HISTORIC RELIGIOUS PROPERTIES JEOPARDIZED
BY PROPOSED LEGISLATION

The ability of Pennsylvania communities and the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission to preserve and protect the religious heritage of Pennsylvania is threatened by a bill currently before the Pennsylvania General Assembly. Senate Bill 1228, introduced by Senator Clarence Bell (R-Delaware County), proposes to exempt from landmark or historic district status, all properties used "in furtherance of religious purposes". The bill would ban the designation, classification or treatment of these properties by state and local governments unless consent is obtained subject to the covenants or requirements of church or law. These provisions would apply retroactively. Properties currently protected under local landmark or historic district law would be affected.

Preservationists are concerned about the sweeping changes this would make in the ability of Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and sixty other local communities to protect the church-owned properties. In addition, the bill would interfere with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission’s administration of all National Register programs. The bill’s special treatment provisions and owner consent requirements are in opposition to the national requirements.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, as well as local preservation organizations, has also taken a strong position against this bill. They argue that the bill violates the equal protection provisions of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, and that it treats similarly situated properties in an unequal manner. It should also be pointed out that it may violate the establishment clause of the First Amendment, in that it promotes religious causes in direct opposition to the principles that church and state issues be kept apart.

On October 17, the Senate State Government Committee, by a tie vote (4-4), tabled the bill to give the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission an opportunity to comment. At the November 8 meeting of the Commission, a resolution was passed objecting to the bill on the grounds that it jeopardized the ability of local government to protect historic resources and threatened the Commission’s ability to participate in the National Historic Preservation Program and receive over $700,000 in federal funding.

Now that the Committee has received the comments of the Commission, it plans to take up further consideration of the bill when the legislature reconvenes on November 13.

As PRESERVING PENNSYLVANIA goes to press, further action on the bill is still pending. YOU can make your concern/objection to Senate Bill 1228 known by phone (7707-2637) or letter to the following key people:

- Senator James Rhoades, Chair of the State Government Committee, (717) 787-2637
- Your local state senator—ask him/her to relay your opposition to Senator Rhoades
- Senator Clarence Bell, lead sponsor of the bill, (717) 787-4712

The address for all senators is: The Honorable (Senator’s name), Senate of Pennsylvania, Main Capitol Building, Harrisburg, PA 17120

SENATE BILL 1228: THE FUND’S VIEW

Pennsylvania’s long tradition of religious toleration and the exceptional strength of its many religions and denominations combine to produce religious institutions with an unusually important place in the Commonwealth’s history. For more than three centuries, they have provided not only spiritual direction, but also education, neighborhood stability and civic leadership. Because of their unique community roles, their institutional importance transcends their individual congregations.

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT TO
PRESERVING PENNSYLVANIA

This PRESERVING PENNSYLVANIA contains a special issue of HARBulletin, a quarterly publication of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission’s Bureau for Historic Preservation. For those of you who ask “What is a HARB?”, it is the acronym for Historical Architectural Review Boards. local entities appointed to review plans for erection, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, or demolition of any building located in an historic district established under the state enabling legislation - Act 167. The HARBulletin deals with issues of interest to these boards, who must make important decisions affecting the visual character of their communities. For more information on HARBs and their role in administering local historic districts, contact Michel Lefevere at the Bureau for Historic Preservation (address/phone on page 5).

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DEVELOPMENT THREATENS FUTURE OF HISTORIC LA MOTT

by Michel R. Lefevre

Historical significance does not necessarily leave an obvious physical trace on the urban landscape, at least to the uninformed eye. Looking about the La Mott historic district, a neighborhood in Cheltenham Township, Montgomery County, one would be hard pressed to surmise, from the appearance of modest two-and-a-half story late Victorian frame and brick houses, that two events of major historic importance took place here and that an extraordinary woman, after whom the district is named, was associated with the community.

The historical significance of La Mott is incontrovertible. In 1863 the community became the site of Camp William Penn, the nation’s first recruiting and training camp for black soldiers. Lucretia C. Mott (1793-1880), a leading figure in the abolition and suffragette movements, lived her final years in the community, where her home became a way station on the underground railroad. Her son-in-law, Edward Davis, shared her political views and subdivided portions of his extensive land holdings, selling lots on a nondiscriminatory basis to both blacks and whites. In fact, this unpretentious place, situated on a heavily trafficked thoroughfare bordering northwest Philadelphia, is thought to be one of the first racially integrated communities in the United States.

