

**Architectural & Historical Report
for
3 Grand Avenue
Siasconset, Massachusetts**

March 12, 2020 Revised 7.5.23

Prepared by Marsha L. Fader, AIA Architect and 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.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: 'Sconset Trust, Inc. Preservation Easements

1. Summary and Project Scope	1
2. Statement of Significance	1
3. Historical Information	1
4. Architectural Information	2
4.1 Description	2
4.2 Alterations/Evolution	2
4.3 Character-Defining Features	3
4.4 Outbuildings	3
5. Property Information	3
5.1 Property Identification	3
5.2 Allowable Ground Cover	3
6. Building Department Records	4
7. Sources of Information	4
7.1 Published & Archival Resources	4
7.2 Historical Maps & Site Plans	5
7.3 Historical Aerial Photographs	10
7.4 Historical Photographs	12
7.5 Current Year 2020 Photographs	14
7.6 Chain of Title	21

1. SUMMARY AND PROJECT SCOPE

Built by Charles H. Robinson as The Ocean View House in 1876 in Siasconset, 3 Grand Avenue is a contributing resource within the Siasconset 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 report is to present the history of the structure at 3 Grand Avenue 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 historic maps and photographs of the property, an examination of the records on file at the town of Nantucket Registry of Deeds, Probate Court, Building Department 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

3 Grand Avenue, also known as the Ocean View House, is an excellent example of late 19th-century Victorian architecture. The style is best described as a simple hybrid of late 19th-century period styles including Shingle Style, Eastlake, and Queen Anne that were popular in the United States. Representative architectural elements for this hotel include its steeply-pitched roofs with decorative roof and porch brackets, 2-over-2 window sash, and roof overhangs. It is similar in style to 17 McKinley Avenue.

The original footprint and form of 3 Grand Avenue, the three floor plans, first floor fireplaces, door & window trim and hardware has survived nearly intact as an excellent representation of late 19th-century Victorian architecture.

3. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Assessor's map: 73.3.1 13.1

Built 1876 as part of the Ocean View House, by Charles H. Robinson

Remodeled as a summer home by Adeline Penrose, 1918

In 1872, visionaries Charles H. Robinson and Franklin A. Ellis purchased land at the end of Main Street, Siasconset, south of the gulley, and laid out a grand plan for a hotel and house lots for summer homes on the high bluff overlooking the ocean. They had the foresight to realize that the village of Siasconset, long a summer playground for Nantucketers, could become a resort for visitors from the continent. The only other accommodation for travelers to the east end of the island was the Atlantic House, built in 1848. Their small hotel, Ocean View House, built in 1873, was immediately successful, and was soon expanded with a second building constructed in 1876, in front of the existing building. The hotel and the new addition were built in the style of summer cottages of the period, with decorative gable bargeboards and porch supports, and lots of windows to open for cool breezes and ocean vistas. Ten years later, when the railroad was extended to 'Sconset, the large Ocean View Annex was built nearby on the bluff above the train station.

Siasconset quickly became a fashionable resort that appealed to those who wanted a remote escape featuring outdoor activities and a casual lifestyle. When the village was discovered by famous stage actors from Broadway and elsewhere in the late nineteenth century, it became the home of an actors' colony, with the Ocean View House acting as the central gathering place for the stars of the day. Many of the well-known actors who first stayed at the Ocean View House eventually built their own homes on the north bluff and on Morey Lane; lesser known thespians rented the Underhill cottages on Pochick, Evelyn, and Lily Streets near the hotel, and the Ocean View House continued to cater to the theater folk—actors, playwrights, producers, and others.

When seasonal travel to the island declined in the early twentieth century at the advent of WWI, the Ocean View House and Annex were sold by longtime proprietor Robert M. Powers to William F. Codd. (NRD Book 97, p. 309–11). He put the property on the auction block in the summer of 1918. The Ocean View House was sold to Adeline G. Penrose of Baltimore. (NRD Book 97, p. 434–35), while Powers sold the Ocean View

Annex to Harry L. Burrage, who razed it in 1919 and built the house at One Ocean Avenue in its place. The house at 3 Grand Avenue is a portion of the Ocean View House. According to Clay Lancaster in *Holiday Island: The Pageant of Nantucket's Hostelrys and Summer Life from Its Beginnings to the Mid-twentieth Century* (NHA, 1993, p. 163): "The second pavilion (1876) was moved southward on the lot and remodeled into a summer house, the balance demolished." The *Inquirer* and *Mirror* reported February 8, 1919: "the work of removing the old Ocean View House property at 'Sconset and remodeling the remainder of the structure is progressing rapidly, with Holmes & Company doing the work." Another brief report on October 23, 1920 stated: "The grounds of the C. B. Penrose estate are being laid out in fine style, and will hold their own in comparison to the adjacent Burrage estate."

