

Transcript of Lecture Delivered by

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East Hampton Architecture: Plain and Fancy

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Thank you. I am delighted to be here, for all kinds of reasons. It is a great pleasure to speak at Guild Hall at any occasion, but particularly as part of this celebration. Not that many towns get to mark this kind of an anniversary, and fewer still mark it in this way -- with a kind of introspective look at the town's past and the town's present, and with an eye to figuring out what all of this will mean to the town's future.

The seriousness of conception of this entire lecture series is really unusual; I would tend to think that most towns, upon reaching a significant anniversary, would mark it with some sort of celebration or party or whatever. If I did not have some experience with East Hampton I would have to conclude that this must obviously be a town that does not think much of parties, and tends to avoid any kind of merriment in favor of constant sobriety. After all, tell me in what other beach community in the country are people spending the Fourth of July weekend inside a lecture hall? If my only introduction to East Hampton were the program of this lecture series, I would think this would be the worst place in the world to locate a catering business. In any event I congratulate Tom Twomey on turning East Hampton, at least for the 350th, into the most Calvinist of summer resorts.

In truth, however, there is a long history of connecting summer resorts to learning, and study, and reflection. There are the religious retreats like Ocean Grove, New Jersey and Oak Bluffs, Martha's Vineyard. There is also Chautauqua near Jamestown in upstate New York, the world capital of summer lecturing. And of course even right here, Guild Hall has a long and honorable tradition of reminding people that thinking hard, being entertained, and relaxing by the sea are not incompatible objectives.

I'm starting off with these general thoughts because my real subject this afternoon is not so much architecture in terms of individual buildings, though I will say something about several of them, as it is the way in which architecture relates to the whole idea of spirit of community, and sense of place. What is it that makes East Hampton East Hampton? What gives it its extraordinary character? How much of its character is a matter of history, coming from the past, and how much of it is made by the present? And -- the crucial question -- how much does the future of East Hampton depend upon the past?

I hope in the next few minutes to be able to address these questions, since they are more on everyone's mind these days than ever before, I think -- in large part because so many of us feel that the character of East Hampton, so secure for so long, is now in danger. Since I want to talk more about these general issues than about individual buildings, I ask your indulgence so far as slides are concerned -- I've decided not to show them, since it would force us back to focusing on this building and that building, and I want to talk more about the wholeness of this place, and where it is going. Another way to put this would be to say that if there is any reason to devote one of the lectures in this important series to the subject of architecture, it is not because of the individual buildings of East Hampton, important though many of them may

be, but because of the connections between architecture and sense of place. That is the key issue right now. The specific architectural differences between, say, the Schuyler Quackenbush House by Cyrus Eidlitz on Lee Avenue -- one of the greatest Shingle Style houses of all, in many ways the Platonic Shingle Style house from the first great wave of resort construction here -- and a neo-Shingle Style house built five years ago down Georgica Road matter less to me than looking at both of these buildings to think about the question about how old and new relate together to affect a sense of place, and whether the best way to preserve those qualities of East Hampton that we value is by making more Shingle Style houses that resemble the great and beloved originals, or whether it is by doing something else. I will warn you at the outset that no matter how carefully you listen you will not find a simple, formulaic answer to this question, because there is none. There are a million specific instances, and formulas do not help get us through them. This is too complex a town, and its architectural and urbanistic fabric too richly multilayered, for any neat and pat formula to get us through.

There is no place like East Hampton, anywhere -- not even that town, whatever it is, you know, the one a few miles to the west where they have a lot of car dealerships -- even Southampton, for all its might, does not have precisely the combination of qualities that gives East Hampton its extraordinary, gentle and powerful aura. This is a remarkable anniversary, the 350th birthday, and before I say anything else I should state, emphatically and absolutely, how strong this town remains as both an architectural and a natural environment, whatever criticisms and fears about its changes and its losses all of us may have. It is astonishing to me that 15 years have passed since I wrote a long article in *The New York Times Magazine* entitled "The Strangling of a Resort," an article that was among the first to sound an alarm about what is happening here, and I am about to say something which will sound on its face very contradictory, which is that things were bad then, and they have gotten considerably worse since then -- and yet they are still not nearly as bad as they could have been, or as other places are.

