

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Anne Taylor Carros
Lord, Aeck & Sargent
404-253-6710
acarros@lasarchitect.com
or
Ann Kohut
Kohut Communications Consulting
770-913-9747
annielk@bellsouth.net

**Historic International Style Military Barracks
Restored and Rehabilitated at Senior Military College**
Project is a rare example of intergenerational architectural work

DAHLONEGA, Ga., Nov. 28, 2012 – Back in the early 1950s, when noted Atlanta architect Richard L. Aeck stood with his 4-year-old son Tony on a reviewing stand overlooking North Georgia College’s revered drill field at the center of campus, he could not have known that the military barracks he was designing for a site opposite the stand would some 60 years later be restored and rehabilitated by the descendant architecture firm to his own Aeck Associates.

Now an architect himself and chairman of [Lord, Aeck & Sargent](#) (LAS), Tony Aeck has seen the firm transform and prepare the international style military dormitory his father designed – Gaillard Hall – for another half century of life.

The \$5.6 million Gaillard Hall restoration/rehabilitation marks the final project in a \$69.85 million, two-phase public/private venture that included six additional brand new structures and a cadet formation plaza, all designed by LAS. Gaillard Hall and two of the new residential buildings – Patriot Hall and Liberty Hall – are organized around the formation plaza to create a military education precinct in the heart of the campus of what is now North Georgia

– more –

College & State University (North Georgia).¹ Nestled in the foothills of the Appalachian Mountains, the university is one of only six senior military colleges in the United States.

At one point during the planning of the university's military precinct, Gaillard Hall was slated for demolition. However, LAS, which led the historic preservation component of North Georgia's campus master plan, recommended that it be saved due to its historic significance as the campus' best example of mid-20th century architecture and its unique proximity and relationship to the historic drill field. Ultimately, campus officials along with the University System of Georgia Board of Regents and the Georgia Historic Preservation Division agreed that Gaillard was both "a good example of international style architecture and a historically significant building," said Mac McConnell, North Georgia vice president for business and finance.

Historic for the 21st Century

Despite its historic importance, Gaillard's interior had to undergo extensive changes in order to be viable for current uses and to be competitive with new housing stock offered on campus.

"The challenge for LAS was to take a 1950s era dormitory and retrofit it into a modern living environment with all of the amenities of a 21st century residence hall," McConnell said. "The floor-to-ceiling height was extremely limited, so the building didn't easily lend itself to transformation. LAS had to find creative ways to fit modern building systems (air conditioning, life safety, electrical, plumbing and data) into a structure that really wasn't designed for that and more importantly, to make it an elegant solution."

¹In January 2013, pending approval by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, North Georgia College & State University is scheduled to consolidate with Gainesville State College to become the University of North Georgia.

“Our goal was to sensitively retrofit Gaillard to be consistent with the newly constructed military housing on campus while maintaining as much of the interior and exterior historic fabric as possible,” said Ross Davis, who served as LAS’ Gaillard project architect.

To that end, the LAS design team devised a strategy to leave intact the signature ceramic glazed terra cotta corridor walls and existing door locations by converting every other room into a shared adjoining bathroom – but otherwise retaining the basic building organization.

The final plan essentially took three existing double-occupancy units and turned the center one into a shared bathroom and separate mechanical room that served the suite. Each semi-suite has an entry door for each of the bedrooms, and a middle door that provides corridor access to the mechanical room, enabling the semi-suites to be serviced without disturbing the residents.

At the end of each corridor in the three-story building with staggered wings, this space – no longer needed for a common bathroom – was combined with the adjacent room and converted into open dayrooms that serve as amenity study and leisure spaces for the cadets. They are designed flexibly to also serve as assembly locations for cadet meetings and training.

The most significant and historically intact space in the building is the dramatic split-level lobby that helps to mediate the significant topography on the campus. Two elevators also were also installed to make Gaillard Hall ADA-compliant.

The building exterior, largely in good structural shape, still needed repair. The restoration work included:

- Selective re-pointing and cleaning the red brick
- Refurbishment of the signature historic steel windows of the lobby that included replacement of the single-pane glass with energy-efficient insulated glass

- Replacement of the windows in each of the semi-suites. These windows were not original to the structure and were replaced with units that were more historically appropriate and that provided improved energy performance
- Addition of a new water-source heat pump system to provide heating and air conditioning to the building
- Installation of a new roof

“You’d never know from the outside that the building was restored. It almost looks brand new,” Davis said.

Proven value

While Gaillard now has 166 beds compared to the original 280 bed count, the military village’s three residence halls now house a total of 782 beds.

“While we sacrificed bed count, we added suite-style bathrooms, new common areas and community amenities to make Gaillard equivalent to North Georgia’s other military housing,” Davis noted.

Tony Aeck, who still has his father’s handwritten notebooks pertaining to the building’s design and construction, noted that Gaillard was built in two phases completed in 1954 and 1961, respectively, for a total construction cost of exactly \$580,148.22.

“So for a total investment of less than \$6.2 million, North Georgia has a building that will last at least 100 years from the time it was originally constructed,” Aeck said.

The value is only part of the story. Said North Georgia’s McConnell, “Gaillard has a strong presence and holds a prominent hilltop location overlooking the drill field. It’s a good part of the fabric of our campus, and we couldn’t be happier with the result. And, it’s not often that you get intergenerational architectural work done on a building!”

Gaillard Hall and the cadet formation plaza are part of a public/private venture financed through the sale of municipal bonds by the North Georgia College & University Real Estate Foundation. Debt service repayment is coming from fees paid for by the use of the buildings.

[Ambling University Development Group](#) was the developer for the project.

Project Team

The Gaillard Hall project team included:

- North Georgia College & State University Real Estate Foundation – owner
- Ambling University Development Group (Valdosta, Ga.) – developer
- Lord, Aeck & Sargent (Atlanta office) – architect
- Jones Lang LaSalle (Atlanta office) – program manager
- Choate Construction (Atlanta) – general contractor
- Eberly & Associates (Atlanta) – landscape architect
- Andrews, Hammock & Powell, Inc. (Macon, Ga.) – MEP/FP engineer
- KSi/Structural Engineers (Atlanta) – structural engineer
- J&A Engineering (Marietta, Ga.) – low-voltage engineers
- Haines Gipson & Associates (Lawrenceville, Ga.) – civil engineer

About Lord, Aeck & Sargent

LAS is an award-winning architectural firm serving clients in academic, historic preservation, scientific, arts and cultural, and multi-family housing and mixed-use markets. The firm's core values are responsive design, technological expertise and exceptional service. The firm is listed as 28th in *Architect, the Magazine of the American Institute of Architects'* annual "Architect 50" ranking of U.S. architecture firms. The ranking is based on business, sustainability and design excellence/pro bono. In 2007, Lord, Aeck & Sargent was one of the first architecture firms to adopt [The 2030 Challenge](#), an initiative whose ultimate goal is the design of carbon-neutral buildings, or buildings that use no fossil-fuel greenhouse gas-emitting energy to operate, by the year 2030. Lord, Aeck & Sargent has offices in Ann Arbor, Michigan; Atlanta, Georgia; Austin, Texas; and Chapel Hill, North Carolina. For more information, visit the firm at www.lordaecksargent.com.

###