Imagining a More Inclusive Preservation Program
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**Cover:** Meridian Hill Park, Washington, D.C.  
**Photo:** PEPPER WATSON

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n deciding to join the Cabinet and serve as the nation’s 50th Secretary of the Interior, my friend and beloved colleague, the late Hawaii Senator Daniel K. Inouye, impressed upon me that the position of Interior Secretary was one of the most important in government because the Secretary was the keeper of the nation’s history and heritage.

Inspired by Senator Inouye’s counsel, and based in part upon my own life experiences, I committed my efforts at Interior to take advantage of the department’s unique abilities and authorities—and responsibility—to tell the full, more inclusive story of our nation’s rich and diverse history and cultures. We therefore launched action plans to include chapters of the nation’s history and cultures that have yet to be appropriately recognized and preserved. For example, with the full enthusiasm and leadership of the National Park Service and National Park Foundation, we established the American Latino Heritage Initiative to increase public awareness, engagement, and support for the national parks and historic sites that celebrate and tell the story of Latino history and culture in the U.S.

We also launched efforts to expand the preservation and promotion of the sites, stories, and contributions of our nation’s women to the country’s history, culture, and society, and of the Asian-American and Pacific Islander community. We continued to strive to protect Native American cultural sites and to highlight African-American history.

The purpose of these efforts, however, is not to promote one aspect of our nation’s history and culture over another. To the contrary, the purpose of these efforts is to enhance and promote a greater understanding and appreciation of our diverse, complex history. Plymouth Rock,
Jamestown, and Paterson Great Falls define America. So, too, do the Indian Pueblos and burial mounds, Ebenezer Baptist Church, Fort Monroe, Nuestra Senora Reina de la Paz, Stonewall Inn, and Angel Island.

The United States is not an old country by European or Far East standards. But what we may lack in antiquity, we make up for in other, historic human achievements and endeavors. The United States has the most incredible history of the coming together of numerous cultures, and of the accomplishments and advances made possible within our unique American society, that have awed and inspired the world’s peoples of all cultures and ethnicities for generations.

Throughout our nation’s complex history, one aspect has always remained clear and consistent—there are many faces of America. As a country of immigrants, this diversity has and will continue to lend great strength to our nation.

The ongoing strength and stability of our country is dependent upon its citizens from all backgrounds feeling invested in and having a stake in the nation. Recognizing and celebrating the contributions of all our constituent parts to the making of the rich fabric of American history is an important part of this investment.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation and its partners are critical to keeping alive our diverse history. The challenge—and opportunity—is to identify suitable monuments and moments of our history and to financially sustain their acquisition and preservation. Given the record and legacy of the National Trust and others in the preservation movement, I have every confidence that we will achieve a more perfect union of our country in the preservation, recording, and promotion of the full history of the United States of America. FJ

KENNETH SALAZAR is the former Secretary of the Interior and former U.S. Senator from Colorado.

Click here to read more articles from the Preservation Leadership Forum blog about efforts to create a more inclusive preservation program.
Diversity in Preservation: Rethinking Standards and Practices

VINCE MICHAEL

At the 1993 National Preservation Conference in St. Louis, I did my first presentation on diversity in preservation in a session that sought to answer the question: How do we get more people of color and inner-city dwellers involved in preservation? My answer was: Wrong question. They are involved. I chronicled a long list of efforts by Landmarks Illinois in Chicago to that date, including my experience with the North Kenwood community, which I wrote about in the *Future Anterior* journal in 2005.¹ The question was more appropriately, how do we integrate our efforts with theirs? This is the same question National Trust President Stephanie Meeks has been asking more recently—how do we reach out to local preservationists?

Those efforts I chronicled on the South and West Sides of Chicago in the 1980s and 1990s were limited by preservation standards like integrity and practices that focused on architectural design. Twenty years later, as vice-chair of the National Trust’s Diversity Task Force, I have been working with the National Park Service to identify how standards and practices might be changed to recognize more diverse historic sites.

In particular we need to consider how integrity is determined; how the period of significance is defined; and how the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards are applied.

JUDGING INTEGRITY

At the 2013 National Preservation Conference in Indianapolis I was part of a Diversity in Preservation Conversation Starter with National Trust Trustee Irvin Henderson and Ray Rast of Gonzaga University. We were tasked with revisiting and discussing prevailing notions of significance, standards, integrity, and criteria. Ray Rast described his challenge surveying and documenting sites associated with labor organizer Cesar Chavez. He commented that he kept running...
into issues of integrity, which generally means that a structure retains essential physical features that allow it to convey its historic identity.

There are three problems with how we judge integrity. The first is the word itself, which was adopted when we created the National Register of Historic Places in 1966, largely because the international word “authenticity” seemed too problematic. In fact, it is the opposite. In international practice, the process of preservation defines authenticity in a culturally specific way, allowing a broader analysis of significance beyond simply the visual and architectural. “Integrity” is a legacy of the visual, formal, and architectural focus of the preservation movement over time. The Depression-era HABS program, the creation of the Society of Architectural Historians in 1941, and the first “lists” of architectural landmarks in American cities were all defined architecturally.

The second problem, as I learned from Ray Rast, is that integrity is an on-off switch. Either a property has integrity or it does not. In academic terms, it is Pass-Fail. But why not A, B, C, D, F? Because integrity reflects the incremental changes that take place over time.
(including restoration), it should naturally be a gradient or continuum, like A, B, C, D, E, F. As soon as you try to apply this to practice, it works easily. That building has lost its cornice and been resurfaced, so I give it a D+. If they restore the lobby maybe it is a C and put the cornice back and you get a C+. Steel, beef, butter, and beans are graded: why not historic buildings?

The third and most crucial problem is that integrity is defined architecturally even if the significance of the property is not architectural. How do you measure how well a property conveys historic significance that has little to do with architecture? Where Lincoln died, or where the Declaration of Independence was signed, for example? All sites of historic significance require interpretation, yet we judge their ability to convey significance by the same standards we use for sites exemplifying great architecture or craftsmanship. Shouldn’t the sites listed under Criterion A for History have a different relationship to integrity than those sites listed under Criterion C, where their significance really is contained in their architectural fabric?

The presence of vacant lots raised questions about the integrity of the Black Bottom District, a predominantly African-American neighborhood in Russellville, Ky., during the National Register nomination process.

PHOTOS COURTESY KENTUCKY HERITAGE COUNCIL
Marty Perry, National Register coordinator for the Kentucky Heritage Council, argues that the way to deal with integrity is not by changing the standard but by following a practice rooted in the nature of significance. Preservation is a process whereby a community determines what elements of its past it wants to bring into the future. For Perry, the question isn’t “Is there enough materials and design to raise the yes flag,” but rather “How does this neighborhood, in its current physical conditions, transmit the messages that are valuable in knowing this neighborhood, and its people, and what’s important about their lives, and the lessons we want to recall about them for our own lives?”

Perry described how this played in the Black Bottom District in Russellville, Ky. This significance of this historic district encompassed the African-American experience from slavery through Jim Crow. African-Americans had been constrained economically and geographically; in the 1920s and 30s they ended up having to build homes in the flood-prone areas of town using cheap materials. In the 1970s and 80s the neighborhood suffered from the classic inner-city problems; demolition was used as a strategy to deal with urban crime and poverty. Perry sought to include that history—vacant lots and all—as part of the National Register nomination. As he puts it, “What testifies to that [history] better than a vacant lot where a house once stood?” He noted that these later demolitions were actions that followed the district’s historic patterns of racial and economic inequality. This position did not sit well with the National Park Service in the first version of the nomination, and the authors revised the nomination, changing the demolished properties from “contributing” to “non-contributing” sites.

