

974.90

S 797

1946 *copy*



DOCUMENTS RELATIVE TO  
THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE CAPITOL GROUNDS AND BUILDINGS  
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY

PROPERTY OF  
RECEIVED  
MAR 27 1946  
NEW JERSEY STATE LIBRARY  
TRENTON

Jean Labatut, Architect, A.I.A.

Site Planner Consultant

Princeton, New Jersey

**DEPOSITORY COPY**  
Do Not Remove From Library

January 30, 1946

MEMORANDUM RELATIVE TO AN ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL LANDMARKS AND  
THEIR INTEGRATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CAPITOL GROUNDS AND  
BUILDINGS, by Jean Labatut, A.I.A., Site Planner Consultant,  
McCormick Hall, Princeton, New Jersey.

(Copy of Memorandum to Mr. Reeve Schley, Chairman  
State Capitol Building Commission, dated January  
28, 1946.)

1. While looking forward and planning for a reasonable foreseeable future, it is well to recognize the priceless value of historical landmarks of which the Capital of New Jersey - the City of Trenton - is a rich possessor.
2. The following memorandum is the resumé of a research made in view of integrating the historical background in the development of the Capitol Grounds and Buildings.
3. If compared with other Capitols and Civic Centers in this country and abroad, the development of the Capitol Grounds and Buildings in Trenton offers a unique opportunity to integrate into one architectural composition several historical landmarks and show them in their appropriate landscape without interfering with present needs for usable space.
4. Such a point of view is also an all-important factor in the development of an urban aesthetic particular to the City of Trenton.
5. Such a point of view permits expressing visually as many as possible of the forgotten historical landmarks and giving prominence to the ones still in existence, while preparing the site and the general mass of new buildings corresponding to foreseeable needs and to their high function as a symbol of the State of New Jersey.
6. Such a point of view permits expressing visually and chronologically from East to West in one composition:
  - a) the Colonial times by the old Barracks built in 1758;
  - b) the 18th century U. S. A. by locating and expressing on the ground floor, the plan of the first Capitol erected soon after Commissioners were appointed for that purpose on November 22, 1791; also by restoring the gravel walk leading to the first Capitol from the corner of Willow and West State Streets;
  - c) the 19th century by the Rotunda designed by John Notman in 1845;
  - d) the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century by the Assembly and Senate Chambers;
  - e) the 20th century, between the two World Wars, by the present State House Annex;
  - f) the period of post-war World II by the new State Office Building, now being projected, and by ultimate additions and restorations of buildings and landscape treatments,thus achieving the maximum of diversity within unity.

7. Such successive steps expressed visually for nearly two centuries and now to be presented in an appropriate landscape treatment will be of great interest to the country, and to the people of New Jersey in particular.
8. Thus, in the proposed solution historical facts were taken into consideration and a research relative to the historical landmarks was made so that as many as possible will be expressed visually either by giving prominence to the ones still in existence, or by expressing in one way or another the ones which have been forgotten. That study, made while preparing the site and general mass of the new State Office Building, contributes greatly to the quality of the solution and permits a tangible expression of respect for a stimulating past while looking into the reasonable future.
9. Prior to the analysis of the documents relative to historical landmarks, a look at the Rotunda and Dome, now minimized or lost in the middle of the surrounding buildings, suffice to convince anyone, with some knowledge of the composition of Domes, that the Dome of the Capitol of the State of New Jersey was originally conceived to be seen from a short distance and as near as possible from its base.
10. The height and somewhat swollen silhouette of the Dome allows it to be visible for a maximum time when approaching it. This was also the point of view of the architect Jules Hardouin-Mansard when he designed the Dome of the Invalides in Paris in 1675. There, when the Dome ceases to be seen from the outside, part of the interior is already visible and becomes more impressive as one finally penetrates within the Rotunda. The result of these successive optical effects is an expression of maximum monumentality and greatness.
11. Consequently, it was our impression that the architect of the Dome of the Capitol of New Jersey had such a possible point of view in mind. At present this condition is still recognizable only from the two narrow East and West courts, from where the Dome offers its best proportions and aesthetic value.
12. As to the inside - the Rotunda - it is without doubt one of the best examples of 19th century architecture.
13. In the light of these observations it appears certain that if the Rotunda is preserved and the Dome carefully studied and presented, they will appear much more monumental.
14. The analysis of three important documents placed at my disposal permitted the finding of the location of the first Capitol of the State of New Jersey. The three documents consisted of one lithograph showing the first Capitol and giving the year 1794 as the time of its construction, with the name of the builder, Jonathan Doane, and two lithographs showing the next important development of the Capitol and giving the years 1845 and 1846 as the time of alterations and enlargement, with the name of the architect, John Notman of Philadelphia. Among works done

by that architect were repairs and alterations of and additions to Nassau Hall in Princeton, and the building of "Prospect" which is now the residence of the President of the University. However, a careful analysis of his work at Trenton shows a definite superiority in the quality of the work done for the Capitol of New Jersey. The two lithographs representing perspective views, of what may be called the Second Capitol, are mentioned in the report in the New Jersey Assembly minutes of 1846, page 385-90, Proceedings of the 70th General Assembly - Monday, February 16, 1846. The following information was obtained from the State Librarian, Mr. Sidney Goldman: "The report notes that the architect made complete drawings of the ground plan and upper stories of the new parts of the structure 'which is now being erected', and also 'perspective views of the North and South fronts of the whole structure'". (Fig. A,B,C)

