



**City of Biddeford
Historic Preservation Commission**

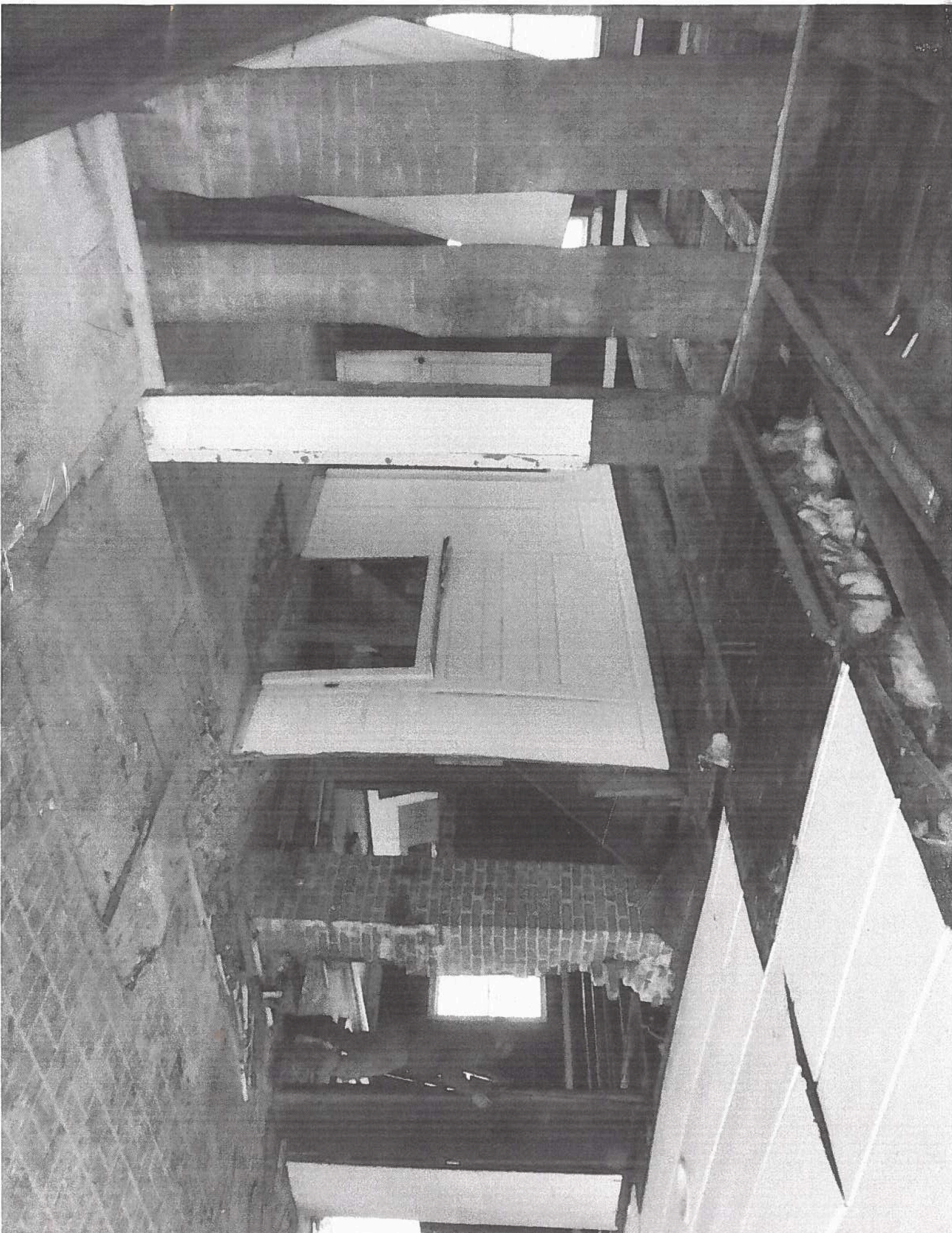
June 24, 2026 at 5:00 PM

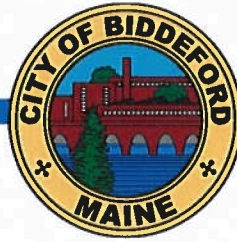
Mayor's Office & Teams

[Special Meeting of the Historic Preservation Commission-John Tarr
House | Meeting-Join | Microsoft Teams](#)

