

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE



**HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW BOARD**  
**APPLICATION FOR HISTORIC LANDMARK OR HISTORIC DISTRICT DESIGNATION**

New Designation \_\_\_\_\_ for: Historic Landmark \_\_\_\_\_ Historic District \_\_\_\_\_  
Amendment of a previous designation  x

Please summarize any amendment(s)  This property was listed in the D.C. Inventory in 1964 and National Register in 1969. This amendment provides additional information on the history and significance of the property and expands the landmark designation to include significant interior public spaces.

Property name  Folger Shakespeare Memorial Library   
*If any part of the interior is being nominated, it must be specifically identified and described in the narrative statements.*

Address  201 East Capitol Street, SE

Square and lot number(s)  Square 0760, Lot 0031

Affected Advisory Neighborhood Commission  6B

Date of construction  1928-1932  Date of major alteration(s)  1959, 1983

Architect(s)  Paul Philippe Cret, Alexander B. Trowbridge  Architectural style(s)  Stripped Classical

Original use  Library, Theater, and Museum  Present use  Library, Theater, and Museum

Property owner  Folger Shakespeare Memorial Library

Legal address of property owner  201 East Capitol Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003

NAME OF APPLICANT(S)  Folger Shakespeare Memorial Library

*If the applicant is an organization, it must submit evidence that among its purposes is the promotion of historic preservation in the District of Columbia. A copy of its charter, articles of incorporation, or by-laws, setting forth such purpose, will satisfy this requirement.*

Address/Telephone of applicant(s)  201 East Capitol Street, SE, Washington, DC 20003; (202) 544-4600

Name and title of authorized representative  DR. Michael Witmore, Director

Signature of representative  [Signature]  Date  8/28/18

Name and telephone of author of application  EHT Traceries, Inc. (202) 393-1199

Date received  9/5-10/18   
H.P.O. staff  TD

# 18-16

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Folger Shakespeare Memorial Library (additional documentation)

Other names/site number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

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## 2. Location

Street & number: 201 East Capitol Street, S.E.

City or town: Washington State: DC County: \_\_\_\_\_

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

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## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this \_\_\_ nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_ statewide      \_\_\_ local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_A      \_\_\_B      \_\_\_C      \_\_\_D

<p>_____  <b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>	

<p>In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.</p>	
<p>_____  <b>Signature of commenting official:</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>Date</b></p>
<p>_____  <b>Title :</b></p>	<p>_____  <b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b></p>

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#### 4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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#### 5. Classification

##### Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

##### Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	buildings
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	sites
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	structures
<u>          </u>	<u>          </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>          </u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 1

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**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: Library

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Theater

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Museum

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

EDUCATION: Library

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Theater

RECREATION AND CULTURE: Museum

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**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MODERN MOVEMENT: Art Deco

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Georgia marble, glazed brick, aluminum, steel, glass, concrete

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## Narrative Description

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### Summary Paragraph

The Folger Shakespeare Memorial Library was completed in 1932 to house the renowned Shakespeareana collection of Henry Clay and Emily Jordan Folger. A massive block of masonry with bold, yet carefully restrained, ornamentation, the building is sited one block to the east of the U.S. Capitol Grounds. The Folger Library occupies Lot 31 of Square 760, facing East Capitol Street between Second and Third Streets, S.E., in Washington, D.C. (Figure 1). The building was designed by architect Paul Philippe Cret in a style the architect referred to as “New Classicism,” but which is also often referred to as Stripped Classicism. Considered one of the most significant buildings of the twentieth century, the Folger presents Cret’s modern interpretation of classicism: a combination of the streamlined aesthetic of the Art Moderne style with classically-influenced materials and sculptural ornament that contains a historicist interior tied directly to the building’s purpose as a library dedicated to the works and times of William Shakespeare.

The building has a concrete foundation and a steel structural frame encased in masonry. In keeping with the stripped classical aesthetic, the primary elevations of the building are clad in white, Georgia marble ashlar, primarily in alternating rows of larger and smaller panels. In addition, the library building features a modern interpretation of the classical entablature, which encircles the building at the roofline. The entablature consists of a marble architrave embellished by a sunk-relief lotus motif, above which is a wide frieze band composed of three rows of ashlar, and a cornice of small vertical blocks resembling dentils. Windows are typically steel-framed, fixed-light with aluminum accents and detailing, while doors are solid aluminum. Bas relief ornament presents an innovative use of aluminum. The building’s principal elevation faces north and is set back approximately 50 feet from East Capitol Street. Constructed on concrete footings, the building’s dimensions are approximately 48 feet high, 227 feet wide, and 112 feet deep. It measures three stories plus a raised basement, although divisions between floors are not expressed on all exterior elevations. It is covered by a flat roof that is concealed by a low, stepped parapet. The building was originally constructed with a U-shaped plan; an addition was built onto the south (rear) elevation of the library in 1983, filling the rear courtyard.

In contrast to the modern exterior, the interior of the building largely reflects the architectural interior styles of the Tudor and Jacobean periods (1485-1625) through the use of elements such as decorative oak paneling, stone floors, and four-centered archways. Upon entering the building, the contrast between the modern exterior and period interior gives the visitor the sense of visiting the world of Shakespeare. Adhering to the programmatic requirements specified by the Folgers, the principal interior spaces consist of a Reading Room (now the Gail Kern Paster Reading Room), Theatre, Exhibition Gallery (now referred to as the Great Hall but referred to by its historic name in this application), and Founder’s Room. These spaces, all intact, display a high degree of integrity of design and superior craftsmanship. Ancillary spaces from the

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original period of construction and the New Reading Room, added in 1983 and outside of the Period of Significance, complete the interior spaces.<sup>1</sup>

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## Narrative Description



Figure 1. Current satellite view of the Folger Shakespeare Library (Google)

### *SITE*

The Folger Library occupies a prominent, one-acre site only one block east of the United States Capitol Grounds. A rectangular-shaped terrace containing a shallow lawn, which measures approximately 25 feet wide by 135 feet long, extends along the north elevation of the building. An additional strip of lawn, measuring approximately 15 feet by 135 feet, occupies the space between this terrace and the East Capitol Street sidewalk. These lawns are framed to either side by the broad marble steps that lead to the East and West Lobby entrances.

To the west of the building, a U-shaped, asphalt drive with a granite curb leads from Second Street up to the west elevation of the building. This drive is currently utilized by Folger employees as a parking area. Within the U of the drive is a marble fountain surrounded by plantings. Atop the fountain is an aluminum reproduction of the marble sculpture of Puck designed by Brenda Putnam for this location. Below the statue are oak leaves carved into the

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<sup>1</sup> The Folger Shakespeare Library was previously listed in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites in 1964 and the National Register of Historic Places in 1969. Refer to Section 8 in this document for a complete description of the original documentation and the purpose of this updated nomination.

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marble of the fountain and an inscription “Lord, what fooles these mortals be!” This quotation belongs to the character Puck in the Shakespeare play *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Below the statue and carving, two raised pools feed into a long, narrow basin at grade. The fountain is flanked by two rectangular marble planters. To the north of the fountain and drive is a large magnolia tree with two wood benches positioned underneath. The area between the drive and the balcony is also heavily planted.

To the east of the building is an Elizabethan-style garden, opened in 1989. It is separated from the public sidewalk by wrought-iron fence. The garden consists of a central knot garden with a copper armillary sphere, a memorial to former Folger director O.D. Hardison. Flanking the knot garden are two sections of lawn. Gravel sections to the north and south are shaded by trees. Low marble benches are found throughout the garden. Also located in the garden are eight bronze sculptures by Greg Wyatt, which were added in 2003-2004 and which reference eight of Shakespeare’s plays: *The Tempest*, *Julius Caesar*, *King Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Twelfth Night*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, *Henry IV Part 2*, and *Macbeth*. To the south of the building is a driveway and service area that separates the building from the Library of Congress Adams Building.



Figure 2. Folger Shakespeare Library, undated photograph (Folger Archives)

## **EXTERIOR**

### **Overview**

The Folger Library is presented as a low, solid, rectangular masonry block. The building’s overall sense of solidity is accentuated by the consistent use of white marble for exterior cladding across the west, north, east, and part of the south elevations. Unifying decorative bands

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of white marble carved with bas relief and fluting also unite the four elevations of the building at the third story. The solid form is punctuated by a limited number of deeply recessed window and door openings, many of which are vertically ganged and span several vertical stories. This dramatic pattern of openings increases the low building's sense of height and presence. It also gives the building a distinctly modern appearance for its time, in line with Cret's interpretation of what he referred to as the "New Classical" style.



Figure 3. North Elevation, Undated (Horydczak Collection, Library of Congress).

### ***North (Principal) Elevation***

The principal elevation faces north towards East Capitol Street. It is defined by a sequence of bas-relief panels depicting scenes from Shakespeare's best-known plays, which are surmounted by imposing, double-height window openings. The recessed window openings with their aluminum grilles nod to the Modern and Art Deco styles, while the bas relief panels and the fluted piers that separate the windows demonstrate the classical influence. The primacy of the elevation is emphasized by the employment of a raised marble terrace in front, which is topped by a lawn. The overall elevation is divided into eleven bays (Figure 3). At either end of this elevation, a flight of marble steps leads to the terrace. Walks of marble and slate flagstone lead across the terrace and are flanked on either side by low marble benches. The walks lead to second sets of marble steps between two cubic, marble planters. The planters are decorated with bas relief-carvings depicting Pegasus. The carvings face inward toward the doors. All four sets



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of steps have a single aluminum railing in the center. At the top of the stairs are recessed, stepped marble alcoves with projecting marble canopy above. On the underside of the canopy is a flush, octagonal, aluminum light fixture. At the center of the alcoves are aluminum doors with full lights covered by aluminum grilles presenting geometric and botanical motifs. The doors are set in aluminum frames with aluminum-grilled sidelights. Above the doors are tall, fixed transoms with aluminum grilles. The area between the door lintels and the overhang above is ornamented with carved Theatre masks, comedy at the west entrance and tragedy at the east. Between the doors are nine double-height, recessed windows with aluminum grilles in a different geometric pattern than found at the doors. The windows, but not the grilles, were replaced in kind circa 2004. They are separated by fluted piers. Underneath the windows are strips of marble bearing a Greek key motif, under which are bas-relief panels, sculpted by John Gregory, which depict scenes from Shakespearean plays. The name of the play from which each scene derives is inscribed underneath the panel. From east to west (left to right), the subject of the panels are *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Macbeth*, *Julius Caesar*, *King Lear*, *Richard III*, *Hamlet*, and *Henry IV*. Centered underneath the windows is another inscription reading "Folger Shakespeare Library," where "Shakespeare" is slightly larger in font than both "Folger" and "Library." At the attic level are three further inscriptions, from east to west:

"This therefore is the praise of Shakespeare, that his drama is the mirror of life." – Samuel Johnson

"His wit can no more lie hid, than it could be lost. Reade him therefore: and againe and againe." – John Heminge, Henrie Condell.

"Thou art a moniment without a tombe and art alive still, while thy booke doth live, and we have wits to read, and praise to give" – Ben Jonson

### ***West Elevation***

Because the west elevation faces the U.S. Capitol, Henry Folger considered it to be of importance nearly on par with the north elevation.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, like the north elevation, the west elevation is defined by a central row of double-height, recessed window openings separated by fluted piers. The overall elevation is seven bays wide (Figure 4). At the north end is a door that originally was intended as an entrance for visitors arriving by car via the adjacent U-shaped driveway.<sup>3</sup> The door opening is set at approximately two and a half feet above grade and is currently inaccessible from the exterior due to the removal of a stair that originally led from the driveway to the entrance. The door itself is aluminum with full lights and an aluminum grille with a geometric and botanical motif. It is set in a geometrically-patterned, aluminum surround.

<sup>2</sup> H.C. Folger to Alexander B. Trowbridge, December 17, 1928, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>3</sup> The driveway is discussed further in the later section describing the site.

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Above the door is a tall transom, also covered by an aluminum grille with a geometric motif. To the north of the door, descending from the front terrace, is a marble stair with sloped sides topped by two aluminum railings. A concrete walk connects the stair with the driveway. Mirroring the doorway at the south end of the elevation is a window of approximately the same dimensions as the transom of the door to the north. The window has an aluminum balconette railing with a botanical and geometric motif. It is set in a recessed surround. Below this window is a basement-level window of two lights with diagonal bars forming a diamond pattern in front. The window is also covered in a metal mesh screen. Between the north door and the south window are set five, double-height window openings. In each opening are two identical windows separated vertically by aluminum panels. The panels are decorated with strips of a geometric motif flanking a lyre relief in the center. As on the north elevation, the window openings are separated by fluted marble piers. In front of the windows is a shallow, marble balcony. The balcony is supported by a series of paired marble corbels. Around the perimeter of the balcony is an aluminum railing formed in a botanical and geometric motif. Below the balcony are five basement-level windows. Each basement level window has two lights and is covered by diagonal bars and metal mesh. At the attic level is a single inscription:

“For wisedsome’s sake, a word that all men love” – Love’s Labours Lost



Figure 4. West elevation, undated photograph (Folger Archives)

### ***East Elevation***

The east elevation is a bold expression of a solid masonry mass punctuated by a single door at its center. The lack of fenestration indicates the function of the east wing of the building as the

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Theatre but is also a dramatic statement reminiscent of a temple. The tomblike-quality is reinforced by the incorporation of the dates of Shakespeare's birth and death above the entrance, signifying the abstract idea that Shakespeare is *within* the space. The central door is aluminum with an aluminum surround (Figure 5). The aluminum surround has a geometric pattern, while the door is ornamented with horizontal stripes of a combination botanical and geometric pattern divided by solid panels. The door is set in a projecting marble block surround. Above the door is a marble overhang with two dates in Roman numerals—MDLXIV and MDCXVI, or 1564 and 1616, the years of Shakespeare's birth and death—on either side of a projection carved with the masks of comedy and tragedy, all within a large stone block. Above the block is a row of marble trim in a fluted pattern. Immediately in front of the door is a marble landing. Opposite the door, the landing has an aluminum railing with a pattern of diamonds mounted on a low stone sill carved with a pattern of waves and fluting. The landing is reached by a flight of steps that descends to a long landing, terminating in an additional short set of steps at the ends of the elevation.

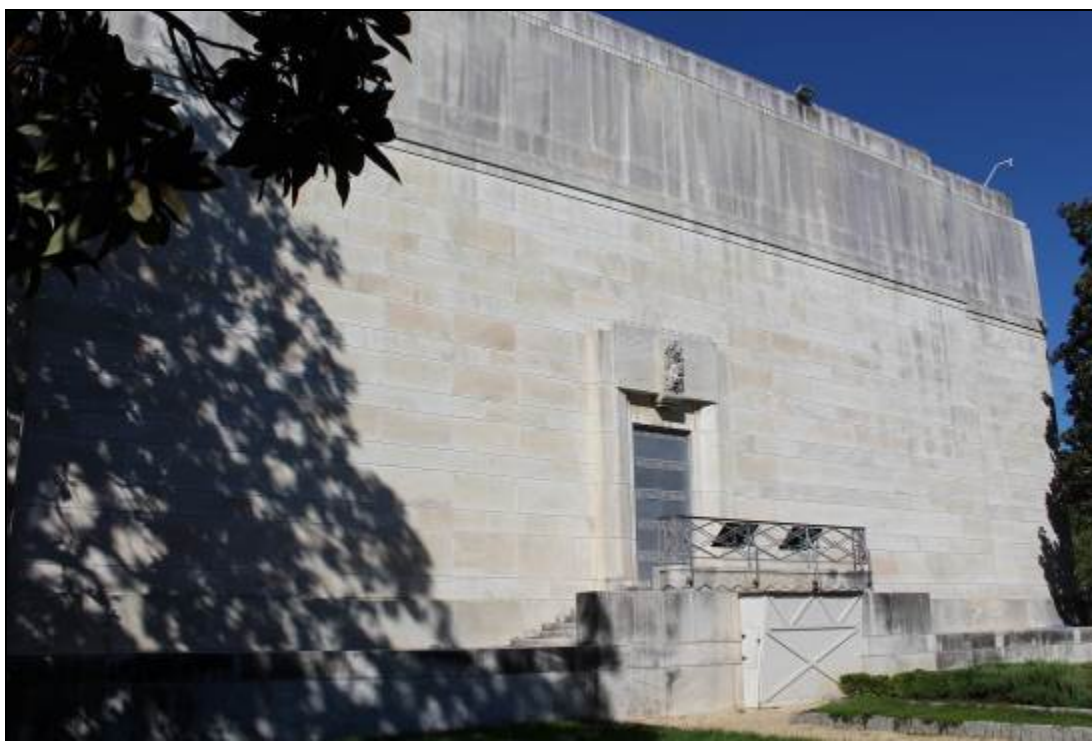


Figure 5. East elevation (EHT Tracerics)

### ***South Elevation***

The south elevation (Figure 6) is the sole elevation that does not face a public street. Facing a private alley now adjacent to the Adams Building of the Library of Congress, the elevation originally presented as two large, solid wings with a recessed central bay that enclosed a service yard.

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The south elevation of the east wing is three bays wide. It has three windows at the basement level, each with four lights. The window openings are covered by diagonal bars and metal mesh. Since this wing houses the Theatre, there are no openings above the basement level. Extending south from the east corner is a rectangular marble planter. The south elevation of the west wing, like the east, has three windows at the basement level. Unlike on the east wing, these windows are set in a slightly recessed surround that extends to above the first-story windows. The first-story windows consist of twelve fixed lights in steel frames. At the second story are three pairs of window openings. Each opening has a double-hung, eight-light window in a steel frame. At the attic level is a single, central window covered by a tripartite, decorative aluminum grate.

In 1959, the service yard was filled in by a one-story brick addition. A second addition was added atop the 1959 addition in 1983. This second addition obscured the majority of the original 1932 building that originally faced onto the service yard. A small portion of the elevations facing the service yard are still visible above and to the sides of the 1983 addition. These portions are clad in white, glazed brick with a narrow marble ashlar band at the roofline and a wider band a few feet below. There are eight twenty-light steel casement windows on the west elevation facing toward the addition. There are no windows on the original portion of the east elevation.

The south elevation is the only elevation where the 1959 and 1983 additions are visible, though the 1959 addition is largely obscured by the 1983 addition above. The 1959 addition consists of one story above grade. It is clad in blond brick laid in a running bond atop a white granite base. The majority of the exposed portion of the elevation features six pairs of double-hung windows covered by steel grates and wire. The windows have concrete sills. To the west side of the south elevation is a double-leaf aluminum door over which a porcelain-enameled metal overhang is mounted to the wall. This door serves as an accessible entrance and is reached via a concrete ramp with painted metal railings. To the east side of the south elevation is a second recessed entrance concealed by a black metal gate.

The 1983 addition appears to sit on top of the 1959 addition but is actually supported by an external steel frame that rests on the original building to the north and on piers to the south, so that the later addition floats above the earlier and projects further outward. The 1983 addition is clad in white marble to match the original building. The vertical struts that comprise the exterior of the frame rise upwards from marble-clad piers with granite bases and are clad in fluted marble slabs. Resting atop the struts is a white-coated steel lintel, which is connected to a series of perpendicular steel girders, also white, that stretch to the north. The exterior walls and roof of the addition are suspended from this frame. The walls are clad in marble ashlar. To the east and west are two inverted U-shaped cutouts that accommodate recessed banks of windows in aluminum frames. Additional banks of clerestory ribbon windows are located at the roofline around the three visible elevations of the addition.

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Figure 6. South elevation (EHT Traceries)

### ***INTERIOR – PRIMARY SPACES***

The primary interior spaces of the building, which largely reflect the architectural styles of the Tudor and Jacobean periods (1485-1625), contrast with its modern classical exterior. The East and West Lobbies, acting as the library's primary public entrances, are situated at the northeast and northwest corners of the building (Figure 6). The East Lobby leads directly into the Theatre, which occupies almost all of the eastern wing of the original building. The Exhibition Gallery, extending almost the entire width of the north elevation, bridges the space between the two lobbies. The Reading Room is situated to the south of the Exhibition Gallery. Accessed via the Registrar Room, it occupies the central portion of the interior. The Reading Rooms, Theatre, and Exhibition Gallery feature soaring ceilings that extend the full height of the building. The west wing is divided into three floors. From the West Lobby, the long, north-south oriented West Corridor extends down the axis of the west wing and provides access to the Main Stair, Registrar Room, and Founder's Room.

