REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIAN SERVICES

THE MONTPELIER FOUNDATION

Orange, VA

Original Issue:October 6, 2025

Updated Issue: October 21, 2025 (updated timeline)

The Montpelier Foundation (TMF) is seeking written proposals from qualified firms/providers to oversee the preservation and restoration of an 1810 garden temple and below-grade icehouse on the historic estate of James Madison.

BACKGROUND:

The Montpelier Foundation has been awarded a $552,204 grant from the Department of the Interior to support the preservation and restoration of the Temple at James Madison's Montpelier. The Temple preservation project is being supported in part by a Semiquincentennial grant from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS:

- The firm/provider must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archaeology and Preservation Professional Qualifications Standards for an architectural historian.

- The firm/provider must demonstrate familiarity with the Secretary of the Interior's Standard for the Treatment of Historic Properties: Preservation as a Treatment and Standards for Preservation.

- The firm/provider must be able to demonstrate experience in historic preservation and the implementation of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.
- The firm/provider must have the ability to visit the site in Orange, Virginia as needed to complete the scope of work

PREFERRED QUALIFICATIONS:

- Experience directing federal historic preservation grant management and compliance
- Experience with bidding and contracting preservation and restoration contractors and vendors
- Experience in preservation planning and administration, historic site management, and/or historical research and evaluation
- Expertise in 18th- and 19th-century American architecture

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Oversee and coordinate the grant scope of work (See Attachment A)

- Serve as the primary expert on complying with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Archaeology and Historic Preservation
- Consult with the Grant Officer to ensure approval and compliance with the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Archaeology and Historic Preservation
- Review and refine preservation site work plan, timeline, and sequencing
- Consult with the National Trust for Historic Preservation (NTHP) on material changes in compliance with the co-stewardship agreement between TMF and the NTHP
- Surveying and documentation
- Overseeing the bidding and contracting of site work professionals and vendors in compliance with 2 CFR 200 Subpart D. (Note that budgeted site work items fall below the Simplified Acquisition Threshold.)
- Creation of a maintenance plan
- Supporting the documentation and reporting for federal grant compliance and historic record in conjunction with TMF staff

TIMELINE AND BUDGET

Length of contract will run from the earliest date of contracting through August 28, 2029**.** The maximum contract amount is $80,000.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated in accordance with the following criteria:

- Whether the consultant meets or exceeds the minimum and preferred qualifications;
- The ability of the Offeror to perform the work or provide the services promptly or within the time specified, without delay or interference;
- The character, integrity, reputation, judgement, experience, and efficiency of the Offeror, and;
- The quality of performance of previous contracts or services.

Note: The Offeror is cautioned that it is the Offeror's sole responsibility to submit information related to the evaluation categories. TMF is under no obligation to solicit such information, if it is not included in the Offeror's original proposal. Failure to provide such information may have an adverse impact on the evaluation of the Offeror's proposal.

EVALUATION PROCESS

TMF will consider a proposal nonresponsive when critical information is lacking, or the submission represents a major deviation from the requirements of this RFP. Minor omissions or informalities may be waived at the sole option and discretion of TMF. TMF also reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, make no award or multiple awards as result of this solicitation. Responsive proposals will be evaluated in the following manner:

A. An Evaluation Committee will review and rank all proposals individually on their technical merits and according to the criteria established in Section 5 of this RFP. The Committee may contact Offerors if any clarification is needed on the proposal.

B. Offerors whose proposals are ranked the highest by the Evaluation Committee may be asked to participate in an interview process to ensure a mutual understanding of both the TMF's requirements and the Offeror's proposal. Interviews may be conducted either in person or by telephone. However, the Committee may decide that interviews are not necessary and make recommendations for award based on the information provided in the proposal.
C. The firm that provides the TMF with the most reliable and cost-effective goods and/or services based on the established evaluation criteria will be recommended.

PROPOSED TIME SCHEDULE

- Original RFP Issue Date: October 6, 2025
- Updated RFP Issue Date: October 21, 2025
- RFP Close Date: November 3, 2025
- RFP Evaluation: November 14, 2025
- Review of Recommended Offeror by Grant Funder: November 17, 2025
- Notice of Award: November 20, 2025

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Please send submissions to Dr. Kelley Fanto Deetz at kdeetz@montpelier.org by 11:59PM EST on November 3, 2025.

