

Historic Black Places, Spaces, and Stories Preservation

By Melissa Jest, Preservation Practitioner

THERE ARE an estimated 15 million historic preservationists in the USA.⁽¹⁾ This modest number aims to include those quiet heroes who taught us to appreciate history or even those more vocal advocates who describe themselves as “[their] ancestors’ wildest dreams”. Historic preservation is both a set of policies and regulations governed on all three levels of governments—local, state, and federal--and a profession that engages artisans, scientists, engineers, architects, tradespeople, and historians. It is also an academic field of study offered at more than 60 US colleges and universities as well as a growing grassroots movement calling for removal of longstanding barriers and biases to make preservation more equitable, inclusive, and relevant. Each of these aspects provide multiple access points for African Americans to contribute their skills and to connect their stories to the American story that binds us all.

It is no exaggeration to say that the preservation movement includes those who care for their historic homes or churches and those that continue to share family histories with the next generation; Or those that photo-document their neighborhoods as they change over time and those who steward the cemeteries and burial grounds of the ancestors. Analysis of data⁽²⁾ from the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, Blacks represented four percent of professionals in the historic preservation field in 2019.

So, it is through support of a grassroots project (or anti-demolition protest) that most African Americans enter the broader preservation movement. Alumni of Rosenwald schools and historically Black Colleges/Universities represent one distinct segment of the historic preservation movement that has achieved mainstream attention and funding support for preservation of their alma maters.

Every facet of the Black experience in America has produced evidence and artifacts that deserve to be documented, preserved, and interpreted for the uplift and edification of descendant and mainstream communities alike.

“Preservation *serves* Americans aware of the value inherent in many older structures: not that they are old, but that they contain so much of ourselves.” – from the National Historic Preservation Act (1966).

While the federal National Preservation Act of 1966 established the procedural structure and standards to guide citizens – individual and corporate – on this activity aimed at physically built resources, legislators seem to suggest that it is shared human values that will provide the framework for this work and will endure in the face of constant change. From this perspective,

(1) National Trust for Historic Preservation 2016 survey “What type of Preservationist are you?” by its Preservation Services Division and member Forum for the 50th Anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act. <https://savingplaces.org/press-center/media-resources/pastforward-2016-preservation-conference#.Yr3143bMKUk>

(2) Presentation, “Role of GAAHPN in preservation movement” guest speaker Keilah M. Spann to Georgia African American Historic Preservation Network volunteer board, March 29, 2019, Atlanta GA. Notes files at Georgia Historic Preservation Division.

here are key guiding principles and supporting actions to anchor grassroots and professional efforts as advocates navigate public and private sectors of the preservation field.

I – Guiding Principles for Preserving African and African American Historic Resources:

Principle: Affirm the place, space, and stories as an asset – Accept and state the value of the historic resource to be saved and preserved. Avoid assumptions here—clarity is a key element in gaining understanding. Owners and advocates must know and declare to themselves and others that the place/space/story has meaning, purpose and value to them and for the broader community. With a simple written or verbal statement, commit to its preservation and secure similar clearly expressed commitments from others as discussions, documentation and engagement begin.

Action - Record and repeat the Affirmation statement, Document current condition of the historic asset. Writing/recording and repeating the commitment to the resource and the people it represents prepares the advocate to respond to all encountered on this journey. When documenting the asset, Owner consent and participation is strongly recommended. Use written, video recorded and still photography-- each method presents opportunity to engage youth and young professional. Research archival sources available through public and academic institutions documentation. Collect oral histories of asset from elders, neighbors, etc. as these testimonies offer factual and interpretive information often left out of mainstream references and news sources.

Principle: Elevate the asset – Celebrate the place, space and/or story as an embodiment of those ancestors and forebearers who built and occupied. Promote their presence and contribution that the asset proves. Reckon with the stark past to heal and to deepen understanding. Balance the history of oppression and violence with the interpretation of the fortitude, courage, and agency demonstrated in that history.

Action - Devise an incremental engagement plan that builds awareness on all levels of the civic and virtual community that confirms the value of the asset to the community at large. Avoid premature media releases or social media posts that over-report actual circumstances or that alienates potential partners. Instead, consider conducting an internal awareness campaign that enlists committed advocates, partners and owner/stakeholders to share about the opportunity to save, preserve and revitalize the historic asset. Prepare and distribute scripted statements to all those that will help spread. Use word by word-of mouth to ensure clarity and secure further commitment. It is recommended to first engage neighbors, civic organization, local officials and community agencies around this preservation effort—everyone in the geographical vicinity is a stakeholder—before reaching state and federal government agencies and national agencies.

