



Preservation Architect

The Newsletter of The Historic Resources Committee | September 25, 2006

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Upcoming Conferences and Events

Message from the Chair

by James J. Malanaphy III, AIA

AIA Historic Resources Committee members will be active throughout the fall—sponsoring, cosponsoring, or participating in a full schedule of meetings, conferences, workshops, and other events nationwide. In addition, the HRC is joining preservation partner organizations in a new sustainability initiative called the Green Summit.

➤ [Read the full message](#)

2006 HRC Programs and Events

The AIA [HRC home page](#) runs a regularly updated list of scheduled HRC events. Just look under "HRC Highlights" and click on the links for more details about any HRC-sponsored or related event.

Other Historic Preservation Events

In addition to the HRC events listed on the home page, check out these other preservation-related events.

In the News

Preservation Action Legislative Update

by Heather McIntosh

As summer gives way to election season, several congressional races give preservation advocates cause for concern. The next Congress's revised lineup on the House Resources Committee, the Ways and Means committee, and certain Appropriations subcommittees will affect how key preservation legislation will fare during a tight budget year.

➤ [Read the full article](#)

AIA Government Advocacy Launches New Toolkit for Community Revitalization Act

A new toolkit can help AIA members to advance a key issue on the AIA's federal legislative agenda: the Community Revitalization Act. The Act, sponsored by Rep. Phil English (R-PA), would expand federal historic preservation tax credit programs to include residential rental properties and housing in difficult-to-develop areas. The AIA Government Advocacy team developed the toolkit to help members to show legislators how the Act would have a positive effect on their own communities, says Adam Melis, manager, AIA Grassroots Advocacy. The [printer-friendly toolkit](#) (PDF) includes background information, talking points, advice on scheduling meetings and tours, and tips for encouraging AIA member involvement.

Call for Nominations: 2007 Preserve America Presidential Awards

Nomination deadline: postmarked no later than November 1, 2006

The Preserve America Presidential Awards annually recognize organizations, businesses, government entities, and individuals for (a) exemplary accomplishments in the sustainable use and preservation of cultural or natural heritage assets; (b) demonstrated commitment to the protection and interpretation of America's cultural or natural heritage assets; and (c) integration of these assets into contemporary community life and combination of innovative, creative, and responsible approaches to showcasing historic resources in communities. Four awards are given each year at a White House ceremony—two for projects or programs that advance heritage tourism and two for outstanding privately funded historic preservation projects or programs. The 2007 nomination form and 2007 nomination guidelines are available as downloadable PDFs on the [Preserve America Presidential Awards Web site](#).

2006 Carter Manny Award Honors Dissertation on Religious Architecture

Timothy Parker, Assoc. AIA, of the School of Architecture at the University of Texas at Austin, won the 2006 Carter Manny Award for his dissertation, "The Modern Church in Rome: Architecture, Theology, and Community." The award includes \$15,000 in financial support. The Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts sponsors the award program, which annually distributes a total of \$47,500 to the winner and finalists "to fund the research and

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writing of academic dissertations focusing on topics concerned with architecture or with other arts that are immediately contributive to the study of architecture." In addition, three recipients were awarded Trustees' Merit Citations: Kathleen E. Foley, Department of City and Regional Planning, Cornell University (\$12,500); Lucia Allais, Department of Architecture, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (\$10,000); and Alexander Eisenschmidt, Department of Architecture, University of Pennsylvania (\$10,000).

