Getting to the Heart of Preservation
The Place of Grassroots Efforts in the Contemporary Preservation Movement

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Introduction
Too often contemporary preservation work has been accomplished by playing almost exclusively to economic interests. History, the stories of why places matter, has been secondary to this process. As business investors and governments have tended to varying degrees toward austerity in spending, preservationists have necessarily justified projects by emphasizing their economic potential. Although preservationists did this with the best of intentions, hoping to save more historic places, this course of action has had a variety of unintended consequences. At its worst, leaning purely on the economic value of preservation can lead to extreme displacement. In contrast, the work of preservation can balance economic potential with the interests of resident communities and honor history as a source of meaning. Under these ideal circumstances, preservation can function to promote more just, equitable, and inclusive distribution of benefits—both economic and intangible. This article analyzes two case studies to explore the conditions and circumstances under which preservation might serve social justice.1

The first of the case studies focuses on the fight to save Japantown’s Bush Street Temple in San Francisco, California. The Bush Street Temple began as a synagogue and ultimately served as a Buddhist temple and, temporarily, an African American church during Japanese American internment in the Second World War. Ultimately, it returned to service as a Buddhist temple that briefly shared space with a western-facing Zen Center. Now the building provides
income-restricted housing as an assisted living facility. When the site became a focal point for preservationists in the early 2000s, the project leaders’ main goals were to encourage people to return to living in the community and to preserve the space; although economics was not a primary consideration, the project remains economically successful.

The second study highlights efforts by African American alumni and other supporters to preserve Lincoln Heights Rosenwald School in North Wilkesboro, North Carolina. Their effort to protect the site and promote its story was tireless in its effort to win support and has continued for twenty years. While the association with Rosenwald and his eponymous fund helps attract attention to the project, group leaders are more interested in preserving the community that formed around the school. They want their experiences remembered and feel preserving the school is an important element of preserving their memories. They aren’t looking for an adaptive reuse that provides a financial return on investment; they want to preserve their school, which is now a community center.

Neither of these groups labels themselves preservation activists, though they are clearly engaging in work that falls into that category. Rather, these examples emphasize the significance of community-based, or grassroots, efforts for shaping a social justice orientation in the contemporary preservation movement.

Traditionally marginalized communities, including African Americans as well as immigrants and first-generation Americans, have had to work outside of the formal preservation system to control their stories. Some have reluctantly partnered with preservation organizations or worked within government structures when their local efforts were in danger of failing. By describing two counternarrative preservation projects and exploring their ultimate financial benefits, this article makes the case for balancing the economic interests with community efforts to protect history and create meaningful collective space.

One note on terminology: I argue that the term grassroots should be reserved for preservationists who consciously work to preserve the history of their own communities, even those who choose to partner with government or entrepreneurial entities. Because so much preservation work is locally based, it can be tempting to call any locally driven work “grassroots preservation.” In addition, there’s a sense in which all historic preservationists might be considered activists in their work to save structures and districts from
destruction, whether they are lobbying local government, writing editorials, making use of social media to draw attention to their cause, or researching and writing formal reports to help preserve places. However, not all local groups are accurately described as working from and for the grassroots. Many are working on behalf of government; others are business owners who will personally benefit from the gentrification that can follow from preservation. Activists of this sort are working from a middle-class perspective, trying to make their neighborhoods more beautiful.³ It is therefore important to reserve the term grassroots for less-privileged groups who are working not to make a profit or appeal to investors but to preserve a sense of coherent and connected community in the face of demographic change. For the purposes of this piece, then, the term grassroots applies to people who lack authority, power, or connections that may allow them to shape public discourse and who are working to preserve their own community’s spaces and stories.

