

July 9, 2012
Select Board
meeting



We stand here before you not just for ourselves, or the sixty-two people who signed the petition, but for *all* the people of Granby - now and future generations. When a scenic byway view is gone it is lost forever. Is it acceptable to compromise a scenic byway, to do away with a community amenity?

Mr. and Mrs. Jonathan Conley of 1, Bittersweet Lane, Granby, are seeking a special permit that would allow them to construct an addition to their home.

They are newcomers to Granby and purchased this house with a panoramic view of the valley. This is where they decided they wanted to spend the rest of their lives. Looking ahead to their aging years, they decided they would need a master bedroom, bathroom, and library extension on the ground floor. Their plans call for a 30 ft. extension on the left side of the house that will obliterate 30 feet of a 40 ft. community view.

Abutters were notified of a hearing of the Board of Appeals on June 25, 2012. This caused so much consternation that sixty-two people in the neighborhood signed in protest.

The reason numbers of us have been so anxious is because we live on what has been designated a Scenic Way where one is not allowed to take down a tree or a stone wall yet this new construction of, 1090 square feet would eliminate the view. By reason of living on a Scenic Way, people on Cold Hill have a higher assessment tax; our site index # is higher than similar homes in other parts of the town. While those living on one side of the road have a full view of the valley, the only view open to us is the wide expanse at the top of the hill which we greatly treasure and is now in jeopardy. If this were eliminated, we would feel justified in asking the Assessor for an abatement.

After the hearing, we were told we would hear the result by letter. We are very aware that a decision is in the hands of the Board of Appeals, and we await their decision but we feel compelled to speak to you, the Board of Selectmen, because we know the Conleys have Plan B in mind if this is unfavorable. In this case, the construction would go back 15 feet and extend 35 feet. The view would be further obstructed with only 5 feet remaining.

We have spoken to our State Representative, Ellen Story, who strongly supports our protest. Unfortunately, she is out of the area or she would be right here with us. There is a lot more at stake here. The question - and it is one we must seriously take to heart - is: how do we want Granby to evolve? We have studied the By-Laws that are based on the vision the people of this town have formulated that extend beyond rules, codes, and legalities. Here are some excerpts:

Planning Department guides residential and commercial development proposals, assesses the potential impact on the environment, neighborhood integrity and town character.

Section 4.29 2. Each structure shall be integrated into the existing landscape on the property so as to minimize its visual impact and maintain visibility of adjacent

agricultural lands from public ways through vegetative and structural screening.
Section 6.20. Purpose. *Special permits are intended to provide detailed review of certain uses and structures which may have substantial impact upon and the character of the Town, among other things. Permit review process is intended to insure a harmonious relationship between proposed developments and its surroundings.*
Each lot shall be of a size and shape to provide a building site which shall be in harmony with the natural terrain and other features of the land.

6.35 Site Plan Review Criteria. 2. *The development shall be integrated into existing terrain and surrounding landscape, and shall be designed to protect abutting properties and community amenities. Building sites shall to the extent feasible*

- (a) minimize use of steep slopes and hilltops*
- (b) minimize obstruction of scenic views from publicly accessible locations.*
- (c) preserve unique natural or historical features*
- (e) maximize open space retention.*

3. *Architectural style shall be compatible with the rural/historical character and scale of the buildings in the neighborhood.*

There are several alternatives available to the Conleys that would allow them to have everything they want by building the addition behind the house. One of these would be to incorporate the garage space into the floor plan and build another garage which would fall well within legal limits. For the record, we are submitting three alternate plans for consideration. The fact that there are other possibilities which we are submitting to you, prompts us to ask for further consideration of this issue. While it may be considered that if a person owns property they should have the freedom to do whatever they like with it, it is entirely inappropriate for them to have this liberty if their actions would adversely affect their neighbors.

