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Abstract

History of the built environment in the United States is short in comparison to that of other countries around the world. Nevertheless, that history is a valuable part of the country’s identity, and retaining elements from all parts of that history is worthwhile. Such a thought would be unheard of two centuries ago when preservation efforts focused on patriotic nostalgia. It wasn’t until the 20th century that the inherent values of architecture began to receive some accolades. Only recently has any value been placed on older buildings that have little inherent architectural value. The question becomes how to treat such buildings in today’s environment. Retaining only a fragment was once a common practice, but is this still a valid approach today?
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Introduction

William J. Murtagh, author of *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America*, asks, “How can a nation without a past have anything to preserve?” Compared to the ancient monuments of Greece, the cities of the Roman Empire, or the Mayan temples in Mexico, the United States represents a mere fraction of the human history of the world. Despite what Murtagh says, the United States does indeed have a past. Just because it is not 5,000 years old does not mean it is irrelevant to today’s society.

Protection of historic structures in the United States began nearly 200 years ago. In the years since, the preservation movement has matured and progressed through several stages. Early preservation efforts surrounded important figures and events in history. The focus shifted to exemplary works of architecture in the late 19th and 20th century. More recently, with the passing of important legislation, entire neighborhoods can be protected from untimely destruction. Despite the increase in protection measures, there are still many vulnerable buildings in today’s cities. Old buildings that aren’t superb examples of period architecture are falling to the wrecking ball, and few people take much notice. This is not unlike the disregard placed on 19th century neighborhoods during the urban renewal campaigns of the middle 20th century, or the destruction of valuable architectural works throughout the 1800s.

The question becomes how to preserve such structures, and is it really worth it to do so? The theories of historic preservation do not normally deal with the common but aged building. They focus more on structures that have already had historic value assigned to them, not those that are still standing precariously in today’s environment. However, such theories still apply, even if that was not originally intended. Alois Riegl makes an analogy that describes the nature of common aged buildings very well. Riegl equates them with “…secondary literary monument[s] like a scrap of paper with a brief and insignificant note.” Riegl describes these old scraps of paper as being rather insignificant in their own right, but their value increases as other more significant artifacts are

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lost. There are also arguments as to just what imparts value. Some value the representation of passage through
time, as evidenced by wear and deterioration on the building. Others value old buildings as records of a bygone era of architecture, or with associations to historic events or persons. By looking at where the value of a structure lies, it becomes apparent that only certain parts of a building may need to be saved.

Sometimes only a small fragment of a building is retained, such as an exemplary interior room, or a decorative entrance portal. Other times a façade is deconstructed and moved to a new site, where it is incorporated into a new building. Yet other projects involve keeping one, or even several, façades in situ while constructing a new facility behind them. Some of these projects are more successful than others, either through their overall approach or implementation. Due to the failures of several projects, this approach has fallen out of favor.

The history of the preservation movement shows that there is a prevailing trend towards increasing the number of buildings that are deemed historical. The theories of preservation also show that the retention of old yet unremarkable (or common) buildings is still valuable for a city. These aged but common buildings are valuable historical resources that can be protected yet still allow for continued growth of the areas they occupy.
History

Introduction

William J. Murtagh’s statement, “How can a nation without a past have anything to preserve?” illustrates the struggle the United States faces in regards to preservation. Compared to other parts of the world, the few hundred years of building in the United States represent a mere blink of the eye in the timeframe of human history. However, at least in relative terms, the history of the United States is indeed valid, as well as that of any other country who is not so fortunate as to have thousands of years of history. The question then is, what is it that we preserve for the future? Kevin Lynch poses this question rather succinctly.

What pieces of the environment should we attempt to reconstruct or preserve, and what are the warrants for historical treatment? Are we looking for evidence of the climactic moments or for any manifestation of tradition we can find, or are we judging and evaluating the past, choosing the more significant over the less, retaining what we think of as best? Should things be saved because they were associated with important persons or events? Because they are unique or nearly so or, quite the contrary, because they were most typical of their time? Because of their importance as a group symbol? Because of their special usefulness as sources of intellectual information about the past? Or should we simply (as we most often do) let chance select for us and preserve for a second century everything that has happened to survive the first?

To better understand the answers to these questions in today’s world, it is necessary to understand how they have been answered in the past. Learning from the mistakes and triumphs of preservation efforts in the past leads to a greater understanding of why certain procedures are followed today.

Early Motives: Independence Hall and the Mt. Vernon Ladies’ Association

The fascination with, if not the preservation of, old structures has existed since pre-revolutionary times. It wasn’t until after the Revolutionary War, however, that efforts were made to actively protect important buildings and sites. In 1789, the Massachusetts Historical Society was formed. The example that was set led to approximately 78 similar societies being established by the Centennial of 1876. The first restoration project in the country took place in Newport, Rhode Island, however the restoration of Philadelphia’s Old State House (Independence Hall), which took place shortly thereafter, marks the first intervention on a well-known landmark.

³ Murtagh, 25.
⁵ Murtagh, 25.
By the time the national capitol was under construction in Washington, D.C., the Old State House was threatened with demolition. The tower, which had deteriorated beyond repair, was removed in 1790. In the late 1820s, work began on replacing the missing tower, and it set an important precedent for design decisions regarding historic structures. “In 1828, William Strickland, architect of the neoclassical Second Bank of the United States and the Philadelphia Merchants Exchange Building, designed the current State House tower in the Georgian style. This is usually considered the first known instance in the United States of an architect sublimating the current design idiom in which he would have been expected to work in favor of what would have been an outdated style for his time.”

Strickland’s decision to forego the prevailing stylistic preference of the time represents an important shift in the ideas of how to treat old buildings. It was common in the 18th and 19th centuries for homes to have their style updated to reflect current tastes. Strickland was able to restrain himself from following the design trends of the time in favor of historic authenticity. The goal of the project was to return the building to a past state, removing examples of later interventions. However, the reason for restoring the building to this state were not architectural. According to W. Brown Morton, III, “Those who rose to save the building stressed its continued utility but backed up that argument with an appeal to historical associations. ‘The spot...is hallowed...by many strong and impressive recollections.’ It was not the architecture but the associative historical values that saved Independence Hall.” This was an important project because of the historical events that took place there. The notion of protecting buildings for this reason permeated preservation practices throughout much of the 19th century. A building was saved from destruction not because of the inherent value of the building itself, but because of the historical associations with important events or persons.

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6 Murtagh, 27.
The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association of the Union, founded by Ann Pamela Cunningham goes along with the philosophies laid out at Independence Hall. This association of women was created for the express purpose of saving George Washington’s Virginia plantation from destruction by neglect or demolition. According to Charles B. Hosmer, Jr., “The oldest of the major preservation organizations was certainly the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association of the Union. The group achieved its first major goal at the outbreak of the Civil War, when it took over the Washington estate and operated it as a historic shrine.” Mt. Vernon itself isn’t a remarkable work of architecture. While it is a large and stately plantation house, its continued building history shows through with asymmetrical window placement, odd proportions, and an overall lack of high design principles. Many preservation efforts throughout the rest of the 19th century followed this same line of thinking. Murtagh describes the motives in this period as being complex. He says, “Not only were we as a people using historic shrines to assert our legitimacy in an international community of venerable nations, but also, as individuals and groups, we looked to associative history for reassurance.” The buildings that were preserved at this time were not looked upon as examples of great architecture, and as was already mentioned about Mt. Vernon, several were not anyway. That is not to say shrines of this sort are necessarily bad. However, it created problems in properly representing the full history of a building. According to Morton, “There are several inherent dangers in patriotic preservation motivations. There is the tendency to focus only on the sites and buildings of transcendent national historical importance. Those sites and buildings, because of their associations with the life of one person or one outstanding event, are often stripped of all traces of later history.” Since patriotic fervor was the impetus for projects involving old buildings like Mt. Vernon or Independence Hall, it was important for those restoring those buildings to put them back to a state that represents them at the time their patron was living there, or the time the important events took place. Essentially, it means picking a specific time to transport the building back to, thus removing any traces of intervention made after that time. This helped buildings suffering from neglect, but it would be a philosophy fraught with controversy later on, in places like Williamsburg, Virginia.

