

Historic Building Report

on

408 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

Region Five
421 Walnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

September 1, 1959

Nelligan
9/1

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Independence National Historical Park
From: Regional Director
Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I - 408 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
	ADM.	
	REC. RES. PLAN.	
	RANGER ACT'S	

9/8-10/10 noted

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five

From: Chief Architect

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, 408 Locust Street,
Independence

The Historic Structures Report, Part I, for building at
408 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		
	Engineer		
✓	Architect		9/10 J.E.C. 9/3
	Land Acq.		
✓	Programs		9/1

8/6/59

Historic Structures Report - Part I

408 Locust Street

Independence NHP

INTERPRETATION

✓	History
	Nat. Hist.
✓	Archeol.
	Publ.
	Museum
	Sec'y.
✓	Dr. Vetter

Concern
Needs
intermediate
along priority
up age

should be
a restored exhibit.

OPERATIONS

8/19/59

Info	OPERATIONS
	Lands
	Engineer
✓	Architect
	Land Archt
	Programs

If this structure is not
repaired for employees
quarters full restoration
and exhibition as historic
house museum should
be considered
WBE 9/10
J.E.G. 9/2

ASSISTANT REGIONAL DIRECTOR

OK 8/20/59

REGIONAL DIRECTOR

I concur.
8/6/59

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Dr. Vilegan

DATE:

8/19

FROM :

J. C. Oth

SUBJECT:

408 Locust St. Home

The fact that this is the oldest house in the Project - and a modest one - justifies, in my mind, preserving the interior as a period house exhibit. I cannot understand why no period dwellings are to be exhibited as restorations. Didn't the founding fathers live here, and their retainers & fellow-citizens, as well?

J.

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 - 408 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, EODG, w/copy of report
Supt., Independence
Operations Division**

MHNelligan/cp

General
Daily
Area



IN REPLY REFER TO:

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Independence National Historical Park

Old Customs House
420 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

February 12, 1959

REGION FIVE		INITIAL AND DATE
FEB 13 1959		
REG. DIRECTOR		
ASST. REG. DIR		
OPERATIONS		
☒ INTER. AFFAIRS	<i>MM</i>	<i>8/4</i>
ADM.		
REC. RES. PLAN		
RANGER ACT'S		

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. O. Anderson

M. O. Anderson
Superintendent

Copy to: Chief, EODC

SIGNATURE SHEET

RECOMMENDED

Director

Date _____

Regional Director

Date _____

Chief, Eastern Office, Div. of Design & Construction

Date _____

APPROVED

Superintendent

Date _____

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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. O. Anderson

NAME AND NUMBER OF BUILDING

408 Locust Street, Building No. 22, is situated on the south 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

\$19,700.

CHAPTER II
HISTORICAL DATA

Prepared by Historian David A. Kimball

STRUCTURAL EVIDENCE FROM DOCUMENTARY
SOURCES

The two and a half story dwelling at 408 Locust Street is the oldest dwelling within Independence National Historical Park. It was built by Hugh James, a Philadelphia merchant, in 1763-1764.

James purchased the lot upon which the house now stands from Dr. William Shippen on May 15, 1761. The lot was situated on the south side of Prune [Locust] Street, 137 feet west of Fourth Street, and measured 18 feet in width on Prune Street by 70 feet in depth. The deed provided that "James shall within 3 years at his own cost build on the lot one tenantable Dwelling House."

James probably did not begin building the required "tenantable Dwelling House" until after September 1, 1762. On that date he agreed with the owner of the property adjoining his on the west, Bernard Rapoon, to open a 3 foot alley between their lots. This alley ran from Prune Street 30 feet southward. James provided 2 feet of his lot for this alley, Rapoon provided 1 foot, and James acquired the privilege of building over the alley provided he left a clearance of 8 feet. This provision enabled him to build a house 19 1/2 feet wide on a lot only 18 feet wide.

The provisions of the deed to the lot required James to complete the house at 408 Locust by May 15, 1764, and it is probable that he did so. The house was described by Gunning Bedford in a survey made for the Philadelphia Contributionship on February 1, 1765, as follows:

A house belonging to Hugh James Situate on the South Side of pruant [Locust] Street, Between fourth & fifth Streets - where he dwells - 19 feet front - 15 feet back - 2 Storys high - 9 inch walls - Board Newel Stairs - one Room on a floor - Garet plastered - Modillion Eaves in front - out Side painted - away out on Roof - quite New - £100 at 22/6

The house described in this survey is the front part of the present 408 Locust Street (see Illustration No. 1).

The building described above was very small, particularly since the "Board Newell Stairs" occupied the south east corner of each of the three rooms. In 1770 James built two brick kitchens, which were described in a Contributionship survey made on December 31, 1770, as follows:

two New Kitchens for Hugh James adjoining his dwelling house on the South side of Pruant Street, near 4th Street each being 15 by 12 ft - 2 Storys high - 9 inch walls - painted out side -
£100 at 20/ p.c. Gung Bedford
or. £ 50 each
(see also the Survey Book entry of this survey in the Appendix).

