Broadening Perspectives
Current Issues in Preservation
THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION (www.PreservationNation.org) is a non-profit membership organization bringing people together to protect, enhance and enjoy the places that matter to them. By saving the places where great moments from history—and the important moments of everyday life—took place, the National Trust for Historic Preservation helps revitalize neighborhoods and communities, spark economic development and promote environmental sustainability. With headquarters in Washington, DC, nine regional and field offices, 29 historic sites, and partner organizations in all 50 states, the National Trust for Historic Preservation provides leadership, education, advocacy and resources to a national network of people, organizations and local communities committed to saving places, connecting us to our history and collectively shaping the future of America’s stories.
Preservation Vision: NYC—Ideas and Actions for a Robust Future
KIRSTIN SECHLER AND JON CALAME .............................. 5

Quantifying the Environmental Benefits of the Maryland Historic Tax Credit Program
EVANS PAULL .......................................................... 12

Adapting Historic District Guidelines for Solar and Other Green Technologies
KIMBERLY KOOLES ....................................................... 24

Adaptive Use of 19th-Century State Hospitals for the Insane
THOMAS J. BALDUF ..................................................... 31

Integrating Materials Conservation into the Preservation Mission
DIANE NEY ............................................................. 38

It’s challenging for a small museum to add collections conservation to its other pressing responsibilities, but the Indian Pueblo Conservation Center in Albuquerque, N.Mex., is now taking some critical steps to protect its artwork and artifacts.
PHOTO COURTESY INDIAN PUEBLO CULTURAL CENTER, © 2006
n early 2007, under the leadership of the Bloomberg administration, New York City released PlaNYC: A Greener, Greater New York. Touted as “a comprehensive sustainability plan for the city’s future,” this document lays out strategies to reduce greenhouse gases, accommodate an anticipated one million more residents, improve infrastructure, and safeguard the environment over the next 25 years.

Although not perfect, PlaNYC put forward with unprecedented clarity some key issues, challenges, and opportunities ahead. But the document—while full of analysis on topics such as housing, water quality, transportation, environmental issues, energy, air quality, and climate change—was notably lacking expert input regarding historic preservation. Why?

While historic preservationists have made significant contributions to the prosperity and growth of New York City over the past 60 years, a question remains about the ability of the profession to play a major role in citywide planning efforts. With so many pressing issues facing preservationists on a daily basis, taking time to discuss the future of the field and its contributions to citywide issues seems like a rare indulgence.

Using the new focus on 2030 created by PlaNYC, a small group of New York City preservation funders and advisors set out in 2007 to orchestrate an organized effort that would provide the space and opportunity for candid discussion within the preservation community about the future. While inspired by PlaNYC, the effort was not intended to be a direct response to it.

As a result, the Preservation Vision: Planning for the Future of Preservation in New York City project was launched in January 2008 as a temporary forum for the profession to consider concrete long-term goals, inspire new alliances, focus on common ground, and compile an “idea bank” of good ideas for the future. The one-year project asked members of the preservation community in New York to submit, discuss, and develop their most compelling ideas to position historic preservation for substantial, lasting contributions to the most pressing issues facing New York City while anticipating new collaborations and increased threats to the city’s historic resources.

This project imposed few requirements...
on participants, with two exceptions. First, participants were asked to think beyond the pressing issues, realities, and limitations of today to consider the broad goals and possibilities of tomorrow. Second, participants were encouraged to contribute as individuals, not as institutional representatives answering for, or advocating on behalf of, their organization or group.

To maximize opportunities for participation, glean “big picture” insights, and encourage candor, many conduits for exchange were created and often professionally facilitated—an anonymous survey, a series of roundtables, a weekend retreat for emerging leaders, and a participant-driven one-day workshop. From January 2008 to January 2009, nearly 500 people contributed. The results of all phases of the project and the final report can be found on the project website at www.preservationvision-nyc.org.

In late July of 2008 Preservation Vision: NYC hosted an intense weekend retreat at the Pocantico Conference Center of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. A group of 23 emerging preservation leaders and practitioners, along with members of the project steering committee, gathered to discuss the results of the project’s initial phases and produce their own set of priorities for the future of the preservation field.

PHOTO COURTESY OF MINERVA PARTNERS
There is no easy way to summarize all the outstanding participant responses collected over the course of the year-long Preservation Vision: NYC project. However, across all phases of this project, 10 key categories emerged as areas in need of an active, strategic response from the preservation field in New York City over the next 25 years.

In the final project report, published online at the end of February 2009, recommended action items are detailed under each key category to compose a Preservation Vision “idea bank” of 102 ideas. Some are new ideas, some twists on old ideas, some no doubt are currently being carried out to some extent by groups or individuals—but all were sincere expressions that came directly from participants of actionable steps and ideas to generate forward momentum.

Following is a brief description of each of the 10 categories, listed in order of priority.

1. Environmental Sustainability.
Throughout the project, the role of preservation in a citywide response to climate change was among the most often repeated future concerns. Many agreed that the moment is ripe for convergence with others sharing an interest in environmentally sound, energy efficient, and socially conscious approaches to housing and real estate development. The need for firm steps toward clarity and unity of purpose was often articulated when discussing preservation and sustainability, and may reflect more broadly a growing frustration with the lack of tools and capacity within the historic preservation community to address urgent situations and emerging trends.

2. Research. Consistent emphasis was given to the need for research to build a strong foundation of data and analysis on which the historic preservation profession of 2030 might rest. It was recognized that the field does not have general research foundations, nor do practitioners have a shared vocabulary with which to compare findings. Accordingly, there is no obvious way to resolve or prove many claims of the “significance” or “relevance” of preservation work without serious research. Producing factual information to back up intuitive arguments constitutes a pressing need. The absence of a solution poses significant challenges to the field and hampers its evolution toward greater collaboration and effectiveness. Further, research must be separated from advocacy and regulation; it must be independent and reliably objective.

Setting a New York City preservation research agenda and priorities could take many forms, including moving away from the abstract and connecting historic preservation issues to the cause-effect relationships of social policy—concerning mental health, carbon emissions, productivity, waste management, economics, housing, and class and races dynamics. Consideration should also be given to the options for executing a research agenda—done by a consortium of organizations, a university, an existing think-tank in a related field, or perhaps a newly created entity.

A first step in tackling any research agenda would have to include compiling existing data—from the National Park Service; New York City Landmarks...
Preservation Commission; city agencies (housing, urban development); New York State Historic Preservation Office; borough presidents’ offices—to create a nonaligned, information-sharing baseline. Setting the groundwork for new data sources by inserting preservation issues and questions into ongoing data gathering tools by city agencies and others would also prove advisable.

3. Incentives. Enhancing incentives to encourage preservation work and simplifying the process for their utilization were considered key issues for the future success of historic preservation. It was routinely suggested that a bundle of incentives should be developed and presented to the public in a clear, concrete, and persuasive way, invoking the logic of sustainability, energy-modeling, and long-term agendas for financial benefit. Some incentives are already in place—federal, state, grant programs, transfer of development rights, etc.—but they do not seem to be a major factor in encouraging more preservation work. Problems with current incentives, designed for average homeowners and nonprofit owners, such as churches and schools, seem too complicated, while payoffs for the added time and trouble are not guaranteed.

4. Land-use Regulation. In New York City, unlike many other U.S. cities, the strong landmarks law dominates the preservation tool kit. With abundant attention given to individual buildings and some historic districts defined by architectural significance, some preservation tools and techniques used in other cities are marginalized. The perceived limitations embedded in NYC’s current regulations, specifically associated with landmarking, might be eased by exploring and adopting other land-use regulations and policy adjustments. New land-use tools might include the creation of neighborhood conservation districts with their own, context-driven historic ordinances for areas worthy of protection but not at the level of the existing landmarks law; creation of written guidelines for aesthetic regulation in design districts that are controlled locally with a system of appeals through the zoning board and the landmarks commission; or creation of historic asset ordinances for outlying areas. In addition, attention should be given to the need for comprehensive zoning reform, more effective planning, the adjustment of the rules governing the transfer of air and development rights, and adjustments to federal rehabilitation tax credits in cities with a population greater than one million.

5. Strengthening the Landmarks Law. Discussion among participants was often dominated by concerns regarding the future of the New York City landmarks law, considered by many to be the centerpiece of the preservation arsenal, and by many others to be a growing liability.
on expanding the law to provide more opportunities for designating cultural landmarks (often without architectural significance), create a more transparent and democratic system, compensate commissioners, lobby for more funding to hire more staff, and push for required review of all demolition permits.

6. Community Livability. Affordable housing and small-business retention were considered to be priorities for New Yorkers and issues to which preservation should make more substantial contributions in the future. In these conversations, affordable housing was defined as both low-income or subsidized housing as well as general affordability for middle-class New Yorkers. In both cases, it is clear that the link between affordable housing and preservation is important because it draws preservation closer to broader social issues such as public health, quality of life, social diversity, and social justice.

If preservation is seen as a positive force for the creation and perpetuation of affordable housing, it might in turn garner much-needed public support and increased relevance. Likewise, addressing small-business retention more strategically could expand preservation’s ability to protect neighborhood character and constituent communities.

7. Messaging and Branding. Throughout the project, serious consideration was given to the way historic preservation is perceived by the general public in New York City today and how these perceptions can be reframed in a more positive way. The question of target audience was discussed and many participants observed that a diverse, relatively young audience is highly desirable. It was noted that preservationists are often perceived as stodgy, elitist, negative, and scolding—not yet associated with flexibility, new options, new spaces, new technologies, and profitability. It was also suggested that there is a problem with the words “preservation” and “historic.” These give the impression of old, fragile, and highly important places and things fixed within the realm of the connoisseur, not the layperson.

