HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT
PART II
ON

THE JOHN G. WILSON BUILDING
SOMETIMES CALLED STAGECOACH INN
(Building #45)

Harpers Ferry National Monument

Architectural Data Section

by
Archie W. Franzen
Architect
April 1962

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APPROVAL SHEET

RECOMMENDED

_____ Date_____
Superintendent

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Chief, EODC

_____ Date_____
Regional Director

_____ Date_____
Assistant Director, DSC

APPROVED

_____ Date_____
Director

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April 1962

Supervising Architect, Historic Structures

Date: Apr 30.62

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

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS		1
PART I	PHYSICAL HISTORY	1
	A. General	1
	B. As Constructed by John G. Wilson	3
	C. Addition by Mrs. Ann C. Stephenson	5
	D. Government Ownership Through Civil War	7
PART II	EXISTING CONDITIONS	10
	A. Original Conditions	10
	B. Early Alterations	12
	C. Park Service Alterations	13
PART III	PROPOSED WORK	15
	A. Use of the Building	15
	B. Architectural	16
	B-1. Grading	16
	B-2. Porches	17
	B-3. Outbuildings	19
	B-4. Concrete	19
	B-5. Masonry Work	20
	B-6. Steel Work	21
	B-7. Roofing and Sheet Metal Work	21
	B-8. Carpentry Work	22
	a. Framing	22

Page

b. Partitions 24

c. Doors and Windows 25

d. Mantels and Baseboard 26

e. Flooring 26

B-9. Plastering and Insulation 27

B-10. Glazing and Caulking 28

B-11. Hardware 28

B-12. Painting 28

B-13. Papering 29

C. Mechanical 29

C-1. Heating 29

C-2. Plumbing 30

D. Electrical 30

D-1. Lighting 30

D-2. Controls 31

E. Communications 31

E-1. Telephones 31

APPENDIX I PHOTOGRAPHS

A. Old Photographs

B. Photographs of Present Conditions

APPENDIX II Drawings Illustrating Evolution of Floor Plan and Elevations

APPENDIX III Measured Drawing of Four Mantel Types

APPENDIX IV Preliminary Prints of Working Drawings Near Completion

A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

The following survey report, pertaining to the proposed exterior restoration and interior rehabilitation of the John G. Wilson Building, was prepared in accordance with directions set forth in the "Inventory with Classification and Work Code for Historic Buildings and Structures, Together With Guidelines on Restoration and the Preparation of Historic Structures Reports" emanating from the Director's Office and dated November 21, 1960.

The measured drawings, appearing in Part I of this report submitted in December 1961, were prepared during the summer of 1955 by students Robert A. Kear, University of Pennsylvania and Walter J. Mulligan, University of California, under the direction of Professor Henry C. Edwards of the University of Illinois.

Few documents exist pertaining to the structure and of these none are contemporary with the restoration period. Old photos of the period, that contain glimpses of the structure, were taken from viewpoints where foreground material obscured pertinent information regarding details of construction. Some help was obtained from later views but in the main it was necessary to make an exhaustive search within the fabric itself to bring forth an understanding evolvement of the external appearance of the structure up to the Civil War Period.

In looking for physical clues, Exhibit Specialist (Restoration) Arthur R. Voorhees has shown not only a real interest in the work but

a talent for reconstructing the reasoning of the original craftsmen in applying the construction methods and materials that were found in the fabric.

During the summer of 1960 Mr. Herbert M. Mark, an architectural student from Columbia University, prepared an excellent set of drawings which have since been used extensively for the recording of fabric data as it was uncovered in the study of the structure.

The working drawings herein appended were prepared by Assistant Architect Raymond R. Mehl, a recent graduate of Georgia Institute of Technology.

The fine photographs appearing in the appendix are the work of Staff Photographer Jack E. Boucher of the Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction.

The Historical Data Section of the Historic Structures Reports for this and other related buildings prepared by Mr. Charles W. Snell were liberally consulted and many points of importance within the building were checked out against his documentory research.

Appreciation is here expressed for the help derived from Superintendents Frank H. Anderson and Joseph R. Prentice both of whom have been enthusiastic and inspirational.

Archie W. Franzen
Architect

PART I

PHYSICAL HISTORY

A. GENERAL

The John G. Wilson Building, located in Harpers Ferry National Monument, is one of the two buildings still standing within the lower town section that were built outside of the Wager Six Acre Reservation. Constructed for use as a commercial establishment and residence it was later to become an hotel or inn serving first the stagecoach trade and then travelers on the C & O Canal and the B & O Railroad.[1] From 1837 until 1869 it was in Government ownership and during the Civil War was used by troops stationed in the vicinity.[2]

When built in 1826 it was an imposing and handsome structure and the addition constructed in 1833-34 to the northeast further enhanced its fine lines. It has withstood three devastating floods of record and managed to survive through several thoughtless man made renovations of post period date.

While nothing but feeble indications remain of the first or ground floor period arrangement much of what is found on the two floors above

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1. Snell, C. W., "Historic Building Report, Part II, for Bldg. No. 45, The John G. Wilson Building," dated February 27, 1959, pp.35-36.

2. Soldier's names, dates and messages were found scribbled on the walls. These had been covered over after the war with a white coat of plaster and painted.

is substantially that which would have been in existence during the Civil War years.

There was little room for any major changes on the exterior after the restoration period due to the confining topography and property boundaries. Some later refurbishing of the porches, the addition of several windows and a door and the application of a tin roof are relatively superficial features that can be restored to their proper status without too much difficulty.

Not much can be determined respecting any outbuildings that may have existed but the existing privy foundation appears to date back to at least the time of the 1833-34 alterations to the main structure. The privy superstructure being of light frame construction probably represents a later replacement as it could hardly have weathered any of the major floods to which the town was subjected.

The rock escarpment, at the rear of the Wilson Building, was not conducive to any development but may have had some form of simple landscaping. None of the steps that were hewn out of the natural rock hillside behind other buildings along Shenandoah Street were found back of the Wilson Building.

Many changes of a minor nature were constantly being made throughout the building's life. However, the more important stages in the evolution of the structure have been used as a framework in studying the fabric. The major phases were three and represent the first three ownerships.

1. As constructed by John G. Wilson, 1826.

2. Addition by Mrs. Ann C. Stephenson, 1833-34.

3. Government ownership through the Civil War, 1837-69.

B. AS CONSTRUCTED BY JOHN G. WILSON

As originally designed the building was 50'-7" long fronting on Shenandoah Street and 35'-4" deep. It was two stories and a garret high with a gable roof running parallel to the street. The site, before construction was initiated, was composed of a large rock formation that had to be removed.[3] This may explain why there is no basement. The exterior walls were laid up in rubble fashion and composed in part of stone taken from the building's site.[4] Evidence on the northeast gable shows that the outer walls were not parqeted originally.

The building was planned for commercial purposes with the first or ground floor divided into two stores of unequal size. There is some evidence that the latter may have been further subdivided but there are not enough traces remaining to confirm a definite arrangement. At each end of the building on this level were two fireplaces.

The two upper floors provided living quarters probably for the proprietors of the stores below. A central hallway, 9'-2" wide, on

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3. Snell, C. W., "Historic Building Report, Part II, for Bldg. No. 45, The John G. Wilson Building," dated February 27, 1959, pp.3-4.

4. Ibid., p.5.

the second and third floor levels ran from the front to the back of the structure with two rooms on each side or four rooms on each floor. Part of the hallway was taken up with a stairway serving all floors and on the second floor there was a door to the exterior at each end.

The rooms to either side of the hallway on the second floor were of unequal depth from front to back occasioned by a built-in cupboard between the fireplaces. The cupboards are located in the rooms on the Shenandoah or front side of the building. The rooms on the attic floor followed the same layout but did not have fireplaces or cupboards. All rooms on the lower floors were amply lighted with well spaced and proportioned windows. The attic level had three dormers on the front roof slope and two on the rear slope. The two attic gable windows in the southwest gable show evidence of having been added in recent years. The interior casings, doors and mantels on the second floor are of fine quality and tastefully executed.

A covered two tiered porch on the Shenandoah Street facade ran the full length of the building serving as a gallery for the second floor and providing shade and protection for the doors and windows on this elevation. An open porch deck at the rear at the second floor level provided access to a privy and another exit from the building.

The dormer cheeks were finished with clapboards and the roof was covered with wood shingles. The chimneys from above the attic space were constructed of brick although they were of stone below this point.

The interior walls of the second floor appear to have been papered from the beginning but only paint could be found on the walls throughout the remainder of the building. The mantels were painted black and the rest of the trim was light tones of off white and light tans.

C. ADDITION BY MRS. ANN C. STEPHENSON

By April 1830, Major Stephenson had rented the upper floors of the original structure and was advertising the space as an hotel. He died in August 1833.[5] Sometime before July 1834 the property was bought by the Stephensons and the addition to the northeast built, for on this date Mrs. Stephenson and her son-in-law advertised the "several new rooms have been lately added".[6]

The addition was a continuation of the existing structure carrying out the same roof line and was made fully as deep as its parent structure. It extended 16'-0" to the lot boundary to the northeast and again it was necessary to remove the natural rock occupying the site. In this case it was not completely reduced down to a finish grade level for the northeast and back walls at their lower levels are composed of natural rock. This accounts for the bulkhead laid up in masonry on the inside of the back wall of the ground level room. The porch on the Shenandoah Street elevation was also continued in front of the addition.

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5. Snell, C. W., "Historic Building Report, Part II, for Bldg. No. 45, The John G. Wilson Building," dated February 27, 1959, p.16.

6. Ibid., p.18.

The ground level room may have been planned for use as a stable or for storage. No attempt was made to finish it out and no provisions were made for heating. Later day occupants, for as far back as they can remember, say that it was used for storage - particularly for coal.[7]

The second floor was divided into two rooms, front and back, separated by a single board partition, having an exterior door to the respective porches. The two windows at this level in the northeast wall of the original structure were removed and their openings enlarged to provide communicating doors between the old and new portions. The windows were then reused in the northeast end wall of the addition.

The back room had a large fireplace, 5'-0" wide by approximately 5'-0" high by 2'-0" deep, which was probably used for cooking. This opening was reduced in size in later years and then bricked up and the mantel removed. This room also had a stairway to the second floor of which traces were found behind a skim coat of plaster on the room's southwest wall. The stair's lift was from the back of the building to the front and may have served as access for servant's quarters in the two rooms above.

The trim on the original casings of these rooms were patterned after the work of the 1826 main structure. The original flooring was replaced by modern boards not too long ago. Some lath found in the ceiling measures 13'-0" in length!

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7. Mrs. Emma Evans of Harpers Ferry told this to her grandson who is employed by the Monument. Mrs. Evans lived on the upper floors of the building 67 years ago.

The two upper rooms of the attic were also separated by a partition of single board thickness and while the room at the front of the building was plastered the rear room was not. Light for these rooms was supplied from dormers, one on the front roof slope and one on the back, and gable windows, one in each room. The trim at this level was simple and undecorated. The present flooring dates back to the period of construction except for the patch occuring over the former or earlier stair well.

D. GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP THROUGH CIVIL WAR

Mrs. Stephenson sold the building to the government on March 25, 1837.[8] While in government ownership a number of changes took place that were undoubtedly conditioned by the erection of the adjacent Coons Building to the northeast.

When the Coons Building was constructed in 1837-38 the builders had to remove stone from their site and were forced to cut the natural rock up to the Wilson Building line and in so doing may have damaged parts of the northeast wall of the 1833-34 addition. The irregularities in this wall suggest such damage.

A stairway in the narrow space between the Wilson and Coons Buildings was constructed to serve the second floor of the Coons Building, probably when the latter building was built in 1837-38. When this was

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8. Snell, C. W., "Historic Building Report, Part II, for Bldg. No. 45, The John C. Wilson Building," dated February 27, 1959, p.21.

done it probably behooved the Government to take advantage of this stair by adding the second floor exterior door in the northeast wall of the Stephenson addition. The materials and methods of construction used in this door and the adjacent window to the northwest of it show that they were added at the same time. The window was made necessary because the newly constructed Coons Building cut down the amount of light admitted to the second floor back room of the Stephenson addition. Later in 1845-46, when the third floor was added to the Coons Building by the Masons, the above mentioned exterior stairs was extended to provide a means of entrance to the Masonic Hall. The stairs as extended cut across the last mentioned window which would not have been the case if the stairway had been constructed all at one time as suggested by Snell in his report covering the Philip Coons Building.[9] It would have been more likely that the window would have been reduced in height to accomodate the stairway or not put in at all because of a lack of privacy.

On the interior of the structure the original division of space in the addition was altered somewhat by the rearrangement in location of the stairway between the second and third floors. This change created two rooms at the attic level opening off a hallway. The front dormer lighted the hallway making it necessary to borrow light from the hallway to light the front room. This was accomplished by placing a window

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9. Snell, C. W., "Historic Building Report, Part II, for Bldg. No. 44, The Philip Coons Building," dated March 20, 1959, p.4.

in the partition between the hall and front room. It is believed that the windows between the attic rooms of the original structure were added at this time not only for improving the lighting but to provide cross ventilation.

During the Civil War the building was used as quarters for troops and a warehouse for military supplies.[10] This is supported by the soldier's scrawls found on the partition on the third floor of the addition and on a partition on the second floor hallway of the original portion of the structure.

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10. Snell, C. W., "Historic Building Report, Part II, for Bldg. No. 45, The John G. Wilson Building," dated February 27, 1959, p.31.

PART II

EXISTING CONDITIONS

A. ORIGINAL CONDITIONS

Most of the original structure as built by John G. Wilson remains in place with the exception of the exterior porches that were subjected to flood damage and the interior partitions on the first floor that were rearranged and removed during the tenancy of a long list of succeeding store keepers.

The northwest exterior wall at the rear of the structure was damaged in late years and the repairs made at the time do not appear structurally sound.

Mud seams or cleavage planes in the escarpment behind the structure left high stone strata poised above the seams with a potential for sliding into the structure. At some undetermined date large steel rods (over three inches in diameter and square bars up to two and a quarter inches in width) were set in holes drilled into the lower stratum protruding enough to back up long steel plates (up to four and three eighths inches in width and two and an eighth inches in thickness) that were designed to hold back the stratum above. The steel work has corroded considerably.

The exterior pargeting has been patched with modern materials in a number of places spoiling the general texture of the wall surfaces. Most of the original exterior window frames have held up over the years although some of the sash have been reglazed with modern glass.

The present tin roof has Precluded an examination of the tops of the rafters but what can be seen from the garret space indicates that they are probably in good condition. Some tightening up of the rafters at their connections with the kick plate, collar beams and at their ridge line will be necessary.

The architectural trim of the upper floors is, in general, in good condition although sagging of the floors following later day changes in partition locations in the first floor store rooms has caused racking around the doorway openings and cracking of the plaster in the interior partitions of the upper floors.

The flooring and joists at the first or ground floor level are missing. Some joists supporting the second floor level are rotted out at their bearing points at the exterior walls. Most of the second and attic floor flooring remains and outside of leveling up its condition is such that it can be rehabilitated.

The 1833-34 Stephenson addition received the most misuse but in spite of this a good portion of the period material has lasted up to this time. However, the second floor flooring was removed and replaced with recent modern flooring. It was not particularly well maintained and has a shoddy appearance. The first floor may have been used as a stable earlier followed by use as a coal storage area and as a consequence was never completely finished on the interior. The present stairs to the second floor are makeshift and are of no value.

The northeast exterior masonry wall is in poor structural condition at its base where a part of the wall is composed of the natural bed rock and where some of the stones have fallen out where the natural rock and the masonry work join.

B. EARLY ALTERATIONS

The exterior porches were altered many times, most likely after every flood of major proportions. In their rebuilding they reflect the use of the then current materials and their styling. The present treatment of the porch facing Shenandoah Street stems back to work following the flood of 1889. About the same time the two bay window appendages facing Shenandoah Street at the ground floor level were added to provide show window space for the first floor stores. A concrete sidewalk was poured within the porch space at the ground level presumably in the 1920's.

A window at the northwest end of the southwest elevation at the first floor level was enlarged after the Civil War to provide an exterior doorway and a window between the chimneys was added for more light. The three ground floor windows at the rear are composed of materials and put together in a fashion to suggest that they are of a post period vintage.

Photographs taken during the 1880's show that the window in the Stephenson addition at the second floor level facing Shenandoah Street was not in existence.

An original window opening at the southwest end of the rear wall at the second floor level, dating back to the Wilson construction of the structure, was closed in with stone following a blasting mishap when a tenant attempted to remove some of the rock escarpment at the rear of the building in the early 1900's.

Local old timers remember replacing the wood shingle roof with the present tin roof.[11]

The present privy superstructure may possibly date to the restoration period but it is more likely that it is a later day replacement. As flimsy as it is it would probably have been taken off its foundations and broken up by flood debris.

C. PARK SERVICE ALTERATIONS

The rear porch platform was removed by the Service in 1956 after it had been adjudged as non-period. Its components were late replacements and had rotted out due to their embedment in the hillside behind the structure. As a menace to the safety of the Park visitor it was undesirable to leave it standing. A number of photographs were taken and these are in the Monument files.

This same year the first floor flooring and joists were removed as they had completely rotted out and were insect infested. This precautionary measure was taken to prevent further infestation of the rest of the structure.

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11. As recounted to the author by Mr. Joe Shipe, an octogenarian resident of Harpers Ferry, who said he helped the men putting on the tin roof when he was a boy.

When taken over by the Service the first floor partitions had long since been removed producing a sag in the second floor supporting joists and beams. Temporary shoring was placed under key points and with the use of jacks a program of gradual lifting back of the joists to their original position has been undertaken.

The exterior wood trim was given a protective coat of paint some time ago and a general repair of the gutters and downspouts was made.

The rotted wood soffit boards of the Shenandoah Street porch decks were removed as they had been fastened with thin wire nails that had rusted through permitting some of the boards to fall.

PART III

PROPOSED WORK

A. USE OF THE BUILDING

It is proposed to use the John G. Wilson Building as a visitor center. Sited across Shenandoah Street from the Monument parking lot its location is ideal for making the initial contact with the park visitors and providing them with a general orientation of the area. Detailed interpretation of specific features would be provided at branch museums located in other buildings within the Monument.

For this purpose the existing first or ground floor of the building has been adapted on paper to provide an entrance lobby with a receptionist's desk, an exhibit room to the southwest of the lobby and an audio-visual room northeast of the lobby in the 1833-34 addition for showing an overall orientation slide presentation of short duration to handle peak visitation loads.

Because of space limitations within the building it is proposed to furnish rest room facilities on the first or ground floor of the adjacent Coons Building sometimes known as the Masonic Building.

The second floor of the structure has six attractive well lighted rooms of ample size. These could well be used for office space for personnel directly connected with meeting the public. They are outside of the visitors' circulation pattern and yet conveniently close to the center of activity. The front porch would be advantageous as an observation point for staff members with a fine view both up and down

Shenandoah Street including the parking lot. The third or attic floor would serve as space for emergency storage in case of a major flood.

For heating the Wilson Building, and cooling, it is recommended that the plant be located next door on the second floor of the Coons Building on platforms above the highest recorded flood. For economic considerations and for reducing the maintenance load the plant should be designed so that it could heat or cool, not only the Wilson Building, but the Coons Building and eventually serve the McCabe-Marmion Building immediately to the northeast of the Coons Building. A proposal has been made that the McCabe-Marmion Building be adapted to provide an auditorium to take care of large specialized and pre-scheduled groups that arrive by bus, railroad or otherwise. These could be handled by means of this facility without interrupting the normal visitor flow pattern and also provide the necessary space for special programs or meetings both within and outside of the Service.

The above outlineduses can be worked into the present building's structure with the least amount of disturbance to the existing historic fabric.

B. ARCHITECTURAL

B-1. Grading

At present the width of the porch separates the building from Shenandoah Street and sometime in the 1920's a concrete sidewalk was poured into this area a few inches above grade level. Until restoration of the porch is undertaken it is not feasible to remove any of this

slab and until this is done it will not be possible to determine if flagstones or a wood deck was used during the restoration period. Pictures taken in the 1880's show a wood deck in use.

To the southwest there is a yard about forty feet in width running back from Shenandoah Street to the rock escarpment behind. Within this yard there is a cistern that collected water from the roof of the structure. It is proposed to finish grade and seed this yard space and provide a period cistern cap. No evidence of any description has so far turned up to indicate if this yard was enclosed by a fence nor has there been any sign any garden plots or stone walls forming terraces within this yard space.

At the rear on the hillside above the rock escarpment it is recommended that the underbrush be cleared away and the area cleaned so that appropriate cover can be planted to prevent erosion. At present corroded old steel pins and plates hold back a large section of rock overburden above a mid seam in the rock escarpment. Additional holes should be drilled and new pins inserted to preclude any later trouble arising from movement of the overburden. This will require adequate shoring while this work is in progress to prevent mishaps.

B-2. Porches

There were two porches during the period. The one on the front of the building facing Shenandoah Street had a ground level deck and a deck at the second floor level roofed over by a continuation of the roof of the building itself although at a slightly lower pitch.

The porch was constructed of wood and all that remains of the period fabric are the joists and beams of the second floor deck. Some of these will have to be replaced because of their rotted condition. The balance of the members now in place are of later origin and will have to be replaced. The period railing, now gone, at the second floor level was composed of four boards running on edge horizontally capped by a flat board nailed to the top of the uppermost horizontal rail. The columns of the lower tier were square posts with half posts at the building wall. The columns of the upper tier had chamfered edges and supported a beam that carried the porch rafters. The chamfers ran between the top of the columns and the top of the railing and were cut in a manner to give the columns a tapered appearance. The caps were square and shallow and were intergral with the column material.

There was a set of stairs at the southwest end of the porch with an intermediate landing now occupied by a similar stairway but of later vintage. At the northeast end another flight of steps in a straight run originated near the base of the Masonic Hall stairs and ascended toward the southwest. This latter stairs no longer exists and will need to be reconstructed.

