



Work in Progress: Restoration of North Passageway Walls

A major restoration initiative – restoring and protecting the rubble-stone walls of the all-weather passageway that connects the house and the North Dependencies – is well under way.

The goal of the project, which is being directed by Robert H. Smith Director of Restoration William L. Beiswanger, is to restore rather than rebuild what are believed to be the original walls

constructed in 1801-02.

Though approximately 18 inches thick, the walls lining the north passageway have been damaged over time by soil pressure, tree roots, and deteriorated mortar.

The southwest wall, on the West Lawn side of the

passageway, showed the greater amount of distress, being bowed an average of 4¾ inches at mid-height (with some bulges projecting up to 6½ inches) and having significant horizontal cracks in its mortar.

Work on this wall began in November 2004, with Monticello archaeologists excavating along the exterior to the level of undisturbed soil. Buildings personnel subsequently continued the excavation to the base of the wall, which was then braced on both sides.

The process of eliminating the bulges involves the application of even pressure through the use of screw jacks placed at



A passageway window with its iron sash removed.

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Monticello



Passageway Restoration

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intervals along the 70-foot length of the passageway.

Once satisfactorily straightened, the wall will be grouted (though final re-pointing will not be done until after the restoration of the passageway's northeast side is completed in 2006).

The newly restored stonework will be protected by a reinforced cinderblock wall built parallel to it below the surface of the West Lawn, then the construction trenches will be refilled and the area will be landscaped.

Cersley Masonry of Charlottesville, which has worked on many restoration projects at Monticello, is restoring the passageway wall and building the secondary wall.

The southwest wall restoration is scheduled to be completed later this year. The north passageway and the full length of the North Terrace will be reopened to visitors at that time.

Work on the northeast side of the passageway will begin in November and carry over into 2006. The 113-foot-long wall that forms the rear of the stables and carriage house under the North Terrace was restored and protected in 2004.

COMMENTS? newsletter@monticello.org