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9 Murtagh, 30.
10 Morton, 150.
Changing Philosophies: SPNEA and Williamsburg

It wasn’t until the Centennial Exposition in 1876 when when attitudes towards the preservation of buildings began to shift away from the historic shrine paradigm. Examples of colonial furniture and architecture drew a good measure of attention during the exposition. The interest that was generated influenced the emergence of colonial revival architecture which has prevailed, at least in residential designs, to this very day. Later on, around the turn of the 20th century, some important projects were undertaken, and preservation societies were formed around the basis of architectural preservation, rather than mere patriotic nostalgia. One good example of this trend is the restoration of Paul Revere’s Boston house. “Although associatively significant, the house attracted equal attention because it was the city’s oldest surviving frame building. Restoration to what was thought to be its earliest appearance emphasized the importance of architectural merit over purely patriotic impulses.”\(^{11}\) Shortly thereafter, William Sumner Appleton, who was an active supporter of the Revere House campaign, founded the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA). According to Hosmer, “One of the most significant developments in the history of the preservation movement was the formation of the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities by William Sumner Appleton in 1910. This organization added three new factors to existing localized efforts: a regional organization that attempted to cover preservation in six states, a definite shift in focus from patriotism to architecture, and the first full-time preservationist in twentieth-century America.”\(^{12}\) This society focused less on pedigrees, bloodlines, and heroes, and more on aesthetics and important examples of New England architecture.

In the 1920s and 1930s a project in Williamsburg, Virginia took the preservation movement to a new level. Rather than focusing on just one, or even a few buildings, an entire town was being put back to an historic state. Not only were all buildings after a certain date removed, but long ago destroyed structures were reconstructed. Colonial Williamsburg was the first effort at creating a living museum, where not only were historic structures restored to their original state (or as close to it as they could determine), but actors portrayed the lifestyle of the

\(^{11}\) Murtagh, 31.
\(^{12}\) Hosmer, 133.
time as they believed it to be. This approach allowed people to experience the town as it was in colonial days, rather than as a static museum filled with artifacts. William Archer Rutherfoord (W. A. R.) Goodwin was instrumental in bringing such a large-scale project to light, with the help of funding from John D. Rockefeller, Jr. In much the same way that Independence Hall and Mt. Vernon were put back to a state that represented a specific time of importance, Williamsburg was returned to its colonial state. The decision to essentially freeze the state of the town at the year 1769 created problems along as well as benefits. Any buildings that were built after 1769 were removed. This led to the demolition of several buildings with historical significance, but because of the strict date imposed on the project, they were deemed extraneous. This lead to a layer of the town’s history being removed, thus diminishing the value of Williamsburg as a living community. However, the aim was not to maintain Williamsburg as a historic neighborhood existing in modern times, it was to be a living museum of colonial days. Therefore, along with the removal of all buildings after 1769, additions to pre-1769 buildings were removed too. The final component of this project was reconstructing colonial buildings that had been removed earlier. The importance of certain buildings in understanding the layout and function of the town necessitated this approach. However, due to poor records, and an almost complete lack of remaining physical fabric, the reconstruction of such buildings could not be guaranteed as accurate. Indeed, several aspects of Williamsburg have been found to be inaccurate, from the design of certain reconstructed buildings, to the overly light paint schemes. Nevertheless, these later additions and inaccuracies have become a part of the history of the town as well. Removing inaccurate reconstructed buildings would deprive the town of yet another layer of history.

13 Hosmer, 11-12.
Early Historic Districts: Charleston, South Carolina

Around the time that Williamsburg was being reworked, another very important event was taking place. As Hosmer says, “Throughout the 1930s and 1940s historical groups began to unite for the first time to save whole districts in a number of cities and small towns. Few people before World War I had appreciated enough the signs of continuous growth that formed the urban landscape to try to save them.” In 1931, the city of Charleston, South Carolina became the first in the country to establish a historic district with regulatory control over the properties contained within.

To counter a threat from outsiders, who were dismantling many of the beautiful Charleston houses, local citizens and planners established a historic zoning ordinance in 1931, even though it had no legal precedent and was established without enabling legislation. A board of architectural review, which had authority to review exterior changes to buildings within the district and to issue certificates of appropriateness if such changes were deemed acceptable, was also established. Without legal basis for this review authority, the regulatory district was viable largely because it had general community support.

What is interesting about the protection measures in Charleston is that most of the buildings covered by the ordinance were houses. While several were stately residences of the well-to-do, many of them were fairly common for the city. New Orleans, Louisiana created a similar district shortly after Charleston, following some of the principles set out in South Carolina. Charleston’s ordinance became the basis upon which several successive historic districts were created throughout the rest of the country. Today, many cities like Baltimore, Maryland and Savannah, Georgia, as well as newer cities like Los Angeles, California or Phoenix, Arizona have historic districts that owe their roots to the efforts in Charleston.

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15 Hosmer, 231.
**Government Involvement: The National Trust, and the Historic Preservation Act of 1966**

Local efforts had been gaining a lot of ground in the preservation movement up through the 1940s. The formation of historic districts in Charleston and New Orleans, as well as the efforts of preservation societies and the work of individuals, was helping to protect several historic buildings. However, it was becoming clear that local efforts were falling short in certain areas. As Hosmer describes, “The local emphasis that had characterized preservation was an asset in that there were always many dedicated supporters around the country, but it was also a weakness because the movement seemed so aimless. By the late 1940s administrators from the National Park Service and private historical groups realized there must be a central preservation agency in the United States.”

“The National Trust, inspired by its English namesake, was created with the purpose of linking the preservation efforts of the National Park Service and the federal government with activities of the private sector.”

The objectives of the National Trust are to:

1. Identify and act on important national preservation issues.
2. Support, broaden, and strengthen organized preservation efforts.
3. Target communications to those who affect the future of historic resources.
4. Expand private and public financial resources for preservation activities

The National Trust encourages preservation through advocacy and lobbying programs. It also takes over properties that may otherwise be too much trouble for the federal government to own, although it only exercises this power for certain exemplary sites. The advocacy and lobbying has been very important, as well as preservation campaigns and the development of other programs that support preservation, such as the Main Street Program.

1966 was a pivotal year for historic preservation, as it is when the National Historic Preservation Act was passed. This Act “...established the National Register of Historic Places, encouraged the concept of locally regulated historic districts, authorized enabling legislation to fund preservation activities, encouraged the establishment of State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), established an Advisory Council on Historic

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17 Hosmer, 809.
18 Tyler, 42.
19 Tyler, 42.
20 Tyler, 44.
Preservation, and defined how federal preservation programs would rely on the voluntary cooperation of owners of historic properties and not interfere with ownership rights. This legislation was paramount in allowing the growing number of preservation efforts to succeed. While cities such as Charleston, South Carolina, and New Orleans, Louisiana had successful historic districts, most cities had difficulty implementing them due to a lack of public support which was present in Charleston and New Orleans. The act gave more power, as well as further legal precedent, to create such districts. No longer were single structures the primary focus of preservation efforts. Now entire neighborhoods could be protected, which not only helps save significant historic structures, but also preserves their historical context. An advantage to this approach is that it forced the issue of not only preserving the integrity of a building, but also maintaining its usefulness in modern society. Up until this time, many of the preserved structures became museums, depicting the history of their owners and the time in which they lived. With entire neighborhoods being declared historic, the prospect of turning the whole area into a museum (with the exception of Williamsburg and a few others) was absurd. This was when more creative approaches regarding old buildings began to come to light.

Recent Preservation Activities

After establishment of the Historic Preservation Act and the National Register, preservation activities throughout the country gained a great deal of momentum. It was also a time of bitter fights to protect threatened landmarks in the face of high rise construction and urban renewal projects. Pennsylvania Station was the great wake-up call for preservation in New York City. The building’s demolition in the 1960s made New Yorkers realize just how threatened their historic buildings were. This led to the city enacting preservation ordinances in order to prevent such important historic artifacts from being destroyed in the future.

The wake-up call for preservation in Chicago came a few years later when Adler and Sullivan’s Old Stock Exchange Building came under threat of demolition. This building was a masterpiece of Chicago School architecture, tying together Adler’s structural mastery and Sullivan’s ornamental sensibilities. It had fallen into

21 Tyler, 45.
disrepair, even after some renovation work had been done in the mid 1960s when several of Sullivan’s decorative pieces were removed. Like at Pennsylvania Station, neither petitions, nor protests, nor lengthy hearings could save the building, and it was demolished in the early 1970s.