8. Alliances and Diversity. Building alliances, seeking coalitions, and expanding opportunities for cross-disciplinary collaboration emerged as major concerns for many participants. Equal emphasis was given to the need for more conversation within the field and to the need for new collabora-
tors outside the field. Many participants believe that more structured exchanges, like the ones supported by the *Preservation Vision* project, would be helpful, along with deliberate efforts going beyond crisis response to build common ground and shared agendas. For the moment, it was frequently observed, the field is bogged down with infighting between groups. Seasoned voices noted that successful collaboration calls for negotiated trade-offs, well-defined priorities, and reliable data in hand to support rational comparisons, decisions, and arguments.

9. **Funding.** Not surprisingly, the need to bring more revenue into all aspects of preservation work in the city—budgets for existing organizations, programs, new initiatives, physical work, and acquisition—was frequently mentioned by participants as a high priority topic. Respondents spoke in favor of increased tax revenues accruing to a fund for preservation projects derived from various sources. It was noted often that strategic planning for expanded funding requires knowledge and experience that preservation professionals often lack; here again the need for alliances and collaborations looms large. In addition, serious research and data were considered integral to enhanced funding because if steps are taken to support research, the strength of preservation arguments improves, and if these arguments improve, previously untapped funding prospects could open to the preservation community. When discussing increased funding flowing into the preservation field, it seems all boats rise on the tide, attracting to the profession younger professionals with diverse educational and cultural backgrounds, more members, more donors, and enthusiastic volunteers.

10. **Education.** Many conversations in the course of this project concluded with a call for enhanced education at all levels—for children, policy makers, the general public, etc. This subject was addressed by participants as a two-way street: The preservation community needs to educate and to be educated in order to improve its productivity and effectiveness. It was observed that low “awareness” and a shallow “knowledge base” plagued both the general public in New York, whose appreciation for the benefits of historic places and their protection was often characterized as insufficient, and the preservation profession itself, whose understanding of local community needs and the work of allied disciplines is chronically weak.

**CONCLUSION**

As might be expected, New York City’s practitioners and advocates of historic preservation do not share a plan for how to make measurable impacts on New York of 2030. Historic preservation professionals in New York hold convictions so diverse—about what the field is, what it could be, and what it does well—that one is left to wonder where lively debate ends and lack of internal coherence begins.

But there is no question that a range of energetic professionals, committed players, savvy strategists, and resourceful
advocates share a strong interest in seeing the preservation profession evolve. And, despite differences of opinion, many agreed that the field is at an important juncture—a three-to-five year window of opportunity opened by the convergence of economic realities and popular trends concerning environmental issues.

To step through this window, the field must be ready—armed with data, partners, and examples—to question assumptions, forge alliances, and seize prospects. To be sure, the big transformative ideas in preservation often take decades to enact. It is the hope of the project coordinators and steering committee members that this project has provided a first, tentative step on the route forward—demonstrating in the process new forms of engagement in constructive conversation within the preservation community.

And while this project was carried out with New York City’s specific political, professional, legal, and cultural issues as its context, it might provide a model for similar efforts as well as a few insights transferable to other communities. For example, a surprising amount of discussion and consensus in this project focused on the need to undertake serious research.

Obviously, reliable, independent research is a pressing need throughout the preservation field, and its continued absence hampers preservation’s evolution toward greater effectiveness.

In the end, the Preservation Vision project was built on participant-determined content, interaction, and commitments. Already several projects, related to specific action steps in the final report, have been developed to further some of these ideas. Examples include a year-long research study on land-use regulations, a university course studying two topics in depth from the Preservation Vision findings, a neighborhood preservation group celebrating its 25th anniversary by creating a vision for its future, and discussion groups being formed to continue the dialogue. It remains for other stalwart individuals with exceptionally keen vision to extend this exploration, taking from these deliberations whatever may be of use along their way.

KIRSTIN SECHLER and JON CALAME are with Minerva Partners (www.minervapartners.org), a nonprofit preservation organization based in New York. Minerva works in the United States and around the world on historic preservation as it relates to professional development and community strengthening.
Quantifying the Environmental Benefits of the Maryland Historic Tax Credit Program

EVANS PAULL

Baltimore’s historic downtown center of commercial activity at Howard and Lexington streets is now at the center of the city’s economic and green resurgence. The Hecht’s and Stewart’s department store shoppers have long since departed, now replaced by the luxury Atrium Apartments residents and world headquarters Catholic Relief Services (CRS) office workers.

The transformation of that intersection into an emerging vibrant West Side mixed-use community is due in great part to the Maryland Heritage Structure Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program (here after referred to as the Maryland Historic Tax Credit Program). But the intersection can also be dubbed “climate change central,” exemplifying the types of changes needed to set Maryland on a sustainable path for future growth.

Most Atrium residents and CRS office workers are probably unaware that their choice of a place to live and work is about as close to “climate neutral” as you can get on a developed piece of real estate in the state of Maryland. The occupants of these buildings drive at least 40 percent less than regional norms, since residents and workers can walk or take public transit to everything from baseball games to movies. Both buildings have been renovated to LEED or LEED equivalent standards, saving about 30 percent of energy use within the building. In addition, the area is also served by Baltimore’s district heating and cooling system (an energy-efficient way to capture waste heat from Baltimore’s waste-to-energy plant) so the energy that is required is delivered with low-carbon efficiency.

While these two projects are in the forefront of the nexus between preservation and sustainability, a recent analysis of Maryland’s tax credit program also indicates that historic tax credit projects, in general, even though they may not feature green design, can legitimately claim substantial climate benefits that are attributable to reduced vehicle miles traveled (VMTs). The analysis finds that tax credit projects reduce VMTs by 30 to 40 percent relative to suburban norms, at the high end of the 20 to 40 percent range for VMT reduction generally attributed to “compact development” and smart growth locations. These VMT reductions have been converted into a finding that the state historic rehab tax credit projects (counting all projects since program inception) are now reducing CO₂ emissions by between 15,900 and 21,200 metric tons annually, which is the equivalent of taking 2,900 to 3,800 cars off the road for one year.

BACKGROUND
The Maryland Historic Tax Credit Program is intended to encourage the redevelopment of historic properties in the state by offering developers tax incentives equal to up to 20 percent of eligible rehabilitation costs for rehabs that meet the Secretary of
Catholic Relief’s $18 million rehab of the former Stewart’s building in downtown Baltimore (leveraged by $4.5 million in Maryland Historic Tax Credits) has gained LEED certification for energy efficiency and other sustainability elements. With 47 percent of employees accessing work via non-automobile means, the project can be estimated to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMTs) by about 50 percent relative to regional norms. Further, the project is also served by Baltimore’s carbon-saving district heating and cooling services. Data provide by Ron Kreitner, Westside Renaissance.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DESIGN COLLECTIVE © ANNE GUMMerson PHOTOGRAPHY

the Interior’s Standards. In the 1996–2002 period, the Maryland program was a leader nationally in the number and scale of commercial projects which it enabled. The success of the program, however, led to concerns about the unpredictability of annual tax credit outlays. Over the 2002–2004 period, the commercial program was progressively cut back: capping total program expenditures and expenditures per property, apportioning awards geographically, instituting competitive ranking for scarce credits—all of which limited its desirability for developers.

Because the program needed to be reauthorized by the Maryland General Assembly, there was an opportunity to make the case for program improvements. With funding from the Abell Foundation (www.abell.org), Lipman Frizzell &

This paper concentrates on the energy conservation and climate benefits. The other environmental impact findings are summarized below and are available in greater detail at www.nemw.org/images/EnvEnergyImpactsMDHistTaxCredit.pdf.

**SUMMARY OF THE ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS, OTHER THAN ENERGY**

Preservation projects contribute to numerous public benefit objectives, from creating jobs in distressed areas to saving landfill space and lowering the infrastructure investments required to accommodate growth. The Maryland study attempted to quantify the full range of public benefits.

All program impacts estimated in this report correspond to 404 completed commercial projects receiving the Maryland Historic Tax Credit between 1996 and 2008, representing $1.02 billion in total eligible rehabilitation expenditures. This level of rehabilitation expenditures has been calculated to correspond to 10.2 million square feet of renovated space (assuming an average of $100 per square foot in rehab expenditures). The non–energy-related economic and environmental benefits of the Maryland Historic Tax Credit projects are summarized below:

### Economic Development

Over 12 years, completed commercial projects have generated a total economic impact on the Maryland economy of more than $1.74 billion (in 2009 dollars) in total economic activity, employing an estimated 15,120 persons earning $673.1 million (2009 dollars). Construction labor on the job sites totaled an estimated 9,248 workers earning $443.4 million (2009 dollars)—over three-fifths of the total economic impact.

### Fiscal Impact

During their construction periods alone, the 404 projects generated an estimated $83.7 million (2009 dollars) in state and local taxes—effectively paying down more than one-third of the state’s total $213.9 million tax credit investment. The greatest return on the state’s investment, however, comes from the long-term increase in employment and property taxes at the historic properties and their neighbors.

### Saving Infrastructure Investment

Preservation projects save between 50 and 80 percent in infrastructure investments relative to suburban greenfields development. The historic tax credit program, in effect, counterbalances the public subsidies that continue to exacerbate sprawl by virtue of publicly funded infrastructure and flat rate charges for utilities.

### Landfill Space Saved

Rehabilitation of tax credit properties has “saved” 387,000 tons of material from landfills. This amount of landfill material is the equivalent of filling a football stadium to a depth of 50 to 60 feet.
Lowered Run-off. Run-off from preservation projects is estimated to be 30 to 40 percent less than alternative low-density sprawl, with resulting benefits for water quality.

Natural Resources Conserved. Because preservation projects use less building materials than new construction, historic tax credit projects have conserved an estimated $100 million in natural resources (relative to new construction).

Saving Greenfields. Preservation projects, due to their urban locations and densities, have preserved an estimated 1,053 acres of greenfields that otherwise may have been developed for sprawl.

The discussion below concentrates on the energy and climate impacts.

