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# CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship

Volume 7 Number 2 Summer 2010





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# Introduction

by *Barbara J. Little, Editor*

*CRM Journal* is particularly pleased to present the edited proceedings of “The Preservationist’s Eye: Esthetics in Reuse and Conservation of the Historic Built Environment” organized by the James Marston Fitch Charitable Foundation in September 2009. The viewpoint essays published here are each adapted from presentations in that symposium. John Stubbs provides background on Fitch’s influential career and describes the organization of the sessions. The impact of Fitch on research and teaching is clearly demonstrated here by the breadth of insight demonstrated in the array of essays written in honor of his legacy.

Fitch’s broad and deep thinking serves as inspiration today for the evolving sophistication of cultural heritage stewardship as it makes increasingly complex connections. Several contributions discuss intersections between preservation and sustainability, including the three pillars of environmental, economic, and social sustainability recognized as necessarily mutually supportive since the influential Brundtland Report was issued in 1987.<sup>1</sup>

Several of our viewpoint authors invoke ecological concepts to explore and explain the intimate connections between human actions and the natural world. Economic sustainability is clearly linked to the greening of existing buildings. Social sustainability, which is value-driven and relies on community participation, encourages new relationships between the professions and the public.<sup>2</sup> These essays help us understand how our surroundings are dynamic, not only because landscapes change and grow in complex ways, but because both public and professional perceptions and values change over time.

Fitch’s centennial celebration simultaneously inspires reflection on the past, engagement with the present, and hope for the future. This issue’s spotlight interview, article, and research reports each offer a fitting complement.

In 1949 Congress chartered the nonprofit National Trust for Historic Preservation to provide leadership for preservation in the private sector. Russell Keune interviews Terry B. Morton about her career, integral to the development of the Trust in its formative years, and reaching well beyond to wider preservation arenas. Her career as a preservation activist demonstrates her influential national and international commitment to historic preservation, all while maintaining a grassroots passion for neighborhoods and individual properties.

Through a selection of Fiske Kimball's own words, we gain insight into the early development of cultural heritage preservation in the U.S. National Park Service. Kimball successfully argued for the preservation of the Second Bank of the United States in Philadelphia and for archeological excavations on Jamestown Island in Virginia. John Sprinkle provides context for Kimball's memoir as well as extensive annotation.

The research report by Sam Sweitz considers the integral relationship between cultural landscape and community identity. He reports on multidisciplinary investigations into Puerto Rico's industrial heritage. Archival research, oral history interviews, and spatial analysis combine to document and explore how both company officials and inhabitants perceived of and used the landscape in the company town of Central Aguirre.

Describing a recent project undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Virginia Price illustrates questions embodied in the Holt House on the grounds of the National Zoo in Washington, DC. The Holt House embodies familiar and intriguing preservation challenges facing an extraordinary building whose surroundings have changed dramatically.

The contributors to this issue of *CRM Journal* speak to many kinds of connections, including those between cultural and natural heritage management, between people and their surroundings, and among the academic, governmental, and private sector partners who make preservation successful. Each offers a starting point to explore heritage as we perceive it, live with it, and manage it.

Too often historic preservation is perceived as looking only backwards, but the actions and attitudes which enable us to appreciate and care for our heritage are wholly invested in both the present and future. We want to enjoy a sense of place, connect with our surroundings, and live in communities that feel welcoming and enduring: all of which contribute to a sense of being at home, of belonging, and of having a legacy worth passing on.

## Notes

- 1 "Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future," World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987. Published as Annex to General Assembly document A/42/427, Development and International Co-operation: Environment, August 2, 1987.
- 2 The emerging importance of values-based preservation has been eloquently discussed in previous issues of this journal. See, for example, Dirk H.R. Spennemann, "Gauging Community Values in Historic Preservation," *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 3(2)(2006): 6-20; Randall Mason, "Theoretical and Practical Arguments for Values-Centered Preservation," *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship* 3(2)(2006): 21-48.

## In Honor of James Marston Fitch: The Preservationist's Eye: Esthetics in Reuse and Conservation of the Historic Built Environment

*by John H. Stubbs*

To celebrate the centennial year of the birth of architect, educator, historian, and preservationist James Marston Fitch, the charitable foundation that bears his name organized a symposium entitled “The Preservationist’s Eye: Esthetics in Reuse and Conservation of the Historic Built Environment” in September 2009.<sup>1</sup> The structure of the symposium reflected aspects of Professor Fitch’s famous “scale of possible participation in conserving the built environment” and specifically addressed the esthetic aspects of restoring and preserving architecture, the esthetics of designing for and conserving historic urban landscapes, and esthetics relative to architectural conservation science. These broad and diverse facets of cultural heritage protection held equal importance in Professor Fitch’s view, and formed the basis of his significant impact on American architectural history and on historic preservation in the United States.

### **A Summary Biography of James Marston Fitch**

James Marston Fitch was born in Washington D.C. on May 10, 1909, and raised in Chattanooga, Tennessee. His father, James Fitch, was a quartermaster in the U.S. Navy and later held clerical positions. His mother, Ellen Payne Fitch, came from a New Orleans family that had suffered severe losses in the Civil War. She rehabilitated and sold houses to supplement the family income and built the log house that was the family home. At the age of 15, Fitch graduated from high school and enrolled as an engineering student at the University of Alabama. In 1929, he attended Tulane University’s School of Architecture but financial circumstances forced him to leave after one year. He later was employed by the Herbert Rodgers interior design firm in Nashville as a designer of period style houses, one of which was a copy of Auburn, a famous Natchez plantation house. When the Depression brought such work to an end, Fitch worked for the Tennessee Valley Authority under wilderness advocate Benton MacKaye, director of recreational resources. The Tennessee State Planning Board subsequently employed him where, as director of population statistics, he produced detailed studies of the distribution of industry, highways, railroads, tenant farming, and the general economic determinants of population distribution. After a summer of study with housing and planning expert Henry Wright, Fitch moved to Washington D.C. where he worked for the Federal Housing Administration on establishing minimum standards for federally subsidized housing.

Fitch's first published article, "The Houses We Live In" (*Architecture*, vol. 68, pp. 213-218, October, 1933) came to the attention of Henry H. Saylor, editor of *Architectural Record*, who offered Fitch the editorial position that brought him to New York at the end of 1936. There he commissioned groundbreaking articles on architecture and landscape design and wrote anonymously himself on architectural trends. Drafted into the army in 1942, he was assigned to meteorology which led him to begin to focus on the connections between climate and architecture and to consider ways that building could benefit from or modify the impact of climate. This formed the basis for his first book, *American Building: The Environmental Forces that Shape It* (New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1948), which was a refreshingly holistic and insightful history of American architecture. Fitch's second key book appeared as *Architecture and the Esthetics of Plenty* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1961). It too was comprised of 18 remarkably well-written critical examinations of mainly American architecture. Its last three chapters—The Uses of History, The Critic's Shifting View, and The Esthetics of Plenty—offered in detail Fitch's bold opinions of the roles of architectural history, historical method, and the then-state of affairs of American architecture.

As an editor at *Architectural Forum* (1947–49) he met Jane Jacobs who became a lifelong friend, fellow activist, and influence on Fitch's thinking about urban conservation. In 1949, Fitch changed positions to serve as architecture editor of *House Beautiful* with the specific assignment of directing a "Climate Control" project. From 1950 to 1953, each issue of *House Beautiful* offered plans for "climate-wise" houses in different areas of the United States designed in consultation with a panel of experts in climatology.

In 1954, Fitch joined the faculty of the Columbia University School of Architecture. Courses in historic preservation were added at Fitch's instigation in 1964, and together with the architect and historian Charles E. Peterson, they established the first graduate program in the United States offering training in restoring and preserving historic buildings. The start of this program coincided with a growing public awareness of the devastation caused by the sweeping urban renewal programs of the 1950s and 60s and graduates of the program became leaders in the nation's growing preservation movement while Fitch became internationally renowned as a teacher, lecturer, and writer who advocated preservation of the historic built environment.

When Fitch reached Columbia's mandatory retirement age in 1979 he embarked on a series of new careers; he had already served as the first conservator of Central Park (1974–75); he set up a graduate program in historic preservation at the University of Pennsylvania; he produced the first comprehensive book on the subject, *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World* (Charlottesville, University of Virginia Press, 1982); and he became a partner and director of historic preservation in the architectural firm Beyer Blinder

Belle in New York City. Among the many restoration and rehabilitation projects he assisted the firm with were: the Museum Block at the South Street Seaport Museum, the Main Building at Ellis Island National Monument, Grand Central Terminal, and the restoration of the Cathedral of the Madeleine in Salt Lake City.

During the 1980s and into the 1990s Fitch continued to travel widely as a consultant and lecturer and to publish critical essays such as “Physical and Metaphysical in Architectural Criticism” and “Murder at the Modern,” in which he attacked Postmodern theory and what he regarded as a betrayal of the principles of modernism. His last book, co-authored with William Bobenhausen, *American Building: The Environmental Forces that Shape It* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1999,) was an expansion on his earlier writings on the subject and was, and likely still is, by far the best title on this topic to date. A perfect literary capstone to Professor Fitch’s career that demonstrates his extraordinary range as critic, historian, preservationist, environmentalist, and philosopher was provided posthumously by art historian Martica Sawin who compiled and edited: *James Marston Fitch; Selected Writings on Architecture, Preservation, and the Built Environment* (New York, W.W. Norton & Company, 2006).

James Marston Fitch received honorary doctoral degrees from Columbia University, New Jersey Institute of Technology, the University of Kansas, Parsons The New School for Design, and Tulane University. Shortly before his death in 2000 he attended the first Fitch Colloquium, established in his honor at the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation.<sup>2</sup> His legacy is maintained by several awards, grant programs, and honors including a chair in Professor Fitch’s name at Columbia University’s graduate program in historic preservation, a fellowship in historic preservation at the American Academy in Rome, and the grant programs of the James Marston Fitch Charitable Foundation that has, since 1988, awarded excellence and new thinking in American historic preservation.

### Defining Esthetics in Architecture and Architectural Preservation

Scholars in the arts and humanities of James Marston Fitch’s generation used the words *esthetic* or *esthetics* for perceiving, describing, and evaluating art and architecture, among other things. Since the word esthetics has fallen into disuse in recent years, it may be useful to define it before discussing the word’s relation to the preserved built environment. The word esthetics, also known as *aesthetics*<sup>3</sup>, traces back to antiquity, and a selection of definitions of the word, that indicate its various nuanced meanings over time, are cited below.

*Webster’s New International Dictionary of the English Language* defines *esthetics* as: 1. a branch of philosophy dealing with the nature of beauty, art, and taste and with the creation and appreciation of beauty; 2. a particular theory or conception of beauty or art: a particular taste for or approach to what is pleasing to

the senses and especially sight.<sup>4</sup> From the 1750s, the philosophers Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, Immanuel Kant, and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel all used the term with slightly differing meanings in describing beauty, the good, the right, the moral. By 1830, Hegel elaborated a science of the fine arts that he called *Aesthetik*, which won so much approval since his time that his usage of the word was generally adopted. More current connotations and denotations reveal additional nuanced meanings and uses of the word; with its most up to the minute publically-generated definition being found in *Wikipedia* being: Aesthetics (esthetics) is commonly known as the study of sensory values, sometimes called judgments of sentiment and taste. More broadly, scholars in the field define aesthetics as “critical reflection on art, culture and nature.” Aesthetics is closely associated with the philosophy of art. Aesthetics studies new ways of seeing and of perceiving the world.<sup>5</sup>

Given the long-standing use of the word esthetics in describing the art of architecture, and with today’s record accumulation of U.S. examples of the preserved built environment, organizers of *The Preservationist’s Eye* symposium asked leading figures in the field to address aspects of esthetics in historic preservation in our time. It is from this perspective that the symposium papers were presented, offering critical thinking on the artistic, psychological, and physical implications of today’s conserved built environment.

After the aims and parameters of the conference were presented, with my remarks taken from the present paper, Professor David De Long delivered a keynote address entitled “James Marston Fitch and the Ethics of Esthetics.” It was followed by Session I: “Esthetics in Sustainable Architectural Preservation Planning and Design; Defining Esthetics in Historic Preservation” which was chaired by William Higgins with presentations on architectural preservation and sustainability by architects Erica Avrami and Rick Cook, and architectural writer Charles Lockwood. Session II: “Esthetic Considerations in Historic Landscape Restoration and Conservation” was chaired by Professor Randall Mason and presentations on esthetics of historic preservation at the scale of landscape design and planning for renewed urban areas were given by landscape architects Alison Hirsch and Michael Van Valkenburgh. Session III: “Esthetics in the Conservation of Building Materials and Finishes” was chaired by architect and professor Theodore H. M. Prudon and presentations on facets of conservation science were presented by professors George Wheeler, Frank Matero, and Susan L. Buck. The conference ended with commentary and concluding remarks by Professor Andrew Dolkart, Director of Columbia University’s graduate program in Historic Preservation.

### **Fitch and the Esthetics of Architecture**

James Marston Fitch’s concerns for esthetics and ethics in architecture trace back to his early career, at least as far as his first employment in Nashville,

Tennessee where he worked as a draftsman building a copy of an antebellum Southern mansion for a client. This experience made Fitch wonder early on about the role of architecture in America, in particular its ethics and esthetics with his writings, especially from the 1950s, confirming his interest in the topic. In a 1970 essay entitled “The Future of Architecture” for the *Journal of Aesthetic Education* he discusses in detail the importance of esthetics in architecture and admits the difficulty in addressing it. The essay’s first sentence is: “Any prognosis of the aesthetic future of American architecture is certain to be difficult, risky to write, and anything but reassuring to read.”<sup>6</sup> He stated that architecture faces the most profound aesthetic crisis since the Renaissance, and that there were problems relating to its manifestations, problems of facing its experiential realities, and even problems of capacities for understanding the crisis. However, he reassuringly states that certain modern masters—namely Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, and Wright, “taken together, constituted the first sustained and principled effort to come to terms aesthetically with the post-industrialized world.”<sup>7</sup>

*Here in the second decade of the 21st century, speculations from 50 years ago on the future of the built environment have proven to be amazingly accurate. He was especially right on matters pertaining to the inherent sustainability of architectural preservation and how blending new and old is key to successful urban design.*

James Marston Fitch’s interests in esthetic theory in architecture developed from his belief that “buildings are first and foremost meant to serve in favor of people.” It is from that position that he quite early saw how preserving, reintegrating, and adaptively using existing buildings is essential to shaping and maintaining built environments. Here in the second decade of the 21st century, Fitch’s speculations from 50 years ago on the future of the built environment have proven to be amazingly accurate. He was especially right on matters pertaining to the inherent sustainability of architectural preservation and how blending new and old is key to successful urban design.

Fitch’s impressive understanding of how environmental, historical, and social forces shape architecture coupled with his critic’s eye and uncanny ability of expressing himself, were the basis of his influential teachings and writings that have resonance to this day. His reach into the worlds of psychology, medicine, science, environmental concerns, and his interest in the roles of the senses, made his perceptions of architecture all the more rare. Elsewhere in his above mentioned article in the *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, when speaking of the architect’s role in aesthetic decision making, Fitch spoke of “the possibility of establishing, much more precisely than ever before, objective criteria for aesthetic decision-making in architecture.”<sup>8</sup> He could be speaking of the deci-

sion maker in historic preservation as well, with only slight modifications to his words: “Every thing the preservationist does, every form he chooses to conserve, or technique he specifies, has aesthetic repercussions. His problem is thus not Hamlet’s: ‘To act or not to act.’ It is rather to *act wisely*, understanding the total consequences of his decision making.”<sup>9</sup>

### Historic Preservation, Esthetics, and Beyond

Any cursory viewing of progress of historic preservation over the past two or three decades reveals its tremendous positive effect on the nation’s built environment. In fact it is phenomenal since today’s *preservation for the sake of preservation*, with all its cumulative experience and capacities, has resulted in the majority of the American population knowing about and at least sympathizing, if not participating in the activity. Indeed the evidence of the success of historic preservation and its good effects is all around us.

In working on a recent book<sup>10</sup> which delved into the question “Why cultural heritage conservation and where is it leading us?” I was reminded of the generation gap in the field of architectural preservation that has closed only recently. In both Europe and the Americas there was an age gap of more than a generation that existed between the post-World War II proponents of the discipline of historic preservation and today’s leaders in the profession which is reflected in the literature of the field, the subjects of conferences, and a continuing general paucity of dialog and critical thinking on topics related to the esthetics of the built environment. Why did this break in continuity occur? Was it because of changes in the teaching of art and architectural history? Were societal changes in the 1960s and 70s so fundamental that broad thinking humanists such as James Marston Fitch and their concerns for esthetics in art and architecture considered too subjective and abstruse? Could it be that modern society simply doesn’t care any more about esthetic concerns and values? Whatever the answer, the abandonment of considering architecture in esthetic terms seems both defeatist and wrong since a) it was such an important consideration in creating so much of today’s built environment and to not understand it is to not see it, and b) today’s accumulated built environment has acquired an esthetic of its own. Call it “sense of place,” “character-defining qualities,” or “cumulative historic significance,” the built environment in which we live has its own distinct and ever changing esthetic. As such, any tool or means that might help in better valuing and interpreting the preserved human built environment is worth considering. The stakes are quite high-after all, we are addressing the *human habitat*. Investigating it anew was the principal aim of the Fitch symposium and of this collection of viewpoint essays published as the symposium proceedings.

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### Notes

- 1 The James Marston Fitch Charitable Foundation is indebted to many who helped bring the symposium to fruition. Special thanks are extended to the Preservation Alumni of Columbia University and Adrian Benepe, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Parks, who co-hosted the inaugural reception for the symposium. Gratitude is extended to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation and Joan Kaplan Davidson who provided financial support for the event and to the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World that generously provided the venue for the conference. Gratitude is extended to Anne LeBleu, former Executive Director of the Foundation who primarily coordinated the event, to the speakers and moderators who are responsible for its rich content, and to Dr. Barbara Little, Editor of *CRM* magazine for her enthusiastic interest and help in publishing these proceedings.
- 2 This biography is a modification of a version found on the website of the James Marston Fitch Charitable Foundation, [http://fitchfoundation.org/about\\_Fitch\\_bio.php](http://fitchfoundation.org/about_Fitch_bio.php) (accessed July 6, 2010)
- 3 According to the *Merriam Webster Third New International Dictionary* (Springfield, MA, Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1981) the word *esthetics* is a variant of *aesthetic* and the two words are synonymous. Both spellings of the word derive from Greek *aisthētikos* meaning sense perception, from *ais-than-es-thai* to perceive. It was similarly spelled in Latin (*aestheticus*) and our use of the term today derives from German *ästhetisch*.
- 4 *Webster's New International Dictionary of the English Language* (Springfield, MA, G. & C. Merriam Company), 1959.
- 5 <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aesthetics>, accessed on July 30, 2010.
- 6 J.M. Fitch, "The Future of Architecture" in the *Journal of Aesthetic Education*, Special Issue: The Future of Aesthetic Education, Vol. 4, Number 1, January 1970, 86-104.
- 7 *Ibid.* 85.
- 8 *Ibid.* 102.
- 9 *Ibid.*
- 10 John H. Stubbs, *Time Honored: A Global View of Architectural Conservation; Parameters, Theory & Evolution of an Ethos*, (New York: Wiley, 2009).

## James Marston Fitch and the Ethics of Esthetics

by David G. De Long

James Marston Fitch came to the field of historic preservation as an architect, not as an archeologist, anthropologist, historian, or conservator, although he would come to welcome those and other professionals as partners. He thus came with certain esthetic judgments in place, and he came with a sound knowledge of architectural history. While still practicing in 1933, he recounted how he consulted measured drawings and historic photographs to design houses in five main styles: French, Colonial, Italian, English, and Spanish, writing that he “. . . was an archaeologically literate eclectic.”<sup>1</sup> Even then he showed an interest in truly historic architecture, saying of his well-crafted historic homes that they “. . . had not the spontaneity, the genuine emotion that makes great works immortal, that makes Mount Vernon as fresh and charming today as it was in 1790;” continuing, he called for a more honest approach: “. . . it seems to me that we will miss authenticity until we have a style so intimately, so unmistakably ours and none other’s that it will not occur to us to delve in the past.”<sup>2</sup>

Fitch began writing about esthetics in architecture in the 1950s, about the same time he started teaching at Columbia University, and in formulating his own theory of esthetics he indicated two sources of inspiration: Lewis Mumford and Horatio Greenough. Both linked beauty with function, and both warned against the ever-changing superficialities of fashion. Anticipating preservationists’ need for a more stable determination of esthetic worth than that provided by changing fashions, Fitch echoed Greenough when he wrote about the “. . . relativity of taste. . . what one epoch adores, the next will despise.”<sup>3</sup> And he expanded upon the essential connection between beauty and function, leading him to link esthetics inextricably with ethics, at least where architecture was concerned: “ethics deals with your reasons for doing something, for acting, and esthetics deals with the consequences of your acts; they are different sides of the same coin.”<sup>4</sup>

Increasingly he argued that visual criteria alone were insufficient in judging esthetics in architecture:

*Most literature on esthetics tends to isolate it from the matrix of experience, to discuss the esthetic process as though it were an abstract problem in logic. . . . This finds expression in a persistent tendency to discuss art forms and buildings as though they were exclusively visual phenomena. This leads to serious misconceptions as to the actual relationship between the building and its human occupants. . . . Far from being based narrowly on any single sense of perception like vision, architectural*

*esthetics actually derive from the body's total response to, and perception of, the environmental conditions which that building affords. . . . With architecture we are submerged in the experience, whereas the relationship between us and a painting or a symphony is much more one of simple exposure. . . . To be truly satisfactory, the building must meet all the body's requirements, for it is not just upon the eye but on the whole person that its impact falls.*<sup>5</sup>

What Fitch accomplished by these means was nothing less than establishing a basis for determining the esthetic worth of a building according to absolute rather than relative values; that is, a reminder that our perception of beauty in architecture depends not on visual qualities alone, but also on our experience of any building in terms of its humane response to our needs and mental well being: how it functions, how it provides for our comfort, how it expresses a logical resolution of structure. In this he was in accord with the Greek origin of the term, meaning of or perceived with the senses—that is, *all* the senses, not just sight. Far from being a matter of personal choice based on changing fashions, esthetics can again be claimed as a justification for preservation.

When it came to questions of preservation, Fitch obviously recognized other justifications than esthetics alone; in particular, questions of historic significance irrespective of other elements. About the essential role of the architectural historian in preservation, he wrote:

*A final requirement. . . is that he be esthetically mature. Whatever his private convictions, he must bring to the scrutiny of past styles a maximum measure of comprehension, even of compassion. . . . [and an] ability to make. . . objective analyses, to break down into their component parts the periods of history, to understand the complex technical, esthetic, and cultural forces which acted upon them and gave their art its characteristic form.*<sup>6</sup>

In this regard he offered specific suggestions as to how esthetics should be taken into consideration whatever the rationale:

*. . . the esthetic ambitions of the original designers/owners must be taken into account. . . . Thus, when monumental, upper-class architecture must be restored, the most suitable cosmetic criteria should be those of the creators, i.e. newness, brightness (of polychromy and gilt) and good housekeeping. The reverse probably applies to most vernacular, peasant, or primitive construction. Although all buildings were at one time new and bright, and the builders probably proud of them in that state, it is doubtful that there were any conscious standards of keeping them that way. . . . The esthetic criteria for the restoration of folk and vernacular buildings, therefore, should reflect this condition. . . . For ruins (e.g. abandoned forts, castles, prehistoric sites, etc.), entirely different esthetic criteria should be applied, with the stabilization of above-grade remnants. . . forming the basic policy.*<sup>7</sup>

So Fitch offers us an invaluable tool for preservation: the tool of esthetics not as relative, but as absolute; esthetics not as a reflection of personal choice, but as generated by ethical concerns for human needs and respect for original esthetic intent. Expanding upon his beliefs, it becomes possible to refute those who marginalize the place of esthetics in such work, for as Fitch defined them esthetics become central to the rational evaluation of design decisions at every level of the field: an ideal guide for preserving, adapting, and adding to historic fabric.

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### Notes

- 1 James Marston Fitch, *Selected Writings on Architecture, Preservation, and the Built Environment*, ed. Martica Sawin (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2006), 31, 27.
- 2 Fitch, *Selected Writings*, 40.
- 3 James Marston Fitch, *Architecture and the Esthetics of Plenty* (New York and London: Columbia University Press, 1961), 251-252.
- 4 Fitch, *Selected Writings*, 24.
- 5 Fitch, *Selected Writings*, 279-280, 284.
- 6 Fitch, *Architecture and the Esthetics of Plenty*, 251.
- 7 Fitch, *Selected Writings*, 213-214.

## Esthetics in Sustainable Preservation Planning and Design

by *William J. Higgins*

The Fitch Symposium session on esthetics in sustainable preservation planning and design brought together the issues of preservation and sustainability, and began to explore the esthetic implications of combining the two.

In matters of esthetics, as in every other matter, Jim Fitch had no fear of taking aim at assertions with which he disagreed. While Jim would have heartily supported the subject matter and approach of this symposium, its title, “The Preservationist’s Eye: Esthetics in Reuse and Conservation of the Historic Built Environment,” might have drawn a bit of his fire. The last thing Fitch would have thought is that esthetics and preservation are exclusively, or even primarily, a visual issue. One of the deepest foundation stones of his thinking is that “the esthetic enjoyment of an actual building or city can never be a matter of vision alone. . . it can only be a matter of total sensory satisfaction.”<sup>1</sup> Always the well-rounded sybarite, Fitch refused to limit his delight in the built environment to the eye. For example, the beautiful photographs which immortalize the Barcelona Pavilion were something he viewed clinically, with mistrust and almost with physical pain. Through photography, he says, the pavilion “. . . survived to engrave its dazzling image on the modern retina.”<sup>2</sup> For Fitch the experience and the esthetic impact of the built world were emphatically multidimensional and multisensory. They are not matters of the eye, but of the whole person.

Fitch likely would have taken at least partial aim at a second target in the symposium. This is the idea that historic preservation is not only a discipline that aims to conserve the physical and cultural fabric of the built environment, but a design art as well. In conversation Jim would often say that preservation is not the place for someone who wants to make a mark in the world of design, that its instincts are primarily curatorial, not creative. He was circumspect about creativity not only in preservation, but in architecture itself: “The areas in which a highly individual personal taste can freely operate will undoubtedly be circumscribed. . . not merely by structural necessity. . . but by our vastly increased knowledge of man’s physical and psychological requirements. . .”<sup>3</sup> There’s not much room for the unpredictable stroke of design genius here, it would seem.

But I think what Jim really had in mind was that contemporary architecture is too infused with ego. I believe his ideal was that preservation, architecture, and all forms of design need to go above and beyond ego; that those of us who practice these arts are meant to be a sort of active lens through which the re-

quirements of function and climate, and the identity of moments in present and historical time, can flow to engender objects, buildings, and environments with a compelling and truly valid esthetic. Fitch's problem with preservation as a design art was, in my view, not that design has no place in preservation. Rather, he felt that the proper place of design in preservation is too often co-opted to make big personal statements which pay, at most, lip service to historic context.

Fitch, father and grandfather to several generations of historic preservationists, was nonetheless a committed modernist; and like the most orthodox of modernists he saw architecture and its esthetics in both functional and ethical/political terms. This view is a key to his pioneering interest in both preservation and sustainability. The high praise he gave to Louis Kahn's Richards Medical Research Building at the University of Pennsylvania could apply to most of the historically and environmentally significant architecture he admired most. In language unmistakably his own, Fitch said that Kahn's building "...will survive because it is umbilically tied to simple structural truth...demanding respect because it is so clearly grounded on granite principle and not the pink Jello of Madison Avenue expediency...it is as clear and astringent as a sermon by Martin Luther".<sup>4</sup>

Fitch sees the roots of Kahn's design in terms which can help set the stage for a productive discussion of the esthetics of green preservation. In assessing the plan, structural system, and reinforced concrete construction of the Richards building, Fitch says that, in Kahn's hands, "most of the sensuous impact of this building derives directly from such esthetically neutral facts as these...yet it should not be assumed that there was anything automatic in this design...it is rather that, while he tries to suspend his preconceived ideas of form...at the same time he subjects them to the sternest intellectual examination. It is from this process that the form emerges with an esthetic identity all its own."<sup>5</sup>

When Fitch praises esthetic excellence in historic architecture, or the elegant interplay of local materials and environmental efficiency in vernacular construction, he does so on similar grounds. For Fitch, beauty emerges from an intelligent response to the requirements of materials, structure, site, climate, and human wellbeing. The same factors apply to the historic and the modern, to the vernacular and the high style, to sustainable architecture and to preservation.

These Fitch-inspired ideas were all present, explicitly or implicitly, as the panel examined preservation, sustainability, and the esthetics, which they generate. There is an evolving new sensibility, which integrates preservation and sustainability through a sophisticated understanding of history, technology, design, philosophy, politics, and above all, an insight into what Fitch called "the circumambient context of esthetic decision"<sup>6</sup> as it applies to the melding of historic preservation and sustainability.

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### Notes

- 1 James Marston Fitch, *Goals in Urban Beauty*, Regional Plan Conference, New York City, November 10, 1965, p. 1.
- 2 James Marston Fitch, *Experiential Context of the Esthetic Process*, Unpublished, n.d., p. 3.
- 3 James Marston Fitch, *The Impact of Technology*, The Journal of Architectural Education, Volume XVI, Number 2, Summer, 1961, p. 17.
- 4 James Marston Fitch, *A Building of Rugged Fundamentals*, Architectural Forum, July 1960, p. 185.
- 5 Ibid., p. 84.
- 6 James Marston Fitch, *Experiential Context of the Esthetic Process*, Unpublished, n.d., p. 2.

