

**PRESERVATION FOUNDATION OF AIKEN  
P. O. Box 3087  
AIKEN, SC 29802**

August 5, 2024

Ms. Faith Hawks, Chair and  
Members of the Board  
City of Aiken Design Review Board  
111 Chesterfield Street  
Aiken, SC 29801

VIA EMAIL

Re: Application for Demolition of the Hitchcock Stables

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Preservation Foundation of Aiken (PFA) is a charitable foundation whose express purpose is to help preserve the history and architecture of Aiken. PFA opposes the application to demolish the historically important Hitchcock Stables (the “Stables”). The Stables are very significant in the history of Aiken. Mr. and Mrs. Hitchcock were the founders of the Aiken Winter Colony, a foundational period in the history of Aiken. Horses were of paramount importance to the Winter Colony, especially the Hitchcock family, and the Stables were at the center of this activity.

The Hitchcocks were responsible for the creation of many traditions and institutions which remain foundational to Aiken’s identity today. They donated the Hitchcock Woods to the Hitchcock Foundation (now Hitchcock Woods Foundation). They were founders of the Palmetto Golf Club, the Aiken Preparatory School (now Mead Hall), the Aiken Hounds and the Aiken Horse Show. Both Mr. and Mrs. Hitchcock were avid polo players and promoters of the sport. Mr. Hitchcock was the Capitan of the first international polo team and a member of the Polo Hall of Fame. Mr. Hitchcock, considered the father of American steeple chasing, owned and trained many successful steeplechasers. He was inducted into the United States Racing Hall of Fame. Their son, Thomas Hitchcock Jr. was one of the finest, if not the finest, polo player of his time.

The historic significance of the Stables is of further import because of its association with Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Bostwick. Mr. Bostwick was nationally and internationally known as a champion steeplechase rider and for his contributions to the sport of steeplechasing. He was the top steeple chase rider in America from 1928 to 1932 and again in 1941. He occasionally rode for Mr. Hitchcock. Six of his steeplechase horses won the Eclipse Award for Outstanding Steeplechase Horse of the Year. Mr. Bostwick was also an accomplished polo player (8 goals) and court tennis player. Mr. Bostwick was inducted into the United States Racing Hall of Fame and the Polo Hall of Fame. Mrs. Bostwick carried on Mrs. Hitchcock’s legacy by serving as Master of the Aiken Hounds.

The current demolition proposal ignores the historic importance of this structure to the early days of the Winter Colony and the sporting history of Aiken. To justify the proposed demolition of

such an important historic structure there must be a showing of something more than financial gain for the current owners. Can the Stables be rehabilitated? Stabilized? Indeed, can the Stables be saved?

The owners clearly have failed to demonstrate that stabilization or rehabilitation of the Stables is not feasible. The engineering report they have submitted outlines some issues with the Stables but does not and cannot conclude that stabilization and rehabilitation are not feasible.

Therefore, we respectfully request that you deny the application because of the Stables' importance to the history of Aiken and because the applicants have not demonstrated that stabilization and rehabilitation of the stables are not feasible.

Sincerely yours,

Lucy M. Knowles, President  
Preservation Foundation of Aiken