Principle: Sustain the asset – Protect and reinvest in the asset with time, talent, and financial resources. Value the lived experience of elders as expertise along with those of trained practitioners. Envision the asset in the near and distant future. Cultivate capacity to both attract and grow leadership by allowing room for creativity. Acknowledge the traditions and systems that uphold inequity. Create safe spaces that intentionally welcome marginalized people and perspective.

Action - Organize stakeholders around the asset and the positive benefits of its revitalization. Revisit the affirmation—consider a manifesto⁽³⁾ or declaration to which volunteers can partners agree. Draft a preliminary project or business plan that anticipates revenue streams, prepares for cyclical maintenance and repair, and outlines steps for recruiting and retain the next generation of stewards. Utilize preservation covenants, easements, and local historic designation to protect the asset from unchecked demolition.

Most Americans define historic preservation as a set of regulatory laws and standards managed by public agencies on all three levels of governments – local, state, and federal (national). While described as restrictive, these standards⁽⁴⁾ aim to protect historic resources (and its authenticity) from ill-advised repair and insensitive changes. Preservation standards also protect owners from investing their funds into physical work that reduces the historic and economic value of their historic property and qualify properties from tax incentives that reduce the cost of standardized rehabilitation.⁽⁵⁾

⁽³⁾ The BlackSpace Urbanist Collective, Inc. is a 501(c)3 non-profit collective of planners, architects, artists, and designers based in New York City, NY with established affiliates in Chicago IL and Oklahoma City, OK, and interested affiliates in Atlanta, Baltimore, Birmingham, Washington D.C., Detroit, Indianapolis, Los Angeles and Seattle. Its manifesto offers a benchmark for nonprofits in the design, preservation and community development fields. <https://www.blackspace.org/manifesto>

⁽⁴⁾ U.S. Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation are regulatory for the Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program. The Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings and the Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings, which assist in applying the Standards, are advisory. <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation.htm>

⁽⁵⁾ Since 1976, over 3,100 completed "certified rehabilitation" projects have been reviewed by the N.C. State Historic Preservation Office, representing almost two billion dollars of investment in historic properties. Benefits of all this activity includes job creation, neighborhood revitalization, and greater community pride. Efforts to preserve Black places and spaces may also utilize these incentives. <https://www.ncdcr.gov/about/history/division-historical-resources/state-historic-preservation-office/restoration-5>

* North Carolina SHPO is in the NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Division of Historical Resources <https://www.ncdcr.gov/state-historic-preservation-office>

Grassroots advocates and professional preservationists must learn how to navigate the regulatory process and respective government agencies and how to engage the appropriate professional and nonprofit entities in the private sector. In any preservation intervention and planning, identify those public and private agents with technical skills, and relevant experience and insights useful for every phase of the preservation project. The below list is not comprehensive but an introduction to these agencies and entities:

II – Guiding programs within the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) *

- Architectural Survey of historic resources and districts
- Certified Local Governments/ Local Historic Commissions
- Environmental Review of Impacts on Historic Resources
- Federal and State Grants for historic preservation (also grants for the arts, parks/recreation, natural sciences)
- Historic Rehabilitation Tax Incentives
- National Register of Historic Places
- Office of State Archaeology (cemeteries and burial grounds; see under the Division of Historical Resources)
- State Highway or Historical Marker

Non-Governmental/ Private Heritage and Preservation Organization

National Level:

- African American Heritage Preservation Foundation -- <https://www.aahpfdn.org/>
- American Planners Association/Planning and Black Community Division - https://blackcommunity_planning.org/
- Archaeological Institute of America -- <https://www.archaeological.org/>
- Association for the Study of African American Life and History – <https://asalh.org/>
- Association of African American Museums -- <https://blackmuseums.org/>
- National Alliance of Preservation Commissions – <https://www.napcommissions.org/>
- National Council for Preservation Education – <https://www.ncpe.us/>
- National Organization of Minority Architects -- <https://www.noma.net/professional/washington/>
- National Trust for Historic Preservation -- <https://savingplaces.org/we-are-saving-places> Oral History Association -- <https://www.oralhistory.org/>
- Society of Black Archaeologists -- <https://www.societyofblackarchaeologists.com/>
- Trust for Public Land/ Black History and Culture Initiative -- <https://www.tpl.org/black-history-and-culture-initiative>

