

BUILDING
ON
THE
PAST



Preserving History, Educating the Present,
Informing the Future

BUILDING ON THE PAST, PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

The Alexander Majors House and John Wornall House are two of Kansas City's most significant and beloved historic landmarks, offering invaluable insight into the region's past. The John Wornall House, built in 1858, provides a deep connection to Civil War history, early Kansas City development, and the realities of life on the Missouri-Kansas border, including the complex history of enslavement. The Alexander Majors House, constructed in 1856, tells the story of westward expansion and the critical role Majors played in founding the Pony Express.

Both houses serve as vibrant community hubs, hosting educational programs, cultural events, and public gatherings. They provide a space for learning, reflection, and engagement with the past, helping visitors connect with the struggles, triumphs, and daily lives of those who came before.

Historic preservation is essential to safeguard these irreplaceable pieces of history and to ensure that future generations can continue to learn from and be inspired by them. Preserving these homes allows the community to maintain a tangible link to its roots, fostering a deeper appreciation for local heritage and a stronger sense of identity. Without ongoing care and restoration, these sites – and the stories they hold – could be lost forever.

Wornall/Majors House Museums is committed to the care of these important historic sites - both now and in the future. Our capital campaign aims to raise \$265,000 for vital improvements that will not only secure the safety of our structures today but will also prevent future structural issues. Your support enables us to continue and to expand crucial educational programs that serve 10,000 people annually.

Please contribute today to support our mission of preserving and maintaining these significant and beloved houses. Naming rights are available for certain phases of our project, and all donors will be featured on our website and donor wall. You may also allocate your contribution toward a specific project of your choice.

Thank you for your support!



Alice Ergovich
Wornall/Majors Board Chair



Sarah Bader-King
Executive Director



ALEXANDER MAJORS HOUSE

WOOD RESTORATION ELECTRICAL REPAIR

The Alexander Majors House was built as a frontier home in 1856. Alexander Majors and his business partners strategically purchased the land on the Missouri-Kansas border in 1855 to graze the oxen for their massive freighting firm in the unsettled prairies of Kansas. Built primarily with pine and elm and painted lead white, the house survived condemnation in the early twentieth century because wrecking crews determined the house to be too solidly built to easily demolish.

Majors' great-granddaughter purchased the home in 1930 in order to restore and preserve it. Today, the house serves as a carefully curated museum exploring not only the life of Alexander Majors, but also freighting west of the Mississippi River, the Pony Express, slavery on the Missouri-Kansas border, and many other topics.

Still clad with much of the original nineteenth century wood siding, the Majors House requires wood rot repair in the gutter and soffit areas. This crucial work will prevent water intrusion into the museum and prevent future damage and repair costs.



TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$78,938

ALEXANDER MAJORS BARN

LOFT REPAIR
RESTROOM UPGRADES
DOOR REPAIR

Built in just three weeks in 1984, the Alexander Majors Barn has welcomed tens of thousands of visitors over the past 40 years. As a vital part of the Wornall/Majors House Museums, the Barn serves as the primary venue for lectures, talks, and fundraising events while also acting as a valuable community resource. Each summer, the Heart of America Shakespeare Festival hosts its youth camps at the Barn, and the popular Strawberry Swing Indie Craft Fair found its beginnings there.

Rentals of the Majors Barn provide a significant source of earned income, accounting for approximately one-quarter of Wornall/Majors' budget and directly supporting the operating costs of our educational programs.

Because of the high volume of visitors to the Barn, crucial repairs are needed to provide a safe and welcoming environment and to correct construction decisions that were made with a lower-capacity venue in mind. These repairs include ADA-compliant bathroom renovations, barn door repairs, and the placement of structural improvements.



TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$52,426

Naming rights available!

ACCESSIBILITY & GROUNDS

ACCESS RAMP
OUTDOOR INTERPRETATION
CHAIR LIFT
NATIVE PLANTINGS

Accessibility at our historic sites ensures that everyone, regardless of ability, can engage with and appreciate our community and national stories. Improving accessibility at the Majors House - through an access ramp, chair lift, and graded sidewalks - not only enhances physical access but also upholds the values of education and equity for future generations.

The addition of native trees enhances the authenticity of the site by preserving the landscape as it may have appeared in the past. Plantings also benefit the environment by supporting wildlife, improving soil health, and enhancing biodiversity.

Additionally, interpreting indigenous history is essential for presenting a fuller, more accurate narrative of the past. To enhance our interpretation, we will be adding several outdoor signs that explore indigenous history in this region, ensuring visitors gain a more comprehensive understanding of our site.

