The Past, Present, and Future of the "Preservation as Provocation"
Architectural Design Competition

An Honors Thesis (HONR 490/ARCH 401)

by

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Abstract

Design competitions are an integral part of the architectural profession and architectural education. They are a means for students and professionals to engage in a specific design problem geared toward a well-defined result. The Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture in conjunction with the American Institute of Architects' Historic Resources Committee has sponsored three competitions over the past decade that have dealt with the subject of historic preservation. This competition, the “Preservation as Provocation” competition, asks students to consider an architectural work of historic significance and add a new architectural intervention. This competition was the capstone project for ARCH 401, which the authors entered as a team. This paper broadens the understanding of the work already completed by analyzing it in the context of the larger framework of the “Preservation as Provocation” competition. We discuss the history of the competition, its importance to students and professionals, our project and what we learned, and we end by suggesting a location and program for the next “Preservation as Provocation” competition.

Note: For ease of writing, a few abbreviations have been employed throughout this paper. Though they are written in full the first time they are introduced, they are collected here as well for the reader's reference:

ACSA – Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture
AIA – American Institute of Architects
AIAS – American Institute of Architecture Students
HABS – Historic American Buildings Survey
HRC – Historic Resources Committee
LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design

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Authors’ Statement

The intellectual basis of this thesis was based on a conversation we had with our advisor/studio professor, Jonathan Spodek. We had just finished up our entry for the 2013 “Preservation as Provocation” design competition, and Jonathan remarked that he thought it was a good project that could be taken further intellectually. We are both interested in architectural history and historic preservation, so we agreed that it would be an interesting challenge.

Unlike many other theses that come from final design projects, we did not further our design thinking in the development of this paper. Rather, we situated our project in the context of the competition itself, and focused on how we met the goals of the competition. This method required that we discover the goals of the competition, and, to some extent, the history of the competition, in order to get a good grasp on the situation. We were able to conduct an interview with Jack Pyburn, one of the main catalysts behind the competition in the first place, in order to understand the goals and intellectual genesis of “Preservation as Provocation”.

After gaining an understanding of the competition and its previous incarnations, we looked at our own project and our design process. We described and critiqued our own work in light of what educational goals the competition had, in light of Mr. Pyburn’s discussion. We then took everything we had learned about the competition, about our entry, and about the goal of increasing historic preservation awareness in architecture, and developed an idea for the next “Preservation as Provocation” design competition.

Many valuable insights were gained during the undertaking of this endeavor. One of the most valuable was gaining an understanding for how education, historic preservation, and architecture all interact. Talking with students, professionals, and academics helped us grow in appreciation of the work being undertaken in each field. On a lighter note, the many hours spent trying to determine a location and building for our own competition proposal helped us understand just how difficult it can be to find a suitable location. There is no perfect idea!
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ARCHITECTURAL COMPETITION AS A TOOL FOR EDUCATION

The tradition of design competitions in architecture has a long history. The reason, presumably, is that a competition can draw so many unique solutions to a given design problem – giving those looking for a solution a great deal of variety. Designs for some of the world's most important buildings were chosen from large, international competitions. Magnificent pieces of design such as Chicago's Tribune Tower, the Sydney Opera House, and most of Washington, DC, resulted from design competitions (Sydney Opera House).

Students are often engaged in the unique educational opportunities that a design competition offers. Student competitions take many forms, but are typically sponsored by an organization somehow affiliated with the architectural profession. This organization often develops criteria for their competition based on their particular niche within the field. For instance, the National Concrete Masonry Association sponsors a concrete block design competition each year (Events). This branding of competition allows students to have in-depth exposure to various portions of the building and design process.

Ball State University's Department of Architecture has had a long tradition of student competitions in its studio curriculum. The first exposure to architectural competition occurs at the end of second year, when the Indiana Concrete Masonry Competition (ICMA) takes place. Third year concludes with another, often more detail-oriented competition (this year's was the ACSA Bridge Competition), while fourth year includes a competition at the end of the first semester. Though the fourth year
competition has been sponsored financially by Cripe Architects of Indianapolis for many years, it is not their competition. Typically, a national competition from the ACSA or the AIAS is chosen for Ball State students to compete in. This past fall (2012) featured the ACSA’s “Preservation as Provocation” competition, which asks students to engage historic preservation in their design work. This is accomplished by the competition’s site, which is typically a place of historic or architectural significance.

