

Assessment of University of Georgia Cultural Resources

Introduction to University Resources

The University of Georgia System’s cultural resources include a wide variety of landscapes, buildings and structures, and archaeological sites statewide. In order to understand the history and character of these varied resources, as well as to assess their condition, integrity, and significance, the current project involved extensive review of archival documentation, field work at selected focus areas, and review and analysis of historic resource documentation provided by the University FindIt Survey and obtained from other sources such as University libraries and archives.

FindIt! is an ongoing statewide survey program of cultural resources sponsored by the Georgia Transmission Corporation in partnership with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Division. The program is housed at the University of Georgia’s College of Environment and Design, in its Center for Community Design and Preservation (CCDP). Survey work is conducted by University of Georgia architecture and landscape architecture students under the direction of CCDP staff, with guidance provided by faculty through coursework. The program was established to help document historic resources throughout the state, in support of their preservation. Over more than ten years, the FindIt survey has added more than 14,000 resources to the Georgia Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resources GIS (GNAHRGIS) inventory.²²⁸

Selected University of Georgia Properties

The following sections of this chapter provide an assessment of selected historic resources—landscapes, buildings and structures, and archeological sites—of the University of Georgia system. As determined in consultation with the University of Georgia project team, the following sites were identified as especially important and representative of the University’s historic resources statewide:

- Athens Campus
- Griffin Campus
- Tifton Campus
- Mountain Research Center

228. University of Georgia College of Environment + Design, FindIt Survey, <http://findit.uga.edu/>, accessed June 2016.

- 4-H Camps: Wahsega and Rock Eagle
- Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve
- Skidaway Marine Institute
- Bamboo Farm

A comprehensive chapter is provided for each of the above sites, including an introductory overview of the property and its resources; historic contexts; historical background describing the evolution of the property and its role within or association with the University; and a chronology of development and use, which describes the physical history of the property, its landscape, buildings and structures, and archaeological resources. An assessment of overall significance for the campus is then provided.

For each chapter, the above sections are followed by an overview description, and identification of character areas for the subject property. (Character areas are land bays or geographic areas that share similar physical characteristics or development history, and are used in this report as a way to organize information within the complex campuses and other sites.) Next, resources within each character area are identified and evaluated, including a description, overall assessment, and determination of significance in terms of whether the resource is historic. Historic buildings are characterized according to the categorization system developed as part of this study for the University of Georgia campuses and resources.

Documentation reviewed for assessment of properties and individual resources included historical research conducted on behalf of this study, information gathered during field work completed by the project team during site visits to selected properties, and data provided by the University's FindIt survey. Survey work by the FindIt team was ongoing prior to and during development of this plan. The consultant team had the opportunity to visit a number of sites and campuses statewide as part of this scope of services, but only selected sites and individual resources could be visited, and those resources reviewed only briefly. Therefore, the scope of the assessment, especially in terms of condition and integrity of individual resources (both structures and landscapes), relied in many cases on the documentation provided by the FindIt survey. Where documentation provided by the FindIt team was limited or incomplete, the consultant team conducted further research in University archives and records to obtain additional information about individual resources, such as date of construction, prior modifications, and existing conditions. The University Office of the University Architects and Facilities Management Division assisted the consultant team with this research effort. Where information was available through University sources, it has been included in the individual resource descriptions and assessments provided in this report. There remain gaps in available documentation, however, and future assessments should rely on updated information where necessary.

A variety of resources were used to support this study, including published and unpublished narrative documentation, National Register nominations and eligibility assessments, University records, historic photographs, aerial photographs, and maps. At the Athens campus and the other properties visited, the consultant team also visited site archives and obtained copies of relevant documentation to assist in development of the historic contexts and historical

narratives. Review of available research material supported development of the historical narratives and historic contexts prepared as a basis for the assessments conducted in this study, and provided an understanding of the evolution of each site or campus, and the way in which individual resources have changed over time. In terms of historical development, some campuses are the subject of prior studies. For example, publications and records of the experiment stations were very valuable in understanding history of the Griffin and Tifton sites; one of the most important of these publications is *The Georgia Experiment Station: 1889–1957*, prepared in 1975 by university faculty, which affords information about the physical evolution of the campus. In addition, some primary resources, such as key buildings on the Athens campus, are well documented in archival collections. However, many less prominent structures and sites—particularly on the more remote campuses—are less well represented in archival materials available for this study. For example, few historic photographs or maps are available for the Rock Eagle and Wahsega 4-H centers; consequently, discussion of the periods of development of each site is general in nature and relies primarily on field observations. Similarly, for the Mountain Research and Education Center, available archival documents afford limited information about the physical evolution of the campus. For properties that have come into the University more recently, such as the Marine Institute at Sapelo Island and Skidaway Institute of Oceanography, resources are yet not well represented in the University’s archives. Subjects of interest for further research include the history of the site prior to the Roebing Ownership, to understand further what features may survive with integrity from the Modena Plantation period, aboveground or as archaeological resources. Several sites offer potential for further archaeological study that is beyond the scope of this project. Rock Eagle provide an example of this potential in the sites identified as associated with the Lamar Culture Bell Phase (1590 through 1680 AD), a period during which American Indian populations in this region were facing tremendous change due to contact with Europeans.

In general, for many of the campuses and individual resources, additional study would be helpful to determine the evolution of buildings and landscape features in more detail. Further research would enhance understanding of the physical history of campus development and the evolution of individual resources over time, to support more detailed treatment decisions in the future. For cultural landscapes, more detailed information would allow for the preparation of period plans that would articulate more clearly change over time, with the changes correlated to programming, research, and administration activities. Research and documentation activities could include archival research; additions to FindIt survey data collection; preparation of National Register eligibility assessments and documentation; preparation of Historic American Building Survey, Historic American Engineer Record, and Historic American Landscape Survey documentation; preparation of Historic Structure Reports; and preparation of Cultural Landscape Reports, could be appropriate subjects for further study by students as part of University of Georgia’s landscape and historic preservation programs. Included in such study should be a focus on correlation between archival research undertaken at each campus and the extant physical building and landscape resources.