

City of Litchfield

PLANNING COMMISSION

AGENDA PACKET

Monday, February 9, 2026

City of Litchfield – Planning Commission

AGENDA

Monday, February 9, 2026 – 5:30 P.M.

Held in the Council Chambers of City Hall
126 N Marshall Avenue

I. **CALL TO ORDER**

A. **ROLL CALL/DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

B. **ANNOUNCEMENT OF ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

II. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A. **MINUTES: (Packet)**

1. *November 10, 2025*

III. **SCHEDULED ITEMS**

IV. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **PUBLIC HEARING, CONTINUED:**

1. **VARIANCE REQUEST - UPDATED SUBMITTAL** – by Jeremy Lehr at 501 S. Chandler Ave.
Variance to allow for an increase in allowable square footage for an addition to an existing detached garage.

V. **OLD BUSINESS**

VI. **ADDITIONAL ITEMS**

A. **HPC MEETING REPORT**

VII. **SET HEARING DATES AND TIMES**

VIII. **REVIEW OF COUNCIL ACTIONS**

IX. **ADJOURNMENT**

Minutes

November 10, 2025

I. CALL TO ORDER

A meeting of the Planning Commission was held on Monday, November 10, 2025, commencing at 5:30 p.m. in the Council Chambers of City Hall. Chairperson Asmus called the meeting to order.

A. ROLL CALL:

Chairperson	Shannon Asmus	Present
Commissioner	Michael Flaata	Absent
Commissioner	Larry Dahl	Absent
Commissioner	John Carlson	Present
Commissioner	Jeff Woods	Present
Commissioner	John Mueller	Present
Commissioner	Gary Barnes	Present
City Planner	Hannah Rybak	Present

B. ANNOUNCEMENT OF ADDITIONAL ITEMS

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved by Commissioner Woods, seconded by Commissioner Carlson, to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2025, meeting. Commissioners Asmus, Carlson and Woods voted aye, and Commissioners Barnes and Mueller abstained due to absence from the July 14, 2025 meeting.

Motion Carried.

III. SCHEDULED ITEMS

A. PUBLIC HEARING:

1. **VARIANCE REQUEST** – by Jeremy Lehr at 501 S. Chandler Ave.

Variances to allow for an increase in allowable height and square footage for an addition to an existing detached garage.

City Planner, Hannah Rybak, provided an overview of the request. She reviewed the standards for granting a variance and requested that the Planning Commission review the project in the context of the criteria and make a recommendation to the City Council.

Documentation was received from two neighboring property owners. Dustin Guza, 506 S Gilman Ave. signed the application in support of the variances. Linda Prieve, 509 S Chandler Ave. submitted a letter in opposition to the variances.

This being the time, date, and place set, with all mailed and published notices given as required by law, the hearing was opened at approximately 5:40 p.m.

Applicant Jeremy Lehr provided the Commission with background related to his request. He owns several vehicles, including race cars, which he would like to store on his property. He is not interested in off-site rental storage, due to inconvenience. The height is necessary so that he can store one of the vehicles on a lift, and also so

that the building could store a larger boat that would not fit inside of a typical 8-foot overhead garage door.

Commissioners Mueller and Woods asked if it would be possible for the height to be reduced to be the same as the home, not taller. The Applicant replied that he would need to look into whether that is an option. He based his current plans on his desired wall height.

Commissioner Carlson asked if it would be an option to make the structure larger and in return reduce the height to be compliant with the Zoning Ordinance.

The Applicant stated it would still require a variance for size, but it could be explored.

The public hearing was closed at approximately 5:55 p.m.

Commissioner Asmus stated he is sensing that there is some room to discuss the size variance in a positive fashion to reduce the height.

Commissioner Woods stated that he is concerned with a precedent being set, and many people would probably like to have a large and tall accessory structure.

Commissioner Asmus stated that he drove around the whole neighborhood. There is only one fairly tall accessory structure in the area. The structure is a barn type, that doesn't have an industrial feel, as the proposed structure would. There is concern that in the future a person would see this property as an industrial opportunity, which would change the character of the neighborhood.

Commissioner Barnes brought up the concerns of the neighbor to the south, who submitted a strong letter objecting to the variances. He stated the city has rules and plans to keep the neighborhoods as neighborhoods.

