

Public History of the Built Environment

Public History of the Built Environment prepares students to put the study of urban and architectural history in service to publicly-oriented historic preservation practice. Unlike more general graduate-level public history programs, PennDesign's concentration focuses on the *built environment*, in a manner informed by other aspects of current historic preservation practice. Our emphasis is on the American cultural landscape—using Philadelphia as our laboratory—but the tools and skills covered will be relevant for international application across diverse geographies. This concentration prepares students for careers in government such as the National Park Service (NPS), State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), public history museums, historic sites, archives, cultural resources management (CRM) firms, and design offices specializing in Historic Preservation.

Learning Objectives

- Learn to read and interpret evidence of present and past buildings and landscapes through historical documents, visual sources, oral history, and material objects.
- Learn to engage public audiences in the communication of historical narratives through written, visual, oral, and changing technological means.
- Develop a foundational understanding of American architectural and urban history that will allow students to adequately contextualize and interpret any site from colonization to the present.
- Practice the skills of research and analysis required to think critically about evidence, arguments, and interpretations, including the ways that race, class, sex, and gender structure the stories we tell.
- Strengthen the ability to write clearly and speak publicly about the subjects researched as a way of educating and engaging a range of audiences, including the general public.
- Learn the basic skills of strategic management for non-profits with history and preservation missions (e.g., strategic planning, budgeting, project management, program and event planning, collections management).
- Utilize the emerging Preservation Clinic, Interpretation Lab, and next generation of the Fine Arts-based Monument Lab project for practicum coursework and internship experience.

Required Concentration Electives:

- HSPV 534: Public History: Theory and Practice (Spring, 1st year)
- HSPV 606: Historic Site Management (Fall, 2nd year)

History Survey (choose one – Fall, 1st year):

- CPLN 500: Introduction to City & Regional Planning
- HSPV 531: American Domestic Interiors
- HSPV 538 Cultural Landscapes & Landscape Preservation
- HSPV 528: American Vernacular Architecture

History Seminar (choose one – Spring, 2nd year):

- HSPV 620: Seminar in American Architecture
- HSPV 638: Special Topics in Historic Preservation Seminar