

**Architectural & Historical Report  
for  
15 Baxter Road  
Siasconset, Massachusetts**

November 20, 2020

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Betsy Tyler, Historian for The 'Sconset Trust, Inc.



## THE 'SCONSET TRUST, INC.

### Preservation Easements

The 'Sconset Trust preserves the unique character of the east end of Nantucket Island in Massachusetts through conservation of areas of open land and preservation of structures of historical and architectural significance in 'Sconset. The Trust works with the entire island community and collaborates with conservation and historic preservation groups to achieve its goals.

This report was prepared to highlight the important architectural and historic features of this house. The Trust hopes that emphasizing such features will encourage current and future owners of historically significant houses to preserve important interior and exterior building features for future generations. The Trust stands ready to assist homeowners in assessing the appropriateness of tools like preservation restrictions and rights of first refusal, which may include tax benefits.

For more information on how the Trust can help, please contact the Executive Director, Elizabeth G. Grubbs.

The 'Sconset Trust is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Please visit the web site at [sconsettrust.org](http://sconsettrust.org).

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## 1. SUMMARY AND PROJECT SCOPE

Built as a summer house in 1911, the property at 15 Baxter Road in Siasconset is a contributing resource within the Nantucket Historic District, a National Historic Landmark District, which is listed in the State and National Registers of Historic Places as well as a local historic district.

The intent of this study is to present the history of the dwelling at 15 Baxter Road and establish its architectural and cultural significance. This study includes a survey and study of the architecture, form and materials of the existing structure, a survey of historical maps and photographs of the property, an examination of the records on file at the town of Nantucket Registry of Deeds, Probate Court and Planning and Land Use Services (PLUS) records, as well as published and archival sources.

This report was prepared for The 'Sconset Trust, Inc. by Marsha L. Fader, AIA Architect and Betsy Tyler, Historian.

## 2. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The stucco bungalow at 15 Baxter Road in Siasconset built in 1911, is a significant architectural anomaly on the north bluff of 'Sconset in an area known as Aurora Heights, just south of William J. Flagg's Sankaty Heights development that extended north to Sankaty Light. In contrast to the larger two-story vacation cottages built prominently along the North Bluff beginning in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the Craig bungalow, with its low-pitched roof, is small and unassuming. It is one of only two extant examples of the bungalow style with a stucco finish on the island, and is earlier than the other located at 48 West Chester Street in town, built in 1915.

The hip roofs, a typical architectural feature for a bungalow, also suggest an environmentally-responsive design well-suited to the high winds of an ocean-front location. The hip roof may also have contributed to the preservation of this house due to its inherent restrictions. Unlike the more typical gable roof on Nantucket, a hip roof is not a design that allows additions or changes, either upward for more height or outward for greater footprint.

Bungalows were a popular type of domestic dwelling in early twentieth century America. Characterized by their small single-family size, they were constructed of building materials of natural color and texture, including unpainted woods, stone, tile, and stucco. Bungalows typically featured dominant roofs with overhanging eaves and verandas, although there were many variations within the type. (Clay Lancaster, *The American Bungalow*, 1985) On Nantucket, bungalows were generally shingled, to conform to local style. There were at one time more than 120 bungalows on Nantucket, and about a dozen were stucco, although many were later shingled over. (Margaret Moore Booker, "Bungalows: Cozy Havens and Summer Retreats," chapter six in *Sea-Captains' Houses and Rose-Covered Cottages*, 2003).

## 3. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Built by John and Florence Craig of Ithaca, New York, 1911

The stucco bungalow at 15 Baxter Road in Siasconset, built by John and Florence Craig of Ithaca, New York, in 1911, is a significant architectural anomaly on the north bluff of 'Sconset in an area known as Aurora Heights, just south of William J. Flagg's Sankaty Heights development that extended north to Sankaty Light.

The north bluff of 'Sconset was developed beginning in the 1880s. William J. Flagg first acquired land just north of the village, from Nosegay Avenue to Rosaly's Lane, and sold individual house lots; eight houses were built in the area by 1888, as shown on Harry Platt's map of 'Sconset published that year. Flagg then purchased land that eventually encompassed most of the north bluff, from Ann's Lane to Sankaty Light in a development he called Sankaty Heights. Between Flagg's two developments, from Rosaly's Lane to Anne's Lane were thirty-nine house lots in an area called Aurora Heights, laid out by Robert B. Coffin and Emily P. Rice 1887. This is the area where the Craig Family built their house in 1911. The road on which the Craigs built their house in 1911 was known as Baxter Road. As development extended north into the Sankaty Heights subdivision, what appears to be the continuance of Baxter Road became known as Atlantic Avenue. The entire length of road to Sankaty Light changed to Baxter Road in the late 20th century.



The original plan of the Aurora Heights development, drawn by William F. Codd, depicts land on the east side of Atlantic Avenue adjacent to Rosaly's Lane labeled "Miss Kate Corbett." This land remained vacant until Kate Corbett sold a portion of it to Dewitt and Alice Taylor of Detroit in 1902 and the Taylors sold the land to John Craig in 1910.

Reports in the *Inquirer and Mirror* about Corbett's cottage on the north bluff in the early twentieth century reference an eight-acre property north of Sankaty Light owned by Corbett and her sister, Alice - not 15 Baxter Road. The 8/17/1907 newspaper report that Miss Kate Corbett was making extensive alterations to her house on Sankaty Bluff, refers to her ten-room cottage north of the lighthouse, listed for sale as early as 9/28/1907 (it sold to Paul Turner as noted in the *I&M* 8/18/1923). Corbett did not build on her property at 15 Baxter Road.

Professor John Craig (1864–1912) was head of the Department of Horticulture at the New York State College of Agriculture, Cornell University, and editor of *National Nurseryman*. He was married to Florence Augusta Craig (1860–1915), with whom he had a son, Arthur, and stepdaughter, Clare Currier, from Florence's first marriage to James E. W. Currier. The *Inquirer and Mirror* noted on July 29, 1911: "The new bungalow for Prof. John Craig, on Sankaty bluff, is progressing finely." A few months later, on September 9, 1911, the newspaper reported: "Professor Craig's cottage is rapidly approaching completion, and will be one of the daintiest on the north bluff."

Florence Augusta Craig died in 1915, predeceased by Professor Craig in 1912. Clare Currier Glazier (1885–1978) inherited the house from her mother. Like all property on the east side of Atlantic Avenue, 15 Baxter includes a portion of the footpath that leads from the village of 'Sconset to Sankaty Light. The foot path existed long before any houses were built on the north bluff. William J. Flagg, who owned land on the north and south sides of Aurora Heights, included in deeds to his house lots a stipulation that the path remain open for public use. No such restriction is found in deeds to property in the Aurora Heights development. Flagg transferred his ownership of the path to the Proprietors in 1892 so that it might be held in trust for the public. The Proprietors transferred ownership of the path to the Town of Nantucket in 1923. William Swift surveyed the path in 1924 and in 1925 the selectmen voted to petition the Massachusetts Land Court to set off the path. In 1929, the public's right of way to the path was preserved in perpetuity by the Land Court. The path is accessible from Baxter Road by several public easements, one of which is an extension of Rosaly's Lane between 13 and 15 Baxter Road.

