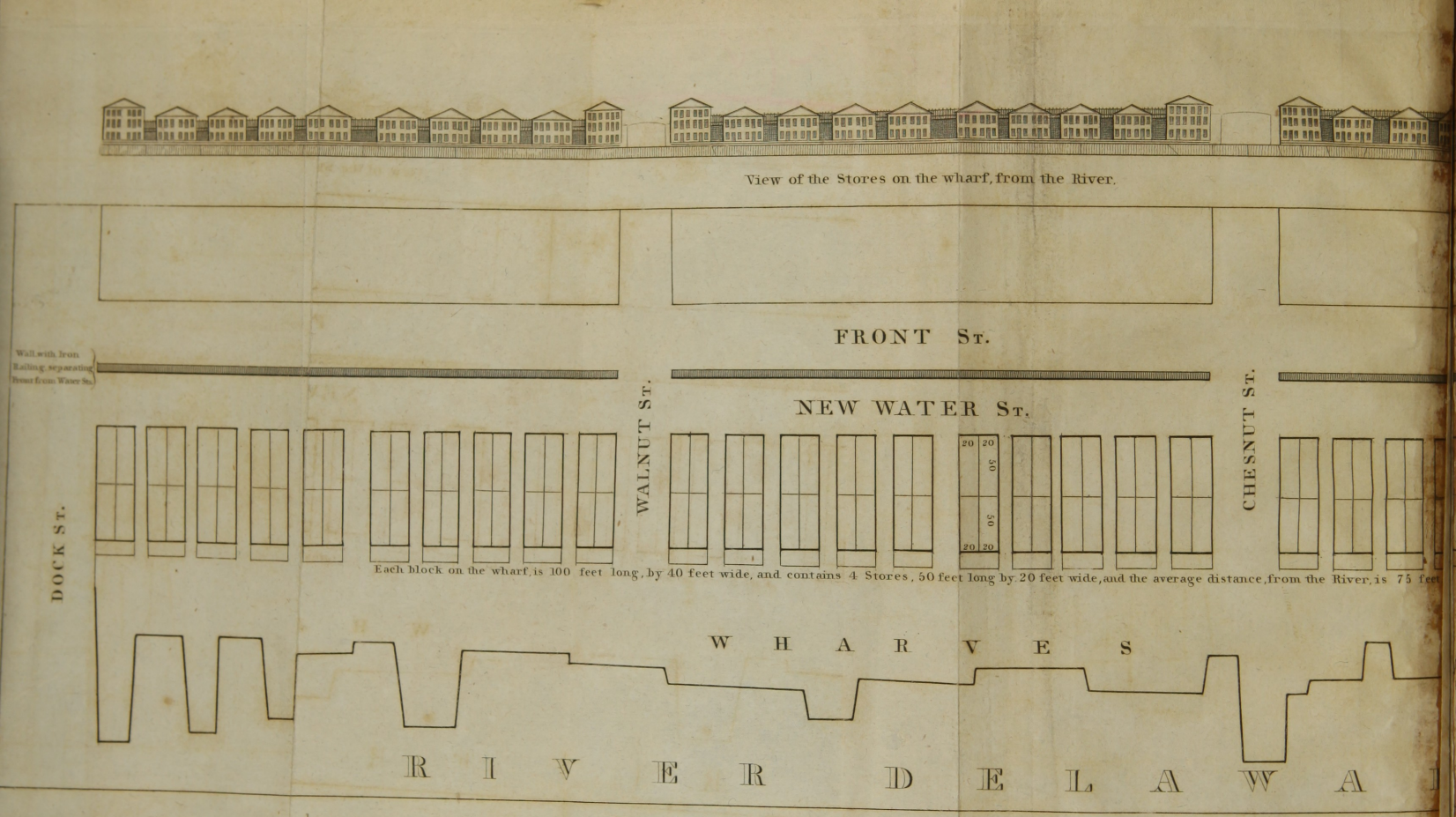
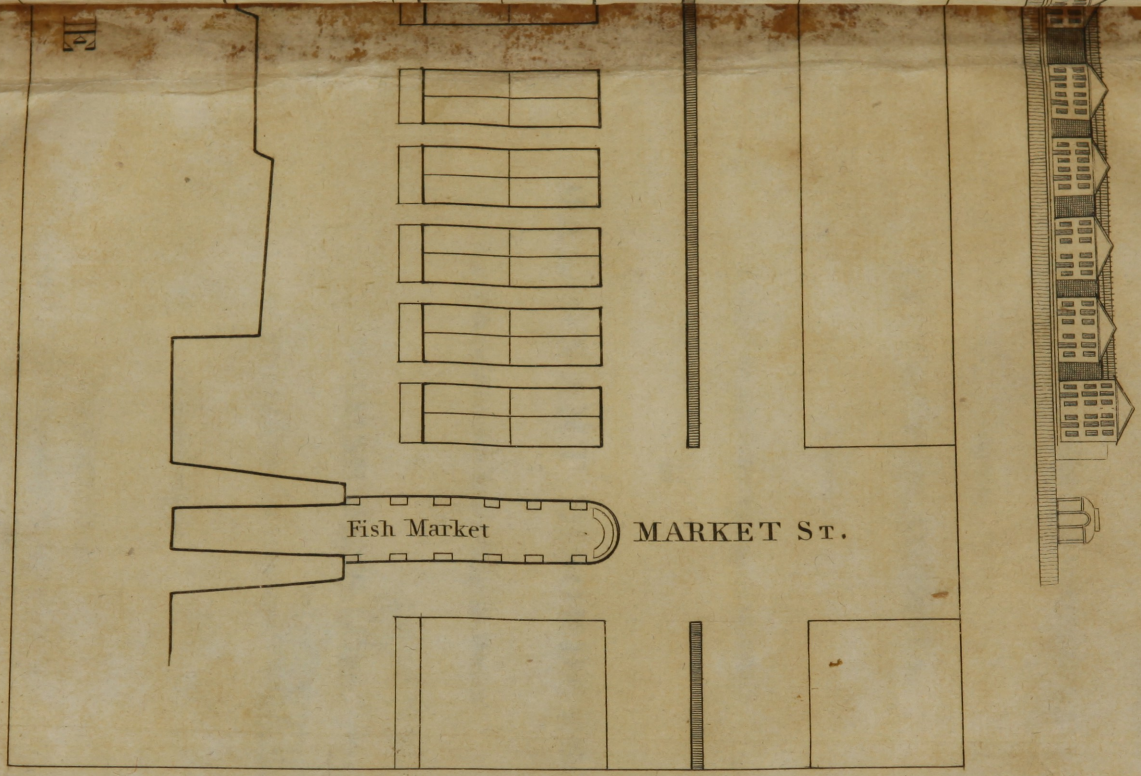
