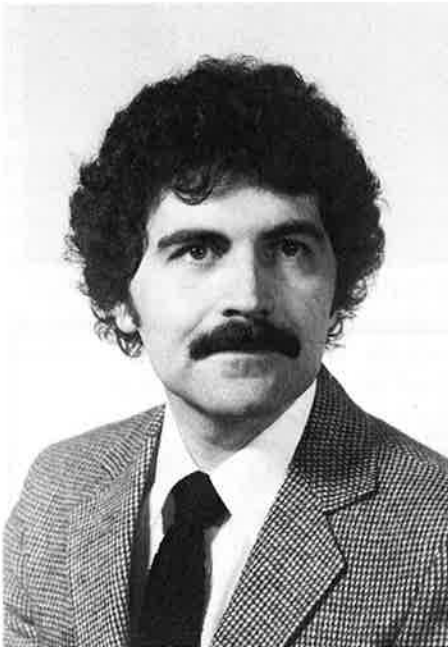


Inter-Agency and Public/Private Cooperation for Rehabilitation and Historic Preservation

by Jean Diaz, SR/WA, SCV

*"The Art of progress is to preserve
order amid change and to preserve
change amid order."*

Alfred North Whitehead



Jean Diaz is the Real Property Administrator for the City of Palo Alto, California. Diaz, with 1982 Seminar Chairman George Wilkerson, developed IRWA's Property Management-Leasing course. Diaz also instructs the course.

Diaz recently earned his Master's Degree in Property Administration from the California State University, Fullerton campus. He is Chairman of the International Property Management Committee.

The Right of Way professional is becoming more involved in the management of property. Diaz, who was instrumental in turning a \$2.7 million dollar property expenditure budget into a \$3.2 net revenue gain for his agency, from acquisition and revenue leasing programs, has written two articles for RIGHT OF WAY. Recognized as an expert in his field, both should be of value to our members in the expanding field of property management.

Alvin Toffler in his classic book *Future Shock* chronicles the rapid pace at which change is confronting our society. In one of the most interesting chapters titled, "Things: The Throw-Away Society," Toffler discusses the growing impermanence of the things that surround us, from children's toys to cities:

The shift toward transience is even manifest in architecture - precisely that part of the physical environment that in the past contributed most heavily to man's sense of permanence. The child who trades in her Barbie doll cannot but also recognize the transience of buildings and other large structures that surround her. We raze landmarks. We tear down whole streets and cities and put up new ones at a mind-numbing rate.¹

Toffler goes on to discuss the change from attitudes of channeling man's creative and productive energies toward maximizing durability and permanence to today's "economics of transience."² Economics of transience is used to describe the growing forces that lead our society towards impermanence. For example, the rapid advances in technology of late lowers the cost of new

manufacture or construction as compared to repair or rehabilitation. The knowledge of this rapid technological advance also leads us to short-term use since we know that the product will be significantly improved in the near future. Uncertainty of the promise of the future also leads towards impermanence since such a recognition makes us unsure about the resulting demands. Therefore, there is a resulting concern about committing large resources to "rigidly fixed objects intended to serve unchanging purposes".³

Arthur Gallion and Simon Eisner support Toffler's contention that economics is a powerful driving force leading toward physical impermanence:

The development of real estate in the United States has not been distinguished for its attention to the amenities of a living environment. Speculation was the moving spirit as the frontiers widened and pushed forward. . . Exploitation and promotion were not always accompanied by the most reliable business tactics, but the growing necessity to improve the property exerted a salutary influence upon the subdivision of land.⁴

According to Gallion and Eisner, the speculative motive is damaging to the urban pattern. It has been such a strong factor in the shaping of our cities; yet the speculative developer assumes no responsibility for the product since there is no real concern for ultimate use and the uses which may have been displaced. This is of course reinforced by the economic principle of highest and best use of property.

Our society has only recently begun to realize the adverse effects of such impermanence. As Sally Oldham has observed, a real concern for preserving the historical and cultural resources of our cities is relatively recent:

Although the federal government has been preserving certain sites and properties of historic significance for a century - since first Congressional authorization of national parks - Federal recognition of a broad range of properties, illustrative of our nation's historic development, dates back only to the mid-1960's. This was the era of urban renewal, when large sections of many American cities were razed in hopes of replacing under-used, deteriorated, and perhaps "unstylish" old buildings with new development. Some of the resulting barren seas of asphalt are only now being reclaimed for redevelopment in cities such as Denver or St. Louis. New construction created jarring juxtapositions between older blocks of buildings and the new ... Citizen concern about the loss of large numbers of irreplaceable older buildings led to the 1964 White House Conference on Beauty, which in 1966 gave birth to the National Register of Historic Places. The concept of the existing register of nationally significant historic properties was expanded to include properties of state and local significance.⁵

Preservation of these ties to the past is important. As Toffler states: *Anti-Materialists tend to de-*

ride the importance of "things." Yet things are highly significant, not merely because of their functional utility, but also because of their psychological impact. We develop relationships with things. Things affect our sense of continuity or discontinuity. They play a role in the structure of situations and the foreshortening of our relationships with things accelerates the pace of life.⁶

John Osman further links the importance of the structural forms of our cities to their history when he states, "The forms of the City live in its people, they emerge out of the mind and spirit of its citizens. They reside in the very history of 'the place . . .'"⁷

The above discussion give us some clue as to the economic reality which makes it difficult for the private sector, given its economic motive, to act independently to preserve these important resources. Yet, it is becoming more and more difficult for the public sector to do much active preservation given the diminishing resources available to public agencies. Therefore, some creative and innovative techniques utilizing col-



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aboration are needed to accomplish preservation of historic, architectural or cultural resources consistent with the goals and desires of our communities.

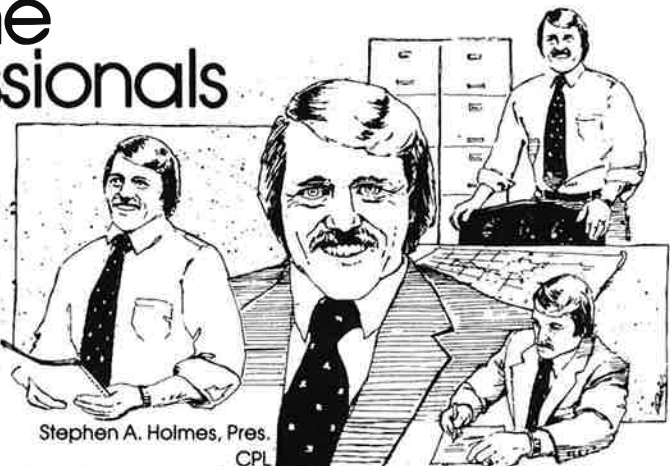
The only means of conservation is innovation.

Peter Drucker

This paper will discuss the efforts of one community to preserve two important historical, architectural and cultural structures. The two structures, the Veterans' Memorial Building and the Southern Pacific Railroad passenger depot in Palo Alto, California, are adjacent to each other and the steps to preserve these structures occurred almost simultaneously. However, the strategies utilized to preserve the two structures present two different methodologies - a public/private joint-venture for the Veterans' Memorial Building and inter-agency cooperation for the Southern Pacific Railroad depot.

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