

4 of 8 391/131999 / 20

Historic Building Report
on
415 Locust Street
in
Independence National Historical Park
INDE. 196-00
CRBIB# 002165

GENERAL FILES

GENERAL FILES

Region Five
421 Walnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

September 1, 1959

Nellis
9/1

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Independence National Historical Park
From: Regional Director
Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I - 415 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



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

August 21, 1959

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H30-DCA

REGION FIVE		INITIAL AND DATE
AUG 26 1959		
✓	REG. DIRECTOR	9/1
✓	ASST. REG. DIR.	9/1
✓	OPERATIONS	9/1
✓	INTERPRETATION	9/1
	AUM	
	REC. RES. PLAN	
	MANAGER ACT'S	

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five

From: Chief Architect

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, 415 Locust Street,
Independence

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

Dick Sutton
Dick Sutton
Chief Architect

Copy to: Chief, EODC (2)
Supt., Independence

Info	OPERATIONS	Act	Initial and Date
	Lands		
	Engines		
✓	Architect		J.E.C. 9/10
	Land Archt Programs		Chris 9/1

8/8/77

Historic Structures Report - Part I

415 Locust Street

Independence NHP

INTERPRETATION

☒	History	B
☐	Nat. His.	
☒	George	8/18
☐	Publ.	
☐	Museum	
☐	Sec'y	
☒	Dr. Veliga	8-24

8/18

8-24

OPERATIONS

Info	OPERATIONS	Act	Initial and Date
	Lo - 3		
	Engineer		
	Land Acq.		
☒	Programs		Chris 8/19

[Handwritten signature]

ASSISTANT REGIONAL DIRECTOR

[Handwritten signature]
8/24/77

REGIONAL DIRECTOR

I have concurred.
[Handwritten signature]
8/6/77

Region Five
421 Walnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

August 6, 1959

Nelligan
8/6

Memorandum

To: Director

From: Regional Director

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I - 415 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, EODC, w/copy of report
Supt., Independence
Operations Division

MHNelligan/cp

General
Daily
Area



4423 H30

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Independence National Historical Park

614 Customs House
420 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

February 12, 1959

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.

W. O. Anderson
Superintendent

Copy to: Chief, EDC

WJA/aps

SIGNATURE SHEET

RECOMMENDED

Director Date _____

Regional Director Date _____

Chief, Eastern Office, Div. of Design & Construction Date _____

APPROVED

Superintendent Date _____

Historic Building Report

on

415 Locust Street

Independence National Historical Park

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Prepared by

Staff

Independence National Historical Park

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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February, 1959

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CHAPTER I
ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION

Prepared by Superintendent M. O. Anderson

NAME AND NUMBER OF BUILDING

415 Locust Street, Building No. 20, 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 66 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.

PROVISION FOR OPERATING HOUSE

As residence for Park personnel, the building would be leased and rent charged.

PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE OF COST
FOR REHABILITATING THE STRUCTURE
AND GROUNDS.

\$49,100.

CHAPTER II
HISTORICAL DATA

Prepared by Historian Martin I. Yoelson

STRUCTURAL EVIDENCE FROM
DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

The building at 415 Locust Street is located on the north side of Locust Street between South Fourth and Fifth Streets. (See Illustration No. 1) It is on a lot fronting 23 feet on Locust Street and extending in depth 120 feet. Erected between 1803 and 1804, this three-story brick building is a typical Philadelphia row house at the turn of the ^{eight} nineteenth century.

