



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Robyn Anderson
Historic Augusta, Inc.
706-724-0436
robyn@historicaugusta.org

Public Encouraged to Attend Meetings to Oppose Proposed New Augusta IT Building, November 21, 4:30 pm and 5:30 pm

An Antebellum Courthouse Annex, located at 527 Telfair Street in downtown Augusta, Georgia, is in danger of being demolished in favor of a proposed new Augusta Information Technology Building. The public is encouraged to attend two meetings to be held on Thursday, November 21, 2013 at the Downtown Public Library at 823 Telfair Street in order to both oppose the demolition and to voice their opinions about the design of the new building. A work session of the Augusta Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) will be held at 4:30 pm, to be followed by the regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the HPC at 5:30 pm.

During the October 24, 2013 meeting of the HPC, which was held at the Downtown Public Library, an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness by the City of Augusta was reviewed and tabled for further discussion. Historic Augusta, Inc. commends the HPC for not approving the application as presented. Historic Augusta hosted a work session which included members of the HPC and the architects for the proposed project at its offices at 415 Seventh Street on November 13, 2013 and provided input on both the location and proposed design. Prior to the October 24 HPC meeting, neither the HPC nor Historic Augusta had been consulted.

Historic Augusta would like for the public to consider the following prior to the November 21 meetings:

Historic Augusta, Inc. objects to the project as proposed on the following grounds:

1. The application proposes the **demolition of 527 Telfair Street, a historic building** located adjacent to the current Augusta Planning and Zoning building (originally the Congregation Children of Israel Synagogue, an exceptional Greek Revival Temple structure built in 1870). The building to be demolished is also a significant Greek Revival structure built before 1865, featuring a Greek pediment, ornate cornice line and a Greek Revival entry portico. 527 Telfair is a contributing building in the Augusta Downtown Historic District.



527 Telfair, Antebellum Court House Annex



Synagogue, Annex and Municipal Building

Historic Augusta, Inc. recommendation: Retain 527 Telfair and demolish newer additions to the building located behind the historic structure.

2. The application proposes a design for the **new building that fails utterly to meet existing design guidelines for the Downtown Historic District.** The plans call for a futuristic structure with materials not approved for the district and a shape and style not complementary to the neighborhood or to adjacent buildings. The existing proposal calls for a garage door facing Greene Street, and the main entrance facing the back of the synagogue.



Proposed IT building, facing interior of the block

Historic Augusta, Inc. recommendation: Redesign the building exterior using materials and styles appropriate to the Downtown Historic District. The City of Augusta has shown sensitivity to historic preservation in recent projects including the TEE Center, TEE Center Garage, Municipal Building and Sheriff's Department. The TEE Center also successfully incorporated a historic structure in its design. We commend the City for these efforts.



TEE Center



TEE Center Garage

Historic Augusta, Inc. believes it would be appropriate to reflect the architectural style and materials of the Municipal Building which is recognized as a fine example of the International Modern style.



Municipal Building

3. The city is constructing individual buildings with no apparent regard for an overall concept for the Municipal Center campus.

Historic Augusta, Inc. recommendation: The city should develop an overall master plan for the block which fits in with the aesthetic and architectural fabric of the Greene Street corridor, one of Augusta's most beautiful and significant streets and neighborhoods.

Conclusion: Augusta's historic neighborhoods are among its primary competitive advantages with respect to other cities - and Greene Street is one of our most beloved and beautiful avenues. Our unique and irreplaceable downtown buildings are attracting more and more residents and businesses to this once distressed area, adding payrolls and property taxes to our city. It is in the interest of all citizens that we preserve the fabric and ambience of this important area. The City must be careful not to damage this valuable asset with ill thought out and inappropriate construction.

For more information, or to discuss concerns about the demolition of 527 Telfair Street or the design of the proposed Augusta Information Technology Building, contact Historic Augusta, Inc. at 706-724-0436.