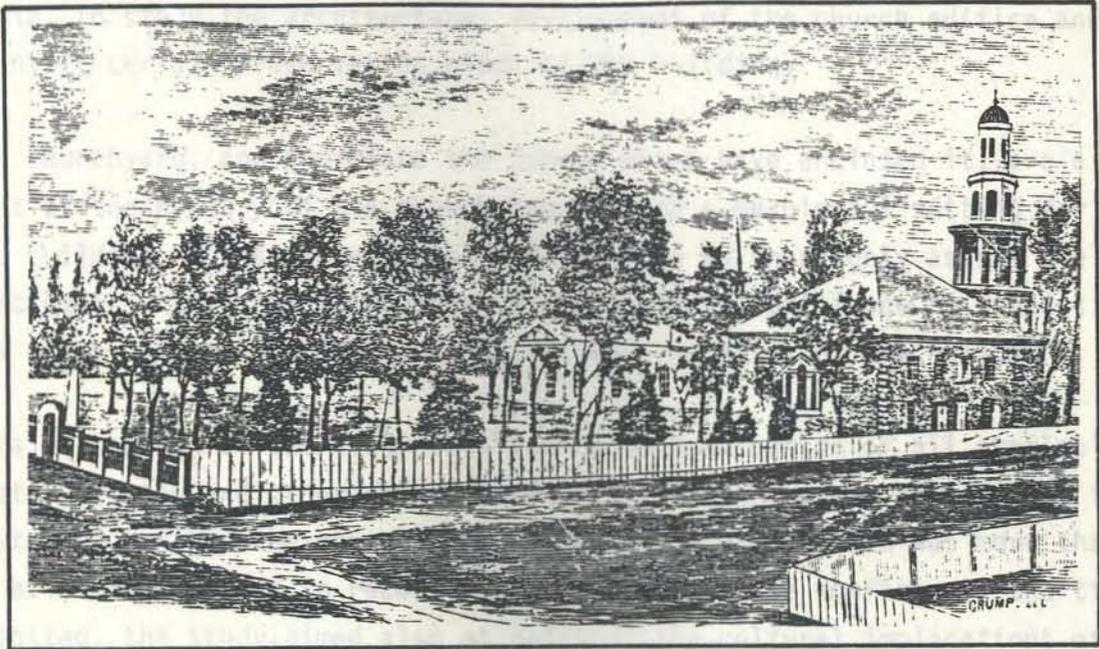


PREFACE

Christ Church, Alexandria, is a National Landmark immediately adjacent to a National Landmark Historic District. As such the church structure and certain architectural and historic features attendant to the building and the site warrant its preservation in order to maintain its historic integrity. In August, 1979, the Society of Christ Church contracted with John Hillier Associates, Architects, Archaeologists, and Planners, West Chester, Pennsylvania,



CHRIST CHURCH
ALEXANDRIA
CHURCHYARD WALL

1978

PREFACE

Christ Church, Alexandria, is a National Landmark immediately adjacent to a National Landmark Historic District. As such the church structure and certain architectural and natural features attendant to the building and the site warrant in depth study as to their historic integrity. In August, 1978, the vestry of Christ Church contracted with John Milner Associates, Architects, Archeologists, and Planners, West Chester, Pennsylvania, to study the architectural development of the church edifice and to identify certain preservation needs of the building.

The churchyard, and therefore the fences which have enclosed it, are a part of the history of the church and provide a meaningful setting for the building. Considering this, and in order to thoroughly assess the particular preservation problems to which the present fence is subject, the vestry agreed to order a separate detailed study of the enclosure.

A major portion of the study involved close examination of all available vestry minutes and other church documents. But the query as to what, if anything, defined the churchyard bounds at different times was more than an academic exercise in record research. Within the confines of the time allotted, the study aimed also at defining the cultural implications of the enclosure so that the reasons for it, whether practical or aesthetic, could be made clear. Working with the effects of a long-time English precedent and adding to this the variations implied by the Georgian aesthetic, the research involved on-site reconnaissance of other enclosures assumed to have been built contemporary to the eighteenth-century churches they enclosed. This comparison served to clarify the seemingly contradictory statements so often found in the vestry minutes. Furthermore, it provided the perspective needed to identify any peculiar social or economic factors which could have been reasons for the church and its yard having been like or unlike its peers.

HISTORICAL RESEARCH

The Setting of the English Village Church

The town church has been a major cultural expression in western history for more than eight centuries. More specifically, the English village church, with its usually impressive enclosed precinct, has for almost the same length of time, provided a community focus and a stately climax to an otherwise vernacular village entity. Unlike the less deliberately located streetside settings of village churches on the continent, the English village church was poised on a prominent site which encouraged the church and its green sward to be a special social place in the midst of the mundane. By the isolation it inferred, both visually and symbolically, the yard, as consecrated ground and the burial place of the parish, emphasized the spiritual focus of the church. During the Georgian era, when beautifully inscribed and decorated stones were placed at gravesites to memorialize the dead, the burial ground within the yard became the setting for a new type of artistic creation, giving a new, sculptured dimension to the place. Indeed, artistically, one could almost say the Georgian era was the only age of the English churchyard.¹ Apart from the art it displayed, however, the yard as the burial ground emphasized the very temporal nature of life; it gave reason for the church and all that that building represented, not only as a work of art, but as the house of God.

As England developed its American colonies, certain among them, including Virginia, accepted the Church of England as the established church and adopted comparable settings for the eighteenth-century colonial village churches and estate churches as well. Precedent remained a strong force in the cultural development of the Atlantic community where, employing essentially the same motifs of church, burial ground, and open-but-sequestered space which had long been employed in England, colonial churchyard precincts were given deliberate artistic stress, especially with the introduction of memorial sculptures.

The churches themselves were most usually built of brick with the more prestigious stone limited to dressings, if used at all. Alluding to post

reformation philosophies, the buildings took on certain domestic characteristics which accommodated the sermon-dominated services of the time. The scale was more human, the detail less lofty, and the form less ecclesiastical than were the Romanesque and Gothic forms built earlier, and there was a sense of purposeful, planned presence in the church edifices themselves. Conversely, the Georgian memorials in the yards led to an assemblage of epitaphs which displayed little sense of plan. There were head stones, chest stones, and most markedly the baroque "table tombs" which provided an architectural element of an impressive but secondary nature. Encompassing all, there was a fence of iron or a wall, most usually of brick, and enhanced by a molded brick cap. Depending on the setting, there was a processional walk leading to the church entrance from an opening which oftentimes was enhanced by an iron or wooden gate.

Christ Church, Alexandria: A Village Church in Concept

In Alexandria, a parcel close to the town but outside the bounds was accepted as a site for a village church in 1766. While the church was not begun until 1767 and was not completed until 1773, burials in the yard seem to have taken place soon after the land was transferred to Fairfax Parish.² The earliest stones record that at least three burials took place by 1773.³ Such activity in the yard, that is the laying away of bodies, would presume that there was some sort of pretense toward protection from animals or thieves. If there was such concern, it is reasonable to assume a fence would have been built at this early date, even prior to the church construction, but records provide no such documentation.

When Christ Church was built, it was placed near the northwest corner of the lot, its axis oriented east to west as was traditional. Such siting resulted in having the church entrance on the far side of the property, apart from the developed section of Alexandria, but it also left an ample open space south of the building, comparable to what was customary in England. There was also a significant open area on the east side of the yard nearer the residential section of the town. (This side of the lot was adjacent to a major transportation artery, later to be called Washington Street.) For at least two generations, or until 1804, some of this area, including

space north of the church,⁴ was used as a burial ground for communicants and townspeople who did not maintain family cemeteries elsewhere. Before 1800, however, Alexandria's population had approached almost five thousand residents, prompting public concern for policies directed toward sanitation. With adoption of Chapter X, Article 1, as law by the town of Alexandria, no burials were allowed within the corporation limits "not opened or allotted" before March 27, 1804. The church was thus prompted by 1807 to restrict burials to church members and contributors.⁵ Christ Church acquired ground for a cemetery in Fairfax County on December, 15, 1808.⁶ By May 1, 1809, virtually all burials were banned at the yard.

Christ Church as a Singular Example of Site

Although planned as an English parish church, Christ Church never functioned as such, even during the short time that it operated under English rule after 1773. Like all similar colonial churches in America, it was not consecrated because the colonies were provided with no bishop to perform such duties. While a moot point, this paradox stresses at least that the burial ground, too, was not consecrated, and consequently, not subject to the special consideration attending hallowed ground. A wall or fence, therefore, was a priority item only in terms of protection from damage.

Once a new government was formed, Christ Church, again like all other English churches, lost its public patronage. With disestablishment, the church was identified with the Episcopal Church in the United States as a part of an impoverished and leaderless Virginia diocese. The church was essentially forced to accept autonomy, relying on a more voluntary allegiance and support. That is to say, any plans which may have been made before the Revolution toward the improvement of the yard (and none have been found in Church records) would, by 1789, have been subject to reappraisal once the Church began to operate under new rules.⁸ At this time, Christ Church could easily have been forced to close rather than consider improvements.

Christ Church, unlike other congregations in Virginia, not only survived the rigors of disestablishment but also grew, a point generally attributed

to the strong administration of Reverend David Griffith, a former army chaplain and friend of George Washington.⁹ The fact that the congregation was made up of residents of Alexandria at the time the city was a strong commercial center also undoubtedly provided strong rationale for relative stability of the church organization and incentive for subsequent work at the site.

Chronology of Church Enclosures

In 1787, the vestry considered opening a subscription to fund an enclosure of the burial ground. Whether or not the concern was for a portion of the yard or the yard as a whole is not clear; nor do we know if the proposed subscription was let and such an enclosure accomplished.¹⁰ What is nevertheless strongly suggested is that the yard before 1787 was not enclosed.

In 1789, as interest in improvements was directed to the church building itself, a gallery was inserted in the upper walls of three sides of the church interior. Again, the records do not provide proof that the newly improved building and its yard were even then "enclosed." It may well be that enclosure was not considered until decisive measures were taken to define the church property. In 1795, the vestry attempted, to no avail, to secure from the Alexander family¹¹ land adjacent to the church, and sometime before 1806, a "new" fence was installed along the south line of the churchyard.

The word "new" infers a significant relative factor. Furthermore, the evidence of a fence before 1806, albeit limited, is provided by record that a firehouse, built in the southeast corner of the yard in 1805, was "fenced out" of the yard area.¹² At least from 1806, repair or reconstruction of a fence (in reference to certain portions of the yard if not all four sides) became a topic of vestry concern every two to ten years.

From 1811 on, references to enclosures correspond often to other work done on the church or to decisions pertaining to the yard. By 1813, as an

example, a fence was erected to define edges which had been in dispute for several years. In September of 1813, a plan of the churchyard was made, showing that the parcel conveyed by John Alexander to the church in 1766 did not correspond to Alexandria's block dimensions, at least as they affected the land adjacent to the church.¹³ As a result of the lengthy debate over the question of the accepted bounds of the church property, the vestry fenced its new north property line when the plan of the lot was executed. Curiously, another north fence was installed in five years, even as the church was arguing its claim to the land concerned with an extension to Cameron Street. This, the vestry seems to have considered by 1819.¹⁴ In the meantime, the church was consecrated in 1814, providing added rationale for sequestered space.

By 1830, the churchyard had achieved a new and somewhat public identity. As mentioned previously, the enginehouse of the Star Fire Company was added in 1805 to the southeast corner of the yard, thus intruding upon any previous reference to the seventeenth-century English prototype of "the church apart." In 1822 a "lecture room" structure, to house also the Alexandria Library and provide rooms for the vestry, was put on the east side of the yard,¹⁵ adding to the sectarian concept of the yard's function. By their presence, these intrusions, oriented to the "town" side of the yard, provided significant illustration of the difference between the English colonial church domain which had been established just short of the Revolution and its more autonomous American successor. The Christ Church yard, in fact, represented a manifestation of options which had been taken once the constitutional separation of church and state required the congregation to sustain itself as an independent body without public support.

In 1829, when various other repairs were also planned, the vestry decided to rearrange the churchyard and to erect a wall on the Washington Street side of the property where a public entrance, leading into a graveled footpath, had previously existed. The choice was given as to a brick wall or a "wall and railing," and the latter was chosen for the Washington Street side "with a handsome gate to the entrance." This wall ran from

the 1822 lecture room to the alley (the unfinished Cameron Street)¹⁶ providing the first known architectural edge for the yard and limiting such formality to the "town" or south side of the lot (Plate 1). From photographs documenting the wall and railing as it existed in c.1865, we can assume that this feature was composed of a low brick wall together with brick piers capped with stone and set approximately seven feet apart. The "railing" was attached to narrow, horizontal bars that fit into the piers and were interspersed by vertical posts,¹⁷ This repetitive configuration provided the formality needed to make the fence compatible with the Georgian church it fronted (Plate 2). A gate allowing access to the yard at the established public entrance, although certainly contemporary to the wall, was not recorded as having been accomplished until 1844 when "ornamental additions to the Washington Street gate" were considered.¹⁸

While the wall provided a sense of formal facade for the public side of the yard, the investment in similar walling for the north and west sides was not realized for more than thirty years. In 1844, fencing, presumably the vertical board fencing documented by c.1865 photographs (Plate 3) and earlier drawings, defined the north and west sides.

In 1842, this fence was ordered whitewashed.¹⁹ In 1844, the fences of the churchyard and of the parsonage were ordered "masked," and fencing within the yard on both sides of the walk was discussed, the latter perhaps aimed at discouraging public use of the open space and restricting what limited traffic was allowed to the footpaths.²⁰ In 1849, reference to the "fenced out" firehouse was made by the vestry wardens who, obviously determined to limit trespassing in the yard, requested the wardens to notify the Star Fire Company that the school then being held in the second story of their enginehouse must be discontinued. Also that "they must plank up the stairway on the north side of their building so as to prevent persons from getting from the steps into the church yard."²¹ By 1851, the fire company was given notice to remove its enginehouse from the church lot.²² In 1853, at about the same time that public improvements such as paving were made to the west on Columbus Street, a new lecture room was built on the southwest corner of the lot and a footpath on the south side of the lot was paved in brick.

However, no particular mention is made of fences and walls.²³ Even as late as 1858, completion of any type of masonry enclosure had not been resolved. Together with the railing and wall on Washington Street was a board fence on Cameron Street which included a removable access panel (Plate 3).

During the years in which the Federal forces occupied Alexandria and Christ Church itself was under military control, the yard exemplified the hard times that were experienced in the town as a whole. By 1865, the Christ Church yard and that of the Methodist Church immediately to the south were described as a "common" (probably a public open space) on which there was not "a panel of fencing around either."²⁴ Official photographs taken at some time during the occupation, however, record that the bounds, at least on Cameron Street and Columbus Street, were defined by a capped and whitewashed vertical board fence into which a gate was prominently inserted on the Columbus Street side. This was a wooden portal with a strong image of formality despite its use of what may have been considered lesser materials. Involved here was an arched entry encased by a stately surround featuring entablature-type detail. While the gate itself was formally latticed, the span and rise of the intrados of the arch was articulated by a simple balustrade (Plate 4).