## Preservation and Sustainability

by Erica Avrami

With the publication of the Brundtland Report<sup>1</sup> and the pursuant Rio Earth Summit, the past two decades have seen a growing synergy amongst the environmental, economic, and social agendas. The three have been politically wed in the international arena as the pillars of sustainability and are often referred to as the “3 P’s”: planet (environment), profit (economic), and people (social). Although economics and the environment have been the drivers to date, this tripartite of sustainability reinforces intergenerational and intragenerational equity and social justice concerns, and advances a more integrative approach to human and natural systems.

The evolving sustainability discourse has given rise to greater environmental awareness in planning, architecture, and preservation. Climate change, energy consumption, and demographic shifts have made apparent, if not dire, the need to revolutionize the way we design and manage the built environment. However, changes in policy and practice are often ad hoc and poorly integrated, without adequate assessment of the combined environmental, economic, and social costs and benefits.<sup>2</sup>

More than thirty years ago, James Marston Fitch called out trends in the field of architecture that remain salient to today’s sustainability debate, and indeed our failure to heed his foresight has compounded our current situation. The emphasis on form over function, the over-reliance on technology to control environments, the failure to take into account the embodied energy in existing buildings, the lack of understanding about construction of the past and vernacular traditions—all are germane to sustainable policy development today. The great challenge of the preservation field, and of all disciplines associated with the built environment, is how to engage effectively in this quest for sustainability from all three perspectives: environmental, economic, and social.

With regard to preservation’s forays into environmental sustainability, attention has favored “adaptation” (how to prepare heritage sites for climate change), rather than “mitigation” (how heritage preservation can help to achieve sustainable practices). Our limited engagement in the mitigation dialogue has been primarily through advocating that old buildings are inherently green, given their embodied energy and often efficient designs. That is indeed true *sometimes*, and a growing number of cases help to illustrate that assertion. However, the preservation field has yet to generate the research necessary for legitimizing

that position consistently through quantitative analyses. As life cycle assessment models become more sophisticated and data regarding all phases of building energy consumption (embodied, grey, induced, operating, and, demolition/recycling) become more available, preservation will need hard numbers to advance its cause.

If we do not do the research and generate the data required to effectively engage the environmental agenda, we will undoubtedly face similar challenges to those of the past, when preservation tried to hitch its wagon to economic development. Recent studies demonstrate a net positive gain in property values for residences in historic districts versus those in similar undesignated neighborhoods. The Trust's Main Street program boasts that it is "one of the most powerful economic development tools in the nation," generating \$27 in community returns for every dollar invested in the program.<sup>3</sup> The Federal Historic Tax Credits have leveraged more than \$55 billion in private investment to rehabilitate historic buildings.<sup>4</sup> A number of statewide impact studies demonstrate the positive effects of preservation on job creation, tourism revenue, and more.<sup>5</sup>

Yet, the field still claims that the economic benefits of preservation are not adequately supported. And in fact, that may be true. Most of this research is advocacy-based, meaning it is undertaken with the clear agenda of supporting the cause of preservation. We do not run comparative numbers, for example, to see if rehabilitating that main street generates more revenue than turning it into a strip mall or if a new high-rise generates more jobs than a five-story rehab. We don't often make those comparisons because it's a numbers game we can't always win. Indeed, the greenest and most cost-effective/revenue generating building may be the existing one, but we are going to have to crunch the data to prove it if preservation is to gain traction in the economic and environmental sustainability dialogue.

Efforts to demonstrate how preservation contributes environmentally and economically should clearly be pursued. However, one can argue that a preservation agenda will never prevail on those justifications alone. The fundamental rationale for why we preserve is the contribution it makes to social sustainability. Yet it is precisely this rationale that is most lacking in research and scholarship, as well as policy debates.

In the last half-century, social theorists challenged the rationalist tradition,<sup>6</sup> thereby questioning the notion that the human condition could be improved through design. The function of deliberation in social action was championed, and the application of these ideas to the planning and management of the built environment questioned top-down, expert-driven models and promoted more robust community participation. Preservation has in turn advocated value-driven methodologies for heritage decision making that engages a range of stakeholders. Such bottom-up, participatory processes are believed to promote

community building, foster tolerance and understanding of difference, and enhance social cohesion. They also ensure intergenerational equity by stewarding heritage for future generations. However, the preservation field has done little to demonstrate these societal benefits, in part because of the complexity of the research required, but also because we remain somewhat conflicted as to how these concepts are operationalized in practice.

*The fundamental rationale for why we preserve is the contribution it makes to social sustainability. Yet it is precisely this rationale that is most lacking in research and scholarship, as well as policy debates.*

Fitch asserted decades ago that we are, all of us, participants in the built environment.<sup>7</sup> Despite his concerns over the democratization of certain forms of material culture, he had a very Jeffersonian outlook on architecture and understood it not only as works of design and construction, but as an ongoing social invention. His perception of aesthetics was driven largely by the dynamic between form and function—how we interact with buildings and landscapes, how the man-made and natural environments interrelate. This is what led him to the issues of embodied energy and the lessons to be learned from pre-industrial and vernacular building traditions. However, his ideas were still framed within a curatorial, top-down paradigm that is now robustly debated. While Fitch acknowledged the pitfalls of a preservation agenda too reliant on artistic and historic values, he saw the work of preservation as an expert-driven, professional endeavor.

The decades hence have produced more standardization and professionalization within the field of preservation, while at the same time scholarship has revealed the concept of heritage and its conservation as a subjective relationship between people and places. Our understanding of aesthetics in the context of preservation has evolved beyond a particular set of values into a way of incorporating multiple and often changing values into our ongoing work. Indeed, one of the great challenges of our generation is to reconcile the tension between the preservationist as expert on the built environment and preservationist as facilitator of a value-driven social process.

Balancing those roles requires an enhanced understanding of the social implications and outcomes of the work of preservation. Preserving heritage has the potential to engage communities in decision making about their shared past and future, forge bonds and bridges between peoples, and foster awareness of the differences and similarities among cultures. In researching and articulating these processes and effects, the field will both inform practice and build the most compelling rationale for its cause. Developing economic and environmental motivations for preservation are critical to forging convergence and

collaboration in the pursuit for sustainability. However, defining preservation's unique role in this pursuit requires renewed focus on and reinforcement of the fundamental purpose of our work: promoting social sustainability through the collective stewardship of the world's cultural heritage.

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### Notes

- 1 World Commission on the Environment and Development, *Our Common Future* (London: Oxford University Press, 1987).
- 2 The adoption of LEED and other green building programs pose particular challenges as municipalities and other regulatory entities begin to incorporate these as "standards," while research is still evolving regarding their long-term efficacy.
- 3 Main Street reinvestment statistics are available at: <http://www.preservationnation.org/main-street/about-main-street/reinvestment-statistics.html>, accessed on July 16, 2010.
- 4 National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, Technical Preservation Services, *Federal Tax Incentives for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings: Statistical Report and Analysis for Fiscal Year 2009* (February 2010), 1.
- 5 For information about these studies and further analysis of the economics literature as it relates to historic preservation, please see: Randall Mason, *Economics and Historic Preservation: A Guide and Review of the Literature* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program, September 2005).
- 6 The work of Jürgen Habermas was seminal in this discourse, especially *The Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. Thomas McCarthy, 2 vols (Cambridge: Polity, 1984).
- 7 James Marston Fitch, "The Future of Architecture," in *Selected Writings on Architecture, Preservation, and the Built Environment*, ed. Martica Sawin (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 2006), 280. This essay was published in several forms, beginning in 1965.

## Two Sisters: The Convergence of Ethics and Aesthetics in the Historic Preservation and Sustainability Movements

by Rick Cook

Within the green building community, especially in New York City, it is now accepted that new buildings are just a small piece in the complex puzzle of climate change. According to PlanNYC, the city's strategic plan for a "greener, greater New York" released in April 2007, 85 percent of the buildings that will exist in 2030 are already here today<sup>1</sup>. This fact means that no matter how well we design, construct, and operate new buildings, the city's existing buildings will continue to have a far greater environmental impact, especially in terms of energy use. Architects and advocates of sustainability, therefore, would do well to focus their energies on the city's existing building stock, both historic and not. They will learn a great deal from practitioners and advocates in the preservation community.

Out of the campaigns and conversations of the last several decades in New York City, we have emerged with a deeper understanding of both what is beautiful and appropriate in spaces of historic significance. Those of us who are architects rely on historic research, physical artifacts, and visual evidence to develop an informed perspective on these questions. For example, when my firm began work on Front Street—a project involving 11 historic but severely neglected buildings along a full block of the South Street Seaport Historic District, as well as three vacant lots interspersed among them—a 1936 photo by Berenice Abbott was a frequent point of reference for our team. The photograph is of the *Theoline*, the last cargo schooner to unload in the South Street Seaport; through its masts and rigging, both the skyscrapers of Lower Manhattan and the low brick warehouses of Front Street can be seen, our view of them entangled in the artifacts of nautical history. The photograph beautifully captures the urban tectonics of Lower Manhattan: its commercial center shifting away from the Seaport and modern buildings reflecting the changing economic tides. Its perspective shows history as a layered record, a disrupted equilibrium of cultural and economic forces.

Supported by the excellent research and collaborative partnership of Higgins Quasebarth & Partners LLC and Mary Dierickx Preservation Consultants, Cook+Fox Architects' work at Front Street took the Seaport's history as the many-layered context for contemporary redevelopment.<sup>2</sup> (Figure 1) Since their original construction in the 19th century, the 11 brick counting houses along Front Street had become richly patinated with layers of urban residue—painted signage, traces of rooflines from formerly-abutting buildings, abandoned indus-

FIGURE 1

*Traces of a roofline reveal layers of time in the South Street Seaport. (copyright Seong Kwon for Cook+Fox Architects LLP, used by permission)*

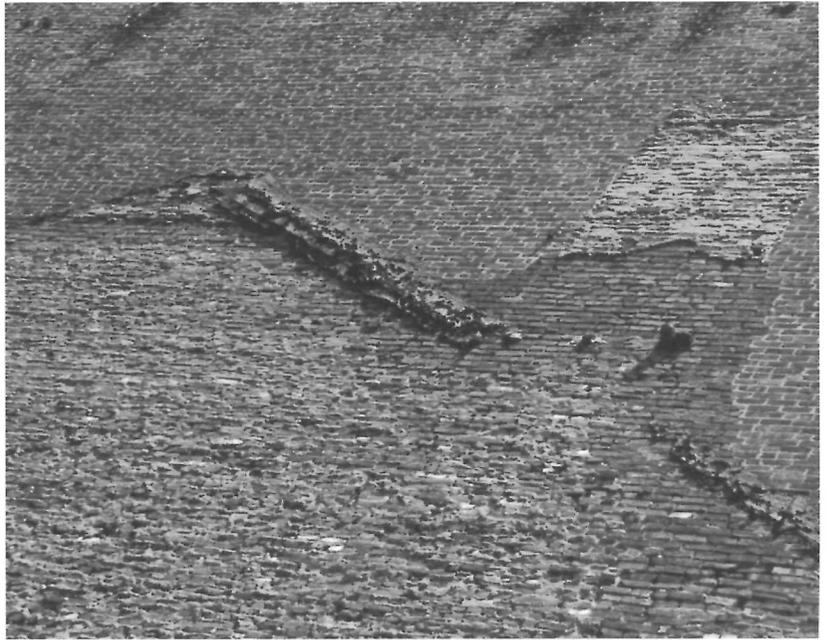


FIGURE 2

*New building on the corner of Front Street and Peck Slip integrates references to the Seaport's maritime past. (copyright Seong Kwon for Cook+Fox Architects LLP, used by permission)*



trial artifacts such as iron hoist wheels—which we carefully preserved and restored. When we began work in 2002, many of the buildings had also lost their basic structural integrity; when acquired from the city, to whose possession they had been condemned, some were on the brink of collapse. In order to preserve the buildings as part of the functioning urban fabric, our first task was simply to make them useful again as inhabitable, desirable homes and businesses. We went to great lengths to protect the individual character of each structure, both inside and out, while rehabilitating them to meet modern fire and building code. We also made strategic incisions and reconfigurations to bring in more light and

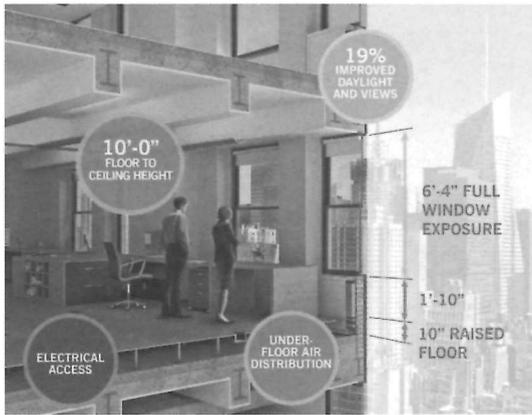
air, in some cases combining buildings to provide better layouts for residential units. (Figure 2)

Throughout the project, the question of authenticity was a recurring theme in our exploration of what was both beautiful *and* appropriate for this site. In addition to preserving individual artifacts and the unpolished textures of the surviving buildings, we worked to weave in modern interventions that respected the scale and massing of the existing neighborhood. While clearly modern in design, the new buildings, which help knit the block back together and restore its original coherence, are tuned to the existing buildings' rhythms and patterns of punched window openings, varying colors, and textures of masonry. The new buildings also allowed a degree of freedom to express other forms and relationships we found relevant to the site. Nautical references can be found in architectural details throughout the project—to artifacts such as ships' rigging, wooden storage casks, and whale skeletons—that are familiar to the Seaport only in historic photographs or literary representations, such as the opening scenes of Melville's *Moby-Dick*. Physical references throughout the project thereby helped deepen the degree of connection to the site's immaterial, historic narrative.

As articulated through the landmarks approval proceedings for Front Street, our ability to resolve questions of appropriateness depends on our understanding of a site's core identity, and what is therefore most relevant to preserving it. Decisions about what to maintain and what can be altered reveal a cogent hierarchy of physical elements, from the essential, defining features to those that are found to be less- or nonsignificant. We find that historic sensitivity is more than the sum of its parts; technical data and historic narrative are equally important in shaping our understanding of the urban environment.

Based on a well-informed understanding of historic significance, our objective as architects is to respond sensitively to the historic context, while remaining true to the new interventions' own time and place. In this effort, modern technologies can actually enhance our ability to preserve aesthetically- and historically-valuable elements. For example, Front Street is cooled by 10 geothermal heat pumps that extend 1500 feet into the earth's crust, tapping its constant temperature to supply naturally-cooled water to the buildings' air-conditioning systems. This new technology allowed us to provide air conditioning without placing cooling towers on historically sensitive structures. Elsewhere, for the offices of Skanska USA, a LEED Platinum interior in the iconic Empire State Building—a skyscraper constructed before the advent of air conditioning—an advanced underfloor ventilation system allowed us to remove a dropped ceiling and conventional overhead air system, re-exposing the windows' full 6'-4" of height<sup>3</sup>. By adhering more closely to the building's original, functional logic, the new interior provides 19 percent more daylight and greater views than a typical floor in the building. (Figure 3)

FIGURE 3  
 Skanska's LEED Platinum office in the Empire State Building emphasizes daylight and views. (copyright Cook+Fox Architects LLP, used by permission)



Daylight and structural robustness are two chief advantages shared by many historic buildings; recognition of these natural assets represents the elegant convergence of preservation and environmental sustainability. Again, techniques of modern, sustainable design can be called on to re-align a building, both aesthetically and functionally, with its original design scheme. During the renovation of Cook+Fox's office in the Ladies' Mile Historic District—formerly the penthouse dining room of the 1902 Simpson, Crawford, Simpson department store—we decided on a lighting scheme that replaced dropped, fluorescent downlight fixtures with column-mounted indirect lighting, after discovering evidence that this closely approximated the floor's original lighting scheme. While using modern, metal halide lamps instead of incandescent fixtures, this design takes maximum advantage of the office's abundant natural light. It also removed 100 years of adaptive clutter that had been hung from the ceiling, re-exposing and highlighting its ornamented capitals and modillion cornices. Not least of all, a return to a daylight-centered lighting strategy improved both energy efficiency and the quality of the indoor environment, helping to earn the space its LEED Platinum certification. (Figure 4)

In the pursuit of a modern aesthetic that synthesizes the ethics of cultural and environmental responsibility, what is both beautiful and appropriate remains a central question. We have seen that understanding how a building once functioned can sharpen the architect's historic perspective, yielding a well-informed aesthetic of the visual environment—yet one that does not stop at the surface. Buildings can show respect for and resonance with history in both material and immaterial ways, even reviving architectural and urban legacies that have been physically lost, but not forgotten. As our shared understanding evolves, we are extremely fortunate to have the writings of James Marston Fitch—who asserted that “[architecture] can never be felt, perceived, experienced, in anything less than multidimensional reality”<sup>4</sup>—as a prescient guide.

The frontiers of the environmental movement suggest interesting directions for further refining the architect's perspective. An emerging field of study known as *biophilia* challenges us to look beyond the familiar visual dimensions of archi-

FIGURE 4  
View of Cook+Fox's office interior and green roof in Manhattan. (copyright Bilyana Dimitrova for Cook+Fox Architects LLP, used by permission)



ecture, and pay attention to ways in which the built environment affects all our senses and modes of perception. Based on the observation that the human species evolved, over many thousands of years, in close relationship with the natural world, biophilia theorizes that we retain clear preferences in the environments we inhabit even today. The study of biophilia has been pioneered by Harvard biologist Edward O. Wilson, who describes *biophilia* as, “the innately emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms. . . human identity and personal fulfillment somehow depend on our relationship to nature.”<sup>5</sup> For example, early humans in the African savannah would have valued places in the landscape that offered natural protection, while simultaneously affording a long view into the distance. Abstracting these conditions to the concepts of “prospect” and “refuge,” we see that people continue to exhibit an intuitive attraction to such places. The familiar example of the front porch, from which one can observe the life of the street from the secure space of the home, can be appreciated anew for its strong biophilic qualities.

Like architecture itself, biophilia is at once an art and a developing science. Its continued study can help us better understand how to create spaces that are not only beautiful but qualitatively better in multiple dimensions. As the preservation and environmental movements continue to learn from one another, it is possible to imagine the expansion of concepts such as beauty and appropriateness, allowing in factors that can be experienced, but not always seen. We may soon return to consider not just the preservationist’s eye, but her senses of acoustic, tactile, olfactory, and spatial quality as well.

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## Notes

- 1 Cook+Fox Architects designed the redevelopment of the Historic South Street Seaport, a neighborhood in Lower Manhattan. The project was completed in 2006 and consists of 95 rental units and 14 buildings (eleven historic buildings and three newly constructed).
- 2 New York City Mayor's Office of Long-Term Planning and Sustainability, "PlanNYC: A Greener, Greater New York." (2007) p. 135, <http://www.nyc.gov/html/planyc2030/html/plan/plan.shtml>, accessed on October 27, 2010.
- 3 Skanska USA Headquarters designed by Cook+Fox Architects LLP., completed 2009.
- 4 James Marston Fitch, "The Future of Architecture." *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, vol. 4, no. 1 (January 1970), 86.
- 5 Edward O. Wilson, *The Biophilia Hypothesis*. (Washington, DC: Island Press, 1993), 20, 42.

## Aesthetic Considerations in Historic Landscape Restoration and Conservation

by *Randall Mason*

One facile (and therefore suspect) idea about landscape and aesthetics that tends to predominate and needs to be thoroughly debunked is the idea that landscape is only, or mostly, about seeing. James Marston Fitch's body of work helps us to overthrow this idea, or at least give it a good shake. Though the word "landscape" and its varied expressions (painting, gardening, poetry) are indeed rooted in the visual, the modern notion of landscape is animated not by the simplicity of the encompassing, slightly elevated view familiar in the canons of European landscape art (think Rembrandt drawings) but by complexity, contention, unseen processes, or "Multidimensional Totality" (a term of Fitch's).

The scholarship about landscape concepts over the last 10-15 years, sprawling across a dozen disciplines and professions, features a variety of landscape concepts, each helpful to practitioners in some way and yet none totally satisfying. These concepts include landscape as an ecological notion (see the work of Richard Forman and Michel Godron, for instance<sup>2</sup>); as a cultural artifact (J.B. Jackson, Peirce Lewis, Paul Groth<sup>3</sup>); as a set of political relationships (Don Mitchell, Kenneth Olwig<sup>4</sup>); a mode of contemporary art (see the work of Andy Goldsworthy or photographer Edward Burtynsky); or as a model for large-scale design (James Corner, Charles Waldheim<sup>5</sup>). The simple, visual conception of landscape and these complex, cultural notions share something important: they are linked by an aspiration to wholeness—viewing the whole scene, understanding and managing all the natural and cultural processes at work in shaping the inhabited world. We have something to learn from them all, but we can't rely on the "eye" alone. Fitch advocated a multisensory notion of aesthetics (the "multidimensional totality" of experience) though he framed it with behavioral science, not by using the lens of landscape.

Landscape in the broader, more encompassing sense is an important and overlooked root of historic preservation thinking and practice and one of the signal topics Fitch wove in to his scholarship and teaching to create the modern preservation profession. To this end, it seems appropriate to inject a bit of preservation history to contextualize Fitch. In very short order, here are a relevant few points:

- The idea of heritage has long been regarded as drawing on both natural and cultural phenomena (i.e., cultural landscapes), and this clear theme in American history finds early articulation by artist Thomas Cole, whose 1836 "Essay on American Scenery" spoke to landscape as both aesthetic resource and national heritage. (Figure 1)

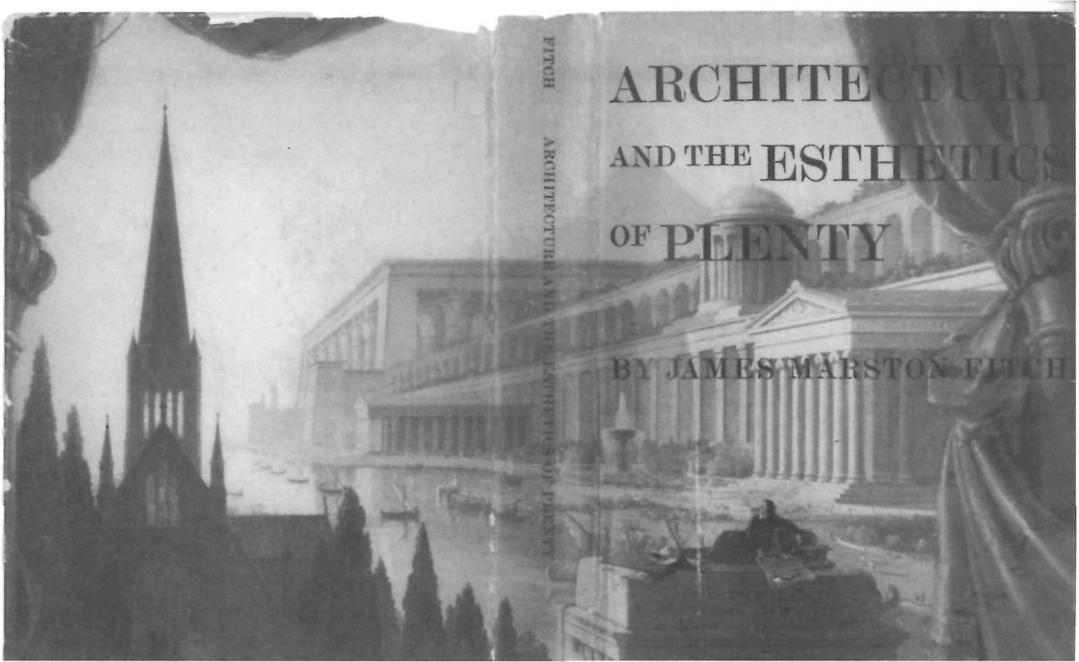


FIGURE 1  
 Thomas Cole painted and wrote about landscapes' central presence in American culture. His painting, *The Architect's Dream*, graced the cover of Fitch's book *Architecture and the Esthetics of Plenty*. (Collection of the author.)

- The marriage of “scenic and historic preservation” was a cornerstone of American preservation as it emerged as a cognate field of advocacy and scholarship in the last third of the 19th century. (Figure 2) The American Scenic and Historic Preservation Society, formed in New York in the 1890s, epitomized the connection; they worked to protect both historic buildings and natural landscapes. In the 20th century, as Fitch came of age professionally, the preservation field became professionalized and sufficiently specialized that such holistic ways of thinking fell by the wayside.
- Natural places, urban squares, and national parks (especially archeological sites) have long been central to the practice of historic preservation as objects of work, and epitomize the field's engagement with all sorts of landscapes.

In recent memory, how have the preservation field (generally), and Fitch (specifically) dealt with competing landscape concepts? It is a mixed bag; two trends are notable.

On one hand, preservationists, including Fitch, have practically tended to treat landscapes like buildings—as discrete, fairly static objects, submitted to the same preservation theories as buildings (which, in turn, come from the art sphere). Examples from Fitch's work include his administration of Central Park, his “Synoptic” approach to architectural preservation of buildings as applied to landscapes in “Curatorial Management of Historical Landscapes,” and his appraisal of Roberto Burle Marx.<sup>6</sup> Today, this static approach to landscapes is rightly regarded as unnecessarily reductive, and with the intellectual framework of “cultural landscape” in hand, the preservation field has made signifi-

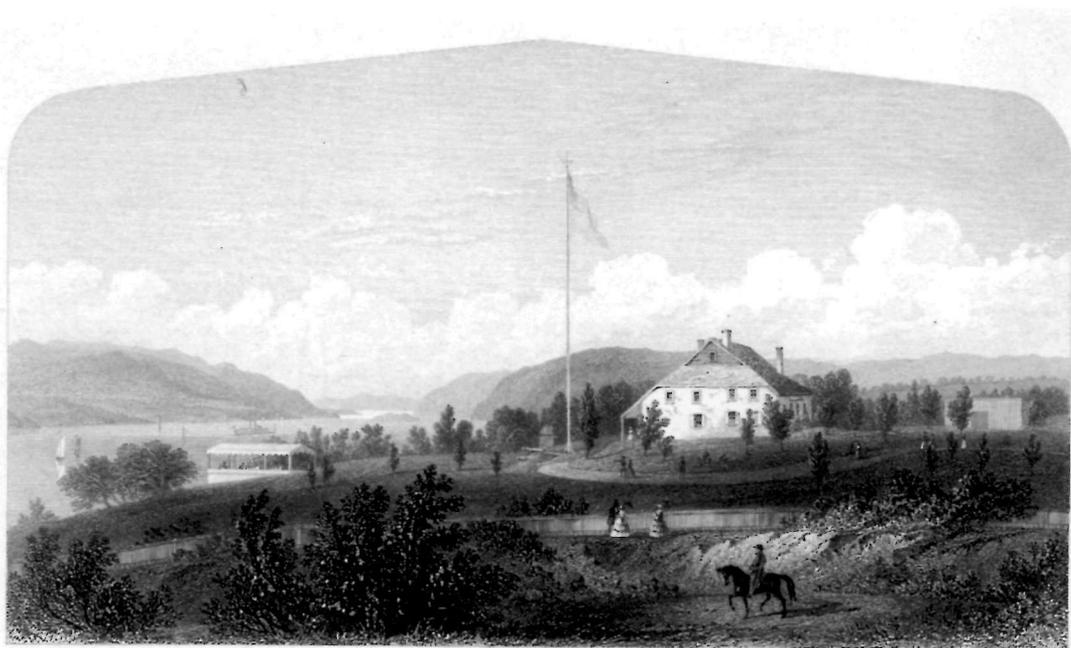


FIGURE 2:  
*This engraving of the Hudson Valley at Newburgh, with Washington's Headquarters in the foreground, typifies the tight connection between natural and cultural heritage in 19th-century landscape discourse. (Image from A Landscape Book, by American Artists and American Authors, New York: G.P. Putnam & Son, 1868; Courtesy University of Pennsylvania Library.)*

cant progress in recognizing and responding practically to the dynamism and changefulness of cultural landscapes.

On the other hand, Fitch deserves great praise from today's practitioners for leading us out of the forest of visually determined landscape notions. The old habit of regarding landscapes as exclusively visual led too often to connoisseurial judgments akin to Justice Potter Stewart's famous maxim about pornography: "I know it when I see it." Against this tendency, Fitch wrote volumes about why a more complex and problematic notion of aesthetics—scientifically approached, appealing to *all* the senses, to a holistic conception of *experience*—should drive our thinking about landscapes, about buildings, and about our responsibilities for designing and preserving good environments.

Therefore, Fitch's generous notion of aesthetics—quite congruent with latter-day notions of "cultural landscape"—remains an important part of the intellectual grounding of preservation. In other respects, though, our intellectual grounding needs work: 19th-century naturalistic landscapes are well studied and canonical (Central Park); other types and periods of landscapes (undesigned neighborhoods, Modernist parks, and public spaces) we find more difficult to see and understand. Listen to Alison Hirsch and Michael Van Valkenburgh for ways to understand, preserve, and design landscapes in ways that value their dynamism and their elusiveness.

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## Notes

- 1 The best starting point for exploring the many aspects of “landscape” is “The Word Itself,” an essay by the pioneering landscape writer John Brinckerhoff Jackson. See his *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986).
- 2 Richard T.T. Forman and Michel Godron, *Landscape Ecology* (New York, NY: Wiley, 1986).
- 3 J.B. Jackson, *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000); Peirce F. Lewis in *The Interpretation of Ordinary Landscapes*. ed. Donald W. Meinig (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1985); Paul Groth and Todd W. Bressi, eds. *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes*. (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997).
- 4 Don Mitchell, *The Lie of the Land: Migrant Workers and the California Landscape* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1996); Kenneth Olwig, *Landscape, Nature and the Body Politic* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002).
- 5 James Corner, ed. *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Theory* (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999); Charles Waldheim, ed. *The Landscape Urbanism Reader* (New York, NY: Princeton Architectural Press, 2006).
- 6 “Curatorial Management of Historical Landscapes.” *Ekistics* (July/August 1978): 271 “Landscapes by a Painter.” *Scope, Volume V, Number 1* (1957).

