

The background of the entire graphic features two teal-tinted portraits. On the left is a portrait of Thaddeus Stevens, a man with a serious expression, wearing a dark suit and a white shirt with a dark bow tie. On the right is a portrait of Lydia Hamilton Smith, a woman with dark hair, wearing a dark dress with a white collar and a small brooch.

Thaddeus
Stevens &

Lydia Hamilton

Smith Center for
History and
Democracy

Honoring
Their Legacy.
Continuing
Their Work.

Thaddeus Stevens & Lydia Hamilton Smith Center for History and Democracy

The Thaddeus Stevens & Lydia Hamilton Smith Center for History and Democracy will explore the profound effects that Stevens, Smith, and networks of advocates and abolitionists had on movements to end slavery, support racial equality, and promote full citizenship in the United States.

Exhibits and immersive experiences will encourage visitors to investigate contested notions of freedom, equality, citizenship, democracy, and racial justice that still shape our nation today.

The Stevens & Smith Center will connect past and present freedom struggles and embolden visitors with the understanding that each of us has the power to make positive change in our own communities.

The Stevens & Smith Center will be housed within two historic buildings in Lancaster City: *the home shared by Stevens and Smith and the adjacent Kleiss Brewery*. Situated in the footprint of the Lancaster County Convention center, the Stevens & Smith Center will also include several substantial exhibition spaces that extend beyond the historic home and brewery.



Dear Friends,

Few places can command and hold center stage in the quest for freedom and democracy in America. Yet Lancaster, Pennsylvania, an epicenter of Underground Railroad activity and home to a principal architect of the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments to the US Constitution, stands front and center.

A century after its founding, crippled by the failure to address the issue of slavery, America struggled to the breaking point. At the center of that struggle stood Thaddeus Stevens: protector of free public education, unyielding abolitionist, brilliant political strategist, and fierce advocate of full citizenship and equality before the law.

At Stevens's side stood Lydia Hamilton Smith, trusted companion and caregiver, pathbreaking entrepreneur, and "a woman of grace, intelligence, and indomitable spirit." Their home at 45 South Queen Street became an epicenter for equality. Yet, few know their remarkable stories, or the stories of their collaborators. The time has come for the world to learn about—and from—Thaddeus Stevens and Lydia Hamilton Smith.

Congressman Stevens and Mrs. Smith demonstrated that each of us can make a difference in our community and our country. Please stand with them, and with us, and make a difference by supporting the campaign for the Thaddeus Stevens & Lydia Hamilton Smith Center for History and Democracy. Now is the time to invest in the ongoing struggle for freedom, equality before the law, and the creation of "a more perfect union."

Sincerely,

Thomas R. Ryan

President & CEO of LancasterHistory

Robin E. Sarratt

Vice President of LancasterHistory

 **LancasterHistory**



Together, we can ensure that the courage and dedication of Thaddeus Stevens, Lydia Hamilton Smith, and others who fought for justice will inspire generations to come.

A sepia-toned portrait of Thaddeus Stevens, a man with dark, wavy hair, wearing a dark suit and a white shirt with a high collar. He is looking slightly to the left of the camera with a serious expression.

Thaddeus Stevens

Birth
1792

Death
1868

One of the most powerful statesmen in American history, Stevens fought tirelessly for civil liberties before, during, and after the Civil War.

Stevens led some of the greatest reforms of his century. He helped codify the legal equality of all Americans, regardless of race, in the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments. He preserved free public education in Pennsylvania. Recent research confirms Stevens's active involvement in Underground Railroad activities, assisting those seeking freedom from slavery by harboring them in his home on South Queen Street.

As a national leader, Stevens took positions well in advance of public opinion, pushing leaders like President Abraham Lincoln towards change. He inspired millions of Americans seeking freedom and equality, which earned him both admirers and enemies. After his death, white supremacists sought to reverse the progress Stevens had so tirelessly worked for, casting him as a bitter villain who wanted to destroy the South. As racist backlash emerged in the wake of Reconstruction, Stevens's public image was battered, and has never fully recovered. The time is long overdue to share the inspirational story of Thaddeus Stevens with the nation.

