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**Interim Historic Structures Report**  
**on**  
**Philadelphia Exchange (Merchants' Exchange)**  
**Part II**

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**Prepared by**  
**Staff**  
**Independence National Historical Park**  
**Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

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**October 1959**

**ON MICROFILM**

**B&W Scans**

*6/3/2004*

SIGNATURE SHEET

RECOMMENDED

*M. J. Anderson* Date 10/12/59  
Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Regional Director Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chief, Eastern Office, Div. of Design & Construction Date \_\_\_\_\_

APPROVED

*Robert E. Smith* Date 12/8/59  
Director Acting Chief Architect, W.A.S.O.

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**CHAPTER I**

**ADMINISTRATIVE DATA**

**Prepared by Superintendent M. O. Anderson**

This interim historic structures report has been prepared as a necessary preliminary to the cleaning of the marblework and rehabilitation and/or restoration of the doors and windows of the Philadelphia (Merchants') Exchange. The historical data section outlines the steps to be taken in cleaning the building's marblework and in effecting an authentic restoration of its doors and windows. These measures would constitute a partial step in restoring the Exchange's exterior to its original appearance, as recommended in the approved Part I Historic Building Report.

The measures for cleaning the building's marblework and for restoring the windows and sash doors of the north and south walls and those windows and sash doors of the east and west walls whose openings have not been altered in size can be carried out independent of and in advance of the general restoration, and it is recommended that this work be done. The measures for restoration of those doors and windows of the east and west facades which have been altered in size or which did not exist in the original building will involve much structural work. It is recommended, therefore, that replacement of those sections which have been altered be deferred until the general exterior restoration is undertaken. As an interim measure it is recommended that sash approximating the appearance of the original be installed.

It should be noted that during a field visit September 24, 1959, the Director rendered a decision that a first step in dealing

with the exterior of the building shall consist of "immediate action by EDDC to prepare required design and working drawings, together with bid specifications for the rehabilitation, replacement, and/or restoration of all exterior mill work involving windows and doors, together with exterior cleaning and waterproofing," and that as a second step "action will be taken to complete the plans for the balance of the exterior rehabilitation and/or restoration work in order that same can be programmed and financed for execution as soon as possible."

**CHAPTER II**

**HISTORICAL DATA**

**Prepared by Historian David A. Kimball**

**HISTORICAL DATA ON EXTERIOR  
STONEMWORK, DOORS AND WINDOWS**

**Exterior Stonework**

The Board of Managers of the Philadelphia Merchants' Exchange Company on December 6, 1832, described the building then taking form in these terms:

About the 10<sup>th</sup> of March, (barely nine months ago,) our masons commenced those substantial foundations, and behold in that short period 2,200 perches of stone and 900,000 bricks have been laid, besides thousands of cubic feet of marble then in a quarry, hewn and fitted to give brilliance and beauty to our edifice.

This was soft Pennsylvania marble. Through the years since 1834 this stonework has deteriorated greatly, and today possesses none of its original polished beauty. As described in chapter III, section 2, pp. 1-2, of the Historic Building Report:

The elements have eroded the soft Pennsylvania blue marble facing of the exterior walls until large sections of water tables and drips have disintegrated, permitting water to run down the walls and seep into the masonry joints (see Plate Nos. 21 and 22). Where layers of soot and dust adhere to the marble they form a wick which absorbs and holds acids from the air and intensifies their corrosive action. Over the years this has resulted in the disintegration of large areas of the marble surfaces....

**Doors and Windows**

The doors and windows presently in place are totally different from those installed originally in the Philadelphia Exchange. In several cases windows exist today where originally there were none.

The Exchange was rebuilt in 1902. Prior to the rebuilding, there were thirteen recessed panels in the east facade's third story where windows are now located. During the course of the work, the two outermost of these panels were removed, the openings enlarged, and windows installed. (see Plate No. 8, Chapter III of the Historic Building Report). Sometime later nine of the remaining panel openings were also converted. These eleven windows are still in place.

