Use:*

Construct a new 3 car detached garage with 2 apartments above and on
site parking

The approval of the conditional use will not be injurious to the public health, safety, and general welfare of
the community. For example: What harm could come from approving the conditional use? Would it create
any public safety issues? Why or why not?*

I do not foresee any public safety issues, there is an alley to the south and
east of the property to make for easy access the building

The development of the property will be consistent with the intent of the development standards established by the Zoning Ordinance for similar uses. For example: Will the conditional use be able to meet minimum building setbacks, parking standards, and other requirements? If not, are variances being sought to address those items?*

The proposed building will meet all minimum set backs and provide 3 off street parking spaces. There is also 2 additional parking spaces available on California St.

Granting the conditional use will not be contrary to the general purposes served by the Zoning Ordinance, and will not permanently injure other property or uses in the same zoning district and vicinity. For example: Are there risks that the conditional use will cause harm to the neighbors' ability to use and enjoy their property? Is there reason to believe that the conditional use will cause harm to neighboring property values?*

Constructing and adding new affordable residential structures should increase property values to the surrounding homes. The proposed project should cause no harm to the neighbors or their properties.

The conditional use will be consistent with the character of the zoning district in which it is located and the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan. Will the conditional use change the character of the area? Will it involve a building, operation, or features that are significantly different than what is common to the zoning district?*

We will adhere to neighborhood architecture standards so that the new building blends in with the other properties.

The City of Columbus Comprehensive Plan can be found at:
<https://www.columbus.in.gov/planning/comprehensive-plans/>.

The Bartholomew County Comprehensive Plan can be found at:
<https://www.columbus.in.gov/planning/comprehensive-plans/comprehensive-county-plans/>.



Record No: BZA-26-32

Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA)
Application

Status: Active

Submitted On: 4/9/2026

Primary Location

1521 CALIFORNIA ST
COLUMBUS, IN 47201

Owner

ENGLAND PROPERTY MANAGEMENT LLC-S
E 100 S 11824 COLUMBUS, IN 47203

Development Standards Variance Request

I am requesting a variance from the Zoning
Ordinance Section (insert the ordinance section
number below):*

3.12(C)

Please provide the details of the variance request:*

We are requesting development standards variance to allow the
proposed accessory building be 5' taller (26') than the Primary structure
21'

The approval will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the
community. For example: What harm could come from approving the variance? Would it create any public
safety issues? Why or why not.*

We do not believe any issues would arise from granting this variance. The
proposed project would provide 2 additional apartment rentals to the city.
The structure being 5' taller poses safety or any other issues.

The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner. For example: What impacts can the neighbors realistically expect to the use of their property and to their property values? Will approval of the variance cause any negative impacts to the neighbors? Why or why not?*

We do not foresee the proposed building being 5' taller than the primary affecting any of the surrounding neighbors. The residential structure located directly to the north of the proposed build site is roughly 28' in height.

The strict application of the terms of the Zoning Ordinance will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property. This situation shall not be self-imposed; nor be based on a perceived reduction of, or restriction on, economic gain. For example: Is there a reason the property cannot be used without the variance? If so, what is that reason (does a stream, existing building, well, or septic system limit options for new construction)? Explain the reason.*

Without the variance being approved, we would not have the ample amount of space to provide covered parking in the form of a garage space below the apartments. It is within reason to construct the accessory structure without garage space, however having a covered parking space is highly desirable esp. among single mothers in this area.

The City of Columbus Comprehensive Plan can be found at:
<https://www.columbus.in.gov/planning/comprehensive-plans/>.

The Bartholomew County Comprehensive Plan can be found at:
<https://www.columbus.in.gov/planning/comprehensive-plans/comprehensive-county-plans/>.

I am requesting a variance from the Zoning Ordinance Section (insert the ordinance section number below):*

3.12(C)

Please provide the details of the variance request:*

We are requesting this variance to allow a slightly less square footage space. 500 being the current minimum. Our proposed units are 434 sq. ft.

The approval will not be injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community. For example: What harm could come from approving the variance? Would it create any public safety issues? Why or why not?*

We do not foresee any public safety issues arising from this variance being granted. We are still providing a 1 bedroom unit with multiple egress windows.

The use and value of the area adjacent to the property included in the variance will not be affected in a substantially adverse manner. For example: What impacts can the neighbors realistically expect to the use of their property and to their property values? Will approval of the variance cause any negative impacts to the neighbors? Why or why not?*

Surrounding neighbors can see their property values rise as we continue to add reasonably affordable housing and rehab the area. Adding 2 additional 1 bedroom units on this property will not affect neighboring homes. We have alley access to the East and South that will allow ample movement of vehicles.

The strict application of the terms of the Zoning Ordinance will result in practical difficulties in the use of the property. This situation shall not be self-imposed; nor be based on a perceived reduction of, or restriction on, economic gain. For example: Is there a reason the property cannot be used without the variance? If so, what is that reason (does a stream, existing building, well, or septic system limit options for new construction)? Explain the reason.*

Based on current set back and parking requirements. The square footage we are proposing for each unit is the maximum square footage that can be constructed on this lot.

The City of Columbus Comprehensive Plan can be found at:

<https://www.columbus.in.gov/planning/comprehensive-plans/>.

The Bartholomew County Comprehensive Plan can be found at:

<https://www.columbus.in.gov/planning/comprehensive-plans/comprehensive-county-plans/>.

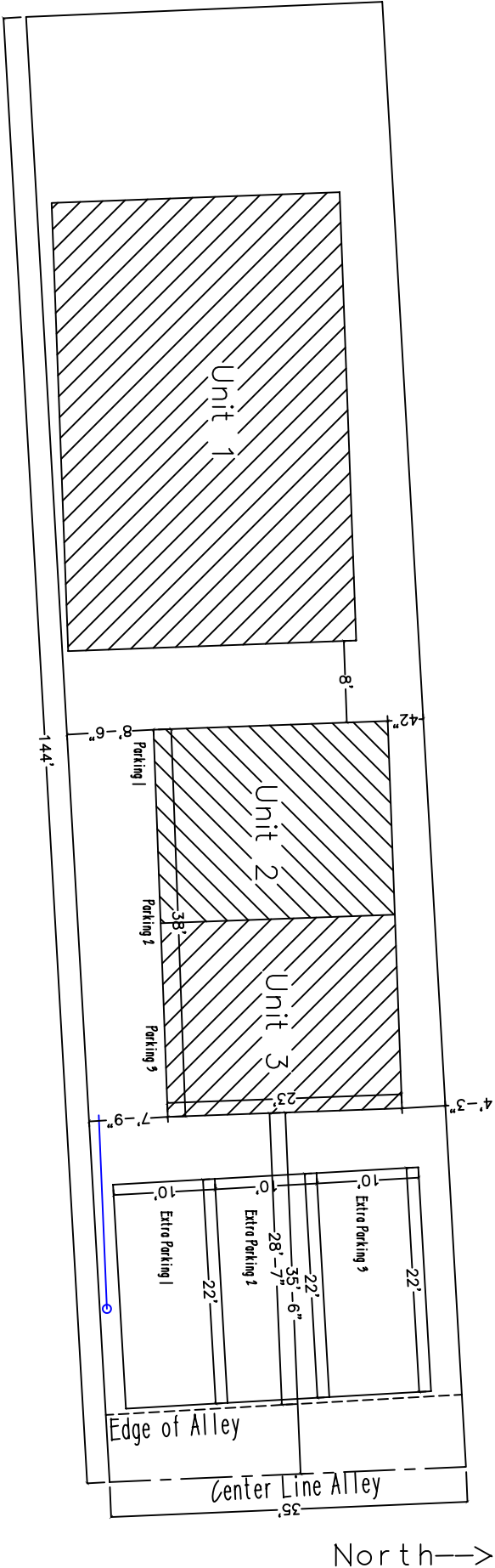
Georegion Duplex California St Columbus, IN

