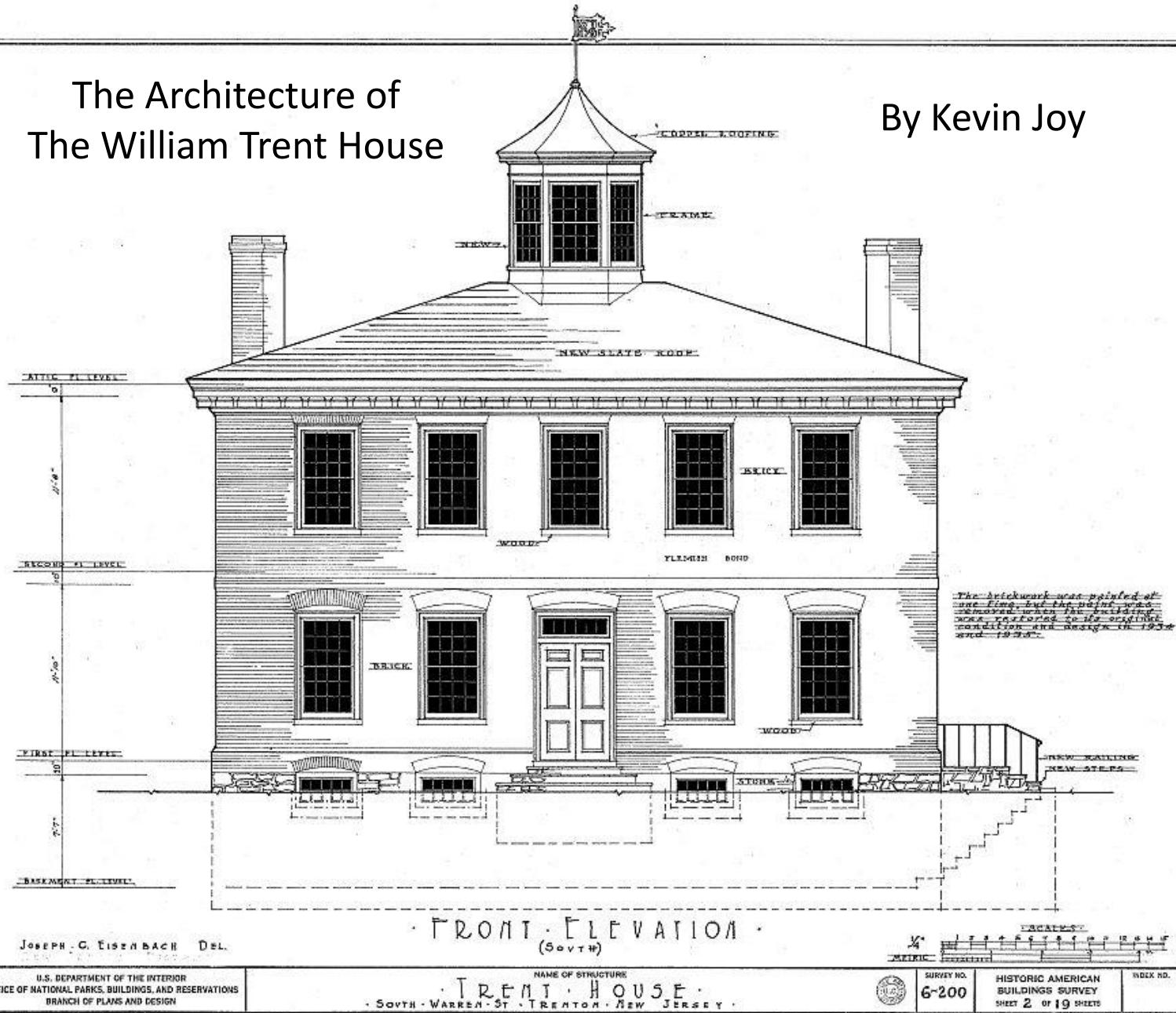


The Architecture of The William Trent House

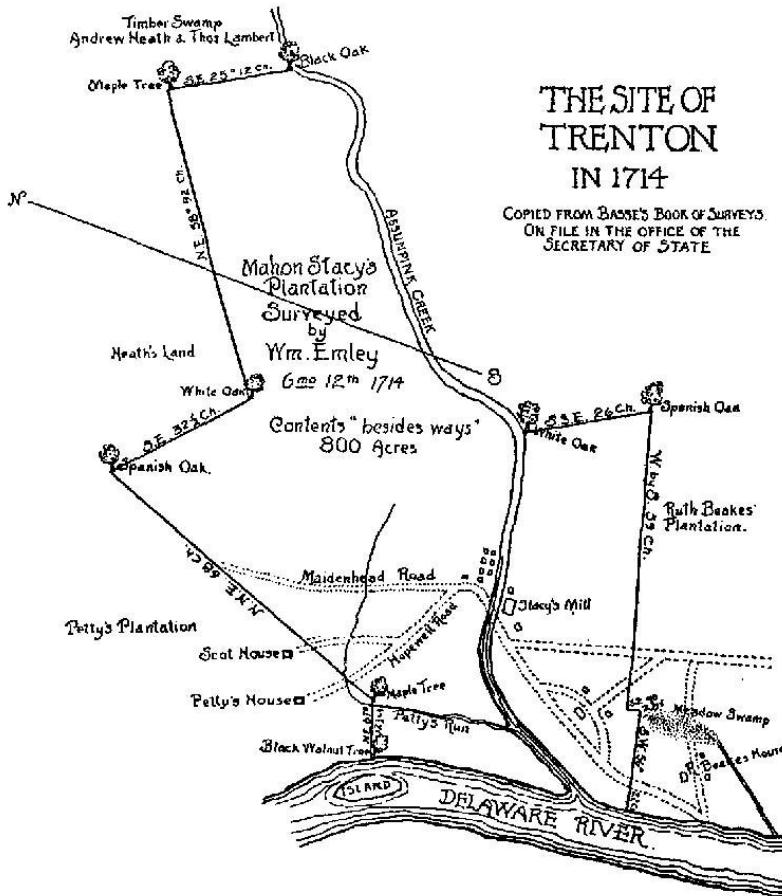
By Kevin Joy



From HABS Drawings

William Trent

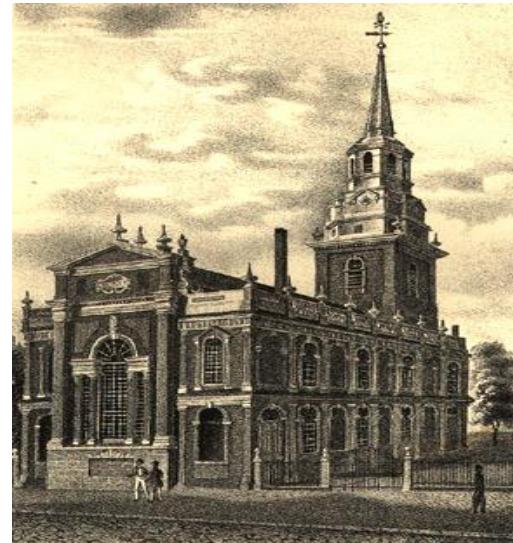
- ◆ Born c. 1653, Inverness, Scotland
- ◆ Dies Dec. 25, 1724, Trenton NJ
- ◆ Wealthy merchant and trader
- ◆ Purchases 800 acres of land along the Assunpink Creek from Mahlon Stacy Jr. in 1714
- ◆ His Dwelling house completed by 1721



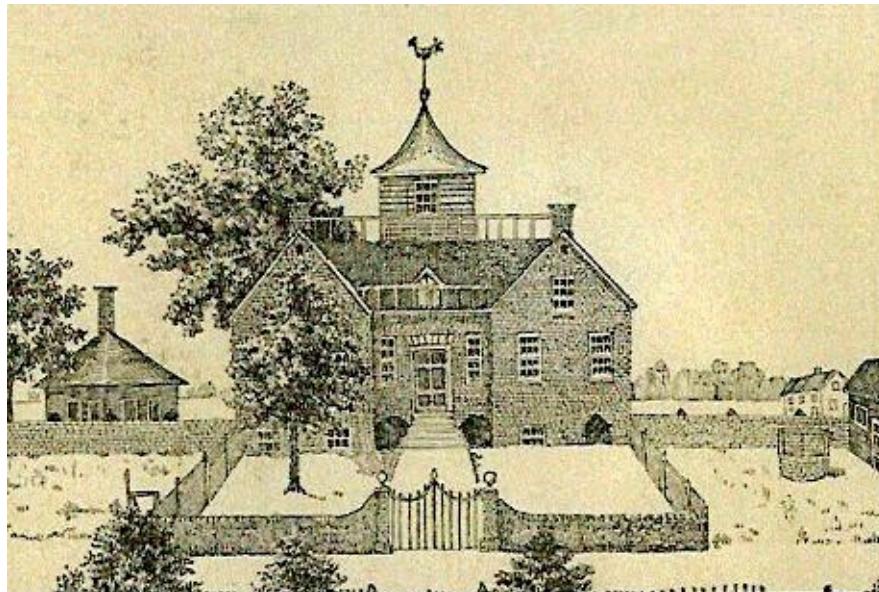
Buildings Attributed to James Portues aka (Porteus) – d. 1736/37



