

THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S REGISTER OF CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT
PROPERTY AS A TOOL FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND DIPLOMACY

by

REBECCA RUTH HAGER

(Under the Direction of JAMES K. REAP)

ABSTRACT

In 2000 the United States Department of State created a tool to aid in the recognition and protection of its historically, culturally, and architecturally significant buildings overseas. This inventory, the Secretary of State's Register of Culturally Significant Property, numbers embassies, residences, offices, and a museum among its twenty sites. The Register does not prevent the sale or destruction of its designated properties, but rather emphasizes government and public awareness of the cultural fabric. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the effects of designation on sites on the Register in order to determine how the nomination and designation process can be improved to effect greater diplomacy, awareness, and preservation of the properties on a local, national, and international scale. The ideas developed in this thesis are based primarily on discussions with Department of State professional staff and firsthand travel to some of the sites described.

INDEX WORDS: Secretary of State's Register of Culturally Significant Property, Historic Preservation, Diplomacy, Embassy, United States Department of State

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DEDICATION

My flesh and my heart may fail,
But God is the strength of my heart
And my portion forever.

Psalm 73:26

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION or MAKING HASTE SLOWLY

In 1909 Captain F.M. Barber, lately of the United States Navy, wrote, “It is evident from numerous indications that the United States Government will soon adopt the policy of owning its diplomatic and consular buildings abroad...Now that the time for the buildings is arriving...it would seem that to make haste slowly is the part of wisdom.”¹ Over the past several years the Department of State’s Cultural Resources Committee has been making “haste slowly” in its pursuit of the preservation of the United States’ culturally significant diplomatic properties. Outside of the Department of State, the United States Governments’ historic and architectural patrimony overseas has been widely ignored and unstudied. However, tools such as the Secretary of State’s Register of Culturally Significant Property are beginning to reveal the potential for diplomacy in the careful management, preservation, and maintenance of these historic buildings.

Russell V. Keune offers a rare attempt at an overview of the management and preservation of the State Department’s historic resources in his chapter on international conservation in Robert E. Stipe’s *A Richer Heritage: Historic Preservation in the Twenty-First Century*:

The State Department’s Office of Overseas Buildings Operations does have a significant role in international preservation based on the important historical architectural presence of the United States in many countries. Our inventory of some 150 historic buildings and properties throughout the world is employed in the service of international diplomacy: it includes embassy buildings, ambassador’s residences and grounds, and cultural centers.

¹ F.M. Barber, “Government Ownership of Diplomatic and Consular Buildings and Their Equipment,” *The North American Review* 190 (September 1909): 359.

But compared with other federal agencies, the State Department was slow and unenthusiastic about meeting the intent and requirements of the 1966 NHPA. Although the department has completed an inventory of its holdings, it is only now, more than thirty-five years following passage of the 1966 legislation, coming into compliance with the requirements of the act. It has recently established a Cultural Resources Committee and a Secretary of State's Register of Culturally Significant Property.²

Mr. Keune does not paint a fair or accurate picture of the United States Department of State, or, in particular, the Department of State's Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations' Cultural Resources Committee. For years members of the Cultural Resources Committee (CRC) have been working from within the Department of State to challenge and shape the agency's perception of and approach to its historic and cultural fabric. The CRC's efforts are evident in the creation of tools such as the Secretary of State's Register of Culturally Significant Property and changes in policy towards the Department of State's historic architecture and furnishings. However, Mr. Keune deserves credit for being one of the few people to recognize and discuss the United States' diplomatic buildings in a preservation forum.

Approaching American overseas diplomatic holdings through this preservation framework offers an entire vista of complexity, opportunity, and potential that cannot be found in traditional United States or international conservation. The motives and goals behind the historic preservation movement in the United States³ and the wider international community⁴ are fairly well established and documented. However, the historic nature and special character of the United States' diplomatic buildings offer extra reason for the Department of State to pay careful attention to the stewardship and conservation of these properties.

² Russell V. Keune, "Historic Preservation in a Global Context: An International Perspective," in *A Richer Heritage: Historic Preservation in the Twenty-First Century*, ed. Robert E. Stipe (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 364.

³ See the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

⁴ See the 1964 Venice Charter.

The United States, as a relatively young country, has a limited built history to explore. America's properties overseas give the young nation the opportunity to own buildings older than itself and have a part in histories that it did not experience firsthand. Prague's Schoenborn Palace (see Figure 10, p. 44) was built in 1718, but was only acquired by the United States Government in 1924.⁵ Recent archeological explorations in Rome's Palazzo Margherita (See Figure 27, p. 63) have uncovered the "first discovery of Roman antiquity on American soil."⁶ Due to their locations, the histories of these diplomatic buildings are inherently unique and different from those of any other structure on the continental United States.

These adopted histories may not have had a role in the development of the United States, but they have played their part in the histories of the host countries and, in some instances, the larger events of the world. The Hotel de Talleyrand, now part of the United States' diplomatic holdings in Paris, offers a prime demonstration of global influence. The then-home-cum-diplomatic-retreat witnessed the efforts of its owner and Napoleon's foreign minister, Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand-Perigord, Czar Alexander I, the King of Prussia, and England's Lord Wellington to end the Napoleonic Wars in the early nineteenth century.⁷ These early summits would have a widespread impact on Western Europe, and on the rest of the world.

⁵ Cultural Resources Committee, Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, U.S. Department of State, "Cultural Resource Property of the Department of State" (PowerPoint, February 9, 2009).

⁶ Charles Trueheart, "The Group: An Intrepid State Department Cadre Helps Preserve Embassies Abroad," *Preservation Magazine*, September/October 2008, 47.

⁷ Bruce Crumley, "Foreign Assets," *France Magazine* 68 (Winter 2002-03), http://www.francemagazine.org/articles/issue64/article50.asp?article_id=50&issue_id=64 (accessed July 9, 2009).



Figure 1: Hotel de Talleyrand Reception Room⁸

The Hotel de Talleyrand also serves to illustrate the significant position that these structures have held in United States history. After being acquired by the United States, the Hotel de Talleyrand witnessed the development of the Marshall Plan, an important international diplomatic effort aimed at relieving Europe's post-World War II economic pains. The Ambassador's Residence in Tokyo (See Figure 19, p. 52) saw Emperor Hirohito meet with General Douglas MacArthur in 1945 in a conference that would effectively end the perception of the Japanese imperial family as gods.⁹ The significance of the United States Government's properties overseas is not confined to what occurred in them prior to their adoption as United States diplomatic posts. The very nature of diplomatic posts guarantees that they will be hosts to history.

⁸ Image by Elizabeth Gill Lui.

⁹ Cultural Resources Committee, Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, U.S. Department of State, *The Secretary of State's Register of Culturally Significant Property* (Arlington, VA: Overseas Buildings Operations Cultural Resources Committee, 2008), 9.

This front seat perspective of diplomacy puts the buildings in the unique position of having a possible influence on the relationships being pursued in them. After all, the United States Congress first allocated money to begin acquiring and building embassies because American businessmen were complaining that the absence or rundown nature of embassy facilities were putting them at a disadvantage in conducting business overseas. President Grover Cleveland said it best in 1896: “The usefulness of a nation’s diplomatic representative undeniably depends much upon the appropriateness of his surroundings, and a country like ours, while avoiding unnecessary glitter and show, should be certain that it does not suffer in its relations with foreign nations through parsimony and shabbiness in its diplomatic outfit.”¹⁰

This quote begins to address one of the dichotomies at the heart of diplomatic building that architects and diplomats are still struggling with and that makes the study of these buildings so fascinating. The offices and homes of America’s Foreign Service need to express the stability and security of the United States, but not at the expense of convincing Americans that their tax dollars are being spent inappropriately and disproportionately on structures that they will likely never see or enter. How can one impress the host countries with these buildings without intimidating Americans? How can one build these sites to be secure, but also welcoming? How can one construct these buildings to be American, but also respectful of local conditions and architecture? The United States’ historic embassies can still offer lessons in navigating the pitfalls of design for overseas diplomatic buildings.

The diplomatic potential of embassies can depend on several different factors, most of which boil down to the United States’ willingness and ability to offer thoughtful stewardship of its properties – properties that, if not initially under the purview of the host country, have an

¹⁰ Jane C. Loeffler, *The Architecture of Diplomacy: Building America’s Embassies* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998), 15.

impact on the surroundings by their very presence. When the United States cares for and maintains a site that has a history in the host country outside of its involvement with America, the United States is protecting the host country's heritage. When the United States cares for and maintains a building that it built to serve as a diplomatic structure, the United States is establishing its respect for the building's location and the country that is permitting its existence.



Figure 2: Tirana Embassy after Restoration¹¹

After the fall of communism in Albania in the early 1990s, the United States reestablished and restored its embassy in Tirana. Historic paint analysts determined what colors the 1926 building originally wore and the structure was painted the admittedly sunny colors that were typical in Albania at the time of the Embassy's construction. Members of the Department of State's CRC noted that after the restoration, neighboring buildings began to cast off their Communist grays and adopt similarly bright, traditional colors. Even if the Tirana Embassy was not the catalyst for this rejuvenation, its participation in the change in the cityscape testified to

¹¹ Image by Kevin Lee Sarring.

the United States' commitment to the new Albania and to restoring the once-excellent relationship between the two nations.¹²

In 2000 a tool was created to aid in the recognition and protection of the United States' historically, culturally, and architecturally significant diplomatic buildings overseas, such as the Tirana Embassy and the Hotel de Talleyrand. Longstanding practice discourages the inclusion, but for one complicated exception, of buildings outside of the continental United States onto the Department of the Interior's National Register of Historic Places. So the CRC developed a similar inventory solely for American properties in different nations.

