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Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site
Hyde Park, New York



Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site Historic Structure Report

Volume I: Executive Summary, History, and Record of Treatment
October 2018

Figure 1. Photograph of the Vanderbilt Mansion under construction by John B. Clermont, Norcross Brothers' superintendent of construction. ROVA Archives.

VANDERBILT MANSION NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE
HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT

VOLUME I
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY,
HISTORY & RECORD OF TREATMENT

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and the

NORTHEAST REGIONAL OFFICE

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CONTENTS

VOLUME I: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY, HISTORY & RECORD OF TREATMENT

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS	vii
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	x
ADMINISTRATIVE DATA	xxiv
HISTORY	1
BACKGROUND HISTORY	1
The Vanderbilt Family as Builders	1
Frederick and Louise Vanderbilt at Hyde Park	3
The Design of Vanderbilt Mansion.....	6
Construction of the Vanderbilt Mansion.....	18
VANDERBILT MANSION HISTORY, 1899-2018	27
The Completion of the Mansion and Its Interior Finishes, 1899.....	27
Repairs and Changes at the Turn of the Century, 1899-1904.....	29
A Major Redesign, 1905-1906.....	30
Repairs and Alterations, 1908-1915	34
Repairs and Renovations, 1925-1936	35
Margaret Van Alen Inherits the Estate, 1938-1939	37
The National Park Service's Initial Investigations, 1939-1940	37
Wartime Repairs and Improvements, 1941-1946	42
Roofing Problems and Repairs, 1941-1942	48
Death of the President and Post-War Projects, 1945-1952	53
The 1950s and 1960s.....	61
The 1970s	67
The 1980s and 1990s	70
The 2000s	75
RECORD OF TREATMENT	77
REHABILITATE FAILED VANDERBILT MANSION ROOF: PMIS 14806	78
COMPLETE THE EXTERIOR RESTORATION OF THE VANDERBILT MANSION	88
Complete the Exterior Restoration of the Vanderbilt Mansion: PMIS 152373.....	95
Rehabilitate Vanderbilt Mansion Foundation and Support Walls: PMIS 161264	105
BIBLIOGRAPHY	114

**VOLUME II: INTRODUCTION TO PHYSICAL INVESTIGATION
& EXTERIOR, SUB-BASEMENT, BASEMENT**

VOLUME III: FIRST FLOOR

VOLUME IV: SECOND FLOOR

VOLUME V: THIRD FLOOR & ATTIC

VOLUME VI: APPENDICES A-E

Appendix A - Measured Drawings (John G. Waite Associates, Architects)

Appendix B - Mechanical, Electrical, and Plumbing Systems Report (Kohler Ronan)

Appendix C - Limited Interior Finish Color Investigation (Jablonski Building Conservation)

Appendix D - Interior Paint Samples (Albee)

Appendix E - McKim, Mead & White Drawings

**VOLUME VII: APPENDIX F - RECORD OF TREATMENT DOCUMENTS
REHABILITATE FAILED VANDERBILT MANSION ROOF: PMIS 14806**

**VOLUME VIII: APPENDIX G - RECORD OF TREATMENT DOCUMENTS
COMPLETE THE EXTERIOR RESTORATION OF THE VANDERBILT MANSION:
PMIS 152373**

**VOLUME IX: APPENDIX H - RECORD OF TREATMENT DOCUMENTS
REHABILITATE VANDERBILT MANSION FOUNDATION AND SUPPORT WALLS:
PMIS 161264**

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. Photograph of the Vanderbilt Mansion under construction by John B. Clermont, Norcross Brothers' superintendent of construction. ROVA Archives.....	Cover
Figure 2. (Left to right) Frederick Vanderbilt, his sister Lila Webb, her son William Seward Webb, and Louise Vanderbilt. Shelburne Farms Archives, Shelburne, Vermont.....	4
Figure 3. William Mead (left), Charles McKim (center), and Stanford White (right). www.britannica.com	5
Figure 4. The west facade of the Langdon mansion (upper image); and McKim, Mead & White's rendering of the proposed east facade of the renovated mansion (lower image). ROVA Archives.....	7
Figure 5. (Upper image) The basement under construction, circa 1896-97, from John B. Clermont, Norcross Brothers' superintendent of construction at the Vanderbilt Mansion. (Lower image) Clermont's construction photograph from the northwest. Note uncarved pilaster capitals. ROVA Archives.....	21
Figure 6. (Upper image) Clermont's construction photograph from the southeast. (Lower image) Clermont's construction photograph from the northeast. Note the column capital, carved and ready to be installed. ROVA Archives.	22
Figure 7. Clermont's construction photographs from the northeast (above) and of the west portico (left). ROVA Archives.	23
Figure 8. View from the northwest, circa 1899, soon after completion. Harry W. Desmond and Herbert D. Croly, <i>Stately Homes in America</i> (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1903), 239.....	31
Figure 9. This undated view of the west elevation of the mansion shows the porch furniture and marble urns in place. Note that there are no railings between the columns of the west portico. ROVA Archives.....	31
Figure 10. An early view of the occupied mansion. Wurts Brothers Photographers, printed from original glass plate negative, McKim, Mead & White Architectural Record Collection, PR 42, Box 67, Department of Prints, Photographs, and Architectural Collections, The New-York Historical Society, photographic copy in park archives.....	32
Figure 11. The south portico while the Vanderbilts were in residence. Palms and Trees are placed between the columns. Wurts Brothers Photographers, printed from original glass plate negative, McKim, Mead & White Architectural Record Collection, PR 42, Box 67, Department of Prints, Photographs, and Architectural Collections, The New-York Historical Society, photographic copy in park archives.....	32
Figure 12. Roof demolition, September 8, 2009: original copper sheeting (upper left); removal of copper sheeting in progress (center); sweeping loose and excess materials on surface of exposed concrete roof deck (lower left). PBS&J.	81
Figure 13. The drill down holes caused spalled areas on underside of roof deck in the attic (upper image); tying rebar into position at the southwest corner deck repair area (center image); and the plywood, densedeck and base sheet layers (bottom image). PBS&J, 2009-2010.....	81
Figure 14. Base sheet installation looking northeast (upper image); cap sheet installation (center image); and the roof in 2017. PBS&J 2009, JGWA 2017.....	82
Figure 15. Skylight removal: preparing a small skylight hatch for installing temporary cover (upper image); removing skylight pane covers and caulking (center image); and skylight frame lowered using a hydraulic crane (bottom image). PBS&J, 2009.....	83
Figure 16. Skylight work: square skylight frames repaired and historic vent caps repaired and installed (upper image); skylights under repair (lower image). PBS&J, 2009.....	83
Figure 17. Lead-covered caulking joints on cap stones along east side of mansion parapet (left);and masonry joints and caulking/lead tee joints along exterior parapet at west side of roof perimeter (right). PBS&J, 2009.....	84
Figure 18. Core drilling to check the composition and stability of the original concrete roof deck, August 18, 2009: measuring the depth of the first core drill hole (upper image); and close up of concrete core from the first core drill hole (lower image). PBS&J.....	86
Figure 19. The entire exterior was surveyed in the fall of 2010, using a sixty-five foot lift.	89
Figure 20. One of the primary issues with the stone was staining from several types of biological growth. JGWA, 2010.....	90
Figure 21. Stone deterioration was also attributed to gypsum crust. On the left, the window lintel is stained with biological growth and damaged by gypsum crust; below, gypsum crust has developed on one of the modillions. JGWA, 2010.....	90

Figure 22. (Upper image) The original mortar joints are very thin; the original workmanship was meticulous and difficult to replicate. (Lower image) Repointed mortar joints on the balustrade did not match the original. JGWA, 2010.	91
Figure 23. The corner stones in the north and south portico cornices were displaced and rotating out. JGWA, 2010.	91
Figure 24. Porticos: The Joliet stone paving on the west portico was chipped and spalled, and the surface was uneven (upper left). Concrete patches did not match the stone. Removal of the stone revealed that the structural steel and concrete support slab were severely damaged (center image). Removal of the paving revealed the original 1899 structural system (lower left); saddles hung on the primary beams supported double-tee shaped bars. The two photos to the right show the severely rusted steel framing of the west portico slab. JGWA, 2010-2015.	97
Figure 25. (Left) View of the brick piers supporting the west portico columns, after the floor structure was completely removed. (Right) Waterproofing was applied to the foundation, four feet below grade. JGWA, 2015.	98
Figure 26. Details of the existing portico slab structure and three options to restore the portico floors. Option 3 was chosen. JGWA, 2011.	99
Figure 27. Details of the existing portico steps and three options to restore the steps. Option 3, providing a new slab, was chosen for all four porticos. JGWA, 2011.	100
Figure 28. Portico steps: (Upper left) The south portico steps after the stone steps were removed. The steps were set on a brick fill that covered the shallow brick supporting arch. (Center image) The fill removed from the supporting arch. (Lower left) The supporting arch after the cheek walls were removed. (Upper right) New lightweight stepped concrete slab. The slab allows water to drain through the structure. (Lower right) The steps and cheek walls during reinstallation. Note the waterproofing installed over the new concrete slab. JGWA, 2015.	101
Figure 29. The restoration of the north steps to the west portico. (Upper left) The condition of the steps in 2010. (Center left) The pavers removed from the brick and stone support walls. (Lower left) Waterproofing installed on the support walls. (Upper right) The treads partially reinstalled. (Center right) The treads installed and cleaned. The lowest tread is a new Joliet stone tread, as the original was cracked and deteriorated beyond repair. (Lower right) The steps with their restored railing. During the second phase, this area was excavated and waterproofing installed on the brick walls. JGWA, 2015-2017.	102
Figure 30. Detail of window and storm window installation. JGWA, 2010.	103
Figure 31. Detail showing the plan for resetting the north and south portico corner stones using Lewis pins. JGWA.	106
Figure 32. (Upper left and center) Views of the structure of the corner of the portico roof, with the top corner stone removed (upper image) and with the lower sections removed (lower image). (Bottom left) One of the corner stones after removal. (Above right) One of the corner stones after pinning and setting it back in place. (Lower right) After installation, one of the Lewis pins failed. The corner block dropped six inches, damaging the modillion brackets below. The damaged pieces have since been re-carved using Indiana limestone to match the original. JGWA, 2017.	107
Figure 33. The west portico ceiling before and after restoration (left); the north portico ceiling before and during restoration. JGWA, 2017-18.	108
Figure 34. Cleaning tests on the cornice (left and upper right); and mock-up by contractor for cleaning and repairing cornice. Lead tees were installed on the skyward joints. JGWA, 2011, 2017.	109
Figure 35. (Upper image) The woodwork was damaged from insects and woodpeckers. (Center and bottom image) Mock-up to develop techniques for dutchman repair on the windows' wood brick molds. Brick mold this damaged was typically replaced. JGWA, 2017.	110
Figure 36. The window sash were removed from their openings in phases; the openings were covered in plywood and protective plastic frames assembled inside (upper left). The sash were restored at Distinctive Cabinetry workshop; in the upper image, the old weatherstripping is shown on one of the sash. The sash are now fully operational, covered with new storm sash, with new sealant to prevent insects from entering. JGWA, 2017-18.	110
Figure 37. Example of a carved stone dutchman repair. The bottom image also shows one of the lead tee caps that replaced sealant on the skyward joints of the water table and belt course. JGWA, 2017.	111

Figure 38. Window grilles (upper image) and historic lanterns from the north and south portico (lower image) were removed to the Keicher Metal Arts shop for restoration. JGWA, 2017.....	111
Figure 39. The mansion from the southeast during restoration. The windows were removed from the mansion for restoration and temporarily replaced with plywood coverings; one of those coverings is visible in the south window opening of the Den. JGWA, 2017.	112
Figure 40. A brick-and-flagstone drain and associated cistern, discovered immediately west of the west portico, is thought to be one of the only surviving elements from the Langston mansion. NPS, 2017.	113

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The preparation of a historic structure report for the Vanderbilt mansion began in July 1998, when Peggy Albee Vance compiled notes from her non-invasive physical investigation of the building into a first draft. Vance was a project manager and architectural conservator/historian for the National Park Service's Northeast Region Building Conservation Branch. She also co-wrote the Historic Resource Study (prepared in 2000, printed in 2008) for the mansion, contributing to the architectural sections.

Additional site visits by Vance and James Lee (an architectural conservator at NPS) in 2008, 2009, and 2010 recorded further information about the interior rooms and the building materials. Vance also prepared a "Background History" that described the history of the site, the original Langdon house which was demolished in 1896, and the initial phases of the Vanderbilt mansion construction.

In 2016, the National Park Service contracted with John G. Waite Associates, Architects [JGWA] to complete Part I of the historic structure report; the same team had completed a Historic Furnishings Plan in 2015 which included descriptions of each room and development of the interiors. JGWA and its consultant, Mount Ida Press, updated the 2008-2010 history and descriptions with information gathered from additional research and site visits. In addition to editing the existing basement, first, second, and third floor descriptions, the JGWA team added descriptions of the exterior, sub-basement, and attic. Kohler-Ronan provided an overview of the mechanical systems that informed the description and conditions assessment.

JGWA was also the architect for the exterior restoration of the mansion, completed in 2018. As part of that work, the firm created measured drawings of the exterior elevations. For this historic structure report, the firm added measured floor plans for the three primary floors as well as the sub-basement, attic, and roof.

NPS received additional funding in 2017 to expand the history past World War II, to assess the condition of the mansion, undertake limited paint analysis (provided by Jablonski Building Conservation, Inc.), and to record the recent roof restoration, elevator refurbishment, and exterior restoration. The report was then divided into multiple volumes, with the conditions assessment, character-defining features, and paint analysis illustrations for each floor grouped with the corresponding architectural description: the introductions to the physical investigation, along with the descriptions of the exterior, sub-basement, and basement are in Volume II; the first floor in Volume III; the second floor in Volume IV; and the third floor and attic in Volume V.

HISTORY

BACKGROUND HISTORY

As mentioned above, Peggy Albee Vance prepared the "Background History," which covers the history of the mansion through 1898 when the exterior construction was nearly complete.

THE VANDERBILT FAMILY AS BUILDERS

Frederick Vanderbilt's father and his older brothers and their wives began constructing palatial houses after their grandfather's death, largely funded by his large bequests. After the death of

William H. Vanderbilt, the remainder of the family could afford to construct grand country houses with their inheritances, and the family's architectural and lifestyle contributions to the "Gilded Age" became immeasurable.

PURCHASE OF THE LANGDON ESTATE AND DESIGN OF THE MANSION

Frederick and Louise Vanderbilt bought the Langdon estate in Hyde Park in 1895, and selected McKim, Mead & White to alter the house. Charles F. McKim, as partner-in-charge, originally designed Frederick and Louise Vanderbilt's Hyde Park project to incorporate much of the existing Greek Revival-style Langdon house. The design of the house started as early as June 18, 1895; the architects finalized the first version of the renovation drawings in late September 1895. The renovations incorporated much of the old house and added wings to either side.

After surgery in October 1895, McKim went abroad to recover. Three weeks later, during his absence, the project met with a seriously delay: Norcross Brothers, the general contractor, discovered that the Langdon mansion was in much worse shape than was thought, and the walls could not sustain the extra weight of the proposed third story. It was almost a full year after the completion of the original Langdon house alteration drawings that the architects finished the final design and construction documents in August of 1896.

The Vanderbilts' new residence was an elegant mansion located on the exact site of the Langdon house. The structure held a commanding place in its setting, with the west facade located near the edge of the topographical drop to the Hudson River and complemented by the openness of landscape directly around it. The building's massing and elevations were derived from the most classical precedents. The restrained use of finely detailed exterior ornament is what sets this design apart from other, more typical Beaux-Arts designs. The design borrows from Italian and French Renaissance architecture with French detailing.

The shell of the house was completed in 1898, built of Indiana limestone supplied by the Indiana Limestone Company over a steel and concrete structure. The main axis was arranged north-south, with the main entrances aligned along the east-west axis. The symmetrical wings were recessed slightly from the main block, all surmounted by a roof balustrade. Unlike its predecessor, the new house rose a full three stories.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE PLAN

It was not unusual during this period to house all service activities in a wing or ell attached to the house. In order to maintain the purest classical form, McKim, Mead & White chose instead to omit the service wing and incorporate all service and servants' rooms within the rectangular block of the house. It was also customary to segregate service areas by floor, often assigning the top floor for servants' quarters. The Vanderbilts required considerable space for guest bedrooms, necessitating the use of part of the top floor for that function. McKim artfully achieved his main goal—the pure classicism of the house—developing a compact plan that succeeded in placing all of the service rooms within the main block of the structure, segregated but not entirely separate.

INTERIOR DECORATORS

McKim designed the Vanderbilt mansion, but as his École des Beaux-Arts training espoused, he included artists and interior decorators to help realize his grand schemes. Ogden Codman Jr. decorated Mrs. Vanderbilt's Bedroom and Boudoir. Georges Glaenzer decorated the Lobby (Office), Den, Reception Room, and Mr. Vanderbilt's Bedroom and proposed a scheme for the northeast second-floor bedroom (the Mauve Bedroom) that was never implemented. Three artists who were known as muralists were brought in for work in several rooms: H. Siddons Mowbray painted the murals on the Living Room ceiling, and Edward Simmons created the murals for the

Reception Room and Dining Room ceilings. Elmer E. Garnsey also played a role in the decorative painting in the mansion, although not as a muralist.

CONSTRUCTION OF THE VANDERBILT MANSION

Demolition of the Langdon mansion and excavation for the basements and foundations by Norcross Brothers began by September 6, 1896, with John Clermont as supervisor. One month later, masons were at work laying the foundations. By the first week of November 1896, the first load of limestone had arrived, and by December a large derrick had arrived to put the limestone, steel structure, and mechanical elements in place.

The mansion was built using the best technology of the time. The limestone veneer covered a steel frame encased in concrete. Fireproof terra-cotta tiles formed the interior partitions. The mansion was fully electrified, serviced by a power plant on the estate, and included a heated air system in the public, family, and guest rooms.

Contractors that worked with Norcross Brothers and/or McKim, Mead & White included:

- R. C. Fisher & Co., who most likely supplied the marble for the interior of the house.
- Baker, Smith & Co., the supplier of the heating equipment.
- Tucker Electrical Construction Co., the electrical contractor.
- Herter Brothers, who produced the woodwork, installed and reproduced sections of the ceiling in the Dining Room, and undertook the construction and decorative work in the Main Stair, in addition to other work throughout the house.
- A. H. Davenport, who executed most of the Living Room woodwork.

Some exterior work must have continued through the summer of 1898, when a stone carver fell from scaffolding. Norcross Brothers finished its contractual obligations in December, thereby indicating that all general construction was complete, but work on the mansion continued into the next year.

VANDERBILT MANSION HISTORY, 1899-2018

Mount Ida Press prepared the post-1898 history of the mansion.

REPAIRS AND MODIFICATIONS 1899-1925

The Vanderbilts threw their first party in the mansion on May 12, 1899. However, more work was required on the interiors, including the ceiling of the dining room, which was only partially in place at the time of the house party.

Minor repairs were carried out between 1899 and 1904, including painting and repairs to the skylight, and cleaning of the limestone façade. Herter Brothers returned to the mansion in 1903 to renovate the linen room on the second floor and to provide a “Wardrobe set up off Dressing Room” in Mr. Vanderbilt’s Bath. In spring 1904 Herter Brothers repaired “woodwork in closets.” In addition, at an undisclosed time, new cabinets were installed above the McKim, Mead and White cabinets in the Mr. Vanderbilt’s clothes press, and the sitz bath was taken out of his bathroom.

The only major redesign of the house took place in 1905-1906. Despite their overall delight in the Hyde Park house, the Vanderbilts were not entirely pleased with certain aspects of its design. Rather than engaging McKim, Mead and White to undertake renovations, the Vanderbilts turned to another prominent New York architect, Whitney Warren. His scheme transformed the halls

on the first and second floors of the mansion and altered the living room. Warren removed the laylight originally installed in the opening between the first and second stories. He also removed the original coved laylight atop the second story and replaced it with a flat laylight filled with frosted glass. The original wood balustrade around the opening on the second floor was removed to make way for a cast-stone balustrade. A deep plaster cove, embellished with lattice-work panels and oval medallions with female figures, was added to the ceiling of the second floor, below the new laylight. The Warren alterations also included adding glazed doors and sidelights to the south foyer, which separates the Vanderbilts' bedrooms from the main hall.

In the Living Room, Warren designed new plaster overmantels. The ceiling murals by H. Siddons Mowbray were removed, and the gilding highlights on the ceiling and cornice were painted over. In addition, the ceiling mural by Edward Simmons in the reception room was painted over apparently in 1906; the Vanderbilts did not care for this painting.

Once this work was done, the Vanderbilts only did minor alterations to the house, including:

1908: Wallpapering in the mansion; electrical work; work on the elevator.

1910: Wire screens for the mansion

1911: Bathroom tiling

1912 Painting and plastering

1915: Office toilet enlarged and the desk moved in the Office.

REPAIRS AND RENOVATIONS, 1925-1936

After Louise Vanderbilt's death on August 1, 1926, Frederick stayed at Hyde Park during the summer or cruised on his yacht. He continued to visit on weekends during the year. He undertook a few interior projects during this period:

1926: Painting.

1927: Room in the third floor servants' quarters was converted to a bath, probably before 1927.

1928: Painting.

1931: Mauve Bedroom painted.

1935: Mrs. Van Alen asked to find replacement wallcoverings for the Mauve Bedroom, the Red Bedrooms, and the Blue Bedroom. In April 1935 Frederick Vanderbilt told his sister Lila Webb that "I came up last week & again yesterday & camped out, having one room ready on the 3rd floor & the [illeg.] & hall downstairs; but now the house is nearly finished."

1936: Otis Elevator Company electrified the hand-powered elevator.

MARGARET VAN ALEN INHERITS THE ESTATE, 1938-1939

Frederick Vanderbilt continued to use the Hyde Park mansion until his death on June 29, 1938, at the age of 82. He bequeathed that property and much of his estate to Louise's niece, Margaret Van Alen. She stayed at the mansion on various occasions and moved some furnishings out of the mansion and others to the mansion from her other residences. She apparently made no other changes to the mansion beyond the furnishings.

The first detailed archival records of the interiors were prepared at this time. The P. J. Curry Company, conducted a detailed inventory of the mansion's contents in 1938. Rodney McKay

Morgan took photographs of many of the rooms for real-estate sales purposes. The *New York Times* published photographs of the public rooms in 1940, and there is an album of snapshots assembled by Fred and James Traudt in the site's archives from 1940.

After attempting to sell the Hyde Park estate, Mrs. Van Alen explored the possibility of donating it to New York State, but the "state had recently acquired the nearby Mills estate in Staatsburg and did not want to take on the additional property." In 1939 she indicated to Franklin D. Roosevelt that she would be willing to donate the estate to a worthy organization as a memorial to her uncle. Roosevelt, who was serving his second term as President of the United States, was actively involved in the transfer of the property to the federal government and in the planning for opening the property to the public. In 1940 Van Alen donated the house and a part of the estate to the west of the Albany Post Road to the National Park Service.

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE'S INITIAL INVESTIGATIONS, 1939-1940

The National Park Service began surveying and investigating the property, generating a number of reports concerning the site's significance and its condition. A Park Service engineer, Alfred D. Curradi, evaluated the condition of the overall infrastructure in April 1940, finding that drinking water had been supplied by an artesian well in the greenhouse and from bottled water. There was no provision for treating sewage: raw sewage from the mansion and the Pavilion was discharged directly into the Hudson River.

By 1940 the mansion was supplied with electricity by the Central Hudson Gas and Electric Co. of Poughkeepsie. It replaced the service originally supplied by the estate's own powerhouse, which had been engineered and built by W. T. Hiscox and Co. in 1897. A separate 230-volt power line for the elevator, which was electrified in 1936, ran underground from the Albany Post Road to the mansion; the voltage was "stepped down to 220V by means of a transformer located at the mansion." Telephone service to the mansion also ran underground from the powerhouse.

The mansion opened for public tours at the end of July in 1940. Gertrude S. Cooper had been appointed the first superintendent of what was officially known as the Vanderbilt National Historic Site on July 10, 1940. She was the first woman to be appointed superintendent of a Park Service site in the country. She and her husband were "long time residents and friends" of President Roosevelt at Campobello in Maine.

In late summer and early fall of 1940 National Park Service personnel undertook more careful analyses of the mansion. In August 1940 Charles W. Andrae, an architectural engineer, submitted a report in which he outlined many problems with the mechanical systems on the estate.

VANDERBILT MANSION AS SECRET SERVICE HEADQUARTERS, 1941-1945

America's involvement in World War II required changes at many levels at the Vanderbilt Mansion. The site's superintendent, Gertrude Cooper, donated 2,800 pounds of copper and 50,215 pounds of steel to the American Red Cross. It is also possible that she donated the pot rack in the mansion's Kitchen, the copper sink from the Butler's Pantry, and the cast-iron beds from the servants' bedrooms.

During World War II the mansion took on a new role as headquarters for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Secret Service detail and communications/secretarial staff, even as tours continued through the mansion. The President's Secret Service detail, which ranged from 16 to 35 men and their staff, as well as the communications staff, moved into the third floor and perhaps the basement rooms of the mansion; more agents moved into the Coach House. The President's Emergency Project No. 1 created sleeping quarters for forty-five people on the third floor, and ten people in the basement. Modifications were made to the Butler's and Servants' Pantries; shower

stalls replaced the bathtubs in the third floor bathrooms; new electrical fixtures and conduit were installed; the plumbing and heating were upgraded, and the roof drainage reworked. The telephone company installed new cable for the Secret Service.

The secretarial staff associated with the Secret Service stayed until 1944, but the Military Police remained at the Vanderbilt site until the end of the war, leaving in November 1945.

The following list outlines some of the work during this period:

1941: Transformer vault installed in the sub-basement. Renovations of sewer lines; basement bathrooms to run to a new sewage disposal system. All other drains to continue to empty into the Hudson River.

1942: Old boilers were removed to prepare for the installation of new cast-iron sectional boilers.

1942: Third floor and basement plumbing renovated; bathtubs removed and showers installed in some of the bathrooms.

1943: Superintendent's office and wash room in the Servants' Hall and Pantry were rewired. Lighting wiring in sub-basement replaced with new conduit, outlets, reflectors, receptacles and switches.

1943–1946: Exterior repairs: exterior painting; reputtying of windows.

On April 12, 1945, President Roosevelt passed away in Warm Springs, Georgia. His death resulted in administrative changes at the Vanderbilt Mansion. On March 5, 1946 the management of President Roosevelt's Hyde Park home and the Vanderbilt mansion was joined under one staff.

REPAIRS AND MODIFICATIONS 1945-PRESENT

Without the Secret Service agents and Military Police in residence, the mansion could be treated entirely as a museum. Since that time, the National Park Service has endeavored to maintain and care for the mansion, including the following projects:

1945: Window shutters removed and stored, due to poor condition and difficulty of maintenance.

1948: Standard Waterproofing Company undertook repointing. Repairs to the roof drainage system.

1949-50: New oil burners installed by Joseph L. Fimbel of Poughkeepsie.

1949-51: Entire electric system in the building (except for the sub-basement), including fixtures, was rewired.

1949-50: Separation of storm and sewer lines to the house. New sewer lines installed to the septic tank.

1950-51: Work on exterior of windows (reglazing and painting).

1951: Cleaning and restoration work in interiors, particularly in Mrs. Vanderbilt's suite.

1952: Oiling of the interior paneling, particularly the 3,800 square feet of wood paneling in the Dining Room, Living Room, and Den.

1954: Linseed-oil treatments applied to all of the woodwork on the main floor, as well as in Mr. Vanderbilt's Bedroom, by volunteers. Clear plastic installed on walls near the entrances

to the master bedroom (Mr. Vanderbilt's room), Mauve Room, Blue Room and Red Room. Albert McClure stabilizes Dining Room ceiling; cleans Reception Room ceiling.

1958: In response to the National Park Service's Mission 66 program, the Vanderbilt Mansion staff prepared an inventory, floor plans, and photographs for a furnishings plan, the first such record for the site.

1961-2: Historic structure report completed for the roof, recommending cleaning the asphalt patching of the flashing and valleys, and covering the roof with the "Monoform" system, an asphalt/Fiberglas material by FlintKote. The material was installed in 1962.

1962: During preparations to repaint the reception room in 1962, the Edward Simmons mural was uncovered.

1964: Repapering in the Mauve Bedroom and in the Second Floor Green Bedroom.

1966: Repainting of the elliptical Hall (101) and Foyers. New carpeting installed on the Main Stair. Various molds were made to replace "missing ornaments from the Dining Room ceiling."

1967: Ceilings painted.

1973: Roof dressing applied to roof to stop leaks.

1974: Coping stones on roof were caulked and pointed.

1976: All exterior grilles cleaned and painted; draft inducer for chimneys installed.

1977: At this time, all of the grilles were cleaned and painted.

1979: Fakton Ironworks of Newburgh, New York, fabricated steel pipe railing for basement entrance. Plywood enclosure with fiberglass panel roof was to be installed over main skylight. Chair lift installed. Storm windows fabricated.

1973: Ground-fault interrupters were installed at the mansion.

1974: Humidification system installed in sub-basement.

1977: Third floor repainted with help by the Comprehensive Youth Program.

1978: The National Register of Historic Places nomination form for Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site was prepared in 1978. The National Register documentation was approved on June 29, 1979 and certified on October 6, 1980.

1979: Servants' Dining Room "returned to its original appearance aside from final coats of paint on one window sash and hand-rubbing some of the moldings and a chair rail. These elements required replacement and were thought to be missing as a result of the room's past use as an office."

1980s: Boiler soot blow-out in mansion, coating surfaces in oily soot.

1981: New storm sash fabricated; windows reglazed; storm doors installed.

1984: Removal of west portico roof and installation of quarry tile roof by Pettiford & Pettiford.

1984: New portico railings fabricated and installed by Joel A. Schwartz of Schwartz's Forge and Metalworks.

1985-87: removal of north, south, and east portico roofs and replacement with quarry tile over single-ply membrane roofing by Pettiford & Pettiford.

1986-88: Selected removal of 1961-62 asphalt/Fiberglas coating on roof; installation of new single-ply roofing in some areas. Application of spray-on roofing membrane over entire roof.

1995: NPS contracts to survey extent of soot damage, followed by dry-cleaning of installed fabric wall coverings, except installed tapestry, and cleaning and repair of second floor wallpapers.

1993-94: In Large Red Bedroom, repair of damaged plaster; replaced wallpaper on west wall with 1987 reproduction.

2000: New electric service; removal of transformer from sub-basement.

2003: Boiler replaced.

2005: Cleaning of selected interior structural stone, including the second floor Hall balustrade and the two mantelpieces in the Dining Room. Ducts in heating system cleaned.

2008-10: Original copper roof removed and replaced with modified bitumen membrane. Skylights refurbished and restored.

2009-10: Rehabilitation of elevator, replacing operating machinery, safety and control systems while preserving the historic car, doors, lighting and control devices visible to the public. Condition survey of ormolu light brackets and subsequent treatment of the brackets in the first floor Hall west alcoves, the second floor Hall, and Mr. Vanderbilt's Bedroom.

2009-2014: Dining Room ceiling restoration.

2012: Stabilization of one representative tapestry panel in Mr. Vanderbilt's Bedroom.

2016-2018: Rehabilitation of foundation and support walls; complete restoration of exterior. Assessment of source of soot in the mansion.

RECORD OF TREATMENT

After the National Park Service took over the care of Vanderbilt mansion, it carefully maintained the site, but moisture leaks appeared as early as the 1960s. NPS patched and covered the original copper roof and made isolated repairs to the exterior. By 2008, these efforts were no longer effective. Extensive leaking had damaged some of the exhibited rooms as well as the rooms on the basement and third floor. Moreover, the exterior stone suffered from botanical growth and carbon staining. The portico's stone steps and paving were seriously deteriorated.

In response, the National Park Service began an extensive exterior survey and restoration of the mansion, beginning with the replacement of the roof in 2009-2010 with a modified bitumen membrane roof. A comprehensive conditions survey of the exterior led to the full exterior restoration, conducted in two phases (2015-16 and 2016-18); this work included masonry cleaning, limited repointing, and repairs. Window sash, doors, light fixtures, and railings were all restored. In the first phase, which dealt with the work below the water table, lightweight concrete support systems replaced the severely deteriorated structural systems for the porticos; similar lightweight concrete replaced the fill under the portico steps. The foundation was excavated and waterproofing installed. The later phase completed the waterproofing, as well as restoration of the architectural elements above the water table. The completion of this work marked the first major exterior construction work since the mansion was built.

The narrative of these projects is found at the end of this volume (Volume I). Volumes VII-IX include the supporting documents.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

As noted above, drafts for the descriptions of the basement and upper floor rooms were prepared by Peggy Albee Vance and James Lee. JGWA edited that draft and added listings for the exterior, sub-basement, and attic.

The conditions and finishes were visually analyzed to determine period of origin. The room names and numbers were provided by the National Park Service. Each room description begins with a general introduction that includes a description of the floor plan as well as the evolution of the space, followed by specific descriptions of the architectural features. The descriptions use the original McKim, Mead & White drawings for comparison (if available) as well as later drawings by McKim, Mead & White, Warren and Wetmore Architects, George Gleanzer, Ogden Codman, and other sources. Sections of these introductions were excerpted from the Historic Furnishings Report, which the JGWA team completed in 2015.

Beyond the visual inspection of the mansion, JGWA researched the door hardware, lighting and electrical fittings. The architectural team was also asked to provide “analysis of complex interior finishes with comments on techniques used to produce the effects.” The 2018 paint analysis (see description below) provided some of this information regarding the more complex finishes. In addition, to better understand the techniques that artisans and contractors used to create finishes in the mansion, the team looked at six sets of similar McKim, Mead & White specifications now in the collection of the New-York Historical Society. These specifications provided detailed descriptions for varnishing, plain painting, tile installation, and laying up terra-cotta fireproof tile.

PAINT ANALYSIS

During her work on the original draft of the historic structure report, Peggy Albee Vance took paint samples from selected rooms; the paint samples listed in the original draft of the report are included at the end of those room descriptions. An additional paint analysis was commissioned from Jablonski Building Conservation, Inc. (JBC) for this report, and the findings in each room sampled are included at the end of those room descriptions; images from the JBC report follow each floor’s physical investigation narrative. Vance’s complete notes are included as Appendix D, and the JBC report as Appendix C.

In the 2018 analysis, JBC performed a selective interior finish color investigation of the mansion, removing paint samples to identify and characterize the pigment and binder used to create the finishes in order to correctly specify future cleaning and treatments of the finishes. The investigation was also used to determine the original color scheme for the rooms and to determine the presence of any additional decorative finishes. Architectural Conservators Stephanie M. Hoagland and Danielle Pape visited the site on February 14 and 15, 2018, and removed a total of ninety-one (91) samples of which seventy-eight (78) were examined. The number of samples and sample locations were determined by the conservator in consultation with JGWA and the National Park Service.

Samples measuring approximately three to six millimeters in length were removed from the identified areas using a scalpel. Every attempt was made to remove samples that were small in size. A minimum of three paint chip samples was taken from each element. All samples were removed

from inconspicuous locations and areas not directly in the line of site when entering or existing a room.

Upon returning to the laboratory, samples were broken to reveal fresh cross-sections and cast in clear resin. Each sample was examined in normal reflected light under illumination conditions that simulate daylight (fiber optic illuminator) for the purpose of color-corrected stratigraphy identification. The samples were examined microscopically during the investigation using a Motic Stereo Zoom microscope with 10x-63x magnification and a Zeiss Axioskop 40 polarizing light microscope with ultraviolet illuminator.

Each paint layer was identified as a primer, finish, or component of a complex finish system. While primers did not usually affect the color of the finish coat, they were important for the opacity and richness of the finish. Complex finishes were found throughout the interior typically involving a base coat and tinted glazes. Base coats were important for the intended appearance of glazes which were applied as a semi-translucent layer over an opaque base coat to change the color of the paint and to give it greater sheen, luminosity, and light reflectance.

Upon completion of the finishes investigation, the paint stratigraphies for each element were compiled in table form and compared to other elements in each room. This information was used to determine which finishes corresponded to different painting campaigns for both the room, and the interior as a whole.

At Vanderbilt Mansion one of the most obvious indicators of different painting campaigns was the use of lead white pigment versus zinc white. Lead white pigments in linseed-oil paints fluoresce bright yellow when illuminated by ultraviolet light, while zinc white pigments sparkle. This sparkle was never seen as the initial finish, but was always the second finish or later.

PIGMENT IDENTIFICATION

Pigment identification was performed using a combination of polarized light microscopy, examination under ultraviolet light, and FTIR (Fourier Transform Infrared Microspectroscopy) to analyze molecular compositions. Samples of the pigment were isolated, mounted onto a clear slide using melt-mount and examined noting particle morphology, color absorption, isotropic or anisotropic, birefringence, and other characteristics. The qualities of the sample examined were then compared to charts and tables of known pigments.

FINDINGS

BASEMENT: All of the rooms in the basement were finished in similar finishes with subtle variations which could be due to the use of hand mixed paints. These finishes are complex finishes consisting of a grayish yellow base coat topped with a moderate yellow or dark yellow glaze. With the exception of the Housekeeper's Office, variations of this finish were repeated for multiple campaigns.

Multiple campaigns of decorative finishes were found in the Housekeeper's Office which retained darker colors of paint on the upper walls including various shades of green, and possibly faux wood graining along the base of the wall executed in pale yellows with dark red glazes.

FIRST FLOOR: The earliest finish found on the Living Room mantle consisted of grayish yellowish brown and a lighter grayish yellowish brown, which were mottled and sanded.

The earliest finishes found on the walls of the Elliptical Hall and the North Foyer were complex finishes consisting of paints and glazes. A description of the room includes a reference to "a range of colored marbles." The room currently only displays the green marbles used on the pilasters, suggesting there may have been additional faux finishes on the plaster.

The Reception Room (Gold Room) is finished in a yellowish white paint which has been coated with a glossy clear glaze and gilded ornament. The original decoration in this room is water gilding which was performed over reddish brown or orange red clay boles. No glazes were applied over the gold leaf. Most of the elements sampled have been over-painted in finishes which mimic the original. Only the high relief gilded areas on the walls retained their original finish. While most elements retained two painting campaigns, it appears that the over-painting was performed at different times as some are completed in gold leaf, while others were done in gold-colored bronzing powders in a clear glaze.

The original finish remains exposed on the walls and raised molding of the Main Stair and is a faux stone finish created using multiple layers of pale orange yellow paints and dark orange yellow glazes. This finish was also found on the wall return leading into the second floor Hall, but has since been overpainted several times.

SECOND FLOOR: Faux stone finishes were found on the walls of the central Hall which used some of the same colors as the Main Stair. This finish was applied to a fabric underlay which was applied directly to the unpainted plaster. A similar technique was used for the wall adjacent to the stairs leading to the third floor. There the fabric underlay was applied directly to the unpainted plaster and was painted using multiple layers of deep colors in green, blue, orange, and yellow. An exposure window should be performed to determine the appearance of these complex finishes.

Original finishes remain on the baluster and newel post of the Guest Stair. The balusters were finished in a yellowish white with a pale yellow glaze and the newel post was a dark reddish brown varnish. The yellowish white topped with a pale yellow glaze was also used on the wood door frames and the wainscot.

The original finish remains exposed inside the Linen Closet consisting of a yellowish white base coat topped with a moderate yellow glaze. The shelf in the linen close was painted yellowish white without the glaze and the pink paint was applied at a later date.

Original finishes are found throughout Mrs. Vanderbilt's Room. With the exception of the ceiling, areas of over-painting repeat the original finish. The walls, wainscot, columns, and pilasters were originally finished in a grayish yellow with ornament gilded in 24 KT gold leaf. Like the Gold Room, these finishes were completed in water gilding with dark orange yellow and olive brown clay boles. Exposed original finishes are found on the cornice, both gilded and non-gilded, the frieze, the decoration, upper shaft and capitals of the columns and the gilded frames above the door. The ceiling was originally painted a pale yellow.

THIRD FLOOR: The earliest retained finish found in the Maid's Room was a complex finish consisting of a pale orange yellow topped with a pale yellow glaze. This finish was found on the upper floor and the wood trim. A similar finish, in a slightly darker shade was used for the wall above the picture rail and the ceiling.

The earliest retained finish found in the Servant's Hall behind the bells corresponded with the second painting campaign in the Maid's Room and was a pale orange yellow.

CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

A “character-defining feature” is “a prominent or distinctive aspect, quality, or characteristic of a historic property that contributes significantly to its physical character,”¹ that is “important in defining the building’s historic character.”² The analysis of the character-defining features for the Vanderbilt mansion is split up across the volumes of this report, following the corresponding architectural description: the introduction to the character-defining features as well as the exterior, sub-basement and basement in Volume II; the first floor in Volume III; the second floor in Volume IV; and the third floor and attic in Volume V.

The Vanderbilt mansion survives remarkably intact. Virtually every room is important; every room had its role in the function of the mansion. The rooms retain their historic plans and volumes. It should be assumed that all historic elements dating to the Vanderbilt’s occupancy are character-defining features.

In general, the only elements that are not character-defining are the changes in the electrical and mechanical systems since 1940. The only major exterior feature that is not character-defining is the 2009-2010 modified bitumen roofing.

Some elements are not character-defining but do contribute to the understanding of the World War II use of the house. In spaces that could be interpreted for the World War II period, these features are called out separately: the 1940s telephone panel in the sub-basement room SB15) and the modifications to the Men’s Bath (B19), the Housekeeper’s Suite (322-324), and the third floor guest bathrooms (302-305).

CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

John G. Waite Associates surveyed the mansion in 2017-2018 for problems of repair in the mansion, starting with the exterior and then conducting a floor-by-floor, room-by-room analysis. These sections are divided across the volumes of the report: introduction, exterior, sub-basement and basement in Volume II; the first floor in Volume III; the second floor in Volume IV; and the third floor and attic in Volume V.

EXTERIOR

With the exterior restoration of Vanderbilt Mansion nearing completion, there are a limited number of problem conditions on the exterior of the building, and these are nearly all concentrated at roof levels.

INTERIOR

The conditions of interiors of Vanderbilt Mansion vary widely, but are remarkable for how little altered they are, and for the high percentage of original materials and finishes that survive in situ. Although many of the interior finishes are in remarkably good condition, some problem

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1. *Director’s Order (NPS)- 28, Cultural Resources Management Guidelines*, https://www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/nps28/28appena.htm, accessed August 19, 2016.
 2. Kay E. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings* (U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Park Service, Cultural Resource Stewardship and Partnerships, Historic Preservation Services, 1995), 63.

conditions of the interior are widespread and effect most areas of the building's interiors. These conditions include insect infestations, soot depositions, and general wear and tear (particularly in heavily visited areas).

- There is a chronic and long-established infestation of both moths and carpet beetles within the mansion which have adversely impacted furnishings and architectural fabrics. Of the materials that are part of the fabric of the building, wall-to-wall carpets have been most impacted. The exterior restoration work sealed the windows and doors more effectively to control this infestation.
- Interior surfaces of Vanderbilt Mansion have long been subjected to high levels of soot deposition originating from the heating system. Levels of soot staining vary widely as a result of both uneven cleaning and uneven deposits. Since the 1990s, filters have been used to cover the historic air vents in most rooms to monitor the spread of soot within the interiors, but many areas have already been effected (see the section on Soot below).
- Abrasion and impact damage exist on original finishes in many locations where visitors and cleaning equipment come in contact with original finishes. The most noticeable of these are the hall side of the door casings on the second floor, thresholds, and baseboards, which have been impacted by foot traffic or vacuum cleaners.

The window sash throughout the house were restored in 2017. Given the range of interior retreatments throughout the house, and the need to preserve many spaces in their existing state, all of the interiors of the sash were left in their pre-restoration conditions as much as possible. As a result, surface finishes are uneven, miscellaneous anchor holes exist, and some disused non-historic hardware was retained.

SOOT: Between September 2016 and October 2017, EYP Architects and Engineers of Albany, New York evaluated the existing building envelope and systems of the Vanderbilt Mansion to “determine the specific sources, means of travel, and actual circumstances under which (soot) depositions occur”. The report attempts to understand how and when the soot deposition in the mansion was formed and how it is being circulated.

The original heating system consisted of coal-fired steam boilers to accommodate both the intermittent occupancy of the owner and the constant occupancy of permanent staff. This was done by providing two heating systems: direct heating, utilizing radiators, was used in service areas; and indirectly heated warm air was supplied to the residential spaces. These heating system boilers were replaced with new, coal-fired boilers between 1940 and 1942; the boilers were retrofitted with oil burners in 1950. By 1973 forced air supply and return ventilation were introduced; however, the circa 1942 boilers were retained. Original warm air stacks were appropriated for use with a new basement air-handling unit, supplying air near the center of the mansion and returning it from the north and south ends of the building. A “power draft induction system” was installed in 1991. New oil-fired boilers were installed in 2003, and the basement air-handling unit was apparently replaced at the same time. The 2003 boilers remain in use today.

Soot is the product of incomplete combustion of a hydrocarbon fuel, such as fuel oil, natural gas, wood or coal; and this report concludes that soot deposition currently plaguing the building is attributable to the existing steam boilers. An XRF (X-ray fluorescence) evaluation (a non-destructive analytical technique used to determine the elemental composition of materials) determined that none of the soot being actively deposited is that generated by the earlier combustion of wood and coal. The report also reasons that the distribution of soot is largely independent of the existing ductwork.

Recommendations were made for an immediate response to reduce soot production and stem its distribution throughout the house; for the permanent elimination of soot production and

distribution through optimized combustion and improved heat distribution; and for upgrades to the mechanical system that explore alternative means of heating the mansion.

