

CAPITOL SQUARE PRESERVATION COUNCIL
Report December 1, 2016

Executive Summary for 2013-2016

Capitol Square Preservation Council is a legislative agency established by an act of the General Assembly in 1999. The Capitol Square Preservation Council consists of thirteen individuals with expertise relevant to the management, stewardship, and interpretation of the Capitol and the remarkable assemblage of historic and cultural resources within the legally defined boundaries of Capitol Square. These resources include more than a dozen distinguished historic buildings: several that are listed on the State and National Registers; three that are also designated as National Historic Landmarks, the nation's highest level of recognition, which has been granted to the Capitol, Old City Hall and the Executive Mansion. The Capitol itself is formally enshrined on the tentative list of World Heritage Sites for its universal significance. The resources of Capitol Square also include a nationally important designed cultural landscape, historically significant in its own right, and distinguished smaller gardens designed by Charles Gillette, archaeological remains from prehistory scatter to the 19th century in ground remains, and a collection of varied artistic sculptural objects. All of these public resources lie within the area delineated by Bank, Broad, Ninth and Governor's streets. The boundaries, and thus the scope of the Council's oversight, also encompasses state-owned buildings on the opposite sides of these streets that are 50 years or older. Council members include the Clerks of the House and Senate and the Secretary of Administration, who each serve ex officio, and individuals appointed by the Speaker of the House, Senate Rules Committee and the Governor with professional or avocational experience in art, architecture, architectural history, landscape architecture, history, public history and historic preservation.

The Council oversees the architectural, historical, archaeological and landscape features of Capitol Square by recommending actions for the enhancement of their historical and architectural integrity and strategies that will enhance interpretive and educational opportunities. The Council reviews all plans or proposals for alterations, improvements, additions, renovations or other disposition that is structural or architectural in nature. Furthermore, no implementation of such plans or proposals shall take place prior to review by the Council.

Following the retirement of its founding executive director in 2011, the Capitol Square Preservation Council was on a two-year operational hiatus during which time organizational planning and revisionist was undertaken by the Council members. On December 1, 2013 a new executive director came on board to re-establish and enhance the Council's core area of responsibility in environmental review and stewardship during a period of great change and development for the Square and its resources, and to enhance public programming and partnerships. From December 1, 2013 to October 1, 2016, Kathleen S. Kilpatrick, a noted state and national expert in historic preservation, cultural resource policy, planning and management, and land and landmark conservation, served as Executive Director of the Council. On September 30, 2016, Capitol Square Preservation Council met to discuss, and entered into

an agreement on a new operating framework that shows a formal partnership with the Virginia Capitol Foundation. The Council has hired a Chief Administrative Officer, and going forward, CSPC and VCF will share office space and work together on upcoming events and projects.

This report covers the significant highlights of an active period of rebuilding programs, of significant findings and recommendations that bear on the future and public use and enjoyment of the resources, and points to new and continuing opportunities and challenges.

2013-2016 Stewardship Highlights

Development of a new Landscape Master Plan. The Council proposed, provided funding support, and partnered with the Department of General Services to draft and produce a comprehensive revised Landscape Master Plan (LMP) for Capitol Square, to guide ongoing stewardship and define the scope of treatment efforts and opportunities needed to protect and enhance the historic integrity of this nationally important landscape, the oldest surviving enclosed public park and ground-breaking first public work in America in the Picturesque style. An important highlight of the new Master Plan is a much expanded statement of significance and historic context in order to fully convey the stature of Capitol Square as more than just the setting of the Capitol, but as a first order resource of national significance in its own right, and one worthy of preservation consideration and treatment. The complete report can be found on the DGS website and was briefed to legislative leaders. The Council strongly urges that all work on the Square be undertaken consistent with the standards set forth in the LMP. The Council commends DGS for its work while also recognizing that funds can be stretched to complete work in a manner or in materials appropriate to Capitol Square and the common goal of preserving and enhancing this important public asset.

Rehabilitation of Perimeter Plantings Beds. An important priority advocated by the Council, and included therefore in the LMP, in order to enhance the appearance and the historic integrity of the Square concerned the need to selectively thin and bring order to the plantings just inside the historic fence installed in 1818, the oldest and largest work of ornamental iron in the nation. The perimeter plantings had increased markedly in recent decades in number, variety, size and density, erecting a visual barrier and interpretation that was inconsistent with both Jefferson's design for the Capitol and John Notman's whose 19th century Picturesque plan for the Square gave it the character it still conveys today. Upon completion of the LMP, the Council worked closely with DGS to lay out a very detailed plan to accomplish the priority. That plan has now been carefully implemented by DGS, resulting in neat and more manageable beds and a more appropriate planting scheme in the historical context. The project has been well-received by the public, and also by Capitol Police for opening up scanning of the landscape for security purposes. The planting beds should be maintained in this more visually open and historically appropriate manner.

