

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

PART II

ON

CONGRESS HALL

Independence National Historical Park

Chapter III

Architectural Data Section

Supplement No. 2

The Portico Door

by
Penelope Hartshorne
Architect
January 1962



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

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H30-DCA

April 5, 1962

REGION FIVE		INITIAL AND DATE
APR 6 1962		
✓	DIRECTOR	
✓	ASST. DIR.	
✓	INSP.	
✓	VEGETATION	
✓	RES. PLAN	
✓	RANGER ACCT'S.	
✓	POSTER CP	4/6

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five

From: Assistant Director

Subject: Historic Structures Reports, Part II, Congress Hall
Independence NHP, Supplements 2, Portico Door,
3 Gallery Rail

✓	History	B
	Nat. Hls.	
	Archaeo.	
	Publ.	
	Museum	
	Spec. y.	

The two Supplements referenced above and submitted by separate (H30) memoranda March 23 have been reviewed. You may indicate on both reports that they have been approved by me as of this date.


A. Clark Stratton
Assistant Director

Copy to: Chief, EODC (2)
Superintendent, Independence

OPERATIONS	
	Ass't. Chief
	Chief of Maint.
✓	Lands
	Programs
	Architect
	Engineer
	Land. Archt.



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

IN REPLY REFER TO:
H30-DCA

April 5, 1962

REGION FIVE		INITIAL AND DATE
APR 6 1962		
FOR		
FOR DIR.		
FOR		
FOR PLAN		
FOR ACCT'S		
Posted 4/6 CP		

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five

From: Assistant Director

Subject: Historic Structures Reports, Part II, Congress Hall
Independence NHP, Supplements 2, Portico Door,
3 Gallery Rail

The two Supplements referenced above and submitted by separate
(H30) memoranda March 23 have been reviewed. You may indicate
on both reports that they have been approved by me as of this date.


A. Clark Stratton
Assistant Director

Copy to: Chief, BODC (2)
Superintendent, Independence

H30

Region Five
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

March 23, 1962

Nelly
3/23
Cramer
3/23/62

Memorandum

To: Director

From: Regional Director

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part II, Congress Hall,
Architectural Data Section, Supplement 2, Portico
Door, Independence NHP

Enclosed for your review and recommended for your approval is one copy of the subject report. It has been recommended by Superintendent M. O. Anderson, Independence, and Chief, EODC, R. G. Hall.

As you are aware, this important feature of Congress Hall has required careful study and consideration, and we all are quite pleased with the results of that study and its proposed restoration as set forth by Architect Penelope Hartshorne, EODC, in this report.

In order that the rehabilitation of Congress Hall be accomplished as expeditiously as possible, we suggest the earliest possible review of this report and approval of the working drawings which will be submitted shortly.

(Sgd.) Ronald F. Lee

Regional Director

In duplicate

Enclosure

Copy to: Chief, EODC
Supt., Independence

MHNelligan/cp

General
Daily
Area
Programs
Mr. Barnes

Historic Structures Rpt., Part II - Congress Hall
Architectural Data Section, Supplement 2, Portico Door

INTERPRETATION

✓	History
	Nat. Hist.
✓	Archaeol.
	Publ.
	Museum
	Sec'y.

dr. Duffin!

OK 2/28

This is an excellent report
from the standpoint of structural & historical
research. JAC.

OPERATIONS

OK 2/28

OPERATIONS

	Ass't. Chief
	Chief of Maint.
	Lands
✓	Programs
✓	Architect
✓	Engineer
✓	Land. Acq.

OK 3/2

OK 3/1

OK 3/1

OK - Pat
- E006
- Ry



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H30 H

March 5, 1962

REGION FIVE		INITIAL AND DATE
MAR 6 1962		
REG. DIRECTOR		
ASST. REG. DIR.		
OPERATIONS		
INVESTIGATION	7	3/6-3
ADM.		
REC. RES. PLAN		
RANGER ACCT'S.		
P. O. Anderson		3/6

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five
From: Superintendent, Independence NHP
Subject: Portico Doorway, Congress Hall, Independence

We have reviewed the illustrated report on the subject doorway prepared by Architect Hartshorne and recommend it as the basis for preparing working drawings. We are happy indeed that investigation of the fabric of the building in the area of the doorway revealed essential information just in time to provide an alternative to the original proposal for the doorway.

