

COMMUNITY ART METHODS AND PRACTICES: A MODEL FOR A MORE
HUMAN-CENTERED AND CULTURALLY SENSITIVE HISTORIC
PRESERVATION PRACTICE

By

SABRINA BESTOR FERRY

A THESIS

Presented to the Historic Preservation Program
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science

March 2018

THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Student: Sabrina Bestor Ferry

Title: Community Art Methods and Practices: A Model for a More Human-centered and Culturally Sensitive Preservation Practice

This thesis has been accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Science degree in the Historic Preservation Program by:

Dr. James Buckley Chairperson

Dr. Anna Goodman Member

and

Sara D. Hodges Interim Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

Original approval signatures are on file with the University of Oregon Graduate School.

Degree awarded March 2018.

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THESIS ABSTRACT

Sabrina Bestor Ferry

Master of Science

Historic Preservation Program

March 2018

Title: Community Art Methods and Practices: A Model for a More Human-centered and Culturally Sensitive Preservation Practice

A growing number of Community Artists are doing work with potential relevance to the field of historic preservation. They have seen a need for action in low-income communities and communities of color that are losing their historic, physical, and social character through dilapidation, redevelopment, and displacement. These artists have found nontraditional ways to bolster communities while preserving neighborhood buildings, histories, and social structures. This thesis analyzes three community art case studies as a means to evaluate changes proposed to our current preservation system by leaders in historic preservation concerned with issues of equity and social justice. This study finds that these projects offer many useful examples for preservationists interested in better serving underrepresented communities through the field of historic preservation.

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME OF AUTHOR: Sabrina Bestor Ferry

GRADUATE AND UNDERGRADUATE SCHOOLS ATTENDED:

University of Oregon, Eugene and Portland, Oregon
The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois

DEGREES AWARDED:

Master of Science in Historic Preservation, 2018, University of Oregon
Bachelor of Fine Arts, 2001, The School of the Art Institute of Chicago

AREAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST:

Art in Historic Preservation

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

Graduate Teaching Fellowship, Scholar in Residence, John Yeon Center for
Architecture and the Landscape, 2016 - 2017

Beach Conservation Lab, Knight Library, University of Oregon, Book
Conservator, 2016

Pacific Northwest Preservation Field School, Oregon, Summer 2015

Charles Moore Foundation, Austin, TX, 2010-2011

GRANTS, AWARDS, AND HONORS:

Heritage Research Fund Travel Award, 2017

University of Oregon, Architecture and Allied Arts Academic Scholarship, 2016-
2017

The Associated Students for Historic Preservation, Treasurer, 2016

University of Oregon Spark Grant, 2016

PUBLICATIONS:

Ferry, Sabrina, "Japantown: A History," In the Journal of the Associated Students for Historic Preservation, University of Oregon, Published Fall 2017

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. James Buckley and Dr. Anna Goodman for their assistance in the preparation of this manuscript. I would like to thank Dr. Buckley for believing in my idea and being so supportive of my thesis topic. His encouragement and advice has been invaluable. I would like to thank Dr. Goodman for her wonderful advice and for being so willing to take me on as a thesis student. In addition, I would like to extend a hearty thank you to Maya Williams from the Rebuild Foundation and Margret Grace from the Heidelberg Project for showing me around the projects and tirelessly answering my many questions.

For R. Todd Ferry, without whose support and encouragement I would still be writing this.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is becoming increasingly recognized by many preservationists that the current system of preservation in the United States is out of touch with the needs and demands of contemporary communities.¹ Although official preservation practice in the United States has been amended periodically since it was formalized in official federal legislation in 1966, these modifications have done little to alter the practices and focuses that have come to dominate our current system of preservation, and which many preservationists are just beginning to reexamine.² A strong emphasis on architectural styles, retained integrity, and original materials has created a preservation approach that is focused on buildings rather than the people who use them, and has caused a discrepancy in representation where the accomplishments and structures associated with wealthy white men have been over-represented in comparison to all other groups.³ This discrepancy is evidenced in the statistic that out of the 90,000 properties currently on the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), only ten percent of those listings were nominated for their connection with either communities of color, women, or the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and Asexual (LGBTQIA) community.⁴ The frustration felt by marginalized communities at continual systematic exclusion is being vocalized now more than ever and is evidenced by campaigns such as the Women's

¹ Jeremy Wells, "Valuing Historic Places: Traditional and Contemporary Approaches," *School of Architecture, Art, and Historic Preservation Faculty papers*, Paper 22, http://docs.rwu.edu/saahp_fp/22, 5.

² Max Page, *Why Preservation Matters*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 53.

² Max Page, *Why Preservation Matters*, (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2016), 53.

³ Wells, "Valuing Historic Places," 1.

⁴ National Park Service website, National Register of Historic Places Program: Research, Database, Accessed November 3, 2017 <https://www.nps.gov/nr/research/>; James Michael Buckley and Donna Graves (2016) "Tangible Benefits From Intangible Resources: Using Social and Cultural History to Plan Neighborhood Futures," In the *Journal of American Planning Association*, 82:2, 152-166, DOI:10.1080/01944363.2016.1141663, 153.

March and the Black Lives Matter movement.⁵ It is imperative that preservation address this issue moving forward, not only because it is a matter of social justice, but because the future of a formalized system of preservation depends on the support and engagement of all communities. Although the preservation community contains a multitude of opinions about how to carry out this work, many preservationists, such as Jeremy Wells, Max Page, and Ned Kaufman, have come to believe that the system of preservation in this country is in need of alteration. The spirit and belief systems on which the preservation movement was founded have not been adequately represented through the systems we have developed to execute that vision, and simply adding more landmarked properties associated with members of disenfranchised groups will not sufficiently address the problem. It is time for preservationists to thoroughly reevaluate our system and make fundamental changes to the way we approach preservation in this country.

While the field of Historic Preservation as a whole is negotiating how to adapt to become more relevant and inclusive, artists who are working in the field of Community Art (also known as Social Practice Art) have seen a need for action in low-income communities and communities of color. Community art began in the 1960s as a way to remove art from the elitist establishments of museums and galleries and bring it into working class communities. These community artists are doing work which supports current communities and makes use of existing and often historical structures to aid in these efforts. These projects cite preservation goals as part of their aim but these objectives are never without the social and symbolic aspects that enliven them and make them meaningful to the surrounding community. Many of the strategies used by these artists are similar to those being proposed by preservationists interested in issues of relevance and inclusion. It would be prudent for preservationists to examine the work being done by these artists for the sake of informing adaptations to current preservation doctrine.

⁵ Women's March, Accessed November 25th, 2017, <https://www.womensmarch.com/>; Black Lives Matter, Accessed November 25, 2017, <https://blacklivesmatter.com/>

This thesis discusses three case studies carried out by artists working in the field of Community Art which contain significant aspects of preservation in low-income communities of color. These case studies highlight the variation of intervention used by these artists according to the social, economic, and situational context of each project.

The first project was undertaken by artist Rick Lowe in the Third Ward neighborhood of Houston, Texas. Lowe's project uses direct action to help revitalize and support community, and combat issues of gentrification and displacement occurring in the Third Ward neighborhood. This project adaptively reuses historical structures that speak directly to the cultural heritage of the neighborhood and leverages the historical house form of the shotgun house to create affordable housing that acknowledges the identity and history of the current community.

The second case study examines the work of Theaster Gates in the Greater Grand Crossing neighborhood of Chicago, Illinois. Gates' work focuses on re-contextualizing how society views minority neighborhoods. His work has brought archives and resources – specific to the culture of the community – into the neighborhood, to both serve the community and give its residents stewardship over their own culture.

The third case study looks at the work of artist Tyree Guyton in Detroit, Michigan. Guyton's project differs from the previous two in that it is a personal artistic expression executed as a reaction to the blight being experienced in his neighborhood. This project is the most closely rooted in artistic expression but is related to the prior two projects in its objective of community betterment and through the profound impact it has had on the neighborhood, both socially and in regards to the built environment.

These case studies will be evaluated based on the changes leading preservationists are calling for within the current system of preservation as it pertains to the preservation of low-income or minority community buildings and histories. The following list of evaluative criteria is a condensed version of the ideas put forth by leading

preservationists who are concerned with issues of social justice and relevancy to current communities in historic preservation. These criteria are:

Analysis Criteria

A. Doctrine Change

Some preservationists are calling for changes to key tenets of the NHPA to facilitate work within low-income communities or communities of color. Individually and together, the following changes have the opportunity to open the door to preserving non-traditional or intangible resources of these communities.

1. Expand the definition of preservation⁶
2. Relax the criteria for integrity⁷
3. Eliminate the need for a period of significance⁸
4. Shorten, or do away with the fifty-year rule⁹

According to these preservationists, the National Historic Preservation Act has not been delivering the result that many Americans expect from preservation work. Therefore, it is natural to look at provisions within preservation policy and imagine the changes that could result if aspects of that policy were altered or eliminated. An idea that is frequently mentioned within the dialogue of changing preservation policy is the idea of *expanding the definition of what constitutes preservation activity*. This idea involves

⁶ David J. Brown, "A Preservation Movement for All Americans," In *Bending the Future: 50 Ideas for the Next 50 Years of Historic Preservation in the United States*, ed. Max Page and Marla L. Miller, (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 59.

⁷ Andrew Hurley, "Making Preservation work for Struggling Communities: A Plea to Loosen National Historic District Guidelines," In *Bending the Future: 50 Ideas for the Next 50 Years of Historic Preservation in the United States*, ed. Max Page and Marla L. Miller, (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 117.

⁸ Hurley, "Making Preservation work for Struggling Communities" 117.

⁹ Brian Joyner, "Should the NHPA Have a Greater Sense of Urgency," In *Bending the Future: 50 Ideas for the Next 50 Years of Historic Preservation in the United States*, ed. Max Page and Marla L. Miller, (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 119.

understanding that preservation takes many forms, not just those currently officially sanctioned by the government.¹⁰ This expansion can help to redefine what are considered to be acceptable adaptive reuse strategies for buildings, and could include the preservation of culturally important intangible resources such as festivals or gathering spaces, or supporting culturally important businesses which serve and sustain existing communities.¹¹

The next three suggestions concerning doctrine change deal less with the theoretical and more with specific preservation mandates. The first is to *relax the criteria for integrity*.¹² The National Register outlines seven aspects of integrity – location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association – which are used to establish a building’s eligibility for listing.¹³ The NPS states that in order for a building to have integrity it would possess all or at least most of these aspects. These aspects of integrity deal primarily with the physical elements of a building and how they relate to a building’s significance.¹⁴ Relaxing the criteria for integrity would lessen the reliance on materiality and would allow for the nomination of buildings which contain significance but lack integrity. Not always, but often, buildings associated with low-income communities and communities of color can be denied eligibility for the National Register because they either have suffered a loss of original building fabric due to lack of maintenance funds, or were not purpose-built by the community but were instead inhabited after the fact.¹⁵ This can allow for preservation funding in low income

¹⁰ David J. Brown, “A Preservation Movement for All Americans,” 59.

¹¹ Buckley and Graves, “Tangible Benefits From Intangible Resources,” 153.

¹² Hurley, “Making Preservation work for Struggling Communities,” 117.

¹³ National Park Service, National Register Bulletin, Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Historic Aids to Navigation to the National Register of Historic Places, Integrity, Accessed November 2, 2017, https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb34/nrb34_8.htm

¹⁴ National Parks Service, National Register Bulletin, How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation, VIII. How to Evaluate the Integrity of a Property, Accessed November 2, 2017, https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_8.htm

¹⁵ Buckley and Graves, “Tangible Benefits from Intangible Resources,” 153-154.

communities and communities of color which can be denied heritage investment due to physical attrition.¹⁶ Lessening standards for integrity is one of the methods being looked at for increasing inclusivity in preservation.

The next specific change would be *eliminating the need for a period of significance*.¹⁷ Defining a period of significance is a requirement for a National Register nomination and is another way in which the National Register determines historical significance.¹⁸ According to National Register Bulletin 16, the Period of significance “is the length of time when a property was associated with important events, activities, or persons, or attained the characteristics which qualify it for National Register listing. Period of significance usually begins with the date when significant activities or events began giving the property its historic significance; this is often a date of construction.”¹⁹ There are a total of four criteria under which nominations can be categorized, with buildings primarily nominated under one of the first three criteria. They are either significant for their architecture and being representative of the time in which they were built, or they can be significant because of their association with an important individual or event. After a criterion or multiple criteria are selected, areas of significance are chosen from a predetermined list and periods of significance are attached to each area of significance. No period of significance is able to include events or associations within the past fifty years unless determined to be meet the exclusion of Exceptional Importance.

Periods of significance can be broad, but claiming a specific history in the life of a building works against the elaboration of a cumulative or multilayered past, this along

¹⁶ Hurley, “Making Preservation Work for Struggling Communities,” 117.

¹⁷ Hurley, “Making Preservation Work for Struggling Communities,” 117.

¹⁸ National Parks Service, National Register Bulletin, Researching a Historic Property, Research and the National Register Form, Accessed November 2, 2017, https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb39/nrb39_ii.HTM

¹⁹ National Parks Service, National Register Bulletin16, How to Complete the National Register Registration Form, <https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb16a/>

with the fifty year exclusion can remove a building from its relevance to current communities. Andrew Hurley, who put forth both the idea of lessening the criteria for integrity and the elimination of a period of significance argues for these changes in relation to the creation of Historic Districts but these changes would offer benefits to individual listings as well.

The final proposed doctrine change would be to shorten or do away with the fifty year rule.²⁰ The fifty year rule was created in 1948 by the NPS in regards to the Historic Sites Survey created by the Historic Sites Act of 1935. It was a way of eliminating contemporary sites from review in an attempt to avoid the controversies associated with recent histories.²¹ This rule was carried through to the NHPA to allow for time to provide perspective on the events of the recent past. There is, however, an exception to this rule which states that a building can be nominated under fifty years of age if it is considered to be of “Exceptional Importance.” In reality, the fifty year rule is more of a guideline but those who seek to preserve the recent past can be stymied by this rule.²² This rule, even with its exception, can prevent the protection of important sites associated with the promotion of civil rights of groups traditionally underserved by preservation legislation, such as African-Americans or LGBTQIA communities.

B. *Preservation Methods*

1. Shift focus from buildings to people and places.²³

²⁰ Joyner, “Should the NHPA Have a Greater Sense of Urgency,” 119.

²¹ John H. Sprinkle, Jr., “‘Of Exceptional Importance’: The Origins of the ‘Fifty-Year Rule’ In Historic Preservation,” In *The Public Historian*, Vol. 29 No. 2, Spring 2007; (pp. 81-103) DOI: 10.1525/tph.2007.29.2.81, 83.