This inventory, the Secretary of State's Register of Culturally Significant Property (hereafter for the purposes of this thesis, the Register), presently consists of twenty properties that serve a variety of diplomatic functions. The Secretary of State's Register does not prevent the ultimate sale or destruction of its designated properties, but rather "establishes a framework by which the Department provides professional stewardship."¹³ Currently, the primary benefit of designation on the Register is recognition within the Department of State.

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the effects of Register designation on the listed properties in order to determine how the nomination and designation process can be improved to effect greater diplomacy, awareness, and preservation of the properties on a local, national, and international scale. Chapter two will explore the special government and architectural contexts which have an impact on the preservation and diplomatic potential of American embassy-related structures. Chapter three and four will go on to discuss the current state of the Secretary of State's Register and provide examples of how the designated properties take advantage of it or

¹² Kevin Sarring, conversation with author, Washington, D.C., February 9, 2009.

¹³ Cultural Resources Committee, "Cultural Resource Property."

could use it to better effect. Finally, chapter five offers recommendations for the improvement of the Register – how it can be better organized and can better effect preservation and diplomacy.

As the Secretary of State's Register, at ten years of age, is still a relatively young tool, there has been little to no scholarship on its impact or academic discussion on how it can be improved. Most of the available published material related to the Register consists of light profiles on the designated sites that generally neglect to mention the properties' inclusion on an exclusive Register. For this reason, much of my research relies on discussions I had with professional staff of the State Department's Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations (OBO). Because opinion varies about what Department of State policy should be towards its historic properties even within OBO, in some cases I will be quoting directly from the official response to some of my questions in order to ensure that I do not misrepresent OBO.

To supplement my research, I traveled to Paris, France and Prague, Czech Republic in order to see firsthand several of the designated buildings and meet the people who care for them. I wanted to receive the stewards' insights as to how a historic building can be both functional and ornamental while gauging the potential of the structures in terms of managing diplomacy through preservation.

I chose to visit Paris and Prague, as opposed to any other of the designated host cities, for several reasons. The proximity of the countries in Europe and the relative ease with which one can travel from place to place allied most closely with my desire to see as many of the sites as possible in the limited time I had. Both Paris and Prague have two sites on the Register, each city has the welcome contrast of one site new to the Register and one site that has been listed since the Register's inception.

Finally, the two cities are good foils to each other for the purposes of my thesis. Paris has a very mature preservation program: the Hotel Rothschild (the ambassador's residence) and the Hotel de Talleyrand (home of the George C. Marshall Center) have received much attention from the private and public sectors and their maintenance and event schedules are works of art in themselves. Paris is, in fact, the pilot post for the new Heritage Program that OBO is developing. Prague's sites, the Schoenborn Palace (the chancery) and the Villa Petschek (the ambassador's residence) are as historic, beautiful, and resource-rich, but their potential has not been explored or taken advantage of to such an extent as the Parisian properties. The differences in the designated sites in the two cities provided me with the chance to see both sides of the spectrum and explore how the different environments affect the options of and challenges to each location.

Due to my travel, many of my examples will deal with Paris or Prague, but I hope that the recommendations that I offer for the improvement of the Register will transcend regional differences and be applicable with only a few adjustments and concessions for all designated properties.

CHAPTER TWO

DIPLOMATIC AND ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXTS

“We have boasted through our history that this is a country of homes...Shall the nation alone be homeless?”¹

- Frank O. Lowden to Congress in 1910

Brief Built American Diplomatic History

America’s diplomatic history began rather dramatically with Benjamin Franklin’s sojourn in France as he endeavored to gain the nation’s moral and monetary support for the rebel side in the Revolutionary War. Mr. Franklin was a great favorite in France and garnered much sympathy and some funding for the burgeoning republic. It was a significant introduction for America to the importance and potential efficacy of diplomacy.

Until the early years of the twentieth century, American diplomats were still living and working in leased or rented buildings at their foreign posts. The ambassadors were expected to pay for their own housing arrangements in addition to the entertaining that is often an integral part of a diplomat’s work. Things changed in 1909 when a group of businessmen joined together and created the American Embassy Association (AEA). The men had found themselves at a disadvantage in conducting their business overseas because of the American facilities’ lack of prestige and ability to inspire economic confidence.²

In “American Embassies Mean Better Foreign Business,” published by the AEA, F.M. Barber (“late naval attaché at Tokio, Pekin, Berlin, Rome, Vienna (sic)”) imagined a time when

¹ Loeffler, *Architecture of Diplomacy*, 16.

² Jane C. Loeffler, “The Architecture of Diplomacy: Heyday of the United States Embassy-Building Program,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 49, no. 3 (September 1990): 252.

“traveling Americans will no longer be mortified at the sight of the United States embassy or legation being located on a single floor in an apartment house or office building with a tin shield over the door, far inferior in appearance to that of many a butcher or baker in that vicinity.”³ At that point, America owned embassy quarters in only Bangkok, Constantinople, Peking, Tangier, and Tokyo.⁴ Paul S. Reinech, the Minister to China, was pleased with his Peking accommodations, remarking that most of the American diplomatic corps “has no place to lay his head except in a hotel.”⁵

The AEA got the attention of the Department of State and in 1911 Congress passed the Lowden Act with the approval of President Howard Taft.⁶ The Lowden Act gave the Department of State the authority to buy sites or structures overseas for diplomatic and consular uses and appropriated five hundred thousand dollars a year for that purpose.⁷ The United States Congress then passed the Foreign Service Buildings Act (or Porter Bill) in 1926. The Act established the Foreign Service Buildings Office (FBO) to work out of the State Department and increased appropriations to ten million dollars. The Porter Bill also created the Foreign Service Buildings Commission (FSBC) to manage the money.⁸ Finally, the budget was large enough to allow for a large-scale building program.

It was at this point that the discussion over what form an American embassy should take began in earnest. It had not been an issue for the construction of the 1929 American Embassy in Paris; the city had design controls set up for the Place de la Concorde, where the site was located,

³ Barber, “Government Ownership,” 359.

⁴ Ralph Hilton, *Worldwide Mission: The Story of the United States Foreign Service* (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1970), 183-184.

⁵ Loeffler, *Architecture of Diplomacy*, 17.

⁶ Loeffler, “Architecture of Diplomacy,” 252.

⁷ Hilton, *Worldwide Mission*, 184.

⁸ Loeffler, “Architecture of Diplomacy,” 253.

and the architects were legally limited in their designs to something that would resemble the neighboring structures.⁹ The design choices for other sites in other countries were not as straightforward.

The FSBC was divided with part of the Commission arguing vehemently for a beaux arts standard, like the embassy in Paris and many Washington government structures, and the rest of the Commission fighting for a southern colonial template, like the embassy in Tirana, Albania (see Figure 2, p. 6).¹⁰ Ron Robin argues in *Enclaves of America* that the United States chose to adopt embassy designs in most countries based on the local architectural styles, but preferred to design embassies with a stronger suggestion of America, via the southern plantation style, in countries where the United States held considerable influence.¹¹ By World War II there was still no clear consensus as to which design was best, with the result that the look of American embassies and consular buildings over the world varied. The United States now owns a remarkably rich and eclectic collection of historic properties abroad.

The need for new diplomatic buildings increased dramatically after World War II. Half of the world had been restructured and the political and economic fortunes of nations were wildly different from what they had been before the war. The United States wanted to establish its presence in Europe and in the Third World. Architecture had changed as well and the big names such as Eero Saarinen, Le Corbusier, and Mies Van der Rohe, were all working within the context of modernism. This move towards modernism represents a change of focus in America: from trying to place itself among the tradition and history of the rest of world, the United States

⁹ Loeffler, "Architecture of Diplomacy," 253.

¹⁰ Loeffler, "Architecture of Diplomacy," 255.

¹¹ Robin, *Enclaves of America*, 6.

Government's use of modernism began to emphasize the nation's prominent place in the future.¹² From 1946 to 1953, the FBO experimented with the international style in its embassies in Germany, Rio de Janeiro, and Havana.¹³

One of the biggest projects of that period, the embassy in Rio de Janeiro (Harrison and Abramovitz, 1952), was criticized for its anonymity and its lack of any sort of relation to or identification with America. The structure was twelve stories with an "amoebic-shaped" library on its first floor. If the United States was trying to establish its modernity or business acumen with its use of the international style, it largely failed. The international style already had a large presence in Rio and there was nothing unique, daring, or noteworthy about one more modern tower in the city.¹⁴ Concerning the new embassies in Germany, Robert Harlan remarked,

In an appearance before a commission interested in maintaining the historic and monumental integrity of an area, it is not useful, in making a presentation concerning the new building to be put in that area, to claim that this would be a building so purely functional that it could work well in Alaska. That happened and we spent another six months undoing the horror which this assertion created among commission members.¹⁵

Similar reactions met the other embassies that FBO built between 1946 and 1953. The glass boxes related neither to the United States nor to their host countries, and so were left wide open for criticism. Interestingly, the FBO reacted to the negative feedback, not by retreat and a return to the southern plantation or beaux arts models, but by committing itself to the modernist style to an even greater extent.¹⁶

In 1953 Leland W. King, FBO director and chief architect, suggested that the FBO adopt an Architectural Advisory Panel (AAP) composed of politically neutral professionals who could

¹² Robin, *Enclaves of America*, 7.