M. O. Anderson
M. O. Anderson
Superintendent

In duplicate

Copy to: Chief, EODC



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H30-H

February 23, 1962

REGION FIVE		INITIAL AND DATE
FEB 26 1962		
☐	REG. DIRECTOR	
☐	ASST. REG. DIR.	
☒	OPERATIONS	
☒	INTERPRETATION	2/23
☐	ADM.	
☐	REC. RES. PLAN	
☐	RANGER ACT'S	

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five

From: Chief, EODC

Subject: Historic Struc. Rpt., Pt. II, Supp. 2--Architectural Data Section,
Portico Doorway, Congress Hall, Independence

Following receipt of your memorandum of December 15 directing the reopening of the subject doorway, we hastily completed a sheet of working drawings in accordance with the information then in hand. Copies of this drawing (dated January 5, 1962) are attached.

We subsequently opened up the masonry at that location and unexpectedly--but fortunately--found enough evidence for many working details.

We now recommend that this doorway should be done along the lines in the attached illustrated report by Architect Hartshorne. Working drawings for this scheme are now being prepared.

Robert G. Hall
Chief

Attachments (in duplicate)

Copy to: Assistant Director, Design and Construction (2)
Superintendent, Independence, w/attachments

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

PART II

ON

CONGRESS HALL

Chapter III

Supplement No. 2

The Portico Door

APPROVAL SHEET

RECOMMENDED

M. Danson Date 3/5/62
Superintendent

Robert G. Hall Date 2-26-62
Robert G. Hall
Chief

Ronald F. Lee Date 3/19/62
Regional Director, Region Five

APPROVED

A. Stratton Date 4/5/62
Director

last

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
FOREWORD.....	1
PHYSICAL HISTORY.....	1-3
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	3-4
ILLUSTRATIONS	
Photographs.....	No. 1-2
Drawings.....	No. 3-6

FOREWORD

The reopening of the Portico Door at this time does not have the recommendation of the undersigned.

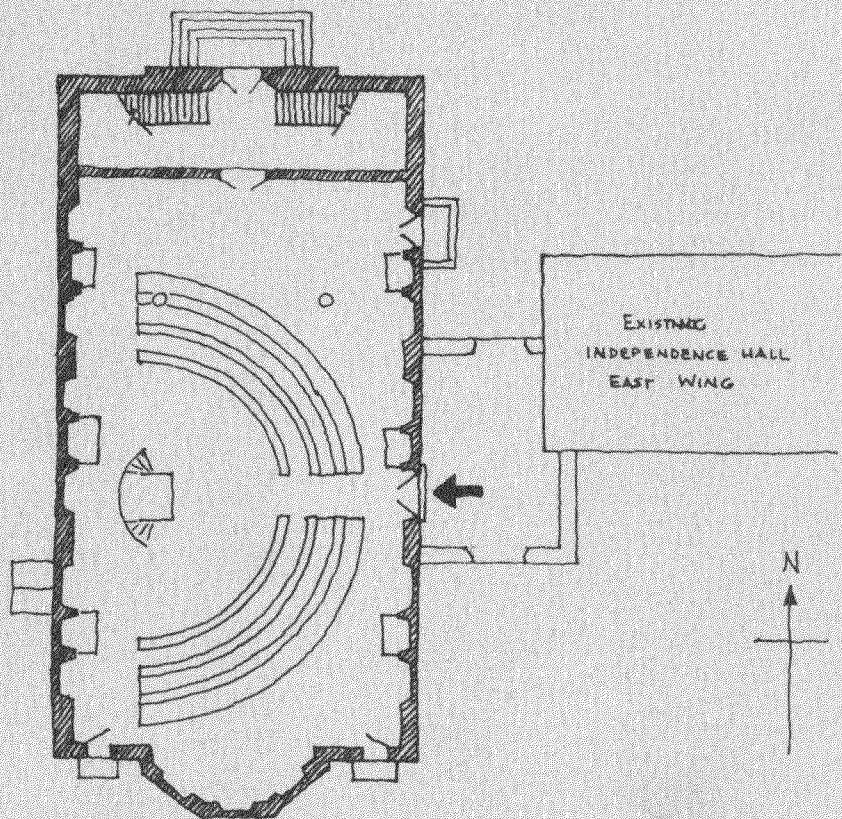
Following the decision to go ahead, our workmen opened up the masonry and found important evidence as to the fittings of this door which existed in the period 1793-1812. These are illustrated in this report.

