Bold Adaptation in the Cause of Preservation: A Reuse Strategy for the Mission 66 Visitor Center at Far View

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Bold Adaptation in the Cause of Preservation: A Reuse Strategy for the Mission 66 Visitor Center at Far View

Abstract
Mission 66, a program that was intended to modernize, expand, and reinvent National Park System from 1956-1966, was the largest improvement initiative by the National Park Service and one of the most ambitious federal projects of the twentieth-century. To celebrate the 50th anniversary of the National Park System, the decade-long program saw the expenditure of around $1 billion for the acquisition of land, the hiring and training of new staff, and the construction of thousands of miles of roads and trails. While these projects helped to transform the image of the Park Service and announce their entry into the modern age, the most visible and well-publicized project completed during this project was the construction of nearly one hundred visitors centers whose designs rejected the “National Park Service Rustic” style of the 1920s and 1930s in favor of the prevailing modernist aesthetic of the post-war era. By transforming the Park Service's approach to the planning and design of the built environment in America's parks, the Mission 66 visitor centers are considered to be one of the National Park Service's most significant contribution to the architectural landscape in America.

Nearly 50 years later, the demolition of some of the greatest examples of Mission 66 architecture has brought renewed interest to the visitor centers and their influence on park development in the post-WWII era. Though many advocates have stepped forward to fight for their preservation, the Mission 66 visitor centers continue to be threatened by shifting views of development philosophy, visitor expectation, and aesthetic taste within the Park System. This thesis investigates the challenges facing the preservation and adaptive reuse of these structures through the development of a reuse strategy for the Far View Visitor Center at Mesa Verde National Park. Through a close examination of the history of the Mission 66 program, the challenges presented by existing management policies and guidelines, and the potential to create a bold insertion that symbolizes the next era of park planning and development, the project takes a critical approach adaptation within the National Park System.

Keywords
NPS, Mission 66, Far View, Joseph Marlow, Louise Marlow

Disciplines
Architectural History and Criticism | Historic Preservation and Conservation

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BOLD ADAPTATION IN THE CAUSE OF PRESERVATION:
A REUSE STRATEGY FOR THE MISSION 66 VISITOR CENTER AT FAR VIEW

Nathaniel Thomas Schlundt

A THESIS

in

Historic Preservation

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

MASTER OF SCIENCE IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION

May 2014

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>List of Illustrations</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and Literature Review</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Mesa Verde and the Mission 66 Visitor Center</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: Existing Management Policies</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Existing Building and Site Conditions</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4: Design Precedents in Adaptive Reuse</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 5: Proposed Program and Rationale</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 6: Design Methodology and Proposal</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Index</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS


1.1 The Chapin Mesa Archaeological Museum at Mesa Verde National Park. Photograph by the author, October 21, 2013.


3.1 Scheme One for Far View Visitor Center at Mesa Verde National Park, 1964. Provided by Mesa Verde Technical Information Center.

3.2 Scheme Two for Far View Visitor Center at Mesa Verde National Park, 1964. Provided by Mesa Verde Technical Information Center.

3.3 View of Far View Visitor Center through entrance tunnel. Photograph by the author, October 22, 2013.

3.4 Exterior of Far View Visitor Center across Ruins Road. Photograph by the author, October 22, 2013.

3.5 Far View Visitor Center, interior of level two. Photograph by the author, October 22, 2013.

3.6 Far View Visitor Center, small retail shop. Photograph by the author, October 22, 2013.

3.7 Far View Visitor Center, diorama display case. Photograph by the author, October 22, 2013.

3.8 Existing program diagram for Far View Visitor Center. Drawing by author, Spring 2014.

3.9 Existing architectural drawings for Far View Visitor Center. Drawing by author, Fall 2013.


6.5 Existing visitor center’s relationship to significant natural features. Drawing by author, March 18, 2014.

6.6 Temporal mapping of spatial experience of three view types. Drawing by author, March 18, 2014.


6.9 Visitor center’s relationship to major natural site features. Drawing by author, March 18, 2014.


6.17 Section looking west (top) and south (bottom). Drawing by author, May 8, 2014.


Mesa Verde National Park, located in southwest Colorado, is one of the largest and most well preserved archaeological parks in the United States. Home to the more than 4,800 archaeological sites, including the spectacular multi-storied dwellings of Spruce Tree House, Cliff Palace, and Square Tower House, the park welcomes over a half-million visitors per year. Though arguably, the history of tourism at Mesa Verde can be traced back over a thousand years, when the Ancestral Puebloans established trade connections with nearby peoples, bringing with them the need to accommodate travelers, its value as a world heritage site was not formally recognized until 1906 when it was declared a National Park by the United States Congress under President Theodore Roosevelt. Throughout the last century, the park has undergone continuous change, adapting to the shifting values, programmatic requirements, and social patterns that have shaped the policies of the National Park Service since its founding in 1916. Though the park experienced several periods of rapid development in the 1920s and 1930s, the most dramatic initiative was launched in 1956 as response to the changing realities and trends of the first post-World War II decade.

Known as Mission 66, the decade-long redevelopment campaign was a Park Service-wide effort to update its crumbling infrastructure after years of inadequate funding and deferred maintenance during World War II. Of the $1 billion that was spent on modernizing the parks and expanding the visitor infrastructure, the most visible and well-publicized addition to the landscape during this time was the construction of over ninety visitor centers, a new building typology developed by the National Park Service to respond to the changing pace of automobile tourism. Designed with a distinctive modernist aesthetic, the Mission 66 visitor centers revolutionized park development by incorporating prevailing post-war planning theory, which sought to create a more efficient visitor experience through the consolidation and centralization of park activities. Nearly 50 years later, the once modern buildings are themselves suffering from the effects of shrinking operating budgets and deferred maintenance. Though many advocates have

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0.1 View of “Gettysburg Cyclorama” from the east

0.2 View up the entrance ramp showing architectural procession
stepped forward to fight for their preservation, the Mission 66 visitor centers continue to be threatened by critics who see their modernists aesthetic as intrusive, inadequate, and obsolete.

In May 2013, Mesa Verde National Park opened the Mesa Verde Visitor and Research Center, a sprawling 24,000 square-foot, $14 million complex that replaced the 50 year-old Mission 66 visitor center at Far View. Although the park has pledged to continue to maintain the building until a reuse strategy is developed, its future is becoming increasingly uncertain as Mission 66 visitor centers across the country are being lost to demolition or extensive and unsympathetic alteration. The significance of Mission 66 should not be undervalued. As examples of both the modernist architecture aesthetic and representations of the fundamental shift in NPS philosophy that took place during the first post-war decade in America, they play an important part in the life and evolving narrative of the national parks. As the National Park Service again faces challenges related to insufficient funding, increased visitation, and changing development patterns, a re-examination of the Mission 66 program could help to inform current park policy and guide decision making today. Gaining a better understanding of the history of development at Mesa Verde would be both an invaluable educational asset and set an important precedent for future growth within the Park. If the Far View Visitor Center cannot adapt to the changing demands and visitor expectation at Mesa Verde, it will almost certainly be demolished. In order to recognize the important role this building played in the history of the National Park Service, the park must re-evaluate their policy concerning the preservation and adaptive reuse of their built heritage to ensure the continued protection of this important resource.

Literature Review

In March 2013, the 14-year preservation battle over the future of Richard Neutra’s 1958 Cyclorama Building at Gettysburg National Military Park came to an end as wrecking balls descended upon the site to clear the way for the 150th anniversary commemoration of the historic battle.3 The building, a striking concrete and glass cylindrical structure that once housed a 377-foot-long 360-degree panoramic painting portraying Pickett’s Charge, sparked controversy among advocates of modern architecture, who accused the Park Service of “abrogating their role as steward of the recent past...by engaging in a revisionist history conceived to destroy the

building.” Considered to be perhaps the most architecturally significant building of the National Park Service’s Mission 66 program, its loss brought renewed interest to the preservation of the Park’s built heritage and the influence of modernist design in the post-WWII era. Although the increased public attention concerning this issue is a fairly new chapter in the story of the Mission 66 program, it has been a subject of interest within the field of historic preservation for years.

The first comprehensive study of the preservation of Mission 66 visitor centers is Sarah Allaback’s 2000 publication, *Mission 66 Visitor Centers: The History of a Building Type*. Her exhaustive investigation of the Mission 66 initiative explores the origins of the program and traces its development from its earliest years of its conception to the recent challenges facing its preservation. Using five visitor centers – the Quarry Visitor Center at Dinosaur National Monument, Utah; the Wright Brothers National Memorial Visitor Center at Kill Devil Hills, North Carolina; the Visitor Center and Cyclorama Building at Gettysburg National Military Park, Pennsylvania, the Painted Desert Community at Petrified Forest National Park, Arizona, and the Administration Building at Rock Mountain National Park, Colorado – chosen to represent some of the most ambitious projects of their type, Allaback establishes an outline to evaluate the significance of the buildings for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Allaback contends that the Mission 66 visitor centers represent the most significant and visible contribution to the landscape of the National Parks during the ten-year program and are inextricably linked to the idealistic philosophies of post-war design and planning. Her study concludes that the significance of Mission 66 building centers on the role they played in breaking from the Park Service Rustic style of the 1920s and 1930s and establishing a completely new design idiom. Characterized by the centralization of park visitor services, an enthusiastic embrace of modern materials, technology, and construction methods, and a restrained and simple aesthetic, the visitor center came to symbolize new attitudes concerning resource management, stewardship, and visitor accountability. However, considering its far-reaching impact in guiding park policy and management over the past 50 years, the significance of the Mission 66 program extends beyond its stylistic influence. As the National Park Service becomes increasingly aware of the environmental impact of park development, Allaback suggests that the preservation of the Mission 66 heritage is vital to establish a more critical perspective of future planning and growth.

Although Sarah Allaback’s research remains the most inclusive source concerning Mis-

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sion 66 visitor centers and the issues surrounding their preservation, several other notable architectural historians, like Randall Biallas, chief historical architect of the National Park Service, and Ethan Carr, associate professor of landscape architecture and regional planning a the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, have published studies that look at the Mission 66 program more broadly in an effort to contextualize it within the history of twentieth-century planning and development. Published in 2008, Carr’s book, *Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma* examines the broader political, social, and cultural forces shaping development patterns in America in an effort to dispel some of the less thoughtful critiques of the Mission 66 program, which are largely based on “misconceptions about what the program and its motivations actually were.” His research seeks to refute many at the Park Service who insist that the designs of Mission 66 visitor centers were too rushed and standardized, resulting in substandard facilities that failed to consider the climate and local contextual considerations. Both Allaback and Carr’s work calls for a deeper reconsideration of the Mission 66 program as a way to determine what its future might be. While neither argues that the program should be replicated, they agree that to move beyond it, it must first be understood – a continual process that reconfirms the legitimacy of current park policy and procedures.

