

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

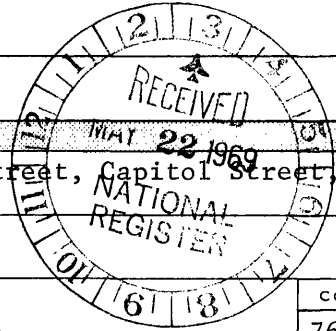
(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE:  
Virginia

COUNTY:  
Richmond (in cit.)

FOR NPS USE ONLY

**NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK**



**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
Capitol of Virginia/Virginia State Capitol

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
Capitol of Virginia

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER: Capitol Square. Bounded by Ninth Street, Capitol Street, Governor Street, and Bank Street.

CITY OR TOWN:  
Richmond

STATE: Virginia      CODE: 45      COUNTY: (in cit.)      CODE: 760

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

| CATEGORY<br>(Check One)  | OWNERSHIP                                      | STATUS                                       | ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC  |
|--|--|--|---|
| District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>     | Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>   |
| Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/>               | Private <input type="checkbox"/>               | Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/>          | Restricted <input type="checkbox"/>                                       |
| Object <input type="checkbox"/>  | Both <input type="checkbox"/>                  | Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/>    | Unrestricted <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>                          |
| PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)                                 |  |  |   |
| Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/>  | Government <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Park <input type="checkbox"/>                | Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Comments <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Commercial <input type="checkbox"/>  | Industrial <input type="checkbox"/>            | Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/>   | Other (Specify) <input type="checkbox"/>                                  |
| Educational <input type="checkbox"/>   | Military <input type="checkbox"/>              | Religious <input type="checkbox"/>           | _____   |
| Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/>   | Museum <input type="checkbox"/>                | Scientific <input type="checkbox"/>          | _____   |

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNERS NAME:  
Commonwealth of Virginia

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond      STATE: Virginia      CODE: 45

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:  
Henrico County Clerk's Office

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Main Street at 22nd Street

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond      STATE: Virginia      CODE: 45

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 14.12 acres

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Report #127-2

DATE OF SURVEY: 1968      Federal       State       County       Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

STREET AND NUMBER:  
Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond      STATE: Virginia      CODE: 45

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Virginia  
COUNTY: Richmond (in cit.)  
ENTRY NUMBER  
DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

**7. DESCRIPTION**

|           |   |  |                               |                                       |   |                                    |
|-----------|---|--|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| CONDITION | (Check One)                                 |  |                               |                                       |   |                                    |
|           | Excellent <input type="checkbox"/>          | Good <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Fair <input type="checkbox"/> | Deteriorated <input type="checkbox"/> | Ruins <input type="checkbox"/>                    | Unexposed <input type="checkbox"/> |
| INTEGRITY | (Check One)                                 |  |                               | (Check One)                           |   |                                    |
|           | Altered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Unaltered <input type="checkbox"/>       |                               | Moved <input type="checkbox"/>        | Original Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |                                    |

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Virginia State Capitol, built from designs furnished by Thomas Jefferson, consists of a two-story, stuccoed temple-form building with a hexastyle Roman Ionic portico placed on a podium. The order of the two-bay deep portico is carried around the seven-bay deep "cella" by the use of Ionic pilasters which frame each bay. The first floor windows are surmounted by plain entablatures supported by Doric pilasters. The second floor windows are framed by simple architraves. Placed between the first and second floor windows are undecorated recessed panels. The building was originally designed to have a broad flight of stairs ascend to the front portico. However, these were not built until the early-twentieth century. The interior of the building has been much changed, and little, if any, of the original fabric remains visible. The Senate chamber which originally extended across the entire front has been divided by a center hall leading from the main entrance to the central rotunda. The basic form of the original Delegates' chamber has survived. The early-twentieth century addition of two-story wings to contain larger legislative chambers has altered the character of the original building. The one-story hyphens connecting the wings to the main building were increased in depth during a mid-twentieth century renovation, causing more of the original side elevation to be hidden.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**8. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian  16th Century  18th Century  20th Century   
 15th Century  17th Century  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1785-1798

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |                                       |   |   |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| Aboriginal <input type="checkbox"/>     | Education <input type="checkbox"/>    | Political <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Urban Planning <input type="checkbox"/>             |
| Prehistoric <input type="checkbox"/>    | Engineering <input type="checkbox"/>  | Religion/Philosophy <input type="checkbox"/>  | Other (Specify) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Historic <input type="checkbox"/>       | Industry <input type="checkbox"/>     | Science <input type="checkbox"/>              | May 22 1969   |
| Agriculture <input type="checkbox"/>    | Invention <input type="checkbox"/>    | Sculpture <input type="checkbox"/>            | NATIONAL REGISTER                                   |
| Art <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Landscape <input type="checkbox"/>    | Social/Humanitarian <input type="checkbox"/>  |   |
| Commerce <input type="checkbox"/>       | Architecture <input type="checkbox"/> | Theater <input type="checkbox"/>              |   |
| Communications <input type="checkbox"/> | Literature <input type="checkbox"/>   | Transportation <input type="checkbox"/>       |   |
| Conservation <input type="checkbox"/>   | Military <input type="checkbox"/>     |   |   |
|   | Music <input type="checkbox"/>        |   |   |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE (Include Personages, Dates, Events, Etc.)

