

**Approved Minutes**  
**Art and Architectural Review Board**  
**February 7, 2025, at 10:00 am**  
**Patrick Henry Building, West Reading Room**  
**1111 E. Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219**

**1.0 ADMINISTRATION**

- 10:06 am      **1.1 CALL TO ORDER**  
*Board Members Present:* Lynden Garland, Chair; Anca Lipan, Vice-Chair; Jill Nolt; and Anne Smith.  
\* A quorum is established.

*Board Members Absent:* Megan Melinat; Stanley Rayfield, and Gaby Rengifo.  
*DGS Staff Present:* Kästle Aschliman; Luke Priddy, and Kimberly Freiberger.

**1.2 PUBLIC COMMENT**

AARB Meetings are open for public comment. Rules for public comment can be obtained from the Department of General Services.

- *Cyane Crump with Historic Richmond provided public comments on Agenda Item 3.1, Commonwealth Courts Building [See Appendix A].*

**1.3 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*Motion to Approve:* Anca Lipan  
*Second:* Jill Nolt  
*Vote:* 4-Y 0-N

**1.4 OTHER BUSINESS**

- Update on the Project Data Sheet and Board Submission Guidelines / Draft review requested.
- Annual Conflict of Interest Training (COIA) will be conducted for the board after the adjournment of the April 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**2.0 CONSENT AGENDA**

- 2.1 University of Virginia, College at Wise / Exterior Stairs and Balcony Replacement**  
*(Final Approval)*  
Replace exterior steel stairs and balconies at Wise Thompson Hall and Asbury Hall. Replacement is required due to the significant deterioration of the structures.  
*Department of Historic Resources (DHR) Comments:* DHR has not reviewed

this project and does not need to review it unless required by another agency.

*Board Comments:*

- None

*Motion to Recommend Final Approval: Anca Lipan*

*Second: Jill Nolt*

*Vote: 4-Y 0-N*

**2.2 Virginia Military Institute (VMI) / Old and New Barracks Window Replacement (Final Approval)**

*The Old and New Barracks serve as residential dormitory facilities for VMI's cadets. The Old and New Barracks are 6 levels tall (referred to on Post as Stoops). The lowest of these levels is a full basement. The total combined size of the Old and New Barracks is approximately 243,515 gross square feet. Old and New Barracks have 319 cadet rooms. The scope of work includes the replacement in kind of 789 window sashes across 423 openings.*

*Department of Historic Resources (DHR) Comments: DHR reviewed this and concurred with VMI that the project will not adversely impact historic resources with the condition that if the scope changes, consultation will be reopened, photographs are to be provided of the completed work and a DHR site visit is coordinated with DHR upon project completion.*

*Board Comments:*

- None

*Motion to Recommend Final Approval: Anca Lipan*

*Second: Jill Nolt*

*Vote: 4-Y 0-N*

**2.3 Virginia Community College System (VCCS) / Northern Virginia Community College, Remove Mansory and Base – Student Outdoor Seating Area (Final Approval)**

*The intent of the project is to reclaim the underutilized space and transform it into a student-centric outdoor seating area.*

*Department of Historic Resources (DHR) Comments: DHR has not reviewed this project and does not need to review it unless required by another agency.*

*Board Comments:*

1. Recommendation to review the placement of the light bollard to avoid trip hazards and reimagine the best use of the space.

*Motion to Recommend Final Approval with Board Comments: Anca Lipan*

*Second: Jill Nolt*

*Vote: 4-Y 0-N*

**2.4 Northern Virginia Community College / Install Awning, MEC HE Building  
(Final Approval)**

The project includes the addition of four (4) awnings and canopies over existing entrances to the HE building at the Northern Virginia Community College Medical Education Campus. The glass canopy covers a pedestrian entrance, the loading dock canopy covers a loading dock, and the two awnings cover the existing classroom and parking garage entrance doors.

Department of Historic Resources (DHR) Comments: DHR has not reviewed this project and does not need to review it unless required by another agency.

*Board Comments:*

1. Recommend that a water management strategy be reviewed for ice and snow on the canopies.

*Motion to Recommend Final Approval with Board Comments: Anca Lipan*

*Second: Jill Nolt*

*Vote: 4-Y 0-N*

**2.5 University of Mary Washington / Replace Fencing and Netting at the Soccer Fields**

*(Final Approval)*

The project is to replace the in-kind existing chain link fence (grey color) around the perimeter of the soccer complex with a 6' aluminum (black color) fence as well as a 4' and 6' new chain link (color black) fence. The replacement of the fencing will occur around the perimeter of the soccer complex as well as around the perimeter of each field (there are two fields). In addition, new nylon backstop netting (color black) will be installed behind each goal. There are four goals (two on each field). The netting will be installed on the poles that are currently in place.

