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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Independence..... NATIONAL PARK

FILE NO. H-2615

Recommendations for the
Completion of the
Archeological Program,
Franklin Court
Independence National Historical Park

Copies to: Region V

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March 20, 1958

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I. Introduction

Franklin Court (Area C, Independence National Historical Park) includes the Philadelphia property owned by Benjamin Franklin on which he built his home, three tenements, and a print shop. The area and the historical remains therein are intimately associated with Franklin, a figure of primary national importance: statesman, scientist, sage, American legend.

It is thus incumbent upon us to bend every effort and to use every available means to develop this site for the interpretation of the Franklin story to the American people. Previous work has demonstrated that a complete archeological program, combined with exhaustive documentary research, will offer the best means of achieving this aim.¹

II. General Recommendations

This area to be investigated and developed now lies under Orianna Street or beneath "modern" buildings along its sides. For reasons of economy and orderly procedure, I feel no further archeology should be undertaken in Franklin Court until (1) all remaining buildings have been demolished, (2) the street has been permanently closed to traffic, and (3) all utilities under the street have been rendered inoperative and their lines abandoned.

The known historic structures lie wholly or partially beneath buildings now standing in Orianna or Market Streets (see Fig. 1). In order to have the greatest flexibility in exploring the remains of the historic structures, it will be necessary to undertake excavations

after the present buildings have been demolished, preferably in line with recommendations contained in Section III of this report. Excavation prior to complete demolition would result in partial or expensive piece-meal exploration and would necessitate expensive backfilling operations to protect archeological features from a subsequent demolition program.

The remains of Franklin's home rest partially beneath present Orianna Street. The street must be destroyed and the area beneath it excavated to depths up to seven feet. This, obviously, will require the closing of the street to all traffic. If the street has been permanently closed, there will be no necessity of refilling any remains and repairing the street. The best possibility of finding traces of the print shop mentioned above, incidently, is also under the street near the northern end.

The best available information indicates that the following utilities run beneath Orianna Street, with branches to serve the buildings.²

- A Keystone telephone cable
- A 2'6" sewer line
- A 6" water line
- A Bell Telephone cable
- A 6" gas line
- A Philadelphia Electric Company cable

In addition, there are eight manholes. The various cables and pipes vary in size, but the deepest penetration seems to be about three and one-half feet below ground level. All lines do not run the entire length of the street, and unfortunately they are thickest over the position of the Franklin home. All will have to be disrupted, and

it will be best if they can be permanently removed under supervision of the Park Archeologist at the time of excavation.

III. Demolition Recommendations

The way the demolition program in Franklin Court is planned, and the way it is carried out, are important parts of the total development of the area. Failure to make adequate plans, to write such plans into demolition contracts, and to see that work is done as carefully as possible may well result in destruction of priceless archeological data.

Reference to Figure No. 1 will show that eleven buildings now stand in Area C: Nos. 314, 316, 318, 320, and 322 Market Street; and Nos. 10, 12-14, 16, 18-20-22, 24, and 13-15 S. Orianna Street.³ These buildings can conveniently be grouped into three classes, each class associated with possible remains of decreasing historical importance: (1) those covering Franklin's home and its immediate surroundings, (2) those covering buildings constructed by Franklin but not occupied by him, and (3) those on property never owned by Franklin.

This classification allows us to outline a three-fold demolition program. The buildings of Class 1, consisting of 12-14, 16, 18-20-22, 24, and 13-15 South Orianna Street, should be demolished to grade level, the existing basements cleaned out, and the remainder of the work left for the archeological crew. This will permit careful removal of basement walls, floors, and foundations, and will assure the preservation

of any archeological features remaining beneath the present structures.

The buildings of Class 2, including 316, 318, 322 Market Street and 10 South Orianna Street, should be demolished by normal procedures except that walls below grade should be removed by hand and basement floors should be left intact and clean. Archeological workmen should do the actual removal of basement floors.

The buildings of Class 3, consisting of 314 and 320 Market Street, should be removed by normal demolition procedures and the sites left open and clean after cessation of the work.

An archeologist should be on hand during all below-grade demolition, regardless of the building involved.

If careful investigation beneath modern basement floors fails to expose significant features, preparation of the site for landscaping could be accomplished with new contracts written for final demolition and clean-up or filling.

IV. Archeological Recommendations

The actual archeological program in Franklin Court is aimed, of course, at recovering all possible physical information associated with Franklin's home and its surroundings. Besides the house proper, documentary evidence indicates the existence of a coach house and stabling with hay-lofts, a bathing house, a wash house,⁴ and a well.⁵ There was probably also a privy. It is possible, although doubtful, that evidence concerning Franklin's garden may be recovered, and previous archeological research suggests the existence of portions of

the wall around the property.⁶ As noted above, Franklin also built three tenements and a print shop at the Market Street end of the court. These structures probably also had various outbuildings. Evidence of some or all of these structures may remain beneath the soil.

