

BOX

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FOLDER

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**Art Commission - H.F.
McLaughlin's Complaint**

1912

*Art Commission
Metropolitan Museum.*

30 BROAD STREET.

October 1, 1912.

PERSONAL

Dear Mayor Gaynor:-

Replying to your letter of September 30, it is incredible that gentlemen like Mr. Adams and Mr. Stokes should do anything in connection with the Art Commission that could have any motive but the city's interests, but Mr. McLaughlin, from his letter, seems to be sincere, however mistaken he may be, and every complaint warrants investigation. I will look into this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Hon. William J. Gaynor,

Mayor City of New York,

City Hall, New York.

Reverend

COPY.

N. Y. C.

Sept. 19, 1912.

Mr. Adams.

Some months ago I was commissioned by the Richmond
Lt. & R. R. Co. to prepare plans for their office bldg. Through
crooked work on the part of you and Mr. Stokes I have been de-
prived of this work.

You and he used your position to harass a younger man
and finally to deprive him of work, and also to harass and delay
a Co. compelled to lease city property.

I have reason to suspect that one of the firm of
architects you favor is related to you.

I am writing a more detailed statement of the case to
Mayor Gaynor, which I will send to him in a day or two and I
expect he will take vigorous action.

(Signed) H. F. McLaughlin

153 W. 97th St.

ART COMMISSION
OF THE
CITY OF NEW YORK

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS, ASSISTANT SECRETARY
ALICE S. CLARK, CLERK

TELEPHONE 1197 CORTLANDT

ROBERT W. DE FOREST, PRESIDENT
VICE PRESIDENT OF METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
FRANCIS C. JONES, VICE-PRESIDENT
PAINTER
CHARLES HOWLAND RUSSELL, SECRETARY
TRUSTEE OF NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
WILLIAM J. GAYNOR
MAYOR OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK
A. AUGUSTUS HEALY
PRESIDENT OF BROOKLYN INSTITUTE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES
R. T. H. HALSEY
JOHN BOGART
I. N. PHELPS STOKES
ARCHITECT
FRANK L. BABBOTT
KARL BITTER
SCULPTOR

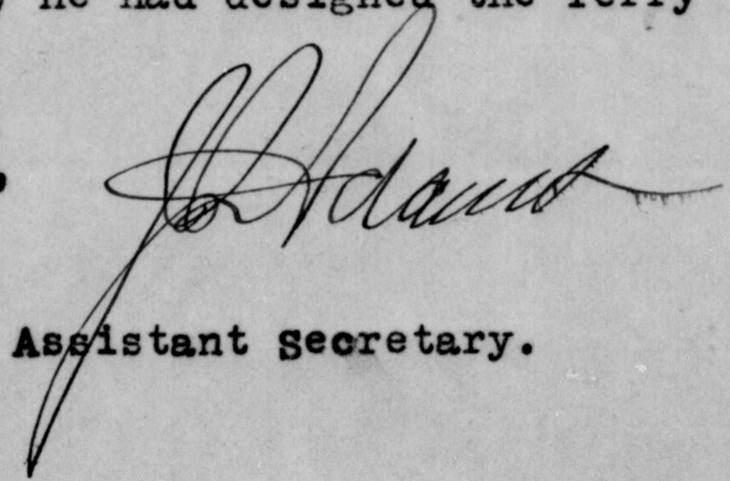
City Hall, October 2, 1912.

Hon. Robert W. de Forest,
#30 Broad Street, City.

Dear Mr. de Forest:

I now recall that on being pressed by Mr. Mullen as to whom to see in connection with Carrere & Hastings that I told him he could consult Mr. Grieshaber who lived on the Island and who, I had heard, had been for many years with Carrere & Hastings, and possibly he had designed the ferry terminal.

Sincerely,


Assistant Secretary.

ART COMMISSION
OF THE
CITY OF NEW YORK

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City Hall, October 2, 1912.

Hon. Robert W. de Forest,
#30 Broad Street, City.

Dear Mr. de Forest:

In reply to your request for the facts concerning the office building of the Richmond Light and Railroad Company about which Mr. McLaughlin has written to the Mayor, I beg to inform you that on April 1st, 1912, that Company submitted to the Art Commission designs for an office building together with a map showing its location on space rented from the Department of Docks and Ferries on the platform approach to the St. George Ferry Terminal. These designs were disapproved on April 9th. Afterwards, I think Mr. McLaughlin had a conference with Mr. Stokes on the subject. New designs were submitted April 29th. These were also disapproved by the Art Commission on May 14th. During the time that designs were before the Commission, I accompanied Mr. Stokes, Chairman of the Subcommittee, to St. George and he and I in company with Mr. T. J. Mullen, Superintendent of the Company, made a careful examination of the location and its surroundings. As you well know I had nothing whatever to do with the disapproval in either case. I never expressed an opinion on the designs.

New York, October 2, 1912.