A very significant legal precedent was set in 1978 regarding the Grand Central Station in New York. The decisions made by the U. S. Supreme Court in Penn Central Transportation Company vs. City of New York formed the legal justification for most local historic preservation ordinances. The case “...dealt with the right of an owner to develop a property versus the right of a city to review and regulate the development of a designated historic property. The case became essentially the first Supreme Court decision dealing directly with historic preservation law.”\(^2\) Penn Central wanted to build a new high rise tower over top of the historic train station. Different schemes involved removing portions of the exterior, façade retention, and cantilevering the new building over the old. Regardless, the presence of a modern skyscraper sitting literally on top of the historic station would be detrimental to the historic fabric. The court proceedings surrounded the legality of New York City’s historic preservation ordinance which gave the city power to prevent projects such as the one Penn Central was proposing. The Supreme Court ruling “...upheld the legitimacy of historic preservation ordinances...”\(^3\) such as New York’s. This meant that cities were free to impose restrictions on properties for the purpose of historic preservation. The protection of Grand Central Station, which has since undergone a significant and very well-received restoration, has benefitted the city as well as the property’s owners. Penn Central was able to sell the development rights of the site, rather than using them to build the new high rise. This situation is very similar to Adler and Sullivan’s Chicago Stock Exchange, however the almost ten year difference in time, the legislation and legal precedent, as well as New York’s own preservation ordinance was able to save Grand Central Station.

The 1970s and 1980s saw the government stepping in to further support preservation efforts. Tax breaks were created that supported preservation projects for income-producing properties. This not only encouraged

\(^2\) Tyler, 84-85.
\(^3\) Tyler, 87.
people to rehabilitate their historic properties, but it also enforced strict guidelines for those efforts. The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation must be followed in order for the tax credits to be awarded. Actions such as this show that while the preservation movement has matured greatly over the past two centuries, much of that maturation has happened in the last 30 to 40 years. By requiring people to follow specific standards to receive tax credits it reinforces the current theories of right and wrong preservation activities. Some approaches which were acceptable in the 1970s and before were later removed from the Secretary of the Interior's Standards as preservation theory changed. By the the 1990s and into the 21st century, most of the legislation and precedents had already been established, and preservation efforts continued along the path that had been established in the 1970s and 1980s.

**Conclusions**

The history of preservation efforts shows that priorities and methods have changed throughout the decades and centuries that have passed. The shift from the early days of patriotic nostalgia to the current broad historic districts shows just how much more value has been placed on different types of buildings and neighborhoods. It is important to remember that a shift in focus does not negate the purpose of efforts before. Historical value and patriotic nostalgia are still important today, but the new values of architecture and neighborhood preservation simply add more buildings to the list of important structures.
Theory

Introduction

“Our predecessors saved only grand heroic treasures; today everything—the typical as well as the unique, the neighborly and the exotic, the relics of the wicked as well as those of the good—is saved for many new motives.” After roughly 200 years of preservation efforts, David Lowenthal reiterates how the reason for such efforts has shifted over time. Not only are the types of buildings that are preserved different now than in the past, but the reasons are different as well. Today, the newest additions to the list of protected historic structures are what can be termed common buildings. These are the everyday row houses and commercial buildings of the 19th century, the turn-of-the-century apartment buildings, the Art Deco retail shops and even the glass boxes of the 1950s and 60s. As little as 20 or 30 years ago, buildings of this sort were given very little regard. This is why so many have been razed or altered beyond recognition. The question is, what is the best way to treat such buildings?

Unintentional Monuments: The Common Building

There remains several buildings in today’s cities that can be deemed common. Just as virtually no buildings were protected in the 18th century, outstanding examples of architecture were not protected in the 19th century, and historic neighborhoods were threatened throughout much of the 20th century, these common buildings are some of the most threatened structures of today. They are only protected if contained within broader historic districts, yet they usually receive no protection when they stand alone or among a mere handful of other common buildings. However, they are still a part of the city’s collective past, regardless of the value placed on them by society.

According to Alois Riegl, “Everything that has been and is no longer we call \textit{historical}, in accordance with the modern notion that what has

been can never be again, and that everything that has been constitutes an irreplaceable and irremovable link in a
chain of development. In other words: each successive step implies its predecessor and could not have happened
as it did without that earlier step. The essence of every modern perception of history is the idea of development.”
A little 19th century commercial building, or an Art Deco theater, while not terribly special in and of themselves,
are links in the chain of architectural and urban history of the city in which they reside. Lynch describes the past as
a “...known, familiar, a possession in which we may feel secure.” The city, as we know it today, would not exist
without the “accomplishments” of such buildings. They drew people to downtown with the services contained
within, they raised land values, provided employment, taxes, and residents. ‘Riegl called them ‘unintentional
monuments.’ They rank very high on the modern scale of values but their survival remains precarious. Their
modern status as ‘monuments’ and ‘landmarks’ entails a loss of practical usefulness and a halt to further
transformation. They become, in effect, the homeless of history, entrusted to public and private guardians.”
This loss of function is something that modern preservation laws try to combat.

Such small structures that make up the group of common buildings are very threatened in the downtown
of American cities, because the cost of land is so high. When they were new, these buildings may not have
contributed much to the city by themselves. However, as a collective whole they accounted for a significant
amount of business. Still, even a small and seemingly insignificant building can be an important record in history.
Riegl makes an analogy that very closely reflects the status of today’s common yet aged buildings.

Even a secondary literary monument like a scrap of paper with a brief and insignificant note contains a whole
series of artistic elements—the form of the piece of paper, the letters, and their composition—which apart from
their historical value are relevant to the development of paper, writing, writing instruments, etc...To be sure,
these are such insignificant elements that for the most part we neglect them in many cases because we have
enough other monuments which convey much the same thing in a richer and more detailed manner. But
where this scrap of paper the only surviving testimony to the art of its time, we would consider it, though
trivial in itself, an utterly indispensable artifact.

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25 Riegl, 21.
26 Lynch, 27.
28 Riegl, 22.
There remains a handful of such “scraps of paper” in cities throughout the country. They are becoming such a rare piece of history that it is important to protect them from destruction. The lack of protection in today’s world is resulting in the systematic eradication of such structures from the built environment. As Jukka Jokilehto says, “An historic town consists of various types of buildings and infrastructures that reflect the social and economic structure of its population as well as the changes that have occurred throughout history.”\textsuperscript{29} Allowing this record of a city’s history to disappear erodes not only the physical historical fabric of the city, but also the social historical fabric as well. Preservation of such buildings, in one form or another, will help to maintain what little integrity remains in American downtowns. Lowenthal said, “I do not decry material preservation. Its benefits are manifold. It endears the familiar, reaffirms purpose, validates custom, enhances identity; it guides, enriches, and diversifies life.”\textsuperscript{30} Surely such little buildings can contribute more to the city if they remain intact as part of the built environment, rather than falling to the wrecking ball for yet another parking lot or garage. This is especially important in the downtowns of large cities. Because the immediate downtown is usually the area where the city was born, it is technically the most historic area. However, because of the pressures of growth, most of the small buildings that once characterized downtowns are gone. They are replaced with glass skyscrapers, concrete plazas, and parking garages. Lynch describes downtowns as follows, “The new offices, which now comprise the bulk of the district, are more distant emotionally. Few feel any personal connection with these new facades...So there is not much at the center that speaks of a personal future. The new office towers, garages, banks, and travel agencies are visible enough. But most people think forward to a suburban house, or the countryside, or another city.”\textsuperscript{31} A big part of the reason for this feeling is due to disassociation with the past.

**Why Buildings are Saved: Historical, Age, and Use Value**

Riegl discusses a few terms that show how people value historic structures. The most important ones are age-value and historical-value. Riegl says, “Age-value in a monument betrays itself at once in the monument’s dated appearance. That it so appears depends less on its unfashionable style, since this might be imitated and


\textsuperscript{30} Lowenthal, 68.

\textsuperscript{31} Lynch, 153.
therefore recognized only by trained art historians, than on the fact that age-value lays a claim to mass appeal. Its incompleteness, its lack of wholeness, its tendency to dissolve form and color set the contrast between age-value and the characteristics of new and modern artifacts. In essence, age-value respects the building for the visual representation of the passage of time. This viewpoint takes as much of a hands-off approach towards preservation as possible. Any sort of intervention that removes the traces of aging, or patina as the case may be, are frowned upon. More than anything, proponents of age-value want the structure to age gracefully, and show that they have made a long journey through the decades and centuries past.

Historical value is a much different approach than age-value. “The objective of historical value is not to conserve the traces of age which have been produced by nature since its creation, but rather to maintain as genuine as possible a document for future art-historical research.” This theory reflects the feelings that value comes from historic events, personages, and overall nostalgia. It acknowledges that the value of the building comes not just from the fact that it is old and worn, but that its style, form, construction, craft, and history are what is valuable. “...the most radical adherents of age-value...must admit that the pleasure which they derive from a monument does not spring simply from its age-value; it also depends a good deal upon the satisfaction derived from the classification of a monument according to a certain style, be it antique, Gothic or Baroque. Thus, historical knowledge also becomes an aesthetic that is bound up with a sensitivity to age-value.” Historical value appeals more to the general populace, since it validates the building for reasons other than just age. It also overcomes the major flaw of age value, that many people decry buildings that are merely old.

