

Report to the London Advisory Committee on Heritage

To: Chair and Members
London Advisory Committee on Heritage
From: John M. Fleming
Managing Director, Planning and City Planner
Subject: Heritage Alteration Permit Application By: H. Virtue
841 Princess Avenue
Old East Heritage Conservation District
Meeting on: Wednesday May 9, 2018

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, with the advice of the Heritage Planner, the application under Section 42 of the *Ontario Heritage Act* to alter the porch of the building located at 841 Princess Avenue, within the Old East Heritage Conservation District, **BE PERMITTED** with the following terms and conditions:

- (a) The Heritage Planner be circulated on the applicant's Building Permit application drawings to verify compliance with the submitted design prior to issuance of the Building Permit;
- (b) All exposed wood be painted; and,
- (c) The Heritage Alteration Permit be displayed in a location visible from the street until the work is completed.

Executive Summary

Summary of Request

The property at 841 Princess Avenue was altered without obtaining Heritage Alteration Permit approval. This Heritage Alteration Permit application seeks to bring into compliance the removal of portions of the existing porch, and allow the construction of new porch balustrades and skirting which is in keeping with the heritage character of the Old East Heritage Conservation District.

Purpose and the Effect of Recommended Action

The purpose and effect of the recommended action is to ensure that a Heritage Alteration Permit is obtained – retroactively – for alterations to the existing porch, and that the replacement of porch balustrades and skirting is compatible with the heritage character of the Old East Heritage Conservation District through the application of terms and conditions.

Rationale of Recommended Action

Unapproved alterations to the porch are not compatible with the *Old East Heritage Conservation District – Conservation & Design Guidelines*. The proposed replacement balustrades and skirting for the porch are compatible.

Analysis

1.0 Background

1.1 Property Location

The property at 841 Princess Avenue is located on the south side of Princess Avenue between English and Ontario Streets (Appendix A).

1.2 Cultural Heritage Status

The property at 841 Princess Avenue is located within the Old East Heritage Conservation District, which was designated under Part V of the *Ontario Heritage Act* on September 10, 2006. The property at 841 Princess Avenue is a contributing resource to the District.

1.3 Description

The cultural heritage resource located at 841 Princess Avenue is a one-and-a-half storey brick dwelling (Appendix B). The dwelling was constructed in 1908, and is a prevalent typological style found in Old East, particularly within this portion of Princess Avenue. Variations in the original typology exist among Princess Avenue properties and can be seen in alternative column profiles and palette selection of brick colouring and detailing.

The porch located at 841 Princess Avenue has a roof sloped towards the street and decorative end gable facing the street. The porch has wood, tongue and groove floor decking. The porch structure is composed of round wood columns set on three, rusticated cast concrete block piers; there is a capstone atop the concrete piers on which the columns rest. Prior to removal, a metal railing system was affixed at the capstone height and a painted wood lattice porch skirt wrapped the base of the porch.

2.0 Legislative/Policy Framework

The *Provincial Policy Statement* (2014) states that “significant built heritage resources and significant cultural heritage landscapes shall be conserved.” The *Official Plan* (1989, as amended)/*The London Plan* (approved 2016) provides policies that cultural heritage resources will be conserved and protected.

2.1 Ontario Heritage Act

A Heritage Alteration Permit is required to make alterations to a property within a Heritage Conservation District. Per Section 41.1(5.e) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the *Old East Heritage Conservation District – Conservation Plan* has defined “porch/verandah replacement, removal or addition” as a class of alteration requiring Heritage Alteration Permit approval (p.7.2). As the alterations were undertaken prior to obtaining Heritage Alteration Permit approval, this application met the Conditions for Referral defined within the Delegated Authority By-law (By-law No. C.P.-1502-129), thus requiring consultation with the London Advisory Committee on Heritage (LACH) and a decision by Municipal Council.

The *Ontario Heritage Act* enables municipalities to give the applicant:

- a) The permit applied for;
- b) Notice that the council is refusing the application for the permit; or,
- c) The permit applied for, with terms and conditions attached (Section 42(4), Ontario Heritage Act).

Municipal Council must respond within 90 days after receipt of a demolition request and/or Heritage Alteration Permit application (Section 42(4), *Ontario Heritage Act*).

