1992

Unwinding the Past: An Educational Program for the Preservation Planning Process

Sarah Payne Korjeff
University of Pennsylvania

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UNWINDING THE PAST:
AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
FOR THE PRESERVATION PLANNING PROCESS

Sarah Payne Korjeff

A THESIS

in

The Graduate Program in Historic Preservation

Presented to the Faculties of the University of Pennsylvania in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

1992

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INTRODUCTION
Preservation planning faces opposition in many communities because its goals and values are not clearly understood. This thesis addresses the lack of communication between communities and their planners by encouraging increased citizen awareness and participation in the preservation planning field. As more and more communities face development pressures and confront the possibility of instituting preservation planning as a mitigating strategy, the need to convey preservation's potential benefits becomes more important.

Educational activities that seek to convey an area's heritage are often developed after planning programs are in place. Optimally, however, they should be instituted prior to establishing preservation planning regulations. Education can enhance the effectiveness of the planning process in its earliest stages by helping residents to understand what historic preservation can offer to existing communities, and by encouraging them to become informed decision-makers and supporters. If the general public could readily recognize the variety of historical resources in their surroundings, and could interpret them as indications of a much larger historic picture, the values of preservation planning would become more apparent.

Through the use of a simple educational program, this thesis proposes a means of fostering a self-informed constituency that is aware of the significant historic resources around them. At the core of the program is a concept for representing the process of historical evolution and the integral physical elements of a community, highlighting their interrelationships. After being introduced to the program's basic premise, citizens will be
stimulated to determine for themselves what is interpretable in their surroundings. They will then be prepared to weigh the values of preservation against development, and to support that which they believe is best for their own community.
Chapter 1

THE PRESERVATION PLANNING PROCESS:
WHAT'S MISSING
Historic Preservation is a broad field dedicated to the restoration, rehabilitation and maintenance of man-made objects and landscapes that reflect past periods of our history. Preservation planning concerns the use of pro-active rather than reactive efforts to protect these historic resources. Though the field of preservation planning is not closely defined, it has in recent years become allied with other forms of land use planning, resulting in efforts to monitor and regulate change in historic areas in ways similar to those used in related land use fields. The goals of preservation planning, in general terms, are to retain data inherent in our cultural resources and to direct change in a way that allows historic sites to continue conveying the history that they represent. The wide scope of this field has led to the creation of a broad range of innovative programs designed to achieve these goals, but an important aspect seems to receive little attention: education.

Preservation planning lacks a manner of explaining its broad goals to the public. Since there is no generally accepted definition of preservation planning, and preservation planners employ a wide variety of unfamiliar programs, outsiders cannot be expected to comprehend the field's value. The public needs to become more familiar with preservation planning, its versatility, and how it can respond to their involvement and influence. This thesis aims to establish an educational program that promotes a greater understanding of the built environment and thus, by creating an increased awareness of its value, encourages public participation in preservation planning. The educational program will provide a means for citizens to interpret the historic development of their community through their own investigation of existing structures and landscapes. It will prompt them to
identify the primary visible forces of change and to note their manifestation in the community. The program's success will depend on its ability to be clear and informative, and to provide a vehicle that motivates residents to interpret their surroundings, to determine what is important to them, and to understand the value of preservation planning.

Planners have tried to involve the public in planning decisions for several decades, hoping to make the process more democratic and to gain support for their actions. Recent studies in related fields indicate that public participation is essential to successful planning, and this theory holds true also for preservation planning. Without input from residents who can point out the value of an historic site on a local level, recognized sites will be largely the ones that reflect only our national heritage, thus omitting an important part of our collective history.

While hoping to encourage participation in preservation planning, we must confront the fact that not all citizens have identified images of the past in their environment. Before citizens can be informed participants in preservation planning, they must grasp the history that surrounds them, and thus develop the ability to make informed value judgements. Though education has long been considered a form of citizen participation in planning, it usually refers to information dissemination rather than to an interactive educational program. Education that not only disburses information, but also promotes an active process of understanding the environment's historic evolution, can lead to greater support for preservation planning and more valuable input into its processes of development.
A. Understanding the Goals and Forms of Preservation Planning:

The concept of planning cities survives from at least as early as the 15th century, when defense was the major concern and a city was designed around its fortifications. In their more current form, city and regional planning are concerned with balancing the myriad existing and future needs of a community's inhabitants against the economic and physical resources available. Comprehensive planning is a term used to describe a relatively recent trend in planning that focuses on identifying a community's goals for future development. A comprehensive plan outlines what needs to be done, when, and how it will be accomplished, serving as a long-range guide to the physical and economic development of a community and, if necessary, creating regulations and programs to enforce its goals. Responding to the expansion of cities and technology, growth management through comprehensive planning has recently begun to be recognized as a successful way of confronting the increasing development pressures facing most towns. Preservation planning is more and more frequently included in comprehensive plans, expanding its usage, but not necessarily explaining its goals to the public in the process. While the public may be exposed to zoning and other aspects of land use law because of their affiliation with home ownership, preservation planning does not have a similar forum.

Citizens often have an automatic negative response to planning. This may be a reaction to poor planning in the past, it may be a hesitancy to

\[1\text{Lewis Mumford, The City in History. (Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.: New York, 1961), pp. 357-8.}\]
embrace change, or it may be due to a belief that planning challenges the
democratic principles on which our governmental system was founded. When
an owner perceives that property values and quality of life are subject to
planning considerations or regulations, it is easy to view these outside
influences as a threat. Such opposition or suspicion of planning may result
from a lack of understanding of its goals and of the thought processes that lead
planners to recommend certain actions or regulations.

As with any evolving field, historic preservation is constantly
developing and changing in theory and in action. Preservation has matured
from a field that focused on saving battlefields and presidential homes in the
early 20th century to one that today encompasses the breadth of a nation’s
history. International Charters guide the actions of historic preservationists,
and modern technology is increasingly used in the restoration of monuments
and structures. Preservation planning has grown beyond landmark
designations and historic districts, to include new programs such as heritage
corridors, conservation districts, and facade easements, each responding to
different needs and providing different levels of regulation. Unfortunately,
however, a large segment of the population still equates preservation with the
actions and goals that it encompassed several decades ago.

Preservation’s goals today incorporate room for greater compromise
than they did in the past, balancing maintenance of historic materials with
social goals such as affordable housing and reasonable community growth.
The notion that preservation planning should include conservation of all
existing historic buildings is recognized by most preservationists as both
"anti-historical and anti-cultural" because it would severely limit the current
society's ability to express itself through new structures. Preservation must always be aware of the fact that history, and its interpretation, is an evolutionary process.¹ The "cultural memory" that we are left with in any community is a unique product of the accomplishments and growth of that community throughout time, and of its interpretation by the community's occupants.

Unlike natural resources, which can be preserved by making them inaccessible, the educational and community value of an historic resource is largely determined by its accessibility to the public - its ability to convey the past to the people who view it. This is not meant to say that historic resources that are inaccessible have no value, but rather to recognize that the public is less able to measure this value. Preservation planning explores the means of managing historic resources in a changing world, stabilizing physical structures and maintaining elements of a community's history that help to define it. Though change in itself is not detrimental, change as the product of rapid growth can manifest itself in insensitive development, straining a community's ability to absorb future growth and threatening the character and scale that are the roots of its attractiveness.²

The first step in developing a preservation plan for a community usually entails compiling an inventory by researching all structures and sites in the area to determine those that have architectural or historical significance. This information is then used to determine the focus of local

efforts. An inventory, however, may seemingly take forever to compile, especially in an area with an abundance of historic resources and only a small group of preservationists and volunteers. In Cape Cod, Massachusetts, for instance, only nine out of fifteen towns have completed inventories, in spite of the fact that they began working on them more than a decade ago.¹

Generating interest in our historic structures and involving more people in the research of historic sites will facilitate the inventory process. Some cities and towns are including the local community in research of nearby historic buildings, both speeding up the inventory, placing structures on a register more quickly, and providing an educational opportunity.² At the same time, they are creating an informed and interested constituency that can challenge the appropriateness of demolition or alteration of these sites until they receive some legal protection.³

Once a site is researched, inventoried and determined to have historic significance, it can be placed on a local, state, or national register of historic places. The different registers afford varying degrees of protection against demolition and alteration, requiring proposed changes to go through a review process that weighs the benefits of the change against the value of the historic structure before a permit will be granted. The National Register protects against demolition or incompatible alteration by federal government funded projects only, while state and local registers can require extensive

¹Information compiled by the author, June/July 1991.
²The Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia is one organization that involves local communities in the research and inventory of historic districts.
review of state and local projects and thus, typically, a higher degree of protection. A large number of historic resources, however, have no protection at all simply because they have not yet been inventoried and placed on a register of any kind.

