

139 ASHLEY AVENUE
after 1836

OLD

Edward Sebring, a New Yorker, built the little brick house at 139 Ashley Ave., but when is still uncertain, although he bought the property in 1836. He amassed a sizeable fortune in Charleston, as a draper on Broad Street and later as president of the Bank of the State of SC . It is possible Sebring built the house to live until his mansion was built or as a rental unit.

The architectural features offer no clues of the construction date, as they are mainly of types used from the late 1830s through the Civil War period. The house is a typical Charleston single house, consisting of 2 ½ stories of brick, stuccoed, with a gable roof and two tiers of piazzas.

The piazza entrance is rather narrow and has a transom and a door surround in the Greek Revival Style, with "ears" of wooden molding. The columns are plain Doric. The piazzas in typical fashion, continue around the rear of the house, terminating at a narrow rear wing, one bay square, which is an original feature of the house.

The notable features include the decorative window cornices of terra cotta on the street façade. The main portion of the house is five bays wide, with the central bay on first and second levels a doorway with multi-light transom and sidelights.

The floor plan is that of the typical Charleston single house, with two main rooms and a central stair hall on each floor. Interior details are simple, with plain woodwork and plaster work, and mantels in the plastered Greek Revival style.

139 Ashley Ave. -- This small two and one-half story, stuccoed brick single house has terra cotta cornices over its windows. It was built by Edward Sebring, president of the State Bank of South Carolina, who also built and lived in the large residence at 268 Calhoun Street, to the south of this house. Sebring probably built this house as a tenement, after he purchased the site in 1836. (Stockton, DYKYC, Nov. 21, 1977. Stoney, This is Charleston, 6.)

171 Ashley Ave. -- U.S. Arsenal and Porter Academy Buildings, Medical University of South Carolina. The United States Arsenal was built here in 1844, with a main building designed by Charleston architect Edward Brickell White, who may also have designed the auxiliary buildings. The main building was demolished after the Medical College of South Carolina bought the property in 1963, but two arsenal buildings remain in the northeast corner of the Medical University campus. They are St. Luke's chapel (a remodeled artillery shed) and Colcock Hall, a two story brick building with a clerestory roof. The arsenal was occupied by South Carolina troops on Dec. 30, 1860, ten days after the adoption of the Ordinance of Secession. It was an important prize for the Confederacy because it contained nearly 18,000 muskets, about 3,400 rifles, more than 1,000 pistols, and several large pieces of ordnance, including five 24-pound field howitzers -- arms enough to equip three divisions. The arsenal was reoccupied in 1865 by Federal troops who remained until all occupying troops were withdrawn from South Carolina in 1879. The abandoned arsenal was leased by the Federal government in 1879 to the Rev. A. Toomer Porter for 99 years at \$1.00 a year, for the use of the Holy Communion Church Institute. Ten years later, title to the property was conveyed to the school. The Holy Communion Church

CVF Buildings -- 139 Ashley Ave

From: Scrapbooks of Charleston, SC Architectural Inventory
1973

OWNERSHIP RECORD

Present Owner *MRS. T. R. SIMMONS*
Mailing Address *268 CALHOUN*
Original Owner

Assessor Map # *4601.15.13.1.9*

Approximate Lot Size *35 x 77*
or Acres

Property Currently Zoned

Assessment: Land
Improvements
TOTAL

Physical Condition:	Good	Fair	Poor
Structure		<i>✓</i>	
Grounds		<i>✓</i>	
Neighborhood		<i>✓</i>	

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Facade Material *SPICED OAK PLANK*
Foundation
Roof Form *GABLE*
Porch or Veranda *✓* Height *2*
Building Height in stories *2 1/2*
Roof Dormers *3*
Chimneys *✓* Where *Central*
Facade Emphasis *Horizontal*
Window Sash: 1st *✓* 2nd *✓* 3rd *✓*
Entrance: Fan *✓* Lintel *✓* Trans *✓*
Sidelights *✓* undecorated

INTERIOR DETAILS

Mantels Overmantels
Staircase Wainscoting
Interior Doors of Period
Door and Window Frames
Other Panelling
Ceiling Cornices
Chair Rails Base Molds
Wallcoverings of Period
Hardware
Ceiling medallions
Original Floors
Other

Significant Outbuildings

Landscaping

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA *2 LOT*
ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY FORM

