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# Incorporating Historic Preservation into an Accredited Interior Design Program, Reasoning and Application

Jenna M. Woodcox

Wayne State University, [jenna.marie.woodcox@gmail.com](mailto:jenna.marie.woodcox@gmail.com)

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INCORPORATING HISTORIC PRESERVATION INTO AN ACCREDITED INTERIOR DESIGN PROGRAM,  
REASONING AND APPLICATION

by

Jenna Woodcox

AN ESSAY

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## **Introduction**

The accreditation process for an interior design program benefits the design community by producing high quality designers that can help an array of clientele. The preservation field impacts the entire nation in a positive manner by bringing awareness to the history of our culture and connecting communities through the pride they share for historical aspects in their town. Our country's value on historical structures and their significance could highly improve if other professions were included in maintaining these properties, including interior design. Designers have a qualifying skill set to enter this field and in this reading prove to benefit preservation properties with their unique and creative minds.

Interior designers should be given more of an opportunity to enter the preservation field, which would start at the educational level. When attending an accredited program (or even a growing interior design program), students should become familiar with preservation -based career paths they can immerse themselves in, as to be better prepared to enter the preservation field. This will make an easier transition into the preservation community and better prepare designers for what to expect for when their graduation date has passed.

Preservation has a way of benefiting communities, which in turn enrich the entire country. With this practice younger generations can relate to history outside of textbooks and feel pride in their nation. When a historic property is being worked on and volunteers are needed, communities are brought closer together and a town is given a newfound pride in where they reside. Individuals that invest in a historic property often see a growth in their investment, while business owners can save money and recourses by re-using and re-adapting a historic site as opposed to building a new site for their individual use. One of the greatest benefits is the economical impact the revitalization a historic property can have. A revitalized landmark often brings in tourism and recognition to an area, which means more money and notoriety for that town.

The accreditation process for an undergraduate interior design program prepares highly professional and educated interior designers. These programs set the standards for interior design education and share their expertise with universities that are striving to gain this accreditation. With this training, future designers gain experience in all interior operations, excluding load bearing walls. Students study building codes, recommended space allocations and appropriate material selections, along with on the job internships to gain industry knowledge and business operation studies. Among these studies, pupils are given the opportunity explore specialized fields that are of interest to each designer. This may include residential, commercial, hospitality, kitchen and bath, office interiors and special user projects. With all of these opportunities in specialization, there is one area of study that more emphasis could be placed on when discussing interior design career paths-historic preservation.

This discussion will outline the interior design field and explain the accreditation process of an interior design program according to the CIDA guidelines. The importance of this accreditation and reasoning why to include preservation in this high standard of design education is also examined. Preservation basics for an interior designer are reviewed to help guide professors to incorporate preservation into their curriculum as well. Finally, several recommendations will be made on how to incorporate preservation practices into multiple classroom applications for an interior design curriculum.

The goal of these recommendations for making preservation a more common practice in the interior design community will hopefully reach out to designers, professors and one day The Council for Interior Design Accreditation so preservation guidelines can one day be included in an accredited interior design program. If not to get those who are involved in the design community to better recognize the potential impact they could make in the preservation field.

## **Overview of the Interior Design Profession**

Interior design is a highly competitive and versatile career path. One can own your own residential business in an historic farm house in Mississippi or work for a multi-million dollar firm in a high rise in New York. Much education and preparation is done before entering the field and skills are continuously being developed through professional development. The goals of the designer are centered on the clients and occupant's needs which can protect their safety, make their environment more productive and increase the resale value of the space. The occupational outlook handbook defines the field as follows:

“Interior designers draw upon many disciplines to enhance the function, safety, and aesthetics of interior spaces. Their main concerns are with how different colors, textures, furniture, lighting, and space work together to meet the needs of a building's occupants. Designers plan interior spaces of almost every type of building, including offices, airport terminals, theaters, shopping malls, restaurants, hotels, schools, hospitals, and private residences. Good design can boost office productivity, increase sales, attract a more affluent clientele, provide a more relaxing hospital stay, or increase a building's market value.”<sup>1</sup>

A designer's responsibilities in the office and job site are endless. The designer is often the key organizer and keeps the construction team on track. Often clients will hire designers, contractors and installation team; this could be per the designer's recommendation or from an outside source. Whether it's an installation team the designer has worked with or not, close communication is the key to a

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<sup>1</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics, United States Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook, 2010-

project's success. Designers learn to adapt to changes and challenges they face each day and carry out the project the best to their ability while being professional and creative.

Interior designers go through a specific design process that they are taught through projects in their undergraduate program, which they then utilize in the design field. This process includes programming, formulating a design plan and schedule, cost estimates of the project, as well as specifying each surface material or product for a given space. When students graduate and enter the real world the designer should try to be on the job site as much as possible depending on the project, especially during the installation process. This is to ensure any problems that arise may be resolved. With constant supervision, installations are completed within the projects given time frame. Designers learn the importance of keeping a construction project within the timeline to carry out a contract and please the client at hand.

The experience of the designer and their location determine a designer's job description. If one lives in a large city or wealthy community a commercial career path is within grasp and many levels of hierarchy are attainable as a designer progresses through their career. Junior designers work under senior designers which usually require at least five years experience to become a senior designer. With large firms, designer's opportunities for advancement are nearly limitless, while smaller communities are quite limited. Each designer may work at multiple firms throughout their career and more than likely will not land their ideal job until they put in time at jobs they may not initially prefer.