**Economic Considerations: A Necessary Evil**

Most current preservation efforts rely on convincing business owners and lawmakers that preservation makes money. Groups like the National Trust for Historic Preservation’s Green Lab and consulting firms like Donovan Rypkema’s PlaceEconomics connect the preservation and reuse of historic buildings to both environmental sustainability and economic development.⁴ There is no doubt that these are valid and necessary arguments. The movement toward green construction has created unexpected opposition to preservation. Older buildings can contain environmental hazards including lead paint or asbestos. Preservationists have worked to articulate the environmental benefits of rehabilitation. Preservation recognizes the embodied energy in historic buildings—the energy used to make the bricks, cut the timber, work the metal, and get all the building fabric to the site has already been expended—and argues that reusing historic structures can be one of the most “green” building efforts around.⁵

Although adaptive reuse of historic structures is essentially a form of recycling, it is often an economic argument that focuses only on selling certain benefits of preservation to community leaders. The underpinnings of the economic argument for adaptive reuse are reflected in the audience Rypkema and others target for their publications that demonstrate to local governments the ways that preservation quite literally pays.⁶ For example, PlaceEconomics worked with the Historic Savannah Foundation to publish Beyond Tourism:
Historic Preservation in the Economy and Life in Savannah and Chatham County in 2015. This important study compiled data to record the economic impact of historic preservation for those living and working in Savannah, not just for tourists or those directly in the tourism industry. Evaluating historic districts, construction, property values, density, livability measures, and jobs, the report argues that not only is preservation good business for tourism; it is good business for Savannah’s daily economy and quality of life. Because preservation organizations require governmental support, they tend to focus on these economic benefits.

Crucially, Rypkema and his devotees are not wrong. Preservationists can be as high-minded as they like, but without proving to those that hold the purse strings (and set the zoning laws) the economic gains that result from taking the time to repurpose and rehabilitate older buildings, much less preservation would occur. The efforts that work to convince folks of both the ecological and economic benefits of preservation are immensely important. In fact, these efforts can and should be increased, as too many town planners and entrepreneurs remain unaware of these benefits. In The Past and Future City: How Historic Preservation Is Reviving America’s Communities, Stephanie Meeks and Kevin C. Murphy drive these benefits home and combine them with the argument that, essentially, people love old places. Nor are they the first to make that argument. Jane Jacobs made it in the 1960s, and Stewart Brand made it again in the 1990s. One thing that all preservationists can agree on is that people must continually argue its merits.

However, Americans’ collective experience of our hometowns tells us that markets change and few businesses last forever. Many of today’s preservationists spend much of their time and resources convincing one investor to rehabilitate one property for one new purpose. We rejoice when a place like Pullman, the community planned to house those who built the company’s sleeping cars, becomes a National Monument and is saved, and we mourn when a place like Bertrand Goldberg’s brutalist Prentice Women’s Hospital and Maternity Center is lost. But not every historic place can become a national monument or historic house museum, and many institutions have technological needs that outstrip some older buildings. Many historic buildings, then, are adapted and reused as new businesses. But how long does that last? What happens in five, ten, or twenty years when that business is no longer sustainable? Neighborhoods shift and change as people move around, following careers and affordable housing. The folks who fought for that old
mill (so many places have these old mills!) and remembered it with fondness will not always be around. A strictly economic, or even ecological, argument in favor of saving a historic place remains a short-term solution. How will the new neighbors learn what makes these places special? Some will fall for the beauty of architectural lines, and after all, aesthetics is what we are told drove early American historic preservationists. Early and mid-twentieth-century preservationists fought for laws that would recognize the United States’ built legacy precisely because they realized that beauty is not enough to persuade folks that newer is not always better when it comes to buildings and that the natural resources of the US were not as unlimited as it often seemed.10

The people who worked in Charleston to create the first legal historic district in the 1930s and those who fought for the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 did not include historic by accident. Contemporary preservationists often, of seeming necessity, leave the historic out of the narratives they use to convince business leaders to preserve special places. The assumption—and maybe it is correct—is that the developers do not need to hear the story of a place; they only require information that affects their bottom line. The focus on the financial is inherently conservative, whereas the urge toward historic preservation in the United States has often been about something much more radical—the desire to connect the personal to the political.

