

APPROPRIATION FOR THE PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

FEBRUARY 4, 1829.

Mr. VAN RENSSELAER, from the Committee on the Public Buildings, made the following

REPORT :

The Select Committee on the Public Buildings beg leave to submit the following report and accompanying documents :

The paper marked A, being a letter from the Architect of the Capitol to the Chairman of the committee, contains an estimate of repairs and work to be done on and about the Capitol. The committee have deemed it their duty to recommend to the House an appropriation for a part of the objects included in this estimate. That portion of it which is printed in italics is regarded by the committee as a work necessary to the improvement of the public grounds in the immediate vicinity of the Capitol, and as such, likely, at some period, to be sanctioned by Congress. But the committee have not thought it expedient to recommend it, at the present session.

The paper B presents the estimates for the completion of the President's house according to its original plan. The committee concur entirely in the opinion of the Architect of the President's house, Mr. Hoban, that the construction of the portico on the northern front is essential to the finished appearance of the building. That portion of the building to be covered by the portico was left incomplete on rebuilding the edifice, in expectation of this addition, the absence of which is consequently an important defect. It is also absolutely required by a regard to the health and comfort of the residents or visitors at the house.

No other than a temporary provision (subject to considerable inconvenience) has ever been made for stabling, at the President's house. A plan was submitted to the committee by Mr. Hoban for the erection of a permanent stable, on a scale conformed to the style of the building, at the extremity of one of the wings. But as this would require a corresponding building at the other end, and as the existing inconveniences admitted of a simpler remedy, which the committee have preferred, they have not recommended that item in Mr. Hoban's estimates. Conceiving that stone posts and chains will furnish a more suitable enclosure for the grounds in front of the house than the pedestal wall proposed, they also make the deduction of the latter item of the estimate.

A part of the President's house never having been furnished, and other parts of it being deficient in many articles of necessity and comfort, the committee have recommended the appropriation of the usual sum for this object.

The papers marked C relate to a subject supposed to be highly important, in reference to the security of the public offices and the health of a portion of the city. The committee have not thought it best to go farther,

the present year, than to provide for obtaining possession of the land in which the fountains of water exist, which it is contemplated, at some future period, should Congress direct, to conduct to the public offices near the President's House. Another plan has been submitted to the committee, (paper D,) for an ample supply of water at the Capitol, of which the committee are disposed to think favorably, but which they have not recommended for present adoption.

By a law, passed at the last session of Congress, the office of Architect of the Capitol was made to cease on the fourth day of March of the present year. As the work which is necessary to be done in repairing, finishing, and enclosing the Capitol will occupy a portion of the ensuing year, it became necessary to make provision for continuing the Architect in office, so long as might be requisite for this purpose. This object is embraced in the second section of the bill reported by the committee.

(A.)

January 21, 1829.

SIR : It was expected, at the close of the last session of Congress, that all the work specified in the estimates on which the appropriation for the Capitol was founded, would be completed in the course of the current season. This has been effected as far as was possible in the short recess, but, owing to unavoidable hindrances, some portions are still unfinished.

1st. The stone for flagging part of the passages was not received until it was too late to attempt to use it. The same is now prepared and ready for laying.

2d. The iron work of the north and south entrances is in great forwardness, but the completing of this, and of the railing to enclose the grounds, has been prevented by the inclemency of the season. It is hoped that some part of this work, which will not interfere with the convenience of Congress, may be finished during the session.

I now beg leave to ask the attention of the committee to the expediency of having two lines of iron scroll railing from the western lodges to the first flight of steps, for the purpose of securing the grounds from the intrusion of cattle, to which they will be subject, from the unavoidable necessity of keeping open the western gates. I present an estimate for this fencing, and for gutters of free stone, in place of the temporary gutters now laid. Also, an estimate for painting part of the exterior of the building, particularly of the roof, which requires attention and repair.

The want of stabling for the horses used by the messengers of both Houses of Congress has been much felt, and has led to inconveniences and delay in executing business. I offer a plan and estimate for a stable, to be placed on the public ground on a line with the engine house.