Local, state, and national historic districts also provide varying amounts of protection for historic resources. Historic districts are geographically defined areas that contain a concentration of registered structures or sites and operate under an ordinance that defines the district's powers. As with individual properties, National Register Historic Districts only provide for review of demolition, new construction or alteration proposals that are federally funded, while state and local districts can impose more broad-reaching regulations and may include design review boards to govern the shape and style of new construction.

Though design review is welcomed in some communities, it is shunned in others, frequently because it is viewed as a barrier to development. The growth of local design review can be seen, at least in part, as a negative response to modern architecture and the non-site-specific structures of post-war service industries that significantly changed the character of many historic areas. Design review boards are primarily concerned with promoting new structures that maintain harmony with existing buildings, and usually do not mandate that new architecture look like it is an original component of its historic surroundings. Requiring a new structure to look like an historic
building contradicts preservation theory, which states that all buildings should reflect the age in which they were constructed.¹

In addition to inventories, individual register designation, and districts, preservation planners have developed many other types of programs in recent years to provide protection to historic resources. For example, heritage corridors or "greenline parks" combine public parks with privately owned residential and commercial historic properties under a common management strategy that guides land use and economic development.² Another form of protection, preservation easements, provides restrictions on the development or alteration of specific lands or buildings. An easement is an agreement between a private property owner and an organization whereby the property owner sells or donates the right to govern treatment of his property. Donated easements are tax-deductible gifts and provide one of several tax incentives for preserving historic properties.³ Finally, conservation districts are an evolving preservation planning tool. In general, they create a local district that focuses on the conservation of older residential structures in low to moderate income areas by encouraging maintenance without imposing strict design review regulations.

Determining what types of preservation planning are appropriate for each community is a difficult process. Not all preservation planners are familiar with all of the available tools or necessarily know the extent of

²James Krohe, Jr., "You Call This a National Park?" Planning (August 1990), pp. 5-6.
valuable historic resources in an area. Citizens can provide assistance at the local level because they are familiar with the area in question and they know its most pressing needs. As professionals in the field search for innovative ways to preserve and interpret the past, they must also search for ways to involve the general public in their programs.

B. The Role of Citizen Participation:

Citizen energy tapped through public participation can contribute to efficient implementation.... Citizens can be the best salespersons for the measure, as well as the best 'watchdogs' for its enforcement.¹

Citizen participation or, more simply, citizen involvement in decision-making processes, has been studied closely in recent decades, generating an analysis of its various forms, successes and failures. The primary benefits of citizen involvement in planning are thought to be participatory democracy and comprehensive communication. Both terms refer to situations where the public represents its own interests, thus providing the most accurate record of its opinions.² The theory that a citizen has the greatest knowledge of his most important needs is widely accepted today, and while a planner has the tools to improve a situation, he likely does not have the intimate knowledge of the community that is necessary to create the most beneficial plan for it.

One planner has observed the strange logic of relying on neighborhood associations for input when administrators were hired for their technical competence and ability to make neutral decisions. Several administrators have noted, however, that neighborhood groups have made them aware of problems and priorities they might not have otherwise recognized. Clearly, community input has proven beneficial, and citizen involvement often generates greater confidence in the planning process. Once citizens believe planning accurately represents their interests, they can provide the support necessary to implement a plan and to improve its chances for success.

Participation can manifest itself in several ways, and most scholars create a hierarchy to explain the varying depths of public involvement. One level is composed of programs that provide information to the public, such as workshops, information seminars, and direct mailings. The limits of this type of participation stem from its one-way flow of information, creating no specific outlet through which informed residents can respond. The second level involves citizen interaction with decision-makers, frequently in citizen advisory committees, organized lobbying efforts, or public meetings. Participation of this sort gives the citizen direct contact with planners and encourages feedback, but does not give any definite decision-making power. The third level of participation includes the citizen in the decision-making process, often through local referenda, but also in citizen review boards or co-design projects that give the citizen an actual vote in the decision.

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Public meetings are perhaps the most frequently employed form of citizen participation, but they have been questioned by some planners as a successful way of representing the general public.¹ Studies have shown that, provided meetings are well-publicized, easily accessed, and all participants are asked their opinion, they can broadly represent the general public's interest.² Others argue, however, that accurate grass roots opinions are best gathered by soliciting individual responses from the citizens themselves, because community leaders are often the only speakers at public meetings and their opinions can be much less broad-based than the communities they represent.³ Though the benefits of community participation are well recognized, the best means of encouraging participation are disputed.

Unfortunately, planners have found that being open to broad citizen participation will not always induce it. An example from a 1974 survey is discouraging: "despite a saturation of a community with programmes of exhibitions and public meetings, and wide coverage of the events by means of posters and local press statements and advertisements, only one-third of the respondents to a survey had any real appreciation of the planning situation or issues in the study area."⁴

There will always be people uninterested in joining the planning process. A differentiation must be made, however, between those who are

⁴Fagence, p. 276.
uninterested and those who are merely uninformed. Planners should provide everyone with the potential to become interested in their surroundings, because the value of localized input is high. If a community does not have existing organizations that provide education and encourage participation in planning, it should be the job of the planning organization to create them.

C. Combining Localized Decision-Making with National Efforts:

The National Trust for Historic Preservation’s 1991 Conference speakers and participants acknowledged the need to pay greater attention to preservation interests at a local level. Several keynote speakers addressed the issues of multi-culturalism and grassroots involvement and, in a conference poll, most participants believed that greater emphasis should be placed on grassroots participation in preservation than on strengthening training and standards for professionals in the field.\(^1\) In recognizing that the diverse cultures of our nation imply a diversity of values, the need for a diversity of historic interpretations becomes obvious. Changing demographics will affect the interpretation of American history, encouraging a much broader focus and therefore modifying what the nation values and wants to preserve. By the year 2000, one third of America’s population will be minorities. Then, as now, the portions of American history that are important to one cultural group may not be obvious to others. For historic preservation to be relevant to these multicultural groups, it must represent and appreciate the backgrounds and

values of all ethnicities; "values [that] must be identified, evaluated, protected, and interpreted by people in their own neighborhoods and on their own terms."¹

Multiculturalism has been a leading force in encouraging citizen participation in preservation activities, forcing preservationists and historians to realize that the existing historical focus is not broad enough to represent all Americans. The belief that residents of a community can contribute to a determination of its most valuable resources has been readily extended to preservation planning. A building that was significant during one period in history may mean nothing to the community that currently exists around it. Similarly, a building of no particular architectural significance may symbolize an important center of an existing community. Local residents will be able to point out the relationships that reach beyond documented history and help determine a current focus for local preservation efforts that will best serve the existing community.

The means of involving citizens in preservation planning are similar to those described for general citizen participation. Some preservation organizations work directly with local residents in workshops and other forums, collecting input and using it directly in the creation of programs to protect specific historic resources. But other preservation planners work without closely addressing local opinions. This lack of communication is likely due to the limited understanding of basic preservation tools, but it also may be partly explained by the planners' concern that residents have not identified the significance of most historic resources in their community. Though

¹45th National Preservation Conference, p. 3.
citizens may note that historic sites give their community a distinctive feel, without at least a general understanding of the community's evolution and how existing resources mark that evolution, citizens may see little value in many important historic structures and landscapes.

For preservation planning to fulfill its goals, it must protect structures of both historic and contemporary importance within a community. Planners need to know that the evaluation local citizens ascribe to historic structures is founded on a knowledge of the building's role in the historical development of the community. With this basic knowledge, citizens will be able to make an informed decision regarding the value of an historic site, and preservation planners will be better able to use their input.

D. Creating An Informed Constituency Through Education:

It is interesting to note the correlation that many authors have cited between identifiable neighborhoods and citizen participation. The existence of a "sense of place" seems to encourage an informed and interested constituency. One study found that the mere presence of a neighborhood planning process served to provide a clear definition of the community and encourage citizen participation. Residents of a community share a common fate regarding planning issues like local services, job opportunities, and quality of life, and people can be mobilized when they believe they have a

common stake in an issue. More homogeneous neighborhoods, then, are most likely to have good citizen participation because of their shared concerns.¹

Geographic influences can also comprise a significant part of the determination of homogeneity. The degree to which a neighborhood is a well-defined spatial unit, and the ability of that geographic unit to generate common concerns that are solvable through joint action, will contribute to the tendency to participate.² As communities expand, however, citizen participation usually decreases, ostensibly because residents are unable to identify personal stakes with community interests, and the definition of their community becomes ambiguous.