Some designers go into business for themselves and start their own firms. These establishments have potential to grow, but primarily deal with residential and limited commercial projects which are composed of a relatively small design team. Working with products like flooring and wall coverings is an option for designers, whether it's through showrooms or being a representative for a company. This is a common career path for recent graduates needing to gain experience in the field to eventually obtain a

design position in a firm. It is possible that designers enjoy these positions and stay in them permanently. Most firms require up to three years experience to work as a junior designer, so working in a product-based position is quite common. This adds job appreciation and makes the designer realize how lucky they are when they finally get to do what they want to do in their career and become a designer in a commercial setting or in a large firm.

Specialties are becoming more and more popular within the industry, especially with the state of the current economy. Because design is often considered a luxury profession many people are losing their jobs and new designers are finding it more and more challenging to obtain a design oriented positions. New designers are becoming more grateful for even product based jobs. Therefore if a specialty is chosen, a career path for a designer is more solidified and a designer has a higher chance of seeking employment. Specialty also shows commitment, a willingness to learn and a large capacity of knowledge that a designer may have. In essence, if a designer has more education in a given field they have an edge over the competition and are in higher demand. A designer must choose their specialty carefully as to be true to themselves and not just sway to what may be a popular focus of study at that time. This is one of the primary reasons why historic preservation should be a more studied specialty within the interior design field; it will always be present and will always be an important practice in the design community.

Design specialties themselves are growing in numbers and flex with building trends. One of the most popular specialties today is green design. Using sustainable or “green” design practices can be used within other specialties like kitchen and bath and commercial properties. Preserving historic properties are no exception to that rule. The field can be combined with many practices, leaning to a versatile learning experience in the classroom or on the job site. The original use of the property may

not be the current use of the building, therefore knowledge in commercial, residential and adaptive re-use are very important while adding credibility to a designer's role in the preservation team.

The preservation field is resourceful, improves the economy and helps the country as a whole, designers can help the field in achieving their goals of preservation. Incorporating preservation principles into an interior designer's skill set would not only make for more educated designers, but make them more sensitive to their surroundings and existing dwellings. Expanding their knowledge not only gives designers more job opportunities, but brings more credibility to the field. Designers have to defend their careers constantly; to outsiders that it is a successful and legitimate profession, as well as to artists that it is an artistic and creative career path. By learning more about different specialties they can do so with even more confidence and knowledge, while proving to the skeptics that the wide skill sets designers possess are valid and contribute to our society. Adapting curriculums to incorporate preservation practices could finally attract more individuals to the field.

In addition to completing an accredited bachelor's program, designers can also obtain licensure when they enter the work force after so much education and design hours are logged. The Nation Council for Interior Design Qualification (NCIDQ) administers the test for interior designers to obtain licensure. The state the designer resides and practices in determines if they can, and or are required to become licensed, registered, or certified. In many states it is illegal for non licensed or non educated decorators to call themselves interior designers. As for Michigan you do not have to be licensed to call yourself and interior designer, a right designers have been fighting for in Lansing for years.

Twenty-six states currently have laws recognizing interior designers, along with eight provinces in Canada.<sup>2</sup> These laws regulate who can call themselves interior designers v.s. decorators. Those who

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<sup>2</sup> A.S.I.D., Interior Design Legislation 101. [http://www.asid.org/NR/rdonlyres/982056F9-CBD4-4A42-](http://www.asid.org/NR/rdonlyres/982056F9-CBD4-4A42-9921-AE6F3B4E84D8/0/IDlegislation101.pdf)

9921-AE6F3B4E84D8/0/IDlegislation101.pdf. Web. 28 June. 2011

become interior designers must acquire a license once a certain educational level and experience in the field is obtained. This is due to states regulating professions that impact the health, safety and welfare of the public. These laws require designers to pass an intense competency exam that is both hands on and in written form to ensure designers are in no way going to compromise the well-being of the public while in the field. Accredited interior design curriculums better prepare graduates for this intense testing process that takes months to study for and serious dedication to pass.

Between design shows, how-to books, magazines, and the internet, interior design has become a media phenomenon. Networks like “HGTV” has the entire nation believing anyone can become an interior designer. As if any person can put together a space, the truth is almost anyone creative can be a decorator. Much of the general public easily confuse designers of being decorators, a large misconception. By definition a decorator is a non-educated practitioner in the interior design field, yet often claims to be a designer. While these individuals declare to be as qualified as designers they are not trained to make decisions concerning building code knowledge, handi-cap and special user design needs, and many other technical problems that may arise on the job site with installation and scheduling. More than likely, decorators haven’t had to deal with the high pressure time constraints and professionalism that is experienced in design school either.

Designers are required to complete a two to six year rigorous design education which is required for licensure. In some states this law is not in effect or doesn’t exist and the lines between the two become fuzzy to clients. Clients are advised to check the credentials of interior designers as much as they would for any contractor to ensure the quality of their interior design project. Often when a commercial interior space is being designed clients will go with a larger commercial firm where these decorators wouldn’t pose a threat, it’s above their skill set.

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The amount of education combined with experience usually determines a designer's career path. Those with associate or two year degrees often work for distributors or showrooms, selling flooring materials, fabric, or designing window coverings. Those with a bachelor's degree start out as product reps, apprentices, or junior designers at firms and work their way up. Higher degrees like masters and doctorates are also obtained by professionals that wish to go into education at the university level, simply expand their knowledge or enter specialization within the field. In this economy it is hard to keep focused and not get discouraged, it is important to keep in mind each designer's career path is unique and the playing field is extremely competitive. Students be warned: you will face challenges.

Because the interior design field is competitive and so many career avenues are possible, it is important for designers to find their passion in the field and pursue their goals whole-heartedly. Finding a specialty gives a designer an edge, choosing preservation as a specialty shows that a designer is not only interested in America's past, but preserving it for future generations as well. A Historic career path shows passion and sensitivity to the built world around us. If you are designer always asking, "Where does this architecture come from?" preservation may be for you.

