

PARK STREET CHURCH, BOSTON, 1809-1810
Photograph *ca.* 1865.

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Peter Banner, Architect, Moves from New Haven to Boston

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EXACTLY why Peter Banner, architect from London, should have left New York City in 1798 for New Haven, Connecticut, remains something of a mystery. Perhaps he found it difficult, after trying some four years to establish himself in New York, to persuade anyone to commission the type of ambitious and profitable undertaking he would have liked to have done. There were already well-known American master joiners and architects in New York, like John McComb, whose work was admired and were the first to be approached. Banner, a foreigner, had to be satisfied with odd jobs. It mattered little whether he was competent; he had to accept any work to make a living. He could have heard that Yale College was planning to do some extensive building and, therefore, cleverly inserted his ad-

vertisement in New Haven's *Connecticut Journal*, where the Yale College authorities saw it.¹

As equally mysterious is Banner's sudden, or so we believe, departure from New Haven to Boston around 1805. As we have seen, his building activities for Yale College and his speculative ventures in domestic buildings around the New Haven Green, were not remunerative, and it looks as if he may have become too involved financially to warrant his staying any longer.² As discouraged as he may have been in New Haven, he somehow made contacts of a building nature in Boston and Brookline, Massachusetts, for by the spring of 1804 he had sold all his land in New Haven and we find him in and around Boston in 1805. Whether he returned occasionally to finish any building ventures or commissions in New Haven is not known. We could surmise that he cut his connections in New Haven gradually after selling off his lands. There is a vague hint that after designing a new

* This is the fifth installment in a series of articles on the life and work of Peter Banner and the last on which Mr. Keith collaborated before his death in February, 1965.

house for Simeon Baldwin which was rejected by Mrs. Baldwin he may have renovated their old one.³ But as this was not completed until after 1806 it is doubtful that Banner could have worked on it as he was far too busy in Massachusetts by then to have returned for a small renovation. There is also a strong hint that Banner may have designed the Abraham Bradley House on State Street in New Haven.⁴ Here again it is doubtful, even if he had conceived the plan, that he could have erected the building in 1807 or 1808, when, as we shall see, he was already engaged on several large Boston building projects. However, we should not underestimate the energy of early artisans and their, to us, astonishing maneuverability. Because many of the better artisans in several fields were "journeymen" and did not remain long enough in some places to leave any kind of records, it is difficult to prove even the existence of some of them, except by anonymous examples of their work which can usually only be attributed to them.

The earliest mention of Banner in the Boston area is in Brookline, Massachusetts. As Brookline had no town hall, the town meetings were held in the brick school. The Brookline Town Records, March 11, 1805, show that "the brick school house be given to Mr. [Peter] Banner carpenter for building the Meeting House for his use during the summer season."⁵

The Brookline Society had been considering erecting a new meetinghouse for some time and on April 2, 1804, the town voted "to choose a committee to enquire about a situation for a new meeting house."⁶ Sometime in April, 1804, an unknown person set fire to the old meetinghouse, badly damaging one corner.⁷ A reward was offered to catch the

arsonist but no one was apprehended. Feelings had been mixed about doing away with the old structure and the fire may have been a deciding factor for on May 16 it was voted "to build a new Meeting House."⁸ Ten days later the committee was directed "to inform themselves . . . as to the best form and manner of building a meeting house both Exterior and Interior parts and exhibit a plan of same to the Town . . . sometime in June next."⁹

The committee, which was to execute the business of building the new house consisted of the following persons: "Colo. Isaac Gardner | Capt. John Robinson | Mr. Nathaniel Murdock."

Of these three, Nathaniel Murdock was the one most knowledgeable about such an undertaking as he was the local house carpenter and builder.¹⁰ This committee may have concluded in its collective mind what was wanted. It may have visited some new religious edifices, as similar committees are known to have done, and decided that it wanted one which included all of the then newest features. Though referred to as a meetinghouse, what the committee had chosen to build, in plan, was a real church. There were no members, not even Mr. Murdock, who could have drawn a plan nor known how to express accurately the kind of decorative elements with which to embellish a new building. For such an undertaking the guidance of an architect was needed. Where, then, did the committee hear of Peter Banner? If Ebenezer Crafts hired Banner to do his house before the Brookline church was commenced, it could have been through him that the architect's skill was sought, for Mr. Crafts had a married sister, Mrs. Ebenezer Heath, as well as other relatives, living in Brookline.

The Brookline Town Records do not state that a plan was exhibited in June of 1804, only "that the Building a New Meeting House be wholly left with the Committee." And it was not until almost a year later that Peter Banner appeared in the records, and then it was only a vote

one was completed. As there was no basement the site was merely "leveled" in March¹² and the cornerstone laid on April 5, 1805.¹³

The new building (Fig. 1) was 68 feet long by 64 feet wide with a porch 19 feet long by 38 feet wide and lobbies or ante-rooms on each side, 11 feet square. The sills and joists were laid on a stone foundation with open spaces for ventilation. The height from foundation to eaves was 35 feet 6 inches and the top of the spire was 137 feet from the ground. Seventy-four pews filled the church of which 14 pews were in the gallery. The English bell was given by Stephen Higginson, Jr., who also contributed the pulpit and "caps." An interior gallery clock, the gift of John Lucas, was still in use in the Brookline Town Hall in 1874, having been placed there after the church was demolished in 1848. It has since been returned to the church. It is said that there were 150 stone steps in front and that the cost of the building was between \$18,083 and \$20,193.¹⁸

The town voted in 1806 "That the Dedication of the New Meeting house be on Wednesday the Eleventh day of June next . . . Devine Worship to begin precisely at Three o'clock, in the afternoon and that the Church and Congregation of this Town will assemble at the said New Meeting house . . . on the next Sunday and afterwards forever."¹⁴

The Reverend John Pierce, pastor from 1796 to 1848, preached the valedictory sermon and the next day work commenced demolishing the old house.¹⁵ Captain and Mrs. Samuel Craft of Brookline, who had no children, had adopted from a local family one Sarah Davis who had a beautiful singing voice. Sarah sang at the dedication in 1806 and was "the occasion of much commendation."¹⁶



FIG. 1. SECOND MEETINGHOUSE OF THE FIRST PARISH OF BROOKLINE, MASSACHUSETTS, 1805-1806

From Woodward's Map of Brookline, 1844.

to give him the use of the brick school. On April 2, 1804, the town also voted "\$875.00 be raised . . . to repair highways and level the Meeting House plat."¹¹ The new building was not to be erected on the original site of the church, but at a new location approximately where the present (fourth) church now stands. At the same time, the old meetinghouse was to be used until the new

This second Brookline ecclesiastical edifice was a church in the true sense of the word though not a meetinghouse, however much the town records refer to it as such. It was a type of structure that the conservative Congregationalists had gradually been accepting since about 1790.¹⁷ This church should be compared, not with meetinghouses, but with other churches in growing towns all over New England. Probably the most influential church architecturally was that designed by Charles Bulfinch in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in 1796. It seems to be the first time an inland community had done away completely with the old meetinghouse plan. This plan was the one Asher Benjamin took from Bulfinch and is illustrated in his first book as a double-page copperplate engraving.¹⁸ Benjamin's *The Country Builder's Assistant* was published in Greenfield and Boston, Massachusetts, in several editions, from 1797 to 1805, and it had great use among local house- and churchwrights in New England well into the nineteenth century.

