



# CITY OF CHARLESTON DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

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## PUBLIC COMMENT JANUARY 5, 2026

A meeting of the Design Review Board (DRB) will be held on **Monday, January 5, 2026** at **4:30 p.m.** in the **Public Meeting Room, First Floor, 2 George Street**.

The following written comments will be provided to the board members on the deadline date and also be acknowledged into the record and summarized. The public is encouraged to attend the meeting in person to speak in order for comments to be fully heard.

Application information is available at [www.charleston-sc.gov/drdb](http://www.charleston-sc.gov/drdb). Please check the website on the meeting date to view any withdrawn or deferred agenda items.

For additional information, please contact:  
Department of Planning & Preservation | 843-724-3781

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### A. APPLICATIONS

#### 1. **2875 Savannah Hwy.**

**West Ashley | Council District 5 | TMS #308-00-00-001 | DRB2025-000292**

Requesting approval for the demolition of an office/laboratory building from the 1930s, a former USDA building.

Owner: Clemson University  
Applicant: Mosley/Aaron Bowman

#### 51 Comments Submitted:

- **Justin Ferira**

**Submitted to Staff**

See attached.

- **Michael Gravely**

**Submitted to Staff**

See attached.

- **Chad Husselbee**

**Submitted to Staff**

See attached.

- **48 Comments Submitted on Innovate Site in Opposition:**

First Name	Last Name	Address	Submitted Comment	Date/Time Submitted
Shellie	Horgan	2251 N Marsh Dr. Mount Pleasant, SC 29466	This structure is important for the future generations. We must keep Charleston's history, while keeping it preserved. Please SAVE this structure.	Dec 29 2025 11:26PM

Meghan	Lee	512 Sarah Street, Charleston, SC, 29407	Please don't tear down this building!! It's important to keep not only for its role in global 20th century agricultural science, but as a perfect opportunity for creative and intentional use. The historic significance, architecture, and character are so special — they gesture to an important moment in history and this state's significant role in it. Not to mention, we love to see it — it makes us feel like we are in a specific and special place (as Charleston is!) and connected to its unique history. It's an important and unique landmark for West Ashley, which we hope will continue to be developed with thought and care, protecting its marshes and local historical landmarks like this one. I would love to see this building restored and have long wondered why it has not been. (We noticed the nearby greenhouses were recently fixed and were so happy to see them in use!)	Dec 30 2025 1:10PM
Megan	Johnson	2640 Kingsfield St, Mt Pleasant SC 29466	Charleston has always understood that preservation is not nostalgia. It is stewardship. The USDA Vegetable Lab on Savannah Highway tells a story of science, agriculture, and the quiet work that shaped South Carolina's economy, communities, and food systems. It represents a chapter of innovation, research, and contribution that should not be erased. Please consider protecting this site as part of Charleston's living history. Once places like this are gone, they're gone forever, and another glass box or parking lot will never hold the meaning, character, or connection to our past that this property does. Preserving the Clemson/USDA Vegetable Lab honors the people, the work, and the legacy that helped sustain our region.	Dec 30 2025 4:33PM
Caroline	Parker	Brookbank Avenue, Charleston, SC	It is criminal and appalling that Clemson 's intentional neglect has resulted in a request to demolish this historically significant property. A very dangerous precedent to set. This building needs to be preserves at all costs. It's historical importance and relevancy is irreplaceable and essential to the community.	Dec 30 2025 5:17PM
Ashton	Finley	22 Beverly Road	Please deny the demolition request for the Clemson/USDA Vegetable Laboratory Building at 2875 Savannah Highway. This building is eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places due to its architectural significance and it's historic significance. It is structurally sound enough for adaptive reuse. This building has been owned by the current owners for nearly a decade, and during that time they allowed the building to decay.	Dec 30 2025 5:23PM

			Demolition-by-neglect of West Ashley's historic resources should not be rewarded with demolition permits. West Ashley's historic buildings and cultural resources are worthy of preservation. Ashton Finley Save Historic West Ashley	
McKenna	Kerr	14 Brockman Drive Charleston, SC 29412	Clemson has held ownership for 10+ years and has neglected it, now just to want to demolish it. This building is historically significant and an important piece of our historic fabric. We need buildings like this around!	Dec 30 2025 7:04PM
Lucy	Orton	514 Mansfield Dr. Charleston sc 29407	Please don't tear down that historical building! It's way too important in Charleston to connect the beauty and history to agricultural roots.	Dec 30 2025 7:06PM
Victoria	Bock	108 Live Oak Ave 29407	This is a significant piece of American history, and represents the Lowcountry's iconic role in food production and culture. Clemson should not be allowed to let a building of this caliber fall into disrepair, then try to demolish it. I'm sure they could use it as a project for their local historic preservation and architecture grad school students, finding grants and donors to fund the project. It could become the next home of a gardening or native plant nonprofit. The possibilities are endless. Demolition should not be one of them.	Dec 30 2025 7:09AM
Stephanie	Morris	2968 Vincent Astor Drive Johns Island, SC 29455	Please don't destroy our history. Fix it. We need to conserve our history for future generations. This could also be a place people visit to learn!	Dec 30 2025 8:18AM
Wiley	Becker	44 Rutledge Avenue	Oppose demolition by neglect due to precedent setting by an applicant with means to maintain and restore, the historic building and scientific purpose, and prominence as a landmark nearing the ACE Basin.	Dec 30 2025 8:43AM
Rutledge	Young	107 Waterfront Plantation Drive. CHS. 29412	I have driven by the Clemson Experiment Station building for many years and walk the Greenway past its back. It's a beautiful sight to see compared to much of the rest of 17 South. Its colonial style and unique setting should be preserved and recycled. Too much of our history is being destroyed .Clemson has the funds to do this. I oppose demolition.	Dec 30 2025 9:58AM
Lauren	Smith	9690 Godwin street Ladson sc	The building is historical for Charleston farms and is a landmark that I have enjoyed seeing over the years. It lets me know where I am and gives Charleston the character it's known for. It should not be demolished.	Dec 30 2025 12:22PM
Matt	Brady	Prefer not to say	I oppose the demolition of this building. While I recognize that not every historic structure can be preserved indefinitely, demolition should not be approved where long term neglect has materially contributed to the building's current	Dec 30 2025 12:37PM

			condition. Public institutions with substantial resources should not be rewarded for demolition by neglect, particularly when alternatives such as stabilization, adaptive reuse, or transfer have not been fully explored. Approving demolition under these circumstances would set a concerning precedent.	
Louise	Britton	1111 William Battle Ct., Edisto Island, SC 29438	Every time I drive into Charleston from my home on Edisto Island I admire this historic building and the surrounding green space. We need to preserve these historic sites that represent South Carolina's important agricultural past and present. The building should be restored and treasured, not torn down, and the trees, fields and open spaces around it preserved as well.	Dec 31 2025 1:11PM
Mary	Traveland	204 N Galloway Ave, Mesquite, TX 75149	This beautiful, historical building needs to be preserved, NOT demolished. It is important to the city, the region, and can still be highly useful in its current state. Please respect and preserve this bit of Charleston's history in a time when so much has been lost.	Dec 31 2025 1:27PM
Margaret	Peery	1224 Village Creek Lane, Apt D5, Mt. Pleasant, SC. 29494	I do not think this building should be demolished. Clemson knew about the historical importance of this building when they purchased the property. I'm sure they can come up with a plan for change that incorporates this building in the design.	Dec 31 2025 1:39PM
Mary	King	1504 Center St Mt Pleasant SC	This is an historic structure and site. Clemson was well aware of this when they purchased the property. I vehemently oppose demolition. The building has significant architectural details , agricultural and historic significance. DO NOT ALLOW CLEMSON TO DEMOLISH. Shame on them.	Dec 31 2025 1:42PM
Ralph	Herda	14 Gadsden St Charleston S C	Very opposed, find a way to preserve/protect/repurpose the structure. It has charm, beauty, historical importance and the land parcel is large enough to make a solution not unreasonable. KEEP IT. FIND A WAY.	Dec 31 2025 2:02PM
Paige	Lewis	507 Stinson Drive, Charleston	I oppose the application to demolish the agricultural building at 2875 Savannah Highway. The building in question is an historic building for its Colonial Revival architecture, as well as its use in developing agriculture for the state and the country. I've always admired that building and appreciated that it had been preserved, including after Clemson University purchased it. The University purchased the historic building knowing of its condition at the time and its historic significance and should seek to preserve it for future use.	Dec 31 2025 2:28PM

Judy	Anderson	31 Orne Street, Marblehead, MA 01945	To Clemson University : Please do not demolish this 1930s property. The building could be preserved and the grounds could be used for farm-to-table programs, consistent with its historic function, and beneficial to the community.	Dec 31 2025 3:30PM
Susan	Hansz	1743CentralPark Road Charleston 29412	I have seen so many changes in our Charleston communities that do not meld well with the area. I have often passed the building at 2875 Savannah Highway and appreciated the architectural and structural integrity. But recently I was made aware not only of its remarkable site, but also some of the historical significance that has occurred on this property and in this building. I do not know what Clemson has caused to demolish such a structure, but I feel that the land surrounding it should be sufficient to do whatever they feel is necessary other than destroying this property. And I hope that they will allow a bit of landscape to benefit the structure.	Dec 31 2025 3:35PM
April	Chafin	3321 Middleburry Ln Charleston SC 29414	The colonial revival style is a historically important part of America.s history. There are too many buildings of this era being torn down. I oppose drastic changes to this building, and it's property. Please uphold the importance of the building.	Dec 31 2025 3:57PM
Christine	Yriart	2428 Vaucluse Road, Charleston, SC 29414	Stop destroying the historic structures and filling in of wetlands, etc. that make Charleston unique. It is not worth the money from developers for this city to lose it's unique character that make it so special. Whether it is destruction of wetlands or buildings, the end result is the same. If wetland destruction, demolishing historic structures or overbuilding does not stop, Charleston will soon look like Atlanta and wouldn't that be sad!	Dec 31 2025 4:22PM
Lawren	Lee	907 Belleview Circle West	Do not demolish the vegetable laboratory off Savannah Hwy. It holds a large piece of Charleston history. It should be preserved as such.	Dec 31 2025 8:26AM
Charles	Andrus	31 Laurens St., Apartment 1402, Charleston, SC 29401	To the Design Review Board, Clemson University is reportedly considering the demolition of a building it inherited from the U.S. Dept of Agriculture - a structure that holds genuine historical and scientific significance. I believe this moment calls not for erasure, but preservation and recognition. This building was home to pioneering horticultural research that helped shape modern plant breeding and beyond. Among the many fine scientists who worked there was my father, C. Fred Andrus, a internationally recognized horticulturalist whose collaborative research had	Dec 31 2025 8:40PM

			<p>lasting agricultural impact. His contributions were recognized not only with an honorary doctorate from Clemson University itself, but at a 2002 ceremony in Toronto, Canada where he was inducted into the American Society of Horticultural Sciences Hall of fame alongside figures such as Luther Burbank and George Washington Carver. Rather than tearing the building down, Clemson - possibly in partnership with the USDA - should begin a process to repurpose it as a museum, archive, or public educational space honoring the early scientists who worked there. Once a building like this is gone, so too is the chance to connect future generations with the people and ideas that helped feed the world. I urge Clemson and state leaders to pause demolition plans and explore preservation before this history is lost forever. Respectfully, Charles Andrus Charleston, SC</p>	
Mary Frances	Hummel	Shadow Ferry Dr	Just leave the building standing. If it needs repairs, fix it. We have too much development in Charleston now. Mayor Riley did an outstanding job as mayor for years protecting our historical sites and history. Cogswell need to work on taking care of what we have instead of building more that we don't need. He needs to take care better care of our city. Clean up the litter that's getting out of hand and protect, restore and repair our historical sites.	Jan 1 2026 2:34PM
Melanie	LaRocca	153 Hampton Circle, Bluffton, SC 29909	Due to its historic significance, and that the structure is doing no harm to persons or property, please keep the building in tack.	Jan 1 2026 10:48AM
Laura	Dubato	2406 Lilytree Drive , Charleston SC 29414	This shouldn't be demolished, it has historical significance. Charleston has no problem building new things that don't help our city. We need to honor the past too!	Jan 1 2026 11:39AM
State Senator Ed	Sutton	13 Leichester Rd	I respectfully urge the Design Review Board to deny Clemson University's request to demolish the historic building at 2875 Savannah Highway. Constructed in 1936–1937 as the nation's first experimental vegetable breeding laboratory, this Colonial Revival structure holds clear regional and national significance and has been deemed eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Despite decades of deferred maintenance, a recent structural engineer's report confirms the building remains structurally sound, making demolition unnecessary and premature. Approval of this request would reward demolition by neglect, set a troubling precedent, and further erode the	Jan 2 2026 1:27PM

			irreplaceable historic fabric of West Ashley, a community that is fully deserving of preservation and thoughtful reinvestment. Adaptive reuse remains a viable and responsible alternative that honors both Charleston's history and sound planning principles, and the Board should require that path rather than allow the permanent loss of a landmark that once played a pivotal role in feeding America during the Great Depression.	
Heather	Russell	1597 Seabago Drive, Charleston, SC 29414	This is an important historic structure and site. It is important to maintain this building due to the significance to our area. Clemson was aware of the historical nature of this building upon securing the property it sits on and should be required to maintain the building for further generations.	Jan 2 2026 7:39AM
Aaron	Russell	1597 Seabago Drive, Charleston, SC 29414	This is a historic building and everything should be done to preserve this building for future generations to learn about the significance of this building and the work done inside of it.	Jan 2 2026 7:41AM
Lesa	Watts	947 White Point Court Charleston, SC29412	We need to protect this historic building and site and should not allow demolition of this building.	Jan 2 2026 9:22AM
Francine	Dionne	1070 Northbridge Drive Charleston SC 29407	This is a historic building and in relatively good repair. It does need some updating, renovation but the basic structure is good. Needs to stay.	Jan 2 2026 9:29AM
Avery	Edwards	3627 Franklin Tower Dr.	While I have lived in Charleston over 35 years, I grew up on Hilton Head and would regularly travel to the city on Highway 17. This building is an absolute landmark, announcing that Charleston is nearby. I cannot imagine the roadside without it.	Jan 2 2026 11:48AM
Brittany	Lavelle Tulla	231 King Street	Documenting the history of the USDA laboratory was an honor, and I thank Clemson University for the opportunity to research and share such a powerful and significant story. I strongly oppose its proposed demolition for numerous reasons, including concerns about demolition by neglect, the irreversible loss of a site integral to historic scientific advancements in agricultural research, the missed opportunity for creative preservation through adaptive reuse, and setting a dangerous precedent for the treatment of other historic properties by institutions. I would like to specifically address the application's statement that this building "does not exhibit unique historic, architectural, or aesthetic features." As an intact two-story Colonial Revival-style building, the former USDA laboratory stands as a distinctive and historically significant	Jan 3 2026 7:20PM