These events are well known to Perry Tripllett, who is executive director of Citizens for the Restoration of Historical La Mott. He is well versed in the history of La Mott and was one of the prime movers in having the district nominated to the National Register of Historic Places and certified as historically significant by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

Although La Mott was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1985 and certified as historically significant in 1975 by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission—thereby permitting the township to regulate and protect La Mott as a historic district under Act 167, the Pennsylvania state enabling legislation—neither designation appears to prevent the proposed zoning change from occurring.

Should the zoning change take place, adverse results appear likely. First, a unique residential community will be eroded by commercial development, altering the character of the historic district and potentially dispersing its residents. A second and more immediately felt result will be the direct negative visual impact of the proposed office building on the early 20th century A.M.E. Church, its next door neighbor.

Perry Tripllett believes that the zoning change and approval of the commercial office building will affect significantly the character of the La Mott historic district. If the office building plans are approved, he believes the developer will request numerous parking, setback, and landscape variances. Tripllett views this building as a first step in the door that will gradually allow a whole body of commercial ventures to overwhelm the turn-of-the-20th-century residential environment, eventually erasing all trace of the original identity of historic La Mott.

These are the local issues, but there are other considerations that should be important to all of us. By erasing the history of a people, either consciously or through gross indifference, we diminish those people and the unique communities they have created.
FUND DONATES BOOKS TO LANCASTER LIBRARY

On September 26, the Lancaster County Public Library became the second recipient of a donation of books thanks to a project of the Preservation Fund. With a grant from Penn Savings Bank, thirty-one books representing some of the best general information on historic preservation currently available for homeowners, public activists, and public officials, are now part of the Lancaster Library’s general lending collection.

The first library project donation was made in 1988, also through a grant from Penn Savings Bank, to the Berks County Library. The Fund hopes to expand the project across the state.

PHILADELPHIA INTERVENTION FUND AWARDS TWO GRANTS

The Grand Army of the Republic Museum and the Community Women’s Education Project are the latest recipients of grants to alleviate crisis situations in Philadelphia.

The Ruan House, which now houses the Grand Army of the Republic Museum and its important collection of Civil War artifacts, is the last surviving 18th century mansion in the Frankford section of Philadelphia. Severe deterioration, wind and water damage have made replacement of the building’s roof critical if further damage to the building is to be prevented. Fund assistance will make this work possible.

The Powers School was built during a time of great expansion for Philadelphia schools. To cope with a rapidly growing immigrant population and implement changes in educational theory and practice, this Victorian Gothic stone building was constructed in 1899 at the corner of Frankford Avenue and Somerset Street. Today the home of the Community Women’s Education Project, the building is one of the few historically significant intact sites in the Kensington-Richmond-Fishtown area of the city. In the last year the building has suffered major structural damage from leakage in drains and walls. A grant from the Fund will be used in conjunction with funds from other local sources to undertake emergency repairs to these areas in preparation for a comprehensive restoration of the building.

The Philadelphia Intervention Fund was established in 1985 with a grant to the Preservation Fund from The Pew Charitable Trusts. The Intervention Fund provides money to deal with preservation crisis situations in Philadelphia County. For more information and application materials contact the Preservation Fund.


Grace Gary........................Executive Director
Susan Shearer..............................Editor

Support for this newsletter is provided by membership dues, contributions and matching grants-in-aid from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Portions of the newsletter that are not copyrighted or reprinted from other sources may be reprinted provided proper credit is given.

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IN THE NEWS

- Howard Kittell, former assistant director of the Providence, Rhode Island, Preservation Society, is the new executive director of the Preservation Coalition of Greater Philadelphia. Kittell, who succeeds Mary Lou McFarland, is a graduate of the University of Virginia School of Architecture and has an undergraduate degree in urban planning from Michigan State University. He brings a broad range of preservation experience to his new role in Philadelphia including work for the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Virginia Transportation Research Council, as well as private consulting projects for Monticello, the Woodrow Wilson Birthplace and various private properties.

- A compromise has been reached on the future of six historic buildings next to Easton’s downtown post office. As reported in the last issue of PRESERVING PENNSYLVANIA, the buildings were threatened by the post office’s plan to create additional parking for employees and patrons. The compromise plan, a result of negotiations completed in late September, calls for the demolition of three buildings and renovation of the others, with the city involved in finding developers.

