

MIDTERM ESSAY¹

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Introduction

This course, outlining the historical development, theory and philosophy of preservation in terms of the American experience, has been providing some good background information for my studies as a visiting researcher in urban preservation. Although I have previously been involved in graduate studies and professional work in the preservation field, I find it immediately valid on this personal level, that the **principles of this field are continuously evolving** and it is worthwhile to **re-consider** the values, assumptions and practices of preservation prevalent today on both sides of the Atlantic.

The **history and theory** of the American preservation movement naturally **lays foundations for the current approaches** to preservation and its reflections on planning in the United States; studying these issues can thus lend new insights toward my PhD thesis ², for which I am investigating effective **tools of preservation planning**. These insights will possibly be reached through a questioning and **verification of valid arguments** to base decisions and actions of preservation planning, and the formulation of **innovative tools** to realize goals of preservation planning based on the new arguments. The following questions have been answered with these ideas in mind.

Question 2: The Historic District

What was the conceptual shift in preservation that heralded the advent of the historic district?

What can designated historic districts accomplish that individual designations cannot?

From a perception of historic significance in single buildings as monuments to an important past, the attention of preservationists and others concerned with the improvement of city life eventually shifted toward the preservation of the built environment on a larger scale. One aspect of this shift is the awareness that the meaning of **certain monuments are fully appreciated within their wider spatial setting**, such as the homestead rather than just the building, the landscape in which a building is set, or the neighboring square and park of a Church (reflecting the ideas of the City Beautiful movement). Beyond this concern, new values were discovered in the wider urban context, such as the **added value of the 'tout ensemble'**, where "the whole is more than the sum of its parts", and buildings that individually might not have very high historic or architectural merit, collectively create a higher level of quality worth preserving. The concept of preserving whole districts also brought into question the **social values** that a 'living' urban system contained, including the network of activities, relationships and a **community's way of life** that was represented in the **vernacular** buildings. The challenge of preserving such a complex set of values has been a larger one than individual building preservation in many ways, and is well summarized by Diane Lea as "**keeping the past alive while adjusting to the inevitable changes intrinsic to a viable community**" (2003: 7).

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² 'Organizational Approaches in the Management of Urban Preservation and Regeneration Projects: A Comparative Analysis toward an Applicable Model for Turkish Towns'.

To be looking at some defining milestones in the advent of the 'district' in historic preservation, an international document of note is the **Venice Charter** of 1964, where Article 1 states that "the concept of an historic monument embraces not only the single architectural work but also the urban or rural setting in which is found the evidence of a particular civilization, a significant development or an historic event. This applies not only to great works of art but also to more modest works of the past which have acquired cultural significance with the passing of time". Closely following this, the **World Heritage Convention** of 1972, in its first article, defines the outstanding universal value of **groups of buildings** from the point of view of history, art or science because of their architecture, homogeneity or place in the landscape.

Before the time of these influential official definitions, certain developments in the American field can be cited as laying important groundwork for the shift to the district scale. The project of **Colonial Williamsburg** in 1926, to restore an entire colonial town and keep it "free from inharmonious surroundings", created a new public interest and inspired other '**museum villages**' to be established, alongside the 'museum house'. The concern for the historic built environment as an embodiment of social values and lifestyle resulted in the act of **official designation**, the first of these being the **Old and Historic Charleston** District in 1931, soon followed by the old quarters of New Orleans and Savannah in the same region.

In the Williamsburg case, the issue of **harmony** surfaces in a very rigid approach, and even to this day the discussion of **contextually appropriate building and zoning**, whether on the ground or the skyline level, is a contested one. The statue of William Penn in Philadelphia was held up as the limit of upward growth for many decades until the 1980's, and the very current controversy of 980 Madison Avenue in New York revolves around issues ranging from the breach of the **zoning ordinance** to the **character** of the neighborhood at stake. Zoning appears to have been used for various ends, both as an **enhancer of property values** – to confront "obstacles private ownership of property presented to profitable urban investment", overcoming the initial objection in defense of property rights, once it became clear that by promoting stability it enhanced property values" (Wallace 1986: 169, 170) – and a **protection** of certain urban areas with **special character against development** through raised real estate expectations.