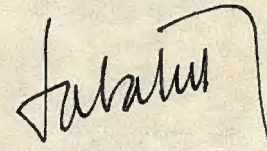
15. The polygonal shape, or bow, at either end of the first Capitol, as well as the first and second floor windows, are easily recognizable in the lithographs showing the Capitol of 1845-46. The rough stucco has been replaced by one with imitation of regular stone joints. Roofs and mouldings were modified and the belfry was replaced by a Dome built on the axis and against the North elevation of the first Capitol. This last statement is further supported by the direction of light in each lithograph which was carefully selected so that the North elevation is shown in the shadow provoked by the morning sun, while the South elevation is illuminated by the afternoon sun. (Fig. A,B,C)
16. The location of the Rotunda and Dome against the North elevation of the first Capitol leaves no doubt as to the fact that a part of the present Governor's wing is located in the West side of the first Capitol. The East wall of the present Reception Room was the West elevation of the first Capitol. The polygonal end, or bow, occupied part of the area of the present Reception Room. A still visible 45° joint in the cornices on the North and South façades of the Governor's wing show clearly where the West elevation of the first Capitol was located. It is also interesting to note that two chimneys on the North elevation of the present Governor's wing are in the same location as the two chimneys on the West side of the North elevation of the first Capitol. On the North elevation of the Governor's wing three first floor windows are still recognizable as well as the three corresponding second floor windows, in spite of their form which differs from the lithographs, and in spite of a fourth window which was coupled with the window farther West. Soundings through foundations and walls may be helpful in finding more precise information related to the first Capitol. (Fig. A,B,C)
17. The two latest photographs show clearly the quality of the solution by John Notman. The part of the building North of the Dome is carefully studied so that one can see most of the Dome for the longest possible time while approaching the Capitol. Alterations and additions made by John Notman were a good job of integration and unification of all parts of the Capitol into one architectural composition corresponding to the needs and spirit of that time. For these alterations and additions the contract was signed May 21, 1845 and ground was broken immediately for the foundations. (Fig. B,C)

18. It is important to note the difference between the present Dome and the one shown on the two lithographs, as if the architect John Notman changed the design after the lithographs were made, or as if the Dome had been altered later; also the difference between the present second floor windows and the ones shown on the two lithographs. (Fig. B,C)
19. Since John Notman's time other alterations and additions, necessitated by new and immediate needs, or by the fire of March 21, 1885, and also by the eclectic taste of various periods, contributed greatly to the disintegration of a good architectural composition and to the mushroom growth of buildings which now form the Capitol group, and which the present study is intended to correct.
20. Thus, in 1945-46, as in 1845-46, a program of alterations and additions is being contemplated, this time the buildings, as well as open spaces, being integrated into one composition corresponding to our times and the foreseeable future.
21. Another interesting point brought up by the two latest lithographs is in what was then the South porch overlooking the Delaware River. The location of that porch is now an inner corridor containing an East and West entry and staircase, immediately South of the Governor's wing. The present porch of the South façade of the Capitol seems to be the one designed by John Notman but which has been moved further South, and altered. (Fig. B,C)
22. On one of these lithographs the corner of West State Street and what was Delaware Street is clearly shown by the low stone wall and fence which were erected in 1846 and which "consist of a stone plinth one foot high, surmounted by a cast iron fence three and one-half feet high, with two gateways on the porch, at \$4.75 per lineal foot." At the same time grading, laying out of walks, and planting of "a large number of shade and ornamental trees and shrubs" took place. (Fig. B)
23. Another interesting landmark, the restoration of which is considered in the new Plan, is the gravel path laid from Chambers corner, now State and Willow, to the entrance of the first Capitol. The restoration of that path, laid before 1795, will form the North boundary of the 18th century landscape treatment surrounding the old Barracks. That path will lead to the floor area on which will be expressed the plan of the first Capitol, thus giving to the ground pattern an historical and symbolic meaning. (Fig. 34)
24. In the proposed solution the Dome will acquire a great monumentality by its immediate environment and various backgrounds. It will be visible from a very short distance and also from afar through relatively narrow vistas so that its relatively small dimensions will produce the maximum effect. When seen from the long narrow vistas on the East and West along West State Street, the Dome will be the central point of interest and will be visible from as far as a point on the sidewalk opposite the

First Presbyterian Church on East State Street, 1780 feet away,  
(See Sheet #7, Section #2). (Fig. 31,16,7,7s)

25. While the Dome will be the focusing point toward the North of the Capitol group, the Senate Chamber will be the focusing point toward the South. Toward the East the Assembly Chamber and the Governor's wing will form the new elevation facing the City of Trenton./  
(Fig. 31,33,29)
26. Consequently, the Capitol group of buildings, which is now facing the State of Pennsylvania toward the South, rather than the State of New Jersey, and which is now only fragmentarily visible and at very short distances from West State Street, will be clearly seen from the East through the open space surrounding the historical landmark of the old Barracks. That new East elevation preceded by a terrace overlooking the 18th century landscape will be visible, in part or as a whole, from West State Street as far as East State Street or from the lower Delaware bridge. (Fig. 31,29,16)
27. The unification of the different buildings into one composition will be assured by appropriate landscape treatment between and around them. The area including the old Barracks and up to the new East façade of the Capitol, will be a restoration of the natural 18th century landscape. The free spaces farther West will be more formal, corresponding to the Renaissance Revival in the United States of America during the late 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The area surrounding the new State Office Building, by the nature of its approaches by foot and by car, will be different from the elementary geometrical forms of the preceding period and from the informality of the 18th century landscape. That area will be more modern, i. e., based on dynamic forms corresponding to (1) motion of motor cars (2) pedestrian approaches and (3) the maximum of contrast between informal and formal treatments of the landscape in the areas between circulations. (Fig. 31,16)
28. The integration of all these expressions into one composition was made possible by careful study of what the human eye can see from any given point of view, rather than from what can be seen in drawings, plans, elevations and theoretical perspectives. (Fig. 7)
29. The general solution proposed shows: 1) the logical contrast between the expression of historical elements and the development of the modern elements corresponding to present governmental functions and means; 2) the possibility of achieving unity and monumentality without costly forced symmetry of such great dimensions that the human eye cannot observe and enjoy; 3) the possible concentration of free space and planted areas. The space developed toward the East of the State grounds and around the buildings containing the Legislative and Executive branches, the terraces toward the South, and the landscape treatment around the new State Office Building, added to the present Stacy Park, will give the feeling of more open space area in spite of the present program for necessary new buildings.
30. In short, the proposed solution for the development of the Capitol Grounds and Buildings is based on:

