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Fixing Historic Preservation: A Constructive Critique of “Significance”

Randall Mason

The idea of “significance” is exceedingly important to the practice of historic preservation. In significance, preservationists pack all their theory, ideology and politics—and their wonder at the capacity to use historic fabric to reflect on the past. A “statement of significance” gathers together all the reasons why a building or place should be preserved, why it is meaningful or useful, and what aspects require most urgent protection. Once defined, significance is used as a basis for policy, planning and design decisions.

There are problems, though, with the use and conceptualization of significance. The overriding one is that the preservation field fails to fully appreciate its contingent nature. By making the fixing of places and their meaning the primary emphasis of preservation, we have unduly objectified and scientized our understanding of memory and historicity. Since significance is the field’s primary tool for doing this, it is worthwhile to break down the problem.

First, significance has too often been used as a blunt instrument—or worse, a black box. Judgments about significance are narrowly drawn, pegged closely to the architectural history canons and historical associations validated by academics. As a field, preservation has shown little appetite for thinking critically about significance, or theorizing a way of handling significance.¹ Instead, it has tended to rely on a standard of self-evidence similar to that used by U.S. Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart in 1964 to define pornography and obscenity: “I know it when I see it.”

Top: Pueblo Bonita at Chaco Canyon, New Mexico. Photo by author.

Bottom: Fajada Butte at Chaco Canyon. Photo by author.

Second, once judgments are made about a site, its significance is regarded as largely fixed. Such inertia needs to be overcome, and each site’s significance needs to be seen as time bound and in need of periodic revision.

Third, many decisions about significance are made by experts, whose mindsets are often quite unreflective and uncritical. By contrast, the imperative of preservation—as in the rest of society—should be to allow more voices to be heard.

Recently, more critical and progressive uses of the concept of significance have begun to appear. This has corresponded with a shift in the core purpose of the field from simply preserving material fabric to the more complicated tasks of preserving the significance of fabric and places. In this regard, the point of this essay is not just to noodle around with the significance concept, but to revisit the questions of why we preserve and what theories inform our decisions. As such, it may serve as the prelude to proposing ways to retool this important concept.

Why We Preserve

At the nineteenth-century roots of the field, the goals of historic preservation were curatorial and memorial: to represent aspects of the past for contemporary society through the preservation of physical remains. Today, however, historic preservation has expanded to encompass a number of different agendas: developers seeking profits in adaptive-reuse projects; community advocates (wealthy or disadvantaged) attempting to block undesirable development; anti-sprawl advocates lobbying for a more sustainable world; cities seeking new heritage tourism attractions to promote economic development; and, of course, myriad social groups pursuing specific historical and memorial

projects that tell their particular stories. The broadening of preservation from its curatorial roots has been a very important and salutary development—these other goals increase the diversity, inclusiveness and robustness of historic preservation as a social movement—but it has also led to some confusion about core purposes and methods.

Conceptually, the heart of historic preservation lies in the intellectual and emotional connections we make between memory and environment—what I’ll call the “memory/fabric connection.”² The connection is what allows old buildings to be seen as sources of wonder, documents about the past, or ways to reform wayward citizens and advance political causes. The rich relationship between memory and built fabric has concerned such diverse scholars, designers and practitioners as Bachelard, Boyer, Halbwachs, Hayden, J.B. Jackson, Lowenthal, Lynch, Nora, Rossi, Ruskin, and dozens of other anthropologists, geographers, sociologists, historians, architects and planners. These writers have celebrated the wonder we find in old buildings, and also mapped society’s uses of the material past. But the preservation field has not always availed itself of continuing scholarship on the subject, often simply looking to find validation in it, and too rarely opening itself to self-critique. The question we should ask more aggressively concerns the proper balance between two approaches: shaping buildings and places in the physical sense (protecting, restoring, reconstructing, tearing down, etc.), and assuming these material efforts tacitly shape memory; and concerning ourselves with reshaping memory, and using buildings and places as a means to this end.

As the preservation field became professionalized over the twentieth

century, it has overemphasized the fabric side of the memory/fabric connection.³ The reasons for this focus are clear: the scientific methods and objective standards used to treat fabric gave legitimacy. Specialized knowledge about materials and decay gave the new profession an area of activity distinct from that of architects, planners, historians, and others concerned with the built environment. The result has been a dominant preservationist mentality of *fixing things*, literally and metaphorically: fixing broken buildings and deteriorating structures, gentrifying downcast historic districts, standing in the path of bulldozers, and (not least) fixing the meaning of preserved buildings and sites.