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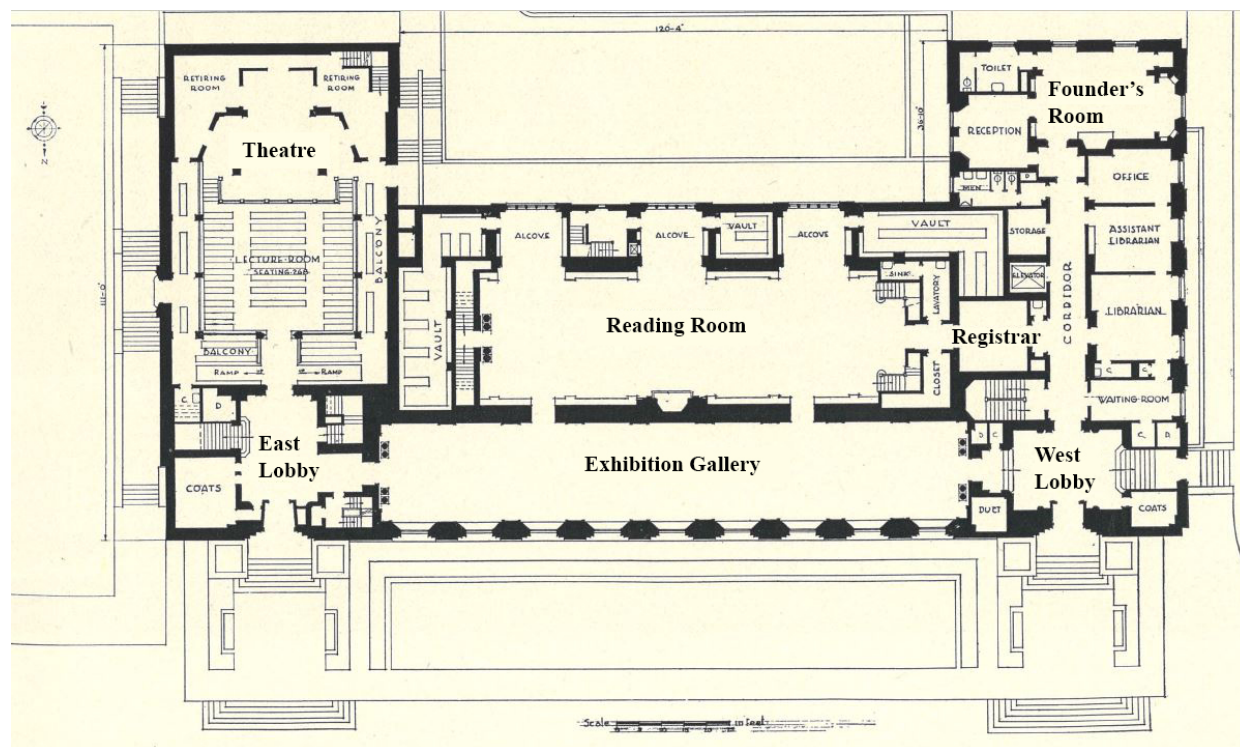


Figure 7. Original Floor Plan (*American Architect*, Vol. 142, No. 2611, September 1932)

### ***East Lobby***

The East Lobby (Figure 8) is located inside the east entrance and serves as the Theatre lobby, as well as providing a connection to the Exhibition Gallery to the east. Sparsely decorated, it evokes the Tudor and Jacobean periods through its materials and decorative accents, including carved limestone, bluestone, and cast iron.

The East Lobby has a floor of bluestone pavers laid in a diamond pattern. The walls are partially covered in limestone ashlar, above which they are finished in textured plaster. At the center of the room is a round, cast-iron chandelier with twelve arms that hangs from the barrel-vaulted, plaster ceiling. Immediately inside the entrance is a covered, oak vestibule clad with carved oak paneling. At the center are double wood doors, each having sixteen lights in leaded glass over a carved panel. Atop the vestibule are two carved oak finials.

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Figure 8. East Lobby, undated photograph (Folger Archives)

To the west of the entrance there is a flight of three steps leading to an alcove. The steps are bluestone, which has been partially covered by rubber treads. The tall entrance to the alcove is surrounded by a limestone arch topped by a molded keystone. The steps have a wrought-iron, wall-mounted railing on either side with scrolled ends. Below the railing on the south wall is a patterned iron grate. Centered within the alcove is the entrance to the Exhibition Gallery. The recessed entrance is set within a quoined limestone surround topped by a triangular pediment. The double doors have a carved oak panel below a single light accented by carved columns on the Exhibition Gallery side. The door hardware is cast iron. Flanking the door are two three-armed, wrought-iron sconces with a rose motif. To the left of the Exhibition Gallery entrance in the north wall is a second door, also in a limestone surround. This door has four vertical wood panels and wrought-iron hardware. South of the alcove is an opening set within the limestone ashlar that clads the walls. The rectangular opening has a keystone-shaped block centered above it and leads to a stair down to the basement level where restrooms are located. The stair has bluestone treads and molded wood risers, painted red. There are wrought iron railings mounted to the walls. A wrought-iron sconce is located above the single landing.

In the south wall is the entrance to the Theatre. The door to the Theatre is set in a limestone surround flanked by two pilasters with carved finials. Above the surround is a bas-relief limestone panel set in a second limestone surround. The panel depicts two cherubs playing pipes. The double doors to the Theatre are covered in padded leather which is attached and with nail-head in decorative patterns. Each door has wrought iron pulls and a small, leaded glass

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window in an elongated octagon shape. To the east of the door is the original of the marble statue of Puck designed by Brenda Putnam for the fountain to the west of the building. The statue sits on a plinth with the same lettering and quotation as the fountain outside: "Lord, what fooles these mortals be!" Around the edge of the south wall is a projecting strip of marble ashlar that follows the curve of the barrel vault.

In the east wall, located in what was originally the coat room, is the box office. Two non-original ticket windows, designed by Hartman-Cox as part of alterations undertaken in the 1980s, are set within the limestone ashlar cladding the wall with a limestone sill below. Between the windows and on either side are carved limestone pilasters. The windows themselves have a wood surround set with a single etched light. South of the box office is a bluestone stair leading up to the second floor of the Theatre. It has wrought-iron, wall- and floor-mounted railings on either side. The stairway is set in an arched opening trimmed in limestone, with a carved limestone keystone. At the top of the first flight of stairs is a leaded glass window with a slate sill.

### *Theatre*

Although the Folgers had considered installing a replica of a well-known Elizabethan Theatre like the Globe, they settled on a more generic interpretation of an Elizabethan Theatre.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, the Theatre at the Folger Library incorporates a number of elements common in the layout and design of Elizabethan Theatres, which were typically circular structures open to the sky at the center. The Folger Theatre also incorporates a large variety of decorative motifs sourced generally from the Tudor and Jacobean periods; as a result, the Theatre is the Folger Library's most heavily ornamented space.

### *The House*

The house, the area where the audience sits, is a three-story space with two levels of balconies above the ground level. The ground level (both the center and periphery galleries), and the first balcony offer fixed seating, while the second balcony typically houses sound and lighting equipment (Figure 9).<sup>5</sup> At the center of the room is a floor of bluestone pavers laid in a random ashlar that slopes slightly down to a wood stage. This area corresponds to the pit of an Elizabethan Theatre and normally has rows of auditorium seating, which may be removed depending on the requirements of particular productions.<sup>6</sup> The walls of the house are non-

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<sup>4</sup> H.C. Folger to Alexander B. Trowbridge, May 20, 1929, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>5</sup> Drawings from *American Architect* vol. 142, no. 2611 (1932) indicate that the Theatre originally also had seating in the center of the first floor facing the stage (*American Architect* vol. 142, no. 2611, p. 49, Box 59, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC).

<sup>6</sup> In a true Elizabethan Theatre, the ground floor immediately in front of the stage (the pit) would not have seating and would have served as standing room for lower ticket prices (groundlings). The first floor around the perimeter, as well as the second-floor and third-floor balconies, would have offered seating for higher-priced ticket holders. These seating areas were referred to as the galleries.



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structurally half-timbered with tin lantern sconces at regular intervals. Wood elements used throughout the space are decorated with red, blue, black and gold painted accents.

Immediately inside the main entrance to the house in the north wall is a vestibule with ramps leading ahead and to both sides. The vestibule floor is covered in bluestone pavers, while the ramps are covered in cork tile.



Figure 9. Theatre House (*American Architect*, Vol. 142, No. 2611, September 1932)

Surrounding the door is dark, wood paneling with red and gold painted accents. To the east and west of the door are arched openings surrounded by wood paneling with carved, floral spandrels. North of the openings are half-height, wood-paneled walls with four wood balusters above. Leading to the pit is a molded, wood, four-centered arch with carved spandrels featuring quatrefoils. The coffered ceiling of the vestibule is painted blue with heraldic devices and Tudor rose motifs as well as red and gold detailing. At the center of the ceiling is a tin pendant lamp.

On the first floor, the perimeter area, referred to as the gallery, has two rows of red-upholstered, folding, auditorium seating and floors of cork tile. The first-floor gallery is separated from the pit by a wood balustrade supported by turned wood posts. The ceiling of this gallery consists of the exposed underside of the balcony above; the beams are decorated with a variety of painted motifs, including floral, vignette, dragon coward, and bird-and-flower. In the northeast corner of the gallery is a four-centered arched

opening leading to a small lobby and restroom area. At the southeast and southwest corners are two further four-centered arched openings with boarded wood doors of matched profile, leading to the backstage area. At the first-floor level, the balcony is supported by simple wood posts with wood brackets at the top and sides. The front brackets are decorated with a recessed shield *per bend* motif, while the side brackets are scalloped.

Like the first floor, the second-floor gallery also has cork tile floors and seating on three sides. On the east and west sides is one row of seating separated from the aisle by a wood and metal

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railing. These chairs are not folding auditorium chairs but wood armchairs upholstered in a matching fabric. On the south side are two rows of folding auditorium chairs on raised platforms, surrounded by wood and metal railings. As on the first-floor, the gallery is separated from the yard by a wood balustrade supported by turned wood posts. The ceiling of the gallery consists of the exposed underside of the balcony with visible beams; the beams are decorated with a variety of painted motifs, including floral, vignette, dragon coward, and bird-and-flower. At the southeast and southwest corners of the second-floor gallery are two rectangular door openings with boarded wood doors. At this level, the balcony is supported by square wood posts adorned with painted terminal figures. Above the terminal figures is a band of scroll molding with painted blue and gold accents, and above the scroll molding is a row of cable molding that has been painted red and blue. As on the first floor, the ceiling of the gallery consists of the exposed underside of the balcony above with visible beams; the beams are decorated with a variety of painted motifs, including floral, *vignette*, dragon *regardant*, and bird-and-flower.

At the third level, the north portion of the gallery houses a light control room, which is separated from the Theatre by sliding wood windows above brown painted panels. The east and west sections of the balcony are used for lighting and storage. A wood balustrade runs around the three sides of the balcony. This balustrade differs from those at the first and second floors since it has plain, rounded balusters with a geometric pattern at the center of each section composed of wooden dowels. Paneled wood doors in rectangular openings at the southeast and southwest corners lead to the backstage area. Above the third story balcony, a canopy mimicking a slate, shed roof extends around the east, north, and west sides of the room. It is clad in Brittany tile and supported by plain wood posts. Covering the ceiling above the pit is a large, painted cloth awning or sky curtain with a large unicorn at the center above a banner reading "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players."<sup>7</sup> The perimeter of the sky curtain has a painted border with birds, shields, fleurs-de-lis, botanical, and geometric elements. The current sky curtain is a reproduction of the original, which was destroyed by fire in 1994.

### *The Stage*

Centered in the north part of the Theatre is the stage (Figure 10). There are three entrances onto the stage at the first floor: from the rear, from stage left, and from stage right. The wide opening at the rear of the stage has no door but is flanked by oak pilasters topped by brackets. The front brackets are decorated with a recessed shield *per bend* motif, while the side brackets are scalloped. The openings at stage left and stage right have paneled oak doors with four-centered arched heads and wrought-iron hardware. They are set in oak surrounds with spandrels carved with a floral motif.

On the second floor, in the area known as the upper stage, is a rectangular opening framing a balcony with a balustrade supported by turned balusters. The opening is flanked by terminal figures. To the east and west of the central opening are oriel windows with multi-light leaded glass above faux half-timbering. The remainder of the second-floor walls are also half-timbered.

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<sup>7</sup> This quotation, while not credited on the ceiling cloth, is taken from *As You Like It* Act II, Scene VII.

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Some of the plaster portions of the half-timbered areas at this floor has been covered in black particle board for lighting reasons.

At the third floor, projecting over the stage is a canopy consisting of a half-timbered block above three Brittany tile-covered shed roofs extending to the front and to the sides. The incorporation of the canopies alludes to the fact that Elizabethan Theatres normally had the yard at the center open to the sky, with roofs covering the stage and galleries around the sides of the yard. The half-timbered block above alludes to the hut, an enclosed room above the stage. The central canopy is supported by two two-story, carved-oak posts with fluted shafts and a scrolled capital reminiscent of an Ionic column. The underside of the central canopy is paneled oak with painted floral motifs in red, black, and gold, while the underside of the shed roof has wood brackets with decorative painting in the same colors.

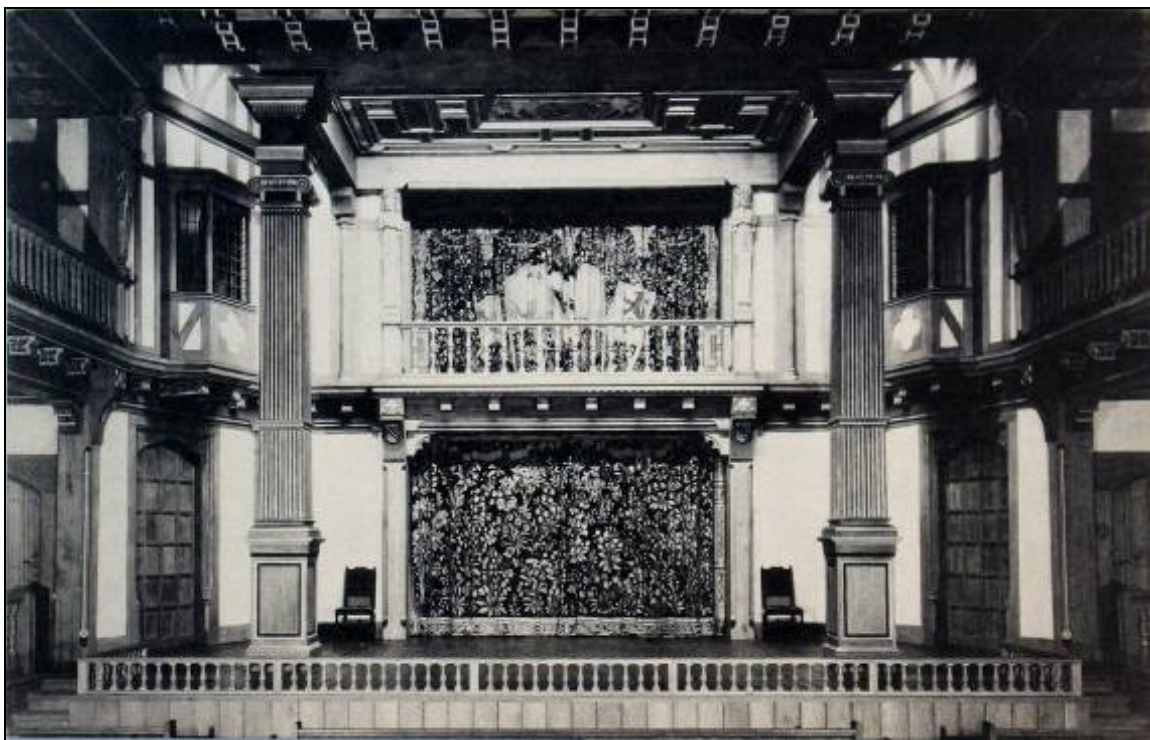


Figure 10. Theatre stage, undated photograph (Folger Archives)

### ***Exhibition Gallery***

The Exhibition Gallery, now referred to as the Great Hall, is a striking visual space both in volume and decoration. A large, rectangular, segmentally-vaulted hall measuring 22 feet wide by 129 feet in length, with thirty-foot ceilings, it is the Folger Library's principal public space (Figure 11). Oriented east-to-west, and running parallel to East Capitol Street, the gallery spans almost the entire length of the building, bridging the space between the East and West Lobbies. Like the Theatre, the Exhibition Gallery incorporates a high level of Tudor and Jacobean stylistic

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detail. The floor is covered in glazed tile and terrazzo, the walls are clad in Appalachian white oak paneling, and the plaster ceiling exhibits ornate strapwork. Entrances on the east and west ends of the Exhibition Gallery lead to the East and West Lobbies, while the south wall of the gallery contains two doorways leading into the Reading Room. Eight tall, narrow windows pierce the north wall of the Exhibition Gallery and are situated in recessed oak-paneled niches. At present, these windows, which are visible on the exterior of the north elevation, are covered by non-original screens that fill the openings.

The floor is covered in brown glazed art tile laid in a geometric pattern. A border composed of cream terrazzo with a band of dark grey and yellow tile, featuring a floral motif and the names of Shakespeare's principal plays, encircles the perimeter of the floor. Located at the east and west ends of the floor, at the two Reading Room doors, the border enters the main floor space, spiraling into two circular devices bearing floral and geometric elements and central face motifs depicting tragedy (east end) and comedy (west end).

The walls of the Exhibition Gallery are clad in full-height, Appalachian white oak wainscoting in the style of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Surmounting the paneling is a plaster crown molding containing a foliate frieze band, also typical of the Tudor/Jacobean period.<sup>8</sup> Corresponding to the eight window openings in the north wall, the south wall features eight subtle projections in the paneling, reminiscent of piers, which serve to visually divide the south wall into bays.

The segmentally-arched plaster ceiling of the Exhibition Gallery exhibits strapwork in low relief. The design of the strapwork, which features geometric and foliate elements, is characteristic of that produced in the more elegant estate houses of the British Isles during the first half of the seventeenth century.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Stephen Calloway and Elizabeth Cromley, eds., *The Elements of Style: A Practical Encyclopedia of Interior Architectural Details from 1485 to the Present* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991), 24-25.

<sup>9</sup> Calloway and Cromley, 28-29.

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Figure 11. Exhibition Gallery (*American Architect*, Vol. 142, No. 2611, September 1932)

The east and west entrances into the Exhibition Gallery feature highly stylized neoclassical surrounds. The entrances each consist of a set of double-leaf white oak doors, the lower half of each door being paneled, the upper half being arched. The jambs are embellished with an egg and tongue motif. Flanking each doorway is a pair of Corinthian columns, supporting an entablature composed of a fluted architrave, a foliate frieze band, and a cornice with a decorative lotus motif. Above the actual doorways of both entrances are rectangular oak panels. Over the east doorway, the panel bears the following verse by eighteenth-century English actor and playwright David Garrick:

Thrice happy the nation that Shakespeare has charm'd.  
More happy the bosoms his genius has warm'd!  
Ye children of nature, of fashion, and whim,  
He painted you all. All join to praise him.

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The west doorway contains a similar frieze panel containing an inscription from the poem, "At Shakespeare's Grave," by American poet and drama critic William Winter. It reads:

There is not anything of human trial  
That ever love deplored or sorrow knew.  
No glad fulfilment and sad denial.  
Beyond the pictured truth that Shakespeare drew.

Above these panels, the east entrance features the English coat of arms carved in relief, while the west entrance displays the Great Seal of the United States, both of which are set in surrounds featuring fluted pilasters.

The two doors leading into the Reading Room, located in oak-paneled recesses in the south wall, are double-leaf in form. Their steel frames and glass panes are arranged in a geometric Art Deco-style pattern of linked octagons and squares.

### ***West Lobby***

The West Lobby incorporates the same overall design aesthetic and materials as the East Lobby. The West Lobby is accessed from East Capitol Street by means of a paneled oak vestibule, which opens into a rectangular groin-vaulted hall (Figure 12). The walls of this space are finished in smooth plaster, with door surrounds, quoining, and vault ribbing of streaked cream and grey limestone. The floors of the West Lobby are bluestone pavers laid in a diamond pattern. Arched portals, featuring marble surrounds with quoining, open to the east and west from the lobby into small vaulted alcoves. The south wall of the lobby contains a doorway leading to the West Corridor.

The south doorway is accessed by a set of bluestone-clad steps with wrought-iron railing. It features a distinctive rectangular limestone surround. Pilasters, in the form of stylized obelisks, flank the doorway. Above is a rectangular limestone plaque set within a surround featuring quoining and a segmental pediment which frames a Greco-Roman face cartouche. Inscribed upon the plaque is a quote from "On Shakespeare" (1630), by John Milton, reading:

What Needs My Shakespeare  
For His Honor'd Bones  
The Labor of an Age In Piled Stones?  
Thou in Our Wonder  
And Astonishment  
Hast Built Thyself  
A Live-Long Monument

The east alcove, accessed by bluestone-clad steps, leads to the Exhibition Gallery. The entrance to the Exhibition Gallery consists of a set of double-leaf, paneled, oak doors recessed within a rectangular limestone surround. Above the surround is a rectangular limestone plaque bearing an

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inscription, taken from Act I of Shakespeare's *The Life of King Henry the Eighth*, which reads "I Shower A Welcome On Ye; Welcome All." Arched doorways with limestone surrounds, placed in the north and south walls of the alcove, lead to small storage rooms.

The West Lobby's west alcove leads to a window that previously served as the transom above a former west-elevation entrance into the building, now concealed on the interior by a change in the level of the floor within the alcove. It consists of a set of tall, double-leaf, aluminum, Art Deco-style glass doors recessed behind a rectangular limestone surround with quoining. Opening to the north from within the alcove is a former coat room that currently functions as a small office.