East Hampton was among the first towns anywhere in this country to recognize the urgency of preservation, but you know from experience how firmly and absolutely it is possible to say that the work of preservation is never done -- that it is impossible to sit back in confidence, congratulating yourselves on being the distinguished and beautiful place that you are, certain that your work is done and the task is over. The task is never over; the work is never done. There are always new threats, new dangers to the historic integrity of a city. But it is not merely a matter of being the police force for architectural integrity. If it were just that, the job would be simple. There is the much more complex task of land use, since one of the things I have been saying is that land use -- issues of zoning and planning -- cannot be separated from issues of architecture. That is one of the things I was trying to say back in that 1983 article, when architecture critics were not supposed to think in these terms. But now more than ever, we have to look at architecture in terms of land use, and not simply esthetics. Once East Hampton had the luxury of simply building, of building what seemed to make sense, and not thinking very deeply of the effect of each building on the whole. Each building could be a thing unto itself. Now we have no such luxury, and every building, every project, every possible building and project has to be looked at in terms of what it will mean for the community at large. That is why, at this moment in East Hampton's history, I think it is fair to say that our planning boards may mean more for the future of our architecture than any

architect. So, too, with organizations such as the Peconic Land Trust, the Group for the South Fork, and the Nature Conservancy -- they will make this community safe for architecture, and without them it will not matter whether we make decent buildings or not, because we will not have a decent community.

And frankly, if we want to be brutally honest, if we look at what makes the village of East Hampton the extraordinary place that it is, the good architecture is only a part of it. The landscape, the trees, the presence of the town pond and cemetery as both symbol and visual amenity, the beaches, the exquisite eclecticism of Main Street and Newtown Lane, and the magnificent way in which Route 27 passes through the heart of the village, democratically revealing its beauties for all, the precise opposite of that other town -- all of these things define East Hampton. It may be heresy for an architecture critic to say that these things are more important than architecture, but the truth is -- they are. Land matters more than buildings. If we preserve the land, then we can afford to start worrying about what buildings we build. If we do not preserve the land, it will not matter what buildings we build, because the East Hampton we love and cherish will be gone.

We often want our favorite places, like cherished friends, to be frozen in time, their images precisely as we remembered them when we last saw them, whether it is a year ago or five years ago or yesterday. Who has ever gone to Venice in search of change, happy to find things different? Who, even, goes to Paris looking for new things, restaurants, I suppose, excepted? But of course time does not freeze for people, and it does not do so with towns and cities, either. East Hampton has not changed as much as some of you may think it has, but it has changed plenty over the last decade, as it had changed over the decade before that, and as it will change over the decade to come. It is painful to accept, but it is real and necessary. You cannot freeze a city in time any more than you can freeze a human being. You cannot, that is, unless what you want is a kind of Colonial Williamsburg, a town that is really a museum, and if that is what you want, I am the wrong person to be talking to you today, since that route  $\hat{u}$  the Williamsburg route  $\hat{u}$  in my opinion is death for any real city. Perhaps Venice is an exception, but then again, perhaps not, since Venice is not a real city either in the terms by which we define real cities today  $\hat{u}$  it is an extraordinary place, dazzlingly potent in a way that is like no other place in the world, but not, for all its power and glory, truly a living city. But East Hampton, I think, has the mission of being more of a living community, and thus raises all kinds of other issues.

Towns and cities  $\hat{u}$  at least the real kind, the category I believe East Hampton must be in  $\hat{u}$  change to stay alive, as people change to stay alive. They go through phases, and periods, and in the very fact of change is a kind of affirmation of life. Yet I have to say that there is something faulty in my metaphor, since in the end, towns and cities are not like people. Yes, they change continually, and cities cannot be frozen in time just as people cannot be frozen in time, but towns and cities have one great advantage over people: change in towns does not have to be a series of steps toward inevitable decline. When we see change in the faces of our friends there is a kind of sadness because the process of aging reminds us that they are one step toward leaving us, one step closer, alas, to death, but it is not so at all for cities. Indeed, in cities, change is not merely a reminder of continued life, it is a step toward assuring it. The city that evolves healthily lives, perhaps forever. The city that does not change is more often the city that dies. It is the opposite of the natural cycle we experience as people.

