

## Thomas Jefferson to Benjamin H. Latrobe, April 22, 1807, from Thomas Jefferson and the National Capital. Edited by Saul K. Padover.

### Jefferson to Latrobe

*Monticello Apr. 22. 07.*

*Dear Sir*

Yours of the 14th came to hand on the 20th. the idea of spending 1000. D. for the temporary purpose of covering the pannel lights over the representatives chamber, merely that the room may be plaistered before the roof is closed, is totally inadmissible. but I do not see why that particular part of the plaistering should not be postponed until the pannel lights are glazed. I hope there is no danger but that the glazing may be ready so as to leave time enough to so much of the plaistering as would be injured by the want of it. It is with real pain I oppose myself to your passion for the lantern, and that in a matter of taste, I differ from a professor in his own art. but the object of the artist is lost if he fails to please the general eye. You know my reverence for the Graecian & Roman style of architecture. I do not believe recollect ever to have seen in their buildings a single instance of a lantern, Cupola, or belfry. I have ever supposed the Cupola an Italian invention, produced by the introduction of bells in the churches, and one of the instances of degeneracies of modern architecture. I confess they are most offensive to my eye, and a particular observation has strengthened my disgust at them. in the projet for the central part of the Capitol which you were so kind as to give me, there is something of this kind on the crown of the dome. the drawing was exhibited for the view of the members, in the president's house, and the disapprobation of that feature in the drawing was very general. on the whole I cannot be afraid of having our dome like that of the Pantheon, on which had

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a lantern been placed it would never have obtained that degree of admiration in which it is now held by the world. I shall be with you in three weeks: in the mean time I salute you with esteem & respect.

Th: Jefferson

MR. LATROBE

[Ms., *Jefferson Papers*, Library of Congress.]