Address *139 ASHLEY AVENUE*
Area

Architect/Builder
Date of Construction
Source of Date
Architectural Style

Present Use *RESIDENTIAL*
Original Use *RESIDENTIAL*
Incidence in Area
Importance to its neighborhood:
Great Moderate Minor
Accessible to the Public

Historic Notes:

Architectural Significance
National Valuable to City
Valuable Notable Worthy of
Mention Other
Significance of Interiors
Significance of Landscaping
Historic Significance

Representation in Other Surveys
This is Charleston (page)
National Register
State Survey
HABS Year



SCRoom vertical files

'Little Brick House' 11 1/2 ft high Built Near Mansion

By ROBERT P. STOCKTON

When and why Edward Sebring built the little brick house at 139 Ashley Ave., is open to speculation.

Sebring bought from William Murray, planter, for \$2,000, the property on which the house stands, on May 17, 1836.

The property is described in that deed as a lot in Cannonsborough, measuring 70 feet in front on Thomas Street (now Ashley Avenue) and 145 feet in depth.

Adjacent to the south was the large lot at the northwest corner of Thomas (now Ashley) and Boundary (now Calhoun) Street, on which Sebring built his substantial mansion, now 268 Calhoun St., around 1838.

Sebring, a New Yorker, amassed a sizeable fortune in Charleston, first as a draper on Broad Street and later as president of the Bank of the State of South Carolina.

It is possible Sebring built 139 Ashley to live in until his mansion was built, but there is no evidence to support or refute this theory.

The city directory of 1837-38 does not list Sebring's home address. The 1840-41 directory lists him simply in Cannonsborough.

The 1849 directory lists him as living on "Boundary continued," as that part of Calhoun Street was then called.

Another possibility is that Sebring built 139 Ashley as a rental unit, since the house is too well finished to have been an outbuilding to his mansion.

Architectural features of 139 Ashley

The News and Courier

Do You Know
Your Charleston?

offer no clues of the construction date, as they are mainly of types used in Charleston houses from the late 1830s through the Civil War period.

The house is a typical Charleston single house in form, consisting of 2 1/2 stories of brick, stuccoed, with a gable roof and two tiers of piazzas.

Notable features include the decorative window cornices of terra cotta on the street facade.

The upper part of the front facade is finished with a cornice of courses of brick, a motif repeated on the short pilasters which are a typical feature of gable-end Charleston houses of the antebellum period.

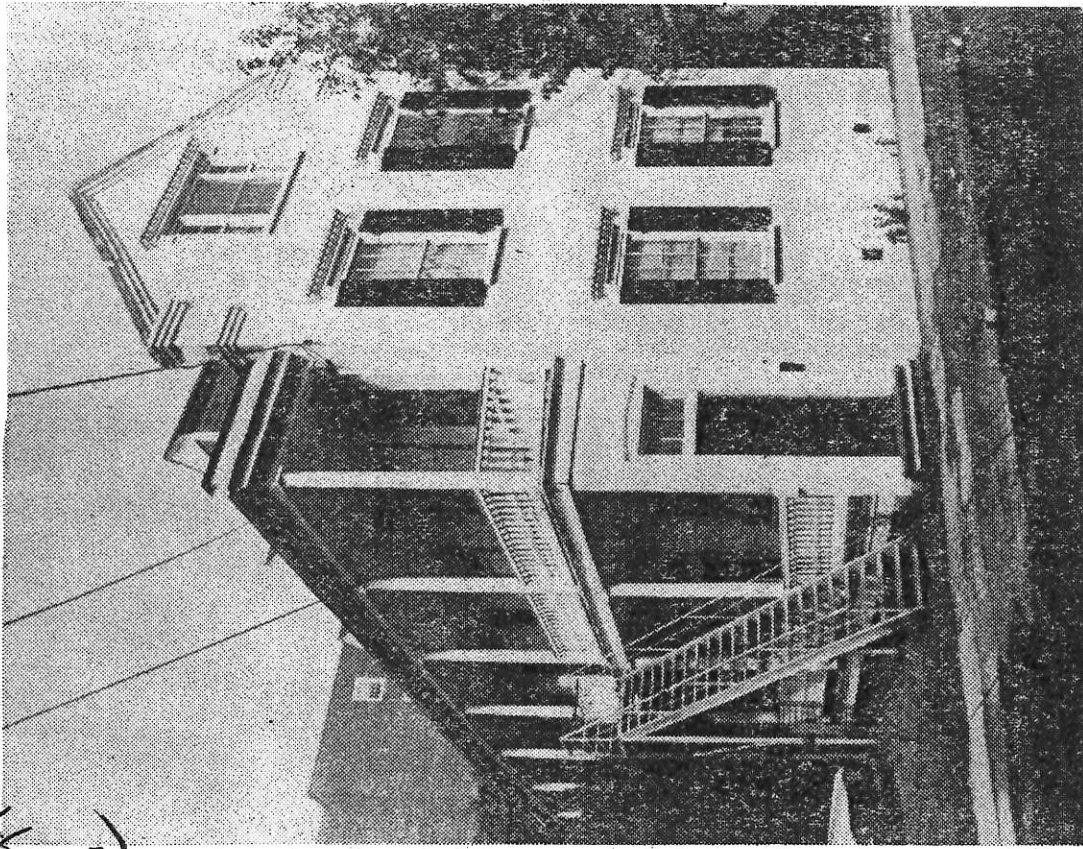
The piazza entrance is rather narrow and has a transom and a door surround in the Greek Revival style, with "ears" of wooden molding.