All well and good, to speak in such generalities. But what does this mean in real life of towns

towns that, like East Hampton, are faced with pressures for change that are enormous, and are full of citizens who, like many in this room I suspect, know that to give in to these pressures is to watch the disappearance of the town as they have known and loved it. Change has been a horror in the recent history of many towns and cities, and it has not always been a friend to East Hampton, as I need hardly tell any of you. Let me make it perfectly clear that by advocating change at the outset I am not here to say that I advocate a laissez-faire approach to cities, or anything remotely resembling that. Don't take anything I've said in favor of change as a general principle as even remotely suggesting that I believe that change is right for its own sake, just because it is change. No, no, a thousand times no. Probably 90 percent of the changes that have been proposed for East Hampton over the last generation are wrong, and destructive, and those of you who have been trying to stop them are probably right. I mean to say only that I hope you are not stopping them because you want to stop all change, and freeze this city in time. I do not want you to stand in the way of the 10 percent of changes that are positive, that are healthy for the future of East Hampton. I do not believe that cities survive when they are completely frozen in time. All I am trying to say is that cities are not meant to be embalmed — not that they should ever let down their guard about negative and destructive change.

Let me say another general word or two about the meaning of change in cities right now, about how it affects our sensibility, our sense of where we are and our relationship to a place. Perhaps it is better thought of as a kind of parable. Some years ago the late Anatole Broyard, who for many years was a book reviewer at The New York Times, wrote a column in which he recalled a visit to New York by the novelist Françoise Sagan and her friend Florence Malraux, daughter of the great writer André Malraux. It was the first visit to the United States for both women, and they were entranced, like many Europeans, by the sense of freedom they felt here. Miss Malraux noted that New York had no past, that it was improvised every moment. She called the French the spoiled children of history, the Americans its resourceful orphans. Miss Sagan observed that the French are made tired by their past, for it surrounds them too tightly; "we can never be unfaithful to it," she said. And then she noted that history, ideally, should be "not a continued presence but a series of passionate interludes."

Well, it is hard not to like the metaphor of history and passion — the French, of course, can make anything into a metaphor involving passion, but in this case it is particularly appealing. History should not surround us so tightly we cannot breathe. That is oppressive in every aspect of culture, and not just architecture. But the opposite — the sense of being without a past altogether — is equally oppressive, in its way. It may be initially exhilarating, especially to a visitor to whom it connotes escape from too much history. But it is also formless, lonely, empty — a culture of shifting sands.

As in all things, balance is the key. A place that changes not at all will die, and a place that changes too much, though it will live, will live an existence empty of meaning. Françoise Sagan was not speaking of architecture when she talked of history as a series of passionate interludes, but she could have been. For a physical environment with the right mix of time in the past and time in the present, with the right mix of things that can change and things that cannot and will not change, is what we have always needed. For all things are not permanent and should not be. But one of the hardest things to learn is where we should have those passionate interludes, where they will do the most for us and for the quality of life and the

place we care about.

It goes without saying, of course, that the parable of Françoise Sagan's observations about history in this country could well apply to East Hampton. This is a town in which we run the risk, continually, of being somewhat like Françoise Sagan found France, or indeed all of Europe, to be *û* spoiled by history, surrounded by too much of it, glorious though it may be, and in the end, despite its glory not uplifted by it but instead oppressed by it. Now, in an age in which historic preservation is an accepted good, an age in which we no longer have to fight the battles in favor of the basic idea of preservation, there is a terrible danger of having history be too present, a danger of pressure to make this place one in which change is no longer valued. To those of you who fight the good fight to keep East Hampton from turning into Ronkonkoma, this may seem an odd problem to raise *û* after all, with every possible danger that faces a this town, how could there be anything wrong with too much preservation, how could there even be such a thing as too much preservation? In fact, as I've been saying for the last couple of minutes, there can be something very wrong about too much preservation, about a city preserved in amber, cut off from the change that is urban lifeblood. The "passionate interludes" that Françoise Sagan spoke of -- and that is a wonderful phrase -- become harder and harder to achieve when a place is frozen in time. Is there passion in Williamsburg? Not much to my mind.

The incredibly difficult goal is to keep the passion in East Hampton, to keep it from becoming bloodless, like Williamsburg, but retain a sense of the real. Now I don't think that a loss of passionate interludes, a loss of a sense of history as something intense enough to inspire passion rather than as so routine nobody cares about it, is the primary risk East Hampton faces at this moment in history, but it is still something to keep in mind. A town as rich in history as East Hampton, and with a quality as unique, runs the genuine risk of taking its history so for granted that it loses all sense of perspective about it, loses the ability to think of it as something to inspire wonderful emotional connections, and constant surprise. History must never be thought so routine, so ordinary, so omnipresent, that we cease to feel it. And the other side of that same coin *û* we must never fall so in love with history that we lose all desire to live in the present *û* is an equal danger. The beauty of the East Hampton we imagine from the turn of the last century is magically, wonderfully, seductive. How easy it is to look around these streets and think that the more we wrap ourselves in the illusion that it is 1900, the better off we will be!