The porch at the rear of the structure ran the full length of the building and extended beyond the southwest end of the building to provide access to the privy. This porch deck was never covered or roofed and was a step lower than the second floor level. A set of wood steps between the privy and the building ran down to the side yard level.

The porch deck was of varying width due to the rock outcroppings to the rear. The porch that was in place when acquired by the Service was obviously a later replacement and was removed because of its hazardous condition. A reconstruction should be effected to provide access to the two second floor doors at the rear of the structure.

B-3. Outbuildings

The only remaining outbuildings on the grounds is one outdoor privy. This small structure, 6'-6" x 9'-6", may in part date back to the period and will need refurbishing and some restoration. It is set on a stone masonry base 9'-0" high and 9'-0" from the southwest wall of the main house. The masonry requires repointing and the whole was undoubtedly whitewashed.

No evidence could be found for any additional outbuildings but a later archeological exploration may disclose the foundations of such structures.

B-4. Concrete

For the proposed visitor center on the ground floor, it is recommended that a concrete floor slab be poured throughout. There being no basement it is proposed to bring the slab to a proper level for the finish first floor by spreading gravel fill to an appropriate height. Such a slab would not be subject to damage by flood and would tend to stabilize the bases of the outer walls. A paper joint should be provided at the junction of the slab with the walls in case it would ever become desirable to remove the slab at a later date. Drain

tile are to be laid in the gravel space to carry away any runoff that might seep under the structure from the escarpment at the rear. A waterproof membrane would be laid before the slab was poured to keep the building dry and perimeter insulation set under the slab at its extremities to reduce heat loss.

Concrete slabs are proposed for the bases of the fireplace hearths. Concealed concrete precast lintels are to be used over any window or door openings that require reworking.

B-5. Masonry Work

The back or northwest wall was damaged some 45-50 years ago by an explosive charge set off to remove some of the rock in the hillside behind the building. When the damage was repaired it was not too well done and one of the period windows was filled in with stone masonry. This work needs rectifying. It will require the resetting of a number of stones and preparing a true window opening. The mortar on the interior of this wall at its base has leached out and the stone joints need repointing. On the exterior of this wall where it meets the toe of the rock hillside a cement cove and drain tile are to be installed and pitched to carry the runoff from the hillside to the southwest end of the structure where it will be picked up underground and carried through a buried pipe to the existing cistern.

The masonry of the northeast wall where it rests on a natural rock protuberance is loose and eroded and will have to be reset.

There are a number of loose stones in scattered locations about the structure that need resetting. A number of these occur on the interior of the gables under the roof line.

The base of the top brick portion of the chimneys contain a number of brick that have disintegrated which will require replacement and the chimney caps will have to be restored to their historic appearance.

Later day spot repairs to the pargeting will need to be removed and replaced with material in keeping with the period work.

B-6. Steel Work

With the rearrangement of the first floor space to suit the proposed reception center and museum exhibit room, it will be necessary to introduce a system of steel beams and columns to adequately support the existing fabric of the second floor structural members. The latter has sagged considerably following the pre-Service removal of supporting partitions on the ground floor and it will be necessary to jack the second floor back into its true level.

In the repair of some of the window and door openings it may be necessary to support the exterior stonework on concealed steel angle lintels.

B-7. Roofing and Sheet Metal Work

The present tin roof is a late addition and is to be removed and a wood simulating cement shingle roof substituted. This will require a general rehabilitation and tightening up of the rafters, kick plates and the collar beams. Once the tin roof has been removed it

will be possible to examine the tops of the rafters and determine if the existing roofers are later replacements and if so if there was a change made in the shingle exposure after the restoration period.

The shingles will be laid with closed valleys at the junction of the dormer roofs with the main roof and also along the dormer cheeks. As this work is done concealed copper flashing will be inserted at these points along with flashing at the roof peak.

Copper backed asphalt impregnated paper flashing will be placed at the head and sills of those window and door openings requiring reworking.

Gutters and downspouts of adequate size will be fabricated of lead coated copper to prevent staining, provide a good paint base and reduce maintenance costs. Gutters will be secured with iron straps fastened under the shingle starter courses and downspouts will be affixed to the building walls with wrought iron hooks driven into the masonry joints.

B-8. Carpentry Work

a. Framing - The present interior floor system framing consists of a long longitudinal wood summer beam at the second and third floor levels, 11½" wide by 9½" deep, running the full length of and down the center of the building. These summer beams are in three pieces at each floor level excluding the first floor. Two of these three pieces are scarf jointed together at a point seventeen feet from the southwest wall of the building and supported at this point either by a partition or former partition now replaced with shoring. The third length at each floor spans the width of the 1833-34 addition.

The joists span from this beam to the outer walls except within the central hall area where they run perpendicular to the summer beam. This framing is apparent from the underside of the second floor level where most of the ceiling plaster is gone. The southwest end piece of the summer beam at this level is badly checked and will have to be replaced with a built-up member of equal size. Some joists of the second floor level are rotted out at their wall bearing ends and new bearings will have to be scabbed in place using split rings. To break down the span of these joists, so as to develop additional load sustaining capacity for the second floor above, two wood beams are to be introduced as joist bearings and paralleling the summer beam about two feet in from the front and back walls directly over the face of the proposed display cabinet surface. In the 1833-34 addition a number of the joists at the second floor level will have to be replaced as the area beneath them was never heated and they have rotted enough to make them weak.

From what can be seen the third floor joists appear to be in good condition but as they project beyond the face of the rear wall their ends within the box cornice may need attention.

Some rafter ends have rotted out and will require new ends scabbed along the rafters with split ring fastenings. As this is done new kick plates will be substituted for the old ones to provide a better and more substantial resistance to thrust occasioned by the added weight of the cement shingles. The cellar beams do not appear to have suffered any damage but they will require more secure fastening at the point where

they join the rafters. Additional rafter scabs will be used as rafters over the front porch along Shenandoah Street.

Some of the framing members of the second floor deck will need replacement and new columns will have to be fabricated. The rear porch deck joists now gone were pocketed at the building line and rested on flat portions of the rock embankment. These will have to be treated to resist moisture penetration. Diagonal bracing for these members will also have to be provided to lock the joist end bearings into position.

b. Partitions - For the first floor exhibit room a false front is proposed for the museum exhibits so devised as to make it possible to readily withdraw the exhibits should a flood take place. This will permit the basic wall fabric and the evidence it bears, within this area, to remain undisturbed. Further it will make it possible to conceal the necessary structural supports and present an uncluttered appearance to the visitor. The materials to be used for this partition are to be worked out with the museum branch. It is proposed to provide a suspended acoustical ceiling throughout the first floor area.

Due to settlement of the floors the plaster is badly cracked on the interior partitions of the upper floors and the door frames have racked to a point where it is impossible to open or shut the doors. Once the floors are leveled to their proper elevation it will be possible to reset the door casings and rehang the doors. Some plaster and lath may have to be removed if any of the studs require additional fastening.

Other than the possibility of placing a staff toilet on the second floor no other additional partitions are contemplated.

c. Doors and Windows - Several post period windows are to be removed and their openings closed in with matching stone masonry. On the first floor these windows are the four in the northwest wall, the central window of the southwest wall, the small window in the southeast wall of the 1833-34 addition and the adjacent small window in the northeast wall of the addition. On the second floor the front window of the addition is post period and is to be closed. At the attic floor level the two small windows in the southwest gable are to be removed and their openings closed.

Two period windows are to be reconstructed, the one to be located in the opening now occupied by the post period first floor door in the southwest elevation. This opening will have to be closed in up to the window sill line. The opening for the other window is closed in and will have to be reopened and is located in the southwest end of the northwest wall.

In general the period windows and frames remaining are in good condition. Some patchwork may be indicated after the paint has been stripped. All modern glass is to be removed and replaced with old panes.

The exterior doors seem to have been rather drastically altered or remodeled. In some the panels and dividing rails were removed and glass substituted. These are to be repaired and restored. The interior doors are in good condition although a number had been nailed shut splitting the stiles. These will require gluing.

A few door and window cawings have missing back bands that will have to be replaced along with a few repairs to some of the damaged mouldings.

d. Mantels and Baseboard - Very little work is required on the mantels. In a few cases the pilaster plinths are beaten up and should be replaced. A few parts of bed mouldings are missing but can be replaced.

Rats have gotten to the baseboard in a number of places and these holes will have to be patched. In two rooms modern baseboard has been substituted and should be removed and period baseboard put in its place.

e. Flooring - The flooring of the upper floors is in relatively good condition. However, the second floor flooring of the 1833-34 addition is now modern oak strip flooring that no longer lies flat. This should be removed and replaced. The second floor flooring in the room at the east corner of the original structure is new flooring laid over the old flooring and should be removed to facilitate the leveling of the floor joists. The original flooring can then be examined to see how much repair work is necessary. A few individual boards in scattered locations will require the plugging of pipe and rat holes.

Since the interior of the public space on the first floor will have a contemporary appearance it is proposed to use a vinyl type flooring for ease of maintenance and its ability to resist wear. Colors selected should be neither too dark nor too light to avoid showing dirt or tracks.

B-9. Plastering and Insulation

On the first floor level the museum exhibit space will be furred out to receive a dry-wall facing for the exhibit cases and displays. This together with a suspended acoustical ceiling eliminates the need for plastering in this area.

The reception lobby will require the patch plastering of the front and back walls as well as the northeast wall. The ceiling will be a continuation of the suspended acoustical ceiling of the exhibit area.

The audio-visual slide talk room was never completely finished and the walls should be cleaned down. It would be desirable to furr out these walls with wood strips and then plaster to avoid heat loss in the winter months thus making the room more comfortable. Here also the ceiling would receive a suspended acoustical tile treatment.

On the upper floors the interior faces of the outside masonry walls will require patch plastering. The existing plaster on the ceilings and interior partitions is badly cracked in many cases and should be removed and replastered. The plaster in some places may be sound and undamaged enough to be retained. This can be more closely determined once the floor systems have been leveled.

It is proposed to blow in loose insulation between the attic floors joists taking advantage of the floor boards that were lifted in late years to install electrical wiring.

Perimeter board insulation is to be placed under the outside perimeter of the first floor concrete floor slab.

B-10. Glazing and Caulking

It would be well to reputty all of the windows that are to be retained and as this is done any modern glass should be removed and replaced with panes of old glass.

All open joints between the door and window frames and their masonry openings should be caulked to cut down infiltration.

B-11. Hardware

Little remains of the period hardware in the way of locks. Paint traces have been uncovered which give the size of these locks and these appear to have been rim locks. Most of the hinges are still on the doors but the stay bolts on the double door openings are missing. None of the windows show any sign of any kind of locking device for the period. As the building will receive heavy use the hardward should be reproductions made to stand abuse. It is proposed to furnish door closers for the first floor entrance doors concealed in the door sill.

B-12. Painting

All interior trim, that will be exposed to view, should be cleaned and painted. In some cases too many successive coats have been applied, obliterating the shapes of the mouldings. This occurs mainly on the fireplace mantels and the superfluous coats should be removed and then repainted.

The walls and ceilings of the rooms on the attic floor level were whitewashed during the Civil War years. This inexpensive treatment should be employed again.

The floors at the upper levels should be thoroughly scrubbed and treated with linseed oil to provide a wearing finish.

The exterior trim should be painted an off white similar to that used during the period. The exterior pargeting appears only to have been whitewashed during the period and that only on the front of the building and along the steps leading up to the Masonic Hall.

B-13. Papering

The only papering evidence that could be found was in the second floor rooms and even here no period paper has come to light although all of the present modern paper has not been removed. When these rooms are finished a paper should be selected that would approximate a period design. This will help enhance the scale of the woodwork.

C. MECHANICAL

C-1. Heating

It is eventually planned to provide public rest rooms on the first floor of the adjacent Coons Building and an auditorium suitable for large and special groups in the McCabe-Harmion Building next in line to the Coons Building.

For this complex of interrelated structures it is proposed to have one central heating system. The plant should be located on the second floor of the Coons Building which would place it in a central location and also above flood level. The plant should be large enough to serve all three buildings and zoned for economical and appropriate operation. Plans for the system should include a cooling system for the air conditioning during the hot and humid months. The three story appendage behind the

McCabe-Marmion Building is conveniently close to serve as a cooling tower.

A heating and air conditioning study of the three structures should be made to determine the best means for providing this service.

C-2. Plumbing

Plumbing for the Wilson Building would consist of providing water and drainage for a water cooler to be located in the reception lobby on the first floor, a janitor's sink in the closet behind the lobby and a water cooler and rest room for staff use on the second floor.

D. ELECTRICAL

D-1. Lighting

Overall illumination is to be provided with flush mounted fluorescent ceiling fixtures for the first floor rooms. Individual fixtures are to be placed to best suit spot lighting of exhibit features. Convenience receptacles are to be suitably located for connecting vacuum cleaners, power tools, and individual lamps for decor and the use of the receptionist. Convenience outlets are to be located in the audio-visual orientation presentation room for operating the automatic equipment. All to be controlled by appropriate switching devices and a branch panel in the janitor's closet.

On the second floor enough convenience outlets are to be located to permit a varying arrangement of office equipment in the future. Central ceiling fixtures in these rooms are to be allowed for to provide general illumination.

Shielded exterior lights are to be placed to light the rear porch, the side yard and the two decks and stairs of the front porch.

D-2. Controls

Conduits are to be built-in with the rehabilitation work for controlling the sound and projection equipment in the audio-visual room from the receptionist's desk. This would provide a means of adjusting the syncronization and volume and turning the equipment on or off without leaving the desk.

E. COMMUNICATIONS

E-1. Telephones

Telephone outlets are to be provided in each of the six rooms on the second floor and at the receptionist's desk. These are to be served by conduit with future tie-ins with the Coons Building and the McCabe-Harmion Building. There is at present a pay station phone available to the public adjacent to the parking lot so there is no need for such a facility within the visitor center.

APPENDIX I

View Looking Down Shenandoah Street

This view showing a portion of the porch of the John G. Wilson Building came from John Mead Howells, Lost Examples of Colonial Architecture, published in 1931 by the Helburn Company of New York, in which it was erroneously identified as a group of buildings in Georgetown, D.C.

This view is of especial importance in establishing the shape of the porch columns and the type of railing. Note the straight run stairway that ends in the vicinity of the exterior stairs to the Masonic Hall.

Copy negative obtained through the courtesy of Mr. Charles E. Peterson, Supervising Architect, Historic Structures, in making available a copy of the Howells' volume from his private library.



Street Along Canal above Present Key Bridge,
Georgetown, D. C.

View Looking West on Shenandoah Street

The Wilson Building is the last building on the right hand of the street. This view shows the aftermath of the 1889 flood. Apparent is the stair at the northeast end of the porch which occupied the first bay. Two of the lower tier columns are missing and were probably knocked out by the flood. It is believed that the present porch is a renovation to repair the damage done by this flood.

Photo Copy Neg. HF-82

In HFNM Files

Photographer Unknown



View from Loudoun Heights

This photo was taken prior to 1896 but no earlier than 1887. By this time the shingle roof on the Wilson Building had been replaced with a standing seam tin roof. This view also shows that the present second floor window at the northeast end of the southeast elevation was added after this picture was taken.

Photo Copy Neg. HF-99

In HFNM Files

Photographer Unknown



View from Jefferson Rock Trail

A glimpse of the rear roof slope and southwest gable end of the Wilson Building can be seen in this 1865 view. With a magnifying glass it can be determined that there were no attic windows in this gable end for the period. The two dormers on the rear roof slope of the original structure can be made out with a careful inspection through a magnifying glass. Foreground material occludes the remaining dormer of the 1833-34 addition. Unfortunately the photo is too fuzzy to determine the chimney cap corbeling.

Photo Copy Neg. HF-361

In HPNM Files

Photographer Unknown

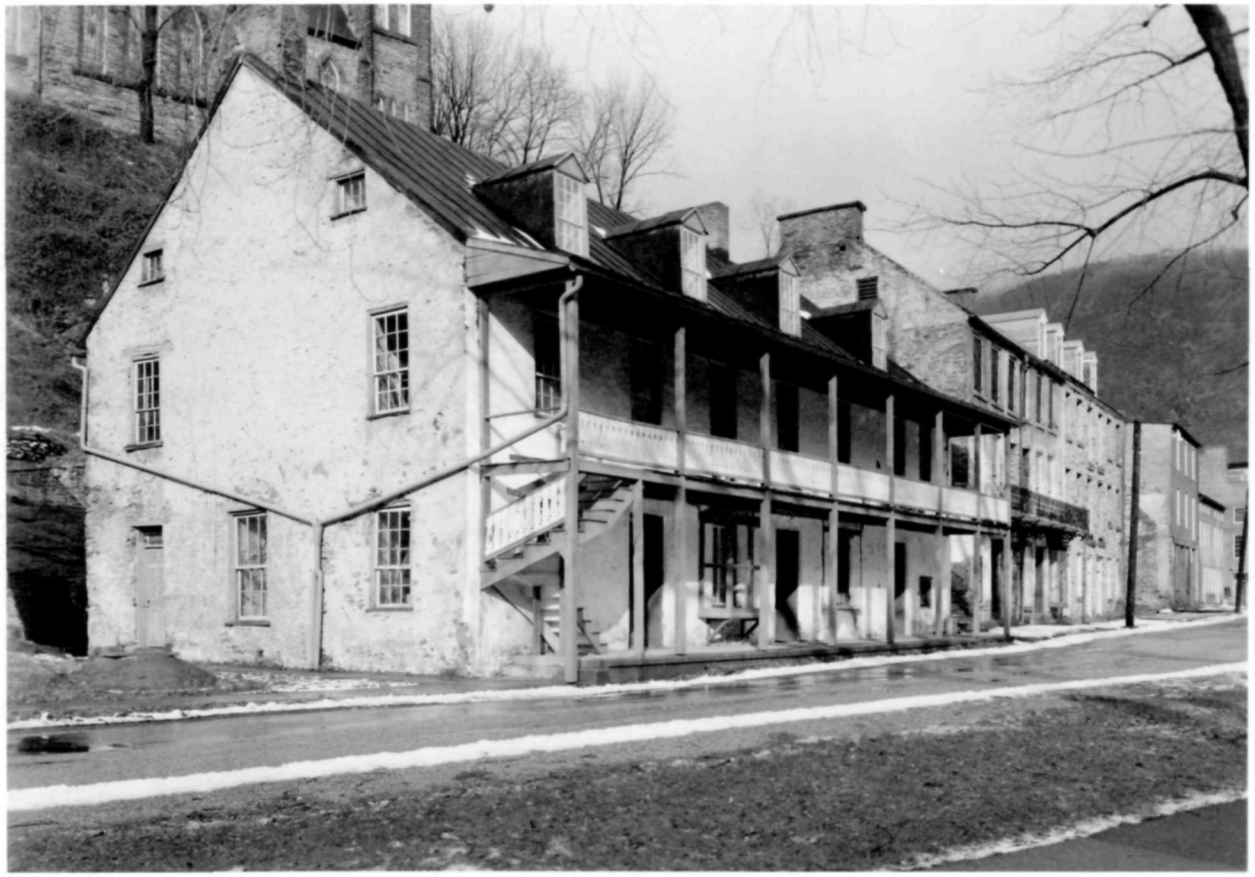


Photo No. 1
Exterior

VIEW OF SOUTHWEST AND SOUTHEAST ELEVATIONS

This view was taken from the parking lot across Shenandoah Street diagonally opposite the Wilson Building. The first floor door at the left of the photo was a window originally and the window to the right of it was added at a later date. When this property was acquired by the Service there were two bay show windows one of which was removed for study before this photo was taken. They were found to be post-period additions. The present porch will require replacement both because it is post-period and requires structural revamping. The street level porch deck, now of concrete, was of wood construction at one time.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
HDA Neg. No. 2487



Exterior

EXTERIOR VIEW OF THE JOHN G. WILSON AND PHILIP COONS BUILDINGS

The existing porch of the structure is a replacement following the 1889 or Johnstown flood. The first five bays delimit the original part of the structure constructed in 1826. The remainder of the structure on the right was added in 1833-34 by Mrs. Stephenson probably in anticipation of the C&O Canal and the B&O Railroad reaching Harpers Ferry.