1. Declaration of Quorum
2. John Tarr House-29 Ferry Road (Tax Map 49, Lot 4)
 - 2.a Recap of May 13, 2026, Site Walk of Property
 - 2.b Review—NRHP Request for Removal
 - i. Reason for Original Listing-1980
 - ii. Reason for Recommendation for Removal
 - 2.c Discussion-Craft Response to MHPC Concerns from April 2
 - 2.d Further Action, if any
3. Adjourn







April 22, 2026

Mr. Kirk F. Mohney
Director and State Historic Preservation Officer
10 Water Street
65 State House Station
Hallowell ME 04347

Dear Mr. Mohney,

The Biddeford Historic Preservation Commission has reviewed the documents regarding the removal of the John Tarr House (29 Ferry Lane, Biddeford, Tax Map 49 Lot 4) from the National Register of Historic Places and does not concur with the evaluation made by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission for the removal of this resource from the Register.

The Tarr House is one of Maine's oldest surviving structures and is evidence of Biddeford's colonial history. The Biddeford HPC has examined the evidence and found the property does not meet the following criterion for removal from the Register:

The property has ceased to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register because the qualities which caused it to be originally listed have been lost or destroyed, or such qualities were lost subsequent to nomination and prior to listing;

The action to remove this property from the National Register of Historic Places was discussed at the March 11, 2026, and April 8, 2026, meetings of the Biddeford Historic Preservation Commission. The commission found statements made by contractor Jeremie Berube compelling and unanimously voted in favor of the following motion:

"Motion not to endorse the removal of the house at 29 Ferry Lane from the National Register of Historic Places based on documented evidence as presented by contractor Jeremie Berube of Arundel, Maine."

For example, The National Register of Historic Places Continuation sheet states that one reason for removal from the NRHP is that the structure was moved from its original foundation. This, according to Mr. Berube, is not correct. As demonstrated by Mr. Berube, the north-facing ell was cut back from the main house, giving only the appearance that the main house was moved.

Further, Mr. Berube presented evidence that other changes to the appearance of the house were based on pictorial evidence or evidence discovered during the course of dismantling the house. For example, a door was relocated to the west side of the house based on evidence in the framing and sheathing, as well as drawings made during the 1930s by Maine architect and historian William E. Barry. Mr. Berube also presented to the HPC field drawings and photographs made during the dismantling process that indicate his team systematically documented sheathing, wood trim, paneling, etc. with a numbering system. Materials that have not yet been reassembled are located at the property.



This project was stopped due to the owner's sudden death, and the Biddeford Planning and Development Department received a letter dated March 10, 2026, from the estate of the Owner of Record stating the intention to continue the work begun by Mr. Berube.

Removing this resource from the Register would be a loss for the Biddeford Historic Preservation Commission, actual as well as symbolic, as it diminishes the perception of preservation efforts here. While this commission works hard to maintain the character of the historic downtown core in Biddeford, this property, nearer to the coastal neighborhoods of Biddeford, was deconstructed without HPC oversight and the City is working to improve permit coordination. The removal of the Tarr House from the NRHP is a real upset for our commission and the community.

From a planning perspective, this action may result in additional sprawl here in Biddeford. The area of the lot on which the house is situated is 3.5 acres and fronts the Saco River. The house is in the Suburban Residential (SR) zone, which prioritizes larger homes on large lots. With the removal of the Tarr House from the National Register, such a desirable site will likely be placed under additional pressure by developers to demolish the existing structures to construct new single-family home(s), intensifying sprawl here in Biddeford. Potential redevelopment of the site would also create environmental impacts, whether by increased construction waste, or by increasing the overall energy used in Biddeford.

Aside from the loss of potential Federal and Maine State tax credits, because of the house's location approximately three miles from downtown Biddeford, there would likely be no noticeable economic development ramifications to this action, except to possibly exacerbate ongoing gentrification Biddeford is now experiencing.

No one from the public stepped forward to provide comments on this matter at either of the two meetings where it was discussed. However, it is the contention of the Biddeford Historic Preservation Commission that the John Tarr House remains on the National Register of Historic Places.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brad Favreau".

