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Old & New Architecture: Design Relationship.

From a conference sponsored by: National Trust for Historic Preservation; Latrobe Chapter, Society of Architectural Historians; Washington Metropolitan Chapter, American Institute of Architects. The Preservation Press: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1980.

Reviewed by Spencer Wilson.

The Historic Preservation movement has come a long way from restoration of individual structures as static museums to preservation of whole, living, neighborhoods and even entire towns. For the most part this kind of piece-meal preservation was done with little attention being paid to intrusive, ill-conceived or down-right unsympathetic buildings. More recently, however, greater attention is being paid by preservationists, architects, and city planners to the problem of new construction in historic areas. The question is, how to arrive at a "design relationship" between historic, preserved buildings and districts, and how to recognize that new construction will happen within the context of historic surroundings. The purpose of this collection of essays is to attempt to answer that question.

This volume is sponsored by the organizations most closely connected to both preservation and the design of new buildings. The contributors are among some of the most concerned architects and preservationists. The National Trust has done a great service in publishing this book.

There are probably no definitive answers to providing for change, both old and new, in relation to historic areas. But the contributors to this book do offer some provocative ideas in suggesting that there are solutions. As James Biddle, a past-president of the National Trust says in his preface: "Recognizing that change is inevitable, we are very much concerned with the concept of change management. Change should be orderly, deliberate and relate to existing structures. In advocating the management of inevitable change, we do not assert that the only routes to follow are replication...as strategy." The modern and contemporary building may well become the landmark of the future to be preserved by some future preservationists. With that as a starting point, the various collaborators proceed to wrestle with the question. The essays are supported with profuse and excellent illustrations.

This book is not casual reading. It provokes thoughtful and careful reading and is a must for anyone interested in the question of relating new construction to preservation of the old.