¹³ Loeffler, "Architecture of Diplomacy," 255.

¹⁴ Loeffler, "Architecture of Diplomacy," 256.

¹⁵ Loeffler, "Architecture of Diplomacy," 255.

¹⁶ Loeffler, "Architecture of Diplomacy," 255.

review and advise on architects and plans.¹⁷ The first FBO panel was chaired by Colonel Harry A. McBride, a former Foreign Service Officer, and included architects Pietro Belluschi, Henry Shepley, and Ralph Walker. Belluschi outlined the mission statement of the AAP in a memorandum:

To the sensitive and imaginative designer it will be an invitation to give serious study to local conditions of climate and site, to understand and sympathize with local customs and people, and to grasp the historical meaning of the particular environment in which the new building must be set. He will do so with a free mind without being dictated by obsolete or sterile formulae or clichés, be they old or new; he will avoid being either bizarre or fashionable, yet he will not fear using new techniques or new materials should these constitute real advance in architectural thinking.

It is hoped that selected architects will think of style not in its narrower meaning but as a quality to be imparted to the building, a quality reflecting deep understanding of conditions and people. His directness and freshness of approach will thus have a distinguishable American flavor.¹⁸

This mission statement addresses several of the special concerns that diplomatic buildings face and that, at times, make their preservation challenging, if not downright difficult.

Currently the Department of State owns or has under long-term lease more than 3,500 properties that it has either acquired or built in 265 posts. Out of these 3,500 properties, some have speculated that 150 could be categorized as historically, architecturally, or culturally significant. These properties include chanceries, ambassadorial residences, office buildings, staff apartments, a gardener's house, and a guesthouse. The State Department also owns the collection of fine and decorative arts and furnishings that is distributed throughout many of these structures.¹⁹

¹⁷ Robin, *Enclaves of America*, 148.

¹⁸ Loeffler, "Architecture of Diplomacy," 257.

¹⁹ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State's Register*, 1.

Special Concerns in Diplomatic Buildings

An embassy is a unique kind of building. As a permanent symbol of a country in a different nation it needs to represent that country to the people who pass it on the street, the people who visit it for the services that it can render them, and the people who protest outside of it. It must convey different and almost contradictory messages to each of these groups. Those who pass the building on the street should be impressed by its wealth and stability (“Foreigners necessarily judge us by what they see of us in their own country”).²⁰ Those who visit it should not feel intimidated, but welcomed, and they should find the facilities capable of meeting their needs. And those who come to protest should find it secure.

Pietro Belluschi began to address these issues in his memorandum for the AAP, but another man was exploring them almost half a century before Belluschi ever sat on the FBO panel. F.M. Barber’s 1909 essay on the need for new embassies, “Government Ownership of Diplomatic and Consular Buildings and Their Equipment,” is remarkable for its thoroughness, farsightedness, and its summation of the sort of qualities a diplomatic building should possess. These same qualities would give the FBO a great deal of trouble as it developed its post-World War II embassy proposals.

Functional Requirements

Barber’s essay emphasizes the functional needs of the United States’ diplomatic buildings. In describing his vision of an appropriately structured embassy, he addresses everything from parking, “having an entrance on each street, an arriving and departing crowd, no matter how large, can be handled with facility,”²¹ to the building’s inhabitants.²² Barber

²⁰ American Embassy Association. *American Embassies*, 3.

²¹ Barber, “Government Ownership,” 359.

²² Barber, “Government Ownership,” 359.

discusses an embassy's basic needs at length without addressing a preferred architectural style. The one element of stylistic design that he does express an opinion on is the need for a tower where "the national flag may float on proper occasions, instead of being stuck out a window like that of a ship in distress."²³ Barber thought that the purpose and functional requirements of a diplomatic building should dictate its form and design.

Many of the architects chosen by the AAP were overly concerned with the idea of designing an architectural monument. This was to the detriment of the functional needs of the posts and even at times to the host nation and the United States' understanding and appreciation of a new building. The former United States Embassy in Accra, Ghana offers an example of the trouble that a preoccupation with outward design and expression can cause to the fulfillment of a building's intrinsic needs.



Figure 3: Former United States Embassy in Accra²⁴

Harry Weese designed the Accra Embassy in Ghana in 1956. The main structure of the building stands on *piloti*, which enhance the building's appearance and protect it from Ghana's destructive termites.²⁵ The roof's wide eaves deflect the sun from the Embassy. Mahogany

²³ Barber, "Government Ownership," 359.

²⁴ Image from Harry Weese & Associates Architects.

²⁵ Loeffler, "Architecture of Diplomacy," 262.

jalousies overlay the windows.²⁶ Weese claimed that a native chieftain's hut, tapered spears, and African anthills inspired the building's design.²⁷

Despite criticism suggesting that Weese was reaching with his supposed incorporation of cultural elements, and the condescension and trivialization of African culture implied in basing an embassy there on an anthill, the Ghanaian people widely admired the completed Embassy.²⁸ However, the Accra Embassy was not designed with enough emphasis on function. Former United States Ambassador to Ghana, Shirley Temple Black, called the Embassy a "fire trap" – workers inside the building were given hatchets to break through the jalousies in case of fire – and a security nightmare, as there was very little privacy and only one entrance. In the best case scenario an embassy will have a separate entrance for the ambassador to enter and exit by.²⁹ The United States Government abandoned the Embassy in the 1970s due to its security shortcomings.³⁰

Accessible, yet Prosperous, Embassies

In addition to his exploration of function and design, Barber also examines the still prevalent, and yet slightly oxymoronic, democratic ideal of an embassy that is outwardly impressive and successful, but still accessible enough for the average American to feel comfortable entering. He writes that, "our country has grown to be one of the richest nations on the face of the earth and our representatives should be installed in a manner more worthy of the country they represent,"³¹ at the same time as he praises and encourages a sort of Puritan perception of the American citizen, à la Benjamin Franklin: "When...Franklin was officially

²⁶ Loeffler, "Architecture of Diplomacy," 259.

²⁷ Loeffler, "Architecture of Diplomacy," 267.

²⁸ Robin, *Enclaves of America*, 160.

²⁹ Loeffler, "Architecture of Diplomacy," 273.

³⁰ Robin, *Enclaves of America*, 242-243.

³¹ Barber, "Government Ownership," 359.

presented at court [in France] it is said that his tailor did not bring home his uniform in time, and he had the nerve to go in simple habit and so made a great hit. He was quick to perceive this himself, and he thus laid the foundation of an honorable custom which has since become deservedly a matter of national pride.”³² According to Barber, the United States embassy should revel in the traditional American ideals of simplicity and equality, and yet still distinguish itself by its prosperity. An embassy should be affluent and impressive, but not elite.

Barber proceeds to elaborate on this evident dichotomy, distinguish between the two sides, and explain how a structure can be built to accommodate both. The American traveler should feel welcome to attend the embassy to receive services and travel aid, but without any sense of proprietary ownership for the building and everyone in it. “There are a few citizens of our country (where it is easier to be presented to the President than it is to see a doctor, because it costs nothing) to whom the idea that an Ambassador or his wife has any right to privacy is entirely wanting. Such people often think that they own the Embassy.”³³ Barber, tongue in cheek, suggests the construction of a booby trap, as seen in Egyptian pyramids, for the hallway leading to the ambassador’s office. “It might kill a few of the more heedless” presumptive travelers.³⁴

When Congress was initially debating the Porter Bill and the principles on which the overseas building movement would be built, Representative Martin B. Madden stated,

I do not want him [the Ambassador] to live in such palatial quarters that I, as an humble, common, every-day American, if by any chance I should find myself in Paris, would not dare to call upon him because of the luxury with which he is surrounded. I want to find myself, when I approach an embassy of America in Paris or elsewhere, at least on equal terms with the man who occupies the place.³⁵

³² Barber, “Government Ownership,” 359.

³³ Barber, “Government Ownership,” 359.

³⁴ Barber, “Government Ownership,” 359.

³⁵ Loeffler, “Architecture of Diplomacy,” 252.

Congress was perhaps more sensitive than Barber to any suggestions of class elitism in its diplomatic buildings, such that Benjamin Franklin, wearing his plainclothes in the court of France, would have objected to.

Today this fear of elitism translates into wariness over spending tax dollars on the preservation of the State Department's more magnificent properties. These same properties were often bought at a bargain or given to the United States. For example, Barbara Hutton granted the United States a long-term lease to the Winfield House in London for one dollar and Sultan Moulay Suliman gave the Tangier Old Legation to the United States Government in 1821.³⁶ All the same, the Department of State wants to avoid the misconception that ambassadors live like royalty by keeping its diplomatic homes and offices from generating high profiles. Congress has shown its support for the preservation of the United States' historic diplomatic properties, but there is a very limited constituency to ask for and defend the preservation expenditures to the rest of the nation.³⁷

Security

Barber does not neglect to discuss security and relationship to location. He is wrong in presuming that the likelihood of violence towards embassies and post staff will only decrease, but he does make allowances for current problems with hostile nations remarking that, "In any event, "let none but Americans be on guard." During our war with Spain, when it was necessary to do a great deal of hard work at our Embassies, and when the entire sympathy of Continental Europe was against us, it was embarrassing to have people in our service whom we dared not

³⁶ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State's Register*, 4 and 7.

