

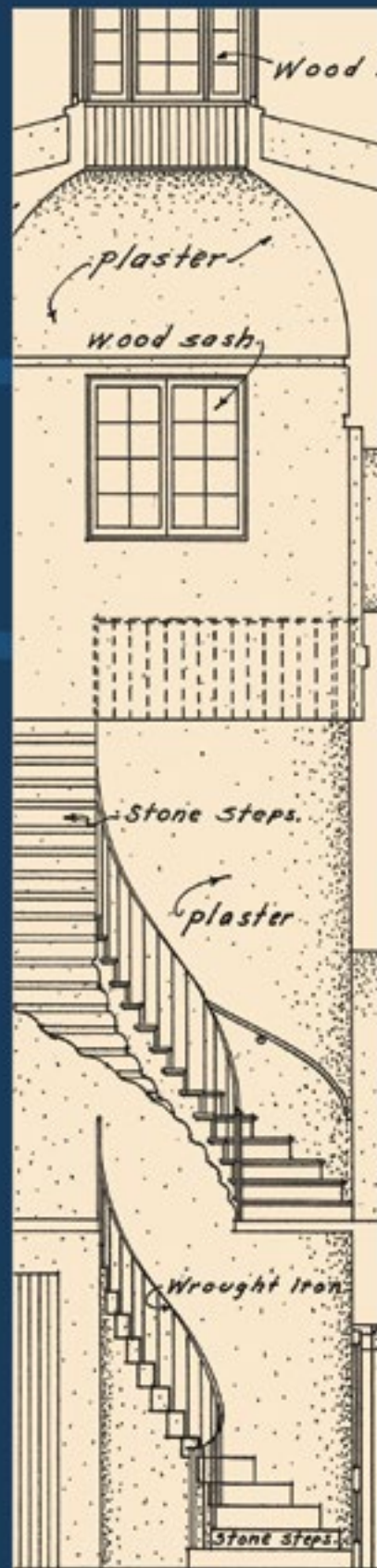


# SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## REACHING NEW HEIGHTS

- Renovating A Treasure
- Opening A Museum
- Connecting With Educators
- Digitizing Resources



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# FOR *thanks* YOUR SUPPORT!

Your donation to the Archives and Building Campaign have created a future for the SCHS.

## *Visionaries (\$100,000 +)*

The Bill and Connie Timmons Foundation  
Jim and Linda Thompson  
The Guilford Foundation  
The David and Ann Westerlund Family Fund  
The Sanders Family Foundation  
The Watson Brown Foundation

## *Architects (\$75,000 +)*

Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation  
The Mills Bee Lane Foundation  
The Post and Courier Foundation  
Drs. Edward and Dorothy Kendall

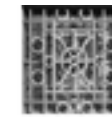
## *Educators (\$50,000 – \$74,999)*

The Wells Fargo Foundation  
The Ceres Foundation

## *Leaders (\$20,000 – \$49,999)*

Mary Burnet and Ellis Johnston  
Dr. and Mrs. William Cain  
Mr. and Mrs. Richard W. Hutson, Jr.  
Neel and Scott Hipp  
Arthur Ravenel  
Mr. and Mrs. H. Laurence Fritz, Jr.  
The Joanna Foundation

A special thanks to State Representative Harry B. (Chip) Limehouse. In 2015 and 2016, he supported the renovation of the Fireproof Building as part of the state legislature's funding bill that maintained South Carolina's "historical infrastructure."



## RENOVATING A TREASURE

*By Alexander Moore, Ph.D.*



*The Fireproof Building*

## *Preserving the Past*

In the summer of 2018 the South Carolina Historical Society will return to and reopen its home in Robert Mills's famed Fireproof Building. Renovated and redesigned as a museum and public education center, the Fireproof Building will reveal in new ways both the riches of the Society's collections and the majesty of its design and construction. Glenn Keyes Architects, Robert Marks Restorations, Inc., and HealyKohler Design have worked together on this project. In turn, they have collaborated with several subcontractors to accomplish this double transformation.



*Historic photo of the Fireproof Building*

Designed and built in the 1820s, the Fireproof Building housed Charleston County offices and records, including the County Coroner, and in 1943 became the permanent home of the South Carolina Historical Society. For over seventy years, the Fireproof Building served as the library, manuscripts repository, and headquarters of the Society. In 2014 the Society relocated its collections to the College of Charleston's Nathan and Marlene Addlestone Library. This act guarded the Society's independence but guaranteed that its collections would be preserved and curated for the present and have the physical space to grow in the future.

