16 April 2018

Preservation South Carolina
Attn: Mr. Michael Bedenbaugh
PO Box 506
Prosperity, SC 29127

Dear Mr. Bedenbaugh,

The Old Edgefield District Genealogical Society (OEDGS) is delighted that the Plantation House has recently been acquired by Preservation South Carolina. We cannot think of a better group to ensure a bright and promising future for this historic structure that has served as a cornerstone on the Edgefield Courthouse Square for almost a hundred years. We have longed for this building to be restored and returned to its original use as a hotel. This will add to the revitalization efforts of the Courthouse Square and will offer an essential place for visitors to stay when they come to visit.

OEDGS was founded in 1985 and is the largest genealogical society in South Carolina, with over 500 members in 40 states. The purpose of the OEDGS is to promote genealogical and historical research in Old Edgefield District. To this end, the Society maintains a large collection of records in the Tompkins Memorial Library located at 104 Courthouse Square in Edgefield, South Carolina. The library is open Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturdays from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. (except holidays). The library greets over 1,500 visitors a year from all over the United States and different foreign countries. Last year alone, OEDGS had 1,720 individuals sign its guest registry. These people were from 43 states and seven foreign countries (Iceland, England, Puerto Rico, Australia, Canada, Spain, and the Netherlands).

There is a tremendous interest in the history and heritage of the Old Edgefield District. Edgefield is such a unique place and tourism is a major drawing card. Six years ago, OEDGS started the Southern Studies Showcase, which promotes the history and genealogy of Edgefield District. This two-day event brings over 130 visitors from across the nation to learn about this area’s rich legacy.
However, Edgefield is lacking one major component—a quality place for these people to stay. It is very difficult for OEDGS to promote tourism and attempt to bring visitors to Edgefield, especially for overnight or extended visits, when there are no really suitable accommodations in the Town of Edgefield. For the past several years, we had to send many of our Showcase speakers and attendees to a hotel in North Augusta and that is twenty miles away! In fact, the Showcase will not be held this year and one of the main reasons is because of this issue.

OEDGS desires to increase its interests for the community and offer more events and projects to ensure the history of our great county is open and available to anyone who wants to learn and treasure it. However, we are going to need this grand hotel to be restored and available to visitors and researchers. We greatly support Preservation South Carolina in its endeavors to make this happen.

Sincerely,

J. Douglas Timmerman
OEDGS President