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# MANHATTAN/RILEY COUNTY PRESERVATION ALLIANCE NEWSLETTER

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JANUARY/FEBRUARY, 2008

## A LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT LINDA GLASGOW

The mission of the Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance is to engage the community in the active preservation of its historic resources by promoting historic preservation in the community and surrounding area; enhancing economic development through historic preservation; and educating the community as to the cultural importance of historic preservation.

In keeping with its mission, the Preservation Alliance has been an active participant in the downtown redevelopment debate. The Alliance paid to print an informational insert that reached 8,500 subscribers to **The Manhattan Mercury** on January 17th. Members also wrote letters to the editor, attended City Hall meetings, and were represented by speakers at public meetings.

The Alliance thanks Commissioner Jim Sherow and Commissioner Bob Strawn for their unwavering support and respect for the community's vision for downtown redevelopment.

At the beginning of the new year it seemed appropriate for me to re-read the book I recommend to all beginning preservationists: **The Economics of Historic Preservation, A Community Leader's Guide** by Donovan Rypkema, published by the National Trust for Historic Preservation in 1994.

The book begins with Rypkema's personal definition of historic preser-

vation: "the careful management of a community's historic resources; avoidance of wasted resources by careful planning and use; the thrifty use of those resources. To use or manage those historic resources with thrift or prudence; to avoid their waste or needless expenditure; to reduce expenses through the use of those historic resources."

Rypkema makes the case that saving historic buildings shouldn't be thought of as a luxury or a frill. Historic preservation is fundamentally concerned with wise stewardship and fiscal responsibility.

What does Rypkema have to say to Manhattan? "The downtown most clearly reflects a community's evolution, history, diversity, and differentiation from anywhere else." In other words, as Manhattan's downtown advances into the north redevelopment area, we should be embracing the one unique, historic element left to us—the Phillipena Strasser House.

Until recently the Strasser House, built in 1874, served as a pleasant two-unit residence. As the lone survivor of its historic neighborhood, the house is now looking especially forlorn. What are its prospects?

The amended PUD marginalizes the house in a too-small space against a tall wall at the back of an enormous supermarket. Parking is limited. Without the resources needed to produce an income sufficient for mainte-

nance and upkeep, the house will be subject to "demolition by neglect." Demolition by any means precludes all other options for the building.

Looking at historic preservation as a tourism strategy, Rypkema writes that "historic resources are among the strongest community assets for attracting visitors." If this community is truly interested in attracting visitors from beyond its borders, great historic resources such as the Strasser House need to be promoted rather than marginalized.

"Real estate is an intensively interrelated asset. Most of its value comes from beyond the property boundaries." Manhattan's historic buildings offer more charm, appeal, and value than any generic fake stucco, strip mall configured buildings ever could.

"Thriving downtowns share two characteristics: 1) They are the center of interactions for the entire community, and 2) there is a sense of downtown ownership by the entire community, independent of who the deed holders happen to be."

The Manhattan community understands this and has been extremely vocal in support of a shared vision for downtown—on the editorial page, on the Internet, at City Hall, and on every street corner.

Manhattan must now decide on the path to the downtown of its dreams—or nightmares—and on who will lead it there.

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## Looking West on Poyntz: What Year Was It?



This photo, courtesy of the **Riley County Historical Society**, depicts the good old days, before Manhattan discovered strip malls. “Main street” was an agreed-upon convention of buildings that faced each other across a spacious thoroughfare that accommodated both vehicles and pedestrians (plus the occasional parade.) Local businesses were allowed to own their own land and erect their own buildings. Eminent domain was reserved for worthy public uses only.

The Historical Society’s best guess is that the photo dates from around 1953.

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## December's Winter Social

The Alliance celebrated another successful year of shared purpose with a white tablecloth and candlelight potluck dinner at Manhattan’s Union Pacific Depot on the evening of December 17th.

Bonnie Lynn-Sherow, Dixie West, and their helpers transformed the Depot into an elegant dining hall. Thanks to all who attended and who provided the communal feast.