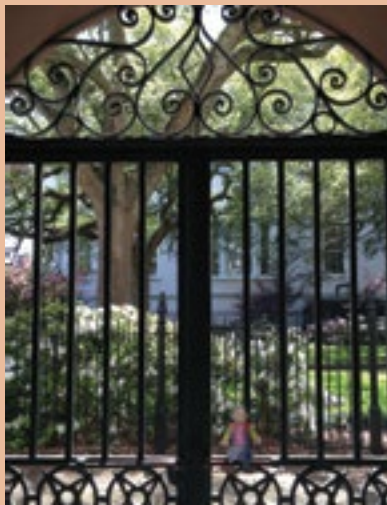




The Fireproof Building was then ready for its rendezvous with the future. When it reopens, the building will house a professionally designed museum, renovated office space, members' library, and catering kitchen. This transformation has been accomplished by a wholesale restoration of the building. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of this restoration and renovation is the fact that this transformation has not only left few marks of its own actions but also removed intrusive remnants of earlier repair and renovation.

A Thoughtful Process

Repurposed, renovated, and revived, the Fireproof Building is certainly the largest and arguably the most significant "object" in the Society's collections. To tell the story of the building as accurately as possible has been chief goal of the team of architects, historic conservators, engineers, craftsmen, and the Society staff. To that end the team has painstakingly employed conservation methods and has documented in hundreds of photographs and notes all of its actions. Mapping and numbering the flagstones under the porticoes and in the ground-floor hallways is an example of their methodology.



One of the ways Robert Mills realized his vision for the Fireproof Building was to use a variety of ironwork in the building's design and construction. The patterns found in the ironwork, interior and exterior balusters, windows and rails, and the scrollwork atop gates are Mills' original designs.

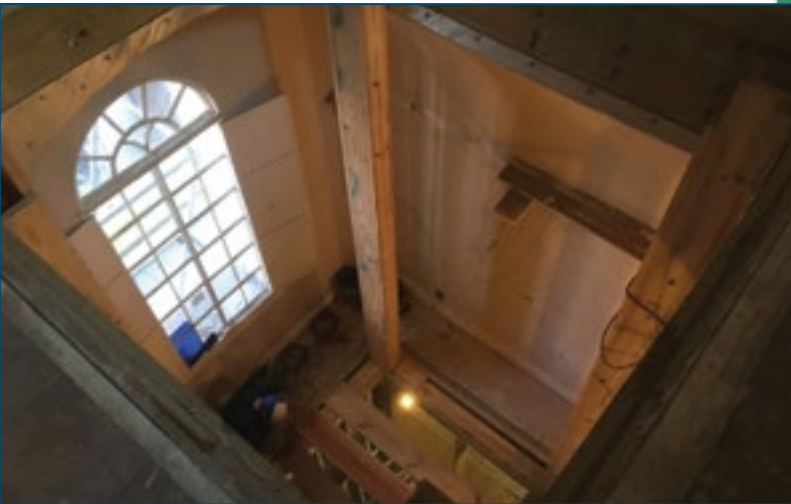
Since it was constructed in the 1820s the Fireproof Building has undergone many repairs, renovations, and even repurposing as it changed ownership and mission. However, the latest renovation is the most comprehensive undertaken. The centerpiece of that renovation has been the first-ever installation of an elevator within the building. The elevator inaugurates a new era in the Historical Society's presence in the Fireproof Building. To make the building accessible to all visitors—especially elderly or disabled visitors—has been a wish and a challenge to the Society for decades.

Renovation: Blue stone ramp, east hall; blue stones stored in loggia



The elevator and its machinery are installed on the ground floor in the room that Robert Mills designed to be a vault. The elevator car rises through the first and second floor barrel vaulted rooms but does not block access to the windows on the façade. The large metal door that led to the original vault on the first floor has been refurbished and reinstalled. In fact, thanks to conscientious engineering and construction, neither the Fireproof Building's exterior nor its interior hint at the momentous change the elevator has brought the building.

This photograph shows the elevator shaft under construction on first and second floors. The shaft is stepped back from the window to allow access to the window that looks out on the north portico.



Exciting Discoveries

Restoration was certain to uncover heretofore unknown aspects of the building's history and of its location in Washington Park. When preparing to install the elevator, workmen excavating the vault floor discovered part of the brick foundation of a building that formerly stood on the site. Temporarily removing the bricks from the south patio revealed slipware pottery and a pipe bowl from the 18th century.