While there is much scholarship relating to the history of the Mission 66 program and the establishment of guidelines to direct its preservation, little research exists that investigates the adaptive reuse of park-owned buildings, especially those from the recent past. The National Park Service’s Management Policies is perhaps the most comprehensive document concerning its approach to interpretation, development, and planning strategies within the Park System. While the policies succeed in establishing development guidelines for new construction – the incorporation of sustainable standards, interpretation strategies, and design guidelines – they fall short in developing an explicit position about adaptive reuse. As park planners and architects continue to defer to the notoriously conservative guidelines of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standard for Rehabilitation as the de facto preservation policy, the lack of oversight in the management of their existing built heritage has tended stifle more creative approaches to preservation. Though the intent of the guidelines established in the Management Policies was to provide

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7 As demonstrated by the Standards’ prioritization of the retention of the material integrity of the original structure and the suggestion that “any new addition should result in ,inimal loss or damage to historic material.” *Standards for...*
a framework for sustainable development within the park, the lack of guidance in redevelopment strategies has instead encouraged new construction over adaptive reuse – a problem that is illustrated particularly well at Mesa Verde.  

Often, the greatest challenge facing the preservation of Mission 66 visitor centers is finding a use for those that have been abandoned, either because they have been replaced with newer facilities (such as Far View) or deemed unnecessary because of changing programmatic requirement or inadequate funding. Although the 2006 Management Policies state that “the National Historic Preservation Act requires each agency to implement alternatives for the adaptive use of historic properties it owns if that will help ensure the properties’ preservation,” it offers no specific procedures or guidelines for developing what they describe as “compatible uses for the structures.” The most useful documents in this regard are the Comprehensive Interpretive Planning (CIP) guidelines and NPS-6’s “Interpretation and Visitor Service Guidelines.” NPS-6, released in 1994, was the Park Service’s first attempt to bring together existing planning strategies to form a more cohesive approach to interpretive programming within the park. With the goal of “fostering the development of a personal stewardship ethic and broadening public support for preserving park resources,” the document focuses on interpretive methods that encourage civic engagement and public dialogue through place-based and site-specific programs. Though the desire to discourage a “one size fits all” strategy is well intentioned, it greatly reduces the capacity for NPS oversight and quality control. Regardless, the document offers a variety of examples of the type of personal guest services that could achieve this goal – from informal interpretation like roving exhibitions and “spontaneous contacts” to performing arts and demonstrations programs that could include dance, music, storytelling, or “artists in the park programs.” While neither the existing scholarship nor the National Park Service Management Policies and guidelines offer a comprehensive approach to the preservation of Mission 66 visitor centers, this thesis will offer a critical reexamination of their recommendations to develop one possible adaptive reuse strategy.

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8 Management Policies 2006, (Sec 9.1.1.1) p 125.
9 Management Policies 2006, (Sec 5.3.5.4.7) p 73.
11 Ibid.
CHAPTER 1: MESA VERDE AND THE MISSION 66 VISITOR CENTER

Mesa Verde is a United States National Park and UNESCO World Heritage site located in Montezuma County in southwestern Colorado.12 Established on June 29, 1906 by Congress under President Theodore Roosevelt, Mesa Verde is one of the largest and densest archaeological preserves in the United States, known for its well-preserved cliff dwellings, such as Spruce Tree House, Cliff Palace, and Square Tower House, as well as a number of Ancestral Pueblo sites on the mesa top, such as the Far View Group.13 While it is most recognized for its ruins, which date to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the natural features of the park reveal a landscape equally rich in geological, biological and ecological features. Dominating the valley with its two-thousand-foot cliffs and steeply ridged slopes, the landscape of Mesa Verde has attracted millions of visitors throughout its hundred-year history and continues to serve as one of the most popular tourist sites in the region.

On August 26, 1916, approximately ten years after the founding of Mesa Verde, the National Parks Service was created by Congress to manage the property with the mission to “protect, preserve, and provide for the future enjoyment by the people.” However, because nothing in the NPS acts speaks specifically to the encouragement of visitation, the tradition of development for the National Park Service has been to provide the most minimal infrastructure that would allow concessioners to develop and promote visitor amenities.14 While this has often led to periods where the infrastructure is strained and the services are inadequate, this practice has guided development at Mesa Verde since its founding and continues to influence park policy. The tourism infrastructure at Mesa Verde as it exists today is a product of two major eras of rapid development within the National Park Service. The first, known as the “rustic era” of park development, began in the 1920s when Congress gave large appropriations to the NPS for the development of park facilities, roads, and other transportation infrastructure.15

the work of nineteenth century landscape architects like Andrew Jackson Downing and Frederick Law Olmsted, the National Parks Service established an approach to park design that was inspired by the pastoral ideal that development should contribute unobtrusively to the natural setting of the park.16

Under the direction of superintendent Jesse Nausbaum, this period of expansion at Mesa Verde heralded in a massive development effort funded largely by John D. Rockefeller. One of the largest projects was the Spruce Tree Camp headquarters area, which included the superintendent’s residence, ranger dorm, Chapin Mesa archaeological museum, park headquarters, restroom, and other visitor amenity buildings (see illustration 1.1). Designed by Nausbaum and his wife, Aileen, these buildings were inspired by the architecture and construction methods of the Pueblo People, predominantly those of the Hopi, and the Pueblo Revival architectural styles that were prevalent in Santa Fe, New Mexico. The result of their effort was a unique hybrid approach, known simply as “National Park Service rustic,” characterized by the use of native and natural materials, rambling asymmetric forms, and the influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement, the prevailing architectural influence during that time. The project was successful with Park management and visitors alike, who praised its ability to complement the picturesque and

16 Thompson, p 7.
the make extended visits to the park comfortable. Following its success at Mesa Verde, other
National Parks began to follow the Nausbaumns’ design and planning strategies, building more
permanent facilities in the “National Park Service rustic” style. While more than ninety years has
passed since the completion of Spruce Tree House, the unique aesthetic style developed by the
Nausbaum in the early years of Mesa Verde National Park continues to influence the national
park’s architecture today.17

Though the first period of development continued through the 1930s, bolstered by Pres-
ident Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal policies that provided funding for infrastructural improve-
ments like landscaping, road building, trail construction, and the development of campsite facili-
ties, construction within Mesa Verde stopped suddenly in the early 1940s due to the outbreak of
World War II.18 With federal funding and resources reallocated for the war effort, the infrastruc-
ture and facilities throughout the Park Serviced fell into disrepair after years of accumulated ne-
glect and deferred maintenance.19 By the 1950s, the combination of low operating budgets and
an unprecedented increase in visitation (from 3,500,000 in 1931 to 30,000,000 in 1948) had so
negatively affected the visitors’ experience that in 1953, Harper’s magazine published a column
provocatively titled “Let’s Close the National Parks,” which estimated that at least $250 million
would be needed to return the parks to “an acceptable level of safety, comfort, and efficiency.”20
Essentially unchanged since the New Deal era development of the 1930s, the park facilities were
in need of major improvements if they were to keep up with visitor demand and continue to
protect the park’s natural resources and historic fabric. This was especially true at Mesa Verde,
where problems of overcrowding, traffic-congestion, insufficient staffing, and inadequate servic-
es endangered the fragile ruins with unprecedented pressure from crowds.21 By the mid-1950s,
Congress was again ready to increase federal funding to the NPS, and shortly after, Park Service
director Conrad Wirth announced an ambitious program known as “MISSION 66,” thus beginning
the second major wave of park development.22

The Mission 66 program represents the largest improvement initiative by the National
Park Service and was one of the most ambitious federal undertakings of the twentieth century.

17 Ibid., 56-57.
18 Smith, p 86-89.
19 Sarah Allaback, Mission 66 Visitor Center: The History of a Building Type (Washington D.C.: The National Park
20 Smith, p 7.
21 Smith, p 133.
22 Ethan Carr, Mission 66: Modernism and the National Park Dilemma (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press,
2007) p 3-5.
Under the direction of Conrad Wirth, the program was developed as a response to increasing political pressure and negative publicity surrounding the need to modernize the park and expand park infrastructure. The decade-long plan, which ran from 1956-1966, was intended as a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the National Park Service and saw the expenditure of around $1 billion on the acquisition of land, the hiring and training of new staff, and extensive construction efforts across the Park System. The projects undertaken by the NPS during the Mission 66 Program included the construction of thousands of miles of roads and trails, the expansion of utilities services throughout the parks, and the construction of additional park residences, administration, and other public buildings; however, the most visible and well-publicized additions to the landscape of the national parks during this time were the construction of nearly one hundred “visitor centers,” a new building type developed as part of the NPS’s new master planning strategy for the parks. Unlike the “rustic era” visitors centers that were organized in a campus-like assemblage of individual buildings, the development goals of the Mission 66 era were inspired by emerging post-war planning theory, which sought to consolidate and centralize different activities. Within the National Parks, planners and architects contended that by concentrating visitor activity within the park, they would be more capable of controlling “visitor flow” and serving the ever-increasing numbers of visitors and automobiles.

