



HISTORIC COLUMBIA



Project Overview

In commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the Hampton-Preston Mansion, Historic Columbia has completed much-anticipated improvements to the site and grounds. This milestone project is showcasing this historic property in unprecedented ways intended to broaden appreciation for both the site and the people associated with it from 1818 through the mid-20th century. This debut follows years of comprehensive work—from a holistic re-evaluation and restructuring of the site's historical interpretation, to capital repairs to the former estate's mansion, to massive additions to the gardens and grounds.

History of the Site

Wealthy Columbia merchant Ainsley Hall and his wife, Sarah, had this mansion built in 1818. They lived here briefly, until 1823, when Hall sold it to Wade Hampton I, who was known as one of the South's richest planters. For the next 50 years, the estate grew to be Columbia's grandest residence under the Hampton and Preston families and the many men, women and children they enslaved. In the 100 years following the Civil War, the mansion and its touted gardens hosted many different owners, including colleges and a tourist home. After an extensive rehabilitation, the property opened to the public in 1970 as an historic site.

The Hampton and Preston families ensured that the four-acre grounds around the mansion signaled their extensive wealth and influence. Through enslaved labor the landscape was transformed into regionally-acclaimed gardens that contained a remarkable collection of native varieties and plants from around the world.

200
Hampton-Preston
1818  2018

Reopening May 12, 2018

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

HistoricColumbia.org/HP200

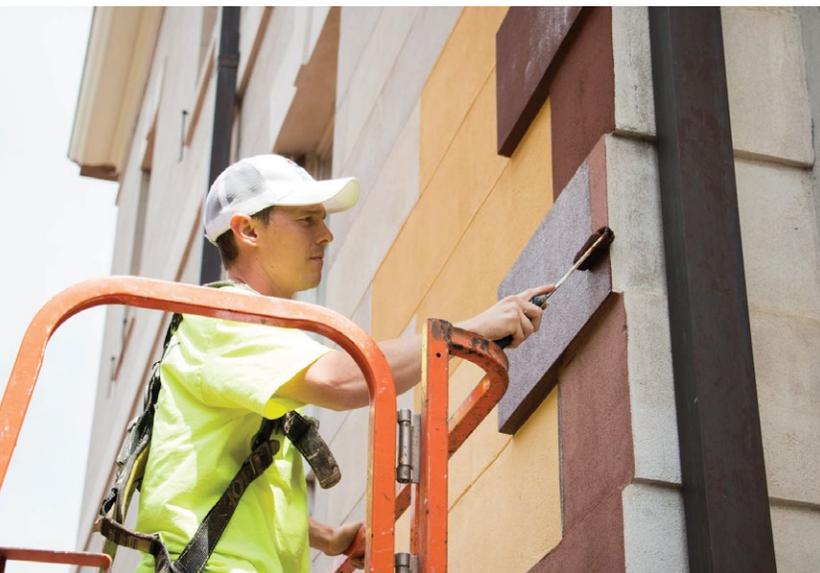
Interpretation

New exhibits, interpretive panels, a supplementary tablet tour, hands-on elements and exterior wayside signage have been integrated in the tour experience to tell a more balanced story of all people associated with the Hampton-Preston site. Thanks to new research findings, the interpretation and new exhibits offer greater and more balanced information about the enslaved African and African American people who once worked and lived at the site. This coverage, and further information about the owners who held them in bondage, have resulted in a more holistic understanding of the site and the institution of slavery that framed the South's racial, social and economic character. Further discoveries after the Civil War grant insight into the black and white people associated with and those barred access to the property during its later uses as the campus of two women's colleges and as a tourist home.



Capital Repair

The property's capital improvements are environmentally intertwined and holistically address the preservation of this important 200-year-old structure. One of the most visible changes to the property is the updated exterior color scheme, which has shifted to an ochre yellow and brown scheme - one more appropriate to its antebellum history. Further capital repairs address the preservation of this important ca.-1818 structure, which includes the installation of a new HVAC system and waterproofing measures to mitigate interior moisture levels. Inside, the building's main hall now features a reproduction early-19th century oil floor cloth and a wall treatment mimicking cut stone or ashlar, an aesthetic effect original to the 1810s through 1830s.



Gardens

With the oversight of its Garden Committee, Historic Columbia has completed Phase II of the Hampton-Preston Garden rehabilitation, which is outlined in the organization's Cultural Landscape Master Plan. This much-anticipated work has returned the garden's central sections to the historic site's horticultural "golden age" (1840s-60s). Work included the installation of an urban arboretum densely populated with trees, the re-establishment of historic pathways and plant beds, the introduction of period-appropriate plant materials and garden structures and repairs to the perimeter wall as well as new electrical and irrigation systems



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