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THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEEDS OF THE DESIGN PROFESSION COLLABORATIONS

Architects, landscape architects, architectural historians and other members of the design and construction industry who specialize and engage in historic preservation or restoration all have, at one time or another, felt a need for the assistance of the professional archaeologist. This need is not easily met.

Client reluctance, agency restraints, protracted lead time and prior commitments can attenuate or halt the investigatory phase of restoration/preservation design. Problems such as site and structure chronology, historic construction sequences and the identification of materials (more intimately, the texture and colors of the structure's fabric and infrastructure) or the species, variety and placement of former plant material require investigation by the archaeologist. Further, his evidence and interpretation, ideally, should be used as substantiation and reinforcement to the designer's initial research, conjecture and intuition.

Presently, most design professionals do not have the informational and laboratory resources available which are required to carry out extensive scientific examinations of sites and features, nor do they possess reliable standards to make comparisons in the examination of ecofacts, building material such as; ceramics, metal, wood or lithics as well as various feature attributes.

The designers approach is often to investigate as a means to an end; that being to collect evidence for his or her current assignment and not to be necessarily receptive to evidence of earlier archaeological features or artifacts, for example pre-historic deposits, which may present themselves during the conduct of the survey.

As we pointed out earlier, most practitioners have been educated to a point where they do not consciously carry out archaeological investigations other than through simple, non-destructive means. However, occasionally construction activities in the area (hitherto held as non-sensitive archaeological) will reveal features or artifacts the recording and interpretation of which are clearly beyond the scientific capabilities of the designer. Naturally, one does not expect that, when summoned, the archaeologist will appear at the site like a fireman but, we feel that there should be a place a network which would have an established procedure for such an occasion and other interdisciplinary cooperative needs.

Historic preservation/restoration design professionals do not want to usurp the prerogative of the professional archaeologist. Designers, by tradition, work under very stringent deadlines, even in restoration work. Most designers do not feel that they can afford the indulgence (and it is considered by most to be an interesting and pleasurable experience) of having an archaeological investigation mounted as a precursor to the design process.

This practitioner feels that if the disciplines concerned were mutually educated to be alert to the concerns of their counterparts, a great deal could be accrued by both sides.

This consultant would like to recommend that a series of articulations take place between design professionals who are currently engaged in preservation/restoration (or who anticipate involvement in such activity) and agency or private consulting archaeologists for the purpose of constructing guidelines for an informational network whose function would be the advance release of data relative to historic site activity.

Several design organizations exist which could possibly provide participants and be hosts for such articulations on a rotational basis: The Society of Architectural Historians, American Society of Landscape Architects Committee for the preservation of the historic Landscape, American Institute of Architects Committee on historic preservation, and Indiana Historical Society Committee for the preservation of Architectural records.

We, at the Westerly Group, Inc. would be pleased to be identified with such a program and further, would be willing to act as facilitators, where we can, to bring such articulations about.
