

THE EXTERIOR RESTORATION OF THE WALNUT STREET THEATRE IN PHILADELPHIA

INTRODUCTION

The Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, the oldest theatre in the English-speaking world that has been continually devoted to drama, was erected as a circus building in 1809. Since that time it has served Philadelphia with a wide variety of entertainment. In 1969, the theatre was still functioning, but it had become increasingly shabby and uneconomic. The theatre along with the building next door were purchased by the Haas Community Funds, a Philadelphia Foundation, with the intent of turning the two structures into a centre that would provide a home for a wide range of cultural activities as well as preserving the theatre which had been designated as a National Historic Landmark. The foundation secured the services of F. Bryan Loving, A.I.A., who set up a special office to renovate the interior of the theatre. The firm of Dickey, Weissman, Chandler and Holt, Architects and Engineers, was retained to restore the exterior of the building. This paper will concern itself with the restoration of the theatre.

EVOLUTION OF THE WALNUT STREET THEATRE

In 1808 two horse-trainers and equestrian showmen, Victor Pepin, a Philadelphian, and Jean-Baptiste Casimir Breschard, from France, purchased a lot on the northwest corner of Ninth Street and Walnut Street, then at the western edge of the city¹. By the end of the year they had begun to erect a riding circus that extended eighty (80) feet along Walnut Street and one hundred (100) feet along Ninth Street. The building, which was named the New Circus, opened on February 2, 1809. During the next few years equestrian and acrobatic exhibitions were the main entertainments presented in the building.

1. The restoration architects relied heavily on the thesis, *The Walnut Street Theater*, submitted by Stuart Smith to the Faculty of the University of Delaware, June 1960, for the structural history of the building up to the twentieth century.

During the early nineteenth century the most popular theatrical exhibitions were variety shows, including brief selections from contemporary and classical drama, songs and dances. Philadelphians, in particular, were fond of horses and riding and traditionally would attend the theatre only if the bill included a dramatic and exciting equestrian show, such as a chariot race or exhibition of specially trained horses and riders.

The main action took place in an elliptical arena, within which was a thirty-six (36) foot by forty-four (44) foot ring, surrounded by a pit. In 1811, Pepin and Breschard purchased an additional lot north of the theatre, demolished the north wall and erected a forty (40) foot addition that housed the new stage. For the next ten years the theatre, known alternately as the Olympic Theatre and the Circus, was the site of equestrian exhibitions, equestrian melodramas, equestrian pantomimes, historical melodramas, patriotic pantomimes and spectacles, all of which utilized both the arena and the new stage.

No views of the building are known and, with the exception of two contemporary written descriptions of the interior, almost no information concerning the appearance of the building during this period has survived. During restoration, the only significant detail of the original structure that was found was a large lunette window in the original gable of the Walnut Street façade.

That so little remains of the Olympic Theatre is due to the fact that on 25 April 1828 Architect John Haviland signed an agreement with the stockholders of the Theatre and Samuel Richards, a merchant, to renovate the Theatre by the following October. His fee of \$12,000 included his designs, building materials and construction (Fig. 1 and 2). The extensive renovation that was carried out by Haviland was reported in the January 1829 edition of *The Casket*:

«It is unnecessary to describe the state of this edifice previous to its late metamorphosis. Everyone who has seen it since the improvements made on it, has been most agreeably disappointed in finding a large old dilapidated building transformed, both in its exterior and interior, into one of the most imposing, elegant and convenient dramatic temples ever seen. The Architect, considering the many disadvantages he laboured

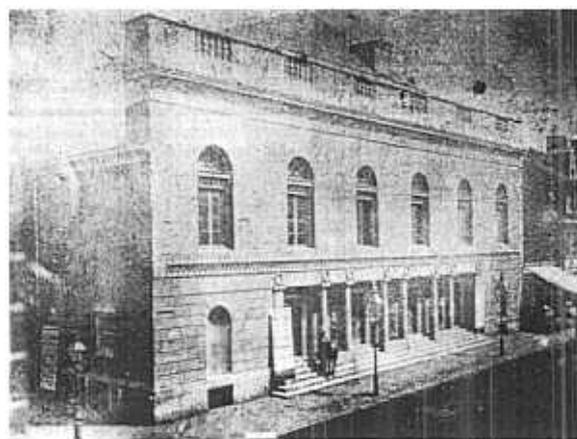
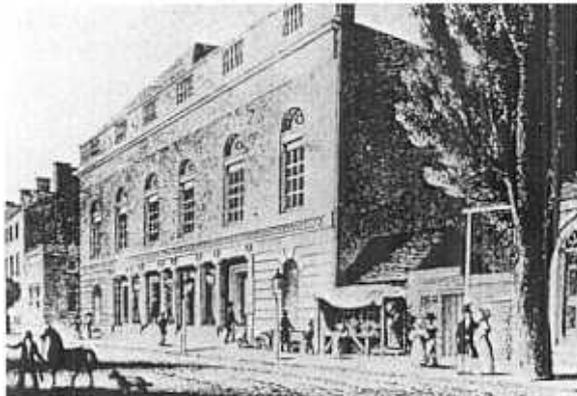


Fig. 1. - Walnut Street Theater, Engraving by Fenner Sears and Co. from a drawing by Charles Burton. Published July 15, 1831, by J. T. Hinton and Simpkin and Marshall, London. Courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

Fig. 2 - Walnut Street Theater, ca. 1859. From an original calotype attributed to William and Frederick Langenheim. Courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

under, deserves more credit for his ingenuity and taste, than if he had constructed an entirely new building on a disencumbered lot of ground². »

Inside the building, the circus ring was removed and a new auditorium was built with seating on the main floor and in the balconies. The balconies were laid out in a horseshoe arrangement and supported by a series of cast iron columns (Fig. 3 and 4). New floor joists and floors were laid out, and the walls and the ceiling were replastered. The front of the boxes, columns,

2. The unsigned article in *The Casket* was probably written by Haviland. A similar description, with a few minor textual changes, appears in the note-book that Haviland maintained on the Walnut Street Theatre.

