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Title: Letter from John Armstrong to William Bingham and William Irvine

Date: January 16, 1788

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Contact:

Archives & Special Collections
Waidner-Spahr Library
Dickinson College
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA  17013

717-245-1399

archives@dickinson.edu
Gentlemen

Carlisle 16th January 1788.

The purchase of the whole or a part of the public buildings near this town for the benefit of the college has always appeared an object of great importance to every member of the Board. I therefore seize upon the occasion of your conference to remind them of the necessity of making this expedient. They have at this difficult season of the year met from a Board. The plans of the Board relative to this matter will here with be delivered to you. The offering of any contract about them with the Board of gentlemen in the Treasury by making a particular price on our part appeared difficult & delicate. We have mentioned the sum of 28,000 Dollars in public Pennants, but asked you may be able to procure them for much less. Perhaps for the one half, considering their condition & the good disposition of Congress towards the establishment of the whole will not be disposed of if you can negotiate for such parts as Congress may agree at this time to deal with the buildings most suitable for as on the Baracks all the buildings except the Southern at Brick Range & the Store Magazine.

The state of the works is well known to you, done in a manner uncertain who is the contractor, which after the requisition of the buildings must also be purchased by the Board. But they are in a mean condition & going fast into decay that great expense will be required in repairing them & in drawing the adjacent how grounds to secure the Heathland of the place. If you cannot be able to raise and them at the 28,000 Dollars. We must leave it to your
Discussion to go some what further. We must submit this
Matter to you - you know were the Situation of the
Buildings & our Circumstances. We trust you will examine in every
Piece of this spare & on behalf of the Board of
Gentlemen, we desire the utmost forbearance &
firmness in order to the quiet & settle the
Your humble servants,

John Armstrong

Post-haste

Nathaniel T. & Co. Wrigley
Reflecting the
Public Buildings & Carrolls
Gentlemen

The Purchase of the whole or a Part of the public Buildings near the Town for the Benefit of the College has always appeared an object of great Importance to every Member of the Board, & therefore upon the Intimation of the opportunity of making this acquisition they have here at this difficult Season of the year met & formed a Board. The Minutes of the Board relative to this Matter will herewith be delivered to you. The Effecting of any Contract about them with the Board of Treasury by making a particular & direct offer on our part appeared difficult & delicate. We have mentioned the Sum of 20,000 Dollars in public Securities, but expect you may be able to procure them for much less—perhaps for the one Half, considering their Condition & the good Disposition of Congress towards the Institution. If the whole will not be disposed of you can negotiate for such Parts as Congress may chuse at this Time to part with; the Buildings most suitable for us are the Barracks & all the Buildings except the Southernmost Brick Range & the Stone Magazine.

The State of the Works is well known to Genl. Irvine, as standing on Ground of which it is in some Measure uncertain who is the Proprietor & which after the acquisition of the Buildings must also be purchased by the Board; that they are in a ruinous Condition & going fast into Decay that great Expence will be required in repairing them & in draining the adjacent Low Grounds to secure the Healthfulness of the Place. If you cannot be able to procure them at the 20,000 Dollars—-we must leave it to your Discretion to go some what further. We must submit this Matter to you—you know well the situation of the Buildings & our Circumstances. We trust you will excuse the Trouble of this negociation.

I am Gentlemen on Behalf of the Board of Trustees with Sentiments of the greatest Respect & Esteem—
Your Humble & most obt Servt

John Armstrong

Pres-protempore