The spatial relationship which these kitchens bore to the older portion of the house is not clear. One of them certainly abutted it on the south (see Illustration No. 1), and the stairs were removed to it. The second kitchen, however, may have abutted the first kitchen on either the south or east. James had acquired the lot east of the 408 property in 1767, and while he did not build a house on it until 1771 or 1772, he may have built a kitchen there prior to building a house. However, it is as equally possible that he built

the second kitchen as a southward extension of the first, thereby adding a two story "E11" 12 feet by 30 to the original 408 Locust Street structure. An architectural examination should be undertaken to determine the location of this second kitchen.

There is no record of further structural changes or additions until the property was surveyed again in 1857 (see Illustration No. 1) and also Philadelphia Contributionship Survey No. 9927 in Appendix). By this date a backbuilding 11 feet by 23 feet and an 11 x 11 wooden kitchen had been added to the 1764 structure. Despite the 1 foot difference in width, the northern 15 feet of this addition consisted of the first 1770 kitchen. The question is whether the additional 8 feet represented a later addition or was part of the second 1770 kitchen.

The only major structural change made since this survey was the substitution of a slightly larger brick kitchen for the wooden kitchen of the survey. The date of this alteration has not been determined.

Thus, the front portion of 408 Locust, while the interior appointments have been altered, is the original structure erected in 1763-64 and described in the 1765 survey. The northern 15 feet of the south extension, while its interior too has been altered, is one of the 1770 kitchens. The next 11 feet of this extension may or may not be part of the second 1770 kitchen; this should be established by an architectural investigation.

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Since there are no tax records or city directories for the period 1765-1785, it is not possible to determine precisely who occupied 408 Locust in the twenty years after it was built. However, reference to this house in the various insurance surveys as "the house where he [Hugh James] dwells" indicate that James occupied the house until his death in 1780. Following his death, his widow seems to have lived there until about 1790. However, tax records show that Matthew Shaw, a carpenter, occupied the property, or that adjoining it to the east, for two years during the 1780's, and that George Carrot, a wheelright, also occupied the premises for at least 1 year.

From 1790 until 1799 the property at 408 (as well as those at 404 and 406) was rented by Dr. Andrew Ross. In 1799, Dr. Ross paid taxes on the properties, but the directory places John Palmer, merchant, at 408 Locust. In 1800, Francis Coustellier rented the three properties; in 1802, 1803, and 1804, they were rented by a Mrs. Martin.

Patrick Nowlan, a taylor, acquired the "Two Story Brick Messuage or Tenement and Kitchen" at 408 Locust from the heirs of Hugh James' widow on April 23, 1804. Nowlan seems to have lived in the house until his death; his widow and children continued to live there until about 1816. In the ensuing years the property was rented at various times to coachmaker John Stone, a Patrick Wood, and Andrew Williams. There is a faint possibility that Thomas Birch, the artist,

rented the property in 1820 (the tax records for that year contain an entry indicating that Birch rented the property but this entry is crossed out in pencil, as though it had been entered erroneously).

On March 14, 1825, Thomas Stewart acquired the 408 Locust property from Widow Nowlan. Apparently Stewart did not occupy the property himself. He undoubtedly rented it, but the only tenant of whom we have record was R. P. King, printer, who leased the property in 1840. This may have been the R. P. King who was active in providing hospital facilities in Philadelphia during the Civil War. In 1892 the property passed from the trustees of Stewart's estate to George C., William J. and Martha S. Roney. In 1906, Matthew T. Gallen acquired it. The United States acquired title in 1956.

EVALUATION OF HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

No figure of major historical importance ever occupied 408 Locust Street; no significant historical events took place there. Nevertheless, the structure is of historical importance as the oldest dwelling remaining within Independence National Historical Park and as an example of the less pretentious type of row house found throughout Philadelphia in the late 18th Century. Its importance justifies retention of the house and restoration of the exterior to its 1770-1800 appearance.

APPENDIX

Philadelphia Contributionship Assurance Co.
Survey Book I, p. 25

Survey^d decem^r 31, 1770

for Hugh James two New kitchens ajoing [sic] each
other & his dwelling house, on the South Side of pruant Street, Near
4th Street - each being 15 by 12 feet 2 Storys high - 9 inch walls -
painted outside
100 pds 20/p.c.

Gung Bedford

one policy

July 16, 1857

I have Surveyed a Brick House & Back Building for John McAllister & Thomas Roney Trustees for Catherine Roney, situate on the South Side of Prune Street between 4th & 5th streets No. 408. The House being 19 1/2 feet front including a 3 feet alley by 15 feet 4 inches deep; two Stories high, Back Building 11 feet by 23 feet three Stories high, 9 inch walls. Wooden Kitchen 11 feet by 11 feet one Story high.