²² Carroll West, “The Fifty-year Stumbling Block,” National Council for Public History Website, Published September 22, 2015, Accessed, October 31, 2017, <http://ncph.org/history-at-work/the-fifty-year-stumbling-block/>

²³ Wells, “Valuing Historic Places,” 6.; Jamie Kalven, “Preservation and Invisibility,” In *Bending the Future: 50 Ideas for the Next 50 Years of Historic Preservation in the United States*, ed. Max Page and Marla L. Miller, (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 124.

2. Community engagement²⁴
3. Developing collaborative relationships - working with preservation minded developers, realtors, city planners, economists, architects, artists, and organizations.²⁵

One of the first and most important changes being called for in preservation is simply *a change of focus*. Preservationists have become so embattled in fighting to save buildings from demolition that they have lost perspective on who these buildings are being saved for. It is not enough to save buildings for an unknown future population or to create a comprehensive “library” of building techniques and architectural styles. We need to remember that our past is being preserved to orient and enrich our present, and surrounding communities need to find value and usefulness in the historic structures in their community.²⁶ This means that we need to *engage with communities* to determine what resources they feel are important within their community.²⁷ Community engagement and involvement should be step one in any preservation process undertaken within a community. Architectural surveys can only relay the physical aspects of buildings. Community engagement is especially important when working within communities of color or amongst disenfranchised groups, because including these communities in discussions about their history and culture that will affect their lives is in itself a matter of social justice.²⁸ In addition to engaging communities, preservationists need to *form collaborative relationships* with a variety of organizations on the local level. Preservation minded city officials, developers, property owners, and organizations can

²⁴ Judith E. Innes and David E. Booher, “Using Local Knowledge for Justice and Resilience,” Unpublished Paper, October 4, 2008, 2; Donna Graves, “The Necessity of Interpretation,” In *Bending the Future: 50 Ideas for the Next 50 Years of Historic Preservation in the United States*, ed. Max Page and Marla L. Miller, (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016) 94.

²⁵ Stephanie K. Meeks, “Become a ‘Movement of Yes,’” In *Bending the Future: 50 Ideas for the Next 50 Years of Historic Preservation in the United States*, ed. Max Page and Marla L. Miller, (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 172.

²⁶ Wells, “Valuing Historic Places,” 6.; Kalven, “Preservation and Invisibility,” 124.

²⁷ Innes and Booher, “Using Local Knowledge for Justice and Resilience,” 2; Graves, “The Necessity of Interpretation,” 94.

²⁸ Innes and Booher, “Using Local Knowledge for Justice and Resilience,” 2.

help to modernize preservation agenda, help adaptively reuse historic properties, and plan for the futures of our communities.²⁹

C. *Preservation Products*

1. Educational Benefits³⁰
2. Social Benefits³¹
3. Use within Community³²

For a project to be *educationally beneficial* many preservationists believe that an interpretation of a building's history needs to be an essential component of preservation efforts. Donna Graves points out that many preservationists often stop after preserving the physical aspects of a building, believing that a well preserved building can “speak” to visitors, but many communities are baffled by preservationists' obsession with the physical remnants of buildings when it is the story of the lived history that is important to most communities.³³ This is particularly relevant in association with lower income communities whose history is entangled with buildings which are often modified and changed such as storefronts or community halls.³⁴ These histories should not be excluded but instead we need to find creative ways to convey these histories. Steven Lubar quotes the ICOMOS charter which suggests that if preservationists make historical sites “places

²⁹ Meeks, “Become a ‘Movement of Yes,’” 172.

³⁰ Steven Lubar, “Preservation Demands Interpretation,” In *Bending the Future: 50 Ideas for the Next 50 Years of Historic Preservation in the United States*, ed. Max Page and Marla L. Miller, (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 153-154.

³¹ Erica Avrami, “From Passion to Public Policy: Making Preservation More Sustainable,” In *Bending the Future: 50 Ideas for the Next 50 Years of Historic Preservation in the United States*, ed. Max Page and Marla L. Miller, (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 50.

³² Meeks, “Become a ‘Movement of Yes,’” 172.

³³ Donna Graves, “The Necessity of Interpretation,” In *Bending the Future: 50 Ideas for the Next 50 Years of Historic Preservation in the United States*, ed. Max Page and Marla L. Miller, (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 94.

³⁴ Graves, “The Necessity of Interpretation,” 94.

and sources of learning” they can support “sustainable community development and intercultural and intergenerational dialogue.”³⁵ Lubar believes that in addition to providing interpretation and perspective, providing a strong educational benefit can strengthen the cause of preservation.³⁶

Social benefits have for a long time been the stated reason why preservation activity has been pursued. Lately, though, preservation work has been promoted for its economic and ecological benefits, undoubtedly important effects of preservation work but aspects of preservation that are secondary to the stated preservation mission.³⁷ Erica Avrami questions why the field of preservation has strayed off of the focus of saving buildings for a social benefit, and has begun evaluating successes on other qualifiers. Although what the social benefit of preservation should be has always been loosely defined, preservation needs to be honest about the reasons why we preserve and either expand policy to include economic and ecological goals or get better at quantifying social benefit and make it the central reason for preservation work.

Keeping preservation *relevant to current communities* is essential to the continuation of the preservation movement. Stephanie K. Meeks discusses the bad reputation historic preservation has acquired as a “movement of no” or the “paint police,” and how these stereotypes are hurting preservation efforts.³⁸ Meeks calls for the development of tools which are less rigid and more community driven. Cordoning off buildings as precious remnants of history disconnects them from communities and leaves them feeling sterile. Preservation needs to embrace new expanded ideas of adaptive reuse and modernize regulations to make the reuse of historic buildings easier for communities.³⁹

³⁵ Lubar, “Preservation Demands Interpretation,” 153.

³⁶ Lubar, “Preservation Demands Interpretation,” 153.

³⁷ Avrami, “From Passion to Public Policy,” 51.

³⁸ Meeks, “Become a ‘Movement of Yes,’” 170.

³⁹ Meeks, “Become a ‘Movement of Yes,’” 172.

By analyzing the Community Art case studies within a framework of suggestions proposed by preservationists, we can begin to visualize how an altered system of preservation might look. Many of the above proposed suggestions are strategies used successfully by these artists, and these artists offer symbolic interpretations of buildings which could inform future preservation activity.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The current system of preservation in the United States was formalized in 1966 with the signing of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). This act was based on the recommendations put forward in a report entitled *With Heritage So Rich*, compiled by the Special Committee on Historic Preservation, a group composed of individuals from the federal government and the National Trust for Historic Preservation (National Trust).⁴⁰ This report was written in the wake of major urban renewal projects and the creation of the federal highway system undertaken in the 1950s which had irreparably altered the American landscape and caused large sections of American cities to be demolished.⁴¹ These losses were acutely noted through the demolition of nearly half of the 12,000 buildings recorded by the Historic American Building Survey, the first national architectural survey and documentation project initiated in 1933.⁴² The recommendations put forth by the Special Committee on Historic Preservation in *With Heritage So Rich*, which became the basis for the NHPA, were based on the heritage conservation work being done in European cities, most of which was regulated and financed by the government. In the United States, prior to the NHPA, preservation activity had primarily existed in the private realm. This privately funded preservation activity emphasized patriotic histories related to the founding of the United States, and landmarks associated with early leaders and battlefield sites were the focus of preservation activity. Early government acts which dealt with preservation such as the Antiquities Act of 1906, the

⁴⁰ U.S. Conference of Mayors, Special Committee on Historic Preservation, *With Heritage So Rich*, The National Trust for Historic Preservation, (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1983), 189.

⁴¹ U.S. Conference of Mayors, Special Committee on Historic Preservation, *With Heritage So Rich*, 11.

⁴² U.S. Conference of Mayors, Special Committee on Historic Preservation, *With Heritage So Rich*, 191; National Park Service, Heritage Documentation Services, Historic American Building Survey, Accessed November 3, 2017, <https://www.nps.gov/hdp/HABS/index.htm>; Max Page and Marla Miller, In *Bending the Future: 50 Ideas for the Next 50 Years of Historic Preservation in the United States*, (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 2.

creation of the National Park Service in 1916, the Historic Sites Act of 1935, and the Act of 1949 which established the National Trust, were all significant to early preservation efforts but it wasn't until the creation of the NHPA in 1966 that a government regulated and funded system for preservation activity within the United States came into being.⁴³

The NHPA created a vast preservation network across the United States and gave credence to the idea that preservation was worthy of a national effort. But an inherent bias toward European value systems and aspects of materiality resulted in a preservation which has over represented the histories and accomplishments of wealthy white men.⁴⁴ As Ada Louise Huxtable has said, "Money frequently made superb examples of the art of architecture possible," but many believe that preservation has spent too much time focusing on saving beautiful buildings.⁴⁵ This preference for the physical fabric developed in part as preservation became professionalized. The creation of a National Register of Historic Places (National Register) is one of the primary directives of preservation established by the NHPA. The National Register is an archive of our nation's important built past, a list of noted buildings which are considered worth saving. Along with the creation of this archive, standards of preservation needed to be developed and qualifiers for inclusion needed to be established.⁴⁶ In the 1950s, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) opened up a school to train preservationists in Rome, the International Center for the Study of Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property, known as ICCROM.⁴⁷ This school focused on the scientific aspects of material conservation and led to advances in maintaining original historical material. As preservation professionalized, aspects of materiality were much

⁴³ U.S. Conference of Mayors, Special Committee on Historic Preservation, *With Heritage So Rich*, 190.

⁴⁴ Buckley and Graves, "Tangible Benefits From Intangible Resources," 153.

⁴⁵ Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1997), 3.; Wells, "Valuing Historic Places," 3.

⁴⁶ William J. Murtagh, *Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America*, (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2006), 51.; Special Committee on HP, *With Heritage So Rich*, 11.

⁴⁷ Murtagh, *Keeping Time*, 149.

easier to quantify and evaluative systems for materiality became the focus when training individuals in the developing field of preservation.

In focusing on standards and methods for the physical aspects of preservation, preservationists have lost one of the main reasons we preserve buildings: a sense of orientation in the world. Layers of built history knit closely together help us to feel the accumulation of the history which has shaped our environment. Unfortunately, these historical place markers and symbols have too often had their physical qualities preserved but the histories and relevancy to current communities have been severed. The field of historic preservation has lost touch with the needs of current communities. As Jeremy Wells writes, “If the goal of architectural conservation is to save places for the benefit of people, perhaps we ought to engage a methodology that determines historical significance based on how everyday people value historical places rather than relying solely on the traditional objective, expert values upon which architectural conservation has frequently relied.”⁴⁸ Ned Kaufman echoes this idea by stating that, “while preservationists debate problems of authenticity, integrity, architectural quality, stylistic purity, and significance, citizens seem to worry more about loss of character, pleasure, or usefulness in the places they inhabit and love, of the ability to recall the past in them, of being forced to leave them.”⁴⁹ This is perhaps the most important shift that is being called for in preservation today, a shift from focusing on preserving buildings for the sake of the building, to focusing on preserving buildings for the people who use them.⁵⁰

This shift of focus from buildings to communities and aspects of place opens up the definition of preservation and the work that preservationists can do within communities. When preservation is expanded to include the preservation of building

⁴⁸ Wells, “Valuing Historic Places,” 5.

⁴⁹ Ned Kaufman, “Moving Forward: Futures for a Preservation Movement,” In *Giving Preservation a History: Histories of Historic Preservation in the United States*, ed. Max Page and Randall Mason, (New York, NY: Routledge, 2004), 314.

⁵⁰ Wells, “Valuing Historic Places,” 1.

types and cultural lifeways not traditionally preserved by preservation, preservationists have the opportunity to preserve culture, not just the built remnants of it. Kaufman argues that, “preservationists have opportunities beyond those of most historians to be actors as well as chroniclers of history.”⁵¹ We as preservationists are not independent of the work we do. All of the decisions we make about what to preserve and how we preserve it affects how the historical record of our country is structured, which speaks to our values and beliefs as preservationists. Jeremy Wells criticizes our current preservation doctrine for the pseudo-scientific qualifiers on which preservation relies for making determinations of significance. Wells says, “The pseudo-scientific basis of conservation doctrine enables the practitioners of architectural conservation to assume that all of humanity values historic buildings and places in much the same, indisputable way.”⁵² Kaufman similarly states that, “history is never a mere declaration. It is an argument, and a revitalized historic preservation movement could do more to harness its persuasive power on behalf of communities and peoples – not by slanting but by presenting the full truth of profoundly complex and often painful relationships among people and between people and the land. In so doing, preservation can become a vital and progressive force in the struggle toward a more just society based on preservation values.”⁵³ At the heart of this argument is the idea put forth by Dolores Hayden, that “restoring significant shared meanings for many neglected urban places, first involves claiming the entire urban cultural landscape as an important part of American history, not just its architectural monuments.”⁵⁴ Hayden states that once we accept that all history has value we need to look for themes of commonality amongst various groups. We need to reach “beyond multiple and sometimes conflicting national, ethnic, gender, race, and class identities to encompass larger common themes.”⁵⁵ These themes do not negate our diversity but

⁵¹ Kaufman, “Moving Forward,” 325.

⁵² Wells, “Valuing Historic Places,” 1.

⁵³ Kaufman, “Moving Forward,” 324-325.

⁵⁴ Hayden, *The Power of Place*, 11.

⁵⁵ Hayden, *The Power of Place*, 9.

instead reinforce the sense of “cultural membership” in our urban societies.⁵⁶ Kaufman echoes this idea, stating that constructs of “African American history” or “women’s history” are helpful in correcting errors of omission, but we mustn’t forget that we are part of a shared history.⁵⁷ Developing a preservation established on a level playing field of historical importance, that embraces our shared histories could go a long way in negating the bad feelings and distrust that has developed toward the field of preservation.

Both Ned Kaufman and Max Page have written broadly about the issues preservation is currently facing which go beyond the focus of issues of inclusion and relevance in preservation. In the essay “Moving Forward: Futures for a Preservation Movement,” Ned Kaufman discusses how the field of preservation has lost the momentum from the passionate movement out of which it sprung. Kaufman asserts that by choosing a narrow focus, the field of preservation has excluded the larger more complex emotional and social aspects of preservation which are an essential aspect of the preservation process.⁵⁸ He finds hope in the new language of place which has subtly different connotations than the previous language of preservation, and which allows for more flexibility in landmarking.⁵⁹ Kaufman challenges the assumptions that growth is good and that preservation needs to bend to economic real estate market forces.⁶⁰ He admonishes preservationists for not standing up for history and being afraid to challenge our current preservation methods. Kaufman believes that now is the time that we should be planning for the future of preservation so that when the time is right we will be ready to act.⁶¹

⁵⁶ Hayden, *The Power of Place*, 9.

