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25

*From conflict to dialogue,
from dialogue to cooperation,
from cooperation to preservation*

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Symposia like this on the Management of Disaster Mitigation Programs for Historic Sites are very useful indeed as they open up channels of communication on both a formal and informal level. We believe that the San Francisco symposium has been a successful voyage across a treacherous sea: interagency rivalry, misunderstanding, territorial demarcation, sheer ignorance of others' concerns and a whole lot more. Some of this was implied, some covertly expressed. On occasion, some was institutional 'baggage' shining through. A feeling of unequal relationship between the players in the game was expressed. All of this is human.

However, by allowing each other to see the other side it should have become clear that not all is dark over there and that not all is light over here either. Disasters do not discriminate how they affect culturally significant and culturally insignificant resources, but we, as managers of these cultural resources, or we, as managers of the mitigation efforts, can.

Whilst the following represents a summary of what we deem to be the significant, real and positive outcomes of this symposium and the areas where we feel some more effort and goodwill needs to be expended, we are not so arrogant to claim "Hey, have *we* got a solution for you!"

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From conflict to dialogue

The need for (more) understanding

There was clearly a need to explain to each other what one's own agency actually did on the federal level, the state level *and* the local government level. Both major players, the US National Park Service and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), have to continue to explain their legal authorities and requirements, as well as the procedures adopted and the management philosophy espoused. As the logo for the Symposium shows, the responsibilities of FEMA and National Park Service only overlap when cultural resources are effected by disaster mitigation and response.

Most of the negative experiences of past disaster response periods seem to have arisen from what is frequently incorrectly perceived as interagency rivalry and mistrust exacerbated by a lack of understanding and communication (Katchka this volume). In part this is due to the different institutional missions and priorities into which new members (staff) are oriented, focused and trained. As Kimmelman (this volume) warns, differences in institutional culture cannot be understated. Yet we believe these are unnecessary constraints which must be overcome. Communication is a key to successful cooperation. However, communication must not be limited to 'umbrella' agreements between the heads of the agencies; it must filter down and be established at all levels of the administrative hierarchy, both at a formal and at an informal level.



Figure 24.1. Interagency collaboration in action. Staff of the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office, the National Trust and the Federal Emergency Management Agency consult with Georgia department of Natural Resources law enforcement officers during an assessment of the flood damage following the flooding by Tropical Storm Alberto. (Photo: Jim Lockhart 1994).

In addition to differences in the specific languages/terminologies used by the agencies, a common issue is the differences in perception of the other agencies' priorities. On the one hand, historic preservationists often believe emergency management agencies to be oblivious to the heritage values of a place while, on the other hand, disaster management agencies often assume that the cultural heritage professionals wished to protect *everything* and that there was no prioritization of sites. The development of a threat matrix model for sites affected, or potentially affected, by the Exxon Valdez oil spill (Kurtz 1995) was a good example how to overcome such misunderstandings.

'The color of money'

Shortly after a disaster occurs, economic considerations come into play. Is it economical to rehabilitate a historic structure? Who pays for the demolition of a structure if one waits beyond the 30-day grace period provided by FEMA?

What is the color of money during a disaster? It is not green; it is red. Just as we are dealing with red-tagged buildings, we are dealing with pennies when we discuss the value of heritage buildings. Bright red (-tagged?) pennies, being counted - somewhere. We are not arguing against budget constraint, or against 'cost beneficial aspects' - to use that beautiful euphemism for cost effectiveness. What we would like to question is the *way* they are counted.

Damaged buildings are tagged based on a preliminary inspection, usually twenty minutes or less. There is a general misunderstanding by the public caused by a misconception in the mass media that all red-tagged buildings must be demolished. The truth is that the red tag only means that the building is considered unsafe to enter at this time and needs further investigation. This may lead to stabilization and repair or it may lead to demolition if the owner is unable or unwilling to pay for the needed work. There are few historic buildings that cannot be stabilized, repaired, retrofitted and reconstructed as witnessed by other cultures around the world.