- Pfaltzgraff, America’s Potter is the subject of a new exhibit at the Historical Society of York County. Beginning in the 19th century with the pottery of Johann George Pfaltzgraff, who came to America from Germany in 1833, the exhibit follows the development of York’s Pfaltzgraff Company and the changes in pottery production from those early years to today. In addition to numerous examples of pottery produced by the company—from utilitarian objects to 1930s art pottery to the fine bone china recently added to the line—highlights of the exhibit include a full-size replica of a 19th-century bottle kiln and a full-scale replica of a 1940s kitchen featuring Pfaltzgraff kitchenware and bakeware. For more information contact the Historical Society of York County, 250 East Market Street, York 17403; 717-848-1587.

- Mary Ruth Kelly, former librarian/archivist for the Bishop Library of the Wyoming Historical and Geological Society, Wilkes Barre, was named executive director of the Society in late August. She brings a strong background in archival work, as well as graduate study in art and architecture at Penn State, to her new responsibilities for the Society.

- A recent ruling by the Internal Revenue Service (no. 89-90) makes a portion of the tax credits for historic rehabilitation subject to recapture if the owner donates or otherwise conveys an easement on the building before a full five years have elapsed since the rehabilitated building was placed in service. According to this ruling, which overturns an earlier private letter ruling permitting use of both the tax credits and easement donations, granting an easement represents a disposition of part of the property; section 47(a) of the tax code provides for recapture of all or part of the tax credits if there is a disposition of the property prior to the end of the recapture period.

- The Pew Charitable Trusts have awarded a $930,000 three-year grant to the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Corporation (PHPC) to implement a new Historic Religious Properties Program. The program will encourage the preservation of older religious buildings in the Philadelphia area by providing funding to religious property owners for professional architectural, engineering, fund-raising and space-planning studies in preparation for actual repair or restoration work. Funding for actual rehabilitation work is not available through this program. PHPC staff will also help clergy and lay leaders determine space-sharing potential for under-utilized space in their buildings. In addition to the grant program, PHPC will hold a workshop in March 1990 and a public tour of Philadelphia’s landmark religious properties in April 1990. For more information, contact: J. Randall Cotton, PHPC, One East Penn Square, Suite 2300, Philadelphia 19107; 215-568-4210.

- Two and a half years have passed since we last reported on the Shoe House in Hellam, York County. Today, thanks to the dedication of owners Annie and Dave Keller and to support from Historic York, Inc., this central Pennsylvania landmark has been restored and is now open to the public during the summer months. Visitors may tour the Shoe’s living room, kitchen, three-bedroom and two baths, and view displays of memorabilia from the days of the building’s creator—“Colonel” Mahlon N. Haines, known locally as “the Shoe Wizard”. Dave and Annie, who is Mahlon Haines granddaughter, hope soon to open the house to overnight guests for a unique bed and breakfast experience. The Shoe House is also being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as an exceptional example of 20th century programmatic architecture. For more information, contact the Haines Shoe House, Shoe House Road, Hellam 17406; 717-755-7118 or 717-235-6463.

LA MOTT (continued from page 2)

their contributions to our history. African American history is intrinsic to our national history. By allowing the historical context to be destroyed, Triplett and other members of the La Mott community feel that certain crucial events and personalities associated with that history will be lost to our consciousness forever.

Can a community that has lost the historic character of its built environment retain the memory of its past? The people who settled La Mott—both black and white—deserve more than a commercial office building as a memorial to their contribution. Will we sell our heritage to the highest bidder?

Michel R. Lafave is the staff of the Bureau for Historic Preservation. He is responsible for administering the Certified Local Government Program and for working with local Historical Architectural Review Boards; he is also editor of the HARBulletin.

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PROPERTIES ADDED TO NATIONAL REGISTER

The following historic properties were added recently to the National Register of Historic Places, the nation’s official listing of buildings, structures, sites, districts, and objects deemed worthy of preservation by the United States Department of the Interior.

Kennett Square Historic District (1800-1938 commercial center), Chester County.

Thunderbird Lodge (1904 Arts and Crafts style residential conversion of 18th century stone barn barn and spring house; architect: William Lightfoot Price), Rose Valley Borough, Delaware County.

North Prince Street Historic District (late 19th-early 20th century tobacco-industry buildings), Lancaster, Lancaster County.

Nisly-Stauffer Tobacco Warehouses (1912), N. Arch & N. Mulberry Streets, Lancaster, Lancaster County.

Eby Shoe Corporation (1914-1938), N. State Street, Ephrata, Lancaster County.

NATIONAL TRUST LOOKS TO PHILADELPHIA

With a string band, cheese steaks, hoagies, Ben Franklin and a 20th century version of an 18th century party, how could you fail to have a good conference? When the National Trust for Historic Preservation and its members from all over the country arrived in Philadelphia in mid-October for the 43rd annual preservation conference, the weather, the city, and the local preservation community all cooperated to make this one of the best and most important conferences in years.

