

Historic Structures Report Part I
on
First Bank of the United States
Independence National Historical Park

*

*

*

Prepared by
Staff
Independence National Historical Park
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

*

*

*

November 1959

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

True idea!

TO : Mr. Frank Barnes

DATE: JUL 31 1968

FROM : Joe Farrell

SUBJECT: Explanatory writing for Merchants Exchange Building and the First Bank of the U.S. Building encompassing their historical significance

I would like to prepare a paper on the order of that which is being distributed for the Bishop White House which will follow somewhat the same pattern and will outline the historical significance of both the Merchants Exchange Building and the First Bank of the United States. Both would be included on the same sheet side and each write-up would number about two-hundred and fifty words. The papers would be intended for distribution at the Visitor Center and would give park visitors a brief but concise idea of the historical background of both buildings. The writing and composition would be done on my own time and the draft naturally would be submitted for appropriate approvals especially from the point of accuracy. I have read the Historic Structures Report on both subject buildings and consequently feel that a suitable write-up could be prepared. Pending approval of this request I will prepare an outline of the work and if approval is given would appreciate any suggestions regarding the content.

this one first!

ok

Thank you.

Joe



Returned

U. S. INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

'68 AUG 1 AM 10:31

REGION FIVE OFFICE
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

STATUS OF HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

INDEPENDENCE
PARK

PART

I

(Arch. Data Sec.)

THE FIRST BANK OF THE U. S.

STRUCTURE/BUILDING #

PROJECT: Rehab.

CLASS

AAA

MASTER PLAN

PCP

PROGRAMMED

SECTIONS:

Admin.

Called for

Due

Rec'd

His.

Called for

Due

Rec'd

Architecture

Called for 12/11/59

Due

Rec'd 6/30/64

Called for

Due

Rec'd

Called for

Due

Rec'd

DISTRIBUTED

Park

7/7/64

EODC

Region

8/3/64

WASO

9/10/64

REVIEWED

Park

7/29/64

EODC

Region

WASO

APPROVED:

Region

WASO

10/6/64



IN REPLY REFER TO:

H30-DCA

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

OCT 6 1964

Northeast Region		Initial and Date
☒	Reg. Director	<i>R. Palmer</i>
☒	Asst. to RD (PA)	<i>dm</i>
☒	Asst. to RD (Dev. L)	<i>H</i>
☒	Resource Studies Adv.	<i>F/H 10/8</i>
☐	Asst. Reg. Dir. Adm.	
☐	Finance & Prop.	
☐	Personnel	
☐	Programs	
☐	Asst. Reg. Dir. Oper.	
☐	Interp. & VS	
☐	Land & Water	
☐	Maintenance	
☐	Master Plan Coord.	
☐	Res. Manage. & VP	
☐	Asst. Reg. Dir. Co-Asst.	
☐	Fed'l Agency Assis.	
☐	NPS Studies	
☐	State Assistance	

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Northeast

From: Assistant Director, Design and Construction

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, The First Bank
of the United States, Independence

The interested divisions have reviewed the architectural data section of the subject report, and they concur with the recommendation stated in Mr. Palmer's September 10 memorandum. I have approved the report this date.

J. E. N. Jensen
J. E. N. Jensen

cc:
Chief, EODC (2)
Superintendent, Independence



IN REPLY REFER TO:

H30-DCA

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20240

Northeast Region		Initial and Date
☒	Reg. Director	
☒	Asst. to RD (PA)	
☒	Asst. to RD (Dev. L)	
☒	Resource Studies Adv.	4/11/64
☒	Asst. Reg. Dir. Adm.	
☒	Finance & Prop.	
☒	Personnel	
☒	Programs	
☒	Asst. Reg. Dir. Oper.	
☒	Intern. & VS	
☒	Land & Water	
☒	Maintenance	
☒	Master Plan Coord.	
☒	Res. Manage. & VP	
☒	Asst. Reg. Dir. Co-Act	
☒	Fed'l Agency Assis.	
☒	NPS Studies	
☒	State Assistance	

LAST

OCT 6 1964

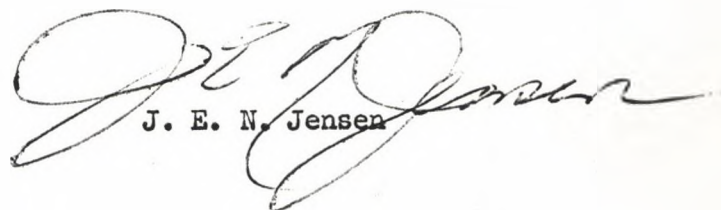
Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Northeast

From: Assistant Director, Design and Construction

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, The First Bank
of the United States, Independence

The interested divisions have reviewed the architectural data section of the subject report, and they concur with the recommendation stated in Mr. Palmer's September 10 memorandum. I have approved the report this date.


J. E. N. Jensen

cc:
Chief, EODC (2)
Superintendent, Independence

Dr. Nelliger

830-20A

OCT 6 1964

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Northeast
From: Assistant Director, Design and Construction
Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, The First Bank
of the United States, Independence

The interested divisions have reviewed the architectural data section of the subject report, and they concur with the recommendation stated in Mr. Palmer's September 10 memorandum. I have approved the report this date.

(Sgd) J. E. N. Jensen

J. E. N. Jensen

cc:
Chief, RCHC (2)
Superintendent, Independence

H30-RHA
NER

SEP 10 1964

Vally
9/8
Posted
Gmf

Memorandum

To: Director

From: Acting Regional Director, Northeast Region

**Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, Architectural
Data Section, The First Bank of the United States,
Independence NHP**

We are pleased to recommend to your approval the subject section of the Historic Structures Report, Part I, for the First Bank of the United States, INHP. Our review indicates that the work proposed is consistent with the Administrative and Historical Data Sections of the report which were approved by your office January 11, 1960.

George A. Palmer

Enclosure

cc:
Chief, EODC
Superintendent, Independence

MHNelligan/gmf
General
Daily
Area

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT, PART I, ARCHITECTURAL DATA SECTION, THE FIRST BANK
OF THE UNITED STATES, INDEPENDENCE NHP

REVIEW SHEET (Admin. and Hist. Data Sections approved in 1960)

1. MR. GOLUB

9/8/13

Chief Div. of Main.	
Area Services	
Chief, Branch	
Civil Engineer	
Tech. Specialists	
Architect	
Horticulturist	
Mech. Engineer	
Secretary	
Division Files	

2. MR. LUKENS

Seems adequate for a Part I with one possible exception:- the Handbook calls for "Estimate of extent and cost of additional work required to complete architectural research and investigation under Part II".

JBZ 8/11

3. Dr. Nelligan



IN REPLY REFER TO:

H30-RHA

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Independence National Historical Park
420 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, Pa. 19106

July 29, 1964

Northeast Region		Initial and Date
JUL 30 1964		
Reg. Director		
Asst. to RD (PA)		
Asst. to RD (Dev. L)		
Resource Studies Adv.		
Asst. Reg. Dir. Adm.		
Finance & Prop.		
Personnel		
Programs		
Asst. Reg. Dir. Oper.		
Interp. & VS		
Land & Water		
Maintenance		
Director's Plan. Coord.		
Ext. Mgmt. & Wr.		
Asst. Reg. Dir. - Conf.		
Fed'l Agency Assn.		
NPS Studies		
State Assistance		

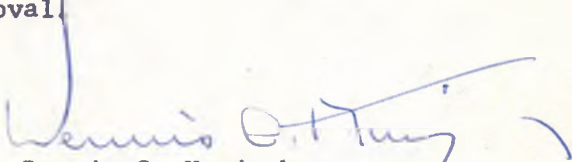
Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Northeast Region

From: Acting Superintendent, Independence

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, Architectural Data
Section, The First Bank of the United States

In accordance with Acting Regional Director Palmer's memorandum of July 7, we have reviewed the Architectural Data Section of the Historic Structures Report, Part I, on the First Bank of the United States and recommend it for approval.


Dennis C. Kurjack

*Posted
Suf*

GMFraney
7/28

Posted
GMF

H30-RHA

JUL 28 1964

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Independence
From: Regional Director, Northeast Region
**Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, Architectural Data
Section, The First Bank of the United States, INHP**

On July 7, we forwarded you a copy of the subject Architectural
Data Section for your review.

We would appreciate receiving your comments on this report as soon
as possible. We would like to complete our regional review and for-
ward the report to the Director for approval by the end of this week.

(Sgd.) Ronald F. Lee

GMFraney
General ✓
Daily
Area

H30-RHA

JUL 7 1964

GMFraneay
6/7/64

Posted
GMF

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Independence

From: *Acting* Regional Director, Northeast Region

**Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, Architectural Data
Section, The First Bank of the United States**

Enclosed for your review is a copy of the Architectural Data Section for the Part I Historic Structures Report on the First Bank of the United States. The Administrative and Historical Data Sections of this report were approved in 1960.

Please let us have your comments on this section of the report at your earliest convenience.

George A. Palmer

Enclosure

GMFraneay/bg
General ✓
Daily
Area



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
Philadelphia, Pa. - 19106

IN REPLY REFER TO:
H30-H

June 29, 1964

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Northeast Region

From: Chief Architect, EODC

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Architectural Data Section,
Part I, The First Bank of the United States, Independence

Enclosed for your review and distribution are three copies of the
subject report which was recommended by Chief Hall this date. A
copy has been retained by this office.

Robert E. Smith
Robert E. Smith

*Post Test
Jmf*

Enclosure

cc:
Assistant Director, Design and Construction
Superintendent, Independence

Northeast Region		Initial and Date
JUN 30 1964		
☐	Reg. Director	
☐	Asst. to RD (PA)	
☒	Asst. to RD (Dev. L)	
☐	Resource Studies Adv.	
☐	Asst. Reg. Dir. Adm.	
☐	Finance & Prop.	
☐	Personnel	
☐	Programs	
☐	Asst. Reg. Dir. Oper.	
☐	Interp. & VS	
☐	Land & Water	
☐	Maintenance	
☐	Master Plan Coord.	
☐	Res. Manage. & VP	
☐	Asst. Reg. Dir. Co-Act	
☐	Fed'l Agency Asss.	
☐	NPS Studies	
☐	State Assistance	

Region Five
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

April 6, 1960

Nelly
5/6
Palmer
4/6

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Independence National Historical Park

From: Regional Director

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, First Bank of the United States

You will recall that our comments on the subject report, and others, were deferred until a meeting could be held to discuss all the inter-related problems in the development of the Park.

Accordingly, subject to the Director's approval, this will serve to confirm the agreement reached at the meeting held in this office three weeks ago - to use the First Bank as a temporary or Interim Visitor Center as proposed in this report. This does not include concurrence at this time in recommendation (2), Chapter I, Section 2 on temporary parking. It is understood that a plan will be prepared on this proposal and submitted for consideration.

(Sgd.) Ronald F. Lee

Regional Director

In duplicate

Copy to: Director
Chief, EODC

MHNelligan/RFL/cp

General ✓
Daily
Area
Operations Division



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

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H30-DCA

January 11, 1960

REGION FIVE		INITIAL AND DATE
JAN 13 1960		
✓ REG. DIRECT	RW	1/16
✓ ASST. DIR.		1/18
✓ OPERATIONS		1/18
✓ ADM.		1/18
✓ REC. RES. PLAN		
✓ RANGER ACTS		

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five

From: Acting Chief Architect

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, First Bank
of the United States, Independence

The Historic Structures Report, Part I, First Bank of the United States, Independence National Historical Park, has been reviewed by the interested Divisions in the Washington Office and is recommended for approval with the following exception.

We would like to endorse the proposed eventual use of the building as a branch museum to present the story of the Bank of the United States and the financial history of the United States from 1775-1800. The proposal to use this building as a branch museum or even as an historic house museum appears to be in keeping with the approved interpretive prospectus. The proposed interim use of the structure as a temporary information center appears to be logical and realistic. However, in light of Mr. Scoyen's memorandum of December 23, 1959, to the Regional Director, Region Five, indicating that a restudy of the specific uses for Park buildings within Area A would be a desirable undertaking by Regional Director Lee, we believe further decision on the use of the First Bank should await Mr. Lee's survey.

Robert E. Smith

Robert E. Smith
Acting Chief Architect

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

Info	OPERATIONS	Act	Initial and Date
✓	Lands		
✓	Engineer		
✓	Monkoshi		
✓	Architect		
✓	Land Archt		
✓	Programs		



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H30 *And*

Eastern Office
Division of Design and Construction
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

January 8, 1960

Info	OPERATIONS	Act	Initial and Date
	Lands		
	Engineer		
✓	Architect		
	Land Archt		
✓	Programs		

Memorandum
LBC DER JEC 2/11/

Regional Director, Region Five

From: Acting Chief, EODC

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, The First Bank of the United States

We are glad to recommend the subject report for approval and endorse the Superintendent's recommendations with the following qualification. In view of the probability that the complete exterior restoration of this structure cannot be accomplished in the immediate future, we propose that immediate steps should be taken to rectify the present deplorable condition of the Third Street facade of this important structure.

