

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT, PART I

FORD MANSION

Morristown National Historical Park

by

Sherman W. Perry

12,
MOER 059e.2
CLBIB #000143
337/135012

HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT

PART I

FORD MANSION

MORRISTOWN NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

September 1963



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

NORTHEAST REGION		Initial and Date
Asst. Dir.:		
Chief, EODC		
Asst. Dir.:		
Admin. Serv.		
Ext. Aff.		
Gen. Inv.		
Ident. & Rec.		
Interpret.		
Plan. Serv.		
Spec. Inv.		
Training		
Records Mgmt.		
Asst. Dir.:		
N. P. & Res. Area Pl.		
Plan. Serv.		
Lands & Water		

IN REPLY REFER TO:
H30-DCAH

OCT 22 1963

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Northeast Region

From: Acting Assistant Director, Design and Construction

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, Rehabilitation of Washington's Headquarters (Ford Mansion), Morristown NHP

*Posted 10/24
Jmf*

The subject report has been reviewed by the interested Divisions and they concur with the recommendation contained in your October 9 memorandum. I have approved the subject report this date.

Richard T. Montgomery
Richard T. Montgomery

cc:
Chief, EODC (2)
Supt., Morristown NHP

Posted
10/9

Nelligan
10/9

Northeast Region
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pa. - 19106

H30

October 9, 1963

Memorandum

To: Director

From: Regional Director

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, Rehabilitation
of Washington's Headquarters (Ford Mansion) Morristown NHP

The subject report is recommended to your approval.

You will note the condition of the structure, as described in the Architectural Data Section, indicates more serious rehabilitation than was originally supposed. A Part II, Architectural Section, now in preparation by the EOBC is expected to be more specific as to the work that needs to be undertaken.

(Sgd.) Ronald F. Lee

Regional Director

Enclosure

cc:
Supt. Morristown (w/c report)
Chief, EOBC

MHNelligan/gmf
General
Daily
Area

Historic Structures Report, Part I
 Ford Mansion (Washington's Headquarters)
 Morristown NHP

Asst. Regional Director (CIU)

History & Archeology

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	History
	His. Sites
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Archeo.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Museum HW 10/2
	Sec'y.

If (PCP) "Repair chimneys and masonry" means uncovering any masonry foundations below grade, the archeological item should be re-instated.
 J.C. Cotton

Operations & Maintenance

	Chief of Maint.
	Architect
	Civil Engineer
	Mech. Engineer
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Chief, OP&R
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Land Architect
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Reg. Architect

I feel that this is a good Part I report from the standpoint of its purpose — Rehabilitation and strengthening of a very important historic structure which may be in a fairly dangerous condition. Let's get the show on the road!

Programs

Dr. Nelligan - last

Section 8 (p3) is not a Furnishings Plan. I also dislike the editorial comments, particularly in "6", gather the Super. wants this exhibited as an historically accurate refurnished home. With this I agree. PCP calls for 2000 for Exhibits. Not specified. Recommend delete.

Note: condition deteriorating, according to appearance is more serious than in Sept '60. to be followed by PTH. MR

Historic Structures Report

Morristown

Area

I
Part

Ford Mansion

Structure

2 - AAA
No.-Class

Project: Rehabilitation, \$58,600, 1963 F.Y. PCP B-35

Nature of, funds & f.y. programmed

Sections:

Admin.

Called for 4/29/63

Rec'd. 9/23/63

His.

Called for 4/29/63

Rec'd. 9/23/63

Architecture

Called for 4/29/63

Rec'd. 9/30/63

Called for _____

Rec'd. _____

Called for _____

Rec'd. _____

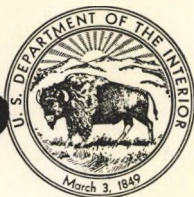
Review:

distributed Park
" EODC 10/1/63
" WASO
" Region 10/1/63

Approved:

Park
EODC 10/3/63
WASO
Region

(Note: Cross-line accomplished items, with dates when done, received, etc. Crossline whole sheet, when report is over.)



