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Alliance the review

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COVER IMAGE
Accessible ramp at Gilman Station,
Issaquah, Washington.
Credit: Sarah Steen



A quarterly journal with news, technical assistance, and case studies relevant to local historic preservation commissions and their staff.

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In this Issue

BY TODD SCOTT, *THE ALLIANCE REVIEW* EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Universal accessibility in historic buildings has been challenging in many ways. Immediately after the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, most of us who were stewards of historic buildings began trying to find ways to meet the spirit of the act, if not the full extent. It took several years for local building officials to settle on acceptable solutions for historic buildings, in many cases striving for a bare minimum that included at least some improvement. Ramps and wheelchair lifts for historic buildings became a specialty for many contractors or suppliers, along with automatic door openers. Today we're all working to address a broader range of accessibility challenges, from poor lighting and signage to QR codes that allow someone in a wheelchair to experience a historic attic space without ever physically being there.

In this issue we look at the current thinking behind accessibility that is truly universal, with research done by Megan Diehl as part of her studies at Goucher College, and with research on disability justice by Michelle Bacca in the Pacific Northwest. Chris Zanassi provides us with a case study and practical example on two different accessibility options for a rural farmhouse museum. And Dr. Kyra Lucas discusses exemption options using a couple of examples in Florida. We've also included a link to a good one-page primer from Wisconsin. We have our regular features - Tools for the Online Preservationist, a Spotlight on a Preservation Organization from Iowa, a Volunteer Profile from Madison, Indiana, and the second of our newest regular feature, Funding Opportunities.

We hope this issue inspires you to consider how best to accommodate everyone in your historic building. Whether it's a public or civic facility, or a private apartment building in a residential historic district, we're certain there are improvements everyone can use to make visiting (or living in) the building easier and more reliable. We also hope you enjoy this issue, and as always, welcome your comments and suggestions.



Credit: Sarah Sheen

Reard House accessible entrance, Sammamish, Washington.

Megan Diehl is a recent graduate of Goucher College's Master of Arts in Historic Preservation program, where she explored ways of improving accessibility in historic places. She is interested in continuing to advocate for accessibility improvements in historic buildings, particularly in those "everyday" places within our historic landscape.

Reconsidering Accessibility in Historic Places

By Megan Diehl

Increasing access to everyday historic buildings is a concept often in conflict with the practice of historic preservation. Making these places more accessible frequently requires physical changes, while many aspects of our current preservation model seek to protect and preserve historic materials against change. This tension ultimately impacts if and how people with disabilities experience historic buildings.

Many historic buildings are either partially or completely inaccessible to people with disabilities, while others have been made inequitably accessible. Those that are inequitably accessible may meet technical accessibility standards, but the accessibility improvements put in place favor historic integrity over equitable experiences for people with disabilities.

However, in recent years, members of our field, including Randall Mason, Christopher N. Matthews, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, have expressed interest in moving away from a fabric-focused practice that can lead to problematic access for people with disabilities, towards a people-oriented preservation movement. These people-focused models of preservation pose historic buildings as places of experience with multifaceted meanings, instead of primarily embodiments of our historic past that must be preserved, frozen in time.

Within these alternative models, what people

value about places, not just their physical materials, becomes the focus of our preservation efforts. People develop relationships with places, relationships that create the meanings we seek to preserve, through the experiences that they have with and within them. If we want to begin preserving diverse place meanings, we should ensure that as many people as possible, including people with disabilities, can engage with historic places in order to develop these relationships with them.

Developing a Standard of Equitable Access

From a legal perspective, preservationists should continue to meet local, state, and federal accessibility requirements. But, within the model of people-oriented preservation, we should strive to develop equitable accessibility improvements that also create an equivalency of **experience** for people with and without disabilities, so that as many people as possible have comparable opportunities to interact with historic buildings. When comprehensively equitable access is unobtainable, then we should



Credit: Megan Diehl

The Modern Auto Court, Albuquerque, that has accessibility issues with lighting, steps, and shrubs.

strive to make accessibility improvements that result in the highest degree of equity whenever possible. I encourage us to move beyond thinking about how we are legally required to make a historic property accessible and to instead begin asking how we can create legally compliant accessibility improvements that also thoughtfully engage people with place.

Disabilities that impact mobility may be one of the first kinds of disabilities that come to mind when we consider how to improve access. But, we must recognize that there is a diverse range of disabilities, both visible and invisible, and create access that

takes those disabilities into account if we want to truly make our accessibility improvements as equitable as possible. This may be as simple as ensuring that lights are brightened to improve the experiences that people with low vision have or ensuring that clear signage has been posted so deaf people can easily and independently navigate the space. In other cases, the accessibility improvements may be more complex, but no less valuable.

This standard of equitable access may not be practical for historic house museums and other similar properties, but it is an approach I encourage us



Credit: Megan Diehl

Albuquerque’s Ernie Pyle House, a historic home here that’s been converted into a library, with a main entrance only accessible via steps.

to begin taking toward “day-to-day” commercial places like restaurants, bookshops, and theaters. I am particularly interested in these kinds of places because creating change within commonplace aspects of our everyday landscape can have a powerful, noticeable impact on the experiences people with disabilities have with historic properties and the relationships they build with them. Though this particular article focuses on how we can reconsider accessibility improvements within these public spaces, the approach I encourage can also be applied to privately owned properties like apartments and office buildings. This is especially true for the shared areas within these places (where we preservationists may have a bit more influence), such as the entrances, hallways, sidewalks, public bathrooms, etc.

Ways Forward: Embracing Aspects of Universal Design Theory

People-focused preservation emphasizes preserving the meanings of place, which in turn permits a more malleable conception of historic fabric. Within these models, we can design accessibility improve-

ments that facilitate equitable experiences (and, consequently, equitable opportunities for developing relationships with place) without the need to first prioritize the protection of historic materials. But, how do we actually begin working towards this new standard? I believe that the essence of Ronald Mace’s Universal Design theory offers an alternative to our historically “fabric first” approach that we can draw from to help enact this transition in practice. Mace’s design theory encourages practitioners to design for (and with) different kinds of people to create spaces that work for people who have diverse needs. Within the Universal Design model, accessibility improvements should be created according to how people, particularly people with disabilities, interact with and use spaces, not solely according to legal standards. Accessibility improvements should be designed with the goal of achieving the best use for as many people as possible in ways that do not “other” people with disabilities. This way of thinking can bring engagement between people and place to the forefront of how we design accessibility improvements.

Universal Design theory is appealing exactly because it does not instruct preservationists how to improve access; rather, it encourages us to begin asking different kinds of questions that will (hopefully) lead to creative, equitable access to historic places whenever possible. One of the difficulties of embracing this theory involves recognizing that what works for one historic building will not always work for another; however, we may be able to apply aspects of successful accessibility improvements to comparable properties and develop a catalog of references as we gain experience with this reworked approach.

Concluding Thoughts

Ultimately, I hope for a shift in our field's day-to-day response when we encounter historic places that are not fully, equitably accessible to the people who want to experience them. I encourage preservationists to ask why historic buildings continue to exclude people with disabilities when we support reorienting our practice around preserving what these places mean to people. I do not propose that we adopt a policy of demolishing historic fabric without thought to create access, because the fabric contributes to the experience of place. Instead, the change I seek to create by encouraging our field to reference Universal Design theory when reworking our approach to accessibility improvements is in our order of operations: I hope that people-oriented, equitable access, instead of the preservation of historic fabric, will become the bellwether for where and how accessibility improvements are implemented. From a practical perspective, I recognize that there will be many circumstances where change will need to occur in phases due to financial and/or logistical constraints. Nonetheless, I argue that reworking how we consider and design accessibility improvements is an important step we should take as we begin to shift towards a people-oriented approach to historic preservation. ■

CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS WHEN DESIGNING ACCESSIBILITY IMPROVEMENTS IN HISTORIC BUILDINGS

- **Can everyone access this building in the same place and in the same way?** Are people with disabilities separated from others when entering and/or navigating the space? For example, is the accessible entrance along an alley or through a side door that leads to a utility room? Is there also a "main" inaccessible entrance that leads to an ornate entryway?
- **Can everyone access all parts of this building?** For example, is there a basement bar only accessible via staircase or are certain doorways within a restaurant so narrow that they restrict access?
- **Is it difficult for people with disabilities to enter the building and/or find the entrance to the building?** For example, is there an accessible alleyway entrance that's poorly lit without directional signage, or is there a single entrance that most people should be able to use, but that has a doorknob that's difficult to open?
- **What kinds of experiences do people with disabilities have when entering the building?** Are those experiences similar to those people without disabilities have? If not, is the discrepancy due to an accessibility improvement that should be redesigned?
- **Should any design elements be added to existing accessibility improvements so that users have comparable experiences of place?** For example, is an accessible elevator predominantly bare-bones and utilitarian, while the main staircase is full of historic fabric?
- **Is there a person/organization we can collaborate with to improve the accessibility and the experiences that people with disabilities have in this building?**

For Further Reading

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Chris Zanassi is a key member of King County, Washington's Historic Preservation Program team. She provides administrative, financial, and graphic assistance to the team and to cultural resource professionals throughout the county as well as in the 23 cities that are part of King County's regional preservation program. Her spare time is spent volunteering with a local boxer rescue organization.