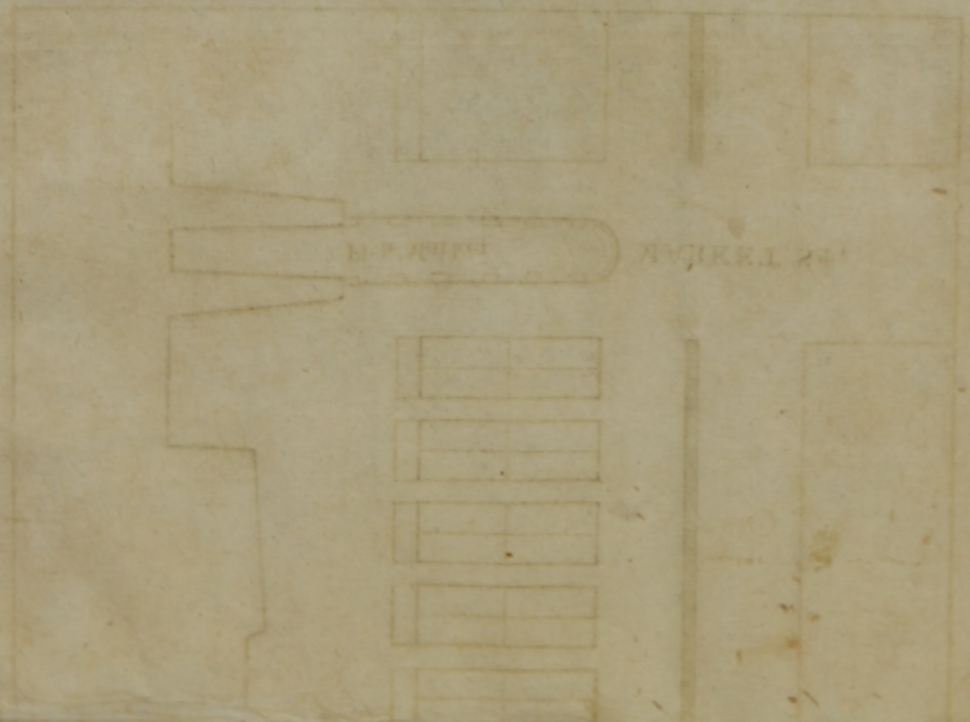

