

PRESERVATION

information

One in a series of Historic Preservation Information Booklets

Rescuing Historic Resources: How to Respond to a Preservation Emergency

by Leah Konicki

The Romanesque Revival county courthouse is about to be torn down for a nondescript convention center. A parcel on the edge of town is about to be converted to a parking lot for a new big-box retailer. A former resort crumbles, unused on the landscape, waiting for the right developer to come along. These and similar stories are all too familiar to preservationists and community activists across the United States.

Many now well-established local preservation groups originally organized in response to similar threats to a treasured local landmark or small town way of life. Whatever its origin, at some point every preservation

“Speedee,” McDonald’s early symbol, stood atop a 60-foot-high golden arch at a stand in Downey, Calif. The stand was rescued from demolition by the combined efforts of numerous organizations and individuals who wanted to preserve a landmark from the more recent past.

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Photo: Alan Hess



National Trust for Historic Preservation

group will face a crisis involving a threat to a historic building, an archeological site, an entire neighborhood, or significant open space. How preservationists respond to the crisis will affect not only the future of the threatened resource, but also will determine how the community regards the organization and preservation issues in the future.

This *Information* booklet was first written and published in 1991. Since then the strategies used by preservationists to rescue threatened historic resources—as well as the nature of the crises themselves—have changed. In the past decade the preservation community has become more savvy in its use of the media to publicize threats to historic resources. For example, the National Trust's list of Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places is prepared annually to raise awareness and rally support to save endangered historic sites. The list also demonstrates the wide array of threats to places that symbolize our nation's heritage. Many preservation groups prepare similar lists for statewide and local resources. These lists are broadcast by the media and help call attention to threatened historic resources.

Another change since this booklet was first written is that preservation has become more integrated into public policy and community planning efforts. This is due in part to a steady increase in the number of historic preservation commissions and historic district ordinances. In 1993 there were 1,800 historic preservation commissions. Today there are more than 2,225 commissions. As a result, preservation issues are more often identified and addressed at the outset of a proposal, rather than when a project is in the planning stages.

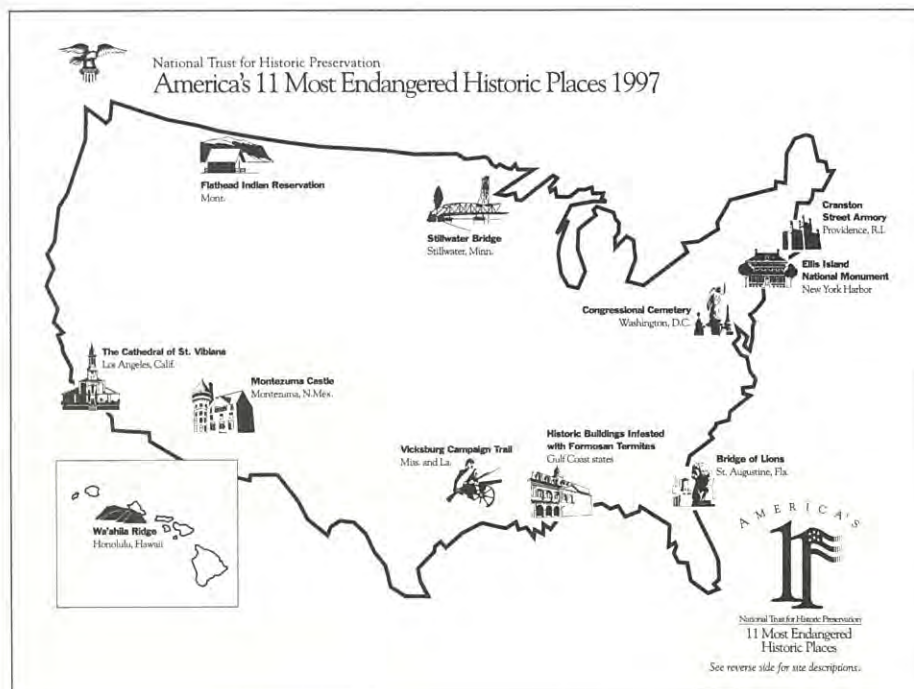
Another important change is that preservationists have learned a great deal about creating and maintaining ties to the development and real estate communities. The fate of many historic buildings is closely linked to the real estate market, and that message is increasingly clear to preservation advocates.

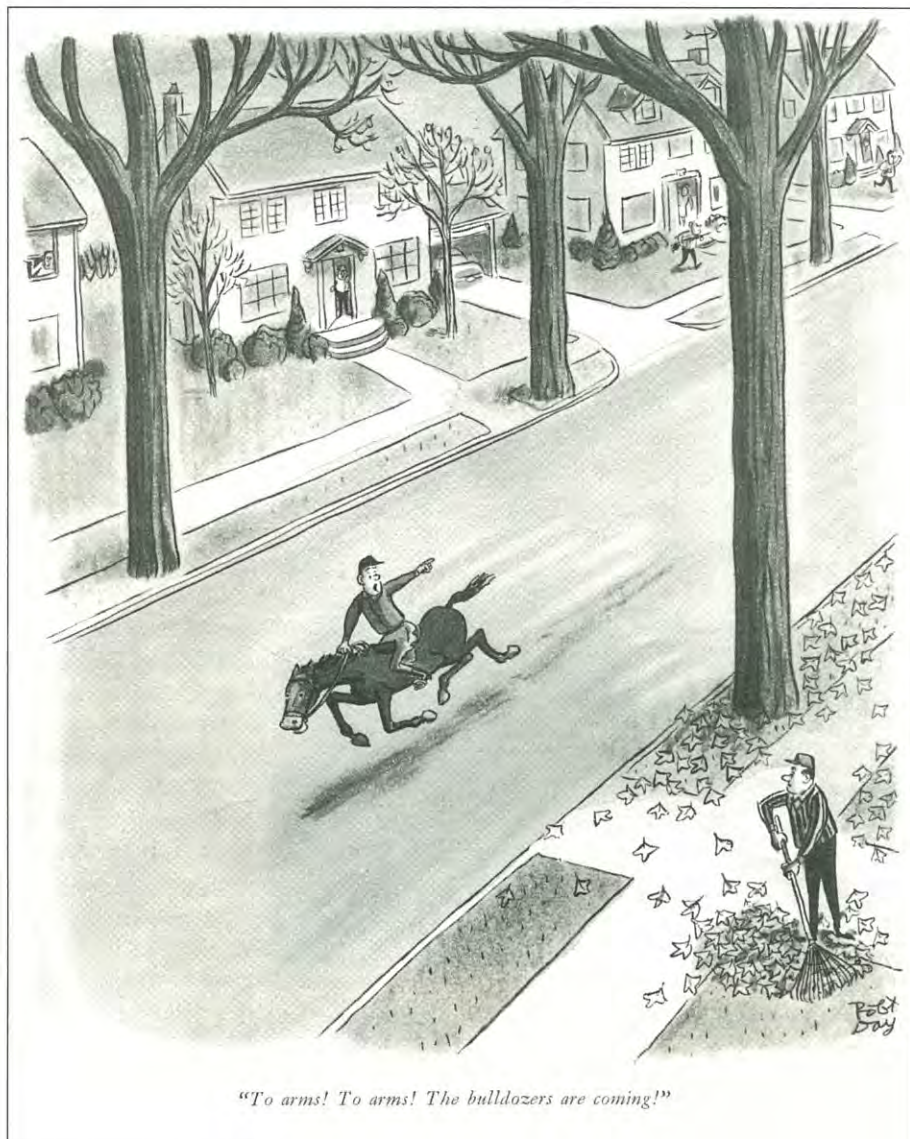
In the past decade, preservation has also become more wide-reaching. Although some of the case studies that follow focus on single historic structures, others include small town opposition to big-box retailers, developments that do not affect historic structures so much as a way of life embodied by historic small towns and Main Streets.

Over the last decade property owners and developers have become more sensitive to negative publicity. They do not want to be known as the ones who demolished a significant historic structure or threatened the economic balance of a community. Owners of threatened historic properties are often more willing to “stay their execution” and work with the preservation community to explore alternatives before proceeding with demolition.

Several things have not changed since this publication was originally written. Now, as then, the preservation community is adept at forging coalitions, recruiting allies, and building grassroots support. Now, as then, those who take on the disputes stay in it for the long haul. The case studies in this booklet demonstrate the importance of perseverance, and each effort deserves, in the words of one experienced preservationist, the “Rubber Tree Award” (a reference to the 1959 song *High Hopes* made popular by Frank Sinatra) for hanging in there through all the ups and downs until success was at hand. Now, as then, these are stories of David versus Goliath, starting often with one individual taking on a giant corporation or questioning a decision that seemed

Many preservation organizations publish an annual list of endangered sites to draw attention to threatened historic resources in their city or state. The National Trust's list of Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places attracts media coverage to endangered sites across the country.





"To arms! To arms! The bulldozers are coming!"

final. They are stories of people who believed so strongly in what they were doing that they refused to give up.

This publication is still needed, however. There was no shortage of recent examples to illustrate tactics and strategies for tackling a preservation controversy. Preservationists still need to be ready to oppose the demolition of historic resources. They need to understand how to stand up against inappropriate development in order to protect their community's historic character.

Every community and every crisis is different, and preservationists should not expect to find a model solution that works every time. The basic processes, outlined in this booklet,

can provide a framework for conflict resolution, and there are certain procedures that, if followed, can increase the chance for success. In all cases, a planned response is better than spontaneous reactions.