An educational program can help to uncover the special characteristics of a neighborhood that make it identifiable, and preservation planning can work to maintain that sense of cohesiveness that becomes so integral to a community's existence. Education programs that focus on our physical surroundings or "material culture" can bridge the gap between people living today and the architectural and cultural forms that are products of the past. They should help citizens to see how particular landscapes and structures that represent past events have evolved into the present, and thus open the door to an understanding of a much broader heritage than that which is immediately visible or interpreted. The democratic ideal of "the active and informed citizen" is fostered by providing people with opportunities to acquire information throughout their lives, and meaningful lay input is more likely to

²Haeberle, p. 60; Christopher Alexander, et al., A Pattern Language. (Center for Environmental Structure: Berkeley, CA, 1977), pp. 81-84.
come from those possessing a sound knowledge base before an issue arises.\(^1\) Preservation education, therefore, should optimally be in place before growth management becomes necessary.

The educational program described in this thesis will explain the integral pieces of a community's development as evidenced in its material culture, and leave the residents to find vestiges of those elements today. By keeping the program non-site-specific, focusing on the physical manifestations of growth found in any community, the possibility of the program designer's historical bias penetrating the program is prevented. The program participants will learn to interpret their surroundings and find value in them by following their own instincts and investigations. To discover how a place came to be requires unraveling local histories, folk memories, badly filed documents, and linkages with surroundings that may have changed almost beyond recognition. However, "it is our own exploration of places that alone can expose us to the magic beyond deeds, and to visual revelations beyond history,"\(^2\)

As one citizen participation specialist has written: "For neighborhood residents to be mobilized, they need to recognize a public problem, believe they have a stake in it, see the possibility of a solution resulting from their actions, and attach greater value to resolving the issue than to alternative uses of their marginal resources."\(^3\) Individuals in areas that are threatened by development pressures or are targeted for an historic district nomination are most likely to be interested in devoting time to participating in the

\(^1\)Connor, pp. 250-251; Howell et al., p. 5; Fagence, p. 176.
\(^3\)Haeberle, p. 4.
preservation planning process. But until that threat or potential arrives, educational programs can help provide cohesiveness and set the stage for successful preservation planning. "Until people become conscious of the surrounding environment and understand it, thinking creatively about using or changing it is not possible." ¹

Chapter 2

DEMONSTRATING THE COMMUNITY NEED FOR EDUCATION
Every community has a history worthy of recognition. Though one might expect that the older a town is, the more likely it is to recognize its abundant historic resources, this does not appear to always be the case. Even among communities with strong roots in previous centuries, public appreciation for early structures and landforms can be limited. This level of appreciation is likely determined by past efforts in historic preservation and history education.

The value of sites related to our Founding Fathers and to the Revolutionary and Civil Wars has been recognized for over a century. The importance of workers' communities, however, though central to our nation's pre-industrial and industrial development, has only been acknowledged more recently. Similarly, since the late 1800s, old residences have frequently been preserved as house museums or the headquarters for a local Historical Society. But sites such as migrant communities or recreational landscapes are still not well recognized for what they reveal of the past. Though in recent years historians and preservationists have broadened their view of important historical events, the general public has yet to catch up.

A pattern appears to develop when comparing communities with a range of local history knowledge and a range of attitudes toward preservation planning. Communities containing historic structures and landscapes whose significance has been well publicized are generally the ones whose residents are most aware of their historic resources. Towns that do not identify themselves with a recognized national phenomenon or a highly visible and unique local phenomenon are more likely to lose sight of the historic resources they have, even though they may be equally valuable.
Without a simple understanding of how historic developments and structures interrelate, most people will pass over the obvious historical information that buildings and landscapes represent. For example, any cluster of older residences reveals an original settlement or a period of community growth, but how many current residents recognize these clusters as illustrative or can identify the historic event that sparked this growth in their town? Transportation axes and nearby natural resources may have dictated a community's development, but how many people today perceive this relationship that is so integral to their town's current existence? The causes for development of every human settlement can be traced back in time through the physical environment, and most towns will find that many vestiges of their early days still remain, but residents are frequently only aware of those resources about which they have been specifically informed or educated. This awareness of historic significance is generally directly reflected in the extent of preservation activity and acceptance in the community.

Increasing growth pressures usually provide the greatest impetus for institution of preservation planning techniques. Large scale new development often begins at the border of a community, but as it infiltrates the town center it can pose the first serious threat to historic structures and the first major physical changes in generations. If a community has a progressive planning policy and is aware of what is at stake, professional planners may be hired to recommend strategies that allow growth while protecting the existing community. However, if local officials or residents are uninformed about growth management and see no intrinsic value in their
historic structures, the community may not understand the struggle between its existing atmosphere and the pressing development. Evidence of many communities that battled heavy growth pressures before comprehensive planning became common practice is visible today. Large shopping centers surround historic commercial centers, drawing the vitality out of them, commercial strips redefine the entrance to towns that were previously marked by open farmland, and entire blocks razed to make room for modern redevelopment effectively obliterate all evidence of the structures and open spaces that stood for generations of growth before them.

Growth, even at unusually high rates, can be very appealing to a community facing economic decline. Consequently, the economic stability of an area will also affect the way in which it views preservation planning programs. If planning is viewed as a hindrance to economic progress and income-producing development, it will be looked upon unfavorably. If preservation programs are understood to encourage economic growth in cooperation with growth management, however, they may find a high level of support. Since growth management has achieved greater recognition, areas that have yet to experience high growth pressures are today far more likely to monitor and control the impact of heavy development than they were in the past. In maintaining their unique historic atmosphere, many communities have fostered tourism and attracted new residents and businesses to their locale, both establishing a new economic resource and protecting the atmosphere that makes their town recognizable.
A. Sense of Place

"Sense of place" is a concept frequently used by preservationists, environmentalists, growth management consultants and others to describe an area's special qualities. It is also used to judge an individual's recognition of that information. Interest in discussing and developing this concept of "sense of place" heightened as development pressures increased and new construction began to obliterate the particular and special elements of a community's built and natural environment.¹ In an attempt to encourage people to notice what was unique about their area, and thus to act to protect it, recent books have attempted to direct an individual toward identifying his "sense of place." These writings discuss how people can open their eyes and minds to the community around them by acknowledging patterns, relationships, interaction, and sensual experiences.

"Sense of place" publications have dealt with both tangible and intangible evaluations of a person's surroundings. In some cases, "sense of place" refers to a feeling of uniqueness particular to every place and every individual; something based not so much on specific sites and structures as on an individual's experience of them. Tony Hiss, in one of the most recently published books dealing with "sense of place," describes what he calls "simultaneous perception" as a way of uncovering normally ignored aspects of one's surroundings. Hiss details almost subconscious reactions to small changes in the environment - quickened steps, feelings of security, or

¹Clay, Close-up, p. 61.
attention drawn toward particular objects. He then translates the acknowledgement of these reactions into a heightened awareness of his surroundings, developing a closer relationship with a site through an understanding of how it affects him.¹

Most "sense of place" publications essentially strive toward a goal that is very compatible with historic preservation - recognition of the surrounding environment. Preservation planners often use the concept of "sense of place" to identify the physical aspects of a community that define its atmosphere, and then to convey these ideas to the local residents. "Sense of place," in its more tangible form, directs people to notice the specific elements that are particular to their community and that make it look the way it does. Residents may become involved in the process of determining these identifying elements and, in doing so, usually begin to understand why they should be maintained through guidelines for new development.²

But the sense of place writings stop short of providing what could be one of the most obvious means of understanding one's place: a simple method of tracing the historical development of an area through its existing buildings and landscapes. Even when they ask members of the community to help determine an area's special qualities, "sense of place" projects rarely include an educational program that teaches residents more about their history before asking them to identify what is valuable in their surroundings. "Sense of place," in preservation terms, should ultimately be derived from an understanding of how the elements of one's community relate to each other

²See, generally, Garnham, Maintaining the Spirit of Place.
and to national developments as a whole. It is this *understanding* of place that will make a difference in community attitudes, and that should be encouraged through education.

*B. Preservation in Varied Communities:*

To determine the contribution of heritage education to the success of preservation planning, it is helpful to examine a sampling of communities. By viewing cases that exhibit a variety of situations and varying degrees of interest in growth management, it is possible to identify some of the main factors affecting the development and continuation of preservation planning and to determine whether they might be affected by further educational programs. The aim of this chapter is to document a trend toward greater citizen acceptance and support for preservation planning techniques when a community is well-informed of the historical significance of its structures and greater cultural landscape.

* * *

Johnstown, Pennsylvania, provides some insight into a community faced with economic decline but looking for a solution in innovative preservation planning. Johnstown is famous for the great flood that occurred in 1889, as well as for its rich industrial heritage. As noted previously, a community's historic resources must have a recognized significance before preservation planning is likely to be instituted. In the case of Johnstown, recognition came relatively recently, in response to the attention directed
toward America's industrial past through the creation of Industrial Heritage Corridors.

