"This Is a Little Beauty": Preserving the Legacy of the Columbia Cottage

Kayla Boyer Halberg
University of South Carolina - Columbia

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“THIS IS A LITTLE BEAUTY”:
PRESEVING THE LEGACY OF THE COLUMBIA COTTAGE

by

Kayla Boyer Halberg

Bachelor of Arts
The College of William and Mary, 2013

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Accepted by:
Robert R. Weyeneth, Director of Thesis
Lydia M. Brandt, Reader

Lacy Ford, Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies
DEDICATION

For his support, comic relief, and encouraging partnership, I dedicate this work to

Ethan Randall Halberg.
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Several individuals have been influential in the completion of this project. First, I must acknowledge Dr. Robert R. Weyeneth for his advice, support and direction for this thesis and my graduate education. I am also indebted to Dr. Lydia M. Brandt. She has guided my interest in architectural history, offered constructive criticism, and encouraged me throughout graduate school. Staci Richey not only introduced me to the term “Columbia Cottage,” but has also been a supportive assistantship supervisor, an excellent teacher, and an encouraging mentor. I would also like to thank John Sherrer for sharing his expertise and knowledge of Columbia’s built environment; the Richland County Conservation Commission for awarding the grant that made my assistantship, which sparked this project, possible; Debbie Bloom for her assistance navigating the Local History Room at the Richland County Public Library; and Brenda Burk and the Clemson Special Collections staff for helpful preparation of the Harold N. Cooledge Collection.

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ABSTRACT

In 1965 the built environment of the city of Columbia, South Carolina, was in a state of flux. An active urban renewal campaign existed in the city for nearly a decade prompting a reactionary historic preservation movement. Upon a collaborative recommendation from the Historic and Cultural Buildings Commission and the Historic Columbia Foundation, City Council hired architectural historian Dr. Harold N. Cooledge to conduct an architectural and feasibility survey. In his report, Cooledge identified the Columbia Cottage, a vernacular form widespread throughout the historic neighborhoods of South Carolina’s capital city. His use of the term “Columbia Cottage” to label the many iterations of the form was an expression of what Cooledge understood as Columbia’s architectural character. Cooledge’s detailed description of the “Columbia Cottage Family” contributed to the popularity of the term, the preservation of the form, and the formation of an architectural identity for Columbia. In defining this local vernacular form, Cooledge gave Columbia preservationists a platform for conserving the city’s architectural heritage. Ultimately, however, decisions about preservation were influenced by location, adaptability, designation, historical association, and aesthetic appeal. This thesis will discuss how these motivations were instrumental in the adaptive use, relocation, or preservation of the Columbia Cottage. It will also argue that preservation through documentation and new construction have contributed to the preservation and legacy of Columbia’s architectural identity.
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

On a cool spring day in 2014, I pulled in at 1623 Richland Street in Columbia, South Carolina, dressed for my interview with the Committee for the Restoration and Beautification of Randolph Cemetery (CRBRC). The property at 1623 Richland Street, however, is not a cemetery. Rather, it is a small vernacular domestic building. The CRBRC was looking for a project director to oversee the rehabilitation of this house they called the Thompson Cottage. Personally excited for the opportunity to work with a non-profit, get hands-on preservation experience, and study vernacular architecture, I accepted the position offered to me several weeks later. Little did I know that this “lovely” cottage would initiate a curiosity that developed into a much larger project.¹

The Thompson Cottage, named for the home’s original owner, an African-American tailor and active member of the black community in Columbia, is a one-and-a-half story wood frame building originally over a raised brick pier foundation that has been enclosed. The façade is three-bays-wide and has a full-length, hipped-roof porch supported by four square columns. To either side of the central door is a sash window that lights the interior, which is a double-pile, central passage plan. The two chimneys divide the interior rooms flanking the central passage (Figure 1.1). This house at 1623 Richland Street, constructed ca. 1872, is a typical “Columbia Cottage.”

¹ The term “lovely” to describe the property at 1623 Richland Street was used in *The State*, 12 April 1931.
Upon starting my position in the fall of 2014, the term “Columbia Cottage” came up time and again. I began to notice other Columbia Cottages around the city and wondered if any scholarship existed on the form. My curiosity informed my initial questions, including: What is the period of construction? Where are they located in the city? What is the type and is there a standard? Who built them? Is the type unique to Columbia? How many have been lost and preserved? Where did the term come from? I took these questions to Staci Richey, a member of the board for CRBRC who also works for the City Planning and Development Services. Richey then introduced me to the Planning Department library, as well as a survey conducted in 1965 by an architectural historian from Clemson University, Dr. Harold N. Cooledge. I immediately realized that Cooledge was responsible for popularizing the term “Columbia Cottage,” promoting its use, and advocating preservation of the type.

Starting with Cooledge’s survey and feasibility study of 1965 and the planning department’s street files I began to generate an inventory of the Columbia Cottages that Cooledge identified, as well as those that did not appear in the survey. The initial goal of the project was to collect a list of cottages in order to study their architectural features and write a thesis that examined a local vernacular form, its association as a “cottage,” its pervasiveness in Columbia, and the regional popularity of the form. As I ploughed through the city planning files and secondary sources, I began to answer several of my initial questions. It became evident that the Columbia Cottage was a vernacular form constructed from the mid-nineteenth century through the first quarter of the twentieth century. Research also suggested that these buildings were not unique to Columbia, but were associated with regional building trends. The more time I spent with the survey
files, historic photographs, and Cooledge’s report, I began to see the project developing in a different direction. Rather than an intensive study of an architectural form, its regional distinctiveness, or the theoretical associations with the term “cottage,” this thesis became a thorough analysis of Cooledge’s survey, its origins, discoveries, definitions, and its impacts from 1965 to 2015.

Conversations with Columbia preservationists today reveal that although each of them knew what a “Columbia Cottage” is and can identify several off the top of their heads, there was not a consensus about what buildings can be defined using the term. Some are even unsure that the term is appropriate at all. Reviewing Cooledge’s survey revealed that the ambiguity of the form lies in the details of his report completed in January of 1966. Rather than a single identifiable vernacular form, the term “Columbia Cottage,” as defined by Cooledge, applied to nine different residential forms.

Cooledge identified more Columbia Cottages than any other architectural type or style in 1965. Cooledge used the term “Columbia Cottage” to label the many iterations of the form as an expression of what he understood as Columbia’s architectural identity. Outlining the “Columbia Cottage Family” contributed to the popularity of the term, the preservation of the form, and the formation of an architectural identity for Columbia that had been lost since the city’s burning one hundred years prior to the survey. In defining this local vernacular form, Cooledge gave Columbia's preservationists reason and focus for conserving the city’s architectural heritage. Ultimately, however, location, adaptability, designation, historical association, and aesthetic appeal influenced preservation decisions. This thesis will discuss how these motivations were instrumental in the adaptive use, relocation, or preservation of the Columbia Cottage. It will also argue
that preservation through documentation and new construction have contributed to the preservation and legacy of Columbia’s architectural identity.
Figure 1.1: 1623 Richland Street is a typical Columbia Cottage constructed in ca. 1872 by an African-American tailor. His family owned the property for 120 years until it was donated to the Committee for the Restoration and Beautification of Randolph Cemetery. Photo by author.
CHAPTER II
THE ORIGINS OF THE COOLEDGE SURVEY OF 1965

After five years of service for the Columbia Urban Rehabilitation Commission (URC), its housing inspector and photographer, Joseph Winter had seen the demolition of over one thousand buildings in the city of Columbia between 1956 and 1961. In the name of urban renewal, Columbia’s “Fight Blight” campaign resulted in the elimination of urban “slums,” effectively ridding the city of its most culturally and architecturally diverse neighborhoods. By 1965 the Historic Columbia Foundation had presented Columbia’s Historical and Cultural Buildings Commission with a list of threatened and demolished historic structures. While the list included only those buildings with known demolition dates within designated historic areas, the chairman of the foundation’s Preservation Planning Committee, Mabel B. Payne, made clear that a number of “fine old homes… and many cottages in and out of the historic area are in constant danger,” since “they stand squarely in the path of progress.” In response to the rapid destruction of Columbia’s historic buildings and the imminent threat on others, Historic Columbia Foundation recommended a survey and feasibility study that

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3 Historic Columbia Foundation Preservation Planning Commission, Outstanding Historic Structures Threatened as of 1965, attached to the Minutes of the Historical and Cultural Buildings Commission, March 2, 1965, City of Columbia Planning Department Files, Columbia, SC.
documented the city’s remaining architectural landscape. The survey, conducted in 1965 by architectural historian Harold Cooledge, became the first systematic effort at historic preservation planning in Columbia. It is also the survey that defined, promoted, and preserved the “typical Columbia Cottage.”

