Historic Preservation + Sustainability =
Stewardship of the Built Environment

"The voyage of discovery is not
in seeking new landscapes
but in having new eyes."
— Marcel Proust

Personal Philosophical Approach

As society's continually expanding land use is tempered by the scarcity of resources, greater efforts must be made in recognizing the value of and reusing existing buildings. I have spent my career balancing the need for "new" with the recognition that "old" does not mean obsolete. The built environment represents the progress that we have made technically, commercially, and socially. To ignore the past is to risk the loss of the awareness of the evolutionary processes which have delivered us to this point and reduces the ability of future professionals to understand how to proceed forward. Advancements in technology, the evolution of how we conduct business and live our daily lives, and changes in social attitudes all affect the idea of what is old and what is obsolete. As professionals we need to continually integrate appropriate solutions into this evolutionary process as we seek to adapt to the future needs of society. This need has resulted in a philosophical approach to historic preservation that I refer to as “stewardship of the built environment.”

Long before the term sustainability became familiar to many, I chose to work in the field of energy conservation within the built environment as a way to marry technology and efficient business practices to the conservation of existing natural resources. Toward that end, I completed a graduate degree in Architectural Engineering to further understand building systems design and their integration into the built environment. After entering this profession, I realized that, along with defining solutions, a great deal of the success of a solution came from communicating with the client and facilitating the implementation of that solution. As a result, I completed a graduate program in Business Administration to enhance my understanding of the client's perspective of the processes. Subsequent experience has developed and sharpened the skills I needed to determine the feasibility of retaining older buildings and overcome the obstacles to modernizing them from both a technological and business viewpoint as well as heightening my awareness of the social value of rehabilitating buildings. This awareness led to my completing a graduate degree in Historic Preservation Planning to further understand how the past and the future can be integrated together. My exploration of these processes has delivered me to where I am today. I am still conserving resources but have refined my scope to focus on the stewardship of the built environment which by its very nature mitigates the depletion of the natural environment and thus sustains the resources and vitality of both the built and natural sectors.
I am, therefore, a steward of the built environment. I have come to understand the forces affecting historic preservation decisions, at first from a design solution standpoint, then from a business perspective, and finally from a societal perspective in appreciating the overall context of how building systems can best be integrated to meet our needs and continue to meet our needs in the future. Within this context, I recognize that the long-term sustainable approach to growth must include a look forward but also a careful integration of how the built environment and the lessons it contains can be optimally reused in the future.

Professional Philosophical Approach

Early in my career, I was introduced to a compelling strategy for professional growth. In this strategy, three components work synergistically to create a much larger composite growth than by doing each individually. These components include professional practice, education/research, and service. As professionals, we can work separately in any of them. However combining all three provides the greatest impact on the future of the profession. Professional practice builds the experience base to develop design solutions which then builds the basis for exploring new ways of enhancing the design process. Research and education draw upon experience from a theoretical perspective to formulate new processes. Through service to others we can learn from others as well as educate others by passing along this acquired knowledge to them. The three components combined create a holistic approach to growth that ensures the adaptation of our profession to the needs of the future. My current professional practice is the synthesis of my consulting, education/research, and service oriented activities.

Educational/Research Philosophical Approach

Based on my professional practice career and as a reflection of this tripartite strategy, my philosophy as an educator is to provide a holistic-based education that sensitizes the students to the reality of their professional environment and exposes them to the concerns of people in that professional environment. All courses should focus on preparing the students to apply their critical thinking and reasoning skills to realistically solving the problems they will encounter in school and in professional practice. As such, assignments that sensitize the students to the built environment and enable them to experience it first-hand are useful for the students to newly see the built environment as a personal learning laboratory, or what Marcel Proust describes as “having new eyes.” As a student and educator, I have found four stages that one must pass through to gain professional proficiency: 1) acquisition of language describing processes involved; 2) internalization of the relevant concepts; 3) integration of the language and concepts into solutions; and 4) interaction with or simulation of the professional environment. Recognizing these stages have helped define the learning pedagogy around which I have structured my teaching approach.

