

# Preserve Lexington Benefit

The Music Community Rallies; Local bands hit Al's Bar to save downtown block

By Michael Porter

National Preservation Week takes on a new significance this year in Lexington in the wake of the proposed CentrePointe development downtown—a project that has galvanized the community.

On Saturday, May 10 Al's Bar is hosting a benefit concert in support of Preserve Lexington—an example of how Lexington's young people and “creative class” are taking up activism and advocacy.

Preserve Lexington, a not for profit organization, is actively working for an alternative to the Webb Co.'s CenterPointe project, proposed for the block bounded by Main, Upper, Vine and Limestone Streets. Preserve Lexington's goal is a significant development that marries great new architecture with the preservation of the important historic and cultural fabric of this block, and that respects the pedestrian-friendly scale of its surroundings.

Paul Shumaker (of The Phat Mavericks) says, “We set the event up as a way to get some local bands together to play at a local venue to support a local cause. We are all from Kentucky and have lived in Lexington for years and this is a good opportunity to help the community through the talents that we have.”

As for what inspired the organization of the benefit, he says, “Mainly what prompted the event was the announcement of the 40 story ‘middle finger’ building purposed to replace the entire block that held Busters, Rosenbergs, and most importantly to us, The Dame.”

Of the impact on the music community, Shumaker says, “In Lexington, the Dame is just about the only venue that is more focused on live music, rather than food and alcohol sales. For local bands like us [The Phat Mavericks, Club Dub, San Serif and many more...] the Dame provides an atmosphere that encourages artists to play their own, ORIGINAL music (instead of crowd friendly covers). Not to mention the opportunity to play on the same bill as national touring acts.”

Faced with the prospect of losing the vital block, the band says, the next step was “to talk to the folks at the Preserve Lexington Organization, a non-profit group focused on preventing the destruction of the downtown ‘historic and cultural fabric.’ While promoting the use, and re-use, of the historic and charismatic, yet vacant buildings that are in danger of being demolished. As citizens of Lexington and members of its artistic community, we felt this was a worthy cause to support. And being musicians, the best way for us to do so is a benefit concert at a flourishing music venue that continues to support the revitalization of North Lexington, Al's Bar. The fellas at Al's were more than happy to work with us in setting up this event, as well as the peo-

ple at Preserve Lexington, and the local music groups that signed on to help us out. It's going to be a fun night and a great chance for people support a cause protecting the local culture of downtown Lexington.”

Of selecting the locally-owned and operated venue, he says “Al's Bar is owned and run by active people and we love to support that type of establishment, and Preserve Lexington works to preserve the cultural diversity that is Lexington so we felt that we could do a lot of good and have some fun at the same time through this benefit.”

Hayward Wilkerson, of Preserve Lexington says, “We were very pleased to learn of the efforts to organize a benefit for Preserve Lexington at Al's Bar. This benefit was a spontaneous effort of a number of local musicians, organized to support our efforts to achieve something better for Lexington than the current CentrePointe proposal.”

He adds, “The fact that this benefit was organized independent of our direction speaks volumes about the level of opposition to the current proposal to discard so much of historic, architectural and cultural significance in downtown Lexington. We are grateful and encouraged by this spontaneous show of support.”

He says, “We will certainly be at this event, and while we don't want to distract from the fun, we will have some brief comments and updates for those in attendance.”

Preserve Lexington has been in meetings all week regarding CentrePointe and will release info as it becomes available. ■

*The benefit concert will be held on Saturday, May 10 at 8pm. Al's Bar is located on the corner of Sixth Street and North Limestone.*

*The benefit show will feature local bands Club Dub, The Phat Mavericks, Joint Venture and Sans Serif. Cover charge is \$5.*

*100% of the proceeds from the door and 50% of the proceeds from the sale of The Phat Mavericks' new album Zebra Gazebo will be donated to Preserve Lexington.*



## Local Preservation Week Events

### Saturday, May 10th & Sunday, May 11th

Historic Preservation Week kicks off with the MayFest celebration in historic Gratz Park.

Saturday: 10am-6pm; Sunday: 11am-5pm

### Monday, May 12

The Historic Preservation Awards will be presented to local residential and commercial preservation projects in the Council Chambers of the Government Center, 200 East Main St. 5:15pm

### Tuesday, May 13

Conserving Family Documents and Books  
Learn about preserving family records, letters, diaries and books from conservator Kazako Hioki at the Lexington History Museum, 5pm, Free. 859.254.0530

### Wednesday, May 14

Downtown Lexington Walking Tour  
Visit locations from Mary Todd Lincoln's childhood and imagine 19<sup>th</sup> century Lexington on a historic walking tour of downtown. 7pm, \$10. 859.233.9999

An open to the public meeting of the Board of Architectural Review at the historic courtroom of the Lexington History Museum, 215 West Main Street. 5pm, Free

### Thursday, May 15

Family Genealogy and Cemetery Preservation  
Learn about tracing your family tree, researching family history and cemetery records and preserving historic cemeteries and family plots. 5pm, Free. 859.254.0530

An open to the public meeting of the Kentucky Historic Preservation Review Board at the historic courtroom of the Lexington History Museum. 10am, Free

### Saturday, May 17\*The Fayette Alliance's Annual Buildings and Bluegrass Tour (\*Highly Recommended)

Take a 2.5 hour tour of renowned Fayette County farms and several innovative downtown Lexington infill projects to discover why responsible growth makes so much sense. 9am and 10:30am, \$15. 859.281.1202

Hampton Court will dedicate a new State Historic Marker for the historic “pocket” neighborhood. 10am, Free.

Former Lexington Mayor Foster Pettit will address the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gratz Park Historic District at the Carnegie Center, 151 West Second Street. 4pm, Free

### Sunday, May 18

Western Suburb Neighborhood Open House  
Tour historic 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century residences, new infill houses and condos, a corner store and a neighborhood eatery, all part of one of Lexington's earliest “suburbs.” 1pm to 5pm, \$10. 859.258.3265