In all spaces with air grilles, the grilles have been covered with filters to monitor the soot generated in the mansion. These filters, which restrict air flow, have been tied to the grilles.

SUB-BASEMENT: As the lowest level of the building, the sub-basement is particularly subject to moisture infiltration from site water. Evidence of these conditions exist along perimeter walls and low-lying areas of the subbasement's uneven concrete floor. Other problem conditions in the sub-basement range from subsidence of an area of the concrete flooring in room SB07 to numerous breaches of the fireproof concrete cladding on the steel beams (see Figure 263), and penetrations through the concrete slab exposing the wood flooring above.

At the historic Boiler Room (SB02) there is substantial deterioration at the perimeter walls, particularly the terra cotta block wall that separates Room SB02 from SB01 (see Figure 263), which is extremely deteriorated at its base. In the current boiler room one of the two boilers recently cracked as a result of cold air coming in from room SB04 when the door between the two spaces was left ajar in December 2017. The walls of Room SB04 were refinished as part of the 2017 exterior repairs.

BASEMENT: In the basement, plaster and paint deterioration are concentrated, but not limited to, the perimeter of the floor level adjacent to exterior walls. Two areas of extensive plaster deterioration which has spread to an extent that it has compromised wood dado rails and other wood trim exist in rooms B11 and B13. Other noteworthy problems of repair at the basement level exist in rooms B01 and B02 where substantial cracks exist through the terrazzo flooring, and where rising damp has caused spalling at the northeast corner of room B01.

FIRST AND SECOND FLOORS: The first and second floors contain the most significant interior spaces at the mansion. Although most of these spaces are in good condition, numerous issues arising from age and wear do exist. Problem conditions that will worsen over time as a result of worn materials or uneven protective finishes are of greatest concern, given the importance of saving as much original material as possible. Considering the high significance of these spaces, particular care must be taken when inserting new electrical infrastructure and safety devices.

In the Main Stair, cracked mortar joints between the stone stringers can be seen at most of the curved transitions from the stair risers to the stair landings. In one location the stringer itself is cracked while in another the mortar joint appears to have been renewed at some point in the past.

THIRD FLOOR: The third floor is not visited by the public. As a result, it has not always received the same level of care as the first and second floors. Some of the problem conditions are a result of the insertion of infrastructure, such as electrical wiring, which has not been conducted as carefully as in the more prominent spaces in the mansion. Other problems are the result of proximity to roof leaks, or general wear over the course of time that has gone unaddressed.

Nearly all of the third floor rooms have exposed wiring for the smoke detection system. An updating of this system has led to two unused plastic-sleeved anchor holes in each ceiling where a detector was removed, but not replaced in the same location. This condition exists throughout the house but is not listed on a room-by-room basis.

Paint and plaster deterioration are prevalent throughout the third floor. The extent of this damage, as with the deterioration of flooring surface at this floor level, are a result of moisture and lack of repairs.

ATTIC: At the attic level, the problem conditions fall into two general types: those relating to moisture ingress, and areas of debris buildup.

ADMINISTRATIVE DATA

LOCATIONAL DATA

In the List of Classified Structures (LCS), the Vanderbilt Mansion is listed as number 001350, structure number one (001).

RELATED NPS STUDIES

- Andrae, Charles W. "Final Report on Improvement of and Repairs to Buildings and Facilities at the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Hyde Park, New York," January 20, 1943.
- Snell, Charles. "An Administrative History of Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Hyde Park, New York, 1939-1955." Typescript, June 9, 1956.
- Master Plan for Preservation and Use of Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site. National Park Service, 1962.
- NPS, "Vanderbilt Mansion Furnishings Plan," 1964. Resource Management Records, Curatorial Division Records, ROVA Archives.
- Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site/New York Final Master Plan. National Park Service, 1976.
- Rieley, Favretti and Rainey. Cultural Landscape Report, Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site. National Park Service, 1988.
- O'Donnell, Patricia M., Charles A. Birnbaum and Cynthia Zaitzevsky. Cultural Landscape Report for Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site: Volume I, Site History, Existing Conditions, and Analysis. Boston, MA: National Park Service, 1992.
- Albee, Peggy, Molly Berger, H. Eliot Foulds, Nina Gray, and Pamela Herrick. *Vanderbilt Mansion, A Gilded-Age Country Place: Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site Historic Resource Study*. Boston: National Park Service, Northeast Museum Services Center, US Department of the Interior, Research Complete 2000, Printed 2008.
- Jane Clark Chermayeff & Associates LLC. "Comprehensive Interpretive Plan: Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites." National Park Service, June 2004.
- Historic Structure Report: Vanderbilt Mansion, National Park Service* (partial draft). Typescript. Staff of the Historic Architecture Program, Northeast Region, Lowell, Massachusetts, 2010. ROVA Archives.
- General Management Plan: Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites. National Park Service, Boston, Massachusetts, 2010.
- Futral, Frank. "Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site Scope of Collection Statement" National Park Service, Hyde Park, New York, 2011.
- Warren-Findley, Jann. "Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Administrative History" [draft]. 2011. ROVA Archives.
- John G. Waite Associates. *Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site Historic Furnishings Report*. 3 volumes. National Park Service, Museum Services. 2015.
- EYP Architects & Engineers, Inc. "Assessment of the Process of Soot Production & Deposition with Recommendations for its Elimination." February 2018.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE ADMINISTRATIVE BACKGROUND¹

On December 18, 1940 the two-hundred-and-twelve acres west of the Albany Post Road were designated as the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site through Executive Order 5 F.R. 5282. The enabling legislation appropriated funds for the operation and maintenance of the site.² The Vanderbilt Mansion property, house and furnishings were recognized as artifacts of the late 19th to early 20th century period known as the Gilded Age, as well as a significant example of work by master architects and designers of that time period.³ It was the first National Park Service house museum to come with furnishings intact.⁴

Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site was opened to the public on July 29, 1940. The first operational funding was provided for fiscal year 1941 with an appropriation of \$17,000 for the administration, protection, and maintenance of the estate.⁵ On July 9, 1940 Gertrude Cooper, a friend of the Roosevelts, was appointed as the first Superintendent. The early staff of Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site consisted of the Superintendent, one historical aide, one seasonal historical aide, one housekeeper, two laborers, and one clerk.⁶

President Roosevelt made initial site planning recommendations regarding building use, landscaping, interpretation, and site operation. As documented in correspondence from First Assistant Secretary of the Interior E.K. Burlew to Acting Director Demaray, President Roosevelt strongly believed that the mansion furnishings and art objects should be provided with identifying cards and that certain parts of the house should be roped off with brass posts and cords for protection. The National Park Service did not agree, however, leaving rooms open to visitors and relying upon tour guides to provide information about the furnishings in place of labels or cards.⁷

Prior to opening the site to visitors, Superintendent Cooper closed the third floor of the Mansion to tours citing that it would be anticlimactic to the first and second floor experience. She also determined that the Pavilion would house comfort facilities, administrative offices, and serve as a gathering and starting point for group tours.⁸

In 1942, as the United States entered World War II, changes came to the Vanderbilt site. New, more extensive security was needed for the President, and the Vanderbilt Mansion played a part in that system, as a private, safe location for his staff to stay. In January of 1943, the President's Secret Service detail (from sixteen to thirty-five men) and staff moved into the third floor and perhaps the basement rooms of the mansion; more of the detail moved into the Coach House.

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1. This summary is taken from John G. Waite Associates, *Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site Historic Furnishings Report* (National Park Service, Museum Services, 2015).
 2. Charles Snell, "An Administrative History of Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Hyde Park, New York, 1939-1955," typescript, June 9, 1956, 2. Snell cites letter printed in Elliott Roosevelt, ed., *F.D.R., His Personal Letters, 1928-1945*, Volume II (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), 7, 11. Snell cites copy of order designating Vanderbilt Mansion a National Historic Site dated December 18, 1940, signed by Harold L. Ickes.
 3. 1978 National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form, Vanderbilt Mansion Historic Site.
 4. Ralph H. Lewis, *Museum Curatorship in the National Park Service 1904-1982* (Washington, DC: Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Curatorial Services Division, 1993) 246. Other furnished mansions that followed the designation of Vanderbilt Mansion included Springwood (Franklin D. Roosevelt's house, 1943) (, the Adams Old House in Quincy (1947), and the Edison house (1955-62).
 5. Snell, "Administrative History," 7. Snell cites "Congressional Record - House," March 5, 1940, 3656.
 6. Snell, "Administrative History," 12. Snell cites Acting Director Arthur. E. Demaray to First Assistant Secretary of the Interior E.K. Burlew, June 27, 1940.
 7. Snell, "Administrative History," 13. Snell cites 1st Assistant Secretary Burlew to Acting Director Demaray, July 2, 1940.
 8. Snell, "Administrative History," 17. Snell cites Regional Supervisor of Historic Sites R.E. Appleman's "Report on Visit to Vanderbilt Mansion NHS," July 18, 1940.

The need to adequately house the Roosevelt entourage led to the President's Emergency Project No. 1, which modified the plumbing, electrical, and heating systems and reworked the roof drainage.⁹ The secretarial staff stayed for just one year, but the Military Police remained at the Vanderbilt site until the end of the war, leaving in November of 1945.

On April 12, 1945 President Roosevelt died, which resulted in a significant change to the administration of Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site. Superintendent Cooper resigned and was replaced by George A. Palmer, who had been the Superintendent at the Statue of Liberty from 1937 to 1945. With the change in administration came the development of the nearby home of Franklin D. Roosevelt as a National Park Service unit. On March 5, 1946 the management of President Roosevelt's Home and the Vanderbilt Mansion was joined under one staff.¹⁰

In 1953, the mansion nearly changed hands again. Mrs. Van Alen Brugiere and her husband expressed interest in reclaiming the mansion, and the National Park Service briefly considered accepting their offer and taking over The Breakers in Newport.¹¹ However, visitation had increased at the Vanderbilt site, and the Regional Director discouraged the idea.¹²

Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on October 6, 1980.¹³ The site has been in public stewardship for nearly 75 years. The National Park Service currently administers 212 acres of the former 684-acre Vanderbilt property.¹⁴

SITE SIGNIFICANCE¹⁵

NATIONAL REGISTER SIGNIFICANCE

In order for a historic site to qualify for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, it must be considered significant under at least one of the National Register Criteria. The Criteria are defined by the National Park Service as, "The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture as present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- That are associated with the lives of significant persons in our past; or

9. Charles W. Andrae, Architectural Engineer, "Final Report on Improvement of and Repairs to Buildings and Facilities at the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Hyde Park, New York," January 20, 1943. Repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion, 1942–1951, ROVA Archives.

10. Jann Warren-Findley, "Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Administrative History" [draft], 2011, "Chapter 2: Opening the Home of FDR, 1945–1948," 50. Warren-Findley cites Justification, Estimates of Appropriation, Department of the Interior, Fiscal Year Ending June 1946, 1.

11. To Regional Director from Superintendent, Morristown, Personal and Confidential, September 10, 1953, Folder H-1415 Legislative History – Home of FDR and Vanderbilt NHS, ROVA, Hyde Park; as cited in Warren-Findley, "Chapter 3: The Administrative History of Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS, 1948–1962."

12. Regional Director to the Director, Confidential Memo, September 11, 1953, Folder H-1415 Legislative History – Home of FDR and Vanderbilt NHS, ROVA, as cited in Warren-Findley, Chapter 3.

13. Though privately owned, many of the historic buildings and features of the Farm were also identified in the nomination for the Vanderbilt Farm Lane Historic District.

14. *General Management Plan: Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites*, 2010, 19.

15. This summary was taken from the *Historic Furnishings Report* 2015.

- That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.¹⁶

Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site was established in 1940 for its significance as a representative example of a late nineteenth-century country property with national significance within the economic, sociological, and cultural history of the United States. The property, buildings, and furnishings were recognized for their importance as representative works by master architects, designers, and craftsmen. The designation of Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site occurred early in the American historic preservation movement. The site's significance fell under National Register Criterion C, although the National Register Criteria had not yet been established in 1940.

The National Register of Historic Places nomination for Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site was prepared in 1978. The National Register documentation was approved on June 29, 1979 and certified on October 6, 1980.¹⁷

The 1978 National Register nomination and 1980 amendment designated the historical significance of Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site under National Register Criterion C. The areas of significance were listed as architecture, economics, and landscape architecture for the period of 1896–1899. The property was described as a representation of Gilded Age economic, social, and cultural history; a “...splendid artifact of the period between the Civil War and World War I when financiers and industrialists lived in a style which consciously emulated European pomp.” The statement of significance described the Beaux-Arts mansion as representative of the palatial architectural style of the late nineteenth century, as well as prestigious for having been designed by the architectural firm McKim, Mead & White.¹⁸

EXPANDED SIGNIFICANCE: HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY (2008)

According to the National Register Bulletin *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, historic contexts are those patterns or trends in history by which a specific occurrence, property, or site is understood and its meaning (and ultimately its significance) within history or prehistory is made clear. The historic context may relate to events or activities related to an area's development (Criterion A); association with the life of an important person (Criterion B); a building form, architectural style, engineering technique, or artistic values, based on a stage of physical development, or the use of a material or method of construction that shaped the historic identity of an area (Criterion C); or a research topic (Criterion D).¹⁹

The *Historic Resource Study* noted that although the 1978 National Register nomination and 1980 amendment listed the architects, landscape designers, and interior decorators associated with the site they did not provide any analysis or placement of the estate's cultural resources within specific historical contexts, which are critical to evaluating a historic property's significance.

16. National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 1995.

17. 1978 National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form, Vanderbilt Mansion Historic Site.

18. 1978 National Register of Historic Places Inventory - Nomination Form, Vanderbilt Mansion Historic Site.

19. National Park Service, *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, 1995.

In response to its criticism of the 1978 National Register nomination, the *Historic Resource Study* offered an expanded definition of the significance of Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site that considered the social and economic context of the late nineteenth century, the Vanderbilt family and its patronage of architecture and interior design, and the historical context of the site in comparison to other Gilded Age estates. The historical significance was expanded to include the following:

- the patronage of the third generation of the Vanderbilt family in building grand houses of the Gilded Age (Criterion A);
- Gilded Age country places in the context of Gilded Age residences of other types (Criterion A);
- Gilded Age domestic life for elite families and their domestic staff (Criterion A);
- the body of domestic architectural design of McKim, Mead & White (Criterion C);
- the body of interior decoration of Charles McKim, Stanford White, Georges Glaenzer, and Ogden Codman (Criterion C);
- the body of landscape design of Charles Greenleaf (Criterion C);
- the technology represented by the transportation, power, and mechanical systems (Criterion C);
- wallcoverings and textiles of a gilded-age country place (Criterion D); and
- Gilded-age estate management and staffing (Criterion D).²⁰

The expanded significance as proposed in the 2008 *Historic Resource Study* laid the groundwork for a future revised and expanded National Register Nomination, but a revised nomination has not been pursued.

20. 265-269.

HISTORY

BACKGROUND HISTORY

This section of the history was prepared by Peggy Albee Vance as part of the original draft of the historic structure report, with editing by Mt. Ida Press and John G. Waite Associates.

THE VANDERBILT FAMILY AS BUILDERS

Frederick William Vanderbilt was the grandson of “Commodore” Cornelius Vanderbilt and the seventh of William Henry and Maria Louisa Vanderbilt’s nine offspring. Only one of the Vanderbilts’ children did not reach adulthood, giving Frederick, who was born in 1856, the third of four surviving sons, a dubious standing financially as long as primogeniture was an accepted practice.²¹ Frederick’s two older brothers would receive the bulk of their father’s estate, as well as earlier large bequests from their grandfather²²; the eldest son, Cornelius II, was thirteen years older than Frederick; William Kissam was seven years older.

However, William H. Vanderbilt brought his son Frederick into the family business after he graduated from Yale’s Sheffield Scientific School (the only one of his siblings to graduate from college), despite the fact that Frederick had caused a scandal by eloping with his cousin’s ex-wife, Louise Holmes Anthony Torrance. Initially, William H. Vanderbilt was not agreeable to the marriage, but he eventually reconciled with his son.²³ Frederick inherited ten million dollars in 1885 when his father died, and he was the only one of his siblings to increase his fortune, in this case more than sevenfold.²⁴

Frederick’s father and his older brothers and their wives began constructing palatial houses after their grandfather’s death, largely funded by his large bequests. In 1879 Frederick’s brother William and his ambitious wife, Alva, were the first to complete a house: they worked with Richard Morris Hunt to design and construct a large, rambling Stick Style house in Oakdale, Long Island, called Idle Hour.²⁵ Their father, William H. Vanderbilt, constructed a complex of three houses in New York City for himself and his two oldest married daughters, as well as a double house for his two youngest daughters, all designed by John Butler Snook of Snook and Trench, beginning in 1879.²⁶ According to William Baumgarten, the manager of Herter Brothers, the well-known New York firm of interior designers and furniture makers, William H. Vanderbilt

was closely involved with every aspect of the design of 640 Fifth [Avenue]. He was either at the site or in the Herter Brothers’ shops on a daily basis, examining progress and

21. John Foreman and Robbe Pierce Stimson. *The Vanderbilts and the Gilded Age: Architectural Aspirations, 1879–1901* (New York: Martin’s Press, 1991), end papers.

22. Foreman and Stimson, 9, 14–15.

23. Foreman and Stimson, 197–198.

24. Foreman and Stimson, 15, 212.

25. Robert B. MacKay, Anthony K. Baker, and Carol A. Traynor, *Long Island Country Houses and Their Architects, 1860–1940* (New York: Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities in association with W.W. Norton & Company, 1997), 224–225. Foreman and Stimson, 173.

26. Foreman and Stimson, 309–313.

encouraging workmen with compliments and generous tips. Two-thirds of the \$2 million he spent on the project went into his own fifty-eight-room house in the southern pavilion.

According to Baumgarten, Vanderbilt reviewed every single thing, from the “first stone to the last piece of decoration.”²⁷

Cornelius Vanderbilt II and his wife, Alice, contributed to the family’s early building frenzy when they constructed One West 57th Street, hiring George B. Post as architect.²⁸ William K. and Alva Vanderbilt again turned to Hunt to design 660 Fifth Avenue, the grandest of all the Vanderbilts’ New York City houses.²⁹ All were completed by 1882. Cornelius and Alice bought The Breakers in Newport, Rhode Island, in 1885, the first of two houses of the same name on Ochre Point; they immediately hired Peabody & Stearns to make alterations to the house, which the firm had originally designed in 1877.³⁰

At the time of their father’s death in 1885, only Frederick and George Vanderbilt had different living arrangements. Frederick and Louise had been given his father’s former residence at Fifth Avenue and 40th Street when William H. moved into his new Fifth Avenue compound.³¹ George was still a young, unmarried man living with his parents; he later inherited the house at 640 Fifth Avenue.³²

After the death of William H. Vanderbilt, the remainder of the family could afford to construct grand country houses with their inheritances, and the family’s architectural and lifestyle contributions to the “Gilded Age” became immeasurable. Eliza “Lila” Vanderbilt, Frederick’s closest sibling, and her husband Seward Webb had already built one house in Vermont but began buying additional property south of Burlington to begin the Webbs’ fantasy farm in 1886, hiring Robert H. Robertson to design all of the structures, eventually to be known as Shelburne Farms.³³ Emily Vanderbilt and W. D. Sloane hired Peabody & Stearns to design Elm Court in Lenox, Massachusetts, in the Berkshires.³⁴ Initial construction of both houses was completed by 1887. Both houses were expanded over the years to designs by their respective architects.

Frederick and Louise Vanderbilt first tried their hand at building at Newport, hiring Peabody & Stearns to design Rough Point in 1887.³⁵ William K. and Alva (primarily Alva) Vanderbilt began building Marble House in Newport in 1888, again working in conjunction with Hunt.³⁶ These houses were completed in 1891 and 1892, respectively. Cornelius and Alice’s residence, The Breakers, burned to the ground in 1892, and a new Italian palace rose in its place, designed by Hunt, that was completed in 1895.³⁷ In 1896 Florence Vanderbilt and Hamilton Twombly bought a house in Newport that had been designed by Peabody & Stearns in 1884,³⁸ rather than building a new one.

27. Foreman and Stimson, 313.

28. Foreman and Stimson, 49.

29. Foreman and Stimson, 23.

30. Foreman and Stimson, 243–248.

31. Foreman and Stimson, 31.

32. Foreman and Stimson, 315.

33. Foreman and Stimson, 73–86. Robertson was also the architect for at least two New York Central Railroad stations, which may be where he developed a friendship with Seward Webb. He also designed the Vanderbilt coach house in Hyde Park, ca. 1897.

34. Foreman and Stimson, 129.

35. Foreman and Stimson, 261.

36. Foreman and Stimson, 219.

37. Foreman and Stimson, 243–248.

38. Foreman and Stimson, 116–117, 136.

The Vanderbilt association with the firm of McKim, Mead & White seems to have begun with a speculative office building in New York City commissioned by Cornelius II and William K. and completed in 1891.³⁹ Stanford White may have been the partner-in-charge of this project. Immediately thereafter, the firm designed Woodlea, Margaret Vanderbilt and Elliot Shepard's house in Scarborough, New York,⁴⁰ and Florham, the Twomblys' estate near Morristown, New Jersey.⁴¹ William Rutherford Mead was the partner-in-charge for Woodlea, possibly because his sister was married to Shepard's brother. Mead and Charles Follen McKim apparently worked on Florham together, with McKim in charge of only the basic design. Both of these houses were begun in 1890 or 1891. Woodlea was completed in 1895, and Florham in 1897.

Meanwhile, George Washington Vanderbilt, the youngest of the Vanderbilt brood, was constructing his "chateau," called Biltmore, in Asheville, North Carolina, turning again to Richard Morris Hunt and the Olmsted office.⁴² With the exception of the Webbs' and the Sloanes' ever-continuing additions, it seems that during the 1890s the family hired only Hunt or McKim, Mead & White as architects. Frederick and Louise had turned to McKim, Mead & White for an alteration to an existing house called Hyde Park, in Hyde Park, New York, with McKim as the partner-in-charge. Two later Vanderbilt commissions also went to McKim, Mead & White, and both were Stanford White's projects: the 1900–1903 portals at Saint Bartholomew's Church in Manhattan, commissioned by Alice Gwynne Vanderbilt as a memorial to her husband, Cornelius II, who had died in 1899,⁴³ and a 1904–1907 house for Virginia and William Kissam Vanderbilt Jr. in New York City.⁴⁴ At least one of the Vanderbilt brothers may have had social connections to Charles F. McKim, possibly through Stanford White, given their similar interests. In 1905 William K. Vanderbilt Sr. contributed \$100,000 toward the establishment of the American Academy in Rome, thereby helping to realize McKim's lifelong goal of establishing an institution to train Americans in the classical arts.⁴⁵

FREDERICK AND LOUISE VANDERBILT AT HYDE PARK

Frederick and Louise Vanderbilt (see Figure 2) bought the Langdon estate in Hyde Park in 1895, probably on May 16.⁴⁶ A house erected by Dr. Samuel Bard first stood on the site in 1799, and the house was remodeled and enlarged for its new owner Dr. David Hosack in 1828 by architect Martin Thompson of New York City. This house burned in 1845 and was replaced in 1847 by its owner at the time, Walter Langdon.⁴⁷ Upon Langdon's death in 1847, Walter Langdon Jr. purchased the rights to the property from the other heirs and remained the sole owner of the estate until his death in 1894.⁴⁸

39. Leland M. Roth, *McKim, Mead & White, Architects* (New York: Harper & Row, 1983), 171. Charles Moore, *The Life and Times of Charles Follen McKim* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1929), 347. Roth says the structure at 17 Beekman Street was completed in 1891; Moore says 1893.

40. Foreman and Stimson, 153.

41. Foreman and Stimson, 105.

42. Foreman and Stimson, 273.

43. Roth, 272–273.

44. Roth, 263–264.

45. Moore, 251 and 295.

46. Historians' Research Notes, card 959, recorded by Snell, for Abstract of Deeds, Deed Liber 281, 36.

47. Patricia O'Donnell, Charles A. Birnbaum, and Cynthia Zaitzevsky, *Cultural Landscape Report for Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site*, vol. 1 (Boston: National Park Service, 1992), 14, 64.

48. O'Donnell et al., 64. The cultural landscape report has a complete history of ownership of the site and is therefore not repeated here.



Figure 2. (Left to right) Frederick Vanderbilt, his sister Lila Webb, her son William Seward Webb, and Louise Vanderbilt. Shelburne Farms Archives, Shelburne, Vermont.

Frederick Vanderbilt purchased only part of the original Bard estate. In 1837 Bard had created a separate estate to the north of the main house for his daughter and son-in-law; this property subsequently passed through several owners, the last being Samuel B. Sexton.⁴⁹ The Sexton house burned in 1899, and after Sexton's death in 1903, the property was put up for sale.⁵⁰ Vanderbilt purchased this property in 1905, restoring the whole estate to its original pre-1837 size.⁵¹ Vanderbilt also purchased the Bard farm, located on the east side of the Albany Post Road.

The Vanderbilts' selection of McKim, Mead & White (see Figure 3) to alter the Langdon house was likely due to the success of other Vanderbilt commissions, although all of these were for new construction. In addition, Ogden and Ruth Livingston Mills had engaged the firm and specifically Stanford White⁵² to enlarge and remodel their country estate in Staatsburg, a few miles to the north of Hyde Park.⁵³ The Mills were friends of Frederick and Louise Vanderbilt, and it was most likely Ogden Mills who brought Frederick Vanderbilt to Hyde Park for the first time.⁵⁴

Modern Vanderbilt histories suggest that Frederick was less socially inclined than his wife and did not enjoy the social life at Newport.⁵⁵ This dislike provided the impetus for him to seek

49. O'Donnell et al., 29–80.

50. O'Donnell et al., 97, 102.

51. O'Donnell et al., 128. Coincidentally, McKim, Mead & White had enlarged a Langdon house in Portsmouth, New Hampshire: "There was also the Georgian house of John Langdon, of 1784, to which McKim, Mead & White, much later, would make an addition." The firm also possibly "provided designs for remodeling an old brick house on Fox Point in Newington [near Portsmouth] into a luxurious summer home for Woodbury Langdon, who also maintained an eighteenth-century ancestral home in Portsmouth." It is possible that the Vanderbilts knew of these commissions, but the Langdon connection most likely did not contribute to their choice of architects. Roth, 46. National Register Nomination Form for the Richman Margeson Estate, Newington, New Hampshire; prepared by James Garvin and listed on the National Register of Historic Places on June 21, 1990.

52. Samuel G. White, *The Houses of McKim, Mead & White* (New York: Rizzoli, 1998), 174.

53. Pamphlet, "Mills Mansion State Historic Site" (Office of Parks Recreation and Historic Preservation, State of New York, October 1995).

54. Foreman and Stimson, 200. Historians' Research Notes, card 1099, recorded by Snell on February 26, 1954, from *Poughkeepsie Sunday Courier* [hereafter PSC], October 18, 1891, 2, and October 28, 1894, 3. The Mills also owned a townhouse in New York City and a house in Newport, as was customary in New York society.

55. Foreman and Stimson, 197.



Figure 3. William Mead (left), Charles McKim (center), and Stanford White (right). www.britannica.com.

suitable property elsewhere so soon after his Newport mansion was completed.⁵⁶ His choice of the Hyde Park property could ensure a less hectic social life than in Newport, as well as furnish the amenities of a country estate, including a farm providing fresh food and a garden providing flowers for all of his houses. One could also choose to seek social company: the Mills lived to their north, as did other Livingston families; the Astors lived in Rhinebeck; the Archibald Rogers, the Thomas Newbolds, and the James Roosevelts lived to the south.

It is interesting that Frederick chose not to buy country property near any of his siblings. His brother William had long been ensconced on Long Island, and his sister Emily had been enjoying the social scene in the Berkshires for many years. His younger sister and closest sibling, Lila, had already spent several years in Vermont. His other sisters, Margaret and Florence, were completing their respective homes in Scarsdale, New York, and near Morristown, New Jersey, and his younger brother, George, was finishing Biltmore in Asheville, North Carolina at the same time as the Hyde Park purchase.

As to be expected, all the Vanderbilt siblings owned houses in New York City, and at least four owned houses in Newport, which was then the summer residence of many in New York society. Vanderbilt siblings chose to own mansions in proximity to each other in only two other places, the Adirondack Mountains of New York and Bar Harbor, Maine. Frederick built an Adirondack camp in the Japanese style at Upper St. Regis Lake in 1902, close to at least two other sibling-owned camps, and he purchased an existing villa, Sonogee, in Louise's name, at Bar Harbor in 1920, after renting various properties in the community.⁵⁷ Also at Bar Harbor, George had purchased and remodeled Point d'Acadie and built Islescote for a Shepard niece.⁵⁸ Lila and Seward Webb also

56. "Fifteen years later, he admitted that he tired of the constant candlepower of the affaires de luxe of the resort "of Newport," Historians' Research Notes, card 1085, from Wayne Andrews, *The Vanderbilt Legend* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1941), 324, which in turn cites the *New York Tribune*, December 4, 1906. Lila Webb also notes her dislike of Newport in her diary: "This life here [Newport] is most unsatisfactory. I hate it"; from Shelburne Farms Archives, Lila Osgood Webb Collection, Travel/Diary/Misc. Various 1893–1896, 1901, 1904. 1894 Diary entry: Friday, August 10.

57. Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Site, Archives, general file, brochure, "You Won't Forget Sonogee," n.d., photocopy attached to letter from Gladys O'Neil to an unknown individual, July 7, 1972. Cat. 4615, Box 3, V-32; O'Neil cites property transfer of records in the collection of Sonogee.

58. G. W. Helfrich and Gladys O'Neil. *Lost Bar Harbor* (Camden, Maine: Downeast Books, 1982), 15, 71.

vacationed in Bar Harbor.⁵⁹ For his country home, Frederick selected a site where no other family member resided.

While his sisters Margaret and Florence were completing their McKim, Mead & White houses, Frederick and Louise summoned the firm to their Hyde Park estate. By 1895 McKim, Mead & White had shifted its focus to designing in more academic styles, looking to Italy, France, and England for inspiration.⁶⁰ The alteration to the Mills mansion was finalized in the neoclassical style, which drew from the Greek Revival detailing of the earlier house. The visual references to the Greek sources at the Mills house were manifested in a large pedimented portico, which along with the white exterior finish, gave the house a similar appearance to the north facade of the White House in Washington, D.C., the nation's executive residence.

Charles F. McKim, as partner-in-charge, originally designed Frederick and Louise Vanderbilt's Hyde Park project to incorporate much of the existing Langdon house (see Figure 5). Its exterior had been designed with Greek Revival detailing but without a characteristic pediment. The Greek Revival features included Ionic columns, bracketed and rather flat, pedimented window lintels at the first story, and overall symmetry.⁶¹ The main house was of brick construction with a stuccoed exterior finish. A third story with clapboard siding was set back from the main facades. The east facade had a one-story porch, supported by Ionic columns, covering the main entrance, while the river, or west, elevation had a two-story, semicircular portico supported by Composite-order columns. On the north and south elevations small, one-story porches protected secondary doorways. Window openings and at least some doorways had shutters.

THE DESIGN OF VANDERBILT MANSION

Charles Follen McKim was working on the alterations to the Langdon house as early as June 18, 1895, when he wrote to Frederick Vanderbilt:

On returning to New York yesterday we immediately sent men to measure the house. They left last night and are now at work, and will remain upon it until sufficient data is gained to set it up on paper. Probably three or four days will be required effecting these measurements and a week more in drawing them out. As soon as this is done we will notify you, and can then arrange for such improvements and alterations as [you] may [deem] desirable, and will keep you posted.⁶²

The firm had sent Silas Brower and Clive N. Elliot to measure the building, which took them a week.⁶³

On June 26, 1895, McKim wrote to his friend Thomas Newbold,⁶⁴ who was Franklin Delano Roosevelt's next-door neighbor at Hyde Park:

59. Shelburne Farms Archives, Lila Osgood Webb diary, [no date on copy of document]. The latter, or at least Lila, also spent time with Frederick and Louise in California and Florida.

60. Roth, 356.

61. Both Classical Revival and Neoclassic styles draw from ancient Greek and Roman architecture, with attributes that include symmetry, geometrical proportion, and certain detailing indigenous to either Greek or Roman sources. The main difference between Classical Revival and Neoclassical is general size and scale, with the latter being larger.

62. Letter to F. W. Vanderbilt from C. F. McKim, June 18, 1895, Folder: McKim, Mead & White, VAMA General File, ROVA Archives, from Charles Follen McKim Papers, Library of Congress.

63. Historians' Research Notes, card 141, recorded by Snell on November 27, 1953, from PSC, June 23, 1895, 5; Moore, 329, 330. Brower worked for McKim, Mead & White from August 1889 to December 18, 1897; Elliot was employed from October 1891 until his death on August 4, 1908.

64. Moore, 326. Newbold was a pallbearer at McKim's funeral.



Figure 4. The west facade of the Langdon mansion (upper image); and McKim, Mead & White's rendering of the proposed east facade of the renovated mansion (lower image). ROVA Archives.

I shall probably stop there when the Vanderbilt drawings are ready a fortnight hence . . . Howard came in to-day on his way to Newport and appeared much surprised at the progress made. Indeed we have done pretty well considering the time. The whole house has been measured and drawn out at a quarter scale, and we are now struggling over the alterations, which you will either like or dislike extremely. I am sure you will be glad to hear that our men found the walls of the old house in good condition and that we shall therefore have no excuse for tearing them down. In another week I hope to have the drawings sufficiently advanced to meet Mr. Vanderbilt and have asked Howard to suggest that he come here to see them as well as the stable, sketches for which will be ready by that time. To my mind the wings are going to greatly improve the house without disturbing its character. Whether I am making a mistake in the planning of the Madams quarters I don't know, but tell Sallie that besides her bedroom, I am giving her a sitting room, a room to contain her night gowns and other linen, a maid's room opening into the wardrobe, a bathroom and a loggia giving a south view from her sitting room. She didn't tell me what she wanted, but she has sent me a lot of books on the Nile and called at the Taylors' before my arrival to inquire when I was expected. The Hunts and Taylors seem to think her likely to be an easy person to get on with, as Sallie predicted.⁶⁵

McKim also told Newbold that he intended to visit the property "soon" and would "want to study the house more thoroughly."⁶⁶

The drawings for the main house were completed after those for the Pavilion, which was a separate building ultimately designed as guest bachelors' quarters. The Pavilion was planned for the site of the Langdon coach house, just north and slightly to the east of the main house, and it initially served as quarters for the Vanderbilts while construction on the main house was underway. Six drawings for the Pavilion are dated August 23, 1895, while the seventh, of interior details, is dated September 12 of the same year; Silas Brower delineated all seven.⁶⁷ The nationally respected construction firm of Norcross Brothers constructed the Pavilion in sixty-six days, between September 8 and November 24, 1895.⁶⁸ The Vanderbilts used the Pavilion during their winter stays in Hyde Park, rather than open and heat the main house.

In 1895 McKim developed plans for two other residences on the Vanderbilt property. One was for Edward Wales, Frederick's friend and stockbroker; the drawings for this house were probably finalized in mid-November 1895. The other house was for Thomas H. Howard, whose wife was Louise Vanderbilt's niece.⁶⁹ A group of photographs by J. Sterling Bird Jr. date the construction of the Howard house between January and September 1896.⁷⁰ McKim, Mead and White also

65. C. F. McKim to Thomas Newbold, June 26, 1895, Folder: McKim, Mead & White, VAMA General File, ROVA Archives, from Charles Follen McKim Papers, Library of Congress. This letter also suggests that McKim and Newbold were related.

66. C. F. McKim to Thomas Newbold, June 26, 1895, Folder: McKim, Mead & White, VAMA General File, ROVA Archives, from Charles Follen McKim Papers, Library of Congress. This letter also suggests that McKim and Newbold were related.

67. Set of seven drawings for the "Pavilion for F.W. Vanderbilt, Esq." New-York Historical Society.

68. "Report of Visit with Mr. John B. Clermont," ROVA Archives.

69. Drawings for the Wales and Howard Houses, ROVA Architectural Drawings Collection, Pre-1940s Vanderbilt Mansion (c. 1874–1940), VAMA 5002, ROVA Archives, from The New-York Historical Society. Five of the twelve drawings for the Wales House are labeled "House No. 1." None of the Howard House drawings has any such notations.

70. J. Sterling Bird Jr., photographs, VAMA Photograph Collection, ROVA Archives. This series of photographs was donated to ROVA NHS by J. B. Clermont, Superintendent of Construction for the builders, Norcross Brothers.

developed plans for a gatehouse and entrance gate.⁷¹ The firm of Hiscox and Co. designed the White bridge that spans the Crum Elbow Creek, and the powerhouse.⁷²

McKim's letter of June 26, 1895, to Newbold mentioning the readiness of the stable drawings suggests that McKim, Mead & White originally intended to be involved with the new stable or coach house. That responsibility was ultimately given to R. H. Robertson, either by the firm⁷³ or through Robertson's relationship with Lila and Seward Webb as the architect of Shelburne Farms. Robertson's office was in the same building as McKim, Mead & White's in 1895, and McKim or the other partners would sometimes collaborate with associates or former employees.⁷⁴ Norcross Brothers was awarded the contract to construct the coach house in May 1897,⁷⁵ adhering to the designs of R. H. Robertson, with his name and firm clearly printed on the drawings.

In 1895, perhaps shortly after writing the June 26 letter to Newbold,⁷⁶ McKim had a bicycle accident that required him to wear "a truss that hurt his body, disturbed his mind and called eventually for an operation by Dr. Bull."⁷⁷ McKim sailed around Newport and Long Island in late July and early August. In a letter written from Newport on August 8, McKim recounted a visit to Hyde Park, apparently earlier in the summer:

Here after a day or two I returned with F.W. Vanderbilt (and the plan on which we have been engaged for him) on his yacht to the landing place at Hyde Park on the Hudson which he has recently purchased; then, after a further discussion of the plans, to the office; thence, on the grievous news of Mr. Hunt's death, to Newport to attend his funeral; and later by train to Cottage City, where I rejoined [E. D.] Morgan and sailed back with him to Newport . . . In another week I shall return homeward feeling in a much better condition.⁷⁸

McKim, Mead & White finalized the first version of the renovation drawings for the main house in late September 1895. The renovations incorporated much of the old house and added wings to either side (see Figure 4). The wings would have increased the Vanderbilts' living space and accommodated modern amenities.

71. ROVA Architectural Drawings Collection, Pre-1940s Vanderbilt Mansion, VAMA 5002, Collection Listing III, five drawings, unsigned, undated. There is a matching lower gatehouse.

72. Peggy Albee, Molly Berger, H. Eliot Foulds, Nina Gray, and Pamela Herrick, *Vanderbilt Mansion, A Gilded-Age Country Place: Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site Historic Resource Study*. (Boston: National Park Service, Northeast Museum Services Center, US Department of the Interior, Research Complete 2000, Printed 2008), 44, 96, 185.

73. The N-YHS drawings, no notations. Copies stored at NPS Northeast Cultural Resources Center, Lowell, Massachusetts. Robertson was the architect for the estate of Vanderbilt's sister, Lila, at Shelburne Falls, Vermont.

74. Roth, 40–48, 169, 196, 216, 304. Robertson may have been working on drawings for the final additions to Lila and Seward Webb's house in Shelburne Farms at this time, as well as supervising construction of New York City's twin-towered Park Row (1896–1899) skyscrapers. Built by financier August Belmont Jr., Park Row, at 30 stories, was the city's tallest building at the turn of the century; MacKay et al., 365.

75. Maureen K. Phillips, draft, "Vanderbilt Garage/Stable Historic Structure Report" (USDOI, NPS, Northeast Cultural Resources Center, Building Conservation Branch, 1999), 5.

76. Roth, 243. A subsequent letter, dated July 9 but without a year, suggests that the accident occurred between June 26 and July 9, 1895. It reads: "I received your note this evening on coming in from Hyde Park where I went yesterday to keep faith with Mr. Vanderbilt (F. W.) and arrange to drop out for awhile. . . As for slicing—I have been compelled—to 'bide-a-wee' to satisfy Dr R & my partners—by taking the opinions of other specialists before acting—but while I should naturally prefer to find out that an operation is unnecessary—I fear there is no such luck in store for me." C. F. McKim to Mary L. Lawrence, July 9. Folder: McKim, Mead & White, VAMA General File, ROVA Archives, from Charles Follen McKim Papers, Library of Congress. This letter was given to the park's Coordinating Superintendent by Eric Gugler and transmitted to the Regional Director, Region One, on September 1, 1945.

77. Moore, 148.

78. Moore, 148; C. F. McKim to Wendell Garrison, August 8, 1895.

Norcross Brothers was the general contractor for the main house in Hyde Park. McKim and Stanford White worked with the Norcross Brothers firm as early as the 1870s, during the construction of Trinity Church in Boston while they were employed by H. H. Richardson. Richardson “repeatedly worked” with Norcross Brothers.⁷⁹ Richardson historian James O’Gorman noted that the firm was “without question . . . among the most important construction companies in the country in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.”⁸⁰

After his surgery in October 1895,⁸¹ McKim went abroad to recover, leaving for Italy on December 7.⁸² Three weeks later, during his absence, the *Poughkeepsie Sunday Courier* announced a change in the plans for the Langdon house. Vanderbilt, according to the account, “is making extensive improvements. He is having the old house on the bluff torn down and will replace it with a modern mansion 198 feet long and 86 feet wide to cost between \$400,000 and \$500,000.”⁸³

Mead explained the problems with the existing house in a letter of February 1896 to McKim, who was still in Europe:

Fred Vanderbilt’s job has met with a serious delay, but he has acted very nicely about it and I think on the whole is glad that it has turned out so. When we came to tear the old house apart, it was found to be in as bad a condition as the annex—no strength to the mortar, walls out of plumb, etc. etc.; in fact, so bad that it seemed foolish to attempt to build anything on it . . . Vanderbilt hesitated on the ground that if he had not thought there was something to save in the old building, he would not have built on these lines. As matters stand now, we are rearranging the center on virtually the same lines but with certain changes in plan, and keeping the exterior just as you left it. There has been a good deal of fight to this, because when it was found the old house had to come down Mrs. Vanderbilt kicked over the traces and was disposed to build an English house as she called it. We have, however, used your name pretty freely as being much interested in this design and likely to be very much disappointed if anything happened to it, etc. etc., and when you come you will find that you are still master of the job and to hell with White and Mead! I gave Fred Vanderbilt your address in Rome care of Lord yesterday, and he will perhaps write you by this same steamer.⁸⁴

Louise Vanderbilt’s desire to have a different style of house, an “English house,” may have been influenced by the style of their Newport house, Rough Point, as well as Frederick’s sister and brother-in-law’s house, Florham, nearing completion at Morristown.

Mead wrote a second letter to McKim on the same day: “Since I mailed your letter this morning three of your favorite clients have been in. . . Mr. Fred Vanderbilt has been in and taken away his revised plan with which he seems to be satisfied. I have also given him your address and he has promised to write you.”⁸⁵

In late February 1896 Vanderbilt wrote to McKim regarding the deficient old house:

79. Roth, 4.

80. James F. O’Gorman, “O. W. Norcross, Richardson’s ‘Master Builder’: A Preliminary Report,” *Journal of The Society of Architectural Historians*, 32, no. 2 (May 1973), 105.

81. Moore, 153.

82. Moore, 154.

83. Historians’ Research Notes, card 176, recorded by Dinneen, from Braman’s Scrap Book, 19, and relabeled as from PSC, December 29, 1895.