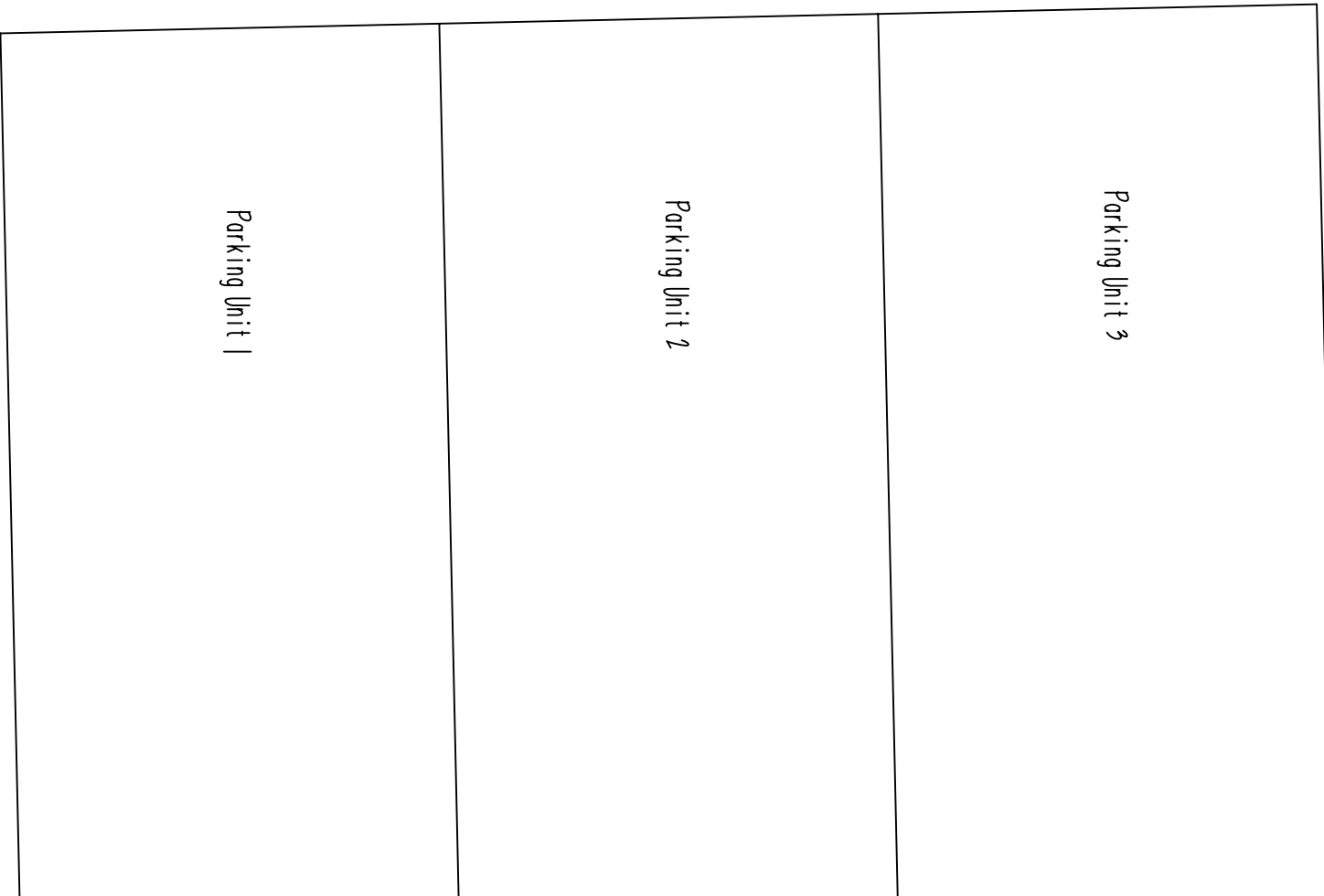
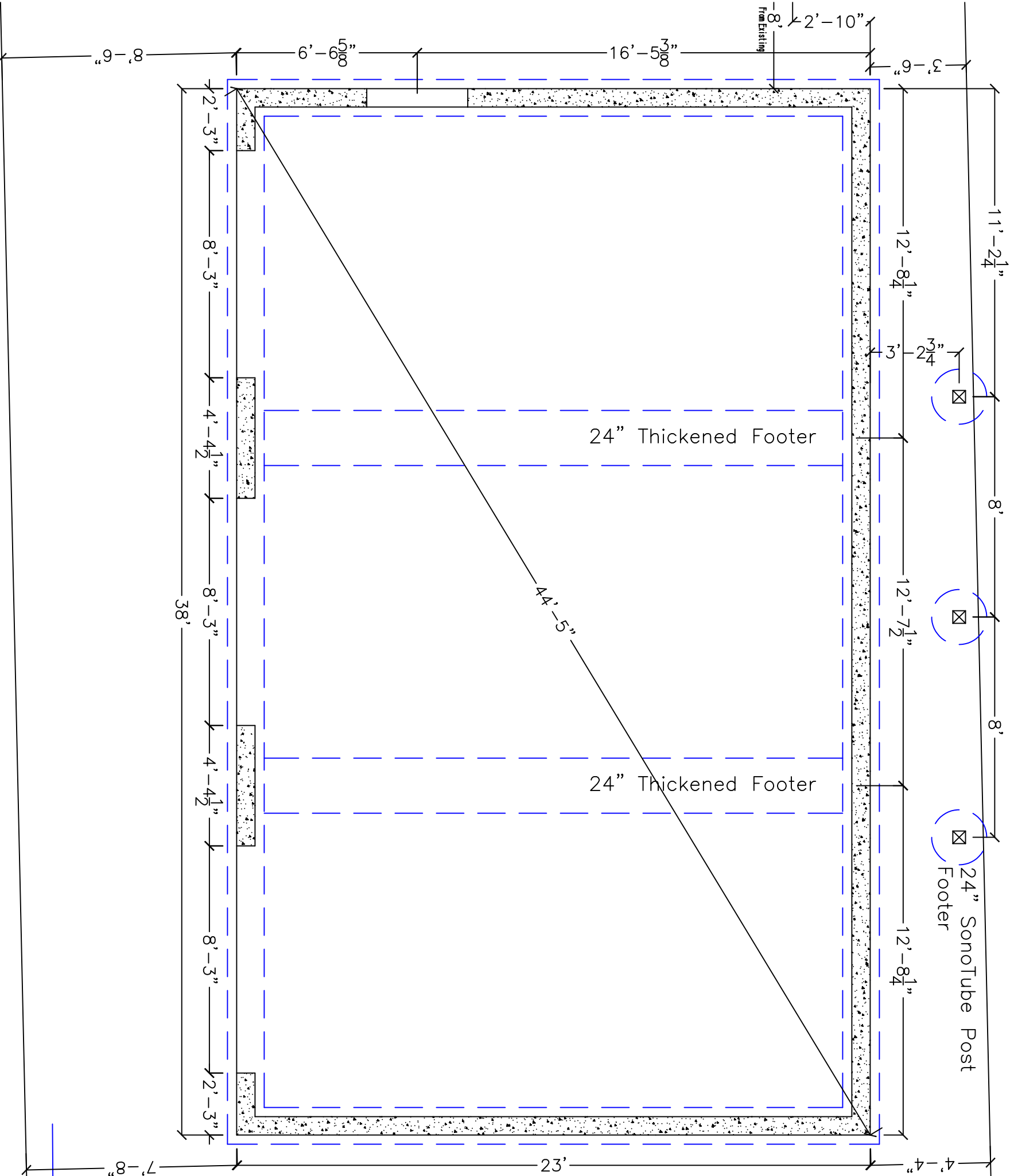
Home Owner/contractor to verify site conditions (septic/sewer/electric/cable/easements/etc)
Contractor to verify existing bearing conditions.
Contractor to verify new bearing conditions.
Local/State building codes override drawing details.