- a) the needs for usable space to serve the different services inherent to the State Capitol at present and for a foreseeable future;
  - b) the analysis of the present site, and conditions of physical as well as aesthetic nature;
  - c) a research of historical landmarks;
  - d) the synchronization into one architectural composition of historical landmarks and new needed construction in an appropriate landscape treatment, thus insuring diversity within unity;
  - e) the rehabilitation of free space by careful site planning and landscape treatment;
  - f) the possible realization of such an architectural composition, by means of successive steps as circumstances and means warrant.
31. Further details relative to the point of view and method of approach toward the solution shown on sheets from #1 to #27, will be found in my memoranda of October 23 and 25, 1945 and January 14, 1946, as well as in my correspondence.

  
Jean Labatut  
Site Planner Consultant

January 30, 1946

MEMORANDUM RELATIVE TO THE LOCATION AND FORM OF THE WEST BUILDING  
(NEW STATE OFFICE BUILDING), by Jean Labatut, A.I.A., Site Planner  
Consultant, McCormick Hall, Princeton, New Jersey.

(Copy of Memorandum to Mr. Reeve Schley, Chairman  
State Capitol Building Commission, dated January  
14th, 1946.)

The new State Office Building was considered as an integral part of an architectural composition consisting of the development of the entire Capitol grounds and buildings, rather than as an independent building - as has been the case with several additions to the main Capitol for nearly a century and soon after the additions and alterations made by John Notman in 1845-46, who was the last to do a good job of integration and unification of all parts of the Capitol in one architectural composition corresponding to the needs and spirit of that time. (Fig. B,C,31,29)

In the present problem of development and unification, 1) accesses, 2) shape, and 3) the location of the new State Building were considered in relation to our time and trend. (Fig. 36,28,32)

1. ACCESSES. In the solution presented the maximum of accesses for pedestrians and vehicles are provided. These accesses are of reasonable sizes to answer their function rather than being exaggerated and Baroque. The pedestrian accesses to the building from the East are insured by 9 different circulations:

- 3 - circulations leading to the South entrance of the building (by sidewalk along Lafayette Boulevard; by main terrace on axis of Senate wing; by upper terrace circulation leading directly from the main Capitol building to the South entrance of the new building down the stairway along the southwest façade of the Boiler Room) (Fig. 31,36,28)
- 1 - circulation leading to the North entrance (by sidewalk along West State Street) (Fig. 36)
- 3 - circulations leading to the East entrance (by the northeast circulation coming from West State Street; by the garden between the new building and the present State House Annex; by the circulation coming from the South terraces) (Fig. 36)
- 2 - covered combined circulations leading to the mezzanine level of the new building (one coming from the present basement circulation of the State House Annex, and one coming from the covered parking). (Fig. 32)

Provision is made for comfortable accesses at three levels by car. The traffic system proposed permits the maximum of vehicular circulation off the two main thoroughfares. This insures the

simplest possible traffic operation and maximum of safety in the approaches to the building as well as in the through traffic of West State Street and Lafayette Boulevard. The one-way V-shaped circulation will also simplify traffic operation at Calhoun Street. (Fig. 36)

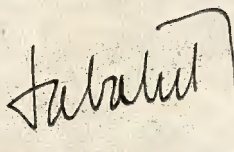
The monumental expression of the North and South approaches to the building is insured by the two architectural sculptural motifs and planting on each side of the gates. The monumentality of the South gate will be naturally expressed by the open landscape of Stacy Park. The monumentality of the North gate will be emphasized by the two horizontal landscape treatments on each side of the gate and along West State Street. (Fig. 36, 28)

2. SHAPE OF THE BUILDING. The shape presented permits (a) the maximum of usable space with a minimum of long and wasteful circulations; (b) a greater amount of natural light, variety of orientations and feeling of transparency than any other shape; (c) the maximum of volume with the appearance of a minimum of bulk. This appearance can be expressed by an effect of lightness and transparency at the core, where vertical and horizontal circulations are concentrated, and by the treatment of the 4 wings as the independent containers of office space; (d) the X-shape gives greater value to the open spaces between the wings of the building, permitting an emphasis on planting, vistas, and the feeling that the building is in a park. (Fig. 29, 30, 36)

The general horizontal skyline with a low terracing effect by the last partial floor and service floor, will complement the effect produced by the Dome of the Capitol, rather than supplement it and compete with it. (Fig. 7, 7s, 33)

3. LOCATION. The exact location was determined by the proper balance between the several accesses to the building, by the relation of the new building to the existing ones, and by the possible contribution of the new building in serving as a contrasting background to the Dome of the Capitol. (Fig. 31, 7, 7s, 33)

For further details relative to the location and form of the new State Office Building, see memorandum dated November 23, 1945.

  
Jean Labatut  
Site Planner Consultant



Jonathan Dotz, Boulder.

A Pray del

† See also p. 100.

STATE CAPITOL OF NEW JERSEY AT TRENTON.

BUILT 1784



N. E. VIEW OF STATE HOUSE

Delaware St. West State St.



