

Preserving Heritage Assets

Architectural History and Historic Preservation

Strategic Plan 2020-2024



Smithsonian Facilities
Office of Planning, Design and Construction

The buildings that house our collections are as important as the exhibitions themselves and the buildings are in fact our largest collection. Our mission is to provide world-class stewardship and to guarantee to the public that these beloved buildings will function forever as living memorials which house our nation's treasures. The Architectural History and Historic Preservation staff watches over our collection of buildings and ensures that our uses of these buildings always keep their history and character intact for generations to come. This Second Strategic Plan builds on the first, completed in 2019, and sets our goals and pledges that we will never lose sight of our ultimate responsibility to our heritage assets.

Nancy J. Bechtol, Director, Office of Smithsonian Facilities

These buildings that serve as repositories of the nation's history are themselves a rich and important collection, representative of the scope of American architectural history and an essential part of the Smithsonian.

Guide to Smithsonian Architecture

The collection of iconic and historic buildings and grounds of the Smithsonian Institution protect and display our national treasures, facilitate scientific research and discovery, and freely welcome all who wish to learn, explore, and expand their understanding. These facilities, each of their own time, place, and identity, serve as architectural symbols of our cultural heritage. As stewards for these unique properties, it is our collective responsibility to protect and preserve them, ensuring their continued use and enjoyment by future generations. This Strategic Plan continues the legacy of sustainable stewardship and best practices in preservation technologies and cultural property management, promoting historic preservation as a core value in the planning, design, construction and care of Smithsonian facilities.

Maria DeIsasi, Deputy Director, Planning and Program Management Division, Office of Planning, Design and Construction

Right: Repaired and refinished cast iron night gate leaf, National Museum of Natural History, 2019. Over: Great Hall, Smithsonian Institution Castle, 2019.



INTRODUCTION

Sharon C. Park, FAIA, Associate Director, AHHP

The Strategic Plan 2020-2024 for Architectural History and Historic Preservation (AHHP) serves to ensure the alignment of historic preservation values into all the capital improvement and rehabilitation projects of Smithsonian Facilities’ Office of Planning, Design and Construction, and with museum initiatives. The resounding success of the first Strategic Plan 2015-2019 saw the implementation of the goals that will be carried forth in this Strategic Plan 2020-2024.

The past five years included broad outreach throughout the Smithsonian community to enhance the understanding of the stewardship role for each of us, individually and collectively in partnership with our museum colleagues. Buildings have been researched and historic structure reports, cultural landscape reports, determinations of eligibility and other supporting documents have been prepared to aid our own stewardship. New listings and upgraded nominations to the National Register of Historic Places have been prepared. Administratively, the past five years saw the initiation and completion of over fifty Section 106 consultation meetings in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act for numerous projects and the development of Memoranda and Programmatic Agreements to move forward with capital projects where adverse effects could not be avoided. Key initiatives focused on developing good relationships and communication with the public and reviewing agencies, training, digital recordation, and documenting our assets. All of these initiatives increased the visibility of historic preservation as added value both inside and beyond the Smithsonian.

The past five years helped build the foundations for this next five year timeframe. Projects underway demonstrate that both the vision for the future and respect for the past are balanced successfully. Several of the buildings, such as the National Air and Space Museum and the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, entered their fifth decade without a major renovation. Both buildings are undergoing or planning for extensive infrastructure improvements sensitive to historic preservation principles. The South Mall Campus Master Plan, completed in 2018, will move forward on the Revitalization of the Historic Core (ROHC) with the restoration of the Castle and the Arts and Industries Building. Several buildings have completed their multi-year rehabilitation projects including the Carnegie Mansion in New York City and the National Museum of Natural History. Other units, such as the National Zoological Park/Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute and the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center continue to protect their historic buildings and settings. All have plans for facilities upgrades and renovation in the coming five years. This Strategic Plan enhances the work already in place to foster a superior understanding of the Smithsonian’s built heritage through preservation, research, and education.