In the last decade or so, an alternative view has started to gain ascendancy. It considers the *raison d'être* of historic preservation to be the cultivation of memory, and it argues that techniques to protect fabric are simply one means to achieve this. Whatever additional benefits flow from preservation, the new thinking goes—well-preserved buildings and artifacts, profits to investors, a healthier downtown, a beautiful landscape, an ecologically more sustainable city—the core benefit is the cultivation of society's collective memory. Fabric is essential to sustaining memory. According to sociologist Maurice Halbwachs: “[I]t is the spatial image alone that, by reason of its stability, gives us an illusion of not having changed through time and of retrieving the past in the present.”⁴ But to the alternative view, material matters have now become the tail that is wagging the dog.

In other worlds, preservation's “fixing” mentality, rooted in the fabric-centered traditions of the field, has gotten transferred to how we think about significance. This has led us to ignore the essential nature of



significance—which is that as an expression of cultural meaning, it must be expected to change, involve multivalence and contention, and be contingent on time, place, and other factors.⁵

Preservation theory traditionally doesn't deal with this reality. It needs to be re-“fixed” to embrace cultural change and social process (the driving forces behind significance), and this is a whole lot different from arresting decay. We can predict that collective memory will change, though we can't predict *how* it will change.

Contrast this with the theories underlying fabric-centered preservation: physical scientific laws documenting unidirectional change (things fall apart) and enabling prediction of outcomes. The fixing mentality, though it works very well for theorizing change vis-à-vis stone or wood deterioration, falls short

in explaining how society's contemporary use of historic preservation is related to contemporary social issues—for instance, the burgeoning presence of African-American histories in U.S. public memory of the post-Civil-Rights-era generation.

Trouble-Shooting “Significance”

Significance is shorthand for the meanings of a place, and the ways a place is made useful—a sort of mission statement about why a place should be preserved. “Statements of significance” occupy the central position in planning and decision-making models widely used in the preservation field.⁶

Like all definitions useful in policy-making, significance reduces the complexity of a situation so that logical decisions can be made and defended. Significance reduces many shades of gray to fewer lines of black and white.⁷



A statement of significance considers all the meanings of a place, and winnows out the few most important ones. The way significance has traditionally been used and talked about makes it seem clear and objective—in keeping with the “fixing” mentality, and sticking to the experts who “know it when they see it.” Once “found,” significance is taken mostly as a matter of faith, and a priesthood (historians, architects and preservation professionals) and group of the faithful (preservationists) interpret the results for the public. Such a view

Above top: City Hall Park, in the early twentieth century; City Hall in middle right. Photo courtesy of National Trust Library, University of Maryland.

Above bottom: The site of the African Burial Ground, just north of Chambers Street, lower Manhattan. Photo by author.

Opposite: McSorley’s Old Ale House. Photo by author.

of significance presumes that a building will always mean the same thing, that all of society views the building in the same way, and that there is only one kind of significance. But overemphasizing (and even fetishizing) preservation of fabric in this way reflects an underlying assumption that culture can be treated as a static set of artifacts. And the methods and epistemology aligned with such an assumption lead us away from a real understanding of cultural and individual attitudes toward place.

The traditional conception is focused on architectural and historical canons; it is succinct, clear and definitive. The more progressive notion seeks to be more extensive, detailed, and complicated; it suggests that there may be multiple valid arguments about the meaning of a place.

Some Examples

Indeed, newer thinking about preservation recognizes that significance is made, not found. It is socially constructed and situational, and it recognizes that appraisals of significance may have as much to do with the people and society making them as with any actual site.⁸

On reflection, such views reveal how problems with significance may crop up when meanings become overly narrow; when they stress the assessments of experts and ignore alternative and popular views; and when they fail to acknowledge change over time. Chaco Canyon National Historical Park, in New Mexico, provides an excellent example of the changing significance of a heritage site. Chaco is an extensive National Monument, centered on the impressive ruins of a complex Native American culture, abandoned about 700 years ago. However, since the nineteenth century, white archaeologists have defined the official significance of the site as consisting largely of the historic ruins of indigenous Chaco culture and their value for scientific research. By contrast, Native American groups ascribe sacred and symbolic value to the place, which they believe to have been created by their ancestors. And, more recently, New Age tourists have begun using the site for their own purposes, invoking their own version of sacred value. As each stakeholder group has asserted a different notion of significance—some of which are clearly incommensurable (New Agers burying crystals in *kivas* transgresses the values of both Indians and archaeologists)—conflicts have arisen.

