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The century-old Cannon Building is plagued by numerous issues affecting its safety, health, and operational efficiency. Without prompt action, essential systems will continue to deteriorate and fail, impacting staff, members, and constituents. The building's systems have not been comprehensively upgraded since the 1930s, with many original components dating back to 1908 or earlier. Upgrading infrastructure and repairing the exterior stone façade are also necessary. The Cannon Renewal Project aims to create a modern workplace for the next century. The 10-year process is divided into five phases, each aligned with Congressional move cycles. Phases 1-4 will require affected wings of the building to be vacated, while Phase 0 focused on installing building utilities in preparation for future work. Work began in 2017 and will occur around the clock, with noisiest activities taking place at night and early morning. The project includes constructing a new fifth floor, demolishing existing walls and roofs, and rebuilding an entirely new floor. Historic preservation efforts are also underway to ensure the building's integrity is maintained. The Cannon Renewal Project will provide a state-of-the-art workplace for the U.S. House of Representatives and support Congressional operations. The restoration and renovation of Cannon involved meticulous attention to detail. Exterior stonework was thoroughly cleaned, joints were sealed, and loose stones were carefully replaced to ensure water-tight integrity. A unique challenge arose when replacing certain exterior stone features, including modillions and window cornices. Due to the closure of the original marble quarry in Dover, New York, the best match for the original stone was found in Vermont marble. Safety and preservation were paramount throughout the project. The grand colonnade above Independence Avenue, composed of 34 fluted columns styled in a modified Doric order, underwent thorough analysis and repair to guarantee long-lasting stability. In some cases, loose stones that couldn't be securely pinned into place were removed, leaving behind only small nicks and gaps that reflect the project's focus on preservation. The treatment aimed for a balance between safety and maintaining the original appearance of the columns, ensuring they remain beautiful and unchanged. The United States Capitol building is a testament to four distinct architectural styles: William Thornton's original design, Benjamin Henry Latrobe's major portion of the first building, Charles Bulfinch's redesign of the central section, and Thomas U. Walter's extensions and present dome. Thornton's design for the Capitol building incorporated elegant elements, including a rusticated basement story, tall principal floor, and attic story. The compact original structure featured a balustrade, deep entablature, and guilloche frieze above the basement rustication. This horizontal layout was countered by vertical organization of windows into bays separated by two-story pilasters, creating an abstract grid. Thornton introduced curvilinear elements, making it the first major building in the US influenced by eighteenth-century English Neoclassical style, also known as Federal style in America. This style is characterized by horizontal massing, oval and circular rooms, wall elements, delicate proportions, and details. The central bay on each wing features bull's-eye and arched windows within a shallow, semicircular arch, providing a central focus to the facade. Segmental pediments over principal floor windows continue curved lines across the facade, intended to be resolved visually by two low saucer domes. Thornton employed the Corinthian order due to the Capitol's importance as the most important building in the federal city. Despite its long building history, the exterior remains harmonious, with differences between Thornton's facade and those designed by Bulfinch and Walker reflecting their unique interpretations of classical tradition. Bulfinch made changes to Thornton's pattern for the west wing, adding a sub-basement story and erecting a terrace in 1825-1827. These walls were visible until 1991, when the courtyard between the basement walls began to be filled with offices designed by Hugh Newell Jacobsen. All east front basement walls will remain exposed and visible from a hall in the new interiors. Thornton used double pilasters to terminate his composition, whereas Bulfinch placed them on the inside angle but neglected the outside edge. Walter continued the original building's regulating lines in his 1851-1865 marble extensions. The facades of the Capitol building showcase distinct architectural styles, with subtle differences between Neoclassicism and Renaissance Revival. The original building's walls and windows formed a measured rhythm, whereas Walter's design introduced more windows and