The theme was Look Homeward America: Look to Philadelphia and attendees did just that as they discussed issues such as affordable housing, rural preservation, industrial heritage, and religious properties, using the city as a learning laboratory through special workshops and numerous tours.

The ultimate preservation trade show, ReHabitat, allowed a close-up, hands-on view of preservation-related products and services from more than sixty vendors. To those of you who stopped by the PRESERVING PENNSYLVANIA booth to talk with us (and sample our Lititz-made Wilbur Buds!), we enjoyed meeting you.

With the experience of the Trust conference behind them, Philadelphia preservationists should be well prepared for the 13th annual state preservation conference to be held in the city in April, 1991. Mr. Franklin, we’ll see you then!
A Past Still Alive: The Pittsburgh History and Landmarks Foundation Celebrates Twenty-five Years is a thoughtful, articulate look at preservation in a city that has both lost and preserved landmark buildings, structures and neighborhoods. Author Walter C. Kidney offers three essays—"What We Have Lost", "What Remains and Why", and "What May Be Kept"—augmented by historical and contemporary photographs that document Pittsburgh's changing visual identity over the past hundred-plus years. The final chapter gives a year-by-year chronology of the Foundation and its role in Pittsburgh preservation. The book is a model effort by an organization that has been, since its formation, a model nationally for how to make local preservation happen. Order from: PHLF, 450 The Landmarks Building, One Station Square, Pittsburgh 15219; 412-471-3808. $29.95, plus sales tax and postage/handling.

Three new Preservation Briefs have just been released by the Technical Preservation Services of the National Park Service.

Preservation Brief 19: The Repair and Replacement of Historic Wooden Shingle Roofs. Sharon C. Park, AIA. GPO Stock #023-005-01053-0.


Single copies of each brief are $1.00 (includes postage and handling). 25% discount on 100 or more copies of one title sent to the same address. Order from: Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402-9325.

A free catalog of National Park Service preservation publications is available from: National Park Service, PAD (424), P.O. Box 38127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127.

Fire Safety Retrofitting in Historic Buildings is a new publication of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the National Park Service Administration. The procedures recommended for effective fire safety retrofitting include maintaining the building's historic stairways; adding new stairways as needed for exit which do not detract from the building's historic features; and planning for the installation of fire sprinklers, extinguishers, and alarms that are concealed or unobtrusive. Single copies are available without charge from the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Suite 809, Washington, D.C. 20004; 202-786-0503.

Responding to the Takings Challenge, a new report from the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the American Planning Association, outlines the impact of three U.S. Supreme Court decisions that left many communities uncertain as to what they can do through land-use regulation to protect scenic and historic resources. These decisions centered on the extent to which local governments may regulate land without such regulation being considered an unconstitutional "taking" of private property. Authored by Richard Rodewing and Christopher Duerksen, two nationally-known land-use and historic preservation experts, the report analyzes three 1987 Supreme Court decisions: First English Evangelical Lutheran Church v. County of Los Angeles; Keystone Bituminous Coal Association v. DeBenedictis; and Nollan v. California Coastal Commission. According to David Doheny, general counsel to the National Trust, "This report should reassure municipalities that responsible land use controls may be enacted and enforced without fear that compensation will be due to affected property owners." Copies are available for $20, plus $1.50 handling charge from: National Trust for Historic Preservation, attn: Center for Preservation Policy Studies, 1785 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Central Pennsylvania Redware Pottery 1780-1904, which has been out-of-print for ten years, has been reprinted by the Oral Traditions Project of the Union County Historical Society. The book, which was originally issued in conjunction with an exhibition at the William Penn Memorial Museum, chronicles the redware pottery traditions of Union, Snyder, Centre, Lycoming, Clinton, Montour, Columbia, Dauphin, Cumberland, Adams, York and Perry counties. It is available for $14.50, plus $2 postage, from the Union County Historical Society, Union County Courthouse, Lewisburg 17837.

