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## Preservation Planning

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# PRESERVATION PLANNING

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## INTRODUCTION

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During the 20th century, historic preservation has expanded from a handful of scattered efforts to salvage elite houses to an organized social movement. For instance, the restoration of Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, in the 1930s required the cooperation of a federal government unit (the National Park Service) with civilian expertise across various disciplines such as architecture, history, landscape architecture, historic archaeology, and planning. In another example, the preservation of Charleston, South Carolina, resulted from the first specific zoning ordinance for historic preservation in the U.S. This sort of interdisciplinary effort allows preservation to tap into the cultural politics of governmental and private groups. It has achieved admirable progress as "one of the broadest and longest-lasting land-use reform efforts," (Page and Mason 2004, 3) although it is typically considered separate from much of the bread-and-butter of planning such as zoning and other land use regulation. The practice of historic preservation in the United States extended back to the 19th century, but it gained official recognition as a field in the 1960s, arguably when National Historic Preservation Act was passed in 1966. In recent years, preservation planning has moved from a staid, traditionalist field toward an emerging practice that embraces, we argue, a subtly revolutionary approach that

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encourages an appreciation of the shared, diverse, conflicting, and emotional character of landscapes.

To achieve this broader view, preservation planning's domain of interest has shifted from individual structures toward wider landscapes, neighborhoods, and sites of production, thus allowing for the broader social meaning of the landscape to be more fully explored through wider public participation. Actors of all sorts become engaged in sometimes fierce contestation over whose history to preserve, which stories to tell and which to keep quiet, and what counts as authentic. Managing this requires more deliberative processes that engage and value the opinions of non-experts, and a narrative approach allowing the walking-through of histories and multiple senses of place. With this, historic preservation becomes an integral part of a larger planning practice, one that uses the tools of wider participatory methods of planning and contributes to a greater depth of emotional attachment and place identity in the outcomes of the planning process. Historic preservation has come of age. This chapter explores these transitions with a focus on United States' practices.

## TRADITIONAL PRESERVATION PLANNING

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Appreciating the changes preservation planning requires an understanding of its roots. Charles Hosmer in 1965 published one of the first scholarly accounts of preservation planning. In it, he identified major criteria for why preservation should be undertaken: patriotic inspiration, local and civic pride, the need for exhibition areas, family pride, commercial objectives, and architectural or aesthetic enjoyment (Hosmer 1965, 3), based on the forensic evidence of the basic accomplishments of the early preservers, namely, large numbers of historic landmarks that are still with us today. The pioneers of the preservation movement prepared the American people to accept the idea of spending money for the seemingly profitless activity of saving a few spots that contribute to the study of history or the enjoyment of beauty (Hosmer 1965).

By the 1980s, a substantial body of academic work had coalesced around the critical history, theory, and practice of preserving buildings, exemplified by the work of James Martson Fitch (1982) and William Murtagh (1988).<sup>1</sup> These perspectives became legal doctrine with the

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<sup>1</sup> In his comprehensive review essay, Joseph Heathcott (2006) listed important works that have contributed to preservation study, including Art Ziegler, *Historic Preservation in Inner City Areas* (1971); Deirdre Stanforth with

landmark 1978 case, *Penn Central Transportation Co. et al v. New York Co. et al.* In it, Justice William J. Brennan Jr. observed "... a widely shared belief that structures with special historic, cultural, or architectural significance enhance the quality of life for *all*. Not only do these buildings and their workmanship represent the lessons of the past and embody precious features of our heritage, they serve as examples of quality for today. 'Historic conservation is but one aspect of the much larger problem, basically an environmental one, of enhancing -- or perhaps developing for the first time -- the quality for people.'" (Stipe 2003, 183)<sup>2</sup>

As a social movement (organized through an interlocking constituency with shared commitments at local, state, national and international levels) in both Western Europe and North America, historic preservation is pursued in concert with urban development (Page and Mason 2004; Heathcott 2006), and especially in the United States from the 1920s to 1950s, significantly overlapped with the planning movement. Holleran and Mason (2004 11) argue that the urban planner and even real estate developer were just other names for preservationist, especially in the early twentieth century, because they took a constructive approach to shape the new development to fit the old urban frame, bringing conversation about preservation into mainstream discussions. As a result, preservation stepped beyond curatorial boundary into a social reform.