In 1956, Clare Glazier transferred the house and all furnishings to her son, William Stewart Glazier. He sold the house to William and Nadine Gibson in 1998, ending eighty-eight years of continuous family ownership of the property. The Gibsons relocated the bungalow to the north side of their property in 1998 and built a larger house on the south side of the lot. In 2009, when the property changed hands again, alterations were made to both the cottage and the main house.

## 4. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### 4.1 Description

Of the three structures at 15 Baxter Road, there is one which was built in 1911 which is the subject of this report. This early 20th-century structure, relocated to the northern area of the property, is currently known as the guest house. It was moved from its original location immediately south on the same property in 1998 when a larger, primary dwelling was built. Additional land (as a separate lot, 17 Baxter Road) to the north of the house shares its landscape with 15 Baxter Road.

The original 1911 house is a 1-1/2-story, wood-framed, stucco-clad, bungalow style dwelling with a similar orientation on the property to its previous location. It is set back 30 feet from Baxter Road facing the ocean along the 'Sconset Bluff. The 'Sconset Foot-Path runs along the ocean-front of the house. The distinctive building envelope - its roof, walls, and windows, has retained its original form and detail. The interior was completely remodeled in 1998 and 2009.

The house consists of two intersecting, hip-roofed sections: a one-story section facing Baxter Road on the west and a 1-1/2-story section adjoining it with a roof-covered open porch on the three sides of the west,

south, and east, an off-center chimney and hip and shed-roofed dormers. There are extended eaves with roof overhangs and exposed rafters at all roofs and dormer roofs. The exterior walls are stucco with painted wood trim.

The design of window and door placement combines both asymmetry and symmetry. The roof dormers are centered on the various roof planes, while most of the doors and windows have a more random, asymmetrical placement. Windows are casement windows with 6-, 8-, 12-, and 24-lights. Many of the windows are grouped together in multiples.

The interior includes a west entry with a fireplace which opens to adjoining dining and kitchen spaces. A stair to a second floor bedroom and bathroom divides the dining and living room areas. The first floor has two bedrooms with private bathrooms, a laundry room and bathroom. There is a crawl space basement.

The interiors date to the 1998 and 2009 remodeling. There is historically-appropriate vertical board wainscoting, beaded board, cased-in ceiling beams together with distinctive detailing throughout. The basic layout of the various spaces may be similar to the original design. It is a house with a street front as well as an ocean front on the east and west elevations. The eastern ocean front is viewed from the living room while the western street front has a laundry room and kitchen with an entrance.

## 4.2 Alterations/Evolution

There are minor changes to the exterior elevations seen from a study of several exterior historical photographs and a 1998 plan drawing. The changes include the following:

- Relocation of the street-front door on the south elevation to the west elevation. This change in 2009 provided entry into an area in front of the fireplace rather than directly into the kitchen.
- All windows and doors are from the 1998 or 2009 remodelings.
- North windows at the dining area and at the first floor stair landing were changed in some way as indicated as 'clouding' on architect Lyman Perry's plan drawing. The actual change is not known.
- The basement crawl space dates from the 1998 and 2009 remodelings. A painting of the house hanging on the wall in the living room shows an earlier foundation treatment with diamonds cut into the exposed foundation wall surface.

## 4.3 Character-Defining Features

The hip roof is a distinctive architectural feature of this house. The hip roof is used on the main portion of the house, as an intersecting roof as well as for many of the dormer roofs. While the hip roof is not the predominant gable roof type on Nantucket, it is known to have performance advantages over the traditional gable roof. Its largest benefit is its resistance to wind and water. With all sides of the roof sloping to the ground, water is easily drained and there is less wind resistance. The hip roof at 15 Baxter Road is ideally-suited to its ocean-front environment.

Character-defining features include:

- A low-profile, hip-roofed dwelling;
- Asymmetrical fenestration and variations of casement windows;
- Stucco exterior wall finish;
- Wrap-around porches.

## 4.4 Outbuildings

Technically, this original 1911 house is now an 'outbuilding'. A primary dwelling, larger than the 1911 house but similar and respectful in style, was built in 1998.

A third structure is situated close to the street and described as a 'garage' on architect Lyman Perry's 1998 Site Plan. It is finished as an art studio and may date to the first half of the 20th century.

## 5. PROPERTY INFORMATION

**5.1 Property Identification:** 15 Baxter Road, Nantucket Assessor's Map: 73.1.4 5, 1 acre, zone SR20. More than half of the property is located below the bank and the other portion is above the bank. A separate lot of 0.59 acres known as 17 Baxter Road, adjoins this lot to the north with a contiguous landscape.

## 6. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

### 6.1 Published and Archival Resources

*Inquirer and Mirror*, July 29, 1911: "The new bungalow for Prof. John Craig, on Sankaty bluff, is progressing finely."

*Inquirer and Mirror*, September 9, 1911: "Professor Craig's cottage is rapidly approaching completion, and will be one of the daintiest on the north bluff."

*Inquirer and Mirror*, August 17, 1912: "Death of Prof. John Craig at Siasconset."

*Inquirer and Mirror*, December 10, 1949. "Death of Philip Glazier."

*Inquirer and Mirror*, July 20, 1978: obituary of Clare Stennis Currier Glazier.

Booker, Margaret Moore, Rose Gonnella, and Patricia Egan Butler. *Sea-Captains' Houses and Rose-Covered Cottages: the Architectural Heritage of Nantucket Island* (Nantucket: Universe Publishing in association with The Egan Institute of Maritime Studies, 2003)

Lancaster, Clay. *The American Bungalow, 1880-1930*. (New York: Abbeville Press, 1985)

Purkerson, Carrie Dilley. *The Bungalows of Nantucket*. (Preservation Institute: Nantucket, 2006)

### 6.2 Historical Maps & Plans

*Plan of Flagg's Sub-Division in Siasconset, Nantucket, Mass*, surveyed by H. M. Waitt, July 27, 1883, NRD Plan Book 2, p. 22