84. Moore, 268–269. This letter to McKim from Mead also implies that McKim was advocating a classical design.

85. Moore, 269. Reflected in a letter to McKim from Mead, February 1896.

We came to grief almost as soon as we started to tear out the old house finding the walls and beams in very bad shape and in fact Riley pronounced the walls unsafe to go on with the proposed additions & not capable of sustaining the extra weight of the third story. Nothing would do but to pull the old house all down & start fresh, so the work came to a standstill as we were not willing to build a new house in the same lines of the old one built 40 years ago. Your office then drew up some new sketches for a brick house but now we are back again on the old plans modified somewhat & are nearly ready to receive Riley's bids for a new house. The front to remain the same as the sketch you had drawn except to make ceilings same height throughout first floor & get better windows on the second & to make the building of brick with stucco trim & columns instead of all stucco. Improve the hall by making it much larger & changing position of staircase, but the wings to remain same as you had proposed. Mead said he would write you. Of course all this means delay & giving up all idea of getting in next winter. . . We have spent nearly every Sunday up there so far. Don't forget to let me know if you come across something fine for the new hall or large rooms during your wanderings that you think we ought to have & I will cable you . . .⁸⁶

The firm's design for a brick house with stucco trim was presented in a set of twelve drawings dated March 27, 1896.⁸⁷ This design was rejected. The earliest plans and exterior elevations for the accepted design are dated August 1896, almost a full year after the original Langdon house alteration drawings.⁸⁸ The McKim, Mead & White bill books record the extra charges for the additional plans: "To charges at cost for Designs, Working Drawings, Specifications and Details for proposed House at Hyde Park from June 1895, to May 1896 - [\$]3,110.69."⁸⁹

McKim returned to New York on May 1, 1896, in order to attend the dedication ceremonies for Columbia University, where he had been heavily involved in the design.⁹⁰ The earliest surviving correspondence between McKim and Vanderbilt from this time period dates from October 1896.⁹¹ McKim undoubtedly contributed to the final drawings for the Hyde Park house. His sophisticated translation of Beaux-Arts design principles is imprinted in the August 1896 design.⁹²

The Vanderbilts' new residence was an elegant mansion located on the exact site of the Langdon house. The setting of the new building added to its majesty: the structure took a commanding

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86. F. W. Vanderbilt to C. F. McKim, February 25, 1896, New York Public Library, Manuscript Division, Margaret McKim Maloney Collection, from research by Nina Gray. It is interesting to note that McKim was also looking for items to decorate the interior, which was a role that was usually reserved for Stanford White. "Riley" apparently was in the employ of Norcross Brothers, who maintained office space with the architectural firm, at least up to 1894: "The only room on the fifth floor of the Mohawk Building, New York not occupied by McKim, Mead & White, 1891-1894, the firm had their offices there, was the branch office of Norcross Brothers manned by a Mr. Reilly, frequently consulted by the partners." See Roth, prologue, endnote 6, 371.
 87. Vanderbilt Mansion Drawings (Second Proposal), 1896, Series II.D, ROVA Architectural Drawings Collection (c.1874-1940), ROVA Archives.
 88. Vanderbilt Mansion Drawings, (Third Proposal), 1896, Series II.E, ROVA Architectural Drawings Collection (c. 1874-1940), ROVA Archives.
 89. McKim, Mead & White, bill books, vol. 5: June 10, [1896] entry, 458, New-York Historical Society, Architectural Records Collection. Nina Gray shared copies of her bill book research.
 90. Moore, 154.
 91. C. F. McKim to F. W. Vanderbilt, October 29, 1896, from research by Nina Gray, from Charles Follen McKim Papers, Library of Congress.
 92. The definition of Beaux-Arts style ("Historical and eclectic design on a monumental scale, as taught at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris in the 19th cent.") is from Cyril M. Harris, ed., *Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1983), 59. "By the late nineteenth century the school [École des Beaux Arts] had a long-established approach to design. The curriculum instilled in the students a feeling for grandiose axial formality in both planning and composition, articulation of building mass, and a predilection for pictorial extravagance. The magnificently rendered presentations in plan, section and elevation captured the essence of their educational goal"; from John Milnes Baker, *American House Styles* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1994), 98.

place in its setting, with the west facade located near the edge of the topographical drop to the Hudson River and complemented by the openness of landscape directly around it. Perhaps McKim could take little credit for the setting, but he could acknowledge his contribution to the design of the house. While the exterior may have been dictated by the plan, as Beaux-Arts training requires (“the facade was to follow on the plan; there was to be no ‘false front’”⁹³), the building’s massing and elevations were derived from the most classical of principles. The elaborate, but in this case also restrained, use of exterior ornament is what sets the Beaux-Arts design apart from the more basic neoclassical classification.⁹⁴ The house is based on Italian and French Renaissance architecture with French detailing.

McKim had a reputation for not relenting or compromising once the design concept was solidified: “Once McKim conceived the central idea,” one expert has written, “he would not alter his course; echoing his father’s evangelical zeal, he asserted ‘you can compromise anything but the essence.’”⁹⁵ According to art critic Royal Cortissoz, building materials received the same reverence: for McKim

[B]uilding materials were what pigments are to the painter; he handled them with the same intensely personal feeling for their essential qualities that a great technician of the brush brings to the manipulation of his colors, and he left upon his productions the same autographic stamp. . . . During the building of the Boston Library certain sheets of marble were to be put in the entrance hall—Numidian, I think they were—and their dimensions were determined by McKim with the utmost care. He regarded those dimensions as essential to the ensemble, but when the marble was delivered it was found that they had not been rigidly followed. Forthwith the sheets were rejected. The contractor argued at tremendous length and almost wept, but McKim was harder than the Numidian itself. He was dealing in marble as an artist deals in paint, and he would no more submit to a change in the appearance of the surfaces he had planned than a painter would allow his color-man to dictate the final condition of his picture.

I make much of this episode because it stands for temperament, for an inborn gift. You cannot learn fastidiousness like that. The right dimensions of a piece of material for a given position in a building cannot more be thought out and communicated by a pedagogue than the secrets of color and texture, to be similarly applied, can be formulated in the schools. To think of McKim is to think of a genius expressing itself through the stuff of architecture as creative genius expresses itself in all the other arts, somehow identifying itself with the very grain and fibre of that in which it works.⁹⁶

McKim was also adamant that available funding or lack thereof it should not be a guiding force in his designs. Biographer Charles Moore related a tale of how McKim discredited an estimate he thought too low that Mead had prepared for a room at the University Club, which was contemporary to the Vanderbilt mansion.⁹⁷ Another historian stated that, “[h]is view of the architect’s role, then, was to design with a view to optimum response to function and site and not strictly on the size of the budget, confident that for the best design for the circumstances the necessary money somehow would be found.”⁹⁸

93. Edmund V. Gillon Jr. and Henry Hope Reed, *Beaux-Arts Architecture in New York, A Photographic Guide* (New York: Dover Publications, 1988), vii–ix.

94. Marcus Whiffen, *American Architecture since 1780: Guide to the Styles* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969), 167.

95. Roth, 60.

96. Moore, 67, from Royal Cortissoz, *The Brickbuilder*, February 1910.

97. Moore, 259.

98. Roth, 147.

Frederick Vanderbilt's letters to McKim are the only evidence to the Vanderbilts' input on the new design of the house. Clearly, he was willing, at least in the end, to spend a great deal more money than would have been required to enlarge the Langdon house. But in addition to the large amounts of money that the new building required, it was McKim's talent, or genius as Royal Cortissoz calls it, that infused the final result with its beauty:

In each of the principal areas of design, the partners arrived at a synthesis of classical allusions which seemed the result of a certain irreducible logic, what Royal Cortissoz described in speaking of the Morgan Library as the bedrock of architecture... [Of the better designs] [e]ach possessed a distinctive clarity of plan combined with strong sculptural massing. Ornamentation and detailing was resplendent but carefully held in check. Construction was impeccable, detailed to weather long and well.⁹⁹

Although lesser known than most McKim, Mead & White commissions (no interior photographs of the Hyde Park mansion are known during the Vanderbilts' residency), the Hyde Park mansion clearly is one of the firm's better designs as defined by Cortissoz. The relative anonymity of this commission may have been at the request of the Vanderbilts, although no evidence has surfaced to support the deduction that McKim was asked not to publicize the commission.¹⁰⁰

The shell of the house was completed in 1898, built of Indiana limestone supplied by the Indiana Limestone Company¹⁰¹ over a steel and concrete structure. The main axis was arranged north-south, with the main entrances aligned along the east-west axis. The symmetrical wings were recessed slightly from the main block, all surmounted by a roof balustrade.

Unlike its predecessor, the new house rose a full three stories. McKim's design was bold, monumental, and true to classical vocabulary. A central block is flanked by recessed flanking wings off of the north and south ends. At each end is a two-story projecting portico supported by columns of the Composite order. Similar columns are used at the east and west porticos. Three of the porticos are rectangular in plan, while the west portico is semicircular in plan, as was Langdon's. Coffers decorate the ceilings of each portico. These coffers had a subtle two-tone polychromatic color scheme.

The structure has an overall horizontal emphasis when viewed from the east lawn. The horizontal emphasis is articulated by the water table; the entablature between the second and third stories, which also carries onto the portico roofs at the north and south ends; the smaller main roof entablature; and the roof balustrade. This horizontal thrust is counteracted by the portico columns; the two-story pilasters; the third-floor decorative vertical panels (placed above each pilaster, surmounted by lion heads that transition to smaller foliated details)¹⁰²; and the vertical alignment of the window openings.

Each story exhibits a hierarchy of window heights. The basement openings are the shortest, but they appear to belong to the first-floor openings, which are the tallest. The alignment and separation from one another by a seemingly narrow but continuous water table contributes to this illusion. The progression of diminishing heights continues through the second- and third-story openings. One-over-one double-hung sash fill openings above the basement, and all openings

99. Roth, 329.

100. Apparently only two architectural magazines published contemporary articles upon Hyde Park's completion: *The Inland Architect and News Record* 3 (August 1899), 8; and *Architectural Record*, which published only two photographs of the house, "Residence of F. W. Vanderbilt"; *Architectural Record* 10 (October 1900), 188–189. The *American Architect and Building News*, which was the premier architectural publication of its time, seems to have ignored the building.

101. William L. Hutchinson to McKim, Mead & White, Folder: McKim, Mead & White, File M-16, ROVA Archives, New-York Historical Society.

102. Lions were included in Vanderbilt family heraldry symbols.

appear as voids, contrasting with the solid mass of the stone. Shutters were once appended to the window openings. A photograph indicates that the shutters were constructed so that they folded back against the window jamb, rather than lying flat on the facade, thereby not obstructing or interfering with the continuous vertical window voids. At the first and second story windows there were fixed shutter panels set behind the ornamental grilles at the bottom of the openings.

In addition to the Composite capitals, exterior ornamentation includes a cartouche above the main entrance portico, lion's-head medallions on the frieze of the entablature between the second and third stories, and running foliated decoration spanning the frieze between selected medallions. It is this added ornamentation that distinguishes this structure as being Beaux-Arts, rather than neoclassical.

No major changes have been made to the exterior of the structure since its construction. The Vanderbilts altered almost nothing in the house after 1915.

THE EVOLUTION OF THE PLAN

It was not unusual during this period to house all service activities, such as the Kitchen and Service Pantry, the Servants' Dining Room, the servants' bedrooms, and linen and trunk storage, in a wing or ell attached to the house. In order to maintain the purest classical form, McKim, Mead & White chose instead to omit the service wing and incorporate all service and servants' rooms within the rectangular block of the house. It was also customary to segregate service areas by floor, often assigning the top floor for servants' quarters. The Vanderbilts required considerable space for guest bedrooms, necessitating the use of part of the top floor for that function. McKim, Mead & White were able to keep the service functions within the main block of the house by assigning some service functions to the basement, some to a small space on the first story and to an intermediate space between the first and second stories, some to an even smaller space on the second floor; and others to half of the third floor.

The arrangement of the basements was typical for the period, providing space for only service functions. The use of the basement for the Kitchen, Servants' Dining Room, Housekeepers' Office, laundry rooms, Wine Storage, and male servants' chambers meant that all mechanical functions were relegated to the subbasement. A Butler's Pantry was located adjacent to the service stair on the first floor, and china storage with an adjoining room was on the intermediate level, also adjacent to the service stair. The only service functions on the second floor were the service stair, the adjacent elevator that serviced all levels, and a Linen Closet, which was accessed from the second-floor hall. Half of the third floor housed bedrooms for female servants, as well as storage rooms. These spaces were segregated from the main rooms of the house, out of sight from the Vanderbilts and their guests.

McKim artfully achieved his main goal—the pure classicism of the house—and succeeded in placing all of the service rooms within the main block of the structure, segregated but not entirely separate. Because of the puzzle this placement of spaces presented, it is possible that McKim digressed from the strict course of Beaux-Arts principles and planned some of the interior spaces based on the shape of the building's shell. This is especially true of the third story, where the axial arrangement is less clear, especially in the northern servants' quarters. In addition, the guest bedrooms in the southern half are accessed from the second story by an elegant staircase dedicated as the only direct communication between the two spaces. Although it contributes to an awkward balance in the third story guest quarters, perhaps the dedicated stairway provided the only solution in McKim's rationale to adhere to Beaux-Arts principles: it is centered over the first story entrance hall and it does not communicate with the first story.

The original proposal to renovate the Langdon house showed all the servants' spaces in the basement and third floor, except for the Butler's Pantry, which was adjacent to the first-floor

Dining Room, and the Housekeeper's Office, the Linen Room, the service stair and elevator, and a Maid's Closet, all located in a small corner of the second floor. Similarly to the final design, the first-floor Dining Room occupied almost the entire north wing, the first-floor Living Room occupied the entire south wing, and Mr. and Mrs. Vanderbilt's bedrooms shared the second-floor south wing, with Mrs. Vanderbilt on the east side and Mr. Vanderbilt on the west side. However, the final plan also eliminated rooms that had been included in the first proposal, like a Breakfast Room, a Library, and a Billiard. The only room that was added between the original and final proposal was the Lobby, which became Mr. Vanderbilt's Office.

The so-called "second proposal" plans, which also survive, were a kind of hybrid between the original and final proposals, having been composed and presented while McKim was still in Europe. The first floor was more closely related to the first plan, since it too, reflected a Billiard Room and Breakfast Room, but here the Library had become a Drawing Room. The second-floor main chambers were similar to the first plan, but eight guest bedrooms were located here, along with the small corner dedicated for Linen and the service stair and elevator. Again, the basement and smaller third floor—occupying only the main block—were devoted entirely to servant activities and storage.

INTERIOR DECORATORS

McKim designed the Vanderbilt mansion, but as his École des Beaux-Arts training espoused, he included artists and interior decorators in his schemes. Ogden Codman Jr. and Georges Glaenzer were hired to decorate selected rooms in the house. Codman and Glaenzer were likely paid directly by Vanderbilt, since no entries for them were listed in McKim, Mead & White's bill books. Codman decorated Mrs. Vanderbilt's Bedroom and Boudoir and proposed a scheme for her bathroom that was never implemented. Glaenzer decorated the Lobby (Office), Den, Reception Room, and Mr. Vanderbilt's Bedroom and proposed a scheme for the northeast second-floor bedroom (the Mauve Bedroom) that was never implemented. The French decorating firm of Allard and Sons was paid by McKim, Mead & White only \$666.00, perhaps for furniture or decorative objects.¹⁰³ Three other artists who were known as muralists were brought in for work in several rooms.

In his letter of June 1895 to Thomas Newbold, McKim explained his floor plan for Mrs. Vanderbilt's chambers when plans still called for the alteration to the Langdon mansion. Codman eventually designed all of the detailing for her suite in the new house. Frederick Vanderbilt's association with Codman may have begun as early as October 1896,¹⁰⁴ but in 1894 Codman had designed many second- and third-floor rooms at The Breakers for Cornelius Vanderbilt II.¹⁰⁵

At the same time, Codman was collaborating with Edith Wharton on a book entitled *The Decoration of Houses*, published in 1897. Correspondence from Mrs. Wharton to Codman first suggests optimism in working with Louise Vanderbilt:

Dear Coddy,

I am very glad to hear from your letter just rec'd, that you are getting on so well with Mrs. F.W.V. - Who can tell? Perhaps you may get some of the other rooms?- . . .¹⁰⁶

103. McKim, Mead & White, bill books, 501–502.

104. 1896 Appointment Book, entry for October 20, 1896: "9:30 train to Hyde Park"; Ogden Codman Jr. Collection, Appointment Books, 88. 1708–1789, Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities archives.

105. Foreman and Stimson, 253.

106. Edith Wharton to Ogden Codman Jr., April 30, [1897]; Ogden Codman Jr. Correspondence, Letters Rec'd, Edith and Teddy Wharton, Apr.–June 1897, Box 83, Folder 1671, Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities archives.

Another letter expressed a certain disdain for the Vanderbilt family's taste in design:

Dear Cuddy, I congratulate you on the two new clients, [I^a] trust they will prove less vague & woolly than Roche, Canfield & Co . . . Teddy hasn't yet rallied from the effect of the Whitney house. It must indeed be a ghoul's lair. I wish the Vanderbilts didn't retard culture so very thoroughly. They are so entrenched in a sort of Thermopylae of bad taste, from which apparently no force on earth can dislodge them.¹⁰⁷

The Decoration of Houses espoused the "correct" way to decorate, with emphasis on restraint and support of the French model, as well as a rejection of the more cluttered and eclectic Victorian interior. Wharton had sent a draft manuscript to McKim during the design of Hyde Park seeking his comments. His response showed only a few minor disagreements, advising her "that sixteenth-century Italian architecture needed to be discussed in preference to palaces and hunting lodges," but overall, he felt that the book paralleled his teachings at the École. The aim there was to capture "the spirit of a style rather than its literal delineation," aiming at

a modern style based on classic composition . . . [B]y conscientious study of the best examples of classic periods, including those of antiquity, it is possible to conceive of a perfect result suggestive of a particular period, if you please, but inspired by the study of them all.¹⁰⁸

The second decorator, Georges Glaenzer, detailed several other major rooms in the house. Although most of his drawings are undated, the earliest ones for one room bear the date of June 1897. Glaenzer's connection to the Vanderbilts may have been through his 1892 commission with George Vanderbilt for the Vanderbilt gallery at the rear of the Fine Arts Society Building.¹⁰⁹ It is also possible that the Vanderbilts were aware of his other seemingly-few commissions, including one in 1892 for the residence of Mrs. Charles Beatty Alexander, whose New York house was adjacent to that of Cornelius II, or an 1890s bedroom for George Baker.¹¹⁰

OTHER ARTISTS AS SUB-CONTRACTORS TO MCKIM, MEAD & WHITE

H. Siddons Mowbray and Edward Simmons created the murals for the house: Mowbray for the Living Room ceiling and Simmons for the Reception Room and Dining Room ceilings. Elmer E. Garnsey also played a role, apparently not as a muralist, although, like Mowbray and Simmons, he too was a muralist and painter. McKim, Mead & White bill books show that like Mowbray and Simmons, Garnsey was paid directly by the firm of McKim, Mead & White. Garnsey's payment was a little more than Simmons's and a little less than Mowbray's. What is interesting is that Garnsey does not list the Vanderbilts' Hyde Park house among his projects in a publication issued by a small professional organization to which he—and more interestingly, McKim—belonged, The Mural Painters, later the National Society of Mural Painters. Mowbray and Simmons were not members of this organization. The organization's 1916 publication, "Brochure of the Mural Painters," did not limit its list of all murals in the United States to those executed only by members of the society. Mowbray's and Simmons's names are included in many of the projects, along with their specific roles. The listing for the Vanderbilt commission attributes the "Decorative ceiling of salon, ten oval panels" to Mowbray and a "Decorative ceiling" to Simmons.

107. Edith Wharton to Ogden Codman Jr., postmarked Saturday, May 1, 1897; Ogden Codman Jr. Correspondence, Letters Rec'd, Edith and Teddy Wharton, Apr.–June 1897, Box 83, Folder 1671, Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities archives.

108. Roth, 183. C. F. McKim to Edith Wharton, n.d. (ca. 1897), from Charles Follen McKim Letters, Library of Congress. This approach exemplifies his final design for Hyde Park.

109. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 317.

110. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 318. A third commission for Standard Oil executive John D. Archbold in Tarrytown, New York, was apparently completed at a much later date. For a contemporary discussion of Georges Glaenzer work, see "Progress of Decorative Art in America," *Godey's Magazine*, 129 (October 1894), 354-367.

This list shows that Garnsey had worked with Mowbray on McKim, Mead & White's University Club at roughly the same time that the Vanderbilt property was being constructed; he also worked with Simmons on Cass Gilbert's Minnesota State Capitol (1895–1905) and on Smithmeyer & Pelz and Edward P. Casey's Library of Congress. In the latter two commissions, part of Garnsey's role was designing the "general color scheme." According to the 1916 "Brochure of the Mural Painters," Garnsey was affiliated with nineteen projects and created the overall color scheme for seven of them. Two of these were McKim's: the Boston Public Library and the Walker Art Gallery at Bowdoin College. He played the same role at George B. Post & Sons' Wisconsin State Capitol, the Union Club of New York City, and Post's College of the City of New York, as well as the Minnesota State Capitol and the Library of Congress. The role of project colorist apparently was not an unusual one: others were credited with the same responsibility in other listed commissions. A magazine article contemporary to the work at the Minnesota State Capitol extolled Garnsey's talents in this role:

The entire plan for the color and decoration of the building had been under the direction of the architect, Mr. Cass Gilbert, and of Mr. Elmer E. Garnsey, of New York, who has to his credit the decoration of so many representative public buildings. Mr. Garnsey regards the interior of the Minnesota State Capitol as the finest piece of work, as a whole, that he has yet achieved, a success largely owing to the unusual understanding of color values possessed by the architect, Mr. Gilbert.

The public little realizes the vast amount of study and designing that is required on the part of the artist, in planning and executing the whole wall decoration for an immense building. To one man is commissioned the development of the harmonious whole. His system of decorating is studied out on as artistic and geometrical a scale as is the architect's plan in constructing the entire building. He must take into consideration the quality and color of marble used; the kind of stone, metal and woodwork, -these all bear their relations to the wall decorations. The whole color scheme and the different sized wall spaces are carefully considered; the type and size of painting or decoration decided upon; and the commissions then assigned to the artist best fitted to decorate certain lunettes or panels.¹¹¹

On the other hand, Mowbray's and Simmons's seventeen combined commissions were all for murals, with only four possible exceptions, and these were listed for "decorations" rather than for general color schemes.

Garnsey's mural decorations included the Richardson Memorial Library within the St. Louis Art Museum, Memorial Hall at Yale University, Gilbert's U.S. Custom House in Manhattan, and McKim's Rhode Island State House, as well as supervision of William Andrew Mackay's series of lunettes at the Gilbert's Minnesota State Capitol. He also contributed "decorations" or "general decorations" to other projects, including McKim's Boston Public Library, the University Club, and Low Library at Columbia University, the Brooklyn Trust Building, New York's Guaranty Trust Building, and Andrew Carnegie's residence on 91st Street.

Before the Frederick Vanderbilt project, Simmons had contributed to Stanford White's Players and Metropolitan Clubs. Mowbray worked on McKim's contemporary University Club and later J. P. Morgan's Library. But Mowbray's connection to the Vanderbilts may have begun much earlier, through Lila Vanderbilt Webb. Mowbray befriended Seward Webb's brother, Louis; rented a studio over a stable owned by Seward Webb and next to Louis's studio; and apparently sold one of his paintings to Lila and Seward that was later loaned for an exhibition.

111. Grace Whitworth, "The Beautiful Interior of the Minnesota State Capitol," *The Craftsman* IX, 1905–1906.

What exact role did Garnsey play at the Vanderbilts' house in Hyde Park? If his assignment was to develop the general color scheme, a role he often played, it is a role that has not been fully explored in the history of architectural decoration of this era. It is clear that at least part of his role was to execute some decorative painting, as evidenced in a letter from Frederick Vanderbilt to Stanford White:

If you can find time to run up here some day with McKim, on your return, I would like very much to have you do so and give your opinion on the proposed changes in the ceiling of the living room and the painting of the hall ceiling frieze and wall. Mr. Garnsey is to commence work on the 5th inst.¹¹²

FIRST FLOOR

Rooms having separate functions for men and women were standard in large residences of the era, beyond the separation of bedrooms for husband and wife. Men often had smoking rooms or private libraries; women often entertained separately in a ladies' parlor, sitting, or reception rooms. At Hyde Park, McKim, Mead & White originally designed a "lobby" to the south of the entrance vestibule, which was accessed directly from the Vestibule, as well as the Elliptical Hall. The Lobby contained a small toilet room. In addition, a Lavatory with a toilet adjacent to it was contained to the north of the entrance vestibule, accessed only from the Elliptical Hall. This space contains a mirrored double sink and many coat hooks mounted around the perimeter of the room. As originally designed, the Lobby may have been dedicated as a "men's room" and the North Lavatory, as a "ladies' room." A few other McKim, Mead & White houses from the period had similarly arranged plans. For instance, the H. A. C. Taylor residence, constructed in New York City in 1896, had a Den and Reception Room on either side of the entrance vestibule, each with its own lavatory—the former possibly for men, the latter for women.¹¹³ In addition, the Joseph Pulitzer residence, built in New York City in 1903, was planned with a "Men's Retiring Room" to the left of the entrance vestibule, with a sink in the room and a toilet anteroom; there was a "Cloak Room" to the right of the vestibule, also with a sink in the room and a toilet anteroom, most likely dedicated for women.¹¹⁴ Isabella Stewart Gardner's Boston house was planned in the same way: "The guests all agog entered Fenway Court . . . and found themselves in a small lobby; at the right was a dressing room for the ladies . . . [and] the small coatroom for the men at the left."¹¹⁵

CONSTRUCTION OF THE VANDERBILT MANSION

Before construction of the mansion could begin, Norcross Brothers' had to demolish the old Langdon house, then excavate for the basements and foundations of the new house (see Figures 5-7 for construction photographs). On July 19, 1896, before final drawings were completed, the *Poughkeepsie Sunday Courier* reported:

The old Greek mansion with its thirty rooms, will soon be a thing of the past. It seems a pity to destroy the [west] portico—one of the most perfect specimens of the Greek portico in the country- but investigation has shown that the foundations are insecure, and the

112. F. W. Vanderbilt to Stanford White, July 1, 1899, Stanford White Papers, Avery Architecture and Fine Arts Library, Box 19:2, from research by Nina Gray.

113. McKim, Mead & White, *The Architecture of McKim, Mead & White* (New York: Dover Publications, 1990), plate 80. Paul Wenzel and Maurice Krakow, *Republication of A Monograph of McKim, Mead & White, 1879-1915* (New York: The Architectural Book Publishing Co., 1915-1920).

114. McKim, Mead & White, plate 180.

115. Douglass Shand-Tucci, *The Art of Scandal* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1998), 212. Shari Benstock, *Edith Wharton* (New York: Scribners, 1994), 135. Morris Carter, *Isabella Stewart Gardner and Fenway Court* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1925), 199-201.

improvements at first contemplated are out of the question. An elegant mansion, rivaling the farfamed Biltmore palace, will be erected on the old site during the coming months. Work will be started in about six weeks.¹¹⁶

Accordingly, on September 6, 1896, the same paper recorded that “[w]ork on the Vanderbilt mansion has been commenced.”¹¹⁷ A week later, the paper reported that “[t]here are about twenty Italian laborers employed in tearing down the old Langdon house.”¹¹⁸ On September 26, the paper noted that “[w]ork at the Vanderbilt mansion will soon be ready for the masons, who will come from New York, and our villgae [sic] will have a boom for awhile.”¹¹⁹ By October 18, 1896, “a number of masions [sic] are at work laying the foundations for the Vanderbilt mansion.”¹²⁰

At least one scow-load of brick had been delivered to the site in December 1895 and another barge-load in July 1896.¹²¹ The first may have been used in the construction of the Wales house or other projects on the property, or it may have been intended for the Langdon house additions. However, most of the second load was likely earmarked for the new mansion, as the drawings for its construction were still being finalized. By the first week of November 1896, the first load of limestone had arrived¹²²; by December, a “large derrick [was] being put in place at the Vanderbilt mansion,”¹²³ no doubt to put the limestone, steel structure, and mechanical elements in place.

Norcross Brothers most likely paid for the limestone and other construction materials, such as brick and steel, directly; there are no entries in the McKim, Mead & White bill books for these types of specific supplies or suppliers. R. C. Fisher & Co. might be considered an exception since it supplied various kinds of stone: it was listed in contemporary New York City business directories as a supplier of “Marble, Stone & Granite Works.”¹²⁴ However, this firm can be eliminated as the limestone suppliers for two reasons: because it concentrated in importing and working in marble¹²⁵; and because of the late date of its appearance in the bill books. In the bill books, the first Norcross account entry for the main house (for which McKim, Mead & White charge commission) is dated November 7, 1896, followed by a second one of December 2, 1896.¹²⁶ It appears that the first entry for \$331,412.00, which coincides with the first delivery of limestone, is repeated in the second invoice, but addended with an entry for Baker, Smith & Co., the supplier of the heating equipment. Seven additional dated entries for Norcross Brothers, Baker Smith & Co. or Tucker Electrical Construction Co. appear before R. C. Fisher & Co. is listed on January

116. Historians’ Research Notes, card 200, recorded by Snell on February 6, 1954, from PSC, July 19, 1896, 2.

117. Historians’ Research Notes, card 216, recorded by Snell on February 6, 1954, from PSC, September 6, 1896, 7.

118. Historians’ Research Notes, card 217, recorded by Snell on February 6, 1954, from PSC, September 17, 1896, 3.

119. Historians’ Research Notes, card 219, recorded by Dinneen on January 24, 1952, from Braman’s Scrap Book, vol. 5, 37: Sept. 26, 1896—Hyde Park Notes.

120. Historians’ Research Notes, card 221, recorded by Snell on February 6, 1954, from PSC, October 18, 1896, 7.

121. Historians’ Research Notes, card 166, recorded by Snell on February 6, 1954, from PSC, December 8, 1895, 3; and card 205, recorded by Dinneen on January 24, 1952, from Braman’s Scrap Book, vol. 5, 34: July 25, 1896—Hyde Park Notes.

122. Historians’ Research Notes, card 224, recorded by Snell on February 6, 1954, from PSC, November 8, 1896, 2.

123. Historians’ Research Notes, card 228, recorded by Snell on February 6, 1954, from PSC, December 20, 1896, 3.

124. Thanks to Nina Gray for sharing this research.

125. R. G. Dun Collection, Baker Library, Harvard University, vol. 373, pp. 1600 A/63, entries for “Jany 5/[18]82,” “Jany 29/[18]88,” and “Dec. 1.[18]90” show that Robert C. Fisher was a very successful dealer in “Marble,” who officially changed the name of the company to R. C. Fisher & Co. late in 1890 (later entries for the firm do not exist). ROVA Archives, VAMA general file, McKim, Mead & White folder: photocopy from advertisement page in *Architectural Record* 8, no. 1 (September 1898), 25. Partial text reads: “Robert C. Fisher & Co., Marble Workers . . . Importers of and Workers in FINE MARBLES.” No other stone or stonework is mentioned here.

126. McKim, Mead & White, bill books, vol. 6 (August 5, 1896–June 17, 1899): November 7, 1896, entry 57; and December 2, 1896, entry 65.

14, 1898.¹²⁷ Therefore, Fisher could not have supplied the limestone, since the majority of the stonework was completed four months earlier, by September 1897.¹²⁸

Although McKim, Mead & White's bill books are somewhat enigmatic when one tries to decipher which entries contain repetitions of prior fees, it appears that the overall contract with R. C. Fisher & Co. exceeded at least \$50,000. This firm was listed in contemporary New York City business directories as a supplier of "Marble, Stone & Granite Works."¹²⁹ Fisher most likely supplied all of the marble for the interior of the house. A room-by-room inventory chronicled much more marble than originally thought existed, even after excluding those marble elements that were documented as supplied by other sources. These included the four large marble columns located at the entrances to the Dining and Living Rooms that Stanford White brought over from Europe, as well as the marble sinks, shelves, and mirror frames (supplied by Meyer-Sniffen) installed in the majority of the bathrooms. Closer examination of the rooms confirmed that old mantels, which had been shipped specifically for the house from Europe, were installed with integral components of new marble. These mantels included the two in the Dining Room, the one in the Elliptical Hall, the one in Mr. Vanderbilt's Bedroom, and possibly the two in the Living Room.

The supplier of heating apparatus, Baker, Smith & Co., first appears in McKim, Mead & White's bill books for "House at Hyde Park" (distinguishing it from "cottages" or the Pavilion) on December 2, 1896, and again on January 16, 1897. Considering that the foundation was begun in October and that the first shipment of limestone received by November, the sub-basement was probably sufficiently prepared to begin installing the heating appliances by December. Subsequently, the "large heating pipes for Mr. Vanderbilt's house passed through Hyde Park" on April 9, 1897.¹³⁰

Other work was taking place at all reaches of the property in 1897. Construction of the powerhouse began in January,¹³¹ as did the "water works" in March.¹³² The local firm of Myers and Son was awarded the contract for a standpipe, the work for which began in March of 1897.¹³³ Other local contractors were awarded contracts, including a Poughkeepsie plumber, P. C. Doherty, who was "to lay 10,000 feet of water pipe through the grounds."¹³⁴ Meanwhile, Norcross Brothers held the contract for constructing the Coach House,¹³⁵ and W. T. Hiscox of New York City was awarded the contract for the White Bridge.¹³⁶

127. McKim, Mead & White, bill books, vol. 6: 78, 110, 157, 184, 231, 258, 274, 303.

128. Historians' Research Notes, card 265, recorded by Charles Snell on February 6, 1954, from PSC, September 12, 1897, 3: "With the exception of the porches, the stone work on the Vanderbilt mansion has been completed."

129. Thanks to Nina Gray for sharing this research.

130. Historians' Research Notes, card 240, recorded by Dinneen on January 26, 1952, from Braman's Scrap Book, vol. 5, 48.

131. Historians' Research Notes, card 233, recorded by Snell on February 6, 1954, from PSC, January 17, 1897, 3.

132. Historians' Research Notes, card 238, recorded by Snell on February 6, 1954, from PSC, March 21, 1897, 7.

133. Historians' Research Notes, card 229, recorded by Dinneen on January 24, 1952, from Braman's Scrap Book, December 25, 1896, 42. Historians' Research Notes, card 239, recorded by Snell on February 6, 1954, from PSC, March 28, 1897, 3. Henry and Jerome Myers are listed: *Lippman's Dutchess County Directory* (Mt. Vernon, Poughkeepsie/Newburgh), (New York: Leonard Lippman, Geo. E. Schlude Jr., 1901–1905), 200.

134. Historians' Research Notes, card 243, recorded by Snell on February 6, 1954, from PSC, May 2, 1897, 5.

135. Historians' Research Notes, card 247, recorded by Snell on February 6, 1954, from PSC, May 30 1897, 7.

136. Historians' Research Notes, card 253, recorded by Snell on February 6, 1954, from PSC, June 20, 1897, 3. Historians' Research Notes, card 252, recorded by Snell on February 6, 1954, from PSC, June 13, 1897, 3; and VAMA Architectural Drawings Collection, 5002, Section VI., four drawings for a Concrete Steel Bridge/Melan Arch Construction, W.T. Hiscox & Co., Engineers and Contractors, New York.

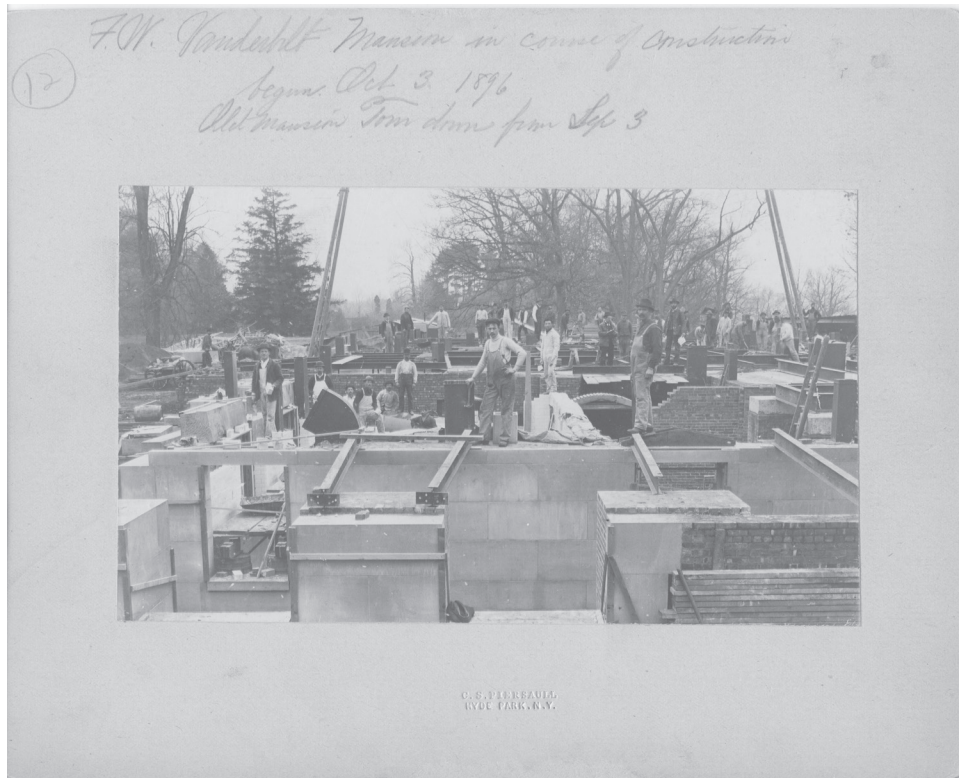


Figure 5. (Upper image) The basement under construction, circa 1896-97, from John B. Clermont, Norcross Brothers' superintendent of construction at the Vanderbilt Mansion. (Lower image) Clermont's construction photograph from the northwest. Note uncarved pilaster capitals. ROVA Archives.

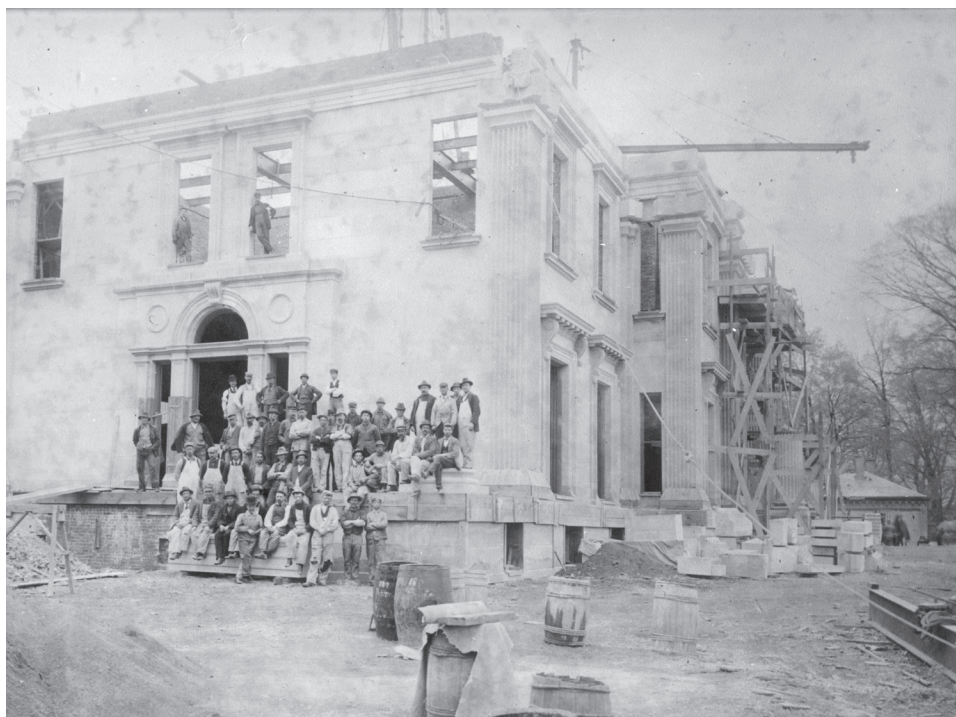


Figure 6. (Upper image) Clermont's construction photograph from the southeast. (Lower image) Clermont's construction photograph from the northeast. Note the column capital, carved and ready to be installed. ROVA Archives.

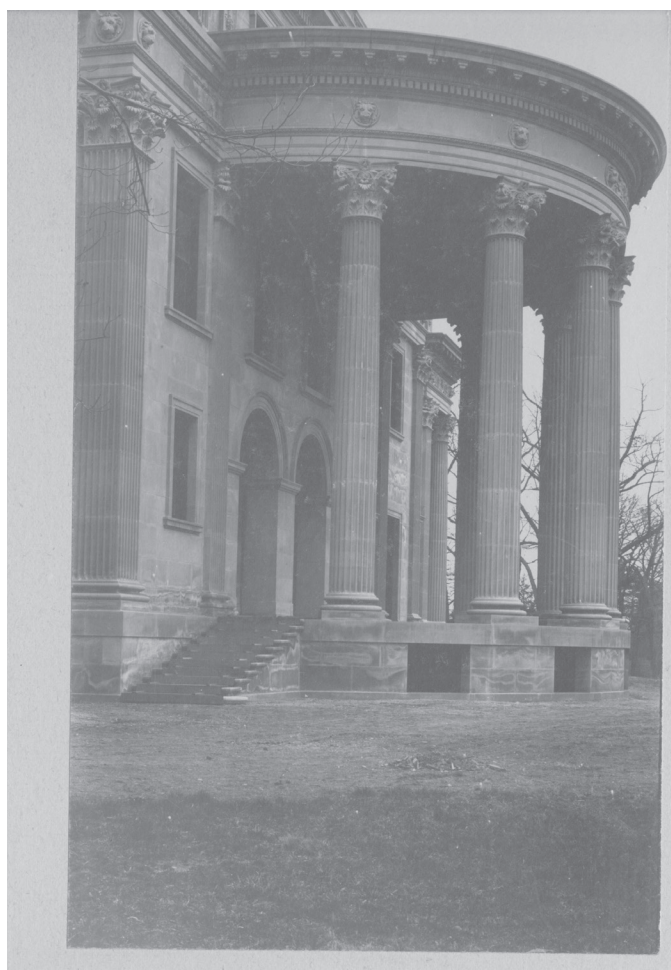
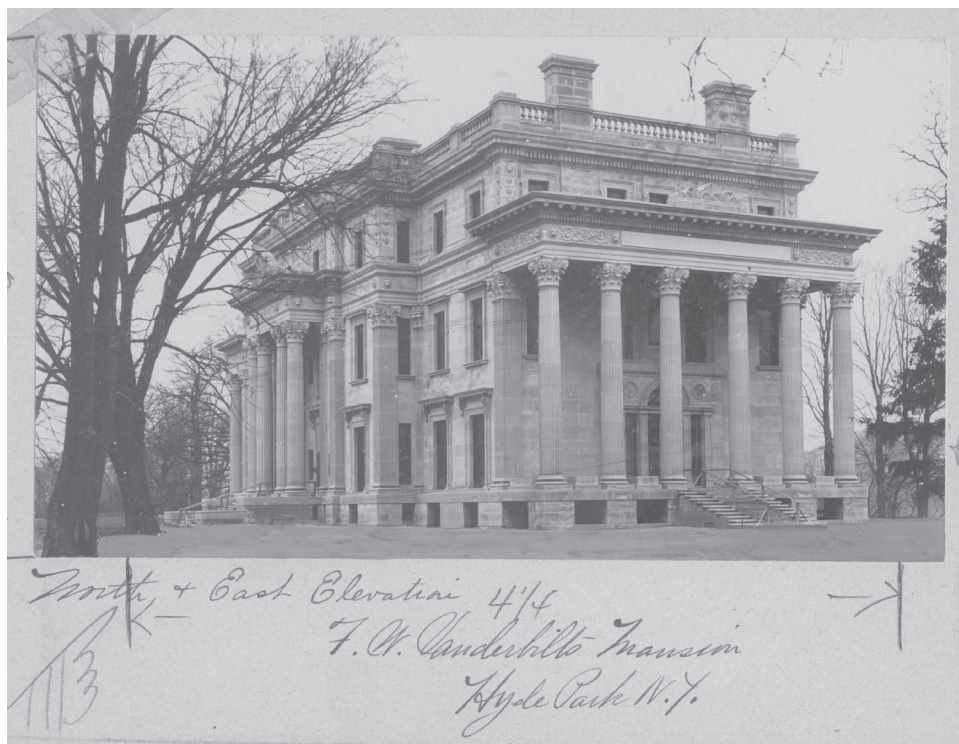


Figure 7. Clermont's construction photographs from the northeast (above) and of the west portico (left). ROVA Archives.

The first entry for the mansion's electrical contractor, Tucker Electrical Construction Company, appears in McKim, Mead & White's bill books on August 12, 1897.¹³⁷ About the same time, a month before Norcross Brothers finished the shell of the main house, "with the exception of the porches,"¹³⁸ the sculptors went on strike,¹³⁹ and six weeks later, the plasterers "employed on the Vanderbilt mansion, went on a strike."¹⁴⁰ The sculptors were likely those men who were executing the finishing work of the exterior lion's head medallions, foliated panels, and the pilaster capitals. The trade strikes, when combined with other archival information from the bill books and estate ledgers, also document the sequencing of construction. The estate ledgers suggest the imminent arrival of plumbers at this same time, since September and October entries record payment for specific plumbing fixtures for the basement, most of which are still extant.¹⁴¹ The presence of first the electricians, then plumbers, and then the plasterers suggests that the building had progressed far enough for the interior finish work to begin, at least on the lower floors, with plastering naturally following the electrical and plumbing work. The estate's 1896–1897 cash book records a November 10, 1897, payment for 875 pounds of plaster, plus 7 bags of plaster, but no further details were recorded.¹⁴²

Construction of any building is a complex orchestration of different trades, one following another as the structure rises from the foundation to the roof. The completion of the brickwork on the last day of October 31, 1897,¹⁴³ further confirms the natural progression of the construction. Since the interior brick walls of the upper floors would be the last to be completed, other trades would have started their work before the masons were finished, ascending behind them by floor level, in this case, the electricians followed by plumbers, followed by the plasterers.

Later records mark a clear shift to the more finished work on the interiors. Two mantels were received, and their freight paid on January 20, 1898¹⁴⁴; these may be the two Dining Room mantels that were selected by Stanford White in Europe.¹⁴⁵ The architectural-decoration firms first appear in the McKim, Mead & White bill books in an April 19, 1898, entry. Two firms are listed. One is Herter Brothers, which manufactured the woodwork and also installed and reproduced sections of the ceiling in the Dining Room, in addition to other work throughout the house. The other is A. H. Davenport, the firm that executed most of the Living Room work. An entry from Herter Brothers appears again on July 13, 1898, for the "Ceiling &c." (the Dining Room ceiling), along with entries for two muralists, H. Siddons Mowbray and Edward Simmons. The initial bill book entries for Mowbray include one for "Decoration" for \$7,500 and another for \$2,000, without any notations. Bill book entries for Simmons also include one for "Decoration" for \$3,000 and a later one, on September 23, 1898, for \$500 for "additions to contract." None of these entries identified the location of the work. The 1916 publication on murals attributes a "Decorative ceiling of salon, ten oval panels" to Mowbray and a "Decorative ceiling" to Simmons,¹⁴⁶ but further descriptions

137. McKim, Mead & White, bill books, vol. 5: 65.

138. Historians' Research Notes, card 265, recorded by Snell on February 6, 1954, from PSC, September 12, 1897, 3.

139. Historians' Research Notes, card 261, recorded by Snell on February 6, 1954, from PSC, August 15, 1897, 7.

140. Historians' Research Notes, card 266, recorded by Snell on February 6, 1954, from PSC, September 26, 1897, 3.

141. ROVA Archives, ledgers, Cash Book. Hyde Park 1896–1897, September 9, 1897, entry to the J. L. Mott Iron Works for three water closets, a boiler stand, a "Defiance" range, and boxing, 73; and October 12, 1897, entry to J. L. Mott Iron Works for a kitchen sink, a copper boiler, a water closet seat, a Nassau Bath, a fountain, and boxing, 81.