## **Accreditation Process**

Growth in the interior design industry has led to further development in education, organizations, and standards in the design field. Curriculums for interior designers have become much more technical, informative, and innovative as the years have passed. With these higher standards students and designers alike are becoming more knowledgeable and able to serve their clients to a greater depth. This accreditation process is important to produce extremely innovative designers and set standards for the design field. When a designer graduates from an accredited program their job opportunities are greater and their knowledge base is expansive. In fact many firms, especially in large cities require a degree from an accredited university.

Exceptional designers are created at the educational level. This is where high standards of design and professionalism are introduced and stay with the designer through-out the duration of their career, which is why the accreditation process is so vital. The United States and Canada has an organization that develops these standards and accredits noteworthy universities that meet these standards:

“The Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA) is an independent, non-profit accrediting organization for interior design education programs at colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. For more than 35 years, this knowledge-driven organization has been passionately committed to the ongoing enrichment of the interior design profession through identifying, developing and promoting quality standards for the education of entry-level

interior designers, and then encouraging, accrediting and supporting educational programs to aspire to those standards.”<sup>3</sup>

CIDA was established in 1970 and until 2006 went under the name Foundation for Interior Design Education Accreditation.<sup>4</sup> The Interior Design Educators Council, CIDA focuses in the advancement of education and research in the interior design profession. The organization continuously strives to further develop interior design education and is constantly trying to enhance the design field as a whole. Fees paid by interior design programs during the accreditation review and after the university has been approved for accreditation financially support the organization.

The organization is composed of nine voluntary members, serving as their board of directors. Their job is to make sure CIDA fulfills its mission and maintain its integrity through the improvement of design education. Preservation enhances this goal, adding quality information, techniques and knowledge to the historic and design professions. There are numerous fields in which designers are trained in interior design programs, why not study the specialty that focuses on the past and where design originated?

Along with accreditation practices, CIDA keeps extremely close relationships with interior design societies throughout the United States and Canada. These societies serve as networking tools, learning avenues, and provide possible interaction for future job placement for students and professionals. These organizations link all knowledge and skill levels of designers together and strengthen growth in the profession.

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<sup>3</sup> Council for Interior Design Education. [Http://WWW.accredit-id.org](http://WWW.accredit-id.org) Web. 2 July. 2011

<sup>4</sup> Council for Interior Design Education. [Http://WWW.accredit-id.org](http://WWW.accredit-id.org) Web. 2 July. 2011

*The American Society of Interior Designers (ASID)* is committed to interior design and has over 48 chapters. Educators, practitioners, and students are all members of the IDEC organization. The *International Interior Design Association, IIDA* is a professional networking association in interior design, connecting professionals and students together which has over 12,000 members. *Interior Designers of Canada* and the *National Council of Interior Design* also have close relationships with CIDA as well.

Each organization has the common goal of educating designers and enriching the design community. CIDA sets standards for interior education, evaluates programs for certification approval, and strengthens bonds between professionals and education. IDEC believes the future of the field rests in the hands of education and the designers it is producing. The newest designers are the future of the interior design practice and the more qualified they become, the more the field can grow and thrive in the building industry.

The accreditation process is composed of six steps that an interior design program must complete and pass for accreditation. Not all universities pass their first application submittal and after acceptance a university must renew their accreditation every six years. First an undergraduate program must request a review sent from the executive officer of the institution. A formal application may then be filled out and submitted one year or more prior to the desired site visit.

Second, determining a programs' readiness is evaluated. The the university then can turn a critical eye to its own program and evaluate structure and content it is delivering to it's students. During this process, the university goes through a progression of self study examining its educational goals in correspondence to the CIDA standards. Once completed, the program can clearly identify its strengths and weaknesses, resulting in recognition of possible effort to further develop the program. Based on those findings a plan for future development can then be constructed.

After determining the programs' readiness, the faculty must complete the program analysis report. This analysis is a form resulting from the self study evaluation results, (whether they are good or bad) to CIDA. This gives the CIDA evaluation team background information and an idea of what to expect from each program. The content of the report includes the curriculum, depth of student work and relationships outside of the program. This includes volunteering and professional involvement completed within the university's program.

Next, the site visit takes place and is evaluated by a three review panel. This three day visit determines if the program meets the education standards to become accredited. A large factor in persuading the outcome of the review is student work, as this is a reflection of the program and determines student's readiness to enter the design field. Students themselves are also evaluated on "knowledge, understanding, ability, skills, appropriate application, and competency."<sup>5</sup> All evidence is recorded at the time of the visit and no additional information can be added to the site visit report after the committee leaves campus.

Not only students are under investigation, "Additional factors considered by the visiting team include: academic and professional qualifications of the faculty in relation to the purposes and objectives of the program; adequacy of the facilities for the educational program; administrative structure of the program and its relationship to the institution as a whole; and program assessment methods and the program's continued development and improvement as a result of assessment."<sup>6</sup>

The visiting team report is drafted before the visit is completed. Once submitted to CIDA, reviewers finalize their report. A representative from the accreditation commission and the

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<sup>5</sup> Council for Interior Design Education. [Http://WWW.accredit-id.org](http://WWW.accredit-id.org). Web. 2 July. 2011

<sup>6</sup> Council for Interior Design Education. [Http://WWW.accredit-id.org](http://WWW.accredit-id.org). Web. 2 July. 2011

accreditation staff, work with the three professionals that visited the university, to finalize the report that grants accreditation to that applicable university. CIDA submits the documents to the interior design program coordinator who verifies for technical accuracy. This is acknowledged in writing and the visiting team as well as the university can make corrections as they see fit.