Simply understanding the change in development strategies during the Mission 66 Program as a result of prevailing urban design ideas would fail to underscore the deeper motive for the centralization of park facilities and infrastructure. In addition to streamlining the visitor experience and making the parks more accessible overall, the Park Service saw the move toward centralized development as an essential part of their overall resource conservation strategy. By locating new visitor facilities along exiting transportation arteries, the Park Service was able to prevent the introduction of additional visitor traffic and infrastructure, a major threat to the delicate natural and historic resources in the parks. While the more rustic and rambling developments, such as Spruce Tree House, worked well in the parks’ earlier years, NPS architects and developers recognized that the increasing presence of the automobile required a fundamentally different relationship between visitor facilities and overall circulation paths within the park. In general, this meant that visitor centers were intentionally located to intercept automobile traffic before it entered the park, where a system of buses and trams would be available to take visitors

23 Ibid., 10.
1.2 Map showing location of Far View Visitor’s Center in Mesa Verde National Park
the remaining distance to the major features or sites.\textsuperscript{25}

While the Far View Visitor Center is located well within the park entrance, the influence of Mission 66 planning strategies is clear. Located on Navajo Hill, just up the road from the major sites, the visitor center facilities are built along Ruins Road, the Parks’ main thoroughfare (see illustration 1.2). When it was originally constructed, tourists were directed to stop at the facility, where they would buy tickets and schedule a time to visit the Park’s most popular attractions – Balcony House and Cliff Palace. With ample parking and regular shuttle buses, the visitor center was meant to become a one stop shop for the Mesa Verde experience, where visitors could drop off their car, orient themselves, and be driven to and from the major sites. While this significantly limited the visitor freedom, essentially reducing the park to a set of prescriptive experiences, park operators and planners were able to more efficiently control visitor flow and manage larger numbers of people. Though the Park continued to struggle with issues of overcrowding and traffic congestion, the visitor experience had nonetheless improved noticeably after the Mission 66 plan was implemented. With the construction of additional lodging and the creation of more formal site interpretation, like archeological tours and signage, visitors to Mesa Verde were able to see more, learn more, and more easily navigate the park. As one visitor attested to in 1966: “I was impressed at the manner in which the park conducted this operation. I am sure that foreign visitors as well as American citizens are very proud of what is being preserved for us to look at and study.”\textsuperscript{26}

Developing A New Style: Park Service Modern

In addition to influencing park management and planning, prevailing modernist theory also influenced the architectural aesthetic of the visitor facilities built during this period. By the mid-twentieth century, the rustic style of the 1920s and 1930s was becoming increasingly associated with the parks’ crumbling infrastructure and outmoded management policies. While the idea of modern architecture in the parks seemed antithetical to those with more conservative attitudes, the Park Service believed that in order to project a more progressive image to the public, they had to embrace the mainstream design aesthetic of the period.\textsuperscript{27} By 1955, when

\textbf{the NPS began the Mission 66 Program, modernism had become the ubiquitous stylistic choice

\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 25.
\textsuperscript{26} Smith, Travels and Travails: Tourism at Mesa Verde, p 140.
\textsuperscript{27} Allaback, 22.
for most federally funded buildings - from housing developments, and government agencies, to public schools and cultural institutions. Much of the acceptance for modernist architecture by the government was a response to the urgency and limited resources available for postwar redevelopment. The NPS, desperate to restore the grandeur of the parks and reverse public opinion, needed a solution that could be constructed quickly, adapt to changing circulation patterns, and service the growing numbers of visitors as efficiently as possible. Modernist architecture, which embraced postwar technology and modern materials – steel, glass, and concrete – seemed appropriate for such an application, providing low-cost, high quality buildings that could be constructed efficiently and economically.

While the use of modern architecture in the parks provided a practical solution to the challenges facing the NPS in the postwar years, the social values and progressive attitudes associated with the modernist movement provided the additional incentive to adopt a wholly new design approach. Much like the prominent modernist architects of the time, Mission 66 planners and developers believed that architecture, specifically modern architecture, had the ability to shape behavior and improve living standards. With their flat roofs, open plans, large windows, and sweeping forms, modernist buildings offered many functional advantages that were well suited to the larger and more complex programming that was required by the Park Service’s new development strategy. The new style, called “Park Service Modern,” was seen by park planners and architects as a symbol of progress, heralding in a new era of park development that championed innovation, improvement, and reinvention.

The buildings that most clearly reflect the new design approaches within the NPS are the nearly one hundred visitor centers, built during the Mission 66 Program between 1956 and 1966. Unlike the visitor facilities of the Nausbaum-era, the visitor centers are very simple in form and detail, stripped of most of the overtly decorative and associative elements of the previous era.28 Rather than “complementing” the scenery as the earlier rustic style strived to do, the Park Service Modern buildings attempted to blend into the landscape with low-lying, single-story elevations, projecting flat terraces, and earth tones that minimized the buildings’ overall visual impact. The buildings of the Mission 66 era also relied heavily on the use of modern materials like concrete, glass, and steel, which allowed them to design structures with free plans that had fewer columns, larger open spaces, and more continuous circulation patterns.29 The use of col-

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29 Carr, 138.
umn-free spaces and large expanses of glass also allowed architects to create a greater connection between the interior of the building and the landscape. As Mission 66 architect John Cabot expressed, views from the visitor center were to be “exploited” throughout the entire building through the use of an architectural procession (a deliberate constructed sequence of spaces and views) that served as the organizational backbone of the building. In many cases, the visitor center itself became an observation platform, where views from the interior spaces, exterior terraces and courtyards, and roof terraces were calculated as a fluid series of events.30

The architectural elements of the Mission 66 visitor centers have all of the hallmarks of the international style that permeated the architectural profession in the 1940s and 1950s. Taking cues from architects like Le Corbusier, who espoused the use of raised architectural volumes, continuous windows, flat roofs, open plans, and ramps in his book Toward an Architecture, the architects of the Park Service offered an alternative approach to the long-standing policy that NPS buildings had to “harmonize” the architecture and the natural landscape of the park (see illustration 1.3).31 Because the buildings of the Mission 66 era were often sited in less sensitive areas and were stripped of superfluous ornament and associations with rusticity, the new “Park Service Modern” buildings’ compact and understated design effectively retreated from the sur-

30 Carr, 149.
rounding landscape.32 Though the new “Park Service Modern” aesthetic was often criticized as being insensitive or inappropriate, it still managed to exert great influence on the course of Park development. As they did in the 1920s with the “Rustic” style, the Parks Service again established a stylistic and typological prototype that could be deployed across the country, announcing to the American public that the National Park Service had entered the modern age.

Mission 66 Visitor Centers and the Threat of Demolition

Although the Mission 66 visitor centers were once proud symbols of progress and modernity for the National Park Service, many of the facilities have succumbed to the very same fate as their predecessors, suffering from deferred maintenance, overuse, and changing visitor expectation. The large-scale infrastructure developments of the mid-1960s, designed almost exclusively around the automobile to accommodate increased numbers of guests, are again overburdened as visitation has exploded in recent decades - over 280 million in 2012 alone.33 Additionally, many believe that the type of experience afforded by the Mission 66 facilities no longer reflects the intended mission of the National Park Service. Although the Mission 66 was criticized from the very beginning for encouraging overdevelopment and car window sightseeing, current critics of the visitor centers believe that the buildings’ prominent locations impinge on both the parks’ resources and the quality of the visitors’ experience. These sites, once carefully chosen to centralize park development and minimize foot traffic through the park, are now seen by some as exemplifying poor park development and shortsighted thinking. The visitor centers at Pipestone National Monument, Dinosaur National Monument, and Gettysburg National Monument have all been accused of being located too near the very resource that they interpret (see illustration 1.4). For some, the Mission 66 Program has come to symbolize the very worst of policy and management within the National Park Service: a willingness to sacrifice the integrity of our most precious and nonrenewable resources simply to satisfy the superficial interest of the general public. In some cases, mounting critique has led to the demolition of Mission 66 buildings in an effort to return the sites to a more “natural” or “historically original” appearance.34

32 Allaback, p 23.
Even the most celebrated structures of the period like Richard Neutra’s “Cyclorama” designed in 1958 for the Gettysburg National Military Park have been demolished in response to the always-changing relationship between the American public and its national parks.  

Though their critics see the demolition of Mission 66 buildings as a form of conservation, restoring the NPS’s resources to a more authentic form, many advocates have stepped forward to fight for their preservation as early and significant expressions of the “Park Service Modern” aesthetic. A 1997 study by the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office on the Wright Brothers Visitor Center, designed by Ramaldo Guirgola, celebrated the structure as “one of the most outstanding examples of modernist architecture in North Carolina...and a vital part of the state’s twentieth century architectural heritage.” Regardless of their place in the history of development within the National Park Service, Mission 66 visitor centers continue to be threatened by shifting views of development philosophy, visitor expectation, and aesthetic taste. Shortly

35 Carr, 15.  
after the conclusion of the Mission 66 program in 1966, the popularity of modern architecture waned as architects and planners once again turned to historic precedents during the Post-Modernist era. This trend continues today, as a more rustic architecture has returned as the preferred aesthetic for NPS buildings.37

As the Mission 66 buildings are approaching 50 years in age, many of them have fallen into a state a disrepair, been abandoned, or demolished without much thought to either their historic or architectural significance. Though many of the buildings, including Far View, are eligible for the National Registry, few buildings have been listed and those that remain continue to be threatened by demolition and unsympathetic alteration.38 The majority of the resistance to preserve the structures comes from the National Park Service itself, which often cites the difficulty of adaptation as the primary rational behind their demolition, despite explicit language in their management policies that requires a feasibility study of rehabilitation and reuse before the consideration of new construction.39 There is perhaps no better example than the case of the Far View Visitor Center at Mesa Verde, which has recently been abandoned after the construction of the new 24,000 square-foot, $14 million Mesa Verde Visitor and Research Center. Empty since May 2013 and without a clear plan for its reuse, the visitor center stands today as a symbol of the lack of foresight and prudence in park planning and development. Although Carol Sperling, chief of interpretation at Mesa Verde, has said that the park will continue to keep up with maintenance and plumbing issues, as well as run the electricity and heat to keep the building from decay, it is likely that without a redevelopment strategy, the building will be demolished.40

Because many of the standards for determining the significance of the visitor centers depends heavily on the architectural integrity of the building, structures like the Far View Visitor Center that are too small or outdated to serve a productive function within their existing envelope face an uncertain future. The first step in developing a productive methodology for their adaptive reuse is a re-evaluation of park policy concerning the assessment of historic buildings and the guidelines established to inform their preservation and alteration. Therefore, the follow-

The National Park Service’s 2006 Management Policies is the most comprehensive document concerning current regulation, guidelines, business practices, and executive orders within the Park System and provides the overall framework for the management, conservation, and preservation of the parks’ historic and natural resources.\footnote{United States. Department of the Interior. National Park Service. \textit{Management Policies 2006}. Washington: Government Printing Office, 2006. \texttt{<http://www.nps.gov/policy/mp2006.pdf> p 4.}} To respond to changes in law and policy and shifting understandings of the park’s resources and American society, interim revisions to the document are released to more accurately reflect or clarify the objectives of park management. The most recent revision includes amendments that speak directly to issues surrounding new construction, the establishment sustainability standards, and the NPS’s approach to interpretation and education. While the policies do well in establishing guidelines for the future of park development, they fall short in addressing how the Park Service should approach the preservation and interpretation of their own built heritage, especially from the recent past, and their relationship with ancestral cultural groups. These shortcomings in reuse strategies and contradictions between park policy and implementation are most evident through a close examination of the standards in chapter seven, “Interpretation and Education” and chapter nine.
“Park Facilities.”