Another problem with age value versus historical value relates to how the building is presented in the modern environment. “Age-value appreciates the past for itself, while historical value singles out one moment in the developmental continuum of the past and places it before our eyes as if it belonged to the present.”

32 Riegl, 31.
33 Riegl, 34.
34 Riegl, 35.
35 Riegl, 38.
36 Riegl, 38.
suggesting that by exhibiting a building, or any other monument, as if it was part of the present, that such a presentation is a lie. However, there is no denying that historic buildings do, in fact, belong to the present. Just because they have been around for decades, or even centuries, doesn’t mean that they are not part of today’s built environment. While they are the product of a long gone history, that does not invalidate their presence now. To look at it another way, nearly every building in the world is of the past, not the present. Even a building that is still under construction carries design decisions, construction methods, and material choices from the albeit recent past. Therefore, all buildings are a product of history, so why should a 120 year old building be relegated to aging and deterioration while a 10 year old is allowed to be painted, patched and cleaned?

Use value, where buildings that maintain a function, even if it is different than its original, has a higher value than a building that is frozen in time like a museum piece. While historic museums are a valid and rather common use for old buildings, it is not really appropriate for a common building that does not have important historical associations or is not exemplary architecture, interior design, and furniture. For buildings such as that, especially in commercial or industrial uses which usually only leave large empty spaces within the historic shell, it is important to find a continuing use for the old fabric. By returning an old building to a useable state, it supports the project by ensuring continued maintenance and function, while contributing not only to the built environment of the city, but also by providing tax revenues, residents, and customers.

Any old building that is going to be returned to the functional marketplace carries maintenance requirements, just as a new one does. Therefore, if it is to remain structurally sound, free of rot and termites, and able to withstand water infiltration, then some form of maintenance will be necessary. This means replacing broken stones or bricks, repairing the roof, and repairing or replacing windows. Since many old buildings require a significant amount of maintenance, many people determine that it is easier to tear them down and simply build new. The question then remains, what can be done to preserve as much of the historic building as possible? The object is to maintain the historic fabric, and to preserve the most important element of history. This brings up the
idea of saving only a fragment of the original structure. In most cases, this means saving the façade. Because of the nature of the inner-city built environment, most of what people see from the street are façades. The structure behind is usually no more than a frame or brick box. Unless the building is on a street corner, there is little value to what lies behind.

**The Value of Fragments**

Preserving only the façade has some advantages to working on the entire building. As Lowenthal says, “Saving fragments rather than the wholes has obvious practical advantages. They take up less space; they are less costly to maintain. And because they are already reduced from their original state, they come to us with a presumption of change that should allow their caretakers greater latitudes: fragments do not demand the same obsessive fidelity to original integrity as wholes.” He goes on to say, “No preservation decision is logically right, let alone permanently appropriate.” In the case of a common building, preserving only the façade allows that much more attention to be devoted to it. Money will not have to be spent on fixing many of the deficiencies of old buildings: insulation, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical systems, windows, fireproofing, and soundproofing. Also, since most such structures exist amidst others of much greater size, it makes sense to construct a taller building on their site. The high land values in downtowns that led to the removal of many small buildings cannot be ignored. That is why the ability to construct a new and larger structure is desirable. It is important, however, that the new building maintains a harmony with the historic fragment. Lynch asks, “...what kinds of specific modifications are, in fact, allowable? In restoring the Nash terraces around Regent’s Park in London for modern offices, the facades are rebuilt according to the original designs, but enough of the former internal arrangement was also imposed so that the view from the street would have the right sense of depth.”

Nevertheless, there are better approaches to protecting historic elements than only keeping a few select fragments.

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36 Lowenthal, 71.
37 Lowenthal, 69.
38 Lynch, 35.
Conclusions

Buildings are protected for many reasons, as evidenced by the history of preservation efforts. The protection of the common building is a very new phenomenon, however. The age, historical, and use values apply to all buildings though. In fact, any common building could have important historical associations, they just might be undiscovered. That is why proper ways of treating buildings that may be insignificant in and of themselves must be found. The historic value may only be relevant to the owner of a building who decides it is important to keep certain historic fabric. Nonetheless, the architect will need to work with that characteristic of the project. The most important thing to remember is that any value judgments made on a building are subjective. Not everyone will agree about the value of a building, nor should they.
Precedent Analysis

Introduction

Most preservation efforts look at the issues of whole buildings, or whole neighborhoods. The notion of looking at fragments is rather uncommon in comparison. The projects that have been undertaken have met with various levels of success. Sometimes the overall method is flawed, and other times the implementation is poor. Nevertheless, an understanding of the successes and failures of similar projects in treating an historic fragment is useful in preventing the same mistakes in the future.

Adler and Sullivan's Chicago Stock Exchange

One approach to protection of historic elements is to remove and display them as art objects. Sometimes this is the only viable alternative to full preservation in cases where the artifacts cannot be retained in situ. It is usually only done as a last resort, when all other possibilities have been exhausted. This is what was done with Adler and Sullivan’s Chicago Stock Exchange. “[Real estate developer Jerrold] Wexler and partner Edward W. Ross purchased the Old Stock Exchange in 1968 and ‘unequivocally denied’ the Commission on Chicago Historical and Architectural Landmarks permission to designate it a city landmark. Their specific intent, the developers state, was to build ‘a modern, commercial building which would be worthy of the replacement of the Louis and Sullivan outmoded structure...’”39 Due to the insistence of the owners that the building not be designated a landmark, because of the restrictions on alterations and demolition, a public hearing was held by the Landmarks Commission to determine if it was worthy of designation against the will of the owners (such efforts were also undertaken for Sullivan’s Carson Pirie Scott Building, whose owners were equally hostile towards landmark designation). The commission believed the stock exchange was an outstanding work by Adler and Sullivan. However, many of the most important decorative elements had been removed in 1964 and protected by private interests. The Committee on Cultural and Economic Development, on the other hand, did not feel that landmark designation was warranted due to the costs involved and the remaining important Adler and Sullivan buildings (although nearly

half of the ones in the city had already been demolished). The threat to the stock exchange rallied several people and organizations that were interested in its protection. Petitions to save it were submitted by the American Institute of Architects, American Institute of Planners, Society of Architectural Historians, and the Metropolitan Housing Council, as well as noted architect Harry Weese.

This project sparked discussion on the transfer of development rights from historic properties to other sites. John Costonis describes how the stock exchange could be saved by transferring the unused air rights over the old building to the adjoining site, which was also acquired by the owner of the historic structure. Costonis mentions that this technique was successfully applied in New York City, and while Chicago did have similar provisions in its zoning codes, they were not structured effectively to protect historic buildings. The main weaknesses were that the development rights had to be transferred in totality to only one other site. Some development rights could not remain with the site original, nor could the rights be divided among different buyers. The worst problem, however, was that the process was entirely voluntary. The city could not interject and force a historic property owner to sell off the air rights of a site to protect a historic building if the owner did not want to.

The lessons learned about the loss of the Old Stock Exchange Building are valuable in much the same way as the loss of Pennsylvania Station in New York. The transfer of development rights and importance of local involvement through legislation and tax breaks paved the way for future legislation that is more successful than it was in late 1960s and early 1970s. “If tax relief or some other type of landmark bonus had been available to the developer, the final result in Chicago might have been different, allowing an alternate scheme to be considered where the landmark would have been retained with a new high rise.” Unfortunately, such tax breaks did not exist at the time, and no developers could be found who would take on restoration due to the low return involved.

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40 Maddex, 3.
While several interior decorative elements by Louis Sullivan were removed several years prior to the building’s razing, the demolition company which had salvage rights to the building sold remaining important elements. The trading room was dismantled and rebuilt in the Art Institute of Chicago, and the entrance portal was placed freestanding in Grant Park.

Neither solution is anywhere near ideal. Both the trading room and the entrance portal have lost the context of the surrounding building. While the trading room is relatively well closed off from the rest of the museum (as it was in the original building) the entrance portal as a freestanding object loses a lot of its impact.

There are better ways to protect and preserve elements of an important building than removing and rebuilding them in another location. However, as already mentioned, this is a last resort tactic. Still, there are better uses for the elements of Adler and Sullivan’s building. The trading room will undoubtedly be safe in the Art Institute. The use as a ballroom or other gathering space is preferable to a simple art gallery or unused museum piece. However, the very fact that it is in a museum precludes some of the bustling activity that was once common in a stock exchange trading room. The entry portal suffers from a lack of purpose. Instead of a freestanding object in the park, it would work better if it was used as an actual entrance portal for pedestrians. While it would still be a freestanding object, disassociated from its own history, it would at least continue to function in the same manner as it once did.

