

# *Preservation Leadership Training*

Hot Springs, Arkansas  
June 3 – 10, 2000

Sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation

◆Institute Partners◆

Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas  
Weyerhaeuser Company Foundation  
The Kirkpatrick Family Fund  
Hot Springs' Fifty for the Future  
Selected Funeral and Life Insurance Company  
Mountain Valley Spring Company



NATIONAL TRUST  
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION™

## *Team Project Proposals*

**TEAM PROJECT**  
**National Trust for Historic Preservation**  
**Preservation Leadership Training**  
**Hot Springs, Arkansas**  
**June 2000**

**The Woodmen of Union Building**

The Woodmen of Union Building is the most prominent structure in Hot Springs' oldest historically African American neighborhood. Known locally as the John L. Webb Neighborhood, the area has suffered from decades of disinvestment and the intrusion of inappropriately scaled buildings such as the Hot Springs Convention Center. The Woodmen of Union Building has remained vacant since 1981 and its physical condition has deteriorated since then. The National Trust's Preservation Leadership Training comes to Hot Springs at a time when community leaders are seeking ways to preserve and develop the Woodmen of Union Building.

**Background and Context**

Hot Springs is an unusual geographical mix—a highly developed park in a small city surrounded by low-lying mountains. Waters gushing from the hot springs flow at an average rate of 850,000 gallons a day.

For Native Americans, the hot springs were neutral ground where different tribes came to hunt, trade and bathe in peace. Tradition has it that the first Europeans to see the springs were the Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto and his troops in 1541. French trappers, hunters, and traders became familiar with the area in the late-17<sup>th</sup> century and it was from the French government that United States acquired the area as part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. The following year, President Thomas Jefferson dispatched an expedition led by William Dunbar and George Hunter to explore the newly acquired springs. Their report to the President was widely publicized and stirred up interest in the "Hot Springs of the Washita Mountains."

In the years that followed, more and more people came to Hot Springs to soak in the waters, which were believed to have medicinal qualities. The idea of "reserving" the springs for the nation took root, and a proposal was submitted to Congress by the territorial representative, Ambrose H. Sevier. In 1832, the Federal Government took the unprecedented step of setting aside four sections of land here, the first U. S. reservation made simply to protect a natural resource. Little effort was made to mark the boundaries adequately, and by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century claims and counterclaims were filed on the springs and the land surrounding them.

In the 1870s, the government continued to control the springs and to reserve certain areas as federal property. Hot Springs came to be called "The National Spa," and such slogans as "Uncle Sam Bathes the World" and "The Nation's Health Sanitarium" were used to promote the city. Private bathhouses, under the supervision of the federal government, were built. These establishments ranged from the simple to the luxurious. The government even operated the U.S.

Free Bathhouse and a Public Health facility.

By 1921, the Hot Springs Reservation was such a popular destination for vacationers and those seeking health remedies that the new National Park Service's first director, Stephen Mather, convinced Congress to declare the reservation the 18th national park. Monumental bathhouses built along Bathhouse Row about that time catered to crowds of health seekers. These establishments, complete with the latest hydrotherapy equipment, also pampered the bather in artful surroundings, featuring marble and tile decorated walls, floors, and partitions. Some rooms sported polished brass, murals, fountains, statues, and even stained glass. Gymnasiums and beauty shops also helped visitors in their efforts to feel and look better.

The Army/Navy Hospital (now the Hot Springs Rehabilitation Center), just above the south end of Bathhouse Row, contributed to a continued high level of activity during World War II and immediately afterward. However, changes in medical technology and in the use of leisure time resulted in a rapid decline in water therapies. Americans started to prefer taking to the open roads in their own cars rather than traveling by train to a specified destination and staying in a hotel a week or two. One by one the bathhouses began to close down. Today only one of the buildings on Bathhouse Row, the Buckstaff Bathhouse, operates as a traditional bathhouse.

Serving as custodian to a number of historic resources in downtown Hot Springs, the National Park Service provides exemplary care and maintenance to much of the city's most notable past. In May 1989, the Park Service reopened the Fordyce Bathhouse (1915) after an extensive restoration. To someone who visited this bathhouse between 1915 and 1920, little is changed; the restoration has been that thorough. All of the women's side and some of the men's side of the building have been equipped with the furniture, steam cabinets, mechano-therapy machinery, tubs, massage tables, sitz tubs, Hubbard tubs, chiropody tools, billiard table, beauty parlor, and hydrotherapy equipment used in those days.

Today, the downtown commercial core of Hot Springs is a designated historic district experiencing varied success with merchant compliance to the design guidelines. A strong neighborhood association, the Quapaw-Prospect Area Preservation Association, has worked diligently to designate a residential area of Hot Springs to the National Register of Historic Places. The Uzuri Project is using several historic preservation tools to document and preserve the African American presence in Hot Springs and Garland County.

### **History and Significance**

The Woodmen of Union Building was built by the Supreme Lodge of the Woodmen of Union under the leadership of John L. Webb, the Supreme Custodian. Dedicated in 1924, the building was constructed the house the various activities of the organization, a social club/union/fraternity for African American men. A 100-bed hospital and nurse training school, a 75-room hotel and bathhouse, the Woodmen of Union Bank, a 2,500-seat auditorium, an electrically operated printing plant and executive offices were all housed within the building.

The development of Hot Springs' first African American residential and commercial district, known to locals as the John L. Webb Neighborhood, began with the construction of Visitor's Chapel AME Church located at Church and Cottage Streets. Founded in 1870, the present

church building was completed in 1913. The opening of Hot Springs' Army and Navy Hospital in 1887 fueled residential and commercial development of the neighborhood to support African American workers at the hospital.

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, several spas were built near Church Street to serve African American patrons. The Pythian Sanatorium, located at the site of the present-day Austin Hotel, was constructed in 1890. Other bathhouses included the Independent/Maurice Bath House and the Crystal Bath House, located on Malvern Avenue near the Woodmen of Union Building.

John Webb was also behind the construction of many commercial buildings and residences in the neighborhood. One such building, now known as the Webb Community Center, located at Gulpha and Pleasant Streets, functioned as a school and dormitory building for nurses and bathhouse attendants employed at the Woodmen of Union Building. Constructed in 1918, the structure also served the community as a restaurant, neighborhood grocery store, and offices.

In 1933, at the height of the neighborhood's commercial development, more than 25 businesses surrounded the Pythian Sanatorium, Visitor's Chapel and the Woodmen building. Hotels, furnished rooms, restaurants, barber shops, dry cleaners, mortuaries, beauty salons, doctors offices, drug and grocery stores all operated in the area. The Gem Theater, located next to the Woodmen of Union Building, opened in 1932.

The John L. Webb Neighborhood prospered in the 1940s, particularly through the end of World War II. Following the war, medical advancements in the treatment of arthritis and other diseases weakened the popularity of Hot Springs as a destination for those seeking "the cure." With fewer bathers and the competition for jobs fierce, the mostly African American hotel and bathhouse labor force began to look for employment elsewhere.

Webb passed away in 1946 and four years later the building and contents were sold to the National Baptist Association, U.S.A. The association renamed it the National Baptist Hotel and Bath House, expanded the bathhouse and upgraded the bath facilities. The bathhouse was finished with nickel-plated brass fixtures and an abundance of marble. The end of legal segregation and the waning use of public bathhouses contributed to the decline of the National Baptist Hotel. Finally in 1981, the hotel closed and has remained closed to this day.

A 1984 redevelopment plan in Hot Springs called for the construction of the Hot Springs Convention Center and Park Hilton Hotel little more than a block away from the Woodmen of Union Building. At that time, plans to convert the building from a 155-room hotel to 80 suites failed. Since then, efforts to resuscitate the building have languished. The building has been mothballed and secured by its current owners, Hawk Management Group of Reno, Nevada.

Recently, a major Arkansas-based real estate development company has expressed strong interest in the redevelopment of the Woodmen of Union site. No definite plans for such a redevelopment have been made public and the building remains on the list of Arkansas's Most Endangered Historic Places.

## **The Issue**

The Woodmen of Union Building served as a center for African American social, cultural, commercial, educational and health care activity for many decades. As such, it is a significant monument to African American history during the time of "Jim Crow" laws. During that time, many African Americans struggled to improve their condition and accommodate themselves to harsh segregation. The Woodmen of Union Building and the Mosaic Templars building in Little Rock stand in contrast to Little Rock's Central High School, which is better seen as a monument to those who struggled against segregation and fought for full inclusion in American society.