Considering Accessibility Options in a Rural Farmhouse

By Chris Zanassi

For more than thirty years, since the implementation of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), stewards of historic properties have been trying to determine the best approach for providing better access to properties for those who might be excluded due to various conditions or disabilities. In many larger museums and civic buildings, it may have been as basic as providing an accessible ramp, or automatic doors and a change in signage. For other historic resources, it might have meant that some patrons couldn't access certain parts of a building, or that they would have to watch a video of the spaces and exhibits they couldn't access.



Photo credit: King County Historic Preservation Program

Dougherty Farmhouse, Duvall, Washington.



Photo credit: King County Historic Preservation Program

Dougherty Farmhouse, circa 1890.

One of the critical pieces of determining the best solution for accessibility has always been the operability of various options and the associated cost. In this case study, we look at two of the more popular methods for providing physical access to many historic properties – switchback ramp and wheelchair lift. In this case the property is a rural farmhouse museum, where many educational events are held, but has a first floor elevated above the surrounding landscape. Over time, the approach to accessibility at this location has changed. We'll explore why.

Dougherty Farmstead

The Dougherty Farmstead began in the late 1880s on the banks of the Snoqualmie River in northern King County, Washington. Located in a community called Cherry Valley, the area eventually became a part of the city of Duvall. The house was built in 1888 and moved up the hill from the river in 1910, along with some of the farming activities as the Great Northern Railroad was building a new rail line along the river's banks. The farm was acquired by John and Kate Dougherty in 1898 and the family remained there for the next 85 years.

John Dougherty died in 1903, just five years after they moved onto the property, and Kate was left to raise eight children on the farm. Besides selling fruit from the 800 apple and prune trees planted by a previous owner, they milked cows and sold cream, and Kate boarded eight loggers in the bunk house. Kate served as postmistress for nine years both before and after the house was moved, and they held the first Catholic masses in the area. Leo Dougherty, the last of the family to live in the house, was remembered as an excellent drainage expert in hand-dug, underground, cedar-lined ditches. Following Leo's death in 1983, the Catholic Archdiocese owned the property, but it was eventually transferred to the city of Duvall, with a lease to the Duvall Historical Society in order to stabilize the house. The society put on a new roof, repaired the porch and chimneys, and did other work in the house and yard. Since that time the city and the society have done a variety of other projects on the property. While a number of agricultural outbuildings have been lost over the years, the farmhouse, bunk house, milk house, pastures, and family cemetery remain.



Photo credit: King County Historic Preservation Program

Overview of Dougherty Farmstead showing the bunk house, garage and farmhouse, as well as the path to a community garden and dog park.

The long-term goal of the city and historical society have been to use the farmstead to interpret historic agricultural practices, provide occasional events related to agriculture, and to provide recreational space for the growing bedroom community of Duvall. There is a community garden, a dog park, and walking trails on a portion of the site's 21 acres. But mostly the property has been used for heritage events sponsored by the historical society and the city. These include tours, educational programs in



Photo credit: King County Historic Preservation Program

Heritage Farm Tour sawing competition at Dougherty Farmstead.

the house and on the grounds, and seasonal events such as harvest farm activities. The farmhouse sits on a slight rise, with the front porch elevated 2-3 feet above the front yard, and the back porch elevated 6-8 feet above grade. However, the rear of the house is an area most used by visitors, as it has direct access to the adjacent parking lot, the bunk house, the community garden, and dog park. The front of the house has retained its original configuration and relationship with the yard.

Installing a Lift

In the early 2000s, the city of Duvall, in conjunction with the Duvall Historical Society, determined that the best way of providing access into the house for those who were physically challenged was to install a small wheelchair lift in the rear porch. The decision was based on a variety of factors, including the large size of the porch, the ability to keep the lift under cover of the porch roof (plus it was on the non-weather side of the house), and to minimize the impact to the overall site which would have been significantly greater if a ramp were used to provide access. A small portion of the porch was cut out to provide space for the lift and new sidewalks were installed between the rear porch and the bunkhouse to provide access to the lift from the parking area. All of these were approved by the local landmarks commission.

For the next several years, everything seemed to work well. The lift was used on special occasions and provided access to the interior of the house for those with walkers or wheelchairs or other devices. However, the lift was used infrequently, mostly when there were large events at the farmstead, and would go weeks or months without any use whatsoever. And while the lift was intended for exterior use, it was still subject to damp, cool Pacific Northwest winters and an occasional snowfall.

After several years, the city made the decision to remove the elevator lift and replace it with a permanent ramp. According to the city, the decision was made due to infrequent use, high maintenance costs and faulty equipment when in use. The city was



Photo credit: King County Historic Preservation Program

Back porch showing wheelchair lift installed.

fined numerous times by Washington’s Department of Labor and Industries (DLI) because during regular on-site inspections the lift would be inoperable. Even though the city had a maintenance contract with the lift company, the city found the lift had become completely unreliable. City staff felt that the exterior location created additional problems for the lift, even though it was intended to be used outside. At this time, the city determined it would be more cost-effective to design and install a ramp; at the very least it would be open and would provide access without any mechanical issues. Designs for the ramp were submitted to the historical society, and landmark commission staff for input. The final design was submitted as an Eagle Scout Project and was reviewed and approved by the landmarks commission.

The ramp installed is five feet in width with a wood handrail, and is approximately 66 linear feet in length, laid out as a switchback. It took up a small portion of the side yard, but in an area that is not typically used. Wire mesh panels were used as balusters underneath the railing to reduce the visibility and visual mass of the ramp, and most of the ramp is supported by pier blocks, which could easily be removed if the ramp is ever redesigned, or another solution is available. The deck material is wood plank, covered in rolled asphalt roofing. The only maintenance expected for the ramp is regular painting of the wood members.

Which Choice is Best?

Determining the best solution for access to historic buildings is rarely a black and white issue. While any improvement in access is often considered a “win,” and enough to satisfy the minimum requirements, stewards of publicly accessible historic buildings should strive to provide consistent, available access for every concern. In this instance, what was being provided was the bare minimum – physical access to the interior of the farmhouse. Once inside, access was still somewhat limited, with no accessibility to the top floor, and narrow doorways between rooms. But for the access that was provided, the city and local historical society felt a larger footprint ramp was at the very least, more reliable than a lift with a smaller physical impact. For a rural historic property, expecting a technician to appear every time there was an event at the farm, and make repairs or adjustments to a mechanical lift was unrealistic and impractical. The ramp provided an always reliable method for access, was placed on the least visible side of the building and was much more cost-effective than a maintenance contract with the manufacturer and regular fines from DLI. ■



Photo credit: King County Historic Preservation Program

Closeup of lift on the least visible side of the back porch.



Photo credit: King County Historic Preservation Program

Ramp installed in lieu of the lift, connecting the back porch to sidewalks that lead to the parking area.



Photo credit: King County Historic Preservation Program

Front view of the Dougherty Farmhouse, with ramp visible, but on the least prominent side of the house.

Americans with Disabilities Act Exemption Waiver for Historic Properties

By Dr. Kyra N. Lucas

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal civil rights law passed in 1990 to prevent discrimination based on disability. ADA regulations are intended to provide equal employment opportunities and make it easier for persons with disabilities to purchase goods and services, participate in state and local government programs, and utilize public spaces. ADA regulations apply to employee spaces, government services and buildings, public transit, public squares and greenspaces, telecommunications, and businesses and spaces that are open to the public.

A disability is defined by the ADA as “a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; a record of such an impairment; or being regarded as having such an impairment” (28 CFR 36 § 36.104). In other words, not all disabilities are physical, perceivable, or obvious. Additionally, while all the conditions listed below are classified as disabilities for the purposes of accessible accommodation in the built environment, many of these conditions are not considered disabilities by the people who live with them.

Disabilities can include, but are not limited to:

- Mobility challenges that require the use of a wheelchair, walker, or cane
- Cerebral palsy
- Autism



Photo credit: Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation

Florida Baptist Building, Jacksonville, Florida. View of side/rear exterior entrances from exterior, depicting ADA access to the subbasement and 1st floor via a platform lift.