			<p>architectural resource representing federally sponsored construction during the New Deal era. It was the first of nine experimental laboratories established across the United States in the late 1930s and intentionally reflects Charleston's architectural character. Many of the other laboratories built nationwide at this time under the same federal program were erected with varying designs more typical of government facilities, making the lab's architectural character both regionally complementary to Charleston's architectural heritage and historically significant as a unique application of Colonial Revival in federal scientific architecture. Through its preserved footprint, setting, and overall design, the building powerfully conveys its significant role in USDA research during a pivotal era in American agricultural history - far from lacking uniqueness - and its removal would result in the total loss of historic integrity for the entire property, emphasized by the site's confirmed eligibility by the SHPO. Character-defining features at the exterior, for example, include the building's symmetrical façade, equidistant dormers featuring arched windows, paired central interior chimneys outlined in brick dentils, and a molded cornice with an unadorned frieze. Despite deterioration, much of the interior finishes and floor plan remain. I urge DRB to deny the demolition of this historic resource.</p>	
Cindy	Wofford	8 elliot St Apt C Charleston	<p>It is difficult to understand why Clemson would highlight the historic property in question on its website and then propose its removal. Clemson was aware of the history and significance of the building when it purchased the property. DENY their request at your upcoming meeting.</p>	Jan 3 2026 7:47AM
Mary	Casey	25 Wentworth Street	<p>Demolition by neglect should not be tolerated or tacitly encouraged by granting permission to demolish this significant building and its ancillary structures. This property has an important history in terms of function and is also a prime example of colonial revival architecture. These buildings comprise a unique local story and should be preserved. Shame on Clemson.</p>	Jan 3 2026 10:44AM
Hannah	Adams	50 George St	<p>2875 Savannah Hwy is a wonderfully intact example of Colonial Revival style architecture that has suffered from ownership neglect over the past few decades. Its historical significance comes from the period of the Great Depression, when the site was used as a federally-funded, cutting-edge vegetable breeding laboratory to stimulate durable vegetable production and</p>	Jan 4 2026 1:43PM

			help feed the country. Most of these operations took place in the structure under threat, and they are entirely salvageable, with any damage being a result of neglect and abandonment for two decades. In 2015, the site was nominated for the National Register, which also highlighted the importance of its contribution to food production in a time of great need across the country. Its historical significance and architectural purity should be heavily considered in this decision.	
Heather	Sheldon	1387 Camp Road	Without ANY proper infrastructure improvements, there is NO PLACE for hundreds more people driving down Savannah Highway each day. There have been near 10000 new units built in West Ashley and John's Island since the moratorium expired. NEITHER of these towns has ANY REPRESENTATION. No Mayor. Just the Peninsula greed seeping into the formerly nature-focused lands they're destroying, for profit and greed. Our towns are worth more than another zero at the end of Developer Mayor's bank account.	Jan 4 2026 3:05PM
Matthew	Dailey	4415 Lord Proprietors Rd. Meggett SC 29449	Why does Clemson get to allow a historic building to fall into disrepair and then simply demolish it because they acted irresponsibly? Is that the standard in Charleston? Would a private citizen be given this right? ABSOLUTELY NOT. Make them restore the building. They have the money and a historic preservation dept.	Jan 4 2026 3:35PM
Zachary	Aument	105 America St	This application is immensely saddening for Charleston, South Carolina and our nation. As one of the first national buildings to study native plants it is a piece of our state and national heritage that, if this application is approved will be lost forever. As a frequent rider of the Greenway, the historic lab building is a landmark that I and my children look forward to. Furthermore, to have Clemson University - the only Architecture school in the state - propose this solution is truly disheartening. They have an active satellite campus in the city that has a robust preservation department. Perhaps those students could learn about preservation by surveying and recreating the lab instead of allowing it to fade into eternity.	Jan 4 2026 7:34PM
Christy	Siegling	820 Armsway Street, Mt. P	Oppose Demo! There were opportunities all along to maintain (or improve) condition. Owner Neglect for years should not be the path to demo approval.	Jan 4 2026 8:19AM

Kinsale	Pearson	--	<p>As a native South Carolinian who has driven by this property many times, I vehemently oppose this demolition. This is a textbook example of demolition by neglect, and approving demolition is a statement to the public that the sure-fire way to demolish any important historic building is to purchase and let sit and decay for years. This is a stunning building and a great example of a Colonial Revival structure. Not only is the structure itself important, the history of the structure is important. This is from the 1930's, and holds an important role in USDA research. It is an emblem of American agricultural history and the property, building, and land that it is on is meaningful. To approve demolition would set a standard to others that the way to approval of demolition of historic &amp; beautiful buildings is to purchase and let decay for years.</p>	Jan 4 2026 11:00AM
Emily	Bell	1125 Village Ct SE Atlanta, GA 30316	<p>As a graduate of Clemson University's architecture school, I am appalled by the university's hand in citing demolition due to their own neglect - on any property at all - much less on such a fascinating and agriculturally significant structure. This move is one of glaring contrast to any kind of stewardship to the state of South Carolina, its past, or its future - values for which the Clemson I know claims to stand. The university has always been a wellspring of creative solutions; it's past time to tap into that for this property. I hope the board rejects this application if Clemson doesn't rescind it immediately as they so should, shamefully.</p>	Jan 4 2026 11:40AM
Jean	Stoll	205 21st St, Grottoes, VA 24441	<p>Thank you for the opportunity to submit a comment regarding TMS #308-00-00-001, DRB2025-000292: the requested demolition of a historic USDA building from the 1930s. I lived in Charleston for two years as a Clemson University graduate student in their historic preservation masters degree program, and remember this site and building. While I do not know the full scope of the project, I urge the owner, Clemson University, to thoughtfully consider rehabilitation of this building. Reuse of existing buildings is the most environmentally friendly construction method. Rehabilitation of this historic building would also demonstrate Clemson's commitment to their own programs in Charleston: architecture and historic preservation. I urge Clemson and this deliberative body to favor sustainability and character over near-term goals which may or may not serve the city in the long term.</p>	Jan 4 2026 11:56AM

Max	Kuller	2nd Bend Rd Harleyville SC	This proposed demolitions would take away not just this beautiful, historic building, but would completely disrupt the lovely land on which it sits upon. While it would be lovely to see the interior fully restored and used, the building maintains a large graceful presence as is, connecting with the lot on which it occupies in a symbiotic way that is quite beautiful. It is not hard to take ourselves back to the early days of the breakthrough vegetable lab as it sits today. Please don't let this building be demolished. It has been neglected for years, but that should certainly not be a reason to allow its destruction. There is so much potential for rebirth, and one with potential for an incredible homage to the buildings past. Thank you.	Jan 4 2026 12:32PM
Mary	Cooper	60 Rutledge Ave Charleston SC 29401	DENY request to demolish because this building is An important historic structure: This 89-year-old, Colonial Revival-style structure is historic in its architecture as well as its context. A significant historic site: The site was deemed eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 2015 due to its historical significance. Clemson purchased the property in 2019 understanding its unique nature and character. An historically and culturally important use: As the first of its kind in the world, the building served as an anchor for the first research station established through the Bankhead-Jones Act to bolster agricultural research, breeds, and innovation post-World War I. Important to the city and the region: Much of the research conducted in and around this building was aimed at developing new varieties of crops that could fill in gaps after the Lowcountry rice and cotton industries collapsed. This site was associated with the improvement of produce	Jan 5 2026 9:13AM
Tom	Gaman	PO Box 276, Inverness, CA 94937	Please do not allow destruction of the historic USDA Experiment Station at 2875 Savannah Hwy. I visit the area often and walk the greenway, as my daughter lives nearby and I am sure there are suitable uses for the restored building. It is a valuable part of the cultural and economic history of West Ashley.	Jan 5 2026 11:26AM

**2. 725 Wappo Rd.**

**West Ashley | Council District 7 | TMS #350-01-00-078 | DRB2025-000293**

Requesting approval for the demolition of a small outbuilding on the school campus and older than 50 years of age.

Owner: Charleston Co School District

Applicant: Tony Giuliani

**No Comments Submitted**

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**3. 2274 Clements Ferry Rd.**

**Cainhoy | Council District 1 | TMS #267-00-00-148 | DRB2025-000251**

Requesting conceptual approval for a new 3-story storage building.

Owner: Holly McAlhany

Applicant: Holly McAlhany

**No Comments Submitted**

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**4. 2275 Henry Tecklenburg Dr.**

**West Ashley | Council District 7 | TMS #309-00-00-055 | DRB2025-000279**

Requesting preliminary approval for a youth learning center which includes a learning center building, a maintenance building, and a 9-hole youth golf course.

Owner: Essex Farms A Partnership

Applicant: LS3P

**No Comments Submitted**

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**5. 350 Grand Oaks Blvd.**

**West Ashley | Council District 10 | TMS #301-00-00-052 | DRB2025-000294**

Requesting conceptual approval for a multi-family development with 6 buildings with 380 units and 36 townhouses, some separate garages and a clubhouse.

Owner: Bees Resources LP

Applicant: Middleburg Communities

**81 Comments Submitted on Innovate Site in Opposition:**

First Name	Last Name	Address	Submitted Comment	Date/Time Submitted
William	Falta	200 Pine Terrace Court, Charleston 29414	The proposed development of 380 apartment units and 36 townhomes is too massive a scale to be built between Grand Oaks Blvd and West Ashley Circle given the substantial increase of traffic and congestion on a daily basis especially in light of existing "rush hour" issues . My family is firmly opposed to this proposal.	Jan 1 2026 2:34PM
Michael	Laskavy	509 Hainsworth Drive, Charleston SC 29414	This area cannot support further development. Those of us who live in Grand Oaks are already dealing with increased traffic getting in and out of the subdivision, increased wildlife incursions into property due to loss of habitat, and increased flooding concerns. Additionally, many of us enjoy the local wildlife, which will suffer devastating impacts due to habitat loss. We are	Jan 1 2026 8:12AM

			<p>already seeing an increase in dead animals due to car hits (a deer ran across GO Blvd. just this past week right in front of my car trying to get from one side of the property to the other; if I had hit it, it would have resulted in the animal's death as well as serious damage to my car). Developers don't live here, they just take their money and go ruin another area. Grand Oaks is built out. At what point will the DRB and Council say, "Enough"?? Our quality of life is being destroyed by greed and thoughtlessness. Please DENY this project!!</p>	
Robert	Frederick	110 Sugar Magnolia Way	<p>I understand the term "wetlands" has been redefined by Trump Administration but this proposed site should not be developed. It is entirely to large a project at this site with Long Savannah being developed behind it. Natural storm water conservation beats out retention ponds every time. Lawsuits will be abundant if flooding occurs like in ShadowMoss. We also have insufficient access to the existing neighborhood from Bees Ferry. Our two lane neighborhood roads are also not sufficient to handle the proposed influx. I cannot attend this public meeting because of the absurd timing in relation to normal working hours and after school care of children. This has been a constant grievance with the public that has been totally ignored to this date.</p>	Jan 1 2026 9:31AM
Caitlin	Crosby	123 Dorothy Drive	<p>Dear Charleston City Council: Please do not approve this area to be developed into residential space. The Grand Oaks community is already in the process of undergoing so much development and change and it has already begun. Between the Long Savanna project taking off, and the Somerset Division in the works, there is going to be continuous construction in this quiet and safe neighborhood. The area proposed for residential development is wetlands, and in the summer months and after tropical systems or heavy rain it stays very wet for months because it's the natural catch all for rainwater which prevents flooding in and round the neighborhood entrance. In addition, we have an incredible biodiversity of wildlife and native trees and plants that are major contributors to why people love to live here. I have lived here for 5 years and it's what drew me to this area as a biologist. Another concern is traffic exiting the neighborhood. Putting the proposed residential development directly at the entrance of the neighborhood is going to cause an incredible</p>	Jan 1 2026 11:59AM

			amount of traffic and we do not have the infrastructure in place to support it. The Glenn McConnell expansion is barely able to handle the existing traffic in the morning and evening as it, and the housing in the already approved residential projects in and around the neighborhood has not been factored in yet. Please listen to your constituents and do not let this land become residential property. We have a vibrant and diverse community in Grand Oaks and we want to preserve as much of the trees, wildlife and community as we can. Thank you.	
Beth	Griffith	102 Dorothy Drive	Please stop building - we can not accommodate more traffic. I know this application handles size and the other details about the site and not approval however anything you can do to pass our opposition would be appreciated	Jan 2 2026 11:01AM
Lucy	Curtis	402 Blue Dragonfly Drive Charleston, SC 29414	NO to anymore apartment or townhomes in Grand Oaks!!! I am so tired of seeing all of this and Not one person has any solutions for traffic! How about more restaurants and shops? My question is have you filled all of the apartments that were built on Glenn McConnell and Bees Ferry? As a homeowner in Grand Oaks we do not want any more apartments or townhomes! How about you use your money and efforts to fix the traffic?!?	Jan 3 2026 6:08PM
Kathryn	Wilson	225 Brambling Lane	Development is too dense. I am not opposed to all development however this one is too dense for an area already severely congested with traffic. Also - a deeper tree line needs to be left intact between the development line and Grand Oaks / Brambling Lane. Stop the clear cutting!!! Stop making everything ugly ! Developers need to improve roads before they build.	Jan 3 2026 6:58PM
Sheryl	Tuttle	10 Drummond court	I have lived in Shadowmoss for the past 35 years. I am begging the board to not approve this development. It is so crowded over here. The roads cannot handle anymore developments. Please please do not approve this development.	Jan 3 2026 7:00PM
Julie	Mylin	383 Cabrill Dr	I am strongly opposed to adding additional units to the area of Grand Oaks and West Ashley Circle. Unfortunately as soon as the Glenn McConnell road project was completed it is obvious 3 lanes in both directions was not wide enough. Adding additional units to an already congested area is unacceptable. We need to be concerned about our roadways and truthfully we need a stop all new construction for homes and Multifamily developments.	Jan 3 2026 7:58PM