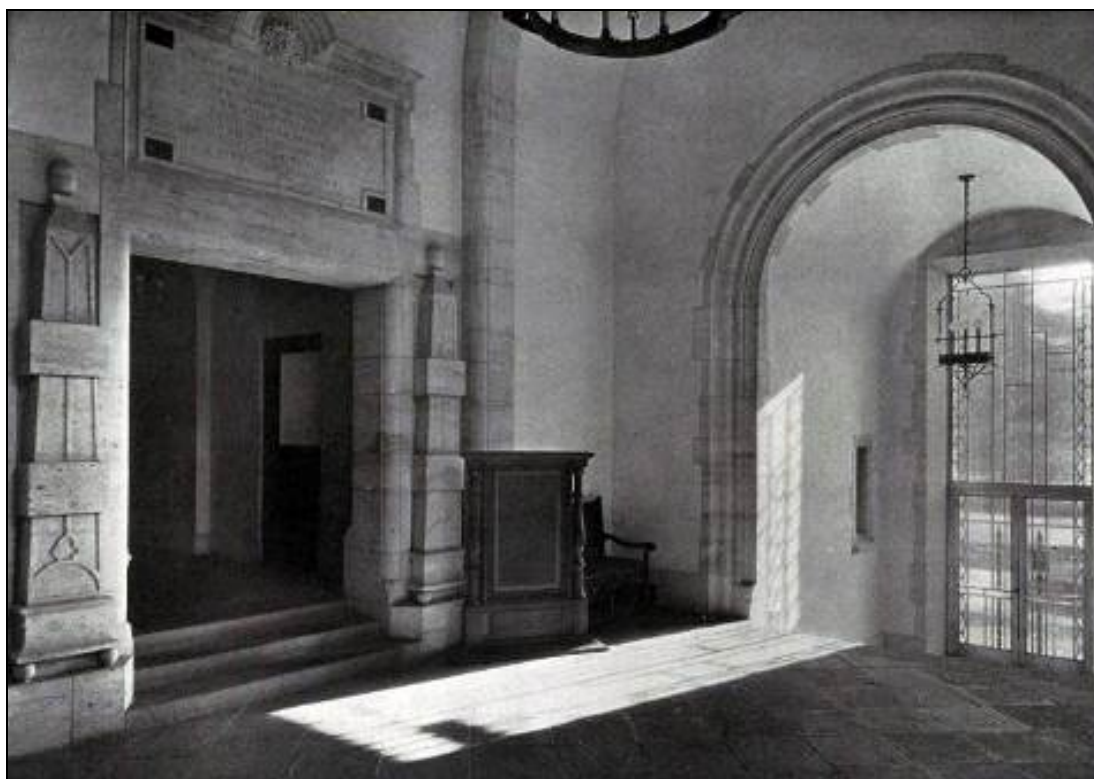


Figure 12. West Lobby (*American Architect*, Vol. 142, No. 2611, September 1932)

### ***West Corridor***

The West Corridor is similar in character and materials to the West and East Lobbies. It is a groin-vaulted passage measuring approximately 60 feet in length (Figure 13). Its walls and ceilings are finished in smooth plaster, its plain, flush baseboards are of limestone, and its floors are laid in bluestone pavers set in a diamond pattern. At the south end of the corridor is an arched opening leading into a vestibule that connects with the Founder's Room. This opening features a limestone surround with a four-centered Tudor arch and quoining. Above it is a small rectangular bronze plaque bearing the face of William Shakespeare in relief. Along the east side of the corridor are (moving north to south) a stairwell entrance, the entrance to the Registrar

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Room, an elevator, and two restroom entrances. On the west side of the corridor are an entrance into the coat room and two office entrances.

On the east side of the hall, the stairwell entrance consists of a non-original single-leaf steel and glass door with two rectangular glass panes, and two rectangular glass side lights oriented to the north. The glass is etched with a geometric Art Deco-style pattern of linked octagons. Above this doorway is a metal grille with a decorative pattern of interlocked circles. The entrance to the Registrar Room is situated within a vaulted recess that is rectangular in plan. The lower walls of the recess are paneled in oak and its upper walls and vaulting are finished in plaster. The entrance to the Registrar Room is situated in the east wall of the recess, a built-in oak mail cubby with shelving is located in the north wall, and a secondary door is set within its south wall. Above these extends a continuous oak frieze panel, featuring brackets with gouge work, and an oak cornice with dentils. The glass and steel door into the Registrar Room is the same as the stairwell door, with the side lights oriented to the south. The oak surround features fluted pilasters and a carved oak lintel displaying strapwork and faceted studs. The secondary oak door is eight-paneled with a Jacobean-style door latch and escutcheon.



Figure 13. West Corridor (EHT Tracerics)

Continuing down the east side of the corridor, the elevator doors are of bronze and are etched in the same geometric Art Deco-style octagon pattern found elsewhere. The two restroom doors are identical to the oak secondary door located in the recessed bay leading to the Registrar Room.

The three doors located along the west side of the corridor are all identical. These oak doors contain four panels in their lower half and a single rectangular, frosted-glass pane in their upper halves. They feature the same Jacobean-style hardware found on the corridor's other wood doors.

### ***Main Stair***

The building's main stair is accessed on the first floor from the West Corridor and extends upward three stories. The walls of the stair are plaster with oak bases. The staircase—including



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treads, risers, skirt rail, square newel posts with carved pendants, turned balusters, and handrail—is oak. The finish at the treads and risers is worn and the treads have non-original rubber tread covers. There are additional handrails mounted to the walls along the exterior of the staircase. The landings are wood plank except for the top landing, which is covered in linoleum. Between the second and third floors is a tripartite, simulated leaded glass window in a limestone surround. At the landing between the second and third floors is a decorative steel grille that is painted white. In the ceiling top of the stair is a skylight covered by a decorative grille. The grille simulates carved wood but is actually a specialty plaster product called WoodKast.

### ***Registrar Room***

The Registrar Room is the smallest of the significant public spaces at the Folger Library, but is nonetheless important because of its position as the gateway to the Reading Room. Square in plan, the Registrar Room is finished in oak dado paneling, with its upper walls and coved ceiling finished in plaster.<sup>10</sup> In the center of the ceiling is a square laylight containing nine square glass panes separated by steel mullions. A non-original fire door leads into the room from the West Corridor, and an opening in the east wall leads into an oak-paneled vestibule that provides entry into the Reading Room. These both present simple, unadorned oak surrounds with rectangular transom panels. Set above each doorway, and to each of the laylight's four sides, are decorative plaster medallions featuring floral designs, scrolling, and cherubs.

### ***Reading Room***

The Reading Room is one of the most stylistically rich spaces in the Folger Shakespeare Library.<sup>11</sup> Measuring 32 feet wide by 121 feet long with a 37-foot ceiling, the Reading Room, like the Exhibition Gallery, is oriented east-to-west and is rectangular in plan (Figures 14-15). Appearing as a lofty hall with a trussed wood ceiling, the room's walls are paneled in Appalachian white oak, with two tiers of built-in book cases extending half the distance to the ceiling. Above the bookcases, the upper walls are finished in smooth plaster. A continuous gallery, reached by two sets of double stairs located at the east and west ends of the room, extends around the perimeter of the space to provide access to the upper tier of book cases. Along the south wall, the line of book cases is broken by a central circulation space and two flanking alcoves that provide entry into the 1983 addition. The ceilings of these three areas extend to the same height as that of the main hall and are finished in plaster with strapwork in low relief. The Reading Room originally had a cork tile floor that is now covered in wall-to-wall green carpet.

The primary entrance into the Reading Room is located at the west end, and is framed by a double stair, with the stair landing situated above the entrance. A second doorway, situated within an oak screen that spans the width of the hall's east end, opens onto the east stairs. Two

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<sup>10</sup> The original oak dado paneling on the north and south walls was removed at an unknown date and replaced with wood cabinets.

<sup>11</sup> The name of this room was changed in 2011 from the Old Reading Room to the Gail Kern Paster Reading Room to honor former Folger director Gail Kern Paster.

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doorways, located in the north wall, lead to the Exhibition Gallery. A prominent feature of the Reading Room is a large fireplace with a highly-developed surround which is located at the midpoint of the north wall. In addition, the Reading Room features four large and seven small stained-glass windows with limestone tracery and quoining.



Figure 14. Reading Room (*American Architect*, Vol. 142, No. 2611, September 1932)

The west entrance surround and east hall screen are particularly rich in decorative elements. The west entrance contains a set of double-leaf oak doors, each featuring Jacobean-style geometric paneling in their lower halves and four rectangular, leaded-glass lights in their upper half. The doors are recessed, with ornately carved oak jambs and lintels. The inner face of the jambs and the lintel soffit feature rectangular panels, with busts, arches, and foliate designs, that closely resemble designs known to have been in use during the sixteenth century. The outer faces of the jambs and lintel present a continuous band of carved molding with a design of interlocking rosettes and tablet flowers. Above the entrance, the stair landing balustrade features a large rectangular oak panel bearing an inscription by German writer Johann Wolfgang von Goethe:

I DO NOT REMEMBER  
THAT ANY BOOK OR  
PERSON OR EVENT EVER  
PRODUCED SO GREAT  
AN EFFECT ON ME AS  
SHAKESPEARE'S PLAYS.

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The panel also quotes French writer Victor Hugo:

SHAKESPEARE IS FERTILITY.  
FORCE. EXUBERANCE. NO  
RETICENCE. NO BINDING.  
NO ECONOMY. THE  
INORDINATE AND TRANQUIL  
PRODIGALITY OF THE CREATOR.



Figure 15. Reading Room (*American Architect*, Vol. 142, No. 2611, September 1932)

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The oak hall-screen that spans the east end of the Reading Room contains a centrally-placed rectangular door opening that is flanked to either side by a pair of fluted Doric columns (Figure 16). These support an entablature that features a linenfold molding, corbelling, and punch-and-gouge decoration. Above each set of columns is a projecting square oak panel displaying a raised foil motif. The central feature of the screen, however, is an exact replica of the memorial from Shakespeare's tomb in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon.<sup>12</sup> To either side of the memorial, the field of paneling is broken by four figurative pilasters topped with obelisks.



Figure 16. East hall screen (*American Architect*, Vol. 142, No. 2611, September 1932)

The fireplace is another focal point in the room. Formed of limestone, the fireplace features a Tudor four-centered arch with spandrels that contain a carved floral design, of the type found in English houses of the sixteenth century, and stop-chamfered jambs. The back wall of the fireplace is finished in brick, laid in a herringbone pattern, with a wrought-iron fire back displaying the English coat of arms. The lintel is ornamented with carved strapwork featuring diamonds, circles, and shield motifs. Supporting the massive mantle are pilasters that are obelisk in form, terminating in heavy scrolled brackets. Faceted limestone studs and circular and elliptical colored marble inlays embellish the mantle. The elaborate over mantel features a central rectangular limestone plaque set in an ornate surround that contains scrolling, geometric marble inlays, and carved foliate decoration. The plaque bears an inscription from the poem "Solution," by nineteenth-century American writer Ralph Waldo Emerson:

<sup>12</sup> Lancelot Sukert, "Folger Shakespeare Library," *American Architect* 141 (September 1932): 43.

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ENGLAND'S GENIUS FILLED ALL MEASURE  
OF HEART AND SOUL, OF STRENGTH AND PLEASURE,  
GAVE TO THE MIND ITS EMPEROR  
AND LIFE WAS LARGER THAN BEFORE;  
NOR SEQUENT CENTURIES COULD HIT  
ORBIT AND SUM OF SHAKESPEARE'S WIT.  
THE MEN WHO LIVED WITH HIM BECAME  
POETS, FOR THE AIR WAS FAME

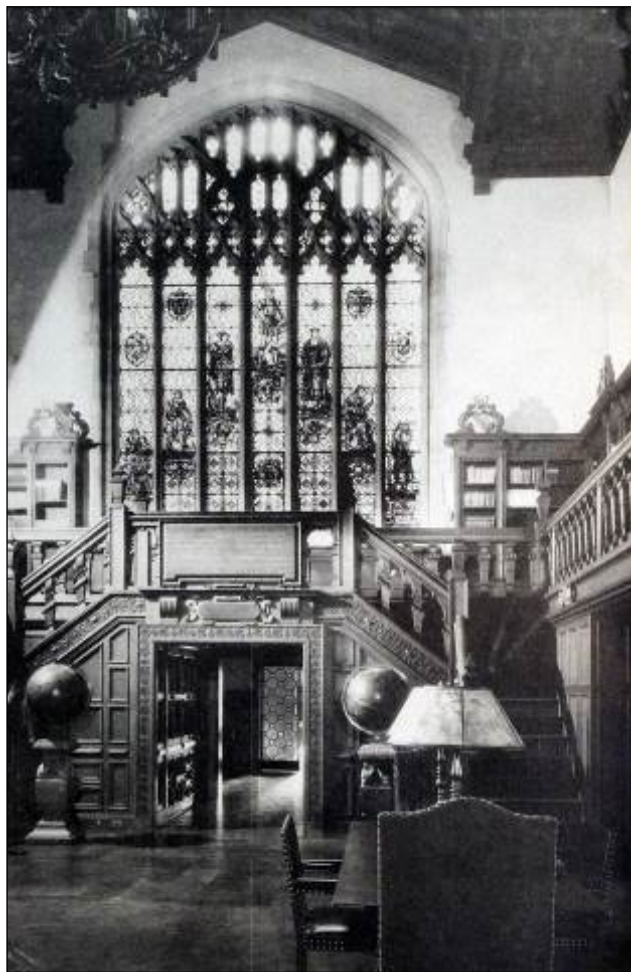


Figure 17. West wall, Reading Room, undated photograph (Folger Archives)

The Reading Room's eleven stained glass windows further add to the period ambiance of the space. Principal among these is the large window located in the west wall (Figure 17). In addition to limestone quoining, it exhibits the four-centered arch and the foiled, perpendicular tracery of the sixteenth century. The tracery pattern replicates that of a window found in Trinity Church at Stratford-upon-Avon. Artist Nicola D'Ascenzo designed the stained-glass, which illustrates "The Seven Ages of Man" from the Shakespeare play *As You Like It*. By the late sixteenth century, mullioned and transomed windows with square window heads had become more common, as seen in the remaining ten stained glass windows of the Reading Room.<sup>13</sup> Three of these square-headed windows are placed in the circulation area and in both alcoves on the south wall. Of these, the south facing windows extend nearly full height, while the secondary, east and west facing windows are smaller, extending from the top of the upper tier bookcases to the plaster ceiling. An additional smaller square-headed window is located in the south wall, behind the oak hall screen.

### ***Founder's Room***

The Founder's Room was originally devised as a private space for the Folgers within the library itself and exhibits a moderate level of decorative detail (Figure 18). Currently, it is in use as a

<sup>13</sup> Sukert, 43.

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private meeting room and as an exhibition space. The room is divided into three spaces: a large, central area with plaster walls and two alcoves adjacent to the window distinguished by wood-paneled walls and separated from the main space by post-and-beam surrounds. The oak floor is composed of wide boards with a lighter stain than the ceiling beams. The room is lit by flush-mounted ceiling lights.



Figure 18. Founder's Room, c. 1932 (Library of Congress)

In the main room, the north and east walls of the room are primarily finished in rough plaster with a limestone baseboard. The entrance to the room is located in the north wall at the northeast corner of the room. The opening is four-centered with a limestone surround of matching profile. The door itself matches the profile of the opening and surround and is paneled oak. A second, identical door is located in the east wall; however, the surround on this door is rectangular rather than four-centered. This door leads to an adjacent office. It is flanked by two wood display cases set within the wall. Above the display cases are wall-mounted display lamps. The plaster and oak ceiling in the main room has exposed beams. Two primary beams supported by scrolled limestone corbels run north-south at the center of the room, while smaller crossbeams run east-west. Centered in the north wall between the two main ceiling beams is a fireplace. The fireplace opening is a four-centered arch, while the surrounding limestone mantel is rectangular with spandrels carved with shields. The fireplace itself is brick, laid in a diagonal pattern, while the hearth is soapstone.

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Within the two alcoves, the walls and ceiling are paneled in dark oak. The ceilings slope downward at each end. On the post-and-beam surrounds that separate the alcoves from the main room, the beams are unornamented while the posts are paneled to match the walls. On the inside of the posts, three of the four panels are carved with a linenfold motif, while the fourth, top panel has a scroll motif. Within the south wall of the larger south alcove are two stained glass windows depicting characters from Shakespearean plays. The windows are set within recessed surrounds paneled in wood. In the east and west walls of this alcove are eight-paneled doors with wrought-iron hardware. Above each door are two wicker-covered vents; similar vents are found underneath the windows. The smaller, west alcove is centered around a single, stained-glass window of similar design to those in the south wall but depicting different characters. To the left and right of the window are glass and metal display cases set within the oak paneling on the walls.

### ***INTERIOR – ANCILLARY SPACES***

In addition to the significant spaces outlined above, the Folger contains a variety of ancillary spaces. These spaces are not included within the interior landmark designation.

The executive office suite, accessed via the first floor West Corridor, and opposite the Registrar Room and north of the Founder's Room, this suite of rooms includes the Director's office (originally the Librarian's office), the Librarian's office (originally an unspecified office), and two auxiliary offices formed out of the former Assistant Librarian's office. It features simplified strapwork plaster ceilings throughout. The Director's office has oak paneled walls and built-in shelving, while the supporting offices have oak wainscoting and picture rails. The Librarian's office features Jeanne d'Arc stone trim. The original reception space east of the Founder's Room is also in use as an office and features a wood plank floor, limestone door surround and baseboard, and a large plaster ceiling medallion with a wrought-iron chandelier. The arched limestone opening to the Founder's Room is infilled on this side with plaster and a door has been added in the south wall.

In the backstage of the Theatre, the maple floors and plaster walls are painted black. The wood baseboards are also painted black. Stairs at the southwest corner of the backstage lead down to the dressing rooms and up to the second and third backstage levels. The steel stair has slate treads and a pipe railing. The dressing rooms have painted concrete floors, built-in laminate tables, and porcelain sinks with gray tile backsplashes.

Additional offices are found on the second and third floors of the west wing, which were renovated in 2005 by Cox, Graae & Spack Architects. Corridors on the second floor are carpeted and the plaster walls feature simple oak trim, including the baseboard, picture rail, crown molding, door surrounds, and window sills. The half-light doors are paneled oak with frosted glass. The second-floor offices also feature simple oak trim, including the baseboard, chair rail, and picture rail. The offices are carpeted and have plaster or gypsum board ceilings with hanging fluorescent fixtures. During the same renovation, the third floor was gutted and entirely

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refinished. As a result, that floor features entirely new materials, including carpeted floors and dark wood bases, picture rails, and door and window surrounds. This floor also features both a meeting room and conservation laboratory, both with all new finishes.

Additional offices and storage areas are found on Decks A, B, and C below grade. Decks A and B have offices, some of which have original wood bases, slate sills, and plaster walls and ceilings, but they mostly feature more recent materials including vinyl floor tile, CMU walls, and acoustic tile or gypsum board ceilings. Some areas have painted concrete floors. Deck B is the location of the materials storage vaults, which have vinyl tile floors, CMU and gypsum board walls, and acoustic tile ceilings with limited oak trim. Part of Deck B and Deck C house the book stacks, which have carpeted or vinyl tile floors with vinyl bases and gypsum board or painted brick walls.

### **INTERIOR—New Reading Room**

The New Reading Room is located in the 1983 addition designed by Harman Cox and constructed in the rear courtyard of the original building over the 1958 addition on the site. The new reading room runs parallel to and is accessed from the original Reading Room. The space, designed in a Post Modern classical manner, runs 106 feet long and consists of a long rectangular volume with a suspended barrel-vaulted ceiling and apse-like space at either end of the room. Natural light enters the space through three laylights and narrow clerestories along the sides. The walls, of gypsum board, are treated with textured plaster which is scored around the openings to imply stone work. The space features extensive red oak architectural woodwork in a simple presentation, including the built-in bookshelves, base molding, columns, and floor trim, all finished with a stain and bleached shellac that gives a lighter tone than the oak employed elsewhere in the building.



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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Literature

Performing Arts

Social History

Architecture

**Period of Significance**

1928-1932

**Significant Dates**

1928-1932

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

N/A

**Architect/Builder**

Paul Philippe Cret (Architect)

Alexander B. Trowbridge (Consulting Architect)

James Baird Company (Builder)

**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph**

The Folger Shakespeare Library was constructed between 1928 and 1932 to house the extraordinary book and rare manuscript collection of Henry C. and Emily J. Folger. The building was designed by master architect Paul Phillippe Cret in a style the architect referred to as “New Classicism,” but which is also often referred to as Stripped Classicism. Alexander B. Trowbridge served as consulting architect. The building’s marble exterior combines the Cret’s most celebrated expression of the Stripped Classical Style with an extraordinary interior that immerses scholars and visitors alike into the Elizabethan world of Shakespeare. The Library holds the world’s largest collection of Shakespearean material, ranging from the sixteenth century to the present, a world-renowned collection of books, manuscripts, and prints from Renaissance Europe, a Tudor/Jacobean-style Exhibition Gallery, and an Elizabethan-style Theatre. Alongside its contemporary artistic and academic institutions, the Folger bolstered Washington’s identity in the early twentieth century as a locus of arts and culture.

In recognition of this outstanding and multi-faceted contribution to the District’s and Nation’s history, the Folger Shakespeare Library is found to exhibit significance under two National Register Criteria. It is significant under National Register Criterion A in the areas of *Literature*,

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the *Performing Arts*, and *Social History* and National Register Criterion C in the area of *Architecture*. It is also significant under the corresponding D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites Criteria B, D, E, and F. The building exterior and interior demonstrate excellent physical integrity, allowing it to convey its historical and architectural significance under these criteria. The period of significance for the Folger Shakespeare Library is 1928-1932, which coincides with its original planning, design, and construction. This period of significance was determined because, though the Folger has continued to serve as an important cultural institution through the present day, its primary importance is as the manifestation of the vision of the Folgers and their architects.

### ***Previous Designation***

The significance of the Folger Shakespeare Library was previously recognized with the successful listing of the building in the D.C. Inventory of Historic Sites in 1964 and the National Register of Historic Places in 1969. The original designation neither fully documented the historical development of the library, nor did it describe the importance of the interior design to the conception and experience of the institution. This nomination expands the information presented in that nomination and, additionally, nominates significant portions of the original interior of the building that were not included in the 1964 Landmark application, including the East and West Lobbies, West Corridor, Exhibition Gallery, original Reading Room, Theatre, and Founder's Room.

