

Pownalborough Court House:

1936 Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS)

Preface

Historic buildings connect us to the people who came before us. Their walls have witnessed public debates, quiet conversations, celebrations, hardships, and the ordinary routines of everyday life. Some of these stories survive in letters, diaries, newspapers, and photographs. Others remain written into the buildings themselves, waiting to be discovered in worn stair treads, hand-forged hinges, weathered timbers, and carefully crafted woodwork.

The Pownalborough Court House, completed in 1761, is one of Maine's oldest surviving public buildings. It served as the seat of government for Lincoln County before becoming the home of the Johnson and Prescott families in the nineteenth century. Today it is preserved as a museum, allowing visitors to experience more than two and a half centuries of Maine history under one roof.

By the 1930s, many of America's historic buildings had already been altered or lost. Recognizing the need to preserve an accurate record of the nation's architectural heritage, the federal government established the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in 1933. Just three years later, a team of architects and draftsmen arrived at the Pownalborough Court House to create one of the earliest comprehensive architectural records of the building.

Over the course of their survey, they measured rooms, fireplaces, stairways, windows, doors, and structural framing, recording details that might otherwise have been forgotten. Their work produced nineteen meticulously drafted sheets that remain one of the most valuable resources for

understanding the courthouse not just as it appeared in 1936, but they included historical notes on everything from its older shingled appearance to which features had been modified since the original construction.

At first glance, these drawings may seem intended only for architects or historians. In reality, they tell a much broader story. They reveal how the courthouse was constructed, how it evolved over time, and how its original eighteenth-century features could be distinguished from later alterations. They also offer a fascinating glimpse into the methods and standards of one of America's earliest historic preservation programs.

This guide was created to help readers explore that survey. Rather than simply reproducing the drawings, it explains what each sheet documents, why it was prepared, and what it reveals about the building. Whether you are visiting the courthouse for the first time, researching its history, studying early American architecture, or simply curious about how historic buildings are documented, these pages are intended to make one of the nation's finest architectural surveys accessible to everyone.

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Chapter 1

The Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS)

Preserving America's Architectural Heritage

Historic buildings are among our nation's most tangible connections to the past. They preserve the craftsmanship, materials, and architectural traditions of earlier generations while providing a physical setting for the events that shaped local communities and the nation as a whole. Every hand-hewn timber, worn floorboard, and carefully carved molding reflects the skills of the people who built them and the lives of those who later occupied them.

By the early twentieth century, however, many of America's oldest buildings were disappearing. Expanding cities, changing transportation networks, economic pressures, and modern construction practices led to the demolition or alteration of countless historic structures. While some buildings were preserved through local efforts, many others vanished without leaving behind an accurate record of their appearance or construction.

Architects, historians, and preservationists recognized that once a building was lost, so too was much of the knowledge it contained. If every room, doorway, staircase, fireplace, and structural detail could be measured and recorded, future generations would still be able to study these remarkable buildings even if they no longer survived. Accurate measured drawings, accompanied by photographs and written histories, offered a way to preserve America's architectural heritage for future generations.

This vision led to the creation of the Historic American Buildings Survey, a national program dedicated to documenting the country's most significant historic buildings with a level of precision and care never before attempted on such a scale.

The Great Depression and the Birth of HABS

The Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) was established in 1933 during the depths of the Great Depression. At a time when unemployment affected nearly every profession, many architects found themselves without work as construction projects came to a halt across the country.

Recognizing both the need to employ skilled professionals and the importance of preserving America's historic architecture, the National Park Service partnered with the American Institute of Architects and the Library of Congress to create a nationwide documentation program. Rather than constructing new buildings, teams of architects, draftsmen, and photographers would record historic structures through carefully prepared measured drawings, large-format photography, and written historical documentation.

The program served two important purposes. It provided meaningful employment for trained architects while creating a permanent archive of America's architectural heritage. Every measured drawing was prepared to professional drafting standards, ensuring that future architects, historians, preservationists, and researchers could rely upon the accuracy of the record.

More than ninety years later, the Historic American Buildings Survey remains one of the nation's most important preservation programs. Thousands of buildings have been documented, creating an extraordinary collection preserved by the Library of Congress and available to researchers throughout the world.

The Survey of the Pownalborough Court House

Among the many buildings selected for documentation was the Pownalborough Court House in Dresden, Maine. Completed in 1761, it is one of Maine's oldest surviving public buildings and an exceptional example of colonial civic architecture.

By 1936, the courthouse had already experienced nearly two centuries of continuous use and adaptation. Although many original architectural features remained intact, the building had also undergone alterations reflecting its long history. Recognizing both its historical importance and its remarkable state of preservation, the Historic American Buildings Survey selected the courthouse for comprehensive documentation.

The survey team produced nineteen measured drawings that recorded the building from foundation to roof. Floor plans documented the arrangement of each level, while exterior elevations captured every side of the structure. Additional sheets focused on entrances, fireplaces, windows, doors, hardware, framing, and other architectural details that distinguished the courthouse and preserved evidence of its eighteenth-century construction.

Today these drawings remain among the most complete architectural records ever created for the Pownalborough Court House. They provide an invaluable reference for historians, architects, museum professionals, preservationists, and anyone seeking to understand how the building was constructed and how it evolved over time.

The Survey Team

The measured drawings contained in this survey were the result of countless hours of careful observation, precise measurement, and meticulous drafting. Every line represents information

gathered directly from the building by trained architects and draftsmen who understood that accuracy was essential.

Unlike artistic renderings intended to capture the appearance of a building, measured drawings are technical documents created to exact scale. Dimensions, construction methods, architectural details, and structural relationships are recorded with precision so that the building can be studied long after the survey is complete.

The names appearing on the original title blocks, including Josiah T. Tubby, Joseph P. DePeter, Frank D. Sampson, and Carl R. Stearns, represent the professionals whose work made this permanent record possible. Their careful documentation continues to serve researchers nearly a century later, preserving information that might otherwise have been lost.

How to Read Architectural Drawings

For many readers, architectural drawings may appear unfamiliar at first. Fortunately, they follow a consistent visual language that becomes easy to understand with a little practice.

A floor plan presents a building as though it were sliced horizontally several feet above the floor, allowing the arrangement of rooms, walls, doors, windows, stairways, and fireplaces to be viewed from above. An elevation shows the exterior of one side of the building, revealing its proportions, windows, doors, rooflines, and architectural details. A section cuts vertically through the structure to expose its interior construction, framing, floor levels, and relationships between spaces.

Many sheets also include detail drawings, which enlarge specific architectural features such as entrances, fireplaces, moldings, doors, windows, or hardware. These enlarged views record craftsmanship that would be impossible to show clearly at the scale of the overall building.

Throughout the survey, scales, dimension lines, labels, and notes provide additional information about construction and materials. Together, these measured drawings form a comprehensive architectural record that allows readers to examine the courthouse from its overall design down to the smallest details.

The chapters that follow explore each of the nineteen sheets in sequence, explaining what the surveyors documented, why each drawing was important, and what it reveals about one of Maine's most remarkable historic buildings.

Finding Historic American Buildings Survey Records

For more than ninety years, the Historic American Buildings Survey has documented thousands of historic structures across the United States. Today, these records are preserved by the Library of Congress and are freely available to the public online.

A typical HABS collection includes measured drawings, large-format photographs, and written historical documentation. Some surveys are relatively brief, while others contain dozens or even hundreds of drawings and photographs.

Researchers, students, homeowners, and history enthusiasts can search the Library of Congress by building name, community, county, state, or HABS survey number. Because the collection is fully digitized, many surveys can be viewed and downloaded in high resolution at no cost.

Whether your interest is an eighteenth-century courthouse, a covered bridge, a lighthouse, or a family farmhouse, the Historic American Buildings Survey offers an extraordinary opportunity to explore America's architectural heritage directly from the original records.

Chapter 2

The Original Survey

The first sheet of every Historic American Buildings Survey serves as the official title page for the measured drawings that follow. Although simple in appearance, it establishes the identity of the building, records its location, identifies the government agencies responsible for the survey, and recognizes the architects, draftsmen, and reviewers whose work created this permanent record.

At the center of the page is a small sketch map locating the Pownalborough Court House along the eastern bank of the Kennebec River in what was then Cedar Grove, Lincoln County, Maine. Although the community is now known as Dresden, the survey preserves the place names in use when the drawings were prepared in 1936.

The title block along the bottom of the sheet provides valuable historical information. It records that the courthouse was erected in 1761, identifies the Historic American Buildings Survey as a project of the U.S. Department of the Interior and the National Park Service, and notes both the dates the building was measured and when the finished drawings were completed. It also preserves the names of the architects, draftsmen, and reviewers whose careful work continues to benefit researchers nearly a century later.

Perhaps most importantly, this page reminds us that the drawings which follow are neither modern reconstructions nor artistic interpretations. They are measured drawings prepared directly from the building itself. Every floor plan, elevation, section, and architectural detail in the pages ahead is part of the official 1936 Historic American Buildings Survey, created to preserve an accurate architectural record of one of Maine's most significant colonial buildings.

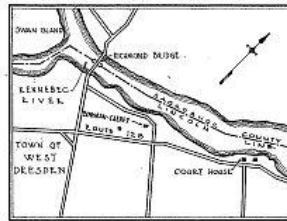
Looking Closer

Several details on this cover sheet deserve special attention.

- **Field work and drafting were separate processes.** The courthouse was measured during July 1936, while the finished drawings were completed in November 1936. This reminds us that much of the careful drafting occurred after the survey team returned from the field.
- **The sketch map provides historical context.** Rather than serving as a navigation map, it identifies the courthouse within its surrounding community and preserves the place names used in 1936.
- **The notation "19 Sheets" identifies a complete survey.** From the very first page, readers know they are looking at a coordinated set of measured drawings prepared as a single architectural record.
- **The approval signatures document the survey process.** Before being accepted into the Library of Congress, the drawings were reviewed and approved, emphasizing that these were official archival documents prepared to professional standards.

POWNBOROUGH COURT HOUSE

CEDAR GROVE
LINCOLN COUNTY
MAINE



SKETCH MAP
SHOWING LOCATION

ERECTED 1761

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
BRANCH OF PLANS AND DESIGN

MEASURED: JULY 7, 1936 - JULY 30, 1936
DRAWN: OCT. 1, 1936 - NOV. 15, 1936
MEASUREMENTS CHECKED: JOSIAH T. TUBBY



DRAWINGS APPROVED: *Josiah T. Tubby*
DRAWINGS APPROVED: *S. L. Allen*
ACCEPTED FOR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS: *[Signature]*

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JOSEPH DEPETER, PORTLAND ME
FRANK D. JAMISON
CARL E. STEARNS

SURVEY NO.
ME 42
19 SHEETS

INDEX NO.
102
61-62-63-64-65-66-67-68-69-70-71-72-73-74-75-76-77-78-79-80-81-82-83-84-85-86-87-88-89-90-91-92-93-94-95-96-97-98-99-100

Next: *The survey began where every great building begins, with its foundation. Before we can appreciate the courthouse's rooms, doors, and architectural details, we first understand the structure that has supported them since 1761.*

Sheet 1 – Basement Plan

The first measured drawing in the survey begins beneath the courthouse. Although visitors rarely see this part of the building, the basement reveals much about how the structure was engineered and how its builders adapted to the site nearly two and a half centuries ago.

Unlike a modern basement, this space was never intended as finished living or working space. Instead, it provided a solid foundation for the building above while supporting massive masonry fireplaces and carrying the weight of heavy timber framing. The plan documents both the structural elements that made the courthouse possible and the practical solutions employed by eighteenth-century builders.

One of the most striking features of the drawing is the large central area labeled "Unexcavated." Rather than excavating beneath the entire building, the original builders removed only the soil necessary to construct the foundation walls, support the fireplaces, and provide access beneath portions of the floor. Leaving much of the interior undisturbed reduced labor while providing a stable base for the structure.