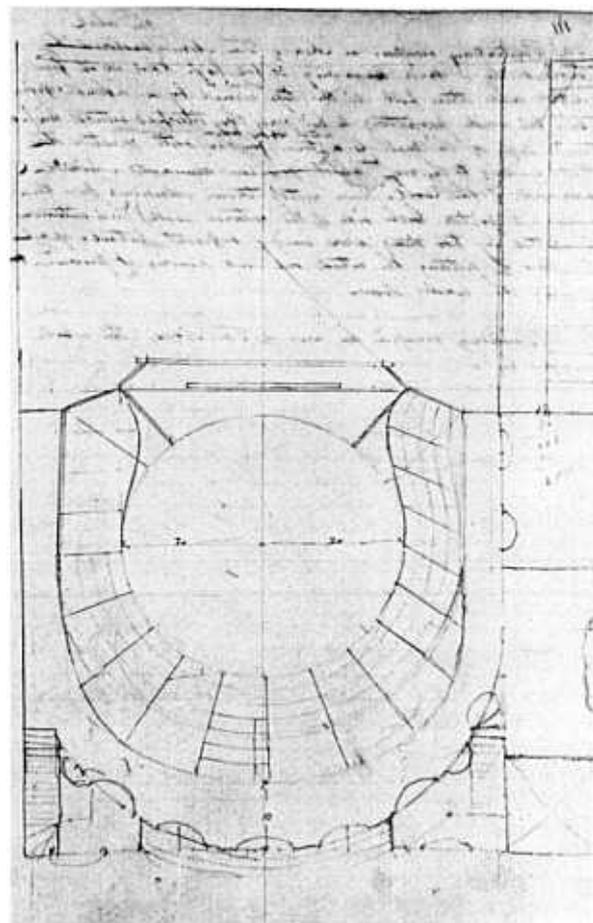


Fig. 3. - Sketch plan for the interior of the Walnut Street Theatre from Haviland's Notebook. Courtesy of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society. On loan to the Charles Patterson Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania.

proscenium, and the ceiling were decorated with classical carved wooden ornaments that were gilded. The rest of the interior was finished with oil paint, tempera and distemper, used either on the plaster or on primed fabric (Fig. 5). Behind the proscenium arch Haviland installed a new stage floor, traps, stage machinery, dressing rooms, workshops and a green room. In the public areas, a restaurant was opened in the cellar, a coffee house was located in the front of the building, and dressing rooms were built behind the yard adjacent to the stage.

In 1865, Edwin Booth and his brother-in-law John S. Clarke, purchased the theatre, and carried out an extensive remodelling program on the interior and the exterior. The auditorium and the stage were renovated and on the exterior the west wall was raised, the roof

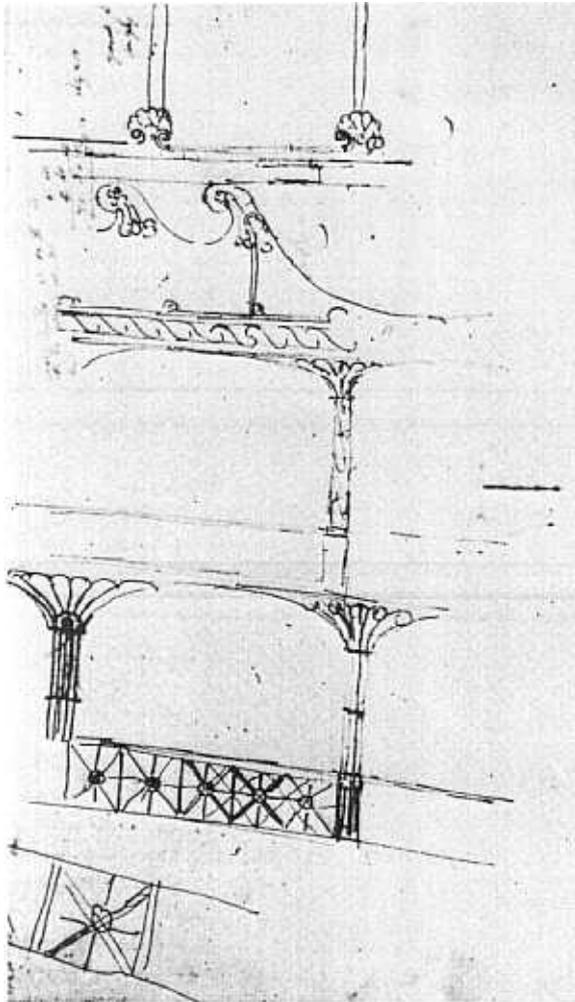


Fig. 4 - Sketches for columns of the Walnut Street Theatre from Haviland's Notebook. Courtesy of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society. On loan to The Charles Patterson Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania.

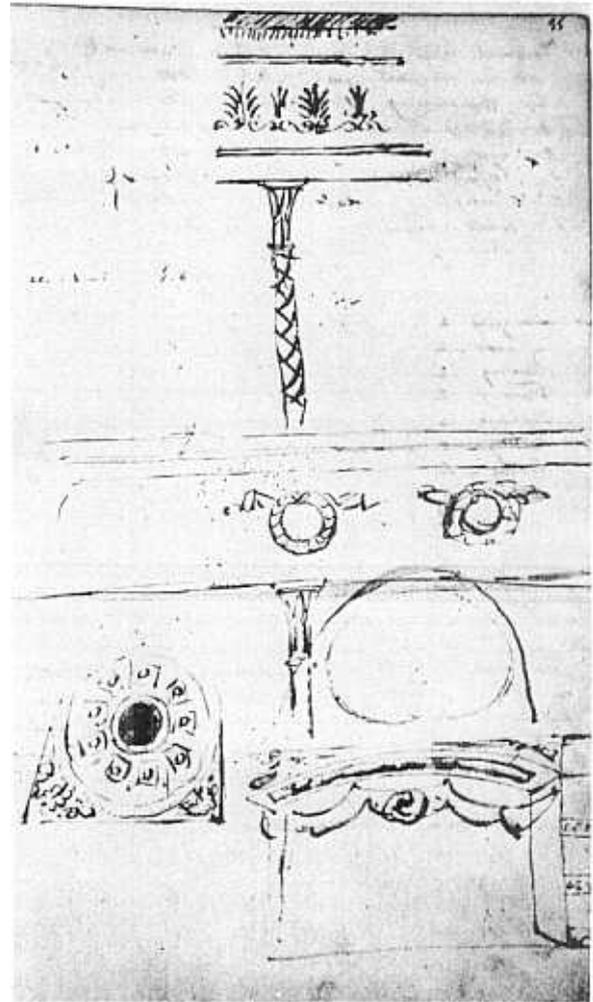


Fig. 5. - Sketches for interior details of the Walnut Street Theatre from Haviland's Notebook. Courtesy of the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society. On loan to The Charles Patterson Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania.

was modified and the restrained neo-classic cornice built by Haviland on the Walnut Street façade was replaced with one that was far more Baroque. The floor level was lowered and two of the original steps in front of the theatre were removed (Fig. 6).