Early Warning Procedures

Know Your City's Departmental Structure. Often preservationists find themselves trying to influence the actions of local government. While any action of local government may work to the benefit or detriment of historic buildings, key decisions usually are made in only a few government departments. It is important for preservationists to identify key departments in their local government whose

decisions may have an impact on historic resources. These usually include local planning and zoning agencies, but may also include the parks or recreation department with responsibility for historic buildings, sites, or cemeteries. If your municipality has a historic district commission or architectural review board, its members can serve as allies in a preservation emergency. Make an effort to get to know the players and keep a list of their telephone and fax numbers.

Know the Strength of Your Local Law. It is also important to know the powers of your local law. An increasing number of communities across the country have a historic preservation ordinance that provides some protection to historic buildings. Keep a



Photo courtesy of the City of Covington

This Kentucky bank building was protected by local landmark status—but that wasn't enough. It was purchased by the county government, which was not bound by local laws. An outpouring of public support helped save it.

copy of the ordinance on hand and read it carefully. Zoning regulations, which delineate commercial and residential uses and set limits on allowable density, can also have an impact on the future of a building or a neighborhood. Permits for construction or demolition may or may not require public notice before being issued.

Know Your Local Elected Officials.

It is important for the preservation community to develop and maintain relationships with local public officials. In addition to elected officials, such as mayors, aldermen, and city council members, many communities have planning and zoning commissions, architectural review boards, recreation and parks boards, and real estate boards whose members are appointed. Both elected and appointed officials generally have access to professional administrative staff; these staff people are often an important link for building good working relationships with city hall.

All preservation groups should keep the following in mind with regard to public sector influence:

- know who elected, appointed, and administrative officials are;
- monitor their activities and attend meetings;
- strive to have preservationists elected or appointed to decision-making positions;
- recruit politicians, newspaper representatives, and other influential members of the community to boards and committees;
- commit to an ongoing governmental relations program, so that, in the event of some preservation emergency, relationships are already established with public officials; and
- maintain and cultivate contacts with the media.

Know Your Historic Resources.

Preservationists should at all times act from a foundation of knowledge of the community's historic and architec-

turally significant resources. If a comprehensive preservation survey has not been conducted in a community, that is good place to start. Such a survey or inventory should identify those buildings and sites that have local, regional, or national significance. This information can help a preservation group formulate its reaction to community planning decisions. Information on how to conduct a preservation survey is available from each state historic preservation office and many state or local nonprofit preservation organizations.

Part of the value in having such a survey is that resources can be identified and protective measures established before historic resources are threatened with demolition or inappropriate renovations. Many communities, through the support of regional planning agencies and state historic preservation offices, have undertaken historic surveys and, in many cases, relied on these surveys to create both locally and nationally listed historic districts.

Surveying is an ongoing process, and it is important to update records to reflect new research or discoveries. In New Orleans, for example, a developer identified a block of historic buildings as the site for a new hotel. The city's preservation community joined with the Historic District Landmarks Commission to fight the proposal. Although the history of the threatened buildings had previously been documented, the group did new research and discovered that one of the structures earmarked for demolition had been owned by a freed slave, and another had been owned by Jewish merchants. According to Daniel Carey of the National Trust's Southern Regional Office, "new research was undertaken which resulted in the significance of the block being reevaluated." In light of this new information, the proposal for the hotel was dropped.

Publicize Your Historic Resources.

The preservation survey and its results should be widely publicized. Often the significance of a local build-

ing is not recognized by the people who pass it daily. A well-publicized survey is the foundation for public education and can generate new support for preservation. Preservationists should be especially careful to inform public officials of the results of the survey. One way is to include survey findings when making presentations at public meetings. It is easier and better to guide a public decision than it is to change one.

Keep Your Public Officials Informed.

An informed public and informed officials are often a preservationist's best friends. Take care to keep a preservation point of view before the public eye at all times. This can be accomplished through press releases, educational programs, and special events. A crisis, by its very nature, is newsworthy. Preservationists should set both short- and long-term goals for any public relations campaign, even those that are crisis driven.

The preservation point of view should be presented in a clear, concise, and compelling way. Good media coverage will be more likely if your group provides regular, objective, and complete information throughout the crisis. It is also important to provide practical alternatives to the proposal you oppose. It may be possible to persuade local professionals to assist your group free of charge in preparing a feasibility study, which can help identify practical alternatives.

Identify the Threat

The first step in rescuing historic resources is recognizing that a battle is at hand. Often local preservation groups and community representatives learn about potential threats to prized resources in a fairly straightforward manner—from the local paper. Other times the threat to a resource may not be so clearly defined. Preservationists should be alert to the status of recently vacated buildings, buildings that have recently sold, hearings for zoning changes, plans for new transportation routes, and the like.

For example, an 1836 bank building in the Ohio River city of Covington, Ky., was in the midst of an area designated for new high-rise, commercial development. City officials had designated the important Greek Revival structure as a local landmark in 1989 as a tool to guarantee that it would remain in place amidst the new development. But the county administration purchased the building as part of a larger site intended to house a 1,600-car parking garage for a nearby state-funded regional convention center.

In Kentucky, counties are not required to obtain any building or other permits from the local municipalities; as a result, it was possible for the county to decide to demolish this significant structure. Recognizing this possibility, local preservationists began talking with county officials soon after their purchase. These concerned citizens also appeared at public meetings where the county's building plans were being discussed. In part as a result of these activities, articles appeared in the local paper describing the threat to the building, its historic importance, and the interest in the community for saving the building. Preservationists sensed a victory when, in the spring of 1997, the bank building was left standing even as surrounding buildings were demolished to make way for the garage.

In the following months, several potential developers contacted county officials expressing an interest in the building. Partly as a result of this interest, in the late fall of 1997 the county released a Request for Proposals, asking development teams to submit detailed proposals, including architectural renderings, cost estimates, and funding proposals for the building's reuse. The county is considering at least one of the proposals, and if all parties can reach agreement, the building will be saved.

Identify Partners

After a preservation emergency is identified, a number of partners can be called upon to provide different types of assistance. Often an existing local preservation organization may either tackle the issue directly or provide technical assistance and support to groups and individuals interested in the issue. Statewide nonprofit preservation organizations as well as state historic preservation offices may be another source of help. It is difficult to win any of these battles single-handedly; therefore, involving other organizations to create a comprehensive strategy and set up committees to handle different aspects can be an effective approach.

Some potential partners may not be so obvious. Developments that will endanger historic resources may also threaten other types of resources such as archeological sites or environmentally sensitive areas. A rerouting of a roadway, for example, in addition to affecting a historic bridge, may also hurt downtown merchants or cut down on visits to local attractions. Consider asking local service organizations, the chamber of commerce, the tourism bureau, city council members, conservation groups, and neighborhood associations for support.

Form a New Group

In many successful preservation battles, a new group forms in response to a specific issue. This may be a completely new grassroots organization—such as one of the groups highlighted in the following case studies, the “Friends of the Wentworth.” It might be an informal group of committed preservationists who disband after the issue is resolved. Or the new group might establish itself as a nonprofit organization that continues to advocate for preservation after the initial controversy has been settled. Many longstanding preservation organizations can trace their roots to a single preservation crisis.

Another effective way to protect threatened historic resources is to form a coalition of existing groups, such as the local preservation organization, the downtown merchants organization, and the local tourism agency.

Winning Strategies

A coalition or “friends” group can use a variety of tools in a campaign to save historic resources. The tools vary, depending on the nature of the issue, the players involved, and how lengthy the discussions become. Many of the tools used in the early stages are designed to draw attention to the issue and let the decision makers, whether they are public officials or private owners/developers, know that there are concerned citizens with an interest in the outcome. Using a variety of strategies will serve to heighten public awareness of a pending demolition or other community issue. The case studies in this publication illustrate how preservation groups have used the following tools successfully to protect threatened historic resources.

Build Interest and Support through Petitions. One of the most commonly used tools is distributing petitions and gathering signatures of those concerned about the issue. A petition drive can serve simply to gather names, addresses, and telephone numbers of your supporters; it may also be a legal tool that can result in placing the issue on a ballot so that the voting public can have its say. Petitions were used effectively to garner public support and to keep in touch with allies in several of the case studies that follow.

Lay the Groundwork by Researching Options. As the preservation community has grown and become more established, preservationists are better able to do the groundwork that shows how a threatened resource may be rehabilitated or otherwise reused. Today, this is a frequently used strategy. This groundwork, which helps to transform preservationists from adver-

saries into resources, can take many forms. It may, for example, involve developing a financial analysis that demonstrates the feasibility of rehabilitation—using the 20 percent historic rehabilitation tax credit for historic buildings, facade easement donations, and other incentives that may be available—and then comparing those figures to the cost of demolition. Another tool may be a feasibility study that examines alternate uses for the building; such a study may include architectural plans and engineering and traffic studies.

Explore Alternatives with the Owner/Developer. Often when owners of historic properties decide on demolition, it is because they are unable to identify viable alternatives, not because they do not recognize the historic or architectural importance of the buildings. In such instances, it may be possible for the preservation community and others to work with the property owner to explore alternatives. The preservation community in New Castle, N.H., started by offering this kind of support at the beginning of its seven-year struggle to save their historic hotel, described in the case study on Wentworth By The Sea Hotel.