The earliest description of the building is an 1818 fire insurance survey of the Mutual Assurance Company which depicts it as a:

"...three Story Brick house, Situate...on the north Side of Prune [Locust Street], between fourth and Fifth Streets, Front 23 feet, Depth 34 exclusive of a Bow, First Story, 2 Rooms, Marble mantles, neat surbase, washboards & windows Cased, Stucco cornices, 1 door large & folding---Entry, 1 neat arch Reeded pilasters, Surbase, washbds and Stucco Cornice. Arch head front door, neat flat top pediment, Reeded pilasters. Second Story, 2 Rooms, neat mantles, Surbase, washbds & windows Cased, Marble to the Chimnies, Stucco Cornices,- Third Story, 3 Rooms, 2 plain mantles, Surbase, washbds, Closets & windows Cased, - 1 flight common winding Stairs, Garret 2 Rooms and plastered, Trap door, Roof a fourth worn, 1 Arch dorman [dormer] window front 12 lights, glass 10 by 12 inches and Square head 2 do. back, 12 lights, glass 8 by 10 inches. - In the Entry are 2 flights open newell mahogany Ramp hand Rail Stairs, plain brackets, - Piazza 7 feet by 14 feet one Story high with Closets, washbds and windows Cased, - Kitchen 13 feet by 18 feet, one Story

high, finished as a Customary, - Roof a fourth worn, 2 floor narrow heart pine, other floor narrow white pine bds, Glass 72 lights 12 by 22, 84 do. 12 by 14 & 56 do. 8 x 10 inches. Party walls 9 inches, Stud & board partitions. An ash hole. East and West three story Brick houses (#413 and #417 Locust Street) Water plenty."

From 1818 until 1891 no resurvey of 415 Locust Street was made. The absence of a resurvey indicates that during these years few, if any, alterations were carried out that changed the interior or exterior appearance of the building.

In 1891 a resurvey of the building by the Mutual Assurance Company indicated that the structure underwent major alterations. At that time a two-story structure was added to the main building. This structure probably replaced the "Kitchen 13 feet by 18 feet, one story" (described in 1818). The resurvey describes the building (See Illustration No. 2) thusly:

"A three & two story brick building as plan. [See plan at end of survey.] Tin roofing wood cornice front fascia board back. Yellow pine floors. Gas pipes in each story girders & posts in cellar under first story joice. second & first story joice 12' centre crop & ridged.

First story. Large doorway front. Wrought iron girder. four fold 8/4 panel doors. each with one light of ribbed glass 22' by 20' in top [?] panel. 8/4 panel door to street and chimney. one 12 light window glass 10' by 15' double hung & panel shutters.

8/4 folding panel doors to yard. about half of walls plastered. No cellar under two story rear part. brick floor.

Second story. divided into two rooms by planed & groved yellow board partition. four blight sash glass 10 by 14 & 1 3/8 panel doors in ditto. mortice lock and Yale lock. ceiling lined with planed & groved yellow pine boards. one 12 light window glass 12 by 18'. three 12 light ditto 12 by 22' double hung & venetian shutters front. even sink & water. skylights in roof. sides lined with planed & groved yellow pine boards. two large closets at south side extending from skylight to partition between rooms. ledge doors. even frame. twenty seven lights of hammered glass. each 18' by 5f puttled & finished as usual. straight stairs to first story yellow pine steps. enclosed & yellow pine board partition. Front windows finished with Pilasters & Blocks in corners. moulding shirting plain winding stairs to third story and straight ditto to first story to front. Yellow pine steps. enclosed & planed & groved yellow pine board partition. 5/4 folding doors from stairs to room.

