

2214-16 Terrace Ave.



Years Brought Changes

March 26, 1972

By H. Russell Zimmermann

Old timers will tell you that the Charles W. Aring residence at 2214 N. Terrace Ave. has been remodeled extensively. But, until a rare photograph was discovered recently, few dreamed that the structure dates from the Civil War and that it is, today, the oldest house on Terrace Ave.

Although no evidence has been found concerning the exact year of its construction, the old mansion can be dated, with accuracy, between 1860 and 1865. The name of the man who built it, however, seems to be lost in history.

The property abstract relates, quite clearly, the succession of buyers who have owned this lot since the Indians. But, like most abstracts, there is no attempt to describe improvements on the land.

Only coincidentally, in certain agreements and wills, is there a passing mention of a building. One such mention appears in this document, but rather than clarify, it compounds the mystery.

The words . . . "together with the dwelling house and other improvements thereon" . . . appear in a warranty deed for this address dated Feb. 27, 1865. That proves the house was in existence by that time, but at the same time it narrows the list of possible builders.

Subdivided in 1854

The history of the property begins with the subdividing of the neighborhood in 1854 by Jefferson W. Glidden and John Lockwood. On a bluff at the northern edge of Milwau-

kee Bay, the North Point area was destined to become a prime residential area.

The Glidden & Lockwood addition, as it was called, was the center of this fine

piece of real estate and it covered more than 100 acres. In the original plat, Terrace Ave. was named Fifth Ave.

A few days after the subdivision was registered, Charles E. Wendt purchased lots 3 through 7. That choice parcel, with a 300 foot frontage on Fifth Ave., extended from the street down the bluff to the Lake Michigan shore.

In early city directories Wendt was identified as consul for the German duchy of Brunswick. Also listed as Carl, his occupation was given as a distiller. He built a house in 1861 on lots 5, 6 and 7 (the present site of Villa Terrace). In 1860 he sold lots 3 and 4 to Carl Alfter.

Thirty-nine days after the sale, Alfter died, a fact which eliminates him as the builder of the house. For the next five years the property remained under ownership of his widow, Maria, who during that period, remarried. Her new husband was Gustav Pfeil, a man remembered for a strange incident.

Citizens Alarmed

Pfeil created a sensation in October of 1855 when he built a funeral pyre and attempted to cremate his wife. According to reports, she was a Russian noblewoman and it was at her request that the attempt was made.

A few alarmed citizens rushed to the scene and prevented him from continuing. Pfeil, like Wendt, had been listed in early directories as a distiller. He later was the proprietor of the old Alanson Sweet grain elevator on S. Water St.

The new Mrs. Pfeil sold her inherited property, "together with the dwelling house," in 1865. What makes the story a mystery is the fact that all of the owners since the subdivision were listed in the city di-

rectories as living elsewhere.

William B. Price was the next to purchase the property, with its new house. But, in less than two months, he sold it to Halbert E. Paine. Mr. and Mrs. Paine were the first owners of lots 3 and 4 to be listed at that address. But the early description was vague — "5th Avenue North Point."

Paine was a prominent attorney who had come here from Ohio in the 1850s. At the outbreak of the Civil War, the governor had commissioned him as a colonel in the 3rd Wisconsin Infantry and by the end of the war he had risen to the rank of major general.