In 1867, a gas lamp was ordered installed on Washington Street in front of the gate which provided entrance to the yard.²⁵ Together with other post-war building repairs which were undertaken by the vestry, the fences around the church lot were ordered repaired in 1868.²⁶ Despite the constant upkeep and attention that the board fencing required, such an unaffected enclosure remained the dominant edge of the bounds of the church property through three quarters of the nineteenth century (Plate 5).

During the period of reconstruction, the business of the church was in the hands of a provisional vestry, responsible for policy. Despite this sensitive situation, the rector at this time was a strong leader, responsible among other things for new plans concerning renovations of the church interior. It was while Reverend R. H. McKim was rector (from 1867 to 1875) that the church celebrated its centennial year. Such a target date, at a

time when the church was made aware of its colonial heritage rather than the hard times it had more recently known, would suggest that enclosure of the yard might have been attended to. Indeed, a churchyard enclosure fund was established to encourage action toward such improvement at that time. The work was not immediate, however.

In 1877, during the time Reverend William Dame was rector, the vestry considered re-using an iron fence which was to be removed from a reservation on Pennsylvania Avenue and 7th Street in the Washington City,²⁷ but neither official papers nor visual records can prove such action was taken. In that year, nevertheless, a masonry and iron fence was realized. While vestry minutes provide no date, Christ Church archives hold a photograph of the west side of the yard. Marked as a document dated between 1860 and 1880, this shows the fence which exists today (Plate 6). Supporting this evidence is a point made in a pamphlet issued in 1894 which says that the then present brick wall was erected around the churchyard during the ministry of Reverend William H. Dame (1875 to 1878).²⁸ To support this, an inscription on the inside wall of the east gate reads "Rebuilt 1877."²⁹ While there is nothing in the vestry minutes as they now stand to substantiate these references, there is also little in the photo to prove a date before 1880. Whether or not any wall or fence was built in 1877 has not been proven archeologically or by record, but there is strong documentation that the present, extensively uniform wall system, based on the earlier work performed in 1830, dates from 1898 when the wardens were authorized to inquire into building a new brick and iron fence on the east, north, and west sides of the yard.³⁰

Coincidentally, the history of yard enclosures shows that considerations of fencing often followed a transformation of the church interior. This is clear again in 1898. During the time the Reverend Henderson Suter was rector (1878 to 1895), a Colonial Revival interpretation of the interior, particularly the chancel area, was undertaken. According to the record then, it was during the tenure of the next rector, Reverend Berryman Green, that the wall was attended to, whether rebuilt or restored.

Summary Statement

While plans regarding Christ Church and its yard were based on the English prototype, changes manifested by the Revolutionary War were introduced early in the history of the development of the yard. As if recognizing the need to plan the limited yard as it may have related to burial spaces and an area for public congregation, the church building was sited to take advantage of open area on the south side; coincidentally, the location of the major structure as far as possible from a busy traffic route presented the Palladian east facade with a special reserve, and also provided an architectural frontispiece for the town. More practically, the site as a whole was so arranged as to eventually allow siting of secondary structures on the town side of the church property.

By 1803, a path leading from Washington Street to the west entrance of the church was graveled. It is assumed that a fence of some sort existed at this time, and that it was replaced at least by 1806 after several years of consideration and discussion on the part of the vestry committees.

In 1829 and 1830, the present brick walling which lines the Washington Street boundary was erected, but board fencing remained in use for the more secondary sides of the yard. Evidence as to this utilitarian use of white-washed and capped upright boards is found in graphics dating from c.1858, and in vestry minutes which in earlier years refer often to monies expended for lumber for a fence, to repairs, and, more specifically, to whitewashing.

While a second-hand iron fence was considered in 1877, and while previous research has concluded that the present fence was built at that time, church records show that the iron and brick fence which stands on Columbus and Cameron Streets, based on the early 1829 construction on Washington Street, was erected in 1898.

NOTES

1. Alec Clifton-Taylor, English Parish Churches as Works of Art, (London: 1974), p. 38.
2. William J. Morton, "Christ Church, Alexandria, Virginia " (1923), cites Mary Powell, local historian, who had found that in 1766 an indentured servant was buried in the yard.
3. "Christ Church Stones," miscellaneous notes, on file at Christ Church.
4. Correspondence from Major General George Mayo, Jr. (U.S.A. Ret.), Junior Warden, Christ Church, Alexandria, December 5, 1979, suggests that "the burial area stretched almost two blocks farther to the north than it does now." To date, no records to document this point have been found, and it is not clear if the land thus used was church property. Since church deeds were frequently entered in the names of church officers, a systematic study of vestries and location of these names in early deed indexes may yet uncover new information.
5. Vestry Minutes, April, 1807 (Vestry Book C, hereafter VBC), p. 139.
6. Fairfax County Deed Book, J.2, p. 32, as cited in letter, Walter Sanford to Rev. Mark S. Anschutz and Rev. Howard R. Peters, November 30, 1979. The Methodist Church, too, acquired ground at the same time.
7. Vestry Minutes, April 20, 1809 (VBC 147).
8. Many records were lost during the time of Federal occupation. This lack of accounts accompanying the early vestry minutes constitutes a major weakness in any research effort referring to Christ Church. Without journals and accounts, completion of several proposed projects cannot be documented.
9. David Holmes, "Miscellaneous notes on the life of David Griffith" (on file, Christ Church).
10. Vestry Minutes, August 27, 1787 (VBC 118). Refer also to Note 8.
11. Vestry Minutes, April 22, 1795 (VBC 127); January 8, 1806 (VBC 133). Whereas in several vestry minutes there is no proof that old business was attended to, here it is clear that the act of "fencing" was accomplished.
12. Vestry Minutes, November 17, 1805 (VBC 133).
13. Vestry Minutes, September 9, 1806 (VBC 136).
14. Vestry Minutes, January, 1819 (VBC 189). Mary G. Powell, The History of Old Alexandria, Virginia (Richmond: 1928), pp. 28, 33, gives the date as 1836. The recognition of bounds and the repercussions thereof is deserving of further research.

15. Vestry Minutes, p. 204.
16. Vestry Minutes, May 15, 1829 (VBC 233). An early woodcut, a copy of which is on file at Christ Church, shows the semblance of an alley in relation to Cameron Street.
17. According to dictionaries of the time (i.e. Walper, Philadelphia: 1815), "railing" is interpreted as a series of posts connected with beams. It is not, therefore, limited to the thought of horizontals.
18. Vestry Minutes, February 7, 1844. "Fixtures," too, (whether lighting, hardware, or added masonry is not clear) were addressed also at this time. Stylistic implications suggest that the stone cap work could have been such an addition or fixture. While such a consideration is seemingly contradicted by the inscription "1830" inside the uppermost stone block of the east portal, this information was probably added in 1877 when the portal was rebuilt. It thus refers to what had generally been considered the date of the gate/wall system and was not a contemporary dating factor.
19. VBC 273. It could be assumed that whitewashing was attended to periodically, but the task seems to have been recorded in vestry minutes only once.
20. Vestry Minutes, April 8, 1844 (VBC 303); April 16, 1844.
21. Vestry Minutes, April 2, 1849.
22. Vestry Minutes, April 5, 1851. While drawings c.1858 do not show secondary buildings on the east side of the yard, the 1873 An Historical Sketch of Old Christ Church, reprinted in 1894, suggests, page 18, that the building was removed between 1873 and 1894.
23. VBC 321.
24. Alexandria Gazette, August 14, 1865.
25. Vestry Minutes, January 31, 1867 (VBC 346).
26. Vestry Minutes (VBC 352).
27. VBC 386, 387.
28. An Historical Sketch of Old Christ Church (1894), p. 30.
29. See Note 18.
30. VBC 396.

ON-SITE RESEARCH

Introduction

Architectural investigation often implies both documentary and physical, on-site, research. In the case of examination of the Christ Church wall where a great deal of historic data was uncovered dealing with its early history, little information regarding late nineteenth or twentieth century modifications was available. It was determined, therefore, that such information would have to be obtained through physical analysis. Upon completion of the documentary (historical) research, physical investigation of the wall was undertaken. The goals of the on-site research were aimed at clarifying the changes, if any, that the existing wall had undergone.

Methodology

A systematic on-site methodology was planned prior to work on the site so that useful data could be charted and interpreted expeditiously to then gain the information required. Each bay of the wall, including gate bays, was given a number; a base sheet was compiled from which "charts" for the individual bays would be prepared in the field. The bays on the Washington Street side were scrutinized most closely since documentary evidence indicated that this was the earliest portion of the wall. Included in the information obtained were such technical aspects as the spacing of piers, brick sizes, pointing details, bonding, iron work detailing, and condition of the existing fabric. It became evident after ten bays were completed that typical conditions could be established (see representative survey forms in appendix) for the entire structure. Thereafter, notation became increasingly streamlined, the record limited to atypical conditions and deterioration.

On-Site Evidence

The following evidence was clarified by this on-site research. The wall fronts approximately 134'0" on Washington Street, 246'0" on Cameron Street, and 201'0" on Columbus Street. There are a total of 15 bays on Washington Street, 27 bays on Cameron Street, and 21 bays on Columbus Street.

Typically, the 63 bays vary in size, the spacing between the piers running between 7'6" on Washington Street and 8'0" on the north end of Columbus Street (Figure 1). The actual wall system consists of brick piers with ornamental caps between which a low brick retaining wall capped with iron has been constructed. Above each retaining wall is an iron picket fence, the horizontals of which are anchored into the piers. The actual height of these piers and the retaining walls varies due to changes in grade, but typical piers on Washington Street are 7'0" high.

The ornamental caps on the piers, the most significant element, can be used to confirm the phased construction of the wall. All caps on the Cameron and Columbus Street piers are cast iron (Plate 7). The piers on Washington Street, originally sandstone, have for the most part been replaced with concrete, possibly installed in c.1951 when repairs were made to the Washington Street portion of the wall in conjunction with the construction of the new parish hall.

The iron fence panels between the piers appear to be standardized. The system consists of 3/4" diameter pickets fixed in place, 5-1/4" on center. The iron rails to which the pickets are attached measure 7/16" by 2-5/8". The standard anchorage detail at the piers consists of a cast-iron sleeve which is set into the masonry (Plate 8). This sleeve type is employed in all locations other than those where piers have been rebuilt in recent years with the railing set directly into the piers.

Five gates (bay A, bay 9, bay 49, bay 60, and bay 63; Figure 1) provided access to the churchyard. The portals at bay 9 and bay 49 are architecturally the most significant and define the major axis through the churchyard. Additionally, limited access was provided by two removable panels (bays 29 and 36) on the Cameron Street elevation. The panel at bay 36 allowed access to the cellar bulkhead for coal delivery. (A removable panel was used in the earlier board fence at the same location; Plate 3).

The entrance portals, executed in brick with an ornamental cap, defy categorization of style. Possibly influenced by triumphal arch motifs, the

broad opening with its segmental arch is flanked by pilasters. The cap, a hierarchy of masonry caps which step up toward the center, may be more closely related to Egyptian Revival, a style frequently used in executing cemetery gates (Plate 9). The iron gates themselves also incorporate many diverse elements, making the total less than orthodox (Plate 10). The bottom panel of the gate is cast iron with an ornamental molded edge and raised oval medallion in the center. Above the cast panel is a slightly larger panel of diagonal iron lattice. The remainder of the opening is consumed by round pickets similar to those employed in the execution of the fence. Both gates are intended to ride on iron tracks set in the brick paving.

Although similar in appearance, the east (Washington Street) and west (Columbus Street) gates do differ slightly. The east gate is inscribed "1830" and "rebuilt 1877." The ornamental cap on this gate is sandstone except where substitutes of cast concrete have been employed. Each leaf of the gate hangs on three pintles set into the masonry.

The west portal includes the same major features. However, there are several modifications which are consistent with the adjacent contemporary wall. Although the gate motif is the same, the pintles are anchored into a 4" diameter iron post behind the brick portal instead of directly into the masonry. The most significant difference lies in the use of cast iron rather than cut stone caps on the top of the portal.

Although a gate at the old parish hall (bay 60) does employ elements similar to those applied to the major gate, with the exception of the cast panel (Plate 11), the remaining gates, (bay A, bay 63) service drives used for modern vehicular services, are less significant and were probably erected in conjunction with the construction of the adjacent department store.

Existing Conditions

The condition of the existing wall varies. Many of the problems can be attributed to a lack of proper maintenance. All portions of the wall

require basic repairs such as repointing. More serious problems occur in lengthy segments of the wall which are presently leaning, probably because of the ground mass behind the wall and inadequate foundations. In areas where the wall has heaved, particularly in the northeast corner of the churchyard, reconstruction will probably be required (Plate 12). Additional work will be required along Washington Street where the wall has been underpinned with an inappropriate concrete curb.

There is some brick deterioration present; however, the major problems seem to be associated with settlement and deterioration of the pier bases (Plate 13). This condition is most evident on the Cameron Street elevation.

The iron railings and the cast-iron pier caps are generally in good repair. (The cast-iron cap at bay 34 is broken. Two caps at bay 61, adjacent to the entrance gate to the old parish hall, are missing. Substitute plywood caps presently cover these piers.) The gates in the main portals are seriously deteriorated. Lacking proper application of paint and rust deterrents, total elements of the gates have deteriorated. While these cast-iron features can be salvaged, the frame which holds the various panels and elements in place will require replacement (Plate 14). The remaining gates of lesser significance, that is, those at service entrances and the old parish hall, are an important part of the total and should be repaired and maintained.

Summary Statement

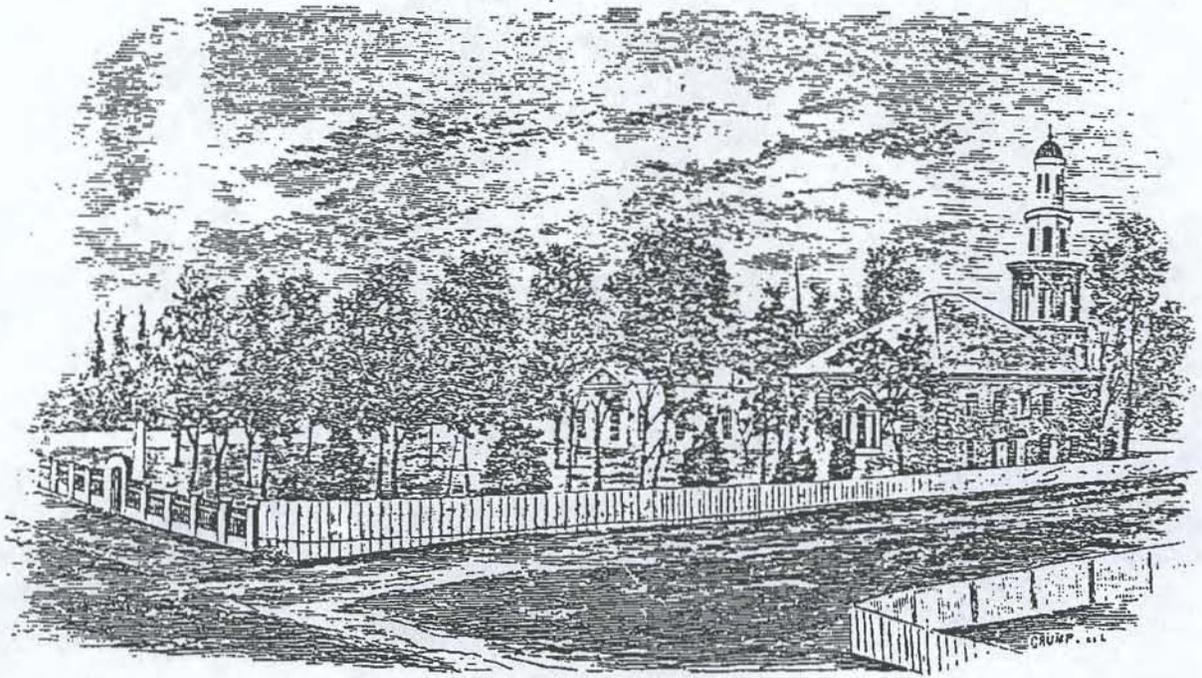
The present wall (fence) surrounding Christ Church yard is of historic importance, the Washington Street elevation having originally been constructed c.1830. Documentary evidence obtained in the course of this research clearly establishes the earliest enclosure as a wood fence. This was replaced in 1830 by the more architecturally elaborate brick-pier and iron-fence system which in part encloses the churchyard today. Similar to the church, whose tower and steeple were completed over a period of more than thirty years, the completion of a permanent churchyard enclosure took over forty-five years.