Adeline Penrose and her husband, Charles B. Penrose, summered at 3 Grand Avenue for ten years. Inscriptions on historic photographs show that their cottage was called "The Corners." Adeline sold the property to Louise Hecker Fletcher of Detroit in 1928. Fletcher held the property until she died in 1960; her heirs sold it to Howard B. Gill and Isabelle V. Kendig of Maryland. Gill was a renowned prison reformer and professor and his wife, Isabelle Kendig, was a clinical psychologist. During the Gill ownership, the house was called "Road's End." The property changed hands several times in the 1980s before it was purchased by Robert M. Cochran in 1991. Cochran transferred the property to Three Grand Avenue Nominee Trust in 2006.

4. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

4.1 Description

The building at 3 Grand Avenue is a wood-framed, 2-1/2 story, shingled structure built in 1876 as The Ocean View House by Charles H. Robinson. It was built as a rectangular, gabled structure with bracketed roof overhangs, a central, flush dormer on the front (ocean/east) and rear (west), and a 3-sided, wrap-around open porch with bracketed support posts. The sign at the front dormer, from 19-century and current photographs reads, "Ocean View House".

The original structure included exterior, louvered shutters on all five (5) front 2-over-2 windows on the first and second floors, that were arranged slightly asymmetrically. Historic photographs show great detail for the east and north elevations of the hotel. See NHA photos GPN943, GPN2664, p21816. Historic maps and photographs also show additional hotel buildings as well as outdoor activities, horse & carriages, fencing, a decorative, free-standing entry portal, people gathered on the porch and porch roofs, and a flagpole mounted at the peak of the roof. All exterior trim, roof and porch brackets, and shutters were painted a darker color.

The north and south gable ends include a central grouping of three windows, with the central window being taller than the two side windows. The existing, central, first floor entry area has two 18-light doors: the southerly one leads into the stair hall and the north door leads into a large room with fireplace. The exterior includes a false door between the two doors in front of an interior, perpendicular wall.

The first floor plan includes several large rooms with fireplaces that may have served as reception rooms, an original wood stair with turned newel posts and railing, original doors and hardware, 2/2 window sash, and period window and door trim. There is a diamond-paned window in a first floor bedroom. In addition to the main stair running east-west, there are hallways on a north-south axis providing access to bedrooms. There is a second stair near the south end of the building leading to the second and third floors.

4.2 Alterations/Evolution

Changes occurred to the Ocean View House after it was sold in 1918. These changes may be seen in the historic photographs included with this report. The structure was moved slightly on the same lot and converted into a private residence with the following changes:

- the front & rear flush/facade dormers were altered to become the shed dormers that currently exist;
- a chimney appears near the roof ridge near the northern end;
- the first floor fireplaces, while they are historically-appropriate for the original 1876 construction

date, may have been added when it was converted to a private residence. Early photographs do not show a chimney in view.

- the roof overhang and brackets at the gable ends were removed. The front roof overhang was retained and altered to include a wood dentil design without the original brackets;
- the north and south sides of the porch were removed. A second floor front, shingled balcony was built with a 15-light door access from the stair hall. Trellis and railings were added. A trellised porch was added at the south which may have incorporated that portion of the original porch;
- single windows at the south front side of the first & second floors were altered to become double windows
- bathrooms were altered to include new fixtures, 1990;
- a new kitchen was installed, 1990;
- a bank of four (4) French doors at the first floor north side, were added;
- a multitude of changes in all wood floors is visible where boards were cut with care to match the existing wood;
- a wine room was added in a partial basement area with beadboard walls and ceiling;
- shutters were removed;
- all exterior trim was painted white;
- see NHA photos GPN943, GPN2664, p21816, a106-33f.[see pp 11-13]
- second and third level wood floors are substantially out-of-level with high areas following a central, north-south axis. This structural condition may be settlement originating from the deterioration of first floor sills.
- a garage was added in 1992 with a studio space and connection to the main house added in 1996.

4.3 Character-Defining Features

The original 1876 footprint and rectangular, 2-1/2-story form of the house has survived intact with ca. 1920s historically-appropriate changes. Character-defining features include:

1. Original plan of rooms;
2. Window and door trim with its hardware is all historically-appropriate. It is substantial in size and profile which suggests that it is original to the 1876 lodging house design;
3. Window sash 2-over-2;
4. Early, historically-appropriate fireplaces of brick and wood mantelpieces;
5. Original interior room plan (front portion only) and all finish materials as noted above;
6. Original interior stair including railings, newel posts, balusters, treads and risers;
7. Original Eastlake-style fireplaces: mantelpieces, hearths and brick chimneys.

