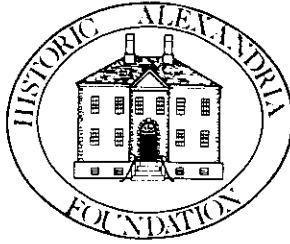


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future

Historic Alexandria Foundation

Post Office Box 19252 Alexandria, Virginia 22320

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4-17-01

October 1, 2001

(703) 549-5811

The Honorable Kerry J. Donley
Mayor, City of Alexandria, Virginia
City Hall
301 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

Re: Application to the City of Alexandria for a grant of \$50,000, as matching support of an awarded grant of \$200,000 from the Save America's Treasures Program of the U.S Department of the Interior for the restoration of the Alexandria Academy

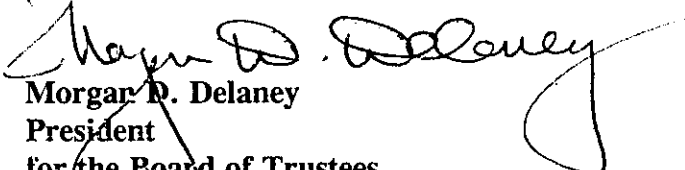
Dear Kerry:

I am forwarding to you along with this letter, the information, requested by the city staff, in support of the Historic Alexandria Foundation's request for a \$50,000 appropriation from the City, to be used as partial matching support of the Federal grant awarded from the Save America's Treasures Program for the restoration of the Alexandria Academy building. I trust that this information will address the issues raised by city staff.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation, I would like to thank you and the members of City Council for your ongoing interest in and support of our efforts to restore the Academy building. Through our efforts, including your commitment of public dollars, one of Alexandria's most historically significant 18th century buildings has been returned to a productive role in our community.

Please let me know if you should desire any further information.

Sincerely yours,


Morgan D. Delaney
President
for the Board of Trustees



ALEXANDRIA ACADEMY

FUNDING PROPOSAL

Purpose: Application to the City of Alexandria for a grant of \$50,000 of non-Federal resources to use as partial matching support of an awarded grant of \$200,000 from the Save America's Treasures Program of the U. S. Department of the Interior to pay construction costs for the restoration of the 1786 Alexandria Academy Building, a national landmark of public education. The grant from the City will help the Foundation to meet the challenge of the matching grant, ending its indebtedness for the restoration of the structure, while maintaining the Academy as an educational and historic resource for the City. In 1994, the Historic Alexandria Foundation undertook the restoration of the structure at the behest of the Mayor and City Council of Alexandria. The City, even after closing the building in 1982, had protected it from deterioration with appropriate security and maintenance of necessary utilities including heat and electrical services. During the restoration, the City waived permit fees (Approximately \$12,000).

The Structure: Built between 1785 and 1786, the Alexandria Academy building is a landmark in the history of public education. A simple, utilitarian structure, it is the only remaining example of pure English bond construction surviving in the city. Intended as a private academy for Alexandria's children, it included a free school at the insistence of George Washington. A trustee, Washington endowed one classroom as a free school for poor and orphan children of Alexandria and perpetuated that endowment through a bequest in his will. In 1812, the Academy added a free school for the children of Alexandria's free black community. By 1823, the Academy had closed in the aftermath of the 1819 depression. The Academy's trustees sold the structure, which became a private residence until the Civil War. During the War, the building served as a hospital for former slaves who found freedom in Alexandria and later became a Freedman's Bureau School. After its return to private purposes, the city acquired the building as a part of its new public school system in 1886, using it for educational purposes until 1982 when it closed the building. Many Alexandrians, from Robert E. Lee to Jack Ticer to Bill Euille, attended classes in the building. As a restored structure it is a landmark of the history of universal education in the United States.

Current Use: Today, the Alexandria Academy is a center for preservation and education. The Historic Alexandria Foundation uses it for meetings and events. The Remediation and Training Institute (RTI), an internationally known non-profit educational research center occupies the Academy as a tenant. Using an advanced remedial education curriculum delivered through the Internet from computers housed in the Academy, the Institute supports educational centers at over 1400 sites across the United States. At the same time, its staff is developing programs to serve the District of Columbia. The Remediation and Training Institute uses the structure for demonstration activities and plans to support tourism in the building. It pays rent for use of the building.