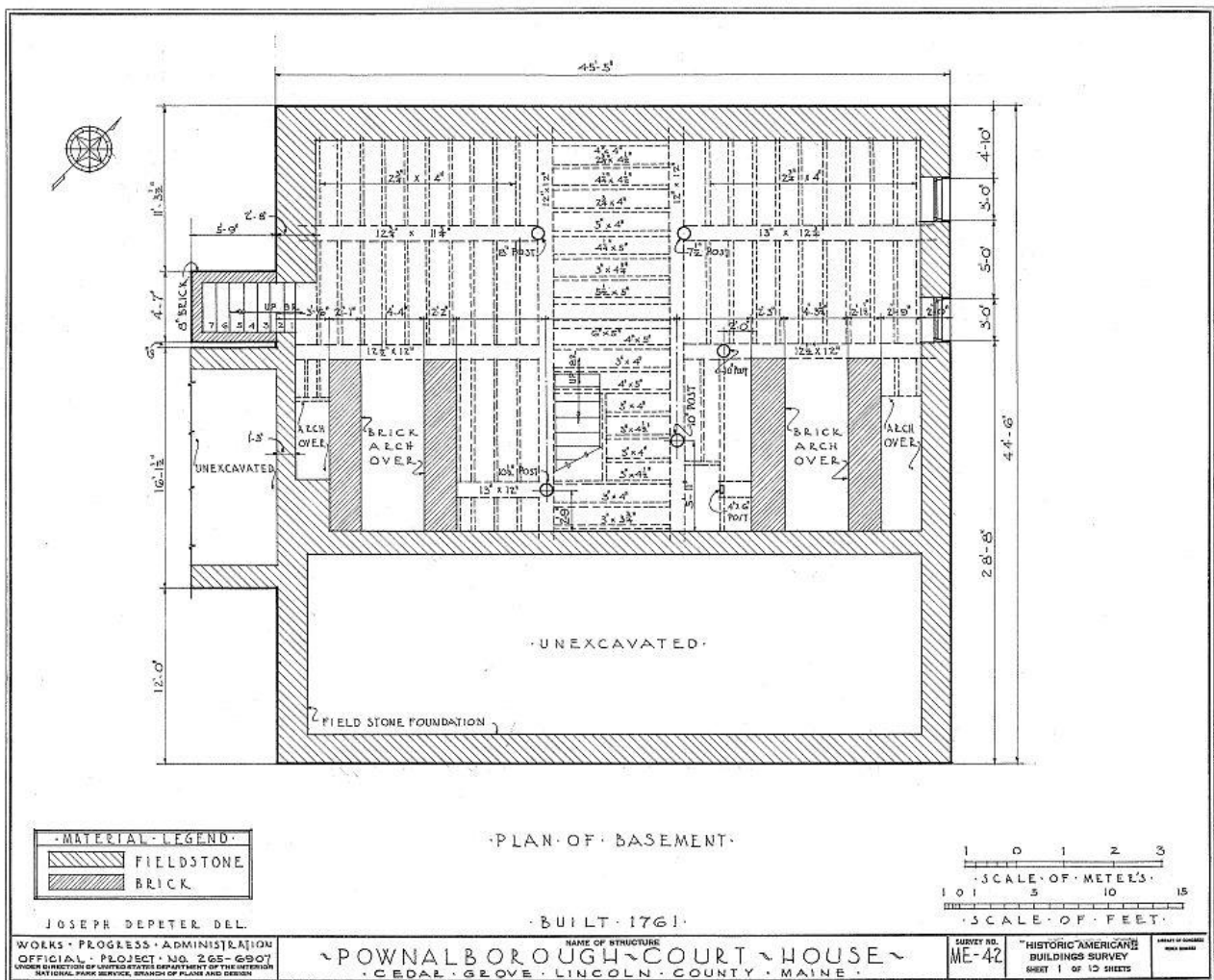
The drawing also illustrates the substantial fieldstone foundation that supports the courthouse. A material legend identifies the two primary construction materials: fieldstone for the exterior foundation walls and brick for the large masonry arches beneath the fireplaces. These brick arches carried the tremendous weight of the chimneys above while creating protected spaces beneath each hearth.

Running through the center of the building is a series of heavy timber posts supporting the principal floor framing. Together with the stone foundation and masonry arches, these supports distributed the weight of the building above and created a remarkably durable structural system that has served the courthouse for more than 260 years.

Although the basement itself receives few visitors today, this drawing reminds us that every historic building depends upon careful engineering hidden from view. Before a single courtroom session could be held or a family could make the building their home, its foundation had to be designed to support generations of use.

Looking Closer

- **Only part of the basement was excavated.** The large area marked "Unexcavated" demonstrates that eighteenth-century builders removed only as much earth as was necessary for construction and maintenance.
- **The fireplaces begin in the basement.** The brick arches shown beneath each fireplace supported the weight of the masonry chimneys that rise through the building.
- **A simple material legend tells an important story.** Only two materials are identified: fieldstone and brick. They form the structural backbone of the courthouse.
- **The basement reveals the building's hidden framework.** While later sheets focus on rooms, doors, and architectural details, this plan introduces the unseen structural system that supports everything above it.



Next: We begin where every visitor begins, on the first floor. Before exploring the courthouse's history room by room, we'll examine the spaces recorded by the 1936 HABS survey and the evidence they preserve.

Sheet 2 – First Floor Plan

The first floor plan introduces readers to the courthouse as its surveyors experienced it in 1936. More than simply showing the arrangement of rooms, this measured drawing captures nearly two centuries of architectural change, documenting both original eighteenth-century construction and later modifications made as the building adapted to new uses.

The plan reveals a remarkably compact and efficient layout centered on a main hall and staircase. Four principal rooms occupy the corners of the building: the Parlor, Kitchen, North Room, and East Room. Thick masonry chimneys stand at the center, allowing fireplaces to heat each of the major rooms while minimizing the amount of masonry required.

One of the strengths of this drawing is the surveyors' careful attention to historical evidence. Rather than recording only what existed in 1936, they also identified features that had changed over time. Notes such as "Original Partition Removed" and "Entrance Probably Not Original" demonstrate that the survey team carefully distinguished between eighteenth-century construction and later alterations whenever physical evidence allowed.

The plan also records spaces that reflect the building's evolution from a colonial courthouse to a nineteenth-century family residence. The wood shed and present kitchen addition appear outside the original footprint, while closets and other interior modifications illustrate how changing needs shaped the building over nearly two centuries of continuous use.

Because every wall, doorway, window, fireplace, and staircase was measured directly from the building, this drawing serves as both an architectural plan and a historical record. It preserves not only the courthouse's original design but also the evidence of generations who adapted the building to meet their own needs.

Looking Closer

- **The survey documents history, not just architecture.** Notes identifying removed partitions and probable alterations show that the surveyors were interpreting the building as well as measuring it.
- **The central chimneys organized the floor plan.** Their location allowed fireplaces to serve multiple rooms while providing structural support for the masonry above.
- **Later additions are clearly distinguished.** The wood shed and present kitchen are shown outside the original building, allowing readers to separate eighteenth-century construction from later modifications.
- **Every measurement mattered.** Doorways, wall thicknesses, window locations, stair dimensions, and fireplace details were all recorded so the building could be accurately understood long after the survey was completed.

Sheet 3 – Second Floor Plan

The second floor plan reveals one of the most significant transitions in the history of the Pownalborough Court House. While the first floor had evolved into a combination of domestic and service spaces, the upper floor still preserved evidence of the building's original public purpose.

Dominating the plan is the large Old Court Room, occupying nearly half of the second floor. This expansive space recalls the building's original function as Lincoln County's courthouse, where judges, lawyers, jurors, and citizens gathered to conduct the business of the community. Long after the courthouse ceased serving its judicial role, the room remained a defining feature of the building's architecture.

The remainder of the floor reflects the building's later life as a family residence. Two large bedrooms occupy the southern corners of the building, each served by a fireplace built into the central chimney mass. Closets, hallways, and the central staircase demonstrate how the upper floor was adapted to meet the needs of those who called the courthouse home.

As on the previous sheet, the surveyors carefully distinguished between original construction and later alterations. A prominent note states that the walls shown with dotted lines are **not original**, providing another example of the survey team's effort to separate eighteenth-century fabric from subsequent modifications. These observations transform the drawing from a simple floor plan into an interpretation of the building's architectural history.

The second floor also illustrates the efficiency of the courthouse's original design. The central staircase provides direct access to every room, while the paired chimneys continue the balanced arrangement established on the first floor. The building's symmetry reflects the orderly principles that characterized much of eighteenth-century public architecture.

Today, visitors often imagine the courthouse as either a colonial courthouse or a nineteenth-century home. This measured drawing reminds us that it was both. Within a single floor plan, the survey captures evidence of the building's changing roles across nearly two centuries of continuous use.

Looking Closer

- **The Old Court Room remained the building's defining space.** Even after the courthouse became a residence, the large courtroom continued to dominate the second floor.
- **Dotted lines tell a historical story.** The surveyors used them to distinguish later partitions from original eighteenth-century construction, helping readers understand how the building evolved over time.
- **The balanced floor plan reflects Georgian design principles.** The paired chimneys, central staircase, and symmetrical room arrangement created both structural efficiency and architectural harmony.
- **Public and private history meet on one floor.** The courtroom represents the building's civic past, while the bedrooms illustrate its long service as a family home.

Sheet 4 – Third Floor Plan

The third floor plan completes the survey of the courthouse's interior while beginning to reveal the remarkable structural system concealed within the building. Although this level contained additional bedrooms and storage space, its simpler layout allowed the surveyors to show features that were largely hidden on the floors below.

Like the second floor, the plan is organized around a central staircase and hall. Four bedrooms occupy the corners of the building, while smaller storage rooms and closets fill the remaining space. Compared to the more formal arrangement of the lower floors, this level reflects practical domestic use, providing sleeping quarters and storage for the families who called the courthouse home during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

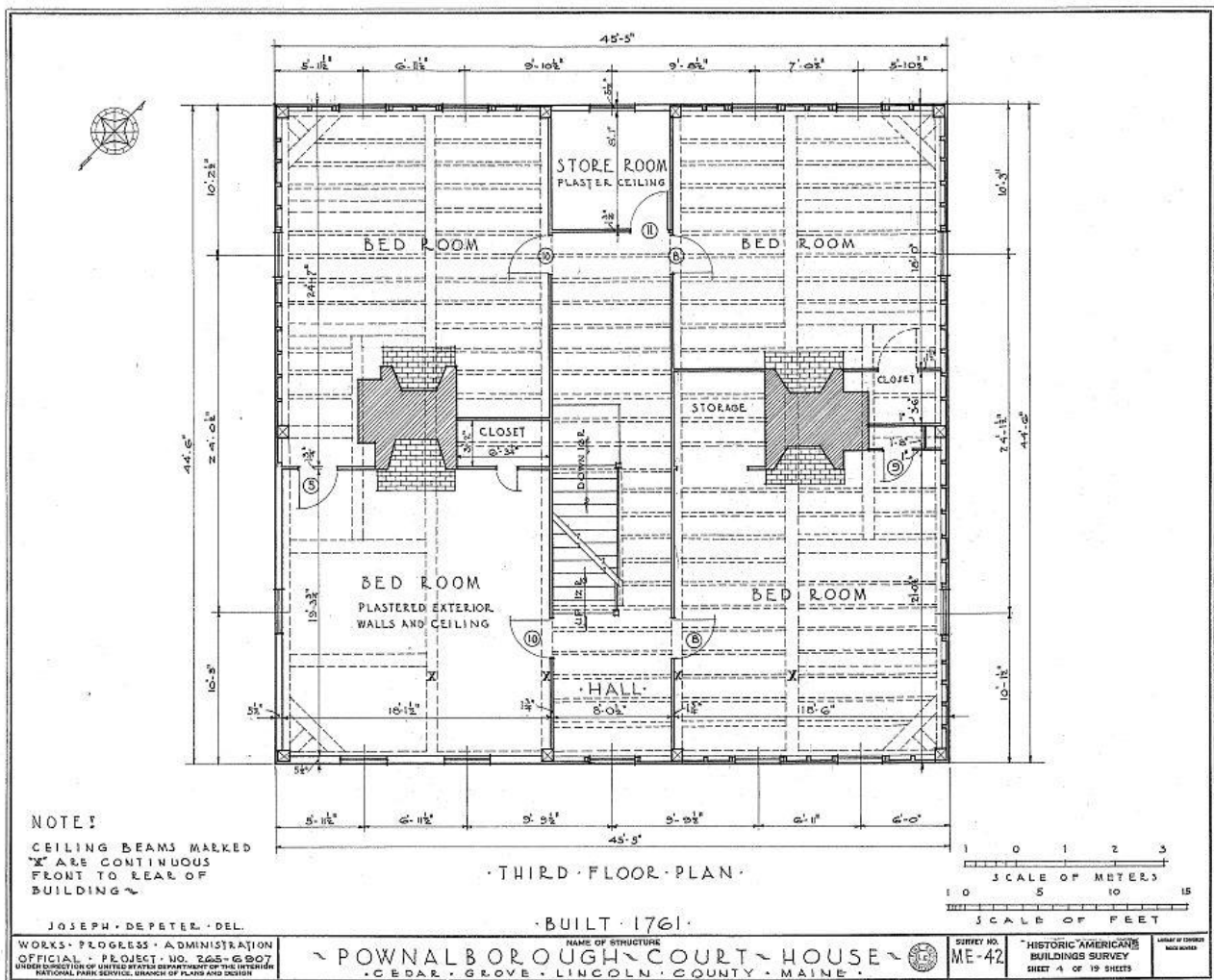
One note on the drawing is particularly significant: "Ceiling beams marked 'X' are continuous from front to rear of building." This seemingly simple observation reveals an important aspect of eighteenth-century construction. Rather than relying on numerous short framing members, the builders incorporated massive timbers that spanned the full width of the courthouse, contributing to the building's remarkable strength and stability.

The plan also hints at the transition from finished living space to the structural framework above. While plastered walls and ceilings enclosed the occupied rooms, the surveyors increasingly focused on framing, beam locations, and construction methods. Their attention was beginning to shift from how the building was used to how it was engineered.

Although less elaborate than the floors below, the third floor demonstrates the thoughtful planning that characterized the entire courthouse. Even the uppermost occupied level maintained the building's symmetry, efficient circulation, and balanced relationship between living space and structural support.

Looking Closer

- **The third floor remained part of the family's living space.** Four bedrooms demonstrate that the upper level was actively used rather than serving solely as an attic.
- **Continuous ceiling beams reveal exceptional craftsmanship.** The surveyors specifically noted framing members that extend from the front to the rear of the building, highlighting the use of long, heavy timbers in the original construction.
- **Storage areas illustrate changing household needs.** Dedicated storage spaces reflect the practical adaptations made as the courthouse evolved into a family residence.
- **The survey's focus begins to change.** Structural notes become increasingly prominent, preparing readers for the detailed examination of the roof framing that follows.