In addition to actual building remains, the recovery of artifacts associated with Franklin is anticipated in view of the results of Mr. Schumacher's preliminary excavations.⁷

I feel the actual archeology can be accomplished in six months, and the program should begin in May to take advantage of the best possible weather conditions.⁸ Such a schedule would allow any necessary stabilization of ruins to be accomplished before the advent of frost in the fall.

This timetable would require a labor force of about twelve men. With a crew of such size, it would be highly desirable to have archeological supervisory assistance. Other more or less specialized aid required would include a draftsman, a full time laboratory assistant, and clerical help.

Certain special equipment will be necessary to augment the usual complement of archeological tools. Compressed air hammers and spades and a mobile compressor will be necessary for street and sidewalk removal, and might be required in basement floor removal.

In view of the restricted area within which the work will be accomplished, it will be necessary to have, at least at times, the use

of a dump truck for removing rubble and back dirt. Much of the area may well be left open, depending on what is found, and considerable fill will probably have to be trucked away.

Mr. Schumacher very wisely, I think, pointed out the advisability of having a field office on the site.⁹ However, in view of the fact that we desire to accomplish all demolition at once, I suggest the construction of a wooden field office in lieu of retaining one of the present buildings for such a purpose, as was proposed by Mr. Schumacher. A simple building of the type built by most contractors, would suffice. It should include desk and drawing board space, work space for preliminary artifact analysis, and storage space for tools.

The archeological work itself must conform to the most rigorous application of accepted archeological techniques in the excavation of the area and the recording and study of finds. If, as proposed, the work takes place during the summer months, it will undoubtedly excite considerable interest among visitors and should prove an admirable interpretive opportunity to illuminate archeological research techniques, the Park development story, and the story of Benjamin Franklin. Suitable interpretive devices should be installed and the area should certainly be a part of the guided tour itinerary. It might even prove advisable to keep uniformed personnel on hand to explain the project to interested visitors.

V. Development Recommendations

It is impossible to make detailed plans for the development of the of the area before archeological research is completed, but I think it is

well now to attempt to arrive at a consensus on the direction development may eventually take.¹⁰

From Mr. Schumacher's preliminary work, we may feel reasonably certain that a substantial portion of the Franklin house cellar will be recovered. In my opinion, this feature should be the focal point for all planning. We know the cellar of the house contained the kitchen, and it may be that recognizable details of this still remain. Even if they do not, however, I think any remains should be preserved and exhibited as they are found. Ruins, as such, apparently have a great interest to the average American. Yet aside from that aspect, the exhibition of such remains will disclose the size and location of Franklin's home and will provide a visual link with the man and his period. In my opinion, the actual remains themselves, even if incomplete, should be exhibited. No reconstruction or mock-up can impart a fraction of the sense of identification which is conveyed by original ruins.

If any outbuilding remains are recovered, they too should be exhibited, for in the 18th century such appurtenances were, in fact, an integral part of the home.

I would, under no circumstances, recommend the reconstruction of Franklin's home in the present state of our knowledge.

The situation along Market Street is, as I see it, a little more flexible. Development might range from reconstruction of period houses, recreating the picturesque arched entryway to the court, to on-surface

treatment suggesting the period buildings or to exhibit of the actual remains (this would probably be less meaningful here than at the Franklin house site).

The remainder of the court should be tastefully and simply treated to augment the interpretive purpose of the area. A small museum; enclosing walls; and landscaping suggestive of Franklin's garden, yard, and carriage lane would be most suitable.

VI. Budget Estimate

I estimate that the archaeological program in Franklin Court, including ruins stabilization, could be accomplished with the following budget. This is based on present wage levels:

Supervisory aid	
GS-7 archeologist, 6 months	\$2,720.00
Drafting aid	
GS-4 draftsman, 6 months	1,707.50
Clerical aid	
GS-3 clerk-typist, 6 months	1,527.50
Laboratory aid	
laborer, 6 months	1,814.40
Rental of special equipment, including hauling	3,000.00
Construction of field office	500.00
Photography	200.00
Ruins stabilization	5,000.00
General labor	
12 laborers, 6 months	<u>21,772.80</u>
TOTAL	\$38,502.20