State Level:

- Conservation Trust for North Carolina -- <https://ctnc.org/>
- Federation of North Carolina Historical Societies -- <https://www.ncdcr.gov/about/history/federation-north-carolina-historical-societies>
- North Carolina Archaeological Society - <https://www.ncarchsociety.org/>
- Preservation North Carolina -- <https://www.presnc.org/>
 - (PNC is one of 28 statewide nonprofit with historic preservation as its mission. PNC assists constituents and property owners through its property revolving fund, educational programs, and publications. PNC is headquartered in Raleigh and has three regional offices to provide technical assistance to the state's 100 counties. For a current list of other statewide nonprofits in the USA, visit <https://www.presnc.org/state-nonprofit-preservation-organizations/>)

Local/Grassroots Level:

- Alumni Associations (for historic Black High Schools and Historically Black Colleges/University)
- Artist Collaboratives/Cooperatives
- Burial Ground/Cemetery Associations
- Business Merchant Associations (for Black business corridors and Main Streets)
- Chambers of Commerce
- Community and Family Foundations (with missions or funds that support cultural/heritage/history)
- Community Land Trusts
- Genealogical and Historical Societies
- Land Conservation Organizations (such as Parks Friends groups, Trail Keepers)
- Nonprofit Community Development Corporations (CDC) /Community Housing Development Corporations (CHDOs)

AMERICANS ARE surrounded by preservation opportunities as the bulk of America's building stock, in our towns and cities are historic in age, design, and significance. However, only a few buildings, districts and communities use historic designations and preservation tools. Why is that? Observers both inside and outside the preservation field list several pitfalls that seem to inhibit the expansion of preservation as a universal activity conducted at every level of community life: Historic Preservation standards are too restrictive; Historic Preservation is too costly in both time and money; Historic Preservation only supports high-style or uber unique properties that can meet museum-level conditions. These responses have become more mainstream than preservation practices themselves.

Observers also note that advocates committed to Black historic assets encounter race-based barriers, in addition to the mainstream pitfalls noted earlier. Why is that? American history reminds that much of the Black history here is greatly influenced by the American Slavery system and the construct of white supremacy. Practitioners observe that the traditional view of Blacks as "chattel" and then as "inferior" in American society continues to inform how many people value (or devalue) the places and spaces that tell the history of the Black experience.

The following entries depict barriers faced advocates and stewards of historic Black assets. Given the situational character of historic preservation, this is not a comprehensive list rather broad cases and respective approaches observed*.

III – Existing Barriers to Preserving Historic African American Assets

A) Barrier: The Burden of Proof of Historic Significance

Designation of a site, structure, place onto the National, State or Local register of historic places is often the first step considered when attempting to save and reuse historic resources. However, this is a major barrier as many Black resources lack these requisite documents to prove significance and worth. While the National Register it created does not overtly address race, it does require documentation that often does not exist due to past laws that prohibited black land ownership and black institutions and race-based traditions that did not require local government to properly record black life. Local designation may offer some opportunity for significant Black sites and districts to gain designation. However, many local Historic Preservation Commissions wholly defers to such National Register limits rather than tap their local ordinance and review powers to relieve this impediment.

Case: Miss Viney's cabin, Cartersville GA (c. 1855) Miss Viney (no last name recorded-pronounced V-eye NEE) was enslaved by Elijah Field to work as a cook and to labor in his house and in the remote fields in Bartow County. Her cabin stands behind the family house in Cartersville. Local lore dates the cabin circa 1855 but few if any documents exist according to current owners. Without proof, the owner struggled to gain support from local history organizations and heritage groups. Specialized assessments such as dendrochronology or radiocarbon dating to secure a building date and to identify original material add costs and delay emergency stabilization often needed for such overlooked historic buildings.

(*Please note: these observations do not necessarily reflect those of any State Historic Preservation Office, director and staff nor its governing agency, its African American commission or advisory council or constituent network.)

Surmount - Oral History⁽⁶⁾ as documentation: The power of testimonies as the evidence of historic significance is growing in the preservation field. To overcome or surmount this barrier, advocates for Black historic assets are encouraged to use oral history to fill the documentation gap. In the words of elders, we must “Tell the truth and shame the devil”.

