



Name of Property: Pennsylvania State Capitol Complex (boundary expansion and updated documentation)

City, State: Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Period of Significance: 1894-1940

NHL Criteria: 4

NHL Theme: III. Expressing Cultural Values
5. Architecture, landscape architecture and urban design

Previous Recognition: National Register of Historic Places: Capitol, 1977; Soldier's and Sailor's Memorial Bridge, 1988
National Historic Landmark, 2006

National Historic Context: XVI. Architecture
M. Period Revivals (1870-1940)
6. Beaux-Arts (1890-1915)
XVII. Landscape Architecture

NHL Significance:

- Beginning in 1894, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania began a major construction program to build a new state capitol building with the construction of the Executive, Library and Museum Buildings in the Beaux-Arts classical style. Philadelphia architect Joseph Huston was selected in 1901 to design a new Pennsylvania State Capitol Building.
- The State Capitol Building is one of the most complete statements of collaboration among architect, artist, sculptor and craftsman. Huston's Renaissance Revival building is a superb example of the American Renaissance influence on government buildings. Mural by Edward Austin Abbey and Violet Oakley, sculpture by George Grey Barnard, floor tiles by Henry Chapman Mercer, and stained glass by William Brantley Van Ingen adorn the building with historic depictions of the history of Pennsylvania.
- In 1916, Arnold W. Brunner was selected to design the landscape plan and office complex behind the State Capitol Building to the east that resulted in one of the most unified, thematic approaches to governmental civic planning ever undertaken in the United States. This outstanding example of the City Beautiful Movement demonstrated rational planning by arranging Classical Revival style buildings around a system of organized parks. The functional and beautiful plan resulted in the construction of the South Office Building (1921), the North Office Building (1928), the Soldier's and Sailor's Memorial Bridge



(1930), Soldier's Grove and Fisher Plaza (1931), the Forum Building (1931), and the Finance Building (1940).

Integrity:

- The Pennsylvania State Capitol Complex retains a high degree of integrity relative to its period of significance. The Capitol Preservation Committee, established by the General Assembly in 1982, has conducted thorough documentary histories and architectural Historic Structures Reports which formed the basis for restorations of almost every major space in the State Capitol Complex.
- The East Wing Capitol Addition was completed in 1987 in the location of Brunner's proposed East Wing and People's Forecourt. The addition's location and form, not visible from the Capitol's principal west façade, do not detract from the historic character of the complex. It is designed as a compatible contemporary addition in the Neo-classical style and uses similar materials to the original Capitol. Its symmetrical design and incorporations of plazas and fountains continue the integration of building and open space as defined by the Brunner plan.
- The buildings and open spaces of the Brunner plan are largely unaltered.

Owner of Property: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Acreage of Property: Approximately 48 acres

Origins of Nomination: The Pennsylvania Capitol Preservation Committee hired a consultant to prepare the updated documentation.

Cost of Nomination to the Public: None known.

Potential for Positive Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program:

- Expansion of the NHL will delineate a more complete precinct that fully recognizes the extent and relationship of the art, architecture, urbanism, and landscape design defining this exceptional public site.
- The proposed updated documentation serves as an example of NPS working with state government partners to illustrate American history.
- The documentation and expansion of the NHL will help in future preservation efforts and management of the site.



Potential for Negative Public Response or Reflection on NHL Program: None known.

Landmarks Committee Comments:

Landmarks Committee Recommendation: Designation. Dr. Seale moved, Dr. Murtagh seconded; unanimous approval.

Public Comments Favoring Designation (received as of 11/01/12):

James M. Vaughan, Executive Director PHMC, State Historic Preservation Officer,
Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Advisory Board Recommendation: