

Interview with Alan M. Hantman
Interviewer, Ron Sarasin
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Ron Sarasin: Welcome to the first interview in the United States Capitol Historical Society's series, Uncle Sam's Architects, focusing on the history of the Architects of the United States Capitol. We begin the series with two interviews with former Architects of the Capitol, Alan M. Hantman and George M. White.

I'm Ron Sarasin, President of the Society, and I'm pleased to introduce our first guest in the series, the Tenth Architect of the Capitol, Alan Hantman.

Alan M. Hantman served as Architect of the Capitol from 1997 to 2007 under the new selection procedure legislated by Congress in 1989. Prior Architects were appointed by the President for indeterminate terms. His immediate predecessor, George White, for example, served 24 years. Under the terms of the 1989 law, however, the Architect is appointed for a ten-year term by the President, with the advice and consent of the Senate, from a list of three candidates recommended by a congressional commission.

Mr. Hantman is a native of New York City and graduated from the City College of New York with a bachelor's degree in architecture and earned a master's degree in urban planning from the City University of New York Graduate Center. He is a fellow of the American Institute of Architects and is certified by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards.

Prior to his appointment as Architect of the Capitol, Mr. Hantman worked as a development consultant, assistant chief architect, and project manager at major architectural and real estate services firms. He was Vice President of Facilities Planning and Architecture for the Rockefeller Center Management Corporation of New York City for 10 years and then served as their consultant. He received the Sidney L. Strauss Award from the New York Society of Architects for his work at the Rockefeller Center.

As Architect of the Capitol, Mr. Hantman oversaw the restoration of the United States Botanic Garden Conservatory. He also took a major role in the security upgrades to the Capitol complex in the aftermaths of the killing of two Capitol Police officers by an armed intruder in 1998, the terrorist attacks of 9/11/2001, and the

anthrax mailings to Congressional offices in September of 2001. His greatest legacy to the Capitol is the construction of the Capitol Visitor Center which will open in December 2008.

Alan, it's a great, great pleasure to have you with us here today.

Alan Hantman: Well, thank you so much for that kind introduction, Ron. It's an honor to be here with you and the Capitol Historical Society to talk about the ten years I spent as Architect of the Capitol.

Ron Sarasin: Let's begin by talking about your background before you became Architect of the Capitol. Your degrees are in architecture and urban planning. Did you always want to be an architect and what attracted you to that profession?

Alan Hantman: Ron, I remember as a child, loving to build with blocks, loving to create things, to make them as tall as I could make them. I recall in the early grades of school, an assignment to create a house out of a cardboard box and I remember carving one of the flaps into stepped peaks that created a Dutch house feeling and cutting out the windows and trying to make it appear wonderful in proportion. Doing that is something that gave me joy. I also promised my mom that someday I would build her a house and, unfortunately, at the age of fifty-two she passed on and I never had the opportunity to do that. And she never had the opportunity to basically understand where my career was going and what wonderful things would happen; but, creating something and understanding what I was creating, as opposed to doing things that were more theoretical, was something I always wanted to do.

Ron Sarasin: Your ten years managing the Rockefeller Center must have been good preparation for becoming Architect of the Capitol. How would you compare the two positions and were there any special challenges posed by the Capitol that you weren't prepared for?

Alan Hantman: There are actually many comparable issues from Rockefeller Center to the Capitol. Both facilities have about fifteen million square feet of space in their multiple buildings, both of them have their own police force, both were major sources of visitation.

Really, Capitol buildings are historic landmarks as was Rockefeller Center. So we had to deal with very similar issues.

Major differences, of course, occurred in the fact that Rockefeller Center Management Corp. is a for profit organization, managing with many tenants in the buildings. When I got direction from the management, I went off and I performed, reporting back to them as necessary and the projects that we were doing and the success or the problems that we encountered. A major difference, of course, is here at the Capitol there are 535 individuals who are involved. We have committees on the House side, committees on the Senate side that we report to, but the reality is that every Member of Congress has a say in what we do in representing them and trying to achieve the best we can in quality service so they can do the job that the American public sent them here to do. So the challenge of trying to work with two diverse bodies and 535 individuals is quite different from Rockefeller Center and from anything any architect, I think, has experienced here in the country. We would have experiences where the Senate would approve something and it would take nine months later before the House would approve it, so a project would be delayed, costs would go up, deadlines would have to be changed, so very different experiences in that respect.

Ron Sarasin: Let's talk a moment about how you became the Architect of the Capitol. How did you learn about the possibility of the appointment?

Alan Hantman: I remember reading an American Institute of Architects newsletter and there was a small blurb, I believe the bottom-right of the front page, that said, George White, the ninth Architect of the Capitol was going to be retiring and that the American Institute of Architects (AIA) had been asked to put together a potential list of candidates for the Senate Rules and Administration Committee to consider. When I saw that ad, I called up a friend of mine, another architect, who was president of the New York City AIA, and I said, "What do you think my chances are for applying for this position?" And of course I was interested in the position because Rockefeller Center was at that point undergoing a bankruptcy.

Mitsubishi, who had bought Rockefeller Center and put some two billion dollars into it, had expected that the rental rates in New York would be going up from thirty-five or forty-five dollars per square

foot up to about sixty-five dollars a square foot, when the balloon mortgage became due. And in fact, the real estate rates were flat for that entire period, so Mitsubishi decided to essentially bail out at precisely the wrong time in the market, and so alternative owners were being sought at that time. So I was looking for alternative locations for myself and this opportunity seemed like a good one.

So Jerry Davis who was president of the American Institute of Architects, New York chapter, called up the Washington Executive Director and said that he had someone he thought was a good candidate, were they still accepting applications? I had a phone call back from Jerry a couple of hours later saying send in your application, the AIA is still submitting them. So we did that, and in fact, my wife and I and our family were camping on the island of Lake George, New York, at the time and I was told to get in twenty-seven copies of my resume as quickly as I could because the committees were going to be reviewing them and George was going to be retiring in September of that year, and this was in June, and they needed those so that they could consider the candidate. And by the time George retired they would have a new Architect selected, so we came back from Lake George and we put together the resumes and mailed them out and rushed them with all the critical information about my career, my work at Rockefeller Center, the other architectural firms, the awards that we'd won, all of those kind of things.

And lo and behold the selection process took longer than people had imagined. George White retired and Bill Ensign, who had been his chief architect, took over for the next fourteen, fifteen months or so, until the process was actually settled. So, there I was, I had left Rockefeller Center and became a consultant to the Rockefellers', to NBC, to Tishman Speyer [Tishman Speyer Properties], who took over Rockefeller Center and I had my own consulting firm doing work for them, when, in fact, the process was continuing apace, but it took its time with the House [of Representatives] and the Senate disagreeing on the job description and the nature of whether the Architect needed to be an architect. That discussion was being held 11-12 years ago as well. I think the House was holding out for an MBA to be the Architect. At that point in time, I think we had Senator [Daniel] Moynihan [NY], was very active. He had been working on the Pennsylvania Avenue improvement projects and doing a very wonderful job of that. I think he said

something to the effect of, “Well the day the Architect of the Capitol doesn’t have to be an architect, we can have a veterinarian operating as a brain surgeon,” or something to that effect. That debate was active back then and it’s a debate that’s still going on today.

Ron Sarasin: When we interviewed George White, he spoke how as a Presidential Appointee, he felt that he was in some sense a representative of the President at Capitol functions, such as welcoming dignitaries and so forth. Since you were appointed under the new procedure, did you have the same feeling?

Alan Hantman: Very interesting question, Ron. Since I am the first person to have gone through the new procedure, where, actually, the Congress had a say for the first time in the selection of the Architect and as you pointed out, the Congress—the Senate Rules Administration Committee, needed to submit a minimum of three names to the President for his or her consideration. Then, the President would send one back for confirmation by the full Senate. When the search was being completed, and it was being recognized that I was the prime candidate being recommended to the President, the FBI began its search and they were checking totally into the background of the candidates. So it was an interesting situation where I had to fill out ethics forms from the executive branch of the government, and a month or two later I was called by the White House and told, no you actually have to fill out ethics forms from the House of Representatives, so they started the whole procedure all over again and they hadn’t gotten their coordination done between the executive branch and the legislative branch in terms of how this would work. So, although I was appointed by President Clinton in his second term, clearly the House and the Senate, primarily the Senate, had a conformational roll. And I’ve felt that I represented the best interests of the Congress. The President really didn’t have a strong role, nor did he follow up, at any extent, on what the Architect of the Capitol was doing. But whenever the president did come to the Capitol, State of the Union events and all, I felt it a tremendous honor and a privilege--part of the Welcoming Committee, Sergeant at Arms of the Senate, Sergeant at Arms of the House and the Architect of the capitol had the honor of welcoming the President and the First Lady to the Capitol and escorting them to the chamber for the State of the

Union and for other gold medal awards and things of that nature, and that was basically the full contact with the President.

Ron Sarasin: Like your predecessor, George White, you are a professional Architect. White told us about how he received a letter from someone who thought it was outrageous that there was an architect for a building that had already been built. Do you think it's important that the Architect of the Capitol actually be an architect?

Alan Hantman: I really do, Ron. I feel very strongly about that. There are so many roles for the Architect to take. The reality is the role—the title, of Architect of the Capitol is not only the position that I held for ten years, but it's the name of our agency. We have 2,200 people in the Architect of the Capitol agency and our responsibilities span quite a gamut of facilities management responsibilities, the operations of all of those fifteen million square feet, the 300 acres of land—day to day concerns, As you mentioned in your introduction, being involved in the security and the upgrade of security around Capitol Grounds after the two police officers were killed, after 9/11, after the anthrax attack. That was a major part of my responsibility and clearly I'd had some interaction with police force and private police force, if you will, with Rockefeller Center in New York. But when you take the role of an Architect, here we have the greatest icon in the United States of America, the most recognizable symbol of our country around the world, in the Capitol and its dome. The hundred year old buildings that we have in the Cannon and the Rayburn Office Buildings, Russell Senate Office Building, Library of Congress—all of these buildings are historic and wonderful landmarks. The concern is that if you have wonderful landmarks like this, you need to preserve them. Things change over time where we needed to integrate security and life safety provisions in all of these buildings. Clearly if they were built hundred plus years ago they wouldn't have all of these facilities then. There is much greater threat out here not only of fire, but of terrorism. The Architect of the Capitol plays a very constructive role both on the Capitol Police Board, in working with those folks who are exclusively concerned with security and trying to balance the need for openness and security at the Capitol. I think so many Members of Congress agree that we want people, their constituents, people from around the world to visit the Capitol, to appreciate it, to have that sense of openness and accessibility. While, yet at the same time, have it

secure. So balancing those seemingly conflicting needs is an important role that the Architect plays. Whenever the Capitol Police Force wants to put in new detection systems, alarms, things of this nature, the Architect's office gets very much involved in where the detectors go, where the conduits are hidden so we do not deface the wonderful artwork in our Capitol building, that we are respectful of the heritage that we have here. Being good stewards of these national landmarks is a key role of the Architect of the Capitol, as is, being a good member of the community—the Washington community itself. So many things are happening now, down on South Capitol Street with the new stadium coming in all the development going in. The National Capitol Planning Commission, the Fine Arts Commission—they are all involved with the community as a totality and the role of the Architect of the Capitol in working with them to make sure that this precinct, the legislative precinct itself is integrated to the greatest extent possible and respects the city of Washington and what is happening there is a role that an architect is really needed to play.

Ron Sarasin: You mentioned the Capitol complex, which is obviously not just the Capitol building—it's the House and Senate office buildings, it's the Library of Congress, the Supreme Court, the Capitol power plant. It's all of those—all of those buildings that you are responsible for and they're each separate jurisdictions. Police forces are different, for example, in the Supreme Court and in the Library. How do you manage all of that? How do you operate the office so that you can encompass all of those responsibilities?