Are Old Buildings Energy Hogs?
The first point in a discussion of preservation and energy is to dispel a basic myth: There is a common misperception that older buildings are less energy efficient than buildings built in more recent times. Data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration indicate that buildings built before 1920 are approximately equivalent to buildings built from 2000 to 2003, and the worst energy offenders are actually those built in the 1970s and 1980s.

The reasons that historic structures are relatively energy-efficient have to do with the use of materials that are superior insulators, use of natural ventilation, and siting/orientation for efficient heating and, especially, cooling in the pre-air conditioning era.

VMTs and Smart Growth—New Urbanism Without the “New”
Climate change experts are drawing attention to the salient facts: Americans have been increasing their driving rates at a pace that will likely nullify gains in fuel efficiency, making greenhouse gas reduction an elusive objective. Without a strategy to also lower vehicle miles traveled, mandated fuel efficiency standards will only succeed in lowering the projected increase in greenhouse gases, not lower them.1 The primary public policy mechanisms that can reduce VMTs are those that relate to smart growth—encouraging

---

FIGURE 1. Commercial Buildings—Average Energy Use per Square Foot by Time Period

![Graph showing energy use per square foot by time period](image-url)
development patterns that make driving less necessary.

A comprehensive review of the literature by the Urban Land Institute concluded that “compact development” saves in the range of 20 to 40 percent of VMTs relative to sprawl. Backing this finding, a study in Atlanta found that the travel patterns of residents of the area’s “most walkable neighborhoods” accounted for 30 percent lower VMTs relative to the least walkable communities. A King County, Wash., study concluded that urban “interconnected neighborhoods,” defined by density, frequency of intersections, and grid street patterns, reduced VMTs by 26 percent relative to a suburban spread development model.

At the high end of the VMT reduction spectrum, an analysis of the highly urbanized, dense, and historic North Beach area in San Francisco (100 households per residential acre) found VMTs per household were 75 percent lower than the low-density suburb of San Ramon (three households per residential acre). Studies of the dense, mixed-use Atlantic Station project in Atlanta, Ga., found that residents average 73 percent lower VMTs per day relative to Atlanta region norms.

The factor that has proven to be most highly correlated with VMT reduction is density. Several studies found that doubling density corresponds to a 25 to 30 percent reduction in VMTs. One model for predicting VMT reduction and greenhouse gas impacts employs density as a sole input variable, because density is also highly correlated with all of the other VMT determinants listed below. The factors that are positively correlated with VMT reduction are, generally in rank order:

- **Density**
- **Mixing uses**
- **Proximity to public transit**
- **Proximity to city center or job centers**
- **Connectivity of the streets and the pedestrian friendliness of the public thoroughfare (grid streets)**

These data are leading environmental and city planning experts and advocates to support “new urbanist” mixed-use, walkable communities. One of the questions posed by this analysis is: Do we need the “new” in “new urbanist”? Can efforts to revitalize older communities meet the same criteria and function to lower greenhouse gases, while having the additional benefits of preserving the historic fabric of our cities?

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION VMT CASE STUDY**

There is one case study of a historic preservation project that was modeled for VMT reduction: the “Lamar on South Side” redevelopment of the former Sears catalogue center, one mile south of downtown Dallas. The development includes 455 loft apartments that occupy 900,000 square feet, 120,000 square feet of office space, and 34,000 square feet for retail and other arts-related uses in a ground-floor retail arcade running the length of the building along a former railroad tunnel. Federal and state historic rehabilitation tax credits were the key financing source.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) examined the project in 2001 and compared it to a greenfields site in the outer suburbs. The findings projected a 23
to 38 percent reduction in VMTs due to the infill/historic preservation project. EPA projected parallel reductions in air pollutants such as nitrous oxide (NOx) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs).\(^\text{10}\)

**MARYLAND PRESERVATION PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS**

Preservation projects tend to be located in smart growth and energy-efficient locations. This simply reflects the urban form of the pre-suburban era: Density, mixing uses, access to public transit, grid streets, and proximity to the city center all reflected the historic/economic need for proximity to jobs and services at a time when car ownership was a luxury.

Of the five VMT reduction characteristics outlined above, researchers for the Maryland study were able to definitively quantify three: density, proximity to job centers, and mixing uses. Because access to public transit is highly correlated with density, and connectivity is strongly associated with the historic urban form, the lack of data in these two areas is not a fatal flaw. Nevertheless the VMT reduction estimates should be characterized as “order of magnitude” estimates.

**Population Density.** A methodology was developed for this study (using Maryland Department of Planning demographic data) to compare typical suburban densities to the densities of the historic rehab tax credit project areas. For the suburban norm, the methodology isolated the developed (non-rural) parts of Baltimore County, an area that includes both older (somewhat dense) and newer low-density tract development. These densities were compared to the densities of the areas within one-half mile of the historic tax credit projects. Note that tax credit projects include some rural and suburban projects, but the vast majority are urban and some of the more suburban and rural projects actually have urban densities.

Three population density measures were calculated for the tax credit project areas—mean, median, and weighted average (weighted for eligible rehabilitation expenditures). Tax credit project area densities were approximately three times the Baltimore County developed area densities: 2.7 (median), 3.0 (weighted average), and 3.2 (mean).\(^\text{11}\) See Figure 2, page 18.

As discussed above, research indicates that a doubling of density corresponds to a 25 to 30 percent reduction in VMTs. These density data would tend to indicate that tax credit projects are reducing VMTs at a rate of between 30 and 40 percent.

**Job Density.** Researchers used employment per acre data (also from the Maryland Department of Planning) comparing the tax credit project areas to the developed area in suburban Baltimore County, using a similar methodology to the population density analysis. In this instance the differences between tax credit areas and the suburban Baltimore County area are more pronounced, with wider variations between mean, median, and weighted average. Tax credit area median job densities were 3.7 times the Baltimore county job densities; tax credit area mean job densities were 13 times Baltimore County’s job densities; and the weighted average (weighted for eligible rehabilitation expenditures) tax credit project job densities were 19
times the Baltimore County developed area densities.\textsuperscript{12} See Figure 2, below.

**Mixing Uses and Walkable Communities.** The best measure for mixing uses is Walk Score. The website www.walkscore.com explains the measuring and scoring as follows: “Walk Score calculates the walkability of an address by locating nearby stores, restaurants, schools, parks, etc. Walk Score measures how easy it is to live a car-lite lifestyle—not how pretty the area is for walking.” The Walk Score for an address “is a number between 0 and 100:

- **90–100 = Walkers’ Paradise:** Most errands can be accomplished on foot and many people get by without owning a car.
- **70–89 = Very Walkable:** It’s possible to get by without owning a car.
- **50–69 = Somewhat Walkable:** Some stores and amenities are within walking distance, but many everyday trips still require a bike, public transportation, or car.
- **25–49 = Car-Dependent:** Only a few destinations are within easy walking range. For most errands, driving or public transportation is a must.
- **0–24 = Car-Dependent (Driving Only):** Virtually no neighborhood destinations within walking range. You can walk from your house to your car!

Project researchers ran Walk Score on 397 of the 404 tax credit commercial projects (the other six did not have geocodable addresses). The results were:

- Median Walk Score – 91
- Mean Walk Score – 82.2
- Weighted average Walk Score (weighted for eligible rehabilitation expenditures) – 86.9
- 85 percent of tax credit projects ranked in the top “walker’s paradise” category or the “very walkable” category

Thus, almost all tax credit projects are in highly walkable communities; i.e. where there are alternatives to using automobiles to access services.

**Model for VMT Reduction Due to Tax Credit Projects**

Researchers for this project used the above data to set up a VMT reduction model, designed to define, within a range, the likely VMT reduction attributed to each

---

**FIGURE 2. Maryland Historic Tax Credit (MHTC) Project Area Densities Compared to Baltimore County Developed Areas**

![Figure 2: Maryland Historic Tax Credit (MHTC) Project Area Densities Compared to Baltimore County Developed Areas](image-url)
Projects were ranked according to the four variables and the weighting system outlined in Table 1.

The total score is the sum of each project’s ranking on each of the four factors. Because the research indicates that doubling density corresponds to a 25 to 30 percent VMT reduction, projects that have densities that are a multiple of Baltimore County density by a factor of four or more are candidates for VMT reduction greater than the 20 to 40 percent attributed to compact development. Projects that are 2 to 4 times the Baltimore County densities are generally within the 20 to 40 percent reduction range. Projects that are 1.25 to 2 times the Baltimore County densities are likely reducing VMTs by less than 20 percent, but greater than zero.

The point system, then, is as follows:
- Total score of 13 to 16 – reduce VMT by more than 40 percent
- Total score of 8–12 – reduce VMT by between 20 and 40 percent
- Total score of 4–7 – reduce VMT by between 0 and 20 percent
- Total score less than 4 – no effect on VMT

The result of this ranking system is shown in Table 2 above.

Almost half (47 percent) of eligible rehabilitation expenditures have taken place in projects that have been esti-
mated to reduce VMTs by more than 40 percent. When the measuring rod is number of projects, instead of expend-
ditures, the results are not as strong—a plurality (39 percent) of projects are in the 20 to 40 percent reduction category, followed closely by those (36 percent) in the higher over-40-percent reduction category. From these data the project researchers conclude that historic tax credit projects are, on average, in the high end of the 20 to 40 percent VMT reduction generally attributed to compact development; that is, in the 30 to 40 percent part of the range.

**VMT REDUCTION AND CO₂**

This 30 to 40 percent VMT reduction can be translated into carbon dioxide reduc-
tion as follows:13

- There have been $1.02 billion (2009 dollars) in eligible rehabilitation expendi-
tures that have been leveraged by the tax credit over the period of 1996 to 2008. These expenditures are assumed to be producing reuse projects that are 50 per-
cent commercial and 50 percent residen-
tial. Using rules of thumb, this represents:
  - 2,548 dwelling units, and
  - 20,382 employees.

