GAME CHANGERS

FORUM JOURNAL ARTICLES THAT HAVE MADE A DIFFERENCE, 1987–2012
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Introduction
STEPHANIE K. MEEKS

For 25 years, the National Trust’s quarterly publication, Forum Journal, has been publishing articles by the leaders in the preservation movement. Many of these articles have had a significant impact on the field, leading to new ways of thinking and advances in preservation practice. We call them “game changers.”

Now we have an opportunity to expand the content and impact of the journal in ways we could not have predicted 25 years ago. Beginning in January with our Winter 2013 issue, the journal will be distributed in a digital format that allows us to offer richer content including video clips, slide shows, interactive features, and links to supplementary resources. But before we move into the world of digital publishing we wanted to reflect on a quarter century of publishing and the game-changing articles that have shaped our movement. We have asked the authors to write introductions sharing how they think their words have influenced the preservation movement.

In many cases, these articles have reached far beyond the Forum audience:
“Cultural Diversity in Historic Preservation.” She notes that while preservation has become more diverse, preservationists still need to rethink some of the usual preservation practices when working with our nation’s many diverse cultural groups.

In 1995, when Richard Longstreth wrote, “I Can’t See It: I Don’t Understand It: and It Doesn’t Look Old to Me,” modern architecture was still very much misunderstood and unappreciated. In spite of increasing appreciation for buildings from the recent past, many modernist icons are still threatened, such as Chicago’s Prentice Hospital.

Donovan Rypkema, in his article “Economics and Historic Preservation,” got preservationists talking about economics in a way they hadn’t before. Today, he asks preservationists to think about whether, indeed, we are really better off considering today’s economic and political climate.

Richard Moe asked if we had too many house museums in his 2002 article and urged historic site advocates to start looking realistically at their traditional management models and get creative about new ways to protect and sustain house museums. This led many museums to consider new ways of programming and partnering with the surrounding community.

Five years ago, Carl Elefante coined the phrase “The Greenest Building Is… One that Is Already Built,” in his early and articulate argument for the connection between historic preservation and sustainability. In revisiting his article, however, he warns that preservationists need to be ever more vigilant about the effects of climate change on historic resources.

Twenty-five years ago, we committed ourselves to creating a “forum” to ask tough questions, share ideas and information, inspire action, and celebrate accomplishments. Forum Journal, as reflected in these articles, has accomplished all that and more. Forum Journal in digital format will do no less, and, indeed, we believe more. It will continue its high standard of editorial content while that the same time taking advantage of the latest technology to bring you fuller and more diverse content than ever before.

I hope you will enjoy this look back, and will join us as we take a leap forward come January.

STEPHANIE K. MEEKS is the president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
The Future of the National Register

CAROL SHULL

Our National Register of Historic Places continues to expand in breadth and reach. As of September 2012, the 88,200 listed historic districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects include nearly 1.7 million historic resources—almost three times the number from when I wrote my article in 1987. National Register bulletins now provide guidance on nominating rural and designed landscapes, traditional cultural properties, boats, suburbs, airplanes, and properties that have achieved significance in the last 50 years, among others.

The National Register’s website, webinars, and social media outreach make information about the National Register more accessible as do other training and assistance efforts. Much of the National Register documentation is digitized and online. Soon the National Register is expecting to begin accepting nominations electronically.

The National Park Service’s Teaching with Historic Places program provides online lesson plans and advice for educators and preservationists on how to engage students, and its online Discover Our Shared Heritage Travel Itinerary Series guides visitors to thousands of historic places.

The United States has the world’s most egalitarian and participatory national inventory. Our National Historic Preservation Act authorizes federal agencies, states, and American Indian tribes to nominate sites and local governments and every individual to participate in the nomination process. More than 1,800 Certified Local Governments and over 130 American Indian tribes participate in the national preservation program today. Some 68 percent of listings are for properties of local significance.

The National Register is not a comprehensive catalog of the nation’s historic resources. States list in excess of 8 million properties in their inventories and CLGs added 10,000 properties to local registers in 2011, sometimes using different criteria than the National Register and conferring a range of restrictions and benefits under state and local laws. States have not been delegated authority to list properties in the National Register as proposed in 1987. Because listing has federal consequences, including conferring eligibility for federal tax incentives and grants, these decisions still occur at the federal level.

Some 75 percent of registered properties are in private ownership with federal tax benefits the motivation for many nominations. The federal tax incentives have generated more than $62 billion in the rehabilitation of income-producing historic properties. Federal preservation grants for registered historic properties have not been appropriated since 2010.
Analysis of the data tells us much about the breadth and scope of this national inventory. More importantly, what has been included in the National Register offers an indication of the achievements and weaknesses of the national preservation program, which can help us chart future directions and improve the program at federal, state, and local levels.

In 1966, the National Register included only 868 National Historic Landmarks and historic units of the National Park system. Today, almost 48,000 properties of national, state, and local significance are

Since the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act in 1966, the National Register of Historic Places has played a pivotal role in the national preservation program. It is the benchmark for determining which districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. Now after more than 20 years the National Park Service (NPS) has entered all of the listings and determinations of eligibility in a computerized National Register Information System.

The number of listings continues to vary widely from state to state as do nomination priorities, but many agencies submit multiple property nominations based on surveys, which provide historic context and facilitate registration. The National Park Service has begun urging its partners to nominate more properties associated with underrepresented ethnic and cultural groups. The NPS is sponsoring theme studies on American Latino Heritage and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to assist in evaluation and National Historic Landmark nominations.

The 2009 report, “Building Capacity to Preserve and Protect Our Cultural Heritage,” (www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/guidance/NHPIL_Final_NPS.pdf) demonstrates how far we are from creating a comprehensive inventory of historic properties and making inventories more compatible and accessible. In 2009, 56 percent of State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO), 6 percent of Federal Preservation Offices (FPO), and no Tribal Historic Preservation Offices (THPO) had accessible inventory data online and relatively few SHPOs, THPOs, and FPOs were capable of easily sharing historic property data in compatible formats. Lack of funding was cited as the foremost reason that inventories were so inadequate. Virtually all SHPOs and THPOs indicated their highest priority was to complete additional historic property surveys for Section 106 compliance and National Register of Historic Places purposes, but funding is limited. The nearly $47 million in federal Historic Preservation Fund grants to states in 2012, when adjusted for inflation, is estimated to have approximately the same buying power as the $21 million appropriated in 1982. The more than 130 participating tribes share a little less than $8.4 million in 2012.

The preservation partners have moved ahead with some of the 1987 recommendations of the National Historic Preservation Forum Historic Identification Study Group, but should look at them again and find ways to step up efforts to achieve the goal of identifying, registering, and protecting the nation’s irreplaceable historic properties and making information about them available to all.
listed with nearly 9,000 more determined eligible for listing. On the other hand, about four million historically significant properties have been recorded in state-maintained inventories. Moreover, only about 3,500 new listings and less than a thousand new determinations of eligibility are made each year by the NPS, while several hundred thousand properties are added to state inventories annually.

Because its guidelines and criteria are used by all federal agencies and states and by many localities, the National Register offers a consistent national system for evaluating and registering historic properties. However, as the figures above indicate, the National Register is nowhere near a comprehensive catalog of the nation’s historic resources. Clearly, action needs to be taken to expand the National Register to include the large number of resources not yet officially listed or determined eligible.

DELEGATING AUTHORITY TO THE STATES
The National Park Service and the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (NCSHPO) have separately proposed amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act which would allow individual states to officially determine eligibility and directly list properties in the National Register. Only those states with state historic preservation programs approved at the federal level would be granted this authority.

Some critics view delegation as opening the door to abuses such as the listing of insignificant properties, thereby weakening the credibility and integrity of the National Register. These concerns are based on the differing capabilities of state programs and the possibility that political influence at the state and local level may interfere with unbiased professional assessments of significance. There is fear that the National Register could become a loose collection of state registers.

In reality, much independence of decision making has already been delegated to the states. In the 1980 amendments to the National Historic Preservation Act, Congress acknowledged the increased professionalism and experience of state preservation programs by allowing them to add properties to the National Register without substantive review by the NPS, except on a spot-check basis. 16 U.S.C. 470a(b). The National Park Service has already substantially reduced its role to one of reviewing the technical and procedural aspects of all nominations, while evaluating a much smaller number of nominations for their significance. Meanwhile, the Park Service has strengthened its role in setting standards and providing guidelines and technical assistance to states and localities.

The 1980 amendments also require that the National Park Service periodically review state historic preservation programs to determine if each state is carrying out its preservation responsibilities according to NPS standards and guidelines. 16 U.S.C. 470a(b)(2). The Park Service, which is now completing its second round of reviews under this authority, has held the states to high standards for
preparing well-documented and justified National Register nominations.

The proposed formal delegation of authority to qualified states would considerably speed up the listing of historic resources since there would be no need to send nominations to Washington for final approval. Disputes on eligibility, however, would still be resolved by the NPS. Since state program reviews and the right of appeal give citizens a method of obtaining a review of state and federal agency decisions, delegation to the states would not lessen the credibility of the National Register.

The National Park Service envisions that states will eventually enter new listings and determinations of eligibility directly into the automated National Register Information System, thereby increasing efficiency and making the National Register a more effective planning tool. Each state and federal agency will have direct access to the automated databank. The information will be available to the public.

The NPS is also publishing guidelines for automating state historic preservation programs. Developed by the NCSHPO, these guidelines urge states to automate their inventories using, at a minimum, the same data elements as the National Register Information System. Eventually it may be possible to access information on the millions of properties in state inventories in the same way we can now access information on National Register properties, thus creating a much broader national inventory. Making this wealth of information on cultural resources accessible through automation will exponentially improve our capabilities for program and project planning and for research on cultural resources of certain types.

CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Since the vast majority of listings are of state or local significance, it makes sense to give local government a stronger role in deciding what is included in the National Register. The 1980 amendments also provide for the certification of local governments to participate directly in the national preservation program. 16 US.C. 470a(c). More than 300 local governments to date have been certified as having preservation programs that meet professional standards. The certified local governments (CLG) collectively receive 10 percent of their state’s portion of the Historic Preservation Fund grants each year. States may delegate much of their responsibility for identifying historic properties and processing nominations to the CLGs.

Some local governments use meeting National Register criteria or listing in the National Register as a threshold for giving historic properties protection and benefits under local laws, but many local programs do not. Unless state and local designations are more closely aligned with National Register designations, the National Register is not likely to become a comprehensive inventory of historic properties in the United States. Only time will tell whether the Certified Local Government program will create a broader base of support for the state and national preservation programs.

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COMPOSITION OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER AND CURRENT BENEFITS

Statistics drawn from the National Register Information System raise important issues. Some 70 percent of the properties listed are privately owned. Of the 30 percent in public ownership, 5 percent are owned by the federal government; 6 percent by state governments; and 19 percent by local governments. Some 75 percent of the listings are historic buildings, followed by historic districts at 13 percent. Each listing may contain a number of significant resources. If numbers of contributing resources within listings are counted, the National Register includes about 669,763 historic resources: 621,109 buildings, 21,895 sites, 17,456 structures, and 9,303 objects. These figures do not include determinations of eligibility, a high percentage of which are archeological sites.

Currently, the benefits for listed and eligible properties include consideration in planning for federally-assisted projects under several federal laws, the primary one being Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The only direct financial incentives are the federal tax benefits. Since 1976, federal tax incentives for rehabilitation, most notably the 25 percent investment tax credit, have assisted about 17,000 rehabilitation projects involving commercial and residential rental historic buildings. To date, these projects represent an investment of about $11 billion, a remarkably successful rehabilitation program. Reduction to a 20 percent credit and other changes in the Tax Reform Act of 1986, however, have lessened the financial incentive to protect income-producing historic resources.

Federal Historic Preservation Fund grants were once used to protect historic properties directly. Since 1966, when the National Historic Preservation Act established federal grants for historic preservation, about $143 million of the approximately $380 million awarded to the states has been used to purchase and preserve historic properties. In recent years, however, Congress has forbidden the use of these grants for preservation of individual properties.
Ultimately, incentives will determine whether the National Register will ever fully represent and assist in protecting the entire range of cultural resources in the United States. Interest is on the rise concerning the lack of federal assistance other than the tax incentives. In Congress, the House included language this year in the Department of the Interior appropriation asking for a National Park Service report by February 1988 on the need for preservation dollars for properties not eligible for the tax incentives. The level of federal financial incentives and other benefits directly influence whether owners and state and local governments seek to have properties listed in the National Register. Regardless of whether new federal preservation incentives become available, the strongest financial benefits and legal protections for historic resources will be at state and local levels.

Statistics on the areas and periods of significance of National Register listings demonstrate the attention to the architecturally significant resources in past identification and registration efforts. Many listings are eligible under more than one criteria, period or area of significance. Some 13 percent of the listings have significance from 18th century American history, 65 percent from the 19th century, 50 percent are from the 20th century and 3 percent have achieved significance within the last 50 years.

IMBALANCE AMONG STATES

These statistics are far more illuminating when broken down by state and locality. Under the National Historic Preservation Act, each state is charged with conducting a comprehensive statewide survey, maintaining inventories, nominating eligible properties to the National Register and implementing comprehensive
statewide historic preservation planning. Implicit in this charge is that each state will methodically identify, register, and encourage the preservation of significant properties.

When the geographical distribution of numbers and kinds of listings are shown on a map of each state, it is clear that, even after 20 years, there are big gaps in the representation of resources. Large areas have few or no listings, indicating either that surveys have not been conducted or that, if they were, the properties identified were not subsequently listed. Many resource types known to exist are not represented at all or are inadequately represented. Much of this under-representation is due to limited funding, particularly for state historic preservation programs, but more careful targeting of registration efforts is also needed.

Because the NPS has not dictated identification and registration priorities, approaches have varied from state to state. Some states register mainly those properties for which owners request listing. Some have made little effort to link surveys to registration. Others have developed systematic survey and nomination programs aimed at thorough coverage of resource types representing important historic contexts. Often these states turn survey data into well-thought-out multiple property nominations which evaluate and list large numbers of related resources at one time. The numbers of listings per state also vary dramatically, demonstrating that with this kind of inconsistency, it will be many years before identification and registration efforts are anywhere near complete.

In recent years, the NPS has emphasized the need for states to develop a good understanding of the state’s historic development patterns in order to identify the kinds of resources that should be registered. NPS encourages the states to focus their identification, registration, and protection efforts to assure adequate coverage for this resource base. This emphasis is embodied in a new registration form and guidelines for preparing multiple property nominations recently issued by the National Park Service. This approach has been evolving since about 1977 when National Register staff first began encouraging multiple property nominations based on surveys.

This is not to say that states should stop servicing individual requests to register significant properties. Nevertheless, a good portion of the dollars allocated to identification and registration should be targeted to filling gaps in the listings of important property types and to systematically registering resources in geographical areas where survey and registration efforts have not been carried out.

LARGE AREAS HAVE FEW OR NO LISTINGS, indicating either that surveys have not been conducted or that, if they were, the properties identified were not subsequently listed.
improvement in the documentation and evaluation of properties. More exacting requirements for documenting National Register nominations have put strains on state programs, which struggle to process nominations prepared by untrained individuals. Citizens who seek listing for their properties are often asked by overworked state staffs to revise nominations. The property owners may be required to hire qualified historians, architectural historians or archaeologists to prepare nominations. This sometimes results in a tug-of-war between documentation requirements and the wishes of the public to have properties listed.

Some preservationists believe that certain resource types—such as historic landscapes, vernacular buildings, maritime resources, properties that are less than 50 years old, and historic archeological properties—are underrepresented in the National Register. As resource types, which have not been the subject of much scholarly research and are not widely understood or appreciated, become the subject of nominations, they will require more research and justification than better represented resource types. Through the publication of National Register Bulletins, the National Park Service is providing technical assistance to states, localities, and individuals to help them evaluate these properties.