Sold to Herman Falk

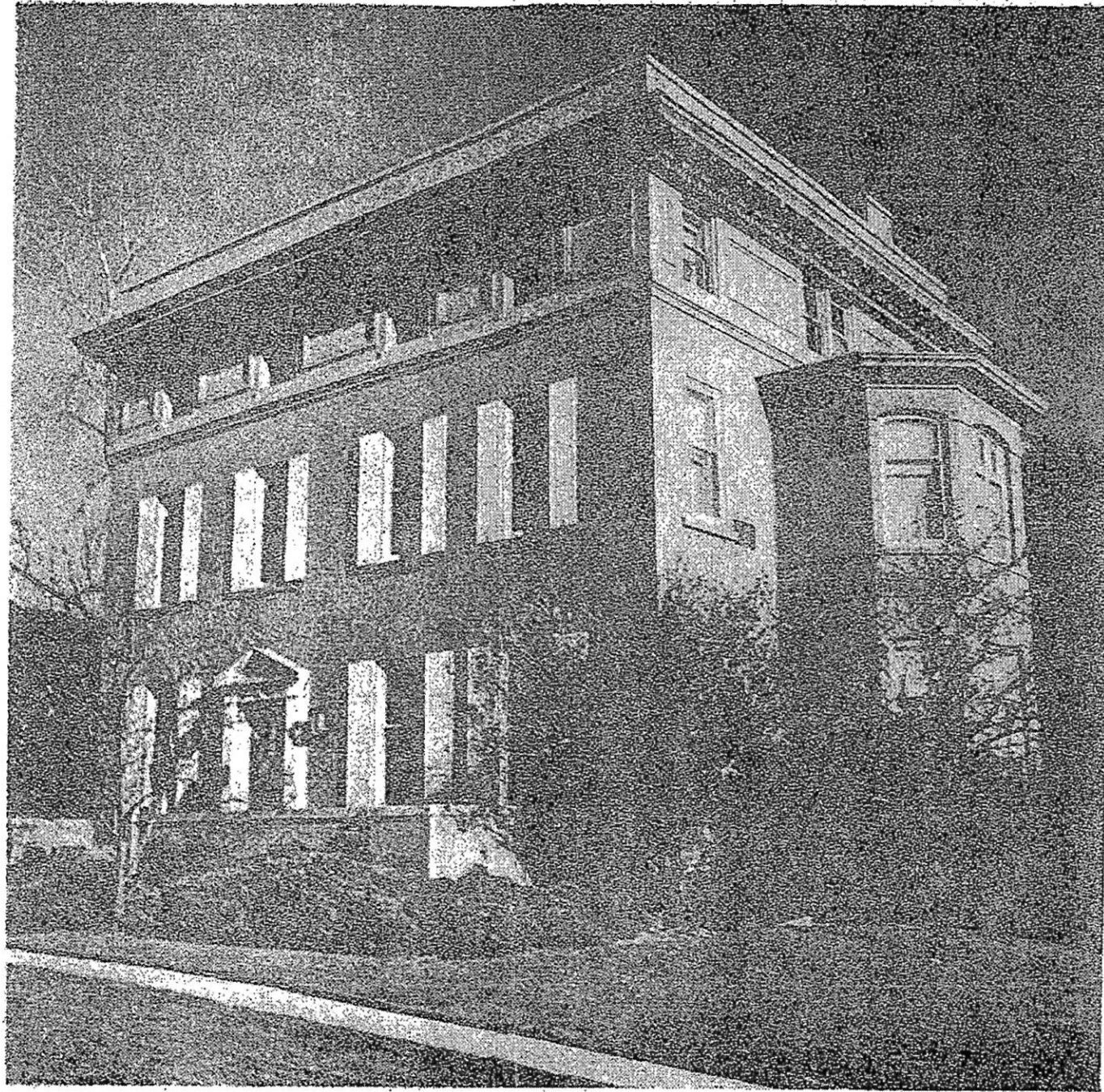
During the time he lived on Terrace Ave., Paine represented the Milwaukee district in Congress. He retired after a second term and moved to Washington where he was for several years, commissioner of patents, and continued to practice law.

Although the Paines were gone by 1871, they did not sell their Milwaukee property until 1874. The James C. Ricketsons were the next residents and occupied the big house for 28 years.

Ricketson had come to Milwaukee three years earlier from Detroit and joined Wisconsin Iron Co. Five years after he moved to Terrace Ave. he was made local manager of Interocean Transportation Co. He was in shipping circles until his death in 1901.

Not Big Enough

A year later his widow sold the house to Herman W. Falk. Falk's name was associated with the house for nearly half a century. The sale to Falk marked the beginning of the many remodelings which made the original structure all but disappear.



—Photo by H. Russell Zimmermann

The mansion at 2214 N. Terrace Ave. dates back to the Civil War and has been remodeled extensively



This 1870-'90 era photo shows the Aring home in its original form

Falk had, by that time, founded the steel products manufacturing company which was to become Falk Corp. Earlier he had been associated with his father's brewery, Franz Falk Brewing Co., which was consolidated with Jung & Borchert and eventually was absorbed by Pabst.