As a leader of the Radical Republicans in the House of Representatives, Thaddeus Stevens played an instrumental role in drafting and lobbying for the passage of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the U.S. Constitution.

XIII

Ending Slavery

Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude ... shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

XIV

Extending Citizenship

All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside. No State shall enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of law.

XV

Expanding Voting Rights

The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.

A sepia-toned portrait of Lydia Hamilton Smith, a woman with dark hair pulled back, wearing a dark dress with a white collar. The portrait is positioned in the upper left of the page.

Lydia Hamilton Smith

Birth
1815
—
Death
1884

Smith worked with Stevens for more than 20 years as his house manager and assistant, becoming his confidante and caregiver and breaking social barriers to achieve remarkable influence and wealth.

Lydia Smith served as Stevens's property manager in Lancaster and Washington, D.C., and mingled with the nation's most influential politicians, achieving national recognition. She lived through an era when citizenship for people of color was deeply contested, and women had few civil or political rights. Despite these obstacles, Lydia Smith bought and sold numerous properties, entered into lawsuits and contracts, and thrived as a businesswoman at a time when her rights were limited and she faced discrimination on a daily basis.

Her story provides an exceptional opportunity to explore the complex lives of free women of color in the 19th century and their role in shaping this transformative time in American history.

The Underground Railroad

Pennsylvania was one of the most significant corridors of Underground Railroad activity for freedom seekers, with Lancaster at its epicenter. At the Stevens & Smith Center, visitors will learn about the Underground Railroad as a flexible network of both white and Black activists that existed to help freedom seekers escape slavery. Immersive exhibits will tell the stories of enslaved people who risked everything to gain freedom and the abolitionists and ordinary people who faced legal, financial, and physical peril to help them. By the early 19th century, the complex network of Underground Railroad antislavery activity had become deeply embedded in the fabric of Lancaster County. Labeled “the nation’s first interracial political movement” by historian Fergus Bordewich, the Underground Railroad inspired Lancastrians, including Stevens, to provide shelter, aid, and safe passage to hundreds of freedom seekers. Stevens hired spies to keep an eye on slave-catchers in town, and his residence became a safe haven. In 1848, a group of freedom seekers, including Oliver Cromwell Gilbert, was directed to the home of Thaddeus Stevens for aid. The story of Mr. Gilbert is one of a few documented instances that helped add the house of Stevens and Smith to the National Park Service Network to Freedom in 2011.

The Road to Civil War

Several exhibits will focus on key events and topics related to the Civil War—including the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, Stevens’s political leadership throughout the war, and his advocacy for Black soldiers. Visitors will also learn about the Christiana Resistance, a pivotal and dramatic event that occurred in Lancaster County, drawing Northern attention to the cause of abolition, weakening the Fugitive Slave Act, and heightening tensions before the Civil War.



