Americus Archway Works with Georgia Tech Class

On April 19, 2012, thirty-one students from Dr. Leslie Sharp’s Georgia Institute of Technology Introduction to Historic Preservation course presented design options for reuse of available space in downtown buildings. The goal of the students' work is to provide planners with downtown building design assistance so that businesses and residents will be attracted to downtown Americus.

In response to the Americus Downtown Development Authority (DDA) request to identify options to begin using the 2nd, 3rd, and sometimes 4th floor spaces of building located in historic downtown Americus, Sumter Archway contacted Dr. Sharp in the College of Architecture at Georgia Tech. Dr. Sharp teaches a course geared toward preservation and reuse of space in downtown buildings, with specific emphasis on second floor and higher spaces.

Dr. Sharp and 31 students participating in the Georgia Tech Introduction to Historic Preservation course visited Americus on March 3 – 4, 2012. The course, comprised of graduate and undergraduate students, includes students majoring in Architecture, City and Regional Planning, Industrial Design, Building Construction, Civil Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Chemical Bio-Engineering, and Industrial Engineering. The students were divided into ten teams, and were assigned a designated building within the DDA district to address.

After touring the community and reviewing the spaces, students developed ideas for re-use, which would meet the needs of the downtown historic district. These ideas included lofts, outdoor patio spaces, lounge and bar areas for businesses, and connecting sectors to assist connected properties with sharing space.

Students developed designs and hosted Archway Professional Barbara Grogan, Sumter Historic Trust President Mark Minick, and Sumter Historic Trust and Americus Historic Preservation Commission member Charles Crisp for a classroom presentation on April 19, 2012. A community presentation will take place in July 2012. Property owners are very eager to begin work, and plans for reuse are being shared.