

# HERITAGE

THE UTAH HERITAGE FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER VOL. 43 NO. 3

## PRESERVATION – MORE THAN JUST A PRETTY FACE

By Lisbeth Henning Cort, Cort Communications

One of the grayest areas of historic preservation is the facadectomy, saving only the facade of an historic building – albeit often its most iconic part – while constructing a new building behind it. It rose as “an acceptable compromise” back in the 1960s and 70s as the young preservation movement took shape.

Today, with 30+ years of facadectomies all over the world reinforcing a sense of recurring loss, the practice is universally regarded in historic preservation as unacceptable – neither good preservation nor good urban design. Rather, the remaining building fragments seem a “win-lose compromise”, leaving us with a thin veneer revealing little about our past and even less about our capacity for quality new design.

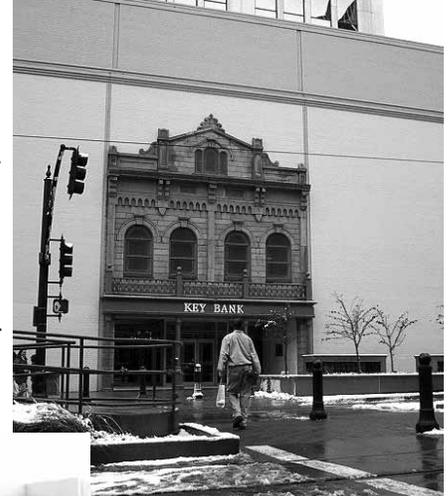
It’s a gray area that incites passion. It’s been called “architectural taxidermy”, “architectural skin job”, “life-sized sculpture”, “urban wallpaper”, “the display of souvenirs from another era”, “a developer’s parlor trick”. Many even find demolition and enlightened new construction preferable to pasting remnants of landmarks onto new buildings.

Yet in spite of tangible examples and passionate arguments against the practice, it continues to present itself as a tempting solution when landmarks

are threatened, especially in the highly-charged politics of downtown development and high-density zoning. It continues to test our sense of what it means to preserve the whole picture – a gut check on standing up for the whole story a building has to tell.

### Better something than nothing?

By way of background on this hotly-debated practice, Chicago Tribune architecture critic, Blair Kamin laid it out better than I could in an April 8, 2007 Tribune article. He said:



*Local examples of facadectomies on Salt Lake’s Main Street included the ZCMI store front (left) and Key Bank (above). Both have been temporarily removed with the City Creek Project. Upon Completion of the project, the ZCMI storefront will again be reattached to the front of a brand new building.*

“Back in the 1960s, the pioneers of historic preservation faced stark choices as they battled to protect such renowned structures as New York’s Pennsylvania Station or Louis Sullivan and Dankmar Adler’s Garrick Theater building in Chicago: Either save the building or watch the wrecker’s ball smash it to smithereens.

But today, developers and architects have devised a new way of holding onto the past that makes things far more complex: Instead of preserving

an entire building, it keeps only the building’s facade, grafting that facade onto a new internal structure, as though it were the skin of a stuffed animal.

Better to save something than nothing, goes this theory. And while it’s true that such projects typically possess the human scale and eye-pleasing decoration rarely found in massive parking garages or bland condominium towers, they still rankle. The reason: They create a stage-set city that treats buildings like two-dimensional wallpaper, not three-dimensional structures. That destroys a building’s essence and, at worst, makes a mockery of the very history these exercises purport to respect. ...How much can you strip from a landmark building until it ceases to be a landmark?”

If we determine a building is worthy of preservation, is removing all but part of its skin ok? How many of us would agree that tearing out the last 95% of a

*(continued on page 6)*



*Brooks Arcade (above), on the corner of 300 South and State Street, is a facadectomy saved and restored while extending the new property to the north, west and underground.*

## FIRST WORD IN PRESERVATION

Utah Heritage Foundation is a non-profit, statewide, membership-based organization dedicated to preserving, protecting and promoting Utah's historic built environment through public awareness, advocacy, and active preservation.

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It may seem that historic preservation is a world of black and white decisions- either you save a building or you don't. Deciding whether a building should have a new use as an office or housing, which will change a neighborhood for decades in the foreseeable future, is also black and white. Deciding to either replace your roof this season or next, or deciding to replace or repair your windows for your historic house, can be black and white based on your budget.

