

**Preservation and Progress**  
**Panelists: Kenneth T. Jackson and Robert A.M. Stern**  
**Moderator: Anne Van Ingen**

Susan Henshaw Jones: It's my great pleasure now to introduce Mary Schmidt Campbell. Governor Elliot Spitzer appointed Dr. Campbell Chair of the New York State Council on the Arts in the Fall of 2007. You know, I know that it is a hard job. But I have to say that I consider Mary Schmidt Campbell to be a very lucky woman. I think that the New York State Council organization, the New York State Council on the Arts is one of the finest organizations of its type in the nation, and I really would like to give this council a round of applause for all it has done.

(applause)

Jones: In addition to being the Chair of the New York State Council on the Arts, Dr. Campbell serves as Dean of New York University's Tisch School for the Arts. She was the Executive Director of the Studio Museum in Harlem for ten years, and was Commissioner of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. Dr. Campbell is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a board member of the American Academy in Rome. She received her BA from Swarthmore and an MA and a PhD from Syracuse University. Dr. Campbell.

(applause)

Mary Schmidt Campbell: Susan, thank you very much for those kind words, and especially for acknowledging the work of the New York State Council on the Arts. I have to tell you it's been a real privilege to be in this position.

Good afternoon. I am absolutely pleased that I have the task of introducing two such distinguished speakers. The architect Robert Stern, and the historian Ken Jackson. I want to first thank one of my colleagues at the State Council on the Arts, and that's Anne Van Ingen (applause) yes, please. Anne. I'm brand new in my role as chair, but Anne has been the director of the Council's Architecture Planning, Design & Capital Projects Program for twenty-four years, and she's done a fabulous job. Thank you Anne.

(applause)

You know, the way in which New York City is shaped by historic preservation, policies and practices is a topic that's very near and dear to me. And as a prelude to the introduction to our two speakers, I'd like to just choose two examples – one professional, one personal – which demonstrate the way in which historic preservation has had a profound impact on my life. Professionally my career in New York City started in Harlem. And of course I don't need to tell this group that between World War I and World War II Harlem was the cultural capital of the world. Or one of the cultural capitals of the world. The landmarks, the architectural landmarks were abundant, not only in residential architecture, but in theaters like the Alhambra and places like the Hotel Theresa. It was extraordinary. Stanford White, William Malbray – just a treasure trove. But by the time I arrived in 1977, decay and dereliction were eviscerating those physical glories. The landscape was filled with abandoned buildings, vacant lots, foreclosed properties. And except for the valiant efforts of some individual residents and cultural institutions, Harlem for the most part was a landscape overrun with neglect.

Now the Studio Museum in Harlem had great plans, like many cultural institutions of that era. And little did we know that those plans really were about historic preservation. We managed to get a bank to donate one of those foreclosed buildings – a 60,000 square foot commercial space. We turned half of it into a museum and the other half we reserved for not-for-profit tenants. There was an awful vacant lot filled with debris and garbage that was owned by the City of New York, of course. And we managed to convince Ed Koch, who was the mayor at that time, to come up and take a look at it. And he looked at it and he said, "Oh, this is disgusting!" I said, "You're right." So he cleaned it up for us, gave us the lot, and we turned the lot into a sculpture garden. In hindsight, that was an historic preservation project. The arguments that we made were historical. The arguments that we made was that Harlem once was a place of excellence, we want to restore that. Harlem was a place where musicians, playwrights, poets, novelists gathered. We wanted to restore that. Harlem was a cultural center. So it was an historic argument that fueled other arguments like economic development, like restoring the physical decay of that building that we had inherited.

Now moving to a personal episode. So that was self-evident. That was the right thing to do. Was to recycle that old building, draw on the historical roots of the neighborhood, and claim an historic preservation victory. On a personal note, in 1987, I moved to Harlem. I moved to the block on West 144<sup>th</sup> Street between Amsterdam Avenue and Convent. Now some of you might know that block. It's a block that looks like a city in Amsterdam. It was that the townhouses were designed by the Dutch architect William Malbray. However, at the time that we moved, my family moved in, it was the height of the crack epidemic in New York City. And on my beautiful stoop, because of the way it was constructed, it made it every easy for the drug dealers and users to come and sit on my stoop and use their, and do their business. So every day became a battle between our family and then the threats, "You better move." And finally I decided, "We'll build a fence."

Well, that's when I had my first encounter with the preservation police. (laughter) And I agreed with them. Honestly. And that the fence should be wrought iron, should be historically authentic. And we found one of the original wrought iron fences that was still extant on the street, and the gentleman from Brooklyn who came to do the design designed it. But it was at a considerable cost, a considerable cost in terms of financial resources, time and energy. And it made me think, it made me think about what the motivations for historic preservation are. Who's making the rules? For whom? And who are these people anyway who are coming and telling me what to do with the front of my house. Are there mitigating circumstances like safety? Like cost? How do you manage these issues? Particularly in a neighborhood where, if the people coming in had not been there in the first place, with their sweat equity and their personal investment to salvage those gorgeous houses, they would not have existed in the first place.

So what is the medium of exchange? How does the community conduct a public discourse with the experts of historic preservation? I'm pleased then in my current role at the New York State Council of the Arts, once again I have the opportunity to think about all these issues. Since the New York State Council on the Arts has had such a robust involvement in historic preservation and design. Under Anne's superb leadership, the Council has funded everything from the original documentation for the restoration of the Weeksville Houses out in Bedford Stuyvesant to architects fees for the adaptive use of an historic Amtrak station up in the Adirondacks into a summer theater.

Since 1960, the Agency has given out grants totaling over \$22 million, including any number of public programs, workshops, conferences and publications which support a diverse range of positions and points of view on the subject of historic preservation. And on the subject, that brings me to our speakers this afternoon. This afternoon we will hear some of those diverse points of view on historic preservation.