- Using the 30 to 40 percent reduction range (conclusion from above) these households and employees have reduced their travel by between 34.3 million and 45.8 million VMTs annually, relative to regional norms.

- CO₂ emissions have been reduced by between 15,900 and 21,200 metric tons annually.

These VMT and CO₂ reductions represent:

- 1.7 million and 2.3 million gallons of gasoline, or
- 2,500 and 3,800 cars from the road for a year.

From a future investment point of view, using the same assumptions, but calculating the savings for $1 million in new historic tax credits, results in:

- 198,000 to 264,000 VMTs “saved;”
- 92 to 123 metric tons of CO₂ “saved.”

**AVOİDED ENERGY USE— EMBODIED ENERGY AND OTHER SOURCES OF ENERGY SAVINGS**

Aside from VMT reductions, there are several additional ways that preservation projects conserve energy. Two have been quantified for the Maryland analysis and four others have not—a follow-up analy-
sis that would be more like a “carbon footprinting” study is recommended.

The calculations below are based on a conversion of the total rehab dollars to renovated space as follows: $10.2 billion in eligible rehabilitation expenditures corresponds to 10.2 million square feet of renovated space, based on an average of $100 per square foot.

First, the Maryland analysis includes a calculation of embodied energy—energy already expended and therefore “not wasted” by virtue of retaining rather than demolishing historic structures. This is an impressively large number—11.2 MBTUs (Millions of British Thermal Units) or a little more than one MBTU per square foot of renovated space.14 However, because consideration of embodied energy is backward looking, some contend that embodied energy has less legitimacy in
the energy-climate debate. Without taking sides in this debate, this analysis gives greater attention to the other energy and climate benefits claimed (but never quantified) by preservationists.

Second, historic preservation saves energy by avoiding demolition. If we make the simplifying assumption that every tax credit project is one that, absent the tax credit, would have been a demolished building, we can also calculate energy “saved” by avoiding demolition. There are two internet calculators for the energy conservation impacts of avoided demolition. One, www.thegreenestbuilding.org, calculates the energy saved for 10.2 million square feet of space to be 107,005 MBTU. This can be roughly calculated to represent 5,000 metric tons of CO2. An alternative EPA calculator for energy lost in landfilling material (see www.epa.gov/climatechange/wycd/waste/calculators/Warm_home.html) calculates the MBTUs at 205,000 MBTU, or 10,900 metric tons of CO2.

It should be noted that there are four additional potential sources of energy conservation attributable to preservation. These were all beyond the scope of the Maryland study and could not be easily quantified, but a full accounting of preservation projects would need to address these additional factors.

1. Because rehabilitation is less “materials-intensive” (and more labor intensive) than new construction, preservation projects save energy expended in the construction phase.

2. Similarly, because preservation projects need between 50 and 80 percent less infrastructure investment relative to greenfields development, there are energy savings because new infrastructure does not need to be built and maintained.

3. Residential preservation projects are usually multifamily dwellings, and multifamily dwellings are associated with energy efficiencies in heating and air conditioning due to fewer exposed walls.

4. Many preservation projects are served by Baltimore’s downtown district heating and cooling systems. Nationally these facilities—known as Combined Heat and Power—are associated with 30 to 60 percent lower carbon emissions, relative to centralized fossil-fuel-burning power plants.

BECAUSE REHABILITATION IS LESS “materials-intensive” (and more labor intensive) than new construction, preservation projects save energy expended in the construction phase.

HISTORIC AND GREEN—THE DUAL BENEFIT OF ENERGY-EFFICIENT BUILDINGS IN ENERGY-EFFICIENT LOCATIONS

The preservation community is increasingly embracing sustainability principles, including energy efficiency. The question then becomes, if you have energy efficiencies within the building structure, as well as VMT reduction, what is the total climate benefit? The analysis below projects a total greenhouse gas reduction from one project that exhibits this dual benefit: the H. F. Miller Tin Can and Box Company.15

With $4 million in state and federal historic tax credits providing the key financing, developers Donald and Thibault Manekin (Seawall Development) are undertaking a $19 million redevelopment of the former H. F. Miller & Sons Tin Box and Can Manufacturing Com-
pany building (also known as the Census Building) at 26th and Howard streets in Baltimore. The redevelopment is planned as a LEED Gold facility and is projected to save energy at a rate that is 34 percent below a code-compliant baseline, according to architect Tom Liebel of Marks, Thomas Architects.

The project will provide 30,000 square feet of office space for nonprofits such as Teach for America and the Baltimore Urban Debate League, as well as 40 apartments targeted for new teachers in the Baltimore City public school system. Employees and residents will be able to enjoy the benefits of locating in a highly walkable community—the project ranks as a “walkers paradise,” a rating of 91 out of 100 points on www.walkscore.com. The project also has other VMT reduction characteristics—urban density, access to public transit, and “interconnected” grid streets. The project can be predicted to be on the high end of the 20 to 40 percent reduction in VMTs that is attributed in national research to “compact development.”

If this building achieves its internal energy objectives and reduces VMTs by 40 percent, it will lower CO₂ emissions by 296 metric tons, relative to norms (the majority—55 percent—of the savings coming from VMT reduction).

Policymakers are only beginning to understand the significance of this powerful combination—the dual benefit of energy-efficient buildings in energy-efficient locations.
locations. Preservation incentives have been successfully established as community revitalization tools, but the new data emerging which tie preservation to smart growth and climate change present another avenue for convincing decision-makers that preservation investments are worthy. There are few public investments that can legitimately claim to contribute to so many critical societal objectives: investments in underserved communities; aesthetic enhancement; efficient use of public infrastructure funding; and, now, energy conservation and response to climate change.

Lastly, a question was posed above: Do cities need the “new” in “new urbanism” in order to transform the urban environment into a more sustainable form? The clear answer from this analysis is “No.” Historic preservation is essentially the equivalent of new urbanist walkable and sustainable communities. The concept of walking to work and taking the metro for a night on the town is not really “new” urbanism; it is historic urban ecology being re-discovered as the most sustainable way to re-invent our cities. FJ

EVANS PAULL is a senior policy analyst at Northeast-Midwest Institute where he specializes in brownfields and sustainable urban development. The Institute (www.nemw.org) devotes a webpage to historic preservation, energy, and sustainable development: www.nemw.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=21&Itemid=154. Mr. Paull is also the principal for Redevelopment Economics (www.redevelopmenteconomics.com), a consulting business specializing in sustainable urban redevelopment.

JOE CRONYN, principal, Lipman Frizzell & Mitchell, LLC, was the principal author of the larger Abell-funded analysis and also contributed to writing this article.

Contact Mr. Paull at 202-329-4282, epaull@nemw.org; and Mr. Cronyn at 410-423-2372, jcronyn@ilmvalue.com.


2 Ibid.

3 David Goldberg, et al., “New Data for a New Era: Linking Land Use, Transportation, Air Quality, and Health in the Atlanta Region”


6 AIG Global Real Estate, 2008 Atlantic Station Project XL Report, provided to Northeast-Midwest Institute.


8 See www.sflcv.org/density.

9 Holtzclaw, ibid; see also: Lawrence Frank and Gary Pivo, Relationships Between Land Use and Travel Behavior in the Puget Sound Region, Washington State DOT, WA-RD 3513, 1994.


11 The weighted average uses project investment as the weighted variable.

12 A flaw in the data/methodology is that the Baltimore County data is only represented as a mean.


14 Calculated from www.thegreenestbuilding.org with a clarification from Patrice Frey at the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

15 For more information on the H. F. Miller Building project, see: Greg Lewis, Transforming a Brownfield in Baltimore, at www.nemw.org, or in Community Investments, A Publication of the Community Development Department of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco;

Adapting Historic District Guidelines for Solar and Other Green Technologies

KIMBERLY KOOLES

Requests for green building modifications are being brought before many historic preservation commissions with increasing frequency. Owners are seeking approval to modify their historic properties with the addition of wind turbines, energy efficient windows, solar panels, energy-saving lighting, geothermal heating systems, and other modernizations. Among all the choices for an environmentally conscious homeowner, outfitting one’s home with solar panels is increasingly one of the more accepted options. Historic preservation commissions that are not prepared to review this districts without any regard for aesthetic considerations. Opinions of local residents are echoed by City Councilor Doug Lyon: “If the Vatican can put up thousands of solar panels on St. Peter’s Basilica…there should be no reason why we can’t allow it on historic properties in Durango.”

The benefits of modern alternative energy systems cannot easily be dismissed, even by the most discerning preservationist. Nevertheless, maintaining the integrity of a historic resource should be the priority of any historic preservation commission. This priority, of course, is not always shared by a property owner who submits an application for a certificate of appropriateness. Environmental groups sometimes even blame this review process for discouraging people from making energy-saving changes to their homes. “It’s a hurdle. If people know there’s a delay, they say ‘Forget about it,’” says Nils Peterman, a research associate with the Alliance to Save Energy. Many preservationists are replying to this challenge with arguments like that of Frank Rathbun of the Community Associations Institute: “Renewable energy and aesthetics don’t have to be mutually exclusive. But agreeing to projects without regard to the architectural guidelines of the community can create divisiveness and can affect property value.”

Unfortunately, green technology and historic preservation are often still wrongly viewed as mutually exclusive.

common energy-saving technology risk irritating a growing populist movement and casting preservation in a bad light.

GREEN TECHNOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Unfortunately, green technology and historic preservation are often still wrongly viewed as mutually exclusive. A proposed ordinance in Durango, Colo., for example, may soon alter the jurisdiction of the local preservation commission regarding energy efficient modifications on historic properties. In the proposed ordinance, solar panels would be allowed in historic
Currently 34 states have some kind of regulations governing solar access and solar rights, which contain a mixture of supportive and unenthusiastic views on the regulatory authority held by local commissions. These laws were adopted to ensure that a property owner maintains the ability to install solar energy systems on residential or commercial properties that are subject to “private restrictions, i.e., covenants, conditions, restrictions, bylaws, condominium declarations, as well as local government ordinances and building codes.”