The Management Policies speak at length about the importance of reinforcing the connection between contemporary cultural groups, or traditionally associated people, and the integrity of the park’s resources, contending that the incorporation of intangible cultural heritage is critical in preserving the understanding of place within the park.42 The policies recognize the importance of involvement with ancestral peoples, who have a legitimate right to participate in decisions that could impact their history, community, and spiritual beliefs and highlight the importance of including the contemporary native perspective into the overall interpretive narrative of the park.43 Through consultation, cultural demonstration, and the inclusion of contemporary ethnographic data, the policies offer a variety of methods for how Mesa Verde could enrich the visitors’ understanding of the greater cultural landscape of the region. While the park has engaged the Pueblo community through consultation with its 24 associated tribes (most recently during the design of the new visitor and research center), there is little mention of their story within the greater narrative of the park. Instead, the park has focused its interpretation largely on the relatively narrow timeframe of ancient occupation, from A.D. 600 to 1300. By failing to recognize the relationship that exists between the contemporary Pueblo people and the park resources, they are denying the visitors the opportunity to understand the full range of meanings and values associated with the park and missing the opportunity to build public support and stewardship through regional engagement.44

In addition to the amendments that address the park’s relationship to Native American Groups, the latest revision of the Management Policies also include more specific language about the Park Service’s approach to sustainability and the adaptive reuse of existing park-owned buildings. These new amendments, developed in response to the Department of the Interior’s 2008 Sustainable Buildings Implementation Plan, mandate that all construction, including renovations, must comply with quantifiable design standards established by the United State’s Green Building Council’s Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) Guidelines.45

42 Ibid., Section 7.5.6, p 94.
43 The policies suggest very explicit goals concerning their understanding of the “nature and spirit of places” within the parks that could help to reinforce the connection between contemporary native peoples and the park, including emphasizing the importance of “place names, migration routes, harvesting practices, prayers, and songs...for use in current and further activities.” Ibid., Section 7.5.6, p 94.
44 Ibid., p 89.
the 2001 Management Policies advocates generally for “improvements in energy efficiency and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions,” the 2006 revision is the first to set quantifiable standards for all visitor service facilities within national parks by mandating that any construction or renovation project must achieve a LEED silver rating. In keeping with its commitment to demonstrate environmental leadership through the principles of sustainability, the 2006 Management Policies also mandate that all new construction and renovations undertaken by the NPS must consider the full life-cycle cost during the planning, design, and construction of the project. While a life-cycle cost analysis is useful in the case of new construction, where architects and engineers can comprehensively calculate the environmental impact of the construction, operation, maintenance, energy consumption, and eventual deconstruction of a new construction, it fails to account for those buildings that are left behind, displaced by newer facilities. In the case of Far View, Mesa Verde was required to conduct a life-cycle analysis for the new Visitor and Research Center; however, it was not required to include the continued operation and maintenance of the now vacant Far View Visitor Center as part of the evaluation. Though the intent of the guidelines was to provide a framework for sustainable development within the park, the revised policy instead encourages new construction over adaptive reuse, which ultimately increases the total environmental impact of the park.

Although a large part of the 2006 Management Policies are devoted to establishing guidelines for new construction, Section 9.1.1.4 of chapter 9, “Park Facilities,” specifically addresses the issue of the adaptive reuse of park-owned buildings. According to the National Historic Preservation Act and Executive Order 13006 (Locating Federal Facilities on Historic Properties) the NPS stipulates that “before acquiring, constructing, or leasing buildings [federal agencies] must use, to the maximum extent feasible, historic properties available whenever operationally appropriate and economically prudent.” The act also requires that to ensure the preservation of historic buildings within the Park Service, agencies must consider compatible alternative uses to prevent deterioration and neglect. Finally, and perhaps the most significant in the case of Far View, the policy requires that the adaptive reuse of existing buildings for visitor facilities must be considered before new construction so long as it does not represent an intrusion on the parks’ natural and cultural resources and it will result in overall cost savings. How-

47 Management Policies 2006, (Sec 9.1.1.1) p 125.
ever, even in the case where the cost of adaptive reuse would exceed that of new construction, the policy states that it may still be justified so long as it meets all other regulations concerning visitor safety and the management of park resources. 49

While the adaptive reuse of the Far View Visitor Center presents a variety of challenges – the ramp, for example, exceeds the maximum incline permitted by the guidelines established in *Physical Access for Persons with Disabilities* 50 and the lack of archival storage at Far View did not meet the park’s objectives - the park administration failed to comply to Section 9.1.1.4 of the Management Policies that requires the development of a reuse strategy for the existing building. Rather, the compromise that allowed the park to construct the new visitor center was to “moth-ball” the Mission 66 building and perform the minimal amount of maintenance until they reached a solution for the building’s future. While there is an unspoken agreement that the building will not be demolished, it is often the case that such buildings, which are allocated only minimal resources, eventually deteriorate to the point where the park service is justified in their demolition. While it is only speculation whether this will occur at Mesa Verde, there is little question that the park failed to adhere to NPS guidelines in implementing alternative programmatic uses for the building.

Considering the 2006 Management Policies’ standards and guidelines for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings, the choice to construct the new Visitor and Research Center without first developing a plan for Far View’s redevelopment seems at odds with the NPS’s commitment to sustainable development. Although the new visitor center should be considered a great achievement in implementing sustainable architectural features, the abandonment of the Mission 66 visitor center, which continues to consume resources, energy, and money, represents a failure in holistic park planning. Regardless of the form or scope of the building’s reuse strategy, the plan must first address how the Far View Visitor Center can again be made serviceable to the park. Therefore, the next section will examine the current guidelines for interpretive planning within the Park Service with the goal of development an alternative use to ensure its continued utility and preservation.

49 *Management Policies 2006*, (Sec 9.1.1.4) p 126.
50 United States. Department of Justice. ADA Standards for Accessible Design. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1994. <http://www.ada.gov/adas94.pdf> p 518-520. Without the addition of an elevator within the interior volume of the existing building, the exterior ramp that serves as the only point of visitor entry into the building must be ADA accessible. In its current configuration the ramp exceeds the maximum allowable slope (1:12) and lacks intermediate landings, which are required for every 30” of rise.
The Comprehensive Interpretive Planning (CIP) and NPS-6

Comprehensive Interpretive Planning arose as a response to the lack of a cohesive approach for interpretation and education within the National Park Service following the post-Bicentennial era of the 1980s. Due to budget cuts and resource scarcity during this time, interpretive planning was largely a result of individual park initiatives that were not necessarily tied to a broader agency-wide vision. While many of these methodologies proved to be successful for short-term planning needs, the Park Service continued to struggle with establishing nation-wide standards that would streamline the Interpretive Planning process and provide a framework for determining shared objectives, management goals, and development approaches. The first step toward cohesive interpretive planning came in 1994 when the Park Service released a new planning chapter for NPS-6 entitled “Interpretation and Visitor Service Guidelines.” This addendum served to bring together existing planning strategies into a single document that would address both short- and long-term planning needs and create a long-range vision for park interpretation.51 In addition to creating a more integrated approach to interpretive planning, the chapter also stresses the importance strengthening public understanding of NPS’s natural and cultural resources by reaching beyond the boundaries of the parks to foster greater civic engagement and open-dialogue. The result is an approach that is more mindful of the larger cultural landscape outside of the park and more responsive to the rapidly changing demographics of its visitors.52

A close examination of CIP guidelines and NPS-6 reveals that the current state of interpretive planning at Mesa Verde falls short of many of the broader goals and aspirations concerning personal services within visitor facilities. While the new visitor center provides an exemplary precedent for integrating advanced sustainable architectural features, much of its interpretive material relies on traditional non-personal methods of content delivery, like informational brochures, museum exhibitions, dioramas, and audio-visual presentations. Although considerable effort was made to acknowledge a greater sense of cultural continuity in the new visitor facility - the faces of the figures in the dioramas, for example, are modeled from contemporary Hopi and

Zuni tribe members - their one-directionality fails to cultivate the sense of civil engagement or encourage open dialogue suggested in CIP planning guidelines. NPS-6 Section 6.1, *Personal Services*, offers a variety of interpretive tools that Mesa Verde could use to establish a programmatic strategy in the Far View Visitor Center that supplements the existing non-personal guest services and diversify the visitor experience. Most noticeably absent in current interpretation strategy is the living cultural component suggested in sections 6.1.4 and 8.6 of NPS-6 and 7.5.7 of the 2006 Management Policies. Often overlooked in favor of more traditional means of interpretive programming, personal guest services offer visitors the opportunity to engage directly with the park staff and is the most effective way to recognize multiple points of view and encourage intellectual and emotional connections between guests and park resources.

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation

The Standards for Rehabilitation addresses the question of how to determine the “appropriateness” of proposed project work on registered buildings. Although the Far View Visitor Center is not a listed building, it is useful to consider how the standards approach adaptive reuse, as they have traditionally served as the de facto addition and reuse policy for properties in Federal ownership or control. The standards were developed to assist property owners and state agencies in evaluating proposed alterations to historic properties that may alter their “significance,” usually defined as their “character-defining spaces, features, or finishes;” however, they also address the buildings’ site, surrounding environment, and landscape features. While the standards have done much to codify methodologies and establish guidelines for the stewardship of historic properties, the policy is largely centered on material integrity and a historian driven approach toward preservation policy. This is troublesome in cases like Far View, where the significance of the building relates more to its associative value with the Mission 66 program and the history of development within the National Park Service than any attribution to a significant architect or historic event. Unlike the Cyclorama, which is associated most with its famous

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53 Ibid., (section 6.1.4: Performing Arts and Demonstration)
55 Management Policies 2006, (Sec 5.3.5.2.7) p 70.
57 Allaback, 268-270.
architect, Richard Neutra, the Far View Visitor Center offers a great deal of flexibility in terms of reconfiguration and reinterpretation. Rather than understanding the building as a singular piece of architecture, its reuse should be conceived within the larger context of park service architecture and development.

When examining the guidelines for rehabilitating historic buildings, the most germane standards are 9 and 10, which concern new additions, alterations, and new construction within historic buildings. The approach for evaluating additions to existing properties draws mainly from a historicist point of view, whereby an era’s material culture has resulted in clearly identifiable associative characteristics. As a result, the Standards for Rehabilitation prioritize the retention of material integrity of the original structure, suggesting that any new additions result in minimal loss or damage to historic material. Although the standards dictate that any addition should be both reversible (Standard 10) and differentiable from the original building (Standard 9), it provides no further direction on what constitutes a compatible addition. At most, it provides a list of suggested techniques for minimizing the visual impact of the new addition, from reducing its size, scale, and massing, to matching the existing building’s window alignments, material color range, and general architectural character.

