Cities, Suburbs & Countryside

Speeches from the 2002 National Preservation Conference, Cleveland, Ohio
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Bringing the Preservation Message to Broader Audiences

Richard Moe

At the 2001 National Preservation Conference in Providence just a few weeks after the events of September 11, I asked you to join me in rededicating our best efforts to the preservation of the places that link us with our shared past and give us strength and unity as a nation. You’ve responded with an enthusiasm that is both gratifying and inspiring. Your commitment is reflected in that of your fellow citizens from coast to coast, who have joined together in a thousand different ways in an unprecedented effort to repair the physical and emotional damage inflicted in the September 11 attacks and demonstrate to the world that the American spirit endures.

I saw this spirit up close when I participated in a ceremony honoring the men and women who worked nonstop to restore the Pentagon. At the climax of the ceremony, Walker Lee Evey, manager of the renovation project, gestured to the beautifully restored facade that had been a fire-blackened ruin just a year before and said, “America, we give you back your Pentagon.”

It was a great moment. I wish you all could have been there. I believe you would have felt the same pride I felt. And I believe you would have shared my conviction that in the process of making the Pentagon whole again, in the ongoing effort to make the World Trade Center site whole again, and in facing the broader challenge of making a way for ourselves in the new and unsettled world into which we’ve been thrust, America is rediscovering itself.

This rediscovery has enormous implications for us as preservationists.

Americans are looking for the sense of continuity, stability, and confidence that comes from knowing who we are. This means that our job—protecting the places that symbolize what America stands for—is essential to the unity and well-being of the nation. Knowing this, and enthusiastically embracing the responsibility that it entails, I believe that we have an unprecedented opportunity to show that preservation is a vital, effective force for shaping, enriching, and celebrating the rich diversity of American life in every community and every household in the nation.

This opportunity will shape some very exciting new initiatives during the next few years. We’ll be sharing the message of preservation with audiences that are larger and more diverse than any we’ve ever addressed before. We’ll be reaching far beyond our traditional constituency of true believers. In short, we’ll be taking some dramatic steps to move preservation fully into the mainstream of American life.

Embracing Cultural Diversity

One way we plan to reach new audiences is by fully embracing diversity, in who we are and in everything that we do. For years now, we have been talking about diversity in the preservation movement and at the National Trust, and we’ve made some good progress, but we need to make more. We will never be effective as a movement until we represent America in all of its wonderful diversity. We have to look like America and we have to serve all of America. The National Trust has established a Diversity Council, led by our trustee from Atlanta, Mamanika Youngblood. We will begin to implement some of the council’s recommendations early in 2003. Our commitment to diversity is not just to the faces around the table, but to all aspects of our work. There is nothing more important. The National Trust is committed to it, and we invite the entire preservation movement to join us in this commitment.

Historic Preservation and Affordable Housing

As preservationists, we need to confront a serious issue that affects almost every family in the nation. The United States is currently experiencing an alarming—and largely silent—crisis in housing. Sources representing all points on the political spectrum agree that despite all-time high levels of homeownership, America is not meeting the housing needs of far too many of its citizens.

Among poor households, the need for affordable rental housing exceeded the available supply by almost two million units in 1999. But the poor aren’t the only ones affected by the housing crisis. It’s generally accepted that “affordable” housing costs no more than 30 percent of a household’s income—but in 1999, three and one-half million working families were paying at least 50 percent of their income for housing. Today almost four million adults are living with their parents, largely because rent levels are out of reach of their current incomes. Over the next ten years, about 20 million new jobs will be created in the United States. More than one-third of these jobs will pay less than $20,000 per year. Where are these people going to live? Already, the people who provide essential services in many metropolitan areas—teachers, policemen, firemen, laundry and restaurant workers—can’t afford to live in the communities where they work.

In response to this crisis, our message is simple and straightforward: Historic preservation has an important role to play in putting affordable housing within reach of all Americans. Most cities have large numbers of vacant or abandoned housing units, most of them in older neighborhoods. These are assets going to waste. Renovating them would help address the housing crisis without sacrificing the historic character that...
We're already working with a team of developers, housing advocates, lenders, economists, and preservationists to develop an agenda that will create housing opportunities for all Americans in historic communities. This agenda will, among other things:

- Make “one rule for housing” by creating parity between the Historic Rehab Tax Credit and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit so that developers can pair the credits to create more affordable rental housing in historic neighborhoods;
- Encourage homeownership in historic neighborhoods by offering incentives for developers or individual owners to rehab owner-occupied historic residential properties; and
- Disseminate a toolkit of “best practices” that will encourage states and localities to adopt “smart” building codes, offer financial incentives for rehab, and take other steps to eliminate barriers to the creation of housing in historic buildings.

Over the years the National Trust has never shied away from tackling important issues. We’ve taken on sprawl, big-box retailers, historic neighborhood schools, and teardowns, to name just a few. I believe that the shortage of affordable workforce housing is one of the most important issues we’ve ever faced. If we hope to demonstrate convincingly that preservation is truly relevant to the daily lives of people at all levels of American society, this is an issue that we can’t walk away from.

Reaching New Audiences

You will soon be hearing the name of the National Trust, and the story of why preservation is important, on your radio and television. You’ll also be seeing these same messages in your newspapers and magazines. This new initiative is happening thanks to partnerships with two of the most highly respected names in communications.

The National Trust has formed a partnership with Home & Garden Television—the cable TV network better known as HGTV—to launch a major public-affairs campaign called “Restore America: A Salute to Preservation.” The Trust and HGTV have selected 12 sites across the country that are participating in our Save America’s Treasures program. Each is in need of restoration. They range from a 1925 theater in Oregon to the home of Mark Twain in Connecticut, from Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta to an adobe building in Albuquerque. During the first year of the partnership, HGTV will contribute a minimum of $1 million to support the restoration of these 12 landmarks and the work of the Trust. Each site will be showcased for a month on Restore America: A Salute to Preservation, a highly successful weekly series now in its fourth season on HGTV.

In addition, public-service announcements and commercials shown throughout the broadcast day will provide information on the campaign, the sites, and the National Trust. Viewers who want to know more will be directed to websites maintained by the National Trust and HGTV.

Let me give you some idea of what this means in terms of exposure. HGTV itself has almost 80 million subscribers. The website hgtv.com had two and one-half million visitors in August. But the reach extends even farther: The E.W. Scripps Company, which owns HGTV, also owns 16 newspapers reaching more than a million subscribers, nine television stations reaching 10 percent of the U.S. population, and other cable TV networks that reach millions of homes nationwide. The “Restore America: A Salute to Preservation” campaign will be cross-marketed in all of these media venues, providing exposure to an audience in the scores of millions and giving the partnership a total value of almost $13 million in the first year alone.

In addition, working with the Ad Council and the creative minds at the Arnold Worldwide agency, we’ve created a radio, TV, and print message that will go out to 28,000 media editors and directors throughout the country. More than 30 state and local preservation organizations have signed up to partner with us to encourage local media to run the ads and to provide local contacts for people who respond to them. The Trust’s relatively modest investment of time and money will produce the equivalent of $32 million in donated advertising every year for three years.

This campaign obviously will encourage people to join the National Trust. But it’s designed to do much more than that. It’s designed to sell the message of preservation, to help people see that keeping our heritage alive is important to us and to the generations that will follow us.
designed to convince people that the loss of a familiar landmark represents the loss of a part of ourselves—and, by extension, to lead them into personal involvement in preservation efforts in their own hometowns. It’s designed, in short, to get people off the couch and into the cause.

The National Trust isn’t an impersonal, monolithic institution that exists in some ivory tower. The National Trust is the members who support us, the hometown preservationists doing the real work of saving America’s heritage—one building, one neighborhood, one community at a time.

We can’t do our job without the support and energy of lots of people—but we can’t expect people to support us until they know who we are. These initiatives will tell our story. They’ll help people understand that historic places are part of the glue that holds us together as a nation. They’ll show how our efforts to preserve those places are making a real difference in the economic vitality and livability of America’s communities. Once people understand that what we’re doing is relevant to their lives, they’ll want to get involved—not just through membership in the Trust but also by joining their own statewide and local preservation organizations. This is a rising tide that will lift all boats.

For more than a half-century, our job has been saving history. With these initiatives, I believe we’re making history too. By tackling the crisis in affordable workforce housing, by building an exciting partnership with HGTV, by launching a compelling national PSA campaign, we’re helping ensure a future for America’s past. We’re sending the world an important message. It is something we preservationists have always known—but it’s worth looking at with fresh eyes. It’s good news for everyone: History is in our hands.

Richard Moe is the president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

A Welcome to Cleveland

Mayor Jane L. Campbell

Cleveland has made great strides since the National Trust held its conference in Cleveland in 1973. And, in fact, historic preservation has been a critical component of Cleveland’s rebirth because, the way we look at it, historic buildings are a strong point for our city, together with our lakefront. And our lake and our historic structures provide an incredibly strong venue that puts us at a competitive advantage because they give Cleveland character—character that’s not found in some of the newer communities. For us, the federal historic rehabilitation tax credits and historic easements have been critical components of financing historic preservation.

We have also supplemented those initiatives with various financing packages at the local level. Now we have 22 historic districts, and within those historic districts we have designated more than 170 individual landmarks. And what that does is provide for the neighborhood a mechanism by which to review proposals for changes or new construction.

When telling the story of historic preservation in Cleveland, you would find that the Catholic diocese has been integral in many places. There were neighborhoods where nothing stood but the Catholic Church, which stayed as the Polish church, or the Romanian church, or the Italian church. And that church as it was restored helped to restore the entire neighborhood.

Protecting Cleveland’s Historic Neighborhoods

When I was doing neighborhood development, I was the executive director of the Friends of Shaker Square. And we were dealing with a neighborhood that was an edge community between the cities of Cleveland and Shaker Heights, one of our neighboring suburbs. We believed it was possible to save Shaker Square, but it was really a community on the edge in the early 1980s. There was concern about white flight; there was concern about safety. But
The changes came about because we were able to establish the historic district. So, for us, historic preservation has worked. Whether it’s the fire station, or the historic church, or the historic shopping center, we have strategically selected those precious buildings to save and to build around.