But as many of you who own historic homes know, there are also many gray areas in historic preservation. There are preservation standards for projects that are spelled out in the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties. While we can point you in the right direction to read this list of "Do's and Don'ts" (or what's "Recommended and Not Recommended"), it's not always easy to understand. So while there is an ever-increasing selection of windows and roofing products that are acceptable today, you have many choices for your dollar.

But when we see a property owner treading away from the Standards and into a gray area with a potential project, no matter how big or small, it sends up red flags. In this issue of *Heritage*, we present some of the choices that property owners and preservation professionals have been grasping with the level of unacceptability for decades now. Consider the following partial list of ideas that are not typically recommended as they can cause permanent damage to a historic building:

- Sandblasting (or walnut shell, glass bead, ice pellet, dry ice blasting) of any surface
- Painting previously unpainted brick
- Covering or removing original materials
- Demolishing part or all of an original structure
- Demolishing an original building in order to replicate it
- Building, or moving, a historic structure from another location on your site

Of course, economics plays a major role in the decision-making process of how historic preservation is executed. In the end, if an owner decides to commit any number of preservation's violations to the Standards, it is often his/her personal choice, but the benefits of historic preservation such as listing on the National Register of Historic Places, historic rehabilitation tax credits, technical assistance for advocacy, and cooperation from municipalities for beneficial zoning will likely no longer be available.

The technical advice provided in this issue is meant to provide context and guidance, but also timeless rules of thumb. In addition, the assistance of UHF and other professionals to help navigate through the options and benefits of a project before it enters the gray area is available to create a successful preservation outcome.

Kirk Huffaker  
UHF Executive Director

## Salt Lake Modern Committee Presents An Evening of Art & Architecture

Salt Lake Modern, a part of Utah Heritage Foundation, is dedicated to preserving and promoting the region's mid-century modern architecture and design. These goals can be accomplished through public education and advocacy, documentation and historic research, building and home tours, and resource development.

Saturday, October 10  
5:00 - 7:00 PM

Call 801.533.0858 ext. 107 to receive your exclusive invitation.

## PEOPLE IN PRESERVATION

### Spotlight on a Docent - Jane Anderson

**How long have you been volunteering for UHF, and how were you introduced to us?**

Over 12 years now. I started in 1996 when the Governor's Mansion had just been restored after a fire. With the restoration complete I became a docent through the Salt Lake Newcomers Club.

**What tour is your favorite tour to give? And what specifically is your favorite part?**

The Governor's Mansion tours are my favorite. I especially like giving these tours to groups of students. They are usually very excited about being in the Kearns Mansion and are interested in every little detail that they can find.

**How has volunteering for UHF changed your thoughts about preservation?**

Now I pay more attention to the various homes and buildings that I pass every day. I can also appreciate the great amount of planning and work required to restore these buildings

**What keeps you coming back to give tours?**

It is the enjoyment that I get from the contact with people touring and sharing stories about the history of these great landmarks. I also enjoy the time spent with my fellow volunteers.

**Do you have any advice for your fellow volunteers?**

The time and study our docents commit to Utah Heritage Foundation is reflected in the outstanding tours that are given. Just continue being excellent docents and being such great representatives of UHF.

**What do you do when you are not volunteering?**

When I am not at the cabin in Lambs Canyon, I ride and show my Tennessee Walking horse.



*Photo Courtesy of Pro Photo and Pam Olsen.*

**Tell us something that we would be surprised to know about you.**

I once took a bicycle tour of France.

### Thank you to the following for choosing Memorial House to host their special event!

**June**

Morton Family  
Cecily Vincent & Eric Buell  
Sophie Ellison & Shane Enquist  
University of Utah, Division of  
General Surgery  
Kim Pehrson & Seth Payne  
Emily Allen & Bryan Tippetts  
Ashland Sellers & Griffin Hazard  
Stephanie Richards & Jason  
Johnson  
Sydne Porter & Randy Garner  
Tamara Hadley & Carlo Argyle  
Jami Craven & James Wright

**July**

Sabrina Crose & Michael Higley  
Kari Wilson & Eric Hull  
Courtney Morris & Adam  
Stockman

**August**

April Rivera & Johnny Saccomanno  
Angie Hair & Scott Steele  
Business Women's Forum  
Catherine Guyon & Bert Van Uitert  
Marissa Allen & Luke Reichert  
Melissa Kunz & Jeffrey Combe  
Jaime Bodenhofer & Brent Ranke  
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**MEMORIAL  
HOUSE**  
in Memory Grove Park

## Capitol Discovery Day

Utah Heritage Foundation and the Capitol Preservation Board hosted the 5th Annual Capitol Discovery Day on August 29. Every year UHF highlights the architectural features that make the Utah State Capitol such a treasure. We have children's activities that help adults and kids alike learn about geodesic domes, wyverns, mirror-matched marble, and mosaics. This year activities were both inside the rotunda and outside the front steps. We had sidewalk chalk murals, much like those that are inside the capitol building. UHF staff and members also demonstrated the construction of geodesic domes out of newspaper. We learned a few lessons about a self-supporting structure, and in the end realized we need stronger parts to make it work a little better next time!