With the possibility that new legislation may soon be introduced, now is a good time for those who are interested in preservation to assess what has been done.
so far to identify, register, and protect historic properties throughout our nation. An assessment of how the National Register has been used and how it should be used in the future is one key to improving the quality of preservation activities at the national, state and local levels.

EXPERTS RECOMMEND IMPROVEMENTS
The following is a summary of the recommendations of the Historic Identification Study Group, experts representing a cross-section of the movement, as presented to the National Historic Preservation Forum in July 1987.

I. What is being identified?
There should be a coordinated effort between the National Park Service, the National Trust, and the states and localities to seek additional funding for the identification, registration, and protection of important resource types.

The National Park Service and the National Trust should develop discussion forums on those themes of significance and classes and types of buildings currently underrepresented in the National Register of Historic Places.

II. Is our methodology a sound one?
The National Park Service should reassess coordination among the National Register, the Landmarks Program, Historic American Buildings Survey, Historic American Engineering Record, and state and local registers.

The National Park Service should be exempted from the Federal Advisory Committee Act to return the authority to appoint expert professionals to advisory committees for the National Park Service survey and designation programs.

The National Park Service and the states and local governments should provide training programs for surveyors and insist on high standards of analysis of data and assessment of historic properties.

The National Trust should devote resources to training in field work methodology and evaluation.

Awards programs should be established by the National Trust and the National Park Service to recognize outstanding professional surveys and National Register nominations.

State review boards should be encouraged to become directly involved in survey design and in reviewing completed surveys.

National Register nominations should be based on historic resource surveys and presented to state review boards in that context.

Certified local governments should assure that survey is an integral part of a local preservation program.

III. How are we using this information?
The National Park Service should provide resources to states to assist in the establishment of a national database which would integrate the results of local and state surveys into a common historic resources data base.

All participants in the national historic preservation program should emphasize the importance of publication, registration and protection as the end products of a historic resource survey and identify additional resources to make publication possible. FJ

CAROL SHULL has worked on the National Register staff for almost all of her 40 years at the National Park Service beginning as a historian in 1972. She has served as Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places from 1994 to 2005 and as Interim Keeper since 2009. This article appeared in Forum Journal, Fall 1987.
The Critical Need for a Sensitive—and Sensible—National Transportation Policy

CONSTANCE E. BEAUMONT

The article below made two arguments back in 1991:

- First, we could alleviate pressing national problems if federal transportation policy better supported community efforts to reduce auto-dependence; and
- Second, historic downtowns, main streets, and neighborhoods embody land use and urban design features that help communities to achieve this reduction.

The context for this article was the run-up to Congress’ enactment of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA). Throughout that year, a coalition of preservationists, planners, environmentalists, and advocates of alternate travel modes met weekly at the National Trust for Historic Preservation to devise strategies for improving this major transportation law. The coalition won approval for several provisions that benefited historic preservation. For example, ISTEA encouraged “multi-modalism” by giving states more flexibility to use transportation dollars for pedestrian, bicycle, and transit modes, which generally cause less harm to historic places than roads and highways. ISTEA also created a Transportation Enhancements Program, which funded many projects that advance preservation goals—e.g., historic rail station renovations and downtown sidewalks.

It’s as true today as it was in 1991 that by making our transportation system less car-dependent, we alleviate serious problems: over-reliance on foreign oil, oppressive energy bills, and climate change linked to more frequent, more intense storms.

As public concerns over these problems have intensified, so, too, has the demand for “sustainability” and energy-efficient “green buildings.” Preservationists quickly point out, however, that the greenest building is often the one already built. They note that cross-ventilating windows, extra-thick walls, and other features of historic structures can make such buildings as energy-efficient as the newest green building. Moreover, experts say it can take years for a new green building to overcome, through more efficient operations, negative climate change impacts created during its construction.

But how people get to a building, not just how they heat or cool it, matters, too. Thus preservationists might also argue that the “greenness” of a historic building doesn’t end at the building’s skin. Land use, urban design, and locational features that characterize most historic downtowns, main streets, and neighborhoods typically produce an environment that enables “carbon-lite” transportation modes: walking, bicycling, and using transit. These features, described in
If we could cut the national deficit, reduce oil imports from the Middle East, make housing more affordable for young families, clean the air, alleviate the isolation of the elderly, improve our mobility, and enhance community life all through a single piece of legislation, shouldn’t we try to do so? Through changes in the Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA), the federal highway bill now moving through Congress, we could make headway this year on each of these goals and more. Unfortunately, it is entirely possible that this opportunity will come and go without much public notice.

For decades the mainstay of America’s transportation system has been the private automobile. Today 72 percent of all personal travel in the United States is done by car, 86 percent if light trucks and vans are included with cars. The average American household now allocates 18.7 percent of its budget to transportation expenses, most of which are auto-related. That is more than it spends for food, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Collectively, Americans now contribute $16.873 billion annually to the federal Highway Trust Fund. When this sum is added to state, city, and county taxes devoted to road building, the taxpayers’ tab for highway construction comes to $69 billion a year.

\[\text{EVERY YEAR 30,000 Americans die from respiratory diseases associated with automobile emissions while another four million people are injured or maimed in traffic accidents.}\]

To be sure, the automobile has conferred many benefits upon American communities and will no doubt continue to do so. But it is time to recognize the fact that our heavy reliance on the car, coupled with the land-use policies that make us dependent on it and the vast infrastructure necessary to serve it, have exacted an unacceptable toll.

The connection between the car and air and water pollution and global warming is so well established that it is unnecessary to belabor the point that the automobile has exerted a devastating impact upon the environment. And the link between the automobile and the public health is equally clear. Every year 30,000 Americans die from respiratory diseases associated with automobile emissions while another four
million people are injured or maimed in traffic accidents. Forty-seven thousand Americans are killed on the road annually.

Less well understood are the connections between the car, local land-use policies, and the disintegration of family and community life in America. Sadly, the impacts here are as devastating as the environmental consequences.

As young families move farther away from traditional cities and farther into the “exurbs” in search of housing they can afford, their commutes are getting both longer and more stressful.

As young families move farther away from traditional cities and farther into the “exurbs” in search of housing they can afford, their commutes are getting both longer and more stressful. A recent segment on ABC television’s 20/20 program showed young parents dropping their children off at a day-care center at 6:00 a.m. so that they could arrive at their jobs, 70 miles away, on time. (Social workers are beginning to associate some child abuse cases with the stressful impact of long commutes on working parents, according to a recent Washington Post article.)

Loneliness and social isolation are arguably among the greatest problems afflicting the elderly. These problems, which gerontologists have long associated with the institutionalization of the frail elderly, are exacerbated by the fact that many older people cannot drive due to poor eyesight. Since the elderly have few options for getting around other than by car, they often don’t.

Thousands of historic landmarks—beautiful, beloved buildings that serve as
community anchors in a world of rapid and often troubling change—continue to be sacrificed for surface parking lots, garages, and road widenings. As many as 1,500 homes, 7,000 trees, and six historic districts will be destroyed if the freeway planned for South Pasadena, Calif., is built. Settled neighborhoods and cohesive main streets in places like Bay View, Mich., Hickory, N.C., and thousands of other communities are being split apart for additional, wider roads.

Ironically, for all the money that we pour into roads and for all the sacrifices we make for the car, we are less, not more, mobile than we used to be. Traffic today moves more slowly in some cities than it did at the turn of the century in horse-drawn carts. Traffic congestion is among suburbanites’ top complaints.

If we are to make any real progress toward solving our transportation problems, Congress must help us find more ways to carry out our daily lives without driving everywhere. High on the lawmakers’ agenda should be the establishment of a federal transportation policy that permits local communities to revive an ancient but still efficient mode of transportation that respects the environment, enhances community life, improves one’s health, and requires no money: walking. But this is unlikely to occur unless Congress understands that the way communities are laid out predetermines our transportation options. In other words, there are important connections between land use, urban design, and transportation.

The widespread application of time-honored planning and development principles that once guided the growth of America’s communities could again make walking feasible, safe, and popular in this country.

The operation of these principles still can be seen in many historic districts and traditional downtowns. The development in such areas is usually compact. Buildings are close to each other and land uses often are mixed. Stores are close to homes, offices are close to restaurants, residences are close to work places. By limiting the distances one must travel to get from one place to another, the mixed land-use and compact development patterns make it feasible to conduct business and carry out essential functions on foot.

Other characteristics make walking safe and pleasant. Sidewalks provide a safe haven for the pedestrian. Street “walls” formed by evenly aligned, adjoining buildings make the pedestrian feel safe, as does the narrowness of streets. The architecture is often attractive and interesting. Building facades are not blank and boring, but often feature window displays and architectural details. The presence of trees adds to the

In 1993, a transportation enhancement grant paid for bike racks on buses in State College, Pa. The bike racks allow riders to reach bus stops from greater distances, expanding the number of origins and destinations served by the system without costly service increases.

PHOTO: NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION ENHANCEMENTS CLEARINGHOUSE
charm of the streetscape. Because many people enjoy walking in such areas, the prospects for chance encounters with friends and associates are enhanced.

Taken together, these land-use, urban-design, and architectural characteristics promote what might be termed “transportation by proximity.” When applied creatively, they amount to an automobile demand-reduction strategy that rivals the efficiency of conventional transportation modes.

The difference in the pedestrian friendliness of these traditional communities and the suburbs could not be sharper. In the new “carburbs,” land-use and development patterns make walking infeasible, unsafe, and unpleasant. Development is spread out while land uses are compartmentalized. Stores and offices are located too far from residential neighborhoods to permit walking, or they are severed from each other by wide roads filled with heavy traffic. Even neighboring buildings are distanced from each other by front- and side-yard setbacks mandated by local zoning codes. Sidewalks, if provided at all, are broken up by curb cuts intended to accommodate moving cars, thus putting the pedestrian on guard and at risk. The experience of walking is further diminished by unattractive, incompatible buildings surrounded by vast expanses of asphalt for parking. Compare Tysons Corner, Va., to downtown San Francisco. Or the Route 28 Dulles Corridor in Virginia to Connecticut Avenue in downtown Washington. Or Rockville Pike in Rockville, Md., to King Street in Old Town Alexandria, Va. Crossing suburban streets is like playing “Frogger” on Nintendo; the odds are against you.

Although walking is trivialized in this country, its potential as a serious transportation mode can be seen in other industrialized countries: 33.3 percent of all personal travel is conducted on foot in western Germany; 30 percent in France; 39 percent in Sweden; and 29 percent in Great Britain. In the United States, walking accounts for only .3 percent of all personal travel.

With the Interstate Highway System now virtually complete, federal legislation authorizing funds for this program is due to expire on September 30, 1991. Between now and then Congress is expected to enact some version of the STAA. The Senate has already passed its version of this legislation; the House is expected to do so soon.

Although Congress is understandably reluctant to become involved in the details of local land-use planning and urban design, it could do much through this legislation to create the conditions under which pedestrian-friendly planning, urban design, and urban redevelopment can occur. Such planning and design is essential to the solution of our transportation problems.

The first thing Congress could do is to stop treating transportation as if it were synonymous with new lane miles of highways, and start recognizing the fact that it includes walking as well as public transit, rail, air, bicycle, and “transportation through proximity.”

**IT WOULD HELP GREATLY if the media could do a better job of laying before the American public the quality-of-life issues at stake in the outcome of the STAA.**
The second thing Congress could do is to require the states not only to coordinate land-use planning with transportation planning, but also to take affirmative steps to reduce their automobile dependence. In the past Congress has required states to meet comprehensive health-planning standards to avoid wasting public money on unnecessary, duplicative health services. The same sort of requirement should be imposed for the receipt of federal transportation (including highway) grants.

The third thing Congress could do is to encourage the U.S. Department of Transportation to give higher priority in its research and demonstration program to land-use and urban-design concepts that reduce the demand for cars and roads. The department’s research agenda needs to emphasize more than asphalt technology and “smart” cars. It should include research into the relationships between transportation, urban form, and land use.

Our current national policies are accomplices in land-use and development practices that perpetuate our reliance on inefficient, costly, car-dominated transportation. It is time for the federal government to promote more creative solutions to transportation problems. It is time to say that the government will no longer waste taxpayers’ money on road projects that are conceived without any reference to land-use or urban-design issues. It is time to recognize that to do otherwise is akin to pouring water into an unplugged sink.

It would help greatly if the media could do a better job of laying before the American public the quality-of-life issues at stake in the outcome of the STAA. So far, about the only point the broadcast media have made is that Congress hasn’t met President Bush’s 100-day deadline for passing this legislation.

The important thing is not whether Congress passes the STAA in 100 days, but rather whether Congress passes a transportation bill that acknowledges the fragility of our environment and permits our badly fragmented society to come together again in cohesive communities.

Cultural Diversity in Historic Preservation: Where We Have Been, Where We Are Going

TONI LEE

My 1992 Forum Journal essay on cultural diversity in historic preservation was part of a special issue devoted to the diversity topic. It followed the 1991 National Preservation Conference held in San Francisco, Calif., that marked the 25th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act. This conference identified diversity as one of the major forces that would shape not only historic preservation, but all aspects of American society in the next quarter century. This projection was based on the demographics resulting from changes in United States immigration policy dating back to the mid-1960s.

Accordingly, the succeeding National Preservation Conference, held in 1992 in Miami, Fla., focused on diversity. The 1992 conference also inaugurated the offering of scholarships to diverse attendees. For the 1992 Forum Journal essay, I reviewed more than 70 abstracts submitted to the National Trust in response to its call for papers for the Miami conference. These abstracts represented the experiences of dozens of preservationists who undertook diversity projects or made astute observations about the cultural heritage of diverse communities.
What is different today? The subject of diversity is no longer an edgy topic in the historic preservation field. It is part of the mainstream of historic preservation goals and objectives as well as projects and programs. Much more work is being done with diverse historic places and in cooperation with diverse communities. However, when viewed within the totality of the historic preservation field, the number of diverse historic properties that are officially recognized and preserved still constitutes a small percentage of the total activity.

The ideas presented in my earlier essay point the way toward overcoming this gap. More official recognition should be given to intangible culture, beyond just American Indian tribal historic preservation programs. Yet historic preservation tools remain fairly static; few adjustments have been made to established criteria and standards in order to accommodate cultural differences and the priorities of cultural groups. In order to meet the cultural heritage needs of the nation’s diverse population, the field needs to “recalibrate” its current tool box and develop new approaches in partnership with the nation’s cultural groups.

Few topics in contemporary American life have so gripped the public’s attention as has “cultural diversity.” The topic is prominent in daily newspapers, on television, and in the vehicles of mass advertising. It is physically evident in many hometowns where cultural groups either congregate in definable ethnic communities or live among other groups, producing neighborhoods in which dozens of languages are spoken. To travelers, other parts of the country take on a new character as growing populations of immigrants who arrived on our shores in the past quarter of a century are incorporated.

A term of recent vintage, “cultural diversity” generally is used to denote the changing ethnic composition of the United States through immigration of individuals from Latin America, Africa, the Caribbean, or Southeast Asia and their concentration in certain states and cities. The emergence of such ethnic groups with long roots in American society, as Africans and those from certain Asian groups to positions of public prominence, bolsters the perception of the growing diversity of the nation.

Localities in which ethnic changes are the most pronounced will certainly witness a change in the balance of political power that will influence all other aspects of the community. A recent article in The New York Times reflects the tenor of the times: It reported that New York politicians are reaching out into “uncharted territory” in pursuing the votes of the foreign born, “who could one day be as much a force as the turn-of-the-century immigrants who gave political muscle to the Democratic machine of Tammany Hall and gave city politics a decidedly Irish cast.”

This profound change inspires both fear
and confidence. It causes concern about the effects of a churning ethnic mix in disadvantaged urban areas but also serves as a reassuring reminder that the nation was founded upon, and endured, despite diverse cultural antecedents.

Awareness about the diverse nature of the American population permeates nearly every sector of American society. Cultural diversity is infused into deliberations surrounding educational curricula, employment practices, immigration policy, and urban-revitalization proposals. Commentators express worry about citizens labeling themselves as “hyphenated Americans” and wonder if the nation can remain united in the face of ethnic pride.