³⁷ Jonathan Blyth, conversation with author, Washington, D.C., February 9, 2009.

trust and whose patriotism was not our patriotism.”³⁸ Security is justly a paramount priority for OBO. It is not and should not be sacrificed for historic preservation, but in many instances State Department personnel can arrive at successful solutions to security problems in historic buildings with a little creative thinking and ingenuity.

In a speech to the 2007 National Conference on Cultural Property Protection, Ambassador Richard J. Griffin, Assistant Secretary for Diplomatic Security, addressed the difficulties and trials involved in retroactively fitting a historic building for the kind of security necessary today, while still adhering to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.³⁹

When confronted with a historic resource that needs security modifications the State Department’s Bureau of Diplomatic Security works with professionals within OBO to provide a solution to the problem that does not violate the Secretary of the Interior’s guidelines, the Venice Charter, or the host country’s preservation ethic. The Department operates within the framework of “adverse impact,” testing and remodeling all security innovations to ensure that they do not cause damage to the culturally or historically significant aspects of a resource.⁴⁰ Security solutions are tailored to the resource’s conservation needs and its “threat rating” – “a numerical score based on an established set of criteria” that includes the host country’s assessment of the danger to the structure.⁴¹

³⁸ Barber, “Government Ownership,” 359.

³⁹ Richard J. Griffin, “Good Fences and Good Neighbors: Security and Diplomacy Travel Hand-in-Hand” (keynote address given at the 2007 National Conference on Cultural Property Protection, Arlington, VA, February 20, 2007), <http://www.state.gov/m/ds/rls/rm/80735.htm> (accessed January 26, 2008).

⁴⁰ Griffin, “Good Fences.”

⁴¹ Griffin, “Good Fences.”

Ambassador Griffin lists some of the biggest challenges in adapting security measures to a historic resource: “fitting new systems into old contexts without damage, installing security features that are reversible, working with local governments, and, of course, cost.”⁴² Another issue that the Bureau of Diplomatic Security must address is the need for a building to exhibit a certain degree of openness and candor, as befits a representation of the diplomatic mission of the United States, at the same time as it meets all of the security requisites. In the words of Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, “Architecture is inescapably a political art, and it reports faithfully for ages to come what the political values of a particular age were. Surely ours must be openness and fearlessness in the face of those who hide in the darkness. Precaution. Yes. Sequester. No.”⁴³ This openness in the face of the reality of threat can to an extent be accommodated through some of the same methods that ensure the integrity of a historic structure.

The character-defining features of a building, or those that are open to the public, should appear unchanged and untouched by security features. Physical security measures (as opposed to procedural security measures) such as “fences, walls, bollards, pop-up barriers, forced entry doors, hard-line walls, shatter-resistant window film, strengthened window glass, alarms, and motion sensors,” must be camouflaged and hidden to a degree.⁴⁴ In this way, historic features are not compromised, security remains discrete, and the buildings and their occupants remain protected. Ambassador Griffin quoted a speaker at a “Balancing Security and Openness” Conference: “You can’t have diplomacy behind razor-wire.”⁴⁵

⁴² Griffin, “Good Fences.”

⁴³ Elizabeth Gill Lui, *Building Diplomacy* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2004), 13.

⁴⁴ Griffin, “Good Fences.”

⁴⁵ Griffin, “Good Fences.”

In Vilnius, Lithuania, the United States Department of State ensured the security of its Embassy at the same time as it maintained the integrity of a neighboring historic cemetery. The Bureau of Diplomatic Security restored an old (and documented) pathway through the graveyard and bordered it with anti-ram planters. It also placed strategic impenetrable boulders between large trees. The protection of the Embassy required security measures in the cemetery so that the building could not be breached from that direction. But with careful thought, consideration, cooperation with the host country, and a fair amount of ingenuity, the Bureau came up with a solution that would negate the danger of attack from that side of the Embassy, while still maintaining the historicity and appearance of the cemetery.⁴⁶

In some cases, the construction or design of historic resources come with their own inherent security features. For example, when the State Department bought a Jerusalem monastery to use as an office building, security personnel did not have to, as is customary, add steel plate to the walls to make them more indestructible because the monastery's walls were already three feet thick. The main idea is that fitting a historic resource for security is difficult, but not impossible if approached with flexibility and ingenuity.⁴⁷

Local Environment

Barber advises that before architectural plans are developed for new structures, "it would seem desirable, first, to send a commission or architects abroad to study the local conditions in each capital of the world."⁴⁸ This suggestion emphasizes the importance of an embassy not appearing out of place, but rather, complementary, to its surroundings in the host nation. All considered, the critically successful buildings of the post-World War II embassy-building

⁴⁶ Griffin, "Good Fences."

⁴⁷ Griffin, "Good Fences."

⁴⁸ Barber, "Government Ownership," 359.

movement were those that featured a successful melding of American culture and the culture of the host country, such as Edward Durell Stone's New Delhi Embassy, designed in 1954.



Figure 4: United States Embassy in New Delhi⁴⁹

The New Delhi Embassy was praised for its incorporation of Indian and ancient Mogul details. It has a “seven-foot-high platform, resembling those of Hindu temples and Mogul tombs,” and about 80 percent of its materials came from India.⁵⁰ The Embassy was favorably compared to the Taj Mahal and on its dedication in 1959 Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru remarked that he “was enchanted by the building,” and thought that, “it is a very beautiful structure and a very attractive combination of typically Indian motifs with latest modern techniques.”⁵¹

⁴⁹ Image from Department of State.

⁵⁰ Elie Abel, “New U.S. Embassy Praised by Nehru: Indian Head, at Dedication, Notes Blending of National Motif and U.S. Technique,” *New York Times*, January 4, 1959.

⁵¹ Abel, “New U.S. Embassy.”



Figure 5: United States Embassy in London⁵²

The London Embassy, on the other hand, designed in 1956 by Eero Saarinen, was not as successful on this front. In his defense, Saarinen had site complications that Stone did not have to deal with. Saarinen had to design within the context of a very well-known and well-established English Square: Grosvenor. His plan had to be American and yet complementary to the neighboring historic buildings which were available for immediate comparison. Unfortunately, any symbolism, historicity, or concessions to the immediate environment that Saarinen did incorporate into his design are too vague or abstract to communicate themselves to the interested bystander. One critic writes, “Saarinen’s claim that he wanted to adapt his building to the “pseudo-Georgian” tone of the square...hardly justifies a style which is Georgian only in symmetry and volumes and lacks both the refinement of Palladian and Nordic neo-classicism.”⁵³ The same critic could discern a relationship between the building and the United

⁵² Image from Department of State.

⁵³ Gillo Dorfles, “Eero Saarinen: The TWA Terminal and the American Embassy London,” *Zodiac* 8 (1961): 84-89.

States only by the “unconsciously pompous tone that sometimes marks the official statements of this great nation.”⁵⁴

An embassy does not have to be functionally ideal to be universally admired as long as it believably evokes what it represents – a relationship between the United States and another nation. If a structure fails in that primary motive, like the London Embassy, it becomes a representation of the worst of American culture in the eyes of its critics and loses that opportunity for the United States to develop goodwill from the host country simply through its physical manifestations.

Barber wrote his essay one hundred years ago and many of his ideas are dated and obsolete, but his essay still stands out as an excellent discourse on the unique character of diplomatic structures and the special issues that they face.

Hierarchy of Management

The hierarchy of ownership and management of OBO’s diplomatic structures and other cultural resources is multilayered. Per OBO’s website:

The Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations directs the worldwide overseas buildings program for the Department of State and the U.S. Government community serving abroad under the authority of the chiefs of mission. In concert with other State Department bureaus, foreign affairs agencies, and Congress, OBO sets worldwide priorities for the design, construction, acquisition, maintenance, use, and sale of real properties and the use of sales proceeds.”⁵⁵

In short, OBO buys, sells, designs, constructs, and maintains the United States’ diplomatic buildings abroad.

⁵⁴ Dorfles, “Eero Saarinen,” 84-89.

⁵⁵ Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, U.S. Department of State, “Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations,” <http://www.state.gov/obo/> Accessed March 25, 2009.

Within OBO, the protection and maintenance of cultural properties, such as historic buildings and furniture, fall under the provenance of the Cultural Heritage Program. The Cultural Heritage Program (CHP) is located within the Residential Design and Cultural Heritage Office under the Managing Director of Operations. OBO is still refining the CHP's responsibilities. Its duties will eventually include the development of maintenance and training programs for the better stewardship of the State Department's cultural heritage.⁵⁶ In addition, "the CHP will research and provide the justifications for future properties to be considered for listing on the Secretary's Register."⁵⁷

The Heritage Maintenance Program (HMP) is the sector of the CHP directly responsible for the development of a maintenance guide and maintenance schedule for the Department of State's historic buildings and their often museum-worthy artwork and furniture. The HMP operates under the management and economic assumption that regular maintenance precludes the need for periodic, costly, and extensive preservation and restoration projects. Maintenance programs also make the protected structures more attractive to potential investors, donors, and grant makers.⁵⁸ In fact, one of the catalysts for the creation of the HMP was a grant from the Getty Institute to finance restoration of the Hotel de Talleyrand in Paris. The Institute stipulated that in order to receive the funds, OBO must train staff to properly care for the restored building.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, U.S. Department of State, "Saving the Department's Treasures," Cultural Heritage Program Symposium, October 6, 2008.

⁵⁷ Richard J. Shinnick, Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, U.S. Department of State, Introductory letter to "Saving the Department's Treasures," Cultural Heritage Program Symposium, October 6, 2008.

⁵⁸ Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, "Saving the Department's Treasures."