Home Owner/contractor assume responsibility to ensure construction of project to meet all local/state building codes.
Home Owner/contractor assume responsibility to ensure construction of project to meet all construction standards and practices. Drawings are an interpretation of desired project. Actual construction and details may vary.
Components are to be sized and engineered by professionals. Homeowner and/or Contractor hold responsibility for construction means and practices. These drawings are intended for the purpose of unit's in bidding, permit requests, and design expectations of construction. Final project may vary from prints due to construction complications, existing conditions, change from design, drawing errors, code requirements, etc.
Douglas Herold (Design Concepts,dbq) is not responsible for final project design in relationship to initial print design and/or construction practices. Print errors will be corrected/addressed as situations come to light.
Plans do not have a professional stamp attached.
If your building department requires one, they will only accept a stamp from a professional licensed in the state where you plan to build.
In this case, you will need to take your plans to a local engineer or architect for review and stamping.

All wall dimensions are from face of stud to face of stud. All doors are 3" from adjacent wall or centered on wall. Unless noted otherwise, Builder/Contractor/Homeowner responsible for final study and verification of accuracy. Window and door indications are for reference only, final product sizes and rough openings to be per manufacture spec.

Drawing Dates
March 19th, 2016
Revisions

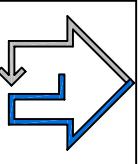




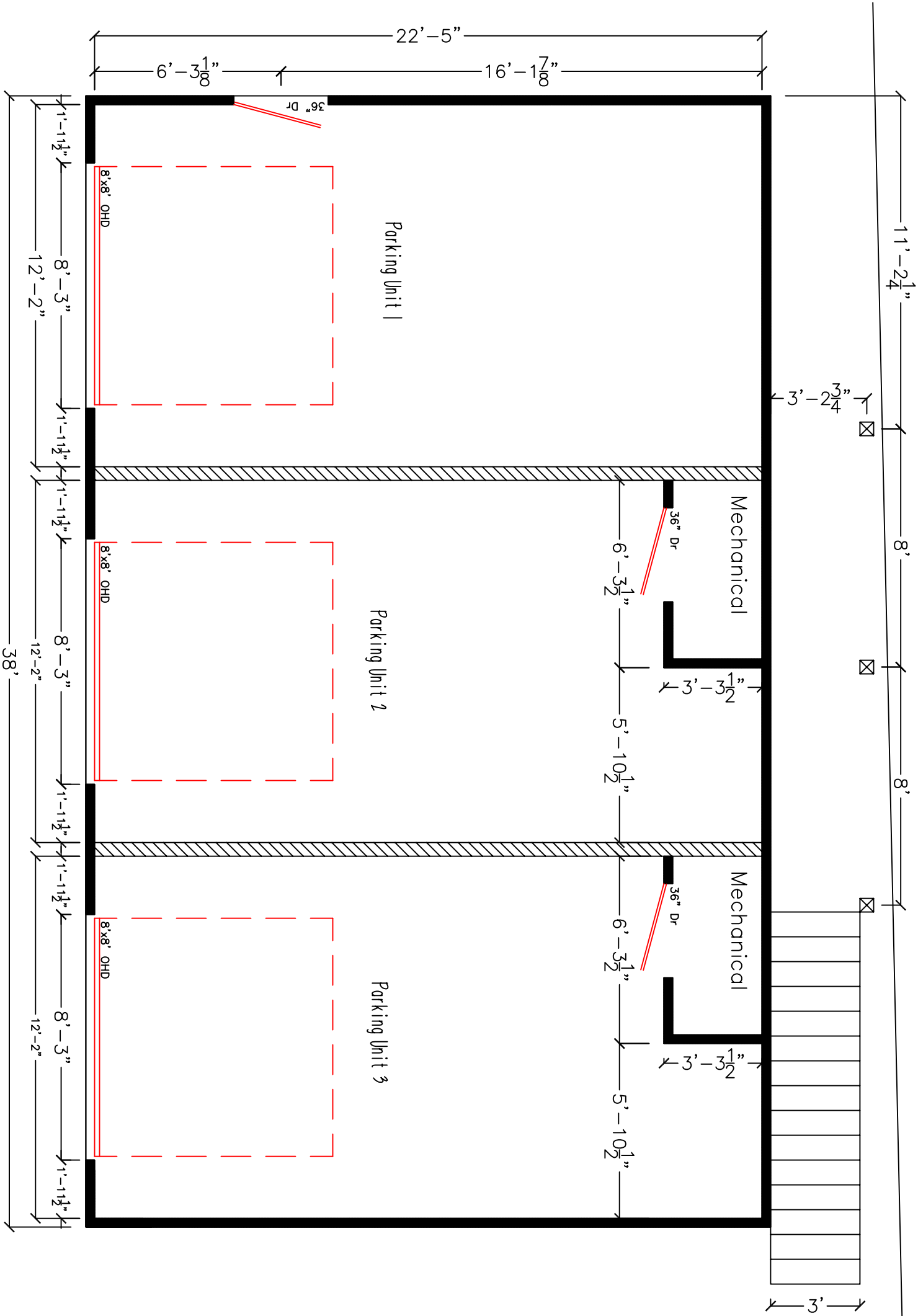
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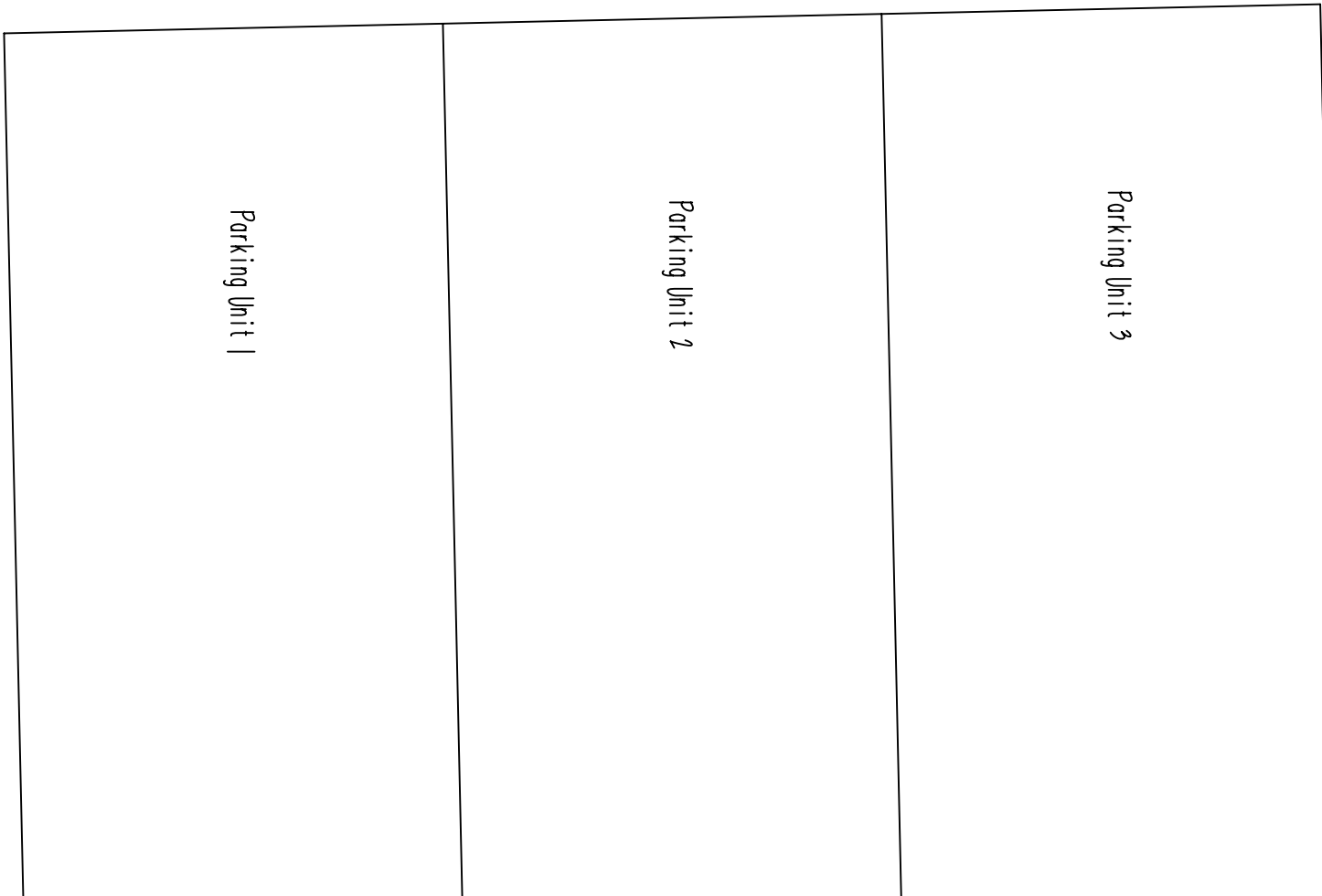
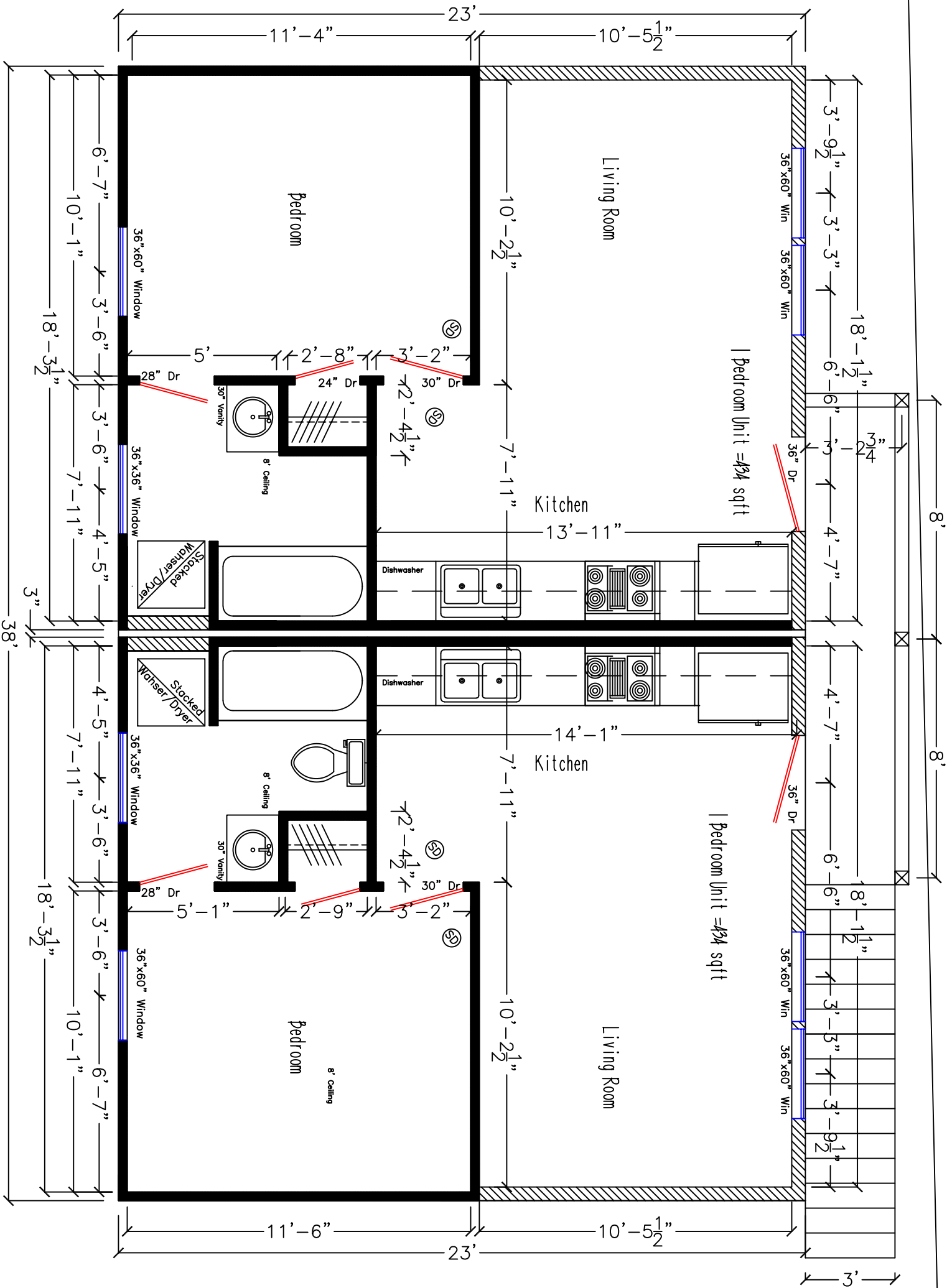
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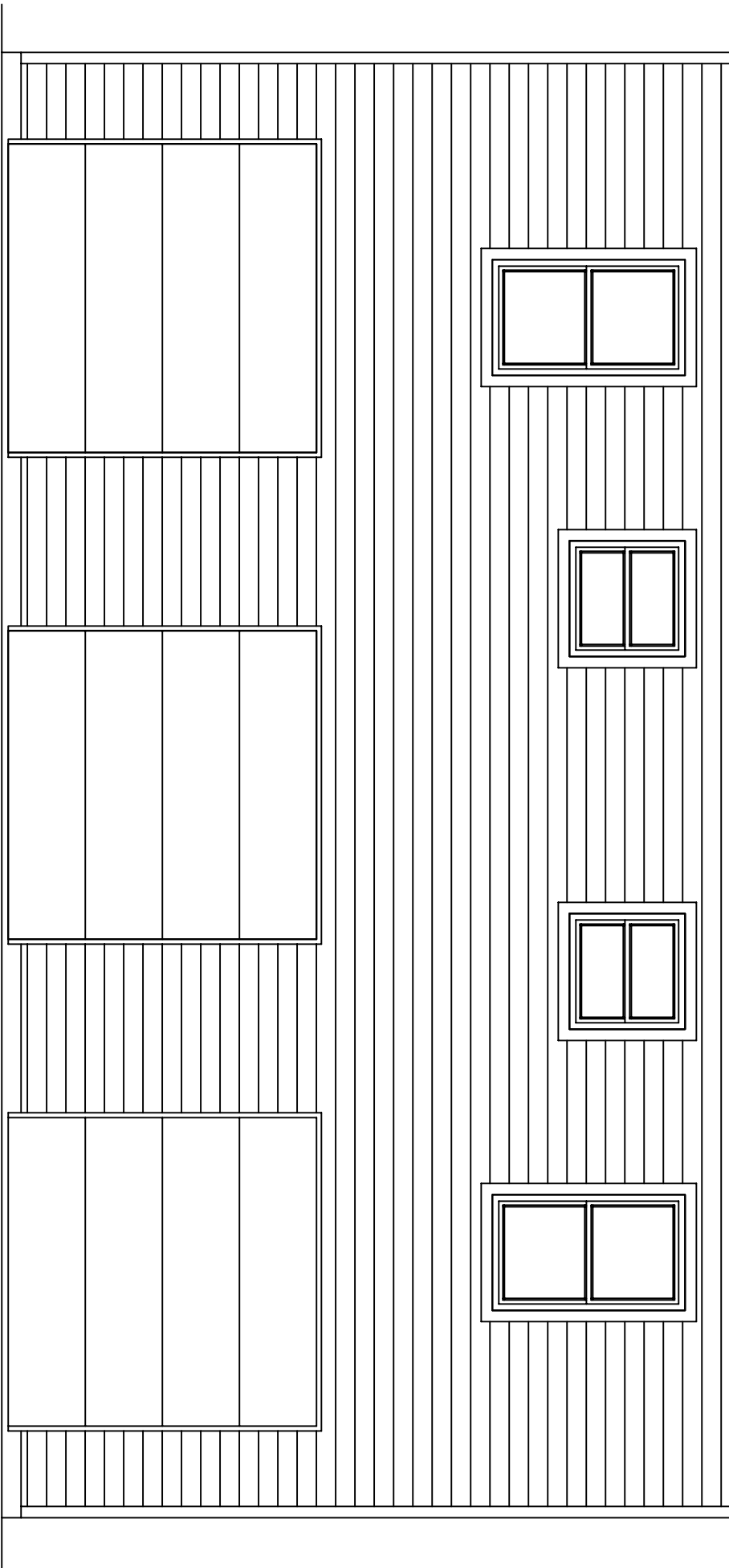
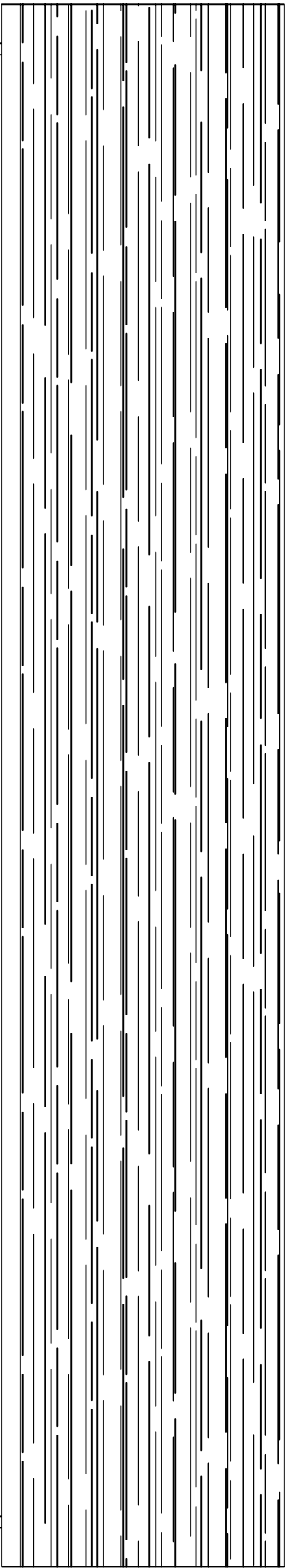
Foundation
Construxus - 191 California St