Buildings can be assessed by the real estate market values, and this concept can be applied to the actual costs incurred during seismic retrofit and the like. Even the economic guidelines given to owners of heritage properties are biased towards demolition and replacement with new buildings. The California State Building Seismic Program, for example, recommends the replacement of a historic structure if the cost of retrofitting an existing building exceeds 120% of the cost of a new building (Donaldson this volume). While this compares favorably with the 60% ratio recommended for non-heritage buildings, these figures, even if based on accurate estimates of the retrofit costs, do not consider values other than those covered by real estate.

Can we apply pure market values to an entity which has intrinsic values - intrinsic values which are based on social constructs of significance and importance? Would it not be prudent to conduct contingent valuation exercises to look at the non-market economics hidden in the picture? These non-market, or amenity values, may well skyrocket the 'value' of many sites. We need to look at this aspect before we jump to conclusions and make far-ranging decisions.

Consequently, Mackensen (this volume) argues for a sliding scale of cost multipliers before demolition becomes an option. He likens this level of protection to that of home insurance where insurance does not cover the depreciated value of the goods or the value of new goods, but the replacement value of the goods damaged.

Retribution

Disasters exert trauma among the victims and there is an inescapable urge to seek retribution, to vent anger and to seek vengeance. As there are no guilty parties that can be condemned easily, the initial anger is vented against the rem(a)inders of the event: the damaged structures. As Widell (this volume) put it: “In time of emergency, when our human instinct is crying to gain control, to strike back and show strength, demolition nicely fills those needs”.

As Kariotis (this volume) points out, we have developed strange views about what is hazardous. The risk posed by earthquake-damaged buildings pales in comparison to the risk posed by traffic accidents. But as David Look said “After a car accident no-one shoots the car. So why do we demolish historic buildings after an earthquake?”. Indeed, why do we?



Figure 24.2. A case of retribution. The Oddfellows Fraternal Hall, Watsonville, CA, was damaged during the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, the falling parapet masonry killing a pedestrian. Although repairable, the building was quickly demolished a few days after the disaster. The tower is a wood frame construction with metal covering and did not fail during the earthquake event. (Photo: Steade Craig 1989).

There are two major agendas being played out in the demolition of heritage buildings. People are concerned, rightly or wrongly, that the buildings pose an inherent danger to the public, that they are beyond repair and that they should be demolished as a public safety measure; and then there are those who take advantage of the disaster situation to rid themselves of heritage-listed structures deemed to be ‘standing in the way’ of urban redevelopment. The result of both is the same: properties either on heritage registers or eligible for inclusion are demolished.

Even though California, for example, stipulates that State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) approval is required for demolition, even in emergency situations, a ‘rider’ still exists which permits demolition without approval if an imminent threat to life safety or the adjacent buildings exists (Craig this volume). This provision can be, and has been, interpreted with substantial latitude, especially as this determination is made at the local level (Donaldson this volume).

Clearly there is a need for the public to appreciate that solutions other than demolition exist and can be used. As Craig (this volume) points out, many owners were not willing or able to challenge demolition orders. The acquiescence to demolition was also reinforced by the fact that the demolition costs would be borne by the federal government for a period of thirty days following a disaster. Often what people were not told was that FEMA would also pay for shoring up, stabilization and fencing of damaged structures (Craig this volume). Federal funds, however, are not available to pay for the repair of structures. Following disasters, the Small Business Administration offers low-interest loans (Brantley 1995) but even these are unaffordable for some of the victims. As a result, demolition and new construction is seen as the cheaper alternative, especially as the demolition is cost-neutral to the owner or is advantageous to one who wants a cleared site in order to redevelop.

The recognition of significant historic character and fabric, archaic materials and earlier building systems and technology is an important element in conservation. While heritage management should not willfully endanger human lives in a disaster situation, the issue of acceptable risk needs to be carefully assessed. It is all too easy to assume that no risk is acceptable and that all structures need to be ‘safe’.

The maintenance of older, damaged structures is often inhibited by the tendency of local government authorities to require that the repaired structure now comply with all *current* building standards imposed on new construction, even though an identical, undamaged historic structure is not required to do so. As Mackensen (this volume) points out, this not only adds to the delay in conservation action, but also, and importantly, adds to the financial and emotional costs to the property owner.

