

POCANTICO PROCLAMATION on Sustainability and Historic Preservation

Premise

The historic preservation community has a deep tradition of stewardship for our built environment, emerging as leaders in sustainable practices. Consistent with this tradition, historic preservation practitioners resolve to face head-on the global human-caused ecological crises that threaten our built and natural resources. Historic preservation must play a central role in efforts to make the built environment more sustainable. To this end, we urge all policy makers to recognize the following:

1. *The Climate Change Imperative* – Human activity has increased and accelerated global warming putting the environment at risk. It is imperative that we immediately and significantly reduced greenhouse gas emissions to begin reversing extreme climate change patterns within a generation.
2. *The Economic Imperative* – Our current economy is based upon unsustainable consumption and an overreliance on finite resources. A new green economy must rest upon a conservation-based foundation to manage natural and cultural resources in a sustainable and economically beneficial manner.
3. *The Equity Imperative* – In recent years, economic inequalities between rich and poor have grown in the United States and abroad. The disproportionate levels of resource consumption and global pollution are unsustainable. Our consumption patterns must be altered to foster social equity, cultural diversity, and survival of all species.

The Pocantico Principles on Sustainability and Historic Preservation

Therefore, in order to address the three above imperatives, we advocate the following:

1. **FOSTER** a Culture of Reuse

Maximizing the life cycle of all resources through conservation is a fundamental condition of sustainability. The most sustainable building, community or landscape is often the one that already exists. Lessons learned from historic preservation are transferable to the entire existing built and landscaped environment.

2. **REINVEST** at a Community Scale

It is not sufficient to address sustainability on a piecemeal basis through individual building projects. We must consider the larger context of the built environment: our communities. Reinvestment in existing, more sustainable neighborhoods – especially our older and historic ones – saves resources and promotes socially, culturally, and economically rich communities.

3. **VALUE** Heritage

The design of older buildings, landscapes, and communities should inform future building practices. While new green building technology offers promise for reducing the environmental harms caused by new construction, traditional building practices provide a wealth of sustainable design solutions that are premised on sensitivity to local conditions, careful siting and planning, and long-term durability, all of which provide essential models for the future.

4. **CAPITALIZE** on the Potential of the Green Economy

Preservation economics provide a powerful model for shifting away from a consumption-based and energy-inefficient economy. Reinvestment in our existing built environment must become an indispensable part of America's new green economy. Per dollar spent rehabilitation activities create more new jobs than new construction.

5. **REALIGN** Historic Preservation Policies with Sustainability

Today's challenges require that historic preservation move beyond maintaining or recovering a frozen view of the past. Historic preservation must contribute to the transformation of communities and the establishment of a sustainable, equitable, and verdant world by re-evaluating historic preservation practices and policies, and making changes where appropriate.

Next Steps

Consequently, we, the historic preservation community, recognize the environmental, economic, and social challenges that face us and call for policies that will result in revising our present course. We stand ready to offer an example for sustainability, while further challenging preservationists to more fully accommodate sustainable practices. We call for our leaders and fellow citizens to join us in taking immediate action.

The Pocantico Proclamation on Sustainability and Historic Preservation was written by participants in the Pocantico Symposium: 'Sustainability and Historic Preservation -- Making Policy, November 5-7, 2008' based on materials developed at this symposium and the discussions that took place there. It reflects the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the Rockefeller Brothers Fund.

ACTIONS TO FURTHER THE POCANTICO PRINCIPLES on Sustainability and Historic Preservation

A Call to Action

The Pocantico Proclamation on Sustainability and Historic Preservation lays forth the imperative for sustainability and offers guiding principles for the use of historic preservation as a model and a partner for a sustainable society.

The future success of the Proclamation necessitates tremendous effort and work on the part of historic preservation practitioners. The Actions to further the Pocantico Principles on Sustainability and Historic Preservation represent a vast, diverse, evolving, and flexible inventory of actions aligned with the ideals of the Proclamation. We call upon preservation practitioners to assist in carrying out these and other actions to help in transitioning to a sustainable society.

ADVOCACY AND EDUCATION (AE)

Education

Integrate sustainability into preservation education

- AE1) Incorporate sustainability into preservation curricula at all levels of education.
- AE2) Promote service learning opportunities focused on preservation and sustainability.
- AE3) Develop educational tool kits custom tailored for various needs (e.g. policy makers, historic building owners and managers, and students in primary, secondary, and higher education).
- AE4) Challenge historic preservation research programs to expand the understanding of sustainable historic preservation.