Commissioner Woods asked if the Applicant could revise the plans?

Planner Rybak stated that the variances could be considered separately, or the Planning Commission could table the application to allow the Applicant to revise the plans.

The Applicant stated that he could take another look at the plans and see if there are any modifications could be made based on the Planning Commission's feedback.

Commissioner Woods made a motion to table the Application to a future meeting. Commissioner Mueller seconded the motion. Commissioners Asmus, Carlson, Woods and Mueller voted aye. Commissioner Barnes voted nay.

IV. NEW BUSINESS

V. OLD BUSINESS

VI. ADDITIONAL ITEMS

A. HPC MEETING REPORT

Commissioner Barnes provided an update to the Planning Commission on the downtown funding project from the legislature and answered questions from the other Commissioners.

Commissioner Barnes stated that he would like to relinquish his duties as the Planning Commission representative to the HPC.

Commissioner Mueller volunteered to fill the role, effective in January 2026.

VII. SET HEARING DATES AND TIMES

The next scheduled meeting is Monday, December 8, 2025, at 5:30 p.m.

VIII. REVIEW OF COUNCIL ACTIONS

- A. SITE PLAN APPROVED – *By First District Association at 21 West Depot Street Site Plan review to allow for a farmer’s market shelter and associated parking.***

IX. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Asmus adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:18 p.m.

Hannah Rybak
City Planner

NEW BUSINESS



CITY OF LITCHFIELD MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission Members
David Cziok, City Administrator

From: Hannah Rybak, City Planner

Date: February 3, 2026
Planning Commission Regular Meeting February 9, 2026

Request: **Request for approval of a size variance to facilitate a detached garage addition at the property located at 501 Chandler Ave S, PID: 27-2056000.**

GENERAL INFORMATION

Applicant/Owner: Jeremy Lehr

Location: 501 Chandler Ave S.

Existing Land Use / Zoning: Residential; zoned: R-2 Residential

Surrounding Land Use / Zoning: North: Industrial; zoned: I-2 General Industry
East: Residential; zoned: R-2 Residential
South: Residential; zoned: R-2 Residential
West: Residential; zoned: R-2 Residential

Comprehensive Plan: The Litchfield Comprehensive Plan guides this property for low-density residential land use.

Deadline for Agency Action:	Application Date:	10-20-2025
	60 Days:	12-19-2025
	Extension Letter Mailed:	11-26-2025
	120 Days:	02-17-2026

CONSIDERATIONS RELATING TO THE REQUEST

- 1. Overview.** The Applicant had submitted a request for two variances, which would allow for an addition to an existing detached garage. The addition, as originally proposed,

would have exceeded the allowable height and total allowable square footage for an accessory structure.

The original application was reviewed by the Planning Commission on November 10, 2025. After a lengthy discussion the Planning Commission asked if it would be possible for the Applicant to revise his plans to fit within the height requirement, thus removing the request for a height variance from the application. The Applicant agreed to explore this option, and the Planning Commission subsequently tabled the application. The Applicant submitted revised plans showing the height of the proposed garage addition to be 17' 11 ¼", which is less than the height of the home (18' ½"). There are no changes to the proposed footprint of the structure from the first to the second plan set. The proposed addition would result in a footprint of 1,418 SF, where 1,200 SF is the maximum allowed.

Requested Variances:

1. A variance of 217 SF, to allow a 1,418 SF accessory structure, where the maximum size allowed is 1,200 SF.

Zoning Evaluation

	R-2 Requirement	Proposed
Corner side setback (north)	20 feet	~50 feet
Interior side setback (south)	3 feet	16.5 feet
Rear setback	3 feet	40 feet
Setback from the home	6 feet	10 feet
Height	Single-story Not to exceed height of home – 18' ½" to peak	1 story 17' 11 ¼"
Number of Accessory Structures	2 max.	1
Accessory Structure Square Footage	1,200 SF max.	1,418 SF

2. Ordinance Authority.

Litchfield City Code, Chapter 154, Section 9.5 D provides Variance approval requirements. Variances shall only be permitted when the applicant can show that all of the following criteria have been met:

1. That the variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the ordinance and consistent with the comprehensive plan.
2. That there are practical difficulties in complying with the zoning ordinance. “Practical difficulties”, as used in connection with granting of a variance, means that:
 - i. The property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the zoning ordinance;
 - ii. The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowners; and
 - iii. The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality and will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to other land or improvements in the vicinity of the parcel of land
3. The purpose of the variance is not based exclusively upon a desire to increase the value or income potential of a parcel of land.