And yet that never works. The only true, valid, lasting gift the preservation movement can give us is to integrate history into the normal, everyday life of a city and its citizens, to make it not just an occasional occurrence but part of the lifeblood: to help us live better today, not to create the illusion that we are living in yesterday. History should not confine us, it should not take us away from reality, and neither should it be kept to the periphery of our lives. It should liberate us, free us, to define a place on our own terms, with our own perceptions. We preserve not just to defer to the past, but to make a richer present.

Of course it's only fair and proper to ask at this point just what I am talking about when I say history in East Hampton. Whose history? The settlers' East Hampton of the 18th century? The first summer colonists' East Hampton of the late 19th century? The East Hampton of fishermen, the East Hampton of artists, the East Hampton of teachers and firemen and policemen and storekeepers who live every day of the year here, the East Hampton of investment bankers who stop here in between Manhattan and Aspen? The East Hampton of

Childe Hassam or the East Hampton of Jackson Pollock? To a certain extent I am talking about all of these groups, and a key issue East Hampton has faced for a long time, as all of you know, is the tension between its different layers of history. This is not a pure New England village, and it is not just a fishing community, and it is not just a cultural center and it is not just a well-to-do summer resort, and it is most certainly not just a World's Fair of elegant architecture in various styles. It is a most astonishing hybrid of all of these things, and it is in the dynamic between all of these layers of history that much of East Hampton's uniqueness lies. By that I mean to say that the presence of late 20th-century East Hampton, far from compromising the integrity of 18th and 19th-century and early 20th-century East Hampton, enriches it, for it takes it out of the realm of a make-believe place, and into the realm of a city that exists over time. The same is true the other way around — the presence of 18th century East Hampton makes the newer buildings here something different from what they might otherwise have been. It shows us that they spring out of a community, however little architectural connection some of them they may have to that community, and we cannot but think of them, at least in part, as saying something about their context, if only to reject it.

Is there an East Hampton style? Now we get down to the real business of the afternoon. The answer to that question is almost, but not totally, and I am very grateful for the "not totally" part of this equation, for the buildings that make this place less purebred, that show it to be of complicated and mixed architectural ancestry, are especially important to my vision of East Hampton. This town is not only 18th and 19th-century architecture, rich though our inventory of such buildings is, and it is certainly not just Shingle Style, for all that East Hampton has some essential works of American architecture in this style, and it is not 19th-century industrial, or Gothic Revival, or English cottage, or mid-20th-century modern, or late 20th-century post-modern. It is something of all of these things, but no one kind of architecture controls all, and that is an essential fact of East Hampton architecture. New England farmhouses and saltboxes and cottages play as major a role in East Hampton's architectural heritage as the great mansions of the Shingle Style; so do the commercial buildings of the 19th and 20th centuries, and so do the important monuments of 20th-century domestic architecture, which flourished here as in few other places in the country. This mixture prevents East Hampton from falling prey to the disease of a place like, say, Santa Barbara, where everything either is Spanish Mission or is presumed to be; or Santa Fe, where a kind of hybrid of Spanish Colonial and Pueblo architecture is all but mandated; or Aspen and Vail, where increasingly a kind of Swiss Alps or neo-Adirondack Lodge style is considered the only proper way to honor the place's history.

There are times when this is forgotten, of course, and one of the more troubling aspects of the current day is the extent to which the Shingle Style, for all its wonders and glories -- and this is one of the great civilizing architectural styles in American history -- has been taken up as a kind of automatic vernacular style of this area today. Well, better a piece of imitation Shingle Style architecture than a piece of second-rate modernism, or strip mall architecture, or whatever. But still -- this is not an answer. Not long ago I saw a local architect -- I will not use his name -- quoted in one of the slick Hamptons magazines as saying that the Shingle Style was the true style of this area, that nothing else was authentic, and that therefore it was right and proper to build everything now in that style.