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### **Narrative Statement of Significance**

The Folger Shakespeare Library is significant in the areas of **Literature**, the **Performing Arts**, and **Social History** (National Register Criterion A). The library was purpose-built between 1928 and 1932 to house the book and rare manuscript collection of Henry C. and Emily J. Folger. The library was conceived not only as a means of making their vast collection available for scholarly consultation, but also as a visual immersion of the world of Shakespeare. The Folgers were responsible for both the conception and the funding of the building, which held over 90,000 volumes when it opened in 1932.<sup>14</sup> Because of the scope of the Folgers collection and vision, the Folger Shakespeare Library became an institution of great importance to national and international study of Shakespeare immediately upon its opening, a position that it has retained over time. It currently holds the world's largest collection of Shakespeare material, ranging from the sixteenth century to the present, as well as a world-renowned collection of books, manuscripts, and prints from Renaissance Europe.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to the property's international importance, the creation of the library and its construction were significant events in the history of Washington, D.C., and the property instantly contributed to the city's standing as a cultural center of note. The dedication of the building was attended by President Herbert Hoover, foreign ambassadors, prominent scholars,

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<sup>14</sup> "A Most Interesting and Attractive Problem," 6.

<sup>15</sup> Folger Shakespeare Library, "The Collection," <https://www.folger.edu/the-collection> (accessed February 2, 2018).

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and members of the business and civic communities. The event was broadcast live on local radio stations across the country, and the opening coincided with the dedication of a new Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon, England, giving the Folger international recognition.

The Folger Shakespeare Library is also significant in the area of **Architecture** (National Register Criterion C). The Folger is significant in this category as the work of master architect Paul Philippe Cret. Cret was trained at the *École des Beaux Arts* in Lyon and Paris but made a marked departure from the highly decorative Beaux-Arts style when he began to design buildings with simpler form and less ornamentation. This style, which Cret termed “New Classicism,” is commonly referred to today as Stripped Classicism.

The Folger Library is not only among the most outstanding of Cret’s designs, it is also an outstanding example of the Stripped Classical style. Primarily clad in marble, its simplicity of form is accentuated by its selective ornamentation, including sculptural panels and aluminum accents. Moreover, the Folger Library is architecturally notable for its combination of a Stripped Classical exterior with a Tudor and Jacobean Revival interior, an unusual combination meant to reconcile the library’s placement near the Capitol with its purpose as a monument to Shakespeare and the Elizabethan era. The rich detail of the interior, which includes oak paneling, stained glass, and art tile, is no less monumental than the building’s marble exterior. Significant interior spaces include the East and West Lobbies, the Theatre, the Exhibition Gallery, the Reading Room, the Registrar’s Room, the West Corridor, and the Founder’s Room.<sup>16</sup> These spaces, embellished with the contributions of decorative artists and craftsmen, are distinguished by their original appearance and high level of detail, specifically intended to provide scholars and visitors with a complete and authentic experience with the work of Shakespeare and his times.

### *Period of Significance*

The period of significance for the Folger Shakespeare Library is 1928-1932, which coincides with its original planning, design, and construction. This original period of construction is a direct manifestation of the vision of the Folgers and their architects. Although the Folger has continued to develop new programming to expand its collection and to serve as an important cultural institution to the present day, the Period of Significance captures the original period of construction and its primary interior spaces. It does not encompass the two additions to the rear of the building, which were constructed in 1959 and 1983.

### *Integrity*

The Folger Shakespeare Library demonstrates excellent overall integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, corresponding with its 1928-1932 period of significance. The building’s location, and its orientation towards East Capitol Street,

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<sup>16</sup> In this document, the Folger’s interior spaces are generally referred to by their original names as stated on the original architectural drawings.

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S.E., remain unchanged. An addition to the south elevation, constructed in 1983 over an earlier 1958 addition, has altered that elevation by filling in the U of the original structure, obscuring a portion of the original exterior wall at the rear elevation. However, the addition is largely concealed from the principal public views of the building and does not compromise the building's prominent, street-facing elevations on the exterior. On the interior, the New Reading Room is not intrusive to the historic spaces. Thus, the building maintains its integrity of design through the retention of its overall form, plan, and stylistic details, both on its exterior and within its significant interior spaces. The setting in which the library was constructed, situated in the historic Capitol Hill section of Washington near major public buildings including the Library of Congress and Supreme Court, has remained largely unchanged. In addition, the Folger exhibits excellent integrity of materials, workmanship, and feeling. This includes the visible exterior elevations, which feature marble sculptural panels designed by artist John Gregory, its surrounding landscape, which includes the east garden and west fountain, and its interior, which retains almost all of its character-defining stylistic elements and original materials. Finally, the Folger Shakespeare Library maintains integrity of association with the era during which it was constructed, as both the exterior and the interior appear largely as they did on the day of the building's dedication in April of 1932.

## DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

### *THE FOLGERS AND THEIR COLLECTION*

The Folger Shakespeare Library was conceived and funded by Henry Clay Folger and his wife Emily Jordan Folger. The couple spent their entire married life collecting books and related material either by William Shakespeare or related to the period of his life. Through their unrelenting efforts, the collection increased over the forty years from their marriage in 1885 until the opening of the Library in 1932, when it became an internationally renowned source for the study of Shakespearian literature.

Henry Clay Folger was born in New York City in 1857, the son of Henry Clay Folger, Sr., a wholesale millinery dealer, and Eliza Jane Clark. Folger studied at the Adelphi Academy in Brooklyn before beginning at Amherst College in Amherst, Massachusetts in 1876. He was assisted in his studies by donations from several private individuals, including businessman and philanthropist Charles Pratt who was the father of his roommate Charles Millard Pratt.<sup>17</sup> While at Amherst, Folger heard the author Ralph Waldo Emerson lecture on "The Superlative of Mental Temperance." Folger was inspired by Emerson's speech and became interested in his other work, leading him to discover Emerson's reverence for Shakespeare.<sup>18</sup> Inspired by Emerson's enthusiasm, Folger "became fixated on Shakespeare."<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Folger Shakespeare Library, "History," <http://www.folger.edu/history> (accessed September 20, 2017).

<sup>18</sup> Stephen Grant, *Collecting Shakespeare: The Story of Henry and Emily Folger* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2014), 30.

<sup>19</sup> Andrew Dickson, *World's Elsewhere: Journeys Around Shakespeare's Globe* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2015), 111.

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Upon graduating from Amherst in 1879, Folger worked as a clerk at an oil company (associated with Standard Oil) owned by Charles Pratt. While working, he completed an LL.B. at Columbia University in 1881 followed by a master's degree from Amherst.<sup>20</sup> Folger's interest in Shakespeare did not diminish. Acquiring a copy of the speech that Emerson gave in 1864 on the occasion of Shakespeare's tercentenary, it is said that he:

...read it cover to cover. He upgraded his one-volume complete works to a thirteen-volume edition. In a copy of Thomas Carlyle's *On Heroes, he underlined Carlyle's statement that "Shakespeare was 'the grandest thing we have yet done.'"*<sup>21</sup>

In 1885, Henry Folger married Emily Jordan. She was born in Ironton, Ohio in 1858, the daughter of Augusta Woodbury Ricker and Edward Jordan, a lawyer, newspaper editor, and former solicitor of the U.S. Treasury Department during the Lincoln and Johnson administrations. Emily Folger attended Vassar College, graduating in 1879. Following her graduation, she worked for six years as an instructor at the Nassau Institute, a private girls' school in Brooklyn. Her friend Lydia Pratt, sister of Charles Millard Pratt, introduced her to Henry Folger at a picnic for the Irving Literary Circle of Brooklyn. The couple married in 1885.<sup>22</sup> Folger's wedding gift to his new wife was a facsimile copy of the 1623 First Folio. Oliver McKee, writing for the *National Republic* in April 1932, reported that Folger presented the gift by saying "Here you can see Shakespeare's plays as they were originally given to the world."<sup>23</sup> Mrs. Folger subsequently earned a master's degree from Vassar in 1896 for her thesis "On the True Text of Shakespeare." One of her thesis advisors was noted Shakespearean scholar Horace Howard Furness.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Folger Shakespeare Library, "History"; "A Most Interesting and Attractive Problem," 5.

<sup>21</sup> Dickson, 103.

<sup>22</sup> *Collecting Shakespeare*, 2.

<sup>23</sup> Oliver McKee, "Washington's New Library," *National Republic*, Volume XIX, Number 12 (April 1932) 18.

<sup>24</sup> Folger Shakespeare Library, "History"; "A Most Interesting and Attractive Problem," 5.

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Figure 19. Henry C. and Emily J. Folger (Folger Archives)

Shortly after the Folgers' marriage, the Folgers began collecting as a couple. Their first purchase was a 1685 edition of the Fourth Folio for \$107.50, paid for on credit. Michael Witmore, Director of the Folger Shakespeare Library, has opined that "It became a group effort between the two of them. They seem to have egged each other on."<sup>25</sup> Over the next thirty-five years, they purchased eighty-two copies of the First Folio, about one third of the known extant copies. The Folgers also began to collect other Elizabethan books and paraphernalia, focusing primarily on literary works. Mr. Folger corresponded with six hundred book dealers around the world to make sure that he never missed an opportunity to add to his collection, while Mrs. Folger monitored auction catalogues. They purchased, on average, over six books a day for a period of forty years. While many books that came into their hands were returned following their inspection, by the time of the opening of the Folger Library in 1932 they had accumulated over 90,000 volumes. The Folgers, who made their home in Bedford-Stuyvesant, Brooklyn, stored their collection in fireproof warehouses in Brooklyn and Manhattan, sending the rarest items to bank vaults. Once stored, however, the items were essentially inaccessible to scholars.<sup>26</sup> The Folgers' obsession with Shakespeare and their effort to gather related documents was certainly a genuine labor of love, but their initial lack of interest in making the collection accessible would appear to be more about control than academic knowledge. Witmore concludes that "it's also a desire to possess, to get hold of a cultural legacy that was empowering on a global scale."<sup>27</sup> Indeed, the Folgers were not alone in their role as significant private collectors during this period—other wealthy Americans were amassing collections of art and artifacts during this

<sup>25</sup> Dickson, 103.

<sup>26</sup> "A Most Interesting and Attractive Problem," 5-7.

<sup>27</sup> Dickson, 104.

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period, and some would also go on to establish publicly-accessible houses for their private collections, including the Huntington Library and Gardens in Pasadena, California, the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., and the Morgan Library in New York City.<sup>28</sup> But the Folgers were unique in the intense focus of their collection, as their peers tended to collect more broadly. Their personal dedication to the task was also certainly stronger than that of their peers. Nieces and nephews of the Folgers reported that the couple engaged in family visits only twice a year and often refused social invitations, preferring to concentrate their energy on their collection.

### ***THE FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY***

#### ***An Idea Becomes a Plan***

In 1911, following the antitrust breakup of the larger Standard Oil Company, Henry Folger became the president of the Standard Oil Company of New York.<sup>29</sup> In the same year, Dr. Horace Furness, Mrs. Folger's professor at Vassar, first suggested to the Folgers that they should build a library for their Shakespeare collection instead of storing it, thereby making the vast collection available for scholarly consultation.<sup>30</sup> In 1914, Amherst granted Mr. Folger an honorary degree in acknowledgement of his efforts to collect the works of Shakespeare. In 1916, the United States celebrated the tercentenary of Shakespeare's death with a panoply of pageants, parades, and articles across the country, which in the Folgers' home of New York included a municipal festival and a ten-part series in the *New York Times*. The many requests by scholars to gain access to the collection were answered with "letters explaining that he hoped 'soon' to be able to make his collection available."<sup>31</sup> Despite these academic overtures and the growing interest in Shakespeare by scholars and the public alike, the Folgers' were undeterred in their quest to expand their private collection and to keep it private until they were ready to make it public.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Henry Huntington, encouraged by his second wife Arabella, began collecting books, art, and other significant memorabilia related to America and Britain in 1913. The collection is said to have included the largest number of British portraits in the world. The couple built a private library at their ranch in California in 1920. In 1928, following his death in 1927, and three years after that of his wife, the Huntington Library was opened to the public. Duncan Phillips and his mother established the Phillips Memorial Collection following the deaths of Duncan's father and older brother Jim. The collection, initially formed with works of art collected by the brothers, was housed in the family home in Washington, D.C. It was opened to the public in 1921, following Duncan's marriage to Marjorie Acker earlier that year. Duncan and Marjorie continued to add to the collection and jointly ran the museum for many years; New Yorker Pierpont Morgan collected the volumes and constructed the original library building that now form the Morgan Library for his private use; however, it was his son J. P. Morgan Jr. who, 1924, eleven years after his father's death, decided to open the library to the public.

<sup>29</sup> Folger Shakespeare Library, "History."

<sup>30</sup> "A Most Interesting and Attractive Problem," 7.

<sup>31</sup> *Collecting Shakespeare*, xii.

<sup>32</sup> *Collecting Shakespeare*, x-xi.



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Figure 20. Spread from the *New York Times* Shakespeare Tercentenary series, 1916 (*Shakespeare and Beyond* blog, folger.edu)

Although never allowing access to the collection, Folger had often expressed apologies for not being able to do so.<sup>33</sup> There appears to have been some threshold that had the Folgers wished to meet before they could or would decide what to do with their holdings. In 1915 he wrote to London bookseller A. H. Mayhew, “I need one more First Folio to bring my collection where I wish it.”<sup>34</sup> But even after they purchased that next First Folio, they continued to collect.

When the Folgers decided that they could build a formal library to hold their collection and make it accessible to others is not known. An undated pencil list of eight possible cities, archived at the Folger, may be the first documentation of the plan.<sup>35</sup> But the earliest dated record that the search for a location for the library had begun is the December 17, 1916 letter from Walter B. Olive, a Brooklyn real estate broker, to Andrew McCreary, a land speculator from Ohio acting as a “front man” for Folger, discussing the potential purchase of houses on or near Fifth Avenue in Manhattan.<sup>36</sup> In February 1918, Henry Folger inquired of a real estate agent about purchasing land on or near East Capitol Street in Washington, DC.<sup>37</sup> Rather than looking to the point when

<sup>33</sup> Stephen Grant alludes to this sentiment several times in *Collecting Shakespeare*.

<sup>34</sup> H.C. Folger to Andrew Mayhew, May 17, 1915, Box 22, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>35</sup> Undated pencil list, Box 56, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>36</sup> Walter Olive to A.A. McCreary, December 17, 1916, Box 56, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>37</sup> H.C. Folger to A.A. McCreary, February 11, 1918, Box 56, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

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the Folgers might have believed their collection was complete, it is an understanding of their financial situation that likely holds the key to determining when the *idea of the possession* of a certain number of First Folios became the *plan to build* and endow a permanent home: a Shakespeare library. Stephen Grant holds that a specific financial event led to the possibility of building a library:

Henry Folger created the wealth to buy Shakespeare in four ways: a five-decade salary from Standard Oil; investments in the company and its affiliates that generated substantial dividends; careful money management; and a major investment in Magnolia Petroleum Company, which generated very large dividends and a huge profit when it was sold.<sup>38</sup>

Folger was associated since graduation from Amherst with the country's most profitable companies, Standard Oil of Ohio. He gained access to Standard Oil through his relationship with the Pratt family, whose patriarch Charles Pratt owned the world's largest kerosene refinery. When Pratt's company was purchased by Standard Oil, it became one of Standard Oil's "committees." Folger quickly impressed his employers with his business acumen, devising a system for organizing and reporting critical data that significantly improved business profits. Having completed a law degree at night, he also had substantive legal knowledge. Standard Oil's founder John D. Rockefeller soon discovered Henry Folger. Folger played a key role for the Standard Oil Trust during the forced dismantling of the trust in 1911 into 34 new companies. Folger proved invaluable during this period and was rewarded with the presidency of the newly incorporated Standard Oil of New York (Socony). This led to his participation in a series of questionable stock exchanges and purchases of companies that resulted in enormous profits for his company and him personally. As part of these machinations, he and John Archbold, president of Standard Oil of New Jersey, personally purchased the Magnolia Petroleum Company. At first, Folger ran Magnolia as an independent company, but in 1918, Socony acquired 68 per cent of the company. In 1925, Socony purchased the remaining stock, giving Folger and Archbold's estate (he had died in 1916) an enormous profit, far beyond that the large salary and dividends that Folger received from Socony. Why Folger became involved in these irregular business deals and how he could have made the initial personal investment in these companies is not known; what is known is that starting in 1918 his association with Magnolia left him extremely wealthy.<sup>39</sup>

In 1928, after five years as Socony's Chairman of the Board, Folger retired from the company to devote his full attention to the planning and construction of the Folger Shakespeare Library. Tragically, he died of a pulmonary embolism on June 11, 1930, before the project was completed.<sup>40</sup> After Mr. Folger's death, Mrs. Folger continued to work towards the couple's joint dream of building the Shakespeare Library. In 1932, she received an honorary doctorate from

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<sup>38</sup> *Collecting Shakespeare*, 65.

<sup>39</sup> *Collecting Shakespeare*, 43-64.

<sup>40</sup> Folger Shakespeare Library, "History."

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Amherst College in acknowledgement of her unwavering efforts to complete the Folger Library in Washington. She died on February 21, 1936 at her home in Glen Cove, Long Island.<sup>41</sup>

### *Site Selection*

When the Folgers first began in earnest to plan for the construction of a library for their collection, they considered several sites across the United States and one site in England.<sup>42</sup> Although they were courted by several universities who wished to host the collection, the Folgers preferred to establish their own institution.<sup>43</sup> Notes in Mr. Folger's papers indicate that he was considering sites in Amherst, Massachusetts; Brooklyn and Manhattan; Nantucket; Princeton; and University Heights, Ohio. He wrote to Herbert Putnam that he was urged to consider locating the library in Stratford-upon-Avon, England. Stratford, the birthplace of Shakespeare, was hopeful that the material would be returned to England.<sup>44</sup> Finally, he considered four sites in Washington, D.C., on First Street, Second Street, Third Street, and Fourth Street, all in the Southeast quadrant. Amherst, Nantucket, and Stratford-upon-Avon were the most affordable options at an estimated \$25,000 apiece, while a site on Fifth Avenue at Eighty-First Street in Manhattan was the most expensive at \$550,000. The Washington sites were estimated at between \$125,000 and \$350,000, with the First Street site being the most expensive.<sup>45</sup>

The Folgers were familiar with Washington. Emily Folger had lived there as a child while her father worked in government, and the Folgers also passed through Washington on the way to their annual trip to the Homestead resort in Hot Springs, Virginia. In 1918, on a layover in Washington on the journey between New York and Hot Springs, they stopped to view some sites around the Capitol.<sup>46</sup> Folger also wrote to an Amherst classmate, John Franklin Jameson—who by 1918 was the director of historical research at the Carnegie Institute—seeking his thoughts on potential locations. Jameson advised that he believed that Washington, which was evolving from an uncultured, underdeveloped political center into a cultural and literary capital, would be a suitable place to build the library.<sup>47</sup> Also among Folger's papers on the site selection was a copy of *Art and Archaeology* from February 1925. The issue included an article on "Washington as a Center of Art" by M. Jules J. Jusserand, the French Ambassador to the United States, which discussed Washington's potential to become an artistic center, indicating that the Folgers

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<sup>41</sup> Folger Shakespeare Library, "History."

<sup>42</sup> Based on dates of letters found archived in FSL, this is likely to have been in 1916.

<sup>43</sup> H.C. Folger to Robert Luce, April 23, 1926, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>44</sup> H.C. Folger to Herbert Putnam, January 21, 1928, Box 33, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC, F Notes of Mrs. Folger.

<sup>45</sup> "Misc. note on possible sites for the library (3 items)", Box 56, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>46</sup> H.C. Folger to A.A. McCreary, February 11, 1918, Box 56, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>47</sup> "A Most Interesting and Attractive Problem," 8.

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considered the possibility of their own contribution toward this evolution. Included with the archived issue was a note from Folger to that publication requesting two copies.<sup>48</sup>

Folger summarized his eventual decision to select Washington, D.C.: “I finally concluded that I would give it to Washington, for I am an American.”<sup>49</sup> Having decided on a Washington site, Folger wrote to his agent, land speculator A.A. McCreary, and asked him to make some discreet inquiries into the four sites that the Folgers had identified there.<sup>50</sup> They ultimately selected site number two at Second Street and East Capitol in square 760. The lots already contained fourteen Italianate-style rowhouses known as Grant’s Row, erected by architect Albert Grant as a speculative venture in 1871. The Folgers decided to purchase the rowhouses in secret, and Mr. Folger presented himself as the middleman for an unnamed client, who was actually his wife Emily. One by one, the Folgers purchased the rowhouses over a period of nine years, securing the final house in 1927.<sup>51</sup>

No sooner had the Folgers completed their acquisition of Grant’s Row than Congress introduced H.R. 9355 in January 1928, proposing to acquire all of squares 760 and 761 to be used by the Library of Congress for the construction of an annex.<sup>52</sup> Henry Folger wrote immediately to the Librarian of Congress, Herbert Putnam, informing him of his plans to build the Shakespeare library in the northern half of square 760 and asking if he should give them up.<sup>53</sup> Putnam responded only two days later, assuring Folger that “With your intention made definite, the governmental undertaking... would then become complementary and auxiliary to yours.”<sup>54</sup> Putnam intervened in the Congressional proceedings by writing to the chairman of the House Committee on the Library, Massachusetts Republican Robert Luce, on February 18.<sup>55</sup> Luce was enthusiastic when he learned of the Folgers’ plan and rewrote a portion of H.R. 9355 to exclude lots 1-14 of square 760. Putnam and Luce lobbied on behalf of the Folgers, with the result that the Library of Congress received all of square 761 but only the southern half of square 760. In return, the Folgers went public with their intent to construct and endow a library on the northern half of square 760.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> H.C. Folger to *Art and Archaeology*, February 25, 1925; *Art and Archaeology* Vol. XIX, No. 2 (February 1925), both Box 56, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>49</sup> Katherine Burton and Louise S.G. Perry, *Idolatry of Books* (Norton, MA: Periwinkle Press, 1939), I, quoted in “A Most Interesting and Attractive Problem,” 9.

