

## ADAPTIVE REUSE IN DECAYING CITIES: INTERIOR DESIGN AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION WORKING TOGETHER

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### **Adaptive Reuse of Historic Structures**

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Adaptive reuse is a creative way to revitalize existing infrastructure while maintaining important aspects of our cultural architectural heritage and promoting sustainability. The option to turn away from older structure's that have "no purpose" anymore and build new is a large problem in cities such as Detroit. Historic preservationists are trained to observe a structure's potential before walking away. Meanwhile interior designers obtain the skills to rejuvenate such buildings. Case studies have displayed the amazing outcome of these two professions teaming up to reuse historic structures for modern purposes with logical selection of building use, creative space planning, and guidance from historic preservation standards. Huge success has been documented already in Baltimore, Pittsburgh, and Traverse City. By studying their decisions, surveying the population, and creating a master plan, Detroit can also experience success and the "turn around" it has been waiting for.

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There appears to be a significant disconnect between historic preservation and interior design in today's world. The truth is the two could not be more interrelated, especially when considering the increasing problem of overbuilt city infrastructure and the existence of a larger percentage of old construction than new construction. Structures are becoming increasingly "historic" and create a special connection to our culture and heritage. Due to this connection, their preservation is a main concern. Interior design would benefit by taking cues from historic preservation's approach with existing historic structures as a means to maximize the potential for beauty, longevity, and usability in that environment. Often adaptive reuse is most successful when interior designers utilize elements that celebrate the time period or historic stylistic elements already present in the space. Time honored practices related to the treatment of interior are both a successful way to reinvigorate an existing space as well as promote the preservation of our cultural and historical heritage.

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### **Incorporating Historic Preservation into an Interior Design Program**

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Due to the recent decline of the economic state in the United States, more credibility needs to be established in regard to the professions that are deemed "luxury career paths". This essay focuses on the interior design field; a creative and very difficult field to enter that is often

requested by commercial and wealthy residential clients. Career paths such as these have become secondary during these hard times [where positions are nearly impossible to find], trained individuals in, and entering the field often give up on their design dreams and settle for a less desired career path. This literature is intended to bring more credibility and awareness to the interior design field to show outsiders how important this field is and the potential it holds. Most importantly, the intention of this writing is for current designers who are not working in the field, to not give up hope for their design careers and think of ways to reinvent themselves [like choosing a specialty] to make themselves a diverse and sought after job candidate. Chosen as an example of a specialty, historic restorations is one of the ways citizens experience our nation's history first hand.