⁵⁹ Vivien Woofter, conversation with author, Washington, D.C., February 9, 2009.

In December 2003 the HMP offered a widely-attended conference on cultural heritage management at the Hotel de Talleyrand. The HMP provides training for facility and cultural asset managers, briefs other officials on property and housing, and is currently developing an exhaustive *Maintenance Guide for Culturally Significant U.S. Embassy Buildings*.⁶⁰ The maintenance program is unique to the United States with no known corresponding programs in other nations. The English, French, and German governments have all asked for copies of the HMP's Maintenance Guide on its completion. They also asked to participate in OBO's Heritage Maintenance Conference in Paris, which was led by the Head Housekeeper of Great Britain's Waddesdon Manor. Waddesdon Manor is a National Trust property with an internationally-recognized housekeeping program.⁶¹

OBO is also the home of the Cultural Resources Committee (CRC). Several OBO employees created the Committee in 1998 to serve as the unofficial caretaker of the Department's historic resources. In their extensive job-related travels, the original Committee members had been individually struck by the importance, by anyone's standards, of the United States' historic diplomatic properties.⁶² They joined together in order to "enable the Department's cultural resource properties to serve American diplomacy and assist our colleagues who are charged with the care and maintenance of culturally significant property."⁶³ The voluntary Committee is a truly unique organization within government in that it is "not hierarchical, and it challenges authority."⁶⁴ When it was established, the Committee challenged the State Department's existing approach, or perhaps lack of approach, to its historic resources.

⁶⁰ Cultural Resources Committee, "Cultural Resource Property."

⁶¹ Vivien Woofter, conversation with author, Washington, D.C., February 9, 2009.

⁶² Jennifer Helmkamp, conversation with author, Washington, D.C., February 9, 2009.

⁶³ Cultural Resources Committee, "Cultural Resource Property."

⁶⁴ Trueheart, "The Group," 46.

The CRC “provides professional advice and guidance on the recognition, documentation and preservation of significant cultural property owned or controlled by the Department of State abroad.”⁶⁵ Among its duties the CRC includes the documentation of historic properties, preparation of property nominations for the Register, support of the HMP, maintenance of two websites, and the production of educational presentations. Since its inception, the Committee has met more than 113 times.

The CRC is composed of experts in many fields, including, but not limited to, architects, historic preservationists, maintenance specialists, engineers, curators, and archeologists who hear of the Committee through word-of-mouth. The multi-disciplinary nature of the Committee enables it to provide a wide variety of expertise when called to assist with projects such as the repair of the stucco on the Ambassador’s Residence in Prague (see Figure 11, p. 45). The CRC also provides a forum for the further education and edification of its members, keeping them up to date on the latest preservation techniques and philosophies. It periodically leads trips to recently restored sites.⁶⁶

The CRC includes among its members Marcia V. Mayo, Committee Chair and Director of Publications for OBO’s ART in Embassies Program; Kevin Lee Sarring, Secretary of the Committee and an architect with OBO; Vivien Woofter, OBO’s Cultural Heritage Conservation Advisor and the individual responsible for the recognition of much of the State Department’s cultural fabric; and Patrick Collins, Chief of the Architect Branch of OBO. Mr. Sarring, as Secretary, fields phone calls and questions on behalf of the Committee. He reports that facility managers have been coming to the CRC more and more often with their questions about how to approach different preservation issues. Mr. Sarring also manages the Committee’s two websites

⁶⁵ Cultural Resources Committee, “Cultural Resource Property.”

⁶⁶ Cultural Resources Committee, “Cultural Resource Property.”

– one for the public (<http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/66242.pdf>) and one for members of the Committee.⁶⁷ The public website is a PDF that features profiles on and a picture of each of the designated sites, and a small summary of the purpose of the Register and the designation criteria.

⁶⁷ Kevin Sarring, conversation with author, Washington, D.C., February 9, 2009.

CHAPTER THREE

OVERVIEW OF THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S REGISTER OF CULTURALLY SIGNIFICANT PROPERTY

As an introduction to the Secretary of State's Register of Culturally Significant Property, it serves to compare the inventory to the more widely-known National Register of Historic Places. Both Registers seek to identify and protect the United State's historic built environment, but by different means and with different intentions. The most obvious difference between the two tools is that the National Register catalogues historic places within the continental United States and the Secretary of State's Register catalogues the United State's diplomatic sites in foreign nations. The National Register seeks to recognize sites in order to preserve a vanishing past, whereas the Secretary of State's Register's emphasis is primarily on awareness of a site as a historic and diplomatic resource. Accordingly, the National Register provides some, if limited, legal protection to its listings, while designation on the Secretary of State's Register is honorific and offers no protection from demolition or adverse impacts. The National Register is also significantly larger than the Secretary of State's Register with over 80,000 designated properties, to the Secretary of State's Register's twenty.

History of the Register

The need for a catalogue such as the Secretary of State's Register became evident in the 1970s when an ambassador sought to get the Tangier Old Legation in Morocco designated under the National Register as a part of the American bicentennial celebration. The Tangier Old

Legation was the first diplomatic building acquired by the United States. It currently houses a museum dedicated to the history of friendship between Morocco and the United States. The National Park Service, the manager of the National Register, initially rejected the nomination of the Old Legation citing the fact that “at that time... [it] did not see its “national” jurisdiction extending overseas.”¹ The National Park Service eventually reversed its decision and designated the Tangier Legation as a National Historic Landmark, but only after intensive lobbying and at the specific request of the State Department’s FBO (now the OBO).² The Tangier Old Legation is still the only site listed on both the National Register and the Secretary of State’s Register.

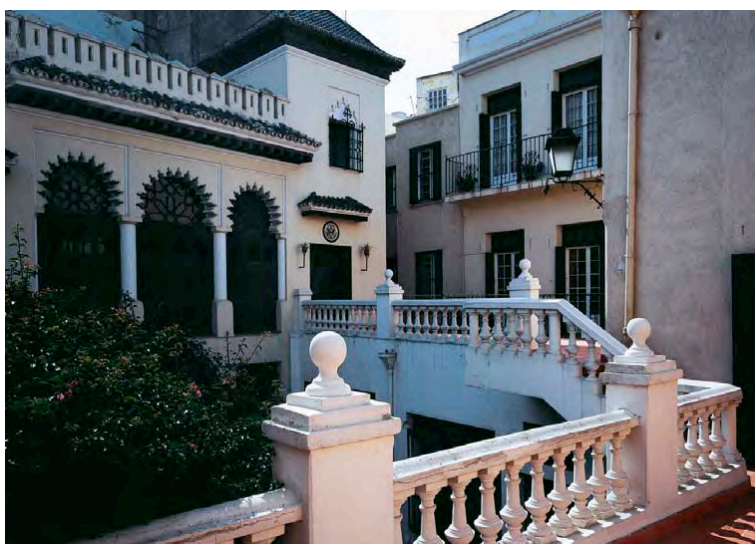


Figure 6: Tangier Old Legation³

The controversy over the Tangier Old Legation was not the only impetus for the creation of the Secretary of State’s Register. As early as the 1980s OBO professional staff Vivien Woofter and Patrick Collins were discussing the need for an inventory that would recognize outstanding historic diplomatic sites overseas. Mrs. Woofter, Mr. Collins, and the other

¹ Cultural Resources Committee, Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, U.S. Department of State, e-mail message to author, February 2, 2009.

² Cultural Resources Committee, Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, U.S. Department of State, e-mail message to author, February 2, 2009.

³ Image by Elizabeth Gill Lui.

members of the CRC “were appalled at the condition of America’s glorious relics around the world.”⁴ Mrs. Woofter remembers, “We were selling them, giving them away, painting them, doing horrible things to them – or nothing at all.”⁵

Perhaps the most stunning example of this neglect relates to the United States Embassy in Rome, the Palazzo Margherita, and Giambologna’s *Venus*. In 1983 Mrs. Woofter traveled to Rome to conduct an interior renovation on the United States ambassador’s residence, the Villa Taverna. However, when she visited the Palazzo Margherita, she was shocked at the wealth of resources that were being neglected. After World War II the Italian government had given the Palazzo and its furnishings to the United States in exchange for the vehicles and other materials that the United States Army had left behind.⁶ Artifacts in all states of disrepair were stuffed behind furnaces and hidden in crannies. Mrs. Woofter asked that part of her funding be used for an appraisal of the United States’ diplomatic resources in Rome, first by a Florentine firm, and then by Sotheby’s.⁷

The appraisers discovered many treasures, but the jewel in the crown was a statue of Venus by the famed Italian sculptor, Giambologna. “Giambologna is considered the greatest follower of Michelangelo as a sculptor, and is one of the greatest sculptors of the period between Michelangelo and Bernini.”⁸ The value of the *Venus* has been estimated to be greater than the entire palace that houses it. The statue was found in a stairwell with a rod running through it.

⁴ Trueheart, “The Group,” 46.

⁵ Trueheart, “The Group,” 46.

⁶ Enrico Bruschini, *Palazzo Margherita*, ed. Anna Gramiccia (Rome, Italy: Edizioni de Luca, 1996), 5.

⁷ Vivien Woofter, conversation with author, Washington, D.C., February 9, 2009.

⁸ Bruschini, *Palazzo Margherita*, 6.