Attachment A: Background on the Temple Preservation at James Madison's Montpelier

Significance

The Temple at James Madison's Montpelier is a singular resource that encapsulates the spirit and values of early American nationhood. Owned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and co-stewarded by The Montpelier Foundation, this iconic structure stands as a testament to the intellectual and political currents that led to our nation's founding. Constructed in 1810–11, the Temple's neoclassical design—with its Greco-Roman influences, half-dome roof, and elegantly carved wood friezes—evokes the ancient republics that inspired the framework for the United States Federal Government. This aesthetic was decorative and imbued with meaning; it symbolized the ideals of liberty, civic virtue, and self-governance that shaped the Constitution and the Bill of Rights, for which James Madison is renowned as the "Father of the Constitution."

a. Description of the Resource:

The Temple is a neoclassical monopteron—characterized by a distinctive half-dome roof supported by a series of pillars—that originally functioned as both a symbolic and utilitarian structure. The wood components, including intricately carved friezes and original shingle laths, articulate a design intent rooted in classical aesthetics. Madison's 24-foot domed garden temple has survived through seven different owners. Strategically located at the junction of major roads, it has long dominated the view of the plantation for approaching visitors, as evidenced by its inclusion in historic sketches and watercolors by visitors to the Madisons' home.

Historic sketches and photographs show the original below-grade lattice entrance to an innovative icehouse. While the below-grade entrance was backfilled by later private owners, the ice pit is still preserved with Madson-era masonry intact. An icehouse allowed for the preservation of meats and other perishables during hot Virginia summers, and provided ice year-round for chilled drinks and desserts. James Madison's wife, Dolley Madison, is often credited for popularizing ice cream in the United States after serving it at Madison's inaugural ball, at her parlor socials in Washington, D.C. during Madison's presidency, and at Montpelier. Visitors to Montpelier during Madison's lifetime often recounted the novelty of being served ice cream in their letters and diaries. More than a charming detail, the icehouse symbolizes the profound diplomatic and social role First Ladies serve—a tradition Dolley Madison helped to define. Congruent with these modifications, the Temple remains a potent symbol of early American ideals; its design not only reflects the contributions of James and Dolley Madison, but also provides insight into daily life and society during the formative years of our nation.

b. Current Designation:

Montpelier, including the Temple, is recognized as a National Historic Landmark and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

c. Integrity:

The Temple's presence on the Montpelier estate, along with the main house preserved as a presidential house museum, makes it an essential piece of the larger interpretive landscape that communicates the nation's founding history. The Temple's historic integrity is immediately evident as a prominent feature on the historic landscape of Montpelier, though the fabric of the structure has been compromised by environmental and anthropogenic factors over time.

In 2015, The Montpelier Foundation secured private funding to complete the emergency stabilization of the wooden roof and below-ground structural masonry. This phase included roof repairs and restoration, emergency masonry repair and grading to remediate water infiltration, and archaeological excavations to reveal original grade and investigate for a complete set of restoration drawings and specifications. This first phase of the Temple's restoration ensured structural stability and prepared for a future completion of a comprehensive restoration.

In completing the restoration of the Temple, The Montpelier Foundation seeks not only to repair physical deterioration but also to reinvigorate its interpretive potential. This resource, imbued with both symbolic and practical historical significance, remains central to understanding the architectural and cultural milieu of early America. The restoration will reaffirm its status as a living monument to the ideals that continue to influence our national identity, ensuring that the Temple remains a vital educational and cultural asset for future generations.

NEED

a. Urgency/Threat:

The primary concern is the degradation of the pillars that support the domed roof. The application of Portland cement stucco on these pillars in the 1910s trapped moisture, causing significant decay in the original brickwork—a challenge that has been compounded by the 2011 Virginia earthquake, which further stressed the structure. Concurrent with the Portland stucco on the columns was the replacement of the wood floor of the Temple with a concrete slab in the 1910s. Today this slab is fully integrated with the Madison-era masonry and cannot be removed. Our plans call for the covering of the concrete floor with black locust flooring (described in documents of the 1810s) to restore the structure's Madison-era appearance. Moreover, the functional integrity of the Temple has been altered by the backfilling of the icehouse entrance—a modification that obscures an essential aspect of its historical use. Nevertheless, the overall layout, spatial relationship, and symbolic design of the Temple continue to convey the architectural intentions and civic values of the early American republic. The planned restoration will prioritize the conservation of original materials and craftsmanship, thereby enhancing its integrity and ensuring that the Temple's historical narrative is communicated with authenticity and clarity for generations to come. The current condition of the Temple is visibly deteriorated. The wood elements, most especially the entablature band below the dome, is critical to the Temple's distinct architectural character, but compromised by prolonged exposure to weather and wildlife. This decay not only threatens the aesthetic appeal of the structure but also its overall stability. The cumulative effect of these threats is a rapidly diminishing integrity that, if left

unaddressed, will lead to irreversible loss of historical material and the dilution of the Temple's interpretive power.

