The Brafferton — A building of historic significance and modern importance
The exterior brick walls of the Brafferton are the most substantially original of the College's three colonial buildings. The exterior was restored to its colonial appearance in 1932 as part of the Rockefeller Restoration of Williamsburg.

Class of 1961 50th Reunion Gift Class Project —

The Renewal and Preservation of the Brafferton

About the Project
The College of William & Mary is seeking $4.5 million in private funding for the renewal and preservation of the Brafferton (1723), the second-oldest building on the College’s historic campus that today houses the offices of the president and provost. The Brafferton escaped the fires that plagued the Wren Building and President’s House, yet for more than two-and-a-half centuries, the Brafferton has stood in the shadow of these other two historic structures, receiving less attention. The time to redress this inequity is long past due.

Many members of the Class of 1961 have fond memories of time spent in the Brafferton. For its Class Gift project, the Class Reunion Gift Committee has established a $500,000 goal to support the effort to renew and preserve the Brafferton. This early demonstration of alumni commitment will serve as a significant endorsement of this effort and could well serve as the basis for subsequent grants from key foundations and individuals. In recognition of this substantial 50th Reunion gift, a plaque recognizing the Class of 1961 will be prominently placed in the Brafferton.

The Brafferton Building
The Brafferton bears witness to the earliest instance of private philanthropy in the history of William & Mary. Designed to house the College's Indian School, the building was constructed with funds from the estate of Robert Boyle, the famous English scientist. Boyle's will stipulated that 4,000 pounds of sterling should be employed for "pious and charitable uses." His executors purchased Brafferton Manor in Yorkshire, England, part of the annual income from which was used to build and support the Indian school.

Second in age to the Wren Building, the Brafferton was designed as the first of two flankers to the main college building, preceding its near-twin, the President’s House, by almost a decade. This placement signaled a reorientation of the College toward Virginia’s newly established capital city of Williamsburg and was, in the words of one historian, “the most striking example up to this time, either in England or America, of collegiate planning as an integral component of a grand urban design.”

In both its original and restored states, the Brafferton is an important and early contribution to the history of Virginia’s architecture.
Preservation of the Brafferton

The Brafferton project began with the production of the Historic Structure Report (2003), which documents and analyzes a building’s initial construction and subsequent alterations through historical, and pictorial evidence. The Report provides a foundation for responsible decision making in the planning and implementation of the project.

In October 2009, the College chose a team of architects and engineers headed by Grieves, Worrall, Wright & O’Hatnick Inc./Architects (GWWO), a Baltimore firm with strong preservation credentials, to undertake a comprehensive existing condition survey of the Brafferton and the adjacent Brafferton Kitchen. Working in concert with William & Mary personnel, the firm has produced a project budget and scope of work that addresses three criteria:

1). The preservation needs of the building.
   - Address the severe problems of drainage and rising damp that are compromising the exterior masonry and pointing
   - Selectively repoint, clean and repair masonry
   - Preserve and rehabilitate exterior materials and finishes
   - Replace 1932 Ludowici terra cotta roof
   - Restore existing decorative lighting fixtures
   - Conduct structural evaluation and make necessary alterations to accommodate present-day floor loads

2). The safety and convenience of its occupants.
   - Special reconfigurations on the cellar level and third floor to meet current programmatic needs
   - Introduction of a full sprinkler system and an air-sampling smoke detection system to help address current code deficiencies.
   - Installation of emergency lighting
   - Refurbishing of rest rooms on the third floors and adding a rest room in the cellar. (No rest room exists on the second floor.)
   - Installation of security devices
   - Completing a survey and removing any asbestos or other hazardous materials.

3). The replacement of the building systems that have exceeded their life expectancy.
   - Installation of forced-air fan coil system to replace broken steam heating system and window unit air conditioners
   - Replacing water, drain, waste and plumbing lines; replacing power and lighting circuits

Archaeology: The Brafferton Project as a Teaching Lab

Extensive archaeological excavations will be carried out prior to the renovation and waterproofing of the 1723 building.

Most archaeological projects on the Historic Campus on the last decade have included students, and the Brafferton Project will once again see William & Mary students carrying out archaeological discovery on their own campus.

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Learn More:

Contact the Office of Major Gifts at (757) 221-1002 or visit the 50th Reunion website: www.wm.edu/giving/50threunion