

Transcription

Washington Irving's letter (1783-1859) to George Harvey, November 23, 1835

Addressed to "George Harvey Esqr
Boston"

Postmarked "New-York
Nov
24"

New York Nov 23d 1835

My dear Sir,

[The small insignia with SHR that appears here was imprinted years ago by staff of Sleepy Hollow Restorations, the precursor of Historic Hudson Valley.]

I have just returned from Greenburgh, where I have been urging the tardy masons to finish the outside work of the Cottage, but all in vain. Winter has come upon us, and two of the gables remain unfinished. That of the kitchen is not carried up higher than the eaves (sic). There is but one mason now at work three of the others having deserted and one been maimed by an accident [To (crossed out)] I have determined to finish the kitchen gable different from the others – carrying the eaves beyond it, to correspond with the dormant windows. This will save mason work, and will, I trust, [be (crossed out)] have a picturesque effect. I observe in some designs of old buildings a mixture of gables with "crow steps" and projecting eaves, so that I presume there will not be any glaring incongruity in it.

I wish to know how the windows are to be glazed, that is to say, what is to be the size of the panes. Are [they (crossed out)] there to be two in a sash thus The sash makers require minute directions. Give me your ideas, both for the double window at the West end, and the other windows, which have but two casements.

I am thinking of having the [West B (crossed out)] bed room in the West end up Stairs finished in a different way from the others. That is to say nor arched; but a recess made at the [ad (crossed out)] end adjoining the small center bed room; and the other end of the room let with the natural pitch of the roof. The recess at the [uppe (crossed out)] end would be so made as to hide the slope of the roof at the angle made by the front and rear building and to gain to the room the full height, up to the beams –

At the opposite end, where there is the pitch of the roof a light arch [or a (crossed out)] might be made along the ceiling, just at the break of the roof – and beneath it the slope of

the roof might be papered with striped paper, so as to resemble the curtain of a tent – I do not know whether I make myself understood – I have seen an irregular attick room managed in that way in France with a very pretty effect. The very irregularity became a source of ornament.

The flowing is the plot of the room as you laid it out at this corner the joists make a steep groin which will be hid by the closet.

By the plan here suggested the room will gain the full height of the rafters throughout, except at the slope of the south front –

I think I have given you explanations enough to perplex and confound you – so let me hear from you forthwith & believe me very truly yours

[The small insignia with SHR that appears here before the signature was imprinted years ago by staff of Sleepy Hollow Restorations, the precursor of Historic Hudson Valley.]

Washington Irving