In relation to such conflict, the “fixing” culture can only remove preservationists further from the needs and desires of contemporary culture and society, and further into their

shells of professional expertise. The corrective to this is greater transparency and participation in the decision-making and significance-defining processes—particularly, participation by nonexperts and other outsider stakeholders.

The issues of changing significance of a place, and the assertion of new stakeholder groups, converged powerfully around City Hall Park in New York City in the early 1990s. This was when traditionally narrow conceptions of the significance of the City Hall area were forcefully broadened by the “discovery” of the African Burial Ground.

As the seat of civic government and a remainder from the city’s colonial landscape, City Hall Park has long held historical value: it was the Commons of the colonial town; it has served as the focal point of government for two centuries; and it has been the site of innumerable protests, celebrations and commemorative events. In addition, City Hall, itself, has long been appraised as a fine historic building, a product of New York’s most accomplished early-nineteenth-century architect, John McComb. For at least 125 years, threats to this canonical significance have arisen from the park’s other obvious values: the economic value it adds to surrounding properties; the utility value of the transportation infrastructure for which it serves as a hub; and its value as a social space—a place to walk, sit, picnic, protest, watch a parade, etc.

Preservation efforts over the years have linked the official significance of the park to its historical and architectural values, while limiting its economic and social values to secondary status. However, in the early 1990s the significance of the whole area of lower Manhattan centered on the park became hotly contested. Public outcry over excavations of free and enslaved



Africans’ graves on the site of a new federal office building just north of City Hall resulted in the designation of a municipal historic district called “The Commons and African Burial Ground Historic District.” Though the location of the burial ground had been known to professionals, it was assumed that the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century graves had long since been destroyed. The sudden “discovery” of hundreds upon hundreds of intact graves stirred a broad community of stakeholders to action.⁹ Powerful African-American politicians such as U.S. Representative Gus Savage and New York City Mayor David Dinkins mobilized these stakeholders to demand the rewriting of the significance of lower Manhattan as an historic site. The inclusion of African-American narratives reflected the cultural politics of the day as well as the abiding recognition that City Hall Park is a richly layered historical landscape with many values.

The City Hall Park/African Burial Ground story epitomizes the changing significance of a particular place, and how the interpretation of site significance often reflects broader cultural politics. Another, longer-term effort in New York City embodies the broad desire to acknowledge and preserve landmarks across the city representing new, alternative, and changing conceptions of significance. Place Matters is a partnership of City Lore and the Municipal Art Society, formed in 1998, to “promote and protect places that connect us to the past, contribute

to vital communities, and sustain what is distinctive about New York.” Their pioneering work centers on identifying places that clearly function to New Yorkers as “cultural landmarks,” yet which fall outside (or in addition to) the canons of architectural style and historical association that dominate decisions on city landmarks. One outcome of Place Matters’ work is an alternative inventory of cultural landmarks, places important to contemporary citizens and communities, without architectural criteria attached. The list includes such places as unmarked sites of civil unrest, an auditorium where Tito Puente and friends played their pioneering Latin music, and a forgotten Revolutionary War battleground (long since built over). This list—and the extensive public outreach and programming Place Matters does—are a memory-centered complement to the City’s extensive inventory and regulatory regime for more traditional historical and architectural landmarks.¹⁰ McSorley’s Old Ale House, on East 8th Street in Manhattan, is one of hundreds of sites in the Place Matters Census. A bar housed in a typical East Village building, McSorley’s is significant in terms of social history through its long, continuous life as a neighborhood saloon, and its notorious exclusion of women until 1970.

Values-Centered Theories of Preservation

If one of the obstacles to renovating significance is the fabric-centered



bias of the preservation field, and its accompanying myth of objectivity, what are some alternatives?¹¹ Values-centered theories of preservation shift the balance, giving priority to the memories, ideas, and other social motivations that drive the urge to physically preserve the built environment. The basic idea is that decisions about preservation are premised on the appraisals people, institutions, and groups make of the built environment's values. Therefore, decisions must be reached by prioritizing some values over others (say, the memorial value of a great writer's birthplace over the economic value of building a strip mall on the same spot). Obviously, knowing about the range of different values, and who speaks for them, becomes crucial for understanding the preservation process. Through the lens of a values-centered theory, the role of memory—as well as

Above left and middle: St. Paul's Chapel, exterior and interior. Photos courtesy of Historic American Buildings Survey/Library of Congress.