Robert Stern, a practicing architect, teacher and writer, is Dean of the Yale School of Architecture. He's a committed preservationist. Before returning to Yale in 1998, where he earned his Master of Architecture degree, he was Professor of Architecture and Director of the Historic Preservation Program at Columbia's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation. Mr. Stern is one of the foremost historians of New York City's architecture and urbanism. He is co-author of the highly-acclaimed New York books: *New York 1880*, *New York 1900*, *New York 1930*, *New York 1960* and *New York 2000*. He's also been an early and strong advocate for the preservation of 20<sup>th</sup> Century buildings. His *Thirty-five Modern Landmarks in Waiting* was published in the *New York Times* in 1996. As founder and senior partner in the firm Robert A.M. Stern Architects of New York, his building projects here include the Brooklyn Law School Tower, the Broadway Residence Hall at Columbia University, residential buildings including the Chatham and 15 Central Park West Improvements at the Kaufman Center on West 67<sup>th</sup> Street, and the New Museum for African Art on Museum Mile. Mr. Stern is a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and received the AIA New York Chapter's Medal of Honor in 1984, and Chapter's President's Award in 2001. He's lectured extensively in the United States and abroad on both historical and contemporary topics in architecture.

Kenneth Jackson is Director of the Herbert Lehman Center for the Study of American History, and Jacques Barzin, Professor of History and the Social Sciences at Columbia University, where he is also chair of the Department of History. He's a graduate of the University of Memphis, and received his MA and PhD from the University of Chicago. He started teaching at Columbia in 1968, and by 1990 had assumed the Barzin Professorship, which honors one of the nation's most distinguished men of letters. He served as President of the Urban History Association, the Society of American Historians, the Organization of American Historians, and the New York Historical Society. He's lectured extensively around the world and has been a featured guest on a wide variety of television shows, and more than forty documentary productions. Professor Jackson's body of

published work is too extensive to list here. But ranges from his well-known *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States* to his most recent publication *Empire City: New York Through the Centuries*. And of course, he's the editor in chief of the all-encompassing and indispensable *Encyclopedia of New York City*. A strong advocate of history as the core of social studies, Professor Jackson chaired the Bradley Commission on History in Schools from 1987 to 1990, a nationwide effort to expand history teaching in America's elementary and secondary schools. Among the many, many awards, fellowships and honorary doctorates he's received are the Skyscraper Museum's Notable New Yorker Award, and Columbia University's Nicholas Butler Medal. Beyond all of this, Professor Jackson is most at home in the subways, back streets and neighborhoods of New York City, where he has been leading all-night bicycle rides, three-hour walking tours, and all-day bus trips to the delight of his students for decades.

I hope you'll join me in welcoming our two extremely distinguished speakers today. I'd like to thank both of them for joining us. After they speak, we're delighted to have Anne Van Ingen, who will moderate. As I said, Anne is the Director of Architecture, Planning and Design and Capital Projects at NYSCA. She has a BA in Art History from Middlebury College, and Masters in Historic Preservation from Columbia, and she's the advisor to the National Trusts for Historic Preservation. So, welcome to both our speakers. And Mr. Stern, we're going to start with you. Thank you.

Robert A.M. Stern: Thank you, Ms. Campbell, for a wonderful introduction, not only to me and I think to Ken, but to framing the discussions so beautifully for this afternoon. I took as a literal mandate the title 'Preservation and Progress', and I thought, "Well maybe we should look at the progress of preservation by looking at one, quickly, one overview, one area. Because of course it is said that my colleague on the platform sometimes doesn't approve of preservation. He denies that now. But sometimes he does say that. So I thought I'd provoke a little mischief in case after the lunch you need to be pepped up again.

So I thought we would look at SoHo, which is a very long-range, and I'm terrible at this...ah, there you go. SoHo, those of us who have been in the preservation movement or interested in preservation for a long time know that SoHo is maybe the most representative of the preserved neighborhoods. That is to say Brooklyn Heights and the Village. Everybody kind of acknowledged they were historically rich neighborhoods, principally because they had charming old

houses and they extended back into the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, pre-modern New York. But SoHo was a manufacturing district that grew up in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, and it did the what is the cardinal sin from the modernist architecture point of view, it represented one form of architecture – the classical masonry architecture of the distant past – in a new material, mostly cast iron. So it presented from the day one when Margot Gayle and even people before Margot Gayle drew attention to these buildings and to this wonderful treasury of buildings and spaces they made, the streets that they formed in Lower Manhattan. It provoked anguish. “Should we save it, because it’s wonderful? Should we save it, because it’s old? Should we save it, because it’s there? And if we save it, what are we saying about what architecture is really about?” And on and on. Some of you may remember those debates.

The buildings were extraordinary. The knowledge of the buildings in the SoHo District and neighboring areas around it was almost non-existent. The lack of historical knowledge about 19<sup>th</sup> Century architecture and indeed early 20<sup>th</sup> Century architecture in New York was shocking thirty or forty years ago. It takes a generation, I suppose, to begin to be interested, of time, passage of time, to be interested in the previous generation. But the ‘Victorian world’ was so anathema to so many people that it took literally two generations before historians like Henry Russell Hitchcock and others could begin to tackle this amazing, fertile period in our city’s growth, in architecture’s evolution, and the nation’s growth as a whole. These are just two wonderful examples from the post-Civil War era.

Now in the mid-1960s, when John Lindsay was becoming, was running for mayor, and then became the mayor, and a number of young people such as myself and Jack Robinson and others became attached to the Lindsay regime as it might be called, we, some of us, were drawn to the issue of the preservation of certain historic districts. This is what Howard Street, a part of the SoHo District, looked like in 1965. You know, it was not pretty. It wasn’t a pretty picture. You had to read way below the layers of grime. I won’t say it looked like Mary Campbell’s derelict dump or lot on 125<sup>th</sup> Street, but it was the built equivalent of that. It was forgotten and forlorn.