**Where Is the Story?**

Historic preservation has not always emphasized the bottom line. The historic preservation field’s origin story in the United States often begins with the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association (MVLA) and its sister organizations. These groups emphasized the emotional connection people felt to places associated with (White) men who played a significant role in the nation’s history.11 Founders of various female-led preservation groups from the mid- to late nineteenth century and the early twentieth century occupied an uneasy cultural space. They were simultaneously elite because they occupied positions of cultural authority based on the wealth and stature of their husbands or fathers and disenfranchised because, as White upper-class women, they were traditionally confined to private, domestic spaces. Their preservation efforts helped them expand their own sphere of influence, but their preservation agenda was not designed to create a more inclusive historic
landscape. Rather, it was designed to cement the social, cultural, and political influence of White, middle- and upper-class people. While all this is true, contemporary community leaders who want to protect places that are important to them are much more aligned with the motives of someone like Ann Pamela Cunningham—founder of the MVLA, who emphasized the emotional and moral value of historic places—than they are with preservationists who craft financial justifications for their work. While fiscal responsibility might justify preservation to a local government or to a property developer, marginalized communities have watched governments at all levels use fiscal conservatism as a tool to erode the resources available to the economically disadvantaged. Communities do not protect historic buildings because doing so will balance the budget; they protect historic buildings because they are places that matter to them. For them, preservation is about the story or stories of what happened there; it is about securing a place in the public memory. By reducing preservation to its quantitative value, we strip it of its meaning and power.

**Case Study 1: Bush Street Temple**

The Bush Street Temple served as a cornerstone of San Francisco’s Japantown for decades. While even a quick review of the structure’s history reveals a story of displacement and injustice, community members sought to frame it as a representation of community-making and survival. Built as a synagogue in 1895, the temple’s use shifted as neighborhood demographics changed. Teruro Kasuga purchased it in 1934, transforming it for Zen Buddhist observances. It became known as the Soto Mission. During World War II, an African American congregation rented the building from its Japanese owners during their internment. In this case, the owners were able to retain the title to the building and were able to return to it after internment ended. Membership in the Buddhist Soto Mission (Sokoji) grew to 250 in the postwar years. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, residents of San Francisco’s Western Addition (the part of the city that includes Japantown and the adjacent predominantly African American Fillmore neighborhood) experienced massive dislocation and destruction of their neighborhoods as a result of federal urban renewal programs.

For a few years in the 1960s, Soto Mission shared the Bush Street Temple space with the Zen Center, which trained Zen priests working with non-Japanese people. Through the Zen Center, Sunryu Suzuki brought Zen Buddhism to a diverse group of people, and its popularity spread throughout the United States from San Francisco and the Bush Street Temple. By the 1970s, members of the Sokoji Soto Mission bristled at the use of their space
by non-Japanese and also longed for a more architecturally traditional worship space, something Bush Street could never provide. They built a new space nearby, on Post Street.

A local redevelopment agency purchased the building in 1973 and leased the building to the San Francisco Go Club. Although the go club hosted
Japanese cultural games and showed samurai movies in the space, the Bush Street Temple remained largely empty for twenty-five years. Beginning in the 1980s, Felix Warburg, a prominent Jewish businessman, began campaigning to save the Bush Street Temple. By this time, Japantown had fewer Japanese residents. As often happens, the Japanese community had moved out to the suburbs in search of lower rents and more space. However, many people still returned to the area at least once a week for shopping, restaurants, and beauty parlor appointments. An interfaith organization, the Japanese American Religious Foundation (JARF), worked to keep former residents of Japantown connected and aware of their common interests. While Warburg was trying to raise funds to purchase Bush Street Temple in the late 1980s and early to mid-1990s, many Japantown advocates, including those connected to JARF, saw the building as essential to their plans for the revitalization of the neighborhood.