Access and interpretation at the Majors House has been partially funded by the Mellon Foundation.



TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$110,156.00

INVESTING IN HISTORY AT WORNALL

PORCH REPAIR
ELECTRICAL UPDATES
PLUMBING UPDATES

The Wornall House, built in 1858, has been a treasured community resource since opening as a museum in 1972. For over 50 years, it has served as a place to explore local and regional history, offering insight into pivotal topics such as the Civil War, the experience of enslaved individuals along the Missouri-Kansas border, and the early development of Kansas City. Beyond its historical significance, the museum's grounds provide an inviting community space, hosting cherished events like the Kansas City Chamber Orchestra's annual Music in the Garden concert and welcoming neighbors who enjoy the landscape for dog walking and quiet reflection in nature.

However, time and constant use have taken a toll on this historic site. The front and side porches have suffered from wood rot, including the second-floor porch where John Wornall had a dramatic and potentially deadly encounter with Bushwhackers in 1863. The front porch, in particular, has sustained significant weather damage and is of special concern as it serves as our primary wheelchair-accessible entry and the first point of welcome for visitors.

Additionally, recent inspections have identified necessary electrical and plumbing updates. Addressing these needs now is an investment in the museum's future, ensuring the Wornall House remains a safe, accessible, and enriching place for generations to come.



TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$22,450.00

A CULTURE OF SUCCESS

Wornall/Majors House Museums has a demonstrated history of success with raising and managing significant funding projects, including:

- In 2013, the Museums raised \$250,000 to repair a significant crack in the foundation of the John Wornall House.
- In 2019, we launched the Learning Landscape at the John Wornall House, an innovative and accessible outdoor educational experience, which funded both critical safety improvements and interpretive signs, raising a total of \$227,000, plus an additional \$33,200 in City of Kansas City PIAC (Public Improvements Advisory Committee) funds for ADA compliant curb ramps and sidewalks.
- In 2024, we raised \$20,000 in emergency funds for HVAC replacement in the Majors House and the Majors Barn, plus an additional \$30,000 for scheduled repairs and updates of the Barn.
- Wornall/Majors is currently undergoing an accessibility and interpretation project totaling \$123,800 in in-kind and grant funds as a member of the Kansas City Monuments Coalition, a community-driven initiative managed by the University of Missouri-Kansas City and funded by the Mellon Foundation. This project will translate educational materials, increase overall accessibility of our sites, and create a searchable database of enslaved individuals in Jackson County, Missouri.



LEADERSHIP

Capital improvement projects are overseen by Wornall/Majors Buildings and Grounds Committee, chaired by Nigel Jones, RIBA, RA, Ret.* Nigel is former Professor of Architecture and University Architect at Oklahoma State University, where he oversaw over \$1.5 billion in construction across several campuses. Other members of the committee include Bill Dickinson, Joanne Fuchs* (social studies teacher, retired), Troy Stout (Schloegel Design Remodel), Clara Van Draska* (Leawood Historic Commission), and Eric Youngberg, AICP* (NeighborWorks America, retired).

*Wornall/Majors board member

DETAILED BUDGET

MAJORS HOUSE

Wood Rot Repair	\$21,100.00
Wood Painting/Lead Remediation	\$40,000.00
Electrical Repair	\$2,050.00
25% Contingency	\$15,788.00
Subtotal	\$78,938.00

WORNALL HOUSE

Wood Rot Repair (Porches)	\$14,000.00
Electrical Upgrades	\$2,950.00
Plumbing Upgrades	\$2,000.00
25% contingency (wood only)	\$3,500.00
Subtotal	\$22,450.00

MAJORS BARN

Loft and header repair	\$21,800.00
Attic access improvements	\$4,150.00
Bathroom upgrades	\$9,110.00
Fence repair	\$2,500.00
Gutter repair	\$1,380.00
Native planting/erosion control	\$3,000.00
25% contingency	\$10,485.00
Subtotal	\$52,426.00

**Total Project Cost:
\$263,970.00**

**Amount Raised:
\$82,375.00**

ACCESSIBILITY/GROUNDS

Access Ramp	\$10,350.00
Access Sidewalks/Signs	\$57,211.00
Chair Lift	\$23,345.00
Tree Planting/Care	\$19,250.00
Subtotal	\$110,156.00

OUR FUNDERS AS OF MARCH 1, 2025

Ash Grove Cement Foundation
Bill & Nancy Majors
Heartland Tree Alliance
Kearney Wornall Trust, UMB Bank, N.A.,
trustee
Libby Gessley
Mellon Foundation