

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS: **Technical Preservation Assistance**

Recognition and designation of historic properties and sites is only one part of historic preservation. Equally important to preservation is the continued care and maintenance of these important places so that they continue to survive and function into the future. While the principle responsibility for maintenance lies with the property owner, the Carbondale Preservation Commission can help in the process by providing technical assistance and guidance on appropriate preservation techniques. This assistance can range from supplying basic reference materials on preservation methods to workshops and classes on specific preservation topics. Additionally, the Preservation Commission should work with the Planning Commission on reviewing building codes so that local codes encourage rehabilitation and redevelopment.

While a large portion of Carbondale's building stock predates the 1950s and thus is considered historic, it suffers greatly from a lack of integrity. Inappropriate artificial siding and porch modifications are prevalent in the City's historic neighborhoods. The current extent of these changes precludes some areas from consideration as National Register or local historic districts. However, some of these changes are reversible. With education and access to proper rehabilitation methods many of these neighborhoods can be historically reclaimed.

### **Historic Preservation Resource Library**

The Carbondale Preservation Commission should establish a historic preservation library that includes information about the role of the Commission, the designation process, designated properties, and copies of all resource surveys. This library should also contain a section on technical assistance and preservation techniques. In order for this information to reach the largest possible audience, and to further the education aspect of the Commission's mission, these resources should be housed at the Carbondale Public Library in a highly visible location, if possible. Copies of the information could also be available in City Hall, and lists of the available information should be periodically advertised in the *Carbondale Communique*.

The following is a list of suggested publications and/or reference materials that could be acquired by the Commission and made available to the public.

- The National Park Service's *Preservation Briefs* series. This series provides information on specific preservation techniques for repairing masonry, roofs, plaster, etc. in a short, easy-to-read format. Over forty publications are available for free or at very low cost and can be accessed over the Internet at [www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/briefs](http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/briefs).
- The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency's *Preservation Series*. While this series is being discontinued, the twenty-two extant bulletins cover topics such as stucco, historic landscapes, house research, concrete, cemetery care, and brick streets. Back copies for most issues are still available from IHPA.

- Association for Preservation Technology, International. Although this non-profit organization is focused mainly on providing technical information to preservation architects and contractors, it does disseminate up-to-date historic preservation techniques. It also has a technical publication, *APT Bulletin*, and holds an annual conference with specialized training sessions. Further information can be found at [www.apti.org/](http://www.apti.org/).
- Subscriptions to the *Old-House Journal* ([www.oldhousejournal.com/](http://www.oldhousejournal.com/)), *This Old House* magazine ([www.pbs.org/wgbh/thisoldhouse/magazine/index.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/thisoldhouse/magazine/index.html)), *Old-House Interiors* ([www.oldhouseinteriors.com](http://www.oldhouseinteriors.com)), and *Traditional Building* ([www.traditional-building.com/](http://www.traditional-building.com/)). These magazines provide “how-to” information on home rehabilitation and provide a source for hard-to-find restoration products. A list of nearby (Illinois, Kentucky, Missouri) architectural salvage centers might also prove helpful.
- Survey forms. Copies of all architectural/historic survey forms and the accompanying reports should be duplicated for the library. While all of these materials are available to the public in the Development Services Department office in City Hall, the public library provides easier accessibility, more flexible hours, and a more comfortable setting in which to use these materials.
- Contractor list. A list of local and/or area contractors that have shown a knowledge of, or sensitivity to, historic preservation in their rehabilitation projects should be developed. Specialized craftsmen, such as those who work on slate or tile roofs, fix plaster, repair porch columns and railings, or repoint masonry correctly, are especially noteworthy. Not all contractors are willing to work on older buildings, and a list of those craftsmen who are both willing and able to understand the problems and requirements of historic buildings is a valuable resource. Recommendations, however, should be supplied by the contractors from previous clients.
- Various architectural style guides and architectural terminology dictionaries. To help people understand the architecture of their historic buildings and to aid them in talking knowledgeably to contractors, books on architectural styles, vernacular building types, and architectural terminology should be part of the resource library’s collection. Suggestions are: *House Styles in America* by James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell; *Houses by Mail: A Guide to Houses from Sears, Roebuck and Company* by Katherine Cole Stevenson and H. Ward Jandl; *American Architecture Since 1780: A Guide to the Styles* by Marcus Whiffen; *A Field Guide to American Houses* by Virginia & Lee McAlester; *Dictionary of Building Preservation* edited by Ward Bucher; *Twentieth-Century Building Materials* edited by Thomas C. Jester; *Illustrated Dictionary of Historic Architecture* edited by Cyril M. Harris; *The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture* by Rachel Carley; and *Old House Dictionary: An Illustrated Guide to American Domestic Architecture 1600 to 1940* by Steven J. Phillips.

- A tool lending library. Property owners often do not have the specialized tools necessary for home maintenance and cannot afford to buy expensive power tools that might have limited use. A lending “library” of selected tools, both power and hand, could provide an incentive for building owners to maintain their property. Use of the tools could be coupled with attendance at certain “hands-on” workshops.