PERIOD OF SIGNIFICANCE
The Kentucky example also brings up the standard of “period of significance,” which can affect both architecturally and historically significant sites. Park Service staff responded to the vacant lot argument by asserting that demolition occurred after the period of significance. The major problem with “period of significance” is that it reverts too quickly to the architectural significance: initial design
and construction. In fact, many buildings achieve significance a generation or more after their initial construction.

Initial construction may be an incorrect measure of the period of significance even when the significance is architectural. Andrew Dolkart wrote a great book called *Row House Reborn* that chronicled the intensive remodeling of Manhattan rowhouses in the 1920s. He argued that the remodeling was equal or greater to their original form.4 I found several of these houses in Chicago as well, and in both cities they were concentrated in historic districts where people had been saving and rehabilitating homes from the 1920s onward. These altered buildings convey a story of a grassroots rehabilitation movement much more effectively than restored Victorians because you can see the transformation that occurred over time.

In 1990 the City of Chicago landmarked the Chess Records Studio at 2120 S. Michigan Avenue. At these studios, Howlin’ Wolf and Chuck Berry recorded classic rock and roll standards, including “Johnny B. Goode,” the only rock song to travel with Voyager II beyond the solar system.5 The building was a 1911 automotive parts facility that was heavily altered in 1957 when the Chess brothers moved in. The period of significance was 1957 to 1967, so restoring the building to 1911 would harm its ability to convey its significance. The end result was a compromise, the second floor went back to 1911 terra cotta and the ground floor retained its slanted steel 1950s storefront.

**APPLYING THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR’S STANDARDS**

A third challenge to our traditional standards and practices, rooted as they are in the practice of architectural design, lies in the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, which in practice are more than simply ten, long sentences, but have been interpreted through book-length Guidelines over many decades.
Shortly before I joined the National Trust Board of Trustees in 2006, I was asked to judge a case in Milton, Wis., where a debate over Standards 3 and 9 and the terms “reconstruction” and “rehabilitation” led to a building addition that displeased just about everyone. Everyone expected a reconstruction but exigencies forced a compromise that was awkward in both its modernity and contemporaneity. The building followed the ground plan of the original, but its tilt-up concrete panels and lack of ornament contrasted with the historic models and early photographs.

Moreover, the building had architectural significance as arguably the oldest concrete (poured grout) structure in the United States as well as historic significance as the only documented Underground Railroad site in Wisconsin. The historic significance of the Underground Railroad elevated Milton House to National Historic Landmark status in 1998, but the discussion of the addition was focused solely on the architecture.

Standard 3 warns against creating a false sense of history, while Standard 9 encourages new additions to be of “contemporary” design. When the Standards were created, “contemporary” design was in the Modern and PostModern idiom, whereas for the last 20-plus years “contemporary” design has often been formally identical to Queen Anne, NeoClassical, or Prairie design. I was shocked to visit Disneyland in 2012 and find that the “house of tomorrow,” originally designed in 1955 was now a 1910 Craftsman. Architect Steven Semes has made the effective argument that we would never allow a NeoVictorian addition on a 1960s Brutalist landmark—why do we allow the inverse?6

Do we need to change the standards, or can we simply refine practices as the Kentucky Heritage Council has done? As fellow panelist Irvin Henderson pointed out, there is a healthy give-and-take in the debates over integrity between the expert preservationists and the community activists: we don’t want either side to simply do what they want. At the same time, we need a more precise, sliding scale of significance that more appropriately grades and filters the concepts of integrity, period of significance, and contemporary treatment. I suggest that experts reflect their concept of significance through the contemporary international approach to
authenticity and expand their understanding of how the appearance of a place conveys its importance.

It is this final point that was the most intriguing in our conversation in Indianapolis. Rast noted that for most people, buildings don’t “speak” very coherently. The average person does not have the experience to “read” a building or judge its integrity or even know whether it was built in 1830, 1930 or 2009. Since most people in the professional preservation community do have this training, it is hard for them to “unsee” buildings, which communicate with them in a manner and depth they do not with most people. This was clearly at issue in the Milton case, where key local players could not “see” the building in the same way the SHPO could.

Thus there is a challenge for historians and stewards to determine the most effective way of interpreting a historic or architectural landmark. We have certainly registered sites that have little physical fabric but a vital historic significance, or sites like battlefields and trails where associations of form and fabric are more natural than man-made.

There is always a desire on the part of those who value history to save a physical remnant. I recall well the sadness Chicagoans experienced when the apartment building Dr. Martin Luther King stayed in during his 1966 Chicago visit was demolished. Prominent civil rights activists visited the demolished site, which was a perfectly ordinary apartment building of a ubiquitous type found throughout the region. There was nothing special about it, but it was the only connection the people in Lawndale had to the most significant civil rights leader of a generation. Could this history be better preserved, better interpreted, more widely appreciated, if we had saved this building? How would we have saved it? Interpreted it?
We will continue to refine our approaches to preservation in light of the significant advances that have been made over the last 45 years in understanding, interpreting, and preserving the full breadth of the American experience. We need to continually challenge our standards and practices to insure that they incorporate the diversity of our national history and rich tapestry of our cultural forms. FJ

VINCE MICHAEL is the executive director of the Global Heritage Fund.


3 Ibid.


A Matter of Alignment: Methods to Match the Goals of the Preservation Movement

RAYMOND W. RAST

“The Secretary . . . shall establish or revise criteria for properties to be included on the National Register and criteria for National Historic Landmarks. . . .”
National Historic Preservation Act, Section 101

Over the past few years, I have worked with the National Park Service—and served the historic preservation movement more broadly—in three overlapping roles. As a consultant working on the Park Service’s César Chávez Special Resource Study, I analyzed more than 100 sites and properties associated with Chávez’s life and the farm worker movement he led. As a member of the National Park System Advisory Board’s Planning Committee, I contributed to the articulation of principles that might guide the Park Service into its second century of existence. As a member of the National Park System Advisory Board’s Latino Scholars Panel, I helped steer Interior Secretary Ken Salazar’s American Latino Heritage Initiative. Engaging in this work as a former Park Service employee, as a history professor at Cal State Fullerton, as the grandson of Mexican immigrants, and as a mentor to younger Latinos exploring preservation careers of their own, I found it to be stimulating, enlightening, and deeply gratifying.

I also found this work, at times, to be bewildering and frustrating. In recent months, with more time to reflect, I think I have figured out why. The goals and the methods of the historic preservation movement are no longer in alignment. On the one hand, growing numbers of
preservationists have embraced cultural diversity as a fundamental goal of the preservation movement. Indeed, our lists of protected places and our ranks as preservationists should reflect the diversity of our population. Given the acceleration of certain demographic trends in the 21st century, this is a goal to pursue with some sense of urgency. On the other hand, the fundamental methods of the preservation movement continue to spring from—and tend to contribute to—the designation and protection of properties (mostly old buildings) associated with prominent, white, male architects and their wealthy clients, just as they did for most of the 20th century. The goals of the preservation movement have evolved. The methods, for the most part, have not.