**PRESERVATION AS PROVOCATION**

**History and Development of the “Preservation as Provocation” Competition**

The “Preservation as Provocation” competition’s creation was brought about through the work of the AIA’s HRC. Through the work of the five person advisory group, the “Preservation in Architectural Education” ideal was pushed through into a white paper. This paper was written to address the observed shortcomings of collegiate architecture programs in terms of architectural preservation and its application in design coursework during National Architectural Accreditation Board (NAAB) visits. These shortcomings were focused on the topic of architectural preservation and historic education; the HRC’s intent was to bring attention to the lack of historic educational opportunities and resources in the education process. Professionals and educators observed this hole in the education system, and a group of interested individuals formed to help push the initiative along. The group consisted of practicing architects, professors, various deans of architecture colleges around the country, the AIAS, and the executive directors of the NAAB. In addition to working with the NAAB, annual
presentations to the ACSA were given by the group to bring awareness to the perceived holes in the architectural education experience.

The Competition

In an attempt to get the "preservation as provocation" conversation started in studios around the country, a competition was proposed. Realizing that not all schools have the capacity to employ faculty members with a focus in the historic preservation field, a competition was deemed an effective way to meet the criteria set out by the HRC. This would give students the opportunity to become exposed to the opportunities and realistic challenges of working in a situation where preservation techniques would be used. The goal was not to just expose students to the program and challenges of a historic preservation project; the hope of the committee was that students would be affected by the content of the competition and would carry the knowledge with them for the rest of their professional careers. According to Jack Pyburn, an advisor for the competition, "the likely measure of success will be the students who participated [in] one of the competitions [who] will become more aware [and] sensitive to the relationship between time and buildings...[they will] be more thoughtful in how they manage a resource that they become stewards of" (Pyburn). The competition has gone through three versions over the last few years. The competition has highlighted Cranbrook's Academy of Art, The Salk Institute, and, most recently, Castle Pinckney, which resides in the center of the harbor of historic Charleston, South Carolina.
Competition One: Cranbrook

Over the course of eight years the Preservation as Provocation competition has focused on some of the most important architectural icons in the country. The latest one, with Charleston as its focus, will be complete this year. The premier competition took place during 2006 and 2007, and it focused on the re-adaption of Cranbrook’s Academy of Art designed by Eliel Saarinen. Saarinen’s arts and crafts style and integrated design approach have stood the test of time, and the competition allowed participants to react and attempt to reflect on the architect’s master planning genius. The competition’s major focus was not how to preserve and protect this National Historic Landmark as a historic artifact; instead, it was an attempt to explore different scenarios to create a living environment for contemporary use. The challenge for the entrants was to challenge and react to Saarinen’s 1942 museum and library to create a responsive and sophisticated piece of architecture that could not exist without Saarinen’s original works. The design goal for the competition was a reaction to and reflection of Saarinen’s design that would complement it.

Competition Two: The Salk Institute

The second competition, taking place during the 2008-2009 school year, was based at the Salk Institute, designed by Louis Kahn. The ACSA wrote that this “competition invites architecture students to imagine the next chapter in the life of one of America’s architectural treasures, which was designated a Historic Landmark in 1991. This challenge asks designers how the preservation of these extraordinary buildings can provoke a profound rethinking of our current conventions about composition,
construction, and building performance” (2008-2009 International). Salk, the creator of
the polio vaccine, had a goal for the campus to be a place of collaborative experience
“that would encourage them to consider the wider implications of their discoveries for
the future of humanity” (2008-2009 International). The reality of scientific discovery is
that it is an ever-growing entity; surely The Salk Institute’s expansive needs are not
being completely met by Kahn’s original plan. The program that was laid out by the
ACSA calls for a few different additions to Kahn’s plan to help modernize the complex
and allow the institute to function in the future. With the expansion of the science
center and the addition of a campus community center and residential facility, The Salk
Institute can hope to remain relevant in the constantly evolving world of scientific
exploration.