Architecture is experiential in both emotional and physical terms and multiple factors affect the success of a building — aesthetics, constructability, cost, comfort, functionality, and durability. The preservation and adaptive reuse of historic architecture are even more so affected by these factors and are compounded at times by a polarized or
indifferent yet mixed constituency of diverse socioeconomic, ethnic, and educational backgrounds. A successful sustainable building is based on the ability of the parties involved to communicate, recognize each others needs, and form the best solutions with the given resources. Basic knowledge required for this can be from textbooks and course lectures but to prepare students for "real life" we need to move beyond the classroom. To reinforce concepts, accessing and using local buildings as a learning vehicle show how building, systems, occupants, and contexts interact with one another. For lower level courses, tests and homework assignments establish the student's proficiency level with the language and concepts of the course. To enhance their interpersonal skills, group projects can often be invaluable. For upper level courses, individual or group projects to emulate professional practice conditions as either a theoretical exercise or as an actual service learning project can provide the experience necessary to create viable solutions to real problems.

As a professional goal, I have set my research agenda to further develop the interdisciplinary aspects of architectural education that facilitate stewardship of the built environment. Therefore, my initial creative energies have been also directed at exploring several venues of research and scholarly work that have been generating publications which reflect my overlying thematic interest in stewardship of the built environment. My unique combination of work experiences and skills has enabled me to understand the many forces affecting the process of getting older buildings rehabilitated or contextually sensitive new buildings built and ultimately the larger impact on how changes to the built environment affect long term sustainability. Drawing from my own experiences, I recognize that the truly successful architects are those who can effectively interact along the entire spectrum of the building design delivery process and can readily understand how their actions affect and are affected by the technical, economic, and social constraints of our building related resources. As a consequence of this belief, my research addresses several areas on that continuum which will enhance the architect's role as an architectural facilitator of the collaborative design process. Within the context of stewardship of the built environment, I investigate issues affecting three areas:

- sustainability/revitalization of the built environment
- building conservation, remediation, and rehabilitation
- historic preservation information technology delivery systems.

I am currently producing papers and journal articles but my long term goals are to write several books to enhance the interdisciplinary understanding of these issues and to use my research in my teaching to strengthen the students' abilities to succeed in modern professional practice.

**Service Philosophical Approach**

Beyond simply performing my current university committee assignments, my service ethic combines the essence of my professional, educational, and research philosophy within the University setting and beyond it through service work within the Salt Lake City, statewide, national, and international environments. My extramural service activities include or have included working on the Association for Preservation
Technology International Board of Directors, the Utah Heritage Foundation Board of Trustees, the Salt Lake City Historic Landmarks Commission, and the Traditional Building Skills Institute. I use my service duties to see how others perceive, use, and understand technical concepts, interpersonal skills, and collaborative processes related to historic preservation and sustainability in particular and architectural design in general. As a result, I now better understand people from a variety of backgrounds and disciplines and translate that understanding into a more effective implementation of my course materials as well as enhancing public awareness to the architectural conservation and preservation issues confronting society.

Service activities enable me to move beyond the academic environment and explore opportunities for my own growth as a community leader and as an educator. My professional service and service-learning activities have significantly contributed to both my educational and research agendas as well as served to enhance the reputation of the University of Utah College of Architecture + Planning as being committed to improve relationships with the local and state community. Most importantly, service is an integral part of my own growth strategy. The boundaries between my teaching, research, and service are often permeable or nonexistent. This is when my greatest opportunities for growth and fulfillment occur. As such, I will continue my service work to bring aspects of non-academic environments into academic settings and vice-versa.

**Future Direction and Commitment**

By the career path that I have taken, my unique combination of skills has enabled me to understand the many forces affecting the process of getting older buildings rehabilitated or new buildings built. As a professional goal, I have set my agenda to further the development of the interdisciplinary aspects of historic preservation, sustainable design, and architectural education. I therefore conclude that the truly successful architects of the future will be those who can readily interact with the entire spectrum of the design delivery process and can readily understand how their actions affect and are affected by the technical, economic, and social constraints of our building related resources.