The adjacent Coons Building was constructed in 1837-38 just after the Government had bought the Wilson Building from Mrs. Stephenson. It was built as a two story structure divided on the first floor into two shops. The second floor was a dwelling. It is conjectured that a stairway was built between the structures at this time or shortly thereafter to provide access to the second floor of the Coons Building and that Door 109 and Window 107 were cut into the northeast wall of the Wilson Building at this time. The door taking advantage of the stairway and the window occasioned by the need for more light because of the proximity of the new building. In 1845-46 when the third floor of the Coons Building was added by the Masons the stairs would have been continued to the third floor.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
HDC Neg. No. 2488

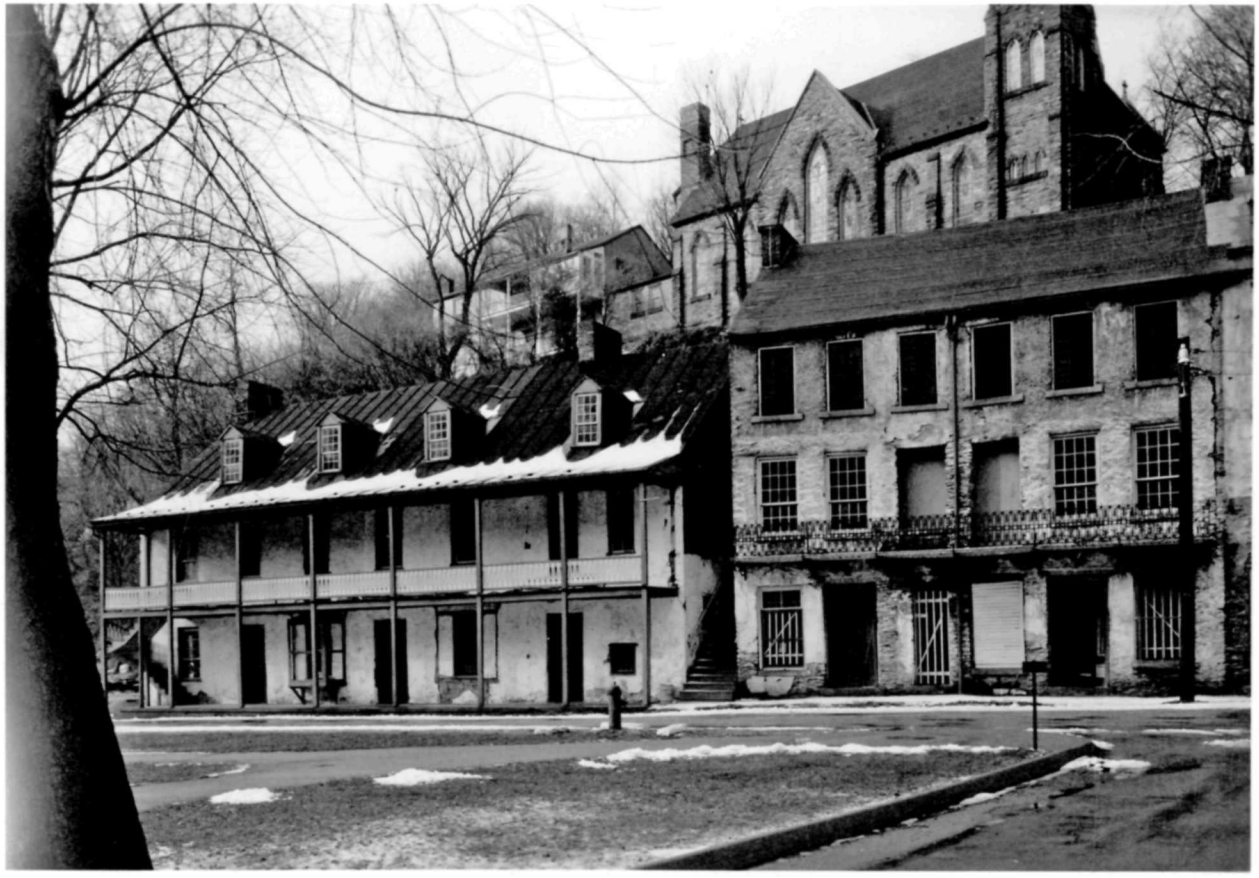


Photo No. 3
Exterior

LATER DAY WINDOW ALTERATIONS

Two of the first floor windows facing Shenandoah Street were altered, presumably in the 1880's, to provide show window space. For more convenient access, from the interior, the double-hung sash were replaced by casement sash. The pargeting was chased to received the bay framing at the wall surface and then patched with Portland Cement. The projection of the bay windows was restrained to permit passage along the sidewalk.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1958
HDDC Neg. No. 2621



Photo No. 4
Exterior

DETAILS OF PORCH FACING SHENANDOAH STREET

This soffit view was taken at the junction of the original building and the 1833-34 addition. Note vertical crack in pargeting that delineates this. The attic floor joists act as outlookers and on the original are cut off on a straight line which may have been done originally or they may have extended out over the porch. However, the companion joists of the addition were cut to their present length when first installed which is proven by the saw cut running up to within several inches of the end of the joist and then being split out to free the blade.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
HODC Neg. No. 2475



Photo No. 5
Exterior

AREA BETWEEN THE JOHN G. WILSON AND PHILIP COONS BUILDINGS

This photo shows a foreshortened view of the northeast wall of the John G. Wilson Building on the left. This wall was built over a hump of natural rock when the 1833-34 addition was constructed. Later when the adjacent building was built by Coons his workmen had to remove the rock outcropping covering their site which they proceeded to do up to the northeast building line of the Wilson Building. This left a large section of natural rock in the wall of the Wilson Building and in this picture its closest edge is defined by the shadow of the outthrust. Irregularities in this wall indicate that some damage was sustained at this time. The escarpment to the rear of the buildings shows up in the background.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
EODC Neg. No. 2513

Photo No. 6
Exterior

REAR VIEW OR NORTHWEST ELEVATION

The present tin roof was put on within the memory of several old-timers. It was covered during the restoration period with wood shingles and the dormer cheeks had clapboards laid with a 4-3/4" exposure. The doors in this view opened onto a wooden porch platform that was removed by the Service because of its hazardous condition. What was removed was a later day replacement and was photographed at the time of removal. Studies of the three lower openings now louvered show that they were a post period addition. An original window at the far end at the upper level was filled in during the early 1900's following a blast and rock slide that damaged the wall at this point.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
EODC Neg. No. 2489



Photo No. 7
Exterior

CORNICE DETAIL

The soffit board of the cornice at the rear of the 1833-34 addition has been removed to show the attic floor joists acting as outlookers. The soffit was scribed to the contour of the building and proved to be original with the addition. The rafter kick plate can be seen above the joists. Neither the gutters nor downspouts are of the restoration period.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
HABS Neg. No. 2496



ESCARPMENT DETAIL

It has not been determined when it was found necessary to secure the rock overburden of the escarpment behind the structure from sliding into the rear wall. At any rate it was done by drilling holes into the sloping rock fault and driving steel square bars and rods into the holes. An iron shim plate was then drived between the rock and steel pins. The steel is heavily corroded and should be replaced or the overburden removed. The privy shows in the background and was reached by a wood porch platform. It or a similar prototype must date to the construction of the building as there would not have been any other suitable location because of the property lines and topography.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
HODC Neg. No. 2499

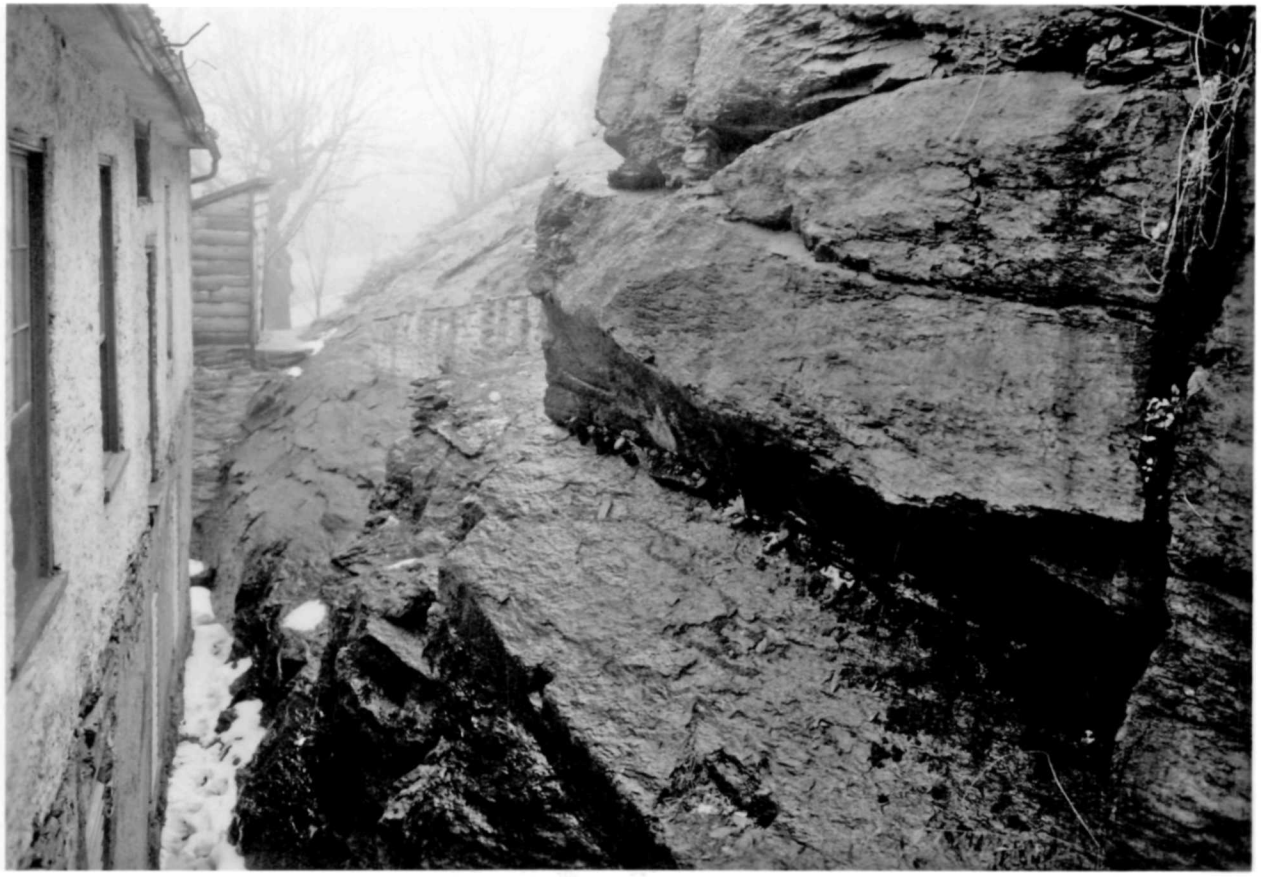


Photo No. 9
First Floor

FIRST FLOOR VIEW SHOWING CONSTRUCTION FEATURES

The first floor was of wood supported by wood joists running perpendicular to the front of the building. The exterior walls at the front and back had a set back at this level for the joist bearings with three low intermediate foundation walls for additional support within the structure. The two Shenandoah Street doorways on this floor level were double leaved doors each leave having three panels over the lock rail and one below. The jamb liners of the windows were plastered and many of the interior casings are of post period vintage. Between the door and window on the left is found the junction of an original partition that divided this floor into two stores and also provided support under the scarf joint in the overhead longitudinal joist supporting beam.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
HSDC Neg. No. 2479



FIRST FLOOR FIREPLACES IN ORIGINAL STRUCTURE

At each end of the 1826 construction on the ground floor level are found two fireplaces. No partition traces were found dividing the storerooms into front and back rooms initially. Later when the fireplaces were bricked up in favor of room stoves an additional partition was added that ran perpendicular to and at the center of the chimney breast shown on the left of the photo. The doorway between the two fireplaces opens into the stable or Room #2. It was probably cut through after the Civil War. The temporary shoring of the joist supporting beam in the ceiling was necessary to prevent further sagging of the floor above occasioned by fairly recent changes in the first floor partitioning.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
HDC Neg. No. 2491



Photo No. 11
First Floor

STAIRWAY FRAMING UNDER SECOND FLOOR

The Wilson Building was planned for stores on the ground floor and living quarters on the floors above. The upper floors were laid out with four rooms each opening off of a central hallway running from the front to the back. A stairway in the hallway provided communication between floors and the framing in this view shows where the stair run between the first and second floors was located. Situated at the rear of the building it landed within the larger of the two storerooms that was located at the northeastern end of the first floor. The stair run was separated from the store proper by an earlier partition.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
HDC Neg. No. 2470



Photo No. 12
First Floor

JOINT IN LONGITUDINAL BEAM UNDER SECOND FLOOR

This beam supports the second floor joists running from the southwest end to the northeast end of the original structure. It is 11½" x 9½" deep and had it been made in one length it would have been over forty-five feet long. However it was made in two lengths joined together by a scarf joint eighteen feet from its southwest end. The joists are fastened to the beam by mortise and tenons and at the scarf joint the joist tenons act as a locking key.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
HODC Neg. No. 2482

Photo No. 13
First Floor

REAR WALL OF ROOM #2 OR STABLE

The bulkhead in the background was constructed over a natural rock ledge comprising the foundation for the structure at this location. This is to be retained as a raised platform for the audio-visual equipment. The window at the rear of the wall on the left is one dating from the original construction. The rear window was probably added when the Coons Building was added next door and was put in to provide more light and ventilation. The chimney foundation on the right is rubble masonry on the interior side but is made up of a large natural rock on its exterior. No traces of any but a dirt floor for this room has been found.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
HDHC Neg. No. 2490



FRONT WALL OF ROOM #2 OR STABLE

Looking southeast toward Shenandoah Street this view shows what was the only entrance to this room at the time of its construction. It probably served as a stable up through the Civil War and as a store room and coal storage area later. It is proposed that this room be rehabilitated as an audio-visual orientation facility. The floor construction above is relatively new with some of the older joists reused. It is possible that the two windows in the background, the furtherest one on the left sidewall and the one in the end wall, are non-period.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
HDDC Neg. No. 2509



Photo No. 15
Second Floor

CUPBOARD DETAIL ROOM #4

Between the fireplaces on the second floor of the original structure at each end of the building a cupboard was constructed. To accomodate these the partitions separating the front and back rooms are so placed to make the two rooms on the southeast side deeper than the two rooms on the northwest side. The cupboards are cased out to match the door and window casings of the rooms in which they are located.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1958
HDC Neg. No. 2922



Photo No. 16
Second Floor

PARTITION DETAIL ROOM #4

This partition separates Room #4 from the central stair hall. After the flooring had been laid a ribbon board was attached to the surface and the studs were haunched to fit over it for alignment. The studs roughly 3" square are spaced around 17" o. c. and the ribbon board is 1½" in width by 1-1/8" high. The studs are notched at the top to engage the joist overhead.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
February 1961
HDRC Neg. No. 2623

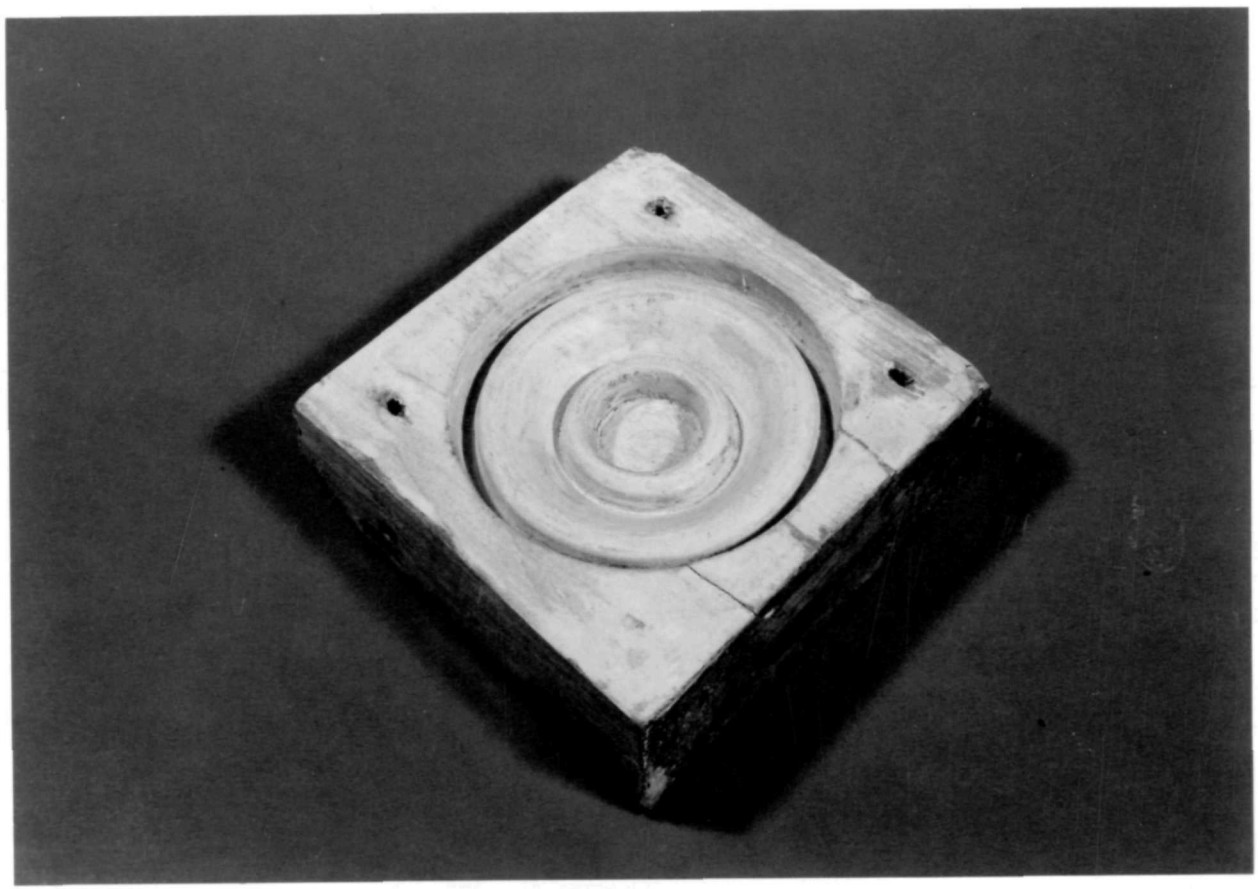


Photo No. 17
Second Floor

ROSE BLOCK FROM DOOR 106

It is thought that the rose blocks, so named in early building supply inventories, are fabricated not in a lathe but by a boring type apparatus set up to receive long boards of the proper width. The individual blocks were sawed off after a continuous series of the design had been bored. Exhibit Specialist (Restoration) Voorhees has seen such a rig owned by a Berkeley County man.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
HABS Neg. No. 2457



TYPICAL DOOR HINGE

This cast iron door hinge is from the large paired folding doors between Rooms #3 and #4 on the second floor of the original structure. It is 2½" x 4" in an open position and 3/16" thick. The door opening is numbered D/106 on the drawings. This hinge is similar to the Thos. Clark hinges that are found in numerous of the Harpers Ferry buildings. The pin is cast in one leave first and then the other leave is cast around it with normal shrinkage, upon cooling, allowing for the workability of the parts.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
HDRC Neg. No. 2452

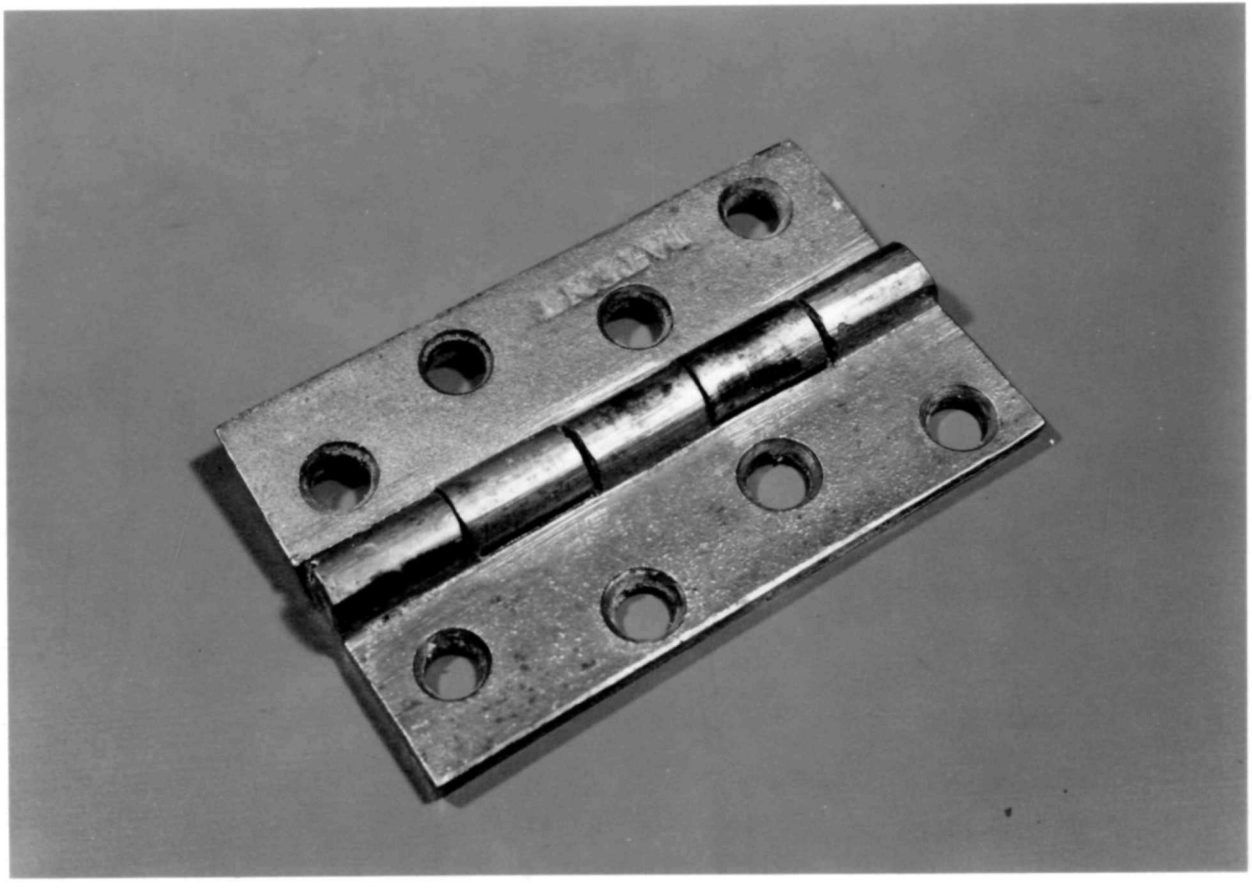


Photo No. 19
Second Floor

ORIGINAL LOCK TRACE ON D/106

This mark of bare wood is 7" wide by 4-3/8" high. It was set as high on the lock rail as possible and was on the Room #4 side of the door. The last used lock found on the door was a Russell and Erwin, patented July 15, 1862, which was also a rim lock. Each of the four door leaves of this opening were 7'-10" high by approximately 3'-0" in width.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
HDSC Neg. No. 2494