**Competition Three: Castle Pinckney**

The current competition, the design at Castle Pinckney, is set on an island in the
middle of the Charleston Harbor; the castle itself is a derelict and historically unused fort
that currently serves no educational, historical, or economic purpose in the context of
the city. Charleston, a historic city that already boasts a booming tourism economy, is
home to the underutilized island in the harbor called Shutes Folly. The goal of the
competition is to reinvigorate Shutes Folly Island, where the castle is located. Although
the castle never saw any real wartime use, its construction and relevance to the
maritime forts along the coast make it a priceless part of Charleston’s history. According
to the official program for competition that was published by the ACSA, competition
entries should “preserve, interpret, and re-imagine the extant historic fabric as
emblematic of the country’s early attempts to create a federal defense system and the site as an eco-tourist and educational destination... Participants should investigate how the preservation of this historically significant site can provoke a profound rethinking of our current conventions about preservation, design, community, the environment, and heritage tourism” (2012-2013 International). A lot of emphasis for the program was placed on creating a new tourist stop that would really bring Charleston visitors to a new level of understanding for the city’s history, and, hopefully, the winner of the competition will bring a centerpiece to the Charleston Harbor that will reflect on and complement the existing structure of Castle Pinckney.

**Intellectual Background and Circumstances**

Many aspects of the competition were formed from the original founders’ personal ideas about the importance of preservation in architectural education, and these aspects live on in the competition today. The competition’s history is filled with architectural responses to varying building typologies and urban settings. One thing remains constant, however; the competition always brings attention to historically significant architectural icons. These iconic structures and buildings are what have given shape to the competitions’ student responses. The iconic pieces of architecture serve as a base point of comparison for new interventions, and the hope is that the design projects will attempt to work in symbiosis with the existing structures.

That being said, it is unlikely that all students will get the opportunity to work on such historically important structures in their lifetime. Although this seems to be a short sighted approach for the competition, Jack Pyburn writes that “if the competition is
successful over time, [the competition] should become more sophisticated in the sense that ‘non-iconic’ buildings/resources will be the focus of more nuanced issues and complex intellectual and analytical challenges” (Pyburn). The hope is that the exposure to historic preservation on the scale of these masterpieces of architecture will help open the eyes of students to the vast world of preservationist architecture. Giving students the opportunity to work on these examples will bring preservation techniques and processed into the forefront of the students’ minds.

**Perceived Educational Gaps**

The “Preservation as Provocation” competition, from its humblest beginning, was meant to fill in the gaps that the HRC saw in the architectural education practice at the collegiate level. In an interview with Jack Pyburn, he stated that “architecture students most often and in most programs do not get any focused orientation to historic preservation architecture, to be distinguished from preservation planning or administration” (Pyburn). According to past AIA Firm Surveys, architecture firms today receive more than forty percent of their billings from work related to existing or historic buildings (Spodek). Obviously, this gap in education will be an important bridge to cross for students looking to find a foothold in the professional field, and this will become an essential piece of architectural education that will need to be addressed. According to Iris Amdur, LEED AP, who is a leading sustainability consultant at GreenShape, “the only way to really reverse the negative trends we’ve seen in terms of greenhouse gas emissions is to improve the efficiencies of the buildings that we already have.

Economically, I think there’s a perception that there’s a trade-off in historic preservation

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between energy preservation and historic issues. But there’s a fair amount of embodied energy [already] in a building, and then there are measures that can be taken to improve the performance of the building envelope that don’t compete with historic preservation goals” (Mortice). Architects will be dealing with existing architecture design challenges more and more frequently in the future, and the preparation of the students in design schools will need to be reexamined to meet the standards of this growing trend in architectural design.