We would like to find a peaceful and happy solution to all this, accommodating our neighbors by working on an alternate plan that will provide them with what they need; at the same time preserving the view. Anything else will incur a lot of bitterness and great sadness. After many hours considering the situation, we believe an intermediary group of people - apart from the Appeals Board, apart from the Building Inspector - drawn from the Planning Board whose members are familiar with the By-Laws that have been provided for the express intent of maintaining the beauty of our town for years to come, to meet with all parties to work out a sensible solution.

We leave you with these thoughts:

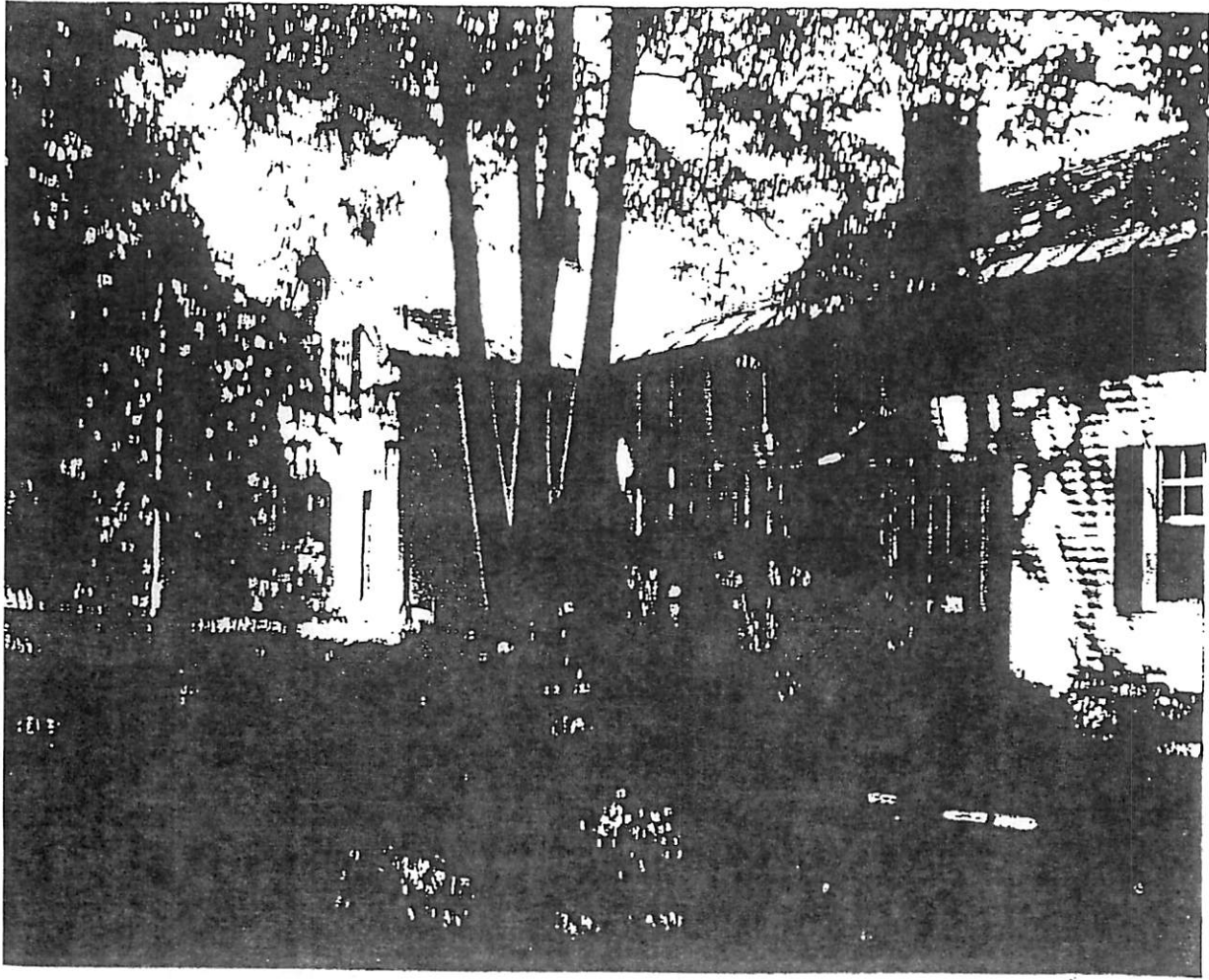
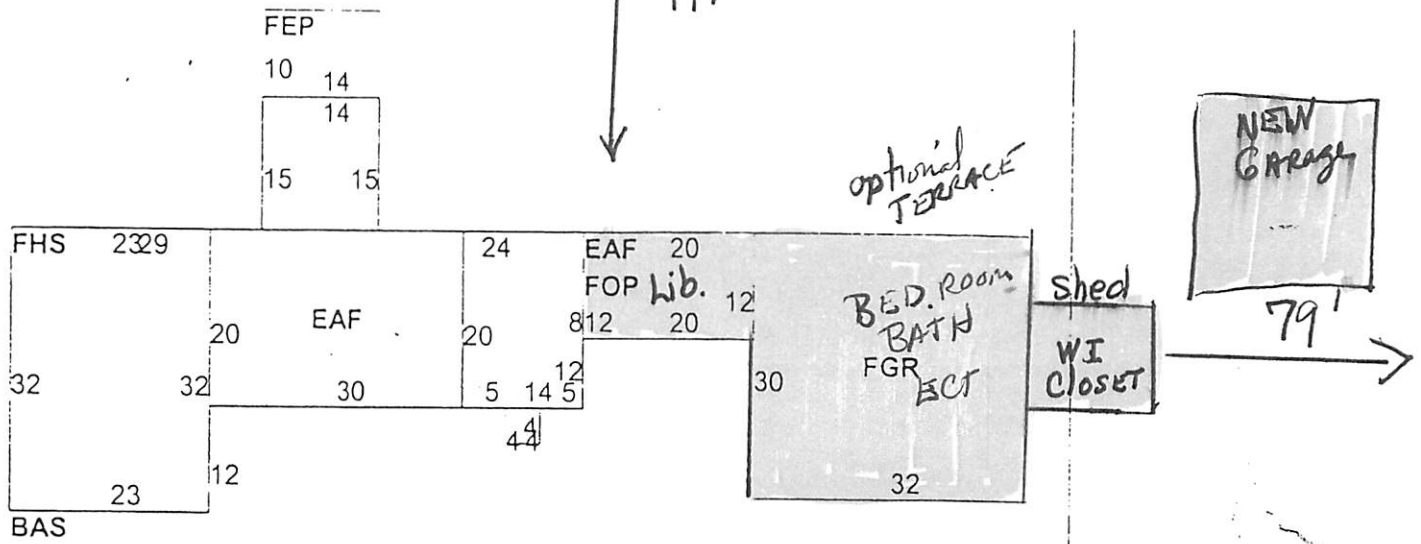
When a view is gone, it is gone for ever.