Rehabilitation of the "Avenue." Another landscape priority identified and advocated by the Council and now pending, is the resurfacing of the historic "Avenue" (and completion of the bluestone curbing to Ninth Street) that connects the ceremonial entrance on Ninth to the

Executive Mansion. This feature is an important surviving element of the Maximilian Godefroy design of 1816-1818 that first established Capitol Square as an ordered landscape. While the “Avenue” retains its historic alignment and defining allee of canopy trees, its historic nature is not served by the grey asphalt surfacing. The appearance and character of the “Avenue” would be greatly enhanced by repaving it in a more natural buff-tone color. Consideration might also be given to using another material and/or adding texture to asphalt if the latter can be done without compromising functionality, including the ability to scrape snow as needed. The Council’s executive director identified an interested and full funding partner for this project. The project also has the support of DGS. Implementation, however, must be staged with work to replace the General Assembly Building and desired security enhancements at Post 1.

Highlighting the Poe Statue. After careful review and deliberate the Council recommended an adjustment to the placement of the statue in place since 1959 honoring the author Edgar Allan Poe. Standing currently north of the Bell Tower, this modest-sized statue is likely to be visually overwhelmed and crowded in by the large scale of the Women’s Monument and the Indian Tribute. Moreover, the current location will become a construction site once ground is broken for the new installations. For these reasons the Council recommended to the Administration that a location should be sought to better highlight and protect the Poe monument.

Critical Finding and Recommendation-Monuments and Memorials. While many findings were made in the course of developing the Landscape Master Plan with DGS and subsequently, the most important for the future of Capitol Square is that this national resource simply cannot and should not be made to accommodate any further new monuments and memorials beyond the two currently in planning and funding development: the Women’s Monument and a Tribute to Virginia Indians. As popular and natural as the desire is, any additional such monuments and memorials in Capitol Square are strongly discouraged as inappropriate to the resource and thus not responsible stewardship in view of the defining open character and design intent of this very important historic public space. Further loss of character will jeopardize the status of the landscape as an historic resource and the Capitol itself it was designed to complement and highlight.

Providing Expertise to Steward the Historic Built Environment

Planning for Morson’s Row. The Council has long had a strong interest in ensuring a future for the three State and National Register buildings known as Morson’s Row (1853). Forming a dignified western terminus of Capitol Square, these rare surviving townhouses are architecturally and historically significant. They have also long been in need of attention to protect them and fully utilize the Commonwealth’s assets in the space-limited Square. The Council was pleased to work closely with the General Assembly leadership and staff to secure funding in FY 2017 for detailed planning for Morson’s Row. Once planning is complete, these important state-owned historic resources will be queued up for construction implementation. The preservation of these historic buildings is strongly urged and will complete a decade and more of careful restoration and rehabilitation at the seat of government that demonstrates a record of outstanding leadership in preservation by example.

Planning for a new General Assembly Building and an Important Historic façade. Although mindful that the General Assembly Building has significances, the Council fully accepts the wisdom of a replacement approach as a balanced public interest decision due to space and programmatic inadequacies, public safety issues, and systems failures. Further, the Council has advocated within the preservation community for this decision. At the same time, however, the Council worked closely with legislative leaders and staff early in project scoping and subsequently to advocate and enable full consideration of the retention and reuse of the southeast facade of the building. Designed by Clinton and Russell, this early 20th century feature, including very rare Pegasus capitals, is a masterwork of design and a work of art. Believing that decisions about such an important resource should be grounded by full information, the Council conducted extensive research and provided briefings to Assembly leaders and staff and to DGS in support of expanding of the scope of the initial draft RFP for the GAB replacement. The final RFP included consideration of alternatives for the façade. The Council has also been pleased to see the careful consideration provided by the architectural firm and the attention to the issue given by the Joint Rules Committee. As design for this important new building goes forward, the Council is mindful of the importance of the setting at the seat of Jefferson's Capitol as well as in the heart of the City of Richmond. Robert A.M. Stern and Associates is a fine organization, and we were honored to participate in the selection of this world-class architectural firm. In addition to the façade question, critical issues for a building at this site are ensuring quality worthy of the setting, increasing height relative to the surrounding buildings so as not to overwhelm them, and respecting the established cornice line of the buildings on Capitol Street while achieving the needed height by employing design strategies.