Alan Hantman: There are really nine superintendents, if you will, reporting to the Architect of the Capitol. One of the superintendents is the superintendent of the Capitol building itself, another of the House office buildings, another of the Senate office buildings, the Supreme Court, the Library of Congress, the Grounds, the Power Plant, the Botanic Garden, as you mentioned, all of these are separate jurisdictions with separate allocations for funding that all come under the flag of the Architect of the Capitol. So one of my first challenges in becoming Architect of the Capitol, was working with these superintendents, some of whom who had been in office for thirty-plus years and had done things their way for a long time and what we wanted to do was create a cohesive agency. An agency that would allow people who were in the House office buildings, for instance, to

apply for a job in the Senate office buildings and had some chance of recognizing that they could actually be approved for that job and not have favoritism for people within that organization take the place. So eliminating the favoritism, the “old boy” network, the glass ceiling for women and minorities—all of these things were a challenge when I first became Architect of the Capitol. In fact, the Congressional Accountability Act first took effect; I think Newt Gingrich and his incoming organization developed for the Capitol building itself and for all the legislative buildings. Meeting the laws and the rules that the rest of the country had been involved with, such as OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Act], ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act], all of the fire and life safety issues that the rest of the country had been so much involved in had not been dealt with very extensively at the Capitol. So it was a tremendous challenge to begin all of these new programs and to make sure that all of these people worked in safe environments and got rid of the asbestos, installed the detectors, the sprinkler systems; all of those things needed to be done, a lot of work still, in fact, needs to be done in this respect, but bringing the team together, making sure that they were part of a single team and they had the flexibility of moving from one jurisdiction to another jurisdiction and that we all worked for the same client, was an important part of the responsibility. And it was also very important for me, as an Architect, to recognize that we needed to hire and retain people who were perhaps more facilities management oriented than I was, although, at Rockefeller Center I was part of a major facilities management team, the day to day operations of each of these facilities was critically important and we needed a lot of people with facilities management background, with MBA background, with all of those kind of issues to deal across all of the responsibilities that the AOC has.

Ron Sarasin: We talked about the House and Senate being 535 different bosses and the fact that you had to be the best diplomat in town in order to be able to be able to deal with them. Did you come to this naturally, was this a learning process, did it take you a long time to get adjusted to that fact?

Alan Hantman: That’s quite a question, Ron. I’m not sure that anybody ever gets adjusted to that. There is actually a bigger issue that I haven’t talked about yet. And it is really the difference between

the House and the Senate--the nature of the House and the Senate. Of course there are two-year terms for Members of the House, six year terms for Members of the Senate. I think that it was George Washington who said something to the effect that the Senate is a saucer into which you pour the hot coffee or tea of the House to let it cool off and simmer for a while—kind of think through some of the decisions that may have been made in the House and maybe want to be reconsidered. The House and the Senate really do have a different philosophy on day-to-day operations as well as the long-term vision, I have found. I used the analogy earlier about approvals being achieved at the Senate side--and this was for perimeter security--we had a plan for perimeter security. We got approval from the Senate and it was nine months later that the House finally came forward and approved that. There was an individual Member of the House who was holding that up all that time. The selection of the Architect of the Capitol was held up by Members of the House who wanted to inject some of their own criteria into the job description and into the type of services that the Architect was to be rendering that the Senate was putting forward. So you have this basic difference between the two bodies. I think that not only is that an issue in trying to get approval from both bodies but its an issue with respect to the constant changing membership more so of course of the House than the Senate. Each election turn you might have forty, fifty, sixty new Members coming in. There are 435 total members and of course the new Members want to have their voice heard. And sometimes people come up with their favorite project whether it be bicycle racks that nobody has seen before or showers for folks, they are all good ideas, or signage, for instance, through the House office buildings. Individual areas of interest for different Members come forward. We treat them with respect and we analyze them, we talk to the leadership to find out if we can have funding for that. It is very difficult to get funding for intermittent projects that have not been taken care of in the normal budgeting process. I think that the concept of respecting members of the House as individuals, Members of the Senate as individuals, as well as the committees and the overall bodies they belong to is something that takes a while to get used to. Not because it's a lack of respect for any person but because there is so much of it. So many people have opinions. I would get phone calls on the most mundane matters and phone calls from Members on critically important Members. You have to deal with that in a pace

that makes sense, that shows respect, and deals with the reality of day-to-day living on Capitol Hill.