Department of Historic Resources (DHR) Comments: DHR has not reviewed this project and does not need to review it unless required by another agency.

*Board Comments:*

1. Recommend the use of a flat top rail on the 4-foot-tall fence.

*Motion to Recommend Final Approval with Board Comments: Anca Lipan*

*Second: Jill Nolt*

*Vote: 4-Y 0-N*

**2.6 Virginia State University / Improve Accessibility, Lindsay Montague**

*(Final Approval)*

This project consists of renovations to Lindsay Montague Hall, an existing 3-story Georgian-style academic building with an attic and basement on Virginia State University's campus. It was originally constructed in 1937 and was later renovated in 1961, 2007, and 2008. The building currently serves as a historic archive and will be renovated to accommodate executive offices in a future phase. The overall renovation effort is broken out into separate projects.

Department of Historic Resources (DHR) Comments: DHR has not received or reviewed this project and will need to.

*Board Comments:*

- None

*Motion to Recommend Final Approval: Anca Lipan*

*Second: Jill Nolt*

*Vote: 4-Y 0-N*

**2.7 Virginia State University / Improve HVAC, Lindsay Montague**

*(Final Approval)*

The project is a renovation of the existing Lindsay Montague building. The renovation is focused on the replacement of the heating, air conditioning, and ventilation systems, fire alarms, and sprinkler systems. While the existing building façade will remain unchanged by this project, there is an adjacent mechanical yard that will require expansion. The existing mechanical yard currently encloses a chiller that is being replaced as a part of this project. The mechanical yard will be expanded to enclose the replacement chiller, the existing transformer, and a new generator supporting the fire pump and building systems. A separate project is ongoing for accessibility upgrades and the addition of a terrace at the rear of the existing building.

Department of Historic Resources (DHR) Comments: DHR has not received or reviewed this project and will need to.

*Board Comments:*

- None

*Motion to Recommend Final Approval: Anca Lipan*

*Second: Jill Nolt*

*Vote: 4-Y 0-N*

**2.8 Virginia Commonwealth University / Phi Beta Sigma Commemoration Marker**

*(Final Approval)*

The monument base will be black granite featuring white lettering and a royal blue shield. The figures on the top of the granite will be bronze-painted black.

Department of Historic Resources (DHR) Comments: DHR has not reviewed this project and does not need to review it unless required by another agency.

*Board Comments:*

1. Recommendation that all the plantings be set behind the monument and ensure that the height of the plantings does not obstruct the writing on the monument.

*Motion to Recommend Final Approval with Board Comments: Anca Lipan*

*Second: Jill Nolt*

*Vote: 3-Y 0-N; 1 Abs [Lynden Garland]*

**2.9 Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) / Occoneechee State Park, Bathhouse Demolition**

*(Final Approval)*

Demolition of a 704 sf, single-story wood framed, wood trussed, vinyl-sided structure with asphalt shingles. Located on Campground B, which this bath house served, was closed in 2005 due to the construction of US Rt. 58 bypass nearby. The bathhouse remained, unoccupied.

Department of Historic Resources (DHR) Comments: DHR has not received or reviewed this project and will need to.

*Board Comments:*

- None

*Motion to Recommend Final Approval: Jill Nolt*

*Second: Anca Lipan*

*Vote: 4-Y 0-N*

**3.0 PROJECT REVIEWS**

**3.1 Virginia Department of General Services (DGS) / Commonwealth Courts Building**

*(Preliminary Review)*

The project is a new Supreme Court of Virginia and Court of Appeals Courthouse for the Commonwealth of Virginia, located on the southwestern corner of historic Capitol Square in Richmond, Virginia. The site is bounded by 9th Street to the west, Bank Street (and the Capitol Grounds) to the north, 10th Street and the historic Powell US Court of Appeals Courthouse to the east, and Main Street (along with commercial development) to the south. The historic Commonwealth Hotel is in the northwest corner of the site.

The project includes the demolition of both the existing Pocahontas East and West Towers, situated at 900 East Main Street to allow for all new construction. The Commonwealth Courts Building will be a new addition framing the urban landscape of Capitol Square's southern edge. The design of the new courthouse will exude the permanence and gravitas of the court system in our society and the role it plays in our Democracy. The design will respond to the unique demands of a 21st-century courthouse while integrating timeless organizational and proportional design elements. The architecture of the Courthouse will reflect its prominent location in this geographic threshold and will be responsive to context and environment.

Department of Historic Resources (DHR) Comments: DHR met with DGS on 12/18/24 regarding the new Courts Building and mitigation for the demolition of the West Tower of the Pocahontas Building (DHR ID #127-5648). The West Tower is not individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR), but it is a contributing resource to the Main Street Banking Historic District, and it remains contributing to the VLR/NRHP-eligible expanded Capitol Square Historic District (DHR ID# 127-0521). The latest design shown during the 12/18 meeting included modifications to what was originally presented to now

include the Pocahontas West demolition. DHR will need to formally review this design iteration and a mitigation plan for adverse impacts.