The Lower Story (Main House) in one room and Box Entry, the floor of yellow pine, moulded wash board, & plain mouldings, one clouded pilaster marble mantel & a 9 light sash door to Box Entry the glass 8 x 12. two 12 light windows front the glass 8 x 12, & one Do back 8 x 12, outside shutters.

The Second Story (Main House) in one room, the floor of yellow pine, moulded wash boards surbase & plain mouldings, two breast closets & one wooden pilaster mantel, three 12 light windows front & one back the glass 8 x 10 outside shutters.

The Garret in one room, the floor of yellow pine, plain wash boards, one plain Dormer window & a Trap Door in the roof, one 12 light window back the Glass 8 x 10.

Back Building Lower Story divided into stairway & Dining Room, the floor of yellow pine plain washboards & plain mouldings, a mantel shelf & Brackets, [dresser] with doors & drawers, & one Closet, two 12 light windows the the Glass 8 x 10 outside shutters, Kitchen back finished with yellow pine floor plain [Surbase] three 6 light windows 8 x 10

The Second Story Back Building in one room & stairway, the floor of yellow pine, plain washboards & Surbase; & plain mouldings, one wooden pilaster mantel, & one breast Closet three 12 light windows the Glass 8 x 10 outside shutters

The Third Story Back Building in one room & Stairway, the floor of yellow pine, plain wash boards & plain mouldings, three 6 light windows the Glass 8 x 10

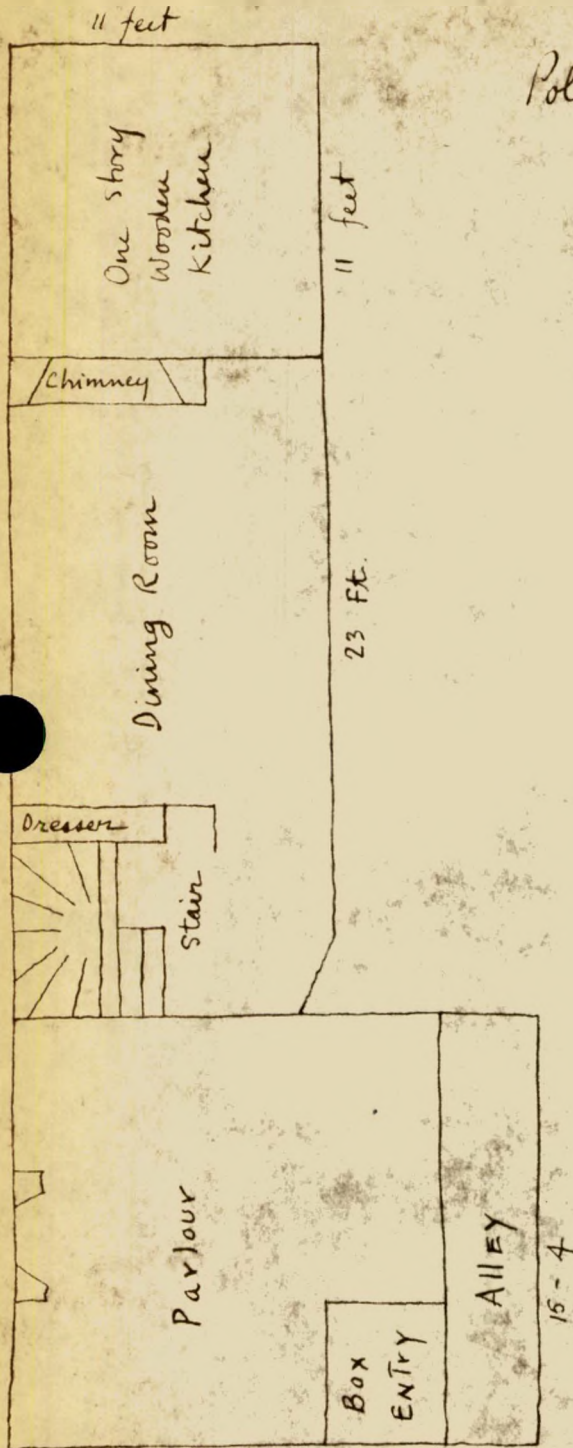
[reverse]

a plain winding stairs in the Back Building adjoining the front building lead from the Cellar to the garret, all the windows single hung except the Garret window, & the gas pipes plastered in in the 1st & 2 Stories, & the same Stories papered, the walls of the Box Entry in lower Story painted, Wooden modillion Cornice front & single pitched roof, the front of the Back Building rough cast or plastered Tin gutter & pipes.

July 16th 1857 Levi Knight

Surveyor

ILLUSTRATIONS



Policy No. 9927 Dra 1000

2 pc \$20

Agreed to be correct

Sam^l J. Roney

In Matters [?]

First Floor plan of 408 Locust Street in 1857,
copied from Contributionship Assurance Co.
Survey #9927.

John M. Allister and
Thomas Roney Insurers

Survey
408 Locust St.



408 Locust Street.
National Park Service Photo.



The alley between 408 and 410 Locust Street, looking
north. 408 is to the right.
National Park Service Photo.