AHHP staff writes the architectural history of the Smithsonian, guides the landmark preservation of the old and new Smithsonian buildings, and cares for the Castle Collection as well as the Heritage Materials Inventory of building artifacts and overstock. The guiding principles of historic preservation, as found in Smithsonian Directive 418 Historic Preservation Policy, informed by the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, encourage necessary interventions to keep buildings in appropriate uses, but also discourage radical changes which seriously alter the character-defining features of a building, site, or landscape. This Strategic Plan outlines measures to reinforce the Smithsonian’s approach to the care and stewardship of its outstanding resources.

Right: Restoring the east doors of the Smithsonian Castle. Paul Westerberg, Museum Specialist, 2020.





MISSION, VISION, VALUES

MISSION: Preserve and enrich the Smithsonian’s historic resources through interdisciplinary stewardship, collaborative interpretation, and the use of both traditional and innovative techniques.

The mission of AHHP supports the Smithsonian’s Strategic Goal Number 6, to “Preserve natural and cultural heritage while optimizing our assets” as well as Smithsonian Facilities Goal Number 2, “Care for Distinctive Buildings and Grounds”. The emphasis of this Strategic Plan is stewardship of the Institution’s built heritage as these resources represent the largest collection, or building assets, of the Smithsonian. AHHP is responsible for the important Castle Collection of furniture and decorative arts which is an in-use “working” collection that furnishes and enhances our landmark headquarters. This collection is also an educational resource for students and scholars. Our stewardship and resource management impact not only significant listed historic buildings and sites, but also modern buildings that will be landmarks of the future. The efforts made today to maintain these resources support past and future capital investments while ensuring that facilities remain in good condition to house the collections, offices, museum, and research functions of the future.

VISION: Respecting the past, present, and future integrity of our buildings and grounds as exceptional vessels that shape and inspire the Smithsonian experience.

The vision of AHHP is to expand the collaboration among stakeholders to ensure that the Smithsonian’s physical resources remain in use for the future with appropriate modifications as necessary. By understanding the value of retaining historic resources, reducing our carbon footprint, and integrating sustainable best practices, this generation of architects, engineers, museum directors, and administrators makes certain that the stability of the Institution is evident in the care given to protecting and preserving its facilities for the long term. The stewardship of these resources is a compelling and visible way to build confidence in the future of an institution that values its past heritage.

VALUES: Ensure authenticity, adaptability, compatibility and sustainability in all our decisions.

The value of restoring buildings and protecting collections is derived not just from preservation for its own sake, but also from the return of the investment in the physical resource through protection of original building materials. The ability to be adaptable to new needs and to maintain the authenticity of the resources with compatible modifications is the core of stewardship. With today’s emphasis on “green” practices, the preservation of the built heritage is a sustainability goal consistent with preservation objectives and values. When decisions need to be made to balance the future needs of aging facilities, it is often necessary to set priorities to protect the most iconic of our heritage collection. The most sustainable path to longevity of our resources is to implement preservation maintenance to apply the best practices of materials care for our public face as well as entire building infrastructure upkeep. Too often, maintenance is lagging to the detriment of our heritage assets. An initiative for the next five years is to work closer with the maintenance units and provide more specific training on how to carefully clean and identify materials in need of attention before extensive deterioration sets in.

Left: Orthomosaic model of the Reptile House portico created from laser scanning and photogrammetry, Historic American Building Survey, 2018.

TARGETED INITIATIVES – 2020-2024 Strategic Plan

Develop and maintain a network of Office of Facilities Management and Reliability (OFMR) staff and zone managers, and museum administrators for clear guidance on preservation maintenance.

Oversee the use of the Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) for Technical Preservation Services to provide documentation, condition assessments, hands-on conservation treatments, and additional research for National Register of Historic Places nominations or Historic Structure Reports.

Protect and plan for the relocation of the Castle Collection during upcoming construction work in the building.