I’m delighted that you chose Cleveland as the place for your conference. I think you can see examples of success throughout our community. And I hope you will see them. And I hope while you are here, you will stay many nights and spend lots of money because, I’ll tell you what, we need all the help we can get in this economy. Thank you for coming.

Former executive director of Friends of Shaker Square, Jane L. Campbell was elected mayor of Cleveland in 2001.
Protecting Historic Resources Through Partnerships

Fran P. Mainella

The National Trust has been the National Park Service’s principal private sector partner in historic preservation for more than half a century. It is a partnership with a great history and a greater future.

Historic places show what America has been and what it can be. The National Park Service has responsibility through our grants, tax incentives, and National Register programs for generating support for protecting streetscapes, whimsical architecture, and sites associated with critical events and central people in our history because all of these things have influenced the character of this great nation.

We also manage important properties. The theme of the summer 2002 issue of National Trust’s Forum Journal was preserving historic structures in our national parks. Contributing authors addressed the challenges and the multiple partnerships that have made effective solutions possible. Most immediately of interest is an article that documents the outstanding Countryside Initiative at Cuyahoga Valley National Park, where I’ve just been and hope you will find time to go. Other articles addressed concerns for battlefield preservation relating to all wars on American soil, to recovery of historic structures at McGraw Ranch in Rocky Mountain National Park, and to creative adaptive uses for Fort Hancock on Sandy Hook in Gateway National Recreation Area. The journal confirms that preserving the historic and natural wonders entrusted to us is a challenge.

President Bush pledged to end the maintenance backlog, committing $440 million yearly to help fund the preservation of historic resources in our national parks. The work will protect irreplaceable structures from Independence Hall to the still-new Oklahoma City National Memorial to the rural cabin where a young Booker T. Washington grew up.

Last month Congress held a rare session outside of Washington to honor the legacy of September 11. It was held in Federal Hall National Memorial in New York, another property that will benefit from this program.

Yet the message in Forum Journal is important in another way: The need is greater than federal resources can handle alone. We’re fortunate to have so many partners already active in historic preservation. Yet we need to be diligent and keep steadily recruiting more to our mission.

Fran P. Mainella is the director of the National Park Service.

Preserving the Full Scope of America’s Past

Rodney J. Reynolds

Historic preservation plays an important role in making not only Cleveland but all of America a better place to live for people of all income levels and races. I am often asked, why are you concerned about preservation? My answer is quite simple. I’m concerned because I feel it is our obligation to hold our history and heritage in trust for those who have yet to be born. Whether it’s a building, a photograph, or an artifact, preserving these items puts us in touch with our past and gives us a better insight into the future.

Along with addressing the whole wonderful, painful, glorious, and rich history of black people, our mission at American Legacy magazine includes bringing to light historic neighborhoods and communities, both restored and in transition—neighborhoods and communities that without proper stewardship might disappear from our historic consciousness.

We have been pleased and proud to present in American Legacy places like Bronzeville in Chicago, an African-American community restored by a public art program. But just as important are places like Weeksville, a black community founded in 19th-century Brooklyn, N.Y. Though only four original houses remain, the area was given landmark status in 1970. But it has taken three decades for true restoration to begin. And there is Princeville in North Carolina, called the first incorporated black town, founded in 1885. Princeville had been nearly swept away by floods more than once, but it persists.

In our upcoming issue, we will be telling the story of the Rosenwald Schools, some 5,300 built in black communities in the south and southwest, with the help of the philanthropist Julius Rosenwald. Many of the schools were abandoned with integration. The few remaining schools, most of them in desperate need of restoration, are now on the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s most endangered list. If restored, the schools will not only serve as
The Cleveland Restoration Society's neighborhood historic preservation program has assisted almost 500 property owners with projects representing close to $11.4 million in neighborhood reinvestment. Photo: Byrd Wood.

America’s diverse historic places and to revitalize its communities, American Legacy’s mission is to instill pride and confidence in a community whose history in this country has often been hidden. You might say we are both in the revitalization business.

Now more than ever, our community organizations and institutions must play an important role in revitalizing our communities. The Cleveland Restoration Society is doing wonderful work in this area. The CRS has launched Cleveland’s first neighborhood historic preservation program. One of the largest programs of its kind in the country, this program has assisted almost 500 property owners with projects representing close to $11.4 million in neighborhood investment. CRS has also led the efforts to preserve the Society for Savings Building, the Allen Theater, the War Memorial Fountain, the Eastman Reading Garden, and the historic Gateway neighborhood. The list goes on and on.

While my product might be different from yours, overall our mission is the same. While the National Trust’s mission is to provide leadership, education, and advocacy to save a tangible example of our history but may be adapted to serve the community.

There are many places like the Rosenwald Schools that need our attention, respect, nurturing, preservation, and revitalization. We’re not only revitalizing these manmade items; we’re revitalizing our own personal spirit. As the founder and publisher of a magazine that is devoted to preserving the history of African-Americans, I know firsthand the positive impact that knowing one’s past can have on a community.

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A Preservation Vision: To Serve the Common Good

The Most Reverend Anthony M. Pilla

I want to speak to you today about the role of historic preservation in creating better places to live for people of all income levels and races. I believe that at the heart of this role is the need for vision. You are here at this conference as leaders and people of vision. Every form of positive change and transformation begins with vision. The Book of Proverbs states: “Where there is no vision, the people perish.”

Last summer Cleveland’s public television and radio stations, WVIZ and WCPN, conducted a series of listening sessions throughout the region. The single word “vision” was cited as the most critical precursor to addressing community challenges. People’s top recommendations included fostering a positive can-do attitude, erasing the divide between central city and suburbs, and developing partnerships in support of the arts, culture, and community services.

More and more, we are faced with the need for a vision that embraces the big picture of what is happening around us. We need to think from a regional perspective rather than from the perspective of competing parochial interests. As a bishop, encouraging this way of thinking—the collaborative mentality—has been one of my greatest priorities. I believe that the success of all of our work depends upon our ability to address the importance of balance and interdependence within our respective regions. Sometimes it is much easier to just see a part of the picture and ignore the rest. But we cannot escape the need to address the fundamental interdependence of our lives. We are created for interdependence. The only way to be human is together.

The Church in the City

I would like to mention an initiative of our Catholic diocese, which we have named “The Church in the City.” Our diocese comprises an eight-county area with three urban centers—Akron, Lorain/Elyria, and Cleveland—along with many suburbs and rural areas. In 1993, I issued a statement which expressed a challenge to build new cities—cities where people of different incomes, races, and cultures can live together and be enriched together. Neighborhoods with mixed incomes, cultures, and religions enrich everyone. They become a witness of how we are meant to live together. We need cities where the poor and disadvantaged can achieve their rightful dignity and potential. Everyone wants to live in a decent neighborhood of which they can be proud. This vision lies at the heart of our religious beliefs and our national heritage.

The Church in the City vision acknowledges the years of out-migration from our central cities—years of unbalanced investment which promoted housing and economic growth in outlying areas to the neglect of central city neighborhoods. This imbalance led to lost opportunities to reinvest in older housing stock, which could have brought new life to neighborhoods and maintained the historic legacy of past eras. This unbalanced investment did not give people fair choices to remain in city neighborhoods. Many people do not want to move out. The pattern of unbalanced investment has led to increasing isolation of people by race, culture, and income. The resulting isolation is simply not right in our common striving to build a good and just society.

The Church in the City vision challenges people to recognize the fundamental interdependence of our lives as a metropolitan community. For all of us, whether we live in a city, suburb, or rural area, and whatever our nationality and religious beliefs, we are one metropolitan society. We are far more interdependent than our many civic or organizational boundaries would lead us to believe. We share one economy and one environment. Our civic boundaries are in some ways an illusion that distracts us from the real needs and the real capabilities of our one society.

One of the most inspiring and enduring aspects of The Church in the City has been the development of different forms of partnership that bring people together from very different situations to better serve the common good. Let me cite the example of parish partnerships. These partnerships have formed between parishes in the inner city and parishes in outlying suburban and rural areas. People intentionally go out of their way to travel from one parish to another, across considerable distance and across boundaries of different cultures and economic realities. They take time to pray and to socialize, to work together, and to initiate projects of service to the wider community. New possibilities and new life have emerged. People have come to see that no one is too poor to have something to give, and no one is too rich to receive. We have all come to realize that while little happens between strangers, all kinds of things are possible among friends.
People of the surrounding community stand out as symbols of enduring presence and lasting values, as centers of service and support to the common good. The power of partnerships is enhanced when people show great respect for the wisdom and talents that each person brings to the table, and when people know their need for one another.

**Places that Embody Values**

The work of historic preservation responds to a deeper need that is important for all of us, for people of every race and culture: the need to remember “who we are,” our roots and our heritage, our values and our beliefs. Life today is very complex and fast paced. It can be chaotic for some people. It can be difficult to distinguish between what is trivial and what is important. One of the great struggles for some of our people, and especially for some of our youth, is found in the experience of “rootlessness”—in being confused or forgetting “who they are” and “where they came from,” in being without a deeper sense of heritage and lasting values, in being without hope. Life becomes all the more difficult when this sense of identity, of “who I am,” is lost.

One very significant way that we help people to remember “who they are” is through the proper care and use of our historic places—our buildings, neighborhoods, and sacred spaces. These places provide us with a sense of rootedness—with a link to the past that helps us to better understand our direction for the future. Across our country, historic places and districts have been the centers of urban rejuvenation. Preservation efforts have proven to be a breath of life in dying and struggling communities. Historic places help us to recall the people, events, and values that we really do want to remember—values that bring depth, meaning, and hope to people’s lives.