Making Good Use of Publicity. If there is one thing that separates the preservation battles of the 1990s from those of earlier years, it is the preservation community’s increasingly effective use of publicity. Publicity has been a key factor in the success of the effort to save each threatened resource described in this booklet. Developing an “Endangered Places” list, whether it is local, statewide, or national in its focus, is often an effective way to draw attention to a threat. Getting your resource included in such a listing will not automatically ensure success. It is important to follow up quickly on any publicity that comes from such a listing.

In 1996, for example, publicity was critical in focusing attention on the circa 1917 Cumberland Telephone Building, one of the few terra cotta-

clad Chicago School office buildings remaining in New Orleans’ business district. The campaign to save the building involved a coalition of several existing groups: the Vieux Carré Property Owners, Residents and Associates; the New Orleans Preservation Resource Center; and the Louisiana Landmarks Society. The coalition arranged for a local public relations firm to film interviews with ordinary New Orleanians who passed by the building and who were asked to share their thoughts on this important structure. The interviews were purposefully conducted with people of all ages and races. These unscripted interviews showed that interest in preserving the building was widespread and not based on respondents’ age, gender, or ethnic background. The interviews were edited to air as an advertisement on local television stations.

The advertisements were aired during the 10 o’clock local news for two weeks, in an attempt to target those who would make the final decision—the members of the New Orleans City Council. In addition, copies of the video were distributed to newspaper journalists and city council aides. The advertisement helped raise public awareness of both the threat to the structure and of its importance in the history and development of New Orleans. The phone company has since sold the building to a company that plans to reuse it. In the fall of 1997, it was announced that the eight-story building is to be renovated as a 140-suite hotel.

Meet with Your Opponents. Meetings with decision makers and community leaders can be an important tool for those campaigning on behalf of a threatened resource. Face-to-face meetings give the preservation group an opportunity to explain alternative approaches to those who may be involved with the decision making. It can also provide a forum to clarify any misunderstandings that may have inadvertently arisen through newspaper articles, television news reports, or rumors.

Prepare Printed Material. If the resolution of an issue revolves around a zoning change or referendum, it may be helpful to prepare informational fliers that explain the consequences of the decision. Often zoning ordinances and other legislative language can be difficult for the layperson to understand. Printed materials that explain the issue or language to be voted on in plain English can help voters and decision makers come to a well-informed decision more easily.

Check the Web. Any discussion of community activism in the 1990s would not be complete without mentioning the Internet. The World Wide Web is an invaluable tool for keeping preservationists and other community activists well informed on the latest issues, as well as on the latest techniques in generating support for a preservation battle.

The National Trust has a site on the World Wide Web (www.national-trust.org), as do many state historic preservation offices and local and state preservation organizations. The Internet is increasingly available to everyone, no matter the size of the town or its location. An estimated 60 percent of public libraries now provide Internet access for their patrons, and this number is increasing daily.

CASE STUDIES:

Classic McDonald's Saved in California

In 1993 the popular food chain McDonald's announced plans to close and ultimately demolish its restaurant in Downey, Calif. The local preservation group, the Los Angeles Conservancy, spearheaded efforts to save the building by enlisting the support of numerous groups who wanted to see the building preserved.

The restaurant threatened with demolition was built in 1953 as one of a chain of stands once known as a "red and white." These early McDonald's "walk up restaurants," as they were called, featured the renowned high golden arches, a red-and-white tile-clad exterior, and the canted roof designed by McDonald brother Richard and California architect Stanley Meston. "Speedee" the chef, McDonald's early symbol with a "hamburger face," was added in 1959. At the Downey stand, he was placed atop a 60-foot-high golden arch where, for decades, he ran on neon legs. The eye-catching stand and freestanding sign became a monument to the emerging car culture. As the oldest remaining McDonald's, the building and the golden arch are also important for their association with

the McDonald brothers, whose innovation in creating a fast-food restaurant with a limited menu, fast service, and low prices transformed the restaurant industry in the years following World War II.

The Downey McDonald's had been operated by a franchise until its purchase in the early 1990s by the McDonald's Corporation. The site on which the building was located was actually owned by another company, the Philadelphia-headquartered Pep Boys, a national car parts retailer. Once it acquired the franchise, McDonald's cited earthquake damage from the Northridge earthquake as one reason for the demolition. McDonald's also claimed this restaurant was less profitable than its newer ones because it lacked current features, such as a drive-through window, a modern kitchen, and indoor seating.

According to the Los Angeles Conservancy's Linda Dishman, "McDonald's discounted the historical significance of the Downey restaurant because they had 'saved' Ray Kroc's original stand in DesPlaines, Ill., originally built in 1955. Because that building is actually a reconstruction, it was rejected for listing in the National Register of Historic Places." On the other hand, in 1984, when it was just

One of the world's first fast-food restaurants, this 1953 McDonald's celebrates the "car culture" that transformed America after World War II. To save the building, McDonald's Corporation had to be convinced of its money-making potential.



Photo: Alan Hess

31 years old, the Downey stand was the first fast-food restaurant to be listed in the National Register.

In response to the threat to the structure and at the request of the Downey City Council, the Los Angeles Conservancy helped to organize what turned out to be a three-year campaign to save the building. The Conservancy is a 6,000-member, non-profit group that represents all of Los Angeles County. The Conservancy's multifaceted strategy included contacting influential organizations to seek their assistance. Among them were the Los Angeles Convention and Visitors Bureau, which recognized the tourism value of retaining this original McDonald's, and the state's largest McDonald's stockholders—the California State Teachers Retirement System and the California Public Employees Retirement System. The most important allies were the City of Downey mayor and city council members, who publicly supported the preservation and restoration of this early fast-food restaurant, together with Governor Pete Wilson and Congressman Steve Horn.

Unlike other historic buildings, there was no adaptive use option because the historic features of the building and sign were McDonald's trademarks: the arches, distinctive signage, and red and white striped tile exterior finishes. Removing these elements would, in essence, destroy the historic building.

The strategy, then, of the Los Angeles Conservancy was not to demonstrate that another owner could use the building, but to show McDonald's that the building could be profitably used as a McDonald's fast-food restaurant. This could be accomplished by building on the history of the structure and its unique quality as the oldest remaining McDonald's in the now worldwide chain of 19,200 operating restaurants. To that end, the Conservancy hired the accounting firm, Arthur Anderson and Company, to study the econom-

ics of operating the building as a McDonald's. According to Linda Dishman, "Arthur Anderson lent credibility to our arguments that the restaurant could be operated profitably. It also changed the dynamic in our discussions with McDonald's representatives."

Also key to saving the building was the cooperation of the actual owners of the site—the Pep Boys Corporation. During the three-year effort to save the building, the Pep Boys Corporation agreed to forego plans for the site—and any income they would have derived from it—and maintain the building. As a result, when the new regional vice president of the McDonald's Corporation came to the Los Angeles area and recognized the potential for this oldest remaining McDonald's, the building was still intact on its original site. Dishman, in fact, believes that the willingness of Pep Boys to leave the building standing was the single most important thing done to save it. By giving the Conservancy time to work out a way to preserve the building, the Pep Boys Corporation helped to save this important icon of early fast-food restaurant architecture.

Widespread publicity also helped save the building. The City of Downey did not have a preservation ordinance that might otherwise have prevented the demolition and provided other legal tools. Press coverage also helped to increase the public's awareness of the importance of buildings from the recent past, which are increasingly threatened.

Publicity for this issue was garnered in a number of ways. Several large publicity events were staged, including rallies and a birthday party commemorating the stand. When it was publicized that Downey's firefighters had signed petitions stating that they would buy a hamburger a week if McDonald's continued to operate the building as one of its restaurants, other people in the community did the same.

In a major publicity coup, the effort to save the Downey McDonald's was reported in a front-page story in the Sunday *New York Times*. This was followed by coverage on the national morning news show *Good Morning America*, which had previously mentioned the issue. According to Linda Dishman, the staff of *Good Morning America* initially thought that this was something that only those "crazy Californians" could care about, but by the end of the filming segment they came to understand the importance of the building. The issue was also featured on NPR and BBC radio broadcasts and in *USA Today* and *Newsweek*. The *Chicago Tribune*, a paper distributed in nearby DesPlaines, Ill., hometown of the McDonald's Corporation, also ran a feature story on the issue.

The Los Angeles Conservancy garnered additional publicity by calling and faxing other groups with an interest in architecture, especially in buildings from the recent past. One such group was the Society for Commercial Archaeology, which encouraged its members to write letters in support of preserving the structure. Part of the intention was to reach out, in the words of the Conservancy's Dishman, "to people who grew up with a McDonald's just like this one."

Public rallies were another tool used to attract publicity for the threatened structure. One rally, playing off a popular McDonald's advertising slogan, had the theme "History Deserves a Break Today." Also an on-site news conference was held to announce that the building had been placed on the National Trust's 1994 list of Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places.

The Conservancy's efforts resulted in worldwide publicity and letters of support from around the globe. The building is revered, in the words of Dishman, "by everyone of a certain age who had a McDonald's just like this one in their hometowns," for its eye-catching design and striking arches, elements that reflect the excitement of the times and also set the tone for

the building design of dozens of McDonald's imitators and competitors in the growing fast-food market.