When Toni Lee surveyed the status of cultural diversity within the preservation movement for the Forum Journal in 1992, the topic was somewhat “edgy.” Today, Lee notes, inclusivity is “part of the mainstream of historic preservation goals and objectives.” The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, for example, has called for better means of “protecting properties associated with the nation’s diverse cultures.” The National Parks Second Century Commission likewise has championed a national preservation program that provides “a more representative picture of America,” including new protection for places that “broaden the diversity of our national narrative.” National Trust President Stephanie Meeks observes that despite some progress, “preservation’s demographics
are not yet reflective of the nation’s overall,” nor do our nation’s preservation programs “fully reflect all the narratives in the American story.” The National Park System Advisory Board envisions “a national system of parks, protected areas, and programs that fully represents and adequately protects our heritage . . . [and] reflects the breadth of our nation’s cultural experience.” NPS Director Jon Jarvis agrees that the Park Service bears responsibility for “tell[ing] the entire story” of the American people.¹

These recent appeals and vision statements actually recapture the spirit of inclusivity that shaped the National Historic Preservation Act (1966) and, arguably, the Historic Sites Act (1935) before it. Now almost 50 years old, the NHPA called for the preservation of our “historical and cultural foundations” and our “irreplaceable heritage,” including tribal and native Hawaiian heritage, for the benefit of “the American people.” The Historic Sites Act called for the preservation but also the restoration, reconstruction, and rehabilitation of sites, properties, buildings, and objects of national, historical, or archaeological significance. Such efforts would inspire and benefit “the people of the United States”—not just some of the people, of course, but all of the people. The Park Service’s first chief historian, Verne Chatelain, thought the selection of sites under the Historic Sites Act “should make it possible for us to tell a more or less complete story of American history.”² These visions were ambitious. They also were fundamentally democratic.

To their credit, our leading preservation organizations and agencies have taken steps toward the goals of inclusivity and diversity on our lists and in our ranks. The National Trust, for example, offers grant funding, workshops, and other support for the recognition and preservation of culturally diverse places. The Trust also supports the work of diversity scholars through conference programming, travel funding, mentoring, and networking opportunities. The Park Service similarly manages a Cultural Resources Diversity Program, which offers internships, mentoring, and publications that celebrate diversity in preservation. More recently, the Park Service has launched several diversity initiatives, beginning in 2011 with the American Latino Heritage Initiative. Boosted by funding from the National Park Foundation (and building, to some
extent, on the work of the *Chávez Special Resource Study*), this initiative has included the production of a theme study aimed at a broad audience, two youth summits, six new National Historic Landmark nominations for properties associated with Latino history, the development of a National Register travel itinerary, and the identification of new properties that might merit National Register nominations. The Park Service’s Asian-American Pacific Islander Initiative and Women’s History Initiative, launched in 2012, are likely to include similar components.³

**OBSTACLES STILL REMAIN**

These initiatives hold tremendous potential, but a survey of past initiatives suggests that they will face significant obstacles, including some from within the preservation movement. In the 1970s, an African-American history initiative produced 61 successful National Historic Landmark nominations. Park Service historian Barry Mackintosh, however, later complained that this remarkably productive effort brought “damage to the integrity of the landmarks program” because the African-American consultants who prepared the nominations “had little regard for the concept of site integrity and the significance of the relationships between the sites and their subjects.” In the 1980s, the California Office of Historic Preservation identified 500 properties associated with the state’s Native American, Mexican-American, African-American, Chinese-American, and Japanese-American communities. The OHP failed to use the survey

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Since 1992, the National Trust's Diversity Scholarship Program has made it possible for community leaders new to preservation to attend the National Preservation Conference. Pictured here are attendees at the 2013 conference in Indianapolis.
in any systematic way, and many of the buildings identified by the survey have since been demolished. In the 1990s, Page Putnam Miller directed a women’s history initiative that produced 70 NHL nominations, only 41 of which were successful. Echoing his past comments, Barry Mackintosh complained that contributors to this project sought special treatment for “disadvantaged minority groups and women,” he insisted that the nomination process was rightfully “time-consuming and difficult,” and he suggested that the NHL program should continue to take its cues from “traditional elite-oriented scholarship” rather than “modern scholarship.” Around the same time, Judith Wellman led an effort to produce National Register nominations for 11 properties associated with the history of the Underground Railroad in New York, but the effort was thwarted by the fact that the integrity of these properties had been diminished. Wellman blamed “strict definitions of integrity” for the difficulty in listing or designating “historically important sites relating to economically, politically, or socially marginalized Americans.”

Each of these initiatives has its own unique history, of course, but a larger pattern seems evident. For several decades, members of diverse communities have been drawn to the preservation movement. They have advocated, launched, and invested time and energy into efforts to make our lists of protected places more representative of the American people. They have faced considerable obstacles and worked to overcome them. Despite their efforts and accomplishments, however, the percentages of places that are protected because of their association with communities of color or with women remain abysmally low: less than 8 percent of roughly 87,000 listings on the National Register and less than 3 percent of roughly 2,500 National Historic Landmarks. For all of their promise, these past initiatives barely moved the needle.

Why is this the case? Why are listings for places associated with communities of color and women (and LGBTQ communities) outpaced by other listings? And why are growing numbers of young preservationists—especially those from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds—now keeping their distance from “the preservation movement”? Certainly, a part of the answer to each of these questions is tied to recruitment. If more people from diverse backgrounds
wrote nominations, we would see more diversity in our preservation programs. Yet we also have to consider the matter of alignment between the goals and methods of the historic preservation movement. If the goals of the preservation movement are still tethered to the celebration of prominent architects and the preservation of architectural styles, construction materials and methods, and the relationships between buildings and their surroundings, then listing and designation standards should continue to prioritize those things. If, however, the goals of historic preservation are now reconnected to a more inclusive, democratic impulse—the drive to “tell the entire story” of the American people—then listing and designation standards need to be changed.

THE PROBLEM OF “INTEGRITY”

The standard that is the most out of alignment is “integrity,” which the National Park Service defines in four or five different ways. While the NHL Program defines integrity as “the ability of a property to convey its historical associations or attributes,” for example, the National Register Program defines integrity as a property’s ability “to convey its significance.” The Park Service measures integrity in seven familiar categories: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. This means, at least for the NHL Program, a property with integrity of “association” will be able to convey its “associations.” Circular definitions aside, the Park Service’s working understanding of integrity seems to revolve around a property’s own ability to “convey” why it is important.

In his essay, Vince Michael touches on three of the reasons we should rethink our reliance on integrity as a standard. First, the concept itself originated in response to the specific needs of architectural preservation during the 1930s and 1940s, and it perpetuates a discipline-specific approach to what is now, in many ways, a much broader effort. Second, there is no agreement, even within the Park Service, whether integrity should be measured as an absolute or on a continuum. Third, although the means of measuring integrity continue to serve the needs of architectural preservation, they often fail to meet the needs of historic preservation, the
preservation of archaeological sites, the preservation of traditional cultural properties, and the preservation of intangible heritage.