Urban Renewal: Progress and Preservation

In 1949 the Federal Housing Act ushered in a period of urban renewal that permanently changed American cities. Prompted by a need for decent housing and a desire to clear urban slums, the bill established a national objective that provided federal assistance for redevelopment of “blighted” areas and the construction of low-rent public housing. Through the creation of the Urban Renewal Authority, the federal law allowed for redevelopment of areas that were predominately inhabited by minorities. The practice, which was often known as “Negro Removal,” has been criticized for eliminating more housing that it actually produced. Low-income families were pushed into small, overcrowded living conditions. While the goal of the law was to provide better living conditions to low-income families and to beautify American cities, the 1949 Federal Housing Act resulted in the erasure of architectural and cultural diversity in many neighborhoods.

The Federal Housing Act of 1954 reduced the restrictions on residential redevelopment to include non-residential prospects. Private developers were given the

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4 The Historic Columbia Foundation Preservation Planning Committee to The Historic Columbia Foundation Board of Trustees, Presented to the Historic and Cultural Buildings Commission, 18 February 1965, City of Columbia Planning Department Files, Columbia, SC.
opportunity to work with city officials to rehabilitate blighted neighborhoods with non-residential purposes. Although much of the country saw the clearing of land to make way for private redevelopment, the South Carolina Supreme Court ruled that urban renewal projects could only use federal funds for public developments. Demolition, however, did not cease. The adoption of a housing code and the establishment of the Urban Rehabilitation Commission in 1954 resulted in the demolition of 1,090 buildings in Columbia. Although the Rehabilitation Commission gave homeowners the opportunity to rehabilitate their properties, few had the financial resources to do so, giving the City the authority to demolish their homes. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s the Rehabilitation Commission led the city’s largest urban renewal and “Flight Blight” campaign. The URC held parades, hung billboards next to town hall, and made films to encourage the beautification of the community. Unfortunately, beautification of Columbia came at a price.

Beneath urban renewal motivations and the “Flight Blight” campaign in Columbia were the long-standing notions of cleanliness that emerged during the Progressive Era, as well as traditional concepts of quality design. Such sentiments were not only evident in the physical clearing of slums and enforcement of standard housing codes, but also in the

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language of urban renewal. Certain areas were noted as “simply not conducive to a good residential environment,” and an emphasis was placed on the civic duty to clean up (and clear out) such neighborhoods.\textsuperscript{11} Even early preservationists sought to “eliminate present slums,” while at the same time designating cultural and historic landmarks, historic districts, and preservation ordinances.\textsuperscript{12} Phelps H. Bultman, an architect and active preservationist, claimed that the “vernacular’ buildings in the state capital exhibit in general a real lack of design quality.”\textsuperscript{13} Buildings with “design quality” in Columbia were typically high-style buildings associated with white elites. In the mid-nineteenth century, preservationists were fighting a battle to save buildings like the DeBruhl-Marshall House, the Robert Mills House (previously known as the Ainsley Hall House), and the Hampton-Preston Mansion from destruction and urban growth.\textsuperscript{14} The energy spent to preserve those buildings that were considered to be of significant “value, quality, and worthy of preservation” was energy lost to the vernacular architecture of the city.\textsuperscript{15} Beautification of Columbia, therefore, resulted in the destruction of entire neighborhoods—neighborhoods with a previously intact collection of nineteenth century vernacular architecture, including the type known locally as the Columbia Cottage.


\textsuperscript{12} Mabel B. Payne, Historical and Cultural Buildings Plan, Historic Columbia Foundation Preservation Planning Committee to City of Columbia Historical and Cultural Buildings Commission, February 18, 1965, City of Columbia Planning Department Files, Columbia, SC.


\textsuperscript{14} National Register of Historic Places, The DeBruhl-Marshall House, Revised, Columbia, Richland County, South Carolina National Register #S10817740023, currently in review, 2015.

\textsuperscript{15} Buildings Commission, Survey of Historical Buildings Form, Columbia, SC, City of Columbia Planning Department Files, Columbia, SC.
While urban renewal resulted in the erasure of architecturally significant buildings, in Columbia, as in other cities across the country, the movement initiated preservation concerns among city officials, historical societies, and interested citizens. In light of the heightened awareness of the rapid loss of the city’s architectural fabric, the Planning Commission and the Rehabilitation Commission established the Historic and Cultural Buildings Commission on February 20, 1963.\(^\text{16}\) While the Buildings Commission sought to identify a list of significant buildings in Columbia from its inception, it was not until 1965 that the commission was able to procure an official list, reviewed and surveyed by an architectural historian. In a report of the Historic Columbia Foundation Preservation Planning Committee, Mabel Payne, who also worked for the Buildings Commission, asserted that there remained an “unusually fortunate number of small but quaint ‘Columbia’ and ‘Builders’ cottages” in the historic residential areas of the city, but that those structures were in “grave danger” as they “stand squarely in the path of progress.”\(^\text{17}\) The Planning Committee’s list indicated that fifty-five buildings were demolished between 1957 and 1965, twenty of which were categorized as cottages.\(^\text{18}\) Their study, presented to the Buildings Commission, called for a preservation planning and feasibility study that would further identify historic structures in the city so that the commission might be better prepared to make future preservation decisions. Upon these recommendations, Phelps Bultman contacted Dr. Harold N. Cooledge, an architectural

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\(^{16}\) Hampton, “The Progress of Preservation,” 11.

\(^{17}\) Historic Columbia Foundation Preservation Planning Committee, *Outstanding Historic Structures Threatened as of 1965*, City of Columbia Planning Department Files, Columbia, SC.

\(^{18}\) Historic Columbia Foundation Preservation Planning Committee, *Known Historic Structure Demolitions, 1957-1965*, City of Columbia Planning Department Files, Columbia, SC.
historian and professor at Clemson University, to conduct an architectural survey of the city of Columbia.\textsuperscript{19}

\textbf{Examining Columbia’s Architectural Landscape}

When the Buildings Commission hired Cooledge in the spring of 1965 the city was in the midst of its eighth annual urban renewal, “Fight Blight,” campaign.\textsuperscript{20} By the time Cooledge arrived to conduct the survey in December of that year, the HCBC and the HCF Preservation Planning Committee had drafted a list of buildings for evaluation—the \textit{Historical and Cultural Buildings Plan}. On March 2, 1965, the Buildings Commission requested funds from city council to research properties considered historically valuable, for the contracting of an architectural historian to evaluate the \textit{Historical and Cultural Buildings Plan}, and for the creation of a master plan for Columbia’s historic neighborhoods. While the survey encompassed the “old city gridiron,” extending ten blocks from the State House in each direction, these requests ultimately guided the survey Cooledge conducted.\textsuperscript{21}

The goal of the survey was to define architectural types and styles, and rank each building based on its historic and/or architectural value. Cooledge, likely with the assistance of Mabel Payne, marked buildings as “worthy of preservation, restoration or repair,” remarked on their physical condition, categorized their national, state, or local

\textsuperscript{19} Buildings Commission Minutes, March 2, 1965; Phelps H. Bultman to Harold Cooledge, 3 March 1965, City of Columbia Planning Department Files, Columbia, SC.
\textsuperscript{20} The \textit{State}, 1958-1965, Columbia, SC
\textsuperscript{21} Harold Cooledge, \textit{The Classification, Preservation, and Restoration of Historic Structures within the limits of the area whose cultural nucleus is the City of Columbia: A First Survey and Feasibility Study}, Report presented to the Historical and Cultural Buildings Commission, Columbia, SC, January 1966, City of Columbia Planning Department Files, Columbia, SC.
“value,” and ranked their “quality” from “very high,” “high,” “notable,” to “mention.”