Is it acceptable to compromise a scenic byway, to do away with a community amenity?

Are not the bylaws, envisioned for the good of the town, not to be considered when a large number of people are relying upon them for the preservation of the natural beauty of their town for years to come?

Alternate propositions for building construction of an addition to the house at 1, Bittersweet Lane, Granby, MA that will accommodate a master bedroom, bathroom and library on the ground floor without compromising the view.

UBM[1686]



Option #1.

Use 30ft. X 32ft. Garage as bedroom addition.

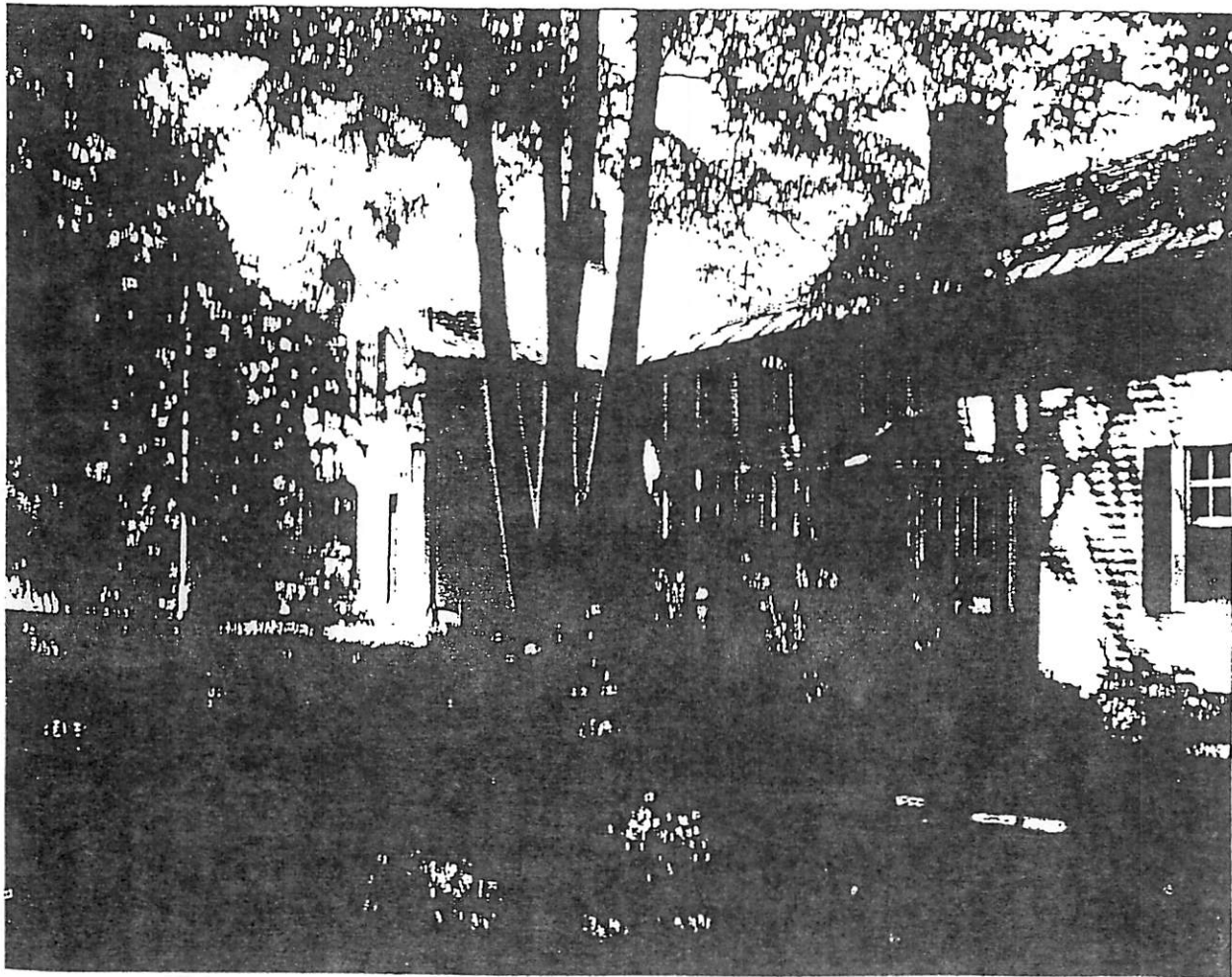
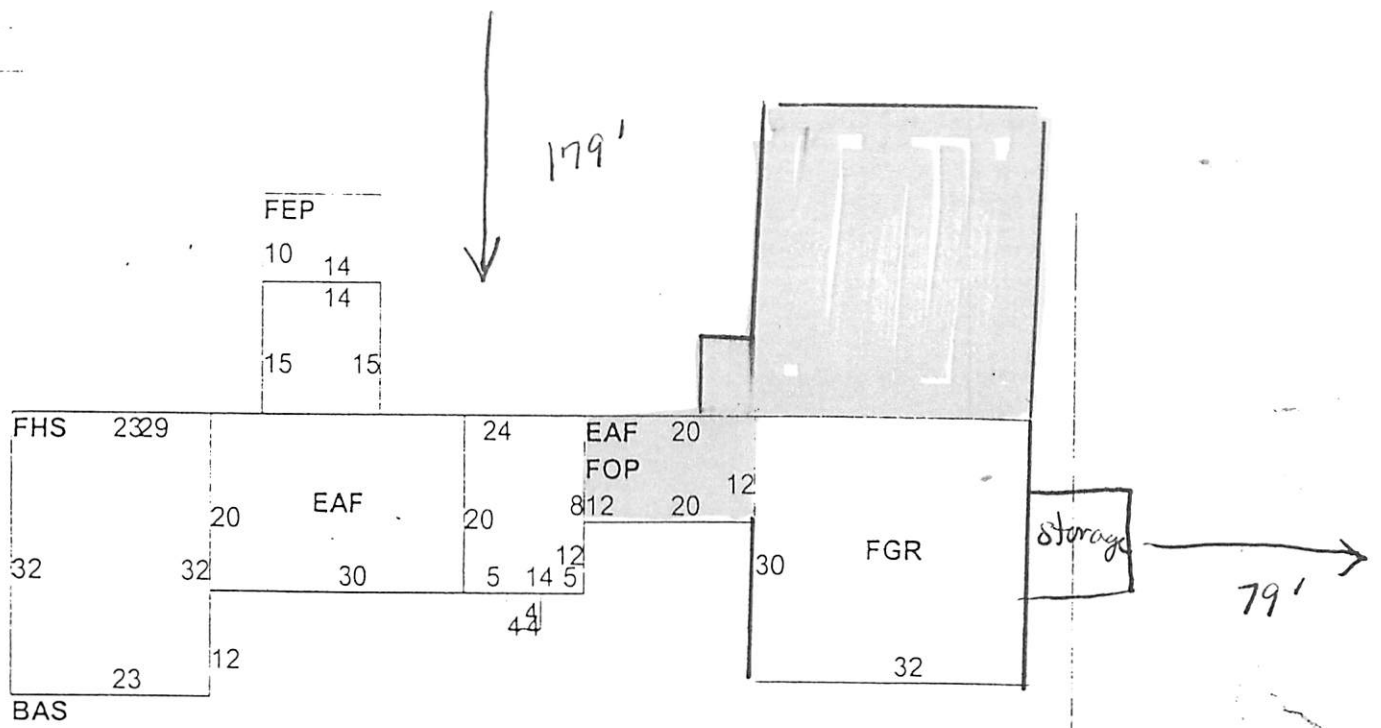
Use breezeway as library - glass in.