There were several churches, however, that were not inspired by either Bulfinch or Asher Benjamin. The First Church of Hartford, built as its third building in 1806-1808 and with its architect still unknown, was a sophisticated edifice for Connecticut at this time,¹⁹ and compares favorably with any erected in Boston, Providence, New York or Philadelphia, and even Banner's own Park Street Church in Boston. The War of 1812 put a stop to any ambitious architectural activity, but in New Haven, on its famous Green, Ithiel Towne, Asher Benjamin and David Hoadley were all involved in designing the three churches that changed the character of the Green from that of a village, with the old State House and four old-form meetinghouses, to one of urban dignity. Here was the

real harbinger of eclecticism in this country. Bulfinch, to be sure, had played with the Gothic style in the Federal Street Church (1809) in Boston, but this was a mere exercise in embellishments, rather than the more fully Gothic conception of Towne's Trinity Church in stone. Here, too, was the Renaissance influence of Gibbs in the Center and North Churches, with Towne's Greek temple for the New Haven Courthouse just west of the three churches. And it should be remarked that Peter Banner had erected before them the President's house in the Adamesque style then coming into popularity. But his lyceum at Yale, essentially a meetinghouse, was built only six years before the Brookline church.

Once the Brookline church is examined critically, one can see that it was designed by an architect versed in idioms other than the still-lingering classical forms of the colonial periods. The size and mass of the structure was larger than usual with its two rows of different-sized windows on the first and second stories instead of the usual one row of large arched or square-topped windows lighting both the ground floors and the galleries. The roof was long and hipped, suggesting a vaulted treatment of the ceiling. The main entrance was in a large, separate bay with a pediment on the gable and the end of the main hipped roof. The whole decorative treatment of the façade and tower was restrained and simple, revealing Banner's preference for the Adamesque style. There is a flat, chunkiness to this building which is quite different from Bulfinch's elegance.

The façade had three entrances. The central entrance in the pedimented bay had a carved wooden panel of half-oval shape with rays in the top corners as lunettes. This was surmounted by an applied railing and a tall, narrow window

with an arch extending into the cornice of the pediment's molding. Two flat Doric pilasters framed the window and the door was also flanked by two more of the same with simple bases. On the top of the small capitals two more pilasters extended above and up in the cornice, the top element of the capitals ending as part of the top molding of the cornice. There were Doric pilasters decorating the corners of the one-story bays. A slight string course cleverly divided the first and second stories and merged with the top element of all the capitals on the first story. On each side of the front were rectangular, unadorned windows in each story.

The other two entrances going to the one-storied lobbies or anterooms on either side of the front bay had molded cornices on the front and were supported by a simple railing on the top. The doors were contained in a slightly recessed arch, while three stone steps with iron rails led up to all three doorways.

The base of the square tower was plain except for a round, segmental window on the front and a molded cornice. This base supported a square, flat element with arched windows and flat, horizontal and vertical applied ornaments, and ended with a repetition of a wide, single curved molding. An octagonal section was set atop this, as well as a belfry, with eight rectangular windows. The eight-sided shingled spire sprang from the octagon and ended in a weather vane with two balls beneath it.

There is no description or picture of the interior. This church was replaced in 1848 by a third structure. The only representation of the whole body is the one that appears as a woodcut on the margin of Woodward's map of 1844. A photograph of a line engraving, taken from this map, is Figure 1.²⁰

One item of peculiar interest is the fact

that the frame was raised by machinery.²¹ This in itself is important as it may be the first time that some mechanical contrivance was used to erect the framing members instead of the usual process of poles and extra hired hands. There are references to meetinghouse spires built on the ground and raised by mechanical means within the tower, but no one really seems to know how it was done. There has been some speculation about this matter and some have suggested that the spires may have been pulled up from the outside of the building.²² Did Peter Banner invent some simple machinery to make frame raising easier, quicker and less dangerous? Being such a novel idea, if true, in 1801, why was it not used more often, or why do we not find more references to its use? Even the earliest telephone poles were raised by men and lifting poles until the Bell Telephone Company found an easier method with a triangular frame and horses when it strung the Boston to New York line in 1907.²³

Major Ebenezer Crafts of Roxbury, Massachusetts, married June 29, 1806, Sarah (Heath) Spooner and moved into a new and impressive mansion which he built on his inherited property.²⁴ Built the year previously by "Peter Banner, an English architect," Figures 2 and 3 show a front elevation and plan of the house. No documentary evidence exists proving it was Peter Banner's creation but there seems no reason to doubt the attribution of William W. Wheildon, who, in 1865, described the Crafts' house as "one of the best preserved evidences of his [Peter Banner's] skill and taste in this vicinity . . . a private mansion house admirably located on the north-westerly slope of Parker Hill." Mr. Wheildon knew Solomon Willard, another master carpenter who became well known as an architect and builder, and he probably knew

Peter Banner with whom Willard was associated in several building projects. That Wheildon speaks of the Crafts' house as being "the best preserved evidence of his [Banner's] skill" shows that he knew of Banner's work generally.

The Crafts' mansion house in Roxbury became a showplace and as much a

setts; and several others. The prosperous men between two wars were demanding grand houses and this demand was being satisfied by architects of native ability such as Charles Bulfinch and Alexander Paris. Newcomers were also appearing from other parts of New England like Asher Benjamin, and even men of foreign train-

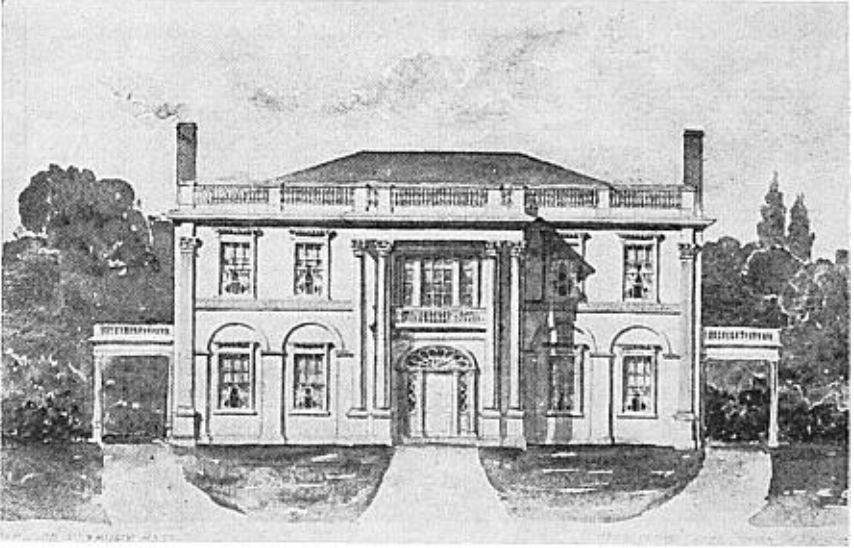


FIG. 2. CRAFTS HOUSE, ROXBURY, MASSACHUSETTS, 1805
From a measured drawing (original location unknown)
made in 1892 by Ogden Codman.