The purpose of our social events is to provide members with the opportunity to get to know each other better and to share their thoughts on historic preservation in an informal, small-group setting.

Attendees were fortified not only by the food but also by a renewed sense of common cause that we take with us into the new year. Thanks again to all who participated.

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# Historic Preservation and Sustainability

By Barbara G. Anderson

Assistant Professor, Department of Apparel, Textiles & Interior Design, Kansas State University

**“Preservation was one of the swiftest, most complete cultural revolutions ever, yet because it happened everywhere at once, without controversy or charismatic leadership, it never got the headlines of its sibling, the environmental movement. Also its reward cycle was much quicker, and therefore quieter, than environmentalists could count on.”** Stewart Brand, *How Buildings Learn: What Happens After They’re Built*, 1994 by Viking Press, p 88.

**“We cannot *build* our way to sustainability; we must *conserve* our way to it.”** Carl Elefante, “The Greenest Building Is...One That Is Already Built,” *Forum Journal* 21, no. 4 (2007), p 27.

The environmental movement is having a profound impact on the way we think about our future. The issues of environmental, economic, and social responsibility are regularly in the media.

For those of you not quite sure what ‘sustainability’ means, The World Commission on Environment and Development defines sustainability as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”<sup>1</sup>

Achieving sustainability will take a revolution in how we live and the changes that are necessary will affect all of us. This column grew out of my interest in how the preservation movement might change as we work to create a sustainable future.

The historic preservation movement is known for its interest in preserving the cultural meaning found in buildings and places. In my experience the preservation movement has long been concerned with environmental issues. I suppose this is a result of when I was exposed to historic preservation, that was in the late 1970s when environmentalism was an up-and-coming movement. At that time Gary Coates, a Professor in the College of Architecture, Planning and Design, taught me that design professionals had a major

responsibility to address environmental concerns.

As students of architecture, we were required to read some of the great books that founded the sustainability movement including *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold and *Design With Nature* by Ian L. McHarg. We learned to design passive-solar and active-solar buildings. We learned about composting toilets and how closed-loop water systems worked. Without any doubt my understanding that historic preservation and environmentalism went hand-in-hand was because Bernd Foerster, then Dean of the College of Architecture, Planning and Design, taught me to think about **all** of the positive impacts of preserving historic places.

It is curious to me that most people in the United States do not recognize that historic preservation and the environmental movement have common and complementary goals.<sup>2</sup> Increasing numbers of preservation professionals are recognizing the importance of sustainability and are attempting to help integrate green design strategies into historic preservation standards and preservation philosophy into green building standards.

There is a current effort to address changes in both the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Rating

System (LEED) criteria established by the U.S. Green Building Council and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties so that they can be used together in greater harmony.<sup>3</sup>

There are many reasons to preserve existing buildings and neighborhoods. Consider the following sustainable outcomes of historic preservation and historic preservation philosophy:

1. Every building preserved and reused is one less building sent to the landfill. It is easy to see how reducing demolition of whole buildings accomplishes this goal. However, when preservation methods are applied to the reuse of existing buildings we don’t gut the interior of the building to the structural shell so that we can redesign and rebuild from “a blank canvas”. This also keeps building materials from ending up in landfills. No matter how you choose to do it, building reuse has a significant impact on **reducing waste**.

2. Reuse of existing buildings retains the **embodied energy** which has been described as “...the sum of all the energy required to extract, process, deliver, and install the materials needed to construct a building.”<sup>4</sup> Obviously preservation is among the wisest and most conservative ways to use our natural resources. It is also one of the

wisest ways to use the human resources that were invested by people in the past for our benefit and for the benefit of future generations.