- Blindness, low vision, and colorblindness
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Human Immunodeficiency Virus
- Epilepsy
- Intellectual disabilities
- Major Depressive Disorder
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Deafness or hearing loss
- Chrome’s Disease
- Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Autoimmune Diseases

ADA and Historic Preservation

Since the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed, state and local preservationists have undertaken increased efforts to make the country’s historic resources accessible to everyone. However, building codes have changed significantly over time and many historic buildings, structures, and sites were not designed with accessibility in mind. Since the ADA was passed, historic preservation organizations, non-profits, local and state governments, and the federal government have worked together as a field to establish the importance of accessibility in historic buildings and sites. The National Park Service has

also published guidelines to explain what accessibility alterations are required in historic buildings and landscapes and what code-compliant accessibility alternatives property owners can implement.

No matter how many guides and codes are published there will be some cases in which it is technically infeasible or impossible to accommodate ADA alterations in a historic building or structure without destroying or weakening the historic integrity of the building. In these circumstances, property owners may apply for an ADA exemption waiver for historic properties. While not every state has a program in place for ADA exemption reviews for historic properties, most states have some kind of waiver and a process to determine if a property is eligible for the exemption. In Florida, this process is a joint effort between the Florida Division of Historical Resources (DHR), the Florida Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR), the Accessibility Advisory Council (AAC), and the Florida Building Commission.

This article examines the Florida ADA exemption waiver process from start to finish, including what activities often trigger an ADA review, what accessibility aspects the DHR and Florida Building Com-



Photo credit: Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation

Florida Baptist Building. View of side/rear exterior entrance from interior, depicting ADA access via a platform lift where there was not enough room to establish a ramp.



Florida Baptist Building. View of interior facing front entrance, which depicts a re-grade and slope of the interior floor to become flush with the entrance elevation and meeting ADA requirements instead of seeking exemption.



Photo credit: Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation

mission look for, how to apply for the exemption waiver and navigate the application process, and the minimum accessibility requirements for historic properties regardless of exemption status.

What Triggers ADA Compliance Reviews?

Regular building inspections of existing structures do not typically involve a full review of a property's ADA compliance. Typically, accessibility issues are discovered and rectified at the local level between property owners and local government officials when a property owner submits a certificate of appropriateness, building permit, or zoning permit. ADA compliance reviews are typically conducted locally by building inspectors, preservation commissions, and city planners.

Reviews are triggered by one of the following three occurrences:

- Change of Occupancy
- Substantial Alteration
- Construction of Additions

A change of occupancy occurs when a building is being used for a new service or business. This is common in historic residential properties that are being used as a business as well as in historic civic (e.g., bank) and industrial buildings that are repurposed as affordable housing, restaurants, shops, offices, hotels, apartments, or mixed-use structures.

A substantial alteration is any major change to the building that could affect the layout of the building, how the building is used or operates, or the historical integrity of the building. Substantial alteration does not encompass regular maintenance activities or minor repairs and alterations. An addition includes any expansion, extension, or general increase in the overall square footage of a building. If any of these activities initiate an ADA compliance review of a historic property, the property owner should review the ADA requirements, consider with which regulations they are capable of easily complying, and make a plan to either become fully accessible or propose alternatives. In Florida, owners of historic properties have the right to request an exemption waiver for certain ADA requirements.

ADA Exemption Waiver

An ADA exemption waiver is a binding document that exempts a property owner from adhering to full ADA compliance based on historic designation and significance or financial hardship. In Florida, ADA exemption waivers are provided exclusively by the Florida Building Commission. Although every jurisdiction may have a slightly different process or rules for ADA exemption waivers, in Florida, it is a joint process between multiple state agencies. The ADA exemption waiver process is coordinated by DBPR. Property owners can apply for the exemption through the DBPR online application portal. It is then

the responsibility of the property owner to contact their State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and request a letter of recommendation for ADA exemption. This letter reviews the existing building and any proposed alterations to the building to determine whether the accessibility requirements would threaten or damage the historic fabric and integrity of the historic property.

It is important to note that there is no blanket exemption from ADA regulations and requirements, regardless of the condition of the historic property. Since these regulations are authorized by federal law, they supersede local and state jurisdictions. However, state, and local exemption waivers do allow historic properties to comply with a lesser standard of accessibility if the alterations for accessibility would be technically infeasible or if they would threaten

or damage the historic fabric and integrity of the historic property.

Since there is no blanket waiver for ADA exemption, applicants must indicate for which of the following exemptions they are applying:

- Florida specific hotel/motel room exemptions
- Minimum height in parking garages
- Accessible parking
- Door opening pressure
- Vertical accessibility
- Restroom facilities
- Private area exemptions
- Other

If no specific exemption is chosen in the application, it cannot be reviewed. Although applicants can apply for more than one exemption in a single



Union Bank of Florida, Tallahassee, Florida. The oldest extant bank in Florida. View of front entrance from interior. Image depicts original wood double doors, which are too heavy for ADA restrictions and do not meet ADA width codes or threshold codes.



Union Bank of Florida. View of side entrance via exterior handicap ramp, from interior. The image depicts new door that visually resembles original double doors (including restored original hardware) but is a single door meeting width and threshold requirements and has an automatic door opener to meet door opening regulations.

Photo credit: Florida Bureau of Historic Preservation

application, each exemption chosen needs to be justified and supported with documentation. Once all proper documentation is received, the SHPO is granted a 30-day review window. The final SHPO recommendation letter is then submitted as part of the ADA exemption waiver application by the owner. The letter cannot be formally submitted from agency to agency.

Once the application is complete, it is presented to the AAC at their bi-monthly public meeting. Property owners are encouraged to attend these meetings to support and defend their applications. The AAC will consider the SHPO's letter of recommendation and materials submitted by the applicant and local government. Then the AAC compiles all the information and makes a formal recommendation to the Florida Building Commission. The Florida Building Commission will then hear the AAC proposal and recommendation at its next public meeting and make a final decision to either approve or deny the application.

ADA Review Requirements

When requesting a letter of recommendation for an ADA exemption from your SHPO, it is important to provide as much information to the reviewer as possible. At a minimum, the following documentation is required for an ADA review:

- Property address
- Date built
- Historical designation status
- Historical use of the building
- Current/proposed use
- High-quality photographs of the building
- Architectural plans and/or drawings

Additional information that may improve the review process includes historic photographs, historic blueprints, and comments or permitting documents from the property's local building department and preservation commission.

From this information, the reviewer extrapolates the history and significance of the property and identifies character-defining features of the building and landscape. The state reviewer will then review the

construction plans or the existing building plan to determine if the proposed alterations or upgrades to the building are compatible with the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation and are in compliance with the ADA. Often, a property owner will make efforts to meet the minimum accessibility requirements for historic properties but may request exemptions from full accessibility.

Minimum ADA requirements for historic properties include one accessible route and entry into the building and service locations, at least one ADA restroom per biological sex or one ADA unisex bathroom, accessible drinking fountains (if fountains are provided), and accessible parking (if parking is provided). For a property to be considered in compliance with the ADA regulations by meeting these minimum standards, property owners must be granted an exemption by the Florida AAC, otherwise a property must be in full compliance with ADA regulations and building codes.

In addition to the minimum accessibility requirements, the SHPO will also examine the plans to determine if all public areas and program areas are accessible. While exemptions can be granted so that not all public spaces and program areas have to be accessible, it is always a requirement to make public programming and services alternatively available to people with disabilities. For example, a historic house museum may not have the square footage to install an elevator to the second floor and attic, however, they could provide a virtual walkthrough and tour of those spaces in the public spaces on the first floor. Likewise, a commercial building could use the upper floors as office spaces or storage spaces and not be accessible, as long as alternative services are available in an accessible space.

The reviewer also examines all public doors to ensure that they meet the entry width and door pressure requirements as well as threshold requirements. The state historic preservation office's ADA reviewer should also consider whether there is any available location for a limited use limited application

(LULA) elevator or a platform lift as an alternative to full elevator installation. When choosing an exterior platform lift, consider that platform lifts have a short life span in coastal areas and snowy areas as the salt in the air and on the ground accelerates deterioration of the lift. To a lesser extent, the reviewer may consider if the signage and control switches throughout the property are accessible. The ADA review may make alternative suggestions as well, such as recommending a ramp with a slightly increased pitch where limited space is available for a full-length ramp at the ADA approved slope ratio of 1:12.