⁵⁷ Ned Kaufman, “Protecting Storyscape,” In *Place, Race, and Story: Essays on the Past and Future of Historic Preservation*,” (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 49.

⁵⁸ Kaufman, “Moving Forward,” 314.

⁵⁹ Kaufman, “Moving Forward,” 315.

⁶⁰ Kaufman, “Moving Forward,” 316-318.

⁶¹ Kaufman, “Moving Forward,” 319.

Max Page in the book, *Why Preservation Matters*, also takes a look at the various issues confronting the preservation profession. Page takes issue with the idea of authenticity and integrity in preservation.⁶² Page believes that preservation is about creating dialogue between people and historical places but a focus on integrity creates a fetishistic focus on preserving physical fabric and authenticity the absurd fantasy that we can time travel. Page believes we need to apply these efforts to the more worthy goals of confronting difficult pasts, seeking economic justice, and creating a more sustainable ecosystem.⁶³ Preservation has just begun to consider confronting its own history, long after other fields have taken reflexive action. Although history is a central component of preservation, interpreting the history of buildings is often ignored and funds are not allocated to writers and artists for communicating the meaning of these significant structures.⁶⁴ Page believes that the need to establish a period of significance is a concept taken from curatorship and that this action has the effect of discounting the importance of subsequent layers of history.⁶⁵ Page takes issue with the economic drivers that are touted as the benefits of preservation and believes preservation needs to shift focus to playing a role in matters of social justice. The economics of preservation should include ways to prevent the displacement often associate with preservation activity.⁶⁶

In *The Power of Place*, Dolores Hayden discusses the intricate and complex histories of our urban environments and how preservation can learn to work with other disciplines to better interpret these multilayered and complex environments. Hayden advocates for cross disciplinary action and a holistic approach to preservation that displays the multifaceted and complex relationships of communities to their place of residence. She puts forward the importance of public space in nurturing interconnected

⁶² Page, *Why Preservation Matters*, 33-34.

⁶³ Page, *Why Preservation Matters*, 42.

⁶⁴ Page, *Why Preservation Matters*, 53.

⁶⁵ Page, *Why Preservation Matters*, 62-63.

⁶⁶ Page, *Why Preservation Matters*, 80.

social memories and believes that “decisions about what to remember and protect involve the grounding of historical scholarship as well as the possibilities of public history, architectural preservation, environmental protection, and commemorative public art.”⁶⁷

Jeremy Wells delves into the current preservation system’s focus on the materiality of buildings rather than the importance of a building to its community. “In *Valuing Historic Places: Traditional and Contemporary Approaches*,” Wells dismantles the Euro-American conservation doctrine which has its roots in nineteenth century doctrine written by white, European men.⁶⁸ This Euro-American doctrine attempts to use indisputable scientific qualifiers to create value systems for evaluating a building’s significance. This assumes that all cultures value buildings in the same way, and places the focus on a building’s materiality, a system that is easier to quantify than the emotional attachment that might be felt by a community.⁶⁹ Wells believes that it is this focus on materiality that is hindering the preservation of the vernacular structures which hold importance for many current communities. He advocates for a change in two qualifiers for historical significance, authenticity and historical value. He believes we need to expand the definition of authenticity beyond its current focus on the retention of original materials and that, in relation to historical value, preservationists need to shift from their belief that there are indisputable historical facts which exist outside of the realm of multiple interpretations.⁷⁰ Wells states, “from a pragmatic perspective, the contemporary Western practice of architectural conservation is therefore dominated by the positivistic values of experts with little consideration given to the values of ordinary, everyday people who use and value historic places.”⁷¹

⁶⁷ Hayden, *The Power of Place*, 13.

⁶⁸ Wells, “Valuing Historic Places,” 1.

⁶⁹ Wells, “Valuing Historic Places,” 2.

⁷⁰ Wells, “Valuing Historic Places,” 3-4.

⁷¹ Wells, “Valuing Historic Places,” 1.

“Bending the Future: 50 Ideas for the Next 50 Years of Historic Preservation in the United States” is a survey of recent thoughts about the future of preservation. This resource, edited by Max Page and Marla R. Miller, is a collection of “provocations” or editorial-like essays considering the past fifty years of preservation and envisioning what the next fifty might look like.⁷² Not all of the essays were applicable to this study but the majority of the essays spoke to a need for change. These essays ranged from the minor changes suggested by Richard Longstreth, to the suggestion for the complete elimination of the National Historic Preservation Act put forward by Thomas King. Three essays useful to this study were by Donna Graves, Jamie Kalven, and Andrew Hurley.

Donna Graves advocates for the addition of interpretation as an essential aspect of preservation in her essay “The Necessity of Interpretation.” She believes the three legs of preservation – identification, documentation, and registration – are incomplete without the addition of interpretation. Although preservation is primarily focused on preserving built structures, preservationists cannot expect intact buildings to “speak” to visitors in any meaningful way on their own.⁷³ Often it is the story of a building or the events that took place there that is the primary objective of a community in saving a structure and interpretation is essential to this process.⁷⁴ Graves echoes the lack of representation of many communities in local, state or federal registers due in part to the modest structures in which they took place. Graves believes that “interpretation can provide a route to the holy grail of “relevance” that many preservation organizations seek, but only if it is based on authentic engagement with communities associated with the site in the past and present.”⁷⁵ If interpretation is done in a creative and consistent manner it would quickly build a legacy equal to the one we have created of building styles and would allow

⁷² Page and Miller, *Bending the Future*, 3.

⁷³ Donna Graves, “The Necessity of Interpretation,” In *Bending the Future: 50 Ideas for the Next 50 Years of Historic Preservation in the United States*, ed. Max Page and Marla L. Miller, (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016) 94.

⁷⁴ Graves, “The Necessity of Interpretation,” 93-94.

⁷⁵ Graves, “The Necessity of Interpretation,” 95.

historic sites to become informational sources, and transcend barriers of time and experience.⁷⁶

Jamie Kalven in an essay entitled, “Preservation and Invisibility,” discusses the planned demolition of Chicago’s high-rise public housing projects, the forced relocation of the residents, and what responsibility the field of preservation has to populations which have been displaced. The removal of populations such as those who resided in the Chicago Housing Authority high-rises and the replacement of those structures with mixed-income development allows for the erasure of place. Kalven states that displacement is a key tool in enforcing inequality while simultaneously obscuring the realities of inequality.⁷⁷ Preservation was largely absent from the debate about the implementation of the project stepping forward only to discuss the creation of a public housing museum and again to assert traditional preservation philosophies on the retention of one of the last Chicago Housing Authority redevelopment plans proposed, claiming architectural significance. Preservationists did not engage with the communities affected by these changes, taking the time to understanding how their lives were interwoven with the places they lived. Even if the results would have remained the same with preservationists’ involvement, Kalven makes the argument that members of the profession should have been present fighting for the places meaningful to these communities and wonders what a redevelopment process that took into account a community’s idea of place might look like.⁷⁸

In “Making Preservation Work for Struggling Communities: A Plea to Loosen National Historic District Guidelines,” Andrew Hurley discusses how historic district legislation has failed low-income communities and communities of color. Some of this can be blamed on the racial prejudices that control real estate investment and the lack of investment in certain regions but some blame can also be place on historic district

⁷⁶ Graves, “The Necessity of Interpretation,” 95.

⁷⁷ Kalven, “Preservation and Invisibility,” 125.

⁷⁸ Kalven, “Preservation and Invisibility,” 126.

legislation which favors areas with distinct architectural features and high levels of integrity. This keeps funds for preservation related activity from benefiting these communities which are often already devoid of investment.⁷⁹ This allows planning offices to demolish whole communities in the name of blight removal. Hurley believes that it is time for preservation to embrace a “wider range of heritage-based revitalization strategies.”⁸⁰ Focus’ on intangible resources need to find formal legislation to allow income streams to economically benefit low income communities.⁸¹ In addition, the immediate changes of relaxing the criteria for integrity in Historic Districts and eliminating the need for a period of significance would greatly help with making preservation funding possible in low-income communities and communities of color.⁸²

In “Protecting Storyscape” in the book *Place, Race, and Story: Essays on the Past and Future of Historic Preservation*, Ned Kaufman introduces the ideas of “story sites” and “storyscapes.” Story sites, as Kaufman defines them are the “historical sites, cultural sites and sites of social value” that contain socially valuable stories.⁸³ The storyscape is how these story sites are referred to collectively. These sites can vary greatly in form but each “describe[s] some aspect of a shared past, and each story is felt by the tellers to have some bearing on the character of their neighborhood, village, city, or region, and its citizens today.”⁸⁴ Kaufman also presents the ideas of social capital, the connections between individuals, and cultural capital, our lifeways, traditions, and beliefs, and how both are often strongly linked to our ideas of place.⁸⁵ Social and cultural capital

⁷⁹ Hurley, “Making Preservation Work for Struggling Communities,” 116.

⁸⁰ Hurley, “Making Preservation Work for Struggling Communities,” 117.

⁸¹ Hurley, “Making Preservation Work for Struggling Communities,” 117.

⁸² Hurley, “Making Preservation Work for Struggling Communities,” 117.

⁸³ Kaufman, “Protecting Storyscape,” 38-39.

⁸⁴ Kaufman, “Protecting Storyscape,” 39.

⁸⁵ Kaufman, “Protecting Storyscape,” 43-46.

contribute to the richness of life within a neighborhood, and are linked to ideas of neighborhood identity, traditions, and daily rituals.⁸⁶ When places that support these lifeways and traditions are lost, neighborhoods suffer. Kaufman cites studies done by sociologist Robert Putnam which support this supposition.⁸⁷ Kaufman believes that inclusion of important storyscapes within historic preservation can help to correct the disparity currently seen in our National Register as well as ensure the continued health and place memory of our communities.

Studies in community engagement

Many preservationists are calling for greater aspects of community engagement within the field of historic preservation. In “Using Local Knowledge for Justice and Resilience,” Innes and Booher address the need for communication and collaboration between institutional bodies (policy makers and scientists) and the communities they are trying to serve. They make the case that greater consideration of local knowledge will provide a more successful outcome than that achieved without taking into account the experience of the community, who know the situation or location best.⁸⁸ Innes and Booher detail some of the fears held by professionals which can prohibit this consultation. The first is that professionals tend to put more trust in their learned understanding of a situation and it becomes hard for them to accept the views of community members who have no professional training or experience.⁸⁹ The second is that it will be difficult to find a common ground or a common voice in which to have discussions due to differing perspectives. It takes understanding and flexibility lead a discussion which includes individuals with different cultural backgrounds and values.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Kaufman, “Protecting Storyscape,” 47.

⁸⁷ Kaufman, “Protecting Storyscape,” 44.

⁸⁸ Innes and Booher, “Using Local Knowledge for Justice and Resilience,” 3.

⁸⁹ Innes and Booher, “Using Local Knowledge for Justice and Resilience,” 5.

⁹⁰ Innes and Booher, “Using Local Knowledge for Justice and Resilience,” 6.

The third reason is the fear of uncertainty. There is uncertainty in the process of interaction and also in what type of outcome will result from a collaborative consultation process.⁹¹ Innes and Booher also list some of the difficulties in establishing constructive working relationships between professionals and marginalized communities. Communities are not often organized into groups; they don't trust the system which they feel on the outside of; they are often angry which can make dialogue unproductive especially when they feel they are being condescended to; and communities don't often have a grasp of the professional dialogue or terms used in discussions which can lead to frustration and miscommunications.⁹² Outside of these issues of interaction, many low income community members don't engage in discussions held by professional organizations simply because they are too busy working to put food on the table or can't afford to pay a babysitter.⁹³ Innes and Booher stress the importance of professionals taking the time to listen to communities, not only because it is beneficial for preservationists to include communities in discussions of how to talk about their history and culture, but because it is in itself a matter of social justice to include the voices of underrepresented peoples in decisions that will affect their lives.⁹⁴ This article draws attention to the need for greater consultation with local communities and supports the idea that community engagement by preservation professionals can support social justice efforts in preservation.

As Innes and Booher discuss the importance of the act of community engagement, an article written by the American Planning Association called "How Arts and Cultural Strategies Enhance Community Engagement and Participation" details the benefits of

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Innes and Booher, "Using Local Knowledge for Justice and Resilience," 20.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Innes and Booher, "Using Local Knowledge for Justice and Resilience," 2.

creative tools in community engagement.⁹⁵ This article highlights how the creative tools of visual arts and storytelling expand traditional planning engagement strategies to help planners gain a better understanding of a community's perspectives and values, and increase stakeholder involvement in community planning projects. Visual art forms and storytelling can be used to increase communication in the dialogue stage of community engagement. In the realm of visual arts methods, visual renderings and models can be used to help to convey ideas during discussions, and creative workshops led by artists can help to facilitate communication by focusing the needs of the community and interpret those needs into visual representations. Storytelling is another useful tool for communication and allows individuals to place themselves and their ideas within the context of experience and place. This provides feedback about a community's views and feelings to planners. Creative engagement also encourages more participation and by a greater range of individuals. Other professions such as urban planning, a profession closely tied with preservation, have engaged creative tools of engagement for facilitating positive community interaction.⁹⁶ Preservation would do well to engage these methods in future projects.