Of course it was a political psychodrama behind all this. And we mustn’t forget it – the Lower Manhattan Expressway of Robert Moses. And you know this expressway, which would have been a disaster of course, but it was typical of expressways such as this that were built or projected,

but so many were built, in so many cities around the country: San Francisco, for example. Boston. The Big Dig is all about taking down an expressway like this. And on and on. So there it was. It had been hanging for twenty years or more, really. It had been officially announced in 1950, but Moses had begun dreaming about it before the Second World War, I believe. And here's what it was. But what's also interesting is that the Ford Foundation supported Paul Rudolph's effort, and other architects, but notably Paul Rudolph, to tame the beast. "Couldn't it be turned into a delightful and delicious mega-structure that would stretch across Lower Manhattan?" This is the city corridor proposal by Paul Rudolph. Paul Rudolph was a wonderful architect. Died only a few years ago. And he had a great respect for cities and great respect for urban context, and indeed for the idea of the background building. But somehow he allowed himself to be seduced into the thought that you could turn the Lower Manhattan Expressway into a great new backdrop building, as if the Chinese Wall, the Great Wall of China was a backdrop. Not quite.

So there was that. Of course artists, this is the period just after Barnett Newman, the famous abstract expressionist, made the pronouncement in New York real estate 'Follow the artists'. And artists had begun to colonize the SoHo District. And they lived in lofts in shocking conditions. Not because artists are messy, that's creative. But because the fire controls were terrible. The light and air was often really inadequate. They used hand-pulled tugged rope elevators, and on and on. Bathroom facilities were primitive. But it was cheap and it had real grit about it. And the artists, young artists of New York, or they were young artists who *came* to New York – because that's also very important – they came to New York and they found SoHo and they settled there and they contributed to its preservation and to its attraction.

This is the period when tours, mostly of ladies from Scarsdale, would descend in buses down here, and they would have a naughty lunch at the Spring Street Tavern, and see some artists, and go back to Scarsdale. But a few of those people said, "Maybe there's something we might, we want, Darling, maybe we should get a little place in Manhattan." And that was the beginning of the repopulation by suburbanites of Manhattan in the Center City, which is very much part of the preservation story. We could deal with it later. So things began to move. Of course you always have to have a requisite number of true catastrophes to really light a fire under the public thing. The expressway wasn't going to be built. Jane Jacobs' night in jail wasn't enough. But tearing down a few key buildings like the famed Thomas Twins. Well they weren't famed then. Nobody even ever

noticed them. But you know once one twin gets shot, the other one looks a lot better. (laughter)  
There it is.

So an area was carved out. And you know if you look at the map of SoHo, which this is, and then you look at what is now designated in and around it, you'll see that SoHo was like a little handkerchief compared to the possibilities and the richness in the Lower Manhattan area. Nonetheless, the first designation was established. I can't remember the date, but it will come to me in a moment. In nineteen seventy-three, August 14<sup>th</sup>. It came to me because I wrote it down. Now after you follow the artists, you have to follow the architects. They take over the same space, and they manage to take away almost all its character. They paint it all white. They put in whatever the style du jour is. They always have with them at least one bent tube set of furniture and maybe some Alvar Alto, and it's all very nice, but it becomes very genteel by comparison. Of course, in so doing, the architects raise the rents, and the artists have to move to the next frontier. The architects always have friends who aren't architects, but are richer than architects called 'bankers' and 'lawyers', and you know that story. However, these two lofts were representative. The date on the right got flipped in the photographing process. It's 1974. As well as the one on the left.

So SoHo began to gentrify. And that gentrification lasted in an upward and seemingly unending and unquestioned cycle for practically twenty years, culminating in the elaborate, most elaborate art galleries being built just before the end. It's always, you know, just before Rome falls they build the best palace. So Gogolian in '91, and especially Rem Koolhaas, the most complicated architect of my generation, difficult to understand, does this gallery in 1996. At that moment, galleries moved to Chelsea because boutiques have taken over in SoHo. Boutiques, which are fed not only by the endless supply of people who *still* live in the suburbs and come there regularly, more power to them, and from people all over the world, but also by people who now live in most of the buildings above the street level. People who live in apartments, lofts, whatever you want to call them. And provide a year-round, twenty-four hour, seven day a week residential neighborhood, which transforms the place. Makes it possible to have food venues, grocery stores, restaurants and all of that. But because of preservation, the buildings retain their character, and even to a considerable extent their grit. And even new buildings, like Aldo Rossi's Scholastic Building, publication building, of 2001, Gensler infilling the site next to Ernest Flagg's little Singer Building, are amazingly interesting and appropriate buildings. That is probably the last appropriate building built in an historic district in

New York, because now we favor *inappropriate* buildings in historic districts. We can talk about that later.

But that is the issue of the moment. It's possible to build modern architecture that is appropriate, but it's also possible to build it that is very *inappropriate*. In any case, so we come to SoHo today, in a nice warm summery day, filled with shops and people are on the streets. The old cobblestones are there. You get a sense of the roughness. It's not really genteel. It may be gentrified but not genteel. That is an issue. It does seem to me, and I've lived through it all, to still be what it was then, but different. Is that possible? The same and different. I leave that question for our discussion. Thank you very much.

(applause)

Kenneth T. Jackson: Thank you. What a nice crowd we have today. It's an honor to be on the podium with Robert Stern, who was a colleague of mine for a generation at Columbia, who's one of America's great administrators, a great architect, and a great historian of this city. There's volumes on New York City occupy, all lined up, a prominent place on my shelves. I will try to make an argument and be brief. I came here first in 1963, and then came here permanently in 1968. It was not love at first sight. I thought I was just going to be here for a couple of years. But over the years, I taught urban history initially, and slowly began to teach New York City history, and began to become familiar with some weird places. I felt like an outsider until I began to get offers to go somewhere else, at an increase of tens of thousand of dollars, and sometimes they'll say what is my price? What would it take to leave? It was only then that I realized I had become part of New York, and it had become part of me, and at some level I love the city. In all my travels, I'm often asked what is my favorite city or where would I live if I could live anywhere and money were no object. And I always answer the same. New York.

Over the years, I've thought about what makes New York the greatest city in the world. And as I have taught, so I try to think about the city and what makes it different from other places, not similar to. And I have come up with a list of five which I teach my students.

First, diversity. From the very beginning in New York, this city was different from other places in the sense as you well know the Dutch were about making money and not about founding a new pathway to the hereafter, and so they were less anxious about where you went to church or if you went to church and more anxious to do business. So by the 1640s, there were eighteen different languages spoken in New York, whereas in New Amsterdam, and many people being chased out of Boston like Ann Hutchinson. But diversity is very important. And even today in, well in 2000, there were 2.9 million legal foreign born people in New York City, not counting all those who hid out, which makes it the largest foreign born place on earth. Even more than London, which claims it.

