

PA MEMO

Preservation Alumni of Columbia University

SUMMER 2005

PA SPRING COLLOQUIUM: 40/FORWARD! *Celebrating Forty Years of Historic Preservation at Columbia University*



Avery Hall basement, foyer of Wood Auditorium.

The 6th annual James Marston Fitch Colloquium was held on the afternoon of Saturday, April 2, 2005 in Wood Auditorium at Avery Hall, Columbia University.

Themed "40/Forward: Celebrating Historic Preservation at Columbia," the colloquium featured a number of speakers and a panel discussion with alumni from each decade of the Historic Preservation program.

Opening the session was Paul Byard, Director of the Historic Preservation Program, and the Dean of the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation (GSAPP), Mark Wigley. Wigley described preservation as a field coming into its own, once a movement of resistance, now a movement in the mainstream.

Two other speakers were Tersch Boasberg, Chairman of the Washington D.C. Preservation Commission, and Greg Pasquarelli, architect and principal of SHoP,

Mr. Boasberg recounted his experiences from many years at the Washington D.C. Preservation Commission. The Commission is just beginning to designate historic districts in minority neighborhoods, as historic preserva-

tion expands its definition and criteria for historical and architectural significance.

Mr. Pasquarelli, Associate Professor of Architecture at GSAPP, and founder of the innovative SHoP Architects, presented three of his projects. One project he presented was the Porter House Condominiums, a former warehouse that was renovated to residential use and received a new four-story addition that cantilevers into the Gansevoort Market Historic District.

The Colloquium concluded with a panel made up of five preservation alumni that graduated from the program in succeeding decades since the 1970s. Moderated by Anthony Wood, longtime preservation advocate and President of the Ittleson Foundation, the panelists spoke about what preservation means to them, their experience in the field, and where they see preservation going in the future.

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PRESERVATION FILM NIGHTS SUMMER 2005

hosted by the Neighborhood Preservation Center and Preservation Alumni

This August, the Neighborhood Preservation Center and Preservation Alumni presents two films about urban history and culture.

William H. Whyte's influential ***The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces*** (1980) will be shown on August 3rd. This film accompanied his published findings of the same title, which examined the use of parks and plazas in New York and the behavior and interactions of people in public spaces. Whyte's book and film revolutionized the way urban planners and designers conceptualized public space. Produced originally for the New York

World's Fair, ***The City*** (1939), produced by Ralph Steiner and Willard Van Dyke, will be screened on August 10th. With commentary by renown urbanist Lewis Mumford, this film presents the development of the American city throughout history, from the agrarian town to the industrial metropolis, and strives to show how overcrowded cities can be reborn as idyllic greenbelt suburban communities.

Both films screenings will be at the Neighborhood Preservation Center at 232 East 11th Street. **Free popcorn and beer provided!**

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Preservation Alumni, Inc. is a non-profit organization formed by alumni of the Historic Preservation Program at the School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at Columbia University. The mission of PA is to support and enrich the Historic Preservation program, by advising and assisting the students, faculty, and alumni, and to advance preservation as a diverse field of public and professional endeavors.

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PA Memo welcomes submissions from faculty, alumni, students and friends. Please contact us at:

Preservation Alumni
P.O. Box 669
Peck Slip Station
New York, NY 10272
info@preservationalumni.org

Editor: René Fan
Contributors: Legier Stahl, Becca Birch Dowling

ALUMNI WORK DAY: GOVERNORS ISLAND



Preservation students and alumni at Governors Island.

Last October 2004, ten PA alums ventured out to Governors Island in New York Harbor to plant daffodil bulbs. The group joined volunteers from New York University and other schools to beautify the former military base with hundreds of flowers.

The volunteer event was organized in conjunction with the Governors Island Preservation and Education Corpo-

ration (GIPEC), the joint city-state public development corporation charged with redeveloping 150 acres of the 172-acre island. The remaining 22 acres, which comprise the island's National Monument, are owned and operated by the National Park Service.

James Lima, President of GIPEC, led the alums on a tour of the island's 92-acre nationally and locally desig-

nated historic district. The tour included a look at Victorian-era officers' houses and the island's two early 19th century forts, Fort Jay and Castle Williams. All of the buildings have been empty since the coastguard vacated the island in 1996. One of GIPEC's greatest challenges is to find compatible uses for its 65 historic buildings. Temporary artists residences and research institutes are among the many options under

consideration. GIPEC has also recently started a building sponsorship program through which it will give private individuals or companies the opportunity to preserve a historic building.