Use shed as walk-in closet.

Pros: much more square footage in addition:

- 1) (12 X 20
(30 X 32
(plus shed dimension
- 2) already have structures - less building
- 3) no impact on community
- 4) less taxes for owners
- 5) less distance for plumbing
- 6) possibility of double-sided fireplace/pellet stove
(more amenities than proposed plans A and B)
- 7) 78 ft. to right side of house for building lower cost garage
- 8) convenient for older people to be closer to car and kitchen
- 9) added views for owners/no loss of view for town
- 10) maintains historical frontage
- 11) advantage of addition - private quarters apart from the rest of the house whenever so desired

UBM[1686]



Option #2

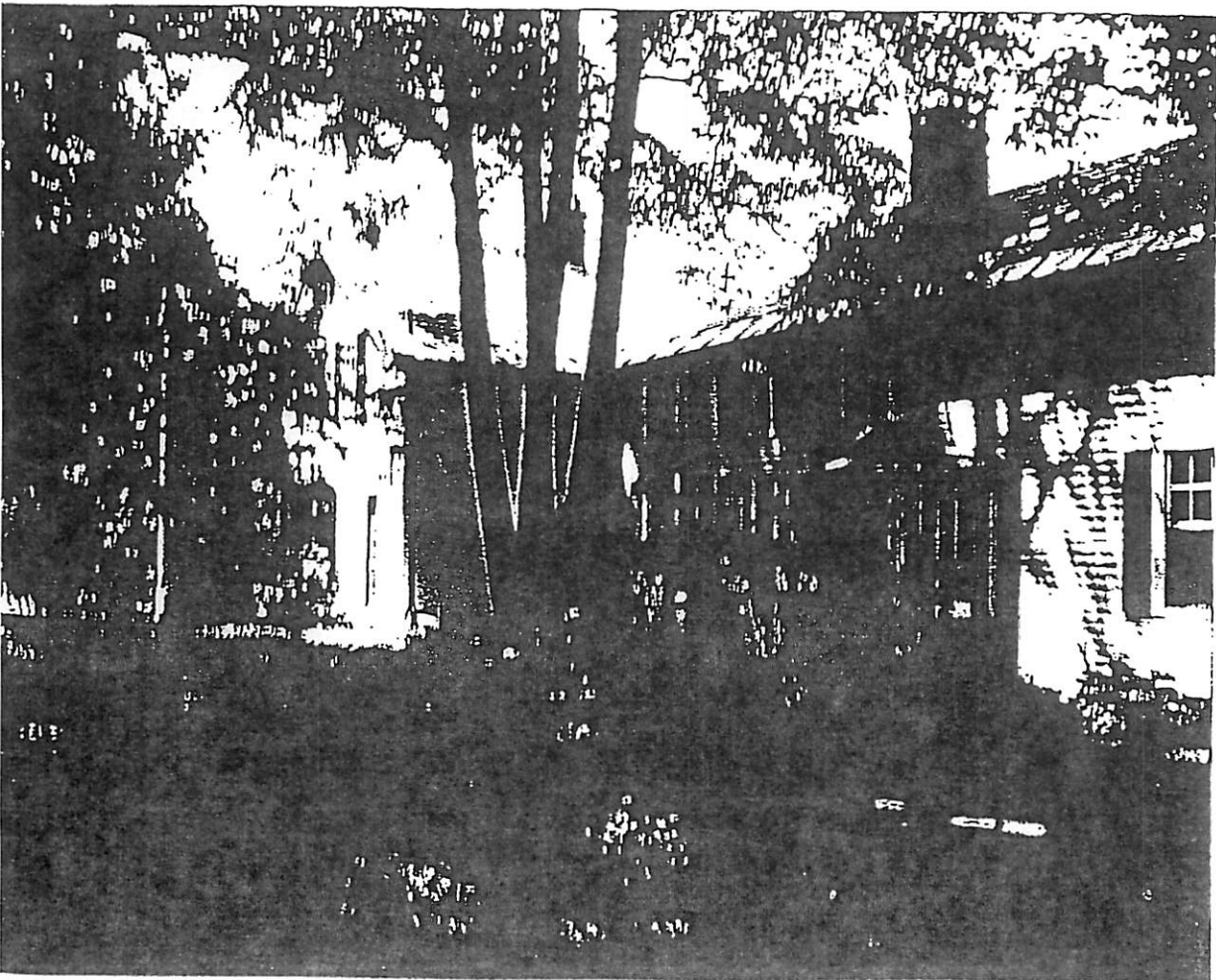
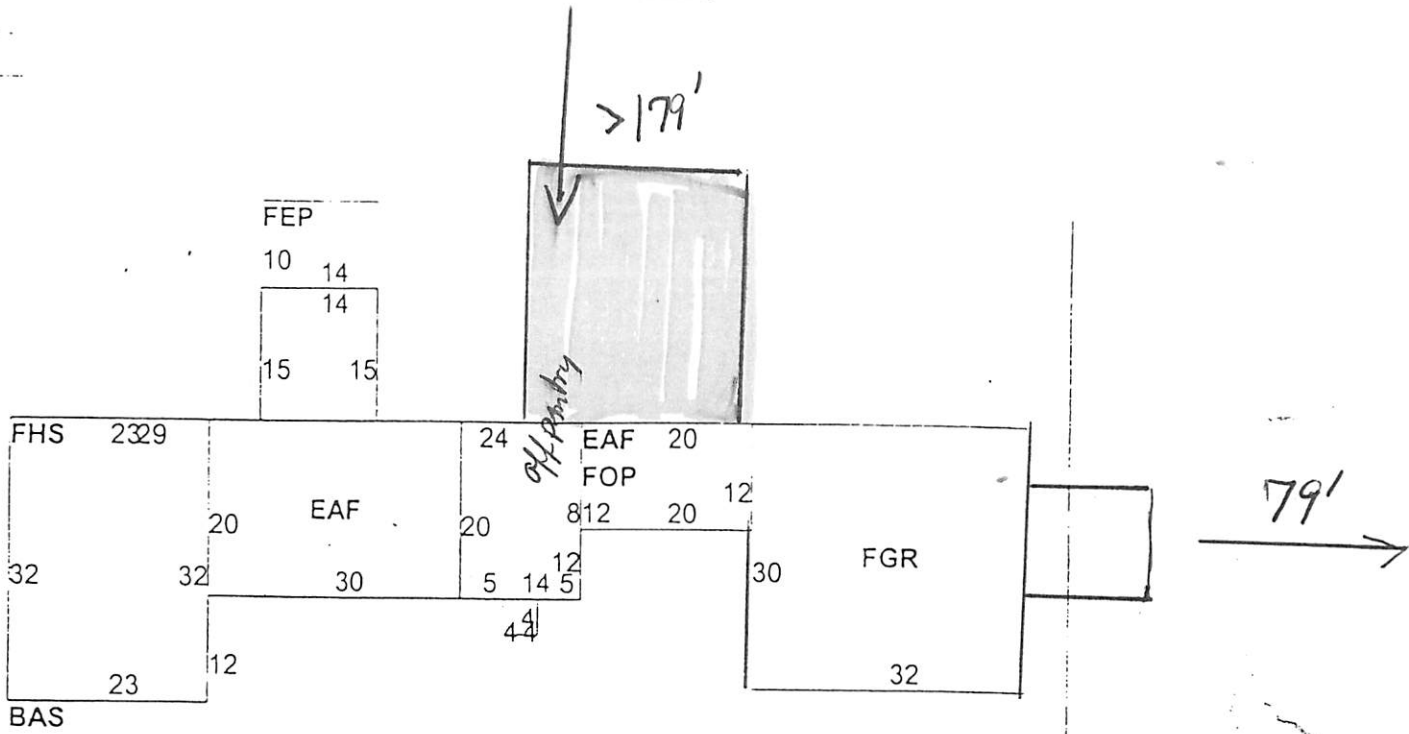
Build off back side of garage. Incorporate breezeway as library. Glass in.