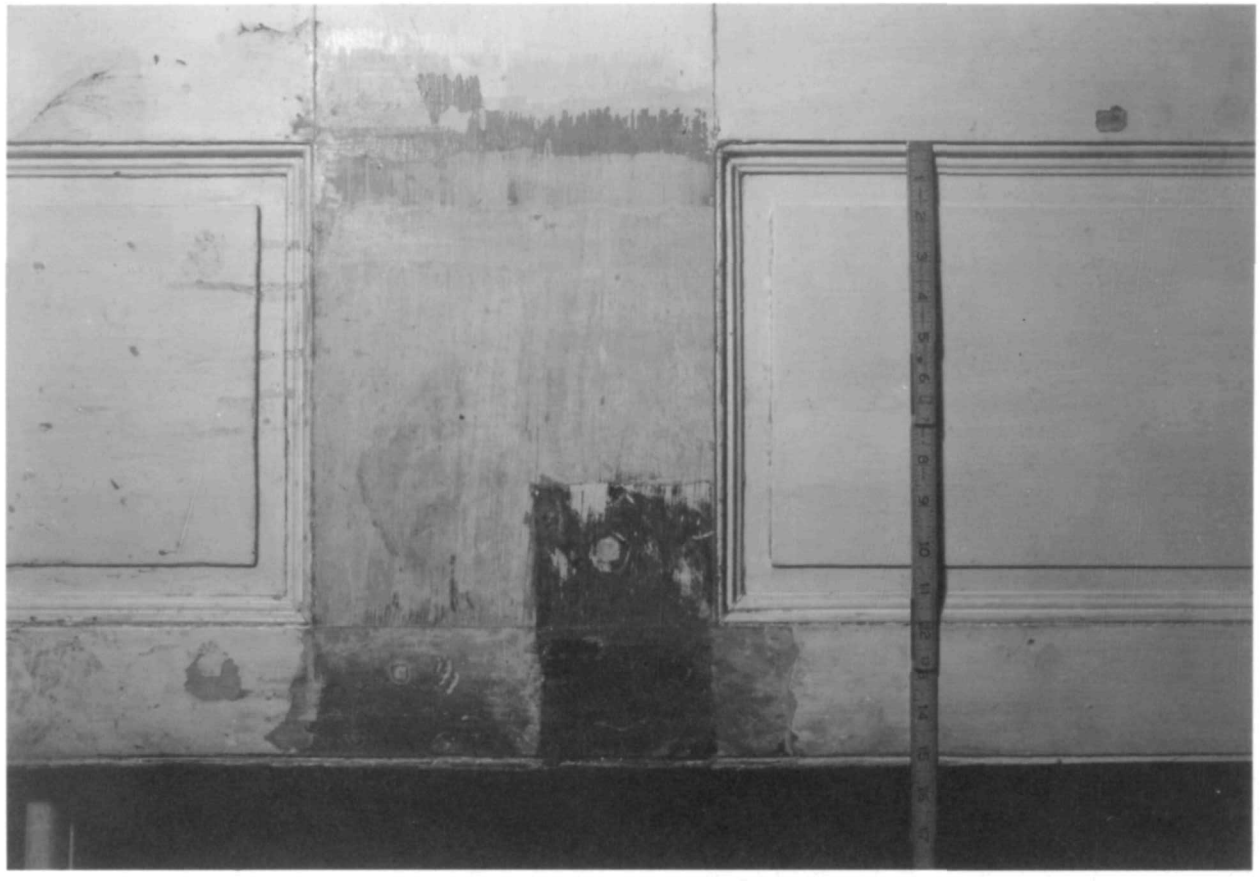


Photo No. 20
Second Floor

HARDWARE MARK ON D/106

Similar markings were found on three of the four door leaves of this opening. They were stay bolts at the door heads (none were found on the stiles at the floor line) and were 1-5/16" wide by 5-13/16" high. The casing at the head was cut to accomodate a metal keeper for each of the stay bolts although the keepers no longer exist. The keeper was in the shape of an inverted truncated triangle. These were held in place by two screws through the exposed surface.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
EODC Neg. No. 2510


1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

MANTEL IN ROOM #3

The room, in which this mantel is found, together with the adjoining room was likely used as a parlor in the beginning. In recent years it was converted to kitchen use. The mantel shelf extended beyond the chimney breast and was cut off at the time the room was made into a kitchen.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
HABS Neg. No. 2497



Photo No. 22
Second Floor

NORTHWEST WALL OF ROOM #3

This wall was severely damaged some forty to forty-five years ago by an explosive charge set off to remove additional rock from the hillside behind the house. When the damage was repaired one of the windows was closed with masonry. The left jamb of this window opening is partly revealed by the removal of plaster. These early repairs are not very stable and will need to be rehabilitated when the period type window is installed. The chair rail was mutilated in late years to provide a flat surface for a wood wainscot when this room was made into a kitchen.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
February 1961
HABS Neg. No. 2624



Photo No. 23
Second Floor

EAST CORNER OF ROOM #3

This view was included to show the height above the floor of flood waters. The highest water the building was subjected to is represented by the dark horizontal trace immediately below the chair rail. This trace is 2'-6" above the second floor level in the foreground. The mark represents the 1936 flood level and was discovered when the later day wainscotting was removed.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
February 1961
HODC Neg. No. 2625



Photo No. 24
Second Floor

MAIN INTERIOR STAIRCASE

This run of stairs originates on the second floor and turns back on itself to the third floor by means of the landing in the background. The low window is limited in height by the floor of the landing and the cornice on the exterior at the rear of the building. The half open door on the left closed off an earlier stairs to the first floor. The space under the stair was converted to a closet when the lower stair was removed and floored over. The room on the other side of the partition on the right had a door opening at this level providing access to the former stairs to the first floor. This latter opening was plastered over in later years.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
HABS Neg. No. 1857



Photo No. 25
Third Floor

DETAIL OF STAIR RAILING

The handrail is 2½" round in section and flattened on the bottom to receive the 1-1/8" x 5/8" ballusters. The newel posts are turned to a simple design and are square at their base. Both the railing and its supports have been painted several times. Well fastened, the railing is sturdy and measures 39½" high above the second floor line and at the landing it measures 26" high at the face of the risers. On the underside of the railing at the second floor and also in the floor can be seen plugs that suggest another spacing and shape of balluster. These plugs do not occur under the sloping sections of the handrail.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1958
HABS Neg. No. 1881



Photo No. 26
Second Floor

MANTEL IN ROOM #6

The fireplace opening had probably been closed by the Civil War period with stove pipe thimbles put in for stoves. All four of the only mantels remaining in the house are found on this floor of the original part of the structure. They are each different in treatment although of the same period. For the most part they are in good condition although painted many times.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
EODC Neg. No. 2511



Photo No. 27
Second Floor

WEST CORNER OF ROOM #5

Beyond this partition in the adjacent stair hall was an early flight of steps leading to the first floor. What is revealed by this photo is an earlier door opening in this room that provided access to the stairs mentioned. The door head was low to accomodate the stair landing, beyond the partition, of the flight of steps between the second and third floors. The chair rail ending at this opening had to be extended when the opening was closed.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
February 1961
HODC Neg. No. 2626



Photo No. 28
Second Floor

DOOR OPENING ON EXTERIOR STAIRS SERVING THE COONS BUILDING

Evidence shows this doorway to have been added and it is conjectured that this was done when the adjacent Coons Building was constructed. The assumption was based on its similarity of materials and construction with those of Window #107, which was probably added to obtain more light in Room #7 after the closeness of the newly constructed Coons Building cut down on the light from the northeast. This would have been done after 1837-38 and before the third floor Masonic Hall was added to the Coons Building in 1845-46. The exterior and only stair to the Hall crosses in front of Window #107 making it likely that had the window been constructed after the stair, it would not have been built partly behind the stairs.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
HDHC Neg No. 2492



Photo No. 29
Second Floor

PLASTERED OVER FIREPLACE IN ROOM #7

This fireplace, a huge one and later narrowed and lowered, served Room #7, on the second floor of the addition. This may have been the kitchen during the buildings use as an inn. Later partially opened, after this photo was taken, a plain iron plate fireback was discovered along with 110 snuff cans tossed down a stove pipe opening in the floor above. The flooring on this floor in the addition is of comparatively recent origin so no hearth remains.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
HDRC Neg. No. 2495



Photo No. 30
Second Floor

SOUTHWEST WALL OF ROOM #7

Below a skim coat of plaster the traces of risers and treads of a former stairway were discovered rising in an opposite direction than that of the present stairway. Why this stair was removed in favor of the presently arranged stairway has not been determined. This was a steep stair with 7½" treads, exclusive of the nosing, and 8¼" risers. It ended on the floor above at the longitudinal wood beam in the ceiling. In this photo the traces of the treads and risers can be picked out upon careful inspection.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
February 1961
HDBC Neg. No. 2627



Photo No. 31
Attic or Third Floor

SOUTHWEST WALL IN ROOM #9

The companion chimney in the next room to the left is also corbeled similarly to this one. They both join above the ceiling to form a single chimney through the roof at the ridge line. The ceiling is 7'-10" high at its highest point sloping off to the kneewalls reducing the effective floor space of these attic rooms to the areas providing headroom. The lath in the attic ceilings are of long lengths with some as long as eight feet. They were sawn and not split.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1958
HDRC Neg. No. 1858



Photo No. 32
Attic or Third Floor

INTERIOR ATTIC WINDOW DETAIL

There are three interior casement windows, one between Rooms #9 and #10, one between Rooms #11 and #12 and one between Room #14 and the Hall. They are later additions and were probably put in to create cross ventilation of the attic space. This view taken from Room #12 shows the casing removed to reveal how the opening was sawed out and the casing applied over the old plaster. The plaster was then removed from the surrounding surfaces and replastered.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
February 1961
HABS Neg. No. 2628

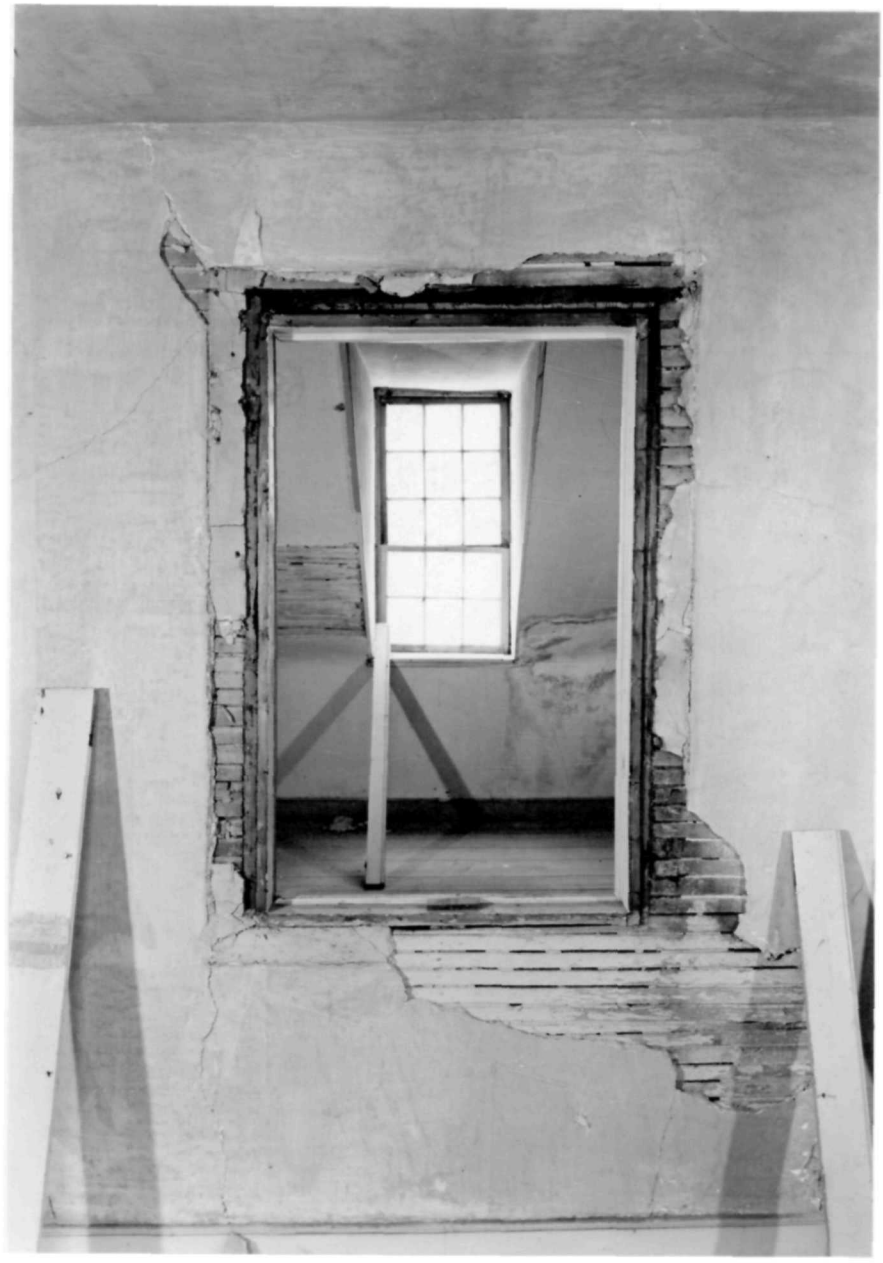


Photo No. 33
Attic or Third Floor

ROOM #14 AND STAIR HALL AT ATTIC LEVEL

The partition on the left was added prior to the Civil War. Soldiers' names and dates of the period were found under a refurbishing skim coat of plaster on this partition. Riven lath were used in this partition. The interior window in the partition was added more for ventilation probably than for light.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1958
HCDC Neg. No. 1847



Photo No. 34
Attic or Third Floor

HEAD OF EXISTING STAIR IN ATTIC IN THE 1833-34 ADDITION

The treads and risers of the stair run shown here compare in size with the traces of an earlier stair, found on the southwest wall of Room #7. It may well be that the stair fabric shown here was salvaged from the earlier stairway. Note how This set of steps terminate against the longitudinal wood beam pointed out by the arrow. The original stair flight was reversed in direction and landed at but on the other side of the beam.

On the left, indicated by an arrow, can be seen the trace of an earlier wood board partition that divided the second floor of this addition into two rooms. As the photo indicates the earlier room to the front was plastered but the room to the rear was left unfinished until the change in location of the stairs depicted here.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
February 1961
HODC Neg. No. 2629

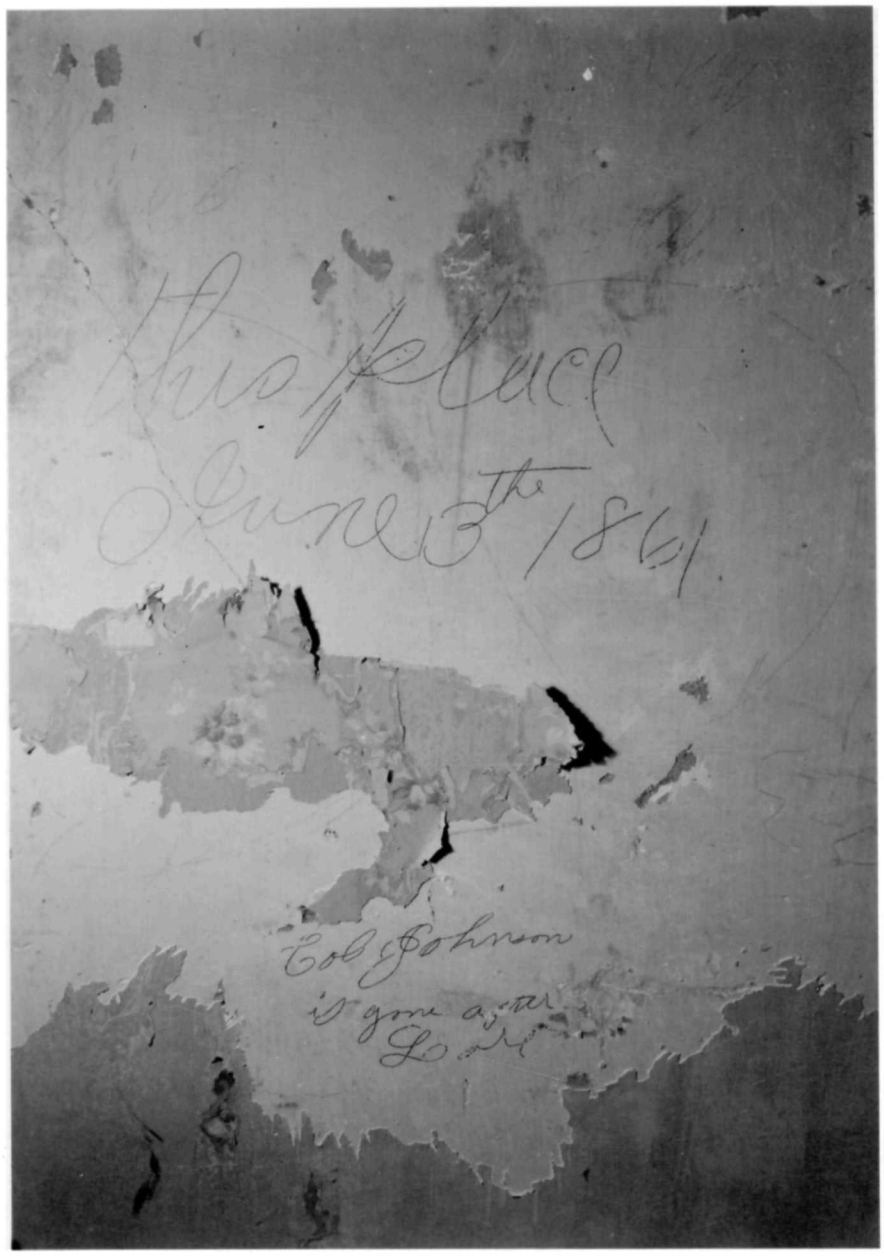


Photo No. 35
Attic or Third Floor

CIVIL WAR PERIOD SCRIBBLING

In Room #13 on the partition separating it from the hall was found this writing under a white coat of plaster later applied to spruce up the walls. The original writing was darkened with a lead pencil so that it would register on the photograph. This was an important find in that it established the period of these partitions.

Photo by Jack E. Boucher
December 1961
HABS Neg. No. 2468


Col Johnson
is gone again
Lord

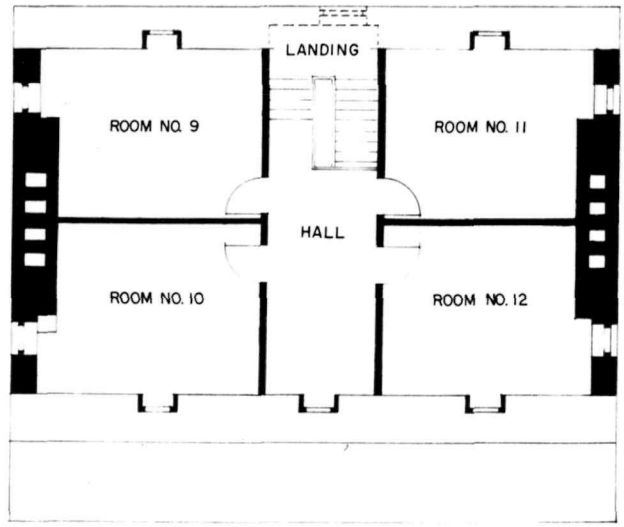
APPENDIX II

Floor Plans As Constructed

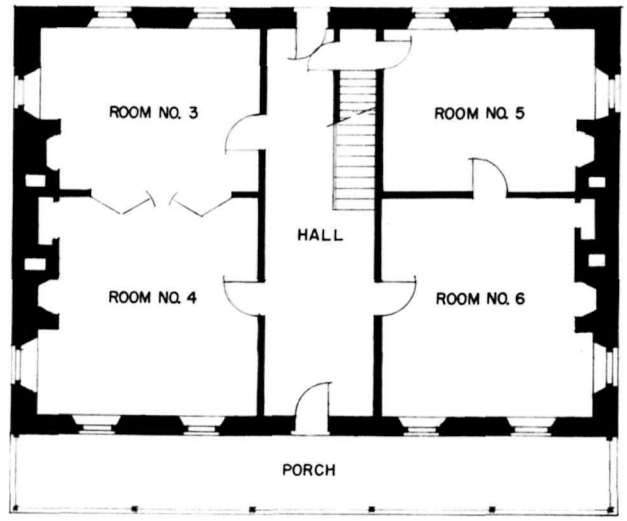
The structure was originally designed to accommodate two stores on the first or ground floor with living quarters for John G. Wilson, his wife and mother on the two upper floors. As can be seen one of the stores was larger than the other with an interior stairway in the larger room that provided access to the living quarters above. No traces of further subdivisions of the stores was found for this period. The upper floors were divided into four rooms with a central stairhall.

A porch on the front of the structure was two tiers high with a door from the second floor giving access to the upper deck. No evidence remains of any porch at the rear for this period although the doorway at the rear of the second floor hall is original.