## Esthetics as Preservation in the Urban Renewal Landscape

by Alison B. Hirsch

This essay introduces the 1960s urban context that incited James Marston Fitch's catalytic preservation efforts. Specifically, it presents how three landscape architects of the time were reacting to the institution of urban renewal programs. This small number of landscape architects working in the city attempted to preserve the human habitability of the urban environment, and restore the city as a place of social interaction and exchange. By restoring the experiential richness of the inherited city, their efforts paralleled those working for the tangible preservation of architectural fabric.

Fitch was passionately devoted to the city as a "generator of civilization." In his essay "In Defense of the City" (1960-1961), he writes:

*[The city] promised music, dancing, theater, and spectacle. . . . But beneath all of these was the city's most splendid gift: a range of choice, an entire spectrum of possible lines of action. . . . Personal face-to-face contact; daily exposure to the friction of competitive ideas; continual exchange of information and opinion. . . .*<sup>1</sup>

When he set up the historic preservation program at Columbia, it was not driven by senseless nostalgia for the past, but as "critical to man's psychic and emotional well-being." Fitch believed that increasing interest in historic preservation was "an expression of [man's] growing sense of alienation in his radically changing personal environment." He established the program in response to this "psychic disorientation as a result of physical displacement."<sup>2</sup> Esthetics became a strategy for Fitch—to achieve reconnection, reorientation, and re-immersion in the environment experienced as a "multidimensional totality." The ultimate aim of architecture, according to Fitch, was shaping the environment to the holistic satisfaction of humans' psychological and physiological requirements.

At the same time Fitch was developing the field of historic preservation, a small number of landscape architects were attempting to accomplish similar goals in reaction to the same degenerating urban condition. To reorient people to their environment, and re-stimulate their cognitive and perceptual participation, landscape architects employed other place-based responses to urban renewal, demonstrating a similar passion for the inherited city and its opportunities for chance and choice, encounter, and exchange.

The interdisciplinary firm Lawrence Halprin & Associates was composed of designers and artists, social scientists, and ecologists who devoted themselves to reorienting people to the alienating environment of urban renewal America. In 1967, the firm was commissioned to evaluate the environmental quality of six renewal projects executed in New York City. In the resultant report, “New York, New York: A Study of the Quality, Character, and Meaning of Open Space in Urban Design,” Halprin demonstrates the diminished balance within the figure-ground relationship or the loss of the fine-grained neighborhood scale and the dynamic complexity inherent to a healthy city.<sup>3</sup> His diagrams demonstrate how one might re-knit these “figures” into the larger urban network through a consideration of the neglected “ground,” within which he considered a socialized public life should play out. (Figure 1)

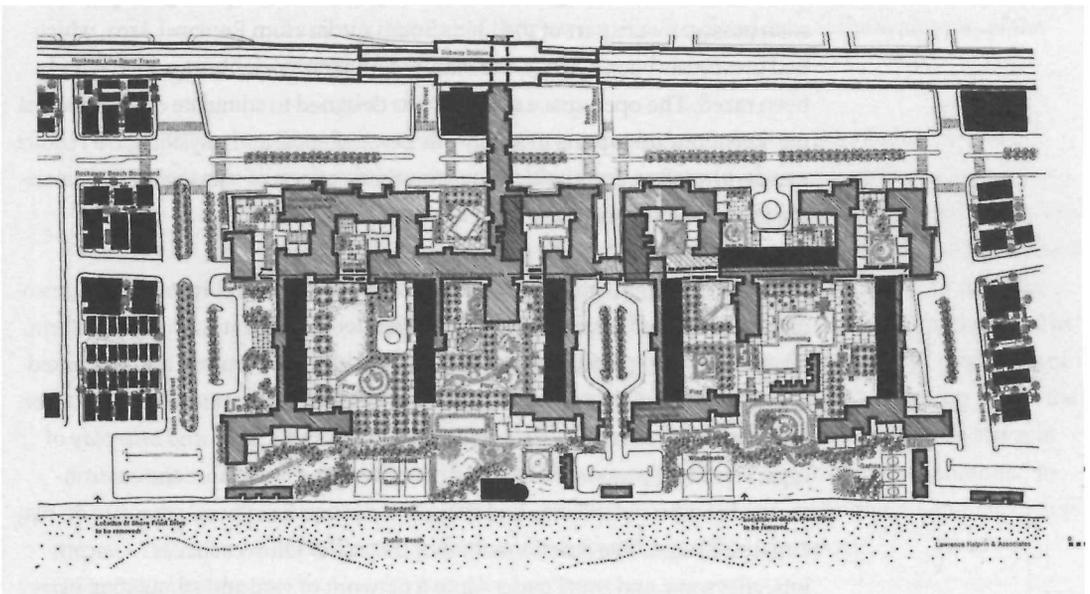


FIGURE 1:  
Diagram by Lawrence Halprin & Associates of Dayton Towers (Queens) demonstrating how to re-knit towers into the urban fabric. (Lawrence Halprin Collection, The Architectural Archives, University of Pennsylvania.)

By inviting psychologists and other social scientists to participate as consultants, Halprin studied community members’ behavioral response to the new developments and, from the findings, articulated alternatives. The report includes a section on “Ethnic Variation,” which claims that unique ethnic community structure should be recognized and enforced by renewal planning. Halprin’s friend and consultant to the project, anthropologist Dr. Edward T. Hall, analyzed the spatial community patterns of individual ethnic groups and called for the retention or preservation of these patterns in renewal schemes. To justify this potentially controversial proposal, the authors state:

*Though this idea of ethnic individuality may be in conflict with the ‘American’ concept of integration of cultural and economic groups, we recommend it, if only for its allowance of choice—that most important of freedoms. The validity of the melting pot where every group gave up its characteristics in favor of a single uniformity is becoming more questionable.<sup>4</sup>*

The biological idea of “Complexification” is featured as one of the report’s most significant recommendations. Halprin applies biological theories to the social landscape by explaining how all biotic communities evolve from a state of simplicity to a stable state of complexity. About this urban ecosystem, he states: “Complexification and diversity are a biological imperative. Isolation and similarity breed stupidity. Interaction and variety encourage creativity.”<sup>5</sup> In other words, Halprin insisted on restoring the possibilities of chance and choice in what had become “a labyrinth of endless similarities,” in the words of geographer Edward Relph.<sup>6</sup>

In addition, Halprin *designed* public spaces in the 1960s and 1970s that serve as dynamic counterpoints to the bleakness of surrounding renewal development, such as in Portland, Oregon. The series of plazas linked by designed pedestrian passages were part of the 1960s South Auditorium Renewal Area, which had previously been a dense and vibrant immigrant neighborhood that had been razed. The open space network was designed to stimulate environmental participation, attempting to satisfy our psychological and physiological requirements through an emphasis on the kinesthetic effects of varying levels, materials, textures, and forms.

M. Paul Friedberg is another landscape architect carefully attuned to the restoration of cities as “intensely interactive arenas of socialization.”<sup>7</sup> Like Halprin, he was invited to projects after clearance had already occurred and was asked to remediate or alleviate disorientation caused by displacement and relocation into alien and often hostile environments. In his book, *Play and Interplay* of 1970, Friedberg proposes a concept of “linked play” to restore the environment of choice, complexity, and social interaction. Friedberg’s theories on play targeted all ages. The transformation of the city’s “leftover spaces”—vacant lots, alleyways, and small parks—into a network of vital and stimulating places would offer a reorienting sense of continuity in the urban environment and would re-knit the city back together. One iconic example of Friedberg’s work is the now-demolished Jacob Riis Plaza (built 1964-1965) around New York’s Jacob Riis public housing towers, which were previously perfect examples of the “tower-in-the-park” typology. The matrix of active and quiet intimate spaces included, in Friedberg’s words, “an enclosed garden abandoned by the elderly, but taken over by teen-agers hungry for privacy; an amphitheater serving as a play space, theater, spray pool, or sitting area; a plaza for checkers or quiet socializing; a playground where play is more than just a physical exercise.”<sup>8</sup>

The most widely cited element of this design is, of course, the playground, designed for hard active wear and little maintenance. Friedberg condensed a mountain, a tunnel, and a tree house into a single play environment linked by planks, cable, ropes, slides, and climbing bars. In *Play and Interplay*, he claims,

*The moving from one experience to the next is an experience in itself. The choice of what to do next becomes an experience. The more complex the playground, the greater the choice and the more enriched the learning experience. . . . The concept of linked play provides play activity far beyond [a] number of play pieces employed in isolation.<sup>9</sup>*

Friedberg proposed linking the plaza to Tompkins Square Park by permanently closing two streets to through traffic, and redesigning them with the same rich inventiveness.

The plaza was demolished in the 1990s and the new design includes all the telltale signs of today's preoccupation with safety. Friedberg claims the plaza's demolition was "the rejection of faith in people... It suggests that people should be denied the use of their own space. It only addresses the symptoms of the problem."<sup>10</sup>

Karl Linn serves as the final example demonstrating the alliance between preservation and urban landscape architectural practice in the 1960s. As Jews living in Germany, Linn's family was forced to flee to Palestine in the 1930s. Like Halprin, Linn founded a kibbutz in Israel, after which he headed to Switzerland to train as a psychoanalyst. He immigrated to New York in 1948, to study the body-oriented therapy developed by Wilhelm Reich. Yet with a background in agriculture and gardening, Linn ultimately entered the "healing" profession of landscape architecture. In 1959 he accepted Ian McHarg's invitation to join the faculty of Landscape Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania. It was at Penn that Linn developed his concept of the "Neighborhood Commons," in response to the physical conditions of ghettoized environments and the disruptive effects of urban renewal programs on the urban poor.

With his students, Linn worked with underserved communities of Philadelphia to develop these "Commons" on the vacant lots that were tangible reminders of municipal neglect. At Melon Commons in North Philadelphia, for instance, Linn and his students initially took a community resource inventory to find out what skills people had, what tools they owned, and how people in that neighborhood used or appropriated space. Based on the availability of resources, they tried to articulate a design that the people could implement using salvaged material from sweeping urban renewal demolitions in these areas. About improving with such salvage, Linn claimed:

*In human habitat. . . the incremental historical deposits of a place imbue the physical environment with a feeling of timelessness. Residues of former buildings, trees, and landscape features create an air of familiarity. 'Historic' building materials bearing the imprint of use and weather confer a sense of relatedness, which is often sorely lacking in new constructions.<sup>11</sup>*

Melon Commons was demolished in the late 1960s. Because Linn's interventions might be deemed *grassroots*, in contrast to the city-sanctioned interventions of Halprin and Friedberg, many of the commons were quickly razed in the name of continuing "renewal." Yet Linn argues for the value of such spaces in the city:

*People are alienated from their physical environment if they are unable to leave their personal imprints on their immediate surroundings. Relegating human beings to the role of passive spectators of their environment threatens their mental equilibrium. . . .*<sup>12</sup>

Each of these designers were interested in restoring the social life of the city, largely through the deployment of an esthetic approach, as defined by Fitch. Their place-based efforts were intended to re-engage human participation in the environment by offering creative opportunities for choice, involving communities in the process of design, and inspiring curiosity, playful exploration, and sensory stimulation. They introduced dynamic active spaces into the homogenizing environment, rather than passive palliatives or visual backdrops. Thus the disappearance of Friedberg's Jacob Riis Plaza, Linn's neighborhood commons, and Halprin's Skyline Park, another plaza built to alleviate the pains of urban renewal, begs the question: Is there a place in the city for these optimistic spaces intended to cultivate utmost habitability in the shifting city? And, are these places painful reminders of the dislocations of urban renewal or do they continue to have value as part of the open space systems of today, perhaps by providing yet another layer of choice?

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### Notes

- 1 Reprinted in Martica Sawin, ed., *James Marston Fitch, Selected Writings on Architecture, Preservation, and the Built Environment* (New York, W.W. Norton & Co, 2006), 260-261.
- 2 From James Marston Fitch, "The Philosophy of Restoration: Williamsburg to the Present," 1992-1993, reprinted in Sawin, 174-176.
- 3 Lawrence Halprin & Associates, "New York, New York: A Study of the Quality, Character, and Meaning of Open Space in Urban Design" (prepared for The City of New York & Housing and Development Administration, March 1968). Jane Jacobs, among others, served as a consultant to the study.
- 4 *Ibid.*, 53.
- 5 *Ibid.*, 108-109.

- 6 Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London, Pion, 1976).
- 7 M. Paul Friedberg, "Looking Back," *Process: Architecture*, n. 82 (May 1989): 12.
- 8 M. Paul Friedberg, *Play & Interplay: A Manifesto for New Design in Urban Recreational Environment* (London, The Macmillan Co., Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1970), 173.
- 9 *Ibid.*, 45.
- 10 Quoted in "Lost in Translation," by Paul Bennett, *Landscape Architecture* 56, n. 3 (May-June 2004): 39.
- 11 Karl Linn, *Building Commons and Community* (Oakland, New Village Press, 2007), 84-85.
- 12 Karl Linn, "Neighbourhood Commons," *Ekistics* 27, n. 158 (Jan. 1969): 65.

## Built Landscapes, Ecologies and Re-defining “Preservation”<sup>1</sup>

*by Michael Van Valkenburgh*

Since the 1970s, there has been a major paradigm shift in the science of ecology: the prevailing view is no longer guided by a static ideal of natural systems, but by a contemporary understanding of dynamic and almost constant change. As the cultural idea of “what landscape architecture is” reflects prevailing ecological paradigms, it is no coincidence that the fundamental understanding of the discipline of landscape architecture has shifted dramatically with the scientific revamping of the word “ecology.” For example, until the 1970s, a “climax forest” was thought to maintain itself in equilibrium until some human or natural disruption occurred. And importantly, after such a disturbance, it was theorized that ecological systems would attempt to quickly return the disturbed area to its prior, stable condition.

Now we think of ecology in an almost completely different light and recognize the indeterminacy of the natural world, particularly as a result of human activities in cities and suburbs. This new awareness of dynamic change in “natural” ecology is inherent to the built and natural environments and has recently served to increase the perceived cultural importance of landscape architecture. It has also radically changed the way landscape architects think about making new landscapes, caring for them, and, over time, the very concept of landscape preservation and whether or not such a thing is even possible. It is both possible and sensible, but needs to be guided by a redefinition of what it means to intervene in a landscape of historical significance.

As my firm, Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (MVVA), sets about reinvigorating a historic landscape and renewing its purpose, we recognize that its current physical arrangement originated from a very particular relationship of site ecology and programmatic and design considerations; these may guide or inform, but not limit, preservation efforts. However, the fact that all landscapes are part of larger ecological systems means that there will always be some level of interpretation in preservation. Rather than seeking to return to an idealized moment in history—a goal that relies on a misunderstanding of ecology and is all but irrelevant to building a landscape that is alive—I prefer to look at landscape preservation as an exercise that allows a landscape to continue to grow and thrive in its own particular (and perhaps unpredictable) way.

Some aspects of ecological dynamism have, of course, always been understood. Landscape designers of the past certainly recognized that trees get larger over

time, but the degree to which their work anticipated, imagined, and even welcomed a framework for such change was usually implicit. Dynamic change is much more explicitly part of contemporary landscape design. It is perhaps the strongest driving idea of our time and why we have seen the rise of the term "landscape urbanism." This, in turn, inevitably affects our notions of "preservation." Even meticulously cared for landscapes continue to evolve beyond their initial frameworks, requiring designers to be vigilant of variable intervals of change: some transformations are immediately evident in the landscape, while others will be slow to register and perhaps understood only by future generations. For the contemporary designer, the exciting thing about landscape preservation work is that it is inherently paradoxical: as Robert Smithson noted in his writings about Central Park in the early 1970s,<sup>2</sup> you must transform to restore, and restoration requires transformation. The challenge of this work gets to the very heart of what distinguishes landscape architecture as unique among the design disciplines. Landscape theorist Elizabeth Meyer has made the important observation that landscape preservation fails when it models itself on architectural preservation, which is primarily concerned with material culture.<sup>3</sup> In landscape architecture, although some materials (park structures, paving, metal work) can be easily restored or repaired with great fidelity, vegetation, larger ecological conditions, and the surrounding context may have changed in ways that make an attempt to restore the original state not only impossible, but perhaps even ridiculous.

There are many moments when I have grappled with the inherent complexity of landscape preservation in our work at MVVA. In the early 1990s, Harvard President Neil Rudenstine, having left the Princeton campus for Harvard Yard, asked MVVA to take up the "restoration" of the Yard, which at that time was almost without a tree canopy due to the maturity of the grove and the death of trees from Dutch elm disease, and otherwise generally threadbare from heavy use. This work was to run concurrently with architectural renovations of most of the buildings in the Yard that aimed to return them to their original appearance. "Colonial" white trim that had been added to the yard's buildings to lend a sense of visual and historical unity was removed, as were irrelevant banks of foundation planting misguided in their intent to "soften" the austerity of the structures and the frugal manner in which they met the ground.

In our work at Harvard yard, we could have taken a parallel landscape approach and replaced the ailing historic elms in the Yard with a monoculture of new elms, but the lethal effects of Dutch elm disease on the great stand of existing trees made that idea seem untenable. Even a modified historic approach that specified a monoculture of a similar species with no known problems seemed to be a gamble, opening the potential for some future disease to again devastate the Yard, such as how Dan Kiley's monoculture of ash on the St. Louis Arch grounds faces annihilation from the emerald ash borer. Our attitude toward historic accuracy reflected the greater goal of restoring the role of the Yard as

Harvard's outdoor cathedral of education. It is the large, high-branched trees that create the cathedral, and so we made the radical recommendation that the Yard be replanted with a heterogeneous palette of tree species to ensure the long-term vitality of this historic landscape.

The layout of the Yard plantings at the time of our intervention was not from the colonial era, but was the result of work by the Olmsted Brothers' firm as part of their efforts to restore the Yard in the early 20th Century. In the Olmsted Brothers' organizational system, trees were planted in several long straight rows, but were spaced unevenly within those rows like beads on an abacus. MVVA preserved this basic spatial structure, shifting tree locations when necessary to accommodate contemporary uses, such as subsurface utilities, or simply to reflect the presence of new pathways and cross-campus connections that had arisen since the Olmsteds' time. MVVA added almost no new paths to the Yard, although we widened several that had evolved from minor to major circulation routes.

Species selection was guided by ecology, and not only by choosing a beautiful tree (which the American elm certainly is). We chose tree types for their suitability to the particular microclimates in Harvard Yard and also with the simple goal of choosing many species rather than few as a broad ecological strategy. For example, trees that thrive in wet conditions, such as black tupelo and sweetgum, were planted in areas where rainwater tended to collect; trees more tolerant of compaction, like hackberry, were placed in heavily trafficked areas. Ironically, the very reason that elms had been planted so extensively in the last century had to do with their adaptability to a wide range of conditions; they remained a good choice for this site and we did plant several disease-resistant cultivars.

One of the greatest challenges of using multiple species was overcoming the potential for the individual characteristics of the trees to read too strongly, creating the effect of a "salad bar" and confusing the sense of consistency that comes with planting a large stand of trees of a single species, particularly a tree with the visual perfection of the American elm. With the campus arborist, we proposed a consistent new tree canopy level, which is determined by the height of the lowest branch of a tree. Selecting nursery specimens of the new trees that were already "limbed up," we continued to work closely with the arborist over the following 15 years to manage the incremental trimming up and shaping of the tree canopy to maintain the Olmsted's spatial intent—formerly achieved by the elegant form inherent to elms—while ensuring the long-term ecological health of Harvard Yard.

Our 1998 Wellesley College Master Plan took a similarly site-specific ecological approach to another historic landscape with its origins in a turn-of-the-century landscape. Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., in 1902, proposed that the wet lowlands

that wove through the original campus should be taken as a campus wide organizing framework for both a network of open spaces and cross-campus drainage system, and that buildings ought to be placed in response to found ecological conditions. The desire to preserve the meandering wet meadow and stream system yielded an irregular hilltop grouping of buildings that was dramatically unlike the quadrangle systems favored on other American campuses, for instance, Harvard and Princeton. Elizabeth Meyer, who was our collaborating landscape historian, unearthed evidence that this landscape approach, which cultivated the natural landscape without eradicating it, was an expression of the school's attempt to develop a program of women's education that would differentiate it from the all-male colleges of the time. This sense of individuality projected by the campus landscape reinforced the way that Wellesley sought to define its own institutional identity as a college for women.

MVVA's restoration of Alumnae Valley at Wellesley in the early years of the 21st Century was an outgrowth of our 1998 Master Plan. This project required that we work creatively within the changes brought about by the site's evolution over time, despite the fact that there was a clear original intention for preserving the existing riparian landscape. The Alumnae Valley project was on a site that was a critical piece of the original wetland system that Olmsted Jr. had worked to preserve. Over the years, however, the Valley wetland was destroyed, and the whole area had been badly compromised through a series of uses, including the disposal of building debris after a fire, the gasification of coal, and surface parking. At first, it seemed apparent that this was a good opportunity for a straightforward ecological restoration project. However, we later discovered that what had originally appeared to be an asphalt parking lot on top of the wetland was also a cover over a brownfield site.

Given a situation in which we couldn't restore the outward appearance of the site, we instead sought to renew the ecological, spatial, and social functions that were the motivations behind the original Olmsted Jr. design. We capped the toxic soils and instituted a mechanical system for pollutant removal that allowed the landscape to be used while the remediation took place. In addition, we raised the grade of the site by several feet using uncontaminated soil from building excavations, allowing the upper layers of soil to capture and cleanse large volumes of stormwater runoff from an extensive watershed within the campus. The renewed landscape dramatically reverses the effects of poor environmental and spatial planning decisions that have accrued over time, performs ecological functions above and beyond that which could have been anticipated during Olmsted Jr.'s time, and creates an important new outdoor social center for the campus. (Figures 1 and 2)

At Brooklyn Bridge Park, we pursued designing a park on a site that was probably never considered "a landscape," choosing to operate with our own kind of preservationist agenda and creating a new social and environmental



FIGURE 1  
Alumnae Valley at Wellesley College. The wet lowlands that ribboned through the original campus were destroyed over the decades. When the project began, the former Alumnae Valley wetland hosted an asphalt parking lot sitting atop a highly toxic brownfield site. (Courtesy of the author)



FIGURE 2  
Alumnae Valley at Wellesley College. For the landscape renewal, MVVA capped the toxic soils, instituted pollutant removal programs, and restored the site's wetland functions. (Courtesy of Alex MacLean)

purpose through its transformation into public space. The introduction of a park to this powerful setting—defined by large-scale urban infrastructure and expansive views of sky, skyline, and water—lent itself to the fluid 21st-century definition of ecology as more dynamic than deterministic in matters of park form and created vegetative habitat, and to a more nuanced idea of how these can be developed and planned as elements that can change over time.

The found environmental conditions of the urban Brooklyn Bridge Park site challenged preconceived notions of what and where an urban park should be. The site itself is almost completely artificial; much of it sits atop large piers and on former industrial land filled into the East River. Moreover, it is directly adjacent to the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway (BQE), a multi-tier regional arterial. In public meetings, the (quite legitimate) list of typical park programs expected by future users was frequently in stark conflict with the list of “un-park like” found conditions. For example, creating a porous urban edge that welcomed the adjoining neighborhoods was restricted by the impenetrable wall of the tiered expressway. Similarly, the idea that the park might be a place for quiet relaxation was challenged by the roar of high-decibel traffic. The first question we asked ourselves was, how could one provide a recognizable park-like landscape in the complete absence of natural systems on this climatically harsh site? Also, how could remnants of the sometimes beautiful post-industrial landscape be preserved, or at least inform design ideas that would support the site's new use as a park?

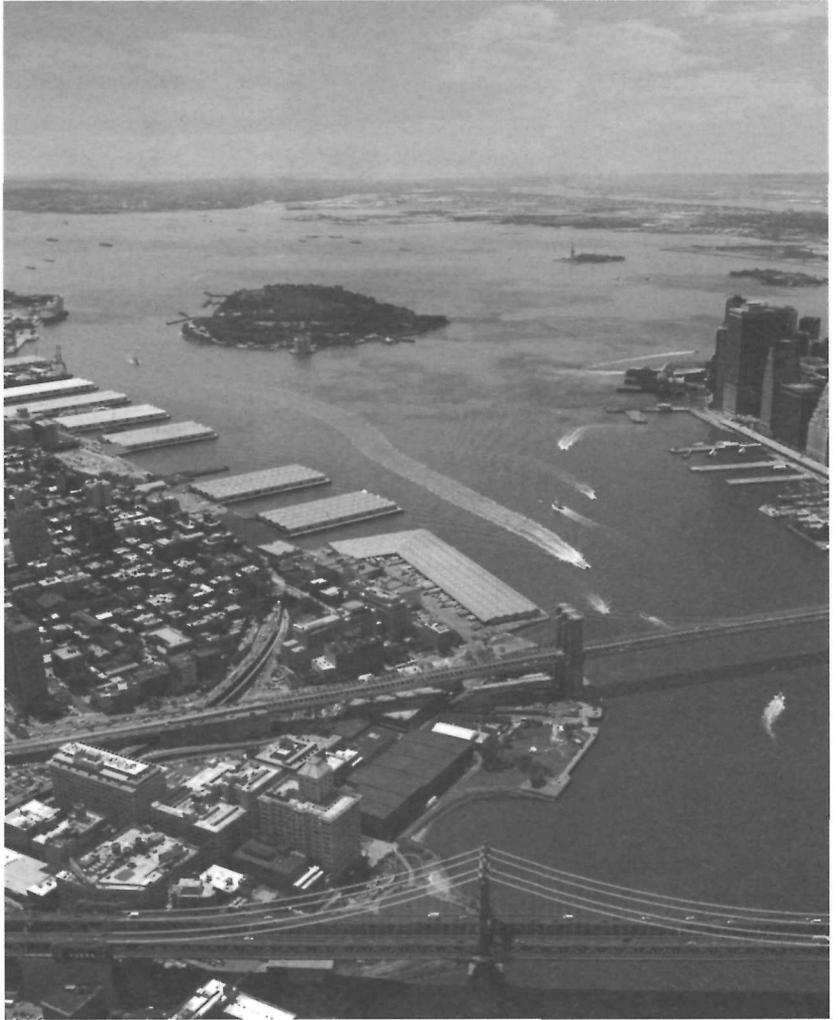
While at first glance some of the aesthetic systems introduced by the park design may, to some, seem Olmstedian in their irregularity, the park's curved landforms and long hedgerows running north to south have been composed to complement the angular geometry of the waterfront rather than impose a normalizing aesthetic traditionalism. The need to protect park users from potentially uncomfortable conditions like the western sun reflected off of the water, heavy wind, the roar of the BQE, and even salt spray gave rise to the idea to create a somewhat rolling landscape and linear planting that will provide a range of protection from the elements and satisfy the significant recreational and open-space needs of the park's users.

Given that the Brooklyn Bridge Park site is some 300 feet away from the natural shoreline, the new ecological systems at the park's water edge could never be considered restoration, but rather new environments that attempt to emulate a higher level of ecological diversity within the constraints of found site conditions. Moreover, a vital part of the park design was economically preserving—or reinventing—the integrity of the site's marine infrastructure edge, which had deteriorated over time. We have utilized a variety of non-traditional technical methods for stabilizing the land/water edge that are adopted more from ecological restoration than from the civil and marine engineering disciplines that originally created the waterfront. The park design is therefore drawn from a complex set of cultural and physical conditions—river ecology, historic construction, economic decline, transitioning uses—and instead of representing one historic "truth" about the place as a landscape, it becomes a collage where all of these elements are still relevant, but now in the service of a space that provides greater comfort and experiential range. (Figures 3 and 4)

Prior to the 1970s, the science of ecology tried to understand natural systems as static conditions; similarly, the model of landscape preservation that was practiced at the time attempted to freeze a particular moment in a landscape's history. Landscapes are not static, and while it is very clear that many of my predecessors knew this (as seen, for instance, in Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr.'s report on the White House Grounds<sup>4</sup>) the larger idea of landscape history had also been driven in part by the dominance of architecture and mistakenly framing landscape concerns through the lens of architecture. In practice, landscapes are not at all much like buildings: buildings are driven by internal program, but landscapes are designed and informed by physical and cultural circumstances at scales both much smaller and larger than what is immediately visible. Buildings have edges, landscapes are about continuities.

MVVA's approach to landscape preservation work, as well as our design of entirely new landscapes, has developed during a time of tremendous shifts in ecological thought. From making a 21st-century post-industrial Brooklyn Bridge Park to bringing new life to venerated campus landscapes at Harvard and

FIGURE 3  
*Brooklyn Bridge Park (before). The unremitting climatic forces of the site and its rich industrial history presented many opportunities for interpretation. (Courtesy of Alex MacLean)*



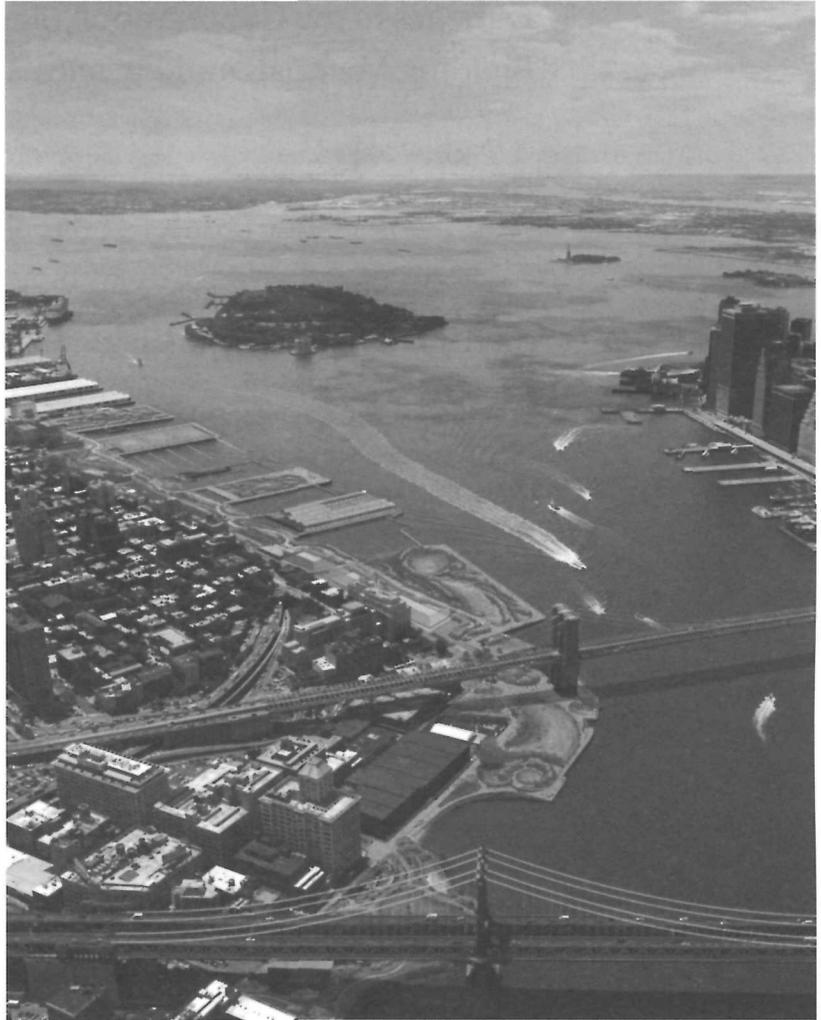
Wellesley, the overlapping challenges of site, program, and public expectations need not defer automatically to a site's distant history but can be invigorated by the form, structure, and vegetation of the contemporary site and advances in the science of ecology. The current practice of landscape architecture is now understood to set ecological, social, and material processes in motion, projecting a circumstance into an uncertain future. Today, with this awareness, landscape architects and historians should work together to move beyond material preservation toward a more supple and situational methodology for addressing historic landscapes that is befitting, both scientifically and culturally, to the living medium of the discipline.