Planning for Old City Hall. The Council was similarly pleased to participate in the selection of the noted preservation A & E firm of Quinn Evans to lead the rehabilitation of this National Historic Landmark Building. A very impressive presence on Capitol Square and a rare surviving example of Gothic Revival in a civic building, the Landmark will be reused for office space and meetings. The Council worked with the firm through the research, building examination, and the conceptual planning phases. Because it is aware of budget pressures, the Council's strong recommendation continues to stress a comprehensive approach consistent with national preservation standards to address the needs of the building's envelope, including the skylight, systems, and the central atrium. If funds beyond appropriate treatment of these priorities that are essential to the long-term preservation of the building are limited, other spaces should be painted and repaired with a light, clean up hand leaving interventions to the future when funds permit undertaking such work to preservation standards.

Shaping Projects through Planning and Consultation. Throughout the reporting period, the Council has managed a steady workload of project review to provide technical information and support to proposers and other stakeholders in order to shape and reshape as needed projects to ensure sensitive treatment of the resources of Capitol Square and the Square as a whole. Varying widely, such projects have ranged from simple window repair and replacement and communication's installations, to major undertakings such as the rehabilitation of Old City Hall and replacement of the GAB as mentioned above, the rehabilitation of the Ninth Street Office

Building, and restoration of the iconic Washington Equestrian Statue. The Council works with many stakeholders and at all phases of projects, from pre-planning to scoping and design, to ongoing project development and full construction implementation. The Council's approach and philosophy are problem-solving, and its focus is on partnership to identify appropriate preservation solutions that also meet programmatic goals and funding realities. Often, such projects go unnoticed as in the very nature of stewarding a site of complexity and ongoing needs; others can be highly visible and closely watched. The Council was pleased to work closely with DGS, project architects and landscape designers and construction contractors to ensure a location, design, materials and construction of a sensitive enhanced accessibility ramp at the Executive Mansion. As a result, the feature is attractive and yet visually discrete in the setting, programmatically successful, and it fully complies with national preservation standards notwithstanding a level of anxiety initially attending the proposal. The Council was also pleased to work with Mansion staff and the Garden Club of Virginia on the rededication and rehabilitation of the small Gillette garden to the rear of the Old Kitchen/Guest Cottage. Long neglected and underused, this now contemplative space serves a public purpose that is unique on Capitol Square as a tribute and window to connect with the story of enslaved workers. The garden has also been made sustainable through the use of plantings that retain the Gillette feel but will thrive in the heavily shady condition that has evolved in the space over 60 years as the trees outside the walls of the garden have matured.

While stressing again that the Council cannot recommend additional memorials and monuments on Capitol Square, the Council has had an active role of providing technical support of efforts to advance two already approved installations: the Women's Monument and Mantle, a tribute to Virginia Indians. The Council's work has been particularly important to Mantle's progress. The executive director served as a point of contact for the artist and his team in working with reviewing agencies and as the convener of the reviewing natural resource agencies in order to facilitate a smooth approval process.

Enhancing and Expanding Educational Opportunities at the Capitol

Reinforcing Educational Direction and Pointing to New Opportunities. The Virginia State Capitol and Capitol Square offer enormous assets to educate and inspire the public, particularly young people, and to give them the knowledge, skills and interest to participate thoughtfully and effectively in self-government. As the home to the oldest elected law-making body in the Western Hemisphere, the Capitol is a working laboratory of democracy. The architecturally important building itself is also a three-dimensional expression of the values and ideals that informed the American experiment in representative government. Moreover, the resources surrounding the Capitol, from the nationally important landscape and the assemblage of distinguished buildings and monuments and memorials all open up many pathways to engagement and learning: history, architecture, social studies, landscape architecture and urban planning, art history, to name but a few. The Council was honored to be tasked in early 2014 with coordinating and staffing a task force to review, inventory and assess existing programs and recommend enhancement and new approaches to the clerks of the Senate and House. The Educational and Outreach Planning task force included state agency experts,