Beyond checking these boxes, Cooledge wrote the “notable features, historical significance, and description,” although ranging in detail from extensive description of the appearance and alterations to a simple phrase—“valueless.” These professional judgments undoubtedly proved influential in preservation, relocation, and demolition decisions by the Buildings Commission and the Rehabilitation Commission.

After evaluating the significance of each building, Cooledge developed a ranking system that classified preservation priorities for the city of Columbia. Cooledge ranked buildings according to “two fundamental principles.” First, he considered it critical that historic buildings should not be preserved based on their age alone. Therefore, he used the following criteria to evaluate the significance of “old buildings”:

1. Unique or distinctive characteristics in architectural design
2. Rarity of type within the cultural area surveyed
3. Belonging to a “family” or “genera” of buildings of which it is exemplary
4. The work of an architect either locally or nationally important
5. A superior example of a style or type of building which is becoming, or is in danger of becoming, extinct nationally.

In addition to this criterion for evaluating architectural significance, the second principle that guided Cooledge’s ranking scheme asserted that “truly historic buildings,” those associated with important historical events and men were “of great obvious intrinsic value.”

Cooledge’s principles reflected a period in the national preservation movement that focused on important associations, “big people” and “cute buildings,” which became the framework for the federal National Register of Historic Places, established in the

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22 Buildings Commission, Survey of Historical Buildings Form, Columbia, SC, City of Columbia Planning Department Files, Columbia, SC. Mabel Payne’s handwriting is recognizable on many of the forms, therefore, it is likely that she accompanied Coolege during the survey.
National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966.\textsuperscript{25} Cooledge’s report, contemporary to the NHPA and its motivating work, \textit{With Heritage So Rich}, published in 1966, reveals national trends in preservation theory and practice, whereby some buildings were considered “more historic” than others, and therefore, better candidates for preservation.\textsuperscript{26}

Based on his principles, Cooledge ranked each building according how important it was to preserve it and divided the survey forms into Group I, Group II, Group III and Group IV for submission to the HCBC. Group I buildings were those to conserve and restore at all costs, which if lost “would leave an un-rewritable blank page in [Columbia’s material, visual] history.”\textsuperscript{27} Typically, Group I structures included large antebellum residences of wealthy, white elites, as well as significant public, religious, and industrial buildings. Group II buildings were well suited for adaptive use, and included smaller residences and several Columbia Cottages. Cooledge noted that Group III buildings had the potential for preservation, but where not first priority for their lack of structural or architectural integrity. Finally, Group IV included buildings that were only to be preserved through private enterprise.\textsuperscript{28} Following Cooledge’s report, the city adapted the group classification system, using much of the same language and individual building rankings to create the HCBC’s City of Columbia Historical and Cultural Buildings and


\textsuperscript{26} John M. Fowler, “The Federal Preservation Program,” 35-44.

\textsuperscript{27} Cooledge, \textit{The Classification, Preservation, and Restoration of Historic Structures}.

\textsuperscript{28} Cooledge, \textit{The Classification, Preservation, and Restoration of Historic Structures}. 
Sites List, first adopted in January, 1967, and became the basis for the city’s current Landmarks List.\textsuperscript{29}

While urban renewal initiatives resulted in the destruction of thousands of buildings in Columbia, Cooledge contended that Columbia “still possess[ed] a meaningful sample of her visual, material history.”\textsuperscript{30} While he defined other notable building styles and types extant throughout the city, the building type that he found most interesting and gave the most attention to in his report was the Columbia Cottage. His extensive discussion of the form is representative of its imprint on the city that Cooledge surveyed.


\textsuperscript{30} Cooledge, \textit{The Classification, Preservation, and Restoration of Historic Structures}. 
CHAPTER III
DEFINING THE COLUMBIA COTTAGE FAMILY

The Columbia Cottage was a vernacular form constructed between the mid-nineteenth century and the early twentieth century. By 1872 the form was widespread throughout Columbia. Over eighty years later, in 1956, the city’s historic residential neighborhoods, namely Arsenal Hill Historic Area (HA-1) and the Robert Mills Historic Area (HA-2), remained largely comprised of Columbia Cottages. In the same year, the form was also popular in sections of Ward One, the area west of the University of South Carolina that was comprised of predominately African-American residents, and was dispersed along other city blocks. The pervasiveness of the form was so strong in the mid-twentieth century that it nearly matched the prevalence of the single house in Charleston and the shotgun in New Orleans. Before 1965 little attention had been paid to the form. Interest, however, was growing among the preservation community. While Mabel Payne, and the Historic Columbia Foundation Preservation Planning Committee cited several types of “cottages” in their report to the HCBC in early 1965, it was not until Cooledge’s survey report, completed in January 1966, that the form was defined. Following publication of Cooledge’s findings, the Columbia Cottage was classified and the use of the term proliferated.

The Columbia Cottage that Cooleedge defined in the report completed in 1966 came in a variety of forms including the “Classic,” the “Baroque,” and the “Gable-End.” In his report, Cooleedge provided a detailed description of each of the three major variations in what he terms the “Columbia Cottage Family.” For each category, Cooleedge assigned an abbreviation—CCI, CCII, and CCIII, respectively—and indicated within which category each cottage belonged on the survey form space reserved for building style. Cooleedge also divided each of these three categories into sub-categories, paying close attention to detail and making clear distinctions among a “family” of buildings otherwise easily clumped together.34

Although Cooleedge’s categorization scheme highlighted the variation among Columbia Cottages, the fundamental characteristics of the form were consistent. The wood frame and sided body of the house was one to one-and-a-half-stories, three to five bays wide and one to two bays deep, with a gable roof. Raised on brick piers or a masonry foundation, the full-height or partial basement resembled that of a typical “English” basement popular among larger residences of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. All examples had a porch with a shed, hipped, or pedimented-gable roof, varying from one-bay to full-façade in length and supported by four columns. With the exception of the CCIII or “Gable End” form, typically each Columbia Cottage was symmetrical, with two to four windows flanking either side of a central door, and had a double-pile, central passage plan with two interior chimneys (Figure 3.1).

