Brookline Preservation Commission
Local Historic District Report

Local Historic District: Cottage Farm

Applicant: 78 Powell Street Trust

Address: 78 Powell Street

House Built: 1895

Carriage Barn Built: 1896

Architect: J. Williams Beal

Builder: unknown

Statement of Significance: The design for this house is the most unusual of the five built by developer Albert Jewell on Powell Street. Although the house has a traditional gambrel roof configuration, the design is particularly distinctive for the use of ashlar stone veneer for the front sections of the house, including the porch and open veranda, and the large projecting gable end. The sides and rear of the house (and the stable) are wood shingle. Combined with the slate roof that extends down to just above the first story, the house is one of the more architecturally distinctive dwellings on the street.

Albert Jewell's permit for this house is dated March 31, 1895. He sold this house to Grace and Edwin Kramer. The Kramer's hired architect J . Williams Beal to design a stable a year later (permit dated April 11, 1896). Mr. Kramer was superintendent for R.H. White & Co., the large dry goods store in Boston. By 1901 the house was owned by Dr. Nathaniel W. Emerson, a surgeon. A few years later it passed to H.B. Duane, who was in the grocery business. Duane built the two-story addition on the rear that, architecturally, does not relate to the house.

Proposed Alterations: The applicant proposes to construct an approximately 15' 6" by 19' 2" roof deck and install two single pane, true divided lite windows and French door (for deck access) on the west (rear) elevation of the house. The new French door will include a wood shingle flare roof for increased overhang protection. The deck will be setback 1' 8" from the corners of the roof and will include a cedar painted railing.

Proposed for the carriage house/garage is to construct an approximately 12' 6" long shed dormer addition between two existing dormers on the west (rear) elevation of the second floor. The shed dormer addition will be setback 18" from the face of the existing dormers and two new single pane divided lite wood windows will be installed. The first floor windows on the north (Freeman Street facing) are proposed to be lowered approximately two feet. However, the north elevation windows are visible from both Powell and Freeman Streets and are character defining features which include a unique wood paneling detail. The applicant proposes restoring or replicating the single pane divided lite windows and paneling detail in the new location.

The existing wood garage door on the east (Powell Street facing) elevation will be removed and replaced with custom swinging doors to match the existing rolling barn door on the non-publicly visible, south elevation. The new doors will match the existing opening dimensions and will be wood with single pane, true divided lite windows. The poured concrete ramp will be removed and a new wood landing will be installed. Two basement windows on the east elevation, which are currently covered by soil, will be removed and the openings closed off. The window above the garage door was replaced after 1936 and the applicant proposes restoring the original fenestration pattern by installing a new wood single pane, true divide lite window. A new single pane, divided lite wood window will be installed on the south elevation where an opening does not exist. The existing chimney will be extended to conceal a chimney for a new gas fireplace.

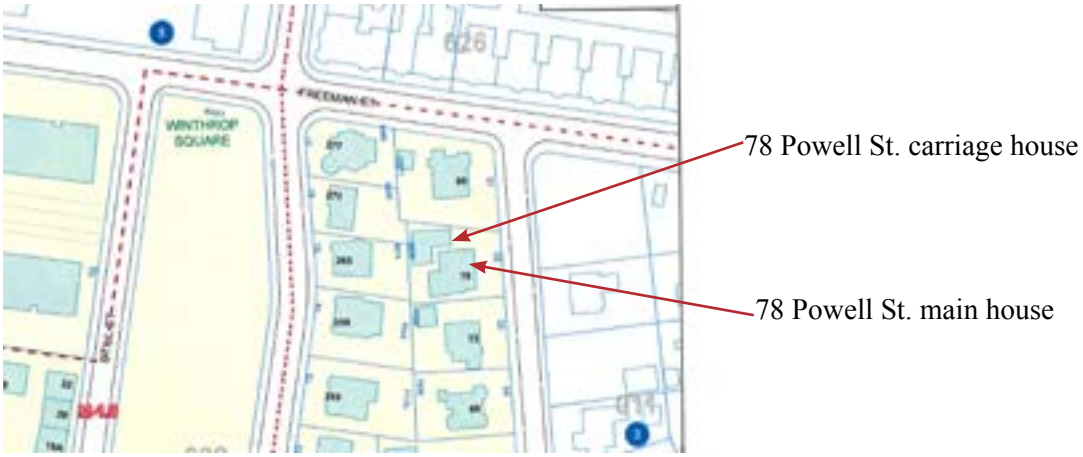
Lastly proposed for the East (Powell Street facing) elevation is the removal of the existing pedestrian gate at the corner of the carriage house and main house and installation of a new wood picket fence to a height of 42" and a new pedestrian gate. The fence location will be where the main house stonework ends and wood shingles begin.