There are two significant historical architectural periods represented in this house: the original 1876 and the 1920 renovation. Both historical periods are represented by substantial, surviving character-defining features.

4.4 Outbuildings

A one-story Garage was designed by Milton Rowland in 1991. It was built at the north end of the house.

5. PROPERTY INFORMATION

5.1 Property Identification: 3 Grand Avenue, Nantucket Assessor's Map: 73.3.1 13.1, .14 acres (6,307 square feet), zone SOH.

5.2 Allowable Ground Cover: The house footprint represents 90% of the allowable ground cover in the SOH (Sconset Old Historic).

6. BUILDING DEPARTMENT RECORDS

1990: application to renovate 1st floor kitchen, 2nd & 3rd floor baths, to single family dwelling
1992: plans for a garage addition and dormer on the east elevation, Milton Rowland & Assoc.
1996: application for construction of addition, garage, entry w/studio above and renovation
2001: replace dormer with gable, add roof walk
2013: new roof

7. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

7.1 Published and Archival Sources

Fader, Marsha L., AIA, & Betsy Tyler, Historian, *Architectural & Historical Report for 3 Grand Avenue*, March 12, 2020 Revised July 5, 2023. Full Report available at <https://www.sconsettrust.org>

Inquirer and Mirror: remodeling Ocean View House, 2/8/1919; grounds at Penrose estate, 10/23/1920

Lancaster, Clay. *Holiday Island: The Pageant of Nantucket's Hostelries and Summer Life from Its Beginnings to the Mid-twentieth Century*. Nantucket Historical Association, 1993.

Nantucket Journal: Ellis obituary, 5/29/1884.

Tyler, Betsy et al. *'Sconset, A History*. Nantucket Historical Association, 2008.

Tyler, Betsy. *The 'Sconset Actors Colony: Broadway Offshore, 1895-1925*. Nantucket Historical Association, 2011.

Bird's Eye View of the Town of Nantucket, State of Massachusetts, Looking southwest. Siasconset detail. 1881 [see p4]

Map of the Village of Siasconset on the Island of Nantucket, Massachusetts, by Harry Platt, 1888. E.T. Underhill and Co. [see p4]

Sanborn Insurance Company maps, 1898, 1904, 1909, 1923, 1949. [see p4]

Plan of Land of Charles H. Robinson at Siasconset, Nantucket, Mass., surveyed by W. F. Codd, Aug. 2, 1901. Nantucket Registry of Deeds, Plan Book 3, page 46.8. E. [see p5]

Land of Howard B. Gill, Oct. 12, 1974, Josiah S. Barrett, Registered Land Surveyor. Nantucket Registry of Deeds, Plan Book 18, page 149. [see p6]

Plan of Land in Nantucket, Massachusetts, prepared for Howard B. Gill, Aug. 30, 1981, Josiah S. Barrett. Nantucket Registry of Deeds, Plan Book 21, page 23.

Plan of Land in Nantucket, Massachusetts, prepared for Nantucket Building Co., July 12, 1982, Josiah S. Barrett. Nantucket Registry of Deeds, Plan Book 21, page 121.

Plan of Land in Nantucket, Ma, Nov. 10, 1986, prepared for Ocean Avenue Realty Trust, Hart-Blackwell & Assoc., Professional Land Surveyor. Nantucket Registry of Deeds, Plan Book 24, page 24.

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Mortgage Inspection Plan for Robert Cochran by Nantucket Surveyors, Inc., July 2, 1991.

Site Plan for Ocean View House by Milton Rowland and Associates, October 10, 1993.

As-Built Plan for Robert Cochran by Nantucket Surveyors, Inc., March 7, 1996.

7.2 Historical Maps & Site Plans

Bird's Eye View of the Town of Nantucket, State of Massachusetts, Looking southwest. Siasconset detail. 1881 [see p5]

Map of the Village of Siasconset on the Island of Nantucket, Massachusetts, by Harry Platt, 1888. E.T. Underhill and Co. [see p5]