142. Cash Book. Hyde Park 1896–1897, November 10 [1897], 87.

143. Historians' Research Notes, cards 274, 276, recorded by Snell on February 6, 1954, from PSC, October 31, 1897, 3; and November 7, 1897, 3, respectively.

144. Ledgers, loose pages inserted in Cash Book 1896–1897, Jan. 20 [1898], 105.

145. Stanford White's direction for purchases came from Charles F. McKim and are recorded in "Memorandum Concerning Purchases for F. W. V.," Sept. 17, 1897, Stanford White Papers, Avery Architecture and Fine Arts Library, Box 19:2, from research by Nina Gray.

146. "Brochure of the Mural Painters."

are lacking. An autobiography by Mowbray, published privately and posthumously, records only the Living Room murals as his.¹⁴⁷

One of the puzzles that many of these sources pose is who paid whom for what. Papers relating to the Norcross Brothers business would probably be one key in solving this puzzle, but unfortunately, they apparently no longer exist, nor do Frederick Vanderbilt's personal account ledgers. The bill books suggest that McKim, Mead & White's commissions were based on all contractors' bills but do not suggest the firm made any direct payments to the contractors; traditionally, architectural firms approved invoices but owners made the payments. The bill books record only direct charges for plans and specifications and for travel disbursements, but they do not specify who would be the recipient of that bill; presumably, that person was Frederick Vanderbilt. The Herter Brothers account books alternately record entries related to this project for "Norcross Brothers for F. W. Vanderbilt," for "F.W. Vanderbilt, Hyde Park, N.Y.," and "Geo. Glaenzer & Co . . . for F. W. Vanderbilt's, Hyde Park," and one entry for "McKim Mead & White, . . . 1 Mirror boxed & shipped to F. W. Vanderbilt," implying several sources for direct charges and therefore payments. However, without Norcross Brothers' or Frederick Vanderbilt's personal account books, it may never be clear how the trail of money progressed.

The Herter Brothers account books are more specific about the work the firm performed, although the entry dates do not always coincide with the McKim, Mead & White bill books. In June 1898 Herter Brothers recorded an entry for work on the second and third stories:

all composite ornamentation in woodwork of 2^d story hall cornice, window and door trim of 2^d floor, excepting Mrs. Vanderbilts room & boudoir, 2^d floor; 25 stair brackets around well light, 3^d floor hall cornice, 3^d floor hall & guest rooms, cornices of 5 bedrooms on 3^d floor, all according to plans & specifications of Messrs. McKim, Mead & White, Archts. & models to be approved by them. Door trim on 2^d floor hall omitted.

A July 6, 1898, entry describes work in the Main Stair Hall: "Modelling [sic] casting & setting plaster cornice & ceiling & side walls in staircase hall in Keane's cement . . ." Estate ledger entries from this time period do not appear to supplement the construction work that was specific to the main house, but the *Poughkeepsie Sunday Courier* reported in its July 31 issue:

The decorations of the Vanderbilt mansion at Hyde Park are so gorgeous that the general public is excluded from the structure while the working men are putting them in. Most of the ceilings, wall tapestries, marble mantels, columns and pilasters, and the beautiful mosaics and woodwork were taken from Napoleon's former chateau of Malmaison, near Paris, which is now the property of Mr. Frederick Vanderbilt.¹⁴⁸

Note that, despite the rumors, nothing in the mansion came from Malmaison.

The columns, a few mantels, the Dining Room ceiling, and most likely all the tapestries were imported from Europe. Herter Brothers assembled and enlarged the old Italian ceiling for the Dining Room, beginning in August 1898.¹⁴⁹ This work continued at least through October, while construction and installation of other Dining Room elements and details also were underway and lasting into November and December.¹⁵⁰

147. Herbert F. Sherwood, ed., *H. Siddons Mowbray, Mural Painter, 1858-1928* (Stamford, Connecticut: privately printed by Florence Gertrude Millard Mowbray, 1928), 141.

148. Historians' Research Notes, card 306, recorded by Snell on February 7, 1954, from PSC, July 31, 1898, 8.

149. Herter Account Books, The Winterthur Library: Joseph Downs Collection of Manuscripts and Printed Ephemera, No. 85x225, vol. 8, no. 10869, August 1898, 29.

150. Herter Account Books, No. 85x225, vol. 18, no. 451, April 10, 1899, 67; No. 85x225, vol. 8, no. 10870, November 1898, 40; vol. 8, no. 10929, December 1898, 46; and vol. 8, no. 10935, December 1898, 47.

Some exterior work must have continued through the summer of 1898, when a stone carver fell from scaffolding.¹⁵¹ Norcross Brothers finished its contractual obligations in December, thereby indicating that all general construction was complete, but work on the mansion continued into the next year.

151 Historians' Research Notes, card 308, recorded by Snell on February 7, 1954, from PSC, September 4, 1898, 3.

VANDERBILT MANSION HISTORY, 1899-2018

One of the finest mansions in a region renowned for its numerous handsome estates has been built at Hyde Park-on-the-Hudson at a cost of more than \$250,000 by Frederick W. Vanderbilt. The house, which is of Grecian-Corinthian architecture, almost of the same style as the Marble House at Newport, overlooks the Hudson River from a high hill, rising about three hundred feet above the river, and is one of the most magnificent and best-appointed residences to be found anywhere along the banks of the great waterway. Besides, its style of architecture, copied from models of the Temple of Jupiter, preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is not often met with in places along the Hudson.

The house, which has three stories, is of Indiana buff limestone and covers an area of 173 by 90 feet. It contains more than one hundred rooms and is, of course, supplied with every modern convenience.

The mansion is surrounded on all sides by immense porches, each of which has six massive columns 35 feet high, except the east and main entrance, which has only four. Elaborate carvings cover the exterior, and the top of the house is finished with a Roman balustrade. One of the features of the interior is the main hall, which is oval in shape and contains a grand marble staircase. On the first floor there are a large reception-room, dining-room, parlor and a small suite used by Mr. Vanderbilt.

The upper floors are devoted to the large drawing-room and private suites for Mr. and Mrs. Vanderbilt and their guests.¹⁵²

—*New York Tribune*, June 11, 1899

THE COMPLETION OF THE MANSION AND ITS INTERIOR FINISHES, 1899

On March 10, 1899, the *Poughkeepsie Eagle* reported that “improvements and finishing touches on the Vanderbilt Mansion go steadily on. It has been found necessary to exclude all visitors from the place for some time past. But the number of skilled workmen and artists employed, conveys the impression that the inside will be as rich and beautiful as the outside is massive and splendid.”¹⁵³

According to John Clermont, the superintendent for Norcross Brothers, the construction contractors, his firm “completed all of their work on the Vanderbilt estate” on March 27, 1899.¹⁵⁴ Clermont noted that the Norcross Brothers’ contract included the outbuildings and that by the end of March 1899 were finished “down to the last detail” so that they were “ready for habitation.”¹⁵⁵ Born in Canada, John Clermont had gone to work for Norcross Brothers in 1890. He arrived at the Vanderbilt property on August 4, 1895, as the superintendent for the job, only his second project with the firm; he was just 22 years old. He initially oversaw the demolition of the Langdon residence, then the construction of the mansion and the other buildings on the

152. “F. W. Vanderbilt’s Home,” *New York Tribune Illustrated Supplement*, June 11, 1899.

153. Braman’s Scrapbook, Vol. 5, 75; *Poughkeepsie Eagle*, March 10, 1899, 8, cited in Snell, “Preliminary Report,” 29.

154. Snell to Superintendent, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS, Report on Visit with Mr. John B. Clermont, Oct. 14, 1954; VAMA—132, Box 1, VAMA 4611, 1939-1976, Central Files, Box 1.

155. John B. Clermont to Superintendent Palmer, Sept. 22, 1954, transcription in HRN, card 1147-a, cited in Snell, “Preliminary Report,” 13.

estate. He had received his common school education in New York City but later held a diploma in engineering and a certificate as an architect. Clermont later donated 29 photographs of the construction work at the estate to the National Park Service.¹⁵⁶

The *Poughkeepsie Sun Courier* noted in mid-April 1899 that “Mr. and Mrs. Vanderbilt will shortly take up their residence in the handsome mansion.” On May 14, 1899, the paper reported that “Mr. and Mrs. F. W. Vanderbilt entertained a large party of guests who came by special train at their mansion on Friday last,” May 12. Most likely, this was a reference to the Vanderbilts’ first house party at Hyde Park. Six weeks later, they were said to be again “entertaining a large party of guests at their handsome mansion.”¹⁵⁷

According to John Clermont, the exterior of the house had been finished by late March 1899. Photographs of the exterior dating from about 1899 (see Figure 7) confirm that the house itself and the porticos had been completed but that the wrought-iron railings had not yet been installed; instead, there were temporary railings of wood on the stairs of the north and west porches. Photographs taken slightly later show the railings installed (see Figure 8).

However, more work was required on the interiors. Included in the work that remained to be done was the ceiling of the dining room, which was only partially in place at the time of the May 12, 1899, house party. The painted panels for the ceiling did not arrive from Italy until May 24; they had cost \$7,180 including freight and duties.¹⁵⁸

In addition to the records of the craftsmen as described in the Background History, account books kept by the Manhattan firm of Herter Brothers indicate that their company did considerable work as part of the final interior decoration of the mansion. In January 1899 they had charged the Vanderbilts for “toning down gold side walls of Dining Room, as selected by Mr. McKim.”¹⁵⁹ In April 1899 they had posted charges for work in various parts of the house, including \$1,035 for putting up the following: in the “Elliptical Hall” “all plain hard finished plaster, including the 2 lobbies, and all the ornamental plaster of ceiling & cornices & band between caps, also the small upright panels over doors.” In addition, the firm was responsible for the “Ornamental plaster in vestibule, including plain hard finished plaster & wire lathing needed for ceiling,” along with the “mouldings on side walls of vestibule of Keane’s cement” for \$555. They also created the “Ornamental panels over doors & windows” and the “Ornamental oval window over door” at a cost of \$135.¹⁶⁰

In November 1899 the firm posted charges for altering windows in the Elliptical Hall “to open out” and changing the “transom light”; they also painted “sash inside & outside where necessary, of the Elliptical hall windows.”¹⁶¹ Also in April 1899 and then in the autumn of that year Herter Brothers posted many charges for work to complete the dining room, including cabinet work of Italian walnut, the herringbone oak floor and marble baseboard, altering the ceiling, “extra carving in flutes of pilasters,” gilding the carved work and other areas, adding transoms over the windows, and altering the windows so they would open outward. The Herter Brothers’ records also show a charge dated April 20, 1899, for “Stair rail covered with plush.”¹⁶²

156. Snell to Superintendent, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS, Report of Visit with Mr. John B. Clermont, Oct. 14, 1954. *Herald Statesman*, (Yonkers, N.Y.), Sept. 19, 1960.

157. PSC, April 23, 1899; May 14, 1899; June 25, 1899, cited in Snell, “Preliminary Report,” 29.

158. Nina Gray, Report on the Vanderbilt Mansion, Sept. 23, 1998, p. 15.

159. Herter Brothers Account Books., Vol. 18, p. 67; cited in Gray, 24.

160. Herter Brothers Account Books., Vol. 8, p. 47; cited in Gray, 9.

161. Herter Brothers Account Books, Vol. 18, p. 67; cited in Gray, 10, 23.

162. Herter Brothers Account Books, Vol. 8, p. 48; cited in Gray, 59.

Meanwhile, on July 1, 1899, less than two months after the May house party, Frederick Vanderbilt wrote to architect Stanford White, asking “If you can find time to run up here some day with McKim, on your return, I would like very much to have you do so and give your opinion on the proposed changes in the ceiling of the living room and the painting of hall ceiling frieze and walls. Mr. Garnsey is to commence work on the 5th inst. and Mowbray has agreed to tone down his paintings to make them look old.”¹⁶³ In October 1899 George Glaenzer and Co. did work on the wood flooring in the den, perhaps some refinishing.¹⁶⁴

REPAIRS AND CHANGES AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY, 1899-1904

Account books maintained by Thomas H. Howard, who lived on the estate with his wife, who was a niece of Louise Vanderbilt, contain references to mostly minor repairs carried out between 1899 and 1904, including painting and repairs to the skylight. One of the larger items was a payment of \$29.92 to C. Vanderveer for “irons for storm steps at mansion” on November 20, 1899; on the same day T. J. Herrick was paid \$22.80 for lumber for the mansion. In May 1902 an unidentified bathroom was repaired. Howard’s accounts also indicate that one carpenter was typically busy at the mansion several days a month from September 1902 through mid-April 1903; in September 1902 two painters were also often employed. Frederick Vanderbilt’s combination daybook and journal for 1903 shows payments for lumber in February and March 1903, as well as a payment for “New York for Architect level” in April 1903. Electric lamps and other electrical supplies were purchased in August and September 1903. More lumber was purchased between December and February 1904, but its use was not specified.¹⁶⁵

Other sources also indicate that repairs were being made at the turn of the century. Safety gates were added at the doorways opening onto the elevator shaft in 1900 after a new cook mistakenly opened an elevator door and fell down the elevator shaft to her death.¹⁶⁶ In July 1900 the *Poughkeepsie Sun Courier* stated that Henry Myers, a stone mason who had regularly done work for the Vanderbilts, had his men “cleaning the stones in the Vanderbilt mansion.”¹⁶⁷

The February 22, 1903, issue of the *Poughkeepsie Sunday Courier* stated that “a number of decorators from New York city are at work remodeling the interior of several rooms of the Vanderbilt mansion”; however, it is not clear whether or where in the house such work was being carried out.¹⁶⁸ It is known that the Herter Brothers personnel returned to the mansion in 1903 to renovate the linen room on the second floor and to provide a “Wardrobe set up off Dressing Room” in Mr. Vanderbilt’s Bath.¹⁶⁹ This work may have involved closing in the passage to the main hall and transforming it into a cedar closet.¹⁷⁰ In spring 1904 Herter Brothers repaired “woodwork in closets.” In addition, at an undisclosed time, new cabinets were installed above

163. FWV to Stanford White, July 1, 1899, Avery Box 19:2.

164. Herter Brothers Account Books, Vol. 18, p. 99; cited in Gray, 36.

165. Peggy Albee, transcriptions entitled Research, ROVA Lab, Dec. 14, 1998; includes transcriptions of journals and cash books [by T. H. Howard?] and FWR’s “Daybook & Journal of Material, Office of F. W. Vanderbilt, Hyde Park, NY, Oct. 1, 1901 to Dec. 31, 1902, in files at VAMA.

166. Historian’s Research Notes File, 383, 385; PSC, October 21, 1900; Braman’s Scrapbook, vol. 5, 101; *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 223.

167. PSC, July 1, 1900, cited in Snell, “Preliminary Report,” 29 and transcription card.

168. PSC, Feb. 22, 1903, transcription card. Snell, “Preliminary Report,” 30. Snell stated that this work was being done in the Gold Room, but it is not clear why; see *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 125-126.

169. 12/07/98 Chronology (from Box A). See also *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 126, note 671.

170. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 135.

the McKim, Mead and White cabinets in the east wardrobe, and the sitz bath was taken out of Frederick Vanderbilt's bathroom.¹⁷¹

A MAJOR REDESIGN, 1905-1906

Despite their overall delight in the Hyde Park house, the Vanderbilts were not entirely pleased with certain aspects of its design. They consulted interior decorators, including Jules Allard et Fils, about possible alterations, but as Frederick Vanderbilt explained in 1906, "so far the problem has not been solved to our satisfaction, & I fear will not be this time."¹⁷² Rather than engaging McKim, Mead and White to undertake renovations, the Vanderbilts turned to another prominent New York architect, Whitney Warren, who had recently designed the New York Yacht Club and was then at work at Grand Central Terminal.¹⁷³ Beginning in late 1905 or the opening days of 1906, Warren developed a scheme that would transform the halls on the first and second floors of the mansion and alter the living room. This would be the only major change that the Vanderbilts would make to the house.

Architect Charles McKim was not pleased to learn that Warren's firm, Warren and Wetmore, had accepted the Hyde Park commission. On January 5, 1906, Stanford White replied to Warren on behalf of his partner McKim, who was not well at the time:

We are in receipt of your letter stating that Mr. Vanderbilt had sent for you to do some work on his house at Hyde Park. This of course is a surprise to us and in view of McKim's relations with Mr. Vanderbilt and the work; it will be of great regret to him that its completion should pass out of his hands. We are certain, however, if Mr. Vanderbilt wishes you to do it, it is much better to leave you free to carry out his ideas in your own way.¹⁷⁴

Frederick Vanderbilt tried to explain the situation to McKim in a letter dated the next day, January 6, 1906:

Yours of 5th rec'd last evening on my return from the North & in reply would say that we asked Whitney Warren to suggest some plan for improving the appearance of the second floor hall, by changing the treatment of the well or the opening to the hall below. As you know we have never been satisfied with this, & at different times Allard & other decorators have looked it over with a view to improving it, but so far the problem has not been solved to our satisfaction, & I fear will not be this time.

I asked him also if he could suggest anything in the way of a terrace outside, around the house, as I understood from you this fall, that while you would be glad to give advice in a friendly way, you did not care to take it up as business.

My idea was that if Warren succeeded in submitting something that was pleasing to us, we would ask your opinion & if it met with your approval, let him go ahead

171. *Historic Furnishings Report* 2015, 402.

172. Frederick Vanderbilt to Charles McKim, Jan. 9, 1906, MMW Collection, Misc. M-3 (1968), copy in VAMA General File, MMW File, ROVA Curatorial Division. Original N-YHS Misc. M-3 (1968).

173. NYT, Jan. 25, 1943. Nina Gray and Pamela Herrick, "Decoration in the Gilded Age: The Frederick W. Vanderbilt Mansion, Hyde Park, New York," *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 10, no. 1 (2002-2003), 98-141. James Marston Fitch and Diana Waite, *Grand Central Terminal and Rockefeller Center: A Historic-critical Estimate of Their Significance* (New York: New York State, 1974).

174. SW to Whitney Warren, Jan. 5, 1906, SW Papers, Avery, Press Book 34.

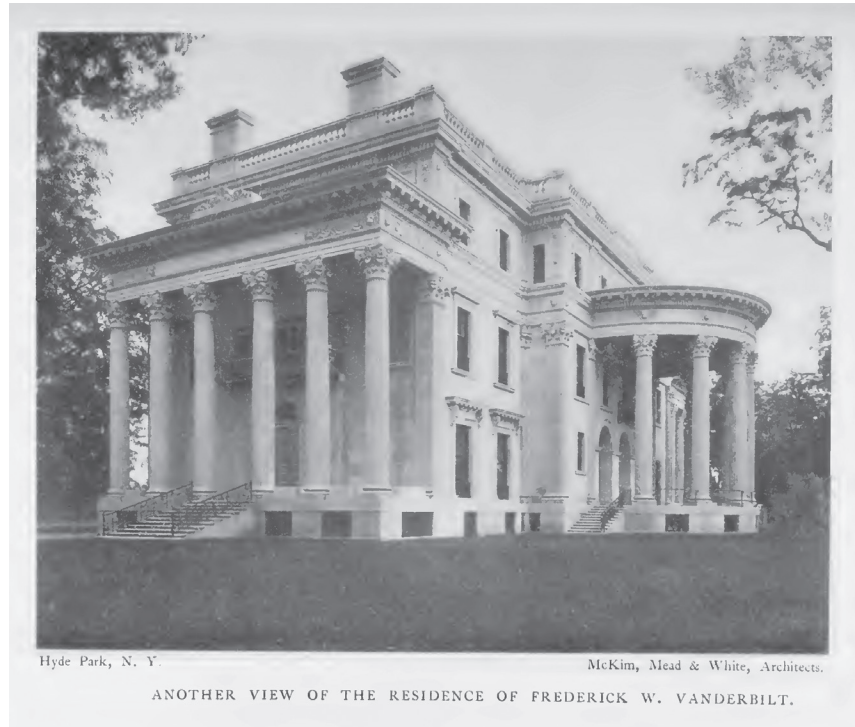


Figure 8. View from the northwest, circa 1899, soon after completion. Harry W. Desmond and Herbert D. Croly, *Stately Homes in America* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1903), 239.



Figure 9. This undated view of the west elevation of the mansion shows the porch furniture and marble urns in place. Note that there are no railings between the columns of the west portico. ROVA Archives.



Figure 10. An early view of the occupied mansion. Wurts Brothers Photographers, printed from original glass plate negative, McKim, Mead & White Architectural Record Collection, PR 42, Box 67, Department of Prints, Photographs, and Architectural Collections, The New-York Historical Society, photographic copy in park archives.



Figure 11. The south portico while the Vanderbilts were in residence. Palms and Trees are placed between the columns. Wurts Brothers Photographers, printed from original glass plate negative, McKim, Mead & White Architectural Record Collection, PR 42, Box 67, Department of Prints, Photographs, and Architectural Collections, The New-York Historical Society, photographic copy in park archives.

with it, & this is the way he understands it. Both my wife and I would indeed be sorry to do anything that would affect our friendly & pleasant relations, especially as we know how interested you are in the place, & our only desire is to save you the bother & worry of detail work. Had I known you were coming back so soon I would have waited and talked the matter over with you first.¹⁷⁵

Two days later, despite his displeasure, McKim replied to Vanderbilt, graciously promising that “any drawings that Warren may require, we shall be glad to place at his disposal, so please iron the matter from your mind”; McKim reassured Vanderbilt that he had written “simply because of my interest in your work.”¹⁷⁶ Warren’s office prepared at least a dozen architectural drawings for the alterations: a perspective, four elevations of the second-story hall, a plan of the balustrade, and ceiling details.

Whitney Warren’s alterations significantly changed the relationship of the first- and second-floor halls. He removed the laylight originally installed in the opening between the first and second stories and changed the shape of the original opening from a rectangle with rounded projections on the north and south ends to an elongated octagon that matched the shape of the second-story laylight in plan. He also removed the original coved laylight atop the second story and replaced it with a flat laylight filled with frosted glass. The original wood balustrade around the opening on the second floor was removed to make way for a “more robust balustrade composed of a double row of cast-stone Renaissance balusters and a wide, flat-topped rail ideal for the placement of plants.” Other changes in the second-floor hall included wood baseboards and picture rails.¹⁷⁷ A deep plaster cove, embellished with lattice-work panels and oval medallions with female figures, was added to the ceiling of the second floor, below the new laylight. Together, these alterations transformed the center of the house into two-story “grander, Renaissance inspired space, fitting of its new role as a visual extension of the first floor Hall.”¹⁷⁸

Preliminary work for Warren’s alterations began little more than two weeks after Vanderbilt had written to McKim: Herbert Shears, the estate superintendent, noted in his journal on January 25, 1906, that on that day he “Had men at Mansion getting ready for N.Y. men to take out skylights.”¹⁷⁹

Apparently, some aspects of the design were still being worked out as that work was underway, for Warren’s drawings were dated March 24, April 10, and April 26, 1906. Construction must have been well advanced in late August, when the *Poughkeepsie Sun Courier* reported “a large force of men are employed on the interior of the Vanderbilt mansion to be in readiness for the return of the family about the middle of September.”¹⁸⁰

Whitney Warren modified the large living room as well. The Warren and Wetmore drawings indicate that the chimney breasts were to be widened and ornamental plaster overmantels added

175. Frederick Vanderbilt to Charles McKim, Jan. 9, 1906, MMW Collection, Misc. M-3 (1968), copy in VAMA General File, MMW File, ROVA Curatorial Division. Original N-YHS Misc. M-3 (1968).

176. McKim to Vanderbilt, Jan. 11, 1906, Charles McKim Papers, Library of Congress, Reel 7; photocopy in Research Binder, FWVNHS, Historic Resource Study, Item 5.

177. *Historic Furnishings Report* 2015, 326.

178. Whitney Warren’s drawings include four elevations (#1-#4); a plan of the balustrade around the new floor opening (#5), and a ceiling plan (#10). Architectural Drawings Collection, ROVA Archives, cited in *Historic Furnishings Report* 2015, 321-322.

179. The removal of the original skylight was documented by Herbert Shears, Untitled Journal, 1906, Transcribed by Diane Seymour, Typescript, Shears Journals, ROVA Archives, January 25, 1906.

180. PSC, Aug. 26, 1906, 7, cited in Snell, “Preliminary Report,” 30.

above the existing mantelpieces.¹⁸¹ The overmantels, with a faux wood finish matching that of the adjacent paneling, were installed, but it appears that the chimney breasts were not widened.¹⁸² A butler who started work at the mansion at a later date recalled that the mantels had originally been so remarkably white that the Vanderbilts “had an expert man come up” to paint them.¹⁸³

The murals by H. Siddons Mowbray on the ceiling of the living room, which were to be toned down in 1899, were removed in 1906 as part of Whitney Warren’s alterations.¹⁸⁴ Other changes included the addition of tin gables in the fireplaces and of four tympana over the east and west windows. A panel with molding was added above the door to the foyer.¹⁸⁵ The gilding highlights on the ceiling and cornice were painted over.”¹⁸⁶ In addition, the ceiling mural by Edward Simmons in the reception room was painted over apparently in 1906; the Vanderbilts did not care for this painting.¹⁸⁷ The paint was removed from that mural in 1962.¹⁸⁸

The Warren alterations also included adding glazed doors and sidelights to the south foyer, which separates the Vanderbilts’ bedrooms from the main hall.¹⁸⁹

REPAIRS AND ALTERATIONS, 1908-1915

Account books kept by Herbert Shears, the superintendent of the estate, show that in 1908 the sum of \$94.43 was paid for “150 hours work & material papering Mansion”; no further detail was provided in the account books, but in a journal entry for April 17, 1908, he stated that “Clay has finished paper hanging,” although Shears did not specifically state that this work was being done at the mansion.¹⁹⁰ Shears’s journals for 1908 noted that electricians were also at work in the mansion, apparently beginning on April 13 and finishing up on April 16; Shears “was glad to see the last of them.” Later in April a man named Miller was “working on elevator in Mansion.”¹⁹¹

Shears’s accounts indicate that in April 1910 a payment of \$781.00 was made for “Wire screens for Pavilion & Mansion.”¹⁹² In 1911, bathroom tiling was undertaken at a cost of \$213.09. In January 1912 painting and plastering in the amount of \$359.75 was done. Other decorating was completed

181. Drawing # 6, 1/4 Scale Details of Living Room, # 7, 1/4 Scale Plan of Living Room, #8, South Elevation, #9, East and West Elevations, no #, East and West Elevations; *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 123-124.

182. *Historic Furnishings Report* 2015, 214, 224.

183. Alfred Martin interview, Dec. 3, 1949, cited in *Historic Furnishings Report* 2015, 219.

184. Whitney Warren drawings, Architectural Drawings Collection. ROVA Archives, cited in HSR, 123-124. This HSR cites two fragments of the mural survive at the mansion. Other pieces were given to the local theater company where they were used as scenery and eventually destroyed. Mowbray supposedly donated the sketch to the West Point Museum, but they have no record of this. See letters Archives of American Art from Mowbray to West Point. *Historic Furnishings Report* 2015, 32, 326.

185. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 123-124.

186. Paint tests by Peggy Albee, cited in *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 123-124.

187. A memorandum from the Acting Superintendent to the Regional Director, January 25, 1962, documents the discovery of the painting; the memo is cited in Albee, Draft HSR, 127, n. 677. As reported in the memo, Mrs. Alfred Martin said that she believed the mural was covered shortly before Mrs. Vanderbilt’s death in 1926. However, it may be more likely that Mrs. Van Alen Bruguere was correct on the 1906 date, as her information seems to be accurate on other subjects. Another memorandum, from Franklin R. Mullaly, Acting Superintendent, to the Regional Director, February 19, 1962, documents a conversation between Mr. Mullaly and Mrs. Louis Van Alen Bruguere.

188. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 127.

189. Paint samples by Peggy Albee, cited in *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 132.

190. Herbert Shears, Account Books, transcriptions in Historian’s Files, Series V, Shears’s Account Books.

191. Shears, Account Books. Shears, Journal, 1908.

192. Shears, Account Books.

in February 1912 for at a cost of \$356.96.¹⁹³ During the Vanderbilts' ownership, the third-floor quarters for the housekeeper and the lady's maid were improved.¹⁹⁴

In 1915 the toilet room adjacent to Frederick Vanderbilt's office was enlarged by constructing new partitions that extended into the office. The north doorway may have been fixed in place at this time and the "built-in desk moved to that wall. Built-in bookcases replaced the bench on the south wall." It was no longer possible to access the room from the entrance vestibule, giving Vanderbilt more privacy in that part of the house.¹⁹⁵

William Rider, a carpenter, was responsible for the alterations to the toilet room and office, according to a listing for this work.¹⁹⁶ Rider was paid \$46.06 for 98 hours of work on the project in January 1915; he and another worker, Harry Kimlin, continued work on the alterations in February 1915.¹⁹⁷

The ledger entries for January through March 1915 also list the supplies of materials for the altered toilet room. A mirror with beveled glass was supplied by the J. L. Mott Iron Works of New York along with a glass shelf and towel rack and a "Nickel-plate Brass Safety Match Holder Plate"; other equipment included a marble frame, presumably for the mirror; a marble slab, and a "basin fountain." There were two entries in the ledger for silver plating of the pipes and fittings.¹⁹⁸

REPAIRS AND RENOVATIONS, 1925-1936

In July 1925 the window sills at the mansion were painted.

After Louise Vanderbilt's death on August 1, 1926, Frederick continued to use the house, living in it seasonally and visiting on weekends throughout the year.¹⁹⁹ Guests were still welcome, as he noted in a 1930 letter to his sister Lila Vanderbilt Webb: "I still have the house open at Hyde Park & go up for Saturdays & Sundays. Mr. Anderson was with me last week. Spriggie & Daisy & their families have promised to go up for Thanksgiving if I do not close up before then."²⁰⁰

In August 1926 the mansion was painted "by contract," and over the next three months more painting was done. One small room in the third floor servants' quarters was converted to a bath, probably before 1927.²⁰¹ In January 1928 considerable painting was done, presumably on the interior, but no further details were provided. In 1931 the Mauve Bedroom was painted.²⁰²

193. 12/7/98 Chronology-Box A.

194. *Historic Furnishings Report* 2015, 32-33.

195. Ledger of Supplies, 6/1910-8/1916, 173-180, Vanderbilt Estate Records, ROVA Archives. *Historic Furnishings Report* 2015, 183.

196. Ledger of Supplies, 6/1910-8/1916, 173-180, Vanderbilt Estate Records, ROVA Archives.

197. *Historic Furnishings Report* 2015, 191-192.

198. *Historic Furnishings Report* 2015, 192.

199. Charles Snell, "Historical Handbook Manuscript: Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Hyde Park, New York," typescript, February 3, 1955, Resource Management Records, ROVA Archives, 10. Snell cites extensive research in the society pages of the PSC from 1890 to 1938; Andrews, *The Vanderbilt Legend*, 324; PSC, December 3, 1906, 2; September 21, 1913, 3; *Who's Who at the Leading Watering Places in Maine-1919*, 125, 109.

200. Frederick Vanderbilt to Lila Webb, October 29, 1930; Shelburne Farms Archives, Lila Osgood Webb Family Papers, Folder 33, Box 5.

201. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 175. Historian's Files, Series V, transcription of Shears, Account Books, July 1925, Aug. 1926.

202. Shears, Account Books.

In 1935 the wallpaper in the mauve room was changed. “The lavender and white embossed wallpaper was replaced. . . with an exact reproduction. Remnants of the original papers show a slightly darker and more purple ground. Remnants of the replacement paper were found in a box labeled ‘A.L. Diamant & Co., 1515 Walnut St., Philadelphia. Hand Blocked & Machine Printed Wallpapers and Cretonnes, Decorative Furnishing Accessories.’”²⁰³ The walls of the red bedroom were repapered in 1932 with a reproduction of the original wallpaper.²⁰⁴

According to Margaret Van Alen, Mr. Vanderbilt had sent her to Europe in 1935 to find replacement wallcoverings for the Mauve Bedroom, the Red Bedrooms, and the Blue Bedroom.²⁰⁵ “Notes kept during this period attributed to Frederick Traudt detail some of the work that was planned for 1935.”²⁰⁶ She later stated that she had found the patterns used in the original papers in those bedrooms.²⁰⁷ In April 1935 Frederick Vanderbilt told his sister Lila Webb that “I came up last week & again yesterday & camped out, having one room ready on the 3rd floor & the [illeg.] & hall downstairs; but now the house is nearly finished.”²⁰⁸

A hand-powered elevator had been part of the mansion since its original construction, and “its location in the service stairwell may indicate that it was not intended for the use of guests.”²⁰⁹ The elevator had rosewood paneling and “wired glass in the diamond-shaped window.”²¹⁰ It was electrified in 1936 by the Otis Elevator Company; the final revised shop drawings are dated July 7, 1936. Installation was completed on November 1, 1936.²¹¹ When it was electrified, a line was run underground to connect with service from Hudson Gas and Electric Co. along the Albany Post Road.²¹²

203. Historian’s Research Notes File, 1941-67, Series V.A., Shears, Account Books, *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 146.

204. “She stated that in 1935 she went to Europe at the request of her uncle. She tried to match the wallpaper on that room, the Blue Room and the Red Room. She was able to secure in 1935 the same wallpaper that had been placed in the room in 1898.” (Bruguiere, 1948.) While Mrs. Van Alen Bruguiere remembered the year as 1935, it was more likely 1932. The shipping box from A.L. Diamant & Co., 1515 Walnut Street, Philadelphia has a shipping label on it dated February 1932. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 144.

205. George A. Palmer, Superintendent, Memorandum, May 18, 1948, 3. ROVA Archives.

206. *Historic Furnishings Report* 2015, 112. “Fred Traudt Composition Book,” 1935-1943, ROVA Archives. Traudt (1893–1967) had been postmaster at the Hyde Park post office, where he served from December 16, 1929, until February 24, 1934, as a Republican appointment under Herbert Hoover. He left that position when Franklin D. Roosevelt took office and, as per tradition, appointed a Democrat. It was soon after that job ended that he began work for Mr. Vanderbilt, and he continued to work on the site for the National Park Service until 1963. *Poughkeepsie Journal*, Jan. 21, 1967, 9; and Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1832–1971. NARA Microfilm Publication, M841, 145 rolls. Records of the Post Office Department, Record Group Number 28. Washington, D.C.: National Archives; available on Ancestry.com.

207. George A. Palmer, Superintendent, Memorandum, May 18, 1948. Resource Management Records, Superintendent’s Monthly Reports, *Historic Furnishings Report* 2015, 412.

208. Frederick Vanderbilt to Lila Webb, April 27, 1935. Shelburne Farms Archives, Lila Osgood Webb Family Papers; copy at VAMA archives—file VAMA Paint History.

209. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 222.

210. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 222.

211. Otis Elevator Co., shop drawing, July 7, 1936; Summary of Contract Data for Service Records, Nov. 1, 1936; photocopies of originals provided by Otis Elevator Co., Bloomfield, Ct., Aug. 28, 1996; photocopies in file VAMA, Room by Room I Interior.

212. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 197.

MARGARET VAN ALLEN INHERITS THE ESTATE, 1938-1939

Frederick Vanderbilt continued to use the Hyde Park mansion until his death on June 29, 1938, at the age of 82.²¹³ He bequeathed that property and much of his estate to Margaret Van Alen.²¹⁴ She stayed at the mansion on various occasions and moved some furnishings out of the mansion and others to the mansion from her other residences. She apparently made no other changes to the mansion beyond the furnishings.²¹⁵

A New York appraisal firm, the P. J. Curry Company, conducted a detailed inventory of the mansion's contents in 1938, and Rodney McKay Morgan took photographs of many of the rooms for real-estate sales purposes.²¹⁶ The *New York Times* published photographs of the public rooms in 1940, and there is an album of snapshots assembled by Fred and James Traudt in the site's archives from 1940.²¹⁷

Not long after inheriting the Hyde Park estate, Margaret Van Alen attempted to sell the property. She also explored the possibility of donating it to New York State, but the "state had recently acquired the nearby Mills estate in Staatsburg and did not want to take on the additional property." In 1939 she indicated to her Hyde Park neighbor and Franklin D. Roosevelt, that if she failed to find a "satisfactory buyer, she would be willing to donate the estate to a worthy organization as a memorial to her uncle."²¹⁸ Roosevelt, who was serving his second term as President of the United States, would become actively involved in the transfer of the property to the federal government and in the planning for opening the property to the public. In 1940 Van Alen donated the house and a part of the estate to the west of the Albany Post Road to the National Park Service. The farm on the property was sold.

THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE'S INITIAL INVESTIGATIONS, 1939-1940

In response to instructions from Col. John R. White, regional director of the National Park Service, two officials from the National Park Service—Francis S. Ronalds, the acting supervisor of historic sites, and L. F. Cook, the acting chief of forestry—visited the Vanderbilt Mansion on October 3 and 4, 1939, to investigate and analyze the property.²¹⁹ They filed a detailed report the day after their visit, explaining first that Herbert Shears, the former superintendent of the estate, had told them that the current owner of the estate, Margaret Van Alen, "had recently refused an

213. *Historic Furnishings Report* 2015, 79.

214. *Historic Furnishings Report* 2015, 112-113.

215. *Historic Furnishings Report* 2015, 4, 79. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, xxvi.

216. *Historic Furnishings Report* 2015, 113. P.J. Curry Company, "Inventory of Personal Property At Hyde Park, New York," typescript, 1938. Photographs by Ronald McKay, ROVA Archives. Alfred Hopkins, "Inventory of the Principal Articles of Furniture and Furnishings Contained in the Main Rooms on the First and Second Floors in the Residence of the late Frederick W. Vanderbilt at Hyde Park, New York," June 5-7, 1940, Resource Management Records, ROVA Archives.

217. NYT, 1940. Traudt Family Album, ROVA Archives. *Historic Furnishings Report* 2015, 113.

218. Charles Snell, "An Administrative History of Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Hyde Park, New York, 1939-1955," typescript, June 9, 1956, 2. Snell cites letter printed in Elliott Roosevelt, ed., *F.D.R., His Personal Letters, 1928-1945*, Volume II (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1950), 927-928.

219. John R. White papers, 1879-1961, University of Oregon Libraries, Special Collections and University Archives.

offer for the property, and is willing to donate grounds, buildings, and furnishings to the Federal Government.”²²⁰

“Although no great event of national monument [sic] occurred at Hyde Park,” the Ronalds and Cook report continued,

this estate is indicative of a phase of American social history which might well be preserved. The house and grounds represent a way of life, a style, and even a habit of thought which belongs to our past as much as does Colonial Williamsburg. It appears to us that posterity would thank the Government for preserving such a site, rather than necessitating the future restoration of some example or other of the period. It is needless to point out that however well done, a restoration is not the same thing as the original.

The mansion contains many really lovely objects and regardless of any personal feelings the taste of the whole is that of the period. The house, carriage-house, boat-house, pavilion, and grounds, all in excellent condition, could not fail to be of great interest to the present day visitor. A fee, collected at the Gate House, could easily be charged. How far the proceeds would go toward taking care of the cost of maintenance, it is impossible to say. No doubt the cost would be considerable as it would require at least 3 men to maintain the grounds.²²¹

Ronalds and Cook were invited to meet with President Franklin D. Roosevelt at Hyde Park later that month and to tour the Vanderbilt estate with him. Their follow-up report, filed on October 24, 1939, described Roosevelt’s personal interest in the property and their discussions that day with Mrs. Van Alen:

The President received us most cordially and said that he had read our report with great interest and thoroughly approved of the idea of conserving historic sites of social and economic interest. He agreed that the Frederick Vanderbilt estate is an excellent example of a phase of American life that is now past. He also felt that the estate would be of great public interest, and that if it became Government property a visitor fee should be collected at the gate house. The President spent some time outlining the history of the Hyde Park area and the wealth of things of historical interest in the vicinity. He mentioned that several other estates might eventually be offered to the State or Federal Government.

The President drove us to the Vanderbilt estate and discussed the various buildings on the property as well as the fine specimens of trees, especially hemlocks, which apparently are his favorites. We met the present owner, Mrs. Van Alen, and her son, who accompanied us on our return to the President’s home.

Mr. Herbert Shears, Superintendent of the Vanderbilt estate, told us that he felt certain Mrs. Van Alen would be willing to donate all of her property at Hyde Park. However, we feel that if her gift were accepted, that part of the estate lying to the west of riverside of the Albany-Post road would be sufficient.²²²

Just three weeks later, on November 15, 1939, Secretary of the Interior Harold L. Ickes reported to Roosevelt that the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments had passed a resolution stating that the estate “as representative and illustrative of its period, is of national significance in the economic, sociological, and cultural history of this country”;

220. Memorandum, from Francis S. Ronalds and L. F. Cook to Colonel White, Oct. 5, 1939. Ronalds was chief historian with the National Park Service during the 1930s and was a founder of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; *Washington Post*, Feb. 20, 1985.

221. Memorandum, from Francis S. Ronalds and L. F. Cook to Colonel White, Oct. 5, 1939,

222. Memorandum from Ronalds and Cook to the Director, Oct. 24, 1939.

the resolution also stated that given the “budgetary problems” of the National Park Service, the Advisory Board recommended “the acceptance of the gift, provided there is a reasonable prospect that the cost of maintenance can be met by admission fees or other appropriate means.” If Mrs. Van Alen formally offered the property to the National Park Service, then this resolution would make it possible for the federal government to accept the estate as a national historic site.²²³

Another report, filed by Reynolds and Cook on December 4, 1939, summarized the building systems at the house:

The mansion, built in 1898, is of fire-resistant reinforced concrete construction. Steam heating plant in basement. Independent hydroelectric plant available for lighting if necessary, but connection with commercial power. Intercommunication telephone system. High pressure fire protection water system. The mansion includes approximately 17 rooms, 12 baths, 14 servants’ rooms.²²⁴

A Park Service engineer, Alfred D. Curradi, evaluated the condition of the overall infrastructure in April 1940. The water supply came from Crum Elbow Creek and was stored in a standpipe on the farm portion of the property. A water-powered pump pumped the water from the standpipe to the mansion. Curradi reported that there was “a sand filter in the basement of the mansion and a storage tank of approximately 5000 gallon capacity in the attic.” The water flowed by gravity from this tank to the plumbing fixtures in the house. The family relied on “drinking water in bottles from world famous springs,” while others at the house used water carried “from an artesian well located at the greenhouse.” There was no provision for treating sewage: raw sewage from the mansion and the Pavilion was discharged directly into the Hudson River.²²⁵

By 1940 the mansion was supplied with electricity by the Central Hudson Gas and Electric Co. of Poughkeepsie. It replaced the service originally supplied by the estate’s own powerhouse, which had been engineered and build by W. T. Hiscox and Co. in 1897. A separate 230-volt power line for the elevator, which was electrified on 1936, ran underground from the Albany Post Road to the mansion; the voltage was “stepped down to 220V by means of a transformer located at the mansion.” Telephone service to the mansion also ran underground from the powerhouse.²²⁶

Opening the mansion to the public for tours was initially planned for July 1, 1940, just nine months after Ronalds and Cook had filed their initial report; however, the opening was delayed until July 30. Gertrude S. Cooper had been appointed the first superintendent of what was officially known as the Vanderbilt National Historic Site on July 10, 1940. She was the first woman to be appointed superintendent of a Park Service site in the country. She and her husband were “long time residents and friends” of President Roosevelt at Campobello in Maine.²²⁷

In anticipation of opening the mansion to the public, a Park Service architect had recommended that a “simple metal railing should be installed in the entranceway of each room that is to be shown to the public (first and second floors only), allowing ample space within the railed

223. Harold L. Ickes to FDR, Nov. 15, 1939, copy in VAMA, Initial Planning for Use and Development of the Vanderbilt NHS, 1939-1940.

224. Memorandum from the Assistant Chief of Forestry to the Director, Dec. 4, 1939.

225. Alfred D. Curradi, Report on Existing Utilities on the Frederick W. Vanderbilt Estate, Hyde Park, New York, April 30, 1940, copy in VAMA, Initial Planning for Use and Development of the Vanderbilt NHS, 1939-1940.

226. Alfred D. Curradi, Report on Existing Utilities on the Frederick W. Vanderbilt Estate, Hyde Park, New York, April 30, 1940, copy in VAMA, Initial Planning for Use and Development of the Vanderbilt NHS, 1939-1940.

227. NYT, July 11, 1940.

enclosure to permit a complete view of the interior,” rather than allowing groups to walk through the rooms.²²⁸

President Roosevelt remained involved with the federal government’s management of the estate. He personally approved the management plan submitted by Park Service personnel in June 1940 and added to it, especially his ideas about the grounds and the personnel who would be employed at the site. He visited twice that summer, on July 29 and again on August 20. First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt came weekly, bringing guests.²²⁹

On July 10 and 11, 1940, a party of Park Service managers visited the site and within a week had prepared recommendations for treating the grounds and the mansion. The report stated that the “house and all its contents seem to be in excellent condition. Close examination may disclose that certain repairs or maintenance work is needed in a few places, but, in general, it may be said that the mansion and practically all the other structures on the estate at the present time are in sound condition.” “The main problem” regarding the mansion, the report continued, “concerns the manner of showing it to the visitor and of safeguarding its contents against vandalism and possible theft.” The report contained a few photographs of the exterior of the house.²³⁰ A more comprehensive set of photographs was taken of the exterior and interior in July 1940 by Melvin J. Weig, a Park Service historian.²³¹ During the summer Herbert Shears, the former superintendent, turned over to the National Park Service the “architectural, landscape architectural and engineering plans relating to the Mansion, gardens and grounds.”²³²

In late summer and early fall of 1940 National Park Service personnel undertook more careful analyses of the mansion. In August 1940 Charles W. Andrae, an architectural engineer, submitted a report in which he outlined many problems with the mechanical systems on the estate. The section on the mansion stated that

This building is now heated by a two-pipe, low-pressure, steam system, heat being supplied to the first and second floor by means of a gravity, hot-air, non-recirculating system, the outside cold air being heated by steam heaters located in the ducts.