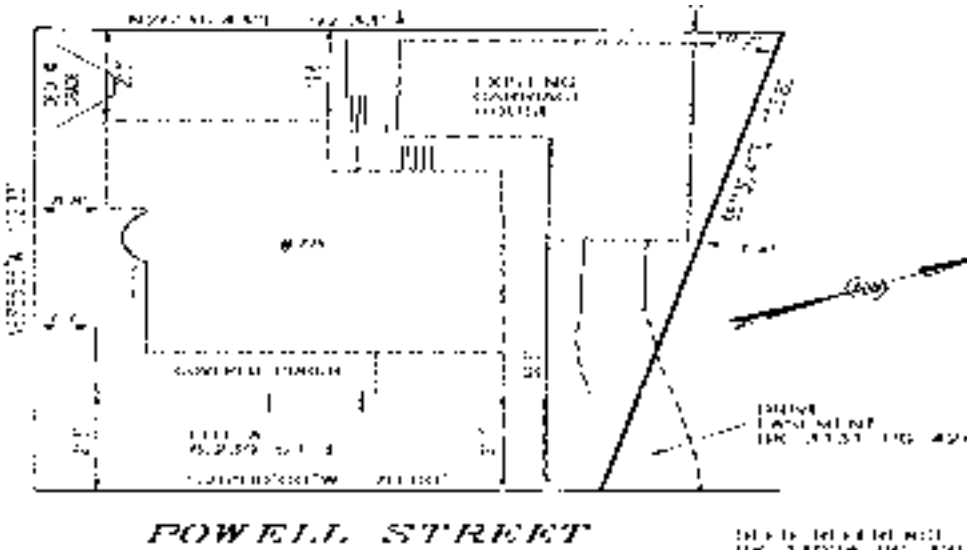
The application proposes non-publicly visibly alterations which include the reconfiguration of the rear main house basement and first floor entrance and deck, lowering of the west and south elevation first floor windows of the carriage house, and the replacement of wood gutters with copper gutters painted to match an existing copper gutter on the carriage house and rear of main house. Replication in kind is also proposed for some windows, wood trim, foundation repair of carriage house, and the carriage house wood shingles.

The application requires two variances, both FAR and open space. An additional two variances may be required for use and for parking. The case will be presented to the Planning Board on December 17th and the ZBA on January 14th.