Litchfield City Code, Chapter 154, Section 10.1, B provides requirements for accessory buildings.

3. Consistency of the Request with the Standards for Granting a Variance

- I. *That the variance is in harmony with the general purposes and intent of the ordinance and consistent with the comprehensive plan.*

The intent of the Zoning Ordinance requirements related to accessory structure size is to ensure that structures are adequately scaled to the residential area they are located in. The proposed structure is large; however, the subject parcel is approximately double the minimum size for an R-2 lot. The proposed variance does not have any impact on the residential use of the property; therefore, it is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

- II. *There are practical difficulties in complying with the zoning ordinance.* “Practical difficulties”, as used in connection with granting of a variance, means that:

- a) *The property owner proposes to use the property in a reasonable manner not permitted by the zoning ordinance.*

The Applicant’s desire to construct a structure large enough to store his personal property is certainly reasonable. The storing of vehicles indoors is always preferable to outdoors on residential properties. While the subject

parcel exceeds the R-2 minimum size requirement, it is not the largest parcel in the immediate area. The reduction in height to conform with the Zoning Ordinance causes the proposal to be more reasonable than the original submittal.

- b) *The plight of the landowner is due to circumstances unique to the property not created by the landowners.*

The variance for size would be necessary on any residential property, as the max size of 1,200 SF is applied across the board. This property does not appear to contain any unique circumstances, outside of number of vehicles the property owner owns, and his desire to store them indoors on his property.

- c) *The variance, if granted, will not alter the essential character of the locality and will not be detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to other land or improvements in the vicinity of the parcel of land.*

The proposed garage is larger than others in the area. There are a row of evergreen trees running along the side of the property, which would screen the view of the structure from the home to the east. The property directly north is an industrial property, so there are no concerns with the visual impression from that area.

- d) *The purpose of the variance is not based exclusively upon a desire to increase the value or income potential of a parcel of land.*

The purpose of this request is to add an additional functional garage space to the property. This is not solely financial.

4. Engineering Considerations.

None.

5. Resident Comments.

The owner of 506 S Gilman Ave. (directly east of the subject property) has signed the application form indicating support of the variances.

The owner of 509 S Chandler Ave. (directly south of the subject property) submitted a letter in opposition to the original application. At the time of this report, we have not received updated feedback from this neighbor on the revised plans.

STAFF COMMENT

The applicant has provided an updated plan set which addressed the greatest concern of the Planning Commission, which was lack of conformance with the height requirement. The

Planning Commission should consider whether to recommend approval of the updated request.

RECOMMENDATION

In the event of a recommendation of approval, staff recommend the following conditions:

1. The Applicant shall obtain a building permit prior to any construction.
2. The graveled area currently leading to the area of the addition must be hard surfaced as part of this project.
3. The exterior of the garage must match or closely resemble the home when completed.
4. Construction shall adhere to the site plan submitted with this application.

POTENTIAL ACTION

1. Recommend Approval with Conditions: Motion to recommend approval of the requested variance, at the property located at 501 Chandler Ave S., based on the following findings of fact... (provide findings of fact to support approval).
2. Recommend Denial: Motion to recommend denial of the requested variance at the property located at 501 Chandler Ave S., based on the following findings of fact..... (provide findings of fact to support denial).
3. Recommend Approval as Submitted: Motion to recommend approval of the requested variance, at the property located at 501 Chandler Ave S., based on the following findings... (provide findings of fact to support approval).