Williamsburg is also cited as the beginning of an **interdisciplinary approach** in preservation, where historians, architects, landscape architects, archaeologists, engineers and craftsmen were brought together in its creation. Similarly, preservation work at the district and city level has meant much **intersector collaboration**, between preservation professionals, advocates, community groups, government officials and political leaders, and the marriage of public and private leadership and funding.

Integrated approaches continued in the subsequent era of the 1950s and '60s, when the **urban renewal** schemes of the 'growth coalition' personified in New York mayor Robert Moses, brought devastation for many historic areas and sparked the coming together of **preservation constituencies and socially-minded planning activists** such as Jane Jacobs. These reactions eventually sensitized the approach to urban renewal and conservation, the new framework for saving buildings being based on the **healthy social networks and street life** that medium-density, 'old style' urban fabrics presented. The concept of the **neighborhood** was celebrated in this light. Today, this line of progression gives us the **Main Street revitalization programs** to help boost cities economically. The story of the counter-measure against ruthless development does not seem to have ended as yet, as current talk is made of how "the push for historic designation is partly a reaction to a flurry of development that has brought enormous changes to many neighborhoods." The **intense interest** shown by some local communities for district designation, commended for its effect on property value, neighborhood pride and physical upkeep of homes, at times reaches an extent where questions are raised about **what's worthy of designation** (Munoz 2006).

Questions 3 and 4: The Concept of Significance and its Evolution (“What to Preserve” in Different Eras)

- Discuss the concept of significance as it applies to historic preservation.
- If asked the question “What should we preserve?”, what would be the answer of a preservationist in 1855? In 1915? In 1955? In 1990?

The concern for preservation and the profession that was born of it are founded on the importance placed in certain **aspects of the built environment** as a reflection of the **accumulated historical and cultural experience** of society (in other words, the **cultural heritage**), these special aspects being expressed generally as **significance**³. Under this broad and malleable concept, **many values** are invested, and together form the grounds for keeping certain buildings, places, and their attributes as they are – or have previously been – for posterity. A fundamental idea behind this concern, of linking reflections of the **past** with their recognition in the **future**, is that of **continuity** – the continuity of this human experience.

This point is made by Kennedy in his emphasis of the essential role of **place in continuous culture**, as “the grounding necessary for climbing a cliff or advancing a culture is to have your feet and one hand upon something tangible, specifically a place, then you can reach for the broader context and the new perception” (2000: 24). The eloquent words of Robert A. Stern, speaking of buildings as “silent witness to what we do and believe”, and “our immortality on earth”, drive home the same point.

The emergence of preservation as a distinct professional framework also came about through the realization that the **continuous flow** of the human experience was under **threat of being severed** by the new, radical changes brought on by the Modern Age. This process firstly came out of modern philosophical reflection on human history and society, the self-conscious treatments of old buildings based on the time’s ‘modern scientific thinking’ (by the likes of Viollet-le-Duc in France and Sir Gilbert Scott in England), and in turn a romantic reaction to this treatment (expressed by the likes of John Ruskin and William Morris), all of these merging into a contemporary theory of restoration, manifested in the **Carta del Restauro** of 1932 and numerous other charters that followed it.

The concept of significance is described similarly in the official international documents, using several basic ways to define the cultural heritage that is worth preserving. The **Athens Charter** for the Restoration of Historic Monuments of 1931 refers to monuments of **artistic, historic or scientific interest**; the **Venice Charter** of 1964 states that the intention in conserving and restoring monuments is to safeguard them no less as **works of art** than as **historical evidence**. The **World Heritage Convention**, under definitions of ‘cultural heritage’, cites ‘monuments’ as architectural [and other] works which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of **history, art or science**, and under ‘natural heritage’, outstanding universal value from the point of view of **aesthetics / natural beauty, science or conservation**. The **criteria** for inscription of cultural heritage on the Convention’s World Heritage List, described in its Operational Guidelines, comprehensively cover different aspects of **human cultural achievement**: outstanding examples of the human creative genius; the interchange of human values over a span of time or within a cultural area, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design; testimony to a cultural tradition or civilization which is living or which has disappeared; illustration of a significant stage in human history; traditional human settlement, or human interaction with the environment; association with events or living traditions, ideas, or beliefs, with artistic and