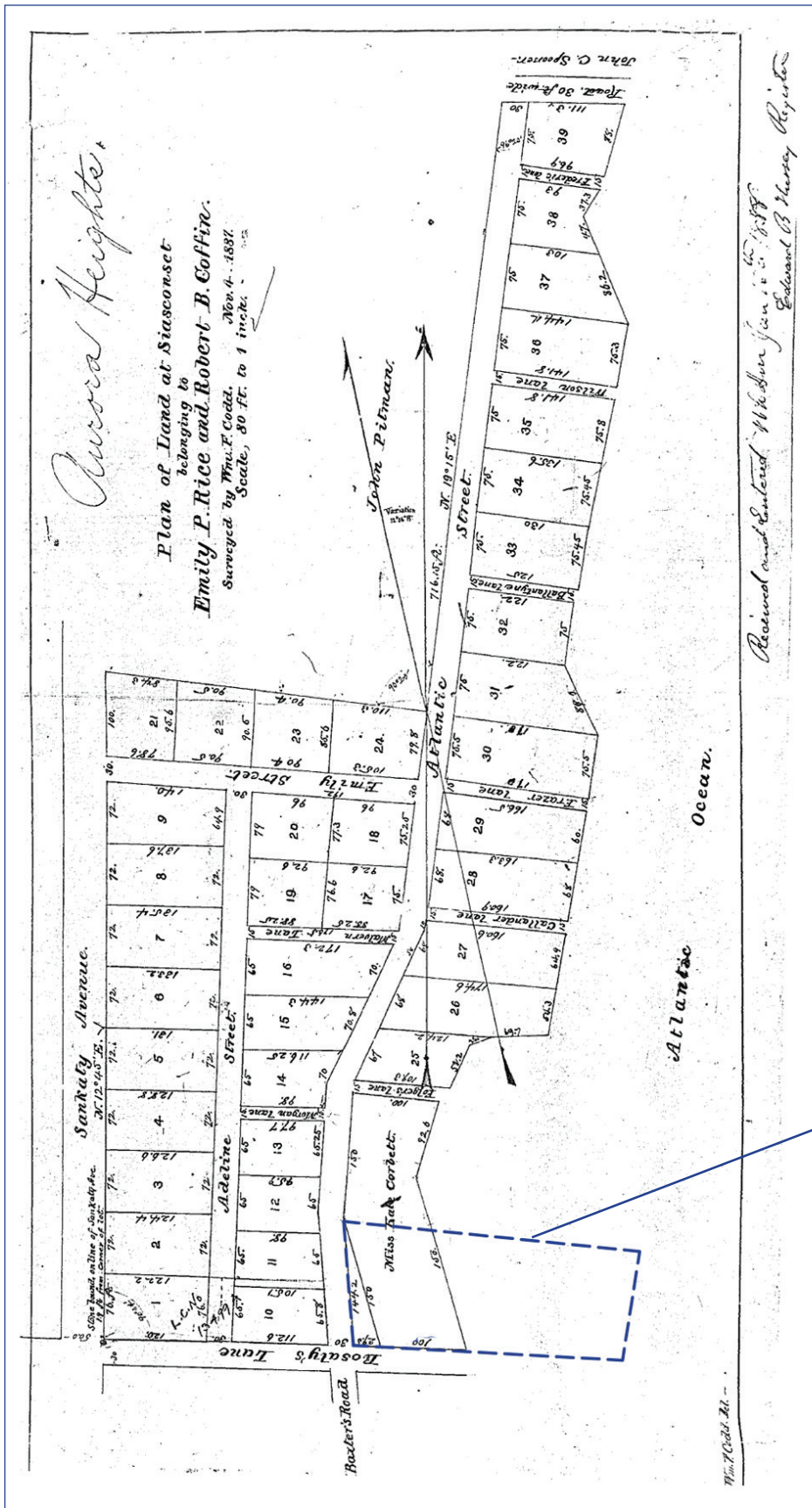
*Plan of Land at Siasconset belonging to W. J. Flagg and Eliza J. Flagg*, situated on Sankoty Heights surveyed by H. M. Waitt, August 15, 1883, NRD Plan Book 2, p. 31

*Plan of Land at Siasconset belonging to Emily P. Rice and Robert B. Coffin*, surveyed by William F. Codd, November 4, 1887, "Aurora Heights," NRD Plan Book 2, p. 5

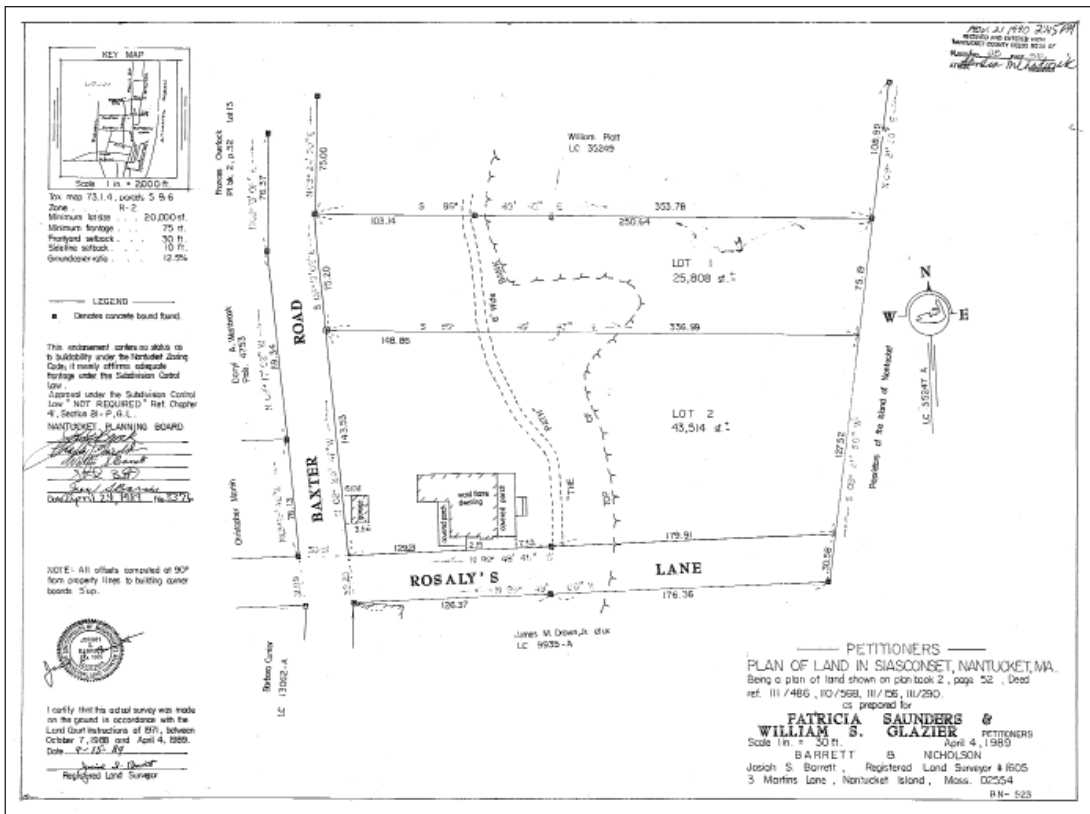
*Plan of Land in Siasconset, Nantucket, MA as prepared for Patricia Saunders and William S. Glazier*, 1989, NRD Plan Book 25, p. 56

Sanborn Insurance Company maps: 15 Baxter Road is not delineated on any of these maps. The 1923 map does note its location with a small arrow pointing north off the map page and the words "50' Stuccoed D", meaning that the stuccoed house was 50 feet north, but was not included on the map.

