

# Preserving Our Heritage Assets

*Architectural History and Historic Preservation Strategic Plan 2015–2019*



Smithsonian  
*Office of Planning,  
Design and Construction*

*The Smithsonian's collections of monumental buildings are beloved by the American public and all of our visitors. The buildings that house our collections are as important as the exhibitions themselves and the buildings are in fact our largest collection. Our mission is to provide world-class stewardship and to guarantee to the public that these gorgeous buildings will function forever as living memorials that house our nation's treasures. The Architectural History and Historic Preservation staff watches over our building collections and ensures that our uses of these buildings always keep their history and character intact for generations to come. This strategic plan sets our goals and direction, and pledges that we will never lose sight of our ultimate responsibility to our buildings.*

Nancy J. Bechtol

Director, Office of Facilities Engineering and Operations (OFEO)

*The buildings and grounds of the Smithsonian Institution are not merely real property assets; they are often irreplaceable, iconic facilities with unmatched historic, cultural, and scientific value. They contain artifacts, collections, and activities that define, preserve, and interpret our national and global heritage, and meaningfully contribute to America's architectural heritage. These facilities are physical evidence of our civilization— as records of our past, as platforms to express our present understanding, and as long-enduring, public resources to be protected, sustained, and adapted well into the future. Stewardship of our cultural properties and historic buildings is a universal responsibility. This strategic plan for the sustainable stewardship of the Smithsonian's cultural properties employs best practices in preservation and cultural property management and embraces the compatibility of old and new in the evolving continuum of our built heritage.*

Debra Nauta-Rodriguez, FAIA, LEED AP  
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## *Introduction*

The Architectural History and Historic Preservation (AHHP) office implements policy and manages programs to ensure the stewardship of over forty signature buildings and the significant Castle Collection of furnishings and decorative arts. Institutions are often viewed for their sustainability and viability in terms of how well they present their physical plant to the public. As an institution with nineteen museums, nine research centers, and hundreds of buildings, both old and new, it is a privilege to support the mission of the Smithsonian by preserving its cultural and architectural heritage assets in a growing number of sites. As noted by nineteenth-century English author and designer William Morris, our time is finite and our buildings live on beyond us when they are well stewarded.

The Smithsonian's collection of buildings marks the evolution of architectural design representing many major periods of American history from the eighteenth into the twenty-first century. Our earliest building is part of a farming residence at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Edgewater, Maryland. We care for the Castle, the iconic flagship known around the world, but we are also responsible for landmark buildings on the Mall, in New York City, at the National Zoo, and elsewhere. The Smithsonian is our country's national museum and the buildings that house the collections are themselves treasures. These buildings and sites require preventive maintenance along with selective improvements to keep them viable. In an age of new technologies and ever-more demanding health and safety codes, it is incumbent on the institution to have professionals well-informed in preservation technology, materials conservation, and innovative design working as part of the facilities teams. This informed approach to the care and stewardship of Smithsonian's architectural treasures and collections is outlined in these pages.

*These old buildings do not belong to us only, they belong to our forefathers and they will belong to our descendants unless we play them false. They are not in any sense our own property to do with as we like with them. We are only trustees for those that come after us.*

William Morris (1834–1896)









This strategic plan enhances the work already in place to foster a superior understanding of the Smithsonian’s built heritage through preservation, research, and education. AHHP staff members write the architectural history of the Smithsonian, guide the landmark preservation of the old and new Smithsonian buildings, and care for the Castle Collection as well as compile the Heritage Materials Inventory of building artifacts. The guiding principles of historic preservation, as found in SD 418 Historic Preservation Policy, encourage necessary interventions to keep buildings in appropriate uses, but also discourage radical changes that seriously alter the character-defining features of a building, site, or collection. To that end, this strategic plan outlines measures to reinforce the Smithsonian’s approach to the care and stewardship of its outstanding resources.

Sharon C. Park, FAIA  
Associate Director, AHHP

*These buildings that serve as repositories of the nation’s history are themselves a rich and important collection, representative of the scope of American architectural history and an essential part of the Smithsonian.*

Heather Ewing and  
Amy Ballard, *A Guide to  
Smithsonian Architecture*



## HISTORIC EVOLUTION OF THE AHHP OFFICE

*The office was established in 1969 by Secretary S. Dillon Ripley as the Office of the Curator, Smithsonian Castle. Staff responsibilities included the furnishing and care of the Smithsonian Castle and select spaces in the Arts and Industries Building (A&I). In 1986 the office was reorganized as the Office of Architectural History and Historic Preservation (AHHP) as a direct report to the Director, Office of Facilities Management. In 2001, the office was incorporated into the Office of Planning and Project Management and in 2014 became part of the Office of Planning, Design and Construction, merging all specialties of the staff from pre-planning through construction.*