The Capitol being now finished, with the exception of these particular objects, I beg leave to suggest that the public grounds immediately adjacent should conform in some degree to the importance and high finish of the building. To bring them into such state, I propose that the triangular space between the Pennsylvania and Maryland avenues, and as far west as Third street at the bend of the canal, should be permanently fenced in. This would secure the improvement of the ground, and render it

practicable to form the foot walks on the avenues, one of which has not been brought into form, and the other is only paved of one-half the required width.

I also propose to regulate and bring to its proper graduation the portion of the Maryland avenue nearest to the Capitol, and to plant the whole avenue with four ranges of forest trees. Nothing has been done of this kind for the embellishment and advantage of the approaches to the public buildings since the time of the administration of Mr. Jefferson, when he directed the improving and planting of Pennsylvania avenue, and defrayed the expense from funds under his control. Besides the beauty and healthiness of these improvements, they must add much to the value of the contiguous land belonging to the public, which may be offered for sale after the improvements shall have been effected.

With great respect,

Your obedient servant,

CHARLES BULFINCH.

HON. STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER,

Chairman of the Committee on Public Buildings.

ESTIMATE of work proposed to be done on the Capitol and its vicinity in the year 1829.

Two lines of iron scroll fencing, from the lodges to the first flight of steps	-	-	-	\$ 2,073 50
A gutter of free stone, three feet wide, on each side and up the glacis	-	-	-	921 92
Finishing gates and fences	-	-	-	2,000 00
Finishing the court in south wing	-	-	-	967 21
Laying stone flagging in passages	-	-	-	300 00
Painting the outside of the building, and repairs of roof	-	-	-	4,000 00
Work on the grounds, regulating, and planting, viz :				
For gardener's salary	-	-	-	\$ 750
labor and carts	-	-	-	1,250
				<hr/> 2,000 00
table for messengers' horses	-	-	-	2,000 00
iron rail fence, on a low brick wall, to enclose the public grounds west of the Capitol, viz :				
Length of fencing 3,650 feet, at \$ 6	-	-	-	21,900 00
Twelve stone piers, at \$ 300	-	-	-	3,600 00
Steps into the ground from the street	-	-	-	800 00
wing 2,400 feet along the above fence	-	-	-	2,400 00
graduating Maryland avenue south of these grounds	-	-	-	1,500 00
planting and securing 1,000 trees on said avenue	-	-	-	1,000 00
graduating and bringing into order the public land north of the Capitol, and bordering on Pennsylvania avenue	-	-	-	3,000 00
				<hr/> <hr/> \$ 48,462 63

Respectfully presented by

CHARLES BULFINCH,

Architect Capitol U. S.

N. B. Amount of preceding estimate,	-	-	-	£ 48,462 68
Deduct	-	-	-	31,200 00
				<hr/> £ 17,262 68
Add this sum, extension of the privies on south wing				1,500 00
				<hr/> <hr/> £ 18,762 68

(B 1.)

WASHINGTON, *January 10, 1829.*

SIR: In answer to your inquiries, I have to state that a portico to the north front is part of the original plan of the President's house, according to my design, approved by General Washington.

The commissioners, at first, had no funds at their disposal but the proceeds of sales of city lots; and as they were insufficient to answer the various demands upon them, the house was carried up with a view of rendering it habitable at the least expense possible, leaving the porticoes to be added afterwards. That to the south front has since been constructed, and the one intended for the north is the only part of the entire design remaining unexecuted.

As regards the proportions of the building, the want of the portico to the principal front is a material defect, making the extension appear too great for the elevation; and one which nothing but its addition would cure.

It is unnecessary to insist upon the utility of such an improvement, not only to the occupants, but, also, to the visitors of the house, by affording them a covered landing place; a convenience which a building of its character should certainly not want.

With respect, yours,

JAMES HOBAN.

JOSEPH ELGAR, Esq. *Commissioner*
of the City of Washington.

(B 2.)

January 23, 1829.

SIR: In consequence of your request, I have visited the appendages to the President's house, and have examined their construction and the uses to which they are applied, and their state of repair. The offices are contained in a long line of one story buildings, extending east and west from the mansion house. I send herewith a sketch of their plan.