Fitch, 155.
Penn Mutual Insurance Headquarters

A somewhat different approach was taken at the Penn Mutual Insurance Company in Philadelphia, designed by Mitchell/Giurgola Associates in 1972. This time, the company doing the project was interested in retaining the original historic fabric. What is interesting about this project is that it was hailed as a triumph when it was completed, and Mitchell/Giurgola was regarded as a major player in the field of contextual architecture. Fitch describes the project as follows.

When Penn Mutual Insurance Company decided to double its office space on Independence Square, it faced a delicate problem in urban aesthetics. A handsome old building in the “Egyptian” style of the 1840s occupied part of the site. Already owned by Penn Mutual, it was the birthplace of its corporate ancestor, the Pennsylvania Fire Insurance Company. It was also an important surviving remnant of the old 3-story town houses that had once enframed the Square. Thus, both company and town had reasons for maintaining its presence: the question was, how? The architects’ solution was to disassemble the old marble façade, clear the land behind it, erect the new tower, and then reconstitute the façade as a free-standing screen in its original position. In its new role as a surrogate for the lost building, the marble façade was mounted on a reinforced concrete armature and creates a loggia for the new tower. It might have been even more effective had the façade of the adjacent town house (now demolished to expose the entrance to the tower) been similarly preserved. Nevertheless, the spatial integrity of the square—especially from the point of view of the passerby—is helped by the reappearance of the familiar Egyptian façade.\(^4\)

This project is successful in some ways, but not in others. The continued presence of the façade along the street is welcomed by the pedestrian, the company, and the city. However, by floating the façade in front of the dark glass high-rise, the windows of the old building become dark, foreboding holes. In a way, it looks like the building was gutted by fire. Also, the high-

\(^4\) Fitch, 159.
rise is not derivative of the historic element. The two are so dissimilar that their juxtaposition seems absurd. There is also a very poor scalar relationship. This four story façade, and the buildings around it, are dwarfed by the 20 story high-rise.

Fitch already described how the project would be more successful if the neighboring building had not been removed to make way for the new skyscraper. It would not only reinforce the street frontage and cornice line of the block, but also maintain a dialogue with the façade that was retained. People are forced to walk around the historic element to reach the building’s main entrance. The area behind it is below ground level, and the only chance one has to pass through the old façade is while going down the small staircase that uses one left side opening. The historic structure has lost its function like Sullivan’s entry to the Chicago Stock Exchange. Penn Mutual’s historic fabric is no longer an entry, or even any functional piece of the building’s exterior. The project would work better if people were required to move through the reconstructed historic fragment to enter the building. That allows more chances for engagement, and it provides a scalar element that bridges between the pedestrian and the skyscraper behind. Also, while the simple neutral background of the glass skyscraper doesn’t impose on the original façade, it makes it look like a foreboding cavern. The interior space of the building’s lobby could engage the façade which would provide more light penetration to the outside, and allow people to actually see what’s going on behind the old stone front.
After the project was completed, the Penn Mutual headquarters was lauded as an outstanding example of merging a new high rise with an historic façade. Mitchell/Giurgola, Associates even won an AIA Honor Award for the project. David Morton wrote in *Progressive Architecture*, “...this building is widely and genuinely admired in Philadelphia.” Interestingly though, he talked mostly about the approach used to create a background building behind Independence Hall. The integration of John Haviland’s 1838 façade was only mentioned briefly in the article. Anyway, attitudes changed within within 10 years, and façade retention projects began to be ridiculed. They lost the support of government historic preservation agencies as well. The Crossroads Mall project in Salt Lake City was the target of one of several attacks on this sort of approach.

**Crossroads Mall**

“Façadism is viewed by some preservationists as a reasonable compromise because at least some of the original historic elements that face the street are retained. Others see it as an abomination that makes a mockery of history.” Treatment in this manner has to be done carefully. The architect has to be sensitive to the original façade and the massing and proportions set forth by it and other buildings in the area. If this is not done, the historic fragment will become disassociated from its context, and the overall impression of the remaining fragment can be more disturbing than its complete absence. An example of a poorly implemented façade retention project is in Salt Lake City, at the Crossroads Mall. The mall project threatened several important historic commercial buildings. The city’s preservationists rallied to protect one of the most important landmarks. However, it was determined by the mall’s developers that retaining the entire building would compromise the mall’s interior layout. The building’s façade was retained as an

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48 Tyler, 151.
entrance to a bank located in the mall. Unfortunately, the façade is surrounded by blank, monolithic walls which, despite the interesting contrast in detail it creates, overpowers and diminishes the value of the historic element.

The use of the historic fragment as an entrance is an admirable approach. However, that is just about the only successful outcome of this project. While contrasting forms, materials, colors, textures, scales, etc. can serve to enhance the appearance of the historic artifact, if it is not done properly it will detract from both the old and the new. In this case, the blank walls surrounding the façade do not create a neutral backdrop, but an imposing mass. The surrounding walls should have been held back from the old façade which would enhance the importance of the historic fabric. The mass should also have been broken up, creating a transition from the small façade to the large tower behind.

By the 1980s, attitudes began to shift away from favoring façade retention projects such as Crossroads Mall. Critics such as Grant Dehard, the director of the Foundation for San Francisco’s Architectural Heritage, were outspoken in their opposition to such projects. Dehard was described as a sworn enemy to façadism, one of many derogatory terms that were coined to represent projects such as Penn Mutual or Crossroads Mall. “Saving facades is not acceptable preservation under the generous incentives available under the Economic Recovery Tax Act of 1981. The 25 per-cent Investment Tax Credit for rehabilitating historic structures is available only if three-fourths of the original exterior walls are reused. Retention of only the facades of non-historic buildings, similarly, also fails to qualify for lesser tax credits under the same law.” He was right in saying that there were “…lots of bad examples and no good ones.” What had been viewed as a creative and valid approach to retaining historic elements, literally in the face of taller buildings, was losing favor. Due to the poor execution of such projects, façade retention became a last resort tactic, a flawed compromise to retention of the whole building.

50 Abbot, 45.
Another example of this type of intervention is the Cincinnati Convention Center. This time however, an old façade from another site was erected as part of a new building. The old stone façade on the south side of the Convention Center was saved from the historic Albee Theater which used to front Fountain Square a few blocks to the east.

In much the same way as the Penn Mutual project, the Convention Center succeeds and fails in a few respects. It is successful with massing and overall form. However, the materials do not coordinate well, nor is the new building derivative of the old façade with the exception of a few select datum lines. Nor does it help that Plum Street, which this façade faces, is one-way in the opposite direction.

The problem of the one-way street is an unfortunate circumstance of the site, and it happened only after the 1987 addition to the Convention Center when the Albee arch was installed. However, other things could be done to make the Albee Theater fragment more successful. The way the new building holds back from the sides of the historic fragment is a good way of highlighting it, but the new polished granite base makes for a confusing junction between new and old. Also, except for one datum line, the rest of the building does not respond to the historic element. Use of the arch motif, as well as the use of freestanding columns and pilasters could add some interest to the otherwise blank walls of the rest of the convention center. This project happened after the backlash against façade retention, because the Albee arch was dismantled 10 years before its eventual reconstitution at the Convention Center. The Theater was demolished in 1977 to make way for the new Westin Hotel/Fountain Square South development. Many of the interior elements were salvaged and now reside in Music Hall, but like the Chicago Stock Exchange, the whole building could not be saved. Since the arch was already in storage, a use needed to be found for it, even though current theories rejected its dismantling in the first place.


**Circle Centre Mall**

The Circle Centre Mall in Indianapolis is a recent project designed by Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Whitelaw in 1995. While this is one of the more successful façade retention projects, it is still not perfect. Rather than preserving one historic fragment, and placing it among a monolith of new construction, a whole block of historic façades were incorporated into the new building. This preserved the streetscape, and kept the size of the building along the street in check, since the taller addition was set back. However, most of the storefronts are not used, and the windows are all frosted over. What looks like several storefronts facing the street is actually the rear of a large department store. This arrangement, while better than a blank wall imposing upon the street, does nothing to create a positive environment for pedestrians. Without function, the retention of these elements loses a great deal of its meaning.

The quality of the restoration on these historic fragments is admirable, and the only thing necessary to make them really special is to restore their function. They should not have been relegated to the back of the store. An opportunity to showcase merchandise was lost by orienting the store this way. The ground floor windows could be used for clothing displays, while the upper floor windows could provide natural illumination as well as views of store activity from the street.