Next: Having documented every occupied level of the courthouse, the survey now looks above the ceilings to reveal the roof framing. Hidden from everyday view, these massive timbers demonstrate the skill and ingenuity of the eighteenth-century craftsmen who created a structure capable of standing for more than two and a half centuries.

Sheet 5 – Roof Framing Plan

With the occupied spaces now fully documented, this sheet turns its attention to the structure that has quietly protected the courthouse for more than two and a half centuries. Hidden above the ceilings and rarely seen by visitors, the roof framing represents some of the finest craftsmanship found anywhere in the building.

Unlike the previous floor plans, this drawing is concerned almost entirely with structure rather than rooms. The heavy rafters, purlins, braces, and principal framing members are shown in precise detail, revealing how eighteenth-century builders created a roof capable of supporting substantial snow loads while resisting the powerful winds common along the Kennebec River.

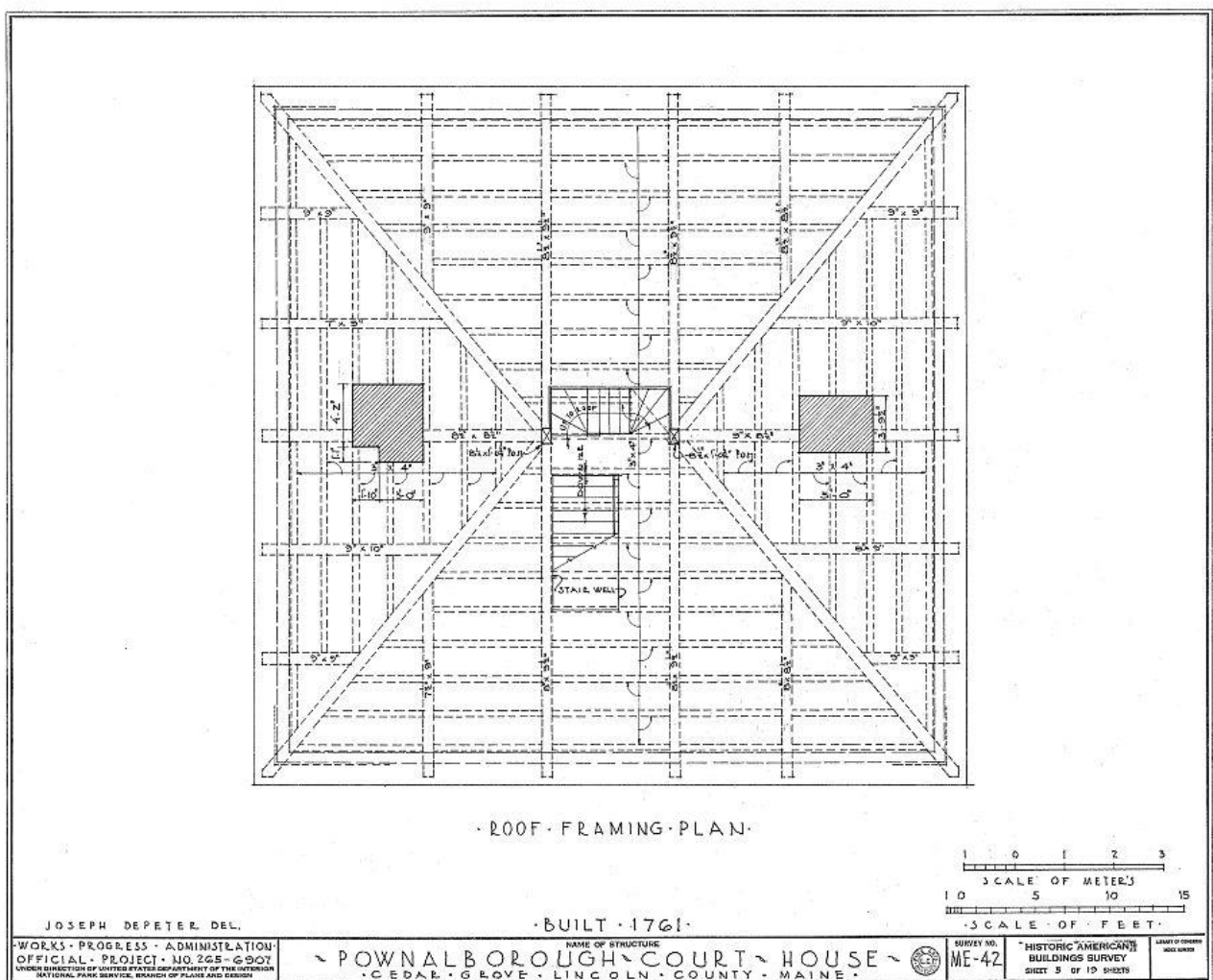
One of the most striking features of the plan is its remarkable symmetry. The framing radiates from the central roof opening, while diagonal braces strengthen each corner of the structure. Every timber serves a purpose, distributing loads efficiently from the roof to the walls and ultimately to the fieldstone foundation documented in the first sheet of the survey.

The drawing also reminds us that the courthouse was built long before modern engineering calculations or manufactured building materials. Every timber was individually selected, shaped, and fitted by skilled craftsmen using traditional joinery techniques. The precision of the framing illustrates both their practical knowledge and their confidence in working with large timbers.

Although visitors seldom see this portion of the building, the roof framing has quietly performed its task since 1761. More than simply supporting the roof, it has protected the building, its occupants, and its history for over two and a half centuries.

Looking Closer

- **This sheet has reached the building's structural framework.** Unlike the previous plans, nearly every line on this sheet represents framing rather than occupied space.
- **Symmetry was both aesthetic and structural.** The balanced arrangement of the framing distributes weight evenly throughout the building.
- **Heavy diagonal braces strengthen the corners.** These members help resist twisting and racking caused by wind and weather.
- **The roof framing completes the survey of the courthouse's structural system.** Beginning with the fieldstone foundation and ending with the roof, the first five sheets document the building from the ground to its highest point.



Next: *Our perspective now shifts outside as the survey begins to document the courthouse's exterior elevations, allowing us to see how its carefully engineered structure was expressed in one of Maine's finest examples of colonial public architecture.*

Chapter 3

Exterior Architecture

Having documented the courthouse from its foundation to its roof framing, the Historic American Buildings Survey now steps outside to examine the building as it appears to the world.

While the floor plans revealed how the courthouse was organized and the roof framing exposed the craftsmanship hidden within its walls, the exterior elevations record the building's public face. They document its proportions, symmetry, materials, windows, doors, chimneys, and architectural details with the same precision that characterized the interior drawings.

Unlike a photograph, an elevation eliminates distractions such as trees, shadows, and perspective. Every architectural feature is presented at a consistent scale, allowing proportions and construction details to be studied with exceptional clarity. These drawings also record features that the surveyors believed represented the building's original appearance, even when later alterations had obscured or replaced them.

The four elevations that follow provide a complete visual record of the courthouse from every direction. Along with the cross section and plot plan, they reveal not only what the building looked like in 1936, but also how it related to its surroundings and reflected the principles of eighteenth-century colonial architecture.

Sheet 6 – Front (South-East) Elevation

The south-east elevation presents the courthouse as visitors would have approached it in 1936. More than a simple front view, this measured drawing records the building's proportions, symmetry, and architectural character while also revealing the surveyors' careful interpretation of its original appearance.

The façade reflects the balance and order that define Georgian architecture. A centrally placed entrance anchors the composition, while evenly spaced windows create a symmetrical arrangement across three stories. Twin chimneys rise from either end of the roof, reinforcing the building's formal appearance and reflecting the practical organization of the fireplaces within.

One of the most interesting aspects of this drawing appears in the surveyor's note. By 1936, the courthouse had been covered with clapboards, concealing its original exterior finish. Rather than simply drawing the building as they found it, the survey team consulted an earlier photograph showing the original wood shingles before they were removed. Using that evidence, they reconstructed the historic appearance of the façade, including the pattern of the shingles and the original window configuration.

This decision illustrates one of the strengths of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Its purpose was not merely to record a building at a single moment in time, but to preserve the best available understanding of its historic character. Whenever reliable physical or photographic evidence existed, the surveyors incorporated that information into their measured drawings.

Dimensions shown along the side of the elevation establish the relationship between the basement, first, second, third, and attic floors, while notes identify construction materials such as lead flashing,

cemented chimneys, and the roof scuttle. These details transform the drawing from a portrait of the building into a precise architectural record.

Looking Closer

- **This is an interpreted elevation.** The surveyors relied on an earlier photograph to restore the original wood-shingled appearance of the façade rather than simply recording the clapboard exterior that existed in 1936.
- **Symmetry defines the design.** The centered entrance, balanced window arrangement, and paired chimneys reflect the principles of eighteenth-century Georgian architecture.
- **The elevation documents more than appearance.** Floor heights, roof pitch, chimney construction, and architectural materials are all recorded with measured precision.
- **Historical evidence guided the survey.** This drawing demonstrates that HABS combined careful measurement with historical research to produce the most accurate architectural record possible.

Sheet 7 – North-East Elevation

The north-east elevation presents a quieter side of the Pownalborough Court House. While less formal than the front façade, it demonstrates that the building's careful proportions and balanced design extended to every exterior wall. Even the secondary elevations reflect the symmetry and restraint characteristic of eighteenth-century Georgian architecture.

The orderly arrangement of windows aligns with the floor plans examined in the previous chapter, allowing readers to see how the interior spaces were expressed on the exterior. The three-story organization remains clearly visible, while the single chimney rising from the roof marks the location of one of the courthouse's central masonry stacks.

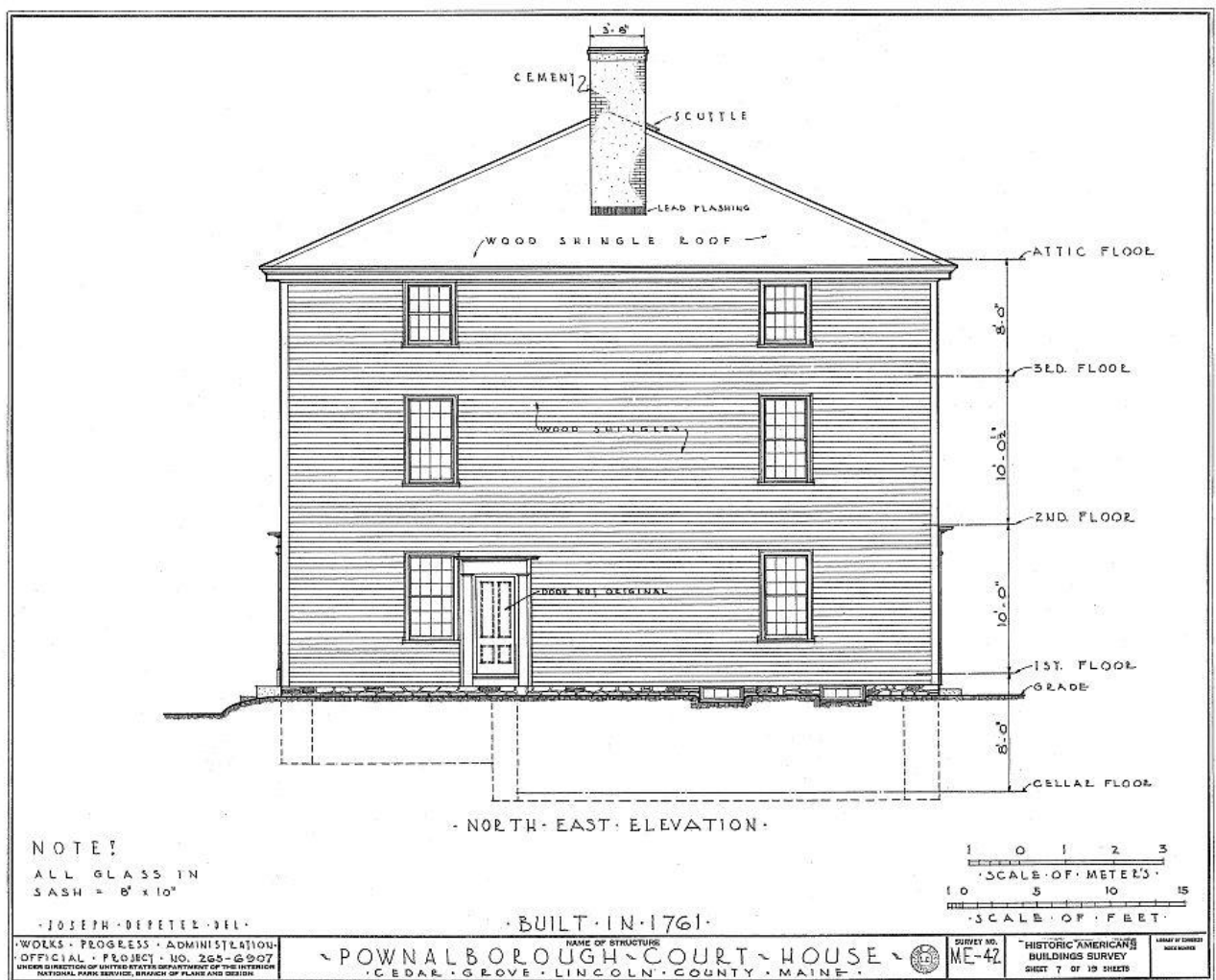
Unlike the principal entrance shown on the front elevation, this side includes a doorway identified by the surveyors as "Entrance Not Original." This simple note reminds us that the courthouse continued to evolve long after its completion in 1761. As the building transitioned from a public courthouse to a private residence, entrances and circulation patterns were adapted to meet changing needs.