2.2 Old East Heritage Conservation District – Conservation & Design Guidelines

The number of surviving porches in Old East is one of the most distinctive features of the District, and contributes to its appearance and overall visual character. Preservation and restoration of the design and detail of front porches and verandahs is a high priority for the heritage conservation district (*OE HCD Conservation & Design Guidelines*, pp2.2, 3.30).

Design guidelines for alterations are outlined in Section 4.3 of the *Old East Heritage Conservation District – Conservation & District Guidelines (OE HCD Guidelines)*. Guidelines emphasize that “alterations to the street facing façades of buildings [...] have the potential to dramatically affect the appearance of not only the building itself, but the entire streetscape” (p4.4). Guidelines also stress restoring, rather than replacement, of significant features such as doors, windows, porches, and decorative trim. Further, alterations to porches should complement the original dwelling and incorporate appropriate materials and components that are similar to what was found in the original porch (such as railing, column, baluster details and porch skirting). Similar properties sharing the same typology (i.e. same age, design, builder) can be used as evidence of what were likely original details for reconstruction purposes.

Section 3.7 of the *OE HCD Guidelines* provides direction on the conservation of porches. Guidelines discourage the removal or substantial alteration of existing porches in their size, shape, and design, as well as removing or covering original porches or porch details. Guidelines state,

[w]hen restoring a porch that is either intact or completely demolished, some research should be undertaken to determine the original design which may have been much different from its current condition and decide whether to restore the original.

Finally, guidelines recommend the use of wood, while discouraging fiberglass and plastic versions or imitations, along with painting to protect the finished product.

3.0 Heritage Alteration Permit Application

As required by the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the *OE HCD Guidelines* identify classes of alterations that require, or do not require, Heritage Alteration Permit approval. Porch/verandah replacement, removal or addition with different materials, size, and design requires Heritage Alteration Permit approval. Unapproved removal and alterations to the porch at 841 Princess Avenue were made before February 26, 2018. A complaint from the community brought this unapproved alteration to the attention of the City, and enforcement action ensued.

A Heritage Alteration Permit application was submitted by the property owner and received on April 20, 2018. The property owner has applied for a Heritage Alteration Permit to:

- Bring into compliance – with the *Ontario Heritage Act* and policies of the *OE HCD Guidelines* – removal of the following portions of the existing porch:
 - Metal railings;
 - Porch skirting; and,
 - Aluminum cladding encasing original columns, decorative porch gable end and fascia and beam.
- Retain, repair and paint now exposed:
 - Rounded columns; and,
 - Dentil moulding and detailing on porch gable end and fascia and beam.

- Replace the following to be compliant with policies of the *OE HCD Guidelines*, and based on submitted drawings and illustrated samples:
 - New wood porch skirting to match skirting (see Image 7, Appendix B); and,
 - New balustrades with the following details (see Image 9, Appendix B):
 - Wood material;
 - Painted finish;
 - Turned wood newel posts; and,
 - Decorative wood spindles set between a top and bottom rail at a height to tie into the existing capstone.

Per Section 42(4) of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, the 90-day timeline for the Heritage Alteration Permit application will expire on July 19, 2018.

4.0 Analysis

Although the removal of portions of the existing porch was completed without Heritage Alteration Permit approval, the intention of the applicant has been to retain and restore as many original features of the porch as possible. The removal of aluminum cladding encasing porch features has exposed original columns with capital and base detailing intact, dentil fascia detailing and porch gable millwork. These features, in particular, will be the focus of repair and restoration efforts.

The metal porch rail that was removed was not original nor compatible with the typology of the dwelling at 841 Princess Avenue; its retention is not being sought. There is no historic documentation (e.g. historic photographs) to accurately identify historic precedence or the 'authentic limits' for constructing a new balustrade and porch skirting, so a compatibility review with neighbouring dwellings was completed. Based on a review of properties on Princess Avenue with the same typology, it seems likely that the original balustrade was composed of decorative turned wood spindles set widely between a top and bottom rail (Image 6). The original porch skirting was likely a decorative panel-style, similar to skirting illustrated in Image 6 & 7. The applicant will be constructing a similar balustrade and porch skirting (Image 7 & 8). The historic railing height will be retained to align with the capstone of the cast concrete piers. Spindles will be spaced no more than 4" on centre (Image 9).

5.0 Conclusion

Portions of the porch at 841 Princess Avenue, a contributing resource in the Old East Heritage Conservation District, were removed without a Building Permit or a Heritage Alteration Permit. The construction of new porch balustrades and skirting, the repair and restoration of original columns and porch detailing and painting of all exposed wood, will bring into compliance unapproved alterations with the *Old East Heritage Conservation District – Conservation & Design Guidelines*.

