The accompanying plans are designs for the New Custom House, proposed to be erected in this City, & they are herewith submitted for the consideration of the Commissioners appointed to superintend the structure.

The Building to be 200 ft. x 75 ft. exterior dimensions, & to be built of some suitable granite, such as may hereafter be decided on. The roof pavilions, resembling those of our Government Buildings, the whole edifice may be made with iron beams, rafters &c., as in the roof caves, with copper. The floors of the two upper stories, to have iron beams worked between with bricks or flagging with stone slate, which can be obtained from 5 to 10 feet in length, & makes a lighter as well as a strong flooring. The Cellar, Basement & Principal floors to be brick vaulted, of a spherical form. This form of arches has recently been introduced & is found to require less abatement, from the lateral thrust, being less than thirds of arches of a different construction. The Boston Magazine for the Navy, in New York, which was completed last season, is of this construction, likewise two fire proof rooms for the county courts, in the New County House, which answer well the purposes for which they were intended. The floors over the Steam Engine, & Twelve rooms of the Rope walks in the Navy Yard, are constructed with iron beams & brick arches between them & are likewise satisfactory. The latter mode however is rather more expensive than vaulting, but does not require a greater thickness of walls than when wood is employed for the floors, & consequently is very calculated for upper rooms, where there is less little weight upon the walls.

The Doors may be made of iron. The entrance doors, to be of bronze, after the manner of those of the Pantheon at Rome. The casings frames &c., may be of the finest cast iron, annealed (as is now done by improvements in cast iron works) so as to render it nearly as tough as wrought iron. The casings may be made folding or hung with wrought iron in the usual manner.

The whole foundation to be laid at low, & the cellar as deep as can be well drained, & to be pitched with good substantial filing, driven with a jamb weighing not less than one ton & falling through a space of not less than 25 feet.
The accompanying plans are designs for the New Custom House, proposed to be erected in this City, & they are herewith submitted for the consideration of the Commissioners appointed to superintend the structure.

The building to be 100 ft. x 75 ft. outside dimensions, & to be built of some suitable granite, such as may hereafter be decided on. The roof partitions, mullions &c., to be of good hard bricks. The whole edifice may be

indicated for parts by substitution iron arches now used in generally used. The

roof & upper story floors, may be made with iron beams, rafters &c. &c., the roof covered with copper. The floors of the two upper stories, to have iron beams, worked between with brick or flagging with pine slate, which can be obtained from 5 to 10 ft. in length, & made as light as well as a strong flooring. The Cellar, Basement & Principal floors to be brick finished, of a spherical form. This form of Arches has recently

been introduced & is found to require less abduction, from the lateral thrusts being less than that of arches of a different construction. The Boston Magazine for the Navy, & Mariner's, which was completed last season, is of this construction, likewise two fire proof rooms for the

navy awards, in the New Board's House, which answer well the

purposes for which they were intended. The floor over the Steam Engine,

& Twelve rooms of the Rope walk at the Navy Yard, are constructed with iron beams & brick arches between them & are likewise satisfactory. The latter mode however is rather more expensive than pavilting by not requiring a greater thickness of walls than where wood is employed for the floors, & consequently is well calculated for upper rooms where there is but little weight upon the walls.

The doors may be made of iron. The entrance door, to be of bronze, after the manner of those of the Pantheon at Rome. The

sash frames &c., may be of the finest cast iron, annealed (as is now done by improvements in cast iron works) so as to render it nearly if not quite as tough as wrought iron. The sashes may be made folding or hung with wrought iron in the usual manner.

The whole foundation to be laid at low, & the cellar as deep as can be well drained, & to be built with good substantial filing, driven with a point weighing not less than one ton & falling through a space of not less than 25 feet.
The space between the walls now existing & the external walls of the building is left undisturbed (on the plan of the cellar) & the partition walls may be put up, as each place as required. Openings in proper distance, to be left in the pavements, for getting down coals or any other article.

A furnace to be placed in the centre of the cellar, of sufficient capacity to heat theNewsletter, passages, winding rooms &c. (most of the other rooms have places either for warming or ventilating) by the aid of fire so constructed as to pass under the pavements, of floors of the principal rooms, as practiced in some of the London fire offices. This method of heating buildings is equally excellent in the purity of the heated air; in the beneficial way in which it is delivered (through the floors) in safety from fire; in preservation from smoke dust & dirt, & in economy of fuel, it cannot fail to be generally adopted when it can be applied.