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Eastern Office, Design and Construction
Philadelphia, Pa. - 19106

October 3, 1963

IN REPLY REFER TO:
H30-H

NORTHEAST REGION		Initial and Date
Reg. Director		
Asst. to Dir. (PA)		
Program Coord.		
Asst. Reg. Dir-Adm.		
Finance & Insp.		
Per. Serv.		
Safety		
Asst. Reg. Dir-Enr.		
Asst. Reg. Dir-Enr.		10/4
Natural Resources		
Oper. & Maint.		
Ranger Service		
Asst. Reg. Dir-Plan.		
N. P. & Rec. Area Pl.		
Plan. Serv.		
Lands & Water		

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Northeast Region

From: Chief Architect, EODC

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I,
Ford Mansion, Morristown

Miss [unclear]
Posted 10/7/63
gmf

The subject report has been reviewed by the interested personnel of this office and recommended for approval by Acting Chief H. Reese Smith, this date.

Robert E. Smith

By: Donald F. Benson.
Donald F. Benson, Acting

cc:
Assistant Director, Design and Construction
Superintendent, Morristown

Druf 10/1

*Nellzy
10/1*

Northeast Region
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pa. - 19106

H30

October 1, 1963

Memorandum

To: Chief, EODC
From: Regional Director
Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I
Ford Mansion, Morristown

Enclosed for your review and comments is a copy of the subject report.

May we have your recommendations as soon as possible?

(Sgd.) Ronald F. Lee

Regional Director

Enclosure

GMFrane
General
Daily
Area



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Eastern Office, Design and Construction
Philadelphia, Pa. - 19106

September 27, 1963

IN REPLY REFER TO:
H30-H

NORTHEAST REGION		Initial and Date
Reg. Director		
Asst. to RD(PA)		
Program Coord.		
Asst. Dir. Admin.		
Finance & Insp.		
Per. Serv.		
Safety		
Asst. Dir. Edu.		
History & Archeology		
Natural Resources		
Oper. & Maintenance		
Ranger Programs		
Asst. Dir. Dir-Rp		
N. P. & Rec. Area Pl.		
Plan. Serv.		
Lands & Water		

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Northeast Region

From: Chief Architect, EODC

Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I, Ford Mansion, Morristown

*Posted
Smith
9/30*

Enclosed are five copies of an Architectural Data Section for inclusion in the Part I Historic Structures Report on the Rehabilitation of the Ford Mansion. A Part II Report is now being prepared, giving specific recommendations for the work involved.

Robert E. Smith
Robert E. Smith

Enclosure

cc:
Superintendent, Morristown



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

September 20, 1963

IN REPLY REFER TO:

H2215

NORTHEAST REGION		Initial and Date
Reg. Director		
Asst. to Reg. Dir.		
Projects Coord.		
Asst. Reg. Dir.		
Exec. Sec'y		
Plan. Serv.		
Salaries		
Asst. Reg. Dir.		
History & Arch.		
Natural History		
Oper. & Maint.		
Ranger Service		
Asst. Reg. Dir.-Bp		
N. P. & Rec. Area Pl.		
Plan. Serv.		
Lands & Water		

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Northeast Region
From: Superintendent, Morristown NHP
Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I

We are enclosing five copies of Historic Structures Report, Part I, as requested in our telephone conversation with Dr. Nelligan on the 13th.

We have been informed by Architect George Wrenn that the architectural section is being prepared in the EODC office and copies will be forwarded soon to the Region.

Francis S. Ronalds
Francis S. Ronalds
Superintendent

Enclosures

September 20, 1963

H2215

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Northeast Region

From: Superintendent, Morristown NHP

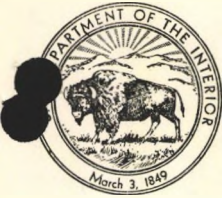
Subject: Historic Structures Report, Part I

We are enclosing five copies of Historic Structures Report, Part I, as requested in our telephone conversation with Dr. Neilligan on the 13th.