representatives of the nonprofit sites community, teachers' advocates, and Council representatives. Chaired by House Clerk G. Paul Nardo, the committee worked over several months to complete its report. Significant findings include: recognition of a number of excellent existing programs, both effective and content rich coupled with recommendations to expand the reach of such programs through different strategies; the desirability of working more closely together to offer program jointly rather than from one house or another; the need to enhance the look of both printed and web-based programs to achieve a consistent or complementary professional look; the desirability of working from a pre-set schedule of rotating exhibits; the need for a permanent orientation exhibit in the galleries in the Bank Street extension to be designed and implemented in partnership with the Virginia Capitol Foundation as a key priority of its capital campaign; the value of increasing the reach of programs through enhanced use of technology and distanced learning; the need to respond to changing demographics by providing foreign language materials; the desirability of using the full campus and resources of Capitol Square to engage and teach visitors; the need to improve, update, bring uniformity to and brand to the Capitol the signage on Capitol Square, etc. Recommendations were informed by a commitment to be responsive the needs of visitors, flexible in that regard, and to build and expand partnerships to deliver public programs while also and serving these partners and their missions as a central state leader.

Capitol Exhibitions. Once the report was completed, the Council set out to undertake a series of programs consistent with and to demonstrate the principles of that document and its recommendations. These include, for example, the creation of the first-ever foreign language guide to the Capitol and Square. Available in several languages chosen based on with visitor patterns, the guide is also app available, and has proven very popular. The Council also worked with the House and Senate Clerks to research and curate two public interpretive exhibits in the east gallery of the extension off Bank Street: *Eye on the Capitol*, timed to the 150th anniversary of the fall of Richmond in April of 1865, was a visually and content rich exhibit featuring historic photograph and engravings and the words of contemporaneous witnesses to those event at and following the close of the Civil War; and *A Stand for Peace—Winston Churchill and the Call for Unity*, which documents through words and images the lines drawn among former allies in the opening salvos of the Cold War era in the years just following the end of World War 11. Delivering on the commitment to further use of technology for educational purposes, the Churchill exhibit for the first time in the Capitol galleries tested this with two stations of electronic screens to display Churchill's hand-corrected speech and to show a contemporaneous news reel of the former prime minister's visit to the Capitol and Williamsburg in 1946. Both these exhibits provided a teaching touchstone for Capitol Guides to educate visitors and the Council was pleased to work with them. Recognizing that the Capitol Tour Guides are critical first-line and valued ambassadors to the public, the Council sponsored two training programs for them on architecture.

Capitol Square Fair. Finally, touching on virtually all of the underlying recommendations of the task force report, particularly an emphasis on partnerships with other sites and museums and a commitment to make Capitol Square a place of engagement for the public, on September 24, 2016 the Council presented the Square Fair, a day of interactive learning and fun highlighting

history and natural resource. The event brought over 600 people to historic Capitol Square for a day of hands-on learning and engagement. Presented in partnership with more than 25 partners, from private non-profits to a variety of state agencies and to the Executive Mansion, and a host of costumed interpreters, the Square Fair was a success and it is hoped that it will grow from this first effort, launched in the kick off year of the bicentennial of Capitol Square, and become a regular event to connect people with learning and fun on the Square.

Fostering Appreciation of the Resources. The Council has also been active in a number of efforts to increase understanding of the importance of the Capitol and its associated resources. These include, for example, participating as a founding site in the Richmond Garden Trail consortium and in the national “What’s Out There” initiative sponsored by the Washington-based association for landscape architecture. The Square was included in tours, those both on the ground and offered virtually by “What’s Out There.” Recognizing that the Valentine, an important nearby partner, conducted regular tours of the Square, the Council reached out to provide training to expand the focus of these tours to educate about the development of the Square through time and the nationally important place held by the Square in the history of landscape architecture and urban planning in America.

National Historic Landmark Listing. Finally, and very importantly, the Council worked over many months to research, write and make a successful case for a name changes, expansion of the period of significance under which the Capitol is recognized as a National Historic Landmark and to add areas of significances, including history and architecture. First designated as an NHL in the run up to the centennial of the Civil War in 1960, the Capitol was officially shown in U.S. Government records as the “Capitol of the Confederacy” and for the limited period of significance of 1861-1865. As a result of work undertaken by the Council, supported and contributed to by the Register staff at the Department of Historic Resources, the Capitol has now been documented in broader aspects of national history, in the area of architecture, and for an expanded period of significance. Moreover, the Capitol is now document under the proper name of “The Virginia State Capitol.” These important changes have been approved by the NHL board and are, as of this writing, on the desk of the Secretary of Interior for signature.