The elevation also demonstrates the surveyors' commitment to documenting historical evidence rather than simply recording appearance. Every window, doorway, roofline, and architectural feature was measured and placed with precision, while notes distinguished original construction from later alterations whenever the evidence permitted.

Although this side of the courthouse lacks the visual prominence of the front façade, it reveals the consistency of the building's design. The same disciplined proportions, regular window spacing, and restrained ornamentation appear throughout, reflecting an architectural style that valued balance over decoration.

Looking Closer

- **The side elevations complete the architectural story.** Along with the front and rear, they provide a complete understanding of the courthouse's exterior design.
- **Windows correspond to the interior floor plans.** Their placement reflects the arrangement of rooms documented in the earlier measured drawings.
- **Not every entrance was original.** The surveyors carefully identified later modifications, demonstrating that HABS recorded both the building's original design and its subsequent evolution.
- **Georgian architecture emphasizes proportion rather than ornament.** The courthouse's visual appeal comes from its symmetry, scale, and careful organization rather than elaborate decorative details.



Next: The survey now continues around the courthouse to the remaining elevations, completing the exterior record before turning to a cross section that reveals how the building's interior spaces, framing, and exterior form work as a single architectural design.

Sheet 8 – Rear (North-West) Elevation

The rear elevation completes the survey's views of the courthouse's long sides. Facing toward the Kennebec River, this façade is less formal than the principal entrance yet maintains the balanced proportions and disciplined symmetry that characterize the building as a whole.

Like the front elevation, the surveyors restored the original wood-shingled appearance of the exterior using historical evidence. The evenly spaced windows align with the floor plans documented in earlier sheets, allowing readers to see how the arrangement of interior rooms shaped the building's outward appearance.

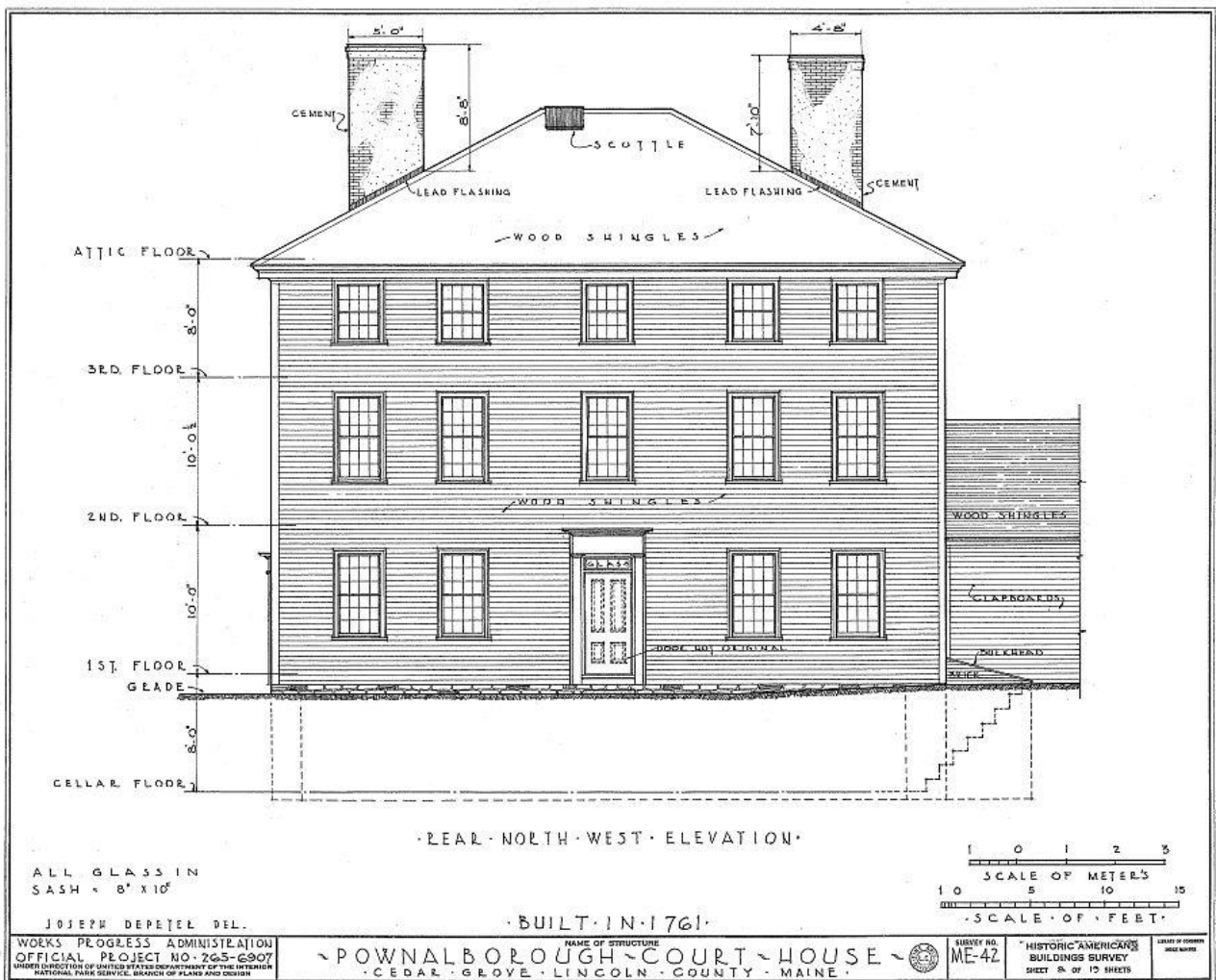
The drawing also records another doorway identified as "Door Not Original." Together with similar observations on the previous elevation, this note illustrates how the courthouse evolved over time. As the building's function changed from county courthouse to family residence, entrances were added or modified to improve daily access. Rather than concealing these changes, the Historic American Buildings Survey distinguished original construction from later alterations whenever the evidence allowed.

At the right side of the drawing, the attached woodshed is shown adjoining the courthouse. Although not part of the original 1761 structure, it illustrates the practical additions made during the building's long residential history. By including both the original building and its later additions, this sheet provides a more complete understanding of how the courthouse adapted to changing needs over nearly two centuries.

Like the previous elevations, this drawing combines precise measurement with historical interpretation. It preserves not only the courthouse's dimensions and architectural proportions but also evidence of the building's continuing evolution.

Looking Closer

- **This elevation faces the Kennebec River.** Along with the front elevation, it documents the courthouse's two principal long façades.
- **Another altered entrance is identified.** The note "**Door Not Original**" reflects the surveyors' careful distinction between eighteenth-century construction and later modifications.
- **The woodshed records the building's residential history.** Although not part of the original courthouse, it illustrates how the structure was adapted for domestic use.
- **The survey balances documentation with interpretation.** Rather than presenting the building as it appeared only in 1936, the surveyors incorporated historical evidence to distinguish original features from later changes.



Next: Only one exterior elevation remains. The survey now turns to the courthouse's south-west end, completing the four-sided architectural record before examining the building in cross section.

Sheet 9 – South-West Elevation

The south-west elevation completes the survey's documentation of the courthouse's exterior. While this side shares the same balanced proportions and simple architectural character seen throughout the building, it also illustrates how the courthouse continued to adapt to changing needs long after its construction in 1761.

Dominating the elevation is the large woodshed attached to the center of the façade. Rather than omitting this later addition, the surveyors carefully recorded it and identified its contemporary use with the note, "Old Wood Shed Used at Present as a Kitchen." This simple annotation captures another chapter in the building's history, demonstrating how a structure originally designed for one purpose could be modified to serve another as the courthouse became a family home.

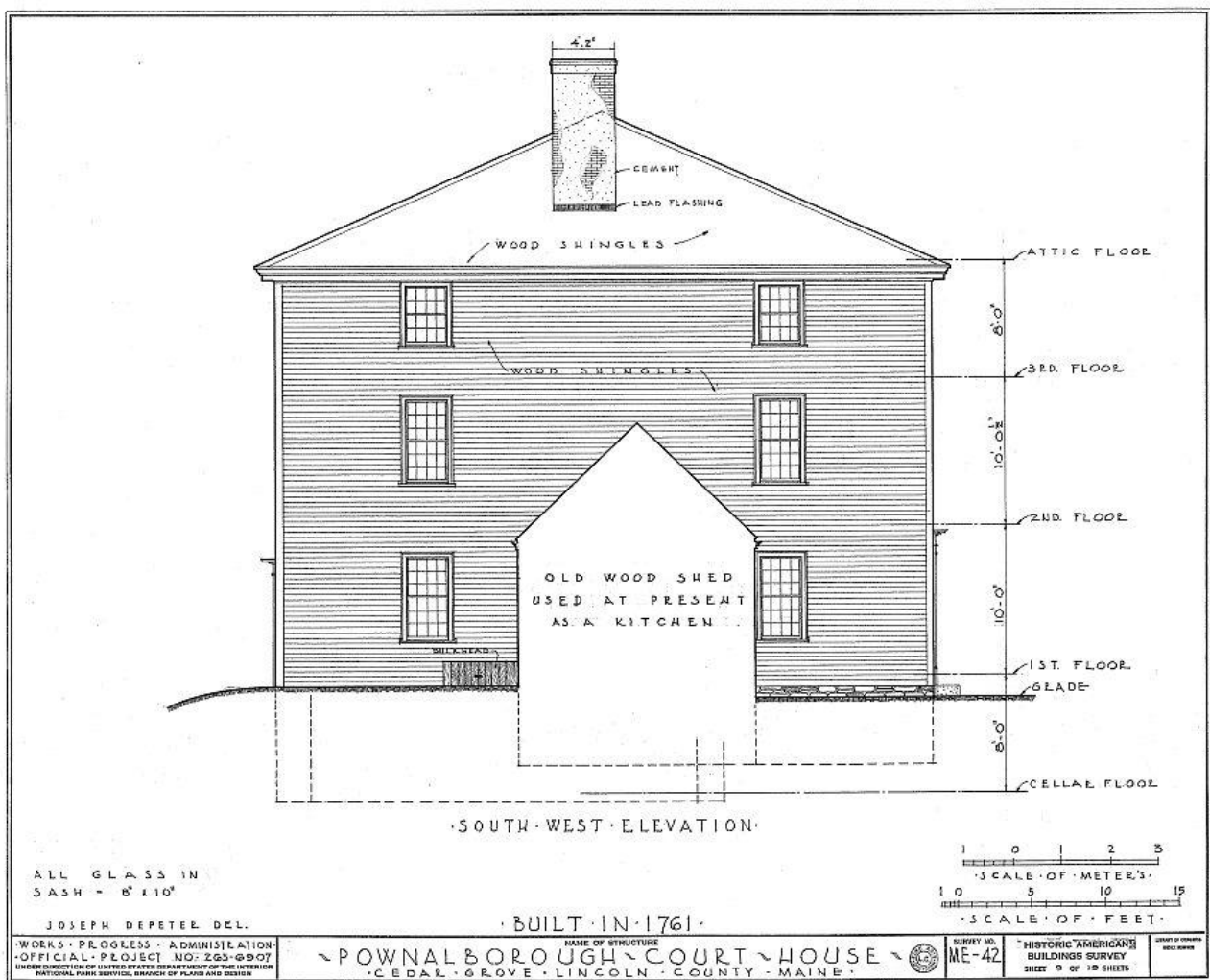
Although the woodshed obscures part of the original wall, enough of the elevation remains visible to demonstrate the building's consistent architectural design. The regular spacing of the windows, the restrained roofline, and the central chimney continue the disciplined symmetry that characterizes the courthouse on every side.

This drawing also illustrates one of the guiding principles of the Historic American Buildings Survey. The surveyors sought to document the building honestly, preserving evidence of both its original construction and its subsequent evolution. Later additions were not ignored or removed from the drawings; instead, they were identified so that future researchers could distinguish original fabric from later modifications.

Viewed together, the four exterior elevations provide a complete architectural portrait of the courthouse. They record not only its appearance in 1936, but also the many changes that occurred during nearly two centuries of continuous use.

Looking Closer

- **The woodshed tells part of the courthouse's story.** By identifying it as an "Old Wood Shed Used at Present as a Kitchen," this sheet documents how the building adapted to residential life.
- **Later additions were preserved in the record.** Rather than removing or minimizing them, the surveyors documented these changes while clearly distinguishing them from the original courthouse.
- **Architectural consistency extends to every façade.** Despite later modifications, the courthouse retained the balanced proportions and restrained character of its eighteenth-century design.
- **The four elevations work together.** No single drawing tells the whole story. Viewed as a group, they provide a complete understanding of the courthouse's exterior architecture and its evolution over time.



Next: Completing the exterior views, the survey now combines everything we've learned. The cross section slices through the courthouse from foundation to roof, revealing how the interior rooms, floor levels, chimneys, and framing fit together as a single, carefully engineered structure.