The vagaries of the guidelines and narrow interpretation of significance for historic buildings complicates adaptive use projects like the Far View Visitor Center, whose eccentric geometry and limited programmatic opportunities are pitted against material-centric ideas of authenticity and rehabilitation. Although the building could likely be put back into productive use while adhering to the Standards, they would severely limit both the type of program possible and the exploration of more innovative approaches to interpretation, design, and sustainability. In many cases, the need to satisfy all the requirements in both the Management Policies and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation discourages the reuse of existing buildings, as new construction is less burdened by redevelopment guidelines and often more efficient to carry out. Further complicating the matter are the competing interests of preservation – i.e. the retention of historic fabric – and sustainable initiatives, which often require significant modification to existing buildings. Considering that existing Park Service management policies require that all new construction and rehabilitation much achieve a LEED silver rating, the next section will introduce the rating system and illustrate the types of challenges that arise when trying to satisfy all

of the competing interests.

**U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED Rating System**

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System is the U.S. Green Building Council’s attempt to codify and set a national standard for what is considered an environmentally sustainable building. Adopted as a standard practice for all new construction and rehabilitation projects, the NPS's adoption of the LEED rating system in the 2006 Management Policies represented the most significant move toward standardizing sustainable practices within the Park System. The rating system is divided into five main categories: Design & Construction, Interior Design & Construction, Operations & Maintenance, Neighborhood Development, & Home Design & Construction, but for the purposes of this thesis, only “Design & Construction,” more specifically the subcategory “New Construction & Major Renovations” will be examined as a way to compare the competing goals of preservation (as established in the Standards for Rehabilitation) and sustainability.60

The issue the competing goals of environmental sustainability and preservation was first raised by the NPS during the oil crises of the 1970s with the release of a Preservation Brief on conserving energy in historic buildings. However, only recently, as concerns for climate change and security issues have increased, has there been a renewed interest in sustainability within the parks. While the NPS has made it standard practice to incorporate both the guidelines for LEED and the Standards for Rehabilitation into their 2006 Management Policies, many cite inherent conflicts between green building standards and historic preservation standards as the reason that many adaptive reuse projects are avoided in favor of new construction (as is seen at Mesa Verde with the construction of the new Visitor and Research Center). While the Standards for Rehabilitation address energy efficiency, they do not openly encourage energy efficient measures, which they suggest could have potentially negative effects of historic resources. Because this type of work is evaluated for its possible negative impact on the historic character of the building, the standards state that existing buildings should not be radically altered their character defining-material damaged simply to meet energy requirements.61

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Rehabilitation is at odds with architectural alterations that could help improve energy efficiency and reduce energy consumption. For example, the LEED guidelines award points based on the percentage of reduction in energy consumption and the amount of daylight admitted into an interior space, which often requires the replacement of older less efficient windows with larger units with a higher insulation value. However, the Standards state that it is not recommended that historic windows be replaced with insulated units, merely for the sake of energy efficiency.

Another example of potential conflicts between green practices and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards relates to the addition of photovoltaic panels to a visible section of a historic roof, a challenge that is made especially difficult in the cases of midcentury buildings, like Far View, which are low-lying and have flat roofs. While achieving a LEED silver rating does not absolutely necessitate the addition of solar panels to the exterior of a building, the desire for on-site energy generation is something that must be considered in buildings like Far View, whose remote location and exposed site make it an excellent candidate for energy independence. Other energy saving measures, like the installation of a green or vegetative roof present fewer potential conflicts.

Because the roof of the Far View Visitor Center is flat, it would be well suited for a minimally invasive green roof system that would add insulation value to the building envelope, minimize rainwater runoff, reduce the heat island effect, and perhaps help to further engage the building with the natural landscape. While prefabricated products like the GreenShield Module Roof System would be easy to install and reversible, the design proposal must weigh the advantages of installing a green roof versus reclaiming the space for additional programming.

While this represents only a small number of potential conflicts that arise when implementing both sustainable building practices and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, it illustrates the need for greater communication between the preservation community, architects, and the National Park Service. The most important issue to convey to the NPS is that there are few conflicts between green building and historic preservation that cannot be resolved through creative design solutions; however, there must be a greater willingness to assess such options before resorting to new construction as the de facto solution to expanding the

CHAPTER 3: EXISTING BUILDING AND SITE CONDITIONS

Preliminary Design and Development

The Mission 66 plan for Mesa Verde was unveiled by Director Conrad Wirth in January 1956. In keeping with the program’s development strategy to centralize visitor services to protect the natural and historic resources in the park, the Mission 66 proposal reoriented park activities though a phased program of building conversion and new construction. The existing headquarters loop, which once primarily served park staff, was converted into an archaeological interpretive center for day-visitors. The changes included the enlargement of the museum (now the Chapin Mesa Archeological Museum), the construction of a lunchroom (now the Spruce Tree Terrace Cafe), and the addition of a large parking lot, trail, and a picnic area. Additional buildings that were determined to be nonessential to the overall redevelopment strategy were demolished and replaced with landscaping and open courtyards. Because of the lack of space surrounding the headquarters area and the desire to locate new park facilities further from the park’s historic resources, all additional construction on the Chapin Mesa was planned closer to the park’s entrance along Ruins Road, the site’s main thoroughfare.65

The master plan from 1961 identified three new sites for the development of additional visitor center facilities – Wetherill Mesa, Morefield Canyon, and Navajo Hill/Far View. The goal of the master plan was broaden the park’s appeal to the public by providing areas for tourists to visit, eat, and stay overnight. While the original master plan called for Wetherall Mesa to serve as an interpretive unit similar to Chapin Mesa, Navajo Hill (now known as the Far View Terrace) was planned as a “control and dispersal point,” complete with a large, modern visitor center.66

The National Park Service hired Joseph and Louise Marlow, husband and wife architecture partners from Denver, Colorado, to design the new visitor center. Known primarily for the numerous international-style houses that they designed around the Denver area, the Marlows’ work carried all of the traits of modernist ideology – flat roofs, low-lying forms, and an extensive use of modern materials like concrete, steel, and glass. The architects, charged with creating a building

65 Smith, Travels and Travails: Tourism at Mesa Verde, p 136-139.
66 Thompson, p 79.
that would both be sensitive to its surroundings and fully embrace the “Park Service Modern” aesthetic, presented two strategies to the park’s administration in 1964.

While the two proposals share an identical ground floor plan and a similar sense of massing and materiality – a low cylindrical form clad in sandstone and lifted on flaring pilotis – their entrance sequence and circulation pattern are quite different. The first scheme (see illustration 3.1) lifts the visitor program one story off of the ground and locates the administration space, bathrooms, and mechanical space on the ground level. Access to the visitor center is granted by way of a switchback ramp on the north façade that leads to a pair of double doors on the second level. The main visitor area, a circular open plan with a central column and radiating beams is given over a large orientation room with a projection screen, an information desk, and a small retail area. On the south side of the building, the architects carved out three bays of the plan for an exterior observation deck that provides sweeping views of the landscape framed by the projecting roofline. Unlike the north elevation, which is largely blank with the exception of the two glass doors, the southern half of the building is completely gazed, flooding the interior with sunlight and taking advantage of the striking views.

Though the size and form of the second scheme (see illustration 3.2) is nearly identical to the first, the entrance sequence was completely reconfigured to create the stronger architectural procession suggested by other Mission 66 architects like John Cabot. Rather than entering the building axially, visitors arrive to the second level visitor space via a long ramp that wraps around the east side of the building and leads directly to the exterior observation deck. While the observation deck is completely contained within the volume of the building in the first scheme, the architects extended the floor plate in the second proposal, giving more floor area to the interior space and further enhancing the visitors’ connection to the landscape. The architects used this space as both the observation deck and the main public entrance for the visitor center, leaving the north elevation as an unbroken sandstone surface. The effect of circulating through the building is quite different. While the first proposal privileges the panoramic relationship established between the visitor and the environment, the second proposal slowly reveals the landscape to the visitor, providing a richer sequence of spaces that serve as the main organizational elements of the building. Combined with the entrance tunnel that connects the visitor center’s plaza with the parking lot on the other side of Ruins Road, the second scheme presents the site in three distinct types of views: the framed view as the visitor passes through the tunnel to the
3.1 Scheme One, Far View Visitor Center, 1964
3.2 Scheme Two, Far View Visitor Center, 1964
The final design of the Far View Visitor Center closely adheres to the second scheme proposed by Joseph and Louise Marlow. The building, nestled within its sloping site, is the only structure within the Far View complex located on the south side of Ruins Road. The other buildings that comprise the development – Far View Lodge, Far View Terrace Restaurant, and smaller administrative buildings - are organized around the large parking on the north side of the road, giving the visitor center a sense of primacy despite its proportionally smaller size. To avoid visitors having to cross Ruins Road, the architects added a long ramp near the parking lot that leads to a tunnel that passes beneath the roadway. Exiting the tunnel, visitors are afforded a view of the structure for the first time, framed by projecting retaining walls that define the entry court located immediately in front of the structure (see illustration 3.3). This elevation presents a largely blank façade to the street – a simple cylindrical volume, clad in sandstone, and lifted on concrete pilotis. The only indication of the buildings function is the large steel lettering that reads, “Far View Visitor Center,” and a ramp that is located on axis with the tunnel and forecourt.

The concrete ramp, which rises from the ground on a series of small inset columns, takes visitors to the second level entrance on the south side of the building. Wrapping around nearly half of the building’s volume, the ramp establishes a close relationship with the building’s en-

3.3 View of Far View Visitor Center through entrance tunnel
velop that slowly reveals the landscape as they circle the building towards the entrance. Once they reach the second level observation platforms, visitors are afforded an unprecedented view of the landscape that is framed on the top and bottom by the building’s projecting floorplates. Beneath the concrete overhang of the roof, the south façade is comprised of steel storefront windows with three pairs of steel doors, large expanses of glass, and maroon spandrels - all materials closely associated with the Mission 66’s “Park Service Modern” aesthetic. The main visitor center space, a free-plan organized around a central column with radiating beams, relies heavily on traditional museum interpretation strategies like display cases, signage, and dioramas (see illustrations 3.7 - 3.8). Although the exhibition partitions are moveable, they greatly reduce the amount of sunlight entering the space and break the visitors’ relationship to the landscape. In the center of the visitor center, an information desk and small storage closet are organized around the central column. Because the information desk faces the main entrance to the visitor center, it serves as the primary orientation point for visitors.