³ While the term ‘cultural significance’ is preferred in Britain and Europe at large, ‘historical significance’ appears to be more widely used in the United States. I am personally curious about the roots of this terminological difference, as well as that between the American term ‘preservation’ as opposed to the European term ‘conservation’ to denote the general profession.

literary works of outstanding universal significance. The criteria also require a property to meet conditions of **integrity** and/or **authenticity**.

Similar concerns are expressed in the definition of significance and criteria for inclusion in the **National Register** of the American **National Trust For Historic Preservation**, which emphasize the quality of significance present in districts, sites and objects that possess **integrity** and that are “associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the **broad patterns of our history**”. They also elaborate on the **architectural / artistic or historical importance** through association with the lives of persons significant in our past; distinctive characteristics that possess high artistic values, yielding information important in prehistory or history, and being commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value of exceptional significance.

Although the above ideas are widely accepted and circulated in the preservation field, writers on the subject point to the **obstacles and complications** that exist in the concept of significance. Green points out to a **tautology** in the double usage of the word significance (2000: 87), and that we still need to know what this significance of contribution to history is. In my opinion, keeping the national document’s definition a broad and general one can be considered fortunate, since it gives allowance to the diversity of possible narratives defining significance, which are increasingly acknowledged, however, the self-referencing repetition does pose an awkward loophole in such a guiding document. Perhaps the next period of reforming the National Criteria can devise a definition that is at once more descriptive, and still allow for that diversity.

Another problem is found in the distinction of **artistic and historical significance** in all of the documents cited above. Striner believes that one should not have to make this artificial distinction, because architectural significance is already rooted in history, the scope of which covers everything including architectural history. This is proposed to be overcome by strengthening the relationship between **philosophy-of-history and preservation**, and putting history more in the foreground in the significance forming process (2000: 137).

The reasons for preserving are given in a concise **layout of arguments** by **Stipe**, many of which touch on the issue of continuity. These include our links to the past; our expectations, need for cognitive mapping, orientation and landmarking; expressing our individuality and diversity in the face of rapid change; anchoring us in the flow of continuum; and bearing a powerful affinity with people and events of the past. Stipe also continues to distinguish the aesthetic / architectural argument among the rest of them, citing the intrinsic value of historic buildings as art, and the right of our cities to be beautiful. On the other hand, Stipe is receptive to the issue of how all arguments should ultimately come together, and points out that because preservation serves **human and social purposes**, including the environmental problem, to bring a better quality of human existence, the achievement of this goal will help the architecture and history will fall into place (2003: xv). This last argument of his seems to me very positive, as it enables the role of preservation to **connect with the urban agenda** of the present day, especially in New York, which focuses on the themes of social and environmental justice, affordable housing and equitable, sustainable development.

Kennedy cites as fundamental realities, beside continuity, the idea of **community**; this is also relevant in discussing the relationship of preservation with **public memory and history**. We preserve places and things that are the embodiment of collective and public **stories**, and so we also keep alive and pass on the **memory** of their **meanings**. The **‘real place’** bearing the **authentic** source of significance is emphasized by Kennedy, as “where objects remain where they commenced”, as opposed to museums, thus presenting a **medium of learning** for people (2000: 20).

Although preservation is argued as a community service, another obstacle to the recognition of significance is the fact that **popular sentiment is not always in favor of preservation**. The Athens Charter foresaw the importance of this problem; it approves “the general tendency which () recognises a certain right of the community in regard to **private ownership** () and the difficulty of reconciling public law with the rights of individuals.” It then prescribes measures that “should be in keeping with local circumstances and with the trend of public opinion, so that the least possible opposition may be encountered, due allowance being made for the sacrifices which the owners of property may be called upon to make in the general interest.” In the case of the United States, the individual, private right to property is such a strong theme of national sensibilities that the arguments for preservation must often tackle a particularly big challenge in this respect. Because of this, I find that preservation efforts are all the more meaningful and victories more commendable in the present-day environment of American cities. I even believe that they might be a real litmus test of the legitimacy of preservation for the global society at large.