Second, toleration. Not that everyone has loved everybody in New York City. But it somehow, despite people like John Rocker or Howard Beach or half a hundred other things, we have managed to go all these years without an assassination, without the Pakistanis and Indians killing each other in Queens, without the Bosnians and the Serbs going at each other all over the place, without the Arabs and Jews killing each other in Brooklyn with one exception, one tragic exception some years ago. But we have been open to difference. And this year we're celebrating the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary, at least two months ago, of the Flushing Remonstrance, which is I think the strongest statement I think of religious freedom in American history. A couple of years ago we celebrated the 350<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the first Jewish settlement in what was then New Amsterdam. And I think that's run through our history, and I think it's an incredibly important of it.

Thirdly, aspiration. Unlike Australia, where they have a term called 'Tall Poppy', which means someone who stands out from his mates, and that's a pejorative term. Unlike many parts of Europe, where everybody's concerned with six weeks off in the summer and taking life easy. This is a nation, and especially a city, that has always stood for effort. Hard work. Trying to separate yourself from the crowd, whether it's to be the best chess player or the best violinist or leading fashion designer, the finest architect or most successful hedge fund manager, whatever you want to do. In Hamburg and Istanbul and Cairo, Cologne, what you see are the steeples of churches or the minarets, indicating a kind of the importance of religion, the here or the past. Obviously not the case in New York.

The fourth distinguishing characteristic of New York City is high density. Almost from the beginning, perhaps because it was an island, I don't need to tell you that a hundred years ago the Lower East Side was the most densely settled place on earth with no building over six stories. Or that as late as the 1960s, thinking of square feet of office space or floor space, there were only two places on earth half as dense as Midtown Manhattan, and one of them was Lower Manhattan. (laughter) So we could talk about this at length, but this is the real home of the skyscraper and vertical living.

And finally, and I think in many ways most importantly, change. What's unusual about New York City is the way it's shifted its focus, as it went from shipbuilding or mercantile activity to industrial activity, to other kinds of change. A transportation hub, to encourage reaching out, really the first global city. The first city to experience globalization, I mean suburbanization. Really the first city to experience deindustrialization. We got there a long time before. As late as the 1950s, this was the leading industrial city in the world. But long before that, Singer Sewing Machine had decamped for Elizabeth, New Jersey. Or Steinway had moved out to Astoria, and so it goes. But unlike other cities like Denver – not Denver, Detroit – or St. Louis or Cleveland or Buffalo, New York City managed to try and figure out something else to do. To change. And of course Professor Stern's example of SoHo was a perfect example of this adaptive reuse of other kinds of buildings. But New York's change has been important. The fact that the city would be wonderful if ever they finished it. And people talked about coming back to the city in 1900. I think it was Henry James. Didn't recognize the city. That would suggest that Joseph Mitchell, the famous writer of the *New Yorker*, who's been dead for quite a while, came back, he would recognize New York. Most people would recognize the city. This was a city of dreams.

Notice that my five distinguishing characteristics of New York City do not include the built environment and do not include architecture. I do not think New York City is distinctive because of the quality of its buildings. I think you would find a serious argument around the world about that. But it really is distinctive for the other five reasons that I mentioned. That doesn't mean we don't have distinctive architecture with its steel framed skyscrapers, brownstone row houses, or wonderful public buildings like City Hall and Customs House or Ellis Island or even the Tweed Courthouse. Or great planned environments like Rockefeller Center or Sunnyside Gardens, Forest Hills, Queens. But that to me is not the essence of New York. Every city can claim that.

What is it that makes New York *really* unique? So let me, having said that provocative statement let me make another. In general terms, interest in preserving architecture is for loser cities, or history is for losers. Let me give you an example. In the last part of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, boosters advocating Tacoma, Washington as the future great city of the world, the successor of Rome and London and New York City. “Who can doubt,” stated one brochure, “that the sum total of Tacoma’s resources, domestic and foreign, together with the entire aspect of her own and the world’s present environments are vastly superior to those of Chicago in 1852, and that is only a question of time when a greater city than Chicago or New York will flourish on the more salubrious shores of Puget Sound.” Tacoma’s aspirations were, of course, never realized. And the fight between the Canadian Pacific and Northern Pacific Railroads, Seattle won out. And then of course Tacoma followed the course of urban losers, and emphasized its human scale, its fine homes, its genteel living and its preservation of historic structures.

Tacoma’s position is the same for all cities. Why do we call it ‘Colonial Williamsburg’? Why do we think of Boston or Philadelphia or New Orleans or Savannah or Charleston as more historic than New York. *This* is the most historic city in the United States easily. But those cities have more of their historic fabric because they lost. They wanted to be big cities, they failed. And so nobody wanted those structures down by the Battery. Oh, it’s wonderful now. I’m not knocking Charleston’s Battery. But even Philadelphia and Boston were in a sense losers in that sense.

So let me make a few provocative statements, and then we can move on to the...I haven’t made any. (laughter) A few provocative statements. By the way, I wanted to rattle cages. When everybody thinks alike, nobody thinks very much. So I’m going to overstate my case. A vital city is a growing city. If you don’t believe that, take a look at Detroit. Or Camden. Or Cleveland. Or Buffalo. For that matter East Germany, which I just left last week. In New York City, the only way to grow is to become more dense. So I would argue New York needs to be more dense, not less dense.

Secondly, or thirdly, New York is not changing. Of course you say, “Where has he been? Has he looked outside? Has he seen the cranes? Has he noticed the new buildings on the Lower East Side or Downtown?” In world terms, of course we’re changing more than Charleston and some other cities. Phoenix added more people in the last seven years, by the way, than New York has grown in fifty years. So we’re not growing in world terms. Shanghai, which is a city we are competing with, has changed more in the last ten years than New York has changed in the last century. We’re not in

a race with Charleston or Savannah or New Orleans to be the most historic city. We're in a race with Shanghai and Tokyo and Seoul and Singapore and Hong Kong and London to be the greatest city in the world. And that's a different kind of a race.