The following provisions can be found within solar access laws: provisions for the removal of protected trees that block direct sunlight, establishment of solar easements (which secure solar access by regulating actions of neighboring properties), the nullification of any regulation that may prohibit the installation of solar energy systems, and declarations that deed restrictions limiting solar panels are unenforceable. California, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New Mexico are a few states in which solar access laws are particularly rigorous.

In California, state law limits local government restrictions on solar installations and discourages local governments from adopting ordinances that would unreasonably restrict the use of solar energy systems. California law also requires local governments to use an administrative application review, instead of a discretionary process, and only permits exceptions to protect public health and safety. In response, the City of Santa Monica adopted an ordinance in July that amended the local zoning ordinance in order to “establish an administrative procedure for approval of solar panels systems that meet objective development standards and to allow solar energy systems to encroach into setback areas and extend above current height limits.” The new standards clarify that all solar energy systems proposed on designated landmarks and in historic districts will continue to require a certificate of appropriateness from the landmarks commission liaison. Authorizing a liaison to evaluate the compliance of the application in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and to act on behalf of the landmarks commission is intended to expedite the process for applicants. The effectiveness of this system remains to be seen, but it may be informative for other municipalities facing similar mandates.
As stewards of our built and cultural heritage, preservation professionals must become familiar with these solar access laws within their respective states. A lack of understanding of such laws can lead to delays in processing applications for certificates of appropriateness and to lawsuits that are expensive to defend. The increase in solar access legislation also serves to highlight the importance of this technology, and the continuing innovations in its design.

THE PROMISE OF EVOLVING TECHNOLOGY

The development of photovoltaic technology (producing a voltage when exposed to radiant energy, especially light) and the installation of solar panels have been ongoing in the United States for decades, with a large surge coinciding with the energy crisis of the 1970s. With growing public interest in this technology, more and more local historic preservation commissions have chosen to incorporate parameters for solar collection systems within their design guidelines. By comparison, very few commissions have felt the need to include guidelines that specifically address other green retrofits and modifications such as wind turbines or geothermal wells.11

The technology of solar panels has evolved steadily over the last three decades, and new products are becoming available on the market quite regularly. As this technology advances, the aesthetic discord between green modifications and the integrity of historic districts may resolve itself in time. For example, photovoltaic shingles or tiles have been developed over the last 10 years by several national solar energy companies, and include products such as the Atlantis Energy Solutions, Inc.’s product “Sunslates.” According to the manufacturer, these photovoltaic tiles provide an “all-slate roof from roof edge to roof edge.” The modules have a polymer encapsulated back-sheet and hermetically sealed edges, providing a complete moisture barrier and ensuring a minimum 40-year life.”12 This warranty is good news to homeowners who may be concerned about the operational lifespan of solar panels, and it also serves to inform the local preservation commission about the projected longevity of the product.
While representatives from Atlantis Energy Solutions, Inc., maintain that their solar tiles can be installed, utilized, and removed from many historic rooftops with no damage to the original fabric, it is a good idea to first engage a structural engineer to measure their effects on historic properties, both positive and negative, before installing them. Given their difference in appearance from traditional roof slates, Sunslates and similar products may not be appropriate in all cases, but they do serve as an example of how technological advances should only make it easier to accommodate or even encourage energy efficient modifications within historic districts.

**CRAFTING USER-FRIENDLY REGULATIONS**

Education does not stop with the local commission or preservationist. Education of the property owner is essential for success. Just as in any case of construction, rehabilitation, or remodeling within a historic district, the property owner needs to understand what work needs commission approval and what work does not. The communities of Breckenridge, Colo.; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Ypsilanti, Mich.; have worked to refine solar application standards while disseminating them in a user-friendly fashion.

Legislation at the local level can greatly influence the number of solar installations constructed within a historic district. Breckenridge, Colo., developed an ordinance to support sustainable development by streamlining approval of appropriate installation of solar panels within the town’s conservation districts. The ordinance requires that panels not be placed on a character-defining roofline or on a primary elevation, so as to not be visible from the street. Solar panels are required to be set back on flat rooftops, and so not alter the historic roofline or character-defining features such as dormers and chimneys. The Breckenridge ordinance reflects the primary penchant in solar panel design parameters within a historic district—that photovoltaic panels may not be visible from the street—and several communities nationwide use the Breckenridge ordinance as a standard of review.

The historic landmarks commission in Salt Lake City has compiled a set of six design standards that measure the impact of solar panels upon the character of a structure or site. Like those of Breckenridge, Salt Lake City’s standards address panel location and visibility from the public right-of-way, and the protection of character-defining features. Furthermore, the standards expand on these basic principles to address the manner of installation (in an effort to reduce damage to the character of the house) and the actual design of the panels themselves (they should have a low profile).
The historic district of Ypsilanti, Mich., has compiled a factsheet for property owners that explains the role of the local commission regarding the review of alternative energy systems. The local historic district commission maintains that a building should remain in its original form whenever possible, since the character and historic value of a property change whenever alterations are made. However, the City of Ypsilanti concurs with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Places in that it recognizes that the long-term preservation of historic properties depends in part on the ability to adapt them to changing circumstances. Interestingly, this philosophy has led the City to conclude that the only current alternative energy system compatible with historic buildings is solar panels.

The Ypsilanti factsheet goes into more detail about the role of local commissions and review of green modifications than do the standards of Salt Lake City and the guidelines of Breckenridge. The factsheet addresses how the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards help to guide the City’s decision to approve or deny proposed solar panels. For example, the factsheet quotes Standard 2 in its directive that “the historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.” As an example, this section cites a business owner whose building faces south and who would like to install an array of solar panels. Because any addition to the south-facing facade would alter the character of the property, the commission would not approve panels in this position, and would require the business owner to propose an alternative location for the panels.

Although the Ypsilanti commission appears to be willing to work with property owners on the introduction of solar panels, the property owners must justify their request. The commission requires that any homeowner proposing the installation of an alternative energy system within the historic district prove that it is a necessity. The commission considers whether the applicant has pursued more traditional energy conservation measures—such as insulation, weather-stripping, or caulking—before approving any application for the addition of solar panels. If a property owner has not taken the basic steps set by the commission, then the proposed alteration would not be deemed necessary and the owner’s application would more than likely be denied.

In some cases, design standards for solar panels might be addressed outside the historic preservation ordinance. For example, Maryland’s Washington County zoning ordinance was recently amended to allow for solar panels and small wind turbines in zoning districts. These zoning districts are classified by their permissible uses—residential,
business, rural, planned development, special, and industrial. The rural district contains guidelines for both a conservation and a preservation district. Another set of guidelines pertains to a historic preservation district located within the special district division. The ordinance outlines eight standards applicable to solar collection systems. These standards refer to the size, setbacks, height, location, code compliance, roof placement, and acquisition of solar easements—all without reference to historic districts. The amended zoning ordinance does not indicate that applications for solar panels within designated historic districts would be reviewed any differently than those within a non-designated area. While the historic preservation commission’s traditional design review authority clearly affords oversight of changes to exterior features, the lack of direct reference to solar panel installations could confuse property owners about the permitting process.

**BEST PRACTICES FOR GREEN GUIDELINES**

The number of applications for green modifications to properties located within historic districts is ever increasing. As such, the preservation community and the preservation commission should be at the forefront of this significant trend. The preservation community should continue to research and highlight best practices on how to incorporate green building technologies into rehabilitation projects. Preservation commissions, in turn, should develop clear guidance on how green technology can be used without adversely affecting the historic sites and buildings they are charged with protecting.

Specifically, commissions should develop new design standards governing the use of solar panels. Commissioners should first consider if the character-defining features of a property will be compromised by the new technology proposed. As a general rule, solar applications should ideally be positioned on auxiliary structures or built as free-standing installations, with restricted visibility from the main right of way. If those are impossible, and installation on the primary resource is required, then solar panels should be located on secondary elevations, not visible from the main right of way, and should be reversionable and non-damaging to historic features. Historic rooflines, dormers, chimneys, and elevations should be preserved as much as possible during the design process. Remember that the review of applications for solar installations is best conducted on a case-by-case basis, as photovoltaics are not appropriate for every historic resource or district. Finally, be able to present any new guidance to historic district residents in an easily understandable format.

By working with property owners, contractors, and manufacturers, local preservation commissions can be key players in the growing green revolution.

KIMBERLY KOOLES is a recent graduate of the master’s of historic preservation program at the University of Georgia. This article is based upon her graduate thesis “Integration of Historic Preservation and Sustainability for Local Historic Preservation Commissions,” completed in May of 2009.


3 Munoz.


5 Kettles, 1.

6 Kettles, 8–10.

7 Kettles, 8.


11 For an example of historic district design guidelines that attempt to fully integrate sustainability concerns (Davidson, N.C.), see Jo Ramsay Leimenstoll, “Going Green: Applying a Sustainability Lens to Historic District Guidelines,” *Forum Journal* 23, no. 3 (Spring 2009).


14 City of Breckenridge.


16 For the complete set of Salt Lake City, Utah design guidelines see www.slcgov.com/CED/HLC/content/Design_Guidelines_Book.asp.


18 City of Ypsilanti, 1.

19 City of Ypsilanti, 1.

20 City of Ypsilanti, 1.

Adaptive Use of 19th-Century State Hospitals for the Insane

THOMAS J. BALDUF

The monumentally impressive 19th-century state hospitals for the insane continue to project a powerful influence on the imagination. They were masterpieces of architecture, landscape design, and advanced technology, all intended to provide a healing milieu. Most featured a dramatic central administration building, ward wings, and landscaped grounds and were intended to be the authoritative embodiment of the treatment of mental illness. Other features, such as steam heating systems, proper ventilation, fire safety improvements, and the availability of clean water, were advanced for the age. While mental health professionals of that period may have overstated the healing function of these buildings and the surrounding environment, nonetheless these hospitals did provide a retreat or asylum from the conditions believed to cause or exacerbate mental illnesses, and represented a vast improvement over earlier accommodations for mentally ill patients.