## **Preservation Workshops**

The Preservation Commission can further their education mandate by developing and/or sponsoring various educational workshops and seminars on preservation techniques for building owners and City staff. These short courses can range from “hands-on” workshops to safety classes to economic incentive seminars. The courses should be widely advertised with special invitations sent to landmark and potential landmark property owners. Some classes, however, could target specific audiences such as City rehabilitation staff or local realtors and developers. Suggestions for some possible courses and activities follow.

- “Hands-on” workshops could include a double-hung window seminar on how to fix sash cords, reglaze and reputty sash, weatherstripping, and installing appropriate storm windows. Such a seminar could save property owners money on their energy bills, while helping to preserve original windows. Additional workshops could focus on rehangng doors or fixing pocket doors, repairing steam or hot-water heating systems, insulating old houses, exterior paint colors, and plaster repair.
- The Preservation Commission could also sponsor a “Great Unveiling” day modeled after the success of Rock Island’s Broadway Neighborhood’s unveilings. Volunteers offer to spend a day removing inappropriate artificial siding from a historic house to “unveil” its historic detail and suggestions for appropriate historic paint colors are given. This is a great publicity opportunity for the Commission to discuss the problems involved with installing artificial siding on historic houses.
- Safety in old houses is an important issue. Safe removal of lead paint and asbestos are two crucial topics. On-staff at the Building Research Council at the University of Illinois is the state’s authority on safe removal of lead paint from historic buildings, Jeffrey Gordon, who has developed a professionally-accredited course on lead paint removal that he is willing to share around the state. He can be contacted at 217.333.1801 ([www.brc.arch.uiuc.edu/leadpaint.htm](http://www.brc.arch.uiuc.edu/leadpaint.htm)). Information on asbestos is available from Dale Halford at the Illinois EPA Asbestos Unit, 217.785.2011 ([www.epa.state.il.us/air/asbestos/](http://www.epa.state.il.us/air/asbestos/)).
- A seminar on economic incentives associated with both National Register and local designation could be held for property owners, realtors, and developers. The federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit and Non-Historic Tax Credit should be explained and, if applicable, shown how they can be combined with the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit. The Illinois Property Tax Assessment Freeze program should be discussed, and the pending federal Historic Homeowners Rehabilitation Tax Credit could also be mentioned

as a possible future economic incentive. Any requirements for local rehabilitation grant programs should also be defined. If time allows, a short segment on the architectural styles and building types found in Carbondale would help acquaint the audience with the historic resources of the community and more clearly tie the incentive programs with specific targeted buildings. In addition, if the seminar were properly structured, it may qualify as continuing education credits for architects and realtors, thus providing an additional incentive for attendance. (See Section IV. *Recommendations: Incentives for Historic Preservation* for additional information.)

- The City should require that all staff of the Building and Neighborhood Services Division attend a class on local architecture and preservation rehabilitation techniques. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* or the Commission's *Architectural Preservation Guidelines* should be adopted by the Development Services Department as its rehabilitation standard for neighborhood preservation districts and potential landmark districts. Staff should then be educated on what the *Standards/Guidelines* mean and how to apply them in different situations. The Illinois Historic Preservation Agency's staff architects could lead the discussion and explain how the *Standards/Guidelines* can apply in "real-life" situations. Replacement windows, artificial siding, and porch modifications that change the historic integrity of buildings should not be allowed.

## **Building Code Review**

Often local building codes discourage investment in historic buildings because they are written with new construction in mind, although they apply to existing construction. In some cases, even the most simple repairs can trigger additional code work. Often this makes repairs and upgrades unaffordable to building owners, which can lead to neglect and disrepair. It can also discourage the adaptive use of some buildings and the reuse of upper stories in commercial structures. The City of Carbondale has adopted the 1999 BOCA National Building Code which includes a short section addressing historic structures. Section 3406.0 "Historic Structures" states the following:

Compliance: The provisions of this code relating to the construction, repair, *alteration*, *addition*, restoration and movement of structures shall not be mandatory for existing buildings and structures identified and classified by the federal, state or local government authority as historic buildings where such buildings are judged by the code official to be safe and in the interest of public health, safety and welfare regarding any proposed construction, *alteration*, repair, *addition* and relocation.<sup>1</sup>

This section attempts to produce a compromise between the interests of historic preservation and the needs of life safety. Guidelines are given that try to balance the preservation of historic buildings with the need to meet the intent of the building code. However, this section does provide for exceptions from building code requirements, if the building is classified as a historic building by the government. Thus National Register-listed and locally designated landmarks would qualify for this exception in Carbondale. Notwithstanding the historic nature of the building, other considerations must still be evaluated such as the building's structural safety, proposed use, effect on life safety, and how the intent of the code will be achieved.<sup>2</sup>

The City has provisions that deal with historic buildings in its building code, but the applicable section is brief, rather vague, and open to interpretation. It also only applies to those buildings that are designated landmarks. It should be noted that the BOCA Building Code is being phased out nationally, to be replaced by the International Building Code 2000 (IBC). Although Carbondale is not required to adopt the new code, no changes or revisions to the BOCA Code will be forthcoming. It is anticipated that most municipalities will be adopting the new International Building Code, which was written for new construction. A companion code, the International Existing Building Code, is now in final draft form and will be officially issued in 2003. The Existing Building Code will address the needs and requirements of existing buildings, whether or not they have been classified as historic.