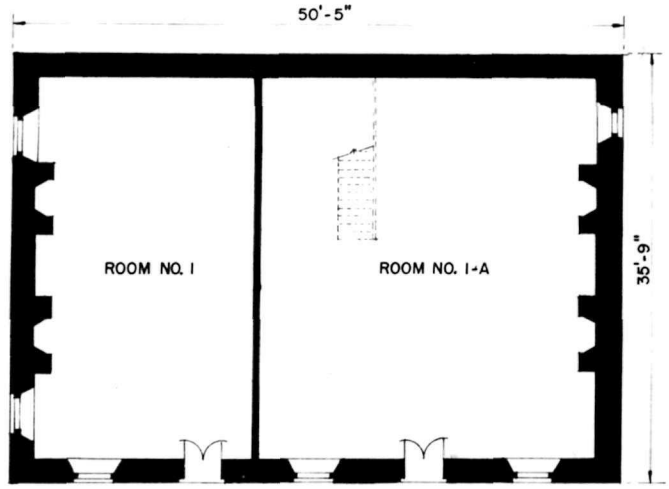
Drawing by writer



THIRD FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

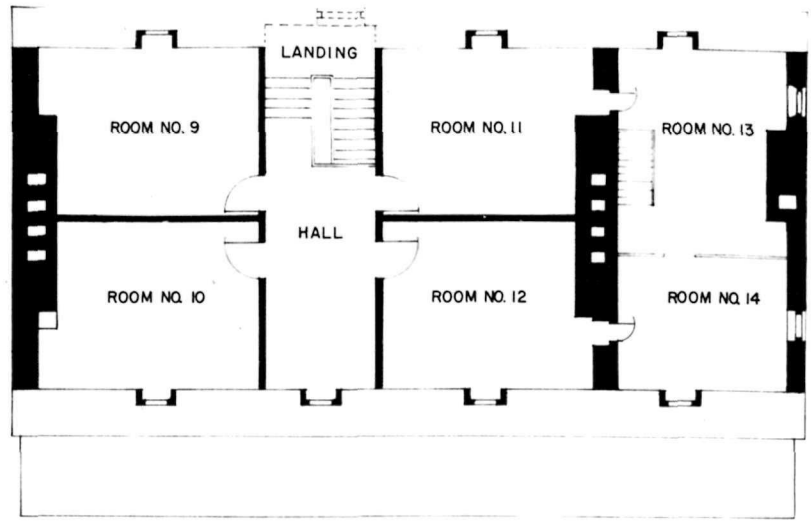
AS CONSTRUCTED BY JOHN G. WILSON (1826)

SKETCH "A"

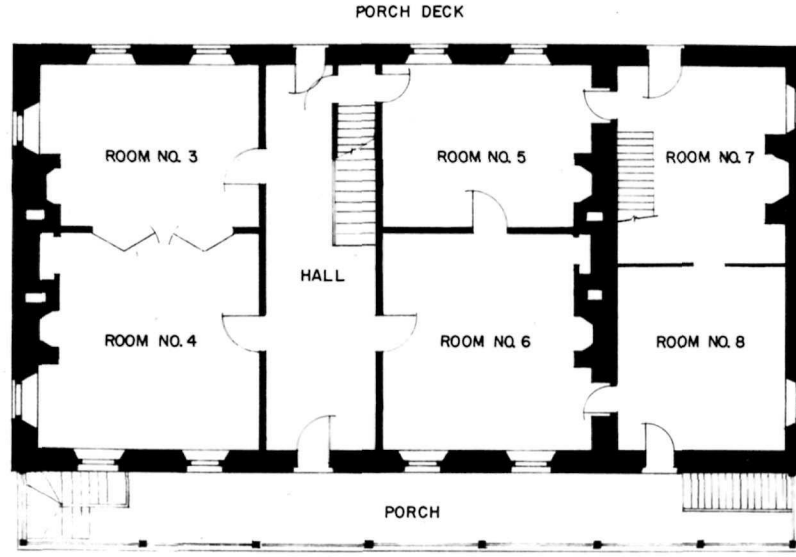
Floor Plans Showing 1833-34 Addition

The Stephensons were operating an inn on the upper floors of the original structure which they rented in 1830. By 1833 they had purchased the building probably because of an increase or prospects of an increase in business with the coming of the railroad and the C&O Canal. They enlarged the structure by adding on to the northeast end with one large room on the ground floor and two rooms on each of the two floors above. It is possible that the ground floor room served as a stable although it seems more likely that it was used for storage. At any rate it was never finished completely. Room #8, with access from the stair introduced on the extended porch, was probably the office. Room #7 with its large fireplace probably served as a kitchen. Room #6 may then have been used as a parlor or lobby with a dining room in Room #5. Rooms #3 and #4 were probably retained by the Stephensons.

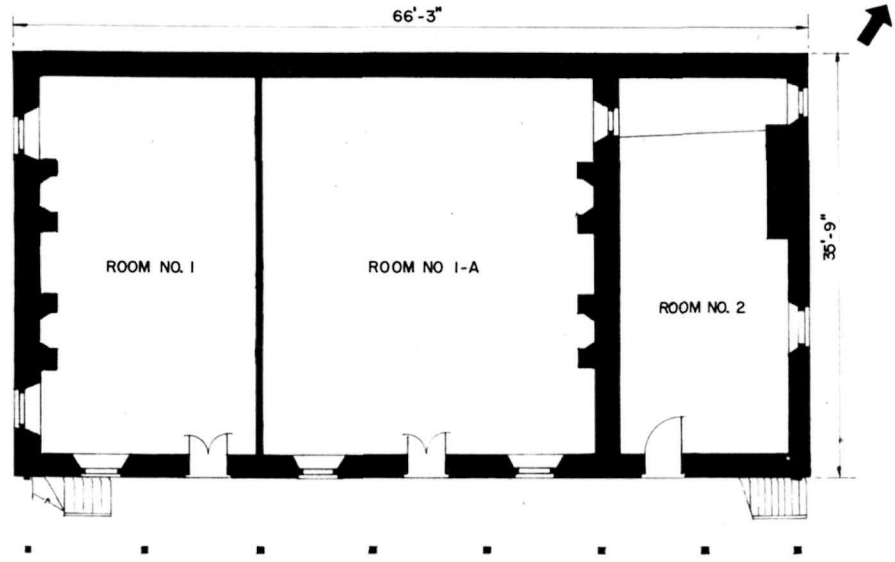
Drawing by writer



THIRD FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

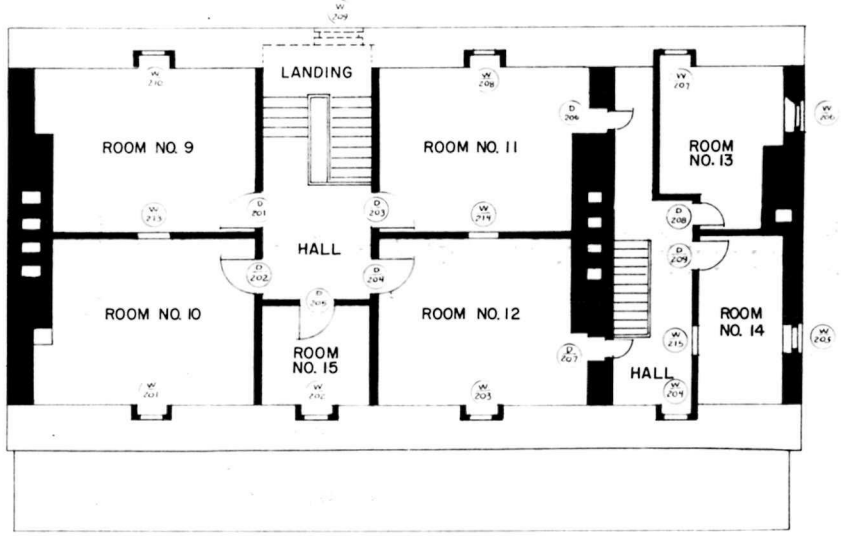
ADDITION BY MRS. ANN C. STEPHENSON (1833-1834)

SKETCH "B"

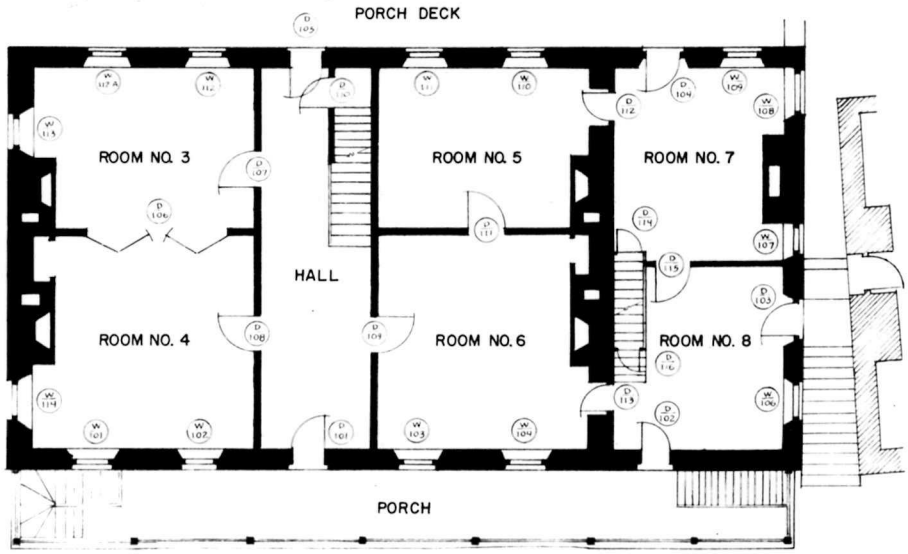
Floor Plans During Restoration Period

By this period the adjacent Philip Coons Building had been constructed and a stairway built in stages between the two structures. The Coons Building was built originally as a two story structure and because of its proximity it darkened the northeast rooms of the Wilson Building making it necessary to add Windows #107 and #109. At this time Door #103 was added taking advantage of the stairway that was built between the structures to serve the second floor of the Coons Building. Also at this time the stairs within the 1833-34 addition to the Wilson Building were relocated which in turn changed the layout of the attic floor rooms of the addition. In 1845-46 the third floor Masonic Hall was constructed over the Coons Building and the exterior stairs between the structures was extended to provide access to the Masonic Lodge room.

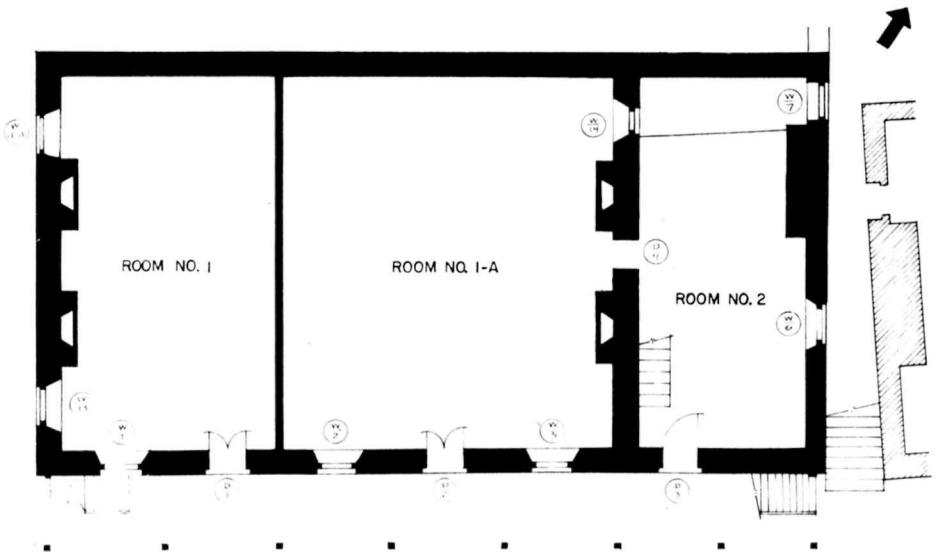
Drawing by writer



THIRD FLOOR PLAN



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

PHILIP COONS BUILDING

RESTORATION PERIOD (1859-1865)

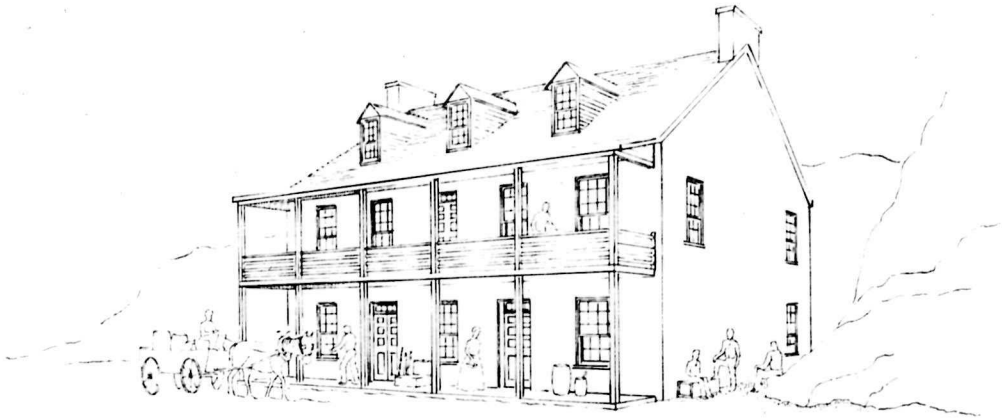
SKETCH "C"

Exterior Evolution of the Wilson Building

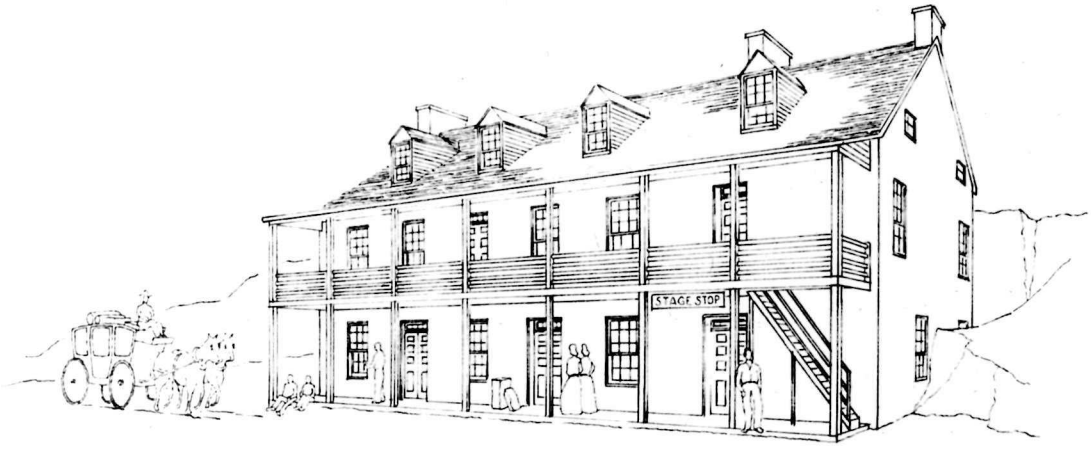
These perspectives were prepared to show the external conditions governing the growth of the structure. Before construction could be started it was necessary to remove a large rock outcropping occupying the site. This same problem was encountered when the 1833-34 addition was built and again when Philip Coons had the adjacent building erected. As can be seen in the middle sketch the northeast wall of the addition was actually built over a portion of rock outcropping and when the Coons Building site was prepared the natural rock was removed up to the northeast wall of the Wilson Building. This left a large section of natural rock in this wall that has slipped out of plumb and will need some remedial work.

The dormer cheeks were covered with clapboards

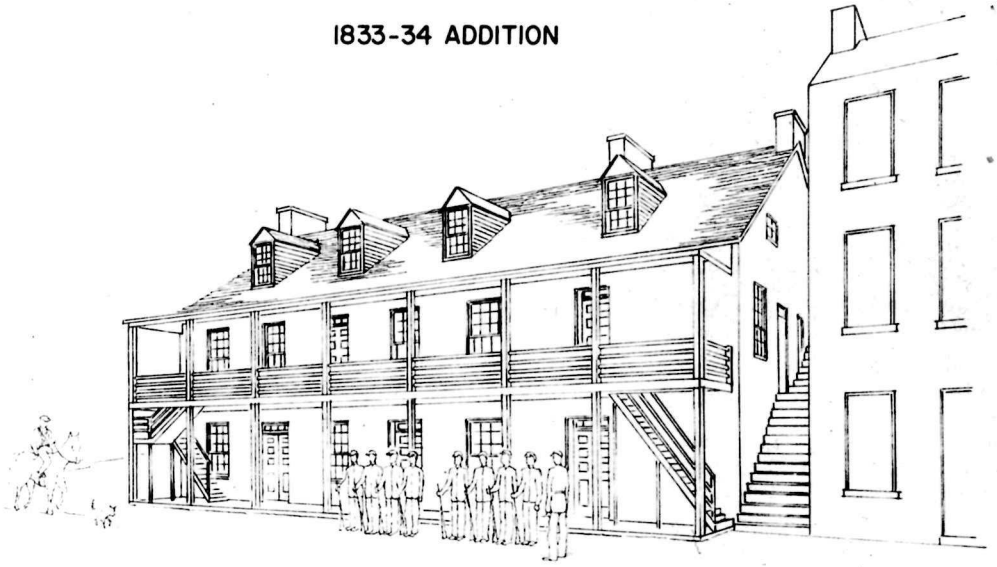
Drawing by writer



AS CONSTRUCTED IN 1826



1833-34 ADDITION



RESTORATION PERIOD 1859-65

SKETCH "E"

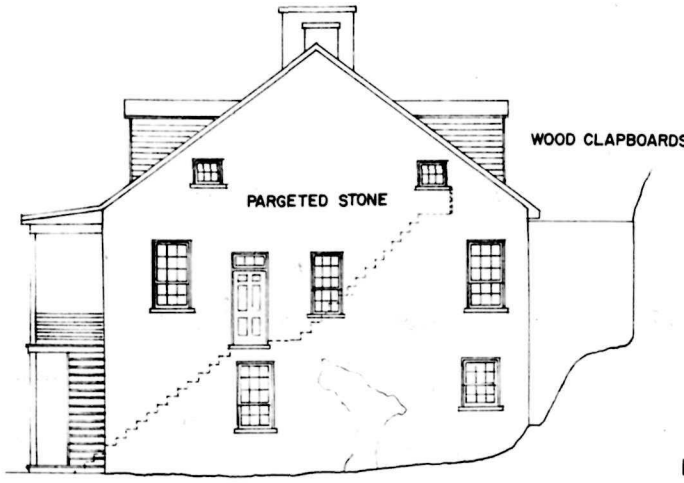
Sketches of Period Elevations

These views show the openings existing in the structure during the restoration period. The first illustration shows by dotted line the exterior stairway between the Coons and Wilson Buildings. The irregular area in the center of the wall near the grade line shows the extend of natural rock that is now a part of this wall.

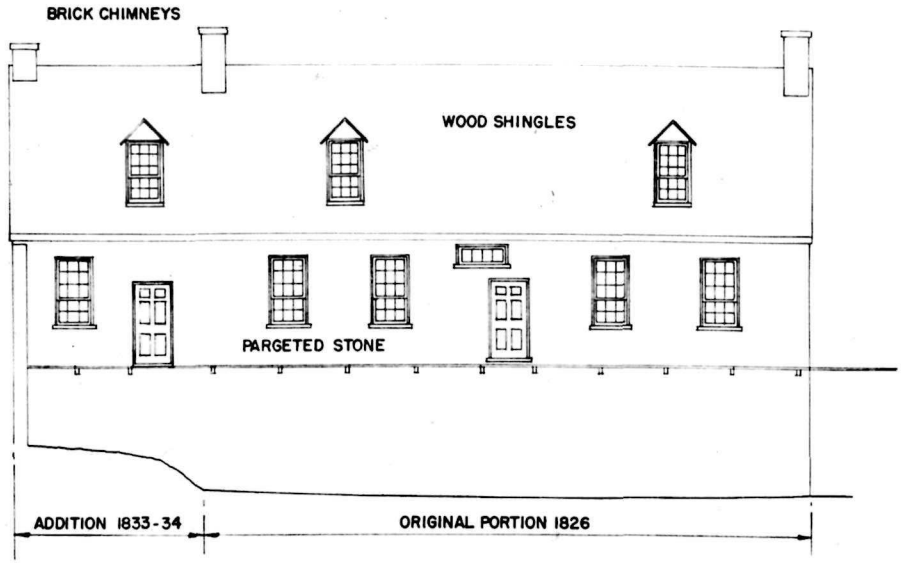
The second view shows the porch deck at the rear of the building, between it and the rock escarpment of the hillside. This porch was not covered.

The last view shows the proximity of the rock escarpment at the rear of the building.

