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## Technical Committee on Sustainable Preservation

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The Technical Committee on Sustainable Preservation (TCSP) was organized in 2004 to respond to the need to advance the integration of environmental and cultural sustainability. Energy-conservation efforts were having a major impact on historic buildings and their character-defining elements at the time, but they were just one of the many sustainability focuses of the TCSP. A priority of the committee was to approach sustainability from a holistic perspective, taking into consideration social, cultural, and economic issues, as well as energy and the environment. Founding co-chair John Lesak wrote in 2005 that “The committee is intended to serve as a network to other preservation and green-building stakeholders and to provide a focus for APT on the subject of environmental and cultural sustainability.”<sup>1</sup> One of the first actions of the TCSP was to produce a sustainability track at the APT annual conference in Galveston in 2004. The next year, at the conference in Halifax, Nova Scotia, co-chairs Lesak and Andrew Powter organized a two-day symposium on sustainability.

The preamble to the Halifax symposium stated that

- > Sustainability is of critical importance to APT’s mission to promote the wise use of the built environment.
- > There is a need to make the cultural dimension of sustainability explicit.
- > Respect for the cultural dimension requires a process that is broad-based and inclusive.
- > Interpreting cultural significance and historic integrity in sustainability rating systems requires both quantitative and qualitative measures.

A special issue of the *APT Bulletin* on “Sustainability and Preservation,” guest-edited by founding TCSP member Mike Jackson, was published in 2005. It featured a recap of the Halifax symposium, papers from the

sustainability track at the Galveston conference, and articles by the founding and future chairs of the committee.<sup>2</sup>

Among the recommendations arising from the symposium was a call to become active in green-building organizations and to participate in the review and approval of evolving green-building rating systems. Pursuant to those goals, TCSP formed focus groups to review the various green-building rating systems to identify those that included a “whole-building ecology” approach and case studies to identify models for exploration. The other focus groups were Publications and Communications, and Education and Outreach.<sup>3</sup> Under new co-chairs Carl Elefante and Susan Ross, the TCSP then collaborated with the American Institute of Architects Committee on the Environment and with the AIA Historic Resources Committee to review and offer refinements to the International Green Construction Code. The TCSP also joined a coalition with the AIA, the U.S. National Park Service, and the U.S. National Trust for Historic Preservation to devise a national policy on historic preservation and sustainability. The coalition worked with the U.S. Green Building Council to integrate preservation metrics into the LEED green-building rating system. As a result of their efforts, APT received from the AIA the 2007 Institute Honors Award for Collaborative Achievement for the work of the TCSP, for “the unparalleled impact the committee has had on national and international organizations.”

The 2005 Halifax symposium was followed by two others organized by the TCSP: one at the annual conference in Montréal, Québec, in 2008 and the other in Victoria, British Columbia, in 2011. These symposia attracted leaders in the sustainable-preservation field and created the opportunity for collaboration to sharpen the vision, clarify the mission, and advance the techniques of sustainable heritage conservation. Broadening the mission, the TCSP collaborated with the APT Technical Committee on Modern Heritage to produce the “Renewing Modernism” symposium at the Kansas City conference in 2015.

Papers from the Montréal symposium were included in the second special issue of the *Bulletin* on sustainability in 2010, which explored the integral role of sustainability in the field of preservation.<sup>4</sup> Guest editor Walter Sedovic’s introduction stated that “this issue of the *Bulletin* is proof that we as a profession have matured and that our notion of sustainable preservation has come of age.” The articles in the issue revealed how deeply sustainability and preservation are connected and explored the ways in which this relationship could be strengthened over the coming years.

At the Denver conference in 2010, the TCSP produced a workshop entitled “Energy Performance Testing, Modeling and Monitoring.” The same year, co-chair Jill H. Gotthelf represented the TCSP in the development of *Illustrated Guidelines on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* for the U.S. National Park Service.

In 2011 co-chairs Jill Gotthelf and Lisa Howe organized the Sustainability Summit at the Victoria conference. Their stated goal was “to produce a tangible, usable ‘tool’ to help in the complex decision-making process that occurs when preservation professionals are confronted with meeting energy-reduction goals in historic buildings.” In working sessions, symposium participants developed a decision-making matrix that was later developed into an online program now known under the acronym OSCAR, the Online Sustainable Conservation Assistance Resource.

Working within tight budgets and with volunteered time, the team hired a web developer, worked on functional goals and user-interface solutions, and built relationships with the NCPTT and others to develop the content and working methodology of the tool. Financial support for the effort was supplied by APT, NCPTT, the Historic Preservation Educational Foundation (HPEF), Mitacs Canada, Carleton University, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada’s Collaborative Research and Training Experience Program (NSERC-CREATE), and Ball State University. The developing tool has been demonstrated and tested in the exhibit hall at each

annual conference since 2013. In 2015 OSCAR was officially launched, to great acclaim, at the Kansas City conference, under the leadership of Cory Rouillard.