3. Historic preservation plays an economic role that is significant in assuring both economic and social equity. Historic neighborhoods provide *affordable housing* and do it in a way that encourages economic diversity among neighbors.<sup>5</sup>

4. Historic preservation has a greater *impact on the local economy* than new construction because there is more labor (local source) and less material (not usually local sources) used in historic preservation projects.<sup>6</sup>

5. Historic preservation enhances *property values* and attracts *heritage tourists*.<sup>7</sup>

6. Preservation enhances *quality of life* and human health and well-being because it reduces sprawl and strengthens community, cultural continuity, beauty, and sense of place.<sup>8</sup>

- Human scale in planning and design enhances beauty, promotes human relationships by creating living patterns that promote interaction, and promotes human health through greater physical activity and less reliance on the automobile than in most U. S. communities planned since the 1950s.
- Historic buildings and districts provide a tangible connection to past generations and an active means of meeting social/cultural obligations to current and future generations.

7. Historic buildings built before World War II typically used *low-technology and low-energy* approaches to create human comfort. Historic buildings used thermal mass (in the Flint Hills region of Kansas we built with native limestone), shading devices (mostly porches in this part of the U.S.), natural ventilation and natural lighting (mostly in the design and placement of doors and windows) to great positive effects. To enhance our potential for reuse of existing buildings

and our goal for sustainability, these low-technology approaches should be understood and retained, as appropriate, in the work of adapting historic buildings to contemporary uses.<sup>9</sup>

8. *Design for disassembly and repair* has been the traditional way of building—that is until the twentieth century when labor became more expensive than materials and thus it was easier to think of assemblies and components as “maintenance-free” until replaced. Preservationists continue to place a much higher value on repair than replacement. William McDonough and Michael Braungart popularized design for disassembly and repair as an appropriate approach for the sustainability movement in their book *Cradle to Cradle: Remaking the Way We Make Things*.

9. Preservationists are experts at *taking the long view in decision-making* and those who aspire to create a sustainable built environment could learn from the preservation movement’s principled philosophy of intergenerational responsibility.<sup>10</sup>

10. To their credit, historic preservationists have been those in our communities that focused on *cultural continuity* through gradual and incremental, rather than rapid and drastic, change. Ironically this has been one of the greatest values of the historic preservation movement but it will have to be the thing that changes quickly if preservationists are going to work cooperatively with those seeking to make existing buildings more sustainable.

There is a huge opportunity for preservationists in the sustainability movement. As with so many opportunities, this one lies within what appears to be significant conflict between the goals of environmentalist and the goals of preservationists. First and foremost, we need a relatively quick cultural change in how we do almost everything related to the built environment to achieve sustainability. It is imperative that new technologies be accepted by preservationists and/or

adapted to historic properties more quickly than they have been in the past.

While preservationists are extremely careful about the technologies and materials they use in historic preservation projects, they are not accustomed to basing decisions **primarily** on efficiency of performance. However efficiency is the hallmark of the sustainability movement. Preservationists are known for their focus on visual character and not so well known for their concern for material preservation, physical integrity, and authenticity. For all the years I have worked with historic buildings it has been of the utmost importance that material treatment decisions be based on the *scientific evidence of long-term consequences*. Preservationists base decisions on both chemical and physical compatibility and reversibility. Preservationists must appreciate and include in their decision-making processes the evidence-based design decisions regarding efficiency of performance that are used in the sustainability movement.<sup>11</sup>

Preservationists will need to accept high-technology solutions to renewable energy such as photovoltaic roofing—not great big solar collectors atop roofs or in back yards like we saw in the 1970s—simply solar-energy collecting systems integrated into the surfaces of new roofing materials. Preservationists made accommodations for new technology in the past. For example we installed mechanical heating systems in buildings that originally had only fireplaces. Unlike the gradual acceptance of mechanical heating (and air-conditioning) systems in historic buildings, the transition to renewable energy may be accomplished rather quickly—over several years not several decades.

For preservationists to accommodate change more quickly than in the past they will have to understand and appreciate sustainability’s aims. Preservationists will need to work with

those who seek to make our built environment support sustainable living.