Because this entire facade of marble with its portico of corinthian columns and decorated pediment above stands now in its unaltered, original state, there is certainly no need for this portion to await the architectural investigation of the entire building, which must precede a complete restoration.

We suggest that the Part I Architectural Section of the Historic Structures Report, which the Superintendent in his memorandum of December 11 has asked us to prepare, take the form of an Interim Report on the cleaning and pointing of the east marble facade and painting of the wood pediment. This should be done this summer at the time the brick walls on the remaining three sides of this building are given the application of a water seal to protect them.

Before this can be done, a scaffold must be erected and a careful examination of the carved wood pediment must be made to determine its condition and the original paint colors.

John B. Cabot
John B. Cabot
Acting Chief

Copy to: Superintendent, Independence NHP
Chief of D & C - 2

REGION FIVE	INITIAL AND DATE
JAN 11 1960	
✓ REG. DIRECTOR	<i>R2/1/2</i>
✓ ASST. REG. DIR.	<i>1/12</i>
✓ OPERATIONS	<i>1/12</i>
✓ INTERPRETATION	<i>1/12</i>
✓ ADM.	
✓ REC. RES. PLAN.	
✓ RAN. C. I. S.	
✓ <i>H. S.</i>	
✓ <i>Miss Pennington</i>	<i>Postel 1/29</i>
✓ <i>Mr. New</i>	<i>2/5</i>

Region Five
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

January 8, 1960

Nelligan
1/8

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Independence National Historical Park
From: Acting Regional Director
Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, First Bank of the
United States, Independence NHP

In the expectation that Regional Director Ronald F. Lee will be unable to give this report the careful consideration it warrants for at least a week or two after assuming his new assignment January 11th, we suggest that decisions and comments be deferred until February 1st.

We trust this date will be satisfactory to all offices concerned.

(Sgd.) George A. Palmer

George A. Palmer
Acting Regional Director

In duplicate

Copy to: Director
Chief, EODC

MHNelligan/cp

General ✓
Daily
Area
Operations Division

Passarelli
12/15/59
Nalley
12/15

Region Five
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

December 16, 1959

Memorandum

To: Director

From: Acting Regional Director

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, First Bank of the
United States, Independence NHP

In accordance with the procedure outlined in FO-11-56,
attached for your consideration is the subject report; a copy is
being forwarded to EODC for review and comment.

Because of the Christmas holidays, we are extending
the review date to January 10, 1960.

(Sgd.) George A. Palmer

George A. Palmer
Acting Regional Director

In duplicate

Attachments

Copy to: Chief, EODC, w/copy of report
Supt., Independence

CPassarelli
General ✓
Daily
Area
Operations Division



IN REPLY REFER TO:

H30

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Independence National Historical Park
Old Custom House
420 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

December 11, 1959

REGION FIVE		INITIAL AND DATE
DEC 11 1959		
REG. DIR.	FOF	
ASST. DIR.		
CHIEF	S	
INTERPRETER		
ADM.		
REC. RES. PLAN.		
RANGER ACT'S		

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region V

From: Superintendent, Independence NHP

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, on the First Bank of the United States

Enclosed in quadruplicate for your review and distribution is the Historic Structures Report, Part I, on the First Bank of the United States.

By copy of this memo, we request that EODC undertake the preparation of Part I of the Architectural Data section.

M. O. Anderson
M. O. Anderson
Superintendent

Enclosures (4)

Copy to: EODC

SIGNATURE SHEET

RECOMMENDED

Robert E. Smith
~~Director~~ acting chief arch. Naso

Date 1/11/60

Ronald F. Lee
Regional Director

Date 4/6/60

John B. Cabot
Chief, Eastern Office, Div. of Design & Construction
acting in case

Date 1/8/60

APPROVED

M. O. Anderson
Superintendent

Date 12/11/59



"Girards Bank in Philadelphia"
by Klinckowstrom, from the Birch
view of 1800.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I.	ADMINISTRATIVE DATA
	Section 1. Name and Number of Building
	Section 2. Proposed Use of Structure and Justification
	Section 3. Provision for Operating the Building
	Section 4. Estimate of Cost for Rehabilitation
CHAPTER II.	HISTORICAL DATA
	Section 1. Structural History
	Section 2. Historical Associations
	Section 3. Evaluation of Historical Importance
	Section 4. Historical Research
CHAPTER III.	ARCHITECTURAL DATA (To be submitted)
CHAPTER IV.	ARCHEOLOGICAL DATA
	Section 1. Archeological Research
	Section 2. Previous Archeological Reports Relating to the Project
	Section 3. Further Research Needed
CHAPTER V.	FURNISHING AND EXHIBITION DATA
	Section 1. Existing Historic Furnishings
	Section 2. Proposed Furnishing Plan
	Section 3. Proposed Financing of Exhibits
	Section 4. Recommendation for Interpretive Development

CHAPTER I

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

Prepared by Superintendent M. O. Anderson

Chapter I
Section 1
Page 1

NAME AND NUMBER
OF BUILDING

First Bank of the United States, Building No. 11.

PROPOSED USE OF STRUCTURE
AND JUSTIFICATION

The historical importance and the architectural merit of the First Bank of the United States ultimately warrant the restoration of the building's exterior to its original appearance. Such treatment is not recommended for the interior, however; at least, not for the present. But the most obvious anachronisms should be removed and measures taken to prevent future changes which would depart from the original appearance of the building.

The eventual use of this building should be as a branch museum (perhaps, in part, if the necessary evidence is developed, as a historic house museum) to illustrate the immediate story of the Bank of the United States and also the broader financial story of the United States from 1775 to 1800.

For the next few years, however, and until development of the Park is further along and interpretive needs more accurately assessed, we recommend the utilization of this building as a temporary Information Center. As the landscape development of the central and west sections of Area "A" is completed, we will need to begin use of this area; and the First Bank, in terms of location, would be suitable for initiating experimentally the interpretive program of the Park from the eastern section of Area "A," as provided in the Master Plan.

Accordingly, we recommend: (1) that with the use of construction funds in the 1961 Fiscal Year construction program for the

rehabilitation of the First Bank, a limited amount of work be done in the building to provide for a temporary Park Information Center; and (2) that the space across the street, bounded by Chestnut, American, Dock, and Third Streets, be developed to a limited extent to accommodate temporary parking under controlled conditions. It is proposed that this parking facility be handled as a commercial venture but administered in such a way as to insure parking for Park visitors, those arriving by bus as well as by private vehicle.

To accomplish this, it is proposed that a suitable lease agreement be worked out with an experienced and cooperative parking lot operator. Under this lease agreement, the operator or lessee would be permitted to handle some commercial or local parking, but would be required to reserve space for bona fide Park visitors, including buses as well as private automobiles. It is proposed that such a lease be of a short term nature so that adjustments based on experience gained might be made with ~~maximum~~ flexibility. (Such an arrangement, it is believed, could be made with the lessee now temporarily operating a portion of this area as a parking lot.)

PROVISIONS FOR OPERATING
BUILDING

It is proposed to operate the building by members of the Park's
interpretive staff.

PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE
OF COST

Facilities, repair (heat, light, plumbing)	\$ 5,000
Interpretive Facilities	<u>25,000</u>
	\$ 30,000

CHAPTER II
HISTORICAL DATA

Prepared by Historian David A. Kimball

STRUCTURAL HISTORY

Philadelphia was enjoying one of its greatest periods of building activity when the officers of the Bank of the United States started to shop around for a lot early in the 1790's. The country atmosphere that had thus far prevailed west of the State House was giving way steadily to the encroachment of the city. A structure of noble proportions which its promoters hoped would become the presidential mansion was underway on High Street at Ninth. The change was most drastic in the blocks south of Chestnut Street and east of the State House which until then had boasted several of the city's fine gardens. Within a few years the Pemberton and Norris gardens on Chestnut were built over. The new Federal government had arrived on the scene and had quickly overflowed the new public buildings around the State House and taken up quarters in private houses in the vicinity. New banks and businesses were flourishing and they too had to be accommodated. The theater, Library Hall, Surgeon's Hall, and Rickett's Circus added to the cluster of new and impressive structures on or near Chestnut Street. A pretentious trend in building had been put into motion which while not completely abandoning the well-known forms and materials was drawn ever more closely to classical forms and materials. To these several processes the builders of the bank contributed their share.

Appearance of the Exterior in the Early Years

On February 22, 1794, the President, Directors and Company of the Bank of the United States acquired a lot at one end of the Pemberton

garden site on the west side of Third Street below Chestnut Street. During the next two years they appointed a building committee,¹ procured plans from the merchant and economist Samuel Blodget, laid the cornerstone and ordered the roofing copper.² On July 24, 1797, the Bank moved from its temporary quarters in Carpenters' Hall to its elegant new banking house,³ although the scaffolding of the new building remained in place until December 1797⁴ and work on the interior continued until 1800.⁵

The completed building, one of the first monumental structures erected in this country, symbolized the wealth and power of the institution it housed. "The masterpiece of Philadelphia for beauty and architecture," its completion inspired the local press to fulsome praise:

Wednesday morning last the workmen at the new Bank of the United States struck their scaffolding, and unfolded the novel and enchanting scene of a truly Grecian Edifice, composed of American white marble.

The entrance to this building is by a flight of nine steps through a Portico, in its proportions nearly corresponding to the front of the celebrated Roman temple at Nîmes; the Pediment is supported by six columns of the order of Corinth, with the decorations they bore at Palmyra and Rome when architecture was at its zenith in the Augustan age; ten columns in Relievo of the same order and proportions support the principal front; and the tympanum of the pediment is adorned with the arms of the United States; there is one door in the center with windows in each of the interstices; all the ornaments are distinct, graceful, and appropriate; but too difficult to describe minutely without the pencil's aid.⁶

After the impact of its marble facade on a city of brick and frame buildings had worn off, the building was described less emotionally and somewhat more completely by the compilers of an 1804 city directory:

The Bank of the United States is on the west side of Third Street, below Chesnut Street, and opposite the Dock Street. The foundation was laid in 1795, and it was open for business in 1798 [sic]. It is a square building, ninety-six feet [90 feet, 10 inches] in front, and seventy-two feet deep. The front has a portico, supported by six fluted columns of white marble, of the Corinthian order; the cornice and pediment are of wood, highly enriched. The tympanum is decorated with the American eagle and arms. The front is of white marble as high as the frieze, inclusive, and extends beyond the portico, on each side, in two wings, and is decorated with Pilasters. The whole of the ground floor, excepting the small area of the staircase, and small private rooms for the President and Cashier, is appropriated for the hall of business. The walls of the sides and back are of red brick. The roof is covered with copper.⁷

The facade contained six windows and a panelled door on the first floor, seven windows on the second. The north and south walls had five windows on each of the three floors (Illustrations Nos. 2, 14, 15 and 16); the tops of the first floor windows of these walls were at a level with those of the facade, and above each was a square marble or stone medallion.⁸ The rear wall contained six windows and a door at the first floor⁹ and seven windows, the center one lower than those flanking it, at the second and third floors (Illustration No. 4). None of these windows were barred. Two iron footscrapers flanked the front door (Illustration No. 4), and a whale oil lamp was suspended above it (Frontispiece and Illustration No. 2).¹⁰ Eight chimneys, three each on the north and south sides and two in the rear, rose above the hipped roof (Frontispiece and Illustrations Nos. 2, 3, 4, 14, 15 and 16). Four or more lightning rods protected the structure.¹¹

Nineteenth Century Changes

In 1817, Stephen Girard, who had purchased the bank building from the Trustees of the Bank of the United States in 1812, undertook the first of several alterations which have been made in the structure's interior. "Observing the backsteps and garden-wall, attached to his banking-house, to begin to settle,...he caused them to be taken down,..." and rebuilt upon a more substantial foundation.¹² Later he had the front steps of the bank "...totally demolished, then reset, and the pillars of the portico as well as the whole front of the building, cleansed to their original brightness,..."¹³ However, neither of these alterations greatly changed the appearance of the structure (compare the Frontispiece and Illustrations Nos. 1 and 2 with Illustrations Nos. 3 and 5).