Third, historic preservation is too often an elitist attempt to prevent or slow down change rather than an honest attempt to serve the public interest. Let us take the meat packing district, or Dumbo, or Williamsburg, or Green Horn. Historic preservation has made the rebuilding of the West Side improvement more difficult and more slow. And now they're blocking necessary improvements. Look at the Superior Ink, just as an example, the Superior Ink, which Robert Stern is building, a new 18 story building. I think it ought to be forty stories, not eighteen stories. That is an enormously expensive, wonderful waterfront improvement. The meat packing district has become almost the most precious place in the United States. The redevelopment of the high line, which I've supported and wrote an op-ed piece in favor of, is an enormously expensive public effort. And now we're limiting it to the few people who happen to have the money. My son happens to live in a six thousand dollar a month two bedroom rental. That's who we're saving this for. You want to add people who can enjoy the Hudson River? Build more units. So I think it should be more dense.

If someone built eight donut shops on a block, the price of donuts would go down. But somebody, especially in historic preservation, has gotten the attitude that somehow we want to save this building so they won't put up a forty story building of luxury apartments. We are trying to preserve inexpensive housing. I beg to differ. If you were to build, by some miracle, eight hundred, eight hundred residential skyscrapers with a thousand units in each of them, those are big skyscrapers, so that you would add eight hundred thousand apartment rentals in New York City, and called them 'super luxury', at five million dollars each, what do you think would happen to the price of apartments? Does anybody think that the price would go up because someone is asking five million dollars? Economics 101 will tell you that you want to drop the price, you increase the supply. And yet what we're trying to do here is, we need to add, we need to make New York more affordable. The way to do that is to build more, not to build less. As surely as the sun rises in the east, that is an economic law.

Third statement: Historic preservation is too often an attempt to slow down change. In 1926, the Municipal Arts Society, in concert with the City Club, put forward an effort to limit buildings to eight or ten stories in New York City. Thank God it went nowhere. I say, “If you don’t want tall buildings, move to Vermont.” Move somewhere else. When I was President of the New-York Historical Society, some woman criticized me about the harbor, because she said, she was talking about the fish. I said, “This is a world port. If you want to worry about the fish, go somewhere else. This is not a place to worry about fish.” (laughter) I guess that’s why I’m not president of the New-York Historical Society.

Fourthly, if historic preservation had been as strong in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century as it was in the late 20<sup>th</sup> Century, New York would never have emerged as the world city that it became. Let me just consider a few obvious illustrations. Just look at the skyline or the Battery in 1883, 125 years ago. You notice that we see a church spire, and not much else. And here we’re looking at the Battery a few years ago. Obviously all of those buildings are new buildings. Obviously all of them altered the streetscape. In fact, the whole park we’re looking at is an encouragement of a river, which wouldn’t have been there, which would have been opposed now, because it’s going into the river. But look at this. The Customs House. What’s that on? The Old Fort. The Old Fort was a lot more historically important than the Customs House ever thought about being. But of course we didn’t save that. We built a new one. Look at the Flatiron Building. You don’t think that was the first thing there. That’s a treasure, a remarkable treasure in this country. Or the Woolworth Building. It was the tallest building in the world from the time it went up in 1913, and I’m always fond of saying, “He paid cash for that building”. I mean who pays cash for a skyscraper anymore? But it was the tallest building in the world. And it’s a treasure. It’s one of, you know I don’t have this kind of aesthetic judgment, but architects say it’s one of America’s greatest architectural treasures. It broke the street in a straight plane, and was, or look at the Waldorf Astoria, the old Waldorf Astoria, which had to be torn down of course to make room for the Empire State Building. And of course that changed the landscape of New York City, and I think most people would agree in a pretty good way. And it’s become probably the best known building in New York. Or think about Rockefeller Center, which required the demolition of many dozens of what probably were wonderful brownstones. But in order to build a new structure which –or new series of structures—which have become one of the, you know in some ways the center of New York City. The very center is Rockefeller Center. Or

here the Lever House. Again, you know, kind of floating there above, but it required the destruction of something else that had been there on Park Avenue. Or the Seagram Building.

And even these what I think we all agree are kind of banal buildings on Sixth Avenue, that used to be an elevated train along there, not very attractive structures beside it. But those buildings required the destruction of other things. And even smaller buildings. I don't know why I showed you this one, but you know on East Seventh Street, McSorley's. Even the church. I mean that's important in Ukrainian Society. But there was an older group of structures there before that.

Let me conclude, because I know you want to have a shot at me and Bob both. (laughter) I do believe that historic preservation has had some positive results. I mean, and Bob could have of course expanded on SoHo to include Grand Central and many other buildings that I'm so grateful I can visit and take others to see. I think it's helped us retain parts of our past which are important to linking us to the future. You know, some of the buildings that I love are not necessarily the ones you would. But where I want where things happened inside of them. Apollo Theater, which went up in 1913, if I remember correctly, or the Old Merchant's House, or Grammercy Park. I mean a whole, there are some places that are so significant in history that we need to hold onto them. But I would say significance. We need to emphasize not only that they're old, not only that they're lovely, but that they were significant. Because suppose New York lasts another four hundred years. There's a kind of arrogance in thinking that we know better than anybody else what should be saved. It's sort of like a root canal – we need it to save our mouth, unless we do root canals on our whole mouth, and then we have a dead mouth. So we've got to be very careful.

I think the historic preservation movement has reminded us that money is not the measure of all things. That gargantuan is not always better. And I see it, we all see it. We see it around us. And none of us want to cede control just to people who can put together a few billion dollars. I think that we do have a right as citizens to say that our landscape is a common resource. And we all have to look at it, and the developer might sell it next year and move on. ....(break in audio)....The past can be beautiful. And desirable. It was only right after World War II, do you know that most Americans responded to a poll and said that they did not want to live in a 'used house'. Now, of course, advertising it's 'pre-War' obviously tells us something positive about it. So we have gotten a

new respect for things that were built well, when craftsmanship was important and not just to see how fast we could do things.