*The preservation standards used to protect our resources ensure that significant buildings of all ages retain their integrity, authenticity, and special features that contribute to their unique character.*

Sharon C. Park

*Today, the scope of AHHP includes:*

- Consultation with historic preservation offices in Washington, D.C., and elsewhere*
- Public consultation on major projects*
- Compliance with Section 106 of National Historic Preservation Act*
- Technical assistance and subject matter expertise to OFEO and Smithsonian staff*
- Writing and documenting changes to buildings undergoing renovation*
- National and international liaisons with education and preservation organizations*

*In addition, AHHP serves as curator of over 3,000 historic objects in the Castle Collection that furnish the offices and public spaces of the Smithsonian Castle. The office is in the process of expanding its Heritage Materials Inventory of artifacts and overstock to meet long-term preservation needs.*









## *Mission, Vision, Values*

*MISSION: Preserve and enrich the Smithsonian’s historic resources through interdisciplinary stewardship, collaborative interpretation, and the use of both traditional and innovative techniques.*

The mission of AHHP supports the Office of Facilities Engineering and Operations’ (OFEO) mission of providing “Sparkling Facilities: Impassioned Stewardship in Action.” The emphasis of the strategic plan is stewardship of the institution’s built heritage because these resources represent the largest collection, or building assets, of the Smithsonian. In addition the office is responsible for the important Castle Collection that furnishes our landmark headquarters. Our stewardship and resource management impact not only significant listed historic buildings and sites, but also the more modern buildings that will be landmarks of the future. The efforts made today to maintain these resources support past capital investments while ensuring that facilities remain in good condition to house the collections, offices, and museum/research functions of the future.

*VISION: Respecting the past, present, and future integrity of our buildings and grounds as exceptional vessels that shape and inspire the Smithsonian experience.*

The vision of AHHP is to expand the collaboration among stakeholders to ensure that the Smithsonian’s physical resources remain in use for the future with appropriate modifications as necessary. By understanding the value of retaining historic resources, this generation of architects, engineers, museum directors, and administrators makes certain that the stability of the institution is evident in the care given to protecting and preserving its facilities. The stewardship of these resources is a compelling and visible way to build confidence in the future of an institution that values its past heritage.

*The facilities and resources at the Smithsonian are tremendous ... yet with the phenomenal growth of the Smithsonian have come almost awe-inspiring opportunities and challenges.*

S. Dillon Ripley  
Secretary (1964–1984)









*VALUES: Ensuring authenticity, adaptability, compatibility, and sustainability in all our decisions.*

The value of restoring buildings and protecting collections is derived not just from preservation for its own sake, but also from the amortization of the investment in the physical resource through protection of original building materials. The ability to be adaptable to new needs and to maintain the authenticity of the resources with compatible modifications is the core of stewardship. With today's emphasis on "green" practices, the preservation of the built heritage is a sustainability goal consistent with preservation objectives and values.



## Strategic Goals

As part of a five year plan (2015–2019), AHHP has developed the following goals and related objectives and will address them as staffing and funding permit:

*To modernize this style was found necessary on account of the different building material, and to do justice to the purposes of the building with its modern demands of perfect safety and elegance of construction, of greatest possible available floor space, of easy communications, efficient drainage, a well calculated and pleasing admission of light, free circulation of air, and all other hygienic dicta.*

Adolf Cluss, architect of the Arts & Industries Building, *Report to the National Building Committee*, 1880

1. *Integrate preservation as a core stewardship value in Smithsonian planning, design, and construction projects.*
2. *Enhance the visibility of and build support for heritage preservation of current and future landmarks.*
3. *Support and expand the Castle Collection and Heritage Materials Inventory.*
4. *Take a leadership role in preservation education and training.*
5. *Strengthen outreach to a broader community to promote Smithsonian preservation achievements.*

GOAL 1: INTEGRATE PRESERVATION AS A CORE STEWARDSHIP VALUE IN SMITHSONIAN PLANNING, DESIGN, AND CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS.

*Objective: Strengthen management and staff understanding of Preservation as both cultural and sustainable added value to projects.*

Build awareness and support among clients for the importance of historic preservation by providing training, consultation, and best practices materials.

Establish effective two-way communications with stakeholders for early project review to incorporate achievable and appropriate modifications.

Contribute to review panels to guide design and preservation decision.







*Objective: Ensure clarity and standardized means of communication for all stakeholders on the legal and regulatory requirements for projects to preserve historic and iconic buildings for the future.*

Define parameters and comply with regulatory enforcement to communicate to the public that the Smithsonian is a steward of its significant buildings.