By the end of the nineteenth century, the chaste quality of the façade had been destroyed by renovation and the accretions of contemporary elements. The major alteration to the Walnut Street façade was the removal of the niches and the rusticated marble veneer on the first floor and the installation of iron and glass store fronts (Fig. 7). Plans were announced in 1903 for a complete renovation of the theatre by architect Willis Hale³. The architect's design would be an adapta-

3. *The Philadelphia Press*, May 14, 1903.

tion of the façade created by Haviland. The storefronts at each end of the building would have been replaced with a rusticated wall. Instead of the niches used by Haviland, there would be entrance doors opening into the lobby. The fire escape on the front of the building was to be removed along with the 1865 cornice. The Walnut Street façade would be raised in order to install a row of attic windows. Inside the theatre, the existing balconies supported on cast iron columns were to be replaced by a cantilevered balcony (Fig. 8). Subsequent photographs of the theatre reveal that none of the plans were carried out.

Early in the twentieth century, the Walnut Street façade was further disfigured with the erection of an exterior fire escape and the installation of vestibules between each set of pair columns. Additional exit doors and a fire escape were added to the Ninth Street



Fig. 6. - Walnut Street Theatre after the 1865 renovation. The Ninth Street wall has been raised, the cornice on Walnut Street has been replaced, the standing lamps have been removed and the porch floor has been lowered. Courtesy of The Library Company of Philadelphia.



Fig. 7. - Walnut Street Theatre. Late nineteenth-century rusticated marble veneer and the niches at each end of the building have been replaced by storefronts. Courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

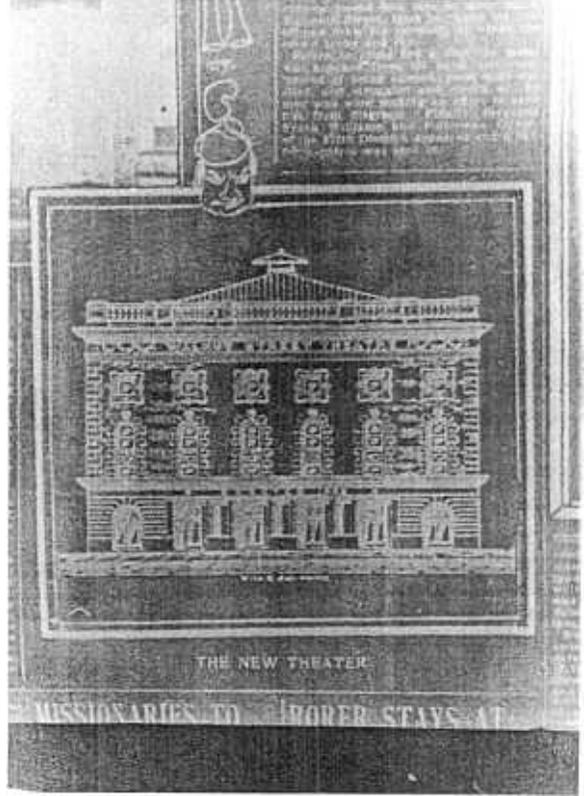


Fig. 8. - Proposed design for the Walnut Street Theatre, 1903, Willis Hale, Architect.

Fig. 9. - Walnut Street Theatre, ca. 1903. Fire-escapes have been added to both façades of the theatre. Courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia.





Fig. 10. - Walnut Street Theatre, ca. 1905-1913. An electric marquee is the latest addition to the front of the theatre. Courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

Fig. 11. - Walnut Street Theatre, 1913. The fire escape had been rebuilt and the east window had been replaced by four small windows. Courtesy of the Free Library of Philadelphia.



wall and a new stage house was erected on the roof (Fig. 9). With the introduction of electricity to Philadelphia, the façade of the theatre was overwhelmed by a new glittering electric marquee that projected over the front doors (Fig. 10). By 1913 the French window on the east end of the Walnut Street façade had been removed and replaced with four small windows. The fire escape had been rebuilt, which only caused greater clutter to the face of the wall (Fig. 11).

The Walnut remained in the Clarke estate until 1920 when it was purchased by J.P. Beury. The architect William Lee was then hired to renovate the theatre. Major changes were made to the exterior, but the Walnut Street façade retained a flavour of Haviland's design (Fig. 12). The storefront at each corner of the first floor was removed. On the western end, it was replaced by the box office and on the eastern side there were new doors leading from the fire stairs. The cast iron wreath, the cast iron guilloche were removed and the French windows were replaced with two sets of casement windows. Apparently the architect believed that the marble columns would not be able to carry the load of the new cantilevered balcony, and the space between each set of columns was filled with brick pier. The cornice installed in 1865 was replaced by a new pressed metal cornice reminiscent of the cornice designed by Haviland. On the west side of the building the architect added a number of utilitarian features such as a large double door that opened on to the stage, and a series of windows in the dressing rooms. The additional arched window opening at the



Fig. 12. - Walnut Street Theatre, renovated by architect William Lee, in 1920 (photo: Jack Boucher).

corner of the building and the cornice that ran the length of Ninth Street was an attempt by the architect to unify the utilitarian aspect of the west wall with the architectonic treatment of the Walnut Street elevation. The desire to improve upon the design of the past while keeping its flavour, is seen in the conscious use of neo-classic details on the windows, the call-boards and the panelled metal doors. It should be noted that Lee did not install another electric marquee, which would have obscured the rhythm of the façade. The only concession the architect made to the Great White Way was the row of electric light bulbs mounted above the marble architrave. The one sign on the building, which gave the name of the theatre, the original date and the renovation date, was relegated to the west wall. When the renovation of the exterior had been completed there was little left of the façade designed by Haviland except for the six marble columns and two marble pilasters, the marble plinths, and the marble architrave. All of the other details had been removed, extensively modified or covered over. The interior of the theatre was stripped and rebuilt.

The only remnant of the nineteenth century that survived was the wooden eagle over the proscenium arch and the wooden stage machinery in the fly space (Fig. 13, 14 and 15). The layout of the auditorium was completely changed. The horseshoe-shaped balconies supported by cast iron columns were replaced by a single balcony cantilevered from the back of the theatre, which placed the new mezzanine floor directly in front of the second storey windows (Fig. 16). The floor level of the theatre was dropped to street level, and a new concrete floor was added. The walls and ceiling were replastered and new appointments were added throughout the theatre.

From 1920 until 1969, the Walnut Street Theatre was an important factor in the theatrical life of Philadelphia. A major link in the chain of theatres managed by the Shubert Brothers, it was host to stars of Broadway. During this period there were no renovations made to the building. When the Haas Community Funds purchased the theatre in 1969, the renovations were almost fifty years old, yet it looked little different than it had in 1920.