⁹⁵ American Planning Association, "How Arts and Cultural Strategies Enhance Community Engagement and Participation," Accessed November 3, 2017, <https://www.planning.org/research/arts/briefingpapers/engagement.htm>

⁹⁶ American Planning Association, "How Arts and Cultural Strategies Enhance Community Engagement and Participation," Accessed November 3, 2017, <https://www.planning.org/research/arts/briefingpapers/engagement.htm>

CHAPTER III
CASE STUDIES

Rick Lowe, Project Row Houses, Houston, Texas



Figure 1. Row houses that are used as studios, By Hourick (Own work) [CC BY 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>)], via Wikimedia Commons, September 2012, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File%3AProject_Row_house_studios.JPG

Project Row houses is a community-based arts initiative started by artist Rick Lowe within the Third Ward neighborhood of Houston, Texas. The objectives of Project Row Houses began with neighborhood betterment and the preservation of 22 shotgun houses, but the project has grown over the twenty-four years it has been in existence to become an important neighborhood advocate, resource, and stakeholder in the battle against displacement prompted by the gentrification that is taking place within the neighborhood. Lowe's project saved 22 vernacular shotgun houses from being demolished because of the negative activity they were harboring and transformed them into thriving place of community support. These 22 shotgun houses remain the center of activity and the symbol of the organization though the project's purview has expanded through the years to take on greater neighborhood issues, including the greatest battle of

all, the fight against gentrification. Project Row Houses now owns seventy-one properties within the Third Ward neighborhood.⁹⁷

Project Row Houses began in 1993 when Rick Lowe, along with six other artists—James Bettison, Burt Long, Jesse Lott, Floyd Newsum, Burt Samples, and George Smith—purchased 22 shotgun houses on two blocks in the Third Ward. It was Lowe’s intention to develop these buildings into art and community spaces in an effort to revitalize an impoverished neighborhood dealing with the issues of drugs and crime. Prior to Lowe’s foray into Community Art, he had been making political art that dealt with issues of race. This art took the form of billboard sized, cut-out sculptural paintings.⁹⁸ Lowe had been showing these pieces in gallery settings but was also working with community groups to make work situated within struggling neighborhoods to help draw attention to specific issues within their communities.⁹⁹ Lowe’s artistic practice shifted one day from making political art, which is largely commentary, to developing a Community Art practice. Lowe attributes this shift to a single statement from a high school student on a visit to his studio in 1990. This student questioned the effectiveness of Lowe’s work, stating that the issues Lowe was discussing were well known within the community. The student asked, if Lowe was a creative person, why couldn’t he create a solution to some of these problems?¹⁰⁰ This statement hit Lowe on a fundamental level and he immediately halted his studio practice to contemplate the challenge brought forth by this student.¹⁰¹

⁹⁷ Claudia Feldman, “Third Ward: The Epicenter of Houston’s Fight for Racial Equality,” In the Houston Chronicle, August 22, 2014, accessed January 12, 2017, <http://www.houstonchronicle.com/life/article/Third-Ward-The-epicenter-of-Houston-s-fight-for-5706658.php#photo-6761861>

⁹⁸ Rick Lowe, “Big Ideas in Art and Culture: Rick Lowe” Kitchener City Hall, Big Ideas in Art and Culture lecture series, January 8, 2014, You Tube, accessed December 10, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Q09es4PZtY>, 4:29.

⁹⁹ Lowe, “Big Ideas in Art and Culture,” 4:50.

¹⁰⁰ Lowe, “Big Ideas in Art and Culture: Rick Lowe,” 5:30-6:10.

¹⁰¹ Lowe, “Big Ideas in Art and Culture: Rick Lowe,” 6:45.

Following the temporary halting of Lowe's studio practice, two events occurred that helped define what Project Row Houses was to become. The first was Lowe discovering artist Joseph Beuys' idea of social sculpture which Beuys wrote about in his book "Energy Plan for the Western Man." Beuys defines social sculpture in the terms of everyone being an artist and we are all, through our actions, shaping the world around us every day. Lowe latched onto this idea of how to turn ordinary and common place actions into poetic symbols. The second event came through Lowe's involvement with the community organization SHAPE (Self Help for African People through Education). In the early 1990s, SHAPE organized a bus tour of the most dangerous places around Houston. These were places that the organization was looking to have demolished as they were rife with criminal activity.¹⁰² One of the locations visited on this tour were 22 shotgun houses in the Third Ward district. At the time of the tour, Lowe agreed with the consensus that these houses should be demolished for the benefit of the neighborhood.¹⁰³ It was afterwards that Lowe began to think about the form of these houses and their relationship to the African American community. Lowe grew up in Alabama and the form of the shotgun house must have been familiar to him, but he attributes his understanding of the house form having African American roots to conversations with the painter John Biggers, a Houston artist with ties to Texas Southern University. It was through looking at Biggers' interpretations of these house forms in paintings that Lowe began to see them as being representative of Black culture, and it was this representational form, combined with Beuys' idea of social sculpture, that gave Lowe the jumping off point for the creation of Project Row Houses. Understanding the impetus for Projects Row Houses is important because it has become a model for many of the community arts projects that have followed.

Once Lowe had the inspiration to do work with these shotgun house forms, he brought in the six other artists who were interested in the idea. They took the idea to

¹⁰² Tom Finkelpearl, *What We Made: Conversations on Art and Social Cooperation*, (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2013) 135.

¹⁰³ Finkelpearl, *What We Made*, 136.

DiverseWorks, an alternative art space located in Houston, and it was through discussions with DiverseWorks that the concept took on the possibility of being sustainable rather than just a single intervention into the neighborhood.¹⁰⁴ Lowe and his collaborators drafted a grant application for funding from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) but by Lowe's own admission their proposal was a bit farfetched at the time, especially since they had not yet acquired the property.¹⁰⁵ The NEA didn't reject the proposal outright but offered a letter of support to help the artists negotiate the acquisition of the houses. Their initial proposal was focused on the preservation of the structures and the reinterpretation of the forms into art space to bring artists from all over the country to work within the Houston community.¹⁰⁶

The seven artists and some volunteers from Diverseworks set to work cleaning up and rehabilitating the buildings, but Lowe understood from the beginning that to make Project Row Houses successful they would need outside involvement in the project.¹⁰⁷ The neighborhood was widely considered to be unsafe and many people around the city went out of their way to avoid it. As a way to bring people into the neighborhood and get them interested in the work they were doing, Lowe and his fellow artists conceived of a drive-by exhibition in which the shotgun houses were activated with art that was viewable from the street.¹⁰⁸ Drive-by shootings were a big topic in the news in the early 90s and this connection garnered media attention for this different type of drive-by.¹⁰⁹ After the drive-by exhibition, Lowe and his fellow artists offered a House Challenge in

¹⁰⁴ Finkelpearl, *What We Made*, 137-138.

¹⁰⁵ Finkelpearl, *What We Made*, 138.

¹⁰⁶ Finkelpearl, *What We Made*, 138.

¹⁰⁷ Finkelpearl, *What We Made*, 139.

¹⁰⁸ Lowe, "Big Ideas in Art and Culture," 14:26.

¹⁰⁹ Lowe, "Big Ideas in Art and Culture," 14:47.

which they engaged different organizations to help renovate the houses one at a time into suitable art space.¹¹⁰

Project Row Houses' first community involvement activities were through artist projects and youth educational activities. These projects were focused around issues within the community and outside artists would engage with the neighborhood to create works that spoke to issues the community was currently facing.¹¹¹ The educational outreach activities were aimed at getting the youth of the neighborhood to think about their community and to participate in neighborhood betterment activities such as house research, property acquisition, and building renovation.¹¹² After becoming more embedded within the community, Lowe realized that housing was a major issue that needed to be addressed. At the time, fifteen of the shotgun houses out of the twenty-two were being utilized, with ten designated for arts programming and five used for educational outreach. It was decided that the remaining seven houses would address affordable housing needs within the neighborhood. In order for the housing to operate within the context of Project Row Houses, Lowe needed it to function symbolically in addition to meeting the practical needs of housing. Lowe developed a program of transitional housing for single mothers called the Young Mothers Program.¹¹³ This program turned the necessity of housing into a reality, altering experience and stretching the limitations of what these women believed was possible for them. Through this project they were offered the support to make real change within their lives.

Affordable housing is a big issue within the Third Ward neighborhood. Project Row Houses is located in the shadow of downtown Houston, and the campuses of Texas Medical Center and several universities like Texas Southern University and the

¹¹⁰ Lowe, "Big Ideas in Art and Culture," 14:58.

¹¹¹ Lowe, "Big Ideas in Art and Culture," 16:30.

¹¹² Lowe, "Big Ideas in Art and Culture," 19:40.

¹¹³ Project Row Houses Website, Under Programs, Social Safety Nets, Accessed September 4, 2017, <https://projectrowhouses.org/social-safety-nets/>

University of Houston are encroaching on the neighborhood.¹¹⁴ Intuitively, Project Row Houses had been buying property around their immediate neighborhood and in the early 2000s were in a position to try to combat some of the displacement that was happening.¹¹⁵ Project Row Houses had several projects for land acquisition and housing in the works simultaneously. They had been working with local homeowners, fixing up their houses in exchange for the right of first refusal if they decided to sell their property.¹¹⁶ They moved homes that would otherwise be demolished to their property to allow for housing reuse, and they partnered with Rice University's Architecture Department to create a design for low-income housing units that were sensitive to the neighborhood's history and took cues from the neighborhood's shotgun houses.¹¹⁷

Although these housing projects were essential to maintaining the community's identity, Lowe found that the issue of housing was distracting from the original objectives of Project Row Houses as a community arts initiative. This led to the creation of the Row House Community Development Corporation, a separate entity focused entirely on housing initiatives.¹¹⁸

The Row Houses Community Development Corporation (RHCDC) has to date had four phases of low to moderate income housing production. All of the units created by the RHCDC are based on a design created in conjunction with Rice University's Rice Building Workshop. The initial development took place in 2004 and was created in response to an expressed need by women exiting the Young Mother's Residency Program for affordable housing and a desire to remain in the neighborhood. The project consisted of four 2 bedroom duplexes on the 2400 block of Division, which is located directly

¹¹⁴ Lowe, "Big Ideas in Art and Culture," 26:00.

¹¹⁵ Lowe, "Big Ideas in Art and Culture," 22:55 & 27:20.

¹¹⁶ Lowe, "Big Ideas in Art and Culture," 28:45.

¹¹⁷ Lowe, "Big Ideas in Art and Culture," 30:04 & 29:23.

¹¹⁸ Rick Lowe, "Big Ideas in Art and Culture: Rick Lowe," 31:43.

behind Project Row Houses. In 2008, a second phase of building took place on the 2400 block of Francis Street, directly behind the Division street duplexes. The land for this project was purchased with the support of the Houston Endowment and the buildings were constructed in a partnership with the City of Houston, Amegy Bank, and the Midtown Redevelopment Authority. This development produced eight duplexes, which provide sixteen, 700-900 square foot units with 2 to 3 bedrooms, suitable for larger families. In 2010, in partnership with the Midtown Redevelopment Authority, RHCDC undertook a two phase development. This project created four duplexes, eight, 730 square foot, 2 bedroom apartments on the 3400 block of Anita Street. These initial four duplexes are reflective of the earlier development styles but have larger front porches and have added back porches to the houses. The second phase of this project includes fifteen to seventeen duplexes containing thirty to thirty-four, 730-900 square foot, 2-3 bedroom units and is located at the 3400 block of Tuam and Drew Streets, bordered between Napoleon and Canfield.¹¹⁹

The fight against Gentrification

Although low income housing work has been separated from the initial Project Row Houses by the formation of the Row Houses Development Corporation, this investment in low income housing is now making a large difference in the fight against gentrification that is taking place within the third ward neighborhood.

The Third Ward neighborhood in Houston, Texas has been a primary area of settlement for African Americans since shortly after the end of slavery.¹²⁰ It was here that a group of African Americans, led by Reverend Jack Yates, raised \$1000 dollars to purchase 10 acres of open land in 1872 for celebration of Juneteenth, a holiday created by

¹¹⁹ All information in this paragraph taken from Row Houses Community Development Corporation website, accessed March 29, 2017, <http://www.rowhousecdc.org>

¹²⁰ Ezell Wilson, "Third Ward, Steeped in Tradition of Self Reliance and Achievement," When there Were Wards: A Series, In Houston History, Volume 8, Number 2, accessed January 12, 2017, <https://www.math.uh.edu/champ/images/Wilson.pdf>

African Americans to celebrate the end of slavery. They named this park Emancipation Park in honor of their freedom, and it was the only park available for use by African Americans in Houston until 1939.¹²¹ The Third Ward was the center of civil rights activity in Houston and is home to many important Black institutions such as Texas Southern University (formerly the Colored Junior College, 1927), Riverside Hospital, and dozens of prominent churches.¹²² The Third Ward has also been home to a thriving music scene which began with blues musicians like Sam “Lightnin” Hopkins and Arnett Cobb, who played at a music venue called the Eldorado Ballroom (now owned by Project Row Houses), and has continued its musical legacy by producing perhaps the most popular singer of our time, Beyoncé.¹²³

The Third Ward neighborhood has already experienced development activity and raising property values. This activity has coalesced the neighborhood into developing strategies to combat displacement and try to control gentrification activity. Project Row Houses worked together with the Emancipation Economic Development Council (EEDC) and a group of Urban Studies and Planning students from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) on a study which determined that about a quarter of the land in the Third Ward was owned by public entities, non-profits and religious organizations.¹²⁴ State representative Garnet Coleman, who is from the Greater Third Ward neighborhood, has also been working with the Midtown Redevelopment Authority to buy property

¹²¹ The City of Houston official website, Our Parks > Emancipation Park, accessed August 7, 2017, <http://www.houstontx.gov/parks/parksites/emancipationpark.html>

¹²² City of Houston, Texas, Planning & Development Department, Super Neighborhood Resource Assessment, The Greater Third Ward No. 67, accessed January 12, 2017, http://www.houstontx.gov/planning/Demographics/docs_pdfs/SN/67_Greater_ThirdWard.pdf

¹²³ Claudia Feldman, “Third Ward: The Epicenter of Houston’s Fight for Racial Equality,” In the Houston Chronicle, August 22, 2014, accessed January 12, 2017, <http://www.houstonchronicle.com/life/article/Third-Ward-The-epicenter-of-Houston-s-fight-for-5706658.php#photo-6761861>

¹²⁴ Leah Blinkovitz, “Third Ward Looks to Shift Gentrification Conversation,” The Urban Edge: Stories About Why Cities Are Great, And How They Can Be Better, From The Kinder Institute for Urban Research, May 25, 2016, accessed August 4, 2017, <https://urbanedge.blogs.rice.edu/2016/05/25/third-ward-looks-to-shift-the-gentrification-conversation/#.WbR4NrKGPIX>

within the Third Ward which will be sold to developers with the stipulation that they build affordable single family homes and apartment buildings. The Midtown Redevelopment Authority now owns 3.5 million square feet of land in the Third Ward.¹²⁵ It is hoped that through a majority land ownership, and educating property owners, the Third Ward neighborhood can begin to control the types of development that happen within the neighborhood.

Project Row Houses has been incredibly successful at preserving both physical and social aspects of community in the Third Ward neighborhood. While the physical preservation of buildings is secondary to the larger social mission, Project Row Houses has found a way to use the symbolic aspects of the history of their structures to create services specific to the current community. This project has also been incredibly influential in the realm of Community Art and has influenced many subsequent projects including the work being done by Theaster Gates in Chicago.

