

CITY BY DESIGN

an architectural perspective of atlanta



Rockefeller Hall and Packard Hall at Spelman College



Menefee+Winer Architects

Five minutes west of downtown Atlanta sits the 32-acre campus of Spelman College, a historically black liberal arts college for women, founded in 1881. In an effort to maintain the architectural integrity of the campus, the school commissioned Menefee+Winer Architects in Atlanta to restore and update two key buildings—Packard Hall and Rockefeller Hall. With a vast expertise in historic restoration and adaptive reuse, architect Tony Menefee led the design team, which included Jessica Grasse, Taylor Lee and Michael Few, as it returned both buildings to their former splendor while also creating modern, efficient and comfortable work environments.

Rockefeller Hall, circa 1886, is the oldest building on Spelman's Campus and is located on the historic quadrangle. It houses offices for the president, vice presidents, provost, academic deans and the Institutional Advancement department. The project scope included an extensive restoration of the building's exterior, complete reconfiguration of interior spaces, and the addition of infill wings.

FACING PAGE: With rigorous detail, Rockefeller Hall's front façade has been restored to look much as it did when it first opened its doors.
Photograph by Menefee+Winer



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UNIVERSITY HALL



ABOVE LEFT: The original windows and brick façades in the rear of Rockefeller Hall were preserved, creating a unique interior office space in the new infill wing. Photograph by Menefee+Winer

ABOVE RIGHT: The entrance to Rockefeller Hall faces the president's house—a fine view to see out of the window each morning. Photograph by Menefee+Winer



In this historic campus, currently listed on the National Register of Historic Places, any addition requires careful attention to detail. The original building showcases magnificent masonry details including watertables, arched windows and entry portals, intricate corbelled cornices and selective brick coloring. The infill wing additions, while elegantly detailed, pay homage to the original details without mimicking them; allowing them to read clearly as physical evidence of a different time period.

Packard Hall, circa 1887, is the second-oldest building on Spelman's campus and is adjacent to Rockefeller Hall on the historic quadrangle. The building once housed all campus functions but had most recently served as a residence hall. Partially funded by a grant from the Historic Preservation Initiative for Historic Black Colleges and Universities—administered by the National Park Service—the project involved a complete restoration of the building's exterior, change of use to administration offices, and the addition of stair towers.



To preserve the building's original character, stair tower additions from the late 20th century were removed and replaced with more contextually appropriate towers. These new, minimal structures created delicate junctures that enhance views of the quadrangle, and also allowed Menefee+Winer to restore bricked-in window openings, providing natural light to the original building. The project also involved a flush joint re-pointing of the original brick mortar, based on a full petrographic analysis. The new brick work on the stair towers incorporates a struck joint, differentiating the construction as from a different time period.

With the sensitivity and innovative thinking of Menefee+Winer's design team, Rockefeller Hall and Packard Hall salute the past while providing useful and attractive space for Spelman College's present and future needs. ■■■■■■■■■■

ABOVE LEFT: A new stair tower at Packard Hall serves as the main entrance to the admissions office.
Photograph by Menefee+Winer

ABOVE RIGHT: Post-restoration, the Packard Hall's front entry epitomizes building in the Southern, traditional style.
Photograph by Menefee+Winer