The at times enormous pressures, mainly to do with private development rights, but also the public interest in development, cause the significance appraisal process of historic buildings to become **competitive**, and some kind of **prioritization** to be necessary. Perception of significance to be at a ‘low’ level makes it harder to defend preservation against development pressures, and arguing well for significance, even creating a perceived value when it was not previously there through diligent investigation and interpretation, can enable critical turning of tides in ‘preservation fights’, as we follow in the cases of Brandy Station and Manassas national battlefields.

Competition of significance also brings us to issues of **subjectivity** and **diversity**, which appear as major players in the current American preservation agenda. As a background to this, one can remember that **period discrimination** has been a theme ever since the emergence of preservation ideals in the 19th century, with the ‘unity of style’ approaches of the rigid restorationists, giving way to the ‘anti-scrape’ call for letting the natural history of a building show itself. Today, respecting the **whole continuum** of history and all of its various stages is a matter-of-fact principle. However, debates still continue over history as objective reality or as a domain of ever-changing interpretations. The concept of the ‘**objective past**’ (often expressed with the quote from Leopold von Ranke, “Wie es eigentlich gewesen” / “how it actually was”) has been shifting from a historicism that viewed the past as a scientifically attainable, concrete thing, to a more relativist view of historiography, open to literary, humanistic and **subjective interpretations**. On one hand, this seems progressive, as if echoing the idea that “the more we learn, the less we know”, and disconcerting on the other, in the same way that post-modern thinking takes away reassuring points of reference. Although consensus is desired and relieving, explanations of how the human mind works point in the direction that subjectivity is the prevailing force. Striner gives age-old and more modern instances of **bringing our own experience** into our writing of history, and describes significance as an outcome of the interaction between the “inherent attributes of a historic resource and the mind assessing those attributes” (2000: 138-141). Baer expresses a similar thing in the “**construct of interwoven mind and reality**”, discussing the way that in the preservationists’ cognitive map, the past, present and future are **self-referencing** in a Mobius strip (2000: 75-6). This brings a complex philosophical reasoning into the picture, which might be more simply put as “**monitoring history** as it is happening”.

Baer calls for a move away from “**meddling with the future**”, giving examples of how urban renewal sought to make the past in historic areas conform to a vision of the future, and how, in reverse, preservation calls for the future to conform to the past. But a call for doing nothing seems to me equally problematic, or even absurd. We, of this time, will inevitably have to leave our marks on the progression of history, and treating our physical environment in a **proactive** way rather than ignoring it, is a more healthy and normal course of action. **Self-awareness** and a **self-critical** viewpoint are indeed necessary at this point. It is also about a careful balance

between giving room for future developments to 'breathe' while heritage we consider significant is preserved. The **limits** we put on both and the point we stand on the **change-versus-preservation scala** are another critical point of consideration, Striner, who believes that preservationists should not be denied a role in the urban process, just as planners should not, also expresses his uncertainty about where to draw this line.

To further this point a little more, it is interesting to see Green's reminder that history as the word denotes both the 'past' and the 'perception of the past'. He dwells on the **social history revolution**, where meaning is socially made (2000: 88-92). By suggesting that **history and preservation deepen their dialogue**, the authors of the relevant articles seem to mean that concept of '**socially constructed historical significance**' should be applied more directly in actions of preservation.

Being more in touch with social nature of history-writing has caused mention of **revisionist history** in relevant articles. Kennedy says that the kind of scholarship we are doing now tries to see 'what really happened' (2000: 22); although this seems redundant after all the talk of how that thing is not really attainable, there is faith that more critical and less self-assured approaches can at least bring us closer to it, and portray a more informed and accurate picture of 'what happened' in history. Kennedy does make an important contribution to this debate in emphasizing that this is fundamental in **shifting our perceptions of significance**; revisions of histories, for example due to **deeper research** or alternative social interpretations, can affect the level and type of significance of a place, and help reduce the risk of losing important heritage resources which are not recognized or acknowledged in time.

