

# The Davidson Residence

Smyrna, Georgia

8-12-2021

August 12, 2021

Rowland Davidson  
1415 Mosswood Lane  
Smyrna, Georgia 30082

Ms. Mandy Elliott  
Historic Preservation Planner  
1150 Powder Springs Street  
Suite 400  
Marietta, Georgia 30064

Re: Certificate of Appropriateness Submittal  
Davidson Residence – 45 Concord Road  
District 9, Land Lot 17-171, Parcel 17017100200

Dear Ms. Elliott and Members of the Cobb County Historic Preservation Commission:

It is with great excitement that we are submitting our application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for our new home to be located on 45 Concord Road. Enclosed is our booklet that covers the requirements of the “Submittal Criteria”.

Since our last submittal we have had several meetings with residents of the Concord Covered Bridge Historic District; Dave Mahloy, Philip Ivester, Genevieve DeMars, Pat Burns, and Robert Roche and have made the following changes per their request:

- We have removed one of the garages so that the house now has only two garage doors. The complaint was that the garage was too large.
- We have moved the house as far away as possible from the Rock House. See the attached site plan.
- We have committed to the Owner of the Rock House to provide landscaping to screen the garage from the side property line.

You will also find enclosed photographs of the site from Concord Road, Covered Bridge Road, and the Rock House showing how little the proposed house would be visible. There is a very brief view window as you pass the driveway that the house will be seen. The way we have placed the house on the property minimizes the visibility of the house.

We trust that the Cobb County Historic Preservation Commission will find that we have been responsive to the requirements of the Concord Covered Bridge Historic District and the request of the neighbors to design a house that will be respectful to the area.

Respectfully,

  
Rowland Davidson



# COBB COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Planning Division: Historic Preservation  
P.O. Box 649  
Marietta, GA 30061  
(770) 528-2018 | fax (770) 528-2092

**Mandy Elliott**  
Historic Preservation Planner

For Office Use Only  
Case No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Date Filed \_\_\_\_\_  
Time Filed \_\_\_\_\_

## APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS Cobb County Historic Preservation Commission

1. Name of Applicant: James Rowland Davidson  
You or your representative must be present at the meeting of the Commission.  
You will be notified of the time, date and location of the meeting.

Mailing Address: 1415 Mosswood Lane, Smyrna, GA 30082

Daytime Phone: (404) 697-4645

Relationship of Applicant to Property Owner:

Owner Architect Contractor Other: (Please Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Address of Property: 45 Concord Road

Location: District 9 Land Lot(s) 17-171 Parcel(s) 17017100200

If a property is within a Cobb County Historic District,

please name district: Concord Covered Bridge Historic District

3. Nature of Proposed Work:

New Construction

Demolition

Awnings

Fence

Exterior Environmental Feature Change

Other

Moving a Building

Sign Erection or Placement

Repairs or Alterations

Exterior Architectural Features

Landscaping

4. Proposed starting date of work: 10-1-2021



**COBB COUNTY  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY | HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Please describe your proposed work as simply and accurately as possible. Use the attached submittal criteria checklist to guide you in your description. Be sure to indicate and/or provide sample(s) of material(s) to be used such as dimensions of structure, property, etc. Accurate drawings and photographs are required. (Use extra sheet, if necessary.)

Building a two-story, single-family residence.

**Important:** This form must be completed before the Historic Preservation Commission can consider the approval of any material change to a property or structure listed on the Cobb County Register of Historic Places. This form, along with supporting documents, must be filed with the Historic Preservation Planner or his/her designee, Cobb County Community Development Agency, Planning Division, P. O. Box 649, Marietta, GA, 30061. Application packages must be submitted at least ten (10) business days prior to the HPC hearing.

All applicable items from the attached checklist of Submittal Criteria must be addressed. The Historic Preservation Commission will not docket incomplete applications for consideration.

For further information, you are encouraged to contact the Historic Preservation Planner at 770.528.2010 or [mandy.elliott@cobbcounty.org](mailto:mandy.elliott@cobbcounty.org).

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Richard [unclear]".

8.12.2021

Signature of Applicant

## II. Response to the Decision of the Superior Court of Cobb County

*1. The Historic Preservation Commission did not adhere to the plain language of the Cobb County Code to approve or deny an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness.*

**Response:** It is the intent of this application for a Certificate of Appropriateness to be met with either an approval or denial. Earlier approval for a Certificate of Appropriateness included a stipulation of “not to exceed 4,000 square feet”. It is our understanding that the response to this application will not include any stipulations per the Cobb County Code.

*2. The Historic Preservation Commission based its decision on incorrect information regarding the square footage of the proposed structure.*

**Response:** This one point has raised a lot of argument and as the applicant a lot of misunderstanding. We offer the following:

- We are not aware of any stipulations of limiting square footage within the Covered Bridge Historic Overlay District. There is language about matching the scale of structures in the District. When we made our previous submittal we were directed by the Cobb County Development Manager to calculate the square footage on the occupied heated and cooled space. This is the same method used in the Cobb County Building Permit application. We feel that we had represented the square footage as directed.
- In this submittal the square footage of the house has been reduced and we feel that the scale of the house is appropriate to the surrounding structures.

