

## ROTUNDA: SOUTH PORTICO

The south portico is five bays wide and projects three bays from the south facade. Ten columns and two engaged pilasters, which replaced the original features designed by Jefferson, support an entablature, pediment, and gabled roof.

The existing fireproof south portico, designed by McKim Mead & White, replaced the wood frame structure that was destroyed in 1895. A photograph of the south front of the Rotunda immediately after the fire shows that only the ten structural brick columns that supported the pediment, and the brick wall of the south facade, survived the fire [Figure 57]. The pediment, roof, and ceiling of the portico were destroyed. The photograph shows the triangular outline of the pediment on the brick wall, and a tall doorway centered in the wall that opened from the attic of the portico into the upper gallery of the original Dome Room.

In a letter dated February 2, 1896, McDonald Brothers described what evidence remained of the original portico:

Measurements taken from the old walls show the height of the columns of the portico, including base shaft and capital to be 28'6". The survey also shows the diameter of the columns at the base to be about 2'11"... The height of the base of the old columns measured from the floor to the top of the torus is 17 7/8", within 1/8" of the proportions of the same members on the Pantheon.

The portico as designed by Stanford White seems to follow these proportions. The concrete columns, including the marble bases, shafts, and capitals, are 28'-6 1/2" high. Above the apophyge, the concrete column shafts are approximately 3'-2" in diameter.

Columns: The Corinthian columns sit on 4-3/4" high, 4'-2 1/4" square plinths. Each of the 1'-3" high marble bases is composed of (from the bottom) a torus; fillet; scotia; two beads; scotia; fillet; torus; and fillet. The concrete shafts extend up to intricately carved marble capitals (approximately 3'-5" high).

Pediment: The columns support the Corinthian entablature that wraps around the portico; the cornice is carried up as a raking cornice on the pediment. The tympanum of the pediment is faced with the same shallow, fluted metal panels as the entablature frieze. At the center of the tympanum is a clock dial and frame, which replaced the original Simon Willard clock destroyed in the fire. The original clock face was of greater diameter (about 6'-2") than the current feature.

A comparison of pre-fire photographs of the pediment with the post-fire conditions reveals subtle differences in molding profiles, a different proportion and closer spacing of the original dentils, and thirteen modillions under the rake of each side of the pediment cornice as compared to the fourteen currently in place.