

Historic Charleston Foundation  
Festival of Houses Tour  
History

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 1/2 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

CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA  
ARCHITECTURAL INVENTORY FORM

2. LOT

OWNERSHIP RECORD

Present Owner MRS. T. R. SIMPSONS  
Mailing Address 218 CALHOUN  
Original Owner

Assessor Map # 9601.15.13.1.9

Approximate Lot Size 35 x 77  
or  Acres

Property Currently Zoned

Assessment: Land   
Improvements   
TOTAL 12,000

Physical Condition:	Good	Fair	Poor
Structure	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grounds	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Neighborhood	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

Facade Material Stucco, L.V. & M.  
Foundation   
Roof Form Gable  
Porch or Veranda None  
Building Height in stories 2 1/2  
Roof Dormers 3  
Chimneys 2 Where   
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

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



SC Room vertical files

# Little Brick House 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 258 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 2½ 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.

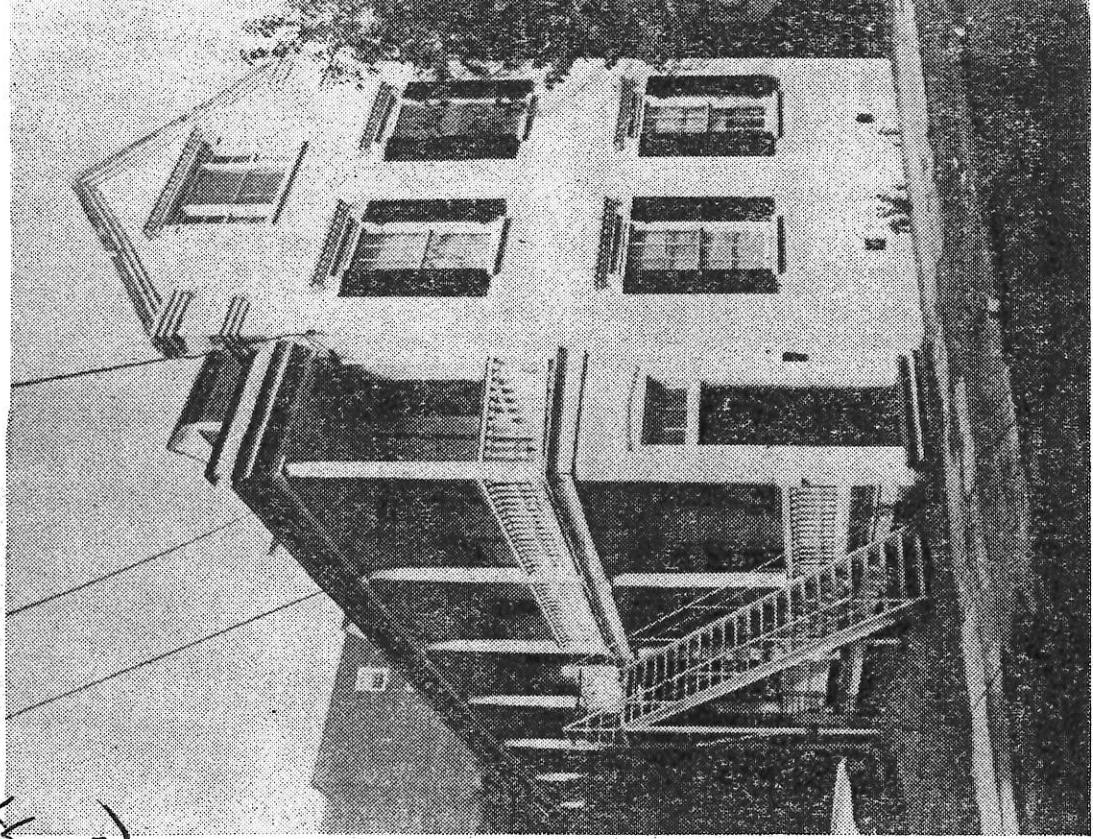
The piazza entrance is rather narrow and has a transom and a door surround in the Greek Revival style, with "ears" of wooden molding.

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)



**139 Ashley Ave.**

(Staff Photo by D.J. Johnson)

# House

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 pilastered 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.

# 47 of 3 MUSC buildings on S.C.'s endangered sites list

Of South Carolina's 11 most endangered historic sites, none may trouble Charleston preservationists more than

those owned by the Medical University of South Carolina. The university owns two historic homes at 171 and 171 1/2 Ashley Ave. that have been vacant for years, and there's no plan in sight to fix them up. It also owns the former High School of Charleston, another vacant building that — while the exact plans are still in the works — could face substantial de-

molition for a new parking garage, although the school expects to save at least its Rutledge Avenue facade.

"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 Medical University itself has a long and wonderful history; and I would think that they would want to have buildings that speak of that tradition," she adds. The list was released Friday by 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.

Other sites in the area that made the list include the archaeological

remains of the colonial settlement of Childsberry in Berkeley County, where a developer has proposed 10 homes for the site.