*3. Ignored the plain language of the Cobb County Code which distinguishes between the immediate neighborhood and the larger Historic District.*

It is our understanding that the term “immediate neighborhood” has been omitted from the revised Cobb County Code. In our review of the requirements, we used the entire Historic District in looking at architectural language of the Davidson residence design.

## Davidson Residence

### *In response we offer the following:*

- The house is designed around a series of stone walls drawing a reference to the historic ruins of the Concord Woolen Mills. The stone walls of the Concord Woolen Mills are free standing so it is important that the walls of the design of the house start from the outside of the structure and run continuously through the interior of the house and out back into the landscape. These walls in the design stand as if historic artifacts found on the site and then incorporated into the design of the proposed residence.
- The design of the house uses the same roof angles and slopes of the neighboring houses, especially to the adjacent "Rock House". The house will have traditional textured shingled roofing.
- In reference to the Concord Covered Bridge the design of the house has incorporated rough sawn wood beams and columns on both the exterior and the interior of the house.
- The exterior materials will include natural stone, wood beams and columns and exterior siding similar to a Hardy Plank type product. Other houses within the district have similar materials.
- The windows we have selected have a narrow mullion profile similar to the windows in the historic Ruffs Mill structure.

### *4. Relied upon compatibility with non-historic homes which do not contribute to the historic character of the district.*

See response to Article 3 above.

In addition, the Court's response states the O.C.G.A. 44-10-28(b) and Cobb Code 66-85(a) states that "compatibility does not equate to sameness; it is the existing together of different things in harmony with one another".

### *5. Reviewed and approved an Application that did not include items required by the Cobb County Historic Commission's Certificate of Appropriateness Submittal Criteria.*

All requirements of the Submittal Criteria were met except providing an elevation drawing showing the proximity of any adjacent structures. The adjacent "Rock House" is so far away that we did not interpret it to be in proximity to our planned new home. Included in this submittal is an elevation drawing showing in scale the Davidson residence and the adjacent "Rock House". There are no other adjacent structures to be shown.

### III. Application Submittal Requirements

#### Cobb County Historic Preservation Commission

District 9, Land lot 17-171, Parcel 17017100200

Cobb County, Georgia

#### Davidson Residence

We are Rowland and Nancy Davidson, and it is our intent to build a new home on 45 Concord Road between the Rock House and the Silver Comet Trail right of way. I am an Architect, and it has been a lifelong career goal to design my own home. In 2006 I purchased this property within the Concord Covered Bridge Historic District and have spent the last ten years designing and planning this project.

#### Response to Section 66-82 Approval of new construction within the designated Districts:

- ***Structures shall conform in design:***

The covered Bridge Historic Overlay has approximately 42 structures within its limits. Four of those are non-residential structures such as the covered bridge and the old grist mill building. The remaining 38 structures are single family residences, of those, only 4 of those homes are historic. These 34 homes have a wide range of styles and design and feel that our new home will fit into the category of design that is the majority of houses within the District.

Our new home has been categorized as being contemporary, of which, there are other homes in the District that would fit this category. As the Architect, I would categorize the design our home as contextual; in that many of the design features are a direct reference to the Covered Bridge Historic District. The following are our points for the contextual design:

- 1. Concord Woolen Mills:** The Concord Woolen Mills opened in 1847 and its ruins are located in Cobb Heritage Park along the Silver Comet Trail and within the Concord Covered Bridge Overlay. During the Civil War it produced Confederate uniforms for the army. As Sherman's troops advanced after the Battle of Ruffs Mill, the Concord Woolen Mill was burned leaving only the stone walls of the structure. During the post war reconstruction, the Mill was rebuilt and operated until 1916. Its native stone walls still stand and are an inspiration to the stone walls designed into our home. The walls in our design stand parallel to each other and run from the exterior through the interior and back out again as if they too were artifacts from the 1800s. These stone walls are used to organize the rooms within the house and the overall structure supporting the gabled roof.
  
- 2. Concord Covered Bridge:** The Concord Covered Bridge was built in 1848 over Nickajack Creek. It was burned by Sherman's troops on July 4, 1864 and was later rebuilt in 1872 using the original stone supports. The Covered Bridge structure was originally built of heavy wood timbers. The design of our house is incorporating heavy wood timbers in reference to the covered bridge and these beams will be exposed both on the exterior and interior of the house.  
  
Our house is strategically located on the property to take advantage of views to the Covered Bridge and Nickajack Creek.
  
- 3. Ruff's Mill:** The old Ruff's Mill building utilizes what appears to be narrow line steel sash windows. Our house is going to utilize similar windows with narrow line steel sash windows.
  
- 4.** The roof lines are a sloped gabled design that are designed to match the angle of the roof line of the historic Rock House adjacent to the project site. Gabled roof lines are the predominant design approach to the majority of homes within the District.

- ***Structures shall conform in scale:***

The scale of this house is consistent with other houses within the Covered Bridge Historic District. The site slopes from the front to the rear and the house is designed into the hill so that the front of the house is one story and the rear of the house is two stories. There is one small bonus room on the left-hand side of the house.

The house was designed around the large specimen trees on the site to preserve the heavily wooded nature of the property. We had the property surveyed and major trees identified so the design of the house will preserve these specimen trees.

- ***Structures shall conform in building materials:***

The predominant material on the exterior of the design is natural stone, fiber cement siding similar to James Hardie Siding or Nichiha USA, Inc. products, brick, and asphalt shingle roofing. The windows are casement windows and steel sash frames and glass.

- ***Structures shall conform in required zoning setbacks:***

The house will conform to all zoning setbacks and setbacks from Nickajack Creek. See the enclosed site plan.

- ***Structures shall conform to landscaping to the character of the district:***

The landscaping will conform to the character of the District and will incorporate grass lawn area and plant materials similar to that found within the Covered Bridge Historic District. The area behind the house down to Nickajack Creek will be left natural and will leave the specimen trees untouched. See the enclosed preliminary landscape plan.

***Response to Section 66-85(a) – Approval or Denial: “The commission shall consider, in addition to any other pertinent factors, the historical and architectural value and significance, architectural style, general design arrangements, texture and material of the architectural features involved, and the relationship thereof to the exterior architectural style and pertinent features of the other structures in the immediate neighborhood”.***

In reviewing the various houses within the Covered Bridge Overlay District, there are a wide variety of architectural styles. In our design, we have strived to maintain the scale and height of the house in comparison to all of the other homes and to incorporate roof slopes of neighboring houses.

## Davidson Residence

By using materials and textures found in the significant historic structures such as the Concord Woolen Mill, the Covered Bridge and Ruff's Mill, we have added to the contextual design approach for the house. These materials include natural stone, exposed heavy wood timbers, steel sash windows, and sloped gable roof lines. The front door will be a natural wood finish in a craftsman style.

The exterior color scheme will utilize natural stone, wood, grey and beige tones, and dark grey asphalt shingles. The goal is to match the natural colors found in the lush landscape that surrounds the house.

### Design Approach for the Davidson Residence – Concord Road

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The design of this house is to accomplish the following goals:

- Blend into the slope of the hill that leads down to Nickajack Creek and fits in and around the large existing hardwood trees on the site.
- Utilize natural stone walls to anchor and organize the overall floor plan of the house making reference to the Concord Woolen Mill ruins.
- Create views from within the house towards the historic covered bridge.
- Create views from within the house towards Nickajack Creek.
- Create outdoor spaces in order to enjoy the sounds of the water flowing in Nickajack Creek.
- Use natural materials: stone, wood beams and posts, and siding.
- Fit the house within the landscape and minimize the visual impact within the area.
- Share a driveway with the Rock House in order to maintain a single curb cut onto Concord Road.

See the attached plans for a four bedroom / three bath house with a two-car garage. The dining room, living room and master bedroom features large windows focused on the Concord Covered Bridge and Nickajack Creek.

### **Historic References:**

**Battle of Ruff's Mill:** Our property is located within the area of the Battle of Ruff's Mill during the Civil War around July of 1864. After the Confederate forces withdrew from Kennesaw Mountain they set up defensive field works near the Nickajack Creek and old Concord Road. Forces crossed the Creek at Ruff's Mill. This line of defense became known as the Smyrna – Ruff Mill line in an effort to defend Atlanta from the advancing Northern Army.

**Concord Woolen Mills:** The Concord Woolen Mills opened in 1847 and its ruins are located in Cobb Heritage Park along the Silver Commit Trail. During the Civil War it produced Confederate uniforms for the army. Sherman's troops burned the mill down in July of 1864. During the Post war Reconstruction the mill was rebuilt and remained in operation until 1916. Its native stone walls still stand and are an inspiration to the stone walls designed into our home. The walls in our design stand parallel to each other and run from the exterior through the interior and back out again as if they too were artifacts from the eighteen hundreds. The stone wall references also relate to other historic structures within the area.

**Concord Covered Bridge:** The Concord Covered Bridge was built in 1848 over Nickajack Creek. It was burned by Sherman's troops on July 4, 1864 and was later rebuilt in 1872 using the original stone supports. This is one of the few covered bridges in the nation that is still in use for vehicular traffic. Our house design is strategically located to take advantage of views to the bridge while sitting naturally along the ridge of a hill facing Nickajack Creek. The homes design focuses key window locations to take in the view of the bridge while carefully located amongst existing hardwood trees on the site. There are rustic wood beams integrated into the design of the house giving reference to the structure of the Concord Covered Bridge.

**View of Property:** The site slopes from the level area at the existing driveway down approximately forty feet to the bank of Nickajack Creek. The house is two stories but is nestled into the slope of the hill so from Concord Road it has a one story elevation. The rear of the house will be two stories. The design has been carefully laid out to minimize removing any large specimen trees. Only smaller trees will need to be removed. There are large existing trees between the house location and Concord Road to minimize views and will give the appearance that the house has been there for many years.



**Selected Building Materials:** The exterior of the house has been designed to expose the natural stone walls that run through the house. These stone walls reference back to the Concord Woolen Mill located within the Concord Covered Bridge Historic District. In addition to the natural stone there are rustic wood beams and columns that reference the structure of the covered bridge.



**Adjacent Property:** This house dates back to the Ruff's Mill era and has natural stone walls that we referenced in the design of our house. The addition to the house is a more traditional exterior with lap siding and shingled roof.