To me this is a sign not of the strength of East Hampton's commitment to good architecture, but of the weakness of it. For by doing every last thing in the Shingle Style, for all the good

intentions this may represent, we are denying our town the most precious gift its historic architecture can give it, which is authenticity. When everything is done in one style, and all new buildings are ordered to imitate a certain style of the past, we begin to lose the very thing architecture is supposed to give you in a real town or city, which is a sense of time. Strangely enough, we destroy the very idea of continuity that we are trying to preserve. This is not to deny the seriousness and beauty of much of the neo-Shingle Style work that has been produced in the last generation, or to deny the reason that it came about -- that so much modern architecture was so woefully second-rate, so wretchedly indifferent to the needs of its occupants. I know that the idea of authenticity is a poor substitute for comfort and visual pleasure, and one of the great failings of the postwar era was the inability of contemporary architects to create the degree of comfort and visual pleasure that their predecessors had done all the time. It is not surprising, then, that the post-modern movement arose in the 1970's, bringing us more and more revival of historical styles. Modernism's failings pushed us into that.

My problem is not with historical revival per se, since there are plenty of times when it is altogether appropriate, even wonderful, to work in past styles. My problem is with mandating it across the board -- and with building almost everything new in a single style, and declaring it to be the style of the town. I worry sometimes that East Hampton might be tempted to go the route of Santa Fe, where after World War II the city, concerned about the creeping presence of modern architecture, decided that it would be necessary to mandate the so-called "Santa Fe Style" for almost all architecture in the center of the city. What had been thought desirable suddenly became legally required, and design controls began to become the rule in the city. And at that moment, it began to become less spontaneous, more forced, less gracefully integrated into the wholeness of the city. As the tourist boom increased the profile of the city through the 1960's and 1970's and then, heaven help us, into the 1980's, "Santa Fe Style" became ever more prevalent, and ever more distant from whatever roots it had had. What did all these flat roofs and adobe walls, or adobe-like walls, and wooden details have to do with the life that was being lived there? Not always a lot. More and more the city was beginning to feel like an adobe theme park -- a make-believe creation whose architectural form existed for marketing purposes more than anything else.

So that people with lots of money who found the whole idea of Santa Fe quaint and appealing could play in this adult theme park, whether permanently by building houses of their own or temporarily as tourists, it was necessary to keep the marketing image up, to be as strict about it as Disney might be at Disneyland. But there is tremendous risk to a city thinking itself so special that it tries to bottle itself, turn itself into something that is not real at all, but make-believe.

And that, of course, is what I am fearful of -- that we begin to think of East Hampton as something that can be bottled, essence of East Hampton, falling prey to the worldview, so indicative of our time, where the notion of the theme park and the notion of the real city are increasingly becoming confused. East Hampton, like Santa Fe, is lucky enough to be one of those "trophy towns," as a colleague of mine calls them, places that are believed to have special qualities and that are deeply attractive to people of great wealth, who come in such

high numbers that they throw the balance of everything off for everyone else. Indeed, East Hampton was one of the very first trophy towns, for it reached this status back when Aspen was but a tiny mining village. And today, it is that early trophy-town status that underwrites so much of East Hampton's wealth today -- so many people want to come to be part of this beauty that they risk destroying it. It is sort of like the problems of the national parks, only here it is harder to regulate, because you are talking about private property and peoples' homes, not about something that everyone agrees is a public resource. But of course the civic qualities of East Hampton, and their natural ones, together do make up a kind of public resource. Main Street, Newtown Lane, the beaches, the bays, Northwest Woods, Barcelona Neck, Cedar Point, Georgica Pond -- I could go on and on and on. I would even include such technically private things as the Maidstone Club, whose golf course is a public resource in the sense that it provides blessed public open space, light, vistas and a sense of calm in the heart of the village. How to hold onto all this, how to keep it from destroyed by the pressures that act upon it?

Ninety-nine percent of the communities in this country would give anything to have such problems as this, of course, but that makes it no less real a problem when you have to face it yourselves. In this sense East Hampton is not entirely different from Aspen, or Vail, or Carmel, or Santa Barbara, or Nantucket, or Martha's Vineyard, or Charleston, or a handful of other places that have remarkable natural and architectural qualities that they now manage, just barely, to hold onto. Too many people love these places, and flock to them like moths to a flame, and in their sheer numbers they run the risk of destroying the very thing that they loved. And even when they manage to save it, they save it at a price -- the price of turning what had been authentic into something vaguely inauthentic, vaguely ersatz -- something forced, self-conscious, precious. We see it with all the cutesy shingled architecture in East Hampton, architecture that, like Santa Fe's adobe, is based on some of the greatest architecture of the American past, but now is often turned into something facile, superficial, too easy and glib, to serve an eager audience wanting to play in the spirit of a place for a few brief moments. A stage-set version of East Hampton suits their needs, just like a stage-set version of Santa Fe suits the needs of many of that city's visitors.