The accreditation commission makes the final decision if the interior design program becomes accredited. The program analysis report, visiting team report, and feedback from the visiting group all influence the outcome of the decision. The minimum five member team meets twice a year to make these evaluations for universities. Accredited programs must also submit a written progress report on areas that creditors may have identified as weak spots.

This accreditation process is a serious one. One of the major arguments to incorporate preservation into these strict design guidelines is linking the two through the goal of enriching the interior design field. By incorporating preservation, designers are not only more knowledgeable but more value is added to their education. Exploration of any interior designer in the preservation field posses' vast career opportunities and offers more than surface depth design by contributing to preserving their nation's past.

## **Linking Preservation and Interior Design**

As children we are constantly curious, asking questions like “Are we there yet?” and “How was this made?”. Creative minds like interior designers, this is even more so. Designers are able to answer their own curiosity by pursuing a career in preservation with the skills they have learned during their interior design training. These specializations for interior designers would fulfill their deepest yearning for curiosity and creativity working with history first hand.

We are all aware the preservation field is our nation’s architectural link to the past. With constant changes developing in our environments, techniques and knowledge about these properties should forever be in the forefront of our minds. Curators and historians alike choose preservation as a career path, so why not interior designers pursuing this path as well? Not only do interior designers have the historic knowledge like curators, but interior designers have a skill set that could benefit the preservation field as a whole.

To be an interior designer you need to be creative and, with this skill, organization and attention to detail are a must. When completing an interior project, each element must be accounted for, from wall placement down to hardware selection, so with these fine-tuned, detail-oriented skills, interior designers can be successful in many fields, including preservation. Designers are also taught strong communication skills that can enhance preservation development. They are taught to interact with clients on a very professional level that would reflect in team and client communication for a historic property. These skills could also help gain sponsorships, donations, and grants that are much needed for the care and maintenance of a historic site.

A preservation project is composed of often a large team, building owner/client, architect, preservationist, and multiple specialty contractors to name a few. Trained interior designers would successfully integrate into this team with the strong interaction and multi-tasking skills that they possess.

Designers are trained from the get-go to handle the pressure of multiple clients and projects at one time through their course load, which is a very useful time management skill for a preservation project. In the building industry time is money and designers know how to get the project done.

Interior designers learn a wide range of material knowledge and their application in their education. Not only can they bring this product experience to a project, but the willingness and capacity to learn about materials is present as well. Both preservation and interior design have the common goal of creating environments for the general public that will artistically satisfy and be safe for their users. With the common goals they both hold, interior designers would fit gracefully into a preservation team. Not to mention, the preservation field could possibly use some fresh eyes and innovative minds in the field to keep the industry lively with their additional perspectives.

With all of the specialties available in the interior design field, preservation should be a career consideration for interior designers because of the integrity and depth the preservation field holds. This brings more substance to a designer's work and gives them a purpose, to work on these projects for the citizens of the United States. Designers shouldn't be discouraged from wanting to protect their nation's history to the best of their ability. This can be done through what the interior designers know best, their profession.

## **The Preservation Field**

Countless infamous buildings have gone to the way-side due to decay or re-development. Since the first preservation ordinance in 1931<sup>7</sup> there has been hope for these properties' protection.

Preserving these sacred grounds enriches our education and culture throughout the United States in many facets, it is also proven to benefit the economy, no matter what its given state may be.

Preservation is an economical choice when it comes to recourses and also shows pride and value in our nation's historical foundation. The sites people destroy everyday cannot be recreated with their value and that's what preservation tries to hold on to and protect.

Discussed onward is an overview of preservation details that designers should be aware of and the benefits of preservation. Afterward, the historic characteristics to preserve and how to preserve them are explained. All of this information can be incorporated into a curriculum, or at least mentioned to design students to better educate interior designers in an accredited program setting.

### **Preservation and it's Benefits**

The definition of historic preservation is essentially the preservation of historical buildings and their defining characteristics. Rypkema defines preservation in the following terms, "The careful management of a community's historic recourses: avoidance of wasted recourses by careful planning and use; the thrifty use of those recourses. To use or manage those historic resources with thrift or prudence; to avoid their waste or needless expenditure; to reduce expenses through the use of those historic recourses".<sup>8</sup> Historical preservation is clearly identifiable as being not only restoring the past,

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<sup>7</sup> National Trust For Historic Preservation, Milestones in the History of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. [Http://WWW.Preservationnation.Org](http://WWW.Preservationnation.Org). Web. 6 Apr. 2010.

<sup>8</sup> Rypkema, D.D. *The Economics of Historic Preservation, A Community Leaders Guide*.

but protecting the future for generations by not depleting current resources. These dwellings are our country's origins, our past, and they should always be remembered and preserved for all who inhabit this country to enjoy. This allows those of the younger generations to experience their heritage first hand and connect deeply to their country and where they come from. Preservation touches on a sensitivity that most practices in our building industry do not possess.

Design guidelines can be set for a historic property, but each project is unique in execution, "Design guidelines may be strictly enforced or may be simply advise and educate property owners. But in general all share the common goal of maintaining the character of an existing historic district on the basis of architectural history and design considerations and by the means of a municipally appointed board with the power to review proposed changes to the built environment."<sup>9</sup> Structures may be categorized as an individual historic site or be considered within a historic district. These districts are protected by the government to restore their initial integrity from where they were built. Nearly every state now holds historic district or landmarks, with over 2,300 historic preservation commissions. Each property could be protected by either local, state, and national organizations depending on the significance and size of the building.

