



New Roof Installed on the South Privy

Monticello's South Privy has a new roof system, one that replaces the construction done in 1941 as part of a general restoration of the South Dependencies.

The reconstruction, which began in December and was completed earlier this spring, was made necessary by deterioration that occurred over more than six decades. Gradual failure of the metal cladding at the roof's corners led to rotting of the hip rafters, some of the sheathing, and the plate on top of the privy's masonry walls.

The need to repair the roof system also provided an opportunity to correct some errors of the 1941 work, including the dimensions of the risers that form the privy's distinctive stepped-pyramid roof. The newly placed steps conform to a drawing by Jefferson that shows foot-wide treads and four risers, each approximately 4¾ inches high. The finial from 1941 – similar to that on the North Privy – has been replaced with one consistent with both Jefferson's drawing and an 1825 depiction by Martha Woodward. The 1941 Tuscan cornice has been repaired and reused.

White oak was used for the framing and cypress for the steps. Though there is no indication that Jefferson used metal to cover the roof's wooden steps, as was done elsewhere at Monticello, for the sake of preservation the South Privy's new steps have been covered in 20-gauge stainless steel and painted white.

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