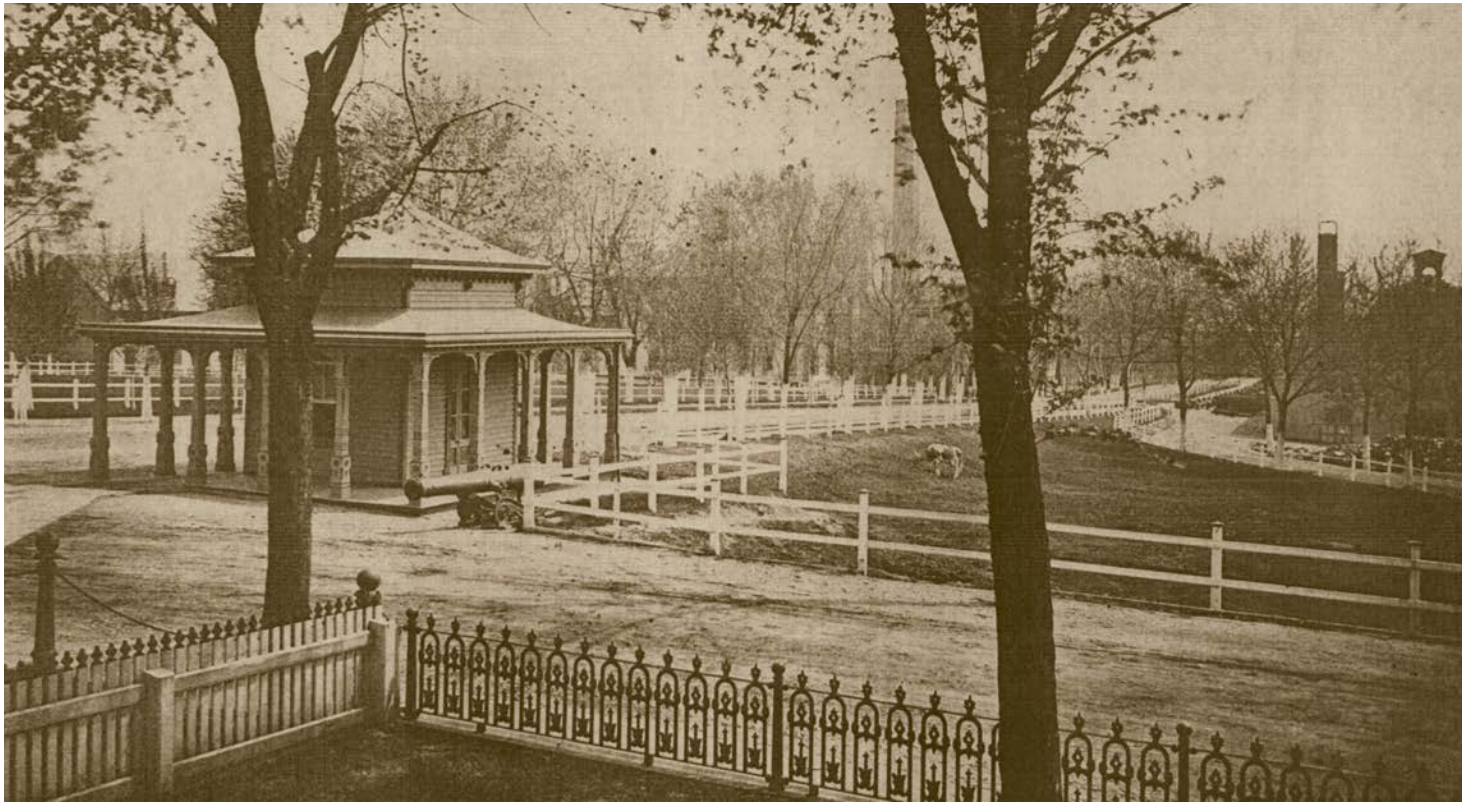




2016 AIA DC
Chapter Design Awards
Restoration of the Historic Watchbox
Washington, DC.



Oldest known photograph showing the Watch-box, c.1870-1880

View looking south along Dahlgren Avenue towards the Commandant's House, c. 1890



This higher level view, taken from the top of the Latrobe Gate (8th and M Streets SE) was critical to developing the detail for reconstructing the porch. The location of the Watchbox, actually projecting out into the road, was a point of discussion regarding the siting of the building.



The Watchbox as found at the Indian Head Naval Support Facility at the beginning of the project. The lower height addition to the one side was added after the building was moved in 1909, but faithfully replicated much of the original trim and clapboard details. When the addition was removed the exterior materials were salvaged for reuse in the restoration.