**Homes within the Concord Covered Bridge Historic District:** There is a wide variety of housing styles within the Concord Covered Bridge Historic District. The following examples are to show the different types of homes that exist.







#### IV. Projected Undue Hardship

The applicants, Rowland and Nancy Davidson have been and will continue to suffer undue hardship if denied a Certificate of Appropriateness.

***Points of undue hardship:***

- The applicants have owned the property at 45 Concord Road since 2006 and wish to build a home on the property. The property was purchased with the goal of living at the location and any further delays or denials have been a hardship.
- The applicants have paid property taxes every year but not been able to use the property as they intended. This has resulted in tax expenses on their current home in addition to the property at 45 Concord Road. Carrying both properties has resulted in a considerable expense.
- The property has a water meter to serve the future home. The cost of the water meter was \$6,700.00. Even though the house is not built there is still a monthly bill from the public water company. This is an ongoing expense.
- The applicants have paid a surveyor to prepare a detailed boundary and topographic survey of the property for the purposes of designing their future home. The cost of this survey was \$3,000.00. Included in this survey is to locate the specimen trees on the property so that the home could be custom designed to avoid the major trees. This was done to conserve the natural beauty of the property. The cost of the survey without being able to build the home is an economic hardship.
- The applicants have paid a geotechnical engineering firm to prepare soil borings and an engineering report to locate subsurface rock and soil conditions to design the home suitable to the conditions at the site. The cost of the geotechnical engineering was \$2,800.00. The cost of the soil borings and geotechnical report without being able to build the home is an economic hardship.
- Though the applicant, Rowland Davidson, is an architect there has been considerable time and money spent developing the architectural plans for the home, including man-hours, drafting, CAD time, blueprinting, and plotting expenses. In addition to the basic plans, Mr. Davidson and his staff have spent numerous hours making design changes to the plans in an effort to appease neighbors within the historic district.

## Davidson Residence

- The applicants have hired a structural engineer to provide professional engineering plans for the construction of their home. The structural engineering cost has been \$3,000.00 to date.
- Upon approval a prior Certificate of Appropriateness the applicants secured a building permit from Cobb County. The building permit was \$1,739.00. We anticipate needing to again apply for a new building permit that will be an additional cost.
- In addition to the building permit expense there is a requirement for a land disturbance permit. The land disturbance permit was \$200.00. We anticipate needing to again apply for a new land disturbance permit that will be another \$200.00 in cost.

VIEW  
#1



COVERED BRIDGE



Lyman  
Davidson  
Dooley, Inc.

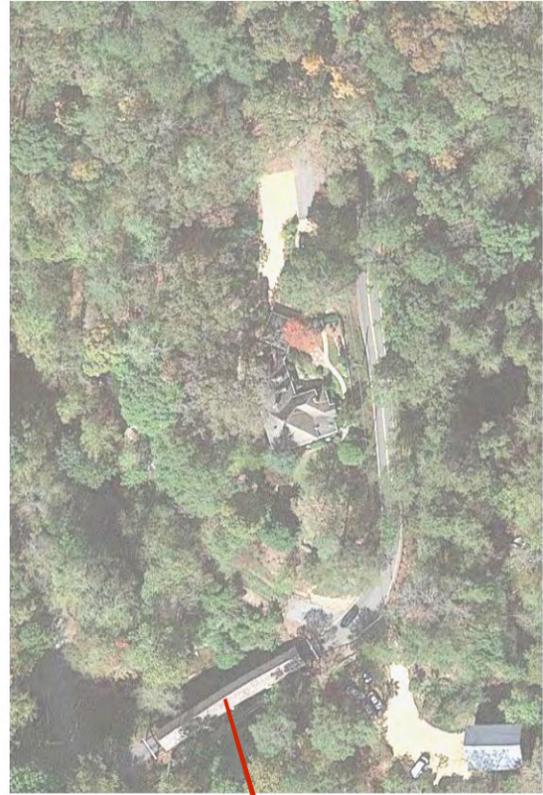
## Site Photo #1 The Davidson Residence Smyrna, Georgia

1640 Powers Ferry Road - Building 1 - Suite 100 - Marietta, GA 30067 - tel 770-850-8494 - fax 770-850-8993 - Copyright as dated.

Drawing for presentation purposes only. Finish materials and colors do not necessarily reflect final finish selections

171.033 06/02/2021

VIEW #2



COVERED BRIDGE



Lyman  
Davidson  
Dooley, Inc.