Hasty demolition of ‘unwanted’ heritage-listed structures is not uncommon. Camouflaged as a public safety measure, property owners call in work teams to demolish red-tagged structures before authorities can act.

This is on record for several localities in California following Loma Prieta (Craig this volume) as well as following the Newcastle Earthquake of 1989 in Australia. The most blatant example in Newcastle was the demolition of the Century Theater where the damage was restricted to a collapsed awning, yet the building was demolished (Henry 1991).

From dialogue to cooperation

The need for standardization

While the National Historic Preservation Act applies uniformly across the United States, and while National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106, approval requirements are also national, each individual state has its own variation of a historic preservation act with different administrative requirements and stipulations. State emergency agencies are aware of these needs and administrative structures. Yet during natural disasters, emergency management commonly also draws on federal agencies, and it is here where problems arise.

Federal agencies, such as FEMA, which are responsible for regions encompassing several states, need to be able to respond to the primary objectives of disaster management to save lives and property in quickly and comprehensively.

Clearly, the variations in state requirement with respect to historic preservation are not conducive to rapid responses. The Midwest Floods of 1993 are an example of where a single disaster affects several states and where a regionally coordinated response potentially runs foul of varied state requirements. Programmatic agreements standardizing the responses and clearly outlining the processes and responsibilities are the obvious answer. As Katchka (this volume) has shown, the key to a successful programmatic agreement is to anticipate the issues of conflict that might arise and to design resolution mechanisms. Clearly, as the programmatic agreements are being executed, lessons are learned and included in future agreements of this sort.

The need for (more) education

A common theme was the need for more public education, but just throwing information at people is no more going to help than just throwing money at the problem. The educational efforts must be focused and targeted to specific audiences; therefore they need to be i) multi-faceted and ii) custom-tailored to the clientele they shall educate (cf., Spennemann this volume).

Public education

As Craigo (this volume) pointed out, a disaster victim is simply not going to be very receptive when confronted with a smartly dressed person flatly stating “I am from the government and I am here to help you.” The victim is overwhelmed by his or her experience, is most likely in a state of delayed shock and is quite understandably preoccupied with more pressing issues. Unless the disaster victim has been ‘preconditioned’ to the nature and extent of the help which can be expected, the help offered for the retention of a historic property may not be very welcome.

Public propaganda campaigns for the general populace are necessary, but will most likely be limited to a ‘shotgun approach’: widely scattered but of limited impact. Targeted, high impact public education campaigns need to focus on the owners *and* occupiers (which need not be the same) of every single property listed on the National Register or included in historic districts: a huge task, no doubt, but a necessary one, as it will also function in

raising the owner's/occupier's awareness of the importance of the residence; and, if coupled with a targeted campaign to inform on maintenance issues, much goodwill can come of it.

There can be little doubt that the community is preoccupied with short-term concerns and issues rather than long-term ones. Hence, education for events that are likely to occur, yet at an unspecified and unspecifiable date will fall on deaf ears. Throughout California there is a nature, if not culture, of denial even though another strong and eminently destructive earthquake event is inevitable. No matter how much public education occurs, some members of the public will remain in denial.

Professional education

Like the disaster victim, local building inspectors or structural engineers are not likely to be receptive to the real or perceived (and thus 'real') 'intrusion' of heritage managers when they are worrying about tagging buildings and keeping the mayor and other local omnipotentiaries off their backs. Handing out information packs containing legal information and ordinances after an event as suggested by Donaldson (this volume) is all very well, but not likely to fall on receptive ears. Training must have been completed *beforehand* and at a level which makes the relevant official feel comfortable about including the knowledge gained in the decision-making process on the spot. After the event has occurred, a short intensive refresher briefing at public meetings can reinforce the training. This was very effective in Los Gatos.

Barksdale (this volume) shows that technical education before, during and after a disaster is crucial to the survival of historic places.

One of the most unnecessary side-effects of many natural disasters is the loss of highly significant aspects of a nation's cultural heritage. Insufficient knowledge of the importance and management of such places leads to well intentioned mitigation efforts which unfortunately impair or destroy cultural heritage. This can be overcome by a training course which focuses on the principles of disaster mitigation and cultural heritage management and addresses the specific mitigation needs of, and conservation options for, heritage sites. A training course should be developed and offered by distance education as a university subject and as a professional development and/or continuing education course. Such a training course would facilitate in-house and in-work training of staff and would render obsolete the currently prevailing climate of misunderstanding and non-implementation of appropriate actions and safeguards.