Chapter 4

Seeing the Building as a Whole

Having explored the courthouse floor by floor and examined each of its exterior elevations, the Historic American Buildings Survey now combines these separate views into a single drawing. The transverse section slices vertically through the building, revealing how its foundation, floors, staircases, rooms, chimneys, and roof framing work as one integrated structure.

Unlike a floor plan, which looks down from above, or an elevation, which views a building from the outside, a section cuts through the structure itself. By removing one side of the building, the surveyors exposed relationships that could not be seen in any other drawing, allowing readers to understand how the courthouse was constructed from the cellar to the roof.

This drawing serves as the culmination of everything documented so far. The foundation shown in the basement plan, the room arrangements revealed by the floor plans, the roof framing examined in the previous sheet, and the exterior appearance recorded in the elevations all come together here in a single, comprehensive view.

More than any other drawing in this sheet, the transverse section allows readers to see the courthouse as its builders understood it: not as a collection of individual rooms or façades, but as one carefully engineered structure whose strength depended upon every timber, masonry wall, floor, and chimney working together.

Sheet 10 – Transverse Section

The transverse section provides one of the most informative drawings in the entire Historic American Buildings Survey. By slicing through the courthouse from foundation to roof, the surveyors reveal the relationships between spaces that no floor plan or exterior elevation can fully explain.

For the first time, readers can follow the central staircase as it rises through every occupied floor, connecting the basement, first, second, and third stories before reaching the attic beneath the roof. The drawing clearly illustrates how each floor is supported by heavy timber framing while the central chimney extends uninterrupted from the cellar to above the roofline.

The section also confirms observations made throughout the earlier drawings. The large courtroom occupies a substantial portion of the second floor, while the bedrooms and hallways align vertically with the spaces below. Notes identifying "Door Not Original" and "Wall and Door Not Original" continue the surveyors' careful distinction between original construction and later alterations, reinforcing that this survey documents both the building's architecture and its history.

Perhaps most impressive is the clarity with which the survey communicates the courthouse's structural system. The stone foundation, heavy framing, stair construction, floor heights, and roof supports are shown working as a single integrated design. What previously required several separate drawings can now be understood at a glance.

For architects, historians, and preservationists, sectional drawings are among the most valuable documents in a measured survey. They reveal not only how a building appears, but how it stands.

Looking Closer

- **A section reveals relationships that other drawings cannot.** By cutting vertically through the courthouse, this sheet exposes connections between floors, stairways, chimneys, and framing that remain hidden in plans and elevations.
- **The staircase becomes the building's spine.** For the first time, readers can follow circulation through every level of the courthouse in a single drawing.
- **Original and later construction remain carefully distinguished.** Even within this complex view, the surveyors continued to identify modifications made after 1761.
- **This drawing unites the entire survey.** Earlier sheets examined individual parts of the courthouse; the transverse section shows how those parts combine to form one cohesive structure.

Sheet 11 – Plot Plan

The final sheet in this chapter broadens our perspective once again. After examining the courthouse from within and exploring its overall structure through the transverse section, the surveyors step back to show how the building related to its surroundings. At the same time, they begin focusing on individual architectural details that demonstrate the craftsmanship of the original construction.

The largest drawing on the sheet is the plot plan, which places the courthouse within its historic setting along the Kennebec River. More than a simple site map, it records neighboring buildings, landscape features, roads, and archaeological evidence that helped the surveyors understand the property's long history. Notes identifying the probable location of the original stockade, the old gallows, a blockhouse, and other historic features illustrate how the survey extended beyond the courthouse itself to document the broader historical landscape.

Two additional drawings examine details that would be difficult to understand from the larger plans and elevations. The cornice section reveals how the roof overhang, framing, and molding were constructed, while the original carriage shed cornice preserves the profile of an architectural feature from a building no longer standing. Together these drawings demonstrate the surveyors' commitment to recording not only entire buildings but also the craftsmanship of individual components.

This sheet also highlights the interdisciplinary nature of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Architects measured the courthouse, historians researched earlier photographs and documents, and surveyors interpreted the surrounding landscape. The result is far more than a collection of architectural drawings. It is a comprehensive record of a historic place.

Looking Closer

Next: *After documenting the courthouse as a complete architectural work, the next sheet turns to the individual features that give the building its character. The remaining sheets examine entrances, fireplaces, doors, hardware, and interior details, preserving the craftsmanship that eighteenth-century builders expressed one component at a time.*

Chapter 5

Architectural Details

The previous chapters introduced the courthouse as a complete building, revealing its layout, structure, and exterior appearance. The final sheets of the Historic American Buildings Survey take a different approach. Rather than documenting the building as a whole, they examine the individual architectural features that define its character and demonstrate the skill of the craftsmen who built it.

These measured details preserve far more than decorative elements. Doorways, moldings, fireplaces, hardware, and interior woodwork reveal the construction techniques, proportions, and materials that distinguish eighteenth-century craftsmanship. Features that might be overlooked during a casual visit become important historical evidence when carefully measured and recorded.

The drawings that follow are presented at much larger scales than the plans and elevations. This allows the surveyors to document individual moldings, joinery, hardware, and construction details with remarkable precision. These drawings preserve the architectural vocabulary of the courthouse, ensuring that even its smallest details remain available for study and future preservation.

Sheet 12 – South-East Entrance

After documenting the courthouse as a complete architectural work, the survey now turns its attention to one of its most important individual features: the principal entrance. More than a means of entering the building, this doorway served as the public face of the courthouse, welcoming judges, lawyers, jurors, witnesses, and citizens for nearly two centuries.

The measured drawing records every component of the entrance, including the door, transom, pilasters, entablature, moldings, and surrounding trim. By enlarging these elements, the surveyors captured details that could never be shown clearly on the exterior elevations.

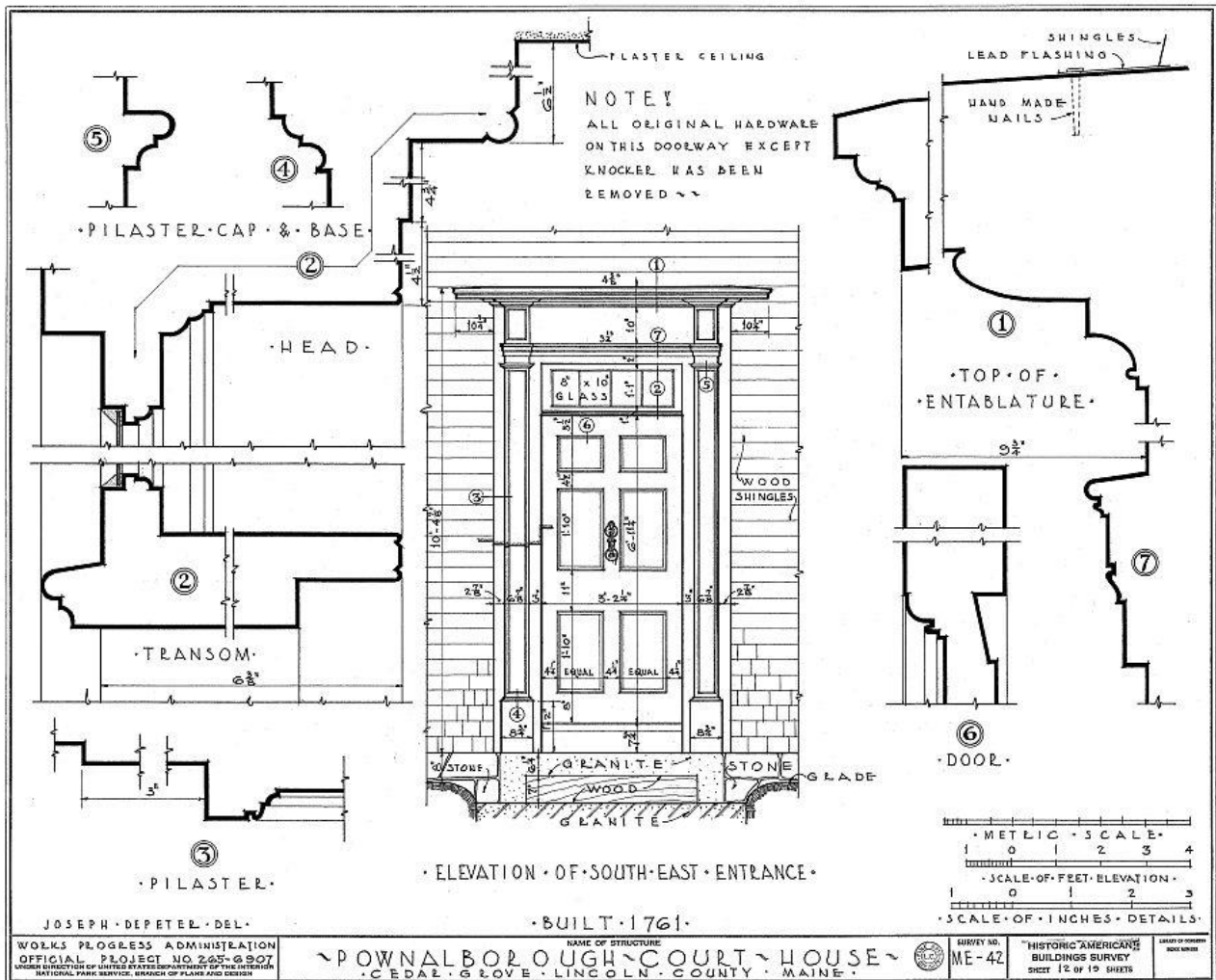
One note is especially revealing: "All original hardware on this doorway except knocker has been removed." Rather than ignoring missing elements, this sheet honestly records their absence. This careful documentation reflects the surveyors' commitment to accuracy and reminds us that preservation sometimes involves recording what has been lost as well as what survives.

The enlarged molding profiles are equally valuable. These carefully measured sections preserve the exact shape of the entrance's architectural trim, allowing future craftsmen and preservationists to reproduce the original profiles if repairs or restoration become necessary.

Looking Closer

- **This is the courthouse's principal entrance.** It formed the public face of the building throughout its years as Lincoln County's courthouse.
- **The doorway is recorded piece by piece.** Rather than drawing only the complete entrance, the survey documents each molding and architectural profile individually.

- **Missing features are documented honestly.** The note regarding the missing door knocker illustrates the surveyors' commitment to recording the building exactly as they found it.



Next: Completing the examination of the courthouse's principal entrance, the survey continues with a series of detailed studies that reveal the craftsmanship found throughout the building. Each drawing focuses on a specific architectural feature, preserving the proportions, joinery, and construction techniques that define the courthouse's enduring character.

Sheet 13 – North-East Entrance and Typical First and Second Floor Window

Having documented the courthouse's principal entrance, this sheet now turns to a secondary doorway and one of the building's characteristic windows. While less elaborate than the front entrance, these features reveal how the surveyors carefully examined even the smallest architectural elements, distinguishing original craftsmanship from later modifications whenever possible.

The drawing records the north-east entrance in remarkable detail, documenting the door, surrounding trim, pilasters, entablature, and molding profiles. A note accompanying the entablature states that the moldings on this entrance are of later construction than the original building, while another profile is identified as "Probably Not Original." These observations illustrate the surveyors' willingness to evaluate physical evidence rather than simply measure what stood before them.

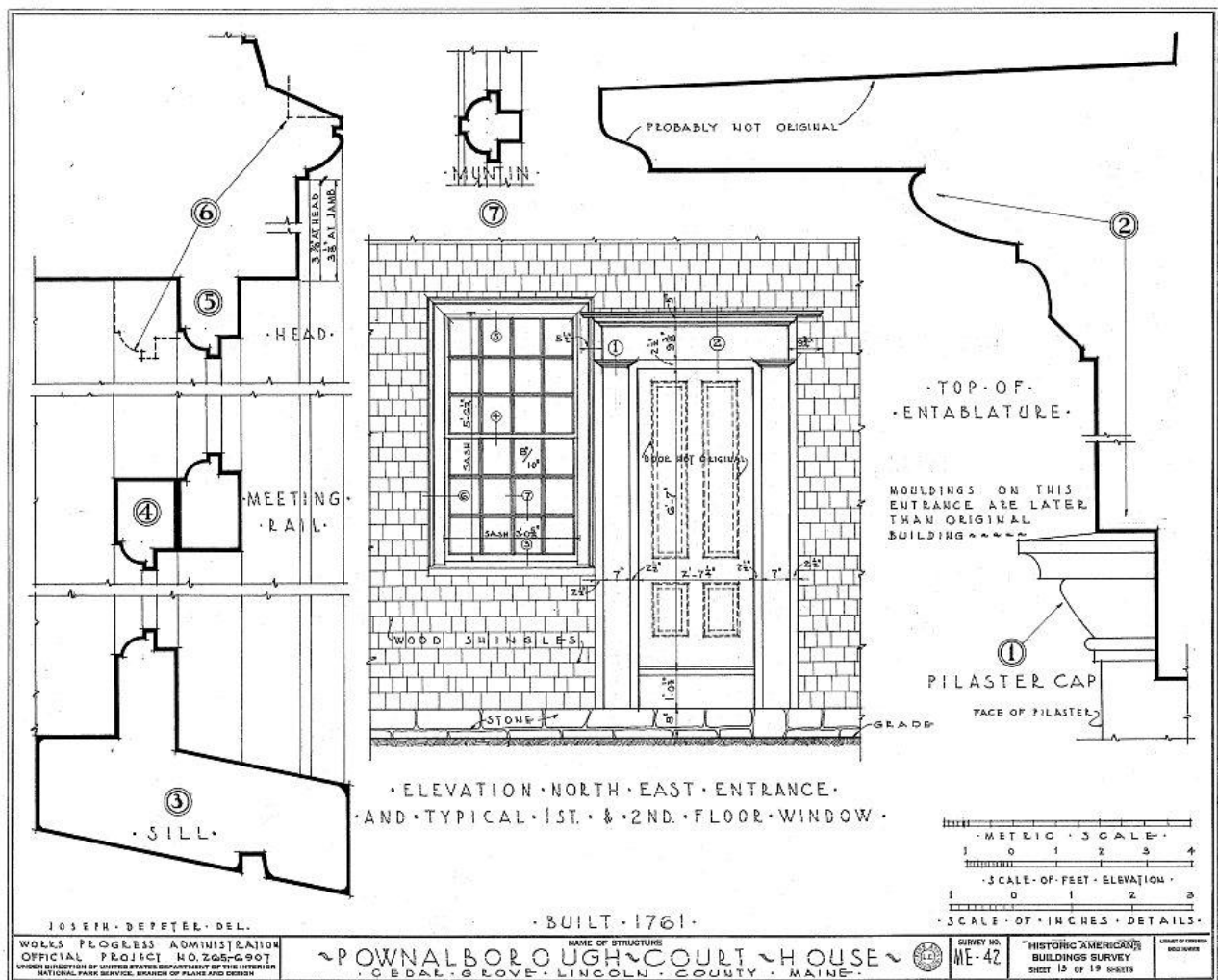
Beside the entrance is a measured drawing of a typical first- and second-floor window. Rather than documenting every window individually, the surveyors selected one representative example to preserve the proportions, muntin pattern, sash construction, and surrounding trim common throughout the courthouse. This practical approach allowed this sheet to record recurring architectural features without unnecessary repetition.