But what I would urge you is not to throw the baby out with the bathwater. Bigger is not always worse, either. It's not always true that a twenty-story building is better than a thirty -story building. We need to think about sustainability. As you well know I think in this room, New York is the most energy efficient, the greenest place in the United States. Most of you did not drive here. You walked, you took a bus, you took a subway, you took a taxi. You treaded more lightly on the environment. We need to move in a more dense way in the United States. We need to cut back on this spread out environment of work, residence, leisure and shopping that has caused us to be in hock to every Mideast Prince. And New York does that, and we need to encourage that kind of living in other places. But I think that we should be open to compromise. Compromise so that we can continue to live in a vital and changing city, even as we argue, strongly and forcefully, to say “*This* building is important. *This* needs to be saved. *This* is wonderful. Here we draw the line and we stand.”

I like to close with a quotation by a guy named E.B. White, who I think you recognize. He wrote a book with a guy named Strunk about how to write a good sentence. Not a passive voice, but active voice. Don't repeat yourself. Be strong. And not be repetitive. He wrote for The New Yorker, he wrote children's books. And you'll not be surprised that he was able to capture the essence of New York better in a small book that he wrote in 1949 called *Here Is New York* than I think I was able to do in a gigantic book called *The Encyclopedia [of New York]*. But I love this quote. It says, this is in 1949 from E.B. White: “New York will bestow the gift of loneliness, and the gift of privacy. New York is peculiarly constructed to absorb almost anything that comes along without inflicting the event on its inhabitants so that every event is in a sense optional. And the individual is in the happy position of being able to choose his spectacle and so can serve himself.”

Thank you.

(applause)

Anne Van Ingen: I'm Anne Van Ingen as Dr. Campbell introduced, told you. And I have the happy but daunting task of being the moderator this afternoon.

Stern: Fortunately we only have eight minutes.

Van Ingen: No, actually I was just told we have a little more time.

Stern: Oh. (laughter)

Van Ingen: On that note, thank you both very much for giving us your time this afternoon, and I hope you can stay a tiny bit beyond three o'clock. Thanks to the Museum of the City of New York and to the New York Preservation Archive Project, which has put on a fabulous event today. It warms the heart of a funder to see this many people caring about something that the Council on the Arts cares about passionately and that I have personally cared about for years. So thank you all for being here, and thank you for a wonderful event.

I remind you all that we are, that civilized people can disagree. That we are not going to make pronouncements this afternoon. We are going to lob questions at each other, and we are going to allow for answers. So, I will take, but before doing that, I also, under the spirit, within the spirit of entertaining a variety of positions, and I think we can all agree that differing opinions enrich any intellectual discourse, I remind you again about the survey The Preservation Vision NYC Survey. I hope you all will please log on and take that survey, because this is all part of the same effort to really chart a course for this field for the next twenty or thirty years. Or at least come up with some issues and different ways of thinking about this. And I know that all of you in the audience, everybody, not just preservationists but architects, public historians, all of you who are here and all of your colleagues in related fields have something to say about this profession. So I really do hope you will log on and launch into letting us know exactly what you think. I know you're not shy.

So let me just start by taking the moderator's prerogative here and just asking a question. One question for Bob, which we touched on earlier. My portfolio includes contemporary design at the New York State Council on the Arts as well, not just preservation. And Bob you touched on the

notion of a charge that is often lobbed at the preservation community, that it stifled good design. Can you expand on, you started touching on that in your talk, about how in fact you *can* have good contemporary design within say an historic district?

Stern: Well, I actually had, I was actually saying something slightly different. Maybe I didn't make myself clear. I think that currently in the preservation administration of this city, there is very little respect for good contemporary design that fits in. I think the notion of what is important and to make the city like Ken wants it to be filled with important monuments from different places, which I'm not sure I agree with, everything has to be completely different from what its context is. And there have been some pretty appalling decisions made. For example, in my view, the Hearst Tower, which may or may not be an interesting building, you take your own position on that, what is it doing on top of that historic landmark in that way? (applause) So whereas I showed Aldo Rossi, a wonderful architect who had a great respect for cities and wrote one of the best books of the twentieth century about this city – not *a* city, but *the* city as a concept – did a wonderful design on Lower Broadway. It fits in perfectly well, yet is quite distinct and about its own self with great integrity. So that's where I come down.

I think the preservation community, I did years ago raise the issue and it has become a kind of adapted issue I suppose, or adopted issue, that the preservationist movement grew up of course with the destruction of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century heritage in New York and elsewhere. Especially in New York and Pennsylvania Station's loss, Brokaw Houses, other things that some of you may have witnessed or certainly know about. And it tended to be very suspicious of new architecture, which it regarded as the enemy because the new shiny buildings replaced wonderful buildings of the past. And it seemed to be an uncontrollable route. Lever House, which Professor Jackson, Ken, showed actually did not replace an historic building. A two story taxpayer that had probably replaced an historic building, but had been sitting there since the 1930s because nobody wanted to build any buildings on Park Avenue until Mead Rose came along. But many other buildings did replace historic buildings. So, but now, to conclude this ramble, now we have a treasury of important modernist buildings. And we have done amazing things in the last ten or fifteen years to save quite a few, like the Lever House, which is protected by the Commission and has been beautifully restored. Like Seagram Building, which was protected by its owners from the day it was built, virtually. The governing protection for the Seagram Building is not the Landmarks Commission.

It's a lease agreement that is in perpetuity that goes with the building and the property. So there you had the most important modernist building ever built in New York – 1958 – with historic preservation motive built right into it. And that's an interesting oxymoron.

In any case I think we are being more respectful about preserving the recent past. We are very muddled. And I think Ken's argument is a little bit part of the muddle about must you have, how you build new and does new get thwarted by old. And I would say new does not get thwarted by old. There are so many empty sites in Manhattan, never mind the rest of the boroughs, for fantastic new buildings and opportunities. Preservation is not thwarting, but in fact absolutely encouraging by its stability of neighborhoods. Stabilization neighborhoods can encourage new construction.

Van Ingen: Following up on that....

Jackson: By the way, I think that's nonsense, but that's....(laughter)

Van Ingen: Don't let me interrupt.