I find that the carriage house is conveniently situated at the end, about 20 feet square. The stable for eight horses accommodates the number now kept by the family; it is airy and well ventilated. The greatest inconvenience experienced arises from the small size of the deposit for hay and straw, and from the necessity of conveying it by hand from these places into the stable. The west wing is divided in the same manner as that on the east, and a number of cows for family use are kept here. There is no provision made for stowing away the dung and offal of the stable, but it is

carried out daily, and makes very dirty and unpleasant heaps upon the ground. These buildings have never been finished; the ceiling of the colonades is lathed, but not plastered; and it was intended to cover the whole exterior with hard stucco, in imitation of stone. The appearance is certainly not in conformity with the style of the house, and is such as no gentleman of moderate property would permit at his own residence.

I also examined the unsightly sheds built against the enclosing wall near the Treasury office. I find that there are twelve of them, and that they have been put up, by indulgence, by those clerks in that and the State Department who reside at a distance, for the purpose of sheltering their horses.

The old building which you called my attention to is an encroachment, but the Government is the aggressor: it is occupied by the gardener who has the care of the grounds, and particularly of the kitchen garden.

Convenient accommodations may be had for the hay and straw by raising the part of each wing used for stables one story higher, as is shown in a pencil sketch on the drawing; and this might be done, and the repairs of the wings, for \$ 2,000.

With much respect,

Your obedient servant,

CHS. BULFINCH,

Hon. S. VAN RENSSELAER.

(B 3.)

January 24, 1829.

Estimate for finishing the President's House and appurtenances.

North portico, per detailed estimate formerly submitted,	-	\$ 24,769 25
Stables, per plan and estimate annexed	- - -	8,023 15
Gates and piers to the southwest entrance	- - -	1,275 00
Gates to the southeast entrance	- - -	400 00
900 feet of coping for south wall, at \$ 2	- - -	1,800 00
1,000 feet of pedestal wall and iron railing fence, at \$ 5	- - -	5,000 00
Improving grounds, including salary of \$ 450 to the gardener,		1,400 00
		<hr/>
		\$ 42,667 40

N. B. Stone posts and chains will not make a fence sufficient to protect the grounds. I have substituted the pedestal wall and iron railing as better calculated to answer the purpose of a permanent fence.

106 stone posts and setting for chain fence, at \$ 9 31, \$ 986 86.

Respectfully, your obedient servant.

JAMES HOBAN.

JOSEPH ELGAR, Esq.

Commissioner of Public Buildings.

(C 1.)

WASHINGTON, May 12, 1828.

812 : By the act of March 3d, 1819, (chap. 83.) Congress appropriated \$,125 dollars " for purchasing a lot of land, and for constructing pipes for

supplying the Executive offices and President's house with water." This appropriation was predicated on an estimate for purchasing sundry lots in square No. 249, containing a fountain of excellent water, and conveying it in iron pipes to the public offices. The proprietor of the lots demanded a price which was considered by the then Commissioner so exorbitant that he refused to give it, and the intention of Congress has never been carried into effect. Since that period, the Corporation of Washington has secured part of the water for the use of the citizens; but it is believed that by purchasing three or four lots, a sufficiency might be obtained to answer the purpose intended to be effected by the appropriation referred to; and the propriety of renewing that appropriation is respectfully submitted to your consideration.

The safety of the Executive offices and their important contents is involved in having a supply of water. It is a fact, too often verified, that, in case of fire, our pumps become exhausted in ten or fifteen minutes. Congress has provided excellent engines for the protection of these buildings, and, at the present session, has appropriated \$ 3,000 for building an engine-house and procuring more fire apparatus; but, without a copious supply of water, all these precautions must be unavailing.

I have the honor to remain, sir, your most obedient servant.

J. ELGAR.

HON. MARK ALEXANDER,
Ch'n Com. District of Columbia.

(C 2.)