Members of JARF recognized the significance of the Bush Street Temple, in all its incarnations, for Japantown, and they wanted to ensure it could continue to serve the community. After many public meetings, they decided that the building should be adapted for use as income-restricted apartments for retirees. The group saw this as a way to encourage the return of former Japantown residents, a shift that could help reclaim the neighborhood’s residential history. Significantly, neighbors of non-Japanese descent supported this idea. Warburg became a vocal supporter of the project once the rehabilitation plan included preservation of the Jewish sanctuary. The redevelopment agency opened the property to bids in 1996, and they selected JARF’s plan. Major renovations were required due to the dilapidated state of the building, but Kokoro Assisted Living opened in 2003.

From the planning stages onward, those involved with the Kokoro project wanted to honor the history of the place and incorporate it into the new use. The members of the board and other supporters, including Warburg, saw history as an essential part of what made the Bush Street Temple a keystone in the community. Those involved wanted to ensure the story remained; they had already seen changes in the demographics of the neighborhood and knew this would continue, but they wanted to include this part of Japantown’s legacy. They wanted to work to reverse some of the economic displacement in the neighborhood, and also to serve people who were economically precarious.

Preserving the sanctuary space ensures that everyone who comes inside the building can see its former religious purpose. It is important to be clear
that the space has been restored most closely to its period of use as a synagogue, with little trace of its uses either as an African American Christian church or as Soto Mission. The use of the space during WWII years by Christians has proved nearly impossible to track, and more should be done in this direction. However, the folks at Kokoro talk often about the building’s uses
by the Japantown community, despite the fact that this is not reflected in the architecture. It remains obvious to Westerners upon entering that the room was a religious space of some variety. Today, the space is used for a variety of events: mealtimes, activities, and musical performances, as well as religious services. In keeping with the multireligious history of the Bush Street Temple and the wider neighborhood, services rotate among various religions and denominations, including all those that have historically practiced in the space. There are also reproductions of several images from the Magnes Collection of Jewish Art and Life at the Bancroft Library in the lobby and entry hallway, which tell part of the story of the building’s original use.

Kokoro administrators provide limited interpretation of the historic temple. There is information about the history of the Bush Street Temple both on the website and in the brochure for Kokoro. By necessity, the public has limited access to the former sanctuary. Because public funds were accessed for completion of this project, general public access is required. The facility’s bylaws state that anyone can access the space, provided they call ahead, but few individuals actually do so unless they are visiting a resident. There are frequent, specific opportunities for community members to access the space. At the grand opening ceremony, eight ministers, including Felix Warburg, provided the traditional blessing of their faiths to the space. Twelve churches, members of JARF, mainly located in the surrounding neighborhood, use the sanctuary space for events. The public funds also require that Kokoro provide its tenants with moderate-income pricing rather than market rental rates for the area.

In an interview, former JARF and Kokoro board member Steven Suzuki noted, “Culture is the fabric of neighborhoods.” The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, which had purchased the Bush Street Temple, and members of various local communities worked together for the adaptive reuse of the building. Japantown supporters and activists see the former temple building as literally holding down the corner of their neighborhood, and they wanted to continue using the space for worship and community events as much as possible. These same advocates acknowledge that many in the Japanese American community have little interest in saving a building for its own sake. Linda Jofuku, director of the Japantown Task Force, said in an interview that folks worked hard to reuse Bush Street Temple as Kokoro Assisted Living to help restore “the psyche of a culture.” Kokoro has become self-sustaining and can be termed an economic success, but the primary driver for the project
was preserving the history and restoring the residency of the community. These activists committed to saving the space not only for aesthetic or economic reasons; cultural significance was the driving factor.