created a staccato movement. Thornton-Bulfinch's approach treated the wall as a neutral plane, while Walter's design activated the wall with three-dimensional elements. The Capitol's central section has undergone changes, including the addition of projecting porticos, pediments, and archways. The building's design has been shaped by various architects, including Latrobe and Bulfinch. Latrobe designed octastyle porticoes for both fronts, while Bulfinch modified his design to accommodate sculptural on the east portico. The Capitol's iconic dome was constructed in 1822-1824 and features an unusually high profile. In 1851-1859, Walter planned a new focal point for the Capitol, opting for a cast-iron dome due to its fireproof, lightweight, and cost-effective qualities. The founders delivered over 1.3 million pounds of cast and painted iron parts to be bolted together for the double dome. This innovative system was designed by August G. Schoenborn, Walter's chief draftsman. The final piece of Thomas Crawford's cast bronze statue, Freedom, was installed in 1863. The statue stands at 19 feet 6 inches and weighs nearly 4,500 tons. This massive structure is the only dome of its size to be erected on an existing building. The design, inspired by Sir Christopher Wren's Saint Paul's Cathedral, features a four-part composition with a thirty-six-column peristyle drum and intermediate attic supporting the dome and tholos. The Capitol dome measures 287 feet high, 135 feet in diameter at its base, and 88 feet at the cupola. Its pyramidal composition resulted from structural necessity and aesthetic considerations. To ensure even weight distribution, a 14-foot iron ring was cantilevered out from Bulfinch's octagonal masonry drum and supported by seventy-two 15-foot brackets. The dome's skeletal cast-iron structure allows for vast expanses of glass on all four levels, flooding the interior with natural light. The sculptural three-dimensional quality of the dome relates directly to the wings, drawing the whole into an integrated composition. Walter's wing extensions are attached to the main building by colonnaded hiphens, breaking the horizontal sweep of the Capitol into three manageable masses. Each rectangular wing was originally set perpendicular to and centered on the longitudinal axis of the main building. The honey-combed marble used in the extensions came from Lee, Massachusetts, while the "white" Georgia marble used in the 1958-1962 east front extension is a poor match. The design features porticoes spanning nearly its entire width on each facade, approached by imposing staircases above carriageways. Walter designed the extensions with one hundred monolithic fluted Corinthian columns of Maryland marble, which controlled the scale of the wings while maintaining the grandeur of the building. The original east front Corinthian columns were designed by Latrobe and executed by Bulfinch, featuring unfluted shafts, possibly due to structural or aesthetic reasons aligned with English Neoclassical principles. Over time, opinions on American history and ideology represented at the Capitol changed, reflected in the sculptural programs of the three east front pediments. The central pediment features the Genius of America, carved in sandstone by Luigi Persico between 1825 and 1828. The originals were replaced with Georgia marble replicas when the east front was extended from 1958 to 1962. The theme shifted to manifest destiny a quarter century later, symbolized by Thomas Crawford's marble figures in the north wing pediment, entitled Progress of Civilization (1863). The south wing pediment features marble sculpture representing various professions that contributed to America's development. The Apotheosis of Democracy, designed by Paul Bartlett, depicts Peace protecting Genius and relates to agriculture on the north and industry on the south. Each wing pediment measures 80 feet long and 12 feet high at its apex, continuing iconographic themes present in the interior design. Latrobe's three chambers, originally occupied by Congress, are architecturally sophisticated spaces that were carried out despite labor difficulties and funding shortages. The original building's construction was faulty, prompting Latrobe to rebuild while maintaining many major interior walls. This led to criticisms about the hallways being ill-lit mazes. To address this, Latrobe focused on making the building appear more monumental by creating layers of space within each room or visually connected area. The Supreme Court vestibule is a great example of this approach. It's a small, apsidal rectangular room divided into spaces by half domes, domes, and barrel vaults. This creates an illusion that the walls are receding, not the columns intruding. To enhance this effect, Latrobe used six corncob and corntalk columns to create the impression of depth. The final pair of columns, in front of the Supreme