During the past decade, the subject of cultural diversity has entered the national discourse because of the results of the 1990 United States census. Analysis of the census produced compelling visual images of changing national demographics. Whereas minority groups were decidedly a minority of the American population at one time, in a few decades the aggregate of minorities will become the majority. At the local level the census explains many of the dynamics in our cities, towns, and rural areas.

The Columbus quincentennial further fueled the debate on cultural diversity. It generated a national discussion about the motivations of the Europeans during the Age of Discovery and their treatment of indigenous cultures in the Americas. What was envisioned as a celebration of national unity became, instead, the occasion for questions about who discovered whom, the Europeans’ domination of the native peoples, the devastation of disease brought by the Europeans, and the cross-currents of cultures between both sides of the Atlantic Ocean.

Cultural diversity has also influenced the historic preservation field. At the 1991 National Preservation Conference held in San Francisco cultural diversity emerged as a key trend of the future that the preservation movement must address. The topic is the focus of the 1992 National Preservation Conference, which will be held in Miami. No doubt, cultural diversity will figure in some way in preservation conferences, publications, and programming for years to come.

This article lays out subthemes within the topic of cultural diversity. It is based largely on the more than 70 abstracts submitted to the National Trust for Historic Preservation in response to the call for papers for the 1992 conference distributed to the historic preservation community in the fall of 1991. While the abstracts represent the experiences and activities of the individual abstract writers, as a group they also reflect the status of cultural diversity in the historic preservation field. Additionally, the abstracts rest on the very substantial foundation of a quarter of a century of efforts by the historic preservation field in attaining cultural diversity.

BUILDING ON THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE PAST
The full dimensions or limitations of the term “cultural diversity” are yet to become clear. It covers the history of “minority”

THE PROGRAMS AND TOOLS of the past quarter of a century to increase cultural diversity in the historic preservation field continue today.
Our definition of what “diverse” means has expanded greatly in the last few decades. In 1999, the Stonewall Inn, the scene of important events that sparked the modern struggle for the civil rights of LGBT Americans was listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

PHOTO: NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

and ethnic groups in the nation from the American Indians who inhabited the Western Hemisphere to the Spanish, English, and French explorers and settlers in the Age of Discovery; the experience of the African-Americans throughout American history; the arrival of the Germans and other European groups during the 19th century; the influx of Eastern and Southern Europeans and Asians at the turn of the century; and the recent arrival of Southeast Asians, Hispanics, Africans, and those from the Caribbean region.

The historic preservation field made initial forays into cultural diversity in the 1940s and the 1950s with the addition to the National Park system of two properties associated with Tuskegee Institute. The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s and the emergence of the “new social history” in the historical profession expanded the scope of the historic preservation movement. For at least a decade before the celebration of the American bicentennial in 1976, hundreds of commemorative local historical studies were undertaken, and the seeds of cultural diversity in historic preservation were sown.

Heightened awareness and appreciation of ethnic and local history resulted in additions of more African-American properties to the number of National Park Service units during the 1960s and 1970s. Many more minority-related
properties were designated National Historic Landmarks. Major outdoor and historic house museums developed minority-history dimensions to their interpretative programs. Historic preservation agencies at the federal, state, and local levels sponsored surveys of ethnic-related historic properties and nominated eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places, state registers, and local landmarks and historic districts lists. Conferences on minority preservation were convened to build bridges between minority groups and historic preservation programs.

THE LOCAL HISTORY CONTEXT

The focus on local history and local historical significance, one of the great leaps forward taken by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, has sparked an awareness of ethnic and cultural diversity. The 1966 act directed state historic preservation offices to conduct comprehensive surveys, many of which unearthed information about ethnic groups that settled in urban neighborhoods and rural enclaves. Preservationists cite community studies as preparatory to uncovering cultural diversity in local historical settings.

The documentation of the North Brentwood community in Prince George’s County, Maryland, by Susan G. Pearl is a representative example of a local survey that resulted in a greater awareness of cultural diversity. The project revealed that the community was founded by Captain Wallace A. Bartlett, a white man who commanded the colored troops from Maryland during the Civil War. In 1892 Bartlett planned a black residential community at the time of the reunion of the veterans of the colored troops. Such community institutions as churches, schools, purposes and for preparing nominations for listing in the National Register or state registers and for local designation of properties important to cities, towns, counties, and rural areas. Listing entails recognition and some protection, particularly at the local level where zoning regulations come into play. Listing serves as a threshold for tax incentives and grant programs at all levels of government and in the private sector.

THE STUDY OF VERNACULAR RESOURCES—often buildings, structures, and landscapes—reveals ethnic and cultural threads that can be traced to Old World sources.

The programs and tools of the past quarter of a century to increase cultural diversity in the historic preservation field continue today. However, the increased cultural diversity of the nation during the 1980s has spurred preservationists to new heights of endeavor. Those workings in the field are aware that without a meaningful involvement of cultural groups in the historic preservation process, the preservation will not enjoy solid public support that translates into political action.

DOCUMENTING CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The survey of potentially historic properties constitutes a common early step in many preservation endeavors. The process of surveying frequently raises the consciousness of citizens about significant properties in their locality. Survey information may be used for planning
businesses, citizens’ and firemen’s associations served to bind together the subdivision and encourage its development into the 20th century.²

VERNACULAR RESOURCES

The study of vernacular resources—often buildings, structures, and landscapes—reveals ethnic and cultural threads that can be traced to Old World sources. These threads become interwoven with the forces of necessity—climate and available building materials, for example—to produce vernacular forms. Vernacular studies also embrace the gradual absorption of distinctively ethnic forms into mass-produced popular building types made desirable by lower costs and by the inhabitants’ willingness to conform to the mainstream of American life.

For example, Dena Sanford documented the Korpivaara community in central Montana, an isolated collection of Finnish log homesteads and related agricultural land. Each bore “characteristics of the Northern European building forms, uses, and farmstead organization.” Located in an area experiencing economic decline and obsolescence, the community’s resources serve as a challenge to preservationists concerned with finding viable uses for historic buildings.³ A group of properties associated with the Korpivaara community recently was listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of a multiple property nomination.

THE USE OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL RESOURCES

Intangible cultural resources present preservationists with additional sources of documentation for tangible historical resources during evaluation and registration processes. Some preservationists also view intangibles as resources that can be appreciated quite apart from physical places because they are as compelling a reflection of culture as tangible resources. As Elizabeth Morton stated when describing her efforts to organize a folklife track at the annual California Preservation Conference, “The primary goal is…to encourage preservationists to expand their definition of cultural stewardship to include a stronger focus on [the collection, recording, and interpretation of] intangible resources.”⁴ Patricia L. Parker and Thomas F. King suggest that options for addressing traditions and lifeways include broadening the scope of the National Register of Historic Places, establishing a parallel “register,” and including consideration of traditions and lifeways in public agency planning.⁵

Cultural conservation was a concept developed in the report, Cultural Conservation: The Protection of the Cultural...
ADDRESSING CULTURAL DIVERSITY in historic preservation requires preservationists to understand what “history” and “culture” mean to various cultural groups.

of the French speaking Acadians in the Upper St. John Valley of Maine addressed the importance of language, ethnic identity, traditional belief systems, vernacular architecture, and material culture.7

Jazz is a musical form that originated in an area known as Congo Square in New Orleans, La. Jane S. Brooks traced the history of jazz from Congo Square, where slaves and free persons of color gathered to drum, dance, and “rekindle their ties to Africa.” When blended with military brass bands after the Civil War, the “Western instrumentation with African rhythm” gave the world this uniquely American art form. Since jazz is an art form that continues to evolve, “the challenge for the preservationist” Brooks contends, “is how to interpret this living history in a way that is at the same time respectful and dynamic; that acknowledges the role of the past and the promise of the future.”8

Emensio Eperiam of Pohnpei, Micronesia, addressed the significance of oral history in documenting a culture’s history. Oral studies and traditions are passed from elder members of a family or clan to succeeding generations. “Every piece of oral history and cultural tradition is considered extremely valuable and thus is safeguarded tightly within the soul of the individual keepers.” The sacredness of these traditions often frustrates researchers who are intent on documentation.9

The conflict between the desires of cultural groups to preserve properties significant to them and the risk to those sites if culturally sensitive information is revealed about them is a concern of Elizabeth A. Brandt. On the basis of her experience with Pueblo Indian and Apache communities, she contends that techniques exist for “understanding, preserving, and respecting the religious and political concerns of Indian communities while still providing adequate documentation using oral history, ethnography, documentary history, and photography.10

HOLISTIC APPROACH

Addressing cultural diversity in historic preservation requires preservationists to understand what “history” and “culture” mean to various cultural groups. The definitions most often do not coincide with those of what is termed the “mainstream” American or the “dominant” culture. For example, Roger Anyon describes the Zuni Archaeology Program as “holistic” in approach. The multifaceted strategy toward cultural heritage is oriented toward “holistic historic and cultural preservation goals of the Zuni Tribe.” One of the projects involves the development of a museum oriented to community
interests and needs. Religious leaders are consulted about impacts on traditional cultural practices. Additionally, “traditional seed varieties are being collected as the genesis of a Tribal Seed Bank.” Zuni cultural values are “fully incorporated into the Zuni Sustainable Development Plan.”

The holistic approach is essential to many cultures because they make little distinction between the sacred and the secular and between history and religion. Writing about her work with American Indian cultures of the Southwest, Lynne Sebastian observes “the whole earth is a sacred landscape, integrally related to the history, beliefs, and practices of the people.” These differing cultural perspectives make the fit between historic preservation regulations and programs and American Indian culture often an uncomfortable one.

**INTERPRETING CULTURAL DIVERSITY**

The interpretation of national, state, regional, or local history is, to many, the essential purpose of historic preservation. Historic and cultural resources are saved not only as living parts of our communities, but also as places that express the nation’s history. How that history is written or conveyed to the public determines how that public views its past and directs the national debate about the future.

For many years, some preservationists, community leaders, and representatives of various cultural groups viewed the historic preservation movement as concerned primarily with the history of national leaders and with the architecture of the affluent. In encouraging increased appreciation of the role of all cultural and economic groups in the interpretation of the nation’s history, these individuals and groups inspired a revisiting of many established historic sites and places as well as the exploration of new resources that hold the keys to a more inclusive historical portrait.

**REDISCOVERING AMERICA**

The interpretation of the culturally diverse dimensions of historic buildings and places is often based on new documentation. This documentation can lead to new understandings of historic resources that previously were viewed in a single dimension. New discoveries and interpretations are under way at large, established historic sites and house museums, among them Colonial Williamsburg and Mount Vernon. Both properties are expanding their research efforts and interpretation to encompass the experience of both slaves and free blacks in 18th-century life.

Reinterpretation of historic properties is taking place as well. For example, Kim Alan Williams described the origins of Fort Concho National Historic Landmark in San Angelo, Tex., as based on “Anglo-western expansion and dominance as part of the manifest...
CULTURAL LAYERING
“Cultural layering,” which results when cultural diversity and demographic mobility are combined, presents particular dilemmas in interpretation and rehabilitation. Meredith Arms Bzdak described Union City, N.J., as presenting a continuum in ethnic diversity from the mid-19th century with the arrival of German settlers via Ellis Island to Puerto Ricans, Cubans, and more recently, immigrants from Central and South America. The succession of groups altered the built environment of Union City, causing a tremendous challenge in evaluating the significance of historic resources. It is particularly difficult for preservationists “accustomed to the investigation of more homogeneous environments.”

The continuous adaptation of buildings and places to suit new owners raises questions about the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, according to Penelope S. Watson. The Standards encourage retaining later changes to a building that have become a part of its overall history. However, buildings can be built for an affluent owner and then subdivided and altered for worker housing. Likewise, worker housing can be upgraded by subsequent owners. “In the first scenario, would destruction of later, inferior finishes be an improper, culturally biased decision? In the second case, would retention of later finishes ‘whitewash’ the history of the site as interpreted to the public?”

How do preservationists treat historic areas now used as “Chinatowns,” particularly when the buildings were previously used by other immigrant groups and reflect early non-Chinese-American history. In Boston’s
Chinatown, “only a handful of the present structures were built reflecting the ethnicity of the present Chinese residents and businesses.” Through the development of a community plan, Ting Fun-Yeh and Philip B. Herr state that the area’s earlier history is being protected, “while the physical and cultural interests of the Chinese community are served, contributing to social equity and the cultural richness of the metropolitan area.”

HERITAGE TOURISM
The historic preservation community has studied the potential for using culturally diverse historic resources in attracting tourism. Elizabeth MacNeil Boggess noted that recent inventories of American Indian and African-American resources in Natchez, Miss., have formed part of a “strategy for multicultural management and tourism” and a complementary tourist experience to the traditional route based on the city’s large mansions and antebellum plantation houses.

Mario L. Sanchez is developing a heritage trail following a 180-mile-long linear corridor along the Lower Rio Grande between Texas and Mexico. The proposed heritage corridor will interpret the culturally diverse resources in both the United States and Mexico and will cover the shared cultural heritage of both nations. The common themes include colonial river settlements, ranching, river steamboat trade, agricultural development, and military conflicts. The development of cultural tourism in the region promises to foster preservation, economic development, and better relations between communities on both sides of the river.

HERITAGE FESTIVALS
Heritage festivals serve to strengthen the ties among members of particular cultural groups and to provide recreational/educational opportunities for other groups. For example, Murney Gerlach reports that “since the late 1980s, San Diego has moved increasingly to preserve its historic and cultural resources, especially in light of the fact that almost forty-three percent of the population of southern California is Hispanic, Asian, African-American, or nonwhite.” Schools and cultural organizations have redesigned their offerings to reflect this change in fairs and festivals organized to bring communities together.

CULTURAL EQUITY
The inclusion of culturally diverse groups and their historical resources into the historic preservation field challenges some of the movement’s basic premises. Not all cultural groups view heritage resources in the same way. Some groups may value resources of little apparent value to others; other groups may value the same resources but at varying degrees of importance. In order to address culturally diverse resources, preservationists must elicit and respect the views of the groups associated with the resources. During a 1990 conference on cultural conservation at the Library of Congress, James Early outlined the concept of “cultural equity”: “The basic purpose for inclusion [of culturally diverse people (people of color) in policy positions]... is to recalibrate, if not in some instances overturn, reigning assumptions, criteria, expectations, standards, canons, even epistemologies, to engage perspectives and criteria historically evolved by other cultures—cultural equity.” Carolyn
Torma observes that the challenges ensuing from differing cultural values between conventional preservation standards and cultural groups spring “from a somewhat limited understanding of one culture or subculture by another.”

The gap between the scholars of the historic preservation movement and the groups whose past and present lifeways are the objects of study is discussed by Veletta Canouts. She notes that many cultural resources are “multiply esteemed” and communication between the interested parties often fails because of differences in cultural assumptions and cultural values. “Communication has remained essentially unidirectional…as this information has been fielded by passive audiences who are not encouraged to engage in active discourse.”

DOMINANT/INDIGENOUS GROUPS

The disparity between dominant cultures and indigenous groups in the area of historic preservation is evident in the Caribbean region. William Chapman asserts that “historic preservation, when it did come to the islands, tended to be borne by Europeans and North Americans who generally imposed their own ideas of preservation upon an often alienated populace.” In fact, historic preservation was viewed “as an effort to expropriate an indigenous culture and as the imposition of a new kind of colonial power.” As a first step in finding common ground, Chapman suggests that basic cultural differences be understood and appreciated. Only then can a more effective preservation approach be effected.

A similar situation exists in the Marshall Islands. Dirk H. R. Spennemann observes that the cultural properties associated with Europeans are considered and treated as more important than indigenous historic sites. “For the islanders a coral head sticking out in the lagoon, with all the oral traditions connected with it, has a far greater spiritual and historical importance than any building the foreigners call ‘historical’.” The Micronesian Historic Preservation Programs are redressing this imbalance by increasingly focusing on the recognition of traditional places and landscapes and “in treating such traditional properties on par with historic buildings.”