Yet from the heroic efforts of Ann Pamela Cunningham to save Mount Vernon from gradual decay in 1853,<sup>3</sup> or the first zoning ordinance to encourage preservation in Charleston, South Carolina, in 1931,<sup>4</sup> and the failed attempt in 1963 to save Penn Station in New York, traditional preservation planning has emphasized the end results -- the preserved buildings and sites -- with little thought to the quality of the process. Indeed, the process was largely expert driven and centered on preventing imminent demolition of structures of the rich and powerful, leading to a conservative image of preservation as being embedded in the status quo and adverse

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photographs by Louis Reens, *Restored America* (1975); Tony Wrenn and Elizabeth Malloy, *America's Forgotten Architecture* (1976); Nathan Weinberg, *Preservation in American Towns and Cities* (1979); Richard Reed, *Return to the City* (1979); and the influential *Readings in Historic Preservation*, edited by Norman Williams Jr., Edmund Kellogg, and Frank Gilbert (1983).

<sup>2</sup> See *Penn Central Transportation Co. et al. v. New York City Co. et al.*, 438 US.104, 107-8 (1978).

<sup>3</sup> See the National Women's History Museum's website for sources on Ann Pamela Cunningham, <http://www.nwhm.org/education-resources/biography/biographies/ann-pamela-cunningham/>

<sup>4</sup> For an overview of preservation efforts in Charleston, see the National Park Service's website on Charleston at <http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/charleston/preservation.htm>

to change. Kevin Lynch, for instance, points out that “preservation has usually been the work of established middle- and upper-class citizens. The history enshrined in museums is chosen and interpreted by those who give the dollars (1972, 30).” Preservationists thus become the “keepers of the moribund, if not downright dead” (Bookspan 2001, 8).

## LIMITS TO THE TRADITIONAL APPROACH

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As daring and passionate as these earlier theoretical and judicial inquiries were, their authors primarily aimed to define preservation as a taken-for-granted social good. (Heathcott 2006; Thomas 2004). Accordingly, preserving monumental structures unquestionably contributed to ‘the quality of life for all.’ The significant changes in social order and theory beginning in the 1960s, however, slowly trickled into historic preservation, with an awareness that standard practices left the question of ‘good for whom’ unasked, and without that, the fundamental premise of social good on shaky ground. The core issues of preservation began to open up, what is *historic* at a particular time and place? If preservation is largely driven by nostalgic, patriotic, and arguably intellectual fever, which version of history is preserved? Who is actually involved in defining what is “historically significant”? What and who is missing from the preserved landscapes? Underlying and uniting these questions, we find three limits to the traditional approach to preservation planning, first, the painstaking pursuit of historic authenticity; second, the pressure to save a fixed single version of historic narratives; third, the lack of attention to the intangible aspects in the built environment, particularly memory and sense of place.

### **Authenticity, A Cherished Professional Myth**

Many are understandably nervous about the idea of authenticity. The public generally expects ‘authentic’ history, a clear story that matches a singular truth, so preservation should provide a physical touchstone for the basic effort to tell the truth about the past. But history is always a representation, always a textual reconstruction of the past, and never a direct reflection of it; it is subject to perpetual bias of both the narrators and audience. Pure authenticity becomes an inapproachable goal of historical inquiry. The attempt to tell the truth about the past seems a

socially responsible endeavor, but the very naivety diminishes our capacity to deal with messy, contested, and interpretive history, which, curiously, turns out to be more relevant and usable. After all, should we seek *the* true version of history, and hold on to it? Given the complexity of history's multiple layers, this apparently simpler conceptual parameter does not in fact render much practical guidance in specific preservation situations.