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FIGURE 4

*Brooklyn Bridge Park (after). By ameliorating harsh climatic conditions and satisfying significant recreational and open space needs, new ecologies were created along the formerly industrial waterfront. (Courtesy of Alex MacLean)*



### Notes

- 1 Special thanks to Danielle Choi, Rachel Gleeson, and Bill Saunders for commenting significantly on early drafts of this essay.
- 2 Robert Smithson, "Frederick Law Olmsted and the Dialectical Landscape (1973)," in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1996), 157–171.
- 3 Elizabeth Meyer, Remarks to the jury for "The City + The Arch + The River 2015 International Design Competition" interview of Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates team on August 26, 2010, St. Louis, Missouri.
- 4 *Report to the President of the United States on improvements and policy of maintenance for the executive mansion grounds.* (Brookline, MA: Olmsted Brothers, 1935).

## Esthetics in the Conservation of Building Materials and Finishes

by Theodore Prudon

The importance of James Marston Fitch to the world of historic preservation in the United States and the role he has played in the development of the field has been well recognized. His writings have appeared all over the world.<sup>1</sup> Nearly all his writings, dating from as early as the 1930s, display remarkably prescient insights and time has proven that most of his speculations about the future of American architecture were correct. The presentations and discussions in the Fitch symposium<sup>2</sup> serve as a powerful reminder of Jim Fitch's continuing importance to the field of historic preservation and the depth of his insights.

I should acknowledge here that my comments are more than just academic and professional; they are also personal. I was one of Jim Fitch's students in the early 1970s in the newly established Historic Preservation program within the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at Columbia University. Immediately upon graduating, I was his teaching assistant for a number of years, a role that evolved to my being a junior faculty colleague. In that relationship with Professor Fitch I cannot help recalling some of his favorite terms including: "profundity of intervention,"<sup>3</sup> "pedagogic," and his frequent use of the Italian word *Andiamo!* (Let's go!) that he used to spur us on, whether on field trips or in the studio. While the latter might be a suitable credo for any "person of action" in the historic preservation field, the first two terms are most relevant in a discussion of esthetics of historic preservation. That is, one must always consider, first, how far and to what degree one should intervene in architectural conservation, and, second, what should one do to rationalize and explain such actions.

In this essay, I discuss the session topic, "Esthetics in the Conservation of Building Materials and Finishes" in the broader context of Fitch's writings and teachings. The best introduction to this topic may well be Fitch's own words: "Beauty may be in the eye of the beholder and may be only skin deep; however, the surface appearance of a building not only can have a profound effect upon our reaction to the structure, but also can provide valuable clues for accurately restoring an historic structure."<sup>4</sup>

The profound effect that he is referring to is on two levels: One, a building's appearance, which usually immediately conveys information about the actual physical condition of the building, and two, the visual and esthetic impact (or the "experiential reality") that a structure may have upon those who observe and experience it. Apropos of Fitch's renowned articulation of the concept of "profun-

dities of intervention,” it is interesting to note the timing of the first expression of this term. Its use is contemporaneous with the start of Columbia’s preservation program that Fitch created with the assistance of Charles E. Peterson in September 1964. This is the same year that the Venice Charter (the International Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites) cited many of the very same levels of intervention within several of its principles, which has so influenced architectural preservation ever since. In the charter, science and scientific research are assumed to be central to what was referred to at the time as “monuments protection” (what we now call architectural heritage protection).

While not a scientist himself, Fitch recognized the importance of science and, over time, instilled conservation science and its methodologies as integral features of Columbia’s graduate program in historic preservation. With regards to the concept of the “experiential reality” of architecture—that Fitch also referred to as “four dimensional experience”—he felt it was crucial to understand this before experiencing and evaluating buildings and sites. In relation to this, Fitch’s early interests and writings on how the cognitive and social sciences relate to architecture are exactly as he hoped for and predicted.<sup>5</sup>

The tension between scientific and esthetic considerations is exemplified in decisions about how and why to clean buildings. George Wheeler<sup>6</sup> discussed the esthetic implications of cleaned versus soiled and stained stone building exteriors. The impetus to clean and ideas of how to go about it have been debated subjects since its wide practice on a massive scale during postwar Europe’s reconstruction. Fitch knew these debates well from his firsthand study of numerous cities in all corners of Europe during the 1950s and 60s. Wheeler compared before and after images of cleaned buildings and sculptures mostly in the New York area, discussing the visual and esthetic impact of cleaning buildings in each instance. He explained that in some instances the accumulation of extraneous surface finishes and their occasional changes to the appearances of buildings can sometimes result in a structure acquiring a unique new, and sometimes beguiling, character, that some might prefer from the standpoint of esthetics. In other cases, as when an architect’s intended patterns, colors, and textures have been obscured by the accumulation of soiling, the decision to clean is a more clear-cut choice.

Wheeler’s discussion included a related practical concern that is often overlooked; the “re-soiling rate” or the rate at which a building gets dirty again in its particular environment. This important consideration has a bearing on the frequency with which the building may require cleaning in order to maintain its “sparkling” like-new appearance. A building’s re-soiling rate is also a consideration when trying to avoid unharmonious appearances of parts of buildings. Wheeler introduced a note of caution about the fact that too frequent cleaning will ultimately damage the building and its surfaces.

Scientific research on historic buildings can produce a great deal of information that is useful to both the conservation process and to a site's interpretation. However, while science may reveal facts, it is often the case that decisions must be made that take into account both scientific accuracy *and* overall visual impact. It is here in "the four dimensional experience" that architectural conservation professionals often find themselves. We may call it the "preservationist's eye" or the sense of beauty in the 'eye of the beholder'—all the more reason to assume that the object in question may well be re-interpreted in the future to reflect a different "preservationist's eye."

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### Notes

- 1 An excellent summary of his wide-ranging writings can be found in *James Marston Fitch: Selected Writings on Architecture, Preservation, and the Built Environment*, ed. Martica Sawin (New York, NY: W.W. Norton, 2007).
- 2 The James Marston Fitch Charitable Foundation organized a symposium entitled "The Preservationist's Eye: Esthetics in Reuse and Conservation of the Historic Built Environment" in September 2009.
- 3 In many of his early lectures and writings he would refer to "levels of intervention" but in James Marston Fitch, *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1990) 44-47, the term "profundity of intervention" is used in describing how we can intervene and its consequences.
- 4 James Marston Fitch, "Visual Criteria for Historic Building Restorations: Determining Appropriate Repair/Cosmetic Treatments," *Technology & Conservation* (Winter, 1978): 10.
- 5 An early example of his point of view as applied to architecture may be found in James Marston Fitch, "The Future of Architecture," *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 1 (4, 1970): 85-103. For the same argument for preservation, see "Chapter 11: Cosmetic Consequences of Intervention" in James Marston Fitch, *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1990)
- 6 George Wheeler was unable to contribute to this volume. The other presenters in the session were Frank Matero and Susan Buck, both of whom have prepared essays published in this issue of *CRM Journal*.

## Making Archeological Sites: Experience or Interpretation?

by *Frank Matero*

Any consideration on the topic of aesthetics and preservation as applied to archeological sites demands reflection on three critical questions:

- How should we experience a site, especially one that is fragmented and possibly illegible?
- How does intervention affect what we see, what we feel, and what we know?
- How can display promote an effective and active dialog between past and present?

All preservation is a critical act that results in the conscious production of “heritage.” As an activity of mediation between the past and the present, conservation is ultimately responsible for what the viewer sees, experiences, and can know about the past. Much contemporary practice is concerned with finding an acceptable balance between protecting the historical and documentary values inherent in the physical form and fabric, including evidence of age through weathering, with the aesthetic values implicit in the original work including its flaws and subsequent alterations. Such questions have been fundamental to preservation theory and practice concerned with interventions in the life of a building or site regardless of age. The tension inherent in this dialectic defines the very nature of conservation as the push-and-pull between the emotional and humanistic on the one hand, and the rational and scientific, on the other. Fitch attempted to explain and guide such intervention policies through a triadic model based on three tangible aspects:

- The “present physiognomy” of the building/site (accumulated physical evidence including age-what Ruskin called “voicefulness”)
- The “architectonic or aesthetic integrity” of the building/site in purely formal terms (original artistic aesthetic intent or what Viollet-le-Duc termed “stylistic unity”)
- The “phylogeny and morphogenetic development of the artifact across time” (the development of type and structure over time, each work being unique and individual unto itself)<sup>1</sup>

## Archeological sites

At least since the 18th-century excavations of Pompeii, archeological sites have long been a part of heritage and tourism, certainly before the use of the term “heritage” and the formal study of tourism. Archeological sites exist in a state rarely imagined by their makers. Their state of fragmentation, dereliction, and abandonment are heavily modified through practices of excavation and presentation—the latter to reveal and give readings of history and experience through modes of display. Interpretation and display begin together at the moment of excavation. Historically, archeology has long been preoccupied with finds and later with facts. The anticipation of preservation and display as an integral part of the archeological project began in the 18th century with the belief in and contemplation of nature and the solace that could be derived from a ruin. There was no question of preservation in the Romantic or Picturesque attitude towards a ruin.<sup>2</sup> The ruin was there to stimulate the visitor, the effect sometimes enhanced by selective destruction and cultivated vegetation. The pleasure to be derived was one of reconstruction in the mind’s eye of the ancient place in its original state. The better one understood the ruin, the better the imaginative reconstruction.

It was in the late 19th century that the first formal attempts to both excavate and display in a scientific manner were attempted at excavations such as Assos (Turkey), Knossos (Crete), and Casa Grande (Arizona). Like other heritage sites, the conservation of ruins requires the removal or mitigation of deterioration; however, the very nature of their fragmented disposition also determines and affects their meaning and character. This has a direct and powerful effect on visual legibility and indirectly conditions our perceptions and notions of authenticity.

Among the repertoire of conservation techniques often applied to archeological sites are structural stabilization, anastylosis, reconstruction, protective shelters and reburial, and a myriad of fabric-based conservation methods. Each solution affects the way archeological information is preserved and how the site is experienced, transmitted, and therefore understood, resulting in competing scientific, historic, and aesthetic values. However technological study and critical definition of the site constitute only the point of departure for conservation. It is the archeologist in consultation with stakeholders who generally develops the narratives and it is the conservation professional who determines how that narrative will be played out on-site, therefore dialogue and negotiation are tantamount to a successful project.

Archeological sites are what they are by virtue of the disciplines that study them. They are made, not found, formed over time, through destruction, abandonment, excavation, and preservation. Display as intervention is an interface that mediates and transforms, and conservation’s methods have always been a part of that process.

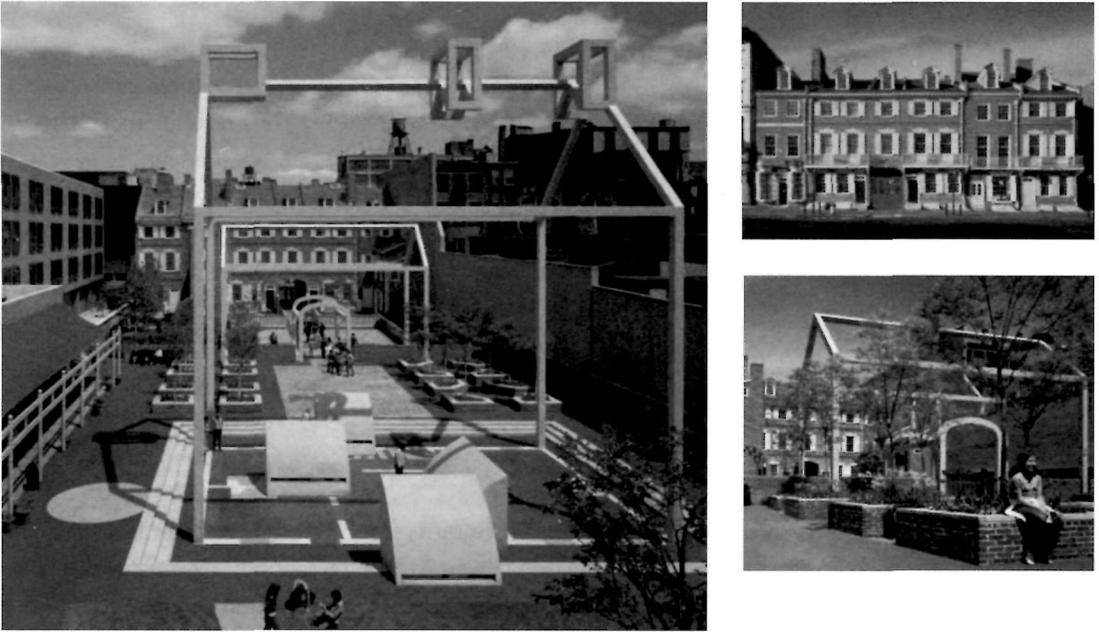


FIGURE 1  
*Franklin Court,*  
*Independence National*  
*Historical Park, 1976.*  
 (Courtesy of Venturi, Scott  
 Brown and Associates,  
 architects)

At Franklin Court, the site of Benjamin Franklin's House in Philadelphia and part of Independence National Historical Park, a team of designers, engineers, and archeologists offered a revolutionary solution during America's Bicentennial in 1976 by revealing the site's historical and aesthetic authenticities through real and exaggerated elements. (Figure 1) The result was the construction of a spatial montage that never confuses the present with the past yet allows visitors an open-ended experience of history, memory, and time. Earlier plans in the 1950s to celebrate Franklin on the site of his house included building a memorial park or architectural reconstruction. They were rejected despite the use of both approaches within the National Park Service and the nation in general since the 1920s.

The alternative solution proved that didactic interpretation and somatic experience could be achieved together through the skillful combination and display of above- and below-ground archeology as well as reconstruction, two and three-dimensional historic space as a hidden urban court and garden, an abstract house plan and volume (the famous "ghost structure"), and a multimedia underground museum. The brilliance and success of the design solution lay not only in the diversity, placement, and juxtaposition of the site's interpretive components (both archeological remains and "interpreted" features) but in the recognition that the original hidden enclave setting of the Franklin site could offer up a powerful experience that brought time and space together in an urban oasis appreciated in Franklin's time as well. Fitch pronounced Franklin Court "...from an aesthetic point of view, the most successful of all [archaeological sites]... marking a new level of maturity in American preservation activities."<sup>3</sup>

## Experience or Interpretation?

The last century's obsession with artistic unity, style, and connoisseurship in the preservation of the visual arts planted the seeds for a revolution of intangible content and process over tangible form. But the question now is: are we losing the desire and ability to respond to the physicality of things and places, to see more, hear more and feel more, in deference to the aggressive revealing of invisible content at the expense of the physical place? As Susan Sontag warned in 1964, "Interpretation is the revenge of the intellect upon art. . . interpretation tames art by reducing it to its content. . . and makes it manageable, comfortable."<sup>4</sup> Here Sontag recalls Hegel's problems with the analytical zeal of "Understanding" upon "Beauty" when he wrote, "Beauty, powerless and helpless, hates understanding, because the latter exacts from it what it cannot perform."<sup>5</sup>

Of course interpretation can offer up a complex reading that has the ability to reveal much about a site that is invisible; it offers another form of excavation that completes what the trowel has revealed or left behind. But then so can a site's inherited physical presence transport the viewer out of time through a series of experiential sensory stimuli. In an effort to develop all-informing narratives, we revise, revamp, reveal, and expose, littering places with commentary in the form of interpretive infrastructure: information centers (no longer museums), signs, viewing platforms, protective shelters, digital technology, and shops and cafes. Instead, to paraphrase Sontag, shouldn't our ultimate task be to show how it is what it is, rather than to show what it means?

## Conclusion

Like all disciplines and fields, archeological site conservation has been shaped by its historical habit and by contemporary concerns. What began as a long-lived European tradition of cultivating a taste for ruins and the picturesque, has developed into the protection of the whole place rather than simply artifact conservation or the removal of a site's architectural features, the Parthenon marbles being among the most egregious examples. Despite the level of intervention, specific sites—namely, those possessing monumental masonry remains—have tended to establish an idealized approach for the interpretation of archeological sites in general. However, many sites such as the earthen mound settlements of the ancient Near East at once challenge these ingrained notions of ordered chaos and arranged masonry by virtue of their fragile materials, and temporal and spatial disposition, while living ancestral sites such as Mesa Verde and Chaco Canyon in the American Southwest reveal very different worldviews, sometimes resulting in conflicting relationships between professionals and traditional communities. Moreover, changing notions of "irresistible decay" have expanded and challenged the realm of what is to be considered, interpreted, and preserved as a ruin, as Philip Johnson himself pronounced on seeing his own 1964 New York State Pavilion transform into a sublime wreck.<sup>6</sup> (Figure 2)

FIGURE 2  
*New York State Pavilion,*  
*Queens, New York, 2008.*  
 (Courtesy of the author)



Archeological sites, like all places of human activity, are constructed. Despite their fragmentation, they are complex creations that depend on the legibility and perceived authenticity of their components for meaning and appreciation. Yet they are also places that possess the power to remember, to admonish, and to elicit strong emotions. How the interpretation and display of such places are realized remains the challenge for the professional in shaping what we see, how we feel, and what we know.

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### Notes

- 1 James Marston Fitch, *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1990), 83-84.
- 2 While the basic definition of a ruin has remained fairly constant throughout recorded history, associated meanings and values have not. Ruins are the remains of human-made architecture: structures that were once complete, as time went by, have fallen into a state of partial or complete disrepair, due to lack of maintenance or deliberate acts of destruction. Natural disaster, war and depopulation are the most common root causes, with many structures becoming progressively derelict over time due to long-term weathering and scavenging. (Definition available online at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruin>, accessed on June 29, 2010).
- 3 Fitch, 303.
- 4 Susan Sontag, "Against Interpretation," in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966), 7-8.
- 5 Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, quoted in *Speaking of Beauty* by Denis Donoghue (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2003), 24.
- 6 Philip Johnson, *The Architecture of Philip Johnson* (Houston: Anchorage Press, 2002), 2.

## Esthetic Considerations in Interpreting, Conserving, and Replicating Historic Finishes at Monticello

by Susan L. Buck

In his 1978 essay “Visual Criteria for Building Restoration: Determining Appropriate Repair/Cosmetic Treatments”, James Marston Fitch advised that “In determining what preservation philosophy should be pursued, esthetic, maintenance, and environmental factors have to be considered. More specifically, the esthetic ambitions of the original designers/owners of the artifact must be taken into account.”<sup>1</sup> This is a challenging task when the original designer and owner is the fascinating and sometimes elusive Thomas Jefferson. (Figure 1)

The painted finishes at Monticello were researched during the 1936 restoration overseen by Milton L. Grigg, a preservation architect, and the architect and scholar Fiske Kimball. Their correspondence suggests there was concern about how the colors they believed dated to Jefferson would be accepted by the public, although Grigg was pleased that the blue he found in the dining room matched the Wedgewood plaques in the mantel.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately the restoration decisions they made seem to have been partly based on the physical evidence, and partly on what they felt was appropriate for a building as important as Monticello. We know now that, one way or another, our decisions about restoring finishes reflect our time, but we are also more willing now to find the messy reality than earlier.

Matching and replicating period colors continues to be one of the most difficult components of building interpretation and preservation. We all have emotional responses to color, and often we cannot help doubting color combinations and faux finishes that seem lacking in taste, refinement, or beauty. Fitch was acutely aware of this problem, as he observed in the same essay: “What may be one generation’s concept of a handsome finish for a building may be considered quite garish, or not even considered at all, in a later time period. And if the original scheme is to be achieved, how can the color values be best determined?”

At Monticello a more scientific approach to analyzing and matching early paint colors began in the late 1970s when paint analyst Frank S. Welsh investigated the interior and the exterior finishes. I have worked on many paint analysis projects with Architectural Conservator Robert L. Self and Director of Restoration William L. Beiswanger since the early 1990s, and we continue to be astonished at how much more there is to learn about Jefferson’s decorating



FIGURE 1  
 Monticello, East Front.  
 Late 1880s or early  
 1890s. (From the *Monticello  
 Architectural Image  
 Collection*, courtesy  
 the Thomas Jefferson  
 Foundation, Inc.)

choices. Methods for analyzing historic coatings and matching colors have advanced considerably in sophistication and repeatability, even in two decades, allowing us to more clearly relate the paint evidence at Monticello to Jefferson's correspondence and to period craft practices and materials.

Three projects help to reveal Jefferson's intentions: analysis of the surviving green paints on the louvered "porticles;" the search for early paints and wallpaper in the Dining Room; and the investigation of the dark gray walls in the South Square Room. These projects provide intriguing insights into Jefferson's decisions about color, surface texture, and overall visual impact, as well as a better sense of how he may have come to make these choices.

When the decision was made to replicate the louvered enclosures in 1998, one key piece of evidence was an original louver fragment discovered in the north attic in 1996. Cross-section microscopy showed that the original paint consisted of an oil-bound off-white primer and an oil-bound finish coat made primarily with the brilliant green copper-based pigment verdigris. But, verdigris paint is unstable, known to discolor to almost black when exposed to weathering. This posed a problem -- had Jefferson chosen this particular green for his shutters and porticles because he knew it would soon become almost black, or did he choose a brilliant green for other reasons? How should this green color be replicated? Cross-section microscopy paint analysis, hand-ground paint replications, and accelerated aging tests were used to determine the original grass-green color. When this color was applied to the shutters and porticles, it visually tied the building to the surrounding landscape.

The paints on the walls in the Dining Room posed a different challenge, especially because the current blue paint, based on the 1930s research, is much-beloved by Monticello visitors. My work in the mid-1990s had revealed a brilliant chrome yellow-based paint on top of the plaster and below, a layer of rag-based gray-painted wallpaper. This wallpaper was of keen interest to Monticello curators since there had long been a question about whether Jefferson installed wallpaper in certain first floor rooms.

The presence of chrome yellow in the first paint on the Dining Room walls means this layer could be as early as 1812, the date of the first known reference for chrome yellow in this country. The remnants of wallpaper above the window pediment, on top of the chrome yellow, could date to Jefferson. Fitch described Mount Vernon and Monticello as “especially worthy of our study as they were so elegantly designed and furnished by their owners, so meticulously documented by them, and subsequently so carefully preserved by their curators.”<sup>3</sup> The survival of the chrome yellow paint and the wallpaper fragments is proof of this careful preservation approach. But the importance of this particular room means that any repainting decision could provoke concern not only from some of the staff, but from Jefferson scholars and the public. It took more than 10 years of research, paint analysis, overpaint removal, and paint replication tests before it was decided to repaint the room. The brilliant yellow paint was applied in early 2010, and while some may perceive this newly repainted room as garish, it now gives us a far better sense of Jefferson and his particular esthetics.

The most recent project at Monticello is the South Square Room. In 1997, Welsh identified the walls as black plaster.<sup>4</sup> In 1981 Andrew Johnson, then Monticello’s architectural conservator, exposed an area of the black plaster using a solvent-based stripper and scrubbing with steel wool, revealing a smooth black surface. But this is somewhat deceiving as the surface was darkened from penetration of the stripper and polished by the steel wool. My on-site investigations and analysis showed that the walls were originally dark gray created with a traditional fresco painting technique, followed by chalky light blue distemper.

The contrast of the matte dark gray walls with the off-white woodwork must have been a dramatic backdrop for the gilded frames and prints known to have been in this room. But the room was recently repainted to match the second-generation blue distemper paint as it is interpreted to the end of Jefferson’s life, when his daughter Martha used the room as the central space from which to manage the household.

All the exposures in the Dining Room and South Square Room were left in place for reference and future analysis as this is certainly not the end of paint research in the house. Analytical methods will continue to improve and researchers will ask different questions. Our generation is interested in

the potential contrasts, inconsistencies, even awkwardnesses, of a house like Monticello, and what they indicate about the owners, particularly someone with the endlessly complex esthetics of Thomas Jefferson. Now, as a house museum, Monticello continues to offer up still fresh ideas of domestic comforts and delight to streams of visitors each year.

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### Notes

- 1 James Marston Fitch, "Visual Criteria for Historic Building Restoration: Determining Appropriate Repair/Cosmetic Treatments," in *Selected Writings on Architecture, Preservation, and the Built Environment*, ed. Martica Sawin (New York, NY: Norton, 2006), 213.
- 2 Milton L. Grigg to Dr. Fiske Kimball, May 28, 1936. Correspondence copy provided by William L. Beiswanger, Robert H. Smith Director of Restoration, the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Inc.
- 3 James Marston Fitch, "Mt. Vernon and Monticello: Exemplars of the Slave Powered Plantation," in *Selected Writings on Architecture, Preservation, and the Built Environment*, ed. Martica Sawin (New York, NY: Norton, 2006), 106.
- 4 Frank S. Welsh, "Monticello: Paint & Color Analysis of the interior & exterior to determine the Original Architectural Finishes," unpublished report for the Thomas Jefferson Foundation, January, 1977. See also Frank S. Welsh, "The Early American Palette: Colonial Paint Colors Revealed," in *Paint in America: The Colors of Historic Buildings*, ed. Roger W. Moss (Washington, DC: Preservation Press, 1994), 72.

## An Interview with Terry B. Morton

by *Russell V. Keune*

*The first part of this interview, conducted in the electronic era of computers, the Internet, search engines, e-mail, faxes, Facebook, and twittering, looks back to a period when printed communications in the historic preservation field were produced on electric typewriters, mimeograph machines, and by commercial printers and distributed by the U.S. Post Office.*

*Terry Brust Morton was a staff member of the National Trust for Historic Preservation (Trust) from 1956 until 1982. The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a nonprofit member-supported organization founded in 1949 by a congressional charter to support the preservation of the nation's historic districts, sites, buildings, and objects through a wide range of programs and activities.*

*During 25 years of her 26-year Trust career, she was the leading print communicator to the national preservation constituency. She oversaw the production of the printed communications that served as the Trust's primary member benefits. She played a leading role in conceiving, developing, researching, writing, editing, designing, and publishing diverse material. Early examples were intended to inform, educate, and service a growing Trust individual and organizational membership. A later publication array—books, brochures, case studies, illustrated slide lecture notebooks, posters, and catalogues—reached a wide audience of citizens and public officials. At her 1982 departure, she was the vice president for the Preservation Press.*

*She was also a leading advocate for the enhancement of District of Columbia public and private preservation programs. She believed that she could be more effective in her Trust responsibilities if directly involved in local preservation.*

*Her 12-year career with the United States Committee, International Council on Monuments and Sites (1982-1994) provided much of the leadership that moved a largely unknown international preservation organization to a position of active engagement with a growing membership and a host of private and public organizations sharing an interest in international preservation challenges and opportunities. In 1980, she was elected vice chairman, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), United States Committee (US/ICOMOS). After leaving the Trust, she served full time as US/ICOMOS chairman (1982-87), and then as its president and CEO (1987-94).*

*This interview was conducted by Russell V. Keune, FAIA, in October 2009. He has been Terry's friend and professional colleague since 1966. She resides at Riderwood Village in Silver Spring, Maryland.*

RVK: Let's begin by telling me about your childhood.

TBM: First a review of my roots. My great-great-grandfather, Rev. Herman Bielfeld, came with his family from Bielefeld, Germany, to Frederick, Md., by way of Canada and Pennsylvania. He was minister of St. John's German Reformed Church from 1873 until his 1895 death, when he was buried under its altar. Relatives were a carriage maker, school superintendent, printing and bookbinding company owner, horticulturist, and *Frederick News and Press* publisher. Two were artists and another's name was given to the Westminster Public Library.

I was born and raised in historic Frederick. My industrious father was a master carpenter who built houses, including three in which we lived, plus our garden playhouse. My mother's farm family was from Alsace-Lorraine; she was a one-room school teacher and a talented mother and homemaker. Both parents were dedicated to the family and active in church. I was one of four children with two sisters and my twin bother, with whom I was generally inseparable until seventh grade. I was raised during the Great Depression's difficult economic times, and attended Frederick schools. Following high school in 1945, I left home determined to make a difference, but had no plan. I lived in Washington, DC, with my sister, enrolled in Strayer College, and completed its secretarial program.

RVK:: What led you to the National Trust for Historic Preservation?

TBM: In 1947 I obtained my first position as assistant to the editor, at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Located in a historic building, 700 Jackson Place, NW, it would begin nearly 35 years working at Lafayette Square overlooking the White House. Alger Hiss, the Endowment's congenial president, worked at the Washington office when not at its New York City headquarters.