National and regional issues profoundly impacted the economy of the neighborhood. The Great Depression and the legal end of segregation combined to bring about a dramatic decrease in business for commercial enterprises like the Woodmen of Union/National Baptist Hotel and the Gem Theater. The end of segregation meant that African Americans were more free to choose among the other hotels and businesses in Hot Springs. Other factors, such as the introduction of chain stores and the out-migration of many African Americans from Hot Springs and the rest of the South, resulted in the closing and demolition of most commercial buildings in the neighborhood.

Recent increases in convention business resulted in the construction of the Hot Springs Convention Center, threatening the future of the Woodmen of Union Building and the character of the nearby Webb Neighborhood. *As preservationists, how do we honor J. L. Webb's vision for the Woodmen of Union Building and his commitment to the neighborhood while planning the building's future?*

## **The Project**

Each Preservation Leadership Training team will develop a proposal that outlines a viable use of the Woodmen of Union Building and that will allow the resource to serve as a catalyst for the revitalization of the John L. Webb Neighborhood and contribute to the economic vitality of Hot Springs.

### **Your proposal should include the following components:**

- Identification of the proposed use.
- Objectives of proposal, detailing what you want to do and how your plan will accomplish it.  
What are the key elements of your re-use plan?
- Situation Analysis, including:
  - Identify the nonprofit and public groups and agencies who have a stake in this project and define their roles. What community support for or opposition to this plan do you expect to encounter?

- Tangible needs and concerns of the community and neighborhood: What role will the building play in the Webb Neighborhood?
- Identify and demonstrate a market for the use: Who will use the building? How will they use it? How much competition will there be from similar, existing businesses?
- Structural condition of the building and recommendations for repairing any structural deficiencies, including:
  - What can physically be accommodated on the site and what physical changes will need to be made? Define both minimum and maximum changes to the site. How will these changes affect the integrity of the structure?
  - ADA, environmental and other regulatory compliance issues.
  - How will your plan accommodate vehicular access and parking? How will your plan manage the impact an increase in traffic may have on the surrounding residential neighborhood.
- Financing:
  - What are the sources of financing for this project? Is the amount of available financing compatible with the scope of the proposal?
  - Financing strategies, such as tax credits, incentives, special funding opportunities.

“It’s not a complete history without ALL of the history.”  
- *Arkansas State Senator Doyle Webb, R-Benton,*  
*referring to the need to preserve the legacy of the Woodman of Union/National Baptist Hotel Building*

## **WOODMAN OF UNION/BAPTIST HOTEL UTILIZATION PLAN**

Preservation Leadership Training  
Hot Springs, Arkansas – June 2000

Prepared and presented by:

Jackie Briggs – Friends of Historic Preservation, Iowa City, Iowa  
Herb Fritz – Tulsa Preservation Commission, Tulsa, Oklahoma  
Sally Dorr Hatcher – Kansas Preservation Alliance, Inc., Leavenworth, Kansas  
Jerry Raetz – City of Hot Springs, Hot Springs, Arkansas  
Judson Roberts – Cherokee County Historical Society, Canton, Georgia  
Constance Sarto – The Society for the Preservation of the Mosaic Templars of America Building,  
Little Rock, Arkansas  
Norma Jean Sawyer – Bahama Conch Community Land Trust, Key West, Florida

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The Woodman of Union/National Baptist Hotel was a premier multi-purpose facility built for African Americans under the supervision of John L. Webb, a prominent civic leader. It not only provided spa facilities and therapeutic services, but it housed a hospital and nursing school, two theaters dedicated to music, drama, and other community events, and a full service restaurant. It became a national destination for African Americans.

The building speaks to the struggles of a proud people to survive Jim Crow, their quest to educate and produce qualified professionals, and their love of music and the arts. We hope that our proposal will assist the State of Arkansas, the City of Hot Springs, and the African American community in working together to preserve the rich history and cultural importance of this historic building.

**I OBJECTIVE:** Revitalization of the Hot Springs Central Business district through the adaptive re-use of its historic buildings. The historic Woodman of Union/National Baptist Hotel not only provides a main anchor to this historic area, but also has the potential to provide much needed commercial space and lodging. This irreplaceable structure is featured on the Historic Preservation Alliance’s current list of Arkansas’s Most Endangered Historic Places, and has been condemned by the City of Hot Springs. As a destination location, the Woodman of Union Building would also enhance Hot Springs tourist business by attracting scholars, students, church conventioners, spa clients, and many others.

**II PROPOSED USE:** In honoring the history of the original Woodman of Union/National Baptist Hotel, the African American community, and builder-contractor, John L. Webb, we propose the following uses:

- A series of exhibits throughout the building will commemorate the history of the building, the local Woodman organization and Webb. These will be designed to preserve and teach the history of the historic Woodman of Union organization, recognized for early African American industry and achievement in Hot Springs from the 1920's through the 1940's.
- For the main floor, a full service, café-style restaurant would be open for lunch and dinners.
- In addition, this main level would offer storefront space on Malvern Avenue
- A total of 25 units for moderate-income apartments in the Building. These would offer approximately 900 to 1200 sq. feet of living space at a cost of \$550 + /month. These distinctive units will offer the conveniences of living downtown.
- Also proposed for the first floor, an African American Internet e-commerce incubator.
- Along with technology services, the building would offer a new spa similar to the original as a part of a larger Fitness and Wellness Center. The proposed Center would offer a full range of therapeutic treatment options and consultations. The Center would be the preeminent fitness-wellness concept facility, exceeding industry standard.
- On the fourth floor, an African American Jazz Hall of Fame with a state of the art performance hall and theater. The fourth floor auditorium would feature a fully outfitted multipurpose public space for expositions, seminars, workshops, conferences, dances, parties, concerts and small ensemble performances. African American Jazz and Blues giants like Cab Calloway, Billie Holiday, Count Basie and BB King, have typically rocked the rafters in this grand hall for decades. Let the music live here again!

### **III STRUCTURAL ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Woodman of Union Building was built in the 1920's utilizing two different structural systems –

- 1) The “L” shaped portion at the Malvern and Garden Street appears to be framed in wood on masonry walls and is in a severe state of decay. Active and substantial roof leaks were apparent in several areas and reached through all floors. Several basement sections had standing water several inches deep. Severely sloped floors and rotted floor joists were also evident. A major restructuring will be necessary to regain the structural integrity of this portion of the building.
- 2) The remainder of the building is framed in steel and concrete and appears to be in much better condition. A qualified structural engineer should be retained to evaluate an existing structural condition.

The exterior masonry walls of the building exhibits substantial movement in many areas, most likely due to water infiltration. All terra cotta should be removed, repaired or replaced as needed and re-installed. All loose brick should also be removed and replaced as needed. All windows and frames will also need replacement. The existing condition of the exterior walls may be severe enough to pose an immediate safety hazard to passers by.

Life safety systems are essentially non-existent. Rated exit access corridors, fire separations, sprinklers, and protected fire stairs will all be required by current building codes for any redevelopment.

All mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems will also require complete replacement to meet current codes.

### FUNCTIONAL ARRANGEMENT

The attached diagrams outline the locations for the proposed uses as follows:

1 <sup>st</sup> Floor			
5 Loft Apartments (Incl. Lobby, Elevators, Corridors)	7000	G.S.F.	
Incubator Business Service Center (Incl. Lobby)	4000	G.S.F.	
Retail Shops	6700	G.S.F.	
Additional Service Areas	3000	G.S.F.	
2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor			
7 Loft Apartments	8000	G.S.F.	
Wellness Center	9000	G.S.F.	
Additional Service Areas	1300	G.S.F.	
3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor			
7 Loft Apartments	8000	G.S.F.	
Wellness Center	9000	G.S.F.	
Additional Service Areas	1300	G.S.F.	
4 <sup>th</sup> Floor			
6 Loft Apartments	7000	G.S.F.	
Auditorium & Support	10,000	G.S.F.	
Additional Service Areas	1300	G.S.F.	

**IV FINANCING NEEDS:** The following projections are based on conversations with owners and financiers involved in similar projects: Vanadis Group, Inc., Little Rock, Arkansas; Hot Springs High School Project, Arkansas; and Canton Mills Lofts, Georgia. It is critical that the developer/owner has a successful track record in rehabilitation of historic buildings and have access to financing.

