

Foundation for NPS Cultural Resources Management - Module 1

Introduction to Historic Preservation History and Philosophy

National Park Service
Foundation Body of Knowledge for
Cultural Resource Management

NPS Module #1 Day 1

Introduction to Historic Preservation History and Philosophy

The preservation movement's success hinges on the idea of going beyond saving "occasional historic houses and opening museums...It must attempt to give a sense of orientation to our society, using structures and objects of the past to establish values of time and place" this means the following:

Look beyond individual buildings and structures as isolated landmarks, consider districts, neighborhoods, communities

Go beyond aesthetics and design and architecture to include cultural and historic value

Revise tax policies to encourage preservation

Broaden historic preservation to reflect the heritage of our nation. In order to do that, we need to broaden public support and forge public-private partnerships.

- Conclusions to the Findings, *With Heritage So Rich*, 1966

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National Historic Preservation Act (Public Law 89-665) 1966

Broadened the federal government's concept of preservation to include sites, objects, districts and structures of national, state, and local significance

- Established the National Register of Historic Places, called for the Secretary of the Interior to actually create a list of significant sites and properties worth keeping (areas of significance included American history, architecture, archaeology and culture)

- Established the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, including members of the President's Cabinet and private citizens. They discuss how to treat properties affected by federal dollars or licenses

- Authorized matching grants-in-aid for historic preservation to states and the National Trust for Historic Preservation

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National Environmental Policy Act, 1970

established the environmental impact statement and the fact that there is a continuing federal responsibility to "preserve important historical, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage."

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Tax Incentives for Rehabilitation:

- Tax Reform Act, 1976** established tax incentives for rehabilitation of commercial and income-producing historic properties certified by the secretary of the interior
- Revenue Act, 1978** established investment tax credits for rehabilitation of historic building
- Economic Recovery Tax Act, 1981** established 25% tax credits for rehabilitation of historic buildings
- Tax Reform Act, 1986**, cut back some of the incentives

Instructions: You will now break away from this broadcast into your groups at your own site and respond to the following question:

Based on what you just learned about the history of the movement, characterize the preservation movement during the pre-WWII time period and post-WWII.

Write your comments in two columns.

Think about how the relationship between the public and the private sector has changed over time ?

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Pre- World War II

- **predominantly private sector**
- **women volunteer efforts**
- **individual landmarks, associated with famous men**
- **shrines to patriotic heroes**

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Post- World War II

- **increasingly larger public sector role**
- **women volunteer efforts**
- **focus on context**
- **sites associated with the underrepresented and under-served saved**

DEFINING HISTORIC PRESERVATION

**FINDING A COMMON
LANGUAGE**

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Instructions: We will break away from the broadcast to have you write as best you can your own definition for the commonly used terms listed below --

- What is a Cultural Resource ?
- What is a Historic Preservation Resource?
- What is preservation ?
- What is rehabilitation ?
- What is restoration ?
- What is reconstruction ?
- What is adaptive use ?
- What is conservation/consolidation ?

A Cultural Resource is

an archaeological resource, cultural landscape, structure, museum object or ethnographic resource significant because of its association with American historical, cultural, scientific or technological importance.

An Historic Preservation Resource is

a building, structure, district, site or object that is significant in American history, architecture, archaeology or culture.

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What is preservation ?

The act or process of applying measures to *sustain* the existing form, integrity, and material of a building or structure and the existing form and vegetative cover of a site. It may include initial stabilization work, where necessary, as well as ongoing maintenance of the historic building materials and vegetation.

What is rehabilitation ?

The act or process of returning a property to a state of utility through repair or alteration which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions or features of the property which are significant to its historical, architectural and cultural values

What is restoration ?

The act or process of accurately recovering the form and details of a property and its setting as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of later work or by the replacement of missing earlier work.

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What is reconstruction ?

The act of rebuilding a missing structure using new materials

What is replication ?

Constructing an extant building on a different site using new materials

What is adaptive use ?

Changing the use of a building from its original design

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What is conservation/consolidation ?

The physical intervention in the actual fabric of the building to ensure its integrity, ranging in degree from stabilization to use of replacement materials

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NPS Module #1 DAY 2

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Historic Preservation Resources are defined as:

buildings
sites
districts
structures
objects

Cultural Resources are defined as:

archaeological resources
cultural landscapes
structures
museum objects
ethnographic resources

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Defined for purposes of the National Register, the following categories of historic properties are described as:

building: something constructed principally to act as shelter for any form of human activity (e.g. house, barn, mill building, theater, train station, etc)

site: a location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archaeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure (e.g. battlefield, campsite, rock carving, ceremonial site, etc.

district: a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development

structure: distinguished from "building" in that it is a functional construction created other than to provide shelter for human activity (e.g. bridge, boat, trolley car, windmill, etc.

object: constructions that are primarily artistic in nature or are relatively small in scale and simply constructed. It is usually associated with a specific setting or environment (e.g. mountain, statuary, monument, etc.)