Indeed, the first marked change in the appearance of the exterior of the bank did not come until 1846, when the red brick side and rear walls were painted white to match the marble facade.¹⁴ Between 1850 and 1901, the medallions above the first floor windows of the north and south walls were removed and the window openings were extended upward some 4 feet (compare Illustrations Nos. 3 and 6).¹⁵ During these same years, the center window openings of the second and third floors, west wall, were converted to tripartite openings (compare Illustrations Nos. 4 and 7). Also, between 1880 and 1901, bars were placed over the windows of the first and second floors.¹⁶

Later Exterior Alterations

In 1901-02 even more drastic changes were made. The rear steps were removed and the "marble pilasters, arch, Keystone, etc." of the rear door were reset (Illustration No. 18). The front door was replaced. A cornice and balustrade of galvanized iron "similar in detail to that...on the south side" replaced the old wooden cornice and balustrade of the south, west and north walls, and all of the chimneys were removed.¹⁷ Even more important, the old hipped roof was replaced with an asphalt-covered hipped roof with skylight and elevator housing (Illustrations Nos. 7 and 17).¹⁸

The final change in the exterior of the bank was made in 1912, when the stepped addition shown in Illustration No. 7 was built at the rear of the structure. The foundation of Girard's 1817 garden wall was used as the foundation of this addition; during its erection the areaways of the west wall of the main building were closed, the first floor windows were closed up or converted to doors, and portions of the wall itself were removed to provide communication between the addition and the first and second floors of the main building.¹⁹

The Interior of the Building, 1797-1901

In comparison with the wealth of prints and written descriptions, lacking in detail though they are, of exterior of the banking house, there is an almost complete lack of early views or descriptions of the interior. The only contemporary descriptions yet found are the passage in the 1804

description quoted above which states that the "whole of the ground floor, excepting the small area of the staircase, and small rooms for the President and Cashier, is appropriated for the hall of business," a remark in Mease's 1811 Picture of Philadelphia that "excepting the four external walls and the vaults, the entire structure is of wood,..." and a reference in the memorandum of agreement executed when Girard purchased the building from the Trustees of the Bank to the effect that the "Trustees are to have the use of the Directors' Room in the Said Bank, the North Side of the Banking Room, the President's Room, and the Vaults adjoining it, and one large Vault below,"²⁰

However, since it is probable that the arrangement of the interior did not change much between 1798 and 1901-02, the descriptions of the building prepared by the architect in charge of the restoration of the latter years (see Appendix A), the reminiscences of an employee of that architect (see Appendix B), and photographs of the interior taken before the alterations (Illustrations Nos. 8-12), when analyzed in conjunction with the two contemporary descriptions, permit certain deductions about the original interior arrangement to be drawn.²¹ The first floor, with the exception of a small room in the southwest corner, another small room in probably the southeast or northwest corner, a vault, and "the small area of the staircase," was in one room. The staircase rose in a vestibule just inside the front door (Illustrations Nos. 5 and 11). Behind this vestibule was the large banking room with barrel vault ceiling which ran through to a

vestibule inside the rear door (Illustrations Nos. 8, 9 and 10). Columns at the sides of the barrel vault into the low-ceilinged space on either side supported the second floor, which consisted of "a sort of gallery" on both the north and south sides, separated from each other by the vaulting. The third floor extended out over the portico (Illustration No. 16). Nothing is known as to the arrangement of the cellar, although it must have contained vaults for the storage of bullion and specie.

The 1901 Rebuilding

The building was gutted and its interior arrangements changed during the alterations of 1901-02. When this work was complete, the staircase had been removed and a new one built near the rear entrance, an elevator had been installed, a rotunda extending up to and lighted by the new skylight had replaced the barrel vault of the main banking room, a fire-proof vault had been erected in the northwest corner of the first floor, the space under the portico had been walled off from the rest of the third floor, and other drastic changes had been made (see Appendix A and Illustrations Nos. 13-19). Still further changes have been made since 1902.

Interior Decor

If little is known about interior room arrangement, even less is known about interior decor. The undated photograph of the first floor reproduced in Illustration No. 8 shows a type of decor not in general use in Philadelphia at the time the bank was built. While the decor shown might possibly be original, it more probably represented a change made at some

time in the nineteenth century.²² In any event, the decor was changed between the time when the undated photograph was taken and 1901-02 (compare Illustrations Nos. 8 and 9).

Whatever its room arrangement and decor may have been, the interior seems to have had a full quota of furnishings. Among them were a pine writing desk, a white pine counter, a bench, a foot bench, a pump and sink, four candlesticks, and two stoves. In addition, there were such items of banking equipment as a "Metal scale [sic] Thermo [meter]," an iron chest, a screw press, and various sets of money scales (see Appendix C). Somewhere in the building--probably out of sight from the main banking room--were a clock, a walnut desk, and a "Bedstead with Sacking Bottom & cord."²³ Over the rear vestibule door was a gilded eagle and ball (Illustrations No. 8, 19).

NOTES

Chapter II
Section 1
Notes

1. "The Committee for superintending the Building of the New Banking House [was] continued." - Minutes of the Board of Directors of the United States Bank, January 6, 1795, Etting Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Hereafter cited as Board Minutes. No other reference to this most important committee has been found, and the names of its members are not known.
2. "Agreed that the Cashier write to Mess. Bearing [Baring] to procure & ship by the first Vessel from Liverpool or Bristol where it can be had on the best terms 1500 sheets of Copper 48 x 24 inches each sheet weighing 8 pounds - for the Roof of the Banking House - with a sufficient Quantity of Nails suitable for fixing the Copper upon the Roof -" - Board Minutes, November 24, 1795.
3. "On Monday [July 24], for the first time, the Bank of the United States transacted business in their new building, south Third Street." - Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser, July 26, 1797.
4. "Wednesday morning [December 20] the workmen at the new Bank of the United States struck their scaffolding,..." - Gazette of the United States, December 23, 1797.
5. The cost of the building stood at \$94,042.33 on December 23, 1797, and at \$110,168.05 on August 12, 1800. Quite obviously some \$16,000 worth of work was done on the building in the interim, and the indications are that it was done on the interior. - James O. Wettereau, "America's Oldest Bank Building," Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, 43 (1953), p. 73. Hereafter cited as Wettereau, "America's Oldest Bank Building."
6. Claypoole's American Daily Advertiser, December 25, 1797. The Gazette of the United States for December 23 had carried an almost identical story. However, not all of those who viewed the building were so impressed. "The white marble columns of the bank are full of bluish and yellowish veins, but they have, notwithstanding, a very beautiful appearance. Sufficient attention has not been paid to the successive heights of the blocks, nor are the joints level. The plain workmanship is well executed. The sculpture is not good." - Benjamin H. Latrobe, The Journal of Latrobe (New York, 1905), 84. Further, Moreau de St. Mery, in his American Journey, 1793-1798, remarked that it was "a wonder so flimsy that its portico was destroyed by rats."
7. Moore and Jones, The Traveller's Directory or A Pocket Companion (Philadelphia, 1804), 13. Similar descriptions are to be found in James Mease, The Picture of Philadelphia (Philadelphia, 1811), 320-21;

Chapter II
Section 1
Notes

Daniel Bowen, ed., A History of Philadelphia...With a Notice of Villages in the Vicinity (Philadelphia, 1839), 65; and H. S. Tanner, A New Picture of Philadelphia or The Stranger's Guide (Philadelphia, 1840), 44. The "marble collonade, sculpture, carving, etc...." was executed by C. F. LeGrande and Sons. - Philadelphia Aurora, December 14, 1797.

8. See Independence National Historical Park, "Historic Building Report on Merchant's Exchange" (May 1958), Chapter III, Plate 1, for a picture of this detail.
9. From this door a set of steps led down into an enclosed yard. - Independence National Historical Park, "Historic Grounds Report for First Bank of the United States" (February 1959), Chapter II, Section 3, p. 5. Hereafter cited as "Grounds Report." See also Illustration No. 13.
10. On July 13, 1801, the cashier purchased "2 Cask Sperm: Oil" containing 114 gallons from John Moybin and Company; on August 11 he purchased "4 lb. fine Cotton 1 wick" from N. and D. Dillers. - Miscellaneous Bills, Etting Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Hereafter cited as Miscellaneous Bills.
11. "I observe two of your electrical conductors out of the ground - If the building had not others, this would be dangerous - but I find these will not be deep enough even when cover'd; & I would recommend driving an Iron Bar a few feet down to moisture which is the real Safe Conductor to be sought for - & to connect them with the present ones by binding them together with nail rod - and as I know no other risk your Bank is exposed to, I take the liberty of mentioning it-" - John Vaughn to Stephen Girard, July 11, 1817, Girard Papers, Girard College.
12. Stephen Simpson, Biography of Stephen Girard (Philadelphia, 1832), 172-73. Hereafter cited as Simpson, Girard. See also "Grounds Report," Chapter II, Section 3.
13. Simpson, Girard, 173-74. This work was done during or immediately after the erection of Girard of brick houses on the property south of the bank in 1829.
14. See Independence National Historical Park, "Interim Historic Structures Report on First Bank of the United States" (July 1959). But see Illustration No. 4, which shows the rear wall unpainted. Perhaps the photograph has been dated incorrectly.

Chapter II
Section 1
Notes

15. This work had not been done when the 1850 photograph referred to in note 8 was taken, but had apparently been completed before the 1901-1902 alterations began. The sash of all windows has been changed since 1880; perhaps the change occurred at the time while this work was in progress.
16. See Illustrations Nos. 5, 16 and 18. The notes on the drawings which call for installation of "iron grilles" in the third floor windows and "iron bar grilles similar to present second story windows" in the tripartite windows of the west wall establish that there were bars in the second floor windows, and probably in those of the first floor as well, in 1901. No bars are shown in the c. 1880 photo.
17. Three of the chimneys were rebuilt during the alterations (see Illustrations Nos. 7 and 17).
18. However, the copper roof of the portico was not disturbed (see Illustration No. 17).
19. Sheets 8 and 9 of drawing NHP-IND 9064, Resident Architect's files, Independence National Historical Park, contain plans for this work.
20. Quoted in Wettereau, "America's Oldest Bank Building," 74.
21. The conclusion that the interior arrangement remained relatively unchanged is based on two factors: the absence of references to change and the general agreement between the contemporary descriptions and the pre-restoration photographs. It is, at best, tentative, and it should be noted that some of the columns shown in Illustrations Nos. 8 and 9 are in a position where they would not have rested on the present basement walls.
22. Writing in 1839, Daniel Bowen remarked in his A History of Philadelphia... that the bank's "appearance has been recently much improved by suitable repairs." There is no indication that the exterior was altered between 1829 and 1846; perhaps Bowen is referring to installation of the decor shown in the photograph. It seems doubtful, from Girard's character as portrayed by his biographer, that Girard would have had work of this type done. All of this, however, is speculation.
23. David Evans' Day Book, December 9, 1791, February 7, 1792, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Leach, Josiah Granville, History of the Girard National Bank (Philadelphia, 1902), 71.

The building remained in its original condition until within the past year, during which its exterior has been carefully renovated, and the interior has been rebuilt in the most modern manner, both from sanitary and fire proof points of view. This work has been done under the direction of James H. Windrim, Esq^t, architect, who has furnished the following description of the building, together with the improvements mentioned:

"The Girard Bank Building's exterior is an admirable specimen of the best class of designing in which the finest examples of antique work have been followed with gratifying results. The contrast of the wealth of detail, beautiful modelling and grouping of pilasters, windows, portico entrance, doorway, etc., of the front facade, with the severe simplicity of the facades on either side, is admirable and gives the building a character of great dignity and civic importance.

"The portico of the Third Street front is Corinthian, studied from the Pantheon and Temple of Saturnus, and stands on a stylobate elevated above the pavement by steps on three sides, which give it emphasis and dignity and mark it as the feature of approach to the building. This portico is flanked on either side by a pavilion of pilasters of the same character as the columns of the portico, the space between the pilasters being pierced with windows, which are adorned with architraves and cornices supported by carved brackets. The pilasters and columns are surmounted by a cornice pediment and balustrade of great elegance of detail and proportion, studied from the best class of Roman antique work. The tympanum of the pediment is enriched by the date of the erection, 1795, and the American eagle in bas-relief carving of excellent modelling. From the pavement to the apex of the portico is fifty-six feet. The entire front is of Pennsylvania blue marble.

"The building stands alone. The three remaining sides are severely plain, and of brick painted to harmonize with the marble of the Third Street facade. The complete isolation of the building from contact with other structures, the nearest building being thirty feet away, adds greatly to its security

as a banking-house, rendering it easy of surveillance and adding also to its prominence and individuality. There is but one means of access to the building, the door on Third Street, which is very prominent from the street, and simplifies and renders most direct the method of conducting business. The low-ceiled apartments in which the first United States Bank started business have been replaced by a banking-room, eighty-six feet three inches wide and sixty-seven feet deep, lighted by a glass dome thirty-five feet in diameter and forty-four feet from the floor to the apex, flooding the entire apartment with daylight. This unique feature of the interior is supported by eight Corinthian columns in the first story, which are surmounted by a similar colonnade of forty columns and an entablature from which springs the glass dome.