Project History: In 1995, after negotiation with the City of Alexandria, the Historic Alexandria Foundation took over the Alexandria Academy Building at 604 Wolfe Street for the purpose of restoring the historic structure and returning it to public use. In the years between 1995 and late 1999, the Foundation restored the building. In the process, the Foundation returned the structure to its original 1786 exterior appearance, while incorporating in the building all the facilities necessary to meet modern requirements for life-safety and habitability.

The Foundation board retained and supervised restoration architect Richard Bierce and restoration contractor Oak Grove Construction to carry out a careful program of “architectural archaeology” and documentary research before and during the project to create a model restoration. At the same time, the Foundation worked closely with City of Alexandria staff to meet the standards required of a restoration that also is a functional structure serving modern needs. City staff most closely involved with the project included Al Cox, Art Dahlberg, Jean Federico, Ron Kagawa, and Peter Smith.

The exterior is a careful restoration of the original appearance that required removal of 19th and 20th century additions that had become unsafe and could not be retained without major expenditure and virtual reconstruction. Using eighteenth century building techniques, the restoration contractors restored the north and south walls to their original state, filling in openings added later in time. The contractors completed the exterior restoration by late 1997.

At the same time, the principals and city officials worked to develop a plan for the interior. We made our goal to develop the basement and first floor spaces as fully accessible while retaining the historic character of the first floor classroom, and to preserve the upper floors in a way that combined historic character with appropriate life safety. This program ultimately included substantial funds devoted to fire suppression and security, the creation of an interior stair to the basement, substantial deepening of the basement, additions to the foundation, installation of restroom facilities, and installation of a wheel-chair lift. Work began in 1998 and the contractor completed the job in 1999, well within the five-year term of the original agreement with the City.

Work on the landscape proceeded more slowly. To make the building fully accessible, the Foundation built a graded, ramped walkway to the original main entrance on the east side from Wolfe Street and added an exterior lift from the first floor to the basement on the south side of the structure. In keeping with the original utilitarian landscape, a simple yard with minimal plantings has been developed. Landscaping, funded by the Garden Club of Alexandria, is now virtually complete.

Funding History: Restoration of the Academy has proved expensive. Before the Foundation initiated the project, city staff had estimated, in the early 1990’s, that restoration of the existing fabric, including retention of the additions, might cost \$500,000. As work proceeded, this proved conservative. Complications in the structure, combined with code requirements, raised the cost of the project to, in the end, approximately \$1.25 million dollars. This sum includes construction costs, architectural fees, administrative costs, and fundraising costs. It does not include substantial professional management time contributed by board members of the Historic Alexandria Foundation. Fund raising fell behind the pace of restoration work, requiring the

Foundation to secure a builder's loan of up to \$500,000 from Burke and Herbert Bank to complete the project.

When restoration began, the Foundation had set aside approximately \$200,000 for the project. In the past years, we have raised an additional \$614,000. This includes contributions by over 200 individuals (\$200,000); foundation grants (\$145,000), income from special events (\$194,000), and grants from the State of Virginia (\$75,000). A list of the supporters is appended to this document.

We received a grant of \$200,000 from the Save America's Treasures Program of the Department of Interior in 2000. As required by the terms of the grant, these funds must be matched. The proposed City of Alexandria grant of \$50,000 will be a part of the match and the balance will be made up with monies raised through the sale of collections owned by the Historic Alexandria Foundation. These collections, owned by the Historic Alexandria Foundation, had been on loan to the Lee Boyhood Home Museum until it closed. After donating all Alexandria-related items in the collection (there were no Lee related artifacts in the collection) to the City of Alexandria, the other items have been sold at auction. At this writing, the sum amounts to approximately \$150,000. Combined with the City's grant, these funds will be used to match the Save America's Treasures grant. With these funds, we will be able to complete payment of all costs associated with the restoration of the Academy.

We must note that two Historic Alexandria Foundation board members who are professional preservation, museum, and restoration consultants contributed approximately 600 days of volunteer time over the course of the project to provide necessary management of the restoration. This does not include the thousands of volunteer hours involved in fundraising activities by many Foundation members. Finally, approximately one half the regular annual operating costs of the Foundation have been devoted to supporting the Academy project.

A small foundation, with one part-time paid staff member, has taken on the restoration of a major historic structure. Significant to the history of the city, the state, and the nation, this is a project of lasting importance. It has received support from state officials, led by the Honorable Marian Van Landingham, and national officials, led by the Honorable James Moran. Individuals, businesses, and foundations from the community contributed to the project. But the costs have been substantial. The grant from the City of Alexandria will be important to completion of the project that benefits the city's historic environment and is a lasting testament to Alexandria's place in the history of education.

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