



Entablature Preservation at Historic Christ Church

A National Historic Landmark

COMPLETED IN 1735, Christ Church in Lancaster County is the finest and best preserved parish church from colonial Virginia. No church built during that time rivals its design or craftsmanship. No other retains so many of its original elements. The church stands much as it did in 1735.

"The most perfect example of colonial church architecture now remaining in Virginia is Christ Church, Lancaster County. It is now, with the exception of some minor details, almost as it came from the hands of its builders."

William G. Standard, 1908

What is the Entablature and How Do We Preserve It?

Likely the finest of its type from colonial Virginia, the Ionic entablature marks the transition between Christ Church's soaring brick walls and hipped roof. Standing four feet tall, the wooden entablature provides a visually pleasing spot for the roof to "stand," but it also establishes a principal decorative theme repeated in the church's rubbed brick doorways outside and pulpit and chancel inside.

Threatened by flaking paint, natural weathering, and the buildup of surface dirt, mold, and cobwebs, the woodwork is in dire need of preservation. FHCC first preserved the entablature in stages from 2002-2008. But it was last cleaned and painted over a decade ago, and exposure to the elements and continued accretions of algae and dirt leave the wood desiccated and vulnerable to deterioration.



Preservation of the entablature is more than just saving one element of Christ Church. The entablature is an integral part of the building's pristine architectural character, and preserving it is critical to preserving the historic integrity of Virginia's finest church.

Project Funding

Total cost is **\$80,000**. We have been awarded \$25,000 in grants, \$20,000 of which requires a 1:1 match. We need your help **to match** this and raise the remaining \$55,000. Your gift will help ensure the survival of one of Christ Church's most important architectural features for decades.

Why does Christ Church matter?

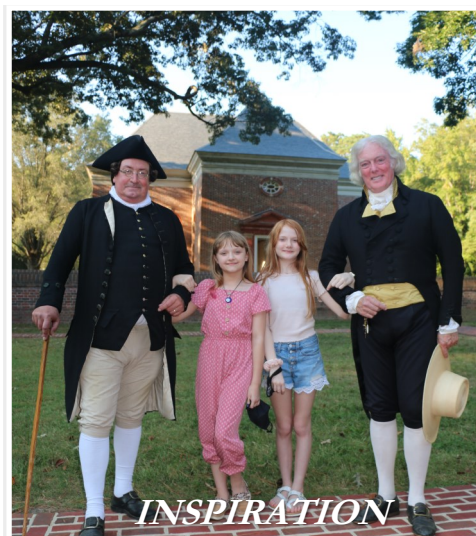
Since 1958, the Foundation for Historic Christ Church has been a leader in bringing people together through educational programs and special events that make the past come alive and connect visitors of all ages and backgrounds:



PRESERVATION



EDUCATION



INSPIRATION

Free Field Trips for Local Students | Northern Neck History Fair | Teacher Workshops | Hands-On History Days
Living History Reenactments | Speaker Series | Concerts | Archaeological - Historical - Genealogical Research

Please see back for images and descriptions of the Entablature Preservation Project

“For years I have felt that a visit to Christ Church, Lancaster County had the powerful effect of cleansing my soul. It's nothing to do with God - rather, it is the refinement of which Man is ultimately capable. I've also felt that, like those rare works of art of exquisite proportion and purity of form, it has the capacity to restore my eyes back to true freshness. For me, it is akin to the effect of one of those wondrous works of nature in America's West.”

Graham Hood (1936-2021)

Carlisle H. Humelsine Chief Curator Emeritus, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation



Fabricated of wood and standing four feet tall, the entablature's three-part design includes a denticulated cornice, pulvinated frieze and three-step architrave.



Mold, dirt and cobweb build up in southwest corner (April 2025).



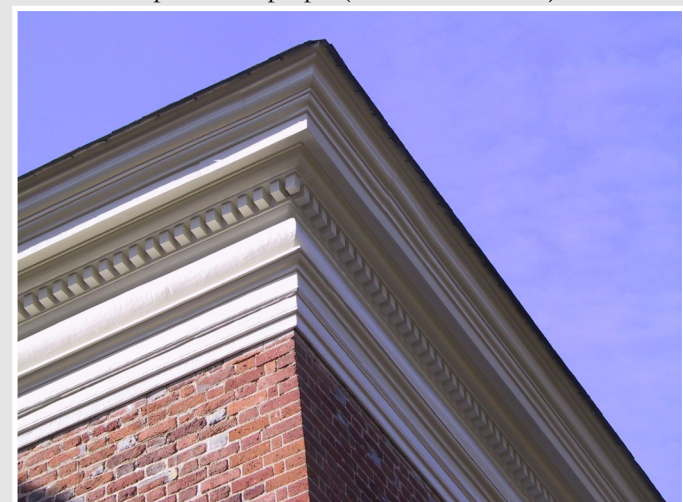
Mold, dirt and cobweb build up (April 2025). Note how the wood has become desiccated in areas.



The entablature repeats itself in the rubbed brick doorways and the altarpiece and pulpit (detail shown here).



This view in May 2025 from the south gate shows how the buildup of dirt, mold and cobwebs on the entablature has discolored it compared to the doors and windows, which have been preserved in recent years.



Preservation includes cleaning, lightly sanding, repairs to deteriorated woodwork, and painting with an egg-shell white determined by historic paint analysis to be the original color like that seen here following preservation work in 2002.

FOUNDATION FOR HISTORIC CHRIST CHURCH, INC.

Mailing Address: Post Office Box 24 ▪ Irvington, Virginia 22480 ▪ **Physical Address:** 420 Christ Church Road ▪ Weems, Virginia 22576
(804) 438-6855 ▪ info@christchurch1735.org ▪ ChristChurch1735.org