Pros:

- 1) Quiet. Private.
- 2) Additional views for owners - panoramic.
- 3) No impact on community.
- 4) Would use up portion of land that now has poison ivy.
Con: would lose some pines.
- 5) Using the breezeway as library, an added view while in there.
- 6) Owner has mentioned wanting a screen door to keep out bugs.
Breezeway/library would buffer this.
- 7) Piping for plumbing closer to the kitchen.
- 8) Less walking in old age to car and kitchen

Con: This would necessitate removing some pine trees.

UBM[1686]



Option #3

New addition comes off the pantry. It encompasses the back side of the breezeway.

Pro:

- 1) Less cost to build because the piping is already there from existing bathroom and laundry.
- 2) Close to the kitchen in old age and close to the exit of the house.
- 3) Quiet and private.
- 4) Beautiful views added for the owners.
- 5) No loss of view for the community.

Con: would necessitate providing for an exit to the back yard.

This is Owner's PLAN (PLAN A)

PLOT PLAN

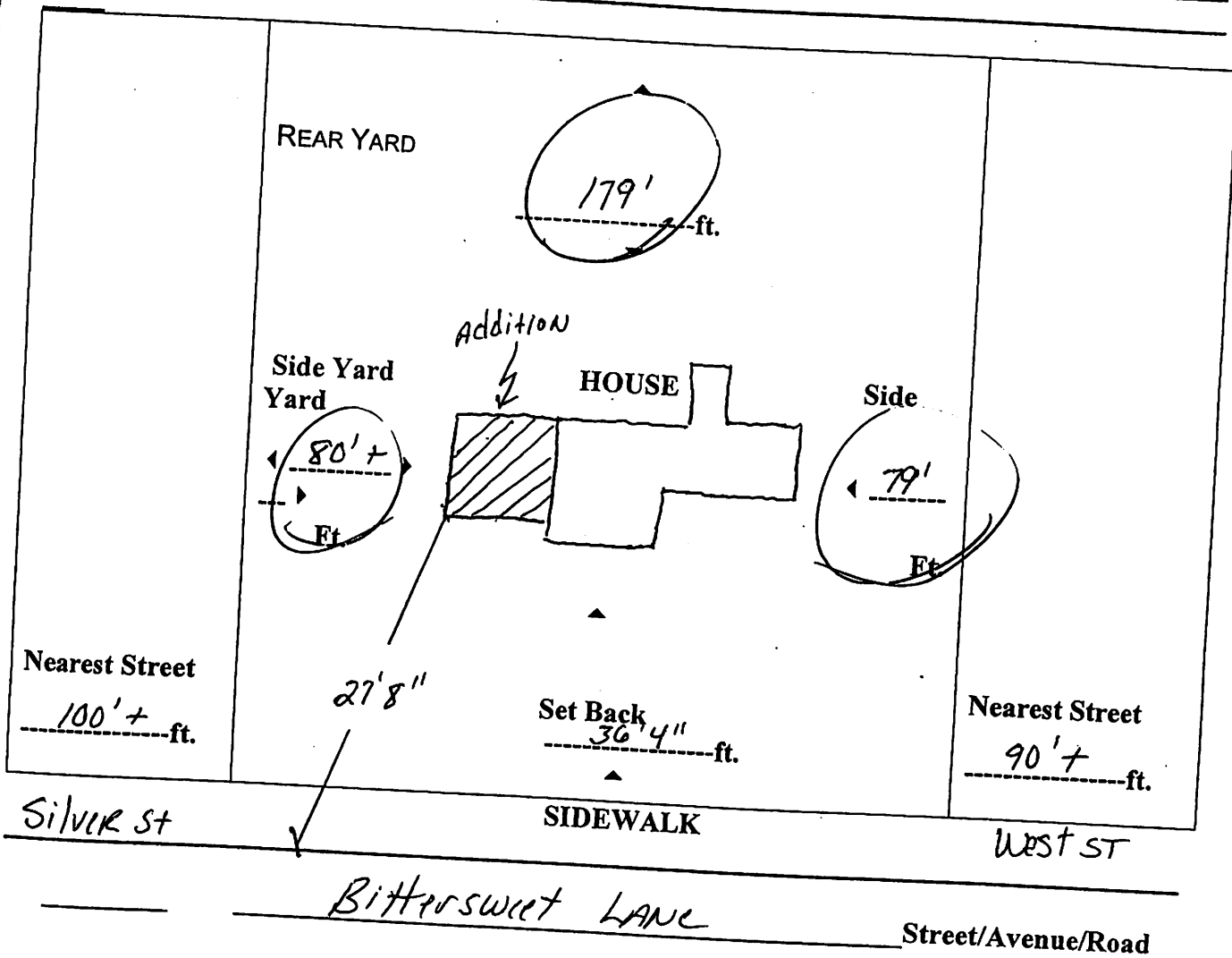
DATE: 5-18-12

HOUSE NUMBER 1 Bittersweet Lane

LOT NUMBER _____

OWNER OF LAND JONATHAN & LAURIE CONLY

ZONE RS



Mark North Point

Signature Ken LeBlanc

Project Manager