Another strand of the subjectivity issue is the way **intellectual and emotional** approaches to preservation are placed in opposing camps. Preservationists are often perceived as unable to adequately shed their personal, feeling-based appraisals, as is expected and requested by other professional parties in the urban sphere. Here, increased integration of the preservation field with more positive-science-based fields such as planning and engineering can help a better appreciation of the customized needs and nature of each professional group.

While preservationists can seem inadequately equipped with the scientific authority, a reverse situation is observed in the debate of '**the professional versus the ordinary citizen / community**'. Pannekoek downplays the preservation professional's authority (2000) and Striner (2000: 82) criticizes the assumed role of "quality cops", while Kennedy defends their crucial role for a humane society and that "community needs competence" (2000: 23-24). The optimal point must be somewhere in the middle of these views, where the professional input to significance is not obscured in a post-modernist climate of subjectivity, while it refrains from dictating and imposing itself on alternative and softer voices of society. Again, it comes down to balance and negotiation.

Subjectivity and diversity have a strong connection to the role of **power and politics** in preservation. The main argument put forth today is that the **selective memory of dominant classes and groups**, prevailing over the perceptions of significance, should be rectified by liberating **historical intelligence** and returning to people their **sense of their own past** (Frisch 1986: 12) It is easily understood that a primary motivation for preservation originally was to do with the political concerns of the elite (eg. New England merchants and textile magnates' descendants, or Old South planters class descendants), promoting **symbols of their legitimacy**. In a similar fashion, multimillionaire industrialists, in their distaste for unrestrained capitalism, were seeking to secure a distinctive cultural position within a larger capitalist class, when they were transferring historic property into public ownership and fencing them off from the market. They were assuming **custodianship of the 'American heritage'** to restore their position (Wallace 1986: 168-170). The importance of this strategy was later reflected in the opening phrase of the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, stating "the **spirit and direction of the Nation** are founded upon and reflected in its historic heritage." Different constituencies of

American society are embracing this meaning of heritage, and contesting its content for more political voice, as its custodianship and interpretation are tried to be brought down to grassroots.

This is actually all possible because of the **time-dependent** nature of significance, as changing social and political fashions are accompanied by changing perceptions of heritage. The tendency of each period architectural and urban design throughout history to **react to the style of its predecessor**, to ensure that it is distinguishable from the old, has direct consequences for what styles have been popularly preserved. Political climates following **regime upheavals** are typical of this phenomenon. The dislike of the Founding Fathers towards the idea of saving buildings with meanings was due to an interpretation of their meaning in terms of old, rejected value systems. The possibility of placing new, well-liked meanings onto monuments later made it acceptable to preserve them. As a side illustration from another nation's experience, I would like to note that the same phenomenon is observed in the Turkish history of preservation, as the modern Republic founded in 1923 witnessed in its first decades a ruthless disdain of Ottoman social and religious buildings, such as the endowment (waqf) monuments and dervish lodges. The country is still coming to terms with its Ottoman heritage, which is what makes intellectuals like the recent nobel-prize recipient Orhan Pamuk to be celebrated for their embracing both modern and historic values of Turkish society.

Crossing over from the theme of time-dependence, an overview of what would be favored for preservation in various time periods of the American experience is given below.

1855:

This date falls under the **Era of the Secular Saints**, where the **Founding Fathers** were celebrated through **house museums** that were created out of the homesteads of important historic figures, and became centers of patriotic pilgrimage. The favorite sites for preservation would then include Mount Vernon (and other places wittily described as "George Washington having slept there"), and national **battlefield monuments** such as Gettysburg. These are still preserved with the same respect, although they have come to represent a much smaller portion of the nation's heritage.

