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Sustaining Cultural Heritage at UNH

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Sustaining Cultural Heritage at UNH

Building a new road? A cell phone tower? A pipeline? A new government building? Building anything with federal funds or on federal property requires that one must conduct a review of the impact of the project on tangible cultural resources, which includes archaeological sites and historic buildings, under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA). But building a new student center, a new dorm, or a new business school on your land-grant university campus? More often than not, no cultural resource review is required.ⁱ What responsibility do land-grant universities have to the tangible cultural heritage on their land when section 106 is not mandated? As a land-grant institution and one that takes sustainability seriously, what should UNH's role be in managing its cultural heritage?

Every community has a distinctive cultural heritage, a legacy of physical remains that are inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generations.ⁱⁱ The distinctive cultural heritage of a community is one of its most significant assets, providing, among other things, grounding and authenticity, but cultural heritage is highly vulnerable to change.ⁱⁱⁱ Without formal policies



Historic ceramics dating to the 1800s recovered in excavations of the original Train Depot under the Great Lawn

in place, cultural resources are easily damaged and/or destroyed by modern activities.^{iv}

While many universities increasingly focus on promoting sustainability and becoming more sustainable themselves, many do

Sustainability Briefings are a collection of occasional essays, thought pieces, case studies and research briefings through which University of New Hampshire (UNH) faculty, staff and students can connect with larger audiences on the complex issues of sustainability. The collection is sponsored by the Sustainability Institute at UNH, a convener, cultivator and champion of sustainability on campus, in the state and region, and around the world. Learn more at www.sustainableunh.unh.edu.



The Barracks in 1918 (Photo from the Moran Collection, UNH Special Collections)

not have formal policies and procedures in place to protect their tangible cultural resources.^v

The growth of sustainable development on campuses has often overlooked cultural resources, yet these resources are always non-renewable and sometimes completely irreplaceable.

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966

This act was established to protect historical and archaeological sites across the US as these were becoming ever more impacted in the context of post-WWII expansion and development. Section 106 of NHPA requires that Federal agencies take into account the effect their projects have on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. However, Section 106 review is not always mandated at land-grant universities.

I first came to these issues while developing and teaching my course ANTH 444 *The Lost Campus: The Archaeology of UNH*.^{vi} During this course, I asked students, working with Milne Special Collections and Archives at the Library, to identify places on campus that may hold historic sites.

Thompson Hall is already listed on the National Register of Historic Properties and the Pandora building at the UNH Manchester Campus^{vii} is in a Historic District but through this process, I have been struck by the truly significant cultural resources on our campus that are less obvious and striking constructions. For instance, we have underfoot remarkable archaeological sites like the Barracks (next to the MUB) built during WWI when UNH was turned into an Student Army Training Camp as well as one of the oldest Train Depots on the Boston-Maine Railroad (now located under the Great Lawn). While Section 106 review comes into play when places like Thompson Hall may be impacted, I have been struck by the lack of formal procedures and policies to identify, protect and manage the other abundant resources on campus that are not covered by Section 106 review.

As a Faculty Fellow in Culture and Sustainability, I have been advocating the development of a UNH-wide Heritage Management Plan that establishes policies and protocols for protecting all of UNH's tangible cultural heritage. Working with the Culture and Sustainability Task Force, we have written a



Looking north along the train tracks towards the original Train Depot (Morrill Hall is behind the train tracks, photo ca. 1893 from UNH Special Collections)

draft version of such a plan. In Fall 2014, we embarked on a two-year pilot program that will allow us to assess what best practices are, what work is feasible within the extant structures of UNH, what additional supports and costs may be, and the like.

In working on this topic, it became clear we need a dual process for assessing, managing, and making decisions about historic buildings and archaeological sites (together forming the tangible heritage sites on UNH property). Developing a plan for managing archaeological sites is likely to be a more straightforward process than for historic buildings because archaeological sites have their value in situ, that is, in their original place, and when they are disturbed (not by professional archaeologists) they lose their value, whereas historic buildings often need renovations to maintain their value. Therefore, our pilot program focuses on archaeological site management. During

this two year pilot program, the Anthropology Department and Facilities and Campus Planning at UNH will be in active communication to discuss land-disturbing activities and to work together to decide potential impacts and best practices for handling possible disturbances of archaeological sites. As part of the pilot program, we are creating and maintaining an inventory of all historic and archaeological site locations (and potential locations) on campus. This inventory is contained in a spatially referenced Geodatabase (in ArcGIS). One aim is for this database to become applied in Dig Safe® such that an alert is sent when a project will impact an area with high archaeological sensitivity.