To address the need for quality, moderately priced rental housing, the Woodman ideally suited for rehabilitation as loft apartments. The other facilities, such as the e commerce incubator, wellness center, jazz/special events facility and shops, will enhance income streams to repay the debt. The Moderate Income & Historic Tax Credits will enable us to offer quality affordable housing averaging \$550 per unit. A construction line of credit will be available for draw down up to 18 months at which time permanent financing will be available. The line of credit will be available from a traditional lender or consortium of lenders based pre-approved permanent financing. The developer/owner will supply initial funds covering acquisition and operating costs until permanent financing commences.

We anticipate financing needs of \$4,140,000 net of tax credits (67%) and owner's investment (10%):

\$18,000,000 (Including 20%: Contingency Reserve (15%) & Financing (5%))  
Less: 12,060,000 (67% Tax Credits: Historic & Moderate Income Housing)  
1,800,000 (10% Owner's Equity including purchase of land/building)  
\$ 4,140,000 Total Financing Required

Though bank financing is a possibility, we recommend financing the balance with bonds guaranteed by HUD under Program 1031D3. To qualify, prospective tenants of the rehabilitated property cannot generate annual incomes exceeding \$28,000 for individuals and \$32,000 for multi-family. The moderate and historic tax credits will enable the owner to offer rents at lower than market prices, adequately service debt and realize profitable returns.

Under Program 1031D3, sources have stated that bonds guaranteed by HUD can be issued for a period of up to 38 years; however for the exercise we will use 30 years. Interest is fixed at 6%.

Estimated Annual Debt Service: \$146,280

Repayment:

Primary sources of annual income slated repayment are projected as follows:

- 25 apartments (approximately 900 sq. ft) @ \$550 generating \$165,000 annually
- Wellness Center: 18,000 sq. ft. @ \$10=\$180,000 annually
- Incubator/ E Commerce Business Center: 2,500 sq. ft. @ \$10 = \$25,000 annually (minority entrepreneurs be encouraged to apply for funds under the Foundation recently established by **Coca-Cola** to promote minority businesses and entrepreneurial ventures).
- Commercial Space/Shops: 6,700 sq. ft. @ \$3 = \$20,100
- Auditorium Rental: \$5,000 per month or \$60,000
- Annual Subtotal: \$450,100
- Less: Operating Expenses (30%): 135,030
- Vacancy Rate (10%): 45,010
- Net Operating Income Available to Service Debt: \$270,060

Gross income (\$165,000) derived from the apartments will be adequate to service debt making the transaction attractive. Annual projected income will service annual debt payments 1.8X. Income from other rental space could be viewed as a secondary source of repayment. Asset conversion is a tertiary source of repayment given the value of the refurbished building.

Collateral: DSD on Refurbished Commercial Building AV: \$18,000,000 (Conservative at Cost of Investment).

## **V SITUATION ANALYSIS:**

The City of Hot Springs would offer in-kind matching services. With efforts from the City of Hot Springs, the following measures can be taken. The City of Hot Springs can re-initiate condemnation procedures. A City inspector, for example, will address safety issues that pose a danger to public sidewalks. An emergency action program would be implemented and submitted to the Board of Directors. With these steps in place the owner of the Building would be required to comply or accept a lien for hiring a contractor.

Further preservation of the building would include the participation of Hot Springs Planning Department, creating an application process for the establishment of an emergency volunteer preservation board. After the appropriate board is established, the City would then help mediate negotiations between the owner and the successful bidder for the project.

The Hot Springs Public Works department would ideally provide the appropriate infrastructure improvements to the neighborhood streetscape. This includes historical street lighting, water and sewer facilities, and fire hydrants. The Parks Department would provide initial landscaping of the parking lot and vehicular traffic areas.

According to Paul Boynton, Hot Springs's Executive Director of 'Arts Cooperative Team', the city is experiencing resurgence in the arts community. With this surge, he believes the need for performance space and downtown moderate-income lodging is rapidly increasing in demand.

**VI EDUCATION:** The importance of encouraging heritage tourism to this area is key to expanding the numbers of yearly visitors to Arkansas. According to Donovan D. Rypkema, a real estate and economic development consultant specializing in downtown revitalization and the redevelopment of historic buildings, "Heritage visitors stay longer, visit more places, and spend up to two and one-half times more per trip than do other visitors." In order to educate city and local agencies to this end, the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program would be able to hire a consultant who would offer programs emphasizing the importance of Heritage Tourism.

**VII CONCLUSION:** In conclusion, this group has identified several relative strengths of this proposal: value to the community, preservation of African American history, economic investment, and revitalization of an historic neighborhood. Several challenging areas remain: determining appropriate developers, arranging financing, marketing the use of the e-commerce incubators, and remaining focused on the development of a center commemorating pioneering African American entrepreneurs.

# **National Trust Preservation Leadership Training**

**Hot Springs, Arkansas - June 3-10, 2000**

## **PROJECT: WOODMEN OF UNION BUILDING**

Elizabeth Buxton, Historic Wilmington Foundation, Inc., Wilmington, North Carolina  
Tommy Kleckner, Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, Terre Haute, Indiana  
Anne-Leslie Owens, Metropolitan Historical Commission, Nashville, Tennessee  
Karen Riles, Austin History Center, Lockhart, Texas  
Claudia Shannon, Shannon Design Enterprises, Inc., Jonesboro, Arkansas  
Becky Snider, Missouri Alliance for Historic Preservation, Columbia, Missouri  
Kenneth Story, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, Arkansas

### ***Objectives of the proposal and Identification of the proposed use overview:***

This proposal offers a creative alternative for the adaptive reuse of the Woodmen of Union building. The objective of this proposal is to create a multi-use facility encompassing elderly housing, a community recreation and arts center, a bathhouse and space for retail and other services.

#### **ELDERLY LIVING**

- Forty-five affordable living spaces for the elderly
- Respite Services
- Guest rooms

#### **COMMUNITY RECREATION**

- Spa/bath house
- Fitness center
- Pool
- Exhibit space
- Library/computer center

#### **COMMUNITY ARTS CENTER**

- Theatre
- Studio and classroom space
- Cultural activities

## RETAIL AND SERVICES

- Bank branch
- Store/sundries
- Drug store
- Doctor/dentist's office
- Café/restaurant

### ***Elaboration:***

Our concept for the adaptive reuse of this historic structure is the creation of an affordable retirement/assisted living community. The proposed Woodmen of Union Center will also include a fitness center, health spa and recreational facilities, and community arts center that will be available to the residents of the building, the neighborhood, and the entire Hot Springs community. Retail shops and offices will also be included in the proposed plan.

The Woodman of Union Center will serve primarily as a retirement community that will feature studio, one and two bedroom apartments with full kitchens for independent living for senior citizens. Several assisted living suites will also be available and will provide a nursing program internship venue for Arkansas Rehabilitation Center students. A full service cafeteria will be located on the fourth floor adjacent to the Auditorium. The Auditorium will serve as an activity center for the residents including space for theatrical productions, dancing, aerobics and social/recreation activities.

To provide additional services and activities for the residents and the community, partnerships will be developed with such senior-oriented services as the Area Agency on Aging, the Senior Center, Shepherd's Center and St. Joseph's Hospital.

The programs will include activities and services for senior citizens as well as the residents of the surrounding neighborhood. Space on the first floor will be leased for retail ventures such as a café, beauty/barber shop, pharmacy, and a bank branch. Also included on the first floor will be a private library that will offer meeting space for book clubs, computer classes, literacy programs and GED classes. Educational classes that are currently taught at the Shepherd's Center and Garland County Community College will also be offered to the residents.

Offices for health care providers will include space for a dentist, doctor and nurse practitioner specializing in geriatric care. An on site-pharmacy will be planned for the first floor, as well as Respite care, adult day care, and a wellness center where the County Health department may provide services. The bath house/spa will provide additional health amenities not only to the residents but also to the community at large.

Programming for the facility will include art, music, and theater, utilizing the main auditorium and multiple function spaces. A permanent history exhibit paying tribute to John Webb will be installed in the main lobby of the Center. This exhibit will also interpret African American heritage in the community. Opportunities for the residents to be involved with the ongoing research and care of the collection will be available through a cooperative effort with the Garland County Historical Society. The auditorium on the fourth floor will be available for resident as

well as community activities. In addition to serving as a performance facility, the fourth floor can function as a dining hall, conference/meeting room, and ballroom.

The large open space adjacent to the main building will allow for the incorporation of an indoor/outdoor pool. The remaining area will be landscaped with ground set aside for a community garden. All exterior recreational facilities will be available to residents as well as the community.