IN INVOLVING ETHNIC PARTICIPATION

The National Park Service’s Applied Ethnography Program was established to develop methods and programs to manage park resources so that both culturally sensitive resources and the traditional users’ needs are protected. Muriel Crespi and Jenny Masur define cultural resources as embracing subsistence grounds, massive geological features valued as homelands of spiritual entities, and traditional ethnic neighborhoods. Because these resources are not monumental, they have often been undervalued. However, they contribute to people’s sense of cultural distinctiveness. “The integrity and continuing use of such resources, on-site or through legends and myths, can be essential to a groups’ cultural vitality.”

A regional National Park Service ethnographer, George S. Esber, Jr., suggests that current efforts to increase
minority participation are often inadequate because they “are rooted in an idealism that is often expressed in terms of a need for increased sensitivity, kinder...behavior, invitations to participate, and a willingness to consult.” Ultimately, such gestures are viewed as insincere. Esber suggests that overcoming social distance between cultures lies in the use of language and terminology. “To achieve this end requires a challenge to many misconceptions that are routinely expressed in dominant society. An audit of current language use and thought represents a necessary first step in creating a more hospitable environment for enhanced communication and minority preservation.”

THE URBAN CHALLENGE
The nation’s cities remain its foremost cultural centers. In the central city lie the city’s origins, its historic architecture, its ethnic history, and the history of its growth and development. There also lie the origins of the imagery by which it is portrayed in literature and of the memories of countless individuals. These, too, are the places that today reflect the consequences of neglect by city services, abandonment by the middle class, and relegation to the most disadvantaged in American society.

Can historic preservation help reclaim the nation’s cities? Often historic preservationists carry in their historic preservation “tool chest” an offer to deliver services to the inner city. Judith Ann Johnson developed the Special Neighborhood Awareness Project, which was intended as a model for educating low-income residents about preservation as a strategy for neighborhood revitalization. However, because the neighborhood did not become involved in the project, the project failed to achieve its objective of creating a model for other preservation efforts in minority areas. Johnson views the aftermath of the failure as providing lessons important for developing a more effective model.

Holding the view that historic preservation can be the “glue to hold together the fabric of diverse ethnic, cultural, and racial groups” in urban centers, Donald D. Slesnick II and Louise Yarbrough suggest that revolving funds represent an innovative approach to physically improving the condition of older neighborhoods “while underwriting projects that have created jobs, provided new sources of housing, and overcome the ethnic and cultural barriers that prevent the development of a sense of community.” A revolving fund could be made up of monies from private foundations and government agencies along with set-aside bank guarantees. The fund could be used to procure, restore and resell historic properties. It could also serve as a source of low-interest second/third-mortgage money for repairs and maintenance.

CULTURAL UNITY ISSUES
The current national preoccupation with cultural diversity has produced myriad observations about the pros and cons of ethnic pride and as many recommendations about how to increase, decrease,
or accept the current level of interest. Editorial writer Joel Kotkin wrote recently in The Washington Post that the transformation of California into a new kind of society—an amalgam of Asian, Latino, African-American as well as Anglo influences—was sending shock waves through virtually every sector of the state’s society. The recent riots in Los Angeles raised the specter of a “fundamental choice between cosmopolitan multiracialism or a descent into tribalism.”

The prospect of cultural pride resulting in the disintegration of American society runs counter to the history of the nation itself. For as long as the nation evolved, particularly since the Age of Discovery, Americans have enjoyed the right to practice their own cultural traditions as well as to join the mainstream culture and view themselves as “American.” History also indicates that retention of cultural distinctiveness is essential to the adjustment of new arrivals in the nation and continues to play an important role in determining how individuals view themselves and their future prospects. Preservationists have documented the role of cultural awareness and pride in American history and the continuity of cultural characteristics to the present.

**CULTURAL CONTINUITY AND RETENTION**

One recent example from the 1990 census demonstrates the remarkable endurance of cultural distinctiveness despite the passage of generations. In the Star Tribune, it was reported that suburbs in Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area still retain their identification as Scandinavian, German, or Irish. In response to a report that suburbs continued to be defined by ethnicity, Rudolph Vecoli, director of the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota, observed, “Immigrants historically moved to places where they felt most comfortable, where people spoke their language and knew their customs, whether in the country towns or city neighborhoods...But even today, people naturally settle near relatives or near their churches.”

In another case, Ted J. Ligibel studied the Toledo, Ohio, neighborhood of Birmingham, an intact Eastern European neighborhood. Founded a century ago, the neighborhood “retains...many of the customs of the Old World, some of which died out in the homeland due to religious and political oppression.” (In fact, one such custom, the Bethlemish Christmas Play was taped by Hungarian National Television as a historical record of a lost tradition) The close connections that remain between Birmingham and the Old World can also be demonstrated in churches, social halls, schools, and commercial buildings, all of which display ethnic iconography or Old World forms. One residential street appears to be laid out according to the pattern of villages in rural Hungary.

**CONCLUSION**

Preservationists have moved far beyond urging one another to simply do more in the area of cultural diversity; they also are doing their work differently.
in the area of cultural diversity; they also are doing their work differently. No longer are they prepackaging their historic preservation tools and delivering them to cultural groups. With the influence of such related professional groups as anthropologists, ethnographers, folklorists, and community planners, preservationists are learning to work with cultural groups, to ask them what their priorities are, to discern how historic preservation tools can work for the groups, and to make adjustments to the tools in order to accommodate cultural differences.

The ability of the historic preservation field to address the needs of the nation’s various cultural entities will determine its success as a national mainstream movement. It also will influence the comprehension of the nation’s history as a whole—whether at the national level or from the vantage point of a small community. Historic preservation efforts leave a consequential legacy in telling the extraordinary story of how, out of many nations, a single and enduring nation was formed.

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2 Susan G. Pearl, “Historical Survey of an Early Black Community in Prince George’s County, Maryland,” abstract for the 46th National Preservation Conference.
4 Elizabeth Morton, “Historic Preservation and Folklife Resources in Humboldt County, California,” abstract for the 46th National Preservation Conference.
12 Lynne Sebastian, “All Things on the Earth and in the Sky and under the Waters,” abstract for 46th National Preservation Conference.
14 Ronald M. James, “Multiculturalism, Mining and the Wild West,” abstract for 46th National Preservation Conference.
16 Penelope S. Watson, “Multicultural Site Interpretation and Conflicts with Established Preservation Practice,” abstract for 46th National Preservation Conference.
17 Ting Fun-Yeh and Philip B. Herr, “Boston’s Chinatown: Community-Based Planning and Preservation in a Multicultural Context,” abstract for 46th National Preservation Conference.


27 George S. Esber, “Building Bridges in National Park Service Programs,” abstract for 46th National Preservation Conference.


29 Donald D. Slesnick II and Louise Yarbrough, “The Historic Preservation Revolving Fund as an Outreach to the Inner City,” abstract for 46th National Preservation Conference.


31 Peter Leyden, “Scandinavians No. 2 Here; German Ancestry is No. 1,” Star Tribune, July 5, 1992, pp. 1A, 13A.

I Can’t See It; I Don’t Understand It; And It Doesn’t Look Old to Me

RICHARD LONGSTRETH

When I delivered the content of this article as part of the opening session at the National Park Service’s “Preserving the Recent Past” conference in 1995, the subject was still somewhat of a novel one. Some great works of Modern architecture had been preserved as museums, Fallingwater and the National Trust’s Pope-Leighey house being among the pioneering ventures during the 1960s. Still the post-World War II legacy was just beginning to be appreciated by many preservationists, and the scope of that legacy remained a matter of debate.

In framing my remarks, I sought to cast a wide net, going beyond the icons of Modern architecture, which had long been venerated by architects, to include significant, but for the most part unrecognized components such as major urban renewal projects, early regional shopping malls, and large-scale housing tracts. I also sought to approach the subject by highlighting some of the factors that bred skepticism among many preservationists: that much of the postwar legacy was difficult to comprehend from a single vantage point or even to see at all from public rights-of-way; that often the language of modernism in this era was substantially different from those with which preservationists felt comfortable; and that this legacy was often seen as still “new” and hence not “historic.” Although I tried to make clear the fallacies of each of these viewpoints, some members of the audience, including DOCOMOMO representatives, thought I was claiming such work should not indeed be the focus of preservation efforts. I do not think that interpretation was widespread, and am grateful to Forum’s editors for picking up the piece so that it could reach a far larger audience.

The scene is very different today, less than two decades later. Preserving the recent past, now extending to work of the 1970s, has become a widespread, grassroots-driven activity, as well as one spurred by national organizations, here and abroad. The postwar period has captured the interest of scholars of architecture, landscape architecture, and urbanism as much as it has drawn thousands of young men and women into the preservation fold. Many significant contributions to the postwar legacy have been preserved, often carefully restored or sensitively rehabilitated. But many more remain ignored and frequently are lost. Examples in the controversial areas I mentioned in 1995 are, with a few exceptions, still on tenuous ground today. Even major monuments such as Richard Neutra’s former visitor center at Gettysburg National Military Park are threatened. There is much work still to be done.
The champions of modern architecture seldom missed an opportunity to ridicule the past. At best, the past was treated as a closed book whose chapters had mercifully ended with little bearing upon the present. But often the past was portrayed as an evil. Both buildings and cities created since the rise of industrialization in the early 19th century were charged with having nearly ruined the planet. The legacy of one’s parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents was not only visually meaningless and degenerate, but socially and spiritually repressive as well. Architects such as Walter Gropius and critics such as Lewis Mumford saw the contemporary city as so much detritus. The more of this alleged blight that was removed from the scene, the better.

Such sweeping indictments of the built environment in architectural and planning circles added fuel to the cause of historic preservation in others. It is no coincidence that the National Historic Preservation Act was created at a time when the Modernist cause seemed to be exercising a major hold on federal policy. This relationship, among other things, makes it difficult some 30 years later to consider the legacy of Modernism itself a valued thing of the past. Furthermore, Modernism is still with us. It can be argued that more of its agenda has been realized over the past 25 years than over the previous half century. Nevertheless, the products of a generation ago are assuming a new dimension and indeed can be examined from a fresh perspective. In their particulars and sometimes in their basic attributes, many of these works are quite unlike what we choose to create today. What was called by its proponents simply “Modern Architecture” does not always seem modern any more. The issues beg our attention. Let’s take an example.

The Southwest redevelopment area, in Washington, D.C., fully manifests the Modernist imperative. Planned in the 1950s, with most of its components in place by the mid-1960s, this model venture retained but a few vestiges of the previous urban fabric. Street patterns and block size were modified. New construction increased density and open space at the same time. Planning struck a balance between accommodating automobiles and pedestrians, separating the two wherever possible. The project was a consummate manifestation of federal urban renewal programs, when wholesale clearance and sweeping new designs were irreproachable objectives. It was comparable to the Mall, a few blocks away, in that nothing of its kind in the country was more ambitious, more fully realized, and, arguably, more accomplished in its design.

Locally, the Southwest project represented not only major physical and demographic changes. It also, for the first time, allowed Washington-based Modernists to exhibit their talents in a conspicuous way. The precinct stands as a veritable pantheon to the best and brightest designers the city had to offer: Clothier Woodward Smith, Charles Goodman, Keyes Lethbridge & Condon, among others. There were also contributions from famous practitioners elsewhere, including Harry Weese and I.M. Pei.
These facts, along with many others, are now appropriate ones to delineate the historic significance of the project. We would not question them were this area developed a 100 or 75 years ago, and we should not from a distance of some 30 years either. The scheme no longer represents the present: the buildings, the planning elements, indeed the whole approach are very different from anything in our current vocabulary. Yet the project possesses an enduring value, and not just as a museum piece. Many residents are devotees, who live there because of its special qualities, and sometimes fondly refer to their neighborhood as Brasilia. The idea that it should become a historic district has been entertained (though as yet not seriously pursued) by residents who, just as Georgetowners and Alexandrians a half century ago, fear that outside forces will alter those material and spatial attributes that make the Southwest like no other place.

**SHOPPER’S WORLD**

One other example, somewhat earlier and lacking a solid internal constituency, is, like the Southwest, a benchmark development of its kind. The complex is called Shopper’s World, and it lies in Framingham, Mass., some 16 miles west of Boston. When it opened it 1951, it was the second regional shopping center, developed as a fully integrated business around a core pedestrian area—a mall—to be realized anywhere on earth. (Northgate, which opened the previous year in Seattle, was the first.) Furthermore, it is the only one of the first generation of regional centers, and perhaps the only one operating prior to the 1960s, to remain in anything approaching its original form. Shopper’s World thus is the foremost example we have of the initial...
thrust in a trend that has revolutionized both shopping patterns and the development of outlying areas in the United States. Like the Southwest, it embodies beliefs that the old order could not meet contemporary needs, that radical new solutions were needed, in this case in a setting far removed from the traditional urban core. Like the Southwest, Shopper’s World should be a National Historic Landmark, although arguing the
it does not provide any vantage point from which the precinct can be best appreciated. Shopper’s World was hardly noticeable from its approach routes, even when it stood in isolation, before the array of surrounding businesses began to be built, as a result of the mall’s great drawing power. Moreover, the cumulative result does not tend to read as a district. In traditional terms the strip lacks visual coherence. Similarly, little apparent relationship exists between such groupings from one part of a metropolitan area to another. Examples of this kind are the rule for the mid-20th century rather than the exception. Chances are that the elementary or high school does not monumentally crown a hill, or terminate a major street, or otherwise conspicuously demark its importance in the community. More likely it is sited well back from the road, from which, if it is visible at all, it appears as a series of unobtrusive pavilions. A number of headquarters and regional office buildings of major corporations, such as Reynolds Aluminum and John Deere, are the polar opposites of their skyscraper precursors, sited like great country houses, on the outermost edge of the city in large, lush park preserves of their own. It is easy to cast such work as anti-urban when compared to the centralized structure of the industrial metropolis that emerged during the 19th century. However, the past 50 years have shown us that there is a clear new order in recent growth, that it is distinctly metropolitan in nature, and that it is an outgrowth of the old, more traditional one.

IRRESEPCTIVE OF SITING PARTICULARS or of landscaping, modern architecture often cannot be understood, let alone appreciated, from seeing one or two exterior elevations.

point is now academic because it was leveled in December 1994 for a parking lot. Why do we have trouble coming to terms with resources of this kind? Why do bureaucrats shake their heads and mutter they do not want to hear about it when the possibility is raised of creating a historic district in the Southwest? Why do others doubt whether Shopper’s World could even be declared of exceptional significance for the National Register listing? To do so only requires demonstrating it is exceptional at the local level, when this mall complex is clearly of national, perhaps international, significance.

LEARNING TO “SEE” MODERN ARCHITECTURE

Part of the problem is that often we do not “see” the landmarks of the mid-20th century. They are not sited like their forebears. The landscape that they help form is not centralized. Rather it is multi-nucleated, as the geographers call this structure, and those nucleations often lack traditional focal points. The Southwest has a major thoroughfare, but
Perhaps no type is so central to preservation, in the popular mind at least, as the single-family house, and here, too, modern architecture defies convention. The great modern houses do not line Main Streets, nor do they cluster in well-defined and readily viewable enclaves such as Roland Park in Baltimore or the Country Club District in Kansas City. Most are as invisible to the public eye as the mountain cabin, marked only by an unassuming driveway leading through dense foliage. Even in communities that possess an abundant collection of noteworthy examples, New Canaan, Conn., for instance, or Princeton, N.J., little is known about this legacy except through individual encounters with domiciles owned by friends. And even when property sizes are smaller, the setting not quasi-rural, the perceptual impact often is no greater. Los Angeles affords a telling example, with scores of great domestic works from the mid-20th century sequestered on tiny hillside sites, seen by the few who drive the winding roads as sheer walls, garage doors, and vegetation. The richness of plant life in California is such that it can completely subsume a building, such as Richard Neutra’s Nesbitt house of 1942, without the aid of topographical variation. Thousands of people could pass by such a dwelling each day and never “see” it.