Reconstruction & the Second Founding

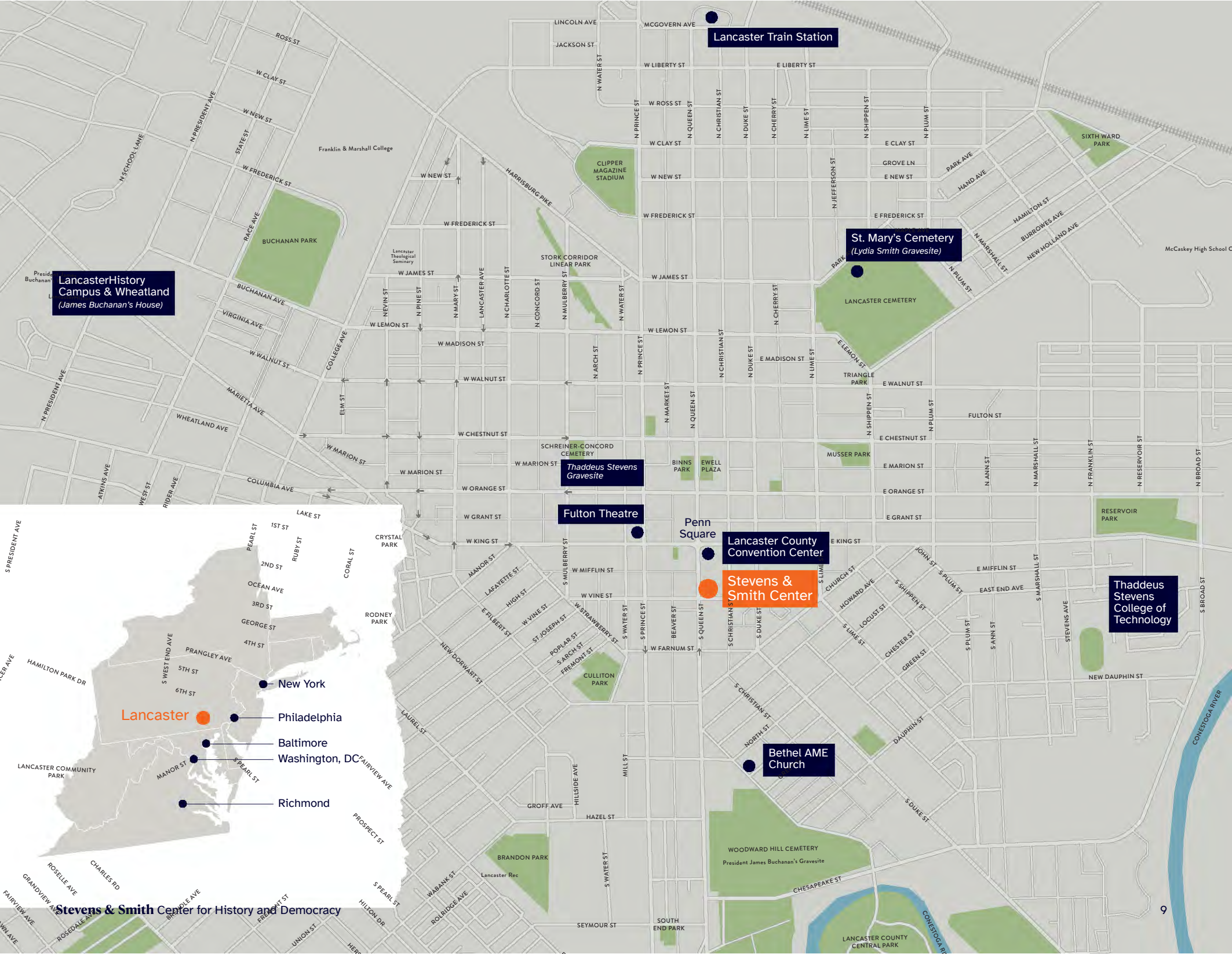
In the wake of the Civil War, activists and progressive politicians saw the opportunity to build a more just America. Stevens and his Radical Republican allies added three amendments to the Constitution, abolishing slavery, providing equal protection before the law, and establishing the vote for Black men. The Reconstruction era marked a significant chapter in the quest for civil rights in America. For a brief time, there existed the promise of significant change, and the success of Reconstruction included property and citizenship rights for people of color. But racist opponents led a sweeping backlash, and the nation saw the rise of Jim Crow laws and the formation of violent supremacist groups such as the Ku Klux Klan.

The legacy of the Jim Crow era is still with us. Visitors to the Stevens & Smith Center will come away with a deepened understanding of the role the era plays in American civics and history.

The Visitor Experience: A Closer Look

After several years working with architects, museum designers, and renowned historians, we're excited to share detailed plans and renderings of the future Center.

The renderings shared in the following pages reflect early design concepts, and will continue to evolve.