Develop checklists and guidelines easily accessible to all units for coordinating approaches to building alterations as part of the coordinated SD 410 Facilities Construction and Improvement Projects process to achieve alignment on all projects early in the process.

*Objective: Provide guidance on the highest level of care using best practices for all treatments that affect the Smithsonian's built heritage.*

Promote SI's Historic Preservation Policy (SD 418) and develop guidelines on how to meet the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*—the core document of the Smithsonian's preservation policy.

Develop a balanced approach to preservation and modernization that sets priorities for retention of historic fabric while allowing changes consistent with SI's preservation policy.

Conduct Best Practices/Lessons Learned exercises for all projects affecting historic buildings.

Work pan-institutionally with other Smithsonian units, such as the Museum Conservation Institute (MCI), to implement and support conservation efforts.



Conservator repairing  
Castle Collection table



GOAL 2: ENHANCE THE VISIBILITY OF AND BUILD SUPPORT FOR HERITAGE PRESERVATION OF CURRENT AND FUTURE LANDMARKS

*Objective: Develop additional documents supporting the listing of current and future landmarks.*

Increase the number of National Register of Historic Places nominations.

Develop an inventory of special objects and spaces needing high-level care for each of the significant buildings and sites of the Smithsonian.

*Objective: Develop specific preservation projects to preserve deteriorated elements of SI's properties outside of the five year capital plan.*

Evaluate needed repairs, such as the rose window in the Castle or the original door in the A&I, to be restored as independent projects.

*Objective: Showcase the successful restoration and revitalization projects of the Smithsonian.*

Highlight the achievements of AHHP projects through public events.

Promote the collaborative work of various SI units with award nominations.

Create an annual report and other marketing pieces to educate and highlight collections, buildings, and programs.

*Objective: Identify alternative sources of funding for preservation projects.*

Encourage philanthropic, development, and partnership opportunities to support preservation projects.

Apply for grant funding for special projects.

*Objective: Proactively work with the planning and design branches to find appropriate uses for underutilized SI historic resources.*

Consider partnerships with outside groups to become tenants or periodic users of SI's older and historic buildings.

*The Secretary of the Interior's Standards are neither technical nor prescriptive, but they are intended to promote responsible preservation practices that help protect our Nation's irreplaceable cultural resources.*

National Park Service,  
*Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*









GOAL 3: SUPPORT AND EXPAND THE CASTLE COLLECTION  
AND HERITAGE MATERIALS INVENTORY

*Objective: Expand the public visibility of the Castle Collection.*

Utilize the Castle Collection more prominently in historic spaces.

Increase ways in which the public can appreciate the scope of the collection through featured displays and educational materials.

Provide orientation tours of the buildings and collections to expand the public's knowledge of architectural history and historic preservation.

*Objective: Increase the digitizing program for the Castle Collection.*

Promote the history and significance of the furnishings to the general public and educational institutions by facilitating access to the digitized materials.

*Objective: Promote the Castle Collection for conservation treatments and educational purposes.*

Feature active conservation work either in demonstrations or video clips.

Expand information about the Castle Collection on the web to make it readily accessible to students, scholars, professionals, and researchers.

Promote AHHP's internship program with a goal of filling at least one conservation or museum specialist position each year.

*Objective: Utilize the Heritage Materials Inventory both for educational purposes and restoration purposes for on-going building projects.*

Develop options for housing and storing construction overstock materials and salvaged building elements as part of the future master plans of the Suitland and Garber campuses.

Work with design and construction units to safeguard unique overstock materials that will be hard to obtain in the future.

Utilize artifacts and physical samples to guide and assist with preservation projects in the future.



Castle Collection  
conservation gilding



GOAL 4: TAKE A LEADERSHIP ROLE IN PRESERVATION EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

*Objective: Communicate preservation principles in design, engineering, technical preservation, and maintenance across all units of the Smithsonian as a motivation for a passionate workforce.*



Maintenance training for stone cleaning and materials care

Ensure that regular preservation maintenance and construction methods training takes place across all OFEO units annually and promote the value of preservation within the construction workforce.

Develop training and publish training materials and case studies to illustrate best practices in preservation.

*Objective: Collaborate with national and international experts on preservation treatments and apply this knowledge to Smithsonian projects.*

Share knowledge with preservation and technical communities to ensure that the Smithsonian is seen as committed to preservation.

Work with federal agencies as well as national and international professional organizations to develop best practices and risk analysis to ensure safe historic buildings, such as assessing options to mitigate hazardous materials.