Theaster Gates, Dorchester Projects, Chicago, Illinois



Figure 2. (left) The front of the original Dorchester Projects buildings, Photo by Sabrina Ferry, September 2017

¹²⁵ Leah Blinkovitz, "Third Ward Looks to Shift Gentrification Conversation," *The Urban Edge: Stories About Why Cities Are Great, And How They Can Be Better*, From The Kinder Institute for Urban Research, May 25, 2016, accessed August 4, 2017, <https://urbanedge.blogs.rice.edu/2016/05/25/third-ward-looks-to-shift-the-gentrification-conversation/#.WbR4NrKGPIX>

Figure 3. (right) Rear view of the original Dorchester Projects buildings, Photo by Sabrina Ferry, September 2017

Theaster Gates started Dorchester Projects in 2009 with the purchase of the house adjacent to his own in the Greater Grand Crossing neighborhood of Chicago, Illinois. The project has since grown to include six structures, all adaptively reused buildings. Unlike Lowe, whose goal from the start was to help revitalize and sustain an existing community, Gates' work was led by the overarching goal of redefining for the greater public what a minority neighborhood can be. He does this in a way which reinforces the existing culture of the neighborhood as opposed to creating a vehicle for gentrification by replacing it, and in the original spirit of the Community Art movement, through redistributing power from the elite art world.

Theaster Gates is a native Chicagoan, having grown up on Chicago's Westside.¹²⁶ He moved into a former sweets shop on Dorchester Avenue in Chicago's Southside in 2006 after starting a position at the University of Chicago. Gates began rehabilitating the building to prepare for a variety of programmatic uses. Gates used repurposed and salvaged material for his adaptive reuse of the sweets shop, such as a set of 18th century hand-carved doors from China, "ware boards" from the nearby Wrigley chewing gum factory (formerly used to dry gum) as interior wall cladding, and salvaged bowling alley flooring. Gates programmed his newly renovated house with a ceramics studio, a design lab, a rehearsal space, living space for an artist-in-residence, and a communal kitchen.¹²⁷ After the economic collapse in 2008, the two and a half story house adjacent to Gates' went on the market and was purchased by Gates for \$18,000 dollars using his own

¹²⁶ Theaster Gates, "How to Revive a Neighborhood: with Imagination Beauty, and Art," TED2015, March 2015, Accessed on July 22, 2017, https://www.ted.com/talks/theaster_gates_how_to_revive_a_neighborhood_with_imagination_beauty_and_art#t-184026, 3:30.

¹²⁷ HesseMcGraw, "Theaster Gates: Radical Reform with Everyday Tools." *Afterall: A Journal of Art, Context and Enquiry*, Issue 30 (Summer 2012), 92.

savings.¹²⁸ Although Gates had been referring to his own house as Dorchester Projects for a while, the addition of this new more public space was the official start to Gates expanding his practice into the realm of community art.¹²⁹



Figure 4. The interior of the first floor of the Archive House, Photo taken by Sabrina Ferry, August 2017

Gates says in his 2015 TED talk that he didn't have a set plan when purchasing the house. An article from 2012 claims his initial intention was to turn the house into a 'soul food pavilion' which would contain both restaurant and performance space.¹³⁰ This is reiterated in Gates' TED talk where he discusses holding exhibitions and dinners in the house. He goes on to emphasize the importance of the realization that the building was becoming a gathering space where people of various backgrounds could come together to share ideas in a place which, prior to the dinners, important individuals within the city would consider unsafe, and that these experiences were changing their perception of the

¹²⁸ Gates, "How to Revive a Neighborhood," 4:34.

¹²⁹ Claire Doherty, "Theaster Gates: Dorchester Projects," *In Out of Time, Out of Place: Public Art (Now)*, ed. Claire Doherty, (United Kingdom: Art Books Publishing Ltd, 2015), 167.

¹³⁰ McGraw, "Theaster Gates: Radical Reform with Everyday Tools."92.

neighborhood.¹³¹ Gates latched on to this idea and realized that he could play a role in changing how low-income minority neighborhoods are perceived.¹³² At the time this building was being renovated, Gates received an offer from the University of Chicago's Art History Department to house 80,000 glass slides depicting Western art history.¹³³ This offer caused Gates to re-envision this structure as a home to "bodies of knowledge." The building was structurally reinforced to be able to house this collection and was renamed as the Archive House. The archive house also came to contain 14,000 books about art and architecture from the former Prairie Avenue Bookstore, as well as a collection of 8,000 records from the local Dr. Wax record stores when they closed.¹³⁴ Gates added a third building to his project, Black Cinema House, which hosted regular films, video workshops, and soul food dinners. Gates now had three buildings on the block: Archive House, Black Cinema House, and his original home on Dorchester (the sweets shop), which became Listening House. Gates named these buildings with their descriptors in order to allow them to fill a symbolic role within the neighborhood. Their names announce their utility as amenities to those in the neighborhood.¹³⁵

In 2010, Gates established the Rebuild Foundation, a non-profit organization through which could extend his studio practice into the realm of social engagement.¹³⁶ The Rebuild Foundation has since taken on several other projects in the neighborhood: The Dorchester Arts and Housing Collaborative, which is Gates' version of a housing initiative; a workforce training program located in an old electric station building; and the

¹³¹ Theaster Gates, "How to Revive a Neighborhood," 4:55.

¹³² Theaster Gates, "How to Revive a Neighborhood," 5:11-5:30.

¹³³ McGraw, "Theaster Gates: Radical Reform with Everyday Tools," 92.

¹³⁴ Doherty, "Theaster Gates: Dorchester Projects," 167.

¹³⁵ Claire Doherty, "Theaster Gates: Dorchester Projects," 167.

¹³⁶ Claire Doherty, "Theaster Gates: Dorchester Projects," 167; Rebuild Foundation website, About, Accessed July 23, 2017, <https://rebuild-foundation.org/about/our-story/>

Stony Island Arts Bank, which is a continuation of the work he was doing with the original Dorchester Projects initiative.



Figure 5. (left) Dorchester Arts + Housing Collaborative entryway addition, Photo taken by Sabrina Ferry, August 2017

Figure 6. (right) Example of Dorchester Arts + Housing Collaborative apartments, Photo taken by Sabrina Ferry, August 2017

The Dorchester Arts + Housing Collaborative (DA + HC) is located within a few city blocks of the original Dorchester Projects site. It is located in a former housing complex which had been abandoned and boarded up when Gates first conceived of the project in 2011.¹³⁷ This housing complex consists of two-story rowhouse style apartments. During the rehabilitation of the building, four apartments were removed in a central location to create a community space and large kitchen to be utilized by residents and the surrounding community. The apartments are an equal mix of artist, public, affordable rate, and market rate housing.¹³⁸ The Rebuild Foundation undertook this project in partnership with the Chicago Housing Authority, Brinshore Development, and Landon Bone Baker Architects.¹³⁹

¹³⁷ Rebuild Foundation website, About, Accessed July 23, 2017, <https://rebuild-foundation.org/about/our-story/>

¹³⁸ Rebuild Foundation website, Projects > Dorchester Arts + Housing Collaborative, Accessed July 23, 2017, <https://rebuild-foundation.org/about/our-story/>

¹³⁹ Rebuild Foundation website, Projects > Dorchester Arts + Housing Collaborative, Accessed July 23, 2017, <https://rebuild-foundation.org/about/our-story/>



Figure 7. Former electric station building that is the current home of Workforce training program. Photo taken by Sabrina Ferry, August 2017

Gates' workforce training programs started when the City of Chicago was looking for a productive use for the Ash trees felled as a result of the destruction caused by the Ash Borer beetle. The program developed by Gates hired individuals from the Greater Grand Crossing, Woodlawn, and Washington Park neighborhoods to learn from master carpenters how to mill the trees and build furniture.¹⁴⁰ This program has grown since its inception and has moved into a purpose-built mill located in a former electric substation building, which is part of a complex of PowerStation buildings located directly behind the Archive House and the Listening House. This workforce training program has expanded into a larger training program which has become Dorchester Industries, a program which connects artisans, craftspersons, and contractors with residents on the Southside of Chicago to teach them building and craft skills.¹⁴¹ Gates has also created a workforce trained in construction to work on his projects within the neighborhood and

¹⁴⁰ Rebuild Foundation website, Projects > The Ash Project, accessed July 23, 2017, <https://rebuild-foundation.org/site/the-ash-project/>

¹⁴¹ Robin Scher, "Theaster Gates Starts Artisan and Craft Training Program in Chicago," November 1, 2016, *Art News*, accessed August 8, 2017, <http://www.artnews.com/2016/11/01/theaster-gates-starts-artisan-and-craft-workforce-training-program-in-chicago/>

has his eye on the Barack Obama Presidential Library, which will be built just blocks from the Stony Island Arts Bank.¹⁴²



Figure 8. The Stony Island Arts Bank, Photo taken by Sabrina Ferry, August 2017

Stony Island Arts Bank was acquired by Gates from the City of Chicago in 2013, and represents an ambitious advancement of many of Gates' earlier projects. The 1923 neoclassical structure had sat vacant for the past 30 years during which time several skylights gave way allowing rain and snow to accumulate in the interior of the building. Seventeen different developers had tried and failed to develop a profitable business model for the structure and demolition seemed imminent.¹⁴³ With the support of Chicago Mayor Rahm Emmanuel, Gates purchased the building from the city for a single

¹⁴² Hilarie M. Sheets, "Using Discards to build Art (And Rebuild a City)," *New York Times*, Art and Design, March 14, 2017, accessed September 9, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/03/14/arts/design/theaster-gates-national-gallery-of-art-chicago.html?mcubz=0>

¹⁴³ Anneta Konstantinides, "Chicago Artist Pays \$1 For Disintegrating South Side Bank and Turns it into an Amazing Community Center Complete with a Bar, Gallery, Music Venue and Library," *Dailymail.com*, October 20, 2015, accessed August 10, 2017, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3280165/Chicago-artist-transforms-1-amazing-community-center.html>

dollar.¹⁴⁴ Gates proposed turning the structure into a community center and cultural archive for the community, continuing the work he had been doing on a smaller scale with Dorchester Projects. The Stony Island Bank building is located within just a few blocks of the original Dorchester Projects site and has become the new home for archives and bodies of knowledge within the neighborhood. Gates moved the collections originally stored in the Archive house to the Stony Island Arts Bank building and added the additional collections of The Johnson Publishing Archive and Collections (Johnson Publishing produced both *Ebony* and *Jet* magazine), the Edward J. Williams Collection of racist memorabilia (purchased with the intent to remove it from the market), and the Frankie Knuckles' (the godfather of House Music) vinyl collection.¹⁴⁵ All of the collections gathered by Gates are specific to the history of African Americans in Chicago, and housing them within an African American community allows that community to become stewards of their own culture.



Figure 9. (left) Interior main hall of the Stony Island Arts Bank, Photo taken by Sabrina Ferry, August 2017

Figure 10. (right) The Johnson Publishing Archive and Collections, Photo taken by Sabrina Ferry, August 2017

¹⁴⁴ Melissa Harris, "First Look Inside Theaster Gates' New Stony Island Art Bank," September 4, 2015, accessed June 5, 2017, <http://www.chicagotribune.com/business/ct-harris-theaster-gates-arts-bank-0906-biz-20150904-column.html>

¹⁴⁵ The Archive house is in a state of transition and is currently being utilized as a ceramics studio for Gates' workforce program.

Gates, like Lowe, is working to strengthen community, but where Lowe is reframing community preservation activities within the context of art, Gates is using the elite art world and his connections within it to funnel funds into a low-income community that the art world would otherwise have no interest in. Gates' art practice and his community work are intertwined. He has been unabashedly open about the cyclical way in which his projects are funded. Gates makes art from materials from the buildings he rehabilitates and sells those pieces to fund the rehabilitation work he is doing within the neighborhood.¹⁴⁶ If a donor wants to contribute monetarily to Gates' community work he directs them to his galleries, letting them know that the funds from the sale of his work go toward the work he is doing in the Greater Grand Crossing neighborhood. The most elegant example of this was done to raise funds for the rehabilitation of the Stony Island Bank Building. Here Gates removed a marble slab from a bathroom wall and carved it into "bond notes" which he then sold for between \$5,000 and \$50,000 a piece.¹⁴⁷ This move translates the building from being a storehouse for thing of value to the value being in the building itself. Traditional preservation methods would never advocate for the loss of original materials, but Gates' symbolic understanding of the building as currency created a system by which the building was able to financially support its own rehabilitation. Gates' ability to leverage the artworld is tied to his reputation, but these examples show that there are alternative funding methods which can utilize the symbolic history of a building.

A criticism of Gates' project is that it does not follow traditional community outreach methods. His initial Dorchester Projects was framed more around bringing important individuals from the elite art world and the city government into the neighborhood. Efforts to consult with specific individuals from the greater Grand Crossing neighborhood seemed to come after interest in his interventions was cultivated.

¹⁴⁶ Ben Austen, "Chicago's Opportunity Artist," *New York Times*, December 20, 2013, Accessed November 26, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/22/magazine/chicagos-opportunity-artist.html>

¹⁴⁷ Nikil Saval, "Three Artists Who Think Outside the Box: How Theaster Gates, Mark Bradford and Rick Lowe are Changing What Art Can – And Should – Do For the World," *New York Times*, December 3, 2015, Accessed November 25, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/12/03/t-magazine/art/theaster-gates-mark-bradford-rick-low-profile.html>

I see this as a product of Gates' pulled back, big picture view of what he wanted to achieve from community interaction. This differs from Lowe's hands on, ground up method of community interaction and, as a result, the project has taken a different form, but one that is no less important and offers a useful precedent for preservationists.

Tyree Guyton, The Heidelberg Project, Detroit, Michigan



Figure 11. The Number House at the Heidelberg Project, Photo taken by Sabrina Ferry, August 2017

The Heidelberg project started by Tyree Guyton falls more within the realm of artistic expression than the previous two case studies but shares the important motivations of social practice art. Guyton's project differs greatly from the work done by both Rick Lowe and Theaster Gates in its personal nature, its execution, its reuse of the built environment, and its community interaction, but it has had an undeniable impact on the neighborhood in which it is situated. Guyton's neighborhood and building interventions are sculptural assemblages of abandoned objects: abandoned buildings, household items, toys, clothing and more, all assembled into works of sculpture that are imbued with meaning by the artist. The Heidelberg project is a product of its placement within the city of Detroit. Detroit has experienced loss of economic resources and city abandonment on a

level never seen before in the United States. This environment of change and instability has had a marked effect on the way the city has reacted to the project since its inception.