<sup>50</sup> H.C. Folger to A.A. McCreary, February 11, 1918, Box 56, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>51</sup> “A Most Interesting and Attractive Problem,” 8.

<sup>52</sup> “A Most Interesting and Attractive Problem,” 9-10.

<sup>53</sup> H.R. 9355, January 16, 1928, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>54</sup> H.C. Folger to Herbert Putnam, January 19, 1928, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>55</sup> Herbert Putnam to H.C. Folger, January 21, 1928, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>56</sup> Herbert Putnam to Robert Luce, February 18, 1928, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>57</sup> “A Most Interesting and Attractive Problem,” 10-13.

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Figure 21. Grant's Row in 1928 (Library of Congress).

### *Architect Selection*

Having successfully secured the site, Henry Folger resigned from Standard Oil to devote his full attention to the library construction. He hired New York architect Alexander B. Trowbridge as consulting architect for the project in the fall of 1928. The Folgers, who vacationed in Glen Cove, Long Island, were familiar with Trowbridge's work at Killenworth, a 1912 Tudor Revival mansion that Trowbridge and Ackerman designed for George DuPont (half-brother of Folger's Amherst roommate Charles Millard Pratt), making Trowbridge, who was related to the Pratts by marriage, someone known to them as well as having expertise in the Tudor Revival style. At the Folgers' direction, Trowbridge departed for Europe, where he visited libraries, museums, and churches of the Renaissance period, sending pictures to Folger for consideration.<sup>57</sup> Though the Folgers had planned to construct a structure with both interior and exterior in the Elizabethan style, in keeping with the library's context and because "they thought that the scholars who were to work in the Library would feel most at home in surroundings reminiscent of the England of the XVIth or XVIIth centuries," Trowbridge persuaded them to at least partially abandon this idea.<sup>58</sup> He urged instead an exterior in "a modern design in which the classic spirit is maintained" that would include low-relief sculpture rather than columns and entablature yet retain the Folgers' desire for a historical setting on the interior. Accordingly, Trowbridge

<sup>57</sup> "A Most Interesting and Attractive Problem," 14.

<sup>58</sup> Joseph Quincy Adams and Paul Philippe Cret, *The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington* (No Location: Trustees of Amherst College, 1933), 31.

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proposed Paul Philippe Cret as the primary architect for the project.<sup>59</sup> Trowbridge became acquainted with Cret in 1902 when Cret wrote to him as a fellow alumnus of the École des Beaux-Arts seeking advice in advance of his move to the United States. Since then Trowbridge had become an admirer of Cret's modern yet neoclassical style.<sup>60</sup> By the late 1920s, Cret was fully ensconced in the United States as a practicing architect and professor of architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. Cret's work at the Detroit Institute of Arts, where he had introduced medieval interiors to a modern building, suggested an excellent marriage between architect and client.<sup>61</sup>

Trowbridge wrote to Cret on October 20, 1928 asking him to send photographs of his prior work for review by the Folgers, whom Trowbridge did not name in the letter.<sup>62</sup> Trowbridge was impressed with the materials that Cret forwarded, but Folger was cautious, writing to Trowbridge that "I am disposed to be a little slow in deciding, feeling that after having arranged to get your assistance our most important move will be this of selecting the architect."<sup>63</sup> Nonetheless, Folger accepted Trowbridge's suggestion and retained Cret as the primary architect within weeks of the reviewing his materials. Cret agreed to provide sketches in plan, elevation, and section for a flat fee of \$3,000; should the Folgers be displeased with Cret's initial work, they would be free to refuse to engage him further, otherwise he would expect to receive as his fee six percent of the finished cost of the building.<sup>64</sup> Folger was ultimately pleased with the decision to employ Cret, as he later wrote to Trowbridge in February 1929 that "we are entirely satisfied that no one could supply what we need better than [Cret]."<sup>65</sup>

### *Design Development*

The design of the building was a collaborative effort between Cret, Trowbridge, and the Folgers, as well as Cret's partner John Frederick Harbeson. The design was cemented through dozens of letters between Folger and the architects. Cret's input convinced the Folgers of the soundness of Trowbridge's suggestion that the exterior of the library be modern neoclassical rather than Elizabethan. As Cret recounted:

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<sup>59</sup> Alexander B. Trowbridge to John Frederick Harbeson, November 12, 1928, Folder 433, Box 9, Series I. Correspondence Folger-Gray, Paul Philippe Cret Papers, 1865-1976, Kislak Center for Special Collections, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

<sup>60</sup> "A Most Interesting and Attractive Problem," 15.

<sup>61</sup> Alexander B. Trowbridge to John Frederick Harbeson, January 5, 1929, Folder 433, Box 9, Series I. Correspondence Folger-Gray, Paul Philippe Cret Papers, 1865-1976, Kislak Center for Special Collections, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Cret became a US Citizen in 1927.

<sup>62</sup> Alexander B. Trowbridge to Paul P. Cret, October 28, 1928, Folder 433, Box 9, Series I. Correspondence Folger-Gray, Paul Philippe Cret Papers, 1865-1976, Kislak Center for Special Collections, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

<sup>63</sup> H.C. Folger to Alexander B. Trowbridge, October 19, 1928, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>64</sup> Alexander B. Trowbridge to Paul P. Cret, November 12, 1928, Folder 433, Box 9, Series I. Correspondence Folger-Gray, Paul Philippe Cret Papers, 1865-1976, Kislak Center for Special Collections, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

<sup>65</sup> H.C. Folger to Alexander B. Trowbridge, February 28, 1929, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

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Mr. and Mrs. Folger desired to see specimens of their collections displayed in a gallery recalling the period rooms of our museums, and, further, they thought that the scholars who were to work in the Library would feel most at home in surroundings reminiscent of the England of the XVIth or XVIIth centuries. On the other hand, the architect and the consulting architect could readily see that the site selected, facing a wide and straight avenue of one of the most classical of cities, surrounded by classical buildings and lying in the very shadow of the classical dome of the Capitol itself, would be inappropriate for an Elizabethan building.<sup>66</sup>

The decision to design a Stripped Classical exterior made the building's Elizabethan-style interior all the more important, as it both preserved the vision of the Folgers and provided an authentic and immersive experience for visitors into the world of Shakespeare. As Elizabeth Grossman neatly encapsulates, "In keeping with the function of [the Elizabethan] rooms, where performances and texts might transport one to Shakespearean times, the stylistic specificity of their décor—too archaic for the actuality of modern Washington—helps to remove the visitor from the condition of the present, so poetically evoked through the facades' modern classicism."<sup>67</sup>

The Folgers received the first set of drawings from Cret by December 1928. After viewing them, Henry Folger responded with a note expressing their initial concerns. Mrs. Folger was concerned that the East Capitol elevation was too severe, while Mr. Folger was worried that the west end of the building was insufficiently decorative, given that it would be easily viewed from the grounds of the Capitol and would likely be the only elevation viewed by many passers-by.<sup>68</sup> The Folgers continued to supply comments via letter as the design progressed. On January 7, 1929, Henry Folger wrote to Trowbridge:

I presume you have often looked at a picture of the beautiful window back of the chancel in Trinity Church, Stratford-upon-Avon. I think it must be included in the pictures sent you recently. I have just been looking at it in William Winter's "Shakespeare's England," and am led to mention it to you as perhaps well suited for a window somewhere in our Library building.<sup>69</sup>

This suggestion resulted in the placement of a large, stained glass window inspired by the window in Stratford's Trinity Church at the west end of the Reading Room. The window retains the general shape and layout of the Trinity Church window, but discards the religious

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<sup>66</sup> Joseph Quincy Adams and Paul Philippe Cret, *The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington* (No Location: Trustees of Amherst College, 1933), 31.

<sup>67</sup> Elizabeth Greenwell Grossman, *The Civic Architecture of Paul Cret* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 182.

<sup>68</sup> H.C. Folger to Alexander B. Trowbridge, December 17, 1928, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>69</sup> H.C. Folger to Alexander Trowbridge, January 7, 1929, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

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theme in favor of the “Seven Ages of Man,” taken from *As You Like It*. Mr. Folger also suggested incorporating a driveway and entrance on the west elevation.<sup>70</sup> In addition, the Folgers supplied the text of the many inscriptions located around the building, both interior and exterior.<sup>71</sup>

On the interior, the Folgers intended that the building would be primarily devoted to the library, while also containing spaces for exhibitions and a Theatre. The interior of the building was divided into three sections—A, B, and C—corresponding to these uses. Additionally, the building interior would house a Founder’s suite for use by the governing board, service rooms, and storage space.<sup>72</sup> The design of each of the main A, B, and C spaces was subject to the greatest deliberation by the Folgers and their architects. One of the primary concerns of the Folgers was the character of the Reading Room. Folger wrote to Trowbridge that “It will not be a reading-room in the way reading-rooms are used generally, nor even as a room for study, because our Library is too special in its character, and the contents are so costly and limited in scope.” Instead, the Folgers envisioned a space that was “intimate, rather than imposing” and “in keeping with the limitation of the collection.” They rejected Cret’s initial schemes as too much like a conventional library reading room before settling on the final, scaled-down design.<sup>73</sup>

The Folgers’ vision for the Reading Room affected not only the character of that room, but also that of adjacent Exhibition Gallery and Lobbies. Cret initially proposed that the Exhibition Gallery, located in the central north portion of the building, should be more neoclassical in character. However, Trowbridge believed that this design was too austere and did not achieve the tone of scholastic intimacy desired by the Folgers. At Trowbridge’s suggestion, the Hall was instead designed as a simplified interpretation of a paneled room as might be found in an Elizabethan country house, providing a transition between the building’s modern exterior and the high Tudor-style design of the library room to the south. Trowbridge described the purpose of this room as “an excellent space where tourists could be conducted without then necessity of taking them into the library,” thus preserving the private nature and scholarly focus of the Reading Room.<sup>74</sup> The East and West Lobbies similarly make use of scaled-back Elizabethan-Jacobean detailing in service of a gradual transition. In contrast to the faithfully high-style Reading Room, “The stonework of the vestibules and the oak paneling and plaster strapwork of the exhibition hall are suggestive of English Jacobean interiors, yet the severity of the details and their repetition deprived them of the idiosyncrasy and piquancy of the originals.”<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> H.C. Folger to Alexander B. Trowbridge, February 13, 1929, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>71</sup> H.C. Folger to Paul P. Cret, April 28, 1930; H.C. Folger to Paul P. Cret, August 9, 1929; both Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>72</sup> Adams and Cret, 32-33.

<sup>73</sup> H.C. Folger to Alexander Trowbridge, December 20, 1928, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>74</sup> Alexander Trowbridge to John Frederick Harbeson, February 23, 1929, Folder 433, Box 9, Series I. Correspondence Folger-Gray, Paul Philippe Cret Papers, 1865-1976, Kislak Center for Special Collections, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.

<sup>75</sup> Grossman, 179-180.



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The Theatre in the east portion of the building was also the subject of much discussion and study. In a letter dated April 1, 1929, Folger discusses ideas for the development of the Theatre design:

You will be interested in the accompanying sketch of a Shakespeare playhouse, made by Dr. Tannenbaum. He is an authority, and undoubtedly this is quite correct.

At the Dramatic Museum, Columbia University, there is a large pasteboard model of the Fortune Theatre, built to exact scale. It was prepared by James P. Maginnis of London. It might be well for someone to look at it, at their convenience.<sup>76</sup>

Four weeks later, Folger sent Trowbridge a copy of the book *Shakespeare's Playhouses* by Dr. Joseph Quincy Adams of Cornell University. The accompanying letter discussed the Globe and Fortune Theatres as possible examples to consider for the Folger's Theatre.<sup>77</sup> Although the Folgers and their architects considered erecting a reproduction of an Elizabethan Theatre like the Globe, Mr. Folger, concerned with the risk of "criticism" associated with an attempted reproduction, decided instead that it would be best to design a Theatre in the general Elizabethan style, "such as was used during the Shakespeare period."<sup>78</sup> Cret's personal notes and sketches indicate that he investigated a variety of documented Elizabethan theatres in the preparation of his design, considering each building's general spatial composition and size in addition to the materiality, proportion, and finish of its individual components.<sup>79</sup>

The faithfully Elizabethan-style design of the Theatre ultimately caused some difficulty. The space was intended for the presentation of Shakespeare's plays in their original staging as well as for lectures and concerts.<sup>80</sup> However, due to fire code restrictions, the Theatre was not permitted to be used as a regular performance space: the doorway between the Theatre and the lobby was only a single doorway, six-feet wide, while District of Columbia code required two five-foot entrances for public assembly spaces. To preserve the design, the Baird Company, the general contractor for the project, pledged to the Inspector of Buildings that the primary function of the space was as an exhibition, not a Theatre, and that no admission would be charged for any plays or performances there. They also promised that assembly in the space would be a rare event, limited to about two occasions per year.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Henry Folger to Alexander Trowbridge, April 1, 1929, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>77</sup> Henry Folger to Alexander Trowbridge, April 29, 1929, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>78</sup> H.C. Folger to Alexander B. Trowbridge, May 20, 1929, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>79</sup> Folger Shakespeare Library Drawings, Folder 226.1 Paul Philippe Cret Collection, Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.

<sup>80</sup> Adams and Cret, *The Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington* (No Location: Trustees of Amherst College, 1933), 32.

<sup>81</sup> DC Building Permit #130151, January 17, 1930, DC Building Permits 1877-1949, M1116 [Microfilm], National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

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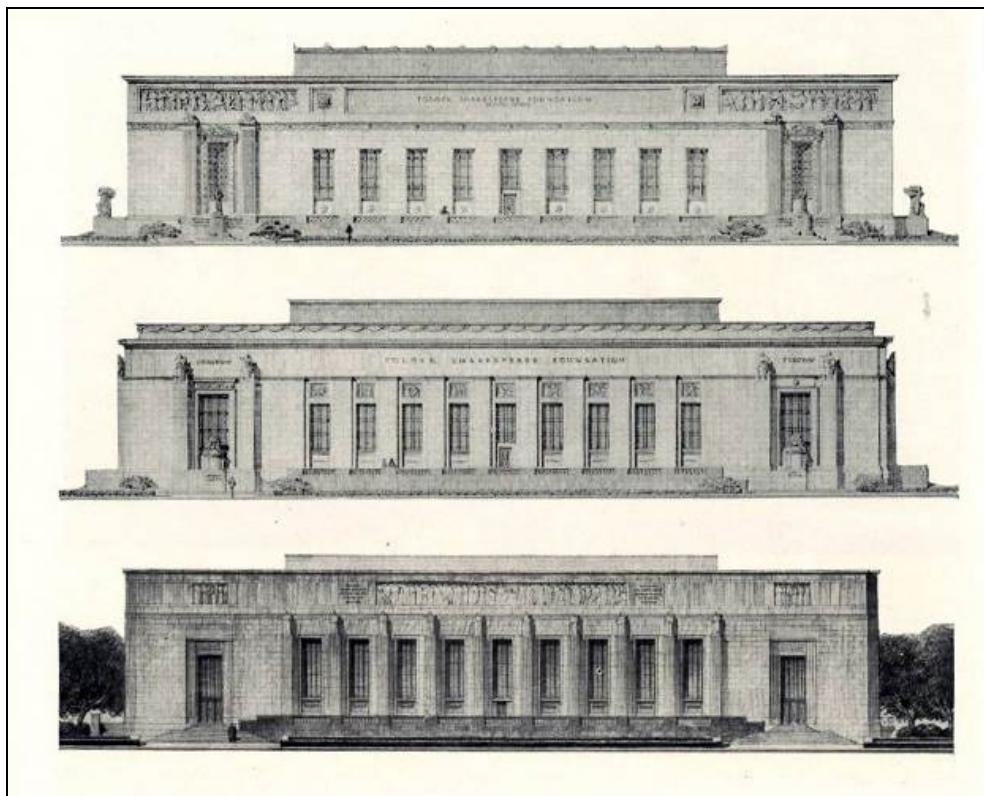


Figure 22. Early design concepts (*American Architect*, Vol. 142, No. 2611, September 1932)

With the design developed, the issue of the building's exact location on the site was still unsettled. Henry Folger had expressed a wish on more than one occasion that the building be sited in the northeastern portion of its lot along the building lines fronting East Capitol and Third Streets, in order to clearly differentiate it spatially from the new Library of Congress building that would be erected to the south. However, in February 1929, the architects learned from the Librarian of Congress Herbert Putnam that plans were under consideration to widen East Capitol Street. This required setting the Folgers' building back from the street, and very close to the new Library of Congress annex. Putnam also advised Trowbridge and Cret on how to approach Charles Moore, then Chairman of the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts, which reviewed all designs with high visibility in the capital. Putnam recommended contacting Moore informally with preliminary drawings. Trowbridge did so, with the result that the design received Moore's support.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>82</sup> "A Most Interesting and Attractive Problem," 16. As the Shipstead-Luce Act was not enacted until May 1930, the CFA at this time no power to approve or deny designs constructed by non-federal actors. The Folger Library was not officially presented to CFA and Moore was consulted only informally.

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### ***Construction***

On November 8, 1929, Henry Folger applied for a permit to raze the buildings in Grant's Row.<sup>83</sup> On January 17, 1930, he filed a permit application to build the Folger Shakespeare Library. Accompanying the issued permit was a note, dated January 24, 1930, that the Architects Advisory Council had reviewed the plans and had designated the design Class 1 – Distinguished, believing it to be outstanding among buildings of its type.<sup>84</sup> The cornerstone of the building was laid in May 1930.<sup>85</sup>



Figure 23. Undated image of the construction site (Folger Archives)

In consultation with the Folgers, Trowbridge and Cret contracted with the James Baird Company to act as the general contractor. The Baird Company agreed that, should the total cost of construction exceed the figure agreed upon in the contract, the Baird Company would cover the difference.<sup>86</sup> Other contracts awarded included, but were not limited to:

Heating, Plumbing, and Ventilation – The Standard Engineering Co.<sup>87</sup>  
Structural Engineering – Wiliam H. Gravell, Inc.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>83</sup> DC Building Permit #128810, November 8, 1929, DC Building Permits 1877-1949, M1116 [Microfilm], National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

<sup>84</sup> DC Building Permit #130151, January 17, 1930, DC Building Permits 1877-1949, M1116 [Microfilm], National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

<sup>85</sup> William A. Slade, "The Folger Shakespeare Library," *Library Journal* Vol. 57, No. 13 (July 1932): 602.

<sup>86</sup> Alexander B. Trowbridge to H.C. Folger, February 5, 1920, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>87</sup> H.C. Folger to Alexander B. Trowbridge, February 4, 1930, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

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Consulting Engineer – Isaac Hathaway Francis<sup>89</sup>  
Steel Windows – Henry Hope and Sons<sup>90</sup>  
Wrought Iron Gates and Hardware – The Iron Craftsmen<sup>91</sup>  
Tile Flooring – Enfield Pottery & Tile Works<sup>92</sup>  
Stone and Marble Carving – Piccirilli Brothers<sup>93</sup>  
Landscaping and Grounds – J.H. Small & Sons<sup>94</sup>  
Stained Glass – D’Ascenzo Studios<sup>95</sup>  
Exterior Marble – The Georgia Marble Co.  
Terrazzo and Slate – United States Tile and Marble Co.  
Woodwork – Eric Janssen  
Plasterwork – A.W. Lee  
Painting and Decorative Work – Edward W. Minte Co.<sup>96</sup>  
Elevator – Otis Company<sup>97</sup>  
Lighting Fixtures – Edward F. Caldwell Co.<sup>98</sup>  
Furniture – Westing, Evans & Egmore, Inc.<sup>99</sup>  
Theatre Hangings – J.M. and A.T. Hewlett<sup>100</sup>  
Theatre Seats – American Seating Company<sup>101</sup>  
Theatre Decorative Painting – Austin Purves, Jr.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> William Gravell to Paul P. Cret, June 3, 1929, Box 58a, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>89</sup> James Baird Company to Paul P. Cret, March 1, 1932, Box 58a, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>90</sup> James Baird Company to Paul P. Cret, January 15, 1930, Box 58a, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC; Trustees of Amherst College to Paul P. Cret, October 17, 1933, Box 58a, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>91</sup> Paul P. Cret to William A. Slade, November 21, 1932, Box 58a, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>92</sup> Joseph P. Müller of Enfield Pottery & Tile Works to Paul P. Cret, October 10, 1929, Box 58a, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>93</sup> Paul P. Cret to James Baird Company, June 11, 1930, Box 58a, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>94</sup> Contract between Emily C. J. Folger and J.H. Small & Sons, April 1930, Box 58a, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>95</sup> D’Ascenzo Studios to Paul P. Cret, November 5, 1929 and July 1, 1930, both Box 58a, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>96</sup> *Washington Post*, “Workmen Gloried in Rearing Library,” April 23, 1932, [www.proquest.com](http://www.proquest.com) (accessed August 28, 2017).