Charles E. Peterson
Supervising Architect
Historic Structures

EODC
February 14, 1962

CONGRESS HALL PORTICO DOOR

JAN 19, 1962
P. HARTSHORNE



PHYSICAL HISTORY

In the Congress Hall Historic Structures Report, Part II, Architectural Data Section dated April 1960, (Chapter III, Section II, pp 63-69; Section III, p. 6) we established the location of the Portico door. We also stated that the doorway could have taken essentially one of two forms, and that further architectural research would determine which of the two solutions was originally used.

We could not very well make this investigation until the decision to reopen the doorway was without question.

Attached are illustrations of the evidence found and the conclusions drawn from the recently made investigation.

The physical history of this doorway can be briefly stated as follows:

1787

A window was placed in this location when the walls were first built.

1793

Along with building the Portico or vestibule for the members of Congress, Charles and Jacob Souder, masons, charged for "Takeing out a Window and Altering for a door" (Voucher #176, 1793-4). The Souders removed the window sash and frame, cut out the brickwork below the sill, cut back the splayed masonry window jambs to a sharper angle, cut out room for a new lower brick arch, built the new arch and filled in the void left above it. (See illustrations #1 and #3).

c. 1812

When the original wings were supplanted by the fireproof offices designed by Robert Mills, the Portico was also torn down. The doorway was then altered back to a window matching all the others in the same room. (Because the window frame we recently removed was held together with handwrought nails, we deduce that this frame may have been stored since 1793 and then reused in 1812, as any new work of 1812 would likely have been made with early cut nails). The exterior east wall of Congress Hall, where it was left defaced by the Portico addition, was parged over. A memoir of 1872 describes this condition: "and the plastering seems to have been carried up to the eaves. This plastering is now to be seen." (J. W. McAllister to S. W. Wallace, February 19, 1872 quoted in Wallace's Discoveries).

1873

This area of parging was covered by a building added to link Congress Hall with the fireproof-offices (Journal of the Common Council of 1873, I, app. 118). The window remained intact although it opened into the new building. (See George C. Mason's plan of Congress Hall of 1895-6.

1896

So that the original wing buildings could be reconstructed, the fireproof offices and the connecting building of 1873 were torn down, leaving the east wall of Congress Hall again defaced. It was at this time that the present exterior

face brick, stone keystone, impost blocks and sill, were added to improve the appearance of the facade.

1962

According to the evidence found so far, it is our intention to reconstruct the Portico door with a fan light directly over the door, a wood frame set flush with the exterior face of the wall, and the doors hung to swing inward (see illustrations #1, #2, and #3). The interior trim of the door will be very plain, greatly resembling the treatment of the windows and the other door leading to the exterior on this east wall (see illustration #4). What is to be the exterior trim should be more elaborate, determined by what we suppose the Portico interior woodwork to have been. We know that the Portico was plastered on its interior walls and ceiling, and that these surfaces were enlivened by a plaster cornice and a ceiling medallion probably similar to that now in the Senate Chamber (the same plasterer did the work and charged only a little less for this work than he did for the Senate medallion). We have therefore based the exterior trim design on the double architraves and transom design of the doorway from the House of Representatives to the stairhall (see illustration #5).

Because the Portico door in 1793 opened between interior spaces, the closed off window above it was completely hidden by the plastering of the walls on both the House of

Representatives and Portico sides. At this time, when we are only restoring the doorway and not the whole Portico (ie. we are not plastering the Portico walls), we intend to hide this window outline by patching the opening with bricks which both match and are bonded into the original brickwork near the opening (see illustration #5).