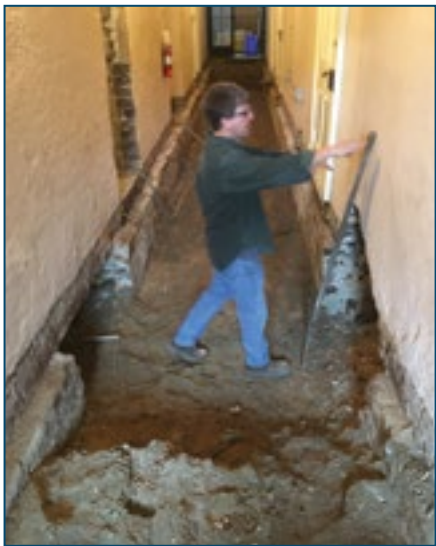


Pottery

Renovation: original flooring 3rd floor, elevator shaft 2nd floor, original flooring 2nd floor

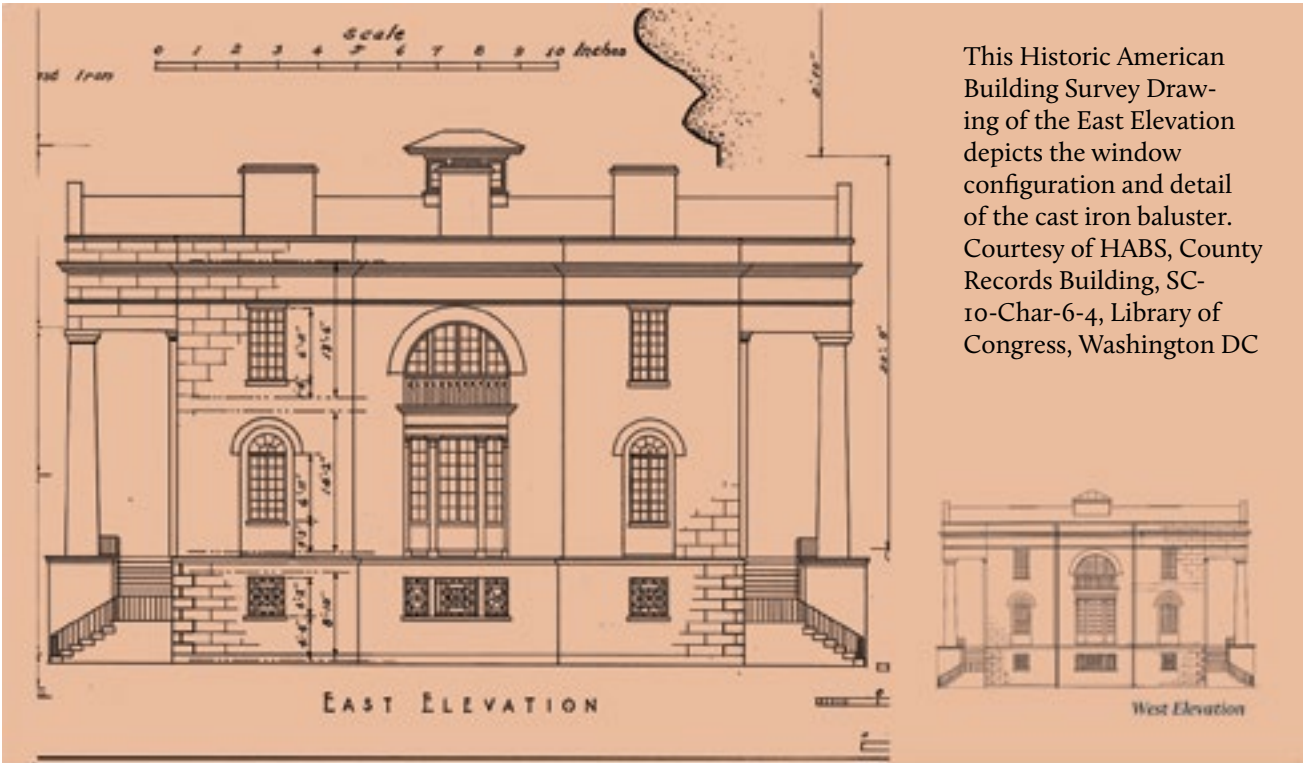






Renovation: Hoyt Roberts discusses conduit issues; redoing the South patio

Another example of secrets that were revealed during renovation was the discovery of remnants of “jib doors,” or half-doors that allowed people in the building to stand in the open windows on the third floor. The rediscovery of the door frames verifies these open windows and offers another example of Robert Mills’s determination to make the Fireproof Building a truly public edifice (see HABS drawing). Other surprising revelations include original wood floors on the second and third floors, exterior walls are twenty-eight inches thick on the first floor, and the building’s barrel vaults are up to fifty-four inches thick. Finally, it was determined that the cantilevered steps were finished with epoxy one step at a time during the restoration by Albert Simmons.