Stern: If the Upper East Side had not been stabilized and preserved, which everyone from the business community said would kill the Upper East Side, then no one would be building luxury or whatever kind of apartment buildings east of Third Avenue. No question about it. It would have stayed old tenements, not very loved by anybody as it was for fifty years from the Second World War 'til the eighties. So I think that's a perfect example. The Upper West Side, if the Upper West Side had not been preserved through preservation, both the big apartment houses and the brownstone rows that form it, it would not have encouraged the very interesting scatterization of buildings through the Upper West Side and probably would not have drawn attention to Morningside and the Harlem communities. As we have now fantastic fill-in amidst historic buildings is taking place. You can have the past and new construction. The only reason nobody goes to Charleston is it's boring in Charleston. There you have it.

Jackson: Well, you know, look. I mean, by the way, I'm sure you realize, and so does Bob, I did overstate my case to jerk the strings.

Stern: A tiny bit.

Jackson: But let's just think of historic, but let's just think of historic, what we've saved. I'll give away that I'm a sports fan. The most historic sports arena in the United States is Yankee Stadium. We have allowed this cathedral of baseball, the most famous outdoor sports arena in the United States, to be destroyed, while we have more than twenty-six hundred historic buildings on the Upper West Side. Now I would suggest to you that we could go with a few less things on the Upper West Side and save Yankee Stadium. To save every building on the Upper West Side, where I happen to live by the way, but there, we're getting a little out of proportion here. We need some historic buildings, but now we're acting as if we're doing God's work if we can save every neighborhood from change. If our predecessors had had the same attitude, we would not have a great city. New York to the world represents skyscrapers. Everybody in the world knows what this city is. If you don't want to be in a vital, busy, turbulent city, I'm serious, go, this is not for gracious living. This is for something else. There's nothing wrong with the rest of America, but this is not a place of ease. You know? It's not supposed to be.

Now admittedly we don't want to just get, I think, just, you know, I don't like the Trump stuff on the West Side and stuff like that. It strikes me as it's awful. But, and so I'm not just saying, "Let's just build a lot of buildings that are new buildings somewhere." Obviously we've got to think about it. But we don't build building on let's say, we preserve the streetscape on Central Park West, what do you think that was when they built those buildings in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century? It was completely raping the landscape as it was then. What happened on Fifth Avenue right below here? We tore down all those other buildings. At subway stops, you need to have tall buildings. People have studied the Upper West Side. And on all of the subway stops, whether it's the Belnord or the Apthorp or the Ansonia, or moving on up, at the subway stops you should have high density. Meanwhile, we have a one story grocery store at 110<sup>th</sup> and Broadway. That's wrong in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. When we're trying to encourage the use of public transit.

Stern: I would answer that, but I'll let you go ahead.

Van Ingen: I'm just trying to, you all get to make pronouncements – the two of you do. The rest of us don't. Mayor Bloomberg has challenged us to look ahead to the year 2030. He has not dwelt on

the subject of historic preservation. So we're, but I'd be interested to know, actually the two of you, and this is two slightly different questions. What role do you think preservation will play in New York City in 2030? And what role do you think it should play? That's two different takes on the same question.

Stern: I'm not going to guess. I mean, it's too hard to guess. What it should do is getting up on a soapbox, guessing what might happen is very hard to do. I was totally amazed – I'm an admirer of Mayor Bloomberg, and he's done amazing things for the city – but the preservation, the way the preservation situation has shifted under his administration, a little bit under Giuliani, but mostly under his, was totally amazing to me – *is* totally amazing to me. And unpredictable. And I think misguided, frankly. So I can't, but I can't predict what will happen in 2030, but I will quarrel a little more with Ken Jackson. It's not the first time, by the way, that we've quarreled publicly. But you know a city like London, which we are competing with, in the global world, absolutely, is absolutely a city filled with present historic districts. And beyond that it has *huge* properties that are bound for one hundred year leases, and owned by single owners, and who are not about to give it up, because that's a source of their historic wealth and power in England. So they have had similar struggles to find new places, so they went to Canary Wharf, opened that up. They've gone, they're moving, the whole City of London is shifting east to areas that were basically unbuilt upon altogether. You look for new places in the city. And the geography in the city does evolve, but that doesn't mean you have to tear down the West End of London and it doesn't mean you no longer can stay at Claridges. It's still there. It will be there for you. And me.

Jackson: No, listen. I agree. But by the way the administration in London feels that the city is not dense enough and is trying to encourage density. They were embarrassed about London compared to other cities, it's only about half as dense as New York. It only has about half as much subway ridership. They're trying to change it. But let's just think about New York. I would go with Bob. It would be much nicer if we could just build on buildings and in areas that nobody really wanted. Fortunately we're in that situation. Think about New York in the last fifty or sixty years. If you look at an elevated or aerial view of New York in 1935 or 1945, you see a kind of a dark wedding cake. Looking like this. Tailing off toward the rivers. What's on the rivers, because it was the busiest harbor in the world, and there were kind of industrial warehouse districts, and people didn't

live there. Go watch the movie 'Sweet Smell of Success' with Tony Curtis and Burt Lancaster. You see these vast areas, and they're empty. Even though other areas are incredibly dense

Now what's happened is of course those factories have all left. We have lost almost a million industrial jobs in the last fifty years. Call it seven hundred thousand. So now we've got all these empty buildings along the waterfront. So what really, and so we've rediscovered our waterfront as the harbor essentially has moved to Los Angeles, and we've lost those hundreds of thousands of stevedore jobs. So what in some sense we are seeing happen, and is happening, is growth along the water way from the transit lines. Because what made New York unusual in the first place was that it grew up along the central spine – call it Fifth Avenue – along the subway lines, and away from the waterfront. Now for whatever reason we want people to, people want to live in West Chelsea and the Meatpacking District, and DUMBO and other places, and developers want to build there. I say we ought to let them. Yes, we can save Domino here and there. And maybe we can't save Superior Ink. But let that be the new developing city. Because nobody has to be evicted most of the time. Let's let it grow, and maybe we should extend public transit there. That's my argument. And then we don't have to evict people.