View of the Stores on the wharf, from the River.
FRONT St.
Wall with Iron Railing separating Front from Water St.
NEW WATER St.
WALNUT St.
CHESNUT St.
DOCK St.
20 20
50
50
20 20
Each block on the wharf is 100 feet long, by 40 feet wide, and contains 4 Stores, 50 feet long by 20 feet wide, and the average distance, from the River, is 75 feet
W H A R V E S
R I V E R D E L A W A


Fish Market
MARKET St.



To. Doct.r Nossack with the compliments of the author.

A PROPOSAL

FOR ALTERING THE EASTERN FRONT

OF THE

CITY OF PHILADEPHIA,

WITH

A VIEW TO PREVENT THE RECURRENCE

OF

MALIGNANT DISORDERS,

On a Plan conformable to the Original Design

OF

WILLIAM PENN.

BY A CITIZEN OF PHILADELPHIA.

B. R. (Paul jr)

PHILADELPHIA:
PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY WILLIAM FRY,
NO. 63, SOUTH FIFTH-STREET.

1820.

TO THE

CITIZENS OF PHILADELPHIA.

Friends and Fellow-Citizens,

THE frequent recurrence of Yellow or Malignant Fever in our city calls on us to adopt some plan to remedy the evil; while the well known fact, that the disease always commences in the neighbourhood of the wharves, teaches us to believe that a remedy can be obtained, only by making a thorough alteration of the east front of the city.

Having transacted business in Water-street nearly forty years, I have frequently reflected on what would be the best means to prevent the dissemination of a disease that has proved so destructive of the lives, happiness, and wealth of our citizens. I now offer, with due deference to public opinion, a plan that I think would correct the evil, and for the execution of which the present time is certainly most propitious, as

real estate, labour, and materials are as low, or lower than they have been for many years, and money is easily obtained. In submitting this plan to your judgment I am aware that the undertaking is of great magnitude, but by no means so difficult as many may imagine, which the information I have collected and now lay before you will clearly show.

The advantages to be derived from it are almost incalculable. It would make our city as healthy as any in the world; it would give employment to a great number of mechanics and labourers; it would put into circulation a large sum of money, and principally among that portion of our citizens who are the most in need of succour; it would remove many dram-shops and other immoral nuisances; it would materially lessen the risk from fire; and in fine, it would make Philadelphia the handsomest of cities.

Having thus stated some of the advantages, it remains for me to show what would be the probable cost of the undertaking; say for the purchase of all private property between Vine and Spruce streets, including the east side of Front-street to the river Delaware; the assess-

ment of which property, for the year 1820, is as follows:—viz.

			Dolls.	Dolls.
Upper Delaware Ward,		Including all property on the east side of Front St. and through to the river Delaware.	192,765	
Lower	do.	do.	224,970	
High Street	do.	do.	415,700	
Chesnut	do.	do.	287,043	
Walnut	do.	do.	297,362	
Dock	do.	do.	275,800	
				1,693,640

I shall not be far from the truth in saying (after seeing the above assessment) that the whole can be bought for - - - - - - - -	3,000,000
To which add an estimate of the expense necessary to complete the plan, made by Mr. Strickland, and in which he has made a liberal allowance, -	651,000
	3,651,000
At 6 per cent. per annum, is	219,060

From this it appears that the whole cost would be about three millions six hundred and fifty-one thousand dollars, equal to two hundred and nineteen thousand and sixty dollars per annum. Here I beg leave to state, that about fifty gentlemen in Boston subscribed half a million of dollars for the erection of a large wharf and fifty warehouses on it, and for which they receive a handsome income: must it be said that the city of Philadelphia cannot accomplish a highly important improvement that will cost but about

seven times the amount of what was done by a few individuals in a sister city?

The way in which the principal or interest of the debt, if incurred, is to be paid, will be from the sale or rent of the stores to the highest bidder in fee for the store and ground occupied by it; from the wharfage on vessels and on all packages imported and exported; and from an assessment on the property on the west side of Front street and streets adjacent, for as much as it may be increased in value by the proposed alteration, and which would amount to at least one hundred and fifty thousand dollars; as Front street would certainly become the most valuable situation for business and the most desirable for residence in the city.