While original caps were of stone, echoing the use of stone to dress the principle structure, the use of cast iron ornamental caps on the later sections of the wall was an indication of a progressive church vestry, willing to accept new technologies while retaining an aesthetic which was recognized as compatible with the church.

Prior to undertaking any work at the site, archeological investigation should be carried out. A minimum of two test trenches should be excavated at the east wall to determine if any further information regarding the earliest permanent wall can be obtained.

Although extensive repairs including the underpinning of certain sections will be required if the wall is to be retained, such investment will preserve a wall whose design and construction were established 150 years ago as a suitable enclosure for the landmark church and its historic yard.

PLATES



CHRIST CHURCH, ALEXANDRIA, VA.

Plate 1

c.1857 View of Christ Church Yard



Plate 2

19th Century Photograph of East Wall
Note Uniform Repetition

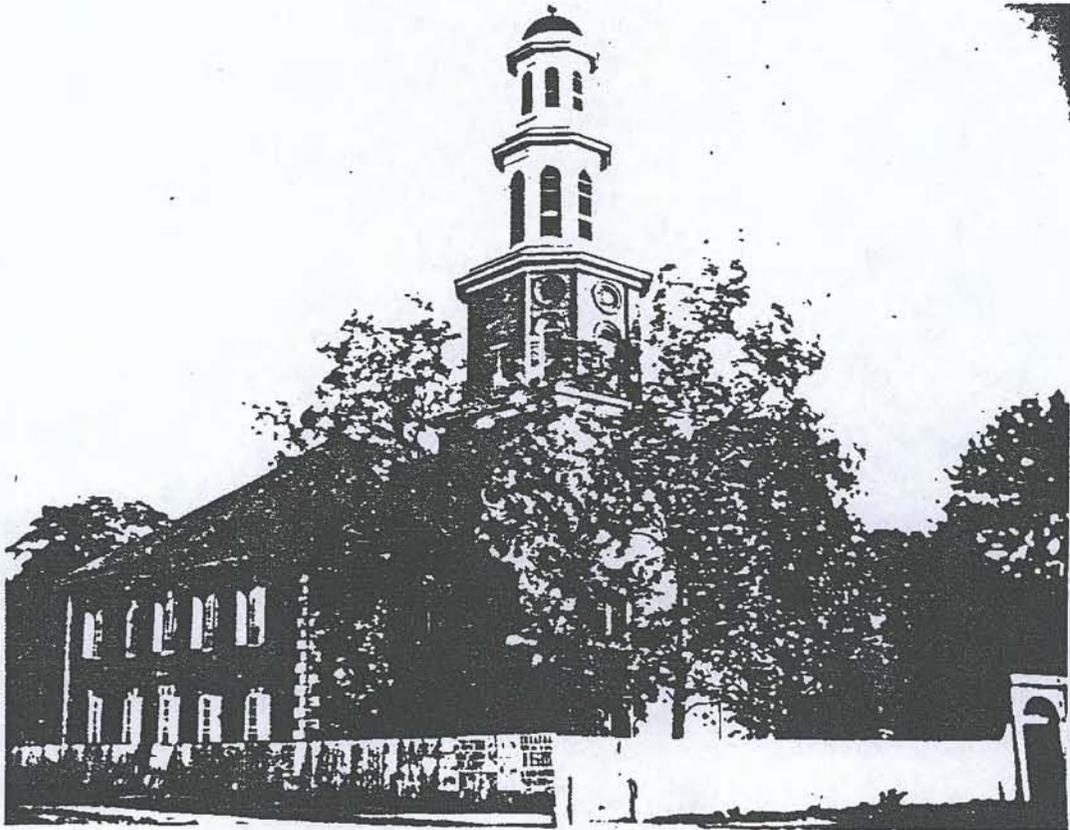


Plate 3

Christ Church from Northwest Corner of Columbus Street
Note Board Fence and Removable Panel on North Face

Attributed to Mathew Brady
Courtesy of National Archives

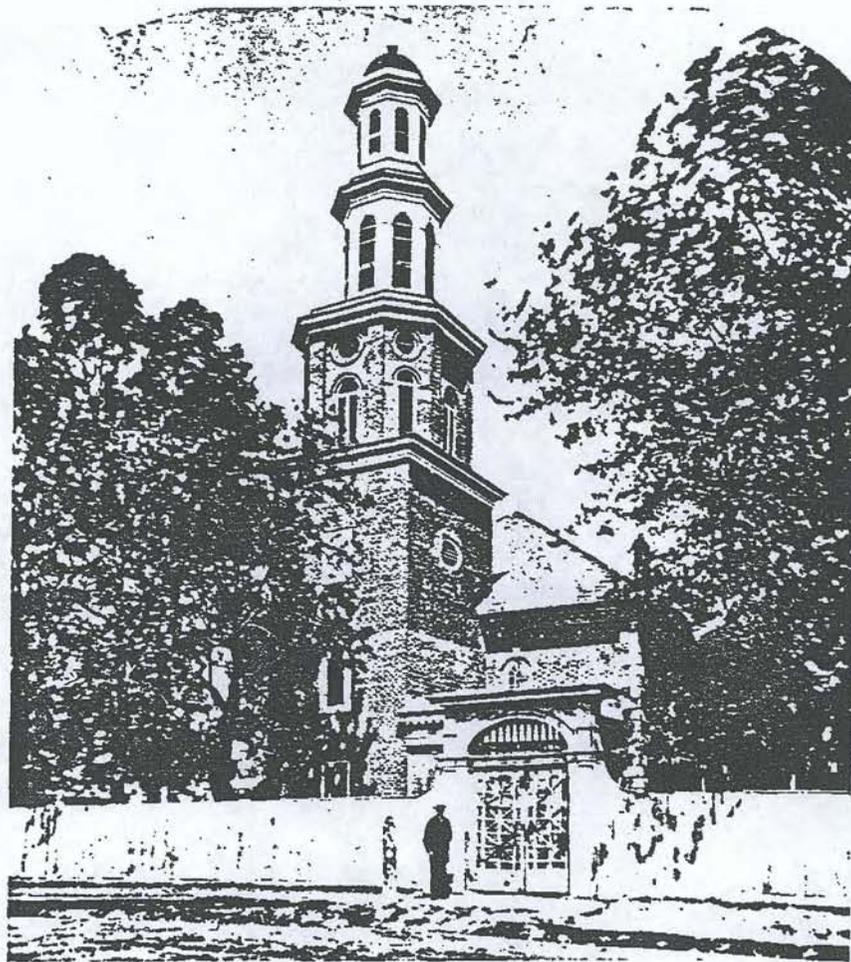


Plate 4

Closeup of West Wall
Note Details of Framed Gate



Plate 5

Christ Church from the Northwest

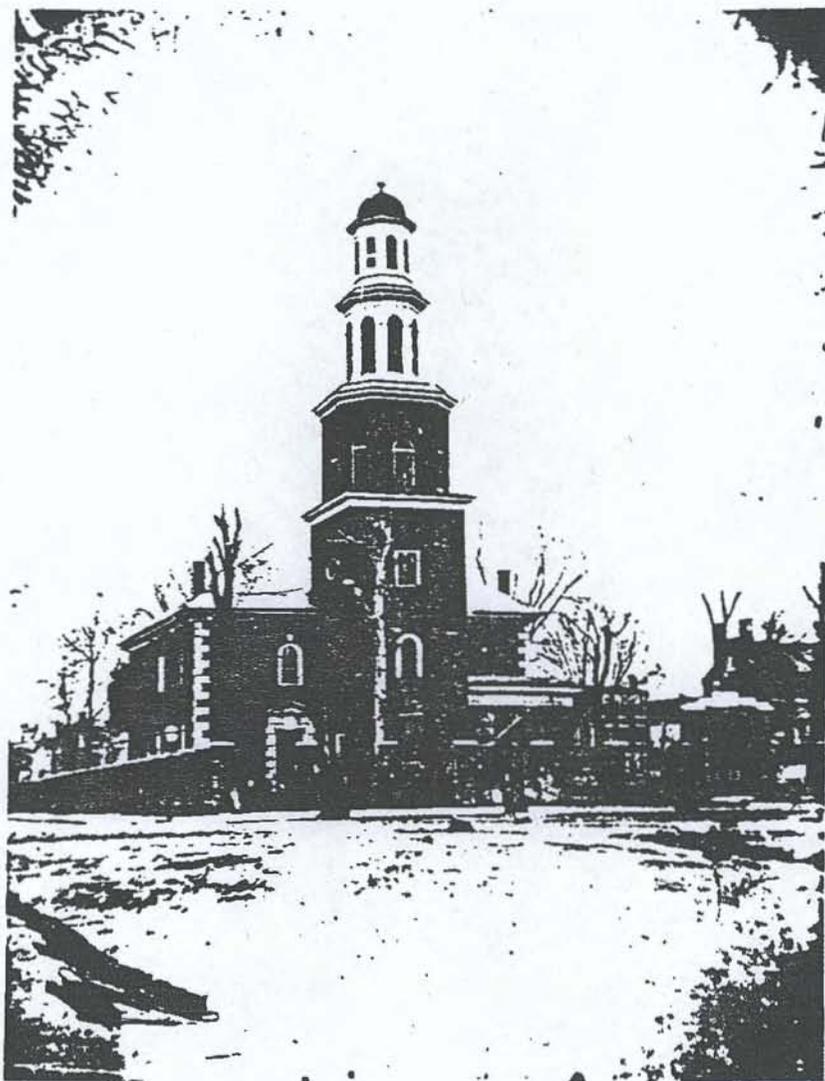


Plate 6

West Elevation of Church showing Completed
Wall on Columbus and Cameron Streets

Brady-Hardy Collection 1860-80
Courtesy of National Archives

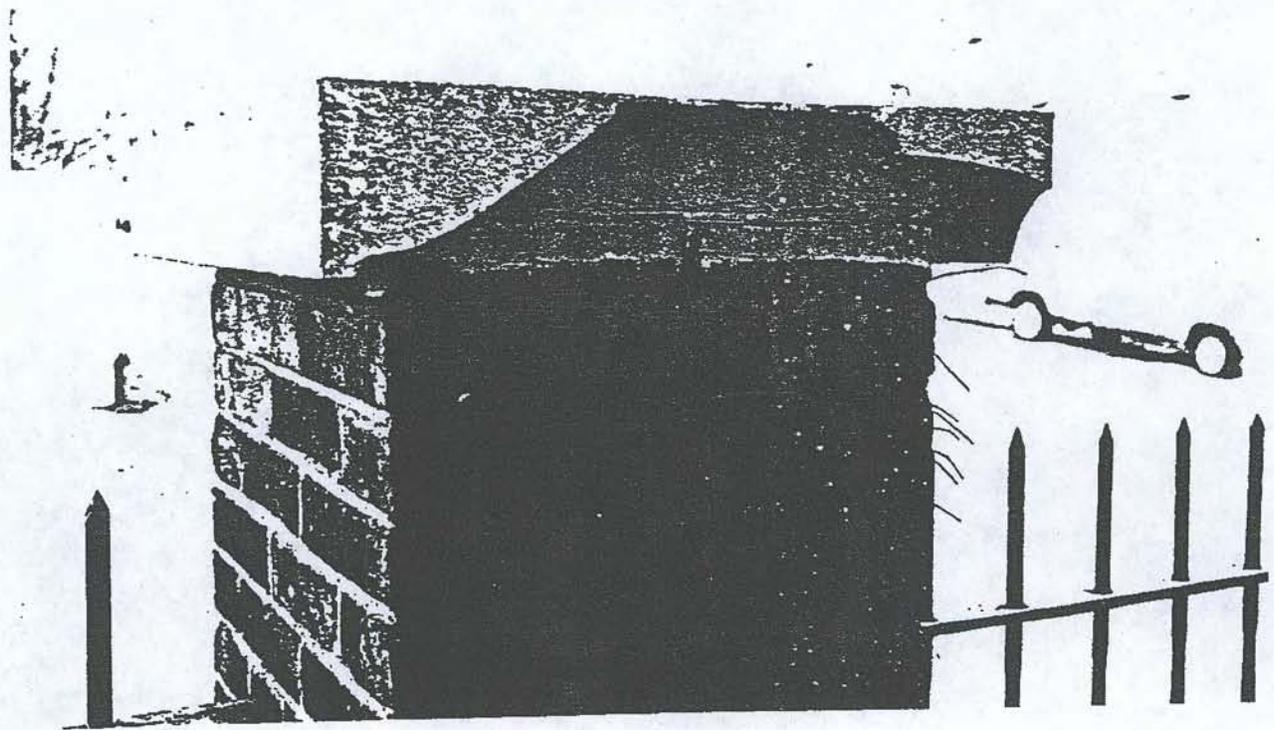


Plate 7

Detail of Typical Cast-Iron Cap located at Bay 34
The Top of the Cap is Molded to Shed Water