This Historic American Building Survey Drawing of the East Elevation depicts the window configuration and detail of the cast iron baluster. Courtesy of HABS, County Records Building, SC-10-Char-6-4, Library of Congress, Washington DC



### Mills’ Vision for the Future

When the state of South Carolina and City of Charleston cooperated to construct the Fireproof Building the two governments obtained a building capable of surviving fires that too often struck Charleston. To place that building in a public park would provide a fire break that would protect the building’s offices and valuable public records. That plan worked well and preserved the Fireproof Building through terrible fires, the destruction of the American Civil War, the Great Earthquake of 1886, and hurricanes too numerous to recall. However, Mills and the officials of the 1820s had additional reasons for placing the building in a city park. By being next to Charleston’s famed Four Corners of Law, the Fireproof Building consolidated state and local offices in a convenient, easily accessible locale. Designed to provide maximum efficiency for office workers and for those who used its services, the Fireproof Building aimed also to be a powerful symbol of American republican values and of the influence of classical Greek and Roman culture in the history of the state and nation. Perhaps Mills and his contemporaries envisioned City Hall Park and later Washington Park as a local Forum where South Carolinians could conduct their civic lives in an ennobling setting. The Fireproof Building restoration and the expansion of the Historical Society’s role in the life of the state and region exemplify Mills’s vision of his building and the nation.



The Fireproof Building



### This is YOUR Building!

The renovated Fireproof Building will feature a Member Library and Event Space. The SCHS Member Library will be located on the 3rd Floor of the building, accessible by elevator and stairs. All Members will be able to visit and enjoy the 3000+ books available on site. Our online catalogue will continue to note which books are located at the Fireproof Building.

Look for special offerings for business meetings, conferences, weddings and parties. At the Benefactor level, members receive discounts on event rentals.





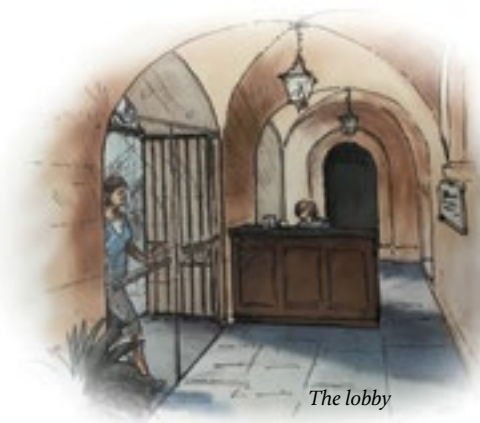
# OUR NEW MUSEUM SOUTH CAROLINA: THE PEOPLE, THE PLACE, THE PROMISE

By Faye Jensen, Ph.D.

## Major Themes

When it opens next summer, the exhibit featured on the main floor of the Fireproof Building will tell the story of the state, from colonial exploration to the conservation movement. This has been a labor-intensive, but exciting, project for the staff and we were fortunate to be assisted by Dr. Alexander Moore. Despite our limits of space and funding, we had a few goals that we felt were very important. They are:

- To tell the story of the entire state (which is rarely, if ever, done in Charleston).
- To reveal the important role South Carolina played in the nation's past.
- To include personal stories of ALL South Carolinians in ALL walks of life, as reflected through our collection.
- To create an exhibit that inspires visitors to learn more.

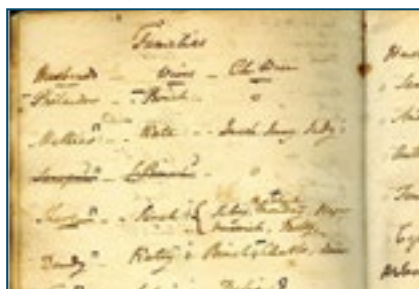


The lobby

## First Impressions

The renovated Fireproof Building will feature a new entrance off of Meeting Street that leads through our courtyard facing Washington Park. The loggia on that side of the building will be enclosed in glass to create a lobby for the building. As visitors enter that lobby, they will be directed to the elevator down the hall. As they walk down the hallway and into the downstairs stairwell, panels explain the importance of the building and the history of the SCHS.