topic of conversation as other houses of similar grandeur in and about Boston. There were some merchants, however, who preferred to live outside of the city surrounded by their acreage of woods and farmland. Here, too, they could have gardens and even landscape the grounds about their mansions. Such places were the Governor William Shirley House (before 1746); the Joseph Barrell House (Bulfinch, 1792) in Charlestown, Massachusetts; the Gore House (1804) and the Lyman House (McIntire, after 1793), both in Waltham, Massachu-

ing were making their appearance, of whom Peter Banner was one.

It would be interesting to know how Ebenezer Crafts and Peter Banner met. As the Crafts' mansion seems now to have been the earliest domestic undertaking by Banner in the Boston region, we wonder how, through Ebenezer Crafts, Banner acquired a foothold with this fine example of his ability. Ebenezer had a brother and sister and other relations living in Brookline, the town next to Roxbury. If Banner had contracted with the Brookline Committee before 1805, Ebe-

nezer Crafts would have known about it and heard of Peter Banner's ability through the Crafts family connections.

In the local Roxbury history, published in 1878, the Crafts' mansion was still considered a landmark. Mr. Francis Drake, the author, devoted a paragraph to it, saying "The large mansion admirably located on the north-westerly slope of the hill and nearly opposite the old (Crafts) house, was built by him at the time of his marriage in 1806. It was designed by Peter Banner an English Architect, also the designer of the Park Street Church, Boston, and was greatly admired for its classic style, its fine proportions, its rich and massive front elevations, its fluted Corinthian columns in pairs and reaching to the height of two stories, its general purity of style. The interior was also elaborately finished and profusely ornamented but was still tasteful and classical."²⁶

We know that Peter Banner was trained in England and came from a family of joiners. There is no doubt, therefore, that he was adept in the taste set by Robert Adam which had already arrived in the United States. Not only were Americans using the Adam classical style, but the young Republic was also adapting the Roman classical to its new architecture with Thomas Jefferson its leader both here and abroad. Both amateurs and professionals followed this classical taste enthusiastically and the turn-of-the-century architects in New York, Philadelphia and Boston were not far behind them.

Peter Banner adapted his ideas and work to those who hired him. In 1799 he built the charming President's house at Yale College in the Adamesque style—a simple, asymmetrical brick townhouse with a more sophisticated interior plan than was usual in New Haven

homes. However, in 1802 when the college had a chance to lead the country in the erection of a new kind of functional building with the first scientific laboratory, library, recitation rooms and dor-

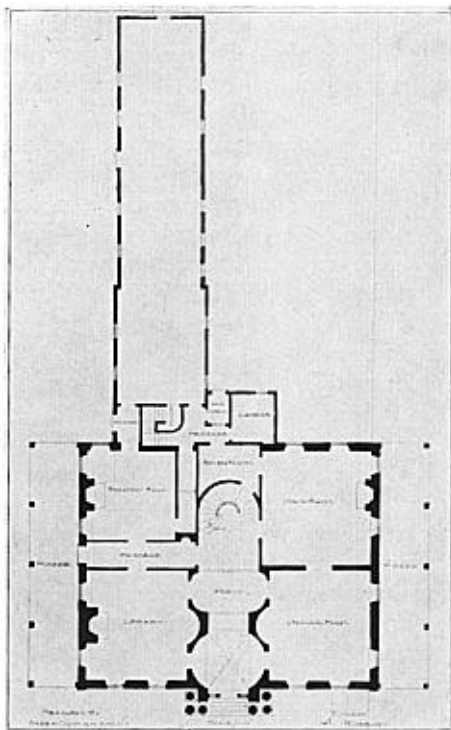


FIG. 3. PLAN OF CRAFTS HOUSE, ROXBURY, MASSACHUSETTS, 1805

From a measured drawing (original location unknown) made in 1892 by Ogden Codman.

mitory, the Trustees insisted, or accepted, Banner's draft of a traditional New England meetinghouse, using an essentially ecclesiastical structure that was not really suitable. It was probably conservative Congregationalism asserting itself and not the Englishman, Banner, who insisted on this old form of structure. If Professor Benjamin Silliman had not been abroad at the time the building was

being conceived, for it was he who was to have the use of the basement laboratory, Silliman and Banner would surely have worked out something far different and of greater credit functionally than the lyceum.²⁷

In the Crafts' mansion Peter Banner was able to design something new and different, yet here, too, he was not as original as one might have wished him to be. The house was typically American in its small scale as compared with English country houses and in the use of wood construction in preference to stone in all its elements. The massiveness of the Crafts' mansion makes it likely that it was conceived for stone, particularly in its use of classical details which are elaborate and heavy. In this it has a similarity to the much later studies of classicism of the Georgian Revival in the 1890's. Corinthian columns and pilasters had been used on domestic houses and public edifices before although we are apt to associate the easier-to-carve Ionic with New England architecture. At first glance the rectangular, square-topped windows on the ground floor, set in arched recesses and flanked with severe Doric pilasters with the flat arches springing from them over the windows, seem to be a new treatment reflecting the Adamesque style. Banner, in the President's brick house at Yale College, used the recessed windows in 1799. It is interesting to compare this recessed fenestration with that in a design for a country home by John McComb about 1798²⁸ which is surprisingly similar to what Banner used on the Crafts' mansion. It makes one wonder what Banner was doing the four years that he was in New York. Judging by what he was producing at this period, could he have worked for or with John McComb?

The sophisticated interior plan with semicircular or circular stairways, oval

and round rooms, arranged symmetrically or asymmetrically, was already popular before Peter Banner designed the symmetrical Crafts mansion with its circular room, Figure 3. He was merely giving his client what he wanted, just as the earlier master joiners supplied the successful Federalists ten years after the Revolution with mansions embellished with the holdover classical idioms of pre-Revolutionary colonial Georgian grandeur.

The Crafts' house was a curious mixture of this older taste for classical detail combined with the severer Adam influence and Banner's own tendency to over-all heaviness. In this design for Ebenezer Crafts, the Adam influence was overpowered. The great two-story porch with the Corinthian columns and the architectural embellishments of the whole façade were ornate but not overly so. They were cleverly and tastefully balanced by the placing of other details, such as the string course with its guilloche carving over the arches, the balustrade, the dentils under the window cornices, and the two nice end chimneys and low hipped roof. Impressive it was, although it had none of the simple grandeur of the Gore mansion, which is a distinguished architectural creation and a truer example of the new taste in domestic aristocratic architecture than this effort by Peter Banner in 1805.