The enlarged molding profiles surrounding the sheet demonstrate another important purpose of the Historic American Buildings Survey. By recording the exact shapes and dimensions of architectural trim, the survey preserved information that could later guide restoration, conservation, or reproduction by future craftsmen.

Together, the doorway and window remind us that a historic building is defined not only by its overall form, but also by the countless individual details that contribute to its architectural character.

Looking Closer

- **Not every architectural feature was original.** The surveyors identified moldings they believed had been added after the courthouse was constructed, carefully distinguishing later work from eighteenth-century craftsmanship.
- **A single window could represent many.** By documenting a typical first- and second-floor window, this sheet preserved the essential design shared by similar openings throughout the building.
- **Profiles are architectural fingerprints.** The enlarged sections record the exact shapes of moldings, allowing them to be accurately studied or reproduced in the future.
- **The survey combined measurement with interpretation.** Every detail was recorded, but the surveyors also documented where the evidence suggested later alterations had occurred.



Next: With the completion of documenting the principal entrance and the secondary doorway on the north-east side, the survey now turns to the north-west entrance. Examined in elevation, plan, section, and enlarged detail, this doorway demonstrates the same careful balance of measurement and historical interpretation that characterizes the entire Historic American Buildings Survey.

Sheet 14 – North-West Entrance

The survey's examination of the courthouse entrances concludes with the north-west doorway. Like the previous entrance studies, this sheet records far more than the appearance of the doorway. By combining an elevation, plan, section, and enlarged molding profiles, the surveyors documented how the entrance was constructed, how it fit within the wall, and how it had changed over time.

The elevation records the overall proportions of the doorway, while the plan and section reveal details that cannot be seen from the exterior alone. Together, these drawings show the relationship between the doorway, wall thickness, foundation, and interior finishes, providing a complete understanding of how the entrance was integrated into the building's structure.

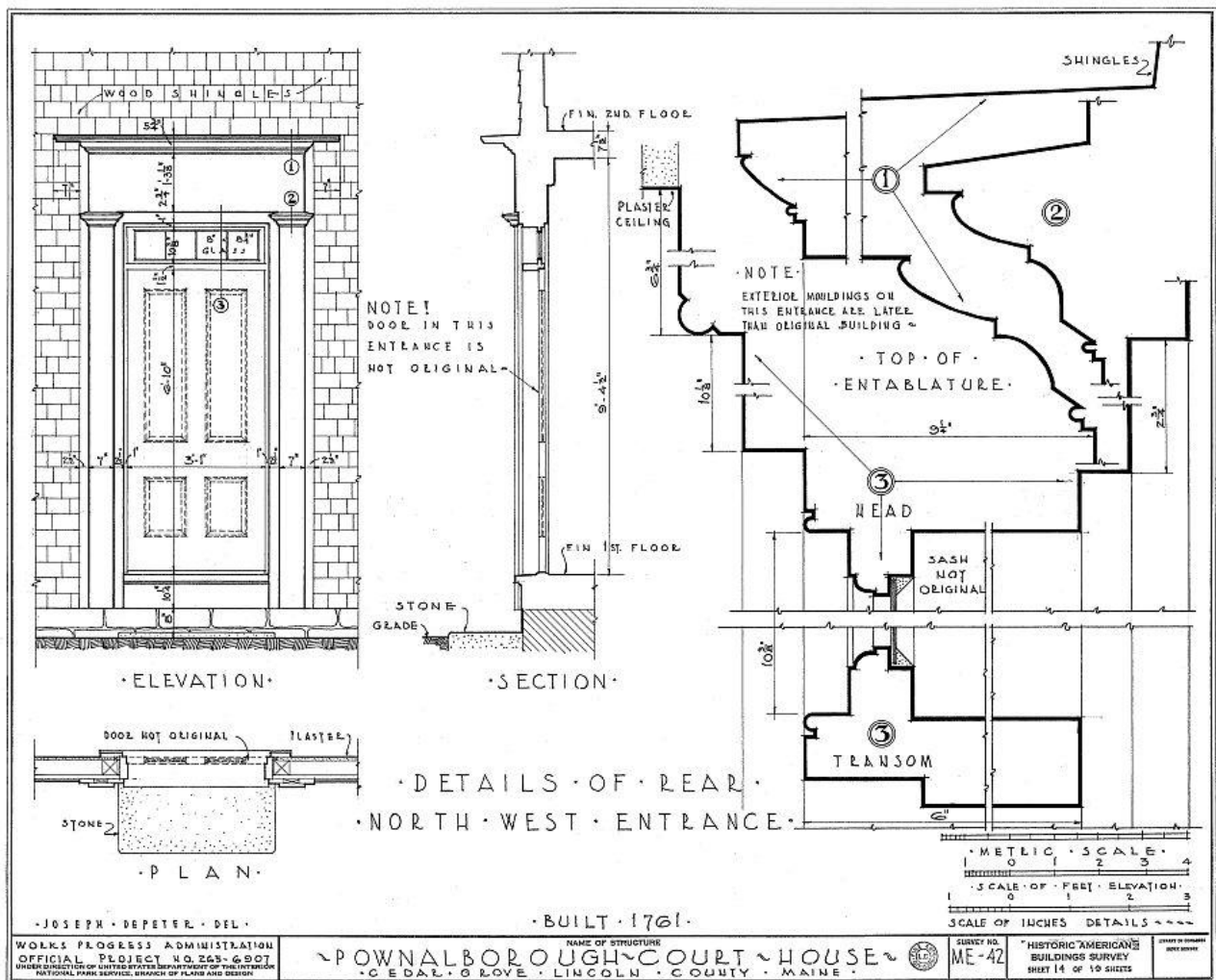
As on earlier sheets, the surveyors carefully distinguished original craftsmanship from later alterations. Notes identify the door as not original, indicate that portions of the exterior moldings were added after the original construction, and identify the sash as original. These observations demonstrate the thoughtful analysis that accompanied the survey's precise measurements. Rather than simply documenting the doorway as it existed in 1936, this sheet attempted to identify which elements dated from the courthouse's construction in 1761 and which reflected later modifications.

The enlarged molding profiles once again preserve the exact shapes and dimensions of the architectural trim. Though these details may seem minor, they represent the work of eighteenth-century craftsmen whose skill is evident in every proportioned curve and molding. By recording these profiles at full scale, the survey ensured that this craftsmanship could be studied, preserved, and, if necessary, accurately reproduced.

Along with the two previous entrance studies, this drawing completes a comprehensive record of the courthouse's principal exterior doorways, illustrating both their architectural character and their evolution over nearly two centuries.

Looking Closer

- **This is the most complete doorway study in the survey.** The combination of elevation, plan, section, and detail drawings reveals both the appearance and construction of the entrance.
- **Original and later work are carefully distinguished.** Notes identifying the original sash, replacement door, and later moldings reflect the surveyors' commitment to historical accuracy.
- **Sections reveal hidden construction.** By cutting through the doorway, this sheet exposes relationships between framing, plaster, foundation, and exterior trim that cannot be seen from the outside.
- **Every architectural profile was measured.** These enlarged details preserve the proportions and craftsmanship of the original woodwork for future generations.



Next: With the exterior entrances fully documented, the survey now turns inward to examine the courthouse's interior architectural features. The remaining sheets record fireplaces, doors, hardware, and other details that reveal the craftsmanship experienced by those who lived and worked within the building.

Sheet 15 – Kitchen

After documenting the courthouse's exterior entrances, this sheet moves inside to one of the building's most important domestic spaces: the kitchen. Once the courthouse became a family residence, this room served as the center of daily household life. Here meals were prepared, water was heated, bread was baked, and the warmth of the large fireplace made the kitchen a gathering place throughout the year.

The survey records the room from several perspectives. Two interior elevations show the arrangement of the walls, doors, fireplace, and wood paneling, while additional drawings document the fireplace, bake oven, mantel, crane, and fireplace hardware in remarkable detail. Together, these drawings preserve not only the room's appearance but also the technology that supported everyday life during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The large brick fireplace dominates the sheet, illustrating the multiple functions it served. In addition to providing heat, it supported cooking over an open fire using an iron crane and pot hooks, while the adjoining bake oven allowed bread and other foods to be cooked using retained heat after the fire had burned down. The plan and sectional drawings reveal construction details that would remain hidden during an ordinary visit to the courthouse.

As throughout the survey, the draftsmen carefully distinguished original features from later modifications. A note identifies the mantel shelf as probably new, reminding readers that even within one room, architectural elements reflected different periods in the building's long history. The survey's willingness to record uncertainty, using words such as *probably*, reflects the careful judgment exercised whenever definitive evidence was unavailable.

Perhaps more than any previous sheet, these drawings remind us that the courthouse was not simply a public building. For generations, it was also a home. The kitchen preserves evidence of the daily routines, practical skills, and craftsmanship that shaped family life within its walls.

Looking Closer

- **The fireplace was the heart of the kitchen.** It provided heat, light, cooking space, and access to the adjoining bake oven, making it the room's most important architectural feature.
- **The iron crane and pot hooks reveal historic cooking methods.** These movable iron fittings allowed pots to be positioned directly over the fire at varying distances from the heat.
- **The bake oven worked differently than the fireplace.** After being heated by a fire, the embers were removed and food baked using the heat stored within the brick oven.
- **The survey documented both architecture and household technology.** Features such as the andirons, crane, pot hooks, and oven are preserved with the same care as walls, doors, and moldings.
- **Evidence was interpreted carefully.** The note identifying the mantel shelf as **probably new** demonstrates the surveyors' commitment to distinguishing observation from informed historical judgment.

Author's Note

Comparison with the first-floor plan indicates that the directional labels assigned to the two kitchen wall elevations appear to have been inadvertently reversed. The elevation labeled "N.E. Wall of Kitchen" depicts the fireplace wall, which is actually the north-west wall. Likewise, the elevation labeled "S.E. Wall of Kitchen" shows the wall adjoining the central hallway, which is actually the north-east wall. The measured drawings themselves accurately document the room; only the compass directions assigned to the two elevations appear to be in error.

Sheet 16 – Door Schedule

While previous drawings examined individual entrances in detail, this sheet takes a broader approach by documenting nearly every door found throughout the courthouse. Rather than treating each doorway as a unique feature, the surveyors created a door schedule, a standard architectural reference that records the size, construction, and characteristics of each door in a single, organized drawing.

Each numbered door corresponds to locations identified elsewhere in the survey, allowing readers to compare doors throughout the building without repeating the same information on multiple sheets. By presenting every example together, the sheet makes it easy to identify patterns in construction while also highlighting doors that differ from the others.

