

LA GUARDIA MAY GO TO MANSION IN MAY

Work of Refitting the Gracie House Proceeds Despite War Stays and Lack of Cash

WPA AIDING SINCE JANUARY

Structure Built 142 Years Ago to Be Official Residence of Mayors of City

Work of refitting the Gracie Mansion, historic manor house in Carl Schurz Park, as an official residence of the city's mayors is progressing despite priorities on construction materials and lack of adequate appropriations. The house will be ready to receive Mayor La Guardia and his family "well before Summer arrives," it was disclosed yesterday.

A WPA crew of laborers began renovation of the 142-year-old frame dwelling and part of the grounds of thirteen and a half acres on Jan. 22. The job was scheduled to take three months, but delays in obtaining metals held up the work. Difficulties in getting fundamental items for the interior decoration plan also have been overcome recently, a spokesman for the Department of Parks, in charge of the project, said yesterday.

Comfort Station Removed
The public comfort station has been removed from the basement of the three-story house and a new station is being completed at a cost of \$8,000 for park visitors 300 feet south of the mansion. The residence stands at the north end of the park, near the East River Drive opposite Eighty-eighth Street, overlooking Hell Gate. In the basement, which is partly above the ground level, four servants' rooms, a room for the Mayor's police guard and an office for the park supervisor are being made.

On the first floor the large central hall off the main entrance facing the East River, the living room, dining room and library have not been changed. The curator's office (the mansion was maintained as a public museum from 1927 until last January) has been converted into a modern kitchen, and part of a side porch adjoining the kitchen has been altered for a servants' sitting room. A pantry, joining kitchen and dining room, has been provided. A driveway has been laid from Eighty-sixth Street to the north side of the house, where an entrance has been cut and a staircase installed.

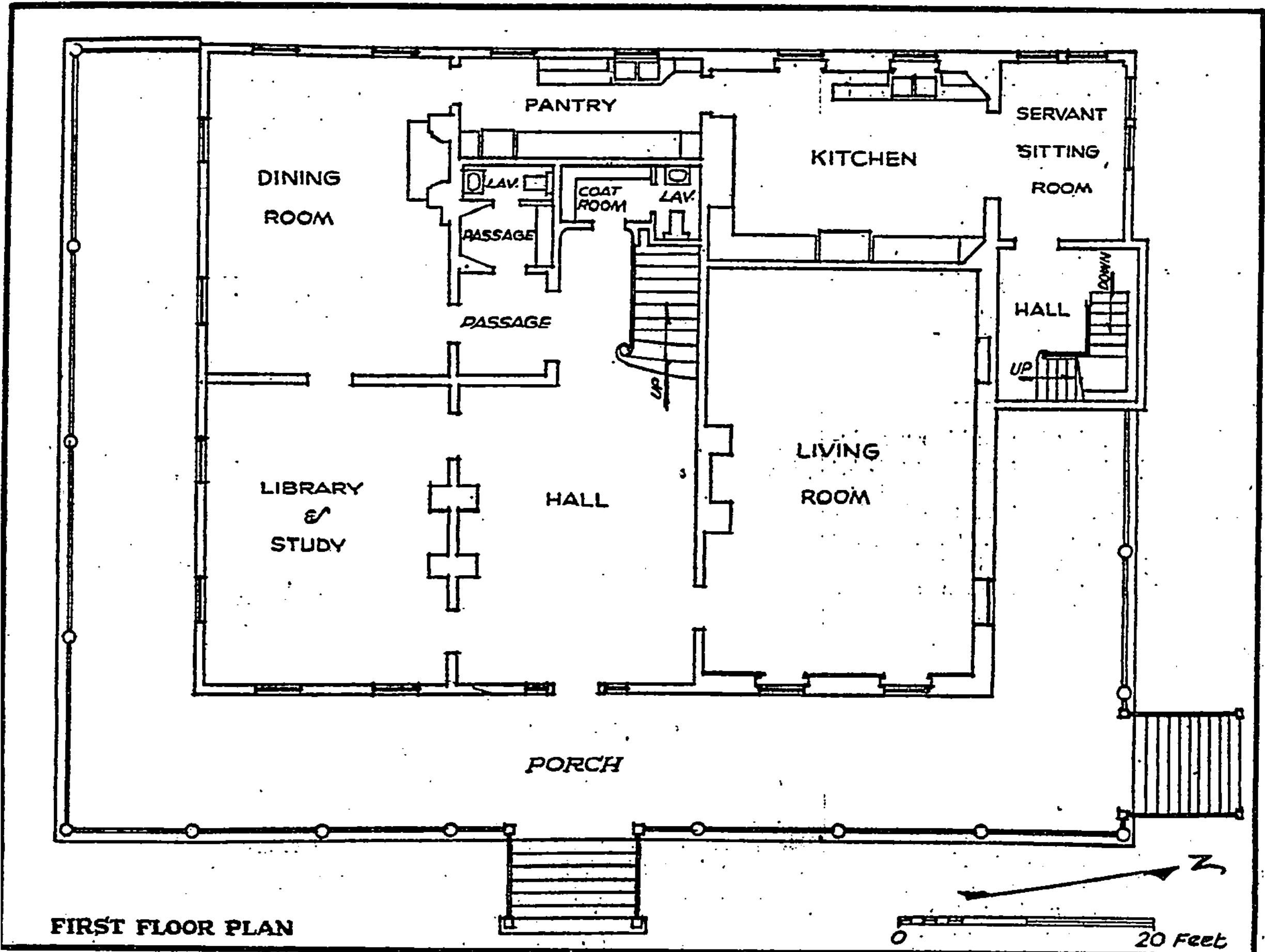
The caretaker's apartment on the north side of the second story has been ripped out. A master bedroom, with four windows and a large bath and dressing alcove, has been fitted into the northeast corner. A former bedroom in the center of the eastern exposure has been altered to a sitting room, while three more bedrooms, each with private bath lined with marble, have been set into the other corners of the second floor. The size of these bathrooms can be judged from the fact that one of them was originally a child's bed chamber.

