

A Gothic Revival Masterpiece Reborn: Green-Meldrim House Unveils Major Dome Restoration

After 172 years in the shadows, the intricate architectural details of one of America's finest Gothic Revival mansions are finally coming to light. The Keepers of the **Historic Green-Meldrim House** in Savannah are proud to announce the completion of the **Dome Conservation Project**, a year-long initiative that combined high-tech science with old-world craftsmanship to restore the home's iconic central feature.

The project, fueled by a Preserve America Grant from Americana Corner, marks the first major capital improvement for the National Historic Landmark under its current governance.

BRINGING HISTORY INTO FOCUS

For decades, the dome's ornate plasterwork—featuring oak leaves, acorns, and grapevines—remained obscured by aged paint and poor lighting. To ensure historical accuracy, the team engaged **architectural conservator Francis Ford**, who used microscopic analysis to peel back three “campaigns” of paint. Her discovery of an original 1850s taupe-toned neutral allowed the team to return the dome to the exact aesthetic envisioned by architect John Norris and the home's first owner, Charles Green.

A COMMUNITY-POWERED RESTORATION

In a unique educational partnership, students from **Savannah Technical College's Historic Preservation program** provided hands-on labor under the guidance of Project Lead Sinisa Domazet and **Savannah College of Art and Design** graduate Tiffany Taylor. This collaboration offered students a rare “living classroom” opportunity to perform meticulous paint removal on delicate 19th-century ornamental plaster.



“This wasn’t just about maintenance; it was about rediscovery,” says Sherry Holtzclaw, President of the Keepers. “With the installation of specialized LED lighting, visitors can now see the corbels, grapevines, oak wreaths, and oak leaf ornamentation described in Charles Green’s original construction ledger. Mr. Green purchased these intricate pieces from New York in 1853, and they are now visible with a clarity that hasn’t been possible since the era of gas lighting.”

TECHNICAL HIGHLIGHTS OF THE RESTORATION:

- **The Oculus:** The 100-year-old glass “rosette” window was painstakingly conserved and frosted to provide a soft, ethereal glow while obscuring the attic structure.
- **Scientific Accuracy:** Paint samples were matched by **Sherwin-Williams** specialists to replicate the original mid-19th-century palette.
- **Economic Impact:** The \$36,562 project was completed through a mix of private funding, grants, and highly efficient in-house labor.

The Green-Meldrim House, owned by St. John's Church, served as General Sherman's headquarters during the Civil War. It is open to the public for tours, where the newly restored dome is now the centerpiece of the visitor experience.

About the Green-Meldrim House:

Located at 14 W. Macon Street on Madison Square, the Green Meldrim House is one of the most important examples of Gothic Revival architecture in the South. For tour hours and more information, visit www.GreenMeldrimHouse.org.

THE DOME AFTER RESTORATION
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