Falk's first move, after buying the house was an extensive remodeling. What he had to begin with was a handsome, two and one-half story, Italianate mansion with a third story square tower.

It apparently was too old fashioned for his taste and not large enough. According to a 1902 building permit, the alterations were designed by

Alexander Eschweiler and were to cost \$3,000. Charles Gruenwald was the mason and J. Deink the carpenter.

The original, India ink on linen drawings by Eschweiler still are in existence. They show that the tower was lowered slightly and that its windows and trim were modernized.

A 16 by 21 foot room was added to the northwest corner of the first floor, filling in the L at the base of the tower.

A large porch with a balustraded canopy was attached to the front. The main entrance, formerly in the lower part of the tower, was moved forward to the porch. Windows were cut into the north and east wings and a side

porch was added.

Wasn't Satisfied

The resulting appearance either was displeasing or there was a need for more room, because in 1915 another remodeling was executed to completely change the facade. This time Fitzhugh Scott was the architect and the estimated cost again was \$3,000.

In Scott's design, the porch canopy was removed, additional windows were cut, and the roof was raised to create a third floor out of the attic. The top of the tower was sliced off and the one story addition of 1902 was raised to three, creating the square, quasi-Georgian front which exists today.

A seven sided, two story, bay window was added to the lake end of the eastern wing and a huge, quarter-circle sunroom was tucked between that wing and the main block.

In 1945 Falk built an elevator shaft on the lake side of the south bay.

Although the exterior has changed little since 1915, the remodeling continued on the interior.

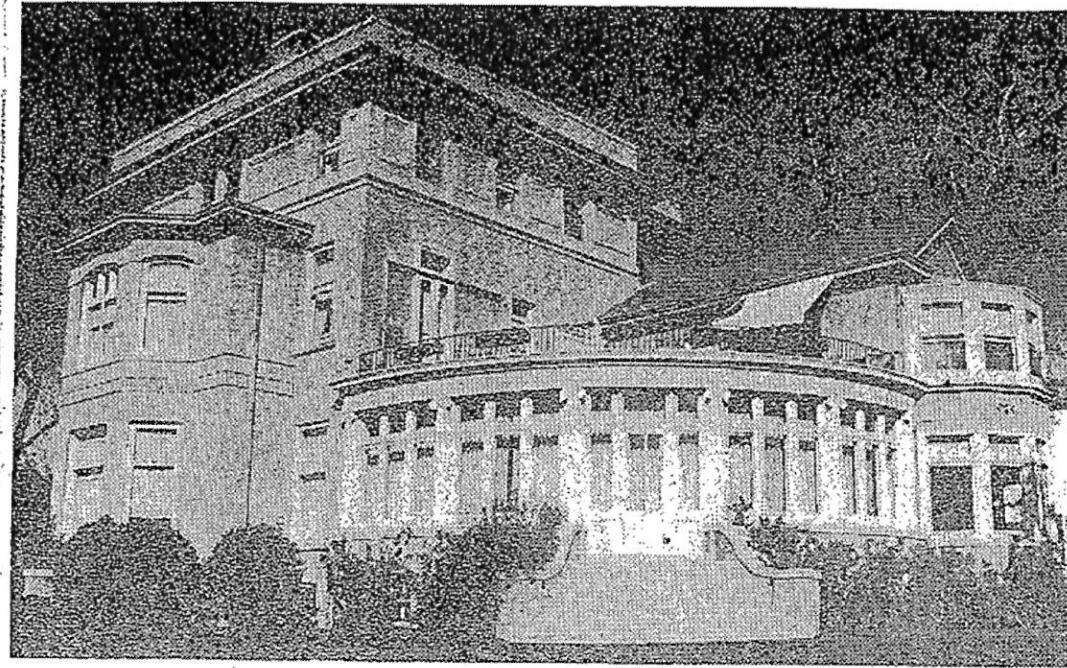
In 1949 the house was purchased from the Falk family by Julian Sammet, who spent \$8,500 converting it into a two family flat.