Case: The Cherry Grove School in Wilkes County, GA stands on stone piers stacked by the freedmen and members of Cherry Grove Baptist Church to serve Black children on three Black enclaves—Cohentown, Sandtown, and Danburg in the early 20th century. And it was the memories and testimony of the teacher who taught in the one-room school, and descendants of those builders that enabled advocates to confirm the development history of the rare one-room schoolhouse and achieve national register listing after nearly 10 years of effort.

Oral History collected with congregants of West Hunter Street Baptist Church of Atlanta were used to demonstrate the national level significance of the 1906 edifice where American icon Rev. Ralph Abernathy ministered and served.

B) Barrier: Reverberating Damage of Disinvestment

In 1933, federal housing policies were passed with specific racial codes and covenants that forbid builders receiving government financing and realtors selling newly built homes from selling to Black citizens – further institutionalization/legalization of white supremacy and racial oppression. The federal Urban Renewal initiatives held this same intention, withdrawing of public funding from Black neighborhoods and directed deadly highways to

Black business corridors, leaving minority communities hobbled and vulnerable to further devaluation, deterioration, demolition.

Case: The Herndon Building named for millionaire Alonzo Herndon who built it in 1924 on Atlanta’s Auburn Avenue which rose to be one of most successful African American business corridors in the U.S. Locals report that the Herndon building and many others on Auburn Avenue experienced disinvestment by their owners as the City stopped providing services like maintenance of streetscape, lighting and the banking/finance community divested – both turning attention to new construction in the sprawling suburban areas. After suffering the ravages of severe weather, the Herndon Building was demolished in 2008.

This pattern of disinvestment is visible in many of Georgia’s historic Black business corridors like Broad Street in Harrisburg community in Augusta, Jackson Street in the Harlem community of Albany, West Broad Street in Savannah, GA.

Surmount - Unequivocal Value of Vigilance: The “P” in preservation stands for persistence for it is through persistence that successful African American preservationists have won small yet significant battles in the war against decades (if not centuries) of legalized disenfranchisement.

Case: When speaking to aspiring grassroots preservationists, one leader of the Hubbard Alumni Association advised, “... just keep saying it.” Hubbard School alumni and advocates knew their historic alma mater—Hubbard Training School founded in 1902—offered value to the

⁽⁶⁾ Oral history is a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events. Oral History Association <https://www.oralhistory.org/about/do-oral-history/> . Accessed June 29, 2022.

broader community of Forsyth and Monroe County, GA and committed to educating public officials and civic leaders on tapping this value for the benefit of all. The Hubbard Association joined the local chamber of commerce as business member. The association instituted its annual Alumni parade that engages all citizens each April. And the association established a scholarship fund that has given \$98,000 in scholarship since 1986. These strategies raised the awareness and support to save the physical campus of Georgia's first vocational school for African Americans and has revived it to serve current and the next generation there. Today, The Monroe County Workforce Development Center operates in the Old Hubbard Teacher's Cottage since 2014, helping more than 300 people access social services and job skills training. The Monroe County government also partnered with the Alumni Association to reuse the Hubbard Dormitory to house the county's Black History Museum highlighting the contribution of this campus and its founder William M. Hubbard.

C) Barrier: Vested Assumptions that Blacks are not Preservationists (held by mainstream)

It is an accepted fact that historic preservation is a majority white profession, academic field, and movement with majority-white preservation organizations reporting their struggle to attract and retain Black and diverse participants. This low level of representation gives the impression that Blacks just don't do preservation. However, history bears out that preservation— of what one has—is ALL African American know to do in the face of disenfranchisement in nearly every aspect of American life. And in the practice of commemoration, Black folk demonstrate their own methods and own perspective on what makes a site significance. The barrier lies in lack of understanding of these differences within the mainstream and resistance to adapting long-standing preservation processes to respect and value these differences.

Case: Andersonville National Cemetery and Park interprets and reserves the Confederate prisoner-of-war camp establisher near Andersonville, GA during the Civil War. A 2019 study commissioned by the National Park Service (7) confirms that Black enslaved laborers built the camp, its buildings, its fortifications, and dug the graves of those who died there. Most importantly, it acknowledges that Freedmen and women commemorated those Union soldiers who died there as captive of war and cared for the cemetery immediately after emancipation. The practice was called Decoration Day and this Black-led tradition continued over 100 years, ending in the late 1960s.