**Goals of the Competition**

The competition’s major focus of spreading preservation education to students is very straightforward, but the long-lasting repercussions of being exposed to the “Preservation as Provocation” competition are harder to measure. The goal of bringing preservation to the forefront of student’s mind seems clear, but the reality is that not every student will incorporate the preservation techniques into their design processes. This, according to Jonathan Spodek who serves on the HRC, is one of the major focuses of the competition; he writes that “it is essential for preservation architects to promote, support, and advance the integration of preservation values into architecture education and not just as a ‘niche’ practice for a few interested students” (Spodek). Hopefully, this competition will spur on a long-lasting pursuit of preservation education and architectural practice. The goal is that the lessons learned during the competition will become new standards that architecture student will hold themselves to throughout their careers, and the idea of preserving and protecting existing architectural will be second nature. Spodek also writes that the programs for the competitions are “written
to help the students' understanding of, respect for, and ability to make ethical and fundamentally sound decisions about how to handle a historic resource" (Spodek).

Using the “Preservation as Provocation” Competition as a stepping stone, students will become more and more aware about the range of design decisions that are available to them and, more importantly, what decisions are appropriate for each case.

For practicing professionals, the goals of the competition are to create a real conversation about preservationist architecture. Keeping the topic alive and relevant and letting the topic permeate the profession to its core will help keep these ideas at the forefront of the nation’s design leaders’ minds. If architects become more involved with the topic of preservation as it relates to their own profession, they will be able to share these experiences with upcoming younger generations of students. This competition aims to mould role models out of the existing professionals of today and to let the topic of preservation in architecture become a cross-generational learning experience.

STUDENT ENTRY AND SELF-ANALYSIS OF COMPETITION SUBMITTAL

Initial Presentation of Design Opportunities and Constraints

The 2012 “Preservation as Provocation” competition was introduced within the smaller context of Ball State University’s fourth year capstone competition sponsored by Cripe Architects, a local firm located in Indianapolis. Thus, students were faced with the interesting challenge of a “competition within a competition”, which meant that two related sets of criteria needed to be adequately satisfied in a successful project. Local
professionals judged the in-house competition, whereas national leaders in the historic preservation and architecture fields will judge the national ACSA competition (Program).

Upon introduction to the competition, students were given access to all of the resources provided by the ACSA. These included a nine-page program document, links to National Archives Documents and HABS drawings, and contextual information on Charleston and Castle Pinckney. This wide range of documentation provided a wealth of information from which to draw from in the initial stages of design development.

The program for the structure was loosely defined. The only required spaces were a welcome pavilion of 2,500 square feet, a belvedere (viewing area), and a student-defined reason for people to approach the island and fort. Suggestions mentioned in the program for the student-defined use included an eco-tourism destination, an interpretive historical center, or an entertainment venue. Thus, the crux of the project involved the student’s exploring the context of the site to determine an appropriate use for the island itself.

Site Analysis

The site determined for the competition, as mentioned above, was Castle Pinckney, a decaying Nineteenth Century maritime fortification located on Shutes Folly Island in the midst of Charleston Harbor. There were thus many historic, environmental, and geographic pressures upon the site. The first task undertaken by students was to analyze the surrounding context in order to determine the opportunities and the constraints inherent in the site itself.
The American South was considered rather broadly in the initial phases of the site analysis stage. The focus soon shifted from a rather general narrative of Southern history and culture to its specific impact on the city of Charleston and Castle Pinckney in particular. Of great importance were the effects of the Civil War upon the wider site. The upheaval and destruction caused Castle Pinckney to change uses throughout the conflict: it was variously a prisoner-of-war camp, a storage facility, and a small garrison. The currents of history causing programmatic change to the island and the fort would become an important theme in the eventual design response.

The nearby city of Charleston was also analyzed as an important portion of the context of the eventual intervention on Shutes Folly Island. Insights into the demographics of Charleston's native population and tourist trends were developed so that renewed site of Castle Pinckney could have the most positive effect possible on the people of the community. Charleston's impressive collection of neoclassical architecture from colonial times, through the antebellum period, and into the Gilded Age provided a wealth of visual forms from which to draw from in the design of the intervention's architecture. The underlying connection among the historical styles of architecture exhibited within the city include a common desire for porches to enjoy the sea breezes, favorable orientation to wind and sun, and a desire to maintain tradition in the style of Greek and Roman revival architecture.