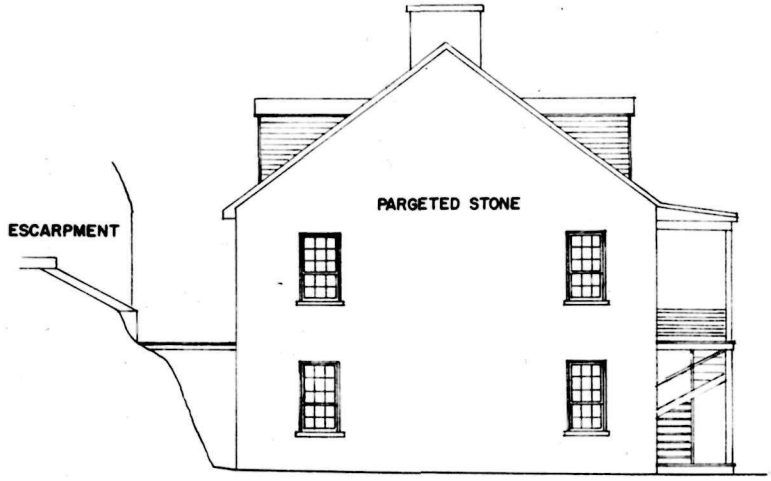
Drawing by writer



NORTHEAST ELEVATION



NORTHWEST ELEVATION



SOUTHWEST ELEVATION

RESTORATION PERIOD (1859-1865)

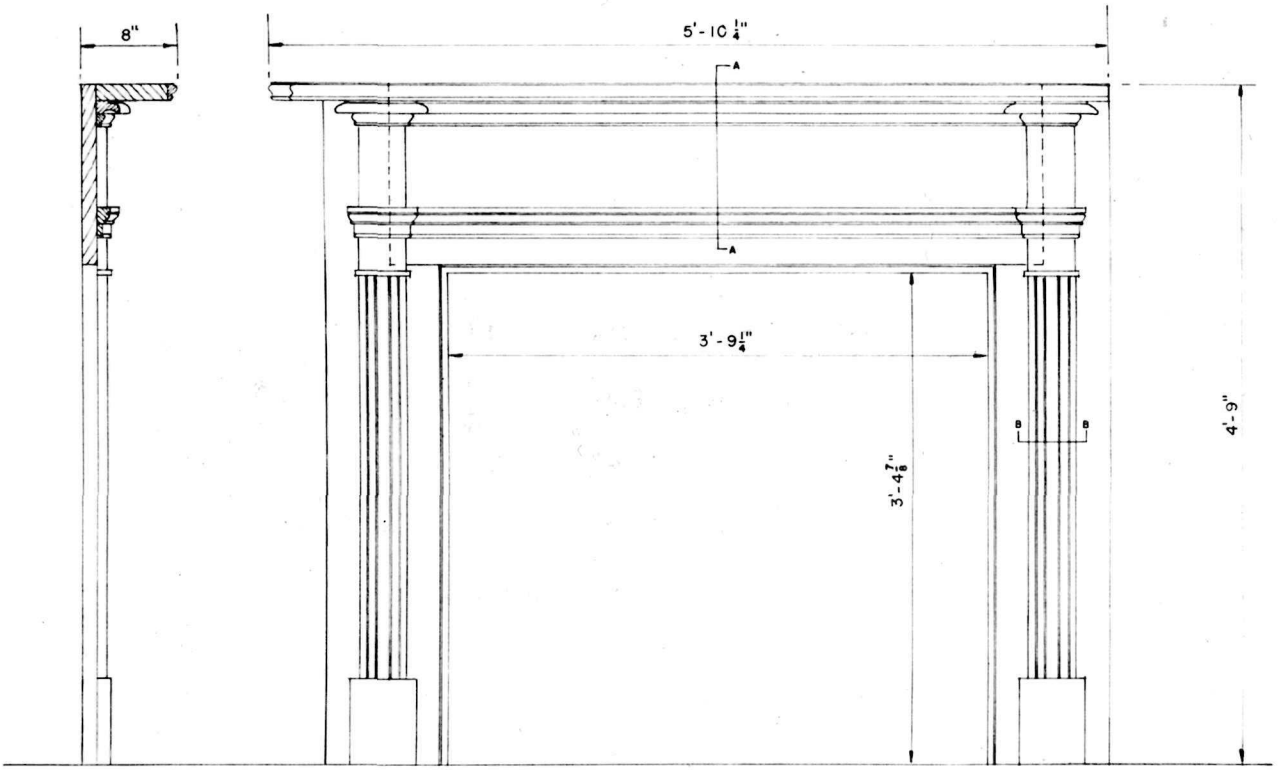
SKETCH "D"

APPENDIX III

Mantel Details

The following four sketches show the only remaining mantels in the building. They are included because they typify the treatment of mantels in the Harpers Ferry area. They are in good condition and will be easy to refurbish. The details show how they were assembled.

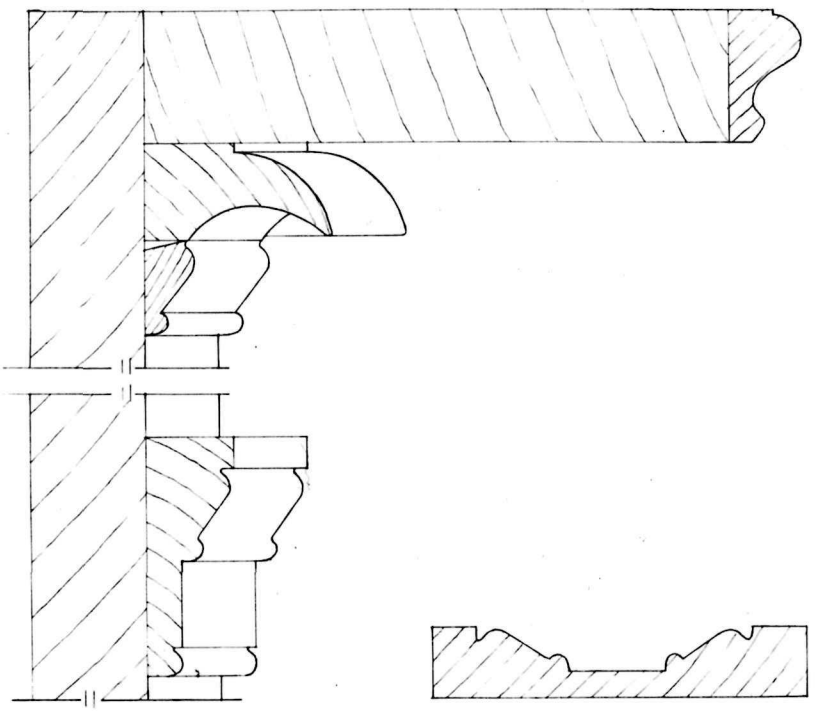
Drawing by writer



SECTION

ELEVATION

SCALE 3/4" = 1'-0"



SECTION "A"-"A"

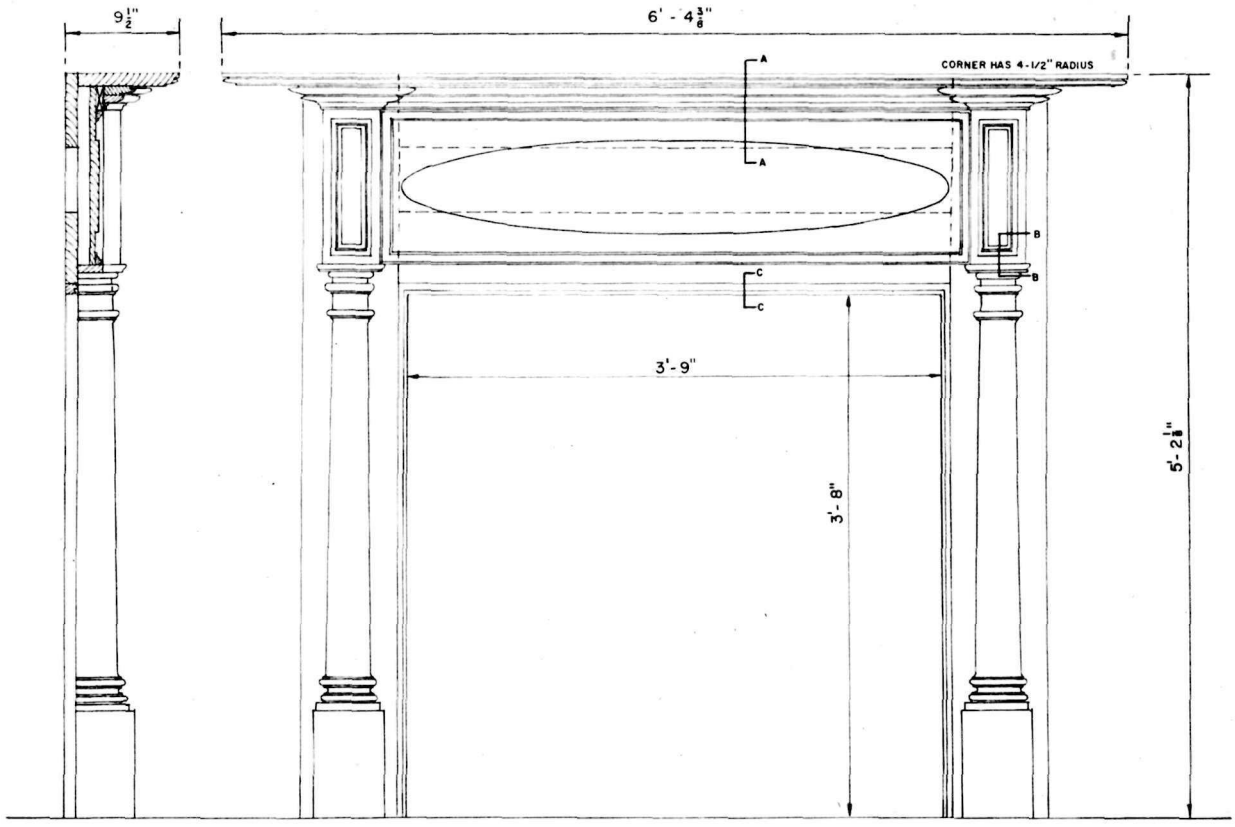
SECTION "B"-"B"

MOULDING PROFILES

HALF SIZE

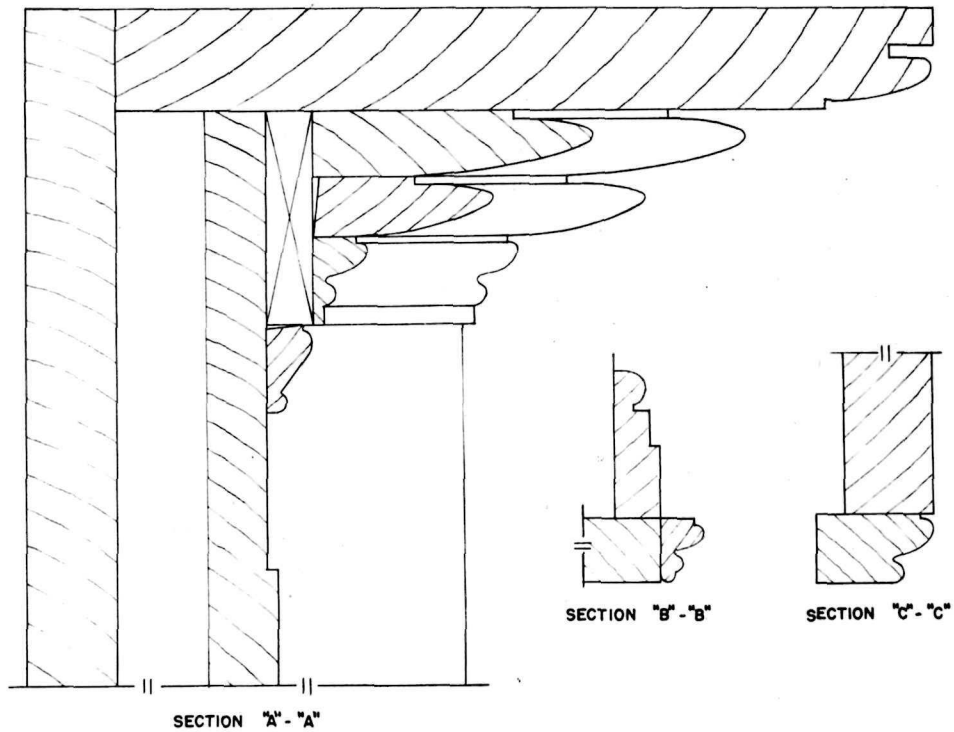
MANTEL IN ROOM NO. 3

SKETCH "F"



SECTION

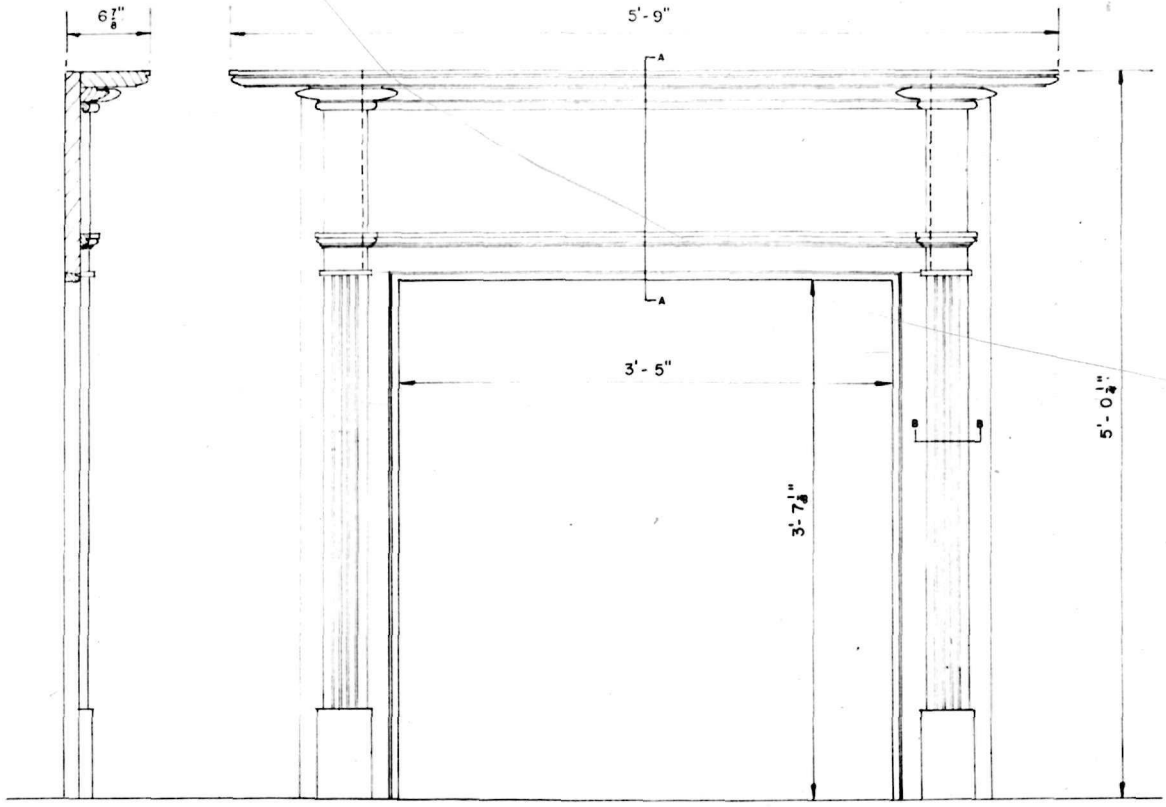
ELEVATION
SCALE 3/4" = 1'-0"



MOULDING PROFILES
HALF SIZE

MANTEL IN ROOM NO. 4

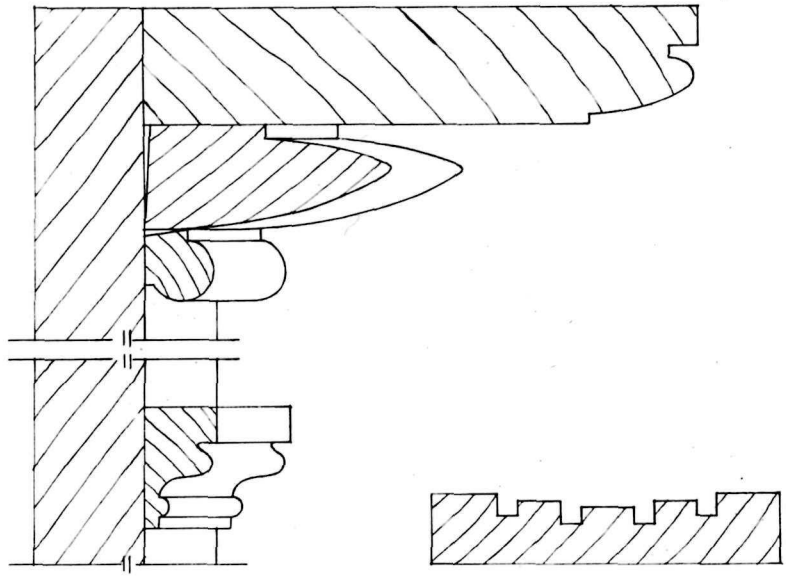
SKETCH "G"



SECTION

ELEVATION

SCALE 3/4" = 1'-0"



SECTION "A"-"A"

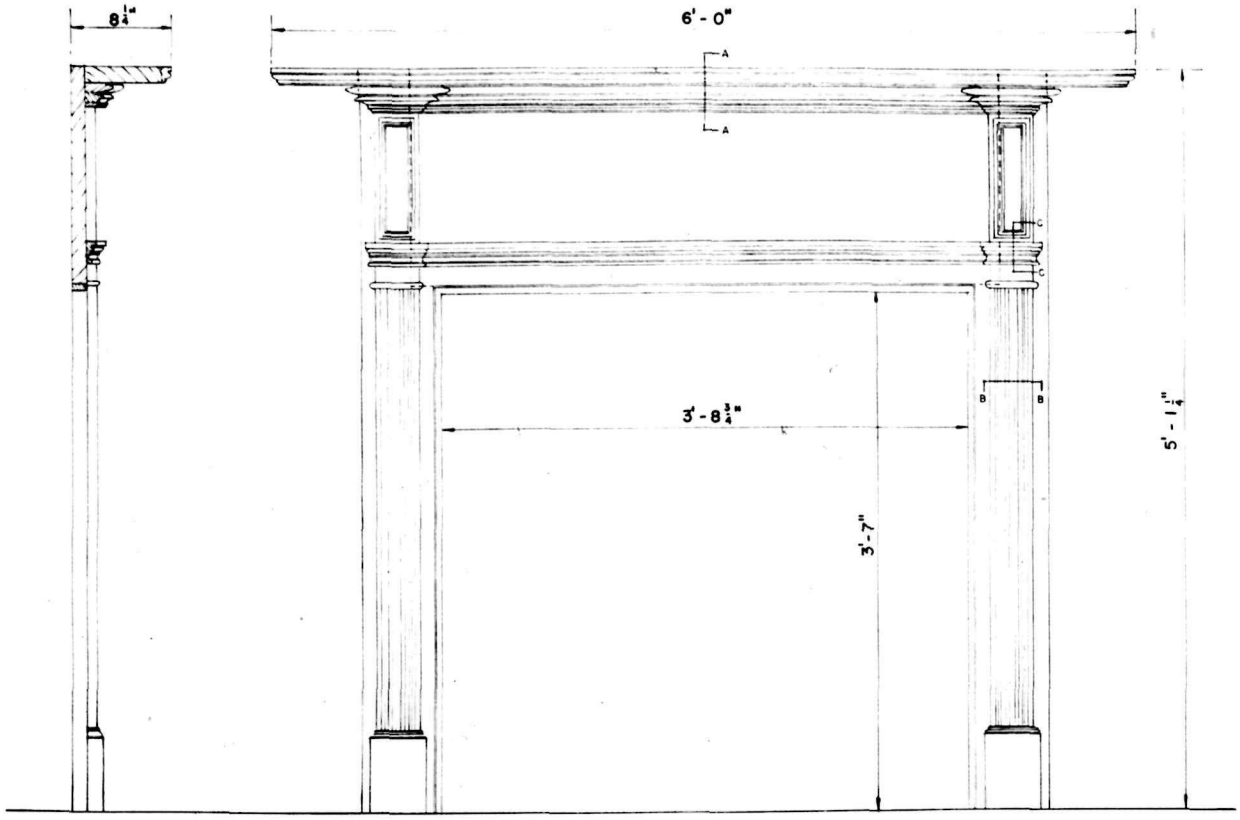
SECTION "B"-"B"

MOULDING PROFILES

HALF SIZE

MANTEL IN ROOM NO. 5

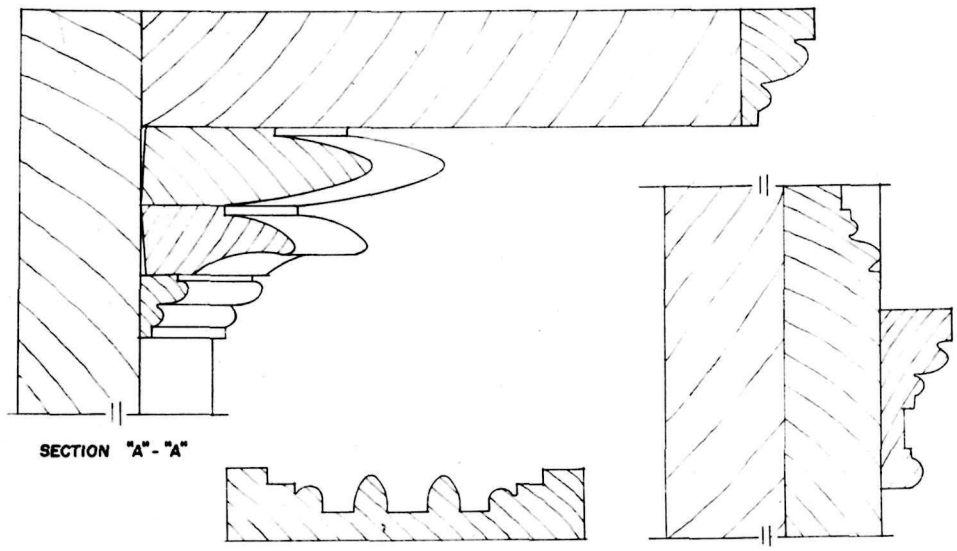
SKETCH "H"



SECTION

ELEVATION

SCALE 3/4" = 1'-0"



SECTION "A"-"A"

SECTION "B"-"B"

SECTION "C"-"C"