Piazza columns are plain Doric; balusters are simply turned.

Windows are six lights to a sash. The house is two bays wide, with a tripartite window centered in the gable.

The main portion of the house is five bays wide, with the central bay on first and second levels a doorway with multi-light transom and sidelights.

(See Page 2-B, Column 1)



(Staff Photo by D.J. Johnson)

139 Ashley Ave.

Continued From Page 1-B

Dormers with simple gables light the attic.

Piazzas, in typical fashion, continue around the rear of the house, terminating at a narrow rear wing, one bay square, which is an original feature of the house.

The floor plan is that of the typical Charleston single house, with two main rooms and a central stairhall on each floor.

Interior details are simple, with plain woodwork and plaster work, and mantels in the pillastered Greek Revival style.

Sebring conveyed the lot "with the dwelling house" on Thomas Street and the mansion at Thomas and Boundary to his wife, Gertrude, in 1870.

Mrs. Sebring, in 1890, sold 139 Ashley to Clifford H. Sim-

mons for \$1,600.

Simmons sold the property to Charles Pons Aimar for \$1,600 in 1905. Aimar had also bought the Sebring mansion in 1882 and had acquired the property to the north, at Ashley Avenue and Mill Street.

Aimar died in 1927, leaving his property to his widow, Leonarda J. Aimar and his daughter, Agatha Aimar Simmons.

In 1952, Mrs. Simmons acquired from her father's estate the several adjoining lots with the buildings thereon, known as 268 Calhoun St., 139 Ashley Ave. and 31 and 33 Mill St.

Mrs. Simmons conveyed the property at 139 Ashley to the Timrod Corporation in 1956. The Timrod Corporation is the current owner, according to tax records.

File.
~~147 R. W. 3 ML~~
~~W. H. C. Co.~~

those owned by the Medical University of South Carolina. The university owns two historic homes at 171 and 171½ Ashley Ave. that have been vacant for years, and there's no plan in sight to fix them up.



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& Preservation

MUSC

ing new homes and other projects for the land once owned by Richard Beresford, a prominent colonist.

Shortly after that, the university offered to give the homes away and provide \$100,000 to any qualified party able to move them to another site and restore them. "We got no takers," says John Satuskay, MUSC's director of planning.

The university estimates it would cost more than \$1.5 million to fix up and move the two houses, and with \$116 million in other capital needs they fall low on the priority list, he says. It appears an outside group likely will have to save them, if they are to be saved. Sautsky says the houses' site is being considered for a new building for a

"I can't get over the fact that I feel they have a responsibility when they own historic property in this city," says Cynthia Jenkins of the Preservation Society, which nominated the three buildings for the endangered list.

The list was released Friday by the Palmetto Trust for Historic Preservation, the S.C. Department of Archives and History, the S.C. Department of Parks Recreation and Tourism and the state chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

The old High School of Charleston may become the most urgent issue. Satusky says MUTC is looking at building a 800- to 1,200-car garage nearby and may seek demolition of at least part of the school.

Jenkins says if the school needs more classroom space, renovating the old high school would be the

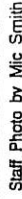
Satsky notes that while the Rutledge facade appears OK, the building's rear has begun to crumble. Jenkins says that prompted the society to nominate the school to the endangered list. "But there still is a huge percentage of that building that I'm convinced can be saved and reused," she adds.