## ***Stakeholders:***

### **NON-PROFIT GROUPS**

People Helping Others Excel By Example (PHOEBE)/ The Uzuri Project. Cheryl L. Batts, executive director. PHOEBE is working to document and preserve the African-American presence in Hot Springs and Garland County. The John L. Webb neighborhood, Hot Springs' first African-American residential and commercial district, is a major focus for this group.

Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas (HPAA). The HPAA is the statewide non-profit historic preservation organization that seeks to protect and preserve the historic resources of Arkansas. The organization identified the Woodmen of Union Building as a significant African-American resource, placing it on its "Most Endangered Historic Places."

### **PUBLIC GROUPS**

John L. Webb Neighborhood. The neighborhood surrounding the Woodmen of Union Building is Hot Springs' oldest and most historically significant African-American neighborhood. The neighborhood is 80% owner occupied and has shown support for the revitalization of this building.

### **PRIVATE GROUPS**

Hawk Management Group. Nathaniel Robinson, property manager in charge of the Woodman of Union Building. Hawk has placed three stipulations on the redevelopment of the building: 1) that it be preserved, 2) that the plan incorporates an operating bathhouse, and 3) that John L. Webb and his accomplishments be recognized.

### **GOVERNMENT AGENCIES**

Hot Springs/ Garland County. The city and county as the local government agencies are concerned with economic revitalization of the area and the expansion of the local tax base.

Hot Springs Convention Center. The Convention Center was recently built on the edge of the John L. Webb Neighborhood. The Woodmen of Union Building is an important neighboring landmark situated on a major roadway leading to the convention center from the center of town.

Hot Springs Advertising and Promotion Commission. This tourism commission is concerned with attracting visitors to Hot Springs and meeting the needs of convention and vacation tourists.

Hot Springs Historic District Commission. The local historic commission is concerned with the identification, preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of the city's historic resources. This neighborhood has been identified as a future historic district.

Arkansas Historic Preservation Program The state historic preservation program is concerned with the identification, preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of the state's historic resources.

National Park Service The NPS maintains the Hot Springs National Park. The federal government currently owns six bathhouses located along Bathhouse Row. The NPS interprets one bathhouse, the Fordyce Bathhouse.

Heritage Tourists African American Heritage Tourism is a growing industry through out the United States.

The Green Team proposal provides many vital community services currently lacking in Hot Springs. We do not anticipate any opposition to this plan.

### ***Situational Analysis, Role in the Neighborhood:***

The redevelopment of the Woodmen of Union building will benefit both the adjacent Webb neighborhood and the Hot Springs community at large. Not only will it reopen a landmark building in African-American history, but also it will revitalize a declining neighborhood. Furthermore, the mixed-use program proposed for the building will provide a variety of services to the local community. The creation of modest apartments geared toward senior citizens and assisted-living facilities will fill a need for affordable housing for the elderly in downtown Hot Springs. The retail, medical and service-oriented businesses that will be recruited to the building will help to replace those that were lost when the building was closed and when the convention center was built. These businesses will provide easily accessible and convenient services to building residents, will provide services to and generate activity in the neighborhood, and will create jobs. The rehabilitation of the bathhouse will revive a service that was integral to the original use of the building and was a major part of Hot Springs history. The permanent exhibit in the lobby will also bring visitors into the building and the neighborhood where they can learn about the history associated with John Webb and the African-American community in Hot Springs.

The recreational and arts facilities provided by the redevelopment of the Woodmen of Union building, including the pool, the fitness center, and the theatre, will not only revive services previously available to the neighborhood, and will provide services and facilities which are needed in Hot Springs. Finally, the rehabilitation and redevelopment of the building will promote responsible growth in Hot Springs by using an existing building. The Woodmen Center will serve as an anchor for the neighborhood, acting as a catalyst for the recognition and revitalization of the historic houses and other buildings in the community.

### ***Situational Analysis, Market:***

A number of senior housing facilities and service providers were contacted to investigate the current availability of affordable housing for the elderly. This preliminary investigation has established a need for this type of housing for residents who desire an affordable quality facility.

The existence of support services and recreational/health facilities within the center will enhance the marketability of the project for potential investors, merchants and future residents. Interior and exterior access to these services and facilities will ensure ease of use for the residents. As such, this Center will hold a niche in the affordable elderly housing market and fill the current housing demand being experienced by other elderly housing facilities in the Hot Springs area.

The local Arts Council confirmed the need for adequate space for artistic and cultural activities. Our proposal utilizes the fourth floor as community arts facility providing classrooms, studios, and performance space for theater groups. Various community activities and cultural events held in the center will help restore the building's role in the vitality of the neighborhood.

### ***Structural Condition:***

An engineering condition report and a termite inspection will be prerequisites to the final sale. However, from a visual assessment of the building, the water damage resulting from the roof leaks must be addressed immediately. The roof structure may require complete replacement due to considerable deterioration caused by long-term water penetration. The basement shows signs of termite damage. One section of the structure is masonry construction while one half remains wooden. It is likely that a great deal of the wooden structure must be removed and reinforced. The brick structural components will require considerable tuck-pointing as well.

### ***Regulatory Compliance Issues:***

ADA compliance will be accomplished by installing additional elevators in the building and providing a major entrance on the back of the building. The first floor is on the ground level and will easily accommodate access. In the design of the reuse, there will be the need for some corridor and doorway widening not only to accommodate wheelchair access but also to meet fire and life safety codes. Additional closed fireproof staircases will be added in the current light wells and on the ends of the wings.

Signage, color-coding, and additional measures must be designed very carefully to remove the disorientation that can be experienced by young and old alike in this building. However, with these measures and some redesign of space, this building will be functional, and will meet all codes and standards. Lead paint and asbestos abatement must be part of the rehabilitation of the building.

### ***Vehicular Access, Parking, Traffic:***

The building is fronted with three streets wrapping around the north, west, and south facades. A driveway will join Gulpha and Garden streets on the east façade providing a covered entrance. A new glass lobby with elevators and staircases will be added to the east facade. The light wells

will be topped with skylights to form interior corridors and still provide light to the upper floors. The rear of the facility will be designed by a landscape architect to provide a lush, green space for the enjoyment of guests and the unobtrusive parking of cars. The new structure will bridge the multi-use back yard forming a major entrance and facing the rear with a porte-cochere for vehicles to unload in weather protection.

### ***Site Analysis:***

The adjacent parcels of land to the Woodmen of Union building will be used for parking, green space, outdoor activities, and walking trails. The majority of parking will be needed for the employees and visitors of the facility. The proposal primarily serves the elderly, who traditionally require a minimal number of parking spaces. In the design phase, when an analysis of car to space ratio is defined, a multi-level parking garage may be needed; or, additional land may be purchased for employee parking spaces from the many empty lots in the surrounding neighborhood; or, a parking agreement may be reached with the adjacent convention center.

### ***Facilitate the plan:***

A grassroots non-profit foundation, *The Friends of the Woodmen of Union* will form from members from each stakeholder group. The Central Arkansas Resource Conservation and Development Council can serve as an agency, which will administer grants. The agency may also provide initial project leadership. *The Friends* group will apply for a research grant and emergency stabilization grants from the following agencies and organizations, including but not limited to:

- The Department of Arkansas Heritage
- Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas
- State of Arkansas, Legislature
- The City of Hot Springs
- Garland County
- The National Association of African-American Heritage Preservation
- The Humanities Council
- The National Park Service, Small Project Conservation and Preservation Grants

Simultaneously fund raising will begin on a local level. The fund drive money will provide seed money to begin. In addition, it can be used for grant matching funds or for expenses that normally cannot be paid with grant money. In this fund drive the owners, Hawk Management, will be approached to donate the building and adjoining property to the Foundation. In the event that they do not donate the building immediately, plans will still proceed.

Once funds are secured, the Foundation will hire a Professional Design/Historic Restoration Team to develop a master plan, feasibility study, a Historic Structure Report, and presentation materials. These are necessary materials to begin the search for permanent funding for the restoration project.

The Restoration Team will make presentations to private foundations, such as the Reynolds Foundation, the Walton Foundation, the National Association of African-American Heritage Preservation; and to State Agencies, such as the University of Arkansas and Arkansas State University; to corporations who specialize in retirement facilities; and to private developers who will form syndicates of partners who will invest for the use of federal tax credits.

*Friends of the Woodmen of Union* will advertise for Request for Proposals and decide which form of ownership and funding will provide the best future for the facility. Ownership will then be negotiated to be in the hands of the desired proposal. The owners will follow through with the design and construction phase.

**Summary:**

The Green Team of the Preservation Leadership Training 2000 believes our plan for a multi-use building housing the elderly provides goods and services for the community while honoring the vision of John L. Webb.