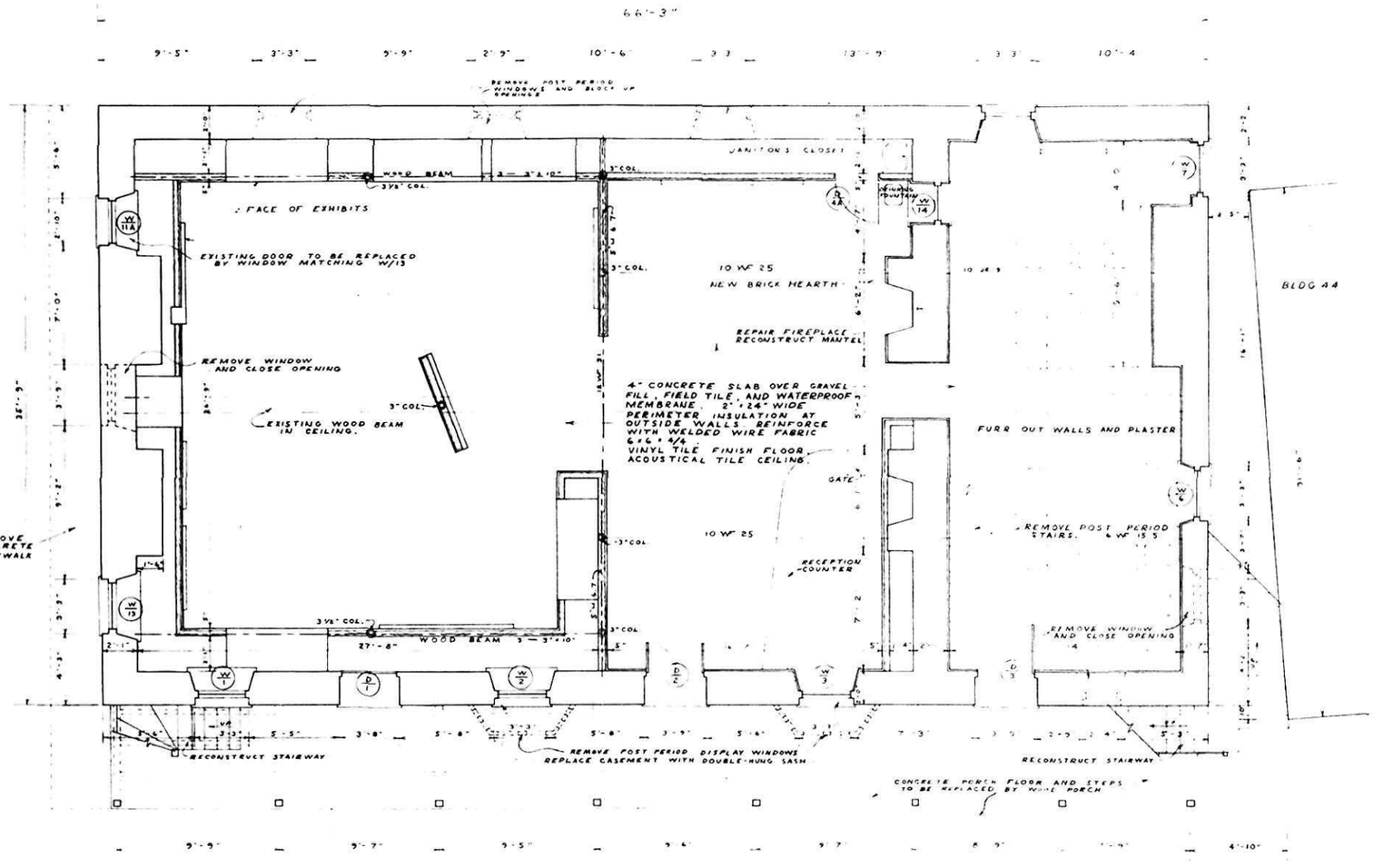
MOULDING PROFILES

HALF SIZE

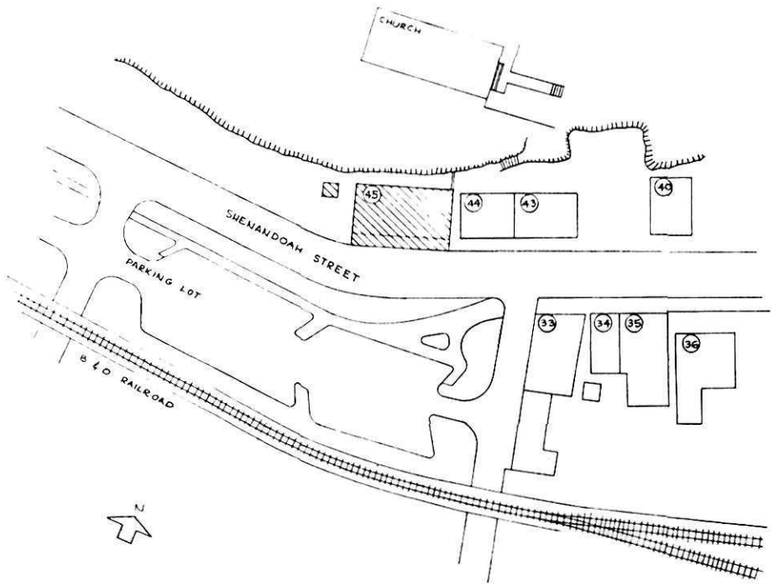
MANTEL IN ROOM NO. 6

SKETCH "1"

APPENDIX IV



First Floor Plan



Plot Plan
SCALE 1" = 50'

N

ORIENTATION

Preliminary

SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

MARK	DESCRIPTION OF REVISION	DATE	INITIAL

RECOMMENDED

DATE

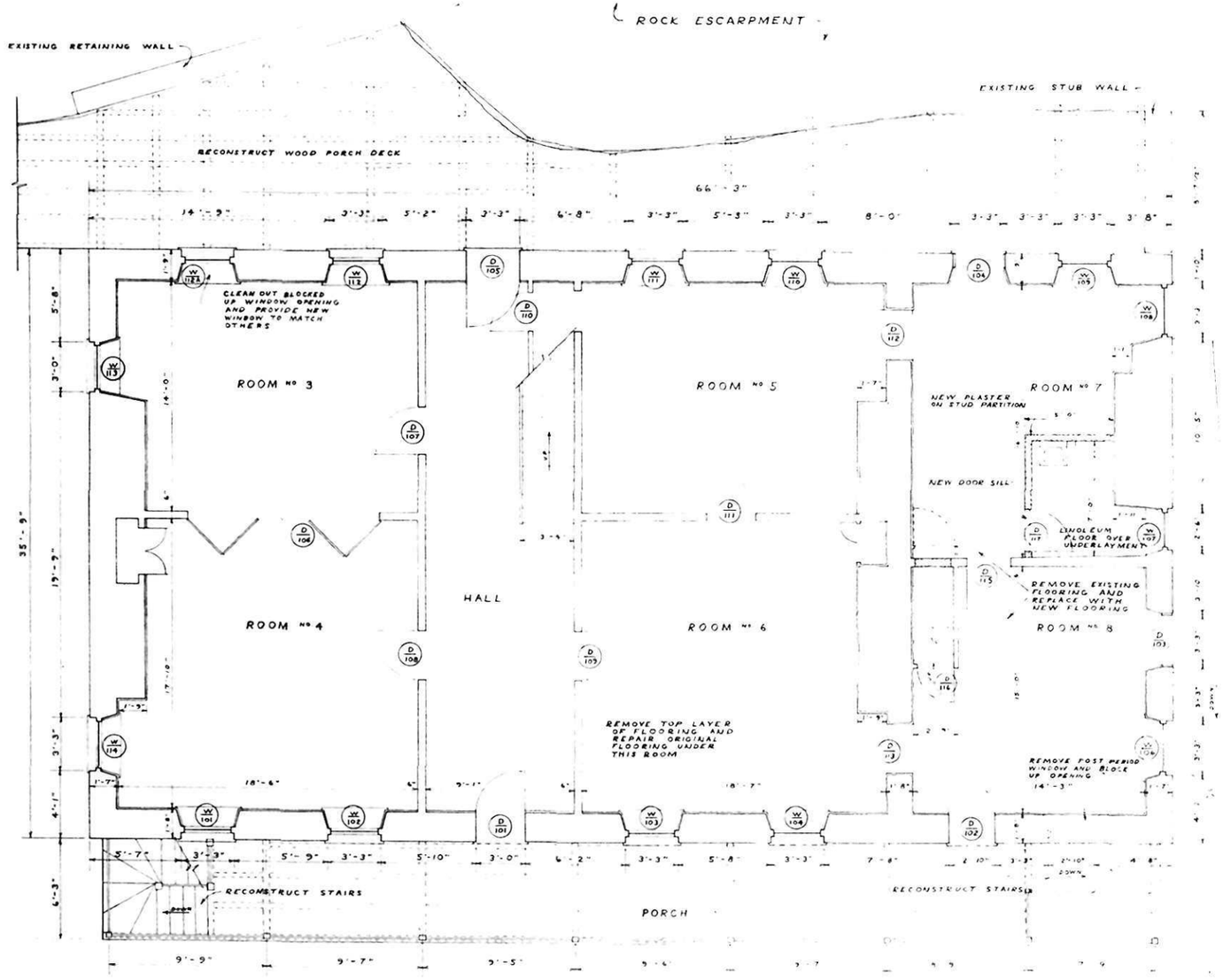
APPROVED

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DIVISION OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
PREPARED BY PARK OFFICE

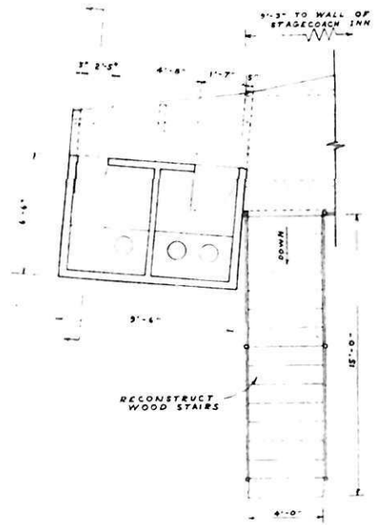
TITLE OF DRAWING: RESTORATION WORKING DRAWINGS — FIRST FLOOR PLAN
LOCATION WITHIN PARK: JOHN G WILSON BUILDING — DOWNTOWN AREA
NAME OF PARK: HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL MONUMENT

PREPARED	
DESIGNED	R MEHL
DRAWN	A.W. FRAUDEN
CHECKED	
3-28-62	R M
REVISED	
REGION	FIVE
DSC NO.	2-2.3
SHEET	/ OF
DRAWING NO.	NM:- HF 3171
DATE	1/8/62

BASIC DATA



SECOND FLOOR PLAN



PLAN OF PRIVY AND CONTINUATION OF PORCH

N

ORIENTATION

Preliminary

SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

MARK	DESCRIPTION OF REVISION	DATE	INITIAL

REVISED

RECOMMENDED

DATE

APPROVED

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DIVISION OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
PREPARED BY PARK OFFICE

RESTORATION WORKING DRAWINGS — SECOND FLOOR
TITLE OF DRAWING
JOHN G. WILSON BUILDING — DOWNTOWN AREA
LOCATION WITHIN PARK
HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL MONUMENT
NAME OF PARK

PREPARED

DESIGNED	DRAWN	CHECKED	
R. MEHL	A.M. FRANKEN		
3-28-62		R.M.	

REGION FIVE

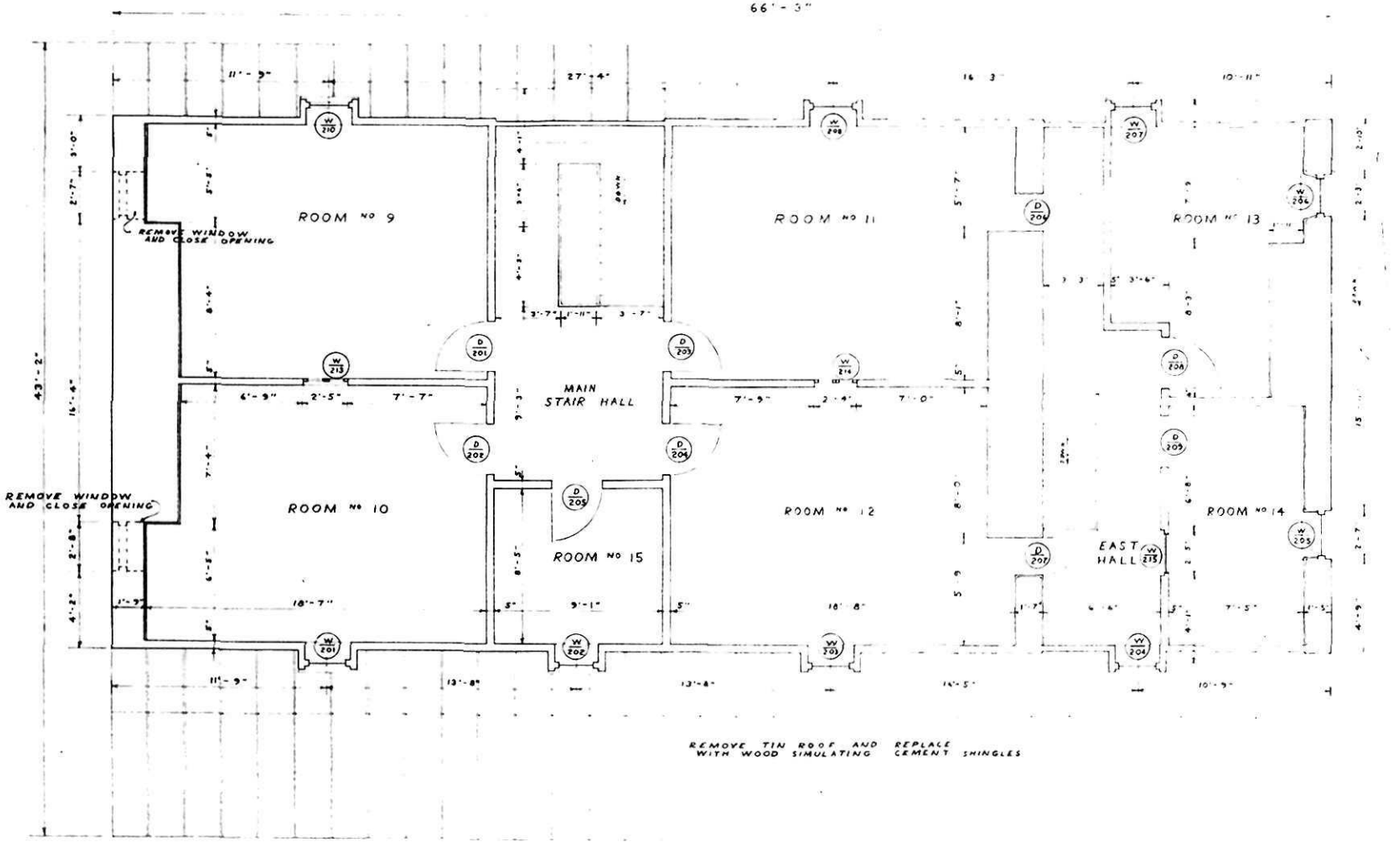
PCP NO. 8-7-3

SHEET 2 OF

DRAWING NO. NM-HF 3171

DATE 1-8-62

BASIC DATA



THIRD FLOOR PLAN

Preliminary

BASIC DATA

SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

RECOMMENDED ____ DATE

APPROVED ____

MARK	DESCRIPTION OF REVISION	DATE	INITIAL

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DIVISION OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
PREPARED BY PARK OFFICE

RESTORATION WORKING DRAWING — THIRD FLOOR PLAN
TITLE OF DRAWING
JOHN G WILSON BUILDING — DOWNTOWN AREA
LOCATION WITHIN PARK
HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL MONUMENT
NAME OF PARK

ORIENTATION

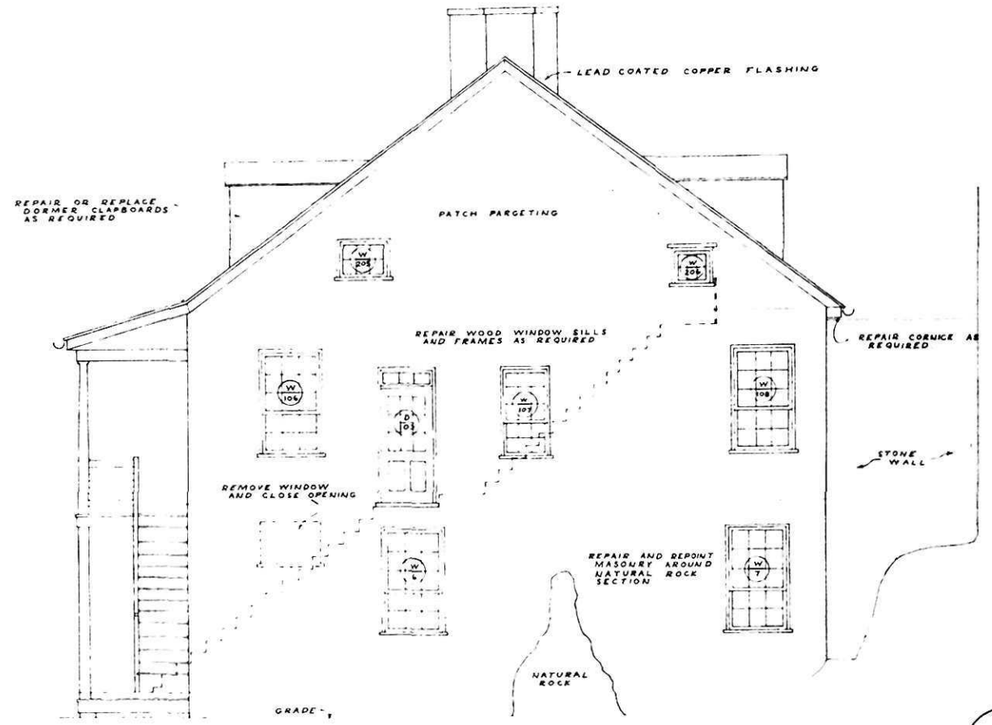
PREPARED
DESIGNED R MEHL
DRAWN A.W. FRANKEN
CHECKED
5-28-62 R M

REVISED
DATE INITIAL

REGION FIVE
PCR NO. 8-7-3
SHEET 3 OF
DRAWING NO. NM-HF 317
DATE 1-18-62



SOUTHEAST ELEVATION (FACING SHENANDOAH STREET)



NORTHEAST ELEVATION

Preliminary

BASIC DATA

ORIENTATION

PREPARED

DESIGNED	
R MEHL	
DRAWN	
R.M. FRANSEN	
CHECKED	
3-28-62	R.M.

MARK	DESCRIPTION OF REVISION	DATE	INITIAL

REVISED

SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

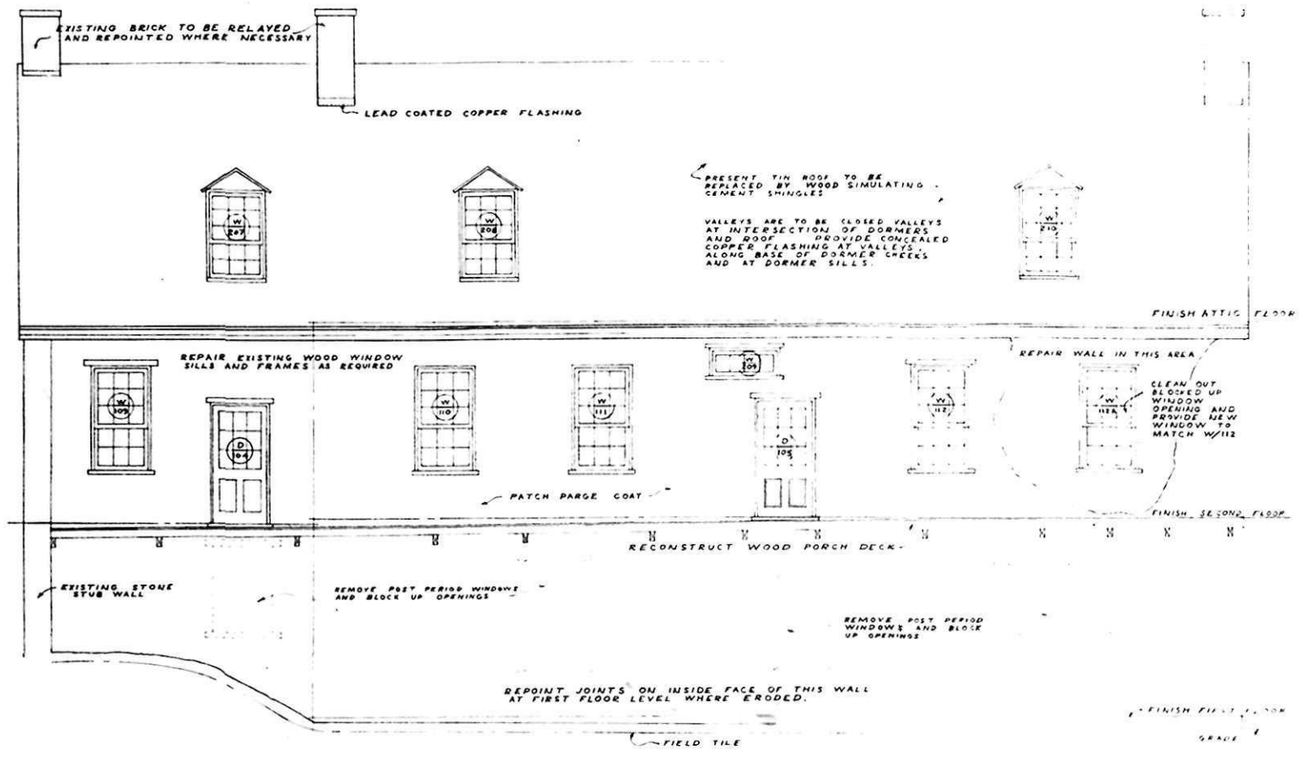
RECOMMENDED ____ DATE

APPROVED ____

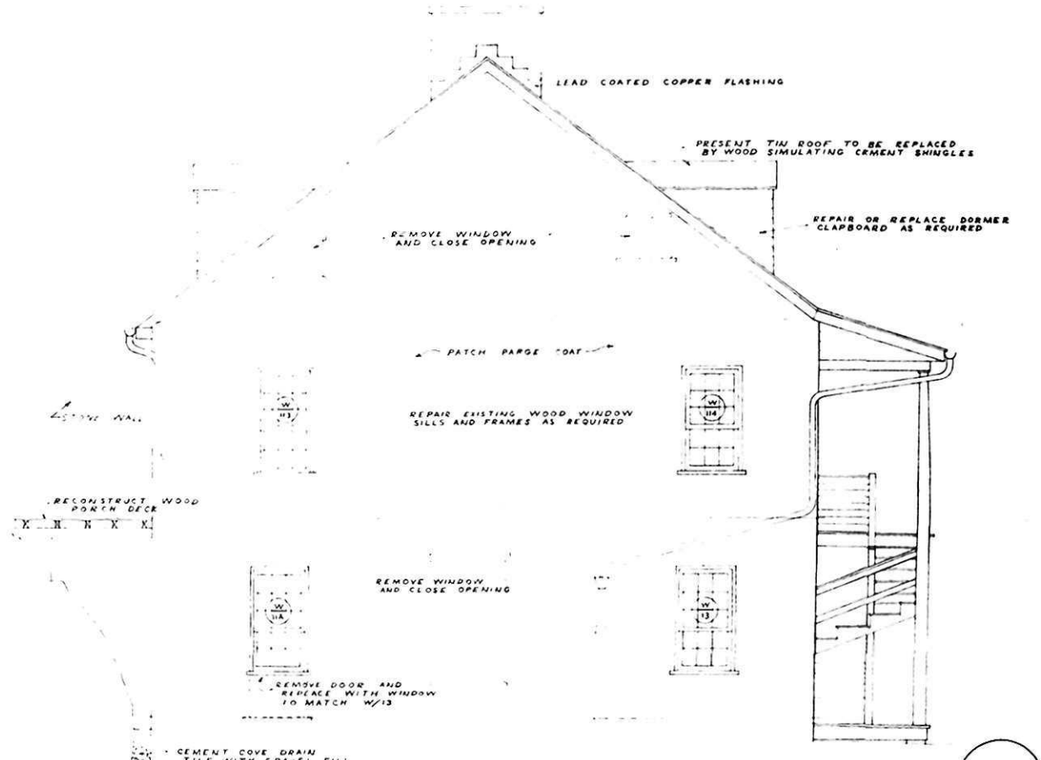
UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DIVISION OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
PREPARED BY PARK OFFICE