This story of Black preservation and commemoration has not been told and remains to be included in the current site interpretation of the National Park site.

Surmount - Overt Outreach: Black folks have worked within their own networks to meet need, solve problems whether indicative of African ancestry and tradition or in response to American oppression. It is through faith in humanity and in the power of inclusion that Black organizations reach out at the speed of trust.

Case: The Powell Family homestead (c. 1930) sits in downtown Stone Mountain, GA, pressed by parking lots and large-scale properties on its north and west side. When the family decided to sell the historic property, they entrusted those at their home-church, Bethsaida Baptist Church rather than turn to

(7) National Park Service, Plain Sight: African Americans at Andersonville Historic Site, A Special Study, 2020. Kuntzler, Evan, Brock, Julia, McCleary, Ann, Adams, Keri, Bastien, Ronald, and Rivers, Larry O. Rivers. [https://www.nps.gov/articles/upload/In Plain Sight -African-Americans-at-Andersonville-National-Historic-Site-A-Special-History-Study-small-file.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/articles/upload/In%20Plain%20Sight%20-African-Americans-at-Andersonville-National-Historic-Site-A-Special-History-Study-small-file.pdf)

the real estate market. The trustees of Bethsaida identified a local nonprofit and neighboring property owner to steward the Black-owned homestead. This nonprofit had transformed Stone Mountain's 1920-brick trolley barn at 5384 Manor Street into the ART Station Theatre performance and community arts center. It is this demonstrated preservation ethic that helped win the confidence of the church and later the Powell family. During a Summer 2019 tourism assessment,⁽⁸⁾ the ART station director shared a vision of the Powell house serving as an Artist-in-Residence to support the larger mission. In planning the interpretation of the house's history, advocates pointed him back to the church and the family as the prime source for this likely undocumented history. This proposed Powell House project presents an opportunity to reconnect this small city long divided along racial lines and begin a new tradition of inclusion and intentional engagement.

D) Barrier: Persistence of Punitive Public Practices

Racial biases embedded in public policy and repeated by private organizations become systemic, thereby causing these institutions and seemingly innocuous processes, like grantmaking or building survey work, to have detrimental effects.

Case: As a certified local government, cities like Valdosta are eligible for federal and state funding to survey of its National Register historic districts. In Valdosta, the Southside neighborhood is the city's only historically African American district National Register district—listed in 2007

with 421 contributing properties rated as demonstrating good integrity. However, City planners reported that the next survey would target the five predominately white National Register historic districts, noting their local district designation as their justification. While it is true that Southside district is not a locally designated historic district, inclusion in this survey work would qualify it for local designation.

Surmount - Shift the Standard toward Equity: Grassroots and political activists in today's preservation movement challenge racial and economic bias rooted in preservation policy and traditional planning practices. To shift the preservation paradigm to one of equity and fairness as practice, advocacy must engage citizens who vote, pay taxes and added to the vibrancy but may not call themselves preservationists.

Case: In the Fall 2021, Valdosta advocates petitioned the City council to fund a survey of Southside district which has not been surveyed in 13 years and not considered for local districting in 40 years.⁽⁹⁾ This advocacy sought to break the cycle of exclusionary policies that threaten both the integrity of Southside as a testament to Black resilience and contribution to Valdosta and its future as a viable neighborhood. Here, activists were joined by those working to preserve Liberty Theater (c. 1950) that sits at the gateway entrance to Southside from downtown. According to newspaper reports, the effort also sought to establish a Citizens Engagement Board to investigate inclusion of other Black communities in Valdosta's preservation planning.

⁽⁸⁾ Stone Mountain Village Report August 2019, Georgia Tourism Product Development program. Georgia Department of Economic Development. Cindy Eidson, Director, Tourism Product Development, Tracie Sanchez, Manager, Tourism Product Development and report editor. <https://industry.exploregeorgia.org/resource/stone-mountain-village-tpd-resource-team-report-august-2019>

⁽⁹⁾ City approves historic district survey, citizen police board" Etheridge, Bryce. Valdosta Daily Times, September 14, 2021.

https://www.valdostadailytimes.com/news/local_news/city-approves-historic-district-survey-citizen-police-board/article_16af08be-5f08-5276-adc2-f64cdfb7b3b5.html