"The clerical force of the bank is located beneath the dome and provided with all the accessories for doing the business of a great banking institution in the most expeditious and up-to-date manner. This space is separated from the general public by a screen of polished white marble, mahogany, and plate glass, in which are bronze wickets for the tellers and for officials with whom intercourse is necessary, and for the handling of bullion, documents, etc.

"A prominent feature is the safe-deposit vault, from designs by W. H. Hollar. It is built of Harveyized steel, and is both bomb- and bullet-proof and cannot be pierced with any known instrument. The doors are made to slide, and are controlled by time-locks, which, when closed, are absolutely inaccessible and cannot be gotten at either by burglars or others.

"The side-walls of the public space are lined with polished marble; the floor is of marble, and the apartment is of most ample proportions, being fifteen feet wide and extending the entire width of the building and half-way on either side.

"The officers of the bank have well appointed offices in the southwest portion of the first floor, which are accessible from the public space and also overlook the clerical space. In the second story around the central dome and light-well are grouped a board-room, a spacious room for clerical work, a large dining-room and pantry, rooms for storage, etc. In the third story is located a kitchen. The lockers and toilet-rooms of the employees are in the basement. These different floors are reached by means of an elevator and a stairway at the west end of the building."

APPENDIX B

Interview of Mr. William B. Cavin, Goshen Road, RFD 2, Malvern, Pa.,
with Historian David A. Kimball, September 15, 1959.

Mr. Cavin's father was real estate officer with Girard Trust. Mr. Cavin, through his father, got a job in the office of John T. Windrim, architect, at 132 S. Third St. He was working for Windrim when the latter remodelled the Girard National Bank [First Bank U.S.] building. He later worked for the Girard Estate.

He stated that Windrim made a set of drawings of existing conditions, but thinks these may have been destroyed at the time Windrim retired. Mr. Cavin has the following recollections of the pre-alteration appearance of the bank:

1. The north, south and west walls were red brick--Windrim had them painted.
 2. The rear steps were on the outside; Windrim had them moved inside and lowered the rear door and its frame.
 3. A barrel-vaulted corridor ran from the front to the rear door; offices were on either side of corridor.
 4. There were "a sort of gallery" on both the north and south sides of the second floor, separated from each other by the top of the barrel vault of the first floor corridor.
 5. The loft extended under the roof of the pediment. Windrim closed off this pediment from the rest of the third story by erecting a brick fire wall between them.
 6. There was neither a vault nor an elevator in the building.
 7. John Patterson, a civil engineer, worked out the circular girder supporting the columns of the rotunda, although colleagues felt the system would fail. The original floor was supported by wooden girders running east and west, and wooden joists running north and south.
 8. The 1902 work was executed by a Chicago firm of contractors.
 9. There was a brick wall topped by iron palisades behind the building, enclosing the court or yard of the bank.
 10. Mr. Cavin was superintendent on the erection of the Girard power plant. When excavating for the chimney foundations, the remains of a slaughter house or tannery were uncovered. Below the tannery was a layer of water-bearing gravel [Dock Creek?]. The water ran faster than the excavation could be pumped out, and a sewer was built to connect with the Dock Street Sewer.
- 

APPENDIX C

Furnishing Vouchers among the Miscellaneous Bills, Etting Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Bank of united States to Baker & Neff		
1800		
Nov. 22	To 3/4 of a day work at 10/ per day	0. 7. 6
	To Boarding up the end of the Counter	
	To 15 feet of white pine @ 21/ per h	0. 2..7
	To Cash for 1 lb. of nails	0. 0.11
Bank of the United States to Henry Schively D ^r		
1801		£ s. d.
February 17	to taken down the Stove pipe)	0. 7.. 6
	& Cleaning & putting up)	
March 16	to grinding a pair large Sascors	0. 1..10-1/2
April 4	to a new pin in lock	0. 1.. 0
May 6	to 4 new Clamps to Seal press	0.10.. 0
	to 2 Dozin Screws	0. 2.. 6
12	to 1 new Clamp & Six Screws	0. 3.. 1
	to fixing the above Clamps to	0. 2..01
	the Seal press	
		1. 7..11-1/2
Bank of United States		
May the 11	To Benj ⁿ Lyndall D ^r	
1801		
	to 1 pine Riting Desk	£ 2. 5.. 0
July the 8	to a Bench	0. 7.. 6
the 11	to a frame for Desk	1.10.. 0
		£ 4. 2.. 6
Bank United States		
1801	To William Poyntell D ^r	
Sept. 4	To an 18 Inch Metal Sciale Thermof	
	in Mahogany case	£ 3. 9.. 0
Bank United States		
1801	Bot of Ann Penrose	
October 31	A wrought Iron Chest @ 2/6 p.	D ^r s
	1b. wct. 224 lb.	74-67/100
	...	
	Charge Expences a/c for Office at Washington	

Bank of the United States		To Henry Schively D ^r		£	s.	d.
1801						
October	12 th	To opening an Iron Chest Lock		0.	2..	9-1/2
	19	To repairing a Lock		0.	2..	9-1/2
	28	To 2 Shovels		1.17..		6
		To Strikeing off Knives		1.	6..	0
		To 2 Canciling hammers		1.13..		9
		To 1 Large Chissel		0.	5..	7-1/2
		To 1 small do		0.	3..	9
		To 1 Swage	Office in	1.	0..	0
		To 1 Stake	Norfolk	0.13..		1-1/2
		To 1 Chissel with Handle		0.	7..	6
		To 1 Screw Driver		0.	5..	7-1/2
		To 1 Stamp Light		0.11..		3
		To 2 pair Scissors		1.17..		6
Nov.	5	To a 6 plate Stove 7 feet pipe & puttg up		4.13..		9
		To 15 lb. of pipe for 10 plate stove				
		at 1/1/0		1.	8..	1-1/2
		To a large Hook to hang the pipe in		0.	9..	4-1/2
		To 1-1/2 lb. of Stove pipe		0.	2..	9-1/2
		To fixing up the pipe		0.	7..	6
				£17. 8.. 9		

Philadelphia, November 16, 1801

Bank of United States		To Jacob Snider D ^r		£	s.	d.
To 49 bds	a 15 pr [piece]			£	3.	1..3
To 10 ditto	a 9 ^d pr ditto			0.	7..	6
To 10 ditto	a 11 ^d pr ditto			0.	8..	3
To 24 Pidgeon Holes	18/9			0.18..		9
To 1 Case for Sink	6/6			0.	6..	6
To 1 Box for Iron Doors	15/			0.15..		0
To 1 foot Bench	6/			0.	6..	0
				£ 6. 3..3		

Philad^a 5th of 12th M^o 1801

Bank of the United States		Bought of Joseph Richardson		
for Office)				
Washington)				
1 Pair	box beam Scales in wainscot Box			\$11.00
1 Pair	ditto smaller size			8.00
1 Pair	money Scales with mahogany Box			
	& Brass Stand			8.00

2 Mahogany Stands for Scales with Fixtures compleat	18.00
1 Sett Bank weights consisting of a 10, 20, 30, 40, 50, 100, 200, 300, 500, 1000, & 2000 pennyweights making in the whole 4250 dwts @ 3 farthings per dwt is £ 13.5.7-1/2	35.42
2 Setts Dwts & Grains	<u>1.20</u>
	\$81.62

December 19th 1801

Simson to Samuel Z. Jones to a pump 22 feet at 50/100 Cents per foot	11.00
Boxes Nawsel and leathers	2.50
to halling pump	.25
opening & Shuting Sink	1.00
to puting in the pump	1.50
to Iron Work	<u>5.00</u>
	21.25/100

Philad^a Dec^r 22^d 1801

Bank United States

Bot. of Thomas Hockley	
4 Flat bottom'd candlesticks 7/	£ 1.8..0
2 pair Steel Spring Snuffers 2/4	<u>4..8</u>
	£ 1.12.8

HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

The "Grecian Edifice" into which the First Bank of the United States moved in 1797 was the first bank building of great note erected in the United States. Designed for and built by the institution whose name it bears, the structure continued in use as a bank for more than 130 years. It housed, successively, the First Bank of the United States, the Bank of Stephen Girard, the Girard [National] Bank, and, since 1929, such public agencies as the Board of City Trusts and the Park Service's Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction.

The Bank of the United States, occupant of the building from 1797 until 1811, originated with Alexander Hamilton's Report on a National Bank, the second of his three monumental reports, which was submitted to Congress on December 14, 1790. This report recommended that the Congress incorporate a bank which "...would provide sufficient capital to support an extensive circulation, but...would also enhance the current price of government obligations and thereby sustain the government's credit."¹ Moreover, it would aid the Treasury in administering the national finances. To effect these ends, the Bank was to be capitalized at the enormous sum of ten million dollars, two million of which was to be subscribed by the Federal government. Three-fourths of this capital was to be payable in six percent stock of the United States.

Hamilton's proposals, overcoming bitter opposition from the nascent Democratic-Republican party, were embodied in an act of incorporation

passed by the Congress and signed by President Washington on February 25, 1791. It was during the controversy over this measure that the powers of the new government were put to the first great test. None of Madison's powers of persuasion had sufficed to deter the bill's progress in Congress. Washington, having paused to ascertain the opinions of Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, Attorney-General Edmund Randolph, and Hamilton, finally was won over by the Secretary of the Treasury's "classic exposition of the doctrine of implied powers." Within a few months the stock was subscribed, a board of directors and a president chosen, and a building rented. On December 12, 1791, the Bank opened for business in Carpenters' Hall where it remained until July 24, 1797, when its own banking house was ready for occupancy.

This handsome new banking house stood at the crossroads of the nation's economic life. Within a stone's throw of the building were the offices of the Treasury Department, then as now the most important single factor in the economy.² Only slightly more distant were two banks--the Bank of North America and the Bank of Pennsylvania--second in wealth and power only to the Bank of the United States itself,³ and both the United States Mint and the office of the United States Customs for the District of Pennsylvania were within walking distance.⁴ Through its huge, ornamented gates and down its court to the rear entrance were drawn the heavily loaded carts as bullion and specie flowed in and out of the bank's basement vaults, to and from the neighboring banks and the mint,⁵ and bank

notes and bills of exchange flowed into it from the customs house. Moreover, the building was the control center for a system of branch banks covering eight other major cities.⁶ At the zenith of its power and influence, the busy bank in its every aspect radiated status and confidence. This extended even to its four watchmen who were accoutered in a distinctive uniform of "drab cloath" with "Baize Linen trimmins & mettles Buttons."⁷

Thus situated, the Bank of the United States was in an ideal position to facilitate the operation of the Treasury Department. The services it rendered in this respect were many and varied:

The Bank acted as agent for the payment of interest on the funded domestic debt, not only officially in the United States, but also unofficially (for the accommodation of foreign investors) in London and Amsterdam. It acted as agent for receiving subscriptions to new government loans, and in sinking fund operations. It acted as agent for paying the salaries of government officials and also certain claims against the Government. It facilitated the incessant and complicated foreign exchange operations of the Treasury. It acted to prevent excessive drains of specie from the United States, and cooperated with the United States Mint by handing over bullion and foreign coins from time to time. The Bank's circulating notes were receivable for all payments due to the Government. It aided in the collection of customs bonds. It was the main, though not the exclusive, depository for Treasury funds, and transmitted them from place to place without charge.⁸

The deposit of Federal funds and the existence of a system of centrally controlled branch banks in leading commercial centers. combined to give the Bank an additional power, the power to restrain the extension of credit by other banks.⁹ "This restraint upon bank lending came later

to be designated central bank control of credit."¹⁰ At a time when bank notes and similar evidences of bank credit constituted much of the nation's circulating medium, this power was comparable to that now exercised by the Federal Reserve System.

At the same time that the Bank was acting as the fiscal agent of the Treasury and was restraining credit expansion, it was a commercial bank, discounting bills, issuing bank notes, extending loans, accepting deposits and providing all the other services expected of contemporary banks. However, it had far more resources at its command than any of its contemporaries. Indeed, its authorized capital of \$10,000,000 was thrice that of the next wealthiest bank,¹¹ and by 1809 its specie holdings had increased to a point at which they were approximately equal to the combined specie holdings of all of the nation's other banks.¹² As a factor in the nation's economy, the Bank ranked second only to the Federal government.