LancasterHistory
Campus & Wheatland
(James Buchanan's House)

Lancaster Train Station

St. Mary's Cemetery
(Lydia Smith Gravesite)

Thaddeus Stevens
Gravesite

Fulton Theatre

Penn
Square

Lancaster County
Convention Center

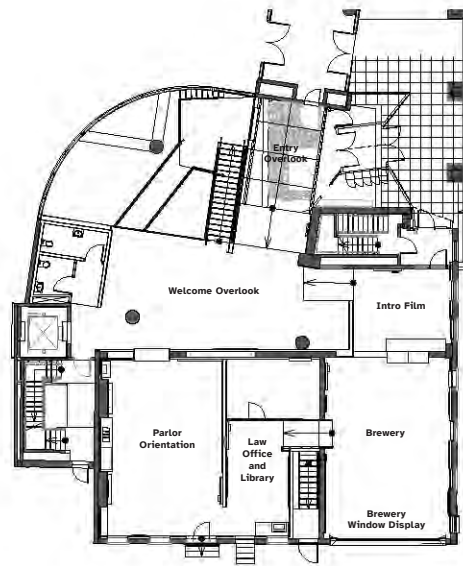
Stevens &
Smith Center

Thaddeus
Stevens
College of
Technology

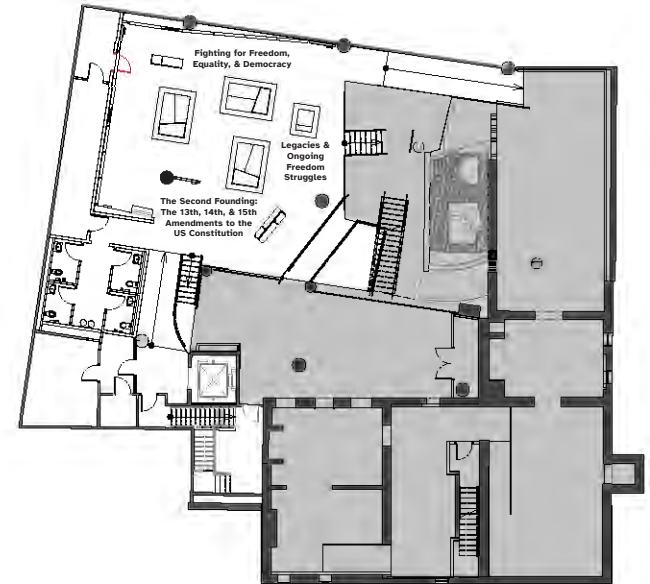
Bethel AME
Church

Stevens & Smith Center for History and Democracy

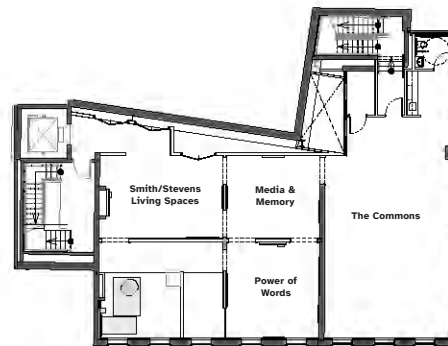
Stevens & Smith Center Design Floor Plans and Renderings



