

New Orleans Charter for Preservation of Historic Structures

The New Orleans Charter is the product resulting from the two symposia: *Museums in Historic Buildings* held in Montreal, Quebec (1990) and New Orleans, Louisiana (1991) and co-sponsored by the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (AIC) and The Association for Preservation Technology International. This Charter has been officially adopted by the Board of Directors of both AIC and APTI.

The New Orleans Charter was subsequently adopted by the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers at its Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. in March, 1992.

In 1992 this Charter was presented by a panel of symposium participants at a half-dozen conferences.

American Institute for Conservation, Buffalo, June 1992

American Association of State and Local History, Miami, Sept 1992

International Council of Museums, Sept 1992

Association for Preservation Technology, Philadelphia, Sept 1992

Joint meeting of the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums/New England

Museum Association, Albany, Nov 1992

—APT Communiqué 21(2): May 1992

The New Orleans Charter

Arising from a concern for the coexistence of historic structures and the artifacts housed within them;

Recognizing our responsibility as stewards to provide the highest levels of care for the structures and other artifacts placed in our care;

Recognizing that many significant structures are used to house, display and interpret artifacts;

Recognizing that historic structures and the contents placed within them deserve equal consideration in planning for their care;

Recognizing that technologies and approaches will continue to change; and

Recognizing that those involved in preservation are part of a continuum, and are neither the first nor the last to affect the preservation of historic structures and artifacts;

We, therefore, adopt these principles as governing the preservation of historic structures and the artifacts housed in them:

1. Institutions' statements of mission should recognize the need to preserve the unique character of both the historic structure and artifacts.
2. The preservation needs of the historic structure and of the artifacts should be defined only after study adequate to serve as the foundation for the preservation of both.

3. Requisite levels of care should be established through the interdisciplinary collaboration of all qualified professionals with potential to contribute.
4. Appropriate preservation must reflect application of recognized preservation practices, including assessment of risk before and after intervention, and the expectation of future intervention.
5. Measures which promote the preservation of either the historic structure or the artifacts, at the expense of the other, should not be considered.
6. Regarding public use, the right of future generations to access and enjoyment must outweigh immediate needs.
7. Appropriate preservation strategies should be guided by the specific needs and characteristics of the historic structure and artifacts.
8. Appropriate documentation of all stages of a project is essential, and should be readily accessible and preserved for the future.
9. The most appropriate action in a particular case is one which attains the desired goal with the least intervention to the historic structure and the artifacts.
10. Proposed preservation strategies should be appropriate to the ability of the institution to implement and maintain them.