The efforts of the Conservancy and others paid off. In 1996 the McDonald's Corporation announced that the Downey restaurant would be restored and reopened. The restaurant, which was back in business in December 1996, now features a limited menu, similar to the original McDonald's menu of the 1950s; the restaurant staff wear uniforms reminiscent of those worn by their 1950s predecessors. A separate structure next door contains a museum featuring exhibits on the history of McDonald's and a gift shop selling Speedee dolls, T-shirts, hats, and other memorabilia. McDonald's received a Los Angeles Conservancy Preservation Award and a National Trust Honor Award for preserving the building.

"One United Band" Saves Historic Florida School Building

In the early 1990s the Dade County School Board announced its plans to demolish the Miami Edison School, an architecturally and historically significant school building in Miami, Fla. A diverse group of individuals that included local preservationists, alumni, parents, students, and teachers worked

The 1928 Miami Edison School—a rare example of the Prairie style in Florida—is also significant for its long history of serving diverse groups of white, African-American, Hispanic, and Haitian residents.

out their differences to form a new organization to present a united front in favor of preserving the school. Together they did even more than saving school buildings. They built lasting bonds among diverse groups of people, all now committed to supporting the school and its students.

The Miami Edison School, listed in the National Register of Historic Places and designed by H. H. Mundy, one of Miami's notable early architects, is a rare Florida example of the Prairie Style. Built in 1928 as Edison High, it eventually became a junior high and then a middle school. The Miami neighborhood in which it is located has undergone constant demographic change since the school's construction; today the neighborhood is predominately Haitian.

Former Edison students had for many years participated in an alumni organization called the Over the Hill Gang. More than 5,000 strong, this group, along with the Dade Heritage Trust, appealed to the Dade County School Board to save the former high school at a public hearing in early 1992.

But the new, predominantly Haitian, residents of the neighborhood resented the involvement of the primarily white graduates of the school. They felt that they needed a new

school to meet the needs existing in the neighborhood now, not an old building that had no meaning to them.

In response, a new group was formed under the leadership of two Edison alumnae, Adele Graham, wife of Florida Senator Bob Graham, and notable Florida preservationist Arva Parks McCabe. Called the "One United Band," this group was biracial and tri-ethnic, and included influential alumni as well as teachers and parents. This group's mission was not only to save the existing building, but to help the current students of the school. According to Mrs. McCabe, "there was a lot of misinformation—that an old school was a bad school—that had to be overcome."

According to Mrs. McCabe, the school had been integrated in 1963, and through its history, had been first predominantly white, then African-American, Hispanic, and finally Haitian. Its history, in other words, reflected diversity. The school had been valued by—and so links—diverse generations and groups. This was the message preservationists sought to emphasize to the new residents. In particular, they encouraged Haitian community representatives to see the preservation effort as a way to build useful connections with other involved citizens and groups.



This new group, in concert with the Over the Hill Gang and the Dade Heritage Trust, successfully convinced the Dade County School Board to save the old school, made up of a main block flanked by separate gymnasium and auditorium buildings. The school board then hired a local preservation architect for the project. His ultimate design resulted in the preservation of the three historic buildings while demolishing non-contributing additions and adding a new section. The remodeled Miami Edison Middle School, an example of the successful reuse of a historic school building following the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation*, reopened in the fall of 1997.

Once the building was saved, however, the work of the One United Band was not over. The group, which had originally organized for the purpose of insuring the building's preservation, continues to work with the school under the name of the Edison Linkage Foundation. The first activity of this group was to raise funds to run a tutoring program in the middle school. Through this program, high school students selected for both their academic ability and their ability to serve as role models, are paid to tutor middle school students. The high schoolers are paid an amount equivalent to what they might make at a fast-food restaurant, but organizers think that the program helps to instill in these students a sense of responsibility and commitment to others that they cannot get from other jobs that may be available to them.

The Edison Linkage Foundation holds an annual honor awards luncheon to recognize the achievements of the middle school students. It also looks for innovative ways to foster ethnic pride in the students; for example, plans are under way for a Haitian Art Show at the school. Members of the Edison Linkage Foundation will travel to Haiti to collect original artworks to display at the school.

The Friends of the Wentworth Save Resort Hotel

When a former resort hotel in the small fishing village of New Castle, N.H., was threatened with demolition in 1992, concerned residents banded together to form a "friends" group to raise money and find a new use for the building. The once elegant 300-room resort known as the Wentworth By The Sea Hotel had operated in the Great Island community from 1874 to 1982. The original three-story building was enlarged in 1879, including the addition of three towers that became a hallmark of the building. In 1920 a new owner, Harry Beckwith, added indoor plumbing and a salt-water swimming pool and built a free-standing structure near the waterfront. Known as "The Ship," this structure housed a theater and dressing rooms.

In addition to its architectural significance, the hotel is renowned for its role in the 1905 peace treaty negotiations between Russia and Japan that brought an end to the war between these two countries. The negotiations took place at the nearby Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. After the long days of negotiating a settlement, the Japanese and Russian delegates returned to the Wentworth By The Sea Hotel. Japanese tourists to the United States still visit this hotel.

In the 1980s two forces threatened the historic hotel: a decrease in tourism to the area and an increased interest in Great Island as a desirable and affluent residential community. In 1991 the owners of the building, the Henley Group, decided to demolish the remaining portion of the old hotel to make way for a revamped resort with additional land for luxury housing. (The wings, which were later additions, had been demolished in 1989; the remaining portion was the original building and the grandest, most historic part of the structure.)

This announcement resulted in the creation of the Friends of the Wentworth, a grassroots organization dedicated to preserving the hotel.

Because of community outrage, as evidenced by the formation of the Friends group, the Henley Group agreed to stay the demolition of the building for two years if the nonprofit organization could raise \$50,000 by June 1992 to pay for exterior repairs. The Friends sent out an appeal letter, and raised the \$50,000 plus an additional \$20,000 primarily from New Hampshire residents, including former employees and guests of the famous resort. They also drummed up support from the New Hampshire legislature, from two local newspapers, and from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Although the \$70,000 was initially raised to pay for exterior repairs, the Green Company, which had been hired by the Henley Group to manage the property, realized, after discussion with the Friends, that the money might be better spent on marketing the building. The owners agreed to delay demolition for 14 months while the nonprofit group looked for a new owner. At that point the group hired an executive director, Albert Rex, to help market the building. The funds raised from the appeal letter were used to print marketing materials, mail brochures to increase awareness and interest in the property, and supply interested parties with detailed marketing information. It also helped to pay the salary of the part-time executive director.

A major activity of the Friends of the Wentworth was to lay the groundwork for a possible new use for the hotel. The group came up with a plan to redevelop the hotel as a summer resort and a winter conference center, which would give the building year-round use. A hospitality consulting firm donated its services to develop the plan. Financial projections developed for this scheme showed that a 108-room corporate conference center with a 50 percent occupancy rate for rooms averaging \$108 a night would be making money by its fourth year of operation.



Nearly leveled to make room for luxury housing, the Wentworth By The Sea Hotel may soon reopen. Support for the 19th-century landmark, with its distinctive towers, came from as far away as Japan.

The Friends of the Wentworth assembled engineering and traffic studies and environmental and economic impact assessments from earlier hotel plans. Additional studies were accomplished with generous help from area professionals, who donated their services.

While the Friends of the Wentworth was raising money and searching for a new owner, construction was taking place around the hotel building. In September 1993 the first phase of the development—21 homes known as the Ducks Head Condominiums—was complete and the houses were on the market. In 1994 the hotel's golf course was sold by the owners and construction began on 24 single-family luxury homes known as Little Harbor. Because of its deteriorating condition, the Wentworth was viewed by the developers as a detriment to the sale of the luxury housing being constructed all around it.

The nonprofit group had until October 1, 1996, to find a buyer for the hotel, which had a price tag of \$1 million and estimated renovation costs of \$11 million. The Friends of the Wentworth pursued an aggressive marketing program while working with the owners to ensure that the building remained intact. Part of its strategy included direct mailings to

existing hotel owners and operators in the United States and Canada. Brochures were originally sent to the 123 members of Historic Hotels of America, a program of the National Trust. In early 1996 mailings went to an additional 350 North American hotel groups. As a result of these efforts, more than 300 of the detailed marketing packets were distributed.

The Wentworth By The Sea Hotel was also listed by the National Trust in 1996 on its list of Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places. According to Albert Rex, before submitting the nomination form, the board carefully considered the potential drawbacks to including the hotel on this national list. The Friends of the Wentworth did not want to offend the Green Company, who by now had purchased the property, and who had been willing to give the organization time to find a buyer for the old hotel. The Friends of the Wentworth finally decided that, if the building were included on the list, it would, in Rex's words, "make them do the right thing. We felt that the Green Company would not want to be known as the company that tore the building down."

According to Rex, being included on the Trust's Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places list led to national

and international coverage of the threat to the hotel. (Because of the role that the Wentworth played in the 1905 Russo-Japanese treaty negotiations, the Japanese have followed the news of the hotel's fate closely.) Rex also felt that the listing gave the building a certain cachet, a new owner could be known as the white knight who rescued the building. In addition, the listing also helped draw new potential investors and developers to the project. Media coverage resulted in several new proposals for the reuse of the building.

In early 1997 a development company known as Ocean Properties, Ltd., signed a purchase agreement with the Green Company to purchase the Wentworth By The Sea Hotel. Initially the agreement was for the hotel and a 4.65-acre parcel of land. Ocean Properties negotiated with the Green Company to purchase an additional parcel, which included the Ship, land behind the hotel, and the pool and restaurant.