There are, according to the plan, 132 stores, 20 by 100 feet, which will be worth about $1,333,333 33.

	Dolls.
at 6 per cent. per annum, is	80,000
Wharfage on imports, foreign, say on 534,000 packages at an average of 8 cents per package, ...	42,720
Wharfage on foreign exports will certainly exceed the above, but put at the same, ...	42,720
Wharfage on domestic imports and exports, say . . .	30,000
Wharfage on vessels estimated at about one half the present rate, ...	25,560
Dolls.	221,000

From this statement it appears that the revenue would be equal to the expense, allowing for the loan required six per cent. interest; but it is highly probable that money could now be obtained (on the security that the city could give) at five per cent. per annum; in which case there would be an annual surplus of thirty-eight thousand four hundred and fifty dollars, to be appropriated as a sinking fund; to which might be added the sum assessed on property on the west side of Front street and adjacent thereto.

The estimate of packages is made from the Custom House returns for the years 1807 and 1819, which give the above as an average number for one year, without including steel, bar-iron, hides, dye-woods, plaster of paris, hemp, twine, salt, coals, lead, limes, oranges, cocoa-nuts, and various other articles that come loose, and which would pay a considerable sum.

Heretofore I have said nothing about the property of New-Market Ward, running from Spruce to South street; and although not included in the preceding estimate, it would be necessary for the city to purchase it, as otherwise

it would be difficult to collect the proposed wharfage on packages, while such good and convenient wharves could be had free of that charge; but as this ward would require but a trifling alteration, it would unquestionably pay the interest of the purchase money.

Should each particular trade take stores adjoining each other as in other large cities, it will be a great convenience to the merchants; there would be no danger of business going beyond the limits of the city, whatever inducements might be held out, as the difference of porterage would more than pay the wharfage; besides, no vessel from a foreign port can discharge above Vine or below South streets, without special permission of the collector.

Having now given my calculations founded on the best information I have been able to obtain, you will on examination be able to determine whether they are founded on good grounds; if they are, the difficulty apprehended by many will be done away. No doubt the plan now suggested may be much improved; it is certainly very desirable that a regular plan for the gradual improvement of the wharves should be

early adopted, and when a wharf requires repairing, it should be done in conformity with that plan; the repairs should be done with stone from low water mark, which would contribute to health as well as durability.

I must notice that the city would lose the taxes for one year while the improvement is going on, say on two squares annually, at an average of about three thousand five hundred dollars per square.

Should the trade of our city increase, which we have every reason to expect, the revenue to the city would increase in the same proportion.

The mode of carrying the plan into execution, should it be deemed worthy of consideration, can be digested by such body as may be appointed to consider the same: All of which is respectfully submitted by the public's

Humble servant,

PAUL BECK, Jr.

STATEMENT.

The following is an estimate of the cost of one block of stores, size 40 by 100 feet, two and one half stories high.

	Dolls.	
Logs for foundations, ...	200	
Laying 200,000 bricks, including lime and sand, ...	800	
Slate, 40 squares, ...	820	
Carpenter's work, ...	1500	
Plank for floors, ...	400	
Blacksmith's work including fire proofs, . . .	2000	
Ironmongery and nails, ...	400	
Painting and glazing, ...	500	
Rough casting the fronts on the river and on New Water street, ...	230	
Stone-cutter's work at heads and sills, . . .	300	
Digging out foundations, ...	300	
Total cost of a block 40 by 100 feet, ...	7450	
One half of a store 20 by 100 feet, say . . .	3750	
Number of stores, ...	132	
Net cost of 132 stores, ...		495,000
The following is an estimate of the toal cost of pulling down old buildings and cleaning fifty millions of bricks, allowing ten millions to be broken and unfit for use, . .	65,000	
Removing and hauling rubbish, filling up old cellars, &c.	8000	
Amounts carried forward, ...	73,000	495,000

Amounts brought forward, ...	73,000	495,000
Building stone wall along the bank on east line of Front street from Dock to Vine street, ...	18,000	
Iron railing along the east line of Front street	15,000	
Brick and stone paving and regulating wharves and streets, ...	50,000	
		156,000
Total cost, ... dolls.		651,000

(Signed) WILLIAM STRICKLAND,
Architect.

Philadelphia, Oct. 27, 1820.