

THOLOS

VOLUME 20

FEATURE

Olmsted's Never-Built Retreat

SPOTLIGHT ON SUSTAINABILITY

What Sustainability Means
to the AOC

EMPLOYEE HIGHLIGHTS

Interning During COVID



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ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

improving the
employee
experience

WRITTEN BY DR. GANELLA SMITH

The Architect of the Capitol (AOC) continues the organizational transformation intended to make us more efficient and transparent. These initiatives enable the agency to build a safer, more inclusive and more effective workplace. We recently:

- Launched newly defined agency core values — Respect, Integrity, Safety, Empower (RISE)
- Had over 300 employees participate in RISE training and campaign efforts
- Identified specific key initiatives that are important to the agency's long-term success

This organizational transformation update is focused on the employee improvement and well-being initiatives: Human Capital Strategy, AOC University and Cultural Behaviors Transformation.

HUMAN CAPITAL STRATEGY: ATTRACTING AND INCENTIVIZING THE BEST WORKFORCE

Over 200 staff throughout the agency and across workforce demographics participated in employee focus groups and/or interviews to determine how the AOC can enhance the employee experience and inform the development of our Human Capital Strategy.

Feedback from employees at every level has been consistent. Employees have shared that they desire:

- Career pathways with development and training that support upward mobility
- Ongoing supervisory training
- Stronger communications with managers/workgroups
- Mentoring and networking opportunities, which would support institutional knowledge and employee development
- Opportunities for onboarding and off-boarding improvements
- Increased outreach to identify/locate new and diverse talent
- Advancement opportunities aimed at retention
- Sufficient resources for human capital management
- Development of agile and flexible processes, systems and policies

The Human Capital Strategy Working Group will take all of the information gathered from employees throughout the agency and will develop a plan to address the concerns highlighted. Their effort will outline a vision and plan for how the AOC hires, trains, promotes career growth and seeks to retain employees over the next five years. As progress continues on this very exciting initiative, information will be shared on Compass and through future Tholos articles.

AOC UNIVERSITY: TRAINING FOR THE FUTURE

Once we hire the right people for the job, we want them to thrive at the AOC. Training and development will be ongoing so our employees learn the skills that will prepare them to advance in the agency.

This summer, we conducted an internal survey to determine training and development needs throughout the agency. Survey results show that the greatest interest in training and development is within the trades. We are taking a deeper look at the results to learn more about what employees are looking for.

CULTURAL BEHAVIORS TRANSFORMATION: CREATING THE ENVIRONMENT WE WANT

Of all the Big Rocks, Cultural Behaviors Transformation is most dependent on the people of the AOC. While values like respect can be promoted by AOC leadership, how our values show up day-to-day depends on everyone in the organization.

To date, 468 AOC employees have engaged in employee engagement sessions aimed at building a positive workplace culture, learning about topics such as:

- Understanding culture and how to support an engaged and empowered workforce
- Resolving conflict through conversation
- Strengthening leadership
- Building and maintaining workplace trust
- Assessing the impacts of the events at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021

Participating in the engagement sessions helps us improve the overall employee experience. Together we can make the AOC a great place to work.

Please feel free to visit Compass or reach out by email to ask any questions or learn about opportunities to support and participate in the organizational transformation.

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EMPLOYEE HIGHLIGHTS

INTERNING DURING COVID

WRITTEN BY MORGAN GREEN

Every year the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) hires numerous summer interns. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the AOC did not run an internship program in 2020 and could only accommodate 23 interns this summer, most of whom teleworked. The highly sought after internship program, which typically runs for 12 weeks beginning in June, saw smaller orientation groups and fewer opportunities for interns to network and socialize. One of the most popular internship programs that kick-starts every AOC summer, the scavenger hunt, did not take place this year due to COVID-19 safety measures.

The AOC internship program is designed to give students a hands-on approach to gain real-world experience. It provides the opportunity for students to gain practical and professional skills in trade jobs and office positions alike. Additionally, students can choose to apply for internships beyond their courses of study to step outside their comfort zones and expand their skill sets. This summer, many AOC interns navigated the challenge of gaining experience and networking while working remotely. Despite not being able to congregate and socialize, the AOC interns made the most of their experiences. I interviewed a few of them to hear what the internship experience was like during a pandemic.