Ron Sarasin: We talked about security. In the ten years you served as Architect of the Capitol there were at least three major problems that occurred. Let's talk about your memories and your responses to, first, the shooting of the two police officers in 1998.

Alan Hantman: What a tragedy that was. I had known [Capitol Police officer] J.J. Chestnut at his door at the Capitol and had walked through many times. He was always a very gentle, kind, and professional individual. I really hadn't known Detective John Gibson well at all. He was protecting, I think it was Tom DeLay [the House Minority Leader]. When those two officers were killed, as a member of the Capitol Police Board, we certainly had been lobbying for a while for increased numbers of Capitol Police. Basically there was one officer at each door and J.J. Chestnut was basically giving directions to a guest, to a visitor to the Capitol at the time that this deranged individual came in. And before he could do anything he was shot. Then of course Mr. Weston went in and had a shoot out battle with Detective Gibson. We had had many studies done, Capitol Police Board and the Capitol Police itself, by outside security organizations telling us what we needed and they were really talking about three or four members of the police at each entrance way. Part of the problem is that we have so many entry ways: a dozen to the Capitol building alone. So many to each individual House office building, Senate office building, to conceive of putting in four members of the Capitol Police at every entry way, for multiple shifts, and over the weekend was just a very daunting issue. I think when I came in we had something like 1,200 members of the Capitol Police Force. We now have over 2,000 with basically a recognition of the reality that security is a real problem. So we do have three police officers at each entrance now with one standing back and making sure that everything is going well with the people who are doing the inspecting, having all the other folks going through the magnetometers. So what went through my mind is just horror that something like this had to happen before the Congress would begin to act on some of the security things that had been recommended for so long. I took part in the funeral cortèges for both of these police officers. I went to the churches and the cemeteries where they were

buried. And the honor of being part of that cortège and seeing the fire engines on the bridges that we crossed under have crossed ladders, seeing the police forces and the ambulance corps people, all of the people in uniform saluting as we went by was tremendously moving--the honor guards at the cemeteries. These people gave their lives in the protection of the Capitol, of the legislative branch of our government, our democracy. And losing them was a tremendous blow of course to all of us. And some of the moving things that were said by Members of the Congress were very important and the subsequent support in fact that occurred. We had been underway in planning the Capitol Visitors Center at that point in time. We didn't have the funding. Within four months of the murders of these two police officers a hundred million dollars had been appropriated to make this project a reality, to begin the project. So that was really part of the initial impetus to make the project a reality. You talked about George White and early in the '70s when he was Architect of the Capitol, he had talked about visitors facilities. This building, the Capitol building itself, has grown up in nine increments over its 200 plus years of history. Never planned to have millions of visitors every year, there weren't the restroom facilities, there weren't the places to change a baby's diaper. The Capitol guides competed with each other to try and be heard with the individual groups that they ran through the building. It was not a respectful way to welcome the constituents who elected the Members of Congress, to welcome the visitors from around the world who came to see how our democracy functioned. So the need for a visitor center, the need for security, the need for upgrading a facility that was in parts over 200 years old. The truck docks, that were out front where garbage was collected or deliveries made on the east front of the Capitol--that was a terrible sight for the front door of the Nation's Capitol. Accessibility for people with disabilities was not adequate because there were so many ramps and stairs throughout the Capitol--difficult for them to have adequate restrooms and facilities of that nature. So all of these things came to be, but the murder of the two police officers was the trigger that was unfortunately necessary to move forward with a plan that George had talked about decades before.

Ron Sarasin: Let's talk about the next major issue that happened and that is the terrorist threat of 9/11. What are your memories of that?