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Submitted by:	Gregg Barrett, AICP Manager, Long Range Planning and Research
Recommended by:	John M. Fleming, MCIP, RPP Managing Director, Planning and City Planner

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Appendix A – Map

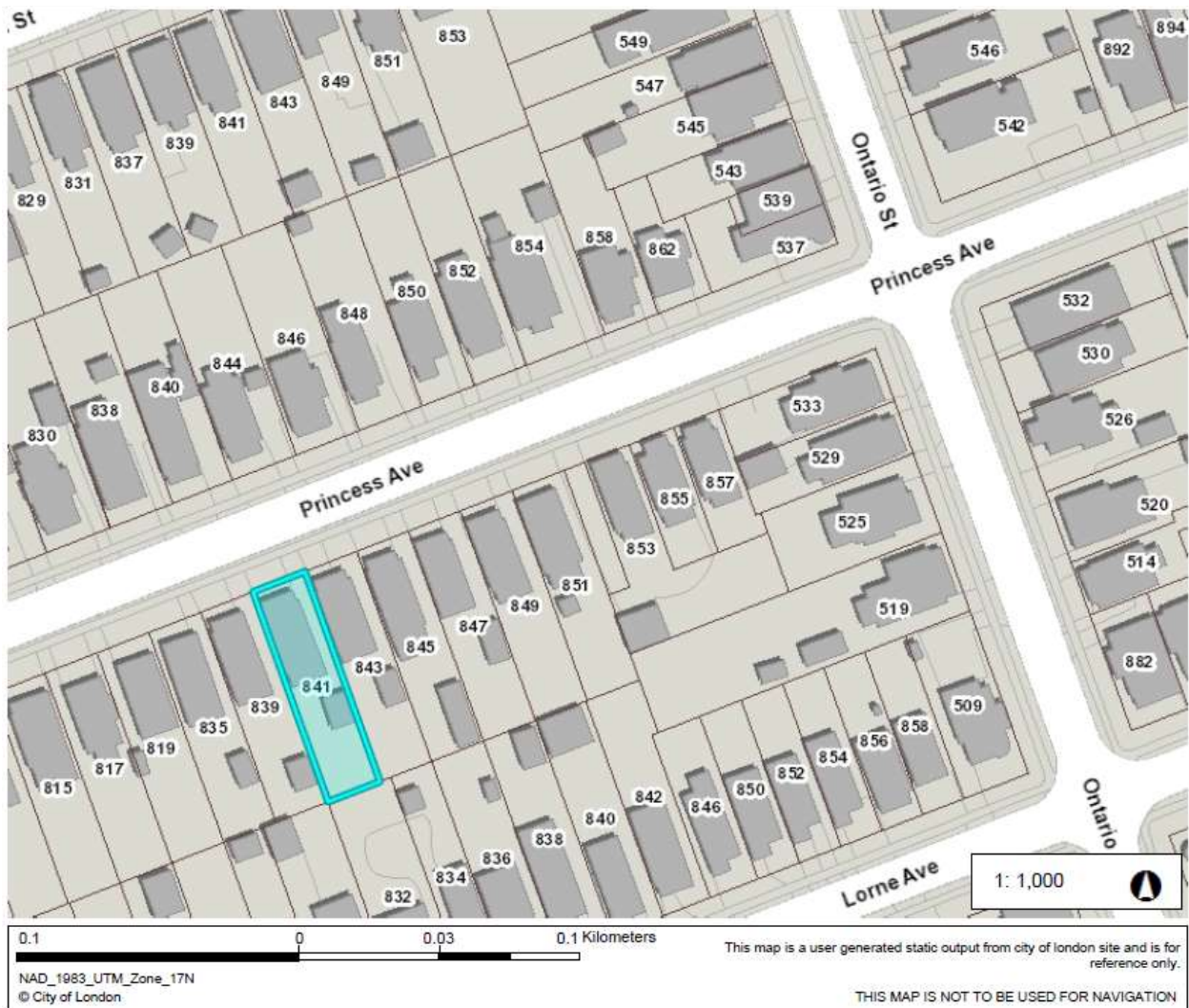


Figure 1: Property location of 841 Princess Avenue

Appendix B – Images



Image 1: View of the property located at 841 Princess Avenue – prior to alterations to front porch (2014, Google Maps)