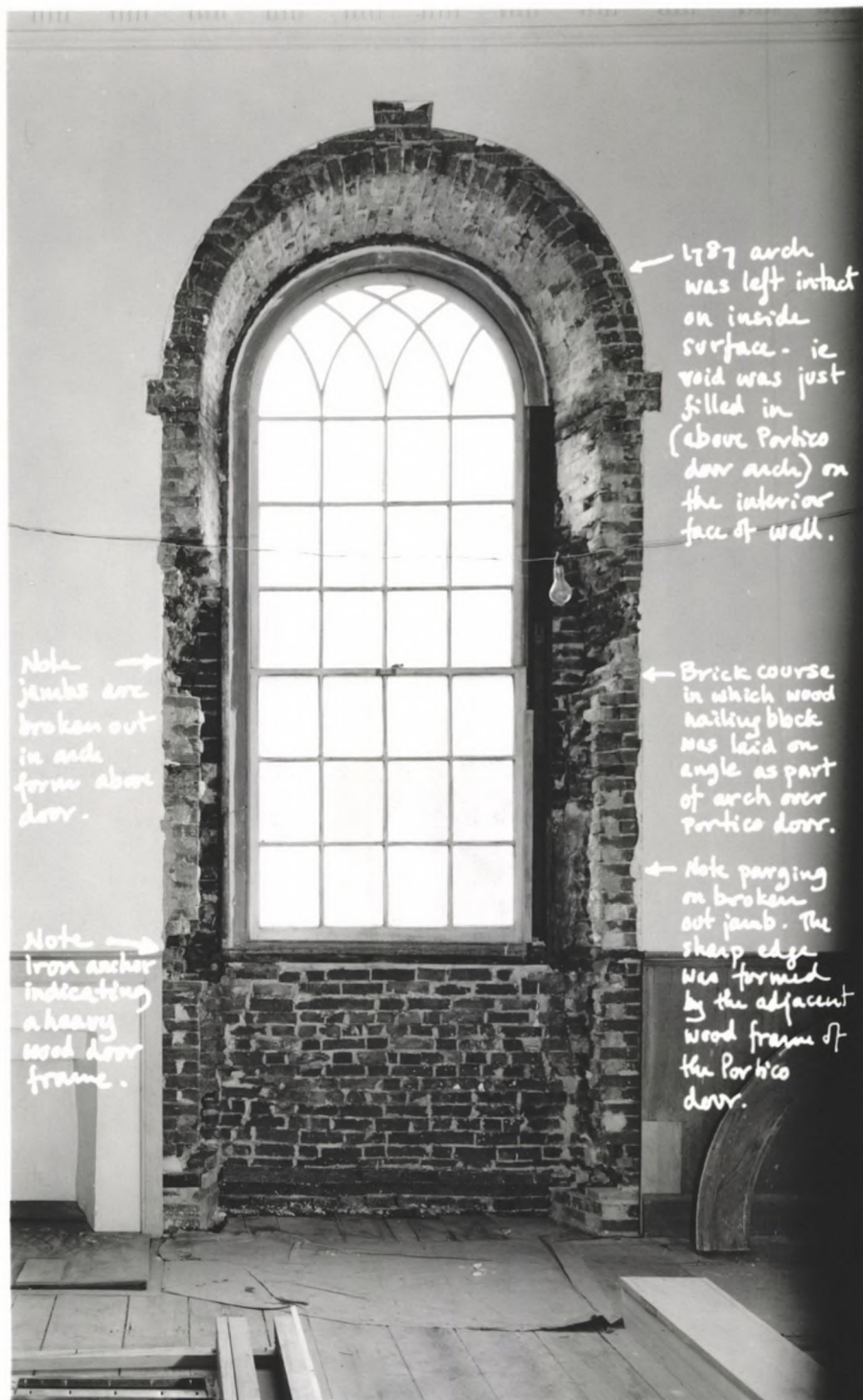
To designate the walls of the Portico itself we recommend that cut stones be laid at ground level as shown in illustration No. 6, and the Portico flooring be represented by a herring-bone brick pattern.

Steps must be provided at the Portico door from the existing grade to the House of Representatives floor level. The stone and design used would match the existing original steps at the south doors, or the one original step at the Old City Hall west door.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 1

PORTICO DOOR EVIDENCE

Photo: James L. Dillon Co., January 1962
Neg. No. EODC 2437



← 1787 arch was left intact on inside surface - ie void was just filled in (above Portico door arch) on the interior face of wall.