Court door, support an arch that defines a shallow space, making it appear deeper than it actually is. This type of spatial manipulation was common in European Neoclassicism, which Latrobe introduced to America. The entrance opposite the main door was cut by Bulfinch, while Latrobe planned the vestibule as primarily an entrance to the Supreme Court chamber with only one off-axis door to the main stairhall behind it. The arched openings and multifaceted ceiling increase the sense of space in flux, pushing out rather than confining the visitor. The corncob columns were part of three American orders invented by Latrobe for the Capitol, including tobacco-leaf and magnolia orders. These orders drew from the Western architectural tradition of inventing orders associated with symbolic meanings. Latrobe used Aqua sandstone extensively and to great advantage on the interiors, despite it being an unreliable material for exterior use. The Supreme Court chamber was likely located on the ground floor due to space constraints in the original building, and this placement was viewed as a temporary expedient. In the Supreme Court, space appears to be expanding in all directions, resulting in the appearance and reality of monumentality. The arrangement, based on ancient theater forms and revived in European eighteenth-century auditoriums, included a semicircular shape with columns along its diameter and angled piers around its circumference. # Latrobe's architectural design at the Capitol building drew inspiration from ancient Greek and medieval styles, creating a unique blend of forms. The columns and piers appear slender, contributing to an airy atmosphere in the room. Originally, natural light poured in through large windows, but a later addition disrupted this harmony by introducing static backlighting. The space behind the columns served as intimate meeting areas while remaining visually open to the main area. The half-dome design is composed of butterfly vaults between substantial ribs, rather than a single continuous surface. Latrobe's willingness to combine different historical styles led to innovative spatial solutions that became characteristic of American architecture. Adjacent to the Supreme Court lies the two-story tobacco-leaf rotunda within oval walls, originally featuring a staircase designed in the 1814 fire. Latrobe replaced it with his own cupola, bringing light and air into the central circulation area. However, the original windows were closed, and an oversized chandelier was installed. The curved piers on the ground floor obscure the sense of being within an oval shape, which Latrobe disliked for its geometric impurity and expensive construction. Yet, he cleverly created a visual thread connecting public circulation spaces through the use of semicircular and semioval arches. Throughout the ground-floor halls, walls are frequently articulated by open or blind semicircular openings set within half ovals. The crypt was designed to evoke ecclesiastical crypts, with Washington's tomb instead of the base or from the gallery at the springing of the dome. Six groups of figures represent War, Science, Navigation, Commerce, Manufactures, and Agriculture around the central composition of an enthroned Washington, attended by Liberty and Fame. The thirteen figures completing this circle represent the original states. Brumidi's figures, executed in broad brush strokes, have a three-dimensional quality necessary for them to be visible from below. The Capitol extensions boast exquisite mid-Victorian interiors that showcase an eclectic mix of styles. The architectural decoration is characterized by bold statements, rich colors, and intricate patterns. The inner dome's cast-iron frame acts as a sculptural touch, while the latticelike coffers are heavier and more ornate due to the structural demands of the iron. Architect Charles Bulfinch worked within the Neoclassical tradition but introduced his own decorative vocabulary, which was primarily Roman-inspired. His designs emphasized elegant surface details, unlike those of Latrobe, who favored bold statements and mixed architectural styles. The Capitol's Senate wing features fresco and oil paintings on plaster, carried out by Constantino Brumidi and his assistants. The corridors' walls and vaulted ceilings are adorned with native American plants and animals, blended with traditional Roman-derived spiraling acanthus leaves. The color palette includes acid reds, greens, browns, and ochers, which accurately replicate ancient tones. Paintings of historic events, symbols, inventions, and portraits of important figures are set within ornate Roman-inspired frames. The interior decoration of the House and Senate chambers, completed in 1949-1950 by Architect David Lynn, unfortunately destroyed the original grand rooms. However, numerous offices and committee rooms still boast lavish interiors on a smaller scale. Few