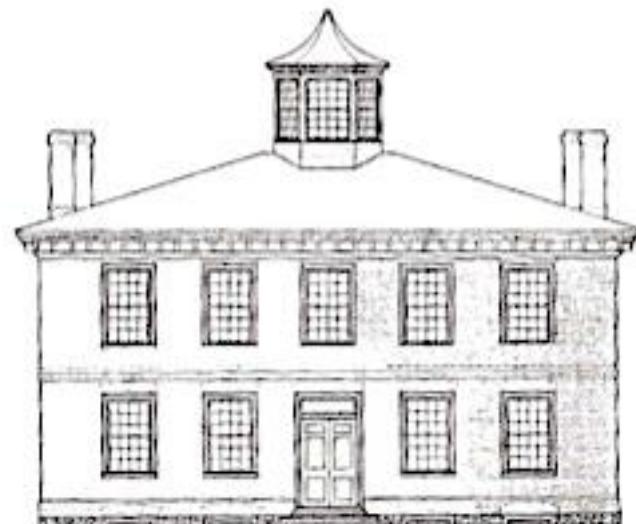
Slate Roof House c. 1698



Christ Church 1695 - 1741



Isaac Norris House c. 1717



Trent House c. 1721

Georgian Architecture



- ◆ Georgian Architecture Period 1700 – 1800. Coincides with the reigns of King George I through III.
- ◆ First architect-inspired style in America
- ◆ Arrived in America via building manuals called “pattern books” around 1700.
- ◆ Style is based on classical forms of the Italian Renaissance period.
- ◆ English master architects Christopher Wren, Inigo Jones and James Gibbs developed the Georgian style in England.
- ◆ Identifiable and common features include:
 - Symmetrical form and window placement
 - Multi-paned sliding sash windows
 - 5 bays, center door, center hall
 - Hipped or side-gabled roof
 - Dentilated or Modillioned cornice
 - Brick or Stone walls
 - Water table and/or belt course
 - Transom window over paneled front door
- ◆ This style in the Colonies reflected a period of growth and prosperity and a desire for more formally designed buildings.

Local Georgian Architecture

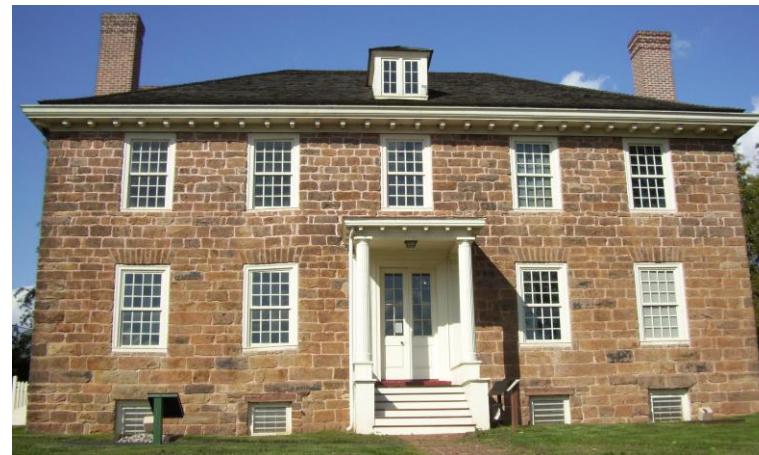
Trent House 1721



Stenton 1730



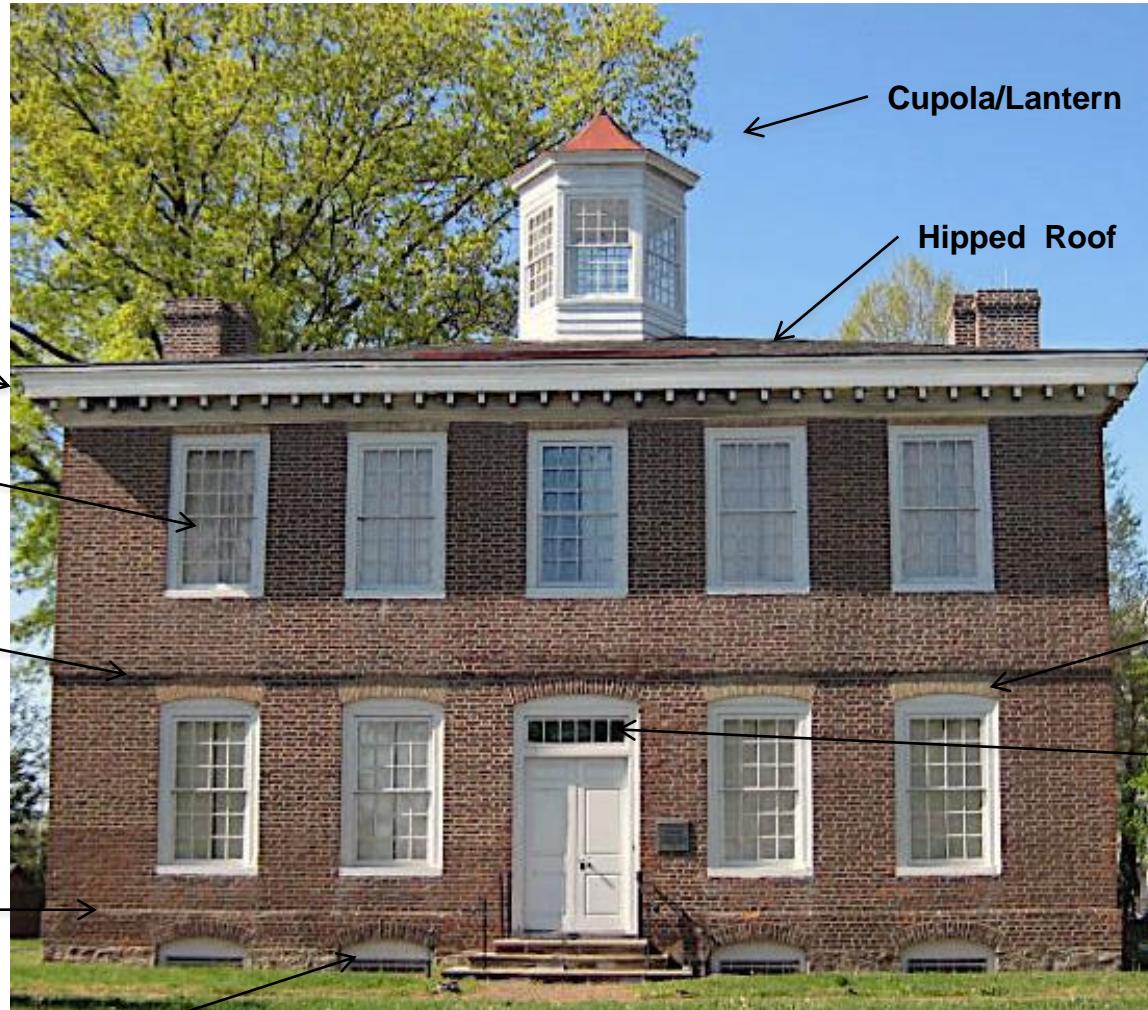
Salem Courthouse 1735



Cornelius Low House 1741



Cliveden in Germantown, Pa c. 1767



Cupola/Lantern

Hipped Roof

Classical Cornice
w/Modillions

Multi-paned Glazing (12
over 12)