Cynthia	Smart	301 Steele Magnolia	No more traffic is needed in this area. Past development has already maxed out the infrastructure. Please don't make it worse by adding the proposed structures.	Jan 3 2026 10:48AM
Shawn	Finch	190 Gazania Way Charleston SC	You Council members need fired ASAP. Stop the over building of West Ashley. We don't need anymore apartments, Townhouses, storage Facilities or anything else. How about a Park instead. Why are you even having a public meeting if you have no authority on what goes there. Nice move having the meeting at 4:30pm when most people are at work. Leave the trees alone and stop taking away the beauty of West Ashley because you are turning it into North Charleston concrete jungle.	Jan 3 2026 10:57PM
william	holland	122 evening shade dr	The traffic around Harris Teeter is already very heavy. More development is going to make it worse with no improvements to Bees Ferry or Grand Oaks Blvd. If it is not already zoned for this concentration of housing, it should not be approved. Zoning is there for a reason, NOT to make exceptions every time a developer wants it changed. We vote. The developer probably lives somewhere else.	Jan 4 2026 1:34PM
Lynn	Veatch	809 Bent Hickory Rd., Charleston SC 29414	Grand Oaks Blvd is heavily congested making entry and egress very slow. The addition of 380 apartments and 36 townhouses will further slow traffic and limit emergency services to the Grand Oaks community.	Jan 4 2026 1:58PM
Mark	Bell	2 Brook Hollow Ct. Charleston, SC 29414	Stop throwing buildings up whenever and wherever. The infrastructure doesn't support what we have now.	Jan 4 2026 2:01PM
Sarah	Cantrell	827 Bent Hickory Rd	The infrastructure of Grand Oaks Blvd, Bees Ferry, and Glenn McConnell cannot support 400 more residential units. The residents of West Ashley need more green space, not more homes.	Jan 4 2026 2:18PM
Charise	Cassetta	258 Larissa Drive, Charleston, SC 29414	Please please please do not approve this project!! Bees Ferry is already too overloaded with new developments and retail buildings that have been added in the last five years. The rapid development has not done anything to alleviate the traffic and infrastructure. Getting out of Grand Oaks is already a challenge. Log Savannah is already under construction. Why do we need to approve and build more developments in this area? Please do not approve! Let's put a pause on developments for a few years and let what is already in the works complete and see how infrastructure is then.	Jan 4 2026 3:34PM

Ruth	Freedenberg	343 Cabrill Drive	Congestion overload!!! It's already a nightmare to exit onto Bees Ferry and then Glenn McConnell. With the building going on here, it is evident that traffic is not taken into account. No infrastructure for public transportation which should have been planned for decades ago. Very discouraging situation. If I was not retired, I would leave Charleston as it is a nightmare to get anywhere.	Jan 4 2026 4:04PM
Meghann	Wheeler	509 Blue Dragonfly Dr. Charleston SC 29414	Grand Oaks Blvd is already overly congested with traffic at peak times; adding this volume of homes would only serve to exacerbate and already stressed area. Wildlife has also recently been displaced in this area with the Long Savanna development, which will further stress the wildlife in the area. There are too many cons, nowhere near enough pros to move forward with this plan.	Jan 4 2026 4:34PM
Lilia	Pelfrey	703 Bent Hickory Rd	It is IMPOSSIBLE TO BELIEVE the plans to do more building in an already literally impossible to handle the every day heavy loaded traffic! Please reconsider NOT to do more building in this already saturated community	Jan 4 2026 5:03PM
Pamela	Ingram	1036 Tyron Circle, Charleston, SC	The scale and mass are way too large for the area. Buildings need to be no more than 2 stories high, or else they will dwarf the homes that are off of Grand Oaks Blvd. I'm also concerned about light pollution from taller buildings. There also needs to be more green space (particularly areas left natural, including the wetlands area), as well as a natural area buffer fronting Grand Oaks Blvd. The garages and trash area should not be visible from Grand Oaks Blvd. The area is too small for the number of buildings proposed. The developer MUST provide access to WA Circle so that all of the traffic is not utilizing Grand Oaks Blvd. This comment is off-topic, but the notice was insufficient. It was placed during a holiday week with the sign barely visible to drivers-it was parallel to Grand Oaks Blvd. and could only be read by stepping into the street. At minimum, there needs to be a sign on each side of the road, in the driver's line of sight (perpendicular to the road).	Jan 4 2026 5:10PM
Olivia	H	West Ashley	I respectfully oppose the proposed development at 350 Grand Oaks Blvd. Housing development in this area of West Ashley is occurring at a pace that exceeds the capacity of existing infrastructure, particularly traffic and roadway systems. Continued density without corresponding infrastructure improvements will further strain the area and reduce overall quality of life for	Jan 4 2026 5:23AM

			residents. Additionally, there appears to be little emphasis on conservation or long-term environmental stewardship. West Ashley needs a more measured approach to growth that prioritizes infrastructure readiness, environmental protection, and the future livability of the community for our children.	
Eric	Wilhelm	1706 N Elgin Ct, Charleston SC 29414	Infrastructure along Bees Ferry and Grand Oaks is already stressed from numerous projects, such as this one, over the last decade. In addition, an area prone to flooding and heavy rainfall puts existing buildings and houses at risk of major damage if forests and wetlands are removed for such a project. I heavily oppose such a project without major improvements to both infrastructure and drainage.	Jan 4 2026 5:23PM
Nancy	Huber	337 Weeping Willow Way	Our neighborhood not only doesn't need this development but Grand Oaks can't handle all the traffic it will bring. When I moved in GO 5 years ago I always said it took me 5 minutes to get out of the neighborhood. Now it takes 10 minutes at times. If this development is approved, we'll never be able to get out. And one of the reasons I purchased in GO was the beautiful entrance driving into the neighborhood. Please please please don't approve this development.	Jan 4 2026 5:43PM
Wendy	Stimpson	902 Lansfaire Dr, Charleston	This will add to the overcrowding in the area. Traffic is already terrible. It will destroy the beautiful entrance to Grand Oaks. It will have to be renamed to No Oaks.	Jan 4 2026 5:45PM
Leyna	Hanson	401 Matuskovic Dr	I am very much so opposed to any further single family, multi family or affordable housing developments along Bees Ferry Rd. Over the past few years I have seen the area grow at an unbelievably astonishing rate. There seems to be zero interest in supporting that growth with any proper infrastructure being put in place. Traffic is a huge problem already in this area. Mon thru Fri, it can take me a full hour to get to the downtown area...I live 12 miles away from my job, an hour to get there is incomprehensible. The widening of Glenn McConnell absolutely will not accommodate the growth that is coming to this area...it doesn't support the growth the area has already seen. I can not think of a single positive impact adding yet another multi family housing development would bring to this area. Is the addition of Long Savannah not enough?? Not every open area of land needs to be developed in order to make some money. What about the environmental impacts, like flooding? How about	Jan 4 2026 5:54PM

			the all of wildlife that is being displaced and forced to become a nuisance to some because the animals have lost their homes? The greed that drives these decisions is not surprising anymore, but it never fails to disappoint. NO MORE DEVELOPMENT ALONG BEES FERRY ROAD!!	
Aislinn	Mcilvenny	Dorothy Drive	Current infrastructure cannot handle this growth. As things are now, it is extremely difficult to even get out of grand oaks, onto bees ferry, then Glenn McConnell during rush hour. That many additional homes will make it near impossible.	Jan 4 2026 5:57PM
Devin	Moore	1028 Tyron Circle, Charleston, SC 29414	Do not approve this housing project. Grand Oaks is already more than crowded. The coming Long Savannah project will be adding thousands of people and cars to the area already. As it is, I often cannot leave my own neighborhood without waiting through multiple traffic light cycles because of backups at the Bees Ferry / Grand Oaks intersection due to the current high traffic levels. The last thing we need is an additional 380+ residences & the associated cars on Grand Oaks Blvd. Residential saturation along the Bees Ferry corridor is already astoundingly high. The growth is out of control. We need an incredibly large amount of infrastructure development before adding any more residents to our neighborhood. We don't even have permanent traffic lights at the Bees Ferry / Grand Oaks intersection yet - they're still the temporary lights hanging on cables. I most strongly oppose the development at 350 Grand Oaks Blvd. and sincerely hope this does not progress any further. Mark me down as a "NO" vote on this - in fact, make that "HELL NO".	Jan 4 2026 5:57PM
Caroline	Perez	2104 Fife Lane	This area of West Ashley is becoming over developed with housing and the road infrastructure does not support it. The traffic is bad enough it will worsen with the addition of more apartments and townhomes.	Jan 4 2026 6:14AM
Richard	Kazzi	862 Rue Drive Charleston, 29414	Please consider the negative impact that this massive development will have on our Grand Oaks neighborhood, on our quality of life. The increase in traffic that this development will bring to our neighborhood cannot be supported by current infrastructure. Respectfully, Rick Kazzi	Jan 4 2026 6:23PM
Bonnie	Walton	210 Summer Rain Ct.	Please do not allow this construction to happen. It is one of the last wooded areas around Grand Oaks. Traffic is already terrible leaving the neighborhood and we will also see an influx of traffic with the development of Long Savannah. Please leave it as woods.	Jan 4 2026 6:34PM

Pamela	Morgan	3464 Forest Glen Drive	We have elected officials who would look out for the best interest of our community. So far they have not done their jobs because we have been overrun by apartments. The traffic is nothing less than complete deadlock all hours of the day, night and week with no relief in sight. And now you want to build 380 more apartments? That is pure insanity and a sure fire way to get voted out come election time.	Jan 4 2026 6:34PM
Tracy	Lyles	1497 Ashley Garden Blvd	More apartments are NOT needed in our area. Traffic is a huge contributing factor to my opinion. It should not 10+ minutes to get out of Grand Oaks and down Glenn McConnell. The traffic is terrible all day - there is no time that travel is easy. Charleston must get our infrastructure under control before we add more housing. I have lived in Grand Oaks for 20 years. I have worked on Johns Island, North Charleston and now James Island during this time. It routinely takes me 30-40 minutes to get to work every morning (I leave my house around 6:45 each morning) and an hour to get home each day. The beauty of this area is also being destroyed with every new housing complex. It is no longer peaceful. Please reconsider adding housing to this area. We don't need more people here.	Jan 4 2026 6:36PM
Rhiannon	McPherson	6050 Postell Dr Ravenel SC	The infrastructure can't handle the additional apartments and townhomes. The local schools are over populated. Additional homes, townhomes, apartments, and other living unit neighborhoods must be denied until appropriate upgrades can be made to the roads, the flooding, the lights, traffic, and schools. This addition will only cause detriment to current residents in the neighborhood and those who have to travel thru for school and work.	Jan 4 2026 6:36PM
Samantha	Briggs	732 Bent Hickory Road, Charleston, SC 29414	I strongly oppose allowing the proposed apartments and townhouses to be built on this property without first addressing the inadequate road infrastructure serving the Grand Oaks subdivision. Our community is already experiencing a significant residential expansion, with many new homes currently under construction. As it stands, we already face ongoing traffic congestion and safety concerns on the limited roads leading in and out of the neighborhood. Adding high density housing without improving these access points will only worsen an already strained situation. Before any additional residents are approved, the roads in and out of Grand Oaks must be	Jan 4 2026 6:36PM