To sum up, the education shall increase the level of public understanding in general; the level of specific knowledge of the house owners/occupiers; and the level of skills *and understanding* of heritage matters by non-heritage disciplines, and of disaster matters by non-disaster disciplines.

Communications

In the past, some negative experiences have derived from interagency 'turf wars' and simple misunderstandings as a result of a lack of communication. But communication must not be restricted to the disaster phase alone.

Repeatedly, the need to maintain lines of communication has been stressed. As a result, taskforces on heritage needs in disaster situations have been formed (Cliver this volume). However, we should not confine this communication to top-level connections at high-level meetings. These meetings and connections are fine, but they do not translate into trust. These meetings only too often translate into decrees: *Thou shalt talk to (liaise with) the NPS / FEMA / OES / SHPO / ACHP....*Such approaches are not really conducive to building up trust, but trust is what underpins successful management. In a disaster situation, we simply do not have the time, nor the energy to work out whether some ‘drop-in’ from another agency is actually any good at his or her job. Consequently, he or she is given the ‘arms-length treatment’ rather than putting the person straight to work.

Communication must occur across the board and may well involve going across town, or - god forbid! - across the corridor and joining in at a tea or coffee hour for a chat. Socialization in others' institutional culture will pay off.

The media have been identified by several as one of the major agents of hasty change. Always hungry for gory details, non-spectacular results are not newsworthy. However, if a good relationship has developed, it should be *good* news that our stock of historic buildings has survived the earthquake well. The message is that the anchor to a past splendid is still there, thereby potentially providing emotional fix points.

Such news does not generate itself; *we* have to precondition the ‘bloodhounds’ of the media and *we* have to ‘put a spin on it’. All of this is basic politics of image creation, well known to all of us. Let's do it!

Support

It has become clear that disasters simply over-stretch the resources and capacities of the local staff. What can be done?

Building on the FEMA concept of having a register of available professional staff which FEMA can borrow from other agencies in case of an emergency, it may well be a sensible idea to pull in a small Heritage Damage Assessment Task Force from interstate. This task force would assist the local staff in the verification of red-tag decisions, run routine section 106 matters, provide instant advice to home owners and so forth. But these are not the only benefits. Consider also that such a team would:

- fill the gap of the first two weeks before ‘standard’ responses ‘kick in’;
- experience the trauma following an actual event (rather than simply relying on theory);
- gain actual first-line people management skills;
- develop team relationships;
- work out ‘snags’ in the team's communication with the emergency services; and
- establish close relationships with other state teams.

If a disaster were to strike in the home town/state of the team, the team would ‘hit the ground running’. No start-up period, no time wasted getting to know each others' idiosyncrasies and so forth. Responsibilities and skills are well understood, and the team is

'in business' from the first minute onwards. It would be well trained, 'battle-hardened' and would already have working relationships with the other Heritage Damage Assessment Task Forces coming in from interstate to help.

Any Heritage Damage Assessment Task Force leaving for an emergency call should not have more than 10% new (that is, untrained) people. This maintains stability thereby ensuring well oiled operations. The composition of the taskforce should include FEMA, Office of Emergency Services (or state equivalent), SHPO and National Park Service, augmented on the ground by a person from the local preservation support group or historical society to provide information on local politics and other constraints.

It is obviously a reciprocal structure which, in the climate of cost-cutting and downsizing, may sit uncomfortably with some administrators, but we believe it is a 'safety net' well worth weaving. It cannot work on its own and needs to be linked with public education programs (mentioned above) and good lines of communication. The 'nitty gritty' of the matter, of course, is to work out who 'picks up the slack' left behind at the office back home.