<sup>97</sup> James Baird Company to Paul P. Cret, January 28, 1930, Box 58a, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>98</sup> Paul P. Cret to William A. Slade, November 21, 1932, Box 58a, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>99</sup> Westing, Evans & Egmore, Estimate of Special Furniture and Furnishings, Schedule “A” of English Design; Westing, Evans & Egmore to Paul P. Cret. April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1931, both Box 58a, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC

<sup>100</sup> Paul P. Cret to J.M. and A.T. Hewlett, April 6, 1931, Box 58a, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>101</sup> Contract between Emily C. J. Folger and American Seating Company, May 1, 1931, Box 58a, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

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Figure 24. South (rear) elevation of the Folger Library under construction, January 1931 (Folger Archives)

### ***Death of Henry Folger and the Trusteeship of Amherst College***

On June 11, 1930, Henry Folger died from a pulmonary embolism. His will, written in 1927, dictated that the bulk of his estate, excepting some bequests to his nieces and nephews, be left to Amherst College in trust for the Folger Library to complete construction and endow the institution. Mr. Folger had been in the practice of gifting his wife one-half of his stocks in Standards Oil as he acquired them, so she was not included as a beneficiary, but was named executrix. The will asked that the Trustees of Amherst consult with Mrs. Folger on all plans and disbursements for the library beyond routine expenses. However, after examining the estate which, like most stocks, had suffered from the effect of the stock market crash of October 1929, the Trustees did not believe that the returns would be adequate to both complete and endow the library. Accordingly, Mrs. Folger provided the Trustees with securities of her own with a market

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<sup>102</sup> Folger Shakespeare Library, "Elizabethan Theatre," [https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/Elizabethan\\_Theatre](https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/Elizabethan_Theatre) (accessed September 28, 2017).

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value at the time of at least three million dollars. She also agreed to pay the salary of the Director of Research during her lifetime.<sup>103</sup>

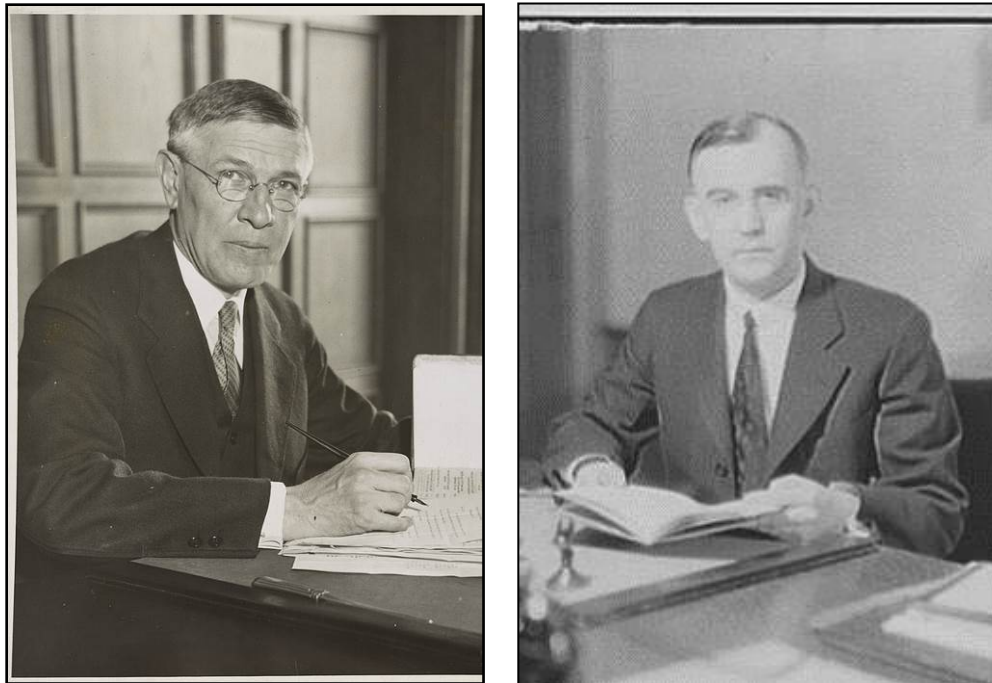


Figure 25. William Slade (Left) and Joseph Quincy Adams, Jr. (Right) (Library of Congress)

### ***Dedication and Opening***

Together, Henry and Emily Folger had chosen two men to head the library. They were William A. Slade, formerly head of the bibliographic department at the Library of Congress, who would serve as Director, and Dr. Joseph Quincy Adams, formerly Chair of the English Department at Cornell University, who would serve as Director of Research. As the library building neared completion, Slade arranged a skeleton staff to receive the books, which arrived from New York via truck between October 1931 and March 1932.

The Folger Library was dedicated and opened on Saturday, April 23, 1932, the anniversary of Shakespeare's birth. Among the attendees of the ceremony were President and Mrs. Herbert Hoover (Figure 25). President Arthur Stanley Pease of Amherst College presided, and Emily Folger presented the keys of the library to George Arthur Plimpton, chairman of the Amherst Board of Trustees. Dr. Adams gave an address titled "Shakespeare and American Culture," in which he called the Folger Library "a noble library, housed in a building as lovely as a poem

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<sup>103</sup> Stanley King, *Recollections of the Folger Shakespeare Library*, published for the Trustees of Amherst College (United States: Cornell University Press, 1950), 6-12, Box 60, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

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itself.”<sup>104</sup> Stanley King, who had just been appointed President of Amherst College, reported that “The ceremony had charm and distinction, and Mrs. Folger, in the center of the stage, was obviously very happy.”<sup>105</sup>

The dedication of the library was a significant event in Washington, and it received extensive media coverage, both locally and nationally. The ceremony was transmitted live on radio by WEA-FNBC in Washington and was also broadcast on stations around the United States. In New York, the live broadcast was followed by a radio program presenting excerpts from Shakespeare’s best-known plays. The *Washington Post* ran a four-page special supplement in its April 4, 1932 edition that was dedicated exclusively to the library, exclaiming, “Folger Library Called Gem of Architecture” and “Library Declared True Work of Art.” The supplement included quotes from numerous dignitaries, including the Ambassadors of England, France, and Germany, as well from Shakespeare scholars and political and business figures from across the country. The French Ambassador lauded the new library, saying that the “beautiful building erected in Washington, thanks to Mr. Folger’s generosity and Mr. Paul Cret’s talent, is a monument worthy of the poet and of a great English-speaking nation.”<sup>106</sup> Dr. William F. Notz, dean of the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University stated that the “location of the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington marks a notable forward step in making our Capital City an outstanding national cultural center.”<sup>107</sup> Emily Folger was quoted as saying that, “had my husband lived to see the completed library building, I am sure he would have been entirely satisfied. It is his dream come alive at last.”<sup>108</sup>



Figure 26. President and Mrs. Hoover arriving at the dedication of the library, April 23, 1932 (Folger Archives)

The dedication occurred on the anniversary of Shakespeare’s birthdate, and it also coincided with the three-hundredth anniversary of the publication of the Second Folio.<sup>109</sup> Further, in Stratford-upon-Avon, on the same day that the Folger Library was dedicated in Washington, the new

<sup>104</sup> Joseph Quincy Adams, Jr., “Shakespeare and American Culture,” in *Shakespeare in America*, ed. James Shapiro, pages 418-435 (New York: The Library of America, 2013), 419.

<sup>105</sup> King, 9, 15-16.

<sup>106</sup> “High Dignitaries Laud New Folger Library,” *Washington Post*, April 23, 1932, 1.

<sup>107</sup> “Civic Chiefs Join Scholars in Shakespeare Tributes,” *Washington Post*, April 23, 1932, MS1.

<sup>108</sup> “Library is Called Architectural Gem,” *Washington Post*, April 23, 1932, MS2.

<sup>109</sup> “Shakespeare’s Red Letter Day,” *Bulletin* (Providence, Rhode Island), April 17, 1932, Box 64, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, D.C.

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Shakespeare Memorial Theatre was dedicated.<sup>110</sup> Stratford had been a focus for Shakespeare enthusiasts since the early 1700s but its popularity was cemented in 1769, when actor David Garrick arranged a jubilee celebration of the birth of Shakespeare.<sup>111</sup> The Folgers had made eleven trips to Stratford-Upon-Avon during their marriage and were well-known to the town for their endeavor to collect Shakespeareana as well as for their passion for Shakespeare. The new Stratford Theatre replaced an earlier Victorian Theatre that had burned in 1926. The new building was designed by Elisabeth Scott in the Art Deco style similar to that of the Folger.<sup>112</sup> Like the Washington ceremonies, the event was broadcasted widely on radio, and included an address by the Prince of Wales, and remarks by Sir Archibald Flower, Mayor of Stratford, and Thomas W. Lamont, Chairman of the American Shakespeare Association. In Washington, a cablegram from King George was read during the Folger dedication ceremonies, conveying warm sentiments:

It is a source of interest and pleasure to me to know that on the day of England's patron saint, when my son is opening the new Shakespeare Theatre at Stratford-upon-Avon, the Folger Shakespeare Library is also being inaugurated at Washington. I welcome it as forming another bond of friendship between our two nations.<sup>113</sup>

### ***Critical Reception***

The Folger Library was received very favorably by architectural critics. Architecture critic Leila Mechlin, in an article for the *Sunday Star*, wrote: "The Folger Shakespeare Library as a work of art is a great asset to Washington—not only an exhibit, but a permanent exhibit, adding for all time to the beauty of our National City and witnessing to the ability of contemporary artists to create new beauty with old materials."<sup>114</sup> Art critic Ada Rainey for the *Washington Post* called it a "structure of surpassing loveliness...that strikes a new note in architecture in the city."<sup>115</sup> James Waldo Fawcett, also writing for the *Post*, called the building "a veritable marvel of cooperative genius" and reported "Critics have said that [the Exhibition Gallery] is beyond

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<sup>110</sup> In 1929 the Mayor of Stratford-Upon-Avon extended an invitation to Henry Folger to join the Board of Governors of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre; however, he declined based on the need for him to focus on the Folger Library. H.C. Folger to Sir Archibald Flowers, May 10, 1929 Box 23, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>111</sup> In spite of its classification as an anniversary celebration, Garrick's jubilee was in fact held five years after the bicentenary of Shakespeare's birth in 1564.

<sup>112</sup> The 1932 building was the product of a national competition. The winning design by Elisabeth Scott became the first major British building designed by a female architect. It was dramatically altered in 2012 to accommodate a new stage and back of house facilities; however, the building's façade and original lobby remain, integrated into the new design.

<sup>113</sup> "Folger Memorial Opened by Widow," *New York Times*, April 24, 1932, Box 64, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>114</sup> Leila Mechlin, "Notes of Art and Artists," *Sunday Star*, February 14, 1932, Box 63, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>115</sup> Ada Rainey, "New Folger Shakespeare Library in Capitol Area is Called Beautiful Gem of Modern Architecture," *Washington Post*, July 12, 1931, Box 63, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, D.C.



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question one of the finest rooms in the United States.”<sup>116</sup> On May 13, 1932, The Architects Advisory Council of Washington, D.C. announced that it considered the Folger Shakespeare Library an outstanding building and had awarded it the rating of Distinguished Architecture, the highest accolade bestowed by that body.<sup>117</sup> In an editorial, the *Evening Star* also praised the building:

Through the munificence of the late Henry Folger and his widow in their selection of the National Capital as its appropriate site, Washington today becomes formally the possessor of another jewel in its rapidly expanding crown of architectural glory. The Folger Shakespeare Library fittingly takes the place among those other symbols which venerate America’s immortals, the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial.<sup>118</sup>

Charles Moore, chairman of the Commission of Fine Arts, stated that, “The Folger Library Building is distinctly a work of art. The general design is rooted in the past, but it also has elements of the ‘modern’ spirit, on which time alone must pass judgement.”<sup>119</sup>

The Folger represented a significant achievement for both of the architects involved in its design. As a result of his work on the Folger, Trowbridge was hired as consulting architect for the construction of the Library of Congress Adams building immediately south of the Folger Shakespeare Library. The Adams Building harmonizes with the Folger Library by adopting a similar Stripped-Classical-style exterior; it is no doubt a result of Trowbridge’s influence. The Folger Library also enhanced Cret’s already considerable reputation as an outstanding architect capable of high-profile projects. Among his many subsequent commissions was the Federal Reserve Board Building, also called the Marriner S. Eccles Building, located adjacent to the National Mall.<sup>120</sup>

The Folger has continued to receive critical acclaim and recognition. When evaluating the Hartman-Cox addition in 1983, *New York Times* architecture critic Paul Goldberger called the original Cret structure “a building that is both as nearly perfect and as eccentric as anything in this city.”<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> James Waldo Fawcett, “Folger Library Called Gem of Architecture,” *Washington Post*, April 23, 1932.

<sup>117</sup> Arthur B. Heaton and Horace W. Peaslee to William A. Slade, May 13, 1932, Box 58, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, D.C.

<sup>118</sup> “Our Shakespeare Shrine,” *Evening Star*, April 23, 1932, A6.

<sup>119</sup> “Leaders Endorse Work,” *Washington Post*, April 23, 1932, MS2.

<sup>120</sup> “A Most Interesting and Attractive Problem,” 18.

<sup>121</sup> Paul Goldberger, “A Blend of Architectural Grace and Eccentricity; An Appraisal,” *New York Times*, February 5, 1983.

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### ***PAUL PHILIPPE CRET: ARCHITECT***

Paul Philippe Cret was born in Lyon, France in 1876 to Paul Adolphe Cret and Anna Caroline Durand. Cret was related by marriage to Joannès Bernard, a Lyonnais architect known for his medieval-inspired church designs, who may have influenced Cret's decision to enter the field of architecture and for whom Cret worked while a student. Cret was educated at a private school before attending the École des Beaux-Arts in Lyon beginning in 1893. He distinguished himself through his studies. In 1897, Cret won the prestigious Prix de Paris, which guaranteed an income of eighteen hundred francs annually for three years and allowed him to continue his study at the better-known Paris École des Beaux-Arts. In Paris, Cret again excelled.<sup>122</sup>



Figure 27. Paul Cret (Folger Archives)

Cret left the École des Beaux-Arts and Paris when, in 1902, he was offered a teaching position at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. The University of Pennsylvania's architecture school had begun operation in 1890, and the successful recruitment of a professor trained at the esteemed École des Beaux-Arts was a coup for the young school. Cret also benefited from a higher starting salary and more professional freedom than he would have in France. Cret would continue teaching at the University of Pennsylvania until his ill health forced him to retire in 1937.<sup>123</sup> Among his pupils was Louis I. Kahn.<sup>124</sup>

In 1907, four years after he began teaching in 1903, Cret also began an architectural practice in Philadelphia under his own name.<sup>125</sup> Among his first commissions was Pan-American Union Building in Washington, D.C. with Albert Kelsey, now known as the Organization of American States (1908-1910, listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1969). This building, a canonical example of the Beaux-Arts style, draws from the building traditions of North and South America, including Aztec, Incan, and Mayan motifs.<sup>126</sup> The success of this project led Cret to commissions for several public buildings, including the Indianapolis Public Library (1917).<sup>127</sup>

<sup>122</sup> Grossman, 1-11.

<sup>123</sup> Grossman, 19.

<sup>124</sup> Pamela Scott and Antoinette J. Lee, *Buildings of the District of Columbia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 56.

<sup>125</sup> University of Texas Libraries, "Paul Philippe Cret," <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/apl/paul-philippe-cret> (accessed September 20, 2017). The firm was formally known as The Studios of Paul Phillippe Cret.

<sup>126</sup> Scott and Lee, 56, 209.

<sup>127</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Connecticut Avenue Bridge Over Klinge Valley, Washington, DC, National Register #04000448, Section 8, Page 23.

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Cret temporarily left his practice in 1914 to fight for France in World War I, an experience that left him partially deaf. Upon his return, U.S. Army General John J. Pershing appointed him consulting architect for the American Battle Monuments Commission to oversee the design of war monuments both domestically and abroad.<sup>128</sup> Among the monuments that Cret designed is the Château-Thierry American Monument near Château-Thierry, France (1937), a Stripped-Classical-style memorial to the involvement of American forces in World War I.

Prior to designing the Folger, Cret honed his skills in museum design with the Detroit Institute of Arts (1923-1927); the Barnes Foundation in Merion, Pennsylvania; and the Rodin Museum in Philadelphia (1926-1929). He also designed several bridges, including Philadelphia's Benjamin Franklin Bridge, originally the Delaware River Bridge (1922-1926) and the George Rogers Clark Memorial Bridge in Louisville, Kentucky (1928-1929). Beginning in 1933, he was responsible for the 1933 Campus Master Plan and twenty buildings at the University of Texas at Austin.

In Washington, D.C., in addition to the Folger Shakespeare Library and the Pan-American Union, Cret designed the Connecticut Avenue Bridge, also known as the Klinge Valley Bridge (1931-1932, listed in the National Register in 2004); the Central Heating Plant (1933-1934, listed in the National Register in 2007); the Duke Ellington Bridge (1935); and the Marriner S. Eccles Federal Reserve Board Building (1937). The Eccles Building is notably so devoid of ornament that it represents Cret's furthest point of departure from his Beaux-Arts training.

In 1938, Cret received the Gold Medal of the American Institute of Architects. From 1940 to 1945, he served as a member of the Commission of Fine Arts.<sup>129</sup> His tenure ended with his death in 1945. His practice was continued by John Harbeson, William J. Hough, William Livingston, and Roy Larson under the name Harbeson, Hough, Livingston and Larson, later known as H2L2.<sup>130</sup> The American Institute of Architects, Philadelphia Chapter, currently offers an award named in honor of Paul Cret that recognizes the contributions of non-architects to the built environment of Philadelphia.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Connecticut Avenue Bridge Over Klinge Valley, Section 8, Page 23.

<sup>129</sup> Scott and Lee, 56.

<sup>130</sup> University of Texas Libraries, "Paul Philippe Cret." H2L2 Architects/Planners LLC remains active today.

<sup>131</sup> AIA Philadelphia, "Paul Philippe Cret Award," <https://www.aiaphiladelphia.org/paul-philippe-cret-award> (accessed September 28, 2017).

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**ALEXANDER B. TROWBRIDGE:  
CONSULTING ARCHITECT**

Alexander Buell Trowbridge was born in Detroit, Michigan on September 3, 1868. He was educated in Detroit before attending Cornell University, from which he graduated in 1890 with a B.S. in architecture. From 1893 to 1895, he continued his architectural studies at the École des Beaux Arts in Paris. He then returned to Detroit, where he practiced architecture from 1895 to 1897. In 1897, he was appointed a professor of architecture at Cornell and became the director of Cornell's architecture department. He remained in that position until 1902, when he returned to Europe to study for two years. In 1904, he once again returned to the United States and established the practice of Trowbridge & Ackerman in New York City in partnership with Frederick L. Ackerman.<sup>132</sup>



Figure 28. Alexander B. Trowbridge  
(*Washington History*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (2012))

Among the best-known works of Trowbridge & Ackerman is Killenworth, the home of George DuPont Pratt in Long Island, New York. The sprawling country estate was modelled on the English manor houses of the Tudor and Jacobean periods, incorporating elements such as an exact replica of a ceiling of the house of Sir Paul Pindar (1599-1600), included in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.<sup>133</sup>

In 1921, Trowbridge & Ackerman dissolved their partnership. Ackerman took on the firm's remaining design work, while Trowbridge continued to act as a consulting architect to the Federal Reserve Board of Washington, D.C. and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. Following the conclusion of these projects, he set up an individual specialized practice as a consulting architect.<sup>134</sup> Trowbridge practiced as a consulting architect until his retirement in 1937. He died in Washington, D.C. in 1950.<sup>135</sup>

**PAUL CRET, THE FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY, AND MODERN CLASSICISM**

***The Art Deco Style and "Stripped Classicism" in Washington***

The Art Deco style emerged from the 1925 *Exposition Internationale des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* in Paris, and represented the intersection of the European avant-garde,

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<sup>132</sup> Francis Bacon Trowbridge, *The Trowbridge Genealogy: History of the Trowbridge Family in America, Volume 1* (New Haven, CT: Printed for the compiler, 1908), 663-664.

<sup>133</sup> Harriet T. Bottomley, "The Residence of G.D. Pratt, Esq., Trowbridge & Ackerman, Architects," *Architectural Record*, Vol. 35 (January - June 1914): 558-73.

<sup>134</sup> *Cornell Alumni News* Vol. XXIII, No. 28 (April 21, 1921), in *The Cornell Alumni News* Vol. 23 (September 1, 1920 - August 31, 1921) (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University, 1921), 358.

<sup>135</sup> *New York Times*, "A.B. Trowbridge, 82, Architect in Capital," September 28, 1950.

