to define historic preservation as a curatorial pursuit, committed to preserving a three-dimensional encyclopedia of the objects of historians’ desire, aesthetically and stylistically considered. This framing of historic preservation drastically narrowed its social and cultural possibilities. Ned Kaufman points the way toward a more relevant, expansive, and vital historic preservation movement; a movement committed to social equity, steeped in ethnography and politics and guided less by the imperatives of architectural history practice and more by sensitivity to the human values manifested in everyday attachments to place.

Some historic preservation practitioners have used the criteria and models of architectural history to insulate their work from social claims of various stakeholders and communities. Kaufman argues, “It is hard to understand how separating heritage from society’s most pressing concerns can enhance the cause of conservation.” He challenges the tendency of many not-for-profit preservation organizations that allocate “resources to protect a historic site admired by architectural historians” (9) while making no effort to discover and help protect sites that are meaningful to a much broader array of neighborhood and community groups. Kaufman does not stand alone. Retiring in 2010 as president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Richard Moe reflected on the field; he wrote, “Historic preservation has evolved into something much more than just saving historic buildings. Today it is about people and the places that they care about—where they live, work, shop, worship, and celebrate. We need historic places to help ground us in our past, but also in our future, as older buildings are part of the solution to larger challenges, such as how we support environmental sustainability, adapt to population changes and growth, and promote job creation and economic development.”

Kaufman’s advocacy of preservation priorities beyond the familiar tropes of architectural history should not prompt architectural historians to bypass this important book. There are excellent essays here that thoughtfully illuminate the foundations of architectural history as a discipline, quite apart from preservation matters. The book has eleven essays that Kaufman published between 1989 and 2004. Their original forms are not all readily accessible. The book pulls them together and groups them into four thematic categories—“storscape” and attachments to place; historical perspectives on visiting, collecting, and preserving architecture; case studies of recent preservation efforts in New York City, often considered within a frame of race; and an agenda for the future of historic preservation. An extended prologue and introductions to each of the four sections nicely connect the disparate essays and establish overarching themes.

Every architectural historian could profitably read chapter four, “History, Design, and the Rise of Architectural Travel.” Here Kaufman considers the “significant reorientation in the nature of architectural knowledge” (146) in the mid-eighteenth century, when buildings outside the Roman-Renaissance tradition began to significantly influence the making and understanding of architecture. Kaufman argues that travel by architects such as James Stuart and Nicholas Revett stood at the center of this change. Moreover, the buildings encountered by these travelers were interpreted as products of place rather than as representations of time. Measured drawings, models, fragments, and architectural sketches all pointed to place and travel as central to architectural knowledge. Chapter five, “Collecting Architecture, from Napoleon through Ford,” considers fragment collectors such as John Soane, open-air museums like Henry Ford’s Greenfield Village and John D. Rockefeller’s Williamsburg, the displays of architecture in museums and at world’s fairs, and the relationship between personal and institutional visions in situating architecture. Later efforts at organizing architectural knowledge, which emphasized time and stylistic transitions, eroded the understanding of architecture as rooted in place and landscape. In important ways, many of Kaufman’s other chapters seek to recapture architecture as a community resource capable of forging cultural attachments, and of strengthening a “sense of place” quite
apart from architecture understood through time and style.

Kaufman's awareness of the processes by which people form attachments to place shapes his most innovative, and likely most controversial, ideas concerning historic preservation. These he gathers under the idea of "storyscapes." Stories are often as important in connecting people to place as any physical properties of a site, Kaufman argues that historic preservationists thus need to protect places that are bound up with stories, regardless of whether they fit into vernacular or high-style canons of architectural history. He talks passionately about brownstone stoops, coffee shops, and casitas, the wooden structures built as social clubs by Puerto Rican groups on vacant lots in New York City. These are places with tremendous cultural and social capital, and yet they generally fall outside the interest of historic preservationists. These are places that matter. Many students and administrators in historic preservation will find the notion of protecting storyscapes deeply troubling. The concept points toward a world in which every site and every place could be deemed significant and thus in need of protection and regulation. Kaufman lays out a survey method that could be useful in reaching an understanding of storyscapes. He is less precise in pointing out that he would assign first priority in protecting storyscapes to sites of collective meaning and significance. He assumes that preservation boards could be charged, as they now are, with assessing significance and establishing appropriate protections. They might then expand their staffs to include folklorists, geographers, anthropologists, and historians, and to incorporate greater ethnic and social diversity. Largely overlooked sections of landmark legislation that permit listings of sites of social and cultural history could easily accommodate the protection of storyscapes.

Kaufman explores the ramifications of his storyscapes vision in chapters that treat the preservation, race, and historical interpretation of New York's African Burial Ground, the Audubon Ballroom (where Malcolm X was assassinated), working-class New York neighborhoods, the intangible cultural heritage of Hawaii, and the relationship between the eighteenth-century English estate of Harewood House and Caribbean slaveholding. Kaufman ends his collection with an call-to-arms essay titled "Moving Forward: Futures for a Preservation Movement." He proposes a movement where passion trumps timid professionalism. He envisions a movement that works with diverse communities’ attachments to story and place. He sees preservationists organizing communities politically around historical understanding and resisting the pervasive ideology of growth and the dominance of the market as arbiter of social and cultural value. Implicit in Kaufman's challenge to historic preservation is a challenge to architectural history. Casitas, brownstone stoops, and African burial grounds will perhaps be of little interest to some architectural historians. However, there is an interpretative challenge in what Kaufman presents. Can architectural history dislodge the primacy it often places on original intent, the nexus of meaning established by original clients and architects, and the original social, cultural, and landscape context? But focusing on how we use and interact with architecture, how people value, devalue, and sometimes revalue a single site through time, we might be able to grapple more closely with the issues of politics, memory, and culture that Kaufman hopes to see at the center of the historic preservation movement. Architectural historians perhaps could expand the canvas of their work, pulling their places and buildings through history toward the present.

Part of Kaufman's vision turns on society organizing itself to implement safeguards for the environment and for heritage. Unfortunately, reports from the field suggest that even the laws we have on the books are not working very well. Thomas P. King's important book Our Unprotected Heritage is a wake-up call. King argues that the foundational legislation of heritage and environmental protection—including the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act, the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Clean Air Act—is failing to protect our environment or our heritage. The reasons for this are complex. The primary difficulty is that the very parties that have a vested interest in building projects that undermine historic and environmental resources often are responsible for hiring those who assess the work. The cultural and environmental firms that do this work bend their work in favor of projects and away from protection because if they do not, they are likely to go out of business. This book is a primer on the workings and failures of environmental and historic preservation laws. King insists that we need to entirely revamp the regulatory system that surrounds heritage and environmental resources. We need as a society to privilege these resources, even placing their protection in the federal constitution, and passing new legislation that will actually afford a much greater measure of protection. In King's lucid account we find the sort of committed and passionate professional that Kaufman insists that historic preservation needs. Both books should be required reading for people who care about architecture, preservation, and the politics of place.

Daniel Bluestone
University of Virginia