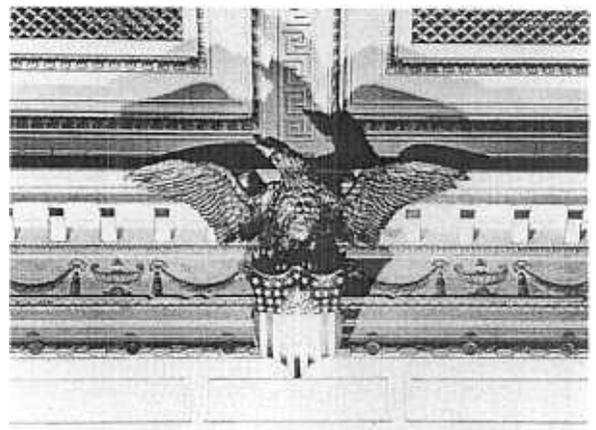
Fig. 13. Auditorium, Walnut Street Theatre, renovated by architect William Lee, in 1920 (photo: Jack Boucher).

RESTORATION APPROACH

After the investigation of the building had been completed, it was clear that the only restoration approach that could be taken was to renovate the interior and to restore the exterior to its appearance in 1828. Virtually, no information was discovered which could be related to the inside of the 1809 structure except for confirmation that a horse ring had originally occupied the centre of the auditorium. There was a written description of Haviland's interior, but the only iconographic evidence were some sketches in Haviland's notebook (Fig. 3, 4 and 5). The architectural investigation revealed that almost no evidence of his interior had survived the renovations that were carried out in 1865 and 1920.

A drawing of the interior published in 1882 showed a horse-shoe shaped auditorium with a dress circle and two balconies (Fig. 17). The extent of the 1865 renovation has not been determined, so it is not known how much of Haviland's interior survived the first renovation. However, since the porch was lowered in 1865

Fig. 14. - Detail of the carved wooden eagle. The polychrome painting is not original. Although there is no documentary evidence concerning the eagle, the only clue to the date is the number of stars, on the shield. There are thirty-five stars which would place the carving between June 1863 when West Virginia became the thirty-fifth state and October 1864 when Nevada entered the Union (photo Jack Boucher).



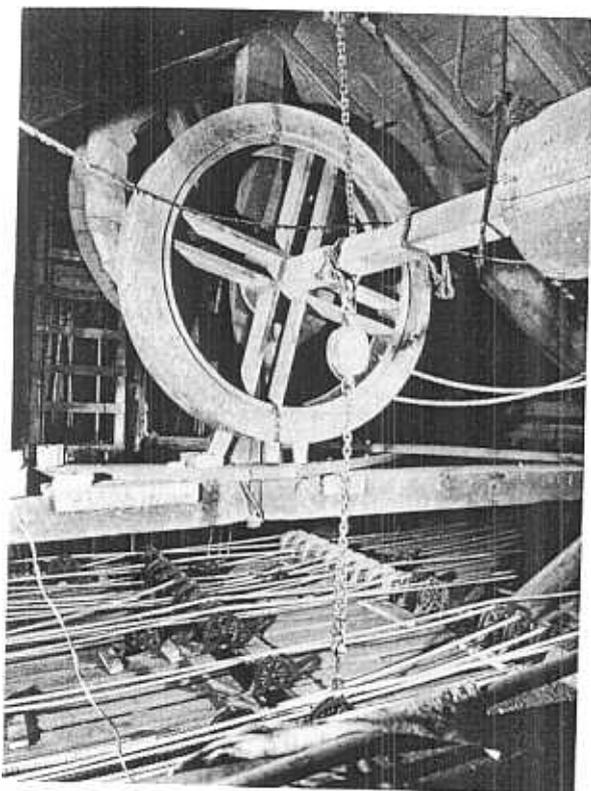


Fig. 15 - The fly space with the nineteenth century stage machinery (photo Jack Boucher).

the orchestra circle shown in the 1882 print may be different from what was built in 1828. The 1920 renovation swept away almost all of the information about the nineteenth-century interior. Without more data it was not possible to consider reconstruction of the theatre interior. The only alternatives were to preserve the 1920 interior or renovate the theatre to provide for contemporary needs. The decision was made to renovate the interior in order to incorporate the sophisticated equipment that is required for a theatre that would be used for drama, cinema and dance.

The investigation of the exterior revealed little about the appearance of the theatre in 1809 other than the dimensions of the building and the fact that there had been a lunette window in the gable of the Walnut Street façade. From Haviland's description of the 1828 renovation it would seem that the Walnut Street façade may have been substantially rebuilt.

There was a good deal of documentary and architectural evidence concerning the 1828 renovation carried out by Haviland. The documentary evidence was based primarily upon Haviland's notebooks that contained copies of letters, estimates, notes, sketches,

specifications and a description of the theatre⁴. There is an excellent engraving printed in 1831 by Fenner, Sears, and Company (Fig. 1) and a ca. 1859 photograph, the only one known that shows Haviland's façade before it was remodelled in 1865 (Fig. 2). The engraving and the c.1859 photograph of the theatre are in agreement on almost all details of the structure. There are several photographs that show the building after its renovation in 1865 and a substantial number of late nineteenth century and early twentieth century photographs which show the gradual evolution of the building as portions of Haviland's façade were removed or altered by successive owners of the building (Fig. 6-11).

The architectural investigation of the building produced evidence of many details that had been eliminated from the building. In most cases, the architectural investigation corroborated the documentary sources. When the information about the exterior was reviewed, there was little question that an exterior restoration was feasible. One of the major characteristics of Haviland's design for the theatre was that it was façade architecture. The Walnut Street elevation was an architectonic composition of classic motifs. Inherent in the design was a rich symbolic message easily understood by the contemporary public. On the other hand, the Ninth Street façade was strictly vernacular. No classic motifs were used, rather the vocabulary was limited to such homely details as double-hung sash windows and louvered shutters (Fig. 2). The public along with the architect had no difficulty in accepting the incongruity between the articulate Walnut Street elevation and the dumb Ninth Street elevation. With this in mind, the restoration approach was to restore the Walnut Street façade to Haviland's design and to renovate the Ninth Street façade in simple and direct manner sympathetic to Haviland's approach. Except for required fire exits, stage doors, and windows for the dressing room, the Ninth Street wall was left unadorned. The lobby and the ancillary space in the Walnut was small and there was inadequate space for the new theatre services. In order to provide adequate room for lobbies, box office, office space, and a museum devoted to theatrical arts the Haas Community Funds purchased the loft building next to the theatre (Fig. 18). The new entrance lobby and ticket office were located in the office building, but connected internally to the original lobby in the theatre. There was no attempt to visually integrate the two structures.