The other endangered S.C. sites include the Old Tuberculosis Hospital in Greenville, the Pointsett Bridge in Greenville, the Carnegie Free Library in Gaffney, Bamberg's Main Street business district, Oakhurst in Newberry, the J.J. Lawton Sunday School Building in Lawrenceville, the Civil War Stockade in Greenville, the Civil War Stockade

Four other sites, including the Old Charleston Jail, were listed as noteworthy for their historic significance and threatened status. The other sites are the Faith Cabin Library in Pendleton, the Henry Gaffney Home Place in Gaffney and the Leaphart-Harmon House in Lexington.

■ Gov. Jim Hodges' new Task Force on Historic Preservation and Heritage Tourism will meet at 6 p.m. Tuesday at the Charleston County Library at 68 Calhoun St. to hear about threatened sites, preservation policies and how historic preservation affects the state's economy. For more information, visit www.state.sc.us/scdah/calen or by e-mail at scdah@state.sc.us or by phone at (803) 771-0870.

Robert Behre may be reached at 93-5540 or by fax at 93-5579. His e-mail address is robehre@postandcourier.com and his mailing address is 134 Columbus St., Charleston S.C. 29403.



The old High School of Charleston on Rutledge Avenue is owned by MUSC and is among the 11 most endangered sites in South Carolina.

See MUSC: Page 6-B in South Carolina.

Preservationist group appealing to MUSC

By JASON HARDIN
Of The Post and Courier staff

Preservationists are hoping a mildly worded letter to the president of the Medical University of South Carolina will achieve what they say years of talk has failed to achieve: Force the school to quit neglecting three of its historic buildings.

The buildings, which include houses at 141 and 141½ Ashley Ave. and the former High School of Charleston on Rutledge Avenue, have been decaying for years and "are threatened by demolition by neglect," wrote Cynthia Jenkins,

executive director of the Preservation Society.

The three vacant buildings recently were added to a list of the most endangered buildings in South Carolina.

"These important buildings in Charleston's architectural history have been neglected by MUSC since Hurricane Hugo in 1989. Today, eleven years later, these buildings are still threatened, and one stands on the verge of partial demolition," Jenkins wrote this week to MUSC President Dr. Raymond Greenberg.

John Sutusky, MUSC's interim vice president for finance and ad-

ministration, acknowledged the school has done little to maintain the buildings.

But with MUSC in the middle of a budget crunch, expenses such as whether to maintain historic buildings become judgment calls, Sutusky said.

The university has deferred \$75 million in maintenance to its campus, as needs pile up without funds to meet them, he said.

"We have responsibilities at the university that are greater than just preservation of historic property, as important as that is," he said. "We have needs that are critical for people and students ... and

we can't meet them."

Still, plans are under way for each of the buildings, although preservationists might not be entirely pleased.

The school is hoping to put together a deal that would offer \$100,000 to anyone who is willing to move and restore the 180-year-old house at 141½ Ashley Avenue, Sutusky said.

MUSC is considering using that land, as well as land by the 150-year-old house next door, for a heart and vascular center.

The school would move the second house about 50 yards to make room for the facility, which still is

in the early planning phase, Sutusky said.

Jenkins said the former high school is the building in the most jeopardy.

Sutusky confirmed that, saying the school is in the very early planning stages of building a parking garage on land partially covered by the building.

Studies showed rehabilitating the building would be too costly, he said. However, the school could at least save the building's facade, he added.

The school probably will select a design firm in October, then re-

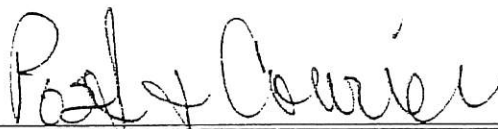
serve at least 16 months for planning. That will give nearby residents, preservationists and others a chance to weigh in on the final plan, Sutusky said.

In addition to writing the letter to Greenberg, the Preservation Society circulated a preservation alert to its members.

They were asked to write their own letters to Greenberg or to The Post and Courier.

The group also directed its letters to Charleston Mayor Joseph P. Riley Jr. and to city council members.

Jason Hardin covers Charleston city government. Contact him at (843) 937-5549 or at jhardin@postandcourier.com.



Editorials

Sunday, August 13, 2000

Save endangered properties

Three Charleston buildings are listed among the state's most endangered historic structures, and all are owned by the Medical University of South Carolina.

MUSC should respond to the alarm sounded by the Preservation Society of Charleston and the concerns expressed by the Historic Charleston Foundation.