Industrial Heritage Corridors are largely a product of work begun by the National Park Service in 1985. When the Park Service recognized a combination of local, state, and national interests in industrial areas' rich social history and production growth, they began working on regional efforts to protect and interpret these resources. The Corridor is essentially a partnership that connects industrial sites and their surrounding communities in a path of planned districts, often following the routes along which industrial products were transported historically.

Johnstown, as home to the Bethlehem Steel Corporation, is part of a perceived industrial corridor that stretches to nearby coal and railroad communities. Its revitalization is directed by America's Industrial Heritage Program (AIHP), a product of the National Park Service research that focuses on industrial communities experiencing an economic decline, sometimes referred to as de-industrialization. AIHP seeks to establish renewed economic security by developing tourism programs and encouraging private investment, following the example of Lowell, Massachusetts, an historic mill town that used preservation to encourage $800 million in private investment by high technology industries. Thus far, Johnstown's development plan has emphasized the incentives of preservation planning, rather than the control aspects, but planners expect to win the residents' support even in the newly

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2Jerry Kunzio, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Johnstown, PA. Telephone interview, February 24, 1992; James Krohe, Jr., "You Call This a National Park?" Planning (August 1990), p. 5.

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regulated historic districts. Johnstown residents view preservation planning as a potential money-making process, and the community seems encouraged by its programs. As the executive director of the Johnstown Heritage Association stated, the people feel generally powerless because of their economic situation, and they are happy to see their area preserved after watching a nearby neighborhood leveled in the 1950s.1

Even with community support for preservation, an increased focus on heritage education programs in Johnstown is important. Though the citizens have accepted preservation planning for its economic potential, many still fail to see value in understanding the history of coal and steel industries.2 To meet its goals, preservation planning's acceptance must include an understanding of the historic significance that prompts the planning. Educational programs, thus, must be directed not only at the tourists who provide economic support, but also at the local residents who will largely determine the success and extent of any preservation program that is initiated.

The Johnstown Flood Museum, while primarily geared toward tourists, sponsors a folk festival and a few other heritage-related activities that attract a broad cross-section of the community and begin to promote local education. Perhaps more importantly, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in Johnstown has recently hired an educational director to coordinate local history programs aimed at schoolchildren and adults. (Currently, the director's efforts are focused on school programs because of

the difficulty in finding a forum to reach adults.\textsuperscript{1} The presence of preservation and related organizations will influence the community's acceptance of preservation planning. The existence of such groups notes at least some perception of the historic significance of the area, though spreading the recognition of its significance may be dependent on the success of these organizations' educational activities.

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Similar economic development and cultural awareness factors affect preservation planning in a different type of community. Elverson, Pennsylvania, is a small town that developed in the mid 1700s in response to surrounding iron furnaces and ore-producing mines. In the later 19th century, extension of a railroad line to Elverson increased its significance as a shipping and receiving community, spurring enough growth to attract small industries and commercial development in its center. The town retains its wealth of 19th century structures and has grown little in the 20th century, maintaining a population of only several hundred people.\textsuperscript{2}

Elverson has been lucky to avoid much of the growth pressures affecting small towns in recent decades. The majority of the town's historic structures are intact and still used as the residences and commercial properties for which they were designed. Only in the past several years have development proposals become an issue. Currently, a large farm in the town is being proposed for subdivision which, if completed, will approximately triple the size of the town. The recent installation of public water and sewers makes

\textsuperscript{1}Ann Safely, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Telephone interview, February 24, 1992; Berkert, 1992.

\textsuperscript{2}National Register nomination for Elverson, PA. Compiled by Pamela Shenk, June 1991.
this possible. In addition, the Bank of Elverson has proposed plans for a mall and light industrial park at one end of the town. Though the National Register Historic District nomination for Elverson notes that "new buildings and businesses have built on the perimeters without threatening the original character of the street scape," this may soon be no longer true.\(^1\) All of the above developments would significantly increase the traffic along the town's main street, PA Route 23, where large homes still function as residences. Zoning exceptions have already been granted to several homeowners along the street, and some residents now fear that the entire road may become a series of commercial properties and apartment buildings.\(^2\)

Because the Town Council in Elverson had not been faced with major development plans in the past, they were unfamiliar with growth management tools when recent development proposals were submitted. At the request of some Council members, professional planners were eventually consulted regarding the proposals, and the Town Council is now considering incorporation of open space and park planning in the borough. Unfortunately, they are not interested in creating an historic district. As one councilman was quoted at the prospect of establishing a district, "I won't spend tax money to make the town historic. There's nothing historic in this town."\(^3\)

Elverson faces the problem of little recognition of it's historical significance. Even as the importance of industrial areas such as Johnstown begins to be recognized, the small towns surrounding them have not received

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\(^1\)National Register nomination, Elverson, PA.


\(^3\)Beaton, 1992.
much attention. The population of Elverson is mostly elderly, and though they view their community as "old," it does not appear to them as "historic."\(^1\) This attitude may be attributed to the fact that little has been done to help the people of Elverson see any historic significance in their structures. An Historical Commission was formed several years ago and it prompted a National Register Historic District nomination for the town's center, but it has been relatively inactive since. In addition, there is no local history program in the schools that could help to disseminate information or generate an awareness of the town's history to help change people's views of it from "old" to "historic." While newspaper articles about local history have sparked some interest, and a community group has shown support for preservation-related activities, the majority of the public still seems unconcerned with its history.\(^2\)

As in most communities, Elverson's residents exhibit a general resistance to change, and this resistance could help to make possible the institution of preservation planning. Since the wide implications of large scale development have been recognized, growth management has received some attention in this community. There appears to be greater attendance at meetings discussing zoning issues, and some realization that the town's future growth could have previously unforeseen affects on most of its residents. If people understood preservation as a way to manage change, it might receive the attention it deserves, but without efforts to explain this concept, there can be little hope for support of it. According to Town Council members, people in Elverson have the usual misunderstandings about National Register Historic

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\(^1\) Beaton, 1992; Shenk, 1992.

\(^2\) Shenk, 1992; Riley, 1992.
District regulations, wondering if the regulations will force them to remove aluminum siding or more recent additions on their homes. Basic education about preservation planning obviously must accompany efforts to employ it, and should be viewed as integral to the process of creating an awareness of a community's historic significance.

* * *

Doylestown, Pennsylvania, the county seat of Bucks County, provides an example of a community that has long recognized its historic significance and has been relatively successful in preserving it, despite heavy growth pressures. The streets in the town center are lined almost solely by pre-20th century structures, suggesting the atmosphere of the community at a much earlier time. In 1880, the Bucks County Historical Society was founded in Doylestown for the purpose of preserving artifacts and teaching about everyday life in pre-industrial America. The Historical Society's purpose included a focus on the town's early agricultural and crafts-making history, but it also reached far beyond the community's borders with its collections. This contrasts significantly with the many historical societies that formed around an effort to save a local historic house, or that developed in the later 20th century, and it indicates a recognition of local historic resources in Doylestown long before they were acknowledged elsewhere.

Doylestown created a local historic district in 1970, encompassing a large portion of the town center. Under Pennsylvania Act 167, which gives governing bodies the power to create historic districts, the Town Council has the power to regulate erection, reconstruction, alteration, restoration,

1Riley, 1992; Beaton, 1992.
demolition or razing of the structures within the local historic district, thus providing some protection to these buildings. An Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) was also created in accordance with Act 167, to review permit applications for alteration and new construction in relation to their effect on the historic district, and to make recommendations to the governing body on the advisability of granting permits for these projects. Act 167 requires that the HARB has a membership of at least five people with knowledge or interest in architecture and related fields.\(^1\)

As county seat, Doylestown benefits from the significant architectural examples that highlight Bucks County’s growth and success. In addition, it is the site of three unique concrete structures built by Henry Chapman Mercer in the early 20th century. These large buildings are highly visible, and with the aid of the Bucks County Conservancy, the Bucks County Historical Society, and the Foundation for Architecture, Doylestown’s historic significance has been represented through them for several decades. Though few residents may be aware of the booklet published by the Buck’s County Planning Commission in 1969 on Doylestown’s historic character, many have been exposed to historic architectural tours, festivals and other educational programs in the past 15 to 20 years.\(^2\)

Doylestown’s position as county seat has helped it to maintain a stable economy, but the town faces constant growth pressures. The farming community that once surrounded the town center has developed into commercial strips along Doylestown’s borders, and the strips continue to

expand. In order to maintain the viability of the town's central commercial district, growth management is necessary. Doylestown Township and Doylestown Borough planners have been sympathetic to preservation issues, and consequently, some preservation planning has been incorporated in their work. When an historic village was recently discovered within an area zoned for strip commercial use, a task force was quickly formed to study options to protect it and to restrict its development. In addition, Bucks County's comprehensive plan is currently being updated, and planners are expected to include more extensive preservation planning tools in its new form.¹