But does it suit the long-term health of the town? Paradoxically, given that all of this latter-day Shingle Style architecture in East Hampton or the new adobe in Santa Fe were done in the name of giving these cities an "authentic" feeling, we squeeze out a sense of authenticity, too. And does anybody think that the A&P got any better when it re-did its Newtown Lane building some years ago into what I call the Arches & Pilasters? The A&P has other problems, of course, since it is now threatening to destroy a key piece of open space at the edge of East Hampton village in what I consider a dangerously misguided move. We should have known from the building on Newtown Lane that their architectural judgments were suspect.

Now, let me make one thing very clear. I am not trying to hide behind the old modernist argument about the spirit of the age, and saying that any architecture that resembles anything traditional, anything old, is automatically invalid, and that everything has to be modern to be real. Not at all. That was something of a fallacy, this claim the modern architects made in the 20's and 30's that this was a new age requiring new architecture, and that anything that looked like anything that had been done before was in some way untrue to its time, almost immoral.

Nonsense. Simply not true, and not only because people love what has come before, and cherish it, and seek it in what they build now. They seek it now, and they always have. But the spirit-of-the-age argument is untrue also because it is not the way architecture has ever worked -- everything has always built on what has come before, taken from it and reinterpreted it, revised it, built upon it. Architecture has never had to completely reinvent the wheel to express the needs and feelings of its time.

Today most people -- architects and clients alike -- understand this, and of course we have seen in the last generation a tremendous revival of traditional architectural styles. Unfortunately, however, as the 80's went on, we saw more and more traditional architecture being churned out, faster and faster, getting more and more glib and simple and facile, and less and less connected to anything about the real spirit of architecture, or of place. Traditional architecture was becoming more and more an architecture of appearances only, done to satisfy a marketing instinct more than anything else. If those people churning out Shingle Style houses all over the Sagaponack fields were really concerned about the "spirit of place," they would be building silos and potato barns, not shingled mansions for the newly rich. It is a glib attempt to knock off the spirit of East Hampton village in the old potato fields, and it is patently false, made worse, in my opinion, by the way in which it is masked in all of this "spirit of place" rhetoric.

For what is missing in the overwhelming amount of traditional architecture that has been sweeping across the landscape is a quality we can best call authenticity. I increasingly think that authenticity is the rarest and most precious quality a community of any kind can have. We don't see a lot of it in this day and age. Indeed, I sometimes think we are in an age when artifice well executed is often considered to pass for authenticity -- it is the authenticity of our time. In an era of malls, of theme parks, of festival marketplaces, of virtual reality; an age in which the private realm has so often triumphed over the public realm -- an age when a kind of ersatz, contained, privatized quasi-urban entertainment passes for real urban life -- this is an age that has come to devalue authenticity considerably.

East Hampton's greatest danger is not destruction, but caricature. The economy will not destroy this city by tearing it down -- the real risk is that it will destroy this city by building it up, by making it replicate itself over and over until it becomes a caricature of itself, horrendously overcrowded and jammed together so that the very things that made it attractive in the first place are impossible any longer to find. Never forget that once Sayville and Ronkonoma were pretty attractive places, too.

And yet -- what is the alternative? You do not want to cut off your nose to spite your face; you do not want to reject those people who come out of goodwill, if sometimes out of innocence, seeking a different and better kind of experience from that which they will find in any other American oceanfront town. After all, almost all of us were once newcomers, too, and there is nothing more unattractive than the sight of the last people in pulling up the ladder and slamming the door in the face of newcomers.

This is a real, and genuine dilemma, and I have no simple answers. The one thing I can say is that East Hampton is doing a vastly better job than Southampton, or almost any other community I know in this region. Nothing in East Hampton, however troubling it may be, looks like County Road 39 in Southampton, and I hope it never will. The tightness of the zoning regulations in this town helps everyone, even if it makes it difficult to build. And the deep commitment to building additional publicly assisted housing to help those who are

squeezed out of the market economy is key to East Hampton's quality -- for it makes clear that we recognize that the marketplace alone cannot create the civilized community we all crave, that more has to be done.