Closing

“...[T]his reaching back and looking forward may enable current residents to feel that they are part of a continuum and to achieve a sense of stability and belonging.” -- National Preservation Act (1966)

HERE, BLACK preservationists and grassroots advocates agree that American preservation rests on the West African concept of Sankofa—to retrieve the past to serve as a guide for planning the future. Specifically, Sankofa translates, “...it is not taboo to go back and fetch what you forgot.” ⁽¹⁰⁾ — a call to remember even the harshest realities in order to apply that lesson towards an equitable future. Many champions for Black resources also point to preservation as opportunity for heal both the people who keep the stories and change the modern-day systems that perpetuate the current inequity, exclusion and trauma. In the spirit of Sankofa, Black people and communities exhibit resilience and ingenuity in maintaining their homes, institutions, and their humanity just as the ancestors did.

In closing, readers are asked to consider that the biggest obstacle is us as we perpetuate these misperceptions and repeat these exclusionary practices in the name to tradition. Conversely, we are also the solution. So rather than thinking of Historic Preservation as an exclusionary tool used to suppress some and reward others. I say Historic Preservation is SANKOFA.

(10) Carter G. Woodson Center, Berea College, Berea KY <https://www.berea.edu/cgwc/the-power-of-sankofa/>

IV -- Guiding Glossary

MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING is the foundation for those collaborations needed to preserve and activate historic Black places and spaces. Only by first establishing a shared meaning of the terms and concepts that will define the work at hand can formerly disparate groups find common ground, and ultimately build the trust required to move forward together towards the goal.

This glossary is not a comprehensive vocabulary list but rather a preliminary lexicon that combines technical terms and key concepts that are often used when advocating for the promotion and preservation of historic places and spaces and stories.

Sources:

- Preserving African American Places: Growing Preservation's Potential as a Path for Equity (A report of the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund/ National Trust for Historic Preservation) October 2020 pp.10-15, <https://savingplaces.org/equity-report#.Yr339nbMKUk>
- National Park Service Glossary of Terms, National Historic Landmark program, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalhistoriclandmarks/glossary.htm>
- Georgia Historic Preservation Handbook: A Layman's Guide to Historic Preservation in the State of Georgia (a joint publication by the Fox Theatre Institute, The Georgia Trust, the Georgia Historic Preservation Division) 2012, pp: 165-168., https://www.foxtheatre.org/assets/doc/Georgia_Historic_Preservation_Handbook-17f6129d73.pdf
- All other terms from other sources (i.e., Wikipedia.com) are footnoted separately.

Adaptive Reuse/Use -- The conversion of a building for a use other than that for which it was originally intended. Ideally, such conversions retain the architectural integrity of the building's exterior while making compatible adaptations to the interior which accommodate the needs of the building's adaptive use.

Affordable Housing -- Any type of housing that does not cause financial burden to households and individuals. In this context, financial burden is typically defined as housing costs not exceeding 30 percent or more of household income, based on local median household income and daily expenses. Types of housing may include subsidized housing, restricted-income housing, and/or market-rate housing that does not exceed income thresholds.

Archaeology -- The destructive science of identifying and interpreting the material remains of past human life and activities. Non-destruction methods include ground-penetrating radar (GPR) and

African American or Black -- The political context of these terms has evolved since the 1960s and there are supporters and detractors for each. The Census Bureau uses the self-identified racial category of “Black or African American” in reference to census data, which is used in the research and analysis presented in Chapter 3: Exploring Neighborhood Change to show demographic changes in predominately African American neighborhoods. Throughout this report, the terms Black and African American are used interchangeably in reference to the history, culture, and communities of Americans of African ancestry, which may include but are not limited to groups that identify as Black, African American, Afro Caribbean, Afro Latino and African immigrants living in the United States. Decisions to capitalize Black (as well as White) and to leave African American unhyphenated throughout this document are intentional.

Burial Ground -- Term used for an identified area of unmarked graves, such as burial grounds of Enslaved Africans, Native Americans, European/Immigrant paupers, etc.

Cemeteries -- Term used to describe a bounded area or collection of marked graves. Community development -- The United Nations defines community development as "a process where community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems." More specifically, this term is used to refer to the civic process of developing community services to meet local human needs such as job training, healthcare, housing, and economic/market access within urban or suburban neighborhoods or towns.