Applying for an ADA exemption waiver is a collaborative process between the property owner and the reviewer. As such, applicants must submit complete review applications and communicate effectively with the reviewer. While there are numerous ADA exemptions available for historic properties, the goal of these exemption reviews is not necessarily to get full exemption status, but to work with preservation professionals to find alternative solutions that provide as much public access to historic properties and the goods and services located inside them as possible

while still retaining the historic character, integrity, and significance of the property. ■

References

2020 Florida Building Code, Accessibility, 7th Edition
<https://codes.iccsafe.org/content/FLAC2020P1>

Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) Title II documents, design guidelines, and technical assistance documents
https://www.ada.gov/ada_title_II.htm

Americans with Disabilities Act (1990) Title III documents, design guidelines, and technical assistance documents
https://www.ada.gov/ada_title_III.ht

NPS Preservation Brief 32
<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/preservation-brief-32-accessibility.pdf>

NPS Preservation Brief 53
<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/its-53-additions-for-accessibility.pdf>

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Michelle Bacca is a graduate student pursuing a Master of Urban Planning with certificates in Historic Preservation and Disability Studies at the University of Washington. Her work seeks to establish disability justice in preservation and explores accessibility, belonging, and the feasibility of public systems of cultural care.

Toward Disability Justice in Seattle Area Preservation Practice

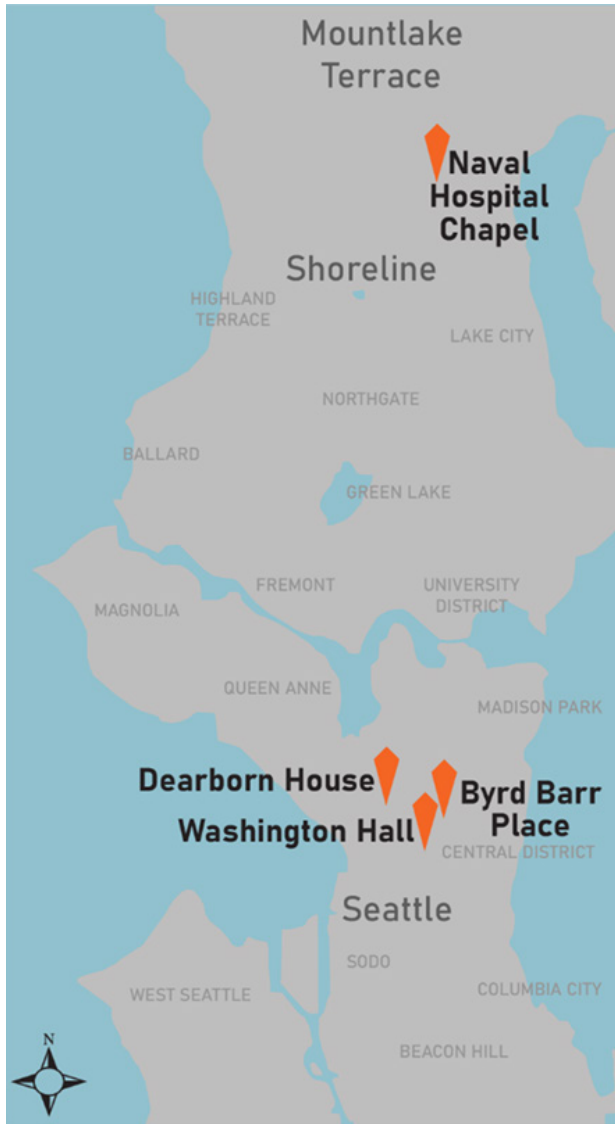
By Michelle Bacca

People with disabilities have long been ignored and undervalued in the fields of urban planning and historic preservation. While access to most historic properties is a civil right under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), ableist perspectives permeate common definitions of access, leading to the prominence of exclusive and unsafe spaces created, restored, and reinforced in the name of high design and historic integrity.

Historical accounts demonstrate the persistence of disability discrimination and ongoing struggle for disability justice. Stigmatization can be located in philosophical texts that date back to antiquity and were codified in sixteenth-century England's poor laws. During the colonial era, unjust characterization of disabled bodyminds was built into the framework of the nation, where the English conception of almshouses was continued. The Immigration Act of 1882 explicitly excluded anyone deemed disabled and tangled notions of ethnicity with disability through accounts of "defective races." As urban areas industrialized, ugly laws emerged as part of a unified project that aestheticized disability and criminalized begging. The medical model shifted confinement practices from almshouses to institutions, where misguided reforms attempted to improve society through confinement and abuse.

During the civil rights era, the formation of a collective identity led to a raised awareness of disability rights at the national level, pushing back against conventional notions that disabilities could be cured; instead, a common understanding emerged in which exclusionary social and built environments were the true disabling barriers. The 1973 504 sit-ins, organized occupations of Health, Education, and Welfare offices across the U.S., laid the groundwork for ADA that followed in 1990. Despite this victory, ADA saw a slow implementation, often referred to as the "wait and see" approach.

Contemporary scholars have begun the work of connecting disability frameworks and public histories and in doing so, challenge the perception that accessibility is contradictory to preservation. Despite over three decades with ADA as law, needed mate-



Source: Michelle Bacca

Context map of local case study sites.

rial changes in our built and social environments are still going unrecognized and being underfunded. To achieve safety and true inclusion in the built environment as pandemics, natural disasters, and social unrest ensue, we must shift focus to reimagining heritage spaces to be welcoming and inclusive for all users at all stages of life. More sweeping solutions should look beyond the still necessary specifics of ramps and grab bars to create environments where people experience belonging and opportunity, however they devise it.

Method

4Culture, King County, Washington’s cultural development authority, has supported data-focused research evaluating historic properties across King County through internships that inform the work of the Beyond Integrity group. Beyond Integrity is a coalition of cultural resource professionals in King County looking at ways to recognize culture and historic resources beyond the common practice. Finding that associations with underrepresented communities were often inadequate or missing from landmark documentation and that integrity and alterations were the main factors preventing the designation of places with recognized social or cultural significance, these interns advanced knowledge on King County preservation practice. In their effort to diversify the historic record and make the preservation process more equitable, this work has still not fully addressed

NAME	YEAR BUILT	YEAR DESI	CURRENT USE	OWNERSHIP	DISABILITY IN DESI	ADA EXEMPT	ADA COMPLIANT	ACCESS CATEGORY	LOA	UC ASSOCIATION	SEATTLE CRITERIA					
											A	B	C	D	E	F
Washington Hall	1908	2009	Event Space, Offices	Private (Historic Seattle)	NO	NO	YES	MODERATE ACCESS	3	European Immigrant/Dan mark, African Am, Asian Am/Filipino, Muslim, Jewish, Disability			1	1		
Dearborn House	1905-1907	2007	Offices	Private (Historic Seattle)	NO	NO	YES	MINIMUM COMPLIANCE	1	Disability				1	1	
Fire Station #23 Byrd Barr Place	1909	1975	Social Services Organization	Private (Public until 2020)	YES	NO	YES	UNIVERSAL ACCESS	1	Disability	1			1		1
												KING COUNTY CRITERIA				
												A1	A2	A3	A4	A5
Shoreline Naval Hospital Chapel	1942	2021	Non-Denominational Chapel	Public (WA State DSHS)	YES	YES	YES	MINIMUM COMPLIANCE	1	Disability	1		1			

Source: Michelle Bacca

Updated landmark inventory for local case study sites; new data is in orange columns and changes to prior data in red text.

bodymind diversity. I sought to update the Seattle and King County landmark inventories with the following data:

- **Current use** is important for understanding whether a site is subject to ADA. Landmark designation often shifts the use toward a public good.
- **Ownership** is important for understanding ADA subjectivity as well as holding public jurisdictions accountable for upholding their laws.
- **A Disability History in Designation** often shows reverence for the place's disability history, though no mention does not indicate that a disability history does not exist.
- Landmark properties that are **ADA-exempt** include private homes and other non-public sites. ADA also has exemptions and allowances for religious entities and private membership clubs.
- **ADA Compliance** is measured based on specific standards around entry and approach, restroom facilities, and provision of goods and services.

Access Categories were established as follows:

- **Minimum compliance:** Property meets ADA standards but does not go significantly above and beyond.
- **Moderate access:** Property goes above and beyond ADA to create safe and welcoming access but may require some improvements to be considered universally accessible.
- **Universal access:** Highly subjective and difficult to define; for this project, properties are universally accessible if they follow all principles of Universal Design based on my assessment.

I started the project assuming ADA compliance for local landmarks had already been tracked at the government or individual landmark administrative levels. Once I understood that wasn't the case and that I would need to visit most of the sites to audit for compliance, which was not feasible within my timeframe, I adjusted my scope to instead focus on specific case studies that represent each access category.

I turned to scholarly works focused on disability



Source: Michelle Bacca

Shoreline Naval Hospital Chapel.

theory and historic/cultural preservation, local civil rights panel discussions, archival sources as well as references made available by local, national, and international bodies working in both preservation and accessible design. I also conducted interviews with local practitioners and toured each case study site.

