



# The Progress-Index

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## **A partnership to revitalize a historic treasure**

### **Battersea, the Colonial-era home in Petersburg, has a new lease on life.**

A partnership between the city and a non-profit group could elevate the status of the historic home in the future.

Last week, city officials and members of the non-profit group Battersea Inc. announced a unique partnership to revitalize the property and open it to the community.

Under a new agreement, Battersea Inc. — a group of professionals and conservation enthusiasts from around the state — will take a leadership role in fund raising and preserving the structure.

The city, which purchased the property for \$200,000 in 1985 as a capital endeavor, will continue to own the property. The cost of renovations is not yet known, but nearly \$300,000 has been raised so far through donations and state funding. There is no plan yet for how the home will be used. But the partnership hope to elevate Battersea's prominence not only on a regional scale, but also on state and national levels.

“The city of Petersburg should be very proud that Battersea has been saved and will be protected,” said Robert Bolling Lambeth Jr., president of the group's board of directors.

We agree.

The five-section Battersea home was built in 1768 by John Banister, a distinguished figure from the Revolutionary era, a merchant and the first mayor of Petersburg. Situated on a bluff overlooking the Appomattox River, it is a rare example of American-Palladian architecture — a style that emulated stately villas found in the north of Italy. During the Revolutionary War, British troops occupied the house on more than one occasion.

“There are not many houses in America that look like this,” said Calder Loth, chief architectural historian for the Virginia Department of Historic Resources “The style was limited to elite people and is extremely rare.”

Battersea, located at 793 Appomattox St., has been on the National Register of Historic Places since 1968.

David J. Brown, executive vice president for the National Trust for Historic Preservation, said the city and Battersea Inc. should be commended for their teamwork.

“Historic preservation adds significance, adds meaning and, importantly, adds value to our lives,” he said. “The new partnership between the city of Petersburg and Battersea Inc. brings new vitality to this remarkable place.”

We hope that is the case and that Battersea becomes an even more prominent landmark for the region.