Irrespective of siting particulars or of landscaping, modern architecture often cannot be understood, let alone appreciated, from seeing one or two exterior elevations. The single outside photograph or brief description may, in fact, deceptively suggest something of little consequence. Movement around and through the building, or the building complex, may be essential to grasp the salient qualities of its design. Just as the experience is frequently more internal and private than external and public, so space is often accorded primacy over form. To understand modern architecture, one must look beyond motifs and veneers. Modern architecture did not just eliminate ornament; it did not just eschew references to the past; it did not just emulate a machine aesthetic; it entailed challenges to theretofore basic assumptions about the properties of design.

Understanding modern architecture poses another challenge as well. Despite innumerable claims to the contrary, it has never been monolithic, but rather defined by an array of differing individualistic approaches to design. The result is an assemblage of personal modes. Look at the picture around 1955: the laconic structuralism of Mies van der Rohe; the geometric organicism of Frank Lloyd Wright; the understated...
MENT PATTERNS SINCE WORLD WAR II, BUT MANY PRACTICAL FACTORS WERE AT WORK AS WELL. TOO OFTEN THIS LANDSCAPE IS SIMPLISTICALLY DISMISSED AS “SPRAWL,” WITH NO EFFORT TO UNDERSTAND THE FORCES THAT HAVE SHAPED IT. THE MODERN METROPOLITAN AREA IS NOT THE PRODUCT OF DEMONS OR FOOLS, OF CONSPIRACY OR VANDALISM, ANY MORE OR ANY LESS THAN THE INDUSTRIAL OR PRE-INDUSTRIAL CITY. IN ALL THESE CASES, FUNCTIONS HAVE TENDED TO GRAVITATE WHERE THEY APPEAR TO OPERATE EFFICIENTLY FROM THEIR OWNERS’ OR OPERATORS’ PERSPECTIVES. THE REGIONAL SHOPPING MALL, TO RETURN TO SHOPPER’S WORLD FOR A MOMENT, FLOURISHED NOT JUST BECAUSE EVER LARGER NUMBERS OF THE MIDDLE CLASS WERE MOVING EVER FURTHER FROM THE CITY CENTER AND POSSESSED UNPRECEDEDENT MOBILITY, DISPOSABLE INCOME, AND LEISURE TIME. A KEY PART OF THE EQUATION WAS THAT RETAIL DISTRICTS IN MANY CITY CENTERS WERE SATURATED. THEY COULD NOT EXPAND AT A RATE CONSUMMATE WITH MARKET GROWTH UNLESS THEY EMBARKED ON PROHIBITIVELY EXPENSIVE BUILDING PROGRAMS THAT WOULD HAVE REPLACED THE CORE WITH MUCH DENSER DEVELOPMENT. THIS HAS HAPPENED—THAT IS, CENTRALIZATION HAS CONTINUED AS A SIGNIFICANT THRUST—IN CASES WHERE IT HAS BEEN ADVANTAGEOUS TO DO SO, MOST CONSPICUOUSLY WITH FINANCIAL AND CERTAIN OTHER KINDS OF SERVICE CENTERS.

ON THE OTHER HAND, DECENTRALIZATION HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN URBAN GROWTH FOR MUCH LONGER THAN MANY PEOPLE REALIZE. THE DEMANDS OF SPACE FOR NUMEROUS INDUSTRIAL PROCESSES AND FOR NEARBY WORKER HOUSING LED TO A SCATTERING OF FACTORY SITES IN LARGE CITIES BEGINNING MORE OR LESS WITH THE ADVENT OF THE RAIL—

IN BANISHING ACADEMIC PRINCIPLES, MODERN ARCHITECTURE’S PROONENTS ESTABLISHED A NEW CONCEPTUAL ORDER DEFINED TO A STUNNING DEGREE BY INDIVIDUAL WILL. MANY OF THE MOVEMENT’S LEADERS ESPoused PURPORTEDLY TRANSCENDENT PRINCIPLES OF DESIGN—WRIGHT’S AND LE CORBUSIER’S ARE AMONG THE BEST KNOWN—but these were individually generated, and seldom proved to be creatively used by others unless they were transformed into a new, equally personal manner, as Goff did with Wright’s, for example. Furthermore, the fundamental academic notion that principles were immutable, that they do not change over time however varied the expression from one era to another, also was silently discarded in favor of an outlook that encouraged more or less continual change, so that the basic premise of design espoused by one group or generation was, and is, frequently challenged by others. Modern architecture, in short, is very much a relativistic phenomenon.

UNDERSTANDING “SPRAWL”
Modern conceptions of space have certainly affected the structure of settle—

Abstractionism of Richard Neutra; the “soft” naturalism of William Wurster; the flamboyant expressionism of Bruce Goff; and then the challenging approaches nurtured by a younger generation such as Paul Rudolph, Eero Saarinen, Minoru Yamasaki, and Craig Ellwood, to name just a few.

In banishing academic principles, modern architecture’s proponents established a new conceptual order defined to a stunning degree by individual will. Many of the movement’s leaders espoused purportedly transcendent principles of design—Wright’s and LeCorbusier’s are among the best known—but these were individually generated, and seldom proved to be creatively used by others unless they were transformed into a new, equally personal manner, as Goff did with Wright’s, for example. Furthermore, the fundamental academic notion that principles were immutable, that they do not change over time however varied the expression from one era to another, also was silently discarded in favor of an outlook that encouraged more or less continual change, so that the basic premise of design espoused by one group or generation was, and is, frequently challenged by others. Modern architecture, in short, is very much a relativistic phenomenon.

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These machines not only consume vast amounts of space themselves, they allow us to traverse space in ways never before imaginable. Driving time, not linear distance, has been a standard locational measure since the 1940s. We think little about driving an extra five miles—a few minutes—for shopping, to church, to our home, if we see clear advantages to doing so. A very important factor in this equation is that the car did not so much introduce such choices to us as it allowed us to retain some of the sense of spatial openness and freedom of movement associated with many towns, but not with most cities, in the 19th century.

What did change, of course, were many of the particulars of where things were located and how they were configured. The major cause was the mobility permitted by individually owned motor vehicles for work and pleasure. Industrialization, too, led the rich and middle class to seek other peripheral locations for just as long. To contemporary observers, cities such as Philadelphia or Detroit seemed to have reached epic proportions in their sprawl by the late 19th century. That scale, in turn, appeared diminutive compared to growth over the next several decades. The surge that came after World War II was hardly unprecedented then, and, had it not continued to occur, cities would have had to remake themselves, leaving little fabric over 50 years old to preserve.

Vernacular sites from the recent past, such as these Las Vegas commercial buildings, have gained increasing attention in recent years. PHOTO: SETH TINKHAM, NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION.
The modest tract houses of the postwar era, for example, are really incarnations of the modest ones built individually that comprise the vast majority of dwelling units in the great majority of American towns. Shopper’s World took the New England green as a conceptual prototype for its mall configuration. The big open spaces around the school, amid the office park, or permeating the apartment complex are latter-day surrogates for being able to see the country from many parts of town and being able to reach one from the other in minutes.

“IT’S NOT OLD TO ME”
We are not used to thinking of the modern world as having strong ties to the past, as representing continuity as well as change, in part because its differences, its ambient newness, have been so unrelentingly promoted. For this reason, among others, it can be difficult to think of mid-20th-century things as “old.” What we see, what we think about, is how dissimilar they are to what came before them—how much the glass curtain-wall bank stands out from its neighbors of even 30 years previous; how much the modern house, nearing 40 years old, seems unlike a traditional domestic environment; how much the aircraft manufacturing plant seems worlds removed from stereotypical notions of factory.

Has the bank recently failed; the aircraft plant closed? Is the housing tract that was a field of dreams for persons entering the middle class a generation ago now deteriorating into a slum? Or perhaps is it that we still see this world with the critical eye of the present rather than with a sense of detachment? The Urban Renewal Program, after all, was one of the federal behemoths that helped launch the National Historic Preservation Act as a counterforce. How could the Southwest project, as one of that program’s penultimate ventures, not be worth a major preservation initiative.

MOST PRESERVATIONISTS are bad critics of the built environment, which they cast in simplistic terms, sometimes irresponsibly so. It’s all or nothing: the development Godzilla versus the preservation Bambi.

TAKING A HISTORIAN’S VIEW
Part of the challenge is for preservationists to think less like critics and more like historians. Most preservationists are bad critics of the built environment, which they cast in simplistic terms, sometimes irresponsibly so. It’s all or nothing: the development Godzilla versus the preservation Bambi. But it’s not all their fault. Even the most sophisticated critics tend to cast things in black-and-white, indulging in hyperbole along the way. Lewis Mumford did this: Park Avenue was no better than a slum; ye olde New England village was beyond reproach.

Ada Louise Huxtable does this: Williamsburg, and preservation in general, begat many of the “evils” of current design and urban development, as I am sure many of you have read. This tack may be a defensible ploy to engage the reader, to get him or her to think about, to discuss, and to debate significant issues. In other cases, it may not be defensible at all; it may amount to intellectual reductionism.
at its most mischievous. But even under the best of circumstances, the critic’s portrayal is not wholly accurate; it is not the way things really are. That is why we have more than critics and commentators; why we have historians to provide a more detached, retrospective view.

Mrs. Huxtable’s charges aside, preservationists have done a pretty good job with history. Over the past 25 years, they have saved a remarkably broad, diverse swath of the past in terms of type, time, and place. At the outset of that period, preservationists made a major contribution to academic disciplines by demanding a more inclusive scrutiny of the past, by insisting that many more things were significant than the textbooks let on. As a result of preservation, we have a much richer sense of the past in its physical dimension than we had before.

Given this track record, it is rather strange that many preservationists, and by no means just some of the old guard, have more conspicuous difficulty coming to grips with the recent past, I think, than many members of the public at large. The problem, I fear, lies not just with the subject matter, but with what’s happening to the field as a whole. Overly bureaucratized procedures, combined with a tendency for preservation to be subsumed by fields such as urban revitalization and tourism, which can be of great benefit to, but which should not drive, preservation endeavors, have led to an increasingly formulaic view of the past. In this schema, history is not rich and complex, it is a litany of buzzwords, it is one or another “theme.” Here I must partially agree with Mrs. Huxtable; preservation is at least in danger of becoming synonymous with the theme park.

Similarly disturbing signs are evident in preservationists’ common parlance. Take, for example, the ever more habitual use of the term “historic” to refer to listed properties and of “non-historic” to those that are not so listed, as if “historic” is some kind of breed raised in the darkest recesses of the Department of the Interior. How preposterous. History is not fixed, not finite. Nor are all of our listing programs combined anywhere near completed, even according to what we may view as historically significant at present. The newer the resource, the more such rote categorization is applied. I have heard time and again from preservationists, professionally employed preservationists, that little in their respective communities is “historic” because most of its fabric was built after the First World War. Is this just an excuse for doing less work, for having less of a management problem? Not necessarily. A recent newsletter from a state historic preservation office gave lengthy coverage to the local legacy of Modernist buildings, some now well over 50 years old, bemoaning the difficulties of saving them when they are not “historic.” Who says they’re not historic! I do not know any reputable architectural historian in academe who would entertain such foolishness. Lots of scholarly attention is being given to the mid-20th century, to its vernacular as well as its high-style aspects. Why do all these historians devote years

PRESERVATIONISTS ALSO NEED to rid themselves of their “style” fetish—the reliance on simplistic categories presented in guides that is antithetical to what is taught in serious programs of history.
to studying “non-historic” material? Preservationists run the risk of losing credibility in the disciplines that are their professional backbone when they succumb to such shallow typecasting.

Preservationists also need to rid themselves of their “style” fetish—the reliance on simplistic categories presented in guides that is antithetical to what is taught in serious programs of history. In these books, a very complicated and elusive subject is reduced to a series of motifs, which in turn tend to become a test of “purity”—again as if the process of design was synonymous with breeding. Anything that doesn’t fit these limited categories is immediately suspect, or at best ignored, because preservationists do not know how to deal with it. Many resources from the mid-20th century pose problems when this kind of approach is taken—not just the high-art examples where the architect’s personal style is such a determining factor, but in vernacular examples as well. I was recently told that a famous middle-class housing tract of the 1950s would never be eligible for the National Register because the architecture conformed to none of the “recognized styles.” If such thinking prevails, preservation will render itself irrelevant in short order.

The challenge is great. There is much to save. After World War II, the United States became an international leader in modern architecture. Our legacy of work by a wide range of highly creative designers—of landscapes and interiors as well as of buildings—during the postwar era is probably unmatched by any other single nation. There is an equally formidable inheritance from those not as famous, but whose work nonetheless is of an exceptional standard. Then there is the broad vernacular realm, from which one can take many examples. At no time, past or present, for instance, has such commodi-
ous housing been available to persons of moderate means in major metropolitan areas than during the postwar years—not in this country and certainly not anywhere else. All those derisive comments about sprawl, about ticky-tacky, about inhumane boxes extending to the horizon referred to an absolutely remarkable phenomenon that affected millions of people and may never be duplicated.

Then there is the highway landscape. Again, there is no comparison elsewhere because nowhere was so much space available and so many consumers able to reach it. The components can be as rich and varied as on Main Street, which itself was once seen as blight, just like the strip is now. The small, family-run motels, the expansive department stores run by national chains, idiosyncratic things cheek-by-jowl with idiomatic ones. Nowhere is evidence of the automobile more emphatically displayed; nowhere is the car’s insistent demands on space more clear; nowhere is an environment more attuned to perceptions as they are from behind the steering wheel. The critics hate the strip too, just as they once hated the cities that the preservationists helped rescue.

The challenge is pressing. We cannot afford to squander what has been created during the mid 20th century the way we have squandered so much that came before it. We cannot afford not to know what we have. We do not have the luxury of time. Population growth and change, paid mortgages, expended depreciation, expired leases—there are many factors that hasten the threat to the recent past. If we can redirect preservation back more to historical thinking and away from formula, more to historicity and away from theme; if, as we do this, we can become more knowledgeable of, and creative with, strategies in commercial revitalization, housing, tourism, and all the rest so we can affect integration without poor compromises, so that we can more honestly demonstrate the transcendent power of the past on its own terms and not the pliability of the past as a tool of convenience or as a plaything of design; then we can address these challenges well and give preservation the vitality and imagination it will need to flourish in the next century. FJ

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Economics and Historic Preservation

DONOVAN D. RYPKEMA

Things change; things remain the same. In 1995 local historic districts were opposed because of fear they would reduce property values. Today they are opposed because they increase property values and, hence, property taxes.

In 1995 older, close-in neighborhoods were written off as slum and blight. Today they are championed by the National Association of Realtors, Smart Growth America, and the public health industry as being “walkable.”

In 1995 heritage tourism was seen as an economic opportunity for few communities. Today towns and cities of every size have demonstrated its effectiveness as a local economic development strategy.

In 1995 little was known quantitatively about the role historic preservation plays in the local economy. Today more than 20 states have commissioned studies on the economic impact of historic preservation.

American preservation has always been more market driven than in most countries, so it’s not surprising that the economics/preservation connection was looked at in the U.S. earlier and more often than elsewhere. But in recent years the international world of heritage conservation has begun to acknowledge those links. At the beginning of the latest recession, the European Parliament held hearings on “The Economic Role of Heritage in Times of Economic Crisis.” The same year the European Heritage Heads Forum devoted its annual meeting to heritage as an effective response to economic downturns. In 2011 the focus of the Council of Europe Heritage Days Forum was “Value the Heritage! Heritage during the Recession—Luxury or Necessity?” and even ICOMOS had as the theme of its triennial General Assembly, “Heritage: The Driver of Development.”

The ultimate endorsement of historic preservation as economic development came this October with the publication of Economics of Uniqueness: Investing in Historic City Cores and Cultural Heritage Assets for Sustainable Development by none other than the World Bank.