Figure 7: Giambologna's *Venus* in the Palazzo Margherita⁹

On behalf of the CRC, Undersecretary of State for Management Bonnie R. Cohen officially proposed the Secretary of State's Register of Culturally Significant Property in a memorandum to then Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in November 2000. In her memorandum, Undersecretary Cohen explained how the Register would tie into then current State Department policy: "Acquisition and presentation of culturally significant property, where appropriate, is currently the policy of the Office of Foreign Buildings under A/FBO Policy and Procedures RE005 (3/3/98). Establishment of a Secretary's Register will advance this policy by

⁹ Image from Department of State.

officially identifying our culturally significant overseas properties, buildings, and objects.”¹⁰ She also described the intended impacts of the Register, the criteria for designation, and the CRC’s next steps, given approval of the proposal. Secretary Albright officially established the Register on November 11, 2000 in a ceremony at the Department of State’s Treaty Rooms. She signed in the Register’s initial seven properties at Thomas Jefferson’s desk.¹¹

Register Criteria

At the present time, a site must meet at least one of seven qualifications to be eligible for inclusion on the Register. The criteria are as follows:

1. Designation or Acknowledgement by a Government as a Significant Property
2. Part of the United States’ Overseas Heritage
3. Association with a Significant Historical Event or Person
4. Important Architecture and/or by an Important Architect
5. Distinctive Theme or Assembly
6. Unique Object or Visual Feature
7. Archaeological Site¹²

Several of these criteria are analogous to the National Register criteria; distinctive theme or assembly, for example, is similar to the National Register qualification that allows for the designation of districts. However, criteria one and two testify solely to the mission of the Secretary of State’s Register. When the United States designates a site because it has first been designated or acknowledged by the host country, the United States is publicly recognizing the other country’s heritage. So when the Philippines designated the Manila Chancery and South Korea recognized the Seoul Old American Legation, the United States’ complementary inclusion of the sites onto the Secretary of State’s Register was an act of good policy and diplomacy. The

¹⁰ Bonnie R. Cohen to Madeleine K. Albright, memo, November 2000, State Department, Washington, D.C.

¹¹ Cultural Resources Committee, “Cultural Resource Property.”

¹² Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State’s Register*, 1.

Philippines had wanted to acknowledge the role that the Chancery had played in Philippine history and South Korea had wanted to honor the long diplomatic relationship between itself and the United States. It was only fitting for the United States to recognize these relationships in turn.

Nomination Process

The present nomination process is simple, direct, and within the dynamics of layered bureaucracy. Initially the CRC and OBO Heritage Maintenance Officer prepare the nomination with the aid of archives from both the nominated post and OBO's library. When completed, the Heritage Maintenance Officer hands the nomination packet off to the Director of OBO for approval. The Director signs the nomination, notifies the nominated post and passes the nomination on to the Under Secretary for Management for his or her nomination concurrence. At this point the nomination proceeds to the Secretary of State for official signing onto the Register. This process is currently under review by the CRC.¹³

Effects of Designation

While examining the effects of the Register it is worthwhile to include Ms. Cohen's description of the intended impacts of the Register:

1. It will be honorific. It will honor the local culture of the host country in the context of the use of the property by the U.S. Government.
2. It will heighten the occupants' (the Posts') awareness and appreciation of the value of these properties. By doing so, it is intended to avoid future piecemeal degradation of the properties that might otherwise occur through a lack of awareness of their value. In the past, "improvement" projects may have diminished historic and culturally

¹³ Cultural Resources Committee, "Cultural Resource Property."

important features unnecessarily. Designation may inspire some to seek to preserve properties.

3. It will provide the opportunity to demonstrate an American heritage that exists overseas. Nomination to the Register would be accompanied by factual information that can be the basis for further research into the history of the property. This can be used for outreach initiatives in a variety of media.
4. It will permit changes and alterations to be well managed. Changes and alterations are foreseen to be inevitable and necessary. Register status will ensure that, during the process, important cultural aspects of the property are considered.
5. It will establish a framework for the Department to provide a professional stewardship of the properties that require special consideration. This is simply good management of the properties that have been entrusted to us. It will tend to shift the focus from short term “wants” to long term “needs”. A/FBO and the Post would have an incentive to take better care of designated properties.
6. It will allow the sale of properties if they are no longer needed in the inventory. This initiative does not limit the ability of the Department to sell property. Registry status has the potential of increasing the value of the property at the time of sale. Research in this country has shown that historic designation is usually accompanied by a somewhat elevated dollar value of the property.¹⁴

Awareness

These intended impacts illustrate the State Department’s emphasis on awareness of the historic, cultural, and diplomatic importance of the sites by the host countries, post staff, and the American public. Currently, however, this desired awareness is only achieved to a limited degree. Very little attention is given to new designations and there has not been a ceremony honoring the new listings since the inaugural signing. The designated buildings possess no outward signs of their inclusion – the CRC has designed a bronze plaque for Register properties that reads, “This property has been placed on the Secretary of State’s Register of Culturally Significant Property by the United States Department of State,” but there has been no funding to

¹⁴ Bonnie R. Cohen to Madeleine K. Albright, memo, November 2000, State Department, Washington, D.C.

implement their production and installation.¹⁵ Books and magazine articles on the various sites tend to ignore their participation on a prestigious Register.

There is evidence, however, that State Department employees and the preservation world, at large, are becoming more aware of the unique inventory. In June 2008 the Department of State was the recipient of the National Trust for Historic Preservation's Restore America Hero award for the establishment and management of the Secretary of State's Register. The Restore America Hero award "honors public officials, agencies, private citizens and corporations for significant contributions to the preservation of historic buildings, collections, documents, and works of art."¹⁶ The Trust had never before awarded an organization for the protection and stewardship of American-owned properties overseas.

Perhaps the greatest sign that the Register is slowly gaining in popularity and recognition, at least within the Foreign Service community, is the indignation of others on a site's behalf, when it remains absent from the Register. One former Foreign Service Officer who served as consul general in Istanbul, Turkey, writes of Palazzo Corpi, the former Consulate Building:

As Palazzo Corpi arguably meets at least six of [the Register's] criteria, one might have expected that M/OBO would have selected it as a charter member of the Secretary's Register. Unaccountably, this did not happen, even though of the 12 overseas buildings placed in the Register so far, several cannot be said to rival the Palazzo in historical, architectural, or cultural significance. One hopes M/OBO will see fit to correct this situation in the not-too-distant future.¹⁷

¹⁵ Cultural Resources Committee, "Cultural Resource Property."

¹⁶ *State Magazine*, News, September 2008, 8.

¹⁷ Thomas J. Carolan, Jr., "History of the Former Consulate Building: Palazzo Corpi," Consulate General of the United States, Istanbul, Turkey, <http://istanbul.usconsulate.gov/history2.html> (accessed August 10, 2009).

Conservation

As Undersecretary Cohen's memo establishes, "designation is honorific and does not restrict the alteration or sale of the property"¹⁸ on the Register. Security, spatial, and financial needs would make it very difficult for the State Department to legally bind itself to a meticulous preservation of its historic buildings. This being said, the State Department's designation of a site onto the Register serves as the Department's tacit commitment to keep and maintain that building to a certain standard for the long term. The State Department does not pursue the nomination of sites that it is not prepared to hold onto or see conserved.¹⁹

Properties on the Secretary of State's Register are often subject to rigorous preservation projects prior to their nomination to the Register. It makes sense for the State Department to want to designate a building after it has gone through the expense of conserving it. Post-conservation designations honor and recognize the talent, time, and money that were put into the site. In addition, after renovation the eligibility of a building for designation often becomes more obvious.

The most significant impact that designation on the Register has, in terms of physical preservation, is in officially pulling sites into the framework of the State Department's historic and cultural fabric. As a part of this framework, a building is recognized as in need of professional stewardship and deserving of a certain level of care which might not be available to it without the widespread awareness of its historic or cultural significance. This framework also places a building at the front of the queue for attention and funding from the newly developing HMP. As the HMP matures and completes its maintenance manual, a high and correct standard of care, with special attention for historic fabric, will become the general approach to the United

¹⁸ Cultural Resources Committee, "Cultural Resource Property."

¹⁹ Jonathan Blyth, conversation with author, Washington, D.C., February 9, 2009.

States' historic diplomatic properties. Until then, listing on the Register is more likely to ensure that a building receives special attention and preservation priority.

While Sections 106 and 110 of the NHPA offer a degree of legal protection to National Register properties, these Sections do not apply to the Secretary of State's Register properties. Federal agencies are only required to "take into account the effect" of their projects "on any district, site, building, structure, or object that is included or eligible for inclusion in the National Register"²⁰ when that district, site, building, structure, or object is within the United States.

Section 402, on the other hand, applies internationally. The full text reads:

Prior to the approval of any Federal undertaking outside the United States which may directly and adversely affect a property which is on the World Heritage List or on the applicable country's equivalent of the National Register, the head of a Federal agency having direct or indirect jurisdiction over such undertaking shall take into account the effect of the undertaking on such property for purposes of avoiding or mitigating any adverse effects.²¹

It is doubtful whether the Secretary of State's Register properties would qualify under this Section as they are not "on the World Heritage List," and the Register does not qualify as another "country's equivalent of the National Register."²²

Those sites that are on both the Register and their host country's Register equivalent would fit the criteria of Section 402. However, even with this being the case, Section 402 could not prevent OBO from ultimately tearing down or adversely impacting such a designated property. Section 402 only requires Federal agencies to take applicable historic properties into account when planning undertakings. It does not require that they abandon or rework potentially

²⁰ Okinawa Dugong (Dugong Dugon), et al., Plaintiffs v. Robert Gates, et al., Defendants, 543 F.Supp.2d 1082 (U.S. District Court, N.D. California 2008).