The basement and third floors are heated by direct exposed radiators.

The steam is generated by two (2) 50 HP brick set return tubular steel boilers, installed about 1898 by Baker-Smith Company, of New York City.

The present heating system, due to age has about reached the end of its serviceability and, will have to be replaced shortly with a new and more modern system.

228. Ronald F. Lee to Coordinating Supt., Morristown National Historical Park, June 19, 1940, VAMA Initial Planning for Use and Development of the Vanderbilt NHS, 1939-1940, Cooper/Reynolds. Ralph W. Emerson, Resident Architect, Branch of Plans & Design, to Regional Landscape Architect, need rest of this. Ronalds to Gertrude S. Cooper, July 23, 1940, VAMA Initial Planning for Use and Development of the Vanderbilt NHS, 1939-1940, Cooper/Reynolds.

229. E. K. Burlew to Mr. Demaray, July 4, 1940, copy in VAMA, Initial Planning for Use and Development of the Vanderbilt NHS, 1939-1940. Cooper to the Director, Sept. 4, 1940, File ROVA VAMA Correspondence, May 1940-Nov. 1941. Cooper to the Director, Sept. 4, 1940, File ROVA VAMA Correspondence, May 1940-Nov. 1941.

230. Roy Edgar Appelman, Report on Visit to Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, July 10-11, 1940, Together with Recommendations, copy in VAMA, Initial Planning for Use and Development of the Vanderbilt NHS, 1939-1940.

231. Cooper to Ronalds, July 23, 1940, copy in VAMA, Initial Planning for Use and Development of the Vanderbilt NHS, 1939-1940.

232. Kenneth B. Simmons to the associate landscape architect Ewald, Aug. 6, 1940, copy in VAMA, Initial Planning for Use and Development of the Vanderbilt NHS, 1939-1940. Walter E. J. Ewald to Regional Landscape Architect, Job status report and recommendations for estate improvements, Sept. 25, 1940, copy in VAMA, Initial Planning for Use and Development of the Vanderbilt NHS, 1939-1940.

The boilers are not in very good condition. Several tubes are leaking but can probably be repaired to last through another season. The drums have also been patched.

The boilers will have to be cut in pieces in order to remove the same from the building, and new boilers will have to be of the sectional type.

The circulation of the entire system of steam piping is poor; some of the rooms are reportedly very cold when the heat is on, part of this being due, no doubt, to the lack of weather stripping, and loose fitting doors and windows.²³³

Andrae thought that the heating “system can be repaired sufficiently to operate for a season or two at a small cost,” but that a “complete shutdown” could happen at any time. He included a list of the repairs that would be needed before the existing system could be put in operation.²³⁴

Andrae also reported on the plumbing system, which, he stated, “has often given trouble.” Among the problems were leaks, some filled with “wooden plugs.” The plumbing required “extensive repairs and general overhauling”; he expected that it would be serviceable for only “a limited time.” Similarly, the electrical wiring needed attention. He noted that the wires had been “installed in the old manufactured gas piping” and that initially DC current had been generated on the estate. He confirmed that when the new service for the elevator had been installed, the mansion was connected to the new feeder line. He also noted that “numerous fixtures are now untouchable due to ‘shorts.’” The telephone service to the house also remained out of order. Overall, he stated, the “wiring will probably suffice until a complete survey can be made and new system” designed.²³⁵ A new water-treatment and water-supply system, as well as sewage-treatment facilities, were needed. He recommended that a “detailed survey be made of the building, and plans drawn, new heating, wiring, and plumbing systems designed, using present equipment as far as practicable, where found in usable condition.” He also recommended that a “fire protection or detection system should be installed as a precautionary and safety measure.”²³⁶

Ralph W. Emerson, an architect, was part of the National Park Service team that had visited the mansion on August 9 and 10, 1940, “for the express purpose of making a complete survey of existing conditions, as well as a study of future requirements.” Emerson filed a separate inspection report on September 25, 1940, noting that the first and second floors of the mansion were open to the public. He reported that the “building seems to be structurally sound in all respects, and since it has been occupied and heated, at least partially, no signs of serious deterioration are evident.” Experience to date “had proven that railed enclosures are not needed, nor are they desired, to restrict the visitor at the entrance to each room,” although protective floor coverings were needed. Emerson recommended considering the “installation of two small public toilet units in the basement” and using a “portion of the large basement space for office purposes,” an arrangement that could “be accomplished with little or no alteration.” Minor maintenance items, “such as pointing, caulking, and pointing,” would be “required at periodic intervals,” and weather stripping could also be considered.²³⁷

Another report, filed at the same time by associate engineer James W. Head Jr., recommended that the National Park Service purchase water from the Hyde Park fire district rather than install

233. Charles W. Andrae to Chief of Planning, Mechanical Equipment Report, Aug. 28, 1940, copy in VAMA, Initial Planning for Use and Development of the Vanderbilt NHS, 1939-1940.

234. Ibid. [Mechanical Equipment Report, Aug. 28, 1940]

235. Ibid. [Mechanical Equipment Report, Aug. 28, 1940]

236. Ibid. [Mechanical Equipment Report, Aug. 28, 1940]

237. Emerson to Regional Landscape Architect, Report, Sept. 25, 1940, copy in VAMA, Initial Planning for Use and Development of the Vanderbilt NHS, 1939-1940.

a new treatment facility on site. As stop-gap measure to ensure water for washing was “as pure as possible,” he advocated borrowing a hypo-chlorinator from another division of the National Park Service. Head also stated that the discharge of raw sewage from the mansion needed to be “remedied at once” and noted that it was likely that the roof drains from the mansion emptied into the sewage line, complicating the problem. He recommended the installation of a septic system and then either connecting the roof drains to the line downhill from the septic system or “dumping the storm water at grade as soon as possible after leaving the building.”²³⁸

These reports and related estimates had been prepared so that funding for the corrective work could be incorporated into the regular appropriation for the site for the next fiscal year.²³⁹ A more detailed survey of the mechanical and supply systems was made that fall, and emergency temporary repairs were made to the heating system during this time. The survey noted that the heating system and “especially the boilers, are in very poor condition.” The accompanying recommendations included changing the heating fuel from coal to oil; adding public toilets at the mansion; installing new electric wiring, a “centrally controlled electric distribution system,” and “commercial telephone service”; weather-stripping windows and doors; puttying glass; and “painting of all exterior window frames and sash.”²⁴⁰

As predicted, problems with one of the boilers in the mansion arose during the winter of 1940-1941.²⁴¹

WARTIME REPAIRS AND IMPROVEMENTS, 1941–1946

VANDERBILT MANSION AS SECRET SERVICE HEADQUARTERS, 1941-1945

America’s involvement in World War II required changes at many levels at the Vanderbilt Mansion. The site’s superintendent, Gertrude Cooper, donated 2,800 pounds of copper and 50,215 pounds of steel to the American Red Cross. It is also possible that she donated the pot rack in the mansion’s Kitchen, the copper sink from the Butler’s Pantry, and the cast-iron beds from the servants’ bedrooms.²⁴²

During World War II the mansion took on a new role as headquarters for President Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s Secret Service detail. Nevertheless, during this time,

The park continued to bring tours through the mansion, even as the third floor and basement were given over to the Roosevelt entourage, and later, to the Military Police. The work to accommodate these agents began March of 1941: rewiring the bathrooms, updating the plumbing systems, and reworking the heating, and new beds and other furniture were purchased for the rooms.²⁴³

238. James W. Head Jr., Special Report, Sept. 24, 1940, copy in VAMA, Initial Planning for Use and Development of the Vanderbilt NHS, 1939-1940.

239. L. M. Gray to Acting Regional Director, Oct. 23, 1940, copy in VAMA, Initial Planning for Use and Development of the Vanderbilt NHS, 1939-1940.

240. F. E. Whitehouse to Regional Engineer, Oct. 22, 1940, copy in VAMA, Initial Planning for Use and Development of the Vanderbilt NHS, 1939-1940.

241. Narrative Monthly Report for the Chief of Planning, March 19, 1941, File ROVA VAMA Correspondence, May 1940-Nov. 1941.

242. Receipt from Hyde Park Chapter of the American Red Cross, November 18, 1942. Resource Management Records, Maintenance Division Records, “Repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion 1942–1951,” ROVA Archives.

243. Snell, “Administrative History,” 47.

The President's Secret Service detail, which ranged from 16 to 35 men and their staff, as well as the communications staff, moved into the third floor and perhaps the basement rooms of the mansion; more agents moved into the Coach House.²⁴⁴

According to the National Park Service's architectural engineer, Charles W. Andrae,

The need to adequately house the Roosevelt entourage led to the President's Emergency Project No. 1, to create sleeping quarters for forty-five people on the third floor, and ten people in the basement. In the midst of war, available craftsman or materials were not readily available, and the project took months to complete. Modifications were made to the Butler's and Servants' Pantries; the bathtubs were removed from the basement and third floor bathrooms, and showers installed; new electrical fixtures installed; and the plumbing and heating were upgraded, and the roof drainage reworked.²⁴⁵

Superintendent Cooper explained that "the staff and agents slept on a combination of the Vanderbilt brass beds, army cots, and bunks." To further accommodate the group, Cooper later ordered 45 beds, mattresses, and springs from Sears, Roebuck and Company.²⁴⁶

Other changes to the mansion to accommodate the Secret Service were relatively minor. For instance, the small plates above the doorways that identify the keys for the doors may have been installed during the World War II period.²⁴⁷ Other changes were largely related to utilities. On January 27, 1942, Frederick Traudt noted, "Telephone Co. putting in new cable for Secret Service." On January 30, he noted, "Prepared Mansion 3rd floor for Secret Service." On February 1, 1942, he noted, "Secret Service men moved in."²⁴⁸

During this period some of the guest room furnishings were removed from the third floor.²⁴⁹ The open dumbwaiter in the stairwell was dismantled due to relocating of the roof drain through the service stair.²⁵⁰

A January 20, 1943, report summarized the work completed on the mansion and the Coach House in the amount of \$48,971.37.²⁵¹ The scope of that work was restated at that time as follows:

The removal of the furniture from the third floor bedrooms, and the re-furnishing of these rooms to provide sleeping quarters for 45 persons.

Additional sleeping quarters were provided for 10 persons in the basement bedrooms.

The bathrooms on the third floor and in the basement were revised to provide additional bathing facilities.

The old steel heating boilers, and domestic hot water heater in the subbasement, being about 44 years old and in poor condition, were removed and replaced with new coal burning equipment.

244. Transcript of interview with Louise Hackmeister, September 6, 1951. Sound Recordings Collection, ROVA Archives.

245. Charles W. Andrae, Architectural Engineer, "Final Report on Improvement of and Repairs to Buildings and Facilities at the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Hyde Park, New York," January 20, 1943. Repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion, 1942-1951, ROVA Archives.

246. Memorandum from Gertrude S. Cooper, Superintendent, August 1, 1942. "Repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion, 1942-1951," ROVA Archives.

247. Hassett, *Off the Record with F.D.R. 1942-1945*, 172.

248. *Historic Resource Study 2000/2008*, 175 cited James Traudt, Typescript of taped interview, (date unknown), Oral History Collection, ROVA Archives.

249. Supt. Palmer's Monthly Narrative Report for November 1945; as cited in Snell, "Administrative History," 101.

250. Snell, "Administrative History," 47.

251. Snell, 48. Architectural Engineer Charles W. Andrae's Final Report on Improvement and Repairs to Building and Facilities at Vanderbilt Mansion NHS, Jan. 20, 1943. 12 pages.

The Superintendent's office in the basement was renovated and refinished. The first and second floors of the Mansion, now used for exhibition purposes and open to the public, were not disturbed by the rehabilitation work.

The work in the Mansion was delayed considerably by the necessary emergency planning to have all conveniences available on short notice, (usually 1/2 day) in order that the Government Agency occupying the sleeping quarters would have accommodations similar to hotel service during their periodic visits.²⁵²

A conditions survey of the mansion was undertaken by federal officials on June 2, 1943. The report included room-by room descriptions.²⁵³

The secretarial staff associated with the Secret Service stayed until 1944, but the Military Police remained at the Vanderbilt site until the end of the war, leaving in November 1945.²⁵⁴

IMPROVEMENTS TO UTILITIES AND MECHANICAL SYSTEMS, 1941-1942

UTILITY IMPROVEMENTS, 1941. Improvements to utilities had begun prior to the Secret Service occupation of the mansion. The staff at the property noted in their January 24, 1941, monthly report that by late January 1941 members of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) had begun work on utility-related projects:

A small CCC crew is now engaged in the work of excavation for the fuel oil storage tank and the trench for the utility lines between the Mansion and Pavilion. This work is proceeding rather slowly, due to the frozen condition of the ground, and the fact that additional CCC labor is not available at this time.²⁵⁵

In addition, the National Park Service undertook renovations of the sewer lines to "run from the two basement bathrooms to a proposed new sewage disposal system. All other drains, including roof drains and service sinks, would continue to empty into the river through the existing sewer line."²⁵⁶

An additional \$3,000 was allotted to a water-system project, as reported by the acting associate director, Hillory A. Tolson, in March 1941. On May 3 the acting assistant regional director, A. P. Bursley, reported that:

The estimated bill of materials, skilled labor, and man day estimates for the sewage disposal systems of the Mansion and Pavilion were: for material \$650, for skilled labor \$100, and that 1500 CCC man days would be required.²⁵⁷

By mid-May 1941 these numbers had changed somewhat. A new estimated total cost for the project was \$3,100.77. Work was not begun until June 17, 1941, when the Hyde Park fire

252. Final Report on Improvements of and Repairs to Building and Facilities, P.E.P. No 1 (President's Emergency Report), by Charles W. Andrae, Jan. 1943, Folder: Repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion 1942-1951, ROVA Archives.

253. Report of Physical Survey of the Mansion (Third Floor) and Coach House and Stable, June 2, 1943, Folder: Repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion 1942-1951, ROVA Archives.

254. Memorandum from Gertrude S. Cooper, Superintendent, August 1, 1942. "Repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion, 1942-1951," ROVA Archives.

255. Emerson, "Report to the Regional Chief of Planning, Region One," Jan. 24, 1941.

256. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 211, cited Historian's Research Notes File, 46. Source: Memo to Superintendent VAMA from A. P. Bursley, Acting Assistant Regional Director, May 20, 1941, ROVA archives.

257. Snell, 40.

department board of trustees and voters approved the use of the Hyde Park fire department's water mains for the project.²⁵⁸

Members of the Civilian Conservation Corps dug trenches and laid pipes for new water and sewer lines between August and November 1941. The new sewage system was completed for the mansion in October, at which time water from Hyde Park began to flow to the house.²⁵⁹

HEATING WORK, 1941-1942. Inclement winter weather had held up other mansion renovation projects, as well as the utility projects. On March 1, 1941, it was reported that the heating contractor had installed the fuel-oil tank and piping, but "the completed back filling [would be] delayed due to snow and the frozen excavated earth." Delays were not a result of failure to receive materials, however.²⁶⁰

In late August 1941 an inspection of the boilers was carried out by a local firm. During this inspection, a ½-inch-diameter hole was discovered. Fortunately, "after carefully tapping the entire vital bottom half of the boiler shell no other defects were uncovered."²⁶¹ According to the repair technician, an "electrically welded patch using a steel plate approximately 12 inches square" would be required for repairs. It was believed that this hole developed when the boiler was tested to 20 pounds pressure a week earlier.²⁶²

Charles Snell, the site historian, later described the emergency repairs to the heating system undertaken in the fall of 1941:

On August 18, 1941, specifications for emergency repairs to the heating system of the Mansion were also prepared. The cost of this work, to be done by contract, was estimated at \$600. The contract was awarded on September 13, after an investigation by engineer Francis J. Guscio had disclosed that the west boiler was in need of urgent repairs. The contractor began work at once, removing 50 old tubes in the boiler and applying electrically welded patches wherever necessary. The cost of this work amounted to \$585.75.²⁶³

In early May 1942 a report from Charles Andrae, the site's associate engineer, disclosed that one of the boilers was not working and was also not repairable. His report stated:

Of the two present heating boilers, No. 1 boiler is out of commission and totally unfit for use or repairs; No. 2 boiler was fitted with new tubes last summer and used very cautiously throughout the past heating season. The shell on this boiler has been patched in several places and still leaks due to the poor condition of the shell, the continued use of this boiler (No. 2) remains a constant gamble.

The work under the present project proposes to install 2 new cast iron sectional low pressure steam boilers, including oil burners and sundry oil equipment.

The funds are available for the removal of the present steel-set boilers and the installation of new boilers and old burning equipment.

258. Snell, 40. Clerk Alex Knass, Board of Trustees, Hyde Park Fire Depart. to Supt. Cooper, June 23, 1941.

259. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 211, cited Charles W. Snell, "An Administrative History of Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Hyde Park, New York, 1939-1955," June 9, 1956, 40-1. Resource Management Records. Hereafter cited as Snell, "An Administrative History."

260. Charles W. Andrae, "Narrative Monthly Report for the Chief of Planning, February 1941," March 1, 1941, Box 1 of MNR, Sept. 1940–March 1947, ROVA archives.

261. Francis J. Guscio, "Special Report," Aug. 28, 1941, p. 1, ROVA Archives.

262. Guscio, "Special Report," Aug. 28, 1941, p. 1.

263. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 216, cited Snell, 42. Bid forms were sent to a number of prospective contractors, with the project start date set at September 4, 1941.

The present fuel situation confuses the selection of equipment if oil is used; also the coal supply it seems will be a problem. This year's coal consumption for heating the mansion has totaled 125 tons of anthracite.²⁶⁴

Since this work was to be done during World War II, the availability of fuel was a concern. National Park Service staff chose oil burners, but they also purchased coal grates just in case. In 1999 the unused coal grates were found under the subbasement stairs.²⁶⁵

On September 23, 1942, a request for proposals for the installation of the new boilers was issued, with bids due a week later.²⁶⁶ Three weeks later, on October 12, the old boilers were removed to prepare for the installation of new ones. As a result, there was no heat available to the Secret Service agents stationed in the mansion, although hot water was available. The agents were given the choice to "occupy space on the third floor" or move to hotels.²⁶⁷

Charles Snell described the new boilers in his history of the site: "The new cast iron sectional boilers were set on 12 inch high brick foundations to provide the proper combustion space for future oil burners. The 51 indirect heaters were provided with new air relief valves to replace the old ones."²⁶⁸

ELECTRICAL WORK AND RADIO EQUIPMENT, 1941–1942. Other alterations to the mechanical systems were made to the mansion in the early 1940s. In June 1941 the architectural engineer, Charles W. Andrae, submitted plans for the transformer vault and equipment needed to supply electricity for the mansion. The estimated cost of this project was \$2,400, including a line for telephone service to the Pavilion.²⁶⁹

Approval for the transformer vault in the sub-basement of the mansion was received from the U.S. government on September 8, 1941, and Civilian Conservation Corps laborers immediately began work.²⁷⁰ This project was completed by early October 1941. An additional \$300 was spent at that time to repair cables that had suffered lightning damage.²⁷¹ On November 26, 1941, the contractor began installing electrical equipment in the new transformer vault.²⁷² The successful bid for this job had been \$1,323.²⁷³ The project was completed on December 22, 1941, at a final cost of \$1,375.²⁷⁴

264. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 216. Cited Historian's Research Notes File, 52. Source: Memo for the Chief of Planning by Charles. W. Andrae, May 6, 1942, ROVA Archives.

265. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 175 cited James Traudt, Typescript of taped interview, (date unknown), Oral History Collection, ROVA Archives. In his 1942 report, Andrae described the boilers as "steel set." This contradicts his description of the boilers as being "brick set" in his report of August 28, 1940. According to an oral interview with James Traudt, "no evidence remains of the original boilers but the current boilers have their fire-boxes encased in brick, a set-up known as a dry base boiler." The 1940s-era oil-filled boilers remain in use.

266. Memorandum Specifications for Installation of New Heating Boilers and Domestic Hot Water Boiler, Storage Tank, Etc., Sept. 23, 1942, Folder: Repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion 1942–1951, ROVA Archives.

267. A. E. Demaray, Associate Director, to the Superintendent, Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Oct. 12, 1942. Vanderbilt File V-38, ROVA Archives.

268. Snell, 46. For the year of 1943. For additional information on the boiler system, see EYP Architects & Engineers, Albany, NY, Assessment of the Process of Soot Production & Deposition with Recommendations for Its Elimination, Feb. 2018, VAMA.

269. Snell, 41. Mr. Andrae to Regional Director, June 26, 1941.

270. Snell, 41. Supt. Cooper's Monthly Narrative Report for September, 1941, Oct. 13, 1941.

271. Snell, 41. Telegram, Jenning to Supt. Cooper, Oct. 4, 1941.

272. Snell, 41. Supt. Cooper's Monthly Narrative Report for November, 1941, Dec. 11, 1941.

273. Snell, 41. Chief of Engineering O. G. Taylor to Contractor Theodore Kaish, Sept. 10, 1941.

274. Snell, 41. Supt. Cooper's Monthly Narrative Report for December, 1941, Jan. 13, 1942. Snell, 41. Mr. Taylor to Mr. Kaish, Jan. 10, 1942.

In 1943 additional electric work was undertaken in the mansion. According to Charles Snell's report,

The Superintendent's office and wash room in the basement [in the Servants' Hall and Pantry] were re-wired, and new fixtures and switches installed. The lighting wiring in the sub-basement was replaced with new conduit, outlets, reflectors, receptacles and switches. New lighting outlets and switch were installed in the basement entrance from the parking area, to provide night illumination for the incoming and outgoing of the Government Agency people, using the building after regular hours.²⁷⁵

The installation of radio equipment was requested for the Secret Service agents stationed there. On June 12, 1942, the acting director of the National Park Service wrote to the site superintendent about the request:

Mr. Edwards also will discuss with you a request from Mr. Reilly to permit the installation of certain radio equipment in the basement of the Mansion, including a 15-foot antenna on the roof of the Mansion. It appears that unless these installations can be worked out with you, it will be necessary to construct a separate building on the grounds of the President's Hyde Park Residence.²⁷⁶

Discussions about electric power for radio equipment continued into July 1942. On July 15 Superintendent Cooper wrote to Michael F. Reilly, the supervising agent of the Secret Service:

Mr. Gill discussed with Lieutenant Greer, the use of electricity to operate your radio set in the Mansion and he was advised that Lieutenant Greer had spoken to you about installing a power meter for the purpose and that no definite understanding had been reached. We are perfectly willing to allow you to use our present meter service with the understanding that your appropriation will be charged with the extra current used for this purpose. If this is not satisfactory, it is suggested that you consider the possibility of installing a power meter which would probably be considerably less expensive.²⁷⁷

PLUMBING REPAIRS, 1942. In order to house the Secret Service agents and communications staff, plumbing work was undertaken. The acting director of the National Park Service, A. E. Demaray, wrote to the site superintendent in July 1942 to explain the scope of this work:

According to a review of the project the only work to be done on the first and second floors was the repairing of existing plumbing fixtures and the replacement of fittings in several bathrooms. It was also understood that there were some necessary repairs to be made of the heating system involving work on the first and second floors, and it may be that the President has reference to this work.

The first and second floors are to be left intact: it has been contemplated renewing faucets on the lavatories in the bathrooms, due to their leaking condition.

Mr. Andrae and I discussed the matter thoroughly and decided to leave the old faucets in place rather than renew them with ones of a new and modern design, and instead decided to shut off the water at the stop valves underneath the lavatories, and thus not disturb the present equipment; water for cleaning purposes can be obtained from the slop sinks located in small closets.

275. Snell, 46. For year of 1943.

276. A. E. Demaray, Acting Director, to Mrs. Gertrude S. Cooper, Superintendent, Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Hyde Park, New York, June 12, 1948. Vanderbilt File V-38, ROVA Archives.

277. Gertrude S. Cooper, Superintendent, to Mr. Michael F. Reilly, Supervising Agent, U.S. Secret Service, The White House, Washington. D.C., July 15, 1942. Vanderbilt File V-38, ROVA Archives.

The third floor and basement plumbing has been renovated to provide more adequate accommodations for other Government agencies in accordance with our original plans.²⁷⁸

ROOFING PROBLEMS AND REPAIRS, 1941–1942

In a February 15, 1941, report to the chief of planning, Charles W. Andrae, the architectural engineer, reported that the mansion staff had “learned that Mr. Vanderbilt usually had the snow removed from all the roofs as soon as the fall ceased, also considerable salt was used for thawing. This practice no doubt had its effect on the copper roofs, etc. The use of salt has been stopped.”²⁷⁹

The winter of 1940–1941 had been hard on the mansion’s roof. A number of leaks had been reported in February, but by March 1, “sufficient ice and snow were removed or melted from the roofs to permit an investigation of the leaks as reported last month.”²⁸⁰ According to Andrae,

The leaks seem to be caused by the opening of seams in, and the old metal of the concealed gutters and downspouts. The gutters show evidence of having been repaired several times. A separate report on the roofs, and an estimate for repairs will be filed at once.²⁸¹

In March 1941 Andrae requested a total \$2,500 for necessary repairs to the roofs of various building on the site and for the “Mansion roof in particular.”²⁸² He also submitted an “additional estimate on the cost of immediate repairs required to the roof of the buildings on the site.” The cost of the immediate repairs to the mansion roof was \$978.00.²⁸³

Superintendent Cooper reported to the director of the National Park Service in March 1941 that “the roofs of all buildings in the area are in poor condition.” Andrae was asked to prepare a document containing proposed repairs to each of the roofs and their approximate cost.²⁸⁴

A roof leak in August 1941 damaged interior plaster to such an extent that it caused the “finish plaster to curl.” A temporary repair was undertaken in an effort to prevent the plaster from falling. Mastic was applied to what park staff believed to be the site of the leak. Nevertheless, “a wash tub full of water was [later] caught. . . during a recent rain.”²⁸⁵

The roof was covered with sheet copper and relied on concealed gutters for drainage; its pitch should have been adequate to drain off rainwater. However, it was found that “unequal settlements have caused low spots at which there invariably are leaks.”²⁸⁶

As problems continued with roof leaks, plaster damage continued. Reports from August 28, 1941, indicate that this interior damage was serious, but “an elaborate ‘wash tub system’” organized strategically throughout the mansion seemed to be helping. It was determined that

278. Snell, 44. Acting Director A. E. Demaray to Supt., July 20, 1942.

279. Charles W. Andrae, “Monthly Report for the Chief of Planning, Jan. 1941,” Feb. 15, 1941, transcribed by C. W. Snell, Feb. 29, 1956, Historians Research Notes Files Box 3, Series 5 [Vanderbilt Mansion, B].

280. Andrae, “Narrative Report,” March 1, 1941.

281. Andrae, “Narrative Report,” March 1, 1941.

282. Snell, 50. Mr. Andrae to Chief of Planning, March 5, 1941.

283. Snell, 39. Mr. Andrae to Chief of Planning VInt, March 5, 1941.

284. Gertrude S. Cooper, Superintendent, to Director, “Monthly Narrative Report for February 1941,” March 10, 1941, Box 1 of MNR, Sept. 1940–March 1947, ROVA Archives.

285. Guscio, “Special Report,” Aug. 28, 1941, p. 1.

286. Guscio, “Special Report,” Aug. 28, 1941, p. 1.

leaks had occurred at the walls where the “concrete roof slab under the copper roofing joins the brick backing of the stonework of the wall,” so most tubs were placed there.²⁸⁷ During rain and snowstorms, the staff needed to be vigilant in order to prevent overflows from the washtubs.²⁸⁸

Replacing the copper roofing with a material more suited to the Northeast climate was discussed as a possible solution. Copper was known to be problematic because of its “seams opening due to expansion and contraction and ice pressure allowing water to leak under the roof covering.” Some sort of composite covering was thought to be a better solution for the mansion.²⁸⁹

Previous repair efforts had kept some leaks at bay but overall did a poor job of preventing them in the long term. A special report prepared by Francis J. Guscio, an engineer, in August 1941 indicated that

Serious leaks have been prevented in part by painting the gutters with coal tar mastic which is at present very badly checked or cracked. This offers only a minimum of protection over the sheet copper and its joints. On good authority the last time this painting was done was prior to 1936, which is also true for the graphite type painting on the upstanding seams of the roof proper. It is easily understandable that this painting method is one that will have to be maintained and repeated from time to time.²⁹⁰

Repairs to the main skylight were also needed to prevent further leaks. Deteriorated putty surrounding the glass of the skylight was found to be allowing the entry of water into the skylight well, “which if permitted to continue to grow worse will cause further damage.” It was recommended that these repairs be included in the roof-repair work.²⁹¹

Furthermore, Guscio recommended that a continuous chase be installed between the “concrete roof deck and the brick backing of the parapet. This chase should be of about 1/2 inch in width and have at least 1 inch minimum depth. It would then be poured with an asphalt filler to serve as a watertight joint between the concrete and the brick backing.”²⁹²

A September 26, 1941, report by Guscio emphasized continued difficulties with the roof and also mentioned the need to repoint the masonry walls and repaint the ironwork:

1. Mansion Roof: The need for a new roof and skylight repair for the mansion roof has already been pointed out by the writer in a report under date of August 25. The Chief of Engineering has advised that consideration is being given to including the re-roofing item in the physical improvements program for 1943.”²⁹³

Until this re-roofing is begun certain repairs of a seasonal nature should be made. At present these involve:

- a. Covering the flat seams of the roof with a 3 inch width of cloth and painting this down with asphalt mastic. Also the painting with mastic of all dubious places in the gutters where the old mastic has excessively cracked.
- b. Repairing the octagonal or main skylight by removing the copper ribs, replacing broken clips and caulking the joint with elastic compound, thus replacing the copper

287. Guscio, “Special Report,” Aug. 28, 1941, p. 2.

288. Guscio, “Special Report,” Aug. 28, 1941, p. 2.

289. Guscio, “Special Report,” Aug. 28, 1941, p. 2.

290. Guscio, “Special Report,” Aug. 28, 1941, p. 2.

291. Guscio, “Special Report,” Aug. 28, 1941, p. 2.

292. Guscio, “Special Report,” Aug. 28, 1941, p. 2.

293. Guscio, “Special Report,” Aug. 28, 1941, p. 1.

ribs using new copper where required. Removing and reglazing the glass should not be necessary for this temporary repair.

Item “a” could best be accomplished by a handyman familiar with the work, the cost of which will be small, but difficult to estimate as it is mostly a labor job.

Item “b” should be done by an experienced roofer and an approximate estimate of cost for the 335 linear feet of ribs would be 50 cents per foot or a total of \$167.50. This repair work should be started as soon as possible so that it will be completed before freezing weather sets in.

2. Mansion Walls: The exterior stonework of the mansion walls is in need of repointing. There are a number of joints where the mortar has completely fallen out. . .

7. Mansion Ironwork: The exterior ironwork of the mansion like that of the fencing needs to be scraped and repainted.²⁹⁴

In November 1941 an assessment of the roof was completed, and the cost to re-roof the mansion was estimated at \$15,000. Minor repairs were undertaken the following month under the supervision of Alfred D. Curradi, an associate engineer for the National Park Service, but before the year’s end, more leaks were observed.²⁹⁵ On December 11, 1941, the superintendent reported that “Engineer Curradi of the Washington Office was here for making temporary repairs to the roof of the Mansion.”²⁹⁶

The focus of the National Park Service on the roof continued for the remainder of the year. On December 29, 1941, Superintendent Cooper reported that:

A recent inspection made of the roof of the Mansion at this area after a heavy rainfall, has revealed several places along the edge of the roof, outside the railing, where the cement has become loose with age and fallen out between the exterior stone work. Water accumulates in these openings and leaks through into the interior, doing damage to the walls and ceilings on the third floor.

Cracks have been noticed along the entire length of the exterior stone work from the ground to the roof which should be attended to before further damage results.

This situation is brought to your attention in the hope that something can be done to patch the separations thus avoiding more extensive repairs and greater expense later on.²⁹⁷

During the winter of 1941–1942, efforts to repair the roof were put on hold. The situation was closely monitored, however, and on January 7, 1942, it was reported that a heavy rainfall had led to serious leaks inside the mansion. The acting chief of engineering wrote to the regional director reporting on the situation:

It was hoped that the roof repairs accomplished early this winter under the supervision of Associate Engineer Curradi would be successful in taking care of the leaky roof condition for some time. It now appears, however, that during heavy rainfall water leaks into the interior through broken places along the edge of the roof outside of the railing.²⁹⁸

294. Guscio, “Special Report,” Sept. 26, 1941, pp. 1-2.

295. Snell, 50. Acting Chief of Engineering A. W. Burney to Regional Director, Jan. 7, 1942.

296. Superintendent, to Director, “Monthly Narrative Report for November 1941,” Dec. 11, 1941, Box 1 of MNR, Sept. 1940–March 1947. No further detail provided.

297. Cooper to Regional Director, Dec. 29, 1941.

298. A. W. Burney, Acting Chief of Engineering, to Regional Director, Jan. 7, 1942, Folder: 621-02 Roof Construction for Mansion, Central Files, ROVA Archives.

WORK PROGRAM REPORT, 1942–1943

A new work program for the mansion prepared by National Park Service staff in November 1942 provides a snapshot of the condition of the mansion at that time. It listed the following repair needs:

Weather-stripping on all windows and doors.

Insulation over the third floor ceiling, under the roof.

Puttying of all glass in exterior windows.

Painting of all exterior sash, frames, shutters, iron grilles and doors.

Pointing-up of all parapet walls, chimney flashings, roof flashings, exterior stone work and stone steps.

Re-set all skylight glass.

New roof on main building and decks, with new flashings.

Repair all foundation waterproofing and install footing drainage system, if same is not in place. (This is an unknown item as excavation to the bottom of footings has not been done and there is no record of any footing drains).

Install three wire electric system to, and install new safety typed electric panels.

Re-wire all lighting fixtures, and install new switches for all present switches.

Install oil burners and storage tanks for two (2) heating boilers and one (1) hot water heater.

Divorce sanitary and storm water systems to utilize the new septic tank.²⁹⁹

Though all of this work was not conducted immediately, some of it was undertaken after the close of World War II.

EXTERIOR REPAIRS AND REPAINTING, 1943–1946

While the problems with the mechanical systems and the roof received attention in the early years of the National Park Service's administration of the mansion, the exterior masonry also needed attention. A June 1943 report indicated that the steps at the north entrance of the mansion were in poor condition due to substantial deterioration. Both jacking and repointing would be required to repair them.³⁰⁰

In November 1943 it was noted that the window sash and frames were in "very bad shape," with peeling paint and dislodged putty. Some of the work had been undertaken, according to Superintendent Cooper, but additional funds were requested.³⁰¹

In her monthly report for November 1943, Cooper explained that the work was taking a long time since maintenance had not been done regularly in the recent past:

The painting of the outside window sash, frames, and iron grill work on the second and third floors, was finished this month. It was quite a job as no painting had been accomplished in several years and most every window had to have new putty. Because

299. Work Program, Nov. 4, 1942, Folder: Repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion 1942–1951, ROVA Archives.

300. Olinus Smith, Engineer, to Acting Regional Director, June 17, 1943, Folder: Repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion 1942–1951, ROVA Archives.

301. Gertrude S. Cooper, Superintendent, to Director, "Monthly Narrative Report for October 1943," Nov. 9, 1943, Box 1 of MNR, Sept. 1940–March 1947, ROVA Archives.

of the small amount allotted, we feel quite proud of being able to get so much work performed. The basement and first floor will be finished at an early date, weather permitting.³⁰²

Exterior work continued in the New Year, but again progressed slowly, this time due to the weather. Cooper wrote in mid-January 1944 to say that the repairs to the windows and grille work would be completed soon, but that the cold had delayed the project substantially.³⁰³

Cooper and the staff at the Vanderbilt Mansion had many repair requests. A list of major work on the 1944 list included the following:

Repainting Stonework	\$12,000.00
Repair Skylight	\$200.00
Repainting Exterior Trim	\$1,700.00
Interior Decoration	\$1,200.00
Repair & Clean Furnishings	\$20,000.00 ³⁰⁴

In September 1945 Superintendent Cooper reported to the regional director of the National Park Service that “The window shutters have been removed from the windows of the Mansion and stored away until such time funds are available to put them in first class condition.”³⁰⁵ In late November 1946, Cooper suggested that repainting the trim and other projects be deferred until the spring. However, she wished to use the winter months to find “a good grade of paint.” No approval was necessary for the project unless a color change were suggested.³⁰⁶

In December 1946 Cooper left her post at the mansion. Replacing her was George A. Palmer. Upon his arrival, Palmer initiated an investigation into the maintenance of the shutters, noting that

The last time the exterior trim was painted there were shutters on the windows.
Superintendent Cooper removed the shutters because there were no funds to paint them.
I spoke to Regional Architect Emerson about repainting the shutters concerned, and he approved, but for the record I would appreciate written confirmation.³⁰⁷

Ralph W. Emerson, the regional director, explained to Palmer that Cooper had been advised to remove the shutters to protect them from further decay, since so many required repairs and fresh paint. Emerson advised Palmer that “the shutters [should] be scraped, cleaned, and repaired before they are repainted and, if you have sufficient funds available to do the work, it is recommended that they be re-installed since they are important in the architectural appearance of the Mansion.”³⁰⁸

302. Gertrude S. Cooper, Superintendent, to Director, “Monthly Narrative Report for November 1943,” Dec. 13, 1943, Box 1 of MNR, Sept. 1940–March 1947, ROVA Archives.

303. Gertrude S. Cooper, Superintendent, to Director, “Monthly Narrative Report for December 1943,” Jan. 11, 1944, Box 1 of MNR, Sept. 1940–March 1947, ROVA Archives.

304. Major Repair and Rehabilitation Program, 1944, Priority List, Folder: Repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion 1942–1951, ROVA Archives.

305. Superintendent Cooper to the Regional Director, Sept. 4, 1945, transcribed by M.B.W., Nov. 30, 1956, Historians Research Notes Files Box 3, Series 5 [Vanderbilt Mansion, B], ROVA Archives..

306. Cox to Superintendent, Nov. 25, 1946.

307. George A. Palmer, Superintendent, to Regional Director, Dec. 2, 1946, File: Completion Report on the Repointing Cut Stone at Vanderbilt Mansion, Entrance Gate House and Superintendent’s Residence, Dutchess County, Hyde Park, N.Y. Contract I-55np-30, 1949, p. 1, Folder: Repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion 1942–1951, ROVA Archives..

308. Emerson to Superintendent, Dec. 5, 1946.

Emerson requested a piece of a broken louver or other component of the shutters in order to match the paint color. He recalled the shutters being a dark green color but was unsure whether that was the original color. Emerson also suggested that a coat of primer would be necessary if surfaces seemed to be “badly weathered or porous.” Since trim color proved so excellent at masking imperfections, the regional director suggested that the “trim color should be used as the finishing coat because of the excellent hiding qualities that often make a third coat necessary.”³⁰⁹

DEATH OF THE PRESIDENT AND POST-WAR PROJECTS, 1945–1952

On April 12, 1945, President Roosevelt passed away in Warm Springs, Georgia. His death resulted in administrative changes at the Vanderbilt Mansion. An administrative history explained that

Superintendent Cooper resigned and was replaced by George A. Palmer, who had been the Superintendent at the Statue of Liberty from 1937 to 1945. With the change in administration came the development of the nearby home of Franklin D. Roosevelt as a National Park Service unit. On March 5, 1946 the management of President Roosevelt’s Home and the Vanderbilt Mansion was joined under one staff.³¹⁰

The National Park Service became fully responsible for Vanderbilt Mansion without input or financial support from the President. Without the Secret Service agents and Military Police in residence, the mansion could be treated entirely as a museum.

ROOF PROBLEMS, 1946–1949

On June 27, 1946, W. E. O’Neil, Jr., a National Park Service regional engineer, wrote to the regional director with news of additional problems with the roof. A heavy rain the prior week had led to a serious leak in the northeast corner on the second floor, resulting in damage to the ornamental plaster in Mrs. Vanderbilt’s Bedroom.³¹¹

In the summer of 1946 damage from another leak occurred in one corner of the French Renaissance Bedroom on the second floor. This, too, was brought to the attention of the Regional Office.³¹² The regional engineer noted that in other respects “the Vanderbilt area appeared to be in an excellent state of maintenance.”³¹³

In February 1948 Park Service staff noted a new leak, the second to appear in two months. Located in the northeast corner of the building, this leak led to water seeping into the Dining Room and the basement Kitchen, where it was observed in “large quantities.” The staff was unable to determine where the leak had originated, however.³¹⁴

On December 15, 1948, bids for repairs to the roof of the mansion were opened. A number of bids were received, and a bid for “Items totaling approximately \$2,500. was accepted.” This bid

309. Emerson to Superintendent, Dec. 5, 1946.

310. Jann Warren-Findley, “Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Administrative History” [draft], 2011, “Chapter 2: Opening the Home of FDR, 1945-1948,” 50. Warren-Findley cites Justification, Estimates of Appropriation, Department of the Interior, Fiscal Year Ending June 1946, 1, ROVA Archives.

311. W. E. O’Neil, Jr. Regional Engineer, to the Regional Director, June 27, 1946, Folder: 621-02 Roof Construction for Mansion, Central Files, ROVA Archives.

312. Report on Vanderbilt Mansion National Historical Site, New York, Aug. 6, 1946, Vanderbilt File V-37, ROVA Archives.

313. Warren-Findley, 92, cited Snell, 101.

314. Superintendent to Director, “Monthly Narrative Report for February 1948,” March 11, 1948, Box 1 of MNR, Apr. 1947–Dec. 1948, ROVA Archives.

included roofing work at “the home, Library and Vanderbilt Mansion.”³¹⁵ No further details were located.

REPOINTING, WEATHER STRIPPING, AND OTHER EXTERIOR WORK, 1946–1952

Late in 1946 plans were being made for repointing the exterior stonework, with the intent of beginning work early the next year once weather permitted. Elbert Cox, the associate regional director, wrote to the superintendent to say that a request had been sent to the Indiana Limestone Institute to furnish “the latest information on non-staining cements, integral waterproofing compounds, and waterproofing cements that are recommended for use in this work.”³¹⁶

An inspection of the roof in April 1947 revealed that flashing and counter flashing against the stone parapet required attention, so that it would be flush against the building. Pointing of the parapet was also identified as an area requiring work.³¹⁷ During the same inspection, an examination of the chimneys revealed that “the upper course of the fire clay brick flue lining of one chimney has fallen out. Its replacement and the repointing of joints in the lower courses [were to] be included in the pointing specifications.”³¹⁸

A 1948 report of repairs undertaken since 1940 indicated that the exterior of the mansion had undergone repointing wherever mortar had been “loose or lost.”³¹⁹ In February 1948, “Specifications for repointing the Vanderbilt Mansion were sent out for mimeographing.”³²⁰ The request for proposals for the repointing was distributed, but as of mid-April no bids had been received.³²¹ In June the National Park Service sent revised specifications for repointing to the Regional Office for approval. One month later, this approval was still pending, awaiting the “establishment of wage rates by the Labor Department.”³²²

In July 1948 invitations to bid on three alternates for repointing were issued. The bids were to be opened on August 16.³²³ Standard Waterproofing Company Corp. submitted a bid on August 3 for alternate 3, at a total of \$12,314, which included the “entire stone work on Vanderbilt Mansion,”

315. Superintendent to Director, “Monthly Narrative Report for November 1948,” Dec. 15, 1948, p. 1, Box 1 of MNR, Apr. 1947–Dec. 1948, ROVA Archives.

316. Elbert Cox, Associate Regional Director, to Superintendent, Nov. 25, 1946, File: Completion Report on the Repointing Cut Stone at Vanderbilt Mansion, Entrance Gate House and Superintendent’s Residence, Dutchess County, Hyde Park, N.Y. Contract I-55np-30, 1949, p. 1, Folder: Repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion 1942–1951, ROVA Archives.

317. A. J. Higgins, Architect, “Report on Inspection of Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, April 2-4, 1947, File: Completion Report on the Repointing Cut Stone at Vanderbilt Mansion, Entrance Gate House and Superintendent’s Residence, Dutchess County, Hyde Park, N.Y. Contract I-55np-30, 1949, p. 1, Folder: Repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion 1942–1951, ROVA Archives.

318. Higgins, “Report on Inspection of Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, April 2-4, 1947.

319. “Major repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion since July 1, 1940,” VAMA Coach House V-D1.003, ROVA Archives.

320. Superintendent to Director, “Monthly Narrative Report for January 1948,” Feb. 12, 1948, Box 1 of MNR, Apr. 1947–Dec. 1948, ROVA Archives.

321. Superintendent to Director, “Monthly Narrative Report for March 1948,” April 13, 1948, p. 1, Box 1 of MNR, Apr. 1947–Dec. 1948, ROVA Archives.

322. Superintendent to Director, “Monthly Narrative Report for June 1948,” July 14, 1948, p. 2, Box 1 of MNR, Apr. 1947–Dec. 1948, ROVA Archives.