Belt Course

Segmental Arch
over Window

Multi-paned
Transom

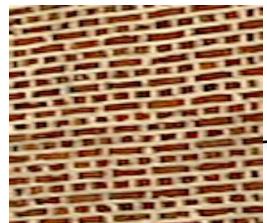
Molded Brick Water
Table

“English” Basement

Elements of Georgian Architecture



Flemish Bond



English Bond

Raised Stone Foundation

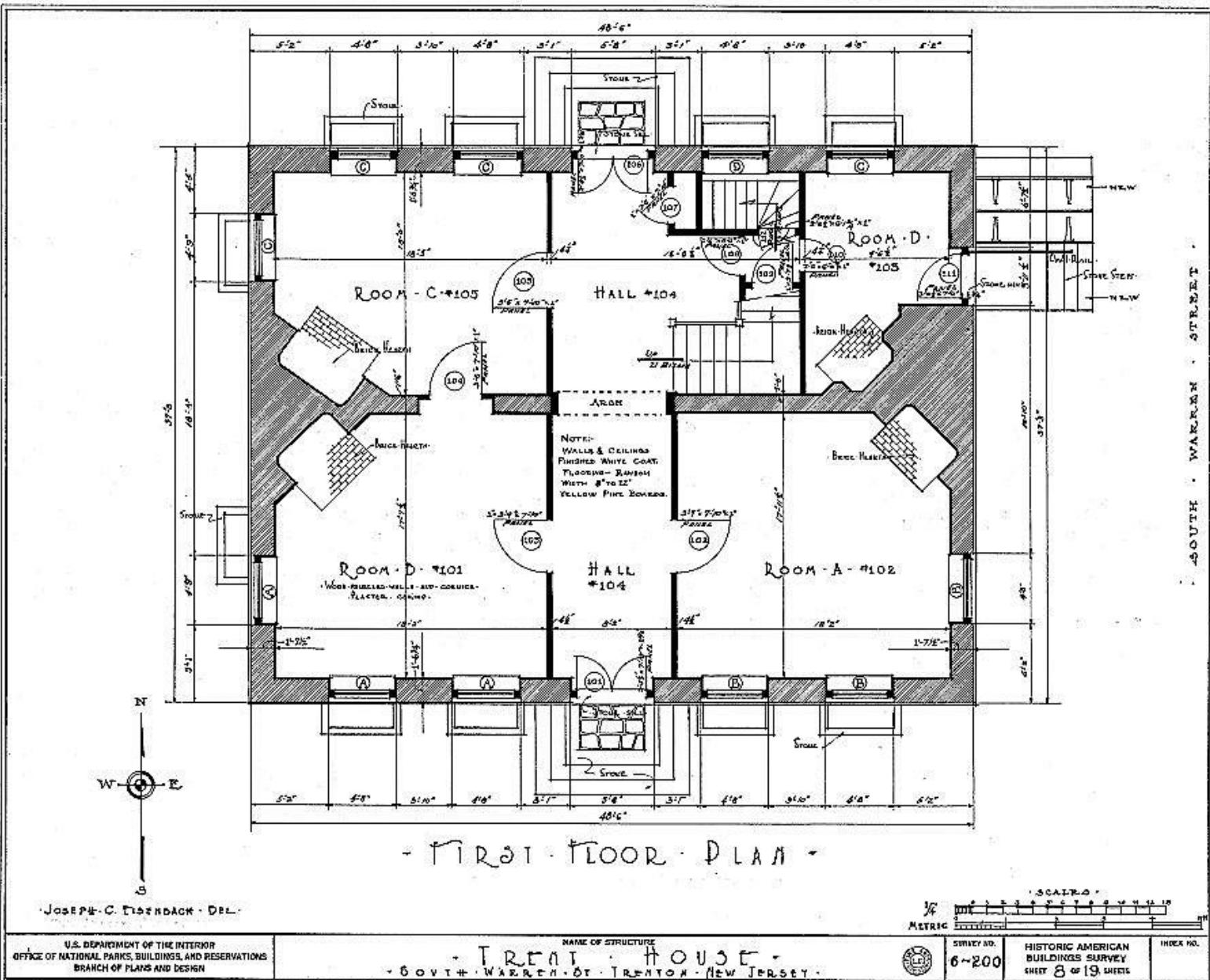
Brick work Details



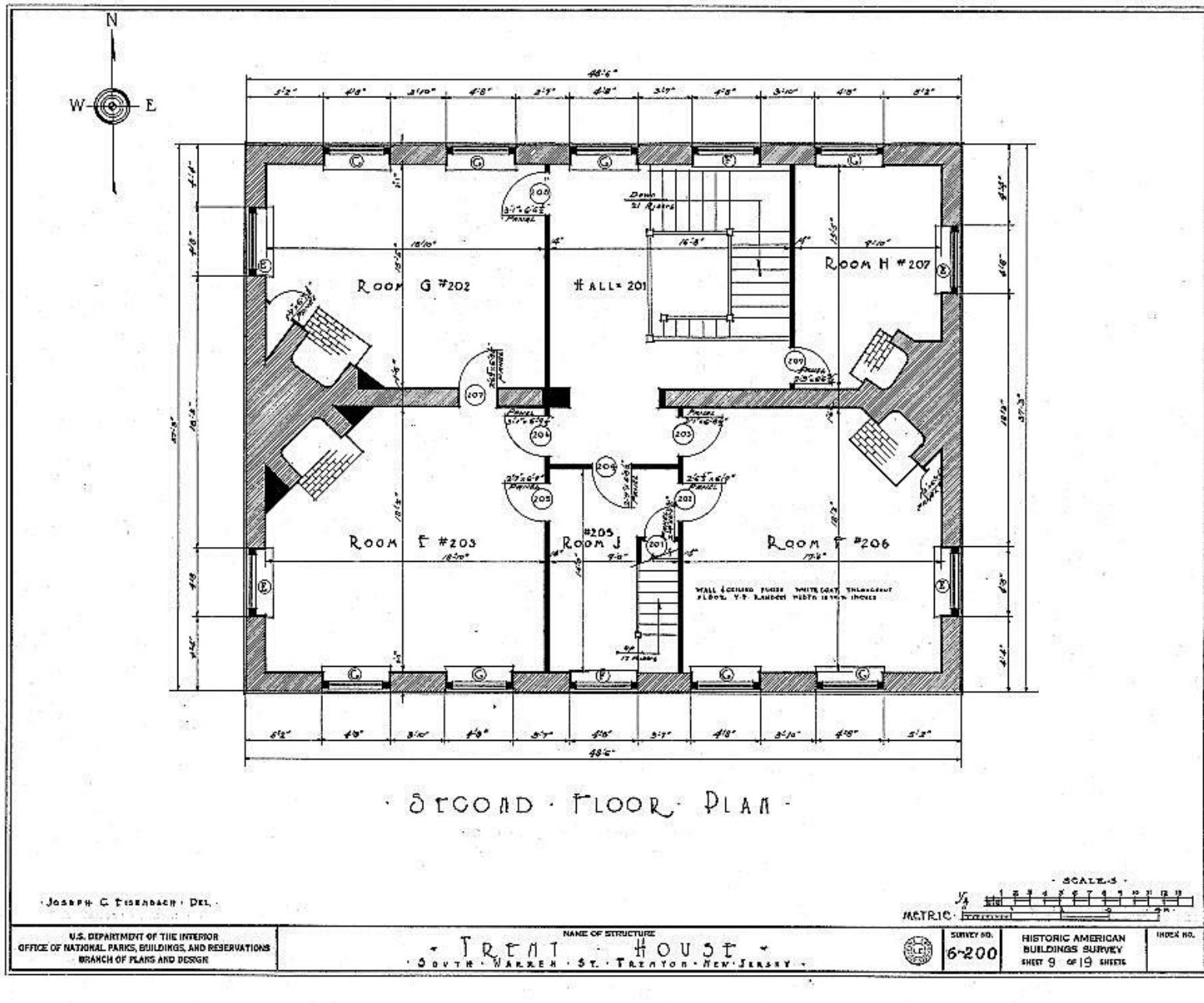
Segmental Arch with Dutch Bricks

◆ Bricks likely made on premises or nearby, with the exception of the Dutch bricks.

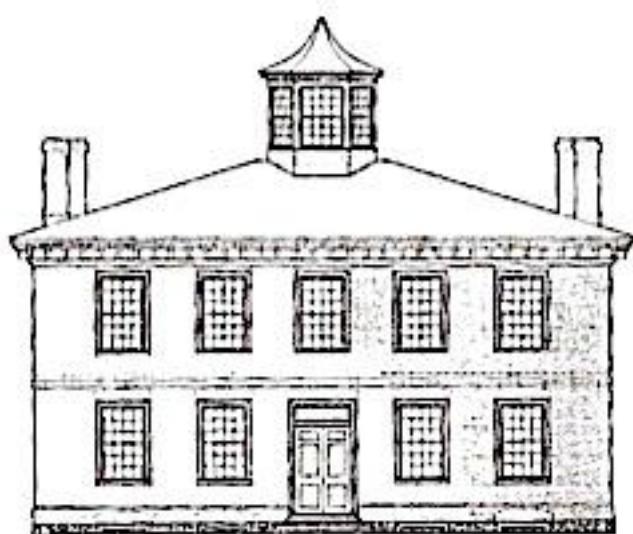
◆ Original lime mortar has been mostly replaced by Portland cement.



From HABS Drawings



Trent house Building Materials (c. 1721)