Educational programs and preservation planning efforts explain the awareness of Doylestown's historic significance and account for the maintenance of so many of the town's historic structures. The Planning Commission usually supports the Historic Architectural Review Board and, in doing so, represents the interests of most town residents.² Local professionals disagree, however, as to whether the citizens are necessarily knowledgeable about their town's history.³ Doylestown's beauty, as expressed in its buildings and landscapes, is important to most of its residents, but many may not realize that the structures also clearly convey the town's historical evolution. An educational program that focuses on recognition of a townscape as an interpretable resource could help to change this situation, and would perhaps

also generate increased interest in local planning activities. Knowledge of the history and interrelatedness of sites and structures in a community can provide a much broader understanding of their significance than an appreciation for their appearance can. The "indigenous feeling" that Doylestown's borough planner uses to describe most residents' feeling about the town's character should be recognized for what it is - a product of the town's history.¹

¹Jarret, 1992.
Chapter 3

A HISTORY OF DOYLESTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA
The history of Doylestown, Pennsylvania, is exemplary in that it does not contain site-specific boom or bust periods related to natural resources peculiar to its own location, but rather revolves around the growth of basic technologies, services, and social developments in history that were prevalent throughout America. The study of Doylestown's history is not intended to represent the history of all American towns, for it is obvious that every community develops around its own special circumstances, but it is meant to provide a focus on those elements that affect the growth of almost all towns. Doylestown's evolution will provide an example of the forces that work together to create a town and allow it to develop over time.¹

Doylestown was chosen as the sample community because so much of its history is currently visible in its structures and land-use patterns; from its streets lined with 19th century structures to its adaptively re-used jail and agricultural works. This makes Doylestown particularly illustrative for the educational program that follows. In examining a town that still speaks loudly of its heritage through its physical structures, the many recognizable elements that serve to interpret a town’s history can be noted.

The history of Doylestown may be divided roughly into five periods, each marking the introduction of several new influences on the physical structure of the town. The first period deals with the Indian settlement prior to colonization, the second marks the development of a crossroads community, the third establishes the elements of a fast-growing town, the fourth reveals

¹Unless otherwise noted, all historical information in this chapter comes from W.W.H. Davis's History of Doylestown, Old and New (Intelligencer Print: Doylestown, PA, 1904).
the early effects of an industrialized nation, and the fifth notes the influence of increasing technology on an average community.1

Pre-Colonization and Growth of a Crossroads:

Doylestown lies approximately 25 miles due north of Philadelphia. According to turn of the century newspaper accounts, prior to its colonization the region was densely wooded, frequented by big game, and a favorite hunting ground of the Indians.2 Two Indian trails crossed where Doylestown's center is now located, and evidence of this early heritage can be found in several Indian names in the town. It was not until 1720 that colonists began to enter the area, at that time owned by a group called the Free Society of Traders who had not sold or settled the land after they purchased it in 1682. In 1720, a road was constructed following one of the Indian trails passing through Doylestown. Though it was built to allow access to the Provincial Governor's plantation to the north, the road had the effect of opening up the area in between, and in 1726, the Society of Free Traders sold 2,000 acres for settlement.

A second road was constructed, following the other Indian trail through Doylestown, in 1730, to provide access to the Schuylkill River fords to the east. Thus a crossroads was created and passage through the area became more common. [See figure 1] The same year that the second road was completed, a settler near the crossroads began petitioning for a license to keep a public

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1These periods roughly correspond with those distinguished by the Doylestown Borough Planning Commission in their publication, Design Resources of Doylestown, published in 1969.
2Historical Sketches of Doylestown, a collection of essays from the Doylestown Democrat, January to December 1908, p. 15.
house there. Though there were at least six settlers in the area by 1735, the license was not granted until 1745.

By 1773, a hotel had also located near the crossroads, and shortly thereafter the tavern was replaced by a second hotel called the Fountain House, which still remains today. [See figure 2] Passage through the area must have been significant to supply both hotels, and in 1792 it surely increased as the first stagecoach line was directed through Doylestown on its path from Easton to Philadelphia.

This late 18th century Doylestown crossroads was described at the turn of the 20th century as little more than a clearing in the forest, with two inns, seven houses, a village blacksmith, and a log schoolhouse.¹ The small community provided enough resources to bring the stagecoach, however, and may have been more developed than the small list of structures indicates, encompassing farmland far beyond the town center. It was only 1800 when the first newspaper was published in Doylestown, The Farmer's Weekly Gazette; a second came shortly thereafter, The Pennsylvania Correspondent and Farmer's Almanac, in 1804. The titles indicate that farming was the area's key industry. [See figure 3]

During the same year, 1804, several other developments indicate that Doylestown was experiencing growth. The Union Academy was founded, only the second school in Bucks County, and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians began planning the town's first church. In 1807 a third road was constructed, connecting the crossroads with an existing road to the northeast. Doylestown had residences, workplaces, roads allowing transportation in all directions,

¹Historical Sketches of Doylestown, p. 17.
and had begun to develop secondary public structures. The town was clearly growing and expanding, and likely would continue to do so under normal circumstances. The next years, however, brought news that Doylestown's future development would be affected in a way that most towns would never be.

*Fast-Paced Growth:*

In 1810, it was decided that Doylestown would serve as the new seat of Bucks County. The town's crossroads lay within one mile of the county's geographic center, and its roads led in all four directions, providing access to the Delaware and Schuylkill Rivers. Though there were only sixteen buildings at the town's center, it was an ideal location to serve the surrounding farming communities, with a high elevation, good drainage and ample springs to provide fresh water. The area's natural resources would serve it well. As the Doylestown Democrat stated in 1908, "the coming of the County Seat gave to Doylestown an impetus in its business, social and religious life that was quite marked for those times."2

The first county courthouse was constructed near the crossroads in 1813. [See figure 4] In response to the town's new prestige, several small industries began to develop. Within five years, the first lumber yard was opened, and a coachmaker and wagon builder, a watchmaker, a blacksmith, merchants, and several tailors had established themselves in the town center. Of course, with the courthouse also came the development of the legal

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1Design Resources of Doylestown, p. 9.
2Historical Sketches of Doylestown, p. 23a.
profession in Doylestown, which increased the town's financial base while also increasing its population. Streets were built to provide access to new residential areas, and commerce and industry continued to expand with the population.

In 1830, a member of the Doylestown Bar bought a farm along one of the original roads, not far from the town center, and divided part of it into building lots to sell. As could be expected, the gap between the new development and the town center soon filled with other structures, essentially expanding the town's commercial area. About this time, the local newspaper began advertising for certain occupations to help the town maintain continued growth. The appeal must have been effective because by the end of the 1830s, a full-fledged hospital was established, as well as three boarding schools, a fire company, a bank, an insurance company, a marble yard, and two new churches, many constructed in brick. In addition, Doylestown showed signs of its increased status in the creation of its first turnpike, collecting funds for maintenance and to keep the road passable during the winter months. The town's first census, in 1840, placed the population at approximately 1,000.

Industrialization:

During the 1840s, the local newspaper made a new appeal, asking Philadelphians to spend their summer in Doylestown and "enjoy the ice creams and mineral waters." Doylestown's summer residents soon increased, and along with them came the development of literary societies and other entertainment. The middle of the century also saw improvements in the
town's utilities, first with the introduction of a gas-rosin plant to provide artificial light, and later with the construction of a fresh water holding basin on the cemetery grounds, servicing the town until a municipal water system was installed in 1869. [See figure 5]

The greatest influence on Doylestown in the mid century was the coming of the railroad. After more than a decade of commissioning surveys and lobbying to bring the rails to Doylestown, a branch of the North Pennsylvania Railroad was extended to the town in 1856. [See figure 6] With the railroad came new streets and the growth of an industrial area that could be served by the tracks. Not only was it easier to ship goods to Philadelphia, but summer visitors also found it much easier to reach the town. The manufacture of agricultural machinery, considered Doylestown's largest industry, expanded considerably after the railroad, taking advantage of tracks leading directly into its yards.¹ This complex survives today, though the rails no longer reach it. W.W.H. Davis, an early 20th century Doylestown historian, explained why the town's industries did not occupy a leading place in its business affairs: "it is because the site of our county's capital is off the leading lines of travel, and the absence of water power. The mechanical trades here, at an early day, only supplied the local demand." Though Doylestown's industries did not develop to service the entire nation, they experienced the growth visible in almost any American town after the coming of the railroad. [See figure 7]

¹The extension of railroad tracks into several nearby industrial yards is visible in all maps of the area, the earliest being J.D.Scott's Combination Atlas Map of Bucks County, PA, published 1876.
During the Civil War, the increased demand for resources stimulated all industries, and by the late 1860s new sections of Doylestown were opened for development to meet the needs of an expanding population, now close to 2,000. First the east, then the southwest and western suburbs grew into residential districts, and new schools and churches were constructed at the same time. In 1870, with the founding of a Building and Loan Association, Doylestown began construction of several costly public buildings. The Lenape Building, still standing today, was built in response to the town's need for a farmer's market space and an opera house.⁴¹ The next large project was the construction of a new courthouse in 1877, prefaced by the demolition of the original 1813 structure. A new jail followed in 1885, designed in the then-famous Havilland plan.