Note →
Jamb is broken out in arch form above door.

← Brick course in which wood nailing block was laid on angle as part of arch over Portico door.

Note →
Iron anchor indicating a heavy wood door frame.

← Note parging on broken out jamb. The sharp edge was formed by the adjacent wood frame of the Portico door.

ILLUSTRATION NO. 2

Wrought-iron anchor found in the north
jamb of the Portico door.

Photo: Jack E. Boucher, January 1962
Neg. No. EODC 2525



ILLUSTRATION NO. 3

When Congress Hall was first built this particular opening was a window. In 1793 when the portico was added the window was removed, the jambs cut back, and the Portico door frame installed in the wider opening.

CONGRESS HALL PORTICO DOOR

JAN. 19, 1962
P. HARTSHORNE

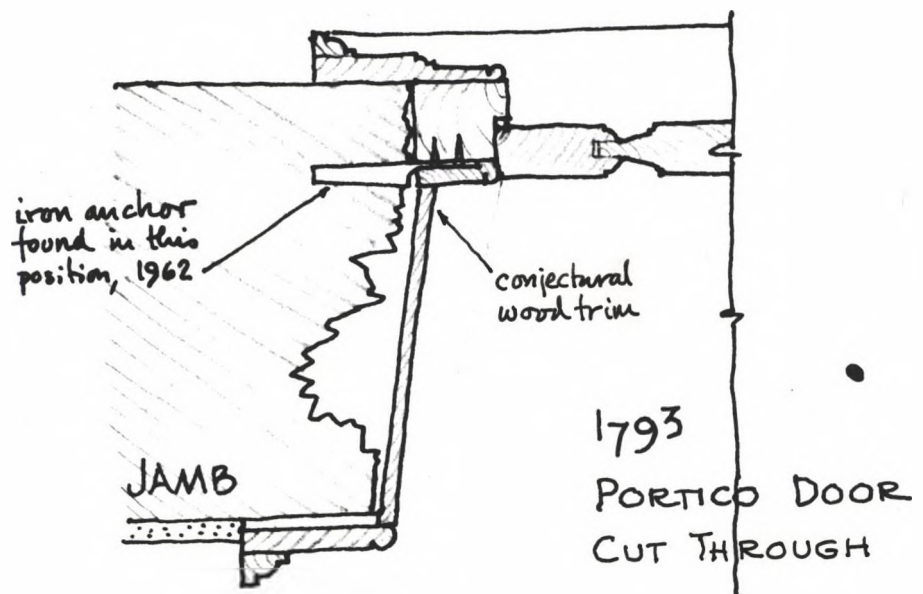
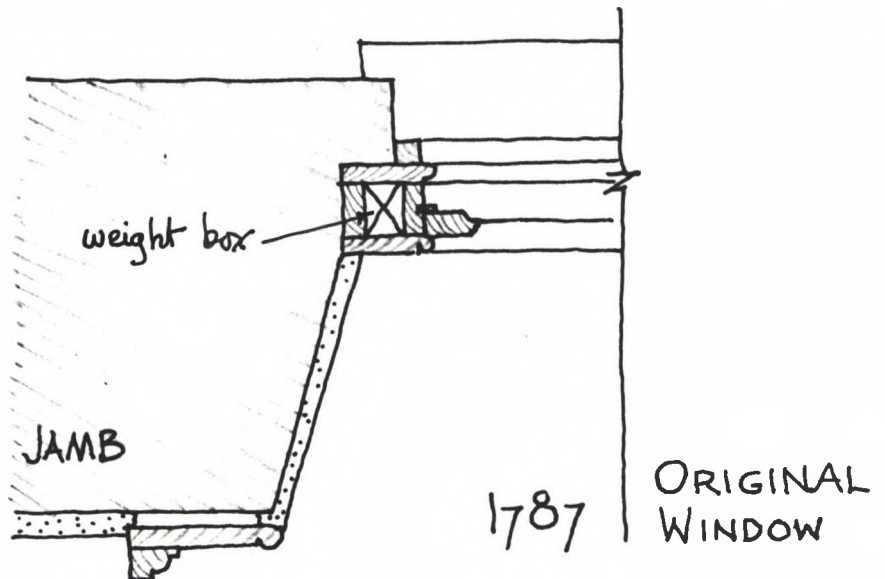