After passing through two more owners, the house was acquired by Aring in 1959.

Virtually nothing remains of the original interior but there are a few clues to the building's age on the outside.

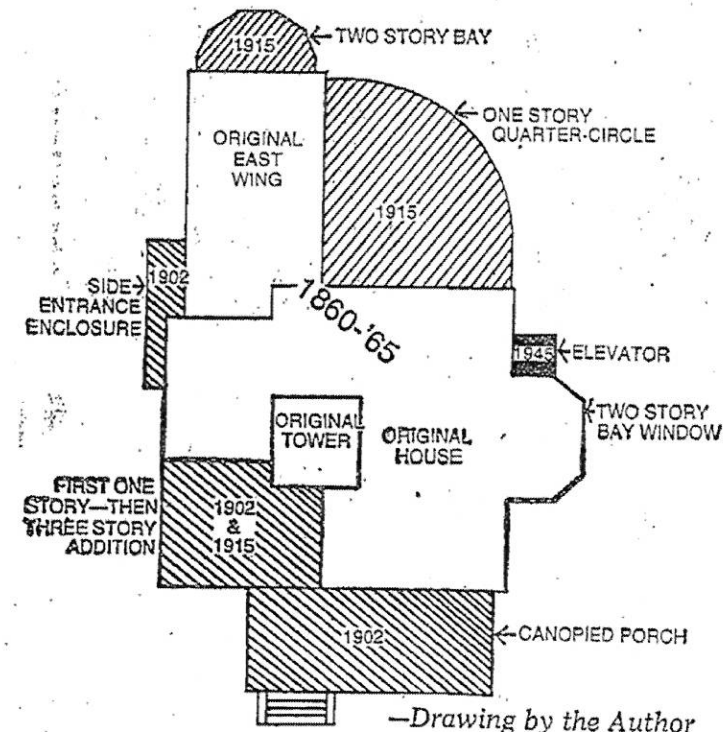
The two story, bay window on the south wall obviously is Victorian and decades older than the front. The rear, or eastern, wing is part of the first building.

If stripped of its painted disguise, the multicolored brickwork of the front facade would betray the years of rebuilding. Then one would see the four large windows in the southern half belong to the stately Italian villa which was erected during the Civil War.



—Photo by the Author

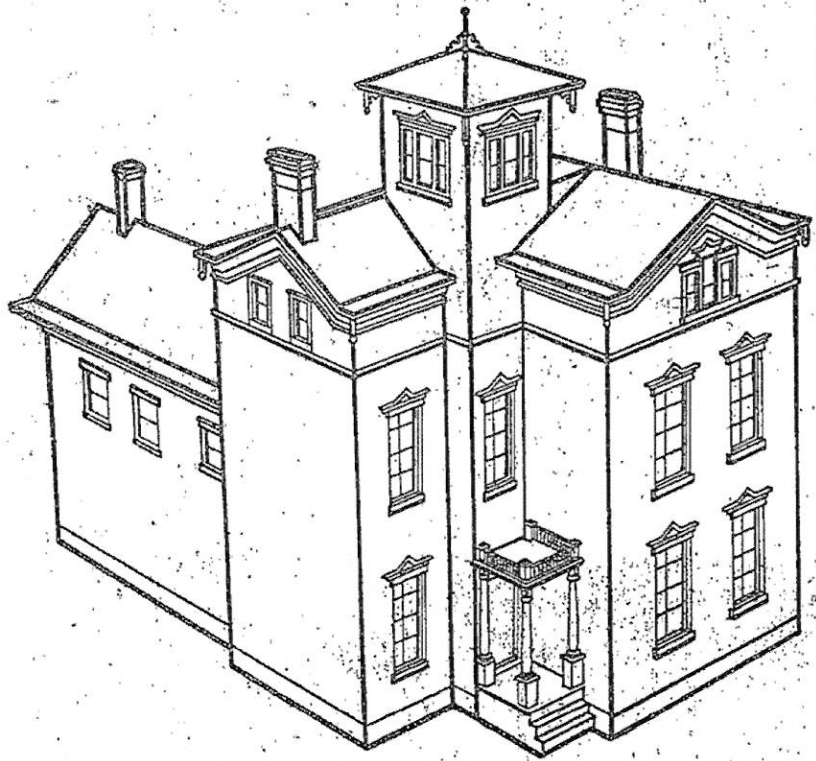
The large sunroom and two story bay at far right were added in 1915