Local Organizations and Commissions

Engage local preservation organizations and commissions

- AE5) Utilize the more than 3,000 local preservation organizations and innumerable local commissions to promote preservation as a sustainable solution, and to become sustainability advocates within their communities

- AE6) Provide local community-based preservation organizations and local commissions with technical, policy, and practical tools for promoting preservation as a key to sustainability.
- AE7) Focus resources at the local level as this is where numerous policy decisions are made.

Energy Management

Actively manage climate control systems

- AE8) Encourage property management organizations to adopt flexible indoor environmental standards that improve operating energy performance.
- AE9) Promote the “behavioral wedge” – the concept that we can reduce one “wedge” (a gigaton) of greenhouse gases by altering our behavior (i.e. turning off lights, using shades, opening windows, etc.)

PUBLIC POLICY (PP)

Green Building Rating Systems

Integrate preservation into sustainability standards, codes, and rating systems

- PP1) Work with developers of green building rating systems to ensure the value of building reuse is recognized.
- PP2) Promote the adoption of mandates for the improved energy performance of historic properties following recognized national models and timetables.
- PP3) Develop performance based energy codes, so that historic properties can find non-standard methods for improved energy performance.

Historic Preservation Policies

Update historic preservation policies to include sustainability principles and practices

- PP4) Identify critical conflicts between sustainable design practices and preservation and develop solutions.
- PP5) Integrate green design practices into preservation guidelines as part of a fresh look at the Secretary’s Standards (i.e. The Secretary of the Interior’s *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*) by emphasizing ways to enhance building performance while preserving historic character.
- PP6) Create new *Interpreting the Standards Bulletins* on common issues related to sustainable design practices and historic projects.

- PP7) Support research programs that explore new technologies for retrofitting historic structures and quantify the sustainability of preservation.

City and Regional Planning

Integrate preservation with planning, community development, and transportation

- PP8) Illustrate America's automobile dependence and the drastic divergence from America's strong transit history.
- PP9) Encourage all levels of government to fund mass-transit infrastructure instead of personal automobiles in urban settings.
- PP10) Explore the use of urban growth boundaries and promote sustainable planning as seen in historic districts (e.g. walkable, transit-oriented, and livable communities)

Funding

Develop reliable and professional funding sources

- PP11) Promote new sources of funding through environmental, housing, transit, and energy programs promoting sustainable solutions.
- PP12) Integrate preservation into an economic stimulus plan based on the inherent sustainability of historic preservation.

Economic Investment

Develop economic programs to reinvest in existing buildings

- PP13) Encourage government to offer incentives for reuse over demolition.
- PP14) Encourage public and private grants for reinvestment in historic buildings and communities.
- PP15) Work with the National Park Service and other review agencies to encourage expedited tax credit approval and streamlined reviews for sustainable projects.

TECHNICAL (T)

Rehabilitations

Achieve Net Zero historic rehabilitations

- T1) Utilize best practices and technologies to ensure long-term viability of historic resources through renewable energy.
- T2) Aspire to "net zero" historic rehabilitations for all types and scales of historic places.

Energy

Promote and develop technologies and products that support sustainable practices compatible with historic properties

- T3) Work with industry to develop energy conservation and alternative energy products and techniques that respect the characteristics of historic properties.
- T4) Encourage planning for alternative energy development and distribution that properly considers the impacts on cultural and natural resources.

Demonstration Project

Launch a sustainable preservation demonstration project

- T5) Design and implement demonstration projects showcasing the best sustainable design approaches and technologies while utilizing representative historic properties across America.

Conclusion

Preservation practitioners must rise to the sustainability challenges we face to inspire and inform society at large. Building upon the Pocantico Proclamation on Sustainability and Historic Preservation, the action items provide guidance in transitioning historic preservation to the forefront of the sustainability movement.

The objectives of the actions are twofold. Firstly, illustrate that historic preservation offers a model for sustainability. Secondly, challenge preservation to more fully incorporate sustainable building practices. Through interdisciplinary collaboration, partnership between government and the private sector, and diligent work on behalf of preservationists, we can transform historic preservation into a leading, relevant, and timely exemplar for a sustainable twenty-first century.

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