Capitol Discovery Day is one of UHF's largest public events and we aspire to teach all Utahns about architecture and the Utah State Capitol. We would like to thank our Volunteers who helped make this day such a great success. A special thank you to Shirley Palmquist who volunteered for the entire length of the event, helping to teach 3,000 people about geodesic domes made with gumdrops and toothpicks.



## UTAH HERITAGE FOUNDATION HAPPENINGS

### Members Trip to Delta



*Replica of a Topaz barracks outside the Great Basin Museum (left). The group explores the remains of the Topaz historic site (below).*



On August 22 Utah Heritage Foundation members toured Delta, discovering some of the historic gems that can be found in Utah's West Desert. A group of 30 gathered at the Great Basin Museum to see artifacts from historic Delta including objects left behind by the Japanese-Americans at Topaz Internment Camp. Outside the museum is a reconstruction of an original Topaz barrack that houses several pieces of original furniture. Some of the furniture was made at the Topaz using the shipping crates to fashion chairs.

We also had the rare opportunity to visit Van's Hall. Built in 1926 this dance hall has over 200,000 pieces of hand-cut mirror and glass. To top it all off, a 400-pound rotating mirrored globe fills the center of the hall. We took the opportunity to have a group photo (above) so we can share our Van's experience.

Next, at the site of Topaz we learned from our tour guide, Jane Beckwith, that the barracks were dismantled shortly after the war and sold for \$250 each. It was a rare experience to be on that site in the middle of summer and wonder how the residents survived the heat with little water.

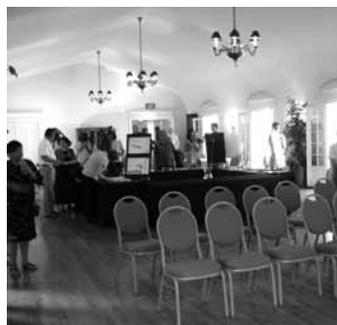
This trip was truly one-of-a-kind. We would like to thank our tour guide, Jane Beckwith, who continually promotes preservation in the Great Basin area. Don't just take our word for how great this tour was – UHF members Michele Taylor and Ken Hartner said, "Delta had so much to offer and we were so impressed. Everything was so interesting and well thought out. We appreciate the efforts of everyone there and look forward to future events."

### The Salt Lake Tornado - 10 Years Later

On August 11, 2009, ten years after one of the most devastating meteorological events in Utah history, friends gathered again at Memorial House in Memory Grove to celebrate the restoration made possible through their hard work. Mayor Ralph Becker emotionally recalled the dedication of those who worked to bring back Memory Grove and other areas of Salt Lake City. Rick Graham, Salt Lake City Public Works Director, and Larry Dunn, Meteorologist-in-Charge of the Salt Lake City Office of the National Weather Service, also spoke.

Utah Heritage Foundation board chair Pete Ashdown spoke and donated video footage he took of the immediate aftermath of the tornado. Community members also gathered, sharing photos and memories, reconnecting with old friends and making new ones. Utah Heritage Foundation thanks everyone who came, shared their memories and media. We also again express gratitude to those who worked and continue to work diligently to restore, rehabilitate, and maintain Memory Grove Park since the tornado.

*The picture of the far right shows the devastation that was created by the 1999 tornado. The picture on the left shows neighbors and community members gathering to remember and celebrate the volunteer hours that went into rebuilding the park.*



Hemingway novel would be ok? Or leaving the Mona Lisa's smile but whitewashing the rest of da Vinci's masterpiece?

Can remnants of a building give a complete picture of the past ways of life? Is a facade the total expression of an architect's efforts and intentions? How does one decide if the exterior of a building can be segregated from its interior? Tough questions posed by Gustavo F. Araoz in the National Trust's Spring 1990 Forum Journal.

