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**2020 KSU Symposium Abstract:**

**Restoring History: Mixed-Use Hotel & Retail Center**

Monroe, Georgia, is a unique small town, located halfway between Athens and Atlanta. The small-town atmosphere and amenities have become a popular destination for people attracted to the historic buildings, downtown events and UGA football home games. Monroe is popular for its wedding venues, antique malls, and car shows, but there are not enough hotel rooms. Currently within the historic downtown, there are only one bed and breakfast, two AirBNB's, and no hotels, although every downtown storefront is occupied by restaurants, retail stores, and businesses.

The need for overnight accommodations has raised the possibility of a new mixed-use hotel and business hub facility containing retail spaces, an upscale restaurant, and event and ballroom spaces. One two story 1920s concrete building near the center of town is a candidate for rehabilitation. A razed neoclassical-style hotel is to be recalled in the design of the preserved structure, which will be built with modern techniques and sustainable innovation.

My proposal is supported by the current needs of residents and local businesses, which presently lodge salesmen in nearby Athens. Local venues and other downtown events will sufficiently support operation of the hotel. Additionally, two self-guided walking tours of the downtown historic districts will attract tourists in the evenings and on weekends and will increase opportunities for commerce as the town center becomes more accessible. This significant historical preservation project can also be used as an example to promote social interaction and thus improve the life of other small cities in Georgia.

Keywords:

Mixed-use Hotel, Historic Downtown, Historic Preservation, Historic Districts, Tourism, Sustainable Construction.