Plantation ledger



Map, 1855



"The Rice Bird"



## The Galleries

Major themes addressed by the exhibits are:

- The Life and Legacy of Robert Mills
- Cultures Converge: Exploration and Settlement
- Expanding Horizons: Moving to the Upcountry, Antebellum Life, Revolution
- War and Reconstruction: Secession, Civil War, Reconstruction.
- Charleston Recovers: Natural Disasters, Charleston Renaissance Film
- Celebrating Diversity: Art, Literature, Culture
- Only in South Carolina: (rotating exhibits): Foodways, Conservation



"Porgy and the Goat Cart"

## Gallery Sponsors

Through the generosity of **the Sanders Family Foundation**, the "Expanding Horizons" gallery will highlight the development of the state, its significant role in the struggle for independence, and the early years of the republic.

Thanks to a challenge match by **the Ceres Foundation**, the exhibit in "Only in South Carolina" will document the state's leading role in Land Use and Conservation. This challenge was met through private donations from conservation groups across the lowcountry.

## Technology Helps

As we designed the exhibit, our major problem was too little space and too much material. To solve that issue, we turned to technology. The first room features kiosks that tell the story of four characters, the Cassique of Kiawah, Eliza Lucas Pinckney, Rene Ravenel, and Priscilla, an enslaved woman. We view the colony through their eyes and explain the reasons that they settled in Carolina. Two rooms later, the descendants of these characters are portrayed in an interactive portrait. And, because we have such wonderful genealogical and historical records, they give very personal views of their lives in South Carolina in the nineteenth century. In between those two rooms is an interactive map table. Using four state maps from different times, we have created "hotspots" describing important events and individuals from the past.

"Only in South Carolina" will feature rotating exhibits that make us proud of our state!



**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!** As we reopen the Fireproof Building next summer, we will need docents who are willing to learn about our collection and share their love of South Carolina history. Please contact our Educational and Volunteer Coordinator, Bailey Knight (bailey.knight@schsonline.org) if you are interested.



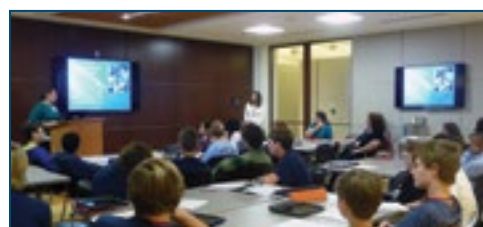


## HISTORY IS HAPPENING! CONNECTING WITH EDUCATORS AND DIGITIZING RESOURCES

### Engaging Students

**A**t the SCHS looks to fulfill its mission to improve knowledge of and encourage interest in the history of South Carolina, we are working with social studies and history teachers from across the state. With one of the richest collections of primary documents, maps, and images, the Society is perfectly situated to provide the resources that will enable teachers to bring history alive for their students. Actually, the use of primary documents in the class not only encourages interest in history, but cultivates all of the following important life skills:

- Investigative Thinking
- Cognitive Abilities
- Deductive Reasoning
- Problem-solving
- Gaining Different Perspectives
- Understanding Historical Truth



Students from Moultrie Middle analyze primary documents and learn more in seminars.

Our “Teaching Primary Resources” workshops (funded by a grant from the Library of Congress), the interactive exhibits in the museum, and the Wells Fargo Teaching Fellowship are just a few ways that we are reaching the future leaders of our state. In addition, our new website will feature an enhanced Education tab that will provide information on SCHS resources, lesson plans, and workshops

### Digitizing the Collection



SCHS resources on Lowcountry Digital Library

When the staff met with educators from all over the state in late 2016, their number one request was that more items be digitized and placed online for use in the classroom. With such a huge collection (at least 2 million pieces of paper), this is a daunting, and expensive, project. However, through several individual projects, we are working towards this goal. Our Pinkney Family Papers appear on the University of Virginia’s Rotunda Website, SCHS resources are available on the Lowcountry Digital Library, and we have received a joint grant from the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley and the Mills Bee Lane Foundations to digitize a portion of our fascinating Visual Materials Collection. This is truly exciting, as it means that people all over the world have access to our amazing materials!