Tyree Guyton started the Heidelberg Project in 1986 as a reaction to the blight that had taken hold in his neighborhood. Unlike Rick Lowe or Theaster Gates, Guyton grew up on the street on which he founded his project. This personal relationship to the neighborhood makes his project inherently a very personal artistic expression. Guyton returned to his neighborhood in 1985 after doing a stint in the Army to find it overrun with drugs and prostitution. When discussing the origins of the project, Guyton remarked “that people were a reflection of what’s around them – a broken neighborhood. [He asked] how do I make sense of the craziness, chaos. I need to turn it around, into something.”¹⁴⁸ Guyton had pursued the arts with the encouragement of his grandfather since he was eight years old. Guyton was one of ten children raised by a single mother who had little time to nurture his artistic pursuits. It was Guyton’s grandfather, a house painter, who put a paintbrush in his hand and took him to places like the Detroit Institute of Art. After getting out of the army, Guyton took night classes with Detroit artist Charles McGee at the College of Creative Studies.¹⁴⁹ McGee encouraged him to engage with abstraction and introduced him to working with found objects. One day, as Guyton was routinely cleaning his brushes against the side of an abandoned building in his neighborhood, he had the inspiration for what would become the Heidelberg project.¹⁵⁰

When Guyton and his then wife Karen began this project it was in response to the blight and crime they saw each time they looked out their window.¹⁵¹ They collected

¹⁴⁸ Deborah Che, “Connecting the Dots to Urban Revitalization with the Heidelberg Project” *Materials Culture*, Vol. 39, No. 1, (Spring 2007), 33.

¹⁴⁹ Melanie L. Buffington, “Art to Bring about Change: The Work of Tyree Guyton,” *Art Education*, Vol. 60, No. 4 (July 2007), 26.

¹⁵⁰ Melanie L. Buffington, “Art to Bring about Change,” 26.

¹⁵¹ Oprah Winfrey Show, Tyree Guyton on the Oprah Winfrey Show, You Tube, accessed 09/08/2107, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnhRJIw-aON0kvbeUDM4SKA>

refuse from around their neighborhood and began to adorn the abandoned houses using these found materials. In addition to these assemblages, Guyton painted the houses, the objects, and the streets and sidewalks, in bold, bright colors to bring vibrancy and liveliness into the neighborhood. Not everyone in the neighborhood was excited about the interventions and many of the neighbors were bewildered by what Guyton was doing. His neighbor, Otila Bell, was so upset by the project that she contacted the Oprah Winfrey show and she, Guyton, and his wife Karen appeared on an episode about feuding neighbors.¹⁵²



Figure 12. (left) The Dotty Wotty House, Photo taken by Sabrina Ferry, August 2017

Figure 13. (right) The sculptures of Heidelberg Project, Photo taken by Sabrina Ferry, August 2017

The City of Detroit has also taken issue with the project and has on two separate occasions demolished large sections of it. The first demolitions happened in 1991 during which the project lost five of Guyton's houses turned art pieces. The names of the houses lost during the first demolition were: Baby Doll House, Face House, Your World (house), Fun House, and Truck Stop (house).¹⁵³ These first demolitions were ordered by Mayor Coleman Young during a time when the city of Detroit had over 35,000 abandoned

¹⁵² Oprah Winfrey Show, Tyree Guyton on the Oprah Winfrey Show, You Tube, accessed 09/08/2107, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnhRJlw-aON0kvbeUDM4SKA>

¹⁵³ Margret Grace, Individual tour of the Heidelberg Project given to author, Detroit, Michigan, June 23, 2017.

housing units.¹⁵⁴ The City again chose to demolish parts of the Heidelberg project in 1999, mobilizing police, helicopters, city workers, and bulldozers, just 90 minutes after a temporary restraining order had expired.¹⁵⁵ This demolition resulted in the loss of the Canfield House.¹⁵⁶ Understandably, Guyton saw these demolitions not as an attempt to clean up a neighborhood, but as a personal attack against the project. In a statement issued by the Project in 2005 they point to how the city cannot afford to plow snow but had the ability to quickly mobilize to destroy a site which had become a major tourist attraction.¹⁵⁷

Another hazard that has plagued the project is arson. Almost all of the houses involved in the project had been abandoned and were subject to occupancy by homeless individuals or others. During October, November, and December of 2013 the project lost: Obstruction of Justice House, War Room (house), Penny House, House of Soul, Party Animal House, and Clock House. In 2015 the Project lost 1 2 3 House, and in 2016, Birthday Cake House.¹⁵⁸ Despite the many losses, Guyton kept rebuilding and reworking the project. Many of the houses lost to arson have little left but their foundations. Guyton has adorned these house remnants with objects. These decorated foundations seem to stand in memoriam to the houses that formerly stood there and the lives that once took place inside them. Guyton's project has symbolic themes that run through his many pieces. Shoes, for example, are used in abundance and can represent those who are no longer there, or speak to lynchings in the south when they are hung in trees. Brightly

¹⁵⁴ Deborah Che, "Connecting the Dots to Urban Revitalization," 41.

¹⁵⁵ Deborah Che, "Connecting the Dots to Urban Revitalization," 41.

¹⁵⁶ Margret Grace, Individual tour of the Heidelberg Project given to author, Detroit, Michigan, June 23, 2017.

¹⁵⁷ Deborah Che, "Connecting the Dots to Urban Revitalization," 41.

¹⁵⁸ Margret Grace, Individual tour of the Heidelberg Project given to author, Detroit, Michigan, June 23, 2017.

colored polka dots are another theme which simultaneously symbolize racial harmony and are reminiscent of Guyton’s grandfather who loved jelly beans.¹⁵⁹

Almost since its inception, the Heidelberg Project has lured visitors from all over the world. Currently The Heidelberg Project has the second highest visitation rate for an art related tourist attraction in the city of Detroit, second only to the Detroit Institute of Arts.¹⁶⁰ The project brings about 275,000 people annually from 90 countries, creating cultural exchange opportunities typically unavailable to the residents of this mostly African American neighborhood.¹⁶¹



Figure 14. (left) A house at the Heidelberg Project, Photo taken by Sabrina Ferry, August 2017

Figure 15. (right) The reinterpretation of the remains of Obstruction of Justice House (lost to arson), Photo taken by Sabrina Ferry, August 2017

Guyton conceives of his work as both the physical art objects and the ongoing arts-based community building and neighborhood revitalization projects undertaken by the non-profit organization he created together with Jenenne Whitfield, the current

¹⁵⁹ Melanie L. Buffington, “Art to Bring about Change,” 26.

¹⁶⁰ Melanie L. Buffington, “Art to Bring about Change,” 36.

¹⁶¹ Deborah Che, “Connecting the Dots to Urban Revitalization,” 40.

director of the Heidelberg non-profit.¹⁶² The mission of the Heidelberg Project “is to empower people through art and specifically develop innovative ways to use art as a catalyst to halt the decline of the east side neighborhood affected by drugs, prostitution, gangs and crime, by preserving its homes, discouraging crime and offering new hope to its residents.”¹⁶³

During my visit to the project I learned that Guyton has employed members of the community to do odd jobs around the project, such as painting and lawn mowing. Several residents have found ways to generate income from the numerous visitors the project attracts. Otila Bell, who brought Tyree Guyton onto the Oprah Winfrey Show, sells beverages to visitors and lets them sign her house for a dollar donation. Other individuals panhandle for money from visitors. This community involvement in The Heidelberg Project raises the question of what will happen to the neighborhood when the project disappears. Guyton announced in August of 2016 that the project would begin to be dismantled in an effort to shrink its footprint and become more “green.”¹⁶⁴ The project has received money to do an extensive renovation on the Number House, completely gutting the inside and making the house habitable. It currently has no heat or running water, and the upper floors are too unstable to occupy. The organization hasn’t announced what will happen with the overall project, but there is concern that any positive influence the project has had will most likely disappear if the project disappears.

¹⁶² Deborah Che, “Connecting the Dots to Urban Revitalization,” 26; Jenenne Whitfield, Heidelberg Project, TEDx Talk Oakland University, You Tube, accessed September 8, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H2Tiv6JoOEU>

¹⁶³ Deborah Che, “Connecting the Dots to Urban Revitalization,” 40.

¹⁶⁴ James David Dickson, “Detroit’s Iconic Heidelberg Project to be Dismantled,” The Detroit News, August 14, 2016, Accessed August 3, 2017, <http://www.detroitnews.com/story/entertainment/arts/2016/08/14/detroits-iconic-heidelberg-project-dismantled/88722336/>



Figure 16. Otila Bell's House at the Heidelberg Project, Photo taken by Sabrina Ferry, August 2017

The Heidelberg Project is a major work of public art that has had a profound impact on a neighborhood for decades, and the legacy of the Heidelberg project leaves two main questions for preservationists: Should aspects of the project be preserved? And how could the preservation field help to facilitate a grassroots effort like this project to achieve the objectives of a new social justice-seeking preservation effort?

Realistically, this project could have had an entirely different outcome if the city of Detroit had embraced the project and used policy to support the work Guyton was doing within his neighborhood rather than rushing to destroy the project. This project was generating international press and tourism, bringing attention to what was happening within the city of Detroit which could have been capitalized on. Guyton tried on several occasions to purchase the abandoned lots which his artworks occupied but was continually denied the option of purchasing the properties. This project, more than the work of Lowe or Gates, illustrates a missed opportunity by the City of Detroit to be supportive of grassroots efforts at revitalization. Could zoning have been changed to allow for the development of a business that could have been supported by tourist activity, bringing funds into the neighborhood and putting residents to work? In any case, the Heidelberg Project represents an interesting contrast to Lowe's and Gates' work, and

illustrates that preservation can benefit communities by developing policies which act in support of neighborhood efforts.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS

This section looks at each project individually and analyzes it based on the evaluation criteria put forth by preservationists, described in detail in the introduction. After analyzing each project individually, a comparison will be given of all three case studies.

Project Row Houses Analysis

Analysis Criteria A – Doctrine Change

The main campus of Project Row Houses is composed of twenty-two shotgun houses built in the 1930s as tenant shacks.¹⁶⁵ The neighborhood sought to have these houses demolished for their role in harboring criminal activity within the neighborhood. The formation of Project Row Houses saved these buildings from near certain demolition, and reuse and retention of the buildings was a key objective at the core of the project's mission. Although it is oriented towards preservation, Project Row Houses has not engaged with formal systems of preservation for the twenty-two shotgun houses. In addition, Project Row Houses owns the Eldorado Ballroom, a historic venue for entertainment which housed Black Social Clubs and was built in 1939 in the streamline modern style.¹⁶⁶ This property is being considered for local landmark status but is not yet nominated and is not listed on the National Register.¹⁶⁷ In addition to these historic properties, Project Row Houses has worked to provide affordable housing options within the neighborhood. These newly constructed buildings were designed based on the form of

¹⁶⁵ Michael Kimmelman, "In Houston, Art Is Where the Homes Is," In the *New York Times*, December 17, 2006, Accessed December 19, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/12/17/arts/design/17kimm.html>

¹⁶⁶ Texas State Historical Association, Handbook of Texas Online, Roger Wood, "Eldorado Ballroom," accessed September 06, 2017, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/xde02>.

¹⁶⁷ Department of Urban Studies and Planning at MIT, "Emancipation Park Neighborhood: Strategies for Community-Led Regeneration in the Third Ward," Prepared for the Emancipation Economic Development Council, June 2016, 115.

the shotgun house. These buildings are an important part of the project's work but would not be considered eligible for listing on the National Register because they are new construction and have not reached the fifty year age requirement.

Both the shotgun houses and the Eldorado Ballroom building would be eligible for listing on the National Register. They are at least 50 years of age, retain historical integrity on the exterior, and have local significance to the City of Houston and the Third Ward District.

1. *Expand the definition of preservation.*¹⁶⁸

Expanding the definition of what constitutes preservation work could encourage Project Row Houses' engagement with designating its structures. It is possible that formal systems of designation have been avoided because of their limiting factors. In Robert Hammond's essay, "Lesson's from the High Line: Don't Preserve. Repurpose," Hammond remarks that, in the case of the High Line project, current systems of preservation were not engaged because landmarking would have locked the project into reuses that would have been limiting. Hammond states, "By repurposing instead of preserving we would be able to honor the structure and maintain its essence, with the freedom to modify it for today's world."¹⁶⁹ Similar to the New York Highline Project, Lowe may have been hesitant to engage with the nomination of the rowhouses because this nomination could lock those buildings into representing their original appearance. This could limit the artistic freedom of artists who have painted messages on the outsides of the buildings, covered the exterior with hanging cups containing seeds, or as one artist did, pierce the entire structure with a tree trunk.

2. *Relax the criteria for integrity.*¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁸ Brown, "A Preservation Movement for All Americans," 59.

¹⁶⁹ Robert Hammond, "Lessons for the High Line: Don't Preserve. Repurpose.," In *Bending the Future: 50 Ideas for the Next 50 Years of Historic Preservation in the United States*, ed. Max Page and Marla L. Miller, (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2016), 104.

¹⁷⁰ Hurley, "Making Preservation work for Struggling Communities," 117.

The integrity, or physical materiality, of the shotgun houses and the Eldorado Ballroom appears to be intact and changes to this doctrine would not alter the buildings ability to be listed.

3. *Eliminate the need for a period of significance.*¹⁷¹

Eliminating the Period of Significance would not change the ability for the buildings of Project Row Houses to be listed on the National Register.

4. *Shorten, or do away with, the fifty year rule.*¹⁷²

Alteration of the fifty-year rule would not change the ability for the shotgun houses or the Eldorado Ballroom to be listed on the National Register, as they are all over fifty years of age.

Analysis Criteria B – Preservation Methods

1. *Shift focus from buildings to people and places.*¹⁷³

Although preservation goals were an aspect of Project Row Houses’ mission from its beginning, the focus of the project has always been on the reuse of structures with culturally specific ties to benefit and support the current community within the Third Ward neighborhood.

2. *Community engagement*¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Hurley, “Making Preservation work for Struggling Communities,” 117.

¹⁷² Joyner, “Should the NHPA Have a Greater Sense of Urgency,” 119.

¹⁷³ Wells, “Valuing Historic Places,” 6.; Kalven, “Preservation and Invisibility,” 124.

¹⁷⁴ Innes and Booher, “Using Local Knowledge for Justice and Resilience,” 2; Graves, “The Necessity of Interpretation,” 94.

Community engagement has, from the outset, been a key tool in the development of Project Row Houses. Lowe was initially involved with the community making art in an activist capacity, representing the concerns and issues of the community. Through his activist work he worked with community organizations. This put him in a prime position for engaging community organizations and representatives in the new project he was undertaking in the neighborhood.

3. *Creating collaborative relationships - working with preservation minded developers, realtors, city planners, economists, architects, artists, and organizations.*¹⁷⁵

Project Row Houses has understood the importance of outside involvement. At the outset of the project, the fledgling organization offered a House Challenge in which they engaged different organizations from around Houston to help renovate the houses.¹⁷⁶ Shows like the “drive-by exhibitions” and programs like artist residencies were used to get the word out about what was happening in the neighborhood and create interest and involvement in the project. Project Row Houses has partnered with nearby Rice University students in designing an affordable house form based on the historical style of the shotgun house to create affordable housing which speaks to the community’s cultural roots. And Project Row Houses has recently teamed up with the Emancipation Economic Development Council (EEDC) and Students from the Urban Studies and Planning department at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to create a resiliency plan for the neighborhood to evaluate methods accessible to the community that would allow for controlling the gentrification forces acting on the neighborhood.