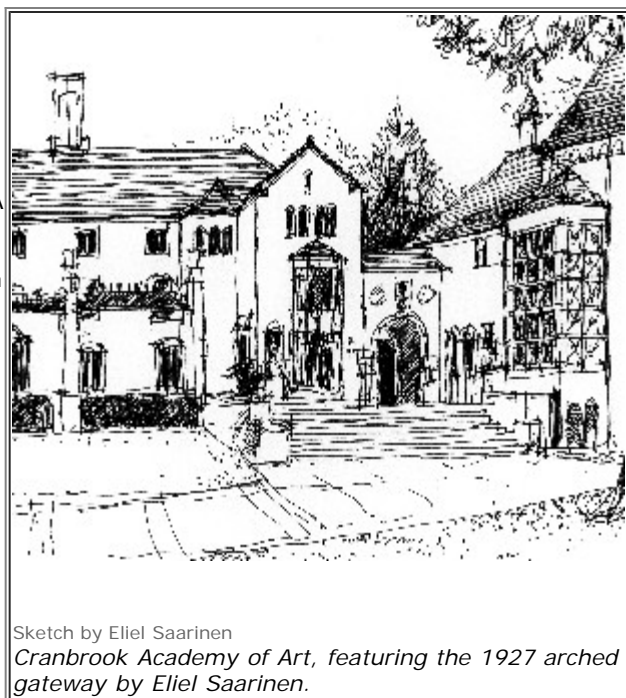
Features

Time Matters: A Reflection on the ACSA/AIA Teachers Seminar at Cranbrook

by David Woodcock, FAIA

More than 50 academics and professionals gathered at the Cranbrook Academy of Art to explore the relationship between architecture and time in the 2006 ACSA/AIA Teachers Seminar, "Time Matters: Exploring Preservation Values in Architectural Education." Designed to support the AIA Historic Resources Committee's Preservation Education Initiative, the seminar provided a fresh perspective on how preservation values can inform design and how the values of design can stimulate new ways for historic resources to relate to a changing environment.

The goal was to translate this perspective into creative and effective teaching skills, tools, and resources to expand the horizon of preservation in the academy and practice. The outcome was a series of syllabi—prepared by three professional-faculty teams—that can be used in design studios at the senior or first-year graduate level and will serve as the basis for the 2006-2007 ACSA Historical Preservation Student Design Competition. This competition program will help to address and promote the National Architectural Accrediting Board's (NAAB) Student Performance Criteria that require an understanding of context, history, and preservation legislation as parameters for design.



Sketch by Eliel Saarinen

Cranbrook Academy of Art, featuring the 1927 arched gateway by Eliel Saarinen.

► [Read the full article](#)

HRC Preservation Breakfast Enlightened and Inspired AIA Convention Attendees

by James J. Malanaphy III, AIA

The HRC Preservation Breakfast drew a great turnout for the inspiring presentation of Francois LeBlanc, head of field projects at the Getty Conservation Institute. He briefed the committee on two Getty field projects that demonstrated how careful research and planning can produce well-thought-out intervention programs to train and employ local residents in the traditional arts, crafts, and skills of their region, preserving not only works of art but cultures as well.

The Conservation of Mosaics in Situ project trains and certifies Tunisians as craftspeople qualified to document, stabilize, and repair ancient ceramic mosaics *in situ*. The Wall Paintings at Mogao Grottoes program, in northwestern China, trains local staff to document, stabilize, and restore hundreds of thousands of square feet of rare, hand-painted, earthen interior wall surfaces and statuary—the largest collection of Buddhist art in China.

► [Read the full article](#)

El Alisal Works Its Magic: the 2006 Historic Structure Assessment Workshop

by Victoria T. Jacobson, AIA

In the magical setting of El Alisal—the hand-crafted home amid old sycamores built by writer and journalist, preservationist, archaeologist, ethnographer, and photographer Charles Fletcher Lummis—participants delved into the detective work of assessing a historic structure in the sold-out "Constructing an Historic Structure Assessment" workshop preceding the AIA 2006 National Convention in Los Angeles.

The 1898–1905 home constructed with granite stone "arroyo eggs" and hand-hewn timbers was only a few miles from the center of the City of Los Angeles, which currently owns the structure

and has leased it for many years to the Historical Society of Southern California. The workshop faculty discussed the history of El Alisal ("Place of the Sycamore"); why historic structure assessment is needed and why it is used; and the team process of conducting the assessment. Then four teams of workshop participants undertook the hands-on part of the workshop: identifying significant character-defining features and assessing the physical condition of the materials used in those features. The teams' reports, submitted to the Historical Society, contributed to the body of knowledge needed for continuing stewardship of El Alisal.

➤ [Read the full article](#)

World Heritage Studies Expands University of Minnesota Preservation Offerings

by Laura Weber

The newly named College of Design at the University of Minnesota brings together two formerly separate disciplines: the College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (CALA) and the Department of Design, Housing, and Apparel (covering clothing, interior, graphic design, housing studies, and retail merchandising). The college has offered preservation-related courses since 1979. In recent years, a service component has been added to the preservation curriculum. Some planned new undergraduate offerings in preservation will seek a broader audience beyond architecture students.

What really sets the preservation program apart, however, is the College of Design's year-old World Heritage Studies Center, which, in cooperation with UNESCO, studies and helps preserve cultural or natural sites around the world. The College is also in the planning stages for a new master's degree in world heritage studies.

➤ [Read the full article](#)

HRC Member and Component News

Featured Component: AIA Minnesota Historic Resources Committee

by John Stark, AIA

One of the oldest state AIA Historic Resources Committees (HRCs) in the country, the AIA Minnesota (AIAMN) HRC began serving its preservation advocacy role more than 35 years ago. In addition to serving AIAMN members through sponsorship of tours, competitions, conferences, and professional development seminars, the AIAMN-HRC provides an active professional link between many of the large and small preservation groups in Minnesota. It also helps statewide groups with awards programs and other activities.