Community development organization -- CDOs is referenced interchangeably with community development corporations (CDCs) in this document, in reference to not for-profit organizations that are created to support communities, especially those that are impoverished or struggling. Many CDOs were born out of the civil rights movement to fight against redlining and disinvestment in cities and commonly focused on affordable housing. Today, CDOs can be involved in a wide range of community services that meet local needs such as education, job training, healthcare, economic development, preservation, and other social programs. While CDOs/CDCs may work closely with local government, they are not government entities, and their work is often place based.

Conservation -- The preservation, management, and care of natural, built, or cultural resources.

Cultural Displacement -- As neighborhoods change, and shops and services shift to focus on new residents, those residents who have lived in the area for a longer time may feel a sense of exclusion and isolation despite physically remaining in the neighborhood. Cultural displacement can also include the erosion of longstanding cultural norms and practices, closure of long-operating businesses and institutions, and demolition of important historic places resulting in the loss of neighborhood and cultural identity felt by longtime neighborhood residents.

Cultural Landscape -- Landscape shaped by natural and cultural (human) forces over a period of a span of time.

Cultural Resource Management—The documentation of sites, buildings, structures, or objects deemed to have local, regional, national, or international cultural/historical significance that are threatened with destruction through development of any kind.

Demolition by neglect -- The destruction of a building through abandonment or lack of maintenance.

Disinvestment -- A key driver of neighborhood decline, disinvestment is a process driven by systemic practices in urban planning, policy and regulation, and development and redevelopment where governments, financial services providers, organizations, and investors intentionally abandon and neglect an area and its inhabitants leading to poor conditions and cyclical poverty.

Displacement -- The involuntary movement of households out of their current residence due to reasons they could not reasonably control such as rising rents, property tax burden, insurance redlining, predatory lending, lack of affordable housing, large-scale development, and natural disasters.

Equality or Equity – Equality is defined as the condition where different groups to receive equal or equivalent standing, treatment, and life opportunities, including equal recognition of places of historic and cultural significance. Equity refers to the intentional reduction of inequality among groups of people by addressing the barriers or deficiencies specific to the group that hinders them from reaching more just and fair conditions, whether groups are defined socially, ethnically, racially, economically, geographically, or any other affiliation. Promoting equality and/or equity means supporting policies and actions that explicitly reduce/remove barriers both in the process of decision-making and implementation, and in terms of achieving positive community outcomes such as ownership of financial assets and real property.

Equitable Development -- A process of sharing authority in decision-making to deliver place-based public and private investments, programs, and policies that meet the needs of residents and reduce racial disparities, while considering past history and existing conditions. This process should result in inclusive quality of life outcomes including affordable housing, access to quality education, living wage employment, equitable pay standards, healthy environments, and comprehensive transportation alternatives, equitable access to incentives, regulations, and resources, for people currently living and working in a neighborhood and new people moving in.

Environmental Justice -- The original conception of environmental justice in the 1980s focused on harms to certain marginalized racial groups within rich countries such as the United States and was framed as environmental racism. The environmental justice movement was heavily influenced by the American Civil Rights movement and is defined as a social movement to address the unfair and/or disproportionate exposure of poor and marginalized racial communities to harms associated with resource extraction, hazardous waste, and other dangerous land uses.⁽¹¹⁾

Gentrification -- The term gentrification was first used more than 50 years ago and is today commonly understood as the changes to a historically disinvested neighborhood, characterized by the influx of residents of higher socioeconomic status, rising home values and rents, and corresponding cultural shifts. While new investment can bring positive change, gentrification is often associated with displacement, which occurs when long-time residents can no longer stay in their neighborhoods to benefit from the prosperity that gentrification brings.

Heritage Conservation -- Intentional actions that protect and elevate culturally significant markers, both non-physical and physical, to understand a place and the past, present, and future of its people.

Historic District – A group of buildings, properties, or sites that have been designated by national, state, or local officials as a historic district. This district can include properties described as “contributing” or “noncontributing” the architectural and/or historic significance.

Infill Development -- The use of vacant land or property within an existing area for new construction.

Integrity – The term refers to the ability of a property to convey its historical associations or attributes. While the National Historic Landmark (NHL) and National Register of Historic Places (NR) programs use the same seven aspects of integrity to evaluate properties (location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association) NHLs must retain integrity to a higher degree than required for NR designation. If the building or site has been more than modestly modified or deteriorated since its period of significance, it may meet the NR threshold for integrity, but not the higher NHL standard. Archaeological sites must also exhibit integrity regarding their potential to yield significant information or insight into the past.