The Virginia State Capitol was designed by Thomas Jefferson while he was in France with the assistance of the noted French architect, Charles-Louis Clerisseau. It was inspired by the Maison Carree, an ancient Roman temple, located in Nimes, France. The building for the Virginia Capitol represents the introduction of Neo-Classicism in public buildings in the United States. The building was begun in 1785, with the construction being supervised by Samuel Dobie. By 1798 the original temple-form building was complete. In 1796 the Houdon statue of George Washington in Continental uniform was placed in the Rotunda of the Capitol. Later were added portrait busts of the other Virginia-born Presidents, and the Houdon bust of the Marquis de Lafayette. The 1870 Capitol disaster, in which sixty-two people were killed when the courtroom gallery collapsed, was cause for some renovation, but it was not until 1904-06 that extensive renovation and alterations were made. At that time the two wings were added to the east and west ends to house new chambers for the State Senate and the House of Delegates. In 1929 the original chamber for the House of Delegates was renovated and refurbished. The Virginia State Capitol has significance both historically and architecturally. Historically, it houses the oldest legislative body in America, the present legislature growing out of the Colonial House of Burgesses. Also, the Capitol building was the place where the Virginia Convention drafted the new constitution for the Commonwealth in 1829-30. In addition, the Virginia Capitol building served as the meeting place of the Confederate Congress during the years that Richmond was the capital of the Confederacy.

Architecturally, the Virginia State Capitol is the first purely neo-classical building to be erected in this country. It is also the first instance since ancient Roman times where the temple form was employed for a public building of importance. Furthermore, it set the precedent for using neo-classical forms for American public buildings.

**NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

"Capitol Square Data-Grounds", Vol. 2, unpublished manuscript, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia.  
 Gaines, William H., Jr., "Warehouse and Roman Temple, the Capitols of the Commonwealth, 1780-1951", Virginia Cavalcade, Vol. 1, Winter, 1951.  
 Hamlin, Talbot, Greek Revival Architecture in America, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1944.  
 Kimball, Fiske, Thomas Jefferson, Architect, Boston, 1916.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY |          |         |         | O<br>R  | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES<br>DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY<br>OF LESS THAN ONE ACRE |         |         |         |         |
|--|----------|---------|---------|---------|--|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| CORNER   | LATITUDE |         |         |         | LONGITUDE  |         |         |         |         |
|  | Degrees  | Minutes | Seconds | Degrees | Minutes  | Seconds | Degrees | Minutes | Seconds |
| NW   | 37 °     | 32'     | 26"     | 77 °    | 26'  | 13"     |         |         |         |
| NE   | 37 °     | 32'     | 26"     | 77 °    | 25'  | 55"     |         |         |         |
| SE   | 37 °     | 32'     | 15"     | 77 °    | 25'  | 55"     |         |         |         |
| SW   | 37 °     | 32'     | 15"     | 77 °    | 26'  | 13"     |         |         |         |

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|--------|------|---------|------|
|        |      |         |      |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|        |      |         |      |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|        |      |         |      |
| STATE: | CODE | COUNTY: | CODE |
|        |      |         |      |

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
 Staff, Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission, James W. Moody, Jr., Director

ORGANIZATION: Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE: April 22, 1969

STREET AND NUMBER:  
 Room 1116, Ninth Street State Office Building

CITY OR TOWN: Richmond

STATE: Virginia

CODE: 45

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name Edw. P. Alexander per JWM  
 Dr. Edward P. Alexander, Chairman  
 Virginia Historic Landmarks Comm.

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date May 20, 1969

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

**NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK**

Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

|                  |      |
|------------------|------|
| STATE            |      |
| Virginia         |      |
| COUNTY           |      |
| Richmond         |      |
| FOR NPS USE ONLY |      |
| ENTRY NUMBER     | DATE |
|                  |      |