I want to note in a particular way the value of religious buildings. Within neighborhoods struggling with diminished populations and fewer resources, our churches, temples, and mosques have stood out as symbols of enduring presence and lasting values, as places of great beauty and reverence, as centers of service and support to the people of the surrounding community. For many people, they are symbols of the great sacrifices made by past generations of immigrant peoples from different parts of the world—people who made such sacrifices because they remembered who they were: people who achieved what seemed impossible with very limited means. In our Catholic diocese, the churches maintained in urban areas continue to bring people back into “old neighborhoods” week after week. Many people might never come back and maintain a relationship to the old neighborhood without their presence. These churches and their ministries clearly give hope to many different people in the surrounding neighborhoods. And there is nothing more important we can do than to give hope to people—the kind of hope that inspires a better life.

**Preservation as a Calling**

Please know that your work as preservationists means far more than words can tell. The work of restoration and preservation has a deeper purpose. It is a way of sharing in the great work of God’s creation. It contributes lasting value. I believe that there is a deep hunger in our lives to make a difference—to leave something that we know has made the world a better place. Preservation work makes the world a better place.

You are people who create vision. You implement the vision and get things done. This is not an easy task. But it is your calling. Being a leader with a vision is not easy because you see and believe in possibilities before others see them, before they are popular and everyone wants to do them. You can look at an old, dilapidated structure that no one cares about and see a restored building revealing exquisite craftsmanship and the historic legacy of another era. You can look upon a parcel of land long forgotten and taken for granted, and see a place teaming with life—with individuals and families remembering and celebrating things of value. But the road from vision to reality is not easy. Remember that so many of our greatest achievements in preservation and in all forms of human endeavor came forth because someone had the courage to keep the vision alive and the willingness to make the sacrifices to see it come true.
Urban Rehab Opportunities and Challenges: A Developer’s Perspective

Ronald A. Ratner

My personal commitment to historic preservation represents more than just an individual’s passion for the past. It is, in fact, a meaningful component of our company’s long-term vision and strategy. We believe that historic preservation is good for our business and for the business of American cities in general. First, I would like to offer some background on who we are and what we do.

Forest City Enterprises, Inc., was founded by an immigrant family in 1921 here in Cleveland. The company has been publicly traded since 1960 and is currently listed on the New York Stock Exchange. Today Forest City has grown into a $5 billion real estate company. We’re diversified in product and geography. We have primarily commercial product (office and large retail), and residential product (multi-family apartments). We’re currently in 19 states and the District of Columbia, but we’ve increasingly had an urban focus—Boston, Washington, Denver, northern and southern California, and, of course, Cleveland, our hometown.

Forest City has an experienced management team, a wonderful group of people who have led us into all of these developments. But we are a hybrid of a publicly traded, financially sound company and an entrepreneurial business directed by the third generation of family leadership and committed to creating value in real estate. I grew up in the real estate industry and love it like a relative.

Forest City has adopted a core strategy of investing in cities. We believe that urban development and the revitalization and growth of urban centers represents an exceptional economic opportunity. Originally Forest City started with greenfield development primarily in suburban locations in the ’60s and ’70s. Starting with Cleveland our interest in cities grew and our understanding of cities grew.

We realize that urban centers are, in fact, long-term market opportunities. There are complex issues in urban environments which require complex solutions. We’ve had to match those opportunities with a broad base of real estate development skills, and we’ve had to develop a long-term vision and a long-term commitment. Urban real estate requires investment, not speculation.

But it’s more than just a private opportunity. Sound public policy supports urban development. Urban development is, in and of itself, smart growth—economic expansion without sprawl. Urban development—and all urban development, I would argue—is sustainable development. It brings jobs, homes, services, and fosters the diversity that America cherishes. People in America are looking for a sense of place, a rootage, a feeling of belonging, for connections to each other in our collective past.

But why do we do historic rehab? Our experience has taught us that urban development and redevelopment requires an understanding of the historic fabric and historic buildings that make up our cities. A dynamic city requires significant new construction, but we must maintain a commitment to the historic components that define and preserve a city’s character.

Issues in Urban Development

There are four themes that are either challenges or issues that I see as lessons learned from our experience.

First, we must address broad issues of place and context. Individual buildings, however skillfully we do each
building, must be part of a vibrant context if they’re to maintain value and provide a return on financial and civic investment. A project is not just a single building but must be seen as part of a neighborhood, a district, a city, even a region. We must understand the historic patterns of place and form, and we must permit them to be modified by the dynamics of current economic and other needs.

Second, success in historic rehab relies on a whole series of public and private partnerships in the management of complex projects, through teams of professionals on both the public and the private side. Public and private partnerships, however, must extend beyond the conventional process that we all know—economic assistance, regulatory and code cooperation, and even some of the innovative public marketing and planning agendas in American cities. If a building, as stated above, can only succeed as part of a vibrant urban fabric, then owners have to rely on the civic and public entities to establish a broad vision, a broad agenda, and to carry that out.

An example of this can be found in a property, which happened to be new construction, that we did many years ago in Detroit. The building originally was very successful and, in fact, was successful for almost its first decade. However, the city really didn’t do all the other things that had been promised on Washington Boulevard. That portion of Detroit declined severely. And after initial success, the building eventually became a failure. No individual project can exist without the city and the neighborhood. And that means that we as individual developers of projects have to rely in a broader sense on that public-private partnership.

Third, the economic reality of a historic rehab is that bringing old buildings into compliance with new codes, with new needs, and with new demands is complex and very expensive. While the 20 percent historic rehabilitation tax credit brings some economic relief, in most cases it barely offsets the premium cost of doing a historic rehab. Every project still requires careful attention to the real estate fundamentals—marketing, product, cost, value, finance. To overcome some of those challenges we have to be very creative. And I break down creativity—with regard to historic rehab—into two categories: financial creativity and physical or technical creativity.

Fourth, the future. I think we need to really reassess the historic rehabilitation tax credit. We need to rethink what we’ve done. In the decade that we’ve been using the historic rehabilitation tax credit to promote the reuse of historic buildings for commercial purposes, we’ve learned a lot as developers, as public officials, and as citizens. While there are many areas of concern that have been raised in various forums across the country, there are two areas that I feel are critical, based on our experience.

First, the standards and guidelines originally developed by the Secretary of the Interior for other program purposes have been used as the criteria to determine whether an adaptive use meets the requirements of a historic rehabilitation and qualifies for tax credits. I don’t believe that these standards, or the process that is in place to review and approve projects, allow for creative balancing for the historic needs and economic realities. The whole concept of adaptive use doesn’t really find a place in the standards.

Second, the historic rehabilitation tax credit undererves the small project. As I said before, it’s the urban fabric that matters in American cities; it’s not just individual buildings. That urban fabric is contributed to by multiple small buildings. If those small buildings aren’t preserved, if they’re not rehabbed, we lose the character of that neighborhood, of that district, of that city. And, in fact, it is very, very difficult for the owner of a small building to take advantage of the historic rehabilitation tax credit. Transaction costs are large. There are multiple and easier things that we could do to change that and make it possible for small business to take advantage of the credit.

Tower City Center

I’d now like to present an overview of our efforts at historic rehab and urban development, with Tower City Center, our core asset here in Cleveland. Tower City Center is the project that both launched Forest City into historic rehab and into a realization of what a city could be. The Tower itself was built in the ’20s and opened in 1930. It was then, and is still, one of the largest mixed-use projects in America. At the time it provided not only a major city railroad station but a hotel, department store, and, of course, the Terminal Tower Office Building.

The Tower became both a physical and financial heart of Cleveland and over the years became the emotional heart of the city. However, by the 1980s the Tower had fallen into disrepair, and many parts of it had been virtually abandoned. The railroads had pulled out many years before. The Tower seemed not to have any future. At that point my cousin, Albert Ratner, and his sister, the late Dr. Ruth Miller, conceived a vision of what the Tower and Cleveland could become. Not only did their efforts recreate the Tower but they revitalized the city, and in some senses, the region.

This project took tremendous devotion to historic preservation. An example of that is the ceiling of the center portico coming off Public Square. We had a young man
The restoration of the Tower City Center and the creation of retail space that extends to the river helped revitalize the city of Cleveland. Photo courtesy of Forest City Enterprises.

Ronald A. Ratner is the president and chief executive officer of Forest City Residential, Inc., a Cleveland-based, national real estate company.

somewhat academic decision, but nonetheless, you could argue, I think coherently, that it was a correct decision. The National Park Service was concerned that the cumulative changes meant that we had lost the sense of the train station. And although compromise in this case would have meant that we would have lost about a third of the retail space and lost the integrity of the retail development, the National Park Service legitimately said that that part of the economic reality of the project wasn’t within their standards. If that was a correct decision under the standards and guidelines, then we need to rethink the rules.

Keys to Success

So what are the keys to success? They’re very straightforward. There’s passion. There’s urban vision. There’s creativity. There are relationships. Underlying it, there are economic realities. And in the end, for our company and for the country, there’s a notion that location equals value.

I don’t often quote Einstein. In fact, I don’t even try to understand Einstein. But these words seemed particularly appropriate: “Out of clutter, find simplicity. From discord, find harmony. In the middle of difficulty, wise opportunity.”

My overall message is that we must work together, and we can. As a developer, I am sometimes asked if we ever sacrifice profitability to achieve excellence in historic preservation. My answer is that that is a false choice. The fact is, we can have it all, but only if we work together. The projects we want to be involved in, the best ones, offer opportunities in all areas, including economic return. Private investment is the only way to achieve some of these things. Without it, and without the commitment and leadership of the public sector, it just won’t happen.
New Alliances Promote Kentucky’s Rich Heritage

My family and the other early settlers who came to Kentucky were drawn by the beauty of the land, the richness of the natural resources, and the potential for personal and economic prosperity. And they developed a rich tradition of architecture and craftsmanship that built on our state’s natural heritage. Today those are the very assets, the very strengths, that we find ourselves placing a renewed value on 200 years later. I’ve been interested and involved in preservation and growth management issues from a number of different perspectives: as president of an economic development agency, as secretary of the tourism cabinet, and as arts commissioner for Kentucky. But today my job is to advise Kentucky’s governor on the broad policy agenda to move the state forward and to look at all the ways all of our various policy initiatives should interlink and coordinate in ways that can truly form a brighter future for Kentucky.