Photo by Thomas Hatzenbuhler

KITERRA SCOTT, PAYROLL AND PROCESSING BRANCH, OFFICE CLERK

Kiterra Scott, a rising sophomore at St. Mary's College of Maryland studying psychology and neuroscience worked as an office clerk in the Payroll and Processing Branch (PPB). Scott worked remotely most days and came in to assist her PPB colleagues sporadically. Scott was offered an intern position as a garden laborer last summer and was disappointed when the AOC internship program was canceled due to COVID-19. Despite working remotely, Scott stayed in close contact with her PPB colleagues to ensure AOC employees received great customer service.

"My teammates hosted a virtual meet and greet when I onboarded to welcome me and it was fun meeting everyone."



Photo by Thomas Hatzenbuhler

MELANIE SKAHEN, CURATOR'S DIVISION, OFFICE CLERK

Melanie Skahen is a rising senior at the University of Mary Washington studying historic preservation. Skahen, who previously interned with the Curator's Division in 2019, was thrilled to be accepted back into the internship program for another summer. Skahen was tasked with working on an artwork redistribution project.

"This summer, there are fewer research requests than there were two years ago that need to be filled just because people are teleworking and there aren't any visitors in the Capitol. My favorite thing about interning this year has been coming into the office. I'm grateful to be working in an office setting as opposed to working at home. Every time I get off the Metro and cross Independence Avenue, I walk up to the Capitol and it's like I'm seeing it for the first time."

THE AOC INTERNSHIP PROGRAM IS DESIGNED TO GIVE STUDENTS A HANDS-ON APPROACH TO GAIN REAL-WORLD EXPERIENCE.



Photo provided by John Paul Smith

JOHN PAUL SMITH, POLICY AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS DIVISION, OFFICE CLERK

John Paul Smith, a rising senior at Salisbury University studying political science served as an office clerk for the Policy and Special Programs Division. Smith previously interned in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer in 2018. This summer, Smith has worked closely on budgeting and policy requirements in the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer.

"In 2018, there were a lot more interactive programs. I really enjoyed the intern lecture series so there has been significantly less time to network with other interns this summer, but it has been a great experience so far."



Photo provided by Aubrey Stewart

AUBREY STEWART, OFFICE OF SAFETY AND CODE COMPLIANCE, OFFICE CLERK

Aubrey Stewart, a rising senior at Millersville University studying occupational safety and environmental health worked as an office clerk in the Office of Safety and Code Compliance (OSCC). Stewart's professor suggested that she apply for the internship and take advantage of the remote position as she lives in Pennsylvania. Stewart was responsible for reviewing incident report sheets and analyzing data. By analyzing incident report data, OSCC can identify current trends to help reduce workplace injuries in the future. One advantage to remote work, there is a level of unspoken independence that pushes Aubrey to work harder.

"It's nice having a level of independence in the workplace while also having colleagues I can reach out to for assistance. It would've been nice to be on campus this summer to get hands on experience, but it's been great because if not for teleworking, I may not have been able to do this internship."

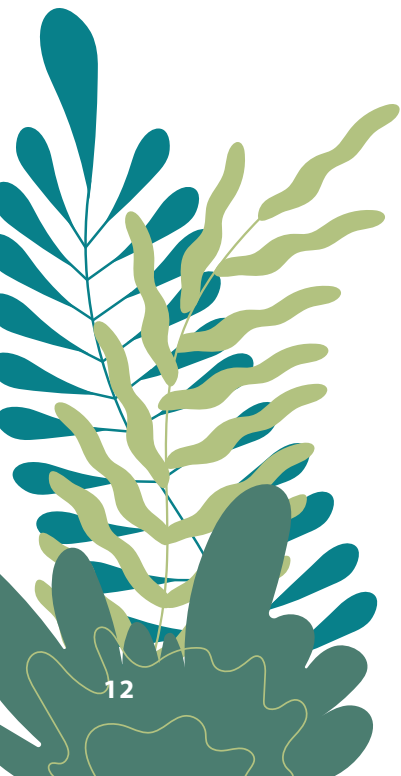
SPOTLIGHT ON SUSTAINABILITY

WHAT SUSTAINABILITY MEANS TO THE AOC

WRITTEN BY THE SUSTAINABILITY, ENERGY
AND WATER BRANCH

The Capitol campus contains an intricate network of buildings, infrastructure and thousands of people who work in or visit the properties managed and maintained by the Architect of the Capitol (AOC). The agency has developed a commitment to sustainability within this same complex matrix of buildings, infrastructure and people.