The declining state of the former High ir,2, 10p School of Charleston and two historic houses on Ashley Avenue must be addressed before conditions worsen.

The high school has been vacant since 1985, and has suffered a gradual deterioration that preservation advocates have likened to demolition by neglect.

MUSC should take overdue steps to incorporate the building into its expansion plans, restoring it to provide needed classroom space or for some other appropriate use. Merely maintaining its facade isn't an acceptable alternative.

And the medical university should drop any idea of using the site of two historic houses at 141 and 141 1/2 Ashley Ave. for new construction by moving the historic structures. The houses should retain their original setting. If MUSC can't adapt the houses for office space, it should make them available to a purchaser who is willing to keep them intact.

As the Preservation Society points out in a letter to MUSC President Ray Greenberg, the antebellum houses on Ashley Avenue have been neglected since they were damaged by Hurricane Hugo.

Despite the neglect, each remains worthy of being restored. The Alston House, for example, still retains important elements of its early 18th century interior.

If further ignored, the future il,2, 10p of all three structures is dim. As a spokesman for Palmetto Trust for Historic Preservation said: "These places are in the 11th hour of their existence."

Preservation and re-use of the high school would retain something of the scale of the neighborhood that already has been overshadowed by massive medical buildings nearby. Preserving the two houses on site would respect the historically residential character of the neighborhood - much of which has been eroded by university expansion.

MUSC should look to the College of Charleston, which

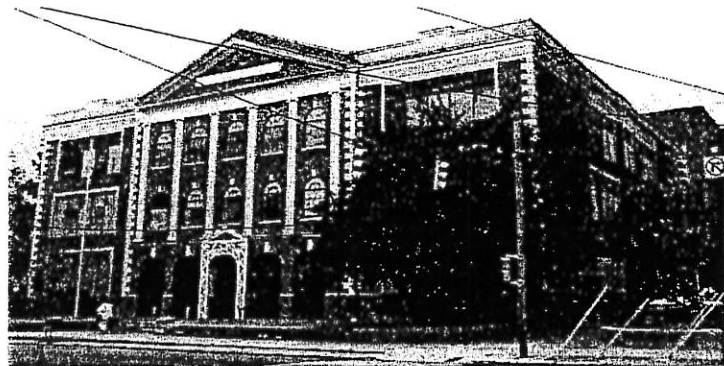
has successfully incor-porated restored historic structures, including dwellings, into its expansion program.

The Preservation Society says the restoration of the buildings will enable MUSC to "be a role model for the community." It's a challenge the Medical University should be willing to accept.

Preservation Alert

WHAT: The Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) is seriously neglecting three historic

buildings. MUSC owns The High School of Charleston (147-157 Rutledge Avenue), 141 Ashley Avenue, and 141½ Ashley Avenue (The Alston House), and all three have been neglected since Hurricane Hugo. They are all threatened with demolition by neglect.



The High School of Charleston

Repeated attempts by local preservation organizations, as well as individuals, to encourage the preservation of these buildings have failed. The Preservation Society of Charleston and Historic Charleston Foundation nominated all three buildings to South Carolina's 11 Most Endangered Properties 2000 list, and the buildings were included on the list. In fact, the Alston

House was listed on the South Carolina's Most Endangered Properties list in 1997, yet nothing has been done to ensure the protection of this site.

The High School of Charleston appears to be in the most imminent danger. A major parking structure with 1,200 parking spaces is being planned for the land currently occupied by the rear portion of the High School of Charleston. Preliminary design for the parking garage could begin as early as November. As for 141 and 141½ Ashley Avenue, the site where these two houses now sit is being considered for a new Heart and Vascular Center.



141 Ashley Avenue

WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT:

We need your help in encouraging MUSC to be good stewards of the historic buildings they own. Please voice your concern

and contact Dr. Raymond F. Greenberg, President of MUSC. A sample letter is attached. Sign the letter and mail it today, or write your own letter. Send a letter to the editor of the *Post & Courier*. We need to let MUSC know that demolition by neglect is not acceptable in Charleston! Please call The Preservation Society at (843) 722-4630 to let us know if you send a letter so that we may track our members' response (or email to preserve@preservationsociety.org). Thank you!