Findings

Shoreline Naval Hospital: Minimum Compliance

The Shoreline Naval Hospital was established during WWII. The vision of Captain Joel T. Boone, the chapel was built in under six months in 1944. The Tudor Revival building was sited in a tranquil, forested section of the property as the first non-denominational chapel ever built for a Navy installation. When the Navy closed the hospital in 1947, the site was repurposed as an extension of the Firlands Sanatorium for tuberculosis patients. Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) now manages the site as the Fircrest Residential Habilitation Center supporting about 200 people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

In 2016, the chapel underwent accessibility renovations. A ramp with a railing that ties in with the existing woodwork was added and leads to an accessible restroom that was previously used as a prayer chapel. While the restroom is spacious enough for an aide or attendant, it lacks privacy as it is only



Source: Michelle Bocca

Dearborn House wheelchair lift.

separated from the rest of the chapel by curtains. The non-denominational nature of the church hints at a more universal experience and initiates inclusion. However, the chapel did feel distinctly Christian in terms of design, meaning someone of a non-Christian faith may not necessarily feel welcome or comfortable there.

Dearborn House: Minimum Compliance

Dearborn House was designed as a single-family residence for Seattle real estate developer Henry Dearborn by architect Henry Dozier in 1904. A disability association can be found in the house's use as a medical office, first as an eye clinic in 1953 and later as a plastic surgery office in 1985. Non-profit preservation organization, Historic Seattle acquired the property in 1997 and currently leases the carriage house to First Hill Psychological Services.

In 2003 a wheelchair lift improved accessibility, providing access to the basement and main floor of the house from the parking lot, but does not extend to the second or top floors. The property meets minimum compliance as a private office space, but when events there involve informal tours, those unable to use the stairs cannot see some of the major features of the house. The renovation happened around the same time universal design principles were first published, so it makes sense that it was

improved to the then-prominent accessibility standards.

Washington Hall: Moderate Access

Built as a community center by the Danish Brotherhood of America in 1908, the eclectic Mission Revival and commercial style structure was designed by prolific Seattle area architect Victor W Voorhees. The Danish Brotherhood rented the space to groups of diverse backgrounds, leading to its prominence as an important dance hall and performance space for Seattle's communities of color. Icons including Duke Ellington, who lived with synesthesia, as well as Billie Holiday and local legend Jimi Hendrix, who both lived with trauma and addiction, have inhabited the hall. While a less direct association to disability, the people that commanded its stage anointed and vibrantly enriched the place. Despite nearly a century of consistent use, the Hall fell into a state of disrepair and was in danger of demolition for condo development after then owners, Sons of Haiti, paid off their mortgage in 1999.

Historic Seattle acquired the property in 2009 and launched a restoration project that created homes for three anchor organizations: 206 Zulu, Cypher Cafe, and Voices Rising. Their renovation campaign kept



Source: Michelle Bocca

Squire Park P-Patch, the Central Area's oldest p-patch, incorporates signage that celebrates the history of Washington Hall.

safety and accessibility at the forefront while honoring the historic integrity of the site. In addition to roof replacement and seismic retrofit, the historic windows and main facade were restored. Contrasting other historic venues in the area, access for performers is considered in addition to access for the audience. Furthermore, the people stewarding the space during my visit were friendly and accommodating, enhancing my experience of the place. A universally accessible design might include more prominent exterior wayfinding, nonobstructive upper-level window barriers as well as onsite AED (automated external defibrillator) to improve safety. A crosswalk from the Hall to the Squire Park P-Patch across the street would foster an accessible and natural connection between the two sites.

Byrd Barr Place: Universal Access

A functioning firehouse for several decades, Fire Station #23 was extensively remodeled to house the Central Area Motivation Program (CAMP) in 1970. Part of the first generation of grassroots organizations funded by the Economic Opportunity Act, CAMP was founded in 1964 with the mission to help underserved communities. The organization still provides safety-net services for refugees, immigrants, and the disabled community. As advocates for equity, the organization's firehouse headquarters has become an anchor for the African-American community and a symbol of their place in the city despite the pressures of gentrification. In 2018, the name change to Byrd Barr Place honored Roberta Byrd Barr, a local civil rights leader, educator, and journalist who headed the Seattle school boycott Freedom School.

In 2020, the Seattle City Council formally transferred property ownership to Byrd Barr Place. A renovation project with a focus on inclusive and accessible design reflects on the neighborhood's history and includes original wood window rehabilitation, seismic improvements, systems upgrades, and fire suppression, as well as enhanced accessibility through reconfiguration, expansion of community spaces, and the installation of an elevator. Before a community member enters the food pantry, designed

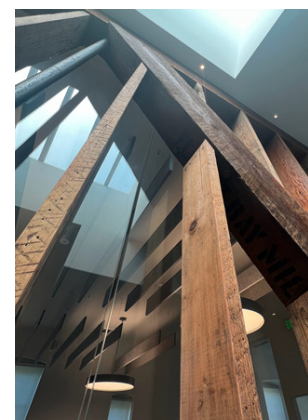
to look and function as a community marketplace, they are met by a clean sink station, which became a more common and crucial accessibility feature during the COVID pandemic. Acoustical panels in the ceiling reduce noise levels and eliminate echoes, allowing clients privacy when working with service providers and creating a more pleasant environment for those with sound sensitivities. My tour of Byrd Barr Place resulted from a random drop-in, and on top of all the impressive accessible and restorative design features, everyone I interacted with there was very accommodating and friendly, which is one of the most important aspects contributing to the accessibility of any place.

Reflections

The ADA exemptions for historic properties are vague and subjective, prioritizing the biases of bureaucratic professionals and supposed financial and administrative burden over basic civil rights. An equitable enforcement of ADA would be more proactive than the current grievance procedure. This would involve expanding current departments of construction and inspections to prioritize historic properties and parks that pose severe safety and civil rights risks to the public. There also needs to be a shift in focus toward accessibility beyond ADA as well as an emphasis placed on public belonging in civil departments outside of transportation and construction. Finally, it's critical to continue funding historic and cultural preservation both within and outside of the landmarking bureaucracy and recognize it as a viable community healthcare strategy. ■



Byrd Barr Place sink, market entry and elevator lobby.



Byrd Barr Place original timber beams separate the upstairs elevator lobby with an overhead skylight from the office space with acoustical panels in the ceiling.

Source: Michelle Barcca

Adapting Historic Buildings to Comply With ADA – A Helpful Online Resource

By NAPC Staff

The Wisconsin Historical Society provides a great overview of adapting historic buildings to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on their website. Building owners may feel overwhelmed by the idea of adapting their building. This resource provides a list of best practices, which helps make the work feel less daunting.

The article starts with background information on how the ADA legislation impacts historic buildings that are open to the public. It stresses the importance of understanding that historic buildings are not exempt. The five minimum requirements for complying with ADA prioritize the work to make a building accessible and highlight how critical it is to have a well-rounded team working on the project. This includes a lead architect who understands building codes, ADA, and historic structures. It is also important to consult with the disability community, preservationists, and building inspectors.

With the proper planning and creativity, adapting a building does not have to be prohibitively expensive. The article suggests that simple changes can make a big difference, such as adding a ramp, installing grab bars in the bathroom, creating an accessible

parking spot, and changing out door hardware. One creative example offered is to combine separate men's and women's facilities into a single unisex restroom that has one conventional stall and one ADA-compliant stall. For owners concerned about cost, the article discusses the 20% disproportionality rule as well.

This resource is full of helpful tips and ideas for all involved in a project. For example, it is recommended that an inventory of the character-defining features of the building be developed before beginning a project. If the property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the nomination documents will help you do this.

The Wisconsin Historical Society's article on adapting historic buildings to comply with ADA is an excellent resource for property owners starting a project, or for preservationists to better understand this important civil rights legislation.

Check it out for yourself: <https://www.wisconsinhistory.org/Records/Article/CS4156>.

Candy Welch-Streed is the Director of Partnerships for Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area. A native Iowan and former AmeriCorps Program member, as Director of Partnerships she is responsible for helping the 37-county region and its partners preserve and share their agriculture stories.

Spotlight on a Preservation Organization: Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area

By Candy Welch-Streed

Iowa's only National Heritage Area, Silos & Smokestacks was designated by Congress in 1996 in recognition of northeast Iowa's nationally significant resources and heritage related to American agriculture. With its headquarters located in downtown Waterloo, the heritage area is spread over thirty-seven counties in northeast Iowa, boasting more than 100 heritage area sites and attractions. Along with the National Park Service, Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area (SSNHA) is a Member of the National Heritage Area System.



The restored Forest Grove School.



Norman Borlaug Boyhood Farm, Cresco, Iowa.



Motor Mill Historic District, Elkader, Iowa.