During the 1922 alterations, the two doors at the head of the exterior staircases were replaced by windows of smaller dimensions (compare Plates Nos. 1 and 2 with Plate No. 15, Chapter III of the Historic Building Report). These windows are still in place.

Until 1902 there were eleven windows under the east portico of a size which in the words of a contemporary were "used as doorways" (J. C. Myers, Sketches on a Tour of the Northern and Eastern States). During the work of that year marble panels were inserted in the bottom of nine of these windows and smaller frames and sashes were installed. The remaining two windows under the portico were replaced by a combined door and window installation (compare Plates Nos. 3 and 15, Chapter III of the Historic Building Report).

During the 1902 rebuilding, the doors of the east facade's first floor were replaced by doors of a different design which in their turn were removed in 1922 when market sheds were installed on that end of the building. The original doors as described in the 1834 survey

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Plate 8

were "folding sash doors with glass 6-1/2 x 8-1/2 by 15." These doors led into a "vestibule within each also with folding sash doors." The original doors can be seen in Illustration No. 5, Chapter II of the Historic Grounds Report for Philadelphia Exchange, and Plates 1 and 3, Chapter III of the Historic Building Report.

Originally there were eight windows, four doors and a center entranceway in the building's first floor west facade. All of the original doors and sashes have been replaced. Two of the doorways and two of the window openings flanking the entranceway were eliminated when the vestibule wall was altered, probably in 1902 (Illustration No. 2, Chapter II and Plate 4, Chapter III of the Historic Building Report). The sash doors of the west facade were identical to those of the east facade. Within the west facade's portico on both the second and third floors there were originally tripartite windows flanked on either side by single windows. At some later date, probably 1902, two additional windows were opened on each floor, one on either side of the tripartite window (Illustration No. 3, Chapter II and Plate No. 4, Chapter III of the Historic Building Report). All of the original window sash of this facade, including the four tripartite windows flanking the portico, was long ago replaced.

The three tiers of tripartite openings originally provided in the north and south walls of the building remain. Each of those on the first floor enclosed a folding sash door identical to those in the building's facades flanked by windows. Those openings of the second

and third floors contained windows (Plate No. 3, Chapter III, of the Historic Building Report).

The panes of the first floor windows were 12 inches by 18 inches. The panes of the second floor windows were 13 inches by 18 inches. No glass sizes are given in the insurance surveys for the third floor windows.

All prints and photographs of the building antedating 1902 show the doors to have been panelled at the bottom.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the foregoing it can be seen that the appearance of the Exchange has been appreciably altered in the past century.

1. The once glistening marblework has become grimy and decayed.
2. Window and door openings in the east and west walls have been so altered that the character of the entire building has been changed.

The approved Historic Building Report for this structure recommends that as part of a general restoration the exterior marblework be cleaned and sealed and the doors and windows be restored to their historic appearance. Recommendations as to the steps to be taken in cleaning and sealing the marblework were contained in our memorandum of September 18.

The carrying out of the recommendation for restoration of the doors and windows to their historic appearance will involve the following measures:

1. Replacing the outermost windows of the east facade's second story with doors of the same dimensions and appearance as the originals.
2. Enlarging the eleven window openings under the east portico to their original size and installing new sash of the same dimensions and appearance as the originals.

3. Restoration of the step within each door opening of the east facade's first floor.

4. Installation in the east facade's first floor of folding sash doors of the same dimensions and appearance as the originals.

5. Restoration of the west facade's original first floor wall and the doors and windows which flanked the original entranceway.

6. Walling up the four windows which flank the tripartite windows within the west facade's portico.

7. Walling up the eleven windows of the east facade's third story with marblework of the same dimensions and appearance as the originals.

8. Replacement of all other doors and windows with folding sash doors or window sash of the same dimensions and appearance as the originals.