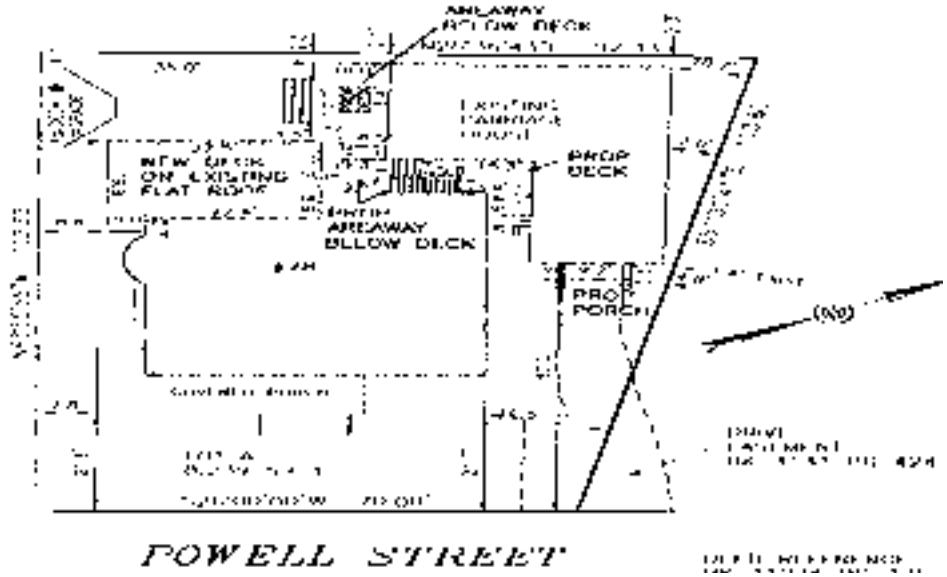
Applicable Guidelines: "The historic character of a property should be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property should be avoided... Historic carriage barns and automobile garages should be preserved... Existing windows should be repaired, not replaced. The Commission has available names of window rehabilitation specialists. If an applicant believes that an existing window cannot be repaired, the applicant's proposal for replacing any window[s] will be reviewed on a window-by-window basis. If a replacement window is proposed, the material and design of the existing window, including the casing, size, number of panes and type of window (e.g. single pane, true divided light) , should not be changed, unless the window is not a character-defining feature of a façade, in which case minor changes in the proposed replacement window may be approved by the Commission...Wood gutters, when an integral part of an ornamental cornice or roof edge design, should be repaired and maintained. Copper gutters which duplicate the original molding profile of wood gutters may be considered as a replacement for wood gutters... Roof decks and enclosures should be unobtrusive. New fences and walls should not prevent or restrict views of buildings from a public way. Tall solid fences and walls should not be constructed as noise or headlight barriers. The design of fences should be appropriate in scale and architectural style to the building, its site and the surrounding properties. New front fences and the front yard portion of side fences should be open in character so as not to create visual barriers. New fences and walls running along property lines with street frontage, as well as any section of a side yard lot line fence or wall that is forward of the main body of (i) the applicant's house or outbuilding or (ii)adjacent houses or outbuildings, should not exceed 42 inches in height."

Preliminary Findings: The proposed main house roof deck is minimally visible from St. Paul Street and is unobtrusive to the streetscape. The carriage house addition is not on a primary elevation and is minimally visible from Freeman Street. The window changes on the north elevation are visible and a character defining element. Where possible staff recommends repair and reuse of the original wood windows rather than replacement in-kind.