Colonel David Humphreys (1752-1818) of Rimmon Falls (Derby), Connecticut, moved to Boston around 1803. His business ventures had become successful and though he was traveling a good deal this distinguished and useful gentleman decided to build a proper and elegant house for his wealthy English wife. Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Humphreys' friend and equally important a political



FIG. 4. STEPHEN HIGGINSON, JR., HOUSE, 87 MOUNT VERNON STREET,
BOSTON (NOW THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE COLONIAL SOCIETY),
1804-1806

Courtesy of the Boston Athenæum.

and mercantile figure, had also left his native town, Litchfield, Connecticut, to become a leading merchant in New York City. Wolcott was in charge of Humphreys' financial affairs in New York and Stephen Higginson, Jr., of Boston, another friend and advisor, was a kind of overseer to Humphreys' interests in Boston while the latter was abroad on a business trip investigating new techniques in textile manufacturing. Mr. Higginson was also building a house next to that of Colonel Humphreys' on Mount Vernon Street, Boston, both on land purchased from Charles Bulfinch, who was also the architect (Fig. 4).

In the Wolcott manuscript collection at The Connecticut Historical Society, there are several letters which give important information on Peter Banner as well as interesting data on domestic building practices and an unusual side light on the rising building costs which seem all too familiar today. Unexpectedly here, too, is succinct information about Charles Bulfinch as well as the carpenters, masons, Samuel Skillen, the wood carver, and the other artisans who were all connected with the building of the Higginson and Humphreys houses. This information is included in the correspondence between Mr. Higginson and Mr. Wolcott as well as correspondence with Mr. Oliver Sherman of the firm Sherman & Company, Boston, which also handled Colonel Humphreys' bills and business.²⁹ (The letters are included in an addendum.)

David Humphreys had purchased land "pr Deed" in Boston from Charles Bulfinch in 1805 for \$4,000. Before this, on November 2, 1804, Humphreys paid Bulfinch \$4,500, perhaps for the plans for the house and work connected with its supervision.³⁰ The work on the house had progressed from 1804 until the fol-

lowing spring, when Humphreys became concerned with the costs and complained that "The account [was] rising far beyond what was expected by even Mr. Bulfinch, who superintended the building. . . ." ³¹ With the hope of reducing costs he wrote to Peter Banner, asking him to review the building accounts of his house and to submit a "judgement" sometime before August. This letter is not in existence but the following extract from the letter, dated New York, August 14, 1806, to Stephen Higginson, Jr., a certified extract of which was sent to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., is quoted in full as it enlightens us on several points concerning Banner's activities at the time:

I take the liberty of enclosing, unsealed, a *private & confidential letter* to Mr. Peter Banner (Architect, now employed in superintending the India Wharf-buildings) to assist in forming a judgment on the subject. I believe he is an honest man, skilful in his profession, & that I can depend on his Estimates. I think moreover, from what I have learned from Dr. Dwight & others, he may be employed as a builder with credit to himself & advantage to his employer; and I recommend him accordingly. I request you will not let *any Person* know I have written to him on this business. His disinterested interference might otherwise, from motives of jealousy, in others, become a prejudice to himself. And if I can do him no good, I would fain avoid doing him any harm. I pray therefore you will have the goodness to consult him in *perfect confidence & secrecy*. And whatever Bill he pronounces I ought to pay, I shall most voluntarily & cheerfully discharge.³²

Colonel Humphreys was most emphatic about keeping the matter secret, but one wonders how much may have leaked out, particularly to Charles Bulfinch, himself a close friend of both Higginson and Oliver Sherman, "whose proper business it is to settle the accounts of Colonel H."³³ It is apparent how much Humphreys trusted Banner and had perfect confidence in his ability. He may

have even known, or at least have met Banner, though he does not say so. The "Dr. Dwight" mentioned was probably none other than President Timothy Dwight of Yale College for whom Peter Banner had worked for several years. It is refreshing to know that President Dwight spoke to Humphreys so well of Banner for it reflects complete satisfaction with his work for Yale College from 1799-1802. It is also to be noted that Humphreys talked with "others" showing that Banner was well known and thought of.

The letter also gives some insight into another, hitherto unsuspected, project—Banner's employment "superintending the India Wharf buildings." Abbott Lowell Cummings, in his study of India Wharf, makes no mention of Peter Banner's connection with the work.⁸⁴ However, there was considerable building activity along the wharf over a period of several years. First, there was the Broad Street Associates and their wharves and stores, presumably finished in 1805. Secondly, the Proprietors of India Wharf also built "according to a plan drawn by Charles Bulfinch Esq." Then again, the Proprietors contracted a block of 34 brick stores five stories high above the cellars in 1805. This imposing structure was to be erected "nearly in conformity with a plan drawn by Charles Bulfinch Esquire" and was apparently finished in January, 1807.

Banner may not have had any connection with these ranges of buildings. Mr. Cummings, however, states that there were other projects in the works. For instance, on May 24, 1805, the same Proprietors "contracted for a third block of stores . . . as an almost wedge-shaped building at the western end of the India Wharf stores and just to the south of the 'Ten Stores' first built." And Mr. Cum-

mings also points out that other stores may have been contemplated as late as 1808.

Colonel Humphreys, in his letter of August 14, 1806, says that Peter Banner was superintending India Wharf buildings then and we assume this was before August 14. Mr. Cummings kindly looked again through the manuscript collections upon which he based his article on India Wharf and found one bill among the other loose-sheet accounts which has particular bearing on the subject:

Dr Proprietors of India Wharf in
a/c with Francis C. Lowell . . .

1808

Jan ^y 30	To Cash p ^d James Lloyd Jr.	
	Stephenson & Gardners	
	bill	69.75
	P. Banner	<u>126.66</u>

196.41⁸⁵

We not only have Peter Banner as superintendent at the building of India Wharf in 1806, but still working or in some way connected with the project as late as January 30, 1808, and being paid almost twice as much as the other workmen. Mr. Cummings states that there are frequent gaps in the records and, perhaps, other accounts concerning Banner were among those missing. From these two references, however, we can assume that Banner had worked in several of the wharf buildings. As we have seen, Banner had built extensively in brick in New Haven and was capable enough to supervise such a large masonry construction project for the Wharf Proprietors. There is no reason to assume that Banner was engaged in any other way than that of a supervisor. With so many ambitious and separate projects being contracted in such close chronology, the Proprietors perhaps had difficulty in finding enough capable workmen, join-

ers, and bricklayers to keep the work in progress. A particular problem was finding experienced superintendents, of whom Peter Banner was apparently one.