Image 2: View of the property located at 841 Princess Avenue after removal of portions of the existing porch (March 5, 2018; by applicant)



Image 3: Streetscape groupings (845 to 853 Princess Avenue); same typology found at 841 Princess (Old East Heritage Conservation District Study, p41)

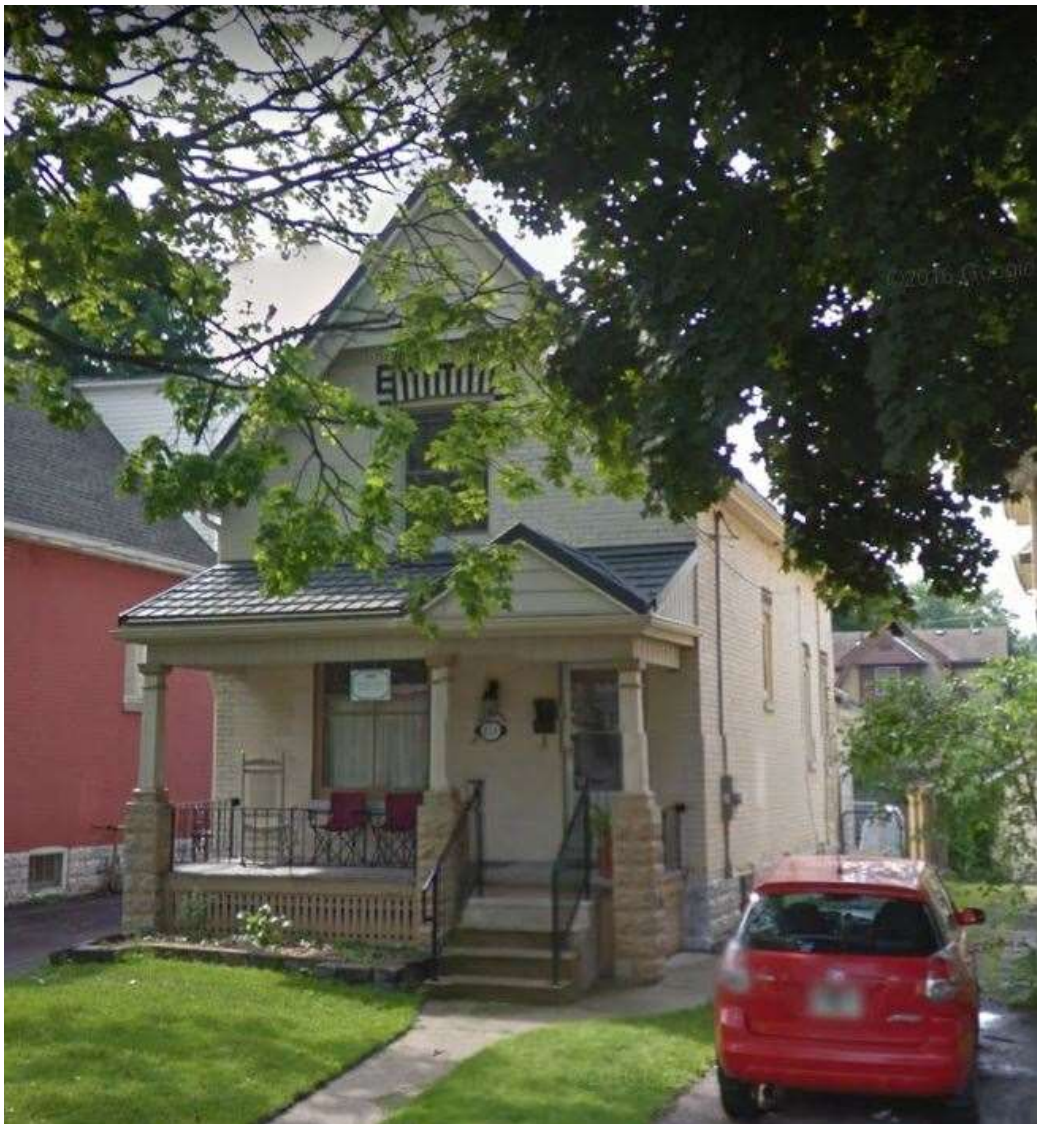


Image 4: View of the property located at 839 Princess Avenue – same typology with square columns and iron railing replacement (April 6, 2018)