Cultural sensitivities

An issue mentioned by Coshigiano (1995) and, in passing, alluded to by other speakers, is the sensitivity of the disaster managers to the specific needs of cultures other than the dominant Anglo-Saxon/Anglo-European conglomerate. Non-European cultures need to be respected and, if possible, understood. The disaster response team must be culturally sensitive and understand that levels of acceptable risk are cultural constructs and differ from culture to culture, and that, by implication, the priorities for mitigation efforts will vary from group to group. While this is particularly true for members of the Native Americans, Hawaiians and Micronesians, it is applicable to other ethnic minorities as well. The United States is a multicultural society and this needs to be taken into account.

Katchka (this volume) touches upon the issue of stakeholder identification and who should be consulted in the formulation of a memorandum of agreement. Clearly, as she points out, the process has to be holistic and needs to be more compassing than merely drawing on individuals recognized by the United States as being legal descendants of tribal descent. Ultimately, broad community support and *consensus* decisions are needed if proposed agreements shall have longevity and success.

One of the issues recurrently encountered in Australian cultural resource management is the sacred sites. These do not figure on any register as they are no-one's business except that of the specific local group and their custodians. These sites are only mentioned when the sites are actually threatened. Likewise, there are men's and women's sites, and it is totally inappropriate for a man to enter a woman's site, no matter what the circumstances. In the US scenario, a good solution to the problem would be the close involvement of Native American Indian groups as full stakeholders in the development of disaster response plans, and to include one or - if gender issues are important to the local community - two representative(s) on the cultural heritage assessment task force who can provide instant advice.

From cooperation to preservation

Proactive versus reactive management

The loss of any historic fabric is deplorable as it is irreplaceable in its own right, as any loss of original fabric will reduce the historical integrity of a structure. It can be repaired but, once damage occurs, the resource is never the same again. Thus, is it not better to mitigate a hazard than to mitigate the effects of the disaster?

Seismic retrofit has been addressed many times over, but there are only a few references of retrofit and preventative mitigation for other disasters types (roofs can be better anchored for hurricanes and typhoons). Across the board we are in dire need of proactive management.

Following the Loma Prieta Earthquake, state building codes were revised (Mathison this volume) leading to greater protection, but also some undesirable effects. The California building code, for example, requires local government entities to identify potentially dangerous unreinforced masonry structures and to develop plans for mitigating hazards derived from these places. While the California Unreinforced Masonry Law does not require owners to retrofit their buildings, the local government entities, fearing liability lawsuits, adopted mandatory seismic retrofit ordinances (Craig this volume). While these ordinances permitted, in the case of non-compliance, the demolition of the structure, the owners were not given avenues of financial assistance to retrofit.

There can be little doubt that mandatory programs of seismic retrofit, such as San Francisco's parapet abatement program and the Los Angeles unreinforced masonry abatement program, saved lives in the respective earthquake events. It is questionable though, whether non-compliance on financial grounds should lead to the loss of heritage structures. It is incumbent on the local government agencies to consider financial incentives, such as property tax rate freezes or rate rebates (which should be means-tested), to ensure the survival of historically significant neighborhoods.

The various bond proposals issued by the City and County of San Francisco, and the approval of these proposals by vote of the general public shows that there is widespread community support for the rehabilitation and seismic retrofit of public structures, even if this requires the commitment of substantial funding (Alfaro this volume).

As historic structures are a finite resource, and an assessable resource at that, it should be possible, where required, to develop individual assessments and individual disaster response methodologies for each structure well and truly before a disaster strikes (Donaldson this volume).

Blaine Cliver's tale of the mitigation of the effects of a fire at Frank Delano Roosevelt's mansion is a salient point: proactive management in the form of disaster preparedness training and a disaster plan facilitated the successful containment of the blaze (Cliver this volume). We can only hope that, in five years time, such a tale is *so* commonplace that it is no longer worth mentioning.

The advances in portable computer technology allow us to conduct structure assessments and enter the information into databases. Craigo (this volume) described how the SHPO database of historic properties could be electronically compared to the database of damaged properties as assessed by the emergency services. The filtering process identified the damaged heritage properties which could then be independently assessed. While this is an obvious solution and clearly a labor-saving advancement, this system is only as good as the historic properties database. If the database includes all properties, both on the register of historic places and those properties eligible for inclusion, then a safety net has been achieved. If, however, as is too often the case in communities not overly concerned with heritage issues, the register of historic properties is minimalist or thematically skewed, with little interest in achieving a comprehensive listing, then a database comparison will only identify the most significant properties at risk.