The East & West Elevation, are comprised of three parts, a centre & two wings. The centre is a Portico of six fluted columns, of the Ionic order from a Temple on the Acropolis of Athens. This is considered a very fine example of purity & simplicity. The members or parts being few, their effect is clear & distinct, calculated for effect at a distance. It is also admirably adapted to be worked in the granite of this neighborhood. The wings have Antae, the whole elevated upon a rusticated basement with solid piers, one of which stands under each column leaving a passageway for passages between them. The columns support an entablature & pediment, the tympanum of which may be decorated with some emblematical figure, but it is left without ornament in the drawing, for want of time to make a suitable design. The entablature is to extend around the whole building, surmounted by a blocking course, in which are strewn small windows for lighting the upper rooms, but these windows may be dispensed with, if thought unsightly & plate glass or ships deck-lights substituted in the roof, both of these have been successfully employed in buildings erected at the Navy Yard.

The Elevation North, is composed with two columns in antis of the same style as just described. The North Elevation is wholly in antis.

This is shown upon the North Elevation a Dome, which may be omitted, or one of a different form may be adopted. I intended to have made 2 or 3 Sketches of different forms of Cupolas, & Domes in order
to place ... the Elevation, but time will not allow. Should it be desired, they can be furnished, but exterior cupolas & domes are going out of use in public buildings of the present age.

The Basement story is entered as shown on the plan, from the four fronts—The principal entrance however is from the East & West, the staircases leading to the principal floor have an easy ascent, it is intended to be made of marble. The other staircases are calculated to be of granite. The central or principal staircase, which leads upon a gallery communicating to all parts of the principal story, will require more workmanship than can be executed in granite.

The principal floor is the grand business room, the form & style of which are shown on the plan & section. It is proposed to make the columns of Italian Marbles of a light dove-color except the capitals which are to be white. The proportions & character of the order of this room to be that of the Ceresic Monument of Agrippina at Athens; the columns to be 2 ft. 3 inches diameter, the Arches to be of Marble the same as the columns, the ceiling to be vaulted with brick & plaster smoothly finished with stucco & painting.

Time will not allow me to go into the details of describing the materials & work of the edifice, but should the Board of Commissioners think favorably enough of the designs herewith presented to adopt them, I will immediately set about making the plans in detail. Until the working plans are considerably advanced no very accurate description can be made out.

The making the designs herewith submitted, great care has been observed to make the interior subordinately to exterior arrangements as regards convenience &c. The practice of copying or imitating ancient buildings, cannot be too much reprobated. As manifests want of genius, judgment & taste, & Architecture can never improve while modern professors who aspire to the name of Artists content themselves with mere copyists.

The system has of late been recommended & in many instances adopted of decorating with columns, judgment &c., the ends or principal fronts of a building thereby making it the principal fronts; but when the commanding prospect of the east fronts of the New Custom
House & the importance of having the broadest fronts, which will certainly
make the most imposing appearance, are considered, it is believed that it
will be admitted by all Amateurs of Persian & Roman Architecture,
that the facade ought to be made the principal front. The western
Portico may be omitted, if deemed advisable. The Elevation on the East is
presumed to be sufficiently decorated to be in keeping with the other
parts of the building.

Should any part of these designs meet the approbation of the
Board of Commissioners, the Architect, who presents them will
most cheerfully attend & make such alterations as they may suggest
& would be very happy to be employed in the Architect of so noble an edifice.

With great respect
Your obedient servant

Alex. Parris

Boston, January 1, 1838

To the Commissioners superintending the New Custom House.

W. H. Since the plans were commenced & nearly completed & the above com-
munication presented, I have duly considered the subject of Bunns, as appli-
cable to this edifice, & have come to a conclusion not to recommend a
Bunns, but merely a lanturn or sky-lights, to be placed upon the roof,
which will not be seen from the streets, & will light the central entrance,
& illuminate much better than a lanturn placed upon a Bunns, which
must be constantly elevated. I have therefore left of the Bunns on one
of the Elevation, which is drawn to a larger scale than the plans & Section

E. T.

Custom House Boston

Feb. 13, 1838