Ocean Properties' plans for the Wentworth and adjoining properties included a 170-room hotel in the remaining core of the original building with two new additions set back from the main facade, 18 extended-stay units in the Ship, and four single-family houses behind the hotel. In

addition, the developer is proposing to move the main road, which runs right past the hotel on its way across the island, to the rear of the property. This relocation would better separate the traffic from pedestrians, who would no longer need to cross the road to reach the pool or beach associated with the hotel.

Their proposal, however, ran into a "bureaucratic snag" at the 11th hour. Although the community wholeheartedly endorsed the developers' proposal for the building and the site, the zoning ordinance, drafted in the early 1970s, did not foresee the closing and possible reopening of the hotel. Because the new use is considerably different from that which the current zoning allows, the local Zoning Board of Appeal was unable to recommend in favor of the extended-stay units, despite strong sentiment in the community in favor of the project. It instead recommended that the zoning for the site be changed to accommodate the proposed use, rather than try to grant a series of special exceptions and variances that would be required to meet the project goals.

This led to an approximately four-month delay in the project. The board and staff of the Friends of the Wentworth, with the input of the community at large, worked to convince developers not to withdraw the project, but to wait for the vote on zoning change expected in February 1998. As the vote approached, the Friends sent a mailing to all of New Castle's residents which outlined the pros and cons of the project. The mailing was extremely effective and a record number of voters turned out, with 75 percent voting in favor of the hotel. The zoning ordinance was changed to allow for the development of the hotel.

One of the keys to the success of the Friends of the Wentworth, according to Executive Director Albert Rex, is the diversity of professions represented on the group's board. The board consists of a landscape architect, several developers, a public relations professional, a banker, an attorney, and community representatives, all of whom are interested in the preservation of the Wentworth. The board is supported by part-time staffer Rex and by a membership of

530 New Hampshire residents, former employees, and former guests from 30 states and Japan.

Keeping An Entire Town Intact— Virginia City, Montana

Residents of Virginia City, Mont., were faced with the rescue of an entire small town and a way of life when 60 historic buildings, owned since the 1940s by a single family, were put up for sale. By forming a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation of Virginia City, and by enlisting the help of national and statewide organizations, residents were able to ensure the long-term protection of their historic mining community.

Virginia City was founded after gold was discovered along Alder Gulch in 1863. The town grew to more than 10,000 residents during the Civil War, including both miners and the merchants and small businessmen who came to sell goods and supplies to them. Virginia City boasted the state's first newspaper and first public school system and in 1866 was made

To increase voter support, Friends of the Wentworth sent a special mailing to all of New Castle's residents which outlined the pros and cons of the proposed zoning change.

Friends of the Wentworth

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE WENTWORTH BY THE SEA HOTEL SPECIAL VOTE, FEBRUARY 17

On Tuesday, February 17, New Castle residents will cast their vote on the fate of the historic Wentworth By The Sea Hotel. The Friends of the Wentworth have developed this flyer to help you understand the specifics of the votes and the project.

Issue	Hotel ('Yes' Vote)	Without Hotel ('No' Vote)
What will happen to the property?	<p>the Hotel to 170 rooms, 100 bed stay units in the Ship, 70 family homes</p> <p>operated, and managed as a company with 40 years experience. Operates 60+ historic hotels, inns and Key West voted as one of the best by Resorts & Hotels</p>	<p>Most likely build the 27 homes that have already been approved for the same site, including 6 condominium units, 5 single family homes, and 16 attached multi-family homes</p> <p>Residential homes would be built and sold by the Green Company; management would ultimately revert to the condominium association</p>
Behind the Hotel	<p>Route 1B remains as is</p>	<p>No guaranteed access to gardens; no public access elsewhere on the property</p>
Weekends and evenings, primarily in peak summer months. Only an estimated 20% of the Hotel's traffic would be through town. (1)	<p>Conversely, the same engineering report estimated that 40% of any residential trips from the same development would be toward town on Wentworth Road. In other words, if the Hotel is not approved and the 27 approved and built instead, much of the resulting traffic would be 'through town' year-round traffic.</p> <p>Furthermore, statistics of</p>	<p>40% of new residential traffic expected to travel through town, 60% estimated to travel through Rye (1)</p> <p>Year-round traffic, including school/commuting hours</p> <p>Each home estimated to generate 9.55 trips per day (2)</p>
Town Assessor estimated tax revenue of \$136,080. Tax is based on property value		

BACKGROUND ON THE VOTE
In order for the Hotel renovation to occur as proposed by Ocean Properties, 13 zoning ordinance changes are required. All of the changes are specific to the Hotel and its extended stay units. All have been unanimously recommended by the Town Planning Board, pending a special vote.

TWO DIFFERENT VOTES
State Law requires Zoning Ordinance changes be voted on by ballot. Registered voters may cast their vote on February 17 between 12 noon and 9 p.m. at the New Castle Recreation Center. A small group of opponents recently collected the 35 signatures necessary to invoke a State statute requiring two of the proposed zoning changes be approved by a two-thirds majority. Voting 'Yes' for all 13 zoning changes will allow the Hotel to be developed.

Montana's first territorial capital. Between 1863 and 1868, \$40 million dollars in gold was removed from Alder Gulch, making Virginia City the largest producer of gold ore in the state.

By the late 1860s, however, miners began to leave Alder Gulch to work other strikes. By 1870 only 867 people remained in Virginia City, and in 1876 Helena became Montana's territorial capital. Although mining in Virginia City continued well into the 1930s, the town never regained its mid-19th-century prominence. By the Second World War, fewer than 400 people lived in the town. After the gold was all mined and people left, little money remained in the community to remodel the original Victorian-era frame structures. When a Montana family, the Boveys, first visited the town after World War II, they found an intact historic town with very little alteration to the historic buildings, many of which dated from the 1860s and 1870s. In 1961 the National Park Service declared Virginia City a National Historic Landmark because of its importance to mining history and its remarkable state of preservation.

The Boveys, Montana history buffs, were so impressed that they began buying up the old buildings, along with original furnishings and merchandise. They eventually purchased 130 structures and furnished them with 250,000 authentic artifacts—including antique fixtures, appliances, clothing, toys, cars, stagecoaches, music machines, canned food, and everyday utensils. This collection made the houses look lived in and the stores ready for commerce. The Boveys converted the sleepy wild west town into a popular tourist destination that included restaurants, gold rush-themed live entertainment, and quaint inns. Their efforts are regarded to be the first and largest private preservation project in the West.

Charlie Bovey had also been buying old buildings and artifacts from across Montana for a number of years. Initially, these buildings were housed

near his home, at the Great Falls fairgrounds. They were eventually moved to Nevada City, located a mile up Alder Gulch from Virginia City.

Every summer from 1950 until his death in 1976, Charlie and Sue Bovey educated and entertained visitors to Virginia and Nevada Cities with their collection of historic buildings and artifacts. During the day, visitors toured the old buildings, viewing the Bovey's collections. At night visitors attended the opera or saw the Virginia City Follies at the old brewery. Overnight guests slept in log cabins and rustic hotels and dined at the Wells Fargo Cafe.

By the time Mrs. Bovey died in 1986, their son and heir, Ford, found that the buildings—which were unplumbed, unheated, and unmaintained—required so much work that he could no longer afford to operate the town. As a result he put the buildings up for sale in 1990. Shortly after the announcement of the potential sale of the buildings and arti-

It took great persistence and multiple approaches to find a way to save Virginia City. Today visitors to the remarkable collection of buildings and artifacts glimpse daily life in an authentic, historically important gold rush town.

facts, Virginia City's remaining 140 residents contacted the National Trust Mountains/Plains Office in Denver requesting help. In March 1991 a public meeting was held with representatives of the community, Montana's state historic preservation office, the National Trust, and the National Park Service. At the meeting it was decided that the best outcome for Virginia City would be for the National Park Service to purchase the buildings and establish a new national park.

For the next four years, the citizens of Virginia City and the National Trust worked to convince the National Park Service to create a new park at Virginia City. It took two years to get Congress to appropriate money to fund a Special Resource Study for Virginia City, the first crucial step for the consideration of any new park. When Congress funded half the amount needed, the National Trust donated a staff person to help the Park Service complete the study and prepare the report. Next the National

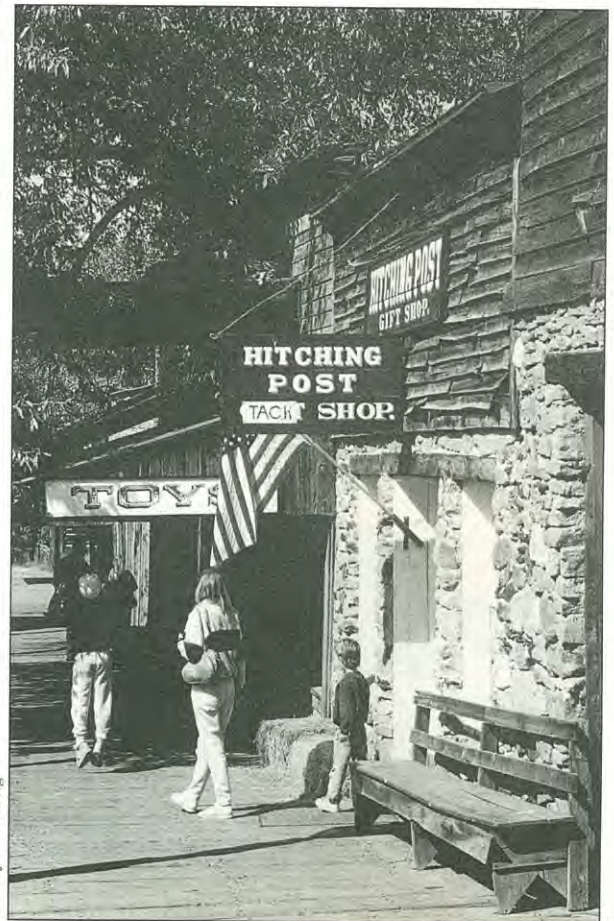


Photo: Jim Lindberg

Trust worked with interested citizens in Virginia City to create a local non-profit group, the Virginia City Preservation Alliance, who could work in partnership with the future park and provide needed volunteer and fund raising assistance.