To return to the Humphreys' and Higginson's town houses, Colonel Humphreys had looked into Peter Banner's reputation, found it good, and asked him to review the costs of construction on his Boston house, a Charles Bulfinch commission. Banner took his time about it, and when he did submit his "judgement," he reduced the bill only by \$134.40. At the end of the accounts, dated December 2, 1806, Banner wrote: "Examined the vouchers for the above account & find them agree. by [*sic*] find error in the charges to the amount of 134.40. Peter Banner."³⁶ (See addenda.)

In January, 1807, the bills had still not been paid. Stephen Higginson, Jr., finally wrote to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., in January, 1807, from which we quote in part:

The account rising far beyond what was expected by even Mr. Bulfinch who superintended the building—great delay has arisen in Settling the Bills and some have been left to a reference—The result has been that they at last amounted to more than 22,000 and they were all placed a month since in the hands of Mr. Peter Banner, agreeable to the wishes of Col. H—. Yesterday, he returned them to me with only the deduction of \$134.40 leaving the Am^t of \$22,547 against Col H., of which only \$18, 250 has been paid—Now, my Dear Sir, you will relieve some of these Tradesmen and the credit of Col. H. if you can make speedy provision for the pay^t of the remaining sum say \$3,847.³⁷

In this same letter Higginson quotes the letter from Humphreys saying he will abide by Banner's decision.

The business of paying Mr. Bulfinch does not seem to have taken place until just before the end of the month. In another letter to Wolcott about the matter,

Higginson ends by stating cryptically: "As my own Bills amount to exactly the same as his, and are long since paid, I cannot a moment doubt his approbation of our proceedings."³⁷ Thus, both Mr. Higginson's and Colonel Humphreys' houses were nearly finished in January, 1807, and both far exceeded in expense the original estimates of Bulfinch.

Having established himself in Boston with the Crafts' house, Brookline church, and his work on one of the India Wharf projects, Banner had by this time gained some prominence. In 1809 he won what was a coveted building contract—the Park Street Church in Boston.

Charles Place has described the Park Street Church, shown in frontispiece, and there is no need to go into further detail here.³⁹ Begun in the spring of 1809, the spire was an adaptation from the work of James Gibbs whose soaring spires were exclusively in favor in this country rather than Sir Christopher Wren's, popular hearsay erroneously to the contrary. Bulfinch plainly preferred Gibbs to Wren. In Rhode Island, particularly in Providence, native-son architects like Brown and Warren were just as enamored with Gibbs as Banner and Bulfinch were. The tower on Banner's Park Street Church is even a finer adaptation of Gibbs than that on the First Baptist Church by Brown, constructed in 1771.

Peter Banner not only won the contract for the Park Street Church in 1809 but in June of the same year he also was after the contract to erect two houses in Boston. In May of 1809 a committee of the Old South Church was asked to inquire into the costs of building two parsonage houses and on this date had accepted "the form of the Houses, agreeable to the plans long drafted by Mr. Benjamin."⁴⁰ Benjamin's plans included

basement stories for each house and were to cost \$12,000. The committee, although it had voted to accept Benjamin's plans in May, was not content with them for some reason. On June 6, 1809, the committee reconsidered Benjamin's plans and also "Another plan drafted by Mr. Banner, 2 houses with 2 kitchens not with basement stories" at a cost of \$14,000. The only action taken by the committee was to request the Trustees of the church to make the sum available to complete the building of the two parsonage houses. The next day, however, the committee met again and voted "That we so far reconsider our vote passed on the 29th of May respecting the form of the Houses, agreeable to the plans drafted by Mr. Banner and we now adapt and agree to build the parsonage houses agreeable to a plan drafted by Mr. Banner, which this day laid before the Society, provided they can be built not to exceed the sum of \$14,000." It was also voted that the committee make the contracts and effect the completion of the new buildings, at the same time disposing of the old building then on the grounds to the best advantage. This last had been built in 1710 and was a warehouse with tremendous long and heavy beams.⁴¹

We know that Peter Banner had already won a building commission by underbidding. Back in New Haven he himself stated that he had a competitor for one of the buildings of Yale College.⁴² We do not know who this competitor was, but in Boston he won a larger commission from a young native son who already had a good reputation, Asher Benjamin. Benjamin had also come from Connecticut where he had been apprenticed to or at least worked with Thomas Hayden of Windsor, a competent and much-experienced master joiner, on the Oliver Phelps house in Suffield, Connect-

icut, in 1795.⁴³ Benjamin was well known in rural New England, judging at least from his handy-sized publications on architecture so much in use by rural carpenters that early editions are scarce today because they were worn out. In 1802 Benjamin had advertised an architectural school in Windsor, Vermont,⁴⁴ where he designed and built the fine Congregational Church and some houses. It was after Windsor that he went to Boston and had been in residence there longer than Peter Banner. Bulfinch was considered the architect of Boston. It is doubtful that this loss to Banner was the first such rejection that Benjamin had received. As the engraved plates in the first edition (1797) of Benjamin's *Country Builder's Assistant* show direct adaptation of Bulfinch's design of the church in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, Benjamin must have been in Boston much earlier than 1802 and friendly enough with the master to have been able to copy Bulfinch's plans for his own book. If this is true, then Benjamin was trying to make a living in Boston for a second time in 1809.

There is much we would like to know about these two competing architects. Whether Asher Benjamin lost to Banner with good grace is not known, but we do know that Benjamin did find work in Boston where some of his best buildings still remain. Benjamin has figured more prominently in the history of American architecture, through both his domestic and ecclesiastical buildings and the many editions of his useful books, than his Boston rival, Banner.

This prominence is due to the fact that Asher Benjamin was one of our first American architects about whom there has been material to publish, whereas Peter Banner's work has long been neglected and unknown. Banner's Park Street Church was as fine an architectural

creation as any of comparable size and ambition of the time. The fact that he won a contract from Asher Benjamin shows his reputation had increased remarkably well since 1794 when he was an immigrant to this country in New York.

Though no representation of the South Church parsonage houses are known, they were finished and in use for some years. On April 11, 1811, the Church Society Committee voted to pay "the bills for building the Ministerial Houses, out houses, as far as they are finished, amounting to the sum of \$16,310." Unfinished, they cost over \$2,000 more than Banner had estimated. The easterly house was rented in 1811 for that year for \$600, and Dr. Waterhouse evidently rented it in 1813. There are bills for repairs through the years to follow, and the whole area by the 1840's had become commercial. The buildings and the land were finally sold in 1845.⁴⁵

Another curtain drops on Peter Banner's activities after 1812. During the War of 1812, building activity declined considerably and he may have been content working for some other architect or builder.

There is one activity that we have not mentioned—his private work, which we can only mention briefly. In Boston, Banner returned gradually to somewhat the same buying and building practices he had inaugurated earlier in New Haven. Although we can follow him in the Boston deeds to some extent, it is to no purpose to do so in detail as far as Banner's architecture is concerned, for, unlike his activities in Connecticut, we have little idea of the private houses he constructed. However, it does show us to some extent his personal building undertakings over the years and it will be well to excerpt

from the land records even the slight references to them.