The AOC's practices in the design, construction, maintenance and preservation of our nation's cultural assets epitomize sustainable development. We believe that sustainable buildings can be maintained indefinitely and exemplify the potential for significant resource conservation.



The AOC focuses on energy conservation, which saves utility expenses, allowing savings to be reinvested into our buildings and infrastructure. The AOC has used energy savings performance contracting and energy savings over the past 12 years to fund more than \$200 million in building and infrastructure energy improvements. These investments have resulted in reduced long-term energy demand and reduced greenhouse gas emissions across Capitol Hill.



Over the last 15 years the AOC has reduced its energy intensity level by more than 50 percent. As a result of these energy savings, the AOC building-related greenhouse gas emissions have been reduced by 40 percent. The AOC uses U.S. Department of Energy calculations and tools to validate and track these energy intensity and greenhouse gas emission reductions.

The AOC focuses and carries out its sustainability and energy conservation efforts through three primary channels: Buildings and Landscapes, Infrastructure and People.

BUILDINGS AND LANDSCAPES

The AOC is responsible for the operation and care of more than 18.4 million square feet of facilities, thousands of works of art including sculptures and paintings, more than 570 acres of grounds and a fleet necessary to support operations.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Exceeded agency goals to achieve a 50 percent energy intensity reduction by Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 and a 35 percent greenhouse gas emissions reduction by FY 2021
- Provided employee training to address building controls operations and maintenance skills gaps to support more comfortable and efficient buildings
- Converted major legacy building mechanical systems to state-of-the-art, direct digital control systems to support occupancy comfort and energy conservation goals
- Formulated custom building energy efficiency plans with targets and long-term reduction goals that measure performance and support long-range energy reductions
- Used retrocommissioning throughout our energy conservation program to periodically retune buildings and bring them back to peak efficiency
- Maintained over 4,600 trees that provide eco-benefits worth \$250,000 to the Capitol Hill community
- Implemented Sustainable SITES Initiative® practices on new landscaping projects
- Installed and maintained green roof structures on buildings in the House Office Buildings, Senate Office Buildings, U.S. Botanic Garden, and Library Buildings and Grounds jurisdictions that reduce building stormwater runoff and reduce summertime cooling demands

INFRASTRUCTURE

Across Capitol Hill, architects, engineers and technicians design, enhance and maintain new and historic structures, spaces and building systems. Employees in various trades such as electricians, mechanics, gardeners, masons and carpenters maintain the buildings and infrastructure.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Implemented a utility energy service contract and completed the construction of a cogeneration system that provides more efficient production of electricity and steam heat
- Renewed the Capitol Power Plant Refrigeration Plant, which resulted in significant efficiency and reliability improvements for the chilled water system that supports Capitol campus air conditioning systems
- Focused on maximizing the use of free cooling, which uses lower outdoor air temperatures to meet year-round cooling demand for spaces like data centers and IT closets, which has improved Capitol Power Plant efficiency and saved resources
- Installed advanced utility meters to support energy conservation strategies and created a utility data enterprise system that summarizes hundreds of utility meter readings throughout our infrastructure
- Implemented an advanced data analytics building automation monitoring system that data mines thousands of energy-related building systems to highlight inefficient operations

PEOPLE

The AOC employs over 2,200 full-time employees, serves 30,000 tenants and welcomes nearly 5 million visitors annually.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Created a new digital control technician job series targeting growth and skill development for entry-level technicians through senior leader mechanics
- Strengthened recycling programs by following best standards and practices to maximize waste reduction; AOC jurisdictions increased diversion rates and improved communications and engagement in recycling programs, especially with vendors and visitors
- Developed a comprehensive scrap metal recycling program, which produces revenue that is reinvested back into energy conservation and recycling initiatives
- Diverted 10,000 tons of construction and demolition debris from the landfill, recycling 98 percent of all construction debris generated; this volume is equivalent to 1,600 construction debris dumpsters
- Executed a sustainable cleaning and a vendor-managed inventory contract to provide certification training for labor/custodial and other trade shops to meet Green Seal and Cleaning Industry Management standards; the Green Seal program supports a more sustainable building environment by adopting green cleaning products and standards
- Doubled the collection of outdoor recycling materials across Capitol Hill; annually, 2.1 million bottles and cans are recycled from the outdoor recycling containers
- Instituted sustainable design standards for construction and renovation projects to support healthier indoor air quality and use of recycled-content materials



Photo by James Rosenthal

FEATURE

OLMSTED'S NEVER-BUILT RETREAT **STORY OF THE U.S. CAPITOL'S SOUTH SUMMERHOUSE**

WRITTEN BY FRANKLIN BRADLEY

Frederick Law Olmsted's design of the U.S. Capitol Grounds created a landscape that appears to be naturally formed, even though the entirety of it was shaped according to his exacting designs. Amid the stately trees, colorful flower beds and verdant lawns, Olmsted created a hidden gem that is clearly not natural: the Summerhouse, which visitors delight in to this day.