We have been informed by Architect George Wrenn that the architectural section is being prepared in the EODC office and copies will be forwarded soon to the Region.

Francis S. Ronalds
Superintendent

Enclosures



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Eastern Office, Design and Construction
Philadelphia, Pa. - 19106

July 9, 1963

NORTHEAST REGION		Initial and Date
Reg. Director		
Asst. to ED(PA)		
Program Coord.		
Asst. Reg. Dir. - <i>Adm.</i>		
Finance & Prop.		
Personnel		
Safety		
Asst. Reg. Dir. - <i>Const.</i>		
Asst. Reg. Dir. - <i>Plan.</i>		
Natural History		
Open. & Mon.		
Ranger Services		
Asst. Reg. Dir. - <i>Rp.</i>		
N. P. & Rec. Area Pl.		
Plan. Serv.		
Lands & Water		

IN REPLY REFER TO:
H30-H

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Northeast Region

From: Chief Architect, EODC

Subject: Architectural Data Section, Historic Structures Report, Ford Mansion, Morristown

posted by

As noted in your memorandum on July 2, we have assigned Exhibits Specialist (Restorations) R. Verfaillie to the Rehabilitation of the Ford Mansion at Morristown. His present assignment is to determine the work needed on the structure, so an Architectural Data Section for the Historic Structures Report might be prepared.

Because the building had been previously restored, the emphasis of this study was on the structural condition. As anticipated, a great deal of rotted framing was found in areas which showed evidence of water penetration. The study also cast doubts on some phases of the previous restoration. Many of these doubts were confirmed by the location of the diaries of Gabriel Ford, son of Colonel Jacob Ford, dating from 1796 to the 1860's. For example, he makes specific references in the diaries to the dormer windows as being in existence in part of the original structure. The dormer windows were removed in 1939 by the Park Service. He also makes specific reference to a wooden stoop and railing where we now have a brownstone front-entrance porch. The Historic Structures Report will therefore contain recommendations for the structural repair, as well as recommendations to correct the restoration, based on new evidence.

Chief of Maint.	<i>7/7/63</i>
Architect	<i>P-7-6</i>
Civil Engineer	
Mech. Engineer	
Chief OPR	<i>8/6/63</i>
Land Architect	<i>8/7/63</i>
Reg. Architect	

802/7/25

Robert E. Smith

By: *Lawrence B. Coryell*
Lawrence B. Coryell, Acting

cc:
Superintendent, Morristown
Mr. Verfaillie

Northeast Region
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia, Pa. - 19106

H30

July 2, 1963

Nelligan
7/2

Memorandum

To: Chief, EODC

From: Regional Director

Subject: Architectural Data Section, Historic Structures Report,
Part I, Ford Mansion, Morristown

We noted in the Superintendent's Monthly Narrative Report for May, 1963, that "Mr. R. Verfallie started on the rehabilitation of the Ford Mansion."

By memorandum dated April 29, 1963, to Superintendent Ronalds (copy to your office), this office suggested that the Administrative and Historical Data Sections of an Historic Structures Report, Part I, be prepared to cover the rehabilitation contemplated. He was also advised that your office would prepare the Architectural Data Section of the report.

This is to enquire as to the status of the Architectural Data Section for the subject report.

(Sgd.) Ronald F. Lee

Regional Director

cc:
Supt., Morristown

MHNelligan/bg
General
Daily
Area

Northeast Region
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

H30

April 29, 1963

Willy
4/29
4/24/63

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Morristown

From: Regional Director

Subject: Historic Structures Report. Part I. Ford Mansion
(Washington Headquarters)

This has reference to your memorandum of March 27 and that of Chief Architect Robert Smith's reply to it dated April 2 regarding rehabilitation of the Ford Mansion.

You will recall that the Administrative and Historical Data Sections of the Historic Structures Report, Part I, were prepared by your staff and approved in 1959 for the general rehabilitation of the Ford Mansion. However, in the absence of an Architectural Data Section, no specific rehabilitation measures were authorized.

