

GROWTH FOR THE FILSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OUR PLANS TO EXPAND

BY MARK V. WETHERINGTON

Almost twenty-five years ago, The Filson faced a number of challenges to its continued growth as a historical society devoted to collecting and preserving material related to Kentucky and adjacent states.

The archival stacks that held our unique and irreplaceable collections was full; the old headquarters on Breckinridge Avenue were “cramped”; the small museum was inadequate; and lecture room and office space were limited.

The solution to these challenges was a successful mid-1980s capital campaign, one that allowed The Filson to move into its present Old Louisville headquarters in the architectural gem known as the Ferguson Mansion.

Now, we find ourselves in an almost identical situation. Our 6,000 square feet of archival space, 90-seat lecture room, 2,400 square foot exhibit gallery, and the seemingly abundant office space have reached capacity due to collections growth and expanded educational outreach programming, including The Filson Institute conferences and lectures that total around 100 each year.

Our present facility severely limits our ability to fulfill our regional mission of collecting, preserving, and telling the significant stories of Kentucky and Ohio Valley history and culture.

Today, The Filson seeks to expand its home for Kentucky and Ohio Valley history by creating a space more reflective of its inclusive atmosphere and more suited to its expanded work. While we will continue to maintain our headquarters in the Ferguson Mansion, we will add a new building with flexible program and event spaces at the corner of Fourth and Ormsby streets on property previously acquired by The Filson with possible future expansion in mind.





AERIAL VIEW OF STREET CORNER



NORTH FACE OF NEW BUILDING



WEST FACE OF NEW BUILDING

This building, designed by the award winning Louisville firm De Leon & Primmer Architecture Workshop, will add 9,000 square feet of collections space (bringing our total to 15,000 square feet), a flexible lecture hall capable of seating up to 260 people and including display spaces, and a fully programmable third floor overlooking Old Louisville.

The Ferguson Mansion and Carriage Houses will be renovated to offer more exhibit space and a much larger reading room. The old and new buildings will be integrated into a Filson “campus” aligned along a pedestrian mall reaching from Third to Fourth streets. The Old Louisville Architectural Review Committee has unanimously approved this exciting design.



De Leon & Primmer Architecture Workshop describe the design this way:

In response to its context and to encourage community engagement with The Filson, the design uses as its starting points both a physical and visual externalization of The Filson. Engaging the community as an urban amenity, the project is organized along an open-air, public mall. Along the public mall, civically scaled views into The Filson’s collections and programs will animate the neighborhood and engage the community through an informal visual access.



Construction of the new building, renovation of the existing Ferguson Mansion and Carriage House, and development of the campus is expected to cost approximately \$7.5 million.

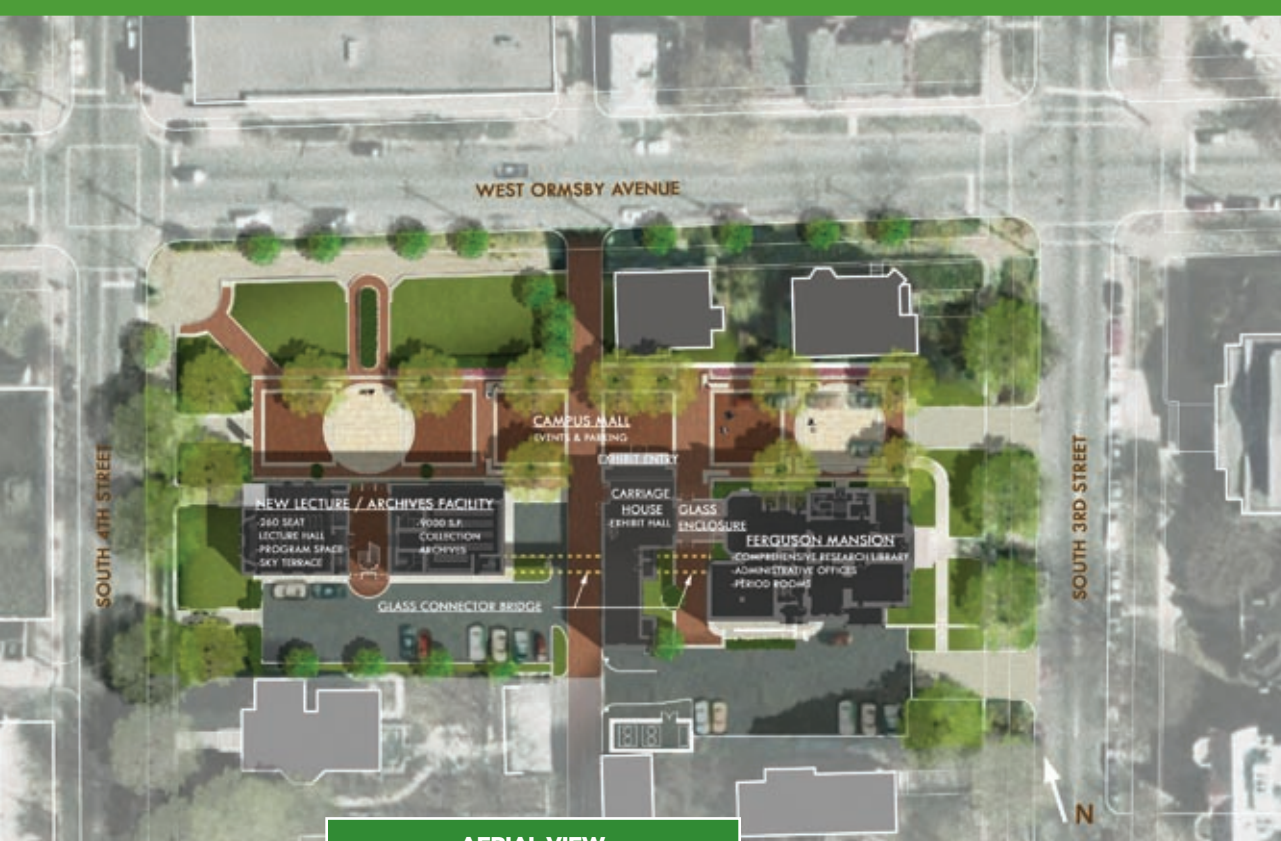
These new research, program, and events spaces will give members and the general public more opportunities to experience and celebrate their history, allowing them to understand how the past continues to shape the present and future.

The Filson needs your support to make this exciting vision a reality. Look for future articles on the development of the new campus in The Filson Magazine.

MORE PHOTOS ON NEXT PAGE 



STREET VIEW OF NEW BUILDING



AERIAL VIEW