From 1807 and during the construction of the Park Street Church and the Old South Church ministerial houses we find Peter Banner, "architect and Builder," buying land at Fort Hill which was then in the south end of Boston, north of Griffen's Wharf, the same of Tea Party fame, and near the easternmost point of the town.⁴⁶ In the deed Banner speaks of his recent removal to Dorchester to live. There he bought two lots on time, paying \$300 per annum for four years, and then \$400 each for five more years, and giving a mortgage for the property. There are stipulations for preserving a passway behind both as an access to the other lots. In August, 1814, Charles Barrett, merchant, recovered judgment against Banner, "house wright," for \$2,000 and four years' interest, and took an execution on the property "with the brick dwelling house and other buildings standing thereon, situated at Fort Hill."⁴⁷ Samuel Billings, owner of the mortgage, then came in possession of the property and bought the judgment of Barrett. We do know that the property was in a row of houses since ownership stopped at "the middle of the partition wall" of James Nelson's house.

Another lot Banner bought was on Common and Tremont Streets.⁴⁸ This he bought at vendue of the town of Boston on July 11, 1811, "with the stipulation that the house built thereon was to be of the same height as its neighbors." This deed was signed, interestingly, "In the presence of Charles Bulfinch."

Still another lot was on Southback Street, now Philip Street, from West Cedar to Grove, back to the Cambridge Ferry.⁴⁹ He bought this from John T. Apthorp for \$2,000 on April 6, 1813. But he divided this into two lots and sold

them the same day at a loss to Moses Ames and Luther Farwell. Let us hope he built them each a house and made up his loss. In these deeds he is merely called "Builder."

It is not likely that he lived at or near any of these places. In fact, during these Boston years, he was distinctly peripatetic. The Boston Directories place him on Elliot (now Stuart) Street in 1809. A year later he was at 90 Newbury Street, that name being then given to Washington, formerly Queen Street. In 1814, he returned to Dorchester. But in 1816 he was back in Boston on Marlborough Street (now Washington, south of Riddle Street) and two years later on Brattle Street.

There is little of a building nature from which to draw any conclusions from these meager references taken from twenty-three recorded deeds ranging from 1807 until 1815. These small projects could have occupied his time in the slack interim of the War of 1812. They do not seem to have been as ambitious or complicated as his private undertakings in New Haven. With the amount of work up to 1812 he could not have had much time to devote to such personal work. During the building lull it is doubtful if he could have hired men to work for him. The records indicate that his transactions for lots of land were busiest after 1810 and up to 1814, signifying, perhaps, an attempt to work on his own after India

Wharf, the Park Street Church, and the Old South Church houses were completed, when there was lack of work of a public or private nature.

Peter Banner may be considered an architect, as is proved by his own plans for Yale College. He had had some training in drawing plans. There was one great difference, however, between Banner and Bulfinch. The latter was an architect from study and books, whereas Banner, who was familiar with architectural books, was a skilled and practicing artisan as well, both a carpenter-joiner and a mason. Banner was a designer, contractor, and even worked on his own buildings in New Haven, Brookline and, presumably, the Park Street Church and his own domestic projects. With such abilities and experiences, he may have executed other designs and plans about which we are ignorant now, and which, let us hope, we may discover.

In the next and concluding article, it will be seen that the two last Peter Banner commissions known—the Burlington First Church (Unitarian), Burlington, Vermont, 1816, and the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts, 1818—were both built according to his designs and plans. So far as the extant records show, he was at no time engaged as a workman or supervisor on these two important buildings. In other words, he was recognized as a competent architect per se.

NOTES

¹ Elmer D. Keith and William L. Warren, "Peter Banner, His Building Speculation in New Haven," Part IV, OLD-TIME NEW ENGLAND, LIII, No. 4, 102.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁴ George Dudley Seymour, *New Haven*, P.P. (New Haven, 1942), p. 774 (illus.) and

p. 775. "The Abraham Bradley House on State Street, built 1808; architect unknown. The author had full notes on this house and intended to write it up for this book, hoping to show that Peter Banners [*sic*] designed it, but he cannot find his notes. . . ." Mr. Seymour must have had reliable evidence. His articles are accurate and founded on facts. Others have dated the house 1807, i.e. WPA Federal Writers'

Project (Connecticut) Old House Survey, 1935-1940; Elmer Davenport Keith's personal file of Connecticut domestic architecture.

⁵ Brookline Town Records (hereafter cited B.T.R.), March 11, 1805.

⁶ B.T.R., April 2, 1804.

⁷ B.T.R., April, 1804. The town offered a reward of \$500 to "detect the villain."

⁸ B.T.R., May 16, 1804.

⁹ B.T.R., May 24, 1804.

¹⁰ Nina Fletcher Little. Mrs. Little has furnished a great deal of material connected with the Brookline meetinghouse from her own researches and notes. It was due to her that the author first knew this church was built by Peter Banner. She also supplied the names of the building committee and the information that Nathaniel Murdock was the local house carpenter. See Nina Fletcher Little, *Some Old Brookline Houses* (Cambridge, 1949), published by The Brookline Historical Society.

¹¹ B.T.R., June 11, 1804.

¹² B.T.R., March 11, 1805.

¹³ Harriet F. Woods, *Historical Sketches of Brookline* (Boston, 1874), p. 252. Many particulars are from this book.

¹⁴ Nina Fletcher Little, "The Four Meeting Houses of the First Parish of Brookline," paper read at the annual meeting of the First Parish in Brookline, April 13, 1938, p. 4.

¹⁵ H. F. Woods, *Historical Sketches of Brookline*.

¹⁶ H. F. Woods, *Historical Sketches of Brookline*.

¹⁷ Charles H. Place, "From Meeting House to Church in New England," OLD-TIME NEW ENGLAND, Ser. Nos. 30-33.

¹⁸ Asher Benjamin, *The Country Builder's Assistant* . . . (Greenfield and Boston, 1797, 1798, 1800, 1805).

¹⁹ William Lamson Warren, "Who Designed Hartford's Center Church?," *The Connecticut Antiquarian*, VII, No. 2, 19-27.

²⁰ Woodward, Map of Brookline, Mass., 1844, one of marginal illustrations.

²¹ H. F. Wood, *Historical Sketches of Brookline*.

²² George Dudley Seymour, *Researches of an Antiquarian*, P.P., n.d. (New Haven); J. Frederick Kelly, "Raising Connecticut Meeting Houses," OLD-TIME NEW ENGLAND, XXVII, No. 1, 3.

²³ Frederick Rice, Jr., "Laying a Long-Distance Line," *New England Magazine*, XXVII, No. 3, 322.