WOODMEN OF UNION  
501 MALVERN STREET  
HOT SPRINGS, ARKANSAS

National Trust for Historic Preservation  
Preservation Leadership Program  
Spring 2000

Janine da Silva, Neighborhood Preservation Consultants, New Bedford,  
Massachusetts

Laura Dreistadt, Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, Jeffersonville,  
Indiana

Peter Goodman, City of Brownsville, Brownsville, Texas

Edward Hooker, Alabama Preservation Alliance, Mobile, Alabama

Lee Anne Zeigler, Tulsa Preservation Commission, Tulsa, Oklahoma

**I. Identification of the proposed use and key elements**

Proposed uses of the Woodmen of Union Building include a 25,000-30,000 square foot bathhouse/pain management center, 45 historically-renovated hotel suites, 2000-seat auditorium, 75-seat small community theater, John L. Webb History Exhibit, and potential space for retail businesses at the ground floor level. The proposed use will work in conjunction with additional development including a three-story parking garage for 300 vehicles to replace the original heated parking garage located north of the building, and new construction consisting of a seven-floor mixed use building recreating the former streetscape. The newly constructed hotel boasts upper story rooms of 350-square foot and ask \$125.00-\$165.00 per night room rates. The lower stories consist of restaurants and related retail concerns. More than 350 jobs will be created in the medical/hotel and restaurant/retail industries.

Cottage Street is enhanced by an adaptive reuse of existing building stock. Potential uses include cafes, boutiques, and personal service businesses.

We encourage the use of preservation tools such as protective covenants and a revolving loan fund. A developer could initiate the funding for the latter, which would be administered through the "Friends of Woodmen" group and would help to perpetuate the existing housing stock. This investment in the neighborhood would help to protect the developer's investment in the Woodmen Building and new development by increasing the property values in the area. We would also encourage listing in the National Register of Historic Places, to encourage community pride and give the neighborhood the recognition it deserves.

Accomplishments include preserving the historic integrity of the existing houses and building stock while providing much needed upscale hotel rooms and parking. Local business trade and property values would be increased as well as enhanced living and working conditions.

## II. **Situation Analysis**

### A. Stakeholders

#### Nonprofit groups

- 1) National Park Service-provider of spring water for bathhouse and potential promoter of new bathhouse and hotel.
- 2) National Trust for Historic Preservation-desire to save the Woodmen of Union Building, assist community with technical assistance, advocacy and funding strategies.
- 3) Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas-desire to save the Woodmen of Union Building with an appropriate reuse, assist community with technical assistance, advocacy and funding strategies.
- 4) PHOEBE/The Uzuri Project-desire to save the Woodmen of Union Building as a testament to the ability of the African American community to survive segregation with successful businesses and preserve the remainder of the Webb neighborhood community.
- 5) Emma Eleese Webb Center-a 501(c)(3) corporation with a desire to save a community landmark, present “heart” of the neighborhood, provides after-school programming.
- 6) Friends of Woodmen-a proposed 501(c)(3) corporation created to advocate and fund-raise for the Woodmen building and the entire Webb neighborhood. The Friends group could oversee the potential revolving fund and also receive donations for neighborhood improvements.

#### Public Agencies

- 1) City of Hot Springs-City Manager Kent Myers recognizes the need to acknowledge the history of African-American in Hot Springs, but is unsure of how to proceed; City Director Elaine Jones, in the middle of a four-year term, has been a valuable advocate for the neighborhood working on street lamps and neighborhood watch issues.
- 2) Hot Springs Advertising & Promotion Commission-Steve Arrison has intimated that the area needs an upscale hotel near the Hot Springs Convention Center and that these rooms could rent for up to \$150.00 per night
- 3) Hot Springs Economic Development Office-Jay Chesshire intimated that the City needs at least 600 more hotel rooms for the number of tourists visiting the city.

## Public Groups

- 1) John L. Webb Neighborhood-a community of predominately African Americans, predominately senior citizens, wanting to save the Woodmen of Union Building. There are many absentee property owners, some of whom are children of deceased homeowners. This formerly vibrant neighborhood had a variety of commercial businesses including bathhouses, barber shops, restaurants, hotels and drug stores. The Neighborhood has a valued advocate in Elaine Jones, City Director for the Ward.
- 2) Jack Fryer-representative of a potential developer, proposing to develop the Woodmen and an adjacent property into an upscale hotel with a bathhouse/pain management center. This development would preserve the bathhouse, auditorium and lobby of the existing Woodmen building.

## B. Tangible Needs and Concerns

The Woodmen of Union Building can be considered an anchor of the Webb Neighborhood and Malvern Avenue. It is the last remaining commercial structure and is a testament to the vision of John L. Webb and his desire to provide jobs for the Hot Springs African American community. Even though the building has been vacant for almost twenty years, older citizens remember its vibrancy. The Woodmen could be the western boundary of a National Register Historic District that would include the Woodmen, vernacular architecture of the Webb Neighborhood, the John L. Webb House and Webb Center.

Through conversations with several neighborhood residents, it is apparent that the community has a strong attachment to the Woodmen Building and would like to see it restored to its former stature. The building is seen as the historic centerpiece of the neighborhood and the key to its revitalization. Residents would like to actively use the building in order to maintain that connection. Local residents are enthusiastic about the prospect of reinvestment in the neighborhood, but wary because of past failed schemes and twenty years of neglect. The Webb Neighborhood needs a variety of services that were lost in previous years: drug store, restaurant, dry cleaners, bookstore, and convenience store. The new hotel construction adjacent to the Woodmen can provide commercial storefronts to contain these services.

In addition, the Webb Neighborhood would benefit from a small space for a community theater and museum. The Little Bowman Theater on the first floor of the Woodmen fills that need. This space could have a historical display on John L. Webb and his vision, and be used to teach the youth of the neighborhood theater arts. A potential sponsor for theater is the Weyerhaeuser Corporation because of its link to the lumber industry and the fact that the Woodmen of Union fraternity is lumber oriented. In addition, Weyerhaeuser is a known contributor to the Hot Springs community.

There is a concern about possible gentrification of the Webb Neighborhood and displacement of the residents if the community is not involved in development process.

The developer could fund the Friends of Woodmen revolving fund. This fund could be used to purchase options on houses or provide low interest loans to residents to preserve/restore buildings.

### III. **Structural and Physical Condition of Woodmen of Union Building**

Three major phases of construction:

\* Phase One:

Circa 1922 - wood frame with full basement historic use as bath house. This portion retains the original fixtures, fittings and finishes. Southeast part of building.

\* Phase Two:

Circa 1931 - steel frame with hollow terra cotta tile infill and brick veneer. Southwest part of building. Most probably brick veneer was used to unify the two buildings. Non-structural glazed terra cotta decoration also added at this time. Renaming as the "Good Samaritan Hotel and Bathhouse."

\* Phase Three:

Circa 1950 - coinciding with the purchase by the National Baptist organization, addition to rear turning building configuration from "C"-shaped to "E"-shaped, and creation of the large auditorium. Interior extensively altered to include installation of elevators, updating of hotel room baths, light fixtures, etc.

#### **Initial Condition Assessment:**

\*NOTE: A Historic Structures Report of the Woodmen of Union Building is strongly recommended. Careful selection of consultants well versed not only in the conservation and restoration of historic materials, but also an appreciation for historic preservation is of paramount importance. While the current physical conditions are visually daunting, with the advent of state-of-the-art conservation and consolidation of historic materials, anything is possible. The following assessment was garnered just from a quick walk-through of the building and analysis of the exterior, and from conversations with the building custodian.

#### Phase One Condition:

Probably in the worst shape, the original portion of the building containing the historic bath facilities, suffers from water infiltration through deteriorated roof and flashing, missing windows, and burst pipes. This part of the building is constructed over an active thermal spring, and therefore a sump pump and floor drains are required to keep the basement area dry. The exterior brick on the foundation of this area appears to be suffering from rising damp.

#### Phases Two and Three Conditions:

These two areas are being combined due to the similarity of construction and condition. These later sections of the building utilize modern construction techniques and modern materials, however, deferred maintenance (lack of a cyclical maintenance program) and exposure to the elements over time have seriously weakened the structural stability. Plate steel columns are delaminated and rusted; cracks in concrete have caused water infiltration to expand steel reinforcing rods and spalled off areas of concrete.