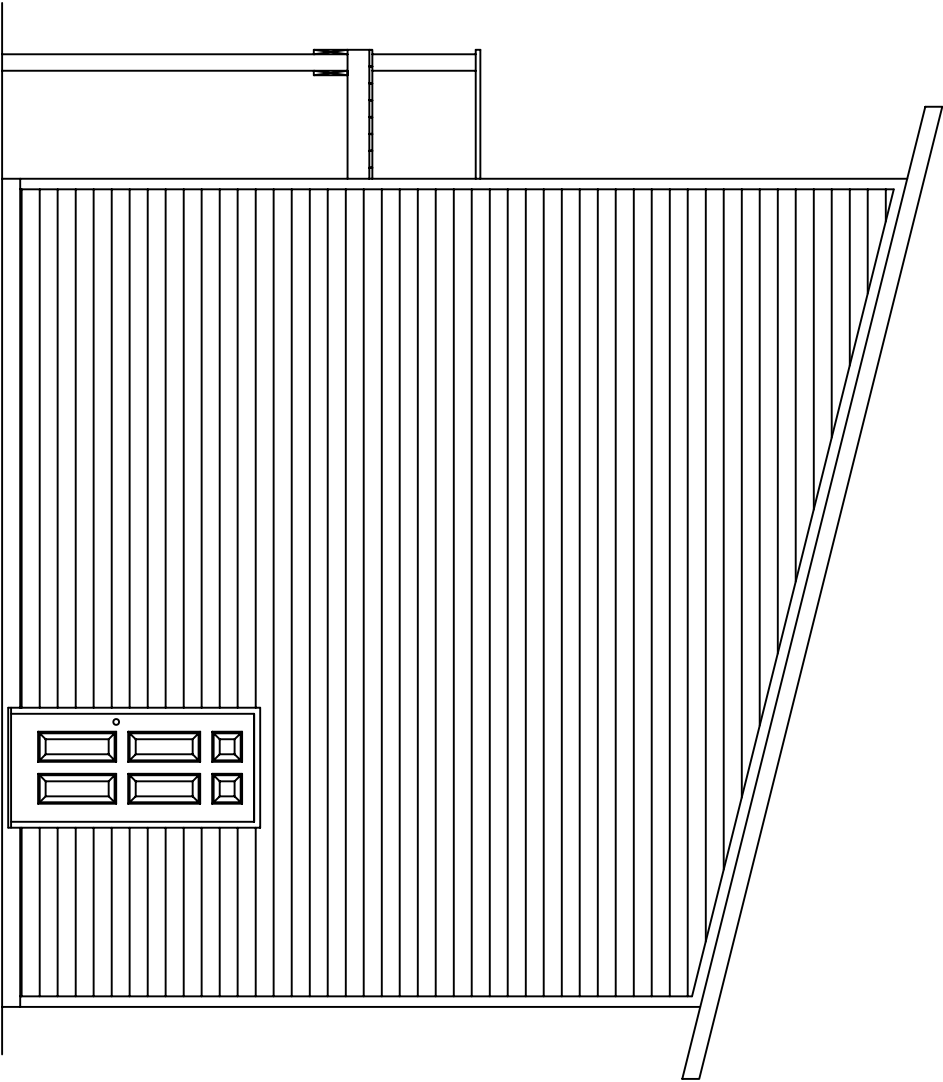
Design Concepts
Douglas Herold
812-581-0036
www.PlanoOutSpace.com