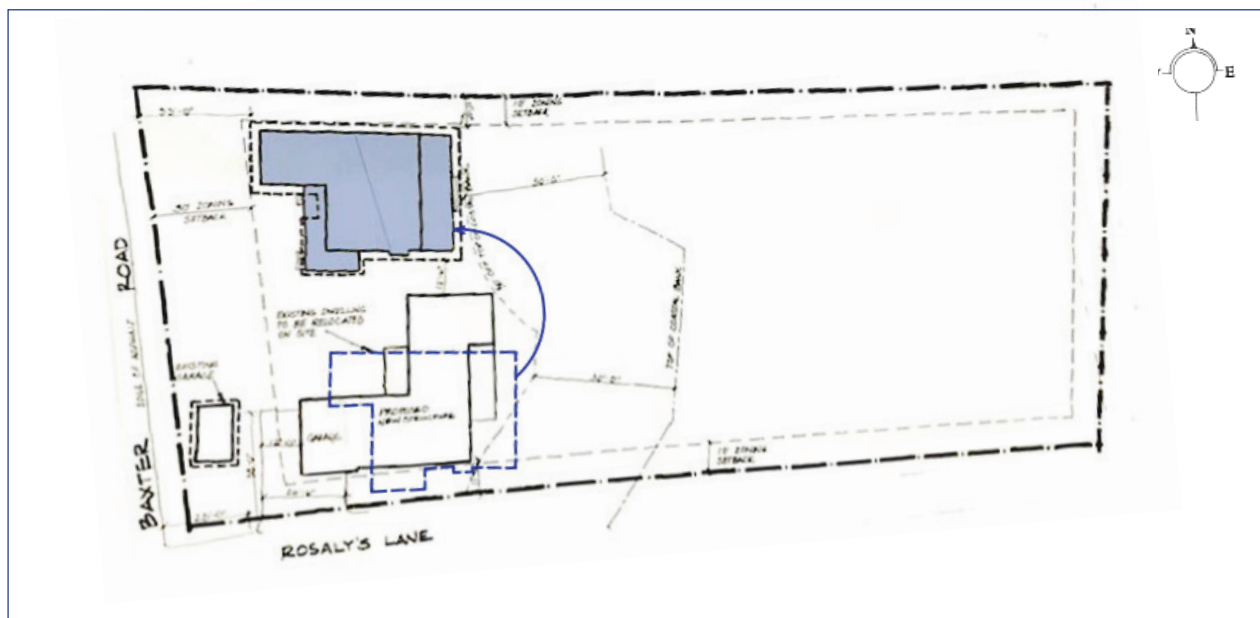
Architectural Plans, 2009: Ike Kligerman Barkley Architects PC, Nantucket Historic District Commission



Plan of Land at Siasconset belonging to Emily P. Rice and Robert B. Coffin, surveyed by William F. Codd, November 4, 1887, "Aurora Heights"

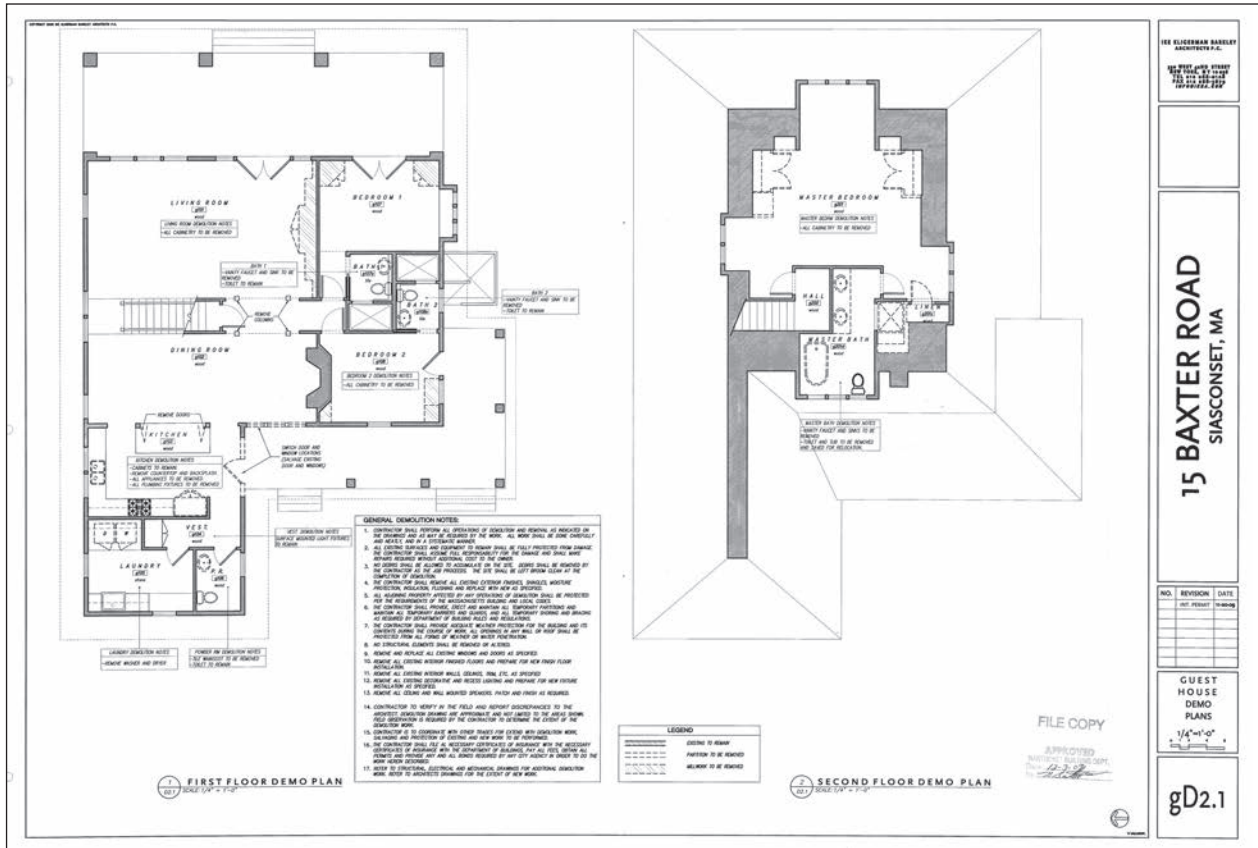


Plan of Land in Siasconset, Nantucket, MA as prepared for Patricia Saunders and William S. Glazier, 1989