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industrial design, and the mass-consumption culture of the 1920s and 1930s. Initially, the style reflected the more florid, “jazzy” aesthetic of the 1925 Exposition, which was inspired by the Art Nouveau and the decorative arts being produced in Paris. Earlier examples of Art Deco accordingly incorporated extensive decorative detail. By the 1930s, a more simplified “Art Moderne” or “Streamlined Moderne” phase had emerged, which communicated a sense of cleanness, smoothness, and speed, yet was still in continuity with the artistic trends of the previous decade. The Art Deco style, therefore, served as a bridge between competing twentieth-century aesthetic movements: the Art Nouveau, the eclectic impulse in architecture that had been building since the 1890s, and the spare functionalism of the Modern Movement. Not bound by a guiding orthodoxy, Art Deco designers freely blended aspects of the International style with classical Greek, Egyptian, or Aztec motifs. The Art Deco aesthetic was also enabled by new building materials produced during the 1920s and 1930s, such as extruded aluminum, plastics, and structural glass. The shimmering, sparkling quality of these materials were in accord with the “search for elegance” which marked the style.<sup>136</sup> The Folger Shakespeare Library was one of the earliest applications of architectural aluminum in the United States, and the Alcoa Company featured the library in their advertising.<sup>137</sup>

The Art Deco style slowly grew in popularity in Washington, until the 1930s it came into vogue. It was expressed in the design of residential, commercial, and institutional buildings. In the city’s residential architecture, the style was applied to apartment building design, and was employed by architects such as Alvin Aubinoe, Harry L. Edwards, Joseph Abel, George Santmyers, and Porter and Lockie. It is epitomized in The Majestic apartment building, located at 3200 Sixteenth Street, N.W., designed by Aubinoe and Edwards in 1937. The aesthetic was also reflected in the commercial buildings designed by out-of-town architecture firms for Washington’s larger businesses, such as the Hecht Company warehouse at 1401 New York Avenue, N.E. designed by Abbott, Merkt & Company. Large scale institutional and government buildings, however, represented “historical continuities” that required a more enduring and classically-derived aesthetic. Architects such as Bertram Goodhue and Paul Cret pioneered a modernized classical look, known as Stripped Classical, which enjoyed global popularity, and was deemed appropriate for the design of new institutional and government buildings in New Deal Washington. Also referred to as “Greco-Deco,” this approach merged the modern, streamlined aesthetic and artistic conventions of the Art Deco with classically-influenced materials and sculptural ornament.<sup>138</sup>

As in the private sector, federal architecture in Washington during the 1930s was emblematic of the opposing influences of traditionalism and modernism, with the Stripped Classical, or “Greco-Deco” aesthetic serving as a compromise. This trend is seen most notably in the Marriner S. Eccles Federal Reserve Board Building (1935-37), designed by Paul Cret. In many other federal buildings of this period, the Art Deco style is more evident, though notably subdued. These

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<sup>136</sup> Hans Wirz and Richard Striner, *Washington Deco: Art Deco Design in the Nation’s Capital* (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1984), 18-19, 39.

<sup>137</sup> Travis C. McDonald, “Modernized Classicism: The Architecture of Paul Philippe Cret in Washington, D.C.” (master’s thesis, University of Virginia School of Architecture, 1980), 58.

<sup>138</sup> Wirz and Striner, 19, 40-41.

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examples include the Post Office Building (1931-34, William Adams Delano); the Justice Department Building (1931-35, Zantzinger, Borie and Medary); and the Federal Trade Commission Building (1937-38, Bennett, Parsons and Frost), all located in the Federal Triangle. It is also communicated well in the Library of Congress Annex (1939, Pierson and Wilson).<sup>139</sup>

According to architectural historian Richard Guy Wilson, two public buildings—the National Academy of Sciences and National Research Council Building (1919-1924), designed by Bertram Goodhue, and Paul Cret’s Folger Shakespeare Library (1928-1932)—established a new architectural idiom of modernized classicism. While each design was informed by the past, neither design reflects a specific lineage of classicism, but rather an abstraction of historical forms and details. Wilson further argues that these two buildings “were important in the development of Washington, D.C., and also as prototypes for a vast number of public buildings erected in the next decade at the local, state, and federal levels.”<sup>140</sup>

The aftermath of the McMillan Commission report formed the context for the design of the Folger Shakespeare Library. The McMillan Plan, which sought to reassert L’Enfant’s vision of a classical federal city, was not formally adopted as the guiding plan for the development of Washington until 1929. The Commission of Fine Arts, established in 1910, largely served as the implementing body for the ideas contained in the plan, and Charles Moore, who served as its chairman from 1915 to 1937, saw the classical aesthetic as the ideal for the design of major public buildings constructed in the capital during his tenure.<sup>141</sup>

### *Cret’s New Classicism*

Paul Cret developed his modernized classicism over the course of his career. His designs for the Pan American Union Building in Washington (1907), Indianapolis Public Library (1914-1917), and Detroit Institute of Arts (1922-1927) were all expressed in the modern French classical style. During the 1920s, Cret’s classicism increasingly assumed a more simplified and austere quality featuring less exterior surface decoration. Rejecting the ahistorical modernism of Le Corbusier and others, Cret sought a “new classicism” grounded in good proportions rather than through the picturesque. While he abandoned the ornate capitals and moldings of the Classical Revival, he retained the “essence” of classicism through the use of classically-derived forms, proportion, balance, and symmetry.<sup>142</sup>

The modernized, classical idiom that is now associated with Paul Cret is communicated through his design for the Folger Shakespeare Library. The white marble-clad building exhibits a sense of solidity and balance, which creates a feeling of monumentality, in part, informed by Cret’s Beaux-Arts training. The Folger serves as an example of the degree to which his interpretation

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<sup>139</sup> Wirz and Striner, 89-92.

<sup>140</sup> Richard Guy Wilson, “Modernized Classicism and Washington, D.C.,” in *American Public Architecture: European Roots and Native Expressions*, ed. Craig Zabel and Susan S. Munshower, vol. 5 of *Papers in Art History from the Pennsylvania State University* (University Park, PA: Penn State University, 1989), 273.

<sup>141</sup> Wilson, 274.

<sup>142</sup> Wilson, 279.

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of classicism became subtler as his career progressed, with the north elevation serving as an abstract representation of the classical composition. Its series of pilasters seems to represent a colonnade, resting on a plinth of horizontally-laid marble slabs. The pilasters support a modern interpretation of a classical entablature, identified through its three components. A narrow band of incised decoration, bearing a lotus motif, serves as the architrave. Above this, a wider zone containing incised quotations acts as the frieze, capped by a band of dentils which represents the cornice. Another aspect central to Cret's evolving style was the treatment of the wall surface. In his design for the Folger, Cret leveraged the value of empty surfaces as an element of composition, demonstrated through the areas of undecorated space on the building's three principal elevations.<sup>143</sup>

Prominently located on Capitol Hill, the Folger Shakespeare Library is one of the most architecturally significant examples of Stripped Classicism produced in Washington during the 1930s. Of the design for the Folger, Alexander Trowbridge stated that the library was "a departure from strict architectural traditions, but it can hardly be said that it is an extreme illustration of modernism."<sup>144</sup> Royal Cortissoz, an architecture critic for the *New York Herald Tribune*, addressed the interplay between modernism and traditionalism inherent in Cret's design for the Folger Library:

Modernism does not need to be a formula any more than tradition needs to be such. It may be, instead, a state of mind, out of which beauty may emerge if the passion for beauty be there...Mr. Cret knows about functionalism, as I can testify from careful examination of his plan. This building has the character of a useable library – and it looks like one. Also Mr. Cret is a traditionalist, to the extent of giving his facades a kind of classic simplicity. But there are no bases or caps to his fluted pilasters nor does his sculptural decoration promote a merely conventional influence anywhere in the edifice. If antique precedent has counted with him at all I figure it as something atmospheric, something indefinable, leaving his essential originality untouched.<sup>145</sup>

### *Exterior Sculpture and Décor*

The Folger Library incorporates many fine decorative details, of which perhaps the most prominent are the carved panels on the exterior depicting scenes selected by the Folgers from Shakespeare's plays (Figures 29-37). Cret contracted with sculptor John Gregory to provide the carved panels as well as the ornamental niche in the Exhibition Gallery that contains the bust of Henry Folger.<sup>146</sup> Mr. Folger had originally proposed Frederick William MacMonnies, a well-

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<sup>143</sup> McDonald, 53-55.

<sup>144</sup> "Architecture Wins Praise of Expert," *Washington Post*, April 23, 1932, MS1.

<sup>145</sup> Royal Cortissoz, "Recent Architecture and Some Other Things," *New York Herald Tribune*, February 24, 1933.

<sup>146</sup> Paul P. Cret to Alexander Trowbridge, December 7, 1929, Box 58, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC; contract between John Gregory and Paul P. Cret to provide ornamental niche, November 17, 1932, Box 58a, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

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known sculpture in the Beaux-Arts style. However, Trowbridge was concerned that McMonnies' sculpture would clash with Cret's minimalist design.<sup>147</sup> Cret and Trowbridge instead chose Gregory. Gregory, a president of the National Sculpture Society in New York and a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, believed that sculpture should be integrated with architecture, making him an ideal choice for the Folger project.<sup>148</sup> Originally, Cret and Trowbridge decided to contract with Gregory for only five of the nine carved panels, as they were concerned that assigning him all nine would be overwhelming.<sup>149</sup> Gregory was eventually contracted for all nine panels, the design of which he completed around October of 1932.<sup>150</sup> They became his most well-known work. The carving of the reliefs and other exterior marble elements was executed by the Piccirilli Brothers of New York, who were also known for carving the statue of Abraham Lincoln at the Lincoln Memorial.<sup>151</sup>

The sculpture of Puck (Figure 38) that adorns the fountain in front of the west elevation was designed by Brenda Putnam. Putnam was the daughter of Library of Congress Librarian Herbert Putnam and had studied at the Boston Museum School of Art and in Florence, Italy.<sup>152</sup> The subject of the statue was suggested by Henry Folger as the most appropriate Shakespearean figure to grace the fountain, which he expected to be surrounded by plants (Puck, a mischievous sprite, appears in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is largely set in a forest).<sup>153</sup> Brenda Putnam was suggested as the sculptor by Alexander B. Trowbridge.<sup>154</sup> Folger deferred to his architects in selecting the artist for the sculpture but noted that "We are under great obligations to Dr. Putnam, and for that and other reasons will be glad to see the name of his daughter associated with our project."<sup>155</sup> Brenda Putnam was accordingly contracted to provide the sculpture on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1930 for a fee of \$6,000.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>147</sup> Alexander B. Trowbridge to Paul P. Cret, October 8, 1929, Box 58a, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>148</sup> Smithsonian American Art Museum, "John Gregory," <https://americanart.si.edu/artist/john-gregory-1940> (accessed September 28, 2017).

<sup>149</sup> Alexander B. Trowbridge to Paul P. Cret, November 15, 1929, Box 58a, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>150</sup> John Gregory to Mrs. Folger, June 21, 1932, Box 58, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>151</sup> National Park Service, "Lincoln Memorial Builders," <https://www.nps.gov/linc/learn/historyculture/lincoln-memorial-design-individuals.htm> (accessed September 28, 2017).

<sup>152</sup> Smithsonian American Art Museum, "Brenda Putnam," <https://americanart.si.edu/artist/brenda-putnam-3896> (accessed September 28, 2017).

<sup>153</sup> H.C. Folger to Paul P. Cret, April 30, 1930, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>154</sup> Alexander B. Trowbridge to Paul P. Cret, November 19, 1929, Box 58a, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>155</sup> H.C. Folger to Alexander B. Trowbridge, May 5, 1930, Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>156</sup> Contract between Brenda Putnam and Henry C. Folger, May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1930, Box 58a, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, DC.



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Figure 29. "The First Part of Henry IV," undated photograph (Folger Archives)



Figure 30. "Life and Death of Richard III," undated photograph (Folger Archives)



Figure 31. "The Merchant of Venice," undated photograph (Folger Archives)



Figure 32. "A Midsummer Night's Dream," undated photograph (Folger Archives)



Figure 33. "The Tragedy of Hamlet," undated photograph (Folger Archives)



Figure 34. "The Tragedy of King Lear," undated photograph (Folger Archives)

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Figure 35. "The Tragedie of MacBeth," undated photograph (Folger Archives)



Figure 36. "The Tragedie of Romeo and Juliet," undated photograph (Folger Archives)

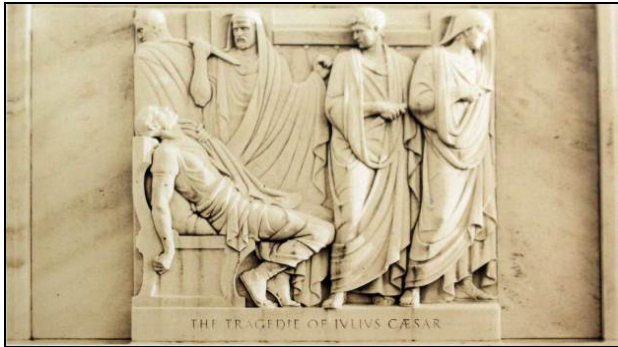


Figure 37. "The tragedie of Julius Caesar," undated photograph (Folger Archives)



Figure 38. "Puck," by Brenda Putnam, undated photograph (Folger Archives)

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***“HERE YOU CAN SEE  
SHAKESPEARE’S PLAYS  
AS THEY WERE  
ORIGINALLY GIVEN TO  
THE WORLD”: CREATING  
THE TUDOR/  
ELIZABETHAN WORLD AT  
THE FOLGER***

The Folgers were intent on creating a library that would allow their collection to exist within an “authentic” context. This dream was revised when they were persuaded that the building needed to fit into the Washington classical aesthetic; however, part of the reason for their acceptance of a white marble exterior was the understanding that the interior would be designed to present the Elizabethan world of Shakespeare’s time. In a demonstration of his versatility, Cret’s interior design deliberately and successfully contrasted with the library’s modern classical exterior, providing the Folgers with the Shakespearian period settings that they sought for their library.

Cret had previously employed a similar juxtaposition between differing exterior and interior treatments in his design for the Detroit Institute of Arts (1922-1927). While that building’s exterior is rendered in the Beaux-Arts classical mode, portions of the interior, such as the courtyard, Early Christian Room, French Gothic Chapel, Italian Room, and Dutch Room are Gothic, Byzantine, and Renaissance in style. The intent behind this decision was to amplify “the enjoyment of objects of art by presenting them in such a way that the visitor would form clear impressions not only of their intrinsic beauty, but also of their relationship to the life of the civilizations that produced them.”<sup>157</sup> The building, completed one year prior to Cret’s association with the Folgers, clearly provided proof that Cret could successfully execute the juxtaposition of a modern exterior with an historical interior. During the early phase of design development for the Folger Library, Cret sent the Folgers a signed copy of the 1928 publication



Figure 39. Rendering of the Folger Library Reading Room by Paul P. Cret (Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania)

<sup>157</sup> Detroit Institute of Arts, *The Detroit Institute of Arts: The Architecture* (Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts, 1928), Box 57, Folger Collection, Folger Library Archives, Washington, D, page 5.

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*The Detroit Institute of Arts: The Architecture* for their consideration. He would have had to assure them that this approach would not negatively affect their intentions for the building. The examples also showed them that he, like Trowbridge, was articulate in period design.

Of the use of historical styles, Cret said:

One does not cast away in a day the patrimony acquired by centuries of labor, even if he wants to do so. Architectural forms, which are like the words of our language, are transformed very slowly and without much regard for the rules which we should like to establish. But what remains in our power is to use these forms in giving expression to our own ideas and not to those of our fathers.”<sup>158</sup>

While Cret was a master of historicity, he advocated for employing it deliberately, not as mere pastiche, and with care that the use of historic decorative details should not become the entire substance of a design. Both the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Folger Library clearly evince this philosophy. At the Folger, period details and materials are skillfully applied throughout the building to varying degrees, never overwhelming the intent of the design as a whole. The East and West Lobbies, West Corridor, and Exhibition Gallery serve as transition spaces from the stripped, modern exterior to the Theatre and Reading Room, which most faithfully communicate the style of the Tudor and Jacobean periods. Cret’s design choices give the Folger interior an extraordinary presence. His fluency in historical styles is particularly evidenced in the design of the Reading Room, which is the most authentically Tudor-style room in the building and closely resembles the Great Hall at Lambeth Palace in London, which contains much of the Lambeth Palace Library.<sup>159</sup> Thus, at the heart of the Folger is an archaeological approach to historic design that unmistakably communicates the presence and power of an earlier age. As scholars Ivor Brown and George Fearson said, “England has nothing like the Folger Library, considered as a specialised [sic] Elizabethan exhibit.”<sup>160</sup> The Folgers’ intention to immerse the library’s visitors in the past was achieved.

The interior of the building employed several features created by the master craftsmen of the day, many of whom, like Cret, were based in or near Philadelphia. The stained glass, including the Seven Ages of Man window found in the east wall of the Reading Room, was created by Nicola D’Ascenzo Studios. D’Ascenzo was born in Italy in 1871 and moved with his family to the United States at age eleven. He studied at the Pennsylvania Museum School of Industrial Art, the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Art, the New York School of Design, and the Senola Liberra and the School of St. Luca in Rome. He established his eponymous business in Philadelphia in 1896, initially offering his services as an interior decorator and muralist.

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<sup>158</sup> Paul Cret, “Styles—Archaeology,” in *Paul Philippe Cret: Architect and Teacher*, ed. Theo B. White, pages 49-51 (Philadelphia: The Art Alliance Press, 1973), 50.

<sup>159</sup> The Archbishop of Canterbury, “Lambeth Palace Library,” <http://www.archbishopofcanterbury.org/pages/lambeth-palace-library.html> (accessed November 1, 2017). Historically the library of the Archbishops of Canterbury, the original building was demolished during the English Civil War, but was rebuilt by Archbishop William Juxon in 1663.

<sup>160</sup> Ivor Brown and George Fearson, *Amazing Monument: A Short History of the Shakespeare Industry* (Kingswood, Surrey, United Kingdom: Windmill Press, 1939), 139.

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D'Ascenzo became interested in stained glass but realized that existing American manufacturers producing quality stained glass, notably John LaFarge and Louis Comfort Tiffany, were unaffordable to most Americans. He was determined to produce stained American glass windows that were affordable and of good quality, completing his first commission in 1904. Around 1912, he abandoned his decorating business and became a full-time stained-glass artisan. By 1926, his shop on Summer Street in Philadelphia occupied two full buildings.<sup>161</sup> In addition to the Folger Shakespeare Library, one of his best-known works, D'Ascenzo designed stained glass for the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C.; the Princeton University Chapel in Princeton, New Jersey; the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York; and many other buildings around the United States. The majority of which were located in the Northeast.<sup>162</sup>

The art tile floor in the Exhibition Gallery consists of tiles created by the Enfield Pottery and Tile Works, founded by Joseph Heatly Dulles Allen in Enfield, Pennsylvania around 1906. Allen, who began the business on his father's farm, became a well-known producer of Art and Crafts decorative tiles. The Enfield Pottery and Tile Works ceased production around 1928, making the Folger Library one of the last structures to use its tile. Among Allen's commissions were the Pan American Building in Washington, D.C.—also designed by Paul Cret—and the Bok Tower in Lakes Wales, Florida.<sup>163</sup>

The decorative painting in the Theatre were by Austin M. Purves, a noted muralist, mosaicist, and art educator. He was also less well-known for his work in sculpture and charcoal drawing. Purves attended the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts before studying in Europe. He served as Director of the Cooper Union Art School between 1931 and 1938 and also taught at Yale University and Bennington College.<sup>164</sup> Of his work in the Folger Theatre, Purves said:

The little ceiling in the entry of the theatre is made up of the coats of arms of some people who were either patrons of Shakespeare, or who contributed to the support of some of the players companies for which Shakespeare either wrote, or in which he acted. The stage ceiling is developed from the coat of arms, the crest and supporters of Queen Elizabeth.... The details of the decorations on the beams and rafters were developed mostly from English mediaeval wood-carving, particularly the birds in one of the upper galleries, which design was found on an old English chest. The detail of the small entry ceiling was inspired by painted cartouches on the ceiling of the old Bodleian Library in Oxford.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Lisa Weilbacker, "A Study of Residential Stained Glass: The Work of Nicola D'Ascenzo Studios from 1896 to 1954," Master's Thesis, Graduate Program in Historic Preservation, University of Pennsylvania, 1990, 28-37.

<sup>162</sup> *Evening Star*, "Nicola D'Ascenzo, Artist Noted for Stained Glass Work," April 14, 1954, [www.newsbank.com](http://www.newsbank.com) (accessed September 28, 2017).

<sup>163</sup> Ralph and Terry Kovel, *Kovel's American Art Pottery* (New York: Crown Publishers, Inc., 1993), 187; Springfield Township Historical Society, "The Origin of the name Enfield and its Contribution to the Decorative Arts," *The Challenge* September 2016, <http://www.springfieldhistory.org/Challenge9-16.pdf> (accessed September 28, 2017).

<sup>164</sup> *New York Times*, "Austin M. Purves," March 24, 1977.

<sup>165</sup> Folger Shakespeare Library, "Elizabethan Theatre," [https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/Elizabethan\\_Theatre](https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/Elizabethan_Theatre) (accessed February 5, 2018).