public spaces allow visitors to appreciate the true quality and extent of the architectural decoration in the Capitol extensions. The Capitol's extensions boast a mix of Roman and Renaissance architectural influences, with intricate details throughout. Encaustic tiles cover the floors, featuring patterns that harmonize with the walls. The Minton Tile Company supplied these tiles on such a large scale that they later advertised being "tile makers to the US Capitol." Marble imperial stairs, lit by iron ceilings with glass etchings and paintings, are a highlight of the extensions. Unfluted columns have black Corinthian capitals made from cast bronze, while coffered ceilings are constructed from white Italian marble. The east front vestibules and staircases feature materials that achieve a stunning effect without additional decoration. The vestibules themselves are made of white marble from Lee, Massachusetts, with columns inspired by the American order, combining acanthus and tobacco leaves harmoniously. Both chambers have open hallways except for their entry vestibules and member's staircases at the outer corners. Designed by Bruidi in 1857, the newel posts and rails were modeled by Edmond Baudin and cast in bronze between 1857 and 1859. The Senate Reception Room is a standout space on the principal floor, featuring a Victorian interpretation of Italian Renaissance interiors. The room's walls and shallow domes are overlaid with gilded plaster, while frames for paintings display the technical skill of master plasterer Ernest Thomas. The use of deep yellow gold from California celebrates America's resources and adds to the overall opulence. The Hall of Columns on the first floor of the House wing is another notable feature, showcasing a mix of architectural styles open to the public. The South Wing of the United States Capitol, a monumental entrance designed by architect Walter. Twenty-eight fluted Corinthian-cum-American columns, crafted from Massachusetts marble, rise to a height of 142 feet. The capitals feature a unique design, combining acanthus leaves and tobacco leaves with thistles. Originally, the floors were adorned with colorful encaustic tile designs but these were replaced in 1924 with a simple black and white marble pattern. The trabecated construction is made possible by cast-iron beams, creating a ceremonial route that draws visitors to the building's center. The wing also features Allyn Cox's 1974 and 1982 mural cycles, Hall of Capitols and Great Experiment Hall, located on the main east-west cross corridor. Four cast-bronze historiated doors adorn the Capitol, modeled after Lorenzo Ghiberti's famous Gates of Paradise. The most prominent are the Columbus doors, installed at the prominent east central door opening into the rotunda since 1871. Designed by Randolph Rogers in Rome in 1858 and cast in Munich in 1861, they were installed between the original hall of the House and the new South Wing in 1863. Thomas Crawford designed doors for both extensions between 1855 and 1857. The Senate doors were cast in America and put in place in 1868, while those for the House were not cast until 1903 and installed two years later. The rectangular and circular panels depict allegorical scenes and actual events of the Revolution. Louis Amateis designed doors for the west center door in 1910, installed only in the east House stairwell south of the crypt. Their iconography is allegorical, featuring the apotheosis of America in the transom, as well as portraits of Americans representing various trades and professions. Throughout the Capitol extensions, one senses that the opulence of materials and Renaissance Revival designs were meant to express the torch passing from the Old World to the New, from European civilization to American ideals as its east and west coasts united. ##### The United States Capitol, located on Capitol Hill at the east end of the National Mall in Washington, D.C., has been a symbol of American democracy since its inception. Originally named after ancient Rome's Capitoline Hill, the building was designed to reflect the ideals of self-governance and architectural styles reminiscent of the Roman Republic. Throughout history, the Capitol has sought to commemorate significant events through art and architecture while maintaining its original grandeur. The complex has undergone several transformations since its construction began in 1793 under President Washington's guidance. Notable architects have contributed to its evolution, including William Thornton, James Hoban, Benjamin Henry Latrobe, Charles Bulfinch, Thomas U. Walter, and August Schoenborn. The Capitol has housed the Congress, the country's legislative organ, since 1787, with a brief period of uncertainty in the early years when the government was temporarily located in New York and Philadelphia before settling permanently in Washington D.C. in 1800. The building's