b. Need:
The Temple is at a critical juncture—all of the Madison-era elements are intact, but further degradation will result in irreparable structural failure. This would result in the loss of what architectural and landscape historians have deemed one of the most architecturally sophisticated garden temples that is known to have been built in the early American republic. The loss of historical features, such as the neoclassical masonry pillars wood friezes, and the icehouse entrance, would strip the site of its multidimensional historical significance, weakening its contribution to the collective understanding of America's founding.

c. Mitigation:
Through specialized carpentry repairs, the decorative entablatures will be restored using historically accurate methods and materials, preserving the maximum amount of original material as possible. A historically appropriate black-locust floor will be laid on the concrete floor that provides the Temple's structural integrity. Masonry experts will conduct extensive repairs on the pillars, reinforcing their structural integrity and preserving their historical appearance. The project includes the careful excavation and restoration of the backfilled icehouse entrance, a step that will reinstate the Temple's original function and contextual authenticity. Additionally, the incorporation of ADA-compliant pathways will not only enhance accessibility but also provide a controlled and protected means for public interaction with the site. These proposed visitor pathways will follow the historic road traces discovered during previous archaeological investigations. The project's phased approach ensures that each critical component is addressed systematically, mitigating ongoing deterioration and preserving the resource's historical narrative.

d. Sequence:
This restoration effort represents the logical next step in the long-term preservation strategy for Montpelier. The project begins with the removal of inaccurate or inappropriate treatments, such as the modern stucco on the pillars, which is trapping moisture that threatens the historic masonry. Decaying wood and weathered masonry will be either restored or, if not structurally salvageable, will be replaced. Once the immediate threats are mitigated, the restoration will proceed with the functional and interpretive enhancements, including the excavation of the icehouse entrance and the installation of ADA-compliant visitor pathways. Each phase builds upon the success of the previous one, ensuring that the Temple's historical integrity is not only restored but also safeguarded against future threats. The successful completion of this project is essential to ensure that the Temple continues to serve as a vital educational and cultural resource, conveying the rich narrative of America's early history to generations to come.

Feasibility

a. Scope of Work:

•**Carpentry Repairs:** Specialized carpenters will repair and restore the entablature, fabricate and install the Temple floor and icehouse door using historically accurate materials and techniques to ensure fidelity to the original design.

•**Masonry Repairs:** Skilled masons will address deterioration in the pillars, reinforcing and conserving these elements to maintain both their structural and aesthetic roles.

•**Restoration of the Icehouse Entrance:** The project includes the excavation and careful restoration of the backfilled icehouse entrance, reinstating its original function as part of the Temple's integrated design.

•**ADA-Compliant Visitor Pathways:** New pathways will be constructed to meet ADA standards, ensuring that the restored site is accessible to all visitors while harmonizing with the historic landscape.

•**Archaeological Excavation:** Prior to major restoration work, an archaeological excavation of historic pathways will be conducted to document, confirm, and preserve the site's archaeological record prior to any below-grade disturbance required for visitor accessibility.

b. Inclusion of Partners in Planning:

The Montpelier Foundation will consult with the National Trust for Historic Preservation [the National Trust], owner and co-steward of the Temple and historic site, to finalize the plans for any material changes to the Temple. The Montpelier Foundation will abide by the co-stewardship agreement to maintain and preserve the Temple, consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Archaeology and Historic Preservation.

c. Timeline:

The proposed grant project is slated to begin in October 2025 and be completed by October 2028. The pre- preservation phase will span the first six months. Historic preservation and restoration work will then be implemented in sequential phases over the next two years. The final phase, including the completion of accessibility enhancements and interpretive improvements, will be wrapped up within the three-year period. This timeline allows sufficient time for meticulous restoration while meeting all federal guidelines and compliance.

d. Budget Justification:

Funds will be allocated for specialized labor (carpenters, masons, and historic landscape experts), historically appropriate materials, historic landscape restoration measures, and accessibility improvements. Each cost element is grounded in the requirements to adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation, as well as federal procurement standards outlined in 2 CFR Part 200 Subpart D.

e. Professional Involvement:

A consulting architectural historian will be contracted to oversee and execute the grant project.

Archaeology will be completed by Montpelier's in-house department of Archaeology and Landscape Restoration. Specialized contractors will be procured to provide preservation carpentry and masonry in compliance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines. A contractor will be secured to complete ADA-compliant visitor pathways in consultation with the Department of Archaeology and Landscape Restoration to comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation.

f. Measurable Outcomes:

Success will be measured through a series of quantifiable outcomes:

•Material assessments will be conducted before and after the restoration to verify improvements.

•The restored architectural elements, historic icehouse entrance, and immediate surrounding historic landscape will be documented through high-resolution imaging and detailed reports.

•The installation of ADA-compliant pathways will be verified through compliance testing. Regular progress reports, milestone reviews, and a final evaluation will ensure accountability and provide transparency regarding the achievement of all stated goals.