Alan Hantman: I was in the Capitol building at the time. I remember one of the secretaries saying, “Oh my, a plane has gone into the World Trade Center. It’s probably the same kind of thing that happened in the Empire State Building when a plane had flown into it.” We went about our business for a while there and then the second plane hit some forty-five minutes or so later, and there was an announcement that another plane was on the way over Pennsylvania and that it was twelve minutes out. The announcement for evacuation of the building came. I felt it part of my responsibility as a member of the Capitol Police Board to make sure that people were evacuated. I made sure that my staff had left the offices around. I left the building myself but not after my wife Ros called up and said, “Al, get out of the building there is another plane on the way.” It’s hard for something like that to sink in. You plan for disasters to happen. You plan for negative things to happen for terrorism at some level. But certainly nothing on this level to coming to impact our nation’s Capitol. I left the building at that point. The ramifications of that day, while that fourth plane went down over Pennsylvania, I fully believe that it was coming to the Capitol. I do not think that the White House was the target. But the ramifications of that were amazingly severe. We had looked at our security planning for the Capitol Visitors Center, certainly when J.J. Chestnut and Detective Gibson had been murdered; but now a whole reevaluation of what we had been designing. And we were very far along in the planning and the construction documents for the project at that point in time. But we had the “men in black” come in and our own police officers and we looked at what we needed to do to continue revising the plan and strengthening it from a security perspective. All of those things took place post 9/11. There were calls for much more security. And we also had a call from the Congress to complete the expansion spaces that had been planned essentially for the House and the Senate in a much more expedited fashion. Part of the original plans were to excavate as big a hole as we could so that in future years people did not have to come back and create a mess on the east front of the Capitol again. So as long as we were building for the visitor center we had 80–85,000 square feet of potential expansion space for the House, the same amount of square footage for the Senate and we were just excavating those holes, putting in the foundations, putting in the slabs, there were no emergency regress stairs, no electrical, no

mechanical, nothing of that sort. No plans in terms for what those spaces would be used for. After 9/11, we were directed to meet with the House, to meet with the Senate, to begin programming those spaces and to redesign all of those drawings which we had to do for the visitors center to accommodate that. Now if you can imagine Ron, having a mechanical system designed for the central portion of what is now a 580,000 square-foot facility and not take into account the air conditioning for the two major expansion areas, or the electrical needs of the expansion areas, because our budget was basically to just do the shells for those two spaces. So we had the option at that point in time of leaving the design that we had and just adding more mechanical units, more electrical substations, running additional conduit, but from an operations perspective, it made no sense to have multiple units like that when you could have larger units that were much more efficient in terms of energy utilization and also would take up less space and be easier to maintain over the years. So we went back to the drawing boards and we changed the mechanical system, we changed the electrical system. Major filtration systems were added to the mechanical system which drew a lot more energy than we had originally planned for. All of these changes were in reaction to the 9/11 issues.

Alan Hantman: You also said that you wanted to talk a little about the anthrax. That itself is something that built on the issues that I have just been discussing. Clearly that was a major attack on the Capitol. It inconvenienced and put a good part of the Senate out of their building for a long period of time. Also, it put major sections of the House of Representatives out of their buildings as the trail of the anthrax spores was checked out and inspected. Everybody thought that within two weeks we would all know what the story was, what the distribution of the anthrax was throughout the Capitol and throughout all of the buildings. That wasn't the case. People did not understand that anthrax could be aerosolized and could float around. They thought that it would just drop down and be in the locations where Senator Daschle's office was and where the mail room was and things like that. That wasn't the case. It spread tremendously. And in fact there were many debates about what to do about the buildings that joined, the Dirksen building joined at the hip essentially with the Hart Senate Office Building where the attack occurred. We had to close off those entrances between the two buildings. I was under