This estimate does not include post-excavation help involved in

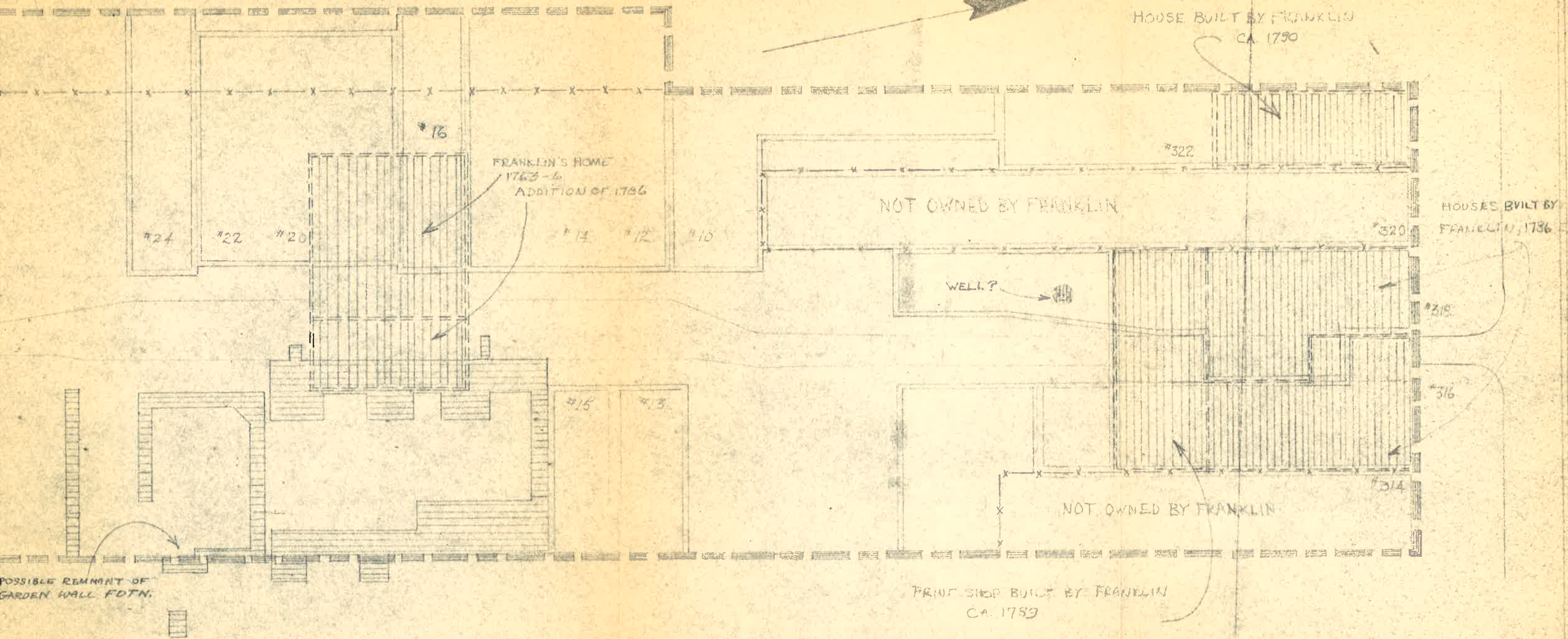
the care and treatment of artifacts or in report writing.

VII. Conclusions

This plan is the result of considerable thought and study. It offers, I believe, a plan of action which will enable us to do a thorough job and to do it efficiently. The importance and location of this site set it apart. It is far above average in the interest it will draw; in the criticism, both good and bad, we may expect during the project; and in the final judgement accorded our development and interpretation of the area. I feel the plan contained herein will enable us to do a job which is a credit to Independence National Historical Park and to the National Park Service.

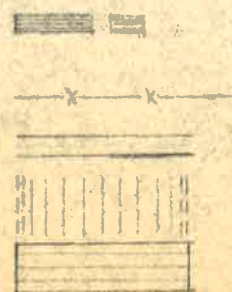
REFERENCES

1. Riley, Edward M., Preliminary Historical Report, Franklin Court, 1950, p. 75, and Schumacher, Paul J. F., Preliminary Exploration of Franklin Court, 1956, pp. 43-45.
2. Drawing No. IND:NHP 9060, Sheet 2.
3. See Riley, op. cit., pp. 71-73, for a description of these buildings.
4. "Aurora," March 11, 1799, p. 2, col. 1, and "General Advertiser," August 17, 1799, Callatin Box 5 (1799-1800), Callatin Pps., MSS (NYHS), p. 3.
5. Riley, op. cit., p. 42.
6. Schumacher, op. cit., p. 44.
7. Ibid., pp. 28-41.
8. Chamber of Commerce of Greater Philadelphia, Greater Philadelphia Facts, 1955, p. 26.
9. Schumacher, op. cit., p. 45.
10. Riley, op. cit., pp. 74-77, gives his views on development of Area C.



LEGEND

BOUNDARY, AREA C
FRANKLIN PROPERTY LINE
PRESENT STRUCTURES
HISTORIC STRUCTURES
EXCAVATED AREAS



SCALE ~ ONE INCH = TWENTY FEET

AREA C - FRANKLIN COURT

SHOWING EXISTING STRUCTURES, HISTORIC
SITES, AND PAST EXCAVATIONS.

INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
MARCH 7, 1958

FIG. 1

B. K. HOWELL

UNITED STATES
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