4. Haviland's notebooks are not neat compendiums with separate sections devoted to individual buildings. The notes on the Walnut Street Theatre are scattered through the pages of Book 11, interspersed with material on other projects. The notebooks are part of the Haviland Papers owned by the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society that are on loan to The Charles Patterson Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.



Fig. 16 The new cantilevered balcony built in 1920 replaced the 1828 balconies supported by cast iron columns (photo: Jack Boucher).

The scale, configuration, and material of each structure were totally unrelated.

While the loft building, built in the 1920's, was neither architecturally nor historically significant, it was decided that the details of the terracotta decoration on the façade should be preserved as part of the evolution of the streetscape. A complete exterior renovation of the building would have given it an importance that would have competed with the restoration of the Walnut Street Theatre. The only changes that were made to the building were to replace the original movable steel awning type windows with fixed sash and to remove the wooden storefront in order to provide access to the new box-office.

THE RESTORATION PROCESS

The restoration of the Walnut Street façade of the theatre involved the removal of the later exterior decorative details except for the marble elements which

were part of Haviland's renovation. The work required that the wall be stripped to the brick in order to carry out structural repairs and to install the new finish materials.

The major structural repairs were required on the front wall in order to restore the exterior appearance. When Haviland renovated the theatre in 1828, the balconies he installed were primarily carried by the cast iron columns inside the theatre. The front wall of the theatre only had to carry the load from the roof and partial loads from the balconies. Because these loads were relatively light, the six free standing marble columns were able to support the central portion of the front walls. When the theatre was remodelled in 1920, Haviland's light balconies were replaced by a massive steel and concrete balcony that was virtually cantilevered from the front wall (Fig. 16). The marble columns at the entrance were then unable to support the load and it was necessary to add brick piers between the columns (Fig. 12).

At the same time that the brick piers were installed,

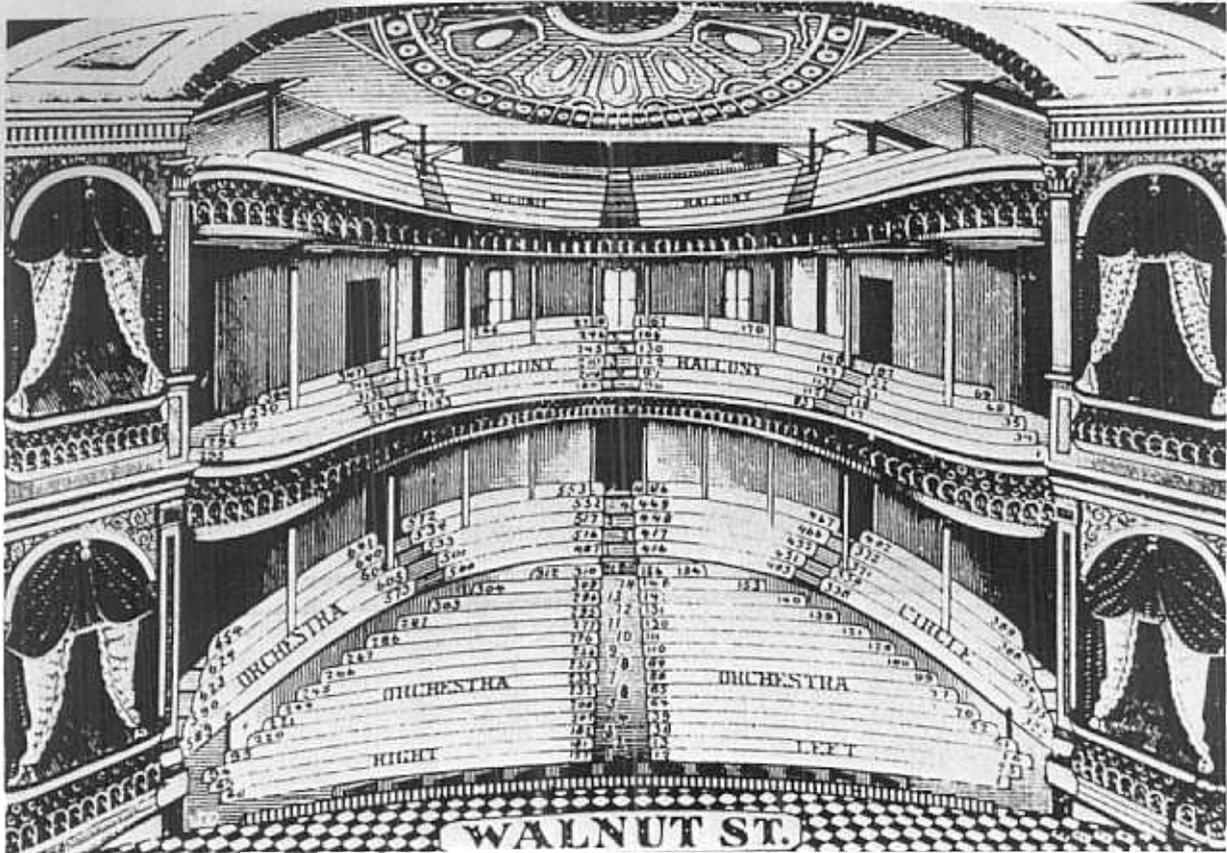


Fig. 17 - Interior View of Walnut Street Theatre, 1882 *Philadelphia Today*, John W. Ryan, 1882.

Haviland's front wall and the doors on the first floor behind the colonnade were torn out and a new wall was built near the face of the building.

In order to restore the colonnade that Haviland had designed it was necessary to remove the brick piers and the front wall on the first floor. However, before the piers could be taken down, a new structural system was installed to carry the front wall and the balcony, since the load could not be carried by the marble columns alone. A new steel beam supporting the upper wall was cantilevered from steel columns that were set into new front wall (Fig. 19).

When the building was renovated in 1828, Haviland presented the owners with alternatives for the treatment of the front wall. For \$3,000, he would cover the entire façade with marble. For \$1,500 the first storey would be marble and the rest of the wall would be covered with roughcast. The owners chose the less expensive proposal. In addition to the rusticated marble veneer on the first floor of the Walnut Street façade there were marble columns, pilasters, plinths, architrave, floor trim, porch floor and steps. The rest of

wall along with the entire wall of the Ninth Street façade was covered with roughcast. By the end of the nineteenth century the rusticated marble veneer and the niches on each end of the Walnut Street façade had been replaced by storefronts. The second storey wall over the shopfronts was supported by iron beams and columns. When the theatre was renovated in the 1920's, the storefronts were removed and the walls rebuilt with non-loadbearing cinder block. Openings were left for new door openings and the walls covered with stucco. Rather than remove all of the materials that had been used in the late nineteenth century and the 1920 renovation it was decided to eliminate the later exterior details, but retain the existing cinderblock wall and ironwork. In order to restore the marble veneer and the niches according to Haviland's design, it was only necessary to remove the stucco and the door openings. The doorways were filled with concrete masonry units with space left for the new niches. While it was known that Haviland had purchased his marble from the Black and Brown Company, one of the local quarries in King-of-Prussia, Pennsylvania, the local



Fig. 18 - Office Building, 825 Walnut Street, Philadelphia (photo: Jack Boucher).