Climatic and environmental factors also influenced thinking on the project and its demands. Charleston has a humid subtropical climate and is prone to periods of both intense sunshine and intense rainstorms. Dealing with this climatic dichotomy was chief
among the environmental challenges presented by the location of the site. A related challenge was the tidal nature of the harbor and its influence on the island. The high tide level completely submerges the island (apart from the high ground in the immediate vicinity of the fort) twice per year, and routinely floods much of the island. This fact of nature placed distinct limits on the site immediately, as it would be imprudent to subject a work of architecture to flooding on purpose (unless it was expressly designed to withstand the water level).

In-house competition vs. National competition

Having considered the environmental, climatic, demographic, historical, and cultural issues at work on this site, the design process could begin. As aforementioned, differences between the in-house competition sponsored by Cripe and the national competition sponsored by the ACSA involved decisions regarding where to focus energies. The in-house competition required a model while the national competition does not. The decided process was one that would involve a technically precise and well-presented two-dimensional design that could then be translated into three-dimensional model form for purposes of the in-house competition only. Thus, most time was expended in the phase of design most directly related to program, environmental concerns, and visual representation, with lesser attention paid to 3D modeling.

Treatment of the Island

Beginning from a macro view of the site, the treatment of the island became the first decision point that was necessary to come to terms with before moving on to the smaller contextual framework of Castle Pinckney itself. Because of the frequent flooding
due to tides and heavy storms, it was decided that the majority of the island—
everything north of the small, elevated portion around the fort—would be left to
natural forces and untouched by the built intervention. This strategy keeps intact
habitat for the Brown Pelican—a native bird species that is facing endangerment from
human encroachment. Limiting building to what has already been built also fulfills a
larger philosophical goal of changing what has already existed into a new purpose—
rather than ignoring it or merely using it as a background.

**Treatment of the Fort**

Castle Pinckney itself was set aside for the most intensive intervention in terms
of architectural intensity. The scheme developed involves excavating the interior
courtyard of the fort—which is filled with earth and plant material presently—and
removing the infill to the north side of the fort into a berm. The hollowed out interior is
shaped into an amphitheater facing the original gated entry to the fort, while the
exterior amphitheater created by the infill forms a twin amphitheater that looks back
toward the north wall of the fort and the gate as well. Guiding the treatment of the fort
were the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Historic Preservation, a federal
document that distinguishes among preservation, rehabilitation, reconstruction and
restoration. This allows the scheme to take advantage of the historical importance of
the structure in some instances, while allowing change and reconstruction in other
places. This flexibility again hearkens back to the overarching theme of reshaping an old
place for new purposes. The belvedere viewing platforms are sympathetically attached
to the high points of both the fort and the berm in strategic places that provide
exceptional views across Charleston Harbor toward local landmarks including Fort Sumter to the south, the Battery to the west, and the Arthur Ravenel Jr. Bridge and remainder of Shutes Folly Island to the north. The small welcome pavilion sits on the southern edge of both Castle Pinckney and the island, on the site of a small pier-like structure leftover from Castle Pinckney’s days as a warehouse. The welcome center juts out into the harbor, providing an entrance experience dependant on purposefully choreographed views of the fort, the harbor, and surrounding vistas.

Treatment of Program

After analyzing the demographics and culture of Charleston and determining that it was a location well suited to high culture such as the performing arts, it was determined that a venue devoted to various performances would be a welcome addition to Castle Pinckney. The idea of performance provided a strong metaphorical and symbolic basis for further development of the scheme. Related ideas of drama, light and shadow, and reveal were developed at various points of the design to further integrate the notion of performance throughout the complex.