The means of measuring integrity also often fail to meet the needs of a preservation movement seeking diversity on its lists and in its ranks. As preservation advocate Ned Kaufman has argued, our listing and designation standards “contain unintentional biases against diversity. A thorough audit will help to identify and correct them—starting with the integrity standard.” The problem with integrity, Kaufman notes, is that “many important historical experiences did not take place in buildings that have survived intact but, rather, in open fields, barrios, labor camps, union halls, social clubs, street-front churches, bunkhouses, tenements, cabins, factories, and docks. As building types, all of these have been highly susceptible to alteration and demolition.” Protection for such properties that lose some integrity yet manage to survive, Kaufman concludes, “is essential for preserving immigrant and working-class history.”

From a practical standpoint, Kaufman’s observations make a lot of sense. If we want to preserve more places associated with working-class communities, communities of color, or other diverse populations, and any of our standards work against the preservation of places associated with those groups, we should reconsider our use of those standards. My deepest reservations about the integrity standard, however, spring from my own professional work as a historian, my interdisciplinary approach to the study of the past, and my ongoing conversations with younger preservationists who embrace a social justice perspective.

**THE HISTORIAN’S APPROACH**

My training and my work as a historian make me question whether any site or property can “convey” its own historic significance, no matter how much integrity it has retained. I do not deny that grand cathedrals and soaring skyscrapers can make emotional impressions upon their visitors, and I recognize that those who are conversant with architectural practice can stand in front of certain buildings and appreciate the architectural achievements they embody. As a historian, however, I find it difficult to accept the proposition that any property *itself* can convey to any visitor anything about the
historical experiences or events that happened in it, around it, or because of it. A historian would never try to understand the historic significance of a property simply by visiting it. A historian would conduct research using scholarly sources, archival sources, oral history interviews, photographs, maps, and so on. A historian would interpret that research, contextualize it, and draw conclusions.

Even if historians did accept the premise that properties with sufficient integrity could “convey” their own historic significance—that they could “speak” to visitors directly and obviate the need for research and interpretation—we would not automatically devalue properties that speak less clearly, seem to whisper, or seem not to speak at all. Admittedly, earlier generations of historians did ignore voices that seemed to be quieter, even silent, in the historical record: the voices of women, Native Americans, enslaved Africans, working-class immigrants, the poor, and almost anyone else other than wealthy white men who were prominent in politics, business, or the military. We now know that the stories we tell about the past are not complete if we only pay attention to the loudest voices. Historians have learned to listen more carefully, and we have learned to be more creative. We have moved beyond a strict reliance on documents, especially the documents produced by wealthy white men, but we also have learned the value of reading those same documents more closely, searching for clues about the historical experiences of marginalized groups. We now recognize that the quieter voices, the whispers, and the silences themselves reflect important stories, too, including stories of adaptation and survival. Buildings and other properties reflect the same kinds of stories.

Using a different analogy, we might consider what would be done with a newly-discovered journal kept by a historically significant person—say a journal that César Chávez might have kept during the 1950s, as he was emerging from the Mexican-American community of East San Jose as an advocate for civil rights and labor rights. If this hypothetical journal was tattered and torn, and some of the pages were loose or missing, an application of the Park Service’s integrity standard would focus attention on what had been lost and the reasons not to protect what remained. A historian,
conversely, would point out that the information the journal does contain would be no less valuable, just because the journal itself had lost some degree of integrity. Preservation is a means to an end. We would not preserve Chávez’s journal only if it rounded out some esoteric collection of pristine mid-century journals, we would preserve it because it would be an important source of information, a valuable vehicle for education, and, for many Americans, an authentic connection to a wellspring of inspiration. A social justice perspective would only heighten the sense of urgency. The journal’s fragile condition would not weaken the case for preservation—it would help make the case.

Like other listing and designation standards, the integrity standard has an important role to play in our preservation efforts, as long as it is recognized for what it is—a tool to be used with the broader goals of the historic preservation movement in mind. If we wish to protect a property that is significant because of its physical characteristics, then the presence or absence of those characteristics should remain a central factor in the decision to protect it. If a property is significant because of its historical associations, cultural resonance, or archaeological value, however, then the decision to protect it should be based on the strength of that significance. Either way, once the decision has been made, integrity again offers a valuable tool for indentifying the characteristics of the property that should be protected and a means of measuring how well we do, in fact, protect them.

Integrity thus should remain in our preservation “toolkit,” but a preservation movement that seeks greater inclusivity needs to recognize that its goals and its methods are no longer in alignment. If the preservation movement now embraces that democratic impulse to “tell the entire story” of the American people, then it

The Women’s Rights National Historical Park tells the story of the first Women’s Rights Convention held in Seneca Falls, N.Y., in 1848. Pictured here is the Elizabeth Cady Stanton house.

PHOTO: NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
should survey and select the best methods to reach that goal. Likewise, if the National Park Service truly embraces the role of “America’s storyteller,” it should recognize that many of America’s best stories are attached to humble places that have witnessed many changes and weathered many storms. Those places are part of our diverse national heritage, too. FJ

RAYMOND W. RAST teaches history at Gonzaga University.


3 “National Historic Landmarks Heritage Initiatives Progress Report” (2013), 6, 8, 10, http://www.nps.gov/nhl/publications/NHLHeritageInitiatives.pdf (accessed Jan. 27, 2014). The NHL Program has associated eleven NHL nominations with the Latino Heritage Initiative, but two of these nominations actually predate the initiative (including one I prepared in 2004). Of the other nine properties, three are significant for their association with Spanish American history.


The Path to Big Mama’s House: Historic Preservation, Memory, and African-American History

CLEMEN'T ALEXANDER PRICE

Over the past two years, in presentation after presentation, I have confessed that I am a recent convert to the importance of preservation in my professional life as an academic and public historian. As with far too many of my generation’s academic historians, historic preservation, its importance to the nation’s heritage notwithstanding, was until recently not a pursuit or passion.1 As time has passed, and I have joined historically-minded colleagues on the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, I have given thought to the deeper meaning of how, in subtle ways, the power of place, and a personal interest in preserving places and memories dear to me have shaped my and my contemporaries’ scholarship on the making and remaking of the nation.

Personal evolution has thus enabled me to connect the rhythms and changes in historical scholarship to historic preservation. I suspect that is probably not unusual. The past, in all of its complexities and ambiguities, is gradually revealed to us over time, hardly in one fell swoop. As we age, becoming more emotionally mature and intellectually sophisticated, we are able to take on more of history’s informative powers. We are better able to complicate the past, examining it through multiple lenses and from different, sometimes conflicting perspectives. This is especially true for readers, for those who travel the American landscape, and for those whose public and private lives are marked by diverse experiences and associations. As our ability to complicate our lives matures over time, building upon our storehouses of memory, we become, in a sense, historic preservationists by default.2

My journey to the presence of the past and the power of place, not unlike that of many others, begins with the oldest person in my family, my maternal grandmother, Lillian White Spann. She was born in Sumter, S.C., in 1888. She died in 1992, at the age of 104,
in Columbia, S.C. Her formal education did not extend beyond primary school. She was raised, not by her parents, about whom very little is remembered, but by Miss White, who apparently adopted her. From all that I have heard, and from all that I remember of her through the lens of my youth and early adulthood as a graduate student in American history, she was well-raised. That is to say, she was placed on a path that enabled her to survive, to take care of her heath, and to become the veritable matriarch of a remarkable American family.