National Heritage Areas (NHAs) tell America's stories. From the great wars to border skirmishes, from slavery to civil rights, from industrial giants to agricultural lands – they are the living history of America. America's stories can be discovered at more than 62 NHAs in thirty-four states. To date, Silos & Smokestacks is the only National Heritage Area to tell the agriculture story. Strong partnerships were the foundation of the original authorization for Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area (SSNHA) and remain essential 27 years later. SSNHA's Partnership Management Plan calls to preserve and tell the story of American agriculture and its global significance through partnerships and activities that celebrate the land, people, and communities – specifying it is to be a partnership of federal, state, and local agencies; private enterprises; professional associations; and volunteer organizations.

SSNHA, as the coordinating entity, does not own or operate any historical sites; instead, it is charged with carrying out the work of the heritage area by creating and supporting a network of sites. SSNHA makes investments in its heritage area sites to meet their mission of conducting preservation and interpretation activities. These investments include technical assistance, seed money available through program awards, educational assistance, capacity building, and awareness-building activities.

In the early 2000s, SSNHA created a partnership program to designate heritage area sites. An essential part of this program was the establishment of the Partnership Panel, an advisory body representing a cross-section of the heritage area's partners and sites. The Panel works closely with SSNHA staff in reviewing site applications and

making recommendations for site designations. Natural and cultural resource locations are evaluated based on the SSNHA theme or themes they represent, and how their site's stories will be tied to these themes through a variety of interpretative methods. Today, there are 110 heritage area sites and twenty emerging sites, sites that are working toward becoming a heritage area site. The sites are diverse ranging from large museums with million-dollar budgets and large agricultural manufacturers, to small businesses, such as working farms, and to volunteer-led historical societies preserving a community site. Over half of the sites are listed in or manage sites listed in the National Register of Historic Places. There are also a few National Historic Landmark sites, including the Amana Colonies.

The Lisbon Historic Preservation Commission is preserving the Meyers Farmstead Historic District, a focal point of the new Pleasant Grove Heritage Park. As an Emerging Site with SSNHA, they are rehabilitating the barns and developing a plan to interpret, preserve, and protect this natural and historic landscape. When complete, the site will become a Heritage Area Site.

The interpretive mission of the heritage area is to ensure residents and visitors alike can gain experience of the significant contributions the people and the land of northeast Iowa have made to America's agricultural and agriculture-related industry legacy. Silos & Smokestacks and its heritage area sites interpret the agriculture story using a framework of six interpretive themes to work together. The themes are:

- The Fertile Land
- Farmers and Families
- The Changing Farm
- Higher Yields: The Science and Technology of Agriculture
- Farm to Factory: Agribusiness in Iowa
- Organizing for Agriculture: Policies and Politics

Each theme embodies distinct aspects of the area's heritage. Taken together the themes allow visitors to interpret and experience the story in many places: in small towns and larger cities; along trails and country roads; and on farms, natural areas, local museums, and historical buildings. SSNHA is building the framework – signage system, exhibits at sites, visitor guides and rack cards, visitor kiosks, tours, and educational websites – which

will tie the stories together about SSNHA and its destinations to create a quality visitor experience.

To date, Silos & Smokestacks has made over \$2 million in matching program awards to provide and leverage funding for new projects across the region that preserve, interpret, and develop heritage resources within these thematic areas and expand visitor experience opportunities. Elevating the quality of the heritage area individually and collectively. Funds for the SSNHA's program awards are federal dollars provided by appropriations and administered through a cooperative agreement with the National Park Service. Annually, SSNHA offers the following Program Awards:

- **Field Trip** – Helps schools within the Heritage Area fund transportation costs associated with field study trips to heritage area sites.
- **Internship** – Assists Heritage Area Sites expand their agricultural story and provide valuable experience for a college student.
- **Small and Large Projects** – Supports Heritage Area Sites with planning assistance, educational programs, interpretation, marketing, exhibit displays, indoor and outdoor interpretive signage and other special projects.

Silos & Smokestacks provides guidance to sites in developing their site's agricultural interpretation and visitor experience through individual and group consultations. SSNHA also provides sites with opportunities for professional development for their staff and volunteers through annual training and various workshops. Additionally, SSNHA provides tools to develop sites' educational programming through curriculum development assistance in relation to agriculture and meeting Iowa CORE standards. The website campsilos.org is an excellent resource for ag education and Iowa history, including free lesson plans.

SSNHA provides sites with opportunities to increase public awareness, interest, and visitation to the Heritage Area. Heritage Area Sites have free and paid opportunities to promote their sites, including a comprehensive listing in the SSNHA website and visitor guide, online events calendar, email and website promotions, and regional coop advertising.

For more information about Silos & Smokestacks National Heritage Area, visit www.silosandsmokestacks.org. ■

This is part of a regular series highlighting websites that are useful to the historic preservation community. Do you have a website that you think would help others? Send your tips to **Michelle Thompson**, CLG Coordinator and Main Street Design Specialist for the state of Washington, at michelle.thompson@dahp.wa.gov for possible use in a future article.

Tools for the On-Line Preservationist: National Park Service Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines for Interpretive Media

By Rebecca Goodwin

Preservationists are well aware of the need to ensure that historic resources are accessible. Ensuring that interpretive and educational materials are equally accessible requires that we consider not only physical disabilities, but also sensory and cognitive.

What it is:

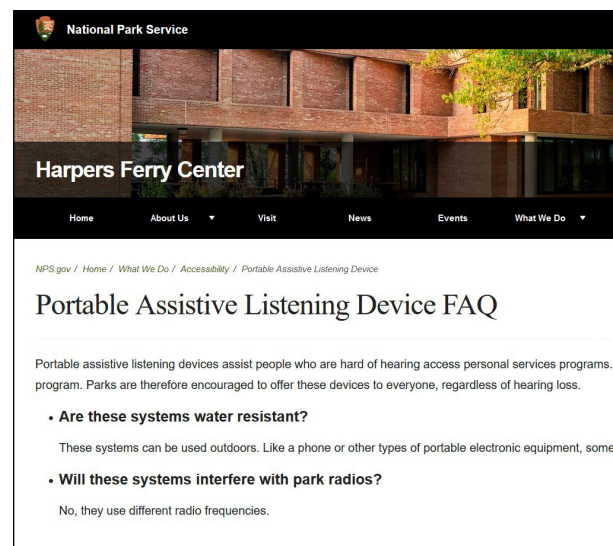
The NPS is required to provide the highest level of accessibility that is reasonable for all their interpretive materials and sites. The National Park Service's Harpers Ferry Center is responsible for the management and direction of interpretive materials throughout the NPS. They create tools that support field NPS interpreters throughout the country and assist with development of the full range of interpretive media.

The website and guidelines developed by the NPS-Harpers Ferry Center are the best practices for national parks, but they also provide information for local preservation commissions, staff and consultants. The information is easily accessible, well organized and clearly identifies the steps for analyzing, planning and developing interpretive materials ranging from audiovisual, to web based materials, to signage and publications.

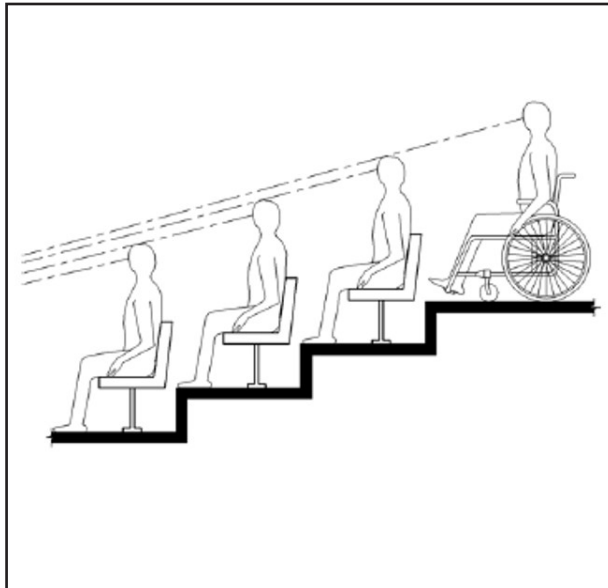
Website

Harpers Ferry Center (U.S. National Park Service)
www.nps.gov/subjects/hfc/index.htm The homepage

of the Harpers Ferry Center (HFC) website clearly identifies the types of media products they work with. On the menu bar click on "What We Do" and then click on "Accessibility." From here you can download the HFC Media Accessibility Guidelines.



Screenshot highlighting information on portable listening assistance.