**Case Study 2: Lincoln Heights Rosenwald School**

Meanwhile, on the other side of the country, in the small town of North Wilkesboro, North Carolina, a group of concerned citizens has been trying to save their former school, Lincoln Heights. During the Progressive Era, separate did not often mean equal in any sense of the word. Booker T. Washington (1856–1915) was well aware of this fact and convinced Julius Rosenwald (1862–1932) that he could do something to improve education for Black southerners. Eventually, Rosenwald funded over 5,300 school buildings, teacherages (residences for teachers), and workshops across the South.²⁷ During the 1920s, local people worked to replace the traditional but outdated one-room schools in Wilkes County, North Carolina, with larger schools, better reflective of Progressive Era attitudes toward education. By the late 1930s, all the one-room schools had been closed. While several consolidated schools were built for White students in the area, Lincoln Heights was the only school for Black children. The project was driven by local African Americans and funded by a combination of money from the Rosenwald fund, Wilkes County, and local families. During the planning stages, prospective students sold “bricks” for twenty-five cents each to raise the community’s portion.

Originally established as Wilkes County Training Center, the community changed the name to Lincoln Heights because they had designed it as a state-of-the-art school at which students could “reach the heights of Lincoln.”

Lincoln Heights opened in 1924 with six classrooms and an auditorium. Students came not only from Wilkes County but also from the surrounding counties of Alleghany, Ashe, Caldwell, and Surrey. It was similar to schools built for Whites in the area. The bathrooms were outdoors, students brought water in from a well, and there was no gymnasium. Rooms were heated using potbellied stoves. At the same time, while Lincoln Heights represented an improvement in local African American education, it still did not provide Black students with an education fully equal to that White students received. Students at Lincoln Heights used outdated textbooks, handed down from White schools. Several students had to commute long distances. Commuters came to North Wilkesboro for the week, rooming with local families, and only returned home on weekends. Particularly in later years, there were subjects
offered at the White Wilkes Central High School that were not available either at Lincoln Heights or in other, more rural, White schools.

By the 1950s, Lincoln Heights had several outbuildings, including a gymnasium, and it had been expanded twice. Elementary and high school students were bused in from five surrounding counties. In 1965, more than a decade after the Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board of Education* decision, the state of North Carolina sought to comply with desegregation by implementing a “Freedom of Choice” plan. Parents could continue to send their kids to segregated schools or they could choose to integrate their children into local White schools. Most parents in the region served by Lincoln Heights chose to send their children to more convenient and more modern schools that had previously served only White students. Lincoln Heights closed in 1968.

Nonetheless Lincoln Heights School remained a source of pride for those who had attended as well as for other members of the local Black community. Elizabeth Ann Parks Grinton galvanized a local effort to preserve the building and retain it for use as a community center. The school had long been a center of neighborhood life. Local people had attended performances,
dances, meals, parades, and other events there. Under Grinton’s leadership, they formed the Lincoln Heights Recreation Corporation (LHRC), an alumni group, to manage the property.

Members of the LHRC understood the value of Lincoln Heights history. The school is a reminder of life in the Jim Crow South, but it is also a symbol of the community’s effort to transcend the limits imposed by segregation by providing Black children with the best possible education. Alumni feared that young people did not understand the significance of this school to the community. They began to reach out to traditional preservation groups in North Carolina, wanting to gather information about how formal organizations could help them share their story and repair the building for ongoing use.28

The LHRC found creative and practical ways to keep the structure as a living part of the community. They leased space to a local Masonic Lodge, hosted fish frys and bingo nights, and rented the building for celebrations by a variety of groups and individuals, including members of the local Hispanic community. I first encountered this project as part of my role as an assistant professor teaching public history at Appalachian State University. In 2015, my students and I began working with LHRC board chair Brenda Dobbins to have the property listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The LHRC recognized that listing the site on the National Register would help prove its significance both to a broader local community and within the context of a larger national history. They also hoped that recognition of this nature would help them access grant funds for repairs.

The students met with the board and worked in teams to complete several significant tasks that the board requested. They completed a draft nomination to list the main building on the National Register of Historic Places. They conducted a landscape survey to determine if any of the other buildings formerly associated with the campus could be nominated. They developed an exhibition proposal. They compiled a list of grants that might help fund renovations to the structure. They wrote a historic structure report on the main building, detailing its current condition and listing priorities and strategies for rehabilitation.29 The students also created a plan that included suggestions for including more young people in work to meet the goals of the Lincoln Heights Recreation group. The members of the LHRC board want young people to recognize their story and become involved.