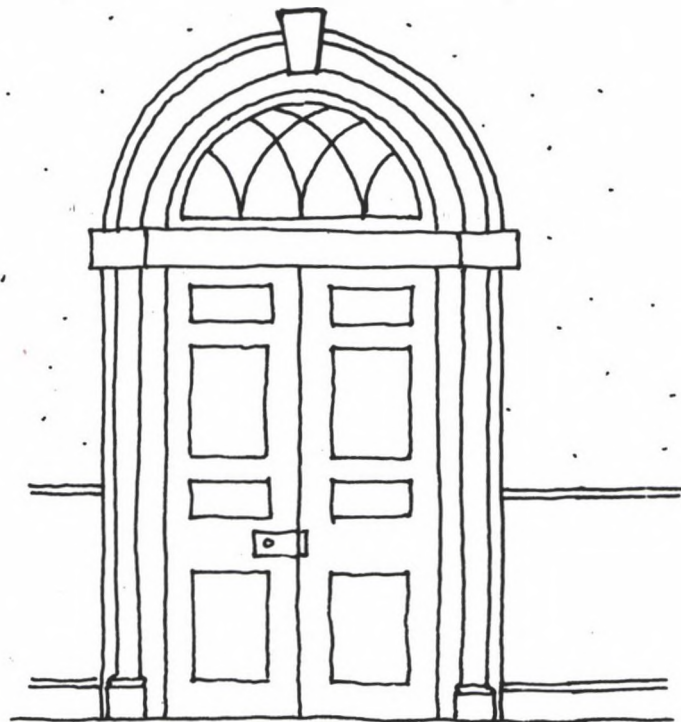
ILLUSTRATION NO. 4

The 1793 Portico door, on the House of Representatives side, we believe, was trined with the same plane woodwork as the rest of the room.

CONGRESS HALL PORTICO DOOR

JAN. 19, 1962

P. HARTSHORNE



INTERIOR ELEV.

(House of Representatives Elevation)

ILLUSTRATION NO. 5

This is the recommended exterior restoration of the Portico door.