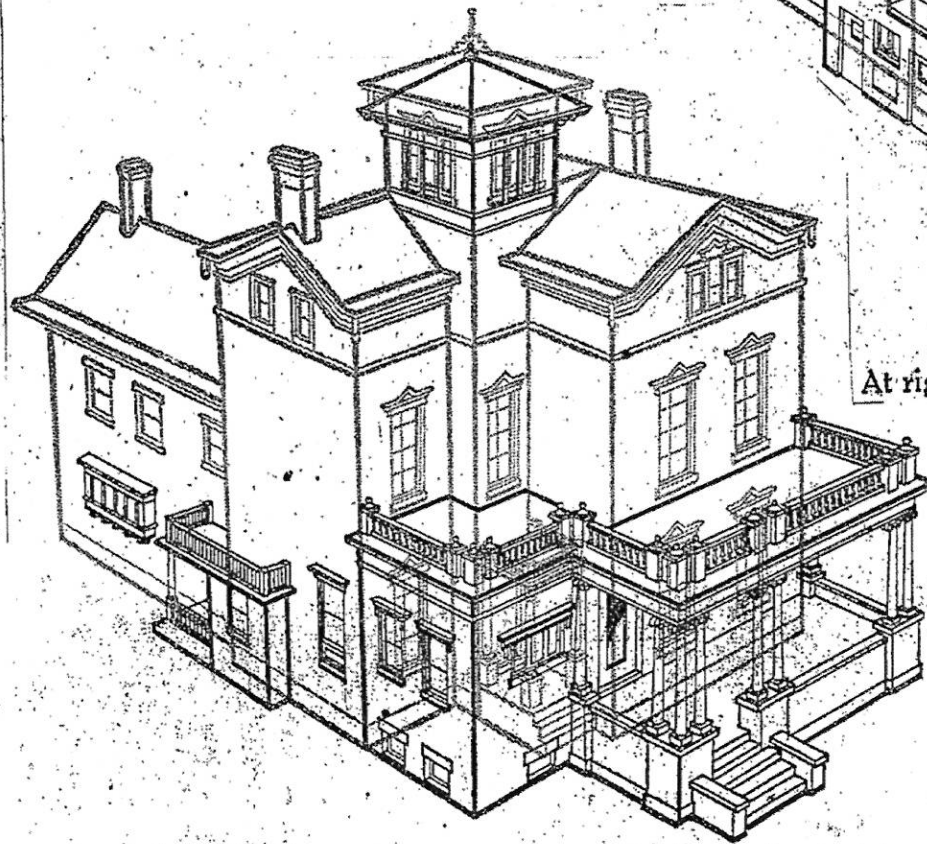
—Drawing by the Author

Shaded areas show the additions and changes made over the years at the Aring home.