This quiet brick grotto is embedded in the slope northwest of the U.S. Capitol Building and skillfully blended into the pastoral landscape by careful plantings. A welcome retreat from the noise and bustle of the surrounding streets, the shade and water provided by the Summerhouse still serve the purpose Olmsted intended them to.

“There has been much complaint from the want of a resting place for those who walk from the bottom of the hill to the [Capitol] building,” Olmsted reported to Congress in 1880. “To meet this want, a structure is now being erected, designed to combine both drinking fountain and a secluded and cool retreat.”

Olmsted’s plans for a similar structure for visitors walking up from the southwest were never realized, perhaps due to criticism from some in Congress of the north Summerhouse. In 1881, F.H. Cobb, the engineer in charge of Capitol Grounds removed only one item from Olmsted’s budget request for the coming year: \$3,000 for a “Summer house on the south side.” Before it was cut from the budget, however, Olmsted had begun designing a south summerhouse; his sketches for it have been rediscovered.

Cobb might have been reacting to those who ridiculed Olmsted’s designs. Senator James B. Beck of Kentucky asked about the Summerhouse, to laughter that rang out in the Senate chamber, “What was that for? I heard it was built for a monkey house.”

Perhaps he was making a reference to the wrought iron gates that prevent visitors from entering at night, although Beck had already established his opposition to Olmsted’s designs. He called the fountains Olmsted built on the east side of the U.S. Capitol, “a couple of Dutch spittoons.”

Beck had likely seen the Summerhouse before it was blended into its surroundings. While it was under construction, the entire brick building was visible. Much of the completed structure would be covered by soil that matched the slope of surrounding ground or obscured by plants, vines and trees.

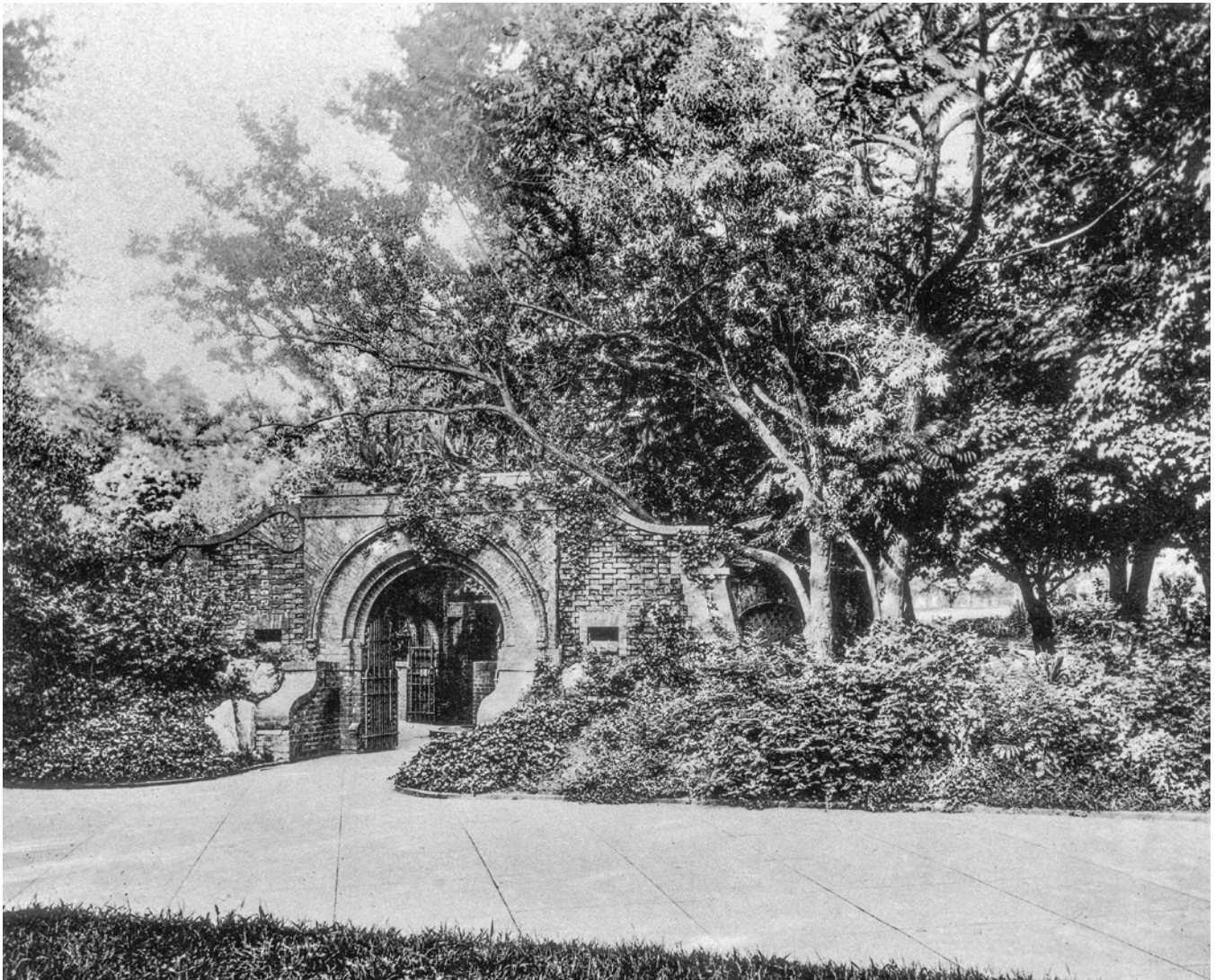
Thomas Wisedell, who oversaw construction of the Summerhouse, had anticipated a negative reaction. He observed that “criticism may be expected until the roof