**Significant and Character-Defining Features**

The Far View Visitor Center incorporates many elements from modernist architecture
that characterize the “Park Service Modern” aesthetic. Similar to other Mission 66 buildings, Far View’s low, horizontal massing, flat roof, lack of overt ornamentation, and extensive glazing makes the visitor center unmistakably modern. The building also relies heavily on the use of modern building materials like concrete, steel, and glass that allowed the architects more freedom in terms of spatial organization and architectural expression. Taking advantage of these modern construction techniques, the Marlows followed the example set by other prominent National Park Service designers, like John D. Cabot, Richard Neutra, and Cecil Doty, who stressed the importance of free-plans and fluid circulation patterns in helping connect the visitor to the natural environment.

Park planners encouraged the architects to make use of the surrounding environment by relating their designs, whenever possible, with natural features. According to Cabot, the visitor center’s location should meaningfully influence its design and the development of the program. As he described in 1953, “the building’s placement affects how, in what sequence, the story is told, as well as how much or how little.”

In designing a Mission 66 visitor center, the architects were doing more than providing a point of orientation for visitors; they were building a narrative that incorporated information about the area, an explanation of the park’s values, and the story of its development. The Far View Visitor Center’s relationship to the regional landscape remains

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67 Allaback, 28.
perhaps the most important features of the building. From the observation deck, visitors are given uncompromised views of many of the most significant features of Mesa Verde’s landscape, including Ute Peak, Ship Rock, Carrizo Mountain, Lukachukai Mountain, Chuska Mountain, and Angel Peak.

The sequence of events described by Cabot extended beyond the experience within the building to include the changing pattern of movement that resulted from the increased prevalence of automobiles in the post-war era. Though this relationship is less tangible than the modernist architectural features of the Mission 66 project, it nonetheless represents a significant element of park development during that time. Like many of the visitor centers built during this period, Far View was meant to serve as a departure point, where visitors were able to park their car, view a small exhibition in the interpretation area, schedule tours, and be taken to and from the park features by a fleet of shuttles. This sequence was deliberately designed to create a unique visitor experience that exemplified the culture of efficiency that visitors expected in the 1960s in America. Though today, the National Park Service discourages the expansion of the transportation infrastructure in favor of alternative solutions that reduce the intrusion of private automobiles within the park, it remains an important character-defining feature of the Mission 66 program. While the preservation of the entire Mission 66 transportation infrastructure would likely negatively influence the visitor experience, its role in post-war park development is still important and deserves recognition in the overall narrative.

A close examination of the character-defining features of Mission 66 visitor centers reveals a broader interpretation of historic significance than documents like The Standards for Rehabilitation suggest. Beyond their architectural significance as examples of post-war modernist architecture, these buildings represent a fundamental shift in the National Park Service’s philosophy concerning planning, design, and development during a time of great transition in the United States. Facing an unprecedented increase in visitation, changing programmatic requirements, and new transportation patterns, the National Park Service responded with an equally innovative solution that completely re-evaluated their goals and values. Although recently the project has

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68 Carr, 5.
69 The Management Policies are quick to recognize how the park’s transportation system strongly influences the quality of the visitor experience impact the park resources. It states that for this reason “management decisions regarding transportation facilities require a full, interdisciplinary consideration of alternative and a full understanding of their consequences. Traditional practices of building wider roads and larger parking areas...are not necessarily the answer.” The go on to recommend that the Service should consider “solutions that will preserve the natural and cultural resources in [their] care while providing a high-quality visitor experience.” Management Policies 2006, (Sec 9.2) p 131.
faced criticism due to the buildings’ siting and iconic architecture, which some believe disrupts the park’s resources and negatively impacts the visitors’ experience, the importance of preserving its history should not be undervalued. As the National Park Service again faces challenges related to insufficient funding, changing visitor expectations, and development patterns, a re-examination of the Mission 66 program could help to inform policy and decision making today.

3.6 Small retail shop, Far View Visitor Center

3.7 Diorama Display, Far View Visitor Center
Welcome and exhibition space 3,175 square feet
Public restrooms 275 square feet
Offices 775 square feet
Employee restroom 60 square feet
Employee kitchen 30 square feet
Storage 130 square feet
Circulation 100 square feet
Mechanical space 500 square feet

Net square footage 5,045 square feet
Gross square footage 5,675 square feet
3.9 Existing building drawings
By better understanding the history of development within the National Park Service, Mission 66 can serve as both a window into the past and a catalyst for future growth.

CHAPTER 4: DESIGN PRECEDENTS IN ADAPTIVE REUSE

A central theme shared across nearly all of the Mission 66 visitor centers is their use of the narrative as a design device to organize both the physical configuration of the building and the way it presents interpretive material to the visitors. In a 1957 memorandum issued by the NPS’s Washington chief of interpretation Ronald F. Lee and chief architect Dick Sutton, prominent architects Lyle E. Bennett, John D. Cabot, and Cecil J Doty emphasized the need for close cooperation between interpreters and architects “right from the early stages of planning.” By designing buildings tailor made specific museum exhibitions and interpretive displays, the architects were attempting to predict and avoid many of the functional problems related to the visitor center program, like a lack of storage and preparation space, poor visitor flow, and inadequate visitor facilities. However, the designers also saw the collaboration as a way to enhance the visitor experience and better integrate the interior and exterior spaces, where views were “exploited” by directly incorporating them into the circulation plan. By providing a conceptual “visitor sequence,” Mission 66 architects were able to incorporate create an experiential narrative that informed the architectural composition of the building and the interpretive experience.

To better understand how narratives are used in contemporary architectural design, the following sections will explore two precedents – both of them additions to existing buildings - that employ narrativity as the principle-organizing concept. The first, Daniel Libeskind’s Jewish Museum in Berlin, uses cultural narrative to literally inform the building’s architectural composition and physical form. In his design, Libeskind uses the building itself as a means of narrative to present the visitors an experience that reveals the effects of the Holocaust on the city of Berlin and its Jewish population. The second precedent, The Museum of Scotland by Benson+Forsyth, uses the narrative metaphorically to organize the interpretive material based on ideas of historic progression, with the earliest material in the underground galleries (situating them back into their archaeological context) and the latest material at the top (representing their ascent their archaelogical context)
industrialized present, and projective future). Though the two precedents approached the idea of narrative differently, they provide an important framework for establishing a reuse strategy that speaks to both the history of the Mission 66 program and the greater aspirations of the National Park Service today.

**Jewish Museum, Daniel Libeskind, 2001**

Daniel Libeskind’s Jewish Museum, which opened to the public in 2001, draws on the narrative as the central design concept for its formal and material configuration. The project was the result of an anonymous architectural competition organized by the Berlin government in 1987 for the design of a museum to Jewish culture that would be housed in an extension to the Prussian Court of Justice, a baroque building completed in 1735. Though several internationally renowned architects submitted entries to the competition, Libeskind’s design, with its radical zigzagging form, cavernous interior voids, and gleaming zinc facade articulated by a series of seemingly random gashes, was the only project that used the building’s formal composition as a conceptual tool to express the Jewish experience through the Holocaust. In a detailed description of the conceptual foundation of the project, Libeskind explains that the museum was based on three interrelated narratives:

First the impossibility of understanding the history of Berlin...without understanding the contributions made by the Jewish citizens; second, the necessity to integrate the meaning of the Holocaust, both physically and spiritually, into the consciousness and memory of the city of Berlin; third, that only through acknowledging and incorporating this erasure and void of Berlin’s Jewish life can the history of Berlin and Europe have a human future.\(^{72}\)

What is clear from Libeskind’s description of his project is the importance of establishing the building’s meaning through its physical form and figuration as a means of conveying the feeling of absence, loss, and invisibility. In constructing the architectural narrative of the museum Libeskind began with the abstracted form of the Jewish Star of David that is composed on the site to connect points of historic significance throughout the city. Though the museum is an extension to an existing building, the two structures are formally distinct, with Libeskind’s building standing as a sculptural counterpoint to the Court of Justice. The only connection between

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the buildings is an underground corridor that serves as the main point of entry to the new addition, preserving the contrasting character of the old and the new. This entrance, described by Libeskind as an “entry Void” is meant to disorient the visitor and provoke feelings of anxiety and fear. Visitors descend to the lower level of the building that is organized around three axial paths that tell different parts of the Jewish narrative. The first path, called the Stair of Continuity, cuts through the building in plan and section to express the concept of historic continuity. The second takes visitors from the interior of the building to the Garden of Exile and Emigration, which memorializes through who were exiled from Berlin. The last path leads to a dead end called the Holocaust Void, a vertical cut through the building’s volume that is intended to embody a sense of absence.

Like the Mission 66 architects, who used the building’s circulation plan as a way to organize sequential architectural events, Libeskind’s conception of the Jewish Museum can be traced to his analytical 1978 drawing series *Micromegas* that used architectural lines as indexical markings of spatial conditions to organize a series of “time sections”.

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4.1 Jewish Museum concept drawing

voids, and terminuses – that serve as representational gestures forming an overall narrative of the Jewish experience. The interior environments, composed of concrete, steel, and gypsum create an interlocking series of spaces that are cold, dark, and at times overwhelming.

The use of architecture as a narrative device extends to the Libeskind’s treatment of the exterior of the museum, which is composed of a network of narrow slits that slice through the facade’s zinc cladding. Though they appear random, the location and orientation of the windows follow a precise matrix that maps the addresses of famous Jewish citizens living in Berlin during the war. Like the overall configuration of the building, a network that connects otherwise unrelated sites throughout Berlin, the facade serves to contextualize the building both physically and temporally. Though the architect describes the building’s formal composition as “irrational and invisible,” he is inevitably referring to the irrational and invisible nature of the building’s content rather than its deliberate architectural effect. As a precedent for the addition and adaptation of the Far View Visitor Center, Daniel Libeskind’s Jewish Museum in Berlin demonstrates how architectural composition can be used to translate and articulate human experience to the public. At once instructive, emotional, and inspiring, the Jewish Museum forms an innovative visual language brimming with symbolism and history.