Lowe has stated in a lecture that when he first began Project Row Houses he and his fellow artists had an understanding of how to engage in creating arts programming but that they were unsure how to implement social programs of education and housing. In the project’s development they chose to build these programs within the developing organization but in hindsight they would have been better off to partner with local

¹⁷⁵ Meeks, “Become a ‘Movement of Yes,’” 172.

¹⁷⁶ Lowe, “Big Ideas in Art and Culture: Rick Lowe,” 14:58.

organizations that were doing this work and played a supporting role in their endeavors.¹⁷⁷

Analysis Criteria C – Preservation Products

1. *Educationally Beneficial*¹⁷⁸

Project Row Houses is able to use the history of the shotgun house as a symbol of the African American community to support community activity. The history of the shotgun houses is not conveyed through historical plaques but is present to contextualize the project's programming within the African American community. This framing of historical association may not convey the name of the first owner or the date constructed but does more to socially solidify a neighborhood experiencing the effects of displacement and gentrification.

2. *Socially Beneficial*¹⁷⁹

Since its inception Project Row Houses has worked to be an asset within the Third Ward neighborhood. It has brought an active and vibrant arts scene into the neighborhood for all to engage with, it has tutoring programs to help children succeed in school, it has created a support structure for single mothers to improve their situation, it has begun to address the issue of affordable housing within the neighborhood in a way that supports the current community, and is an important player in the neighborhood's fight against gentrification.

It is important to keep in mind that the social benefits Project Row Houses provides are aimed at bolstering the current community. Lowe's project uses the symbolic role of the shotgun house to contextualize the activities that occur within them.

¹⁷⁷ Creative Time, "Creative Time Summit | In Conversation: Rick Lowe & Nato Thompson" Published on Nov 13, 2013, Accessed October 5, 2016, You Tube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loloNoVKDXE>, 9:33-11:00.

¹⁷⁸ Lubar, "Preservation Demands Interpretation," 153-154.

¹⁷⁹ Avrami, "From Passion to Public Policy," 50.

The shotgun house, being an African American house form, frames the activities of art, education, and transitional housing within the context of the black community, allowing these activities to be directly supportive of and representative of that community. In addition, the reinterpretation of the shotgun house form in the project's affordable housing helps to reinforce for whom that affordable housing is meant to serve.

3. *Maintain Usefulness within Community*¹⁸⁰

The buildings of Project Row Houses are programmed to be of service to the neighborhood. They are actively changing spaces-not time capsules.

Dorchester Projects Analysis

Analysis Criteria A – Doctrine Change

Dorchester Projects uses five existing built structures within the Greater Grand Crossing and South Shore neighborhoods. Out of these five buildings, one is currently listed on the National Register. The Stony Island Arts Bank, formerly the Stony Island Trust and Savings Bank Building, was placed on the National Register in 2013. Of the other four buildings, only the Kenwood Substation building, part of a Commonwealth Edison electrical complex built in the prairie style in the 1920s and designed by Hermann V. Von Holst, would be considered for inclusion on the National Register.¹⁸¹ This building is on the City of Chicago's survey inventory of significant places for having possibly significant architectural or historical features. Both the Listening House (the former candy shop which was Gates' original home) and the Archive House (a two and a

¹⁸⁰ Meeks, "Become a 'Movement of Yes,'" 172.

¹⁸¹ City of Chicago, Chicago Landmarks, South Shore Neighborhood, 6913 S Kenwood Ave., Accessed November 14, 2017, <https://webapps1.cityofchicago.org/landmarksweb/search/searchdetail.htm?pin=2023412073&formNumber=432001002>

half story residential building) have had their exteriors altered significantly from their original construction and would not be considered eligible. The Dorchester Arts + Housing Collaborative, town house style apartment complex, built in the 1980s does not meet the fifty-year mark.¹⁸² When the building was renovated, changes were made to the structure. The renovation was sensitive to the original look of the building but four apartments were removed at the center of the complex to create a community space. This change might not disqualify the building for listing when it reaches fifty-years of age, as the addition is differentiated from the original structure but the materials unite the new and old into a cohesive composition.

1. *Expand the definition of preservation.*¹⁸³

If this project lasts for a significant period of time or has a significant effect on the neighborhood it may soon be pertinent for preservationists to preserve the buildings associated with this project. If that becomes the case, an expanded definition of preservation would contribute to some of the buildings, which would typically not be eligible for listing, to be listed under this project.

2. *Relax the criteria for integrity.*¹⁸⁴

Relaxing the criteria for integrity would not change the ability for these buildings to be listed on the National Register.

3. *Eliminate the need for a period of significance.*¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² The American Institute of Architects, Dorchester Arts + Housing Collaborative, Landon Bone Baker Architects, Accessed November 24, 2017, <https://www.aia.org/showcases/14671-dorchester-art--housing-collaborative>

¹⁸³ Brown, "A Preservation Movement for All Americans," 59.

¹⁸⁴ Hurley, "Making Preservation work for Struggling Communities," 117.

¹⁸⁵ Hurley, "Making Preservation work for Struggling Communities," 117.

Shortening or eliminating the Period of Significance would not necessarily help these buildings to become listed on the National Register but it would help to tie the history of these buildings to the current surrounding community. The Greater Grand Crossing neighborhood was home to an Italian immigrant community until the 1950s and many of the historical structures eligible for listing were built to serve an entirely different cultural group. Expounding upon the significance of multiple historical associations up to the present helps to tie the significance of a structure to the current community.

4. *Shorten, or do away with, the fifty year rule.*¹⁸⁶

Removing or Shortening the fifty-year rule would not affect the listing availability of these buildings.

Analysis Criteria B – Preservation Methods

1. *Shift focus from buildings to people and places.*¹⁸⁷

Theaster Gates' project is focused on how abandoned properties within the Greater Grand Crossing neighborhood can become useful spaces which support the current community.

2. *Community engagement*¹⁸⁸

Theaster Gates' project did not involve community engagement from the outset. His work within the Greater Grand Crossing neighborhood had a more organic beginning which was catalyzed by the housing crisis of 2008. This economic collapse created an

¹⁸⁶ Joyner, "Should the NHPA Have a Greater Sense of Urgency," 119.

¹⁸⁷ Wells, "Valuing Historic Places," 6.; Kalven, "Preservation and Invisibility," 124.

¹⁸⁸ Innes and Booher, "Using Local Knowledge for Justice and Resilience," 2; Graves, "The Necessity of Interpretation," 94.

excess of abandoned properties within the neighborhood and made building prices affordable enough for Gates to engage in socially beneficial work within the community. Gates' engagement activity began with inviting friends and connections from the artworld and the city government to visit his fledgling project. As growing interest in his efforts grew among outside organizations and city officials, Gates began discussing his projects and visions with the surrounding community.

3. *Creating collaborative relationships - working with preservation minded developers, realtors, city planners, economists, architects, artists, and organizations.*¹⁸⁹

Gates' status within the art world grew around the same time that his art practice and community work was being recognized. The more recognition Gates received for his work the greater number of individuals and organizations wanted to participate in his mission. Individuals have contributed funds by purchasing his artworks, the sale of which helps to fund his work within the neighborhood. He has also fostered relationships with influential individuals within the City of Chicago government which has aided his purchase of blighted city property, such as the acquisition of the Stony Island Bank building for a dollar. Also, his relationship with the city helped to jumpstart his workforce program, as he partnered with the city to put to productive use the trees being removed due to Ash Bore Beetle damage. Gates' work has recently become a direct asset to the community with the opening of the Stony Island Arts Bank, his first project regularly open to the public, and which holds events that directly engage the surrounding community.

Analysis Criteria C – Preservation Products

1. *Educationally Beneficial*¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Meeks, "Become a 'Movement of Yes,'" 172.

¹⁹⁰ Lubar, "Preservation Demands Interpretation," 153-154.

The Stony Island Arts Bank is an important community resource within the neighborhood. The building, which is open to the public Wednesday through Sunday, is part library, part book store, part historical archive, and is a gathering space for art, events, and movies. All of which are culturally relevant to the Chicago community.

Gates' work force program is also educationally beneficial in that it is a skills-based training program which teaches various crafts, allowing individuals the opportunity to learn skills applicable to creative work and helps with job placement.

2. *Socially Beneficial*¹⁹¹

Social benefits Gates' project offers to the neighborhood include a community archive, a workforce training program, and a mixed income housing development. The archive housed in the Stony Island Arts Bank additionally contains a bookstore, gallery, and is home to Black Cinema House offering weekly showings and discussions of culturally relevant films. The mixed income housing development contains a large community gathering space where local organizations can hold meetings or events.

3. *Maintain Usefulness within Community*¹⁹²

The buildings of Dorchester Projects maintain usefulness within the community. Even those with no current public access such as the Listening house are used for artist residencies.

Heidelberg Project Analysis

Analysis Criteria A – Doctrine Change

None of the buildings that are part of the Heidelberg Project would, in their current state, be able to be listed on the National Register. They have become

¹⁹¹ Avrami, "From Passion to Public Policy," 50.

¹⁹² Meeks, "Become a 'Movement of Yes,'" 172.

transformed into something too far from their original form. Guyton shifts the function of the buildings that are a part of his project, removing their role as dwelling, and using only the symbolic idea of a house. His buildings are assemblages of neighborhood detritus. Those that are still standing as house forms after the rash of arson and demolitions have objects adhered to their exterior. Windows are often missing and buildings are exposed to the elements. Many of the houses that formed the neighborhood appear to have been built between 1900 and 1950, but many of the buildings are now either missing or altered beyond recognition. As far as the National Register is concerned, the neighborhood would have had a better chance of listing before Tyree Guyton's intervention.

1. *Expand the definition of preservation.*¹⁹³

Expanding the definition of preservation may or may not help to get the remaining buildings associated with the Heidelberg project on the National Register. The project is missing many of its initial buildings as a result of the demolitions and arson attacks which have plagued the project. However, Guyton's work has become a significant aspect of the neighborhood and may be significant enough in itself to warrant some level of preservation. If preserved, this project may require the attention of both historic preservation and art conservation.

2. *Relax the criteria for integrity.*¹⁹⁴

The remaining buildings of the Heidelberg project contain integrity. They are essentially examples of preservation by neglect except for the additions performed by Guyton.

3. *Eliminate the need for a period of significance.*¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Brown, "A Preservation Movement for All Americans," 59.

¹⁹⁴ Hurley, "Making Preservation work for Struggling Communities," 117.

¹⁹⁵ Hurley, "Making Preservation work for Struggling Communities," 117.

The buildings of the Heidelberg project would not be affected by a change in period of significance.

4. *Shorten, or do away with, the fifty year rule.*¹⁹⁶

A change in the fifty-year rule would not affect the listing potential of the buildings of the Heidelberg project.

Analysis Criteria B – Preservation Methods

1. *Shift focus from buildings to people and places.*¹⁹⁷

Although the buildings of the Heidelberg project are the focus of Guyton’s intervention, the alteration of these structures has been to highlight the issue of blight in the hopes of improving the situation within the neighborhood for all residents. The buildings became physical frameworks which he “occupied” with his assemblages of found objects, thus neutralizing the criminal element which may have taken hold within them. They also became physical representations of the loss the neighborhood has experienced as Guyton symbolically filled the void left by families with the familiar detritus of human existence.

2. *Community engagement*¹⁹⁸

Tyree Guyton’s intervention into his neighborhood involved little to no community engagement. All written accounts indicate that there was a mixed response from his surrounding neighbors as he, his then wife Karen, and his Grandfather began the interventions into abandoned houses within the neighborhood. What is clear from the Oprah Winfrey television appearance is that there was a high level of confusion about

¹⁹⁶ Joyner, “Should the NHPA Have a Greater Sense of Urgency,” 119.

¹⁹⁷ Wells, “Valuing Historic Places,” 6; Kalven, “Preservation and Invisibility,” 124.

¹⁹⁸ Innes and Booher, “Using Local Knowledge for Justice and Resilience,” 2; Graves, “The Necessity of Interpretation,” 94.

what purpose his actions were meant to serve, and many neighbors saw his interventions as being eyesores.¹⁹⁹

3. *Creating collaborative relationships - working with preservation minded developers, realtors, city planners, economists, architects, artists, and organizations.*²⁰⁰

Guyton has had a long and tumultuous relationship with the City of Detroit. The Heidelberg Project reached 30 years of age in 2016 and, depending on the mayor, the city has either worked with Guyton or has moved to demolish parts of the project. The City of Detroit has partnered with the Heidelberg project to create educational programming, notably Detroit's New Detroit program in 1989 and again in 2008 with Art, Community and Environmental Education (ACE2) added to the Detroit school system.²⁰¹ The project has received arts funding from organizations such as the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Annenberg Foundation, and prominent individuals such as Russell Simmons.²⁰²

Analysis Criteria C – Preservation Products

1. *Educationally Beneficial*²⁰³

The Heidelberg Project has engaged in educational programming for children within the neighborhood and also within the Detroit school system. In addition to direct educational engagement, the project has provided an example of a type of arts

¹⁹⁹ Oprah Winfrey Show, Tyree Guyton on the Oprah Winfrey Show, You Tube, accessed 09/08/2107, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnhRJlw-aON0kvbeUDM4SKA>

²⁰⁰ Meeks, "Become a 'Movement of Yes,'" 172.

²⁰¹ Heidelberg Project website, Who We Are > Timeline, accessed September 7, 2017, <https://www.heidelberg.org/timeline/>

²⁰² Heidelberg Website, Home Page, Accessed November 19, 2017, <https://www.heidelberg.org/>

²⁰³ Lubar, "Preservation Demands Interpretation," 153-154.

intervention that was revolutionary at the time of its inception. Guyton dramatically changed his neighborhood with very little and created a world renowned arts intervention that brought people from all over the planet to a small and economically depressed neighborhood in the city of Detroit.

2. *Socially Beneficial*²⁰⁴

The Heidelberg Project is a local organization that employs individuals from the neighborhood doing small handyman tasks, and local individuals interested in the arts employed by the organization doing administrative tasks or giving tours. Local neighbors have found ways to make money off of visitors by selling bottled water and Gatorade, or panhandling off of visitors. The project offers a cultural exchange between visitors and the local community, and draws attention to blight, but also to the inspirational response toward blight created by the project.