is on as it will appear so uneven in its outlines that the Washington people will not understand it. They spoke of its mass and redness when I was there.”

Wisedell knew that those concerns “will be lost in your planting,” but Olmsted estimated that it would take three years for the plants around the building to grow enough for people to see the full effect of his design.

The first impressions of the Summerhouse were likely fatal to Olmsted’s plans for a second such retreat and

resting space for visitors in the landscape to the south of the U.S. Capitol. The rediscovered sketches are incomplete and intriguing, indicating a more open design with sheltered seating next to a pond. Some also seem to be studies of sightlines for the structure, reflecting Olmsted’s guiding principle for this design, which was that the central feature — the U.S. Capitol Building — was never obscured and was always framed as the focus of attention.



**The Summerhouse, obscured by the plants, vines and trees of Olmsted’s original design, blends into the landscape.
Photo provided by AOC Photo Branch**



The view through the wrought-iron window grate into the lush overgrown grotto of the Summerhouse. Photo provided by AOC Photo Branch

The surviving drawings give an idea of what Olmsted intended, including detailed lists of plants and locations to place them. They also appear to show that he would have preserved the symmetry of the grounds by placing the second structure in the same location to the south of the U.S. Capitol that the Summerhouse occupies to the north of the building.

It appears that Olmsted did not plan to create a mirror image of the brick structure, however. He explored various ideas for the unbuilt retreat, which would have been roughly triangular and bounded by three walkways. At one point, he appeared to consider placing seats across one of these paths, allowing the water and plants to fill the entire triangle. Olmsted's final design for the south summerhouse showed all of the seats, pond and plants within the three paths around it, as is the case in the north Summerhouse.

Overall, the effect would have been of a naturally formed pond, emanating from a spring. What would have seemed to be the pond's perimeter would have been made with retaining walls and other earthworks obscured by ivy and other plants. While Olmsted wanted to give visitors a sheltered spot for restoration, most important to him was that every element in his design would keep the focus on the U.S. Capitol Building. His plans were, he wrote, "in all respects subsidiary to the central structure."

We can only speculate now about what wasn't built. But, if the south summerhouse were as successful as the Summerhouse that was completed, it would have become another beloved element of Olmsted's landscape, which matches the grandeur of the building it frames.

2820

Engineer's Office, U. S. Capitol Grounds,

Washington, D. C., Aug 12, 1881.

Edward Clark Esq
Architect U.S. Capitol
Dear Sir:

The Estimate for the cost of improvements for the year 1882 & 83 is as follows.