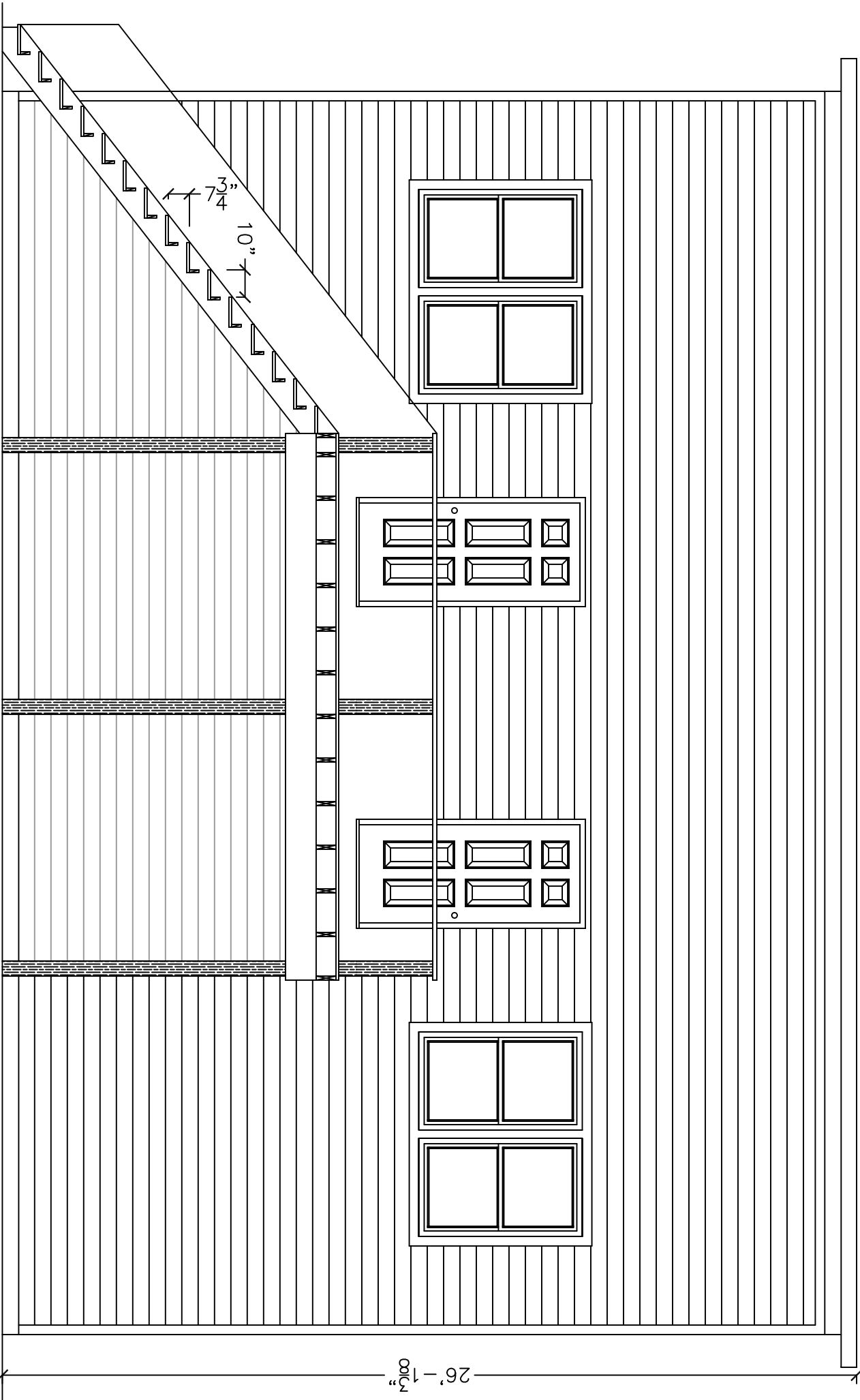




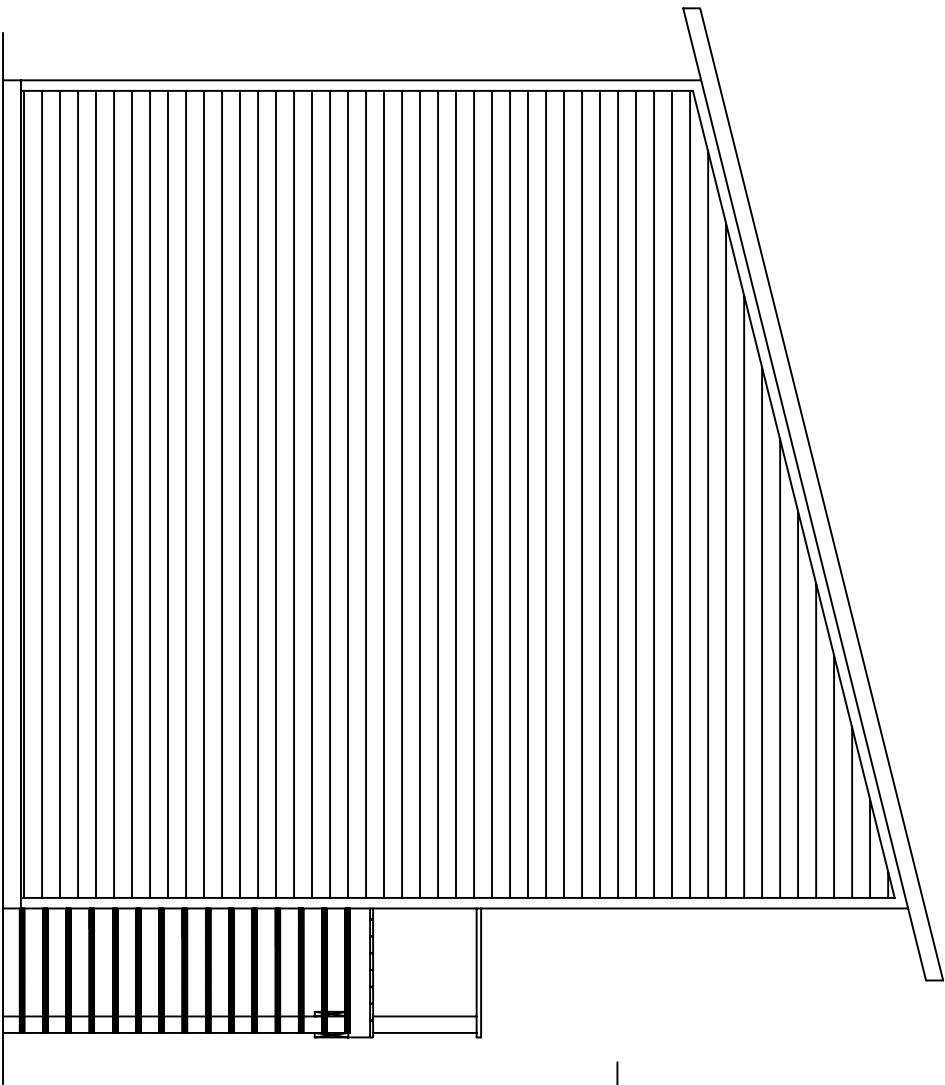
South Side Face
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West Side Face
Scale - 3/16"=1'-0"



North Side Face
Scale - 1/4"=1'-0"



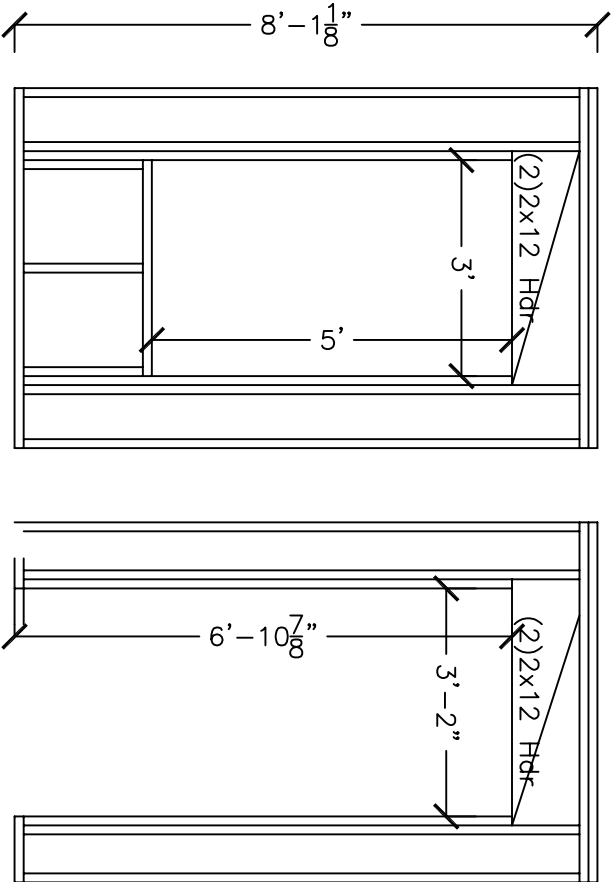
East Side Face
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Framing Detail