A board of twenty-five directors, one of whom served as president, determined policy and supervised the operation of the institution.¹³ Thomas Willing, senior partner in the firm of Willing and [Robert] Morris, member of the Second Continental Congress, and president of the Bank of North America, was president of the Bank from 1791 until 1807.¹⁴ He was succeeded by David Lenox, merchant and former United States Marshall for the District of Pennsylvania, who continued in office until the Bank was dissolved. The directors were without exception men of substance, experienced in commercial affairs; among them were such men as William Bingham, Elias Boudinot, Samuel

Breck, George Cabot, Andrew Craigie, Rufus King, and Harrison Gray Otis. And they exercised great discretion in wielding the power at their disposal

In 1811, the Bank's charter expired, and despite the pleas of President Madison and Secretary of the Treasury Gallatin, its charter was not renewed. Trustees were named to close out the affairs of the Bank, and after attempts to acquire a charter of incorporation from the state had failed, set about disposing of the bank property.

At this time Stephen Girard, Philadelphia's leading merchant and owner of approximately a thousand shares of stock in the bank, found himself with over a million dollars on hand as the result of a timely withdrawal of his funds from Europe.¹⁵ Not a man to let capital lie idle, Girard purchased the banking house, hired the bank staff, and, on May 12, 1812, opened a private bank, the Bank of Stephen Girard, in the building.¹⁶

Girard's bank, despite opposition from its neighboring incorporated banks, prospered. By extending credit to the war-tried national government,¹⁷ and particularly by joining with John Jacob Astor and David Parrish in taking some \$10,000,000 of the sixteen million loan of 1813, Girard gained official recognition for his bank. He continually reinvested its profits, so that at his death in 1832 its capital stood at \$3,000,000.¹⁸

With Girard's death in 1832 his bank building became part of the estate and was rented to the Girard Bank. The structure was still at the center of the nation's financial life; the Bank of North America, the Bank of Pennsylvania, the Mint and the Customs House were still close by; the

Second Bank of the United States was scarcely more than a block away, and a new Exchange was being built across the street.

Then, in 1836, the charter of the Second Bank of the United States expired, and soon Philadelphia lost its primacy in the field of finance to New York. Too, as the years passed, the city's financial center moved to the Broad Street axis. The Girard Bank remained in the old First Bank of the United States building until 1929 when it too moved to Broad Street. The bank building became an office building.

NOTES

Chapter II
Section 2
Notes

1. Bray Hammond, Banks and Politics in America from the Revolution to the Civil War (Princeton, 1957), 115. Hereafter cited as Hammond, Banks and Politics.
2. The offices of the Secretary, Comptroller and Register were at 100 Chestnut Street, just around the corner from the Bank, and the office of the Commissioner of Revenue was on the corner of Chestnut and Third Streets. The office of the Treasurer and Auditor were further away, at 171 Chestnut Street and the corner of Market and Third Streets, respectively. - Cornelius W. Stafford, ed., The Philadelphia Directory (Philadelphia, 1797).
3. The Bank of North America, with a capital of \$2,000,000, stood at 99 Chestnut Street, across from the office of the Secretary of the Treasury. The Bank of Pennsylvania, with a capital of \$3,000,000, stood between Dock and Second Streets, half a block east of the Bank of the United States.
4. The Mint was on Seventh Street, above Market; the Customs House on Front Street near Walnut.
5. "Expences from Oct. 14 to Dec. 13, 1801, from scratch.

...			
October 15	portorage	gold from mint a/c PB	.50
...			
24	portorage	from mint	.25
Nov. 4	Portorage	from Bk Penn	1.50
14	Do	Do	3.--
[Dec.] 15	portorage	Gold from mint	.25
26	Do	Do	.50
..."			

- Miscellaneous Bills, Etting Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
6. By 1793, the bank had established branches in Boston, New York, Baltimore and Charleston. Later, branches were opened in Washington, Norfolk, Savannah and New Orleans. The board of directors of the main bank supervised the operations of the branches. - James O. Wettereau, "New Light on the First Bank of the United States," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, 61 (1937), pp. 277-79. Hereafter cited Wettereau, "New Light on the First Bank."
7. Miscellaneous Bills, December 24, 1801, Bank of the U.S., Etting Papers, H.S.P.

Chapter II
Section 2
Notes

8. Wettereau, "New Light on the First Bank," 271-272.
9. "The Bank of the United States, like all the local banks, was both debtor and creditor to the others.... Being the main government depository and having offices in the principal commercial cities, the Bank was the general creditor of the other banks. It had the account of the largest single transactor in the economy - the federal government-and the receipts of the government being mostly in the notes of state banks and these notes being deposited in the Bank, it could not help being their creditor. By pressing them for payment of the notes and checks received against them, the Bank automatically exercised a general restraint upon the banking system. The more any bank lent, the more it went into debt. The larger the volume of notes and checks outstanding against it, the greater the pressure to which it became subjected." - Hammond, Banks and Politics, 198.
10. Ibid, 199.
11. Ibid, 144.
12. Ibid, 202.
13. The President and Directors were almost invariably ready to cooperate with the incumbent Secretary of the Treasury, but they "remained singularly independent of Treasury dictation." - Wettereau, "New Light on the First Bank," 272. Alexander Hamilton, Oliver Wolcott, Junior, Samuel Dexter and Albert Gallatin served as Secretary at various times during the life of the Bank.
14. Dictionary of American Biography, vol. 20, pp. 302-04.
15. Kenneth P. Brown, "Stephen Girard's Bank," The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, 66 (1942), pp. 30-33. Hereafter cited as Brown, "Girard's Bank."
16. Ibid, 35.
17. "Such was the situation when Congress adjourned on the 4th March, 1813.... The Treasury was nearly exhausted; so nearly that on the 1st April it was absolutely empty, and must have ceased to meet the requisitions of the War and Navy Department;..." - Henry Adams, Life of Albert Gallatin (New York, 1943), 477.
18. Brown, "Girard's Bank," 55.

EVALUATION OF
HISTORICAL IMPORTANCE

The building known as the First Bank of the United States is the most important structure of its type in the country. It is the oldest bank building in the United States, and is important as well for its place in America's architectural development.

Historically it is associated with two banking institutions: the First Bank of the United States and the Bank of Stephen Girard. The former association is far the more important. The building's very presence recalls to mind the first ringing invocation of the Constitution's "necessary and proper" clause by Alexander Hamilton in 1791. It is the tangible remnant of the colossus which so dominated the American economic scene during the crucial twenty years of national existence after 1791. Within its walls were centered the activities which stimulated the amazing expansion and diversification of the American economy during that period when, according to the foremost authority on the subject, James O. Wettereau, the bank acted "...not merely as an indispensable engine in the administration of finances..., but also as the mainspring and regulator of the whole American business world." Later from an office in the same building, Stephen Girard made the arrangements which saved the nation from bankruptcy and perhaps worse during the war of 1812. Its worn and lusterless marble columns^N and stonework were then the polished symbols of a transcendent authority in its sphere.

As the first monumental bank building erected in the United States, it established a trend to which American banks were long faithful. As noted by a reporter of the Gazette in 1797, it was "...the first finished building of any consequence wherein taste and knowledge has been displayed in this country." It was, and still can be, an exceptionally handsome building.

The historical importance and the architectural merit of the First Bank of the United States warrant ultimately the restoration of its exterior to the appearance it had when new. Moreover, the historical importance of the Bank of the United States, and to a lesser degree of Girard's Bank, is such that the basement and first floor of the building should in time be restored for use as a branch museum and, in part at least, as an historic house museum illustrating the history of these institutions and recreating the setting amidst which they functioned. To this end, while the restoration of the interior is for the present neither possible nor desirable, every effort should be made to remove the most obvious anachronisms and to prevent any further departure from original arrangement and appearance.

The First Bank has undergone many changes since its completion in 1800, including the remodeling of the interior which took place in 1901-1902. Nonetheless, a substantial portion of the original structure remains.

1. The marble facade, including the pilasters, architraves of the windows, and carved relief work and frieze, is original.

2. The marble columns and frieze of the portico are original.
3. The pediment and the tympanum, with its beautifully carved adaption of the seal of the Bank of the United States, are original.
4. The north, south and that portion of the west wall which remains are original.
5. The roof of the portico is original.
6. The cornice and balustrade of the facade may be original.
7. Most of the basement partition walls are original.
8. Some interior trim, such as mantels, window casings, and so forth, may be original.
9. The stylobate of the portico is original; the steps may be of the original material.
10. The footscrapers flanking the front door and the lamp hanging above it may be original.

Many of these irreplaceable original elements have deteriorated and are in need of immediate preservative treatment. This is particularly true of the exterior marble and woodwork. The marble is covered with an accumulation of soot which not only lends the once sparkling facade the appearance of a particularly dingy railroad station but also causes the marble to disintegrate, with a consequent loss of detail in the carvings. The wooden tympanum with its priceless eagle carving has become shabby, its paint is peeling, and it apparently is in need of protection from the ravages of time and weather, as are the cornice and balustrade of the facade.

The marble should be cleaned and the woodwork examined for decay, repaired and painted as soon as possible.

A number of changes have been made in the exterior. One such change, painting the side and rear walls white to match the marble facade, has already been made the subject of an Interim Historic Structures Report, Part I.

The present asphalt covered hipped roof with its skylight and elevator housing replaced the original copper covered hipped roof in 1901-1902. It is recommended that the present roof be removed and replaced with a restoration of the original. The elevator and elevator housing on the roof should be removed.

Originally, the building had eight chimneys; all of these have been removed and only two were rebuilt. It is recommended that the other six chimneys be rebuilt.

The galvanized iron balustrade and cornice of the north, south and west walls were installed in 1901-02. It is recommended that they be compared with the old wooden balustrade and cornice on the east side and if not identical be removed and replaced with balustrades and cornices of wood corresponding in every detail to those on the east side.

Some time after 1850 the center windows of the second and third floors, west wall, were converted to tripartite openings. It is recommended that these windows be restored to their original size.

The first floor window openings of the north and south walls have been enlarged and the stone medallions originally in place above them have been removed. It is recommended that the window openings be restored to their original size and the medallions above them be replaced.

In 1912 a stepped addition was erected at the rear of the bank. It is recommended that this addition be removed, the garden wall that was there be rebuilt on its foundations, and the west wall of the bank be restored to its original condition.

During the restoration of 1901-02 the steps to the bank's rear door were removed from the exterior and replaced by interior steps, and the rear door was lowered. It is recommended that the rear door be reinstalled at its original higher level and the exterior steps rebuilt.

The bars over the first and second floor windows date from no earlier than 1880. It is recommended that they be removed.

Even more drastic changes have been made in the interior, which was completely rebuilt, except for some of the interior basement walls and the building shell, in 1901-02. We know very little about the structure and appearance of the interior before this change took place. It is recommended that a thorough architectural investigation be undertaken to find partition locations, girder and joist locations, ceiling and floor levels, door and window locations, and that any and all evidences as to the original structure and decor of the bank's interior be recorded and evaluated. All elements of the interior trim which may be original should be identified at that time.

HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Today, little more than a century and a half after construction was started in 1795, there are fewer extant documentary and primary source materials relating to the building which housed the First Bank of the United States than any other structure of comparable importance in this country. Original plans, early property records and insurance surveys, detailed vouchers covering construction, in short, the useful materials usually recovered in part or whole, are all but totally missing. It has been possible by piecing together such fragmentary data as are represented in sections 1 through 3 of this chapter to sketch in the physical history of the building. A comprehensive story of its exterior has thus emerged. Much less can be claimed for those passages which deal with the physical history of its interior. The discussion below presents the facts relating to the present status of research and an evaluation of the results to be expected from such future research as is recommended.

It is to be expected that this research and the data gained from a thorough architectural investigation will provide the necessary groundwork for sound decisions affecting the restoration and use of the building's interior.

1. Records of Construction

The institutional records of the First Bank, which might be expected to include plans of the banking house and the record of expenditures made for its construction, have not been found. Upon the dissolution

of the Bank in 1811, trustees were appointed to close out its affairs and were given control over its records. The trustees proceeded in this task with somewhat more than due deliberation; not until 1852, and then only under the auspices of the United States Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania (Morewood et al. v. Sims et al.), was the trust terminated. Throughout the life of the trust, its officers retained the use of "the Director's Room...the North Side of the Banking Room, the President's Room, and the Vaults adjoining it, and one large Vault below,..." In 1852 Thomas Dunlap was appointed Receiver to take charge of the remaining funds and the books and papers of the trust, which he deposited in Founders Hall of Girard College. It is quite possible that the institutional records of the Bank, or at least a portion of them, were included among the papers so deposited.

No further reference to these papers has been found. Professor James O. Wettereau, an experienced and conscientious scholar specializing in financial history, searched Founders Hall and the Offices of the Girard Estate for these papers without success, and the staff of Girard College has searched that institution's Girard Papers, also without success. His route has since been retraced by the Park history staff, with as little success.

