



Presentation to the
Beacon Hill Architectural Commission

(Previously presented at May 20 Advisory
Hearing)

17 Louisburg Square

Beacon Hill Architectural District

17 June 2021







Original Residential Elevation 1835-1907



Original Residential Elevation 1835-1907



Convent Facade 1907-1993



Convent Facade 1907-1993

Original Residential Facade
1835-1907



Original Facade 1835-1907

Convent Facade
1907-1993



Convent Facade 1907-1993

Current Facade
1993-2021



Current Facade 1993-2021



Original Facade 1835-1907

Convent Facade 1907-1993

Current Facade 1993-2021



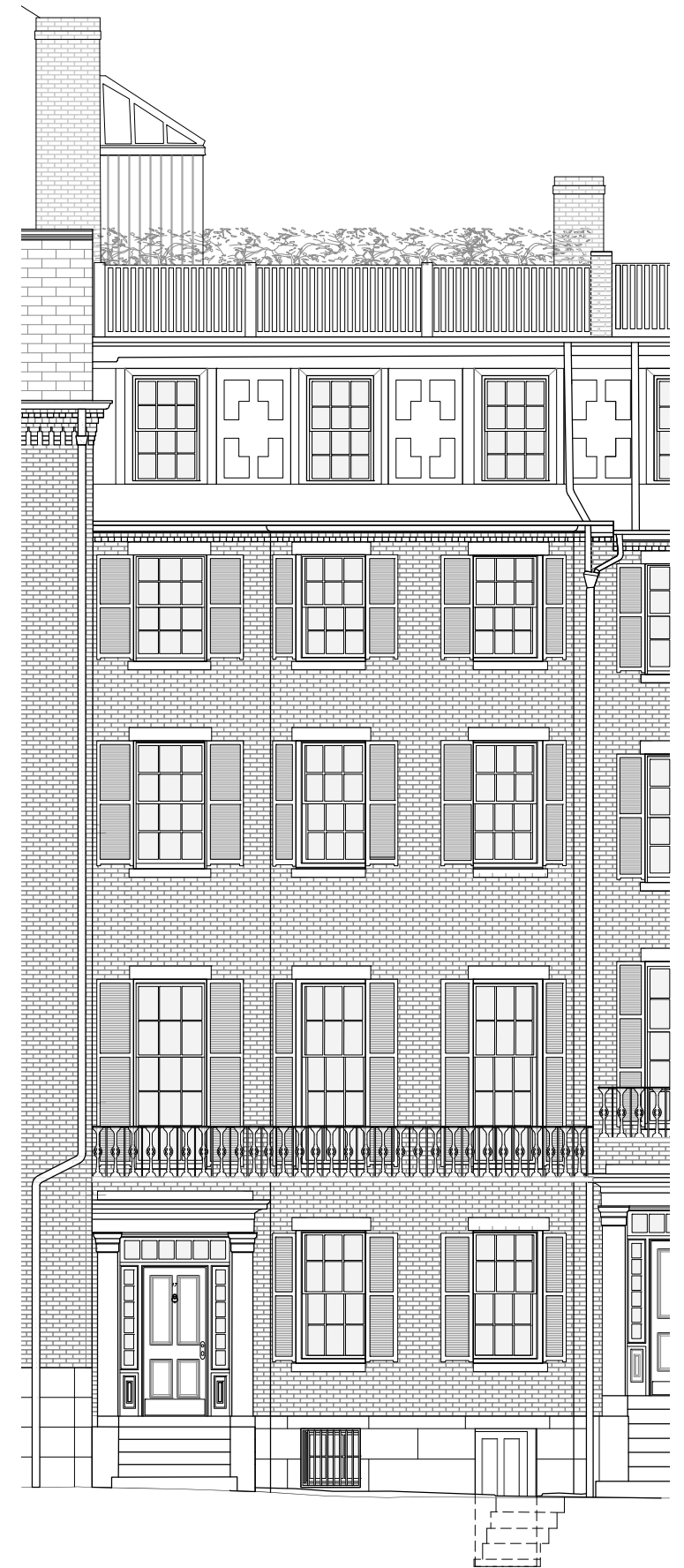
Original Facade 1835-1907



Convent Facade 1907-1993



Current Facade 1993-2021



Proposed Restored Facade



September 20, 1989

HISTORIC BEACON HILL DISTRICT

Society of St. Margaret
17 Louisburg Square
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

NOTICE OF DECISION
Application #89.419
13, 15, 17, 19 LOUISBURG SQUARE

CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

City of Boston
The Environment
Department

Dear Sisters,

Boston City Hall/Room 805
Boston, Massachusetts 02201
617/234-4116 or 725-1850

At a meeting held in Boston City Hall on September 21, 1989, the Beacon Hill Architectural Commission reviewed and voted to approve your application for a Certificate of Appropriateness for the rehabilitation of these buildings (as illustrated in drawings in file dated 9/12/89). Specifically, the work items include: reconstruction of the original entries at #15 and #19; replacement of a window on the Pinckney Street elevation of #19 with a door; removal of fire-escapes; replacement of the chapel stained glass windows with clear glass; restoration of window openings to their original dimension; installation of replacement windows on the Louisburg Square elevations; and, the installation of blinds on the Louisburg Square elevations. The approval is contingent upon the following specifications and amendments:

1. The restoration of the original entries at #15 and #19 was approved as submitted.
2. The existing window at the first floor between the chapel and the main building on the Pinckney Street elevation of #19 shall be replaced with an opening for a service alley and a decorative iron grate. Please submit final drawings of the proposed grate for review by the staff architect, Michael Cannizzo.
3. The removal of all fire-escapes was approved as represented.
4. The stained glass windows of the chapel shall be replaced with art glass, bubble glass or a similar treatment. The replacement material and design of the replacement muntin tracery shall be reviewed in the field by Mr. Cannizzo.
5. The proposal to lower the window sills at the piano nobile level at #17 and #19 shall be reviewed in the field by Mr. Cannizzo and at least one commissioner.
6. Specifications for the replacement window assemblies for the Louisburg Square elevations shall be submitted to Mr. Cannizzo for review.
7. Shop drawings for the proposed blinds shall be submitted to Mr. Cannizzo for review.

Air Pollution Control, Boston Art, Back Bay Architectural, Beacon Hill Architectural, Boston Landmarks and the Conservation Commissions