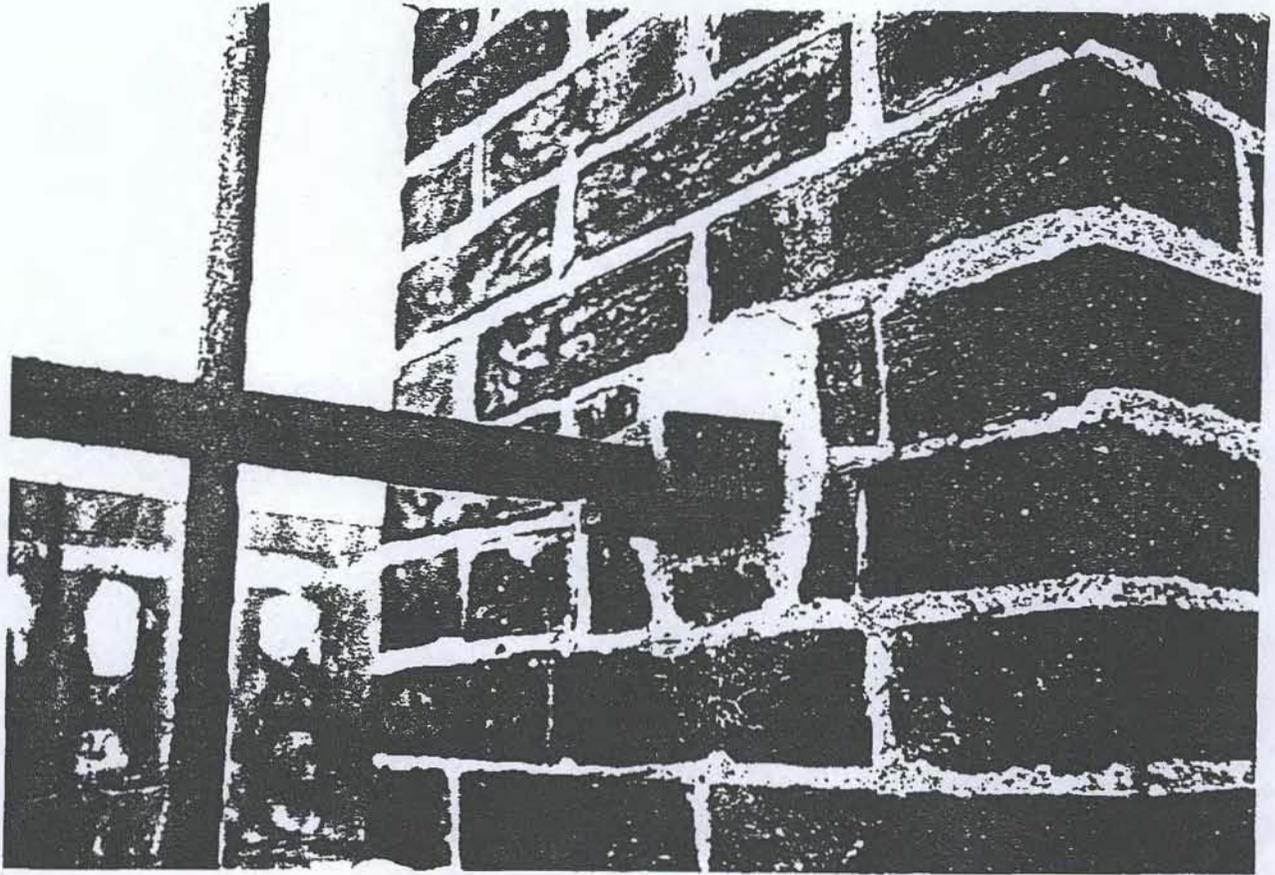


Plate 8

Detail of Cast-Iron Sleeve (Atypically Installed)
Typical Condition is with the Sleeve set Flush to the Pier



Plate 9

Entrance Portal on East Washington Street Elevation
Note there are Two Steps from the Street Level to the
Churchyard Level. The Lower Step is Concrete and appears to
have been Installed at a Later Date due to a Change in Street Level

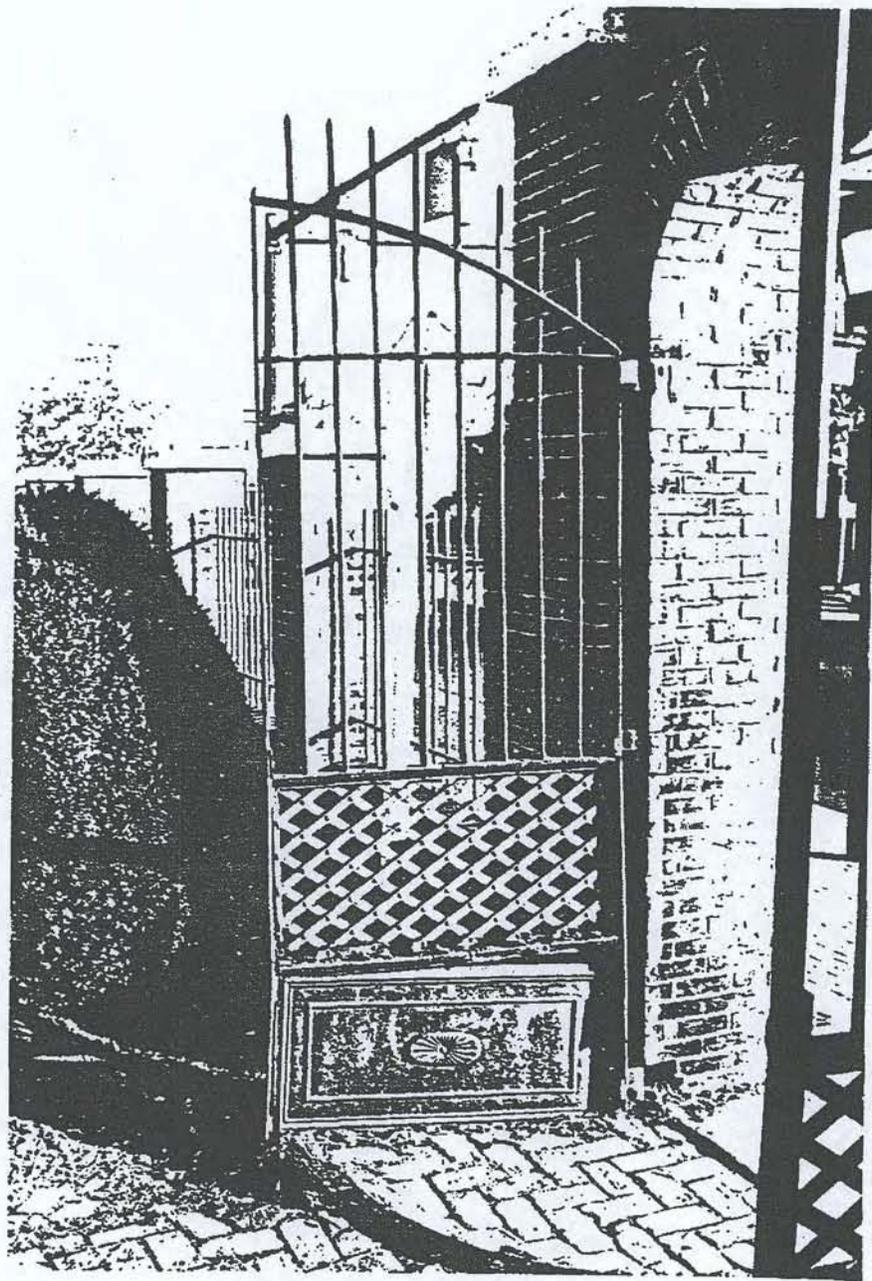


Plate 10

Ornamental Iron Gates

The Base Panel is Cast Iron and the Central Panel is Riveted Latticework
The Upper Portion Corresponds to the Adjacent Fence
Note the Tracks Provided on the Ground to Prevent the
Brick Paving from Abrading



Plate 11

Detail of Entrance Gate to Old Parish Hall
Note the Right Column Cap is a Plywood Replacement

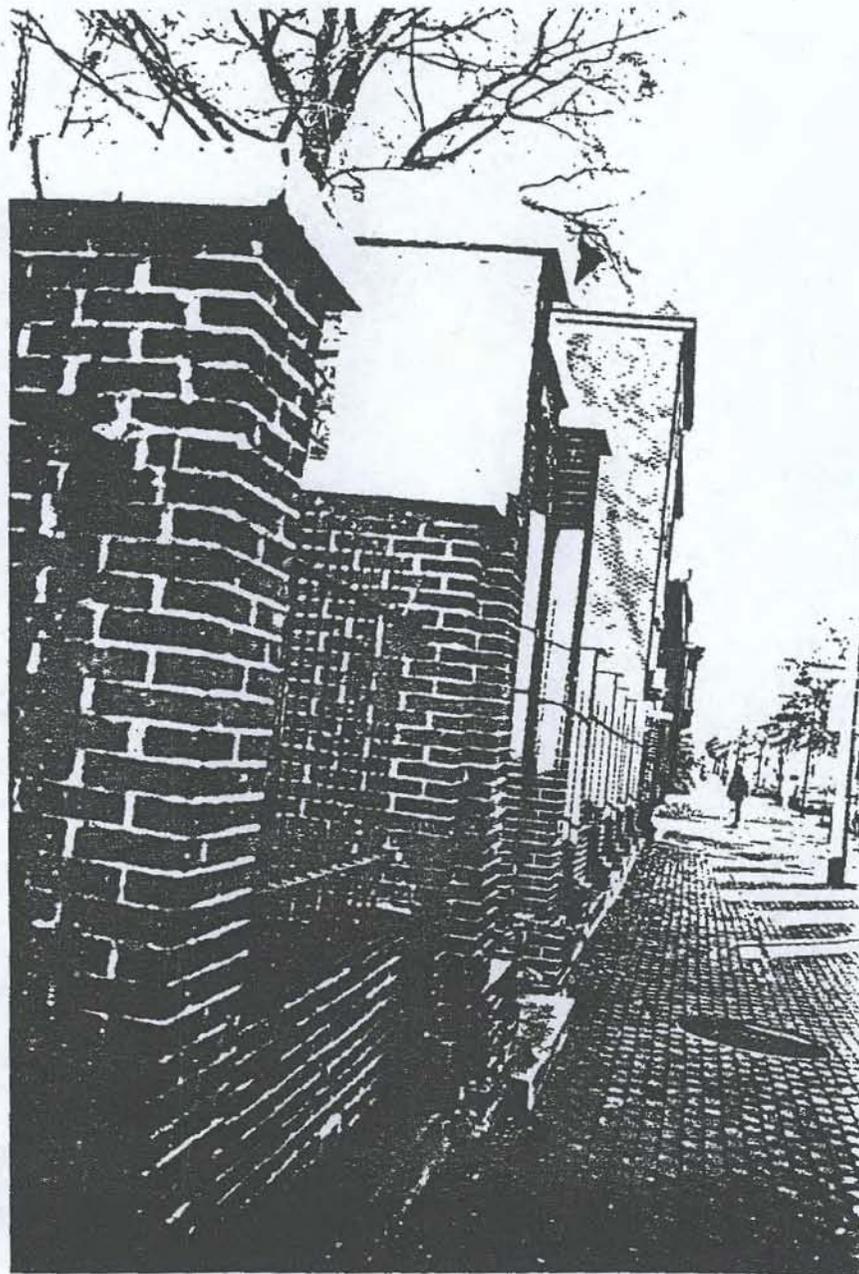


Plate 12

View of a Segment of the East Wall
Note the Leaning Pier at Northeast (far) Corner

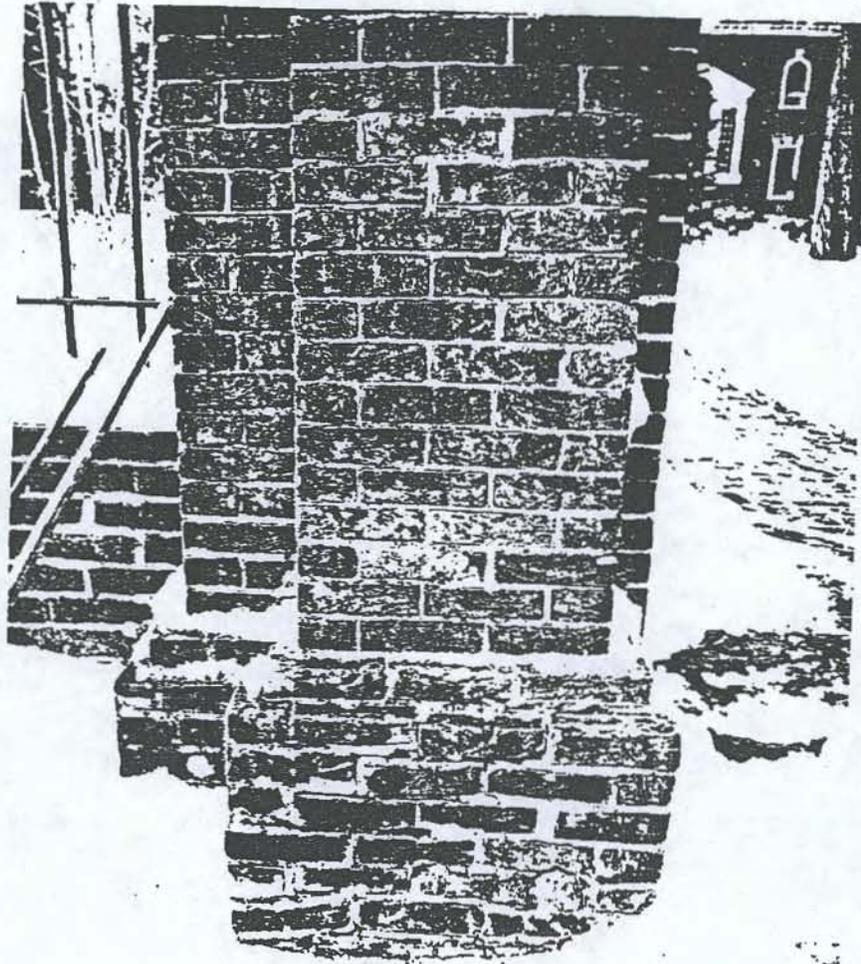


Plate 13

Detail of the Base of a Corner Pier
Note Deteriorated Condition of Pointing and Associated Settlement