So we’ve come a long way...or have we? Far fewer local historic districts are being created today than in 1995, and almost none without vociferous opposition. Stimulus plans to fight the recession were adopted by most developed countries around the world. Heritage conservation was at the core of these strategies in Norway, Australia, Hong Kong, France, and elsewhere. In the U.S., $870 billion stimulus? Not part of the program. The federal rehabilitation tax credit is one of the few federal programs of any kind that returns to the treasury more money than it costs, but it is in jeopardy of repeal.
I’ve never been apologetic about a career focused on the economic side of historic preservation, but I’ve always argued that in the long run, the other values of the built heritage—aesthetic, environmental, social, symbolic, educational, cultural, etc.—were more important than the economic value. Today I believe that more than ever. We’ve made the case for the economics of historic preservation and we need to continue to do so. But unless we as preservationists are able to reframe our arguments in a larger context, and make preservation an everyday working tool for towns and cities, we risk losing the progress we’ve made. The buildings of the past are too important to the communities of the future for us to allow that to happen.

Here’s the deal:

- We are going to have to choose between historic preservation and economic development.
- Preservation is kind of nice when times are good, but we simply can’t afford it when local budgets are stretched to the limit.
- It’s great that the rich can afford to restore their mansions, but the public sector certainly can’t afford to rehabilitate these old buildings and most certainly preservation is not a cost-effective means of housing the poor.
- Historic districts, because of the restrictions they place on properties, inherently reduce property values.
- Close-in residential neighborhoods are in such a state of deterioration that we need to raze them to get rid of slum and blight, the crime and the eyesores those neighborhoods represent.
- Preservation probably works as a tourism strategy in Santa Fe or Charleston but is antithetical to broader economic development anywhere else.

Those statements have three things in common: we hear them all the time; they are all economic arguments; and they are all absolute, unequivocal, unadulterated hogwash.

To have the theme of a National Trust conference be preservation economics is almost amazing to me. My first National Trust meeting was a little over a decade ago. I do not exaggerate when I tell you that there were violent arguments about whether real estate developers should even be allowed to register at the conference—somehow that was diluting the purity of the movement.

**EVERY COMMUNITY NEEDS JOBS. So let’s take a look at historic preservation and job creation.**

This conference, I would suggest to you, marks the date when economics takes its rightful place as one of the pillars upon which the preservation ethic is based. It certainly is not more important than the cultural, aesthetic, sociological or historical bases, but the time has come to recognize its equal importance.

This is largely due to the incredible impact of the National Main Street Center and its philosophy of economic development through historic preservation. That has made believers out of more crass unrepentant real estate capitalists like me than can possibly be counted; an impact far beyond the 900 towns with Main Street programs. The “Main
Street Approach” has now become part of the vernacular of the field of economic development. It would be nice to say this success stems from the brilliance of the staff, the quality of the publications, the excellence of the conferences. Not so. This answer is much more simple: economic development through historic preservation works—it works.

If you ask your local economic development director what is the single best measurement of economic development success, I’ll tell you what the answer will be—jobs. Every community needs jobs. So let’s take a look at historic preservation and job creation.

Dollar for dollar, historic preservation is one of the highest job-generating economic development options available. In Michigan, $1 million in building rehabilitation creates 12 more jobs than does manufacturing $1 million of cars. In West Virginia, $1 million of rehabilitation creates 20 more jobs than mining $1 million of coal. In Oklahoma, $1 million of rehabilitation creates 29 more jobs than pumping $1 million of oil. In Oregon, 22 more jobs than cutting $1 million of timber. In Pennsylvania, 12 more jobs than processing $1 million of steel. In California, 5 more jobs than manufacturing $1 million of electronic equipment. In South Dakota, 17 more jobs than growing $1 million of agricultural products. In South Carolina, 8 more jobs than manufacturing $1 million of textiles. Historic preservation creates jobs.

At the same time, rehabilitation will have a far greater impact on the local economy than will the same amount of new construction. Suppose a community is choosing between spending $1 million in new construction and spending $1 million in rehabilitation. What would the differences be? $120,000 more will ini-
Forget preservation and the environment—downtown revitalization saves tax dollars; sprawl wastes tax dollars. You tell me who is the fiscal conservative.

Let’s leave downtown for a moment and go to residential neighborhoods.

Here’s what a recent study by the National Association of Home Builders discovered: “The size of a house and the number of bathrooms are important in determining the price of a home, but the characteristics of the neighborhood in which a house is located affect price the most...The analysis found that the presence of abandoned buildings in the neighborhood reduces the price more than 30 percent.”

Now where are those abandoned houses found? In our older and historic neighborhoods. If municipal budgets really are stretched, how much more fiscally irresponsible can you be than to allow the neighborhoods from which you draw the taxes to decline in value? Not to mention what that does to the security of bank loans, people’s life savings wrapped up in home equity, and crime that gravitates almost instantly to abandoned houses.

Oh yeah, some idiot police chief will have a brilliant solution: “Oh, you have a crack house in your neighborhood? We’ll send over a bulldozer tomorrow, level the house, and that will take care of it.” Right! Having an empty lot next door instead of an empty house means having hookers for neighbors instead of drug dealers—some improvement in quality of life that is.

But job creation and household incomes aren’t the only measures. There probably isn’t an elected official in the country that doesn’t claim to be for fiscal responsibility. And I politically and philosophically endorse that position. But let me make one thing unequivocally clear—any community of any size that does not have a formal program of downtown revitalization cannot claim to be doing everything possible to save taxpayers’ dollars.

Every community has already made a huge investment of public funds in downtown streets, sidewalks, water and sewer lines, parking lots, streetlights, and other infrastructure. A downtown that is allowed to deteriorate with buildings sitting empty wastes assets that have already been paid for. It is exactly the same as buying a new police car but only driving it on Fridays, or paying a full-time salary to an assessor who only works twice a week. Certainly taxpayers wouldn’t stand for that as public policy. A community wastes taxpayers’ dollars every day when downtown is being used at 30 or 40 or 50 percent of its capacity. Commitment to downtown revitalization and reuse of downtown’s historic buildings may be the most effective single act of fiscal responsibility a local government can take.

**A DOWNTOWN THAT IS ALLOWED to deteriorate with buildings sitting empty wastes assets that have already been paid for.**
And those of you from smaller communities who say, “abandoned houses are a problem in Detroit or Philadelphia but not in our small town” are kidding yourselves. Half my work is in places of less than 20,000 people and abandoned houses are there too—with the same negative effects.

There are those who have suggested that a somewhat lesser standard be applied when dealing with low-income housing preservation projects. But what does that say?

As counter point, consider the study last year of a State of Washington preservation program. Here was one of the findings: While almost 60 percent of the rehabilitated buildings under this program were either vacant or completely abandoned buildings located in blighted neighborhoods, they are now fully occupied.

Now you don’t have to be the president of the local Mensa chapter to make the connection. The rehabilitation of abandoned housing doesn’t just preserve a single building. It preserves the value of the entire neighborhood. That’s what historic preservation has become. It isn’t about restoring buildings; it’s about restoring communities, and that includes restoring the economic value of communities.

What mayor of a community of any size doesn’t struggle with how to get middle-class taxpayers to move back to the city? But think for a minute where there have been pockets of back-to-the-city migration—Columbus, St. Paul, Chicago, Louisville, Boston, New York, Des Moines, Seattle, Oakland. It has not been back to the city in general. In every instance it has been back to historic neighborhoods within the city. City governments that allow their historic neighborhoods to disappear through demolition, neglect, commercial encroachment or abandonment preclude themselves from being beneficiaries of a future back-to-the-city movement.

While we’re on the subject of neighborhoods, we might as well come face-to-face with another issue preservationists are unfairly saddled with—gentrification. Yes, preservationists encourage reinvestment, renovation, and relocation to historic neighborhoods. But not through the displacement of existing long-time residents. Preservationists understand better than anyone that the real character and quality of neighborhoods come from people, not buildings.

When solutions have been developed to prevent displacement, those solutions have almost always come from preservationists. In Savannah, Cincinnati, Indianapolis, and elsewhere preservationists have found ways of bringing in new people, new money, and new businesses without displacing the residents who for too long struggled alone to maintain their neighborhood and its sense of place. It is time we acknowledged that for our communities to be reborn we have to have economic integration—and our historic neighborhoods provide the best environment for that to happen.

Historic preservation has become more about creating healthy communities, rather than simply restoring buildings.

Photo: National Trust for Historic Preservation
But I think we have to ask ourselves why the Standards exist at all and I think it is to assure the quality and the integrity of the structure when the work is done. There are those who have suggested that a somewhat lesser standard be applied when dealing with low-income housing preservation projects. But what does that say? That low-income people won’t know the difference? That low-income people won’t care? That certainly hasn’t been my experience. If procedures, policies, interpretation, or the Standards themselves need to be changed to make residential rehabilitation work better, let’s change them—but change them for all of us, not develop a lower standard for the poor.

There’s another bit of economic silliness we are barraged with—that historic districts reduce property values. In researching my book, The Econom-
Among their other arguments is that land-use controls discourage long-term economic development. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. Today quality of life is the single most significant variable in economic development.

Think about it. Since quality of life is the significant variable for economic development, and since the physical environment is a major element of the quality of life criteria, there is no greater threat to sustainable economic growth than the elimination of those community-based enactments whose sole purpose is the protection of that physical environment whether it is built or natural. In the name of real estate rights these myopic fast buck artists are the ones dooming the economic future of our communities—not preservationists, environmentalists, and our allies.

Many of you first became involved in preservation as a result of a threatened or
completed demolition. What about the economics of that? Well, in real estate development perhaps the most important single element is flexibility—you need to maintain as many options as possible for as long as possible. When a building is standing—even if empty and unused—you have four options: do nothing; stabilize the building and warehouse it; rehabilitate; or tear it down. But once the fourth option is taken, the other three are eliminated forever. You can always tear a building down—that choice is never eliminated—but once a building is razed other choices no longer exist. And stabilizing and warehousing a building is nearly always a cheaper alternative than demolition.

Let me give you a small example. A city I visited recently spent $1.8 million acquiring a vacant 1920s hotel. Now they are preparing to spend another million to tear it down—even though their own engineering study says that they could spend $400,000 and stabilize the building indefinitely. The city manager says demolition is an act of fiscal responsibility. They are going to end up with a piece of vacant ground that will have cost them over $100 per square foot in a neighborhood where you can buy all the vacant lots you want for less than $15 a foot. That has all the fiscal responsibility of the Pentagon’s $600 toilet seats.

I think there’s something to learn from Italo Calvino’s book *Invisible Cities*. In it Marco Polo is describing to Kublai Khan the various cities of the Khan’s vast empire. In depicting the city of Trude, here is what he tells the Khan:

“If on arriving at Trude I had not read the city’s name written in big letters, I would have thought I was landing at the same airport from which I had taken off.

The suburbs they drove me through were no different from the others, with the same little greenish and yellowish houses. Following the same signs we swung around the same flower beds in the same squares. The downtown streets displayed goods, packages, signs that had not changed at all. This was the first time I had come to Trude, but I already knew the hotel where I happened to be lodged; I had already heard and spoken my dialogues with the buyers and sellers of hardware; I had ended other days identically, looking through the same goblets at the same swaying navels.

‘Why come to Trude?’ I asked myself. And already I wanted to leave. ‘You can resume your flight whenever you like,’ they said to me, ‘but you will...”
arrive at another Trude, absolutely the same, detail by detail. The world is covered by a sole Trude which does not begin and does not end. Only the name of the airport changes.’”

It seems to me that the most powerful argument for historic preservation is to avoid having the “world covered by a sole Trude which does not begin and does not end.” In economics it is the differentiated product that commands a monetary premium. If in the long run we want to attract capital, to attract investment to our communities to have community rebirth, we must differentiate them from anywhere else. It is our built environment that expresses, perhaps better than anything else, our diversity, our identity, our individuality, our differentiation.

In this world, in this time when far too much is framed in the zero sum game of “for me to win, you have to lose,” it’s worth looking at how different from that historic preservation is.

Historic preservation is the single economic development strategy that doesn’t require the rust belt to lose for the sun belt to win; isn’t prosperity in the big city built on poverty in the small town; doesn’t have to take away jobs in the north to create jobs in the south.

Historic preservation is an economic development strategy where reaching economic development goals doesn’t mean sacrificing community development goals.

In fact, more than that. Whenever historic preservation is economic development, community is developed—whenever historic preservation is community development, the local economy is developed.

Since this is a conference about reservation economics and since we are in Boston, it is appropriate to give the last word to the great Harvard economist John Kenneth Galbraith. Here is what he writes:

“The preservation movement has one great curiosity. There is never retrospective controversy or regret. Preservationists are the only people in the world who are invariably confirmed in their wisdom after the fact.”

And your wisdom, fellow preservationists, is being confirmed daily. FJ

Are There Too Many House Museums?

RICHARD MOE

When I wrote “Are There Too Many House Museums?” more than a decade ago, I hoped it would begin a serious conversation that would cause people around the country who love these places to reflect on what the best course might be for such sites in their own community. I must confess I have no idea the extent to which that conversation has occurred, or whether it has affected the direction of specific sites.

What I do know is that there are still thousands of historic house museums in the United States, mostly run entirely by dedicated volunteers, which are financially strapped, struggling for visitors, and badly in need of repair. The latter point is critical because it goes to the heart of stewardship, which is what owning a house museum is all about. And the number of such troubled places has to be growing because the competition for charitable contributions in a sluggish economy as well as for entertainment and educational opportunities in a digital age has multiplied exponentially.

So the basic points I tried to make in the original article have taken on even greater urgency if communities are to do right by the places they have already determined to be important. If a private owner can provide essential stewardship to such a place by investing in its physical well-being while maintaining its integrity, that’s a huge thing. And historic houses that are returned to residential use—it was, after all, their original purpose—can still be opened to the public occasionally and appreciated by the community.

At the very least, many if not most historic house museums need to rethink and expand their purpose if they hope to remain viable. Aside from places of exceptional historic or architectural distinction, the old “velvet rope” strategy is increasingly deadly and ultimately bound to fail.

Most sites need to find ways to become more relevant to the community by becoming gathering places for purposes other than the site itself. Happily, there are growing numbers of sites moving in this direction. Among the most successful in my view is Sotterley Plantation in Southern Maryland which has made itself not only the focal point for the history of the region but an attractive venue for events of all kinds. Served by a dedicated board and able staff, it is thinking creatively and executing effectively to remain relevant and viable for years to come. Sotterley and other sites like it can serve as models for other house museums if their stories can get around.

During my years at the National Trust there was no greater institutional challenge than addressing this question at our own historic sites. We began the process and it continues today.

It’s essential that everyone think outside the box on this critical question if we are serious about the concept of stewardship of historic sites in the 21st century.
For many people, the terms “historic preservation” and “house museum” are virtually synonymous. While this perception unquestionably represents a narrow and inaccurate view of what preservation today is all about, there can be no question that house museums constitute the bedrock of the American preservation movement.

The saga of the establishment of a typical house museum—often involving a lengthy struggle to rescue the property from the threat of demolition or the neglect of insensitive owners, to restore and furnish it with some degree of authenticity and within the limitations of a tight budget, and finally to administer and interpret it as an icon of historical significance, patriotism, and good taste—has been a staple of preservation history and folklore ever since Ann Pamela Cunningham led the national campaign to save George Washington’s Mount Vernon in the 1850s.

The successful Mount Vernon campaign established a pattern that has since been followed by hundreds of preservation groups. As a result of the dedicated labors of these grassroots activists, almost every American community of any size can boast at least one—and quite often more than one—house museum. Many of them serve as shrines to the memory of the Founding Fathers or other notable political and military leaders. Some are primarily showcases for impressive collections of furnishings and decorative arts. Others offer a tantalizing glimpse of the lifestyle of the very wealthy. Still others simply present a generalized (and often heavily romanticized) view of The Good Old Days.

