

## INTRODUCTION

This report describes the background of a conference session and summarizes the presentations of the speakers who participated in the session. The session grew out of the efforts of a Task Force on Historic Preservation of Transportation Related Structures which was created in early 1977 by the Committee on Social, Economic, and Environmental Factors of Transportation. The principle aim of the Task Force is to study major aspects of the preservation of historic transportation-related structures. The Task Force is concerned with

1. The nature and extent of the laws, regulations, policies, and procedures prescribed by all public and quasipublic agencies governing the preservation of transportation-related structures and examples of their successful application;
2. Criteria for the selection of sites, facilities, structures, etc. that have sufficient historical or cultural value to warrant preservation consideration in the face of development that would seriously endanger or eliminate them;
3. Information that will facilitate the assessment of equitable trade-offs between preservation and transportation interests, especially for public officials having decision making authority in situations involving historic preservation;
4. Awareness of the legitimacy of values that relate to both preservation of historically important structures and maintenance of safe and adequate transportation systems at reasonable cost.

### THE NEED FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION: PHILOSOPHY AND PURPOSE

Douglas Griffin, Chief, Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service

Those of us involved with historic preservation know that the old architectural axiom, "form follows function," is not necessarily true. People are beginning to agree with us that old buildings recycled from an earlier function into a new one seem to work as well, if not better than before. The cost of adapting an old building to a new use is usually less than new construction; aesthetically, the old is generally more pleasing than today's modern architecture, and many old buildings are more energy efficient than new ones.

For example, from a design/aesthetic standpoint, in Washington the best office building/shopping complex is a recycled canal warehouse in Georgetown; in Baltimore, the best art school is a recycled railroad station; in Salt Lake City, the best shopping center is a recycled streetcar barn complex; in New York City, one of the best sports facilities is a recycled boat pier - all transportation-related facilities.

But historic preservation is not concerned solely with recycling old buildings. Preserving and revitalizing old neighborhoods, industrial and commercial districts, preserving significant examples of engineering architecture, preserving sites of associative

historical importance, and preserving and protecting archeological sites are all part of the historic preservation movement today.

Our democratic form of government has greatly influenced historic preservation, both in the concerns of preservationists and in the financing of preservation activities. The preservation movement reflects our racial, ethnic, cultural, religious, and economic diversity and emphasizes everyday life and structures representative of it.

Preservation financing reflects our free-enterprise system. It was not until 1966 that federal funds were available for preservation activities, except for the acquisition and development of historic sites of national significance by the National Park Service. Even now federal financing of preservation is on a 50-50 matching basis and represents a very small fraction of total preservation activity by the private sector. With a growing grants-in-aid program to the States, and the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) programs which benefit preservation, the Federal Government is assuming an ever-growing role.

Preservationists have always been in conflict with the development syndrome and the growth-at-any-price philosophy. This single-minded pursuit of economic growth has taken both private industry and government hand-in-hand down the same path. Early efforts to open the West for settlement and exploitation resulted in public investment in canals, railroads, and later highways.

Industrialists' domination of manufacturing, transportation and commodities continued without restriction for decades, aided by a government which on the one hand was reluctant to infringe on what was recognized as man's "natural right" to private property, on the other hand was only too willing to legislate a host of laws and programs which were thought necessary to promote economic growth. These laws, most still operative today, encourage periodic replacement of buildings (sometimes as often as three times per century) through depreciation allowances; encourage lenders to lend, unions to find work, suppliers to supply, and architects and engineers to design; and they promote a market economy which consistently hails the new and downgrades the old. We have government programs to build massive highways, housing complexes, and public works projects which devastate neighborhoods, downtowns, and even lifestyles.

Ironically, the structures that were built by these captains of industry, developers, and federal programs are the ones that preservationists are now busily trying to preserve.