Brad Favreau, Staff Liaison for
The Biddeford Historic Preservation Commission



Notes and Observations on the Restoration of 29 Ferry Lane, Biddeford, ME (John Tarr House)

The Door to the Rear

1. Newer sawn lathe around side door
 2. Mortise pockets at side door originally narrower in width. Same width as windows everywhere else.
 3. Original, missing walls from tavern room to hallway, the swinging wall and door
 4. Ceiling boards in the hallway are shorter in length, not matching longer tavern ceiling boards
 5. Small mortise in upper plate beam cut for ceiling plank (photo) which anchors the wall to the hallway across from the swinging wall
 7. Shadow, gray lines on exterior wall boards showing long marks
 8. A granite step was found 8 inches under the soil (under door)
 9. September 24, 1931 - A William Barry (1846-1932 important architect and historian) drawing in tavern room, showing outer back door, end of hallway and just outside swinging wall, "The Smoking Gun".
 10. **The rear door matches the original floor plan perfectly.**
-

The Center Chimney, Location and Size

1. All 3 original fireplace mantles are still in place
 2. The large stone base still in place
 3. The complete brick base is still in place
 4. The fireplace outlines in original brick were still in place
 5. Beams frame the opening to 2nd floor
 6. The original roof boards are spaced for the chimney size through roof
 7. The original ridge pole is spaced for the chimney size
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The Ell

1. The ell was cut back from the original house because it was rotten. This section could be rebuilt with vintage material.
 2. The main house is on the original foundation and has not been moved.
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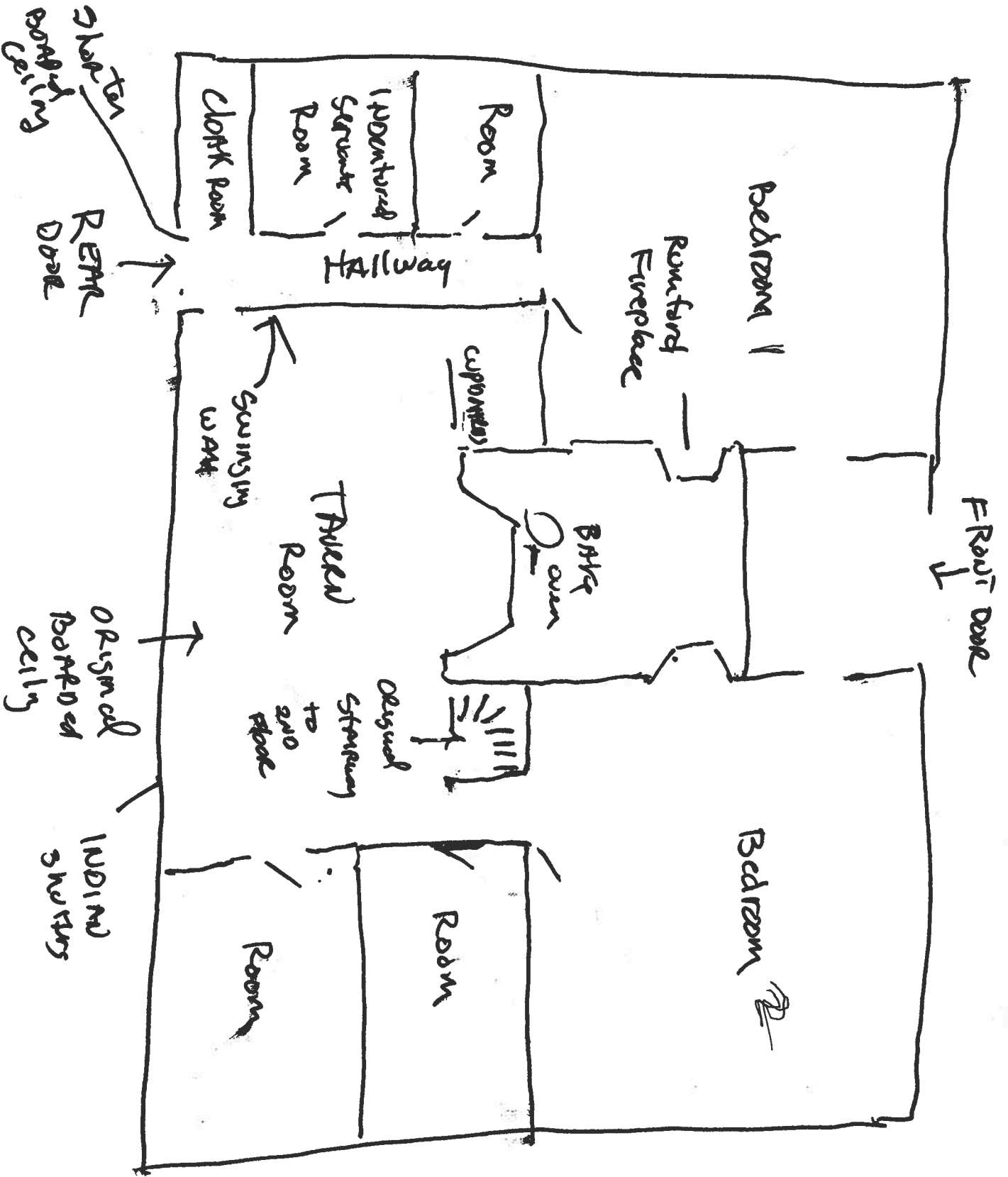
The Stone Foundation

1. The stone foundation is original and has not been moved.
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The door to the rear, the swinging wall, the large center chimney (replaced with small chimney), and side door added, were probably all changed around 1890 or 1900 when the new ell (present ell) was constructed.

