

Jamestown Rediscovery

HISTORIC JAMESTOWNE

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Jamestown Rediscovery Awarded Grant to Restore Foundations of 17th-Century Statehouse Complex

JAMESTOWN, VA (October 15, 2024) –

The Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation has been awarded nearly \$750,000 in grant funds from the National Park Service Semiquincentennial Grant Program, part of the Historic Preservation Fund commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States. The funds will support the restoration and preservation of the historic foundations of Jamestown’s circa 1665 Statehouse, the first structure built to house a representative government.

The Jamestown Statehouse served as the dedicated meeting place for Virginia’s General Assembly—the first example of representative governance in North America—until 1698. The parliamentary model predicated upon the consent of the governed and the rule of law would impact every American colony and would become a model for the founding of a new nation in 1776. At the same time, the Statehouse saw the systemic stripping away of rights for African, African American, and Indigenous populations through a series of laws that moved towards the establishment of a slave code, ultimately setting the stage for later American struggles for liberty and justice.

The Statehouse complex today consists of five, conjoined brick-and-mortar foundations located on a ridge of high ground at the southwest end of Jamestown Island. Currently, the foundations are capped in Portland cement, which is contributing to the disintegration, cracking, and moisture inundation of the historic brick and mortar. This grant will support the restoration of these foundations, including assessment and removal of old masonry, up-to-date conservation of the historic brick and cobble foundation, and a new outdoor exhibit highlighting the significance of Jamestown’s Statehouse. The grant will also fund updates to pathways and landscaping to make the site more accessible for all visitors.

“The brick foundations of the 1665 Statehouse complex are the only surviving remains of the first built structure in English America dedicated to representative government,” said Dr. James Horn, President of the Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation and author of *1619: Jamestown and the Forging of American Democracy*. “They are a physical connection to the seemingly distant history of America’s great paradox: the birth of slavery amidst the beginnings of liberty. This project will allow us to tell a more complete, inclusive story of our nation’s beginnings.”

Available photos [may be found here](#). All images courtesy of Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation.

About Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation

The Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation preserves and shares the original site of James Fort and Jamestown, established in 1607. The Foundation is dedicated to uncovering, preserving, and sharing Jamestown's diverse history, and highlighting its major contribution to the foundations of modern American society. Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit. JRF jointly administers Historic Jamestowne alongside the National Park Service. Admission includes the James Fort site, New Town, and the Voorhees Archaearium Archaeological Museum, as well as walking tours, living history, and public programs. For more information about visiting Jamestown, please visit www.historicjamestowne.org or call (757) 856-1250.