Road paving in East park 6550 sq. yds. @ 2 ¹ / ₂	14737.50
" " around Md. Av. Circle 800 sq. yds. @ 2 ¹ / ₂	9000.00
Footwalks on West park	1500
Curbing & Improving Md. av. Circle	22500
Tunnel from Capitol to Government lot	28000
Air duct for private	4000
Air shaft " "	2500
Summer house on south side	3000
Entrance to Denak North side	10000
Contingencies	5000
Pay roll	25000
Terminal lamps	15000
Total.	97237.50

Very respectfully
J. N. Cobb



2820

CONVERSE HOUSE

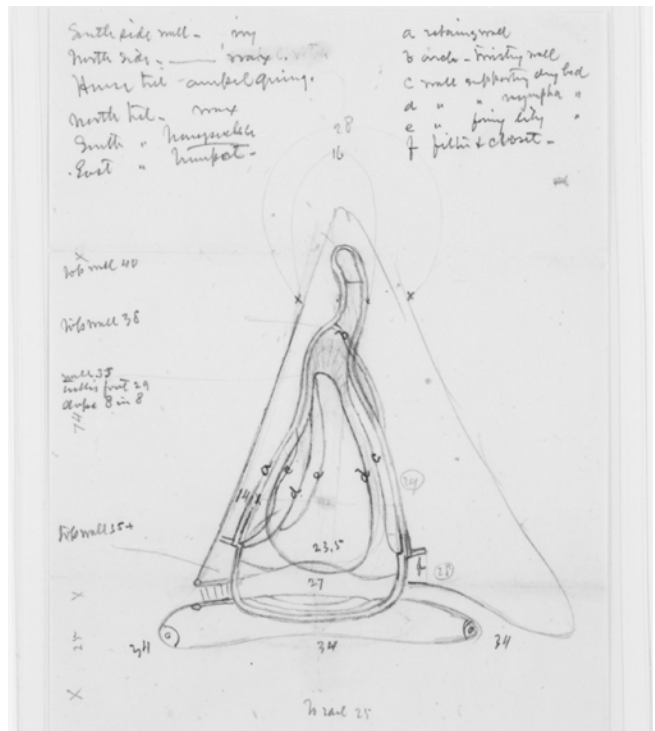
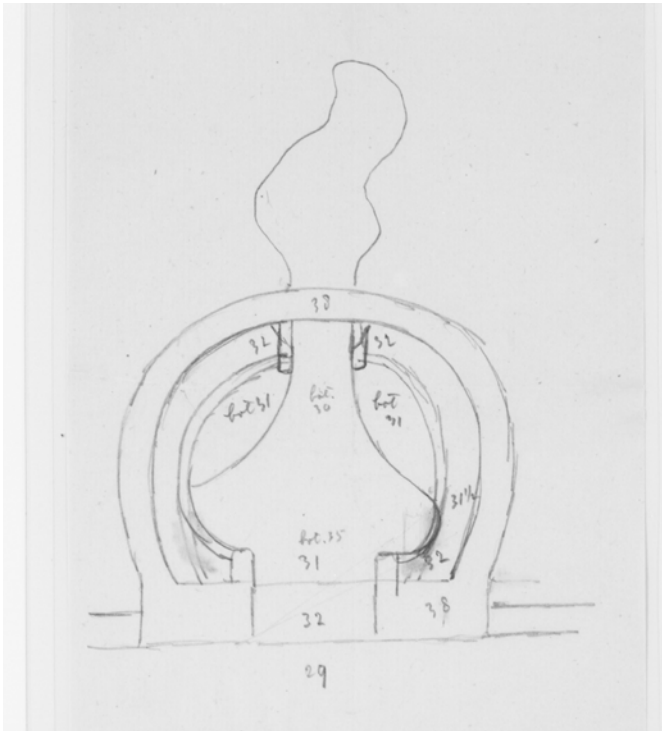
H. A. CONVERSE, Proprietor.

434, 436 & 438 MAIN STREET.

SPRINGFIELD, MASS., 11th Sept 1881

J. L. Olmsted Esq
My dear Sir

On account of an extended trip and absence from the New York Office I am only in receipt of your telegrams and letters in reference to Washington work. Today I write to Mr. W. asking him to forward data in regard to work which shall be for you and at all on return to city which will be on coming Wednesday & I by W. send you papers from an unofficial act. Just at the moment as I am doing this, one of the papers at end of the week so that Washington work shall have first consideration. In regard to the



Top (L-R) Olmsted's budget request showing a line through "Summer house on the south side."; Letter from Thomas Wisedell to Olmsted regarding the summerhouse.