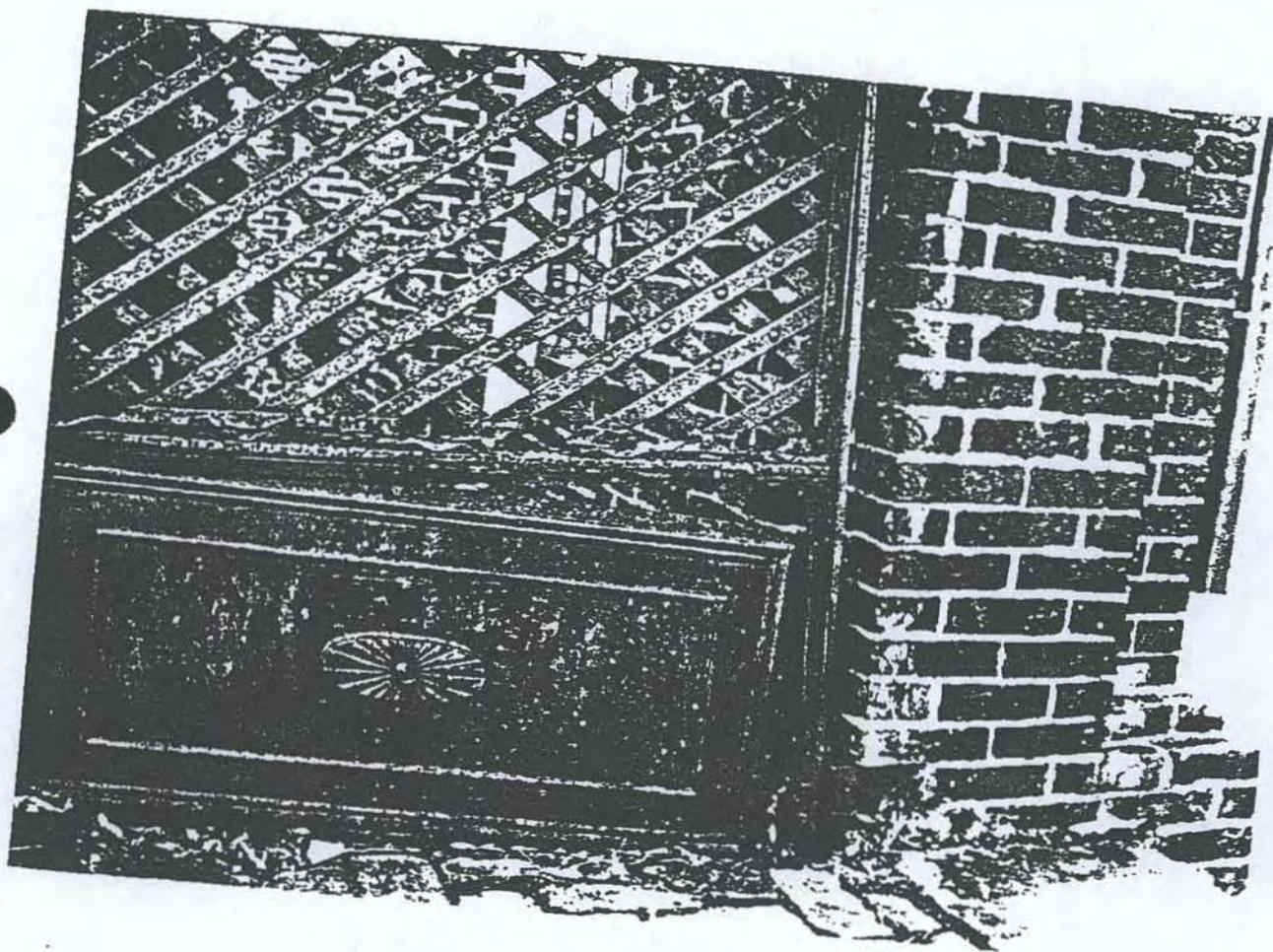
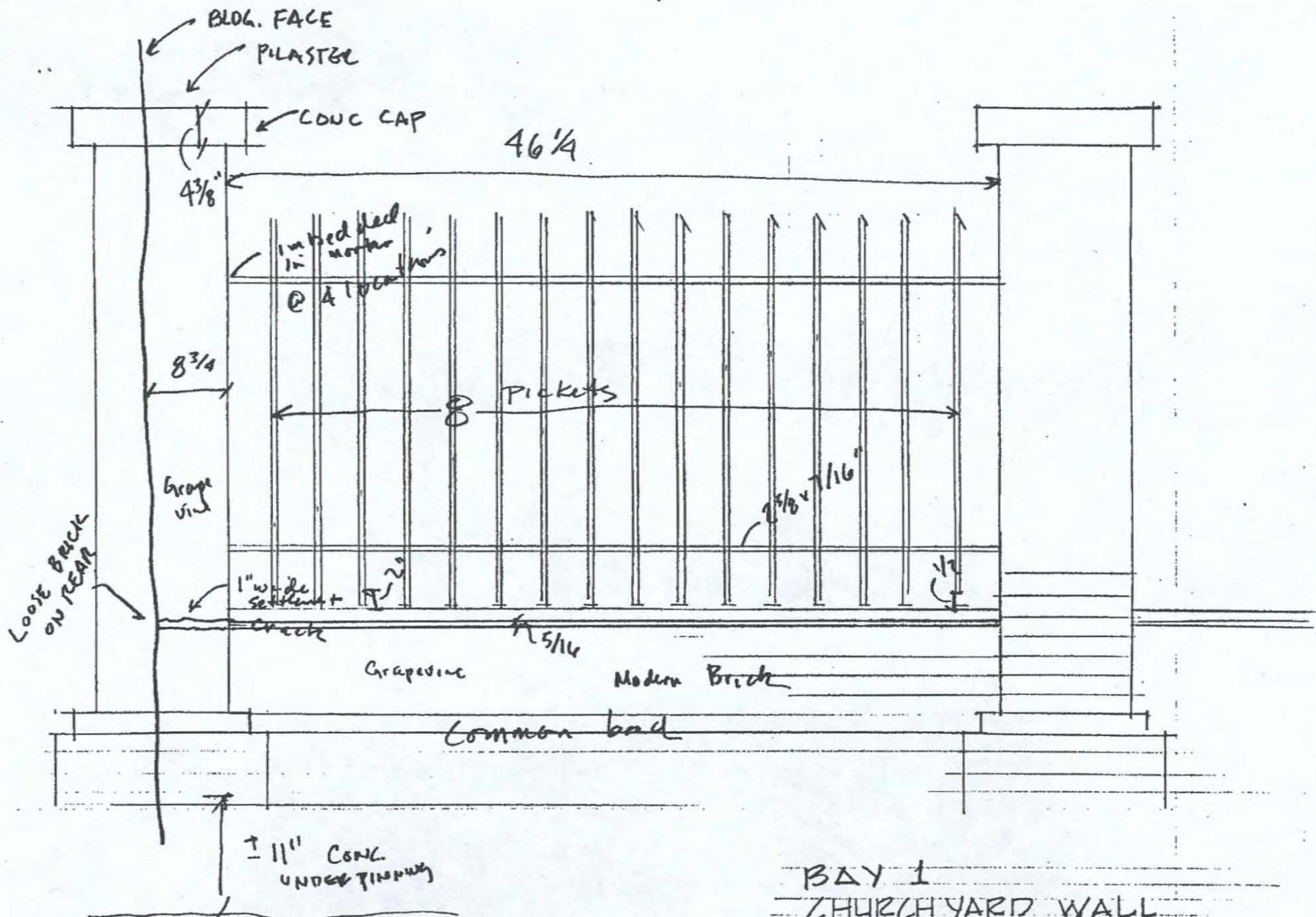


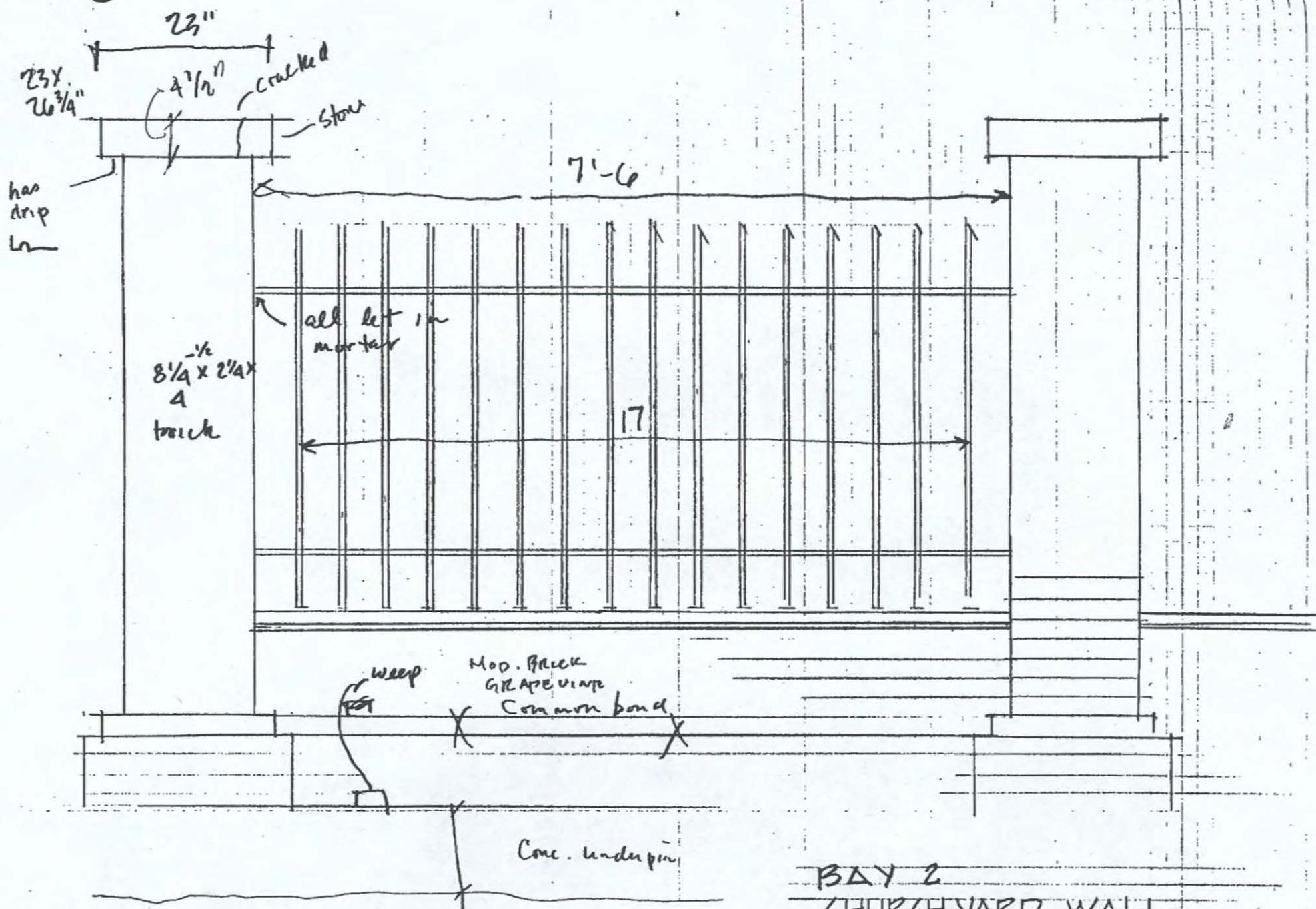
Plate 14
Detail of Iron Gate Showing Deteriorated Members and
Dropped Cast-Iron Panel

APPENDIX

Field Notes



BAY 1
 CHURCHYARD WALL
 CHRIST CHURCH
 ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

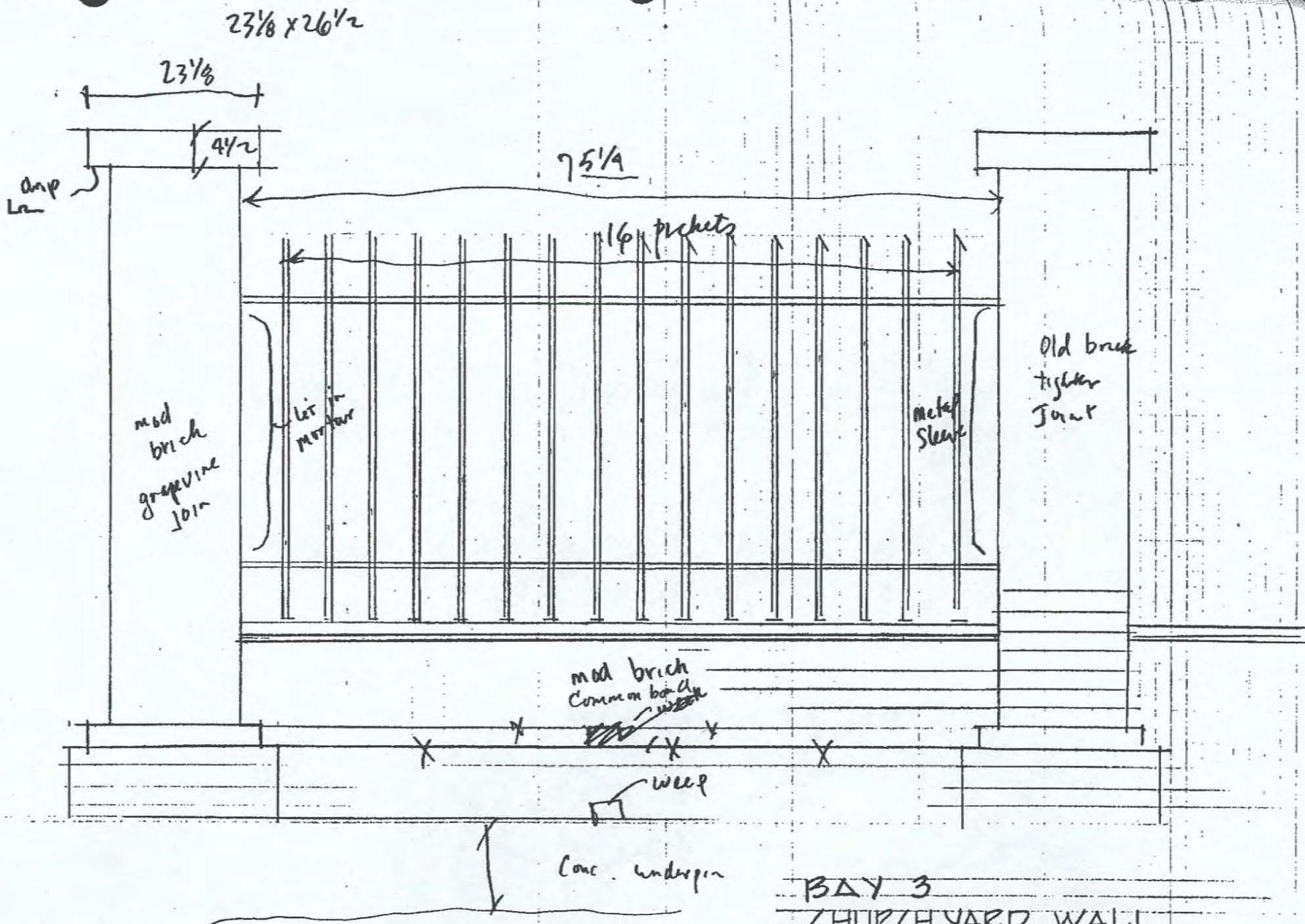


BAY 2

CHURCHYARD WALL

CHRIST CHURCH

ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA



BAY 3

CHURCHYARD WALL
 CHRIST CHURCH
 ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

23 x 27

23"

4 1/2"

7 6 1/2"

16

Le drip

old brick
tighter joint

cut grapevine
lime mortar

2 1/8 x 8 1/4 x
2 1/16"

let in
w/ iron
sleeve

let in
w/ iron
sleeve

no grapevine
slightly wider joint
8 1/4 x 8 1/2 - x 2 1/8

Header
Course
4 1/8"