Later I joined the Wells Organization, a New York City fundraising firm helping Washington's First Baptist Church acquire funds to build its new modified Gothic structure, at 16th and O Streets, NW. I became secretary to Dr. Edward Hughes Pruden, the church minister. He was also President Truman's pastor during his presidency.

By 1950 I enrolled in George Washington University, continuing full-time church work to pay expenses during six night-school years. My academic focus was on history, literature, and writing. In an art survey course, I realized I could study these subjects through art and architectural history. I also took Corcoran School of Arts' drawing and painting courses. Through cultural events and the Institute of Contemporary Arts membership, I attended lectures, including

those by Frank Lloyd Wright, Dylan Thomas, and Aldous Huxley.

Following graduation in 1956, I sought a position with the National Gallery of Art and the Smithsonian Institution. Because of my lack of experience, it was difficult to secure a professional position. In a newspaper advertisement I noted a position at the National Trust. Although I had not heard of the organization, I applied, was hired and, on June 18, 1956, reported as secretary to the newly appointed first Trust president, Richard H. Howland.

Dr. Howland was a Greek classical archeology authority, Society of Architectural Historians founder, US/ICOMOS founder, and John Hopkins University Fine Arts Department head. Working with Dr. Howland and the Trust subject matter, it seemed I was in extended college studies. Dr. Howland would become a lifelong friend and colleague, and I considered him my “godfather.” Years later he offered to nominate me to be the Cosmos Club’s first woman member; for personal reasons, I declined his gracious offer.

RVK: What was it like working at this early Trust?

TBM: The Trust was seven years old and had a staff of five and two part-timers. Donated office space was in a townhouse at 712 Jackson Place, NW, owned by Paul Mellon and adjacent to his townhouse. It marked my second return to historic Jackson Place.

As the president’s secretary, I was introduced to what this new, small national organization was about. A broader view was afforded by my serving as Board of Trustees recording secretary, 1956-75. Board officers and members had played significant roles in the 1949 Trust chartering. Among these leaders were David E. Finley, National Gallery chairman, U.S. Commission of Fine Arts chairman, and Trust Board chairman; Ronald F. Lee, National Park Service chief historian; Ambassador Robert Woods Bliss, Dumbarton Oaks; Mrs. W. Randolph Burgess, former World War II Women’s Army Corp head; Ulysses S. Grant III; and Louise E. du Pont Crowninshield of Delaware. Later significant Board vice chairmen were Helen Abell (Kentucky), and Robertson E. Collins (Oregon).

Seminars, annual meetings, fundraising, increasing individual and organizational membership; responsibility for the first Trust historic properties—Woodlawn Plantation (Virginia) and Casa Amesti (California)—answering ever-increasing telephone and letter inquiries; receiving visitors; and scheduling and preparing Dr. Howland’s lectures—all required collaboration among our small staff.

Most member service responsibility went to Helen Duprey Bullock, who in 1950 had become staff historian and editor. The first member benefit publication was initiated in 1949, an eight-page, 8½" × 11" magazine, *Historic Preservation: Quarterly of the National Trust for Historic Preservation*.



Terry B. Morton in the National Trust for Historic Preservation offices in 1958. (Courtesy of Terry B. Morton)

It was the only member communication when I arrived in 1956. Nine months later, I was made managing editor to enhance and expand Trust printed communications and assist Mrs. Bullock. I had no academic training in editing or publishing graphics.

Mrs. Bullock had been Colonial Williamsburg's archivist, 1929-50, a University of Virginia Thomas Jefferson fellow, an AIA honorary member, and a recognized authority on colonial American cooking. A mesmerizing speaker, she shortly became a Trust icon. After her retirement she received the Trustees' highest national preservation honor, the Louise E. du Pont Crowninshield Award. She was my teacher and adviser; we worked together for 18 years and were lifelong friends. When I was at US/ICOMOS, she gave me her sculptured award eagle, saying that it was the first of two that I would receive!

The Robert Lee Blaffer Trust of Houston, Texas, funded Trust communication advances. A graphic designer enhanced and unified the Trust graphic image with the use of terra-cotta color, a new logo, new stationery, and the quarterly magazine redesigned in a journal format issued from 1957 to 1971.

Under Dr. Howland's leadership, the staff initiated and expanded programs, especially in education and properties. Endowment increased with major gifts, including those from Mellon family foundations. One project was the Historic American Buildings Inventory for the Commonwealth of Virginia, co-sponsored by NPS and the American Institute of Architects. It was a precursor of the national, state, and local surveys envisioned in the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act.

RVK: You worked for a succession of Trust presidents. Who succeeded Dr. Howland?

TBM: Dr. Howland was preceded by Frederick L. Rath Jr., executive director, who came from the NPS during the 1949 Trust founding. In the 1990s, when giving his papers to the University of Maryland's National Trust for Historic Preservation Library Collection, Mr. Rath remarked that our careers covered 33 years of Trust history.

In 1960 Robert R. Garvey Jr., executive director of Old Salem, Inc. (Winston Salem, N.C.), succeeded Dr. Howland. As the Trust's executive director, Mr. Garvey ushered in an era of extended Trust communications to its 2,400 members and 326 member organizations. He was a strong supporter of enhancing member communications. It was his idea that the monthly newsletter, which he had established on his arrival, be replaced by a large newsprint format with advertising, continuing the name *Preservation News*. With his finely tuned political instincts, the newspaper was dispatched monthly to the U.S. Congress. First printed in January 1961, the paper was placed for free distribution outside the Trust office entrance at the H Street facade of Decatur House.

RVK: What role, if any, did the Trust Board play in its publication programs?

In 1962 Gordon Gray, former secretary of the army, became Trust Board chairman. The number and role of Board committees under Mr. Gray were expanded. Made up of trustees and non-trustees, the Publications Committee brought experience and perspective. Five chairmen made significant contributions: Alice Winchester, *The Magazine Antiques* editor; later Wendell Garrett, *Antiques* editor; Dr. Leonard Carmichael, former Smithsonian secretary, and National Geographic Society Explorer vice chairman; and Philip C. Johnson, FAIA. Important members were Howard E. Paine, designer of *National Geographic*, and Robert E. Stipe, lawyer and professor, North Carolina State University.

RVK: How did you gather information to develop newspaper and journal articles?

TBM: We were never lost for subjects for either publication. In the early years, in addition to suggestions from members throughout the country, our clipping service provided initial leads. Throughout the late 1950s and early 1960s, federal urban renewal, dam construction, and interstate highways were increasing dramatically. Entire historic neighborhoods, significant city halls, county courthouses, and federal buildings were being demolished in record numbers by government agencies. There were abundant issues and conflicts. Local, county, state, and national preservationists were operating before the protections provided under the 1966 Act.

In addition to reporting threats and losses, we also reported success stories: buildings saved, newly created historic districts, noteworthy surveys, preservation awards, and new educational offerings. Our print media provided a vital link among individuals and organizations facing similar challenges.

I am proud of planning, writing and editing editorials, articles, and features for *Historic Preservation* and *Preservation News*. Over those 26 years there were 98 journals and magazines and 252 newsletters and newspapers. Having national exposure to the preservation movement at all levels, it was rewarding to highlight subjects that I viewed as meriting attention.

I commissioned preservation crossword puzzles for the newspaper written by prisoners recommended by the *New York Times*. Since there was no feedback, the crossword puzzles were discontinued. We also commissioned cartoons, some used in the 1976 cartoon book, *I Feel I Should Warn You: They Have Taken Down Boston and Put Up Something Else*. I had collected preservation cartoons over 25 years and received approval to use no more than 25 percent from the *New Yorker* in the book.

Our enhanced print communications attracted renowned architecture critics, including Ada Louise Huxtable of the *New York Times* and Wolf von Eckardt

of the *Washington Post*. Their writings on an array of preservation issues spread the message to a wide and diverse audience beyond the Trust membership.

RVK: The Trust undertook major new initiatives during the 1960s. What were the highlights?

TBM: Under Mr. Garvey's leadership, the Trust assumed a coordinating role in efforts leading to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The conceptualization, planning, funding, writing, and publishing of the book *With Heritage So Rich* involved Trust Board members and staff. Carl Feiss, an urban planner and Board member, played a pivotal role. Mrs. Bullock was temporarily relieved of normal duties to produce this key book. A monumental effort, it was to be available for congressional committees working on this legislation. The appendix recommended legislative elements. Preservation losses and accomplishments, featured in a photographic essay, documented what was happening to America's historic, architectural, urban, and archeological heritage.

In 1969, when the reconstruction of Jackson Place began, Trust offices moved to a nearby building. The Trust then moved back to Decatur House and two former townhouses, now reconstructed, on Jackson Place. I proposed that the Trust establish a preservation bookstore to adjoin the visitor reception area. It would sell Trust publications with those of member organizations and related commercial items. The bookstore opened December 1971.

RVK: The Trust established the Preservation Press in the 1970s. What led to this development?

TBM: In 1968 James Biddle became the second Trust president. Mr. Garvey became executive director of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, established under the 1966 Act. Mr. Biddle came from New York City, where he had been curator of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's American Wing.

Established in 1975, the Preservation Press was a concept that I initiated when Mr. Biddle asked for new directions. We had continued to publish the monthly newspaper and quarterly journal, which had been redesigned in 1972 in a four-color, square magazine format. It was redesigned again in 1979 as the bimonthly magazine in an enlarged format with advertising. Both publications won awards for content and design.

The new entity published an expanded array of Trust books with other preservation organizations and commercial publishers. A grant-in-aid program provided matching support for member organization publications. Special seminars on publishing were incorporated into Trust annual meetings.

Major Press books included *Old and New Architecture: Design Relationship*;

*Space Adrift: Landmark Preservation and the Marketplace*; the two-volume *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949*; two Trust histories 1949-63 and 1963-76; and *America's Forgotten Architecture*, published by Pantheon Books.

I assembled a talented staff of experienced writers and editors. Key people were Marguerite Gleysteen, Lee Ann Kinzer, Carleton Knight III, Diane Maddex, Sharon W. Timmons, and Gail Wentzell. Diane and I worked together for 14 years and we remain close friends. She was my chief assistant, my book editor, and became an AIA honorary member. Having her own business, she has written, or edited, and published 30 Frank Lloyd Wright books and related items. Eventually the Press was supported by a staff of 17.

Preservation Press reviewed, approved, and published all Trust printed materials, except direct-mail member solicitations requiring specialized consultants (although I expressed our belief that direct-mail membership promotional mailing(s) were often inaccurate and inconsistent with the Trust's image).

With Board members coming in the late 1970s from corporate backgrounds, the decision was made to include newspaper and magazine paid advertising. A person knowledgeable in marketing commercial advertising was added to Press staff. While advertising income contributed to production costs, it never became a sole sustaining source.

With Trust membership reaching 160,000, its magazine audience attracted the interest of an Arkansas private publisher. He had launched a privately published preservation magazine and sought a Trust contract to publish its bimonthly magazine. The Board did not accept his proposal.

In 1979 the Trust moved to new quarters in the former McCormick apartments at 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, just off Dupont Circle. The Preservation Press enjoyed first-floor offices in this historic building purchased from the Brookings Institute. The Trust and I had come full circle in association with Mellon family quarters from the son's townhouses on Jackson Place to his father's apartments in this grand building. It was here that major National Gallery paintings had been selected by Andrew W. Mellon.

My 25th anniversary as a Trust employee was celebrated in 1981. That same year my professional accomplishments were recognized when I was elected an AIA honorary member and named a "preservation pioneer" by the Smithsonian. I received honor awards from the Trust, twice from the [Washington] D.C. Area Women in Preservation and the Bryn Mawr College/Pennsylvania Historical Society's Ann Pamela Cunningham Honor Award. Later I was named a US/ICOMOS fellow.

RVK: The Trust went through strategic planning exercises during your tenure. What impact was there on your responsibilities?

TBM: The 1963 conference Historic Preservation Tomorrow convened at Colonial Williamsburg. Its final report recognized membership and public communications as an essential Trust mission and called for their expansion. The 1973 "Goals and Programs" study took place when the Trust was receiving federal funds from the 1966 Act. It reaffirmed Trust publications as a primary membership benefit. Though broader than Trust concerns, the third was the 1978-79 "Preservation: Toward an Ethic in the Eighties." It had little Trust impact since in 1980 there was a complete change in Board and staff leadership.

RVK: You have pride in your personal role as a preservation activist. What are some of the highlights of that commitment?

TBM: My activist activities started in 1964 when the Trust sponsored the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Year, which we did in collaboration with the U.S. Department of State. My first personal and public preservation advocacy occurred with the proposed sale and demolition of the National Presbyterian Church on Connecticut Avenue, NW, just south of Dupont Circle. It was one of the finest Romanesque Revival city churches and had one of the two downtown towers on the Washington skyline.

Learning of a congregational evening meeting to vote on the developer's proposal to buy and demolish the church for an office building, I organized a sidewalk protest march with Mr. Garvey's approval. Needless to say the minister, developer, and many attendees were not pleased to find sign-carrying marchers. The police informed us that a public sidewalk demonstration permit was needed and dispersed us. The church was later demolished; recently the replacement building's façade was stripped and replaced by a more modern version.

By 1964, the right-of-way planning for Interstate Highway 66 in Falls Church, Virginia, included one of three area houses designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. One of his Usonian designs, it was later named the Pope-Leighey House for its original and current owners. Marjorie F. Leighey did not want to see her house destroyed and had not opened Virginia Department of Highways documents. The situation was discovered when my husband, M. Hamilton Morton Jr., AIA, led a Wright house tour for the Northern Virginia Fine Arts Association. The next day I reported the widow's plight to Mr. Garvey; publicity and outrage ensued, and Mr. Garvey, the U.S. Department of the Interior, and the highways department negotiated to save the house.

During this time, Hamilton and I helped Mrs. Leighey prepare the house interior for a visit by public and private preservation leaders to examine rescue

May, 1971 at a Smithsonian Institution reception held in conjunction with the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Preservation Law Conference. Left to right—James Biddle, President, NTHP; William J. Murtagh, Keeper, National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service; Terry B. Morton; Frederick Rath, first Executive Director, NTHP; Richard H. Howland, first President, NTHP. (Courtesy of Carlton Knight III)



possibilities. Leading the delegation was Stewart L. Udall, secretary of the interior. The house was saved, accepted as the first modern Trust historic house museum, and moved to the Woodlawn Plantation site. In 1969, to publish the house's history in *Historic Preservation*, I organized an oral history reunion of those responsible for the Pope-Leighey House's original construction, relocation, and reconstruction.

In 1967, being members of the Society of Architectural Historians, James C. Massey, later director of the Trust Properties Department, and I proposed to Dr. Howland the creation of a local SAH chapter. At the organizational meeting in the Trust's Decatur House (1819), the new chapter was named for its architect and America's first professional architect, Benjamin Henry Latrobe. The chapter has grown in membership and regularly presents lectures and tours on significant Washington area architecture.

In 1971 a preservation controversy focused on the Old Post Office at 12th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, NW. The redevelopment plan for Pennsylvania Avenue prepared by the architect Nathaniel Owings, of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, for the Pennsylvania Avenue Redevelopment Corporation called for this 19th-century Romanesque public building's demolition. It was to be replaced by a new complex to complete the 1930s classical Federal Triangle. Alison Owings (not related to the architect), a WRC-TV writer much concerned about local heritage, and I led Trust staff and members in a lunch-time march to the Old Post Office. The march spurred the creation of a new private citywide preservation organization, *Don't Tear It Down*, eventually renamed the DC Preservation League.

Intensive media and lobbying efforts ensued; the national landmark was saved, with its tower, and restored with a new adaptive use in 1983. It became home to the Advisory Council and the National Endowments for the Arts and Humani-

ties (NEA and NEH). It was one of the first federal buildings to house multiple uses under new federal regulations.

The first U.S. conference on national historic districts was convened in 1969 by the Trust in Boston. Lawyers active in preservation law relating to districts attended and spoke. Leaders realized there was much innovative activity within preservation law. I suggested to Mr. Biddle that the Trust establish a national preservation law committee. Hesitant that the Trust might be taking on too many new initiatives, he ultimately agreed. Among prominent lawyers to serve were Robert E. Stipe; Frank B. Gilbert, New York City; and Albert B. Wolfe, Jr., Boston.

The Trust committee then convened a national conference to review the developing law field. It was held in Washington, DC, on May Day 1971, with proceedings to be published by the *Duke University Law Journal*. Released in 1972, it was the first comprehensive U.S. preservation law publication.

In 1973 the Preservation Law Committee urged the Trust to hire its first staff attorney to provide preservation law advisory services. You, Russell, as Trust director of field services, and I were sent to Harvard University to interview graduating law students. The attorney we recommended was hired.

May 1970 marked the first Trust Earth Day engagement, promoted and planned by the Preservation Press. Its success led to my suggestion that the Trust launch its own National Historic Preservation Week. Started in 1971, it is still a national event. The Trust Earth Day celebration also directly resulted in the Council on Environmental Quality, our neighbor on Jackson Place, to include historic preservation in its environmental tax relief legislation proposed to Congress.

I also proposed that the Trust and the SAH Latrobe Chapter organize the first historic preservation conference in the nation's capital. Held in April 1972 and attended by 350 people, it endorsed DC citywide preservation legislation. The second DC preservation conference was held in 1982, sponsored by the DC AIA Chapter and SAH Latrobe Chapter. During the intervening 10 years, with DC Preservation League leadership, the District of Columbia had enacted and put into effect one of the most progressive preservation ordinances in the country.

RVK: How did you become interested in the international aspects of historic preservation?

TBM: There were international preservation news stories in the Trust's newspaper and magazine, as well as headquarters meetings with international visitors. In 1965 several Trust leaders and members, including Charles E. Peterson of the Park Service and Mr. Garvey, were U.S. delegation members to meetings in Warsaw, Poland, that formed the International Council on Monuments and

Sites. Our national US/ICOMOS committee, which I joined, was formed shortly. Eventually, I was elected to its Board of Trustees, became its vice chairman and chairman; and, after the 1987 general assembly, its secretariat president and CEO.

I served on delegations to ICOMOS general assemblies and international symposia in Moscow, USSR (1978), Rome and Florence, Italy (1981), Rostock and Dresden, German Democratic Republic (1984), Lausanne, Switzerland (1990), and Colombo, Sri Lanka (1993).

Dr. Ernest A. Connally was the first head of the Park Service's Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation; in 1975 he became the first American elected ICOMOS secretary general. His three-year tenure brought a high level of engagement between the U.S. committee and the Paris parent organization, a non-governmental organization related to UNESCO.

As a membership benefit, ICOMOS published the quarterly journal *Monumentum* for its 65 national committees. US/ICOMOS sponsored and published a 1976 edition dedicated to the U.S. preservation movement to celebrate our Bicentennial. This was another Press project for which I was editor.

RVK: In 1983 you became the first permanent US/ICOMOS staff member. What were your first goals in assuming this position?

TBM: From 1965 to 1983, Mr. Garvey volunteered his services and those of his Trust and Advisory Council staffs as US/ICOMOS secretariats. It was essentially a volunteer organization, with fewer than 100 members. Although the Trust gave me a small grant and two Decatur House offices, I had to raise all additional income. Eventually there was a staff of four with two others hired for the 1987 general assembly, and with additional support from three regular volunteers.

I published a monthly newsletter, printed on thin air mail-style paper to convey a sense of being international. Monthly lectures were presented by members and visiting foreign preservationists. We sought members and then encouraged them to join ICOMOS specialized committees, reaching those interested in international preservation beyond Washington. When I left, the membership had grown to nearly 700 individual and organizational members.

RVK: The World Heritage Convention became a major US/ICOMOS focus. How and why did that come about?

TBM: The United States played a leading role in developing UNESCO's convention, dealing with cultural and natural property. In 1972 we were the first country to ratify this convention. ICOMOS is the official international organization supporting UNESCO in the convention's cultural property aspects. The State Depart-



The staff of the Preservation Press prepared a special notebook at the time of Terry B. Morton's 25th anniversary with the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1981. (Courtesy of Carlton Knight III)

ment, having the federal U.S.-WHC responsibility, designated the NPS International Office to be the operating entity.

US/ICOMOS offered support to NPS to make WHC programs better understood in America. We collaborated in a number of initiatives, one being member programs on WHC properties. We sponsored with the DC AIA Chapter a presentation on the Statue of Liberty, a World Heritage site, by its restoration architects. It was held at the Federal Reserve Auditorium with a standing-room audience. We assisted the National Geographic in publishing the first U.S. book devoted to the World Heritage Convention. It was illustrated with cultural and natural sites from the Society's photographic archives.

Each quarter, US/ICOMOS newsletters were devoted to world heritage news. US/ICOMOS and NPS reviewed U.S. sites considered for convention nomination and were invited to UNESCO meetings where WHC sites were designated. 1987 general assembly funds were used for a WHC exhibit sponsored with NPS.

A new US/ICOMOS initiative led to the creation of model elementary school curricula focused on world heritage. Arlington County, Virginia, and Montgomery County, Maryland, education boards tested and refined programs. We were fortunate to have NPS support and that of a private foundation's dedicated volunteer, Barbara Timken.

**RVK:** US/ICOMOS also reached out to students interested in international preservation. How did this come about?

**TBM:** French ICOMOS had a Youth and Heritage summer intern program and invited US/ICOMOS to include American high school students. We responded affirmatively, beginning our international intern program. Then Robert Kapsch, chief of the NPS Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), suggested that foreign college students join U.S. students on HABS summer intern teams. Foreign students came recommended by their ICOMOS national committees.

The intern programs were directed by Ellen Delage, a former American staffer at the ICOMOS secretariat in Paris and our talented French-speaking program officer. Subsequently foreign students were added to Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) teams. Foreign and American interns, mostly students of architecture and landscape architecture, were usually assigned to local, state, and national private nonprofit sponsoring organizations. Participating ICOMOS committees then hosted American summer interns in their countries.

The first Americans in Moscow worked for state preservation agencies. In Alaska, USSR interns used their Russian and English language skills on Russian colonial period documents. In 1989 in Moscow, HABS landscape architect Paul

Dolinsky and I met with the minister of culture to sign the USSR/USA-NPS-US/ICOMOS intern exchange protocol.

Member donations supported intern programs through annual Valentine appeals. The program, in the years from 1984 to 2009, trained more than 600 students from 70 countries. Intern orientation was given by DC members and public and private organization representatives. Intern debriefings on their DC return were given to this group, discussing their professional work and sharing their observations of places and people.

- RVK: US/ICOMOS came to engage in foreign preservation projects. What were they?
- TBM: Foreign projects discovered US/ICOMOS, because its nonprofit tax status enabled us to receive tax-deductible donations for transfer abroad.

The first initiative was to support preservation of the 16th-century Citadelle Laferrière in Haiti, a World Heritage site. It is the largest masonry fortification in the Western Hemisphere. The U.S. committee to raise restoration funds was led by Ronald Brown, later the secretary of commerce. US/ICOMOS transferred funds to the overseeing Haitian entity.

A project in the then Yugoslavia was for the 16th-century Arneri Palace on Korčula Island in the Adriatic Sea. Located on the old town square and facing the cathedral, most of its interior and roof had been destroyed by fire, leaving an empty shell for decades. A prominent American preservationist on a Smithsonian tour made a sizable grant for restoration and reconstruction. The local effort was facilitated by Sir Fitzroy and Lady Veronica MacLean. A Foreign Service Officer, he had been Churchill's representative to Marshal Tito to support Yugoslavia's war with the Nazis. Many of the James Bond stories were inspired by Sir Fitzroy's adventures.

US/ICOMOS served as fund recipient and formed a board committee to oversee grant administration and preservation work. Since the historic Korčula town center was a designated national monument, all work was under government monument service approval. As the project progressed, Croatia declared its independence and the Serbian-Croatian war temporarily halted work. Exterior restoration was completed in 1992; the Croatian Ministry of Culture continues interior restoration and furnishing of the museum and cultural center.

We also obtained U.S. tax-exempt status and raised funds in a joint effort with the French Association *CSS Alabama* to help rescue and protect the ship's relics. A Confederate raider, it was sunk in 1864 during the Civil War off the Cherbourg coast.

For a multi-year program focused on two castles and a fort on Ghana's Atlantic

coastline, US/ICOMOS joined a consortium with the Smithsonian, Conservation International, and the University of Minnesota. The goal was to enhance economic development of the Cape Coast region with a new national nature park, as well as preservation and interpretation of Cape Coast Castle, Elmina Castle, and Fort St. Jago—all World Heritage sites.

Under this project supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), we worked with Ghana's Museums and Monuments Board. Foreign professionals were brought to the U.S. for Smithsonian technical design and construction training and for introductions to NPS preservation and interpretation. It was rewarding to see President Obama visiting the Cape Coast Castle during his 2009 state visit to Ghana.

The U.S. Information Agency (USIA) supported projects were under its International Visitors program. Historic agency administrators came for two-week periods to meet with public and private preservation agencies. Another brought architects and urban planners from the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central and South America to visit established historic districts. Preservation officials also came from developing countries to the 1987 ICOMOS general assembly, participants being selected by U.S. embassies in their countries.

The USIA television project WORLDNET brought U.S. and foreign counterparts to interactive live broadcasts at U.S. embassies. Our members focused on topics such as archeology and historic districts.

Our largest USIA undertaking involved two regional, weeklong conferences with government leaders invited to share experiences. The first studied Asia at the East-West Center in Honolulu, with proceedings published by the Getty Conservation Institute. The second was in Cairo, Egypt, for Middle East and North Africa delegates.

RVK: US/ICOMOS carried out American Express Company projects. What did they involve?

TBM: The first was to plan, organize, promote, and conduct special competitive preservation awards for Caribbean countries' 1992 Christopher Columbus Quincentenary. Winners received cash awards to support ongoing efforts; the program was extended for 1993.

Another was writing and publishing an illustrated book on national preservation programs of the 10 member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), prepared in conjunction with a regular ASEAN meeting. We collaborated with the World Monuments Fund of New York City, and on another book, *The Razing of Romania's Past*.

RVK: The most far-reaching and largest undertaking during your US/ICOMOS service was the 1987 General Assembly and International Symposium. How did this come about and what did it involve?

TBM: ICOMOS national members meet every three years for the general assembly, all previous meetings since its 1965 founding having taken place in Europe. US/ICOMOS had always been represented; our delegates were impressed by the 1978 Soviet Union sessions. Since much had been accomplished under our 1966 Act, I recommended to the Board that we host the 1987 gathering—I knew what was required, but not how we might do it!

I extended the US/ICOMOS invitation in 1981 at the Rome 6th general assembly; it was welcomed and accepted. Although these conferences were previously held in May, ICOMOS acceptance required an October meeting. ICOMOS attendees and 1987 Trust Washington annual meeting participants could thus attend some sessions at either meeting. It proved to be a significant and challenging event for our small organization—but we did it; we succeeded!

With the theme Old Cultures in New Worlds, planning began six years in advance. European governments financially support committee hosts for these events. Our appointed committees determined that it was necessary for us to raise nearly \$1 million to host our event. As the US/ICOMOS general assembly chairman, I requested \$100,000 from NPS congressional appropriations subcommittees, although Trust staff advised me it would be easier to obtain \$1 million. Starting in 1983, we received \$100,000 annually, which continued until 1994, with reduced amounts in future years.

Another financial success occurred when Dr. Howland and I, on a hot August afternoon, visited a foundation sponsor. We asked \$40,000 for foreign delegates, and within days a \$40,000 check arrived. Significant support came from individuals, other foundations, and public and private entities: Advisory Council, National Building Museum, NEA, NPS, Smithsonian, Trust, and USIA. A major expense was to provide simultaneous English, French, Spanish, and Russian translation service.

In 1986 I hired you, Russell, as US/ICOMOS program vice president, to mastermind the planning and execution of the big event. You were a NPS employee for seven years and Trust staff officer, 1969-1983. With your related preservation responsibilities, including international experience and planning numerous Trust national conferences and annual meetings, there were no other candidates—no one was better qualified!

Regional, state, and local public and private organizations contributed staff and facilities for sessions and tours that included historic sites, towns, and cities in

DC, Maryland, Virginia, and Delaware. Hundreds of volunteers contributed to the weeklong event.

Publications without charge were available at participant arrival, including 142 papers in four symposium sub-themes published in English and French editions. Another was a survey book, *The American Mosaic: Preserving a Nation's Heritage*, covering 21 years of U.S. preservation.

The US/ICOMOS Specialized Committee on Historic Towns led an effort to produce the first ICOMOS Charter on Historic Towns that was adopted by the General Assembly.

The DC Board of Elections lent voting booths, prepared ballots used for ICOMOS officers, and supplied automated equipment to count and verify cast ballots. Election Board staff operated the system, previously a time-consuming, hand process with paper ballots. It was transformed into a record-time election.

My late husband, Hamilton, and I shared many preservation goals, and I was fortunate to have his support and counsel. In 1985 he was the DC AIA chapter president; he had many preservation contracts and numerous preservation volunteer projects. My efforts were immensely enhanced by his varied interests and relevant contacts.

I am grateful for the years I pursued preservation opportunities and carried out others that I created. I miss the challenges, action, family, staff, U.S. and foreign preservation friends, colleagues, and mentors, sadly many no longer with us. We dedicated "preservation people" strengthened the work of our predecessors. We did change the world and set the stage for preservation of heritage in the 21st century.

#### Note

- 1 Now the Corcoran College of Art and Design

## Fiske Kimball's National Park Service Memoir<sup>1</sup>

by John H. Sprinkle, Jr.