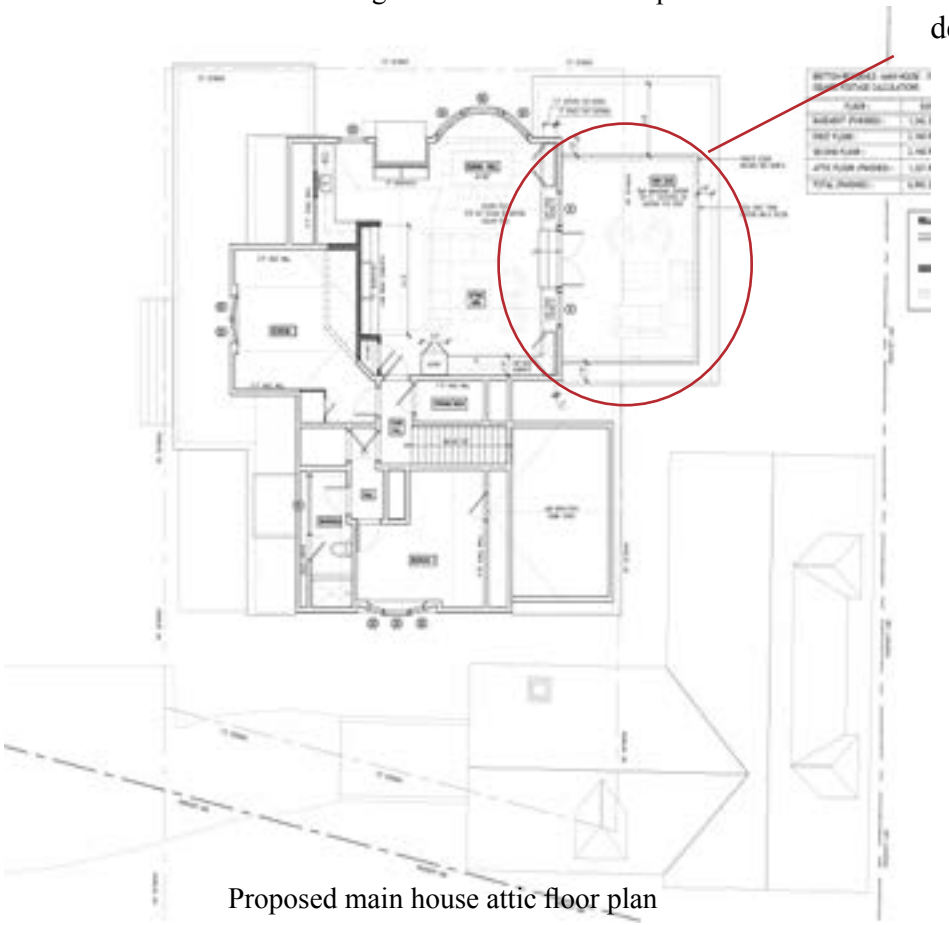
Existing Site Plan



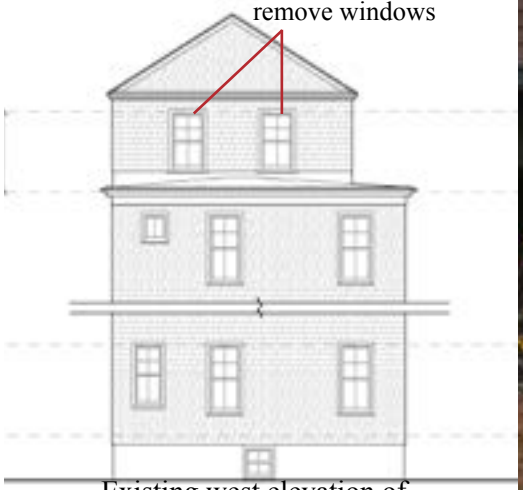
Proposed Site Plan

Existing main house attic floor plan

Proposed roof deck



Proposed main house attic floor plan

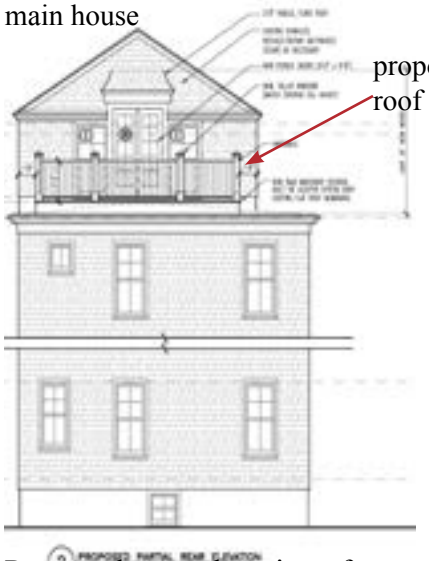


Existing west elevation of main house

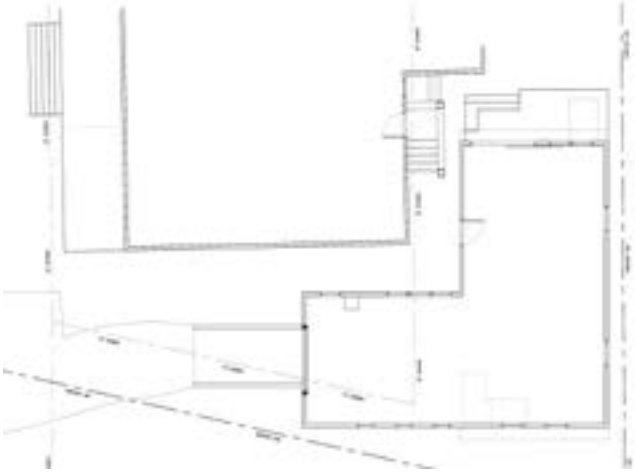