Dr. Raymond F. Greenberg, President
MUSC
171 Ashley Avenue
Charleston, SC 29425
greenber@musc.edu



The Alston House

Post & Courier
Attn: Barbara Williams, Editor
134 Columbus Street
Charleston, SC 29403



147 KING STREET • POST OFFICE BOX 521 • CHARLESTON SOUTH CAROLINA 29402

March 17, 2000

Mr. Chad Lennox
The Palmetto Trust for Historic Preservation
1314 Lincoln Street, Suite 213
Columbia, South Carolina 29201-3154

Dear Chad:

The Preservation Society of Charleston and Historic Charleston Foundation would like to submit three nominations for South Carolina's 11 Most Endangered Properties 2000. The properties—141 Ashley Avenue, 141 ½ Ashley Avenue (Alston House), and 147-157 Rutledge Avenue (The High School of Charleston)—are all owned by the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) and have been seriously neglected for at least a decade. The buildings are within a one block vicinity of each other. The Alston House was listed on the 1997 South Carolina's 11 Most Endangered Properties list, and unfortunately, it is still threatened. It is our belief that MUSC is ignoring these buildings so that they will ultimately be demolished. All three buildings are threatened by demolition by neglect and encroaching development.

We hope that these properties will be listed either as one or three sites on the 2000 list. A listing, and in the case of the Alston House a *second* listing, would encourage MUSC to meet their stewardship responsibilities. Thank you for your consideration. If I can provide any additional information, please let me know.

With kindest personal regards, I remain

Most sincerely yours,

Cynthia Cole Jenkins
Executive Director

11 Most Endangered Properties Nominations

Name of Site: 141 Ashley Avenue

Address: 141 Ashley Avenue
Charleston, South Carolina 29403

County: Charleston County

Date of Property: c. 1850

Ownership: Private

Owner Address: Medical University of South Carolina
171 Ashley Avenue
Charleston, South Carolina 29425
(843) 792-2300

Designation: Old City District, Charleston, South Carolina

1. Provide the name of the group nominating the site:

The Preservation Society of Charleston
and
Historic Charleston Foundation

2. Provide the address and phone number of the group nominating the site:

The Preservation Society of Charleston	Historic Charleston Foundation
Post Office Box 521	Post Office Box 1120
Charleston, South Carolina 29402	Charleston, South Carolina 29402
(843) 722-4630	(843) 723-1623

3. What is the physical description of the site?

The property is located at 141 Ashley Avenue.

The house was originally built as a two-story single family house. The house adheres to the Charleston Single House form, with the piazza on the south side. The house was built of "Charleston brick" and covered in a lime stucco, scored in a stone block pattern and sits on what appears to be its original masonry foundation. The house contains its original fenestration, with solid shutters on the first floor and louvered shutters on the second floor. The north side of the house was the property line and was devoid of windows for privacy. A later window has been installed on the first floor. Part of the heart pine piazzas at the southwest corner was infilled at a later date for bathrooms.

The roof has three southern dormers. The slate roof was replaced after Hurricane Hugo with fiberglass shingles. A chimney was lost in Hurricane Hugo and the masonry gabled end on

Ashley Avenue was destroyed. The original staircase that was located between the front two rooms on the first floor has been removed. The house was converted to two apartments circa 1945, and an exterior open riser steel staircase was added to the exterior of the piazza.

The interior walls are a combination of plaster on wood lath and gyp board. The house retains its original heart pine tongue and groove flooring. The house has its original wood mantles.

4. What is the historic or architectural significance of the site?

There are extraordinary terra cotta window pediments on the Ashley Avenue façade.

5. Is the site open to the public?

No

6. What is the threat to the site?

Demolition by Neglect

7. How immediate is the threat?

The house has been seriously neglected since Hurricane Hugo in 1989. All of the wall and ceiling finishes are severely damaged due to heat, humidity, and rain water through the roof. The interior face of the exterior masonry walls exhibit severely deteriorating mortar joints.

8. How can the threat be eliminated?

Protection mechanism, change of ownership, or encourage the current owner (the Medical University of South Carolina) to meet their stewardship responsibilities.

9. How would listing this site as one of SOUTH CAROLINA'S 11 MOST ENDANGERED PROPERTIES help this property?

The property is owned by the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC). Repeated attempts by local preservation organizations as well as individuals, to encourage the preservation of this property have failed. Listing on South Carolina's 11 Most Endangered Properties list would make MUSC aware of their responsibility to be good stewards of their buildings.