Increase the number of identified “assets” beyond buildings - such as fountains, landscape features and decorative architectural elements. Examples of decorative architecture elements include, and are not limited to, historic flooring, lighting, sculpture, medallions, hardware, murals, and paint finishes.

Provide conservation-based assistance during pre-planning or schematic design for facility upgrades, such as laser scanning documentation, petrographic analysis of materials, and non-destructive testing.



Cast iron fountain, Ripley Garden.



Maintenance of the cast iron night gates at the National Museum of Natural History.

STRATEGIC GOALS

As part of the five year plan for 2020-2024, AHHP has developed the following goals and related objectives and will address them as staffing and funding permit:

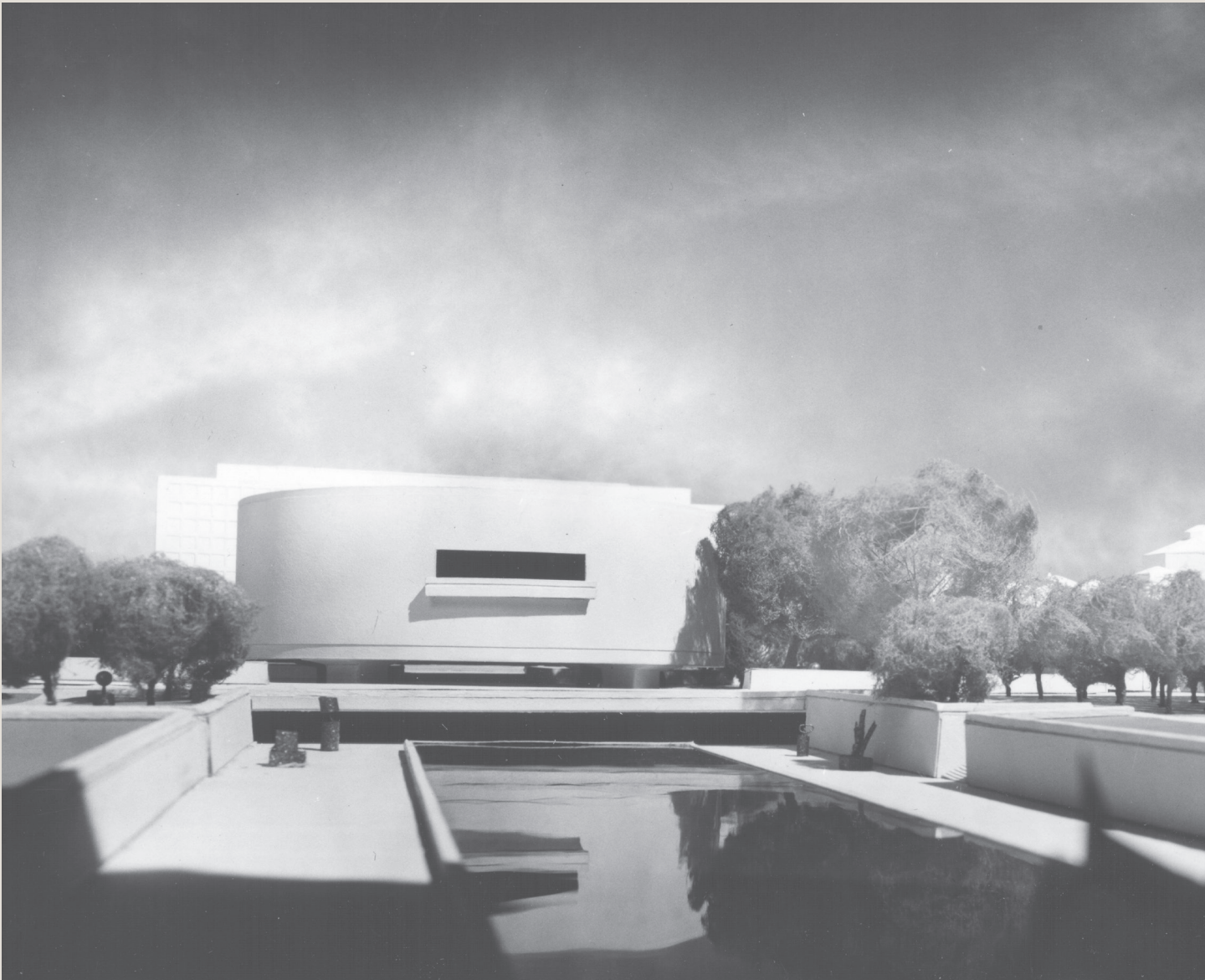
Goal 1. Integrate preservation as a core stewardship value in Smithsonian planning, design, and construction projects.