**Conclusions**

None of the projects described are perfect, although few projects are ever so lucky. The key to making a façade retention project successful is not treating it as a mere decorative application, and to continue to use it as a functional element of the building. When the historic element is slapped on to a new building as it was at the

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Crossroads Mall, it becomes expendable and unimportant. The surrounding building can’t just hold itself back from the fragment either, it must also embrace it and take cues from it as well. By maintaining the fragment as a functional element that derives portions of the new structure, it supports use value and ensures that people get the most out of their experience with it. However, are façade retention projects still acceptable today? The backlash against them in the 1980s and afterwards shows that they are not. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards also do not consider keeping only the façade of a building a project worthy of tax credits.

The successes and failures of these projects help determine what should be done to make a project like this successful. First and foremost, as much of the original building should be kept as possible. This is required by the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, and it must be followed in order to receive preservation tax credits. However, what if a project is not eligible for tax credits, either because the building is not significant enough, or there simply isn’t enough historic fabric left? In a case like that, it may be feasible to retain only the façade, while removing what little remains behind it. However, this should only be done if there is absolutely no other choice. Assuming that as much of the building as possible will be retained, how should the new building be integrated with it? Crossroads Mall shows how the lack of a reveal around the historic element hurts its importance and causes an uncomfortable crashing between the new and old. Holding the new construction away from the old sets the historic element apart, giving it more importance. The Cincinnati Convention Center was successful in this respect. The reveal does not even need to be that large. The Builders’ Building in Chicago, for example, constructed in 1927 by Graham, Anderson, Probst, and White was added to in 1986.

Image 3.9: Graham, Anderson, Probst, and White’s Builders’ Building on Wacker Drive in Chicago is pictured in the center. The addition by SOM is on the right third of the block. Source: Robert Cameron. Above Chicago. (San Francisco: Cameron and Co., 1992), 35.
by Skidmore Owings and Merrill. A small dark glass strip window effectively cushions the intersection between the new and the old. Another important aspect to integrating a new building with an historic structure is to make sure the new building responds to it. The new and the old must be related so that the removal of the historic artifact would be impossible without diminishing the understanding of the new building. One way to do this is by tying together the new and old through datums. Cornice lines are an obvious example, but water tables, and window openings, are equally important. Overall massing and proportions, materials, and structural systems can also be extracted from the historic element and used in the new building. Frank Gehry’s Fred and Ginger Building in Prague takes some cues from the adjoining buildings by using punched openings, typical of the historic flats in the area, where his building meets the old ones. Hugh Newell Jacobson’s Trentman House in Washington D.C., built in 1969, uses brick as the common element that links new and old. He also responds to the typically smaller third floor windows and roof massing of the historic Georgetown residences next to his project. This is not to say that historic techniques or designs should be copied outright, in fact that is less desirable since it may confuse what is new and what is not. The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards make it clear that new additions should be easily distinguishable from the old. They should also not destroy the old building where they intersect, so that if the addition is removed in the future the old building can be put back in its original state. All these procedures protect the historic element, while also enabling the new building to benefit from it.

The Project

The Building: 807 Race Street

807 Race Street in Cincinnati is an example of an old, common, and threatened building. It is a small office and retail store built in 1880, sitting only three blocks from the very heart of downtown. It is one of few such structures left in Cincinnati’s or any American city’s downtown. 807 Race Street is small. This building sits on a standard city lot of 30’ x 90’. It is only two stories tall, and it is dwarfed by everything around it. The building next door is six stories tall, the one next to that is four, and the one next to that is five. The two buildings across the street are seven and ten stories tall, respectively. Nearby is a 20 story high-rise apartment building, and a few low-rise apartments that are still taller by several floors. Only to the northwest are there some smaller individual row house buildings, but even these are three and four stories tall. What explains this? Most of the taller buildings in this area were built in the early 20th century. A few apartment buildings are only 10 or so years old, but the majority of buildings, aside from the row houses to the northwest, are newer than 807 Race. Many were built in the 1910s and 1920s, a good 30 to 40 years afterwards. Several of those buildings, or some of the parking lots peppering the area, replaced the small commercial building that 807 Race represents.

Image 4.1: 807 Race Street is the little gray building at the right center of the picture. It is dwarfed by the other buildings around it.

Image 4.2: The front façade of 807 Race Street, also showing the side wall and blocked windows. Note the brick paving in the alley. The roof of City Hall is visible in the distance.
Historic Potential

While 807 Race Street may not look like anything particularly important, it does have some unique characteristics. As already mentioned, the building was constructed in 1880. While this isn't particularly old for Cincinnati, it is very early for a Colonial Revival style building. Without knowing the exact date of construction it is impossible to be certain, but this could be one of the oldest Colonial Revival buildings in the area. That fact, in and of itself, makes protection of the building a valid enterprise. According to William Forwood, Jr., Cincinnati's Urban Conservator, the city does have an established historic district on 9th Street to the north of the site, but it only includes buildings on that street, and it does not extend south far enough to pick up 807 Race or the adjoining buildings. However, there is a National Register historic district, also called the Ninth Street Historic District. This district which was created in 1980 does encompass 807 Race, but not the parking lot on Garfield Place. The building is a contributing structure to this district, and could be eligible for preservation tax credits. Keeping only the façade would preclude the project from receiving those credits.

It has already been established that the façade is where most of the value in 807 Race Street lies. Unlike many 19th century storefronts, this one is still completely intact. Only one of the side doors and the main window have been altered. It has suffered from deterioration, but not so much that the damage is irreparable. Considering

53 William Forwood, Jr.
that the building is more than 120 years old, it has survived quite well with only routine maintenance. However, preserving only the façade is not enough. The side wall along the alley will need to be retained as well. This isn’t a hindrance to the design, because a wall would need to be put back in that location anyway. Like the front façade, the side wall has not been irreparably altered. While all the windows have been bricked up, the openings are still visible, and in many places the sills and headers are present. These windows can be opened back up, which will provide some light to the interior spaces that are currently only served by the windows in the front of the building. The party wall along the adjacent building can also be used in the new design. Old interior brick walls have an aesthetic charm that is impossible to match with new materials. The interior of the building has little of redeeming value, however. The space has been chopped up several times as it was converted to different uses. No original interior partitions remain. The one element that may be worth saving is the second floor structure. There are exposed beams on the first floor which have not been compromised seriously. However, keeping this flooring system may cause too many problems with fire codes, sound deadening, and space configurations. Maintaining the exterior integrity of the building is paramount, since that is where most of the valuable fabric is, and that is where the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards focus.
Design Approaches for the New Building

The approach taken at 807 Race will be different from Penn Mutual or the Cincinnati Convention Center. While a new building can be constructed that will be contemporary to today, it can still be derivative of the existing building. For one thing, the datum lines can be repeated throughout the new building. The rhythm of the pilasters can set up the structural grid of the new building. The rhythm of A-B-A can also be used, without actually copying the old façade’s fenestration. Similar building materials such as brick and stone can also be used in the new construction. These are some of the basic ways that the new building can be derivative of the old without actually mimicking it. Massing is also an important consideration. The two story height, and the 30 foot width of the old façade can be used to generate the overall form of the new surrounding building. A reveal can be created on the story above the old building, which will show off the new column structure rising behind it. This reveal will be a horizontal representation of the vertical reveal created by the alley on the south side of the building. The alley is just as much a part of the history of the site as the building itself. It is an excellent example of the city’s many brick alleys with granite curbs. It is narrow, but not so narrow that cars and trucks cannot traverse it. The horizontal reveal, and keeping the alley open, allows the new building to embrace the old, without an uncomfortable intrusion such as at the Crossroads Mall in Salt Lake City.
Physical Treatment of the Façade

The question then remains, what to do with the old façade itself? It is possible that portions of the façade will need to be dismantled and then reassembled. Some stones between the first and second floors have shifted from their original locations, and movement could be continuing to this day. If sections do need to be reassembled, they can then be put back together so that everything is true and plumb, and it will be less likely to fall out of place in the future. Some of the metal elements around the cornice will have to be replaced as well. Several dentils have rusted through or have completely fallen off. It is unlikely that the façade’s stones can be brought back to a natural state after decades of painting. It is also not clear if the stones were ever left natural, or if they were in fact painted from the start. In this case, it is reasonable to assume that the façade will be painted again, after as much of the old paint is removed as possible. Due to the difficulty of repairing certain elements, they can be used to appeal to the concept of age-value. Rather than trying to clean every speck of old paint off the stones, what is left can be stabilized and painted over, giving the building a texture and acknowledgment of the many painting jobs that took place in past centuries. As already mentioned, the side wall will have the window openings brought back into use. Like the façade, the side walls will likely have to be repainted, rather than returned to an unpainted state, if they were even left natural from the beginning at all.

