

were probably enclosed single runs. The enclosures would provide full support for the lower runs of the main stairs. Such support would result in only the upper portions of the main stairs rising upward in an unsupported manner. The repositioning of the ground floor/basement stairs would provide for greater area at the main entrance, and allow for access to the windows flanking the entrance, a more acceptable and likely condition for the formal entrance into the building.

Jefferson's Dome Room plan records the main stairs as they arrive at that level. The point of their arrival, a small square patch of floor at the south end of the large circular room, was to be the location of a pair of glazed doors that opened to the upper area of the portico. A railing, not a balcony, was to be positioned in front of this opening. Jefferson was persistent about this door placement.

The Dome Room plan does not appear to show how the two gallery levels were to be accessed, but it seems likely that one or two stairs were to exist directly above the flights rising from the main floor. Jefferson's simple drafting technique would have placed one stair above the other.

Other questions and revelations concerning the original plan and appearance of the Rotunda are found in the various room descriptions in this report. This information was collected during several trips to the Rotunda between June and December of 2006. The investigations involved careful inspection of the exterior and interior of the Rotunda and its wings. The inspections did not involve any probing into the building's fabric; such probing is recommended in the future when repairs and restoration work are undertaken.

An important aspect of the investigative process was the concurrent analysis of the various plans, illustrations and photographs of the exterior and interior of the complex of buildings. For example, the pre-fire photographs of the Dome Room were carefully compared to the existing conditions in that significant room. The same procedure was used for the exterior, where the pre-fire photographs could be compared to the conditions resulting from the McKim Mead & White reconstruction. The Ballou & Justice drawings were also helpful, in recording the conditions found in the mid-1970s.

An unfortunate result of the McKim, Mead & White reconstruction project was the destruction or covering of information for original interior conditions that should have existed on the internal brick wall surfaces of the Rotunda. To support the heavier Guastavino dome, an inner surface of brick was placed over the inside face of the Rotunda walls at the main floor and Dome Room levels. This condition is seen in the dramatic mid-1970s photographs of the interior after all of the 1898 floors and finishes were removed [*Figures 107-109*]. Close inspection of the wall surfaces shown in the photographs reveals no evidence for pre-1895 conditions. The evidence may still exist behind the veneer of brick, waiting to be studied.