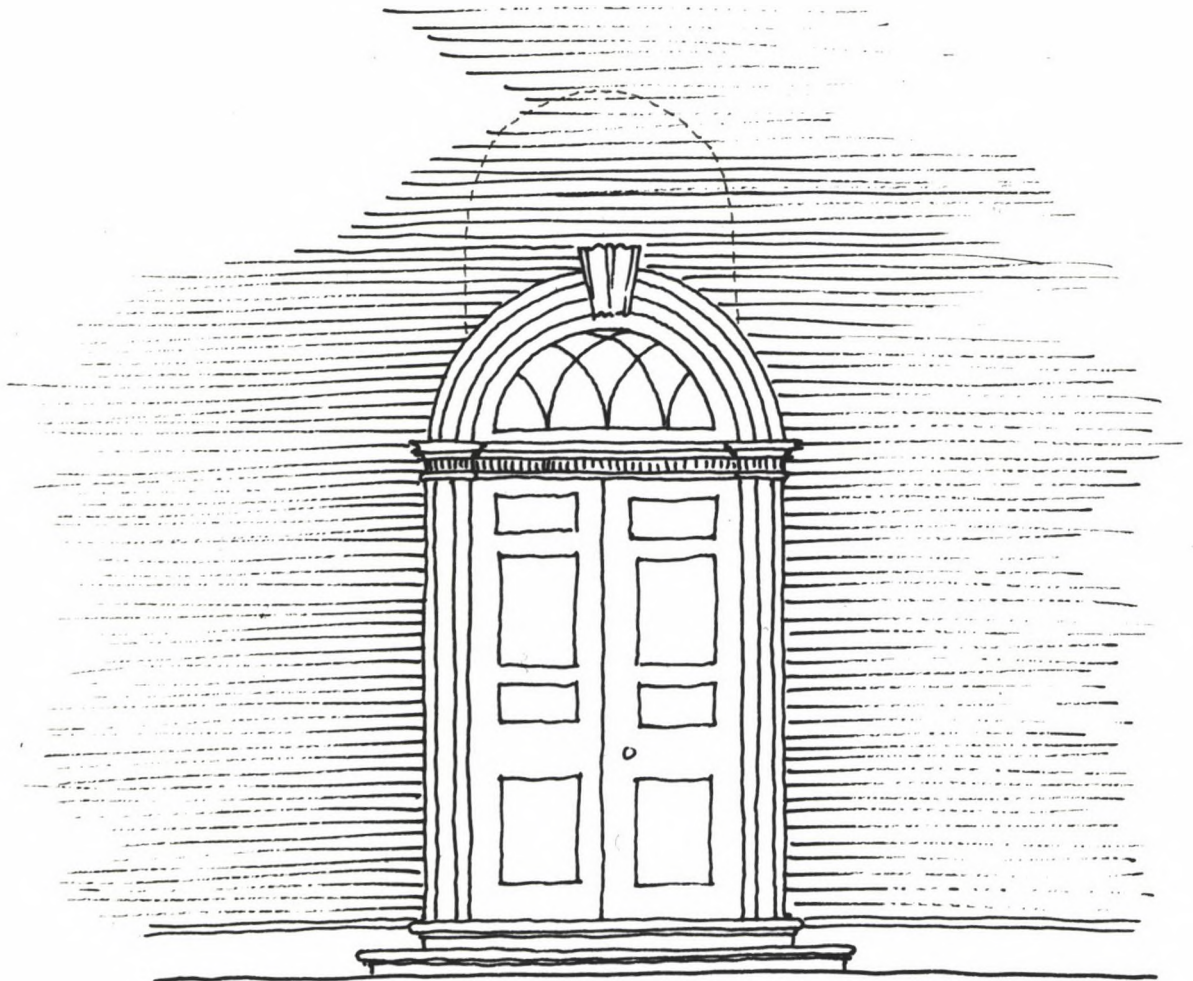
Because the Portico door in 1793 opened between interior spaces, the closed off window opening above it (indicated by the dotted line) was completely hidden by the plastered interior walls of the Portico and House of Representatives.

In our restoration we propose hiding this window outline on the Portico side by patching the opening with bricks which both match and are bonded into the original brickwork near the opening.

Also because the door in 1793 was an interior door its trim will be, as it undoubtedly was, made of wood.