10. Additional Comments/Recommendations:

11. Contacts:

Cynthia Cole Jenkins, Executive Director
The Preservation Society of Charleston
Post Office Box 521
Charleston, South Carolina 29402
(843) 722-4630

Dr. Carter Hudgins, Executive Director
Historic Charleston Foundation
Post Office Box 1120
Charleston, South Carolina 29402
(843) 723-1623

12. Photographs and location map

See Attached

Name of Site: Alston House

Address: 141 1/2 Ashley Avenue
Charleston, South Carolina 29403

County: Charleston County

Date of Property: c. 1817-1819

Ownership: Private

Owner Address: Medical University of South Carolina
171 Ashley Avenue
Charleston, South Carolina 29425
(843) 792-2300

Designation: Old City District, Charleston, South Carolina

1. Provide the name of the group nominating the site:

The Preservation Society of Charleston
and
Historic Charleston Foundation

2. Provide the address and phone number of the group nominating the site:

The Preservation Society of Charleston	Historic Charleston Foundation
Post Office Box 521	Post Office Box 1120
Charleston, South Carolina 29402	Charleston, South Carolina 29402
(843) 722-4630	(843) 723-1623

3. What is the physical description of the site?

The property is located at 141 1/2 Ashley Avenue. The Alston House has been moved three times in the past century. It originally sat back from Calhoun Street, and the piazza garden side overlooked Bennett's Rice Mill pond. The entry to the house faced Mill Street.

The two-story house is wood-frame with fine architectural detailing in wood and plaster. However, almost all of the plaster has separated from the wood lath. The house has original six over six double hung windows. The front two-story piazza is original to the house. The octagonal columns on the second floor are original and the first floor fluted columns are a later addition. The original configuration of the piazza appears to have been a "C" shaped plan, but two sides of the porch were later infilled. The original standing seam metal roof was badly damaged in Hurricane Hugo and now the roof is a mixture of asphalt shingles and roll roofing.

The floors are tongue and groove oak and pine. The house sits on a new foundation, since it was moved.

4. What is the historic or architectural significance of the site?

The Alston House is an excellent and rare example of a suburban villa that wealthy rice planters built in the Cannonborough and Radcliffeborough neighborhoods, just outside of the city limits of Charleston in the early 19th century. The house was built by William A. Alston, a rice planter.

The house has surviving ornate Adamesque ceiling plasterwork complete with medallions and cornices. One second-floor room has a barrel vaulted ceiling.

The house has exceptional carved wood trim.

5. Is the site open to the public?

No

6. What is the threat to the site?

Demolition by Neglect

7. How immediate is the threat?

The house has been seriously neglected since Hurricane Hugo in 1989. Encroaching development threatens the site further.

8. How can the threat be eliminated?

Protection mechanism, change of ownership, or encourage the current owner (the Medical University of South Carolina) to meet their stewardship responsibilities.

9. How would listing this site as one of SOUTH CAROLINA'S 11 MOST ENDANGERED PROPERTIES help this property?

The property is owned by the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC). Repeated attempts by local preservation organizations, as well as individuals, to encourage the preservation of this property have failed. The property was listed on the South Carolina's 11 Most Endangered Properties list in 1997, but nothing has been done to ensure the protection of the site. A second listing on South Carolina's 11 Most Endangered Properties list would make MUSC aware of their responsibility to be good stewards of their buildings.

10. Additional Comments/Recommendations:

11. Contacts:

Canthia Cole Jenkins, Executive Director
The Preservation Society of Charleston
Post Office Box 521
Charleston, South Carolina 29402
(843) 722-4630

Dr. Carter Hudgins, Executive Director
Historic Charleston Foundation
Post Office Box 1120
Charleston, South Carolina 29402
(843) 723-1623

12. Photographs and location map

See Attached



147 KING STREET • POST OFFICE BOX 521 • CHARLESTON SOUTH CAROLINA 29402

August 9, 2000

The Honorable Joseph P. Riley Jr., Mayor
80 Broad Street
Charleston, South Carolina 29401

Dear Mayor Riley:

Out of concern for the fate of three historic buildings in Charleston, The Preservation Society of Charleston has mailed to our members the attached Preservation Alert. The High School of Charleston, the Alston House, and 141 Ashley Avenue are threatened with demolition by neglect. They all are owned by the Medical University of South Carolina. The Preservation Society is seriously concerned about the future of these buildings.

I am sending you and members of City Council the Preservation Alert and sample letter to Dr. Greenberg that were mailed to our members today. The Preservation Society would appreciate any assistance that you and members of City Council can give us with this matter.