**Dogma and the Gut Check**

Full disclosure. I'm not a "purist" when it comes to preservation. I think exposed brick walls in loft apartments are pleasing canvases for cool art. I like inventive adaptive use projects that turn obsolete warehouses into hip modern offices. Such rehab projects sometimes meet preservationists' technical and philosophical tenets spelled out in the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Sometimes they don't. The difference is whether the "character-defining features" are preserved. That is, are the distinct and consequential pieces still there to tell the whole story?

As a former, long-time preservation professional, I respect the Standards as a common-sense set of guidelines that can be applied fairly easily and objectively in any town no matter its geography or architectural styles. As an individual, I trust my gut.

It's a gut that's been working well since I was a kid who didn't know or care what "historic preservation" meant but knew it was just wrong when I watched as my grandmother's hometown of Lawton OK demolished its entire downtown core in the name of urban renewal. Huh? Likewise, when I saw my first facadectomy a few years later, I knew instantly that it was oddly superficial, trivial, shallow. At first I was drawn to

the pretty terracotta facade, but I soon realized that if I tried to venture inside to discover what lay beneath, I'd bump into the glass wall of the new skyscraper it was spliced onto. At the time I couldn't cite the Secretary's Standard for why this was jarring or articulate my reaction using architecture lingo. It didn't matter. Even a kid can spot a fake.

Turns out my gut and the Standards are right in sync when it comes to facadectomies. Facadectomies never meet the Standards. They also never pass the gut check when seeking reasonable compromises between preservation and new development.

**We Could Do Worse**

"We could do a lot worse" is usually the final argument for saving just a facade. But when has this ever been a good argument for anything – especially when it comes to the way our cities look and our hometown history is personified? San Francisco Chronicle Urban Design and Architecture Reporter John King said, "The result too often shows contempt for both the present and the past. History becomes a hollowed-out token. And contemporary design is hindered by arbitrary restraints." In Salt Lake, we've been able to judge for ourselves whether these slivered landmarks stand the test of time -- whether we could do worse. Did the old Amussen's Jewelry Store facade



*These row houses are located on what is now George Washington University in the District of Columbia. They have been attached to a large, multi-use structure and their unique architecture becomes lost in the massive building that overshadows them.*

tell us very much when we were distracted by the giant brick box it was attached to called the Crossroads Mall? Did anyone even know it was

the facade of the Amussens Jewelry Store? Did it mean much to us when its last slim vestiges were torn down with the mall? The ZCMI facade was an interesting structural feature, but it always seemed a bit like a sad old man with hollowed out eyes as it stood pasted to the west wall of the old ZCMI Mall. The modern windows and doors on the Brooks Arcade at least line up with the old, but the great old commercial corridors with prism-windowed office doors were sacrificed, to our detriment, when city hall politics won out over a rational, economic, and real alternative that would have saved the whole building.

**We Can Do Better**

And so the final argument should be, "we can do better." Our landmarks deserve that we do our best rather than settle for "not doing worse". We deserve better. We deserve depth and texture vs. a phony veneer. We want the full story and not just the cover. We've learned that a facadectomy is a compromise where everyone loses, a "comforting illusion that we're saving the style and the meaning of history when, in fact, we're destroying all but a fraction of it (Blair Kamin).

Turns out we can see quite clearly what matters – even through the gray.

*Lisbeth Henning Cort was executive director of the Utah Heritage Foundation from 1995 to 2002. Today she lives on Whidbey Island, north of Seattle where she runs Cort Communications, helping nonprofits plan, achieve and inspire change. [www.cortcom.com](http://www.cortcom.com)*



*Facadectomies are a global problem. This classic structure has been transformed into a faceless high-rise office building and is located in Valparaiso, Chile. Photo provided by Gonzalo Morere.*

## PAINING BRICK BUILDINGS... STILL NOT A GREAT IDEA

By Robert A. Young, University of Utah

A number of homeowners, both past and present, have at some point painted their brick houses. Whether done for color aesthetics or simply to cover soiling, painting brick can begin or accelerate its deterioration. Without identifying and correcting the underlying causes of the decay, the seemingly quick, albeit, inappropriate choice is to paint. While initially often cheaper, painting brick is not a good idea for the long term sustainability of your building. Without correcting underlying moisture problems, painted surfaces will fail and become a recurring maintenance issue. Properly cleaned and maintained, unpainted brick can last hundreds of years.