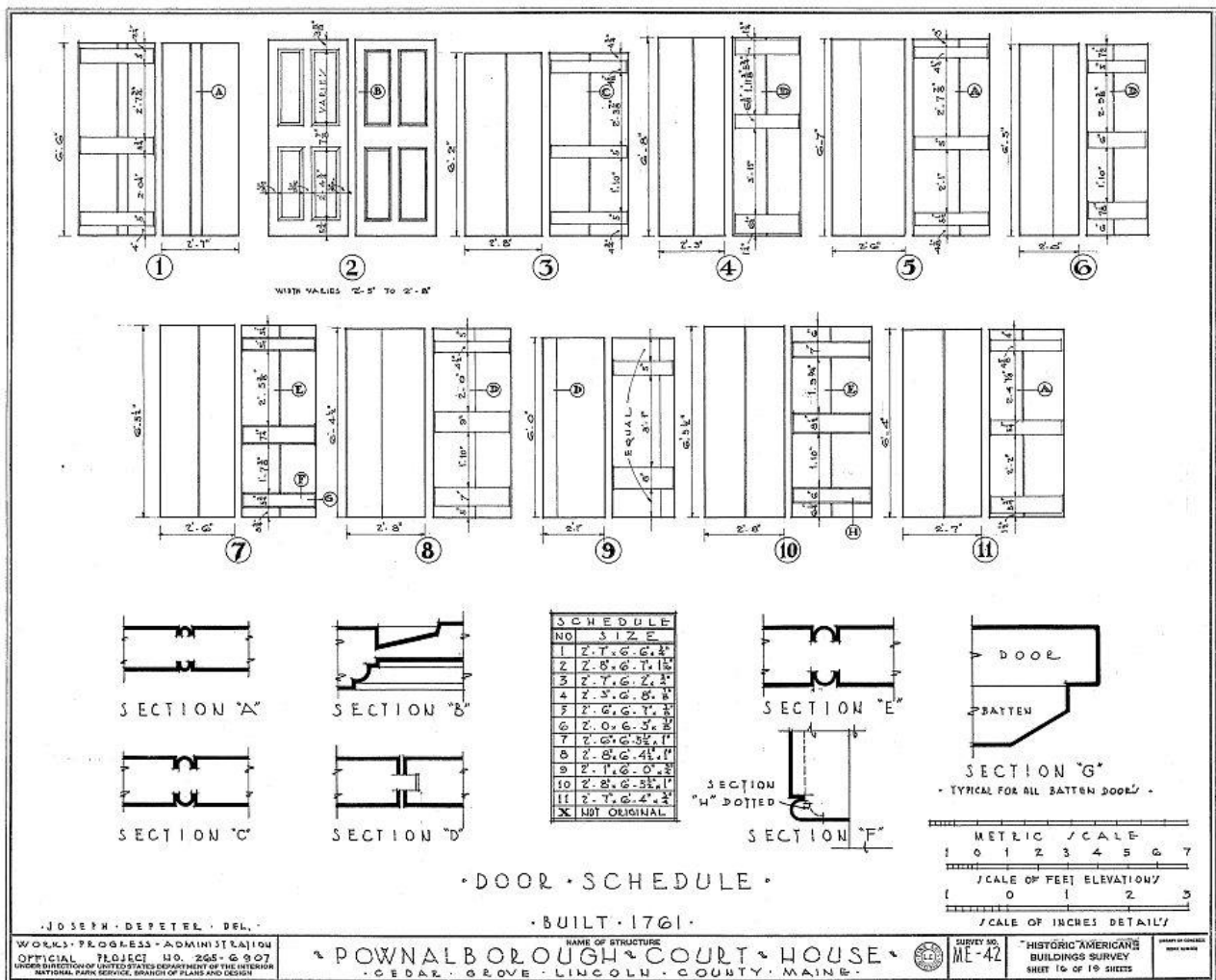
The accompanying schedule records the dimensions of each door, while sectional drawings illustrate their construction. These details reveal how panels, rails, stiles, battens, and moldings were assembled to create strong, durable doors capable of withstanding generations of use. Although doors are among the most frequently handled architectural features in any building, they are often overlooked. Here they receive the same careful attention given to fireplaces, entrances, and structural framing.

The sheet also distinguishes original doors from later replacements. One door is identified as not original, reminding readers that even seemingly ordinary architectural features evolved over the building's long history. Recording these distinctions allows future researchers and preservationists to understand which elements represent eighteenth-century craftsmanship and which belong to later periods.

This sheet demonstrates one of the practical strengths of the Historic American Buildings Survey. Rather than documenting every feature individually, the surveyors organized repetitive elements into schedules that efficiently preserved essential information without sacrificing accuracy.

Looking Closer

- **A door schedule is an architectural inventory.** It brings together similar features from throughout the building, allowing them to be studied and compared on a single sheet.
- **Dimensions tell only part of the story.** The sectional drawings reveal how each door was constructed, showing the relationship between panels, rails, stiles, and battens.
- **Not every door dated from 1761.** The schedule identifies at least one door as **not original**, continuing the survey's careful distinction between original construction and later alterations.
- **Patterns emerge when viewed together.** Similar proportions and construction techniques demonstrate the consistency of the courthouse's original craftsmanship while making later replacements easier to recognize.



Next: Having documented the courthouse's doors, the survey now turns to one of its most distinctive interior features: the bedroom fireplace. The following sheet records its mantel, brickwork, and surrounding architectural details, preserving the craftsmanship that brought warmth and character to the private rooms of the courthouse.

Sheet 17 – North-East Bedroom, Second Floor

The survey now moves from the public spaces of the courthouse into one of its private rooms, documenting the fireplace and surrounding architectural woodwork of the north-east bedroom on the second floor. While modest in scale compared to the kitchen fireplace, this drawing demonstrates that the same careful craftsmanship extended throughout the building, even in its more intimate living spaces.

The central elevation records the complete fireplace wall, including the mantel, fireplace opening, surrounding trim, adjacent doors, and wall paneling. Additional drawings isolate individual architectural elements such as the mantel shelf, fireplace jamb, architrave, wood base, and frieze, preserving the exact profiles of each molding. These details reveal the proportions and design vocabulary used by eighteenth-century craftsmen to create a room that was both functional and visually balanced.

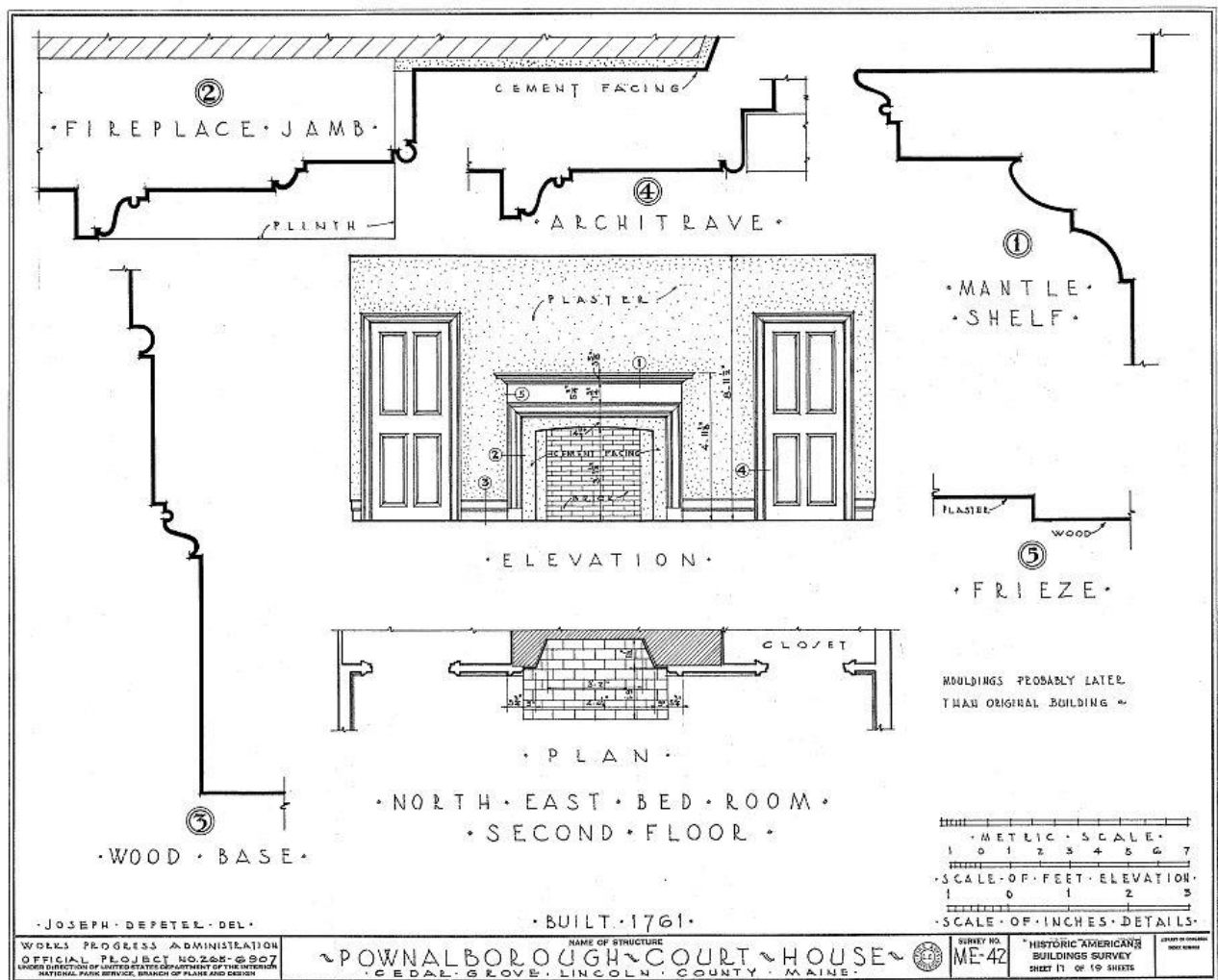
The accompanying plan illustrates the relationship between the fireplace, chimney, and adjoining closets, showing how the massive masonry stack served multiple rooms while conserving space. This arrangement, first observed in the floor plans, becomes much easier to understand when viewed at this larger scale.

As elsewhere in the survey, the draftsmen carefully distinguished original work from later alterations. A note indicates that portions of the moldings were probably later than the original building, reminding readers that decorative details, like doors and entrances, often changed over the building's long history. Even so, the survey preserved these features exactly as they appeared, allowing future researchers to distinguish eighteenth-century craftsmanship from later modifications.

This sheet also illustrates an important principle of Georgian interior design. Rather than relying on elaborate ornamentation, the room derives its character from careful proportion, balanced composition, and finely executed moldings. The fireplace naturally becomes the focal point, while the surrounding woodwork provides visual harmony without unnecessary decoration.

Looking Closer

- **The bedroom fireplace reflects the same craftsmanship found elsewhere in the courthouse.** Although smaller than the kitchen hearth, it was carefully designed as the visual center of the room.
- **Individual molding profiles preserve the work of eighteenth-century joiners.** These enlarged drawings record details that would be nearly impossible to measure accurately from photographs alone.
- **The chimney served multiple rooms.** The plan demonstrates how one masonry stack efficiently provided fireplaces for adjoining spaces.
- **Later modifications were identified.** The surveyors noted where moldings appeared to postdate the original construction, continuing their careful distinction between original features and later additions.
- **Good design depends on proportion.** The restrained moldings and balanced arrangement reflect the principles of Georgian architecture, where elegance was achieved through harmony rather than ornament.



Next: The survey concludes with two final sheets that focus on the courthouse's smallest architectural features. By documenting original hardware, hinges, latches, and other fittings, the survey preserves the finishing details that completed the work of the eighteenth-century builders and craftsmen.

Sheet 18 – South-East Bedroom, Third Floor and Original Wrought Iron Hardware

The penultimate sheet of the Historic American Buildings Survey shifts attention from the building's architectural features to the hardware that made them function. Hinges, latches, handles, and hand-forged fasteners may seem like small details, yet they represent the daily interaction between people and the courthouse. Every door opened, every latch lifted, and every hinge swung through the work of a local blacksmith and carpenter.

The upper portion of the sheet documents portions of the south-east bedroom on the third floor, including two interior wall elevations. A note identifies the mantel as not original, continuing the drawing's careful effort to distinguish later alterations from surviving eighteenth-century craftsmanship. While modest in appearance, these elevations preserve the room's wall paneling, fireplace, and trim with the same precision seen throughout the survey.

The remainder of the sheet is devoted to the courthouse's original hardware. Enlarged drawings illustrate a typical latch, strap hinge, kitchen door latch, and other iron fittings, accompanied by elevations, sections, and construction details. These illustrations record not only the appearance of the hardware but also how each piece was attached and operated within the building.