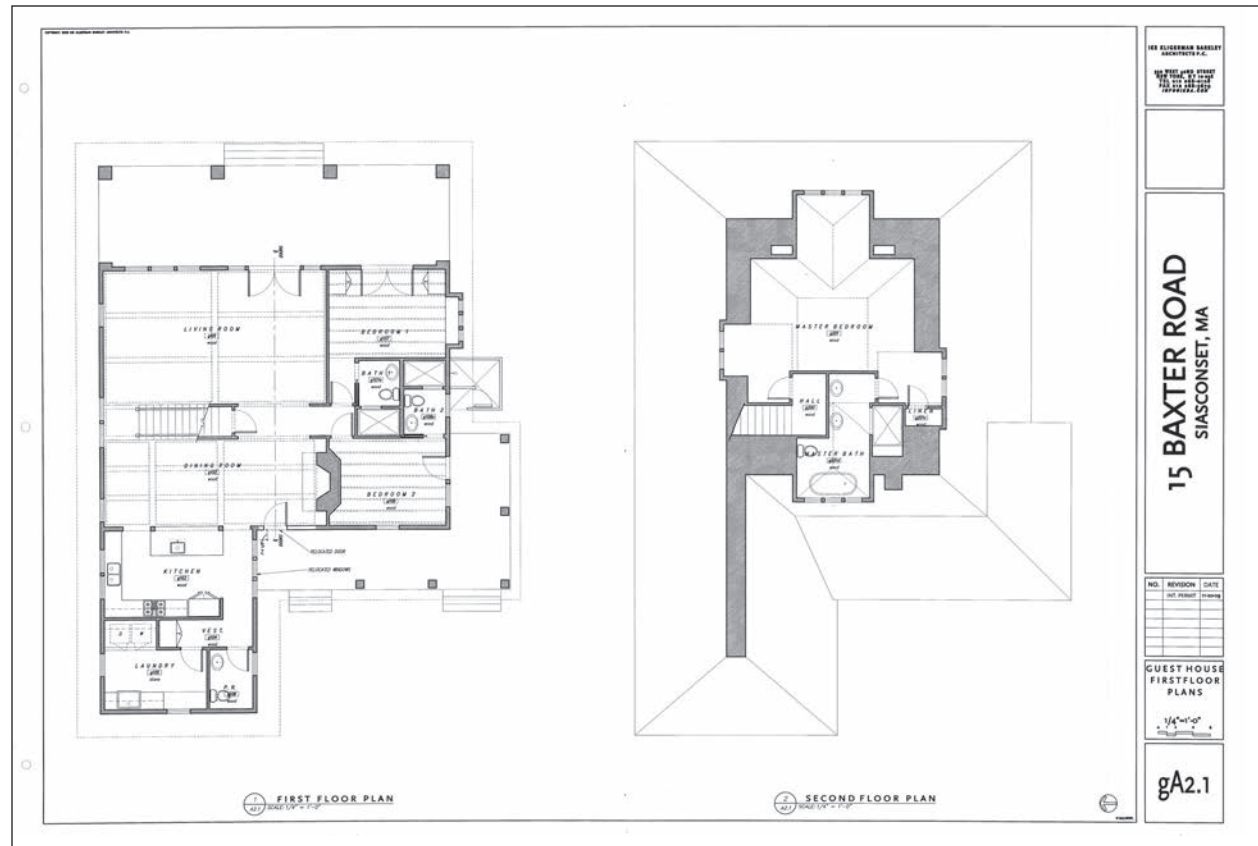


Site Plan, 1998 by Architect Lyman Perry showing original 1911 house location and 1998 relocated house to the north.