Goal 2. Enhance the visibility of and build support for heritage preservation of current and future landmarks.

Goal 3. Support and protect the Castle Collection and expand the Heritage Materials Inventory.

Goal 4. Take a leadership role in preservation education and training.

Goal 5. Strengthen outreach to a broader community to promote Smithsonian preservation achievements.



Original design of the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden. Photograph of the architectural model, 1967.

Strategic Goal 1: Integrate preservation as a core stewardship value in Smithsonian planning, design, and construction projects.

- Objective: Strengthen management and staff understanding of Preservation as both cultural and sustainable added value to projects.*
- Build awareness and support among clients for the importance of historic preservation by providing training, consultation, and best practices materials.
 - Establish effective two-way communications with stakeholders for early project review and inclusion of alternative approaches to incorporate achievable and appropriate modifications.
 - Contribute to review panels and workshops to guide design and preservation decisions.
 - Develop and maintain a network of Office of Facilities Management and Reliability staff and zone managers, and museum administrators for clear communication and guidance on preservation maintenance.

- Objective: Ensure clarity and standardized means of communication for all stakeholders on the legal and regulatory requirements for projects to preserve historic and iconic buildings for the future.*
- Define the parameters and comply with regulatory enforcement to communicate to the public that the Smithsonian is a steward of its significant buildings.
 - Develop checklists and promote best practices materials as part of the coordinated SD 410 Facilities Construction and Improvement Projects process to achieve alignment on all projects early and throughout design.

- Objective: Provide guidance on the highest level of care using best practices for all treatments that affect the Smithsonian’s built heritage.*
- Promote SI’s Historic Preservation Policy (SD 418) and develop guidelines on how to meet the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties – the core document of the Smithsonian’s preservation policy.
 - Develop a balanced approach to preservation and modernization that sets priorities for retention of historic fabric and character-defining features while allowing changes consistent with SI’s Historic Preservation Policy and Sustainability initiatives.
 - Provide assistance on preservation projects or preservation components of larger projects from planning through design and construction.
 - Highlight preservation examples from other institutions to inform sensitive approaches for similar Smithsonian resources.
 - Work pan-institutionally with other Smithsonian units, such as the Museum Conservation Institute (MCI), to implement and support conservation efforts.
 - Utilize the Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) for Technical Preservation Services to help ensure high quality preservation approaches, conservation treatments, and pre-project documentation.
 - Work closely with the SI Construction division to provide technical guidance on the review of submittals, and to monitor mock-ups and restoration work.

Right: National Museum of the American Indian.





Swenson Pink granite quarry, original source for the aggregate in the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden’s concrete, 2019.



Aesthetic sample of aggregate concrete with Swenson Pink granite, Hirshhorn Museum, 2019.

Strategic Goal 2: Enhance the visibility of and build support for heritage preservation of current and future landmarks.

- Objective: Develop additional documents supporting the listing of current and future landmarks.**
- Increase the number of National Register of Historic Places nominations, updates and digital documents of existing buildings.
 - Develop an inventory of special objects and spaces needing high-level care for each of the significant buildings and sites of the Smithsonian.

- Objective: Ensure that the SI meets obligations agreed to and mandated by individual Programmatic Agreements and Memoranda or Agreements from Section 106 consultations.**
- Completion of mandated tasks builds support and the reputation of the Institution on public facing projects.