We understand that EODC plans to study the house this spring with a view to determining what rehabilitation is necessary. The results of that study will be embodied, we anticipate, in an Architectural Data Section. Preparation of this section may reveal the need for some revision of or addition to the Historical Data Section of the 1959 report. Otherwise, the Administrative and Historical Data Sections need be revised (in the form of a supplement, perhaps) only to justify the specific rehabilitation measures and cost estimates recommended in the Architectural Data Section.

(Sgd.) Ronald F. Lee

Regional Director

cc:
Chief, EODC

MHNelligan/bg
General
Daily
Area

Northwest Region
163 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pa.

62-223

February 1, 1963

Memorandum

To: Superintendent, Morristown

From: Regional Director

Subject: Annual Research Program, Report RPS (CRA)-2

We are in agreement with the research program outlined on the forms forwarded with your memorandum of January 17. However, we are adding the project "Historic Structures Report, Part 1, Ford Mansion, Historical Data Section," as recommended in our review memorandum of last year's research program; we would appreciate your doing the same to the forms retained in your office--also, your sending a supporting form 10-20 describing this project. Additionally, we would like to stress the importance of accomplishing this project by no later than March 15, if the thorough rehabilitation envisioned by the project in this year's construction program is to go forward.

The Historical Data Section of this Structures Report can, essentially, be an updating of the material contained in the Structures Report on the Ford Mansion done by Park Historian Holland in 1959, incorporating any additional evidence that may have been uncovered since that time. By copy of this memorandum we are reminding the Chief, EOBC, of the need for an architectural section for this Structures Report.

Regional Director

cc:
Chief, EOBC
Director, w/c of report

FBarnes/bg
General
Daily
ARCA

Approval Sheet

Approved:

15/ Richard T. Montgomery, Acting Asst Dir. Des + Consts.
Director

15/ Ronald F. Lee 10/8/63
Regional Director

Donald F. Benson 10/3/63
Chief EODC

Recommended:

Francis S. Ronalds
Superintendent

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Administrative Data	1
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Furnishing & Exhibition Data	3
Architectural Data	4

Administrative Data

a. The name of the structure is the Ford Mansion. The number of the building is number 2.

b. This important historic house is the nucleus of Morristown National Historical Park. It will continue to be of primary interest to the visiting public as this house served as George Washington's headquarters during the hard winter of 1779-1780.

c. The pertinent part of the master plan, dated 1941, for the justification of the use of the Ford Mansion is quoted below.

"This building is said to have been erected between 1772 and 1774 by Col. Jacob Ford, Jr. ... for a very brief period in 1777 it served as a barrack for the light infantry regiment commanded by Captain Thomas Rodney. From December 1, 1779 to June 23, 1780 the house was occupied as the headquarters of General George Washington, and for a considerable portion of this time the Commander in Chief's beloved wife Martha was also in residence there ... The Marquis de Lafayette visited Washington at this house May 10, 1780, and passed four days with him."

d. The Ford Mansion will continue to be operated by appropriated funds.

e. There is no cooperative agreement for furnishing or operating the structure.

f. The proposed construction activity should replace all weakened structural timbers in the house, repair of siding on the south wall, repair of gutters and downspouts and repair of chimneys. Replace worn floor boards and repair plaster. The house should also have at least two exterior coats of paint.

g. The cost of this construction as estimated in the PCP of 4/5/62 is \$86,000.

h. See attachment of photograph of the existing condition of the structure.

i. See attachment #2 of PCP.