Those that survive today continue to provide a legacy of significant architectural and landscape value, with great potential for adaptive use.

KIRKBRIDE HOSPITAL PLANS

In past centuries, the mentally ill were often confined in almshouses, jails, attics, cellars, and airless outbuildings. By the the early part of the 19th century, however, trust in science and its ability to cure insanity, and an intense interest in moral reform led to increased concern over the plight of the insane. This concern coincided with the application of “moral treatment,” a more humane treatment for insanity, based on European models, that minimized use of restraints, was more psychological in nature, and was physician-supervised. Treatment also included recreation, religious activities, and farm work, all thought to help stabilize the patient’s condition, leading to increased behavioral responsibility.

Central to these reforms was the development of a unique architectural form specifically designed for treating mentally ill patients. These hospitals are often referred to as linear plan hospitals, due to the monumental central administration building with patient wards in lateral wings, laid out in a line formation (much like a flock of migrating waterfowl) with a series of stepped-back pavilions connected by hallways. The linear plan hospitals are commonly called “Kirkbrides” after Thomas Story Kirkbride (1809–1883), their best-known advocate. A Quaker medical doctor, he was instrumental in
the 1844 founding of the Association of Medical Superintendents of American Institutions for the Insane, or the AMSAI.

Beginning in Trenton, N.J., in 1848 and ending in Brattleford, Sask., Canada, in 1911, these hospitals came into widespread use across North America. They were found in all regions of the United States, but tended to be concentrated in the Northeast. Approximately 100 hospitals of the type were built.

The linear plan hospital was designed to be “a therapeutic instrument that would assist in healing” and would “represent moral treatment in a built form.” The hospitals also had extensive agricultural acreage and park-like grounds dotted with subsidiary structures, including power plants and farm buildings. The buildings and grounds formed a contextual whole directly affecting patients, staff, families, and communities. They were intended to be nearly self-sufficient communities, providing for many of the needs of their inhabitants, physically separate from the surrounding society but still interacting with it. Such institutions constituted an “architectural representation” of sanity and became literally a “moral architecture” actively involved in the process of healing.

DEcline Of StAte HOSpItAlS

The treatment offered by such hospitals probably had some salutary effects on certain conditions when the hospitals had a low patient/staff ratio. But as the patient population expanded beyond anticipated capacity, and the moral treatment approach was found to be inadequate as a sole means of treatment, the fall of the asylum system was inevitable.

In the early part of the 20th century, treatments for the mentally ill continued to advance and soon the Kirkbride hospitals fell out of favor. Eventually they became associated with crowding, ill treatment, and merely custodial care.

With advances in drug treatments, there was less need for long-term confinement, as long as patients’ drug treatments could be sustained. Increasing concern about patient rights and an emphasis on care in the community made the institutional approach much less tenable. (This is not to say, however, that the need for chronic care of the mentally ill disappeared with the closing of the asylums; under the present system, the chronically ill population is less visible, but still extant.)

The 21st CeNtury And adAPTive uSe

While many state hospitals have been demolished or sit vacant, the survivors still present a powerful image on the national landscape. Given their historic nature, and architecturally impressive structures and landscapes, the question of protection and use becomes significant. These hospitals...
and their extensive grounds provide opportunities for adaptive uses never envisioned by their designers. Today some of these buildings still remain in operation, providing mental health and social services; others have been rehabilitated for housing and other uses.

Developing a reuse plan for these hospitals can be complex, depending, in part, on the perception by the community, including the public, political entities, developers, media, and preservation interests. Although the main buildings were constructed to be durable and enduring, deterioration and vandalism has taken a toll on many of the sites—leading to a negative image in the community and increased project costs.

Challenges to adaptive use may include an overabundance of space that may exceed local needs, size and complexity that may be intimidating to planned development, physical deterioration, the perception that alternative uses are limited due to the buildings’ solid construction and single-use design, and bias associated with mental illness and the asylum system. However, careful planning, local support, and visionary development can lead to alternative uses that can contribute to the social, economic, and cultural needs of the community and serve as a reminder of the history associated with these unique buildings and landscapes.

**WARREN STATE HOSPITAL, Warren, Pa. (1873–1880)**

Warren State is an excellent example of a facility that is still in use for healthcare, possessing many representative characteristics of a typical Kirkbride hospital. Warren State maintains a towered central building, stepped-back patient wings, an elevated rural setting, ancillary structures, and a park-like setting that are reminiscent of the original Kirkbride designs. The site is well maintained and provides a reminder of the history of mental health care in the 19th century.

**The Importance of Remembering**

Recognition of the historic role of the state hospital and the lives of patients and staff should be part of any adaptive use plan. Saving the hospital may be the most obvious form of recognition, but ideally the project should include reference to the historic “why” of the place. Information about the historic significance of the hospital to the community should be included in signage, on-site handouts, and promotional materials. Many facilities included cemeteries, holding the often anonymous remains of patients who died while hospitalized. These cemeteries should be identified and cared for as memorials.

In 2000, following the demolition of the Northampton State Hospital in Massachusetts, artist Anna Schuleit planned a special ceremony to commemorate the site’s history. The hospital had been closed for several years and, following a futile adaptive use effort, was taken down. The event, which included speakers, panelists, an open forum for former patients to tell their stories, and a dramatic musical tribute, brought the community to the hospital site, and paid homage to the positive intent of the 1856 founding and the plight of patients in the later years of operation, who were essentially warehoused in over-crowded conditions.

**SOURCE:** The State Hospital: In Memorium. A Remembrance of the People and the History of the Former Northampton State Hospital, at Northampton, Massachusetts. 2000. This information can be found at the Anna Schuleit website on asylums: www.1856.org/main.html.
Warren State Hospital (Pa.) has retained its original use, including continuing to provide inpatient health care, but the campus now also houses other health and social services.

PHOTO BY THOMAS BALDUFF

features, landscaped grounds, contemporary technological systems, and main entry gate and drive.

Warren State retains connections and interactions with the City of Warren. It still provides inpatient care for those requiring longer-term care. There is also a forensic center located on the campus, as well as a geriatric hospital. Other services on the campus include the office of the State Health Department and a county agency dealing with mental health, mental retardation, and drug and alcohol issues. One of the original houses on the site is still in use as overnight accommodation for families visiting patients.

Warren State has adapted to changes in mental health programs and uses for buildings and grounds. Social service functions have required updating the main buildings, as well as additional structures. Use of outbuildings and code-driven interior updating of the main building allow continuing service, in both familiar and innovative ways.

The hospital restored the patient cemetery, providing a positive connection to the community and strengthening the memory of the hospital’s role in the history of medicine. The Warren State staff has been attentive to the hospital’s history, architectural significance, and contributions to the community, and to the archiving of historical materials.

TRaverse CITY STATE HosPITAL, Traverse City, Mich. (1881-1885)

The rehabilitation of the Traverse City State Hospital as a mixed-use urban village began in 2003, while retaining the historic architectural features of the main building and other structures. The Village includes a range of units for living, from studio apartments to live-work units and condominiums. The development also includes retail shops, restaurants, wineries, a bakery, coffee shops, and a variety of offices offering professional services. Now known as The Village at Grand Traverse Commons, it was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. The planning process for adaptive use at Traverse City has been long and complex, but has provided time for the community to invest the facility with positive cultural importance, as well as for the hospital to become recognized as a source of economic and cultural value to the community.
The City of Traverse City, the township, and the State of Michigan invested significant time, planning, and funding to support the preservation of the hospital and grounds to benefit community cultural and economic interests. A state conservation easement has been instrumental in maintaining the pastoral landscape and historic arboretum. The Traverse City Commons Redevelopment Corporation led the long-term effort to find alternative uses, maintaining positive attention to the facility until an appropriate developer could take on the project.

The Traverse City State Hospital project made wise use of planning by means of phased development, through stabilization and redevelopment of successive sections of the main building. The reuse of many of the ancillary buildings—particularly the free-standing cottage-type patient wards as commercial space, residential suites, and retail spaces—has contributed to the success of the development and helped to maintain the historic context. Other former hospital buildings have been adapted separately as a hospitality house for the nearby medical hospital, and as assisted living centers. No infill construction has been planned, probably due to the availability of considerable square footage in the existing main building, which should serve the future needs of the community.

**DAYTON STATE HOSPITAL, Dayton, Ohio (1855–1868)**

The Dayton State Hospital was completely rehabilitated in the mid-1980s as a senior community. The Ohio Department of Mental Health abandoned the hospital in 1978 and planned complete demolition. But there was strong local support for preservation and restoration, and in 1979 the hospital was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The property was eventually rehabilitated for senior housing by a developer with strong support from the City of Dayton and local business interests. The project also received certification for federal historic rehabilitation tax credits.

The central building now includes the entrance lobby, library/sitting rooms, offices, service functions, and double-loaded corridors (i.e., units on both sides).

**Internet Resources**

- [www.kirkbridebuildings.com/index.html](http://www.kirkbridebuildings.com/index.html)
- [www.asylumprojects.org/tiki-index.php?PHPSESSID=52e83925a40f28d7a473ce1084c5005d](http://www.asylumprojects.org/tiki-index.php?PHPSESSID=52e83925a40f28d7a473ce1084c5005d)
- [www.1856.org/main.html](http://www.1856.org/main.html)
- [www.ohio.edu/athens/greens/theridges.html](http://www.ohio.edu/athens/greens/theridges.html)
- [www.thecottageetc.com/](http://www.thecottageetc.com/)
- [www.dpw.state.pa.us/partnersproviders/mental-health/substanceabuse/statehospitals/003670893.htm](http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/partnersproviders/mental-health/substanceabuse/statehospitals/003670893.htm)
- [www.mantenostatehospital.com/theproject.html](http://www.mantenostatehospital.com/theproject.html)
for assisted living. The three floors of the patient wings were converted into independent living apartments, requiring considerable demolition of non-load supporting interior walls in a switch from double- to single-loaded corridors. The entrance portico was restored to its 1906 appearance and windows were rehabbed according to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards. The extensive, wooded grounds in the front of the hospital were retained, along with the historic entry gate, including two pergolas with concrete columns and tile-roofed gatehouses.

