



# HERITAGE NEWS

For Members of San Francisco Architectural Heritage (1971 - 2011)



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Heritage celebrates  
the release of  
**PORT CITY**

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## A HISTORIC LEED CERTIFICATION

By Katie Grote, LEED AP

**Editor's Note:** On the 125th anniversary of the Haas-Lilienthal House, Heritage is exploring ways to improve the building's long term sustainability by obtaining the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED®) Green Building Rating System™ certification. Funded by a grant from the Columbia Foundation, a sustainability plan will be developed this spring in a one-day workshop—or “eco-charrette”—to identify green strategies that can be sensitively integrated into the historic fabric. Independent of this effort, students at the Presidio Graduate School have developed a business plan to make the case for greening the house. Their findings are summarized below.

In the fall of 2010, as first-semester MBA students in Sustainable Management at the Presidio Graduate School, our team explored how Heritage could improve its revenue, membership, and visibility by embracing sustainability. Our initial idea was to have the organization pursue LEED certification for the Haas-Lilienthal House. As the project progressed, however, we concluded that integrating sustainability throughout the organization's mission, tours, and educational programs would be an even more beneficial strategy. While LEED certification would be an enormous undertaking, we believe that it could create significant lasting revenue streams from rentals, visitors, and education programs. Ironically, we were several weeks into our project when we learned that Heritage was already investigating certification under LEED Existing Buildings Operations & Maintenance.

The Bay Area offers a receptive social and political climate for successful historic retrofit projects. In 2010, 80 percent of San Franciscans voted to uphold AB 32, California's state law curbing greenhouse gases, in comparison to 60 percent of all Californians. The Northern California Chapter of the U.S. Green Building Council is one of the largest in the nation. Despite the economic downturn, Oakland-based green certification firm Build it Green netted \$2.1 million in revenue in 2009.

However, there is a general lack of education about green preservation, especially when compared with the prevalence of green new construction techniques. Improving the energy efficiency of San Francisco's historic and often leaky and drafty building stock poses unique challenges that are largely unaddressed within the green building community. We propose that Heritage address this educational



Photo courtesy of the Galveston Historical Foundation

In Texas, the Galveston Show House above was moved and rehabilitated as a model for energy-efficient technology in a historic home. The project was led by the Galveston Historical Foundation with a Partners In the Field grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

void by embedding information about any future green retrofits within its tour program. Each visitor would leave the house understanding how they could implement similar greening measures in their own home or business.

Heritage can capitalize on the knowledge it gains through LEED certification to become a resource for green preservation within the Bay Area. Developing educational opportunities around preservation and sustainability would enable the organization to enhance both its relevance and revenues. Heritage could sponsor green historic walking tours with its Heritage YP group, host speakers on historic retrofit projects, and partner with local sustainability organizations like the Pacific Energy Center or SF Environment.

Just as the California Academy of Science's living roof has become its strongest

brand asset, LEED certification for the Haas-Lilienthal House would create and strengthen Heritage's brand as a green building organization. Many sustainability advocates are young professionals, and a LEED house museum would broaden Heritage's appeal to a younger and more diverse audience. We encourage Heritage to capitalize on the experience gained through LEED certification to position itself as a leader and resource for green preservationists throughout San Francisco.

*Katie Grote is a LEED AP, YP member, and a 2012 MBA candidate in Sustainable Management at Presidio Graduate School. She previously worked under Heritage board member Benjamin Ladomirak at Teevan Restoration. Her teammates and collaborators on this project were fellow MBA candidates Jonathan Gibson, Jenny Hoang, Cyndie Hoffman, and Aaron Israel.*