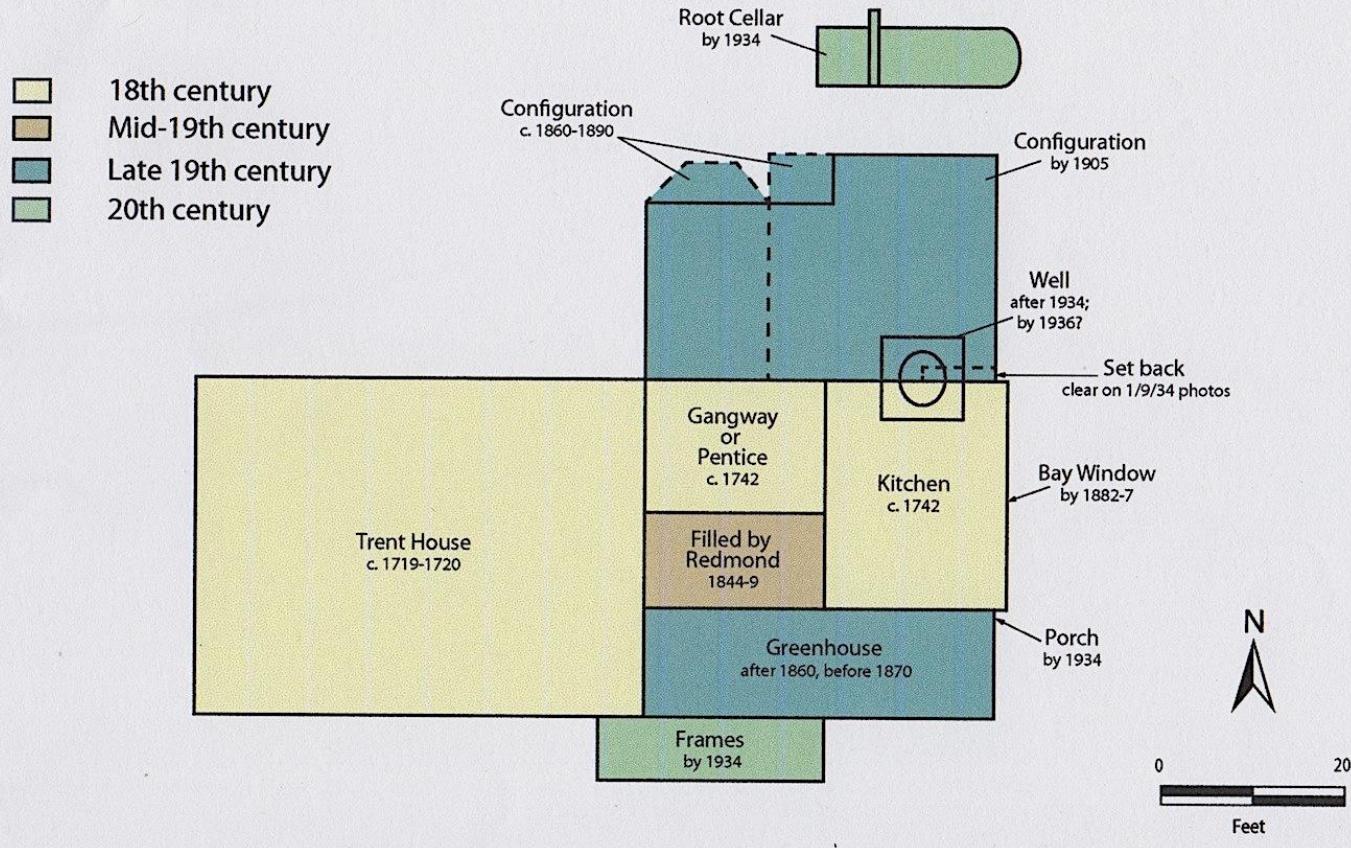


- ✧ Foundation made of fieldstone
- ✧ Exterior walls made of locally produced brick (9 ½ "x 4 ½ " x 2 ¾ " via 1683 regulation)
- ✧ Pointing consists of sand/lime mortar
- ✧ Segmental arches over main windows made of imported Dutch brick
- ✧ Structural and trim woodwork (interior and exterior) made of oak and pine
- ✧ Roof likely wood shake
- ✧ Interior walls plastered (over oak plank and lath) with wood paneling and trim
- ✧ Window sash and most hardware imported
- ✧ Exterior paint-cornice, doors, sash, etc.:
 - First layer, reddish brown primer with high oil content
 - Second layer, White, lead-in-oil finish paint with high oil content
- ✧ Interior paint: All trim is yellow/white semi-gloss oil
- ✧ Oil paint is made of white lead and calcium carbonate (chalk, lime) that is tinted with yellow ochre, raw sienna
red iron oxide, and bone black
- ✧ Baseboards (mopboards) and baseboard height accents on all trim and doors are painted in gloss black made of lamp black and linseed oil
- ✧ Plaster walls are whitewashed

Note: Interior paint analysis by Frank Welsh, 1993

Exterior paint analysis by Frank Welsh, 2003

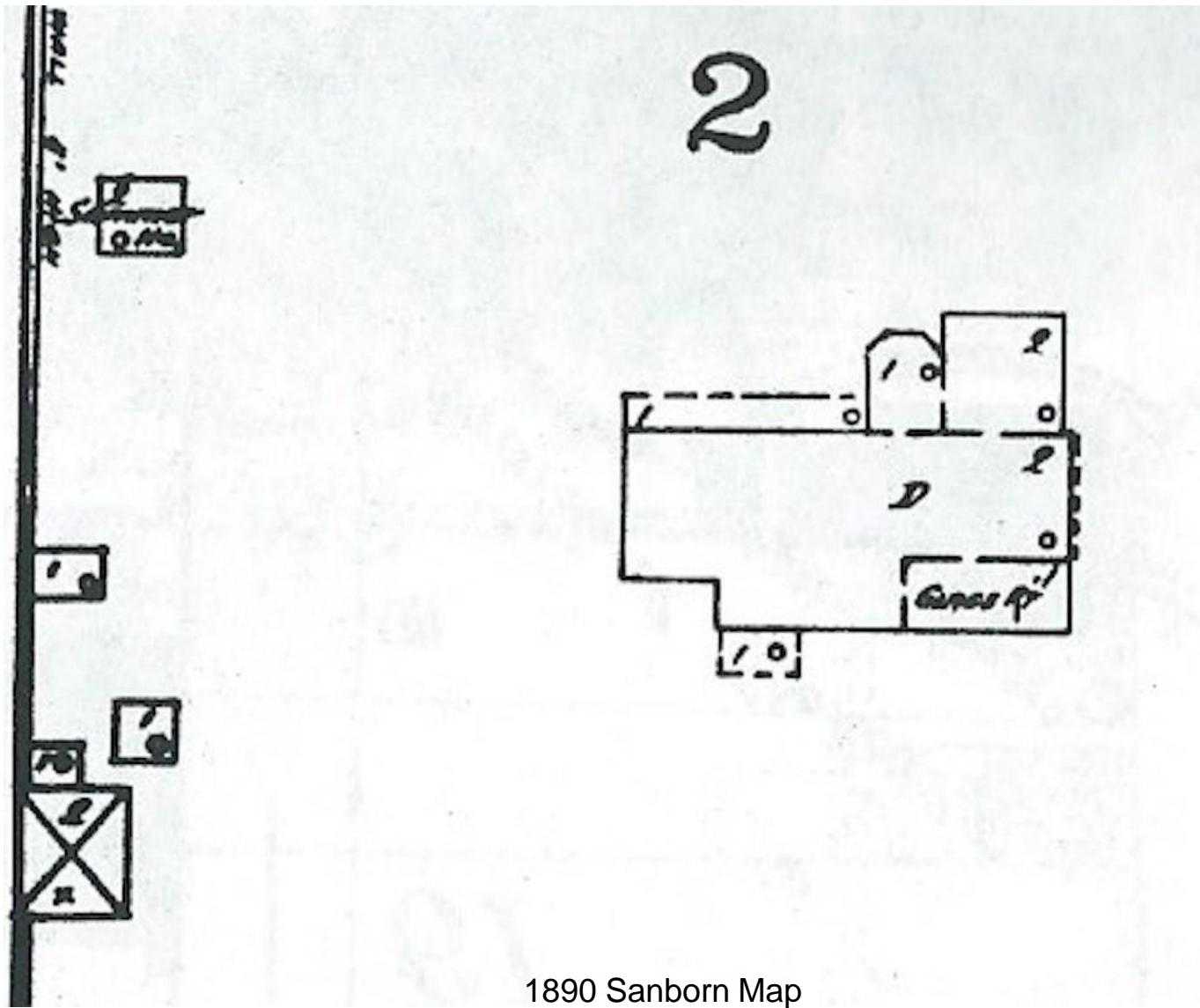
**Fig. 1: Structural History and Configuration of the East Wing of the Trent House
(After Maxman 1997 and Hunter Research, Inc.)**



Courtesy of Hunter Research

Notes: Noble Preservation believes 1719/20 construction date cannot be confirmed.

- There was a second greenhouse constructed on the same site after 1887.
- Well head is believed to be original to c.1742 kitchen addition.
- A frame addition is believed to have existed off western elevation of original house.
- Porches existed after c.1815-1835 on both north and south facades of original house



1890 Sanborn Map



(George Thomas/Gov. Lewis Morris Period)

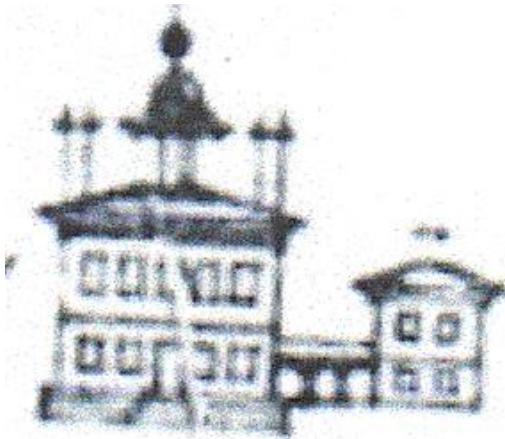
c. 1750

"Kingsbury House"

Sketch of the Trent House from "A Plan of Colonel Thomas's Estate, Kingsbury in West Jersey"
THIS SKETCH OF "KINGSBURY HOUSE" IS THE EARLIEST DEPICTION OF THE TRENT HOUSE.
Note kitchen addition with gangway, hipped roof and center chimney.
Also note lack of basement windows.