1915:

This date follows the milestone ushering in the **Era of the American Aesthetic**, which was the 1876 Philadelphia Centennial Exposition. The Colonial house displayed in this event, joined by the New England explorations of McKim, Mead and White, and a 1889 journal article proclaiming that **democracy was embodied in a certain architectural style**, raised appreciation for the stylistic attributes of **colonial architecture**. It thus spurred the formation of **local and regional historical societies** such as the Society for the Protection of New England Architecture (SPNEA) with a mission to preserve buildings that were "architecturally beautiful or unique, or have special historical value". This definition resonates with the previously discussed coupling of history and architecture as twin entities.

1915 also follows the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which brought on the **City Beautiful** movement advocating civic improvement, and giving birth to the profession of **city planning**. The preservation movement was by now well-enough formed to have introduced the **1906 Antiquities Act**. An interesting point of note in this act is that **Native American sites** were included in its scope, which goes to show that awareness of multiple cultural stories in the United States was not an alien concept that suddenly appeared in the recent decades, but a slowly evolving line of advocacy with a considerable history.

1955:

By this date, societies had formed linking interests of **landscapes and historic places**. Scenic landscapes, national and municipal parks were at the center of the preservation concern. The **National Park Service** was set up in 1916, "to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of same and in such a

manner as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations". Thus, the language of sustainability was starting to be articulated as well. 1926 has seen the initiative of **Colonial Williamsburg**, where the entrepreneur Rockefeller expresses his "interest in promoting patriotism and good citizenship through both **natural and cultural areas**." While such homogeneous environments depict a patriotic story, the new idea of saving ordinary, **vernacular houses** arose. 1931 witnessed the Old and Historic Charleston pioneering historic district designation. An important milestone in society's perceptions was the Second World War, the public works that followed it triggering reactions that eventually lobbied for the formation in **1947** of the **National Trust For Historic Preservation**. Although it is past the date of 1955, a contemporary milestone of this time is the reform of the National Criteria of the NTHP in 1956, emphasizing the importance of a broad cultural, political, economic and social history of the nation, state or community. This is still in the process of maturing today, which once more goes to show these are long processes spanning decades and generations.

1990:

Many developments tie the date of 1955 to 1990, as the preservation movement tried to keep up with the fast-changing world. The **Era of Urban Renewal** was experienced, based on prevailing theories of 'the rational city'. The destructive results and battles of this period have been explained above. However, this was also the time of the Cold War, when **national identity** crisis fears were felt, and thus preservation gave a reassuring message that "individuals feel both more secure and more purposeful when they recognize that they exist as a part of a historical continuum". The preservation movement was intensified by bitter lessons, epitomized in the 1964 demolition of **Penn Station** in New York City, and acquired a legal protection framework in the **1966 National Historic Preservation Act**, establishing the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. This brought the expansion of significance from the national level to **local** and statewide level. Local communities' perception of the significance of their heritage was recognized as instrumental in the "orientation to the American people". The Penn Station event also reconciled the modern-aspired public with **pre-modern styles** like the Beaux Arts. Thus, the long and famous case of **Grand Central Station** in New York City was finally resolved in favor of preservation with the 1978 Supreme Court decision, which gave legitimacy to the role of local government in preservation. There has also been a growing emphasis on preservation planning and growth management, which have an easier medium of integration at the level of local government issues. Thus, the development of planning, finance and real estate tools became possible, involving tax credits, grants and revolving funds. As the definition of historic significance expands, the interest area of historic preservation naturally reached out to partnerships in allied fields. The **alliances** that were forged between the preservation movement and other alternative movements like environmentalism and feminism provided great help for the cause.

The **1976 Bicentennial** celebrations were an added factor in raising awareness of Americans to historic preservation, particularly its local nature reflecting the diverse character of the nation. Preservation publications and television shows provided new media for the "continuing discussion of what could be considered worthy of preservation" (Lea 2003: 13), while heritage tourism, the advent of theme parks and the wider acknowledgment of vernacular styles were supporting aspects of this process. This climate also provided opportunities for the proliferation of **special preservation interests**, such as preservation of the maritime, rural, intangible cultural heritage.