The next semester, another a group of public history graduate students from Appalachian State and I worked with the LHRC to develop a website
so that they could share their story and solicit input from the wider community. The site did not see much traffic at first, but the group turned its attention to other, more pressing matters, including the completion of a grant proposal to fund repair of the school building roof. In December 2016, we received a National Endowment for the Humanities Common Heritage grant. This grant enabled us to host a one-day event where members of the community brought photographs, artifacts, and other items to be scanned or photographed on-site. Community members received digital copies of their scanned or photographed items on USB drives at the event, and we created a digital collection that is linked to the LHRC website as well as to the Appalachian State University Library’s digital special collections.30 The day featured public programming, including talks from alumni of the school, screening of the 2015 documentary *Rosenwald*, and a talk by Mary Hoffschwelle, author of the 2006 book *Rosenwald Schools of the American South*. This event helped with the LHRC’s goals of publicizing their story and preserving it for the future.
Collaboration between Appalachian State University students and the LHRC served a larger purpose. It revealed the commitment and activity of the Lincoln Heights group over the years, and it also created a bond between the organization and the students. They enjoy working with young people and sharing their story with anyone who will come and listen. The members of the LHRC board and the students genuinely appreciate each other. The building’s preservation requires funding beyond the immediate reach of the Lincoln Heights alumni and friends, and the students were able to help them find and win grants to help. At the same time, projects like these bring prestige to the university and the public history program, as well as providing essential training for students. On one hand, university partnerships provide a great way to overcome economic hurdles for grassroots groups, but on the other, the unequal balance of power in these agreements can prove problematic. Regardless, Lincoln Heights alumni continue working to preserve and restore their building, not to turn a profit (though of course they want to be able to afford upkeep without going into debt) but to share their story.

**Who Gets to Be Considered a Preservation Activist?**

Both the members of the group that worked to save the Bush Street Temple and those working to save Lincoln Heights know about preservation. They have learned the term in order to reach their goals, but very few would call themselves preservationists or activists. I suspect that some readers might wonder why this question matters. To the community members themselves, perhaps it does not matter much.\(^\text{31}\) But it matters to our broader understanding of preservation as a potential tool for establishing healthy and self-determined communities. The members of each group were collecting histories and shaping their own narratives, just as the best public history work helps communities do, and they used preservation to achieve their goals. In an environment where some of the most powerful preservationists heavily utilize economic arguments, groups that foreground community history and address local needs may appear radical to the traditional preservation community. They seem this way because, despite many public history-trained preservationists recognizing that work should be done with and for locals, most preservation processes, particularly laws around preservation, are not set up to prioritize working that way. These cases show that radicalism in preservation can manifest simply in the insistence that the historic meaning of a place is more important than its potential future economic benefit.
The work at Bush Street was done long before I came to study it for my doctoral dissertation, though those responsible for its preservation were happy to talk with me and very generous with their time. I spoke at length with Steven Suzuki, who had been a board member of JARF and of Kokoro, as well as meeting with members of the Japantown Task Force, who were moving forward with plans to continue revitalizing their neighborhood and telling the stories of its former residents. They certainly did not need my help, though it must be acknowledged that the city of San Francisco has prioritized this sort of neighborhood redevelopment. The members of the LHRC asked for help with their projects, but they already had specific goals in mind. They’d been doing their own historical research for years and had reached out to the State of North Carolina’s Natural and Cultural Resources Department for assistance.

The answer to the question “Are these groups examples of grassroots preservation activism?” is a clear yes because each community drove their projects. Both JARF and the LHRC have worked to save special places and to share those stories with their wider communities. Kokoro has been economically successful, and the folks at Lincoln Heights are still working to get more of a financial investment to continue using their former school as a community center. Both groups’ passion for these places shines through. How can preservationists engage in the necessary work of demonstrating the economic viability of their work without losing the heart and soul of the work itself? There may not be a singular answer that applies in all contexts, but we must remember that people want to preserve places because of their histories in order to better strike this balance. Preserving places costs money, but it is the stories that show why places should be saved.