*James H. Smith*  
*fence and planting in place*  
*by 1847*

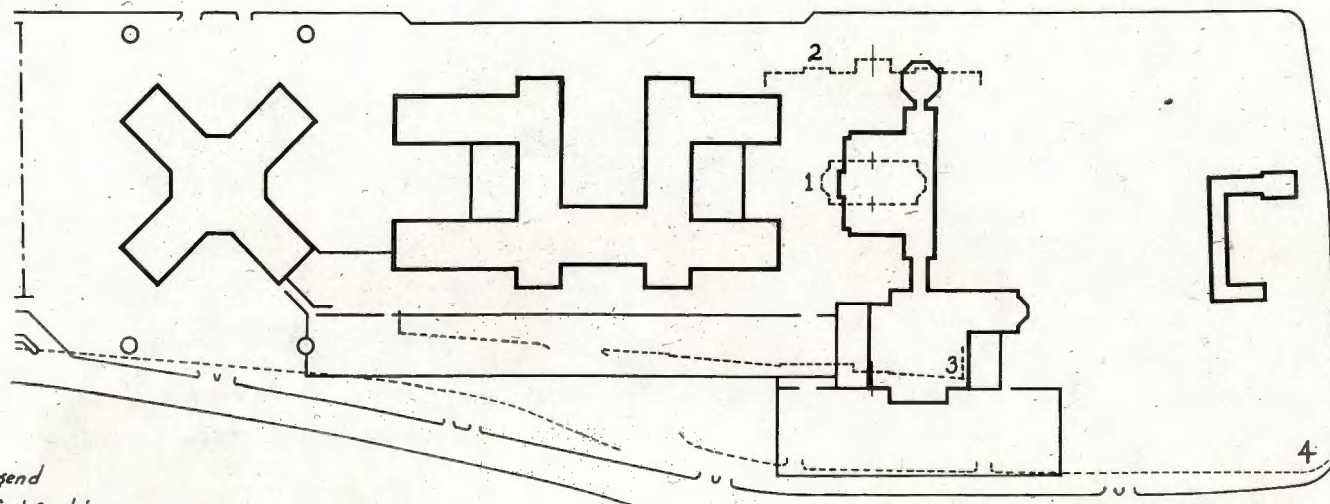
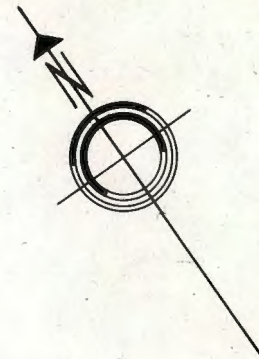
STATE CAPITOL OF NEW JERSEY AT TRENTON.

BUILT, 1794. — ALTERED & ENLARGED 1845 & 46.

*State of New Jersey  
Development of the Capitol Grounds and Buildings  
Trenton, New Jersey*

*New Plan Superimposed on Existing Conditions*

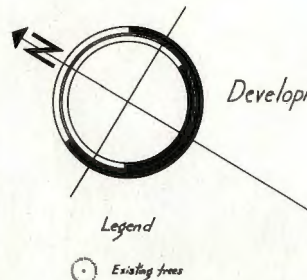
*Scale: 1" = 100'-0"*  
0 50 100 150 200 300 400 Ft



*Legend*

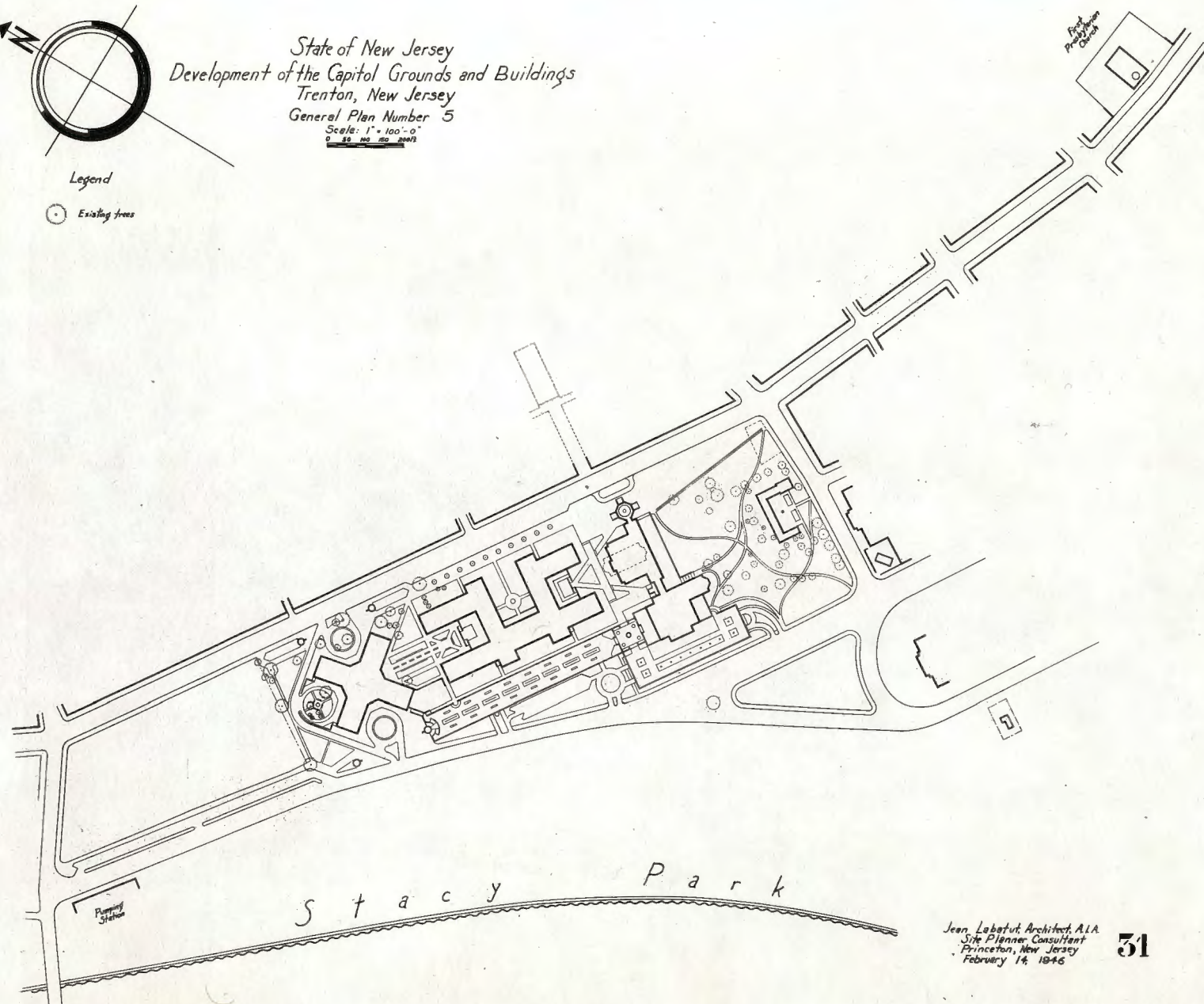
- 1 - Foundations of first Capitol
- 2 - Present north facade
- 3 - Present line of south facades and terraces
- 4 - Present curb line of Lafayette Boulevard