GIPEC is currently completing a master planning process for the island led by consultants Robert Charles Lesser & Company, Ehrenkrantz Eckstut & Kuhn Architects, and Urban Strategies Inc.

- Becca Birch Dowling

ALUMNI NEWS

The National Council for Preservation Education awarded the James Marston Fitch Lifetime Achievement Award in Preservation Education last November 2004 to alumnus **Chester H. Liebs** (1970).

Mr. Liebs is an early graduate from the Historic Preservation program established by James Fitch in 1964, and is

the first alum from the program to receive the award.

His education achievements include being director of the Historic Preservation Program at the University of Vermont, advisor emeritus to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and trustee of the US Committee of the International Council on Monuments and Sites. His

1985 study, *Main Street to Miracle Miles*, focused on the preservation of historic roads and heritage corridors.

Mr. Liebs is currently Adjunct Professor and Director of the Southwest Summer Institute in Preservation and Regionalism, at the University of New Mexico.

MANSIONS OF MUD



Hamtut Residence, in the town of Tarim in the Hadramaut Valley, Yemen.

Professor Pamela Jerome has been working in Yemen for a number of years, advocating for the preservation of the mud-brick buildings indigenous to the Hadramaut Valley, a region in the eastern part of the country. This past January she brought three Columbia Historic Preservation students to Yemen to document an early 20th-century mud-brick residence in the town of Tarim. Built for the esteemed Al-Kaff family, the four-story building was a palatial residence with a pool, courtyard, and a fruit orchard. The building is now abandoned. Lindsay Smith (2006),

Joselito Corpus (2005), and Nuha Ansari (2005) were joined by alumni James Conlon (2000) and René Fan (1999) to measure and photograph the residence known as the *Hamtut*. Sarah Lardinois, an architect from San Francisco, also joined the team this season.

Mr. Conlon presented the work he has done about Tarim at the US/ ICOMOS Conference in Charleston this past May 2005. His presentation "**The Virtual Indian Ocean: Expressing the Significance of Tarim, Yemen, through New Media**" was enthusiastically received.

René Fan

STUDENT NEWS

This past spring, a group of first-year students and Professor Michael Devonshire used their Kinne Travel Grant to journey to Scotland. Pictured on the right, students on the trip stand outside the Hill House, a residence in Helensburgh (near Glasgow) designed by the renowned Arts and Crafts architect Charles Rennie Mackintosh.

In other student news, the annual Fitch Thesis Grant Prize was awarded this past spring to Susie Jackson, for her thesis *Natural Extractives as Wood Preservatives*. The prize contributes toward research-related expenses.

Stay tuned this fall for the winner of the Cleo and James Marston Fitch Prize, awarded for an outstanding paper completed for coursework during the first year.



Mikel Trevisano, Jill Hall, Brent Lazar, Ms. Hall's fiancé, Margaret Anne Tockarshewsky, and Jennifer Kearny outside the Hill House, by Charles Rennie Mackintosh, near Glasgow, Scotland.

Jennifer Kearny

PA COLLOQUIUM, CONT'D

(Continued from page 1)

Panelists included Adele Chatfield-Taylor (1974), Carole Rifkind (1974), Robert Chattel (1983), Erica Avrami (1993), and Leslie Klein (2004). Reinforcing the theme of the conference, panelists echoed the sentiment that preservation, once a marginalized movement of resistance and protest, has now become mainstream, a veritable profession and an industry of historicism.

Ms. Avrami spoke about the need for preservation to make connections with other fields, such as the environmental movement. Ms. Klein further emphasized the importance of conducting research into other fields, where notions of authenticity, interpretation, and memory are also important imperatives.



Wood Auditorium, Avery Hall.

René Fan



PRESERVATION ALUMNI OF COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 669
Peck Slip Station
New York, NY 10272-0669

www.PreservationAlumni.org

PA SPRING PARTY: MERCHANT'S HOUSE MUSEUM, MAY 16, 2005



East 4th Street.



PA Board Member Nathan Riddle (1999) serving wine.



Alumni Britton Baine (2004) and Sybil Young (2004).



PA Board Members Amy Diehl (2003), Melissa Baldock (2003) and Rena Sichel Rosen (2002).



Wine Tasting.



Garden in the back.

René Fan



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Preservation Alumni. We won't be able to continue our activities without your help!

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