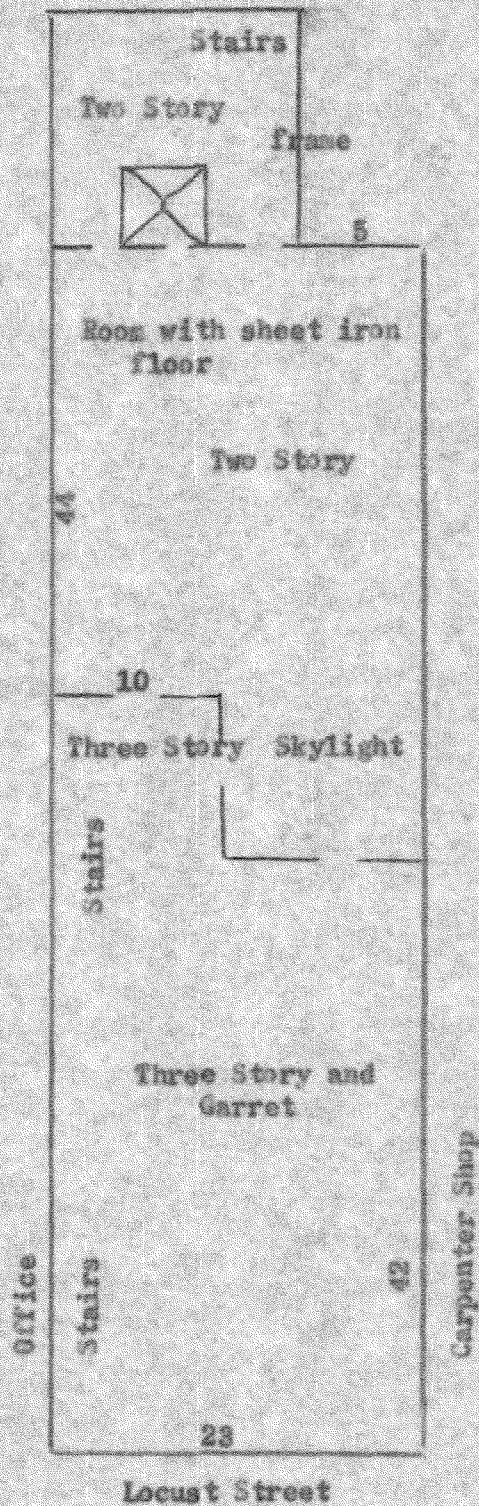
Third Story. divided into three rooms & Entry. Six 12 light window glass 12' by 15' double hung and venetian shutters front. planed & groved yellow pine boards (double) 3f high with heavy caps around [sic] landing of stairs. panel door to roof over two story part. Doors [?] windows finished with Mouldings. two closets. 5/4 panel doors. rim locks moulded shirting plain winding stairs to the garret. yellow pine steps.

Garret divided into two rooms & Entry. one 12 light circular head dormer window glass 10 by 12'. and glass in circles. one 12 light flat top dormer glass 8' by 10' Single hung. one closet. 5/4 panel doors. Doors finished with Mouldings.

Sides of partition 4f high and floors in second story lined with sheet iron. and Entry divided off at side.

First story under brick and frame part at rear. Open on east side. girder under second story frame wall. two water closets divided off. straight stairs with quarter pace to second story. yellow pine steps. enclosed by planed & groved yellow pine board partition panel door at foot.

Second story. ceiling lined with planed & groved yellow pine boards. east wall frame. planed & groved boarding. two 12 light window glass 14' to 20' double hung. & 8/4 folding sash doors each with 3 lights of glass 16' by 18' in ditto. 3 light transom sash. Skylight in roof. sides planed & groved yellow pine boards. eight lights of hammered glass in even frame. puttied & finished as usual. each light 18' by 5f. two closets with panel & two ditto with ledge doors. large galvanized iron chimney with cap on roof. wrought iron girders where required on skylight and walls."



No evidence has been uncovered to indicate additional alterations to 415 Locust Street since 1891.

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 standing.

Investigation to date strongly suggests the absence of a structure on this site prior to 1808; also, that the building known today as 415 Locust Street is partially the one erected by Reverend Samuel Blair sometime between 1803 and 1804.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Ownership of Property to 1803

The lot represented today by 415 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 Shippens partitioned this property among themselves. William Shippen received the section running north of present-day Locust Street, including 415 Locust Street.

William Shippen later partitioned his grant. In a will dated September 1, 1783, he bequeathed to his daughter, Susanna Blair (wife of Samuel Blair, Presbyterian minister), that part of the property which included the present-day 415 Locust Street. Susanna inherited the property after the death of her father in 1801.