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EMPLOYMENT/VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES
Hopewell Furnace National Historic Site is recruiting volunteers to work at the property, located in Berks and Chester Counties. Hopewell Furnace, known as the finest and best preserved iron-making site in North America, needs assistance in areas such as: conducting tours, wildlife and vegetation surveys, livestock care, trails work, craft demonstrations, computer data entry, archival and preservation work. Contact: Park Volunteer Coordinator Ronald Boice, 215-582-8773; or stop by the site, which is located five miles south of Birdsboro State Route 345.
Bill 1228 (continued from page 1)

Nor is the importance of these institutions limited to their historical significance. Many are in the best sense architectural landmarks. Congregations often express their pride and devotion in the tangible form of their buildings. Some, such as Darby Borough’s Presbyterian Church by John Notman, Beth Shalom Synagogue in Elkins Park by Frank Lloyd Wright, and Pittsburgh’s First Baptist Church by Bertram Goodhue are masterpieces designed by America’s most famous architects. Others, such as the Lancaster Unitarian Church by C. Emlen Urban, Philadelphia’s Church of the Advocate by Charles M. Burns, and St. Gertrude’s Roman Catholic Church in Vandergrift Borough by John T. Comes are the work of locally important architects. Whatever the significance of their architects, however, religious buildings form important additions to a neighborhood’s visual and emotional identity. Through their prominent locations and special use, they define, anchor, and enhance both the streetscape and their neighborhood. Their physical contribution to those neighborhoods is important to the entire community.

Communities have a stake in the physical appearance of their buildings. The entire concept of local land use regulation is based on the understanding that the greater good is served by regulating the actions of individuals. Historic preservation’s role in local zoning was clearly articulated by the United States Supreme Court in 1978 in Penn Central Transportation Company v. City of New York, when the court affirmed the right of a community to enact zoning legislation to protect historic and architectural resources for the benefit of all citizens of the community. Senate Bill 1228 proposes to reduce the ability of local government to legislate its own land use issues; such a transfer of authority is not in the best interests of local communities and their citizens.

Local citizens benefit from historic preservation and often in direct, tangible ways. Since 1981, over one billion dollars has been invested in the rehabilitation of income-producing historic properties in Pennsylvania. (The number is far higher if private residences are included.) Many of these properties were rehabilitated because of the tax benefits associated with the rehab of properties within National Register historic districts. Senate Bill 1228 will make it difficult, if not impossible, for many eligible National Register districts to be listed on the National Register, thus depriving private property owners of potential tax benefits and communities of investment.

The Preservation Fund of Pennsylvania believes that Senate Bill 1228 puts important parts of Pennsylvania’s history at risk; that it denies local governments their legitimate role in land-use regulation; and, that it removes the opportunity of economic advantage from countless private property owners across the state. We do not believe that this bill is in the best interest of the majority of citizens of Pennsylvania.
Calendar

1989

December
December in Bethlehem, the Christmas City. Month-long activities and events. Contact: Christmas Tour & Information Center, Broad & Guetter Sts., Bethlehem 18018; 215-686-1513.

Dec. 1
Candlelight Christmas in Chadds Ford. 5:30-10:00 pm. Contact: Chadds Ford Historical Society, Box 27, Chadds Ford 19317; 215-388-7376.

Dec. 1-10
Festival of Lights, Ligonier. Contact: Ligonier Valley Historical Society, Star Route East Box 115, Ligonier 15658; 412-238-6818.

Dec. 10
Historic Harrisburg Association Candlelight House Tour. Contact: HHA, Box 951, Federal Square Station, Harrisburg 17108.

1990

Jan. 23-25
Introduction to Federal Projects and Historic Preservation Law. 3-day course on working with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Washington, D.C. Contact: GSA Training Center, P.O. Box 15608, Arlington, VA 22215-0608; 703-557-0986.

April 26-28

May 4-5
Annual Conference on Black History, Allentown. Contact: PA Historical and Museum Commission, Box 1026, Harrisburg 17108-1026; 717-787-3034.

June 15-17
National Quilt Symposium, Lancaster. Cosponsored by Franklin & Marshall College and Oral Traditions Project of Union County Historical Society. Contact: Carol Fail, F&M College, Box 3003, Lancaster 17604-3003.

June 16-19

June 21-22
PA Federation of Museums and Historical Organizations, annual meeting, Buck Hill Inn. Contact: Federation, 717-787-3253 or 717-787-1902.

Oct. 3-6

ADVERTISE IN PRESERVING PENNSYLVANIA

PRESERVING PENNSYLVANIA accepts advertising for preservation-related products, services, and properties-for-sale to appear in upcoming issues of our quarterly newsletter. For information contact: Susan Shearer, Preservation Fund of PA, 2470 Kissel Hill Rd., Lancaster, PA 17601; 717-569-2243.