Bottom: Plans showing details of the pond, pathways and plantings for the south summerhouse.

HEALTH UPDATE

COVID-19 REMINDERS

Though you may be feeling “COVID fatigue,” it’s important to remain vigilant about safety to protect yourself and others.

All AOC employees are encouraged to get vaccinated, which is one of the very best things anyone can do for their own protection and to promote the health and safety of our community.

The Office of Attending Physician is offering COVID-19 vaccination appointments. To make an appointment, please call 202.225.VAXX (202.225.8299) between 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

RESOURCES FOR STRESS AND ANXIETY

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a free, voluntary and confidential program that can assist you and other AOC employees as you work through stress and personal or professional challenges. Employees have access to TalkNow, which offers AOC employees immediate, 24/7 telephonic access to confidential, in-the-moment counseling support delivered by qualified behavioral health professionals, no appointment necessary. Access the website by visiting www.espyr.com and log in (upper right hand corner) using your password: [aoceap](http://www.espyr.com). You can also request services by phone at 888.351.0027.

As always, there is no charge to employees for these services, and the program is confidential, with your right to privacy protected within the bounds of the law.

To talk to someone associated with this program, call EAP at 202.226.2546.

REMEMBER, YOU CAN TAKE ACTION BY PRACTICING THE THREE WS AND AVOIDING THE THREE CS.



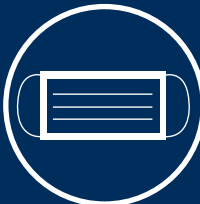
WATCH

YOUR PHYSICAL DISTANCE. STAY AT LEAST 6 FEET FROM OTHER PEOPLE.



WASH

YOUR HANDS OFTEN FOR AT LEAST 20 SECONDS.



WEAR

A FACE COVERING WHILE ON CAMPUS AND IN PUBLIC SPACES. FACE COVERINGS WILL BE PROVIDED TO AOC EMPLOYEES UPON RETURN TO WORK ON-SITE.

AVOID



CROWDED SPACES



CLOSE CONTACTS



CONFINED SPACES

EMPLOYEE RECOGNITION

KUDOS TO YOU

The Architect of the Capitol recognized the following employees in the winter and spring for their exceptional service. We could not meet our mission without you!

Don Anderson

John Cochin

Charles Apple

Erica Cohen

Ashley Arevalo

John Coles

Melaku Banteamlak

William Contee

Brian Beecher

William Cunningham

Joe Bocianoski

Laurence Dallaire

Willie Brown Jr.

Roman Davydov

Nina Bryant

Maurice Dawson

Brian Carroll

Robert DiMichele

Pat Easton

Derek Falzoi

Kristopher Foote

Maurice Foxx

Jose Garcia

Jeff Hagan

Jennifer Henley

David Hicks

Marlon Jefferson

Rachel Jenkins

Martin Jimenez

Claudia Jones

Dante Jones

Linda Jones

Andrew King

Brian Kohler

Dinh Lam

Jeremy Lauer

Donald Lee

Gary Leonard

LaVaysha Lewis

Brian Lindsey

Vincenzo Lusi

Arron Maxwell



Leonard Mbuko

Shemika McCrae

Christopher Morris

Kevin Nathan

Calvin Newbill

Joe Okes

Jennifer Rheaume

Kendell Richardson

Ben Riffe

Omar Rivera

Brian Roberson

Hajira Shariff

Pawan Sharma

Andy Shizak

Ray Slack

Anthony Smith

Greg Smith

Robert Somerville

Cedrick Stewart

Harry Thomas



Adrian Toledo

Eric Walls

Jeff Walters

Robert Washington

Stephen Watts

Lori Williams

Ronnie Williams

Cyndi Yocubik

James Zibragos

Vladimir Zotikos

Team Awards

**Capitol Grounds and
Arboretum**

Legislative and Public Affairs

**Training and Employee
Development Branch**





Legislative and Public Affairs
U.S. Capitol, Room SB-16
Washington, DC 20515

Tholos Volume 20

The Architect of the Capitol strives to meet its mission 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to **serve** Congress and the Supreme Court, **preserve** America's Capitol, and **inspire** memorable experiences for all who visit the buildings and grounds.

Tholos is distributed by the Architect of the Capitol primarily for AOC employees. Questions regarding content and publication should be directed to AOC Legislative and Public Affairs at communications@oc.gov, 202.228.1793, or U.S. Capitol, Room SB-16, Washington, DC 20515.