The interior paneled walls, the tavern room ceiling, Indian shutters, and other trim were all labeled, photographed, and meticulously removed. They are not damaged, lost, or destroyed. Each is safely stored in the building awaiting being put back

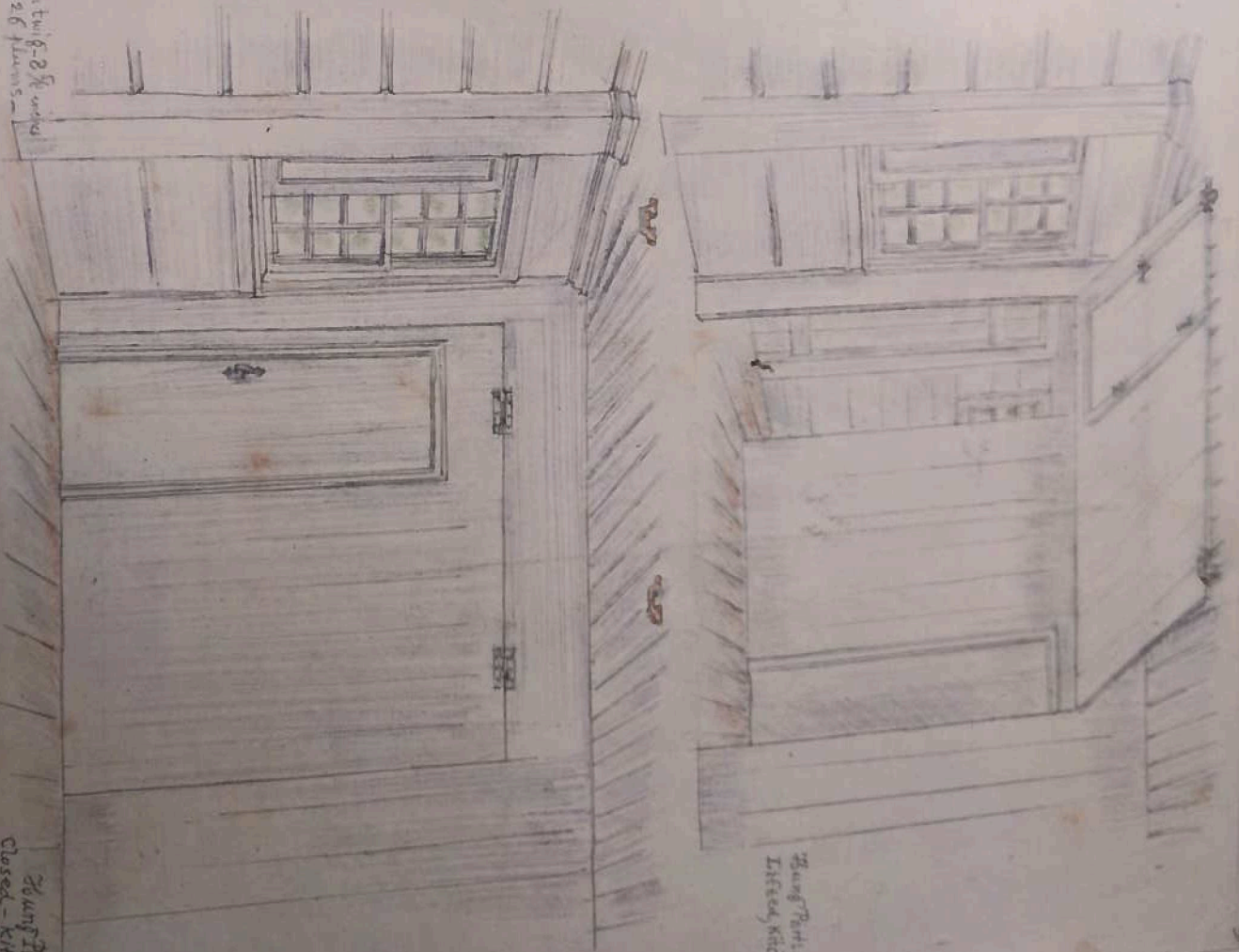
Jeremie Berube Preservationist



24 Perry in
 B. Method in
 Terence B