Convent Facade 1907-1993

Current Facade 1993-2021



Original Residential Elevation 1835-1907



Current Entry



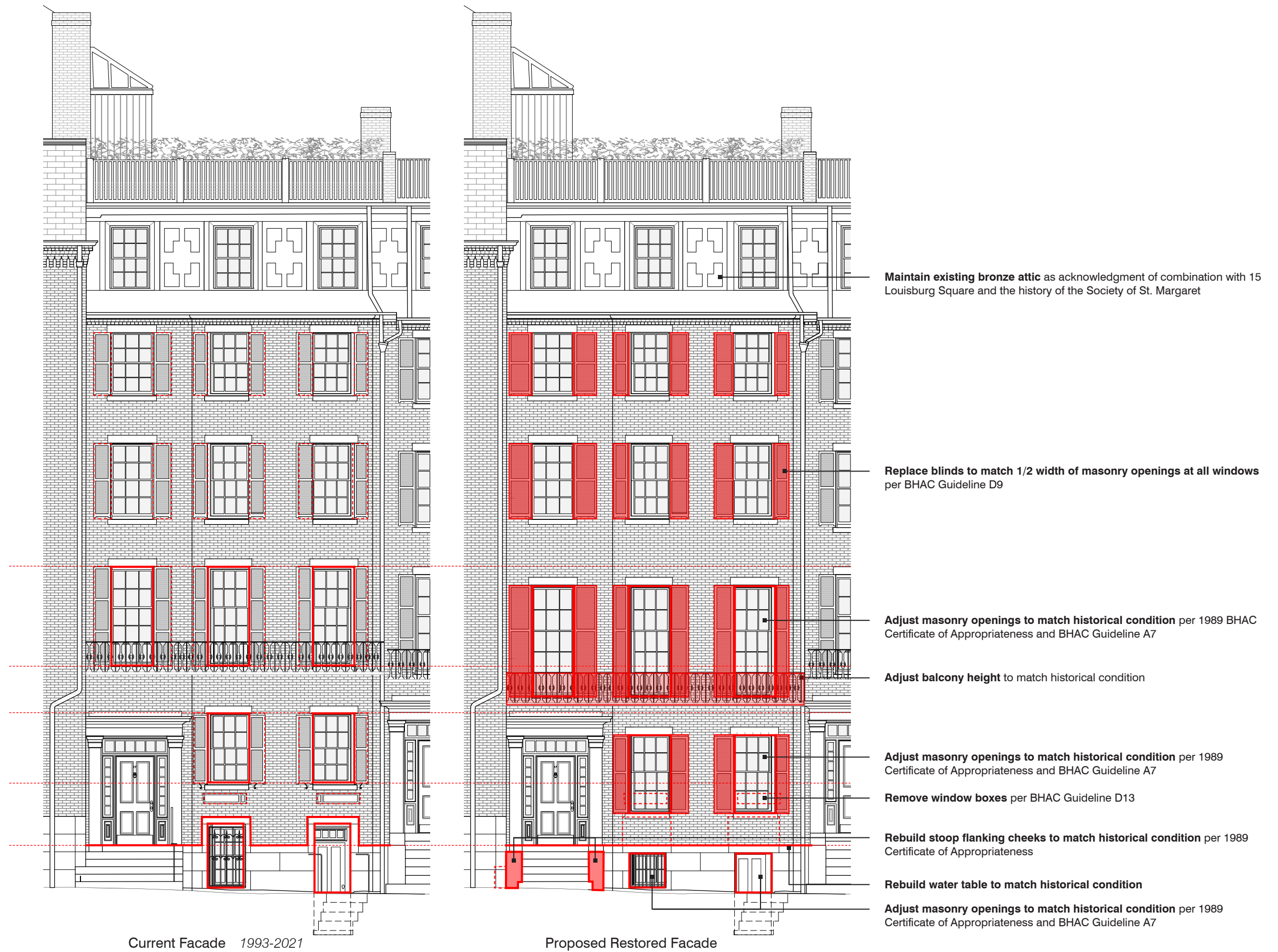
Original Entry 1835-1907



Current Entry



Original Entry 1835-1907









Current Facade



Proposed Restored Facade

Appendix



Original Residential Facade

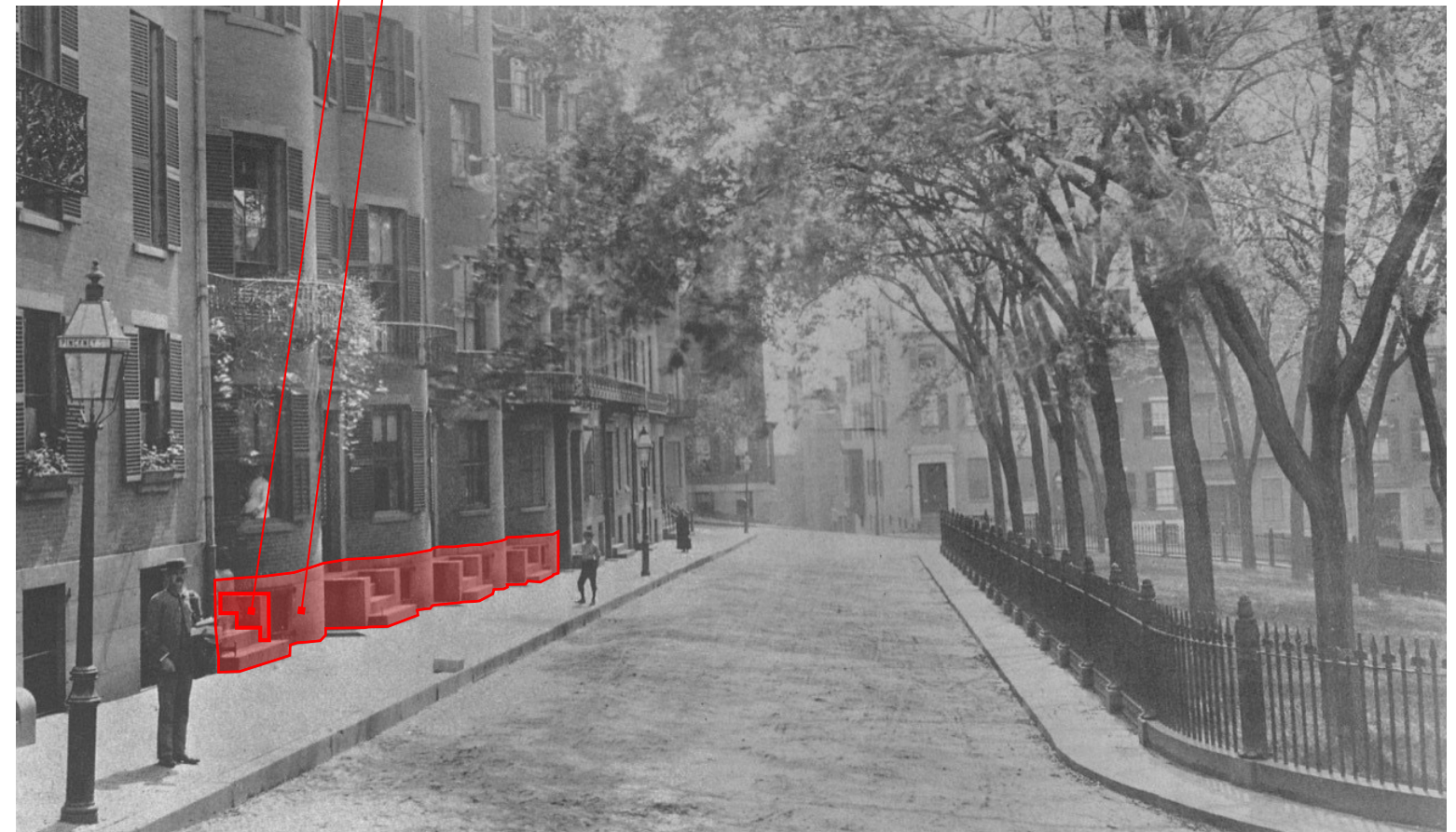
1835-1907

- Tall, 6-over-9 windows at the piano nobile level
- Tall spandrel above piano nobile windows indicating a gracious ceiling height at piano nobile
- First floor 6-over-6 windows with lintels below the door surround
- Door surround consistent with rest of terrace with tall, flanking vertical elements at the stoop
- Consistent water table level with rest of terrace
- Shutters exactly half as wide as window masonry openings
- Consistent elevation change of balcony between houses of terrace



19, 17, 15 Louisburg Square before 1907

- Original facades of terrace features **shutters exactly half as wide as windows**
- Original facades of terrace features **tall brick spandrel above piano nobile windows**
- Original facades of terrace feature **tall six-over-nine windows at piano nobile**
- Original facades of terrace feature **six-over-six windows at first level with lintel below door surround**
- Original facades of terrace feature **stoop with flanking verticals**
- Original facades of terrace feature **a consistent granite water table**



Original Street View

Original Residential Elevation 1835-1907



Convent Facade

1907-1993

- First and second level floor framing at 15 and 17 Louisburg are raised changed to unify interior floors with 19 Louisburg
- All windows at 15,17, and 19 Louisburg are replaced with 2-over-2 windows in modified masonry openings
- Lintels and sills of windows at piano nobile level at 15,17, and 19 Louisburg are raised, but to inconsistent elevations
- Spandrel above piano nobile windows is shortened
- Lintels and sills of windows at first floor level at 15 and 17 Louisburg are raised to match 19 Louisburg elevation
- Lintel of windows and header of doors at basement level at 15 and 17 Louisburg are raised
- Water table at 15 and 17 Louisburg is broken
- Balconies removed at 15 and 17 Louisburg
- All shutters removed at 15, 17, and 19 Louisburg
- Original door surrounds at 15, 17, and 19 Louisburg are removed
- New pedimented door surround for combined houses added to 17 Louisburg to act as entry for combined three buildings
- Original roofline of 15 and 17 Louisburg are modified by removal of dormer windows and construction of new, bronze-clad fifth floor elevation



Society for St. Margaret purchased 15, 17, and 19 Louisburg in November 1880 and occupied the houses in December of that year. At this point, the three houses still had their original facades and interior modifications were made to connect them.

After much deliberation it was decided to purchase three adjoining houses on Louisburg Square at the corner of Pinckney Street. With a few alterations these would afford ample room for the Sisters, the children, the Infirmary and Embroidery Rooms, while a spacious lot in the rear could be used for the erection of a Chapel and Refectory. The purchase was effected in November and early in December the Community began to move into its new home. The last Mass was said in Bowdoin Street on December 3rd, and the first in Louisburg Square on the next day, but two weeks elapsed before all were settled and in order. The corner house [#19], which was the largest of the three, contained temporary Chapel and Refectory, various offices, Common Room, Novitiate and dormitories for the Sisters. *The middle house [#17] contained the reception room and kitchen, two large embroidery rooms, and several guest rooms, while the fourth floor was given up to Sister Jessie and the children;* the third house [#15] was entirely occupied by the Infirmary, and *all three were made to communicate with each other.*"

Convent Facade 1907-1993

Sister Catherine Louise, S.S.M. *The House of my Pilgrimage*. Glenside, PA: Littlepage Press, Inc., 1949.