St. Paul Street visibility

Proposed west elevation door and window detail of main house

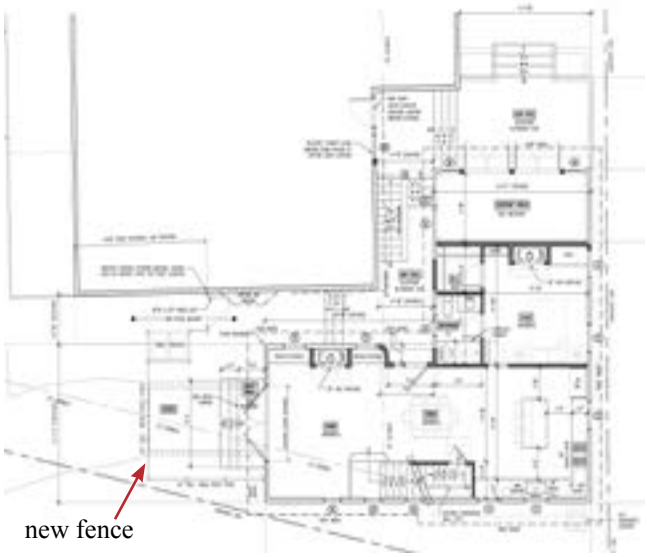
St. Paul Street visibility



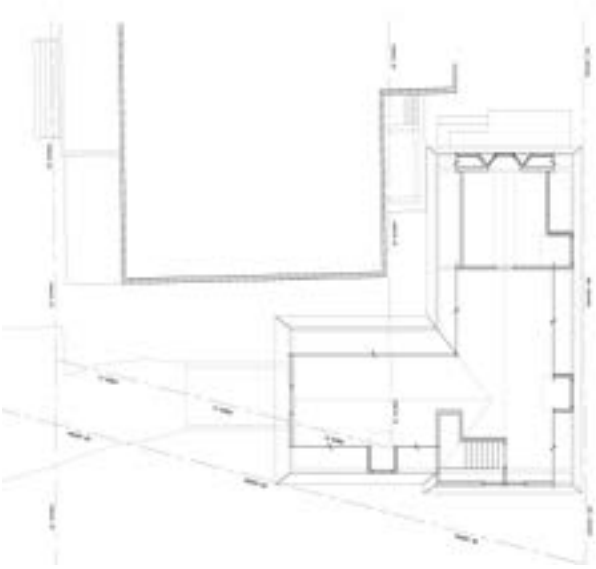
Proposed west elevation of main house



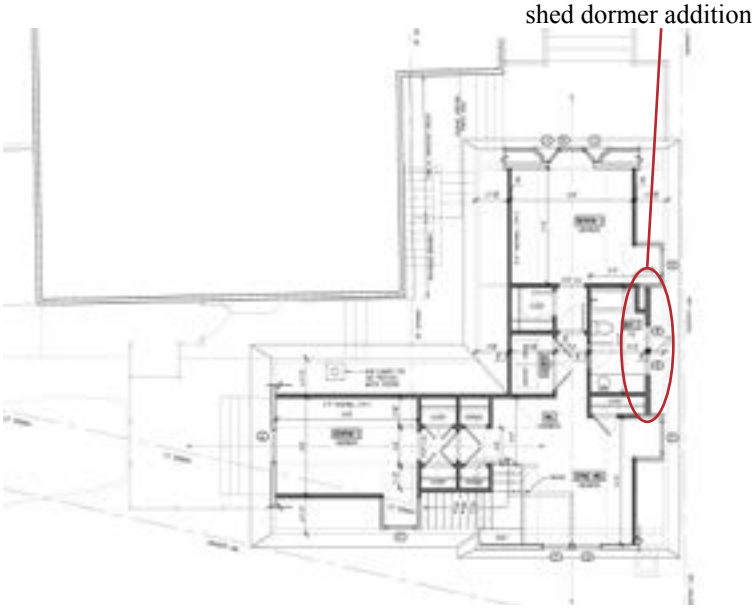
Existing first floor plan



Proposed first floor plan