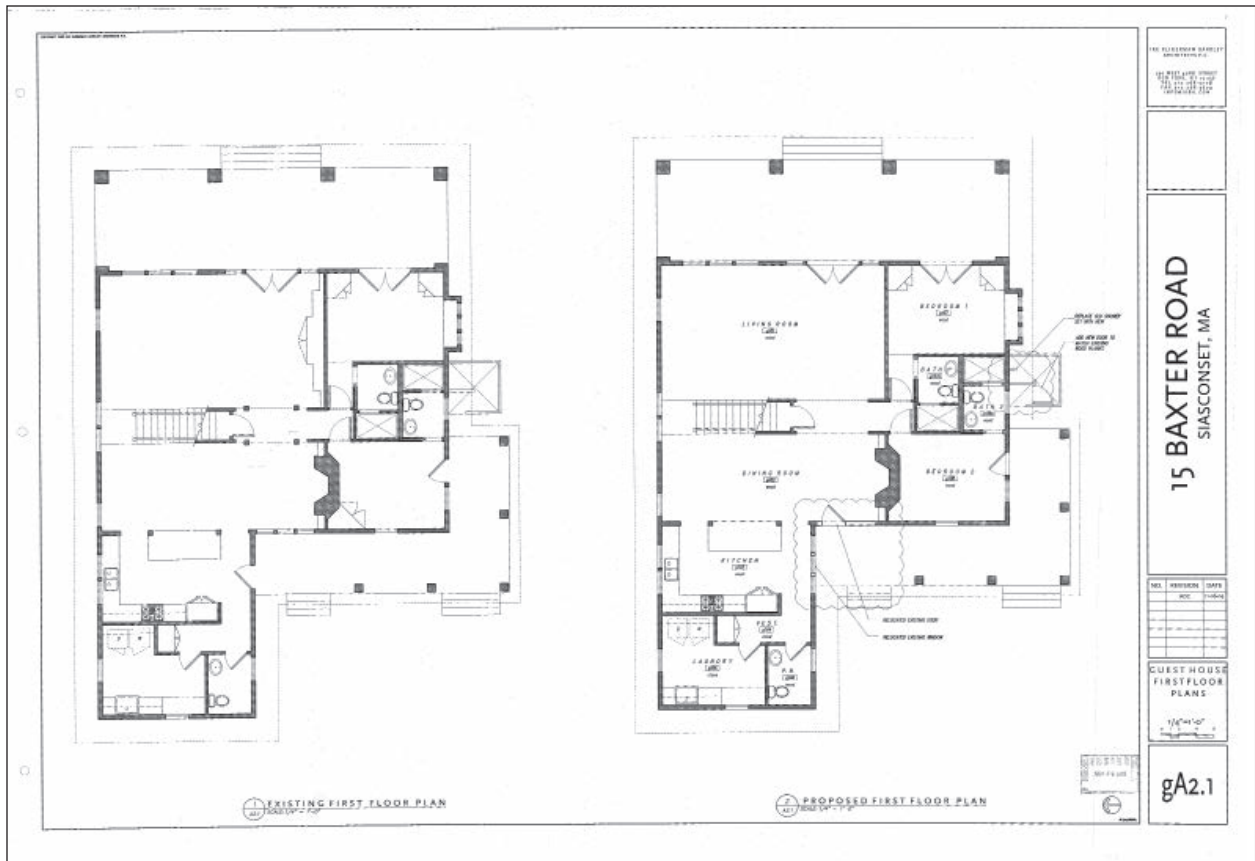




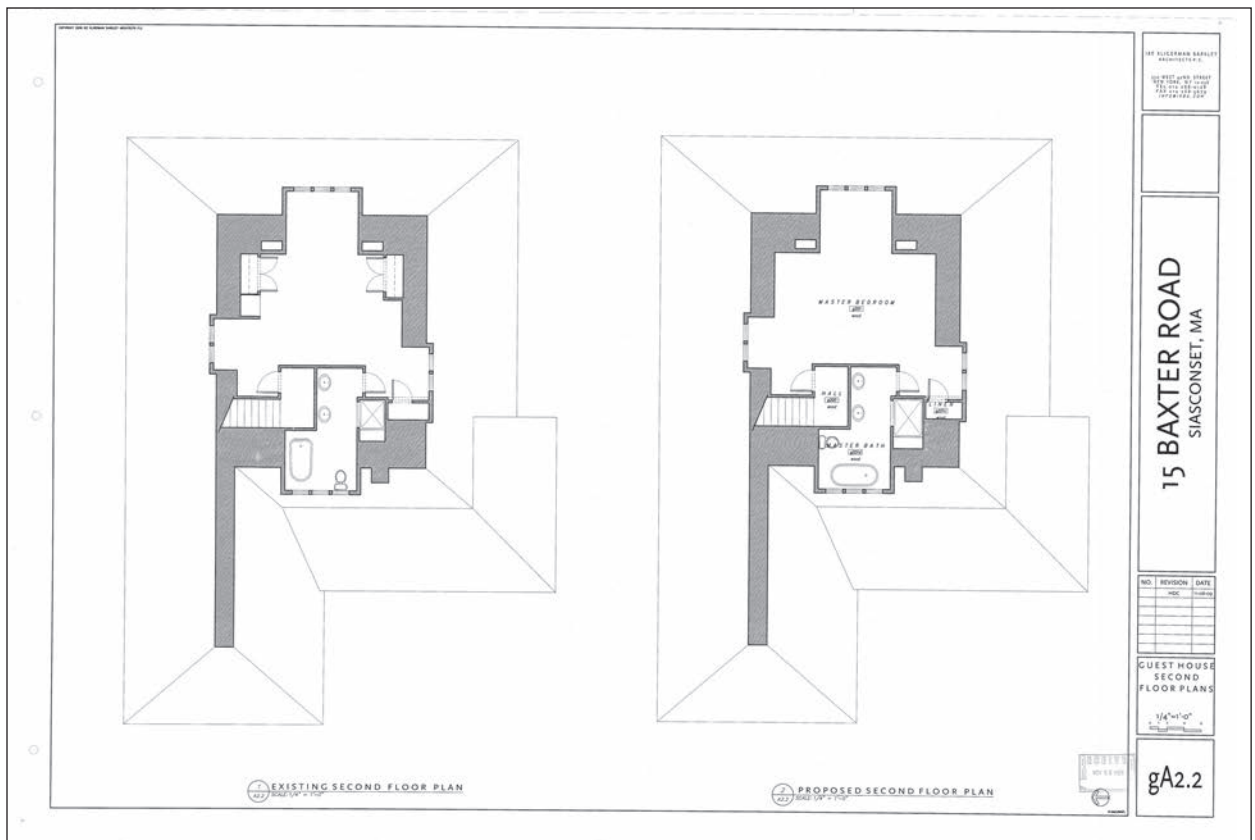
2009 Remodeling Plan: Demo First and Second Floor Plan



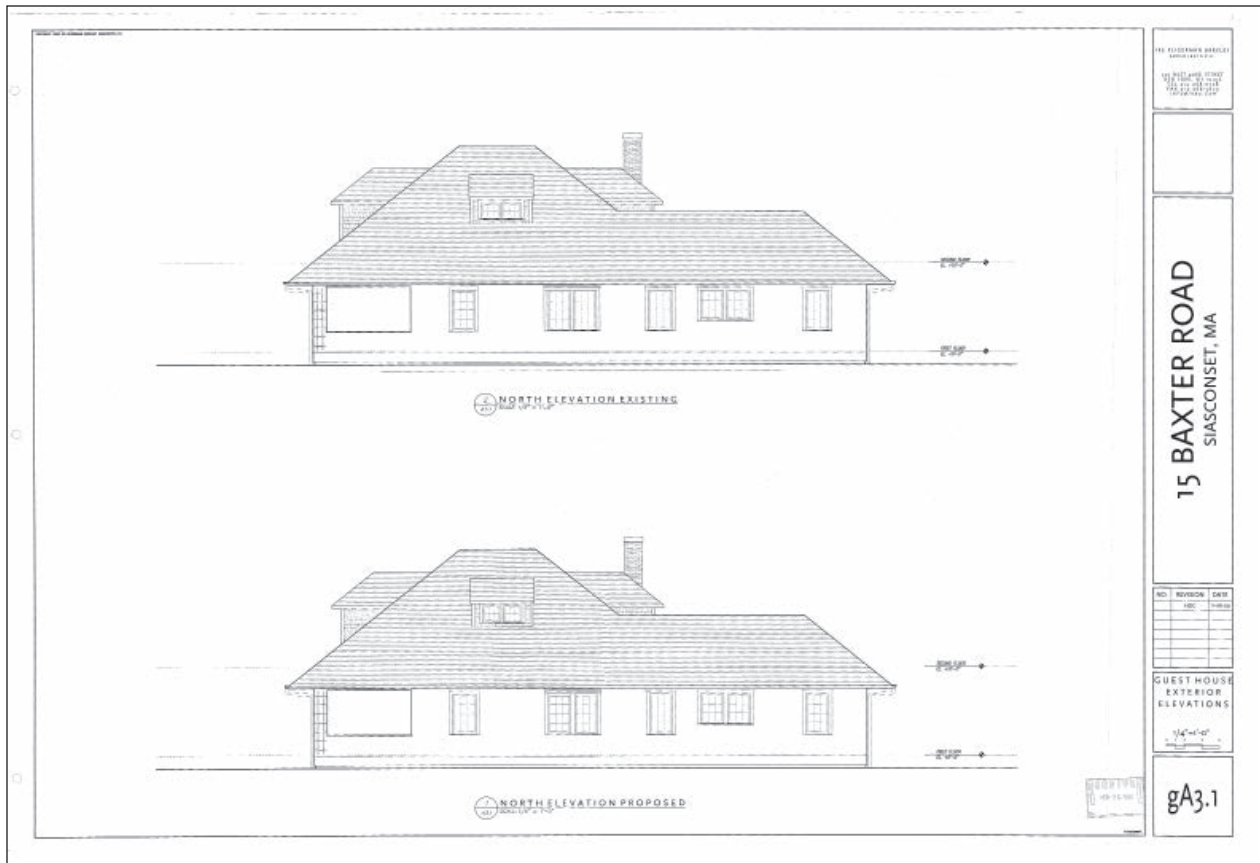
2009 Remodeling Plan: First and Second Floor Plan