Preservation Fund courtesy buses helped National Trust conference goers get around Philadelphia.
Bureau Director’s Message

Surprise! The HARBulletin is in a new location. For just this time, we have joined forces with PRESERVING PENNSYLVANIA, the quarterly newsletter of the Preservation Fund of Pennsylvania. This is one way of informing HARBulletin readers about the programs of the Preservation Fund which serves as Pennsylvania’s statewide private nonprofit membership organization and revolving fund. We urge all readers to support historic preservation in Pennsylvania and join the Preservation Fund today.

I also want to thank all of you who generously took the time from your busy schedules to answer our questionnaire. This information is helping Michel R. Lefèvre plan next year’s training programs by identifying the topics of highest preference and choosing optimum locations. It also reinforces the need for networking among local historic preservation organizations.

Finally, I want to ask HARBs, CLGs, and our wider historic preservation audience for input on another area. The Bureau for Historic Preservation receives funding from the National Park Service on an annual basis for subgrant programs, including surveys, planning, and predevelopment grants. Your assistance in suggesting priorities for the allocation of these funds is important. For information on the existing priorities or to provide comments to our Bureau, please write: SUBGRANTS, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation, P. O. Box 1026, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1026.

Brenda Barrett

HARB Questionnaire Results

A thank you to all of you who took the time to answer our HARB/CLG Questionnaire. We believe that the information from the questionnaire will help us provide you with the type of training you need. Of the twenty-seven HARB communities that responded, forty-two separate questionnaires were completed. Since there are fifty-nine HARBs in Pennsylvania, somewhat less than half of all HARBs responded. We have summarized the results of the questionnaire by extrapolating what we consider its most significant data.

In the section entitled subject preferences the following responses deserve notice. Under the “Historic Preservation Law Issues” category 71% considered violation and enforcement of their historic district ordinance very important. Generally HARBs and their staffs or consultants regard implementing preservation objectives through the use and understanding of preservation law crucial to their success.

“Presenting a Positive Public Images,” “Educating the Public” and “How to Implement Public Relations,” all interrelated concepts, were considered as deserving HARB and staff training time. Interestingly, 62% considered establishing contact with secondary schools a means of promoting and inculcating preservation.

Under the category of “Administering the Historic District” 68% considered design review as very important. HARB meeting procedures, record keeping, etc. did not generate the interest we feel it should have been given—the mechanics or bureaucratization of preservation is not very enticing, however it is crucial to implementing the historic district ordinance. We thought it rather odd that 41% considered the political context of administering the historic district unimportant, when in fact implementing historic preservation planning on any governmental level is affected by...
DESIGN SHORTS
James Caufield

Question: What are some appropriate guidelines for evaluating signage on historic buildings?

Many of our HARBS review building signage proposals, including their design, materials, construction and placement. There is often confusion as to what is considered an appropriate sign. What should the Board consider in order to make an intelligent recommendation? Some general guidelines to follow regarding signs include:

1. Insure that proposed signage is appropriate and complementary to the building. Avoid the tendency to impose a standard sign style throughout a district of varying architectural styles, materials and uses. For example, a Colonial style sign would not be appropriate for a 1910 storefront.

2. Do not discount the suitability of neon in a building’s signage. Typically, our downtowns reflect an array of commercial buildings constructed over a number of years and exhibiting a number of different design styles. As a result, styles such as Art Deco and Moderne, often characterized by neon signage and ornamentation, should utilize this lighting type. The crafts of neon sign design, construction and repair have been revived in many locales.

3. Do not discount the suitability for any other sign material unless it can be documented as not appropriate to the building. In addition to wood and neon, signage materials vary from metal to stained glass to plastic.

4. Keep in mind that lettering is just as important to a sign as its material, size, color, etc. Lettering styles predictably change with the times and often reflect the corresponding architectural styles. Obvious exceptions to this are corporate logos and franchises. Often, these contemporary images and lettering styles must be sympathetically incorporated into more traditional signage backgrounds.

5. Consider that the size of signs should be proportional to the building facade on which it is placed. Although zoning regulations frequently dictate the allowable sizes of signs, zoning rarely takes the aesthetics of historic design into account.

6. Install historic building signage in such a way as to prevent damage to the exterior building materials. Consideration should always first be given to accommodating signage that does not have to be physically attached to the building. Free standing signs, painted lettering on storefront glass, and awning advertising are examples of this approach. In instances where this approach is neither possible nor desirable, signage should be attached with the least number of fasteners possible. In addition, on masonry buildings, every attempt should be made to attach sign fasteners into the mortar joints of the brick, stone or block rather than into the masonry unit itself. This facilitates sign replacement or removal, requiring only simple repointing rather than possible replacement of broken or split masonry material. In extreme cases, broken masonry can require replacement or expensive—and usually not very effective—patching.