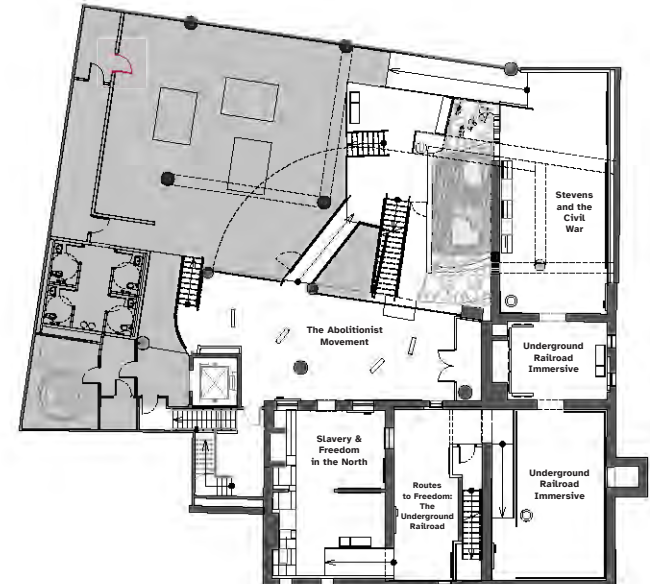
First Floor



Modern Exhibit Level



Second Floor



Historic Cellar Level

EXHIBITION WALKTHROUGH



Concept renderings, RAA

Welcome Overlook

The Welcome Overlook will introduce visitors to the Stevens & Smith Center and offer amenities like ticketing, maps, and details about tours and programming. Signage will help orient visitors and suggest paths of discovery. The Welcome Overlook will also provide information about other sites, tours, and attractions in the region.



Concept renderings, RAA

Equal Before the Law: Thaddeus Stevens's Law Office

Stevens's recreated law office will illuminate the ways the "Old Commoner" leveraged legal systems and political structures to shape movements for freedom and equality. Visitors will also learn about Stevens as an entrepreneur who purchased properties, invested in businesses, and owned a newspaper.



Concept renderings, RAA

A Defiant Home: Mrs. Smith in Focus

A legislator, businessman, and community leader, Thaddeus Stevens hosted guests with diverse political allegiances in this parlor. As the senior member of Stevens's small household staff, Lydia Hamilton Smith supervised the house and managed access to Stevens. She also served as a conduit between Stevens and his constituents, granting them unique access to political power. Together, Stevens and Smith defiantly forged social connections. The home's historic parlor will house an immersive exhibit that introduces visitors to the life and achievements of Lydia Hamilton Smith. A 3D soundscape, interactive screens, multimedia panels, artifacts, and historical recreations will bring to life Mrs. Smith's experiences as a free woman of color and manager of this property.



Concept renderings, RAA

The Kleiss Tavern, next door to Stevens' home, will introduce visitors to Lancaster in the 1850s.



Concept renderings, RAA

The Abolitionist Movement

As visitors enter the lower level, they will find an exhibit introducing the Abolitionist Movement within the United States. A series of illuminated plinths will introduce local and regional abolitionists, and companion displays will examine the networks of Black and white activists advocating for legal change while breaking laws to help enslaved people reach freedom.



Concept renderings, RAA

Slavery & Freedom in the North

Before the American Revolution, slavery was legal in all 13 colonies that formed the United States, including Pennsylvania. Yet, even as Northern states enacted gradual emancipation laws, the North and South continued to share significant economic and political ties. Slavery was never just a Southern problem—it was a national institution, deeply interwoven in the fabric of America. When Stevens arrived in Lancaster in the 1840s, the question of slavery was the most critical issue facing the nation. In these galleries, visitors will learn about the history of slavery and freedom in the American North, especially in Pennsylvania. Exhibits and artifacts will present the history of Lancaster as a border community between free and slave states in the mid-1800s and highlight the experiences of communities of color, including many formerly enslaved people, in places like Columbia, Christiana, and the City of Lancaster.



Concept renderings, RAA

Pathways to Freedom

The cellar rooms will be transformed into an immersive environment featuring historical artifacts, images, maps, soundscapes, and media highlighting first-person accounts from freedom seekers and activists. This space will encourage visitors to reflect on the experiences of freedom seekers—from their daring journeys to the challenges of life after enslavement.



Concept renderings, RAA

Stevens and the Civil War

This foundational exhibit will trace the events of the American Civil War and Stevens's critical role in the Union cause—including advocating for abolition, funding the Union Army, enlisting Black soldiers in the Union Army, and the passage of the 13th Amendment. Objects, vignettes, and media presentations will illustrate Stevens's impact on the outcome of the war and emancipation.