Indeed, the very quest for authenticity alters its nature. Interpreting the past unavoidably surpasses immediate concerns, we deal with creations begun some time ago, often before our own epoch; we save and interpret them for future generations. It may be more productive instead to seek to understand what the different social actors – preservationists, politicians, developers, and public – think is authentic and why authenticity matters to them (Barthel 1996). Lower-case truth, and perhaps multiple truths, that move toward the goal of authenticity without expecting ever to arrive, may be more feasible in the public planning process.

If authenticity is neither possible nor necessary, which version of history is the one to preserve? How is the selection process intertwined in political and power struggles? How does faith in authenticity clash with interpretive flexibility, which may encourage the opposite outcome, i.e. a fabrication of heritage (Lowenthal 1998 1996)? At its worst, this flexibility can lead to invented or imagined traditions selected for their potential to be sold and consumed, often going by the catch-all of 'heritage.' More commonly, heritage as practiced in communities becomes local history selectively perceived and explained through a rosy glow. Lowenthal (1996), for example, retains his basic attitude that heritage, at its best, is an act of *faith* since the very act of interpretation changes the residues of history. Despite this, he argues for the social and spiritual benefits of heritage, finding that "heritage underpins and enriches continuities with those who came before and those who will come after us" (2008, 12).

A central and helpful aspect of heritage is that as practiced it tends to make the common more visible; in preservation planning this comes forward through an increasing willingness to preserve sites of work and of production, as well as sites of middle and upper class consumption. Preservation of old industrial landscapes such as those in the Cuyahoga Valley National Recreation Area, which includes derelict steel mill structures, or similar parks in the Ruhr Valley in Germany, demonstrate ways that preservation practice can honor working-class history.

In these cases the industrial structures no longer function. Equally interesting are cases where in order for the landscape to be preserved in its form, it must continue to be a site of

production and work. The most obvious examples are heritage farms and forests that evolved through active human management. In these, for both aesthetics and heritage purposes, the management goal is to preserve the landscape in its traditional functions and ecology, and requires continued human intervention to maintain. A key challenge in these cases is that retaining the landscape requires retaining the cultural management practices of the past, or at least simulating their effects. In these cases, the intimate connection between human and landscape is the topic of preservation, more so than the structures themselves. This is the sort of preservation project the successful management of which requires engagement with long-standing local communities because the practices that created the landscape need to be documented, continued, and taught to new generations in order for the essential qualities of it to continue (Hamin 2001).

### **Single History, Visible Narrative, What is Missing?**

A simplified historic narrative by definition excludes other interpretations, and particularly contested ones. Marginalized social and cultural groups, whose histories may be more patriotically complicated and less uplifting, run a great risk of having their history be largely rendered into oblivion, intentionally or unintentionally, and disappearing from the urban landscape (Dubrow and Goodman 2003). Taking up the challenge of connecting the tangible and intangible values associated with places, Dubrow and Goodman (2003) argue that the answer to the fundamental question *why preserve*<sup>5</sup> -- lies in the curatorial promise of preservation to archive an otherwise lost historical consciousness. Lee (2003) traces the trajectory of cultural and ethnic diversity awareness, as well as its role in shaping the future of historic preservation, and demonstrates how the expansion of cultural limits beyond the traditional mainstream has benefited the profession, and the nation as a whole (Stipe 2003).<sup>6</sup> The importance of this inclusiveness is irrefutable – how can we understand Williamsburg, Virginia, without viewing

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<sup>5</sup> See Stipe (2003) for more on the question of why we should preserve at all.