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The stage curtains and sky cloth were designed by James Monroe Hewlett. Hewlett was an architect and designer who graduated from Columbia University in 1890 before working for the firm of McKim, Mead & White. He then studied in Paris before returning to New York in 1894 to establish the firm of Lord & Hewlett. Hewlett was also a mural and set designer responsible for murals at the Willard Straight Memorial at Cornell University, the Elihu Root Memorial in Washington DC, and the George Washington Bicentennial frieze—*George Washington and His Friends at Mount Vernon*—at Mount Vernon.<sup>166</sup>

### ***LATER HISTORY OF THE FOLGER SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY***

Upon its opening in 1932, the Folger Shakespeare Library launched itself as an important institution for the study of Shakespeare and Renaissance Europe. The Folger has since continued to pursue the mission established by the vision and generosity of the Folgers through its programming and acquisition, a pursuit that has maintained its status as a foremost international cultural institution. The library celebrated the 370<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's birthday in 1934 with a musical program broadcast to a nationwide audience. In 1936, Dr. Joseph Quincy Adams became the Folger's first director. Under his leadership, in 1938, the Folger acquired the collection of the late Sir Robert Leicester Harmsworth, which contained more than 8,000 rare books printed in England during the late Renaissance and Elizabethan period. The acquisition expanded the focus of the library's holdings beyond that of Shakespeare to include other aspects of early modern society and culture. In 1939, to provide adequate space for the expanding collections, the Amherst Board of Trustees contacted Cret about designing an addition for the rear of the building to be constructed at a later, undetermined date in response; however, it is not known whether Cret ultimately produced such a design.<sup>167</sup>

The Folger continued to grow through the 1940s and 1950s. During World War II, the Folger secretly transported 30,000 rare items by train to Amherst College, which were stored in an underground vault to avoid wartime dangers. Dr. Adams died in 1946, and in 1948 Louis B. Wright, formerly of the Huntington Library, was named director. Under Wright's supervision, in 1949, the Amherst Masquers received a one-time code exemption to stage a performance of *Julius Caesar* at the Folger Theatre, the first theatrical performance held at the venue and the only live performance held there until the 1970s.<sup>168</sup> In 1958, the library published *Music in Elizabethan England* by Dorothy E. Mason. It was the first in a series of Folger Booklets on Tudor and Stuart Civilization, which provided information on the social and intellectual history of these periods. The library continued to publish the series until 1971. The Folger conducted a renovation of the library in 1959, which added a rear addition including one story above-grade and one below, offering a combination of new offices and storage areas. The roof of the addition

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<sup>166</sup> "James Monroe Hewlett," Public Art in the Bronx, Lehman University, <http://www.lehman.edu/vpadvantage/artgallery/publicart/bio/hewlett.html>, (accessed February 5, 2018).

<sup>167</sup> Joseph Q. Adams to Paul P. Cret, December 11, 1939, Folder 143, Box 4, Series I. Correspondence, Paul Philippe Cret Papers 1876-1945, Kislak Center for Special Collections, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA.

<sup>168</sup> Mary Anne Dolan, "What's New Chez Shakespeare," *Washington Post*, April 23, 1973.

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was a tiled deck. In 1960, the library began the publication of a series of accessible, annotated, paperback editions of Shakespeare's works.

In 1964, the Folger celebrated the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's birth with three major exhibitions, lectures on Shakespeare's life and work, and a reception at the White House hosted by President and Mrs. Lyndon Johnson. Director Louis B. Wright retired in 1968, and the following year, the Folger appointed O. B. Hardison, a professor of English at the University of North Carolina, as his replacement. In 1970, the library established the Folger Institute. Partnering with a university consortium, the venture promoted Renaissance and eighteenth-century studies through seminars and symposia.

In 1970, Hardison and director of programs Richmond Crinkley were able to secure a permanent code exemption that would allow performances at the Theatre by treating the oak timbers with a fire-resistant varnish.<sup>169</sup> The Folger Theatre Group was subsequently formed and staged its first production, a musical adaptation of *The Bacchae* entitled *Dionysus Wants You!* In 1974, the Folger hosted an international congress on the work of fourteenth-century Italian humanist writer Petrarch. Two years later, in 1976, the Folger hosted the International Shakespeare Congress, which featured the bicentennial theme, "Shakespeare in America." The Folger Consort, the institution's resident early modern music ensemble, was formed in 1977, and in 1980 it released its first recording, *Shakespeare's Music*.

By the 1970s, the enormous growth of the Folger collections, staff, and readers since the Library opened in 1932 (all had more than doubled during that period) prompted an internal study as to how the physical plant could be adapted to accommodate continued expansion. In the late 1970s, the Folger, still lead by Hardison, commissioned Washington architects Hartman-Cox to conduct a study assessing the Library's needs for the next twenty years. The Hartman-Cox "Long Range Space Allocation Study" recommended various internal modifications including two new levels below-grade and an addition to expand the Reading Room to the south, atop an existing terrace. The Hartman-Cox study identified the Reading Room expansion as an interim solution to address the Library's projected growth over the next three decades:

This Reading Room addition...provides enough additional space, at the right place, to allow easy rearrangement of all departments and, in fact, provides slightly more than sufficient space to meet the projected requirements for 2010.<sup>170</sup>

As a result of that study, the Folger commissioned Hartman-Cox to design the Reading Room expansion as well as add the two office and storage levels below grade. On the exterior, the addition was clad in white marble to match the existing building. On the interior, the simple, marble-walled addition approximately doubled the size of the original Reading Room via three

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<sup>169</sup> Dolan.

<sup>170</sup> Hartman-Cox Architects et al., "Long Range Space Allocation Study," Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C." (August 1976), 38.

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connections cut into the room's south wall.<sup>171</sup> The resulting space was dedicated in 1982 as the Bond Memorial Reading Room (although the Bond Reading Room was dedicated in 1982, the overall Hartman-Cox renovation was completed in 1983 and this date is used throughout this nomination to describe the project). The restrained Classical treatment of the addition is respectful of and consistent with the stripped Classicism of Cret's exterior, at the same time that it clearly distinguishes itself, stylistically from the Elizabethan interiors. . Because the addition was largely concealed within the U-shape of the original building and because the connection points on the interior were made sensitively, the addition does not compromise the integrity of the original building. The below-grade addition included the Patterson Conservation Laboratory and the Charles A. Dana Wing, also dedicated in 1982. Located outside the entrance to the vaults, the case-lined Dana Wing serves as a space for the display of rare and outstanding objects from the library's collections.

In 1982, the Folger celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with a two-day observance of Shakespeare's birthday that includes lectures, performances, and a White House reception hosted by President and Mrs. Ronald Reagan.<sup>172</sup> In 1983, O.B. Hardison resigned as director. In the same year, the Folger made some alterations to the Theatre, including removing the existing stairs, constructing new stairs and modifying the seating layout.<sup>173</sup> In 1984, Werner Gundersheimer succeeded Hardison. Under his direction, the Folger established two new endowments to support long-term fellows and cooperated extensively with the National Endowment for the Humanities to produce new programming. In 1985, the Folger Theatre Group reincorporated as the Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger, a non-profit organization without financial ties to the Library. In 1986, the Exhibition Gallery was updated with new exhibition cases and solar-veil window treatments. In 1989, the Elizabethan Garden to the east of the building opened.

In 1992, the Shakespeare Theatre at the Folger changed its name to the Shakespeare Theatre and moved to the Lansburgh Theatre in the Penn Quarter neighborhood of Washington. Following this departure, in 1993, the Theatre stage was rebuilt.<sup>174</sup> Performances in the space have continued under the moniker of Folger Theatre. In 1994, a fire in the Theatre destroyed the original sky canopy and caused other damage. In the same year, the Library began to convert the card catalog in preparation for an integrated library system to include an online catalog, *Hamnet*, which debuted in 1996. Also in 1996, the Folger launched its first website. In 2001, the Folger continued its digitization efforts with the launch of an online database containing 50,000 records of English books printed between 1475 and 1700. In 2002, Gail Kern Paster succeeded

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<sup>171</sup> Building Permit #B280101, September 18, 1980, Building Permits, 1949-1995, District of Columbia Archives, Washington, DC.

<sup>172</sup> Folger Shakespeare Library, "Timeline of the Folger Shakespeare Library," Folgerpedia, [https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/Timeline\\_of\\_the\\_Folger\\_Shakespeare\\_Library?\\_ga=2.226475411.841009209.1509634757-910367719.1509473006](https://folgerpedia.folger.edu/Timeline_of_the_Folger_Shakespeare_Library?_ga=2.226475411.841009209.1509634757-910367719.1509473006) (accessed December 11, 2017).

<sup>173</sup> Building Permit #B300755, April 9, 1984, Building Permits, 1949-1995, District of Columbia Archives, Washington, DC. This work was also designed by Hartman Cox.

<sup>174</sup> Building Permit #B382374, August 17, 1993, Building Permits, 1949-1995, District of Columbia Archives, Washington, DC.



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Gundersheimer as director. Under Paster's direction, the Folger added a new digital photography laboratory and conservation laboratory for imaging and conservation of the collection. It also installed the eight bronze statues in the Elizabethan Garden. Paster was succeeded as director by Michael Witmore in 2011.

### ***CONCLUSION***

As a young man impressed by Ralph Waldo Emerson and passionate about Shakespeare, Henry Folger copied a line from Emerson's *Essays* onto the title page of the book: "Build therefore your own world." The message within these words resonated with Folger and resulted in the story of the lives that led to the establishment of the Folger Shakespeare Library. Completed in 1932, the Folger Shakespeare Library was constructed to house the lifetime collection of Henry C. and Emily J. Folger. The Folger is a significant scholarly and cultural institution in the Nation's Capital that was celebrated at the time of its dedication for its contribution to Washington's emerging status as an international center for culture and the arts. Following the course set forth by the Folgers, over the years it has grown to become the world's leading repository for the study of Shakespeare, hosting national and international conferences and releasing numerous publications. The library also represents one of the finest and most architecturally significant works by master twentieth century-architect Paul Phillipe Cret, and it is regarded as one of the works that canonized the Stripped Classical aesthetic within American architecture. Equally significant are the building's Tudor/Elizabethan and Jacobean Revival interior spaces. Richly ornamented and displaying accurately-executed period details in a variety of materials, these singular interior spaces add artistry and depth to this iconic Washington building, and further demonstrate Cret's versatility in skillfully integrating these varied stylistic expressions into a unified architectural composition. But more than simply excellent examples of architecture, the exterior and interior of the Folger provide an extraordinary opportunity for scholars and visitors to leave behind contemporary Washington—with its limestone, classical formality—and immerse themselves in the dark, intimate wood and stone spaces of the Tudor/Elizabethan and Jacobean world: the world of Shakespeare

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

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     University

     Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** \_\_\_\_\_

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreage of Property** 1.18 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates (decimal degrees)

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

1. Latitude: 38.889740                      Longitude: -77.003454

2. Latitude: 38.889168                      Longitude: -77.003454

3. Latitude: 38.889168                      Longitude: -77.002097

4. Latitude: 38.889740                      Longitude: -77.002097

### Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lot 31 in Square 760, bound by East Capitol Street, Second and Third Streets, S.E., and Lot 803.

### Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

These are the boundaries of the property, as identified for the purposes of taxation and assessment by the District of Columbia.

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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Bill Marzella, Kendra Parzen, John Gentry, and Emily Hotaling Eig

organization: EHT Traceries, Inc.

street & number: 440 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

city or town: Washington state: DC zip code: 20001

e-mail: eht@traceries.com

telephone: (202) 393-1199

date: August 2018

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**Additional Documentation**



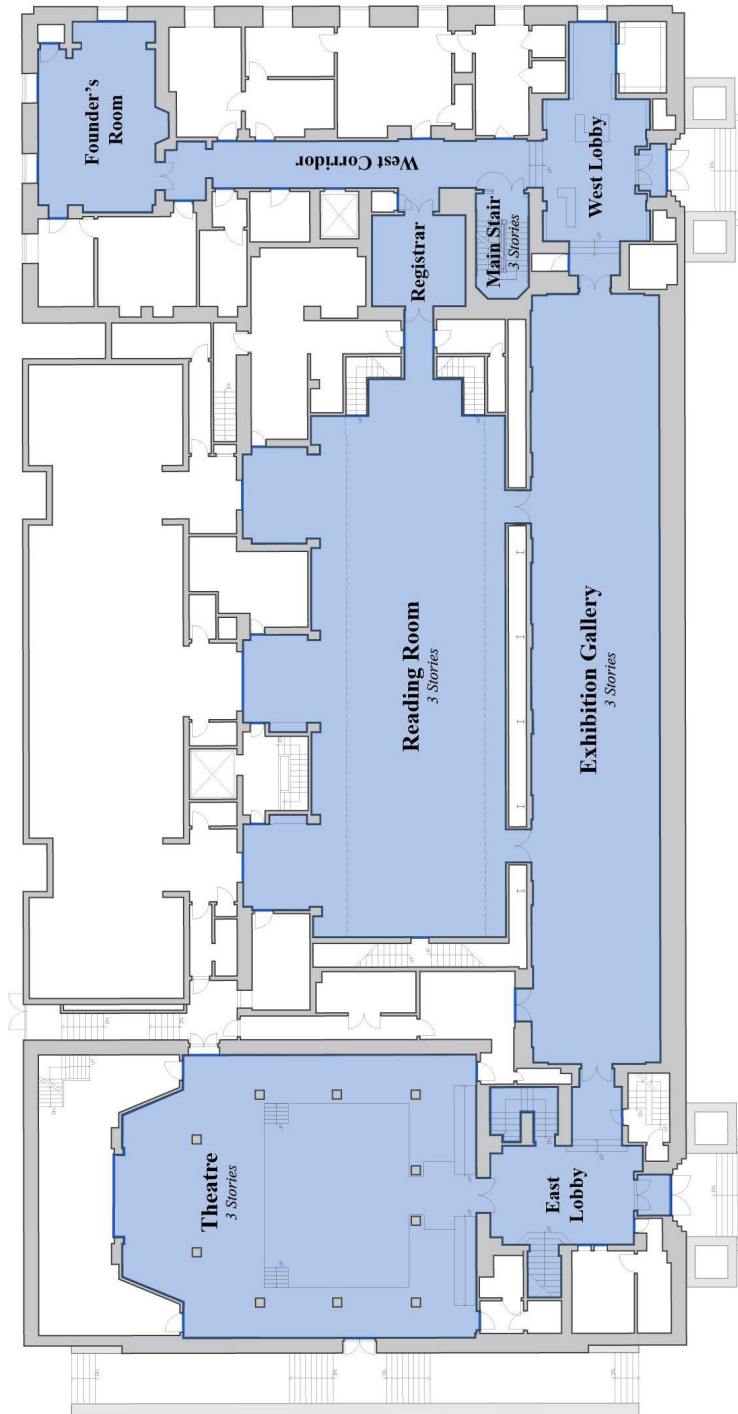
USGS Washington West quad (7.5-minute) showing location of the Folger Shakespeare Library.



Landmark boundaries (D.C. Atlas Plus; annotation EHT Tracerics)

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Areas included in interior designation (EHT Tracerics)

*Beyond those indicated here, no spaces on the floors above or below are proposed for interior landmark designation.*

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## Photograph Log

**Name of Property:** Folger Shakespeare Library

**City or Vicinity:** Washington

**State:** District of Columbia

**Photographer:** John Gentry and Kendra Parzen; EHT Tracerics, Inc.

**Date Photographed:** September 2017 and August 2018

**Location of Original Digital Files:** 440 Massachusetts Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20001



Photo #0001: DC\_Washington\_Folger Shakespeare Library\_0001.tif  
North elevation, looking east

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.



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Photo #0002: DC\_Washington\_Folger Shakespeare Library\_0002.tif  
North elevation, looking west.



Photo #0003: DC\_Washington\_Folger Shakespeare Library\_0003.tif  
West elevation, looking east.

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Photo #0004: DC\_Washington\_Folger Shakespeare Library\_0004.tif  
West and south elevations, looking northeast.



Photo #0005: DC\_Washington\_Folger Shakespeare Library\_0005.tif  
East elevation, looking northwest.

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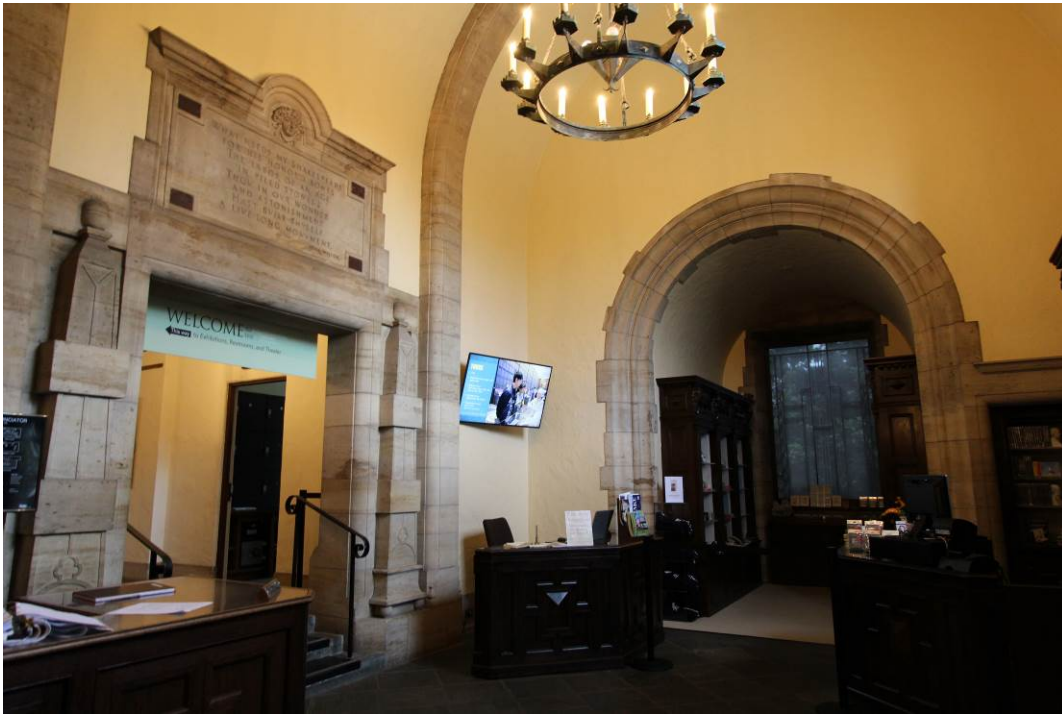


Photo #0006: DC\_Washington\_Folger Shakespeare Library\_0006.tif  
East lobby, looking southwest



Photo #0007: DC\_Washington\_Folger Shakespeare Library\_0007.tif  
East lobby, looking northeast

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Photo #0008: DC\_Washington\_Folger Shakespeare Library\_0008.tif  
West corridor, looking south



Photo #0009: DC\_Washington\_Folger Shakespeare Library\_0009.tif  
Registrar, looking east

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Photo #0010: DC\_Washington\_Folger Shakespeare Library\_0010.tif  
Reading Room, looking northeast



Photo #0011: DC\_Washington\_Folger Shakespeare Library\_0011.tif  
Reading Room, looking northwest

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Photo #0012: DC\_Washington\_Folger Shakespeare Library\_0012.tif  
New Reading Room, looking east



Photo #0013: DC\_Washington\_Folger Shakespeare Library\_0013.tif  
Founder's Room, looking northwest.

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Photo #0014: DC\_Washington\_Folger Shakespeare Library\_0014.tif  
Founder's Room, looking southeast.



Photo #0015: DC\_Washington\_Folger Shakespeare Library\_0015.tif  
Exhibition Gallery, looking northeast

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Photo #0016: DC\_Washington\_Folger Shakespeare Library\_0016.tif  
Exhibition Gallery, looking northwest

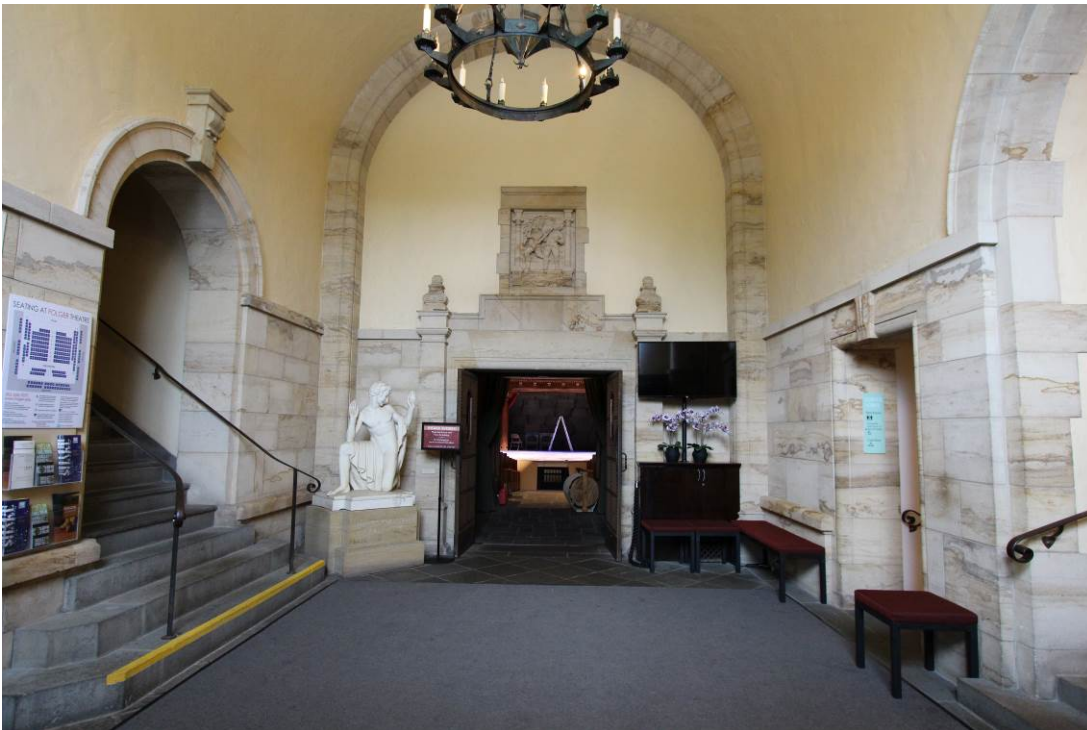


Photo #0017: DC\_Washington\_Folger Shakespeare Library\_0017.tif  
East Lobby, looking south



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Photo #0018: DC\_Washington\_Folger Shakespeare Library\_0018.tif  
Theatre, first floor, looking south



Photo #0019: DC\_Washington\_Folger Shakespeare Library\_0008.tif  
Theatre, second floor, looking north.