THE LUMBER ROOM

The reactions to this column have been quite positive. Among those who have commented, Thomas S. Grbenick, manager of community conservation services for the SEDA-Council of Governments, writes:

"In response to ... The Lumber Room I do like words as much as you do! Have you ever noticed how 'Carpenter Vernacular' has evolved its own language, e.g. cornich for cornice, mortise & tenant for mortise & tenon, etc. Maybe your readers can think of some other examples."

"One last question. I’ve often heard old barn carpenters talk about the 'square' or the 'square log.' This, I have come to understand, is synonymous with the rafter plate in heavy timber construction. But, what is the origin of the meaning and usage of the term 'square' or 'square log' in this context?"

We thought we would make an attempt by starting with the origin of the term “square log.” We queried two of our colleagues at the BHP, James Caufield, architect, and Jerry Clouse, historian, as to how this term might have originated. Jerry didn’t think that a square log necessarily referred to a rafter plate or plate log. "I’ve heard the expression, ‘finished up to the square’. This means the building was finished to the roof line," he says. James, on the other hand, reasoned that since the rafter plate was originally a relatively large timber, normally a log (prior to the 18th century in the USA), it had to be squared in order to fit the notched rafters. We are not certain whether we have the answer to Tom’s inquiry, but we certainly won’t balk at trying. Balk? Oh, yes, that’s another term for a squared timber. Clues from our readers would be appreciated.
There is nothing more demoralizing to Historical Architectural Review Board members than to witness violations of their historic district ordinance and then to realize that the violators will suffer nothing more than a notice of violation, if that.

It isn't that Board members want to see draconian measures meted out. What is crucial to them is to see work which was done without a permit or certificate of appropriateness, work which has altered some special architectural feature beyond recognition, restored to its original form. But the general rule unfortunately is that elected officials and district justices consider requiring reestablishment of altered work as too much of a hardship on the property owner or contractor.

This reflects their judgement that architectural preservation niceties are not a priority and that those who seem concerned over these issues or ideas are slightly touched with madness. This attitude erodes the self-confidence of the board and often initiates a valid reassessment of the board's function. Furthermore it penalizes, indirectly, those property owners who have taken the time and money to rehabilitate their properties according to board guidelines and then discover that their neighbors have flaunted the historic ordinance with impunity.

What can your board do about this kind of situation? The Act of General Assembly No. 167, known as the "Historic District Act", which is the enabling legislation establishing HARBs, provides the following:

Section 5. The agency charged by law or by local ordinance with the issuance of permits for the erection, demolition or alteration of buildings within the historic district shall have power to institute any proceedings, at law or in equity, necessary for the enforcement of this act or of any ordinance adopted pursuant thereto, in the same manner as in its enforcement of other building zoning or planning legislation or regulations.

Ordinarily, the responsible agency would be the building inspector or zoning officer. What they would be enforcing would be the provisions in the particular local ordinance. The ordinance may give them the language of the Historic District Act, impose criminal as well as civil penalties and may also provide for seeking injunctive remedies. The latter is an order from the court to the property owner which could direct the property owner to comply with the requirements of the local ordinance. In the case where a property owner has already commenced work and altered the building in an unacceptable manner, the court may order the owner to restore the building to its appearance before the work commenced. See, for example, Preservation Law Update, January 26, 1989, "New York Court Orders Owner to Remove Residential Addition"; Chase F. Parker, Trustee v. Beacon Hill Architectural Commission (No. 80370, Suffolk County Superior Court, decided June 21, 1988); Faulkner v. Town of Chester-town, No. 428879 (Maryland 1981).

If you have a property owner in the community who is not complying with a local ordinance, the first step is to review your local ordinance to see what the enforcement provision says. This is what governs the action that can be taken. Most likely, it will refer to penalties for violations of the zoning code. If so, look up the zoning provisions and then request that the building inspector or zoning officer, whomever is delegated the authority to enforce the law, initiate enforcement proceedings as provided by the ordinance. You may wish to include in your request information regarding the importance of uniformly enforcing the law together with the need for maintaining the integrity of the historic district. Also be sure to specify the exact action you would like to see taken, for example, civil fines of a certain amount and an injunction directing that the building be returned to its appearance prior to the non-complying action.