<sup>6</sup> Despite some counter-examples such as the early efforts from Congress to save African American history in 1943, and the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act to include some ethnic minority interests in the massive urban renewal projects of the time, the emphasis remains on the visible elites in minority group rather than the vernacular environment associated with culturally and socially marginalized. In 1943, Congress added the George Washington Carver National Monument in Diamond, Missouri, to the National Park System. According to Lee, this action may have been an acknowledgement of the sacrifices that African Americans were making to the war effort. See Lee in Stipe, ed., (2003).

the slave quarters there?<sup>7</sup> Understanding why certain groups are typically ignored or stand outside of the preservation agenda becomes one of the central tasks of a progressive historical preservation project, and then acting on that knowledge.

History is contested. Urban preservation in communist ruled countries vividly illustrates the ideological conflict.<sup>8</sup> The rapid redevelopment of traditional urban neighborhoods in China, for instance, which results in destruction of historic vernacular neighborhoods, is largely a result of the sheer concentration of power or absolute political will and a culture that celebrates progress (Li 2010). Support for local historic places conveniently slips outside the agenda, and the resulting built environment poorly represents any sense of the long histories of those places. Worse than the loss of the physical structures, the spirit of the place, or in Anthony Tung's words, the "city's capacity to tell its past" gets ruptured (2001, 414). Consequently, collective memories in those places are deliberately suppressed or ignored (Bodnar 1992). This intentional jettisoning of problematic pasts and preserving sanctified ones is, of course, not limited to post-communist cultures, and instead forms some of core debate that surrounds preservation in emotionally or economically charged locales.

### **Culture and Memory, Multiple Senses of Place**

Despite an increasing awareness of the social dimensions of preservation (e.g., Lee 2003), there still has been fairly limited scholarly attention to and in-depth analysis of what makes built environments contested, emotional, and political, i.e., the role of collective memory and specific cultural protocols.

Collective memory, acting as the meeting ground between the past and the present, connects the physical world with a gamut of values, cultural, social, individual, and community, and offers insights in the retrospective version of the past through shared frames for understanding. By constructing and sustaining the essence of urban places, collective memory can help us to make intellectual and personal connections with physical landscapes. Meanwhile, a sense of history embedded in collective memory locates us in time and space, "connecting our personal experiences and memories with those of a larger community, region, and nation", as

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<sup>7</sup> See the website for Colonial Williamsburg, <http://www.history.org/Almanack/places/hb/hbslave.cfm>.

<sup>8</sup> Cities such as Beijing and Moscow are typical in this genre.



Glassberg (2001, 7) explains powerfully in his *Sense of History*. He argues that a perspective on the past is at the core of who a community is and the places they care about (Glassberg 2001). Once the interplay of remembering and forgetting is translated into physical form, it makes a fixed and sometimes permanent imprint on the landscapes, which, in turn shapes the public understanding of the past. This mutually evolving process can spark or inhibit collective imagination, and make a strong psychological statement about the past, present, and future. Given different interpretations of the same past, however, the process can be deeply fraught with politics, and often involves emotional conflicts. This is why the meanings of a place evolve with constant negotiations of multiple stakeholders, so instead of sense of place, we deal with senses of place.

Memory shapes our perceptions of urban environments, and the environments help us to remember, re-experience, our histories. “Memory locates us, as part of a family history, as part of a tribe or community, as a part of city-building and nation-making. Loss of memory is, basically, loss of identity” (Sandercock 2003, 402). Dolores Hayden (1995) explores place memory and urban preservation in *The Power of Place*, advocating a fuller historic representation and strong participatory community processes. Following Casey (1987), she argues “place memory encapsulates the human ability to connect with both the built and natural environments that are entwined in the cultural landscape” (Hayden 1995, 46). Boyer also suggests in her *The City of Collective Memory* that urban landscapes should actively systematize collective memory, to evoke “a better reading of the history written across the surface and hidden in forgotten subterrains of the city” (1994, 21). She quoted Maurice Halbwachs (1992) saying,