"Kingsberry, June 25, 1759

To Be Let for a Term of Years



From the Pennsylvania Journal
No. 866, July 12, 1759

The Plantation whereon the Subscriber now liveth, containing 200 Acres of Land, of which there is about 80 Acres cleared, the rest Wood Land. It is accommodated with a Large well Built Brick Dwelling House 38 by 48 Feet, two Story High, four Rooms on a Floor, with a Large handsome Stair Case and Entrys thro' the House, with Cellars under the whole Building, and a Court Yard on each Front of the House, the one Fronting down the River Delaware to the Ferry thro' a large handsome Avenue of English Cherry Trees, the other Fronting up the River to Trenton, with a Large Brick Kitchen, 30 Feet by 20, with a Handsome pav'd Gangway between the House and Kitchen, 14 Feet by 20 Long, the Kitchen two Story High, with a Well in it, and Four handsome Appartments above for Servants, with a Fire-place in one room, if any of the Servants should be ill. Also a good Barn 40 by 38 Feet, with a Plank Floor and Stables for 10 Horses. Also a Chaise-house, Poultry-house and other useful Buildings to accommodate the same, with a fine piece of Meadow, that yearly Produces about 20 Loads of good Clover and Timothy Hay, with an Orchard of about 350 Apple-Trees, whereof about 150 are old bearing Trees, the others just beginning to Bare and are of the best Grafted Fruit, there is also a fine Collection of other Fruit, to wit, Peaches, Damsels, Cherrys of several Sorts, Squinces, English Walnuts, Grapes, Rasberrys, and a handsome large Garden. The above Premises lying in the county of Burlington, in West-New-Jersey, and pleasantly Situated on the River Delaware at the Head of the Navigation and Opposite to the Falls thereof, and also lays between Trenton and the Ferry, known by the Name of Trenton Ferry. There is a great Variety of Fish, that are caught in the River, which affords a great deal of Diversion in Trouling and Angling the whole Spring and Summer, and in the Fall and Winter Season there is great plenty of Duck and other Water Fowl. It would be too tedious to set forth all the Advantages this Situation has, therefore shall only mention, as it lays at the Head of Navigation of a fine River where great Quantities of Produce &c. are delivered, and two or three small towns lying near it, and a fine settled Country all Round, it's presumed, it will suit a wholesale Merchant or a private Gentleman for his Seat. For Terms Enquire of ROBERT and JACOB HOOPER at their Store, Opposite to Trenton, or of the Subscriber, now living on the Premises.



(Colonel John Cox Period)

1789

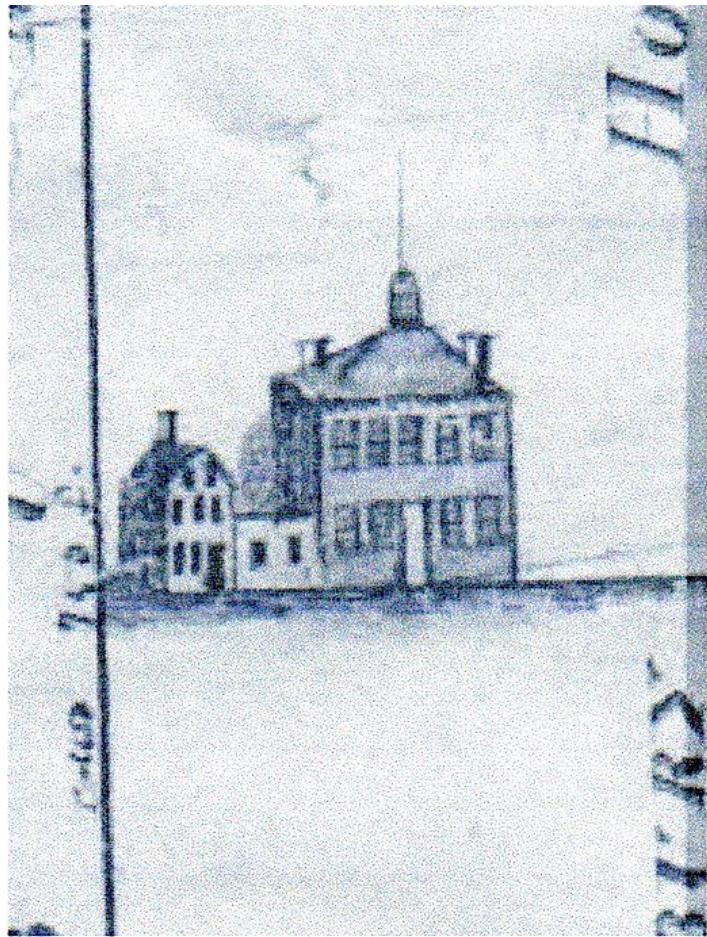
Sketch of the Trent House (Bloomsbury House at the time...) from "A Plan and Survey of sundry pieces of Land adjoining the Delaware River and Afsanpink Creek belonging to Jn. Cox 1789." Note cupola detail and pediment canopy over the front door



c.1800

(William Coxe Period)

"Trenton sur la Delaware." c. 1800 watercolor by Count de Maulevier. Note the facades are painted a cream color rather than the reddish orange (brick?) used for most of the background buildings. The house appears to be painted at the time of this rendering. Also note window and cupola details and that the basement windows are now present.. No pediment visible over door.



c. 1804 [c. 1815-1835]

(Daniel William Coxe Period)

Tracing of “A Plan of Sundry Lots of Land the Property of Daniel W. Coxe Esquire Part of His Bloomsbury Estate, probable date – 1804.” Here it appears evident that the north elevation has become the main elevation/entrance. This is the first image of this elevation. Note the apparent flaws in the depiction of the kitchen addition: a 2 ½ register, gabled roof rather than a 2 register hipped roof structure. The divided light windows are now visible.

GET NJ



1850

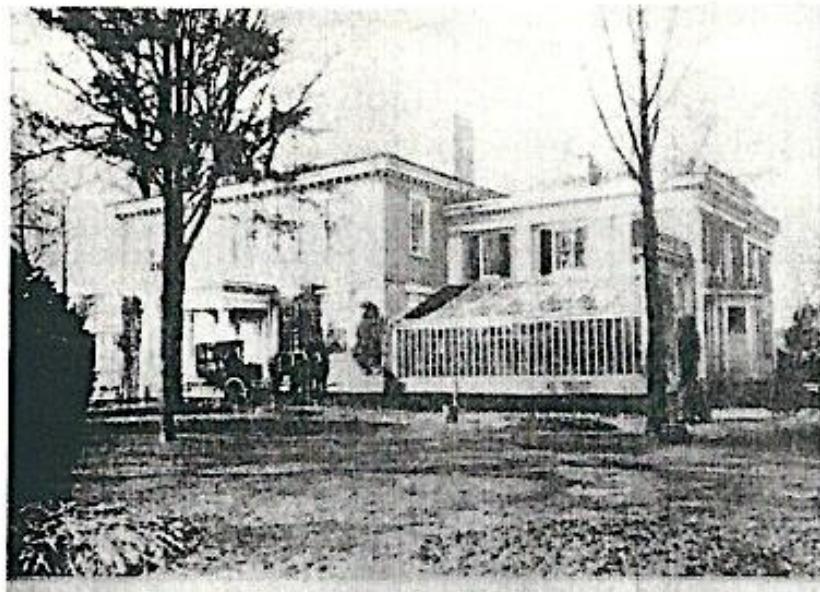
Bloomsbury Court

(James M. Redmond Period)

An 1850 mounted engraving of the north elevation entitled “Bloomsbury Court.”

This engraving is the first image drawn with an attempt to detail the features of the Trent House.
Notes: the addition is just visible through the trees on the left.

The hipped roof appears relatively flat with what looks like a sort of sky light in place of the cupola, which was evidently removed after c.1815-1835. A one-story porch has been added to this elevation, and two floor to ceiling windows are evident on the west side of the front door. These were likely installed when the porch was built. The rest of the windows are depicted as 6/6 divided light double-hung sash with wide trim. Note curvilinear drive.



n.d. [c. 1882-1887]

(Edward H. Stokes Period)

Photograph of the south and east elevations with the caption, "Residence of Edward H. Stokes, Trenton, N.J." This is the first known photograph of the Trent House. Notes: Again, the south elevation has become the main entrance. This is the first view of the south elevation entrance porch, which was added between 1800 and 1874—very likely between c. 1815 and 1850. See also the two-story frame addition on the northeast corner, and the greenhouse and centered brick section on the east elevation. All three sections are crowned with metalwork to tie them together and create a cohesive appearance. This photograph also confirms the 6/6 sash suggested in the previous engraving. The facades of the original section of the house appear to be whitewashed or painted, though this may be an effect caused by the exposure of the photograph.



n.d. [After 1887, when Edward H. Stokes' tenure concluded] (Edward A. Stokes Period)