A main stage area was developed at within the excavated interior of the fort. Various treatments of built and landscaped elements combined to create a variety of experiences for viewing and participating in various performance types. The goal was to incorporate flexibility within the programming of the space. This goal rested on the philosophical underpinning of treating Castle Pinckney as a historic structure that has been reshaped and reformed for diverse uses throughout its two centuries of existence.
Sustainability

Given the delicate natural systems at play on the island as a whole, a comprehensive strategy of sustainable systems was addressed in the proposed intervention. As mentioned above, the built forms are small, focused, and sit lightly on the land and fort. Additionally, reflecting the rhythmic nature of much of Charleston’s historic architecture, the structures are highly modular, easing their constructability and raising the possibility of easy addition and repair. Stylistically, the built elements of the proposal are sympathetic to the reserved nature of Charleston’s architectural heritage, adopting simple white steel frames and wood cladding. When a community views a piece of architecture as an integral part of its fabric, it is more likely to be well maintained and preserved for years to come. This is in opposition to many architectural schemes that come out of competitions, which aim for more bombastic or exciting first impressions that may be interesting at first, but which also may fall out of fashion more quickly due to their outlandishness. Thus, preservation itself was built into the concept and the architecture itself.

Issues of climate were addressed in the design of the belvederes and the welcome pavilion. The welcome pavilion features a double-layered skin system that allows the building to breathe in the heat and humidity of South Carolina. The outer skin features photovoltaic panels that help generate electricity, while simultaneously providing shade and shelter to the more permeable inner skin that allows the center to take advantage of cross ventilation systems. Rain water, which is plentiful in Charleston, is gathered from the roof and stored in a cistern near the restroom facilities, which

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feature composting toilets. The belvedere viewing areas also feature small photovoltaic arrays that generate the electricity used to power the lighting and sound systems within the amphitheater spaces inside and outside the fort. Strong, durable materials were chosen to cope with the harshness of the corrosive salty air and the intensity of the sun and rain. Taking in each of these aspects of green design helps the proposal achieve the goal of a more sustainable design that is equitable to the local context, both social and environmental.

PROPOSAL FOR THE NEXT "PRESERVATION AS PROVOCATION" COMPETITION

Irwin Union Bank and Trust | Columbus, IN

Columbus, Indiana is an underappreciated gem in the midst of the Midwest; many great architects have been drawn here by the city's dedication to architectural quality. This level of quality has become synonymous with the city's legacy. Architects such as Eliel and Eero Saarinen, I.M. Pei, Robert Venturi, Cesar Pelli, and Richard Meier have designed architectural works for this city; with all of this talent centralized in one small place, Columbus has earned the nickname of "Athens of the Prairie."

The Miller family, who owned Cummin's Engines, single-handedly brought world-class architects to the small town of Columbus, and the city is now home to six buildings that reside on the list of National Historic Landmarks. J. Irwin Miller was a strong believer in good design being a catalyst for a strong and thriving community, and, since many of the city's residents were workers at his company, he felt a certain responsibility for the whole Columbus community. Using his own money, Miller agreed to pay the grandiose architectural fees that the premier architects of the time were charging so
that the community could benefit from good design. J. Irwin Miller began with the public schools, firehouses, public housing, and other community structures to give back to the community where the Cummin’s employees worked and lived. This work expanded to churches, parks, a library, and other important aspects of the city, and, within a relatively short period of time, a precedent for architectural quality was set into a small town’s mind. Columbus still holds itself to a higher standard when it attempts to bring a new architect for one of its buildings.

One historically significant architectural piece of Columbus that stands out is the Irwin Union Bank and Trust that J. Irwin Miller had designed specifically to cater to his workers at Cummin’s Engine. Built in 1954, the building now sits as one of the six buildings in Columbus that is on the list of National Historic Landmarks. With its structurally light feel and airy open interior, this bank feels more like an expensive loft than a bank. Miller wanted a place that would be welcoming and friendly to his Cummin’s Engine workers; allowing the building to maintain a strong connection with the street by creating a high level of transparency was almost unheard of at a time when banks were traditionally built of stone and looked impenetrable. Instead of the typical iron bars that were commonly built between the tellers and customers at the bank, Saarinen chose to leave the space open to facilitate an open and honest communication. The neoclassical monoliths of the time were not acceptable to Miller, and he worked to make the bank as inviting as possible. Even the floors were designed to withstand the grease and high volume of usage that the Cummin’s workers would
bring. In 1973, Kevin Roche of John Dinkeloo and Associates expanded onto the bank by adding onto the office annex on the north side.