On February 28, 1803, Samuel Blair contracted with Peter L. Berry, house carpenter, to erect two, three-story brick buildings on the property inherited by his wife, Susanna. One of the structures is the present-day 415 Locust Street (Berry constructed not only the above-described houses, but also the adjacent house, 413 Locust Street.).

The building at 415 Locust Street was completed by 1804, and in that year William J. Miller, merchant, occupied the premises

as a tenant. Miller was apparently the first occupant since neither the city directories nor the Philadelphia City and County tax records list an occupant for earlier years. Moreover, the tax records for 1803 reveal the structure was then an "unfinished house." The available evidence gives no indication of a house on the property before 1804.

Tenants of 415 Locust Street

Little is known concerning the tenancy of this building other than that William J. Miller occupied the premises from 1804 until 1806 and W [illiam] Warner, a merchant, resided here for the next four years.

Ownership of Property Since 1803

Samuel Blair, Presbyterian minister, the first owner of 415 Locust Street, never resided there. Prior to 1800 Blair occupied a house located nearby at Locust and Fifth Streets. After 1800 he resided in Germantown.

Biographical material concerning Samuel Blair is limited. He was educated at Princeton University and was offered the Presidency of this institution at the early age of twenty-six. He graciously declined in favor of the Reverend Doctor John Witherspoon (a signer of the Declaration of Independence) who had earlier rejected a similar offer, but upon reconsideration accepted the position. Shortly there-

after, Blair received the position of assistant minister at the Old South Church in Boston. In 1769 he removed to Philadelphia, married Susanna Shippen, and devoted his efforts to the Presbyterian Church. A direct result of his work was the establishment of the English Presbyterian Church in Germantown, believed to be the first Presbyterian Church in that area. Also, over a period of years, Blair had been a member of the Pennsylvania Assembly which met in Independence Hall.

Little is known concerning Blair's activities during the American Revolution other than his serving from 1779 until 1781 on attachment to the brigade of artillery as a Chaplain.

On July 9, 1816, Blair sold to Charles Pierce, merchant, the "three Story Brick Messuage [house] and Lot of ground situate on the North side of Prune [Locust] Street and numbered thirteen [415] containing in breadth [on Locust Street] 23 feet and extending in depth Northward 120 feet."

No information concerning the life of Charles Pierce is available. Pierce did not occupy the premises. Two years after acquiring the property he sold it to Doctor John Arentair Honges. It remained in the latter's estate until 1835. Honges, the third owner of the house,⁴⁵ Blair and Pierce never resided there.

Information concerning the life of Dr. Monges is quite limited. He was born in France. During the American Revolution he was attached to the French Naval force which ably assisted the American cause for Independence. In 1793 he returned to the United States to settle in Philadelphia. For several years Dr. Monges resided in houses formerly located within the present-day Park boundaries. From 1794 to 1801 he occupied a house situated at the northeast corner of Dock and Third Streets. (The structure was opposite the site of the Merchants' Exchange and the first Bank of the United States.). In 1802 he removed to the present-day 421 Locust Street. One year later he moved to a house located on the east side of Fifth Street above Locust Street. Monges occupied these premises for about fifteen years. From 1794 until his death in 1827, as a resident of Philadelphia he practiced medicine.

EVALUATION OF HISTORICAL
IMPORTANCE

The historical importance of the building, 415 Locust Street, other than its possible value as a part of the landscape setting (as an exterior restoration), is slight.

Not one of the owners or occupants of the building was involved in events which are an integral part of the Park story. Because the house was built after the historic period which the Park commemorates (1774-1800), its preservation is not considered vital.

On the other hand, since a house built in 1803/1804 is not necessarily different from one built, say ⁱⁿ 1800, it is considered desirable ~~historically~~ to preserve and restore the exterior of this house as a landscape feature.

ILLUSTRATIONS



View of 415 Locust Street looking northward, 1980.

Chapter II
Illustration No. 2



View of 415 Locust Street including the two-story
addition, 1960.