323. Superintendent to Director, “Monthly Narrative Report for July 1948,” Aug. 16, 1948, p. 1, Box 1 of MNR, Apr. 1947–Dec. 1948, ROVA Archives.

as well as work at the superintendent's residence and entrance gate house.³²⁴ On September 10, 1948, the contract for this work was awarded to Standard Waterproofing Company for the total amount of the bid.³²⁵ J. Weingarten, the president of Standard Waterproofing Company, proposed to the Department of the Interior that Fred Kuhl's grey elastic caulking compound be utilized wherever non-staining compound was required.³²⁶

Also in September 1948 two concealed leaders were opened and found to be defective. Temporary repairs to prevent further leakage into the walls were made, but the superintendent warned the "condition of the pipe is such that extensive repairs are going to be required in the future."³²⁷

The superintendent later submitted the following report on the repointing project:

The contractor delivered material immediately, approval of which was given and with a force of men varying from two to eight, the work was prosecuted without delay. Swinging scaffolds were used for all work on the exterior walls and the skill of the workmen was such that the scaffold came down along the building but once. Loose mortar was removed, joints were cleaned, and new mortar was placed so that there was a minimum of lost time. The Superintendent can say that this crew of men was one of the smoothest working he has ever watched.

Two questions arose and were referred to the Regional Architect. The first concerned the color of the mortar to be used. Specifications called for tinting of mortar if requested by the contracting officer. Upon removal of old mortar, it was learned that the original was white. The Regional Architect agreed with the recommendation of the contractor that the new mortar should be white and let [it] discolor to match the old. The degree of discoloration after the winter months has justified this decision.

The second question raised by the contracting officer concerned chipping of edges on the joints when the old mortar was removed. Inspection by Architect Higgins indicated that this was not as serious as the contracting officer had felt and that it was no greater than might be expected.

The contractor completed the work on the buildings on October 22, 1948. A contractor's representative returned to the site on October 26 to make a final inspection with the contracting officer. The work on the contract was accepted as of that date – 43 days after the work was started.

Prints and photographs were included in the report.

There was some delay in the preparation of plans and specifications for the necessary repairs to the roof drainage system but agreement was finally reached and the Roof Drainage System

324. George A. Palmer, Superintendent, to Standard Waterproofing Corp., Aug. 17, 1948, File: Completion Report on the Repointing Cut Stone at Vanderbilt Mansion, Entrance Gate House and Superintendent's Residence, Dutchess County, Hyde Park, N.Y. Contract I-55np-30, 1949, p. 1, Folder: Repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion 1942–1951, ROVA Archives.

325. George A. Palmer, Superintendent, to Regional Director, Sept. 10, 1948, File: Completion Report on the Repointing Cut Stone at Vanderbilt Mansion, Entrance Gate House and Superintendent's Residence, Dutchess County, Hyde Park, N.Y. Contract I-55np-30, 1949, p. 1, Folder: Repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion 1942–1951, ROVA Archives.

326. J. Weingarten, President of Standard Waterproofing Co., to Department of the Interior, Roosevelt Vanderbilt Historic Site, re: Repointing Stone, etc. Vanderbilt Mansion, Sept. 13, 1948, File: Completion Report on the Repointing Cut Stone at Vanderbilt Mansion, Entrance Gate House and Superintendent's Residence, Dutchess County, Hyde Park, N.Y. Contract I-55np-30, 1949, Folder: Repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion 1942–1951, ROVA Archives.

327. Superintendent to Director, "Monthly Narrative Report for August 1948," Sept. 14, 1948, p. 2, Box 1 of MNR, Apr. 1947–Dec. 1948, ROVA Archives.

Plan prepared. Bids were opened on December 28, 1949 and awarded to the lowest bid[d]er for \$6,863.00. This work was completed on November 15, 1950.³²⁸

The repointing work was completed on October 26, 1948. Palmer reported being “well pleased with the execution of the contract.”³²⁹ According to the superintendent’s monthly narrative of January 1949, the repointing of the mansion and the gate house had cost \$8,700.”³³⁰

Once the repointing was finished in October 1948, specifications were prepared for roof repairs.³³¹

In 1949 weather stripping in the amount of \$1,500 was approved, and the work was carried out between October 20 and December 7, 1949.³³²

The bid presented by the contractor, the Frank J. Peterson Co. of Mount Vernon, New York, proposed various items, only two of which were accepted by the National Park Service managers for reasons of cost. On October 24, 1949, Palmer requested from the contractor “an estimate on the cost of furnishing wider side strips for the windows under item 1, first and second floor.” He also requested “an estimate as to the credit that would be allowed for the elimination of the bronze saddle on the main entrance of the first floor.”³³³

By early December 1949, Palmer reported that the weatherstripping work was completed. He stated that the National Park Service “received very good work on this job and the improved conditions in the Mansion were well worth the cost.”³³⁴

In October 1951 and during the spring of 1952, the windows of the mansion were “reglazed and the sashes and frames given three coats of paint.”³³⁵

MINOR INTERIOR WORK, 1946–1947

Superintendent Palmer reported to the regional director in May 1946 that an inspection of the mansion had been made in January that year. According to this report, the major repair and maintenance needs at that time included the “painting of rest rooms, kitchen, serving pantry, ceiling of lounge, cleaning wall paper in rooms, and refinishing some of the floors. The rest of the building appeared to be in good condition. Equipment in the kitchen owned by the Government seemed well maintained.”³³⁶

In early August 1946 it was reported that the mansion received \$29,130 from major repair and rehabilitation funds for various repair projects, including the repointing and repainting the exterior trim described above; the funding was also to cover the costs of “interior decoration,

328. Snell, 102-103. Superintendent Palmer, “Completion Report on Separation of Storm Water,” Jan. 17, 1951, ROVA Archives.

329. Superintendent, to Director, “Monthly Narrative Report for October 1948,” Nov. 15, 1948, p. 1, Box 1 of MNR, Apr. 1947–Dec. 1948, ROVA Archives.

330. Superintendent to Director, “Monthly Narrative Report for December 1948,” Jan. 14, 1949, p. 2, Box 1 of MNR, Jan. 1949–Dec. 1949, ROVA Archives.

331. Superintendent, to Director, “Monthly Narrative Report for October 1948,” Nov. 15, 1948, p. 1, Box 1 of MNR, Apr. 1947–Dec. 1948, ROVA Archives.

332. “Major repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion since July 1, 1940,” VAMA Coach House V-D1.003. Snell, 104. Supt. Palmer’s Monthly Narrative Report for October and November 1949, ROVA Archives.

333. George A. Palmer, Superintendent, to Frank J. Peterson Co., Oct. 24, 1949, File No. 620-46: Correspondence relating to weatherstripping of Mansion, Folder: Repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion 1942–1951, ROVA Archives.

334. Superintendent to Director, “Monthly Narrative Report for November 1949,” Dec. 12, 1949, p. 3.

335. Snell, 104. Supt. Palmer’s Monthly Narrative Report for October, 1951.

336. Snell, 165. Supt. Palmer to Regional Director, May 13, 1946.

cleaning and repair of furnishing in the Mansion.” However, all of this work, “was deferred to the next spring.”³³⁷

Some renovations to the Service Pantry were undertaken in 1947. According to an October 16, 1947, transmittal from Palmer to the regional director, a “portion of the dresser” in the Service Pantry had been “moved to the north end of the Service Dining Room by Superintendent Cooper, who had the room converted to a lavatory. It is currently used for storage.”³³⁸

Other changes carried out around that time in the first floor Butler’s Pantry included the following:

A sink flanked by two white marble sideboards was formerly on the east wall. A private phone was installed in the small cupboard on the west wall. It was connected to the Coach House, the Power House, and the Pavilion. A plate warmer was on the north wall. All three items were removed between 1938 and 1947, according to Alfred Martin.³³⁹

IMPROVEMENTS TO THE MECHANICAL SYSTEMS AND ROOF DRAINAGE, 1949–1952

In early 1949 a report was compiled by the regional director of the items approved for maintenance or repair for the following year’s “Physical Improvements Program.” These projects included the following:

Rewiring Mansion	\$14,100
Oil Burner Installation, Mansion	3,000
Weatherstripping Mansion and Quarters	1,500
Separation of Storm Water & Sewer Lines	3,600

The program, of course, has yet to be acted upon by the Congress.³⁴⁰

NEW OIL BURNERS. In September 1949 funds were made available to the National Park Service for the purchase and installation of two oil burners. Bids for this project were opened on December 22, 1949, and the contract was awarded to the lowest bidder, Joseph L. Fimbel of Poughkeepsie in the amount of \$2,933.³⁴¹ March 29, 1950, was designated as the first day of work under the contract. The contractor was to have 45 days to complete the work.”³⁴²

Ultimately, it was determined that work on the second boiler could not be conducted according to that timeline. Work resumed in June 1950 and was largely completed, aside for a few changes to the gas line, by late October 1950. A January 1951 report indicated that “operation of the oil burners through the first half of the winter indicate that there will be an economy in fuel alone

337. Snell, 102. Supt. Palmer to Regional Director, Aug. 5, 1946. Snell, 102. Acting Supt. Alton Aaron to Regional Director, Oct. 7, 1946.

338. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 162, cited Theresa Farley, typescript of taped interview, October 16, 1947, unn., Oral History Collection, ROVA Archives.

339. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 168, cited Alfred Martin, typescript of taped interview, December 1, 1947, unn., Oral History Collection, ROVA Archives. Martin worked as an assistant butler in the mansion 1909–1938.

340. Thomas J. Allen, Regional Director, to the Superintendent, Jan. 20, 1949, No. 620-46: Correspondence relating to weatherstripping of Mansion, Folder: Repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion 1942–1951, ROVA Archives.

341. Snell, 103. “Completion Report for Furnishing and Installing Two Oil Burners at Vanderbilt Mansion,” by Supt. Palmer, Jan. 19, 1951, ROVA Archives.

342. George A. Palmer, Superintendent, “Completion Report for furnishing and installing Two Oil Burners at Vanderbilt Mansion, Dutchess County, Hyde Park, New York, Contract I-55np-45,” Jan. 17, 1951, VAMA Coach House V-D1 003, ROVA Archives.

without regard to the economy in labor that was previously used in the handling of coal and ashes.”³⁴³

ELECTRICAL WORK. Preparations for rewiring the mansion were begun in July 1949. The superintendent engaged the services of the Central Hudson Power Company to check the existing system and ensure it met N.E.C. standards. The regional engineer, W. E. O’Neil Jr., submitted the following report on the existing conditions:

The main conduits are in remarkably good condition, needing only minor work to effect proper grounding and protect the wires at the termini. The wire of course must be replaced because of the advanced deterioration of the insulation. As a result of the findings and our discussions, it is proposed to contract for all necessary work between the main panel board in the sub-basement and the five auxiliary panel boxes including new modern panel boxes. The remaining rewiring will depend to some degree, insofar as location and extent are concerned, on the means of display lighting to be used and will have to be done force account or by our own forces in order to exercise the desired control and reasonable economy. The entire job now appears to be much simpler than we had anticipated. The Power Company Engineer will soon submit a diagram and specification outline for the contract work, the completion of which will eliminate the principal fire danger. I advised Superintendent Palmer that we would be glad to prepare a detailed technical specification for him upon receipt of the diagram and outline from the Power Company.

I thought that the Mansion and grounds were in a remarkably good state and presented an excellent appearance, particularly in view of the limited staff available for so tremendous a job.³⁴⁴

On January 6, 1950, invitations to “bid on the installation of new electric panel board and five feeders were issued”; the bids were opened on February 6. The work was awarded to the lowest bidder, who had submitted a quote of \$1,287.00.³⁴⁵

Once work was begun, however, it was determined that

The supply lines to the feeders could not be pulled in the size conduits in the building. An estimate was secured and a purchase order in the amount of \$493.90 was issued to the contractor for additional work that was necessary in order for him to perform the work under the contract awarded to him. The panel boards were installed and work under both the contract and the separate purchase order was completed on April 28, 1950.³⁴⁶

Charles Snell reported that the work of rewiring the rest of the mansion was to have been completed by contract but that a representative from Central Hudson Gas & Electric Company and the local fire underwriter inspector had recommended that the work “be done by force account because it was impossible to anticipate the installation difficulties that might arise.”³⁴⁷

Snell later providing more details about the rewiring:

343. Palmer, “Completion Report for furnishing and installing Two Oil Burners,” Jan. 17, 1951.

344. W. E. O’Neil, Jr., Regional Engineer, to Regional Director, “Inspection of Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site,” July 29, 1949, Folder: 621-02 Roof Construction for Mansion, Central Files, ROVA Archives.

345. Snell, 103.

346. Snell, 103.

347. Snell, 103.

Cable, wire, wiremold, BXL and miscellaneous fixture parts were purchased in the amount of \$1,013.54 and equipment, specifically lamps for emergency lighting in the amount of \$40.24.

Beginning on July 9, 1950, maintenance man Neil Smith, fireman Fred Traudt, a laborer and the museum preparatory, at various times were assigned to this project. Except for annual leave periods, the maintenance man and fireman worked almost steadily on the project from the beginning through February 3, 1951.³⁴⁸

From May through part of September [1950], he [McClure] also worked, from time to time, on the rewiring of the original electrical fixtures in the Dining Room of the Mansion.

By December 1950 the National Park Service family quarters on the third floor of the Mansion were no longer used for this purpose and by August 1951 the Mansion had been completely rewired except for the sub-basement, which still had not yet been rewired.³⁴⁹

In his 1950 annual fire inspection report to the director, Palmer reported that

The replacement of the old panel boards with modern circuit breaker panels and the rewiring of the entire mansion and fixtures now going on by force account, is by far the most important step taken in fire prevention since 1940. With the removal of wire and some of the fixtures, the amazing thing is that the electrical system of the Mansion even continued to operate. In many of the fixtures, we have found that the insulation has melted and fused with the surround metal so that its removal is impossible. In three or four circuits, we have been unable to move the old wire; whether the same thing has happened to them as to the fixtures is impossible to say.³⁵⁰

In his May 1, 1951, final report on the rewiring of the mansion, Palmer provided the following summary of the work:

The entire electric system in the building including fixtures, many of them imported and art pieces, were rewired. The basement, first floor, second floor and third floor, with an extension to the attic were completed. Funds for this project were exhausted on March 9, 1951. All but the sub-basement of the Mansion were rewired.³⁵¹

“Completion of this project,” Palmer noted, “is probably the most important single piece of work accomplished in this area since the National Park Service took possession.”³⁵²

ROOF DRAINAGE. A roof drainage project, related to the utilities project covered the repairs or replacement of the roof leaders that were rusting out and permitting water damage to the interior finish of exhibit rooms in the Mansion.³⁵³

In May 1949 Palmer explained to the National Lead Company and Eagle Picher Lead Co., a contractor being considered for the work, that

When the mansion was erected in 1898 concealed leaders of 4” wrought-iron pipe with cast iron fittings were installed. During the past two years we have had leaks as a result of rusting at the thread lines on a number of the pipes. To replace the leaders would require

348. Snell, 103–104.

349. Snell, 164.

350. Snell, 164. Supt. 2.

351. Snell, 104. “Completion Report on Rewiring Vanderbilt Mansion,” by Supt. Palmer, May 1, 1951.

352. Snell, 104. “Completion Report on Rewiring Vanderbilt Mansion,” by Supt. Palmer, May 1, 1951.

353. Snell, 102.

the destruction of considerable art work such as ornamental plaster work, gold-leaf panels and the removal of irreplaceable French wallpapers.³⁵⁴

On November 8, 1949, Palmer requested that the regional director order a change to the work:

The leader at the southeast corner of the building was the first one to develop a leak and is now patched with okum and concrete. The south portico roof should be releveled in the same manner as the north with the leader at the southwest corner to be retained.³⁵⁵

Bids for repairs to the roof drainage system were opened on December 28, 1949:

There were two bidders and the contract was awarded to the low bidder, Joseph L. Fimble, Poughkeepsie, N.Y. in the amount of \$6,863.00. The contract was approved by the Director and the contractor was notified to proceed with the work as of April 1, 1950.³⁵⁶

However, the contracting officer was unable to locate the point at which the new storm drains were to be connected with the old drain, and a stop order was issued on April 14. In early June orders were given for work to resume. Palmer reported in January 1951 that

The contractor made very good progress with the installation of the new drains connected to the roof. Replacement of the leaders to the portico roofs, however, indicated that considerable damage would be done to paneled rooms.

In order to prevent any destruction of interior furnishings, the contractor proposed to substitute rigid copper tubing for wrought iron and to slip the tubing through the old wrought iron pipe to connect with the old drainage system in the sub-basement.³⁵⁷

On June 22, 1950, a change order was issued to “eliminate the relevelling of two portico roofs with a reduction of \$980 and to install 2” copper tubing in six leaders instead of wrought iron in leaders at an added amount of \$980. There was no actual increase in the total amount of the contract but additional time was granted to contractor to secure copper tubing.”³⁵⁸

SEWER AND STORM LINES. In September 1949 funds were appropriated to “separate the storm and sewer lines in the house.” This work involved separating the sewer lines from the storm drainage system and then connecting new sewer lines to the septic tank that had already been installed.”³⁵⁹

Two contractors submitted bids for this work, which were opened on October 21, 1949. The lowest bid was submitted by Shaker, Travis & Quinn, of Poughkeepsie, New York, in the amount of \$789. This company was awarded the contract, and they began work within ten days. The cost of this work was \$7,654.”³⁶⁰ According to Palmer, “the workmanship under this contract was the best that this Superintendent has had in the area.”³⁶¹

354. George A. Palmer, Superintendent, to National Lead Company and Eagle Picher Lead Co., May 20, 1949, Folder: 621-02 Roof Construction for Mansion, Central Files, ROVA Archives.

355. George A. Palmer, Superintendent, to Regional Director, Nov. 8, 1949, Folder: 621-02 Roof Construction for Mansion, Central Files, ROVA Archives.

356. Palmer, “Completion Report on Separation of Storm Water and Sewer Lines,” Jan. 17, 1951, p. 1.

357. Palmer, “Completion Report on Separation of Storm Water and Sewer Lines,” Jan. 17, 1951, p. 1.

358. Palmer, “Completion Report on Separation of Storm Water and Sewer Lines,” Jan. 17, 1951, p. 2.

359. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 211, cited Snell, 102.

360. “Major repairs to Vanderbilt Mansion since July 1, 1940,” VAMA Coach House V-D1.003, ROVA Archives.

361. Palmer, “Completion Report on Separation of Storm Water and Sewer Lines,” Jan. 17, 1951, p. 1.

The contract for the separation of the storm water and sewer lines was completed and accepted on November 15, 1950.³⁶² In addition, photographs of the leaders were included in Palmer's January 1951 report.³⁶³

In January 1952 a small crew prepared a site for the construction of a septic tank sludge bed. This project was carried out in accordance with Public Health Service requirements.³⁶⁴

THE 1950s AND 1960s

EXTERIOR REPAIRS, 1951–1965

By the end of 1951 “the painting and regl[az]ing of the windows” had been completed. Approximately two-thirds of the windows were completed and given two coats of paint. It was planned to complete repairs to the other windows and give all a third coat of paint in the spring.³⁶⁵

Additional exterior work was occasionally reported. Fasteners were installed in November 1953 outside the second floor hall to accommodate new flower boxes for the balustrade.³⁶⁶ On August 5, 1956, Edwin C. Dinneen, the site historian, indicated that the iron grille work and gate entrances were being painted. He assessed the work as “much needed” and said it made a “decided improvement.”³⁶⁷

In October 1958 a site historian recommended that the window “shutters be removed from storage and placed again on the windows of the Vanderbilt Mansion,” but this proposal was rejected due to the need for extensive repairs to the shutters.³⁶⁸

A historic structure report for the roof of the mansion prepared in 1961 recommended that the following work be undertaken:

It is proposed to clean the asphalt patching of the flashing, valleys, and roof sections where asphalt has been applied heavily and shows cracks. It is also proposed to cover the entire roof, flashing, and valleys with Flintkote Monoform, a material composed of asphalt and Fiberglas which should not require any appreciable maintenance for a period of at least 20 years. The portico roofs would also be covered with Flintkote Monoform and the roof skylights would be repaired and waterproofed.” It was estimated that the repairs would cost \$6,500 and \$7,000.³⁶⁹

362. Palmer, “Completion Report on Separation of Storm Water and Sewer Lines,” Jan. 17, 1951, p. 2.

363. Palmer, “Completion Report on Separation of Storm Water and Sewer Lines,” Jan. 17, 1951.

364. “Summary of the January, 1952, Monthly Narrative Report,” Superintendent’s Monthly Narrative Reports HOFR and VAMA Jan. 1952–Jan. 1954, ROVA Archives.

365. Superintendent, to Director, “Monthly Narrative Report for October 1951,” Nov. 14, 1951, p. 2, Box 1 of MNR, Jan. 1950–Dec. 1951, ROVA Archives.

366. Snell, 161.

367. Edwin C. Dinneen, “Historian’s Report for the month of July, 1956,” Aug. 5, 1956, Box 1 of RVNHS RMR 1939–1966, Folder: ROVA Historian’s Report 1952–1960, ROVA Archives.

368. Benjamin H. Davis, Park Supervisory Historian, to Robert H. Atkinson, Superintendent, “Subject: Window Shutters, Vanderbilt Mansion,” Oct. 24, 1958, VAMA Coach House V-D1.003. Robert H. Atkinson, Superintendent, to Benjamin H. Davis, Park Supervisory Historian, “Subject: Window Shutters, Vanderbilt Mansion,” Nov. 10, 1958, VAMA Coach House V-D1.003, ROVA Archives.

369. “Historic Structures Report, Part I for the Roof of Vanderbilt Mansion at the Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Hyde Park, New York,” 1961, VAMA Coach House V-D1.003. Robert H. Atkinson, Superintendent, to Regional Director, Region Five, “Historic Structure Report – Part I – Roof of Vanderbilt Mansion,” Dec. 19, 1961, VAMA Coach House V-D1.003, ROVA Archives.

Later that year a “Building Maintenance Inspection Report” was prepared for the mansion. The report noted that the roof was leaking and that “moisture is penetrating concrete roofs over porticos. Skylights are leaking.”³⁷⁰

In February 1962 the National Park Service issued a request for proposals for roofing and other repairs at the mansion. The contractor was to “furnish all labor, materials, equipment, supervision and tools necessary for the entire and proper performance of the specified work on the roofs, skylights, ventilators, parapet walls, chimneys, and scuttle of Vanderbilt Mansion.”³⁷¹ However, in April 1962 bids were again invited for roofing work at the mansion.³⁷² The announcement for proposals indicated that the work would consist of “repairs to scuttles, ventilators and skylights and priming and applying to the main roof area and four porticos, roofing equal to a 20 year bondable “Monoform” system applied in accordance with recommendations and specifications of the Flintkote Company” of New York City.³⁷³

On June 5, 1962, a notice to proceed was issued by the superintendent to Sun Contractors, Inc., for the roofing project.³⁷⁴ By mid-July a lump-sum contract with a final estimate for \$6,580 had been awarded to the contractors. The work was to be completed on July 21, 1962.³⁷⁵

The contractor agreed to guarantee the roofing work “for a period of three (3) years for watertightness from the date of acceptance.”³⁷⁶ However, according to Superintendent Benjamin H. Davis in a July 1963 letter to Sun Contractors, “At least one leak has developed on this roof and ther[e] is a good possibility that others will develop due to the fact the copper ribs on the skylights are loosening and the sealant is falling out.”³⁷⁷ Davis requested that the contractor and “Mr. Howard L. Fox, the Flintkote Company representative, inspect this roofing job to determine what should be done to correct the conditions that need immediate attention.”³⁷⁸

In addition to the roof repairs, the building inspection report of November 1961 recommended repairs to the pointing, window sash, and exterior doors:

EXTERIOR WALLS

Rigid pointing has failed in several joints of limestone facing allowing penetration of moisture. Pointing should be accomplished and outer layer should be a resilient [sic] type compound.

Estimated cost----- \$700.00

370. Building Maintenance Inspection Report, Nov. 14, 1961, VAMA Coach House V-D1.003, ROVA Archives.

371. “Invitation for Bids for Roofing and Related Work, Vanderbilt Mansion,” Feb. 14, 1962, VAMA Coach House V-D1.003, ROVA Archives.

372. Announcement, Apr. 11, 1962, Box 3, File 8, Contract Files, ROVA Archives.

373. Announcement, Apr. 11, 1962, Box 3, File 8, Contract Files, ROVA Archives.

374. Robert H. Atkinson, Superintendent, to Sun Contractors, Inc., “Notice to Proceed,” June 5, 1962, Box 3, File 8, Contract Files, ROVA Archives.

375. Lump Sum Contract for Sun Contractors, Inc., approved by Franklin R. Mullaly, Acting Superintendent, July 18, 1962, Box 3, File 8, Contract Files, ROVA Archives.

376. Benjamin H. Davis, Superintendent, to Sun Contractors, Inc., July 9, 1963, Box 3, File 8, Contract Files, ROVA Archives.

377. Benjamin H. Davis, Superintendent, to Sun Contractors, Inc., July 9, 1963, Box 3, File 8, Contract Files, ROVA Archives.

378. Benjamin H. Davis, Superintendent, to Sun Contractors, Inc., July 9, 1963, Box 3, File 8, Contract Files, ROVA Archives.

EXTERIOR SASH

All windows need painting, caulking and some need re-glazing [sic]. Iron grilles over windows need cleaning and painting.

Estimated cost----- \$6,000.00

EXTERIOR DOORS

All doors need painting, caulking and some need re-glazing.

Estimated cost----- \$800.00

EXTERIOR PORCHES (PORTICOS)

The stone floors of the porticos need pointing.

Estimated cost----- \$2,500.00

STEPS

The exterior Stone steps and check Walls need pointing, iron railing need cleaning and painting.

Estimated cost----- \$3,000.00³⁷⁹

INTERIOR WORK, 1950–1969

Some interior repairs occurred simultaneously with improvements to the mechanical systems. In November 1950 one corner of the dining room required the removal and replacement of paneling to allow a contractor access to the drainage pipes of the Mansion.³⁸⁰ In 1951 other minor interior repairs continued. Snell explained:

In 1951 the ceiling ornament in the southeast corner of the room was restored, and the ceiling washed and painted. At that time seven decorative panels were restored, the woodwork was washed, and the furniture was oiled with linseed oil.³⁸¹

Also in 1951 the woodwork was washed in Mrs. Vanderbilt's Boudoir.³⁸² A report on the rehabilitation of furnishing explained that

The destroyed cornice and ceiling ornament in the southeast corner of Mrs. Vanderbilt's room was completely restored by the preparatory, after which the entire ceiling was washed and given one coat of matching French grey paint. Seven of the decorative panels which were in an advanced state of deterioration were given restoration treatment. All of the woodwork and walls were carefully washed.³⁸³

In addition, the "grand staircase and walls from first to third floor were hand scrubbed, and "all woodwork in the Green Room was carefully handwashed."³⁸⁴ The carved panels and woodwork in the Library were treated with linseed oil, as well.³⁸⁵ In January 1951 the paneling in Mr.

379. Building Maintenance Inspection Report, Nov. 14, 1961, VAMA Coach House V-D1.003, ROVA Archives.

380. Snell, 158.

381. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 139, cited Albert McClure, Monthly Reports, 1948-1968.

382. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 141, cited Memo November 30, 1951, Museum Preparator to Superintendent, VAMA.

383. Snell, 157. Report by McClure on rehabilitation of furnishing for the period July 1, 1950 to Nov. 30, 1951.

384. Snell, 157. Report by McClure on rehabilitation of furnishing for the period July 1, 1950 to Nov. 30, 1951.

385. Snell, 157. Report by McClure on rehabilitation of furnishing for the period July 1, 1950 to Nov. 30, 1951.

Vanderbilt's Bedroom was oiled.³⁸⁶ In May 1951 it was again reported that "the woodwork was washed."³⁸⁷

In May 1952 "the finish of the paneling [in the Living Room] was altered with the NPS program of oiling carried out in the 1950s."³⁸⁸ The walls of the dining room, which reportedly were "virtually unaltered since the Vanderbilts lived at Hyde Park," underwent oiling in 1952.³⁸⁹ Also in May 1952, it was reported that the mansion's maintenance crew finished painting the last coat of trim.³⁹⁰

According to an October 1952 report, the oiling of the interior walls, particularly the 3,800 square feet of wood paneling in the dining room, drawing room, and library, was among the most important preservation techniques carried out at the mansion. Reportedly, no such treatment had ever been previously conducted, and the walls were in an "extremely dry condition." McClure, the museum preparator, felt strongly that similar work should be repeated as soon as possible once funds were again available.³⁹¹

Linseed-oil treatments were undertaken in February 1954. This time, they were applied to all of the woodwork on the main floor, as well as in Mr. Vanderbilt's Bedroom. The work was completed with the help of volunteers.³⁹²

In addition to the linseed-oil treatments, the October 1952 report stated that:

Heavy sheets of clear plastic were installed on the walls near the entrances to the master bedroom (Mr. Vanderbilt's room), Mauve Room, Blue Room and Red Room where there was evidence of mistreatment by visitors.

Loose and missing plaster around the Grand Staircase window was replaced and reinforced.

Other work completed during this period included the filling of several voids in the Main Hall floor with plastic materials, and the bottom section of the hand-rail of the Grand Staircase was recovered.³⁹³

In mid-December 1953, the mansion's maintenance crew "concentrated on the rehabilitation of the kitchen in Quarters No. 3 at Vanderbilt Mansion which was vacated by Foreman Halpin and will be occupied by Building Superintendent Plain."³⁹⁴

By August 1954 the focus of the interior work had turned to the quality of the paint used in the mansion. Some of the paint in the dining room, in particular, was noted to be of poor quality and in need of repairs. A "Mr. Nitkiwicz instructed Museum Preparator McClure in the methods

386. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 134, cited Albert McClure, Monthly Report, January 1951.

387. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 147, cited Curry Inventory, 1938, 56. Albert McClure, Monthly Report, May 1951.

388. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 125, cited Albert McClure, Monthly Report, March 1952.

389. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 113, cited Albert McClure, Monthly Report, March 1952.

390. Director, to the Superintendent, Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, "Monthly Narrative Report for April, 1952," May 12, 1952, p. 1, Box 1 of RVNHS RMR 1939–1966, Folder: Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Reports HOFR and VAMA Jan. 1952–Jan. 1954, ROVA Archives.

391. Snell, 158–160. Report by McClure on rehabilitation of furnishing for the period Dec. 1, 1951 to June 30, 1952.

392. Snell, 161.

393. Snell, 160.

394. Director, to the Superintendent, Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, "Monthly Narrative Report for November, 1953," Dec. 10, 1953, Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Reports HOFR and VAMA Jan. 1952–Jan. 1954, ROVA Archives.

and procedures for the stabilizing [sic] the old paint [in August 1954?].”³⁹⁵ No further work was conducted on this until 1955, when “most of Mr. McClure’s time went into the stabilizing work on the Italian Gesso ceiling in the Dining Room. He also completed an experimental cleaning of the Gold Room ceiling, using liquid latex for this purpose.”³⁹⁶

In 1958 the National Park Service’s Mission 66 program was well underway. The Museum Services branch of the National Park Service emphasized the importance of developing an approved furnishings plan for historic sites like Vanderbilt Mansion.³⁹⁷ In 1964 a conference of curators determined that the National Park Service was “falling behind the best current standards and practices in the maintenance, operation and interpretation of its historic house museums.”³⁹⁸ That same year, the staff at Vanderbilt Mansion prepared an inventory, floor plans, and photographs for a furnishings plan.³⁹⁹ This document was the first such record for the site.

A November 1961 building inspection report recommended the following repairs to the mansion:

FLOORS

All floors are in good condition except in drawing room where several water marks have damaged the finish.

Estimated cost----- \$200.00

INTERIOR FINISH

Second floor red room bath – repair wall and ceiling canvas – new painting required.

Estimated cost----- \$200.00

Third floor rooms 32, 35 and bath – painting required.

Estimated cost----- \$80.00

INTERIOR FINISH – (continued)

Third floor – white guest room – repair ceiling canvas, repair wall paper – touch up paint.

Estimated cost----- \$150.00

Third floor – southwest guest room – repair and paint ceiling canvas.

Estimated cost----- \$200.00

Third floor – north bathroom – repair baseboard – paint walls and ceiling.

Estimated cost----- \$75.00

The ceiling of the first floor dining room is in need of repairs and cleaning. Cracks exist in the wood backing, rosettes are missing and mouldings need repair.

This work must be performed by highly skilled artisans. No estimate of cost can be given since a close examination from a scaffold will be necessary to discover all defects in the ceiling finish.

395. Snell, 162.

396. Snell, 162.

397. Lewis, *Museum Curatorship in the National Park Service 1904–1982*, 245–46.

398. Lewis, *Museum Curatorship in the National Park Service 1904–1982*, 243. Lewis cites Memorandum, Acting Assistant Director, Conservation, Interpretation, and Use, to Chairman, Long Range Requirements Task Force, Branch of Museums/Museum Operations Dailies August 1962–December 1966 storage box, NPS History Collection; Branch of Museum Operations Special Objectives for FY65, Aug. 11, 1964, *ibid.*; Report, Conference of Regional Museum Curators, Sept. 13–18, 1964, Regional Curators Conference 1964 folder, Curatorial Services Division files, Harpers Ferry.

399. NPS, “Vanderbilt Mansion Furnishings Plan,” 1964, Resource Management Records, Curatorial Division Records, ROVA Archives.

FOUNDATIONS

The foundations are satisfactory except for pointing needed on interior brick face of north wall forming wall of cellar entrance corridor.

Estimated cost----- \$300.00⁴⁰⁰

During preparations to repaint the reception room in 1962, the Edward Simmons mural was uncovered.⁴⁰¹ According to the superintendent's monthly report, it was not completely clear why the mural had been painted over, but it was recognized as a beautiful work of art, and it was "decided that the painting will remain uncovered."⁴⁰²

In March 1964 the Mauve Bedroom underwent repapering.⁴⁰³ The same year, the Second Floor Green Bedroom was redone with a green paper. However, Albert McClure indicated that the green wallpaper had "no sympathy with the original paper."⁴⁰⁴

A flurry of interior work was conducted beginning in 1966. This included repainting of the elliptical hall and foyers in May.⁴⁰⁵ In addition, an unidentified "replace and refurbish furnishings" project cost \$3,200.⁴⁰⁶

On March 11, 1966, new carpeting was installed on the grand staircase by L. Jones and Company under contract. New upholstery fabric was purchased for several chairs.⁴⁰⁷

In November a National Park Service regional architect visited Vanderbilt Mansion and reported that "the cleanup, wall-painting, etc. in the halls of the two upper floors are a commendable achievement. They look beautiful, as does the new carpet on the main stair."⁴⁰⁸ In the same month, various molds were made to replace "missing ornaments from the Dining Room ceiling."⁴⁰⁹ In 1967 the mansion's ceilings were painted, which cost a total of \$1,718.⁴¹⁰

In a 1969 management appraisal report, Frederick L. Rath Jr. noted many problems at the mansion, both in terms of furnishings and the interior features of the house itself. For instance, "materials in the rooms on the third floor, south (perhaps where he once lived) needed attention. The fine wood panel veneer in the first floor study was crazing and buckling." Rath further recommended that environmental controls be installed in both buildings to "control temperature, humidity, and dust."⁴¹¹

400. Building Maintenance Inspection Report, Nov. 14, 1961, VAMA Coach House V-D1.003.

401. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 128, cited article in the *Poughkeepsie Journal*, copy in ROVA General File, "Van Alen," ROVA Curatorial Division.

402. Superintendent's Monthly Report, May 1962, p. 1, ROVA Archives.

403. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 146, cited Albert McClure, Monthly Report, March 1964.

404. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 147, cited Albert McClure, Monthly Report, March 1964.

405. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 105, cited Albert McClure, Monthly Report, May, 1966.

406. Data for Individual Building Report (Form 10-768 to be inserted in Folder), Aug. 1959, VAMA Coach House V-D1.009, ROVA Archives.

407. Warren-Findley, 145, cited Historian's Report, March 11, 1966.

408. N.A., May 6, 1966, Field Trip-Reg. Architect, VM, VAMA Coach House V-D1.003, ROVA Archives.

409. *Historic Resource Study* 2000/2008, 113, cited Albert McClure, Monthly Report, November 1966.

410. Data for Individual Building Report (Form 10-768 to be inserted in Folder), Aug. 1959, VAMA Coach House V-D1.009, ROVA Archives.

411. Warren-Findley, 142, cited Frederick L. Rath, Jr., "Management Appraisal Report of National Park Service Curatorial Programs at Hyde Park and Boston NPS Group," Nov. 1, 1969 (this copy noted "R Lewis copy") CRBIB, Boston, p. 3, ROVA Archives.

THE 1970s

EXTERIOR REPAIRS, 1970s

There are few reports of exterior work being done in the 1970s. A May 7, 1973, report by National Park Service historic architect Hugh C. Miller stated that the mansion staff showed a “major concern for the fabric of the buildings.” However, he also indicated that “roof leaks and stoppages within the rainwater drainage system is one of the major problems that consistently plague the buildings.”⁴¹² A January 1973 report indicated that “a roof dressing has been applied to the roof of the Vanderbilt Mansion to stop leaks.”⁴¹³

Superintendent Warren C. Hill reported in February 1974 that “Coping stones on the roof [had been] ca[u]lked and pointed.”⁴¹⁴ Repointing of the steps at the north end of the mansion was undertaken in November 1974.⁴¹⁵

No other reports were located on any exterior work at the mansion until two years later, in February 1976. At this time, all of the grilles were cleaned and painted. In addition, “the draft inducer for the chimneys... was contracted for and installed.”⁴¹⁶

A June 1977 report described the continuing problems related to the roof and drains at the mansion:

The Mansion is a major historical building. The present roof and drains were repaired in the 1940s. Since then the drains have deteriorated to the point that they are leaking and causing serious drainage damage to the interior, highly decorated ceilings and walls and to the contents of the rooms. The rooms are an important part of the historic scene. Leaks have permitted water to enter the walls resulting in damage of several sections.⁴¹⁷

The same report addressed the need to repair the portico steps, deemed unsafe for visitor use due to loose handrails and other deterioration:

The steps need to be removed and the base under the steps needs to be releveled and new base added, the steps replaced, the handrails put back in solid. The north portico steps are 13' x 20' and 10 steps. All steps should be marked when moving so they can go back in the same place, be pitched to drain properly, etc.⁴¹⁸

The parapets over the porticos were also mentioned in this report; they required repointing. Furthermore, they exhibited cracks, which water flowed into during the wintertime. The water

412. Hugh C. Miller, Historic Architect, to Chief, Park Historic Structure, “Trip to Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites and Saint-Gaudens National Historic Site,” May 7, 1973, VAMA Coach House V-D1.003, ROVA Archives.

413. Warren H. Hill, Superintendent, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS, to Regional Director, North Atlantic Region, “Annual Report,” Jan. 23, 1973, p. 3, A-2621 Annual Report 1972–1980, ROVA Archives.

414. Warren H. Hill, Superintendent, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS, to Regional Director, North Atlantic Region, “Superintendent’s Annual Report,” Feb. 14, 1974, p. 5, A-2621 Annual Report 1972–1980, ROVA Archives.

415. Warren H. Hill, Superintendent, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS, to Regional Director, North Atlantic Region, “Superintendent’s Annual Report,” Nov. 8, 1974, n.p., A-2621 Annual Report 1972–1980, ROVA Archives.

416. Warren H. Hill, Superintendent, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS, to Regional Director, North Atlantic Region, “Superintendent’s Annual Report,” Feb. 12, 1976, p. 6, A-2621 Annual Report 1972–1980, ROVA Archives.

417. “Rehabilitation of Roof Main Catch Basins Drains,” *Development/Study Package Proposal*, June 21, 1977, VAMA Coach House V-D1.003, ROVA Archives.

418. “Repair North and South and West Portico Steps,” *Development/Study Package Proposal*, June 21, 1977, VAMA Coach House V-D1.003, ROVA Archives.

froze, causing damage to the stone. It was also suggested that the walls and porch ceiling areas be cleaned. This work was not expected to be unsafe or interfere with visitors in any way.⁴¹⁹

In September 1979, as part of this work, an order was placed with Fakton Ironworks of Newburgh, New York, for the fabrication and installation of the following:

Approximately 15' of 1 1/4" steel pipe railing with an intermediate section, and including one (1) hand rail 8' long, located on the parapet wall of the basement entrance to the Vanderbilt Mansion. Railing shall have one (1) 3' sliding gate to permit opening for existing lift floor and/or platform. Railing shall be primed and painted with one coat of black low luster enamel; in accordance with our drawing No. A-H dated 12 July, 1979. Completed 9/25/79.⁴²⁰

In the 1979 annual report, the acting superintendent, Margaret Partridge, outlined several additional changes made to the mansion, including the construction of "a plywood enclosure with a fiberglass panel roof" to be installed over the large skylight to prevent leaks. She also noted that storm windows were being constructed under contract for installation at a later time. In addition, a chair lift was installed at the basement entrance of the mansion for the use of disabled guests or staff.⁴²¹

MECHANICAL SYSTEMS, 1972-1974

In 1972 the assistant director of operations for the northeast region, Nathan Golub, reported on the heating and humidification of the mansion:

The Mansion is heated for the most part by steam radiators in vertical ducts leading to registers in the various rooms. Except for the third floor, each room generally has a duct which returns air to the sub-basement and is connected to the supply duct, thereby completing the circuit. There are about six such gravity hot air systems serving all of the Mansion except the basement and 1/2 of the third floor. Both these areas are heated by free standing radiators. The ducted systems, of course, each serve several rooms and these are sometimes on different floors, each room having its own ducts.

The Park installed a number of Walton humidifiers in the return air ducts in the sub-basement. While waiting to see the effect of these devices, I suggested that the Park arrange with the local distributor to select and install two Armstrong floor mounted Humid-fan systems, one in the basement and one in the upper floor-areas not served by the duct system. This was done.

Unfortunately, the Armstrong units were not effective due to a lack of steam pressure. The Walton units also were inadequate, probably because the return air is too cool and moves too slowly to have adequate humidifying capacity.⁴²²

In January 1973 ground-fault interrupters were installed at the mansion.

A contract was awarded on February 14, 1974, for \$30,000 to Shaker, Travis and Quinn of Poughkeepsie, New York, for the purpose of installing a humidification system at the mansion, and a 1½ H.P. Airtherm Centralaire air handling unit was installed at the center of the sub-

419. "Repair North and South and West Portico Steps," June 21, 1977, ROVA Archives.

420. Order for Supplies or Services to Fakton Iron Works, Inc. of Newburgh from Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS in Sept. 1979, VAMA Coach House V-D1.003, ROVA Archives.

421. Margaret Partridge, Acting Superintendent, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS, to Regional Director, North Atlantic Region, "Annual Report for 1979," March 6, 1980, p. 5, A-2621 Annual Report 1972-1980, ROVA Archives.

422. Nathan B. Golub, Assistant Director, Operations, NER, to Director, New York District, "Vanderbilt Mansion Humidification," June 27, 1972, VAMA Coach House V-D1.015, ROVA Archives.

basement. The same month's report discussed other repair work, including four leaded glass windows that were repaired and reinforced. Also, "the panel of the cassons in the north foyer of the mansion was treated and partially cleaned."⁴²³

INTERIOR WORK, 1970s

In November 1974 an interior wall at an unidentified location in the house that had been heavily damaged by water leakage was "carefully repaired and restored."⁴²⁴

A January 1977 paint study on the wall and woodwork finishes of the Servant's Dining Room found that "the woodwork was natural with a varnish finish, the walls and ceiling were painted a cream color matching Benjamin Moore 2-18, the picture rail was painted a gloss black, and the sash was grained."⁴²⁵ The study recommended that the woodwork "be given a coat of orange shellac prior to varnishing." This was thought to give the woodwork a natural finish similar to the appearance of the hallway outside of the dining room.⁴²⁶

Painting the interior of the mansion continued into March 1977. The third floor in its entirety was painted by March 2, a large portion of which was achieved with the help of participants in the Comprehensive Youth Program. These young people were provided to the mansion for work of this nature for up to 35 hours a week.⁴²⁷

In mid-March 1978 a large wall hanging on the stairway to the third floor was removed and properly rehung.⁴²⁸

A year later, in March 1979, the Servant's Dining Room was returned to its original appearance aside from final coats of paint on one window sash and hand-rubbing some of the moldings and a chair rail. These elements required replacement and were thought to be missing as a result of the room's past use as an office. The final painting was to be completed as "soon as a competent painter can be found."⁴²⁹

On August 10, 1979, a severe windstorm caused the thick plate-glass window in the west portico door to fracture. This window was replaced with a ¼-inch-thick plate glass.⁴³⁰

423. Warren H. Hill, Superintendent, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS, to Regional Director, North Atlantic Region, "Superintendent's Annual Report," Feb. 14, 1974, p. 3, A-2621 Annual Report 1972-1980, ROVA Archives. For more details on the changes to the heating system, see EYP Architects & Engineers, Assessment of the Process of Soot Production, 23-24.

424. Warren H. Hill, Superintendent, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS, to Regional Director, North Atlantic Region, "Superintendent's Annual Report," Nov. 8, 1974, n.p., A-2621 Annual Report 1972-1980, ROVA Archives.

425. Blaine Cliver to Superintendent, "Restoration of Helps' dining room, Vanderbilt mansion," Jan. 21, 1977, VAMA Coach House V-D1.003, ROVA Archives.

426. Blaine Cliver to Superintendent, "Restoration of Helps' dining room, Vanderbilt mansion," Jan. 21, 1977, VAMA Coach House V-D1.003, ROVA Archives.

427. Warren H. Hill, Superintendent, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS, to Regional Director, North Atlantic Region, "Superintendent's Annual Report," March 2, 1977, p. 7, A-2621 Annual Report 1972-1980, ROVA Archives.