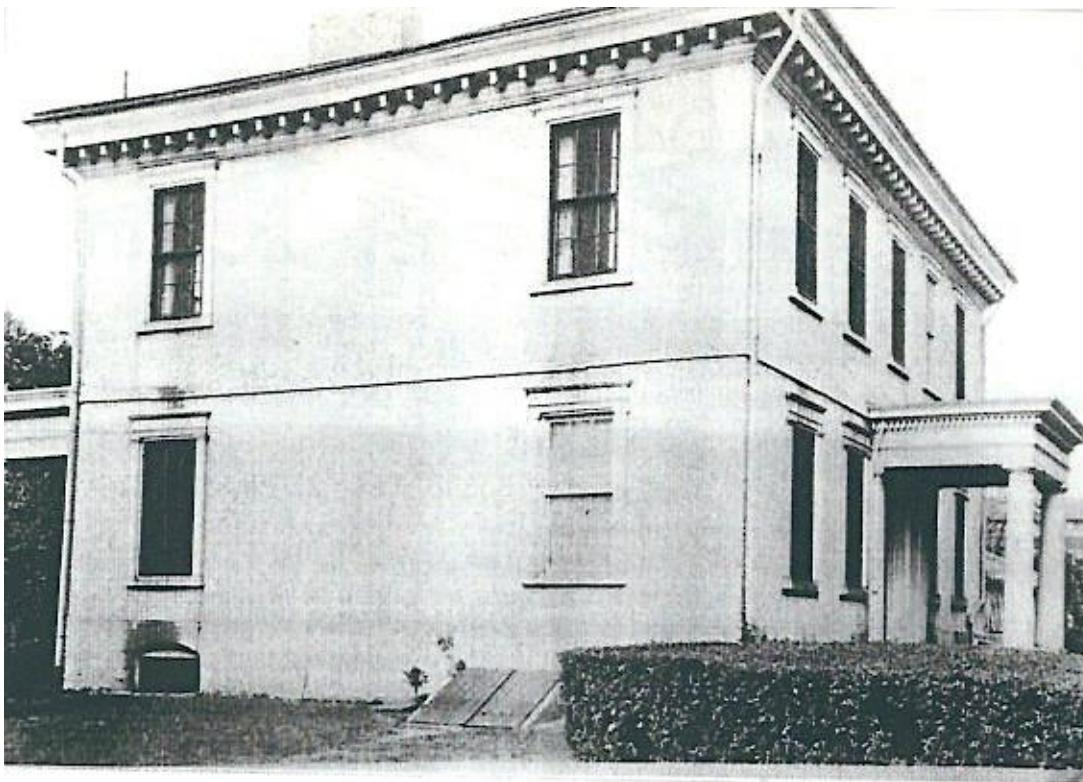
Pre-1934 photograph of the north elevation. This photograph details the north elevation of the original section of the house. The photograph, similar to the 1850 engraving, shows a porch that contains the same form and details depicted in the engraving-six fluted, Doric columns with fluted pilasters. The entrance, accessed by four steps contains a paneled wooden door fronted by a screen door. The door surround is comprised of wide wooden trim which forms sidelights and an 8 light transom. The window trim is notably wide, and the trim on the floor to ceiling windows is of a different profile, confirming that these windows were altered within the c.1815-1850 period, the dates the porch was constructed. Again, window sash are mostly 6/6 configuration-the floor to ceiling windows contain 12/6 sash.



n.d. [After 1887]

(Edward A. Stokes Period)

Pre-1934 photograph of the south and west elevations. Notes: This photo depicts the south and west elevations of the original section of the house. Details of the entrance porch include fluted Doric columns and a wide soffit band-identical to those on the north elevation porch-probably indicating these to be of the same date. This south elevation porch soffit, however is crowned with dentilated molding, a feature missing from the north elevation porch-possibly denoting that the south elevation entrance was the primary one at this time. Note bulkhead door on west facade.



n.d. [After 1887]

(Edward A. Stokes Period)

Pre-1934 photograph of the west and south elevations. Note bulkhead door. This was located appox. where the present utility tunnel entrance is now.

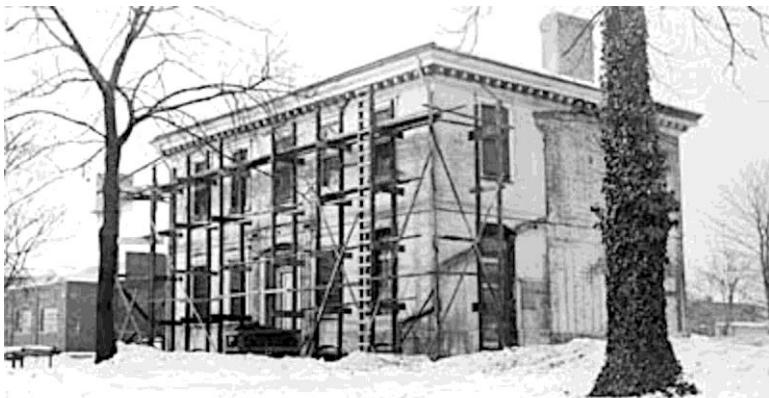


n.d. [After 1887]

(Edward A. Stokes Period)

Pre-1934 photograph of the south and east elevations. The most notable feature in this photo is the greenhouse-a different structure than the one depicted in the c.1882-1887 photograph. This greenhouse is depicted in a 1927 map. Notes: the two distinct northeast /southeast sections of the additions can be easily seen in this photo. The northeast section is frame/clapboard and the southeast section is masonry. Windows on the original house as well as the additions are 6/6.

The WPA Restoration 1934-1936



- ◆ 1929 Edward A. Stokes conveys Trent House to the City of Trenton under stipulation that it be restored to its original (Colonial) appearance.
- ◆ Restoration was financed by the Federal Government through The Civil Works, The Emergency Relief and the Public Works Administration. (WPA.)
- ◆ Planning (and selective demolition) began 1933 under direction of Trustees of Trenton Free Public Library
- ◆ J. Osborne Hunt was supervising architect. Samuel Mountford was researching architect and directed the mechanicals installation.
- ◆ J. Harmon Harvey and Leon Slack completed the team of four architects and Howard Hughes, City Librarian provided historical research.
- ◆ After Hunt's death in 1935, Mountford assumed the role of supervising architect and completed the restoration
- ◆ Approximately 80 to 100 men were employed at most times
- ◆ Many of the workers were unskilled or had minimal training
- ◆ The estimated completion date was November 15, 1936, but the project was finished ahead of schedule.
- ◆ On October 14, 1936 the Trent House was formally dedicated by the Trenton Free Library Board upon completion of the restoration.
- ◆ The Trent House Commission, (pre THA) was created to establish, maintain and manage the Trent House Museum.
- ◆ While the Trent House Association was not incorporated until 1957, a furnishings committee, or "Women's Committee" oversaw the furnishing of the house in the 1930's, utilizing the 1726 inventory as a guide.
- ◆ The Garden Club of Trenton accepted the responsibility of restoring the Trent House gardens and retained the services of noted NYC landscape architect Isabella Pendleton Bowen to prepare the plans.



1/9/1934

(City of Trenton Period)

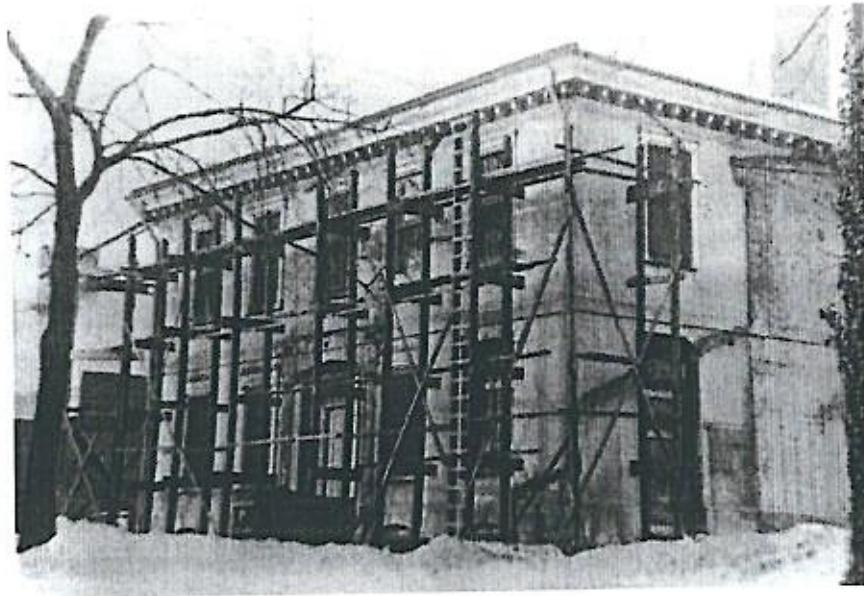
Photograph of the east and north elevations pre-restoration. Photo 61, WPA Project 2976. The two distinct sections of the additions can readily be seen In this view.