ATTACHMENTS

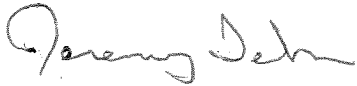
- Attachment A: Location Map
- Attachment B: Application Packet

1/26/2026

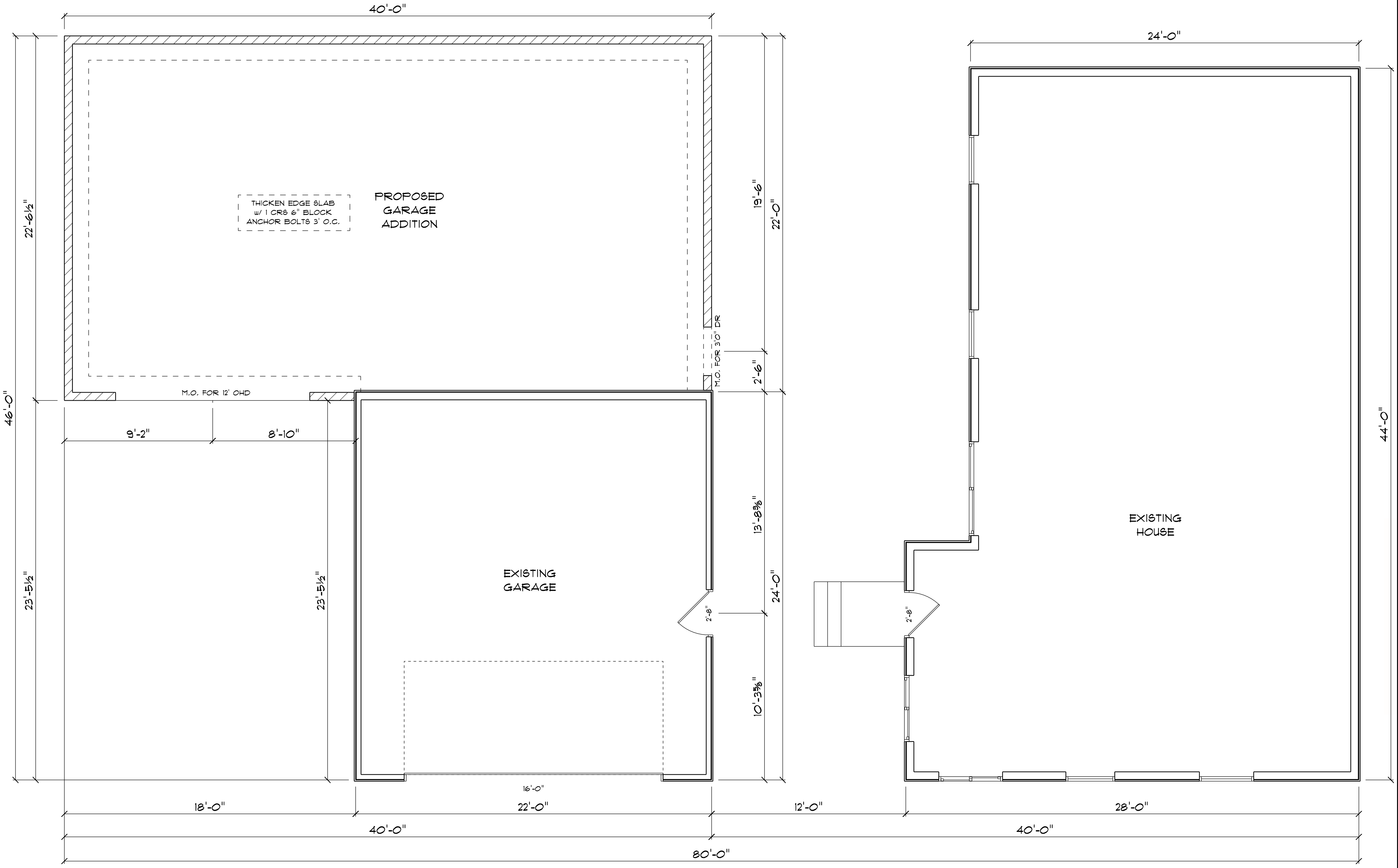
Addition for Jeremy Lehr @ 501 South Chandler Ave in the City of Litchfield.

This is an updated proposal plan from the original back in October 2025, I would like to add to my current garage which is a 24'x22' structure. Following the west side of the current garage I would go straight back south 22' and then over 40' to the east as you could see in the drawings. The update from previous is the roof line has been lowered to meet suggestions and concerns. The roofline has rotated from previous drawing to accommodate the shorter side wall height and minimize the height of the peak, so it remains to not exceed the height of the house to match appearance. The reason for this addition remains for storage.