## **Project Narrative:**

### **Proposed Scope of Work:**

- Rehabilitation of existing 70,000 square foot Woodmen of Union Building to include restoration of the hotel lobby; dining/meeting room space; 45 luxury hotel suites; 35,000 square foot pain management clinic incorporating the historic concept of the bath house; 6,500 square foot auditorium/ballroom; and 200 seat community little theater/museum.
- Construction of a new building on the northeast corner of Gulpha and Malvern incorporating commercial space on the first level, office space and hotel rooms on the second level, and hotel rooms on levels 3-7. The massing of this building will be diminished by stepping the tower portion back from the street 25' on the three sides that face the street, creating a roof-top garden area, a traditional Hot Springs design element.
- Construction of a 300 car, three story parking garage on the vacant parcel behind the Woodmen of Union Building, attached to the building with a two story arcaded structure containing a fitness center and multi-purpose room. Historic Sanborn maps showed that a 20 car heated garage was located here by the 1930s. To the east side of this connector will be a well-landscaped pool court, and to the west of the connector will be a well-landscaped contemplation garden linking the existing site to the new construction across the street.
- Streetscape improvements to include new stamped concrete sidewalks, nostalgic street lighting and benches, street trees and planting beds linking the neighborhood to the Convention Center.

## **Project Summary and Recommendations:**

The proposed rehabilitation plan for the Woodmen of Union building calls for the addition of 240 rooms and 45 suites to the Hot Springs hotel market. According to the Chamber of Commerce and local Economic Development officer, the total number of rooms needed to attract large-scale conventions is approximately 600. As a subsequent phase to the revitalization of the Webb Community and the rehabilitation of the Woodmen of Union Building, serious thought and strategic planning should focus on the core of the downtown historic area, along Central Avenue.

Historically, the downtown Hot Springs Commercial District along Central Avenue was a mixed-use area consisting of retail, restaurant, office space, etc. with small hotels on the upper floors. Currently, the vacancy rate in upper story downtown buildings is approximately 80% - 85%.

Established pedestrian infrastructure is in place - sidewalks with ADA access, trolley access, and destinations within comfortable walking distances are a tremendous asset to the downtown area. Through National Park Service involvement in the community, maps and educational brochures provide information on the community and its local, regional and national significance.

**Synopsis of Design Aspects:**

The rehabilitation of the existing building, in conjunction with the planned development of adjacent vacant parcels, can successfully achieve the goals desired by the neighborhood, a developer and the city. The remaining historic structures should be retained and as a whole be a contributing element to the revitalized Webb neighborhood.

**IV. Financing**

From conversations with bank representatives, it is evident that a local bank is interested in playing a major role in financing a hotel development project.

Federal Incentives:

Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits: a 20% tax credit for substantive rehabilitation to the Woodmen of Union Building.

70,000 square ft x \$125.00/square ft rehabilitation costs =	\$9,000,000.00
A 20% tax credit would equal	<u>\$1,800,000.00</u>
Total rehabilitation costs would equal	\$7,200,000.00

State Incentives:

1) Facade Easement granted to the State Historic Preservation Office could grant the developer a 10-15% tax deduction that would protect the exterior architectural integrity of the Woodmen and also benefits the Webb Neighborhood and the City of Hot Springs.

2) Arkansas Tourism Sales Tax Credit: a 25% tax credit on sales.

Annual Sales	\$10,000,000.00
25% Tax Credit	<u>\$ 2,500,000.00</u>
Remaining income	\$ 7,500,000.00

Owner would realize a \$4,500,000 savings on sales tax over a period of ten years.

Local Incentives:

- 1) Municipal/Industrial Bond Issue must have popular support. The Magic Springs Amusement Park and Convention Center received funding through similar referendums.
- 2) Possibility of other locally generated incentives such as: waiver of property taxes if legislated in 2001, and creation of a Tax Incremental Financing district.
- 3) \$500,000 savings to developer on water and sewer services and sidewalks, in addition, funding for streetscape amenities such as plantings, could be applied for under TEA-21 program.

**Proposal to Save the Woodmen of Union Building  
Hot Springs, Arkansas  
Preservation Leadership Training  
June 3-10, 2000**

Cheryl L. Batts, Hot Springs, Arkansas  
José A. Gavito, Jr., City of Brownsville, Brownsville, Texas  
Marie Goodwin, St. Joseph Preservation, St. Joseph, Missouri  
Adriane Frère Kramer, Louisiana Preservation Alliance, Baton Rouge, Louisiana  
Martha Ann Norton, Capitol Zoning District Commission, Little Rock, Arkansas  
Jena Roy, Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, Indianapolis, Indiana  
Drane Wilkinson, Historic Jonesborough Foundation, Jonesborough, Tennessee

**The Woodmen of Union Building must be saved!** Our vision to make this happen is a multi-use facility housing an all-suite hotel, health-spa resort, public facilities, commercial spaces, and an interpretive center dedicated to the history and heritage of the neighborhood.

The third floor of the Woodmen Building will be reconfigured for sixty suite hotel units. There will also be adequate space for administrative offices, laundry facilities, and storage space. A restaurant on the first floor and a bar on the fourth floor will be available for hotel guests. The feasibility of the project will also require the construction of an addition on the northeast corner of Gulpha and Malvern streets. We recommend that the building be no more than four stories tall to fit in with the scale of the neighborhood. This will also allow for an additional 110 hotel suites. We also suggest a sensitive design for this new structure, that uses the characteristics of the Woodmen Building. This use will meet the need for high-end tourist and conventioner lodging in Hot Springs.

The building will also include a two-story health spa. This spa will be more than just a bathhouse, but will be a luxurious, upscale health and wellness facility with all the amenities, including a fitness/exercise room. The bathing portion of the spa will utilize the historic bathtubs and dressing facilities. There are no other facilities that offer this range of services anywhere in Hot Springs.

We have also proposed a John L. Webb interpretive center. The over-view interpretive text and photographs will be displayed in the hotel lobby and other text panels and photographs will be located throughout the building, interpreting different historic uses of the building, such as hospital, bathhouse, and nurses stations. This interpretive center will provide an opportunity to educate the public about the history of the building, the community, and Mr. Webb. A museum administrative office will be located on the second floor.

Several spaces in the building will be adapted for public and convention use. A part of the fourth floor will be adapted for conference rooms. Restoration of the small theater on the first floor will provide overflow space for the convention center or meeting

areas for small conferences or community events. Also, the 1500-seat auditorium on the fourth floor would be perfect for events of all kinds, including live musical performances, large theater productions, and special events such as Black History Month, wedding receptions, or other cultural and performing arts events.

And finally, to bring in rental/lease income, commercial storefronts will be located along Malvern Avenue. Potential businesses could include a pharmacy, a cleaner, and/or a drug store that could be used by both the neighborhood residents and hotel guests.

We have identified a number of stakeholders in this project, including government agencies, historic preservationists and historians, marketing and publicity organizations, and professionals. While all of these parties play an important role in the project, we believe that the key players in its success are the City of Hot Springs; Hawk Management Corporation, the Owner; the Developer, and the Webb Neighborhood. We believe that this is an opportunity for the City, the Owner, and the Developer to partner in initiating revitalization efforts in the neighborhood. They will be able to put a historically important but severely under-utilized building back into vital use in the community. The Neighborhood will reap the most tangible and immediate benefits from the project. Their landmark historic building will be brought back to life and will renew the neighborhood's sense of place and sense of pride.

Completion of our plan will be a place to initiate the revitalization efforts throughout this entire neighborhood. A true success depends on an aggressive community-wide effort. We are suggesting that every available tool be utilized. The first step would be to work with the city of Hot Springs to pass a moratorium to prevent demolition while survey work can be done. Next establish both a local and national historic district in the area surrounding the Woodmen of Union Building. These districts will not only serve as a means of protection against demolition and insensitive alterations to the included structures but will also encourage investment in income producing properties with federal tax incentives. Establishing the same area as a Cultural district will give representatives of that district a stronger voice. For example, any concerned citizen of the neighborhood appearing as the spokesperson for the Webb Cultural District will exude more influence as a voice for an entire unified body.

Local groups should immediately begin a beautification program to encourage support for the plan. This may be anything from getting together on a Saturday to plant flowers to writing grants for sidewalk and curb repairs that are still needed. It will be vital to form a network of supporters among the Webb Center, Phoebe, the congregations of both Visitors Chapel and Union Missionary Baptist Church, The Langston Neighborhood Watch and other area residents. This network should be used to show support at local meetings and to stay informed. Gain as much publicity as you can. Start a fundraising effort and gather support for a proposed state bond issue. This project's success means the most to the people with a direct interest in the building and in this neighborhood. You have a sentimental tie to the Woodmen of Union Building and the building has a direct tie to the rich African American history that occurred here.