WASHINGTON, *January 1, 1828.*

SIR: In answer to your letter of the 31st ult., I have the honor to state that it is proposed to purchase the whole square designated on the plan of the city No. 249. A large portion of the surface of this square is occupied by fountains; and to preserve the purity of the water, it will be necessary to keep off private buildings, by securing and enclosing the entire square. It is divided into thirty lots, which stand charged on the Assessor's books as follows:

James M. Varnum's heirs,	-	-	-	1 lot.
John Granbury,	-	-	-	4
William Willock,	-	-	-	10
William Cammack,	-	-	-	1
James Campbell	-	-	-	11
Moses Myers,	-	-	-	3
				—
				30

It is estimated that about four cents per square foot would be a fair price for the property at the present time; and has been ascertained that a considerable part of it could now be purchased at that or a lower rate. The square contains 174,417½ square feet, which, at 4 cents. amounts to \$ 5,976 70

217 pannels of fence, at \$ 3,	-	-	-	-	\$ 651 00
Regulating and planting the ground,	-	-	-	-	500 00
					<hr/>
Cost of ground and enclosure	-	-	-	-	7,127 70
Conveying the water in iron pipes by the Treasury office and President's house to the Navy office, a distance of 3704 feet, at \$ 1 per foot,	-	-	-	-	3,704 00
Three reservoirs, at \$ 150 each,	-	-	-	-	450 00
Hydrants and contingencies,	-	-	-	-	218 30
					<hr/>
					\$ 11,500 00
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Respectfully submitted,

J. ELGAR.

Hon. STEPHEN VAN RENSSELAER,

Chairman of Committee on Public Buildings.

(D.)

WASHINGTON, *January 26, 1829.*

SIR : After reflecting on the conversation I had with you some days ago respecting the scarcity of water on the Capitol hill, either for culinary purposes, cleanliness, or to extinguish fires, I am decidedly of opinion that something should be done to ensure a sufficient supply of that most useful and necessary article.

I have been informed that there is not a well on the hill but may be pumped dry in fifteen minutes : if that is the case, and from the best information I have been able to procure I believe it to be true, only let us figure to ourselves the consequences of a fire on the Capitol hill, either in the Capitol itself or in the houses of individuals : the canal and the Tiber creek are the only places from which a supply of water could be obtained ; and the distance is too great, the population too thin, and the fire engines too few in number, and too inefficient, to justify any hope of success in a contest with that most terrible of all destroying elements, fire.

Three years ago I took a series of levels to find the height of one of the branches of the Tiber creek, to ascertain the practicability of bringing a supply of water to the Capitol : on examining the different branches, the only one that afforded any chance of a supply at a proper elevation is that branch which passes to the east side of the Catholic burying-ground, and heads on the lands of Thomas Peter and Mr. Dunlop, and is about north 12° west of the Capitol, and distant about three miles. The point to which I carried the level is about 150 yards above the road which runs along the northern boundary of the city, where, on the east side of a large white oak tree, and close to the ground, there is a bench mark, which is 10,315 feet above the stone pavement under the arcade in front of the Capitol.

From the best information I am able to obtain, this branch, which is wholly supplied with springs, is (excepting in rainy weather) the same nearly in Summer and Winter ; and by a careful measurement of the quantity of water furnished at a time when it might be considered at its minimum, made by the late Col. Roberdeau, Maj. Kearney, and myself, it was found to discharge 124 cubic feet in two minutes and four seconds, or 13,935 cubic feet, equal to 104,241 wine gallons, in 24 hours.

On examining the sources of this branch, it is found to head in a swamp about one-third of a mile above the point the level was carried to, and is, as before observed, entirely fed by springs, which might be collected, by means of covered drains, into a reservoir at a clump of cedar bushes near a small brick house on the west side of the swamp; and on a reconnoissance of this site, I believe that five more feet of elevation might be obtained, which would reach a point in the Capitol 15 feet above the basement story.

If this water should be brought to the Capitol hill, and terminate in a large reservoir, say at the highest point of the Capitol square, the security and advantage accruing both to public and private property is very obvious: from that point it could be taken to every part of the Capitol and public grounds, at the elevation of the reservoir, not only for security against fire, but for other purposes, among which may be enumerated objects of cleanliness, watering the grass, shrubbery, trees, &c. &c., and might be conveyed to the whole of the inhabited parts of the hill; thereby affording an abundant supply for extinguishing fires, and for every useful and necessary purpose.