 Original F
 Plan



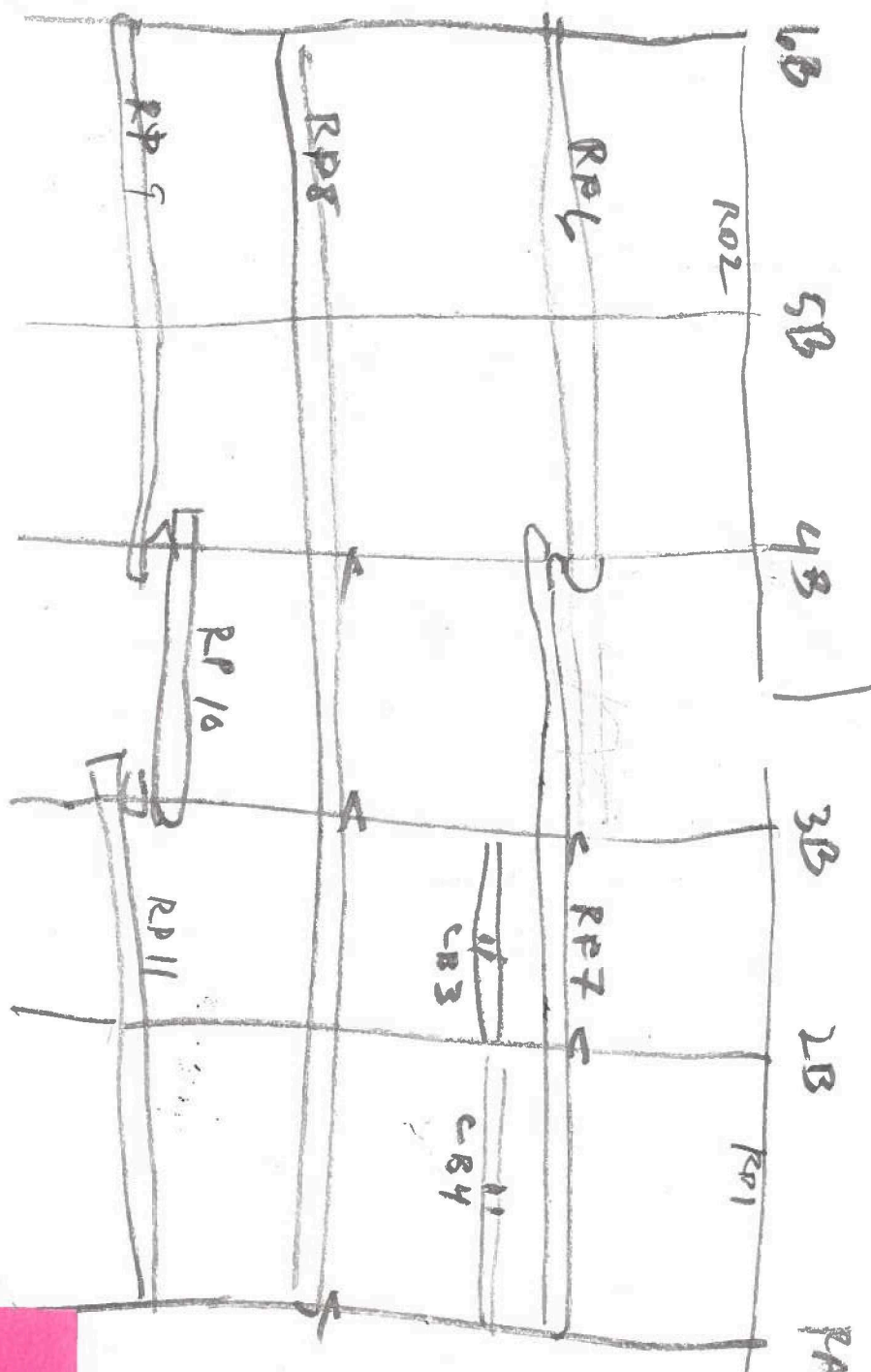
Young Tree
Geac Plum twig 8 2 1/2 inches
26 leaves



Young Partition
Closed - Kitchen

Young Partition
Open, Kitchen

5. TOP OF CASE FRAME PART / BACK



44 1/2" case.

Left → right

TONGUE
SIDE ON
RAFTERS

ROOF RAFTERS
+ PURLINS"

CENTER CHIMNEY
IN RIDGE

OPENING
INDICATES WIDTH
OF CHIMNEY