Materials – The term describes the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form (or build) a historic property. If the property has been rehabilitated, the historic materials and significant features must have been preserved. The property must also be an actual historic resource, not a recreation; a property whose historic features have been lost and then reconstructed is usually not eligible.

(11) “Environmental Justice” entry, Wikipedia.org https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Environmental_justice . Accessed May 1, 2022

NIMBY-ism -- NIMBY, an acronym for the phrase "not in my back yard", is characterized as opposition by residents to proposed commercial, industrial, or residential developments in their local area as well as support for strict land use regulations. It carries the connotation that such residents are only opposing the development because it is close to them and that they would tolerate or support it if it were built farther away. This viewpoint is called Nimbyism.⁽¹²⁾

Preservation – The term can refer to a repair technique, a career field, an area of academic study, and to a political movement. Preservation (also referred to as historic preservation) is primarily concerned with protecting and supporting the continued use of physical places and understanding and sharing the reasons why these sites are significant. Historically, preservation has been focused more on protecting particular styles of architecture and perpetuating the narratives of White wealth and privilege. Recently, the preservation movement has begun to recognize and protect a broader range of places with cultural and historic significance, that support a truer and more inclusive narrative. More attention is also being placed on how buildings are used and who they are serving. The current preservation toolkit includes regulations, incentives and other resources like landmarking and designation, demolition delay, low-interest loan funds, and federal and state Historic Tax Credits. Preservation can also include strategies and techniques to reimagine historic sites, reuse historic buildings, and promote neighborhood preservation and revitalization. In the broadest sense possible, preservation is an effort that is rooted in physical place but is fundamentally people-centered and holds significant potential for advancing equity and justice.

Racial Equity/Racial Justice -- The Center for Social Inclusion states that racial equity is achieved when concepts of “race” no longer shape one’s socioeconomic outcomes, and when all people have access to what they need to succeed, regardless of where they live. It is also a process that ensures those most impacted by structural racism are contributing to the creation and implementation of the institutional policies and practices that impact their lives. The following definition of racial justice is articulated by Race Forward, which states that, “Racial justice [is defined] as the proactive reinforcement of policies, practices, attitudes and actions that produce equitable power, access, opportunities, treatment, impacts and outcomes for all.” Racial justice is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.

Reconstruction -- To re-create an historic building that has been damaged or destroyed; to erect a new structure resembling the old using historical, archaeological, architectural document

Rehabilitate -- To repair a structure and make it usable again while preserving those portions or features of the property that are historically and culturally significant.

(12) “NIMBY” entry, Wikipedia.org <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NIMBY>. Accessed May 1, 2022

Remodel -- To change a building without regard to its distinctive features or style. Often involves changing the appearance of a structure by removing or covering original details and substituting new materials and forms.

Renovate -- To repair a structure and make it usable again, without attempting to restore its historic appearance or duplicate original construction methods or material.

Restore -- To return a building to its form and condition as represented by a specified period of time using materials that are as similar as possible to the original materials of said period of time.

Significance -- According to the National Park Service (NPS), significant properties tell important stories that have meaning for all resident-citizens, regardless of where they live. The period of significance is the period when the historic events associated with a property or site have occurred. A period of significance may be thousands of years (in the case of an archeological property), several years, or even a few days, depending on the duration of the event. NPS assesses properties according to three different levels of significance: A property may be locally significant (have played a role in local events and/or a local community), significant at the state level (have played a role in the history of a specific state), or nationally significant (have played a role in the history of the nation overall). Properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places may be locally significant, significant at the state level, or nationally significant, while National Historic Landmarks must be nationally significant.

Stabilize -- To protect a building from deterioration by making it structurally secure, while maintaining its current form.

Sustainability -- In broader contexts, sustainability seeks to prevent the depletion of natural or physical resources, so that they will remain available for future generation in the long term. Sustainability is also defined as a societal goal with three dimensions (also called pillars): the environmental dimension, the economic dimension and social dimension.⁽¹³⁾

Sustainable development – This type of development aims to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

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(13) “Sustainability” entry, Wikipedia.org <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sustainability>. Accessed May 1, 2022

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