4. Historical Data

a. The Ford Mansion was built in 1774,¹ by Col. Jacob Ford, Jr. father of Gabriel H. Ford. During the winter of 1779-1780, General George Washington and his official family occupied the home as official headquarters.²

When Washington left the home in 1780, it did not house any officers or soldiers for the remainder of the war. The widow Ford continued to live in the house until her death in 1826 when the house passed through acquisition of other heirs interests to Gabriel H. Ford. Upon his death in 1849 the house passed to Henry A. Ford, Gabriel's son who continued to occupy it until his death in 1872.³ The house was sold at auction at this time and the Washington Association of New Jersey operated the home as a historic museum until the establishment of Morristown National Historical Park in 1933.

b. There are no known 18th century plans or paintings of the house. Apparently Jared Sparks commissioned the first sketch of the Mansion in 1838.⁴ As far as can be determined from the Ford diaries no major

¹Gabriel H. Ford, Memorandum Book No. 1, note in Gabriel H. Ford's handwriting, "1774, Mansion house was built by my father." Holland, Ross, Historic Structures Report Part I submitted July 7, 1959, p. 3.

²Fitzpatrick, John C., The Writings of George Washington (Washington 1937) xix, 262.

³Holland, Ross, Historic Structures Report Part I, p. 5.

⁴Sparks, Jared, The Life of Washington, (Boston 1839) 220.

changes were made in the house while it remained a residence of the Fords. When the Washington Association of New Jersey acquired the property some changes were made in the rooms but details are very general in their reports. After the National Park Service acquired the property a major rehabilitation was accomplished under the direction of Thomas Waterman in 1938. Since that time there has been no alterations to the building but repairs have been made to the roof.

c. & d. No evidence has ever been located as to who was the architect, designer or builder of the Ford Mansion.

e. The owner of the house in the historic period was Col. Jacob Ford, Jr. After his death in 1777 the house apparently passed to his widow, Theodosia Ford, who offered the house to General Washington during 1779-1780.

8. Furnishing and Exhibition Plan

a. The Ford Mansion is beautifully furnished with a number of Ford family pieces that are said to have been in the house when General Washington used the home as his headquarters. Other pieces are of the period of 1780 or earlier.

b. The home, although adequately furnished, is not complete at this time. This house is considered one of the finest furnished historic houses in the United States and is continually being improved in quality by the donation of better examples of early furnishings.

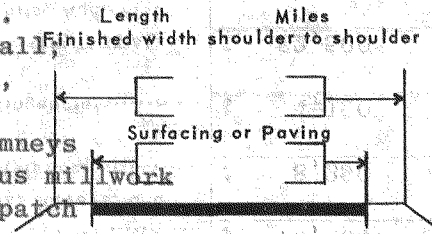
c. Since the home is nearly complete, there is no present method of financing the furnishings to be added in the future. Most of the present pieces have been acquired through donation which we believe will continue.

d. See b & c.

PROJECT CONSTRUCTION PROPOSAL

1. Statement of requirements, proposed work and construction data, justification, etc. (Use additional sheets as necessary.)

Rehabilitation of Ford House as shown on Drawing NHP-MOR-1129. Selective replacement of roof rafters; replace siding south wall, strip exterior paint; repair or replace damaged siding, sills, etc., paint with prime and finish coats; repair gutters and downspouts; selective replacement of floor joints; repair chimneys and masonry; preservative treatment as necessary; miscellaneous millwork of sizeable proportion; sand floors and replace worn boards; patch interior walls as required.



This historic building is the outstanding attraction of the Park as it was here that General Washington lived during the Revolutionary War period which directly affected the Morristown Area. The Ford Mansion was reconstructed in 1939. Time and the elements are beginning to take toll as dry rot is evident in many places and powder post beetles have gained a foothold. Continued heavy public use is damaging floors, woodwork, stairways, etc. Gutters require repair where in previous years water has been permitted to wet back of boards. South wall siding and all exterior paint should be removed and replaced as the many coats of existing paint are heavily crazed and blistered and no longer preserve or protect the wood. Building inspected July 25, 1957 by Architect L. B. Coryell and Programs & Plans Control Officer C. N. Blake.