Brick absorbs and releases moisture continually. In a sense, bricks "breathe" and this is an important part of the maintenance process. Early coatings on brick accommodated this moisture exchange but were often limited to lime washes, white washes, and casein-based (milk) paints. More moisture resistant paints were used on wood. The custom of painting brick arose with the advent of the "Industrial Revolution" as a means to eliminate soiling. Advancement in paint technology in the twentieth century eliminated the moisture exchange properties of most paints altogether. No moisture penetrated the surface and, conversely, moisture was trapped within the painted material.

Beyond color preferences, decisions to paint brick buildings stem from problems

appearing at the surface of the brick itself. These surface problems include: soiling from air pollution (e.g., coal soot and automobile emissions); decay formed by moisture on and within the brick itself (e.g., salt crystals or efflorescence, leaking gutters and pipes, and mineral depos-



its from lawn sprinkler overspray); and abrasion from tree branches. Moisture within bricks promotes spalling and surface deterioration due to absorption and freeze thaw cycles that can cause bricks



*This Richard Kletting designed house (above) was painted in the mid-twentieth century. The paint was recently removed and the brick work restored to its original beauty. Brick detail (left) revealed after paint removal.*

to swell. This creates internal pressures when there is no tolerance for the expansion, typically created when using improper mortar repair methods. Similarly, moisture will migrate from the living space through the wall, especially condensation from kitchens and bathrooms. Moisture and accumulated soiling may also invite plant life.

Before making a painting decision, eliminate sources of decay. If the building must be repainted then select "breathable" coatings which unfortunately rules out many contemporary products. If breathable coatings are not used, be assured that the moisture problems will reappear or migrate to other vulnerable locations inside the walls. Removing paint introduces other issues. Use of harsh abrasive methods such as sand blasting, power scraping, and high-pressure washing have been extremely detrimental to brick. They abrasively remove portions of the brick surface along with the paint or accumulated soiling and subsequently accelerate decay as the interior of the brick is exposed to the atmosphere. At present, the most commonly approved method is a combination of detergents or stripping agents and low-pressure washing. For best results, consult a reputable masonry specialty contractor. Poor choices in removal methods may result in an immediate satisfactory appearance but will accelerate decay and future maintenance needs. This choice is particularly important when seeking historic preservation tax credits as the wrong choice will eliminate eligibility for them.

*Robert A. Young, PE, is the director of the University of Utah Historic Preservation Program and the author of Historic Preservation Technology.*



*The bricks on the Stoneman Store and House (1914) have never been painted and were cleaned in 2008.*

## CREATING A FALSE SENSE OF HISTORY

By Kirk Huffaker, UHF Executive Director

Coming to Utah in the late 1990s, I learned that many significant milestones in Utah's historic preservation had already been accomplished – buildings saved; policies passed; education programs taught; historic district commissions formed. I also learned how some of Utah's most interesting preservation examples were achieved in ways that I had previously only read about in textbooks.

An interesting evolution of preservation practice is to move numerous buildings of the same type to a new location. In Utah, many historic log cabins belonging to town's founding fathers have been rescued and now rest in local parks. This had not happened in such a wholesale manner in the Midwest, where I came from. I also experienced Gardner Village and This is the Place Monument.

These were successful saves that happened in an era that people remember fighting for, cherish still, and therefore continue to patronize. But as a person that strives to stick to preservation principles first, I knew there had to be a better way to save buildings than what had devolved into a game of chess with history.

As the field of historic preservation has professionally evolved, so too have the criteria that determine the success of a project. The national criteria for rehabilitation, additions, and reconstruction projects are included as a list of recommendations in the Secretary of the

Interior's Treatment for Historic Properties (1995). When a project meets a majority of these recommendations, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, we consider it a model for others. Many of these projects can

of haste comes an equally expedient way to "preserve" history. A successful project that truly includes historic preservation is one where all parties understand each other's common goals, including the historic preservation goals. Unfortunately, documenting a structure in photos or on

a plaque does not preserve any of the physical history of the building. Only saving elements of the building or performing a façadectomy does not preserve the true physical history of the building either (see cover story).

### Moving Buildings

While Gardner Village has become a successful destination and carries name recognition, in part because of its historic character and from having moved several buildings from their original historic context to one central location, it is not the most acceptable option in historic preservation today. Inevitably, there's

the occasional new plan to create the next Gardner Village or This is the Place by moving buildings. Unfortunately, these are not looked upon favorably and even referred to as "architectural petting zoos." It creates a setting where you can experience a cross-section of historic architecture and living history in manicured confines and all within walking distance of your car. Plus, if there was a Gardner Village in every county across Utah, none of them would be unique anymore.