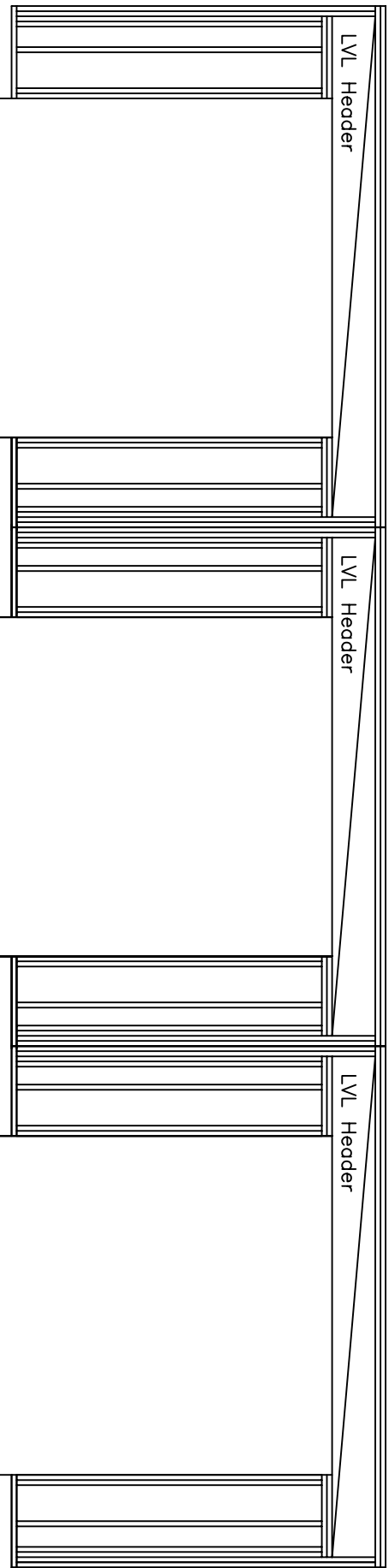
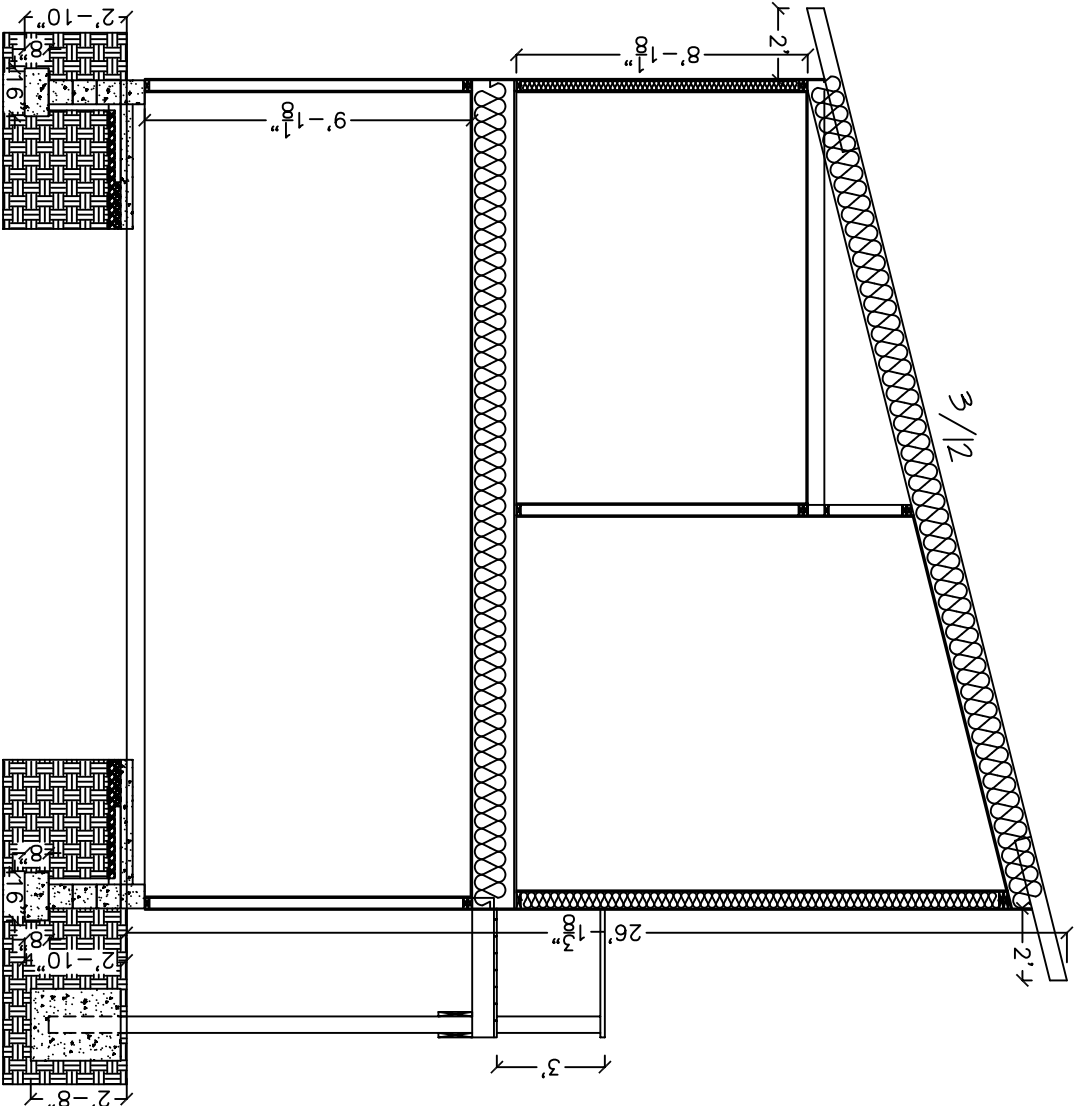
3/16" = 1'-0"

- Shingled Roof
- Underlayment
- OSB Roof Deck
- L-Joist Roof @ 16"oc
- R38 Ceiling Insulation
- 6" Gutter Board
- Vented Soffit
- 6" Freeze Board
- 1/2" Drywall
- Double 2x6 Top Plate
- 2x6 Studs @ 16" o.c.
- 7/16" OSB Sheathing
- Housewrap
- Subfloor

- 36" Handrails
- 5/4 Deck Boards
- 2x8 Treated Joists
- 6x6 Posts
- Sono Tube Post Footer
- L-Joist Floor @ 16"oc
- R38 Insulation
- 5/8" Ceiling Drywall
- 2x4 Double Top Plates
- 2x4 Studs @ 16"oc
- 2x4 Treated Plate
- Sill Sealer
- Anchor Bolts
- 8" Poured Concrete Walls
- Perimeter Drain
- 2" Rigid Foam Board
- 4" Concrete Slab
- 4" Pea Fill
- 16"x8" Footer w/Rebar



Window & Door Section
3/8"=1'-0"



Garage Door Header
1/4"=1'-0"