The governor turned to smart growth because of its critical link to economic prosperity for Kentucky. The connection between smart growth and economic prosperity is the best way to build the bridge between the traditional advocates for preservation and the business and the development community. If we’re truly going to see the economic results the state needs, we must partner with people who are investing in Kentucky’s future.

In this new economy of the 21st century, quality of life matters more than it ever has before. New high-tech firms and knowledge-based companies are going to locate where the highly skilled workers are. And those skilled workers will want to live in areas that are attractive, clean, and free of congestion, and where they can raise a family.

Kentucky, as do many states, has many advantages when competing for new jobs and new industries. We have some of the most diverse and beautiful landscapes in the country. We have unique small towns dotted across our state, each with its own rich history. We have vibrant cities with strong cultural offerings. We have a very low cost of living. We have the lowest energy costs in the country and some of the lowest housing costs. But it’s essential to protect those assets if our state will have a successful economic future.

The states that aren’t taking the steps to protect those assets will find themselves the economic backwaters. They will be creating service jobs and back-office jobs. The businesses that attract the well-educated workers will not settle in the states that aren’t paying attention to protecting those quality-of-life assets.

Kentucky’s Smart Growth Task Force

In May of 2001, Governor Patton appointed a 35-member Smart Growth Task Force, a bipartisan committee of volunteers across the state with diverse interests. About 65 groups were identified as stakeholders who could also participate in meetings and work teams. The task force organized its work around five committees, which attracted more than 230 members from around the state. The subject areas of the work committees ranged from community design and revitalization, to economic development, land preservation, planning, and transportation. Over a period of about six
The connection between smart growth and economic prosperity is the best way to build the bridge between the traditional advocates for preservation and the business and the development community.

months, those work teams met all across Kentucky.

As part of this Smart Growth initiative, we asked the University of Kentucky to conduct a survey to test people’s opinions on various growth management issues in different parts of the state. And we learned an important lesson in that process: In Kentucky, the concerns about growth are as diverse as the regions of our state. In the urban areas such as Louisville and Lexington and northern Kentucky which is just south of Cincinnati, it’s traditional sprawl issues. But it’s preservation of farmland in central Kentucky and far western Kentucky, where farmers are threatened by large chicken and hog operations. It’s preservation of natural areas in far eastern Kentucky where we have some of the most beautiful ecological treasures in our state. And it’s the preservation of downtowns and neighborhoods in every community that Kentuckians care about as they look to the future.

But we found quickly that, unfortunately, too few Kentucky communities have the tools with which to address these issues. In fact, nearly 25 percent, or 27 counties in Kentucky, have no planning function at all, at either the city or the county level. Only 27 of our 120 counties have joint planning units with full county-wide planning and zoning. And in many of those counties where they have comprehensive planning on the books, we found decision-makers who truly didn’t understand the basic tenets of comprehensive planning and certainly didn’t understand the principles of smart growth. So we found a tremendous lack of education and training in the state, even in the areas where the right laws are on the books.

Meanwhile, Kentucky’s rate of growth is accelerating at an astounding pace. From 1982 to 1997, 592,000 acres of farmland were converted to urban areas and roads. The state’s land development is dramatically out of synch with its population growth. We’re showing a slight growth in population, but our land development is far outpacing that growth.

In the fall of 2001, after about six months of work, the governor presented the results of the Smart Growth Task Force report. The task force came with 66 recommendations ranging from training and education of local officials to changing laws to require more planning at the local level to providing more technical assistance for local communities to developing significant funding pools for preservation to recommendations to enact historic tax credits.

We began to try to implement the report’s recommendations in our legislative session last spring. Since smart growth is a controversial issue in Kentucky, we tried to take segments of it that we thought were manageable and that we could build political support for. We passed several bills that related directly to smart growth. We passed bills dealing with the siting of cell towers and power plants. We also passed a bill to create Pine Mountain State Park in eastern Kentucky to protect the area from mining and timbering and other encroachments. We passed a comprehensive solid waste management bill which we consider part of a broad environmental growth plan.

However, the bill we called the Smart Growth Bill failed to pass. And it’s that phrase, “smart growth,” that really turns people off and makes them think that the government is trying to interfere with individual property rights or trying to mandate state controls that can over-ride local controls. The Smart Growth Bill, which would have established a state planning office to give more assistance to local communities, scared some legislators to death. They were convinced that that was communism.

The other bill that didn’t pass was historic rehabilitation tax credits. The bill would have provided up to a 30 percent state tax credit for owner-occupied residential property and for redevelopment and qualified new construction in historic districts. We hope to revive that bill in the 2003 legislative session. I think, as much as anything, that bill got caught up in our fiscal crisis in Kentucky as in every other state.

A state tax credit would really be an important step forward because it would con-tinue to build on Kentucky’s legacy of preservation. Nationally, Kentucky has the fourth highest number of entries in the National Register with more than 3,100 listings encompassing approximately 41,000 structures. The tax credit would build on the federal programs and would serve as a catalyst for investments in neighborhoods and downtown commercial areas.

We put together a broad coalition to lobby for the tax credits, which included Ken-
We really began our smart growth initiative, several years before he named the task force, by creating a program called Renaissance Kentucky. This program provides communities with financial and technical resources to revitalize and restore their downtowns. Since its creation, Renaissance Kentucky has channeled more than $72 million into efforts in now 73 cities.

Forming New Alliances

We’ve learned some valuable lessons in Kentucky. We’ve lost some battles and we’ve won some battles. I think the most important lesson is that we have to form new alliances if we’re going to convince a broad cross-section of citizens that we must act now to preserve and protect our natural and our built heritage, and if we expect to have public policy that ensures a strong economic future. We can no longer afford to have our preservation and conservation interests seen as being at odds with our economic interests because they are vitally linked.

One of my previous jobs, as I mentioned, was secretary of the tourism cabinet. And I’ve been in some meetings where the preservation and tourism and arts community were in the same room with the transportation officials, and you didn’t want small children in the same room. It was not a pleasant atmosphere. These were not agencies where there was a great deal of mutual trust. There was not a great deal of understanding of each others’ missions and responsibilities. But today in Kentucky, not only have we reached a point where these agencies are working together, but what they are doing in Kentucky for us is a model for other states to follow.

But in all of this, it’s absolutely clear that in every state, preservation must be a player. And you must be a partner when issues affecting the future of the state are addressed. In Kentucky, we talk about having the fourth highest number of listings in the register. But in the end, it’s not the numbers, it’s the people that will make a difference. It’s not enough for preservation advocates to get together to tell each other what a good job we’re doing. We must talk to economic development planners, to local elected officials, to members of planning and zoning boards at the local level, business leaders, and chambers of commerce.

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Crit Luallen is the secretary of Governor Paul Patton’s Executive Cabinet.

One of my previous jobs, as I mentioned, was secretary of the tourism cabinet. And I’ve been in some meetings where the preservation and tourism and arts community being made today in every community across this country that are affecting the future of our children and our grandchildren. And those decisions are going to determine whether or not those next generations actually have the choice of remaining close to their roots where they can nurture their heritage while also enjoying economic prosperity and a quality of life.

As preservation advocates, each of us must never let our elected officials forget that in the end, government is not about programs or policies or buildings or task forces. Those are all a means to an end. Government is about the lives, the hearts, and the minds of the people that we serve. And we must together build a future that will give every opportunity possible for our people to live the lives that they want and deserve.
Pleasant and delightful, the rural landscape is a relic from the past—static, underdeveloped—in need of the civilizing touch of the city and industry and commerce. That is the urban view. But the rural landscape is the unwritten record of intense, adaptive development, mute testimony to great revolutions.

The greatest revolution in human history—that of the Neolithic—made the rural world a place of villages. The compact settlement of the village enabled the cooperative endeavor of agriculture, providing the material foundation for all progress.

A complex architectural entity, the village is a miniature, theologically based, democratic state. At its midpoint stands a building of religion, a hall for worship, that gathers the homes of the farming people whose fields fan away, spreading order to the edge of chaos. So it is today in Anatolia, where the concept was invented, and so it once was from Japan, the island at the eastern end of the Eurasian landmass, to England, the island on the west.

The old English village was centered by the church, its tower rising in pride. Farm homes clustered in close sociability. Strips of tillage clustered beyond, convenient for cooperative labor. Then in the second great rural revolution—the long, slow, violent revolution of enclosure, beginning in private initiative and ending in parliamentary law—the village, with its stone church and huddled housing, was replaced by the separate farm, a steadying of independent enterprise. This revolution marks the birth of the modern world.

Enclosure—the shift from the village to the separate farm—was at once an economic triumph and a social disaster. It was a change in social base from the community to the family. In the village, the family was part of a corporate entity, secure in the coherence of shared custom. On the farm, the family was on its own. It was a change from a sacred to a secular political order. People once unified within the mystic body of the church sought freedom of conscience and enterprise within the lawful order of the state. It was a change from a culture of trust and maintenance to a culture of competitive economic advancement. People traded confidence and cooperative security for material success.

Jamestown and Plymouth, both founded as villages, yielded quickly to the separate farm, to the hope for wealth. Anglo-America was born modern. New England experienced the sacred retrenchment of Puritanism when the church fathers strove to shape the New Jerusalem on the model of the Anglo-Saxon village, but the American pattern had been set in rural Virginia, the world’s first purely capitalistic landscape, and the idea of the separate farm went west. The plantation became the ranch, an open-air factory where the boss directed the hands in the production of a commodity—not the tobacco or cotton or sugar of the South, nor the clocks and locks and firearms of the North, but cattle, meat for the market.

The West supplies at once the extreme instance of the ranch and the conspicuous exceptions to the rule. One is found in the pueblos of the native people, where the houses pile on one another and the people emerge from their kivas to dance, uniting and transcribing the lineaments of a monumental sacred architecture in the bright air. Another is found in the Hispanic village, with its church on the plaza. And the most dramatic instance exists in Mormon territory, where the old English village was revived within a neo-theocratic order, where the farmhouses congregate around a building for worship and the fields spread beyond. These are the exceptions, the villages of sacred order.

By contrast, the old rural—thoroughly modern—
the coming and going of fashion. Look upon the landscape, North, South, or West, and you will find houses built, say, in 1880 with Greek Revival doorways, Gothic scrolls, and Italianate brackets; then look beyond the ornament and you will find a form, in plan and elevation, dating from the middle of the 18th century.