2/1/1934

(City of Trenton Period)

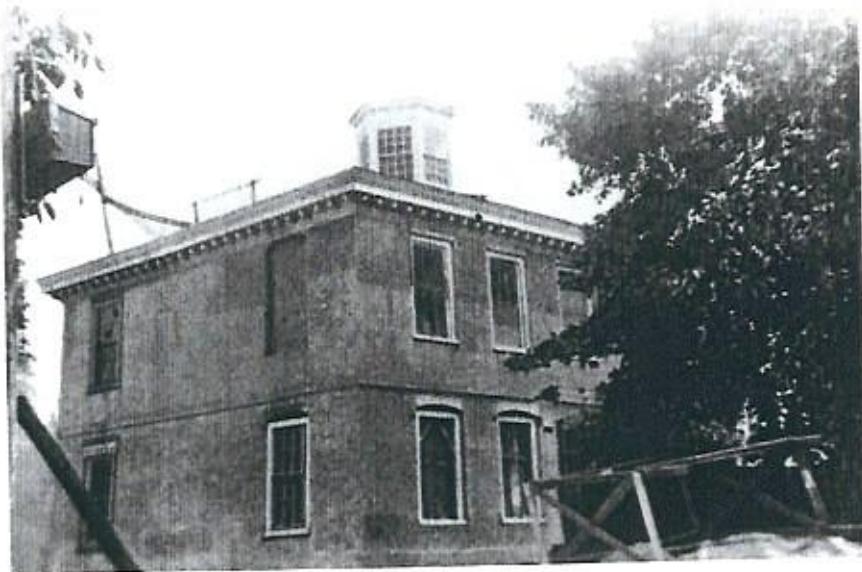
**Photograph of south and east elevations. Photo 97, WPA Project 2976
This view was taken during the WPA removal of the greenhouse.**



n.d. [1934]

(City of Trenton Period)

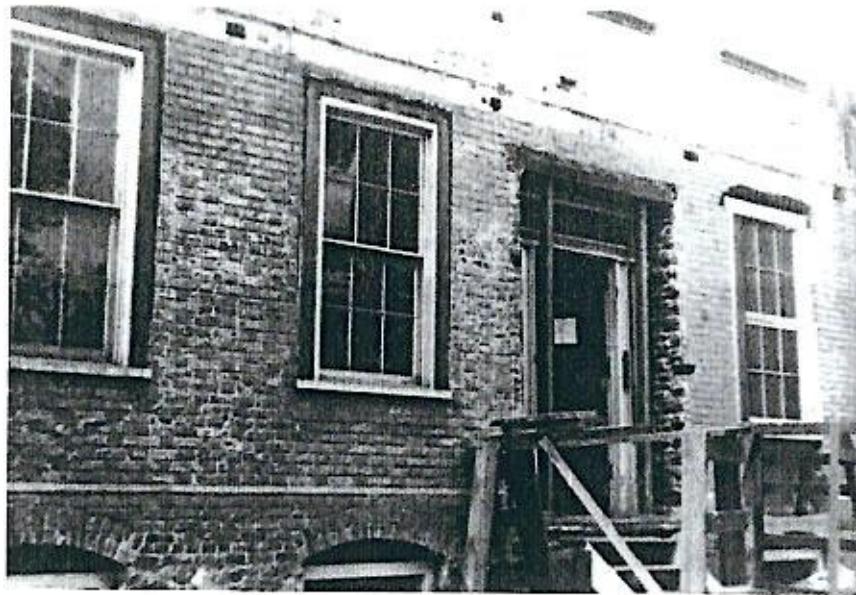
View of the south and east elevations. This photo was taken after the removal of the additions, greenhouse and porches.



n.d. [1934]

(City of Trenton Period)

View of the south and west elevations. This image documents the restoration of the cupola and the removal of the 6/6 sash, and shows that the brickwork has likely been acid cleaned and/or sandblasted.



n.d. [1934]

(City of Trenton Period)

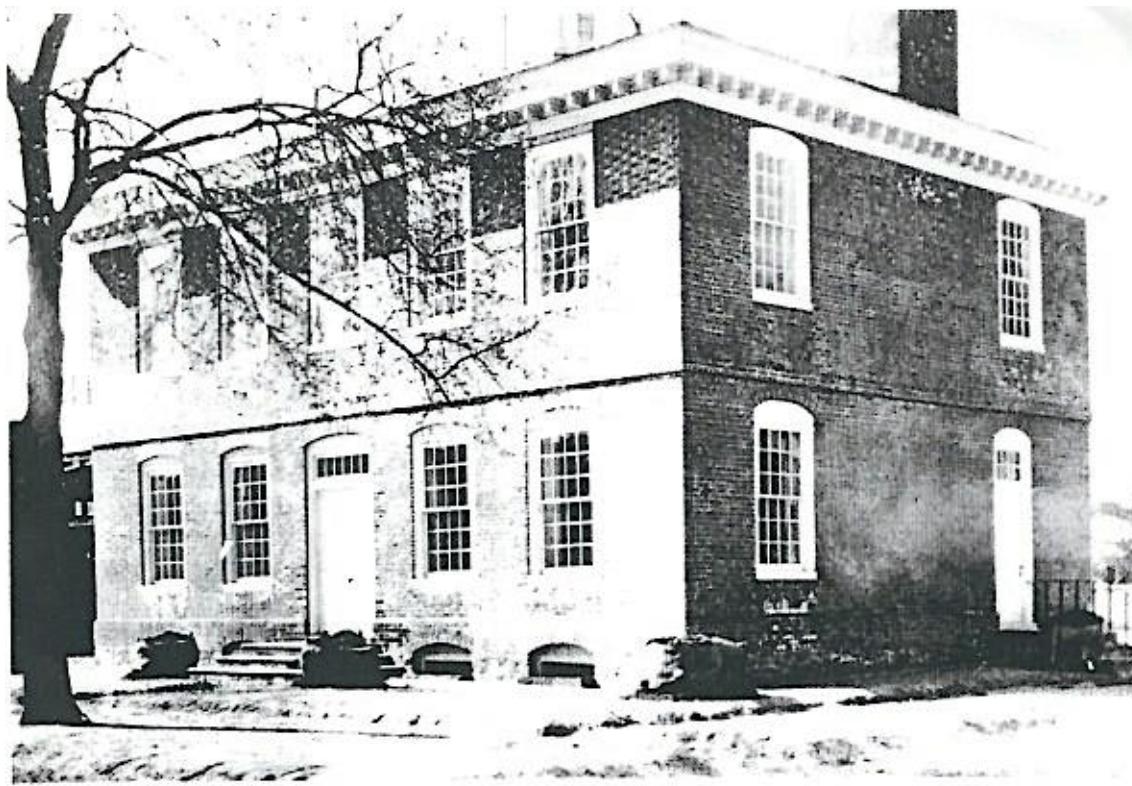
**North elevation entrance photo detail taken during the WPA restoration.
This shows the north elevation entrance after removal of porch which spanned entire length
of the elevation.**



n.d. [1936]

(City of Trenton Period)

**Photograph of the north elevation after the WPA restoration.
This image depicts the site from the north. Note the
completed well and well shed and root cellar.**



1936

(City of Trenton Period)

Photograph of the south and east elevations after the WPA restoration.

This image, taken after the restoration was complete shows notable changes that include the removal of the additions, the removal of the porches, the reconstruction of the cupola, the reconfiguration of the window openings and the installation of 12/12 sash. Also, the carriage house was altered to a Colonial appearance. (Not shown)

Additional Construction Details of the WPA Restoration

- ◆ The restoration team operated under procedures and philosophies typical of the Colonial Revival Period. The significance of later (non Colonial) periods was entirely discounted and all later elements inevitably removed.
- ◆ Typical of the period, all information was documented through rough field sketches, including dimensions and annotations.
- ◆ **THERE IS NO WRITTEN ACCOUNT DOCUMENTING THE RESTORATION PROCESS.**
- ◆ The carriage house restoration was undertaken very early on in the project, likely as an exercise in procedures and methods for the workmen before attempting the main house.
- ◆ Records indicate that the original 18thC floors survived in remarkably good condition as they had been covered throughout with later oak flooring. This oak flooring was removed early on and the original floors covered with a rubberoid coating applied to protect the floors during the restoration. Traces of this coating can still be seen in some areas.
- ◆ Also remarkable is the fact that the floor plan had remained virtually intact from the original construction period so that the restoration was concentrated primarily on recreating missing features.
- ◆ Some significant elements of the restoration included the reconstruction of the window seats based on a single surviving example, the replication of surviving interior shutters, the construction of new six panel doors based on the surviving original closet door under the stair, the replication of floorboards based on the surviving originals and the replication of the stair to the recreated cupola based on wall scarring.
- ◆ Exterior tasks of note are cleaning and pointing of the brick walls of the Trent House and carriage house, laying the walkways, constructing the brick wall that surrounds the property, installing gates and re-grading the entire grounds.

WILLIAM TRENT HOUSE

Built - 1719

Restored - 1934-36

The House has been restored as it was in 1719 and is at least 80% of original material.

BRICK WALLS	original with some repairs; brick probably made nearby.
CORNICE	original, with a few repairs.
CUPOLA	replaced; some original extant pieces gave the size.
FLOORS	some original, some replaced in whole or in part.
SHUTTERS	inside shutters, more than half are original.