Hon. R. W. de F. -2-

Following the second disapproval I had several conferences with Mr. Mullen and one conference with Mr. Betts, one of the assistant engineers of the Dock Department, trying to arrive at some satisfactory solution. I explained to Mr. Mullen that the Art Commission did not believe that a three story building of the proportions shown in the design could be made to properly harmonize with the surroundings and also that it did not seem fair to the architects who designed the ferry terminal that a building should be placed in the foreground that was absolutely out of harmony with their building. Mr. Mullen insisted that they could not enlarge the space on the platform and must have a three story building in order to accommodate their offices.

Finally, about the middle of August, I had another conference with Mr. Mullen in which I said substantially:

That if he insisted upon a three story building he must get satisfactory designs - designs that will harmonize with the ferry terminal and look as though the building formed a part of this group as the Dock Department has built here a fine ferry terminal and is building a fire proof concrete platform and that the Borough of Richmond has also made great improvements in the vicinity. I explained that it would be unfortunate to have an ugly office building in such a conspicuous place. I said that if his present designer could not prepare satisfactory designs, it would seem wise to get some one who could. He replied that he thought that perhaps he would have to do that and further said that he had engaged

New York, October 2, 1912.

Hon. R. W. de F. -3-

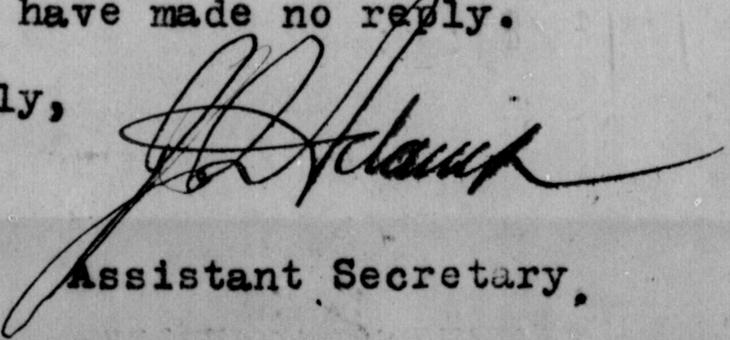
Mr. McLaughlin because he is an employe in the Dock Department and he thought that Mr. McLaughlin would understand the conditions. He said that he did not know whom to get to prepare the plans. I explained to him most emphatically that it did not make a particle of difference to the Art Commission whom he employed; that all the Commission wanted was that satisfactory designs should be submitted. He explained that he did not know any architects and asked whom he could possibly get. I again replied that it made no difference to us whom he got and suggested that as Carrere and Hastings had designed the ferry terminal, they would most likely grasp the whole situation and prepare satisfactory designs.

Yesterday he submitted designs by the firm of Delano and Aldrich. This is a firm I know only by name. I do not know either member of the firm personally and as for being relatives of mine, they are no more related to me than is the Mayor of Timbuctoo.

My sole purpose in this matter has been to assist the Richmond Light and Railroad Company to get satisfactory designs for their office building and to assist the City in having a building that would not be a disfigurement to its ferry terminal.

I enclose you a copy of a letter which I received from Mr. McLaughlin but to which I have made no reply.

Sincerely,


Assistant Secretary.

*Metropolitan
Museum*

30 BROAD STREET.

October 3, 1912.

Dear Mayor Gaynor:-

I return architect Mc Laughlin's letter, enclosed by you to me under date of September 30, with a report from Mr. John Quincy Adams, Assistant Secretary of the Art Commission, which I called for immediately upon receipt of your letter.

Mr. Mc Laughlin's innuendo, if not accusation, is that Mr. Adams and Mr. I. N. Phelps Stokes used their relation to the Art Commission to secure disapproval of plans made by Mr. Mc Laughlin in order to secure the employment for these plans of another firm of architects, one member of which Mr. Mc Laughlin states he has reason to believe is a relative of Mr. Adams.

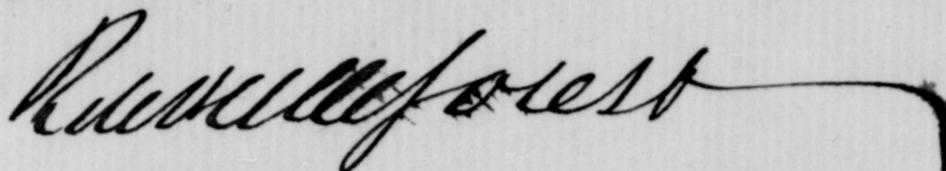
This seems to me entirely disproved by Mr. Adams's letter, which he tells me he has submitted to Mr. I. N. Phelps Stokes, for his, Mr. Stokes's, approval as a correct statement of what occurred. I find that Mr. Mc Laughlin wrote Mr. Adams a letter prior to the date of his letter to you, ^{*copy of which I send you*} I also note Mr. Adams's statement that Mr. McLaughlin is an employee of the Dock Department, and on further inquiry I understand that he is architectural draughtsman in the employ of the city in that department. I ask myself whether it is appropriate for a city employee in the Dock Department to accept professional service

30 BROAD STREET.

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from a corporation which has business relations with that department. I assume, however, in this case it was done with the best intent on both sides.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "R. M. Forest", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

President Art Commission.

Hon. William J. Gaynor,

Mayor City of New York,

City Hall, New York.