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STATE CAPITOL RENOVATION;

Architect: Gov 'completely unfair'

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SPRINGFIELD - Embattled Capitol Architect J. Richard Alsop III lashed out at [Gov. Pat Quinn](http://www.nexis.com/search/XMLCrossLinkSearch.do?bct=A&risb=21_T21308977520&returnToId=20_T21309339452&csi=11064&A=0.16166334353527234&sourceCSI=162599&indexTerm=%23PE000A4UW%23&searchTerm=Gov.%20Pat%20Quinn%20&indexType=P) Friday, calling his criticism about expensive Capitol renovations like copper-clad doors and maiden sculptures "completely unfair."

"I don't know why he made the statements he made, but I think they were unwarranted and completely out of line," Alsop told reporters in his first public comments after the governor's statements about the $50 million Capitol face-lift.

Tuesday, Quinn ridiculed Alsop by name for signing off on "excessive flourishes" like the three door sets that cost more than $669,000, sculptures of maidens that cost more than $78,000 apiece and 300-pound chandeliers in one Senate suite that cost $323,000.

The governor vowed to halt funding on the next phase of Capitol construction, which by one estimate could total as much as $140 million, and urged Alsop's board to "rein in" the architect.

The historically accurate touches, the governor went on to say, made the Capitol appear as if it was the "Palace of Versailles" at a time when Illinois is $7 billion behind on bills, owes $100 billion to the state's pension systems and has seen its credit rating downgraded repeatedly.

"It's completely unfair," Alsop said of Quinn's criticism. "We were given a direction. The scope was agreed to long before I got here. Money was appropriated long before I got here. We did the best job we could with the resources we had."

Quinn's comments earlier in the week came as the governor faced an attack from his primary challenger, former White House Chief of Staff Bill Daley, who questioned why the Quinn administration signed off on "wasteful spending" that has tarnished the project.

Alsop, who cut off questions from reporters after barely more than 90 seconds, made his statements after a meeting of the Office of the Capitol Architect Board, which issued a statement that defended his work and noted that the Quinn-led Capital Development Board signed off on the historical niceties, as well.

"While much attention is given to the finishes that restore the building back to its original period of significance, that focus represents a mere fraction of the work being done to restore the Capitol," the statement reads. "This renovation was primarily about life safety."

The letter was signed by the board's four members: Tim Anderson, Brad Bolin, Scott Kaiser and Tim Mapes, who is House Speaker Michael Madigan's chief of staff.

Mapes declined to answer questions after Friday's meeting.

A spokesman for Quinn stood by the governor's comments and disputed Alsop's argument that the Capital Development Board had authority to stop any individual expenditures tied to the renovation.