Above right: Pews in St. Paul's Chapel, showing conserved marks made by rescue workers.

Photo by author.

Opposite top: Aerial view of Mostar, Bosnia, looking upstream toward the Old Bridge over the Neretva River (center). The predominantly Muslim Old Town is to the right. Photo courtesy of Aga Khan Trust for Culture archive, from the former Yugoslavian state news agency.

Opposite bottom: Recent view of the Old Town, on the left bank of the Neretva, including traditional stones houses (some reused as shops and cafes) and mosque. Photo by author.

other values and uses of heritage, like economic and political values—takes center stage in explaining the motivations and outcomes of preservation.

The idea of a values-centered theory of preservation as an alternative to traditional, fabric-centered thinking has several sources.¹² To some extent, values- or memory-centered theory has always been part of preservation—the idea of memorializing and shaping culture lies at the roots of preservation. But recently, the social complexities of globalization, migration, culture wars, economic shifts, armed conflict, and so on have provoked many of us associated with the preservation field to question the traditional fabric-centered approach and reconnect preservation with the pressing social issues of the day. Research undertaken by the Getty Conservation Institute in the past several years has sought to pull together various threads and advance the field's discussion along these lines. The abiding goals of these research threads have been (1) acknowledging the diverse and socially constructed values of heritage; (2) doing something pragmatically that enables practitioners to deal with all the values more robustly; and (3) making connections between preservation theory and practice that are rigorous, analytical, transparent and collaborative.

Getting back to significance, per se, what is useful about values-centered theories of preservation is that they can yield much more detailed, sensitive appraisals of significance. Additionally,

the understanding of different values, and the nonexpert stakeholders that advocate them, forces preservationists to break out of their shells and collaborate widely. A few essential ideas underpin the values-centered approach.

First, "values" are understood in the sense of qualities, not morals or ethics. Any particular building, site, or place has many different values; indeed, the multivalence of the historic built environment is one of its fundamental qualities. The historical, cultural and aesthetic values traditionally at the center of preservation discourse, as well as economic, social, educational/research, ecological values, are equally present.¹³ These values, said collectively to be a place's "heritage values," are the source of the place's significance (which can be defined as the most important, urgent values at a given time).

Second, heritage values are acknowledged to be constructed and situational, not inherent. The assessment of values depends to a great extent on who is assessing them, and on the historical-geographical moment in which the value is articulated. Thus, an economist, historian, architect, schoolchild, ordinary citizen, or elected official might have different views of the value of the City Hall Park. Furthermore, some stakeholders will have direct experience and association with a place, while others will seldom if ever visit it, yet still value it highly. So a professional study of values must be done in

parallel with understanding and consulting with the stakeholders—i.e., the people and groups doing the valuing.

St. Paul's Chapel in New York City illustrates these two principles about values superbly. The values of St. Paul's are many and changing, and they yield a shifting sense of why the building has been significant. Situated on Lower Broadway, the chapel has long been treasured as an architectural and historical landmark remembering "Old New York." Completed in 1766, the chapel is one of the oldest and finest buildings in Manhattan, its colonial beauty enhanced by the presence of its surrounding graveyard in the midst of ultra-dense lower Manhattan. Today the value of the building is further guaranteed by the fact that George Washington worshipped there immediately after his inauguration (his pew is clearly marked).

Less vaunted, but equally valuable has been the chapel's ongoing use for worship and community service, a value not really represented in its preserved physical fabric. And in the aftermath of the 9/11 tragedy, St. Paul's took on a new kind of significance. Located very near the World Trade Center but miraculously unharmed by the destruction all around, the chapel became a shelter for relief and rescue workers, a place for them to rest, eat, and recover in every sense. This function left its marks on the building, and in deciding how to repair and renew the building after service as a shelter, it was decided to retain the scuff marks made on the pews by sleeping rescue workers and their tool belts, thus preserving this important memory in the fabric of the building. Appreciating the values of the chapel as they stand today, then, would require acknowledging these most recent marks and the enormous social and symbolic value



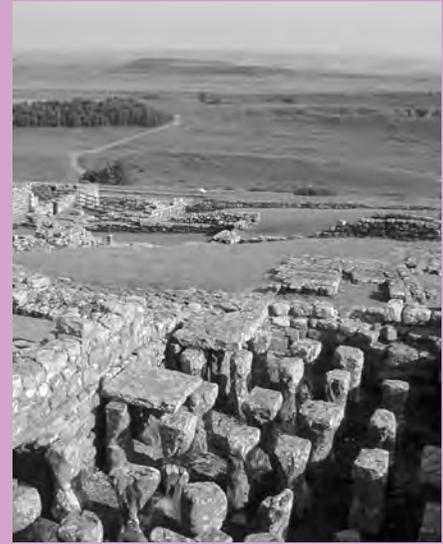
attached to them, as well as the traditional architectural distinctions and historical associations, as well as other factors such as the economic values tied up in the land and buildings.