There is a possibility that these papers, which should be extremely productive of data on the erection and original appearance of the bank, are still in existence. However, all that can be done to locate

them has been done. If they are found, it will be more or less by accident, and, while any leads which may be found as to their whereabouts should be followed up immediately, no further systematic effort to locate them is warranted.

2. Records of Maintenance and Repair

After the dissolution of the Bank of the United States the trustees sold the banking house to Stephen Girard. Upon his death the building passed to his estate, from which the United States acquired title in 1955. From 1832 until 1929 the building was occupied by the Girard Bank and successor institutions.

Any records of maintenance and repair during the occupancy of the First Bank would be with the other institutional papers discussed above.

Records of maintenance and repair for the period from 1812 to 1832 are to be found in the Girard Papers at Girard College. During preparation of the Grounds Report spot research in Girard's receipt books was conducted and produced some extremely valuable information. Intensive research in this collection, and particularly in the receipt books and the day books, ledgers and/or journals of the Bank of Stephen Girard, will provide a complete record of all expenditures for maintenance and repair from which a great deal of information as to the interior arrangement and decor of the building may be drawn.

Research in the Girard Papers has been limited by two factors: much of the material is in an uncatalogued collection housed in a basement

vault of Founders Hall and the College requires that persons using it be accompanied by a librarian. She must take time out from her other duties for this purpose. An intensive effort on the part of the Park to arrange a relaxation of this rule has resulted only in an arrangement to free the librarian for this purpose for one and one half days a month. Research will be undertaken on this basis at once, and when sufficient data is accumulated to justify it, a further attempt to secure a more satisfactory working arrangement will be made. It is estimated that four man months will be necessary to complete this research (the collection contains well in excess of 100,000 items) if it is undertaken on an intensive basis.

For a century after 1832 maintenance and repair were the responsibility of the city government and of the various boards administering the trust (the Board of Directors of Girard Trusts, the Commissioners of the Girard Estates, the Committee of Councils on the Girard Estate, and the Board of Directors of City Trusts). The minutes of these various boards and the Annual Reports of the Bureau of City Property should be examined to ascertain the dates of major repairs. Leads provided by this process should then be run down in the records of the Bureau of City Property and the Treasury and Accounting records of the City to discover the details of the work done. This should require one man month at most.

3. Insurance Surveys

Insurance surveys, when available, provide a more or less detailed description of both the exterior and interior of the building

surveyed. Unfortunately, no survey for the banking house has been found. The Bank of the United States was a self-insurer, and, while Girard insured some of his property, neither the index to Girard's letters sent and received nor a survey of fire insurance companies active from 1812 to 1832 give any indication that he insured the bank. If he did, the intensive research in the Girard Papers outlined above should provide all data necessary to locate the survey.

In 1845 the Mayor, Aldermen and Citizens of Philadelphia took out Mutual Assurance Policy No. 5869 on the banking house. The survey made at that time, which would contain a detailed description of the interior arrangement and decor, is, and has been for many years, missing from the company's files. There is no way to locate this policy through any method of systematic search.

4. Diaries, Journals, Traveler's Accounts, etc.

The published journals, diaries, traveler's accounts, etc. of people known to have visited Philadelphia prior to 1850 have been the subject of an intensive search, and most of those available in the five major research libraries have been examined with small result as far as the bank is concerned. Location and examination of such material should continue where promising, but the results to be expected from it do not justify that it be conducted on a project basis.

5. Correspondence of Officers and Officials

During the twenty year existence of the Bank of the United States, more than a hundred individuals served on its board of directors, and perhaps as many as fifty more were in its employ. The extant papers of all directors living in Philadelphia or known to have visited the city between 1794 and 1811, as well as the extant papers of any employees, should be examined for data on the appearance of the banking house. Priority should be given to examining the papers of President Willing and locating and examining any extant papers of President Lenox and Cashier George Simpson.

Research of this type involves a considerable expenditure of time. In view of the scarcity of data for the years when the Bank of the United States occupied the property and the remoteness of the chances of finding such data in any other source, it is justified in this case. This project should be completed before preparation of a Part II report is undertaken. It will require three man months to locate the extant papers, and up to four man months to examine them.

6. Newspaper Accounts of Construction or of Major Alterations

Research in contemporary newspapers is an even more formidable task than research in the personal papers of Bank personnel. A comprehensive search of a nineteenth century newspaper would involve examination of more than 300,000 pages. Nevertheless, it is recommended that newspapers be used to supplement the results of the other research recommended above,

Chapter II
Section 4
Page 7

Leads discovered in other sources when followed up in the newspapers
should prove to be profitable.

ILLUSTRATIONS

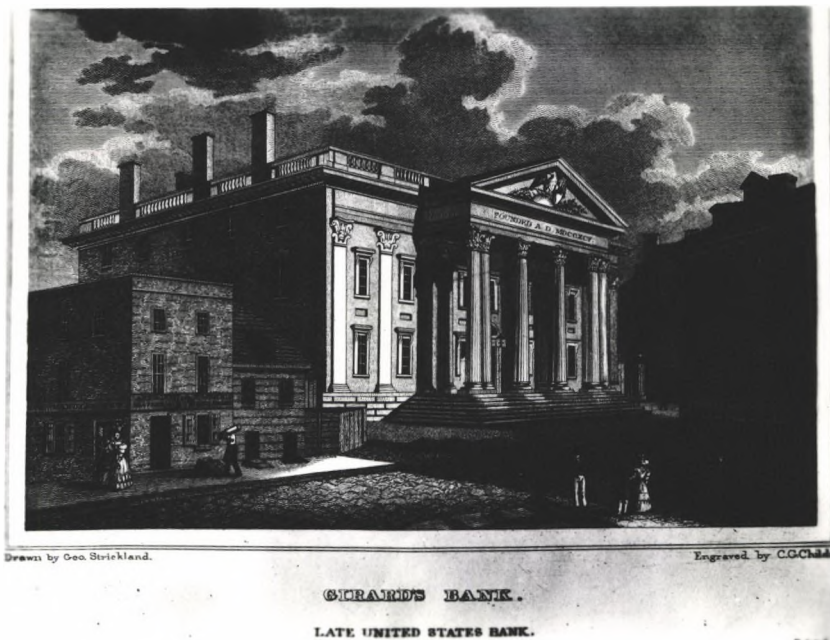
Chapter II
Illustration No. 1



Bank of the U. States

The Bank of the United States, enlargement
from Varlé map of 1802. Note hipped roof.

Chapter II
Illustration No. 2



"Girard's Bank. Late United States Bank."
1829. Note chimnies, portico, and absence
of bars on the windows.

Chapter II
Illustration No. 3



The Philadelphia (Merchants') Exchange
with the Bank in the background, drawn
by William Strickland about 1831. Note
the bank's hipped roof.

Chapter II
Illustration No. 4



1850 Talbotype from State House steeple
 looking east and showing portion of rear
 of First Bank. Note chimnies and center
 second story window.

Chapter II
Illustration No. 5



The Bank of the United States about 1880. Note the staircases visible through the windows on either side of the door. Note also the footscrapper to the right of the door. Photo courtesy of Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Chapter II
Illustration No. 6



The elaborately carved wooden tympanum
of the Bank of the United States.

211

Chapter II
Illustration No. 7



The bank looking southeast. Note the 1901-02 roof, the 1912 rear additions, and the tripartite windows of the second and third floors.

Chapter II
Illustration No. 8



The main banking room. Note the elaborate ceiling decorations, and compare with Illustration No. 9. Photo [undated] courtesy of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Chapter II
Illustration No. 9



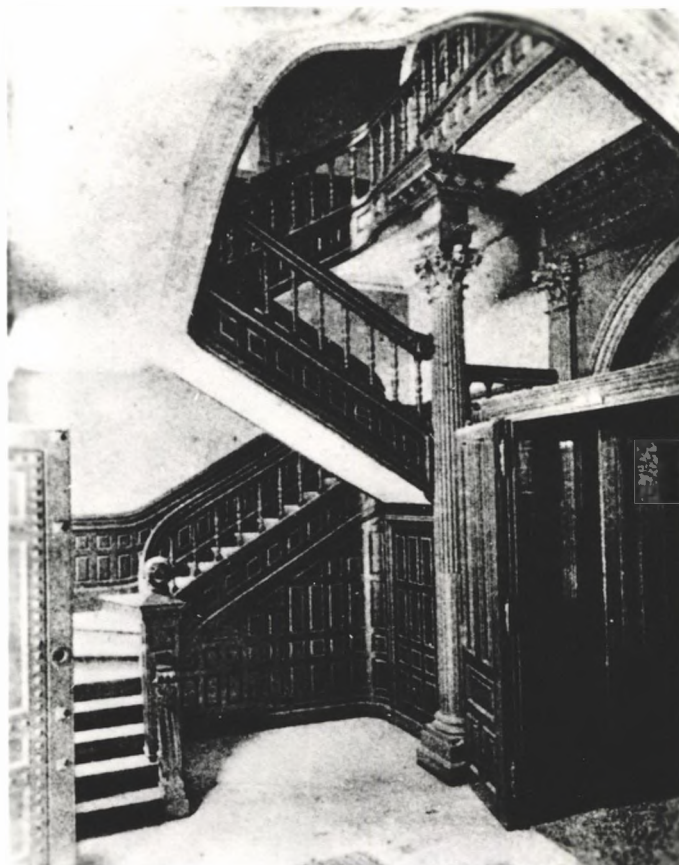
"Interior view of bank, south side, before alterations." Photo from Leach, History of the Girard National Bank.

Chapter II
Illustration No. 10



"Interior view of rear door, prior
to alterations." Photo from Leach,
History of the Girard National Bank.

Chapter II
Illustration No. 11



Stairway to second floor, before
alterations. Photo from Leach,
History of the Girard National Bank.

Chapter II
Illustration No. 12

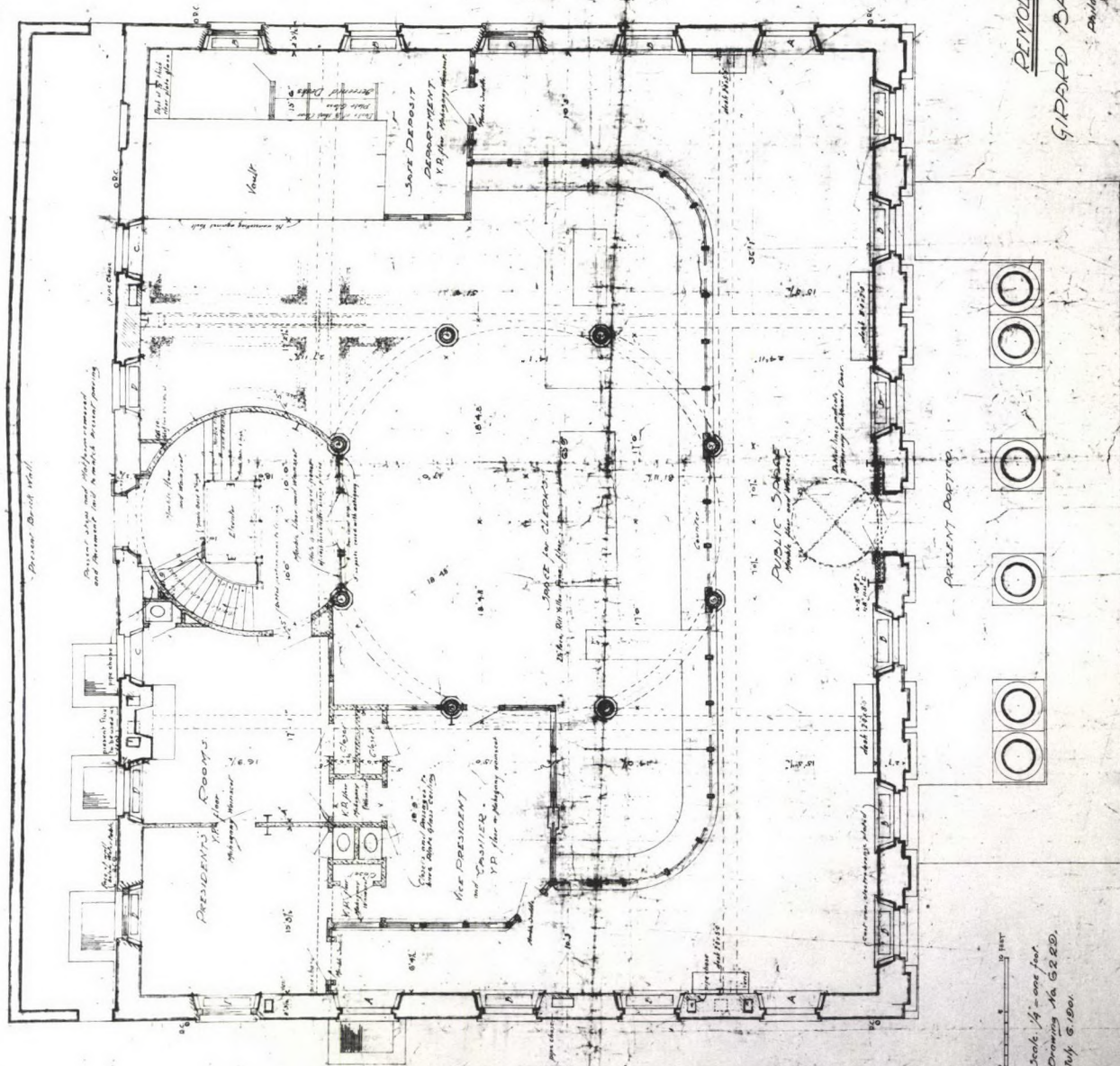


The Board Room, before 1902.
Photo from Leach, History of
the Girard National Bank.