Concept renderings, RAA

Reconstruction and the Second Founding of America

On the Center's lowest level, this exhibit will explore the ways Thaddeus Stevens fought for the freedom and equality of people of color—and changed the nation as a result. Illuminated plinths will highlight the profound impact of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution and Stevens's efforts to ensure the success of the Union during the Civil War. Displays will examine Stevens's vision for Reconstruction and the failures of the nation to enforce that vision.



Concept renderings, RAA

A Shared Household: Personal Lives, Public Lives

A series of four galleries on the second floor of the historic home will explore the intertwined lives of Stevens, Smith, and other members of their shared household. The exhibit will examine the political and spiritual influences of Stevens's youth in Vermont, as well as Smith's early experiences and influences, including her Catholic faith. A central media program will examine the contexts that shaped Smith's experiences as a free woman of color at a time when her rights were limited by society and the government. A series of recreated rooms will provide a sense of place and intimacy while exploring Smith's role as a housekeeper, her care of Stevens in his declining health, and her entrepreneurship.



Concept renderings, RAA

The Commons

Located in the historic footprint of the Kleiss Brewery, the Commons will serve as a community gathering space. The area will support public programs, discussions, workshops, and educational outreach. Programming themes will include racial justice, gender equality, American democracy, local history, and more. The displays in this area will change regularly, featuring everything from archaeological materials to relevant art exhibitions.

Designed for Every Visitor

The Stevens and Smith Center will set a new standard for accessibility and inclusion.

In most museums and cultural sites, accessibility is limited by design decisions made long ago. With this project, LancasterHistory has the rare chance to consider accessibility at every phase.

We've partnered with several respected teams—including Prime Access Consulting, Centerbrook Architects, Ralph Appelbaum Associates, and the Museum Studies graduate program at SUNY Oneonta—to ensure accessibility beyond basic ADA compliance. From floor plans to typefaces, we've prioritized accessibility to make the Center a more enjoyable and inspiring experience for all.



RAA

Ralph Appelbaum Associates

LancasterHistory is honored to partner with RAA—an international team of researchers, artists, and exhibition designers—to help us bring the Stevens and Smith Center to life.

Since 1978, RAA has worked on some of the world's most celebrated institutions. They've completed 700+ commissions in more than 50 countries.

Notable Projects include



Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture



United States Holocaust Memorial Museum



Hawaiian Hall of the Bishop Museum



The forthcoming Obama Presidential Center Museum in Chicago

OTHER PARTNERS

The logo for Centerbrook, featuring the word "CENTERBROOK" in a bold, sans-serif font, centered within a light yellow rectangular background.

CENTERBROOK

Centerbrook Architects & Planners

has received more than 350 design excellence awards for museums and academic buildings, including LancasterHistory's headquarters.



The Roz Group

is a strategic planning and marketing communications firm tasked with supporting our community engagement efforts.



Prime Access Consulting

helps organizations create inclusive experiences for all audiences. They will lead an in-depth review of accessibility standards at all stages of design and implementation.



Infantree

is one of Lancaster's most respected creative agencies, and they'll help to develop the Center's brand and promotional assets.



Civic Projects

is based in Chicago and will conduct workshops and research to ensure our decisions are guided by community input.

STEERING COMMITTEE & SCHOLARS

LancasterHistory has assembled a group of nationally recognized scholars and community leaders to speak to many aspects of the coming Center. Their support, guidance, and input will be central to this project's successful completion.