The Classic Columbia Cottage (CCI-1) was a side-gabled one to one-and-a-half-story wood frame building over a full or three-quarter raised brick basement, and is three to five bays wide. The basement may or may not have been covered with roughcast or

34 Cooleedge, *The Classification, Preservation, and Restoration of Historic Structures.*
stucco, and some had two to three sash windows on each elevation at the basement level. The front and rear elevations had four symmetrically disposed two-to-three-sash windows on the main level. The central door was topped by a rectangular transom window and flanked by rectangular sidelights. There was a central gable porch that covers one full bay and was supported by four, usually square, columns. On the gable-ends there were two to four sash windows symmetrically spaced. The gable may have had a raking cornice, box cornice, or false transverse cornice creating the illusion of a pediment, and all moldings were simple in profile. The central passage, double pile plan had two interior chimneys dividing the interior rooms to either side of the central passage. The chimneys may have been exposed brick, stucco, or roughcast. Cooleedge noted that the “Classic” cottage is distributed throughout the city, yet most examples were much smaller in scale than the “base-type,” and he therefore created sub-categories to distinguish the “classics” from one another (Figure 3.2).35

The Classic Columbia Cottage included two sub-groups: CCI-2 and CCI-3. The CCI-2 had only two windows on the front and rear elevations. It was lower to the ground than the CCI-1, but still on a basement raised one-and-a-half to three feet off of the ground. The porch was narrower and may have had a gable, shed, or hipped roof. The overall proportion of the building was much smaller, and may have had only two rooms flanking a central passage, rather than four. Finally, the CCI-2 had one to two chimneys, variously placed. Cooleedge used the term “quarters house” on various survey forms to indicate the exceptionally small size of the building, comparing them to slave housing (Figure 3.3). The CCI-3, also variable in size though usually smaller than the CCI-1, had four sash windows closely spaced along the front and rear elevations. They were

35 Cooleedge, The Classification, Preservation, and Restoration of Historic Structures.
generally raised one-and-a-half to two feet on brick piers, many of which have been in-filled with brick or concrete block. There was a narrow porch that extended the width of the building with a low-pitch hipped or shed roof, supported by four columns (Figure 3.4). While each building varied, typically there were two interior chimneys dividing two rooms to either side of a central passage, much like the CCI-1.36

The “Baroque” cottage, or CCII, was larger in scale and more detailed in ornament than the “Classic” cottage. Though much like the CCI, the CCII had large gable, hipped, or shed dormers. The door and window details were also more elaborate (Figure 3.5). Like the CCI, the “Baroque” form also had two sub-categories. The CCII-2, like the base-form, had four windows; however, the two closest to the door were full-height casement windows, and act as “French doors,” usually sheltered with full-height shutters (Figure 3.6). The CCII-3 was smaller in scale, and had only two windows, both full-height casement windows. The CCII-3 also had a porch that covered the entire length of the façade, while the other two sub-categories had porches that covered only the central door and two flanking windows (Figure 3.7). In most examples, the “Baroque” cottage was built in a raised foundation of brick piers or a raised basement.37

The third category of the Columbia Cottage “family” was the “Gable End” form (CCIII). As Cooledge predicted in his report, this form has rarely been associated with the Columbia Cottage type since his definition. Most would consider the “Gable End” form a different vernacular family, known as the Gable-Front, the simplest of which is often referred to as the shotgun house popular throughout the southeast and Gulf Coast

regions. For Cooledge, however, the “Gable End” form constituted a widely distributed cottage form in the city of Columbia, and was therefore, a member of the Columbia Cottage “family.”

The CCIII was a one to one-and-a-half story wood frame building raised on one-and-a-half to three feet brick pier foundation, and situated with the gable-end facing the street. Typically, the façade was asymmetrical with the door on one end of the elevation and two full-height casement windows or French doors to one side of the door. Above the door was a transom light. Cooledge inferred that the typical plan includes a side passage with the rooms aligned on the opposite side. The front porch was supported by four columns and had either a shed roof or low-pitched hipped roof. Cooledge found that chimney placement was varied from interior to exterior, and that the cornice finish also varied (Figure 3.8). The sub-categories of the CCIII were those that are two-stories in height. The CCIII-2 had the same door and window arrangement on the second floor, and had a double porch on which the second floor door opened. The CCIII-3 had a mixture of window types and may or may not have had a full-height porch. While Cooledge found it important to include the “Gable End” form in his discussion of the Columbia Cottage Family, his contemporaries and subsequent architectural historians and preservationists have categorized the “Gable End,” CCIII as a shotgun house.

40 Cooledge, *The Classification, Preservation, and Restoration of Historic Structures*.
In addition to differences in form among the categories of the Columbia Cottage Family, stylistic details also varied among Columbia Cottages. While most were characteristic of the mid-nineteenth century Neo-Classical or Greek Revival style, others, either by later construction date or alteration, demonstrated mid-to-late-nineteenth century Gothic Revival and Victorian vernacular details. Typical features of the Neo-Classical or Greek Revival cottage included a pedimented-gable porch, transom and sidelights surrounding the central door, gable dormers, and classical (including square) columns. Columbia Cottages with Gothic Revival and Victorian vernacular details included features such as turned balusters for the porch railing, decorative vergeboards and spindlework, and decorative brackets under the eaves and at the top of the porch columns. While these variations in size, scale, and architectural details contributed to the sub-division of the term, the Columbia Cottage form remained consistent and recognizable as a distinct vernacular tradition that was once widespread in the South Carolina capital city.

Cooledge’s survey was undoubtedly influential in the definition of the term “Columbia Cottage.” Although he did not invent the term, the publication of his report sparked a proliferation of the phrase “a typical Columbia Cottage” among preservationists and the community at large. The local newspaper, *The State*, featured an article on Cooledge’s report highlighting the “category of special interest to Columbians…the ‘Columbia Cottage.’” The term was also used to classify city landmark buildings, to advocate preservation and/or relocation of buildings, as a style noteworthy for representing the city on two historic district nominations to the National

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42 For more on architectural styles see: McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses.*
Register of Historic Places, brochures produced by Historic Columbia, and many newspaper articles highlighting Columbia’s historic architecture since the mid-1960s. Outlining the Columbia Cottage Family contributed to the popularity of the term, the preservation of the form, and the formation of an architectural identity for the city.
Figure 3.1: First floor plan of 1623 Richland Street shows the typical central passage, double-pile plan of the Columbia Cottage. Drawing by author.

Figure 3.2: 1830 Henderson Street, a typical CCI, or the “Classic” Columbia Cottage. Photo by Mabel Payne, 1969. Image courtesy of the City of Columbia Planning Department File, Columbia, SC.
Figure 3.3: 715 Park Street, a typical CCI-2. The CCI-2 was also sometimes identified as a “quarters” type in Cooledge’s survey files for their small size and scale. Photo by Mabel Payne, 1960. Image courtesy of the City of Columbia Planning Department File, Columbia, SC.

Figure 3.4: 2009 Park Street, a typical CCI-3, which was smaller than the CCI and often had a triangular dormer. Image courtesy of the City of Columbia Planning Department File, Columbia, SC.
Figure 3.5: 1419 Blanding Street, a typical CCII, which is larger and more ornate than the CCI, and has large dormer windows. Photo by Mabel Payne, 1969. Image courtesy of the City of Columbia Planning Department File, Columbia, SC.

Figure 3.6: 1314 Laurel Street, a typical CII-2, which has proportions and details similar to the CCII, but has two tall casement window and two sash windows on its façade rather than four sash windows. Image courtesy of the City of Columbia Planning Department File, Columbia, SC.
Figure 3.7: 1524 Pickens Street, a typical CCII-3, which is distinguished by its two full-height casement windows that flank the central door. Image courtesy of the City of Columbia Planning Department File, Columbia, SC.

Figure 3.8: 1316 Blanding, a typical CCIII. Photo by Mabel Payne, 1969. Image courtesy of the City of Columbia Planning Department File, Columbia, SC.
CHAPTER IV
“WORTHY OF PRESERVATION:”
PRESERVING THE COLUMBIA COTTAGE THEN AND NOW

Following the publication of Cooledge’s survey and report, the proliferation of the term “Columbia Cottage” among preservationists, journalists, and historians sparked interest among the community in this somewhat ambiguous architectural form. Cooledge surveyed more Columbia Cottages than any other architectural type or style in 1965. His use of the term “Columbia Cottage” to label the many iterations of the form was an expression of what Cooledge understood as Columbia’s architectural identity. Defining a local architectural form gave the city “roots” it thought it lost with the burning of Columbia in 1865. For preservationists Cooledge’s definition provided a reason to conserve buildings that contributed to the historic—and cultural and aesthetic—character of the city.

