

Emmanuel Episcopal Church  
498 Prince Avenue

Application for Certification of Appropriateness  
to  
Athens-Clarke County Historic Preservation Commission

Relocation of House Located at 685 Pope Street

March 1, 2006

## Plan for Relocation

By action of the Church's governing body, "The Vestry," on November 27, 2005, authorized its Property Use Master Plan Committee to accept proposals for relocation of the house located at 685 Pope Street, known as the Meeting House. The Committee received and approved a proposal from Bonafide Construction to relocate this house to 228 Barber Street and transfer ownership of the House to Bonafide.

The Church has attempted for almost two years to find a suitable owner for the house and had received a very attractive offer to relocate it on a site on Cherokee Road in Winterville where it would have been restored in a residential community.

The plan offered by Bonafide will be far easier to accomplish from a transportation perspective and poses fewer risks of damage to the house. Bonafide has the credentials and experience to restore the house and place it into use as a residential property.

Bonafide has agreed to arrange for appropriate removal and transportation to the Barber Street site. They will be responsible for all costs associated with removal and transportation.

The Church will be responsible for clean-up, debris removal and site preparation for Church use after relocation.

Ideally, relocation would take place during a holiday or vacation period in order to minimize disruption to the Emmanuel Day School.

## Proposed Use of the Site After Relocation

The Church will retain ownership of the site and restore the grounds on the vacant lot for near term use as an outdoor open space. By relocating the house, the Church can

provide its members with a secure place for individual quiet reflection, social gathering, and recreation for children. This is the only significant outdoor area owned by the Church that is not exposed to Prince Avenue or Barber Street traffic.

The Church intends to plant additional shrubs and/or trees that could make the site more visually attractive for neighbors who reside on North Pope St. adjacent to the Church property.

Certain landscape design elements may be added to create a more “park-like” environment, as suggested in the artist’s illustration commissioned by the Church.

The Church recognizes that additional design elements could also make it more inviting for public use and it understands that all such additional elements should be supported by the affected neighbors with property adjacent to the Church. The Church is sensitive to concerns about neighborhood security and wants to avoid any action that will increase the risk of criminal activity. For the near term, creating a “park-like” environment on the site can help restore interest among church members to visit before and after regular worship and meeting times.

### Rationale for Relocation

The primary reason for relocation of the cottages are:

The Church will gain the use of an additional open area to serve its entire membership and also provide a unique attraction for families, especially those with children.

The house provides only very limited space and was not designed for current Church programs.

The house is no longer viable for the purpose of community outreach due to lack of parking and conflicts with other existing recreational uses of the site.

The Church will be able to concentrate more of its human and financial resources on the care of the Howell Cobb House which it owns and currently leases as part of its community outreach program to the Pope Street Association. Church membership has not been nor is it expected to be large enough to sustain long-term historic preservation of both the house and the Cobb House, we are currently attempting to raise \$140,000 to re-roof and stabilize the Cobb House which is recognized as a landmark property in Athens.

The house at 228 Barber Street will be protected and preserved for future use and remain within the Athens-Clarke County community. Bonafide has demonstrated capacity and interest in historic preservation.

Other reasons for relocation include:

The staff and members will have an unobstructed view of the existing basketball court and will be able to more easily observe or monitor activities taking place there. This is especially important for parents who may be taking part in activities in the Church building across the street from the house.

Some part of the area could be fenced for additional playground area that would be available to the Emmanuel Day School.

Outdoor worship activities could be conducted on the site and the traditional Easter procession could begin on the site, rather than the lawn of the Howell Cobb House. The site could be used for Easter Egg hunts and other children's games.

Some parts of the area could be set aside for additional gardens, a meditation garden, labyrinth or fountains.

## A Brief Summary of Church Facility Use and Planning

The Church acquired almost all of the adjacent properties to its original site in the 50s and 60s in order to prevent encroachment. It began transforming the use of the existing acquired buildings for community outreach purposes.

The Church now provides facilities under lease agreements to the Community Connection, Atlanta Union Mission and the Pope Street Association for their not-for-profit, charitable purposes, as well as, the Thrift House, which is affiliated with the Church.

The site upon which the house is located was conveyed to the Church in 1956 or 1968.. A number of local agencies used the house in the 70s, including Head Start, Rutland Center and Clarke County Mental Health Clinic for Children. In the 80s, the house was primarily used for some Sunday school classes, some weekday Church meetings and youth activities. Parking for the house became more difficult because of the establishment of the Emmanuel Day School, which currently serves families of approximately 100 pre-school age children. Membership in the Church is not required for enrollment in the Day School.

In 2003, the Church decided not to continue leasing out the 540 Prince Avenue building in order to have an alternative facility for weekday meeting. For many years, this building housed the offices of the Athens Area Realtors Association.

The Church has been engaged in a dialogue and planning process with its members over a period of at least ten years for the purposes of reaching consensus on the use of its properties in a manner that serves its worship, pastoral care, parish life, education and community outreach objectives. Developing a master plan for its properties to maintain a healthy balance for the diverse interests of its membership has presented many

challenges. The Church governing body painstakingly examined its options and came to the conclusion to relocate the house and the neighboring house (“the cottage”) because they are not suitable for future use by the Church. The following resolution was adopted by the Vestry on February 24, 2004:

“Whereas, after giving many years of careful and prayerful consideration to the use of church property, the Vestry has determined that the two cottages on Pope Street, known as the Meeting House and the Youth House, are not suitable for future use by the church in their present location; therefore it is resolved that each such house be removed from, or relocated on, the campus of the church property as promptly as possible and the Senior Warden, with the approval of the Rector, is directed to appoint a special committee, consisting of no more than nine members of the church, to form a plan for, implement, and carry out such removal or relocation of these houses, subject to oversight and final approval of the Vestry of the plan and prior allocation by the Vestry of any funds of the church that may be required for such purposes.”

The Property Use Master Plan Committee resumed its work after a short interruption due to the retirement of Father Peter Courtney in February 2005. It produced a new set of Guiding Principles and Goals based on work performed earlier by the Church’s architect. These were subsequently adopted by the Vestry in April 2005. At the same time, the Vestry gave its approval to initiate an improvement project for Barber Street that was envisioned as a joint program with the Athens-Clarke County Commission. These actions helped re-invigorate the process of property use planning and helped the Committee move up the house relocation plan in June. The Vestry then approved expenses for commissioning an artist’s illustration and legal counsel in late July.

The Vestry and its Property Use Master Plan Committee intend to continue drawing upon the resources and guidance of the Diocese of Atlanta to identify uses and design programs for all of its property that satisfy community standards and serve the Church mission.

Respectfully submitted by the Property Use Master Plan Committee  
For the Vestry of Emmanuel Episcopal Church, Athens, Georgia