CONGRESS HALL PORTICO DOOR

JAN. 19, 1962
P. HARTSHORNE



INTERIOR PORTICO, 1793
EXTERIOR ELEV., 1962

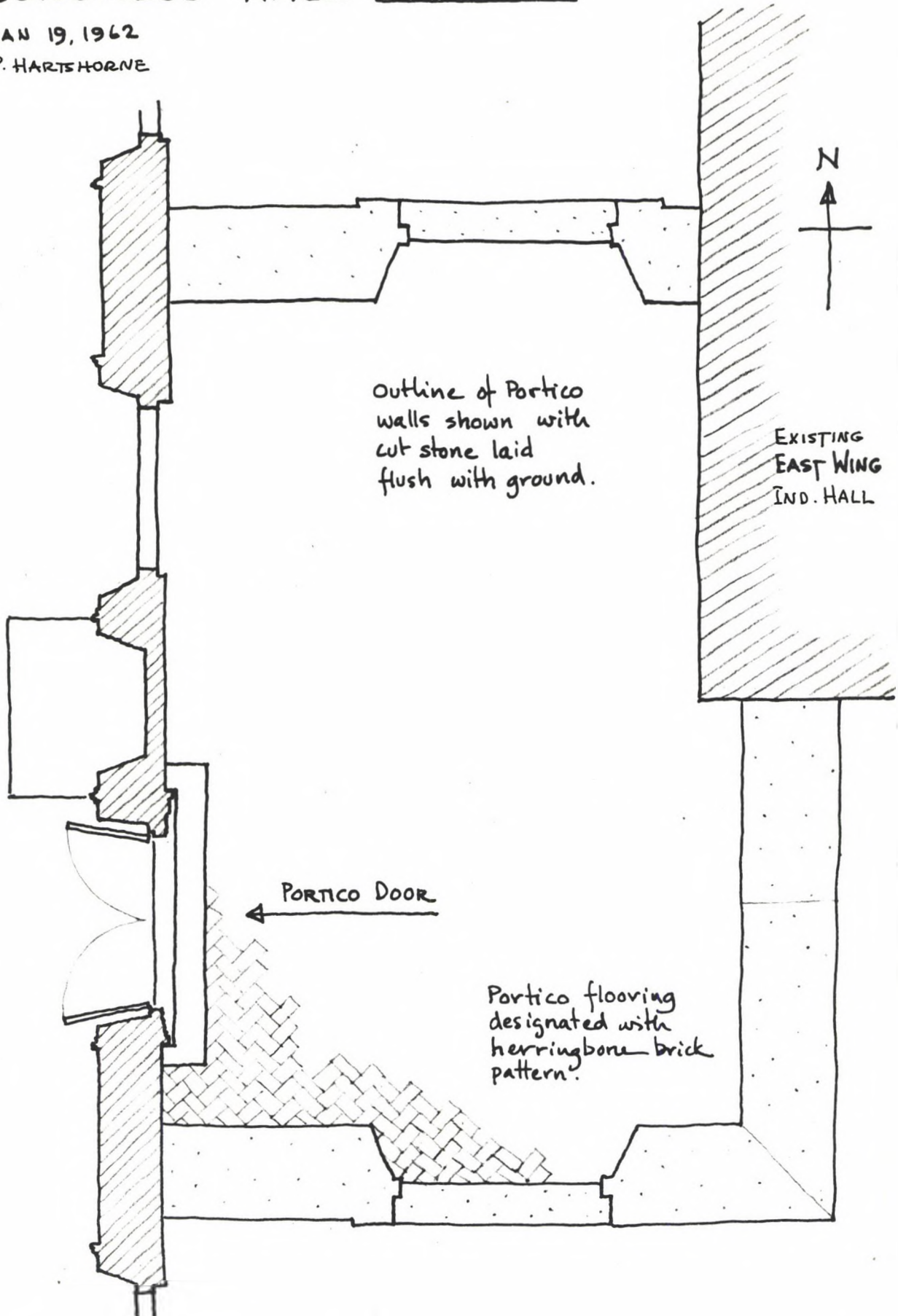
ILLUSTRATION NO. 6

To aid the interpretation of the Portico door, it is suggested that the Portico walls be designated in another material flush with the existing brick ground cover.

CONGRESS HALL PORTICO DOOR

JAN 19, 1962

P. HARTSHORNE



EXTEND BOTTOM RAIL
OF EXIST. SASH

F.S. SECT.
THRU TRANSOM

F.S. PLAN DR JAMB

BRICK

TO LINE WITH
BRICK JAMB ABOVE

CAULK

8'-2"
HEIGHT OF DOOR OP'G

DOOR WIDTH DIM.

RETRACTABLE
NEOPRENE SEAL
RUBBER MAT
OVER CARPET

FLOOR BOARDS

PLASTIC
CEMENT

GRANITE

METAL FLASHING

JOIST

CUT TOP OF EXISTING BSMT WDW
LINTEL STONE TO RECEIVE DR TREAD

F.S. SILL SECT.

INSIDE

OUTSIDE

F.S. DETAIL A-A

EXISTING
SASH

EXISTING
TRIM

INTERIOR EXTERIOR

ELEVATION

EXISTING OPENING

4'-6"

STONE SILL

WOOD STEP

PLAN

SCALE: 3/4" = 1'-0"

SCALE F.S. & 3/4"

MARK

DESCRIPTION OF REVISION

RECOMMENDED	DATE	UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE DIVISION OF DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION PREPARED BY EASTERN OFFICE	DATE	INITIAL
		TITLE OF DRAWING PORTICO DOORWAY CONGRESS HALL LOCATION WITHIN PARK INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK NAME OF PARK	REVISOR	REVISOR
	APPROVED		PCP NO.	
			SHEET OF DRAWING NO.	
			DATE	1-5-62