Since the mid-twentieth century, however, Columbia had been actively involved in the redevelopment of residential neighborhoods. Slum clearance and urban renewal had inspired preservation activity in the city, which initially named two historic districts—HA-1 and HA-2. These neighborhoods received the majority of the original city landmark designations, and also received the majority of Cooledge’s attention in the 1965 survey. These two neighborhoods also contained the largest proportion of the city’s Columbia Cottages. Mabel Payne indicated in the Historic Cultural Buildings Plan presented to the HCBC that there were an “unusually fortunate” number of cottages in the Arsenal Hill area that contributed to the nineteenth-century history of Columbia. By
1956, the Arsenal Hill Historic Area, bounded by Elmwood Avenue, and Assembly, Taylor, and Huger Streets, had over one hundred Columbia Cottages, while the Robert Mills Historic Area, bounded by Elmwood Avenue and Calhoun, Barnwell, Taylor, and Sumter Streets contained approximately fifty cottages. Early designation as historic areas and listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 1971 solidified the precedence for preservation in these sections of the city. Additionally, Historic Columbia Foundation had made significant strides in these neighborhoods beginning in the 1960s. In both HA-1 and HA-2, Columbia Cottages have been preserved sporadically with the exception of a few sections, which have a higher concentration of extant cottages. Ultimately, decisions about preservation were often influenced by location, adaptability, designation and/or landmark status, historical association with important events or historical figures, and aesthetic appeal. Preservation of the Columbia Cottage has come to fruition through five avenues: adaptive use, relocation, preservation through continued residential use, preservation through documentation, and new construction inspired by historic forms.

Adaptive Use

The largest concentration of surviving Columbia Cottages exists on the 1500-1700 blocks of Richland Street. In 1956, the 1500 block of Richland Street contained seven cottages.

44 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, Columbia, SC, 1956. Cooledge’s survey only included 101 buildings designated as Columbia Cottages total. The numbers included here are based on careful analysis of Columbia’s 1956 Sanborn maps. Discrepancies may be due to the ten-year gap between the map and survey. Additionally, Cooledge did not identify a type or style for many structures he considered “valueless.”
Today, the block remains relatively intact, with five of those Columbia Cottages extant.\(^45\) The houses on this block demonstrate several of the key characteristics that encouraged their preservation. First, their location was influential in their preservation, and in many cases restoration, for their adaptability. As the commercial center expanded beyond the Main Street corridor, professionals began to convert residential buildings in the Robert Mills Area into offices for doctors, lawyers, and architects. One of the most well-known, and most readily identified Columbia Cottages, 1518 Richland, or the Maxcy Gregg House, named for the famous Civil War General who resided in the house in the nineteenth century, is located on this block.\(^46\) The building at 1507 Richland, like 1518, received much attention in the local newspapers regarding its restoration in the early 1970s. “Loaded with charm that no new building can copy,” 1507 Richland was considered a “heritage house” that gave Columbia “character and personality and continuity” that set it apart from other historic cities.\(^47\) The preservation of 1507 Richland evoked the aesthetic appeal of retaining historic buildings, but also acknowledged the importance of architectural identity that the Columbia Cottage gave the city. The restoration of both houses was not only secured by their historical associations and “charm,” but also because of the growing popularity of adaptive use of historic houses in the Robert Mills Historic Area. The cottage at 1507 Richland was also featured in the series “Carolina Landmark,” a bi-weekly column that appeared in *The State* from 1977 to

\(^{45}\) Sanborn Fire Insurance Company, Columbia, SC, 1956. 1522 Richland Street is not recognizable by current definitions of a Columbia Cottage among city preservationists; however, the house is categorized as CCIII.

\(^{46}\) “Maxcy Gregg House Saved From Bulldozer,” *The State*, 6 March, 1978. Although the house has been heavily altered with the addition of three large dormers and the expansion of the porch from single-bay to full-width, both the original and altered forms are characteristic of the Greek Revival style Columbia Cottage.

1979, which highlighted historic buildings throughout the state following their rehabilitation and successful reuse as commercial spaces.\(^{48}\)

Located one block west of the historically intact 1500 block of Richland Street is the Mann-Simons House at 1403 Richland. The property, which was owned by an African-American family for over a century, originally contained several buildings. In the early 1970s the Columbia Housing Authority (CHA) threatened to demolish the building through eminent domain, prompting the Historic Columbia Foundation to take steps to advocate its preservation. Although the CHA offered the house for relocation in December 1972, ultimately the Historic Columbia Foundation purchased and preserved the house on its original location at the northeast corner of Marion and Richland Streets.\(^{49}\) In 1978, the Foundation opened the Mann-Simons Cottage as a house museum telling the story of its original owners, an adaptive use of the building that preserved for the public the African-American history of the city, and provided the city’s first Columbia Cottage museum.\(^{50}\)

Relocation

Although original location in the designated historic districts offered a measure of protection, several buildings in each district were relocated to avoid demolition. Those houses on the west side of the Robert Mills Historic Area closer to the burgeoning Main Street district, for example, impinged upon development campaigns. Commercial development forced the relocation of buildings like 1316 Blanding Street to “safer” lots

in the core of the district. The house at 1316 Blanding Street, although a CCIII and a form that was not usually considered a “typical Columbia Cottage,” was adored by many. Cooledge himself wrote in his notes that 1316 Blanding was “a little beauty.” The house was also included among Nell S. Graydon’s collection of Columbia Cottage images in her popular book on Columbia.\textsuperscript{51} The “little beauty” at 1316 Blanding, like the houses on the 1500 Block of Richland Street, was featured as a “Carolina Landmark” in \textit{The State} in August 1978.\textsuperscript{52} When threatened by the South Carolina Baptist Hospital, the community rallied around the cottage that was once owned by the influential dentist and dental supplier, Dr. J. Edwin Boozer of David L. Boozer & Sons. While neighbors fought to preserve the cottage for the aesthetic value it added to the neighborhood, ultimately, the hospital had the cottage relocated to Pickens Street.\textsuperscript{53} Relocation, however it might distort the integrity of the house and its original neighborhood, was a preferred choice over the alternative of demolition. Hundreds of other Columbia Cottages and thousands of other buildings, whether dilapidated, or simply “standing squarely in the path of progress,” were demolished.\textsuperscript{54} Following the devastation of urban renewal, Columbia residents and preservationists had seen the effects of demolition, and sought a well-meaning alternative, which resulted in the relocation of several Columbia Cottages.

While 1316 Blanding was moved from one section of the Robert Mills area to another, other Columbia Cottages, including 1419 Blanding and 1921 Park, were moved to suburbs like Shandon, Forest Acres, and Northeast Columbia to make way for new

\textsuperscript{54} Historic Columbia Foundation Preservation Planning Commission, \textit{Outstanding Historic Structures Threatened as of 1965}, attached to the Minutes of the Historical and Cultural Buildings Commission, 2 March 1965, City of Columbia Planning Department Files, Columbia, SC.
construction or municipal parking. In the fall of 1965, the Columbia Cottage at 1921 Park Street was meticulously taken part, transported across the city, and reconstructed at its current site, 1720 Windover Street (Figure 4.1 and 4.2).\textsuperscript{55} The South Carolina Baptist Convention sought to purchase the land at 1921 Park, but because the house was listed as “historically and architecturally important” by the City of Columbia, the board offered it free of charge to someone who would move and restore it.\textsuperscript{56} This proposition was supported and vetted by the HCBC, and new owners were chosen from over one hundred interested individuals based on commitment to ongoing stewardship of the house.\textsuperscript{57} Relocation of historic houses, and especially Columbia Cottages, was (and continues to be) a popular avenue for preservation. Ultimately, however, the relocation of these structures between 1950 and 1990 altered the character of Columbia’s downtown residential neighborhoods, which have all but become commercial centers.

