

Thomas Jefferson to Washington, D.C., Commissioners, April 20, 1792, from Thomas Jefferson and the National Capital. Edited by Saul K. Padover.

Jefferson to Commissioners JEFFERSON TO COMMISSIONERS

Philadelphia April 20th. 1792

Gentlemen

Your favour of the 11th. has been duly received and laid before the President. He thinks it best to decline making any alterations in the plan of the City. The consideration which weigh with him are the expediency of fixing the public opinion on the thing as stable & unalterable, the loss of the work done if altered, the changing all the Avenues which point to the Capitol, removing the two houses to a still greater distance, change in the engraving, and that it will not be necessary to dig away the hill to the Eastward, since were it to be dug away, private buildings would as effectually exclude prospect from the Capitol, except merely along the avenues. He thinks that the obstruction given by Mr. Youngs house need not bring on any question for years to come.

The warants are received, and your desire shall be attended to for releasing the lots mortgaged [there is a space left here in the book] with redemption, but I do not know that, that can now be effected. You have certainly heard of the extraordinary crush which has taken place, here at N York and Boston, of persons dealing in paper, & of good merchants and others who had dealings with paper-men, it has produced a general stagnation of money contracts, which will continue till it is known who stands and who falls, during this crisis, Mr. Blodget thinks it prudent to suspend proposing our loan, & indeed we think so too. this will oblige you to keep

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back, some of your operations. Perhaps proper offers to workmen, and labourers, without being addressed to any place in particular, might at this moment draw great numbers from New-York, Boston and this place. The procuring workmen from Scotland is an object of importance: and it may be doubted whether the importation of some Germans might not be a good experiment as well in economy, as to have a certain dependance. They are distinguished for their industry & sobriety, and might do good as an example & model to be referred to. I have the honor to be with the utmost respect and esteem Gentlemen &c.

Th: Jefferson

[Pp. 87–8, COMMISSIONERS' LETTERBOOK Vol. I, 1791–1793, in the National Archives; U. S. v. MORRIS, pp. 2213–14, Vol. 7.]