Historic Building Report

on

613 Locust Street

Independence National Historical Park


Prepared by

Staff

Independence National Historical Park

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania


February, 1959
Region Five
421 Walnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

September 1, 1959

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Independence National Historical Park

From: Regional Director

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I - 413 Locust Street

After reviewing the subject report, we are pleased to recommend its approval.

(Sgd.) Daniel J. Tobin

Daniel J. Tobin
Regional Director

In duplicate

Copy to: Director
Chief, EODC

MHNelligan/cp
General
Daily
Area
Operations Division
Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five

From: Chief Architect

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, 413 Locust Street, Independence

The Historic Structures Report, Part I, for building at 413 Locust Street, Independence, has been reviewed by the interested Divisions in the Washington Office and is recommended for approval.

Dick Sutton
Chief Architect

Copy to: Chief, EODC (2)
Supt., Independence
Historic Structures Report - Part I

Locust Street
Independence NHP

INTERPRETATION

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Aug. 8, 69

Dr. Nelligan

OPERATIONS

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Comm'n in recommendations
Furnish data necessary change
be applied to justify
reconstruction. Suggested
9/12

Assistant Regional Director

9/11

Regional Director

9/12

Comments due August 21
Region Five
421 Walnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

August 6, 1959

Memorandum

To: Director
From: Regional Director
Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I - 413 Locust Street, Independence NHP

Forwarded herewith for your review are two copies of the subject report.

Comments on it should be made by August 21.

(Sgd.) Daniel J. Tobin
Daniel J. Tobin
Regional Director

In duplicate

Attachments

Copy to: Chief, BSCC, v/copy of report
Supt., Independence
Operations Division

MHNelligan/cp

General
Daily
Area
Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region V
From: Superintendent, Independence NHP
Subject: Historic Structure Reports on 408, 413, 415, and 423 Locust Street

Enclosed in quadruplicate for your review are the administrative and historical data sections of the Historic Structure Reports on 408, 413, 415, and 423 Locust Street.

Through inadvertence the reports have not been submitted.

By this memorandum we are requesting the Eastern Office of Design and Construction to prepare the architectural data sections of these reports.

M. C. Anderson
Superintendent

Copy to: Chief, EODC

MIX/hgm
SIGNATURE SHEET

RECOMMENDED

__________________________________________  Date ________
Director

__________________________________________  Date ________
Regional Director

______________________________  Date ________
Chief, Eastern Office, Div. of Design & Construction

APPROVED

__________________________________________  Date ________
Superintendent
CHAPTER I. ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Section 1. The Building (Name, No., etc.)

Section 2. Proposed Use of Structure and Justification

Section 3. Provision for Operating House

Section 4. Preliminary Estimate of Cost for Rehabilitating the Structure and Grounds

CHAPTER II. HISTORICAL DATA

Section 1. Structural Evidence from Documentary Sources
      Evidence

Section 2. Historical Associations

Section 3. Evaluation of Historical Importance
CHAPTER I
ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION

Prepared by Superintendent M. C. Anderson
NAME AND NUMBER OF BLDG.

413 Locust Street, Building No. 21, is situated on the north side of Locust Street between Fourth and Fifth Streets, in Area "B" of the Park.
PROPOSED USE OF STRUCTURE
AND JUSTIFICATION

It is proposed that the exterior of this structure be restored to serve as a needed feature in the landscape design of the Park, and that its interior be converted for employee housing. This structure, along with the other five on Locust Street, has no significant association with important figures or events, but is typical of Philadelphia dwellings of the historic period. The retention of all six, for incorporation in the overall design of this section of the Park, will help recall the eighteenth-century atmosphere.

Justification for this proposed use is contained in the approved Mission 60 Prospectus for the Park. Only a limited number of key protective, maintenance, interpretive, and administrative personnel will be provided with housing in this and the other five structures.
As residence for Park personnel, the building would be leased and rent charged.
PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE OF COST FOR
REHABILITATING THE STRUCTURE AND
GROUNDS

$48,400.
CHAPTER II
HISTORICAL DATA

Prepared by Historian Martin I. Yeelson
Chapter II
Section 1
Page 1

STRUCTURAL EVIDENCE FROM DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

The building (see Illustration No. 1), 113 Locust Street, is located on the north side of Locust Street between South Fourth and Fifth Streets. It is on a lot fronting 23 feet on Locust Street and extending in depth 111 feet. Erected between 1802 and 1804, this three-story brick building is a typical Philadelphia row house at the turn of the nineteenth century.