After the 1980s, the emphasis focused on **adaptive reuse** of factories and warehouses, obsolete after the decline of large industry in cities, being transformed into housing types like lofts, or mixed use regeneration areas, which also helped reclaim waterfronts for private and public use. The National Trust's **Main Street programs** and initiatives for **downtown revitalization** have been developments related to this regeneration movement, which has also brought forth a contemporary hub of discussion, **gentrification**.

Today, a **vast array** of heritage forms figure on the stage of preservation. The shifts occurring in the last years have brought an **enhanced public understanding of cultural diversity**, as the National Register has broadened its concept of heritage to the vernacular, industrial, natural resources. Within the expansion are innovative projects entailing financial, social or political risks. Further expansion in the scale of the places worth preserving has produced scenic highways, 'heritage areas', **cultural landscapes** and '**traditional cultural properties**', acknowledging the **Native American** concepts of land-human relationships, and the **associational dimension** of historic properties (Lyon 2000: 44). The **alternative cultural and social histories** and narratives expand continuously to include more **Native American** and **African American** sites, such as burial grounds and the Black Heritage Trail, and those of other 'subaltern' groups, as the definition of historic districts extend to entire working-class neighborhoods. Oral history figures as an increasingly more important tool in the documenting and appraising of the significance of these narratives. The **Charleston** Principles adopted in 1990 acknowledge preservation as the element of every community's economic success, "recognize the cultural diversity of communities", and the "**empowerment of a diverse constituency** to preserve America's cultural and physical resources". The National Preservation Conference in **San Francisco**, 1991 similarly deals with ways to use preservation tools to address the abandonment of central cities and the **cultural illiteracy** of nation. The 1992 amendments to the NHPA bring a noteworthy contribution, that of **tribal historic preservation officers**, thus helping the narrative of the Native American heritage reach high levels of political empowerment. The 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the Twenty-First Century (**TEA-21**) supports the efforts of preservation planning by allocating funding for downtown street improvements, rehabilitation of historic neighborhoods, rail depots, pedestrian paths and urban waterfronts.

The concept of historic periods, events and people also broadens into more recent periods such as the international and modernist styles, and even seemingly unlikely territory, such as leaders of present-day technological innovation like Hewlett Packard, Apple Computers and those taking part in the development of the Silicon Valley (Darlin 2005).

In this contemporary landscape, some points to note toward closing might be, firstly, that "where there is a **shared public understanding** of the value of historic properties, historic preservation is successful. Where their perceived value is uncertain, misunderstood or contested, they are often lost" (Lyon 2000: 37-38). The comfort of **consensus is still a desired goal** but is an ever more difficult and complex task, as society becomes more pluralistic and democratic and that consensus has to be reached via an openness to alternative voices and inclusiveness. In response, some constituencies in the preservation field are in the process of **re-inventing** its scope and methodology, to keep up with the current state and issues of society. They are considering options of approaching the '**inclusive consensus**' challenge, such as validation and regulation. The effective programs seem bound to be those enabling **syntheses** and excelling in the art of **community consensus building**. The struggle to keep the greater diversity together requires stretching the criteria to new, untried limits. Lyon also stresses the urgency of preservation to **translate its updated concepts of significance into coordinated preservation action** (Lyon 2000: 46-48) in order to achieve the desired broad social and political process.

As the scope of what is to preserve increasingly becomes broader and more flexible, the professional field of historic preservation is also **blending at the fringes with other related areas**, such as archival studies, object and document conservation, not to mention urban and public history, anthropology, ethnography, sociology, demographics, real estate and urban economics. Many of these specialization areas are related to the urban planning profession, reminding the **ever-growing need to work together across disciplines**, in addressing processes such as gentrification and displacement, preserving the social fabric and contemporary community values, which are acknowledged as part of a continuum of history, as well as an integral part of efforts toward social justice and **equitable development**.

Sources⁴

Readings

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⁴ Citation of sources basically follow the guidelines issued by the Graduate Center for Planning and the Environment.