

Capitol Exterior Deck Replacement Update - 2/20/2018

In 2018, the SPB will be replacing the exterior pedestrian decks at the east and west entrances of the Capitol. In Elijah E. Myers's original design, these decks were to be covered with porticos similar to the existing north porch. The porticos were removed from the design in 1885 as a cost savings measure when changing the exterior stone from limestone to granite. Currently, these decks perform not only as walking surfaces, but also as roofs over interior spaces on the ground floor. After 25 years, the waterproofing has substantially weakened, resulting in water intrusion which is damaging historic metal and masonry in the breezeways below. This project will remove the 1990s reproduction tile and waterproofing on these decks, exposing the original structural deck. An improved waterproofing system will be installed which spans all construction joints and provides drainage paths for any water that may gather below the tile surface. The detailed tile design will be replaced with encaustic tile to match the original 1888 colors and patterns, a key character-defining feature of the Capitol. The project also includes repair of the brick arch and wrought iron beam ceilings of the breezeways below, which have been damaged by water infiltration.

Similar work will occur on the north porch decks at the second and fourth floors. While damage at these locations is not as severe, water intrusion has been observed. The porch has key structural metal elements encased within its stone structure which cannot be easily accessed for repair. Repairing and improving the waterproofing on these decks above will ensure the longevity of the porch, postponing the need for major reconstruction well into the future.



East Deck Installation - c. 1888. Courtesy The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin.



East Deck Today - 1993 era reproduction tile will be replaced, and new waterproofing installed below.



Breezeway below decks, showing impacts of water infiltration. Metal structure and masonry arches will be preserved.



North Portico showing two elevated decks also having tile and waterproofing replaced to protect key historic metal structural elements within.