Fig. 19 - The restored façade of the Walnut Street Theatre, 1971 (photo: Jack Boucher).



quarries were no longer in operation. The new marble for the veneer, the architrave, porch floor, steps and the door architrave had to be imported from Italy.

Although it is not known how long Haviland's rough-cast lasted before it was replaced, when the walls were examined in 1969, they were covered with cement stucco. Since the composition of the stucco was uniform over all of the building, including those areas where door and window openings had been closed in the 1920 renovation, it is believed that the existing stucco dates from that period. When the pressed metal cornice was removed from the front wall, the lower portions of the parapet installed by Haviland were still in place. Although the cast iron balustrades were gone, portions of the niches into which they had been set were still in place. While the fabric covering the face of the parapet had been stripped away, the inner faces of the niches were covered with blue-grey rough-cast. Under microscopic examination, it was evident that the blue-grey colour permeated the entire sample and there was no indication that colour on the surface was applied to the body of the samples. The colour of the roughcast, which was matched to the Munsell Color System, was similar to the deeper hues of the marble that were still in place. All of the evidence indicates that this was the roughcast that Haviland had applied in 1828. The existing stucco was removed from the walls and it was replaced by a new coat that simulated the texture and the colour of the material used by Haviland.

Haviland's description of the theatre states that «The wreaths, guilloche, balustrade and other enrichments are of iron, beautifully cast at the foundry (sic), of Samuel Richards, Esq⁵». While all of the details were easily identified from early photographs, they had been removed by the time the 1920 renovation was completed (Fig. 12). The holes where the wreaths had been attached to the marble architrave still existed, but they were irregularly spaced and there were no marks on the face of the marble to indicate the size of the wreaths. The guilloche had been removed, the reveal filled with brick and covered with stucco. The original balustrades had been set into niches at the top of the wall. Only portions of the niches had survived when a new sheet-metal cornice had been erected in 1920.

Since the cast iron details no longer existed, designs for the reconstructed details were based on photographs, Haviland's sketches, and drawings from Haviland's own books. There are cast iron wreaths on the Atwater Kent Museum, Philadelphia, designed by Haviland in 1824; however they differed significantly from the wreaths on the Walnut Street Theatre. Various wreaths are shown in Haviland's books, but

5. John Haviland, Notebook 11, p. 65. The Charles Patterson Van Pelt Library, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

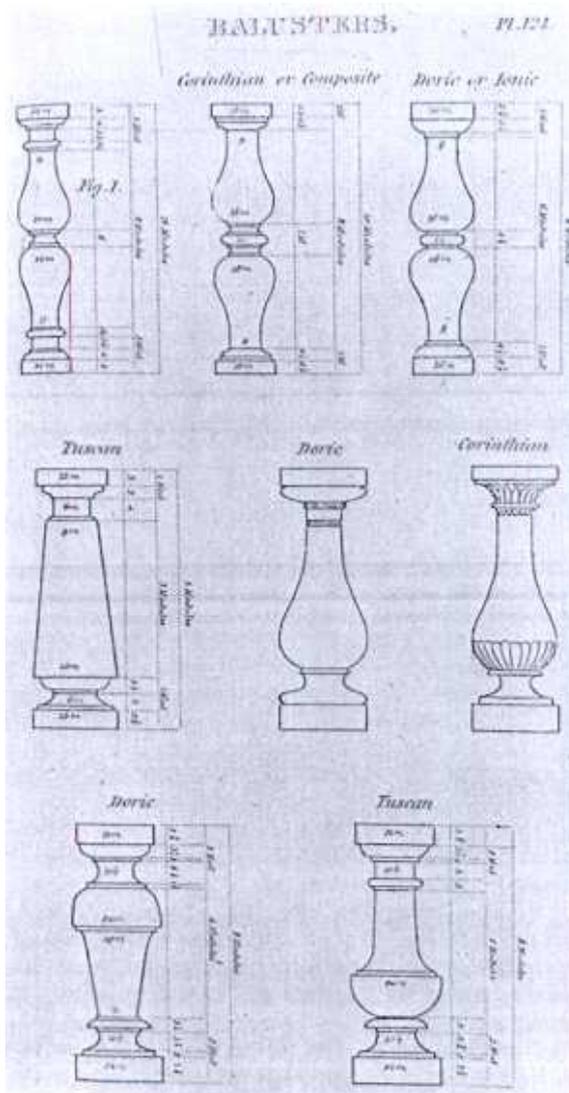


Fig. 20 - Doric or Ionic Balusters, from John Haviland's *Builder's Assistant*, 1819, vol. 3, pl. 124.

even they were somewhat different from the photographs of the Walnut Street Theatre. The final design was based primarily on the photographs of the building, and several sources from Haviland's books. The balustrade designed and built by Haviland was removed by 1865. The design for the reconstructed balustrade was based on the «Doric or Ionic Balustrade», from his book published in 1819: *The Builder's Assistant* (Fig. 20).

In his description of the building, Haviland mentions that «3 decorated Grecian lamps stand on the plinths between the columns and add much to the finish»⁶.

6. *Ibid.*

Aside from this description, the only other information about the lamps are the 1831 engraving (Fig. 1) and the ca. 1859 photograph (Fig. 2). Apparently they were removed in the 1865 renovation, since the spaces between the paired columns are empty in the ca. 1865 photograph (Fig. 6). The design for the reconstructed lamps drew on a number of sources and proved to be the most conjectural part of the restoration. The initial decision required was whether to reconstruct the lamps shown in the 1831 engraving (Fig. 1) or the lamps shown in the ca. 1859 photograph (Fig. 2). Most details in the engraving were unusually accurate compared to the photograph, but the lamps differed substantially. It was decided to reconstruct the lamp in the photograph because it was known to have existed, while the lamp shown in the engraving in all likelihood was an imaginative visualization by the artist of an element that remained to be installed.