			expanded and improved to ensure the safety of current homeowners, future residents, and daily commuters. This is not just an inconvenience issue, it is a public safety concern. In the event of an emergency, first responders need reliable and efficient access to our community. Currently, limited entry and exit routes create delays that could be life threatening. Likewise, in the case of a large scale emergency or evacuation, there is no safe or sufficient travel path to accommodate the residents who already live here, let alone additional population. Development should be done responsibly and in phases. Infrastructure improvements must come before increased density, not after. For the safety, accessibility, and well being of our community, road expansion and traffic planning should be completed prior to approving any additional housing on this property.	
Michael	Frederick	416 Blue Dragonfly Dr Charleston SC 29414	I am opposed to further housing development with the current infrastructure that exists around Grand Oaks Blvd, Bees Ferry Road and Glenn McConnell. The current infrastructure cannot handle the amount of traffic already present, further development of new housing will only compound the problem and safety of drivers and pedestrians present in the area.	Jan 4 2026 6:49PM
Kristen	Martin	149 Dorothy Drive Charleston SC 29414	I have lived in Grand Oaks since 2007 and the traffic getting in and out of the neighborhood has increased greatly over this time. Any more development of such a high density would completely tax the current infrastructure and greatly depress the quality of life for residents as well as future home sale values. With the Long Savanna project underway, the Bees Ferry/Grand Oaks area is at maximum capacity and I vehemently oppose any further high density residential development.	Jan 4 2026 6:59PM
Ben	Briggs	732 Bent hickory Road Charleston,SC 29414	The proposed addition of apartments and townhomes to an area that is already experiencing significant traffic congestion and population density raises serious concerns. Introducing high-density residential development in a location where roadways, intersections, parking, and public services are already overburdened will inevitably exacerbate existing traffic problems, increase safety risks, and further strain emergency response capabilities. Higher-density housing generates substantially more daily vehicle trips than single-family homes. Without corresponding and clearly funded infrastructure improvements, this	Jan 4 2026 7:00PM

			development will negatively impact mobility, increase commute times, and diminish the overall quality of life for current residents. In addition, the increased demand on schools, utilities, and public services must be carefully considered, as these systems may not be equipped to accommodate a rapid influx of new residents. Given these conditions, the proposed development is not appropriate in its current form. Single-family homes would represent a more compatible and measured approach to growth, one that better aligns with the existing character and infrastructure capacity of the area. At a minimum, this project should be tabled until comprehensive traffic, infrastructure, and public safety studies are completed and reviewed, and until concrete plans are in place to address the documented impacts. Proceeding without these safeguards would be irresponsible and contrary to the long-term interests of the community.	
Kraig	Keyes	2919 Limestone Blvd Charleston SC 29414	Excessive housing development on Hwy 61 and Bees Ferry / Paul Cantrell, combined with inadequate transportation infrastructure, is impacting the quality of life due to a lack of meaningful long-range planning.	Jan 4 2026 7:23PM
Bruce	Stimpson	902 Lansfaire Drive, Charleston, SC 29414	The addition of 380 units and 36 Townhouses to Grand Oaks is not a wise decision for the following reasons: 1. This will increase the already overwhelming traffic. It now takes several traffic lights to get out to Bees Ferry. 2. The flooding of Church Creek will increase due to the lack of drainage possibilities. 3. The addition of yet more housing to our West Ashley will make it look more like Mount Pleasant.	Jan 4 2026 7:25PM
Tracy	Dresnin	128 Fulmar Place, Charleston	I oppose for this location for development. It is overcrowded enough and I do not want any wildlife harmed.	Jan 4 2026 8:22PM
Pamela	Knox	311 Grouse Park, Charleston SC 294145	As a resident in the Grand Oaks Plantation subdivision, I strongly oppose this project. The residents of this subdivision have already been subjected to major development since 2018 at the intersection of Grand Oaks Blvd. and Bees Ferry including the major shopping center at the corner of this intersection with a Harris Teeter grocery store as the anchor. With the Bees Ferry/Glenn McConnell Blvd intersection being the main feeder to 526, the traffic is already a major issue on weekday mornings. This proposed new development will make it nearly impossible to get in and out of the Grand Oaks subdivision in a reasonable amount of time during standard	Jan 4 2026 8:23PM

			<p>rush hour timeframes. We cannot continue to increase the population in this small area without major changes in the infrastructure. We also need to keep in mind that there has been major new residential development on &amp; off Bees Ferry in the direction of Savannah Highway, creating a significant increase in traffic. Please rethink this additional stress on an already overly developed area.</p>	
Denise	Gann	188 Larissa Dr	<p>If there is going to be development here, it really should be for commercial use only. It would be nice to keep some of the green space and at least keep a barrier of trees along Grand Oaks Blvd. Would prefer no development, but please NO MORE APTS!!!</p>	Jan 4 2026 8:24PM
Kathryn	Cox	610 Summerfield Court, Charleston SC 29414	<p>This project will impact so much in our already crowded neighborhood of Grand Oaks Plantation. I've lived here 23 years and have seen it grow so much and traffic can't even get out at our light sometimes for 10 minutes as the light favors Bees Ferry Road always. I do not want to see this happen but unfortunately our voices don't seem to matter anymore it's all about revenue and the people just have to take it. I am very sad with all the condo/apartments being built along Bees Ferry Road, how much is too much and where will it end? The Savanna Long is about to be developed behind us and they never ran the Glen McConnell all the way to 165 as promised when I moved here. No roads to handle these vehicles and people trying to get to work and home, it's becoming a very dangerous nightmare driving and getting around over here now....</p>	Jan 4 2026 8:32PM
Thomas	Freund	1039 Tyron Circle	<p>I am writing to formally oppose the proposed development at 350 Grand Oaks Boulevard due to significant concerns regarding inadequate infrastructure planning, existing and projected traffic congestion, and irreversible environmental impacts. The Bees Ferry Road and Ashley River Road corridor is already operating beyond its intended capacity. Daily congestion—particularly during peak commuting hours—has become a defining feature of this area, creating safety concerns, emergency response delays, and reduced quality of life for residents. These issues are not hypothetical; they are currently being experienced and will be substantially worsened by additional density without corresponding infrastructure investment. This concern is magnified when considered alongside the ongoing and planned development efforts in</p>	Jan 4 2026 8:53AM

			<p>Ravenel, which will further strain the same road networks and intersections. At present, there is no clear, funded, or phased plan to meaningfully address these cumulative impacts. Approving new development without first resolving known transportation deficiencies represents poor long-term planning and places the burden of congestion squarely on existing residents. Equally concerning are the environmental implications of this project. The proposed development threatens to destroy valuable habitat and green space that serve important ecological functions, including stormwater absorption, wildlife corridors, and natural buffers along the Ashley River watershed. In a region already vulnerable to flooding, erosion, and habitat loss, preserving remaining undeveloped land should be a priority—not an afterthought. Once these ecosystems are disturbed or removed, they cannot be meaningfully replaced. The environmental costs of this project extend beyond the immediate site and will affect surrounding communities through increased runoff, degraded water quality, and loss of biodiversity. Growth in our region is inevitable, but it must be responsible, well-sequenced, and aligned with infrastructure and environmental realities. Approving development at 350 Grand Oaks Blvd without first addressing transportation capacity and environmental protection sets a troubling precedent and undermines the long-term resilience of the West Ashley and Ravenel communities. For these reasons, I strongly urge decision-makers to deny or delay approval of this development until comprehensive traffic mitigation, infrastructure improvements, and environmental safeguards are clearly defined, funded, and implemented. Thank you for the opportunity to submit this comment and for considering the long-term wellbeing of our community.</p>	
Jamie	Nault	805 Paran Oaks Dr	Since moving into Grand Oaks in 2023 there has been continuous development, majority of which have been high and medium density residential developments. Multiple sets of town homes off of Bees Ferry, apartments off of Bees Ferry and Glen McConnell, request to rezone Story Brook Farm for more town homes. The current infrastructure has remained the same and traffic is more and more of an issue. As a resident of Grand Oaks, I am opposed to more development on Grand Oaks Blvd. This will add	Jan 4 2026 9:15AM

			to the worsening traffic problems and further tax the current infrastructure and facilities.	
Cheryl	Leonard	2982 Winners Circle	I live in Hickory Farms. For 3 years in a row we experienced severe flooding in our neighborhood due to over development beside and behind our subdivision. We have yet to see any of the promises as to what would be done that we were given to prevent this from happening again. 1 acre of wetlands absorbs over a million gallons of water. This area on Grand Oaks Blvd. Is a wetland. It also has ruins of a house on the old plantation. Are we ever going to stop overdevelopment? Other neighboring communities have established moratoriums on over development. Why can't Charleston? Please do not allow this excessive development to move forward.	Jan 4 2026 9:18PM
Michelle	Kanapaux	910 Lansfaire dr charleston sc 29414	We have enough traffic. Add houses or townhomes not apartments.	Jan 4 2026 12:51PM
Beth	Mountz	2912 Amberhill Way	I believe this is a disservice to this area. Traffic and congestion is already at a high point and adding more homes to this area is irresponsible for the infrastructure that is currently in place as well crowding this area more than it already is. Charleston/West Ashley used to be so beautiful and unique and we just keep building and adding homes and traffic is excruciating. All of these aspects need to be seriously considered before adding more apartments/buidling more homes.	Jan 5 2026 6:41AM
Kellie	Dawson	18 Darcy Court	The infrastructure in West Ashley cannot handle any more large projects with multi family units to this extent. The growth is getting completely out of control. We need to start focusing more on shopping and stores that the local people can use so they do not have to travel. Investors are coming in here and overcrowding West Ashley and causing the liability to decrease. I am a school teacher, and our schools are becoming overcrowded. This construction will just cause more problems.. as a taxpayer and voter I ask that you reconsider this building permit.	Jan 5 2026 7:14AM
Emily	Vogelgesang	584 Hainsworth Dr, Charleston, SC 29414	Increased tree buffers will help lessen the blow of the overall development to the neighborhood aesthetic - suggesting an increase to 35 feet. The back of the townhomes should be required to match the current look of other townhomes in the development to maintain overall character - there wasn't an indication if a fence would be allowed to go up and that should be made clear	Jan 5 2026 8:22AM

			<p>as part of the design review. Overall the color choices should be adjusted to reflect the other townhomes within Grand Oaks - either the brick choice or the bright colors. Adding a big white building does not match any existing homes or townhomes in the stretch of neighborhood this is going in. Additionally, the white is going to get mildew and moldy quickly and not be maintained properly as seen in other apartment units throughout town. The development should be limited to 3 stories - allowing 4 stories in this developed of a neighborhood where nothing is currently higher than 2.5 stories is ridiculous. With the trees to be left as a buffer and addition of palm trees, this height would much quicker blend in to the surrounding than 4 stories will. I appreciate the developers use of native plants to maintain existing area character. The wet ponds should be required to have more landscaping planned around them than is currently indicated as well as benches to reflect the other ponds in the neighborhood. The developer should plan to add trash cans around their property with the increase in residents. Dog poop stations as well. This should be a part of the design review as they should match the aesthetic. Due to the site location, the builder should be required to add bigger turn lanes on their property and increase the tree buffer on all sides. The turn lanes will help alleviate traffic issues this is going to cause by giving residents a quicker opportunity to exit moving lanes of traffic.</p>	
Careen	Jensen	904 Lansfaire Dr., Charleston, SC 29414	I am opposed to any development in the Grand Oaks neighborhood. The proposed development will cause more congestion. The traffic in and out of Grand Oaks has already become a problem with the existing development. When the Harris Teeter shopping center was proposed, there was supposed to be an access road connecting Grand Oaks to the circle. That still has not happened. Adding hundreds more vehicles to the area will cause additional congestion, which this area cannot handle. Please stop the development of high density housing in this corridor. The infrastructure cannot handle it.	Jan 5 2026 9:02AM
Christy	Rullis	228 Brambling Lane, 29414	My family and I live on Brambling Lane, which is the closest road to the proposed subdivision. The road infrastructure in West Ashley/Bees Ferry Area cannot house all of these new residents. The traffic is already horrendous trying to leave Grand Oaks and get down Glen McConnell.	Jan 5 2026 9:03AM

			We also worry about flooding if they will be filling in the wetlands behind our houses. Enough with all of this building and time to focus on renovating some of the old abandoned buildings in West Ashley and fixing up inside 526 a bit more.	
Mary	Cooper	60 Rutledge Ave Charleston SC 29401	DENY request to demolish because this building is An important historic structure: This 89-year-old, Colonial Revival-style structure is historic in its architecture as well as its context. A significant historic site: The site was deemed eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places in 2015 due to its historical significance. Clemson purchased the property in 2019 understanding its unique nature and character. An historically and culturally important use: As the first of its kind in the world, the building served as an anchor for the first research station established through the Bankhead-Jones Act to bolster agricultural research, breeds, and innovation post-World War I. Important to the city and the region: Much of the research conducted in and around this building was aimed at developing new varieties of crops that could fill in gaps after the Lowcountry rice and cotton industries collapsed. This site was associated with the improvement of produce	Jan 5 2026 9:13AM
Linda	McDonald	6001 Sandlewood Court	Bees Ferry is busy enough without additional traffic and housing. Need to improve infrastructure before adding more cars to the road!	Jan 5 2026 9:14AM
Elizabeth	Gray	544 Tribeca Drive	As a resident of Grand Oaks since 2011 I understand that land will be developed and changes happen. I ask that this is not allowed to happen because the infrastructure is not here to support this community or what is already here. I work 12 miles away and have to leave 1.25 hrs ahead to make it on time. I wont be able to make the commute with more traffic and it could put my livelihood at risk. I already live here, this doesn't have to happen.	Jan 5 2026 9:23AM
Katie	Register	2 Loch Carrun Terrace, 29414	526 needs to be finished before any further housing developments are added. It is a nightmare getting anywhere.	Jan 5 2026 9:25AM
Erin	Nichols	120 Fulmar Place, Charleston, SC 29414	I live in The Landings at Grand Oaks, the adjacent property. The traffic is already too congested and the lights way too long due to over developed land on Grand Oaks and Bees Ferry. I worry about ground water, wildlife and congestion. This area is wetlands and has already been overdeveloped. Please deny any	Jan 5 2026 9:26AM