All districts and single properties vary in size and design style, no two are completely identical. Some districts hold just a few historic buildings, while others are designated to an entire section of a large city. The Federal Government of the United States designates historical districts under the National Park Service, through the U.S. Department of Interior. Federal level of districts and properties

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Washington, D.C: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994. Print

<sup>9</sup> Cox, Rachel, S. *Design Review in Historic Districts*. Washington, D.C: National Trust Publication, 2005. Print.

have a stricter set of guideline to follow, where state protected districts may be regulated based more upon recommendations. Local districts are often administered by the county, and have the most legal protection.

The preservation committee that oversees sites sets up a preservation design review, called an ordinance, to evaluate the property. This ordinance process often includes a survey, which is then turned into design guidelines that hold alterations to consider for the property. With these guidelines established, an important factor of a successful preservation is the communities' involvement.

Educating the public and getting them interested in ongoing projects can start a preservation revolution! This involvement leads to ownership and integrity felt by the citizens of a town that holds a historic landmark.

Like the interior design field, the preservation field has many organizations that support its goals. The preservation field has more organizations that are taken much more seriously, since these properties effect our nation's history and are typically funded by the government. The most prominent Federal organization that protects and regulates historical sites is the previously mentioned "National Trust for Historic Preservation". This government agency regulates said historic properties and has started an organization that fuels interest in historic preservation called *Preservation Nation*. Their website ([preservationnation.org](http://preservationnation.org)) has newsletters, community involvement activities, and lessons on how to teach today's children about preservation, all ways of promoting preservation on the community level. Along with preservation enthusiasts groups, each state has a state preservation office that located in the state capital so every state has the opportunity to make a difference.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation's milestone timeline dates back to 1947, starting the national trust in the United States. The first historic site was administered in 1951 in Virginia, and it's

first office opened in 1971.<sup>10</sup> In 1978 The National Trust for Historic Preservation participated in a case in which the Supreme Court upheld legalities of preservation ordinances, a definite milestone in preservation history. In the 1980's many programs were created like *Historic Hotels of America* and *Community Partners*. The history of preservation, organizations and articles available are all key tools in student's education regarding the field.

Exterior architecture is proven to have stricter protection laws than that of an interior historic structure in most cases. The owners of historic buildings are often more than happy to give up control of the exterior of their dwelling to accommodate to a district's set of rules, and in the end it tends to add more value to their investment of their property, all the while enriching their community. Projects are often modest in scale so they tend to not be as intimidating, therefore a small investment can turn into a large payout further down the road. No one project should ever be considered a solution to fixing a city and each city should follow its own unique historical roots.

One of the main benefits of preservation is enhancing the economy through tourism. Tourists boost the town with their interest in attractions and restaurants. Smaller specialty shops and small businesses naturally see a rise in their profit when there is more traffic flow in the area. One of the largest money makers from this tourism is the need for transportation. If more people are visiting and living in these newly restored areas, alternate means of transportation must be made, creating more focus and even more employment opportunities for the community. More than likely this would be done on a smaller scale like bus and cab transportation, possibly a light rail. Towns nearby are affected by the incoming traffic and their businesses are impacted in a positive way as well, generating more revenue. The possibilities within the realm of tourism are endless, we never know the outcome until

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<sup>10</sup> National Trust For Historic Preservation, Milestones in the History of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. [Http://WWW.Preservationnation.Org](http://WWW.Preservationnation.Org). Web. 6 Apr. 2010

these sites are preserved. We do know that tourism and its domino effect would help a historic property and its community for the better.

“Dollar for dollar, historic preservation is one of the highest job-generating economic development options available. In Michigan(per 1994), \$1 million in building rehabilitation creates 12 more jobs than does manufacturing \$1 million worth of cars”<sup>11</sup> Not only is that individual community enhanced, but the state it resides in receives benefits as well , which essentially turns into a domino effect bridging out to the entire country. The state benefits specifically through purchasing of goods due to travel, fuel consumption, and taxes on these purchases. The character and unique experience of each city draws in diverse crowds and gives each city its’ own competitive edge. Tourists are also proven to stay longer in a location with historical attributes. Because tourists come to the city more often and stay longer, funds are invested into that local economy as previously discussed.

What these tourists do in towns with historic attributes has a vital impact on these communities. When citizens visit they network and create potential lasting professional relationships. This may even include talk of opening new businesses in the area. Businesses themselves are also attracted to the principle of preservation. It is more cost effective to a business to buy or lease a building and restore it, as opposed to building a new structure. A restored space often accommodates that of a small business’s spacial needs, and historical buildings are often in downtown areas where the hub of the city is, exactly where a starting or relocating business would thrive. Not only are you in the heart of the town, but the heart of where this town originated. Industrial and manufacturing firms of a smaller scale want to be upstanding citizens and be involved in a community. This would also show commitment to a community and get a business’s name out there for restoring a town’s relic. Using a

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<sup>11</sup> Rypkema, D.D. *The Economics of Historic Preservation, A Community Leaders Guide*.

historical building is a good way to become involved in a new area, and keep the number of vacancies in a city down so property values do not drop due to vacant buildings. AT the same time the area is staying current and vivacious for those to live in and explore.

Cities have built their reputations through their restoring of its past. Take New Orleans for example. The French Quarter is home to some of the most elaborate classical mansions, and its downtown area pulsates with French Renaissance architecture. With large projects such as these the government can also show it's support to a community by donating funds to restore sites, and incentives are often given(such as tax) to owners of these properties that do choose to restore them.

Historic preservation not only adds value, but richness to a community. It adds art, culture, and life to once ghostlike town.