No description of the building before 1825 has yet been found, except that it was "a three Story Brick House." The earliest and fullest description of the structure is an 1825 fire insurance survey of the Mutual Assurance Company which depicts it as:

"\[\text{Three Story Brick House, \ldots Front on Locust Street} \]
\[\text{25 feet, Depth 30 feet, exclusive of a Row, First Story,} \]
\[\text{2 Rooms, marble mantles, neat surface, washbds and windows} \]
\[\text{Cased, Stucco Cornices, 3 Curld Maple doors, 1 of them} \]
\[\text{Large & Folding, \ldots In the interior of the Row is one win-
\text{dow of 12 lights, glass 12, 18 inches, glazed with locking} \]
\[\text{glass plates. Entry vainscoted surface high, 2 Nest Archs,} \]
\[\text{Neated pilasters, Surface, washbds & Stucco Cornice, Arch} \]
\[\text{head front door, Nest flat top frontispiece, turned Colons,} \]
\[\text{Second Story, 2 Rooms, neat Mantles, Surface, washbds &} \]
\[\text{windows Cased, Stucco Cornices, Marble to the Chimney, door} \]
\[\text{Large & Folding, \ldots Entry 1 nest Arch Neated pilasters,} \]
\[\text{Surface, washbds & Stucco Cornices, \ldots Third Story 3 Rooms,} \]
\[\text{2 Nest Mantles, Surface, washbds, Closets & windows Cased,} \]
\[\text{1 flight painted Strait hand Rail Stairs, Close String,} \]
\[\text{with Closets under do. Garret 2 Rooms & plaster'd, Trap} \]
\[\text{Door, 1 Arch head dorson /Germm/ Window front 12 lights,} \]
\[\text{glass 10.12 inches & 1 Common Square head do. 12 lights,} \]
\[\text{glass 8.10 inches, Planta 9 feet by 15 feet 6 in.} \]

Three Stories high, two flights. Open Newell, Mahogany, Painted hand Rail Stairs, Nest brackets, painted half Rails 
& pilasters ...."
Party walls 9 inches, Stud & Board partitions, 
An ash hole, next a three Story Brick house, - East a 
11 feet wide Court, Access at the Back For Engines, Water 
plenty."

In addition to the main building, other buildings situated 
on the property are described by the survey as 

"... a Back Building 14 feet 6 in. by 20 feet, 
Two stories high. First Story, used as a Kitchen, plain 
mantle, washbas, closets & windows Cased, - Second Story, 
plain mantle, surbase, washbas, closets & windows Cased, 
Common winding Stairs, - also a/ Kitchen 13 feet 6 in. by 
17 feet, Two Stories high. First Story finished as 
Customary with a family Brick Oven & Stov holes, Second 
Story, plain Mantle, washbas, Closets & windows Cased, 
Adjoining to the last describ'd Building & Communicating 
with the Same in the Second Story by a doorway, Is a Brick 
Building 9 feet Square, two Stories high, First Story in 
two parts, one a privy, other an Ash house---Second Story, 
a Store Room, washbas & windows Cased and Shelv'd, 1 floor 
narrow heart pine. Other floors narrow white pine bds, - 
Glass, 60 lights 12..22, 60 do. 12..18, 60 do. 12..12, 
134 do. 12..12, & 24 do. 8..10 inches. ....."

As late as 1864 no major alterations are known to have been 
made to the building except for the installation of a coal fuel fur-

nace in the cellar in 1861. Little is known of the physical appearance 
of the building after 1864 for in that year the insurance policy carried 
with the Mutual Assurance Company was cancelled.

Except for the three present-day photographs illustrated at 
the end of this chapter and the survey described in this section, no 
plans, prints, maps or sketches concerning this building have been un-
covered to date.
It is recommended that an architectural investigation be conducted to substantiate the historical or documentary evidence in this section of the report. The investigation should determine what portion of the original building is still intact.

One important problem remains — to determine which, if any, of the back buildings date to the historic period. The original building, according to the 1825 survey, was 38 feet in depth along the alley. In the rear of the main building were four other structures: a "piazza", 9 by 15 1/2 feet, three stories high; a "back building", 11 1/2 by 20 feet, two stories high; a "kitchen", 13 1/2 by 17 feet, two stories high; and a "brick building", 9 by 9 feet, two stories high.

At the present, No. 413 Locust Street consists of the original main building with a complex of adjoining back buildings one or more of which may be original. (See Illustration Nos. 2 and 3) Architectural investigation, aided by knowledge of the precise dimensions of the original back buildings, should determine whether the back buildings are original.

Investigation to date strongly suggests the absence of a structure in this site prior to 1802; also, that the main building today is substantially the one erected by Peter L. Barry sometime between the years 1802 and 1804.
Chapter II
Section 2
Page 1

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Ownership of Property

The lot represented today by No. 613 Locust Street was originally part of a larger lot. It was situated in an area bounded by Fourth and Fifth Streets and the back ends of Walnut and Spruce Streets. This larger lot was granted in 1744 to Edward, Joseph, and William Shippen by Thomas and Richard Penn.