*Jean Labatut, Architect A.I.A.  
Site Planner Consultant  
Princeton, New Jersey  
February 15, 1946*



State of New Jersey  
Development of the Capitol Grounds and Buildings  
Trenton, New Jersey  
General Plan Number 5


Scale: 1" = 100'-0"  
0 50 100 200 Feet

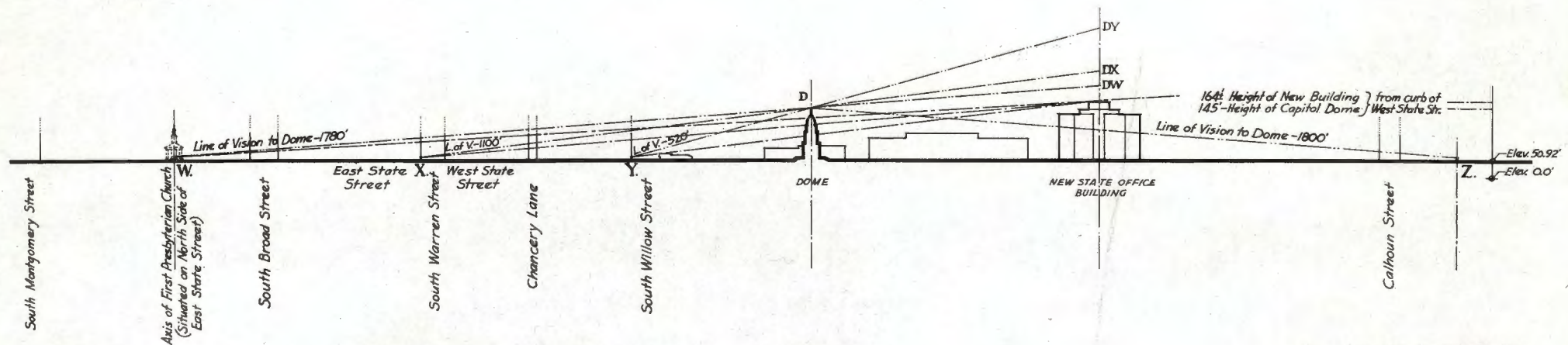


Jean Labatut, Architect, AIA  
Site Planner, Consultant  
Princeton, New Jersey  
February 14, 1946



Section No. 2  
Study of Approach along State Street (Time Façade):

Scale:   
1" = 200'-0"



Jean Labatut - Architect - A.I.A.  
Site Planner - Consultant  
Princeton, New Jersey

10/5/45  
Revised 2/26/46

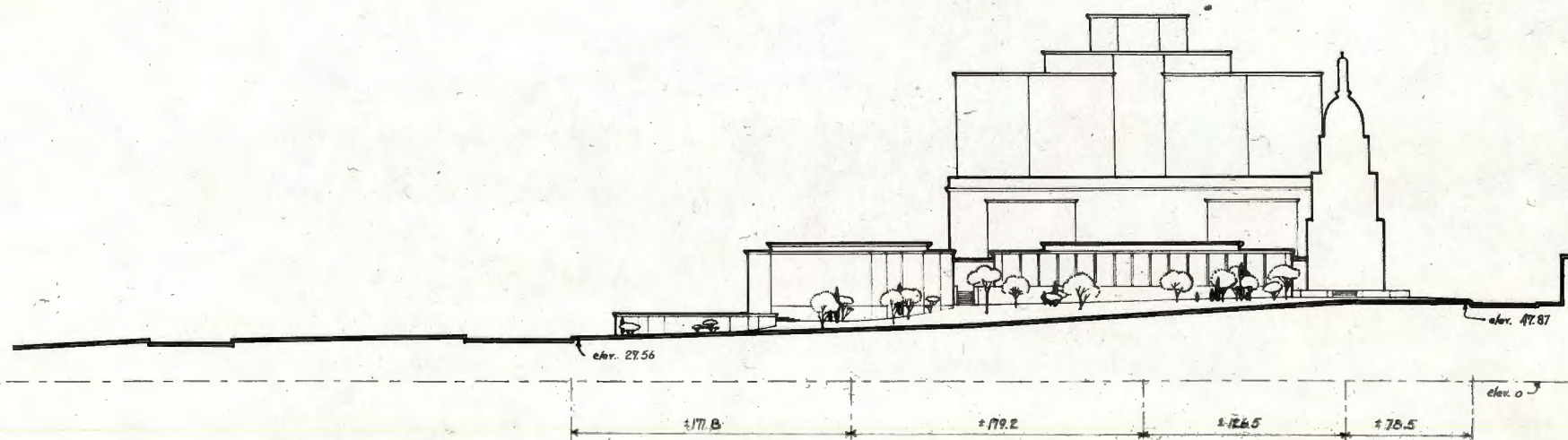


Dome seen from  
south Warren Street  
(Point X sheet #7)