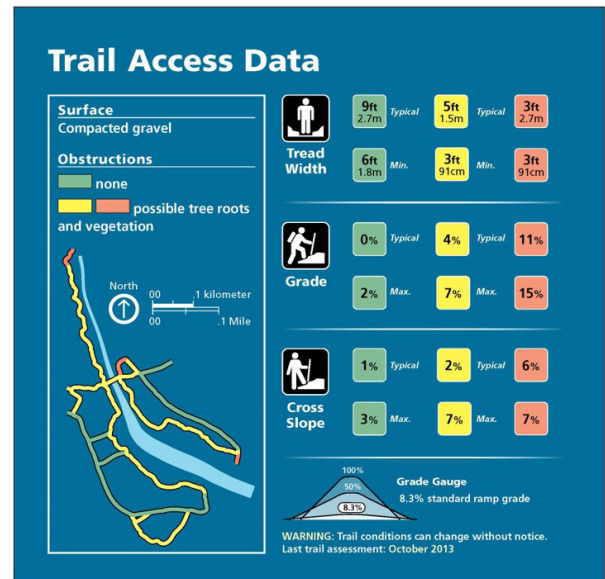


Lines of sight for seated visitors.

Programmatic Accessibility Guidelines

The guidelines have a detailed table of contents that lead the user from the first steps of Interpretive Planning, Scoping, and Budget through the evaluation stages of Front-End, Formative and Summative/Remedial Evaluation. The evaluation steps are followed by specific guidelines for different types of interpretive media, including:

- Audiovisual Programs and Tours
- Exhibits
- Signage (font type, size, spacing, content, layout)
- Publications (including maps)
- Wayside Exhibits
- Web-based Media



Sitka, Alaska trailhead signage.

These comprehensive sections are followed by five appendices that provide a wealth of additional information.

- Laws, Regulations and Policies
- Accessibility Resources with links to federal, organizational and non-profit websites
- The Principles of Universal Design
- Alternative Media Formats
- NPS Accessibility Pictograph Symbols

*This is the second in what we hope will become a standard feature in The Alliance Review, highlighting funding opportunities around the country. If you're aware of other potential opportunities that could impact the work preservation commissions do, send your tips to **Rebecca Goodwin** at rgoodwin@preserveourhistory.us.*

Focus on Funding Opportunities: Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

By **Rebecca Goodwin**

Urban Renewal Authorities (URA) and historic preservation might seem like strange bedfellows. Yet, if your community has a URA or similar revitalization organization that is funded through Tax Increment Financing (TIF) they may be able to assist with your historic preservation project. In some states the terms TAD (tax allocation district) or TIRZ (tax increment reinvestment zone) may be used for this type of funding mechanism.

The History of Urban Renewal

Between 1949 and 1974, the federal government underwrote through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) the practice of seizing and demolishing private and public owned properties with the goal of revitalizing and “improving” communities. Grants and loans were provided by the federal government, but the renewal plans originated and were implemented at the local level.

While this original URA program did make it possible for communities to address blight, they also resulted in countless persons being displaced, tens of thousands of structures being demolished, and many neighborhoods and the histories they represented being obliterated. By the late 1960s the federal URA program was so controversial that federal funding for renewal was reduced and folded into the Community Development Block Grant program.

Urban Renewal/Revitalization Today

With the end of federal funding for the original urban renewal, individual states began developing their own statutes to address blight and develop a funding mechanism. Because of this, the name and the statutory requirements vary from state to state. Some states



East College Street Development, Iowa City, Iowa

Photo courtesy of Neumann Monson Architects

still use the term Urban Renewal Authorities (URA), while others may use Community Redevelopment Area (CRA), Redevelopment Authority, or a variety of other names. The basic concept is that future tax revenue pays for revitalization efforts, this is called Tax Increment Financing (TIF).

With each state setting their own requirements, it is difficult to provide a specific explanation of how TIF may be able to assist with your historic preservation projects. The basis of the process is that a community identifies a geographic area that meets their state’s requirements and then develops a detailed plan for how they will address issues based upon their state’s statutes. These statutes, and the public policy goal of the community, will define

the issues that can be addressed with TIF such as blight, inadequate infrastructure, health and safety issues, shortage of affordable housing, etc. If a project does not meet the statutes and local plan, TIF cannot be utilized.

Tax increment financing requires that the dollar value of all real property be determined as of a fixed date. As improvements are made to properties, resulting in increased property taxes, an “incremental” part of that increase goes to the URA, CRA, or other entity. These funds are then used for community projects, or to assist property owners through grants, loans, general obligation bonds or notes, and lease-revenue bonds or notes. In Oregon, over 40 cities and counties currently have urban renewal programs in operation. Colorado has over 62 towns and cities with urban renewal authorities and Florida has over 202 community redevelopment areas.

How Can TIF Benefit Your Preservation Project?

The specifics of how TIF funds are used will vary based upon your state and the plan for your community. While it will take research on your part to find out the specifics for your community, it may be well worth the effort. Throughout the country, there are urban renewal/revitalization programs that make TIF funding available for the following:

- Economic development strategies, including small-business loans (think, rehabilitate that abandoned storefront for a new business)
- Historic preservation projects
- Façade improvement/rehabilitation projects
- Accessibility projects (ADA ramps, doors, elevators to make multiple story commercial buildings functional for today’s use)

Some Examples of TIF Projects

The East College Street Development in **Iowa City**. In 2017 a developer acquired the Crescent Building, and then decided to rehabilitate four surrounding buildings and add student housing. The developer applied for \$1.2M in TIF, to leverage other financing. The developer worked with the city and five original buildings were granted local historic landmark status, preventing demolition. A portion of the Crescent Building was set aside for a non-profit professional theatre company, supporting community goals for the arts. The city also required the

developers to meet city’s sustainability goals, which was accomplished with installation of solar and energy-efficient features.

In **Two Rivers, Wisconsin**, TIF funds were used for an adaptive re-use project to turn a former school into 32 units of affordable senior housing now known as Marquette Manor. This \$3.1 million project was also a historic preservation project.

The **City of Streator, Illinois**, has a façade renovation and replacement grant and loan program. The program applies only to exterior faces adjoining or facing a city street in the program area. Eligible projects include masonry work and repair (including tuck pointing), windows, canopies, cornice and trim, doors and eligible signage, painting and replacement of a building’s original decorative materials. Program requirements include detailed drawings, including identification of proposed materials, colors, finishes and decoration. The application information includes design guidelines to ensure historic characteristics of buildings are retained and required application documentation includes photographs and other documentary evidence of the building’s original appearance.

In July 2021, **Great Falls, Montana** passed Ordinance 3229 creating three programs in their downtown TIF district. The Life Safety Code Compliance Program is designed to encourage public safety and ADA improvement projects in the downtown historic building inventory.

In **La Junta, Colorado**, TIF grant funds were utilized to assist a private owner rehabilitate the former Woolworth Building on the main corner of the downtown TIF district. The vacant building could not be rehabilitated and repurposed without remediation of friable asbestos and the installation of an elevator to make the basement and second floor ADA compliant. According to the *2015 Tax Increment Finance State-By-State Report* prepared by the Council of Development Finance Agencies, 49 states and the District of Columbia have tax increment-type statutes. It may take some research on your part to determine if your community has a TIF program, and what your state’s statutory requirements allow, but this is an important funding source preservationists need to utilize more. ■

VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Thomas Stark



HISTORIC DISTRICT REVIEW BOARD
MADISON, INDIANA

Please tell us about the activities you're involved in here in Madison.

After moving here in 2016, I have been involved in several foundations and boards. I serve on Madison's Historic District Board of Review, and most recently I served as a board member for The Lanier Foundation, a 501(c)3 that oversees and assists with maintenance of the structures and grounds at the state-owned JFD Lanier Mansion. I also serve as a docent at three properties operated by Historic Madison, Inc., also a local 501(c)3.

What is the background on your program's activity?

The Historic District Board of Review, a volunteer board, works directly with the citizens of Madison and the city to review most exterior changes to Madison's historic commercial and residential properties. The board consists of a chairperson, vice chairperson and five board members. I have served as board member and vice chairperson. There are over 130 historic contiguous commercial and residential structures within Madison.

What are the most notable accomplishments of your program recently?

We have access to many state and federal grants which have greatly ensured the future of Historic Madison. A few examples of some of our successes include the restoration of the Shrewsbury-Windle House, Lanier Mansion, Tack Factory residences, Old Cotton Mill Marriott, Chandler Hotel, Swellstay Building, and many residences.



Shrewsbury-Windle House, Madison.

Credit: Benjamin L. Ross

What are your program's biggest challenges?

The challenges we face are the board's lack of strict adherence to the guidelines. Historic fabric has been lost all over the city including windows, doors, chimneys, siding, trim, porches, dovecotes, etc. Since the board has no effective way to enforce the guidelines, citizens often start and sometimes finish their projects without approval. Most know there will be no adverse consequences applied to them or their contractors freeing them up to do whatever they want. I believe there are looming issues moving forward in a fast-growing economy and our preservation staff is currently not equipped with the tools to enforce our guidelines.

Have there been recent changes to funding or staffing with your program?

