

## History, Incorporated

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When the City of Lancaster first planned to put a convention center on Penn Square in the late 1990s, the design called for knocking down all of the block's original buildings and replacing them with a modern structure.

The Historic Preservation Trust of Lancaster County protested, saying the buildings had historical value and needed to be preserved. After much back and forth, the most recent convention center plan calls for preserving the facades of the old Watt and Shand department store and the Montgomery House. Plans

also include an underground museum in corridors between the convention center and the restored home and office of 19th-century U.S. Rep. Thaddeus Stevens and his neighbor, Lydia Hamilton-Smith. The general plans are complete, drawn up by the Atlanta firm Cooper Carry Inc. and Lancaster-based Community Heritage Partners.

The struggle over the center is a battle in a much greater war: preservation versus innovation. A truce seems to be evolving. Architects who work on downtown designs are finding a compromise in incorporated buildings, modern structures built around existing ones to preserve and expand at the same time.

"This was happening in Philadelphia and in Washington, D.C., 25 years ago, and it's now finally happening here," said architect Gene Aleci of Community

Building Partners. "It is not unusual for things to come here more slowly."

Not everyone in the historical-preservation community is a fan of incorporation. While it may appease both parties, David Zwifka of Historic Harrisburg Association thinks the result can be tacky.

"The architecture of the two must be in harmony," he said. "Otherwise, the result can be a rather jarring aesthetic."

Building incorporation has not caught on in Harrisburg; Zwifka could not think of one example in the city.

Some architects in York have started to use building incorporation in the past few years. A

nonprofit firm, Crispus

Attucks Association of York Pennsylvania, owns several buildings on South George Street and Boundary Avenue in York, many of which it has renovated or is looking to renovate.

Scott Butcher of NuTec Design Associates Inc. in Springettsbury Township, likens building incorporation to a backpack. An advantage to this design is a building addition could be removed.

"We don't want to mess with the historic design," Butcher said.

Butcher's firm used design incorporation for Greenway Tech Centre, formerly the Dallmeyer Building, on South George Street (see illustration, page 29), which is owned by Crispus Attucks.

Of course, not every design will look good in building incorporation. Butcher, Aleci and Zwifka all stressed that new architecture must complement historic styles without imitating them.

In the Eisenlohr factory's case, the basic structure of the old building will remain intact. Modern restrooms and elevators will simply be added to one side of the building to update it. The new wing will be made of glass and

steel, rather than matching the brick exterior of the factory.

"These new-and-old projects are driven by a greater vision," Butcher said.

Aleci touted the style as a living architecture, one that keeps history while allowing for progress.

"Twenty years ago, architects thought to build new you had to erase the old," he said. "Finally, that mentality is changing."

That mentality is more costly; the Lancaster County Convention Center Authority's plan to keep historical structures on the site of a museum will cost at least \$12 million extra.

"In the long run, it will improve the quality and value of the

building," said Tim Smedick of the Historic Preservation Trust. "And city officials and the architects for the convention center have seen that."

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