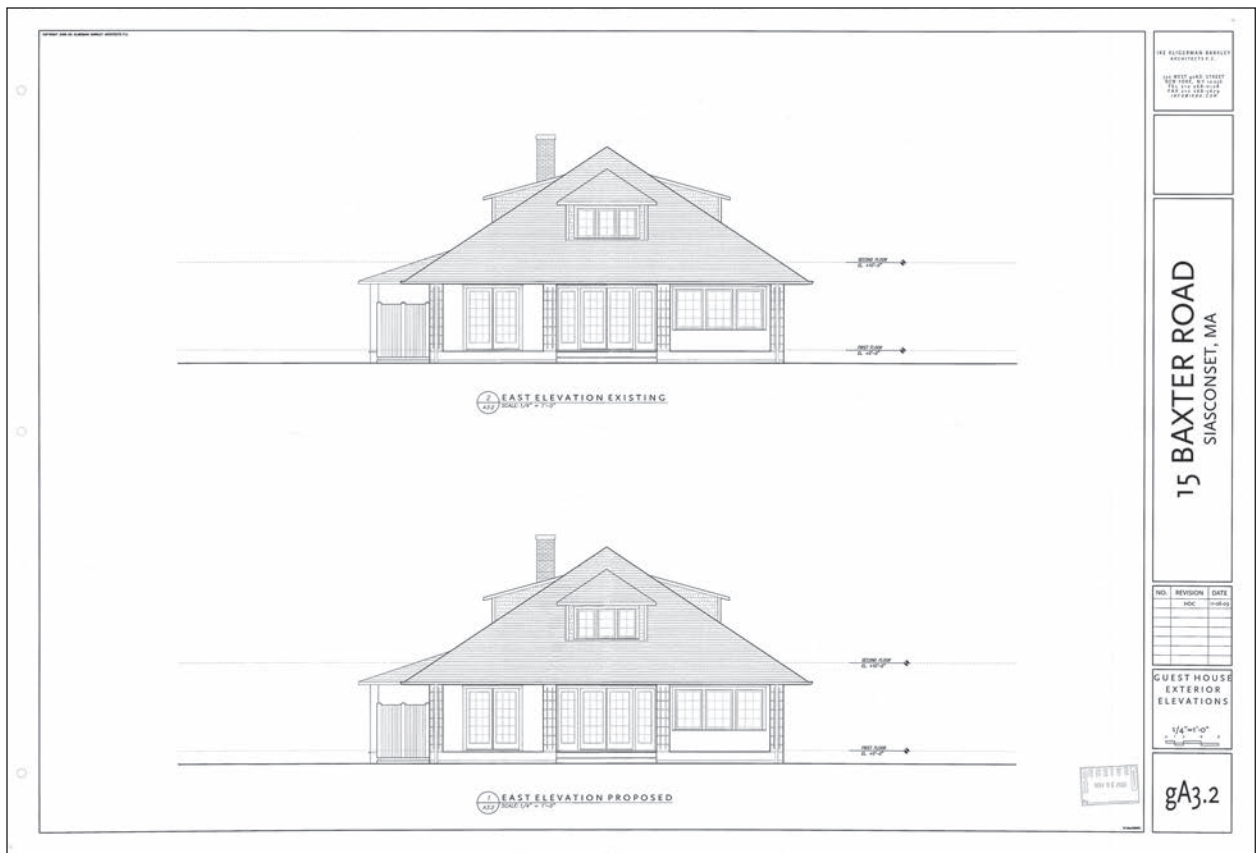
2009 Remodeling Plan: Existing and Proposed First Floor Plans



2009 Remodeling Plan: Existing and Proposed Second Floor Plans



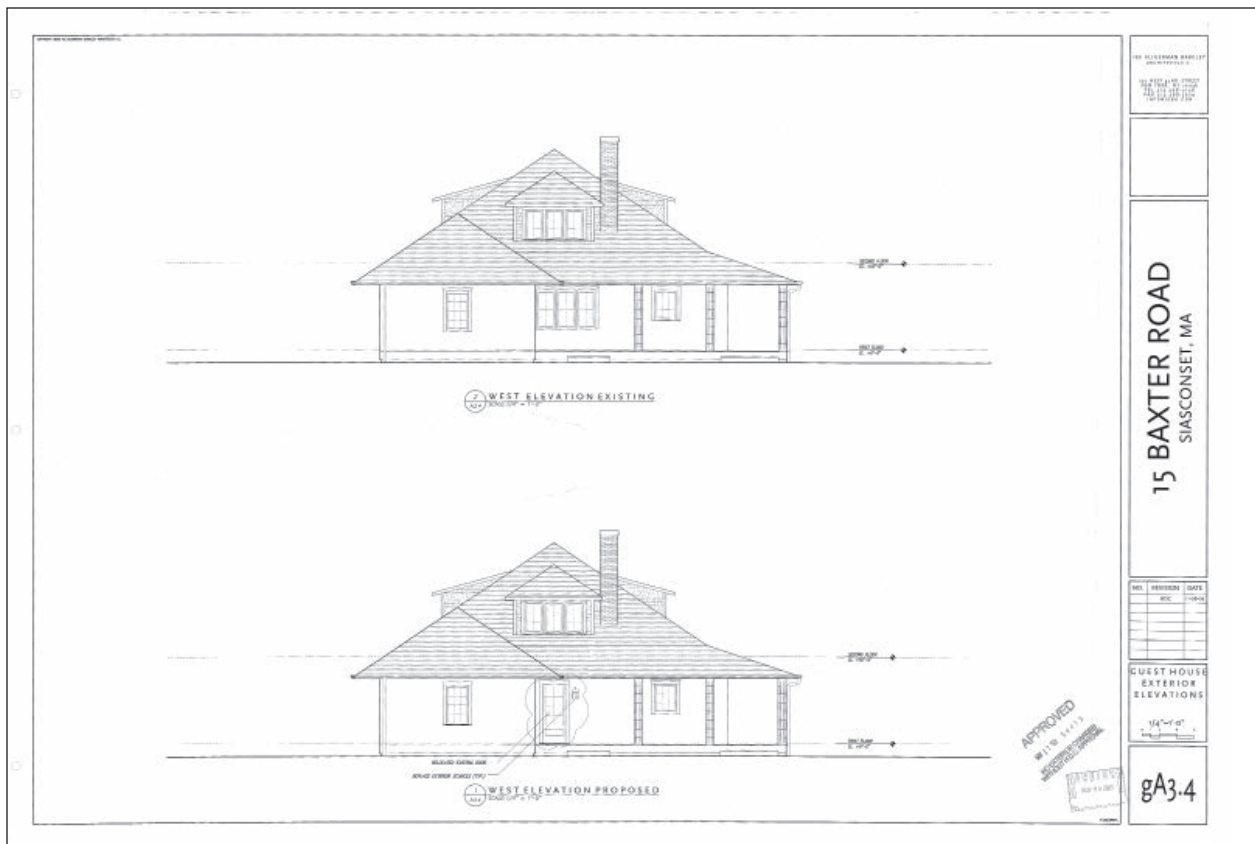
2009 Remodeling Plan: North Elevation Existing and Proposed