Now space is a reality that endures, since our impressions rush by, one after another, and leave nothing behind in our mind, we can understand how we can recapture the past only by understanding how it is, in effect, preserved by our physical surroundings. It is to space – the space we occupy, traverse, have continual access to, or can at any time reconstruct in thought and imagination – that we must turn our attention. Our thought must focus on it if this or that category of remembrances is to reappear.” (137-8)

But this individual reflection from seeing or experiencing a building is a fairly weak form of remembering; a stronger, culturally lasting memory requires that we experience and share socially that memory evoked through the built environment. The city and its architecture

Na Li 9/15/2010 8:17 PM

**Comment [1]:** Just want to make sure that this article, by Sandercock, was originally published in 1998, but I quote this from Campbell, Scott, and Susan S. Fainstein. *Readings in Planning Theory*. 2nd ed. Malden, MA, Blackwell Publishers, 2003.

provides a collective set of memory spots that enable people to create meaning to reproduce, recall, and retain their history through informal and collective action. In this line of reasoning, buildings alone cannot preserve memory; the social practice behind it does.

It is to these practices that this essay now turns, first exploring the more general connections between planning and current approaches to preservation, and then turning to contemporary understandings of key characteristics of good preservation process (which is also good planning process).

## PLANNING AND PRESERVATION

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Planning for preservation connects the past, the present, and the future. Mandelbaum (1985) argues that historic reflection is good for planning as a profession. Since planners work within an imperfectly delimited profession and discipline, history has an important function in forming a community identity, as well as broadening the horizon of self-defined groups. Becker's (1932) insight that history is myth making, an unconscious and necessary effort on the part of society to understand what it is doing in the light of what it has done and what it hopes to do, bears particular relevance to preservation planning, given that planners as a group are action-driven and future-oriented. Mandelbaum (2000) explains that the first cognitive act of planners is to impose order upon the future, what do you want of it.

Abbot and Adler (1989) advocate for using historical analysis as a planning tool, arguing that planners can benefit from *thinking historically* in very specific ways – without dwelling in the archives or even immersing themselves in the growing scholarly literature on planning history. Thinking like a historian may equip planners with a sense of time and proportion, or more accurately, a sense of the complexity of issues at hand.<sup>9</sup> This history need not be solely human history; understanding geologic history, for instance, helps to explain why development is where it is and where it can go in the future.

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<sup>9</sup> The sense of complexity that we may gain from studying history can perhaps better be utilized through scenario building than through attempts to produce quantified forecasts. History makes us aware of the interrelations of technical, economic, social, cultural, and political factors. Scenario building in one sense is history in reverse; focused on the future, it utilizes the same combination of disparate pieces of information within a broad context to create an understandable narrative of event ((Abbott and Adler 1989)

Silver suggests that the urban American South affords an exemplary case of historic preservation contributing to the broader processes of planning and revitalization (Silver 1991). He notes that while preservationists in southern cities are often portrayed as “the backward-looking guardians of a vanishing culture” (1991, 69), their deep attachment to the contested and emotionally charged history evoked in their built environment supplied an important justification for city planning and contributed directly to the implementation of planning strategies. Private urban preservation organizations developed the techniques of neighborhood conservation that became the mainstay of publicly backed housing improvement programs in most cities, which according to Silver, provided a valuable counterpoint to the dominant clearance approach to city planning.<sup>10</sup>

Recent economic changes have encouraged the integration of planning and preservation. Cities pursuing the ‘creative class’ (Florida 2006) recognize that uniqueness comes from history and therefore is foundational to local growth. Given this strong connection between economic development, local identity, and historic sense of place, community planning can begin, rather than end, with identification of unique character and strengths (Hester 1994; Hamlin 2006). Thus for reasons both theoretical and practical, historic preservation planning is becoming a closer ally to comprehensive and economic development planning.