Preservation through Residential Use

Although several Columbia Cottages have been preserved through rehabilitation and adaptive use on their original sites, few have been preserved as residences as the character of the in-town residential neighborhoods changed. By 1980 downtown residents were lamenting the fact that their neighbors were becoming uncomfortable and they were actively trying to “keep downtown a livable place.”\textsuperscript{58} The property at 1830 Henderson Street, Cooledge’s best example of the classic version of the CCI, remains one of very few Columbia Cottages that retains its original function on its original site, a fate quite

\textsuperscript{55} 1921 Park Street, Street Files, City of Columbia Planning Department Files, Columbia, SC.
\textsuperscript{56} “Baptist Board Offers Old House for Removal,” \textit{The State}, 3 September 1965.
\textsuperscript{57} Mabel B. Payne, “100-Year-Old Edifice To Be Moved, Restore,” \textit{The State}, 7 November 1965.
inconsistent with most historic buildings in Columbia. In the 1700 block of Pulaski and Wayne Streets, the Columbia Cottage has also survived as a residential form in an area where much of the original housing stock was cleared for new construction or commercial development. Though few Columbia Cottages retain their original function, this section will discuss those that have survived relocation and demolition through continued residential use.

The house at 1830 Henderson Street, considered a “style-type” that Cooledge formed the Columbia Cottage Family around, sits at the southeast corner of Henderson and Richland Streets. Known as the “Friday Cottage” it has been consistently owned and functioned as a single-family residence for most of its existence. In 2008, the current owners, and residents, of the house received the Historic Columbia Foundation Preservation Award for Preservation/Restoration. Continuous ownership and maintenance has in many cases resulted in stewardship of historic properties and insured their ongoing preservation. Similarly, 1623 Richland Street, just a few houses away from the Friday Cottage, was preserved by the same family for over 120 years. Only recently has the property begun to undergo rehabilitation for commercial use. Other examples of Columbia Cottages that remain residential in use have typically been relocated to suburban areas. The ongoing preservation of its intended domestic function is unique, however, incredibly pertinent to the history of preserving this architectural form.

59 Cooledge, 1830 Henderson, Survey of Historical Buildings Form, Historical and Cultural Buildings Commission (HCBC), Columbia, SC, City of Columbia Planning Department Files, Columbia, SC
Three Columbia Cottages, 1724, 1720, and 1716 Pulaski Street, have been preserved as single- or multi-family residences (Figure 4.3). The block itself is relatively intact surviving the fate of surrounding blocks, which have been demolished to accommodate modern residential building. Each of these houses is constructed on a hill and uses the raised basement feature to level the core of the house, typical of many smaller Columbia Cottages in the Arsenal Hill area. The house at 1724 Pulaski is a well-maintained CCI-2 with a full-width, shed-roof porch supported by four square columns. The building at 1720 Pulaski has been converted to a duplex and has a much altered porch system. However, the overall features of the house are characteristic of the CCI-2. The cottage at 1716 Pulaski, also a CCI-2, has an enclosed porch with a shed roof supported by four square columns over brick piers. The porch roof also has exposed rafters, which point to an early twentieth-century alteration. Flanking this short row of intact cottages are two vacant lots, one that still maintains its brick retaining wall. These vacant lots, which are sprinkled throughout the Arsenal Hill area, are ghosts of long-gone buildings and homes, reminders of the destruction caused by urban renewal. Their vacancy also preserves the legacy of these houses—which in this case were likely Columbia Cottages—that have been lost. It is clear here that something is missing. This is not always the case when new construction takes over. While these vacant lots, 1730 and 1714 Pulaski, can represent failed preservation, they can also serve as historical markers of city development, displacement, and the absence of a defined architectural landscape.

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62 The houses at 1716, 1720, and 1724 Pulaski Street were not defined as “Columbia Cottages” in Cooledge’s Survey in 1965. However, the buildings take the form of the Columbia Cottage and appear on the 1956 Sanborn Insurance Map.

Preservation through Documentation

Three decades prior to Cooledge’s survey, the federal government established the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) to document a “complete resume of the builders’ arts.” The program established a nation-wide standard for documentation based on traditional methodology that included measured drawings, large-format, black and white photographs, and historical reports. HABS officials circulated their philosophical justifications, criteria for selection, drawing techniques, and a format for report writing, promoting standardized documentation. Unfortunately, this level of documentation was not completed in 1965, nor was it required for the demolition of historic buildings in Columbia. However, Cooledge, Payne, the HCBC and Historic Columbia Foundation wrote descriptions, took photographs, made sketch drawings, and completed research, all of which is stored in a public repository.

Of the hundreds of Columbia Cottages, surveyed and not surveyed in 1965, approximately forty extant buildings now communicate the once predominant form as an architectural type in Columbia. Cooledge was impressed by the frequency with which the form existed, especially given the peculiar features like the raised basement. Demonstrating, or even imagining, the architectural landscape that Cooledge encountered in 1965 is a difficult task today. Therefore, Cooledge’s survey, in addition to Mabel Payne’s research and photographers’ collections of mid-century images serve as “preservation through documentation.”

In his photograph book on the history of Columbia, Russell Maxey claimed that, “The past is not really gone forever…A priceless legacy in pictures has since been left in

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books, magazines, and newspapers to those who would interpret the past…Details of
everyday life, too commonplace to be recorded in writing, can often be revealed only in
t pictures." Maxey, whether he was intending to or not, recognized the significance of
preservation through documentation. By photographing Columbia, he was instrumental in
capturing a “snapshot in time” that would give future historians a glimpse into the past.
Largely a compilation of building and aerial photographs, his collection is valuable for
understanding the landscape of Columbia, especially as it began to change in the mid-
twentieth century. Similarly, the earlier work of writer Nell S. Graydon also sought to
preserve the built environment of Columbia through her photographs. While her book is
not typically considered a scholarly work, nonetheless, her photos preserve the buildings
she chooses to include. Her choice, in fact, speaks to a previous generation’s aesthetic
ideals and historical values that influenced physical preservation. Joseph Winter’s
photographs from the mid-1950s through the 1960s are equally telling of the motivations
behind urban renewal. Winter sought to record dilapidated buildings with the intention of
rehabilitating or demolishing them. Due to housing standards set by the Urban
Rehabilitation Commission, many of the buildings he photographed no longer stand.
Winter’s photographs, therefore, serve as the last record of these buildings.

For the Columbia Cottage, Cooledge’s survey served not only as a catalyst for
physical preservation of the form, but it also preserved hundreds of cottages through
documentation. Each survey form acts as a record of existence: recording style,
construction date, architectural details, and state of repair. Together the forms provide a

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66 Maxey, *South Carolina’s Historic Columbia*, 363.
67 Graydon, *Tales of Columbia*.
68 University of South Carolina Digital Collections, The Joseph Winter Collection,
picture of Columbia, a city Cooledge portrayed as characterized by its “quaint” cottages. Studying the forms gives one an historical understanding of the built landscape of the city. Payne, who accompanied Cooledge on his survey, also did her share of work to preserve through documentation the architectural heritage of Columbia. Active in the historic preservation movement in Columbia both for Historic Columbia Foundation and the City, Payne took hundreds of photographs, meticulously noting dates and details about relocation and ownership. She conducted deed research, wrote histories on houses threatened by demolition, and advocated their preservation. She also drew sketch plans of buildings she was able to enter. Her notes have aided city planning, historic preservation, and research on the Columbia Cottage. Payne’s documentation has provided insight into the interior plans of the Columbia Cottage, the number of cottages throughout the city (especially those not categorized in the 1965 survey), and the motivations for preservation.69 While Payne and Cooledge can be criticized from today’s perspective for their inability to recognize the “value” and potential of so many small, vernacular buildings, as historian Thomas Sugrue aptly stated, we must “listen to our historical subjects and package them in their own terms.”70 Unfortunately, buildings were demolished, many because of a lack of recognition on the part of those who considered themselves preservationists. Fortunately, however, they documented Columbia as they found it. They likely did not see it as such, but that documentation was, in and of itself, preservation.