The attic will be left as unfinished storage space. The spacious double veranda running around three sides of the house and the open fireplaces that are in virtually every room likewise will remain. When the Department of Parks repaired the building in 1934, the central heating and electric systems were installed. New radiators and electric outlets are being added now. An iron fence will separate the residence and "yard" from the remainder of the park.

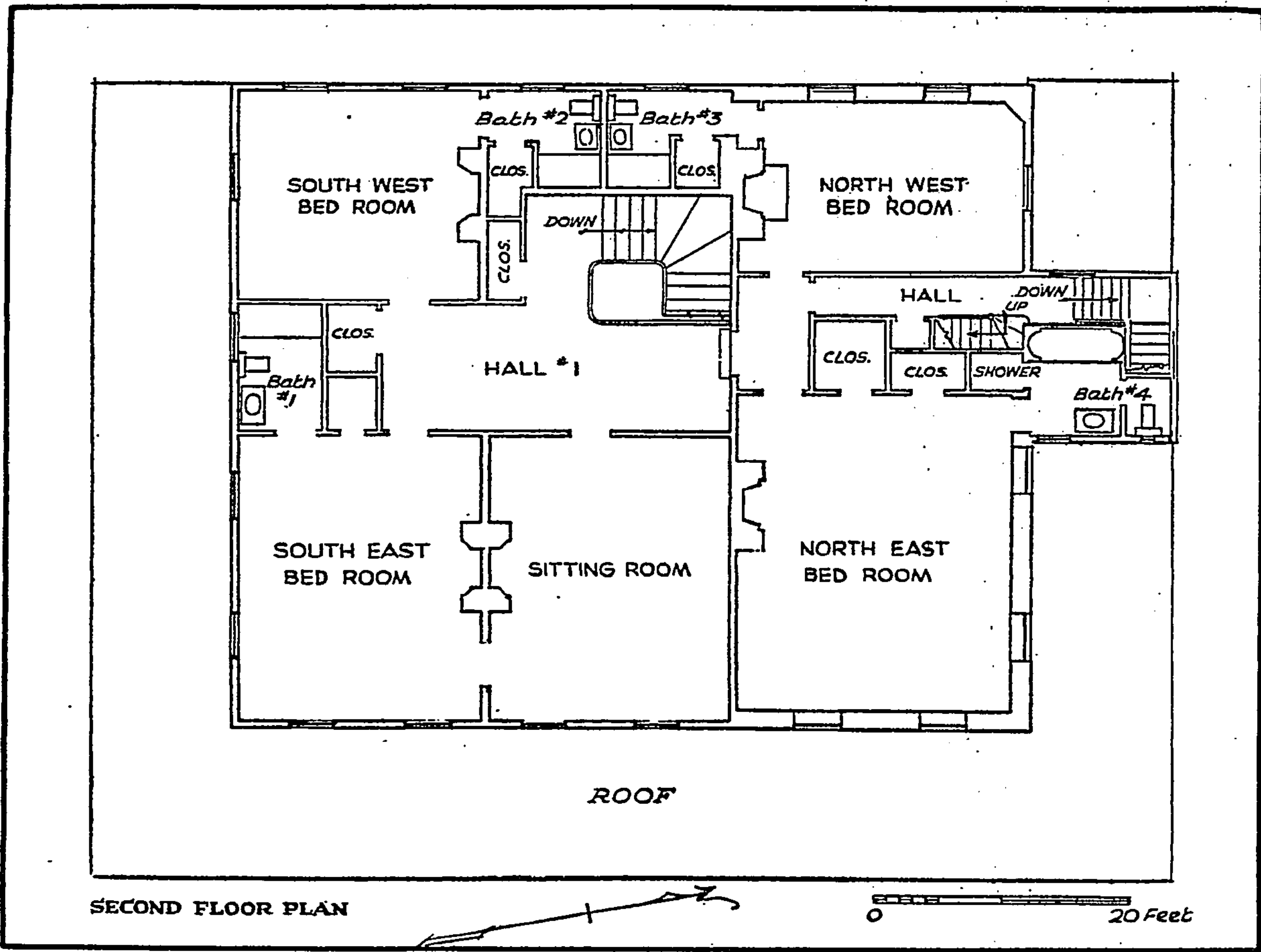
Embury the Architect
Plans for conversion of the building and decoration of the interior were drawn by Aymar Embury 2d, consulting architect to the Department of Parks. The rooms are to be furnished in the fashion of 1800, when the house was built by Archibald Gracie, owner of a famous fleet of clipper ships, with "permanent loans" of authentic pieces in the period of Duncan Phyfe from the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Museum and the Museum of the City of New York.

Selection of the pieces, however, could not proceed until the basic items of the scheme, such as rugs, draperies, wall coverings and new upholstery fabrics for the antiques, were obtained. The museums could not donate these articles for actual daily use and the Board of Estimate had refused to appropriate \$5,000 for them. Private donors, however, have promised to provide them, it was said yesterday. The Mayor, with his wife, two children and a small nephew who lives with him, may be able to leave their apartment at 1274 Fifth Avenue for the housewarming in Gracie Mansion next month.

FLOOR PLANS FOR GRACIE MANSION RENOVATION



First Floor



Second Floor. The architect for the renovation is Aymar Embury 2d.

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