The American farmhouse displays an awareness of fashion, and it displays a deeper mood of resistance in a form that keeps faith with the socially effective traditions of its place. Its mass is familiar, its rooms are comfortably useful, its decorative detail is modest and sufficiently proud.

Like the house, the barn exhibits continuity over time and space. The barns of old England were reproduced in New England, but European forms also provided the basis for creative departures. The barns of Pennsylvania, astonishing combinations of economic intelligence and aesthetic mastery, are among the most beautiful and historically significant works of American architecture. Beyond the mountains, in Tennessee, the inventiveness of Pennsylvania was matched in the development of the transverse-crib barn, the signal form of the Middle West.

The Need for Rural Preservation

We are not used to thinking of rural places as hotbeds of invention, but the rural designers in the Mohawk Valley, southeastern Pennsylvania, the Valley of Virginia, and eastern Tennessee were as creative as their industrial contemporaries in the Connecticut Valley to whom historians attend. But when the old buildings have all decayed and the land has been paved, there will be no record to challenge the urban view.

Held with equal conviction by thinkers from both ends of the political spectrum, by apologists for capitalism and Marxist critics alike, the urban view dominates our history and
governs our policies. From the urban perspective, the rural landscape—in fact, a record of creative endeavor—is a pretty thing, belonging to a placid past, in need of development.

It is crucial that we have alternatives, checks to prejudice, and it is primarily for that reason, I believe, we need programs of rural preservation. For that reason, I tagged along and helped a bit when Marsh Davis, then of the Historic Landmarks Foundation of Indiana, now of the Galveston Historical Foundation, worked to make Maple Grove, in Monroe County, Indiana’s first rural historic district.

The Maple Grove area included a set of noble old homes: houses of log and stone from the first phase of settlement, one brick mansion—Georgian in form, Greek and Gothic in ornament—built during the Civil War, and a scatter of plain frame farmhouses from the end of the 19th century. Old patterns of agricultural land use were visible from the road that followed the ridge above the bottoms rich with corn. People from families many generations on the land rallied to the cause, and they found a leader in Joe Peden, a farmer who spoke eloquently about the spiritual nature of working the earth.

Maple Grove was a fine choice for preservation, and it passed easily through the requisite legal stages to historic district status. Now it is for sale. Lots by the roadside carry the signs of dealers in real estate, and the view to the valley is blocked by new palaces of the usual suburban sort.

The preservationists have not been beaten. Bloomington Restorations Incorporated (BRI), the energetic local organization, has followed the general drift in preservation by concentrating on late urban buildings. It has pioneered admirable programs in affordable housing, but the countryside has not been forgotten, BRI loans are helping householders in restoration projects in Maple Grove. But, here too, preservationists are going down to defeat for want of policies adequate to the rural task. Along Maple Grove Road, new intrusions proliferate, and the rural landscape is becoming, tragically, yet another suburb.

When it has all been developed, when the countryside has been obliterated by travesties of one kind or another, by broad bland highways and jerry-built commercial strips, by vulnerable mobile homes and plastic-clad Queen Anne Revival-French Provincial mansions, the stories muttered in the ruins of gaunt wooden houses and soaring stone barns will be too weak, unable to counter the urban ideology or stay the hand of the developer.

Meanwhile, as we pine for sturdier regulations and more attractive incentives for preservation in America, we are fortunate that most of the surface of the earth remains undeveloped, safe in the canny, caring hands of hard-working peasants who create beautiful landscapes around their villages and who are not to blame for the ecological disasters we face.

Henry Glassie is Professor of Folklore at Indiana University and the author of a dozen books on life and art and architecture in the United States, Ireland, Turkey, and Bangladesh.

A Long-Range Vision for Cities, and for Preservation

I am honored to accept invitations from the National Trust because those of us involved in New Urbanism owe you greatly in our own endeavors. We are certainly in your debt, not only as an allied institution, but—and I want to emphasize this—in what preservationists bring to communities. Whenever we come to help a town or city that needs expansion or revitalization, there is a substantial public process with participants who have a lot to say. In fact, they’re almost always the determinants of whether the plan goes forward well. And the vast majority of those who help are preservationists.

When we arrive to work with a city, I am the least expert person. Everybody else knows more about the city than we do. It’s a very peculiar situation, to come from the outside as an advisor. Study as you might, take advice as much as you might, you’re never as expert as those who live in the city. What emerges in these public processes, are people who have been thinking deeply about what is to be done. And ironically, they also think how impossible it is to get things done, because they know too much. They know the details.

So what can I contribute when I come into a place where everyone else is an expert? Rather than pursuing expertise in the sense of becoming like the citizens, I’ve found that I can contribute two things that are not normally engaged in their mindset: a conception of time and a conception of scale.

Time: The Need for a Long-Range View

After many years of being an architect and an urbanist, I’ve finally figured out the difference between the two disciplines. The first conception was to think that for an urbanist, the issues are more complicated because the scale involved is larger. It’s architecture writ large. In fact, I have found that not to be the case.
The categorical difference between urbanism and architecture is the factor of time.

When we first arrived at the Florida Panhandle in 1980, the only value of that shoreline was the strip on the beach, which was sold as townhouses and condominiums. Nothing behind it was valuable. The only things that were on the market at the time were relatively cheap condominiums selling “ocean view.” That was the only reality in 1980.

Now, because Robert Davis, our client, owned land in depth, he had to make all the land valuable, not just the frontal strip, we had to conceive of a plan that the site as a whole was not just an attachment to the beach. There had to be other things that made it worthwhile to live at Seaside.

In 1980 no market analysis would tell you that such a thing was possible. And it was even more difficult to conceive of the plan as a town.

How can you even think of anything other than marketing condos on the beach? And yet when we designed Seaside, we reserved a site for a rather large chapel; we reserved a site for an elementary school; we reserved sites for a clubhouse and a concert hall; we reserved many sites for a downtown of four-story mixed-use buildings with shops on the first floor, living above; we even reserved sites for a cemetery as well as houses. Over time they all became real. Over time the citizens moved in. They became proud of their community. They wished to improve their quality of life. They wished to ornament their lives. And they themselves raised the money to build a beautiful chapel. They’re now raising $10 million to build the concert hall. And they lobbied to bring in their public school.

Now, this happened because we knew that over time everything is possible. There is nothing unusual about time as a factor. Look at the people who laid out cities like Cleveland. Look at the early lithographs of Cleveland, 200 years ago, 150 years ago. You see shacks without windows. You see pigs in the street. You see mud in their streets. There was no sewer. And yet we know very well that, although the buildings were akin to shanties, the initial conception was that it was to become a city. The road grid was laid out; the widths were large. And duly, 100 years later came the infrastructure that permitted the large and glorious buildings that you now have in Cleveland. This happened because they took time into account. This is the kind of vision that permits cities to occur. Vision is, in fact, possible only when you take time into account.

Another reason that time, as an ingredient is so important: People are experts in what cannot happen. They will tell you that the crucial building, which stops the project, is “owned by a misanthrope living in Florida.” And my response is, is there any evidence that he’s immortal? Because if there isn’t, then we can go ahead and plan for the generational transition. This happens even more often with entrenched regulators, such as zoning administrators or public works chiefs.

And then a curious thing happens when you see past the people who are preventing things: For the first time, a vision is permitted to be created that is of sufficient standing, of sufficient greatness, that
used to be forward looking. We always knew that the future was to be better than the present; that the present was better than the past. And so willingly and uncritically we demolished and demolished in order to build places that were better and better. Remember the shantytown that became Cleveland! And the evidence really was that places do get better.

If you look at lithographs and photographs of Cleveland, first with shacks that then became brick houses, which then became glorious mansions, and then became the standard American five-to-six-story downtown, and then became glorious 1930s stone skyscrapers.

This rise to greatness was built on the demolition of the prior stage. There was no preservation movement because it was understood that there was a fair exchange value. It was understood that that which would be acquired would be at least as good as that which was taken away.

But in the 1950s and in the 1960s the evidence grew that this was no longer the case. I believe the key event was the demolition of Penn Station and its replacement by that aberration, that disgusting building. That was the last straw. And we as a culture concluded that we were trading downwards. And so we came to believe that we must preserve not only that which is of historic value, but anything that exists, knowing that it is better than that which will replace it.

That’s been my own experience with the preservation movement. I have seen single buildings of no value, architectural or historical, being fought for by preservationists because the proposed replacement is some kind of disgusting national chain drugstore.

Ultimately, in the very long run, thinking about time again, there will be less and less for us to preserve. Right now we’re engaging in the debate about Levittown. We’re engaged in a debate on preserving the earliest McDonald’s. I think those are of value. I think that the earliest glass-and-steel office buildings are of value. But as you move into the 60s and the 70s, I guarantee you, there are no lenses so rosy that they will actually permit us to look at those McMansions and say that they are worth defending.

We are creating places that are not worth preserving under any circumstances. And as you look backwards, it is just as important that you look forward. If not you, who? Who else is, in fact, supervising the quality of what is being built? Who has the knowledge? Who has the goodwill? Who has the vast and mature organization to look over that which is being built but the National Trust?

Scale: The Need for a Regional View

It is crucial that preservationists begin to understand the protocols that are creating the present built environment, which is largely suburbia, and see the competitive disadvantage cities are in. Of course, the cities are more beautiful. Look at the glory of these buildings in Cleveland. Look at where the cultural institutions are located. Look at the advantage of existing infrastructure and the mature street trees and parks. Look at the tax breaks that are available. But then, why is development occurring out in open lands at a much faster rate than redevelopment in the city? Why are they building thousands of houses for every unit that is built downtown? Why does a shopkeeper willingly pay 10 times as much to be in a shopping mall than in a storefront downtown?

Preservationists, who want cities to be preserved as vitally functioning places, must understand the scale of the region and the competitive relationship between the city and the suburbs. Otherwise they will not understand why Euclid Avenue in Cleveland is still relatively empty, despite the excellence of the architecture and all the efforts to develop it. It is not that there is anything intrinsically wrong with Euclid Avenue; it is just that it extrinsically relates to what else is happening in the region.