A New Function for the Old Building

Another important consideration will be the function of the façade and the old building itself. At Penn Mutual, the façade was degraded to a simple loggia for the entry. It wasn’t exactly part of the building’s entrance, because the adjacent building was razed to open up the glass high-rise structure to the street. The historic elements at the Circle Centre Mall and the Cincinnati Convention Center are also not used as primary entries. The façade at 807 Race can function as the main entrance for the new apartment building that will take up this, and the adjoining sites. It will not become just an empty shell, it will continue to function and will be more important than it was before. The entrance can be reconfigured, however. The two doors on either end originally served as separate entrances for the first and second floors. That arrangement is no longer appropriate, and having two
doors would be somewhat awkward as an entrance to the new building. The doors are also not wide enough to meet current fire egress codes, and having single doorways makes moving furniture in and out rather difficult. There is also a step up from the sidewalk that must be dealt with. By moving the entrance to the large window in the center, double doors can be installed. The open area of glass is wide and tall enough to accommodate the doors without interfering with the leaded glass above or the original wood framing. Also, by working in the center, the step up can be cut away more easily to get the necessary clearance. The doors on the side can be left as doors, or they can be locked off so that people must use the central door. Since the right side door appears to be original, or at least constructed in the manner of the original, it is worth saving. It can then be replicated on the other side of the building.

Making this the primary residential entrance gives the historic building a renewed purpose which is more grand than it once had. Due to the two doors, and the presence of the wide pilasters, there is not much room left for the central window, and thus there is poor visibility for commercial retail uses. Turning it into the entrance and moving retail space to the new building, where large glass expanses can be created, allows for better use of both spaces. The lobby in the front of the old building will allow people the opportunity to experience the dialogue between the new structural columns for the building overhead and the old front façade.
A New Use for the Site

This project entails the construction of a six story apartment complex in downtown Cincinnati. 807 Race is for sale, and it is advertised as a possible two-unit apartment or condominium, but considering the proximity to the heart of downtown, a two story building is not a particularly efficient use of the land. The parking lot is also a poor use for this street corner. Garfield Place is a pleasant tree lined boulevard here, and at the corner with Race Street there are fountains with some seating. Both streets are also relatively quiet, and the lot is too small to achieve an efficient parking layout.

An apartment building will be a good use for this site. There are already a few other new apartment buildings in this immediate area. The Gramercy on Garfield, The Greenwich on the Park, as well as Garfield Tower Apartments are all within site of this area. The Groton Lofts and The Lofts at Shillito Place are also just down the street. This proximity to other residential developments helps protect the project from sitting in isolation among offices and parking lots. The close proximity to downtown shopping and offices also makes this a prime location for residences.


**Proximity to Transportation and Services**

Since the location is downtown Cincinnati, this site is very well connected to major automotive thoroughfares. One is only a few minutes away from I-75, I-71, I-471, and Rt. 50/Columbia Parkway. There is also bus service on most downtown streets. Most daily needs are available within walking distance. Fountain Square is only three blocks away, the public library, dry cleaners, restaurants, a small grocery store, and entertainment are also close.

**The Project's Market**

Cincinnati has very little housing downtown. Traditionally, the area bounded by I-75, I-71, the Ohio River and Central Parkway has been relegated to commercial use. In fact, the census tract that this site is in (bounded by 5th Street, Eggleston Avenue, Central Parkway and Plum Street) lists only 2,600 residents. Of these 2,600 people, 72% are male, 53% are white, and 92% are single. The age range is actually somewhat spread out, with the majority of people in the 25-44 age range, with the balance being filled by older retirees. There are very few children under age 18 in this area. Therefore, the market for downtown housing is basically young to middle-aged single men.

This project will look beyond the market that is already established in downtown, and try to attract some people who currently would not consider living in downtown Cincinnati. Because of the state of Cincinnati’s school system, as well as the lack of any youth activities downtown, it is unrealistic to expect any market for married couples with children more than a year or two old. It isn’t really possible to accommodate these needs on such a small site. However, something can be done to attract more women and couples. One reason that there are few women living downtown likely has to do with crime. Women tend to be more sensitive to safety concerns than men, and providing a well controlled building access system can help with this problem. Nevertheless, the focus will be on attracting couples. They tend to want more space than singles do, as well as places to meet other

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Image 4.12: Map of downtown Cincinnati

Image 4.13: Land use map of downtown Cincinnati
couples. This is something that the project will incorporate. This building will have large outdoor spaces for all units. There will also be a substantial roof garden for parties and other building functions.

**Site Zoning and Use**

Currently, the site for this project is zoned commercial. The parking lot is general commercial use and the building is zoned for offices. Changing this zoning to multi-family residential with a retail first floor will not be a problem. The city of Cincinnati has been encouraging more residential development downtown, as shown by the adjacent apartment complexes recently built. Even existing buildings like the Groton Lofts and Shillitos used to be commercial structures and have since been converted to residential use.

**Financial Feasibility**

This project is feasible for the site, however the right economic conditions have to be met. A large one bedroom apartment with the option for enclosing a second bedroom will be expected to rent for between $900 and $1,000 per month, including parking. This is $100-$200 more than the cost of a one bedroom apartment in surrounding buildings. However, the rents listed for other nearby buildings do not include parking in their rent. Also, the listings for the other properties show the lowest price for that particular unit type. Why would people pay more for these units? The quality and quantity of the outdoor spaces is key. Instead of a little 8’ x 5’ balcony, some apartments will have a large terrace that stretches the entire width of the unit. Corner units will have terraces along two sides of the apartment. Some of these terraces will look out onto Garfield Place, and have ample access to sunlight because of the wideness of that street. Other units will have terraces looking to Race street, with views along the road to the north and south. On the west side of the building, residents will be able to get some views of Garfield Place, but the alley that runs out to the west is landscaped and has views of nearby church spires and the tower of City Hall in the distance. There are also no tall buildings to the west, allowing for ample sunshine exposure in the afternoon and evenings. As mentioned before, there will also be a public roof garden for use by all residents. Most of the units will also be two stories high, allowing for better light penetration.
Conclusions

807 Race street is an asset to Cincinnati. It provides a historical record of an era that has long since passed. Without care, all traces of this building type will be lost to future generations. By keeping the façade of the building, more freedom in design creativity is allowed, which makes survival of the fragment that remains that much more likely. The façade of 807 Race street can continue to contribute to the environment of downtown Cincinnati for decades, or even centuries to come, even without the base building it is currently attached to. Hopefully, approaches such as this can be applied to other less significant buildings throughout this and other cities throughout the country. Through some creative reuse possibilities such as this, the history of our cities, and as a result the history of our culture, will not continue to fall to the wrecking ball.
The Program

First Floor

Residential Lobby

A large lobby is used for entry to the apartment units, for visiting guests, and the rental office. Includes air
lock at the entry for residents and guests to get out of the weather to unlock the door or call inside via
intercom. The lobby should be open and airy, to showcase the existing façade. At the rear should be a
desk/counter for a doorman, including room for package storing and individual unit mailboxes. The lobby
needs to be easily accessible from the rental office in case a doorman is not used, or is not present at certain
times of the day.

Retail Space

The ground floor areas of the new building will be devoted mostly to retail spaces. These will be primarily
open spaces with good visibility from the sidewalk and street. They will have storage space in the rear, away
from the windows. This storage space will also accommodate rear/side entrances from the alleys for receiving
deliveries.

Surface Parking

One surface parking space will be provided off the east/west alley for visitors to the rental office, or for
deliveries. This space must be close to the lobby, rental office, and the retail receiving doors.

Typical Apartment Units

Most units are two stories tall. The two corner units, facing Garfield Place, will have two bedrooms, with
an optional third bedroom or multipurpose room. The other units will have one bedroom with an optional
second bedroom or multipurpose room. Other units are one story, and they will have either one bedroom, or
will be configured as studios.

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**Upper Floor**

**Entry Foyer**

The entry foyer is the means of ingress and egress for the unit, it has space for a small table for keys and wallets. Small windows to the side of the door provide views to people at the door. Adjacent to the front entry will be closet space for coats and boots, along with a small powder room for use while upstairs or by guests. Also adjacent to the entry are the stairs to the sleeping quarters on the floor below. Tile flooring is provided for durability, easy cleaning, and water resistance.

