



University of Georgia

Historic Preservation Master Plan

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Acknowledgements

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Foreword

Americans, a common argument purports, are ahistorical—we are, it is suggested, a nation of doers driven by material progress and focused only on the future. Of course, nothing could be further from the truth. Eric Foner has pointed out, in *Who Owns History? Rethinking the Past in a Changing World*, how intensely political interpreting the past can be and how history is as much about the present as the past. If history in general, as Foner suggests, is clearly appropriated to influence society and culture, material history is also very relevant because it is so tangible—we walk up steps worn by the generations who traversed them, feel the patina of age on the railing, and at the apex open doors or garden gates built by our ancestors.

Many college campuses are evocative places because the material past and heritage of place are so powerfully linked. There, various rituals, sporting events, ceremonies and convocations, and traditions are played out in the same buildings, arenas, stadiums, and landscapes year after year. As the oldest public institution of higher education in America, the University of Georgia is comprised of one of the most intact set of structures and historic spaces in the United States and, consequently, communicates essential traditions to each new generation of students.

But UGA is also on a mission to greatly improve on its already excellent record of teaching, research, and service. The University, therefore, must be forward looking, too, as it considers a shift to active learning, the importance of experiential learning, measures to increase research funding, and offering the very best public service in the State of Georgia and beyond. It is because of that need to balance extant historical richness of place with many of the institution's strategic imperatives that President Jere W. Morehead initiated the historic preservation master planning process and appointed a steering committee to oversee the work. All of us who were involved with the planning process are grateful to him for taking such an important step. As an academic dean at UGA, I also personally thank President Morehead for his insistence on enlisting students in the planning process.

In phase one, several graduate students under the direction of Pratt Cassity, Director of the College of Environment and Design's (CED) Center for Community Design and Preservation, and Laura Kviklys, Director of CED's FindIt program documented all of UGA's historic structures across the entire state. That in-depth effort resulted in the first ever database of UGA's historic resources, which will be useful for years to come. The consultant, Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates, Inc. (WJE) and subcontractors including Liz Sargent HLA, were retained by UGA's Office of University Architects and Scott Messer, Director of Historic Preservation, during this first phase of the study in order to interact with students and help guide their process as necessary.

In phase two, the consultant researched and wrote the history of UGA statewide and identified important periods in the institution's development. WJE also offered an assessment of historic resources at the Athens, Griffin, and Tifton campuses as well as at numerous other UGA sites including the Rock Eagle 4-H

Center and the Skidaway Institute. Finally, the consultant suggested guiding principles and a treatment philosophy. In two workshops, an in-progress report was shared with the Steering Committee, University of System of Georgia Board of Regents staff, Georgia Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation Division representatives, community preservation organizations, and numerous UGA employees ultimately responsible for implementing the plan. Workshop participants offered numerous comments that resulted in positive changes to the plan.

The intent of the plan was never to designate individual structures to be razed or saved but rather to develop and codify a defensible decision making process. That goal was accomplished during the final phase: the development of standard operating procedures, by following an innovative cultural resource planning model developed by the United States Department of Defense (DoD). Using the DoD template, Scott Messer and WJE developed a process oriented plan driven by the reality that, while it impossible to plan for every future contingency, the University can always be consistent and transparent in considering its historic resources.

Because of this plan, as the University of Georgia forges ahead in solving the grand challenges of Georgia and the world, we can also draw on the best of the past even as we embrace the future.

*Dan Nadenicek
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