Until the recent recession, nearly a million houses were built each year in this country in the greenfields. It is very, very difficult to stop this. We know it truly cannot be stopped because there is growth in the population and wealth that makes the generations no longer share households. Families, who would have lived together, now live apart. So there’s a tremendous multiplication of households, and statistically some regions must continue losing greenfields.

I don’t think anybody here should or can stop this constant exchange. Exchange is life. The problem that we have in suburbia is that the
exchange value is downwards. Even the rawest potato field is more desirable than a strip shopping center. It’s a downward trade despite the fact that the shops in that strip shopping center must be provided somewhere. And preservationists, who have come to learn, painfully, about exchange value in buildings of the past, cannot fail to engage that issue of exchange value in the open space of the present.

Why Preservation Needs New Allies

To conclude, I would like to make a proposition. This organization is necessarily elsewhere, but it is constrained by its mission. You should not diffuse yourself more widely. You should concentrate on your job, but you do need an allied organization that will engage the preservation of the countryside and the building a future worth preserving.

Now, most environmental organizations have an ethos different from yours in the sense that many of them—and I’m not criticizing them because they are very effective—are staffed by overgrown and not particularly well-behaved kids. Their effectiveness is their misbehavior. But there is one organization that is actually staffed by steady-eyed adults, and that’s the Nature Conservancy. And they also have the tremendous advantage that they look upon the landscape as shared by human habitation. They do not share the cataclysmic definition—that nature is only wilderness and humans are always intruders.

Now, as I said, do not diffuse yourself. You do not need to take on environmental problems. Nor do you need to take on the building of the new communities; the Nature Conservancy and the New Urbanists are engaged in these endeavors. But we do desperately need each other for cross-education and to back each other in the many, many campaigns that must be fought, both locally and at a national level.

I also wonder whether at some point, to stimulate debate, you should consider a change of your name as a way to bring up the fundamental issue of the future. Is the National Trust for Historic Preservation the future? Is “historic” the correct word? Is this not limiting?

Now, you will probably decide not to alter your name. But to engage in a debate about fundamental issues by reconsidering that name and seeing where that takes you would be healthy. And nothing gives more vitality to an organization than the true exchange of ideas, both by internal debate and by external association with the two organizations I’ve proposed.

I’m proposing to you that the Congress of the New Urbanism owes you a lot, and I think we can offer a lot. I think that the Nature Conservancy would also be equally invigorating as an ally.

Historic Preservation: Where We’ve Been and Where We Need to Go

Twenty-one years ago I attended my first National Trust conference in New Orleans, and I think that I’ve only missed two since then. Twenty-one years is often thought to be a rather significant number—it has historically represented the reaching of majority, and it often serves as a reasonable proxy for a generation.

So I’m going to use that time frame for my remarks today: looking first at how dramatically the historic preservation movement has changed over that 21 years, then looking at what needs to be on our agenda in the immediate future, and finally looking forward another 21 years and suggesting a role that is not being played by preservation today but could be crucial in the future.

How Far We Have Come

Twenty-one years ago the historic preservation movement was primarily concerned with house museums and saving national landmarks. Today historic preservationists deal daily with issues of community character, saving local landmarks, cultural tourism, economic development, promoting neighborhood schools. It is not that house museums and national landmarks have become less important but that our vision and horizon have significantly expanded.

Twenty-one years ago downtown revitalization was synonymous with tearing down that old stuff to make room for the new. Today historic preservation is the common denominator in virtually every sustained success story in downtown revitalization. Twenty-one years ago the National Main Street Center was just being formed; today 1,600 communities have their own Main Street programs and “The Main Street Approach” has become part of the vernacular of economic development professionals throughout the country.

Twenty-one years ago
historic preservation was seen by many as a frivolous extra, peripheral to a city’s prerequisites. Today historic preservation is seen as an irreplaceable variable in the quality-of-life criteria essential for sustainable prosperity and growth.

Twenty-one years ago historic preservation was seen as the opposite of economic development. Today historic preservation is a vital vehicle of economic development.

Twenty-one years ago business leaders like chamber of commerce executives and bankers would rarely be seen at a preservation meeting. A couple of months ago I was in Sayre, Okla.—population 4,100—where the drive to establish a National Register district downtown is being led by the two bank presidents and the chamber of commerce.

Twenty-one years ago there were only a handful of statewide preservation organizations; today 47 states have them, 41 of which have paid staff. Twenty-one years ago there was no such thing as a Certified Local Government; today there are 1,343 of them in addition to some 200 local preservation advocacy groups and 2,300 historic district commissions.

Twenty-one years ago historic preservation was a movement that was largely obstructionist and reactive—standing in front of bulldozers to stop a demolition. Today, while preservationists still sometimes need to stand in front of the bulldozer, preservationists are more often at the table from the beginning and are a respected part of the problem-solving process, not a fringe advocacy group that can be marginalized at will.

Twenty-one years ago there was no such concept as “smart growth.” Today historic preservation is a vital strategy in this nationwide movement.

Lest I forget, however, one important characteristic of the historic preservation movement has not changed in the last 21 years—in fact hasn’t changed in the last 160 years. And that is that the ideas, the passion, the energy, the drive, and the leadership of grassroots preservation comes, and has always come, primarily from women. The preservation movement owes its existence and its force to women. I happen to strongly believe that Richard Moe is by far the best president the National Trust has ever had, and hope he stays on for years to come. But I also hope we don’t have to wait another 21 years for there to be a woman president of the National Trust.

There are still remnants of the old preservation—a few in academia, some in international preservation groups, a smattering elsewhere—who haven’t bought into this expanded, more inclusive, less elitist, decidedly less dilettantish evolution of preservation. But their tired, outmoded voices are today lost among grassroots preservation activists, among those who have built over the last 21 years today’s preservation movement.

Now I don’t want this to sound like all of preservation’s challenges have now been met, and we no longer have to fight daily to keep the best of our built heritage. We do. But historic preservation is more rarely on the outside longingly looking in; historic preservation more often is on the inside and today speaks with a clear and credible voice. Historic preservation is not the answer to every urban problem, but historic preservation is part of the solution to the vast majority of city issues—affordable housing, neighborhood stabilization, downtown revitalization, fiscal responsibility, small business incubation, education, cultural policy, economic development, environmental quality, growth-industry business recruitment, urban design, suburban sprawl, transportation, quality of life, social expression, economic integration. We have come a long way from only being concerned about house museums and national landmarks.

**Continuing Challenges**

So where does this leave us today? I’ve identified a handful of issues that I believe we’ll have to do a better job of addressing over the next few years.

And we might as well start with the one that we’ve avoided too long—gentrification. Gentrification is a serious issue that merits a reasoned response.

First, diverse neighborhoods should be a public policy goal. Neighborhoods that are all poor can, in no sense of the definition, be considered diverse. What all neighborhoods need is economic integration.

Second, the ultimate defense against gentrification is homeownership, and historic preservation strategies for neighborhood revitalization consistently strive for homeownership by existing residents as a top priority.

Third, recent analysis indicates that, far from having a negative impact on low-income residents, the revitalization of urban neighborhoods can improve the quality of life among disadvantaged households. The most credible analysis of gentrification yet undertaken was released this year by a housing advocacy group—the Citizens’ Housing and Planning Council in New York City. Here is what they reported:

“Low-income households actually seem less likely to move from gentrifying neighborhoods than from other communities. Improving housing and neighborhood conditions appears to encourage the housing stability of low-income households to the degree that it more than offsets any dislocation resulting from rising rents.”

Fourth, since there is often a high rate of vacancies in older and historic neighborhoods, there can be significant...
in-migration while keeping long-term residents in place.

Fifth, historic preservation is often the erroneous target in the gentrification debates. Listen to what Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels has said:

“Clearly gentrification is occurring in our city... I don’t chock that problem up to historic preservation, in fact I think in some ways by preserving and upgrading and restoring the housing in a neighborhood you can keep the prices more affordable than when new construction comes into a neighborhood.”

Sixth, if white flight from cities was bad—and who in their right mind would suggest it wasn’t—how, then, can the return to cities of the middle class—both white and black—not be considered a good thing.

Finally, “gentrification” is the result of too little historic preservation, not too much. People of all income brackets are attracted to historic neighborhoods because of the quality of the housing; because of the investment protection that a local historic district provides; because there is a wide range of housing styles and sizes available; because typically there are citizen activists committed to advocating for the neighborhood; and because there are few tools other than local historic districts that can defend a neighborhood against inappropriate uses, out-of-scale development, low-quality construction, and the encroachment of objectionable uses. Because the number of households looking for neighborhoods with those characteristics exceeds the supply, historic neighborhoods are in high demand. The answer is not to have fewer historic districts—the answer is to provide historic district protections to more neighborhoods.

It’s time preservationists quit avoiding the gentrification issue.

Related to this issue of gentrification is the issue of neighborhood diversity. America is a diverse country, ethnically, racially, economically. From a political perspective there’s not much unanimity in the U.S. regarding overall urban policy. But I think there is rather widespread agreement on one issue: Our cities would be healthier if we had diverse urban districts—that no one particularly benefits from neighborhoods that are all rich or all poor, all white or all black. And while for nearly 40 years we have had laws prohibiting discrimination based on race or religion, while any

one with the money to buy can live wherever they choose, our neighborhoods as a whole are not very diverse.

Presidents have said, “I want my cabinet to look like America.” Well, virtually the only neighborhoods that look like your entire community are your historic districts. I had an intern over the summer looking at preliminary 2000 U.S. census data from here in Cleveland. We posited that to be diverse a neighborhood had to be less than 80 percent white and less than 80 percent black—that is, no extreme concentration of race. 61 percent of the nonhistoric neighborhoods in Cleveland failed to meet that test—61 percent were essentially all white or all black. But in the historic districts? The percentage was virtually reversed with 63 percent meeting the diversity test. This is not an accident. Neighborhoods that have a wide variety of housing sizes, styles, conditions, and prices will end up with a wide variety of human beings who choose to live there. And it is in our historic districts where that wide variety of housing choices is available. I’ve looked at data from a dozen cities and the answer is always the same: historic neighborhoods are decidedly more racially, economi
cally, educationally, and occupationally diverse than other parts of the community. Find someone to look at the data from the 2000 census and just see if that isn’t also true in your community.