Capitol of  
Virginia

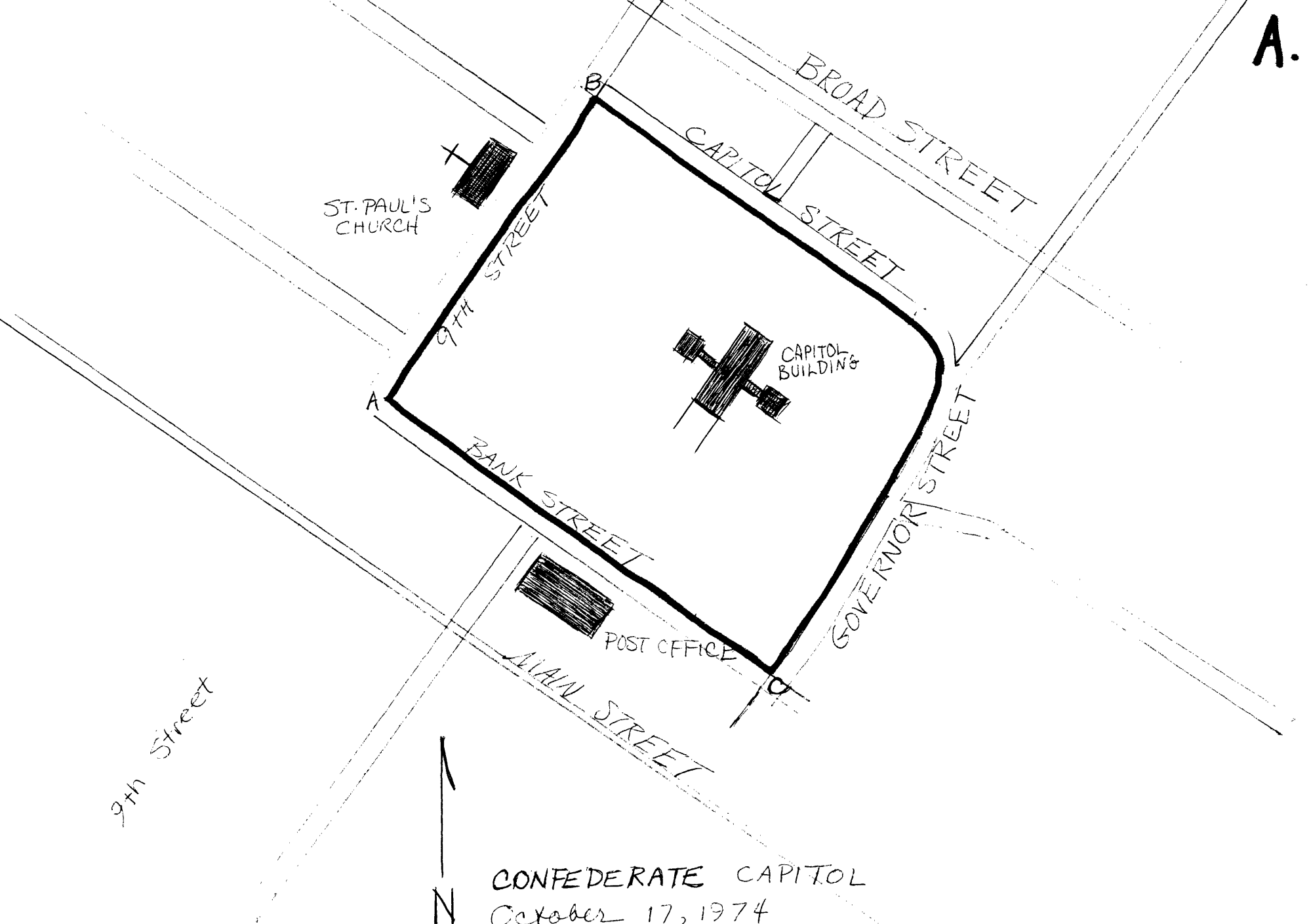
(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

8. Statement of Significance

The Capitol of Virginia in Richmond was designed by Thomas Jefferson in collaboration with the French architect Charles-Louis Clerisseau during Jefferson's stay in France as First Consul (1784-1789). At this time in France the interest in Neo-classical building forms based directly on the originals from Roman or Greek antiquity was at a peak. So that when Jefferson was asked to provide a design for the new Capitol of Virginia in Richmond he chose the Roman temple at Nimes, known as the Maison Carée, for his model. Well aware of the limitations of local Virginia craftsmen, Jefferson substituted the Ionic order for the Corinthian of the Maison Carée and simple engaged pilasters for the engaged columns. The Capitol was begun in 1785, while Jefferson was still in France; however it was not finished until 1798. The resulting building was not an unqualified success in spite of its dramatic and dignified exterior. The original floor plan shows a marked disregard for the possibilities of the temple form and its function. The space requirements of the two legislative bodies, the Senate and the House of Representatives, was more or less forced to fit the exterior form as best they could. This situation prevailed until 1904 when the lateral wings were added. These additions solved the functional problems but spoiled Jefferson's intent to have a pure, uninterrupted temple. Despite these vicissitudes the Capitol of Virginia is of paramount importance in the development of American architecture because it is the first purely Neo-classical building to be erected in this country. The Capitol was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1960 under the Civil War Theme.

A.



CONFEDERATE CAPITOL  
October 17, 1974

(not drawn to scale)