At first glance, they are both diverse and diverting. On closer inspection, however, the distinctions among them may begin to blur, and the frequent visitor is often left with a single overwhelming impression: There are so many of them.
The situation in microcosm is prominently displayed in the Philadelphia neighborhood of Germantown, whose streets and lanes offer a vivid visual record of three centuries of architecture and history.

Founded in 1683, Germantown grew into a prosperous semi-rural suburb dotted with the summer homes of 18th-century Philadelphians anxious to avoid the yellow fever epidemics that occasionally ravaged the nearby city. Later, the completion of a commuter rail line spurred a new wave of construction, lining the community’s streets with proud houses—many of them built, like their Georgian-era predecessors, of handsome local stone—in a range of Victorian styles.

Germantown’s fortunes, like those of many urban neighborhoods, suffered a sharp decline in the post-World War II decades. Today, despite sporadic revitalization efforts, a number of vacant, dilapidated storefronts mar once-proud Germantown Avenue. In residential areas, blocks of stately houses on well-kept lawns are interspersed with pockets of poverty and weedy vacant lots.

In some ways, Germantown is similar to many older neighborhoods in large eastern cities. In other respects, however—such as the richness of its history and the extent to which tangible evidence of its past has survived—this community is unique. Among the things that set it apart is this: Scattered throughout the relatively small confines of 21st century Germantown is a remarkably extensive collection of historic house museums.

Among the houses currently—or until recently—open to the public are:

- **Wyck**, begun in 1690 (thereby earning the distinction of being the oldest building in Germantown) and “modernized” by famed architect William Strickland in 1824;
- **Stenton**, the home of William Penn’s secretary, James Logan, now maintained by the National Society of Colonial Dames of America;
- **Loudoun**, which boasts a handsome Greek Revival portico and a fine interior described by a Frommer guidebook as being “full of Hepplewhite and Queen Anne chairs”;
- **Grumblethorpe**, a rather plain 18th-century house that was occupied by generations of the Wister family;
- the **Deshler-Morris house**, which served as a “summer White House” for George Washington and his family in 1793 and is now administered by the National Park Service as a unit of Independence National Historical Park;
Most are individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Over the years each has benefited from the expertise and dedication of numerous owners, artisans, preservation and museum professionals, volunteer docents, and supporters. Some are recognized as a genuine asset to the community, and each is a valued link to an important era in Germantown’s—and America’s—past. Despite their impeccable pedigree, however, a number of Germantown’s house museums are struggling. Some are open only a few days a week, and attendance figures are far from impressive. Plagued by chronic underfunding, most have an extensive backlog of deferred maintenance needs and find it difficult to attract or retain qualified professional staff. Perhaps even more distressing, many of these handsome houses have only a limited connection to the community around them: As the economic, social, and ethnic makeup of the surrounding neighborhood has changed, these places have become anomalies, mere relics from a distant past that is
perceived as having little relevance in the day-to-day lives of many of the people who now call Germantown home.

Sadly, the plight of Germantown’s museums is by no means unique. All over the United States, in cities, towns, and rural areas from Maine to Hawaii, scores of historic houses open to visitors—whether administered by large public agencies or small volunteer groups—are barely getting by.

The question, rarely spoken and perhaps heretical, is nonetheless obvious: Are there too many house museums?

While the question may seem simple, finding a valid answer involves asking additional questions.

**HOW MANY ARE THERE, ANYWAY?**

To begin with, it’s difficult to get a handle on exactly how many house museums there are. Since they range from large, well-known cultural icons that welcome hordes of visitors annually to small, mom-and-pop operations that are open only sporadically and are not affiliated with any professional organization, merely enumerating them is a challenge. A 1988 state-by-state survey conducted by the National Trust estimated the number at close to 6,000—but of course, that figure, even if it was reasonably accurate at the time, is now outdated.

The issue is sufficiently vexing that the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) has appointed a committee to document the number and condition of the nation’s house museums. For now, Jim Vaughan, vice president in charge of the National Trust’s own collection of historic sites, notes, with some amusement, that “popular wisdom” among many museum professionals holds that the number of house museums has doubled since 1976—a factoid that is neither definitive nor helpful, since no one knows precisely how many such institutions existed in 1976.

**ARE THEY TOO MUCH THE SAME?**

Whatever their number, there can be little argument that the current crop of house museums suffers from a distressing sameness. The vast majority of historic sites open to the public represent a single building type: the house. Museums that interpret other aspects of American life—industrial, commercial, and religious buildings, for instance—are few and far between. Moreover, most house museums fall into a single category of historic resources that is often flippantly described as “the homes of dead rich white guys.” While many of these museums have great significance to the community and, in some cases, to the entire nation, their overwhelming dominance in the field leaves entire segments of the American population—including women, ethnic groups such as African-Americans and Hispanics, and people who are neither rich nor famous, to mention only a few examples—woefully underrepresented.

Recent additions to the National Trust’s collection of historic sites represent an attempt to address this issue. The Gaylord

**WHATEVER THEIR NUMBER, there can be little argument that the current crop of house museums suffers from a distressing sameness.**

Building in Lockport, Ill., for example, is a 19th-century commercial building that now accommodates both income-producing tenants and interpretive exhibits that describe the building’s role in the development of the Illinois & Michigan Canal. The Lower East Side Tenement Museum is a gateway to understanding the lives of the immigrants, most of them poor, who struggled to make a life...
for themselves in early 20th-century New York. And the Touro Synagogue in Newport, R.I., added to the Trust’s collection just last year, functions as both a historic site open to the public and a place of worship for an active religious congregation.

While these and similar museums represent a long overdue step in the right direction, we are still a very long way from what should be our ultimate goal as preservationists: the establishment and operation of historic sites that truly represent the American experience in all its diversity.

DO THEY COST TOO MUCH?
As every homeowner knows, it costs a great deal of money to keep a house—particularly an older house—in good condition. With the added expense of conserving and insuring a collection of furnishings and artifacts, dealing with the wear and tear caused by visitors, and providing salaries and benefits for staff, the cost of owning and running a house museum can represent an enormous and never-ending drain on the finances of any organization.

Some organizations are able to keep their heads above water only by postponing needed repairs or by making their museums available for special events such as weddings and banquets. The latter practice may lead to conflicts between the practical need to raise dollars and the professional obligation to maintain high curatorial standards, while the former is practically guaranteed to turn minor problems into major ones.

Perhaps even more alarming, the constant pursuit of funding for museum operations may force an organization to make tough (and often untenable) choices. Faced with the need to fix a leaky museum roof, the organization may have to skimp on the development and expansion of other outreach programs and services—such as conducting a survey of historic resources, operating a revolving fund, rallying public support for preservation-friendly legislation, or sponsoring educational programs. The cause of preservation is not well served, to say the least, by an organization’s failure to support and strengthen the work of community residents who are working to save their heritage.

IS THERE A BETTER WAY?
With the best of intentions, preservationists too often think of conversion to museum use as the best—or even the only—means of ensuring the preservation of a significant historic house. In fact, allowing the house to remain in, or return to, private residential use may be a better option.

The recent history of the Lee Boyhood Home offers an instructive example. Located on a quiet street in Alexandria, Va., just across the Potomac River from Washington, D.C., the house was where Robert E. Lee spent most of his childhood before entering West Point in 1824. Considered a “crown jewel” among the city’s historic sites, the property was open to the public for more than 30 years under the auspices of the Lee-Jackson Foundation. Then, early in 2000, the foundation startled the community by announcing that it was no longer able to care for the house adequately and had therefore sold it to a local couple, Mark and Ann Kington, who planned to restore it as their private residence.
Caught by surprise, the community initially reacted with alarm. Facing strong criticism from some members of the public and the Virginia attorney general, the Kingtons agreed to sell the property to a qualified nonprofit group, and an independent panel of prominent preservationists was appointed, under the auspices of the National Trust, to screen applicants. Only two organizations applied, and the panel determined that neither was able to handle the purchase and restoration of the house (which had an estimated price tag of $4 million) and its ongoing operation as a museum. The Kingtons were given the go-ahead to proceed with their plans, and restoration of the house is currently underway. Proceeds from the sale of the house’s furnishings will support programs of the Historic Alexandria Foundation.

During its years of ownership of the Lee Boyhood Home, the Lee-Jackson Foundation did its best to be a good steward but found itself financially unable to provide the care the property needed and deserved. The new owners, who have placed an easement on the house, will not only correct the current structural problems (which include, according to the Washington Post, “a leaky roof, cracking walls and an infestation of termites”) but, as residents, will also have a vested interest in ensuring that it is well maintained in the future. They have also agreed to open the house to the public from time to time—perhaps during Alexandria’s annual garden week, on Robert E. Lee’s birthday, and on other occasions.

With what appears to be a “happily ever after” ending, the story of the Lee Boyhood Home refutes the fallacy that nonprofit management of a historic house is somehow superior to, and therefore preferable to, private stewardship. What really matters is finding a solution that best addresses the long-term interests of the property and the community, and financial resources are almost always the biggest factor in that solution. Even though they operate with the noblest of intentions, nonprofits are often unable to stretch their budgets sufficiently to meet the property’s needs. Private ownership becomes a viable—even preferable—option when there is a sympathetic owner who is willing to commit resources to the stewardship of the house and to impose an easement to ensure that significant architectural features are protected.

That’s exactly what happened in Alexandria, and the result is a scenario in which everybody wins: Private owners have made a generous financial commitment to the restoration and maintenance of a significant historic building, preservationists have the assurance that the future of a treasured community landmark is secure, and a local preservation organization has received an infusion of cash to support its programs. It’s a model worth emulating elsewhere.

Stepping across the threshold of a house museum has brought history alive for millions of people—and, in the process, given many of them their first introduction to the concept of historic preservation. These sites have served the public and the cause of preservation well. With careful thought about ways to broaden their appeal, improve their representation of the diversity of American life and culture, and maximize their effectiveness as educational venues, there is every reason to believe that they can continue to serve us well in the future. FJ

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In the five years since the Greenest Building article first appeared, a great deal has changed. While there has been significant progress integrating historic preservation into initiatives promoting green building and sustainable communities, unfortunately the most dramatic development has been unproductive and discouraging. The emerging culture change that I so hopefully pointed to in 2007 has devolved into the culture wars of 2012!

First, the progress: In most quarters, the sustainability community is coming to recognize the importance of existing and historic buildings and to respect the expertise residing in the historic preservation field. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has contributed substantially to this “maturing” relationship.

The Trust has engaged the United States Green Building Council (USGBC) to raise awareness of existing and historic buildings and to modify green building rating systems to more appropriately reflect their value. While this process is arguably still in its infancy, its significance should not be underestimated. The Trust co-sponsored with the National Center for Preservation Training and Technology (NCPTT) the Pocantico Symposium where five principles were articulated to recast historic preservation objectives in sustainability terms. And perhaps most importantly, the Trust’s Preservation Green Lab published its groundbreaking study (The Greenest Building: Quantifying the Value of Building Reuse) that demonstrates in great detail the technical, not just philosophical, truth behind my oft-quoted proposition that the greenest building is one that is already built.

There are many other examples of progress. In university historic preservation programs around the country, students are turning their attention to the inherent green attributes of historic structures. Professional literature on sustainable preservation now fills...
an entire shelf in my library. (Of particular note is the authoritative volume by Jean Carroon, FAIA: Sustainable Preservation, Greening Historic Buildings.) The National Park Service has appended the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards with the Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings. And most importantly, the portfolio of successful sustainable preservation projects has multiplied many times over.

However, in 2007 I believed there was growing evidence that a corner had been turned. I saw that as a nation, we were beginning to face the challenges of climate change by seizing the opportunities of sustainability. But instead, over the last five years the United States has entered an era of gridlock and ever more strident proclamations about true American values. Where once political correctness meant navigating the shoals of gender and ethnic sensitivity, today it means denying overwhelming scientific evidence of the human causes of climate change in the name of respecting alternative explanations. Parallels to the decades of debate over the health risks of tobacco are obvious.

If there were no consequences to such willful ignorance, I would simply leave it alone. Unfortunately, the stakes could not be higher, especially for historic resources. While this disingenuous debate rages across the airwaves nationally, at the local level nearly every coastal city struggles to formulate both emergency and long range plans for “adaptation” to the impacts of climate change, impacts that threaten many of the most beloved historic places in the United States of America. There is no way for historic preservation advocates to sidestep the debate. If we truly value our heritage, it is time to defend it against forces that threaten it, even if we offend fraudulent political correctness in the process.

A page has turned. In decades hence, 2006 may well be regarded as the year when the national discussion about the future of our cities, perhaps our civilization, changed from a debate over whether human impacts on the environment are leading to potentially severe problems to one focused on what we can do to diminish and even reverse them. Halleluiah!

Evidence for this supposition is widespread. Certainly, Al Gore’s Oscar-winning film, An Inconvenient Truth, has been singularly important in raising public awareness and defining environmental stewardship as a fundamental trait of American patriotism. Today, preventing climate change is the rallying call for millions, not just the environmental intelligentsia. There are hundreds of examples of how deeply our sense of national purpose has transformed. My profession accepted the Architecture 2030 Challenge laid down by Ed Mazria at the 2006 AIA National Convention to cut in half fossil fuel consumption in architect-designed buildings by 2010, yes 2010, and create carbon-neutral buildings by 2030 (thus the name). Green building is maturing. “Green Buildings and the Bottom Line,” published by Building Design + Construction states the business case for green building, documenting increases in productivity, performance, and profitability and reductions in risk, insurance premiums, and financing costs. Green has
found its way into the boardroom.

However, this growth process is far from complete. Largely, the green building movement remains blind to its most troubling truth: We cannot build our way to sustainability. Even if, with the wave of a green wand, every building constructed from this day hence has a vegetative roof, is powered only with renewable energy sources, and is built entirely of environmentally appropriate materials, sustainability would still be far from fully realized.

Seeking salvation through green building fails to account for the overwhelming vastness of the existing building stock. The accumulated building stock is the elephant in the room: Ignoring it, we risk being trampled by it. We cannot build our way to sustainability; we must conserve our way to it.

Consider the numbers. The U.S. Department of Energy maintains a database of America’s nonresidential buildings, its Commercial Building Energy Consumption Survey. As of its latest update in 2003, there are some 65 billion square feet of nonresidential buildings in the U.S. According to economic projections reported by Architect magazine in 2006, a prolonged building boom of historic proportions will produce an estimated 28 billion square feet of new construction by 2030, an increase of more than 40 percent. The report also notes (almost as an aside) that during the same period, more than 54 billion square feet of the existing nonresidential building stock, about 84 percent of it, will undergo substantial modification.

Picture it this way: Four out of every five existing buildings will be renovated over the next generation while two new buildings are added. Can sustainability be achieved if our green vision extends only to new buildings, ignoring the enormous challenges of existing buildings and communities? After two decades working to promote green building within the architectural and environmental policy sectors, I believe that it is up to the preservation community to call attention to the elephant in the room.

**SUSTAINING THE EXISTING BUILDING STOCK**

About 6 percent of the existing building stock was constructed before 1920. This small slice contains America’s best-loved historic buildings, the “poster children” of historic preservation. From a green design viewpoint, this segment also includes those structures built before the introduction of climate-control and lighting systems powered with fossil fuels. There is a wealth of traditional, vernacular, and indigenous structures that deserve close study, by preservationists and green building professionals alike.

Another 11 percent of the nonresidential building stock consists of mid-20th-century buildings constructed up to the close of World War II. Building technology began to change rapidly during this period, turning away from traditional construction materials and methods and dramatically increasing the complexity of mechanical and electrical systems.

The buildings that make up these two, older segments of the building stock gar-
ner by far the most attention from preservationists. Over the past four decades, tried-and-true conservation treatments have been developed that employ remarkably efficient methods to sustain these traditional structures. Preservationists are justified in heralding these achievements as sustainable in their own right. Indeed, we need to make a much more methodical effort to measure, document, and report the effectiveness of preservation as a green building strategy based on the work we have accomplished with these core elements of the historic building stock.