In the meantime, New Jersey, Maryland, and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development have approved new building codes that deal specifically with existing buildings. Three other states are currently revising their codes. The Preservation Commission could help the City review its building codes as they relate to existing buildings by completing the following:

- Assemble a task force of architects, developers, contractors, and building code and fire officials to review existing Carbondale building codes as they relate to historic buildings to ascertain if there are any problem areas.
- Review newly adopted rehabilitation building codes such as New Jersey's Rehabilitation Subcode ([state.nj.us/dca/codes/rehab/](http://state.nj.us/dca/codes/rehab/)), HUD's Nationally Applicable Recommended Rehabilitation Provisions ([www.huduser.org/publications/destech/rehabpr.html](http://www.huduser.org/publications/destech/rehabpr.html)), and the final draft of the International Existing Building Code ([www.icbo.org/Code\\_Talk/iebc-01-finaldraft.html](http://www.icbo.org/Code_Talk/iebc-01-finaldraft.html)) for processes that can be adopted in Carbondale.
- Seek assistance from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency's staff architects for innovative ideas for meeting safety and accessibility codes. These architects work throughout the state and often have simple and novel ways to meet existing codes while preserving the integrity of a building.
- Develop strategies for reusing upper stories of commercial buildings for residential use and for adaptively using obsolete buildings for different uses.
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## **Accessibility Requirements**

Providing access to historic buildings for the disabled is generally addressed through federal and state law, rather than through building codes. The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 is the federal law which provides that places of "public accommodation" be accessible to disabled persons. Historic buildings, or historically interpreted buildings, are discussed in the Illinois Accessibility Code "Subpart G: Historic Preservation." Neither program applies to private residences and both contain provisions for special consideration of historic buildings. In general, a building is defined as "historic" if it is listed on the National Register, is a "contributing building" located in a National Register historic district, or has been designated as historic by a local historic preservation commission. Buildings need to comply with the requirements of these laws as long as the necessary changes do not "threaten or destroy" the historic character of the building. The Illinois State Historic Preservation Officer can determine whether the required action will threaten or destroy the historic character. Alternate provisions for accessibility and some exemptions are available to historic buildings that

cannot comply with the law. Further information about ADA requirements for historic buildings under federal and Illinois law is available from the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency.

## **Disaster Preparedness**

Disasters can range from historic house fires to downtown district fires, from tornados to earthquakes. The City of Carbondale has an Emergency Operations Plan in place to deal with disasters. A Damage Assessment Annex has been developed to assess the condition and coordinate the repair and removal of damaged buildings and structures.

After a disaster, damage assessment teams comprised of individuals with architectural, construction, and property assessment skills will make an initial survey of the area. These teams will determine which buildings are safe or unsafe for habitation and will label each buildings or structure within the disaster area after an inspection. While public safety after a disaster is paramount, it is also important that efforts are made to mitigate the effects of the disaster on historic properties.

The Carbondale Preservation Commission should work with City staff and other relevant commissions in reviewing the City's Emergency Operations Plan and Damage Assessment Annex. A recovery and restoration plan will help meet public regulatory requirements, maintain sensitivity to historic preservation principles, work within budget and resources, and render the site more secure against damage from future disasters. The Illinois Emergency Management Agency is equipped to help cities prepare a plan to safeguard historic sites. At a minimum, the Commission's *Master List of Historic and Architecturally Significant Properties in Carbondale* and lists of National Register and locally designated properties should be part of the assessment files and a building's historic or architectural significance should be noted on the Damage Assessment Inspection Forms. In addition, the preservation of records is important, and the Commission should have copies of all of their records safely stored in two locations or in a fire-proof vault. Documentation of historic resources is also vital to any disaster plan, and the City's Photographic Archives Project may provide key services in this area.

### ***Recommendations***

- The Preservation Commission should develop a Historic Preservation Resource Section in the public library that includes information about the duties of the Commission, local preservation programs, and resources for technical assistance. The resource section should contain publications from federal and state preservation programs, information from preservation technology groups, preservation "how-to" magazines and architectural style guides and terminology dictionaries.
- The Preservation Commission should maintain a list of local and/or area contractors that have shown a knowledge of, or sensitivity to, historic preservation in rehabilitation projects. The Commission should also develop a tool lending library.
- The Preservation Commission should sponsor workshops for both the public and City staff on appropriate preservation techniques, old house safety, historic preservation incentive programs, and related topics.

- The Preservation Commission should work with local professionals, City staff, and other commissions to review the City's building code for possible changes to the code as it relates to historic buildings.
- The Preservation Commission should work with City staff and other commissions to review the City's Emergency Operation Plan and Damage Assessment Annex as it relates to the City's historic resources.

### **Endnotes**

1. *The BOCA National Building Code/1999* (Country Club Hills, Illinois: Building Officials and Code Administrators International, Inc., 1991), 338.
2. *Ibid.*, 34-8.