2009 Remodeling Plan: East Elevation Existing and Proposed



2009 Remodeling Plan: South Elevation Existing and Proposed



2009 Remodeling Plan: West Elevation Existing and Proposed



**6.3 Historical Photographs:** Courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association and the Collection of the Johnson Family Collection

NHA P15468: bluff view, 1930s

Nantucket Historic District Commission Survey Photo, 1989

John Austin Paintings, no date, Johnson Family Collection

NHA Aerial ap75-49



NHA P15468: 1930s distant view of the north elevation of 15 Baxter Road



Nantucket Historic District Commission Survey Photo, 1989, East & South Elevations



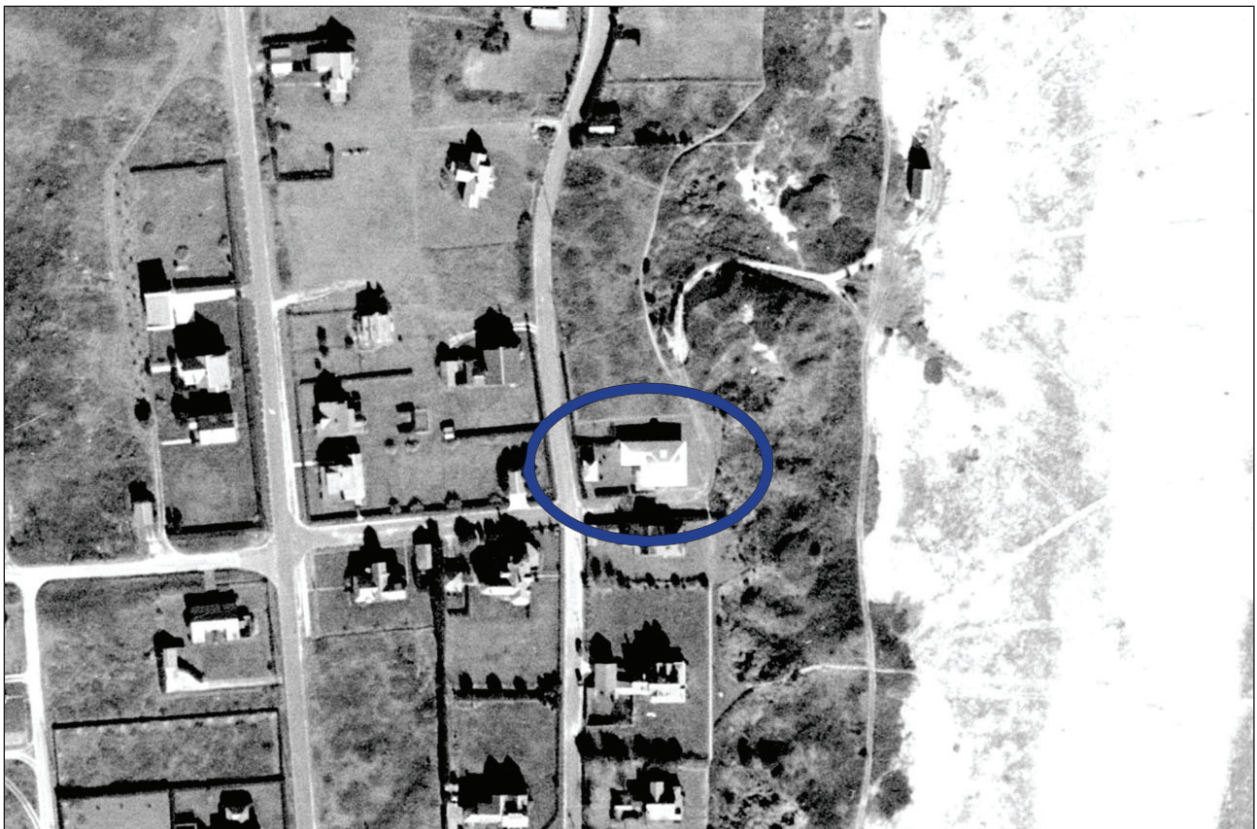


John Austin Paintings, no date, Johnson Family Collection, West and South Elevations





NHA Aerial ap75-49, 1949 Aerial Photograph



NHA Aerial ap1940-071, 1940 Aerial Photograph





NHA Aerial p8000, 1935 Aerial Photograph

6.4 Current Year 2020 Photographs

Exterior



South and West Elevations



Street/West Elevation





South and West Elevations



North Elevation





East and South Elevations



South Elevation

Interior



Entry Fireplace



Living Room





Kitchen and Dining Room



Dining Room



Staircase



Stair Newel Post



Garage



Garage/Art Studio



Garage/Art Studio



## 6.5 Chain of Title

NRD Book 67, p. 329: Robert B. Coffin to Kate F. Corbett, 1882

NRD Book 84, pp. 433-435: Kate Corbett to Dewitt H. Taylor and Alice A. Taylor, 1902

NRD Book 95, p. 324-26: Dewitt H. Taylor and Alice A. Taylor to Florence Augusta Craig, 1910.

Nantucket Probate No. 1381: Will of Florence Augusta Craig, 1915

NRD Book 116, p. 486-87: Clare C. Glazier to William S. Glazier, 1956

NRD Book 587, p. 156: William S. Glazier to William and Nadine Gibson, 1998

NRD Book 1203, p. 70: William and Nadine Gibson to Nikos Hecht, 2009

NRD Book 1304, p. 198: Nikos Hecht to Nikos Hecht, Trustee of Fifteen Baxter Road Nominee Trust, 2011

NRD Book 1405, p. 1: Nikos Hecht, Trustee, to J Squared Nantucket LLC, 2013