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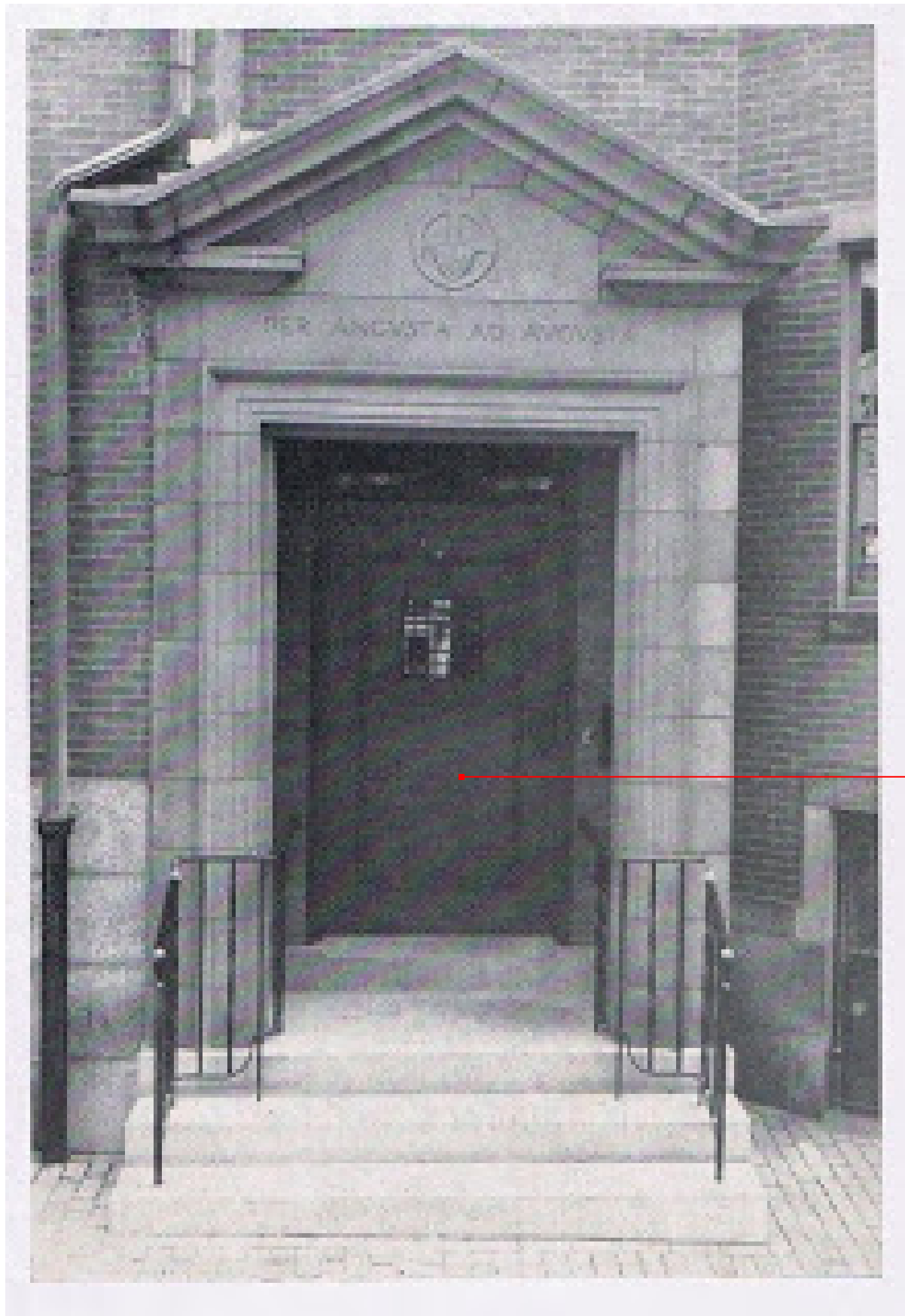
The original facades of 15-19 Louisburg were modified in 1907. The architect is unspecified. The basement, first floor, and piano nobile floors were restructured to match the higher elevations of 19 Louisburg, and the windows of all three houses at these levels were modified to correspond with this change. The upper floors of the three houses were not restructured, and maintain the 3-brick rhythm of the original terrace condition.

The Sisters had been living in the three houses on the corner of Louisburg Square since 1881 and it was evident that this was a satisfactory permanent home. Yet the heating and the plumbing were highly unsatisfactory and many were the emergencies when it was necessary to call the "copper" in the middle of the night. *It seemed that the time [ca. 1907] had come when it was essential to remodel the three houses and mold them into one.*

...

We must return to the story of 1907 and the remodeling of the Convent in Boston. In January plans had begun for the rebuilding of the house and on February 1st men came to take the measurements. April 1st the plans came and were shown to the Sisters at recreation. The Sisters stayed on at South Duxbury that year from May until November while a new heating plant and other utilities were installed in the Boston Convent and it was entirely remodeled. *On the upper floors one still notes a step in the hall as one moves from what was one house into another.* Otherwise the three houses are perfectly blended into one. The first meal in the new Convent was November 17th and the family quickly moved back from South Duxbury.

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Convent Facade Era Door Surround 1907-1993

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Detail of tabernacle pedimented door surround during convent era

Sister Catherine Louise, S.S.M. *The House of my Pilgrimage*. Glenside, PA: Littlepage Press, Inc., 1949.



Original dormers removed and new brozne fifth floor facade added

Original masonry openings at top two windows are maintained, as are original floorplate elevations

Lintels of piano nobile windows are raised and historical spandrel height is decreased

Windows at piano nobile level are shortened, and the sills of windows at 15 and 17 Louisburg are at inconsistent heights

Balconies removed

Windows at first floor level are raised at 15 and 17 Louisburg to match window elevation and heights at 19 Louisburg

Tabernacled ecclesiastical door surround that spans 19 and 17 Louisburg property line replaces original door surround and stoop

Masonry is patched under first floor windows as a result of windows being raised to higher elevation

Convent Facade 1907-1993



Convent-era masonry **patch of original spandrel**

Convent-era **modified granite lintel**





First floor windows of 15 and 17
Louisburg are aligned and do not reflect
topography of Louisburg Square

Consistent lintel height of broken water
table does not match 3-brick stepping
rhythm of historical terrace

New door surround extended beyond 17
Louisburg property line

Door surround and stoop at 15 Louisburg
Square removed

Historical water table rhythm broken by
new masonry openings at basement

Vertical flanking of stoop removed and
stoop extended beyond property line

3 Brick elevation change at water table

No. 17

No. 15

No. 13

No. 11

Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"



Original Facade 1835-1907



Convent Facade 1907-1993

Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"



Current Facade

1993-2021

- Certificate of Appropriateness issued in 1989 approves the “**restoration of window openings to their original dimension**” and “**restoration of the original entries**”
- The framing of first and second floors at 15 and 17 Louisburg from the convent era are not changed and remain at higher elevations than the historical condition
- All windows at 15,17, and 19 Louisburg are replaced with windows with divided lites
- Sills of windows at piano nobile level at 15, 17, and 19 Louisburg are lowered, but not to the historical condition
- Lintels of windows at piano nobile level at 15, 17, and 19 Louisburg remain at convent era height
- Spandrel above windows at piano nobile level remains shorter than historical condition
- Broken water table at 15 and 17 Louisburg remains from convent era facade
- Balconies at 15 and 17 Louisburg are replaced but are higher than historical condition
- Shutters replaced at 15 and 17 Louisburg, but are not 1/2 width of masonry openings
- Door surround added to 17 Louisburg to match historical condition
- Door surround at 15 Louisburg is installed at higher elevation than historical condition







Recent brick masonry patch of area of facade behind convent-era door surround



Convent Facade 1907-1993



Current Facade 1993-2021

Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"

Proposed Facade



Maintain existing bronze facade as acknowledgment of combination with 15 Louisburg Square and the history of the Society of St. Margaret

Replacement shutters to match 1/2 width of masonry openings at all windows per BHAC Guideline D9

Adjust masonry openings to match historic condition per 1989 BHAC Certificate of Appropriateness

Adjust balcony height to match historical condition

Adjust masonry openings to match historical condition per 1989 Certificate of Appropriateness

Re-build stoop to match historical condition per 1989 Certificate of Appropriateness

Re-establish consistent rhythm of historical water table



Original Residential Elevation 1835-1907



Current Elevation



Original Residential Elevation 1835-1907



Proposed Restored Elevation



Original Residential Elevation 1835-1907



Current Elevation



Original Residential Elevation 1835-1907



Proposed Restored Elevation





Current Facade 1993-2021



Proposed Restored Facade

Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"



Original Facade 1835-1907



Proposed Restored Facade

Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"



