

HONORING THE FUTURE

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Renovation of the University Chapel

AN ENDURING CHAPEL OF HISTORIC CHARACTER

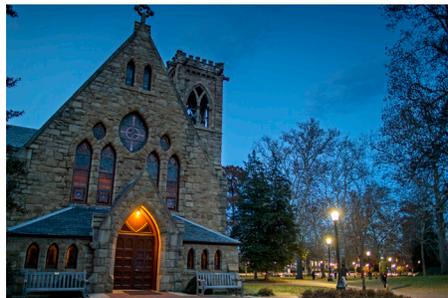
“If you think of the chapel and Brooks Hall flanking the Rotunda annex, you realize that they created a very thoughtful composition on the north side of the University.”

- BRIAN HOGG

Senior historic preservation planner in the Office of the Architect for the University

Designed by Baltimore architect Charles Emmet Cassell, and constructed between 1884 and 1890, the University Chapel was the first structure on Grounds dedicated solely to worship and the last to be constructed in the Romantic styles that had held sway since just before the Civil War. The use of quarry-faced natural stone in its construction sets up a marked contrast with the red bricks and white columns elsewhere on Grounds. With the Brooks Museum, the chapel framed the Rotunda annex and effected a northward expansion of Jefferson’s original compound and its orthogonal geometry.

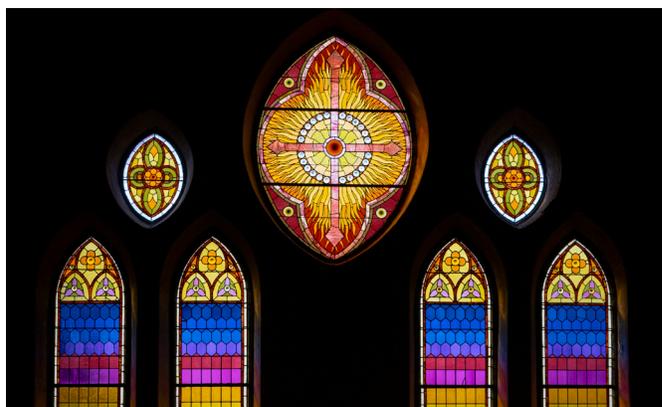
The University Chapel embodies the advancement of religion at the University during the nineteenth-century, and the eclipse of Jefferson’s original prescriptions for a nonsectarian institution. Today, the chapel is a popular wedding venue and is heavily used by student groups for a variety of activities.



RENOVATION SCOPE OF WORK

Since the chapel's last renovation in the 1950s, several small projects have improved mechanical and AV systems, stabilized the bell tower, added smoke detection, and restored stained glass windows, but no comprehensive renovation work has been done. In summer 2021, UVA completed a first phase of exterior improvements to replace failing mortar joints in exterior stone walls and protect the foundation from water intrusion. Now that the building is water-tight, UVA is launching a major interior renovation to improve visitors' experience and safety.

Most of the chapel's electrical system dates to the 1950s and is overdue for replacement. An interior renovation will replace all electrical wiring and panels. New dimmable light fixtures will highlight the late-nineteenth century Gothic-Revival architecture, and increase illumination for reading in the nave, all while preserving the building's sense of solemnity and repose.



The project will restore original finishes to all elements of the interior based on a 2019 historic finish analysis by Sutherland Conservation. The finish restoration will include removing over 100 years of soot, grime, and later dark finishes from wood ceilings, red marble columns, and brick arches to return these elements to their original unified red ochre hue. Plaster walls also will be repaired and painted to match the original color, and cork flooring will be removed to reveal the heart pine flooring extant underneath.

The vestibules and office will be renovated and refurnished to provide comfortable support spaces for bridal parties and other events. AV system upgrades at the chancel will improve audio quality and enhance performance capabilities.

The interior renovation will take approximately 6 months to complete. The building will be closed for installing scaffolding to reach the peak of the 40-foot ceilings.

By supporting the University Chapel renovation, you will preserve a historic treasure that marks a departure from Jeffersonian neoclassicism and welcomes visitors to experience its significance today. *Expendable gifts and pledges of any amount will be matched 1:1 by the University.*

Total Project Cost Estimate: \$2.6 million

CONTACT

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