Publish reports of preservation successes utilizing modern as well as traditional methods of conservation.

Utilize digital resources and the web to distribute best practices information to engage in educational outreach.

*Objective: Support training for students, tradesmen, Smithsonian staff, and museum administrators on diverse preservation topics including accessibility, sustainability, craftsmanship, health, safety, life-cycle, and materials durability.*

Engage students and others in the field with hands-on experience on SI projects as a training platform for future staff.

Support interns for both conservation work and for on-going preservation and architectural history projects.

Network with training providers and professional organizations to enhance preservation training within the Smithsonian.





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GOAL 5: STRENGTHEN OUTREACH TO A BROADER COMMUNITY TO PROMOTE SMITHSONIAN PRESERVATION ACHIEVEMENTS.

*Objective: Engage a broader audience in the understanding of historic preservation through print, social, and digital media.*

Feature video and social media clips and information on the web about the Smithsonian’s care of its historic and contemporary significant properties.

Expand the number of architectural history annotations for each SI property on AHHP’s Smithsonian Preservation web and social media sites.

Identify the significance of the more modern Smithsonian buildings and how and why they contribute to the landmarks of the future.

*Objective: Promote and celebrate Smithsonian’s built heritage.*

Utilize existing buildings, such as those at the National Zoo, to feature information for visitors regarding the significance of the Smithsonian’s “largest” collection.

Encourage organizations to recognize quality preservation, craftsmanship, and research by applying for their awards. Publicize award-winning projects.



AHHP print/web publication development and distribution



Opposite: Kogod Courtyard, Donald W. Reynolds Center of American Art and Portraiture

Left: Reptile House, National Zoo



## *The Next Five Years*

*We want people to appreciate the architecture. The building really is our own biggest exhibit.*

Lloyd Herman,  
first Director of the  
Renwick Gallery (1971–1986)

Opposite: Renwick Gallery

Below: The new National Museum of African American History and Culture will be completed within the timeframe of this strategic plan. It will be celebrated and cared for as a future landmark in its setting adjacent to the National Museum of American History and the Washington Monument.

The strategic plan for Architectural History and Historic Preservation sets out some challenges that can be met through current efforts; others will require additional staff and funding support. The expansion of the Heritage Materials Inventory will need to be housed in a support facility that should be integrated into SI's real estate and master planning programs. The advancement of the South Mall Master Plan will require additional analysis of the more modern facilities in that zone. The upcoming Castle renovation will be a high priority for early review as plans develop. AHHP will continue to provide input to the Preservation Environment initiative and the National Collections Program's Master Plan efforts. The forthcoming NASM envelope repairs provide an opportunity for collaboration on a complex project and an innovative look at finding an appropriate solution to the exterior re-cladding project. The completion of the new National Museum of African American History and Culture will give SI a new resource for which to develop preservation maintenance plans to ensure the appropriate level of care for a future landmark. The next five years will furnish opportunities to identify ways to effectively reinforce the preservation ethic at the Smithsonian, for buildings both old and new, as well as to strengthen the visibility and educational benefits of the Castle Collection and the Heritage Materials Inventory.







DEDICATED TO

american craft



## AWARDS

Glass Magazine Award for Innovation and Creativity with Glass, National Postal Museum, 2014

Association of General Contractors Washington Construction Award for Renovation of the Arts & Industries Building, 2013

Victorian Society Award for Excellent Renovation of the Old Patent Office Building, 2008

American Institute of Architects Award for Excellence in Historic Resources, Donald W. Reynolds Center for American Art and Portraiture, 2007

Potomac Valley AIA Merit Award for Hall of Mammals, National Museum of Natural History, 2006

Victorian Society's Henry Russell Hitchcock Book Award for *Adolf Cluss, Architect from Germany to America*, 2006

D.C. Mayor's Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation for the Adolf Cluss Exhibit Project, 2006

American Institute of Architects Award for Excellence, National Museum of Natural History, 2004

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## PHOTOGRAPHY

All photographs by members of the Smithsonian staff or from the Smithsonian Institution Archives with additional images from:

Grunley Construction: Arts & Industries Building (front cover and page 15)

Martin Stupich: Peacock Room, Freer Gallery of Art (page 5); Arts & Industries Building (page 6)

Timothy Hursley: Kogod Courtyard, Donald W. Reynolds Center of American Art and Portraiture (page 24)

Freelon, Adjaye, Bond and SmithGroup: National Museum of African American History and Culture rendering (page 26)

Paul Westerberg: Smithsonian Castle Great Hall floor mosaic (back cover)

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For more information about the Smithsonian's Office of Architectural History and Historic Preservation, visit our website and Facebook.

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INSTITUTION



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