In the 1960s, preservationists and environmentalists began to press for laws which would begin, at least, to regulate federally funded or licensed projects affecting cultural resources and the environment. In 1966 the National Historic Preservation Act was passed, setting up an Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to review and comment on federally funded or licensed projects affecting historic resources; the Transportation Act of 1966 required that special consideration be given for protecting or minimizing harm for any transportation project affecting, among other

things, historic sites; and the National Environmental Protection Act of 1969 required all federal agencies undertaking a project affecting the environment to prepare a detailed analysis that considers the effect of the project on historical, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage. Historic resources were included in the 1976 Tax Reform Act. Many states have added laws relating to historic preservation.

Private development has begun to be slowed and channeled by preservationists through more thoughtful urban planning where preservation is an integral tool. The concept of incentive zoning is becoming an increasingly valuable aid to preserving historic resources in urban areas.

Most resources worthy of preservation can be grouped under one of two categories: those having historical significance (Mt. Vernon, Independence Hall, the White House); or those environmental and/or aesthetic resources which are part of our community life and culture which give a sense of orientation to the American people.

The latter category would include most transportation facilities: the parkway designed for its scenic beauty, the metal truss bridge across a pastoral stream, railroad stations of architectural significance, railroad shops that can be recycled to new uses, -- all structures that trace the history of an important aspect of American life while also serving as landmarks to give a sense of orientation and a sense of place to the American people, as noted above.

Transportation planners, both federal and state, have made great strides and must continue to do so in working with preservationists. We need to assure that our citizens in their travels do not find, in the words of Gertrude Stein, "that there is no there there."

#### THE TRANSPORTATION AGENCY RESPONSE

Robert Crecco, Office of Environment and Safety, U.S. Department of Transportation

It has been a decade of push and pull for historic preservation in the transportation field. Since 1966 when the U.S. Department of Transportation was instituted, the agency's attitude toward historic preservation has progressed from indifference to where the words meant controversy and frustration and now to the beginning of an enlightened attitude of understanding and consideration.

DOT didn't take to preservation without scratching and fighting, wailing and remonstrance. The Transportation Act of 1966 contained the important section 4(i) which, among other things, required the Secretary of Transportation not to approve the use of historic sites unless there was no feasible and prudent alternative. But despite that directive it took a while for it to become a commitment. Impetus toward that end came in the form of the National Environmental Protection Act of 1969 and historic preservation legislation related to you by the previous speaker. We were forced

into historic preservation recognition through legislation, as were other federal agencies.

In my estimation DOT is the leading federal agency in historic preservation outside of Interior, which has historic preservation as a primary mission. DOT has committed an average of \$65 million in each of the last four years to historic preservation implementation in transportation programs. While the bulk of that figure was attributable to the highway program, aviation, transit, railroad and Coast Guard administrations also committed their share to historic preservation. This investment is almost three times the funding Interior made available directly to the states in FY 1977 for historic preservation grants. Over a half million dollars per year for the last ten years has been used directly for the recovery of archaeological data and materials.

The Secretary's office coordinates historic preservation policy and program for the Department and works closely with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Department of Interior, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. In addition, the office has compiled a catalog of historic American Transportation sites that are not listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Currently, we have a study underway to document the reuse of historic railroad stations for multipurpose needs including transportation. DOT believes in historic preservation and considers it an important environmental consideration in transportation projects.

At this point, I would like to examine four problem areas in the preservation of historic structures related to transportation: site identification, National Register criteria, the process for property protection, and maintenance and preservation costs. Difficulties in these four areas have hindered the preservation of transportation landmarks.

Site identification is inadequate by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). It has not completed the required inventory task and the burden has been placed on federal agencies such as DOT. Unless a site is on the National Register or noted in a state register, state and city transportation administrations must survey project areas for historic resources. The paramount cause for this is lack of funding. The new National Heritage Trust program of Interior will broaden the national heritage resource inventory to natural resources as well as cultural resources. The federal agencies could experience relief on the additional costs of project surveys if Interior earmarks and adequately funds the SHPO's with more identification funds.

National Register criteria are too broad, resulting in listing properties of dubious quality; virtually anything qualifies for the National Register that is 50 years old or more. There are more than 14,000 historic properties now on the Register, and a projected 70,000 by the 1980s. A major increase in the number of Register properties is taking place through nomination of large urban areas to the register as historic districts, actions that are more in the nature of "conservation" of the character