tremendous pressure to send our staff in to close off those entrances very quickly. And I stood back and said wait, we need to make sure that they had the right protective equipment, that if they need the right injections to protect them if they were to come in contact with any of the anthrax. We needed to do that and there were some people who dissagreed with me and wanted me to do it immediately. But we took the right precautions, I'm convinced now. Especially since we found out that the anthrax essentially had spread much more so. So we did not put our people in harm's way. Being part of the Capitol Police Board for those many weeks was a tremendous challenge. One of the challenges of course is that we had the Center for Disease Control come in. We had many people come in to help remediate the buildings and there was no place for them to meet. You mentioned in your introduction, Ron, that I had a lot to do with the Botanic Garden Conservatory renovation and then the National Gardens after that. We had at that point in time just completed the United States Capitol Conservatory, the gardens themselves. We had done a complete renovation, changing out of the glass, the electrical systems, the mechanical systems and the building was ready for the reintroduction of plants and people and almost ready to open to the public. Well, it was the only building where mail had not been delivered to on the Capitol complex. So that became the headquarters for all of the folks who were mediating the anthrax problems. It is interesting to see how the pieces came together but that was a tremendous challenge in itself.

Ron Sarasin: During your tenure, the construction of the Visitor Center, that we have spent a little bit of time talking about, was undertaken and now it is slated to open in December of this year. How did the Visitor Center originate? Where did the concept come from? You mentioned the difficulty with visitors and that something was needed, more restrooms and so forth. What was the process to develop the Visitors Center and to get it to where it is today?

Alan Hantman: In the mid seventies when George White had originally proposed some type of visitor screening facilities the concept at that point in time was really something that was called the whips plan. It was to put a fence around all of Capitol grounds and to have several points of access to the Capitol grounds through which all of the visitors would have to come. In fact, if you visit the White

House today everyone goes through this small building that has the magnetometers in it and you are checked remotely from the building itself. That was pretty much the whips plan concept. That concept evolved under George White to think about the needs of the visitors, to think about educating them, protecting them, making sure that they were treated respectfully. And when I became Architect, there were some plans that had been drawn by the firm that he had retained, RTKL, a fine firm headquartered in Baltimore and Washington, for an underground facility. We reexamined those plans, revised them very significantly. The security was a much greater component of concern than it had been when these preliminary plans had been developed under George White. The flow of people the whole processional entry into the Capitol, what people saw as they came through, how they were treated within this underground facility so that it wasn't felt to be a basement, a second class space; but something that really complimented the Capitol. That was our challenge. How you made the transition from this underground facility into the Capitol under the Capitol Rotunda steps was a very tremendous challenge so that people again didn't feel as if they were squeezed through an unhappy corridor to the building itself. So I am very proud of all of these issues that we addressed, that we came up with over time. And over the length of this project, the Capitol police, the "men in black" folks have come up with new ideas, better ideas on what security could be. And we incorporated all of these changes into the Capitol. Into the project which makes it a state of the art project. The problem of course with incorporating all of those changes is it delays the schedule and the cost goes up; very difficult to explain in open hearing to the Congress what the security changes were and how rapidly they came at you-- and all of the changes that needed to be done. So there was a lot of frustration in the Congress because there were many, many changes. And the contractors who were committed to a schedule with the original contract no longer were bound to those schedules because hundreds of millions of dollars of new work was added to their scope of work and they tried to integrate it into the original planning for the Visitors Center. And we had a great team working together on it. It was a very frustrating process but we tried to do the right thing to make sure that we did not compromise the quality, or the security, or the safety issues within that building.

Ron Sarasin: The Congress is now searching for candidates to become the next Architect of the Capitol. I don't know whether they have asked you for your advice but if you were asked what what qualities would you recommend for the next Architect of the Capitol?