Original Residential Elevation 1835-1907



Proposed Restored Elevation

Existing and Proposed Details

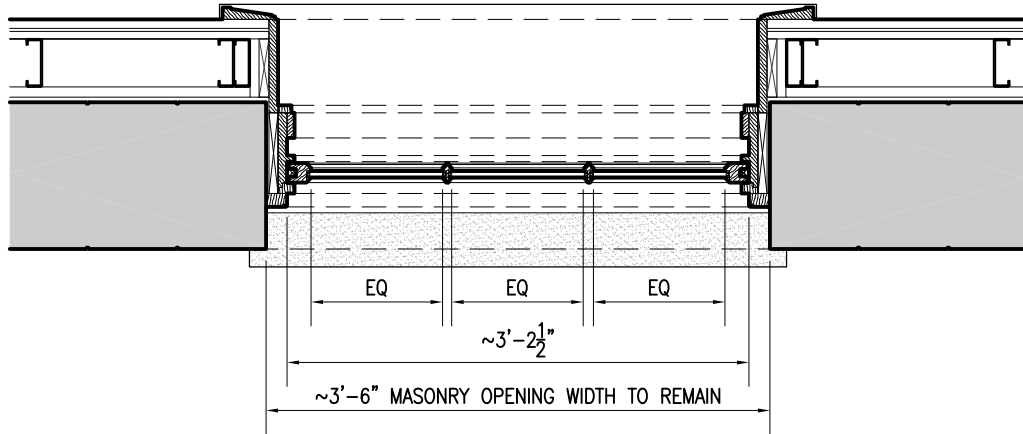
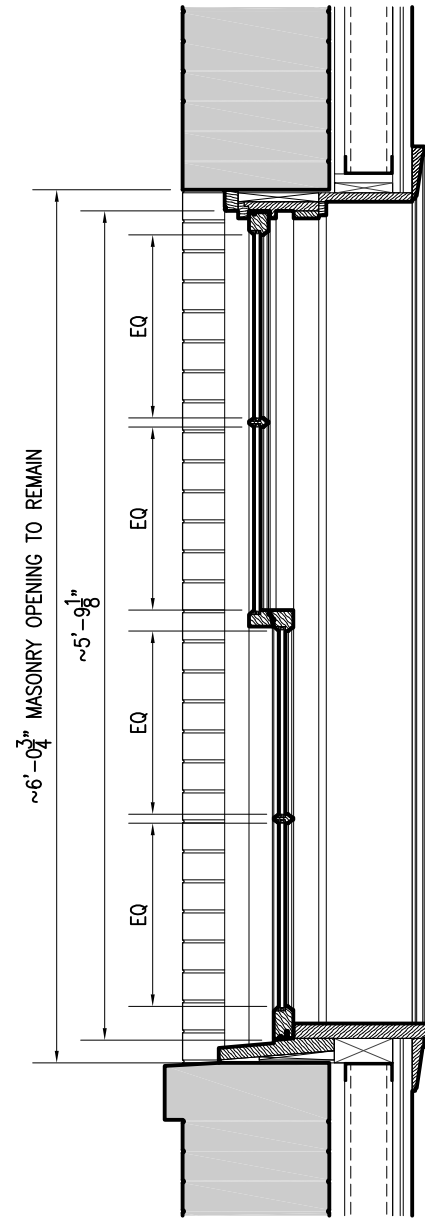
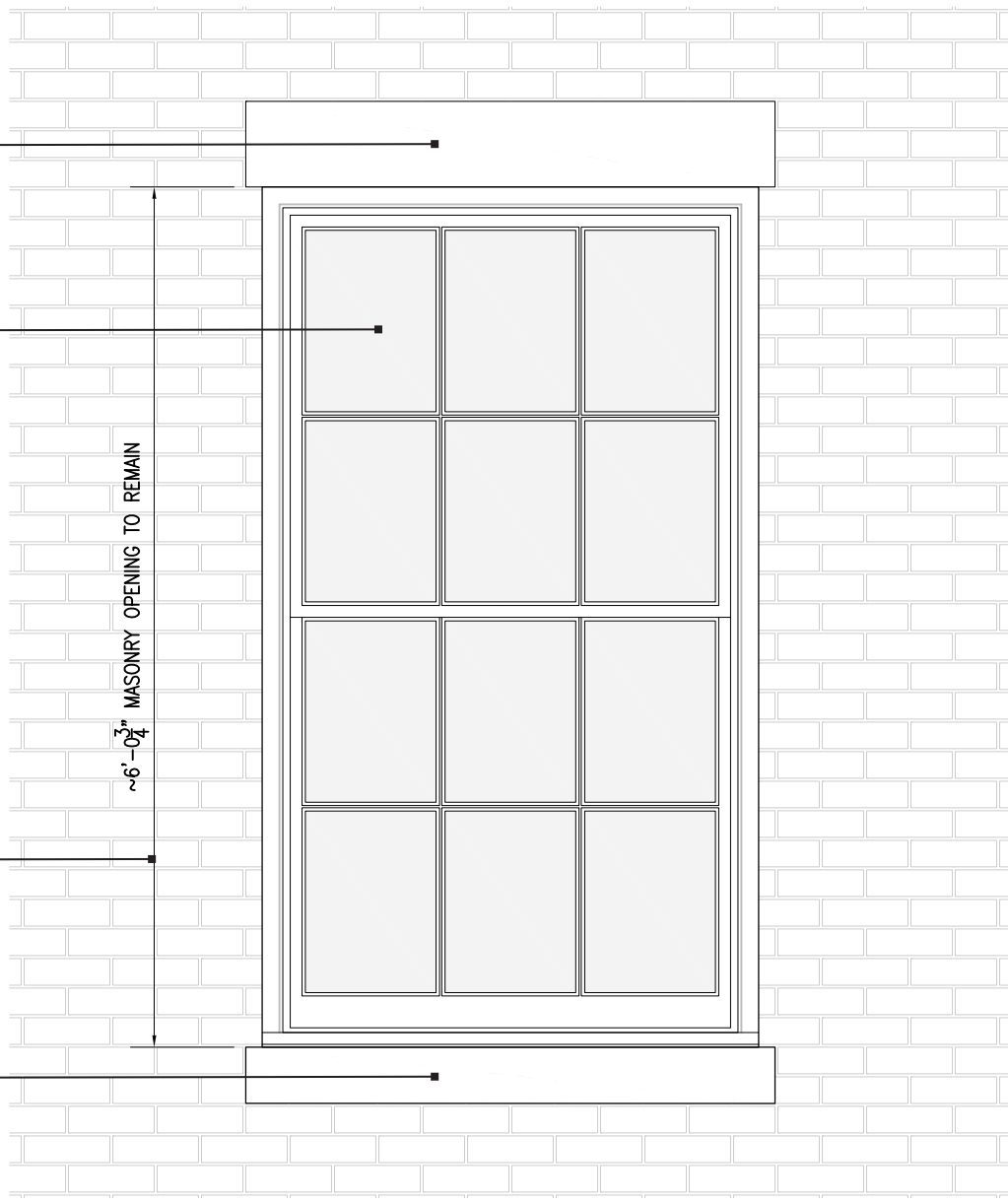
Brownstone lintels shall be evaluated and repaired, and new lintels to match existing

New wood thermally-broken windows with period appropriate details

Windows at bowfront to have curved thermally-broken glazing to match proposed details

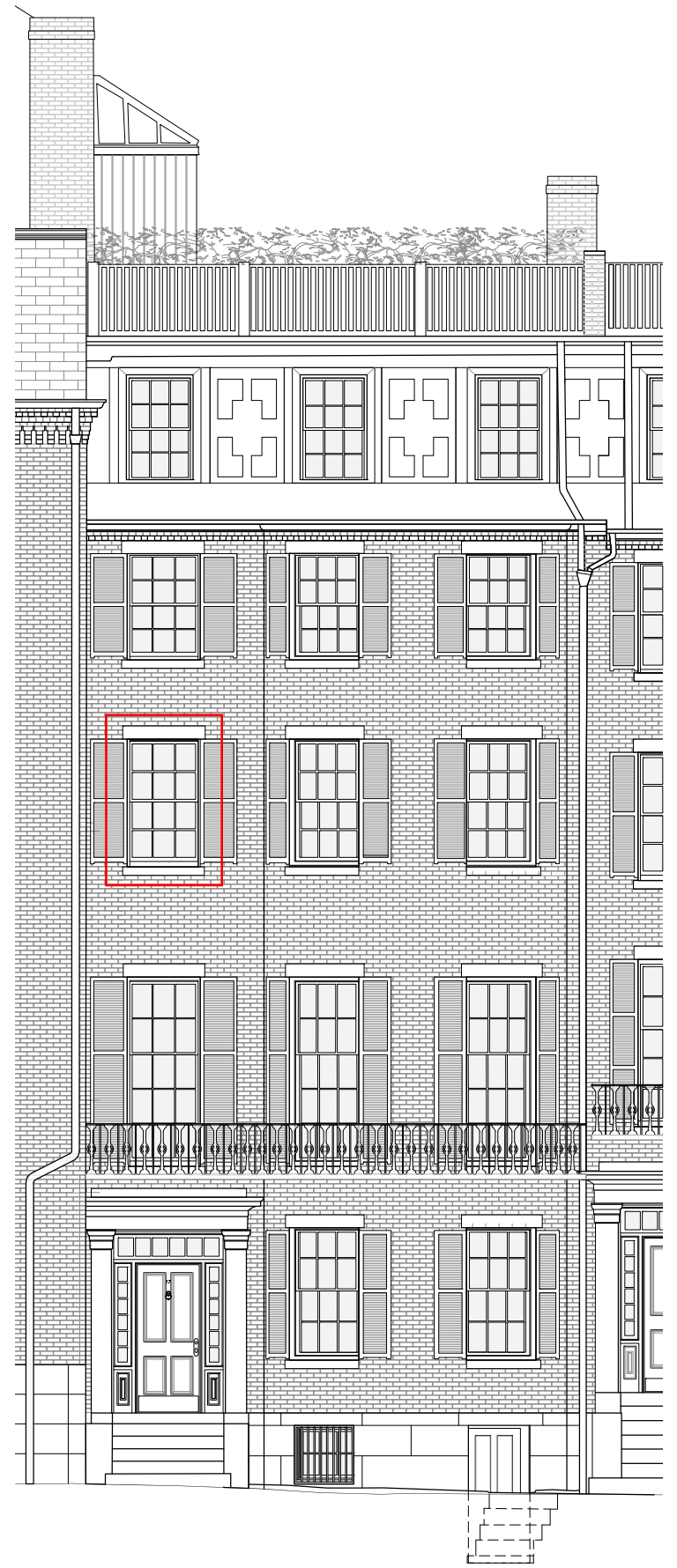
Refer to elevation for proposed window masonry openings