To make out an accurate estimate of the expense would require a careful survey of the line along which the conveyance will be made, the distance, and of course the length of pipes necessary; but an approximation may be made near enough by assuming the following data, viz:

To 3 miles of a cast iron pipe, 3 inches in the interior diameter, say 15,840 running feet, laid, including every expense, at one dollar per running foot, - - - - -	\$ 15,840 00
To reservoir and drains for collecting the water at the source, - - - - -	1,500 00
To reservoir on Capitol square, 60 x 25, 10 feet deep, faced and paved with cut stone, and laid in Roman cement, - - - - -	5,000 00
To conveyance to the different parts of the Capitol and public grounds, - - - - -	2,000 00
To contingencies and unforeseen incidents, - - - - -	660 00
Total,	\$ 25,000 00

I am, sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
ROBERT LECKIE.

To the COMMISSIONER of Public Buildings.

(E 1.)

WASHINGTON, January 13, 1829.

SIR: I am directed by a resolution of the Columbia Fire Company respectfully to ask you to obtain from Congress an appropriation for the purpose of keeping in repair the United States' fire apparatus in our care, and to pay the expenses incurred by us for that object since the year 1824; and also to enable us to procure fire hooks and ladders.

The sum of \$ 300, I should suppose, would be sufficient for all these purposes for two years to come, unless a thorough repair of the large engine (the old one) should sooner be found necessary, which we hope may not be the case; but the alarm bell has never been properly erected, and needs

some attention immediately. I would therefore suggest, that, to avoid a similar application for two or three years, it might be expedient to ask for \$ 350.

Fire apparatus is very perishable, unless faithfully attended to; and all that we ask is, that the labor which we are obliged to hire for this purpose may be paid for.

At the late annual meeting of the company, the apparatus was found to be in good condition, and we trust it will always be found so when called into use.

Relying upon that readiness with which you have always preferred our claims, I cheerfully comply with the duty assigned me,

And am, sir,

Your most obedient serv't.

JOHN P. INGLE, *Capt. Engineers,*
Col. Fire Company.

JOSEPH ELGAR, Esq.

Commissioner of the Public Buildings.

(E. 2.)

WASHINGTON CITY, *January 30, 1829.*

SIR: By a resolution of the "Franklin Engine Company," passed at their meeting held on the 23d December, 1828, the undersigned were appointed a committee to solicit you to use your influence to have annually an appropriation made by Congress for defraying the expenses of keeping the engine, hydraulion, hose, and apparatus, in complete repair, that are attached to the President's house, and are in the care of this company. The undersigned will say nothing in support of the company's application for an annual appropriation, as it is manifest, that, without the utmost care and labor, fire apparatus will soon go to decay; that, in fact, it requires looking to every week, and more particularly if it is much used; so that, to keep such costly pieces of machinery in ample order, thereby making them answer the purposes for which they were purchased, it requires a constant expenditure of money and labor. The machinery now in charge of the company is of the first order, together with the house built by the appropriation of last year: with these advantages, the company hope to render to the public, if necessary, services that will be highly satisfactory.

The undersigned would suggest that the sum of \$ 200 will be little enough this year, as there are some few fixtures that are indispensable about the apparatus and house; viz. a lamp to be set on the street, and for the lighting thereof; an electrical conductor for the house; a goose-neck for the engine; a fall for the hose tower; two stoves, one for the dubbing room, and one for the machinery room; and some other minor objects, the naming of which we will dispense with.

The undersigned would further call your attention to the propriety of refunding to the Franklin Engine Company the sum of \$ 90 25, being the amount which the company has expended from time to time, (over and above what the United States has laid out,) for six or seven years past, in keeping the engines and hose in repair. The undersigned can confidently say that a much larger sum than this has been expended, but as there are no vouchers for it preserved, no more can be asked. It may be proper to

state that this money was raised by contribution, so that not one cent was given by the public, but wholly by individuals. We venture to say, in conclusion, that after this year the sum of \$50 per annum will suffice for the repair, &c. of the engine.

Respectfully submitted,

C. L. COLTMAN,
Prest. F. E. Company,
WM. M. M'CAULEY,
Capt. Engineers,
HENRY BARRON,
Hoseman,

} *Committee.*

Mr. JOSEPH ETGAR,
Com'r Public Buildings.

P. S. Within is enclosed the Treasurer's certificate of the amount of expenditures of money which was collected from contribution.

I hereby certify that there has been expended by the Franklin Fire Company, in articles of use to the said company, and repairs to engine, &c. ninety dollars and seventy-five cents of money collected by subscriptions and contributions.

ISAAC COONER,
Treasurer F. F. Company.