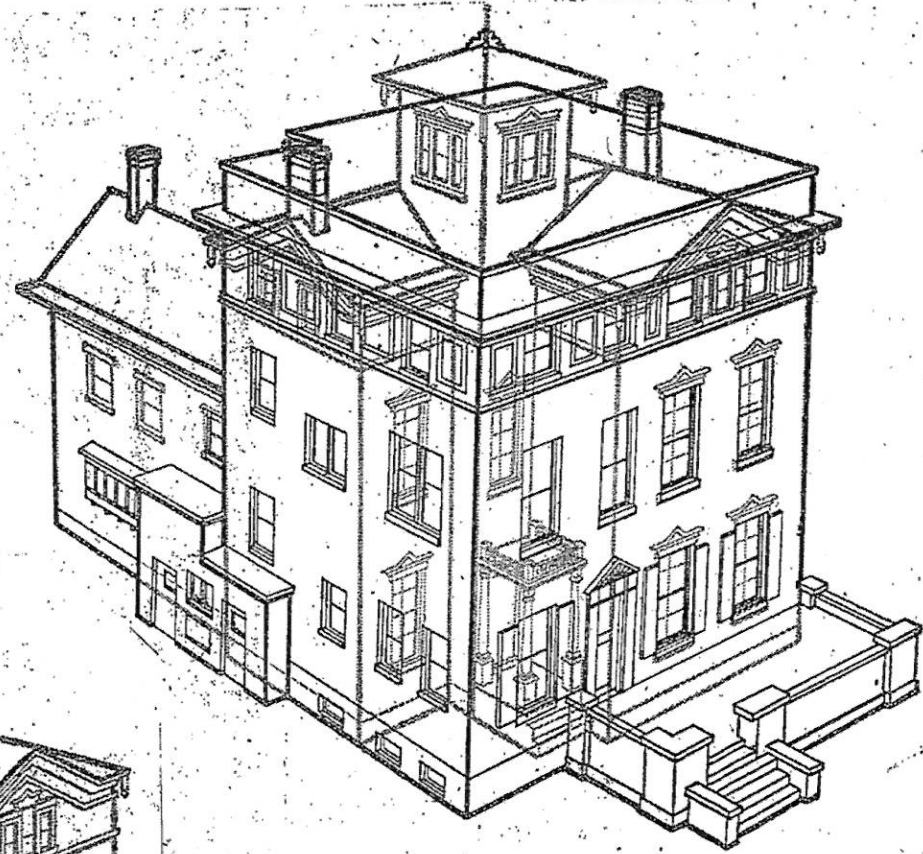
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The drawing at left shows the house in its original form.



The one at center shows the remodeling done in 1902; with the alterations in dark lines.



