

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
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The National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings:

Rotunda, University of Virginia, Virginia

Thomas Jefferson founded the University of Virginia at Charlottesville in 1819 and considered it one of his three greatest achievements. Architecturally and spiritually, it is a fitting monument to his genius. He laid out plans for an "academical village," complete with pavilions, "hotels," dormitories, colonnades and arcades, forming three sides of a quadrangle. Dominating the plan was the Rotunda, a half-scale adaptation of the Pantheon in Rome. Extending southward from the Rotunda on either side of the Lawn are the academic buildings, each row consisting of five 2-story pavilions in a variety of classical styles, linked by one-story blocks behind Tuscan colonnades. Beyond the East and West Lawn, as they are called, are located the single-story East and West Ranges, used for student housing. All were erected under Jefferson's immediate supervision, only the Rotunda being incomplete at the time of his death. Three buildings by Stanford White rounded out the incomplete quadrangle in 1898.

In the mid-19th century the classical lines of the Rotunda were changed by the addition of a multi-story wing to the north side; but the intruding wing was destroyed by fire in 1895. The interior of the Rotunda was redesigned by White following the fire. Restoration of the "academical village" has been underway for some time. Several of the pavilions have been restored, and plans have been formulated to recreate in the Rotunda the original offices for the President of the University and the Board of Visitors.

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