



PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC SITES, DISTRICTS AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES (R1984, R2000, R2001)

Policy Statement

The American Society of Landscape Architects believes preservation and protection of nationally, regionally and locally significant historic properties, buildings, structures, districts, cultural landscapes, archeological remains and objects, both designed and vernacular, are critical to maintaining the continuum of land use and history across generations. Protection of these cultural resources offers inspirational values and an appreciation of past ingenuity, accomplishments, hardships and hopes, as well as insight into future land use and design solutions. The interpretation and public use of the historic properties and cultural landscapes should be viewed as an integral part of their preservation.

Rationale

Since 1960, the historic preservation movement has grown beyond its singular focus on historic buildings and districts to encompass additional resources, including cultural landscapes. Like most resources that have gained recognition in the field of preservation, as the integrity of a resource type is threatened there tends to be increased public outcry and ultimately a demand to act on behalf of the resource. As early works of private and public landscape architecture were threatened, a growing concern for those landscapes caused teams and individuals working in the field of landscape preservation to research, analyze and evaluate landscape features and then propose protection measures.

With maturation of the landscape preservation movement, a variety of inventory and documentation processes, analysis and evaluation methodologies and site/resource treatment standards have developed to assist and guide historic property managers in the decisions about cultural landscapes. Comprehensive landscape inventories, known as cultural landscape reports have become commonplace for both privately and publicly held historic properties.

Without a comprehensive understanding of the site history and a plan to manage the site in place, well meaning but unstudied modifications may compromise the integrity of a significant historic property or cultural landscape. The identification, documentation, analysis, evaluation, treatment and maintenance of historic sites and cultural landscapes is critical to managing a site wisely. Such efforts help ensure that the resource is available for the education and enjoyment of future generations.

Development of cultural landscapes, including the placement of buildings and service facilities such as parking areas, roads, information facilities, visitor shelters, etc, should be based on the landscape treatment chosen for the site be it preservation, rehabilitation, restoration or reconstruction.

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