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Defined by the National Park Service as guidelines for Cultural Resource Management, types of resources are described as:

archaeological resources: the remains of past human activity and records documenting the scientific analysis of these remains (e.g. stratified layers of household debris, lab analysis of pollen, etc.)

cultural landscapes: settings we have created in the natural world (e.g. formal garden, cattle ranch, cemeteries, village squares, pilgrimage routes)

structures: material assemblies that extend the limits of human capabilities, including building, bridges, trains and monuments (e.g. temple mounds, fishing vessels, auto factories, bronze statues)

museum objects: manifestations and records of behavior and ideas that span the breadth of human experience and depth of natural history (e.g. a butterfly collection, woven fragments, a prehistoric sandal)

ethnographic resources: basic expressions of human culture and the basis for continuity of cultural systems (e.g. riverbank used as a ceremonial site, schoolhouse associated with Hispanic education, carved ivory from 19th century Alaska, etc.)

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SIGNIFICANCE:

A cultural resource must have important historical, cultural, scientific or technological associations and it must manifest those associations in its physical substance

Historic properties must be evaluated in its historical context based on its association with an event or person, its design or construction and information potential

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As preservationists, how do we *evaluate* the integrity of a property and its historical *value* or *significance*?

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Methodology:

- academic assessment of the historical context, based on discipline or interdisciplinary research
- primary source research and documentation
- measured drawings
- scientific analysis

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Methodology:

- academic assessment of the historical context
 - scholarship based on primary research in an academic discipline or across disciplines
- primary source research and documentation
 - archival materials
- measured drawings and photography
 - field studies, past and present (HABS/HAER standards)
- scientific analysis
 - materials analysis in the laboratory

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Methodology/Research informs planning:

- academic assessment of the historical context
 - determines significance
- primary source research and documentation
 - determines eligibility for protection
- measured drawings and photography
 - creates a lasting record of the property
- scientific analysis
 - determines integrity (conversely, state of decay) and helps to develop the physical intervention strategy

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NPS Condition Assessment using FMSS

The National Park Service developed a kind of scientific method for evaluating historic resources (or Heritage Assets), intending to apply an *objective analysis to prioritize spending of limited financial resources* called the FMSS (Facility Management Software System)

- an API or Asset Priority Index is established -- the measurable importance of a resource as it relates to the park's mission
- FCI or Facility Condition Index is established based on a ratio of deficiencies to replacement value
- The relationship of the API to the FCI determines a priority level, which is in turn used to determine funding

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Planning leads to stewardship:

Simply stated, *cultural resource management guidelines* encourage the path that incurs the slowest rate of decay and least impact on the resource while still allowing for public access

Simply stated, *preservationists* try to develop a path of least intervention and reversibility if possible

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Consider the statement in your reading assignment in "Cultural Resource Management Guideline: Chapter 1

The **Function** of Cultural Resource Management is to

preserve, protect and conserve the material aspects of cultural resources

The **Value** of those resources is to.

enliven, enrich and inform

Cultural Resources should provide a type of collective and personal orientation to the past and provide inspiration

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Here is a list of 6 NPS sites that should be recognizable to all of us. They should in one way or another *orient* us to the broader continuum of our history and culture and *inspire* us.

- The Liberty Bell
- Little Rock Central High School
- USS Arizona
- Little Big Horn Battlefield
- Gettysburg Battlefield
- The Wright Brothers National Memorial

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Instructions: You will now break away from the broadcast into a group discussion to complete your assignment as follows:

Step 1: Write a brief description of the site, including its history and significance and why you **personally** value the site as an important part of of the National Park System.

Step 2: As a **group**, number the sites sequentially in order of importance, #1 being the most significant

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National Park Sites:

- The Liberty Bell
- Little Rock Central High School
- USS Arizona
- Little Big Horn Battlefield
- Gettysburg Battlefield
- The Wright Brothers National Memorial

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We have now been asked by the federal government to “de-accession” one of these sites. We need to figure this out as a group and come to some sort of consensus.

- The Liberty Bell
- Little Rock Central High School
- USS Arizona
- Little Big Horn Battlefield
- Gettysburg Battlefield
- The Wright Brothers National Memorial

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Cultural resources help provide a setting in which cultural diversity is viable and individual potential can be realized; they help bring us together in a spirit of appreciation of the past in order to better meet the challenges of tomorrow.

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Assignment: take a few minutes to write your personal reactions to one of the following quotes about preserving our built environment...

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1. Peter Eisenmann, architect and theorist, analogy of an arrow:
An arrow at rest is simply an object, but an arrow in motion is part of a much richer story, for it has both a shooter and a target. How can we understand the arrow without understanding where it began and where it is going? Its current position, as portrayed in the drawing, is but a small part of the story, and much of the meaning is lost without knowing the larger context of time and place.

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2. Philip Johnson, architect:
Preservation is 'rather a phony movement' for it tries to restrict changes rather than encourage it

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3. Adele Chatfield-Taylor at a talk given at Columbia University:
...It is our increasing lack of access to a familiar world that has generated a hunger for the sight and touch of a gritty reality that old buildings provide – and not impenetrably preserved, bionic old buildings, but buildings that have registered the imprint of the passage of time. Old buildings that are a time line, old buildings that are real...

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4. Clem Labine, publisher of *Traditional Building* magazine
...preservation is really un-American...the fact is that preservation goes against the basic historical thrust that built America into a world power. America was built on the concept of the frontier. Land was limitless. Resources were never-ending. The pioneer way was to use it up, throw it away and move west...Preservationists oppose the conventional American idea of consuming ever more. We are actually the new wave of pioneer. We are struggling to reverse the 'use it up and move on' mentality...We are cleaning up after society's litterbugs.

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**WHY
PRESERVE?**