“A few years ago the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation identified some of those community benefits. The list included: 1) new businesses formed; 2) private investment stimulated; 3) tourism stimulated; 4) increased property values; 5) enhanced quality of life, sense of neighborhood, and community pride; 6) new jobs created; 7) compatible land-use patterns; 8) increased property and sales taxes; 9) pockets of deterioration and poverty diluted.”

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Historic preservation has also been proven to improve the quality of life through culture and the unique experiences it houses. It can serve an inspiration for artists and create better schools for children of the community as well. Facilities that house libraries, art galleries, and opera houses often

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<sup>12</sup> Rypkema, D.D. *The Economics of Historic Preservation, A Community Leaders Guide.*

Washington, D.C: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994. Print

are historically repaired buildings that allow these events to take place, providing unlimited opportunities for businesses and attractions.

### **Design Characteristics to Preserve and How to Preserve Them**

Each site of historical value has a unique set of design characteristics that are protected by the power of the preservation team. Identifying the unique and important characteristics of the site are step one of the protection process, step two is determining the best application method to protect and preserve these characteristics. If one simple mistake is made during repair, the whole site can be jeopardized. This section is a broad overview of what a designer should know about the common types of characteristics that are of concern to historic properties and how to maintain them properly.

Exterior attributes are a main concern when discussing distinguishing characteristics pertaining to a historic site. Categorized on the façade of the building may be details such as finials and trim work, signage, the color of the building and even landscape architecture can be protected. Interiors may be conserved as well. Interiors are most commonly protected in famous locations like the house of Paul Revere and John Adams, both located in Boston, Massachusetts. These public places are at times open to the public for tourism and educational purposes for the national community. Furniture pieces and artifacts are displayed around the world either within the location or museums. Considering all variables, the setting and content of historic material can differ greatly between properties.

Along with historic knowledge, a preservation professional should be familiar with practical applications on how to preserve historic characteristics on site. This level of expertise includes professionals in the interior design field that wish to go into preservation. While professional installers and contractors will be performing the labor, it is important for the other team members to be familiar with the process of each project to avoid any damage that could affect the property. These installations will either be overseen, or performed by specialists, but as a general rule the more information one knows about the project the better it's integrity is protected.

“The range of proposals that may come before a design review board extends from basic maintenance work with minimal long-term effect on a building’s integrity, such as re-painting or adding storm doors and windows, to irreversible acts such as demolition. It is important to remember, however, that even seemingly minimal changes, such as repainting, can have significant effects on a neighborhood’s historic character. How much weight to give to these two variables-maintaining historic character-in reviewing proposals will be key considerations in developing design review guidelines.”<sup>13</sup>

Creating a minimum of maintenance standards for each dwelling is important for the building to withstand the test of time. Cleaning a building’s exterior is one of the first and most important steps of the preservation process. Using appropriate cleaning and coating treatments are essential for a successful preservation. While cleaning you must determine what era is the best to restore the property to. Layers of paint and several design periods are often combined with-in a single structure. Depending on the neighborhood it sits in and the consistency of its characteristics, a design period may be determined and fully restored to that era. The most important concept is to retain the original materials of a building whenever possible, while characteristics staying as true to the buildings original intent.

Aside from aesthetics, it is essential to make the building as structurally sound as possible. Building codes are required in all buildings, but there are numerous cases in historic properties where the content of the building is more important to restore, than making it accessible. This includes specialty plaster work and details on the interior that are highly detailed and wouldn’t be re-created in this day and age, such as moldings, banisters, carvings and a multitude of detailed architectural focal points. Exterior considerations include characteristics that rest on the roof down to the foundation.

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<sup>13</sup> Cox, Rachel, S. *Design Review in Historic Districts*. Washington, D.C: National Trust Publication, 2005. Print.

Windows, doors, siding material, and building ornamentation are common exterior materials to protect, but the characteristics and materials will differ depending on the unique character of the site. Interior techniques are also applied. Maintenance and repair beyond the main building such as landscaping and extended buildings (that may have been made for the servants if the buildings first intent was residential) are also taken into consideration.

It is a vital process to research these materials and to repair them to the greatest quality possible, while being familiar with alternate applications to historic building techniques. Some alterations can be done in less costly, or repaired in a more durable product than the original building was constructed in while not compromising the project's integrity. It is important for all professionals involved to be familiar with these methods as to have the best well-informed and educated team possible. Because so many of these practices are classic and modern day practices differ, specialty contractors familiar with historic materials are highly valuable to the preservation field. Some materials may change due to code or original materials may not be available. Therefore, not only is education in materials important, but innovation with resources as well. Some of these specific durability factors include weather-tight roofing and weatherization of windows, primarily applications concerned with the exterior of the building.

Updating the buildings functionality is included in the criteria for restoring a site. Fitting a modern mechanical system into a historic building is one of the most common alterations. Systems have changed and technology has updated the way we live and if we want to inhabit and use these building to their full potential, the preservation team must make these buildings as safe and inhabitable as possible. Updates may also include adding modern day technology such as satellite dishes and solar collectors.

Components of the building may have to be taken away to accommodate to a new system (interior and exterior) and a large amount of forethought is put into such a complex process. Exterior additions, no matter when added, are often a building concern that effect interior space and possible exterior alterations. If additions are not true to the original building they are more than likely removed to not compromise the initial integrity of the architecture, often adding new additions are simply not prohibited. Although rear additions are sometimes left as is, as long as the building's façade is not compromised since this is typically the area that holds the most value and naturally is under the most protection. One element that is very important to a building's façade is its signage. Signage itself was developed in Europe, as has become a preservation art form all on its own.

