

BRIEF WARE-LYNDON HOUSE REHABILITATION HISTORY AND FUTURE STRATEGIC PLAN

INTRODUCTION

2008 marks the 12th Anniversary of the founding of the Ware-Lyndon House Historic House Committee. This entity supervised the period rehabilitation and furnishing of the Ware-Lyndon House Museum. We believe this is a good time to review past accomplishments as well as summarize future plans.

REHABILITATION HISTORY

In the mid 1990s, the expansion of the Lyndon House Arts Center and rehabilitation of the Ware-Lyndon House was placed on the S.P.L.O.S.T. tax package and passed by the voters of Athens-Clarke County. The original architectural plans for the historic house designated the downstairs of the house for heritage rooms, and the upstairs of the house for offices. The Lyndon House Arts Foundation organized a house committee in early 1996 to assist with this task. The original house committee members were: Jim Carter, Janet Clark, Ron Evans, Burke Hodgson, Anita Sams Holton, and Robert and Harriet Nix. Over the past ten years, many others have joined and contributed to the house committee, including: Claire Benson, Jan Freeman, Karen Johnson, and Amy Kissane. This committee has met on a regular basis for over a decade to help guide the rehabilitation of the Ware-Lyndon House and maintain the exhibited decorative arts collection.

Beginning in early 1996 the committee studied the history and architecture of the historic house and determined that a historic house museum, one which interpreted the late-Classical and mid-Victorian periods of Dr. E.R. Ware, and the later Victorian period of Dr. E.S. Lyndon, would be the most appropriate use of the downstairs rooms. Later, an elevator and mechanical room were installed in one of these rooms to meet modern building code. Because this room's historic character had to be compromised, it was chosen for interpretation and display of Athens' history.

The Ware-Lyndon House has had a positive impact on the local tourism industry (Classic City Tours), as it is the only house museum in Athens interpreting the late-Classical and mid- to late-Victorian periods.

In the early stages of planning and development of the new Arts Center and rehabilitation of the adjacent house, it became apparent that funds to complete the project would be very tight. The budget for rehabilitation of the house did not allow for the contracting of a professional consultant to maintain historic accuracy. All F.F. & E. funds (furniture, fixtures and equipment) were taken out of the house budget and used to buy historically accurate architectural elements (ex. mantels, gasoliers, drapes, rugs, door hardware, etc.). Due to this restricted source of funds, the Committee had to make all decisions regarding the historic accuracy of the house, raise private monies to cover costs, and solicit donations of furniture and decorative arts to furnish the house. A large percentage of the furniture and decorative arts for the historic house had been acquired by the grand opening of the complex in 1999.

In 2002 management of the decorative arts collection, previously administered by the Lyndon House Arts Foundation, was turned over to the Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation, Inc. (ACHF), at which time the Historic House Committee became a standing committee of the ACHF. The Ware-Lyndon House Decorative Arts Collection had an appraised value of over \$300,000 by this point.

Much has been accomplished over the last ten years, however, a house museum is never complete; it should be continuously evolving. By working in partnership with the Athens-Clarke County government, the Athens-Clarke County Department of Leisure Services, Lyndon House Arts Foundation, the Watson-Brown Foundation, and the ACHF, we hope to accomplish many projects in years to come. The following is an overview of ongoing projects as well as those still in our sights for the future.

Strategic Plan List - February, 2008

- A. Finish the ongoing restoration and replication of 6 period, 1850s Rococo window cornices for the double parlor (ACHF and House Committee donation to the project is \$13,500).
- B. Finish a quality audio tour recording and purchase CD players to assist with interpretation of the house.
- C. Provide docents for interpretation of the house.
- D. Complete an appropriate period landscape master plan.
- E. Install an appropriate period landscape garden adjacent to the house (make alterations to the kitchen garden).
- F. Install period tie-back drapery hardware in all period rooms.
- G. Fix water problem and repair damage in back double parlor.
- H. **Complete faux graining for upstairs hall doors** and possible faux marbling for down and upstairs baseboards.
- I. Use of period wallpaper in appropriate locations.
- J. Furnish and interpret upstairs bedroom.
- K. New acquisitions of important family items or Athens-specific decorative arts or furniture which would improve the collection for historic interpretation.
- L. Lessen the impact of modern mechanical devices in the dining room ceiling. Decorate ceiling with historically accurate design compatible with the period of the wall decorations.
- M. Acquire and improve display items in the Athens Historic Display Room when possible.
- N. Continually update Patrons Book (complete memorial page for Ms. Patsy).
- O. Continue decorative arts education class using the Lyndon House as the laboratory.
- P. Continue fund raising effort to assist in completing the above list (install donation box for tour donations).

Book (Ware-Lyndon)

- Indicates completed projects

Thank you for taking the time to read a brief rehabilitation history of the Ware-Lyndon House and share in our vision of the future.

Ware-Lyndon Historic House Committee
Athens-Clarke Heritage Foundation, Inc.
Lyndon House Arts Foundation