I believe we are at the beginning of a new age for the preservation movement. This new age will be a time when we work cooperatively with those who are attempting to make our ways of living sustainable. For the last 25 years preservationists have been

shifting their focus from preserving significant individual buildings one-by-one to a process of preserving cultural landscapes—that is preserving by thinking in a holistic way of the built environment *and* the natural environment. **If preservationists could move toward an acceptance of historic preservation as a process that wisely man-**

**ages the change of places—rather than a process of protecting individual buildings or districts from change, the aims of historic preservation and sustainability would likely find greater common ground leading to both compatibility and shared success.**

## END NOTES

1. *Our Common Future* Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987 Published as Annex to General Assembly Document A/42/427 Development and International Co-operation: Environment August 2, 1987 Retrieved November 27, 2007 <http://www.un-documents.net/wced-ocf.htm>

2. It is especially curious that Europeans see the interdependency of historic preservation and sustainability, but we don't. Donovan Rypkema wrote an excellent article on this topic: "Economics, Sustainability, and Historic Preservation" *Forum Journal* Vol. 20, No. 2 (Winter 2006): 27-38.

3. A coalition of preservation and sustainability professionals and organizations has emerged, see the following:

James J. Malanaphy III, "NTHP Sustainable Preservation Coalition Meeting with USGBC," in *AIA Preservation Architect: The Newsletter of The Historic Resources Committee*, July 25, 2007. <[http://www.aia.org/nwsltr\\_hrc.cfm?pagename=hrc\\_a\\_20070725\\_nthp](http://www.aia.org/nwsltr_hrc.cfm?pagename=hrc_a_20070725_nthp)> (23 August 2007)

John D. Lesak, "APT and Sustainability: The Halifax Symposium," *APT Bulletin: Journal of Preservation Technology* 36, no. 4 (2005): 3-4.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, published by the US Government <<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/rhb/stand.htm>> (23 August 2007)

4. Mike Jackson, "Embodied Energy and Historic Preservation: A Needed Reassessment," *APT Bulletin: Journal of Preservation Technology* 36, no. 4 (2005): 47.

5. Donovan D. Rypkema, "Historic Preservation and Affordable Housing: The Missed Connection," *Forum Journal* Vol. 17, No. 3 (Spring 2003): 4-19.

6. Donovan D. Rypkema, "The Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader's Guide," Second Edition, 2005, National Trust for Historic Preservation.

7. Ibid.

8. Donovan D. Rypkema, "Economics, Sustainability, and Historic Preservation" *Forum Journal* Vol. 20, No. 2 (Winter 2006): 27-38.

9. Baird M. Smith, "Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings," Preservation Brief #3, National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior <<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief03.htm>> (23 August 2007)

10. David Lowenthal, "Stewarding the Future" CRM Vol. 2, No.2, Summer 2005

<[http://crmjournal.cr.nps.gov/02\\_viewpoint\\_sub.cfm?issue=Volume%20%20Number%20%20Summer%202005&page=1&seq=2](http://crmjournal.cr.nps.gov/02_viewpoint_sub.cfm?issue=Volume%20%20Number%20%20Summer%202005&page=1&seq=2)> (23 August 2007)

11. I was fortunate to work with Stefanie Hetzke on her thesis for a Master of Historic Preservation, University of Maryland in August, 2007. Her unpublished thesis "Green Preservation: Linking Cultural & Environmental Sustainability Practices" addresses this issue well.

# *What's Happening at the Hulse—Daughters House*

## *617 Colorado*

*By Bonnie Lynn-Sherow*

Given the fact that the Preservation Alliance played a pivotal role in saving the Hulse-Daughters house from demolition, Jim and I thought we would update you on the restoration progress so far.

At the time the Alliance gained ownership of 617 Colorado, the structure had not been lived in for two decades. By April, 2007, a full assessment of the house was done and the damage caused by neglect was considerable.

The most pressing issues were structural. The porch was determined to be beyond repair and was demolished. Unfortunately, shortly after taking possession of the house, the interior chimneys and fireplaces collapsed on the west side of the house causing some damage to the fireplace mantels and mirrors.

Stone masons skilled in restoration were set to work on redoing the entire chimney using stone salvaged from the 1930s porch piers and repointing and rebuilding every stone wall in the house, inside and out. This work took the better part of four months, from May to August.

Today the chimneys and stone work are in better condition and safer than they were at the time of original construction in 1892. As our mason Scott said, "if there was a tornado, I'd sit in the fireplace!"