The design of the reconstructed lamp was an amalgamation of two style periods. The upper portion of the lamp is related to many English late eighteenth-century designs. Numerous examples of lamps mounted on a standard were shown by I & J Taylor in their 1795 catalogue *Ornamental Iron Work* (Fig. 21). However, similar designs appear twenty years earlier in views of the Adelphia and the bridge for Syon House in Robert and James Adam's *Works in Architecture*.

While most of the English designs show a lamp mounted on a wrought iron standard, the standard in the theatre photograph appears to be a cast iron double volute in the Grecian manner. The model for this portion of the lamp was based on the cast iron braces that support the fence surrounding St. Peter's Church, Philadelphia. The lower half of the standard appears to be a trapezoidal stand made up of wrought iron bars. The design was a common motif of the new Greek Revival, and is illustrated by Thomas Hope and George Smith in England and Percier and Fontaine in France. An unusual feature is that the stand is virtually two-dimensional. The final design was based on several sources; the shape of the standard was based on the photograph, the rosette was copied from a design in Haviland's *Builder's Assistant* and the feet were based on the carved wooden lion's paws found in numerous pieces of furniture in America from 1815-1845.

The light source for the lamps caused some concern, since neither the photograph, Taylor's catalogue, nor Adam's design showed the mechanism for burning fuel. Although gas lighting had been used experimentally in Philadelphia since 1816, there was widespread fear of gas lighting, and it was not until 1833 that the City Council allowed the creation of a public gasworks. In 1828, oil was the most common lighting fuel in Philadelphia, and it seems likely that the standing lamps in front of the Walnut Street Theatre originally burned oil. While it might have been interesting to burn oil in the reconstructed lamps, the maintenance would have been excessive, and since a natural flame was required, it was decided to use gas as a fuel.

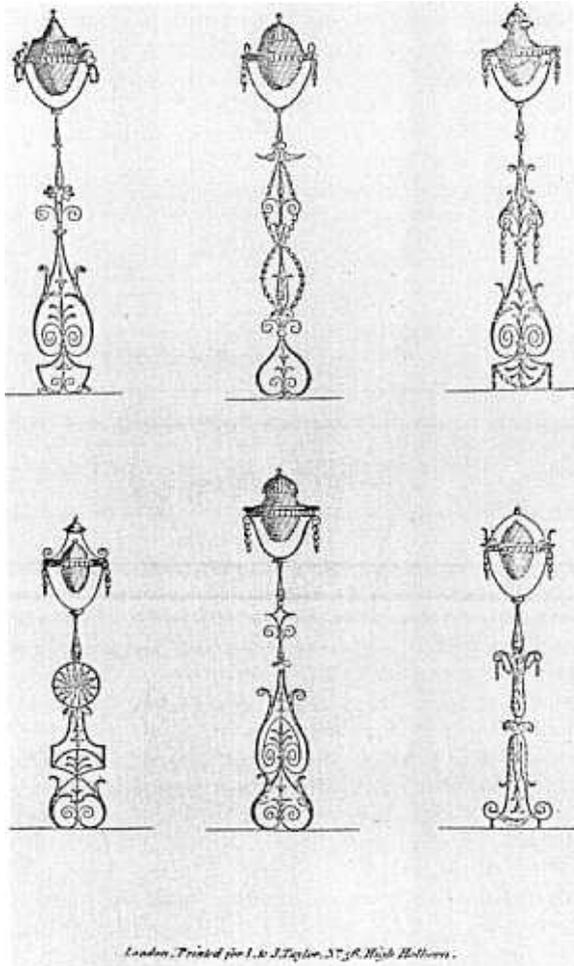


Fig. 21. - Lamp Irons, I & J. Taylor, *Ornamental Iron Work*, 1795, Pl. 12.

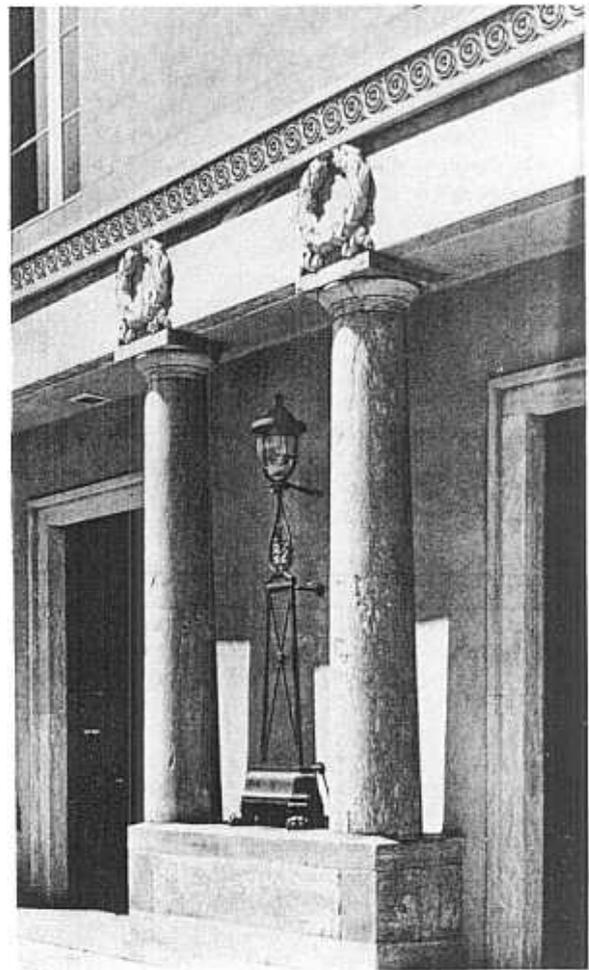


Fig. 22. - Reconstructed Standing Lamps, Walnut Street Theatre (photo: Jack Boucher).

It was possible to bring the gas line into the lamp without modifying the globe or changing the elements of the burner (Fig. 22).

Due to the evolution of the building, there were several external features of the building that could not be restored. The wall on Ninth Street had been raised in the 1865 renovation and the pitch of the roof had been changed to meet the new wall level. In order to satisfy the spatial requirements of the interior of the theatre it was necessary to maintain the existing roof line. The existing roofing material, however, is similar to that which was used in the 1860's. In 1828 the theatre floor was six steps above the sidewalk. During the 1860's renovation, the floor of the theatre had been lowered by two steps (Fig. 6). During the 1920's renovation the

theatre floor was dropped further and the remaining four steps were removed, and the new sidewalk was sloped upwards toward the building. As with the roof, the requirements of the new interior necessitated leaving the theatre floor near the existing level, so it was impossible to restore the porch and the steps that Haviland had built in 1828. However, it became possible to rebuild three steps and the porch. This was done to carry out the horizontality of Haviland's design.