The following year the Shippons partitioned this property among themselves. William Shippen received the section running north of present-day Locust Street, including No. 413 Locust Street.

William Shippen later partitioned his grant. In a will dated September 1, 1763, he bequeathed to his daughter, Susanna Blair (wife of Samuel Blair, Presbyterian minister), that part of the property which included the present-day No. 613 Locust Street. However, Susanna did not receive the property until the death of her father in 1801.

On October 25, 1802, Samuel and Susanna Blair sold a portion of their estate, a lot on Locust Street 23 feet in front by 111 feet in depth, to Peter L. Berry, a house carpenter. This lot is the piece of ground today represented by No. 613 Locust Street.

Upon acquiring the property Berry proceeded to erect a three-story brick house. The structure must have been completed by 1804 for in that year Tench Coxe occupied the premises as a tenant. Coxe was apparently the first occupant since the city directories do not list
as occupant for earlier years. Moreover, the city tax records for 1803 reveal the structure as an "unfinished house". Prior to the erection of the house by Berry, according to the available evidence, no substantial building existed here. Any structure that may have existed on or near this site was probably a temporary frame stable or shop.

Berry constructed not only the above-described house, but also two additional houses adjacent to No. 413 Locust Street for the Reverend Samuel Blair. In partial payment for this work, the alleyway east of No. 413 Locust Street was widened two feet for Berry's personal use.

Peter Berry sold the property to Joshua Edwards, gentleman and merchant, on March 31, 1807. Edwards became the second occupant of the premises, residing here until he sold the property to Joshua Glibborn, merchant, in 1811. Glibborn never resided on the premises.

In 1811 Benjamin Stille, merchant, purchased the property and occupied the house for one year. Mary Neilvaine, widow, became the next owner on May 27, 1815. Widow Neilvaine resided here for a number of years and retained ownership until 1829 when Jeremiah Fisher Leesing purchased the property. It remained the latter's estate until 1873.

**Tenants of No. 413 Locust Street**

Tench Cox, the first occupant, resided here from 1806 until 1807. During this period he held the office of Surveyor of Public
Supplies for the United States. The Surveyor's duties were "to
collect and provide for all arms, military and naval
stores, provisions, clothing, Indian goods, and generally all articles
of supply requisite for the service of the United States." This
lesser position was the culmination of his lifetime of political
activity.

Coxe was capable and versatile and considered high in the
second rank of men of his day, according to the Dictionary of Ameri-
can Biography. Originally his sympathies rested with the royalist
cause, but by 1777 he turned Whig. Little is known of his pursuits
during the American Revolution other than that he was a member of the
Philadelphia firm of Coxe, Furness, and Coxe, merchants. However, in
1786 he was chosen a delegate from Pennsylvania to the Annapolis Con-
vention (which was the convention which led to the calling of the
Federal Constitutional Convention of 1787). The Pennsylvania Assembly
selected Coxe in 1788 to represent the state in the Congress of the
Confederation than meeting in New York City. He supported the adoption
of the Federal Constitution in able pamphlets which identified him as
a Federalist. In 1789 he became Assistant Secretary of the Treasury
in the new Federal Government, and in 1792 Commissioner of Revenue.
His removal as Commissioner in 1797 by President Adams led to his
joining the Republican party. As a reward for his attacks on the
Adams' Administration, in 1803 President Jefferson appointed him Purveyor of Public Supplies. He held this job until 1812 when it was abolished.

Cone was most interested in promoting American manufactures, particularly cotton. He has been called the father of the American cotton industry because he was one of the first to urge on the South cultivation of cotton as a staple.
EVALUATION OF HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

The historical importance of the house other than its value as a part of the landscape setting (as an exterior restoration) rests upon its association with Tench Coxe.

Coxe, the first occupant of the building, was closely involved in events which are an integral part of the Park story, although he was not a pre-eminent figure in these events. His participation in the Annapolis Convention gives him some indirect association with the Constitutional Convention. His membership in the Congress of the Confederation and the appointive offices which he held in the Federal Government during its tenure in Philadelphia certainly associate him with the Federal Period of the Park Story.

Because of this association with Tench Coxe, No. 413 Locust Street has definite historical interest; but it is not considered of outstanding historical importance. Certainly, it is not recommended that the interior be restored and refurnished. However, the exterior merits restoration and preservation.
No. 413 locust street looking northwest, 1951.
No. 113 Locust and adjoining back buildings looking north, 1951.
Chapter II
Illustration No. 3

Rear view of No. 113 Locust Street with adjoining back buildings, 1951