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www.aoc.gov

FRONT COVER PHOTO BY:

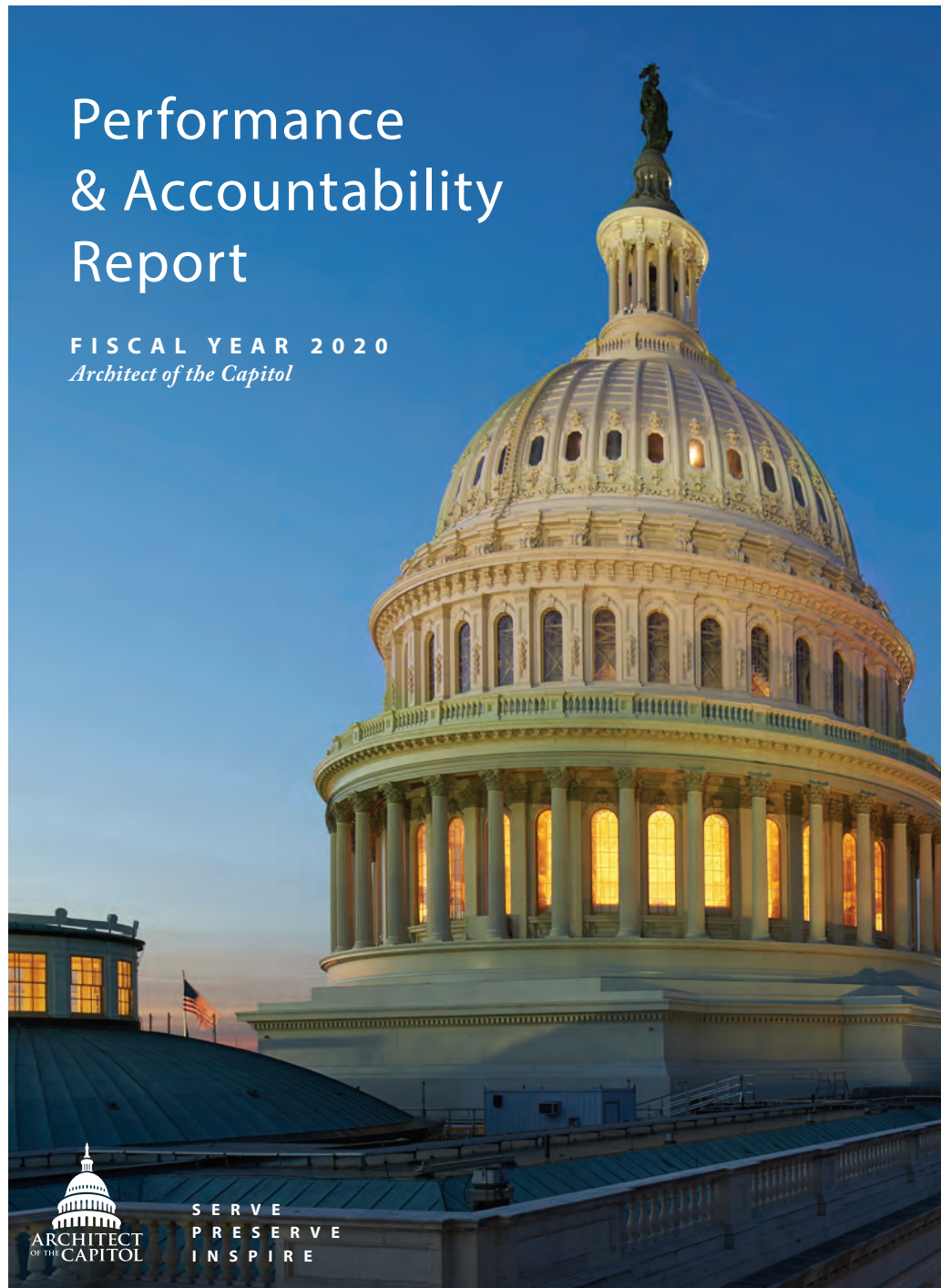
SEAN GREENE

BACK PHOTO;

For the 10th consecutive year, the Architect of the Capitol received the Association of Government Accountants' prestigious Certificate of Excellence in Accountability Reporting for its Fiscal Year 2020 Performance and Accountability Report.

Performance & Accountability Report

FISCAL YEAR 2020
Architect of the Capitol



SERVE
PRESERVE
INSPIRE