428. Warren H. Hill, Superintendent, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS, to Regional Director, North Atlantic Region, "Annual Reports," March 20, 1978, p. 4, A-2621 Annual Report 1972-1980, ROVA Archives.

429. Warren H. Hill, Superintendent, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS, to Regional Director, North Atlantic Region, "Superintendent's Annual Report," March 13, 1979, p. 7, A-2621 Annual Report 1972-1980, ROVA Archives.

430. Order for Supplies or Services to Schmalting Glass Company of Poughkeepsie from Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS on Aug. 15, 1979, VAMA Coach House V-D1.003, ROVA Archives.

THE 1980s AND 1990s

The National Register of Historic Places nomination form for Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site was prepared in 1978. The National Register documentation was approved on June 29, 1979 and certified on October 6, 1980.⁴³¹

Throughout the 1980s, preservation and repair work continued. A series of interviews with Superintendent Duane Pearson provided information on the management of the site's interior over time. In an undated recollection, Pearson remembered one particularly drastic heating incident:

We had a blow-out of [unclear—perhaps “oily”] smoke up at the Vanderbilt Mansion. And it coated everything. It was coming throughout the building, throughout the mansion. And we started looking into what the problem was and ultimately hired somebody to look at the stack on the building from the furnaces and there was a clean-out tunnel that was large enough you could crawl on hands and knees to the base of the stack. And the accumulation of soot at the base of that stack, it had reached a point it had completely shut it off.

So the furnaces continued to run, they had a fresh air supply but they had nowhere to discharge it through a flue. So that's where it was coming from. Now here's a situation where the Park Service had operated the property for probably fifty years and during that period of time nobody had cleaned the flue. We had cleaned [up?], previous generations of superintendents, and maintenance supervisors, but nobody had cleaned it. And nobody at the regional level, also, you know, you'd say from one standpoint, well, if things were working as well as they could maybe you would have specialists come in when a site is acquired and put together some punch lists. Here's what you need to do to operate this facility. Well, that's not what happens. What happens is you're given the key as we were at St. Paul's Church or at Val-Kill and said it's yours.⁴³²

Pearson also recalled difficulties with the mansion's cast-iron drain pipes:

We had drains at Vanderbilt Mansion that were not working, roof drains. And we had water ponding up on the roof and we had leaks occurring in the building and so forth. And so I told maintenance, I said, “You know, get up there and look over the system, go down in the basement, go everywhere, look for the cleanouts. If you need to get Roto-Rooter or something like that in here, we need to get those cleaned out.” They did find clean-outs and they took brush, twigs out of these things, the stuff that falls on a roof goes into a drain. They worked at it for a couple of weeks cleaning this stuff using Roto-Rooter-type equipment and all of these oak things that could get into the drains and so forth. Years ago, the Park Service had actually put some other drains in the building because leaks had occurred and they were getting damage. So they'd replaced some drains and so forth. What we did in this instance is simply clean them out and found that some of them near the roof area had actually holed through. There were cast iron pipes that had holes right through the pipes so some repairs were accomplished.⁴³³

431. 1978 National Register of Historic Places Inventory, Nomination Form, Vanderbilt Mansion Historic Site, 1978, ROVA Archives.

432. Warren-Findley, 283-284, cited Pearson Interview, 24. The clogged flue was cleaned out c. 1991-1992. The NPS staff first installed filters over all of the registers of warmed and forced air system in 1991 in response to the escalation in soot, and NPS commissioned study of the environmental conditions in the mansion that same year. For more detail on problems with soot, see EYP Architects and Engineers, *Assessment of the Process of Soot Production*, 36-37.

433. Warren-Findley, 283-284, cited Pearson Interview, 24.

WINDOWS AND DOORS

In May 1981 a large project to fabricate all new sash, conduct window glazing, and install storm doors was undertaken. Specifications for this project included the following:

A. Wood and Grade:

Fabricate all sash using new materials, Grade C and better, Kiln Dried; e.g., Southern Pine, Idaho White, Ponderosa or Lodge-Pole Pine C Select; Kiln Dried. Wood to be free from warpage, stains, rot, or other imperfections affecting strength and durability. All materials to be stamped and approved as Grade C or better by an approved agency, typically; New England Lumber Manufacturers Association, West Coast Lumber Inspection Board, etc. or other bona fide agency.

GLAZING

B. Vanderbilt Mansion

Locations having wrought iron works in window, a two (2) piece unit will be required to facilitate installation. The contractor shall submit with his Bid, details describing the modification he proposes. . . .

C. Storm Doors:

Include wood stops on all doors to support glass, instead of glazing points and compound - all doors to be fabricated as shown on plans.'

D. Glazing Compound:

Shall be DAP '1012', Pecora 'M-242', with non-hardening additives or equal, approved in advance by the Contracting Officer.⁴³⁴

In July 1981 a formal bid from Drums Sash & Door Co. Inc. was approved for a total of \$35,988. The contractor was charged with fabricating and delivering new storm doors and windows.⁴³⁵

Work on the windows continued in August 1983, when the National Park Service authorized "the fabrication of eight large new windows for the first floor of the mansion. The contract stated that after installation the windows would be treated with SOLAR-X by the curatorial staff to reduce ultra-violet light damage."⁴³⁶

ROOFING AND RAILINGS

In June 1984 bid documents were prepared for repair work to the roof of the west portico roof. This work included the reroofing of the portico, including removal of the existing roofing, and the relining of two interior rainwater drains. The relining was specified to include rebuilding drain sumps and leaders.⁴³⁷ In October 1984 a notice to proceed was issued to Pettiford & Pettiford for the restoration of the west portico roof.⁴³⁸

434. Harvey E. Davies, Contracting Officer, Addendum #1, May 20, 1981, Box 18, Folder 5, Contract Files, ROVA Archives.

435. Solicitation Offer and Award to Drums Sash & Door Co. Inc., July 7, 1981, Box 18, Folder 5, Contract Files, ROVA Archives.

436. Order for Supplies or Services to Drums Sash And Door Co., Inc. of Drums, Pennsylvania, from Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS on Aug. 9, 1983, Box 20, Folder 25 [sic], Contract Files, ROVA Archives.

437. "Section 01010 Summary of Work," Project Documents for Restoration of West Portico Roof, June 6, 1984, VAMA Coach House V-D1.019, ROVA Archives.

438. Nancy R. Tansino to Pettiford & Pettiford "Notice to Proceed," Oct. 16, 1984, Box 24, File 1, Contract Files, ROVA Archives.

On September 13, 1984, Walter Sedovic, an historic architect for the National Park Service, sent to Joel A. Schwartz of Schwartz's Forge and Metalworks approved drawings for railings to be constructed and installed on the portico. Schwartz was informed that he might "proceed now to develop casting patterns and models for each of the railing components."⁴³⁹ The railings were installed in late 1984.⁴⁴⁰

In June 1985 contractors were invited to bid on "roofing work on the north, south and east porticoes (approximately 1100 sq. ft.) of the Vanderbilt Mansion, including removing existing fiberglass-reinforced asphalt roofing from concrete and stone substrate, and reroofing with new quarry tile over new single-ply membrane roofing."⁴⁴¹

By May 1986 there were concerns that the funding "presently earmarked for roofing work might be lost unless a firm commitment" was made by the North Atlantic Regional Office to "develop specifications and go to contract." There was concern that "with the uncertain future of the FY 86 budget and beyond, delays "might set back the project for many years."⁴⁴² Superintendent Pearson noted that the roofs had "a standing seam copper roof installed in the 1920's. Perhaps as long as 20-30 years ago bitumen roofing tar was mopped on to plug leaks and the process of mopping has been repeatedly regularly in subsequent years."⁴⁴³

Pearson recommended to the regional director that "work on the portico roofs be completed by Pettiford and Pettiford under continuous supervision and secondly that a modern membrane roofing system be designed and put out to bid and contract before the end of FY 86."⁴⁴⁴

During July 1986 the National Park Service staff inspected the roof of the mansion and recommended a preservation-based approach that was also considered to be "the most efficient: to make repairs to the existing roof, addressing specific leaks/problems that have been documented over time at the site."⁴⁴⁵

Unfortunately, the work completed by Pettiford & Pettiford was not deemed satisfactory. The following items were of concern:

1. Pulling and resetting all defective/uneven tiles, as identified by Mr. Sturm.
2. Regrouting all defective joints under Mr. Sturm's direct supervision.
3. Pulling and resetting the flashing in accordance with project specifications."⁴⁴⁶

439. Walter Sedovic, Historical Architect, to Joel A. Schwartz, Schwartz's Forge and Metalworks, re: Restore Portico Safety Railings, Sept. 13, 1984, VAMA Coach House V-D1.013, ROVA Archives.

440. Walter Sedovic, Historical Architect, to Facilities Manager, "Annual Maintenance of Railings, VAMA," Dec. 12, 1985, VAMA Coach House V-D1.013, ROVA Archives.

441. "Section 01010 Summary of Work," Project Specifications, Restoration of Three Portico Roofs, prepared by NAHPC, June 1985, VAMA Coach House V-D1.012, ROVA Archives.

442. Duane Pearson, Superintendent, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS, to Regional Director, North Atlantic Region, "Critical Issue'-Cyclic Repair-Vanderbilt Mansion Roof," May 16, 1986, VAMA Coach House V-D1.012, ROVA Archives. This document cites the amount of "\$200,00.00" as being set aside for the roof, presumably meaning \$200,000.

443. Duane Pearson, Superintendent, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS, to Regional Director, North Atlantic Region, "Critical Issue'-Cyclic Repair-Vanderbilt Mansion Roof," May 16, 1986, VAMA Coach House V-D1.012, ROVA Archives.

444. Duane Pearson, Superintendent, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt NHS, to Regional Director, North Atlantic Region, "Critical Issue'-Cyclic Repair-Vanderbilt Mansion Roof," May 16, 1986, VAMA Coach House V-D1.012, ROVA Archives.

445. Walter Sedovic, Historical Architect, to Superintendent, ROVA, "Preservation of Main Roof," July 3, 1986, VAMA Coach House V-D1.022, ROVA Archives.

446. Karen Klam to Pettiford & Pettiford Contractors, Inc., July 11, 1986, Box 26, Folder 7, Contract Files. Walter Sedovic, Historical Architect, to Chief, Contracting and Property Management, NARO, "Inspection for Final Acceptance," July 2, 1986, VAMA Coach House V-D1.019, ROVA Archives.

Bids for repairs to the main roof, drains, and flashing of the mansion's roof were due in September 1986. The scope of work included the following:

1-1 Scope of Work: This project consists of roofing repairs to the main roof of the Vanderbilt Mansion (approximately 8,250 square feet) as follows:

- A. Selected removal of existing fiberglass-impregnated asphalt coating from copper and cementitious substrate.
- B. Installation of new single-ply membrane roofing in designated areas (approximately 2,000 square feet).
- C. Cutting of new reglets in limestone parapets and masonry chimneys, and provision of new copper counterflashings.
- D. Provision of new copper drain pans, including new connections to existing interior cast iron drain system.
- E. Installation of flexible rubber pipe flashing.
- F. Application of spray-on roofing membrane over entire asphalt-coated-copper roof.⁴⁴⁷

Around the same time, an inspection of the portico roof project was undertaken by Walter Sedovic. He met with Ed Sturm and later reported that:

The project is on schedule and, more important, that the quality of the work completed so far is very satisfactory and is in accordance with project specifications and intent.

In summary, the north roof has new underlayment, partially installed counterflashing, and partially installed tile setting bed; the east roof has new underlayment; and the north south roof is undergoing demolition. The Contractor's on-site representative, Doren Pettiford, as well as the workers themselves were all quite amiable and interested in the work, and I see no reason to expect that this project will in any way be a replay of the west portico project.⁴⁴⁸

The larger roofing repair project was still underway in mid-April 1987. At that time Walter Sedovic wrote to the National Park Service staff to specify the use of Dibiten, a single-ply membrane roofing material. Sedovic indicated that this product "was described in the manufacturer's literature as 'a plasticized bituminous roofing membrane consisting of a compound of distilled asphalt mixed with polypropylene and other petro-chemicals. This compound is bonded to a polyester or fiberglass core and extruded to various thicknesses.'"⁴⁴⁹

In early May 1987 a notice to proceed with the repair work to the main roof and drains was issued to Attri Enterprises, Inc., of Astoria, New York. The work was to be completed within 120 calendar days.⁴⁵⁰

447. "Section 01010 Summary of Work," Project Documents for Repairs to Main Roof, Drain and Flashing, Sept. 11, 1986, VAMA Coach House V-D1.022, ROVA Archives.

448. Walter Sedovic, Historical Architect, NAHPC, to Superintendent, ROVA, "Restoration of Three Portico Roofs," Sept. 18, 1986, Box 26, Folder 8, Contract Files, ROVA Archives.

449. Dibiten one-ply roofing system, installation specifications, n.d, VAMA Coach House V-D1.022. Historical Architect, NAHPC, to Superintendent, ROVA, "Installation Specifications: Dibiten," April 13, 1987, VAMA Coach House V-D1.022, ROVA Archives.

450. Notice to Proceed from Karen Klam, Contracting Officer, to Attri Enterprises, Inc., May 1, 1987, VAMA Coach House V-D1.022, ROVA Archives.

By the end of June 1987 the three portico roofs were completed and accepted. All final items including, those on the west portico roof, were also completed.⁴⁵¹ The larger roofing project was completed on May 6, 1988.⁴⁵²

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT AND HEATING PROBLEMS, 1991–1993

In October 1991 Alio M. Fishman, a National Park Service regional engineer, inspected the heating system at the mansion and subsequently recommended that the it be completely replaced. The two boilers had “reached their useful life a long time ago,” and the “entire hot water piping system in the building (supply and return)” needed complete replacement.⁴⁵³ A detailed environmental assessment study was prepared by Steven Weintraub in conjunction with William Rose and Dominick Depinto, and the final report was submitted in July 1993. It dealt with relative humidity, temperature, air quality, light, and ventilation and included recommendations for correcting problems in those areas, in the short term and the long term.⁴⁵⁴ Corrective work was expected to take several years.

LATER REPAIRS OF THE 1990s

Not much information has been uncovered about repair work conducted during the 1990s. In 1995 a request for proposals was issued for repairs to the fire and burglar alarm systems. In May Archetype Architecture, Inc., was awarded a contract for “Rehabilitation/Upgrade of Fire and Intrusion Alarm Systems.”⁴⁵⁵ Apparently the project took a significant amount of time due to delays, but by the end of July 1997, the draft specifications for the intrusion and fire-protection system for the mansion had been submitted to the National Park Service.⁴⁵⁶

Changes to the HVAC system at the mansion were proposed in late 1997. At that time, the building was served by a one-phase underground service, which would not be adequate for the new HVAC equipment that had been proposed. Instead, three-phase service would be required. The Denver Service Center was to design the equipment for the mansion. It was determined that the National Park Service staff at Vanderbilt Mansion would choose from a variety of alternatives proposed for installing the “underground electric service.”⁴⁵⁷

451. Ed Sturm, Project Supervisor, to Ellen Sanderson, Contracting Officer, NARO, “Portico Roofs,” Aug. 3, 1987, Box 26, Folder 5, Contract Files, ROVA Archives.

452. John T. Darcy, Project Supervisor, NAHPC-Edison, to Bud Hawkins, Contract Officer, NARO, “Completion of Punch List on CX1600-6-0042, Preservation of Main Roof, Vanderbilt Mansion,” May 6, 1988, VAMA Coach House V-D1.022, ROVA Archives.

453. Alio M. Fishman, Regional Mechanical Engineer to the Chief of Engineering and Maintenance, North Atlantic Region, “Trip Report – Roosevelt/Vanderbilt National Historic Sites,” October 22, 1991, VAMA Coach House V-D1.018, ROVA Archives.

454. Art Preservation Services, “The Vanderbilt Mansion at Hyde Park An Environmental Assessment Submitted by Steven Weintraub in Conjunction with Willian Rose and Dominick Depinto,” July 1993, Museum Division Records, ROVA Archives

455. Marcia A. Omowaiye to Archetype Architecture, Inc., re: Rehabilitation/Upgrade of Fire and Intrusion Alarm Systems, May 4, 1995, VAMA Coach House V-D1.021, ROVA Archives.

456. Archetype Architecture Inc., Specifications: Fire/Intrusion Alarm and Fire Protection, Task Order #7, July 31, 1997, VAMA Coach House V-D1.021, ROVA Archives.

457. Don Zieman, Chief, Public Utility Management, WASO Denver Operations, to Contract File, “Progress Report-Tip November 21, 1997-Record of Negotiation,” Dec. 1, 1997, file: Van Broekhoven Vanderbilt Mansion, VAMA Coach House V-D1.007, ROVA Archives.

The final plans and specifications for the fire-alarm system were issued by Aug. 14, 1998. The work was to be completed within 45 days of the award of the contract.⁴⁵⁸

The Mauve Bedroom underwent plaster repairs by the National Park Service staff at some point during this period. In 1993-1994 the Large Red Room suffered water damage that required plaster repair and replacement of wallpaper. In 1995 the Park Service contracted with the Williamstown Art Conservation Center, who hired the Textile Conservation Workshop to determine the extent of damage from soot to interior surfaces. Installed fabric wall coverings in several rooms were dry cleaned in the mid- and late 1990s, and during that period, damaged wallpaper in the Small Red Room was replaced with fragments of original paper.⁴⁵⁹

THE 2000s

MECHANICAL SYSTEMS

Improvements to the mansion's electrical system were initiated just after the turn of the new century. A contract dated April 27, 2000, explained the project:

The work of this Contract consists of the construction of a new Electric Service, for the Vanderbilt Mansion, Roosevelt/Vanderbilt National Historic Site, at Hyde Park, New York. The project includes, without limitation, trenching, temporary controls, seeding, demolition of existing electrical service, conduit, conductors and the extension of existing conduits to new Service board, and underground secondary conductors to underground vault and related electrical work.⁴⁶⁰

By early May 2000 the bid from Richers Electric had been accepted for a total of \$62,603.00.⁴⁶¹ The project was completed by March 2001. Work involved "conversion of the primary service from 4KV to 13.2KV on the east side of Route 9, installation and splicing of new 13.2KV cable to connect from the vault to the line in the basement feeding the gardeners cottage, conversion of the transformer in the gardeners cottage, and removal of the transformer and equipment in the basement of the mansion."⁴⁶²

The 1941 boilers were put out of service in 2003 but left in place. They were replaced by new oil-fired boilers in the east part of the boiler room.⁴⁶³

PORCH STRUCTURES, WATER PENETRATION, AND STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

In December 2005, Einhorn Yaffee Prescott Architecture and Engineering of Albany submitted a detailed report analyzing structural problems with the mansion's porticos, overall water

458. Frederick W. Bentley, Chief, Engineering and Facility Management, to Superintendent, Gateway National Recreation Area, "Fire Alarm System," Aug. 14, 1998, VAMA Coach House V-D1.021, ROVA Archives.

459. Museum Division Records, ROVA Archives.

460. "Section 01010 Summary of Work," Project Documents for Secondary Electric, Vanderbilt Mansion Site, April 27, 2000, VAMA Coach House V-D1.007a, ROVA Archives.

461. Adella Hansen, Contracting Specialist, to Richers Electric, "Notice of Award," May 11, 2000, VAMA Coach House V-D1.007a, ROVA Archives.

462. William F. Cotting, New Business Services-Supervisor, The CH Energy Group Companies, to Donald Zieman, Chief, Public Utility Management, WASO Denver Operations, re: Vanderbilt Mansion Electrical Connection, March 1, 2001, VAMA Coach House V-D1.007, ROVA Archives.

463. EYP, Architects & Engineers, Assessment of the Process of Soot Production, 25.

penetration problems, and interior wall cracks. The report also suggested where additional investigations were needed.⁴⁶⁴

ROOF REPLACEMENT, 2008–2010

In 2008 the Vanderbilt Mansion still had its original 10,500 square foot copper roof. Years of maintenance issues led to the replacement of the copper roof with a modified bitumen membrane roofing system. For a narrative on this project, see the “Record of Treatment” section in this volume.

ELEVATOR REHABILITATION, 2009–2011

In January 2009, under direction from John G. Waite Associates, the Otis Elevator Company provided the National Park Service with a rough order of magnitude price estimate for rehabilitating the passenger elevator; their estimated cost was \$279,000.⁴⁶⁵ The elevator had been installed in 1897; it was then electrified and the control systems modernized in 1936. The new rehabilitation work would involve replacing “the operating machinery, safety and control systems while preserving the historic car, doors, lighting and control devices that are visible to the public.”⁴⁶⁶ A pre-construction meeting was held on site in July 2010, and work was soon underway at the Otis factory.⁴⁶⁷ Payments for the work were made to Otis Elevator in August 2011.⁴⁶⁸

CLEANING PROJECTS, 2009-2015

Various interior improvement projects were undertaken between 2005 and 2015. In 2005 the two mantels in the Dining Room were cleaned, along with the balustrade in the second-floor hall. The park commissioned a study of the component materials and condition of the ceiling by the Building Conservation Associates (BCA), which was completed in January 2009. Over the next five years, BCA and Foreground Conservation and Decorative Arts completed four phases of work to consolidate loose and flaking paint and gilding, and to dry clean the newly stabilized surfaces. A conditions survey analyzed the ormolu light brackets; subsequently, selected brackets were repaired. In Mr. Vanderbilt’s Bedroom, one of the tapestry panels was stabilized.⁴⁶⁹

EXTERIOR RESTORATION, 2010–2018

PLANNING AND ASSESSMENT The exterior of the mansion had not undergone comprehensive restoration since its initial construction in 1899. The 2010 roof replacement solved some moisture-infiltration problems, but the porticos and the basement still needed repair, as did the windows and storm windows, the ornamental ironwork, site drainage, and the exterior masonry. The narrative for this work can be found in the “Record of Treatment” section in this volume.

464. Einhorn Yaffe Prescott, “Porch Structures, Water Penetration & Structural Analysis: ROVA-Vanderbilt, Hyde Park, New York,” December 1, 2006, VAMA Coach House V-D1.001, ROVA Archives.

465. Jack Hager, Otis Elevator Branch Manager to Mr. Henry Van Brookhoven, The National Park Service—Vanderbilt Mansion, January 13, 2009, VAMA Coach House V-D1.002, ROVA Archives.

466. Vanderbilt Mansion Elevator Rehabilitation, Scope of Work, VAMA Coach House V-D1.002, ROVA Archives.

467. Henry Van Brookhoven, ROVA NPS, to Stephen Spaulding Boston NPS, “Urgent: PMIS Status of your ARRA Projects,” July 27, 2010, VAMA Coach House V-D1.002, ROVA Archives.

468. Stephen Spaulding, Boston NPS, to Melanie Gamble, Philadelphia NPS, “VAMA Elevator C1790100020,” VAMA Coach House V-D1.002, ROVA Archives.

469. Museum Division Records, ROVA Archives.

RECORD OF TREATMENT

After the National Park Service took over the care of Vanderbilt mansion, it carefully maintained the site, but moisture leaks appeared as early as the 1960s. NPS patched and covered the original copper roof and made isolated repairs to the exterior. By 2008, these efforts were no longer effective. Extensive leaking had damaged some of the exhibited rooms as well as the rooms on the basement and third floor. Moreover, the exterior stone suffered from botanical growth and carbon staining. The portico's stone steps and paving were seriously deteriorated.

In response, the National Park Service began an extensive exterior survey and restoration of the mansion, beginning with the replacement of the roof in 2009-2010. A comprehensive conditions survey of the exterior led to the full exterior restoration, conducted in two phases (2015-16 and 2016-18). The completion of this work marked the first major exterior construction work since the mansion was built.

The following Record of Treatment for these projects summarizes the intent of the work; the way in which the work was approached and accomplished; schedule; and costs. It also describes any discoveries made during the projects that contributed to the understanding of the mansion's history. The narrative is organized into the following sections:

- Rehabilitate Failed Vanderbilt Mansion Roof: PMIS 14806
- Complete the Exterior Restoration of The Vanderbilt Mansion
 - Planning
 - Complete the Exterior Restoration of the Vanderbilt Mansion: PMIS 152373
 - Rehabilitate Vanderbilt Mansion Foundation and Support Walls: PMIS 161264

REHABILITATE FAILED VANDERBILT MANSION ROOF: PMIS 14806

The following narrative was drawn from meeting minutes, reports, and as-built drawings.⁴⁷⁰

INTENT OF THE WORK

In 2008, the Vanderbilt Mansion still had its original 10,500 square foot copper roof and its original gutter system. The low slope of the roof and the many skylight penetrations were inherent issues of the original design. NPS noted leaks in the 1960s. A secondary mastic/membrane roof was installed as a temporary measure in 1986 and was maintained by NPS for over twenty years until 2007-2008, when spot repairs were no longer effective. Moreover, layers of insulation installed on the floor of the attic prevented snow from melting off of the roof; snow load accumulated through the winter months, creating areas of ice buildup that further deteriorated the roof through freeze/thaw cycles. The 2008 Project Agreement summarized the need for a new roof:

In the past year, interior leaks have appeared in the third floor servant's wing, guest quarters, and Mr. and Mrs. Vanderbilt's bedroom as a result of failure of the vertical wall flashing and masonry joints. The rapidly growing leak area now threatens the Mansion's second-floor exhibit areas. Recent investigations by Park staff and independent A&E concluded that given the age of the original roofing materials and the temporary repairs, continued spot repairs of the roof are no longer feasible and ongoing damage of the roof deck structural system and interior finishes will accelerate. Additionally, new masonry wall failures, associated with exfoliating of components of the roof framing system, failure of the masonry joints in the roof parapet, parapet ledge and balustrade, as well as failure of the bedding, flashing and caps of the many skylights were identified. These failures have increased the potential for water infiltration directly into the wall masonry and are indicative of wider exterior and interior damage.

This project involves the replacement of the failed 110-year old, 10,500 square foot, copper on masonry Vanderbilt Mansion roof. The work includes replacement of the copper roof, associated drains, counter flashing and flashing, and the failed mortar seals at the main girder support pockets, parapet, and transverse and perimeter joints of the masonry roof deck and rehabilitating the leaking areas of the chimneys and skylights.⁴⁷¹

PLANNING

John Milner Associates and HDR Engineering Inc. inspected the roof, then provided preliminary design reports that included condition assessments of the roof, the effort required to rehabilitate the

470. Thanks to David Hayes, Chief of Resource Management & Facilities, Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites & Martin Van Buren National Historic Site for finding these records at the VAMA Coach House.

471. Project Agreement, VAMA 14806A - Replace Failed Vanderbilt Mansion Roof, May 2008. Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Hyde Park, NY, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Denver Service Center. VAMA Coach House.

roof, conceptual designs, an order of magnitude cost (Class C) cost estimate, key issues, and how to proceed with the project.⁴⁷²

Based on these findings, NPS narrowed down its choices for the roof restoration/renovation to three alternatives: a modified bituminous roof; a single ply membrane roof system; and a copper batten seam roof with an ice and water shield. NPS met with a representative of Revere Copper to discuss the feasibility of a new copper roof. While the copper roof was consistent with the original intent of the building, the representative and the design team felt that detailing a copper roof to prevent leakage would be difficult and expensive. NPS chose the modified bituminous roof for its cost advantages and because it would be more effective on the existing flat roof.

Modified bituminous roofing is a time tested roofing system that has been used historically in low slope applications with multiple penetrations. The maintenance of this roof is relatively easy and repairs can be readily made. However, the recurring maintenance of a roof of this type tends to be higher than that of a metal roof. It is a relatively heavy roof although that is not a concern on this building. This type of roof can be walked on but walkway pads are available for heavy traffic areas. The roof can be covered with a light colored granular material to minimize damaging heat build up and keep the building cooler in the summer. The roof finish is not as historically consistent but will be seen only by maintenance crews.⁴⁷³

The state historic preservation office approved the use of the new material, as the stone parapet would mask the roofing and the visual appearance of the historic building would not be impaired. The Development Advisory Board, however, asked the team to reconsider using a copper roof to replicate the original roofing material.

In November of 2007, HDR Engineering issued a revised 100% Final Schematic Design report evaluating the modified bitumen roof system and a copper batten seam roof. The modified bitumen roof held the advantages of lower cost, ease of maintenance by park personnel, and watertightness; its primary disadvantage was that it did not match the original material, thereby conflicting with the Secretary of the Interiors Standards. The report went into more detail when discussing the copper batten roof:

The batten roof system is designed to shed water from the roof; it provides weathertight protection when properly detailed and installed. It is generally recommended for installation of roof slopes of 3: 12 or greater; particularly in locations that are subject to snow and ice. Replication of the original batten seam roof will require some modifications of the original detailing in order to provide a more watertight roof system.

According to the CDA, only flat seam roofing is constructed to be completely watertight. It also notes that lower slopes are possible under certain conditions, using modified details. Modifications include increasing the headlap of transverse seams where the roof and gutter meet, increasing the height of battens and seams, incorporating sealant to improve watertightness of seams, and avoiding transverse seams on the main roof surface by using long pans.

The biggest challenge is the protection against water ponding or snow build-up where water would have an opportunity to seep through a seam and get under the metal. Installation of a high-temperature membrane over the entire roof deck underneath the metal roof should capture any of the water that might enter. However, this water that

472. HDR Engineering, Inc., *Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Rehabilitate Failed Vanderbilt Mansion Roof, Hyde Park, New York, Design Analysis Field Observation and Assessment Report*, August 14, 2008. VAMA Coach House.

473. Capital Asset Plan and Business Case, Exhibit 300, VAMA 14806A, March 18, 2008. VAMA Coach House.

would be trapped between the membrane below and the metal roof above would have to be directed to the drains and provided a means of discharging in to the drains. Protection against backflow would also be required at the drains.

This “dual” roof system seems to provide a watertight roof but is not a tested detail. It is not certain that there is a roofer who will warranty this application.

Many of the metal roofs can last 80-100 years with proper installation and maintenance.

The advantages of the batten seam or standing seam roof system are closer replication of the original roof appearance and materials and the long life expectancy.

The disadvantages are the higher cost, the complexity of the detailing, and the installation on a low slope.⁴⁷⁴

Based on the additional value analysis, the modified bitumen roof was approved, with funding for the fiscal year of 2009.

PROJECT TEAM

The consultants and contractors for the roof replacement included:

Project Architect: John Milner Architects

Construction Manager: PBS&J

Prime Contractor: Kalimex, Inc.

Contractor: Diamond Quality

Roof Skylights: Diamond Quality

Masonry Repair: Kalimex Inc.

Landscaping: Kalimex Inc.

ACM (Asbestos-Containing Material) Testing: Abatetech

Concrete Testing: Atlantic Testing Labs, Ltd.

Engineers: HDR, Inc; Betzwood and Associates (Engineer)

Lightning Protection: Morse-Collins, Inc.

DEMOLITION AND INSTALLATION OF ROOFING

In September of 2009, the contractor began demolition, removing existing roofing layers down to the original concrete slab, and removing the tapered noncementitious material and wood battens (see Figure 12). The flashings were removed from the concrete curbs, masonry parapet walls, and chimneys.

Demolition of the roofing layers revealed the original concrete deck (see Figure 12). Following a structural inspection of the deck, the contractor and engineers concluded that the top portion of the deck substrate was not capable of securing the roofing materials through adhesion only. The team determined that plywood should be utilized in the installation to provide a more stable base for the roofing. This decision led to a new problem: drilling for the plywood sheathing hold-

474. HDR Engineering, Inc., *Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Rehabilitate Failed Vanderbilt Mansion Roof, Hyde Park, New York, Revised 100% Final Schematic Design*, November 2008. Denver Service Center TIC.



Figure 12. Roof demolition, September 8, 2009: original copper sheeting (upper left); removal of copper sheeting in progress (center); sweeping loose and excess materials on surface of exposed concrete roof deck (lower left). PBS&J.

Figure 13. The drill down holes caused spalled areas on underside of roof deck in the attic (upper image); tying rebar into position at the southwest corner deck repair area (center image); and the plywood, dense deck and base sheet layers (bottom image). PBS&J, 2009-2010.

down screws caused spalling on the underside of the roof deck, especially in the thinner areas of the deck (see Figure 13). Together, Kalimex, Diamond Construction, and PBS&J evaluated the drilling methods; after testing, they chose to drill down using a hammer drill until it hit the top of the concrete layer, adjust the depth gauge on the drill for the desired screw engagement, and then complete the drilling. This method reduced the spalling by approximately fifty percent.

After inspection of the concrete slab surface, all spalls and cracks greater than 1/4" wide were patched. Before laying the plywood, in some areas positive drainage was added by anchoring 2" to 1/4" sleepers to the concrete deck.

The roofing system installed was the Garland Company's StressPly SA FR Mineral, a self-adhering, fire-resistant, dual fiberglass reinforced, modified bitumen membrane, with White Knight (a liquid waterproofing membrane). The system included self-adhering base sheet underlayments and the surface membrane (see Figure 14).

SKYLIGHTS

Initial inspection of the skylights revealed a "considerable quantity of existing cracks in individual glass panels" of the main skylight. Some panels in the smaller skylights were also cracked, causing concern that some of the panes might not survive dismantling. NPS chose to replace four of the cast-glass panels in the main skylight; six other cracked, fissured, and chipped panels were considered intact enough to be reinstalled. Following the inspection, the glass and muntin covers in the skylights were identified, mapped, and recorded before removing the glass and storing it for later reinstallation in the original locations (see Figure 15). All existing sealant was removed. The skylight frames were removed and repaired off-site at Diamond Construction's shop (see Figure 16). By January of 2010, all of the skylights were ready for reinstallation.



Figure 14. Base sheet installation looking northeast (upper image); cap sheet installation (center image); and the roof in 2017. PBS&J 2009, JGWA 2017.



Figure 15. Skylight removal: preparing a small skylight hatch for installing temporary cover (upper image); removing skylight pane covers and caulking (center image); and skylight frame lowered using a hydraulic crane (bottom image). PBS&J, 2009.

Figure 16. Skylight work: square skylight frames repaired and historic vent caps repaired and installed (upper image); skylights under repair (lower image). PBS&J, 2009.



Figure 17. Lead-covered caulking joints on cap stones along east side of mansion parapet (left); and masonry joints and caulking/lead tee joints along exterior parapet at west side of roof perimeter (right). PBS&J, 2009.

MASONRY

The contractor performed the masonry work on the parapet and chimneys from a high lift, so that scaffolding would not be needed. The workers raked out and repointed deteriorated mortar joints. At the top of the balustrade, the contractor removed the butyl sealant, and installed a backer rod, sealant and lead tee-cap at each joint (see Figure 17). The cornice was treated similarly: mortar joints were raked out and backer rods, sealant & lead tee-caps installed at all joints. Limestone Dutchman patches were installed at six locations on the parapet wall.

The brick chimney that serviced the laundries was fully raked and repointed, and water repellent applied to all four sides.

In the preliminary planning for the roof replacement, NPS noted displacement of the stonework at the southeast corner of the parapet. During the restoration of the masonry, it was found that the displaced stone keyed into the adjacent limestone chimney; any additional work beyond cleaning and repointing the joint might result in additional problems. The team decided that the roofing repairs would halt the deterioration, and so no re-leveling or re-positioning was needed at the time. The caulking compound used for the balustrade caps was used to repair the joint.

PLUMBING

The original copper sheet metal drains were removed, with their tie-in components, and sections of concrete were removed from around the openings. The original internal cast-iron drain lines remained. The contractor enlarged the openings around the drains to 2'-0" x 2'-0", saw cutting and removing the concrete. The existing reinforcing was left in place and integrated into the overall reinforcing scheme (see Figure 13). The contractor installed new cast-iron drains, incorporating bearing pans and under-deck clamps, as well as new thru-deck leaders, couplers, and other tie-in components to the existing drain pipes.

FLASHING

After completion of the masonry work, new base flashings were installed at skylight curbs, parapet walls, chimneys, roof drains, and the roof penetrations. New copper counterflashing at the skylight curbs, parapet walls, and chimneys replaced the original counterflashing.

ABATEMENT

The black mastic above the roof counter flashing was found to contain asbestos. The mastic was removed and abated.

PORTICOS

All of the existing 1980s quarry tile roofing and flashing was removed from the porticos and replaced with Garland roofing materials. The contractor installed new copper drain pans and flashings, connecting the drain pans to existing copper piping. On the west portico, a 2" corrugated pipe was removed and the existing 3" and 4" pipes relined. All four roofs were coated with White Knight Plus (a Garland Company product). Masons raked out the masonry joints on the parapet walls and repointed the joints. The cap stone joints were raked out, lead T and V caps were installed, and caulked.

LIGHTNING PROTECTION

Existing lightning rods were left on the chimneys. No secondary rods were installed.

FINDINGS DURING CONSTRUCTION

When investigating the roof structure, Betzwood Associates issued a report describing the concrete and steel structure:

The concrete is reinforced using steel tees fabricated in a double cross geometry. These shapes are approximately two-inches deep and one-inch wide. It is believed that these are spaced between 16 and 24 inches on center within the concrete. They are supported on saddles placed over the beams that are fitted to accept the tees.⁴⁷⁵ The concrete was then formed from the underside, encasing the top flange of the steel beams. There are no deformations in the concrete reinforcing; the only bond that can be achieved between the reinforcing and the concrete is through friction. From the topside of the roof deck, it was noted that flat wood strips are embedded within the concrete. It is believed that these strips may have been used to screed the concrete after placement.

The steel observed in the attic was found to have been manufactured by the Carnegie Steel Company. During the design phase, measurements of the steel members were taken and a survey of the steel roof structure completed and documented. The steel supporting the concrete deck not only supports the roof construction, but also the attic floor and a plaster ceiling. This is accomplished through a network of steel rods hung

475. This steel framing method was used throughout the mansion. The 2017 exterior restoration uncovered a similar steel framing system below the west porch and identified it as the Columbian Fireproofing System.

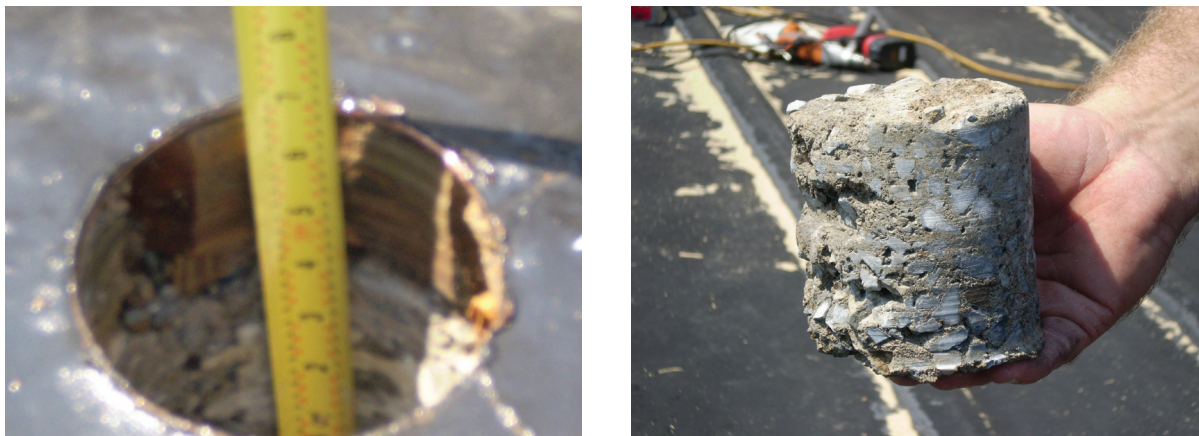


Figure 18. Core drilling to check the composition and stability of the original concrete roof deck, August 18, 2009: measuring the depth of the first core drill hole (upper image); and close up of concrete core from the first core drill hole (lower image). PBS&J.

from the bottom flanges of the steel. As previously mentioned, the primary steel members supporting the roof are sloped to provide the drainage. Between these primary members are the smaller intermediate beams that are spaced approximately eight feet apart. This then is the span of the double cross tees used for reinforcing the concrete. All connections of the steel are bolted; no welding could be observed, which is to be expected. Steel of this age is generally not weldable due to its high carbon content. The primary beams are pocketed into the masonry walls.

Toward the northeast corner of the roof, a small area of the temporary roof had been cut open for further observation of the concrete. Here it was noted that a cinder topping did exist; however, its condition was also found to be poor. In the area exposed, the cinders have deteriorated to a powdery consistency, with much of it adhered to the temporary roof membrane removed. It is believed that the topping had become exposed to moisture infiltration, thus causing a breakdown of the cement. Again, it is unclear to what extent this condition exists throughout the roof, but it is reported by the roofing contractor that approximately 30 percent of the roof may be affected by this deterioration.⁴⁷⁶

The report also discussed the six core samples taken of the roof (see Figure 18).

Although the thickness of the roof deck is believed to vary throughout the roof, core samples of the roof, taken as part of the contract requirements, indicate that the concrete is approximately four inches thick with a two-inch thick cinder topping. Six core samples were taken; however, only two of these samples were deemed suitable for testing. The results of the compression testing of the two samples are included as an attachment to this report. Also included are photographs taken of the samples, which depict varying degrees of consolidation in the concrete mix. Indeed, one sample was found to be severely segregated, while another fractured when it was taken out of the hole saw. The compression strength of one sample taken was found to be 1,700 pounds per square inch and the other 1,570 pounds per square inch.⁴⁷⁷

476. Betzwood Associates PC, *Engineer Report on Roof Deck*, September 21, 2009. Included as attachment to September 21, 2009 letter from Kevin O'Brien, Kalimex Incorporated, to Mary Robinson, National Park Service, Denver Service Center.

477. Betzwood Associates PC, *Engineer Report on Roof Deck*, September 21, 2009. VAMA Coach House.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

Kalimex, Inc. was awarded the contract on July 8, 2009. The original contract completion date was February, 13, 2010; the actual completion date was June 30, 2010.

COST

The final contracting cost for the project was \$1,943,546.57.

COMPLETE THE EXTERIOR RESTORATION OF THE VANDERBILT MANSION

COMPLETE THE EXTERIOR RESTORATION OF THE VANDERBILT MANSION: PMIS 152373 & REHABILITATE VANDERBILT MANSION FOUNDATION AND SUPPORT WALLS: PMIS 161264

INTENT OF THE WORK

The roof replacement solved some of the moisture infiltration issues in the mansion, but there were still issues at the porticos and at the basement. NPS issued a task order to complete the work:

In accordance with the PMIS #152373 statement, this project would complete the work started with the roof and address the same water infiltration problems on the remainder of the exterior envelope and renew the service life of this key character-defining historic structure, portions of which are now closed to the public because of the threat of falling building pieces.

This project includes the following:

1. Repointing of exterior masonry to seal it from the elements and to staunch water infiltration and resulting damage to the structure and its historic interiors.
2. Stone repair and/or replacement where required.
3. Rehabilitation of the four porticos including resetting all steps and repair or replacement of stone and steel where required.
4. Repair and repainting of all exterior ironwork.
5. Repair and repainting all exterior woodwork including windows and doors.⁴⁷⁸

Other significant issues identified included insect infiltration concerns and site drainage concerns.

The project was later divided into two phases. The intent of the work in PMIS 152373 was finished under PMIS 161264 with no change in overall intent.

PLANNING

To accurately assess the condition of the building, John G. Waite Associates, Architects (JGWA) documented the entire exterior through field notes and photographs during the fall of 2010. A 65-foot aerial lift accessed all parts of the building. JGWA created measured drawings; using those drawings, the team developed diagrams to record stone damage, biological growth, staining and soiling, and cracked, pitted, or eroded masonry. To fully inform the investigation, Mount Ida Press prepared a history of the mansion construction, with background information on the

478. Task Order No. T2011100564, IDIQ No. C200008110, VAMA 152373, "Complete the Exterior Rehabilitation of the Vanderbilt Mansion," DSC-CS Contracting Services Division, NPS, September 23, 2010.



Figure 19. The entire exterior was surveyed in the fall of 2010, using a sixty-five foot lift.

bluestone, marble, and ironwork. Robert Silman Associates provided structural engineering, and AMEC undertook civil engineering. Frances Gale, an architectural conservator, developed and supervised the masonry cleaning tests.

PROBES

The team also conducted a series of probes to understand the condition of the structural framing. Paving stones were removed from the portico floors to reveal the concrete slab and framing beneath. On the west portico floor, where the conditions were particularly bad, the contractor demolished a small section of the concrete slab to allow inspection of the steel elements. This investigation continued into the construction phase; see the section on Portico Floors in the narrative for PMIS 152373.

Before the probes, it was thought that cracking and movement of the façade stones were caused by a combination of rust jacking of the concealed structural steel and freeze-thaw cycles at open joints. At the northwest basement window (looking into B13, the Chef's Room), a section of cracked stone and the brick masonry behind was removed from the end of a steel flange floor beam bearing on the brick wall. That steel was in surprisingly good condition. Additional probes inside the mansion—above the Chef's Room northwest window, in the Empire Room (304), and in the Red Bathroom (220)—confirmed that, even in areas of severe moisture damage, the steel was in fair to good condition.⁴⁷⁹ The findings of all of these probes led to the conclusion that the cracks in the exterior façade stones resulted from a combination of very tight mortar joints and the natural movement of the building.

The construction of the portico ceilings was investigated through several borescope probes. While these probes revealed details about the steel framing, lath, and plaster, they did not determine the suspension system of the decorative medallions. Loose areas of plaster around cracks corresponded to concealed, corroded steel framing members.

STONE CLEANING TESTS

Biological growth caused a large portion of the staining on the facades stones (see Figure 20). Some areas also exhibited gypsum encrustations (see Figure 21). Two rounds of cleaning tests

479. Robert Silman Associates, Structural Engineer's Field Report & Schematic Design Report, in John G. Waite Associates, Architects, Predesign Report, revised June 17, 2011.