The Museum of Scotland, Benson & Forsyth, 2002

The Museum of Scotland, designed by the British firm of Benson & Forsyth in 2002, utilizes narrative to establish a dialogue between architecture and the interpretive exhibition design. Situated at the crossroads of six streets in Edinburgh’s historic district, the museum is an addition to the former Museum of Science and Art, an exhibition building, designed by the British architect Francis Fowke in 1889. Juxtaposed together, the two buildings represent contrasting examples of museum exhibition design: the older, a top-lit gallery designed for the neutral display of objects, and the addition, a careful aesthetic integration of architecture and exhibition design. In response to the competition brief, which specified that “the display concept emerging from [the] work...should provide a coherent story from the earliest geological times to the present day,” the architects organized the museum on six floors around a central triangular atrium, forming a peripheral route that provides visitors alternative paths on each level. Rather than

following a typical historic chronology, the Museum of Scotland’s interpretive sequence allows
visitors to start at any point along the museum route and explore the exhibition, moving freely
between the past and present.

While the individual levels of the building offer alternative interpretive paths and viewing
sequences, the museum’s six floors are organized historically from Scotland’s pre-historic
material on the basement level, to the twentieth century material on the sixth.75 Visitors begin
the museum route at the basement level of the building, where exhibition content focuses on
Scotland’s geological and early archaeological past. Here, the building’s relationship to the interpretive material is expressed through the architects’ sculptural treatment of the space, which
suggests ideas of excavation and primitive history. The passage from the darkened lower level to
the top-lit central galleries metaphorically communicates the development of the country from
a medieval to an industrialized society. As visitors continue to ascend the buildings, the interior
environments become increasingly light, creating a sequential series of spaces that reveals the
progressive forces shaping Scotland’s history and development. The last space in the sequence
is a roof terrace that offers sweeping panoramic views of the city and gives visitors a privileged
position to contemplate the country’s future.

The periphery sequence of spaces created in the Museum of Scotland offers a wide
range of routes that represent the country’s development as a spatial flow of accomplishments
and events. Rather than using narrative as a conceptual tool for the formal composition of the
building as Libeskind did in the Jewish Museum, Benson & Forsyth incorporated narrative to
strengthen the relationship between the architecture and the objects it contains. The desire to
create a symbiosis between architectural design and the museum’s curatorial approach reflects
a continued interest in understanding the ability of architecture to transmit knowledge and
organize information - an interest the guided many of the interpretive objectives in the Mission
66 program.76 In developing an adaptive reuse strategy for the Far View Visitor Center at Mesa
Verde, a close consideration of the relationship between architecture and exhibition design is
invaluable in determining the basic building program and organization strategies in the prelimi-
nary design phase. Additionally, by strengthening the connection between the architecture, the
site, and the interpretive material, the adaptive reuse strategy could diminish the perceived
imposition of Mission 66 buildings on sensitive sites like Mesa Verde, a recurring criticism that

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75 Psarra, p 175.
76 Carr, 149.
has led to the demolition of some of the most celebrated Mission 66 visitor centers, like Richard Neutra’s Cyclorama and Anshen & Allen’s Quarry Visitor Center.\textsuperscript{77}

**CHAPTER 5: PROPOSED PROGRAM AND RATIONALE**

The objective of the proposed program for the adaptive reuse of the Far View Visitor Center is to address the existing contradictions between National Park Service policy concerning interpretation and education and its implementation at Mesa Verde. After a close examination of the 2006 Management Policies, the Comprehensive Interpretive Planning (CIP) guidelines, and NPS-6, a programmatic strategy was developed that seeks to correct two area of weakness in the existing interpretation strategy of the Park: (1) the collaboration between the NPS and ancestral cultural groups; (2) the incorporation of the living cultural component as suggested in sections 6.1.4 and 8.6 of NPS-6.\textsuperscript{78} The proposed program for the redevelopment of the visitor center will focus on introducing additional personal services – cultural demonstration, performing arts, and interpretive demonstration – that will help to reinforce the Park’s connection with the surrounding region’s contemporary Pueblo People. The “Pueblo Cultural Center at Far View” will provide space for native cultural groups to curate exhibitions, host special events such as dance performances, concerts, and group demonstrations, and house a permanent exhibition about the lives of ancestral and contemporary Pueblo groups. While museums like the Anasazi Heritage Center in Dolores, Colorado offer an excellent introduction to the four-corners region and help to people the surrounding archaeological sites, there is still a lack of recognition of contemporary Pueblo People, culture, and practices. Because no such facility exists within Mesa Verde or the surrounding area, this project presents a boundless opportunity in nurturing the sort of civic engagement and open public dialogue that permeates all of the National Park Service’s interpretive guidelines and documents.

The program for the Cultural Center is organized around three central themes: (1) Natural Environment: The Mesa Veredean Landscape Past and Present, (2) Cultural Arts: Performance and Demonstration, and (3) Cosmic and Sacred: Ancient Astronomy and Cosmology. Following

\textsuperscript{77} A portion of the Quarry Visitor Center at Dinosaur National monument in Utah was demolished in 2010, less than ten years after being declared a National Historic Landmark (2001). Though National Register of Historic Places determined that the building was eligible for listing in 1998, the NPS conducted a court-ordered study that overturned the decision in 2012. Amongst protests that the NPS failed to comply with federal regulations to investigate alternative redevelopment approaches, the building was demolished in March 2013.

\textsuperscript{78} National Park Service, Director’s Order #6: Interpretation and Education” (section 6.1.4: Performing Arts and Demonstration) accessed 10 November 2013, [http://www.nps.gov/policy/DOrders/DOrder6.html](http://www.nps.gov/policy/DOrders/DOrder6.html).
the precedent of Benson & Forsyth’s Museum of Scotland at Edinburgh, the cultural center is composed of three spatial layers that define the programmatic themes, creating a spatial narrative that acknowledges the special interdependent relationships that exists between the integrity of the park resources and the contemporary Pueblo people.

The lower level, which houses the theme of “The Natural Environment” is built beneath the existing ground plane on the east and west sides of the building. As visitors slowly descend into this subterranean space, the idea of excavation provides a strong metaphorical association that resituates the exhibition material back into its archaeological underground. Exploring the subject of the site’s geological, climatic, and agricultural heritage, this space is composed of a series of axes that frames significant features in the distant landscape, reinforcing the relationship between the building and the natural environment. The lower level includes an entry and reception hall, two large meeting rooms, public restrooms, and the largest programmatic areas on this level - 2,500 square feet of rotating interior and exterior exhibition spaces. The objective of the flexible exhibition space is to include contemporary Pueblo People as active stakeholders in the process of interpretive exhibition design and development. As stated in the 2006 Management Policies, such “collaborative relationships with American Indian tribes help maintain their cultural and spiritual practices and enhance the Park Service’s understanding of the history and significance of sites and resources in the parks.”

The ground level, which opens to the entrance court and houses the “Cultural Arts” component of the building, includes performance, dining, and social spaces. As the most visible and accessible part of the building, the ground level serves a critical role in fostering a sense of civic engagement and public dialogue. The programmatic strategy of this space is guided by the discussion of personal guest services in the NPS’s Director’s Order #6: Interpretation and Education and Director’s Order #75A: Civic Engagement and Public Involvement. The Park Service defines such services as “those in which [the NPS] facilitates opportunities for emotional and intellectual connections between resources and the visitors.” Through such activities as performance art – drama, dance, music performance, art shows – and cultural demonstrations –activities designed to present a skilled process, activity, or historic event – the arts programming of the cultural center is meant to encourage visitors to engage directly with the Park’s resources.

Though reduced in size, the second level of the visitor center will retain much of its original function and serve as an orientation point and permanent exhibition area for visitors to the Far View Group and surrounding archaeological sites on the mesa-top. As part of the overall interpretive strategy, the external entrance sequence to this space has been preserved, though a new set of stairs now connects all three levels internally. The original 1964 reception area has also been preserved as a general information desk, but all of the remaining internal partitions, display cases, and interpretive plaques have been removed to make way for an internal ramp that connects the second level space with the roof and new viewing platforms.

The final area of the building is located on the roof and houses the “Cosmic and the Sacred” portions of the program. The visitor center’s flat roof, a hallmark of mid-century design, offers a great opportunity to expand the program of the building without extensive alteration to its exterior form. In addition to providing an even more expansive view of the site, the roof level will be seasonally programmed with outdoor activities that extend the hours of park programming. Chaco Canyon’s “Night Sky Program” provides an excellent precedent for how programming can be used to connect ancient and contemporary practices through astronomy and cosmology. Since 1991, Chaco Culture NHP has offered astronomy in its public interpretive programs and used it as an opportunity to speak toward the greater stewardship of the park. The park established an ongoing partnership with the Albuquerque Astronomical Society (TAAS) in 1991, attracting the attention of affinity groups from across the country. In 1998, the park built a more permanent observatory that was funded by members of TAAS, which added a new dimension to the site’s existing archaeological astronomy and cosmology program. Today, over 3,000 visitors and school groups attend annual public astronomy programs where the park invites amateur astronomers to help monitor levels of light pollution in the region in an effort to become better stewards of the park.82

The proposed design increases the floor area of the existing building by more than fifty percent – from 4,900 square feet to 7,600 square feet – and adds over 4,000 square feet of outdoor demonstration, exhibition, and dining space. The following page outlines the proposed program and general sequence of the spaces.

---
Outline of Proposed Program

Theme: Natural Environment

Lower Level Interior
- Entry and Reception  
  700 sq ft
- Temporary Exhibition Space  
  1,500 sq ft
- Meeting Room (2)  
  700 sq ft
- Restroom (2)  
  200 sq ft

Lower Level Exterior
- Outdoor Exhibition  
  625 sq ft
- Outdoor Demonstration  
  425 sq ft

Theme: Cultural Art

Ground Level Interior
- Performance Auditorium  
  1,200 sq ft
- Performance Reception Area  
  425 sq ft
- Kitchen  
  450 sq ft
- Dining  
  600 sq ft
- Restroom (2)  
  300 sq ft

Ground Level Exterior
- Entry Courtyard (Existing)  
  1,000 sq ft
- Outdoor Dining  
  600 sq ft

Second Level Interior
- Visitor Orientation and Information (Existing)  
  500 sq ft
- Permanent Exhibition  
  2,000 sq ft

Second Level Exterior
- Observation Deck (Existing)  
  1,500 sq ft

Theme: The Cosmic and the Sacred

Roof Level
- Exhibition Ramp  
  1,200 sq ft
- Observation and Sky-Viewing Deck  
  1,500 sq ft

Total Interior:  
  7,600 sq ft
Total Exterior:  
  5,350 sq ft
Design Approach and Proposal

The design approach for the adaptive reuse of the Far View Visitor Center was conceived as a contemporary projection of many of the original design goals of the Mission 66 architects and planners, who adopted the modernist principals of architectural procession, the integration of outdoor and indoor space, and the play of overlapping spaces and outward views. Like the visitor centers designed by NPS architects Cabot, Bennett, and Doty, the addition to Far View uses circulation as the backbone of programmatic organization to guide the visitor through a dramatic sequence of spaces that capture and re-present significant views of the site. The analysis of the site focused on the building’s relationship to natural and cultural landmarks visible from the existing building and its relationship to the temporal experience of visitor circulation. The overall objective of the project was to provide an experiential narrative that would unite the building with its landscape and program through a series of calculated sequential experiences. The following design statement served to direct the early phases of research and schematic design:

The arrangement of spaces, social relationships, material, and cultural content is the fundamental way that architecture communicates meaning through abstract conceptual relations and embodied perceptual experience. As a form of representation bound with sequence, space, and time, the use of narrative can provide structure through which this content can be presented for interpretation to an audience. In order to understand how meaning is constructed and communicated in architecture and how it can be made actionable in the cause of preservation, this thesis will examine the role of the narrative in the adaptive reuse of the Mission 66 Far View Visitor Center at Mesa Verde.