Unfortunately, with the passing of time, the bank lost its foothold in the community of Columbus. It was closed by the Indiana Department of Financial Institutions and the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation on September 18, 2009, and it has remained empty since. Since the building now stands vacant, this architectural icon seems to be an appropriate choice for a new competition site.

Decision Points Based on Past Projects

An analysis of the past “Preservation as Provocation” competitions yielded several important points of consideration for future projects. The goals of introducing students to issues of historic preservation were met in different ways in each competition, even as the scope and location of the projects changed dramatically. That is not to say that these differences were not without their shortcomings, however.

The first competition idea, calling for an addition to Eliel Saarinen’s iconic art museum on the campus of Cranbrook in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, asked competitors to consider their intervention in the context of a campus thoroughly planned and organized by the architect. Though the site of the competition itself was limited to the area immediately surrounding the museum of art, entrants were forced to contend with a much wider artistic vision that permeates the surroundings. The tension between the addition and the overwhelming unity of Saarinen’s vision created a very complicated juxtaposition that was very difficult to resolve.
The following competition went west to Louis Kahn’s iconic Salk Institute in San Diego. Again, the entrants were asked to consider their work in the context of a mature master plan. This time, however, the program was much larger and could act as an effective counterweight to Kahn’s magnificent seaside work. Additionally, though the Salk Institute is technically a campus, it is organized in such a way that it reads as a single composition, making it much easier to react to. This is in clear contrast with Cranbrook, which is asymmetrically planned and based on a complex series of sightlines, pathways, and minor axes. A drawback to the Salk Institute competition – in addition to the campus’ revered status as an architectural icon – was the immensity of the program. The required spaces ran upwards of 200,000 square feet – an immense task for any student to undertake successfully. Furthermore, the immensity of the program made any attempt at detail more difficult, an ironic misfortune given Louis Kahn’s talent at well-detailed construction.

The current competition asks students to consider Shutes Folly Island and Castle Pinckney. This competition took a radically different direction in choosing a 19th Century fortification as its subject matter, rather than a Mid-Century Modern icon as the previous two had been. In addition, the site encompassed an entire island, making it by far the largest land area to contend with in the history of the competition. On the other hand, the required spaces demanded by the program where minimal and sparsely described. This combination of large site, decaying fort, and small program created an interesting mix of issues of to confront. The large site in conjunction with the fort may have contributed to mixed outcomes, because students were able to ignore the fort in
deference to the island or another location. This seems to defeat the goal of getting students to think critically about historic preservation. An added challenge may have been that architecture schools, by and large, teach in the modernist idiom, which is more applicable to the Saarinen and Kahn sites and less easy to apply to Castle Pinckney in the same way. This is neither a good nor a bad thing of itself, but it does add another layer to the competition dynamic.

The thinking for the next competition program took cues from each of the past three competitions. The concept of casting Mid-Century Modern buildings as an integral part of historic preservation is laudable. It rescues historic preservation from being relegated to its unfortunate stereotype of dealing only with buildings of a classicist or traditional idiom. Seeing historic preservation as a provocative pursuit that encompasses the length and breadth of architectural history is called for in our times as we are starting to deal with the unfortunate decay of not a few modernist landmarks. Consideration of wider issues of society and culture was hinted at in the Castle Pinckney competition, but could be pursued with greater vigor. Architecture is a social art that has the potential to change the entire community. Focusing on the impact good historic preservation projects can have on their communities should be integral. This goal could be accomplished by continuing to look beyond the boundaries of the site into a more urban context. Both Cranbrook and the Salk Institute are rather isolated, introspective complexes that avoid intense interaction with the wider regional context. The site of Castle Pinckney is indeed isolated as well, but its proximity to and visibility from Charleston allows it to take on more urban attitudes.
The combination of social interaction, modernist preservation, and an urban site suggest a slightly different path for the “Preservation as Provocation” competition. Setting the competition in Columbus, Indiana, would accomplish each of these goals. It is a small town, in contrast to Detroit, San Diego, and Charleston – yet it has a dense urban center, in contrast to the sites in competitions past. The town is home to an exemplary collection of modernist buildings, providing ample context for any proposed intervention. Additionally, taking on a small town in a rust belt agricultural state could provide an interesting context for insightful social commentary for the future. It could fuel conversations on preserving the Midwest’s heritage while moving the region into the future via technology or other means.