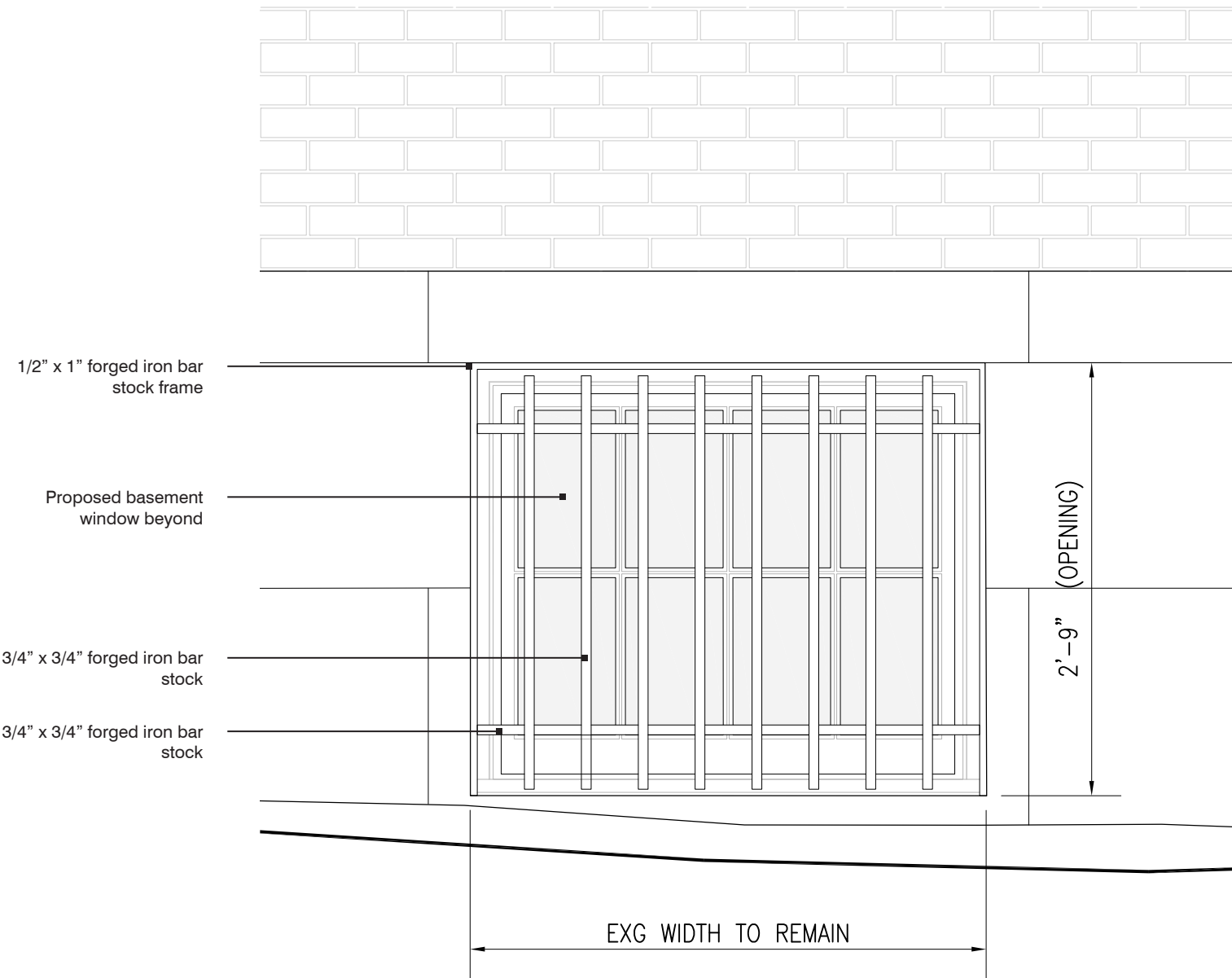
Brownstone sills shall be evaluated and repaired, and new sills to match existing



Window Details to match typical Beacon Hill sash and parts circa 1840's-1880's provided by:

Sean Cryts
Historic Window and Door Holdings





Proposed Basement Window Grate (1/2" = 1'-0")

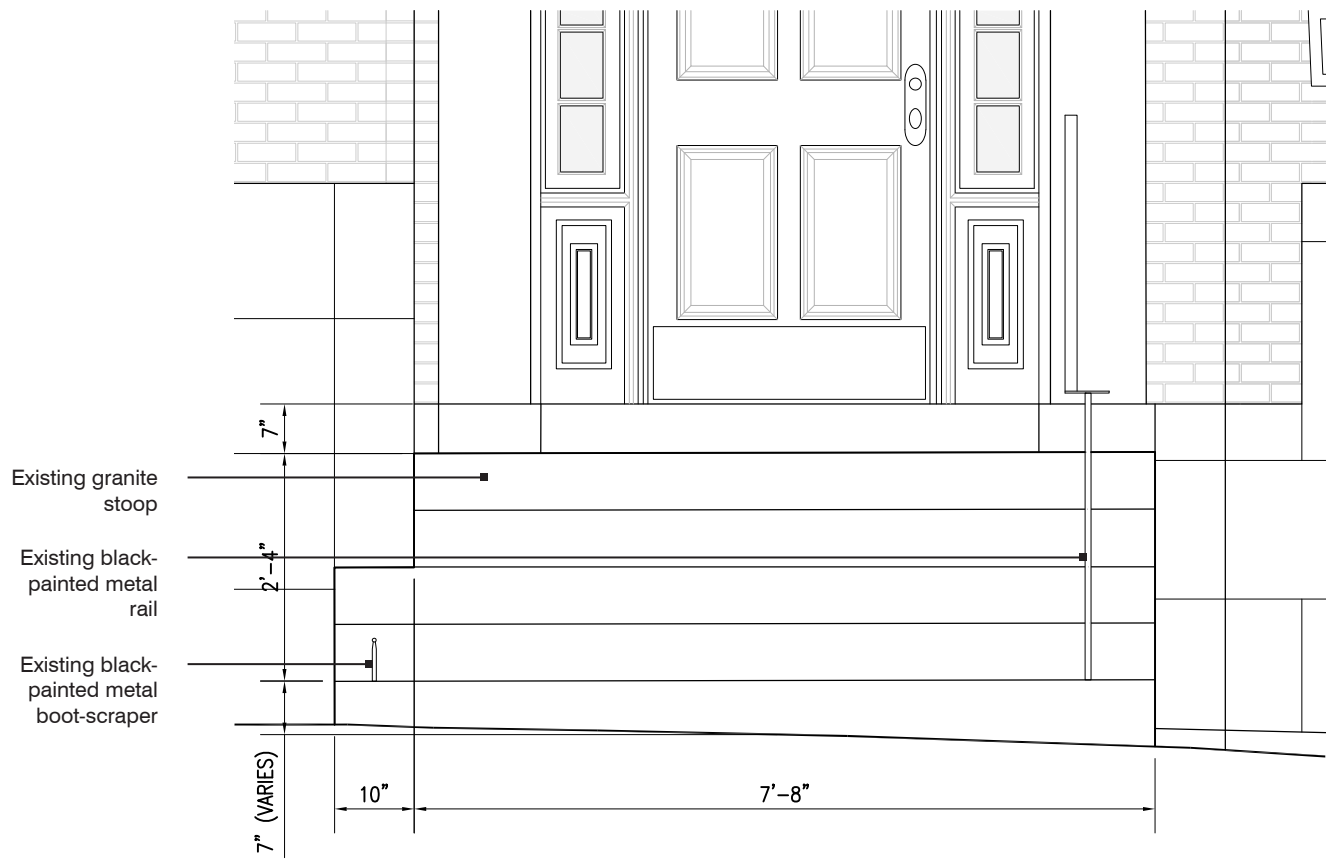


Proposed window and window grate to match existing at 13 Louisburg Square (see above)

