California Historic Capitol
A Symbolic Building, Made Richer by its Symbols

by Assemblyman Ken Cooley
Chair, Joint Committee on Rules
As California’s historic “People House”, the West Wing is a Symbol first, and a Building very much second.

The faces and hushed tones of those who visit the Capitol makes this plain; the building and its rotunda stir awe and respect from its visitors.

For visitors to Capitol Park and the West Wing, symbols abound inside and out because early Californians invested it with a rich story of our system of governance and its meaning for all who enter its precincts.

Astonishingly, the 1952 Annex is entirely and unimaginably devoid of these important symbols and their hope-giving narrative.

To strengthen civic engagement, the Annex Project, by restoring this narrative and symbols throughout, can again import their rich understanding of our system of government, its heritage, and its promise.
West Portico: A Tale of Governance

In “Natural World” atop pediment, well-known 1870’s hazards (Grizzly and Buffalo) rage wildly & imperil lives
In Pediment, Athena / Minerva, with public tools in hand to act both offensively & defensively for community, has “subdued the bear”
The Subdued Grizzly, symbolically restrained by Athena/Minerva’s Shield, is the Key to a rich West Portico “Governance” Narrative.
This narrative explains the “docile bear” on State Seal and Flag
Also the Bear on the Capitol Tiles
The Bear Symbolism Calls to Mind the Powers of Queen Califia
On South Portico – Eagle, Shield & figures with hands joined, honors the American Union of States.
On North Portico, California Joining the American Union is Celebrated
North Portico figures show documents as California’s State seal joins, & instantly dominates, the American Union.
The symbolic papers are likely the February 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, conveying California to US from Mexico, & the US Law setting official statehood (Admission Day) as September 9, 1850.

Gold’s discovery in 1848 made California an influential part of the American Union from Day 1 and we remain so today. The Annex Project Offers us the chance to once again, as early Californians intended, use the People’s House itself to tell this story.
32 Horns of Plenty Honoring
Unparalleled Abundance of Our Farms
Ag Produce Makes Banners in Rotunda
On Twin Leaves of 2\textsuperscript{nd} Floor Doors
On West Portico North and South
On Athena & Seal Tableaus in Rotunda
Meaningful Icons Abound in West Wing
Handsome Lions Convey Nobility of Public Work
Bears Show Strength
Also Independence
Pineapple of Welcome & Bundle of Sticks
Pineapple: Traditional Symbol of Welcome & Hospitality
Placed in 1870 stairwells, they welcomed all who came. For Annex Project, welcoming ADA & Cal Title 24 hospitality is a needed “People’s House” outcome.
The Bundle of Sticks (*Lat. Fascis*)
Capitol’s Most Abundant Symbol
Bundle of Sticks
One Person is Weak, Together We Find Strength & Flexibility
In the Stairwells
In All Capitol Park Lampposts
On Original Set of 2nd Floor Doors
Athena/Minerva Symbolizes Wisdom & our start as Full State 9/9/1850
Athena/Minerva, who sprang full grown from father’s head, seen as akin to gold-rich California’s admission to U.S. Union w/o being a territory 1st.
16 Alert Grizzlies Protect Public Fisc: Left Paw on Bag, Coins Below
Modeled on cast iron original in 1906
Treasurer’s Office on first floor
The Ornate West Wing Doors on Second Floor Include Owls of Wisdom
A Legacy in Craftsmanship
A Legacy of Symbols Extolling our History