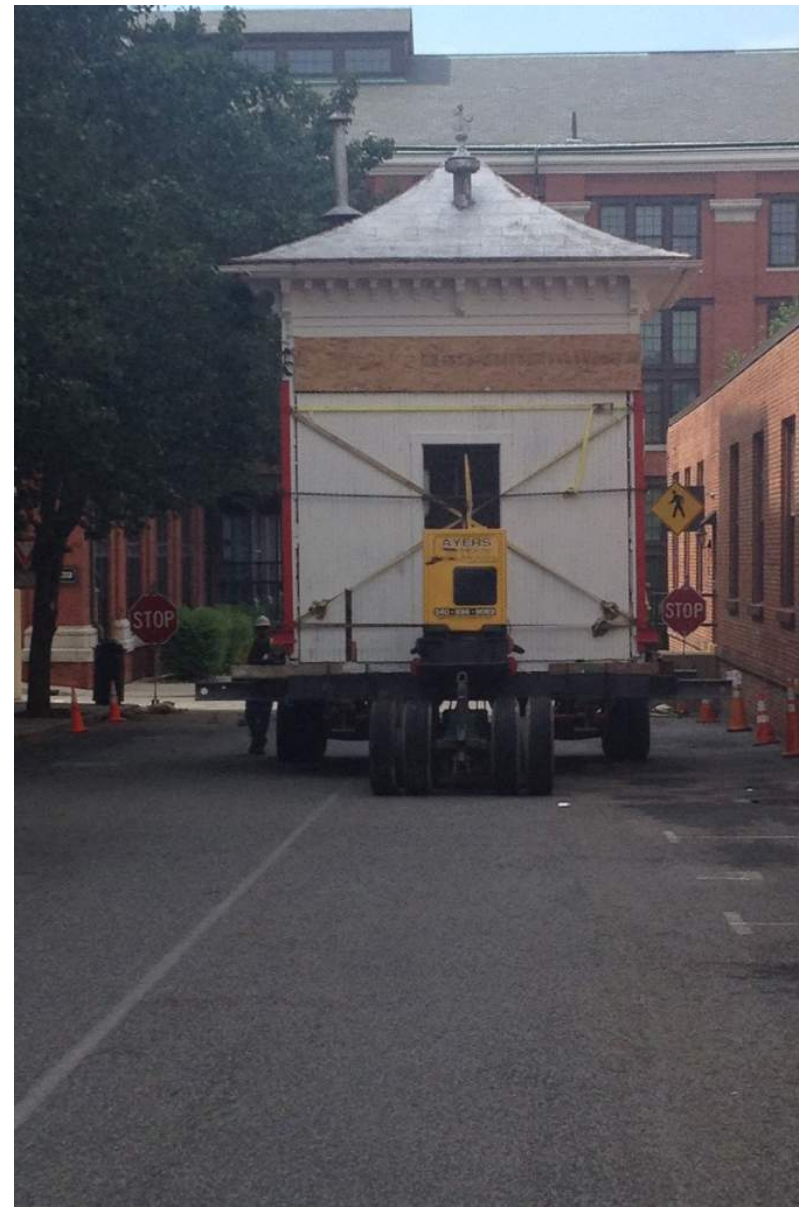
Door and window locations had been changed after the 1909 move. Evidence such as these splices in the clapboard were combined with photographs to recreate the original fenestration pattern.



While the porch had been removed in 1909 the locations of the porch roof rafters were determined by these notches and cut nails that were used to secure the rafter ends.



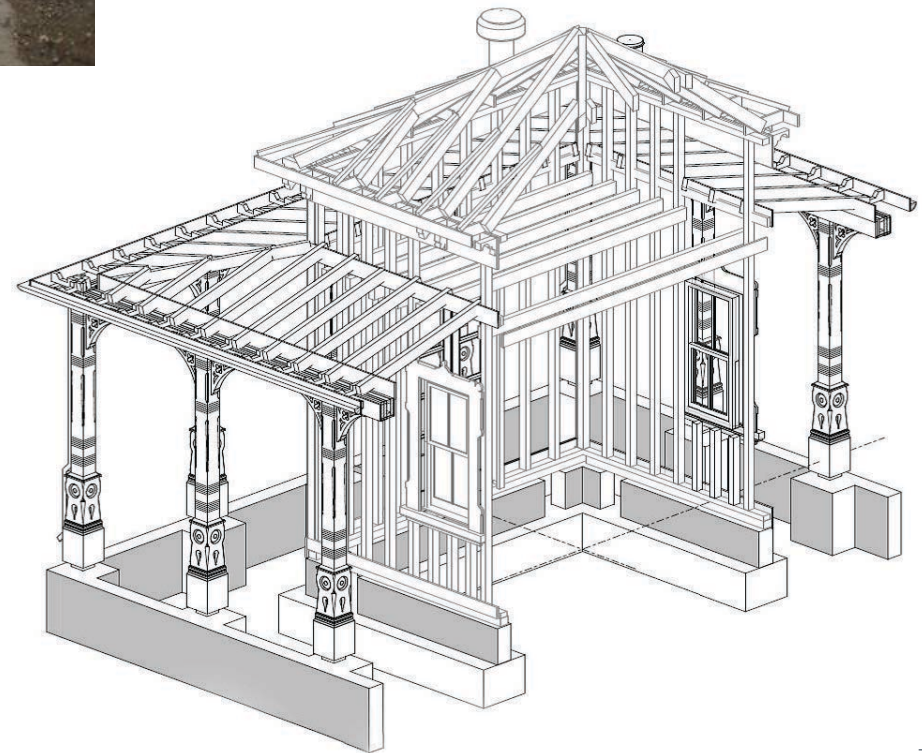
Investigation of the floor framing compared to the historic photographs lead the team to determine that the wood joists and flooring were not original and that the original construction included a brick or stone floor.



The Watchbox was braced and reinforced to prepare it for the move back to the Navy Yard. While the technology of moving a building is much more sophisticated today the route was very similar to the one taken in 1909. A construction barge was used to bring the building up river and motorized wheel sets carried it from the Navy Yard docks to the new foundations.



The construction drawings were developed in Revit to help the design team visualize how the reconstructed porch would connect to the historic core of the building. These diagrams simplified the translation of the work from documents to construction in the Design/Build project delivery.





Completion photos showing the exterior including the reconstructed porch and the one-room interior with the brick floor. The view at the top is looking north towards the Fire House, which occupies the original site of the Watchbox.