With kindest personal regards, I remain

Most sincerely yours,

Cynthia Cole Jenkins
Executive Director

cc: The Honorable Anne Frances Bleecker
The Honorable Kwadjo Campbell
The Honorable Yvonne D. Evans
The Honorable Henry B. Fishburne, Jr.
The Honorable Jimmy S. Gallant, III
The Honorable G. Robert George
The Honorable Wendell G. Gilliard
The Honorable James Lewis, Jr.
The Honorable Robert M. Mitchell
The Honorable Larry D. Shirley
The Honorable Paul Tinkler
The Honorable Louis L. Waring

(843) 722-4630

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FAX (843) 723-4381



147 KING STREET • POST OFFICE BOX 521 • CHARLESTON SOUTH CAROLINA 29402

Dr. Raymond F. Greenberg, President
MUSC
171 Ashley Avenue
Charleston, SC 29425

Dear Dr. Greenberg:

I am writing you to express my concern over three historic buildings owned by the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC). MUSC is seriously neglecting The High School of Charleston (147-157 Rutledge Avenue), 141 Ashley Avenue, and 141½ Ashley Avenue (The Alston House). These important buildings in Charleston's architectural history have been neglected by MUSC since Hurricane Hugo in 1989. Today, eleven years later, these buildings are still threatened, and one stands on the verge of partial demolition.

The Charleston single house at 141 Ashley Avenue was built c.1850. The house has exemplary terra cotta window pediments on the Ashley Avenue façade and maintains its original fenestration. The Alston House, 141½ Ashley Avenue, was built c.1817-1819, and it is an excellent and rare example of suburban villas built by wealthy planters in the Canonborough and Radcliffeborough neighborhoods. The house has surviving ornate Adamesque ceiling plasterwork complete with medallions and cornices. The High School of Charleston, built in 1921, is a three-story, Neoclassical, brick school. Founded in 1839, the High School of Charleston is one of the oldest high schools in the country. The school was located in this building from 1922 to 1981. A 1985 architectural survey of Charleston listed the building as a Category III historic building, meaning that the building has "significant architectural quality." The building has been abandoned since 1985.

The three properties were selected to be on South Carolina's 11 Most Endangered Properties 2000 list in May after being nominated by The Preservation Society of Charleston and Historic Charleston Foundation. Repeated attempts by local preservation organizations, as well as individuals, to encourage the preservation of these buildings have failed. In fact, the Alston House was listed on South Carolina's Most Endangered Properties list in 1997, yet nothing has been done to ensure the protection of this site. While all three buildings are threatened by demolition by neglect, the High School of Charleston appears to be in the most imminent danger.

John Sutusky, Director of Planning for MUSC, has told The Preservation Society that a major parking structure is planned for the land currently occupied by the rear portion of the High School of Charleston. As for 141 and 141½ Ashley Avenue, the site where these two houses now sit is being considered for a new Heart and Vascular Center.

These three buildings offer MUSC the opportunity to be a role model for the community by being a good steward of her historic buildings. Since MUSC is among the oldest medical schools in the country, the university should protect the sense of place and security that comes from the adaptive re-use of historic buildings.

Sincerely,

Member, The Preservation Society of Charleston

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MUSC

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August 23, 2000

Ms. Katherine E. Hammersley
99 Chadwick Drive
Charleston, SC 29407

Dear Ms. Hammersley:

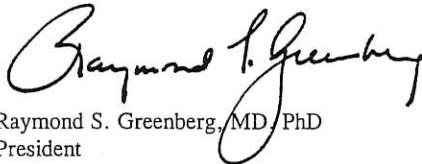
I have received your letter regarding the former Charleston high school building and the two historic properties located at 141 and 141 ½ Ashley Avenue. I appreciate your concerns and thank you for taking the time to write me.

Concerning the former high school building, we are initiating a formal planning process for the development of that general area of the campus late this year. We have structured this extended planning and design process in order to allow for input from all interested parties. I want to assure you that there will be ample opportunity for you to have input during that process.

The historic houses on Ashley pose different challenges. The University has been working for several years to find interested and responsible parties to relocate and restore the Alston House. When we last advertised that offer, there was limited response. The recent publicity about the properties has stimulated new interest. We plan to solicit proposals again in the near future.

Again, I am grateful for your expression of concern for these properties. You have my promise that we will attempt to address these concerns in a timely and responsive manner.

Sincerely,



Raymond S. Greenberg, MD, PhD
President

RSG/jwc/vh