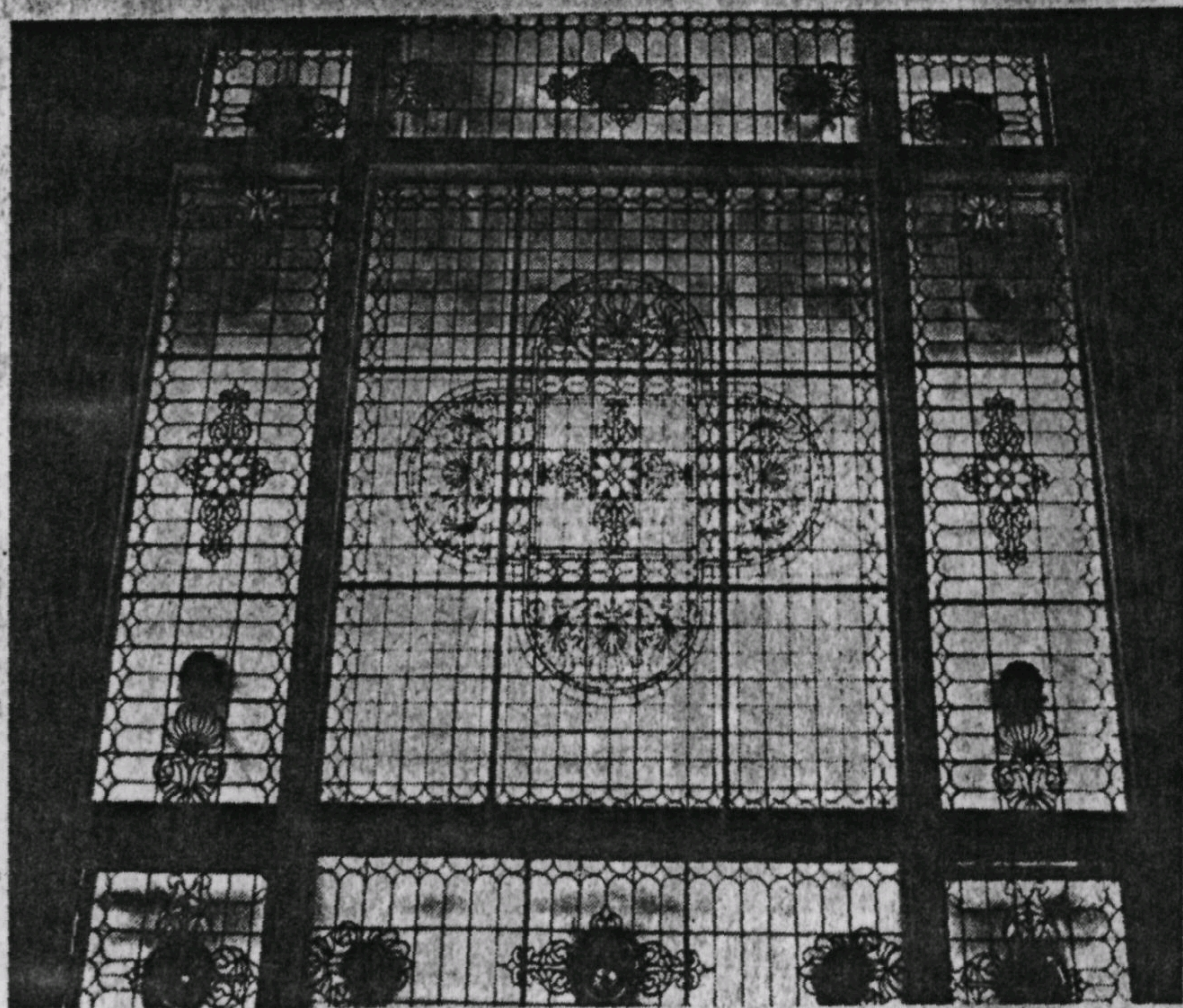


Senate skylight ruled a Tiffany



Evening Capital photo

The skylight in the State Senate is a work of Louis E. Tiffany.

(Continued from Page 1)

He kicked the idea around with his Senate colleagues and other state officials for about a year before formally proposing it to the State House Trust last spring. The project was studied by state architects, historians and Papenfuse before the Board of Public Works, which includes Gov. Marvin Mandel, Comptroller Louis L. Goldstein, and Treasurer William S. James, approved it this fall.

The contract with the D. Willet Stain Studio in Philadelphia had been signed before local preservationists learned of the project and launched their campaign against it.

In letters, phone calls and visits to Hoyer's office and through a letters-to-the editor campaign in the Evening Capital, friends of the skylight argued that the old glass was probably very valuable and that it was a waste of the taxpayers' money to replace it in any case.

Although Hoyer had been advised by Papenfuse and others that the skylight was not a Tiffany and he believed he could successfully defend the relatively small cost of replacement, he was disturbed by the protests.

Pressured into taking a position on the

issue, Historic Annapolis, Inc., the powerful local historic preservation group, joined the bandwagon against Hoyer, lending strength to the preservation argument.

Worse yet, the controversy was providing budget-watching Republicans with fodder for taking pot-shots at the Democratic gubernatorial hopeful.

Just the other day Senate Minority Leader Edward Mason, R-Allegany, complained on the Senate floor, "It's just a small item, but it demonstrates an attitude."

Thus, Hoyer's plan to make the Senate chamber more attractive, to his way of thinking, was rapidly becoming symbolic of unnecessary government spending at a time when taxpayers are grumbling fiercely about existing taxes and facing a certain state sales tax increase this year.

But he hated to be cowed into backing down on an issue when he believed he was doing the right thing.

So, when the skylight turned out to be Tiffany, "something that has an intrinsic value of its own that obviously we can replace," Hoyer said somewhat sadly, but with notable relief, "The project is more."