### Communicative Democracy

It is because of this complexity of history, its narrative quality and its particularities, its emotional content and economic value, that preservation planning stands to be one of the most communicative of the planning approaches. Done well, it allows for a layered, multi-vocal outcome with many stories told rather than one ‘consensus’ outcome. The process itself can be liberational; Thelen observes that “a *politics* that values active individual engagement over group, ideology, institution may be built by listening for and to the deepest needs that individuals present, in places that presently elude pundits and pollsters, as they use the past to sustain and change the course of their lives and the world” (1998, 207).

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<sup>10</sup> Discourse about preservation planning seems ineffective in defining how preservation is essentially part of planning. The reason may be, as Cofesi and Radtke observed, because the word “planning” is used differently in differently contexts. Please refer to their argument on this in Stipe (2003).

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**Comment [2]:** This quote is from Thelen, though Roy is the co-author.

Doing this, however, is quite difficult. In *Expanding the Language of Planning*, Sandercock (2003) explores how cultural differentiation and change continually reinvent the city, as new immigrants or those who begin to speak up for the first time challenge existing narratives and normative categories. Confronting *otherness* and articulating the cultural values and social identities challenges planners working in culturally diverse communities, but is also an essential part of their role as planners (Umemoto 2001; Thompson 2003). Specific cultural norms, values, and ways of knowing and interpreting form the basis of judgment, and shape the quality of social interaction. So when a planner enters a community, (s)he enters an invisible cultural setting with temporal and spatial significance, culture, history, and memory, collectively, shape and re-shape the interpretive frames.

A second significant challenge is to the culture of professionalism itself. Finding the “truth” in history accords well with the way we are trained as professionals, to interpret, preserve and plan as objectively as possible, weighing different facts and interests to attempt to develop a plan (Dalton 1986). It is deceptively easier to objectify and rationalize historic environments and employ a set of criteria for evaluation and inventory. Seeking an abstract authenticity dilutes our attention to the emotional, messy, sensual, and protean nature of history, ignoring the role that power plays in selecting what to preserve or to demolish. And indeed, as noted above, many community members ask for the “truth” of history (or the plan), and it takes a strong planner indeed to admit that they do not know the truth, that it cannot be revealed, because in a contested situation only “truths” may exist.<sup>11</sup>

In popular history, as well as in some aspects of planning, these truths often emerge as stories. Sandercock (2003) argues that story has a special importance in planning that has neither been fully understood nor sufficiently valued. In order to imagine the space, life and languages of the city, to make them legible, we translate them into narratives. The way we narrate the city becomes constitutive of urban reality, affecting the choices we make, the ways we then might act. She concludes that planning is performed through story in a myriad of ways, in process, as a catalyst for change, as a foundation, in policy, in pedagogy, in explanation and critique as well as

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<sup>11</sup> There are, in addition, challenges that cross into all public communicative processes. Examples include questions such as, what should we do with stakeholders we disagree with, or find reprehensible? How hard should we push regarding stories that victims do not necessarily want told? In the interest of space, we will not seek to answer these, and only suggest that they are appropriate parts of the dialogue in historic preservation planning.

justification of the status quo, and as moral exemplar. Throgmorton (1996) contends that planning itself is an enacted and future-oriented narrative in which the participants are both characters and joint authors; preservation planning would appear to be this, but even more so as the narrative arc encompasses a longer time frame.

Local residents often bring forward their histories as stories, and these provide crucial insight into what a community needs to preserve, and the multiplicity of a site or neighborhood's possible meanings. At its best, this historical story telling can help in forming *open moral communities* that allow multiple stories, diverse and often incommensurable narratives, to emplot both the past and the future (Mandelbaum, 2000). The power of emplotment is subtle, but real. An example is the reinterpretation of history and future undertaken by Deborah and Frank Popper, in the Great Plains, where the story of the Buffalo Commons provides an entirely new vision of a restored, preserved, still working but very different Plains region (Popper and Popper 1987). The local resonance of their proposed narrative of the Buffalo Commons, according to them, is partially from the skill and good luck of finding a highly resonant metaphor to which residents can connect. If this were not appropriate to the residents' history, it would not have that resonance in the first place (Popper and Popper 1999).