Professionals will create an initial checklist that designers should be familiar with. While evaluating a location elements they may consider, include:

- Building Height
- Scale
- Orientation, spacing, and site coverage
- Façade proportions and window patterns
- Size, shape, and proportions of entrances and porches
- Projections
- Materials, texture, and color
- Roof forms
- Horizontal, vertical, or non-directional emphasis
- Landscaping, walls and fences<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The Department of the Interior. *The Preservation of Historic Architecture. The U.S. Governments*

*Official Guidelines for Preserving Historic Homes.* Guilford, Conn: The Lyons Press, 2004. Print.

Along with updating certain systems in a building, streetscape alterations are very important and this may include adapting to special users. First, one must review the historical significance of the building, what era was the building built in, when it thrived, and what design/architectural characteristics are the question to consider while making the building multi-user friendly. A designer must also evaluate current and future needs of accessibility for the building before progressing with construction. Characteristics to consider when restoring the streetscape include street width, driveway design, setbacks, façade alignment, street lamps, street furniture, fences, walkways, walls, and street signage. This includes previously mentioned alterations to aesthetic details on the building and its landscape. The original intent of the landscape should be restored for the final preservation, completing the project.

Describing every detail and technique would create a whole new report in and of itself. While these characteristics are very general, and preservation techniques are broadly overviewed, it is still beneficial for an interior designer to have a general idea of the restoring process. Countless hours of planning and labor go into a preservation project, all to save the historic integrity of our nation's past.

With the background information supplied, interior designers would have a solid base of knowledge in the preservation field that could comfortably transition them into preservation practices. This information can be included in multiple applications in an interior design curriculum. Because of the numerous benefits to the field and our nation, interior design involvement in the industry would be highly successful.

## **Incorporating Preservation into an Interior Design Curriculum**

### **Comparing Universities**

For this study of incorporating preservation into an accredited interior design programs we will discuss and compare three accredited Michigan interior design programs, Central Michigan University<sup>15</sup>, Eastern Michigan University<sup>16</sup>, and Michigan State University<sup>17</sup>. All of these highly ranked programs prepare design students to thrive in their future careers from detailed and time consuming studio classes, lecture based application, to hands on exercises in the interior design field, such as internships.

Central Michigan University, or CMU is the youngest accredited program, gaining their accreditation around 2009. Located in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, this university supports both theoretical and technical teaching methods to train future design professionals.

Eastern Michigan University- EMU is located in Ypsilanti, Michigan and is known state wide for its interior design program. This program considers a each client and who will be using a space, their environments, and global factors as well as having sensitivity to the environment and a compassion to all user types.

Michigan State University, known better as MSU or State, has been accredited in its interior design program from the Council for Interior Design Accreditation since 1976. In this curriculum

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<sup>15</sup> Central Michigan University, Interior Design Major. [Http://WWW.cmich.edu.ehs/x1693.xml](http://WWW.cmich.edu.ehs/x1693.xml)

<sup>16</sup> Eastern Michigan University, Technology Education. [Http://www.emich.edu/cot/progsites/ide/](http://www.emich.edu/cot/progsites/ide/)

<sup>17</sup> Michigan State University, School of Planning, Design and Construction; Interior Design.

[Http://www.spdc.msu.edu/aboutmajors/accreditation.aspx](http://www.spdc.msu.edu/aboutmajors/accreditation.aspx)

“emphasis is placed on the means of satisfying functional and aesthetic requirements appropriate for a variety of specific interior special use”.<sup>17</sup>

Each one of these established curriculums is accredited, and each has standards to enter, succeed, and graduate. Non-accredited programs often do not have these special requirements, resulting in a more low-pressure environment. These standards set in entering the program, prepare the designers for the work for years to come at the accredited university level and in the field. These and most other accredited programs have admission requirements to enter, or to achieve as a student progresses through the program. To be accepted into each program varies between universities, but all work under the general rule of taking introduction to design courses and submitting a portfolio of creative work before admittance.

Every program has general education requirements, a recommended course sequence, and high expectations of completed creative work. Typically a C grade is a minimum to pass design courses to graduate, and if failed on the first attempt the student must re-take the course. In these accredited programs an internship is required, placing much value from the beginning of a designer's career on practical experience in the design field. The outcome of these students' work sets them above the rest of the universities that are not accredited. These programs are more up to date with technologies, and generally more involved in the design community. Students tend to be devoted design organizations, and know how to interact with design professionals and clients in a professional, refined manner. Finally they tend to be more innovative with their designs and all around have a more refined and complete design skill set.

### **Classes to Incorporate Preservation Information**

The design courses in the curriculum are presented in lecture format, studio format, or more than likely a combination of both. Each university has their own teaching methods and variations in the classroom, but the combination of lecture and hands on activity in the design classroom is typical. Lecture based courses could include, but not be limited to, materials and components classes and history classes. The more intense hand-on classes are studio based, giving the designer room to express their creativity. In studio classes students are given fictional or real-client scenarios to solve through their design education experience, drawing from multiple courses and past knowledge gained from their program. Classes that include both hands on activities and have a heavy lecture load could be construction classes, lighting and environmental design courses.

With all of these different course scenarios, preservation can be mentioned or incorporated in some fashion to make preservation a common topic to consider for design students. No matter the syllabi, a course could add preservation to its content to cover throughout the semester. Preservation design principles would enrich the classroom and the program as a whole, while promoting all career opportunities to better decide their career path as to become more passionate about their jobs. Focus on career paths could be mentioned in a portfolio/internship class or a senior seminar course. To educate these designers more efficiently on the topic, discussed below are suggestions on how to incorporate preservation ideals into a multitude of interior design classroom settings.