However, it must also be acknowledged that the buildings preservationists most frequently address represent a very small percentage of the entire stock. Preservation will become more relevant to sustainability by expanding the scope of the buildings we conserve. In my view, this expanded role should be paralleled by a shift in priorities among preservationists toward neighborhood revitalization models, where ordinary buildings are embraced for their contribution to a larger context. I see it as emphasizing more of our Main Street preservation culture.

THE MODERN-ERA BUILDING STOCK
By the sheer force of numbers, preservation will have to address a much larger building stock when modern-era buildings become more fully the stuff of preservation. The buildings of the 1950s, ’60s, ’70s, and ’80s constitute more than half, about 55 percent, of the existing nonresidential building stock in the United States, a whopping 36 billion square feet. In part, the postwar building boom was made possible by new design attitudes, ones that emphasized the new building forms and the application of new technology over traditional building types and craft.

Modern-era architecture is markedly different aesthetically from its traditional predecessors and generally performs very differently as well. Both preservation and green building advocates readily agree that modern-era buildings present greater challenges to both disciplines. Preservation professionals have begun to wrestle with the problems of modern-era structures, including their construction using materials and assemblies that often lack durability and their absolute reliance on equipment that consumes fossil fuels.

This large and problematic segment of the building stock is going to require new thinking about both preservation and green building. I see it as both a challenge and an opportunity. In practical terms, the quantity of the modern-era building stock dictates that we find ways to use these buildings far into the future. Their (lack of) quality requires that we find efficient yet effective ways to transform them, elevating their performance to sustainable levels.

The need to transform the modern-era building stock is an important point deserving more elaboration. Quite frequently, with the preservation of 18th-, 19th-, and early 20th-century buildings, we endeavor to retain or restore their original function as well as fabric. Repairing operable windows, shutters, and awnings on a Victorian house in a historic neighborhood overarched with 100-year-old trees is so obviously a win-win for both preservation and sustainability. The character of a historic resource is preserved and effective weather- and climate-responsive devices are returned to their intended function. But it is hard to discover such win-win scenarios with many, if not most, modern-era buildings. Far too frequently, the windows never
For both preservation and green building professionals, it is absolutely critical to study in detail and truly appreciate the characteristics that define the existing building stock. The preservation community needs to invest more resources into this endeavor. Even a brief overview makes it obvious that the scope of the challenge is monumental and that the issues we must tackle together are complex and varied. Although emerging green building principles and practices must be duly credited for identifying solutions to many of the unintended consequences of the industrial age, we cannot ignore the necessity to both preserve and transform the buildings and communities we already live in.

WHAT IS SUSTAINABLE, REALLY?

If preservation is going to make a valuable contribution to sustaining our communities, it needs a deeper understanding of what constitutes sustainability. In today’s “green marketplace,” where green claims are made about virtually every product and service, clarification is required. What makes clarity most elusive is that our perspective on sustainability is evolving so rapidly. Take recycling as an example. Most everyone recognizes that recycling is an effective and productive sustainable strategy, which it is. However when recycling is studied in more detail, it becomes apparent that things are not as simple as they seem. Much of what is called “recycling” is more accurately “down-cycling,” where high value materials are cycled down to low-value ones. While this approach may divert millions of tons of waste from landfills today, how many more cycles can these materials endure into the future? With the expenditure of energy, glass bottles can be recycled into glass bottles time and again; however, plastic
bottles are reduced to a pulp material that can only be formed into the most elementary objects. Can it be said that both examples of recycling are sustainable?

What is sustainable, really? There is no easy answer. Study the partnership between The Natural Step and Interface Carpets. For more than a decade, Interface has been leading a revolution in the building products industry. It has conducted perhaps the most complete analysis of its products and processes of any company in history. Yet Interface is still looking quite far into the future, 2020, to realize its mission of eliminating all negative impacts on the environment.

Both scientifically and culturally, we simply don’t know everything we need to know to say with authority what constitutes sustainability. Then how does the preservation community proceed toward sustainability? I believe there are three fundamentals which translate directly into new directions that will help bring preservation into partnership with green building.

As biological creatures we are, literally, one with the environment. To appreciate this best, study the work of Dr. David Suzuki, who documents in scientific terms our direct connection with nature’s four elements: earth, air, water, and energy. What we do in the environment, we do to ourselves. To create sustainable communities, we must fully appreciate that they are seamlessly part of the natural world.

To paraphrase architect and industrial philosopher William McDonough: “Being less bad is not being good.” Today, we are taking the first steps toward sustainability, reducing our “environmental footprint” by consuming less energy, releasing fewer harmful substances, and increasing the efficiency of technology. Such retooling is important; however, sustainability goals must reach beyond doing less harm. To be sustainable, human activities need to increase the vitality of the planet, not diminish it. Increasingly, green building professionals seek regenerative solutions that restore the natural environment. We need to break through to new plateaus. Why can’t buildings produce safe, affordable, reliable, and renewable energy instead of consuming fossil fuels? Why can’t buildings harvest rainfall and recharge aquifers with drinkable water instead of releasing “stormwater” and “wastewater”? (Listen to the language!)

Over the past decade I have coined a phrase: The greenest building is…one that is already built. Many who hear me say it assume that I am being metaphysical. I’m not. In the same way that the wisdom of indigenous cultures taught David Suzuki to see the links between humans and nature, preservation philosophy has sensitized me to see the value in the existing world, especially the built world. Taking into account the massive investment of materials and energy in existing buildings, it is both obvious and profound that extending the useful service life of the building stock is common sense, good business, and sound resource management. To fully capture the value of the existing building stock requires merging two disciplines: historic preservation and green building. It requires an understanding of how to respect and renew what is already here and a vision for where and
how to transform the legacy of the past into the promise of tomorrow.

**PRACTICING GREEN PRESERVATION**
The intersection between preservation and green building is becoming well traveled. Significant cross-pollination has occurred and the rate of collaboration is exploding. The inherently green aspects of historic and traditional buildings are being assessed and documented.\(^9\) Greening existing buildings, including important historic structures, is gaining recognition in green building circles.\(^10\) This body of work contains many exciting projects involving traditional buildings that protect their material and cultural value while significantly improving their energy and environmental performance characteristics. Many well-publicized examples are worth “Googling.”\(^11\) I leave it to you to explore.

**BUILDING LIFE-CYCLES**
As we conserve buildings, which treatments are undertaken is often determined by careful, even exhaustive, assessment of the conditions of each material and element. Buildings are complex assemblies. Conservators pick apart each assembly into its components and repair or replace what needs to be attended to. Following this process gives preservationists a very clear view of the life-cycles of buildings.

Life-cycle analysis (LCA) and life-cycle cost analysis (LCCA) are considered fundamental tools of green building. There are quite a number of well-developed LCA protocols for rating the cradle-to-grave performance and environmental impacts of construction materials and products.\(^12\) However, there are considerable obstacles to applying LCA to entire building projects. The number of variables is simply overwhelming. Few tools have been developed that even attempt to encapsulate all the elements of a building project into a single impact assessment.\(^13\)

For those of us with an ingrained preservation outlook, more frequently than not, we find the use of LCA tools in green building practice to be shortsighted and shallow. Even the most rigorous LCA standards ignore any after-use impacts other than demolition and disposal. What about restoration and renewal? Where is the work of preservation that gives buildings new life?

In my architectural practice, I am working to codify building life-cycles by drawing from preservation. The overall outline is a simplification of one posed in Stewart Brand’s thought-provoking book *How Buildings Learn*.\(^14\) The process begins with sorting building elements into four categories: structure, building envelope, interior elements, and systems. I have found this to be a workable list that differentiates building components according to their life-cycle.

Preservation teaches firsthand the practical limits of durability. Structural elements can, and really should, be constructed to last for a very, very long time. By code and for life-safety reasons, structural elements must be constructed for survivability, that is, the ability to survive fires, earthquakes, and storms. (Oh, add to the list terrorist attacks!) In most cases, when survivability is achieved, almost unlimited durability is achieved at the same time. Doesn’t life-cycle design suggest that there should be an intentional relationship between survivability and durability?

On the other hand, building envelope elements are exposed to weathering.
Periodic renewal is an unavoidable reality, ranging from simple routine maintenance, like painting, to more substantial reconditioning and selective replacement. Preservationists familiar with the restoration of traditional wood windows know every trick to restore their operation and material integrity with the most minimal means possible: a segment of rotted wood replaced here, a patch of glazing compound there, a broken pane replaced with salvaged glass that matches the characteristics of the original glass. Many of us have experience restoring 100-year-old windows through such straightforward means.

For preservationists, it is an absolute mystery why so many “high-performance” windows are designed without any consideration for their renewal. Such systems are sold as maintenance-free. In fact, they cannot be repaired. For example, today’s glazing systems are complex, multi-component assemblies. While their thermal and solar heat gain performance characteristics may be admirable, window assemblies made out of materials that last for hundreds of years (aluminum, glass) are doomed to early retirement due to “differential durability” problems, for example edge seals that fail in a couple of decades. A 20-year guarantee should not mean that a building element is guaranteed to need replacement in 20 years.

Currently, we are designing our first new-building project using an aluminum window wall system that allows the glazing stops to be removed, exposing the entire internal water management system. All gaskets and seals can be inspected, accessed, and repaired or replaced if needed. Even the frames’ thermal break elements can be replaced. You see, progress is possible.

**ENERGY PERFORMANCE**

Preservationists must accept the need to improve the energy performance of the existing building stock. We simply cannot ignore the fact that the electrical power that runs our buildings contrib-
Office has installed ground-coupled heating and cooling systems at two National Historic Sites where open land made the requisite well-fields practical. Over the past 20 years, green building practitioners have developed technologies that make changing the energy performance of existing structures achievable. Many preservationists are adopting them today. In my experience, energy modeling is the most powerful one. Energy modeling has become a routine step in our project development protocol. Energy models are simulation tools that predict the energy performance of a building using computers. The characteristics of the building are entered including climate data, building orientation and form, roofing, wall materials, and window sizes and types.

The performance characteristics of all energy-consuming systems are input, including mechanical systems, lighting,
and plug loads. Finally, operational and interior environmental settings are entered. The program predicts energy use around the clock and year. Energy simulations can be calibrated to provide amazing accuracy. Many scenarios can be simulated so that trade-offs between building alterations and system design can be tested.

Over the past few months, our office has used energy modeling to help design two very different preservation projects that serve as revealing examples of its use. The first project is the restoration of Eastern Market in Washington, D.C.18 The energy model showed that implementing a repair-in-kind approach to window restoration did not have an adverse impact on the energy performance of the building. Window “upgrade” scenarios were shown to reduce energy consumption by no more than 3 percent, nowhere near justifiable using an LCCA cost-benefit analysis.

The second project is the stewardship and greening of the American Institute of Architects National Headquarters Building, also in Washington, D.C.19 Quite to the contrary of the Eastern Market example, energy modeling showed that achieving energy goals was, essentially, impossible without making significant upgrades to window performance. Nearly 60 percent of the annual heat loss and gain is directly attributable to the window system. However, this does not necessarily require window replacement. We studied alternatives for achieving the required performance upgrades both with and without window replacement. Energy modeling gives us choices.

Energy modeling showed that a repair-in-kind approach to window restoration at Eastern Market in Washington, D.C., would not have an adverse impact on the energy performance of the building.

PHOTO: NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

A FINAL THOUGHT
“The earth is not given to us by our parents, it is lent to us by our children.”20

My professional immersion in preservation has revealed to me something about our culture that I believe to be of the very greatest importance in the pursuit of sustainability. Our culture is drunk on the new and now. This intoxication clouds our judgment, causing us to profoundly undervalue the legacy of our forebears. Clearly, preservation itself is a calculated reaction to our culture’s insensitivity to the past and to the vandalism that it has perpetrated in the name of progress. I am certain that all preservationists recognize truth in this observation.

Beyond regretting these blows to history’s legacy, my deepest concern is that our intoxication blurs our vision of the future. I worry that our culture equally under-appreciates the significance of our actions today on the future; not a distant future, but our children’s. As preservation teaches us all to better value the past, it is my hope and prayer that it also helps us to fully awaken to our responsibilities to the future. In my eyes, this is the unbreakable bond between preservation and sustainability.

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1 For information about Architecture 2030 founded by Edward Mazria, AIA, go to www.architecture2030.org where his speech laying out the 2030 Challenge can be downloaded.


Detailed Tables, Table B1. Summary Table: Total and Means of Floorspace, Number of Workers, and Hours of Operation for Non-Mall Buildings, 2003, can be found on the internet at www.eia.doe.gov.


6 For information about the sustainability program adopted by Interface Carpets, go to www.interfaceinc.com/goals/sustainability.

7 David Suzuki is a prolific writer and lecturer. The David Suzuki Foundation website is a good source of information about his activities promoting the science of sustainability, at www.davidsuzuki.org.


9 For a good sampling of recent green preservation articles, see the APT Bulletin Special Issue on Sustainability and Preservation, 36, no. 4 (2005), Mount Ida Press.

10 Two widely recognized sources for green building case studies are the American Institute of Architects Committee on the Environment Top 10 Green Buildings (www.aiatopten.org) and the United States Green Building Council Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System Project List (www.usgbc.org). Both green building lists include quite a few existing building projects including historically designated ones that demonstrate the best practices in green preservation. However, I cannot help but note that neither list specifically acknowledges building reuse and historic projects in their database.

11 Google these four projects which present an informative spectrum of green preservation: Draper Hall at Berea College by Sim Van Der Ryn, Jean Vollum Natural Capital Center (Ecotrust headquarters) in Portland, Ore., by Green Building Services, California College of Arts and Crafts (former Greyhound Bus Maintenance Facility) in San Francisco by Leddy Maytum Stacy, and Chicago Center for Green Technology by Farr Associates.

12 Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) tools are largely targeted at products and, more specifically, the impacts associated with their manufacture and use. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) have developed the Building for Environmental and Economic Sustainability (BEES) software tools for rating environmental performance, in essence the “official” U.S. government LCA tool.

13 In my experience, the most comprehensive LCA system to address entire building projects is the Environmental Impact Estimator (EIE) program developed by The Athena Institute, a Canadian nonprofit organization. Athena has applied EIE to two existing building renovation projects, testing contrasting approaches to assessing the value of reusing buildings: “benchmarking” and “avoided impact.” It should be noted that even the EIE does not capture the life-cycle implications of future building renewal regimens.


15 I have shamelessly borrowed this point from Michael Jackson, FAIA, with the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

16 Headquartered in Germany with U.S. manufacturing and distribution, Schuco International KG produces an aluminum window wall, curtain wall, and skylight system that can be taken apart down to the structural frame and fully reconditioned by inserting new gaskets and other weatherizing inserts. Go to www.schuco-usa.com for more information.

17 QUINN EVANS | ARCHITECTS has installed ground coupled heating and cooling systems at the Monroe School in Topeka, Kans., the Brown vs. Board of Education National Historic Site, and the Ulysses S. Grant National Historic Site in St. Louis, Mo. Ground source systems provide heating and cooling by passing water through a series of wells extending into the earth which maintains a constant temperature year-round only a few feet below its surface. Electricity, generated using fossil fuels or nuclear power throughout most of the U.S., is used only to power pumps and fans. A far greater power need for chillers and boilers is eliminated.

18 QUINN EVANS | ARCHITECTS has prepared recommendations for the rehabilitation of Eastern Market in Washington D.C., Washington’s only remaining 19th-century market building and one of six remaining buildings designed by Adolph Cluss. The energy model showed that adding insulation to the roof is the only envelope improvement that would have measurable results.

19 QUINN EVANS | ARCHITECTS has prepared recommendations for the greening of the American Institute of Architects Headquarters building designed by The Architects Collaborative (TAC), founded by Walter Gropius. Quite to the contrary of the traditional architecture of Eastern Market, the continuous ribbon windows at AIA make window upgrades a matter of the greatest necessity.

20 SokaGakkai International, War and Peace, From a Century of War To a Century of Hope, UN Department of Disarmament Affairs, attributed as a “Kenyon Proverb.”