²⁴ James M. and William F. Crafts, *The Crafts Family* (Northampton, 1893).

²⁵ William Wilder Wheildon, *Memoir of Solomon Willard, Architect* (Boston, 1865).

²⁶ Francis A. Drake, *The Town of Roxbury* (Boston, 1878), p. 343.

²⁷ Keith & Warren, OLD-TIME NEW ENGLAND, XLIX, No. 4, 104.

²⁸ Fiske Kimball, *American Domestic Architecture* (New York: Charles Scribner's & Son, 1922), p. 166, Fig. 125.

²⁹ The Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Connecticut, Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Correspondence, hereafter cited as C.H.S., O.W., Jr., Coll.

³⁰ C.H.S., O.W., Jr., Coll., Stephen Higginson, Jr., to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Boston, January 8, 1807, enclosure, "Account of Expenses on house of D. Humphries [*sic*]." Complete account reproduced in addenda.

³¹ C.H.S., O.W., Jr., Coll., *ibid*.

³² C.H.S., O.W., Jr., Coll.; Oliver Sherman to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Boston, January 28, 1807, with certified copy of a letter of David Humphreys to Stephen Higginson, Jr., New York, August 14, 1806.

³³ C.H.S., O.W., Jr., Coll., Stephen Higginson, Jr., to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Boston, January 30, 1807.

³⁴ Abbott Lowell Cummings, "The Beginnings of India Wharf," *Proceedings of the Bostonian Society* (Boston, 1962), p. 17.

³⁵ Business papers of Francis Cabot Lowell, in possession of Mrs. Harriet Ropes Cabot, Boston, Massachusetts.

³⁶ C.H.S., O.W., Jr., Coll., Stephen Higginson, Jr., to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Boston, January 8, 1807, enclosure, "Account of Expenses on house of D. Humphries [*sic*]."

³⁷ C.H.S., O.W., Jr., Coll., *ibid*.

³⁸ C.H.S., O.W., Jr., Coll., Stephen Higginson, Jr., to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Boston, January 30, 1807.

³⁹ Charles A. Place, "From Meeting House to Church in New England," OLD-TIME NEW ENGLAND, XIV, No. 1, 4-6.

⁴⁰ Hamilton Andrews Hill, *History of Old South Church* (Houghton Mifflin Co., 1890), 2 vols., pp. 343 ff.

⁴¹ Hill, *ibid.*

⁴² Keith & Warren, OLD-TIME NEW ENGLAND, XLIX, No. 4, 105.

⁴³ Phelps-Hathaway House, Suffield, property Antiquarian & Landmakers Society of Connecticut, Inc. The initials T.H. were found written on back of a board in the northwest parlor, which established tradition that Thomas Hayden worked on the north wing of this house in 1795. In the King Memorial Library vault is a drawing by Asher Benjamin for a fence post for the Phelps House. Many other artisans worked for Oliver Phelps and most of the papers and bills for it are in the Phelps Collection, State Library, Albany, New York. Several students are working on the building of this house.

⁴⁴ Herbert Wheaton Congdon, "Dake of Castleton House-Joiner Extra Ordinary," Vermont Historical Society, Montpelier, 1949; advertisement reprinted from *Windsor Gazette*, January 5, 1802. "The Subscriber (Asher Benjamin) intends to open a School of Architecture at his house in Windsor, the 20th of February next. . . ."

⁴⁵ H. A. Hill, *History of Old South Church.*

⁴⁶ Suffolk County Deeds (hereafter cited as S.C.D.), Vol. 223, p. 13A, September 12, 1807, Peter Banner of Boston.

⁴⁷ S.C.D., Vol. 244, p. 286, August 20, 1814, and Vol. 249, p. 190.

⁴⁸ S.C.D., Vol. 238, p. 109B, August 14, 1811.

⁴⁹ S.C.D., Vol. 242, p. 33C, April 7, 1813.

ADDENDA

The following letters are copied from the Oliver Wolcott, Jr., collection of correspondence at The Connecticut Historical Society, 1 Elizabeth Street, Hartford, Connecticut, and published for the first time with the kind permission of the Society's Standing Committee.

Boston Sept^r 15. 1806

Mr Oliver Wolcott

Sir.

Col^o Humphreys when he left this place mentioned that we were to draw on you for any sums which we might need for the payment of Sundry bills for his Accts—We have been obliged to advance for his account about 300 Dols more than we had funds, & shall take the liberty to draw on you for that amount at 10 or 15 days Sight which drafts we presume you will honor—The Bills for building his house have not yet been collected & approved by Mr Higginson, the payment for those bills, if we understood Mr Humphrys letter, would not be paid until about 90 Days from the date of his letter 12 August & we shall not draw on you payable before that time for the same

We are respectfully

Yours etc

Oliver Sherman & Co.

[Cover]

Messrs Oliver Wolcott & Co

Merchants

New York

Boston Sept^r 26 1806

Mr Oliver Wolcott

Sir

We have this day drawn on you as 60

Days Sight in favor of Jeremiah Gardner for one thousand dollars being in part for money due on ^{a/c} of building Col^o H's house—This bill was drawn at the request of Mr S. Higginson Jr in writing—The accts for building the house have not yet been settled & approved by Mr Higginson, but Mr Higginson informs me there will be due from Col^o Humphreys "some thousand dollars"—We should like to be informed respecting Col^o Humphrey's directions to you as we should not like to draw without authority

We are respectfully

Yours etc

O. Sherman & Co.

[Cover]

Mess^s Oliver Wolcott & Co.

Merchants

New York

Boston, Jan^y 8th 1807

Oliver Wolcott Esq

Dear Sir,

It is some time since I have seen your letter to Mr Sherman on the subject of providing for the payment of the Balance due on Col Humphries' House—The account rising far beyond what was expected by even Mr Bulfinch who superintended the building—great delay has arisen in Settling the Bills, and some have been left to a reference—The result has been that they at last amounted to more than 22,000, and they were all placed a month since in the hands of Mr Peter Banner, agreeable to the wishes of Col. H—Yesterday he returned them to me with only the deduction of \$134.40 leav-

ing the Amt of \$22,547 against Col H of which only \$18,250 has been paid and a balance of \$4,297 remains due on the account of which Mr Sherman informs he can pay only \$450—Now my Dear Sir, you will receive some of these Tradesmen & the credit of Col H if you can make speedy provision for the pay^t of the remaining Sum say \$3,847.