Among recent government advocacy efforts, the MN-HRC has joined forces with the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota, the Minnesota Historical Society, and others to pass a state historic structure and community reinvestment tax credit bill. Based on the progress of this legislation over the past few years, the partner groups hope the state legislature will finally pass this bill during its 2007 session. The tax credit would allow a taxpayer incurring certain qualifying costs for the rehabilitation of eligible property to take a credit of 25 percent of those costs against his or her state income tax.

➤ [Read the full article](#)

State and Local HRCs Want You!

Get involved! Check out a complete list of state and local AIA components that have formed Historic Resources Committees, complete with contact names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses.



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Message from the Chair

Thanks to all the Historic Resources Committee (HRC) members who answered our call for volunteers to serve in the [Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans](#) Preservationist in Residence program, which assists victims of Hurricane Katrina. [Groups of preservation-minded architects](#), engineers, contractors, and others are still being booked through November 2006. Your participation makes a difference in the lives of others—and helps New Orleans residents move back home.

The agenda of the 2006 HRC fall meeting, to be held November 17–19 in Minneapolis-St. Paul, begins with ["Energy, Currency and Memory: Sustaining the Value of Historic Resources."](#) This engaging symposium will give members the tools to measure and communicate how conservation of historic buildings contributes to healthy, livable, sustainable communities—incorporating energy, environmental, economic, and cultural values.

The fall meeting will also provide an opportunity to meet members of the [HABS/HAER/HALS Coordinating Committee](#) and the HABS/HAER/HALS Foundation as well as students, faculty, and preservation partners from throughout the Midwest. We will celebrate the 2006 student winners of the [Charles E. Peterson Prize Student Competition of Measured Drawings](#) at a reception in their honor on the campus of Peterson's alma mater, the University of Minnesota.

The 2006 HRC fall meeting is being planned in cooperation with [University of Minnesota College of Design](#), [AIA Minnesota](#), and [AIAS Minnesota](#), and it will immediately follow the [AIA Minnesota Convention](#) November 14–17—extending the AIA Minnesota convention festivities well into the weekend. It's time to make plans to attend. Hotel rooms disappear quickly during football season.

In June HRC members sponsored tours, workshops, and education sessions during the [2006 AIA National Convention and Design Expo in Los Angeles](#). In addition, the HRC Historic Preservation Education Task Group sponsored and organized the 2006 ACSA/AIA Summer Teachers Seminar at Cranbrook Academy of Art, ["Time Matters: Exploring Preservation Values in Architectural Education."](#)

The HRC also has been organizing its members to serve on expert panels as part of the [Preserve America Summit](#) October 19–20, announced earlier this summer by First Lady Laura Bush, and preparing to sponsor meetings, tours, workshops, and education sessions during the [Association for Preservation Technology Annual Conference](#) in Atlanta September 13–16; the [Traditional Building Exhibition and Conference](#) in Washington, D.C., October 5–7; and the [National Trust for Historic Preservation National Conference](#) in Pittsburgh October 31–November 5.

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In other news, the AIA (including the HRC, the AIA Committee on the Environment, and the AIA Center for Communities by Design) has joined the National Trust, the National Park Service, and the Association for Preservation Technology to form a partnership collectively called the Green Summit. The partners are developing a strategy for a multiyear campaign to reposition historic preservation front and center in the nationwide Green movement, promoting more energy-efficient, healthy, livable, and sustainable communities. Representatives of the Green Summit partners will meet October 30 in Pittsburgh prior to the 2006 National Preservation Conference.

We need to hear from you. Send us your component news. Look at the AIA/HRC Web site and view the directory to state and local component HRCs. Help us build this Web page into a national directory for component HRCs. If your component doesn't have an HRC listed in the directory, send us a report on your component HRC leadership status. Don't be afraid to start your own local component HRC. AIA Professional Practice has developed a special Component KC Toolkit to help make it easy to do so.

All across the country, HRC members are doing good things for communities large and small: volunteering in New Orleans and Mississippi and protecting threatened historic buildings and other cultural resources like [the Lazaretto](#) in Tinicum Township, Pa.; St. Saviour's Church in New York City; Skidmore Owings and Merrill buildings at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station, Ill.; and many other things.

Thanks for all that you do to promote the responsible stewardship of architectural heritage in your communities. Keep up the good work!

See you in Minnesota!