I interviewed my grandmother in her home in Columbia in 1974. Because she was born in South Carolina at the end of the 19th century, in her youth my grandmother was surrounded by those who knew of slavery and of the dawning opportunities and challenges of the Great Emancipation. Those who surrounded her young life knew also of the hemmed-in world of segregation. Their lives unfolded during what was a stark period. That mattered to me, for as a historian I knew that slavery’s legacy was tenacious and that freedom, though preferable to enslavement, was bitter-sweet. What also mattered over the years when my life crossed hers was her home, at 1010 Oak Street in Columbia. The elder family members called it Big Mama’s House (long before a film of

Price family photo with Lillian Spann (Big Mama) with the author’s mother, Anna Christine Spann Price, James Price (far left) Clement Price, (far right) Alberta Jackson and her brother Doug, circa 1948.

PHOTO: CLEMENT PRICE
that name existed) and passed along to their children that honorific place name, which made us all appreciate old places and how such places gave meaning to being an extended family.

A NEW RECOGNITION FOR BIG MAMA’S HOUSE

The historic preservation movement has now caught up with Big Mama’s House. Though it is unlikely that 1010 Oak Street will ever make any credible list of historically significantly places, a new sensibility abounds within the historic preservation movement that is at once important and transformative. When we consider what historic preservation was a half century ago and what has become of it, clearly cataclysmic changes have been in the offing. Big Mama’s House and all the other places where anonymous Americans like Lillian Spann lived are ennobled by what these individuals went through and by what they left behind for us to save and remember.

Big Mama’s house was a simple bungalow, probably built in the 1920s. Its simple design belies the richness of a narrative stretching far beyond its modest architecture. During the 1950s and 60s, Lillian Spann created rental space to accommodate six to eight boarders, mostly men. My brother, James Leo Price, Jr., lived with her while he was a student at nearby Benedict College. His memories are more vivid than mine. He remembers the strict, almost Victorian standards of comportment our grandmother enforced, including respectable attire, proper speech, honesty, and restraint. That she purchased the house as a widow in 1931, and raised three of her children there, including my mother, sheds light on the aspirational ethos of early 20th-century black women. We now know that such women have until recently been largely excluded from American historical scholarship, which mostly centered on the male narrative of African-American history over the generation that followed the Great Emancipation. But these women were present in the daily struggles blacks waged to give meaning to freedom and freedom’s legacy by building places, purchasing places, and giving places a powerful connection to memory, what historian Deborah Gray White calls a recoverable past.

During the 1950s and ‘60s, 1010 Oak Street was at the center of a growing black community known as the Waverly Area. The
neighborhood was shaped by the early 20th-century black migration from rural places to cities, racial segregation, and the galvanizing energy of blacks more than a generation removed from slavery. Lillian Spann’s neighbors ranged from modestly yet upwardly mobile intact families to more hard-pressed folks who lived on the lower, unpaved streets that I saw from her backyard. This was arguably the first vista that influenced my early notions of class hierarchy in African-American communities during the Jim Crow era. As a youngster visiting my grandmother, spending time within the house and sitting with her on the porch, I witnessed black life unfolding as a litany of rituals and social practices. These were shaped as much by traditional cultural norms as by progress manifested within and beyond 1010 Oak Street.

Over time, Big Mama added modern conveniences—a paved driveway, more electric lights (which my father installed), a modern kitchen (of sorts), and a television. I bore witness to how the 20th century took hold of a woman born in the previous century, when such conveniences were inconceivable. The transition from the past to the present was gradual, with elements of the past remaining in place, the most important being a reliance upon memory. Big Mama spoke of the past as if it were yesterday’s news. So I heard much about her husband’s, my grandfather Sellers Spann, handsomeness, his gentleman’s gait. He had passed before I was born and yet he was a veritable presence drawn from my grandmother’s past and memory. She spoke, too, and often, about the post-emancipation
black people of her birthplace in Sumter, of their individual and collective strength, those God-fearing people who stuck together through adversity. She remembered traditional African-American fealty to family and to the centrality of home, hearth, and church.

What I remember most vividly was the importance of the allocation of space in Big Mama’s House. Porch space was social space, open to all and a welcoming portal for passersby. The kitchen was her domain and, as I remember, where she sang and hummed traditional music of Negro Americans. The front parlor, where my parents were married, was customarily off limits to children, which made it forbidden space until I was quite grown. Even as I entered it just a few years ago when my family rededicated Big Mama’s house, I felt uncomfortable, as if I was not supposed to be there, but somewhere else in the house.

REVEALING THE STORY OF THE BLACK EXPERIENCE
The past generation of African-American historical scholarship examined the social lives of blacks and revealed places like Big Mama’s House, in churches, beauty parlors, and barber shops, and in shared experiences such as ceremonies of death, singing ensembles, and clubs. What took place at 1010 Oak Street has became identifiably a part of a vast experience wherein black Americans took advantage of their collective numbers in preparation for their greatest feat since the ending of slavery: the modern civil rights movement’s struggle against a hardened white-over-black system of exploitation and racial mythology. Places and spaces, like Big Mama’s house, their humbleness notwithstanding, now loom large in what matters in the way historians are deciphering what blacks did as free people. Beyond the black experience, such places connect very ordinary Americans with their personal histories and in turn, these histories connect with the larger narrative of the making of more perfect and yet complicated union.4

THE POWER OF PLACE
My essentialist “homecoming” to Big Mamma’s House exemplifies why the contemporary historic preservation movement is intensely meaningful to the power of place and how it coincides with powerful
memories of who, as individuals, we used to be and set us on a course leading into the future, which is now the present. The most important organizations committed to preserving and interpreting the places and spaces that give meaning to preservation—the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Park Service, and a constellation of other public and private organizations on local, state, regional, and national levels—have moved far beyond the old consensus view of preservation that eschewed the humble places where so many Americans learned of the power of place and memory.

Though I could hardly have known it at the time, visits with my grandmother at 1010 Oak Street during the 1960s coincided with the resuscitation of the contemporary historic preservation movement. That movement, as preservationist historian Robin Foster has argued “was born in an identity crisis, in which insecurities and anxieties festered amidst a rapidly changing and turbulent world.”

A particularly important part of that crisis played out in the way Big Mama’s House affected me. During the decade marked by a war, social unrest, assassinations, and demographic shifts, the identity crisis facing African-Americans, especially my generation, was marked at once by a thrust toward a full measure of civil rights and a tenacious clinging to group solidarity. As the modern civil rights movement unfolded, it discredited and substantially weakened racial injustice, legal segregation, and other legacies of the nation’s white-over-black social and political hierarchy. Only in retrospect has it occurred to me how powerfully my grandmother’s living space would shape my sensibilities as a historian and how interpreting or fully understanding such spaces and their communities would become the mettle of my life.

Big Mama’s House was a racialized place long before I studied such places and before scholars asked why such places are so powerfully connected to memory. As the Jim Crow era fades into a distant past, such places created in the years when memories of southern slavery grew faint yet segregation persisted are more than physical symbols of racial subjugation, more than enduring evidence of the nation’s mistreatment of its black citizens. Most significantly, they are harbors for memory and ritual. Admittedly,
the places that belonged to or catered to blacks that I saw as a child compared poorly with places for whites. That perception, through my youthful lens onto America, was the way in which so many black Americans understood race and place in the United States. It may be that the unsavory aspects of living a segregated life blurred my vision of the meaning of place. Or, put another way, the constant comparisons that black Americans make between majority privilege and minority disadvantage took its toll on the power of place in real time in my life as I sat with Big Mama on her front porch.