- Objective: Showcase the successful restoration and revitalization projects of the Smithsonian.**
- Highlight the achievements of AHHP projects and capital projects through public events, webpages, quarterly newsletter, and case studies featuring preservation projects. Promote the collaborative work of various SI units with award nominations.
 - Maintain an interested party email distribution list, and dedicated email address for public comments and communication.
 - Maintain the Architectural History and Historic Preservation webpage, and regularly post showcase information on ongoing or completed projects.

- Objective: Identify alternative sources of funding for preservation projects.**
- Encourage philanthropic, development, and partnership opportunities to support preservation projects.
 - Seek and apply for grant funding for special projects.



Above Left: Bethel granite Dutchman repair, National Museum of Natural History, 2019.

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards” are neither technical nor prescriptive, but they are intended to promote responsible preservation practices that help protect our Nation’s irreplaceable cultural resources.

- Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings, National Park Service

Strategic Goal 5: Strengthen outreach to a broader community to promote Smithsonian preservation achievements.

Objective: Engage a broader audience in the understanding of historic preservation through print, social, and digital media.

- Feature video and information on the Smithsonian’s care of its historic and contemporary significant properties on social media, AHHP’s webpage, and other web-based resources.
- Expand the architectural history annotations to include each Smithsonian property on AHHP’s webpage and social media.
- Redevelop the Architectural and Historic Preservation webpage.
- Identify the significance of the more modern Smithsonian buildings to explain how and why they contribute as landmarks of the future.

Objective: Promote and celebrate Smithsonian’s built heritage.

- Utilize the existing buildings and sites to feature information for visitors regarding significance of the Smithsonian’s “largest” collection.
- Encourage organizations to recognize quality preservation, craftsmanship, and research by applying for industry awards. Publicize award-winning projects.



Dimensional model created from laser scanned data. National Museum of American History. George Washington, Horatio Greenough, 1841.



SI.1968.130. Chair, arm. Renaissance Revival, 1855-60. Smithsonian Castle Collection, Bequest of Mrs. Eleanore Maria Van Swearingen.



Above: Arts and Industries Building.

Below: Sellman House, Smithsonian Environmental Research Center.



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PHOTOGRAPHY: All images by members of the Smithsonian staff or from the Smithsonian Institution Archives, unless otherwise credited.
For more information about the Smithsonian’s office of Architectural History and Historic Preservation, visit our website: www.si.edu/ahhp
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Richard Stamm



Peter Muldoon



Paul Westerberg



Tara Spada, Interim Staff

Architectural History and Historic Preservation Strategic Plan 2015-2019
Highlighted List of Accomplishments:

Arts & Industries Building

- Completion of South Mall Campus Master Plan
- Consultation on exhibit planning, studies for egress, new systems, and revitalization programming
- Development of brochures and web content on the building’s history
- Extensive tours of the building to promote its history, innovation, and significance

Castle (Smithsonian Institution Building)

- Completion of South Mall Campus Master Plan
- Extensive consultation and quality control of exterior masonry restoration and window repairs
- Great Hall terrazzo restoration and installation of historic images exhibits
- Completed in-house decorative painting repairs collaborating with OFMR masons
- Restoration of historic slag glass window and entry gate in the Smithson Crypt
- Restoration of 293 artifacts and 832 items in collections storage by Castle Collection staff
- Digitizing 762 collection items for public access
- Accepted 101 new acquisitions for the Collection and processed 71 objects on loan

Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum

- Preservation guidance for the restoration of the Carnegie Mansion and the entry canopy
- Revitalization of the Miller Fox library and office spaces
- Design consultation on the Conservatory restoration
- Application for a New York State Historic Preservation Program grant for the Conservatory restoration

Freer/Sackler Gallery of Art

- Completion of South Mall Campus Master Plan and Historic Structure Report
- Oversight on environmental solutions for the preservation of the Peacock Room
- Assisted with conservation of the historic terrazzo in the Peacock Room
- Consultation on the cleaning and repair of bronze night gates and exterior bronze doors
- Conservation work on cleaning the historic flooring, marble wall, and stair features
- Consultation on studies for accessibility solutions for the interior courtyard

Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden

- Completion of a Determination of Eligibility and draft National Register of Historic Places nomination
- Completion of South Mall Campus Master Plan and Historic Structure Report
- Archival research on the original materials and design of the building to support multiple projects
- Section 106 consultation reviews for the Envelope Repair and Sculpture Garden Revitalization projects
- Consultation on repairs for the historic fountain

National Air and Space Museum (National Mall Building)

- Completed Section 106 consultation for the NASM Revitalization with a Memorandum of Agreement
- Visits to quarry and stone supplier to approve new stone samples and layouts
- Completed Historic American Building Survey documentation
- Developed content for exhibit panels on the history, design, construction, and future of the NASM

National Museum of African American History and Culture

- Completed Section 106 consultation for the opening of the museum with a Programmatic Agreement
- Collaboration on exhibit panels on the design and approval process and history of the Tiber Creek
- Consultation on cleaning the exterior fountain
- Updated the National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Washington Monument Grounds
- Updated National Register of Historic Places nomination of the Bulfinch Gatehouses and Gateposts
- Condition assessment and conservation treatment report for the Bulfinch Gatepost

Right: National Air Space Museum, Historic American Building Survey, 2017.





Great Hall, Smithsonian American Art Museum and National Portrait Gallery.



Carnegie Mansion, Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum. Halkin/Mason Photography, LLC.

National Museum of American History

- Consultation on the Master Plan update including an Historic Building Report
- Completed Historic American Building Survey documentation
- Laser scanning documentation of Horatio Greenough’s sculpture of George Washington
- Research and inventory of significant interior materials and features
- Archival research and inventory of significant interior features in support of multiple projects
- Consultation on the finish for the Calder Fountain pool repairs
- Oversight of the Tennessee Pink marble cleaning on the penthouse level

National Museum of the American Indian

- Completed Section 106 consultation with General Services Administration on museum revitalization
- Consultation on restoration of the eastern entry doors
- Completed Section 106 consultation on the National Native American Veterans Memorial

National Museum of Natural History

- Extensive consultation in support of the Southside Improvements projects, including restoration work on the historic granites, cleaning, and repointing, and bronze refinishing
- Quarry visit to select new stone, and oversight in placement and quality control of new construction
- Extensive consultation and quality control for Tombasil bronze railing design and fabrication
- Oversight on restoration of the cast iron night gates including repairs, and refinishing
- Consultation on preservation of historic materials for Dinosaur Hall and West Court revitalization

National Zoological Park

- Completed Section 106 consultation for the Bird House, Radio Tower, Conservation Pavilion, and Perimeter Security
- Completed conservation assessments of the Think Tank and Reptile Discovery Center
- Completed Historic American Building Survey documentation of the Reptile Discovery Center
- Established scope of work and treatment approach for the Reptile Discovery Center portico restoration
- Consultation and support of Bird House construction

Quadrangle

- Completion of South Mall Campus Master Plan and Cultural Landscape Report
- Completion of Determination of Eligibility (determined not yet eligible)

Renwick Gallery

- Consultation on restoration work associated with the completed major revitalization
- Architectural salvage of the historic bow trusses from the attic
- Completed Section 106 consultation for exterior signage and lighting

Smithsonian American Art Museum and National Portrait Gallery

- Assessment of exterior stone for future conservation work
- Initiated study for accessibility options for south entrance

Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute

- Consultation on restoration and adaptive use of Ferret Circle buildings
- Consultation on Section 106 review for George Mason University academic buildings

Smithsonian Environmental Research Center

- Development of Historic Structure Report on the Sellman House including finish analysis
- Consultation on rehabilitation of Sellman House exterior and interior for public use
- Stabilization design and implementation of Contee Mansion house ruins
- Participation in two Historic Preservation Grant requests from the State of Maryland

Over: Commons, Smithsonian Institution Building.



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