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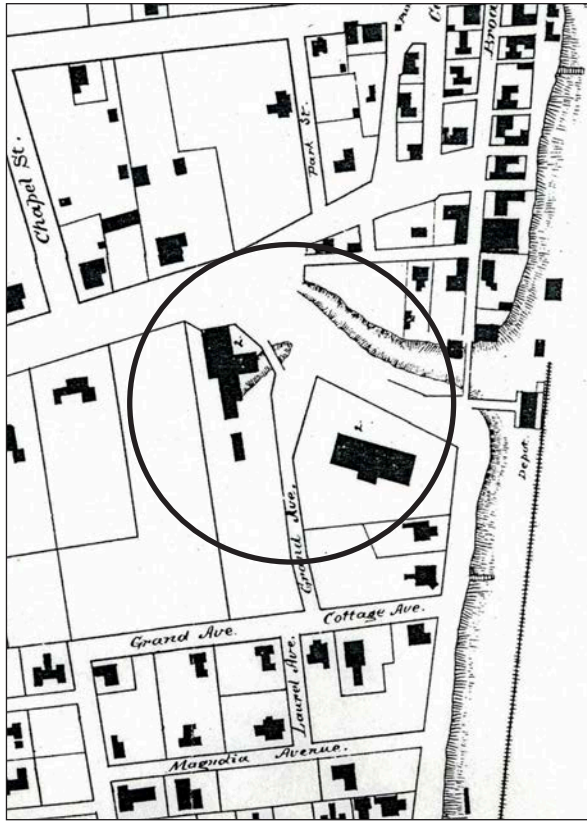
Plan of Land in Nantucket, Massachusetts, prepared for Nantucket Building Co., July 12, 1982, Josiah S. Barrett. Nantucket Registry of Deeds, Plan Book 21, page 121.

Plan of Land in Nantucket, Massachusetts, Nov. 10, 1986, prepared for Ocean Avenue Realty Trust, Hart-Blackwell & Assoc., Professional Land Surveyor. Nantucket Registry of Deeds, Plan Book 24, page 24.

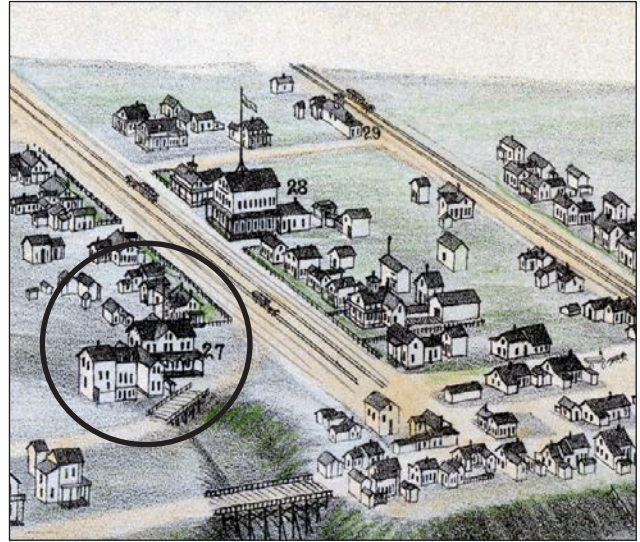
Mortgage Inspection Plan for Robert Cochran by Nantucket Surveyors, Inc., July 2, 1991. [see p7]

Site Plan for Ocean View House by Milton Rowland and Associates, October 10, 1993. [see p8]

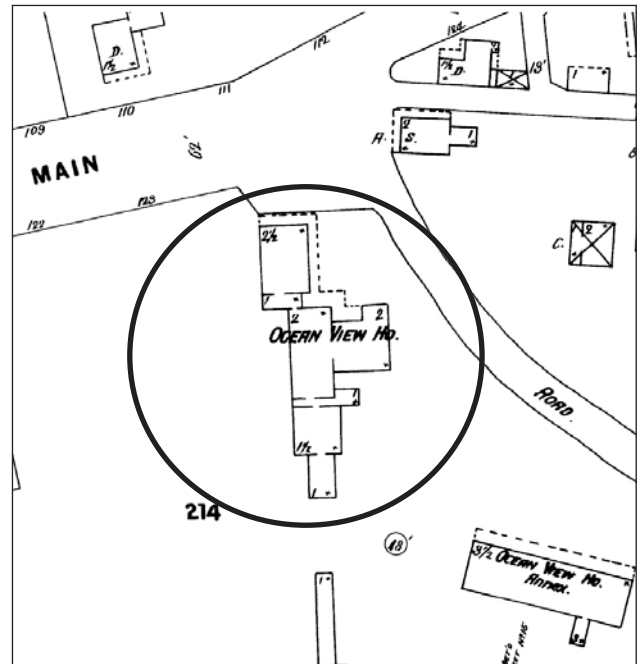
As-Built Plan for Robert Cochran by Nantucket Surveyors, Inc., March 7, 1996. [see p8]