But once preservation addresses sites of contests, personal historic and negative as well as positive experience, planning processes need to be much more explicitly concerned with accommodating, allowing, and managing emotions. Forester (1999) and Baum (1999) both pursue this line of thought in exploring how dialogue can be transformative learning. Forester explains that deliberative rituals, brainstorming sessions, or search conferences can be safe places for participants to explore new roles and identities along with new norms and agreements. Forester (1999) is pioneering in demonstrating the *emotional* demands of planning in an ambiguous and politicized world, where emotional sensitivity can work as a source of knowledge and recognition, as well as a moral vision.

People often behave *irrationally* when communicating emotional or contested issues, and they may communicate strategically, presenting issues that are more likely to win converts rather than the issues that lie at the center of their concerns (Hamin 2003). The powerful may have little interest in a real dialogue (Flyvbjerg 2002). Those who have experienced the pain and shame of historical difficulties or oppression may feel neither comfortable nor safe to utter their experience, and their voices abound in inevitable deep emotion. In these processes we are likely

to find, as Abram (2000) rightly argues, that the requirements that Innes (1995) sets for consensus-building process, i.e. the willingness of all parties to put aside power differentials, to be sincere, and to find solutions at the discussion table, are in practice not achievable, since they suggest that either power relations are negligible or interests superficial. In more complex, emotionally and historically fraught situations with diverse publics, moving beyond consensus building may well be necessary. A narrative approach to process management may help overcome these issues and achieve the goals of a culturally sensitive historical preservation that brings forward multiple stories, multiple histories, and assures retention of multiple senses of place.

## CONCLUSION

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Edward Chappell (2007) suggests that preservationists should sharpen their focus on the use of vernacular architecture for public history, because vernacular structures often provide the most tangible evidence for how people lived in the past or live today. This renewed attention to the ordinary and the marginalized can bridge the gap between insiders and outsiders, accommodating the multiple interpretations of history.

A more diverse and inclusive interpretation of history brings a new awareness of what (and who) is invisible in the official representation (Barthel 1996; Page and Manson 2004). Interpreting and preserving the past often involves negotiations and re-negotiations of meanings and values, through signs, symbols, and artifacts, landscapes and narratives, along with political and power struggles. In fact, sites of collective memory extend the temporal and spatial range of communication, and are inevitably situational. “In effect the physical durability of landscapes permits it to carry meaning into the future so as to help sustain memory and cultural traditions” (Foote 2003, 33). The process also can be a personal as well as collective journey of historical inquiry, which assists us in asking more important or urgent questions about the assumed historic truths or the themed cultural landscapes of various scales, whose past and whose memory are we trying to interpret and preserve? Which version of history do we choose to remember or neglect? Landscape-scale vernacular architecture more easily accommodates these multiple stories than a

focus on individual sites of the rich and famous. Including these multiple stories requires a highly participatory public process that builds on local historical narratives.

We acknowledge, however, that these participatory processes may flounder in the face of local culture.<sup>12</sup> Some Asian cultural protocols, for example, such as public respect for and obedience to the elder, the leader, or community gatekeepers, represent barriers to genuine public participation. In these cases in particular, emotional sensitivity based on understanding the power structures and cultural norms within a particular community become critical. Even within the same general culture, the public arrives at planning tables with a variety of agendas, cultural values, and personal priorities, which are often different from what professionals bring. Therefore, the challenge here is two-fold, first, how to communicate and balance the competing values through storytelling, and second, how to accomplish this in culturally diverse settings.