69 City of Columbia Planning Department Files, Columbia, SC.
New Construction Inspired by Historic Forms

In October 1984 Dorothy Perry Thompson reminisced about the once shotgun-house-lined streets of the Wheeler Hill neighborhood she grew up in. The neighborhood, bound by Wheat Street, Saluda Avenue, Enoree Street and Pickens Street, was photographed by Joseph Winter and Mabel Payne in the 1960s and 1970s as part of the urban renewal campaign. By the mid-1980s most of the houses had been demolished to provide modern housing close to the expanding University of South Carolina. Development efforts, a collaboration between the City of Columbia and the Carolina Research and Development Foundation, resulted in the displacement of a community. What was rebuilt in the shadows of this destruction, however, gave a nod to the vernacular architecture of the city.

The 1700 block of Catawba Street, in the center of the Wheeler Hill neighborhood, contains three buildings whose design was inspired by the historic Columbia Cottage. Constructed between 1982 and 1990, 1704, 1709, and 1720 Catawba are one-and-a-half story wood frame buildings erected on raised, full-height masonry foundations. Like the CCII, each of the houses has three large dormers. The house at 1704 Catawba has a full-width porch supported by four square columns. The central double door is flanked by five-paned sidelights and is topped by a four-pane transom, Colonial Revival features that speak to the traditional Greek Revival style cottages common among the Columbia Cottage form (Figure 4.4). The house at 1709 Catawba has a full-width integral porch unlike those seen in most Columbia Cottages; however, it

72 1709 Catawba is constructed into a hill. Its masonry foundation is visible from the side and rear elevations.
retains square columns, classical door surrounds, and Chippendale porch railing reminiscent of 1507 Richland Street (Figure 4.5). The building at 1720 Catawba has an entry porch with a shed roof supported by two square columns, similar to the smaller forms of the Columbia Cottage (Figure 4.6). Additionally, 1704 and 1720 Catawba also have latticework that conceals the area below the porch, much like that of many of the earlier cottages. While these buildings do not intentionally copy a particular house, they act as reconstructions of an incredibly popular domestic form in Columbia. The architectural identity that Cooledge assigned the form in his survey not only acted as catalyst for preservation, but also new construction. Although buildings have been, and continued to be, demolished in historic neighborhoods, the new residents of Wheeler Hill desired a domestic type that was familiar to the landscape. Whether they sought to make amends for the destruction of the “real thing,” or fancied the “quaint charm” of the Columbia Cottage is open for interpretation. What is not up for debate is that the Columbia Cottage was not only a significant historic building type, but has become an ideal domestic form for Columbia’s residents.

Beyond the city limits, architects, developers, and suburban residents are also reinterpreting the Columbia Cottage. The house at 100 Beaver Lake Drive, located in the Woodcreek Farms subdivision in Northeast Columbia, is at its core inspired by the “classic” Columbia Cottage (Figure 4.7). Constructed on a slight slope, the house is raised on a masonry foundation and has a pedimented-gable porch supported by four columns. The style, size, and massing of 100 Beaver Lake Dr. are similar to 1431 Pendleton Street. Likewise, several houses along Lake Carolina Boulevard, also in Northeast Columbia, mimic the classic Columbia Cottage form. For example, 205 Lake
Carolina Blvd., though composed of brick veneer siding, has a full-width porch raised on brick piers with latticework concealing the crawlspace, and a triangular dormer similar to 712 Calhoun Street and 2009 Park Street (Figure 4.8).

These Northeast Columbia neighborhoods, which are characteristic of post-suburban development, combine the curvilinear roads and picturesque landscapes with pedestrian streetscapes that acknowledge early city planning. While new urbanism town planning in suburbs like Lake Carolina is inspired by a mixture the early street car suburbs and automobile suburbs, as well as Garden City ideals, Colonial Revival architecture typically lines these new developments. Architectural historians have argued that Colonial Revival architecture suggests a “conservative attitude” that “looks to the American past for inspiration.” The construction of modern residential buildings in Wheeler Hill, Woodcreek Farms, and Lake Carolina that reflects the historic Columbia Cottage form is representative of conservative notions of home, place, and identity. While Colonial Revival or New Traditional architecture is repeated in neighborhoods across the country, the special attention to a design that mirrors the local vernacular form is ubiquitous in these late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century Columbia developments. Russell Maxey wrote in the conclusion to his book of Columbia photographs that, “So it is with fond memories of the old, that we strive to cope with the

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new.”77 New construction in Columbia has done just that. While the buildings are not perfect reconstructions, and certainly do not contain historic materials, their design and popularity preserve the memory of Columbia’s “quaint” cottages.

77 Maxey, *South Carolina’s Historic Columbia*, 363
Figure 4.1: Dismantling of 1921 Park Street in preparation for its relocation. Photo by Mabel Payne, 1965. Image courtesy of the City of Columbia Planning Department File, Columbia, SC.

Figure 4.2: Relocation of 1921 Park Street. Photo by Mabel Payne, 1965. Image courtesy of the City of Columbia Planning Department File, Columbia, SC.
Figure 4.3: The 1700 Block of Pulaski Street has three extant Columbia Cottages. To either side of these buildings is a vacant lot on which a Columbia Cottage once stood. Photo by author.

Figure 4.4: The house at 1704 Catawba Street is a late nineteenth-century building inspired by the historic Columbia Cottage form, and is quite similar to 1518 Richland Street after its rehabilitation. Photo by author.
Figure 4.5: The house at 1709 Catawba Street is a late nineteenth-century building inspired by the historic Columbia Cottage form. The porch railing resembles the Chippendale railing extant at 1507 Richland Street. Photo by author.

Figure 4.6: The house at 1720 Catawba Street is a late nineteenth-century building inspired by the historic Columbia Cottage form. Photo by author.
Figure 4.7: The house at 100 Beaver Lake Drive was constructed in a modern suburban development and is reminiscent of the Columbia Cottage at 1431 Pendleton Street. Photo by author.

Figure 4.8: The building at 205 Lake Carolina Boulevard, constructed in a suburb northeast of Columbia, resembles the historic design of many Columbia Cottages. Photo by author.
CHAPTER V
THE FUTURE OF THE COLUMBIA COTTAGE

Fifty years after Dr. Harold N. Cooledge surveyed the historic architecture of the city of Columbia, approximately twenty-five percent of the once pervasive architectural form, the Columbia Cottage, remain. Following his study, Cooledge claimed that Columbia, even in the wake of urban renewal, still possessed a “meaningful sample” of its historic architecture. He also stated, however, that, “If the city does not wish to become anonymous through the inevitable ‘skin-shedding’ which all vital urban centers experience, she much conserve, preserve and protect a meaningful cross-section of that sample.” While the city may still maintain a “cross-section” of its original Columbia Cottages, the important question to ask is whether or not it is a “meaningful” section. Though Cooledge does not explicitly state this in his report, it is clear that his elaborate explanation of the Columbia Cottage is rooted in the fact that he saw it as the most significant architectural form in Columbia—and with its name, made it the defining architectural character of the city as he saw it in 1965. Cooledge easily could have referred to each of these buildings as “Greek Revival Cottage” or “Victorian Vernacular Cottage,” lumping them with popular national and regional architectural styles. Instead, he uses the term he learned from his Columbia commissioners to define an architectural legacy. That legacy, however, has not been well maintained. The remaining twenty-five

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78 Cooledge, The Classification, Preservation, and Restoration of Historic Structures.
percent, unfortunately, do not give modern residents a sense of the historic character of
the city.

To ensure that those which remain extant are not lost to future development,
neglect, or negligent renovation practices Columbia preservationists, historians, and
residents needs to consider the following: (1) Update the city-wide architectural survey;
(2) Update the City of Columbia Historic Landmarks List (2012); (3) Digitize the City
Planning Department Files; and (4) Find a meaningful way to advocate the preservation
of the Columbia Cottage.