Virginia City was included on the National Trust's Eleven Most Endangered Historic Places List for three consecutive years, beginning in 1992. According to Barb Pahl, director of the National Trust's Mountains/Plains Office, the inclusion of Virginia City on the national list of endangered sites helped convince owner Ford Bovey not to sell the properties immediately. It also resulted in national publicity when the story of the Montana mining town was covered by both the *Dallas Morning News* and the *Baltimore Sun*.

The results of a Special Resource Study funded by Congress, which were announced at a public meeting in November 1994, recommended a "Partnership Park." Under this plan, the National Park Service would acquire and interpret selected sites in the town; a local nonprofit organization or the state of Montana would acquire and manage the remaining sites. Members of the state legislature introduced a bill requesting state funding for the project.

However, despite their support and support from the governor, the bill failed. At the same time, the climate in Congress changed, with new emphasis given to balancing the budget. Despite the support of the director of the National Park Service, Congress was not in the mood to appropriate money for creating new national parks. After four long years of hard work, efforts to save Virginia City through purchase by the federal government were dropped.

Defeated and disheartened, leaders of the Virginia City Preservation Alliance and the regional office of the National Trust met in Virginia City in June 1995 to consider alternatives. Ford Bovey had waited patiently for four years to learn if either the state or Congress would buy out his interests, but his patience was wearing thin. Other potential buyers, including the giant auction houses of Christies and Butterfields, had made inquiries and Ford instructed his agents to start negotiating with them.

Present at the June 1995 meeting were three representatives from the Montana Historical Society Foundation. Established as the 501(c)(3) arm of the state-funded Montana Historical Society, the Foundation had a dream of establishing Society-owned and locally man-

aged historic properties around the state; they viewed Virginia City as a good project for them.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation, the Montana Historical Society Foundation, and the Virginia City Preservation Alliance formed a coalition to negotiate a sale price with the Boveys and privately raise the money to acquire the property for the state. Initially, the coalition believed all it could handle were the 60 historic properties and artifacts in Virginia City. However, negotiations quickly came to include historic properties and artifacts in Nevada City as well. In January 1996, after several futile attempts to get Ford Bovey to determine the value of the property or list what would be included in a sale, the chair of the Montana Historical Society Foundation officially declared the negotiation over.

In June 1996, National Trust President Richard Moe and Barb Pahl, director of the National Trust's Mountains/Plains office, met with Montana Governor Marc Racicot to ask him to lead a state effort to save both Virginia City and Nevada City; he agreed. Part of their success, claims Barb Pahl, was that "we had already looked at other options and found out that they would not work for whatever reason. We could say to



Photo: Jim Lindberg

The state of Montana appropriated almost \$9.5 million for the purchase and restoration of Virginia and Nevada city.

the Governor, 'We've been everywhere.' The state had to know about the other things that had been done before we came to them." Although with the failed National Park Service effort and the private effort it felt like "we went down two black holes," in Pahl's words, doing this groundwork resulted in the ultimate success of the work to save these two important western towns.

With Governor Racicot's support, a task force was established, spear-headed by Brian Cockhill, director of the Montana State Historical Society. This task force met for several months to determine how the state could finance the purchase and restoration of Virginia City and Nevada City. After their report, which included several recommendations for funding options, was completed in November 1996, a purchase agreement and option between the Bovey family and the Montana State Historical Society was successfully negotiated. The agreement was for the purchase of more than 110 of the buildings and 300,000 artifacts for \$6.5 million. The option secured the properties through June 1, 1997.

Nevertheless, all was not smooth sailing. Despite the governor's interest and a public fund-raising campaign demonstrating popular support, a January 1997 bill to fund the purchase with money from the state's coal trust fund was defeated. It was at that point that the Montana Preservation Alliance and the National Trust for Historic Preservation set up a "phone tree" starting with 95 people who were concerned about the issue and were willing to make calls to their state elected officials. When called, each member of this group agreed to call his or her legislators and five more people to encourage them also to contact their legislators. The people making up the phone tree were, according to Barb Pahl, "not preservationists, just regular folks who were concerned about the welfare of Virginia City." Besides generating calls, this group also sent letters of support on behalf of the bill when it

was reintroduced, and helped to recruit citizens to attend hearings, to testify, and to attend rallies. Finally, in April 1997, legislation was passed authorizing the purchase of the buildings and artifacts. In the end, the legislature appropriated almost \$9.5 million to enable the state to buy and restore more than 110 properties and 300,000 artifacts dating back to Montana's gold rush past.

Two Massachusetts Towns Say "No!" to Superstore Sprawl

The imminent demolition of a historic site is an obvious wake-up call for preservationists. But some threats to historic buildings are more subtle. Increasingly, historic buildings are at risk because of new "superstores" and other development on the perimeter of a community, which will contribute, over time, to the decline of a traditional downtown center. Several publications listed in the resource section of this booklet document the actions taken by citizens to prevent or control unwelcome sprawl. A look at the tactics used by groups in two Massachusetts communities—originally described in *How Superstore Sprawl Can Harm Communities (and What Citizens Can Do About It)* by Constance Beaumont (Washington, D.C., The National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994) to combat sprawl—provide useful strategies for others engaged in this kind of effort.

Greenfield

In Greenfield, Mass., a small New England town, the local business community played a vital role in the successful fight against a Wal-Mart planned for the edge of town. Initially, the business people and merchants were reluctant to get involved in the fight, because they did not want to alienate their customers and associates who might favor the project. The business community, including the chamber of commerce, the county community development corporation, and the city's redevelopment authority, changed its mind, however, after pro-

jections for the planned store revealed that Wal-Mart would capture as much as \$24 million from existing retail sales while providing a net gain of only eight new jobs (at lower pay than existing jobs offered) and a net increase of less than \$34,000 in county tax revenue. Construction of a new store also meant increased traffic congestion and the potential for lowered property values in both the commercial and residential areas of Greenfield.

As in the other case studies, publicity was a primary component in the struggle against the zoning change that would allow for a new superstore. The town council had voted in favor of the zoning change, but a local attorney had discovered that a decision of the council could be appealed by the citizens if enough signatures were gathered on petitions. Within days, a local radio station reported that representatives would be on the town common collecting signatures. People came out in the pouring rain to sign the petitions. Despite the weather, in two days 600 people had signed petitions, 100 more names than were needed to place the issue on the ballot. The referendum vote was scheduled for eight weeks later.

The Greenfield Community Preservation Coalition, an ad hoc group consisting of preservationists, community activists, and business people that formed in response to the perceived threat to their community, decided to hire a professional lobbyist to assist in the last phase of the fight against the zoning change. It chose a Greenfield resident, Al Norman, who had experience as a lobbyist for non-profit groups.

Despite the economic data about the impact of the proposed Wal-Mart, Norman felt that it was more important to appeal to voters' hearts than to their wallets. He recommended framing the issue as a threat to "Greenfield's small town way of life." He laid out a comprehensive strategy that included publicity, grassroots organizing, and voter polling. Norman also

recommended changing the name of the organization to the catchy "We're Against the Wal Committee."

The carefully planned campaign was outlined on a timeline with deadlines for each task that needed to be accomplished. One of the first activities was to print 500 bumper stickers reading "Stop the Wal" and distribute them to townspeople. A primary strategy was a weekly press conference on the town common that included a traveling "Wal." The "Wal" was a four-foot-high-by-six-foot-long community bulletin board where townspeople could post their views on the proposed Wal-Mart and the needed zoning change. This "Wal" became a tangible symbol of the community's opposition; three "Wals" were filled during the eight-week campaign.

The media strategy for the campaign was complicated by the fact that the local newspaper had twice printed editorials in favor of the rezoning. It had not, however, included information outlining the impact on the local economy, which was not as favorable for Wal-Mart. The committee tackled this problem head on in a number of ways. Part of their fund-raising efforts, for example, went toward raising money to pay for newspaper and radio ads. It also prepared a four-page advertising supplement to the local paper entitled "Retail News" that contained arguments against the Wal-Mart. Because it was an insert, it was received by all the regular subscribers to the local paper.

Committee members also urged their friends and neighbors to write letters to the editor of the local paper. The committee had a goal of 50 letters, which was more than exceeded by the enthusiastic townspeople. These letters were copied and distributed as part of an information packet.

Finally, Al Norman recommended that a telephone survey of 1,000 voters be conducted. With the assistance of a local telemarketing company, 4,000 telephone interviews were done. The results were informative.

First, the survey provided information on how the community as a whole felt about this issue, as well as who was "for" and who was "against" the proposed zone change. It indicated how different precincts would be likely to vote on election day. Armed with a list of people who were leaning against the rezoning, members of the committee were able to call these individuals the weekend before the election to remind them to vote.