Those who live in, work at, and visit Kokoro Assisted Living recognize that it is a special place; they are drawn to the deep history of community events and worship that took place in the building. Speaking on a similar theme, Elizabeth Ann Parks Grinton said, “Lincoln Heights has never been an empty place. It has served its purpose and continues to serve the children of this county. As long as a human being lives in this area, it will go on because Lincoln Heights means so much to many people.” Lincoln Heights “was not only a place of learning, but a reminder of black students’ history and the black community effort to provide quality education to its children.”
Notes

For their time, comments, and discussion, I am grateful to those who have reviewed this piece in the years it has taken to bring this piece to publication. Thanks so very much to Denise D. Meringolo, for her dedication and skill as editor of Radical Roots.

1 The displacement of communities in Brooklyn, New York, due to some of the negative effects of gentrification is so well-known as to be played for laughs. For an example, see the TBS show The Last O.G. (2018–), in which the main character is released from prison after fifteen years, “returning to his newly gentrified Brooklyn neighborhood” (“The Last O.G.,” TBS, accessed March 4, 2021, https://www.tbs.com/shows/the-last-og). However, in recent years, people such as Justin Garrett Moore, executive director of the NYC Public Design Commission, have been working for citizen-led, inclusive approaches to planning in Brooklyn and elsewhere. Moore’s work does not particularly integrate stories, but it does show the best of planning and preservation that considers people first. New York City has developed the NYC Neighborhood Planning Playbook (available at https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/services-and-information/nyc-neighborhood-planning-playbook.page), and Moore’s Indianapolis-based Urban Patch is a group doing similar work. See Justin Garrett Moore, “Making a Difference: Reshaping the Past, Present, and Future toward Greater Equity,” Forum Journal 31, no. 4 (2017): 19–26.

2 The authors in this section participated in many conversations about the meanings of grassroots, during our collaborative research process. We have had long discussions in an effort to pin down a specific meaning. Ultimately, we concluded that it was necessary for scholars to define the term as it relates to their own work, as I do in this paragraph.

3 This isn’t a bad thing! See the introduction to Stephanie Meeks and Kevin C. Murphy’s The Past and Future City: How Historic Preservation Is Reviving America’s Communities (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2016), 1–24, for more on the appeal of historic preservation to a variety of people and why they don’t always recognize their work as preservation.

4 There are a variety of publications available at these groups’ websites that explore both economic output and environmental sustainability. Preservation Green Lab, The Greenest Building: Quantifying the Environmental Value of Building Reuse (Washington, DC: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2011); Donovan Rypkema and Briana Paxton, Beyond Tourism: Historic Preservation in the Economy and Life in Savannah and Chatham County (Savannah, GA: Historic Savannah Foundation, 2015), would be excellent places to begin.

5 The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System was made available to the public beginning in 2000 and has undergone several changes since that time. Initially, only one of the six available classifications applied to historic buildings, but that “Existing Buildings” category is for
maintenance, not for adaptive reuse of historic buildings. In 2006, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, working with other interested groups, began lobbying the US Green Buildings Council (the organization that evaluates and issues LEED certifications) to consider historic buildings in new ways. LEED 2009 included some updates that helped adaptive reuse and historic projects to earn the certification. Barbara A. Campagna, “How Changes to LEED Will Benefit Existing and Historic Buildings,” Forum News 15, no. 2 (November/December 2008), https://forum.savingplaces.org/viewdocument/how-changes-to-leed-will-benefit-
ex. Historic Preservationists have continued to push the US Green Buildings Council to go further, and LEEDv4, released in 2013, addressed more of their concerns. With LEEDv4, buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places, their state register, or a local register automatically get 5 points toward certification; this is an improvement because rather than looking at a percentage based on how much building fabric is reused in a project, it considers the cultural relevance and incorporates historic standing. Barbara A. Campagna, “Raising the Bar for LEED,” True Green Cities (blog), July 22, 2013, http://barbaracampagna.com/category/leed-v4/page/4/.