**Kitchen**

The kitchen should be adjacent to the main living/dining space of the apartment, and near the entry/powder room. A pantry for storage of bulk food items and cleaning supplies should be provided. Proximity of working appliances to one another is important to reduce unnecessary movement between the sink, range, and refrigerator. The area should not be closed in as most apartment kitchens are. It should be open to the rest of the living space, while maintaining its own defined space. Adequate cooling and ventilation should be provided to ensure against excessive heat build up and odors. Lighting should be provided for all working conditions. General lighting for the whole kitchen area should be suitable for most light tasks. Specific task lighting should be provided at the range, sink, and working spaces along the countertop. Noise from the refrigerator and dishwasher should be properly shielded from the rest of the unit through the use of acoustic barriers and quiet appliances. Built-in upper and lower cabinetry with provisions for a seating area adjacent to the living/dining area of the apartment. While a large sink with room for washing and drying of small amounts of dishes will be provided, a dishwasher is located adjacent to the sink for washing of larger amounts of dishes. A gas cook top with electric oven is located under a microwave with venting to the outside. A side-by-side refrigerator/freezer with ice maker is also provided. Tile flooring is used for durability, easy cleaning, and water resistance.
Living/Dining Space

Adjacent to the kitchen, and near the entry/powder room is the apartment unit’s main living and dining area. This is where reading, watching television, lounging, eating meals, and parties will take place. Ease of furniture arrangement is important, along with ample open space to allow easy flow during large get-togethers. A large fireplace will be used in the middle of the space to separate various functions and better define the long room. There should be good flow to the outside balconies through the use of french doors. Adequate heating and cooling is important for maintaining comfort with the large expanses of windows and doors. Lighting should be used to enhance important elements of the room such as the fireplace and floor to ceiling windows. Lighting should be carefully designed around the exterior perimeter to prevent the windows from becoming dark holes at night. Lighting will also be used to accentuate the columns around the outside perimeter of the apartment. Floor materials will be hardwood to provide a warm feeling and enhanced durability compared to carpeting.

Balconies

The balconies are adjacent to the main living/dining space of the apartment. These outdoor spaces should be easy to access from the rest of the living spaces. Ample lighting should be provided to allow for continuous use during nighttime hours. There should be room for tables, benches, and several potted plants or other planting beds. Since the balconies are covered, there should be provisions for watering plants with easily accessible spigots and drains for removing excess water. Flooring will be stone tiles for durability and water resistance.

Lower Floor

Master Bedroom

The primary bedroom is to be located on the lower floor of the unit, near the bottom of the stairs to allow for easy access to the rest of the apartment. The space should be easy to close off, both
visually and acoustically, from the rest of the unit. A fireplace is provided at the opposite end of the room from the bed wall, along with a built-in TV cabinet. Lighting will be used specifically to highlight the fireplace and provide reading light over the head of the bed space. Noise separation from the rest of the apartment, the master bathroom, and outside is very important. Intermediary spaces such as closets can be used to provide some noise separation. Carpeting will be used on the floor for comfort and noise cancellation properties.

**Master Bathroom**

The master bathroom is set up for use by two people in all units. It is directly adjacent to the master bedroom, and it can only be accessed through that room. Along with the master bedroom itself, the bathroom should be easy to close off for privacy.

The first area in the bathroom are the two master closets. A deep closet with ample room for built-in drawers and cabinets, as well as for hanging garments is provided on each side of the space leading to the rest of the bathroom. Proper overhead lighting, as well as lighting inside the closets are important for visual clarity when trying on clothes. Mirrors on the doors will allow space for examining one’s self while trying on clothes, as well as helping the space seem larger. Tile flooring will tie this area in with the adjacent bathroom.

Two separate lavatories are provided for each person to use individually, and they are contained within their own zone of the bathroom, separate from the toilet/bath/shower area and the closet area. Lighting will be provided from above, and from the sides to ensure proper facial illumination when standing in front of the mirrors above each lavatory. A tile floor is used for durability and water resistance. In the other section of the bathroom are the toilet, a large whirlpool bathtub, and a separate shower with two heads. Lighting should be provided over each of the fixtures to ensure good illumination for reading as well as overall visibility. Ventilation is extremely important for removing excess moisture. The exhaust fan should be integrated with the rest of the HVAC system for continuous operation and greater
efficiency. Tile floors and walls provide for durability, easy cleaning, and water resistance.

**Second Bedroom (Corner Units Only)**

The second bedroom is intended as a guest bedroom or a nursery. It is to be located on the lower floor of the unit, near the bottom of the stairs to allow for easy access to the rest of the apartment. The space should be easy to close off, both visually and acoustically, from the rest of the unit. A built-in window seat along the south wall provides storage as well as seating options. Noise separation from the rest of the apartment, the master bedroom, and outside is very important. Intermediary spaces such as closets can be used to provide some noise separation. The closet will provide ample room for built-in drawers and cabinets, as well as for hanging garments. Lighting will be provided inside the closet, as well as general lighting in the bedroom itself, especially to accentuate the columns around the outside perimeter of the apartment. Carpeting will be used on the floor for comfort and noise cancellation properties.

**Multipurpose Room**

The multipurpose room is intended to be used as a space open to the rest of the downstairs, or as an additional enclosed bedroom with the installation of temporary walls. It is to be located on the lower floor of the unit, near the bottom of the stairs to allow for easy access to the rest of the apartment. Built-in desks and window seats will accommodate use of the space as a sitting room, computer room, den, office, or hobby room. The built-ins will be placed such that they will not interfere with the enclosure of the room as a bedroom if there is such a desire. A closet will provide ample room for built-in drawers and cabinets, as well as for hanging garments if the bedroom is enclosed. Lighting will be provided inside the closet, as well as general lighting in the room itself, especially to accentuate the columns around the outside perimeter of the apartment. Carpeting will be used on the floor for comfort and noise cancellation properties.
**Downstairs Bathroom**

The downstairs bathroom is set up for use by guests, children, or people working in the downstairs office space. It is located near the second bedroom (if present) and the optional other bedroom or multipurpose room. The bathroom should be easy to close off for privacy. One lavatory is provided, along with a toiled and a combined shower/bathtub. Lighting will be provided from above, and from the sides to ensure proper facial illumination when standing in front of the mirrors above the lavatory. Lighting should be provided over each of the fixtures to ensure good illumination for reading as well as overall visibility. Ventilation is extremely important for removing excess moisture. Tile floors and walls provide for durability, easy cleaning, and water resistance.

**Laundry Room**

The laundry room houses a side-by-side or stacking washing machine and dryer. It is located on the interior of the unit, away from the bedrooms and multipurpose room. The room is hidden under the stairs, but it remains open to the rest of the apartment so one can hear alarms/buzzers set off by the washer and dryer. This is also where the main air handler is located for the unit. Storage space is provided for bulky items that do not store well in normal closets. Venting for the dryer and plumbing hookups for the washer and air handler/humidifier are located near the unit’s central service core. Tile flooring with a drain is provided for durability, easy cleaning, and water resistance in case of leaks.

**Bonus Room (Not in Corner Units)**

The bonus room is located in the center of the building, behind the laundry room. This room will have doors between two units. The doors will be locked depending on which unit the room is assigned to. It is intended to be used as a workshop, dark room, or bulk storage closet.
Roof Terrace

The roof terrace occupies most of the available space on the roof of the building. This outdoor space should be easily accessible by stairwells and the building’s main elevator. Ample lighting should be provided to allow for continuous use during nighttime hours. There should be room for tables, benches, and several potted plants or other planting beds to be used collectively by residents of the building. There should be provisions for watering plants with easily accessible spigots and drains for removing excess water. Flooring will be stone tiles for durability and water resistance.

Rental Office

The rental office should be easily accessible from the front lobby. The area should be easy to secure overnight, or while management is showing units to prospective renters. Built-in office furniture provides working space for the staff, and storage room for advertising files and lease agreements. A powder room and small kitchenette will be provided for use by the office and maintenance staff. Vinyl flooring will be used throughout for durability and ease of cleaning.

Garage Parking

Each studio and one bedroom apartment unit will be assigned one parking space, while the two bedroom units will have an option for two spaces. These spaces will be provided in an underground garage accessible from the east/west alley. Access will be controlled by a key card/fob for security. Access to the rest of the apartment building through stairwells and the elevator is important to minimize unnecessary traveling. Proper lighting is important to prevent the space from appearing foreboding and cavernous. Orange sodium vapor lighting is not acceptable. Ventilation is extremely important to remove exhaust fumes and moisture. Materials will be concrete throughout for durability.
Bibliography


