January 10, 2023

Dr. Karen Spence, Director
MSU School of Architecture
240 Giles Hall
Post Office Box AQ
Mississippi State, MS 39762

Dear Director Spence,

The Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians (SESAH) wholeheartedly supports the establishment of a historic preservation minor at the Mississippi State University School of Architecture. Represented by Michael Fazio, MSU was one of the institutions that helped found SESAH in the 1980s, and our organization is still composed of both academic architectural historians and active practitioners in the field of architecture.

There are several historic preservation programs in the southeast region certified by the National Council for Preservation Education, but many of them are master-level programs focused on public history or traditional craft practitioners such as the programs at the University of Georgia and Tulane University. The few that allow undergraduate students to receive training in preservation practices that will engage their architectural careers are located at institutions such as Texas A&M that would require Mississippi students to leave the state, making it likely that they will establish their practice and their expertise elsewhere. All of us involved in the historic preservation field know that in many cases, the architect—rather than public policy or historic preservation organizations—is the most important influence in guiding clients to preserve their historic buildings, and Mississippi has many publicly owned Mississippi Landmarks whose owners need a skilled practitioner to outline the best preservation plan for their building.

In short, we believe that the need is evident and that MSU is well-placed to lead Mississippi's first NCPE-certified historic preservation program. This would carry on the legacy of Michael Fazio, who did so much to train Mississippi's architects and give them a love of architectural history. As the School considers how to move forward with this important new offering, we look forward to being a partner in your preservation program.

Lydia Mattice Brandt, PhD
President
Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians