

Rebuilding Shelby: A Historical Perspective

Livermush, a little-known delicacy, is just one of many special qualities the town of Shelby, NC has to offer, according to Ted Alexander, partnership leader of Rebuild Shelby and executive director of the Uptown Shelby Association. But perhaps this charming small town is better known for its remarkable historic district that serves as a draw for



A house built in Shelby in 1936 gets a new life as an insurance office.

visitors. Alexander addressed how the town is revitalizing its historic district and creating a catalyst for economic development with the help of Rebuild America, the Community Education for Enterprise Development and the National Main Street programs at a lecture at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C., on February 17. Titled “Community Revitalization Through Energy Savings,” the lecture was part of the Buildings for the 21st Century Lecture Series presented by DOE’s Office of Building Technology, State and Community Programs.

Alexander shared the town’s experience in seeking to blend the goals of energy efficiency, small business development and historic preservation without compromising the character or features of the buildings. The results have proven to be anything but “mush.” During the past several years, Rebuild Shelby has completed 13 building retrofit projects and two efficient new construction projects. Total project costs to date have exceeded \$9 million dollars, \$1.3 million of which was spent on energy conservation measures. Rebuild Shelby is now working on four more projects that include the historic uptown Rodgers Theater, built in 1936.

Many Rebuild Shelby projects have benefited from the expertise of the Department of Energy, Oak Ridge National Laboratory and the architectural firm of Holland, Harrick and Patterson, a key Rebuild Shelby partner.

The First National Bank, a historic landmark, has undergone one of the most extensive renovations to date. Energy-efficient windows with low-e technology and argon-filled double panes were installed. Insulation was added and a more efficient HVAC system was installed. Lighting upgrades included T-5 electronic ballasts and modern fluorescent lighting systems. With its facade restored and building envelope rendered energy efficient, the bank now provides a comfortable, efficient and welcoming environment.

Shelby’s City Hall, built in 1939, is currently undergoing

Rebuilding Shelby

Continued from page 2

energy-efficiency improvements that are expected to bring the building well into the 21st century. The building suffered from heating and cooling systems that were competing against one another, out-of-date interior lighting, and little or no insulation. To address these needs, the HVAC system was replaced with a contemporary programmable system to distribute air efficiently throughout the building. The lighting system was upgraded to a modern T-5 fluorescent lighting system and insulation was placed strategically throughout the building, particularly in the attic.

The former Belk Department Store, now LaFayette Place, is another example of a local landmark brought back from the brink. The roof had caved in and the building also suffered from a bad case of “re-muddling” – a historically inaccurate renovation. Plans called for tearing it down to create a parking lot in Uptown Shelby. Rebuild Shelby stepped in and convinced local authorities that not only could

the building be saved, but it could bring in needed tax and utility revenue far beyond what the parking lot could provide. The City reallocated the \$100,000 earmarked to demolish the building to clean out its interior. A Charlotte, NC developer bought the building for \$1 and spent an additional \$1 million to convert the structure into six stores, 12 apartments, and a small parking court. Efficiency measures included insulation and high-efficiency water heaters. Not only has the project been highly successful, but the city is benefiting from tax and utility revenues that otherwise would have been lost.

So, the next time you are traveling on Interstate 85 or US 74 in North Carolina, make sure to stop by Uptown Shelby to get a taste of just how its downtown is thriving from its participation in Rebuild America and Main Street initiatives – and while you are at it, don't forget to sample the livermush!

For more information, contact Ted Alexander at 704-484-3100.