The next issue on my list that we need to address is the lunacy of the facadomy. Maintaining a four-inch depth of a brick facade is not preservation. Either a justification can be made for replacing the building because it causes economic hardship, or it can’t. If there is no economically feasible way to save the building, we ought to demand a high-quality new building be built in its place. If there is not demonstrated economic hardship we ought not to settle for this Halloween preservation—saving the mask and throwing away the building. This is the worst of both worlds. There is no historic preservation, by any sane def

inition, and yet we’ve encumbered the developer with the extraordinary cost of removing an entire building behind the skin and pasting it back on again. Every time some historic preservation commission accepts—or in most cases mandates—this facadomy as “historic preservation” it not only makes it more likely to happen again, it also has taxpayers and elected officials shaking their heads in wonder and saying, “This is what preservation is about!”

Maybe the most critical issue we need to begin addressing is affordable housing. Every day of the week, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year for the last 30 years we have lost 577 housing units built before 1950—80 percent of them single-family residences. Some of these were in historic districts, most were not. Some should have been designated, most probably should not have been.

I believe preservationists now have a great opportunity but also a great responsibility to address this issue of affordable housing in our communities. Let me give you a real estate fact of life: you can’t build new and rent cheap, it can’t be done, unless you have deep public subsidies or you build crap. A major economic reason to stabilize and preserve
close-in older neighborhoods—even if you think they are of nominal architectural or historic value—is so you preserve an inventory of affordable housing. So when you see a house being torn down in an older neighborhood, don’t just weep for the architectural character or cultural significance or historic importance that is being lost forever. Also say to yourself, “Well, there’s one more unit of affordable housing that we’ve thrown away,” and it will be very expensive to replace it.

Why do we care? Of the 20 million net new jobs over the next 10 years, for every computer programmer we’ll need 7 clerical workers; for every chemist we’ll need 43 cashiers; for every operations research manager we’ll need 73 janitors. We will need 300,000 more waiters and waitresses. And the crucial question is: Where are those waitresses. And the crucial 300,000 more waiters and janitors. We will need 7 clerical workers; for every operations research manager we’ll need 73 janitors. We will need 300,000 more waiters and waitresses. And the crucial question is: Where are those waitresses. And the crucial 300,000 more waiters and janitors. We will need 7 clerical workers; for every operations research manager we’ll need 73 janitors. We will need 300,000 more waiters and waitresses. And the crucial question is: Where are those waitresses. And the crucial 300,000 more waiters and janitors. We will need 7 clerical workers; for every operations research manager we’ll need 73 janitors. We will need 300,000 more waiters and waitresses. And the crucial question is: Where are those waitresses. And the crucial 300,000 more waiters and janitors. We will need 7 clerical workers; for every operations research manager we’ll need 73 janitors. We will need 300,000 more waiters and waitresses. And the crucial question is: Where are those waitresses. And the crucial 300,000 more waiters and janitors. We will need 7 clerical workers; for every operations research manager we’ll need 73 janitors. We will need 300,000 more waiters and waitresses. And the crucial question is: Where are those waitresses. And the crucial 300,000 more waiters and janitors. We will need 7 clerical workers; for every operations research manager we’ll need 73 janitors. We will need 300,000 more waiters and waitresses. And the crucial question is: Where are those waitresses. And the crucial 300,000 more waiters and janitors. We will need 7 clerical workers; for every operations research manager we’ll need 73 janitors. We will need 300,000 more waiters and waitresses. And the crucial question is: Where are those waitresses. And the crucial 300,000 more waiters and janitors. We will need 7 clerical workers; for every operations research manager we’ll need 73 janitors. We will need 300,000 more waiters and waitresses. And the crucial question is: Where are those waitresses. And the crucial 300,000 more waiters and janitors. We will need 7 clerical workers; for every operations research manager we’ll need 73 janitors. We will need 300,000 more waiters and waitresses. And the crucial question is: Where are those waitresses. And the crucial 300,000 more waiters and janitors. We will need 7 clerical workers; for every operations research manager we’ll need 73 janitors.

There are only four options in addressing the housing affordability crisis—1) mobile homes (where two-thirds of the owners don’t own the ground on which they sit); 2) building cheap houses where land is cheap—that means exacerbating the problems of sprawl; 3) having very deep public subsidies; or 4) protecting and reinvesting in our older and historic neighborhoods. You tell me which is the most responsible option.

An issue that many of you have been dealing with for several years is smart growth. That effort will have to continue. The opposition to smart growth is becoming more sophisticated in their tactics, often describing their own initiatives as “smart growth” when the results of implementation would be the polar opposite. Here’s what you need to know: Historic preservation is not just one of the tools of smart growth—it is the indispensable tool. Greenbelts around cities are nice, but you can have smart growth without greenbelts. Transferable development rights are a useful tool, but you can have smart growth without TDRs. Conservation easements can assist in reaching smart growth ends, but you can have smart growth without conservation easements. But, simply put, there can be no smart growth without historic preservation. Period. No exception. Any anti-sprawl strategy that does not have historic preservation at its core is “stupid growth.” Period.

On all levels of government preservationists are going to have to be more active in assisting public agencies in dealing with their historic buildings. On the national level that means the General Services Administration, the Army, the Veterans Administration, the National Park Service, and others. But there will also be needs at the state level, at the county level, and particularly at the city and school district levels. Look, preservation is our expertise, not theirs. There is no way they can be expected to understand the right way to treat and reuse their historic buildings without our help. While we shouldn’t be reluctant to be the adversary of public entities when they are putting historic buildings at risk, we shouldn’t wait until a conflict emerges to get involved. We should be the helpful ally of agencies’ stewardship, not just their antagonist after the fact.

But there’s a related issue regarding public buildings where, I think, preservationists are going to have to lead the fight. And that is the growing practice of ruining the city by making it a bunker. We have to pay attention to security, no one is quarreling with that. But the current approach, in Washington and around the country, is to destroy the human quality of the public sphere with fences, Jersey barriers, buildings surrounded with acres of concrete, and steel posts trespassing into the public realm of the sidewalk. Enough is enough. Stop already. What’s the point of saving a city if it is to become an anti-pedestrian, alienating, Blade Runner version of civilization. It’s time to “just say no” to the security design fanatics. To condemn our cities to become anti-human outdoor prisons is to hand the victory to terrorists, domestic and foreign.

So there are some issues—gentrification, neighborhood diversity, public buildings, affordable housing, smart growth, building security, facadomies—that were on few preservation agendas 21 years ago, that need to be on our agenda today.
Today 1,600 communities have their own Main Street program and the Main Street approach has become part of the vernacular of economic development officials. Photo: National Trust for Historic Preservation.

America in the World

But if we look beyond what we need to address today, to the issues of the next 21 years, the challenge becomes even greater. I am going to give you a personal view. It is a view in part molded by events in the United States over the past two years, and in part molded by my good fortune of having worked in a dozen countries on five continents in the last few years. My perspective on the potential international role of historic preservation has significantly expanded.

I believe that events of the last few years have set back American influence around the world by a generation. My purpose is not to convince any of you of anything. In fact, many of you will vehemently disagree with my conclusions. My only goal is to plant the consideration of a concept in your heads.

Over the last 14 months we have seen far too many headlines and heard far too many commentators ask, “Why does everybody hate us?” Not only is that not true, it is the kind of whimpering, whiny comment one might expect to hear from an 11-year-old on the school playground, not from the world’s strongest nation. That sniveling is embarrassing. But it also has two other unfortunate impacts. First, if we assume everyone hates us, then there is no reason to pay attention to what anyone else has to say. And second, if we assume that everyone hates us, we become deaf to helpful comments from our friends. Of course there are some people in the world who hate America, and I’m not sure it is particularly useful to spend a lot of time worrying about denunciation from one’s enemies. But there is a difference between criticism from one’s foes and critique from one’s friends, and as a country we need to reach the maturity level to know the difference.

America is highly regarded in every corner of the globe I’ve been in, by government officials, academics, and just plain citizens. America is admired for its political system, for its economic system, and for its values. Our freedom isn’t hated; our freedom is admired. But admiration and sycophantic adoration are two different things. And as a nation we shouldn’t have the fragile ego of a rock star but rather have the maturity to discern the difference.

The admiration of the United States is tempered by six specific critiques from America’s friends.

The first critique goes like this: “We’re for economic globalization. We want foreign investment and we want an opportunity to sell our goods and services around the world. The United States has been the champion of globalization and we admire that, but it seems to us that American corporations don’t want free trade or competition, they merely want to dictate and dominate world markets.”

Now why would they think that? The Golden Arches are frequently the target of cultural globalization protestors. McDonald’s CEO Jack Greenberg vehemently denies his company is trying to McDonaldize the world. But when asked why only one of his board of directors is a non-American (the exception being a Canadian) his response is, “I’d love to add somebody from outside the United States, but getting them to meetings six times a year is very complicated.”

Wait a minute! McDonald’s can figure out how to get special sauce and sesame seed buns to 28,000 restaurants in 120 countries and can’t figure out how to schedule six plane trips a year? No wonder Greenberg is not believed.

A decade ago, under great pressure from the United States, Japan opened up its markets to American retailers. Both U.S. businesses and Japanese consumers greatly benefited from that decision. But it wasn’t enough for the major retailers to sell to Japanese customers, they insisted on selling based on their American model. So the Japanese were coerced not just to amend their trade laws but also into changing centuries-old land-use laws. Those regulations had protected agricultural land, precluded suburban sprawl, and maintained economically healthy city centers. But apparently Toys ’r Us and its category-killer cousins didn’t have the imagination to adapt to a distribution system that would respect that local culture. Instead they insisted on big boxes, built at the edge of communities, surrounded by asphalt parking lots on land that had been farm ground for hundreds of years. Not surprisingly, now Japan is trying to deal with the problems of sprawl, excessive automobile dependence, and declining downtowns.