James J. Malanaphy III AIA, 2006 Chair
Historic Resources Committee, American Institute of Architects



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Other Historic Preservation Events

[Inaugural James Hoban Symposium and Commemoration Colloquium](#)

September 28–October 2, 2006

The James Hoban Societies of the United States and Ireland, with the support of the AIA, the Royal Institute of Architects of Ireland, and more than 15 other professional, heritage, academic, and research interests, have developed a commemoration program to heighten awareness of James Hoban's contribution to early U.S. architecture and the importance of the nation's architectural heritage and the influences (including the Irish context) which helped to form and inspire it.

[Traditional Building Exhibition and Conference](#)

Washington, D.C.

October 4–7, 2006

The Traditional Building Exhibition and Conference is the only national trade show and conference for old-house owners, architects, designers, contractors, developers, building owners, and craftsmen involved in historic restoration, renovation, and traditionally inspired new design and construction.

[Preserve America Summit](#)

New Orleans

October 19–20, 2006

First Lady Laura Bush, honorary chair of the Preserve America initiative, will lead a national Preserve America Summit in cooperation with the [Advisory Council on Historic Preservation](#). The summit marks the 40th anniversary of the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act and commemorates four decades of progress in the stewardship and productive use of America's historic properties while exploring opportunities to build on this progress.

[2006 International Preservation Trades Workshop: "Rebuilding Hope, Reclaiming Heritage"](#)

New Orleans

October 26–28, 2006

The International Preservation Trades Workshop (IPTW), sponsored by the [Preservation Trades Network](#) (PTN), is the only annual event in North America that brings together the foremost practitioners of the traditional building trades to share knowledge and skills through hands-on demonstrations and pilot projects. The 10th annual IPTW will be unlike any other. In response to the devastating effects of Hurricane Katrina, the PTN community will gather in New Orleans to work with residents of the historic Holy Cross District, one of the hardest-hit neighborhoods, to "Rebuild Hope and Reclaim Heritage." The goal is to make a tangible difference in a neighborhood that is working to rebuild and recover. In partnership with the Holy Cross Neighborhood Association, World Monuments Fund, and

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other organizations, PTN is already working in the community through hands-on workshops for homeowners, tradespeople, and others, united in the belief that preservation is as much about people and community as it is about buildings.

Volunteers—including historical architects and preservation specialists in carpentry, plastering, roofing, masonry, condition assessments, and interpretation of preservation guidelines—are needed now and in the coming months to help staff a mobile preservation unit and serve as instructors and coordinators for a series of demonstration projects and workshops in Holy Cross. Stipends, per diem, and travel assistance are available. To learn how you can be involved in this effort, please visit www.iptw.org and www.ptn.org.

Where Hi-Tech Touches the Past: Risks and Challenges for the 21st Century

Nicosia, Cyprus

October 30–November 4, 2006

The conference will provide an opportunity to exchange research results, opinions, and experiences on the best practices and hi-tech tools used to document, preserve, manage, and communicate cultural heritage.

National Trust for Historic Preservation National Preservation Conference

Pittsburgh

October 31–November 5, 2006

Every year preservation experts, professionals working in related fields, and community leaders all gather at the National Preservation Conference. Come together to share preservation challenges, successes, new information, and inspiration. The Fall 2006 conference will have a special emphasis on green buildings. The conference will include targeted educational and field sessions plus a full-day, pre-conference summit addressing the combined goals of green building and historic preservation advocacy, LEED certification issues, and more.



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Preservation Action Legislative Update

By Heather Macintosh

As summer gives way to fall (and election season), those of us watching preservation policies on Capitol Hill are paying close attention to races in key committees. In the House, where all seats are up for grabs, we're looking ahead to next year's (revised) lineup. Whoever is on the House Ways and Means Committee (tax); the Appropriations subcommittees for the Interior (funding for historic preservation programs) and HUD; and the Resources Committee (policies governing historic preservation) will affect how far key preservation legislation will proceed in a budget year that is even tighter than it has been over the past several years.

The Ways and Means chair, Rep. Bill Thomas (R-CA), is stepping down. Rep. Charles Taylor (R-NC), head of the Appropriations subcommittee for the Interior, will be key to funding for historic preservation, which advocates hope will break through its seven-year doldrums. Taylor was one of the few primary proponents of reform to the National Historic Preservation Act this year and faces his most competitive election season yet in North Carolina's westernmost district. Seven-term Rep. Joe Knollenberg (R-MI), head of the Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Treasury, and Housing and Urban Development (HUD)—where Community Development Block Grant funding is of particular interest to preservationists—is being challenged by contenders who assert he's too conservative for his suburban Detroit district. Rep. Richard Pombo (R-CA), head of the Resources Committee, is facing a tough race in his home district (in the Stockton area). His opponents are connecting him with the Abramoff scandal—a link that has sunk many players on the Hill.