design contest, inspired by Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, aimed to evoke the spirit of ancient Rome and its connection to the Capitoline Hill. The winning proposal by Dr. William Thornton was chosen for its timeless beauty, grandiosity, simplicity, and ability to convey the idea of self-governed civilization. The Capitol's construction began in 1793, with President Washington laying the foundation stone in a Masonic ceremony on September 18 that year. The Capitol's construction was a massive undertaking, financed primarily through the sale of city plots and labor from local residents, immigrants, and slaves. To complete this enormous project, the Senate chamber turned to Dutch banks for loans in 1794. Later that year, the gallery for visitors was added, allowing greater interaction between citizens and government officials. In 1796, it was decided to abandon construction of two-thirds of the building and focus on completing just the north wing. The Capitol finally opened its doors in 1800, offering public spaces when Congress wasn't using them. Years later, Congress allocated \$50,000 to build the southern wing. President Thomas Jefferson hired architect B. Henry Latrobe to redesign the interior of the South Wing, incorporating fire-resistant brick vaults and maintaining its exterior appearance. Latrobe also rebuilt parts of the north wing and added a new model of columns inspired by maize cobs. Jefferson and Latrobe incorporated symbolism into the Capitol's sculptures, hiring Italian sculptors to create pieces like an eagle for the House of Representatives and relief on justice for the Supreme Court. The Senate chamber featured sculptures representing arts, commerce, agriculture, science, military, and civil government. On August 24, 1814, British forces set fire to Washington's public buildings, including the Capitol during the Napoleonic War. The north wing suffered significant damage, while the House of Representatives was destroyed. As a result, much of Latrobe's neoclassical design was lost. Following the fire, Latrobe began restoring the building, modifying some interiors and adding new rooms to the north wing for the Senate. He extended the House of Representatives and the Senate, inspired by ancient Greece and Rome. In 1819, the north and south wings reopened after being remodeled the previous year by Charles Bulfinch from Boston. Bulfinch designed a 29-meter-diameter rotunda, echoing the proportions of the ancient Pantheon in Rome. The dome featured sculptures and paintings depicting European explorers, Indians, and settlers. On the east porch's pediment, Luigi Persico sculpted an allegory called Genius of America. In the early years, the United States Capitol had symbolic figures representing peace and war on either side of its entrance. Architect Charles Bulfinch designed a large wooden dome at the request of President James Monroe. Additionally, he oversaw the landscaping of the Capitol's garden, creating terraces in the western part of the grounds. When Bulfinch retired in 1829, the Capitol was finally completed after three decades. As the country grew and expanded westward between 1815 and 1851, conflicts arose over slavery and Native American issues. During this period, eight new states joined the Union, leading to the Capitol's building remaining small and outdated. By 1850, it housed thirty-one states, compared to fifteen at its inception. To address space constraints, the Senate offered a \$500 prize for the best solution in 1850. The House of Representatives and Senate couldn't agree, so President Millard Fillmore intervened, awarding the project to architect Thomas U. Walter. Walter's design added wings to the existing building. In 1851, a fire destroyed much of the Library of Congress, revealing the wooden dome's vulnerability. To symbolize Congress's growing power, Walter designed a new cast-iron dome, fireproof. After the 1860 commission was awarded to James, Fowler, Kirtland from New York, the company finished the work despite the government's financial constraints due to the Civil War. During the war, former slaves like Philip Reid contributed their labor to the project. In 1863, Reid helped create the Statue of Liberty that crowned the dome. The Capitol continued to grow between 1851 and 1868, with Walter adding new wings to the original building. In the late nineteenth century, office space on the Capitol became insufficient. In 1891, the Senate purchased a residential building and converted it into offices. However, this solution proved short-lived. At the beginning of the twentieth century, two identical buildings were constructed, providing each representative with more space. The Capitol complex in Washington D.C. has undergone significant transformations over the years to accommodate the growing needs of its occupants. Initially, two separate buildings were constructed for the