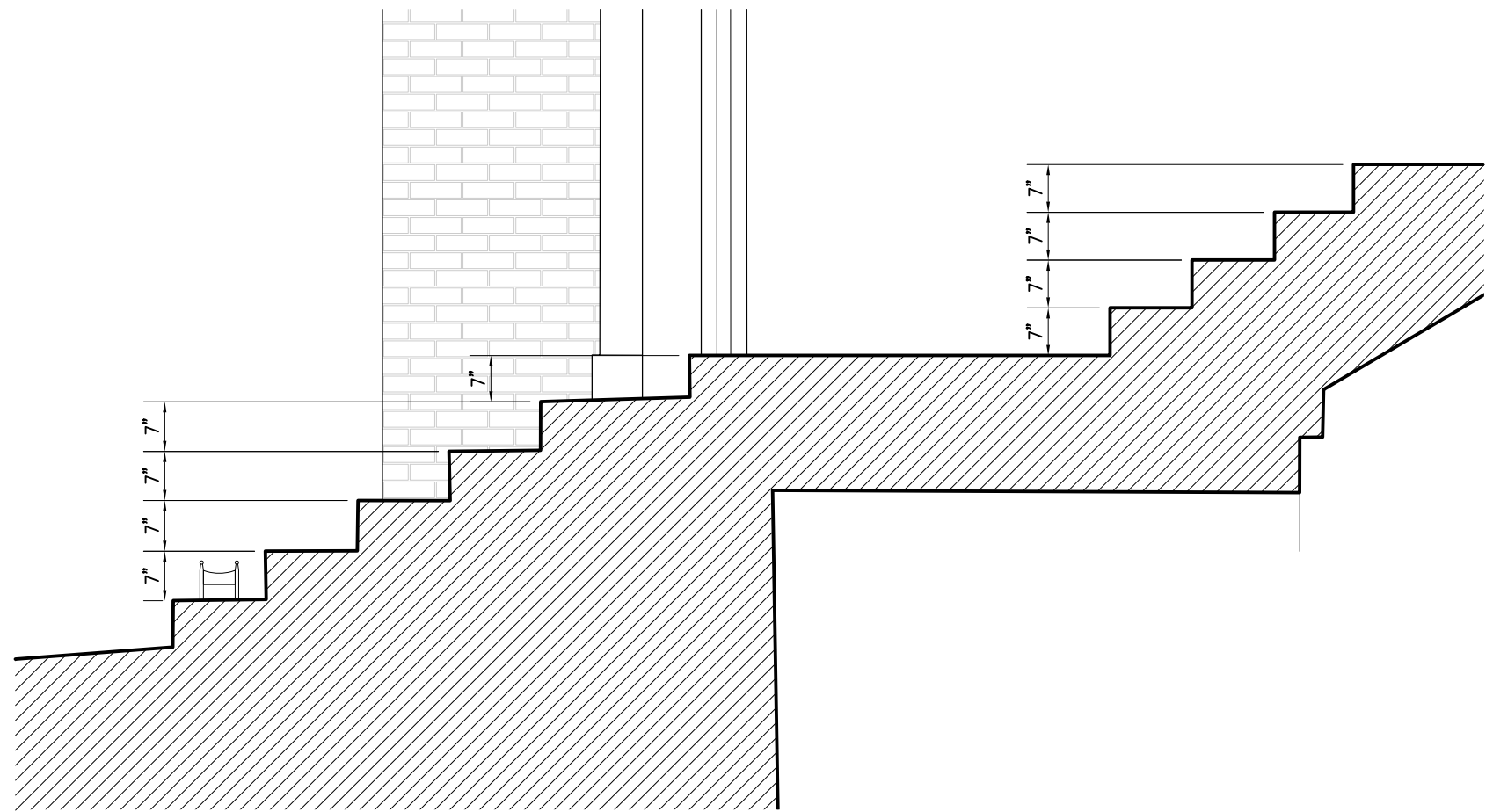
Window Details to match typical Beacon Hill sash and parts circa 1840's-1880's provided by:

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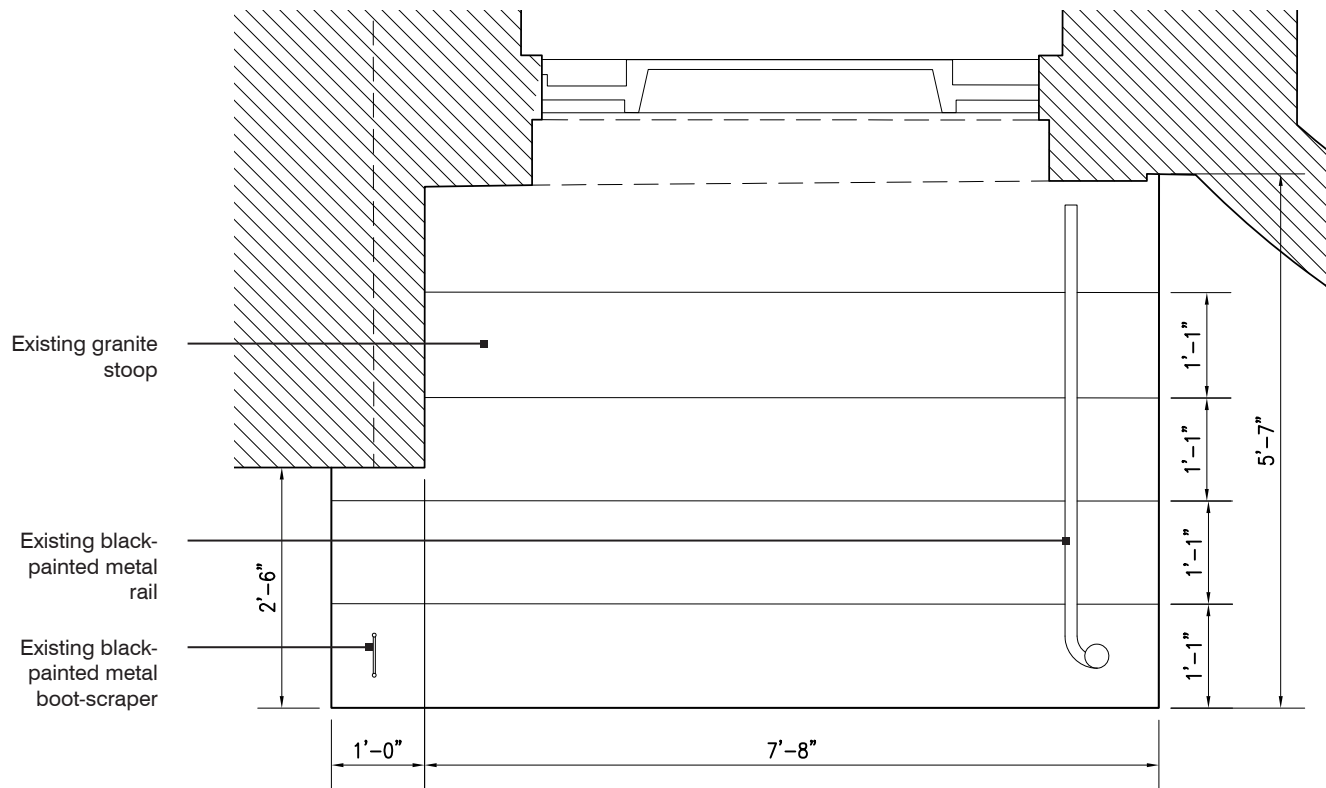




Existing Stoop Elevation (1/2" = 1'-0")



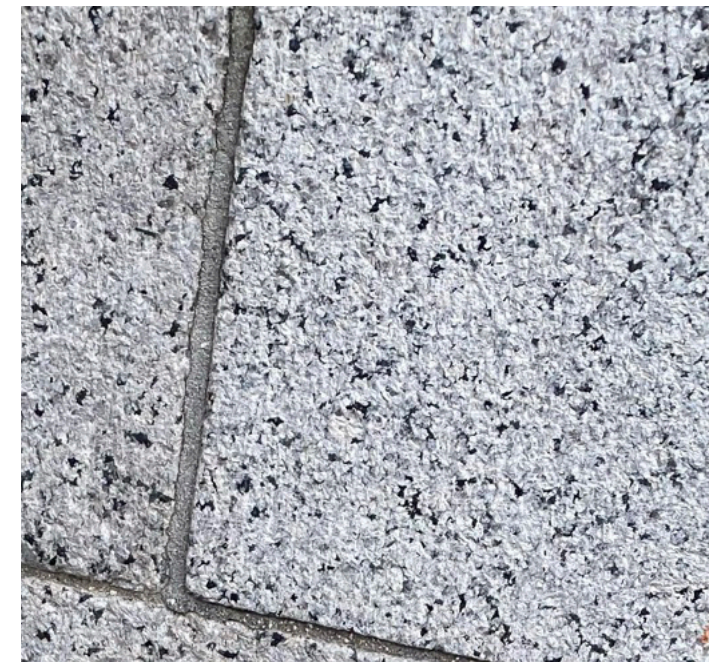
Existing Stoop Section (1/2" = 1'-0")



Existing Stoop Plan (1/2" = 1'-0")