*Fiske Kimball (1888-1955) is well-recognized as one of the founders of American architectural history.<sup>2</sup> His *Thomas Jefferson, Architect (1916)*; *Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic (1922)*; and, *American Architecture (1928)* remain landmarks in the history of American architecture.<sup>3</sup> From 1924 until 1955, he was the director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art where he was widely acknowledged as a highly skilled curator and administrator.*

*Kimball is equally significant in the story of American historic preservation. His 1941 essay in the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* defined the "The Preservation Movement" during the period prior to World War II.<sup>4</sup> Kimball served as one of the founding members of the National Park System Advisory Board, which was created by the Historic Sites Act of 1935 to advise the Secretary of the Interior regarding the identification and evaluation of nationally significant historic properties. As such, he played a highly important role in the establishment of National Park Service historic preservation policy.<sup>5</sup>*

*During World War II, Kimball drafted an essay entitled "Historic Monuments," which outlined his reminiscences regarding the wide range of historic preservation projects and personalities he had known through his career. Comprising one chapter of his proposed memoirs, the manuscript is maintained among Kimball's voluminous records at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.<sup>6</sup> The following excerpt from Kimball's memoirs describes his involvement with the National Park Service.*

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### Historic Monuments

Already at Harvard I had been unimpressed with the great series of inventories of historic monuments listed in Lauglois' *Manual*<sup>7</sup> and shelved at the college's library—covering in topographic order, especially in the Teutonic countries, every surviving work of any importance. As I worked on American colonial subjects I hoped that something similar could be undertaken here.

When I organized, in the Archaeological Institute, the Committee on Colonial and National Art, it occurred to me that such inventory of monuments might [need] to [be] undertaken through the Federal Bureau of American Ethnology, but I learned that its scope was limited by statute to aboriginal inhabitants of the United States.<sup>8</sup> Americanists in the Southwest were extending this interest

to the Spanish colonial monuments, some of which, if on public land, had been declared National Monuments under the control of the National Park Service. I sounded these men as to such an extension of the scope of Federal interests as would include Eastern, Anglo-colonial works. Buildings had been excavated at Jamestown; why should we not consider archaeology to include works of our own ancestors on this continent? They agreed in principle but begged me not to raise this problem to the Park Service until the problems then existing there as to the West could be straightened out. It was many years before circumstances became really favorable for the effort I had in mind.

[ ... ]

Simultaneously with the Rockefeller work at Williamsburg, went forward nearby under the National Park Service, the development of Colonial National Park at Jamestown and Yorktown. Its landscape architect was Charles Peterson, a young man from Cornell, very self-confident, fertile in ideas and, as was proved, a genius for organization. I had been warned against him by the Williamsburg architects, but when he sought me out and showed me all he was doing, I was much impressed by his abilities and we became good friends. Early in 1934 he came forward in the conception of the Historic American Buildings Survey, by which, as a measure of unemployment relief, the buildings of historic and architectural importance throughout the country would be measured and photographed.<sup>9</sup> He engineered an effective collaboration of the Park Service, of the Works Progress Administration, which provided the funds, and the Library of Congress, which preserved the results. Though early taken into confidence, I had no part in the early organization of the enterprise, which was in excellent hands, and realized one of my long cherished dreams.<sup>10</sup> Later I did have a chance to help in its continuance at a crucial moment, and to protect and encourage Tom Waterman<sup>11</sup> and Stuart Barnette,<sup>12</sup> the aces of the headquarters staff in the Park Service.

The Park Service had had for some years an advisory committee on which Herman Carey Bumpus, retired director of the American Museum of Natural History, and Waldo Leland, the historian, founder and director of the American Council of Learned Societies were mainstays.<sup>13</sup> In 1935 Congress passed, on the initiative of the Service, The Historic Sites Act, establishing for the first time in America something which might become analogous to the service of monuments in foreign nations.

I was appointed on its Advisory Board, along with Bumpus and Leland, with the Harvard Americanist Alfred Vincent Kidder<sup>14</sup>, the California historian Herbert Bolton<sup>15</sup>, and with several laymen active in their patriotic societies and in local preservation work, such as George de Benneville Keim of New Jersey,<sup>16</sup> Edward Abrahams of Savannah, and Archibald McCrea, who had restored and garbled Carter's Grove near Williamsburg.<sup>17</sup>

The Board was intended to act as a buffer between the Department of the Interior and its Park Service and Congress, members of which were always promising the acquisition of sites of merely local importance. There as a sheaf of such proposals awaiting us at our first meeting. We organized with sub-committees on scenic sites, archaeological sites, and historic sites, the last of these, under the chairmanship of McCrea, a personal friend of Secretary Ickes, being my interest. There was a great contrast between the inconsequent opportunism of the lay members and the long-range views of the professionals, but we managed to work in harmony with each other and with the officials of the Service, who also hoped for a long-range view: Arno [B.] Camerer, its Director; [Arthur E.] Demaray, the Deputy Director, and Verne Chatelain, who at first was chief of the Historic Sites Branch—a disciple of the historian Charles Merriman, then head of the Carnegie Institution of Washington.<sup>18</sup> Chatelain elaborated a broad series of themes such as under which the important sites and monuments could be designated. As the small staff of the Branch were kept too busy reporting on single sites currently in question, certain of us in the Board took the initiative in bring[ing] in comprehensive lists of the most important ones in different fields. Thus Kidder was primarily responsible for a list of eligible archaeological sites, Bolton for one of mostly Spanish sites—both largely of a nature to call for ultimate excavation. I undertook a list of surviving buildings which could be regarded as of national significance—not only for events which took place there but equally for their artistic importance. Thus, we ruled in advance, with some consistency, on the eligibility of sites and monuments irrespective of whether emergencies regarding them had arisen calling for legal action.

An advantage and inducement for owners and occupants of sites and buildings which might be designated as of national significance lay in the existence at that time, and potentially in the future, of relief funds such as of the Works Progress Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps. These would become available for restoration and development work if cooperative agreements, as provided by the act, could be negotiated with organizations concerned, even without federal ownership of the site. In two notable instances I was so fortunate as to bring about such agreements.

### **Second Bank of the United States**

One of the finest old buildings in the United States is the old Philadelphia Custom House, a masterpiece of our Greek Revival, built in 1819-1824 for the Second Bank of the United States.<sup>19</sup> It stood abandoned, in custody of the Treasury Department, on completion of a new Custom House, and was being offered for sale as surplus government property. Its location was in an area depressed by the revival of the financial center of the city, an area in which many buildings had been demolished to save taxes. Miss Frances [Anne] Wister, head of the Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks, was much exercised at the danger, but her efforts in the matter were unrealistic



FIGURE 1  
*Second Bank of the United States, 420 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, PA, June 1939, North Facade (Frederick D. Nichols, Photographer. HABS PA,51-PHILA,223-4. HABS/HAERI/HALS Collection, Library of Congress)*

and ineffectual.<sup>20</sup> Even if a purchaser should be found to use the building as it stood, and there were some inquirers, such as the Temple University for its Law School, one would have no assurance against its ultimate resale and demolition. The time to strike for its preservation was when it was still in federal hands and could be transferred to the Park Service merely by executive action.<sup>21</sup> It was obvious to me that the easy way to achieve this was to find a tenant who would put up the cash needed as “sponsors contribution” for necessary restorations of the building under WPA, and who would assume the cost of maintenance.<sup>22</sup>

For some years, initially through Marie’s<sup>23</sup> German-American interests, we had been in friendly touch with the major organization in that field, the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation.<sup>24</sup> It was well endowed and had large ambitions to assemble a library and museum collections in its field. I attended a meeting of their board and outlined both the financial advantages of the proposed scheme and the perfect adaptability of the building to their needs: headquarters offices in the old officers rooms at the front, editorial offices in the rooms just above, an assembly hall in the main banking room with the museum collections displayed in its aisles, the library and its stack[s] in the large rooms behind.<sup>25</sup>

The Board visited the building and the deed was done; the building was transferred to the Park Service, or cooperative agreement with the foundation was signed and ample WPA funds for allotted for the restoration. For an

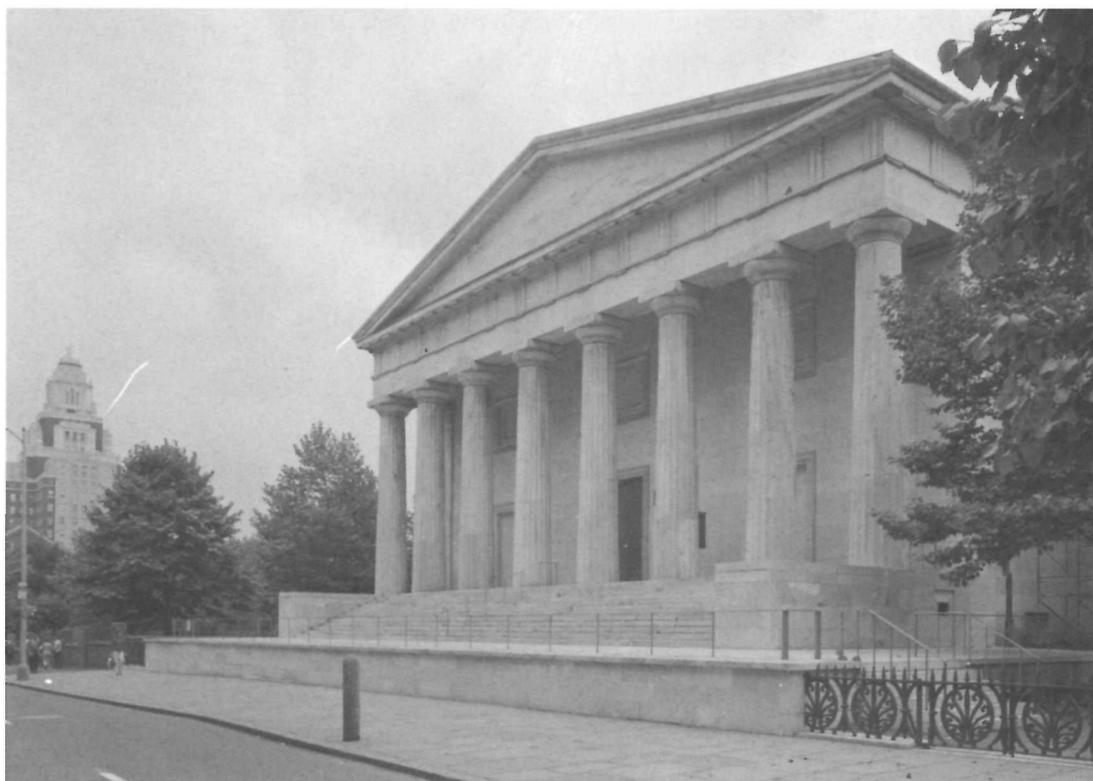


FIGURE 2  
*Second Bank of the United States, May 1976 (Jack E. Boucher, HABS PA,51-PHILA,223-36. HABS/HAER/ HALS Collection, Library of Congress)*

ultimate contribution of \$28,000 the Foundation secured this beautiful and historic headquarters free of any rent, the building was preserved, doubtless in perpetuity.<sup>26</sup>

### **Jamestown Island**

A site of the first importance where conditions were far from ideal was Jamestown. The upper part of the island had long been the possession of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, and its consecrated Virginia ladies deserved much credit for their initiative regarding it, and for their considerable restoration of the old church, behind the ruined tower. On their property also were the foundations of a row of brick buildings including the State House of 169\_, [sic] which had been excavated and consolidated by Colonel [Samuel H.] Yonge, of the Army Engineers, when they were encountered in building the sea wall to preserve the island in 1907. The Association had also built a brick rest house; where souvenirs were sold, and Yeardeley House, for hospitality, supposedly a reproduction of a seventeenth century type, actually a unmistakable wooden suburban cottage of around 1900.<sup>27</sup>

The Park Service had lately acquired the rest of the island; its archaeologists were actively at work; helped by men from the Civilian Conservation Corps, in excavating old foundations here, with very interesting, to paraphrase, results and rich finds of objects.<sup>28</sup> [Figure 3] They had built a laboratory and museum



FIGURE 3  
*Excavation of a brick  
 foundation (Unit A),  
 Jamestown Island, 1936  
 (HABS VA,48-JAM,1-1.  
 HABS/HAER/HALS  
 Collection, Library of  
 Congress)*

building, said to be temporary, the museum design of which outraged the ladies of the Association. Relations between the two bodies were very tense. The route of the Colonial Parkway, connecting with Williamsburg and Yorktown, which the Park Service was to build, was still undetermined, and the most desirable possibility for it, by restoring the isthmus from Glass House Point, was blocked by the property of the Association.

The roof of the Association's rest house was leaking badly and something had to be done there. The Williamsburg Restoration was appealed to for designs to remodel the building into harmony with seventeenth century style, and although these were made on a cost basis, the Association paid considerable sums for them without any satisfactory result. It was then proposed to demolish the rest house and house its facilities in a restoration of the old State House. Herbert Claiborne<sup>29</sup> was a member of the board of the Association, they wanted him to do the work, he said I should be called in to design it. I was retained initially for a day's consultation and we went to Jamestown together to meet some of the ladies, especially Miss Ellen Bagby, the chairman of their Jamestown Committee. She was the daughter of George Bagby, author of "The Old Virginia Gentleman," and was wholly unreconstructed.

I could not concur with the desirability of their proposal. Nothing whatever was known of the form of the superstructure of the State House; its design, however plausible, would have to be pure guesswork, and the intended uses would have

been very unsuitable for it. I ventured the suggestion that if the Association could come to a cooperative agreement with the Park Service, it would be possible to undertake a larger and wiser program for a harmonious development of the island, restoring the isthmus, placing all modern buildings, both rest house and museum, off the island at Glass House Point, and extending the excavations to the Association's property.<sup>30</sup>

To this very radical proposal Miss Bagby and some other conservative figures in the Association were far from favorable, although the Park Service was ready to make any concession to secure its adoption. A meeting of the Association was called at the Jefferson Hotel to consider it.<sup>31</sup> Forces on both sides were marshaled. Miss Bagby had secured a letter from Senator [Thomas Ashby] Wickham, of redoubtable influence. The proponents dined before and at the Claiborne's across the street—they included the President of the Association, Mrs. [Margaret W. Wilmer], and Miss Ellen Harvie Smith, a descendent of John Marshall, one of the most reasonable and self-abnegating women I have ever met, at once firm and gentle. At the meeting we outlined the proposal and spoke favorably. That Claiborne and I were prepared to abjure any personal employment made its due impression. The other side stressed the sacredness of the Confederate Fort, "planned by Robert E. Lee," which stood directly on the supposed site of the first settlement, the sacrilege of disturbing it by excavation. Officials of the Park Service were heard.<sup>32</sup> [Harrington], the archaeologist, handled the matter of excavations at the fort with delicacy;<sup>33</sup> [Charles W.] Porter, a Southerner who had luckily married the niece of Senator Wickham, spoke with much effect.<sup>34</sup>

I then retired with the other outsiders to the balcony of the hotel. There was a long executive session, during which champagne cocktails were the strongest relief Virginia law afforded us. Toward midnight the members emerged and the Claiborne's took me to their house to report a complete victory. The Association was prepared to place Miss Smith in charge at Jamestown; she stood aside to mollify Miss Bagby, who then promised to cooperate, and any schism in the Association was avoided!<sup>35</sup>

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*Fiske Kimball never published or completed his memoir, although portions of his reflections informed the biography, Triumph on Fairmont: Fiske Kimball and the Philadelphia Museum of Art, which was published soon after his death in 1955.<sup>36</sup> Other sections of the chapter on "Historic Monuments" related stories of his involvement with the restoration of Monticello, Stratford Hall in Virginia, as well as the restoration and adaptive reuse of "The Colonial Chain" of homes located in Fairmont Park.<sup>37</sup>*

*In the mid-1940s Kimball would again collaborate with the National Park Service leadership to secure designation of Hampton, an 18th-century mansion located near Baltimore, Maryland, as a National Historic Site. Hampton bears the distinction of being the first historic property recognized as being nationally significant for only its architectural qualities, as an object of beauty, rather than for any historical associations.*

*For 15 years Kimball served as the National Park System Advisory Board's expert on American architecture and historic preservation. In fact, at the first meeting of the Advisory Board in February 1936, Kimball laid the foundation of American historic preservation policy by recommending the adoption of the adage: "better to preserve than repair; better to repair than to construct; and better to construct than to destroy the evidences of history."<sup>38</sup>*

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### Notes

- 1 The views and conclusions in this essay are those of Fiske Kimball and John Sprinkle and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the National Park Service of the United States Government. John Sprinkle acknowledges the invaluable assistance of Susan K. Anderson, the Martha Hamilton Morris Archivist at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.
- 2 George and Mary Roberts, *Triumph on Fairmont: Fiske Kimball and the Philadelphia Museum of Art*. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1959. Hugh Howard, *Dr. Kimball and Mr. Jefferson: Rediscovering the Founding Fathers of American Architecture*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2006. Lauren Weiss Bricker, "The Writings of Fiske Kimball: A Synthesis of Architectural History, 215-236 in *The Architectural Historian in America*. Studies in the History of Art 35. Edited by Elisabeth Blair MacDougall, Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 1990. *Bibliography of the Works of Fiske Kimball*. Compiled by Mary Kane. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1959. Joseph Dye Lahendro, "On Kimball as Architect and Historian," paper presented at "Fiske Kimball: Creator of an American Architecture." University of Virginia, 1995.
- 3 Fiske Kimball, *Thomas Jefferson, Architect*. Cambridge, MA: Riverside Press, 1916. *Domestic Architecture of the American Colonies and of the Early Republic*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1922. Reprinted: New York: Dover, 1966. *American Architecture*, New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1928
- 4 Fiske Kimball, "The Preservation Movement in America," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol 1, No. 3-4, (July–October, 1941), 16.
- 5 John H. Sprinkle, Jr., "'History is as History was, and Cannot be Changed,' Origins of the National Register Criteria Consideration for Religious Properties," *Buildings and Landscapes: The Journal of the Vernacular Architecture Forum*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Fall 2009), 1–15.
- 6 Fiske Kimball Papers, Box 159, "Historic Monuments." MS, ND. Philadelphia Museum of Art Archives. Kimball probably wrote this memoir between 1943, the last date mentioned in the text, and 1945 when he became actively involved in the establishment of Hampton National Historic Site. Kimball's manuscript has been edited to focus on his relationship with the National Park Service and to remove personal reflections that are not relevant to development of American historic preservation.
- 7 Charles-Victor Langlois (1863-1929) was an influential French historian. Rolf Torstendahl, "Fact, Truth, and Text: The Quest for a Firm Basis for Historical Knowledge around 1900," *History and Theory*, Vol. 42. No. 3 (October 2003), 305–331.

- 8 Kimball chaired the Committee on Colonial and National Art for the Archaeological Institute of America and served as an editor for its magazine, *Art and Archaeology*, in 1919-1921.
- 9 Catherine C. Lavoie, "Architectural Plans and Visions: The Early HABS Program and its Documentation of Vernacular Architecture." *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, Volume 13, No. 2, Special 25th Anniversary Issue (2006/2007), 15-35.
- 10 Fiske Kimball, "Introduction," in John Mead Howells, *Lost Examples of Colonial Architecture: Buildings that have Disappeared or been so Altered as to be Denatured*. (New York: Dover Publications, 1963; originally published by William Helburn, Inc., 1931).
- 11 Fay Campbell Kaynor, "Thomas Tileston Waterman: Student of American Colonial Architecture," *Winterthur Portfolio* Vol. 20, No. 2/3 (Summer/Autumn 1985), 103-148.
- 12 NPS Assistant Architect Stuart M. Barnette published "The Old Philadelphia Custom House: An Architectural Monument," *The Regional Review*, Volume 11, No. 6 (June 1939). A native of Dover, Delaware, Barnette graduated from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Ecole des Beaux Arts Americaine. He joined the National Park Service in 1934 and for a time worked on the Historic Sites Survey.
- 13 Hermon Carey Bumpus (1862-1943) was director of the American Museum of Natural History. Waldo G. Leland (1879-1966) worked with the Carnegie Institution, the American Historical Association and the American Council of Learned Societies.
- 14 Robert Wauchope, "Alfred Vincent Kidder, 1885-1963," and Neil M. Judd, "Alfred Vincent Kidder, A Tribute," *American Antiquity*, Volume 31, No. 1, Part 1 (October 1965), 149-171, 272.
- 15 John Francis Bannon, "Herbert Eugene Bolton - Western Historian" *The Western Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Jul., 1971), 261-282. George P. Hammond, "In Memoriam: Herbert Eugene Bolton, 1870-1953," *The Americas*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (April 1953), 391-398. Albert L. Hurtado, Herbert E. Bolton, Racism, and American History Herbert E. Bolton, Racism, and American History," *Pacific Historical Review*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (May, 1993), 127-142.
- 16 In 1935, as Chairman of the Commission of Historic Sites in New Jersey, George Keim testified before Congress supporting passage of the Historic Sites Act.
- 17 For the history of the National Park System Advisory Board see: Barry Mackintosh, *The Historic Sites Survey and National Historic Landmarks Program: A History* (Washington: National Park Service, 1985).
- 18 Harlan D. Unrau and G. Frank Williss, *Expansion of the National Park Service in the 1930s* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1983).
- 19 Bray Hammond, The Second Bank of the United States, *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, New Series*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (1953), 80-85.
- 20 The Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks was established in 1931 in an effort to preserve the Powel House.
- 21 On January 21, 1938, Kimball telegraphed NPS Director Arno Cammerer: "Understand fate of Old Philadelphia Custom House which was Bank of the United States during Biddle Jackson struggle is on point of decision and that property would be sold for only seventy five thousand dollars. Building is the masterpiece of the Greek Revival in American. Marble adaptation of the Parthenon. Failing any other public or quasi public use urge propriety of transfer to National Park Service for preservation as a National Monument. Artistic Calamity if this beautiful and historic building were destroyed. . . . Building admirably adapted to museum purposes of Service in this area." National Park Service, Park History Program, Independence National Historical Park Files, Washington, DC. In March, the National Park System Advisory Board declared the building to be nationally significant for both its history and architecture.

- 22 Charles B. Hosmer, *Preservation Comes of Age: From Williamsburg to the National Trust, 1926-1949* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), 706-712. The Department of the Interior acquired the Custom House and designated it a National Historic Site in May 1939, almost a decade prior to the establishment of Independence National Historical Park in 1948.
- 23 While teaching at the University of Illinois, Fiske Kimball married Marie Goebel on June 7, 1913.
- 24 For example, in 1936 the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation and the Oberlaender Trust sponsored a traveling exhibit of German art that first appeared at the Philadelphia Museum of Art where Kimball was the director. "Art: Retreat." *Time*, Monday October 19, 1936.
- 25 During the summer of 1939, the Department of the Interior solicited proposals for the adaptive use of the Old Custom House by a "reputable organization of sound financial standing." U.S. Department of the Interior Press Release, July 18, 1939. NPS, Park History Program, Independence National Historical Park Files, Washington, DC. Although both Temple University and the American Philosophical Society expressed interest, the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation presented the most viable plan for adaptively reusing the structure. Reflecting international geopolitical tensions of the time, as negotiations over a cooperative agreement continued into 1940, "serious questions" were raised regarding the possible connections between the Schurz Foundation and the Nazi Party in Germany. Secretary of the Interior Ickes demanded that the foundation publish a "declaration against Hitlerism and a defense of democratic ideas" before he would approve the proposed agreement. Ickes to Ferdinand Thun, Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation, September 20, 1940, Waldo G. Leland Collection, Box 101, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.
- 26 In fact the Carl Schurz Memorial Foundation occupied the Old Philadelphia Custom House for two decades. In the late 1950s, the National Park Service developed plans for its own use of the building and took steps to relocate the foundation's headquarters to the 300 block of Walnut Street as part of the Mission 66 program.
- 27 The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities (APVA) acquired 22.5 acres of Jamestown Island in 1893. For the history of the APVA see: James M. Lindgren, *Preserving the Old Dominion: Historic Preservation and Virginia Traditionalism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993).
- 28 In early 1939, the National Park Service was concerned that its ongoing work on Jamestown Island would be compromised by the appearance of Henry Chandlee Forman's new book, *Jamestown and St. Mary's: Buried Cities of Romance* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1938). Because Forman had represented himself as the "Chief Architect" of the project, NPS archeologist J.C. Harrington worried that the public might perceive "the erroneous impression" that the study was "the authoritative, final description and interpretation of the archaeological and documentary research" at Jamestown. J.C. Harrington, Memorandum to the Superintendent, March 16, 1939. National Park Service, Park History Program, Colonial National Historical Park Files, Washington, DC.
- 29 Claiborne, a Richmond architect and builder, also worked with Fiske Kimball at Stratford Hall and other Virginia restorations.
- 30 During the spring of 1939 Kimball confidentially asked the National Park Service to draft an agreement that would permit NPS archeological research on APVA property "in return merely for the privilege of conducting" the excavations. Kimball to Herbert Claiborne, March 6, 1939. Fiske Kimball Papers IV, Historic Preservation Projects, National Park Service, Philadelphia Museum of Art.
- 31 The meeting was held on October 16, 1939, at the Jefferson Hotel in Richmond, Virginia.
- 32 NPS records reflect that the agency was represented at this meeting by Dr. Francis S. Rolands, Chief, Historic Sites Division; Dr. Charles W. Porter, Chief of the Planning and Interpretation Section; and Dr. J.C. Harrington, Archeologist at Jamestown Island. A.R. Kelly to Ellen Harvie Smith, October 5, 1939, NPS Park History Program, Colonial National Historical Park File.

- 33 On October 12, 1939, J.C. Harrington prepared "Suggestions for Archaeological Research in the Grounds of The Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, Jamestown Island," which prioritized the excavation of three separate areas within the APVA holdings and that focused on confirming the location of the first settlement, NPS Park History Program, Colonial National Historical Park File.
- 34 Dr. Charles W. Porter, an NPS historian, married Mrs. Julia Wickham Porter and restored Woodside, the Wickham family home near Richmond, Virginia.
- 35 NPS moved quickly to confirm the proposed agreement with the APVA and to provide "guarantees regarding the character of archeological studies" proposed for the Association's property. A.E. Demaray to Mrs. Arthur P. Wilmer, October 18, 1939, NPS Park History Program, Colonial National Historical Park File. Negotiations continued until July 16, 1940, when President Franklin Roosevelt approved the agreement. The Secretary of the Interior designated the APVA's 22.5 acre portion of Jamestown Island as a National Historic Site on December 18, 1940.
- 36 George and Mary Roberts, *Triumph on Fairmont: Fiske Kimball and the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1959).
- 37 In 1933, Kimball set down his recollections of work with the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg. "Williamsburg" Fiske Kimball Papers, Box 159. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Archives.
- 38 *Minutes of the First Meeting of the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings and Monuments, Department of the Interior*, Washington, DC. February 13-14, 1936, 34. National Park Service, National Historic Landmarks Program.

## A Multidisciplinary Approach to Investigating the Industrial Heritage of Puerto Rico: Research at the National Register Site of Central Aguirre

by Sam R. Sweitz

Puerto Rico has held a unique relationship with the United States since its acquisition by the U.S. in the aftermath of the Spanish-American War of 1898. The economic ties that have bound the fortunes of the island to both private and federal investment from the mainland have been fundamental to this U.S.-Puerto Rican symbiosis. The influx of capital following annexation had a particularly profound effect on the then moribund Puerto Rican sugar industry, initiating the decades-long preeminence of sugarcane as the island's most powerful economic and social force.

The establishment of the *central* system, meaning centralized industrial sugar mills associated with company towns, in the early 20th century represented



FIGURE 1  
An early view of the mill at Central Aguirre during harvest season, circa 1920s. (Courtesy of Jobos Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve)

an important new chapter in the socio-economic development of the island, one that impacted the lives of generations of working-class individuals. The highly industrialized *central*, emblematic of U.S. economic, political, and social hegemony on the island, was associated with the latest in productive technology. Equally important, the *central* also introduced new ideas concerning social organization and community through contemporary proscriptions on paternalism, social welfare, and the Americanization of working-class individuals. These proscriptions reified principles of

family, morality, opportunity, and class/ethnic divisions among workers within the social and physical landscapes of the planned company towns that were built to support the sugar production of the *centrales*.

Planned communities like the National Register site Central Aguirre on the south-central coast of the island represent late 19th-century and early 20th-century conceptions of how industry and community should be integrated. Central Aguirre was the first American-built mill and company town in Puerto Rico. Production commenced with the harvest of 1900 and ceased in 1990. It was intended, and was designed, to affirm the power and progressiveness of the Central Aguirre Sugar Company. (Figure 1) However, Central Aguirre was also home (and continues to be home) to generations of *Aguirreños* who, in spite of their residence at the beneficence of the company, formed strong communal bonds. These bonds fostered an interrelated sense of place and identity. As the

last remaining, relatively intact example of such an engineered community on the island, Central Aguirre offers a rare opportunity to explore the historical development and evolution of engineered communities within the cultural environment of Puerto Rico. Moreover, research at Central Aguirre provides a backdrop on which broader aspects of Puerto Rican, as well as U.S., industrial and social history may be understood.

### The Company of Town of Central Aguirre

For the past three years Michigan Technological University has been conducting a multi-disciplinary research effort at Central Aguirre that has focused on archival work, oral history interviews, and spatial analyses to discover and record the historical evolution of community within an industrial space. The story of sugar production and community building at the site revolves around issues of colonization, Americanization, class and ethnic segregation, identity, and sense of place. These topics have informed our research on industrial and working-class heritage, revealing the poignancy of life in a community that continues to identify itself with a sugar producing past while suffering the economic and social dissolution of being a post-industrial place. (Figure 2) Thus the work at Central Aguirre has been oriented towards understanding how working-class heritage is related to the creation of place-specific identities, and more particularly, the juxtaposition between how the landscape of the company town was conceived of by the company and how it was then perceived by those who lived in the town. As researchers, we are interested in how the implicit negotiation between the two perspectives led to the everyday experiences that ultimately made a place of production a community.