Project marketing made positive use of the historic context of the facility and the monumental attractiveness of the architecture. Adapting the hospital as congregate housing serves a quite different clientele, but the residential units in the wings with administrative and service functions in the center have a strong conceptual similarity to the original design.

ATHENS STATE HOSPITAL, Athens, Ohio (1867–1873)

The Athens State Hospital, now the property of Ohio University and renamed The Ridges, is a classic Kirkbride design, with a monumental central administration building, power plant and service buildings to the rear, and stepped-back patient wings. Many of the outbuildings associated with the growth of the hospital remain, preserving the historic context. The hospital, set on an elevated site overlooking the Village of Athens, is surrounded by park-like wooded grounds.

The facility now has multiple uses, primarily the Kennedy Museum of American Art in the towered central building. Several early 20th-century cottage structures and other outbuildings now house the University Facilities Planning offices, the Ridges auditorium, the Child Development Center, and the Voinovich Center for Leadership and Public Affairs. The ward wings remain empty, and there is a need for a comprehensive redevelopment plan for those important elements. Well-maintained lawns and many large trees preserve a quiet, shady, pastoral appearance, even with a reduction in total acreage. Driveways, built of locally produced brick, have been retained, most prominently in the front of the main building. The hospital was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1980.

The future of the complex is still uncertain. A 1989 comprehensive land-use study came up with a list of possible uses, including school services, condominiums, conference center, drama festival center, park, recreational trails, historical museum, and recreation center. Additional studies in 2001 emphasized the importance of the various contextual features of the hospital and grounds and noted office space or student dormitories as possible uses for the wings. Ohio University has not ruled out a mixed-use development, which could conceivably follow the pattern of Traverse City State Hospital.
OTHERS AT RISK

There is no complete list of Kirkbride hospitals. Several websites attempt to list the hospitals still in existence (see box on page 35). Some hospitals still in use include Cherokee State Hospital, Clarinda State Hospital, and Independence State Hospital in Iowa and the Danville State Hospital in Pennsylvania. Many others are endangered. Fergus Falls State Hospital in Minnesota is a wonderful facility in need of development. Another in need of reuse is Graystone Park State Hospital in New Jersey. Weston State Hospital in West Virginia has been purchased and development appears to be planned.

To find out more about specific hospitals and efforts to save them, the best initial contact should be with the state historic preservation office to obtain information about the status of the hospital, any ongoing work, possible planning grants, etc. The websites mentioned earlier often support online communication groups that may be of assistance including providing success stories, recommendations, and other guidance.

THOMAS J. BALDUF is community preservation specialist for the Western Regional Office of Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana. This article has been adapted from the author’s 2007 thesis for the master of arts in historic preservation program at Goucher College.

2. Edington.
3. Edington.

State Hospitals on the National Trust’s “11 Most Endangered” List

When New York State put its four vacant 19th-century psychiatric hospitals on the market with no reference to the sites’ National Historic Landmark status, the National Trust for Historic Preservation sounded an alarm by including “Four National Historic Landmark Hospitals” on its 1999 list of America’s Most Endangered Historic Places.

There have been some positive developments since then:

In September 2002, the Utica State Hospital (1843) received a $200,000 Save America’s Treasures grant for restoration. More recently, the New York State Office of Mental Health rehabilitated the first floor of the main building for use as a Records Archive and Repository.

In Poughkeepsie, a comprehensive mixed-use redevelopment project is underway for the Hudson River Hospital, and work to stabilize and restore the Main Building began in 2006. At the end of May 2007, a large fire severely damaged the south wing of the Main Building, the centerpiece of the complex. The future of the site is now uncertain.

Several years ago, a state court ordered New York to repair and preserve the H.H. Richardson–designed Buffalo Psychiatric Center in Buffalo. The state has allocated $76.5 million for restoration of the complex, and in 2006 Governor Pataki assembled panels of experts and advisors who studied the site and developed a master plan for the reuse and restoration of the complex and its Olmsted landscape.

Advocates are feeling positive in Binghamton, where a medical college has recently expressed serious interest in reusing the historic hospital, built in 1858 as the New York State Inebriate Asylum. The state set aside funds and work is moving forward to rehabilitate the building, called the “Castle,” for use as a clinical campus of the SUNY Upstate Medical University.

To check the status of these sites, visit www.PreservationNation.org/travel-and-sites/sites/northeast-region/four-national-historic-landmark-hospitals.html.
Integrating Materials Conservation into the Preservation Mission

DIANE NEY

In his 1792 “Plan of Washington,” Pierre L’Enfant designated a site in our new nation’s capital for a “great church for national purposes.” Today that site is occupied by the Old Patent Building (1850), recently restored to house the Smithsonian American Art Museum (SAAM) and the National Portrait Gallery. Although neither could be mistaken for a church, a conservator visiting the institutions’ jointly administered Lunder Conservation Center might have the notion she or he had truly found the Promised Land. With its floor-to-ceiling glass walls looking into 10,200 square feet of labs and studios fully equipped to treat paintings, prints, drawings, photographs, sculptures, folk art objects, decorative arts, and frames, the Lunder Conservation Center is an answer to a prayer—a means of getting the job done while educating the public on just how vital that job is. And therein lies an important national purpose, increasingly recognized as urgent by the preservation community.

An element of spiritual fervor definitely pervades that community these days, as the realization grows that America’s cultural heritage, displayed and held in its museums, libraries, historical societies, historic sites, and other collection stewards, is seriously endangered by a lack of funds and planning.

However, with the encouraging example and (often free) resources and guidance provided by the Lunder Conservation Center, by regional preservation centers such as the Intermuseum Conservation Association (ICA), and by others, directors of small- and medium-sized institutions and organizations need not be hesitant about suggesting to their governing boards that conservation be a line item in next year’s budget. The resources are there to at least make a start. And the

AMERICA’S CULTURAL HERITAGE, displayed and held in its museums, libraries, historical societies, historic sites, and other collection stewards, is seriously endangered by a lack of funds and planning.
best way to start is by recognizing that problems present opportunities.

**FOCUSING PUBLIC ATTENTION**

The Lunder Conservation Center was the brainchild of Elizabeth Broun, director of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, and her colleagues, the result of a promise to the federal government during a major renovation of the art museum and portrait gallery a few years ago that the entire building would be made available to the public. Broun soon realized that putting conservators in a different building would mean having them at too great a distance from the galleries. “So then we thought, ‘Maybe the conservation labs should be part of the public experience.’ And while we were considering that possibility, the Taliban destroyed Afghanistan’s 2,000-year-old stone Buddhas. That was a huge shock to the art world and to the cultural heritage world, as well.”

Though it was not directly related to Broun’s deliberations about the labs, “it made us think about how we could play a role in focusing public attention on the importance of caring for the things that matter; how we could use the opportunity presented by the building’s renovation to make people think about conservation and heritage. So, these two ideas—public access and public awareness—came together in a very serendipitous way.”

When the Lunder Conservation Center, funded by the Lunder Foundation, opened in 2006, it was “the first time an art museum in this country had put its conservation labs permanently on view,” according to Julie Heath, the center’s coordinator at the time. “Sharing what it means to take care of a collection is an integral part of our work.”

Engaging the public is a major component of what Heath views as good stewardship, a stewardship Heath wants the public to be a part of, even though she estimates “75 percent of our visitors have never heard
of conservation. So we’re starting from scratch and building on that, because you can’t be connected to a cause you don’t know about.”

Speaking in June of this year at an IMLS conference (“Stewardship of America’s Legacy: Answering the Call to Action”) that addressed the conservation needs of small- and medium-sized institutions, Heath pointed out that one of the best ways to help the public understand what’s at stake is by explaining the problems inherent “in preserving objects and, at the same time, providing access to those objects.” Something like keeping the cake and eating it, too.

This preservation/access conundrum is at the heart of every institution’s operations, whether a major city’s museum or a small community’s historical society or heritage site, and in finding the balance institutions can engender a direct link in the public’s mind between the absolute necessity to preserve and the resulting necessity to fund that preservation.

At the Lunder Conservation Center, Heath used storytelling to effectively engage her audience. “All you need is a ‘before’ photograph of an object and the compelling story of how that object is being conserved. Or you can talk about how conservators are also documentarians, documenting the condition of an object and how that examination is done. Most people really don’t understand what being a conservator entails, the code of ethics conservators adhere to, the training they receive. Telling that story connects your audience with the objects they see and with preserving those objects, and from there you can draw people into the cause for preserving other objects—our cultural legacy.”

The storytelling extends to a series of kiosks that introduce each lab and studio and use video clips and before-and-after photographs to show the process and results of treatments. In addition, there is a 40-foot media wall where visitors can hear from 16 experts talking about their projects and training.

For its innovative approach and outreach to the public, including its online resources, the Lunder Conservation Center was awarded the prestigious Keck Award by the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works in 2008.

REACHING OUT TO COLLECTING INSTITUTIONS

The Intermuseum Conservation Association, the first nonprofit preservation center in the U.S. when it was created 60 years ago and now one of 11 such centers nationwide, is committed, in the words of its director, Albert Albano, to “raising the bar of awareness of the importance of cultural materials preservation and about how that’s accomplished.”

