

## BATTERSEA PROJECT NEARS COMPLETION

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**PETERSBURG** -- An effort to protect Petersburg's treasured Battersea villa against further exterior deterioration is near completion.

Over the past few months, workers at the villa on Upper Appomattox Street have added new custom copper chimney caps, removed cement stucco from below the water table, extended downspouts on existing drains to direct water away from the foundation of the house, realigned gutters, scraped and painted the roof, among other upgrades.

Experts in the preservation of historic buildings began the nearly \$100,000 effort, a first phase in a multiyear project of the stabilization and restoration of the historic property, this spring and are expected to finish by November, said Tempy Barbru, executive director of the Battersea Foundation, a nonprofit organization created in 2006 to partner with Petersburg to preserve and restore the house.

"This phase is designed to correct any water and moisture damage to the exterior," Barbru said. After this phase is completed, the work in the villa will continue, she said.

The foundation recently received a matching grant from Save America's Treasures in the amount of \$150,000, one of only two Virginia awards this grant cycle by the Department of the Interior. The grant will help pay for the next restoration phase, which includes critical needs such as the stabilization of two chimneys, restoration of the stucco facade and the orangery, Barbru said.

Battersea is an Anglo-Palladian villa on which sits one of the nation's most unique examples of 18th-century Italianate architecture. It was built in 1768 by Colonel John Banister, one of the signers of the Articles of Confederation and Petersburg's first mayor.

In 1985, the city acquired the property for \$200,000 and has since been studying future uses for it, while the foundation has been working toward the restoration of the property.

Over the past few months, the foundation has also begun to offer tours, programs of interest and opportunities for area residents and visitors on the grounds.

Yesterday, for example, Battersea held an antiques jamboree and its second annual appraisal fair. This year, the event featured a sale with about 40 selected antique dealers bringing their collectibles to Battersea for purchase by the public.

Next month, Battersea will offer several educational events in celebration of Archaeology Month with possible presentations from discovering of a recent archeological dig at the 37-acre property where about 3,000 artifacts, some of them dating back 4,000 years, were found.

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