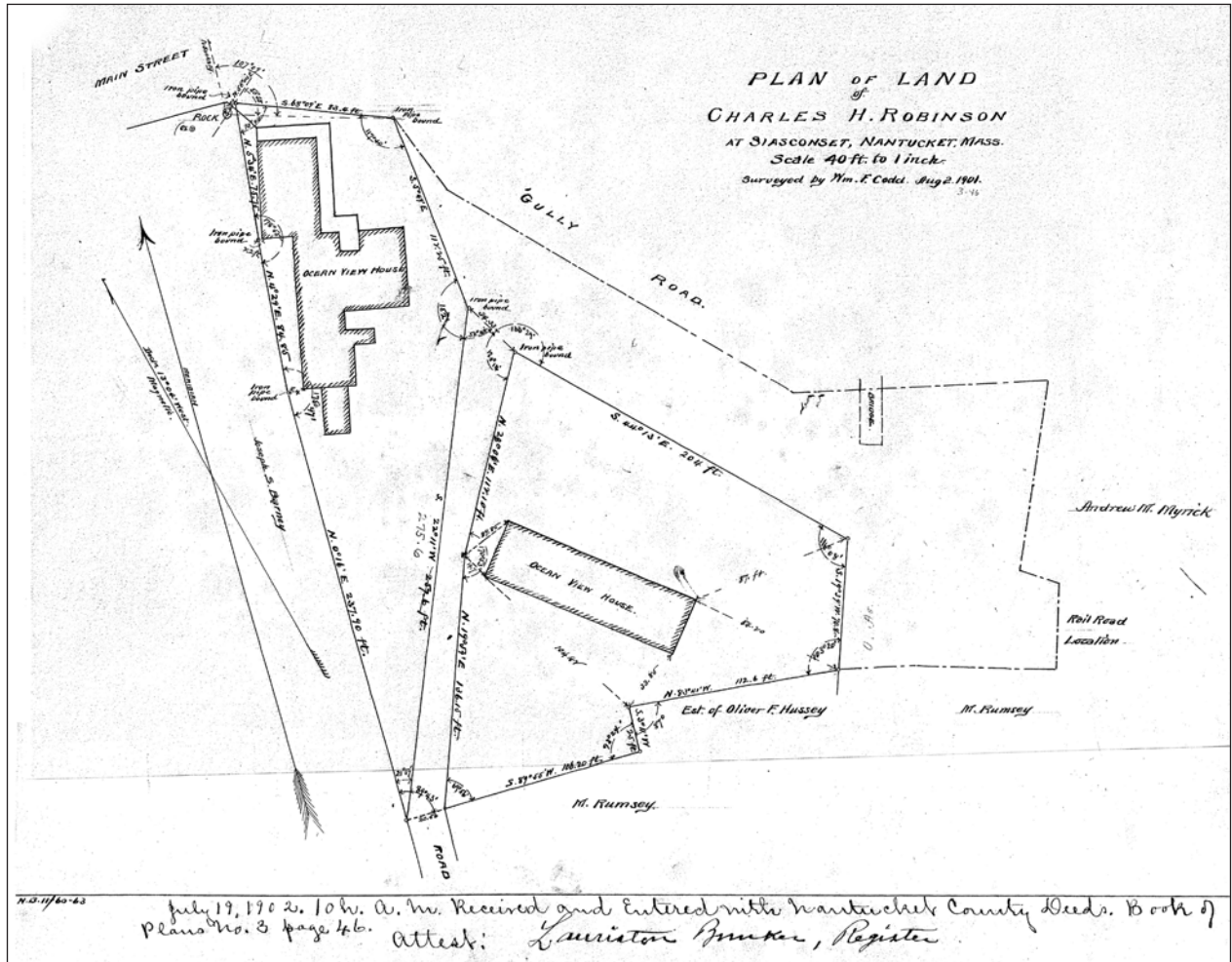
Harry Platt, Map of the Village of Siasconset, 1888



Bird's Eye View of the Town of Nantucket, State of Massachusetts, Siasconset detail. 1881
See map on report cover.