			large housing/apartment complex or storage facility.	
Ren	Ruggiero	2178 Bees Ferry Rd Apt D Charleston SC 29414	As a longtime resident of Bees Ferry Rd, I have seen the increasing congestion in the Grand Oaks area firsthand. It is already very difficult to access the businesses at the intersection of Bees Ferry and Grand Oaks due to the traffic coming in and out of the subdivision. Our neighborhood is growing too fast and the development is unsustainable.	Jan 5 2026 9:27AM
Doug	Lembo	316 Cabrill Dr	As a resident living in Grand Oaks & Shadowmoss for over 15 years I have seen the area grow significantly. While the majority of this is great news for home value and quality of life, I have seen the negative side as well. Specifically with removing natural wetland/drainage in highly populated areas. The flooding is astronomical and the more we pave over these natural drainage areas the worse it gets. The land behind Harris Teeter is one of the few larger run off areas we have left in this neighborhood. Building a giant townhome complex will not only take that drainage away but it will also remove a large area for wildlife which has been dwindling as well. On top of all this the minimal entrances and exits from grand oaks got vehicles is already an issue, adding additional cars right near the main exit will increase an already frustrating traffic pattern issue. Finally I'm all for capitalism and making money for these applicants and even helping house residents who may be trying to buy into the area but there has to be a line of demarcation. The building of homes behind grand oaks (blue dragonfly and long Savanah) is already going to bring hundreds and eventually thousands of residents. Let's leave well enough alone and allow the current residents to try and enjoy what we have without the added stress of traffic/construction near the exit and worst of all flooding in the surrounding neighborhoods. Thank you for your time.	Jan 5 2026 9:30AM
Pamela	Bright	310 Grouse Park Charleston, SC 29414	I respectfully oppose the proposed development of 350 new homes along Grand Oaks Blvd. due to the significant and unresolved impacts it would have on traffic congestion, community overcrowding, and the loss of valuable undeveloped land. Grand Oaks Blvd. extending to Bees Ferry and onto Glenn McConnell, already experiences substantial traffic volume, particularly during peak morning and evening hours. Residents routinely face delays, safety	Jan 5 2026 9:31AM

			concerns, and limited accessibility for emergency vehicles. Adding hundreds of additional households would place an unsustainable burden on an infrastructure that is already strained, increasing commute times, accident risk, and overall frustration for both current and future residents. I personally commute 16 miles to work. On an average my commute time to and from work is over an hour. Why is it Charleston County's goal to cover every inch of undeveloped land?	
Tim	Jensen	904 Lansfaire Dr., Charleston, SC 29414	I am opposed to this development effort as there are already traffic problems in this area. Adding apartments will only exacerbate this problem.	Jan 5 2026 9:35AM
LaDon	Paige	Hunt Club Run	I respectfully ask that the design review board not take this proposal under consideration. The scale and density is too great. I believe that the limited business district should be reserved for something that would better complement the surrounding area and not add to traffic congestion and strain on our inadequate infrastructure. There should be a moratorium on development with the addition and with the upcoming Long Savanna and multiple multifamily projects that are already under construction along Bees Ferry and Glen McConnell, the infrastructure is not adequate to accept more density. Please consider some other design that is better for this community.	Jan 5 2026 9:39AM
Jeffrey	Loope	222 Brambling Lane Charleston, SC 29414	I am opposed to the potential development of large apartment and townhome complexes that is planned for the Grand Oaks neighborhood behind Harris Teeter because the area is already overcongested and lacking the infrastructure needed to support such rapid growth. Traffic delays, strained utilities, and reduced emergency response times are already everyday concerns for residents of West Ashley. Adding hundreds to thousands more residents without meaningful road improvements, drainage solutions, or public service expansion will only worsen quality of life, compromise safety, and erode the character of our community. Responsible growth should prioritize infrastructure and long-term livability over unchecked density in one of Charleston's most burdened corridors.	Jan 5 2026 9:41AM
Erin	Scott	130 Fulmar Place	I oppose this development. This area is already overcrowded with too many developments along Glen McConnell and Bees Ferry. This land should remain open.	Jan 5 2026 10:07AM

Victoria	Klvana	426 Blue Dragonfly Drive	We can not handle amount of people and traffic that would be added	Jan 5 2026 10:08AM
Lester	Klvana	426 Blue Dragonfly Drive	We can not handle more people and traffic	Jan 5 2026 10:12AM
Lindsey	Gill	302 Steele Magnolia Ave	There is NO infrastructure in place for this additional housing. Do you propose a new road out of the neighborhood that will NOT clog the corner of Bees Ferry and Glen McConnell? Also a tall apartment building is NOT coherent with the style and look of Grand Oaks where this is proposed. What ever happened to green space and fresh air? This is not sustainable. What about schools? What's the plan there for all these additional children and overcrowded classes already?	Jan 5 2026 10:25AM
Paula	Molnar	515 Ivy Circle 29414	Opposed to further development. This particular road / intersection is already struggling to handle existing traffic of the area.	Jan 5 2026 10:39AM
Charles	Privett	420 Sycamore Shade street	There is not enough infrastructure at the Grand Oaks entrances to support more traffic in and out of the area. People are already blocking the lanes coming out of Grand oaks. Additional filling of wetlands in the bees ferry and church Creek areas increase the risk of flooding, which is already significant.	Jan 5 2026 10:58AM
Jennie	Frederick	110 Sugar Magnolia Way	The current design is inappropriate for the area. Too many buildings, too many units, too dense. The buildings don't match size or style of the neighborhood. We don't want more apartments. Only single family townhomes or duplexes would be appropriate in this space, to be harmonious with surrounding neighborhoods design.	Jan 5 2026 11:05AM
Abby	Spell	143 Cabrill Drive, Charleston, SC 29414	There have been hundreds upon hundreds of apartments built in the same area of West Ashley over the past few years. We do not need any more temporary housing. I have been a homeowner in Grand Oaks since 2013. I encounter cars speeding down Grand Oaks Blvd and Ashley Gardens Blvd daily racing to their apartments. We have lots of wildlife including Bald Eagles, alligators, and deer that inhabit the woods in the area. There is also trouble with flooding and water in the area. A ton more concrete is not good for the planet and not good for our community. A better use of the space would be a park or community center that offered something for all the citizens of West Ashley. We do not need any more apartments. We need infrastructure improvements!!! The City	Jan 5 2026 11:12AM

			of Charleston is not being responsible with its over development.	
Jennie	Frederick	110 Sugar Magnolia Way, Charleston, SC 29414-9000, USA	We opposed any development to the wetlands! Our voices will likely fall on deaf ears, AGAIN. Be advised, the public has become acutely aware of abuse of power when it comes to new development, and we are ending the public service careers of elected officials that betray the trust of their constituents.	Jan 5 2026 11:12AM
Kristie	Davis	537 Tribeca Drive	The infrastructure and the wetlands will not support yet more construction here. Traffic has become very dangerous not only for pedestrians and bike riders, but for other drivers. It's not acceptable to wait 30 minutes in traffic to arrive at hwy 526. Flooding is an ongoing issue, and building on wetlands, exacerbates the problems and devastate our natural environment. Wildlife is affected by yet fewer resources and become "nuisance " to residents who then harm the animals. Finally, we are held captive here in a hurricane now due to over-construction of the Charleston area. If there is an evacuation we cannot get out due to the overpopulation and highways that can no longer sustain it! We are in danger, and many of our leaders, and the developers do not care. It's outrageous to think we can sustain more homes and residents here in Grand Oaks.	Jan 5 2026 11:17AM
Andrea	Maxwell	Grand oaks resident	I oppose all aspects of this ridiculous project. The area is rapidly being overdeveloped, with negative increasing traffic, risk of flooding, and lack of improvements to current infrastructure. The Glenn McConnell widening is not enough to accommodate the explosion in development. To be clear: I strongly oppose this project. Should it move forward: building height should be limited to no more than three stories. Parking must be included in or under the building. Green space should be maximized, optimizing the retention of trees to maintain the neighborhood asthetic.	Jan 5 2026 11:26AM
Linh	Smith	566 ivy cir	Oppose	Jan 5 2026 11:26AM
Kim	Boerman	900 Lansfaire Drive Charleston SC 29414	Dear Members of the City of Charleston Design Review Board, I am writing to respectfully but firmly oppose the proposed development of 380 apartments and 36 townhomes behind Harris Teeter on Grand Oaks Boulevard. West Ashley — particularly the Bees Ferry, Grand Oaks, and Glen McConnell corridors — is already heavily saturated with multi-family projects. Over the	Jan 5 2026 11:28AM

		<p>past several years, our area has seen a dramatic increase in apartment density without proportional investment in roads, schools, drainage, safety services, or quality-of-life infrastructure. Adding hundreds more units to this already stressed area would further strain an environment that is simply not equipped to absorb it. Traffic &amp; Safety Grand Oaks Boulevard was not designed to accommodate the significant daily traffic generation that an additional 400+ residential units will bring. The Bees Ferry/Glen McConnell corridor is already congested, with frequent backups, safety concerns, and increased accident risk. This project would unquestionably worsen those conditions for residents, school buses, emergency vehicles, and everyday commuters. Drainage &amp; Flooding West Ashley is known for flooding challenges, and much of this area is already sensitive. Covering more land with impervious surface places neighborhoods at higher risk, increases stormwater burden, and pushes water toward existing homes. This puts residents, property values, and insurance costs at risk. Schools &amp; Community Capacity Our local schools are already at or over capacity. Rapid multi-family expansion has not been matched with school expansion, teacher support, or transportation infrastructure. Approving another high-density development ignores the reality of the impact on families and students. Community Character Grand Oaks is a well-established residential community that families intentionally chose because of its suburban neighborhood environment. This project fundamentally changes the scale, feel, and livability of the area. Responsible development should complement a community — not overwhelm it. The Right Project in the Wrong Place This is not anti-growth; it is a request for responsible, balanced, and thoughtful growth. West Ashley needs infrastructure relief, traffic solutions, stormwater improvements, and community resources before more mass-density housing is approved. Approving yet another massive apartment complex disregards the lived reality of residents who already bear the daily impact of unchecked development. For these reasons, I urge the Board to deny this proposal in its current form and protect the integrity, safety, and livability of the Grand Oaks and greater West Ashley community. Thank you for your time</p>	
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			and consideration of the residents who call this area home. Sincerely,	
Pamela	Lyons	406 Blue Jasmine Ln Charleston SC 29414	This proposal is not in line with mass or scale in this proposed location. We urge the board to not approved this project as it will significantly ruin the current aesthetics along GO Blvd.	Jan 5 2026 11:38AM
Jordan	Woodard	508 Ivy Circle	I strongly oppose the 380 apartment and 36 townhomes project. Traffic in this area is already congested, with horrendous wait times at the main traffic light. Adding this level of density without major roadway and signal improvements will negatively impact safety, commute times, and emergency response access. This development is not appropriate for the current capacity of the area.	Jan 5 2026 11:48AM
Carlos & Pamela	Bright	310 Grouse Park, Charleston SC 29414	The proposed subdivision and apartments will create undue strife on the existing residences of Grand Oaks. The roads affected and the traffic lights therein are already overburdened. Adding an additional 400+ vehicles to these roads is ignorant at best. The traffic signal at Grand Oaks and Bees Ferry is timed incorrectly and does not allow a good flow of traffic onto Bees Ferry. On top of that the flow down Glenn McConnell is backed up every morning and evening. There is no way to direct this traffic anywhere else. There is so much construction going on in the area with no regard for the quality of life for the current residents. Anyone traveling this route to work is already dealing with multi hour commutes. Adding these additional cars to the mix will only exacerbate the already miserable commute. The Grand Oaks area/community is already mostly single family homes and some townhomes and adding the apartments to the area will create a mix that we do not want. Apartments should be kept out of the neighborhood. Let us have a peaceful area that is filled with homeOWNERS and not rentals with tenants flipping every year.	Jan 5 2026 11:48AM
suzann	marchewka	108 Dorothy dr	Someone needs to look out for the people who already live in Grand Oaks and the population growth. It seems as though those making decisions are lining their pockets. Nothing new there but a change from that mindset is sorely needed.	Jan 5 2026 11:51AM
Natalie	DiValentino	Autumn Chase Magnolia Lakes	Public Comment – Opposition to DRB Application Re: Bees Resources LP / Middleburg Communities – Multi-Family Development Design Review Board Members, I am writing to formally oppose the proposed multi-family development consisting of six buildings with 380 apartment units, 36	Jan 5 2026 12:05PM

		<p>townhouses, separate garages, and a clubhouse. While I understand the importance of growth, this particular proposal raises serious concerns about the long-term impact on our already overburdened community. 1. Traffic &amp; Roadway Capacity Traffic conditions in this area are already extremely challenging. Daily congestion during peak hours has reached an unsustainable level, and the addition of hundreds of new residential units will only worsen this problem. Local roads and intersections are not designed to accommodate this level of increased volume, and no meaningful mitigation strategy has been presented that would prevent significant degradation of safety and quality of life for existing residents. 2. Wetland &amp; Drainage Concerns The site's proximity to wetlands and existing drainage systems presents major environmental and infrastructure risks. Our community has already experienced issues related to stormwater management and flooding. Further development at this scale increases the likelihood of runoff, erosion, and long-term drainage problems that could negatively impact nearby properties and the surrounding ecosystem. 3. Cumulative Strain from Overdevelopment This project cannot be evaluated in isolation. Numerous other developments and high-density projects are already underway or recently approved in the surrounding area. Together, these projects are placing severe strain on local resources, public infrastructure, and community services. Even basic necessities, such as finding parking at Harris Teeter, have become increasingly difficult — a small but telling indicator of how stretched this area already is. Our community is growing faster than its infrastructure can reasonably support. Approving yet another large-scale residential project without comprehensive planning for transportation, environmental protection, and resource capacity will further compromise the livability of this area. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Design Review Board to deny conceptual approval of this application or, at minimum, require substantial revisions and additional impact studies before moving forward. Thank you for your time and consideration. Sincerely, Natalie DiValentino Resident of Grand Oaks Community: Autumn Chase Magnolia Lakes</p>	
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**6. East corner of West Ashley Cir. and Glenn McConnell Pkwy.**

**West Ashley | Council District 2 | TMS #305-08-00-060 | DRB2025-000291**

Requesting conceptual approval for a new City of Charleston Fire operations/training complex.