Chapter II
Illustration No. 13



The present rotunda of the bank,
looking west toward the rear of
the building.



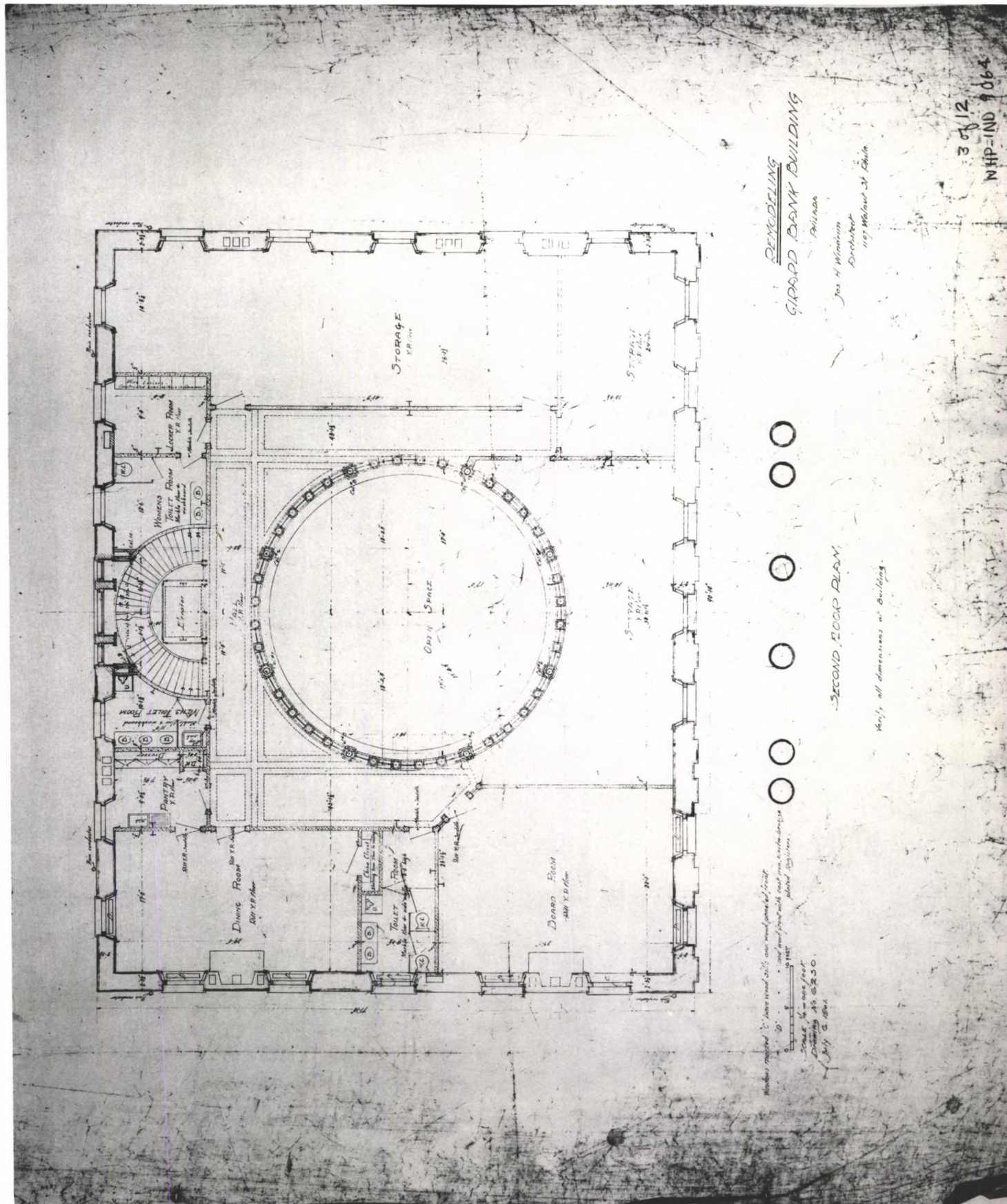
REMODELING
GIRARD BANK BUILDING
Philadelphia

Jos. H. Windheim
Architect
107 Walcott St. Phila.

FIRST FLOOR PLAN

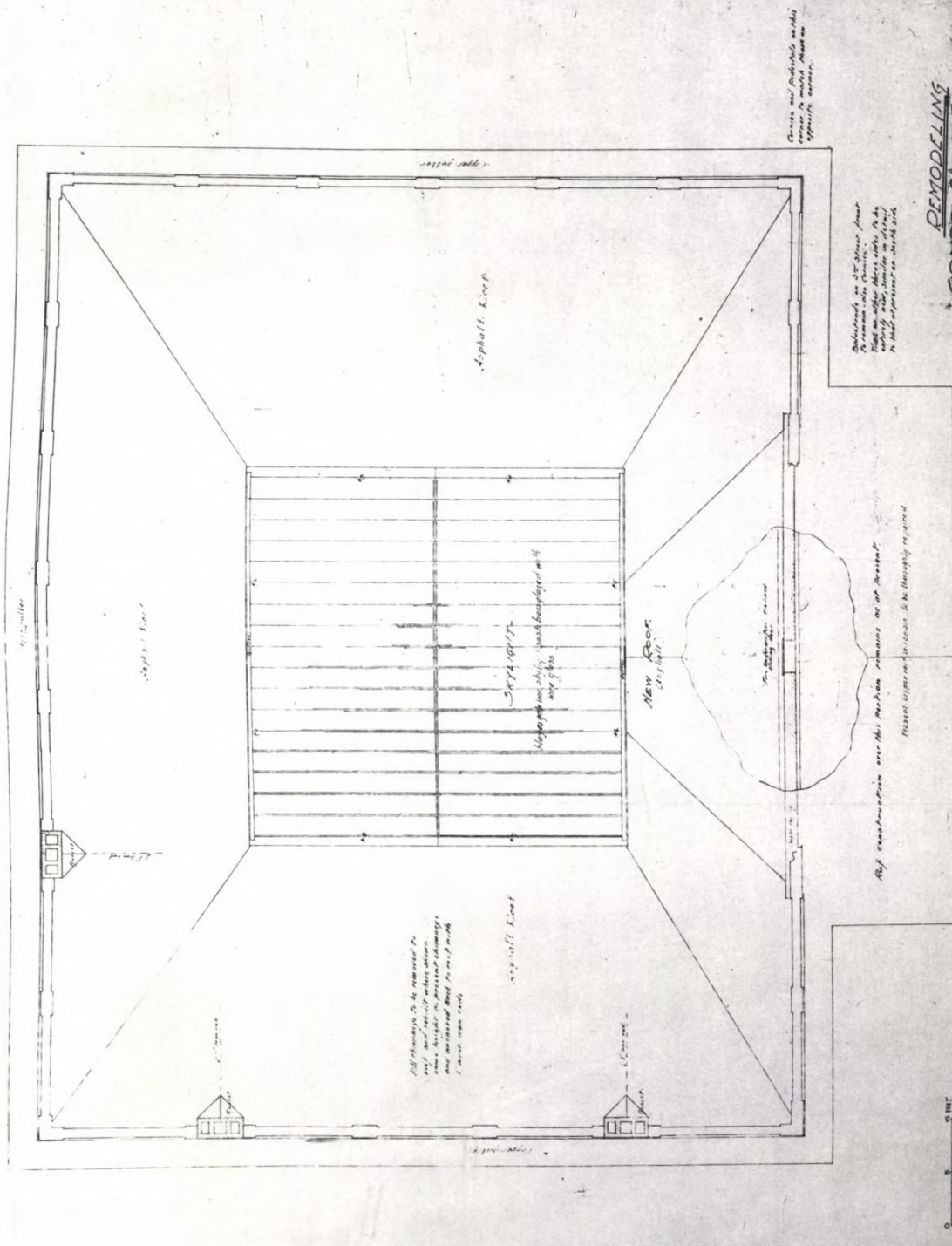
Notes:
1. Architects, Geo. A. Carter
2. Workings marked A are north, all and front
3. with red line electric house, public, register
4. good soil and some parking lot
5. good soil and some front yard and some electric house, parking lot. Verify all dimensions of building
July 6, 1901.

First floor plan, 1901-02 alterations.



Second floor plan, 1901-02 alterations.





Roof plan, 1901-02 alterations.

Tube # 600

Scale 1/2 inch to one foot
Drawing No. 6234
July 1950
Vertical dimensions in the block

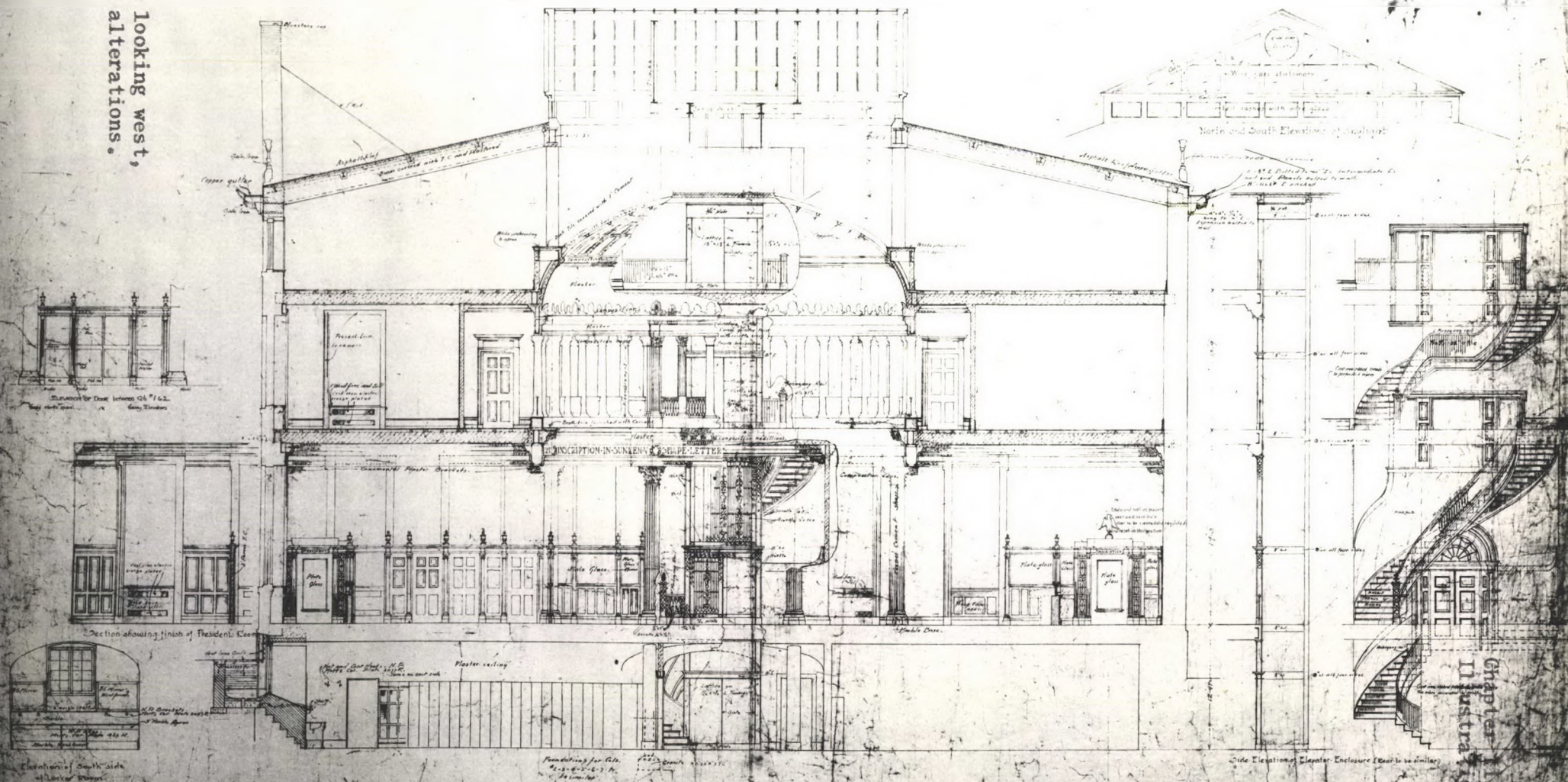
REMODELING
GIRARD BANK BUILDING
Phila. Pa.