This bifurcated emotional, moral, and intellectual encounter with racial segregation and black group identity and self-awareness surrounded my generation like a cocoon. It was a backdrop for the enormous upheavals unfolding as I sat on Big Mama’s porch, as powerful transformations of a black world within a white world unfolded before me and other kids of the civil rights movement. During the 1960s and the decades that were to follow, historians complicated that tug over group identity and what W.E.B. DuBois once described as the black American’s simple wish “to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American, without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of Opportunity closed roughly in his face.”

Within the space of 1010 Oak Street, Lillian Spann helped me come to grips with the paradox of being an American outsider and an American seeking to become a part of the mainstream of contributing citizens. Within the confines of her humble, neat, and proper home I learned about the embracing realm of my family, its 19th-century moorings, the affection my grandmother had for her late husband, and, especially, her personal sacrifice and joy in raising five children.

Twentieth-century African-Americans, especially those of my generation coming of age during the civil rights movement and our elders who mostly knew of the nation’s racially drawn boundaries, have deep memories of a hemmed-in world. Of those black women, like my grandmother—southern born with savvy navigational instincts in the face of the larger society’s barriers—oral history scholars Anne Valk and Leslie Brown have written:
For the Jim Crow generation, then, girls and women learned a distinct set of expectations about their public and private actions, especially regarding how they should comport themselves around boys and men, other women, and their elders. Respectability was not just about manner and morals, although this discourse was always present. Rather, respectability was a way for black women to reclaim themselves, for it required taking ownership and control of one’s body and repelling unwanted advances. Indeed, in Big Mama’s house I witnessed the importance of etiquette, learned of the proper treatment of women, and respect for elders, all of which were woven into values and memories that well prepared me for adulthood and an academic and public life as a historian.

The places carved out during the Jim Crow era are now ennobled by the passage of time and the powerful memories they nearly bring back to life. While a broad section of black Americans, and now other Americans, hold the segregation era in low esteem, many blacks hold onto the figurative and actual paths that remind them of a seemingly simpler time and the safe havens carved out by their forebears, individuals like Lillian Spann. When I was growing up and on into my days as a graduate student, sitting in her kitchen or on her porch at 1010 Oak Street, especially with her at my side, was akin to a front-seat view of a precious world within a world.

Contemporary efforts of a host of organizations, agencies, and institutions involved in historic preservation are increasingly marked by a broadening respect for all sorts of historical narratives, memories, places, and sites. We are living through what historian David Blight calls “The Memory Boom,” a period notable for a surging interest in capturing through memory parts of the past long obscured by prejudice and an unsustainable historical...
record. These widening vistas of historical inquiry and historical memory give the historic preservation movement an opportunity to become “the next big thing” that will contribute to our democracy’s sense of its past and the essential dignity of the places, like Big Mama’s House, that contributed to it. FJ

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3 Earl Lewis, “Connecting Memory, Self, and the Power of Place in African American Urban History,” Journal of Urban History, (March, 1995): 347-371. I have benefitted from Lewis’ observation, “It is important to remember, moreover, that memory is the joint possession of the historian and the historical actor. Although some of us may be troubled by the current practice of self-reflection, we should not shy away from a full discussion of our roles as partial architects of the histories we write. ‘Objectivity’ and ‘subjectivity’ are not polar extremes along a continuum.”

4 For an important and insightful acknowledgment of how African Americans view the past and place it in their everyday lives, see Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 159-161, 200, 272. 220-224.

5 Robin Foster, The Age of Sail in The Age of Aquarius; Historic Preservation at New York’s South Street Seaport in the Sixties, Ph.D. dissertation in progress, Graduate Program in American Studies, Rutgers University Newark, p. 3.


7 Anne Valk and Leslie Brown, Living With Jim Crow: African American Women and Memories of the Segregated South (Palgrave MacMillan, 2010): 8-9. Dolores Hayden has similarly observed, “The city’s different ethnic groups have all had to deal with women’s economic roles and civil rights. They have all had to develop attitudes to upward mobility and assimilation, as well as to occupational segregation, economic hardship, and racial prejudice.” Dolores Hayden, The Power of Place, Urban Landscapes as Public History (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1995): 95.

A Developer’s Perspective: Embracing Diversity in Economic Development

LARRY CURTIS

Often people assume that preservation has one principal objective—to restore a building of perceived architectural quality to its once attractive physical state. They believe that historic preservation is simply about bringing buildings back to life. Yet this perspective neglects a crucial aspect about preservation. Buildings, and the surrounding communities, have a multi-layered history that goes beyond architectural styles and bricks and mortar. Buildings are icons of an era past and symbols of uses long gone—a textile mill in Massachusetts, for example, or an automotive factory in Illinois. On a broader scale, these historic buildings also represent the people that constructed them and the residents that lived or worked in them. Transformations of architectural gems have to happen within the context of the people involved with them—many times this involves a diverse group of Americans.

This article focuses on ways that the diversity manifest in the historic sites and programs of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Park Service, and the historic preservation community (organizations both local and national) can—and should—be integrated into the business and economic side of historic preservation.

As a developer of historic properties, my company WinnDevelopment, has made a commitment to understanding what makes a building historic and how this history relates to the people who built it, the people who labored in it, the neighborhoods that evolved around it, and the people who could or should be involved in rehabilitating it. In short—to make diversity part of our work at all levels.

Most people care about diversity and, by and large, opportunities exist for all. Sure opportunities exist, but are they practiced? Maybe not as much. An article in Massachusetts’s Commonwealth
Magazine in Fall 2013, for example, notes that less than 1 percent of partners at Boston’s premier law firms are minorities. Similar numbers and percentages likely exist among developers of historic properties; however, these figures are harder to come by. This lack of diversity permeates the construction industry in general and most of the historic industry, despite the fact that we all value diversity.

Our development company, WinnDevelopment, and our parent company, WinnCompanies, has focused for more than four decades on developing strong ties to the neighborhoods and communities we serve. One of our specialties is property rehabilitation and turnaround. Urban revitalization is important to us and we strive to better our communities by working with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and various state and local agencies. We are also experienced in acquiring and sensitively re-creating dilapidated historic structures into vibrant living or working spaces.

Although we are certainly not unique among for-profit developers in embracing diversity, we believe it is both good business and equitable to do so. For affordable housing developments, including rehabilitations of existing housing, new construction, or adaptive use of vacant historic buildings into housing (market or affordable), we take steps to make sure that our projects benefit those who live and work in the community.
At WinnCompanies we approach every project with the goal of building partnerships and promoting economic growth within the community. We work hard to engage businesses that have been under-represented in the real estate field. Often our properties are developed using federal and state affordable housing programs (such as Low Income Housing Tax Credits) and initiatives. Additionally, we strive to achieve a minimum of 15 percent, sometimes 50 percent minority and/or women employment. We also strive to have similar multi-million dollar expenditures and percentages for minority-owned business enterprises (MBEs) and woman-owned business enterprises (WBEs) and suppliers that we contract with. This ensures that a greater percentage of the historic redevelopment expenditures flow back to the communities in which the rehabilitated buildings are located.