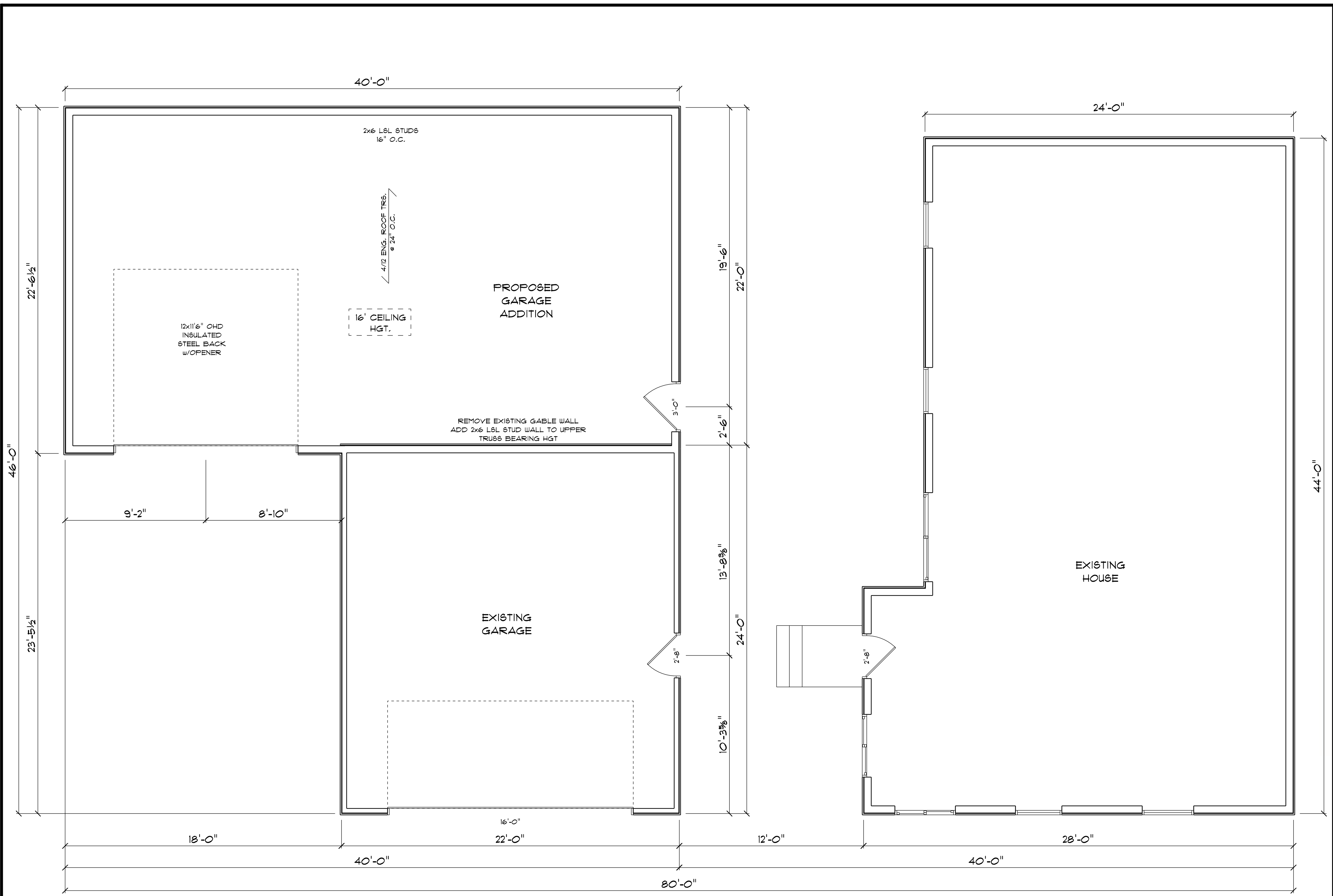
Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jeremy Lehr". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