1. Talbot  
9-18-45

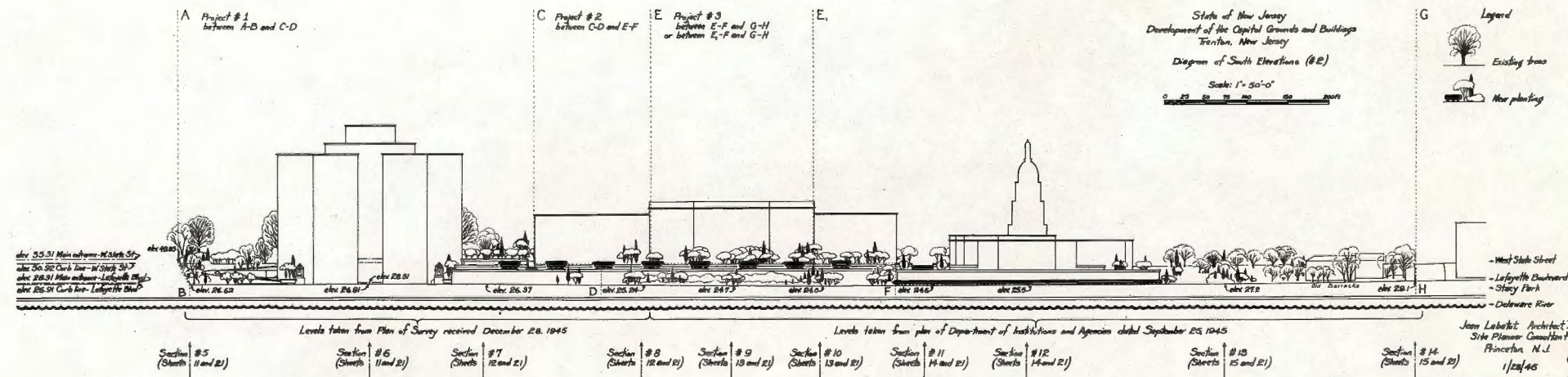
*State of New Jersey  
Development of the Capitol Grounds and Buildings  
Trenton, New Jersey*

*East Elevation  
Seen from the Informal 18th Century landscape  
Surrounding the Old Barracks*



Scale 1"=50'-0"

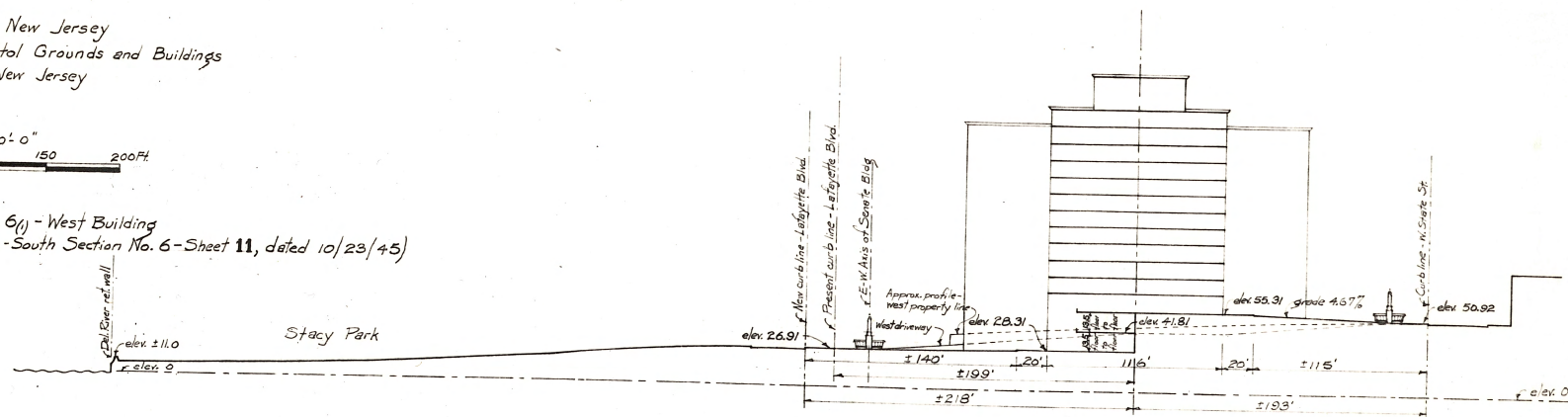
*Jean Labatut, Architect, AIA  
Site Planner Consultant  
Princeton, N. J.  
2/18/46*



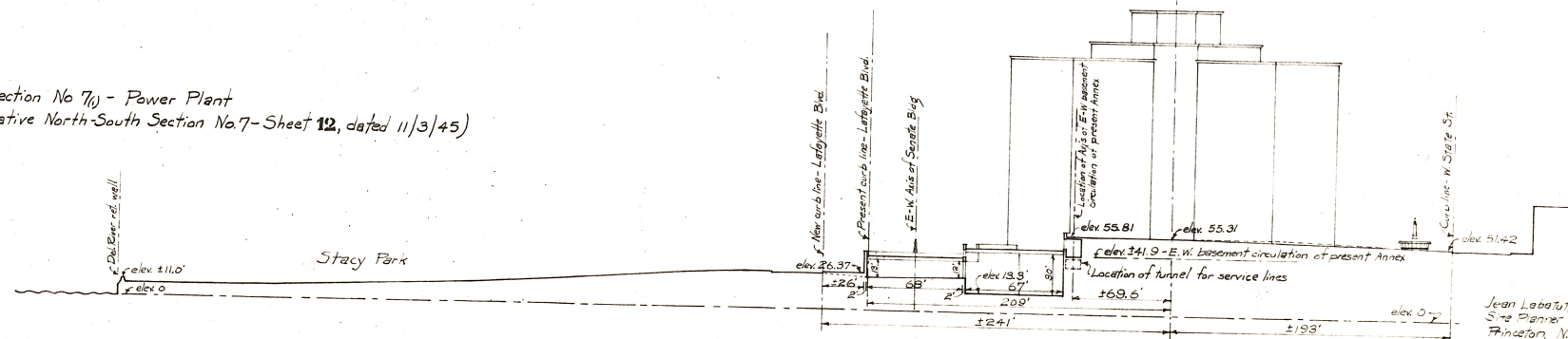
State of New Jersey  
Development of the Capitol Grounds and Buildings  
Trenton, New Jersey