The preservation field should first be introduced at entry level design courses, first while explaining what different career paths are open to interior designers. When explaining kitchen and bath, commercial and hospitality, preservation should be among these choices. This can be introduced in environmental and design theory courses. Preservation details can be incorporated in sketching exercises, rendering, and drafting courses when learning hand drawing techniques. The detail,

complexity, and history in preservation could all influence a designer in this stage, and through-out their career. Mentioning how unique the applications of historic materials are, should also be explained when discussing the different materials and applications in the material and components classes that each interior design curriculum offers.

History of interior design classes are an avenue for the professor to discuss the preservation field. Here students will learn design origins and terminology of interior design and architecture characteristics. If a student makes a strong connection to this material, they may be a good candidate to enter the preservation field. Here educators should be prepared to answer questions about the field and ask interested individuals if they have considered it a career path. From that point, that student may be able to supplement other projects toward preservation to gain more knowledge in the field.

General acknowledgement can also be given in construction, lighting, and millwork classes when explaining how historic interiors would differ comparatively to the modern-day application of these techniques. If a student became interested in the field they could seek out an internship that is interior preservation based, as well as take electives in history or preservation related courses, depending on what their university offers. No matter the circumstance a student should be aware of all of their career options to explore.

Other than lecture-type classes, preservation can fit easily into almost any studio class. Each university offers different studios with different projects and preservation can fit into nearly any of those circumstances. For instance, Michigan State has three design studio courses, Central has five, and Eastern has eight different design studio classes. Studios can focus on one project for a semester or have a broad scope of projects through-out that semester. The three ways this writing recommends to incorporate preservation into a studio application are through giving a historical design option of choice,

an entire project could be preservation based with a common design era, and a full studio course could be devoted to exploring historic properties and all they have to offer.

One way to incorporate a preservation or historic acknowledgement to a studio project is to give the students a design option to the project, choosing from several fictitious clients that request a certain historic design style. A certain design style or practice can be chosen by or assigned to the designer for the project, given the choice may inspire the student greatly. This could be a retail space, a green space, office design or a historic residence. The designer would then research the style and possible specialty applications to include in the project like plaster repair techniques and historic paint applications.

A second way preservation can be incorporated into a studio application is through a specific project in each, or in numerous studios. Take Central Michigan's program for example, studio I is an introductory studio, studio II is residential based, studio III is dedicated toward special users, studio IV is commercial and studio V is multi-user/innovative design practices. Each one, or even just one of these studio courses could require a historic-based project. This could be in a smaller scale project, like in studio I or an intense innovative creation done in studio V. It could be a small interior to a skyscraper, multi-user project that incorporates other design principles like green design or 3-d computer modeling. Either way, a historic project would enhance a student's portfolio and exhibit their breadth of design knowledge to potential clients and future employers.

Finally, historic practices could be devoted to an entire studio course. This could be incorporated with multiple projects through the semester, or be devoted to one large, semester long project. Smaller projects could result in research in multiple design periods, while a larger project would result in a more in-depth analysis of a certain style, it's history, purpose, and hands on applications that apply to the site. At Central, studio III is for special users. This ADA based course is composed of

clientele supervision, field trips and one semester long in-depth project. This framework could be used to develop a preservation derived studio course.

All of these suggestions can be utilized and even modified to incorporate preservation in some shape and form into interior design classrooms. Starting with subtle incorporation tactics, preservation can become part of a solid educational foundation in interior design. In any case it is important for interior design students to be aware of their career options so they can better serve the design community and for educators to teach them about all of their options.

## **Conclusion**

Interior design should be a profession that considers historic preservation as a career path and a focus of study more often. If interior designer's goals are to enhance the safety and welfare of their community why not incorporate them into preservation interiors? If principles of preservation are integrated in accredited interior design programs, the bar will be set high for other universities to follow in their footsteps and incorporate these practices as well. We outlined the interior design field, as well as the intense accreditation process to turn an interior design program into one of the best programs in the country. After these descriptions we hope individuals outside of the field realize how seriously interior design professionals take their careers while having concern for the way the public live their lives and thrive in their environments.

After reviewing the accreditation process for an interior design program, an outsider could also agree that many factors go into developing and educating interior designers to prepare them for the field. We discussed the attributes of the preservation field and what basic knowledge an interior designer should learn as they progress through their education in an accredited program. With this knowledge, interior designers could make a solid decision as to seek preservation as their career path or not. Without this base of knowledge, designers could be left in the dark with no solid career path to be passionate about, or get in the field and not have the slightest clue to what takes place in the preservation field.

Both the preservation and interior design fields could benefit from this collaboration, as you can see through the suggestions on how to combine preservation practices into the interior design classroom, they are easily relatable topics. These general descriptions can be tweaked to fit into any design program and can truly give an interior student a whole new outlook on their career path. The

suggestions given may also inspire educators to incorporate other professions in the building industry into their design curriculums as well.

There are only benefits resulting from incorporating preservation ideals into an accredited interior design curriculum. Preservation of historic buildings benefits this country greatly, so why would suggesting incorporation of another field into the mix become a bad thing? There are benefits on the local to national level for those involved in preservation projects. These can span from those who reside in towns with historic monuments, to tourists who visit these sites. Preservation brings more awareness, knowledge, understanding, and experience to our nation's history and pride to a local community.

Because interior design and preservation are part of the building industry the transition between the two careers would be quite smooth. They both have to do with the welfare of citizens and want to enrich the lives around them. An interior designer has an adequate skill set to bring to the table for a preservation project and could be of much use to a preservation firm. When it comes down to it, our nation can't have too many people working toward the one goal of preserving its history. These historic structures cannot be re-created, and neither can their history, but interior designers can keep the profession alive that preserves our nation's historical integrity that is expressed through architecture.

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