Alan Hantman: It is interesting. George White gave me one piece of advice before I became Architect of the Capitol, while the process was basically being completed. He said, "Allen, you have got to develop a thick skin. You are going to take the heat from the House and from the Senate on things that they decide to do that may or may not work with the project that you will be working on right now. But you are the guy, you are the point person. You need to take that heat and respect the fact that the Senate and the House have the right to do that irrespective of the problems it causes." I think that that's the issue. I have sat in, Ron, on over fifty hearings over my ten years. It is never a pleasant situation to be sitting at the witness table with folks either on the House side or the Senate side looking down from the dais asking questions most of which had been prepared by senior staffers. And sometimes those staffers are trying to make a balanced approach to things and sometimes they aren't. So dealing with those questions in a public venue is a very difficult thing to do. Working with Members, creating a dialog, being open about what you do, those are all criteria that are important. Being true to yourself is critically important and not compromising your ethics or your standards is very important. Caring for people; we have 2,200 people in that agency. People who are blue collar workers, people who are custodial workers, laborers, engineers, architects, folks who are responsible for the power plant for the grounds, from many, many different professional job descriptions--maybe fifty different job descriptions in the agency. And to be able to work with them to respect them, to create good working conditions for them so they can take pride in what they do, all of these are important criteria. Nobody has asked me for my recommendation on who the next Architect of the Capitol could be. Right now Stephen Ayers is the Acting Architect of the Capitol. I had promoted him from an assistant superintendent of the Senate office buildings to be the superintendent of the Library of Congress. I then brought him over to be my chief operating officer. He is an architect, he has an MBA. He has been running the agency for over a year and a half since my term was up. And I think that he is an excellent candidate. He was one of the three names, I believe,

that was submitted to the President before. No decision has been made yet and I'm not sure how the process will move forward. I think that the proof is in the pudding. Stephen Ayers has been doing a great job. I'm proud of him, I am proud of the people who have carried since I left the February of last year. And he has, I think, the qualities that are necessary. He is respectful, he is intelligent, he is a professional, and he has very strong ethical standards. And I think that all of those are critically important. And he wants to work with the larger community as well--with the Advisory Council on Historical Preservation, with the National Capitol Planning Commission, with the [United States Commission of] Fine Arts--all of the people who are interested in impacting the well-being of Washington as a larger community. So I think that he is an excellent candidate, but nobody has asked me.

Ron Sarasin: Alan, it's been an honor talking to you about your experiences as Architect of the Capitol and your tenure period. As people look back at your tenure, how would you like to be remembered and what do you want your legacy to be?

Alan Hantman: In the generous introduction you gave me, Ron, you certainly talked about the Visitor's Center as being a key part of my legacy and I think that's true. It's woven its way through the entire ten year term that I've had and is something I'm very proud of. The Visitor Center is the ninth and largest increment of growth in our nation's Capitol and I think it's wonderfully respectful of the building. It supports the building. It doesn't upstage it, but it really takes the materials, the bronzes, and the stones, tries to use those materials again in a respectful way to give the Congress what it really needs and asked for when we approved the project and it moved ahead. And we wanted to give the American people something that allows them for generations to come to bring their children there, to be educated by how the Congress works, the House, the Senate, how bills are passed, how laws are made, how they affect our lives and to be treated with respect when they come. So that clearly is a major landmark and I'm very, very proud of the team: the architects, the engineers, the construction folks, who worked hard and took a lot of pride in that project. So that certainly is something that I would consider part of my legacy I had the honor of working on and contributing in some way.

The other part of the legacy really is to have helped rebuild the Architect of the Capitol agency itself, to put in modern management techniques, to show respect to the employees. I talked a little about this earlier: to give them opportunities to apply for jobs, to have salaries fairly reviewed, to make sure that their benefits are positive benefits, to create an atmosphere where they are happy to come to work and feel good about what they've done. [I] tried very hard to reduce the injury and illness rate that we've had. It was the highest in the government and we've cut it by over 70 percent so that people work more safely. They recognize that they are their brother and sister's keeper. We are a blue collar agency. Eighty percent of our folks are blue-collar workers; injuries can occur very easily, so getting this whole philosophy of caring for your co-workers, working safely, thinking smart is all a part of what we've done. Creating the Occupational Safety and Health committees in each of the jurisdictions so that people can give us their ideas and we can correct problems before they whirl out of hand and somebody gets hurt. So I really do consider that part of my legacy as well. That we've left an agency in good shape to be able to serve the Congress for many, many years and my successors will hopefully be building on that and allowing the Congress to function in a seamless way so they can get the work of the American people done. It's been a great honor to be serving as Architect of the Capitol, an amazing experience.

Ron Sarasin: Alan Hantman, thank you very, very much.

Alan Hantman: Thank you Ron and the Historical Society.