For many less-contested landscapes and preservation initiatives, a participatory process with appropriate changes for local culture may be sufficient (Hamin et al 2007; Hester, 1984). An example is the process recommended by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts for selection of which local landscapes to preserve. Different groups of community residents undertake identification of locally meaningful landscapes, explore why these landscapes matter to them, and then design the practices that can maintain them; a more dedicated stakeholder group with representation from each of these identification groups resolves any conflicts between landscapes identified by the different citizen groups, and develops the coherent plan (Bischoff 2007). This sort of effort can make purists a bit queasy, however, as it can easily move toward a packaging of attractive, even imaginary, 'heritage' for touristic consumption, as described toward the start of this essay. A trained public historian can provide some checks and balances.

In more complex, contested situations, such as sites of trauma or great injustice, planners should move toward a format of storytelling and oral history. In cultures such as the Chinese or the Inuit within which storytelling is the basis for collective memory, providing small venues for storytelling may serve to highlight the different histories and their connections to the built form

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<sup>12</sup> Raymond Williams (1966) explored this pattern in the following aspects, the middle classes over less powerful groups; the male gender and heterosexuality as against women or sexual minorities; majority lifestyles over diverse, multicultural complexities; cities over the countryside, or overarching bioregional realities; the artefacts of high culture – including architecture – over history, archaeology and cultural landscapes; 'settler' culture over indigenous cultures and values in post-colonial settings; in general, 'dominant' culture over the claims of 'residual' or 'emergent' culture. Instead of a broad analysis of integrating culture in different social inquiries, we focus on history and its cultural implications in intangible aspects of urban places.

that are most meaningful for different groups. Making space and time for stories in the public planning process can be a part of regular participation, but it needs a conscious effort on the part of the planners to overcome the habits of more traditional regulatory approaches, and may not reach the most marginalized groups.

Oral histories of marginalized groups provide an academically-tested means of engaging storytelling in the process, and is particularly helpful to those unlikely to speak up in public workshops (Lynd 1993; Hayden 1995; Shopes 2002). Unlike official sources that typically present a single interpretation, the symbolic and intended meaning of oral history makes it accumulative through generations and open to multiple interpretations. This goal requires more time in the field for the planner, or managing volunteers to do the interviews. But giving residents a chance to tell their own stories at their own pace and using their own structure will provide a much richer interpretation of local history than is available through the brief and formally designed frame of an official public meeting (Li 2010).

J.B. Jackson's life-long passion for vernacular landscapes precisely illustrates how a landscape rich in collective memories and history brings personal connection with time and space. "A landscape without visible signs of political history is a landscape without memory or forethought. We are inclined to think that the value of monuments is simply to remind us of origins. They are much more valuable reminders of long-range, collective purpose, of goals and objectives and principles. As such even the least sightly of monuments gives a landscape beauty and dignity and keeps the collective memory alive" (1984, 152).

We began this article by arguing that preservation planning has moved in scale from individual site to neighborhood, farm, and workplace; it has broadened its concern from the elite to the vernacular architecture and landscape; it has become an avenue for economic development, rather than its antithesis. But with all of this comes challenges, including the management, accommodation, and honest treatment of emotional histories. Historic preservation thus becomes in some ways one of the most complicated planning venues, because the value of preservation increases as a site elicits emotions, fragile histories, relationships between communities, people, and the land – all of which make planning fraught. We have tried to illuminate this practice and theory journey, and to suggest the continued development of ways to incorporate stories and storytelling, and connections to planning theory and practice. The intention of contemporary historic preservation is both modest and grand -- to preserve



landscapes that are perhaps less aesthetic yet representative of various periods of urban development, that make an emotional connection with the lives of the community members that lived through their history, and remember their history, in that place. This includes an honest record of the social and environmental disparities among different groups, from the extraordinarily opulent to those of relatively meager means, including a community's injustice, its difficult and troubling chapters. Bringing together public history, historic preservation and participatory planning processes can help us reconnect these disparate points on the urban landscape, critically and reflectively.

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