## SOUTH CAROLINA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### HELP US REACH NEW HEIGHTS

Generations of members have brought the Society to this critical point. We need YOU to continue the legacy! The Visionaries, Leaders, Educators and Architects listed on the donor page have taken the first steps—please follow their lead!

#### Membership Benefits are Expanding.

Become a Benefactor. Admission and facility rental opportunities will increase as the Fireproof Building opens. By upgrading your membership, you will be a part of this exciting project AND you will enhance your benefits

#### Make a Gift of Stock

Restricted and unrestricted gifts of cash or stock are welcome and will boost the important work of preserving and sharing the story of our state. Naming opportunities begin at \$25,000.

#### Naming Opportunities and Exhibit Sponsorships

Gifts to the building restoration and exhibit sponsorships will be noted throughout the Fireproof Building. The exhibit area affords opportunities to memorialize, honor and sponsor specific subjects and discussions. As you review these pages and envision this exciting exhibit within the iconic Fireproof Building, please call Ginny Zemp for details on sponsorship opportunities.

- Individual Galleries – Please contact Ginny Zemp
- Lobby – The Gateway to History - \$50,000
- Robert Mills – His Life and Legacy (4 Panels) - \$25,000
- Renovation Wall – Panels honor past/current Fireproof Building restoration - \$25,000
- Citizen/Community Panels – \$25,000

#### A Gift to the Endowment

The SCHS accepts restricted and unrestricted gifts. Remembering the Society in your will or trust estate is a wonderful opportunity to advance our mission and secure your legacy. To learn more about any of the items above, please contact our Development Director, Ginny Zemp, at 843-723-3225, ext.119, or [virginia.zemp@schsonline.org](mailto:virginia.zemp@schsonline.org).

#### Help us Recruit New Members

Our new offerings in education, location, and digitization provide exciting ways for South Carolinians, new and old, to be engaged in our history. Family Memberships and Museum opportunities will enhance our mission to encourage pride in the history of South Carolina. Give a membership or encourage your friends to join! For information, contact our Membership Coordinator, Lela Gee-Boswell at [lela.gee-boswell@schsonline.org](mailto:lela.gee-boswell@schsonline.org).



## THROUGH THE YEARS

### *Timeline of the Fireproof Building*

1821: The General Assembly authorizes construction. Division.  
1822—26: Design and construction  
1822: The cornerstone is laid.  
1856-58: Provides office space for Gov. Robert F.W. Allston.  
1860: SCHS moves some of its collections into the building.  
1868: State transfers ownership to Charleston County  
1882: State authorizes use of “gas and electric light” in building.  
1883: Interior and exterior painting and repair.  
1886-1887: Earthquake damages the building’s exterior  
1930: Exterior painted white  
1942: SCHS moves part of its collections to building  
1943: SCHS leases two floors, 30 year lease at one dollar per year.  
1960: Exterior renovations by Albert Simons.  
1968 -1979: Improvements in electrical systems and HVAC.  
1969: Charleston county coroner’s office moves out.  
1971 -1972: Further renovations by Albert Simons.  
1973: Designated a National Historic Landmark  
1980: Charleston County conveyed ownership to SCHS.  
1984: Exterior refurbishment.  
1983: Skylight renovation.  
1991: Installation of a new climate control, roof, door, and window repairs.  
2000: Exterior repairs to brownstone and stucco.  
2017-2018: Total renovation and repurposing



## SHARE THE EXCITEMENT

### **Members' Private Preview at the Annual Meeting**

During the SCHS Annual Meeting Weekend of March 9th and 10th, we hope to open the Fireproof Building (without exhibits) for members only. This is a chance to see the stately architectural elements of the building before exhibit installation. Stay tuned for details.

### **More to Come, Summer 2018**

Our exhibit, THE PEOPLE, THE PLACE, THE PROMISE, will be installed in the spring and we hope to open to the public in the summer of 2018. Watch your mailbox and email for updates on special members-only reopening activities.

### **Wanted! Affiliate Organizations**

To further our efforts at outreach, the SCHS is launching an affiliate program for local historical societies and museums. Affiliate organizations have the benefit of the SCHS scholarly speakers' bureau, archival assistance, and traveling exhibit opportunities. Look for details on our revamped website in early 2018 or contact Lela Gee-Boswell at:

[lela.gee-boswell@schsonline.org](mailto:lela.gee-boswell@schsonline.org)