

## Exterior

The Rotunda, as it exists today, is still the anchor and focal point of Jefferson's Lawn, but the building's appearance is largely the product of the McKim Mead & White reconstruction. The Jefferson structure survives as the central brick drum, with its window and door openings, and the south wings or terraces. Stanford White rebuilt the dome and the south portico, and added a north portico and north wings to echo the south features and colonnades to connect the wings.

There are numerous photographs that record the Rotunda as reconstructed and enlarged by McKim Mead & White, but only a handful that show the building before 1895. The earliest photograph dates to 1868, and shows the Rotunda and flanking terraces as seen at a distance from the south [*Figure 34*].

The following description will list the prominent features of the building, and evidence of earlier building campaigns. The description begins with the general features, and then covers the south portico and south elevation; north portico and elevation; east and west elevations; the roof; the south wings; the north wings; the colonnades; the terraces; and the courtyards. Note that doors and windows, with their hardware, are described in detail within the Interior Description.

### GENERAL

**Walls:** The wall surfaces of the original drum, except in specific small areas, are composed of the original brick laid up in Flemish bond by Abiah B. Thorn and Nathaniel Chamberlain beginning in 1823. The bricks are 2-3/8" to 2-5/8" high x 7-3/8" to 7-3/4" wide x 3-5/8" thick, and are laid such that the ten courses are approximately 2'-2 1/2" to 2'-4 1/2" high. By June 1824, the attic story was under construction. In that year, Benjamin Borden was paid for oiling the brick surface and penciling the mortar joints.

**Windows:** In an April 22, 1823 letter, Jefferson indicates that the "...handsomest entablatures for windows... can be found on plates XXXV and XXXVI of Palladio." Jefferson goes on to state that he would adopt the architrave at the left-hand bottom corner of plate XXXV. Although these plates show various entablatures suitable for window and door openings, none indicate a pediment atop the cornice. The sheet copper architraves designed by McKim Mead & White generally duplicate the Palladio profile.

**Entablature:** The brick walls extend up and behind a carefully proportioned, 6'-0" high sheet copper Corinthian entablature: the architrave, frieze, and cornice are each approximately 2'-0" high. The entablature was fabricated from the design of McKim, Mead, & White, and based on the original wood entablature designed by Jefferson.