Scale: 1" = 50'-0"  
0 25 50 100 150 200 Ft

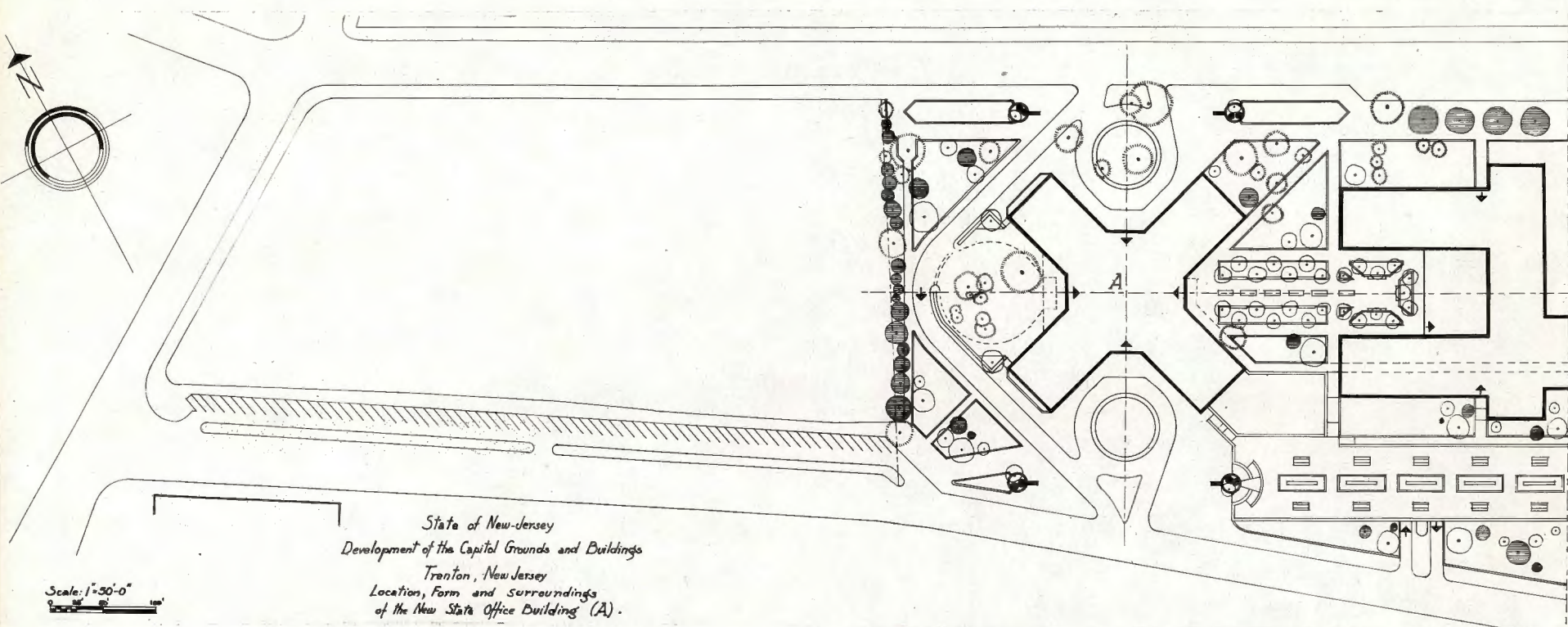
S 6<sub>(1)</sub>: North-South Section No. 6<sub>(1)</sub> - West Building  
(revision of Tentative North-South Section No. 6 - Sheet 11, dated 10/23/45)



S 7<sub>(1)</sub>: North-South Section No. 7<sub>(1)</sub> - Power Plant  
(revision of Tentative North-South Section No. 7 - Sheet 12, dated 11/3/45)



Jean Labatut Architect, A.A.  
Site Planner Consultant  
Princeton, N.J.  
1/31/46



- Legend
- Existing Trees
  - Evergreens
  - Deciduous

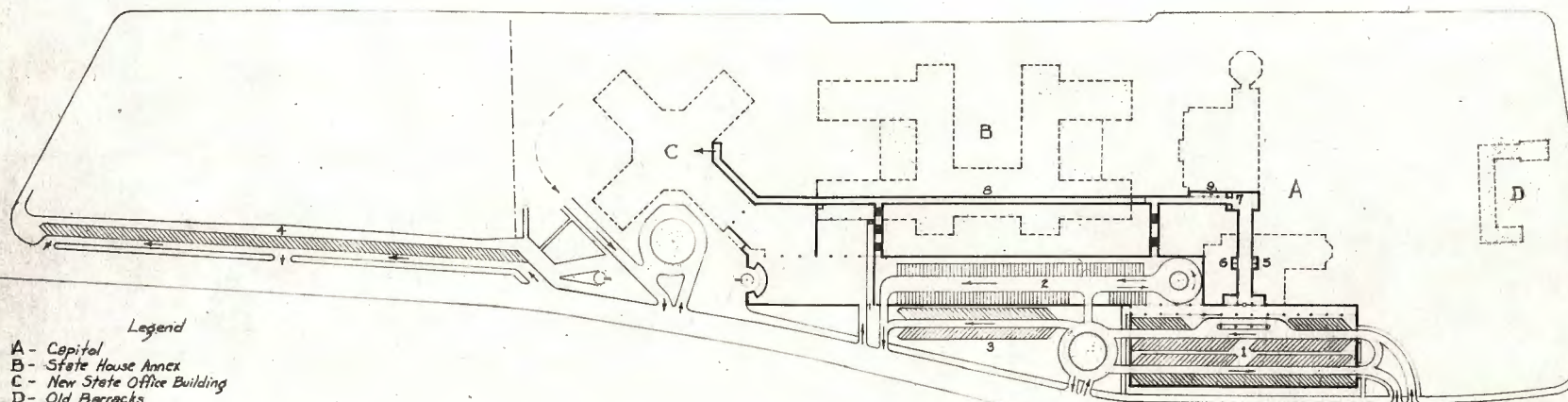
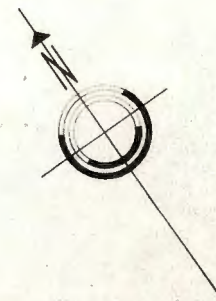


