

**Session Track:** Sustainable Heritage Conservation  
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**Paper:** LEED and Historic Preservation, a Match Made in H...?

**Presented by**

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**Speaker(s) Biography**

Richard I. Ortega, PE, AIA, FAPT, has been a member of APT since 1974. He has over thirty years experience as a structural engineer and architect specializing in the technical and diagnostic aspects of architectural conservation. In fifteen years as owner of Ortega Consulting he worked on over two dozen award-winning preservation projects. Since joining RMJM Hillier, in 2002, as Director of Preservation Technology, he has been the project manager on several major projects including all three phases of the Lincoln Cottage restoration and the adaptive re-use of the Visitor Education Center.

William A. Dupont, AIA is the San Antonio Conservation Society Endowed Professor within the College of Architecture at the University of Texas at San Antonio. Previously, he served for 11 years as the architect for the National Trust Historic Sites and, specifically, directed the Lincoln Cottage project. He still consults to the National Trust on projects concerning master planning and conservation treatment philosophy.

Gavin Gardi, LEED AP, CFD, has over 250 credit hours of university education at the University of the Witwatersrand-Johannesberg, South Africa, Boston University, Western Michigan University, and Jordan College. In his role as LEED Coordinator Educational Facilities and Value Specialist at the Christman Company, Gavin is responsible for value analysis, life cycle costing and construction of sustainable, high-performance buildings. He was the principal coordinator of the LEED certification process for the Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center at the President Lincoln's Cottage at the Soldiers' Home.

Tom Whitmore is a project executive at The Christman Company. He has a degree in architecture from the University of Michigan. After working in Washington state and Oregon, he joined the Christman Company, in 2000. He worked on many of Christman's historic preservation projects in Michigan before transferring to the Mid-Atlantic regional office, in 2006, where he was in charge of the work at the Lincoln Cottage. He is a LEED-accredited professional and is past chapter board member of USGBC.

Elisabeth Dubin has a BA in Architecture from University of California at Berkeley. She joined RMJM Hillier, in 2003, after receiving a Master of Science in Historic Preservation from the University of Pennsylvania. She served as project architect on the Visitor Education Center project and coordinated LEED effort of the design team.

John Evans is a LEED-accredited professional who served as designer and construction administration lead on the Visitor Education Center project.

**Abstract**

The idea that historic preservation is inherently sustainable is not new to those working in that field. To recycle, adapt and prolong the useful lives of buildings and structures whose fabric embodies previously embodied energy of materials would seem to be the very definition of sustainable design. However, to do sustainable work and to have that work recognized for its sustainability are two separate things.

In the United States, recognition of sustainable design and construction is conferred through the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program (LEED) administered by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). The USGBC has established a series of standards as to what constitutes a green building, and has created a point system to quantify and certify the extent to which projects achieve those standards; amassing a higher point count results in commensurately greater award recognition. To date, it is estimated that only 1% to 2% of projects having attained LEED recognition are classified as historic preservation projects. Of these, the most have been commercial adaptive re-use projects; far fewer have involved sites of national significance.

Three years ago the National Trust for Historic Preservation, with the encouragement of a donor, undertook a new challenge: to produce a LEED-certified project without compromising their historic preservation program and standards. Both RMJM Hillier, the architect, and The Christman Company, the construction manager, had produced LEED-certified projects, but neither had attempted to do so while simultaneously meeting the rigorous standards of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

The task of fulfilling the requirements of two essentially proscriptive design standards, one formulated for historic preservation, but over thirty years old, the second, more recent, but intended for new construction, posed a daunting challenge for the design team and construction management team. The National Trust for Historic Preservation started the process by hosting an all-day interdisciplinary sustainability charrette to examine the feasibility of attaining LEED certification and to foster creative thinking on all ways that sustainability might be incorporated into the design of the proposed Visitors Education Center serving the President Lincoln and Soldiers Home National Monument. Using the recommendations produced by the charrette, RMJM Hillier and its consultants in collaboration with The Christman Company targeted the categories within LEED NC v2.2 which were consistent with those sustainability goals. Matching the sustainability goals for the adaptive re-use of the historic Armed Forces Retirement Home Administration Building with categories intended for new construction required substantial thought and ingenuity. As the project progressed, all design decisions were benchmarked and referenced against those targets and goals. The Christman Company took responsibility for registering the project with the USGBC, and throughout the process monitored and updated our potential LEED score, and managed all of the submissions and documentation required by the USGBC.

The panel session will begin with a brief description of the project highlighting the sustainable design elements. Then, each of the collaborators in the project will provide their perspectives on the strengths, weaknesses, value, and applicability of the LEED certification process for achieving and promoting sustainability in historic preservation projects. The session will then be opened to questions from the attendees.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation and The Association for Preservation Technology are actively seeking a dialogue with the U.S. Green Building Council to address the lack of guidelines in LEED standards for integrating historic preservation with sustainable design. This panel session will provide a forum to frame the discussion of those issues within the context of a pioneering project that successfully navigated the difficult path to attain LEED certification for The Robert H. Smith Visitor Education Center at the President Lincoln's Cottage at the Soldiers Home, which was completed and opened to the public in February of 2008 and is the first LEED-certified National Trust property.

Representing the client will be William A. Dupont, AIA, UTSA College of Architecture, San Antonio Conservation Society Endowed Professor and former Graham Gund Architect of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Tom Whitmore, LEED AP, Project Executive, and Gavin Gardi, LEED AP, Value Specialist, will present the perspective of The Christman Company, the construction managers. Finally, the RMJM Hillier design team will be represented by Elisabeth Dubin and John Evans, LEED AP. Richard I. Ortega, PE, AIA, FAPT, Senior Associate at RMJM Hillier, and project manager, will moderate.<sup>7</sup>