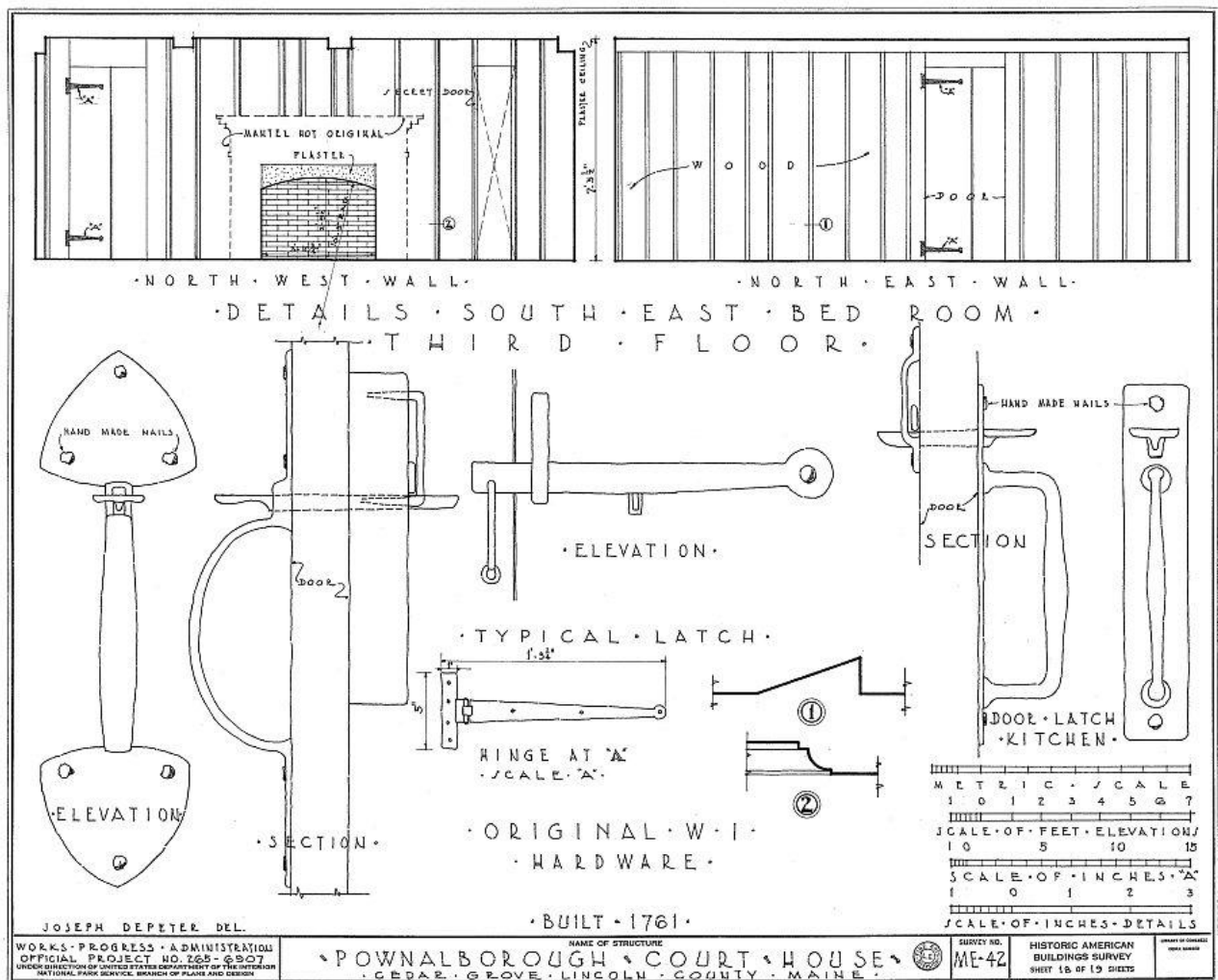
One detail deserves special attention. The strap hinge is fastened with hand-made nails, reminding us that these components were individually forged long before the introduction of modern wire nails and mass-produced hardware. Every hinge, latch, and fastener reflects the skill of eighteenth-century blacksmiths whose work has survived for more than two and a half centuries.

Although easily overlooked during a visit to the courthouse, original hardware often provides some of the clearest evidence of a building's age and craftsmanship. By recording these details at full scale,

the Historic American Buildings Survey preserved information that might otherwise have been lost through wear, repair, or replacement.

Looking Closer

- **Hardware tells its own story.** Hinges, latches, and handles record the work of blacksmiths whose craftsmanship complemented that of the carpenters and joiners.
- **Hand-made nails are evidence of early construction.** Individually forged rather than machine manufactured, they help identify original eighteenth-century work.
- **Function was carefully documented.** Sections and elevations show not only what the hardware looked like, but also how it operated and was attached to the building.
- **Even private rooms received careful attention.** The third-floor bedroom elevations demonstrate that the survey documented the entire courthouse, from its public spaces to its most modest interior rooms.
- **The smallest details complete the historical record.** Features that might seem insignificant individually become invaluable when preserving the building for future generations.



Next: The Historic American Buildings Survey concludes with one final sheet documenting additional original hardware. These finishing details provide an appropriate conclusion to the survey, ending not with the building's grand appearance, but with the carefully crafted components that quietly served generations of occupants since 1761.

Sheet 19 – Original Hardware

The final sheet of the Historic American Buildings Survey concludes with the smallest architectural features documented in the courthouse. Rather than ending with a broad view of the building, the survey finishes by preserving the hardware that generations of occupants touched every day. Keys, locks, latches, knobs, and fireplace tools may seem ordinary, yet they represent the finishing details that transformed a well-built structure into a functioning courthouse and later a family home.

The drawings record a remarkable variety of original hardware. Included are a hand-made key, a large wooden-cased lock, kitchen door latch, bedroom latch and lock mechanism, cast brass door knob and spindle, fireplace tool holder, and the fireplace tools themselves. Each component is shown through carefully prepared elevations, plans, and sections that document not only its appearance but also its construction and operation.

These details reveal the craftsmanship of eighteenth-century blacksmiths, locksmiths, and metalworkers. Unlike modern hardware manufactured in large quantities, each of these pieces was individually forged, fitted, and installed by hand. Hand-made nails, iron bars, springs, latch guards, and precisely shaped keys remind us that every working component required the skill of specialized craftsmen.

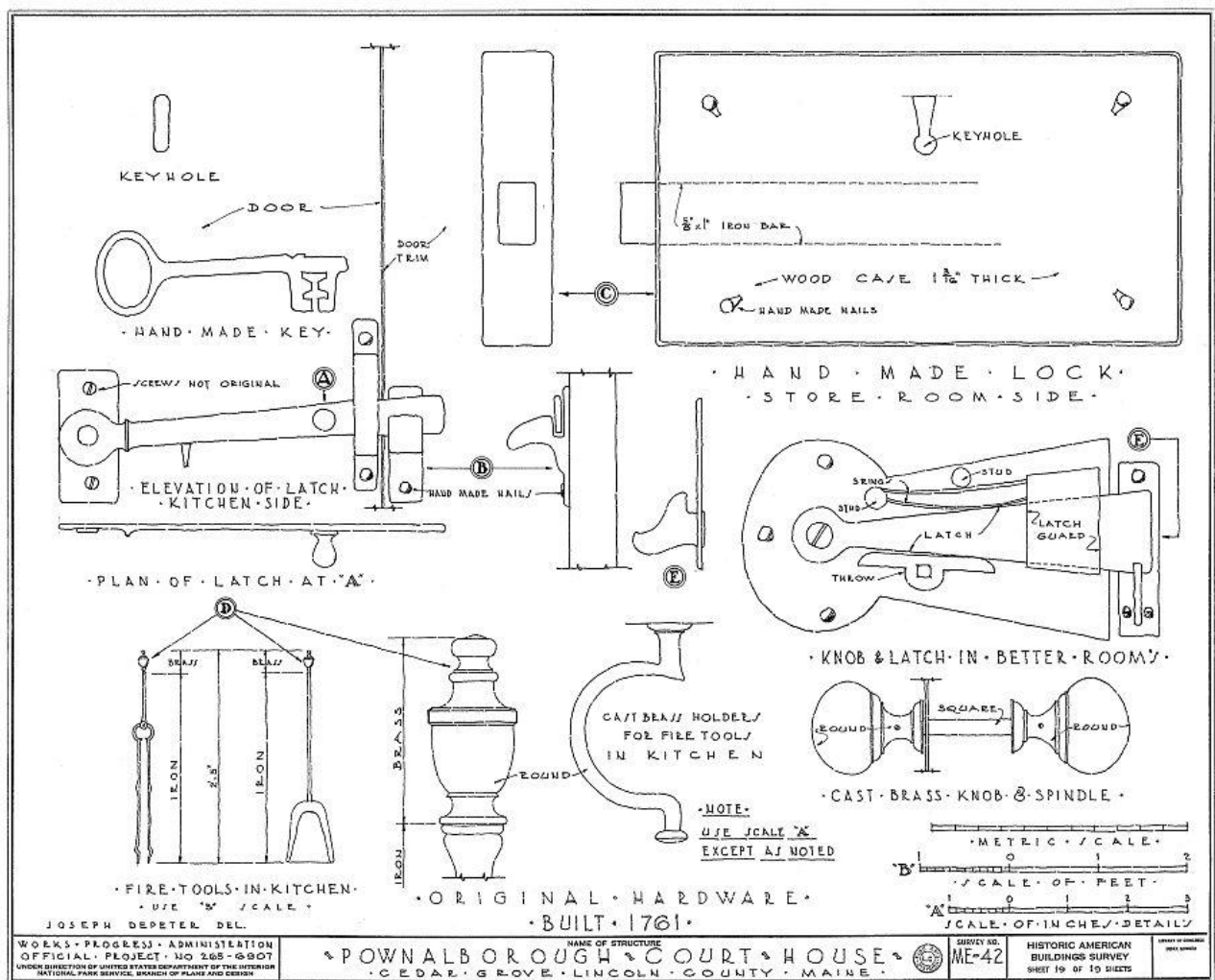
The survey also demonstrates that preservation extends beyond architecture alone. A building's history is found not only in its walls and roof but also in the small objects that made everyday life possible. Hardware often survives long after finishes have changed, providing valuable evidence of original construction techniques and patterns of use.

It is fitting that the Historic American Buildings Survey concludes with these details. The survey began by establishing the courthouse's location and overall form, gradually revealing its plans, structure,

elevations, and architectural features. It ends by documenting the smallest surviving elements of craftsmanship, completing one of the most comprehensive architectural records ever prepared for the Pownalborough Court House.

Looking Closer

- **Original hardware survives where architecture alone cannot tell the whole story.** Locks, latches, keys, and knobs preserve evidence of how people interacted with the building every day.
- **Every piece was individually crafted.** Before industrial manufacturing, hardware was forged and fitted by skilled blacksmiths and locksmiths, making each component both functional and unique.
- **Construction details mattered.** The surveyors recorded not only the appearance of each object but also its internal mechanisms and methods of installation, ensuring they could be accurately understood or reproduced.
- **The fireplace tools complete the picture of daily life.** Practical objects such as tongs, shovel, poker, and their wall-mounted holder remind us that the courthouse served as a home for nearly a century and a half.
- **The survey ends with craftsmanship.** After documenting the courthouse from foundation to roof, exterior to interior, and room to room, the Historic American Buildings Survey concludes by preserving the smallest details that gave the building its enduring character.



The nineteen sheets of the Historic American Buildings Survey tell a story far greater than measurements and dimensions alone. They preserve the design, construction, craftsmanship, and evolution of one of Maine's oldest public buildings, providing an enduring record that continues to guide historians, architects, preservationists, and visitors nearly ninety years after the survey was completed.

The following chapter reflects on the lasting significance of the 1936 survey and the role it continues to play in preserving and understanding the Pownalborough Court House today.

Conclusion

In the summer of 1936, a small team of architects, draftsmen, and preservationists spent just a few weeks measuring one of Maine's oldest surviving public buildings. Their work continued for months afterward as field notes were transformed into the nineteen measured drawings that became part of the Historic American Buildings Survey. At the time, they could not have known that their careful efforts would still be guiding historians, architects, preservationists, and museum visitors nearly a century later.

Today, the Pownalborough Court House continues to stand overlooking the Kennebec River, but like every historic building, it has continued to age and evolve. Repairs have been made, materials have weathered, and new questions have emerged about its construction and history. Because of the 1936 survey, researchers are able to compare the building as it exists today with an exceptionally detailed record created before many later changes occurred.

The value of the survey extends well beyond its measurements. The drawings preserve construction techniques, architectural proportions, handcrafted moldings, original hardware, and evidence of alterations that might otherwise have been forgotten. Just as importantly, they demonstrate the thoughtful methods used by the surveyors, who carefully distinguished between original eighteenth-century work and later additions whenever the evidence allowed.

Perhaps the greatest achievement of the Historic American Buildings Survey is that it transformed a single building into a permanent educational resource. The drawings are no longer simply records of one courthouse in Maine. They have become a teaching tool, illustrating how architects measure historic buildings, how preservationists document evidence, and how careful observation allows us to better understand the past.

As you have seen throughout this guide, each sheet contributes another piece of the story. Floor plans reveal organization. Elevations capture appearance. Sections expose construction. Detail drawings preserve craftsmanship. They create a remarkably complete portrait of the Pownalborough Court House, not simply as it appeared in 1936, but as a building shaped by generations of builders, craftsmen, public officials, and families.

Nearly ninety years after these drawings were completed, they continue to fulfill the purpose for which they were created: to preserve knowledge. They remind us that historic buildings are more than collections of wood, brick, and stone. They are records of human skill, ingenuity, and everyday life. By documenting them with care, we ensure that future generations will not simply inherit historic places, but also the knowledge needed to understand, preserve, and appreciate them.

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National Park Service. *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.*

About This Guide

This publication was prepared to help readers understand the 1936 Historic American Buildings Survey of the Pownalborough Court House. While the measured drawings reproduced in this guide were created by the Historic American Buildings Survey, the accompanying explanations, observations, and historical commentary are the work of the author unless otherwise noted.

Every effort has been made to distinguish information documented by the original survey from modern observations and interpretations. Any errors or omissions in this guide are the responsibility of the author.

Author's observations. *Unless otherwise noted, references to probable labeling errors, later alterations, or comparisons with the present building represent the author's analysis based upon study of the original HABS drawings and examination of the Pownalborough Court House.*

About This Research

The Prescott Girls Historical Research Series

Pownalborough Court House: 1936 Historic American Buildings Survey is part of an ongoing effort to document the people, artifacts, family connections, and historical discoveries that inspired *The Prescott Girls: A Letter from Philadelphia*.

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