

Lackey On Digital Journalism

GSU Students Debate Future Demolition of Kell Hall

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Georgia State University President Mark Becker announced during his annual State of the University address on Oct. 2 that GSU has plans to create a large lawn in the center of campus by tearing down 80-year-old Kell Hall. Much debate has been triggered among students on the heels of this announcement.

Kell Hall, initially known as the Ivy Street Garage, was built in 1925 as Atlanta's first parking garage. But following World War II, Georgia State saw a sudden increase in enrollment and bought the deck to renovate into a classroom building, while leaving the now iconic concrete ramps in place.

With news of the historic building coming down, some students are opposed to the plans to get rid of such a momentous building that signifies a certain history for the university.

Joel Dougherty, a History major, said, "Kell Hall is a historic building that really makes Georgia State the college that it is. And where else are you going to find a parking deck that has been transformed into a bunch of classrooms? Why would they knock that down?"

On the other hand, many students are excited with the news of a new park-like area that will be part of a green corridor intended to transform the core of the university and create a gathering place for students, faculty, and staff.

Malcolm Sawyer, a senior Managerial Science major, is in favor of clearing out Kell Hall to create space for a greener area. "It sounds like a really good idea. With [Georgia State] being downtown, there's not a lot of green space, not a lot of grass, and the places where there is a lot of green space, to be politically correct, there's a lot of impoverished people there. We can't really enjoy it as much as we could without being solicited or feeling uncomfortable."

President Becker has not yet announced that date that construction is projected to begin, but it is expected to take around five years to complete the development. In the meantime, students will continue to debate the issue of what is more valuable; creating a greener, more environmentally friendly campus, or preserving the historical significance of an age old building that dates back to the foundation of the university.

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