Image 5: View of the property located at 857 Princess Avenue – same typology with round columns and original spindles (April 6, 2018)



Image 6: Detail of balustrade of porch of the building at 857 Princess Avenue; height of balustrade ties into capstone of the cast concrete piers



Image 7: Detail of balustrade of porch of the building at 846 Princess Avenue; height of balustrade ties into capstone of the cast concrete piers



Image 8: Selected sample (shown in white) indicating wood posts and correlating spindles

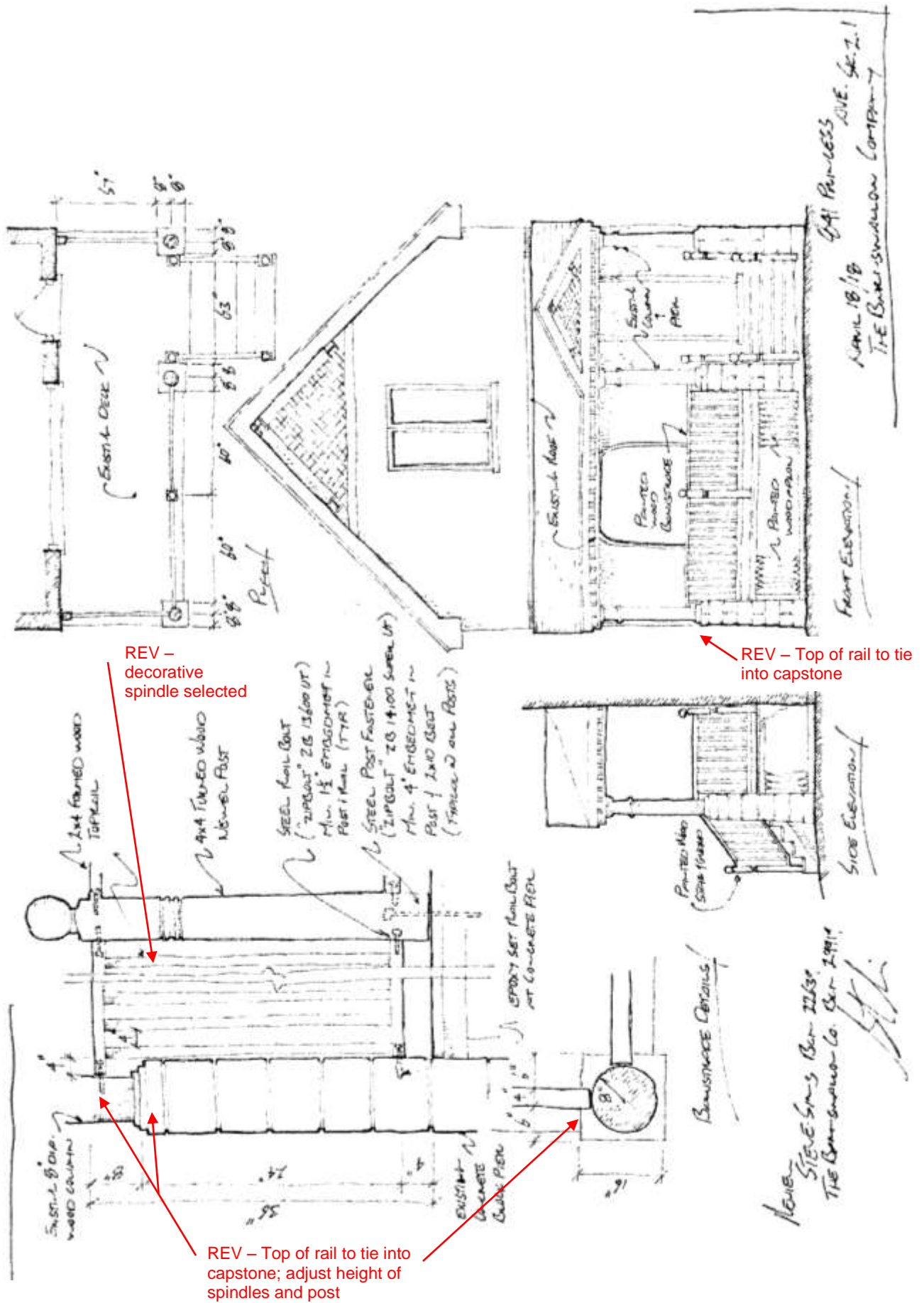


Image 9: Detail of porch and porch balustrades with revisions noted