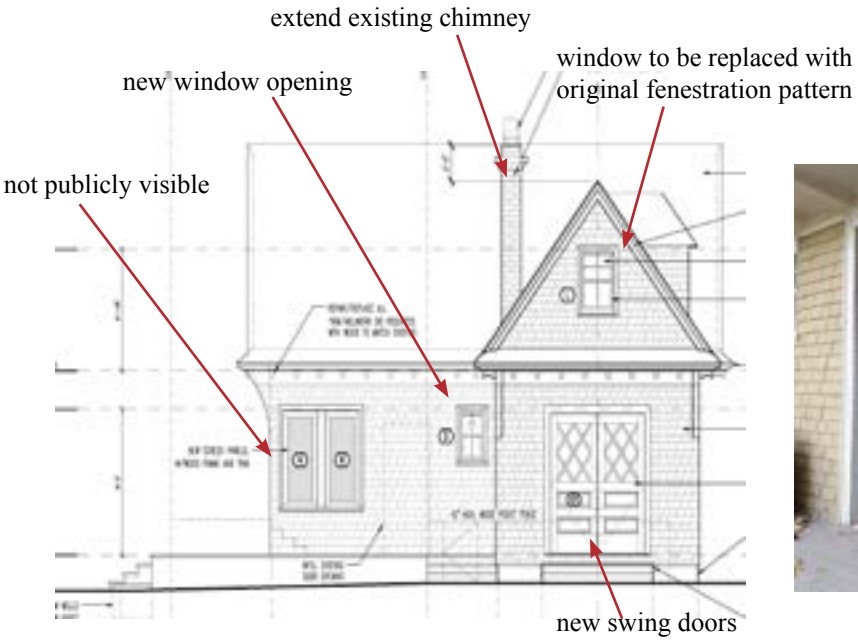
Existing second floor plan



Proposed second floor plan

Existing carriage house east elevation

Existing carriage house

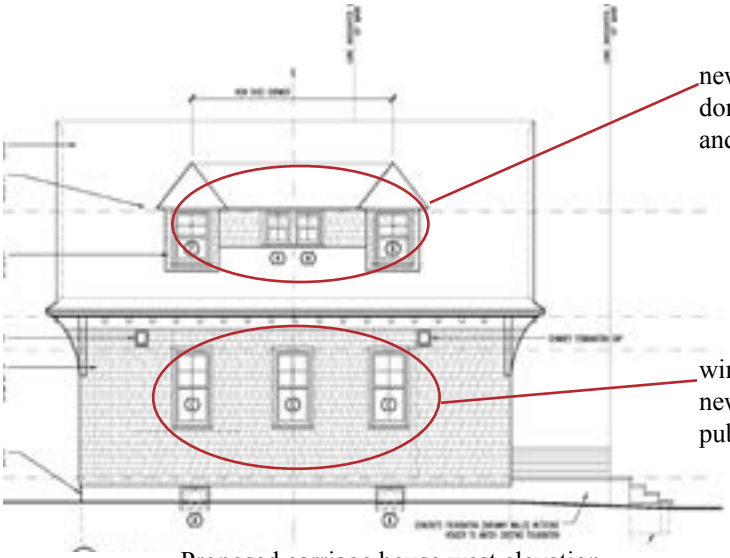


Proposed carriage house east elevation

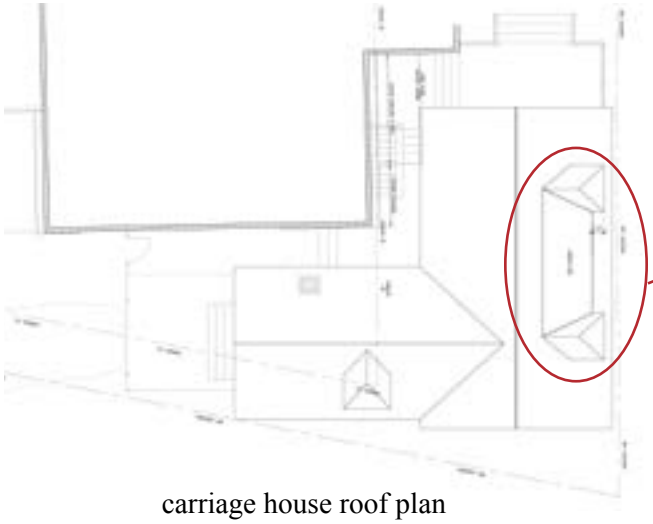
Existing south elevation rolling barn door that will be recreated for east elevation