## Site Photo #2 The Davidson Residence Smyrna, Georgia

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COVERED BRIDGE



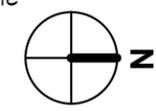
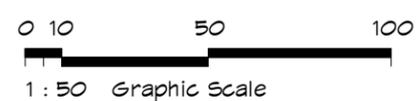
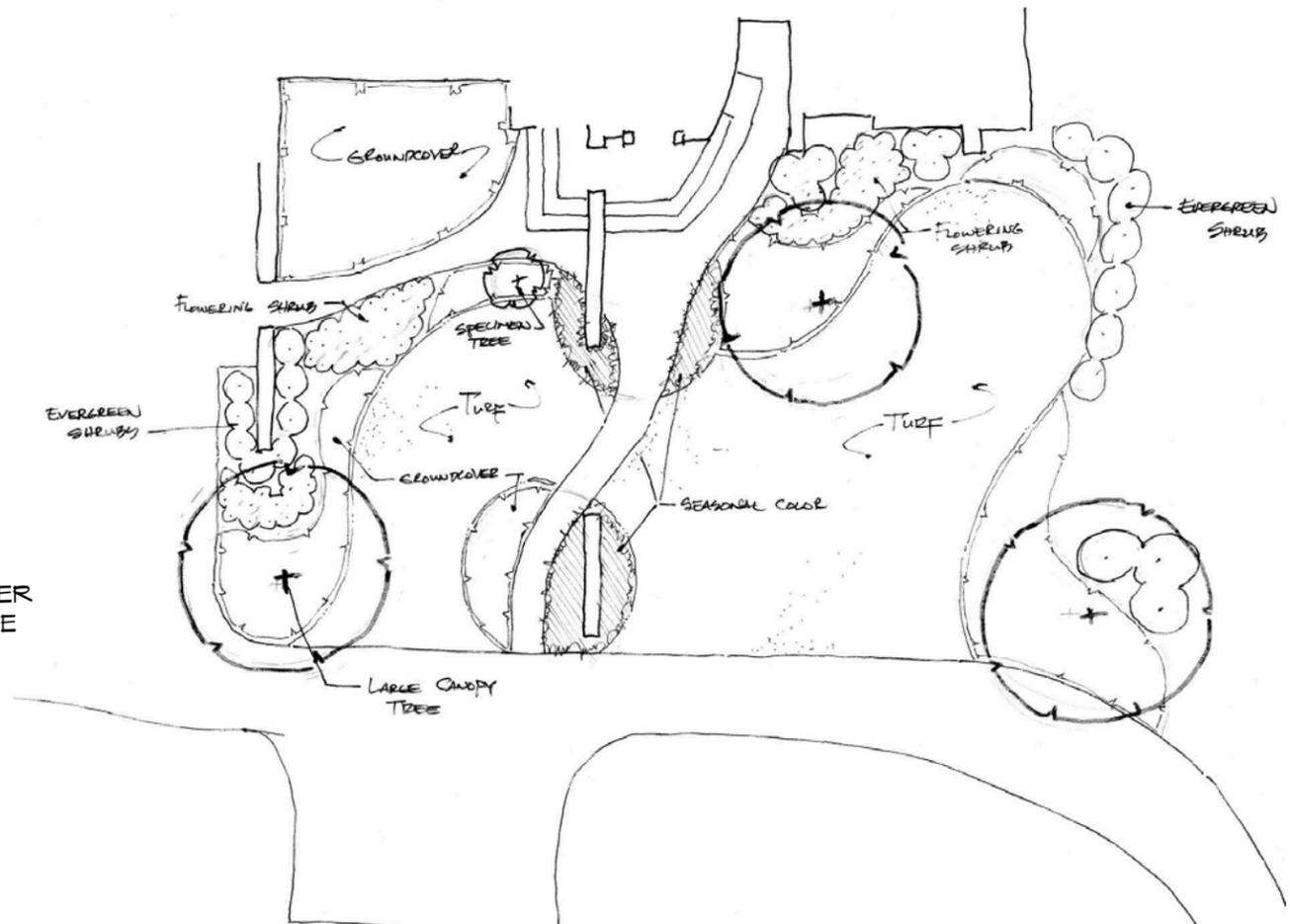
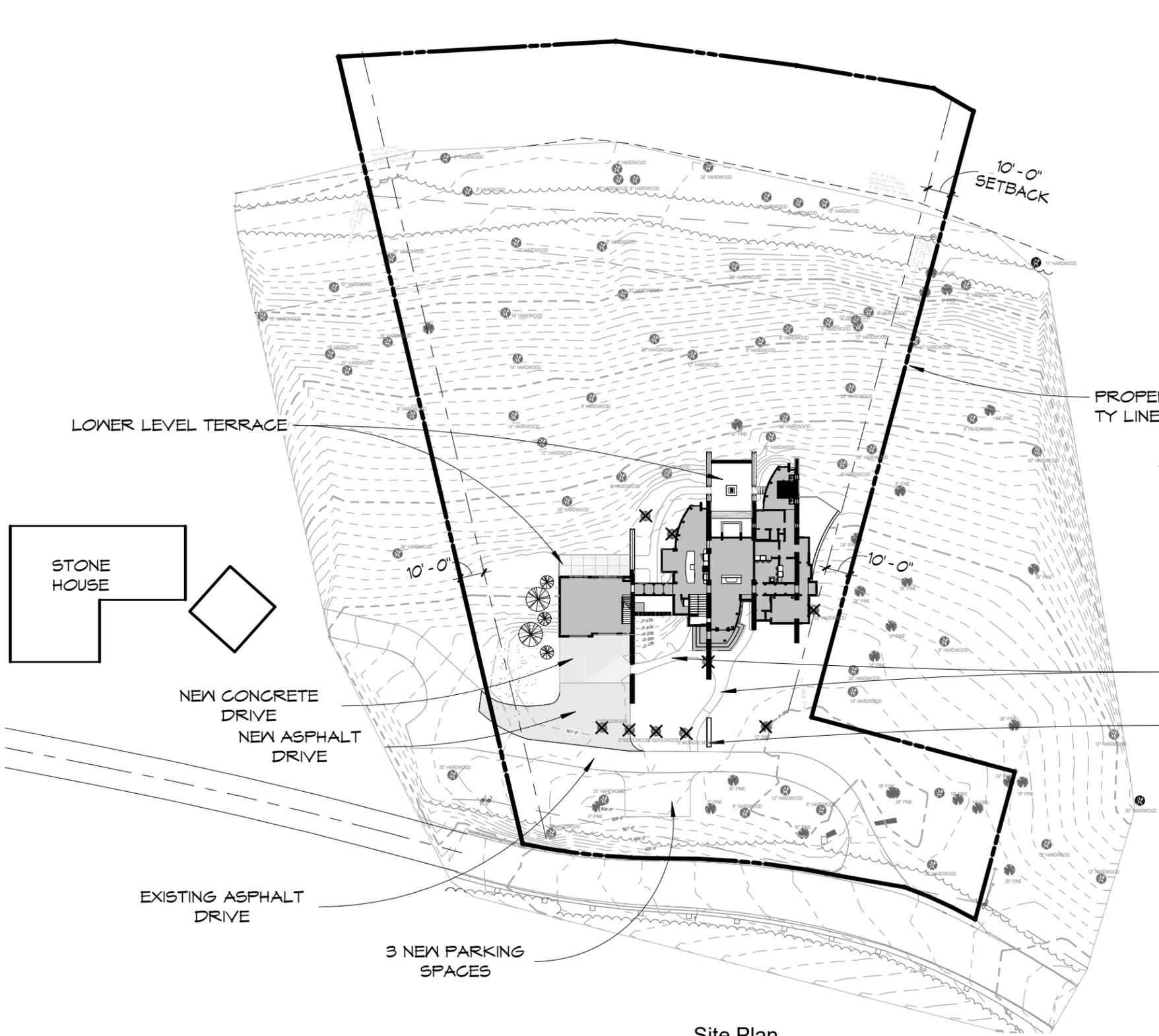
Lyman  
Davidson  
Dooley, Inc.