Critique number three: “The United States says it won’t invest here, and that
we aren't a reliable market economy until we have transparent banking systems, strong securities and property laws, get rid of corporate nepotism, and begin building a strong middle class. We believe those are goals to strive for, but in many cases it seems the U.S. is rather hypocritical in that regard.”

Why would they think that? Well in the last two years we have not isolated examples but Enron, Arthur Andersen, WorldCom, Merrill Lynch, Salomon Smith Barney, Martha Stewart, Tyco, ImClone, Qwest, and dozens of others who not only steal billions of dollars but represent a level of cronyism unimagined by the most egregious third-world dictator. I don’t think, by the way, those people ought to be charged with mail fraud or insider trading or securities violations. I think they should be charged with treason for the damage they’ve done to the United States around the world.

Critique number four: “The United States has pushed us toward a capitalist market economy saying that was the way to build a strong middle class, and we want to happen. But the middle class no longer seems to be the chief concern of capitalism today in America.”

Why would they think that? In 1980 CEOs were paid 80 times as much as hourly wage earners; today their pay is nearly 500 times as much. CEOs of America’s largest companies are paid every three weeks what the president of the United States is paid for his entire four-year term. We have corporate CEOs with retirement packages and stock bonuses that would embarrass King Midas, and then they move the mailing address of corporate headquarters to the Cayman Islands so as not to have to pay American corporate taxes. We’ve sold market economies saying, “You can prosper if you are successful.” But that doesn’t seem to be a criterion any more. The executives at the 25 largest American companies to go bankrupt in the past few years walked away with $3.3 billion.

Critique number five: “The United States so often pursues its goals based on short-term strategies that it doesn’t consider the long-term implications.”

Why would they think that? Well, maybe it’s because they remember it was the United States that first provided the ingredients to make biological weapons to Iraq when they were fighting Iran. Or maybe it is a pattern of championing democracy and free elections but rather quickly abandoning that position when the dictator du jour serves a tactical purpose.

Critique number six: “The United States rarely shows either knowledge of or respect for local culture, oversimplifies issues, and has no recognition of the importance of the time necessary for transition.”

Why would they think that? Well, maybe they look at Russia, where the U.S. declared, “Just hold elections and have a market economy and everything will quickly fix itself.” Instead we’ve seen the emergence of gangsters in the guise of capitalists and a standard of living that has significantly declined for the overwhelming percentage of the population. It isn’t that free elections and a market economy aren’t important. Rather the problems stem from the absurd assumption that those two institutional changes can be made overnight and be expected to work. After all, English-speaking people had 550 years of beginning to practice democracy between the Magna Carta and the American Revolution. Russians had no such opportunity for 80 years under Communism nor for centuries under the cars.

And please note that this list of critiques does not include any of those items of American policy on which there are serious disagreements in this country: failure to sign the Kyoto treaty, opposition to the international criminal court, urging free trade for American goods abroad but protecting the steel industry because of the electoral importance of West Virginia and Pennsylvania, war in Iraq, holding suspects without charges and without access to legal representation, a unilateral preemptive strike policy, abandonment of arms control agreements, and others.

I excluded those issues because in the post-9/11 environment I understand that a case might be made for a different set of standards. There is legitimate debate about those items here in the United States. But I have to tell you, on most of those issues there is not much debate in the rest of the world. On those issues in most of the rest of the world America is seen by America’s friends as both wrong and hypocritical.

Utilizing Historic Preservation in Foreign Policy

Well, please don’t imagine that I don’t know what most of you are thinking at this moment—“First, I don’t necessarily agree with the author’s conclusions, but more importantly, what do these issues have to do with historic preservation?” They do for two reasons: 1) I am absolutely convinced that it will take America a generation to recover the respect, admiration, and moral authority that we have lost in the last few years, and 2) encouraging and assisting historic preservation around the world needs to be a central strategy of the United
States in regaining what we have lost.

Why should historic preservation be part of the foreign policy of the United States? Here are 17 reasons:

1. The adaptive use of historic buildings is fully compatible with participation in economic globalization, which is critical for stability and prosperity in most of the world.

2. Using historic buildings in and of itself mitigates cultural globalization, of which there are no demonstrable benefits.

3. Our having a policy encouraging and assisting historic preservation shows our respect for the local culture of each country.

4. There are aspects of other cultures that do not deserve our respect, rather warrant our reproach—the role of women in Saudi Arabia, the rule of law in Pakistan, freedom of worship in China, tolerance of diversity in India. But cultural changes in those areas will not take place under the point of a gun, nor will they—however meritorious change may be—take place overnight. A strategy of our valuing local heritage resources, however, shows our respect for those cultures without condoning every aspect of them.

5. We have learned over the last 21 years, especially in the Main Street approach, that positive change is an incremental process. A historic-preservation-based component of foreign policy will inherently be an incremental one, thus both providing the time to regain our rightful position in the world and to counter the idea that there is an instant answer to difficult economic, political, and social problems.

6. As a parallel to incrementalism, a historic-preservation-based strategy is inherently long-term. And we need to demonstrate more long-term thinking.

7. One of the great economic arguments for historic preservation in this country is the local impact of rehabilitation in creating jobs and increasing household incomes, relative both to new construction and to most other economic activities. This aspect is surely true in the rest of the world as well. There are few countries in the world where creating local jobs isn’t a high priority.

8. There is certainly great expertise in some aspects of historic preservation in other parts of the world, especially in Europe, that surpasses ours here in the United States. What we have excelled in, however, is the market-based strategies for the adaptive use of historic buildings. That could constitute a meaningful contribution to countries around the globe.

9. A historic-preservation-based policy is applicable anywhere and works equally well in Asia, Africa, or Latin America. Ninety-seven percent of the net population growth in the next 20 years, by the way, will be on those three continents.

10. Developing historic preservation as a key component of our foreign policy provides a useful vehicle for our learning about other cultures on an in-depth basis. The most vociferous cheerleader for American policies today would hardly claim we’re the most culturally aware nation on earth.

11. America is obviously the only military superpower left on earth, and I for one think it’s important that we remain so. However if there is one vital lesson from September 11th it is this: Having far and away the strongest military is not sufficient to protect us. Historic preservation could serve as a non-military component of a comprehensive strategy that recognizes that.

12. While both the private and public sectors play an important role in historic preservation in the U.S., it has always been the nonprofit sector that has been the strongest advocate and the most innovative problem-solver in preservation here. Change in the developing world will be led by the nonprofit sector as well, by groups that are known in the rest of the world as NGOs—non-governmental organizations. Using historic preservation as a strategy abroad helps us assist in the establishment and effectiveness of NGOs elsewhere.

13. A legitimate concern, particularly in world heritage cities, is that a heritage tourism strategy can often overwhelm the fragile historic resources. While heritage tourism will still be important, we have been developing the knowledge here as to how to protect those resources from overuse. More importantly, however, more than anywhere else on the globe, we have found economic uses for historic buildings far beyond tourism. My best guess is that 95 percent of all of the historic buildings in economically productive use in this country have nothing to do with tourism. That knowledge is also transferable.

14. In the scope of things, a historic-preservation-based foreign policy component would be vastly less expensive for American taxpayers than buying tanks for foreign armies or building dams of questionable economic utility and negative environmental impact.

15. As we assist other countries in identifying, protecting, and enhancing their historic resources we are at the same time aiding them in building sustainable and marketable local skills.

16. We have seen in this country some of the downsides of economic growth and prosperity—suburban sprawl, declining city centers, loss of agricultural lands, environ-
ment degradation, and others. Encouraging and assisting developing countries to adopt preservation-based strategies could be central in their preempting those problems before they occur.

17. Finally, in much of the world the major problem is the out-migration from the countryside to the already overcrowded urban areas. A combination of technological advances and the protection and enhancement of local historic resources could be useful tools in helping to stem that tide. Again, Main Street successes in small towns here are an example of that strategy.

Why the Time is Right

So there’s my list. I suspect at least a few of you are now thinking, “This guy has finally lost it—having the audacity to suggest that historic preservation play a central role in American foreign policy.” And you may be right, of course.

But I want to conclude with these observations. Let me be clear that I’m not so silly as to think the entire structure of American policy should be jettisoned and replaced with historic preservation. Of course we still need our army, still need to supply military assistance to our allies, still need the CIA, still need ambassadors and foreign aid and the Peace Corps. What I am suggesting is a role for historic preservation in foreign policy akin to the role that historic preservation plays in downtown revitalization or in smart growth or in neighborhood stabilization—that is, as a central and critical component of a comprehensive strategy.

Why do I think this might be remotely possible? First, President Bush received a warm and positive reception when he addressed the United Nations last September, in spite of the serious misgivings most nations have about war with Iraq. Why? Because the first thing he said was that the United States would rejoin UNESCO after an 18-year absence. UNESCO is the UN agency that deals with historic preservation.

Second, when was the last time that virtually every country in the world was on the same side of the same issue—India and Pakistan, Israel and the PLO, Africa and Europe, North America and South America? It was in the condemnation of the wanton destruction of the Buddhist statuary in Afghanistan by the Taliban—a historic preservation issue.

Finally, 21 years ago, on a Saturday morning in New Orleans I wandered into one of the hotel meeting rooms. There a vociferous debate was being waged on whether real estate developers—and I was one at the time—should even be allowed to register for the National Trust conference. Somehow it was seen as polluting the purity of the movement. Well, we’ve come a long way since then. I venture to say that no attendee at that conference imagined the multitude of important roles that historic preservation would play 21 years later.

I think if there is one adjective that describes the impact of historic preservation it is this one: healing. Healing our cities, healing our neighborhoods, healing our downtowns, healing our small towns, healing our economies—all by healing our historic resources.

If historic preservation has proven to be such a healing tool in America, why can’t it be a healing tool around the world over the next generation? God knows we’re going to need one.

Donovan D. Rypkema is a principal at Place Economics, a real estate consulting firm in Washington, D.C. Copyright 2002 by Donovan D. Rypkema. Reprinted with permission.