A third idea underpinning the values-centered approach is that it is understood that heritage values sometimes conflict. One cannot maximize all kinds of value at once—for instance, a battlefield's historical and aesthetic values would be destroyed by maximizing its economic value as a shopping center. Why consider all the values of the historic built environment, and not just the historical and cultural values at the core of preservation's memorial project?

Empirically, what this means is that all the values of heritage should enter into decisions about the management and fate of the historic built environment. It is untenable to simply ignore

the values of some stakeholders because we may disagree ideologically. Preservation as practiced is not a zero-sum game; it is full of compromises (like most planning and design work). Real estate developers keenly perceive the economic values of the historic built environment, for instance. And indigenous peoples have asserted their interpretation of history in stark contrast to traditional, great-white-man notions. (Consider how the Custer Battlefield National Monument in Montana is now known as the Little Bighorn Battlefield National Monument, de-emphasizing the importance of the Custer story in that landscape).

We cannot and should not wish these alternative views of value away; nor should we ignore them. Why adopt a theory of significance that purposely excludes influential factors



shaping how society values the historic built environment? Why resist change in appraisals of value? Even though preservationists advocate long-term views of the value of the historic built environment, this shouldn't be taken to mean that values are timeless.

The challenge of preservation planning and policy, therefore, is to strike and sustain a reasonable balance of values. Preservationists do not have to advocate all the values of a heritage site, but they should have to understand them, and this requires not only collaboration among professionals and laypeople but familiarity with the valuation methods of many disciplines (economics, anthropology, architecture, history). Without this broad understanding, preservationists will only act on what is valuable to them, not why the environment does or does not have meaning for society at large.

Will significance always be anchored by traditional canons of architectural and historical value? No doubt, events will continue to push preservationists to revise traditional notions of value and significance. Otherwise, their work will become irrelevant to the daily challenges and long-term concerns of ordinary citizens.

In the city of Mostar, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the preservation field's struggle over divergent and changing notions of significance is today being

starkly played out in responses to an historic urban place deeply damaged and socially divided during the Balkan wars of 1992-95. Mostar's Old Town suffered considerable damage during this time, including destruction of the iconic Old Bridge (Stari Most) by Croatian forces.

In recovering from the war, and dealing with the reality of a city divided between Croatian and Bosnian "sides," there is an ongoing debate about the value and significance of iconic structures such as the Old Bridge, versus the reconstruction and preservation of more "everyday" buildings. To those in the international community (whether E.U. politicians or potential tourists), Mostar is significant because the bridge was destroyed, then repaired—metaphorically stitching together a city and region horribly divided by war. To Bosnian Mostarians, the significance of postwar reconstruction and preservation lies as much in the schools, houses, mosques, streets and shops that support their everyday life and long-standing roots in the Old Town.

Process and Product

Historic preservation theories and tools need to reflect the notion that culture is an ongoing process, at once evolutionary and inventive—not a static set of practices and things. As a field, we need to be more rigorous, analytical, and transparent with our decisions.¹⁴ The significance concept needs rethinking to meet these challenges.

Today, the fabric/memory balance in preservation is shifting as younger preservationists are more compelled by Dolores Hayden's work than Bernard Feilden's (though we all recognize that the technical ability to diagnose a building and arrest its decay is what enables us to remember.)

Values-centered theory is a useful way for the preservation field to engage these challenges. It acknowledges the dynamics of preservation and allows us to model (if not solve) the reality of the multiple, contested, and shifting values ascribed to historic preservation sites and projects. It is a body of theory that leads, in practice, to a significance concept that is flexible and multivalent, instead of an older model that succeeded best in placing buildings and sites "under glass," segregated from society like museum objects.

One can see such ideas about a more encompassing, flexible notion of significance being implemented, for instance, in the management of the Hadrian's Wall World Heritage Site in England. Consisting of remains of an 80-mile-long Roman defensive wall, built in the first to the fourth centuries AD, the site has been designated since 1986. Its management through a complex partnership led by English Heritage and other public agencies involves myriad local jurisdictions and landowners to care for this extensive place as both a working landscape of towns, farms and pastures, as well as a remarkable archaeological site long attractive to tourists. The management and planning regime for

Hadrian's Wall and the excavated ruins of Housesteads Roman fort. Photos by author.

the site (updated every five years) sensitively takes these different significances into account.