Jas H Windrim Arch
from Walnut St. Phila

NHP-IND 9064

Chapter II
Illustration No. 2

Section looking west,
1901-02 alterations.



Scale, 1/8 inch to one foot
Drawing No. 4253
July 3, 1901
Verify all dimensions of the building

Tube-602

Section looking west

REMODELING
GIRARD BANK BUILDING
Phila. Pa.

J. H. Windlin Archt
1102 Walnut St. Phila.

CHAPTER III
ARCHITECTURAL DATA

~~(To be submitted)~~

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

PART I

ARCHITECTURAL DATA SECTION

THE FIRST BANK OF THE UNITED STATES

Independence National Historical Park

Prepared by
Norman M. Souder
Architect
June 1964

for

United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
Division of Architecture

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

PART I

ARCHITECTURAL DATA SECTION

THE FIRST BANK OF THE UNITED STATES

Independence National Historical Park

A P P R O V A L S H E E T

RECOMMENDED

acting Dennis J. Kurjock
Superintendent

Date 7-29-64

Robert H. Hall
Chief, EODC

Date 6-29-64

acting George A. Palmer
Regional Director, Northeast Region

Date 9-10-64

APPROVED

asst J. E. Jensen
Director *Des. & Constr.*

Date 10/6/64

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
I. FOREWORD.....	i
II. EXISTING CONDITIONS - EXTERIOR.....	1
A. General	
B. Walls	
C. Fenestration	
D. Roof	
E. Cornice	
F. Chimneys	
III. EXISTING CONDITIONS - INTERIOR.....	5
A. Basement	
B. First Floor	
C. Second Floor	
D. Third Floor	
E. Fireplaces	
IV. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	7

I. FOREWORD

The First Bank of the United States was established as part of a program developed by Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury, to remedy the state of the new government's finances.

The bank opened for business in Carpenter's Hall, December 1791 and remained there until July 24, 1797 when the new building on Third Street was completed.

On June 24, 1812 the bank building and site were transferred to Stephen Girard, who established his own banking business. After the death of Girard in December 1831 until acquired by the National Park Service in 1954, the building was the property of the Girard National Bank and the Board of City Trusts, administrators of the Girard Estate.

Fortunately few major changes have been made to the exterior of the structure in the past 167 years. The classic facade remains essentially the same as it was in 1797. The interior, however, was completely altered in 1901.

For the present, the proposed work on the First Bank will be confined to the restoration of the exterior to its original appearance. The restoration of the exterior will be accomplished in stages, the first of which was the restoration of the tympanum, carved eagle and cornice on the Third Street

facade in 1961.

The Part II Section of the Historic Structures Report will be divided into portions, covering specific phases of the restoration as the funds for each phase become available.

This Part I Report is based upon the rough draft of the First Bank compiled in August 1960 by Architect Woodrow Wilkins, as well as the rough draft of a report assembled in 1957 by Architect Robert G. Stewart.

Norman M. Souder
Architect
June 1964

II. EXISTING CONDITIONS - EXTERIOR

A. General

The First Bank was designed in the classic style by Samuel Blodget, Jr., merchant and economist, who supposedly based his design on the Dublin Exchange. It consists of three floors and basement and has an imposing portico on the Third Street (east) facade composed of six Corinthian columns and a pediment ornamented by an eagle of carved mahogany, painted the color of stone.

B. Walls

The east facade is of white American marble relieved by ten Corinthian pilasters. The portico is surrounded on three sides by a flight of seven marble steps which, according to records, originally numbered nine.¹ The thirteen windows on this facade (three each side of the entrance and seven on the second floor), are trimmed and bracketed in marble. In each bay of the front, between the first and second floor openings, is a recess decorated with carving.

The three remaining sides of the building are of brick above marble water tables. The window frames on the north and south sides are original above the first floor. The first floor

¹Phila., Girard College, Girard Papers, Dec. 1828, Bills and Receipts.

windows on these sides have been increased in height at some unknown date, after 1869, resulting in the obliteration of the recessed brick panels between the first and second floor windows which were a repeat of the panels on the marble facade.

The original size of the building was ninety-one feet wide by seventy-two feet deep and forty-five feet high. In 1912 a stepped addition was erected atop the old Stephen Girard garden wall extending the depth of the building ten feet across the west face.

C. Fenestration

The original fenestration pattern of the central portion of the west facade is not known. The circular staircase of the 1901 interior caused the replacement of the original windows in this area.

The original multi-paned sash have been replaced with two over two light sash on all sides except the first floor front, where the present sash is single light double hung.

The original sash arrangement was 12 over 12 lights for the first and second floors and 8 over 8 for the third floor windows.

The east door architrave and fanlight are original, while the doors are replacements. The lantern and footscrapers shown on the early views are still in place.

The west door frame was lowered from the first floor level to its present position when the addition was made on the west of the building. Originally the door and exterior steps led to the walled garden.

D. Roof

The original roof was a simple hip roof covered with copper and surrounded by a classical balustrade. In 1901 the roof structure was rebuilt with a large monitor-type skylight covering the glass dome of the rotunda which was installed as the core of the interior alterations. In addition to the skylight, an elevator penthouse was added near the west wall. The roofing material on the main building is roll roofing while some of the original copper remains in place on the portico roof.

The original balustrade was of wood. In 1901 the wood balustrade was copied in sheet metal which remains. The metal balustrade was repaired during the rehabilitation which took place in 1960-61.

E. Cornice

The original carved, bracketed wood cornice remained in place on the portico and pediment. The original was copied in galvanized metal and installed on the building proper in 1901. The metal cornice on the east facade had deteriorated and was replaced in carved wood during the rehabilitation of 1960-61.

A metal covered built-in gutter surrounds the roof. The National Park Service repaired and repainted the gutters during the above mentioned rehabilitation.

F. Chimneys

There were originally eight chimneys on the building, three each on the north and south sides and two on the rear. The chimneys were removed during the 1901 changes and only three of the eight were rebuilt.

III. EXISTING CONDITIONS - INTERIOR

A. Basement

The present basement is divided into a series of rooms with brick vaulted ceilings. Until an architectural investigation is made, there is no proof that the present brick and stone walls are original. The location of the original stairs to the basement and the location of an exterior entrance to the basement must also be determined.

B. First Floor

Photographs remain to illustrate the original barrel vault which extended through the first floor on an east-west axis from the main entrance to the rear. The banking room occupied all of the first floor except the space occupied by the President's and cashier's offices and the east and west vestibules.

The original stairs were located in the vestibule inside the Third Street entrance.

The present interior dates from the 1901 alteration by Architect James Windrim. When this work was done, the original interior was razed and any recognizable traces of the original plan were obliterated.

The central feature of the existing interior is a monumental domed rotunda of steel and glass, thirty-five feet in diameter and forty-four feet from floor to apex. The rotunda is

supported by eight Corinthian columns on the first floor and a colonnade of forty columns on the second floor and surmounted by an entablature supporting a leaded glass dome.

A curving marble staircase is located on the west wall rising from the first to the third floor. An electric elevator has been located within the curve of the staircase.

The first floor is one large open area with an anteroom in the first floor of the annex.

C. Second Floor

Little is known of the original plan and treatment of the second and third floors. There are four rooms on the north side of the second floor and two on the south side. Two small rooms are located on the west side as well as one of the two toilet rooms. The other toilet room is on the south side.

D. Third Floor

The third floor has seven rooms and an elevator and stair hall grouped around the domed portion of the rotunda. The ceilings of the third floor follow the line of the hip roof.

E. Fireplaces

Three of the fireplaces remain. Two of these are located on the south wall of the second floor and the other on the west wall of the first. It is possible that two of the mantels may be original.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

The restoration of the roof is the major recommendation. In the 1901 alteration the pitch of the roof was changed to provide a 35 foot square penthouse over the rotunda. The removal of the penthouse and the resultant extension of the steel roof framing, would result in a ridge extending in an east-west direction instead of in the original north-south direction. The removal and complete a new framing system is required for an accurate roof restoration.

Restoration of the wood cornices on the north, west and east sides and the replacement of the wood balustrade around the roof.

Restoration of the original small paned windows and period window frames throughout the building.

Removal of the west annex and restoration of the garden wall which would include the resetting of the west entrance door and steps to their original position.

The lowering of the windows on the north and south sides to their original height and the restoration of the brick recessed panels above them.

The repainting of the exterior in the old "stone" color.

The re-roofing of the entire roof with copper.

CHAPTER IV

ARCHEOLOGICAL DATA

Prepared by Archeologist B. B. Powell

ARCHEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Replacement of the sidewalk in front of the First Bank building in December 1958 resulted in the exposure of a manhole near the Third Street curb. The manhole provided entrance to a long vaulted room directly in front of the center of the building.

The room consists of two sections. In its entirety it runs from the front (east) wall of the bank to the edge of the Third Street paving, a distance of 32 feet. The western portion is a high, narrow room 12.5 feet long, while the eastern portion is wider, lower, and 19.5 feet long. The western end formerly connected with the basement of the bank through a narrow doorway which is now bricked up.

The western section of the room has sidewalls of stone to a height of 6 feet. An arched brick ceiling curves upward another 4 feet, giving the room a total height of 10 feet. This portion is 5.8 feet wide. It has been wired for electricity. The lintel over the low doorway into the bank basement is cast iron and believed to be part of a fire-back.

The eastern portion of the vaulted room lacks stone walls above floor level and consists of an arched brick roof 13 feet wide and 4.5 feet high. The manhole near its eastern end was originally some 3 feet in diameter. The lower part of the east wall of the underground room is of stone, while the upper 1.1 feet is brick.

The floor of the structure is black, ~~ashy~~, dry soil. Excavation to a depth of 2 feet below existing level revealed no change in the nature

of the soil, nor did it uncover any evidence of a brick, concrete, or wooden floor.

The date of construction of this vault has not been determined. It is not possible, without extensive architectural investigation, to ascertain whether the vault was constructed at the same time as the bank building itself. The use of cast iron on the lintel of the doorway suggests that the feature is nineteenth, not eighteenth, century in date, and it is probable the vault was built when Stephen Girard regulated Third Street and reset the steps of the bank about 1829.¹

1. Chapter II, Section 1, Page 4 and Note 13, this report.

PREVIOUS ARCHEOLOGICAL REPORTS
RELATING TO THE PROJECT

The previous report relating to this project is Archeologist Powell's memorandum of January 9, 1959, subject "Underground Room, East Side of First Bank Building," which included three photographs and drawing No. NHP-IND 2591.

FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDED

No further archeological research is needed in connection with the First Bank of the United States.

CHAPTER V

FURNISHINGS AND EXHIBITION DATA

Prepared by Museum Curator David H. Wallace

EXISTING HISTORIC FURNISHINGS

None of the original furnishings of the First Bank of the United States are now in the Bank building.

The only original furnishings that have been located are two leather fire buckets, adorned with the Federal Arms, painted in 1792 by George Rutter. Although this work was done while the Bank was in Carpenters' Hall, the buckets probably were used in the Bank's building on Third Street from 1797. The buckets were presented to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania in 1852 by Thomas Dunlap, who was appointed Receiver to take charge of the liquidation of the Bank trust in that year.

PROPOSED FURNISHING PLANS

In view of the meager information available, it is not proposed at this time to treat the Bank building as a Historic House Museum and no furnishing plan is scheduled.

An exhibit plan for the first floor will be prepared when the space becomes available for museum use.

PROPOSED FINANCING
OF EXHIBITS

No provision has, as yet, been made for financing exhibits in the Bank building. It is estimated that the cost would be about \$40,000.

RECOMMENDATION FOR
INTERPRETIVE DEVELOPMENT

Should further research reveal enough information on the interior architecture, decoration, and furnishings of the Bank in the 1797-1811 period, the first floor should be restored to its original appearance and used as a Historic House Museum, recreating the setting which was familiar to the citizens of Federal Philadelphia. Exhibits telling the story of the Bank and the early financial history of the United States should also be on the first floor, preferably in the President's and Cashier's rooms, if they are large enough, or along either the north or south wall of the main room, where they will impinge least on the visitor's view of the restored room as he enters from Third Street.

Pending an interior restoration, the first floor as it now exists should be used simply as a Branch Museum for exhibits on the story of early government finance and the Bank story.