When you walk through the doors and close your eyes you imagine the busy lobby, the prominent citizens and proud people who made this place their own. This project can be done but it depends on the level of commitment by the people and associations right here in the Webb Neighborhood.

A limited on-site inspection revealed that the building is in poor condition. Immediate steps must be taken to prevent irreparable deterioration. Problems requiring immediate attention are:

- Repair of the roof and building drainage system.
- The terra cotta balconies are in various states of disrepair at all levels and pose a serious hazard which will only increase unless stabilized.
- Many windows are broken or missing permitting invasion by animals and vandals. The problem should be corrected by blocking the windows with plywood.
- A significant amount of standing water is present in the basement, creating a damp atmosphere and further exacerbating existing structural problems.

The exterior rehabilitation will consist of:

- Masonry repairs, including rebuilding and tuckpointing of brick, using compatible materials
- Repair and/or replacement of coping
- Replacement of missing terra cotta elements
- Rebuilding of terra cotta balconies
- Repair and/or replace all windows
- Installation of fire escapes where required by code
- Creating of handicap accessible entrance from rear
- Installation of landscaped dining patio at rear of building

The interior rehabilitation will consist of:

- Repair and/or replacement of wood floor system
- Removal or encapsulation of hazardous materials, including lead and asbestos
- Enclosure of L-shaped light shaft for storage
- Minimal modification of first and fourth floor configuration
- Extensive reconfiguration of second and third floors
- Installation of modern elevators in existing elevator shafts and service elevator to rear of building
- Adding insulation and sound-proofing where needed
- Installation of sprinkler system
- Removal and replacement of all electrical and plumbing
- Installation of HVAC

A partnership between the public and private sectors would qualify this project for numerous financing opportunities. State bond issues and low-interest business development loans to private investors could provide much of the capital needed. With a sensitive rehabilitation as proposed, developers could take advantage of the 20% federal historic preservation tax credit. Based on our estimates of the cost to implement this reuse of the Woodmen Building, tax credits could exceed three million dollars.

Because the Woodmen Building would be the anchor for economic revitalization of the Webb neighborhood, grants for economic development may also be available through the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Rehabilitation costs could be further reduced by using the resources available through job training program, such as Job Corp.

The increased sales tax revenue and employment opportunities that this project would generate would benefit the entire community.

**John L. Webb not only built the building, but he made it possible for African-Americans to experience a quality of life only enjoyed by the larger community.** His vision and commitment also helped to build a neighborhood that was a source of pride for its residents. We believe it is important to preserve this essential element of the community's history, a history that has been silent for too long.

For two years in a row, on behalf of the Historic Preservation Alliance of Arkansas, Lieutenant Governor Win Rockefeller has named the Woodmen of Union Building as one of Arkansas' Ten Most Endangered Historic Resources. This is a challenge for which the gauntlet has been thrown. Now is the time to choose our weapons and take up the fight to not only save this unique historic structure but to make it live again. We believe you can and will win this fight.

# **Preservation Leadership Training Institute 2000**

## **Restoration Plan for the Woodmen of Union Building Hot Springs, Arkansas**

Janie-Rice Brother, Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation, Lexington, Kentucky  
Anne Dennis, City of Marshall, Marshall, Texas  
Donna Leahy, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Washington, D.C.  
Frances McSwain, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Little Rock, Arkansas  
Gwendolyn Patton, Friends of the Historic Voting Rights Trail, Montgomery, Alabama  
David Preziosi, City of Natchez, Natchez, Mississippi  
J. Todd Scott, Oklahoma Main Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

As we contemplate solutions not only to stop the deterioration of this important historic resource but to answer a need put forth by the city leaders, we feel that our multi-use plan both respects the vision of John L. Webb, as well as addresses preservation and economic issues. The key elements of this reuse plan will include the restoration of the original structure by preserving as many original materials as possible and replacing them with consistent materials as needed.

The Woodmen of Union building will be transformed into a multi-use facility, with up-scale hotel rooms, an Archive and Genealogy Center, a spa resort, an arts venue, and varied retail establishments. The structure serves as a physical anchor for the Webb Neighborhood, representing African American contributions in Hot Springs for more than 75 years. Its new role will fulfill many needs of both residents of the surrounding neighborhood and the community at large. The restored Woodmen Building will be a place to shop, to eat, to study, to gather socially, as well as a place to honor and remember the past. Though the structure will change both physically and functionally, the history of the structure will not be lost and community residents will not be shut out as a result of the restoration. The Woodmen will provide services to both residents and tourists and fill a much-needed void in the Hot Springs community.

One phase of the restoration involves the creation of approximately fifty-four up-scale hotel rooms, located on the upper three floors in the southeast portion of the structure. These hotel rooms will provide needed hotel space in a convenient location adjacent to the convention center. These rooms will complement the existing hotel accommodations in Hot Springs; the Woodmen will provide up-scale accommodations that are not available elsewhere. The Woodmen facility space will provide a more intimate venue for events than the convention center.

The market for the restored Woodmen building and its facilities will encompass a wide demographic. Visitors to Hot Springs and convention-goers will not only stay at the Woodmen Building and its annex, but will patronize the shops and restaurant located in the complex. Community members can enjoy the bathhouse, retail shops, reception space, as well as the John L. Webb Archives and Genealogical Center. High schools will find the space ideal for graduations, proms and other special events. The restored auditorium will play host to such gatherings as family reunions, wedding receptions, and other social activities.

Education is a particular aim of the restored Woodmen and its facilities. School children will visit the complex to enjoy history hands-on in the archives. The archives will complement a heritage education curriculum for local school children. The Woodmen will provide a unique area for school children to study the African American past in the Hot Springs area. No other structure in Hot Springs allows for this important and immediate interpretation as that evidenced by the structure and the John L. Webb Archives and Genealogy Center.

Educational opportunities will span all ages. Garland County Community College students will enjoy the first-rate facilities for classes and other academic pursuits. Visitors interested in the development of the African American business community and the Civil Rights movement in Arkansas will flock to the Woodmen putting it in the same category as Central High School and the Lorraine Hotel, important sites in the Civil Rights movement. Historians, genealogists, and others will benefit from the wealth of archival materials in the Woodmen Collection.

As a public-private partnership, the benefits of the Woodmen restoration will be far-reaching. People Helping Others Excel by Example (PHOEBE) will gain another venue to display their collected materials, including their extensive oral history project. The Webb Neighborhood Association will help with the revitalization of the surrounding neighborhood that will help create a true community atmosphere. The Hot Springs Historical Society will be another contributor to the Archives and Genealogy Center.

The City of Hot Springs will benefit from increased revenue, beautification of the neighborhood and economic development. These same elements will also benefit the local Chamber of Commerce. Developers involved in this successful project will of course receive a return on their investment, and the positive public recognition will expose them to other potential projects in the area and throughout the state. Neighborhood residents and property owners are perhaps the most obvious recipients of the benefits of this restoration project. Property values will increase (as will the tax base), resident morale and pride in their neighborhood will soar, and new jobs and new businesses will provide employment and opportunity.

The Woodmen will be an entrepreneurial incubator for African Americans in the retail space available in the complex. The retail shops will provide services in the Webb neighborhood where such services are not currently available.

Perhaps most tangibly, the neighborhood will reap the rewards of new jobs and money generated from the restoration and the new development. The restoration of this building will be a catalyst for further restoration in the neighborhood and encourage new infill housing. The archival and genealogical center will preserve the disappearing remnants of African American experience in Hot Springs as well as educate a new generation about their heritage.

The restored Woodmen, of course, will stand as a physical symbol of past glories translated into vibrant new life. For the new historic luxury hotel component of the Woodmen, fifty-four rooms will be appointed in period furnishings. A new lobby and elevator bank will be developed on the end of the southeast wing. The entrance to the lobby will be accessed from Garden or Gulpha Street. Over the existing light well a glass roof will be installed providing a naturally lit space between the two wings. The hotel will contain standard amenities and take advantage of the onsite, full service restaurant at the north end of the building. The hotel will have easy access to the bath house and spa as well as retail space.

The first floor of the Woodmen of Union building will contain 1,500 square feet of various retail shops and 4,000 square feet of dining facilities along Malvern Avenue and Gulpha Street. These shops will encourage renewed economic development in the neighborhood and provide needed services for guests staying in the new hotel accommodations.