In the final week before the vote, the "We're Against the Wal Committee" staged the "Main Street New England Walk Against Wal-Mart" to demonstrate public opposition to the proposed store. The walk was videotaped by a professional filmmaker who was a member of the committee; the video was aired on the local cable public access channel several times before the date of the referendum. The event and the videotape provided additional ways to keep the issue of the proposed Wal-Mart in the public eye.

All this work paid off. When all of the votes were counted, the voters of Greenfield had rejected the zoning change that Wal-Mart required by a narrow margin. The Wal-Mart was not built.

Westford

The ultimately successful fight against a Wal-Mart in Westford, Mass., began when Elizabeth Michaud read an article in the local newspaper in April 1993, describing the retailer's plans to open a 161,267-square-foot superstore on the edge of town. Michaud was concerned about the impact a Wal-Mart would have on her community, a New England town of 17,500 in the northeastern part of the state. A resident of Westford, Michaud had little experience with community activism or town planning issues. After careful consideration, however, she decided that she would do what she could to stop the project. She started by writing a guest editorial for the local newspaper in which

she announced her plans to launch a petition drive, beginning at the upcoming annual town meeting.

On the day of the town meeting, 300 people signed the petitions. The petition drive not only provided concrete documentation of citizen opposition to the project, it helped to raise public awareness of the issue at an early stage. Six weeks later when Michaud presented the petitions to the town council, they contained more than 2,000 signatures. These petitions, which included a space for phone numbers, proved invaluable later in the struggle. Members of the community who were opposed to the store were contacted and invited to public meetings and hearings; this enabled the anti-Wal-Mart forces to have a strong showing at public events.

Opponents of the proposed Wal-Mart found that zoning approval was not required since the selected site was already zoned for large commercial development. Other types of permits and approvals were required, however. For example, Westford has an open space preservation ordinance that prohibits any commercial development proposed along highways from covering more than half of the land in the parcel with impermeable materials, such as paving or a concrete slab foundation. In the case of the planned Wal-Mart, developers hoped to cover as much as two-thirds of the lot; they were therefore required to request a variance to the open space preservation ordinance.

In addition to the variance, the Wal-Mart developers were also required to submit an environmental impact report to meet the provisions of the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act. As a result of this report, it was learned that 200 trees on the site would be chopped down for the parking lot, that daily car trips would increase by 9,000, and that 9,813 gallons of sewage would be generated daily and would need to be treated at an on-site septic system.

Massachusetts residents successfully fought to preserve their small town way of life by protesting the construction of a large "superstore" on the outskirts of town.



These issues were raised at public hearings on the planned development. When wetlands degradation, water and air pollution, and other allied concerns are part of a preservation threat, local organizations and chapters of national groups that deal with these issues are natural allies to involve in the discussion.

Publicity was a major tool of the "Stop Wal-Mart Committee." The group put together press packets containing copies of published letters to the editor and guest editorials written against the proposal, with a cover letter. The packets also contained background information on the issue, making it easier for reporters to cover the story.

The story of Westford's struggle against Wal-Mart, pitched as a "David and Goliath" fight, was covered by the Associated Press in a small article. The story then received greater coverage in national publications such as *USA Today*, the *Christian Science Monitor*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*. In fall 1993, the *Wall Street Journal* ran a story with the headline "Feisty Yankees Resist Wal-Mart's Drive to Set Up Shop in New England Towns." That same day Wal-Mart's corporate offices in Arkansas announced that they were withdrawing their plans to build the store in Westford.

Fort Worth Citizens Block Expansion of an Unsightly Overpass

Sometimes, the threat to historic resources is not immediately clear. This was the case in Fort Worth, Tex., when plans for a new freeway, to be called I-35, also included plans to expand an existing interstate overpass, known as I-30, from four to nine lanes. Both the new road and the overpass expansion were included in the same funding package. Announcements for the public hearings focused on the new expressway, with no mention of the expansion of the existing roadway.

As it became clear that both projects were included, Fort Worth business leaders spearheaded the effort to bring their concerns to the public. The overpass, long a feature in Fort Worth's expressway system, was widely blamed by local residents for creating a psychological barrier between the city's central business district and the South Side neighborhoods, one of Fort Worth's few remaining inner-city residential areas. Many blamed the overpass for the area's decline. As expansion-opponent Joan Kline said, "[It's] hard to relate to people and an area that you can't see."

When community preservationists realized the I-30 overpass was to be widened, they decided to take on the fight. A collection of business leaders concerned about commercial ramifications of the proposed expansion, led by Robert Bass, Fort Worth businessman and downtown investor, formed the Central Business District Association (CBDA). This group began by hiring experts to study the expansion proposal and to devise alternates.

The CBDA's activities began to attract the attention of groups such as the Ryan Place Improvement Association, the city's oldest neighborhood organization. Residents were especially troubled by reports that the expansion would bring the highway within five feet of Philip Johnson's acclaimed Water Garden and four historic buildings eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Recognizing the need for grassroots support, Fort Worth preservationists sent letters to more than 5,000 individuals and organizations. As a result of the favorable response to this mailing, a new group called Citizen Advocates for Responsible Expansion ("I-CARE") was formed specifically to tackle the proposed highway expansion. I-CARE attracted individuals and representatives from 1,000 different groups, including preserva-



The citizens group I-CARE was persistent in its efforts to prevent the expansion of an existing overpass (I-30) in downtown Fort Worth. The group eventually reached a compromise with the city whereby the existing overpass would be removed and the street below developed as a parkway.

tionist organizations, churches, the Traditional Native American Circle, the Sierra Club, and the local Teamsters Union. According to community activist Joan Kline, "We brought together people who cared about process, people who cared about the park, people who cared about neighborhoods, and people who cared about buildings."

I-CARE's association with the CBDA gave it access to earlier studies, including a proposed alternative to overhead expansion, a "depressed" freeway. The study recommended placing the new "depressed" freeway directly under the existing overpass, thus removing an eyesore and solving traffic congestion problems at the same time.

I-CARE launched a strong public relations campaign against the overhead expansion with a battle cry of "Under-Not Over!" They distributed thousands of posters and bumper stickers that proclaimed, "Fort Worth is Worth it! Lower the Overhead!" The state highway department refused to change its plans.

In 1983, frustrated by their inability to negotiate with highway officials, I-CARE, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and other groups filed suit against the state. In a legal brief that was almost 100 pages long, I-CARE charged that the state violated

public notice requirements and the National Environmental Protection Act regarding historically significant buildings, and that the project would violate noise regulations. I-CARE president Jonathan Nelson announced the suit at a press conference held in the Water Garden, where the deafening roar from the overhead section of I-30 dramatically underscored the group's case. Nelson was joined by others representing the I-CARE coalition, including a former Fort Worth mayor.

Despite the fact that plans for the "depressed" freeway cost at least \$17 million more than overhead expansion, I-CARE and its position received positive publicity. I-CARE and the CBDA presented a good case that the "depressed" freeway would stimulate a minimum of \$100 million in economic development.

The first court that heard the case, the district court, ruled in favor of the highway department. I-CARE appealed that decision to the Federal District Court. That judge ruled in favor of I-CARE, granting its request for an injunction to stop the planning and construction of the overhead expansion. As a result of the appeals court decision, I-CARE was able to stop the project.

This decision, however, did not resolve the issue of the need for the road. When the appeals court ruled in favor of I-CARE, city officials hired an outside company, the Conflict Clinic of St. Louis, Mo., to mediate discussions. Meetings with the Conflict Clinic included representatives of all of the various positions. Through this process, it became clear that the various factions had a lot in common, and they all wanted what was best for Fort Worth. Finally, these negotiations led to a compromise plan which called for a new at-grade section of I-30. This road would be in a different location than the overpass, which would simplify the construction. The existing overpass would be removed. Although this alternative was more expensive than the original proposal, it was considered to be more efficient.

Construction on the \$161 million project, a four-mile-long section of I-35 and its interchange with I-30, began in 1997 and is scheduled for completion in 2002. Planners worked with a new community group, Downtown Fort Worth, Inc., to develop urban design and open space plans for the new section of I-30 that will replace the existing overpass. The highway reconstruction will provide an opportunity to reunite a grouping of historic structures, including two 1930s structures associated with the railroad and the U.S. Post Office, with the rest of downtown.

Words from the Wise

The best advice on how to tackle a preservation issue comes from those who have been through the fray. Arva Parks McCabe, who was instrumental in preserving the Edison High School Building in Miami, Fla., encourages preservationists to “build a constituency and tackle the problem head on. As soon as politicians think there is a constituency, they pay attention; otherwise they don’t, regardless of the issue.” Mrs. McCabe also reminds those of us in the field that, although we “get” preservation, we sometimes have to stop and explain its relevance to others.

Albert Rex, director of New Hampshire’s Friends of the Wentworth, agrees that the work is never done. He has found that it is important, once a developer has been identified, to continue to provide support and technical assistance as he or she moves through municipal approvals and loan applications, since the process of receiving all of the necessary approvals can sometimes be confusing.

The work of the preservation community, it seems, is never done. New threats to treasured resources are continually at hand, in cities big and small, rural areas, and neighborhoods in every state. The examples in this booklet can serve as a source of advice and inspiration, and we can continue to learn from these successful efforts that saved a single building or an entire community’s way of life.