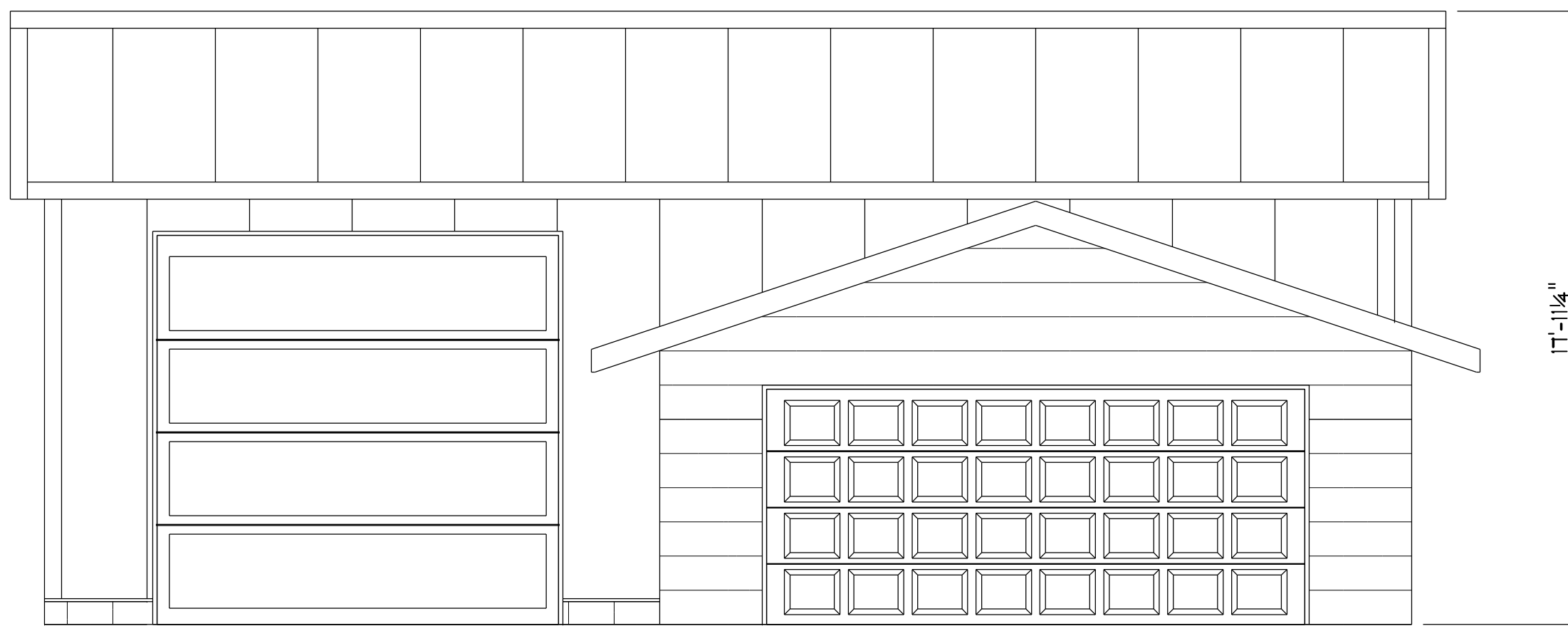
Jeremy Lehr



FOUNDATION
SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"