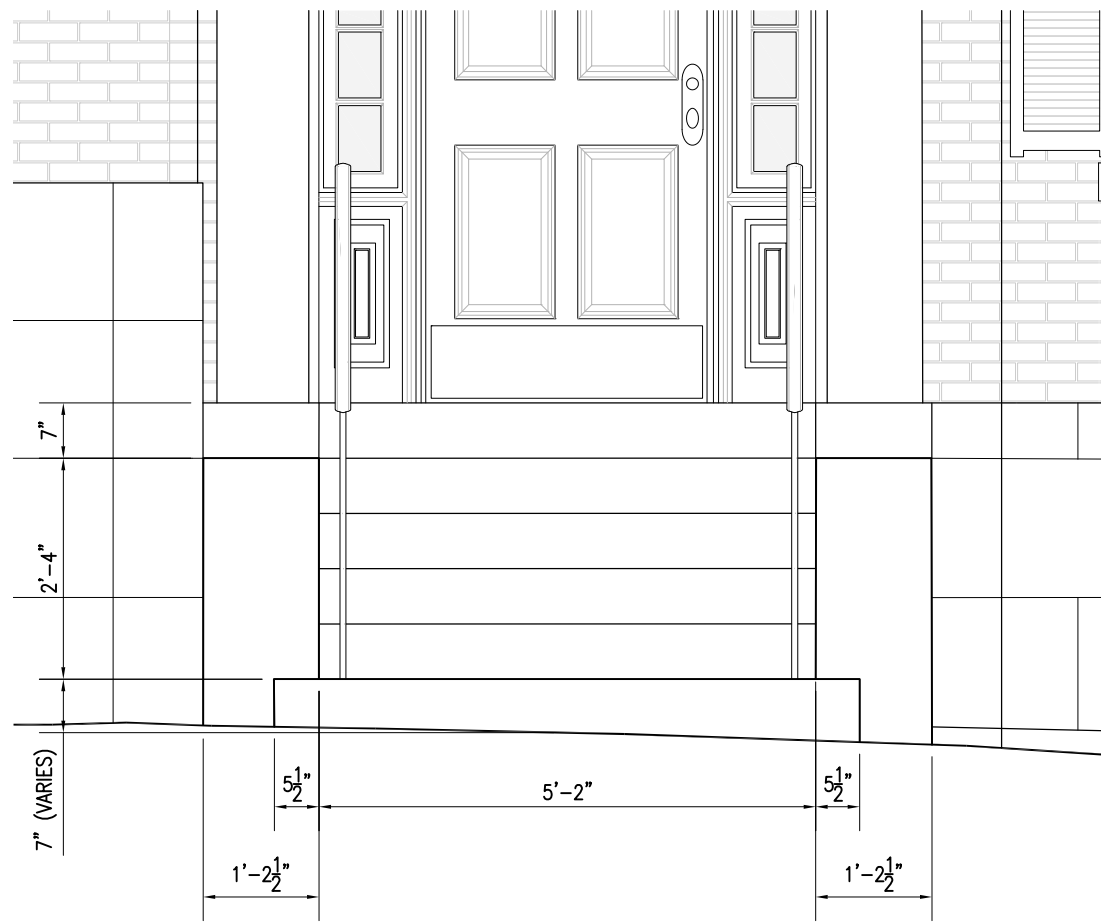


Interior stairs behind front door

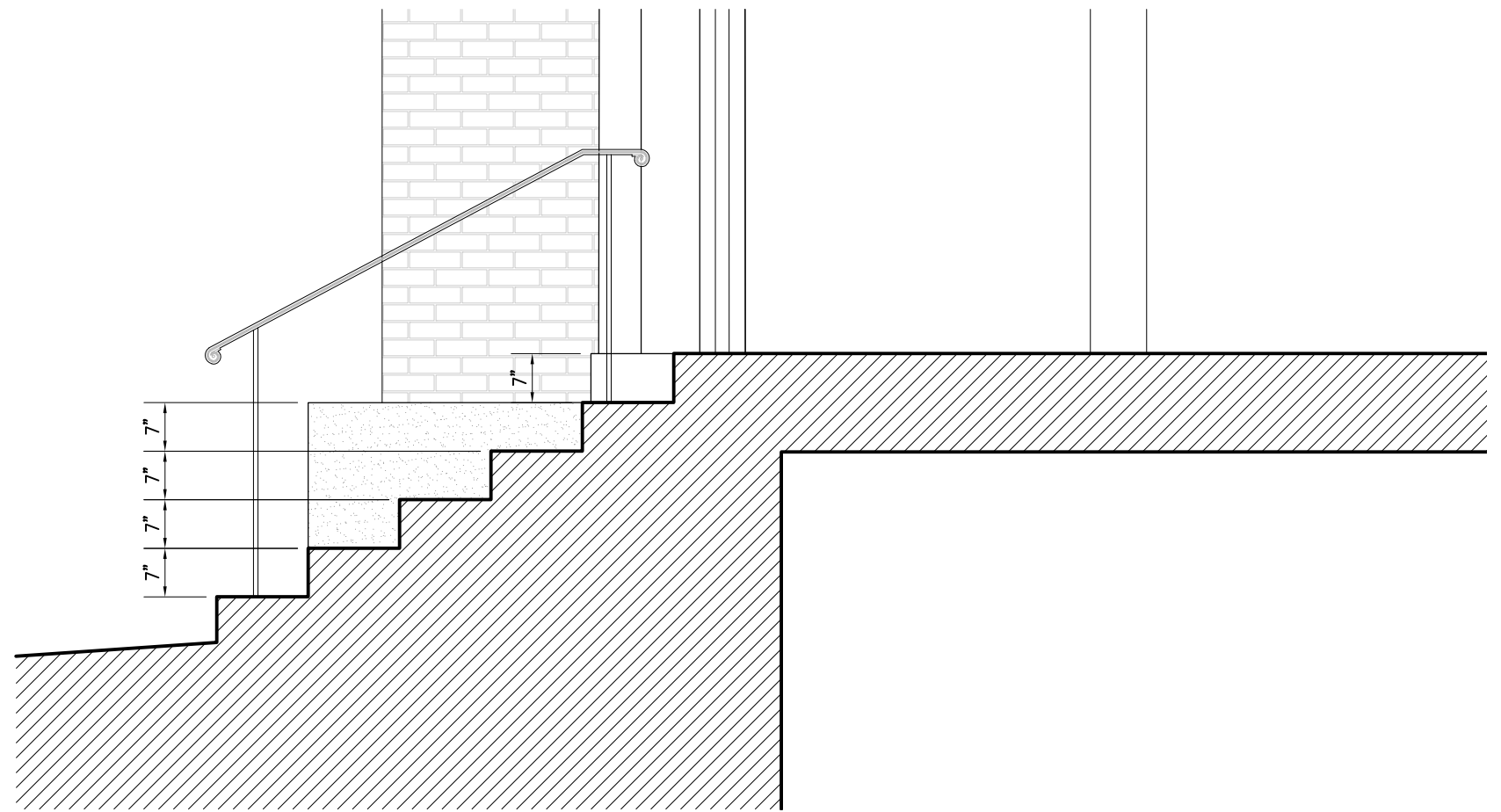


Existing stoop granite (see photo above)

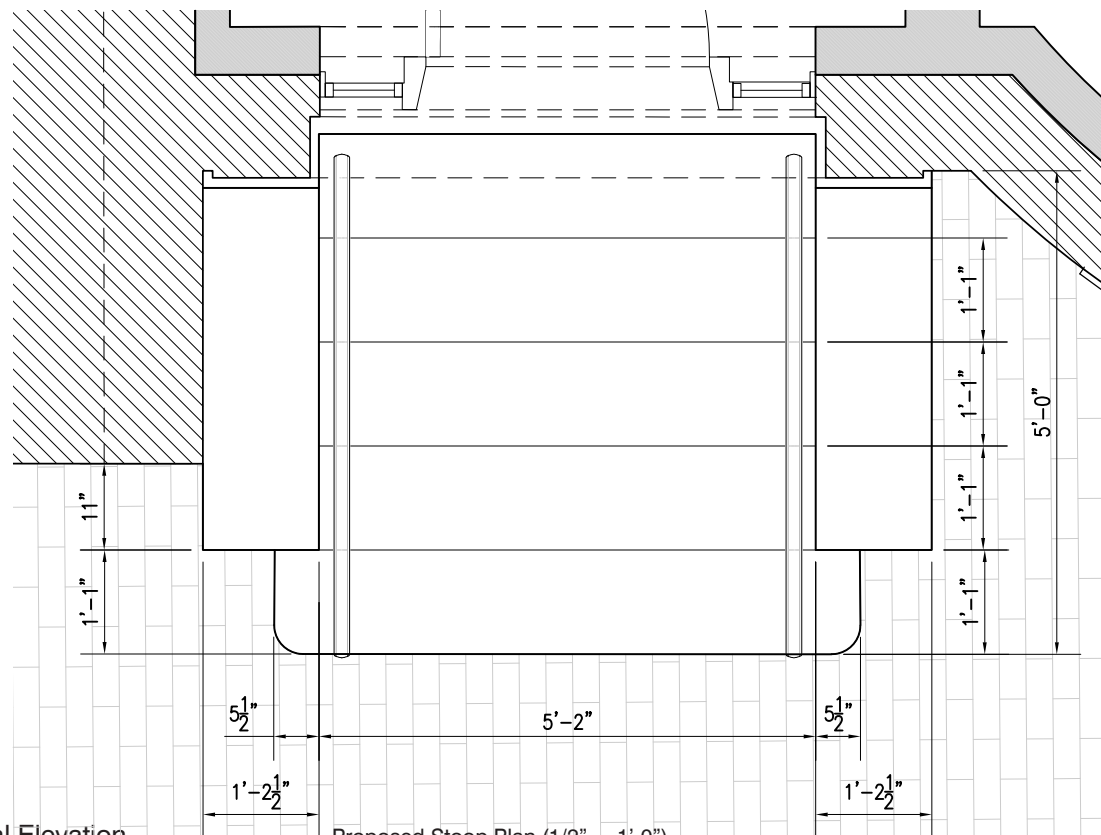




Proposed Stoop Elevation (1/2" = 1'-0")