Tax legislation that would improve the federal rehabilitation tax credit program, H.R. 3159 (the Community Revitalization and Rehabilitation Act of 2005), will likely see a Senate companion bill before the close of this Congress (the 109th), but it's unlikely to pass this year.

We hope to see the two bills reintroduced at the beginning of the 110th Congress. [Save America's Treasures](#) (SAT), a Historic Preservation Fund grant program administered by the National Park Service, saw a significant funding reduction in 2006. Both the House and the White House recommended cutting the competitive grant portion of that program altogether and leaving the program as earmark funding. The Senate recommended \$30 million for SAT and \$10 million for [Preserve America](#), a heritage education program initiated by the White House. Final decisions about Interior Department spending—and funding for the Historic Preservation Fund program within that department—will likely be made this fall.

Heather McIntosh is president of [Preservation Action](#), one of the AIA HRC's liaison organizations. Its mission statement reads as follows: "Preservation

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Action seeks to make historic preservation a national priority by advocating to all branches of the federal government for sound preservation policy and programs through a grassroots constituency empowered with information and training and through direct contact with elected representatives."





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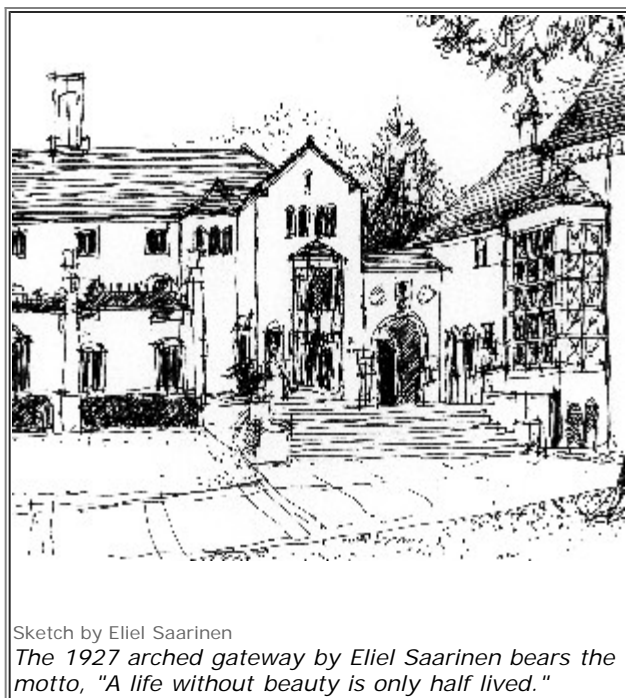
2006 ACSA/AIA Teachers Seminar at Cranbrook: "Time Matters"

By David Woodcock, FAIA

"Time Matters: Exploring Preservation Values in Architectural Education" drew more than 50 academics and professionals to the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Mich., for the 2006 ACSA/AIA Teachers Seminar June 15–18. Attendees examined the theoretical underpinnings of preservation and design, explored their common values, and tested the concepts using the architecture of Cranbrook Academy as both backdrop and inspiration.

With support from the AIA, the [Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture](#) (ACSA), the [National Center for Preservation Technology & Training](#) (NCPTT), and the [Cranbrook Academy](#), the seminar was organized as part of the [Preservation Education Initiative](#) of the AIA Historic Resources Committee. The goal was to provide a fresh perspective on preservation and design that can be translated into creative and effective teaching skills, tools, and resources to expand the horizon of preservation in the academy and practice. The outcome was a series of syllabi that can be used in design studios at the senior or first-year graduate level and will serve as the basis for the [2006-2007 ACSA Historical Preservation Student Design Competition](#). This competition program will help to address and promote the Student Performance Criteria adopted by the [National Architectural Accrediting Board](#) (NAAB) that require an understanding of context, history, and preservation legislation as parameters for design, and the competition program will address these issues.

Keynote speaker Mark Wigley, dean of the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, Columbia University, drew on the seminar theme: the relationship between architecture and time. In his presentation, "ABOUT TIME!", Wigley suggested that preservationists have been thinking more about the future and the importance of continuity than have designers, who are more focused on the past and their need to differentiate their work from it. In addressing the need for schools to experiment, Wigley noted that the design studio has the threefold task of skill development, knowledge building, and the acquisition of judgment in



Sketch by Eliel Saarinen

The 1927 arched gateway by Eliel Saarinen bears the motto, "A life without beauty is only half lived."

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application. The studio is a form of experimentation as we are in fact imagining the future, and the gap between the future and the past is shrinking.