We are currently fully funded and do have access to PACE (Preservation and Community Enhancement) monies from the city to assist with residential and commercial properties. Unfortunately, though, we recently lost our preservation staff at city hall and the position is open. This person was an asset to the community. She assisted new residents with their homes and worked with owners of large commercial buildings in the downtown area.

What partnerships do you have with other preservation organizations or other municipal organizations?

We have partnerships with The Cornerstone Society (a local preservation advocacy organization), and Historic Madison. We are also fortunate to partner with Madison Main Street, ISMHS (Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites) and Indiana Landmarks. Historic Madison has also offered workshops for cemetery monument preservation, window restoration, and several other workshops. ■

Professional Network Member Spotlight: McDoux Preservation LLC

Learn more about one of NAPC's Professional Network Members, Steph McDougal of McDoux Preservation LLC. To learn more about becoming a Professional Network Member, please visit www.napcommissions.org/membership

Tell us about how McDoux Preservation LLC started.

I already was a consultant (in training development and education) when I moved to Texas with my husband in 2005. He went to work for NASA, and I pursued a master of science in historic preservation at the School of Architecture of the University of Texas at Austin. I refocused my consulting practice to historic preservation in 2007 after completing a summer internship at the City of Houston Planning Department and started working right away. I had listed a historic district to the National Register while I was in grad school, and that got the attention of one of my colleagues, who started sending work my way. I should note that my district nomination, in hindsight, was probably pretty deficient, but our SHPO's National Register staff was kind enough to rework it. I had no idea what I was doing and really learned on the job during my first few years of being a preservation consultant.

What kind of work does McDoux Preservation do?

Originally, McDoux did a lot of grant writing. That's an easy way into the field, because people always need money. I have been very fortunate to be hired to do a wide variety of projects, some of which have won awards. I used to get a lot of calls when projects were really in trouble because I'm pretty good at community engagement in contentious situations; a room full of 100 angry residents is totally my wheelhouse! As I get closer to retirement, though, and especially since I recently finished my PhD in public history, I am starting to focus more on National Register nominations and the first part of tax credit applications. I'm not really doing design guidelines or preservation plans anymore.

How/when did you (Steph) enter the field?

I became interested in historic preservation while I was in grad school (for a masters in technical and scientific com-

munication) in the 1990s. I was able to take some classes in preservation and architectural theory, and I considered pursuing a master's in community and regional planning after that, but life got in the way of more education. I just kept coming back to preservation, though, and eventually got my MSHP here in Texas.

What is a current or recently completed project that McDoux is proud of?

I was embedded for several years in the City of Houston's historic preservation office, managing the development of design guidelines for three really large historic districts that cover a lot of the formerly independent city of Houston Heights. We knew, going in, that a local real estate broker/developer would try to derail the project at the very end, so I built the project to have just a ton of public input. I think I led something like 28 public meetings in 30 months, sent six or seven letters, and conducted multiple surveys. By the time we were done, it was pretty much impossible for anyone to say that the finished product wasn't based on sufficient data or the wishes of the community. If a historic preservation officer is aware of a solo consultant who would be a good fit to lead/conduct a large project, I wouldn't be shy about asking whether they'd consider hiring on for that type of long-term commitment.

How has McDoux benefited from NAPC Professional Network Membership?

The listserv, NAPC-L, is a tremendous resource that more people should take advantage of! I was just talking to a new preservation planner who had questions, and I encouraged him to ask the list. Everyone is so collegial and helpful. I remember one time, I needed a photo of compatible infill in a Craftsman neighborhood, and not only did people send me photos, one person even offered to go back and get more photos if I wanted a different view! ■

NEW YORK

The Landmarks Preservation Commission designated a block of Linden Street as Bushwick's first historic district. The stretch includes 10 Queen Anne-style row houses that start on the corner of Bushwick Avenue and Linden Street in Brooklyn. This year was a slow year for landmarking in Brooklyn, with the borough not gaining any individual landmarks, and currently no others are proposed. The Linden Street Historic District includes a "remarkably intact group of 32 brick and brownstone row houses built between 1885 and 1901," as the LPC put it. Designed by local architects, the row houses have motifs on cornices and terra-cotta not seen anywhere else in New York City. The quality of the decoration is also unusual for homes intended for middle-class owners. They were commissioned in 1888 by prominent lawyer and one of the founders of the Williamsburgh Savings Bank, Samuel M. Meeker. Meeker, and later his family, developed much of the section of Linden Street that is now landmarked. The historic district is New York City's 156th and is both architecturally and historically significant. Brownstoner.com

NORTH CAROLINA

Town commissioners in Matthews voted to extend the historic designation of the Benjamin DeWitt Funderburk House to the home's interior at the request of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Historic Landmarks Commission. Designated in 2011, the house was renovated in 2009, after significant damage due to termites. The Landmarks Commission's report on the house described it as a transitional Queen Anne-Colonial Revival-style architecture, which became more prevalent into the 20th century. Funderburk, who lived from 1868 to 1954, owned a dry goods store, worked as president of the Bank of Matthews, and served as a county school board member for over 30 years. He and his wife, Sallie Faulkner, moved into a one-story home on the lot, which was owned by his father, and built the house in 1904 that now sits on the property. Some of the features that make the interior historic include a broken, closed-string staircase; five-panel doors; mantels; baseboards; and Tiffany-stained glass windows.

Matthews-Mint Hill Weekly

OHIO

The Cleveland Landmarks Commission recently approved designating the home of Jesse Owens, a four-time Olympic gold medalist, as a Cleveland landmark. Cleveland City Council still needs to approve the landmark designation. Owens, celebrated for his contributions to track and field and to civil rights, moved to Cleveland with his family when he was nine years old in 1922.

The Owens family lived in a couple of houses before landing in what is now Ward 6 in 1934. This is the house Owens lived in when he competed in the 1936 Olympics in Berlin, becoming the first American track and field athlete to win four gold medals in a single Olympics. The commission also approved a previously installed Ohio Historical Marker within the African American Cultural Gardens located in Ward 9. The marker celebrates the garden's designation on the Cleveland Civil Rights Trail and the struggle to get the garden dedicated during the civil rights movement. The African American Cultural Gardens were erected in 1977 and provide Black Clevelanders a place to celebrate Black pride and culture. Signalcleveland.org

OREGON

The Bend Landmarks Commission gave its approval earlier this week for the demolition of one of Bend's oldest buildings, but the building's distinctive facade will be preserved and stored. The A.J. Tucker Building, built in 1919, has stood beside the Deschutes County Circuit Court for decades. It will be demolished to make room for expanding the courthouse. The Commission granted the county's request to inventory, dismantle, and store the building's lava-rock facade and demolish the rest of the building. The preserved section of the facade is expected to be rebuilt, but officials have yet to determine a location. For more than a decade, local officials have been trying to figure out what to do with the distinct single-story lava-rock building, which has been the Deschutes County Circuit Court annex since the 1980s. Moving the building entirely wasn't feasible because it has no foundation or structure. The A.J. Tucker Building was originally built by a man of the same name as a carpenter and blacksmith shop. It has also served as a pioneer museum, a law library, a jury room, a family court, office and training space for county officials and a place to hold grand jury proceedings. Bendbulletin.com

TEXAS

In Texas there are a lot of abandoned communities, known as ghost towns. One in Longview is getting some additional attention. A row of buildings on West Marshall Avenue is what was once known as Willow Springs. Once a stop on the Texas & Pacific Railroad in the early 1870s, it was a shipping point for area farmers. In the 1920 census 180 people called Willow Springs home. A post office was granted in 1932 and it's assumed the name was changed to Greggton. Many buildings still sport the Greggton name. It was a once thriving community during the oil boom, but now just a collection of dilapidated buildings. But that's where the Historic Preservation Commission comes in. They are working with the City of Longview and the state historic commission to replace windows, and get it listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The town was annexed by Longview in the 1950's, although the Greggton post office remained open until May 1960. Restoration work has already begun on some buildings. KLTV.com

WEST VIRGINIA

The Bath Town Council received a letter from SHPO in late October regarding 33 property owners and Bath residents who contacted the state office that were concerned that the local government lacked preservation efforts and commitment to preserving the town's historic resources. The Historic Landmarks Commission is working with the state on suggested improvements outlined in the letter to avoid a revocation of the town's certified local government status. There seems to be a misunderstanding of whether the status will be revoked, based on conversations with different staff. Mayor Scott Merki said he wants a letter back from SHPO that "we are not in danger of losing certification." The town ordinance committee is working on a demolition review ordinance with landmarks commission input, and the commission will have more public workshops to provide a better understanding of preserving historic properties and the financial incentives for historic preservation. Morganmessenger.com

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How did you hear about NAPC?

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** Membership includes all commission members and staff. Please provide complete list of members with names, phone numbers and email address for additional digital copies.*

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