I have been talking about what we might call the dark underside of preservation so far this evening -- about some of the risks inherent in what all of us surely consider fundamentally a good thing, which is saving your architectural heritage, and basing the future of a community on it. The point I am trying to make is that preservation alone does not bring a city to the promised land, right though it obviously is as a starting point. The culture and economy we live in at the end of the 20th century poses risks and dangers that were never dreamed of in the days of Grosvenor Atterbury or Joseph Greanleaf Thorp, when the translation of the city's history into contemporary built form was a relatively new concept, one that could be pursued with a certain earnestness.

So when we talk about preservation, and about the saving of a community, it is necessary, I think, to talk about authenticity -- about the valuing of what is authentic, and about the elevating of that over all other things. And that brings us, inevitably, to the deeper questions of what East Hampton wants to be.

Let me say another word on another aspect of the struggle between preservation and everyday life, and it is an issue that goes far beyond East Hampton. Far too much preservation goes on not because we value what is being preserved, but because we fear what will replace it. This is sort of the dark underside of preservation, the reason behind it that we rarely like to talk about, but it is true -- that often we preserve not to honor the general usefulness of knowing what our ancestors did and seeing how they lived, and not for the sense of continuity that this inspires, anchoring us in the larger sea of time, but only because we are terrified that if we allow something to disappear, our time will be unable to replace it with anything equal in stature.

Alas, that is all too often true, and East Hampton has more than a few pieces of evidence of the truth of this remark. But remember, again, that the builders of this city in the 19th century had no such fears. And if we are ever going to produce a valid and authentic architecture in our own time, we have to overcome that fear ourselves.

We cannot, in the end, preserve to deny a sense of time. We must preserve to enhance a sense of time -- to richen and deepen our sense of time, to place ourselves in a larger continuum, to remind ourselves that we came from somewhere and are going somewhere, too. We preserve, we save our landmarks, to create resonance.

It is a subtle process. If we preserve too little, we have no sense of history, and we are lost, adrift in the shifting sands of time. If we preserve too much, too rigidly, we can stifle a community, cut out all fresh air -- become the spoiled children of history, as Florence Malraux put it.

East Hampton, of course, has this risk. Like Europe, its legacy is great -- incomparably great, I would even say -- but with so great an architectural legacy lies a challenge. The challenge is not to be stifled by that legacy, not to be inhibited by it, and to keep in mind that the way to respect its spirit is often not to precisely replicate its forms. For if we want this place to remain real, to feel like a true and living community rather than a theme park, it is essential that there be some sense of continued fresh air within its creative realms.

That does not mean that anything that is new and different is okay, and that anything traditional is wrong. Let me say one more time that my point is more subtle than that. I would

even go farther and say that a mediocre traditional building will do less harm to East Hampton than a mediocre modern one, since there is a kind of architectural safety net that sits under traditional, or historicist, architecture in a place like this. But while it is safe, it is not always ambitious, and it does not always offer us the chance to aim highest so far as creativity and a sense of continued energy is concerned.

Indeed, if I may come back to a phrase I used much earlier, "passionate interludes," I think that is the goal when you build a new building in this town: to create a passionate interlude. So that, in the end, is what preservation at its best can mean: a chance to renew and restore cities in the most meaningful way, to bring back that sense of authenticity that modern culture has so often taken away from us. It is not easy, for all the reasons I've mentioned, and often, paradoxically, there is greater authenticity in allowing architecture to reflect the difficult, messy realities of life, and not be as neat and prim and tied up with a pretty bow as the theme-park culture would have it.

In East Hampton, that can sometimes mean not doing everything by the book, not making every last thing a picture-perfect reflection of a past that never was. The Ralph Laurenization of American cities is a phenomenon more or less similar to the Disneyfication of our culture; in each case there is a loss of authenticity, a determination to remake the world in the image of a past more perfect than ever was.

The real history of East Hampton is vibrant, layered, and often contradictory. This is a real place, with its own qualities that make it different from other places -- but never forget, please, that its history was not a history of cuteness or primness. And never forget, too, that the greatest mission of preservation is not to deny us a chance to perceive time, but to enhance it -- to make time more visible, in all its scope: the East Hampton of the past, the East Hampton of the present, and the East Hampton of the future, presenting it with authenticity, glory and power.