Working out of a National Historic Register building in downtown Cleveland, Ohio, the ICA has developed multifaceted educational programming offered at different levels geared to three constituencies: specialists in the conservation/preservation arena, institutional professionals involved with collections, and the general public.

“We’re very committed to taking our message to as broad an audience as pos-
sible,” says Albano, “and especially to the general public. The public is key. We cannot just be talking to ourselves.”

Part of taking this message to the public is having open lab areas, where visitors are invited to join ICA conservators at the table as the conservators work on items as diverse as an Alexander Calder mobile or an 1863 Confederate regiment battle flag.

Albano sees this “open experience” as a way that “visitors can see a wide variety of objects and, by talking to our conservators, can understand better how one approaches a particular item and decides on the proper criteria for that item’s responsible and thoughtful conservation.”

As valuable as this outreach to the general public obviously is, ICA’s most important contribution to the preservation community may be its outreach to specialists and to institutional professionals.

In her three years as ICA’s director of education and external relations, Nicole Hayes has presented 25 programs, all open to the public (though “the majority of those who attend our programs are museum and library folks”), as well as given talks to groups who invite her to their facilities. Most of these programs are one-day events, a few multiple-day, and about half are free. “If we charge a fee, it’s usually because we’re bringing in an outside expert, and the fee covers that cost.”

Hayes’ programs, which are usually filled to capacity, are exactly the kind of fact-filled, hands-on activities members of smaller collection institutions find the most helpful. “We had a three-day disaster response program taught by two experts in the field that was terrific. The participants broke into teams. On the first day, they took a collection of items we had glommed together from places like the local thrift shop and submerged them in baby pools full of water. On the third day, they had to pull the objects that had been soaking for two days out of the pools and learn the actual process of how you would salvage a painting, a photograph, a textile from that condition. They had to act as a team and triage, deciding which objects were most at risk and how to rescue them. It was a wonderful experience for everyone.”

These programs are in keeping with ICA’s mission of providing support for institutions that cannot afford, and don’t really need, a full-time conservator on staff. Along with the educational programs offered by Hayes, ICA staff might give advice on an exhibit design and how lighting and other aspects of the physical environment will impact the objects on display. Or ICA may be called upon to provide expertise that an institution’s on-staff conservator doesn’t have. “We act as an adjunct staff,” says Albano, citing the work currently being done by ICA’s textile conservator Jane Hammond for Spiegal Grove, the home of President Rutherford B. Hayes.

An expert in textile conservation who worked on preserving materials damaged by Hurricane Katrina, Hammond sees a lot of wear and tear on materials occurring
especially in small museums and historical societies that have limited but treasured collections. “A fan on a table or a shawl draped across the back of a chair—many are in open display, and docents are often unable to keep the public from handling them. Add to that, damage done by dust and by non-rotation of objects, which leaves some of them exposed to the light, fluctuations of heat and cold, and humidity for years at a time. And many of these institutions, if forced to make a choice, will put their funds into further development of programs rather than conservation.”

Being forced to make these choices is the lament of almost every director of any collecting institution, whatever its size, but these choices hit smaller institutions much harder. And this usually means delaying treatment.

SMALL STEPS, GIANT LEAPS
Because the 2005 Heritage Health Index was the first comprehensive survey to assess the condition and preservation needs of U.S. collections, its troubling findings resonated throughout the preservation community.

Four years later, collecting institutions continue the process of finding ways to implement three of the report’s recommendations:

- Institutions must give priority to providing safe conditions for the collections they hold in trust.
- Every collecting institution must develop an emergency plan to protect its collections and train staff to carry it out.
- Every institution must assign responsibility for caring for collections to members of its staff.

...and to encourage the fourth:

- Individuals at all levels of government and in the private sector must assume responsibility for providing the support that will allow these collections to survive.

As challenging as even making a start at adopting these recommendations may be for large institutions, it is a major undertaking for small- and medium-sized museums, libraries, historical societies, and stewards of historic sites, who often are operating with a small staff and an already ambitious agenda. For institutions such as these, conservation is usually more a wish-list item than an immediate project—something that can only be accomplished incrementally, one step at a time.

The Indian Pueblo Conservation Center (IPCC) in Albuquerque, N.Mex., for instance, has only recently, for the first time in its history, contracted for the conservation of an item in its collection: a mural by Pablita Velarde called The Herd Dance. This first step was made possible by the generosity of a friend of the museum.

Founded in 1976 by the 19 Pueblos of New Mexico, the IPCC showcases the history and accomplishments of the Pueblo people from Pre-Columbian times to the present. Its 15,000-square-foot museum includes a collection of pottery, jewelry, textiles, baskets, photographs, prints, paintings, and murals, both ancient and modern. The center offers extensive experiential education programming for schools, focused on its exhibits and murals, as well as a series of lectures and demonstrations by writers, scholars, and artists, plus weekly traditional dances throughout the year.

Working with a membership base of around 250, Interim Director Marth Beck-
tell and Collections Specialist and Curator Amy Johnson work wonders with a limited budget and a small staff. The conservation of the Velarde mural is a beginning, but both women are realistic about what is currently possible.

“It’s a very expensive and laborious process,” Becktell acknowledges. “Appraisals need to be current—and finding an appraiser for this type of art, and then insuring it, takes time. Then there’s the process of finding a conservator...All this initial effort is tiny compared to the outcome, and to our having the opportunity to teach conservation as it is being done.”

Johnson fully understands the consequences of not being able to devote more resources to the care of the collection. “We have 2,100 pieces in the collection, at least half of which are on display at any one time. The last few years we’ve removed quite a few of the textiles that have been in the same space for years, but we didn’t rotate other textiles into those spots because I wasn’t sure of the conditions in our cases. That’s a situation I’m working to correct.”

Becktell points out that the museum’s standards for environmental controls have improved considerably in the last few years, an improvement that is part of the ongoing conservation efforts that do fit into the budget. “The IPCC is in a period of expansion and growth, and part of that is managing those aspects of conservation that we can handle right now.”

**TAKE ACTION**

There is a great deal even the smallest of institutions on the tightest budget can do to take that first step toward creating an ongoing and comprehensive conservation program:

- Check out the free information and guidelines available. See Resources at the end of this article. It is possible, also, to talk to and/or meet with an expert, often free of charge. The Lunder Conservation Center provides free monthly clinics, by appointment, where individuals and representatives of collecting institutions can meet with a conservator for advice on the care of an object. The Intermuseum Conservation Association provides a variety of free services, including helping an institution understand what its conservation priorities should be and how to proceed, basic assistance with grant writing, and general preservation advice. Check out these and other resources and then share/trade information with colleague institutions.

- Review the collection, understand exactly what it includes in terms of types and numbers of objects.

- Make changes in the environment of the housing and display areas, such as lighting, heat and cold, humidity, that can contribute immediately to the health of the collection items.

- Using available guidelines and resources, create an emergency preparedness plan first, followed by a five-year plan.

- Using those same guidelines, begin writing grant proposals to obtain funding for conservation needs.
Yes, times are tough. For those directors struggling with limited budgets, with governing boards, with enthusiastic but overworked staffs, and with the uneasy feeling that a biblical plague is about the only problem not being dealt with at the moment (though one may turn up any time), last year’s economic crash and the resulting recession may seem like the last straw when it comes to considering any kind of conservation program.

But, as Lawrence Reger, president of Heritage Preservation, pointed out at the IMLS conference, now is absolutely the right time for institutions to assess the state of their collections, formulate both disaster preparedness and five-year plans, and research and write grant proposals, “so you’re ready when the economy picks up.”

Deborah Hess Norris, chairperson of the Art and Conservation Department at the University of Delaware, concurred that readiness is all, adding that persistence and thorough research are elemental and go a long way toward guaranteeing success. Norris’ excellent presentation, along with that of Julie Heath and others, is available online (see Resources at end) and provides invaluable information on finding the funds, building an audience, and creating an ongoing conservation program.

And keep in mind that large foundations are not the only sources of funding. Gifts from local and regional foundations and from individuals (as in the case of the Indian Pueblo Conservation Center’s donor) can also make a difference. “Make a list of who you know,” advises SAAM’s Elizabeth Broun, “and structure your request so that they know their gift will make a difference. Don’t hit them with a giant number. Instead, explain that you’re looking for this amount and asking 50 people to give a portion of it. Make them understand that they’re integral to the success of your project.”

The important thing is to make a start. Julie Heath, former director of the Lunder Conservation Center, spells it out very clearly: “Deterioration occurs with objects in a rather slow way. The damage may not be noticed within a couple of weeks or maybe even a couple of years, but it’s there and it builds. It’s like that cheeseburger and shake you have for lunch. It’s not going to kill you tomorrow, but keep it up and it’ll kill you eventually. We have to be good stewards with America’s cultural heritage so it will be there for those coming after us. We need to set that example for them.”

DIANE NEY is records manager of Washington National Cathedral Archives.

RESOURCES
Smithsonian American Art Museum and the Lunder Conservation Center http://americanart.si.edu/conservation, detailed conservation guidelines http://americanart.si.edu, videos highlighting work done in each of the center’s labs.

Intermuseum Conservation Association www.ica-artconservation.org, e-newsletter with information about grant opportunities and educational opportunities.


Heritage Preservation Heritage Health Index Results. www.heritagepreservation.org/hhi.

Heritage Emergency National Task Force (in cooperation with FEMA) www.heritagepreservation.org/PROGRAMS/TFresources.html, complete guide to preparing for and responding to natural disasters and other collections emergencies.

Preservation Books www.preservationbooks.org, Housekeeping for Historic Homes and House Museums, advice on cleaning and caring for historic homes and their contents.
ON THE COVER: The Buffalo State Asylum for the Insane is being reborn as the Richardson Olmsted Complex (honoring its building and landscape architects). It is being planned as a “civic campus” featuring an Architecture and Visitor Center along with other public and private activities.

PHOTO BY BRIAN FAIX