**Technological Advances:**

By the late 19th century, Doylestown contained all the elements necessary to create a successful town, and its further developments were largely responses to new technology and geographic expansion for a growing population. Telephones were first installed in the town in 1878, expanding communication abilities and changing the landscape through the addition of poles and wires to convey the service. Electricity reached the town in 1892. New transportation technology brought the trolley car to Doylestown in 1890, facilitating movement on a local scale. Within several blocks of the trolley's

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¹Uses of the Lenape building are specified in the September 1891 Sanborn-Perris Insurance Map of Doylestown.
reach, plots were subdivided and quickly converted to residential districts. [See figure 8] By 1910, Doylestown's population had doubled, reaching 4,000.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, an Historical Society was formed rather early in Doylestown's history. Its first meeting was held in 1880 and it soon began a collection of curios which it titled "the Tools of a Nation-Maker." The formation of this society, and its members' wish to document and preserve pre-industrial implements, indicates a recognition of the tremendous technological growth of the previous decades. Writing at the turn of the 20th century, W.H.H. Davis described the physical evidence of how Doylestown had changed in only fifty years through the aid of technology: The streets had become lined with dwellings, many of them stone and brick, the sidewalks were paved, and the buildings all had gas or electric lighting and a supply of pure spring water. The town's public buildings equalled those of any other county capital. [See figure 9]

The concrete structures built in the early 20th century by Henry Chapman Mercer represent another technological advance (as well as their owner's genius and eccentricity). Mercer, a founding member of the Bucks County Historical Society, experimented with the use of concrete as a fireproof building material. He also founded the Moravian Tile and Pottery Works, a successful Doylestown industry that exists today in its original structure.

The 20th century witnessed continued expansion and technological developments. After World War I, the automobile left its mark on Doylestown, as it did everywhere. Trolleys were replaced by a bus line in 1931, and automobile services developed in large numbers.1 Also following the war,

1Design Resources of Doylestown, p. 11.
entertainment experienced a period of growth, manifested in a movie palace placed close to the original crossroads and a new fairground east of the town center.\(^1\) In the post-World War II period, subdivisions assimilated many of the larger estates and farms around the town, responding to the need for housing and the proliferation of the automobile. In 1960, a shopping mall was constructed on North Main Street, yet another response to the automobile culture. Also in 1960, the courthouse expanded once again, demolishing the existing 1877 structure and replacing it with a more modern building.\(^2\)

Noting the opinions of some current residents approximately thirty years after the construction of Doylestown's "modern" courthouse, it is interesting to read the comments of a local citizen in 1904, thirty years after the demolition of the 1812 courthouse:

In some respects the greatest misfortune which ever befell the county of Bucks ensued when its citizens permitted the destruction of the 1812 Court House... That such a fine old Colonial building, a priceless historic relic and as sound the year it was razed as the year it was built, should have been sacrificed with scarcely a ripple of protest can only be explained upon the ground that the historical and educational value of these old buildings was not so well recognized thirty years ago as it is today.\(^3\)

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New subdivisions and the construction of malls, apartment complexes and new entertainment centers continues to this day, but much occurs beyond the limits of the original crossroads area. Dependence on the automobile has encouraged development in areas that are easily driven to, rather than in the

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\(^1\)Visible in the \textit{Sanborn Map of Doylestown}, October 1928.

\(^2\)\textit{Design Resources of Doylestown}, p. 15.

close-packed commercial districts of the past. Though merchants and usage may change within these older buildings, it is still possible to distinguish between those designed as a residence and as a commercial structure, and to recognize a building that has been re-used for a purpose other than that originally intended. The first roads have not disappeared, nor have signs of the natural resources that brought them there. The relationships between the many elements that create a town are still visible in Doylestown's land and buildings, allowing much of its past to be easily interpreted today.
Figure 1: 1775 Map of Doylestown, Pennsylvania
(Source: Bucks County Historical Society)
THE FOUNTAIN HOUSE, 1853.

Figure 2: The Fountain House, Doylestown, Pennsylvania
(Source: W.W.H. Davis, History of Doylestown, Old and New, 1904)
Figure 3: Doylestown Area Farmlands
(Source: J.D. Scott, *Combination Atlas Map of Bucks County, Pennsylvania*, 1876)
Figure 4: 1813 Bucks County Courthouse
(Source: Doylestown Borough Planning Commission, Design Resources of Doylestown, 1969)
Figure 5: 1857 Map of Doylestown, Pennsylvania
(Source: Bucks County Historical Society)
Figure 6: Reading Railway Station, Doylestown
(Source: Bucks County Historical Society)
Figure 7: Doylestown Planing Mill, Lumber & Coal Yard
(Source: J.D. Scott, Combination Atlas Map of Bucks County, Pennsylvania, 1876)
Sale of the Pollock Tract
Thursday, May 5th, 1898
WM. F. KELLEY, Auctioneer

Figure 8: Notice of Sale of the Pollack Tract, 1898
(Source: Bucks County Historical Society)
Figure 9: 1886 Map of Doylestown, Pennsylvania
(Source: Bucks County Historical Society)
Chapter 4

THE EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM
The examination of Doylestown's history has provided essential background for the creation of an educational program, but the work of several scholars has also been integral. A number of historians and planners have attempted to divide a community into recognizable elements and to present them in some sort of logical form. Timothy J. Crimmins, chairman of the History Department at Georgia State University, aptly describes this process as creating an "ecology" of the natural and built environment. Just as ecology in a science education recognizes that parts of the natural environment are formed by the interaction of elemental forces such as water, air, earth, and sun, ecology in heritage education should recognize that human settlements follow a discernable pattern guided by known forces. As a point of illustration, Crimmins asks: "Can we link the carports that circle suburban cul-de-sacs; the asphalt expanses that surround shopping malls, schools, and churches; the parking decks tucked behind landscaped berms of office complexes, and the concrete ribbons of expressways that are their umbilical cords? The answer, of course, is yes . . . the automobile, the machine of modern life, is responsible for many of the patterns of the late-twentieth-century American landscape."1

The automobile's effect on our surroundings is just an example of the many patterns that are visible to the informed viewer. Automotive technology is one of the more recent influences on our landscape, and because of its familiarity it is perhaps the most easily identified. But the majority of what Crimmins terms "ecology" is not recognized by most citizens. Ecology reaches beyond the common educational programs that focus on architectural style

and period identification. It encompasses the entire history of an area rather than the small part that is represented by a particular style of architecture. If more citizens are to play a role in preservation planning, preservationists should establish a simple way of understanding historical ecology, for it informs residents about their historic resources without requiring them to undertake time-consuming research. Simplifying the growth process from settlement to present-day community highlights the relationship between historic developments and existing buildings, and provides a firm basis for understanding the value of historic structures.

**Precedents:**

Lewis Mumford's *The City in History*, provides one of the earliest descriptions of the forces that worked together to produce the modern city. Beginning with the world's first settlements, Mumford identifies those elements that have influenced the cities we see today, marking how various layers of historical development are directly reflected in the fabric of the existing city. In this way, the city performs what he terms "the function of materialization," expressing past events, values, and achievements in physical forms.¹ *The City in History* is not a simple text, and it could hardly be used as an introduction for citizens interested in preservation planning. But Mumford's focus on the influences of industrialization, transportation, and capitalism can be adapted to a much simpler format.

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¹Mumford, p. 113.
Making the City Observable, by Richard Wurman, was published in 1971. As the title indicates, the book attempts to provide systematic ways of viewing the city and making it more comprehensible. Wurman compiles a catalogue of projects, maps, and ideas that offer a better understanding of the environment. He describes the projects as a means of "making public information public," helping citizens to understand information that is readily available and relevant, but perhaps not comprehensible in its natural form.\(^1\) The value of making our surroundings more intelligible is obvious. "A citizen who understands the highway system and its relationship to other urban systems," Wurman writes, "has a basis for making decisions regarding highway expansion."\(^2\) The same theory can be applied to historical systems and preservation planning. Though almost all of Wurman's examples explain how components of modern systems relate to one another, the important message in his compilation is that visual representations have the power to convey information effectively.