North Carolina architect Joe Oppermann, FAIA, and David Woodcock, FAIA, of Texas A&M University presented a history of preservation practice and case studies on the factors that shape buildings—noting that James Marston Fitch, the father of preservation education, had written on these topics in the 1960s, identifying historic preservation as “the curatorial management of the built world.” They stressed that preservation is concerned with managing change, not preventing it, and that students quickly make a connection with conservation, the wise use of resources, and the emotional connections between people and place.

Practicing architects Dirk Denison, FAIA, who grew up at Cranbrook and now teaches at the Illinois Institute of Technology, and Pamela Hawkes, FAIA, of Ann Beha Architects in Boston, presented a series of case studies of additions to (and subtractions from) historic buildings and places. They drew attention to the nature of architecture as storytelling—part curation of the past and part creation of the future. Intervention, they said, is the greatest design challenge.

After a tour of the Cranbrook campus, the participants broke into groups to study three specific sites, with the subsequent challenge to develop a design syllabus that would use one site as the basis for an intervention. The sites were each connected with the work of architect Eliel Saarinen's and founder George Booth's tradition of preserving the past and building the future as good stewards of the school and the community. The campus provided inspiration for the professional-faculty teams, each of which operated at fever pitch to develop and present their approaches to an integrative old-new design project. Jorge Otero-Pailos of Columbia University responded to the syllabus proposals and will be the lead on the design competition development.

In his concluding remarks, Woodcock of Texas A&M noted that Henry Wotton had defined good design as an amalgam of “usefulness, stability and delight,” and recalled the motto on the gateway to Saarinen's 1927 Cranbrook school, “a life without beauty (delight) is only half lived.” From that standpoint, Cranbrook 2006 was a delight on every level!

David G. Woodcock, FAIA, is a professor of architecture and director of the [Center for Heritage Conservation](#) (CHC) at Texas A&M University. He is also a member of the AIA HRC 2006 Advisory Group.



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HRC Preservation Breakfast Enlightened and Inspired AIA Convention Attendees

By James J. Malanaphy III, AIA

The Preservation Breakfast at the AIA 2006 National Convention in Los Angeles had a great turnout in the beautiful Emerald Room of the historic Millennium Biltmore Hotel. Attendees were rewarded by an hour in the company of Francois LeBlanc, head of field projects at the Getty Conservation Institute. I strongly encourage those not in attendance to take a few moments to explore the Institute's important conservation fieldwork.

The [Getty Conservation Institute](#) successfully leverages the intellectual and financial resources of the Getty Trust worldwide, training and employing residents of affected countries to document, rescue, and stabilize priceless and irreplaceable cultural resources. LeBlanc briefed the committee about two current Getty projects that employ careful research, thoughtful intervention, and innovative training programs.

First stop: Tunisia, where the [Conservation of Mosaics in Situ](#) project trains and certifies Tunisians as craftspeople qualified to document, stabilize, and repair ancient ceramic mosaics *in situ*. Such mosaics, many of which date from early Roman times, are constantly being unearthed throughout Tunisia. Once uncovered, these timeless artistic works quickly become vulnerable to damage and loss. Rather than removing and warehousing mosaics out of context miles from their original locations (as recommended in the past), the Getty Conservation Institute helps communities maintain these priceless artifacts *in situ* where they can be appreciated by the public and become a source of pride for their owners.

Second stop: Dunhuang in northwestern China—the site of the [Wall Paintings at Mogao Grottoes](#) project. After completing careful research, the Getty Conservation Institute designed a thoughtful intervention program, which again involves training local staff to accomplish the conservation work instead of bringing in outside experts. As in Tunisia, the scale of the undertaking is monumental. When completed, the field program (undertaken with the support of China's State Administration of Cultural Heritage and in collaboration with Dunhuang Academy) will have documented, stabilized, and restored hundreds of thousands of square feet of rare, hand-painted, earthen interior wall surfaces and statuary—the largest collection of Buddhist art in China.

LeBlanc's presentation made apparent that we understand little about our collective cultural heritage worldwide—and how much opportunity we have to assist in conservation efforts to protect what remains. Can you believe that fully one-third of the world's buildings are earthen structures—mostly unreinforced, some continuously occupied for more than 2,500 years? Entire cities and countries constructed of earth have been home to hundreds of generations of craftspeople, artisans, and fellow men and

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women. The renewal and replacement of these sites has been an ongoing source of livelihood, trade, and artistic expression for residents of these communities for many centuries. Yet we have little to no written history to document these traditions and no scientific understanding of the principles underlying these ageless decorative arts, construction techniques, patterns of settlement, and seasonal rituals of maintenance and rebuilding.