A bath house and spa will be located in the first floor and basement of the southeast portion of the building. The historic bath house will be restored and provide interpretation of its role in Hot Springs' past. The entrance to the bath house and spa will use the historic entrance at the corner of Malvern Avenue and Garden Street. The bath house will use the existing historic tubs and ancillary spaces. New piping will run along the creek arch to connect with the National Park Services springs, providing spring water to the bath house. Spaces will be created for massage therapy, aromatherapy, facials, body wraps, manicures, pedicures, etc. By providing this service, the complex not only offers a special amenity to visitors, but brings to life an important chapter of the Woodmen Building's history, as well as the unique history of Hot Springs.

The John L. Webb Archives/Genealogical Center will be located in 7,800 square feet of the northeast section of the second floor. This center will be a tribute to the vision of John L. Webb in his construction of the Woodmen Building as well as his largesse to the surrounding community. The center will contain archival materials detailing the history of the Webb Neighborhood and the role the Woodmen Building played in that history. Archival material gathered here will allow genealogical research in this center as well.

The two distinctive auditoriums in the Woodmen will serve as performing spaces for the local community. Reminiscent of its past glory, world-class jazz, blues, and gospel acts will perform in the large auditorium. The documentary film festival, the Jazz Society, and a fund raising event for Arts Cooperative Team will take advantage of the

performance space. The small theater will be used for improvisation, children's performances, dance recitals and poetry readings. Performance space is desperately needed in the Hot Springs area, and the two auditoriums will provide venues for various performances and events.

An additional 7,800 of square footage of the northwest portion of the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor will be dedicated to classrooms, to allow for adding a performance arts curriculum at the Arkansas School of Math and Science and Garland County Community College. These classrooms will be devoted to subjects such as history of drama, theater, and costume and set design.

To increase the size of the existing Woodmen Hotel, an annex will be built to the rear of the existing building. The new hotel construction will include a three story, fifty thousand square foot hotel with 72 luxury rooms. The hotel annex will be compatible to the Woodmen with similar exterior materials. The annex and Woodmen entrances will share a common drive and limited parking spaces on this site. An outdoor pool and courtyard area will be located between the Woodmen and the new hotel annex. The major portion of the parking will occur on the lot north of the Woodmen at the corner of Malvern Avenue and Gulpha Street. Landscaped surface parking will be developed on the site. In the future an additional hotel and parking structure can be constructed on this parking area if needed.

The historic Woodmen site will accommodate the new hotel annex, entrance drive to the hotel and outdoor recreational area with a pool. The integrity of the Woodmen will be slightly impacted by the construction of the lobby and new hotel annex. The impact, however, will be minimized by not physically connecting the two hotels together and using similar materials and scale for the new hotel annex.

The plan for the Woodmen and new hotel annex will address vehicular access and parking in several ways. On the Woodmen site there will be minimal parking and only contain an access drive to the hotel lobbies. Traffic will be able to enter from Garden or Gulpha Streets. Major parking for the hotel will take place on the lot north of the Woodmen and will be accessed from Malvern or Gulpha. This will minimize the impact of vehicular traffic on the neighborhood by containing parking on the lot in the commercial district and as far away from the residential section of the neighborhood as possible.

The structural condition of the building is only fair. The foundation and most masonry veneer walls appear to be in good condition, although some tuckpointing will be needed, particularly in areas of the building where roof scuppers and downspouts are located. Cleaning of all exterior brick is needed, but only using approved preservation methods.

The terra cotta ornament on the building is in various conditions. A few pieces will need to be recast. Some may be repaired. Unfortunately, the main balcony facing Malvern Avenue appears to be unstable. This entire balcony will most likely need to be dismantled and reconstructed.

The majority of the windows will need to be reconstructed. This includes the storefront windows at street level and the wood double hung 1/1 windows located on the 1<sup>st</sup> through the 4<sup>th</sup> stories. Some of the existing windows may be rehabilitated, but the majority will have to be replaced, again using approved preservation methods.

The interior of the structure is in a much poorer condition. The northern half of the building is of steel and reinforced concrete and is structurally sound. The majority of historic finishes have been removed with the exception of some marble wainscoting and tile flooring on the first floor. Some minor modifications may have to be made in this section of the building in order to accommodate HVAC equipment.

The southern half of the building is primarily constructed of wood framing with lath and plaster. Significant water damage has occurred throughout this portion of the building, most likely from inadequate roofing maintenance over the years. This water damage has resulted in a significant failure of the interior walls. Much of this interior section of the building will need to be rebuilt, from the basement through the fourth floor. Storm water continues to deteriorate this portion of the building. If repairs are not made, and made soon to this section, the exterior of the building will rapidly deteriorate.

For the most part, this building should be relatively easy to modify for accessibility. New entries at the rear of the building and existing entries just inches above grade will reduce the need for lengthy ramps which could adversely affect the historic integrity of the building. A new elevator bank and the opportunity to create new, appropriately sized, toilets, hotel rooms, and exhibit facilities are unusual in historic structures. The building's original design facilitated this opportunity by creating nice wide hallways, and adequate circulation.

Abatement of hazardous materials is somewhat problematic. It appears there is a significant amount of asbestos floor tile throughout the building. The entire building also contains significant amounts of peeling paint. While we cannot determine whether or not this paint is lead-based, the period during which it was applied would lead us to believe it contains lead. Consequently, it will most likely need to be abated. Further testing will determine the extent of this abatement.

There are several additional regulatory concerns that need to be addressed. The most important of these is life safety issues. Without question, the building will need to be fully equipped with a sprinkler system. There is also a need to locate two new stairwells to allow for adequate egress. Virtually all existing stairs do not meet current code requirements. Stairs in the southern portion of the building are too narrow, too steep, and structurally unsound. The metal stairwell in the northern portion of the building may meet width and rise requirements, but the landings are inadequate. If these landings can be increased, they may be adequate. Otherwise a new stair should be constructed.

Another regulatory concern will be the historical integrity of the structure as it applies to federal historic tax credits. The primary concerns will be the exterior facades (north,

west, and south) and the interior public spaces. The primary exterior facades will not be changing. The interior public spaces will only be minimally modified. All original lobby spaces will remain intact. The auditorium and foyer space on the fourth floor will also remain intact. Finally, the hallways used for the hotel rooms will remain intact or will be reconstructed in place as needed.

All of these assessments are visual only. An existing proposal for a Renovation Feasibility Study by the local firm of Taylor/Kempkes Architects, P.A. should be accepted and performed immediately.

We foresee five phases to this restoration. Phase I will include the restoration of the 4<sup>th</sup> floor large auditorium, site improvement, and landscaping. The hotel rooms, lobby, elevator banks, and retail spaces will be rehabilitated during Phase II. Phase III will see the Archives and Genealogical Center as well as the performing arts classrooms refurbished and Phase IV will include the bath house on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor and basement. The new hotel annex will be constructed during the final phase, Phase V.

This building serves as the keystone of the Webb neighborhood. Every effort must be considered to assure that any new construction is compatible with existing buildings within the neighborhood, including such characteristics as height, materials, and rhythm of openings. This assurance may be accomplished through a number of ways including local historic district designation, conservation easement, or deed restrictions. These requirements would also include the provision that Gulpha and Cottage Streets remain open and that no additional demolitions, particularly along Cottage, occur. The Hotel Baxter is a valuable resource to the neighborhood and should not be lost.

The effort to restore the Woodmen of the Union building must be led by a coalition of public and private partners with an overall cost projection of \$20,000,000. This cost includes acquisition of the property, rehabilitation of the historic structure and new construction.

With the developer leading the project, the following is the recommended project funding:

Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits (20% of rehab)	2,400,000.
State Rehabilitation Tax Credits (20% of rehab)	2,400,000.
Tourism Bonds (for hotel rooms)	3,000,000.
HUD (for Economic Development/new jobs)	500,000.
FHwA TEA 21 (Trolley Stop)	150,000.
Small Business Administration (Entrepreneurial Business Center)	500,000.
Certified Local Government Grant (Design)	50,000.
Arkansas Natural Cultural Resources Council (affiliation with Garland County Community College)	1,000,000.
Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation (Heritage Tourism Incentive)	500,000.
Weyerhauser Foundation (theatre rehabilitation)	500,000.
Arts Cooperative Team (not-for-profit organization)	1,000,000.

City of Hot Springs (infrastructure)	1,000,000.
Conservation Easement (tax deduction)	3,000,000.
Private Investment	4,000,000.
Projected Total Cost of Project	20,000,000.
Cost of Rehabilitation	12,000,000.
Cost of New Construction	7,500,000.
Property Acquisition	500,000.

3