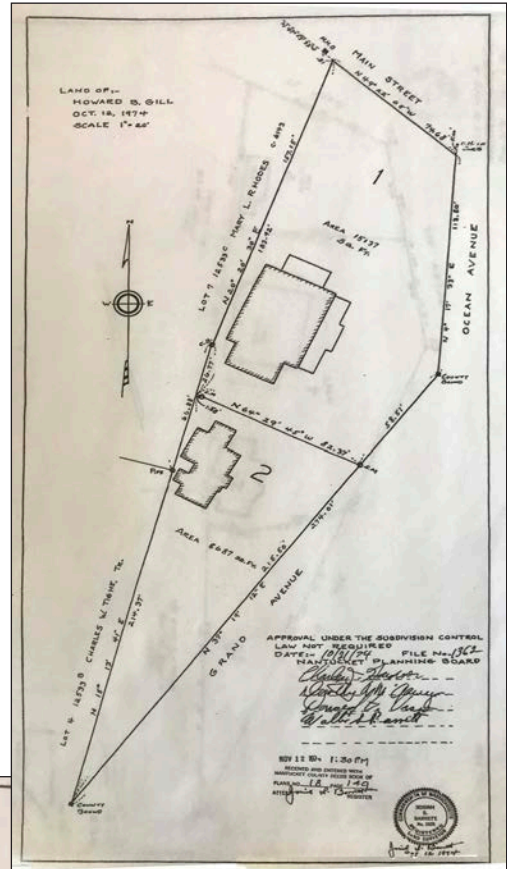


1898 Sanborn Insurance Company Map

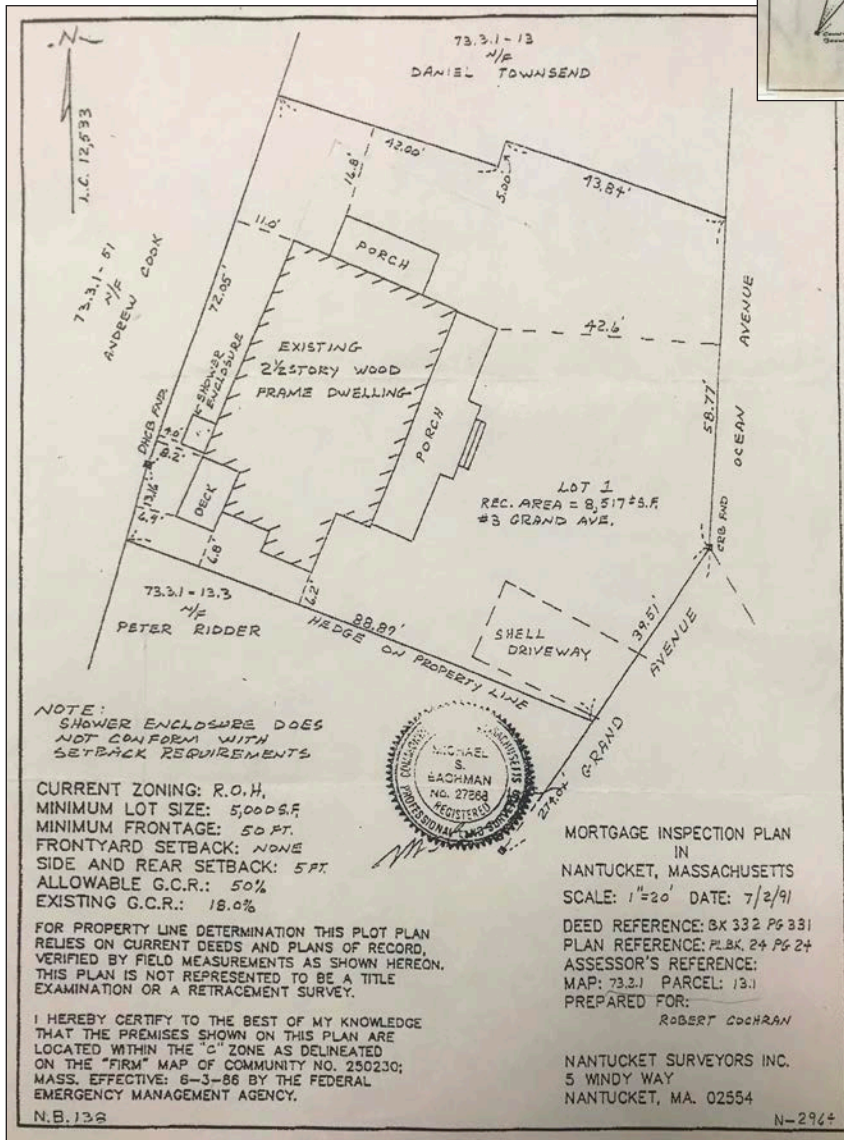


Plan of Land of Charles H. Robinson at Siasconset, Nantucket, Mass.,
 surveyed by W. F. Codd, Aug. 2, 1901.

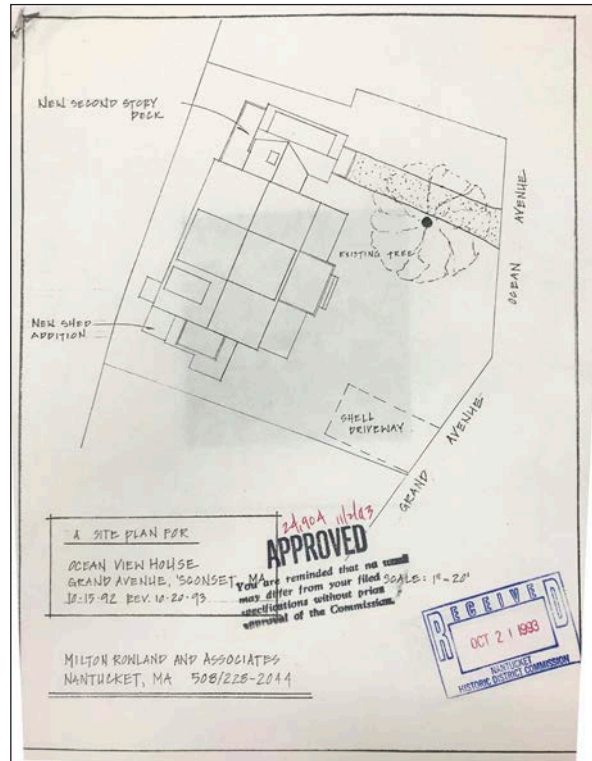
Land of Howard B. Gill, October 12, 1974,
 Josiah S. Barrett, Registered Land Surveyor.