Thank you for taking us on a wonderful journey, Francois. The field projects of the Getty Conservation Institute are inspiring and demonstrate that, through careful research and planning, a well-thought-out intervention program to train and employ local residents in the traditional arts and skills of their region and crafts can preserve not only works of art but a culture as well.

James J. Malanaphy III, AIA, is chair of the 2006 Advisory Group of the AIA Historic Resources Committee.



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El Alisal Works Its Magic: the 2006 Historic Structure Assessment Workshop

By Victoria T. Jacobson, AIA

Despite the last-minute change of venue, the 2006 "Conducting a Historic Structure Assessment Workshop" at the 2006 AIA National Convention was a huge success. Only the quick thinking and great connections of AIA Los Angeles colleague Peyton Hall, FAIA, prevented us from having to cancel the already sold-out workshop. The original venue was to have been the Ennis House, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright and located in nearby Los Feliz. Unfortunately we didn't learn until the 11th hour that no more than 14 visitors could be accommodated in the house at any one time in order to keep the neighbors happy and to avoid interrupting the work of the organization attempting to preserve the house. Enter El Alisal.

[Charles Fletcher Lummis](#) (1859–1928) was not Frank Lloyd Wright, and [El Alisal](#) is not the Ennis House, but to history-conscious Angelenos, Southwest history buffs, and preservationists, Lummis was a hero and his home, a gem. A writer and journalist, archeologist, ethnographer, photographer, and world traveler, Lummis initiated the formation and construction of the [Southwest Museum](#) near his Los Angeles home and cofounded the [Landmarks Club](#), the organization largely responsible for the preservation of the California missions. He is reputed to have been the first to coin the term "Southwest" to describe this part of the country and has been called "Apostle of the Southwest."

In fact most of us had never heard of Lummis or his delightful home. This is how he wanted to be remembered, according to a plaque mounted on the wall of his home:

He founded the Southwest Museum
He built this house
He saved four old missions
He studied and recorded Spanish America
He tried to do his share.

What we will remember is sitting out in the garden under the canopy of tall old sycamores while we learned about the history of this Renaissance man, Charles Lummis, and his incredible 1898–1905 hand-crafted home built with granite "arroyo eggs" and hand-hewn timbers, only a few miles from the center of Los Angeles on the banks of the Arroyo Seco, with Los Angeles's first freeway roaring nearby. Now owned by the City of Los Angeles and for many years leased to the [Historical Society of Southern California](#), the house and its young director, Robert Montoya, welcomed us with open doors and a delightful June day.

To set the stage for the hands-on investigation of this unique structure, W. Lewis "Bill" Barlow IV, FAIA, historical architect for the National Park Service

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(NPS), filled us in on how the Historic Structure Report (HSR) and its use have evolved over time. Barbara Campagna, FAIA, of the National Trust for Historic Preservation provided insights on the use of the HSR by her former employer, the U.S. General Services Administration. I, as an NPS historical architect, added thoughts on the NPS's need for this documentation to meet its own management needs and policies. Montoya shared his intimate knowledge of the structure and its colorful history while also providing the client/user point of view. North Carolina architect Joe Opperman, FAIA, provided insights on the HSR as a team process. Finally Peyton Hall, our favorite Los Angeles preservation architect (whose dedication to working with the Society to conserve the structure may come to fruition in the near future), told the group about the various features needing attention as only one can who has spent hours and days poring over the building.

Although the diminutive scale of El Alisal made it possible for most participants to investigate virtually every nook and cranny of this hand-made structure, we established teams for the hands-on assessment process: one for the site and outbuildings, which included a vintage guest house that Lummis built in addition to a more contemporary toilet building to accommodate the site's public visitation; one for the building envelope; one for interiors; and the fourth for systems including electrical/HVAC. At least one of the presenters accompanied each team, ensuring that the less experienced practitioners got the benefit of both the presenters' and their teammates' expertise in identifying the significant character-defining features and doing the detective work to determine the physical condition of the historic features. We saw the basement, the attic, and all points in-between. Nothing was off limits. We poked and prodded, scratched and knocked, seeking to understand the nature of the materials and their physical condition after 100 years.

Back outside again under the sycamore trees, the teams presented their final reports and delivered them to Montoya. While none of our findings may have been earth-shatteringly new (the Historical Society having hosted Peyton's University of Southern California School of Architecture conservation course students last spring), they contributed to the body of knowledge available to the Society to appropriately undertake its stewardship role. For the participants, it was an opportunity to rediscover the excitement of fabric investigations and the discovery process, in an absolutely magical setting.

Victoria T. Jacobson, AIA, is program manager, historic architecture, for the National Park Service.