representatives and Senators, which opened in 1908 and 1909 respectively. The expansion of the Capitol led to the construction of a large park, which cost \$10 million and took 30 years to complete (1910-1940). In the 1930s, six new buildings were added to the complex, including the Supreme Court building, Longworth House Office Building, and the Library of Congress's Thomas Jefferson Building. The Act of Legislative Reorganization in 1946 led to the construction of four more buildings, including Dirksen and Hart buildings for Senate offices and Rayburn and Ford Buildings for the House of Representatives. In 1991, the Madison Memorial Building was completed, freeing up space for the restoration of the Library of Congress's Jefferson and Adams Buildings. The Capitol Visitors Center opened in 2008, offering an area of 54,000 square meters spread over three underground levels to welcome visitors. The original Capitol interiors featured chandeliers, mahogany furniture, fireplaces, and stoves. Narrow aisles connected the original building with its successive extensions between the 1850s and 1860s. The new wings had galleries opening to the chambers, coffered ceilings, and highly decorated skylights. Statues, marble columns, floor-to-ceiling tapestries, and damask curtains made the interior one of the most splendid spaces in the United States. Artists from Italy, France, Germany, the United Kingdom, and the United States contributed to the decorative details, including railings, bronze doors, and knobs, statues, porticos, murals on walls and ceilings, all inspired by antiquity and America. The United States Capitol Building boasts a rich history of art and architecture. In the rotunda, Constantino Brumidi's frescoes adorn the corridors and rooms, with his masterpiece "The Apotheosis of Washington" (1865) standing out for its depiction of George Washington surrounded by symbols of freedom and victory. The dome also features a 91-meter-long frieze, painted in grayscale, which narrates the history of America through scenes such as the landing of Columbus and the discovery of gold in California. The National Statuary Hall is a two-story circular room that was once home to the House of Representatives from 1807 to 1857. It now houses statues of prominent American citizens, with each state contributing two bronze or marble statues representing notable men and women. The floor of the room was originally changed to marble, and this tradition continues today. The Library of Congress began as a result of Thomas Jefferson's donation in 1815, after his collection of books had been severely damaged by fire in 1814. In 1870, it was decreed that two copies of each book deposited in the library should be kept, leading to the rapid growth of the collection. The current Library of Congress building was designed by Smithmeyer & Peiz and opened in 1897. The Capitol dome was rebuilt between 1855 and 1866 under the guidance of Thomas U. Walter, drawing inspiration from European examples like St. Paul's Cathedral in London and the Pantheon in Paris. It replaced the original wooden dome built by Charles Bulfinch in 1824, more than tripling its height while maintaining the same base. The United States Capitol's design is inspired by the Invalides of Paris, featuring a double dome with an inner oculus that showcases "The Apotheosis of Washington." The interior frieze depicts American history, while the exterior boasts 48 columns, 120 windows, and a height of 66 meters from base to statue. The dome has undergone restorations, including one in 2016. The roundabout beneath the dome houses various artworks and is where state funerals for presidents and personalities are held. The Visitor Center, located on the eastern front, features museum spaces, an auditorium, lobby, and services. It was built to accommodate growing visitor numbers between 2001 and 2008, with excavation work taking care not to damage the building's structure. The Capitol's exterior spaces were expanded between 1850 and 1860, requiring the creation of a large north-south street and the purchase of adjacent parcels of land. Frederick Law Olmsted designed a marble terrace on the west facade to address the building's slope issues. The terrain also features space for committees and storage. The Capitol has commissioned art since its inception. In 1817, John Trumbull painted four Revolutionary War scenes at the roundabout. Later, paintings representing European colonization of America filled empty spaces. A bust of Vice-President Henry Wilson was commissioned in 1875, followed by portraits of House representatives starting in 1911. The Apotheosis of Democracy, a sculptural ensemble created by Paul Wayland Bartlett, adorns the Hall of Representatives' front. For the 150th anniversary of the Constitution, Congress commissioned Howard Chandler Christy to paint the signing moment, which now hangs on the east wing stairs.