Mortgage Inspection Plan for Robert Cochran,
 by Nantucket Surveyors, Inc., July 2, 1991.



Site Plan for Ocean View House,
by Milton Rowland and Associates, October 10, 1993.



As-Built Plan for Robert Cochran,
by Nantucket Surveyors, Inc., March 7, 1996.



7.3 Historical Aerial Photographs: Courtesy of Nantucket Historical Association



NHA_F4097 1926 Aerial Photo
The Ocean View House as a 20th-century residence including a garage.





NHA_PH23-46 ca. 1930s Aerial Photo
The Ocean View House as a 20th-century residence.



NHA_PH23-54 ca. 1930s Aerial Photo
The Ocean View House as a 20th-century residence
including a garage.



7.4 Historical Photographs: Courtesy of the Nantucket Historical Association



SG 2664, Ocean View House, 1880s (stereograph)



GPN 943, Ocean View House, 1890s



GPN 4149, Ocean View House and Annex, 1890s



A106-33f, Penrose Cottage, 3 Grand Avenue, 1920s



SC612-25, Penrose Cottage, 3 Grand Avenue, 1920s

7.5 Year 2020 Photographs



East / Street Elevation, 2020



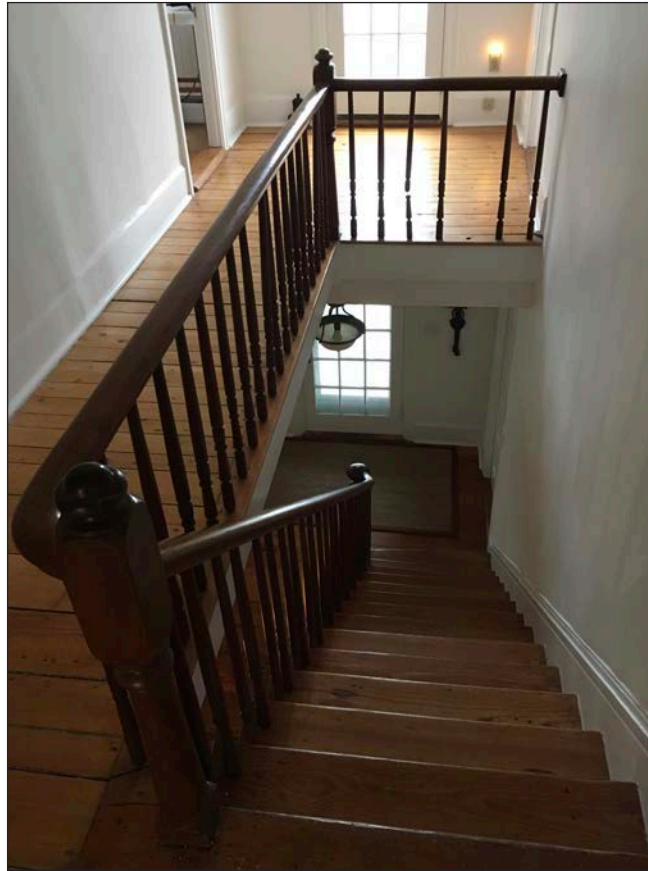
East / Street Elevation showing garage, 2020