Steering Committee

Tom Baldrige <i>CO-CHAIR</i>	Brian Rutter
Lenwood Sloan <i>CO-CHAIR</i>	Ernie Schreiber
Rick Gray	Larry Stengel
Lisa Groff	Carl Strikwerda
Leroy Hopkins	Paul Ware
Ryan Martin	Judy Ware
Debbie Martin	Mike Wege
Chris Metzler	Gerald Wilson
Josh Nowak	Suzanne Woodard
Pedro Rivera	

Scholars

Leroy Hopkins, PhD <i>(Millersville University), Co-chair</i>	Bernie Herman, PhD <i>(University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill)</i>
Matthew Pinsker, PhD <i>(Dickinson College), Co-chair</i>	Mark Kelley, PhD <i>(Independent Scholar)</i>
Michael J. Birkner, PhD <i>(Gettysburg College)</i>	Bruce Levine, PhD <i>(University of Illinois)</i>
Richard Blackett, PhD <i>(Vanderbilt University)</i>	Tamika Nunley, PhD <i>(Cornell University)</i>
Fergus M. Bordewich <i>(Independent Scholar)</i>	Page Talbott, PhD <i>(Drexel University, Lenfest Center for Cultural Partnerships)</i>
Spencer Crew, PhD <i>(Smithsonian Institution; George Mason University)</i>	Louise Stevenson, PhD <i>(Franklin & Marshall College)</i>
Amanda Frost, JD <i>(University of Virginia School of Law)</i>	Cory James Young, PhD <i>(University of Iowa)</i>

FINANCIALS

Anticipated capital cost:

\$19 million

LancasterHistory's capital campaign aims to meet these costs fully through grants, individual donations, state and federal support, and corporate gifts.

Target operating endowment:

\$5 million

This will support the ongoing operations of the Stevens and Smith Center, and will be raised as part of LancasterHistory's multi-year capital campaign.

Summary of Business Operations

We believe that adding a world-class museum to the downtown core of Lancaster will help to strengthen neighborhoods, bring communities together, strengthen local culture, and position the city as an engaging and diverse attraction.

Income	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Museum Admissions	\$687,600	\$581,800	\$610,890	\$626,162	\$641,816
Memberships	\$33,875	\$33,875	\$35,569	\$36,458	\$37,369
Gift Shop & Beverage Cart Sales	\$234,000	\$202,950	\$208,024	\$213,224	\$218,555
Fundraising Events	\$76,000	\$76,000	\$79,800	\$79,800	\$83,790
Grants & Gifts/Memorials	\$162,500	\$162,500	\$166,563	\$170,727	\$174,995
Endowment Support	\$100,000	\$113,500	\$127,473	\$141,934	\$156,902
Other	\$67,300	\$60,000	\$62,500	\$64,063	\$65,664
Fundraising Gala			\$137,500		\$144,375
Total Income	\$1,361,275	\$1,230,625	\$1,428,318	\$1,332,368	\$1,523,466

Expense	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029
Staff	\$620,300	\$635,808	\$651,703	\$667,995	\$684,695
LancasterHistory Support Staff	\$154,700	\$158,568	\$162,532	\$166,595	\$170,760
Building Expense	\$130,500	\$133,763	\$137,107	\$140,534	\$144,048
Program Expense	\$110,000	\$112,750	\$115,569	\$118,458	\$121,419
Gift Shop & Beverage Cart Expense	\$92,197	\$80,774	\$82,793	\$84,863	\$86,985
Other	\$95,481	\$92,865	\$97,666	\$99,865	\$102,119
Fundraising Gala Expense			\$50,000		\$52,500
Total Expense	\$1,203,178	\$1,214,527	\$1,297,369	\$1,278,311	\$1,362,526

Net Operating Income	\$158,097	\$16,099	\$130,949	\$54,057	\$160,941
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Tourism contributes nearly \$3 billion to Lancaster County's economy each year.

Using a conservative estimate of 50,000 annual visitors to the Stevens and Smith Center:

The Stevens and Smith Center would generate more than \$90 million in tourism-related revenue for Lancaster in just five years.

The Stevens and Smith Center will create economic impact in three main ways:

- **Job creation and retail sales**
- **Economic support of nearby retail and hospitality businesses**
- **Adding a world-class museum to the vitality of Lancaster's Southeast neighborhood and its attractions**

Stevens & Smith
Center for History and Democracy