While the stone masons worked on repairing the walls, Jim and his crew worked on digging out the cellar for a new poured concrete floor. Successive floods and old gravel and concrete had built up over decades, making it necessary to dig the floor out as much as 14 inches in some places. All of that dirt and rock and debris then found its way outside in 5 gallon buckets--one at a time.

We made a little "monks mound" in the backyard (for you archeological gurus out there) that Master Landscape helped us to level at the end of the project.

Of course, lots of planning happens at this stage of a restoration and we kept Mike Mecseri pretty busy with drawing floor plans and elevations for every portion of the house.

Once we had the plans in place, a new water and sewer line was laid beneath the cellar floor and the main lines were located. Temporary electrical service was set up for the workers and a new geo thermal heating and cooling system was designed for the house. In the meantime, all of the old systems were

taken out and the window sills were restored in place and storms installed.

The most visible restoration from the street is the front door. Jim worked for weeks on the original front door, stripping the numerous layers of paint and varnish, putting in veneer patches, filling holes and sanding and sanding!

The end result is simply spectacular with a new coat of exterior paint and a beautiful oak interior side. We installed an antique brass knob and reproduction deadbolt and

hinges. It felt good to really "finish" one of the finer details as inspiration for all the intricate work to come.

Finally, there has been lots of paperwork to do for the National Parks Service and the State Historical Society to secure the federal and state tax credits that will be crucial to financing this project. We are very fortunate indeed to live in Kansas and to be able to take advantage of these credits.

There will be an opportunity for those who are interested in seeing the progress for themselves once the project is a little farther along.

Bonnie Lynn-Sherow and her husband, Jim, are historians at Kansas State University. Each is a past-president of the Preservation Alliance. Jim currently serves on the Manhattan City Commission. They operate the Shortridge House Bed and Breakfast, "an historic house in the heart of Manhattan," at 529 Pierre.



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## *Remembering Angelo C. Garzio*

Angelo Charles Garzio, master potter and KSU Distinguished Graduate Professor of Art, died Sunday, January 20, at the Meadowlark Hills Retirement Community. A resident of Manhattan for more than 50 years, he was 85.

Ange was born July 22, 1922, in a small village in Italy. His father immigrated to Syracuse, New York, and worked to earn enough money to allow Ange and his mother to join him in 1929.

After being educated in Syracuse public schools, Ange enlisted in the New York National Guard in 1939 and the U.S. Army Air Force in 1942. He flew in B-26 bombers in WW II's Pacific Theater and was honorably discharged in 1945. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1956, one of his proudest moments.

Using the G.I. Bill, Ange earned degrees in Library Science and in Music, Art, and Literature from Syracuse

University.

In 1950 Ange returned to Italy to study art history at the University of Florence, receiving the Diploma di Proffito. Back in the U.S. he studied art history at the University of Chicago and later transferred to the University of Iowa where he received a Master of Arts degree in 1954.

It was at the University of Iowa that Ange took a course in ceramics from Professor Glen Nelson, one of the leaders in reviving pottery as an art form in America. Ange fell in love with pottery and at the end of the semester took first prize in the Iowa Arts and Crafts Show. He completed his MFA in ceramics at the University of Iowa in 1955.

Before coming to Kansas State University in 1957, Ange was a Guest Potter at the famous Arabia Potteries in Helsinki, Finland, marking the beginning of his international reputation as

a Master Potter. His pottery has been exhibited regionally, nationally, and internationally.

The stark beauty of the Flint Hills resonated deeply within Ange. He spent long hours on his farm near Riley where tree farming and land preservation became his passions.

He also had a passion for teaching and he remained in the classroom until the age of 70. He maintained close relationships with many of his former students through the years, and would speak of them with great pride and fondness.

Ange supported many organizations in the Manhattan area, among them the Manhattan/Riley County Preservation Alliance. In 2007 Ange provided the Alliance with a no-interest bridge loan to help rescue the house at 617 Colorado, now on the National Register of Historic Places.

Addio, Angelo. You will be missed.