The arguments in this article are not simply seeking a better *result* for preservation—i.e., more perfectly preserved buildings, or more accurate and eloquent statements of significance. The *process* of articulating and assessing values is salutary in itself, and it can lead to more relevant and useful ways to understand and manage the built environment as a connected landscape, instead of a disconnected collection of historic buildings.

In order to accomplish any of this, the historic preservation field must stop seeing itself so hermetically. Where are the anthropologists and economists working on preservation? Where are the foundations carrying the flag for collective memory? Who is pushing preservationists to think creatively and critically about the role of preservation in the society of the future? Not all these answers are right at hand, but perhaps we'll know them when we see them.

Notes and Acknowledgement

The author wishes to thank Laura Hansen and Marci Reaven, of Place Matters, for inviting the lecture that was the basis for this article, as well as anonymous reviewers and the journal's editors for a number of insightful and constructive critiques.

1. There are two very notable exceptions to the dearth of critical thinking about significance: a collection of papers from a 1997 conference and a 1984 article by Tainter and Lucas questioning the theoretical assumptions behind significance. See Michael Tomlan, ed., *Preservation of What, For Whom? A Critical Look at Significance* (Ithaca, NY: National Council for Preservation Education, 1998); and Joseph Tainter and John Lucas, "Epistemology of the Significance Concept," *American Antiquity*, vol. 48, no. 4 (1983), pp.707-19. Both of these works have strongly informed this article.
2. "Environment" and "historic built environment" are used here as catch-all terms referring to material culture at a variety of scales: buildings, sites, districts,

settlements, landscapes, objects and collections.

3. For example, Bernard Feilden cemented the notion that preservation was about "arresting decay" of historical fabric. In the U.S., James Marston Fitch, the pioneering preservation educator, subtitled his major work on preservation "The Curatorial Management of the Built Environment."
4. Maurice Halbwachs, *The Collective Memory*, Francis J. Ditter, Jr., and Vida Yazdi Ditter, trans. (New York: Harper & Row, 1980; original, *La Mémoire collective*, 1950), p.157.
5. The pioneering work on collective memory as a social process was by Maurice Halbwachs. See *On Collective Memory*, Lewis Coser, ed. and trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992). Other interesting works include M. Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994); Paul Connerton, *How Societies Remember* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, Lawrence Krizman, ed., Arthur Goldhammer, trans. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996-98, three volumes); and Iwona Irwin-Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1994).
6. Martha Demas, "Planning for Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites," in Teutonico and Palumbo, eds., *Management Planning for Archaeological Sites* (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2002); and Sharon Sullivan and Michael Pearson, *Looking After Heritage Places* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1995).
7. As my U.K. colleague Kate Clark puts it, a statement of significance is only useful if it helps a site manager say "no" to some proposals. It should define the meaning and use of a place such that it excludes *some* possibilities (personal communication).
8. Howard L. Green, "The Social Construction of Historical Significance," in Tomlan, ed., *Preservation of What, For Whom?*
9. The fate of the African Burial Ground site, including long-debated plans for memorials and other historical interpretation, is still in question as of this writing. A reinterment ceremony for some of the human remains is scheduled for October 2003. See <http://www.africanburialground.com/>.
10. Place Matters' web site is www.placematters.net.
11. Peter Novick's *That Noble Dream* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), on the notion of

objectivity in the historical profession, provides an excellent base for critique of preservation.

12. The Getty Conservation Institute has produced several reports on values-centered theories, including Avrami, Mason, and de la Torre, eds., *Values and Heritage Conservation: Research Report* (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2000). (see www.getty.edu/conservation/resources/). For a summary, see Randall Mason and Erica Avrami, "Heritage Values and Challenges of Conservation Planning," in Teutonico and Palumbo, eds., *Management Planning for Archaeological Sites*.
13. There is little agreement on what constitutes a universal typology of heritage values. Many different schemes have been proposed, each with its strengths and weaknesses. See Avrami, Mason, and de la Torre, eds., *Values and Heritage Conservation*.
14. My occasional use of the first-person in this essay reflects the idea that I see myself as both outsider and insider to the preservation field. Though my teaching and research are intimately concerned with historic preservation practice, my graduate training is in geography and urban planning, not historic preservation.