Over the course of the next two years, we hope to develop the relationships and knowledge necessary to make a well-developed archaeological management plan that will be useful for UNH over the long

term. During this process, I aim to explore how the ethos of UNH as a land, space, and sea grant university -- rooted in public outreach, with a strong connection to land, and a commitment to sustainability -- translates into care of cultural heritage resources. In exploring this translation of ideas into on-the-ground procedures, it is my hope our work will inspire and provide best practice examples for other campuses that do not yet have heritage management policies. Students, the heart of UNH, have been involved in this effort to consider in more detail UNH's cultural heritage resources from the start -- through ANTH 444, as mentioned above. Their findings and their questions are what inspired me to look more closely at this matter and I will continue to include students as key participants in this cultural heritage management process.



ANTH 444 students excavating the original Train Depot site (Fall 2014)

Endnotes

i. Note, a few states do have strict policies that mandate cultural resource review of non-federal projects, most notably California's CEQA

ii. Follows the UNESCO definition of cultural heritage

iii. See Araoz, G. (2013) Conservation Philosophy and its Development: Changing Understandings of Authenticity and Significance. *Heritage & Society* 6: 144 - 154; Barthel-Bouchier, D. (2013) Cultural Heritage and the Challenge of Sustainability. Left Coast Press, Walnut Creek, CA; Colwell-Chanthaphonh, C. (2009) The Archaeologist as World Citizen. In *Cosmopolitan Archaeologies*, edited by L. Meskell, pp. 14- - 165. Duke University Press, Durham, NC; Kelleher, M. (2004) Images of the Past: Historical Authenticity and Inauthenticity from Disney to Times Square. *CRM Journal*

1: 6-19; Silverman, H. (2002) Ancient Times: The Present and Presented Past in Contemporary Peru *American Anthropologist* 104: 881-902; Smith, L. (2006) *Uses of Heritage*. Routledge, London.; Vecco, M. (2010) A Definition of Cultural Heritage: From the Tangible to the Intangible. *Journal of Cultural Heritage* 11: 321 - 324.

iv. See Brodie, N. (2006) Introduction. In *Archaeology, Cultural Heritage and the Antiquities Trade*, edited by N. Brodie, M. Kersel, C. Luke, and K. Tubb, pp. 1 -24. University Press of Florida, Gainesville; Heras, V., A. Wijffels, F. Cardoso, A. Vandesande, M. Santana, J. Van Orshoven, T. Steenberghen, and K. van Balen (2013) A value-based monitoring system to support heritage conservation planning. *Journal of Cultural Heritage Management and Sustainable Development* 3: 130 -147; Kankpeyeng, B., T.

Insoll, and R. MacLean (2009) The Tension between Communities, Development, and Archaeological Heritage Preservation. *Heritage & Society* 2: 177-198; Meskell, L. (2002) Negative Heritage and Past Mastering in Archaeology. *Anthropological Quarterly* 75: 557-574; Shepherd, N. (2007) What does it mean 'To Give the Past Back to the People'? *Archaeology and Ethics in the Postcolony*. In *Archaeology and Capitalism, From Ethics to Politics*, edited by Y. Hamalakis and P. Duke, pp. 99 - 114. Left Coast Press, Walnut Creek, CA; Van Krieken-Pieters, J. (2006) Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage: An Exceptional Case?. In *Archaeology, Cultural Heritage and the Antiquities Trade*, edited by N. Brodie, M. Kersel, C. Luke, and K. Tubb, pp. 227 -235. University Press of Florida, Gainesville.

v. See Michigan State University's Campus Archaeology Program: <http://campusarch.msu.edu/>

vi. Follow on Twitter: @Dig_UNH and also see <http://www.unh.edu/news/releases/2013/apr/lw10train.cfm> and http://www.unh.edu/news/cj_nr/2012/apr/lw26campus.cfm for more information about the course

vii. The Pandora building, where UNH is expanding and leasing space, is not only historic, it's probably the "greenest" industrial rehab in the region, according to Historic Preservation expert, Associate Professor at UNH Manchester, Dr. Robert Macieski. It has a 75 kilowatt solar energy system on its roof. Dean Kamen restored the building to promote energy efficiency. The solar panels will create enough electricity to power 25 percent of the energy needs of the 130,000 square foot building, which is designated a Silver Level LEED certified building. Even the lights on the roof, which will illuminate the mill's copper-topped tower, are 40 watt LEDs that emit the equivalent of 250-300 watts. Inside the efficiently-insulated building are low-flow, hands free toilets and sinks, motion-activated lighting and even a 6,000 gallon rain water collection system.

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