In a letter dated New York, Aug. 14. 1806 (which also enclosed one for Mr Banner) after much commendation on Mr B, he says "I pray therefore you will consult him in perfect confidence & whatever Bills he pronounces I ought

to pay, I will most voluntarily and cheerfully discharge"—now Sir, after having the papers a month, Mr B has written the lines you will see at the foot of the account—a copy of which is here enclos'd—I observe your question to Mr S. respecting the money which may arise from the Sale of this Estate—now as Col H. limited me at \$25,000 & this Sum cannot be obtained—I have written to him, to say I would keep the Estate for his further Orders—

With Respect I am yours Etc

[Enclosure]

D^r Account of Expences on house of D. Humphries Esq^r on Mount Vernon

1805	For land of Chs. Bulfinch. . Pr Deed		4000.—
	To J Gardners account for materials & work on the outside & frame of House Stable woodhouse; and complete inside finishing	6702.48	
	Deduct 10 per cent on the labour	393.—	6309.17
	To Osgood & Whitney, Masons acc ^t of materials & work	7545.71	
	deduction made by referees	125.93	7419.78
	To Smith & Blake, Painters account	1057.75	
	deduction by referees	147.86	909.89
	William Homer. stone & marble		304.92
	William Whall. iron balconies &c		155.50
	Jn ^o Martin. fan lights		65.91
	Brown & Widdfield. chimney peices		165.75
	Fullick & Bailey. building cistern		15.37
	J Barnard. Tarrers for do		15.—
	R Ramsall. roof for woodhouse &c		39.68
	Jn ^o . Winslow. window weights		9.20
	Josiah Cushing. hard wood thresholds		3.65
	Kenney & Carnes. papering		71.95
	Joseph How. Rumfords roasters &c		128.28
	Lancaster. ditto setting & chimneys		50.—
	S. Skillen. 8 carved window tresses		40.—
	Jno. How & Sons. turned work		18. 3
	E & J Breed. vase Stoves		97.75
	B. Loring. measuring plaistering		18.43
	S. Bradlee. for Nails		81.72
	Jos ^h Barnes. Stone posts & stone for fence		79.82
	F. W. Major. Cistern pump		17.—
	Reynard & Batson. Stucco work. (472.94 reduced to)		432.94
	J. Tilden. Chimneys from Italy		143. 1
	R Jordan. for labour on the Grounds		22.19
	Dan ^l Cowen. do. do.		192.56
	Carried over		\$20,807.50

Peter Banner, Architect

75

	Bro't over	\$20,807.50
Michael Neef Iron work		182.28
Jn ^o Howes. Bill of lumber		955.34
Tho ^s Barry do		26. 2
Nath ^l Call do		24.57
Capen & Drake. Lime used by Stucco workers		24.50
Caleb Loring. Stone for west wall. 33 perches		85.25
do edge stone in the Street. half		27.18
Wait. for paving bricks do do		31.—
Stevens & Joy. for Locks. hinges &c &c		457.80
		<u>22,681.44</u>

Dec^r 2. 1806. Examined the vouchers for the
 above account & find them agree. by find
 error in the charges to the amount of 134 40/100
 sign'd Peter Banner

134.40
Dolls 22,547. 4

Cr

1806	By Cash at sundry payments to Charles Bulfinch or his order—	
	1804. Nov 2	4500.—
	1805. Jany. 18	800.—
	Feby. 6	1200.—
	Mar. 16	250.—
	“ 30	300.—
errors	April 10	500.—
51	May 2	2000.—
40.12	June 14	160.—
	“ 15	150.—
	“ 24	190.—
	July 11	500.—
	19	140.—
	20	400.—
	Aug 20	600.—
	“ 29	400.—
	Nov 26	1000.—
	Dec 21	500.—
	“ 27	710.—
2.59	1806. Feb ^y 21	400.—
	Mar 22	500.—
	June 7	600.—
3.45	“ 26	600.—
	July 26	200.—
		<u>16,600.—</u>
	Cash of Oliver Sherman paid Osgood	,400.—
	Do Do paid Garnder	1,000.
	Do Do Dec. 6. paid Smith & Blake	,250.—
37.24		
	Carried over	<u>\$18,250</u>

[Cover]
 Oliver Wolcott Esq^r
 Merchant
 New York.

Boston Jany 28. 1807

Oliver Wolcott Esq
Sir

In consequence of your letter to Mr S. Higginson Jr of the 19th Inst, I have this day drawn on you, in favor of Charles Bulfinch Esq at Sixty days Sight three bills of exchange amounting in the whole to Thirty nine hundred dollars—viz

1 bill	792 Dols
1 "	2000
1 "	1108
	<u>\$3900</u>

Enclosed is an extract from Col^o Humphreys letter to Mr S. Higginson Jr dated in August last

I am with respect
Your Obedt Servt
Oliver Sherman

Extract of a Letter from D. Humphreys Esq^f to Stephen Higginson Jun^f dated New York Augt. 14, 1806.

"I take the liberty of enclosing, unsealed, a *private & confidential letter* to Mr. Peter Banner (Architect, now employed in superintending the India Wharf-buildings) to assist in forming a judgment on the subject. I believe he is an honest man, skilful in his profession & that I can depend on his Estimates. I think moreover, from what I have learned from Dr. Dwight & others, he may be employed as a builder with credit to himself & advantage to his employer; and I recommend him accordingly. I request you will not let *any Person* know I have written to him on this business. His disinterested interference might otherwise, from motives of jealousy, in others, become a prejudice to himself. And if I can do him no good, I would fain avoid doing him any harm. I pray therefore you will have the goodness to consult him in *perfect confidence & secrecy*. And whatever Bill he pronounces I ought to pay, I shall most voluntarily & cheerfully discharge."

[Copy certified by John Gardner,
Justice of the Peace, January 27, 1807.]

[Cover]

Oliver Wolcott Esq
Merchant

New York [Endorsed] Oliver Sherman
Keep Feb: 1 1807
Answd " 5 "

Boston Jany. 30 1807

O Wolcott Esq^f
Dear Sir

I have been favored with yours of the 19th. some days since but have waited the final arrangement of the business between Mr. Bulfinch & Mr Sherman which took place yesterday. The Copy of my Letter of y^e. 8th was sent you by mistake instead of the original which was left with the Clerk to take aloon[?] Copy of (as I have no private Letter Book) & forward with a Copy of the Accot the original of which last I kept for the use of Mr Sherman, whose proper business it is to settle the accounts of Coln^l H. As I have no authority to act but in advisory as a friend—on this original which is now ballanced by drafts on you & Cash paid by Mr Sherman, is the signature of Mr Banner annex'd to his note of Approbation, in the words you may see at the foot of the Account sent you—This I presume is the manner in which Coln^l H. expected the Accounts would be pass'd, though the sum far exceeds his expectations—An extract from his Letter to me on this subject has been authenticated. & delivered to Mr Sherman to be forwarded to you. This I hope will be satisfactory—I do not see how as friends to Coln^l H. we could do otherwise than support his Credit in this mode. I have always written to him fully on the subject—I shall write in a few days . . . [torn] for Liverpool, inclosing him a copy of the Account as now settled.

As my own Bills amount to exactly the same as his, & are long since paid, I cannot a moment doubt his Approbation of our proceedings—with Great Respect

I am Dr Sir
Yr Obd^t. Ser^t.
S. Higginson Jr.