Owner: City of Charleston Capital Projects

Applicant: Billy Connell

**No Comments Submitted**

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**7. 3688 Angel Oak Rd.**

**Johns Island | Council District 3 | TMS# 279-00-00-665, 142 | DRB2025-000247**

Requesting preliminary approval for a new 1-story visitor's center/restroom building at the Angel Oak Preserve. Also included are trails, playground, enhanced landscape, and new parking lot.

Owner: Low Country Land Trust/Samantha Siegel

Applicant: Liollio Architects/Jay White

**No Comments Submitted**

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**From:** [Justin Ferira](#)  
**To:** [Meeks, David](#)  
**Subject:** Procedural Observations About DRB Application - re: Clemson Lab Demo Application  
**Date:** Monday, January 5, 2026 1:42:01 AM

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Dear Mr. Meeks,

I hope you are well. I wanted to take a moment ahead of today's Design Review Board hearing to introduce myself and to share a brief procedural observation in a collegial spirit.

First, I want to express my sincere appreciation for your service and for the work of the Design Review Board. I know the Board is frequently asked to navigate complex and high-profile matters, and I appreciate the care and professionalism with which you and the Board approach those responsibilities.

By way of background, I grew up in West Ashley and previously served on the West Ashley Revitalization Commission. Through that role, I came to appreciate the City's efforts—particularly with Councilman Shahid's and Jacob Lindsey's involvement—to place markers at the gateways into West Ashley. I have long viewed the former research lab site as one of those gateways, with the buildings carrying significance beyond their parcel boundaries.

I plan to speak briefly during that portion of today's meeting on the historical merits of the buildings and property. **I did, however, want to flag two procedural considerations in advance, particularly as they overlap with issues you personally have previously and thoughtfully identified in Post & Courier reporting.**

**Demolition by Neglect – Self-Created Deterioration Excluded from Consideration of Building Assessment:**

- I also noted—and agree with—your statement that “*We are now looking into what we can do to stop this demolition by neglect. These buildings need to be renovated and used.*” I understand the City has issued similar directives.
- Procedurally, this raises the question of whether the current application presents evaluable information for approval.
- **The Board may consider a building's condition only where deterioration is not self-created. Where damage results from an owner's failure to maintain or stabilize—particularly after municipal direction—such deterioration cannot lawfully support demolition and instead compels denial or corrective action.**
- In that sense, it appears the application may be evaluable for denial, but not for approval. Reliance on self-created deterioration or on a mischaracterized MOA could place the Board in a position of being asked to rely on inaccurate or procedurally compromised information, potentially warranting deferral, denial, or later appeal if approved.

**Limited MOA Scope & Potential Lapse of Agreement:**

- I noted your comments stating: *“It was brought to our attention that Clemson never notified the MOA that the City denied the demolition of the buildings. And also “It was brought to our attention that Clemson never notified the MOA that the City denied the demolition of the buildings.*
- From a procedural standpoint, it appears that the applicant may have overrepresented the scope of what the MOA ever was from the start. It was a limited coordination agreement that expressly preserved local zoning authority and did not grant demolition rights or override Charleston’s review authority. It stated expressly it was **“subject to local zoning and local rules.”** I have seen many outward references that it was intended to accomplish more—but it undeniably and expressly noted it has no influence on local processes nor should they feel directed by the MOA.
- Additionally, the MOA **appears it either may have naturally expired or lapsed through noncompliance of reporting.** If it was extended, the required annual January updates were not provided. If it was not extended or updates not provided (as you noted), per section V of the MOA, Clemson would be in default and non-compliant, and the MOA not operative to even suggest they still have federal support. So continued reliance on it would seem to misstate its operative status.
- **Again, the applicant must present accurate representation of the documents it references for application and asks the DRB to rely upon.**
- Either scenario raises concerns about whether the MOA is being accurately characterized for the Board’s consideration. And the application mischaracterizing a zoning document as a basis for approval is grounds for denial or appeal.

I offer these thoughts respectfully and in appreciation of the care you bring to your role. Thank you again for your service, and I look forward to today’s proceedings.

If you have any interest to speak to educate me on how I’m thinking about things correctly or not, I welcome the chance to speak and am at . I appreciate your service. Thank you again for your time.

Best,  
Justin Ferira

-

**From:** Michael Gravely  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 23, 2025 6:15 PM  
**To:** haselde  
**Cc:** wwechte; Summerfield, Robert  
**Subject:** Concern Regarding Proposed Demolition of Historic Vegetable Research Laboratory – West Ashley

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Dear Ms. Stoner,

I am writing regarding Clemson University's renewed request to demolish the historic vegetable research laboratory at the West Ashley agricultural research campus, as detailed in the recent *Post and Courier* articles: "*Charleston blocked Clemson plans to raze parts of its historic farm. Now it is accused of demolition by neglect*" (Sept. 29, 2025) and "*Clemson seeks to demolish historic vegetable research lab in West Ashley*" (Dec. 23, 2025).

I want to be very clear: I am extremely disappointed and frustrated by Clemson's handling of this property.

If Clemson wishes to present itself as a responsible steward of land entrusted to it. Then it has a duty to care for what has been given to it — especially when that property holds clear historic and civic significance. Allowing a nationally important building to deteriorate for years, responding only after city enforcement action, and then returning with another demolition request is deeply troubling.

Good stewardship does not mean neglect followed by convenience-driven demolition. If Clemson is unable or unwilling to maintain and responsibly manage this historic asset, then the university should seriously reconsider its presence on this site. That may mean selling the land to parties who are willing to meet the responsibilities that come with ownership, or reassessing internal priorities and budgets if funding for basic stabilization and repair cannot be found.

I strongly hope — and fully expect — that this demolition request will be denied.

As a public university serving the people of South Carolina, and as an institution operating within the City of Charleston, Clemson should be held to a higher standard. I had hoped for better judgment, transparency, and accountability from those entrusted with overseeing this property.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I urge Clemson to reconsider this course of action and to pursue a solution that reflects genuine stewardship rather than irreversible loss.

Respectfully,

**Michael Gravely**  
Supply Chain Management  
The Citadel Oscar '27

**From:** [Chad Husselbee](#)  
**To:** [Meeks, David](#)  
**Subject:** DRB Public Comment Submission – Agenda Item #1 – 2875 Savannah Highway (January 5, 2026)  
**Date:** Sunday, December 28, 2025 11:45:02 PM  
**Attachments:** [DRB Opposition – 2875 Savannah Highway – Agenda Item 1 – Husselbee.pdf.pdf](#)  
[History- USDA Vegetable Lab Clemson webpage .pdf](#)  
[2875 Final Report \(corrected\) .docx](#)

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Dear Mr. Meeks,

Attached please find my written public comment and opposition materials for inclusion in the official record for the City of Charleston Design Review Board meeting scheduled for Monday, January 5, 2026.

Property: 2875 Savannah Highway

Agenda Item: #1 – Demolition request by Clemson University

Meeting Date: January 5, 2026

Submitted by: Chad Husselbee

The primary opposition memorandum is submitted as a single PDF. Additional supporting files and referenced exhibits are also attached for the Board's consideration and incorporation into the record.

I would also like to thank you and the members of the Design Review Board for the time and attention devoted to this matter. The issues presented extend beyond a single property and raise important considerations for historic preservation, public accountability, and stewardship of nationally significant resources. I appreciate the Board's careful review of this record and its role in addressing matters of such importance.

Please confirm receipt of these materials and advise if anything further is required to ensure they are properly distributed to Board members in advance of the meeting.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Respectfully,

Chad Husselbee

Supporting Documentation



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U.S. Vegetable Breeding Laboratory  
Former U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)  
Southeastern Vegetable Breeding Laboratory

2875 Savannah Highway (U.S. Route 17)  
Charleston County, South Carolina

## A HISTORY

**PREPARED BY:**  
Brittany V. Lavelle Tulla, MSHP  
BVL Historic Preservation Research

**PREPARED FOR:**  
Clemson University

SPRING 2020

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# **INVESTIGATIVE REPORT ON THE LEGAL ENFORCEABILITY OF ALLEGED BREACH AT 2875 SAVANNAH HIGHWAY**

**Prepared for Submission to Federal and State Oversight Authorities**

**Date: September 16, 2025**

**Prepared for:** MOA Signatories (GSA, Clemson University, SHPO, ACHP), DOJ, Congress, Preservation Stakeholders, and Relevant Oversight Authorities

**Prepared by:** Independent Analysis Based on Provided Reports and Public Sources

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- XII. Recommendations and Anticipated Defenses (Expanded)
- XIII. Policy Reform and Legislative Recommendations
- XIV. Strengthening Legal and Regulatory Analysis (2024–2025 Context)
- XV. Case Law Appendix
- XVI. Certification

# I. Executive Summary

This comprehensive report consolidates and expands upon analyses of the alleged material breach of the 2018 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) governing the transfer of the former USDA Vegetable Laboratory at 2875 Savannah Highway from the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) to Clemson University. The MOA was premised on the approval of demolition by the City of Charleston's Design Review Board (DRB), which was denied in January 2021. This denial constituted a failed condition precedent, collapsing the agreement's foundation. Clemson concealed this denial from MOA signatories, allowed the historic structures to deteriorate through "demolition by neglect," and colluded with GSA to script official responses, misleading federal agencies, and Congress.

Evidence from FOIA responses confirms collusion, undermining federal oversight. The City of Charleston enforced its demolition-by-neglect ordinance in August 2025, mandating stabilization within 30 days and rehabilitation within one year, validating the adverse effects of neglect. This is not a procedural loophole but a violation of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), federal property disposal laws, and potentially the False Claims Act (FCA). The 2015 Gray & Pape Cultural Resources Study confirmed the property's historic significance, proving Clemson's awareness prior to concealment.

Key implications include re-engagement of Section 106 review, potential property reversion, FCA liability, and the need for legislative reforms to prevent transferees from evading accountability through nondisclosure. Congressional oversight is recommended due to misrepresentations and evidence of collusion. This report merges insights from prior analyses, incorporates public sources, and calls for immediate corrective action to preserve this historic site.

## II. Introduction and Factual Background

The property at 2875 Savannah Highway, formerly the U.S. Vegetable Laboratory, is a historic complex in Charleston County, South Carolina. Established in the early 20th century, it holds significance for agricultural research and architecture, as documented in the 2015 Gray & Pape Cultural Resources Investigation, which deemed it eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) due to its association with USDA advancements and intact structures. A 2017 historic report by Brittney Tulla, approved by the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), further affirmed its value.

In July 2018, the MOA was executed among GSA, Clemson University, SHPO, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (AHP) to facilitate the property's transfer under Section 106 of the NHPA. The agreement was explicitly conditioned on DRB approval for demolition, allowing Clemson to redevelop the site. GSA conveyed the property in April 2019. However, Clemson's September 2020 demolition permit application was denied by the DRB in January 2021. Clemson withdrew the application but failed to notify signatories, violating MOA stipulations for communication and reporting.

From 2021 to 2025, the structures were abandoned, leading to deterioration. In August 2025, the city enforced its ordinance, requiring immediate stabilization and a rehabilitation plan. FOIA records reveal Clemson drafted GSA's responses, constituting collusion. GSA admitted ignorance of the denial in July 2025, repeating Clemson's "repurposing" narrative. AHP and USDA confirmed they were unaware, believing the undertaking was complete. Congressional offices, including those of Rep. Mace, Rep. Clyburn, and Sen. Scott, were misinformed about mitigation completion.

This concealment prevented re-engagement under Section 106 and subverted the MOA's purpose, creating a legal paradox: the MOA assumed demolition, but city law mandated preservation.

### **III. Timeline of Key Events**

- **2015:** Gray & Pape Cultural Resources Study, conducted with Clemson's involvement, confirms historic significance and NRHP eligibility.
- **July 2017:** Brittney Tulla Historic Report finalized and SHPO approved.
- **July 24, 2018:** MOA executed, premised on demolition approval.
- **April 15, 2019:** GSA conveys property to Clemson.
- **September 17, 2020:** Clemson files demolition permit.
- **January 2021:** DRB denies demolition; Clemson withdraws and fails to notify signatories.
- **2021–2025:** Structures deteriorate via demolition by neglect; photos show serious decay.
- **July 2025:** GSA admits ignorance of denial, repeats Clemson-scripted responses.
- **August 27, 2025:** USDA contractor confirms nondisclosure would have triggered action.
- **August 28, 2025:** ACHP confirms unawareness.
- **August 29, 2025:** City enforces ordinance: stabilization in 30 days, rehab plan in 12 months.
- **September 2025:** DRB staff confirms concealment and neglect; GSA misinforms Congress.