Childsberry Towne was built in 1707, but the land was abandoned before the Revolutionary War. Strawberry Chapel stands nearby. Wilmington, N.C.-based Southern Lifestyles, which bought the 90 acres for \$1 million, is pursuing the 10-home development but also is willing to sell the property for \$1.5 million.

The other Lowcountry endangered site is the archaeological remains of the historic village of Cainnoy, including the brick foundation remains and cemetery of a 1699 meeting house and several Native-American sites and 18th- and 19th-century homes. As growth bustles out the Cainhoy peninsula, developers are eyeing the site.

See MUSC, Page 6-B



**ROBERT BEHRE** 5/22/00  
from the former  
Architecture & Preservation

141  
142



Staff Photo by Mic Smith

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

in Florence and four railway depots across the state.

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/sedah/caldarham](http://www.state.sc.us/sedah/caldarham) or call (803) 771-0870. Robert Behre may be reached at 93-3549 or by fax at 93-5579. His e-mail address is [robert@postmedia.com](mailto:robert@postmedia.com) and his mailing address is 134 Columbia St., Charleston S.C. 29403.

"It's obviously a classroom building, and while I'm sure it needs modification, to tear a building of that magnitude down is not going to be inexpensive. If as much effort were put into reusing that structure and maintaining a sense of Charleston history, it would seem that certainly is a win-win," she says.

Satusky 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 Poinsett 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 Gaffney, the Civil War Stockade

Jenkins notes that just down Calhoun Street is an example of a state institution that turned preservation to its favor. "When the College of Charleston made the commitment to preserve the neighborhood it was expanding into, it was from that point forward that the school grew and prospered," she says.

The old High School of Charleston may become the most urgent issue. Satusky says MUSC is looking at building a 800- to 1,200-car garage nearby and may seek demolition of at least part of the list in 1997.

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 Satusky, MUSC's director of planning.

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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 it 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. Satusky says the houses' site is being considered for a new building for a

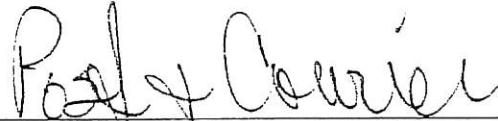
## MUSC

from Page 1-B

new homes and other projects for the land once owned by Richard Beresford, a prominent colonist. The listing on the state's most endangered list is no guarantee something will happen: The two homes owned by MUSC also made the list in 1997.

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 it 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. Satusky says the houses' site is being considered for a new building for a





## 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 <sup>1,2</sup>,  
,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 <sup>1,2</sup>,  
,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.

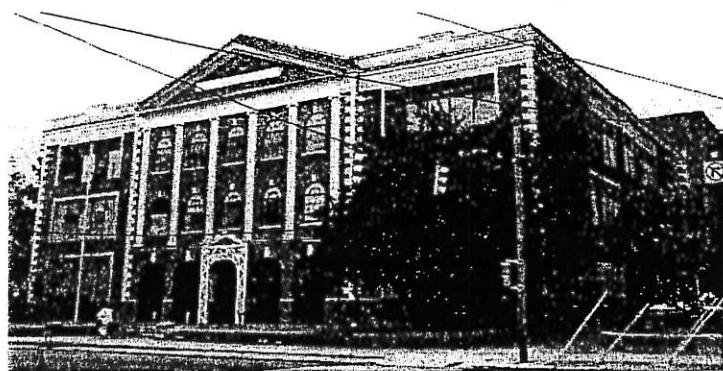
MUSC should look to the College of Charleston, which

has successfully incorporated 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



**The High School of Charleston**

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.

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](mailto:preserve@preservationsociety.org)). Thank you!

**Dr. Raymond F. Greenberg, President**  
MUSC  
171 Ashley Avenue  
Charleston, SC 29425  
[greenber@musc.edu](mailto:greenber@musc.edu)

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



**The Alston House**



147 KING STREET • POST OFFICE BOX 321 • 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

(843) 722-4630

—FOUNDED 1920—

FAX (843) 723-4381

## 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 Post Office Box 521 Charleston, South Carolina 29402 (843) 722-4630	Historic Charleston Foundation Post Office Box 1120 Charleston, South Carolina 29402 (843) 723-1623
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**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 facade.

**5. Is the site open to the public?**  
No

**6. What is the threat to the site?**  
Deterioration 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). Repaired 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 iath. 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 19<sup>th</sup> century. The house was built by William A. Alston,

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:**

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



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

FOUNDED 1920

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:

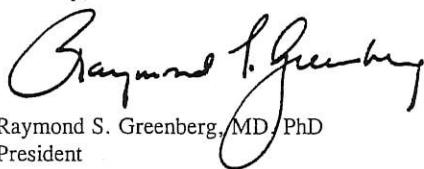
I have received your letter regarding the former Charleston high school building and the two historic properties located at 141 and 141 ½ Ashley Avenue. I appreciate your concerns and thank you for taking the time to write me.

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