SO HOW DO WE DO IT?

Long before WinnDevelopment solicits bids for construction, we reach out to local businesses, minority contractor associations, and community organizations to promote the project and encourage contractors to submit a bid. For example, at the historic Washington Park Apartments that we are currently rehabilitating in Boston, we requested help from the community in identifying local MBEs and WBEs. Since we are based in Boston, we were familiar with

WinnDevelopment reached out to local businesses, minority contractor associations and community organizations to encourage bids from minority- and women-owned business enterprises for the rehabilitation of the Washington Park Apartments.

PHOTO COURTESY WINNDEVELOPMENT
most of these businesses and have worked successfully in the past with them, but wanted to provide open access to the $12 million rehabilitation project, which would create approximately 100 construction jobs.

We invited minority- and woman-owned businesses to open forums, where they could learn more about the bid opportunity, and, in turn, where we could become familiar with their capabilities. We also hosted workshops on contracting opportunities and procedures, which can be daunting, if not overwhelming, to newcomers to the affordable housing industry. Third, we planned the timing of solicitor bid presentations, quantities, specifications, and delivery schedules in ways that facilitated M/WBE participation, all coordinated by our minority development partner and our minority construction representative services firm. Finally, when appropriate, we broke down the contract work items into smaller size scope units; these tend to be more economically feasible units, thus facilitating participation by the smaller, M/WBE firms. According to Wayne Montague, chairman of Wiggin Village board of directors and director of Community Relations at WinnCompanies, “By making a conscious effort to embrace diversity and inclusiveness, we have successfully combined various perspectives into one shared vision to improve the lives of the people that we serve across our communities.”

We have found that if material providers, subcontractors, and construction workers are from the community, we can make a better building and a better community. We believe that our record of achievement in this area is directly related to our success in the field of affordable housing development and historic development. Our commitment and our pride in partnering with M/WBE is reflected in the fact that more than half of the construction hours logged at Washington Park Apartments were by employees of M/WBE owned businesses and over half were minorities working on the project.

This type of commitment should become standard practice in the historic preservation industry. It could become an industry that provides opportunity for 10 percent, or even 20 percent of the
$3.5 billion of tax credit investment made each year, creating tens of thousands of jobs and livable communities. This should be the basis for conceptualizing, capitalizing, and constructing these historic developments.

How can industry groups and other organizations, like the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the National Housing Rehabilitation Association expand their current outreach to involve more diverse audiences? Here are few suggestions.

EXPAND HISTORIC DEVELOPMENT TO INCLUDE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

If the objective is to increase the number of diverse properties that are considered historic in order to truly encompass the American narrative and to revitalize economically depressed areas, then a new approach should be considered in order to encourage the rehabilitation of historic properties in lower income areas. For these communities to benefit economically, a broader definition of what makes these buildings significant could be applied; one in which their context is weighted more heavily. This could either be modeled after or combined with the Enterprise Zones used for defining New Markets Tax Credit Zones (NMTCs). This federal
program focuses on creating economic development in depressed census tracts. Having rehabilitated several historic buildings, I have witnessed the positive economic impact historic designation can have on a city or blighted area. One such example is the Pullman district in Chicago. Historic designation will help it become a magnet for rehabilitation and economic redevelopment, much like what has occurred in Lowell, Mass., where WinnDevelopment has developed numerous historic properties.

**BENCHMARK OFF OF THE AFFordable HOUSING INDUSTRY**

When the Tax Reform Act of 1976 was enacted, it created a tax incentive program for the rehabilitation of older buildings. This economic opportunity, the “business” of preservation, could be expanded further to encourage and incorporate minority participation. The affordable housing industry can be used as a prototype.

Since the creation of the federal *Low Income Housing Tax Credit* (LIHTC) in 1986, 1.7 million units of affordable housing have been created and more than $75 billion has been invested. From its inception, the industry has taken upon itself to create job opportunities for W/MBEs. This is based on the location of LIHTC developments. Although a great effort has been made by the industry to build affordable housing in middle-income and upper-income communities, most affordable housing is constructed in lower-income, often, communities of color. (LIHTCs serve individuals or families earning below 60 percent of the area’s median income, adjusted for family size.) For example, 45.6 percent of African-Americans and 44.2 percent of Latinos earn below 60 percent of median income nationally.

Affordable housing tax credits are allocated by state housing agencies on a per capita basis as determined by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Each state further sets the rules for such allocation, using a Qualified Allocation Plan—or QAP. Often such QAPs and/or the communities in which these properties are built (which often include some contribution of local funding and or real estate tax relief) provide for percentages of W/MBEs on a best effort basis. Sometimes they provide for the strict and absolute percentage requirements. For example, affordable housing developments in
Boston require 10 percent woman, 25 percent minority, and 50 percent City of Boston residents, employed in each trade at such properties. No such benchmark, goals, or thresholds exist in historic housing development. Adding such goals to a federal Historic Tax Credit redevelopment would go a long way to further opportunity for all. Perhaps such ratios could mirror the population in the communities in which a historic property is located. The National Park Service, through its historic credit, could promote jobs opportunities among minority and female residents of the community. The Part 1 (building significance) and Part 2, (work planned), and Part 3 (completed work) submission to the National Park Service could include an outline stating what is being done to better promote minority hiring.

**PROVIDE BONUS HISTORIC CREDIT FOR REACHING CERTAIN HIRING GOALS**

The federal Historic Tax Credit is computed at 20 percent of rehabilitation expenditures regardless of location, it is the same percentage on Park Avenue in Manhattan as it is in the most distressed areas of Detroit. While certainly “user friendly,” the current percentage doesn’t take into account project difficulty—economic, market, or otherwise—but it could. It could also provide bonus credits for historic development in certain economically depressed areas, additional credits for meeting certain job or hiring goals, or an increase in the percentage for certain high-impact projects. For example, in affordable housing, there is a provision for a 30 percent increase in low-income housing tax credits for property development in Qualified Census Tracts and Difficult Development Areas (QCT/DDA). Pending legislative bills exist in Congress to “tweak” the Historic Tax Credit (the CAPP Act). Perhaps such modifications can include bonuses for W/MBE hiring and for creating a clearer path for economic opportunities for all.

**CONCLUSION**

By and large, the federal Historic Tax Credit, and its administration by the capably led and able National Park Service, has been a
fantastic federal program that has been a major contributor to economic revitalization of our nation’s cultural resources, historic buildings, and cities. Arguably, it has been the most successful urban redevelopment tool nationwide.

An opportunity exists to build on this success by recognizing more buildings worthy of historic designation in more communities and to expand the minority workforce hours and minority developers and contractor opportunities. With advocacy from the historic preservation industry, self-imposed, and from the National Park Service, encouraged or mandated, more development firms can join us in achieving high minority and women engagement opportunities in the creative, powerful, and rewarding business of turning our neglected national treasures into vibrant icons of revitalized communities. FJ

LARRY CURTIS is president and managing partner of WinnDevelopment and director of its parent company, WinnCompanies.
Interviews with Diversity Scholars

Since 1992, the National Trust’s Diversity Scholarship Program has supported the attendance of community leaders new to preservation and emerging preservation professionals at the National Preservation Conference. More than 2,100 individuals from diverse socio-economic, racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds have participated in the program to date. Last year at the National Preservation Conference in Indianapolis, we interviewed six scholars to learn more about their work with groups historically underrepresented in the preservation movement, the role of intangible heritage in their respective community’s preservation practice, and how their work differs from how preservation organizations have traditionally approached preservation.