3. *Maintain Usefulness within Community*²⁰⁵

The buildings of the Heidelberg project serve an important role within the neighborhood. Although at this point, many of the buildings have been lost to demolition or arson, the artwork still serves the purpose of drawing attention to blight, and attracting visitors from all over the world who would have otherwise never had any reason to set foot within the neighborhood. Although initially considered an eyesore, it is these artworks which distinguish this neighborhood from the many others in Detroit and have people from all over the world knowing the Heidelberg neighborhood. However, these buildings no longer serve their original role of housing.

²⁰⁴ Avrami, "From Passion to Public Policy," 50.

²⁰⁵ Meeks, "Become a 'Movement of Yes,'" 172.

Analysis Comparison Table

Evaluation criteria of proposed changes to preservation and potential impact on case study projects

Evaluation Criteria	Project Row Houses	Dorchester Projects	Heidelberg Project
A. Doctrine Change			
Expand Definition of Preservation	No Change	No Change	Benefit
Relax Criteria for Integrity	No Change	Benefit	Benefit
Eliminate the Period of Significance	Benefit	Benefit	No Change
Eliminate / Do Away with the 50 Year Rule	No Change	No Change	No Change
B. Preservation Methods (Effect)			
Focus on People not Buildings	Strong	Strong	Moderate
Community Engagement	Strong	Moderate	Little to none
Create Collaborative Relationships	Strong	Strong	Little to none
C. Preservation Products (Effect)			
Educationally Beneficial	Strong	Strong	Moderate
Socially Beneficial	Strong	Strong	Strong
Maintains Usefulness within Community	Strong	Strong	Moderate

Comparing the Projects

After analyzing the three case studies within the context of suggestions put forth by preservationists concerned with issues of inclusivity and relevance to current communities, the analysis reveals that Project Row houses has the most to offer in regards to directly transferable ideas. Although Project Row Houses as a whole is the best model for preservation, specific projects within Dorchester Projects, such as the Stony Island Arts Bank and the Dorchester Arts + Housing Collaborative offer interesting and applicable studies for preservation to learn from. Study of the Heidelberg Project offers the least to preservation. Here the building interventions are too far removed from preservation activity. Although these buildings have served the immediate need of enlivening the neighborhood and drawing attention to the situation of abandonment and blight taking place in Detroit, this solution and the method are not sustainable. The Heidelberg Project was a very immediate and successful intervention but the project has not developed past the initial intervention stage. As we see now with Guyton dismantling the project, no sustainable action has been created to continue without the ongoing attention of the artist.

Project Row Houses has been around for twenty-four years and, although still active within the changing neighborhood, has settled into a focus on its programming rather than creating new interventions. Dorchester Projects has been around for less than a decade and Theaster Gates is nowhere near satisfied with the level of intervention he has had within the Greater Grand Crossing neighborhood or the wider city of Chicago. He is continuing to propose and develop new arts and community spaces and his evolution as a community artist should continue to be followed.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Preservationists are becoming increasingly aware that our current system of preservation is not meeting the needs of all communities. The preservation practice of the past fifty years has left us with a historical record which has overwhelmingly favored the history of the majority culture. As it currently stands, only ten percent of landmarks listed on the National Register have been nominated for their connection to people of color, women, or the LGBTQIA community.²⁰⁶ Preservationists have suggested changes that include altering preservation doctrine, changing the ways communities are involved in preservation activities, and producing products that have an educational and social benefit that bolsters current communities. Looking outside of traditional preservation systems to the work being done by Community Artists can provide preservationists with examples of how other disciplines have successfully worked within communities neglected by preservation to be a positive force within the neighborhood. Preservation as a discipline does not come with the same freedoms afforded to artists, but preservation has legislative strengths and a nationwide structural system beyond the scope of the work that can be accomplished by a single artist. These relatively small-scale examples can be mined for methods and procedures that can be used to change traditional preservation for the better.

After analyzing these case studies through the lens of suggestions made by preservationists, I see four main takeaways which preservationists should consider when changing preservation doctrine and procedures.

1. Different communities have different needs and preservation's tools, approaches, and outcomes will vary between communities and localities.

²⁰⁶ Buckley and Graves, "Tangible Benefits From Intangible Resources," 153.

These case studies highlight the variation in intervention and the numerous forms that neighborhood engagement and preservation can take. Therefore, it is important that any preservation legislation that puts preservation on the path of replicating these positive outcomes remain flexible. The methods used in these case studies need to be recognized as individual tools in a kit, not an applied formula. Rick Lowe's Project Row Houses would be the most transferable model for community preservation, but not every community is experiencing the same problems or fighting the same battles as the Third Ward. Preservation has a national reach and the possibility of creating positive change is vast, but one hopes that the rules created for this new and more inclusive interaction allow for flexibility of situation. One of the reasons artists can be successful is the flexibility that comes with experimenting with programs. Project Row Houses did not manifest fully formed. Lowe and the other artists he worked with began with the single program of creating art space and neutralizing an area considered a negative element. The diversity of programs at Project Row Houses grew and adapted with the changing needs of the community. In 1993 when the project first began, battling gentrification was far from a problem the neighborhood was facing but one which manifested further into the project. I would encourage preservationists to build flexibility into future model and legislation.

2. Neighborhood preservation requires a holistic approach whereby the entirety of the neighborhood is considered as a unit.

Traditional preservation projects are either focused on the creation of historic districts or on individual structures or groups of structures. Traditional preservation methods are also more concerned with the physical aspects of these structures than the livelihoods of the individuals who work or live within or amongst them and what these structures mean to surrounding communities. In expanding preservation to include intangible resources and structures valued, not for their style, but for their connections to community lifeways, preservationists will need to take a step back from those structures which have historically appealed to them and view the neighborhood as a network. Through discussions with the community and understanding the entire history of the neighborhood

– not just the history that is over fifty-years old – preservationists will have to help determine the significance of neighborhood assets. This holistic approach will require not only engagement with communities, but with city planners and organizations who are either already involved with problem solving within the neighborhood or require the recruitment of organizations which could be of use. Preservation has for too long neglected communities for groupings of similarly styled buildings that do not always delineate what constitutes a neighborhood.

3. Literal interpretations of history, plaques and interpretive panels, are not the only way to use history to support community or connect neighborhood histories with current communities.

Both Gates' and Lowe's projects demonstrate that the history of buildings can be used symbolically, not just literally, to inform and support community activity. Lowe's use of the shotgun house for his project's buildings automatically frames the activity done inside them within the context of the African American community. This framing helps the current community to feel ownership over the project and helps to illustrate that Project Row Houses is in support of the African American community, not an incoming community. This is why Lowe's low-income housing developments utilize the form of the shotgun house, to let the African American community know that the housing is in support of keeping African American people within their neighborhood despite raising housing prices. Similarly, Gates' Stony Island Arts Bank continues the purpose of the Bank as a safehouse for precious items. This historical use allows Gates to comment on the value of the archived items, all of which relate to African American history, stored within the former bank. These symbolic uses do more than a plaque or an interpretive panel because they don't simply relay history but subtly control the way a place is understood. This kind of association will not always be applicable but it is a powerful tool that preservationists could use in the fight for social justice in preservation.

4. Preservationists should expand the period of significance for National Register nominations.

Expanding the period of significance could help in the battle for inclusion and relevance to current communities. The perfect example of this is seen in the National Register nomination that was written for the Stony Island Arts Bank, one of the buildings of Theaster Gates' Dorchester Projects.

The Stony Island Trust and Savings Bank Building, now the Stony Island Arts Bank, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2013. It was registered for its local significance under Criterion A and C. Its Areas of Significance are Commerce and Architecture. Its Period of Significance for Commerce is 1923 – 1931, and for Architecture is 1923, the year of its construction.²⁰⁷ The building was constructed at the beginning of the expansion into branch banking and was originally built to serve a European immigrant community. Around the 1970s the Greater Grand Crossing neighborhood became home to a primarily African American population.²⁰⁸ Maya Williams, the Dorchester Projects employee who took me through the space, relayed proudly that the building was owned in the 1970s by the Nation of Islam. The Nation of Islam acquired Guaranty Bank and Trust in 1973, housed in the Stony Island Trust and Savings Bank Building, and according to Williams, offered loans to members of the surrounding black community, allowing many of them to purchase houses. By the way in which Williams spoke proudly of this significant history I assumed I would find mention of it in the National Register nomination, but it wasn't part of the official recorded history of the building. The National Register nomination focused on the neo-classical architecture, the history of branch development in banking, and the surrounding

²⁰⁷ National Register Nomination Form, Stony Island Bank and Trust Building, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 802080, 2013.

²⁰⁸ City of Chicago, Landmark Designation Report, Chatham-Greater Grand Crossing Commercial District, accessed September 9, 2017, https://www.cityofchicago.org/content/dam/city/depts/zlup/Historic_Preservation/Publications/Chatham-Greater_Grand_Crossing_Dist.pdf

European immigrant community for whom the bank branch was built to serve, the time period specified by the period of significance.²⁰⁹ This nomination entirely excluded the history of why the building held historical importance for Williams and for the surrounding community. History is a continuous stream and isolating buildings to limited timeframes in the distant past separates them from continued lifeways.²¹⁰ If you follow the bank building in its use from conception to its present day, the building still symbolically acts as a safehouse for valuable assets within the greater Grand Crossing community. This continues the building's role as a place for safe keeping valuable assets within this community and ties it to the present, keeping it vital as opposed to pushing its importance into the past and cutting it off from the present. Expanding the period of significance takes a buildings historical reference from a curated moment in time to a more useful dynamic building history.

These four takeaways address broad issues within preservation. The first two address ways of approaching preservation, the third addresses a more profound interpretation of building history, and the last addresses a change in doctrine which would allow preservationists to better connect current communities and the events of the recent past with important events and structures of the past. The next step is taking these lessons and creating a system which preservationists can use to apply these concepts to work being done within low-income communities and communities of color.

These newly created systems based on the prior listed lessons can and should take many forms but, as way of an example, I would like to propose that a funding grant be offered through the National Park Service. Funding can be an issue for any project and the community art project case studies examined in this thesis have been at least partially funded through federal and private arts grants, but preservation has its own system of funding that can contribute to efforts in underserved communities. The Federal Historic

²⁰⁹ National Register Nomination Form, Stony Island Bank and Trust Building, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 802080.

²¹⁰ Hurley, "Making Preservation work for Struggling Communities," 117.

Preservation Fund (HPF) annually provides funding to State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO) at the beginning of each fiscal year for the running of state and local preservation programs.²¹¹ In addition, the National Park Service offers a program of grants through the HPF. There is a grant currently offered through the National Park Service that addresses issues of underrepresentation in the number of National Register listings associated with communities of color and the LGBTQIA community, called the Underrepresented Communities Grant.²¹² For the fiscal year of 2017, thirteen grants were awarded under the Underrepresented Communities Grant totaling \$500,000.²¹³ This grant was first offered in 2014 and its existence signals a positive step toward acknowledging and correcting the imbalance in representation. Although increasing representation in the National Register is an important and necessary goal, the case studies looked at - and the current trend in thinking about preservation - demonstrate a need for greater action within low-income communities and communities of color. A preservation funding model based on the lessons derived from our Community Arts models can do more to support greater advocacy within previously neglected communities and makes it a good example for applying our lessons. This grant would be focused on community programming and place-making activities for the purpose of supporting existing communities and community systems to strengthen communities and combat displacement.

Community arts projects inform us that preservation of the physical structures of a neighborhood needs to happen alongside or as a byproduct of community or social preservation efforts. This draws on takeaway number two by which the community needs to not only be looked at holistically but also addressed in that manner. A single aspect of focused social based community work, or concentrated physical preservation work, is not sufficient for stimulating the place-making activity needed to produce the level of results

²¹¹ Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, Federal Funds for the National Historic Preservation Program, Accessed January 9, 2018, <http://www.achp.gov/funding-nhpa.html>

²¹² National Park Service, State, Tribal, and Local Plans & Grants, Historic Preservation Fund Grants, Accessed January 9, 2018, <https://www.nps.gov/preservation-grants/>

²¹³ National Park Service, Underrepresented Community Grants, Accessed January 9, 2018, <https://www.nps.gov/preservation-grants/community-grants.html>

achieved through the work of community artists and their efforts into a neighborhood. Therefore the proposed grant would require a cooperative plan whereby preservationists, artists, and social outreach organizations are required to work in conjunction to address the needs of a neighborhood. Rick Lowe has stated that although he built social systems into the organization of Project Row Houses, in hindsight, this was most likely not necessary.²¹⁴ There were many organizations in existence which could have been community partners in his social outreach efforts. Although multiple organizations will be involved, there will be a requirement in the grant application mandating a framework for cooperative efforts of these organizations toward an overarching goal.

To ensure that both preservation efforts and communities are being best served by these grants, specific systems should be established. To begin with, it is important for application evaluations to be reviewed by a diverse jury, which should include leaders of communities of color, community organizers, or community artists like Rick Lowe or Theaster Gates, in addition to historic preservation professionals. Grant officers should be available to applicants to aid in the development of grant applications. These officers would be able to offer advice on how to strengthen proposals and partnerships to encourage successful projects. However, these grant proposals and their outcomes will be tailored to the needs of a specific area and community. It is important that the flexibility of a needs-based approach, as suggested in the first takeaway, be understood and not inhibit an area from receiving much-needed funding. In addition to applicants clearly defining their project, providing a projected budget, and creating a timeline for deliverables, it will be crucial for teams to determine a rubric for documenting measurable impacts and outcomes that explicitly include the preservation of structures as a critical component of the approach. Over time, it will be possible to evaluate the outcomes of a range of projects and determine what approaches and investment offer the most benefit with preservation as an active player, as opposed to a welcome by-product as is illustrated in the community art case studies.

²¹⁴ Creative Time, "Creative Time Summit | In Conversation: Rick Lowe & Nato Thompson" Published on Nov 13, 2013, Accessed October 5, 2016, You Tube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=loloNoVKDXE>, 9:33-11:00.

The study has shown how Community Arts projects can offer useful examples for preservationists interested in serving underrepresented communities in historic neighborhoods. Although federal grants are just one way in which lessons learned from studying Community Arts practices could be applied, grant funding through a federal institution like the National Park Service could be one of the ways to expand local efforts and take advantage of preservation's national system. Federal funding should be made available for local initiatives serving historically underrepresented groups, which focus on collaborative efforts toward the preservation of community and culture - not simply the physical assets of a neighborhood. In this way, preservation would be guided at the national level toward a more inclusive practice with the kind of broadly reaching impact apparent in the community art practices discussed here. By embracing aspects of other fields that are finding success serving underserved communities, such as community art, preservationists will be able to expand our field, challenge our system, and bring about a way of practicing historic preservation that benefits everyone.

APPENDIX

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