## Site Photo #3 The Davidson Residence Smyrna, Georgia

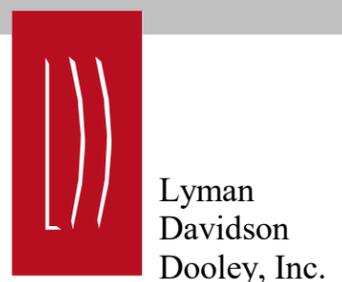
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As indicated

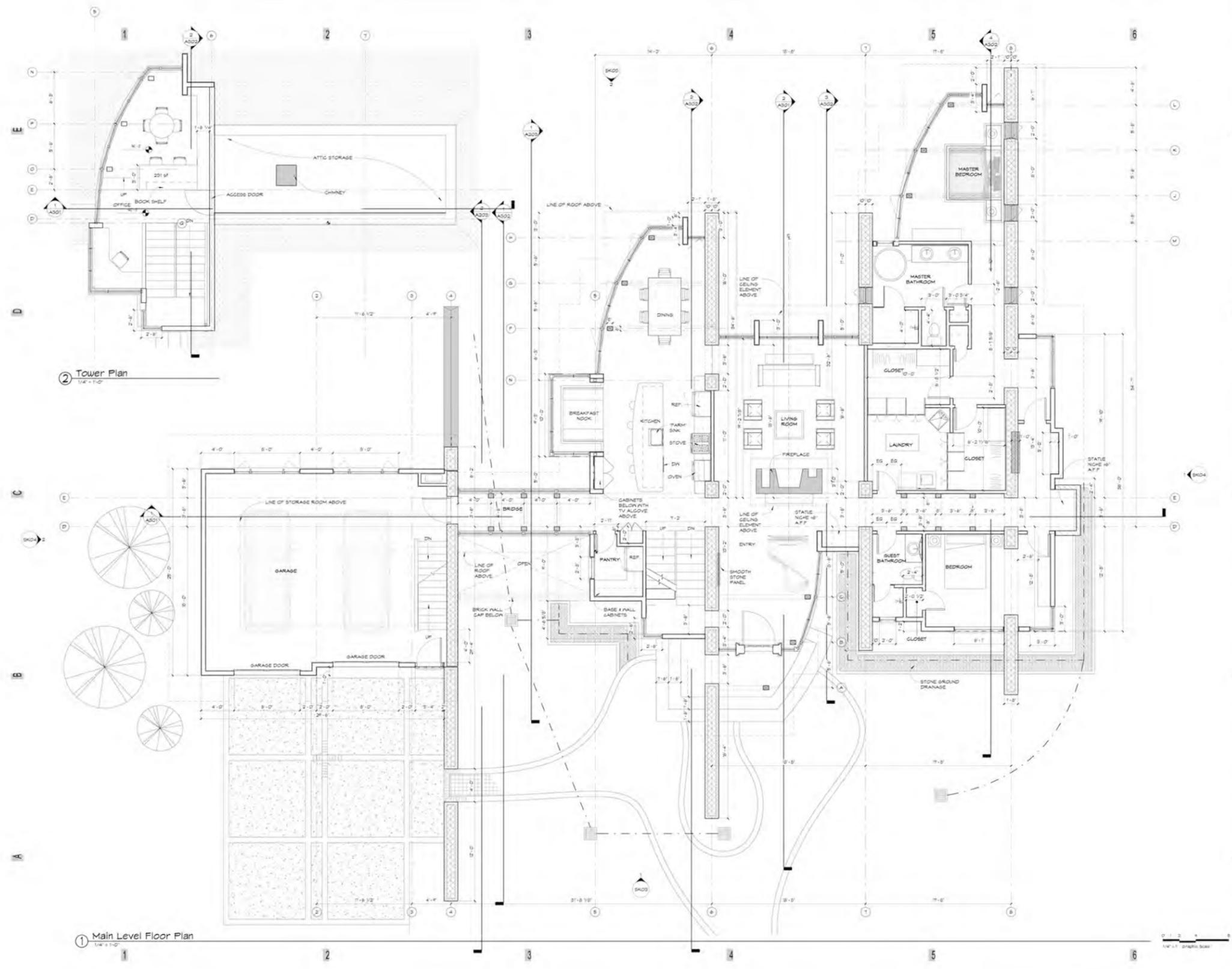


Site Plan  
The Davidson Residence

Smyrna, Georgia

1640 Powers Ferry Road, Building One, Marietta, GA 30067 - tel 770.850.8494 - fax 770.956.9030

03/30/21  
171.033



② Tower Plan  
1/4" = 1'-0"

① Main Level Floor Plan  
1/4" = 1'-0"



Lyman  
Davidson  
Dooley, Inc.  
1843 Peachtree Ferry Road  
Atlanta, GA 30307  
770.888.8881  
770.888.8831  
lmd@lmdco.com  
ATLANTA  
1-1000-76

NO.	REVISION



The Davidson Residence  
Smyrna, Georgia

The Davidson  
Residence  
Project Address

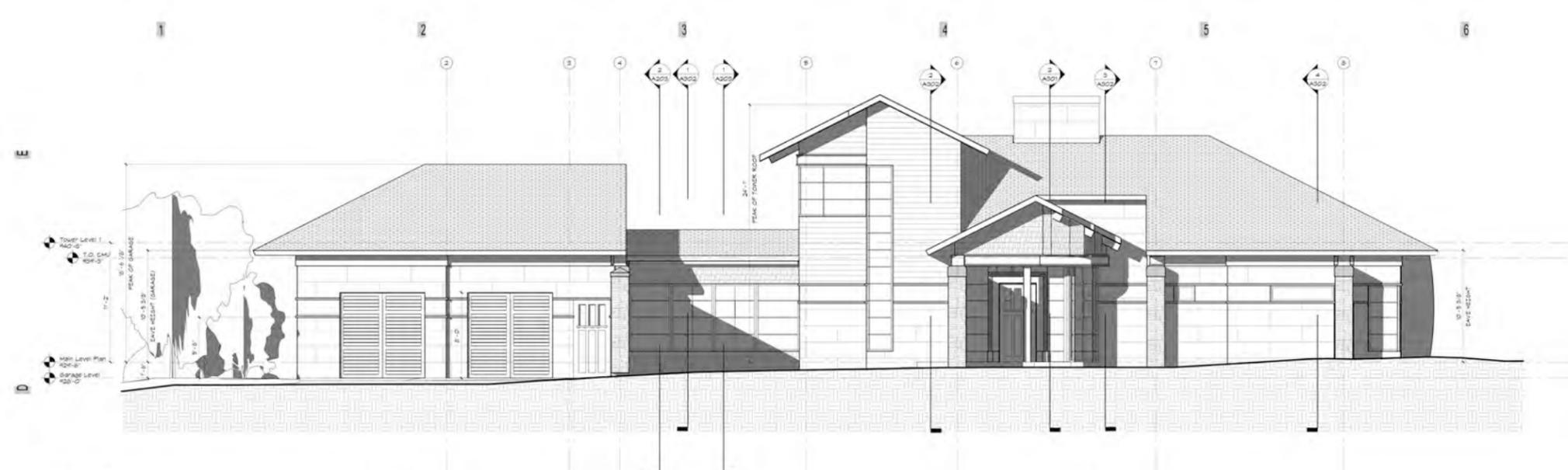
Concord Road SW  
Smyrna, Georgia  
Client Address 3

TITLE Main Level Floor  
PLAN  
STATUS Pricing  
SUBMISSION  
JOB 171.033  
GC Checker  
DRAWN Author  
SHEET **A101**  
DATE 02/19/2019