## IV. Legal and Regulatory Framework

Relevant statutes and regulations include:

- **National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), 54 U.S.C. §§ 306108, 306101, 307103:**
  - Section 106: Requires federal agencies to assess effects on historic properties before undertakings.
  - Section 110: Mandates active preservation of properties under federal control.
  - Section 304: Protects sensitive information but does not excuse nondisclosure of key facts.
- **36 CFR Part 800: Protection of Historic Properties.**
  - §§ 800.4–800.5: Identify and assess effects.
  - § 800.9: Failure to implement mitigation triggers re-review or enforcement.
- **False Statements Act (18 U.S.C. § 1001):** Liability for misleading federal statements.
- **False Claims Act (31 U.S.C. §§ 3729–3733):**
  - § 3729(a)(1)(B): False statements material to claims.
  - § 3729(a)(1)(G): Reverse false claims for concealing obligations (e.g., reversion).
  - Qui tam provisions allow private suits.
- **Federal Property Disposal Law (40 U.S.C. § 541 et seq.):** Governs surplus transfers; breaches justify reversion.
- **Charleston Ordinance § 21-54:** Enforces stabilization (30 days) and rehabilitation (1 year) for neglected historic sites.

The MOA's stipulations (I.A–B) tied mitigation to demolition; III & V required notices and reporting; VI–VIII allowed amendments/termination for failed conditions.

## V. Precedent Analysis

Precedents affirm enforceability:

- **Old Post Office, DC:** GSA OIG found concealment as federal misconduct.
- **Fort Hancock, NJ:** Federal re-engagement after failed agreements.
- **Courthouse Case:** Accountability for concealment in local-federal collaborations.
- **Crowley v. GSA (2022):** Injunctive relief viable despite expired agreements.

These show that post-mitigation concealment does not eliminate obligations.

## VI. Gray & Pape Cultural Resources Study (2015)

The study, conducted for GSA with Clemson's input, confirmed the property's historic significance under NRHP Criteria A (agricultural history) and C (architecture). It described intact laboratory buildings, greenhouses, and fields from the 1930s-1950s, recommending mitigation if demolished. This proves Clemson's deliberate nondisclosure, not ignorance.

## VII. Breach and Concealment Analysis

1. Failed **Condition Precedent**: DRB denial in January 2021 discharged obligations.
2. Concealment **During Active Term**: Occurred while MOA was in force.
3. Violation **of Stipulations**: Ignored reporting/communication duties.
4. Demolition **by Neglect**: City enforcement and photos confirm.
5. Collusion **with GSA**: Clemson scripted responses; misled Congress.

GSA's July 2025 admission that the MOA was "based solely on demolition" and unawareness of denial transforms this into material misrepresentation, subverting Section 106.

## VIII. Effect of the MOA on Findings

The MOA's premise failed, voiding the transfer. Remedies: Breach rescission, Section 106 re-engagement, reversion, FCA liability.

## **IX. Agency and City Evidence**

Exhibits include:

- F: 2018 MOA.
- G: Gray & Pape Study (2015).
- P: Brittney Tulla Report (2017).
- H–R: Emails, permits, photos, enforcement notices, congressional responses.

Supporting documentation is available via public sources.

## **X. Conclusions**

The concealment, coupled with collusion, constitutes a material breach and violation of law. This failure of accountability warrants:

- Re-engagement of Section 106.
- Declaration of breach and potential reversion.
- FCA litigation.
- Policy reforms for independent disclosures.

# XI. Remedies and Enforcement

## **Explicit Remedies:**

- Property reversion under disposal law.
- Monetary damages for neglect-induced losses.
- Injunctive relief to prevent further disposal/demolition.

## **Jurisdictional Authority:**

- Federal District Court (SC): MOA enforcement, injunctive relief, FCA.
- GSA OIG: Investigate collusion.
- ACHP: Section 106 re-engagement.
- City of Charleston BAR: Ordinance enforcement.
- Private Relator: Qui Tam under FCA.

## **Enforcement Pathways:**

- DOJ/GAO review for congressional misrepresentations.
- Contract law: Failed condition precedent renders MOA unenforceable as written.

**Anticipating Defenses:** Claims of “mitigation complete” are flawed; steps were conditioned on demolition, which failed amid concealment.

## **XII. Recommendations and Anticipated Defenses (Expanded)**

### **Recommended Actions**

#### **To ACHP & SHPO:**

- Re-open Section 106 review: Advise GSA to re-engage due to new adverse effects (demolition denial and subsequent neglect).
- Convene a Problem-Resolution Meeting within 15 days under 36 C.F.R. § 800.9.
- Recommend a standstill on property actions until review is complete.
- Coordinate with Charleston BAR deadlines (30-day stabilization; 1-year rehabilitation) and invite ACHP observer participation.

#### **To GSA (cc: OIG):**

- Issue a breach determination: Acknowledge failed condition precedent and concealment during the MOA's active term.
- Begin corrective conveyance/reversion analysis under 40 U.S.C. § 541 et seq.
- Refer misstatement and collusion issues to the GSA Office of Inspector General.
- Preserve and produce all Clemson–GSA communications from 2018–2025.

#### **To City of Charleston BAR/Legal:**

- Integrate federal enforcement with City deadlines under Ordinance § 21-54.
- Invite ACHP/SHPO participation during compliance monitoring.
- Use BAR enforcement to ensure parallel federal remedies are honored.

#### **To DOJ & GAO:**

- Initiate a preliminary inquiry into False Claims Act exposure, including potential reverse false claims by concealment.
- Review risks of false statements to Congress (2021–2025).
- Issue records preservation orders for all Clemson–GSA–Congress correspondence.

### **Broader Remedies**

1. Immediate review of Clemson's nondisclosure by oversight authorities.

2. Formal breach declaration of the 2018 MOA.
3. Property reversion or corrective transfer to a preservation entity.
4. FCA liability evaluation and investigation.
5. Policy reforms: Require independent verification of MOA conditions; mandate re-engagement for new facts; prohibit delegation to transferees.

### **Anticipated Defenses & Rebuttals**

- **Defense:** “Mitigation steps are complete; MOA expired.”  
**Rebuttal:** Mitigation was expressly conditioned on demolition approval. The DRB denial (Jan. 2021) collapsed the MOA’s foundation, and concealment occurred while the MOA was active. Expiry does not erase a breach.
- **Defense:** “We intended adaptive reuse.”  
**Rebuttal:** Subjective intent cannot substitute for disclosure. The City’s August 2025 enforcement letter confirms demolition by neglect, the opposite of reuse.
- **Defense:** “No federal jurisdiction now.”  
**Rebuttal:** Jurisdiction survives for:
  - Property reversion under 40 U.S.C. § 541 et seq.
  - False Claims Act liability (reverse false claim for concealment).
  - Injunctive relief post-expiry, as affirmed in Crowley v. GSA (2022).

## **XIII. Policy Reform and Legislative Recommendations**

If Section 106 cannot be re-engaged despite contradictions, amend NHPA to:

- Require independent verification.
- Mandate automatic re-review for undermining facts.
- Close loopholes allowing concealment to “run out” MOAs.

Congressional action is essential to prevent recurrence.

## **XIV. Strengthening Legal and Regulatory Analysis (2024–2025 Context)**

### **1. Charleston Ordinance § 21-54 (Demolition by Neglect):**

The City of Charleston's Code of Ordinances, Section 21-54, defines 'demolition by neglect' as the willful failure to maintain a structure to the point of deterioration, decay, or damage. The ordinance authorizes the City's Board of Architectural Review to require stabilization within 30 days and rehabilitation or reuse within one year. Failure to comply may result in fines or forced repair action. 2008 Clemson University thesis highlighted enforcement weaknesses in this ordinance. However, the August 2025 enforcement action shows that the City has recently applied it, demonstrating renewed municipal willingness to act. This strengthens the argument for closer federal-city coordination in enforcement.

### **2. Case Law Developments (2024–2025):**

Recent cases and legal opinions provide guidance, even if no exact precedent matches the facts of this matter:

- **Graton Rancheria v. Haaland (2024):** Enforced strict Section 106 consultation obligations, confirming that failure to provide notice or adequate engagement violates federal law.
- **Crowley v. GSA (2022):** Clarified that injunctive relief remains available even after agreements expire, establishing precedent for re-engagement when concealment undermines an MOA.
- **False Claims Act Enforcement (2024–2025):** DOJ reports and case law confirm vigorous enforcement of the FCA, including concealment-based 'reverse false claims.' In FY 2024, FCA settlements and judgments exceeded \$2.9 billion, demonstrating the viability of FCA pathways for property transfer concealments.

## XV. Case Law Appendix

- **Graton Rancheria v. Haaland (2024):** Confirmed that failure to notify or adequately consult under Section 106 violates federal law.
- **Crowley v. GSA (2022):** Established that injunctive relief may be available against GSA even after agreements expire.
- **DOJ False Claims Act Settlements Report (2024):** Demonstrated vigorous FCA enforcement, with \$2.9 billion in recoveries, showing broad applicability of FCA to concealment-based cases.

## **XVI. Certification**

To the best of available knowledge, this report presents facts and analysis under federal frameworks. Respectfully submitted on September 16, 2025.

**Respectfully submitted,**

Chad Husselbee

Prepared: September 16, 2025

OPPOSITION TO DEMOLITION REQUEST

2875 Savannah Highway – Former U.S. Vegetable Laboratory (Office/Laboratory Building, 1936)

Submitted to: City of Charleston Design Review Board

For Consideration at: Monday, January 5, 2026, at 4:30 PM

Department of Planning, Preservation & Sustainability

Agenda Item: #1 – Demolition Request by Clemson University

Submitted by: Chad Hesselbee, Concerned Stakeholder and Advocate for Historic Preservation

Date: December 28, 2025

## 1. BOARD SUMMARY

This submission opposes demolition of the 1936 Office/Laboratory Building at 2875 Savannah Highway, a contributing resource in a National Register-eligible historic district associated with nationally significant USDA agricultural research. SHPO-approved evaluations, including Clemson's own commissioned historical report, confirm its integrity, significance, and viability, directly contradicting the applicant's claims of lacking unique features or being beyond repair. The applicant's structural assessment affirms sound masonry and concrete systems, while City enforcement actions under Ordinance § 21-54 mandate stabilization and rehabilitation, confirming feasibility and evidencing intentional demolition by neglect. This neglect, coupled with concealment of prior DRB denial and collusion with GSA, has been referred to the GSA Office of Inspector General (OIG) for investigation into the federal conveyance process. Contact information for the assigned GSA Office of Inspector General investigator can be provided to the Board upon request. Based on Board criteria, deny the request outright to preserve the status quo amid ongoing federal scrutiny.

## 2. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF REVIEW

This rebuttal addresses Clemson's demolition request for the Office/Laboratory Building at 2875 Savannah Highway. It mirrors the applicant's packet, responds directly to Board criteria, and relies on professional cultural resource evaluations (e.g., 2015 Gray & Pape study), City enforcement actions, Clemson's own published historical documentation (including their Coastal REC webpage and the 2020 SHPO-approved historical report prepared for them), and the investigative report on MOA breaches. Evidence establishes a clear case of intentional demolition by neglect, violating local and federal preservation laws.

### 3. FEDERAL REVIEW CONTEXT (PROCEDURAL CONSIDERATION)

The property is subject to ongoing federal scrutiny due to alleged breaches of the 2018 MOA governing its GSA conveyance to Clemson. The MOA was conditioned on DRB demolition approval, which was denied in January 2021—a fact Clemson concealed from signatories (GSA, SHPO, ACHP), leading to misleading statements to federal agencies and Congress. This concealment, combined with deliberate neglect, constitutes a material breach under NHPA Section 106 and federal property laws, triggering potential re-engagement, reversion, and liability. The matter has been referred to GSA OIG for investigation into the process, including collusion (e.g., Clemson scripting GSA responses). Contact information for the assigned GSA Office of Inspector General investigator can be provided to the Board upon request. Proceeding with demolition is premature and inconsistent with prudent preservation; deferral is warranted pending OIG resolution.

#### 4. HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE U.S. VEGETABLE LABORATORY

Established in 1936 under the Bankhead-Jones Act as the nation's—and world's—first permanent federal vegetable breeding laboratory (as affirmed on Clemson's own Coastal REC webpage: "THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN THE WORLD"), the facility advanced research in breeding, pathology, and entomology, producing over 160 vegetable varieties. Professional evaluations, including the SHPO-approved 2020 historical report prepared for Clemson, confirm eligibility under National Register Criterion A (1936–1980). The building was central to this mission, housing core laboratories inseparable from the site's significance—directly refuting Clemson's claim that history is limited to greenhouses and farmland.

## 5. ARCHITECTURAL INTEGRITY AND CONDITION

The two-story Colonial Revival structure retains integrity of location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, as documented in SHPO-approved reports with pre-vacancy photographs showing intact façades and minimal encroachment. Deterioration results solely from Clemson's post-2021 neglect, not inherent defects—evidenced by the 2015 Gray & Pape study (conducted with Clemson's input) and 2016 building assessment, both confirming viability prior to abandonment. This counters Clemson's portrayal of the building as a "shell with liabilities," as their own consultant noted good structural condition in primary elements.

## 6. STRUCTURAL VIABILITY AND REHABILITATION FEASIBILITY

Clemson's consultant confirms sound brick walls, concrete floors, and interior elements; deficiencies are confined to systems, roofing, and deferred maintenance—addressable issues. City enforcement under Ordinance § 21-54 (August 2025) mandates stabilization within 30 days and rehabilitation within one year, affirming repairability and classifying the deterioration as intentional demolition by neglect. Precedents (e.g., 2008 Clemson thesis on Charleston's ordinance) highlight enforcement viability, inconsistent with demolition. Clemson's failure to maintain post-conveyance, despite awareness of significance (from their own reports), evidences bad faith.