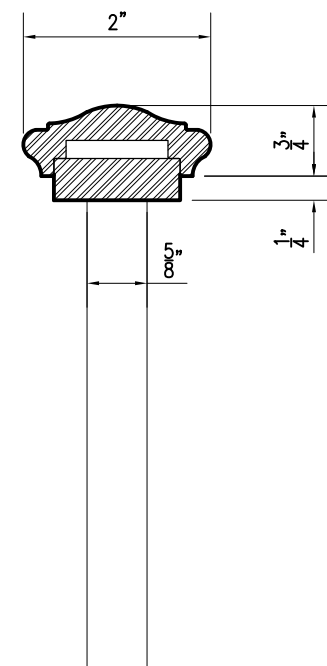


Proposed Stoop Section (1/2" = 1'-0")



Proposed Stoop Plan (1/2" = 1'-0")

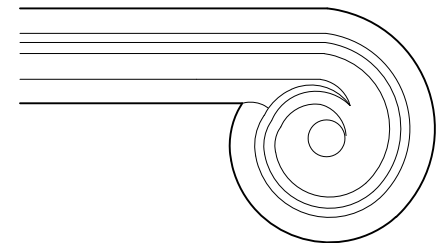
Original Residential Elevation



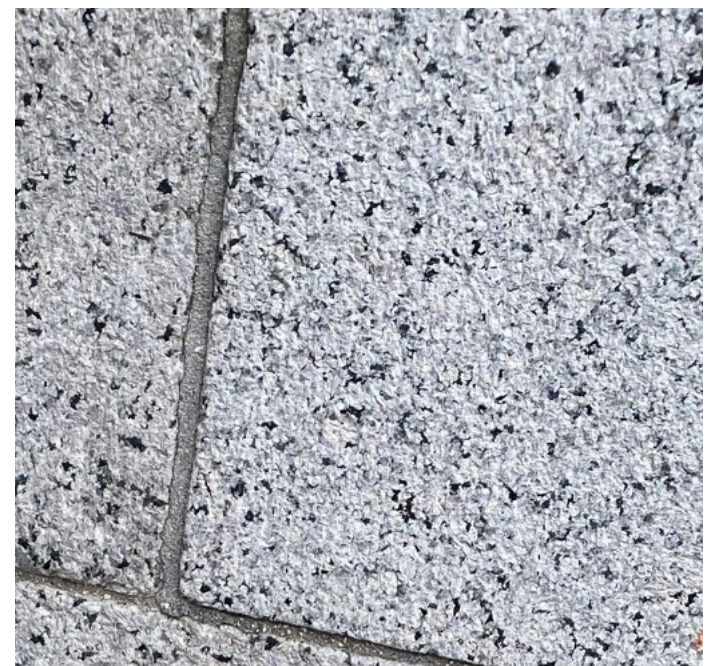
Proposed rail to match Julius Blum #4534 Railing Cap with 5/8" spindles (Half Scale)



Proposed railing color: Benjamin Moore Historic Black HC-150



Proposed rail volute to match corresponding Julius Blue Volute for #4534 Rail (Half Scale)



Proposed stoop to match existing granite water table (see photo above)

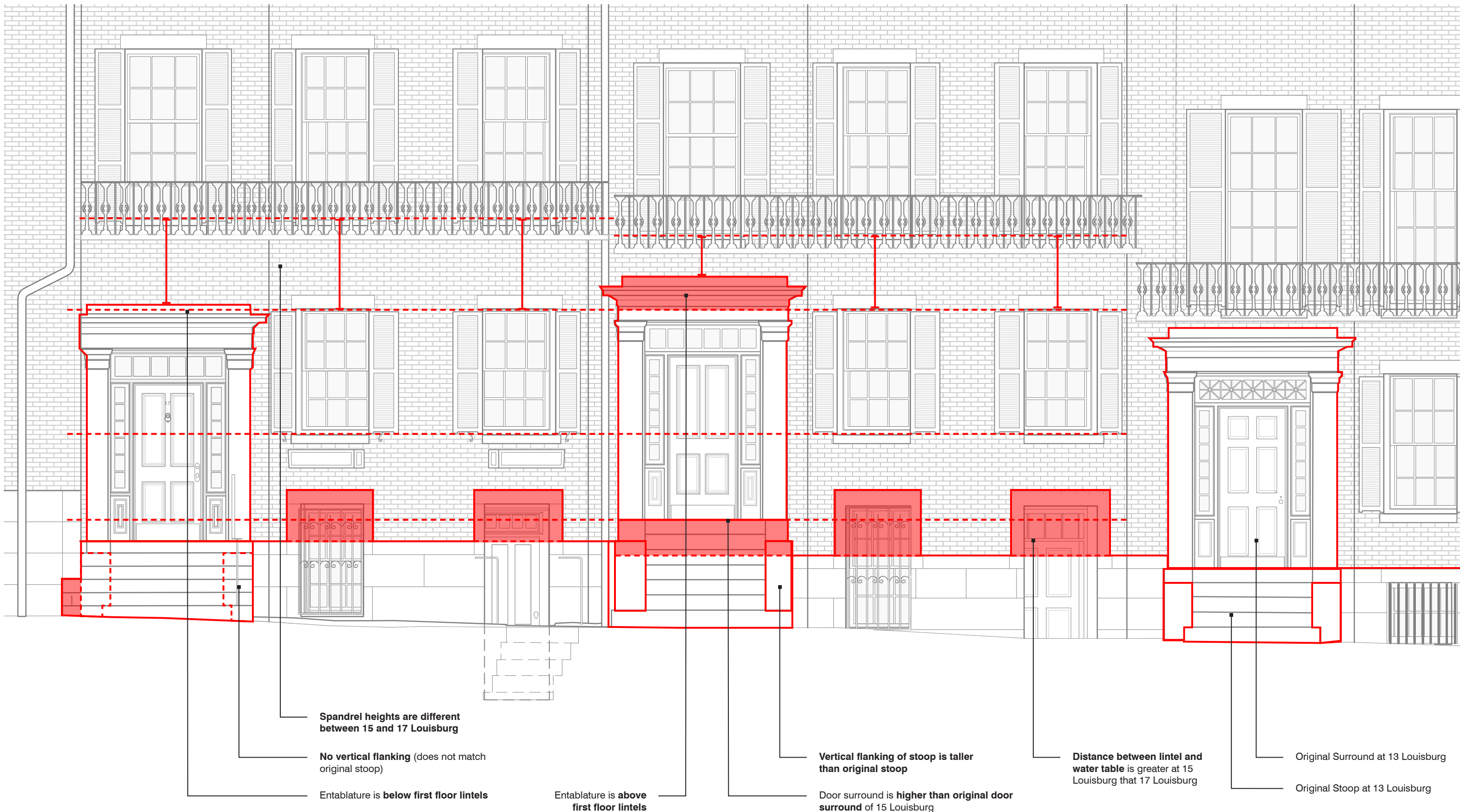


Existing Shutters are less than 1/2 width of masonry opening and cannot be corrected due to position of window



Proposed Shutters are to be 1/2 width of masonry opening

Comparisons of 15 and 17 Louisburg



No. 17

No. 15

No. 13

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

Spandrel heights are different between 15 and 17 Louisburg

No vertical flanking (does not match original stoop)

Entablature is below first floor lintels

Entablature is above first floor lintels

Vertical flanking of stoop is taller than original stoop

Door surround is higher than original door surround of 15 Louisburg

Distance between lintel and water table is greater at 15 Louisburg than 17 Louisburg

Original Surround at 13 Louisburg

Original Stoop at 13 Louisburg



No. 17

Original door surround
and stoop in RED

No. 15

Original door surround
and stoop in RED

No. 13

Original door surround
and stoop in RED

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



Door surround at 15 Louisburg is currently more prominent relative to water table than rest of street elevation

No. 17

No. 15

No. 13

No. 11

Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"



Door surround at 15 Louisburg remains more prominent relative to water table than rest of street elevation

No. 17

No. 15

No. 13

No. 11

Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"

History of Floor Elevation Changes



Original Facade 1835-1907



Convent Facade 1907-1993

Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"



Convent Facade 1907-1993



Current Facade 1993-2021

Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"



Current Facade 1993-2021



Proposed Restored Facade

Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"



Original Facade 1835-1907



Proposed Restored Facade

Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"