FIGURE 2  
*Looking out over the rusting corrugated metal roofs of the now derelict Central Aguirre mill. (Sam Sweitz, photographer).*



FIGURE 3

An example of a typical criollo (creole) style worker's house in the Montesoria neighborhood of Central Aguirre. (Sam Sweitz, photographer)



Archival research and spatial analyses on the history and design of the industrial community reconstruct the framework on which everyday life took place. In building the company town, the Central Aguirre Sugar Company conceived of a physical and social landscape arranged for the production of sugar and the reproduction of a workforce. The hierarchical social and economic representations that ordered this production were encoded within the landscape and became integral to the ways in which individuals and groups perceived and negotiated their everyday lives. The landscape was designed to maintain the expected social and economic relationships within the community through spatial segregation in the form of prohibitions which designated the appropriate spaces for particular activities or behaviors and subdivided space into areas restricted to one group or another.

The primary divisions at Central Aguirre were represented by ethnic and class distinctions embodied in a hierarchical landscape divided into two neighborhoods: Aguirre and Montesoria. The Aguirre and Montesoria neighborhoods differ in size, layout, and style of architecture; in lot size and density; and by topographic advantages. Divisions occurred first along ethnic and class distinctions between Americans and Puerto Ricans, and then between upper-middle class Puerto Ricans - known colloquially as “*acomodados*” (privileged people) or “*blanquitos*” (snobby white people)—and working-class Puerto Ricans. The Aguirre neighborhood, with its large houses and spacious lots in the hills overlooking the mill, was intended for American and upper-middle class Puerto Rican executives and administrators. The efficient houses of Montesoria were built on prescribed lots situated on the flats next to the mill and Jobos Bay and were home to working-class Puerto Ricans. (Figure 3)

Oral interviews conducted at Central Aguirre have elaborated on the community divisions gleaned from archival and spatial analyses. These interviews provide insight into how individuals negotiated daily life within the community. As a company town, life inside the mill community was subject to the direct influences of the company and the pervasive acculturative forces represented by imported elements of material culture, expressive culture, and surveillance. The

processes of acculturation at Central Aguirre were aimed at creating a moral work force that was stable, disciplined, and loyal to the company.

Discipline within the community might be enforced openly when necessary, but the company often relied on more subtle means of compelling self-discipline. The ever present potential for being observed, whether directly by company management or through community informants, helped to internalize the moral and disciplinary message of the company. There were consequences for non-compliance. The most drastic of these was the loss of employment. In addition to loss of income, it also meant the loss of company provided housing, and, as a result then, the loss of one's reason for belonging in the community and one's identity as an *Aguirreño*.

Incorporating archival research, spatial analyses, and oral history into a single research program has allowed a synthetic understanding of the importance of place and identity in interpreting the industrial heritage of Central Aguirre. Answering the question of what it means to be an *Aguirreño* is crucial to any understanding of the working-class heritage of those who labored and lived at the *central*. The sense of place engendered by the continuing negotiation and renegotiation of spaces designed explicitly for production, informed and continues to inform the lived experiences of individuals who imbued this space with their own significance and memories. The words informants use to describe their lives in the *central*, and the memories they collectively share, reinforce the idea that the working-class identity of the community is in many ways directly related to the sense of distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem, and self-efficacy individuals have drawn from being in that place.<sup>1</sup>

The voices of the people of Central Aguirre attest to the dynamic role that a productive place plays in the creation of individual and group identities. The working-class identity of generations of *Aguirreños* is represented in the cumulative and shared experiences of those who called and continue to call Central Aguirre home. Recognition of the collective nature of identity in Central Aguirre has demonstrated to us as researchers that working-class heritage is not something of the past. Rather, the sense of place *Aguirreños* express in describing their attachment to their community is a shared heritage that guides everyday experience, a heritage that is best understood as a continuing dialogue with the past.

### Continuing Research at Central Aguirre

Future research plans at Central Aguirre include the introduction of an interdisciplinary field school, archeological research, and the implementation of an elementary school level outreach program. The interdisciplinary field school we envision will provide students with the unique opportunity to gain experience in archival research, techniques of spatial analysis, oral history, and archeologi-

FIGURE 4

The administrative office of the Central Aguirre Sugar Company sits abandoned among the rusting ruins of the central awaiting reuse in a post-industrial Aguirre. (Sam Sweitz, photographer)



cal excavation. The field school and new archeological information will build on earlier research, extending our understanding of the historical trajectory of production and community on this landscape. It is expected that the initiation of archeological investigations conducted on the grounds of the former Hacienda Aguirre will bring about the recovery of material culture that will give “voice” to those individuals (including those who were enslaved) who labored at this place in the 19th century, furthering our understanding of the evolution and impact of the sugar industry on the island.

The proposed elementary outreach program will involve students in designing a multidisciplinary research project that they will then conduct within the community. This project will include aspects of interviewing, mental mapping, photography, and other community-based forms of study that will encourage interaction between students and multiple generations of community members. The elementary outreach program will go a long way towards achieving our paramount research goal for the Central Aguirre program, which is to create a multivocal research program that addresses the social and economic needs of the community going forward. (Figure 4) It is hoped that the integrated program of research described here will broaden our understanding of the heritage of those who labored in the sugar industry in Puerto Rico while at the same time creating a more sustainable future for all *Aguirreños*.

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### Notes

- 1 Clare Twigger-Ross and David Uzzell have used Glynis M. Breakwell’s principles of identity, including the variables of distinctiveness, continuity, self-esteem, and self-efficacy to discuss the importance of place in individual identity formation, in their work “Place and Identity Processes,” *Journal of Environmental Psychology* 16 (1996): 205-20. For Breakwell’s theories, see *Coping with Threatened Identity* (London: Methuen, 1986) and “Processes of Self-Evaluation: Efficacy and Estrangement,” in *Social Psychology of Identity and the Self Concept*, ed. Glynis M. Breakwell (Surrey: Surrey University Press, 1992).

## Preservation Prospect: The Holt House at the National Zoological Park, Washington, DC

by Virginia B. Price

The Holt House was built in the 1810s just outside the boundary lines of Washington, DC. It was constructed on a tract of land called Pretty Prospect, once owned by prominent Washingtonians: the Beall, Stoddert, and Mackall families.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Henry C. Holt acquired the house and just over 13 acres in 1844. He, in turn, sold it to make way for the National Zoological Park in 1890.

Within a generation, these basic historical facts were aggrandized. The construction date was pushed back in time to before 1805, effectively tying the house to the well-known Stodderts and Mackalls. Dr. Holt was conflated in the public imagination with someone else perceived as more prestigious: Joseph Holt, attorney general during James Buchanan's administration. Presidents Andrew Jackson and Martin Van Buren were said to have summered there.<sup>2</sup> Associations such as these lent an air of importance to the imposing, but deteriorating building. By the end of the 20th century, clarifying who actually was connected to the Holt House, as well as what it looked like originally, became paramount as calls for the building's preservation grew louder. Together with concerns about its run-down condition, questions about the little known, but still-impressive, suburban villa with a five-part Palladian plan resulted in a study by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in 2008-09.

### Toward Preservation: Repair and Research, Assess and Record



Photographs reveal the dilapidated condition of the Holt House at the time of its acquisition by the zoo; the zoo then stabilized the building and renovated it. (Figure 1)<sup>3</sup> A hundred years later, the building was no longer in use by the zoo's administrative staff and it fell into similarly precarious shape. In 2001, however, its prospects brightened. At that time the zoo replaced the roof. The Kalorama Citizens Association rallied around the historic house and, in 2003, sponsored an assessment of the structure by a local firm, Quinn Evans Architects.<sup>4</sup>

As a result of this collaboration between the zoo and the Kalorama Citizens Association, the prospect of preserving the Holt House gained traction. At the zoo's behest, HABS recorded the house with measured drawings. (Figure 2)

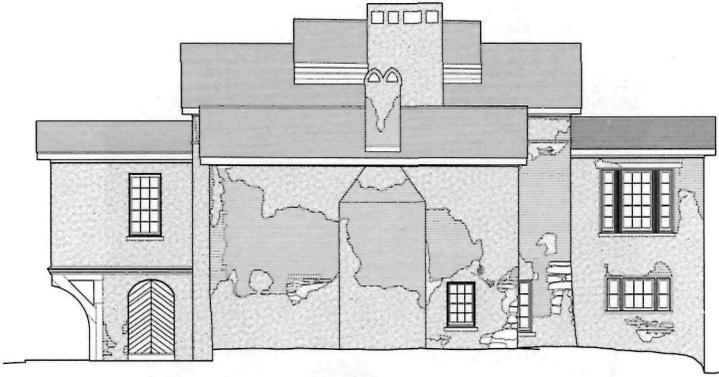


FIGURE 1 (OPPOSITE)  
 Circa 1895 view looking to  
 the Holt House. (Frances  
 Benjamin Johnston  
 Collection, Library of  
 Congress).

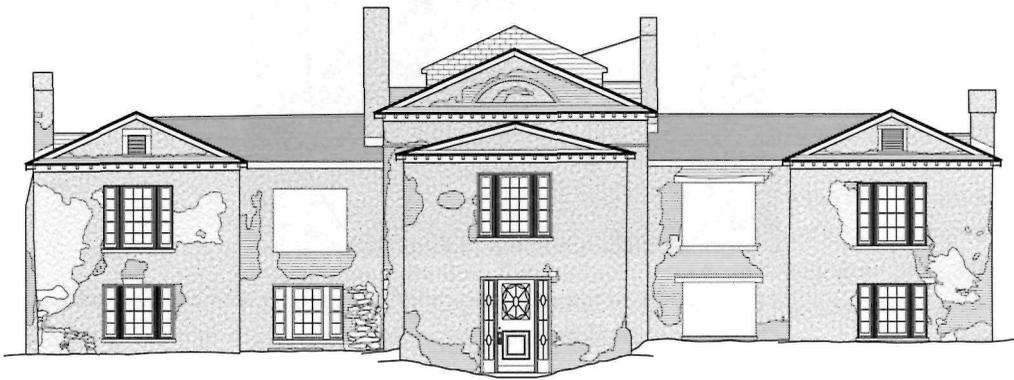


FIGURE 2 (ABOVE) Drawings  
 by Paul Davidson, Daniel  
 De Sousa, Alexander Matsov,  
 and Mark Schara, of the  
 west and south elevations  
 of the Holt House as it  
 appears today. The Palladian  
 aspects of its design  
 are visible here, with a  
 pedimented central block  
 and wings connected  
 by hyphens. (HABS/HAER/  
 HALS Collection, Library  
 of Congress).

The HABS drawings captured existing conditions, while the research and field documentation process highlighted areas for further investigation. The ongoing dialogue about how the building functioned is of particular importance to the Holt House. Many details are unknowable due to its condition and to the succession of alterations carried out by the Holt family and by the zoo. Asking questions of the building, of the documentary and material evidence, is essential if we are ever to discover its secrets.

Now mothballed as a safeguard against further deterioration, the Holt House awaits its future. The HABS project delineated its present form and outlined what is known of its past architectural configuration.<sup>5</sup> By distilling the building history of the Holt House and by working to piece together its evolution, the fieldwork behind the measured drawings represents an important step in the preservation process. Several of the resulting architectural queries are presented here.

### From Present to Past: The Holt House before the Zoo

The building's Palladian-inspired plan is evident despite a cantilevered addition projecting off the main block. (Figure 3) It is likely that William R. Emerson, the zoo's architect in the 1890s, intended this feature to draw the Holt House

FIGURE 3

This perspective view of the Holt House, taken by John O. Brostrup for HABS in 1937, shows the cantilevered addition on the north elevation. This side of the house looked down into the Zoo grounds. (HABS DC-21-3, HABS/HAER/IALS Collection, Library of Congress).

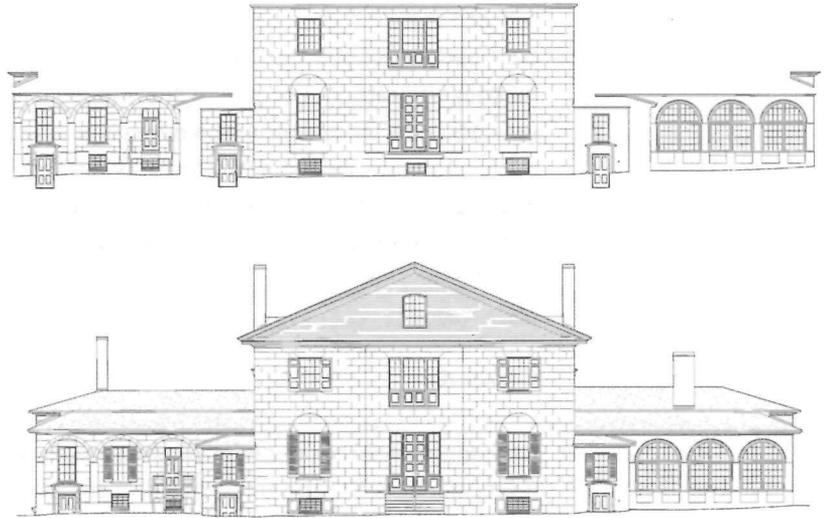


into the zoo's picturesque landscape.<sup>6</sup> Emerson recommended dramatic changes to the building fabric, including excavating to create a full story on the ground floor. Other modifications obscured evidence of the house's pre-zoo appearance. For example, vertical, wood bars filled the ground-floor window openings by the time the zoo acquired it in 1890. It is unclear if sash was initially hung inside the bars, as seen in the basement windows of nearby (and near contemporary in building date) Arlington House. (Figure 4) Whether sash was hung in the window openings before the zoo's rehabilitation of the house is of interest because of implications for how the space was treated inside. Was it fitted out for social use by the Holts, or was it an unfinished cellar? In another example, the zoo's augmentation of the central room upstairs with a skylight, frieze, and ornamental moldings prompted a misinterpretation of that room as a ballroom.<sup>7</sup> The Colonial Revival-era embellishments erased clues to what was there before. What did the moldings and mantelpieces look like? Before the skylight, how was the space lit?

The exterior is less ambiguous. Even with Emerson's cantilevered addition and full ground floor, the Holt House is recognizable as a vernacular rendering of the five-part plan popularized by Andrea Palladio's treatise, the *Quattro Libri dell'Architettura* (*Four Books of Architecture*). At the Holt House, the hyphens are the same height as the wings, a proportional shift that disrupts the overall architectural rhythm (a-b-c-b-a) created by the five-part design. This divergence points to an otherwise unrecorded conversation between patron and builder. Was it intentional? Was it the result of building by pattern book, of inexperience or of improvisation?

FIGURE 4

The basement windows of Arlington House, with the bars and interior sash, are visible in this elevation drawing by Kathryn Falldwell, Jennifer Most, and Mark Schara of HABS in 2003. (HABS VA-443, HABS/HAER/ HALS Collection, Library of Congress).

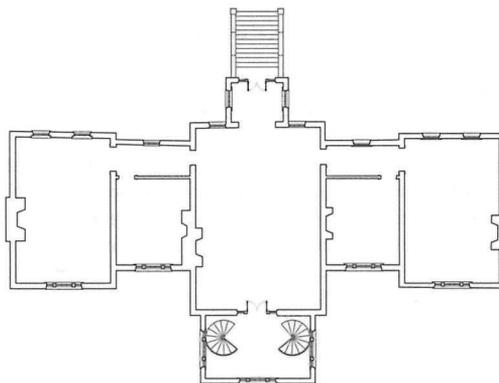


Archival records hint at the restoration which Secretary of the Smithsonian Samuel P. Langley and Zoo Superintendent Frank Baker would have undertaken had funding permitted. They had architect Glenn Brown draw plans, for example, but these were not implemented.<sup>8</sup> For HABS this was important because Brown's drawings included an addition to the west. His scheme formalized the ad-hoc expansion of the west wing indicated on contemporary maps and, if erected, would present a more cohesive elevation than what Holt left behind. Today, the wall fabric yields little information about those (long ago removed) additions. Was, for instance, the space accessible from inside the house?

Sometime during the Holt family's occupancy use of space in the building shifted. Besides the additions to the west, they also changed the points of entry. Historic photographs show that the north vestibule was extended and exterior, wood steps were constructed leading up to it. (Figure 5) Verandahs were tacked onto the south elevation of both hyphens. HABS suggests that the south entrance pavilion was also an early addition.<sup>9</sup>

FIGURE 5

Schematic plan illustrating the late 19th-century plan of the house, with the north vestibule and exterior stair and the two spiral stairs inside the south entrance pavilion. The spiral stairs were also shown on Glenn Brown's drawing, and like the wood exterior stair to the north, were removed during the zoo's renovations. (Plan by Paul Davidson, HABS, 2009, for the author).



Moving past the zoo's and the Holt family's adaptations of the house to its original spatial configuration is a difficult, if not an impossible, quest. The earliest known reference dates to around 1840 when Amos Kendall rented

the place. Kendall's daughters were married at the house and his entertaining solicited praise.<sup>10</sup> A guest mentioned "four rooms below," where there was dancing and card playing.<sup>11</sup> However, the location of those rooms in the building is uncertain. The ground floor had at least five rooms, and was not yet a full story. The advertisement posted upon Kendall's departure also paints a general picture, describing the house as having "...two wings and a centre building, rooms of every size, unique and beautiful in plan..."<sup>12</sup> Thus, the slips of documentary evidence prompt some familiar questions. How was the ground floor finished? Where were the original entrances and stairs, if the party took place "below"?

### Conclusion

As a reminder of Federal-period Washington, the Holt House excites preservationists. Its form and spatial configuration intrigue architectural historians and warrant further study, studies that would build on what HABS was able to record. Questions, such as those posited above, linger unanswered. Although details about early 19th-century spatial arrangements may never be revealed, the Holt House remains an important piece of the landscape of the National Zoological Park.<sup>13</sup> The challenge for its advocates is to find an appropriate use for the house that respects its past as a suburban, Palladian-styled villa and ensures its future as part of the zoo's built environment. The Holt House is a preservation prospect indeed.

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### Notes

- 1 For the chain of title, see the summary in HABS No. DC-21 that was drawn from the land records at the District of Columbia Recorder of Deeds.
- 2 Van Buren in fact leased Woodley, a historic house that is now part of the Maret School. See HABS No. DC-52.
- 3 Also see the photographs available online at the Library of Congress and Smithsonian Institution: <http://memory.loc.gov> and <http://www.si.edu/ahhp/holthous/histfoto.htm>.
- 4 Quinn Evans Architects, "The Preservation of the Holt House: Phase One," Report prepared for the Holt House Preservation Task Force of the Kalorama Citizens Association, 2003.
- 5 This effort was informed by Gavin Farrell, "Smithsonian Institution National Zoological Park: A Historic Resource Analysis," Report for the Smithsonian Office of Architectural History and Historic Preservation, September 2004; Lara Pomernacki, "Holt House: Structural Alterations," Report for the Smithsonian Office of Architectural History and Historic Preservation, 1997; and Denys Peter Myers, "Report on the Holt House: A Feasibility Study to Determine Restoration Goals," Report for the Smithsonian Institution, May 1977. It also benefited from conversations with Tina Roach, Quinn Evans Architects, 2009.
- 6 Regarding Emerson's intentions, Roger Reed to Virginia Price, 2009.

- 7 "Holt House ca. 1810" in Harold Donaldson Eberlein and Cortlandt Van Dyke Hubbard, *Historic Houses of George-Town and Washington City* (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1958).
- 8 American Institute of Architects Archives, RG 804, Series 5, Brown box 4, folder 29.
- 9 Site visit by author, April 2009. Most probably the bricks of the pavilion and the main body of the house are not interlocked. Presently, the south pavilion robs the main room of any exterior light save that from the 1890s skylight.
- 10 *Daily National Intelligencer*, November 21, 1839; *Daily National Intelligencer*, August 14, 1840. Amos Kendall was the postmaster general during Andrew Jackson's administration.
- 11 Letters January 3, 1838 and January 5, 1838, in *The Letters of John Fairfield*, ed. Arthur G. Staples (Lewiston, ME: Lewiston Journal Company, 1922), 185.
- 12 *Daily National Intelligencer*, June 30, 1841.
- 13 The significance of the Holt House property as a cultural landscape lies in its association with the mill once owned by John Quincy Adams and run, for a time, by a miller who worked for Thomas Jefferson at Shadwell; with Washington's earliest Quaker graveyard and later, on adjacent lots, with an African American cemetery; and with Rock Creek Park.

## Reviews

### BOOKS

*The Olmsted National Historic Site and the Growth of Historic Landscape Preservation*

by David Grayson Allen. Lebanon, NH: Northeastern University Press [University Press of New England], 2007; 332 pp., illustrations; cloth, \$50.00.

*Fort Stanwix National Monument: Reconstructing the Past and Partnering for the Future*

by Joan M. Zenzen, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2009; 310 pp., illustrations, maps; cloth, \$75.00

Administrative histories of national parks detail the history of park management and, increasingly, university presses are publishing these heretofore ignored works. While on the surface it might be easy to dismiss them as too narrowly focused, scholars desiring a greater understanding of National Park Service management policies and how they have changed over time cannot ignore these valuable contributions. Administrative histories chronicle the actions of NPS administrators and show how these park sites interact with their surroundings. They provide a glimpse into public engagement with the past and into their interest in history. Such works are invaluable resources for public historians and administrators—something which David Grayson Allen and Joan M. Zenzen have demonstrated in their respective works.

In his book, Allen outlines two objectives supported by evidence gleaned from a number of oral histories, the administrative files of the Olmsted

National Historic Site, and NPS publications. The first objective tells the story of the creation of the Olmsted NHS located in Brookline, Massachusetts, and the second explains how the NPS came to embrace the idea of cultural landscapes as cultural resources. In 1883 Frederick Law Olmsted, noted American landscape architect and designer of New York's Central Park, purchased Fairsted, located in Brookline, to house his growing landscape architecture business. The firm continued to be based at Fairsted long after Olmsted's death in 1903, when his sons John Charles and Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., continued the business until it ceased to operate in 1961. In 1963, Fairsted was designated a National Historic Landmark.

The second chapter describes the controversy between NPS factions who both supported and opposed the addition of the property to the National Park system. Integrity and collection issues caused some NPS professionals to question its inclusion in the system. Others supported the acquisition because of the Olmsted archives, which contained most of the original landscape architectural drawings the firm had completed since 1883. Allen argues that Olmsted is a "nontraditional" park because its integrity derives not from the integrity of Fairsted alone but from the integrity of the archival collection of the landscape drawings as well. Allen refers to Olmsted as a "nontraditional" park on several occasions, but never fully defines what he means by this term. It is unfortunate that he did not do so because he argues that Olmsted's "nontraditional" status makes it unique. Allen describes how NPS managers faced challenges in trying to curate, preserve, and make available to the public the Olmsted landscape drawings. Allen notes that it was not until

1990, 11 years after the site was established as an NPS unit, that Congress made substantial increases to the park's base funding, enabling the park to adequately take care of the archival collection and allow access to it.

In Chapters 5 and 8, Allen demonstrates how the NPS came to embrace the preservation of historic landscapes. For Allen, the creation of the Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, which opened in 1992, illustrates the NPS commitment to this type of cultural resource. He summarizes his support of this policy by saying "the NPS through its internal and external programs has become the leading institution in the historic landscape preservation movement in this country during the last twenty years" (p. viii). While this is an important transition to note in the NPS management of cultural resources, sandwiching this story in with the administrative history of the Olmsted NHS proves awkward and keeps the narrative from having a clear, chronological focus. As it stands, one of the most important points of the book takes the reader by surprise in the middle of the narrative. Despite this one structural distraction, Allen has still given us much to consider.

Utilizing Fort Stanwix's administrative records, National Archives records, collections at the Rome Historical Society, and oral histories, Zenzen has crafted a very useful history of how the community of Rome, New York, embraced the reconstruction of Fort Stanwix, where in August 1777 Colonel Peter Gansevoort stopped a British attack on the fort during the American Revolution. The thwarting of that attack allowed the defeat of General John Burgoyne at the Battle of Saratoga. The fort later played a role in mediating the relationship between the United States and the Six Nations Confederacy in the form of the Treaty of Fort Stanwix that was signed at the fort on October 22, 1784; after that, the fort was abandoned.

As Zenzen recounts in the first chapter, the city of Rome was incorporated in 1819 and, in 1857, as the town developed, most of the fort was razed.

However, the memory of the fort remained alive in the community's heritage because in 1877 residents celebrated the centennial of the siege.

In the early part of the 20th century, the Rome Chamber of Commerce supported an effort to designate what little remained of the fort as a national monument. Congress agreed, and in 1935 the Fort Stanwix National Monument was approved by Congress but the designation would not take effect until the land was acquired and donated to the United States government. Years passed, and by the 1960s the town of Rome was struggling. It turned to its history and urban renewal programs to fund a downtown economic revival. As Zenzen notes, "By connecting urban renewal funding to the dream of building a national memorial to the fort, city leaders and history-minded Romans imagined not just a suitable tribute to the city's past but also a much needed economic boost through increased tourism" (p. 44).

In 1964 NPS agreed to establish a historical park; however, debate raged within the agency about how to interpret the fort site to the public because the fort had been removed from the cultural landscape. Some favored the reconstruction of the fort and others did not; however, by June 1967, NPS agreed to reconstruct the fort in time for the Bicentennial celebration. Reconstructing the fort required the city to remove a significant number of structures, including some considered historically significant, from a 16-acre area located in downtown Rome.

After the buildings were removed, the NPS conducted extensive archeological excavations at the site in order to help with the reconstruction and, as a result, collected a number of artifacts, which became a challenge for the park to curate in subsequent years. In 1973 the city of Rome formally transferred the land to NPS and the reconstructed fort opened to the public in 1976.

Zenzen's discussion of the relationship between Rome and NPS is strongest in Chapters 3 and 4 and she notes that city officials were optimistic that the

reconstructed fort would bring tourists and tourist dollars to the community and would revitalize Rome's downtown. However, Zenzen reveals that the fort never generated the attendance and tourism dollars that "federal officials and economic researchers predicted" (p. 134). In subsequent chapters, Zenzen's account focuses primarily on NPS management of the fort and the impact that various superintendents had on the park and one is left to wonder how or if the relationship between the park and the community had changed since the 1970s.

The challenges park managers faced since the 1970s included maintaining the reconstructed fort and its collections as well as broadening the interpretive themes to include not only information about the soldiers who were stationed at the fort but also the role Native Americans played in the region. The problem with the collections was solved in 2005 when the Marinus Willett Collections Management and Education Center opened and in 2002 the park signed an agreement with the Oneida Nation, which Zenzen says represented an important step in permanently incorporating the voice of Native Americans into the historical interpretation at the park.

In conclusion, both Allen and Zenzen give readers important stories to consider regarding the administration of complex historic properties. Allen chronicles how NPS came to see cultural landscapes as important historic resources. However, he neglects to show how the community of Brookline viewed this new historic resource idea and its archives. In contrast, Zenzen crafts a narrative that discusses the interplay between the community of Rome and NPS. She clearly demonstrates community interest in promoting Fort Stanwix for the perceived economic reward of tourist dollars; however, the account left this reader wondering if NPS learned anything from the reconstruction and if NPS has applied any of this acquired knowledge to subsequent management decisions regarding other historical reconstructions.

While these criticisms might sound harsh, few administrative histories currently in the published historical literature have done as much as these two scholarly works. If NPS management of cultural resources is to profit from its own history, it must include a continued commitment to the production of scholarly administrative histories. Allen's observation of a "nontraditional park" underscores that park administration is seldom if ever "traditional." Successful management takes place against a complicated and complex backdrop of both national and local politics, history, and heritage.

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*Green Oasis in Brooklyn: The Evergreens Cemetery 1849-2008*

by John Rousmaniere. Kittery Point, ME: Smith/Kerr Associates, 2008; 301 pp., illustrations, maps; cloth, \$50.00.

The manner in which people honor their dead and preserve their memory tells us important things about their respective cultures and their view of the world. Funerary custom reflects belief, mythology, understanding of cosmology, and the various ways in which the unknown is approached and understood in any particular culture. In the United States, our understanding and expression of death and memorialization has undergone significant changes in a relatively short period of time. Our customs consist of an amalgamation of traditions and images generally driven by various cultural traditions as varied as the nation's citizens themselves. These images range from the post-medieval anthropomorphic image of the grim reaper with skulls and crossbones, to the Victorian sentimentality of willow trees, weeping angels and temple-like mausoleums to the modern simplicity of simple grave marks in a semi-bucolic or parklike setting.

For those interested in American cemeteries and their serene and scenic pathways, John Rousmaniere brings to students of the American landscape, the history and significance of the 225-acre Evergreens Cemetery of Brooklyn, New York. The book's photographer Ken Druse captures the beauty of the Evergreens through the years' four seasons, providing a rich and impressive backdrop for Rousmaniere's 19-chapter tour of the cemetery.

The author begins with the history of the land that eventually became the Evergreens. During the Revolutionary War, British troops traversed the heights of Guana, the hills just outside of Brooklyn, before outflanking George Washington and his army. The trail they took is called the Rockaway Footpath, which is loosely marked in today's cemetery landscape.

With Brooklyn's ever-increasing population after the turn of the 20th century, there was a corresponding need for burial space; small cemeteries and churchyards had become overcrowded. The Rural Cemetery movement (1830-1855), which started with the creation of New Jersey's Mount Auburn Cemetery in 1831, began to answer this need. Its establishment marked a beginning of secularization and change in the cultural view of death and burial and the desire for natural settings.<sup>1</sup> The founders of the Evergreens sought a location similar to the aesthetics that Mount Auburn offered its visitors.

In Chapters 3 through 5, Rousmaniere examines the cemetery design work of Andrew Jackson Downing, Alexander Jackson Davis, and Frederick Law Olmsted. Also included in these chapters is the involvement of multi-millionaire entrepreneur and New York City Mayor William R. Grace, who served as treasurer for the Evergreens in the years after the Civil War. In Chapter 6, Rousmaniere discusses the Civil War and the graves of the common soldier. Also in this chapter is an interesting sidebar story involving presidential assassin John Wilkes Booth. Sam Chester, an actor, was said to have been solicited to participate in Lincoln's murder, but declined.

Booth's niece, Blanche DeBar Booth, is buried near Chester in the Actors' Fund Plot.