—Drawings by the Author

At right are the 1915 changes and the present shape

Exterior Elevations

East



Exterior Elevations

West



Exterior Elevations

South

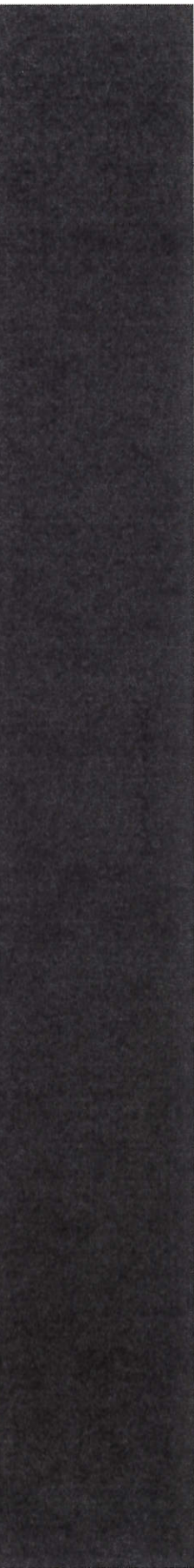


Exterior Elevations

North



Exterior Windows







Exterior Wood & Trim





Exterior Openings



Exterior Foundation



Exterior Gutters





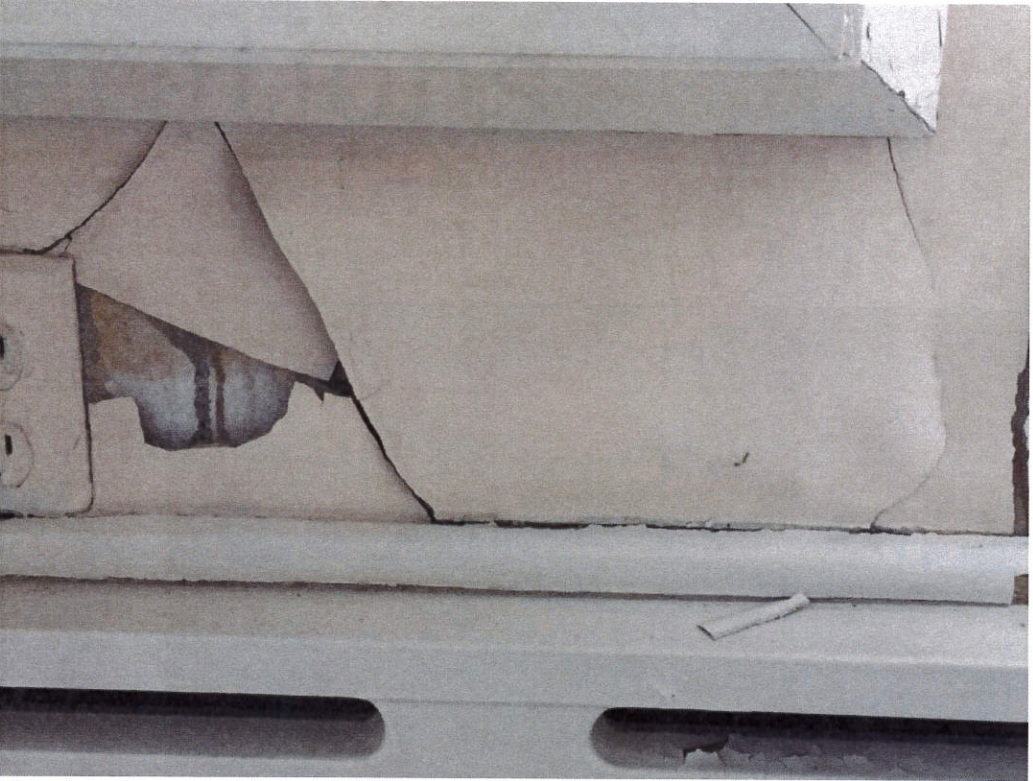
Interior Windows





Interior Water Damage





- Intend to restore the galvanized steel



**EXISTING
RIGHT 'SOUTH' ELEVATION**
1/4" = 1'-0"



**REHABILITATED
RIGHT 'SOUTH' ELEVATION**
1/4" = 1'-0"



- RESTORE METAL CORNICE
- REPAINT ENTIRE HOUSE
- ALL THIRD FLOOR WINDOWS TO HAVE NEW WOOD STORM SCREENS
- REMOVE A/C CONDENSER (NEW CONDENSER TO BE ON ROOF BEHIND PARAPET)
- MODIFY RUBBER ROOFING LOWER ON VERTICAL WALL AND FLASH WITH COPPER
- REPLACE RECEPDED GUTTER LINING WITH COPPER
- GENERAL NOTE FOR ALL WINDOWS ON THIS ELEVATION UNLESS NOTED OTHERWISE:
REMOVE STORMS PATCH GLAZING COMPOUND, PAINT, CLEAN GLASS, REINSTALL STORMS
- REMOVE IN-WALL AIR CONDITIONING UNITS AND TOOTH-IN BRICK TO MATCH EXISTING

- REMOVE IN-WALL AIR CONDITIONING UNITS AND TOOTH-IN BRICK TO MATCH EXISTING
- REPLACE RECEPDED GUTTER LINING AND DOWNSPOUTS WITH COPPER
- REPLACE MODERN CASEMENT WINDOWS AT MASTER BEDROOM WITH CLAD WOOD TILT/TURN WINDOWS
- RAISE BOTTOM OF MASTER BEDROOM + UPPER HALL WINDOWS 8" TO ALLOW FOR LAKE TERRACE DECKING
RAISE STONE SILL + RECONFIGURE BRICK

- REPLACE MODERN CASEMENT WINDOWS WITH CLAD WOOD TILT/TURN WINDOWS
- REMOVE WOOD BENCH/RAILING SYSTEM + LAKE TERRACE + INSTALL CABLE RAIL SYSTEM
- REPLACE MODERN WINDOWS BELOW AND FIXED TRANSOMS ABOVE
TRANSOMS TO HAVE 1/8" SIMULATED DIVIDED LITES WITH DARK SPACER BARS
- RESTORE ALL COLUMNS