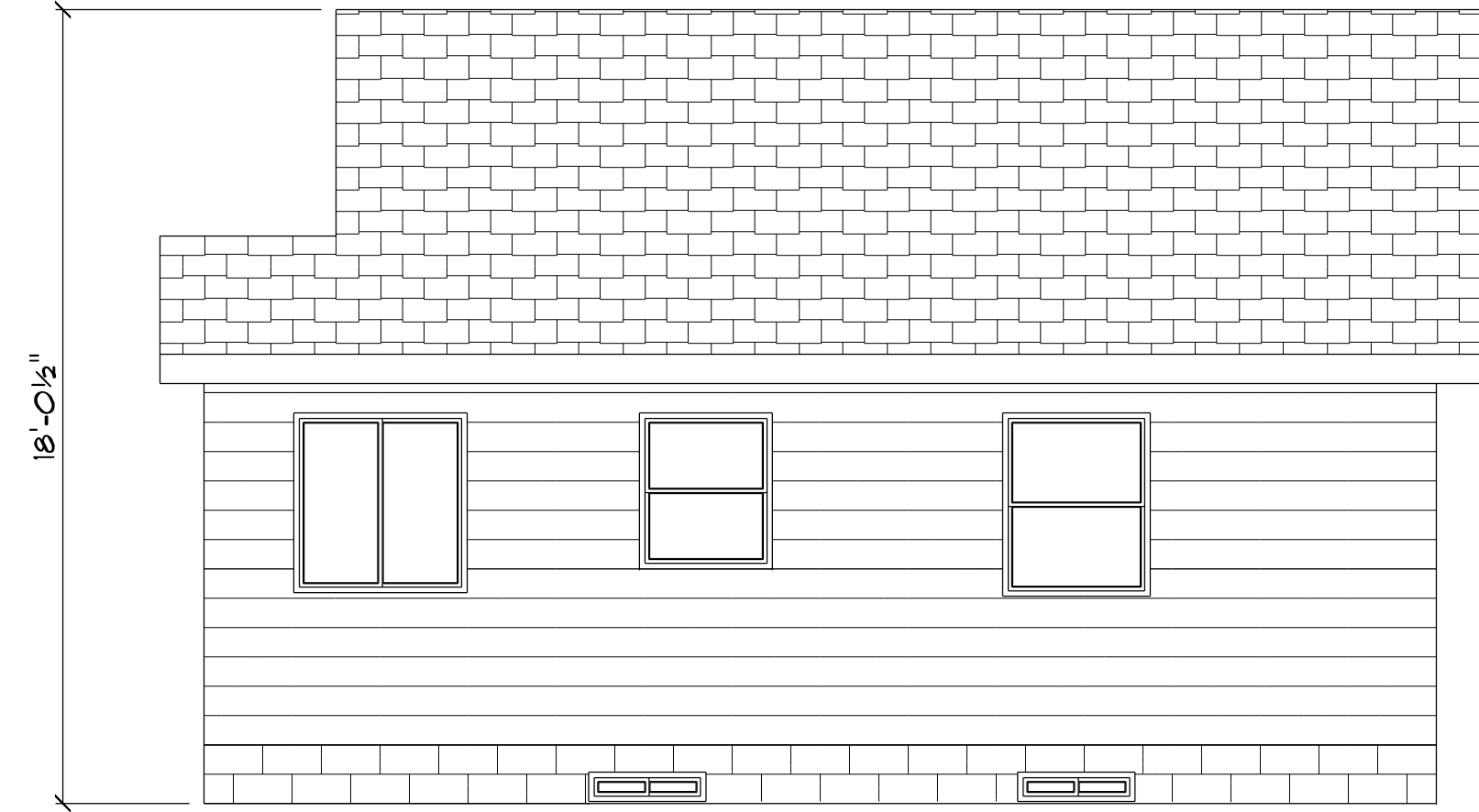


MAIN FLOOR
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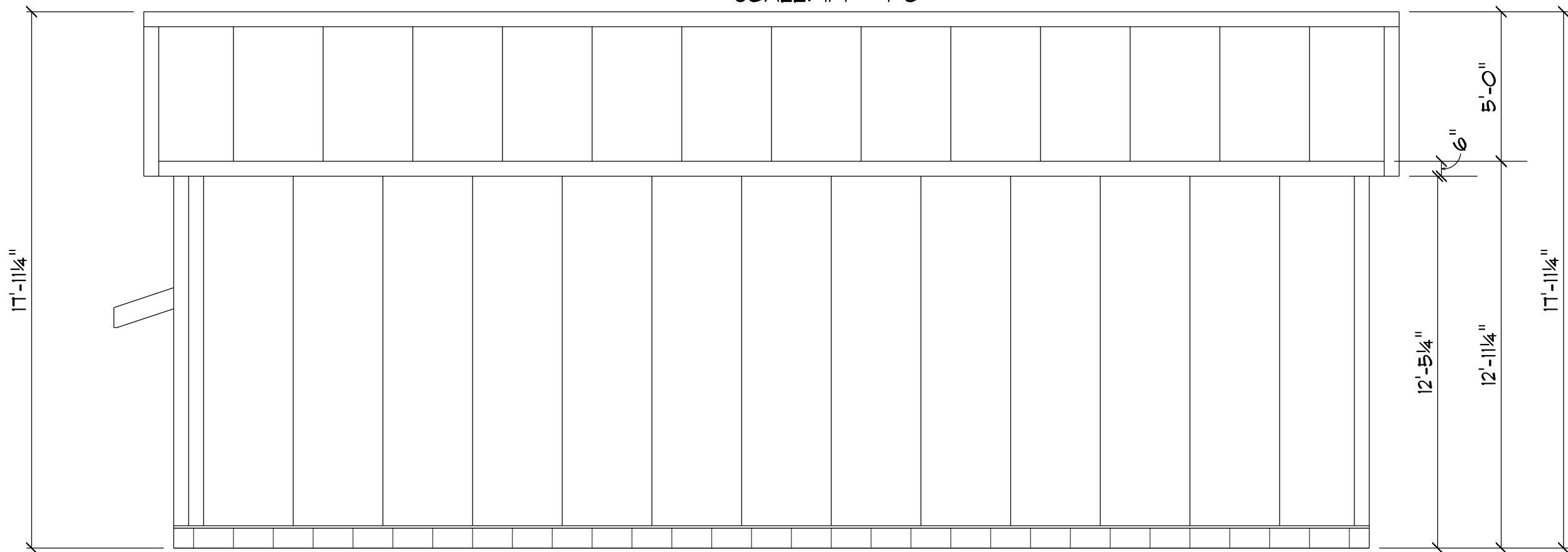
NORTH ELEV2