²¹ Okinawa Dugong (Dugong Dugon), et al., Plaintiffs v. Robert Gates, et al., Defendants, 543 F.Supp.2d 1082 (U.S. District Court, N.D. California 2008).

²² Okinawa Dugong (Dugong Dugon), et al., Plaintiffs v. Robert Gates, et al., Defendants, 543 F.Supp.2d 1082 (U.S. District Court, N.D. California 2008).

harmful undertakings until they pose no threat to the significant buildings. OBO writes of these sections, “While Section 106 and 110 do not apply to the sites on the Secretary’s Register, OBO uses the National Historic Preservation Act as guidance. OBO follows the spirit of these sections of the law, as well as host nation requirements and Section 402 of the NHPA when addressing these historic properties.”²³

Funding

Funding for the preservation of the Secretary of State’s Register properties comes from OBO’s appropriations bill from the United States Congress. Register properties compete with all of the other functions of OBO for funding. The Register also encourages private donations.²⁴ Private donations are especially significant in their effect on the United States Congress, which takes the donations as support for the preservation program from Americans. This is important in that these properties have no real constituency for Congress to respond to about funding.

The funding issue ties into one of the larger problems that pose a challenge for the Register. At the same time as the CRC wants to recognize the Register properties and make more efforts to raise money for their preservation, the Committee is wary of drawing too much attention to the sites. Many of the buildings are large and grand, richly furnished, and in expensive parts of town. The State Department does not want Americans to get the mistaken impression that their ambassadors live like kings, by too much exposure, without explanation, to their residences and chanceries.

²³ Cultural Resources Committee, Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, U.S. Department of State, e-mail message to author, February 2, 2009.

²⁴ Cultural Resources Committee, Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, U.S. Department of State, e-mail message to author, February 2, 2009.

Contrary to the perception that the United States is wasting money on buildings that few Americans will ever see in person, many of the sites on the Register were either given to the United States Government or sold to America for a pittance. And there is the simple fact that the American Foreign Service must maintain certain standards in order to facilitate business, entertaining, and the other functions of a successful diplomatic mission. In the end, diplomacy more than pays for itself.

Designated Properties

The Register's twenty properties range from sixteenth-century palaces to 1950s modernist embassies. These buildings serve as chanceries, office buildings, ambassador's residences, museums, and libraries. The three most recently designated sites are the Hotel Rothschild in Paris, the Villa Taverna in Rome, and the Villa Petschek in Prague. "Each of our embassies is one of a kind, a response to the varying factors of politics, time, cultural context, and the history of our relationship with a host country."²⁵ And together they comprise a varied and fascinating collection of global architecture.

The *Tirana Embassy* (see Figure 2, p. 6) in Albania is significant for its role in the United States' overseas heritage. It is supposedly the first building built through the 1926 Porter Legislation. Architects Wyeth and Sullivan modeled the 1929 embassy on American southern plantations, specifically Mount Vernon. The Italian government occupied the property for thirty years during the Cold War until Albanian-American diplomatic relations resumed.²⁶

²⁵ Lui, *Building Diplomacy*, 19.

²⁶ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State's Register*, 13.



Figure 8: Palacio Bosch²⁷

Rene Sergent designed the house and Achille Duchene laid out the gardens for the *Palacio Bosch* estate in Buenos Aires, Argentina, home of Argentina's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ernesto Bosch. Construction on the grand house extended from 1912 to 1917, but with good effect: the design of the building proved to be very influential in Argentina.²⁸ In fact the United States bought the estate for an ambassador's residence in 1929 because Ambassador Robert Wood Bliss "had appealed to President Herbert Hoover to support the purchase of a property that would project an image of architectural prestige in a prominent location in the Argentine capital."²⁹ The Buenos Aires municipality and Argentine Republic have both designated Palacio Bosch, although it is also eligible to the Register under the important architecture and architect criteria.³⁰

²⁷ Image from Department of State.

²⁸ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State's Register*, 10.

²⁹ Lui, *Building Diplomacy*, 51.

³⁰ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State's Register*, 10.



Figure 9: Truman Hall³¹

Truman Hall in Brussels, Belgium was built in 1963 in the style of an old Flemish country house. It is now home to the ambassador to NATO. B.A. Jacquemotte designed the house, and Rene Pechere, its landscape, for Jean Michiels. Mrs. Michiels sold the estate to the Department of State remarking, “I want you to have it. Your country saved mine in World War II.” A good portion of the original landscape of Truman Hall has been preserved and the site qualifies for the Register by its association with a significant landscape architect, Rene Pechere.³²

³¹ Image from Department of State.

³² Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State’s Register*, 18.



Figure 10: Schoenborn Palace³³

The *Schoenborn Palace* in Prague, Czech Republic is composed of five medieval residences and a malthouse. The Count of Colloredo-Wallsee bought the estate from Emperor Ferdinand in 1643.³⁴ The property passed to the Schoenborn family in 1794, but the family was forced to take in tenants in the early 1900s, one of whom was Franz Kafka. Kafka described the Schoenborn Palace in a letter,

I went into a housing bureau, where, almost immediately, I was told about a flat in one of the most beautiful palaces...It was like the fulfillment of a dream. I went there. Rooms high and beautiful, red and gold, almost like in Versailles. Four windows overlooking a completely hidden quiet courtyard, one window onto the garden. What a garden! When you enter the gate of the Palace you can hardly believe what you see. Through the high arch of the second gate, flanked by caryatids, you see the garden sloping slowly and majestically from a beautifully divided branched stone stairway up to a Gloriette.³⁵

The Schoenborns eventually sold the compound to Richard Crane, an American diplomat. The United States Government bought the estate from Crane in 1924.³⁶

³³ Image from Department of State.

³⁴ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State's Register*, 3.

³⁵ Franz Kafka to Felice Bauer, Prague, 1917, quoted in Brigitte Hauger, *The Schoenborn Palace: A History of the American Chancery Building in Prague* (Prague, 1976), 36.



Figure 11: Villa Petschek³⁷

Max Spielmann designed the *Villa Petschek* in Prague for Otto Petschek in 1929. The Villa possesses many features that were cutting edge at the time of its construction, including an elevator, exercise equipment, and an indoor pool. The Jewish Petscheks fled the country with the Nazi occupation in 1939. During World War II German military governors stayed in the house, but war reparations landed the United States with the property in 1948. In the midst of the Cold War, the Villa Petschek, the United States ambassador's residence, served as a meeting place for the Americans and the Czech dissidents. "Writer Vaclav Havel, later the Czech president, and other dissenters [of the Soviet system] would come and go to these gatherings in the trunks of cars. Havel, heading home one night, was arrested two blocks from the residence for fraternizing with Americans."³⁸

³⁶ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State's Register*, 3.

³⁷ Image from Department of State.

³⁸ Trueheart, "The Group," 45.



Figure 12: American Center³⁹

Alexandrian architect Victor Erlanger built the house that now serves as the *American Center* in Alexandria, Egypt in 1922. In 1962 the FBO bought the building for use as the Thomas Jefferson Library. It reopened in 1979 as the American Cultural Center after it had remained empty for several years due to a 1967 war. The Center now furnishes programs that foster the relationship between the United States and Egypt. The Center qualifies for the Register as it represents Alexandrian architecture, a distinctive theme.⁴⁰



Figure 13: Winfield House⁴¹

³⁹ Image from Department of State.

⁴⁰ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State's Register*, 15.

⁴¹ Image by Elizabeth Gill Lui.

Barbara Hutton, the Woolworth Heiress, built *Winfield House* in London, England in 1936, primarily as a fortress for her young son, Lance. The Lindbergh baby had been kidnapped and Hutton and her then husband, Count Kurt Haugwitz-Reventlow, were living in London out of fear that Lance, the “world’s richest baby” would share a similar fate.⁴² Throughout the war the Georgian-style house served as a Royal Air Force officers’ club and then a hospital for Canadian servicemen. Post-World War II the United States bought the lease of the property from Ms. Hutton for one dollar for use as an ambassadorial residence. The House contains eighteenth-century hand-painted Chinese wallpaper that is considered a unique object or visual feature.⁴³



Figure 14: Hotel de Talleyrand⁴⁴

In the eighteenth century Jacques-Ange Gabriel and Jean-Francois Chalgrin designed the *Hotel de Talleyrand* for Paris’s Place de la Concorde.⁴⁵ Charles Maurice de Talleyrand, Napoleon’s foreign minister, lived, worked, and entertained in this building, inspiring Victor

⁴² Julian Flanders, ed., *Winfield House: A Witness to History* (New York: Butler & Tanner Limited, 2001), 11.

⁴³ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State’s Register*, 7.

⁴⁴ Image from Department of State.

⁴⁵ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State’s Register*, 6.

Hugo to write in 1838: “Into this palace, as a spider into its web, he enticed and captured, one by one, heroes, thinkers, conquerors, princes, emperors...and all the gilded, glittering flies that have buzzed through the history of these past 40 years.”⁴⁶ Later, the Vichy government, and then the German government occupied the hotel.

The United States Government bought the Hotel de Talleyrand after World War II, maintaining the bullet holes in its façade and the German detention cells in the basement. The hotel saw the development of the European Marshall Plan and now houses the George C. Marshall Center, a law office, and the World Monument Fund’s European Headquarters. As the headquarters for the Marshall Plan, the Hotel de Talleyrand has an association with a significant historic event; it also represents an important work of architecture by an important architect.⁴⁷



Figure 15: Hotel Rothschild⁴⁸

The Baroness de Pontalba, nee Michaela Almonaster y Rojas, bought property on Paris’s Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honore in 1836. She tore down the existing building and hired Louis Visconti, architect of Napoleon’s tomb at Les Invalides, to build a mansion, the *Hotel Pontalba*

⁴⁶ Crumley, “Foreign Assets.”