2. Land Status (if Govt.-owned, what agency), Water Rights, Research, Etc.

Government owned - National Park Service

PCP Data Prepared by (Name, Title & Date) Alex D. Walker 4/5/62 Asst. Superintendent	4. Cross-reference PCP's to this Project: PCP numbers of previously completed portions:	6. CLASS C ESTIMATE Construction.....85%... \$ 73,100 Plans, Surveys, & Supervision.....10%... 8,250 Contingencies.....5%... 4,150 SUB TOTAL 85,500 Exhibits, Audio-Visual Installations, etc..... GRAND TOTAL \$ 85,500
	5. Construction by: Day Labor <input type="checkbox"/> Contract <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
	Work supervised by: Park <input type="checkbox"/> Reg. <input type="checkbox"/> Design Office <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

7. DISTRIBUTION OF COPIES No To 1 Director 1 Regional Director 1 Park Superintendent 2 EODC 1 File	8. Recommended by Park Office (Signature, title, date) Francis S. Ronalds, Superintendent 4/5/62
	9. Approved by Regional Office (Signature, title, date)
	10. Reviewed by D&C Field Office (Signature, Title, Date)

11. Location within Area or Termini Headquarters	12. Master Plan No. NHP-MOR-2060	13. Bldg. or Rt. # and Sec. #2
14. Region 5	15. Park Morristown National Historical Park	
16. Project Rehabilitation - Ford House	Morris (County) New Jersey (State)	17. PCP Index No. B-35-1 18. P. S. & S. by BPR <input type="checkbox"/> NPS <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

- CLASS (A) - Estimate based on working drawings
- CLASS (B) - Estimate based on preliminary plans
- CLASS (C) - Estimate based on similar facilities in other parks

19. ESTIMATE

Item	Quantity	Cost
Estimated rehabilitation costs as calculated by Messrs. Coryell and Blake plus increase in cost indices		
Replacing Framing Lumber		\$27,900
Repairs to Exterior Walls (Includes Patching Interior)		3,875
Siding South Wall		1,775
Paint Stripping		7,150
Painting		4,650
Gutters and Downspouts		1,085
Floor Sanding		1,550
Miscellaneous Millwork		12,905
Masonry Repair and Painting		5,580
Preservative Treatment		4,650
SUB TOTAL		\$70,100
Historical Research		1,000
Archeological Research		2,000
		\$73,100
Estimate Totals		
Construction.....		\$ 70,100
Plans, Surveys, and Supervision.....		\$ 8,250
Contingencies.....		\$ 4,750
SUB TOTAL		\$ 82,500
Exhibits, Aud.-Vis. Installations, Etc.....		\$ 3,000
GRAND TOTAL		\$ 85,500

5. Architectural Data

The Ford Mansion is a large, wood frame, two-story house, built in the style derived from England, generally called Georgian. It consists of a large main section with central hall and four rooms on each of the floors and a kitchen wing. There is also a large unfinished attic and a basement. The roof is a hipped gambrel, and there are two chimneys in the main section and one in the kitchen wing.

The most important part of the architectural design of the house is its symmetrical front facade covered with flush boarding. The carved wood Palladian-style doorway and the Palladian-style window on the second story above the doorway form the focus of this facade. The cornice is elaborate.

The structure consists of a wood frame resting on stone foundation walls. The studs are mortised into large sills at each level and the joists are half dovetailed into the sills. The space between the studs is filled with brick nogging, and the studs are covered on the exterior by flush board siding or clapboards, and on the interior by metal lath and plaster.

The structure is in poor condition. Strain on the wood frame has caused the joists to pull away from the sills and girders and the west and north walls to bow out dangerously. Also the rafter plates are being pushed out of place by the weight of the roof. There is dry rot in many of the framing members. Certain sections of the exterior siding are in poor condition. The wood shingle roof is fairly new and in good repair, but the metal gutter must be replaced. The interior

plaster, which dates from the 1939 work on the building, is in generally good condition. Few original floor boards remain. The replacements are worn but not in too bad condition.

The major part of the architectural research and investigation for the structural rehabilitation of the building has been done. Investigation of certain elements of the original interior design has yet to be done and may require removal of certain small sections of the interior finish. Specific proposals for rehabilitation, especially in regard to strengthening the structure of the building, will be made in the Part II Report.