Due to the fact that the new floor was lower than it had been in 1828, the new door openings to be reconstructed had to be considerably longer than those designed by Haviland. The problem of new doors was twofold. Not only were the door openings longer, but there was virtually no information about the doors that

Haviland had installed. Since the doors were behind the colonnade they do not appear in any of the drawings or early photographs of the building. The only clues to the appearance of the doors were the designs for doors that appeared in Haviland's books and comparative study of other buildings. In addition, the new doors would be serving a new function; since the ticket office and foyers had been moved to the building next door, the doors leading to the lobby would serve only as exit doors. Given these facts, it was de-

ecided that rather than install period doors that would be conjectural and out of scale with the original doors, the new doors should be made of a contemporary material, in this case, grey-tinted glass.

The work on the interior and exterior of the building was completed in the fall of 1971, and the building is now open for a variety of cultural events.

Martin Eli WEIL

RESUME

Le Théâtre de Walnut Street a été construit en 1808, et remanié de manière importante en 1828, par John Haviland, un des architectes américains marquants du début du XIX^e siècle. Au cours des ans, ce Théâtre a subi de nombreuses altérations, à l'intérieur et en façade, car il continua à servir aux représentations théâtrales et aux spectacles de la ville. Désaffecté, le Théâtre fut acheté en 1969 par une fondation privée, « The Haas Community Funds », afin d'en préserver la structure historique et de le transformer en salle de spectacle contemporaine pour le théâtre, la danse et le cinéma.

L'étude des possibilités d'aménagement du Théâtre montra qu'il n'y avait aucun vestige, intérieur ou extérieur, du Théâtre de 1808. Toutefois, une partie importante de l'extérieur du bâtiment de 1828 avait été conservée, et son état était connu, d'autre part, par de

nombreux documents écrits et graphiques. Tandis que pour l'intérieur, si l'on disposait de descriptions très précises et même d'indications de l'architecte même, il n'y avait pas assez de vestiges matériels pour envisager la reconstruction des aménagements antérieurs, détruits en 1920. Les quelques éléments conservés indiquaient que la disposition des sièges au XIX^e siècle ne répondait absolument plus aux besoins du théâtre actuel. On décida donc de restaurer les façades dans leur état de 1828 et d'aménager un intérieur contemporain.

Les techniques et les matériaux anciens furent employés dans la mesure du possible, mais des changements dans la configuration du bâtiment ou dans la technique employée ont entraîné la modification de certains éléments ou leur remplacement par des formes ou des matériaux contemporains.

Fig. 1. — Le Théâtre de Walnut Street, Gravure de Fenner Sears et Cie, d'après un dessin de Charles Burton. (Publiée le 15 juillet 1831 par J.T. Hinton, Simpkin et Marshall, Londres, Bibliothèque Municipale, Philadelphie).

Fig. 2. — Le Théâtre de Walnut Street, vers 1859, d'après un calotype original attribué à William et Frederick Langenheim (Bibliothèque Municipale Philadelphie).

Fig. 3. — Croquis du plan de l'intérieur du Théâtre de Walnut Street, tiré du Carnet de notes de Haviland (Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, en dépôt à la Bibliothèque Charles Patterson Van Pelt, Université de Pennsylvanie).

Fig. 4. — Dessins de colonnes, pour le théâtre de Walnut Street, d'après le Carnet de notes de Haviland (Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, en dépôt à la Bibliothèque Charles Patterson Van Pelt, Université de Pennsylvanie).

Fig. 5. — Dessins de détails de l'intérieur pour le Théâtre de Walnut Street, d'après le Carnet de notes de Haviland (Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, en dépôt à la Bibliothèque Charles Patterson Van Pelt, Université de Pennsylvanie).

Fig. 6. — Le Théâtre de Walnut Street, avec les modifications de 1865. Le mur sur la 9^e Rue a été surélevé, la corniche de la façade sur Walnut Street a été remplacée, les lampadaires ont été supprimés et le sol du porche a été abaissé (Library Company, Philadelphie).

Fig. 7. — Le Théâtre de Walnut Street. Le revêtement de marbre rustiqué de la fin du XIX^e siècle et les niches, à chaque extrémité du bâtiment, ont été supprimés et remplacés par des coffrages de boutiques.

Fig. 8. — Projet pour le théâtre de Walnut Street 903, Will Hale, architecte.

Fig. 9. — Théâtre de Walnut Street, vers 1903 — Des échelles à incendie ont été installées sur les deux façades du Théâtre (Bibliothèque Municipale, Philadelphie).

Fig. 10. — Théâtre de Walnut Street, vers 1905-1913. Une marquise électrique est la dernière addition apportée à la façade du Théâtre.

Fig. 11. — Théâtre de Walnut Street, vers 1913. Les échelles d'incendie ont été reconstruites, la fenêtre a été remplacée par quatre petites fenêtres, (Bibliothèque Municipale, Philadelphie).

Fig. 12. — Théâtre de Walnut Street, après les remaniements de l'architecte William Lee, en 1920 (photo: Jack Boucher).

Fig. 13. — La Salle du Théâtre de Walnut Street, après les remaniements par l'architecte William Lee, en 1920.

Fig. 14. — Détail de l'aigle de bois sculpté. La polychromie n'est pas d'origine. Nous n'avons aucun document sur la date de l'aigle, les seuls indices sont donnés par le nombre d'étoiles que porte l'écu. On compte trente-cinq étoiles, l'aigle aurait donc pu être sculpté entre juin 1863 lorsque la Virginie occidentale devint le trente-cinquième état, et octobre 1864 lorsque le Nevada fut admis au rang d'état. (Photo: Jack Boucher).

Fig. 15. — Les cintres de la machinerie du 19^e siècle (Photo: Jack Boucher).

Fig. 16. — Un nouveau balcon en porte-à-faux, construit en 1920, remplaça le balcon de 1828, porté par des colonnes de fonte (Photo: Jack Boucher).

Fig. 17. — Vue intérieure du Théâtre de Walnut Street, 1882, (dans Philadelphia Today, John W. Ryan, 1882).

Fig. 18. — Immeuble de bureaux, 825 Walnut Street, à Philadelphie (Photo: Jack Boucher).

Fig. 19. — Façade du Théâtre de Walnut Street, après la restauration de 1971 (Photo: Jack Boucher).

Fig. 20. — Balustres doriques ou ioniques, d'après l'ouvrage de John Haviland, « Builder's Assistant », 1819, vol. 3 pl. 124.

Fig. 21. — Lampe de fer forgé, (I. et J. Taylor, Ornamental Iron Work, 1795, pl. 12).

Fig. 22. — Reconstitution des lampadaires, Théâtre de Walnut Street (Photo: Jack Boucher).