In 1973, Grady Clay published Close-Up: How to Read the American City. This text, and a second one published in 1987 called Right Before Your Eyes, identify historic growth patterns by focusing on a city's existing fabric. Clay describes the fabric of the city as a list of recognizable elements that speak of various phases in the community's evolution. For example, "breaks" are places where the city grid street pattern shifts, indicating original overlapping settlements; "stacks" are high density manufacturing areas that grew up around transportation corridors; and "sinks" are the inevitable undesirable

\(^{1}\)Wurman, p. 8.  
^{2}\)Wurman, p. 4.
areas surrounding train beds and the bowels of industrialization. Clay's visuals can be difficult to follow because they map concepts rather than objects, sometimes leaving his points unclear. His goal of generating a framework for understanding the city, however, is obvious as he writes the following: "One of the more intriguing aspects of street evolution is that its evolutionary order is far more apparent to the naked eye (though not to the naked mind) than was the evolution of plants and animals."^2

Christopher Alexander's 1977 book, *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction* chooses another way of tracing the patterns in a community. Though Alexander doesn't direct his writing specifically toward identification of historical elements, his concept of "patterns within patterns" describes the interrelationship of all structures and landscapes, and creates a hierarchy that can be translated to historic development patterns.\(^3\) The elements of Alexander's patterns are characteristic to all communities and, if overlaid on a particular town, can provide useful information about how they function.

Since the 1980s, when the concept of creating and maintaining a "sense of place" became popular, several books have been published that explore the recognizable images of a town's past. John Jakle's *The American Small Town: Twentieth Century Place Images* identifies how towns oriented their structures in response to specific historic trends and developments. Jakle provides a listing of public buildings common to every community and notes their usual location, describing how transportation corridors such as the railroad had

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\(^1\)Clay, *Close-Up*, pp. 45; 127; 143.
\(^3\)Alexander, *A Pattern Language*, pp. xix-xxv.
strong organizational effects and dictated growth patterns in most towns.\(^1\) Jakle's work is full of superfluous anecdotes, but his use of figure ground maps to chart a hypothetical town's growth over time clearly expresses some of the basic manifestations of technology during the automobile age.

Another interesting visual form for interpreting historical development was published by artist Jorg Muller in 1976. Muller created eight pictures titled "The Changing City" that chronicle the transformation of one part of a city over a twenty-three year period. The pictures reveal new structures, changing transportation modes, commercial development, and technological innovations. These visuals provide significantly more information than figure ground drawings, since they also portray pollution, increased electrification, adaptive reuse, construction methods, and other elements that are not represented by a building's footprint.

The above texts include useful information that helps to describe how one might "read" a city, but none provide a simple form that can quickly convey the substance of their program. Both Jakle and Muller come close, but they deal with a relatively short timespan and a limited geographic area. To create a stepping stone to participation in preservation planning, the interrelation of structures and events throughout history should be graspable by the general public. Visual representations may be the key to identifying a community's major developmental influences and their manifestations in a widely understandable form.

For this thesis, the ability to convey the basic historical development process simply will determine both the program's educational value and,

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\(^1\) Jakle, *The American Small Town*, pp. 40.
subsequently, its ability to inspire community involvement. The following is a concept for crystallizing history, as seen in our surroundings, in a readily understandable fashion. It is designed to increase perception, and to be implemented easily and in a wide variety of forms. Through its implementation using various vehicles, the concept becomes the basis for an educational program that can reach a broad section of society. A number of potential vehicles will be discussed in the conclusion.

Simplifying Historical Evolution to Identifiable Elements:

The primary component of the educational program is a spiral that represents the interaction of elements guiding a community's development. [See figure 10] The curl of the spiral expresses the passage of time from the point of earliest settlement to the present day. At the hub of the spiral is a depiction of the core elements that enable a community to develop and change: natural resources, transportation, and technology. Natural resources, such as land for farming, ore for mining, water power for milling, or other fuels, will initially draw people to a settlement. Transportation, either by land or by water, will allow people to reach the settlement and to transport goods to and from it easily. Technology will determine the extent of existing transportation forms and the available methods of transforming natural resources through manufacturing. Stretching across the spiral, at right angles to its movement, are arrows that represent milestones in a community's development. Milestones are common to communities across the United States and are associated with technological achievements, discovery of natural resources,
Figure 10: Community History Spiral
creation of new transportation modes, or a combination of the three core elements.

Winding out from the center of the spiral are the primary structural elements of a community: workplaces, residences, and public buildings. These three elements develop in a cyclical process related to the evolution of the core elements. The workplaces derive largely from the existing natural resources and the need for basic supplies, and the residences from the obvious need for shelter. Public buildings begin to emerge once there is a population large enough to sustain them. As workplaces or industries diversify and expand, the number of residences increases to house the new working population, and the demand for public services multiplies. As a community grows, it provides more and more specialized amenities to its residents, such as schools, churches, government buildings, and hospitals. Increased services translate into more workplaces, and thus the cycle continues.

The objective of the spiral is to instill the recognition that all structural elements are influenced in some way by everything that occurs before them, and that milestones can skip across time, having significant, unanticipated effects on development. The spiral highlights the basic evolutionary elements of any community, recognizing that their specific manifestations will obviously vary from one town to the next, depending on the core elements. If one can identify the transportation corridors in a community, the natural resources available, and the major leaps in technology that occurred, one can trace the community back in time to its original form. But to do this, the viewer must understand how the core elements and milestones are physically manifested, and be able to imagine the town without their influence.
Core elements affect the location of a community's primary structural elements. Buildings in settlements will always be placed where they have access to necessary resources, transportation, and the people they serve. Industries must be located near a power source, and near the natural resource they exploit. They also must have access to transportation to facilitate the circulation of their products and, in some cases, their workers. Existing natural resources give an indication of a community's early workplaces, but technological developments in transportation made it possible for some industries to locate farther away from the resources they manufactured by decreasing the cost of shipping raw materials to the site.

In the 19th century, the railroad prompted heavy development along its lines because it meant easy access to transportation for both raw materials and products. The tracks were initially directed to natural resource production sites, but as they passed through undeveloped lands in the Midwest, they created the original impetus for many communities. By the mid 20th century, the automobile had further liberated many industries from locational constraints by providing seemingly unrestricted transportation for workers and materials. Most industries that relied on natural resources extracted from the earth, however, still found it economically prudent to remain in close proximity to them.

Residences will likewise develop in response to natural resources and affiliated industries. They must be close enough to the workplace to allow workers easy access. Prior to inexpensive mass transportation methods, this meant that many residences were located within walking distance of their occupant's workplace. Housing developments, then, often responded to the
growth of a particular industry, occurring within several blocks of the mill or of its transportation source. As the number of residences increased, towns were forced to develop new roads to access them, often following a grid-like pattern that created easily marketed lots. Consequently, a community's earliest streets can often be identified as the ones running counter to the more logical grid that developed once a town began to grow steadily. With the proliferation of the automobile, residential subdivisions frequently adopted winding, irregular street patterns reminiscent of the earliest town roads in an attempt to produce a more country-like atmosphere.

Public buildings will usually occur in the center of a settlement so that they are accessible to most inhabitants. By locating near a major transportation mode, they can serve not only the surrounding community, but also anyone passing through the town. As a community grows, some public buildings may locate amidst their supporting constituencies. This is especially true of churches and schools. If a group of residences is established away from the original town center, a small concentration of public buildings and service industries may develop to provide for them, creating a separate hamlet within the community.

Societies with access to new energies in the form of fuels, raw materials, capital, or construction techniques can be expected to find ways to express and use these resources.¹ Materials used in construction are an important indication of both the natural resources of an area and the transportation available at the time of a building's construction. Until the advent of the railroad made non-local materials available to any community in its path,

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¹Clay, Close Up, p. 179.
structures were rarely composed of anything other than nearby resources. Previously, only in port cities had there been easy access to a variety of non-local materials. As transportation networks expanded, resources moved more freely and new building materials, both natural and man-made, became more common. Various new construction techniques developed in conjunction with the new materials and encouraged a diversity of forms that was reflected in almost all communities.

Landscape features can also provide evidence of past industries, transportation modes and other elements that are no longer visible as they were in the past. Mill races, slag heaps, and quarries are all indications of discontinued industrial sites. A large, rectangular subdivision of similarly-styled homes surrounding an old farmhouse or barn suggests that the area was originally open farmland. That farmland may also be hidden beneath woodlands, since a forest of tall trees can develop in less than half a century if the land is unattended. Rows of large trees may line residential streets as evidence of early tree planting campaigns, or outline impressions in the ground that indicate an abandoned road or rail bed. And finally, the basic infrastructure of a community can leave marks on the landscape too, in such forms as early power and telephone lines, water and gas works, and old graveyards.