Figure 20. One of the primary issues with the stone was staining from several types of biological growth. JGWA, 2010.



Figure 21. Stone deterioration was also attributed to gypsum crust. On the left, the window lintel is stained with biological growth and damaged by gypsum crust; below, gypsum crust has developed on one of the modillions. JGWA, 2010.



Figure 22. (Upper image) The original mortar joints are very thin; the original workmanship was meticulous and difficult to replicate. (Lower image) Repointed mortar joints on the balustrade did not match the original. JGWA, 2010.



Figure 23. The corner stones in the north and south portico cornices were displaced and rotating out. JGWA, 2010.

were carried out: one in December of 2010, and one in April of 2011. Both chemical and water-based cleaning were tested on the stone. As a result of these tests, the team recommended the following treatments for each condition:

- **GENERAL SOILING (ATMOSPHERIC AND LIGHT BIOLOGICAL SOILING):** Water washing applied at approximately 1000 psi with a 25-degree fan tip, maintaining a distance of 8-10 inches from the limestone surface; hot water (approximately 180 degrees F.) could improve effectiveness.
- **BIOLOGICAL GROWTH:** Water washing followed by D/2 Biological Solution.
- **GRAY SOILING (SUCH AS THAT PRESENT ON THE CAPSTONE):** 942 Limestone & Masonry Cleaner, a non-acidic alkaline cleaning gel manufactured by Prosoco.
- **WEATHERING CRUST FORMATION:** Intermittent water misting. This technique uses a system of flexible nozzles that produce a fine spray or mist of water that is directed at the soiling to be cleaned. Repeated “on” and “off” intervals of water misting soften the soiling. It can then be removed with gentle scrubbing and low-pressure water rinsing.
- For the Vanderbilt mansion, the recommendation was for intermittent misting using 15 and 25-degree tip spray brass nozzles spaced 6 inches apart and connected to flexible adapters. The nozzles should be approximately 10-12 inches from the limestone surface, providing misting at a 120-degree angle. Misting cycles of 10 minutes on and 50 minutes off during an 18-hour period were effective in the tests. Because of variable exterior limestone conditions, the technique might require slight adjustments when the cleaning was carried out. Following intermittent misting, hand scrubbing with a soft brush and water washing would remove the loose soiling.

ARCHAEOLOGY

The Public Archaeological Laboratory (PAL) conducted fieldwork around the mansion in October of 2010 to identify and evaluate the significance of archaeological resources that might be impacted by the exterior restoration. The archaeologists excavated thirty-four 50 centimeter by 50 centimeter shovel test pits; five 1 meter by 1 meter excavation units; and six 1 meter by 2 meter excavation units. The team also identified and examined burn/demolition matrices associated with the Langdon and Vanderbilt mansions, as well as utility trench fills.

The archaeologists recovered 1,093 pieces of cultural material, most of which were associated with construction and demolition at the site. No intact structural evidence of the mansions that preceded the Vanderbilt mansion was discovered at the time.⁴⁸⁰

RECOMMENDATIONS

The team recorded the results of this investigative phase in a Predesign Report and made the following recommendations:

1. Chemically clean exterior masonry to remove soil and crusts, staining, and biological growth.
2. Disassemble and reset steps of north, west, south and east porticos, reconstruct masonry backup and foundations as required.
3. Grit blast decorative ironwork. Survey cleaned ironwork for necessary repairs. Repair ironwork, prepare and re-paint. Remove ironwork where stone masonry has been

480. PAL, “Technical Report, Phase 1B Archeological Survey, Vanderbilt Mansion Exterior Rehabilitation Project, Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site,” March, 2011. VAMA Coach House Records.

cracked or broken as a result of oxide jacking; repair masonry and ironwork; reinstall ironwork.

4. Replace broken, eroded, and spalled stone paving. Replace precast concrete paving [which was used to repair paving] with stone paving.
5. Repair or replace reinforced concrete decking, providing flashing and waterproofing beneath stonework as required. Provide positive slope for drainage of paving.
6. Reinforcement of some existing portico steel framing is required.
7. Reset displaced stonework.
8. Repoint and rebuild brick piers beneath west portico as required.
9. Repoint mortar and replace spalled brick as required beneath north portico.
10. Repair cracks in stone masonry at lintels of basement window openings.
11. Repoint all vertical and horizontal joints of stone masonry.
12. Provide positive drainage away from base of building at grade level. *Note: This item is out of scope but highly recommended.*
13. Provide limited underground footing drains and piping. Provide foundation waterproofing at the north portico. *Note: This item is out of scope but highly recommended.*
14. Provide subsurface storm water drainage system. *Note: This item is out of scope but highly recommended.*
15. Restore windows and doors, including storm windows and doors.
16. Restore masonry chimney construction and chimney caps. *Note: This item is out of scope but highly recommended.*
17. Restore historic light fixtures.
18. Restore and reinstall historic window shutters.
19. Re-set shifting cornice stones at north and south porticos. *Note: This item is out of scope but highly recommended.*
20. Provide sheet metal flashing at all projecting cornices. *Note: This item is out of scope but highly recommended.*
21. Re-set or pin third floor corner blocks and cornices. *Note: This item is out of scope but highly recommended.*⁴⁸¹

Most of the recommendations were incorporated into the schematic design, and then later into the construction documents. Some of these items required modification:

- After additional probes uncovered the poor condition of the portico framing (#6), the design was revised to call for complete replacement of that framing.
- Instead of repointing all of the vertical and horizontal joints (#11), only selected joints in poor condition were to be repointed.
- The final design placed underground footing drains and piping (#13) around the entire perimeter of the mansion.

481. Predesign report, 10.

- Numbers 16, 19, 20, were outside the scope of work of the task order, and were not implemented into the schematic design, value analysis, or construction documents.
- NPS decided that restoring and installing the shutters (#18) would cause too many long-term maintenance issues.
- NPS determined that resetting and pinning all of the third floor corner blocks and cornices (#21) was too invasive; instead, the drawings called for repointing all of the joints at those locations, and only pinning the corner blocks.

Late in the design process, after 2012, the project was split into two phases to divert a portion of the funding to emergency projects related to hurricane Sandy: the first phase (PMIS 152373) focused on elements below the water table; the second phase (PMIS 161264) completed the below-grade waterproofing and everything above the water table. The work of the two phases included:

PHASE 1

- Cleaning of stone, repointing, crack repair, and dutchman repair of stone beneath the water table
- Site drainage and waterproofing
- Replacement of deteriorated portico floors
- Resetting portico steps
- Restoration of basement and sub-basement windows and doors; new aluminum storm window panels
- Restoration of decorative iron window grilles at basement level restored
- Restoration and refurbishment of north areaway

PHASE 2

- Cleaning of stone, repointing, crack repair, and dutchman repair of stone above the water table
- Installation of waterproofing along the foundation, in areas not covered in Phase 1.
- Resetting of the four large corner stones at the four corners of the north and south porticos; installation of interior steel channels bolted to the upper cornice corner stones at the attic level.
- Restoration of portico ceilings
- Restoration of first floor, second floor, and third floor windows; installation of UV film on the interior of the sash
- Restoration of exterior first floor doors
- Restoration of second floor balconies and remaining window grilles
- Installation of new wheelchair lift and railing
- Restoration of historic light fixtures and replication of fixtures for east and west porticos
- Repair/restoration of the Wine Storage areas.

COMPLETE THE EXTERIOR RESTORATION OF THE VANDERBILT MANSION: PMIS 152373

The following narrative describes the work completed during the first phase of the exterior restoration, between July 2015 and September 2016. This contract only included the areas below the water table.

INTENT OF THE WORK

The intent of the project was to restore and repair the stone work, windows, doors, and railings below the water table, and to rehabilitate the four porticos, resetting all steps and repairing or replacing the stone and the steel structural system.

PROJECT TEAM

The contractor for this phase was S.J. Thomas Company Incorporated of Landsdowne, Pennsylvania.

CONSTRUCTION

The work completed in the first phase included stone cleaning, repointing, crack repair, and Dutchman repair of the stone beneath the water table. A portion of the brick foundation below the water table at the north portico was exposed to 4' below the water table, and a system of site drainage and grading was installed, including several drywells and partial foundation waterproofing. The exposed bricks were cleaned, repointed, and painted. The work included complete replacement of the deteriorated floor structure of the four porticos, including the addition of waterproofing and complete replacement of the Joliet stone paving. All of the stone portico steps were re-set. The basement and subbasement windows and doors were restored, and aluminum storm window panels added. Decorative iron window grilles were restored.

STONE CLEANING

The stone façade was cleaned using the techniques outlined during the planning stage: water washing for general soiling; water washing with Prosoco's D/2 Biological Solution for biological growth; Prosoco's 942 Limestone & Masonry cleaner for gray soiling; and intermittent water misting for weathering crust.

MORTAR JOINTS

In some areas, the mortar joints in the stone façade had been repaired by filling them with sealant. The sealant was removed and replaced with mortar. Lead tee-caps were installed on the skyward joints of the water table.

PORTICO FLOORS

The probes of the portico floors during the planning phase confirmed that the framing supporting the floors consisted of steel beams supporting a concrete slab. At the west portico, a 4" structural slab was supported from the top flange of the beams. At the north, south, and east porticos, the slabs were approximately 9" thick with a 5" topping slab above a 4" structural slab. McKim, Mead & White and Norcross Brothers utilized a proprietary system from the Columbian Fireproofing Company to reinforce the slabs: rolled steel bars suspended from the floor beams with steel stirrups and embedded in the concrete slab. Above each slab was a 1" thick setting bed and 3" thick stone pavers.

While the east, north, and south portico steel framing was nearly fully embedded in the concrete slabs, at the west portico, the bottom half of the web and the bottom flange were encased in masonry tiles for fire protection. Most of the tiles had fallen off, leaving the steel exposed to the elements. Moisture caused rust to build up on the exposed steel, displacing surrounding finishes, fireproofing, and stones, and deteriorating the beams to the point that large holes had developed in the webs. The full condition of the floors was not fully realized until the paving was removed during construction (see Figure 24).

During the planning stage, three options were prepared for repairing the portico floors (see Figure 26):

- Option 1. Repair the existing slab: clean and paint the steel, patch the concrete, and reset the paving stones. At west portico, slab and steel beams would be replaced in kind.
- Option 2: Replace in kind: install new stainless-steel beams to match the existing beams. Design a lightweight concrete slab and cover it with a waterproof membrane.
- Option 3: New slab: design a lightweight concrete slab with integral concrete beams to replace the original steel framing.

Option 2 was considered, but the new stainless-steel beams could not be designed to be shallow enough to fit between the finished ceiling on the bottom of the slab and the floor pavers. Instead, the entire structural system was removed from each portico and a new slab (Option 3) with integral concrete beams replaced the original structure.

PORTICO STEPS

The steps at all four porticos were displaced. Three options, like those for the portico floors, were proposed for repair; and, as at the floors, the option for a new lightweight concrete structure was chosen (see Figure 27). At the north, south, and east porticos, the contractor removed the steps and cheek walls, revealing brick fill covering shallow brick jack vaults. The fill was cleared away and lightweight concrete stepping installed to support the steps; this concrete base was designed to allow water to drain out of the stair. A waterproof lining was installed on the stepping, and the stone treads were then reset on a setting bed and cleaned (see Figure 28 and Figure 29).

WINDOWS AND DOORS

The basement and sub-basement sash and trim were removed and taken to the subcontractor's workshop (see Figure 36). The existing exterior finishes were removed. Dutchman repairs were used for any area of rot that was larger than .5 cubic inches and at corner locations; smaller



Figure 24. Porticos: The Joliet stone paving on the west portico was chipped and spalled, and the surface was uneven (upper left). Concrete patches did not match the stone. Removal of the stone revealed that the structural steel and concrete support slab were severely damaged (center image). Removal of the paving revealed the original 1899 structural system (lower left); saddles hung on the primary beams supported double-tee shaped bars. The two photos to the right show the severely rusted steel framing of the west portico slab. JGWA, 2010-2015.



Figure 25. (Left) View of the brick piers supporting the west portico columns, after the floor structure was completely removed. (Right) Waterproofing was applied to the foundation, four feet below grade. JGWA, 2015.

damages were filled with exterior putty. Any element with greater than 25 square inches of rotten surface was replaced entirely.

The carpenters removed the existing glazing putty, salvaging the glass. The exterior trim and the exterior side of the sash was fully restored with new paint. Nothing was done to the interior finishes. Restoration of the window hardware included stripping of paint finishes, repairing whenever possible, and, if missing, replacing in kind.

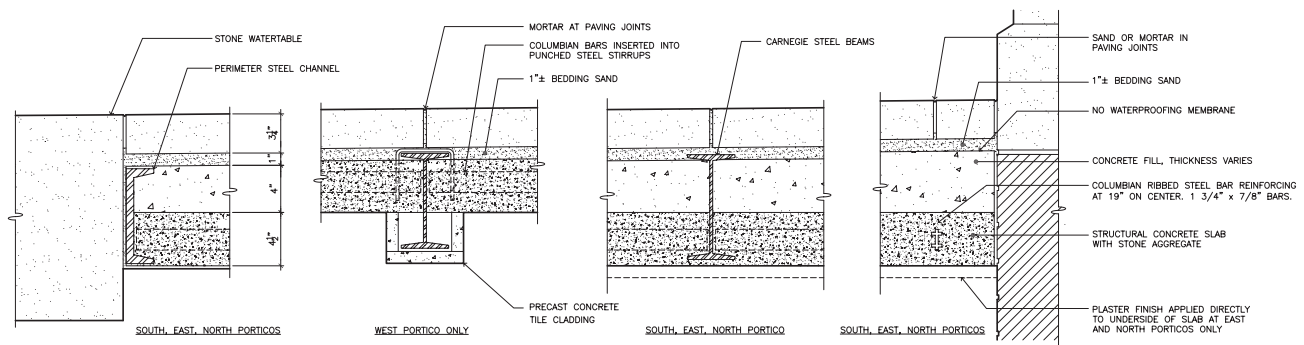
Before the window restoration, NPS had particular concern for insect damage in the mansion. The windows and doors were the primary entries for insects entering the mansion. To prohibit insects from entering through the windows, two-part interlocking galvanized steel weather stripping replaced the old weatherstripping, and multiple layers of sealant between the sash and trim and the stone created an additional barrier (see Figure 30). New aluminum Mon-Ray storm windows were designed to set tightly in the opening. Weep holes at the bottom of the sash were filled in with bronze screen material. Once all window sash and hardware were fully operational, all of the sash could be shut tightly.

The contractor applied similar treatment to the restoration of the exterior doors.

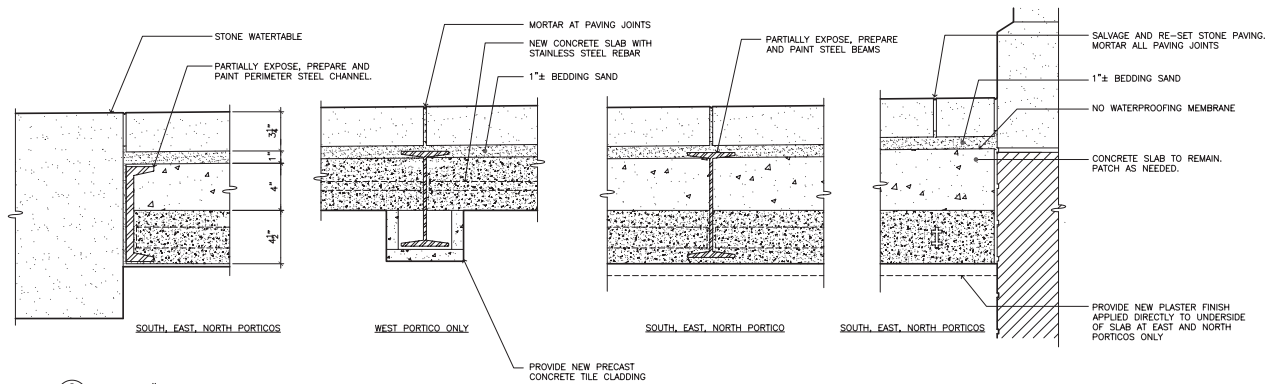
GRILLES AND RAILINGS

Repairs to the cast-iron and bronze grilles and balconies stabilized the existing materials, so that the finishes would last longer. New elements were only introduced when components were missing or damaged beyond repair; any new elements were made by a blacksmith using traditional hammering and bending techniques, supplemented by a power hammer.

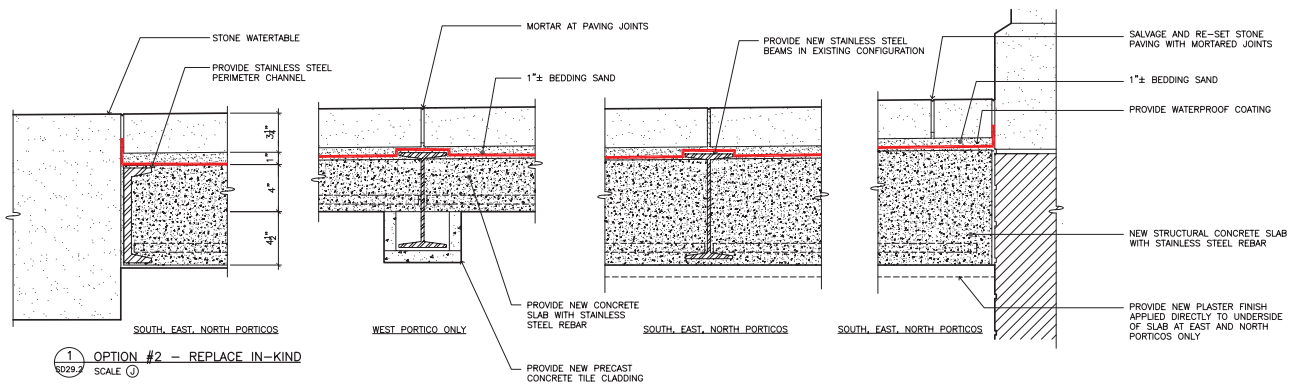
The subcontractor removed the basement window grilles and the portico railings to their workshop. At some locations, the railing posts were embedded in lead; heat was applied to the posts to melt the lead and allow removal of the elements. Depending on the condition of the railing, the shop used different techniques to clean the metal: mechanical or hand rust removal; chemical paint stripper (B4), followed by a thinner wash; or abrasive media blasting, using pulverized walnut shells, aluminum oxide, and/or #13 or finer slag. The metal was painted with an electrostatic paint spray system, sanding between each coat. The posts were reinstalled with lead.



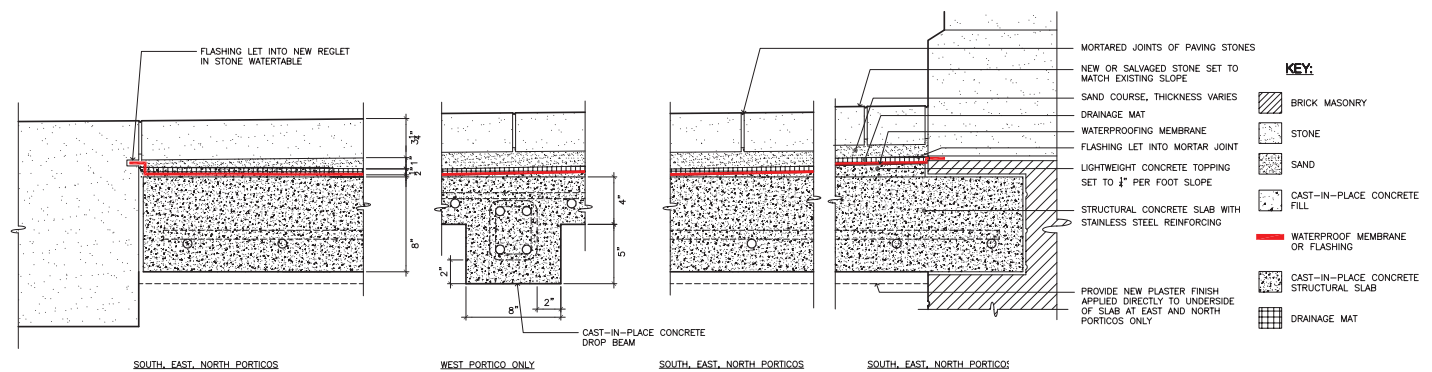
1 TYPICAL EXISTING CONFIGURATIONS
SCALE ①



2 OPTION #1 - REPAIR
SCALE ①



1 OPTION #2 - REPLACE IN-KIND
SCALE ①



2 OPTION #3 - RECONFIGURE STRUCTURE
SCALE ①

Figure 26. Details of the existing portico slab structure and three options to restore the portico floors. Option 3 was chosen. JGWA, 2011.

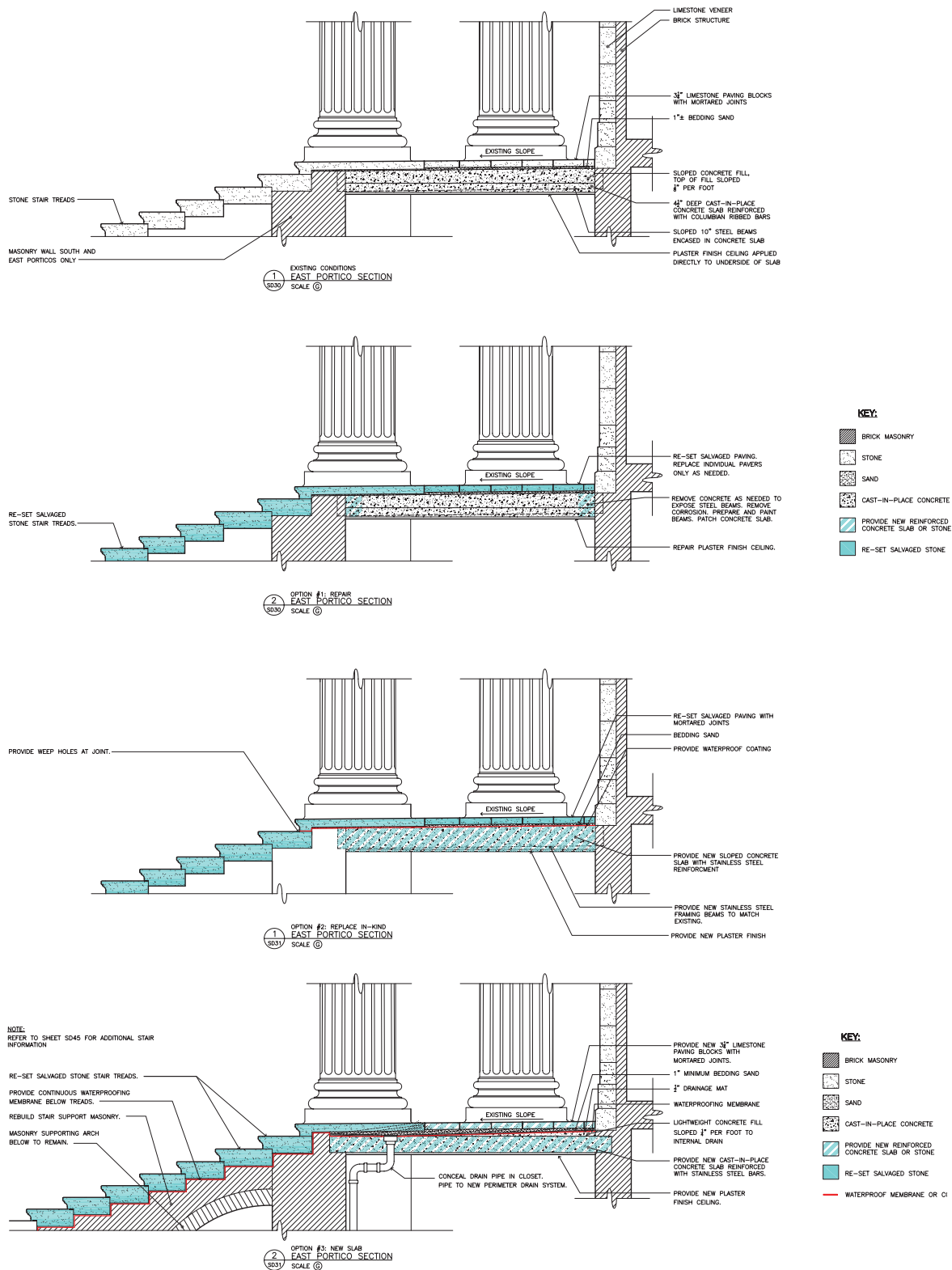


Figure 27. Details of the existing portico steps and three options to restore the steps. Option 3, providing a new slab, was chosen for all four porticos. JGWA, 2011.



Figure 28. Portico steps: (Upper left) The south portico steps after the stone steps were removed. The steps were set on a brick fill that covered the shallow brick supporting arch. (Center image) The fill removed from the supporting arch. (Lower left) The supporting arch after the cheek walls were removed. (Upper right) New lightweight stepped concrete slab. The slab allows water to drain through the structure. (Lower right) The steps and cheek walls during reinstallation. Note the waterproofing installed over the new concrete slab. JGWA, 2015.



Figure 29. The restoration of the north steps to the west portico.
 (Upper left) The condition of the steps in 2010.
 (Center left) The pavers removed from the brick and stone support walls.
 (Lower left) Waterproofing installed on the support walls.
 (Upper right) The treads partially reinstalled.
 (Center right) The treads installed and cleaned. The lowest tread is a new Joliet stone tread, as the original was cracked and deteriorated beyond repair.
 (Lower right). The steps with their restored railing. During the second phase, this area was excavated and waterproofing installed on the brick walls. JGWA, 2015-2017.

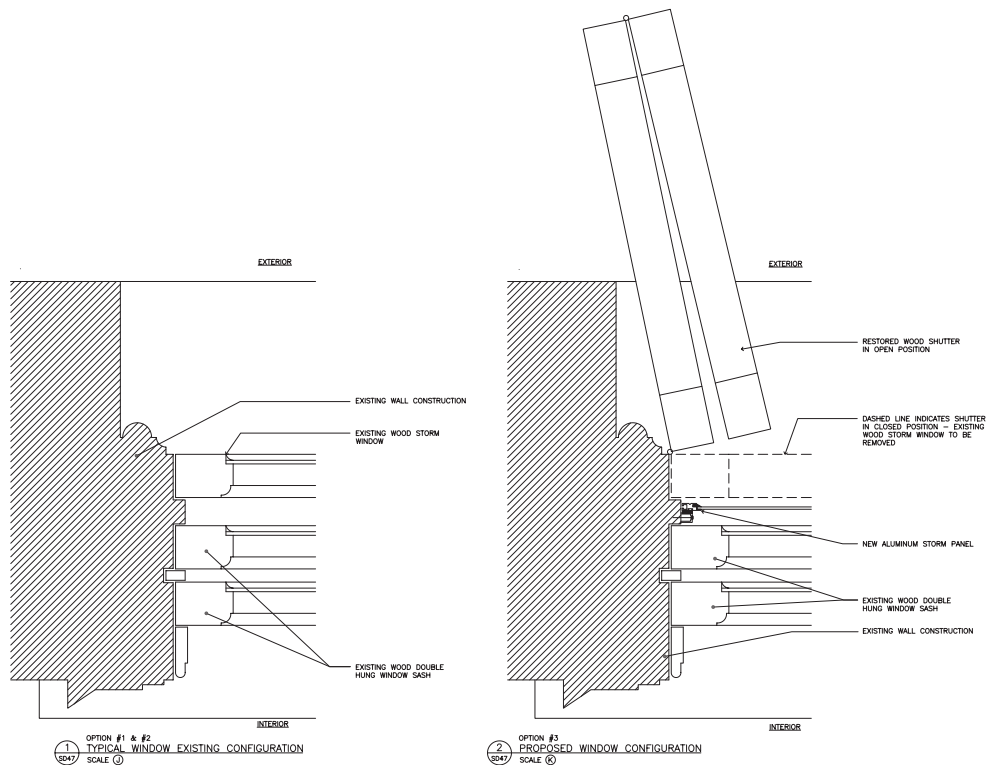


Figure 30. Detail of window and storm window installation. JGWA, 2010.

NORTH AREAWAY

The servant's entrance to the mansion is tucked beneath the north portico. The piers supporting the portico columns form the north side of the areaway; wood storage bins and wood window sash span between the piers. The plaster ceiling and painted finishes had seriously deteriorated. The ceiling was replaced and the bins and window sash refurbished and painted.

Waterproofing membrane and draining piping was installed at the perimeter of the north portico foundation, along with drainage piping and four pre-cast concrete drywell structures.

FINDINGS DURING CONSTRUCTION

The complete removal of the portico paving allowed for further understanding of the concrete slab structural system, confirming McKim, Mead & White's use of the Columbia Fireproofing Company system for the portico floors.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

The construction work was completed between July 2015 and September 2016 by the S.J. Thomas Company Incorporated of Landsdowne, Pennsylvania.

COSTS

The construction cost was \$2,805,449.

REHABILITATE VANDERBILT MANSION FOUNDATION AND SUPPORT WALLS: PMIS 161264

The following narrative describes the work completed during the second phase of the exterior restoration, between October 2016 and May 2018.

INTENT OF THE WORK

The intent of the project was to complete the balance of the restoration of the exterior of the building not completed in the previous phase. The project title refers to the additional waterproofing that was installed along the foundation, but the majority of the work took place at the levels above the water table.

Significant issues identified to be addressed in the project included structural concerns regarding stone movement at the corners of the third floors and the north and south portico cornices, windows and storm windows in varying states of repair, insect infiltration concerns, decorative ironwork conditions for the floors above the water table, site drainage concerns, and general masonry cleaning and repair. Repair of the Wine Storage spaces in the basement of the mansion was also included in this phase.

PROJECT TEAM

The contractor for this phase was Allegrone Companies of Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

PLANNING

John G. Waite Associates, Architects (JGWA) was engaged to update the construction documents. The survey of existing exterior conditions of the exterior was also updated, including structural analysis by Robert Silman Associates and civil engineering by AMEC.

CONSTRUCTION

The work completed included stone cleaning, repointing, crack repair, and Dutchman repair of the façade above the water table. Four large displaced cornice stones at the four corners of the north and south porticos were re-set and anchored to the structure. Steel reinforcement was added in the attic to secure upper level cornice stones at each corner. The remaining windows and doors for the first, second, and third floors were restored. The system of foundation waterproofing partially installed in the previous phase of work was completed.

CLEANING

The stonework above the water table was cleaned, using the same regimen of cleaning as the first phase.

PORTICO CORNICE STONES

Several corner cornice stones at the north and south porticos were displaced and rotating away from their ledge support. The structural engineer determined that the center of mass of the corner assembly was only a few inches from the edge of its bearing support. Once construction began, and the stones were removed, the team discovered that the stones were gravity-set; no pins or support brackets had been used during the original construction (see Figure 32).

Based on the displacement of the stones, the architects and structural engineers designed a new attachment system: a combination of stainless steel brackets and threaded rod anchors were used through each corner stone (see Figure 31).

While the contractor was resetting one of the cornice stones, one of the Lewis pins failed. The northeast cornice corner stone fell 6" and damaged the corner of the stone modillions and egg-and-dart molding below (see Figure 32). Indiana Cut Stone of Bedford, Indiana carved new stone pieces to replace the damaged moldings. The damaged stones were used as a template for the replacement stones, and were returned to NPS.

ATTIC STRUCTURAL

Some movement of the corner stones of the upper cornice was detected in several locations, likely due to freeze-thaw expansion of the mortar joints over time. Steel channels were bolted to the upper cornice corner stones at the attic level. These channels serve to stabilize these stones and prevent further movement. The skyward facing joints had previously been treated with lead tee-caps to exclude water infiltration.

PORTICO CEILINGS

The portico ceilings were dirty, with cracks in the plaster along the concealed structural steel framing. The workers scraped the ceilings and repaired the cracks in the plaster, matching the finish of the original plaster, then painted the ceilings. The softly-toned multi-colored paint scheme was based on preliminary paint analysis of the finishes (see Figure 33). Several of the cast concrete ceiling medallions were found to be loose due to a loss of grout between the ceiling and the uppermost cast concrete section. Stainless steel eyebolts were discretely installed with epoxy and stainless steel wire used to secure the medallions.

MASONRY WORK

The work to selectively repoint the façade continued to the upper floors. On skyward joints in the belt course and cornice, lead tee-caps were installed (see Figure 37). The joints at the balustrade were selectively repointed.

Other masonry work in this phase included salvaging and re-setting the stone facing of the walls east of the north portico; substantially re-building the masonry of the northeast areaway; and replacing the bluestone stair treads and coping. The backup masonry above the basement floor level had been rebuilt in the late twentieth century with concrete block; this backup was replaced with brick. The historic brick foundations below the basement floor line remain in place.

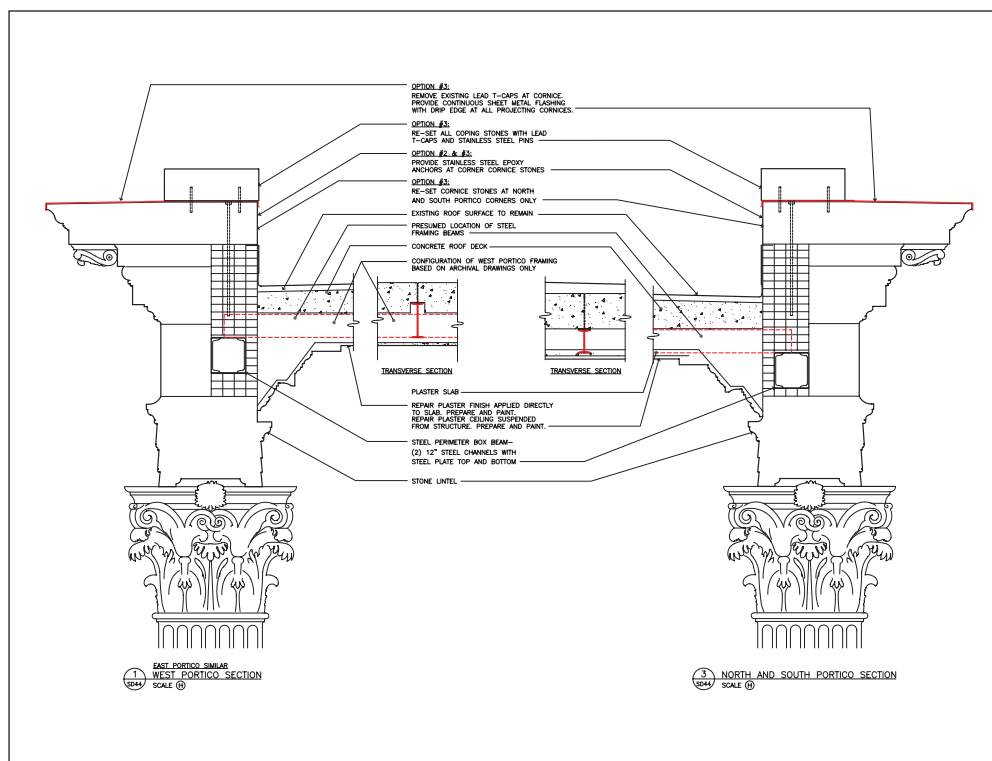


Figure 31. Detail showing the plan for resetting the north and south portico corner stones using Lewis pins. JGWA.

WINDOWS

The campaign for restoring the windows continued for the upper floors, following the same system used in the first phase (see Figure 36). A significant amount of wood brick molding was repaired or replaced due to insect and bird damage. Chapman Stained Glass restored the three deteriorated leaded glass window sash in the Den, Office, and Lavatory/Coats Room.

Aluminum-framed storm windows were provided for all windows except for the north portico transom. Most storm windows are fixed panels, however, several operable storm windows were provided in strategic locations for ventilation as well as for access to portico roofs. Storm windows with insect screens were also provided at the windows of the main skylight well.

An ultraviolet rejection film previously installed on the interior face of the exterior wood storm sash, circa 1970s, was failed and peeling. UV film had also been installed on the interior face of the historic window sash of the upper floors in 2003. These films were removed, and a dark UV film was installed on the interior face of the historic upper-floor wood windows and glazed dors during the window sash restoration process.

Before construction was completed, several window panes were found to be cracked in an unusual wandering crack pattern. At least twelve pieces of glass have so far been found. All cracked glass was historic glass, and found on the east, south, or west side of the building. The exact cause of the cracking has not been determined.



Figure 32. (Upper left and center) Views of the structure of the corner of the portico roof, with the top corner stone removed (upper image) and with the lower sections removed (lower image). (Bottom left) One of the corner stones after removal. (Above right) One of the corner stones after pinning and setting it back in place. (Lower right) After installation, one of the Lewis pins failed. The corner block dropped six inches, damaging the modillion brackets below. The damaged pieces have since been re-carved using Indiana limestone to match the original. JGWA, 2017.

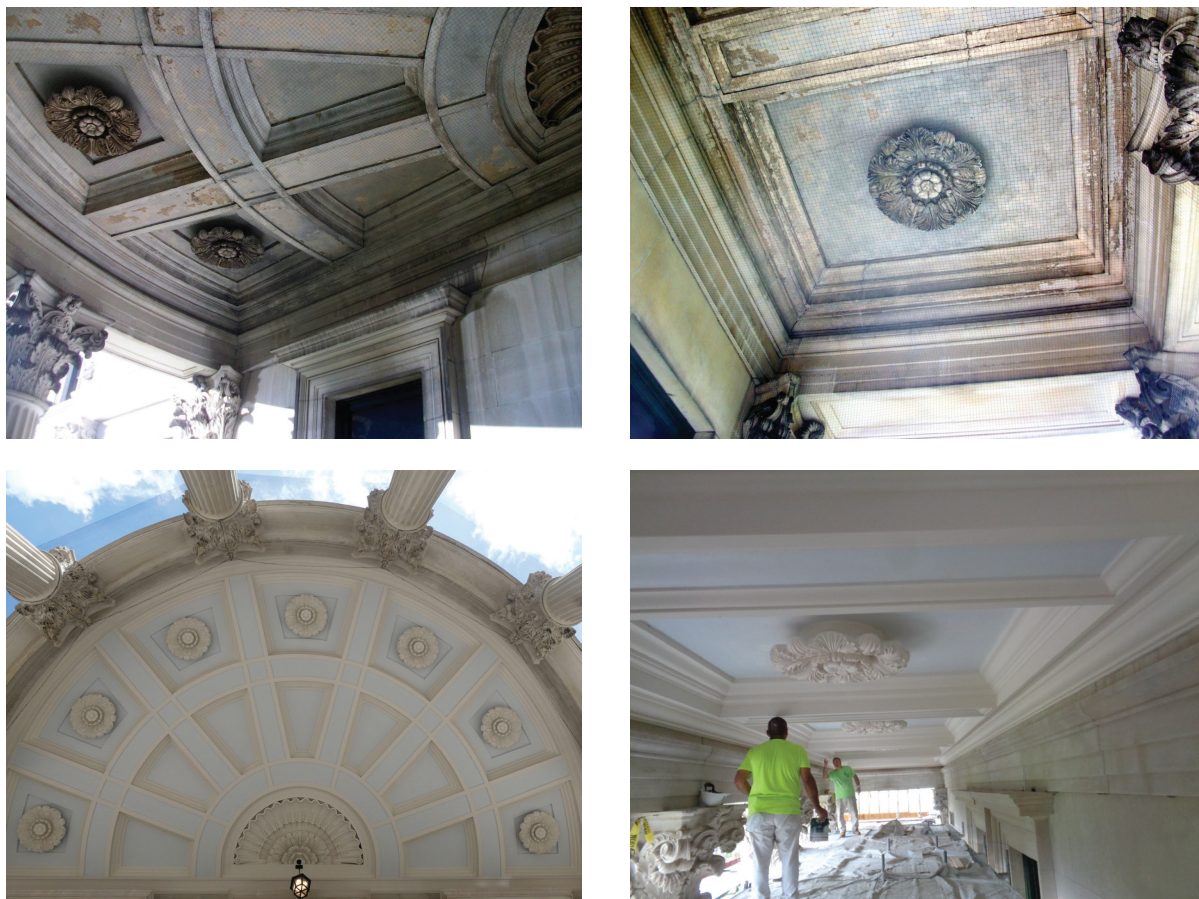


Figure 33. The west portico ceiling before and after restoration (left); the north portico ceiling before and during restoration. JGWA, 2017-18.

EAST ENTRANCE DOOR

The east entrance door leaves, transom sash, and frame were salvaged, repaired, and refinished with spar varnish to match the historic finish. The door hardware was restored and reinstalled. Automatic door buttons were added. The bronze transom grille was cleaned and reinstalled.

BALCONIES AND WINDOW GRILLES

The second-story balconies and the remaining window grilles were removed and restored in the same manner used in the first phase.

The second story balconies were removed and restored in Keicher Metal Arts' shop, where the contractor welded repairs at cracked components, and painted and re-set all of the components. The wood flooring was salvaged and reinstalled.

The existing mid 20th century tube railing at the north areaway was removed. A new metal railing, designed as a simplified version of the nearby historic portico stair railing, services as a guardrail, handrail, and gate for the wheelchair lift.



Figure 34. Cleaning tests on the cornice (left and upper right); and mock-up by contractor for cleaning and repairing cornice. Lead ties were installed on the skyward joints. JGWA, 2011, 2017.

WHEELCHAIR LIFT

The failing wheelchair lift was replaced with a similar lift that more closely complies with ADA guidelines.

LIGHT FIXTURES

The four historic lanterns from the north and south porticos were removed to Keicher Metal Arts' studio. The artisans took each lantern apart, stripping the individual pieces, refinishing them, and then reassembling the lanterns (see Figure 38). The fixtures were re-wired, re-lamped, and then reinstalled.

At the time of the restoration, there was an NPS fixture in the ceiling of the east portico and at the servants' entrance in the north areaway; both fixtures were necessary to light the entrances used by park visitors. There was also an NPS utility fixture in the ceiling of the west portico. The architects found historic junction boxes in the ceiling of the west portico and on the north and south walls of the loggia behind the west portico; from the placement of the boxes and the condition of the surrounding finishes, it was clear that their location dated from the Vanderbilt's occupancy. With limited historic photographs of the mansion, and no views that showed these specific areas, Keicher Metal Arts created new lanterns for the east portico, north areaway, and



Figure 35. (Upper image) The woodwork was damaged from insects and woodpeckers. (Center and bottom image) Mock-up to develop techniques for dutchman repair on the windows' wood brick molds. Brick mold this damaged was typically replaced. JGWA, 2017.

Figure 36. The window sash were removed from their openings in phases; the openings were covered in plywood and protective plastic frames assembled inside (upper left). The sash were restored at Distinctive Cabinetry workshop; in the upper image, the old weatherstripping is shown on one of the sash. The sash are now fully operational, covered with new storm sash, with new sealant to prevent insects from entering. JGWA, 2017-18.



Figure 37. Example of a carved stone dutchman repair. The bottom image also shows one of the lead tee caps that replaced sealant on the skyward joints of the water table and belt course. JGWA, 2017.



Figure 38. Window grilles (upper image) and historic lanterns from the north and south portico (lower image) were removed to the Keicher Metal Arts shop for restoration. JGWA, 2017.



Figure 39. The mansion from the southeast during restoration. The windows were removed from the mansion for restoration and temporarily replaced with plywood coverings; one of those coverings is visible in the south window opening of the Den. JGWA, 2017.

west portico based on the four existing historic lanterns. All of the exterior lights are controlled by a time clock.

WINE STORAGE

Moisture infiltration had severely deteriorated the wine storage area beneath the east portico. The space includes four rooms: a vestibule with doorways to small north and south storage rooms, and a large east room divided by a beadboard partition (found, during the restoration, to be a mid to late-twentieth century reproduction). Water permeated the walls, and in the east room, the plaster had largely failed. The tongue-and-groove wood floor was also in poor condition.

After the repair and waterproofing of the east portico steps and foundation, the east room was allowed to air out and dry out for approximately one year. New plaster was applied to the brick masonry walls. The flooring was salvaged, varnished, and re-set on new treated wood sleepers.

Throughout the wine storage areas, new electrical conduits and fixtures replaced the 1940s-50s electrical fittings. The door to the north storage room was missing; a new door, based on the other doors in the vestibule, was produced and installed. A new transom sash was made for the door leading from the vestibule into the central basement, and reproduction transom hardware installed.

The original patterned linoleum floor in the vestibule was conserved and re-installed.

FINDINGS DURING CONSTRUCTION

During the excavation for the foundation drainage trench, the contractors encountered two previously unknown features—a brick and flagstone drain box and an associated brick cistern—immediately west of the west portico (see Figure 40). The National Park Service Northeast Region Archeology Program (NRAP) was called in to investigate the historic features. The NRAP archeologist determined that the two related features predate the Vanderbilt mansion, and



Figure 40. A brick-and-flagstone drain and associated cistern, discovered immediately west of the west portico, is thought to be one of the only surviving elements from the Langston mansion. NPS, 2017.

are most likely from the Langdon family (1840-1894). If so, they are the only known surviving remnants of the Langdon occupation. The features were avoided during the exterior restoration and reburied to prevent additional deterioration.⁴⁸²

While the storm windows were all assumed to be NPS additions, one set of wood storm window panels at the south portico doors was discovered to be a Vanderbilt period addition.

During the restoration of the second floor window sash, overhead pockets were discovered at the window openings. The lower sash could be slid up into the pocket to allow cleaning of the upper sash.

PROJECT SCHEDULE

The construction work was completed between October 2016 and May 2018.

COST

The construction cost was \$4,459,520.

482. James A Nyman, Northeast Region Archeology Program, "Investigation of Two Previously Unknown Archaeological Features Inadvertently Discovered at Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site, Dutchess County, New York," January 26, 2017.

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Vanderbilt Mansion National Historic Site
Hyde Park, New York