Rousmaniere alternates between various topics through his remaining chapters. Unfortunately, instead of grouping similar topics in a logical sequence, the last half of the book reads as if it is a collection of essays rather than a single work; each topic covered stands well on its own. In Chapter 7, Rousmaniere's discussion of Decoration Day (better known today as Memorial Day) and other commemorative celebrations is interesting; however, this diversion interrupts the general flow of the book. Chapter 12, "Buried from the Home," explains late 19th-century funeral traditions. Chapter 13, "Angels Beside the Tomb: Monuments Grand and Humble," identifies some common architectural features of headstone presentation. Further irregularities are found in its design as well, such as the duplication of sentences and words split across pages causing the reader to disconnect with an otherwise strong and interesting storyline.

However, these minor distractions do not diminish the overall strength of Rousmaniere's work. He allows the reader to mentally stroll the curving paths through the sprawling trees and to muse over the multitude of headstones. Rousmaniere provides a solid history regarding this important cemetery within the cultural context of American funereal interment. Consequently, the reader experiences a more personal and informed connection with the history of this important landscape resource.

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1. Stanley French, "The Cemetery as Cultural Institution: The Establishment of Mount Auburn and the Rural Cemetery Movement," in *Death in America*, ed. David E. Stannard (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), 70. As quoted by Grant Peckenschneider, "History and Development of Greenwood Cemetery," [www.uni.edu/connors/history.html](http://www.uni.edu/connors/history.html)

*The West of the Imagination*  
(Second Edition)

By William H. Goetzmann and William N. Goetzmann. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009; 604 pp., illustrations; cloth, \$65.00

Iconic Western figures like the cowboy, the trapper, and the Indian have been re-invented and re-imagined by artists countless times, linking them intrinsically to the larger vision of the American West. These heroic figures also have some monumental, non-human company in the Western pictorial pantheon. Natural wonders like Yosemite Falls, the Grand Canyon, or the Rocky Mountains also enjoy legendary status in our national mind's-eye and often provide both context and backdrop for the iconic western figures. The question is not whether these images are culturally relevant; it is how they became so.

*The West of the Imagination* may contain part of the answer. This hefty tome seeks to unpack and analyze archetypal images that helped to invent and sustain today's romantically charged vision of the West. Because of its nationalist connotations, such work could be easily swept aside by art critics as propaganda or kitsch (p. 41). But the Goetzmanns, take it upon themselves to address the art and artists that created a mythological western vocabulary of images still in use today.

The book begins at the turn of the 19th century with Charles Willson Peale, a Philadelphia "artist-curator" that once discovered (and reconstructed) an entire mastodon skeleton. The rest of the first section deals with others that specialized in what the Goetzmanns term the "art of information" (p. 51). Some, like George Catlin and Paul Kane, created portraits of American Indians valued as much for their beauty as for their ethnological significance. Others, like George Eastman, took a sociological approach and immersed themselves in the lives and customs of their subjects.

These artists are the Goetzmanns' primary subjects, but they strive to investigate the proliferation of imagery as well. The section ends with Currier and Ives, printmakers and purveyors of a secondhand West. The authors assert the firm excelled at "imaginatively illustrating journalism" (p. 107): the art was original, but much of it was based either on reports of the frontier or the works of more prominent artists. Nevertheless, it sold very well. "Explorer-artists" were actually experiencing the West, but the rest of the country relied on mass reproductions, many of which became a part of the American cultural vocabulary.

The second section is devoted to further exploration and documentation of the West. As the historian Bernard DeVoto wrote, "Manifest Destiny was blindfolded" (p. 145); fortunately, many expeditions brought along artists for just this purpose. The "art of information" flourished. Each expedition compiled its own unique report of its findings; federal printers produced nearly 26 million prints of these reports, almost all commissioned by the government. The art produced by these expeditions is described as a combination of romantic landscapes and "pretensions to scientific accuracy" (p. 150). The grey area between science and art provided just enough room for embellishment, a skill that would prove increasingly essential.

The book's third section is dedicated to the quest for, and the creation of, the picturesque. With the advent of photography, the relationship between art and fact became further blurred; artists, deferring to photographers in matters of accuracy, were free instead to create "the ideal sensation of the place" (p. 216). Being idealists, artists of the sublime like Albert Bierstadt were able to create the West as they knew it ought to have looked. The authors argue that romanticized visions of the West were far more relevant than scientific ones buried in federal archives; although slightly inaccurate, accessible images of the sublime helped to create "a series of sacred places across the continent" (p. 239) that were soon recognized by Congress as well. As noted

by the authors, these fanciful images were essential founding documents of the national parks.

In the art of the sublime, nature took center stage. The art of the frontier, however, featured more action and more actors. Frederic Remington and Charlie Russell, the men responsible for painting the cowboy, share the spotlight in the book's fourth section. Remington depicted the "social history of the West" (p. 290): the process of settling the land, the types of men that did so, and the rough-and-tumble lives they lived. Russell favored "visual folktales" (p. 322), often comic cowboy scenes from stories that he gathered during his travels. The authors cannot hide their wistful tone when pondering the role of cowboy artists in the face of Modernist dominance; they wonder if Remington and Russell could "have competed with Marcel Duchamp's or if their artistic vision could "have ever come to terms with 'found art' such as the Dada urinal" (p. 305).

The fifth section follows the rise of the cowboy throughout popular culture. Most notably, Buffalo Bill's Wild West show took the country, and parts of Europe, by storm. Cowboy autobiographies flooded the market, illustrating what the authors deem "the mythic tradition in the guise of realism" (p. 347). A cadre of Western artists formed The Cowboy Artists of America, which aimed to keep the traditions of the Old West alive on canvas. While it is easy to dismiss each new version of the cowboy as a knock-off, the Goetzmanns assert that this repetition made the character more enduring; even today, the cowboy dwells in "what a psychologist might call the collective unconscious" (p. 376).

The sixth, and last, section of the book is by far the most eclectic. Thomas Hart Benton, Georgia O'Keefe, Jackson Pollock, and the Taos colony all share top billing, but lesser-known inclusions provoke more thought. The most interesting of these is calamitism, a school of photography devoted to the most unpleasant symbols of man's impact on nature (nuclear test sites and animal carcasses, for

example). The photographs are disturbing, to be sure, but what is most noteworthy is the authors' reaction: they accuse them of "theatrical innuendo" and "sensational tabloid tales of western cattle mutilations" (p. 51-12). This shows the authors at their most critical and intrusive, but also at their most passionate. Nonetheless, calamitism seems to embody a new myth of the West, one that ponders the ultimate.

With the exception of the section listed above, the narrative is not combative or aggressively rhetorical. The writing flows easily, and resists any kind of excess. The text is well supported without being overwhelmed by citations; however, the most impressive feat of research is the vast array of pictures. The authors do a skillful job of interweaving loosely chronological historical and biographical details with artistic analysis. Their arguments chapter-to-chapter are convincing, but their most important point lies in the creation of the book itself. In giving serious thought to a widely dismissed genre of western art, they make their argument quite clear: national image is often fueled by a variety of art and artists.

Guy McClellan  
*National Park Service*

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*North Woods River: The St. Croix in  
Upper Midwest History*

Eileen M. McMahon and Theodore J. Karamanski.  
Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2009;  
416 pp., illustrations; paper \$24.95

This publication had its beginnings as a historic resources study for the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, a unit of the National Park Service. The book reflects its origins. Such studies form the basis for understanding a park's cultural resources, helping to enable a park to manage and interpret resources appropriately. These studies provide the

historical contexts for all the historic sites that are or may be present within a park. It is a daunting task to write a historic resources study for linear resources: long corridors, possessing centuries of history, covering a broad spectrum of events. Converting one of these studies into a book is even more so.

*North Woods River* covers over 300 years of history, a temporal scope matched by its geographical breadth. McMahon and Karamanski could have limited their book to the National Park's 255 miles of the St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers, but they examine the entire St. Croix River Basin. Four chapters covering four basic subjects put the St. Croix River Basin into context. The first centers on the fur trade and how it shaped intertribal and international relations involving the Ojibwe, Dakota, French, English, and Americans. Chapter 2 studies the lumber industry from its birth before the Civil War to its end in 1914. In Chapter 3, McMahon and Karamanski detail the settlement of the St. Croix River Basin. And, in their final chapter, they show how the previous stages, combined with the evolution of technology and American society, created today's scenic and recreational river tourism industry.

Early in their book, the authors emphasize a divide between the upper and lower St. Croix River Valley. According to their narrative, the separation emerged during the fur trade, due to the conflict between the Ojibwe and Dakota. Later, the logging industry restored the basin's unity but also evidenced a growing division between the poorer, more sparsely populated northern reaches and the wealthier and more densely populated southern areas. The failure of farming in the northern cutover—the Pine Barrens—accentuate the contrast. Admitting that agriculture was not viable in the Pine Barrens, the Federal Government began buying out farmers during the 1930s. Tourism and the automobile eventually capitalized on the area's rugged character.

Although they call their study an environmental and social history, the authors also look at the political and economic forces that drove and defined

development during each era. Fur trade companies, lumber barons, land speculators, railroads, and electric power companies all defined and affected the valley's environment. Sometimes, politics outside the valley determined its fate. The national debate over adding free and slave states before the Civil War helped determine Wisconsin's western boundary at the St. Croix River and divided a valley that its inhabitants had seen previously as a whole.

McMahon and Karamanski also try to give some insights into the social lives of the groups that lived in the basin. They highlight the basics of Dakota and Ojibwe life: their seasonal rounds and well as impacts of both the fur trade and logging industry on their economy and society. They touch on life in logging camps, lumber towns, and early immigrant enclaves (like the Swedish settlement at Chisago Lakes, Minnesota). They consider the difficulties of farm life in the Pine Barrens versus farm life in the more fertile and temperate lower St. Croix Valley. And they evaluate the origins and impacts of tourism on individuals and communities in these two sub-regions.

At a macro level, McMahon and Karamanski attempt to document the environmental changes forced upon the St. Croix River Basin from the fur trade through the creation of the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway. The fur trade eliminated the beaver, an animal that profoundly defined the St. Croix Valley's landscape and hydrology. The 19th-century evolution of the lumber industry, however, left no time for earlier related environmental effects to become manifest. Lumber companies eliminated over 4,000 square miles of White Pine, leaving behind stubble and brush that became tinder for fires that ravaged the northern St. Croix Basin. They dammed streams to float their logs to booms and mills. In the lower basin, the settlers continued the transformation by turning the cutovers and prairies into wheat fields and dairy farms. In the upper basin, the failure of agriculture, the growing stream of tourists to the area and a New Deal government looking to employ the jobless, reversed previous centuries of resource

extraction. Under the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration, the Federal Government sent thousands of workers to replant failed farms with millions of trees, to restore, and to restock streams and rivers with the desired fish, and to build fire roads, lookout towers and scenic overlooks.

Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson experienced the varied history of the upper and lower St. Croix Valley when he tried to establish the whole St. Croix River as a National Wild and Scenic River. The poor soils and rugged terrain of the upper valley denied economic development, thus preserving the area's appearance as more natural. But opponents argued that the St. Croix below Taylors Falls was too urbanized. Nelson succeeded in getting only the upper St. Croix and Namekagon Rivers designated wild and scenic in 1968. Acknowledging development and increasing recreational uses of the lower St. Croix, Nelson worked with Minnesota Senator Walter Mondale and moderate Republicans to pass the Scenic Riverway Act of 1972. This compromise act partitioned the lower river into a federal scenic reach above Stillwater and recreational reach below.

For each story and historic context McMahon and Karamanski examine, there are related cultural resources: archeological remains, standing structures, and other portions of the historic fabric that represents the history of the region. Unfortunately, this publication does not allow for a detailed presentation of the individual sites McMahon and Karamanski identify in their historic resources study.

It is difficult to cover so much history or so many topics over such a long period. They quickly move from one topic to the next, without much depth of analysis. This is often the nature of works based on complex historic resources studies. Often, deeper understanding is lost in the effort to cover so much. Facts also can get garbled: for example, to state that the Corps of Engineers built locks and dams on the whole Mississippi River (p. 244) is simply wrong. The locks and dams run only from St. Louis to Min-

neapolis. But, even though it remains difficult to be all things to all people in such an all-encompassing saga, thoroughness and fact-checking must remain paramount. The overall weaving of the story cannot rely solely on either the information or the structure offered by the originating historic resource surveys.

Overall, however, McMahon and Karamanski provide a substantive introduction to the regions of the St. Croix Valley. They survey with broad strokes all that this environment has been to its many and varied peoples over the intervening centuries.

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*An Archaeology of Town Commons in England:  
'A very fair field indeed'*

By Mark Bowden, Graham Brown, and Nicky Smith. London: English Heritage, 2009; 136 pp., paperback, \$36.00

*An Archaeology of Town Commons in England: 'A very fair field indeed'* is the first attempt to survey and understand the English town common as a valuable historic landscape. Although couched in the language and geography of British heritage preservation, its goals and content parallel similar efforts in American historic preservation. This is a timely project, since vernacular landscapes are becoming ever more recognized as a worthy cause for preservation. Most importantly, the history and social context offered by this book provide valuable insight on historic American landscapes, particularly those in the New England area where town commons are prevalent.

The survey was launched under the auspices of English Heritage, whose projects on historic studies and preservation in England cover a broad range. After noting the growing threats to the survival of urban commons in 2002, English Heritage went

on to investigate the archeological content and historical value of these unusual landscapes. With the passage of the Commons Act in 2006, this cause received a substantial boost. The new legislation provides for better, more sustainable management of these spaces through creation of “commons councils” that unite commoners and landowners in regulating land use and reinforcing existing protections on the land (p. 78). By consolidating new and vital information on one of England’s greatest but least-studied cultural resource types, Bowden, Brown, and Smith’s book offers vital historic research in support of these preservation goals.

The self-proclaimed intent of *An Archaeology of Town Commons in England* is “to investigate, through a representative sample, the archaeological content and Historic Environment value of urban commons in England and to prompt appropriate conservation strategies for them” (p. 79). In a fairly short, concise manner, the book successfully accomplishes this goal by offering a general history and archeological summary of urban commons, their various uses and development, and some of the challenges involved in their preservation. Using archeological resources as a point of departure, the narrative moves from the right of estover and the varied definitions of “commons” to charming anecdotes of unlawful sheep fleecing, irate cricket fans, and the creation of park areas to refocus male attention away from “public houses” (p. 59). Beautiful color photographs, drawings, maps, and aerials appear on almost every page, illustrating various elements of the text. Above all, the book both recognizes and clarifies the value of archeology in improving public understanding of landscapes and promoting better-informed (or “sympathetic”) land management and conservation efforts (p. 82).

One of the key distinctions made by the authors throughout the book is between open spaces as “wilderness” versus “public parks” (p. 57). Indeed, as towns began to grow and inhabitants struggled to maintain their link with a “retreating rural world” in the 18th century, the commons became increasingly

utilized as public park, rather than wilderness, areas (p. 9). In view of the vast open spaces characteristic of many American landscapes, examination of this concept is highly relevant for preservation work on both sides of the Atlantic.

As an organization dedicated to both public enjoyment and preservation, the National Park Service frequently encounters this very conflict. Indeed, many of the differences and even dangers involved in interpreting an area as either “wilderness” or “park” are shared between American and English landscapes. For instance, the designation of a public space as “wilderness” makes it vulnerable to exploitation, and can inhibit its enjoyment by the public or endanger wildlife, trees, and other natural resources located within it. The book’s comprehensive history of the urban common illustrates this classic “tragedy of the commons,” whereby activities like mining, sport, and livestock grazing can not only conflict with each other, but can negatively affect historic features and public enjoyment of a space as an aesthetic landscape. Thus, the construction of penal institutions and athletic complexes on a number of urban commons has played a defining role in the subsequent perception and use of those landscapes (p. 62).

The task of writing any survey as broad as this one is naturally fraught with myriad challenges, including clarity and organization. Particularly for those less familiar with British landscapes, it would have been helpful to include a short summary of the surveyed sites at the beginning of the book, including some general statements illustrating the geographic extent, context, and average size of commons in England. In addition, despite the presence of a handsome map of surveyed towns on page 4, no mention of methodology is made until the final few pages of the text. This is also the first place that the authors offer any explanation for the sample selection process and investigative approach used in their survey, details that would have been helpful to clarify much earlier.

Lastly but perhaps most importantly, although this book may prompt conservation strategies, its potential to serve as a framework for building such strategies could have been strengthened by devoting more text to the issue of urban commons preservation. Although the gazetteer at the back of the text is helpful in illustrating the geographic range of commons and their need for preservation, a mere eight pages of narrative are devoted to the present and future use of these landscapes. This oversight is likely to leave many readers lacking in guidance on how to apply their newfound knowledge.

Still, *An Archaeology of Town Commons in England* is highly informative, and successfully documents the diverse historic resources that characterize this unusual landscape type. In surveying the history of urban commons for the first time, this book completes an essential piece of the English heritage literature. As spaces intended for use as fairly vague, open land and therefore convenient for a variety of uses, the value of urban commons has, up until recently, been easily taken for granted and overlooked (p. 76).

Yet the importance of the urban common is similar to that of many American vernacular landscapes, whose development has both shaped and supported the adjacent towns and cities. As interest in cultural landscapes has grown in recent years, so the true value of the spaces between built environments has become increasingly recognized. Guided by this shift, historians have begun to accord rolling agricultural fields with the same aesthetic worth and historic meaning as the farmhouses and towns they abut. Thus, the landscape of the urban commons tells the tale of a local, shared history without the self-conscious air and carefully planned past of more designed or urban landscapes. For this reason and many others, this book promises to be informative and relevant to casual readers and veteran archeologists alike, both in England and beyond.

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*Class and Race in the Frontier Army: Military Life in the West, 1870-1890*

by Kevin Adams. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009; 276 pp., illustrations, maps; cloth, \$34.95.

In this work, author Kevin Adams looks at the Frontier Army as a “microcosm of life in American society during the late 19th Century.” Historians such as Robert M. Utley, Don Rickey, and William and Shirley Leckie, and others, have long known of the complex make-up of the Indian Wars Army: part Civil War veteran, part native sons, part immigrant, and after 1866, part former slaves and sons of former slaves. Adams departs somewhat from positions taken by other authors who suggest that the post-Civil War Army was a unique social laboratory that produced not only the first truly professional military in the history of the nation, but also provided new and important opportunities for immigrants and African Americans in the ranks. His subjects are varied, covering both recently immigrated soldiers and soldiers of African American ancestry, as well as touching on the general intellectual and social life of Army officers and related social phenomena.

Other authors have written far more extensively on the daily life of the frontier soldier; however, Adams portrays the overall responsibilities of enlisted men and officers in social and political context, the rise of soldiers as common laborers, and how that labor reinforced upper-class and working-class societal roles. He records their work in construction, surveying, patrols, and the putting down of labor disputes. Interestingly, Adams’ analysis regarding the origin of Frontier Army soldiers finds a significant absence of Southerners in its ranks.

Thought by some Americans to be a questionable experiment, black soldiers became a new source of low-wage warriors. At the same time, becoming a soldier created the first opportunity for African Americans to serve as permanent employees in the Federal Government in large numbers. The legacy

of these men speaks to their desire to be seen as both men and citizens. They comprised a proud, geographically distinct group and continue to provide an important historical point of reference for African Americans that endures to this day.

Adams states that the intellectual life of Army officers and their regular access to contemporary newspapers, periodicals, and books, along with self-produced musical recitals and plays, not only entertained—they also re-enforced class distinctions and social structures. He suggests that instead of being on the fringes of American society, officers used the U.S. Mail and Victorian standards of behavior to put themselves squarely in the middle of the Gilded Age. Adams also delves into the scientific, pseudo-scientific, anthropological, and preservationist interests of Army officers on the frontier, and how those pursuits were firmly consistent with the Victorian Era. He concludes that it played a large part in the thinking of the Army brass from Washington, down through departmental offices, to frontier posts and many company commanders. For example, the author considers the peculiar and persistent practice of officers hiring enlisted soldiers as personal servants in spite of Army regulations to the contrary and how leisure time and foodways reinforced class divisions. Quotes used by Adams suggest that black troops may have had fewer champions among their white officers than may have previously been imagined.

Various inequalities and injustices played out in many a small, dusty, out-of-the-way military post across the West and Adams uses substantial research from a wide array of sources to make his argument. While the Frontier Army was operating at significant distances from urban centers, Adams argues that it still reflected the nation it served, and from which it was made up. As a result, in bringing together military and social history specialties in his examination, Adams documents an American Frontier Army that was no more progressive or self-aware than the nation as a whole. Its experiments did not produce sociological results markedly dif-

ferent than those occurring in the rest of American society. Looking at the Frontier Army through the lens of the Gilded Age, Adams investigates a military world where enlisted men were paid wages one half to one third less than housepainters or ditch diggers. Conversely, college-trained officers received compensation at a rate as much as or more than upper middle-class executives in civilian life.

Joining the Army in the era of the 13th, 14th, and 15th Amendments to the Constitution, black soldiers served during a time of increasing segregation, racial discrimination, and race-inspired violence. Adams notes that these attitudes and actions were not the only negative tensions at work in the nation and its Army. He cites a growing national awareness of the perceived differences between native-born Americans and immigrants, thus placing the painful history of African American troops in historical context. These multiple realities resulted in scenarios in the frontier military where Victorian gentlemen-officers commanded, trained, and led into combat men whom they hardly knew, and, outside the Army, would likely have had little or no connection with at all.

Turning to the experience of race and ethnicity in the Frontier Army, Adams chronicles the regular and repetitive racial animosity faced by black regular soldiers. Having to deal with the race-based expectations of laziness, ignorance, and ineptitude on one hand, while struggling to take their place in a military world that did not account for the fact that slavery itself made literacy and familiarity with weapons highly unlikely on the other, black soldiers found themselves caught between inopportunities and prejudice.

While all students of U.S. history and the black regular soldier might not agree, Adams posits that the U.S. Army institutionalized segregation in its ranks well before southern states developed social segregation. What is not open for debate are the statistics and quotes used by Adams to make his points about the depth and breadth of the racism faced

in the Army by black troops as individuals, and as members of a widely despised group.

In his investigation of the impact of racism in the Army, Adams covers the careers of the handful of black commissioned officers that served in the Frontier Army. Adams repeats charges that black soldiers regularly, and seemingly as a course of habit, received inferior gear, horses, and uniforms from the U.S. Army Quartermaster Department. However, recent reviews of these charges suggests that from 1866 to 1872, most items issued to all troops were Civil War leftovers, and that when newly manufactured gear and uniforms began to emerge in 1874, black troops sometimes received the new items first, not out of any generosity on behalf of the Army, but simply because they were closer to an Army supply line or railhead.

The author then turns his attention to how the military establishment perceived and treated immigrant soldiers, who came to make up a considerable portion of the post-Civil War, Frontier Army. Adams findings suggest that the U.S. military was not nearly so threatened by soldier-immigrants from Germany or Ireland, and may have been too busy to concern itself with religious differences. As he points out in the book, the ethnicity of immigrants was “descriptive, not explanatory,” as it was in the case of black soldiers.

Adams concludes that the Regular Army of the Frontier is little known and less remembered, save by a cadre of historians, enthusiasts, and re-enactors. However, he soberingly suggests that the similarities between the American Indian Wars period and the current military actions taking place today in Iraq and Afghanistan might give us pause before we consign the memories of the past to the “dust-bins” of history.

Adams underscores a connection between soldiering and citizenship that has always existed on some level in the United States, but has been seen through the lens of political thought current at the

time. Critics of America’s present military posture overseas allege that today’s enlisted men are largely undereducated, highly urban, ethnic, immigrant, and from lower income levels. The same, Adams points out, can be said of the Frontier Army. “Just like the Indian Wars, today’s wars are too often out of sight, out of mind, with the national conversations about them more akin to a shouting contest,” Adams warns. “To continue without a greater understanding of our past,” he admonishes, “risks making the estranged and isolated army prized by nineteenth century military historians a twenty-first century reality.”

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*Baltimore’s Alley Houses: Homes for Working People since the 1780s*

By Mary Ellen Hayward. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008; 307 pp., illustrations; cloth, \$45.00

New York built tenements, walk-up apartments of several stories, with no water and few windows in the inner walls. The conditions in these tenements became scandalous via writers like Jacob Riis in the late 19th century.

Baltimore builders learned to build two- or three-story row houses on the main streets, and tiny row houses on the back streets or alleys. In early Philadelphia and Baltimore, builders erected diminutive two-story versions of the grand Federal houses built for wealthier clients. Often a block was subdivided with the larger houses facing outward and an alley running through the middle with more modest dwellings facing it. By laying out blocks with an alley street down the middle, developers could produce more house lots. Some of the earliest alley dwellings had no backyards but abutted the houses built behind them.

In communities where all but the very wealthy had to walk to work, housing was required for every income level within the same geographic area. Substantial merchants and businessmen could afford large three-story houses on major streets. Shopkeepers, craftsmen, and artisans lived in two-story houses nearby. The laboring classes who did the physical work of the community also had to live nearby, occupying more modest houses, which they rented or sometimes were able to buy. This arrangement continued until the advent of the streetcars in the latter 19th century, when workers were able to live further away from their jobs.

Later alley dwellings had small backyards to accommodate a privy. These small working-class row houses accommodated every wave of emigrant that landed in Baltimore, a large native African American population, and African American emigrants coming up from the south. Large numbers of Irish, German, Bohemian, Polish, Jewish, Italian, and Greek immigrants came through Baltimore. Many of them stayed on to found vibrant ethnic neighborhoods, some of which remain to this day. Poor immigrants occupying back alley houses, through thrift saving clubs, were able to make small down payments on purchasing a row house. As people from these groups moved on to more ample housing, newly arrived immigrants took up their places in old Baltimore neighborhoods. Many neighborhoods revolved around ethnic churches, which had a priest, rabbi, or minister who spoke the native language. Extolling the Baltimore row house, George Washington Howard wrote in 1873, in *The Monumental City: Its Past History and Present Resources* about Baltimore's "utter absence of tenement-houses, with their squalid wretchedness," where "the humblest mechanic or laborer can ensconce his family in a modest dwelling and surround them with the pleasures and comforts of home."<sup>1</sup>

The Irish arrived in large number to Baltimore during the Potato Famine in 1846-50. Ships would arrive in the Baltimore Harbor with many passengers who

had died in the Atlantic Passage. Local Irish helped the famine victims find housing near Union Square in west Baltimore. Luckily, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was developing great guns at that time, and many of the Irish found work digging the roadbed and laying track for the railroad to Cumberland, Maryland and westward. Many of these Irish laborers followed the railroad westward with their families. Many others stayed in Baltimore.

Germans came after the failure of the 1848 German Democratic movement. They established singing societies, bakeries, breweries, and piano factories, adding to the commercial and cultural life of the city. Many Bohemians who came had a high school education and were skilled woodworkers, carvers, cabinetmakers, or tailors. A Bohemian builder, Frank Novak developed the classic Baltimore row house in the early 20th century, with marble basement and marble steps. German Jewish businessmen built grand row houses along Eutaw Place with magnificent new synagogues. The Italians settled in an area near Fells Point still known as Little Italy.

Well-to-do African Americans, often descended from Maryland freedmen, occupied a fashionable neighborhood in the Druid Hill Park area, moving in after German Jewish settlers, who were denied residence in other white neighborhoods. Baltimore neighborhoods became "red lined" restricting Jewish and African Americans from buying property. Blacks had always lived in the Fells Point and Federal Hill neighborhoods, sharing both principle street and alley dwellings with white residents. The influx of southern blacks after the Civil War swelled these neighborhoods. A "Great Migration" of blacks from the South continued in the years between the World Wars, filling up old neighborhoods and alley dwellings in central Baltimore. A residential housing city ordinance enacted after the Civil War, disallowed blacks from moving into blocks that were 50 percent white. The U.S. Supreme Court overturned this ordinance in 1917, but de facto segregation continued.

Early 20th-century reformers addressed the alley dwellings lacking sanitation facilities, as the city gradually moved to provide sewers and indoor toilet and bathing facilities.

Eastern Europeans, Poles, Czechs, Italians, and Russian Jews arrived to swell the ethnic mix and rich diversity of Baltimore neighborhoods. The newcomers often occupied the cheapest alley dwellings vacated by the upwardly mobile previous occupants. The canneries east of Fells Point provided a source of employment for unskilled newly arrived workers. Slum clearance became a preoccupation, and Poe Homes, Baltimore's first public housing project with garden style apartments was built 1940-1941.

In 1967, fighting a new interstate highway that would be built across historic waterfront neighborhood Fells Point and Federal Hill, preservationists rallied to nominate both neighborhoods to a new National Register of Historic Places. The famous dollar house program that followed allowed homesteaders and gentrifiers to renovate waterfront neighborhoods with alley dwellings as well. Very soon alley dwellings and larger homes on surrounding streets, vacated by the city's poor, became chic new homes for young white urban pioneers who desired to live downtown close to their workplaces. While some

inner-city neighborhoods have been renovated, several outlying neighborhoods remain unrestored and derelict, creating a challenge to preserve a huge housing stock of Baltimore row houses for all classes. Substantially built, they have provided housing for generations of Baltimoreans.

With meticulous research, Mary Ellen Hayward has re-created the history of working-class Baltimore and the waves of its ethnic emigrants and citizens by studying row houses and their neighborhoods. The book is an extraordinarily focused lens into 19th—and early 20th—century immigration patterns into America, with a rich social history included of the lives and fortunes of all the groups who arrived and struggled to establish themselves, with many ultimately providing themselves and their families a good living and solid housing, if constricted by street entrances, party walls, and limited light and ventilation, yet with quick and easy access to work, markets, church, and temple.

1. George W. Howard, *The Monumental City: Its Past History and Present Resources* (Baltimore: J.D. Ehlers & Co., 1873), 35,44, cited on p. 144.

Gary Scott  
*National Park Service*

## On the cover

View of the Gothic Arch Bridge in Central Park in New York City, New York, that spans the bridle path near the Reservoir. It is one of over 46 bridges and arches in Central Park designed to emphasize the naturalistic setting and further the romantic plan of the park. (Jet Lowe, photographer, 1984. Courtesy of the Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service)

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