If the responsible government agent (zoning officer or building inspector) refuses to act, move on to their superior and also discuss with the town solicitor and the local governing body the need for enforcing the law which they are charged with administering. Having members of the public contact their local governing body in support of uniform enforcement is also a good technique for insuring compliance with the local ordinance.

If your local ordinance does not have any enforcement provisions or references to the zoning code of enforcement provisions, you may wish to amend the ordinance. Following are examples of language used in various local ordinances:

1) Model Ordinance, Department of Community Affairs - Section 700 - Enforcement "Building Permit Officer shall have the power to institute any proceedings at law or in equity necessary for the enforcement of this Ordinance in the same manner as in his enforcement of the (Berough, Township, etc.)

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Questionnaire Results (Continued from page 1)

the dynamics of the political climate. For historic preservation to thrive or become an integral part of the decision-making process, preservationists must become involved in the political arena, if only to elect pro-preservation candidates.

In the design issues category, maintenance and repair of old houses, storefronts and commercial facades as well as infill new construction were chosen as a very important training preference. Building and fire codes and site/environmental issues also were found worthy as training subjects.

HARBs and their staff were interested in finding out about grants and funding. 41% considered the Certified Local Government program a very important training preference.

In the category of Economic Incentives, 69% registered their interest in Community Development Block Grants.

We should note that 32% considered the Pennsylvania State Enabling legislation, the Historic District Act as not an important subject for a training workshop. This seemed to us somewhat unfortunate because that act is the supporting law enabling most local communities to regulate and protect their historic and archaeological resources. Amendments for good or ill in the act could affect local communities drastically.

Other than subject preference questions we were also quite interested in knowing if we were going on the right assumption in thinking that HARB/CLG training was needed. Answering yes, 87% clearly considered training a must.

How many training workshop hours did respondents consider adequate? The largest percentage said four hours. As for the time of day when training workshops should be held, respondents favored weekday evenings or Saturday during the day. Consultants and municipal staffs tended to prefer weekdays during business hours. Generally, HARBs preferred to travel no more than fifty miles. This response does cause us some concern because we think that to establish a successful network of HARBs an annual conference would probably be necessary. However, we hope most HARB members will travel more than fifty miles since they have indicated their interest in forming a network.

Interestingly, 81% said they were willing to host a workshop. Now, what we have to do is convince everyone else to travel there. Regarding the times per year that HARB members and staff considered a training workshop needed, 57% thought twice a year satisfactory, while 29% thought once a year was enough.

We were also interested in knowing how many HARBs and staff personnel had knowledge of certain important historic preservation organizations. We listed four: the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 89% were aware of its existence; the Preservation Fund of Pennsylvania, 58% were aware of its existence; the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, 24% have heard of the organization; and, the Association for Preservation Technology, only 8% have heard of it.

To round off our questionnaire findings we were also interested in knowing if HARB members and staff were aware of funding availability. 85% of HARBs said they wanted grant information. We were interested in knowing how many of you received the *HARB Memo*, a newsletter. More than half of our respondents (71%) had never seen one!

Of those that had received it, 82% thought it useful. 25% said the *HARB Memo* could be improved, while 18% said not. We also wanted to know how many HARBs communicated with each other. Just as we had anticipated, 75% never had. Hence, we asked if HARBs thought networking would be useful and 93% said yes! And lastly, 53% of the HARBs were familiar with the certified local government program; 69% said they wanted information on CLGs.

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Building Permit Ordinance as enacted and as may be amended from time to time."

2) City of Reading - Section 1300 - Violations of Penalties Section 1300.1 - Notice of Violation - The Building Inspector shall serve a notice of violation on the person in violation of this ordinance or of a plan approved thereunder or in violation of a permit or certificate issued under the provisions of this ordinance. Such notice shall direct the abatement of said violation. Section 1300.2 - Prosecution of Violation - If the violation is not abated within the time specified in the Notice of Violation, the Building Inspector shall institute the appropriate proceeding at law or in equity to restrain, correct, or abate such violation. Section 1300.3 - Violation Penalties - Any person who shall violate provisions of this ordinance or who shall fail to comply with any of the requirements thereof or who shall conduct activities in violation of a permit issued under the provisions of this ordinance or who shall, without having applied for and received an approved permit, conduct activities for which a permit is required under the terms of the ordinance shall be guilty of the summary offense punishable by a fine not exceeding $300 or by imprisonment not exceeding ninety (90) days, or both such fine and imprisonment. Each day of a violation of this chapter shall be deemed a separate offense.

Please feel free to write with questions concerning this issue or your comments on your experience in your community with enforcement of the local ordinance.