But meanwhile what we're doing is, this is going to gripe somebody, is in places like the West Side, or places like Greenwich Village where the fight over St. Vincent's Hospital. I teach a course called 'The Cholera Years. About how New York's attitude toward epidemic disease changed in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. From 1832 to 1866, through the Metropolitan Board of Health. And at the end of 1866, the decision was the city has no higher responsibility than protecting the health and well being of its citizens. And New York managed to avoid the great cholera epidemic of 1866. Now I don't know the details, and I'm not in Rudin or anybody else's employ. But what we're seeing is that the few old buildings are more important than an \$800 million modern hospital for people to get well. I'm saying that you have to have a really good reason to save those old buildings, because I think the health and security of the people trumps a few more historic buildings in Greenwich Village. And I love the Village.

Stern: There's an irony to that story. I'm not sure, I don't necessarily disagree with you about the importance of St. Vincent's in any way, shape or form, but the building that people are concerned

about is not an old building. It's the Maritime Building which was built in the 1960s, and it's the last monument of the time when this was a great port. So to go back, and it's a funny building.

Jackson: Well I say it's ugly, but anyway.

Stern: No, no, no. We mustn't get aesthetics. You said aesthetics weren't important. It was significance, historical significance.

Jackson: All right.

Stern: I listened to your talk.

Van Ingen: Should we take a couple of questions from the audience? Yes, right here.

Audience Member: Dr. Jackson, you talked about the value of diversity. And you talked about how welcome diversity is. But how diverse is the preservation community? And this is very problematic to me, because you talked about Yankee Stadium being this great cathedral of baseball, and I agree with you. You know there are people who have their ashes scattered in the infield. And not only did Joe Louis knock out Max Schmelling there....

Van Ingen: Make this a question, right.

Audience Member: It is a question. It is a question. Joe Louis knocked out Max Schmelling there. The pope came there. The Beatles came there. And they're going to tear it down and that is mad to me. Where were the preservationists? But then I would also ask where were *you* when people in the South Bronx were trying to save Yankee Stadium. I've never heard anything that you've said about Yankee Stadium before this date, or anyone else in this room. To say anything about Yankee Stadium. And similarly, Bob, if you say that the highway which was going to destroy Greenwich Village was such a terrible thing, and if in preservation we're saying, "Never again another destruction of Penn Station or wholesale destruction of a neighborhood," then where are the people who are fighting Renzo Piano's identical regiment of buildings that are destroying Manhattanville in Harlem, or the new buildings that are diminishing the Cathedral Church of St. John the Divine.

Where is the preservation world now that the rezoning of 125<sup>th</sup> Street would create luxury housing which will be guaranteed to drive poor Black people out of Harlem and transform it into someplace else. Where, if that is the equivalent of Moses' highway, where are people fighting that now? I do not understand it.

Stern: Michael, I think you're confusing in this discussion the preservation of physical evidence with the preservation of people who, of communities. Because in the case of SoHo, if you go back to that, I thought it made clear that many different successive communities, if you will, of people have lived, or even before that worked, and their jobs were all gone. And they were forced to go wherever. And I think the preservation movement is not a social movement in that sense. If you fight for the preservation of Harlem's buildings, I think you have many people who supported that.

Van Ingen: Thank you Michael.

Stern: If you preserve Harlem's buildings, you will also make those buildings stable and they will become more attractive for investment as Dr. Campbell herself pointed out. And you will get middle class people who will move in. They may be of the same social complexion or physical complexion as the ones who were there, or they may not. And of course that is in our open society what happens. But they will not be the poor people there. Now what to do to help those poor people is a totally different story. But you can't solve, preservation is not a social, it's not a moral crusade in my view.

Van Ingen: A question behind you?

Audience Member: I'm curious, professor, if you believe what you read about the infrastructure – the tunnels, the transportation, the electrical grid, the sewers – what kind of density do you think the city can increase? I mean, we're already straining the limits. Doesn't that come before anything else?

Jackson: Well, I think you have a wonderful point. But the subways now carry many fewer passengers than they did in 1948, which was the peak. So the subway system is not running at capacity now. The L Train is, and the Number 1 Train at 72<sup>nd</sup> is, and so there are places like this.

But the A, B and C and D are not running at capacity. Certainly the C and B are not. And you can certainly, you need, actually you need more people on the B and C line on Central Park West.

Stern: There are reasons for that, though, which I think are important. One, the number of people who live in the outer boroughs and commute to the center city, including to places like the Navy Yard, which was a huge employer in 1940 to '45 during the war, are not coming in. So these subway lines at the outer ends are totally underutilized. Those people who are living there are often working in the suburbs, what we would call the suburbs. If you can persuade some of the buildings, the development projects that are fighting for space in Manhattan, or even nearby edges of the East River in Brooklyn and Queens to be relocated more remotely, you could make more efficient use of it. But you will make a very boring place. You'll end up with Los Angeles. You'll run the danger of Los Angeles. Many centers in search of a city.

Van Ingen: Do we have time for one more? Or should we...in the back.

Audience Member: Hi. My name's Alice LaBrie. I'm a resident of Harlem. Hi, Dr. Jackson, Mr. Stern. I would like to know if you could comment quickly on preservation versus non-preservation and how it impacts our city's tax base.

Jackson: You know, I think that's a hard one, but my guess is that in order to improve the tax base you need to have more development. That's probably what will happen. But I think, every city in the United States wants to grow, and that presumably is why that's the case. Except for a few fancy suburbs. But I mean you take away the Scarsdales or the Dariens, virtually every place in the United States wants development. So I presume that in part they imagine in their financial balance that development equals more taxes. But everybody wants taxes to be, you know everybody wants the upper income trade. And I think to come back to what others were saying, the ultimate dilemma which is beyond the scope of historic preservation is how do we, in a country, a capitalist country with an increasing distance between rich and poor, handle the problems of society. And in that sense I agree with Bob, it's really, it's hard for a city by itself or planners or historic preservationists to solve the bigger mess that we've all gotten ourselves into, and then we hope we can start digging out of.

Van Ingen: And on that happy note, I think it's time. Thank you both very much.

(applause)