## 7. DESIGN REVIEW BOARD DEMOLITION CRITERIA ANALYSIS

### 7.1 Historic, Architectural, and Aesthetic Features

Contrary to Clemson's claim of no unique features, the 1936 Colonial Revival building exemplifies rare New Deal-era federal research architecture, central to a National Register-eligible district. Clemson's own webpage and 2020 historical report laud it as groundbreaking, embodying agricultural innovation—demolition would erase this typology, as affirmed in Gray & Pape and Tulla reports.

### 7.2 Nature and Character of the Surrounding Area

Demolition would fragment the historic district, diminishing cohesion among contributing resources (greenhouses, headhouse, landscape), whose value depends on the laboratory. The active agricultural campus's character is enhanced, not jeopardized, by preservation—refuting Clemson's assertion. Neglect has already harmed the area; approval would reward noncompliance.

### 7.3 Historic or Culturally Important Use

For nearly 70 years, the building housed pivotal USDA research in pathology, horticulture, and entomology, integral to the site's mission—not peripheral, as Clemson claims. Evaluations (e.g., 2020 report prepared for Clemson) affirm its primary role in national advancements, with history tied directly to this structure.

### 7.4 Importance to the City

The site embodies Charleston's agricultural, scientific, and educational heritage, enabling interpretation (e.g., historic marker). Preservation offers public benefits; demolition erodes civic identity. Clemson's mitigation claims are undermined by MOA breach and neglect—City policy favors rehabilitation.

## 8. PRIOR CITY DETERMINATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

City records document prior demolition denial (January 2021) due to merit and significance. August 2025 enforcement requires immediate action, confirming reuse feasibility and City's preservation commitment—directly countering Clemson's neglect-based arguments.

## 9. CONCLUSION AND REQUESTED ACTION

Under Board criteria, the building merits protection. Evidence of intentional neglect, concealment, and federal breaches defeats Clemson's points. DENY the request, or DEFER pending GSA OIG investigation, stabilization, rehabilitation, and federal resolution.

## 10. INCORPORATION BY REFERENCE AND EXHIBITS

Incorporation by Reference: The SHPO-approved “Former USDA Vegetable Lab – Historical Report – BVL – FINAL & SHPO APPROVED” (2020, prepared for Clemson), including appendices; Clemson’s Coastal REC webpage history; 2015 Gray & Pape study; and the Investigative Report on MOA Breaches (September 2025).

Exhibits (submitted separately): • Exhibit A – SHPO-Approved Historical Report (Full). • Exhibit B – Clemson Webpage History PDF. • Exhibit C – Investigative Report on Breaches. • Exhibit D – City Enforcement Records.

# COASTAL RESEARCH & EDUCATION CENTER

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## History: USDA Vegetable Lab

### “THE FIRST OF ITS KIND IN THE WORLD”

From the onset of World War I and through the 1920s, the role of American farmers grew significantly. With much of Europe's agricultural workforce called to war and farmlands transformed into battlefields, Europe lost much of its farm production during and after the war, creating an unprecedented increased demand in crop production across the Atlantic.

As Europe recovered in the 1920s, American farmers were left with significant inventory, resulting in falling prices for produce that only continued with the collapse of the stock market in 1929. One of the responses by Congress was the Bankhead-Jones Act of 1935 – an effort to help farmers efficiently grow sustainable and durable crops for widespread distribution.

The Bankhead-Jones Act called for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to establish nine research laboratories in major agricultural regions to “meet the necessity for creating plants ... adapted to growth under certain climatic conditions and soils.” Each research station was designed to focus on the agricultural concerns of its respective region to collectively bolster America's farming industry and contribute to national agricultural research and innovation.



USDA Vegetable Lab building in 1945



The USDA vegetable breeding laboratory in Charleston County, South Carolina was the first laboratory established under this act. In February of 1936, the USDA purchased a 452-acre former phosphate mining property along Savannah Highway in Charleston for the future U.S. Vegetable Breeding Laboratory's experimental fields. A few months later, a 3.2-acre parcel across the street previously owned by the Agricultural Society of the United States was purchased for the laboratory's buildings from Charleston County.

The facility consisted of a small two-story, Colonial Revival-style structure with laboratories for pathology, horticulture and entomology where scientists experimented on the production of beans, corn, melons and cabbage to strengthen the truck farming industry after the collapse of the rice and Sea Island cotton industry in the Low Country.

Sprawling high ground with surrounding marsh, the property was also selected for its representation of a typical Southeastern truck-farming area where scientists could test vegetables and plants using a wide variety of soils, rainfall and temperatures that existed throughout the southeast. These conditions included frost, extreme heat and extended drought. The location also represented the South's increasing role in American truck farming, as the accessibility to larger farming tracts and the longer growing seasons enabled the region to sustain cultivation when the northern climate became unfit for growing. Northern markets, consisting of approximately 40 million people, relied on the supply of fresh vegetables from Southern farmers.

The adjacent Truck Experiment Station, a state-run facility known today as Clemson's Coastal Research and Education Center, and the USDA federal complex were not associated formally but would work together for decades to create more durable, healthy and vibrant crops for national distribution.

Immediately after the land purchases in Charleston, Dr. E.C. Auchter from the USDA joined members of independent and state-run plant-breeding stations from across the Southeastern states for a two-day conference at the Francis Marion Hotel in downtown Charleston to identify the most pressing issues to be addressed in the new laboratory. The conference was the nation's first biennial vegetable breeding conference, which would continue in Charleston well into the late twentieth century.

The groundbreaking for the complex began the second week of March in 1936. The proposed complex would center around a main laboratory structure estimated at \$30,000 and also include an auxiliary house with two greenhouse wings, storage buildings and workers' cottages.

## The First Experiments

By the summer of 1936, an acre was dedicated to creating disease-resistant tomatoes, ear-worm resistant corn and a half-acre for 35 varieties of zinnias. Additional plants were harvested for later experiments, including cauliflower,

Southeastern territory represented by the U.S. Vegetable Breeding Laboratory in Charleston County (USDA, 1945)



1940s photograph showing USDA laboratory complex (right) and Truck Experiment Station (left) (USDA, 1945)



1950 photograph of Peggy Sullivan on the front steps of Building 1 (USDA, 1950)



cabbage, Brussels sprouts, collards, watermelon and radishes. The staff also received 220 pounds of onion bulbs from the University of California to develop onions resistant to mildew.

With the nearly 50 acres already cultivated for the laboratory's first experiments, local contracting firm Dawson Engineering was hired in the summer of 1936 to construct the laboratory and accompanying structures. During the next six months, Dawson Engineering constructed the multiple building complex that would become the first USDA research facility to collectively have a laboratory, greenhouse and experimental fields. As Dawson Engineering served as the complex's construction team, the laboratory and its auxiliary buildings were most likely designed by the USDA's architects.

By the time of the laboratory's completion in early 1937, new crops of snap peas, cabbage, watermelons, tomatoes and sweet corn were ready for testing. In addition to these crops, the U.S. Division of Plant Exploration and Introduction sent several new and "valuable and economic and ornamental plants showing promise of usefulness" from foreign countries to the "new vegetable breeding project" in Charleston for analysis.

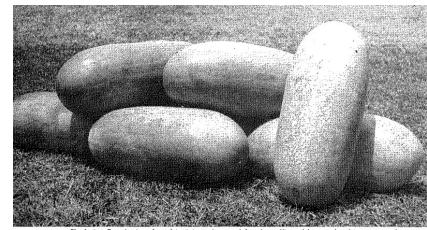
Margaret "Peggy" Kanapaux Sullivan, a Charleston native with a biology and English degree from the College of Charleston, served as a biochemist on the property until 1942, at which time she left for active duty as part of the WAVES (Women Accepted for Voluntary Emergency Service). During her tenure at the laboratory, Sullivan worked with other property scientists to create "winter hardy" cabbage, high-quality snap peas, disease-resistant tomatoes and durable watermelons, which would take years to master. Sullivan would later return after the war.

In 1938, Illinois horticulturist Charles Frederick Andrus joined Dr. Wade, Dr. Poole and Sullivan as part of the laboratory's staff and was tasked with further studying diseases in beans, watermelons, tomatoes and cabbage. This marked the beginning of Andrus' 30-year employment at the laboratory, during which time he ultimately would create several new breeds of watermelon and tomatoes.

The staff continued to breed severe weather and bacteria-resistant snap beans, experimented with maintaining quality in flavor and durability through drying and preserving seeds and even tested fertilizers and irrigation systems. They worked to create more colorful and sweeter watermelon, bigger potatoes and redder tomatoes.

By 1943, Louisiana scientist Dr. James E. Welch was hired to test quick freezing and dehydration qualities of crops to improve the "shipability" and preservation of vegetables during a time of vast food rationing. Within the next year, Charleston's Evening Post reported that the laboratory mastered the flavor-saving, quick-freeze method and was prepared to help provide "more and better food" to Americans. By

1955 April 15, The Daily Times,  
Salisbury, Maryland; (right) 1955 July  
21, The Knoxville Journal, Knoxville, TN



Charleston Gray is strongly resistant to sunburn and frosty wilt, and has good resistance to anthracnose.  
**Everyone Agrees: Watch Out for  
THAT GRAY MELON FROM CHARLESTON**

1954 announcement for the Charleston Gray Watermelon (USDA, 1954)



Building 1 North (primary) facade

1945 the staff consisted of scientists ranging in expertise from genetics, cytology, pathology, physiology and chemistry in horticulture, vegetable composition and related fields.

In the post-war period, the staff worked on creating more disease-resistant snap peas with "more color," cabbage with higher vitamin content and "greater penetration of green color into the head," darker green peas with a "more attractive appearance," larger ears of corn with greater resistance to earworm, larger tomatoes with "high color" and resistance to cracking and watermelons with a "very attractive appearance."

## "A more prosperous South, a better-fed North"

In 1949 the laboratory finalized a new watermelon breed called the Congo, which was bred from what the Miami News called "a vastly superior specimen" from Africa and made to have a sweeter taste and a tough rind for shipping. After its first shipments, the Congo, often referred to as "the king of all watermelons," was widely distributed and replaced the popular Garrison and the Cannonball varieties.

As the 1950s dawned the Charlotte Observer reported that Charleston's vegetable breeding led to "a more prosperous South and a better-fed North," crediting the Congo watermelon and the Contender, a "fresh market" snap pea with great tolerance to heat and drought, as examples of the national advances in vegetable farming that could be traced to the complex.

Within the next three years, the laboratory introduced the Bush snap bean, followed by the Homestead tomato and the Fairfax watermelon. By 1954, the Charleston Grey (or Gray) Watermelon was introduced, a worldwide commodity for which Dr. Andrus received the USDA Superior Service Award and was elected into the American Society of Horticulture Hall of Fame in 2002.

Although Hurricane Gracie and the subsequent mildew destroyed much of the cabbage crop in 1959, Dr. James C. Hoffman successfully introduced a new variety of snap beans to the American farmer in 1960 called the Extender. The new bean became known for its wide adaptability to climates.

Amidst persistent corn, tomato, cabbage and bean farming and testing, advances in melons continued throughout the next decade. After a sixteen-year trial, the Summerfield watermelon was released in 1969 and was a cross between the Fairfax and the Blackstone. It was designed for superior wilt resistance, its large size and high-quality flesh.

The laboratory produced new types of turnips and collards resistant to common disease and cold with the adjacent Clemson University Truck Experiment Station in 1977 after a 15-year developmental stage and also started a new sweet potato



Building 2 Overview of greenhouse complex, looking south



Building 1 and Building 2 - Facing Southeast



Building 1 South Elevation - Facing North

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*The text in this website is adapted from [U.S. Vegetable Breeding Laboratory Former U.S. Department of Agriculture \(USDA\) Southeastern Vegetable Breeding Laboratory, A History](#) (<https://clemson.box.com/s/8qsmkvkz3xsai>) and edited for clarity.*

breeding program.

In 1980, a one-story warehouse was added to the complex to accommodate new research that focused on weed science.

The laboratory often housed education and research groups to demonstrate the experiments on ongoing research. In addition to local agricultural societies and national scientists, students Folbert Bronsema and Sjaan VanEghmaal from the University of Wageningen in Netherlands, for example, spent five months at the laboratory in 1987 to learn how to breed flowers for their return to Holland. A chemist from India and another Dutch student were also scheduled to spend months training at the facility that year.

In 1990, USDA received \$5 million to begin work on a new shared laboratory with the Clemson Truck Experiment Station, known by the 1980s as the Coastal Research and Education Center, yet construction of a new, 54,000 square foot, \$20.5 million facility did not begin until in 1999. In the meantime, the laboratory produced the Charleston Greenpack, a pinkeye-type southern pea with significant field resistance to disease and a vibrant green color, after a seven-year trial. The Charleston Belle, a disease-resistant bell pepper, was also released in 1997.

By 2003, the new research facility was completed across the street with office space for twenty scientists from both USDA and Clemson laboratories. Building 1 and Building 2 were abandoned at this time and no new work has taken place on the site since. At the former complex's closure, the USDA's Agricultural Research Service reported that the laboratory developed and released more than 160 vegetable varieties since its opening. Notables included the Charleston Gray, Congo, Garrisonian, Graybelle, Fairfax, and Summerfield watermelons, Planters Jumbo and Mainstream muskmelons, Charleston Green pack southern peas, Wade, Bonus, Extender, and Provider snap bean, Homestead tomato, Charleston Hot pepper, and Charleston Belle bell pepper.

In 2015, the original laboratory complex was deemed eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A (Historic Events) for its national associations with the USDA's 1930s expansion of its research capabilities to assist farmers in efficiency by producing goods across the country, developing new breeds more adaptable to the region through the creation of pest-resistant strains that allowed farmers to increase crop yields, and for its regional association with the improvement of truck-farming produce in the southeast region of the United States from 1936 through 1980.

# Coastal Research and Education Center

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