Preliminary Site Analysis

Perhaps the most critical aspect in understanding Mission 66 visitor centers is the way that they essentially reversed the architectural premise of earlier rustic buildings from the Park’s prewar period. Where once the park’s buildings were conceived as parts of an overall pictorial
landscape meant to be seen, Mission 66 visitor centers were meant to be seen from. By understanding this premise, its clear why architects of the period rejected façade compositions that “evoked Swiss chalets, pioneer construction, of ‘Indian’ culture” for sculptural forms that were compositions of function.\(^{83}\) Therefore, rather than prioritizing the material integrity or aesthetic intent of the original building, the proposal for the addition to Far View focuses on extending the functional role of the building as a sort of optical device that enhances the viewers’ perception of the site.

To better understand how the current site configuration frames the visitor experience, the initial investigations examined the relationship between the site’s topography and the arrival procession as visitors approach the visitor center. Illustrations 6.1 - 6.3 show how the configuration of the site’s infrastructure (in this case Ruins Road) creates a set of sequential viewing experiences that change depending on the geometry of the road and the surrounding topography. Three distinct viewing types were evident: (1) the framed view that occurs when passing through two adjacent figures, (2) the serial view that occurs as one slowly travels along the circumference of a circle, (3) the panoramic view that occurs when the viewer defines a single point in space that is unobstructed for 180°. Illustrations 6.4 - 6.5 examine this principle on the scale of the existing building, where all three viewing types are evident upon close investigation. In 6.4, the panoramic view is defined by the projecting floor plate and roof line - leaving the 180° horizontal view of the landscape unobstructed - and the rhythm of the store front windows frame smaller areas of the view from the interior and re-present the view through reflection on the exterior. Figure 6.6 and 6.7 further investigate the relationship between visitors, the building’s circulation pattern, and time by mapping the three viewing types on a graph that explores the passage of time (x-axis) versus changes in elevation (y-axis). What these drawings demonstrate is how interconnected movement, time, and building geometry become when orchestrating the three spatial events.

**Relationship to Proposed Program**

Like the proposed program, the three viewing types identified in the preliminary site analysis create distinct relationships between the visitors and their environment. The “framed view” establishes a direct connection between a threshold and a singular point in the landscape;\(^{83}\) Carr, p 150.
6.1 Spatial relationships of arrival procession
6.2 Three view type of arrival procession

6.3 Spatialization of three view types of arrival procession
6.4 Three view types in existing building

6.5 Existing visitor center’s relationship to significant natural features
6.6 Temporal mapping of spatial experience of three view types
6.7 Temporal mapping of spatial experience of three view types
the “sequential view” implies movement through space; and the “panoramic view” challenges visitors to reflect on their relationship to the greater regional environment. As an organizational method, these viewing types were used to relate the configuration of the addition to the proposed program, which also deals with three levels of engagement through its themed components: “The Natural Environment,” “Cultural Arts,” and “The Cosmic and the Sacred.” Using Benson & Forsyth’s Museum of Scotland as a precedent, these programmatic elements were distributed on separate spatial layers relating to their corresponding theme. The following sections will describe the building through its three viewing types, following the spatial progression from the lower level, to the ground level, and finally the roof and viewing platform.

**Program: Lower Level Exhibition Entry | Viewing Type: Framed |**

**Theme: Natural Environment**

Visitors to the cultural center approach the building in the same way they would have when it was originally constructed – through the underground entrance tunnel that brings them
from the north side of Ruins Road to the entry courtyard on the south side. Passing through the tunnel, visitors are afforded the first “framed view” of the entrance sequence – a preserved historic view of the building just as it would have looked in 1964. By carefully situating the addition so it disappears from view when passing through the entrance tunnel, guests are given a glimpse of the past, unobstructed by any modern intervention (see rendering in illustration 6.8). The next series of framed views were designed to call attention to major features in the natural landscape that have served as significant cultural landmarks for the Pueblo People since the ancestral occupation of Mesa Verde (see illustration 6.9). As visitors descend a ramp into the newly excavated lower level entrance of the cultural center, the building frames a view of Angel Peak (illustration 6.10) with its walls and the underside of the existing ramp. In this way, the geometry of the building functions as both a way to announce a major landmark within the landscape and “frame” the viewers understanding of the junction between the old building and the new addition, which are further differentiated through their materiality. Continuing around the building through the reception hall, guests are brought to the temporary exhibition space, a series of linear projections whose axes relate to other natural landmarks – the Carrizo Mountains, Ship Rock, and the Chuksa Mountains (illustration 6.11). Terminating in glazed openings that lead to
6.10 Angel Peak framed in new entrance to cultural center

6.11 Framed views along various building axes
6.12 Lower level proposed plan

Interior
1. Entry and Reception
2. Temporary Exhibition Space
3. Meeting Room
4. Restroom

Exterior
5. Outdoor Exhibition
6. Outdoor Demonstration
outdoor exhibition spaces, these axes also serve as important indicators that guide visitor flow through the building and integrate indoor and outdoor spaces (see building plan in illustration 6.12).

Program: Ground Level Social Space | Viewing Type: Sequence | Theme: “Cultural Arts”

Returning to the reception space, guests can take the original visitor center stairs to the ground level, which houses the performance auditorium, kitchen, café, outdoor dining spaces, and courtyard. Rather than the axial organization of the lower level, the ground level is arranged to form a series of tangential views along the circumference of the ground floor envelope. Unlike the original ground floor plan, which internalized the circulation around the building’s central column, the new proposal weaves visitor circulation between interior and exterior pathways to respond to different programmatic requirements. More private spaces, like the restrooms and kitchen are pushed toward the interior of the building, while more public spaces, like the café and performance auditorium spill into the adjacent outdoor patios (see plan in illustration 6.14 and rendering in illustration 6.13). The result not only serves to make the ground floor more public, but also leads visitors along a new, larger circumferential circulation path that provides sequential glimpse of the landscape as they pass from one space to the next (indicated by the

6.13 Exterior dining space for cafe
6.14 Ground level proposed plan

Interior
1. Performance Auditorium
2. Performance Reception Area
3. Kitchen
4. Cafe Dining
5. Restroom

Exterior
6. Entry Courtyard
7. Outdoor Dining
6.15 Second level proposed plan

Interior
1. Visitor Orientation and Information
2. Permanent Exhibition

Exterior
3. Observation Deck
red lines on the plan). This circulation path is meant to reference the same visual pattern established by the original ramp entry, which has been preserved as the entrance to the second floor visitor center and permanent exhibition space.

**Program: Roof Level Observation Deck | Viewing Type: Panoramic | Theme: “The Cosmic and the Sacred”**

Like the excavated lower level, the roof level and observation deck are wholly new additions to the existing buildings. Visitors access the roof level by way of long ramp inserted within the existing envelop of the building, which serves as both the primary means of circulation between two levels and a light well to natural light to the building’s interior space. (see plan in illustration 6.16 and section in illustration 6.17). Visitors ascend the ramp, again traveling along the circumference of the building, which provides periodic glimpses into the café (see rendering in illustration 6.14) and the roof level above. The remaining area of the roof level provides seasonal program space for “Night Sky” programming, stargazing, and small group lectures (see plan).

Extending from the roof deck is a long linear glass projection, which brings visitors along a series of three axes that are oriented to major features in the landscape – Ute Peak, Carrizo Mountains, and Lukachukai Mountains. While the glass observation desk provides the most privileged views of the site, it also serves as a literal looking glass – re-presenting the surrounding landscape through the reflection of light, shadow, and color (see rendering in illustrations 6.18 - 6.20).
Exterior
1. Exhibition Ramp
2. Observation Deck/Seasonal Programming

6.16 Roof level proposed plan
6.17 Section looking west (top) and south (bottom)
6.18 Exterior view of observation platform

6.19 View from observation platform

6.20 Reflection of sunset - re-presentation of site phenomenon
BIBLIOGRAPHY


INDEX

2006 Management Policies 5, 19-23, 26, 27, 47, 48

A
Allaback, Sarah 3, 4
Anasazi Heritage Center 47
Anshen & Allen 48
Arts and Crafts Movement 8

B
Bennett, Lyle 41
Benson+Forsyth 41, 44-45, 47

C
Cabot, John 14, 30, 38, 41
Carr, Ethan 4
Chaco Canyon 49
Comprehensive Interpretive Planning 5, 19, 23-24, 47
Cyclorama 1, 2, 3, 17, 25, 46

D
Dinosaur National Monument 3, 16
Doty, Cecil 38, 41
Downing, A.J. 8

F
Fowke, Francis 45

G
Gettysburg National Military Park 1, 3, 17
Guirgola, Ramaldo 17

H
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Page(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hopi</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish Museum, Berlin</td>
<td>41-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law Olmsted, Frederick</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Le Corbusier</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership in Energy &amp; Environmental Design (LEED)</td>
<td>21, 26-28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee, Ronald</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Libeskind, Daniel</td>
<td>41-44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marlow, Joseph and Louise</td>
<td>29, 31-33, 38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Museum of Scotland</td>
<td>41, 44-45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nausbaum, Jesse</td>
<td>8, 9, 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutra, Richard</td>
<td>17, 25, 38, 46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Deal</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPS-6</td>
<td>23-24, 47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rockefeller, John D.</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roosevelt, Franklin</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roosevelt, Theodore</td>
<td>1, 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation</td>
<td>5, 19, 24-26, 27, 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sperling, Carol</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sutton, Dick</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wirth, Conrad</td>
<td>9, 10, 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wright Brothers National Memorial Visitor Center</td>
<td>3, 17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zuni</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>