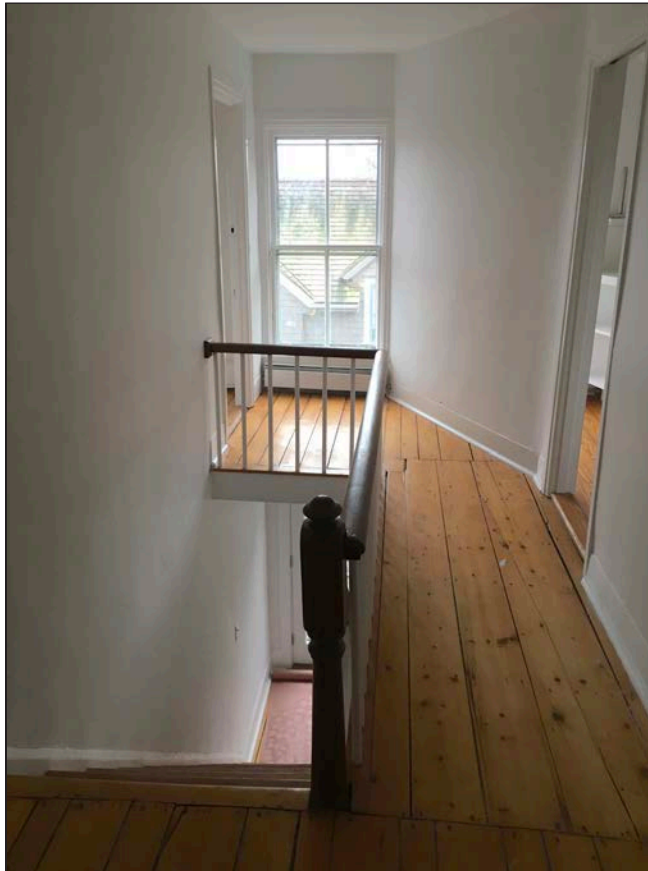
Front Northeast Room, 2020



Front Northeast Room, 2020



Front Center Stairwell, 2020



Hallway and Back Stair



Double Windows, 20th-century,
Second Floor, Southeast Bedroom, 2020



Gable Windows as seen in early photos,
see page 16, Third Floor , 2020



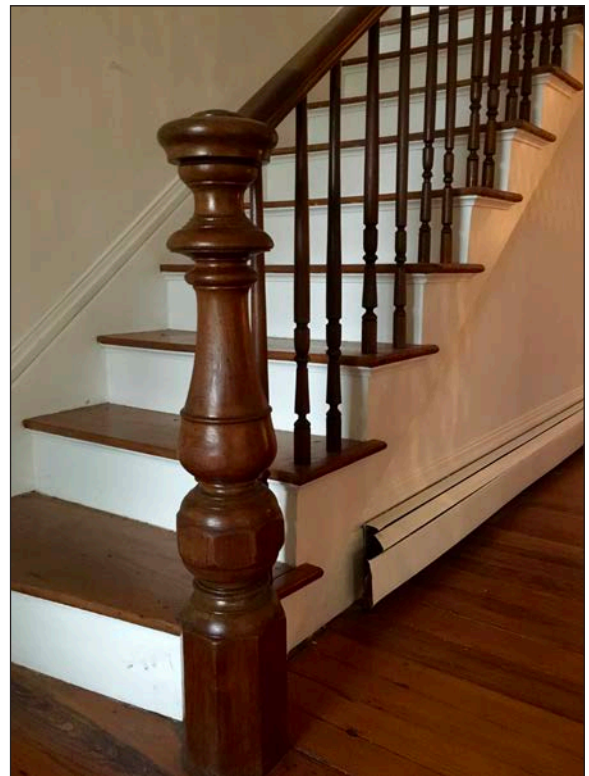
Porcelain Doorknob, 2020



Fireplace, Northwest Room, 2020



Historic Window Trim, 2020



Newel Post, Main Front Stair, 2020



Wine Room in Partial Basement, 2020



Wine Room in Partial Basement, 2020



Remodeled Kitchen, 2020



Northwest Room, non-historic French Doors, 2020

7.6 Chain of Title

From deeds recorded in the Nantucket Registry of Deeds (NRD)

NRD Book 62, pp. 182–83: Matthew Crosby to Charles H. Robinson and Franklin A. Ellis, 1872.
NRD Book 84, pp. 402–03: Charles H. Robinson to Robert M. Powers, 1902.
NRD Book 97, pp. 309–11: Robert M. Powers to William F. Codd, 1917.
NRD Book 97, pp.434–35: William F. Codd to Adelaide G. Penrose., 1918.
NRD Book 104, pp. 44–45: Adelaide Penrose to Louise H. Fletcher of Detroit, Michigan, 1928.
NRD Book 120, p. 407. Charles Fletcher, executor of the estate of Louise H. Fletcher, to Howard B. Gill and Isabelle V. Kendig, 1960.
NRD Book 186, p. 85. Howard B. Gill to William B. Flynn and Gail Giblin Flynn, 1981.
NRD Book 260, p. 298. Flynn to Ocean Avenue Realty Trust (Paul W. Bixby and Richard J. Glidden, Trustees), 1986.
NRD Book 332, p. 331. Trustees of Ocean Avenue Realty Trust to George D. Sloan, 1989.
NRD Book 368, p. 173. George D. Sloan to Robert M. Cochran, 1991. N
NRD Book 1024, p. 305. Robert M. Cochran to Lisa P. Soeder, Trustee, Three Grand Avenue Nominee Trust, 2006.