10 Economic Benefits of Historic Preservation

Arguments in Support of Historic Preservation

Historic preservation….  

1. Is a cost-competitive alternative to new construction.
   - The historic building already exists. With infrastructure in place, buildings can be upgraded to meet modern building requirements and codes.

2. Creates jobs.
   - Historic preservation is more labor intensive than new construction and requires more skilled laborers.
   - Wages for preservation trades are usually higher, as are income taxes paid by workers.
   - In FY 2008, projects approved for federal tax credits had average budgets of $4.58 million and generated 55 jobs each.


4. Reuses, recycles, and conserves resources.
   - Construction debris and waste, some of which is hazardous, represents almost 25% of the total municipal solid waste in the United States.
   - Demolishing one typical two story commercial building on Main Street eliminates all of the environmental benefits of recycling 1,344,000 aluminum cans.

5. Utilizes durable, high-quality materials meant to last and expensive to demolish.

6. Saves time compared to new construction.
   - Rehabilitation often reduces construction time up to 18% with approvals nearly always taking less time than obtaining permits for demolition and new construction, especially in a historic district. Work with your Historic Landmarks Commission to quicken your project.

7. Provides financial incentives in West Virginia.
   - Take advantage of 30% historic rehabilitation tax credits on your commercial properties
   - Enjoy a 20% historic rehabilitation tax credit on your historic residence
   - Tax credits aren’t awarded until the work is complete, so the state gains revenue on taxes paid on materials and labor before the building is even occupied.

8. Supports sustainability and smart growth.
   - Historic buildings are great incubators for start-up and small businesses. They are adaptable and allow for mixed uses, which mitigates risks associated with single use buildings.
   - Publicly-owned historic properties help anchor and sustain communities, attract investment, and can fulfill many uses while supporting local and regional economies through facility operations and maintenance.
   - Historic buildings were traditionally designed with many sustainable features that respond to climate and site. When effectively restored and reused, these features can bring about substantial energy savings.
   - Neighborhood decline and neglect increases the rate of instability. Vacant housing reduces property values and creates disincentive for remaining residents. This leads to decreased property taxes for the city and county and is a reflection of local government.
   - National Register Historic District designation encourages the preservation of historic neighborhoods. Residents can also enjoy historic rehabilitation tax credits.

10. Attracts heritage tourism visitors, who generally spend more than other tourists.
   - Characteristics of the Historic Site Visitor:
     - Spends an average of $62 more per day than other travelers
     - 90% come with their families
     - 58% are employed full-time
     - 64% are visiting the site for the first time
     - 84% will return to visit the site again to bring others or will take more time

~ Profiting from the Past: The Impact of Historic Preservation on the North Carolina Economy

- Most Popular Rural Cultural Heritage Tourism attractions:
  - Local foods, crafts, music, historic districts, buildings of historic importance, nature trails, general site seeing, scenic byways, and folklore

~ Utilizing Heritage Resources for Economic Development

References


   —. Sustainability, Smart Growth and Historic Preservation, given at the Historic Districts Council Annual Conference in New York City, 10 March 2007.