RESTORATION WORKING DRAWINGS - ELEVATIONS
TITLE OF DRAWING
JOHN D WILSON BUILDING - DOWNTOWN AREA
LOCATION WITHIN PARK
HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL MONUMENT
NAME OF PARK

REGION FIVE
PCP NO. B-7-3
SHEET 4 OF
DRAWING NO. NM-HF 31.1
DATE 12/22/61



NORTHWEST ELEVATION



SOUTHWEST ELEVATION

BASIC DATA

Preliminary

SCALE 1/4

MARK	DESCRIPTION OF REVISION	DATE	INITIAL

RECOMMENDED

DATE

APPROVED

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DIVISION OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
PREPARED BY
PARK OFFICE

RESTORATION WORKING DRAWINGS — ELEVATIONS
TITLE OF DRAWING
JOHN S. WILSON BUILDING — DOWNTOWN AREA
LOCATION WITHIN PARK
HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL MONUMENT
NAME OF PARK

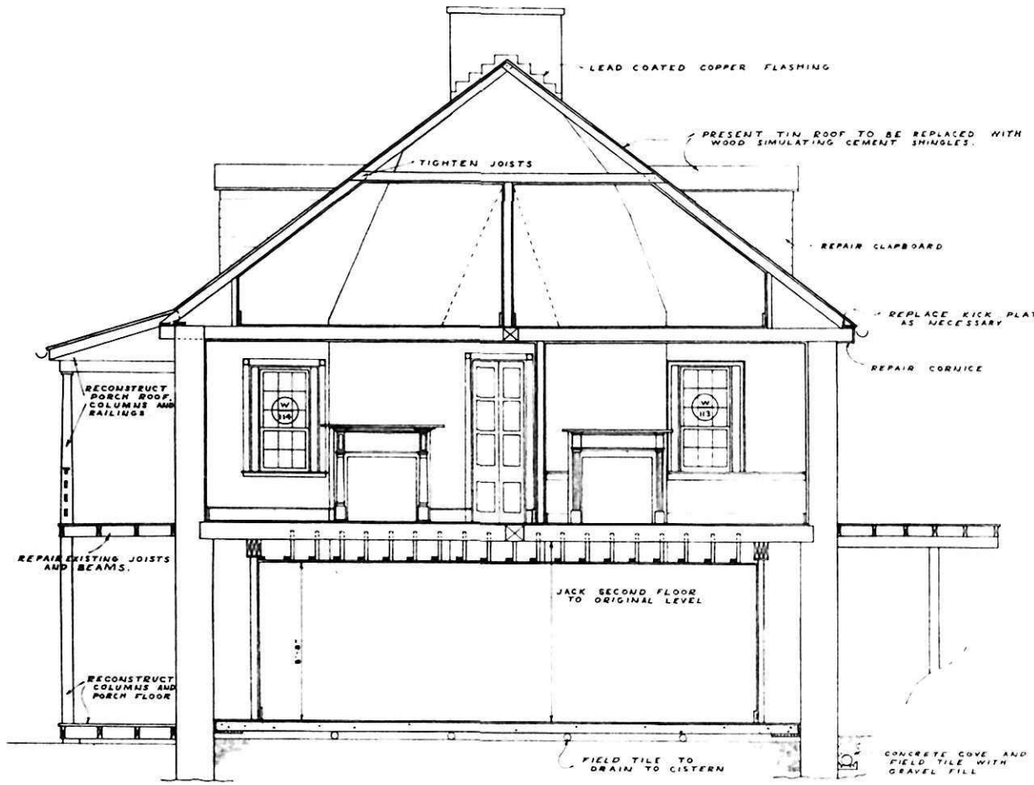
ORIENTATION

PREPARED

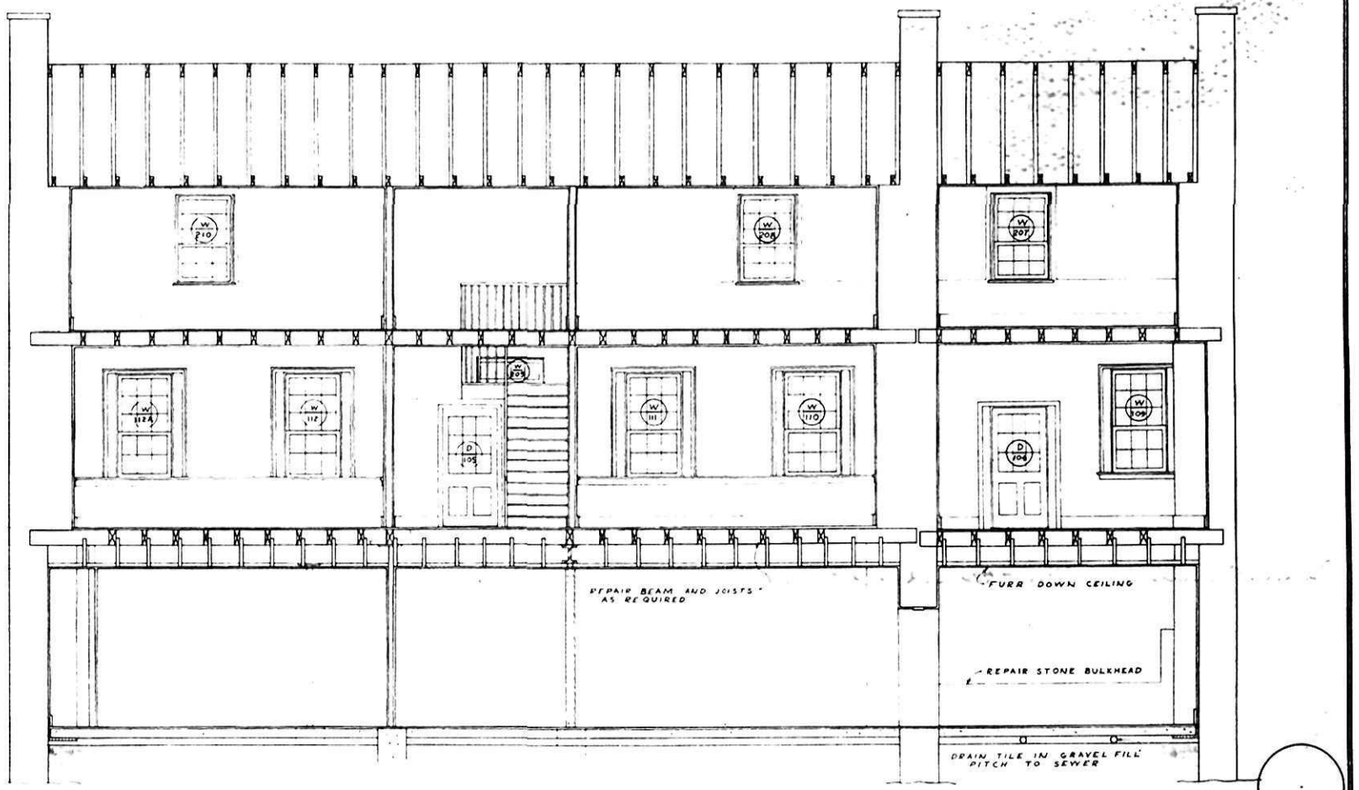
DESIGNED
R. MEHL
DRAWN
R.W. FRANZEN
CHECKED
3-28-62 R.M.

REVISED

REGION
FIVE
PCR NO.
57-3
SHEET 5 OF
DRAWING NO.
NM-HF
3171
DATE 12-22-61



CROSS SECTION



TRANSVERSE SECTION

ORIENTATION

PREPARED

DESIGNED R. MEHL
DRAWN A.M.L. BRAUEN
CHECKED 3-28-62 R.M.

Preliminary

SCALE 1/4" = 1'-0"

MARK	DESCRIPTION OF REVISION	DATE	INITIAL

REVISED

RECOMMENDED

DATE

APPROVED

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DIVISION OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
PREPARED BY PARK OFFICE

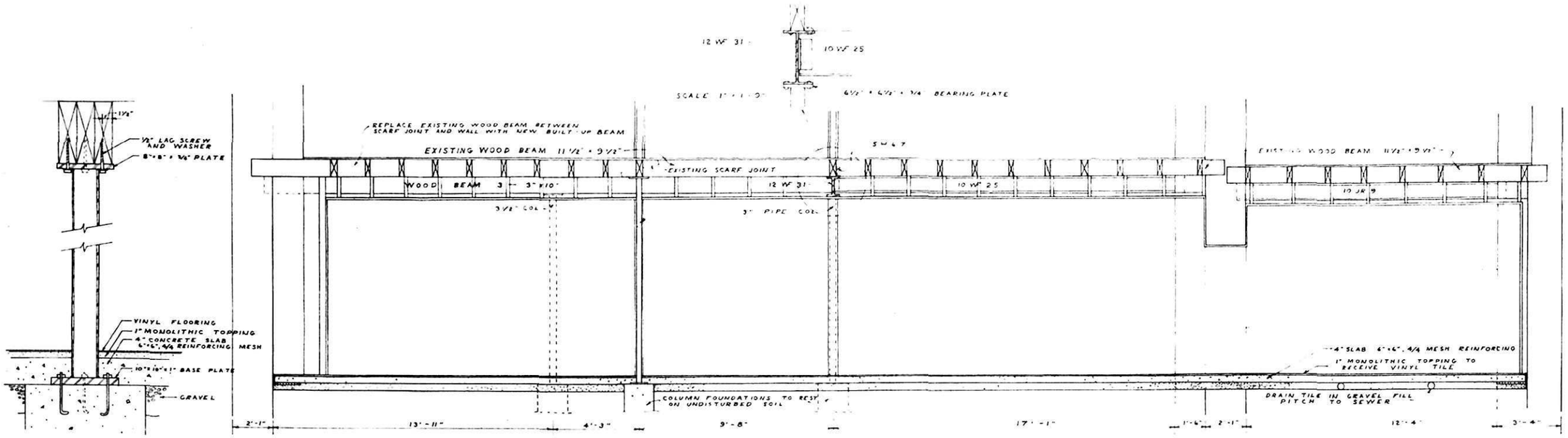
RESTORATION WORKING DRAWINGS — SECTIONS
TITLE OF DRAWING

JOHN G. WILSON BUILDING — DOWNTOWN AREA
LOCATION WITHIN PARK

HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL MONUMENT
NAME OF PARK

REGION FIVE
PCP NO. 8-7-3
SHEET 6 OF
DRAWING NO. NM-HF 3171
DATE 1-18-62

BASIC DATA

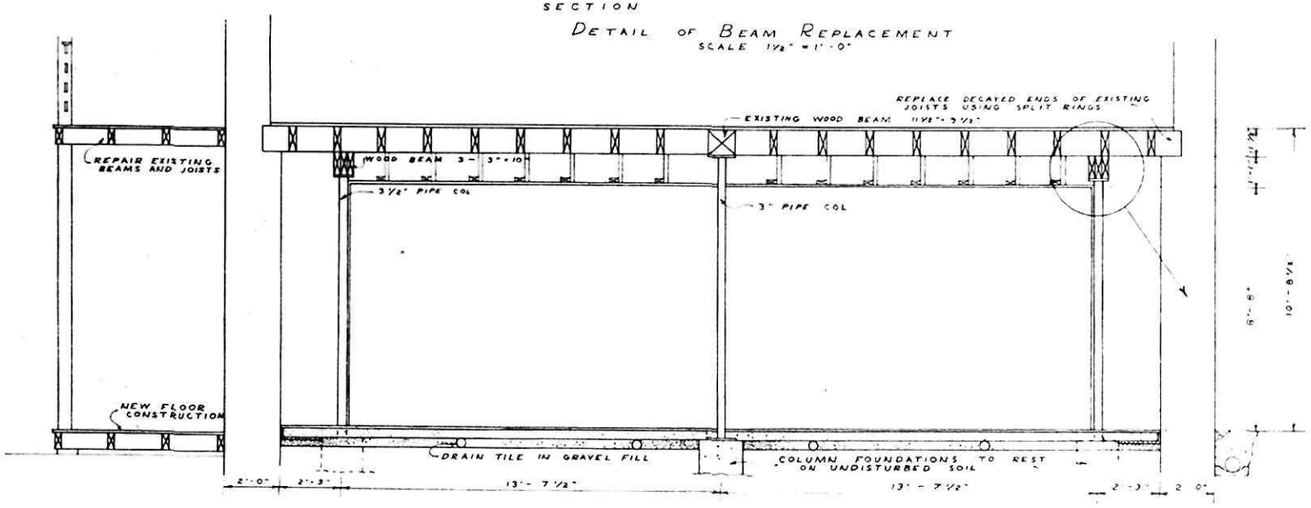


TYPICAL COLUMN DETAIL
SCALE 1½" = 1'-0"

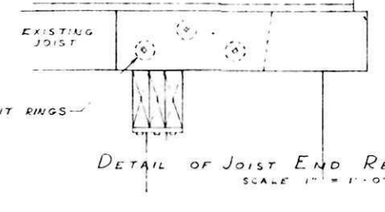
SECTION "A"-"A"
SCALE 3/8" = 1'-0"



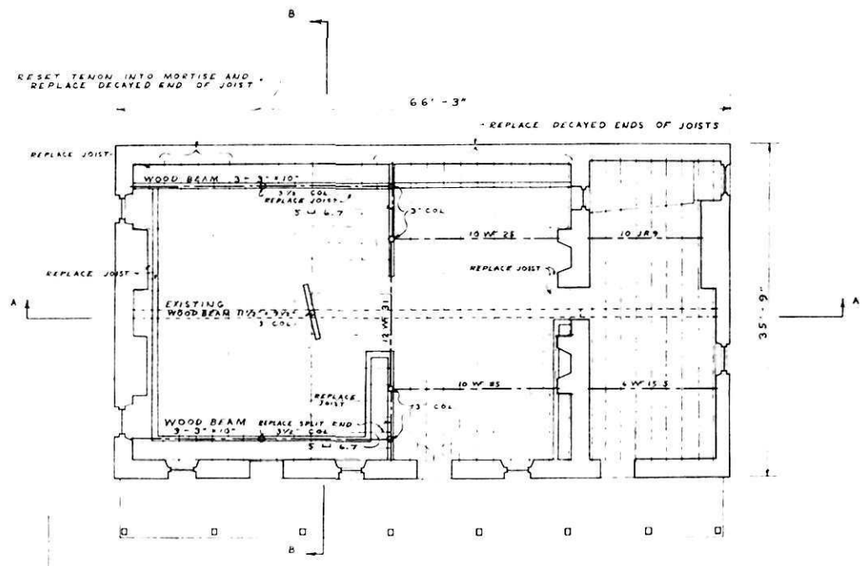
DETAIL OF BEAM REPLACEMENT
SCALE 1½" = 1'-0"



SECTION "B"-"B"
SCALE 3/8" = 1'-0"



DETAIL OF JOIST END REPLACEMENTS
SCALE 1" = 1'-0"



FIRST FLOOR PLAN (SHOWING SECOND FLOOR FRAMING)
SCALE 1/8" = 1'-0"

Preliminary

N

ORIENTATION

PREPARED

DESIGNED R MEHL
DRAWN R.W. FRANSEN
CHECKED
3-28-62 R.M.

MARK	DESCRIPTION OF REVISION	DATE	INITIAL

REVISED

SCALE AS NOTED

RECOMMENDED ____ DATE

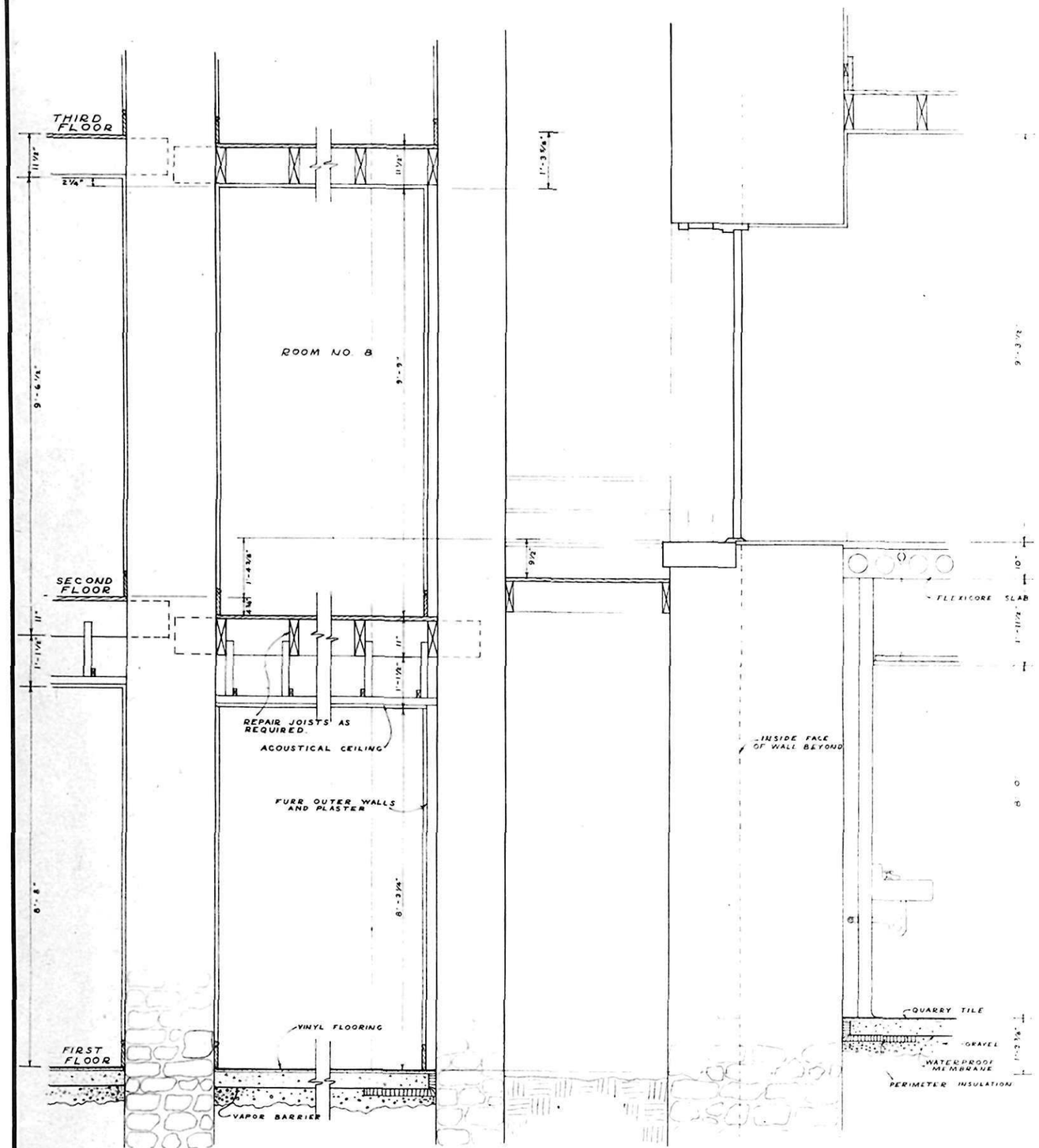
APPROVED ____

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DIVISION OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
PREPARED BY PARK OFFICE

RESTORATION WORKING DRAWINGS — STRUCTURAL
TITLE OF DRAWING
JOHN G WILSON BUILDING — DOWNTOWN AREA
LOCATION WITHIN PARK
HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL MONUMENT
NAME OF PARK

REGION FIVE
PCE NO. 8-7-3
SHEET 7 OF
DRAWING NO. NM 1-HF 3171
DATE 2-7-62

BASIC DATA



BASIC DATA

Preliminary

ORIENTATION

PREPARED		
DESIGNED	R. MEHL	
DRAWN	A.W. FRANZEN	
CHECKED	3-28-62	R.M.

MARK	DESCRIPTION OF REVISION	DATE	INITIAL

REVISED

SCALE 3/4" = 1'-0"

RECOMMENDED

DATE

APPROVED

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
DIVISION OF DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
PREPARED BY
PARK OFFICE

RESTORATION WORKING DRAWINGS — SECTIONS
TITLE OF DRAWING

JOHN G. WILSON BUILDING — DOWNTOWN AREA
LOCATION WITHIN PARK

HARPERS FERRY NATIONAL MONUMENT
NAME OF PARK

REGION FIVE

PCR NO. D-3

SHEET 8 OF

DRAWING NO. NM-HF 3171

DATE 3-20-62