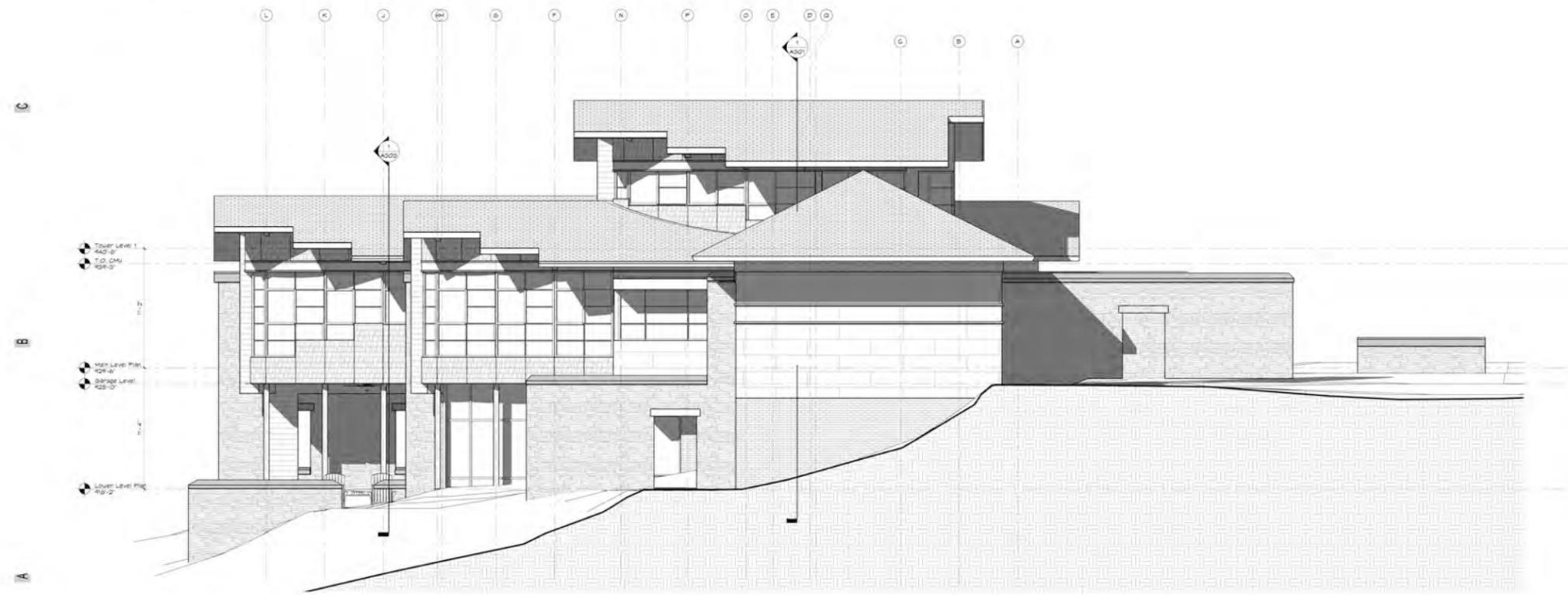
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① South Street Elevation  
1/4" = 1'-0"



② West  
1/4" = 1'-0"

ARCHITECTURE  
PLANNING  
INTERIOR DESIGN

Lyman  
Davidson  
Dooley, Inc.  
1440 Powers Ferry Road  
Marietta, GA 30067  
770.866.8800  
770.866.8801  
lmd@lmdco.com  
ATLANTA  
T 30301A

REVISIONS

The Davidson Residence  
Smyrna, Georgia

The Davidson Residence  
Project Address

Concord Road SW  
Smyrna, Georgia  
Client Address 3

TITLE EXTERIOR  
ELEVATIONS

STATUS PRELIMINARY  
SUBMISSION

JOB 171 033

QC Checker

DRAWN ALPH

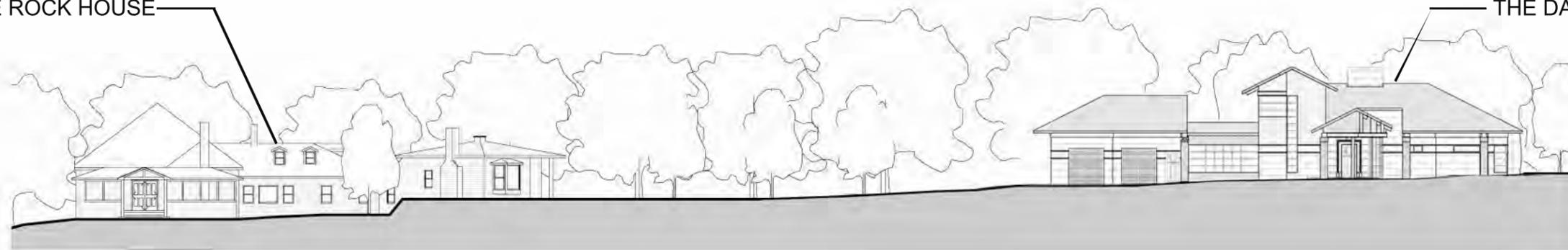
SHEET A202

DATE 02/19/2019

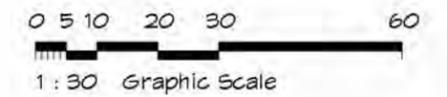




THE ROCK HOUSE



THE DAVIDSON RESIDENCE



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Davidson  
Dooley, Inc.

## Exterior Elevation Adjacent Structures The Davidson Residence

Smyrna, Georgia

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770.956.9030

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