**Update the City-Wide Architectural Survey**

The most recent city-wide architectural survey was conducted in 1991-1993. The report
includes historical background, an inventory of properties listed in the National Register
of Historic Places, recommendations for National Register eligibility, and an inventory of
the city’s historic architecture. While this survey fulfilled its purpose, and has certainly
been a rudimentary resource for those researching the history of the development of
Columbia, it is now over twenty years old. New buildings and neighborhoods are now
eligible for the National Register, and many have been listed in the past two decades.
Furthermore, buildings have been demolished, altered, and relocated, prompting the
necessity of an updated survey. The update should also include an expanded historical
context. Historians, graduate students, and city and state officials have produced a wealth
of excellent research. Currently, the history says little about the history of African
Americans and their contribution to the city’s landscape, and omits the impact that

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segregation had on the built environment. Inclusion of this material will add to and strengthen the arguments made in the 1993 report.

In addition to updating the survey and historic context, a revised city-wide survey should include an architectural style guide that emphasizes those common to Columbia. In recent years cities like New Orleans, Louisiana and Roanoke, Virginia have produced architectural style guides to accompany their city’s preservation guidelines. These guides not only serve as a report on the architectural character of their cities, but also inform residents of the important historic features and materials found in their neighborhoods, encouraging their ongoing preservation. For the city of Columbia, an architectural guidebook, which can be a part of and a result of the updated city-wide survey, will become a source for city preservation officers, students, residents, and developers. It will generate a sense of community, identity, and character that will support the work that the City Planning Department carries out. Like the definition and categorization of the Columbia Cottage in 1965, and updated architectural guide based on styles that are representative of Columbia will enhance the city’s preservation mission. Additionally, it will be an outlet for reiterating the prominence and character-defining quality of the Columbia Cottage.

Update the City of Columbia Historic Landmarks List

The City of Columbia Historic Landmarks List, although recently updated in 2012, should be evaluated to consider both inclusion of non-listed landmarks, as well as

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reconsideration of landmark ranking status, defined by Cooledge’s 1965 survey groups. Research for this project has revealed at least 40 extant Columbia Cottages, however, only half of those are listed as city landmarks. The relatively few extant cottages should be evaluated for recognition and nomination to the city landmarks list for their contribution to the architectural history of Columbia. Additionally, the ranking system, and the basis for designating preservation priorities should also be reevaluated. Several of the Columbia Cottages listed are designated as Group III landmarks, including the building at 1507 Richland Street, which was featured as a “Carolina Landmark” in the 1970s. Additionally, houses like the Mann-Simons Cottage (1403 Richland) and the Modjeska Monteith Simkins House (2025 Marion), which are both significant to African-American heritage and material culture, are Group II landmarks. Because of the relatively few African-American landmark sites in the city, these buildings, as well as others should be considered among the city’s most prized architectural and historic sites. The Landmarks List is intended to highlight, and thereby preserve, sites for their historical and architectural significance. If the city is to properly serve its built environment it is critical to reexamine both the sites worthy of landmark status, as well as the parameters for recognition.

Digitize the City Planning Department Files

I was first introduced to the City Planning Department Library at the start of this project. I quickly realized that this room is the hidden gem for research on the history of preservation, the built environment, and city planning in Columbia. Few realize that this resource is available, as it is usually reserved for the use of the Planning Department staff. One avenue for making the Planning Department’s files more widely accessible is through collaboration with the Richland County Public Library, the South Caroliniana Library, and/or the South Carolina Digital Library. These repositories have established digitization programs, and may be capable of making the City’s historic documentation, photographs, surveys, and commission minutes more accessible to the public. Not only would the digitization of the city files be a service to the community, but it would also be an admirable partnership in the advancement of the digital humanities.

“Why Preserve?”

In the conclusion of Cooledge’s report, he moved beyond “sentimental and academic reasons” for preservation, and rather, stressed the economic benefits of historic preservation. Historic preservation, Cooledge claimed, “is sound business.” The financial incentives of historic preservation are certainly imperative for encouraging most homeowners and real estate developers to consider restoration or rehabilitation over demolition or alteration. However, there are also intrinsic benefits in preserving the city’s architectural and cultural heritage.

Often twenty-first-century preservationists feel the need to make an economic argument about the financial incentives of rehabilitation in relation to the costs of
demolition and new construction rather than focusing their attention on the cultural and historical significance of such buildings. In Richard E. Stipe’s article in the National Trust’s *Preservation News* published in 1972, and reprinted in his 2003 edited volume *A Richer Heritage*, he offered several answers for the question “Why Preserve?” First, he asserted that historic resources physically link us to the past. While images and documentation from Cooledge’s survey help us understand the pervasiveness of the Columbia Cottage in 1965, extant buildings provide physical evidence to examine the form and legacy of preservation that has been offered here. Studies show that Americans feel more connected to the past when they experience historical spaces and places. While pictures, maps, books, newspaper articles, lectures, textbooks, and museums can convey an historical narrative to a popular audience, experiencing the place, seeing a building, and walking along a preserved city street brings history to life and makes it relevant to the twenty-first-century consumer.

Stipe also argued that historic preservation “is an outgrowth of our respect for the past” and produces nostalgia and patriotism, but that it also provides an opportunity to cultivate an imaginative and creative understanding of the distant past, which has much to teach the present. Preservation of the Columbia Cottage provides a platform for educating the public about a historic vernacular form, the local history of historic preservation and its national context, the impacts of urban renewal, and race relations in Columbia. By moving beyond a nostalgic appreciation for the “charming” Columbia Cottage and generating a respect for the diverse, rich history it represents, Columbia

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residents will have the opportunity to use the landscape to analyze today’s social, political, economic, and preservation issues.

Finally, Stipe asserted that we preserve historic buildings for their intrinsic artistic value. Preservation of the Columbia Cottage is fundamentally the conservation of a lost art form. Until the mid-twentieth century, the Columbia Cottage defined the architectural identity of the city. Today, the landscape is much different. Antebellum, Victorian, Craftsmen, and modern architecture consume the city streets, often juxtaposed on adjoining lots. Columbia has a unique opportunity to use this juxtaposition to educate the public about the trajectory of American architecture and urban planning. In order to do this, Columbia will need to pay attention to its cottages, as well as those buildings that replaced its cottages. Both contribute to the story, and both form the architectural identity of the city. While Cooledge claimed that “skin-shedding” led to “urban anonymity” and “rootlessness,” Columbia, rather, developed a new image steeped in its own rich history and architectural diversity. It is now time to embrace the diversity—the quaint (and not so quaint) cottages, the mid-century auditoriums, the antebellum mansions, the vacant lots—preserving each in their own right, for the disparate parts create a cohesive and more interesting whole.

---

88 Stipe, A Richer Heritage, xiv.
89 Cooledge, “The Classification, Preservation, and Restoration of Historic Structures.”
BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCES

Newspapers


Government Records

City of Columbia Planning Department Files, Columbia, South Carolina.


Maps


Photograph Collections


**Secondary Sources**


APPENDIX A: INVENTORY OF COLUMBIA COTTAGES EXTANT IN 1965

TOTAL OF 100
## Inventory of Columbia Cottages Extant in 1965

Inventory as surveyed by Harold Cooledge in 1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Cottage Type Based on Cooledge's 1965 Survey (ND=Not Defined)</th>
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## Inventory of Columbia Cottages Extant in 1965

Inventory as surveyed by Harold Cooledge in 1965

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<th>Cottage Type Based on Cooledge's 1965 Survey (ND=Not Defined)</th>
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APPENDIX B: INVENTORY OF COLUMBIA COTTAGES EXTANT IN 2015

TOTAL OF 41
## Inventory of Columbia Cottages Extant in 2015

Inventory as Surveyed by Author in Spring 2015

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<td>Relocated from 1208 Scott</td>
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<td>Cathcart-Bumgardner House</td>
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<td>ND</td>
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APPENDIX C: MAP OF COLUMBIA COTTAGES EXTANT IN 1965
APPENDIX D: MAP OF COLUMBIA COTTAGES EXTANT IN 2015