NO.	REVISIONS

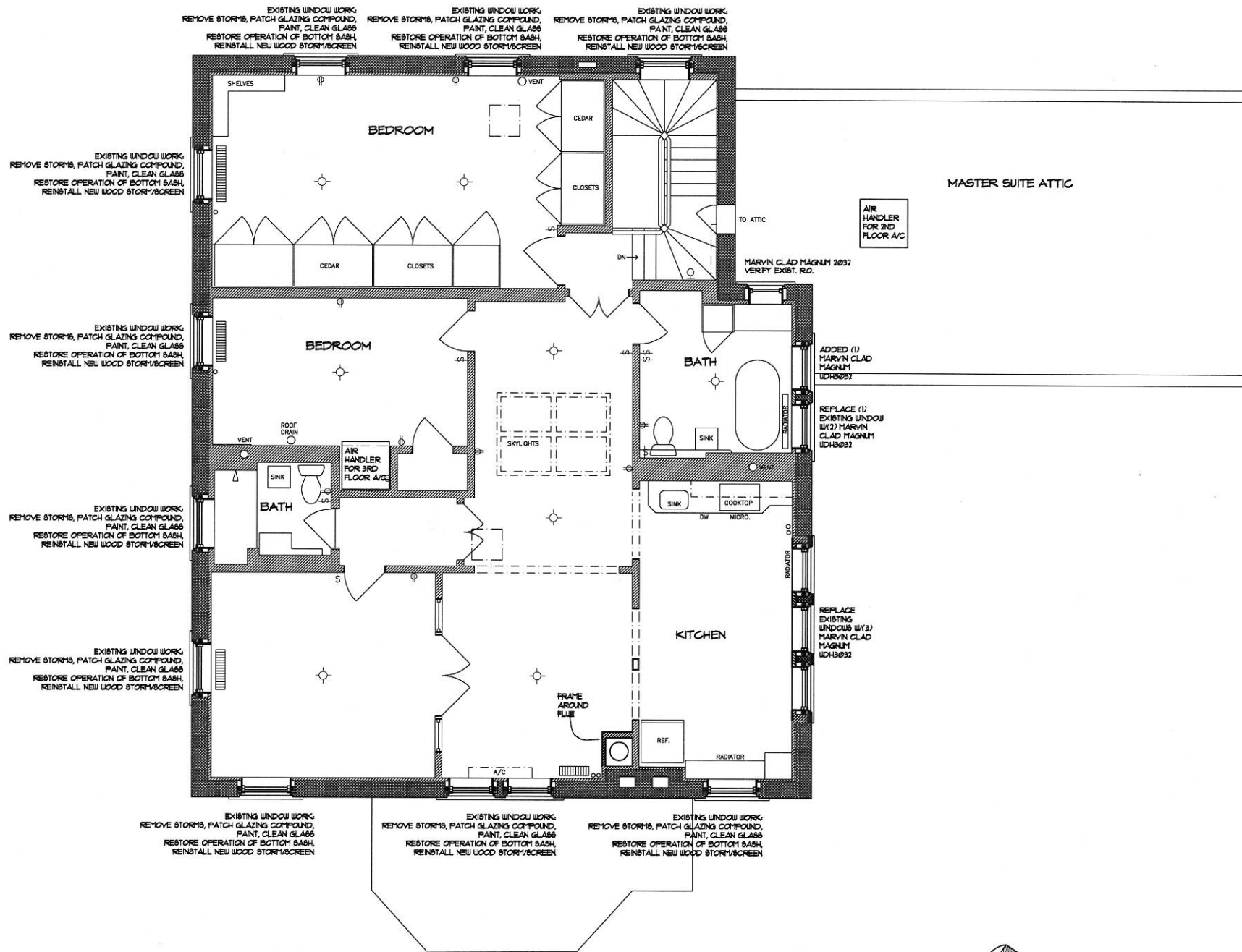
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1.1

EXT. ELEVATIONS



THIRD FLOOR PLAN
1/4" = 1'-0"

- ▨ EXISTING STUD WALL TO REMAIN
- ▨ EXISTING MASONRY TO REMAIN
- ▨ NEW FINISHES (DRYWALL, SIDING, CABINETS, ETC.)
- ▨ NEW DRYWALLED STUD WALL
- ▨ NEW MASONRY

REVISIONS

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DATE:	
FOR:	
DRAWN BY:	BKS
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3.3

Renovated Third Floor