Today, moving buildings is seen as a last resort for saving them; it is expensive, time consuming, and economically challenging to financially pencil-out since moving buildings typically removes them from the National Register, thus removing the possibility of using rehab tax credits. It was the last resort for Odd Fellows and one of the deciding factors was that it could remain listed in the National Register as it was located in its near-original context.



*The attractive village setting of Gardner Village is so successful that many developers would like to re-create this recreation of an old fashioned village, but is not recommended by today's preservation standards.*

be seen on the UHF website as a recipient of our annual Heritage Awards. In addition to being a preservation model, these projects often qualify for historic rehabilitation tax credits giving them further economic benefits.

However, when a project wanders too far from the Standards, what is left leans toward creating or re-creating a false sense of history. The following list includes a few of the reasons why these options should not be pursued to save historic buildings and sites:

### Giving a Building its Just Due - Preserving History in a Photo or a Plaque

Expediency has often led to demolition of historic buildings. In the wake

*The original Ottinger Hall (left) is being used today as the home of YouthCity. But a ¼ scale replica of the Canyon Road landmark stands at This Is the Place Heritage Park where its previous volunteer fire museum artifacts have been relocated.*



## CREATING A FALSE SENSE OF HISTORY (CONT.)

### Replication of a Building

Utah's history and architecture is completely unique. Visitors come to Utah to capture a glimpse of Temple Square, Sanpete County, or southern Utah's small towns. Keeping Utah's authenticity in the forefront should be just as important in the buildings we rehabilitate and promote as in the Bear Lake raspberries or Green River melons we sell. When you walk into a building, you should feel the historic building behind the façade. Unfortunately, replications (and façadectomies) only make you believe that you are seeing the real thing.

### Reconstruction of a Building

There are times that reconstructing a building should be considered; like after an act of God. However, reconstructing a building or replicating the original in a new location while the original still exists is not acceptable in today's preservation practice. The Standards for Reconstruction state that "Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed" and that the building needs to be accurate to original plans. Therefore, it is not acceptable to reconstruct a building on a smaller scale, and reconstruction/replication of a building



*Once the home to the Rigby, Idaho Sugar Factory, this fabulous warehouse structure has been turned into "Sugar Town" by dividing its historic bays into painted sections, creating a mini-village where one never existed. Though its one way to attract new visitors, this method doesn't work with the building's authenticity.*

shouldn't make sense and doesn't do justice to keeping Utah's unique history and architecture.

Over time, the Standards have become preservation's principles. They exist to provide options and recommend choices for saving the character defining features and the entire building. There have been public calls to broaden and eliminate

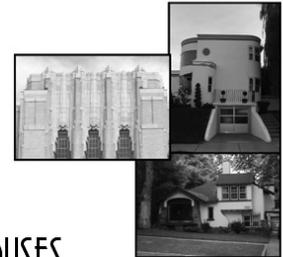
all or part of the Standards in order to include more building types, like modernism, create more affordable housing, and allow more green building products to be compatible with historic materials. But the way I see it, the Standards lay down the rules we need to deter poor decisions while leaving room for individual choice, compromise, and new product development.



Weber County Heritage Foundation's  
32nd Annual Historic House Tour

ART & ART DECO  
FEATURING

ARTHUR SHREEVE AND ART DECO HOUSES  
SEPTEMBER 19TH, 2009. 10AM TO 4PM



This year is our "Art and Art Tour" featuring houses by renowned architect Arthur Shreeve and houses of Art Moderne architecture. The proceeds from our tour will go to the Ogden High School restoration effort. We will tour the new additions to Ogden High School and then continue along the East Bench of Ogden. Tickets are \$15 (\$10 for members) and are available at the Eccles Community Art Center, Planet Rainbow, or the day of the tour at Ogden High School.

## UTAH'S PRESERVATION HEROES

Only through membership dues and generous contributions is Utah Heritage Foundation able to preserve, protect, and promote Utah's historic built environment through public education, advocacy, and active preservation. The following partners in preservation have recently contributed to Utah Heritage Foundation. The Board of Trustees, volunteers, and staff sincerely thank these Preservation Heroes.

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We extend our thanks to the members of the Preservation Council for their generous support.

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Key Bank, *SLC*  
Lowell Construction, *SLC*

##### Foundation

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Foundation, *SLC*  
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Nebeker Family Foundation, *Ogden*

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Jones Waldo Holbrook and McDonough PC, *SLC*  
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