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The author, Leah Konicki, AICP, has 13 years of experience in historic preservation and economic and community development.

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Resources

Several publications available through the National Trust’s *Information Series* are useful to groups that are facing a preservation crisis. To order any of the publications listed below call (202) 588-6286 or write: Information, National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036.

Better Models for Superstores by Constance Beaumont. (\$10 plus postage and handling).

How Superstore Sprawl Can Harm Communities (And What Citizens Can Do About It) by Constance Beaumont (\$20 plus postage and handling).

Organizing for Change by Betty Chronic and Barb Pahl (\$6 plus postage and handling).

Building Support Through Public Relations: A Guide for Nonprofit Organizations by Olivia T. Meyer (\$6 plus postage and handling).

Strategic Planning for Nonprofit Organizations by Marc Smiley (\$6 plus postage and handling).

Saving the Neighborhood: You Can Fight Developers and Win by Peggy Robinson. Available from the Preservation Press, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 605 Third Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10158-0012. (800) 225-5945. (\$16.95 plus postage and handling).

How to Save a Landmark: A Citizen’s Guide. Landmarks Preservation Council of Illinois, 1994. To order a copy write: LPCI, 53 West Jackson Boulevard, Chicago, Ill., 60604-3699. (312) 922-1742. The cost is \$5 for members and \$5.50 for nonmembers.

I. KNOW THE BUILDING

History, like beauty, is sometimes in the eye of the beholder, and significant buildings may be unappreciated by their community because of poor condition, location, or lack of aesthetic appeal. In such cases, official designation as historic is invaluable. It is always difficult to generate enthusiasm for the preservation of a building that does not meet the criteria for official designation. Many communities have enacted local ordinances that designate historic buildings at the local level, but the best-known designation is the federal listing, the National Register of Historic Places. A property is considered listed in the National Register if it is listed individually or as a “contributing” structure in a National Register historic district. It is important to note that National Register listing provides a property with no protection against privately funded actions, but does provide limited protection against publicly funded projects. Local designation protection varies depending on the local ordinance. For more information on the National Register, you should contact your state historic preservation office.

- A. Assess significance
- B. Identify owner
- C. Check zoning controls
- D. Assess physical condition
- E. Establish fair market value
- F. Evaluate accessibility

II. IDENTIFY THREAT

Proposed demolition poses a clear, and clearly understood, threat to a historic building, but other, less obvious, threats may present as great a danger. Even the proposed incompatible use of adjacent land or buildings may threaten the future of a historic building. Understanding the threat will guide your response; if, for example, the proposed project requires a federal permit or will use federal funds, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires that a review of the project be undertaken by the appropriate state historic preservation office.

A. Proposed demolition

- 1. Evaluate potential replacement development
 - a. Will it meet current zoning?
 - b. Is this genuinely the best site?
 - c. What investment will it generate?
 - d. What are the owner’s objectives for use?
- 2. Determine sources of financing for demolition and new construction
 - a. Are public dollars involved?
 - b. Is private financing secured?
 - c. What is source of private financing?
- 3. Identify any needed local, state, and/or federal permits

B. Neglect

- 1. Check compliance with existing municipal codes
- 2. Review owner’s record with other property
- 3. Review owner’s property tax record for this property

C. Incompatible use

- 1. Review existing municipal zoning
- 2. Evaluate impact on neighborhood
- 3. Explore other reasonable alternatives

III. DETERMINE “REALITY”

It is always important to have a realistic view of what you may be up against. If you have less than a week to stop a project that is seen to be in the public interest by a community that has no history of support for preservation, your chances of success are small—but, read on!

- A. Evaluate climate of opinion
 - 1. Organizational support for preservation
 - 2. Neighborhood support for preservation
 - 3. Community support for preservation
 - 4. Business, media, or government support for preservation
 - 5. Support of above for preservation of this building
- B. Assess time limits
 - 1. Municipal review and permit process
 - 2. State/federal review and permit process
 - 3. Project timetable
- C. Know process for project approval
- D. Identify allies
 - 1. Yours
 - 2. Theirs
 - 3. Determine each player’s self-interest

IV. KNOW YOUR GOAL

There are many good reasons to become involved in a preservation issue. The principal reason should always be to influence a design/planning decision in your community. In the process, however, you can increase your community’s understanding of preservation issues, gain and educate new members or support for your organization, or encourage more protective legislation.

- A. Relative to specific case
 - 1. Is it to prevent demolition?
 - 2. Is it to modify new plans?
 - 3. Is it to restore the historic building?
- B. Relative to community
 - 1. Is it to create a community resource?
 - 2. Is it to generate awareness?
 - 3. Is it to encourage new legislation?

- C. Relative to organization
 - 1. Is it to increase public support?
 - 2. Is it to position organization:
 - a. For next issue?
 - b. For fund raising?
 - c. With community?

V. EXPLORE ALTERNATIVES WITH OWNER/ DEVELOPER

Mark Twain wrote “it is difference of opinion that makes horse races.” Plans for development unsympathetic to historic resources may arise from many motivations, including concern over financial return, changing demographics, urban policy, lack of imagination, or honest preference for the new. It is always in the best interest of a community and the concerned parties if differences of opinion can be resolved through negotiation. Do not assume that the other side is determined to do what you fear most.

- A. Prepare to negotiate
 - 1. Visualize best case/worst case scenario
 - 2. Prepare short (1–3 page) position statement
 - a. Who are you?
 - b. What is the issue?
 - c. What is your position?
 - d. Why?
 - e. Do other groups share your position?
 - f. What alternatives or solutions are available?
 - g. What are the background details of the situation?
 - 3. Research economic advantages of preservation
 - a. Historic rehabilitation tax credits
 - b. Facade easement donation
 - c. Financial involvement of government or nonprofit organization
 - (1) Acquisition financing at below-market rates
 - (2) Construction financing at below-market rates
 - (3) Grants (unlikely)
 - d. Public relations

A Process For Community Action *continued*

4. Select negotiating team and appoint chair
5. Recommend neutral location for meeting
- B. Negotiate
 1. Distinguish the people from the problem
 - a. Listen to other side's interests
 - b. Treat other side's concerns with respect
 - c. Avoid emotional outbursts
 - d. Do not react to emotional outbursts
 2. Establish flexible position
 - a. Focus on desired goal not bargaining position
 - b. Recognize each side's multiple interests
 - c. Identify shared interests
 - d. Avoid debate; seek dialogue
 3. Propose options for mutual benefit
 - a. Recommend practical alternate use for the building
 - b. Demonstrate possible inclusion of building in development plan
 - c. Propose realistic alternative purchaser for the property
- C. Don't be a victim
 1. Question "phony facts"
 2. Present alternative to biased "expert"
 3. Beware of less than full disclosure

VI. QUESTION FURTHER ACTION

Is this the right battle at the right time for you? If negotiation has failed, it is time for you and your organization to decide how much further you wish to go. You should base your decision on the importance of the threatened building; the value of the proposed project; whether or not your organization can afford to lose; how any ensuing conflict will affect preservation in your community.

VII. PREPARE FOR CONFLICT

Once you decide to continue your efforts despite failed negotiations, much of your time will be directed at gaining support for your cause in the community. It is essential that your organization be united and clear in its purpose. Both internal coordination and external communication will be more efficient if a single coordinator, or a small committee, leads the organization's efforts. From this point on, it is not as important to be right as it is for the community to understand why you are right. Your communications must be clear, concise, and compelling.

- A. Secure organizational support
- B. Estimate realistic time and money commitment expected of organization and volunteers
- C. Appoint a coordinator
- D. Select committees
- E. Establish network of allies

VIII. PLAN TO WIN

Preservation is a most pragmatic discipline, and buildings saved are the truest measure of success. Success in preservation comes from knowledge and communication: knowledge about the endangered building, the threats to it, and the process by which decisions will be made and the persuasive communication of why and how the building should be saved.

- A. Develop the case for your cause
 1. Prepare short (1–2 paragraph) mission statement
 2. Review position paper
 3. Gather background on other preservation successes
 4. Prepare economic case for preservation
 5. Prepare emotional case for preservation, e.g., "I went to Central School..."

B. Present positive well-researched testimony

1. Know your facts
 - a. Significance of building
 - b. Actual condition—if poor, why?
 - c. Cost of improvements
 - d. Practical reuse possibilities
 - e. Realistic funding sources
2. Cite positive examples
3. Prepare handouts
4. Prepare visuals
5. Secure experts
6. Coordinate presentation

C. Generate positive media coverage

1. Identify personable spokesperson
2. Prepare professional-quality visuals
3. Write professional-quality press releases
4. Package events to be media-attractive

D. Involve public

1. Circulate petition
2. Stage events
 - a. Tours
 - b. Public meetings
 - c. Vigils
3. Secure endorsements from influential people

E. Involve politicians

1. Create photo opportunities
2. Stage events

F. Consider litigation

G. Keep public and organization informed of progress

IX. SO WHAT IF YOU DON'T WIN?

Throughout your efforts to save the building you should conduct yourself in a manner that leads to a positive climate for the protection of other historic resources in your community. Often, it takes the loss of an important building to make a community recognize how vulnerable its resources are and to take steps to protect them. You have won if the loss of one building leads to the protection of other buildings.

A Process for Community Action was originally published as *Crisis Handbook: A Guide to Community Action*. It is reprinted here with the permission of Preservation Pennsylvania. To obtain a copy of *Crisis Handbook* call (717) 234-2310.

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