State of New Jersey  
Development of the Capital Grounds and Buildings  
Trenton, New Jersey

Automobile Parking and Covered Accesses

Scale: 1" = 100'-0"

0 50 100 150 200 300 400 ft



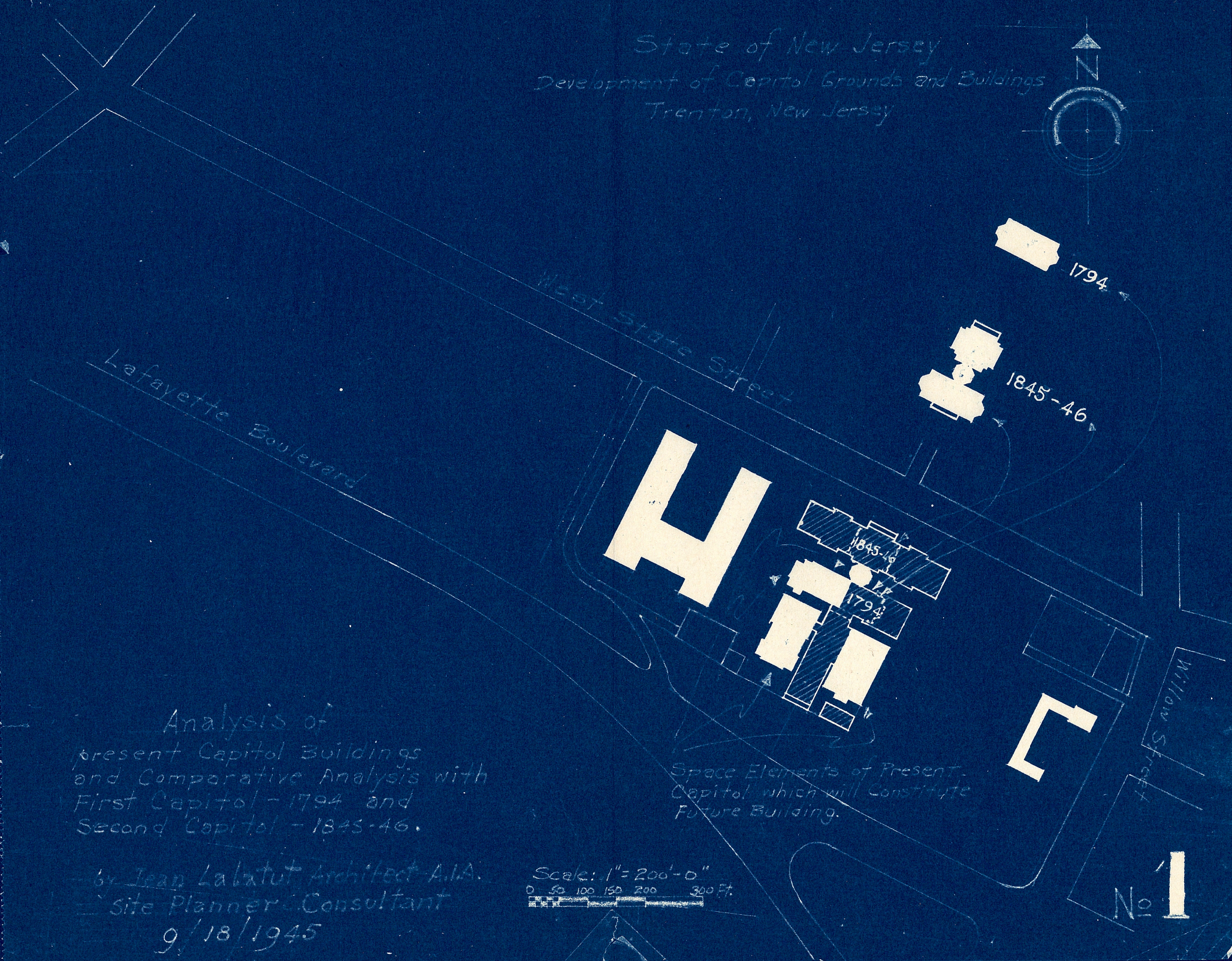
Legend

- A - Capitol
- B - State House Annex
- C - New State Office Building
- D - Old Barracks

- 1 - 90 cars at 45°
  - 2 - 84 cars at 90°
  - 3 - 38 cars at 45°
  - 4 - 60 cars at 45°
- 272 cars total, of which 174 cars are enclosed
- 5 - Access to Governor's wing
  - 6 - Access to Senate Chamber
  - 7 - Access to Assembly Chamber
  - 8 - Main E-W underground circulation
  - 9 - Shops

Joan Labatut, Architect, A.I.A.  
Site Planner Consultant  
Princeton, New Jersey  
2/16/46

State of New Jersey  
Development of Capitol Grounds and Buildings  
Trenton, New Jersey



Analysis of  
present Capitol Buildings  
and Comparative Analysis with  
First Capitol - 1794 and  
Second Capitol - 1845-46.

by Jean Lalatut Architect A.I.A.  
Site Planner Consultant  
9/18/1945

Scale: 1" = 200'-0"  
0 50 100 150 200 300 Ft.

Space Elements of Present  
Capitol which will constitute  
Future Building.

No. 1