The breadth of TCSP's work in the field remains high. Academia and research institutions are also areas of TCSP's endeavors. For example, the Education and Research Focus Group of TCSP took a lead role in the public reviewing of the draft ASHRAE *Guideline 34P: Energy Guidelines for Historic Buildings*.

The draft guideline was also presented as part of a workshop, "Building Science & Systems: New Approaches and Technologies for Rehabilitating Historic Structures," at the San Antonio conference in 2016, which was produced by the TCSP in collaboration with the Preservation Engineering Technical Committee. A stand-alone version of the workshop was presented in spring 2018, as the first of a series to further disseminate the information.

The TCSP recognized early on that the multifarious forces of climate change are another environmental factor affecting the character of heritage structures and their settings. As one of its first public efforts to address the issue, the committee, led by co-chair Jill Gotthelf, presented a disaster preparedness and response workshop at the APT annual conference in New York City in 2013.

The committee also conducted research and gathered resources on the impacts of climate change and published a review of the literature on the APT website. Some fruits of that effort were presented in the third TCSP special issue of the *APT Bulletin* entitled "Climate Change and Preservation Technology," guest-edited by co-chair Nancy Rankin in 2016.<sup>5</sup> The impacts of and responses to climate change are discussed in an article by Sharon Park in this issue. Aspects will be explored further during a TCSP-sponsored symposium on sea-level rise at the APT conference in Miami in 2019.

One part of reducing future impacts of climate change focuses on Zero Net Carbon as the new global measure, as per the 2015 Paris Agreement (COP 21) signed by almost 200 nations globally. TCSP co-chair Mark Thompson Brandt

organized a sustainability plenary session at the APT-National Trust for Canada Joint Conference 2017 in Ottawa, "Historic Buildings and the Race to Net-Zero Carbon." Speakers Edward Mazria, founder and CEO of Architecture 2030, and former TCSP co-chair Carl Elefante articulated the massive impact existing buildings have upon carbon emissions and captured the urgency and complexity of the effort to reduce energy consumption and carbon generation in buildings while retaining their cultural essence.

Engaging with related organizations, as it had done a decade earlier, the TCSP formed, at the Ottawa conference, the Zero Net Carbon Collaborative for Existing and Historic Buildings (ZNCC), led by Mark Thompson Brandt and TCSP focus-group co-chair Lori Ferriss.

The ZNCC brings together APT with the American Institute of Architects, the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada (RAIC), Architecture 2030, Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC), ICOMOS, the Embodied Carbon Network (ECN), and a host of other organizations to work toward developing a unified resource and best practices to responsibly bring heritage places to Zero Net Carbon at an accelerated pace, taking into account both embodied carbon and operational carbon emissions. The ZNCC has been asked to help lead two related events at the Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco in September 2018.

In APT's 50th year the TCSP is working at the vanguard of sustainability, fully engaged in the mission to integrate environmental and cultural conservation.

**Jill H. Gotthelf, AIA, FAPT**, principal, WSA|ModernRuins, and co-chair of TCSP (2007–2013) embraces a holistic view of sustainability. She pursues an open exchange of ideas among peers, clients, and constituents, resulting in projects, workshops, presentations, and publications that embody the essence of sustainable preservation—balancing economics, environment, equity, authenticity, and education.

**Mark Thompson Brandt, OAA, RAIC, LEED AP, CAHP**, is principal conservation architect and urbanist at MTBA Associates, Ottawa. A director of

APT and co-chair of the TCSP, Brandt is co-author of the 2016 national document *Building Resilience: Practical Guidelines for the Sustainable Rehabilitation of Buildings in Canada*.

**Michael Patrick** is an architect at the Washington, D.C.-based firm of Barnes Vanze Architects, where he carries out technically sophisticated and culturally appropriate solutions for historic institutional and residential properties in Georgetown; in Alexandria, Virginia; and across the mid-Atlantic and East Coast regions.

## Notes

1. John D. Lesak, "APT and Sustainability: The Halifax Symposium," *APT Bulletin* 36, no. 4 (2005): 3.
2. *APT Bulletin* 36, no. 4 (2005).
3. Focus groups have evolved and changed since the founding of the committee. For the latest list, consult the TCSP page on apti.org.
4. *APT Bulletin* 41, no. 1 (2010).
5. *APT Bulletin* 47, no. 1 (2016).



Fig. 1. At the New York City APT conference in 2013, TCSP's disaster preparedness and response workshop included a field session at Coney Island. Photograph by Jill Gotthelf.

Fig. 2. Promotional piece for OSCAR.