6 Such as Atlanta-based Presonomics.
8 Both are in Chicago. The Pullman Historic District was designated a national monument by President Obama in February 2016. It is also the first National Park Service unit in Chicago.
9 As happened with Prentice. It was part of Northwestern University’s medical campus, and they could not justify keeping the historic building that they believed could not be retrofitted to support the technology needed for medical research. Preservationists argued this point, but the university would not be moved. This happens. Not all preservation fights can be won.
11 Ann Pamela Cunningham created the Mount Vernon Ladies’ Association in 1853 to save George Washington’s home in the mid-nineteenth century. This was the first of several “ladies’ associations,” including the Ladies’ Hermitage Association, founded in 1889 to preserve Andrew Jackson’s home, and these were joined by the Sons and Daughters of the American Revolution (founded 1889 and 1890, respectively). For more information about the traditionally accepted origins of historic preservation, see Norman Tyler, Ilene R. Tyler, and Ted J. Ligibel, Historic Preservation: An Introduction to Its History, Principles, and Practice, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2009), esp. 29–30 on APC and associations; William J. Murtagh, Keeping Time: The History and Theory of Preservation in America, 3rd ed. (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley & Sons, 2006), esp. 14–16 on APC and associations.
Their congregation was the Ohabai Shalome Temple, but folks began calling it Bush Street almost immediately. It was called this throughout its religious use, regardless of which sect was using the building at the time.


Adams, “Tug of War.”

This organization had been established in the 1950s.


Suzuki.

Suzuki.

Suzuki.

Suzuki.

The Japantown Task Force report, which discusses the community heritage of the neighborhood, lists “physical heritage” (including buildings) last among five cultural resources. People, including those of Nikkei cultural identity and other groups with roots in the area, are listed first, followed by customs, events, and the arts; businesses that contribute to cultural lifeways; and community service groups. Japantown Task Force, *Draft Japantown Better Neighborhood Plan*, 15.

Adams, “Tug of War.”

Rosenwald (an owner in Sears, Roebuck, and Co.) served on the board at the Tuskegee Institute. The Rosenwald Fund provided partial funding, building plans, and sometimes educational materials to communities throughout the South. For more on Rosenwald and the schools, see Mary S. Hoffschwelle, *Rosenwald Schools of the American South* (Gainsville: University of Florida Press, 2014); Mary S. Hoffschwelle,

Material summarized from author’s attendance at several LHRC board meetings in the course of their work with the board.

The North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources hired Cheri Szcodronski and Heather Slane to complete National Register nominations for seven Rosenwald schools throughout the state, including Lincoln Heights. They used the students’ draft as research for the project. Lincoln Heights was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in September 2018.

Mrs. Grinton donated her papers to the Appalachian State University library on her passing. They are not fully digitized, but there’s an exhibit highlighting them; see the Elizabeth Ann Parks Grinton Papers in the Appalachian State University Libraries Digital Collections (https://omeka.library.appstate.edu/exhibits/show/elizabeth-ann-parks-grinton-pa). See also Ashlee Lanier et al., Lincoln Heights Rosenwald School website, Spring 2016, accessed March 4, 2021, https://lincolnheightsrosenwald.org. That site does not have the storage space to host the resulting collection, but it is linked there, and the LHRC has digital copies. The entire collection is available at “Preserving and Sharing the Story of the Lincoln Heights Rosenwald School,” Appalachian State University Library Digital Collections, accessed March 4, 2021, https://omeka.library.appstate.edu/collections/show/86.

At least, this was the case when last we spoke; things may have changed, particularly in Japantown, since early 2012. Personnel has certainly shifted.

Elizabeth Grinton, quoted in Fay Byrd, Wilkes County Bits and Pieces (Wilkesboro, NC: Wilkes County Community College, 2011).