Suggested idea and program

The suggested program for the next competition asks entrants to consider the Irwin Union Bank building in Columbus, Indiana. The building is located on a prominent downtown street corner lot, and it boasts portions designed by Eero Saarinen, Kevin Roche, and landscape architect Dan Kiley. Entrants will be asked to rethink the vacant bank building in the context of Columbus. Required program spaces could include a historical exhibition describing the importance of the building and the bank in addition to new ideas to increase activity and interest along Washington Street, Columbus’ main thoroughfare. The site and building are relatively small, which will force entrants to make immediate judgments about the value of each portion of the site. A spare list of requirements will allow ideas to generate without too much constraint.
The goal of this proposal is to keep students thinking about what historic preservation means today. By using a Mid-Century Modernist building designed by leaders of the movement, the competition attempts to reframe historic preservation as a continuing need in architecture, despite the "modernity" of many structures.

**CONCLUSION**

After analyzing the past competitions and attempting to understand their larger implications for the future of the architectural profession, it becomes clear that the "Preservation as Provocation" competition is vital to the completeness of the architectural education. The varieties of education and experience that are gleaned from the competition give students a realistic edge in the architectural field that can not be found anywhere else. After carefully studying each competition to its finest detail, it is easier to foresee where the competition could be headed next, and the successes and failures of each past competition shed light on ways to pinpoint the best way of approaching preservation architecture in an educational setting. The continuation of this competition seems imminent, but the importance of the content may not always be put in enough of a spotlight.

The reality is that architectural preservation is not a separate sect of the architectural practice, and, in the future, it needs to become completely entwined with the way that professionals view every design challenge. Hopefully, the interest in and use of architectural preservation techniques will have a trickle down effect that will become more apparent as the newest graduates of these institutions become thriving parts of the design workforce. These young professionals, who have already shown a
growing interest in social justice and pro bono work, can help to shape the future of the field of architectural practice in a way that will begin to adapt to an existing environment. This reuse and re-adaptation of existing structures lends itself to a social and environmental sustainability that will continue to respect the past of these architectural icons, while securing a more livable and brighter future for generations to come.
Works Cited


Pyburn, Jack. E-mail interview. 9 Apr. 2013.


Irwin Union Bank, Columbus, Indiana

Photo source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/psulibscollections/8536397523/
Penn State Libraries Pictures Collections
The historic site of Castle Pinckney is the basis for a carefully inserted intervention that transforms the failed typology of defensive fort into a new, flexible series of assembly and performance spaces.

The arrangement of spaces takes cues from the varied built forms that have populated Folly Island in the past. The pier-like welcome pavilion hearkens back to the dock used during the Castle's days as a warehouse, while the light, delicate architectural expression pays homage to the Neoclassical architecture of historic Charleston.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties provided guidance in dealing with the fort. The exterior wall is preserved, while the main gate façade is rehabilitated as a backdrop for the new amphitheater spaces.

The main axis leading from the harbor, through the welcome pavilion, down through the amphitheater and main gate, terminating at a belvedere overlooking the island is derived from Castle Pinckney's orientation in relation to other harbor landmarks. The architecture of this intersection is deliberately delicate, contrasting with the heavy container-like feel of the fort.

By intersecting an old fort with a modern typology - that of a free-form performance environment - Intersection takes a failed form and reimagines it for 21st Century Charleston.
The proposed design for the architecture of NEXT Project 57 is a unique response to the cultural and social needs of the city of Copenhagen, which includes the integration of art and culture into the fabric of the city. The design integrates contemporary domestic architecture in the Copenhagen real estate market, aiming to provide a new identity for the existing structures.

The design emphasizes the relationship between the interior and exterior spaces, facilitating a seamless transition between the two. The materials used are carefully selected to complement the existing context.

The castle façades facilitate flexible performance spaces that encourage visitors to actively engage with the terraced installation and the existing fort's historic structure.