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World Heritage Studies Expands University of Minnesota Preservation Offerings

By Laura Weber

When the University of Minnesota's College of Architecture and Landscape Architecture (CALA) joined forces on July 1 with the Department of Design, Housing, and Apparel (clothing, interior, and graphic design, housing studies, and retail merchandising), the result was the new [College of Design](#) (CDes), which now unites all design disciplines at the U of M.

The college has been committed to historic resources since 1979, when Foster Dunwiddie, FAIA, adjunct faculty and founder of the firm Miller-Dunwiddie Associates, developed the first preservation-related courses. Robert Mack, FAIA, adjunct professor and principal in the firm MacDonald and Mack, took over the courses in the late 1980s. In recent years, Mack inaugurated a service component into the courses: Fall-semester students do a community survey or National Register nomination assignment in conjunction with a neighborhood group so that the materials can be used. Spring-semester students do a physical-conditions survey and documentation project using a building whose owners can use the information.

The College of Design's year-old [Center for World Heritage Studies](#), however, sets its preservation program apart, said Dean Thomas Fisher. Working in cooperation with UNESCO, the center studies and helps preserve cultural or natural sites around the world. Mack; the center's director, Arthur Chen; and Bruno Franck took a class of architecture students to [Baku, Azerbaijan](#), earlier this year. The students learned about historic inventories and documentation in an exotic place; had the opportunity to try new methods of documentation and data recording; and helped provide the information to prepare a management plan to allow better preservation of the walled city.

The College of Design is in the planning stages for a new master's degree in World Heritage Studies—another step in increased awareness of preservation throughout the college. Also in the offing are some new undergraduate offerings in preservation, directed toward a broader audience beyond architecture students.

Laura Weber is communications director of the College of Design, University of Minnesota.

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AIA Minnesota Historic Resources Committee

By John Stark, AIA

The AIA Minnesota Historic Resources Committee began serving in its historic preservation advocacy role more than 35 years ago—prior to the existence of local Heritage Preservation Commissions (HPCs) or the Preservation Alliance of Minnesota (PAM), another statewide preservation advocacy voice. The first AIAMN-HRC members performed historic reviews and, with the Minnesota Historical Society (MHS), prepared National Register nominations. Today the AIAMN-HRC, in addition to serving its membership, provides an active professional link between many of the large and small preservation groups in Minnesota. This coalition shares information, allowing the groups collectively to cover a broader range of people interested in the preservation cause.

Annually the AIAMN-HRC helps PAM prepare a list of 10 most endangered places in Minnesota and assists HPCs in Minneapolis and St. Paul with their awards programs. The AIAMN-HRC has also been working with PAM, MHS, and others to pass a state historic structure and community reinvestment tax credit bill. Progress has been made over the past few years, with hopes of having this finally passed during the 2007 legislative session. The tax credit would allow a taxpayer incurring certain qualifying costs for the rehabilitation of eligible property to take a credit against his or her state income tax equal to 25 percent of the total qualifying costs of rehabilitation.

The MN-HRC has sponsored many professional development seminars—including methods of archiving, existing building codes, preservation primers, historic perspectives of construction and materials, hands-on experience with epoxy wood fillers, and masonry tuckpointing, among other topics. Members of the HRC also serve on local HPC boards, PAM, and other preservation-related organizations throughout the state.

The HRC announces advocacy notices, events, and tours, including those of other organizations, on its Web site and in a monthly newsletter. The [AIAMN-HRC Web site](#) contains many links to preservation resources, organizations, items in the news, programs, and local tours.

During the AIA Minnesota annual convention in Minneapolis, to be held November 17–19, the national AIA HRC and Committee on the Environment will join University of Minnesota College of Design students and faculty and preservation partners from across the country to host "[Energy, Currency, and Memory: Sustaining the Value of Historic Resources](#)," a symposium on historic preservation and sustainable design. The event will include seminars and tours of local architectural landmarks and will recognize the excellence and academic achievement of the 2006 student winners of the [Charles E. Peterson Prize Student Competition of Measured Drawings](#).

In 2007 the AIAMN-HRC is sponsoring a photo competition for AIA

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members to promote Minnesota's historic buildings. The calendar will be available at the National Trust for Historic Preservation 2007 National Convention being held in the Twin Cities October 1–7, 2007. This calendar is being sponsored by AIAMN, the HRC, and Team 007, a group of Minneapolis preservationists who have been meeting monthly in historic bars to help plan Minneapolis-related activities for the 2007 Convention.

John Stark, AIA, is a preservation architect with Miller Dunwiddie Architecture in Minneapolis and cochair of the AIA Minnesota Historic Resources Committee.





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