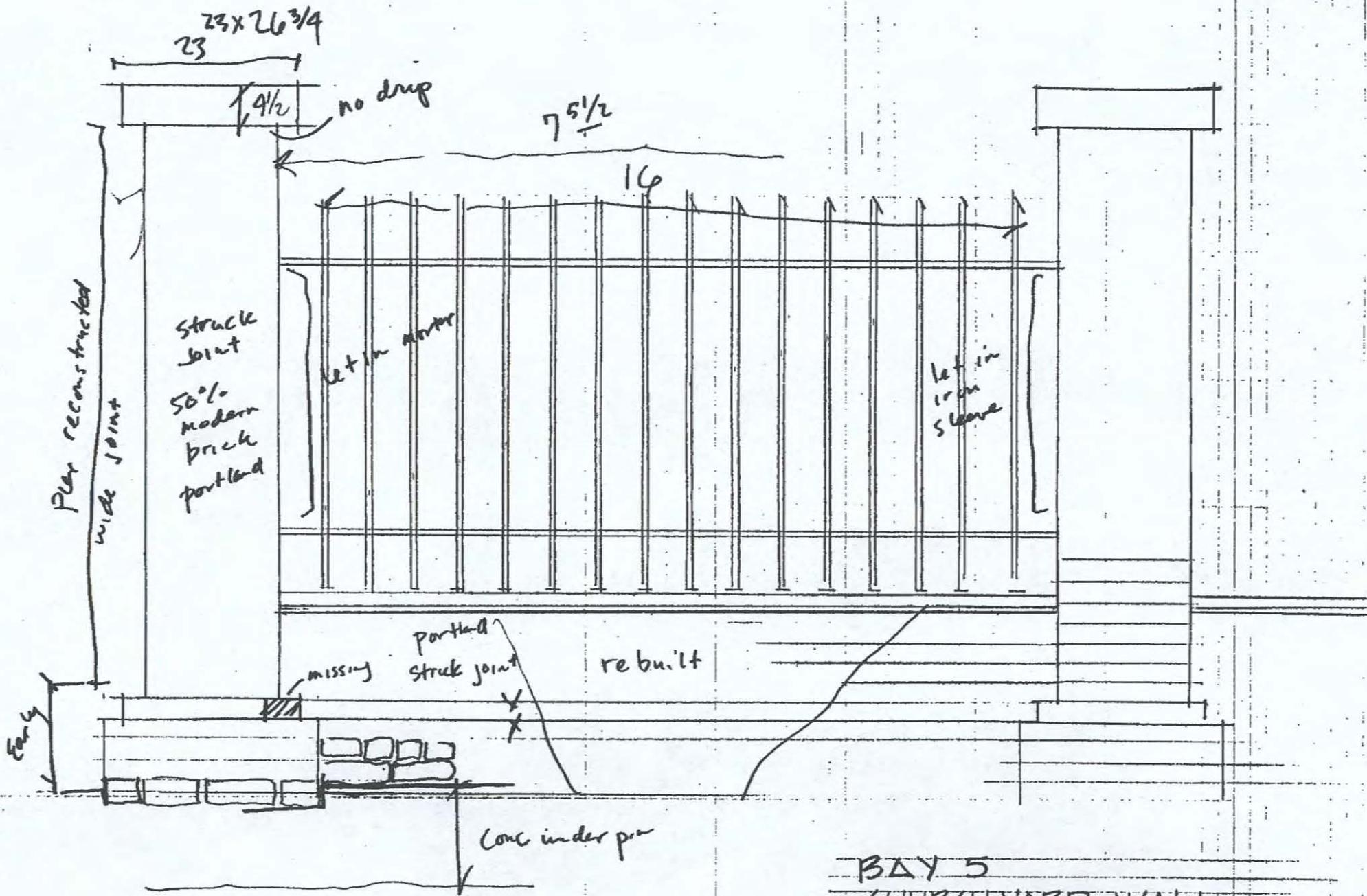
conc. underpin

BAY 4

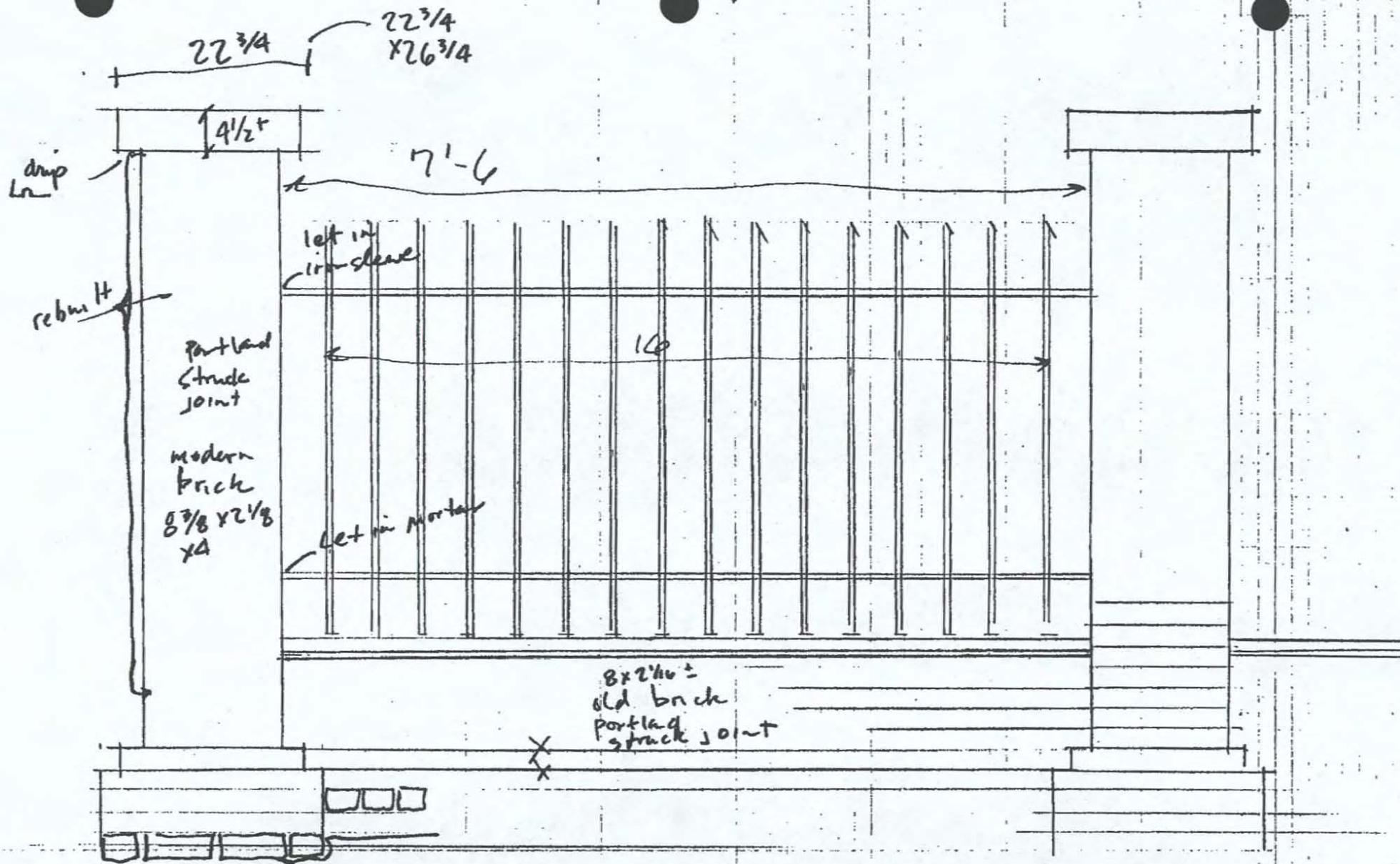
CHURCHYARD WALL

CHRIST CHURCH

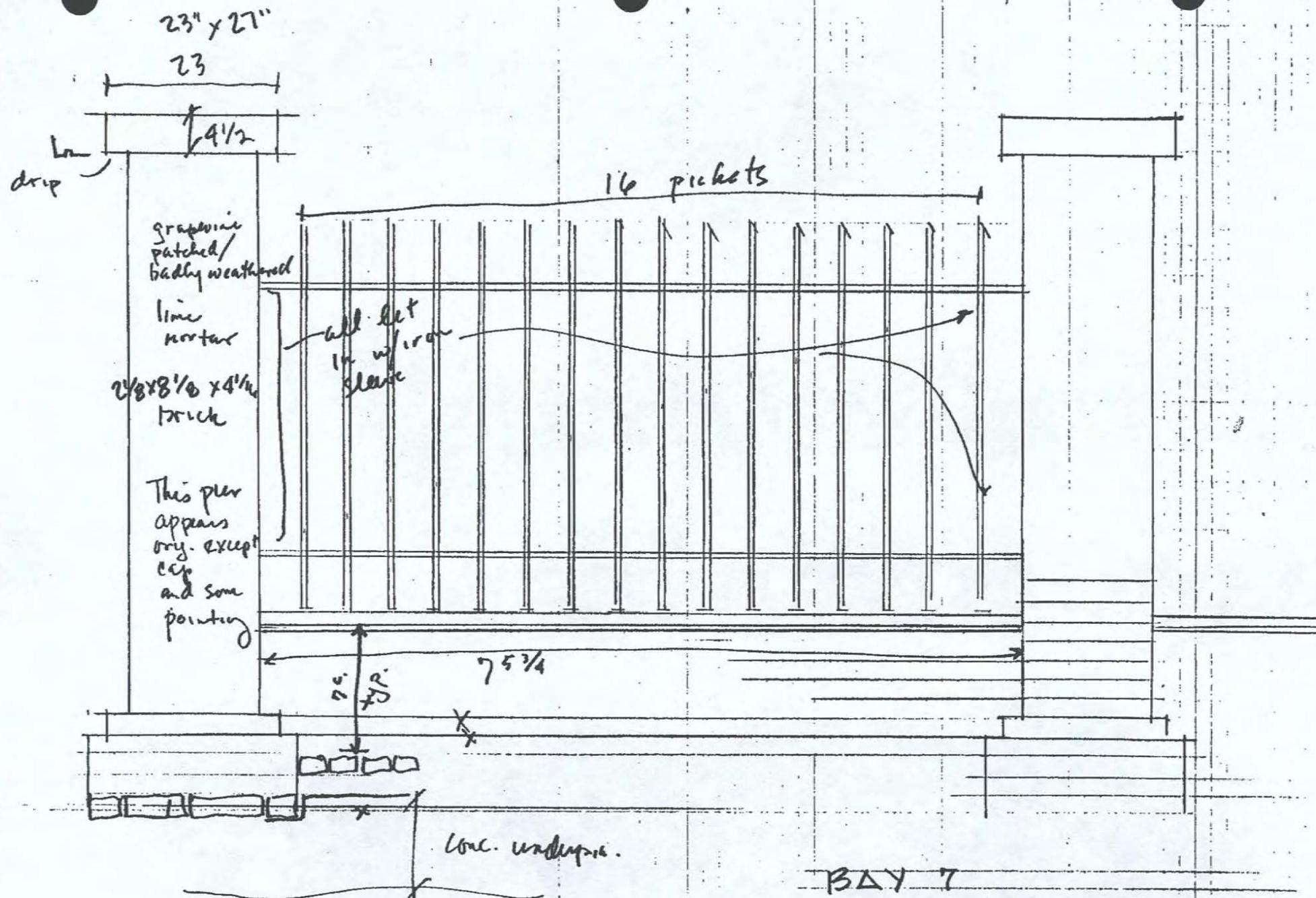
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA



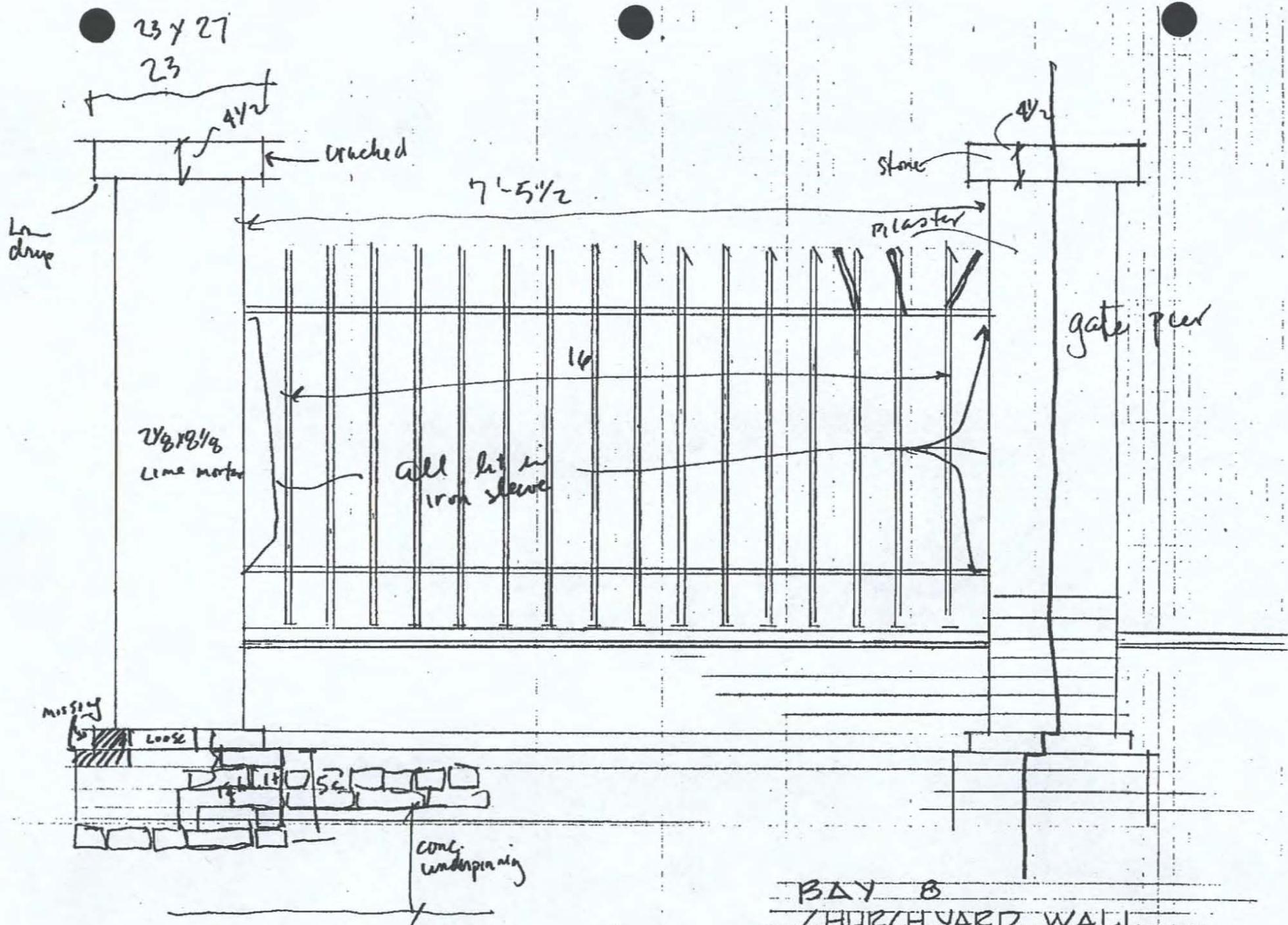
BAY 5
 CHURCHYARD WALL
 CHRIST CHURCH
 ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA



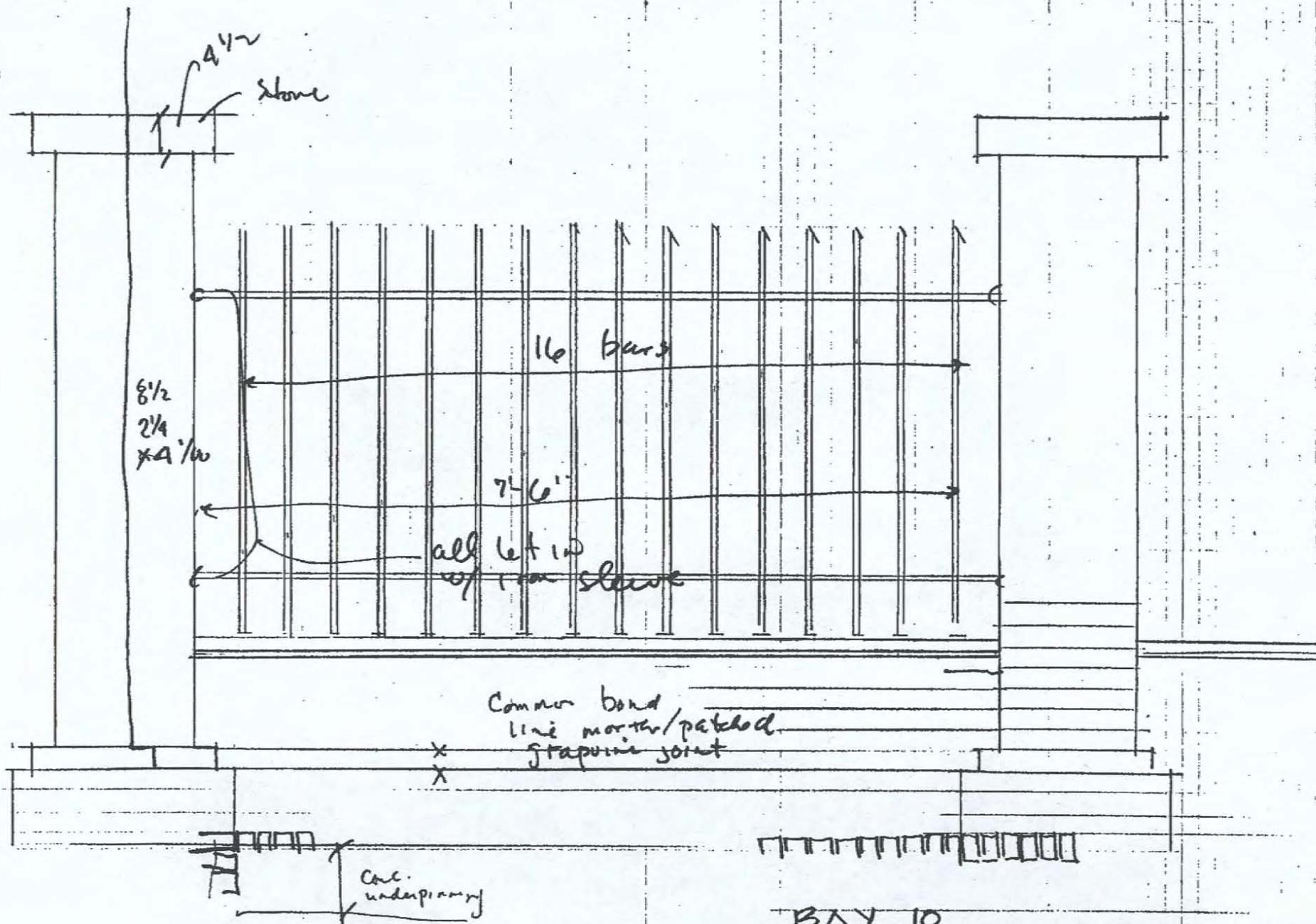
BAY 6
 CHURCH YARD WALL
 CHRIST CHURCH
 ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA



BAY 7
 CHURCHYARD WALL
 CHRIST CHURCH
 ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA



BAY 8
 CHURCHYARD WALL
 CHRIST CHURCH
 ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA



BAY 10
 CHURCHYARD WALL
 CHRIST CHURCH
 ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

23127

23

4 1/2

drip

7'6"

lime
mortar

8 1/2 x 2 1/4
x 4

all let in
iron sleeve

1 1/2

8 1/4 x 2 1/8 common bond

same
shift
pier

brick
colors
don't
to be later
in fill.

match
to appear
to be later
in fill.

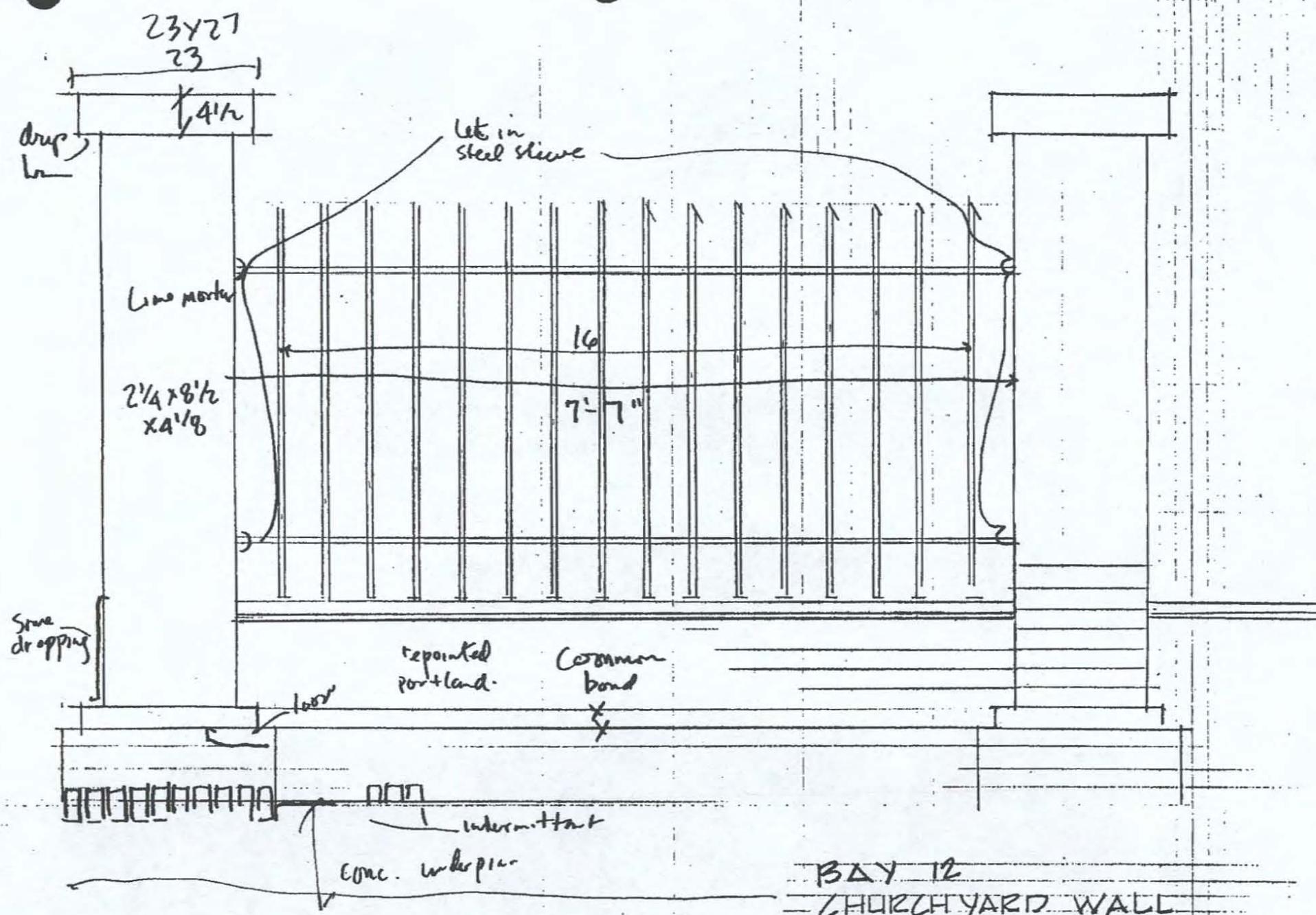
conc. under paving

BAY II

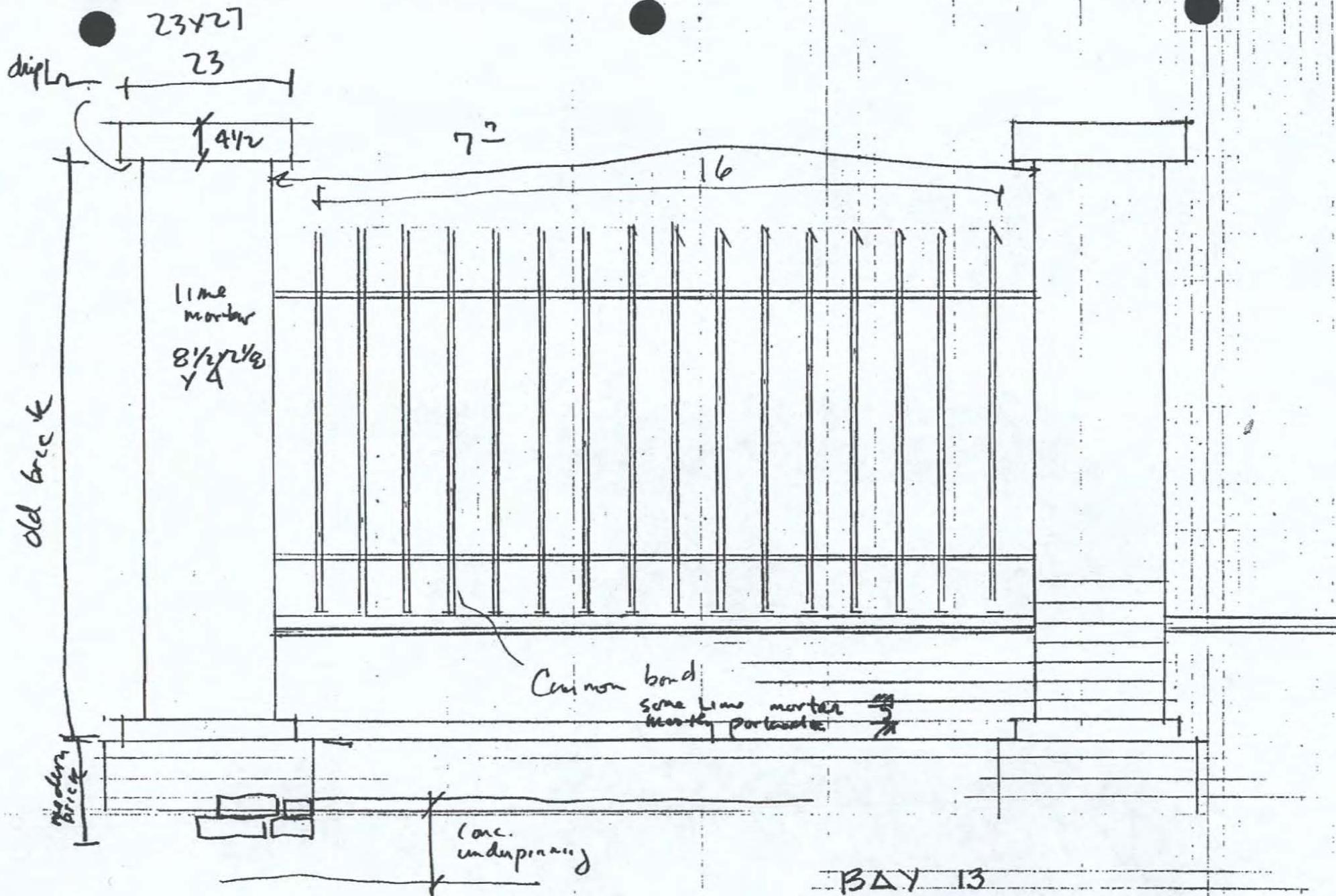
CHURCHYARD WALL

CHRIST CHURCH

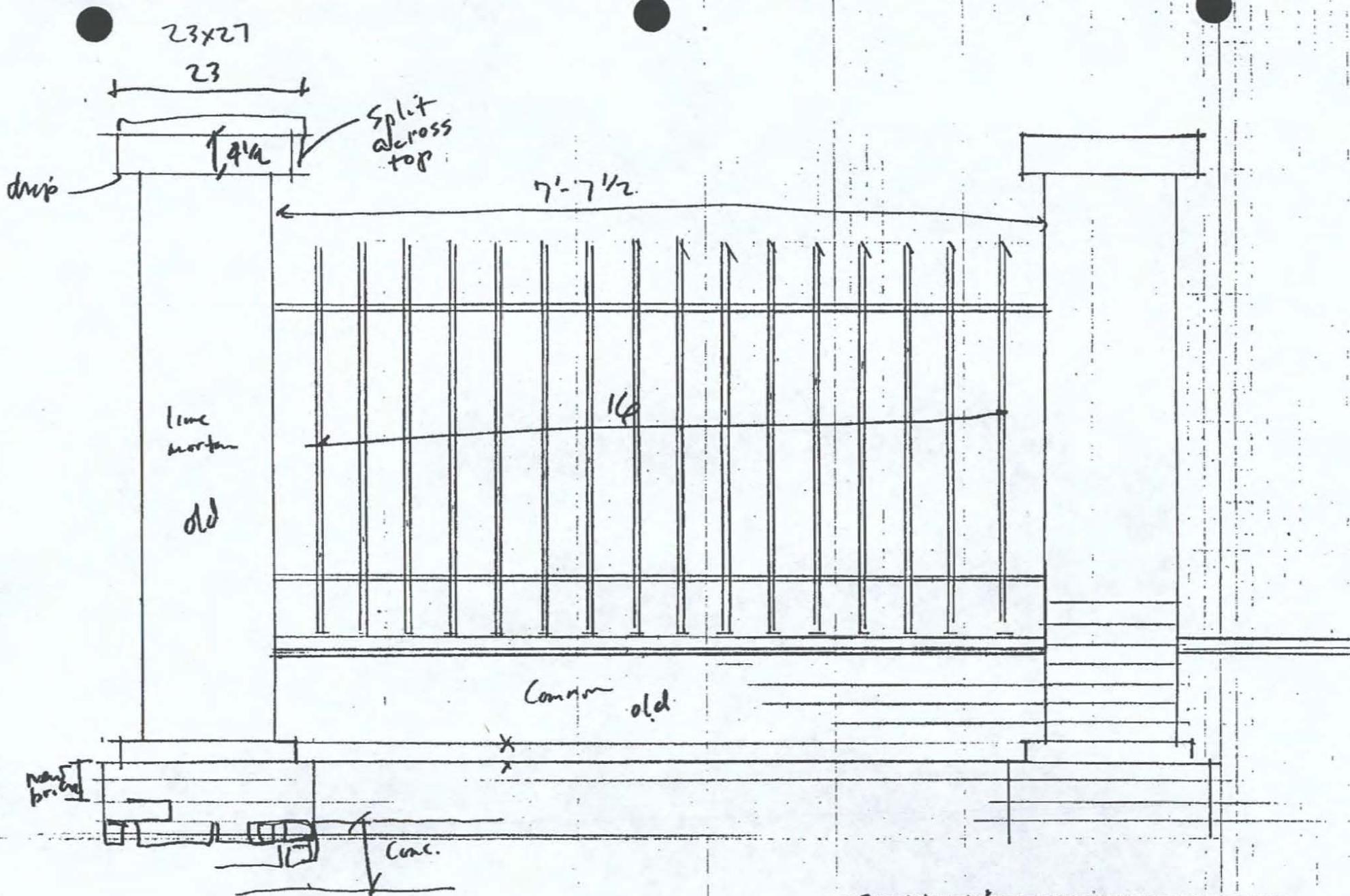
ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA



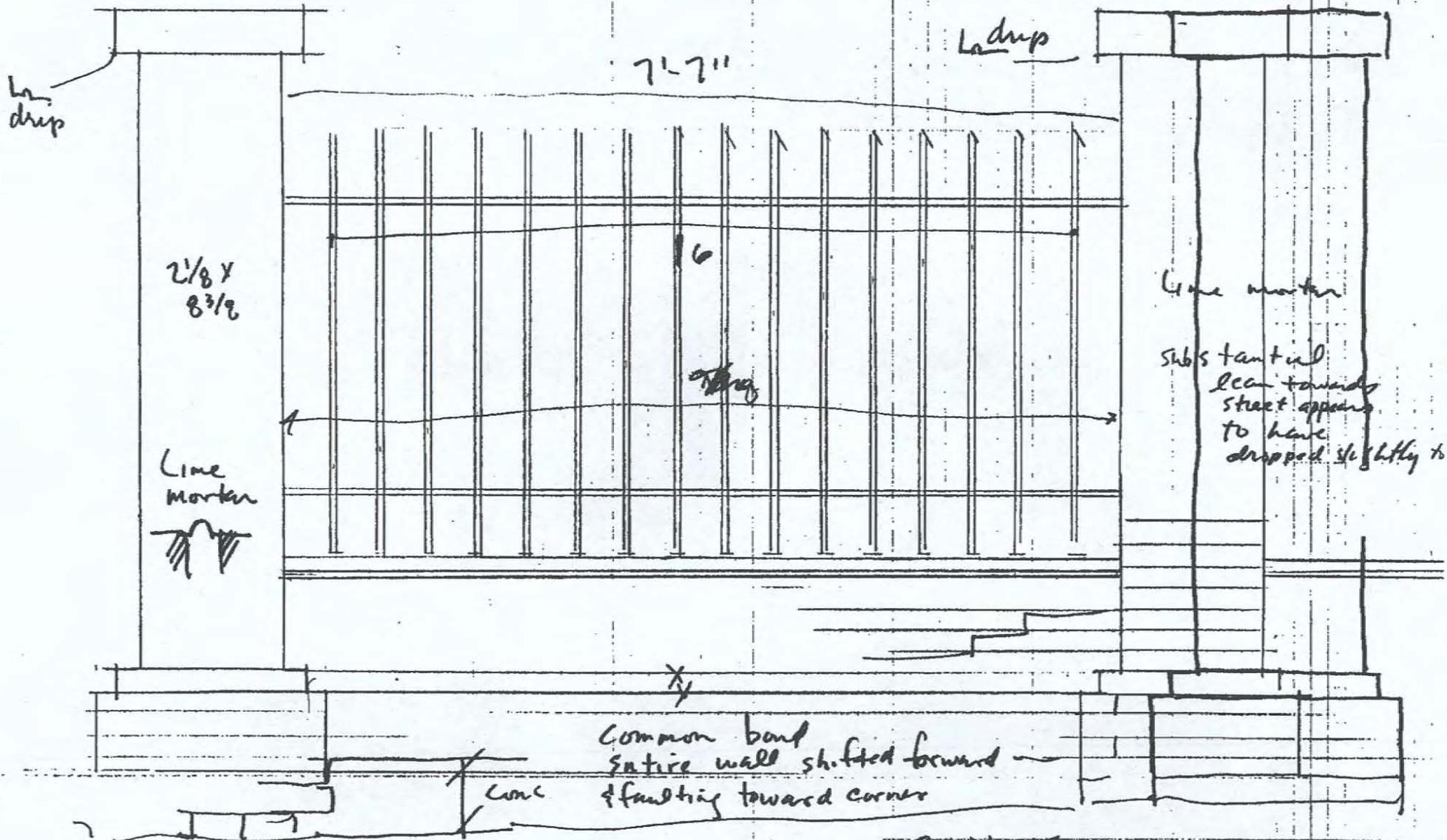
BAY 12
 CHURCHYARD WALL
 CHRIST CHURCH
 ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA



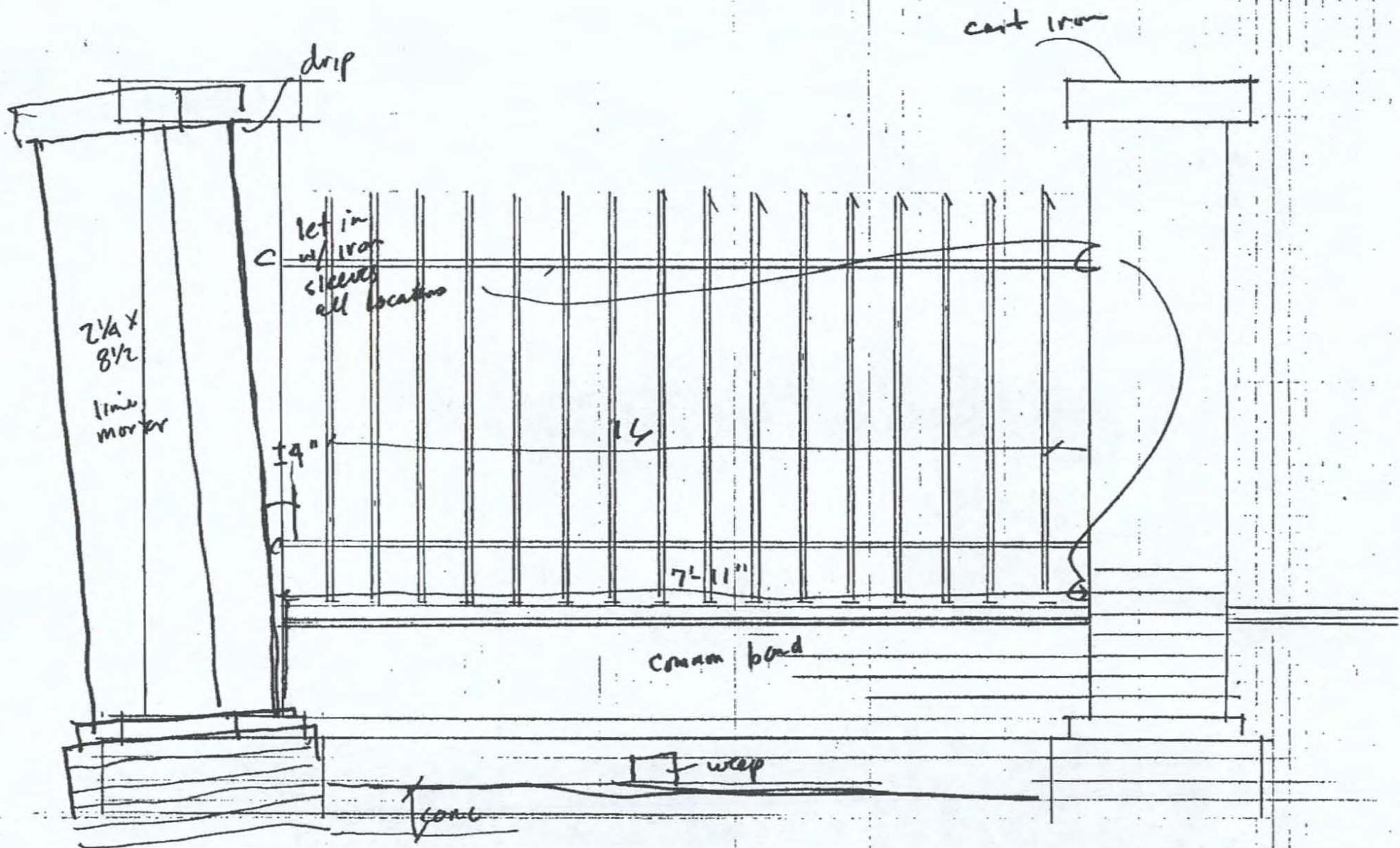
BAY 13
 CHURCHYARD WALL
 CHRIST CHURCH
 ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA



BAY 14
 CHURCHYARD WALL
 CHRIST CHURCH
 ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

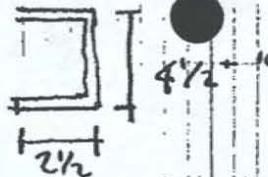
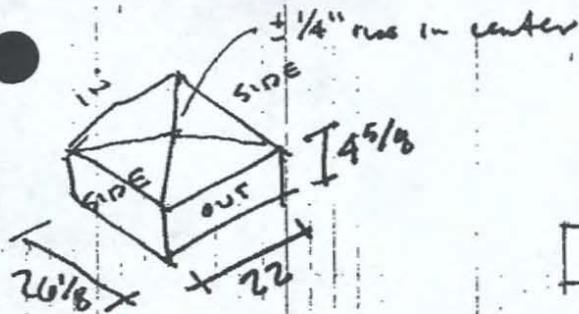


BAY 15
 CHURCHYARD WALL
 CHRIST CHURCH
 ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA



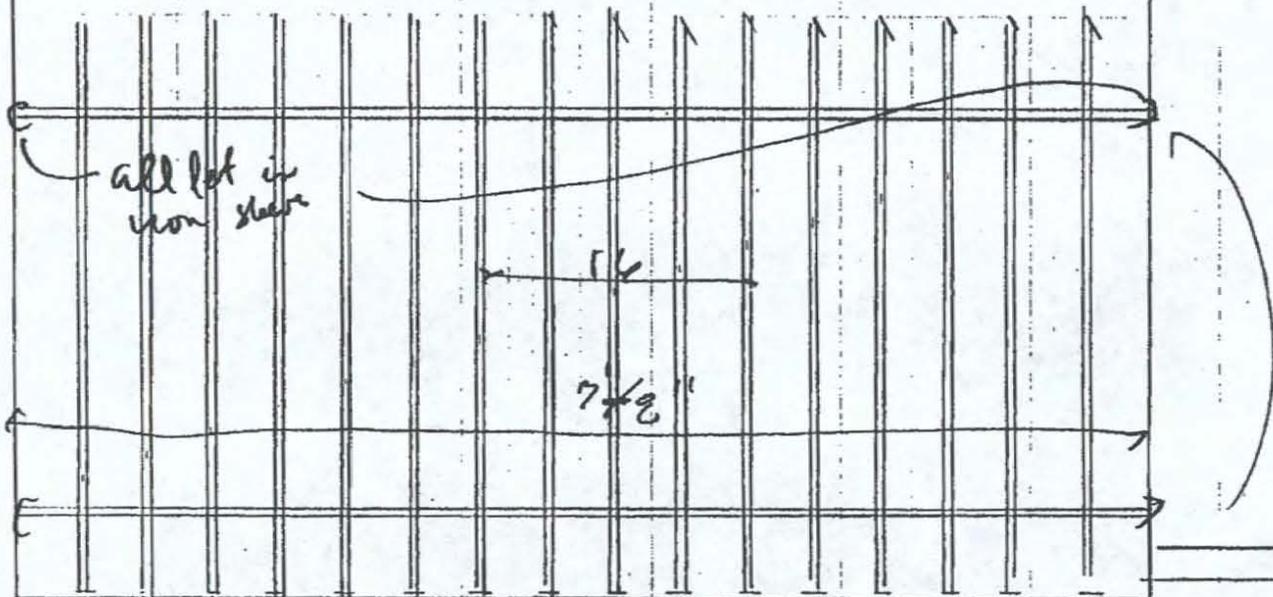
BAY 10
 CHURCHYARD WALL
 CHRIST CHURCH
 ALEXANDRIA, VIRGINIA

Typ C.I.
CAP



C.I.

C.I.



C.I.

C.I.

1000

BAY 17
CHURCHYARD WALL
CHRIST CHURCH
ALEXANDRIA VIRGINIA

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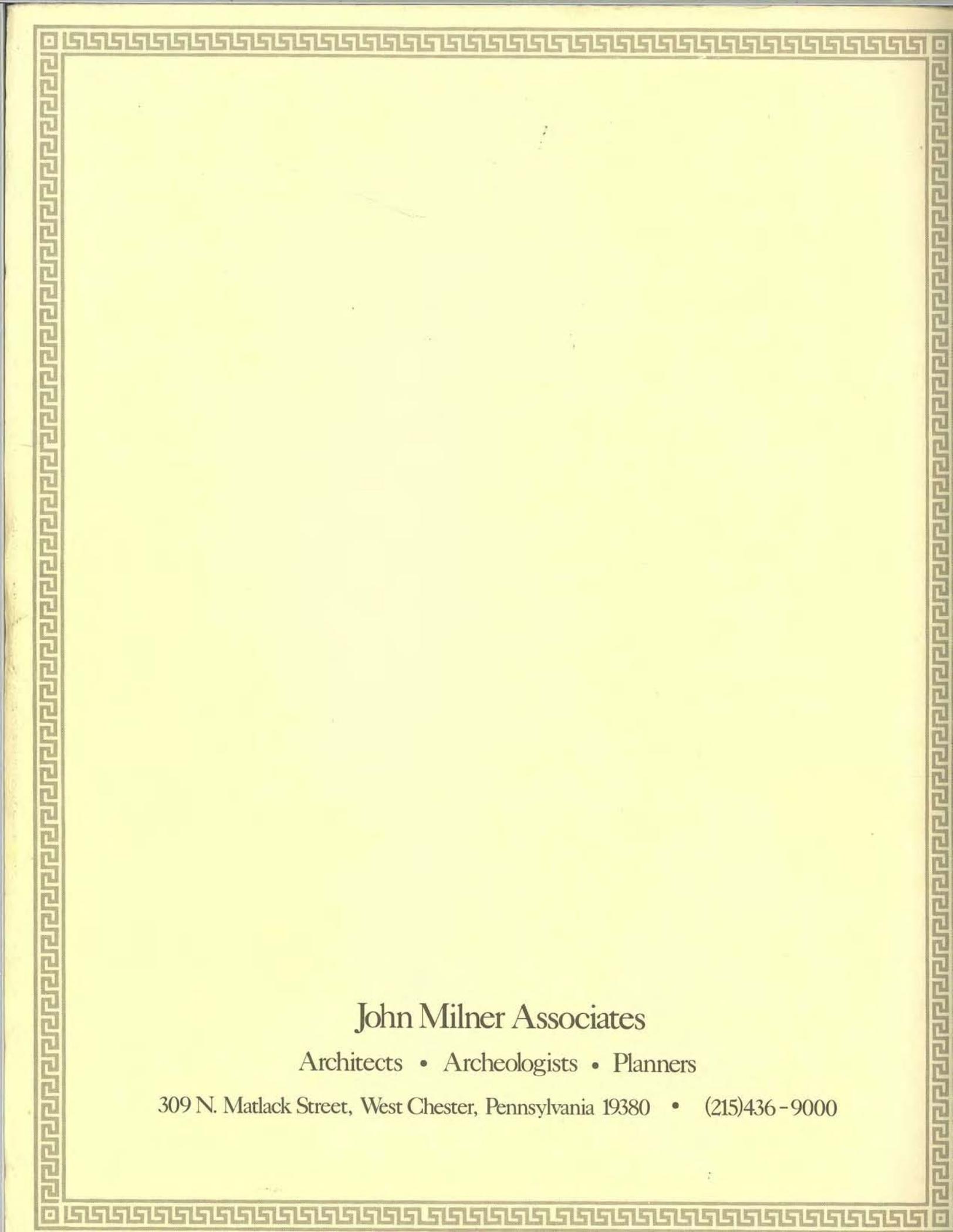
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