Barksdale (this volume) describes the scenario in Georgia following Tropical Storm Alberto. Even though register listings had been carried out, the rural areas were less well researched, surveyed and documented and, as a result, the disaster responses were hampered and organized damage assessments made difficult.

It must be clear to all involved that such a filtering process is only the first step in the assessment of historic structures, targeting those identified as significant and at risk. Yet we should not lose sight that adjoining properties, in themselves possibly not significant, contribute to the setting of the historic place and may need to be saved as well or else the setting of the listed structure, and possibly the whole neighborhood, will suffer.

Application of the precautionary principle

Another issue raised by some of the speakers was the debate about whether a particular place or building was historically significant or not and, hence, whether any management controls should 'kick in'. Why is it important to establish *immediately after a disaster* whether a building is significant? We are aware of the 30-day period for funded demolition, but why not use the precautionary principle and, in the post disaster phase, simply *assume* the building to be significant and eligible for inclusion in the register - *until proven otherwise*?

Donaldson (this volume) argues for a regular and qualified second opinion for all decisions involving demolition and significant loss of historic fabric.

This may well mean that a rule change needs to occur and that the 30-day funded demolition period may need to be extended. But - with some goodwill - it should not be much of an administrative 'high wire act' to develop a list of buildings for which conditional demolition approval has been given, thus ensuring that the 30-day rule stays intact. The final decision on this, however, will depend on the findings of the historic preservation disaster assessment task force. If the building is really so damaged that it needs to be demolished, then a delay of another three weeks or so will not matter.

However, it may matter psychologically as the disaster victims may wish to 'draw a line' under the events and start afresh from a clean building lot, so to speak. This is an issue that can be pre-empted by adequate and ongoing public education.

Disaster planning

While earthquakes are predictable in their occurrence *per se*, but not in their magnitude and timing, other natural disasters can be predicted with reasonable accuracy a few days prior to their occurrence. This is certainly true for cyclones/hurricanes and river floods which are seasonal events. In addition, the linkages between global climatic conditions, such as El Niño, and the frequency of natural disasters has been shown. This allows public officials to predict a higher probability of disasters during some years (cf., Spennemann & Marschner 1995). Clearly, there is a need for predictive modeling and disaster planning which is based on long-term and short-term preparation.

Since cyclones/hurricanes come with a warning period, we can implement last-minute disaster preparedness activities for heritage places and conduct last-minute 'refresher' education campaigns to home-owners; also the communications lines between the various agencies can be reopened should this prove to be necessary.

The disaster planning components need, on the one hand, to clearly define the role of the historic preservation specialists, and the Programmatic Agreements and Memoranda of Agreement are a good step in this process. On the local level, there need to be plans in place which assign meaningful roles to local preservation specialists.

It should be feasible, for example, to compile a register of historic architects willing to donate some of their time *pro bono publico* after a disaster event to assess the mitigation options for damaged structures and to determine a rough estimate of the cost of these actions. This register needs to be maintained on a regular basis and the volunteers on the register need to be trained in emergency management procedures.

The road ahead

One of the major components we need to consider is training of staff at all levels of disaster management in the appropriate treatment of cultural resources. Workshops and Symposia such as the one held in San Francisco particularly targeted front line staff, not heads of agencies. These must be coordinated with department head summits so there is support from the top.

If the achievements of this symposium merely remain a new set of cooperative agreements handed down with authority by the authority, it is 'just another rule' to follow, and this would resemble a free-standing arch: two monolithic pillars connected at the top only by unbraced voussoirs (the stones on each side of the keystone) - and we know what happens to that in earthquakes. What we need to achieve is a structure where these monolithic stones are tied together by shear walls and cross-braces to form a strong unit swinging at the same wavelength.

What we need to achieve is a general proprietary sense among everyone involved; that it may not be *our* property that we are dealing with, but that it is *our* past, *our* heritage - a heritage which *we* hold in communal patrimony for *our* children. Therefore it is *our* inalienable responsibility to look after it, and to do that well.

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