*Board Comments:*

1. Recommend studying the use of a 3-arch entry on the Main Street side.
2. Meet and collaborate with the Commonwealth Hotel owners on the detailing of the screen wall before final submission.
3. Provide clear detailing concerning the precast system, panels, and their joints.
4. Recommend continued study of alternatives for the roof line. This is especially important if the Main Street elevation is supposed to read as two separate buildings.
5. Provide multiple site plans to include the current site along with the proposed Capitol Square Master Plan and how it will approach Bank Street at final submission.
6. Recommend expanding the planting wells to run along the entire front of Main Street.
7. Consider alternatives to the use of bollards to be more pedestrian-oriented.
8. Provide renderings from the pedestrian view of the building from all sides at final submission.
9. Recommend reevaluating the top two floor windows on the front façade of the west wing.
10. Explore how to reuse components of the historical façade of the Pocahontas Building. This includes additional pieces that may be salvaged as well as their locations as part of the new structure.
11. Provide floor plans at final submission. Floor plans only help the Board to understand why certain decisions were made for the exterior elevations.
12. Further study the east elevation to make it appear more aesthetically cohesive.
13. Study the North 10<sup>th</sup> Street elevation so that the design intent of the podium is better realized. It's understood that there is a structural joint that must be maintained. However, the aesthetics on either side of the joint read separately and not as a cohesive podium for the office tower to sit on.
14. Minimize the visual impact of the secure garage entrance and service area to enhance the visitor and pedestrian experience.

*Motion to Recommend Preliminary Approval with Board Comments: Jill*

*Nolt Second: Anne Smith*

*Vote: 3-Y 0-N, 1 Recusal [Anca Lipan]*

#### **4.0 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The next AARB meeting will be held on Friday, March 7, 2025, in the Patrick Henry Building – East Reading Room.

#### **5.0 MEETING ADJOURNED – 11:54 am**

## APPENDIX A

### Public Comment – Cyane Crump

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you. My name is Cyane Crump and I am the Executive Director of Historic Richmond.

You may recall that we also spoke with you first in spring 2023 and most recently in July 2024 when this body reviewed the proposed demolition of the Pocahontas Building West Tower. At that time, we asked for a more fulsome public discussion around the demolition, why it was necessary, and whether there were other locations around Capitol Square that might avoid the impact of this demolition.

Over our opposition, this body approved that demolition subject to mitigation for the impact of the demolition being agreed with the Department of Historic Resources.

While we continue to oppose the demolition of the West Tower – we do not believe it is necessary - we do appreciate the great Commonwealth of Virginia's investment in downtown Richmond. We note that we have not seen the presentation as it was not made publicly available.

As you consider the design for a new court building, we hope that you will consider the items we asked DHR to consider as part of the mitigation for this demolition:

1. Listing for the Old Federal Reserve Building/Current Supreme Court Building on the NRHP. This building is a high-quality, beautiful, national architect-designed structure. Its historic significance has not been recognized and very much should be.
2. A third-party study describing why the West Tower needed to be demolished
3. Reactivation of the Capital Square Preservation Council. The CSPC is a public commission composed of experts and representatives of key stakeholders that is specifically charged with the review of all plans or proposals for alterations, improvements, additions, renovations or other disposition that is structural or architectural in nature relating to the buildings in and around Capitol Square. The Virginia Code (Section 30-194) states that *No implementation of such plans or proposals shall take place prior to review by the Council*. But to my knowledge, this project has not been presented to the Council and this Council is for all intents and purposes moribund. The Council needs to be reactivated. There are too many state projects impacting Capitol Square that are not receiving the appropriate level of public and expert review.
4. Investigation of whether any of the architectural features of the façade (such as the columns, plinth, and screen) can be saved and incorporated into new building.
5. Design of the new building to include distinguished and active facades on both Bank Street and Main Street.
  - a. It is important that the Main Street façade interfacing with Downtown Richmond has an active pedestrian-friendly façade and entrance, particularly since many of the users of this building will be coming from the law firms with offices on Main Street or to the South of Capitol Square. The design of the Main Street base needs more work.
  - b. The landscape design for Bank Street should continue to read as a street. As we commented in March 2023, the landscape should not intrude into the historic street. Capitol Square is a square not a circle.

In addition, based on the designs presented today, we note that the cornice line or water table line that was very much a focus with the projects on the north side of the square is not picked up on the south side of the square. And the use of a more traditional architectural language on the south and east facades gets garbled as the building is broken up into different pieces. If an architecturally distinguished limestone skyscraper is being demolished, its replacement should be a better, more beautiful, and sustainable building.

Thank you for your consideration of these recommendations.