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



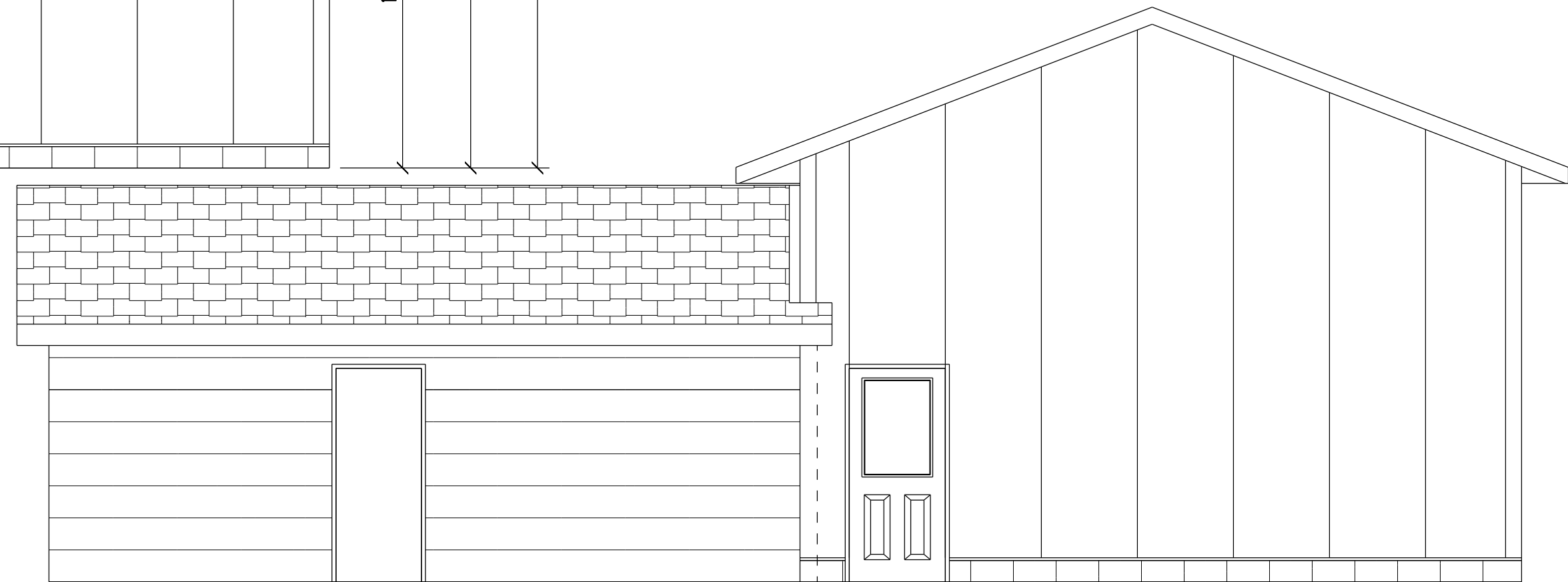
WEST ELEV2

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



SOUTH ELEV2

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"



EAST ELEV2

SCALE: 1/4" = 1'-0"