As Mumford writes in The City in History, "if we are to identify the city, we must follow the trail backward, from the fullest known urban structures and functions to their original components. . . ."\(^1\) By focusing on physical structures, landscape features, natural resources, transportation growth,

\(^1\)Mumford, p. 5.
technological developments, and their relationships to each other, we can do that. "Unwinding the spiral" requires identifying the existing elements in a community and determining what caused them to take the forms they have. There will be missing links in many elements' relationships with their surroundings. Though a mill building may not survive, the workers' tenements that originally were associated with it can confirm its previous existence. What was initially a residence may have been converted to a school or business, but its configuration can give away its original form. If citizens are to understand their heritage, they must be able to recognize the history behind more than those buildings that have been preserved in pristine form, for these will represent a very small part of a community's history. More and more structures are being saved through adaptive re-use, leaving their original relationships visible only to those who look more closely.

Applying the Process to Doylestown, Pennsylvania:

To give a concrete example of how this visual identification system works, the spiral has been applied to Doylestown's history. [See figure 11] Because of Doylestown's successful past preservation efforts, many of the primary structural elements represented on the spiral are still visible in the town's structures and landscapes today. Though their uses may have changed, there are obvious indications that they represent an earlier time. The core elements of Doylestown's growth are also evident. Occasional farms on the outskirts of town and the agricultural program at nearby Delaware College indicate that land has long been the important natural resource in the area.
Figure 11: Doylestown Community History Spiral
Transportation modes that developed throughout the town's history are still in place, with the exception of the trolley, and their relationships to the surrounding residential and industrial structures are still discernable.

Winding backwards, one could imagine stripping away all evidence of the automobile-driven culture; the service stations, the shopping malls, and the subdivisions with residences sporting two-car garages. The prominence of the railroad and the intersections of State, Main and Court Streets would then be evident, for surrounding these two nodes are the majority of the town's businesses and industries. The end of the train line rests next to a large, re-used industrial structure. [See figure 12] Next door, a fast food restaurant (the only modern structure in view) clearly occupies a lot that would have been developed earlier and also serviced by the rails. Only several blocks away, a row of workers housing that was likely related to the above industrial structures is still intact. [See figure 13] Many of the large public buildings at the crossroads of Main and State Streets have dated cornerstones confirming their construction after the arrival of the railroad. These buildings speak of the town's growth in population and financial stability, and provide easy evidence of the proliferation of banks and public structures in the mid to late 19th century. [See figures 14 & 15]

Stripping away evidence of the railroad leaves no major form of industrial infrastructure such as waterways or natural resource extraction. A quarry can be seen in the neighboring town, but Doylestown must have survived on smaller, less intensive industries and farming. Though most of Doylestown's farms have been absorbed into recent subdivisions, some still exist on the outskirts of the borough, and an occasional farmhouse and barn
survive amidst the newer homes of a subdivision. [See figure 16] The concentration of law offices in older structures in the town center should not be overlooked as an early industry. They are obviously related to the courthouse nearby, and suggest that its modern form must have been preceded by an earlier structure. Large residences with open lots near courthouse square are also likely the result of the courthouse's establishment as a workplace. And the number of churches peppered throughout the residential areas helps to confirm the rapid growth in population relatively early in the town's history.

To find evidence of a community's past, one must also simply look for elements that have no relation to present development. The raised stone embankment at the southern end of the town cemetery is an example of this sort. It reveals the location of the original municipal water system in Doylestown, yet is obviously unnecessary today because of the existing water tower above it. [See figure 17] Other examples are the strange traffic pattern through the center of town which suggests the original road configuration of the settlement, three large concrete structures that signify experimentation with a new building material and an obvious eccentricity, and the inns still located at the intersection of Main and State Streets, marking the earliest manifestations of the crossroads' development. [See figures 18 & 19]

In Doylestown, one literally finds many signs that reveal traces of the past: faded on the sides of an old building, on streetposts, or on the edges of a wooded area. [See figures 20 & 21] They reveal industries no longer operating, landscape features no longer prominent, and the presence of large estates. All that is required to find and interpret them is a little informed searching.
Figure 12: Agricultural Works, 1992
Figure 13: Workers' Housing Row, 1992
Figure 14: Lenape Building, 1992
Figure 15: Bucks County Trust Company, 1992
Figure 16: Old Barn within Modern Subdivision, 1992
Figure 17: Stone Embankment in Doylestown Cemetery, 1992
Figure 18: Fountain House, 1992
Figure 19: Mercer Museum, 1992
Figure 20: Faded Sign on Brick Building, 1992
Figure 21: Rear Gate at Fonthill, 1992
CONCLUSION
Implementation: Making Education Available to Communities

The National Council for Preservation Education is making strides in the creation of a resource base for heritage educators, with the program strongly focused on integrating heritage education into the school curriculum.\(^1\) The National Park Service has also established a new program, called "Teaching with Historic Properties," which focuses on creating educational resources for students.\(^2\) Both are valuable developments in the preservation field, but in neither case do these new educational resources address the application of their programs to preservation planning and the need to reach the adult community. Though the Commission on Museums has encouraged a new focus on adult education programs, a large part of the preservation community appears to

Schools are a primary element of any educational program because their teachings have the ability to reach beyond the students and to leave an impression on the parents and the surrounding community. Children today are more and more frequently provided with a strong background in local history, and the formation of innovative heritage education programs across the country is helping them to better learn what their surroundings represent. But children do not have the power to vote and, for the most part,


do not directly influence actions of local governments and planning agencies. It is necessary, therefore, to develop a more direct method of reaching adults and of helping them to recognize the heritage evidenced in their surroundings.

Since there is no specific program for adults that has a dissemination capability equal to that of the school system, the simple and direct program presented herein would be a most effective forum for reaching these adults. A variety of vehicles for implementation could be employed, including community organizations, planning and historical commissions, historical societies, architectural review boards, newspapers, and tourism promotion organizations, as well as schools.

Community organizations could utilize the ideas of historical evolution and the identification of past relationships in existing structures to make short presentations on understanding local history. They might also develop these concepts as a component to an area walking tour, teaching the participants to recognize clues that speak of more than architectural styles and dates. As part of a weekend workshop, interested residents could be asked to collect existing visual information on their community's past and to interpret it in a larger context.

Any or all of the above dissemination techniques could be sponsored by local planning or historical commissions; organizations that can also play a significant role in teaching the basics of the preservation planning process. In conjunction with the more common leaflets that convey how preservation regulations directly affect property rights, it would be helpful if historical commissions published information explaining the basic tools of preservation
planning. The evolutionary spiral would be instrumental in portraying how these tools might protect core elements and primary structural elements in an existing environment, and the educational program could be incorporated as an initial stage of the comprehensive planning process.

Historical societies could concentrate on the program's focus on interrelatedness to organize local history exhibits around missing and existing elements that mark community development patterns, highlighting relationships that are still visible and signs that indicate past structures and landscapes. Architectural review boards could focus on similar patterns, stressing a new structure's need to communicate the present while acknowledging the past. As a supplement to guidelines for new construction, review boards could use the simple concepts of the educational program to explain their purpose to the public and to developers, accounting for their effort to retain historic materials by demonstrating the materials' ability to reveal a complex history to any informed viewer.

Local newspapers could present the educational program as a series on tracing the elements of local history, or as a sort of treasure hunt to encourage readers to look for evidence of past industries and developments. Regional and local newspapers have high readership levels and the ability to catch many people's attention. Often, they provide residents with their first exposure to detailed historic information about an area. Similarly, tourism promotion organizations can reach citizens that might not otherwise become involved in local history or preservation activities. These organizations could adapt the program in the form of a brochure meant to help tourists more fully understand the area they are visiting. Tourists are not always presented with
the larger historical context of an area. Rather, they are often exposed to a collection of historic parts or "disembodied relics" that may not provide the information necessary to convey a broader meaning.1

This educational program addresses the problem of "disembodied relics" by forcing the participant to realize a site's relationship to its surroundings and to the process of historical evolution. It is a learning tool that is transferable to any community. The particular vehicle or means of implementing this program is not as important as the timing. Educational programs have an inherent value to a community at any time, but for the sake of successful preservation planning, they should be instituted prior to the advent of development pressures.

The relationships described in this program can be explained simply and concisely. With the aid of a little information and the encouragement to explore their community, residents can learn to recognize vestiges of the past. As these vestiges begin to represent a network of past development patterns, they become more than "mere objects" and help to tell pieces of the larger story of a town's evolution; as such, they inherently become more valuable. It is this value, and the process of its determination, that preservation planners should strive to encourage, because it provides a strong basis for public participation and support.

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I. COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:


Krohe, James, Jr. "You Call This a National Park?" Planning (August 1990), pp. 4-10.


Pennsylvania Historic District Act. Act of the General Assembly No. 167 (June


II. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS AND SYMBOLS OF THE PAST:


III. DOYLESTOWN HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT:


Scott, J.D. Combination Atlas Map of Bucks County, Pennsylvania. 1876.


INTERVIEWS:


95
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