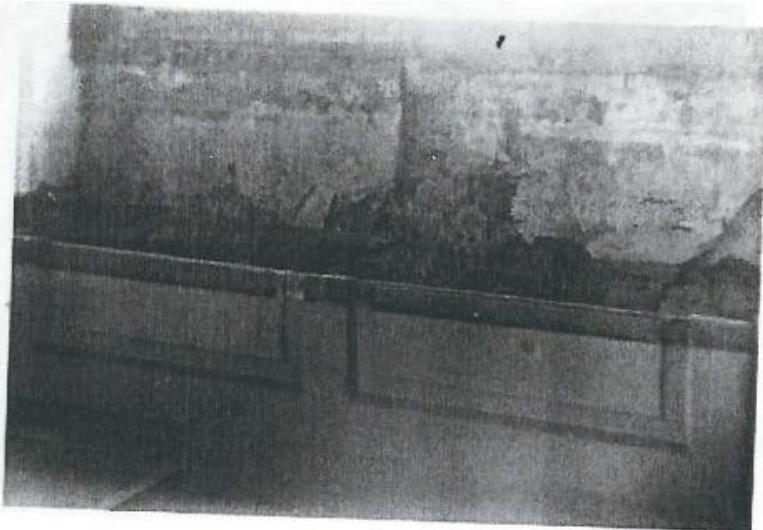
BY ROOM

FIRST FLOOR	panelled room, woodwork mostly original; had been covered with wall paper; floors original; mantle restored from existing evidence . other front room (southeast) - mantle and floor restored. northwest room - mantle and floor restored.
SECOND FLOOR	mantles and tiles and wall plaster in the two west rooms original. small room- beautiful original floor
STAIRS	original and almost untouched
BASEMENT	kitchen as it was the first twenty years; brick floor replaced. meeting room paved with stone during restoration. other stone floors original and relaid exactly as they were. "Dutch" oven rebuilt from existing evidence. overhead beams, original except the very large ones which were replaced.
IRON HARDWARE	new, handmade to match a few existing samples and marks.
DOORS, OUTSIDE	new, no evidence, so built like those of "Stenton", a Germantown house of similar style and period.
DOORS, INSIDE	new, except one on closet under stairs, which was used for sample.

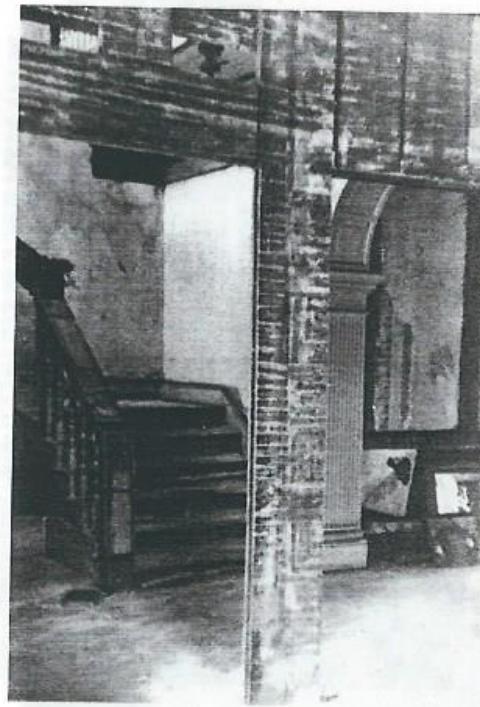
1930's Post WPA Restoration List

◆ One of several variants found in the Trent House files. The origin cannot be determined, and the content cannot be verified.

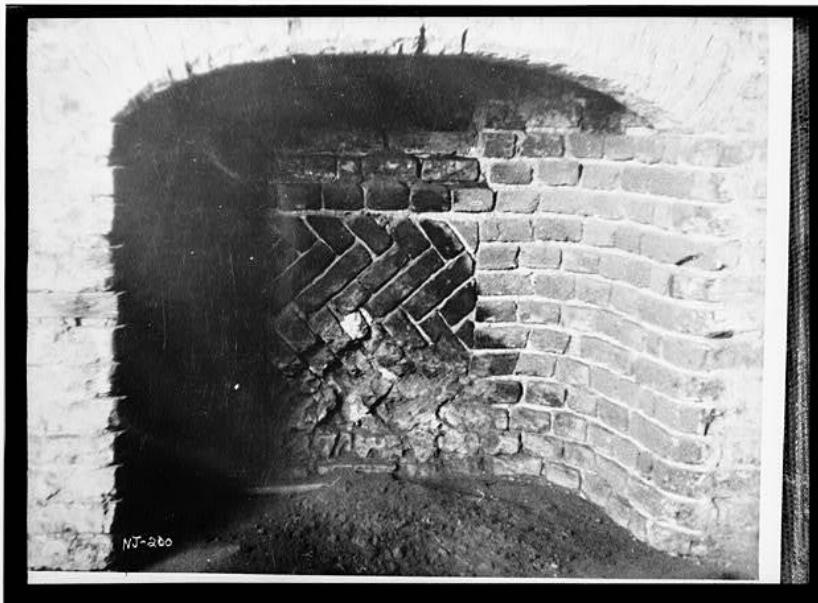
Pre-Restoration Photos



Original Window Seat



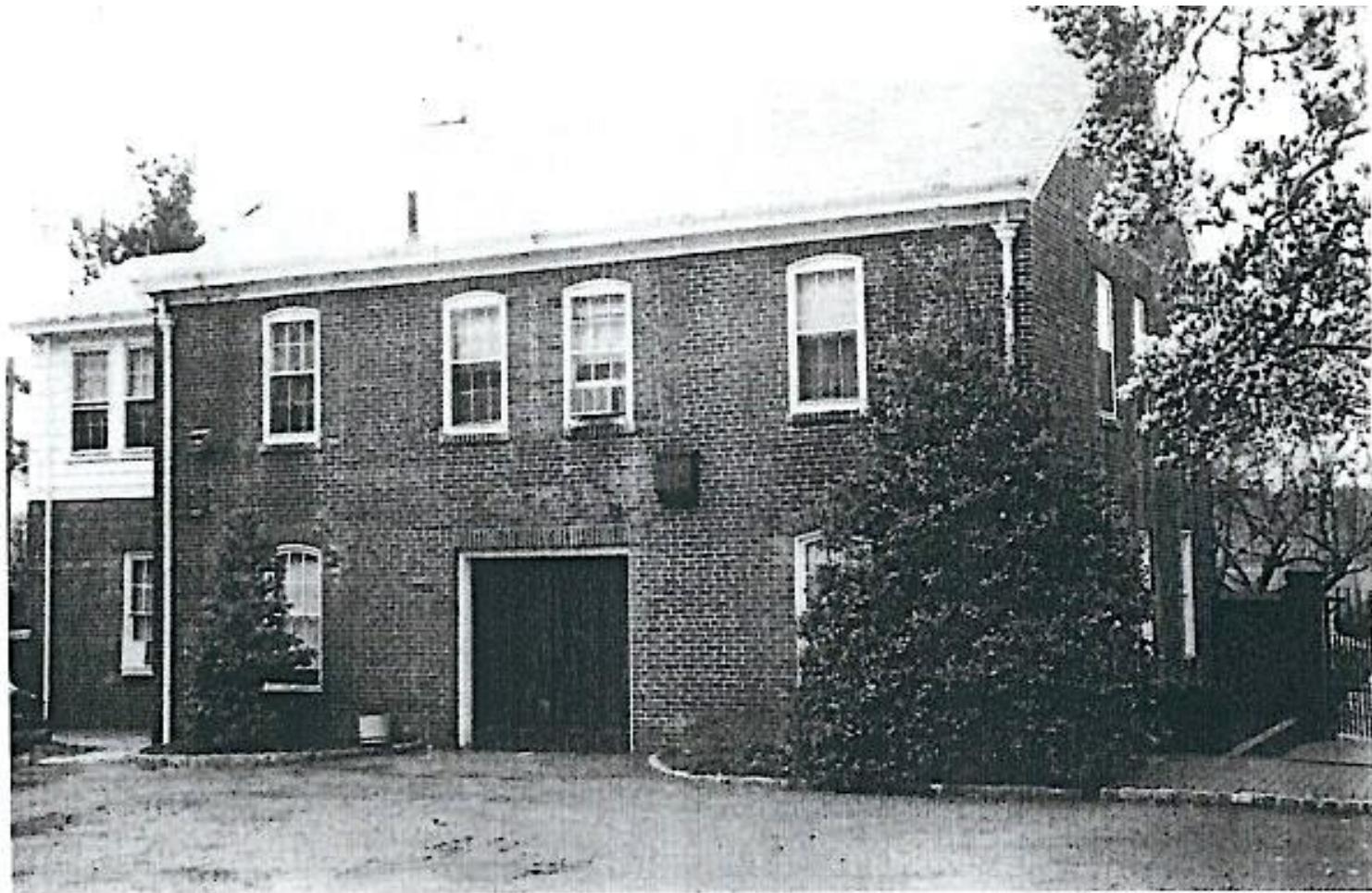
Oak plank and
lath, first floor



Fireplace



Oak plank and
lath, second floor
bedroom



View of the East Elevation

Carriage House. 1996

This Carriage House, erected between 1882 and 1890 replaced an "L" shaped frame building built before 1874 and demolished by 1882. This Carriage House was remodeled to a Colonial appearance during the WPA restoration of 1934 to 1936.



10/14/1936

(City of Trenton Period)

Photograph taken upon completion of the WPA restoration and before the dedication of the Trent House that month. Samuel Mountford is seated to the left (out of view), with Howard Hughes to his left. Edward A. Stokes is seated 7th from the left beside the Hon. John A. Campbell who is seated at the head of the table.

*William Trent House (Built 1719)
on South Warren St., Trenton, N. J.*

81049

17