1936 photo of carriage house, northeast corner

Existing carriage house west elevation



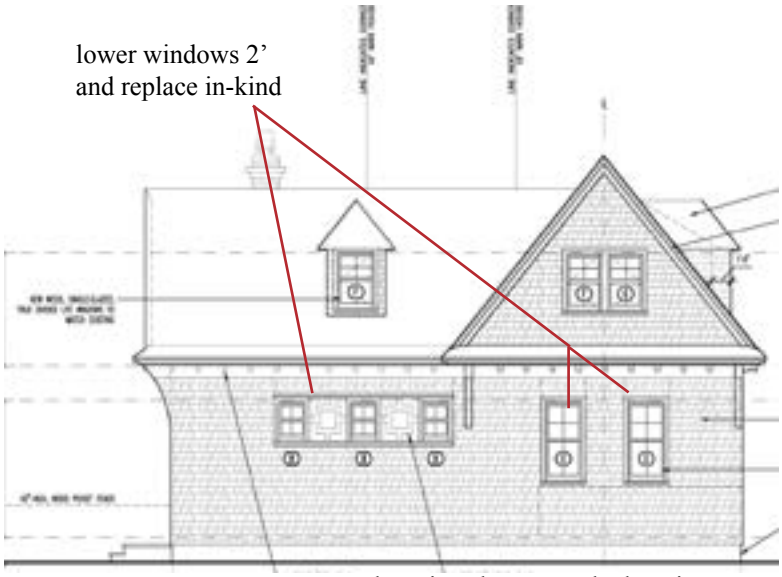
Proposed carriage house west elevation



carriage house roof plan

Existing carriage house north elevation

carriage house north elevation

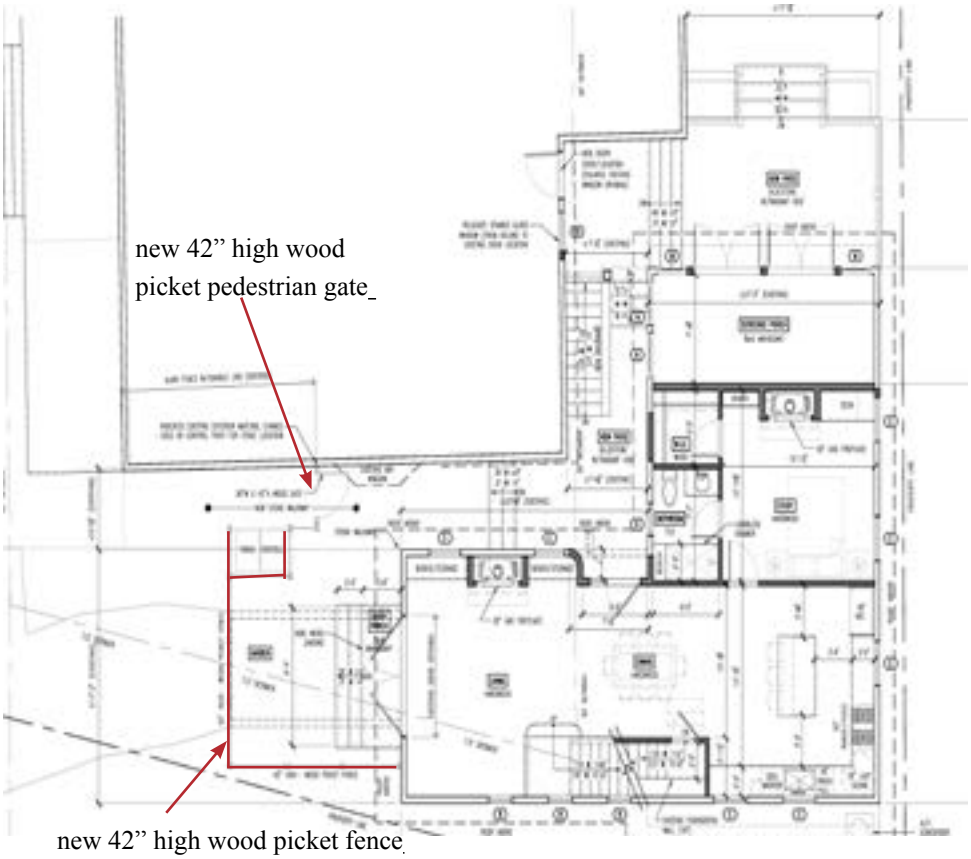


Proposed carriage house north elevation

carriage house north elevation

1936 Photo of carriage house north elevation

wood window and panel detail



existing wood pedestrian gate to be removed and entrance relocate

Example of proposed wood picket fence and gate style