Scholars interviewed include:

Shawnrece Campbell
African American Museum of the Arts, Deland, Fla.

Vincent Hall
Living History Initiative, LLC, East Point, Ga.

Manuel Huerta
Los Angeles Conservancy, Los Angeles, Calif.

Warren James
Warren A. James Architecture + Planning, New York, N.Y.

Dora Quach
Asian Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation, Los Angeles, Calif.

Shayne Watson
Architectural Historian, San Francisco, Calif.

VIDEO
Click here to see interviews with Diversity Scholars.
In 1971, Carl Westmoreland, a young African-American leader in urban revitalization was the plenary speaker at the National Preservation Conference. Westmoreland had been instrumental in bringing back the primarily African-American neighborhood of Mount Auburn, using preservation to bring new life and energy to this faltering Cincinnati neighborhood. He spoke passionately about historic preservation and what a difference it could make for communities—all communities.

Westmoreland was soon invited to serve on the National Trust’s board of trustees, becoming the first African-American on the board. Thus began a long journey by the Trust and its preservation partners to change the face of preservation. And not just the faces of preservation—that is, bringing in more people of color and people representing diverse backgrounds—but the very definition of what is historic—moving past the grand homes of the wealthy and influential or buildings designed by well-known architects.

When organizations embark on such a journey, it generally involves committees and task forces, followed by recommendations and strategies, which lead to actual initiatives and programs. Efforts to broaden the reach of preservation at the National Trust were no different. Much of the diversity work of the National Trust has been guided by two entities in particular. In 1994 the National Trust board of trustees established the Committee on Cultural Diversity to make recommendations to increase diversity in the organized preservation movement. Then in 2001, the board of trustees approved the formation of a Diversity Council charged with enhancing and expanding the diversity of staff, board members, volunteers, and constituents, as well as the programmatic diversity in the preservation movement. These committees have included advisors, trustees, partners, Main Street, and Historic Sites Councils and at-large members.
We asked a few of the individuals who had been involved in these efforts to share their thoughts about past initiatives and what they envision for the future.

Tony Goldman, the visionary developer of historic properties, was one of the original members of the Diversity Council. Goldman died in 2012, but his widow, Janet Goldman, shared her thoughts and remembrances of Tony’s enthusiasm about participating on the committee. She says, “Tony’s drive was to discover, recover and bring into the light discarded or forgotten properties and people who had value. He was so genuinely motivated at the concept of forming a diversity council. All his life he saw people and places in technicolor. I remember his coming home and passionately talking about the opportunity to change the color and flavor of the old guard at the Trust and bring in people with new blood and diverse ideas and a new complexion to the organization.”

Mtamanika Youngblood, president and CEO of Sustainable Neighborhood Development Strategies in Atlanta, Ga., chaired the Diversity Council in 2002. When asked about what prompted the formation of the council, Youngblood notes that it was clear that many historic neighborhoods, most of them urban, were occupied by people of color. She continues, “There was also the recognition that, in addition to people of color, there were many preservationists

A student with YouthBuild scrapes paint on the column bases of the John Coltrane House in Philadelphia.
PHOTO: MELISSA JEST
in the gay community that we needed to be intentional about reaching out to and including in all aspects of the work of National Trust. At the same time, the National Trust’s membership was declining, and we recognized that there was the opportunity to boost membership within the aforementioned communities.”

Another member who eventually chaired the Diversity Council, Spencer Crew, the Robinson Professor of American, African-American and Public History at George Mason University, commented that the Trust realized it would be timely to make some internal changes. He says, “[The Trust] also needed to look at its own operation to insure that its staff and board presented a picture of diversity as well. The task of the committee was to look at both internal and external steps the Trust could take to become more representative and engaged in more wide-ranging and diverse projects.”

Crew explained that the committee served as the “conscience” of the Trust on issues of diversity and “was aggressive in pointing out where more needed to be done as well as suggestions for projects and goals which the Trust should embrace.”

Youngblood concurs. “The National Trust’s diversity committee sought to achieve a preservation movement that was inclusive and reflective of the diversity of America. We acknowledged that there was a need within the Trust and among its partners to insure that its people (leadership, staff and volunteers), places and programs
were also reflective of the diverseness of the country. The committee also wanted to ensure that we were ‘walking the talk’ about diversity by hiring a director for diversity who would help guide and support the organization as it undertook the effort to become more diverse.”

A former chair of the Diversity Council’s Education and Research Committee, Sue Fawn Chung, advisor emerita and professor of History at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, explains that the committee hoped to broaden the definition of what is considered historic to include sites representing more diverse cultures. She says “As the nation became more globally involved, and World Heritage Programs included treasured places in Asia, the Diversity Council Committee wanted to make certain that the meaningful historic sites valued by the diverse population of the United States were included in historic preservation, that the stories of these sites would be transmitted to future generations, and that their place in the development of American history would be recognized in the present and in the future. This was a movement away from the predominantly white historic places that have been saved toward a more inclusive view.

Chung noted that education was another goal. “The Diversity Council hoped to…preserve more diverse sites, educate American minorities about the importance of saving their valued or important sites, and build an appreciation of these sites to present and future generations. Since many minorities (racial, religious, and others) have little or no knowledge about how to go about preserving
places, one of the goals was to teach them (hence the development of the online course “Preservation 101” by the Trust). Another goal was to publicize the preservation work through lectures, museum exhibits, online guides of places to visit, etc.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The individuals who participated in these efforts—whether committees, councils, or task forces—enabled the National Trust to raise its own diversity competency. Fortunately, as the lead preservation organization, the reverberations have been felt throughout the preservation movement. Some notable accomplishments that came out of these various efforts include a diversity scholars/emerging preservation leaders program at the National Preservation Conference; the establishment of a director for diversity position at the National Trust; Main Street programs targeting inner-city neighborhoods; and conference sessions devoted to the preservation of LGBT, Latino, African-American, and Asian Pacific Islander American sites, to name just a few.

WORK STILL REMAINS

Committee members interviewed for this article agree that while the council made some good strides, the work is far from over. Youngblood says, “Leadership in the preservation movement needs to recommit to and make diversity a priority. There needs to be a continued push to find and deploy the resources to invest in the revitalization of low-income historic neighborhoods and places of color; as well as to continue and expand diversity initiatives within the National Trust."

Chung agrees. “Good strides have been made,” she says, “but this is a constant and ongoing commitment for the Trust...I believe diversity must be a central responsibility in the work assignment of all staff members. They must show how they are moving forward in
that area or face repercussions for not having made the expected progress. Without that commitment throughout the organization diversity will have a secondary role in the decision-making process of the Trust and represent a step backward.”

Janet Goldman offers some words of encouragement for the preservation movement going forward. She says, “To protect and preserve our young American history, we need to embrace the challenge and together revitalize our communities and each other. It’s our country, our community, our streets, and our pride. We are a rainbow Trust that breathes new life into old communities and uncovers the richness that made them important in the first place. That is what makes them and us relevant today.” FJ

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