⁴⁷ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State’s Register*, 6.

⁴⁸ Image from Department of State.

or *Hotel Rothschild*, in its place. The Baroness filled her home with salvaged furniture and architectural elements from other demolished estates, perhaps most notably several Chinese lacquer panels from the Hotel d'Havre.⁴⁹ Baron Edmond de Rothschild bought the estate from the Baroness de Pontalba's heirs in 1876.⁵⁰ Baron Rothschild and architect Felix Langlais significantly remodeled the mansion's façade and plan. During the Nazi occupation, the building served as Hermann Goring's headquarters.⁵¹ The United States Government bought the property in 1948 and used it for office space until 1966.⁵² It now serves as the ambassador's residence.



Figure 16: Athens Chancery⁵³

The *Athens Chancery* in Greece was built as a part of America's post-World War II embassy-building movement. Walter Gropius designed it as a modernist play on ancient Greek architecture with abstract columns and plenty of marble. Construction was completed in 1961, and even though the site has not passed the fifty-year mark customary for buildings to be

⁴⁹ Ulrich Leben and Robert McDonald Parker, *The American Ambassador's Residence in Paris* (Paris: Societe Francaise de Promotion Artistique, 2007), 10.

⁵⁰ Leben and Parker, *American Ambassador's Residence*, 12.

⁵¹ Leben and Parker, *American Ambassador's Residence*, 16.

⁵² Leben and Parker, *American Ambassador's Residence*, 17.

⁵³ Image from Department of State.

considered for the National Register of Historic Places, the Chancery qualifies for the Secretary of State's Register under the significant architecture/architect clause.⁵⁴

The *New Delhi Chancery* (see Figure 4, p. 23) was built in 1954, also part of the post-World War II embassy-building movement. Edward Durell Stone designed the chancery in the international style. The design was widely praised for its representation of traditional Indian culture and architecture and its simultaneous incorporation of American technology. The New Delhi Chancery is a work of important architecture, a great example of the international style, by an important architect, Stone.⁵⁵



Figure 17: Palazzo Margherita and Twin Villas⁵⁶

The *Palazzo Margherita* (1886-1890) and *Twin Villas* in Rome, Italy serve as the United States chancery offices. Gaetano Koch designed the Palazzo around the remains of a Cardinal's home. The Queen Mother Margherita, from whom the building takes its name, lived in the Palazzo for about twenty-five years. It later became the headquarters for the National Fascist Confederation of Farmers during Mussolini's reign. The United States, in need of office space,

⁵⁴ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State's Register*, 16.

⁵⁵ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State's Register*, 17.

⁵⁶ Image by Elizabeth Gill Lui.

bought the Palazzo Margherita and Twin Villas in 1946. Beneath the building there “are 2,000-year-old Roman Imperial fresco paintings preserved in an underground passageway” which make the property an archeological site.⁵⁷



Figure 18: Villa Taverna⁵⁸

The *Villa Taverna*, the United States’ ambassador’s residence since 1933, sits on seven-acres of garden in the heart of Rome.⁵⁹ Count Ludovico Taverna and architect Carlo Busiri Vici restored and enlarged the sixteenth-century building in 1920.⁶⁰ Throughout its history the Villa has served as a seminary, a center for religious studies, a military hospital, and a home.⁶¹ The United States Government bought the property, having leased it previously, in 1948.⁶²

⁵⁷ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State’s Register*, 5.

⁵⁸ Image by Elizabeth Gill Lui.

⁵⁹ Elizabeth Helman Minchilli, “Villa Taverna: Ambassador’s Garden in Rome,” *Veranda* 23, no. 1 (January 2009): 106.

⁶⁰ Minchilli, “Villa Taverna,” 110.

⁶¹ Minchilli, “Villa Taverna,” 106.

⁶² Minchilli, “Villa Taverna,” 110.



Figure 19: United States Ambassador's Residence in Tokyo⁶³

The United States Government bought the site for the *Ambassador's Residence* in Tokyo, Japan in 1925 from Prince Ito Hirokuni, a son of Japan's Prime Minister. Architects H. Van Burren and Antonin Raymond incorporated Moorish and Asian stylistic and philosophic elements into the design. When built, the Residence was popularly known as "Hoover's Folly" because of the great expense gone to importing walnut wall panels from Georgia and marble from Vermont, among other things. The Residence was one of the first built specifically for that purpose by the United States' new FSBC. However, this is not the only reason that the building qualifies for the Register: it is also associated with a significant historic event. On September 27, 1945 General Douglas MacArthur met at the Residence with Emperor Hirohito; the meeting signified the new "subordinate position" of Hirohito in the eyes of the Japanese citizens.⁶⁴

The *Tangier Old Legation* (see Figure 6, p. 31) in Morocco was a gift from Sultan Moulay Suliman to the United States Government in 1821, making it the first diplomatic property acquired by America. The architecture "is a harmonious blend of Moorish and Spanish architectural traditions." The Legation has since been an Arabic language school and now

⁶³ Image by Elizabeth Gill Lui.

⁶⁴ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State's Register*, 9.

functions as a museum. The Tangier Old Legation is the only American National Historic Landmark in a foreign country.⁶⁵



Figure 20: Villa Otium⁶⁶

In 1911 architect Henrik Bull designed the *Villa Otium* in Oslo, Norway for Hans Andreas Olsen, a petroleum heir and Consul General to Russia. Bull modeled the Villa on a Russian palace. When the United States Government bought the estate in 1924 for one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars it was the most expensive diplomatic purchase by the United States to date. Not only is the Villa designated under the Norwegian Preservation Agency, but it is also a significant example of the art nouveau style and the work of an important Norwegian architect.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State's Register*, 4.

⁶⁶ Image from Department of State.

⁶⁷ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State's Register*, 12.



Figure 21: Manila Chancery⁶⁸

The *Manila Chancery* in the Philippines was built in 1940 as the United States High Commissioner's residence and office. In its relatively short history the Chancery has experienced several turnovers including occupation by the Japanese during World War II, and the later reclamation by the United States military forces. The Japanese war crime trials for the Philippines were held in the building in late 1945. A year later the structure became the United States Embassy with the independence of the Philippines. The Chancery is now designated under the National Historical Institute of the Philippines.⁶⁹



Figure 22: Seoul Old American Legation⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Image from Department of State.

⁶⁹ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State's Register*, 14.

⁷⁰ Image from Department of State.

The *Seoul Old American Legation* in South Korea was built in 1883. Lucius Foote, an American envoy, bought the home a year later, making it the first legation in Korea, and supposedly, the first Korean property sold to a foreigner. The building has since “been in possession of the United States government longer than any other U.S. residence.” The United States Government now uses the Legation as a guesthouse. The Seoul Old American Legation is an example of a site with a distinctive theme or assembly – it is “culturally and architecturally sympathetic to historic Korean design principles.”⁷¹



Figure 23: Byne House Dining Room⁷²

Byne House in Madrid, Spain is the residence of the United States Deputy Chief of Mission to Spain. It was built in 1885 by Don Manuel Caldero and bought by Americans Arthur Byne and Mildred Stapley in 1931. The Bynes filled the home with Spanish antiques and artifacts and decorated accordingly. The United States Department of State bought the house in

⁷¹ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State's Register*, 8.

⁷² Image from ART in Embassies Program

1944. Byne House fits several of the criteria for the Register: it is listed with premier status on Madrid's historic register and contains numerous unique objects and visual features, including a seventeenth-century fireplace and carpentry representative of the Muslim Mudejar tradition.⁷³



Figure 24: United States Ambassador's Residence in Hanoi⁷⁴

Finally, the *Ambassador's Residence*, designed by M. LaCollonge, in Hanoi, Vietnam was built in 1921 for Indochina Financial Governors. After the Governors moved out the building was occupied by several different groups including Vietnamese government officials, the Committee for Foreign Culture Exchange, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs press office. The Residence was acquired fairly recently by the United States Government in 1995. The estate is significant for its second empire architecture.⁷⁵

⁷³ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State's Register*, 19.

⁷⁴ Image by Elizabeth Gill Lui.

⁷⁵ Cultural Resources Committee, *Secretary of State's Register*, 11.

DESIGNATED SITES

Site	City	Country	Architect	Date Built	Date Acquired by the U.S. Gov't	Current Use
Tirana Embassy	Tirana	Albania	Wyeth and Sullivan	1929	1929	Chancery
Palacio Bosch	Buenos Aires	Argentina	Rene Sergent, LA: Achille Duchene	1912-1917	1929	Ambassador's Residence
Truman Hall	Brussels	Belgium	B.A. Jacquemotte, LA: Rene Pechere	1963	1984	Residence of the Ambassador to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization
Schoenborn Palace	Prague	Czech Republic	Compilation of Buildings	1643, R: 1718	1924	Chancery
Villa Petschek	Prague	Czech Republic	Max Spielmann	1929	1948	Ambassador's Residence
American Center Alexandria	Alexandria	Egypt	Victor Erlanger	1922	1962	American Center
Winfield House	London	England	Wimperis, Simpson, and Guthrie	1936, R: 1969-1974	1946	Residence of the U.S. Ambassador to the Court of St. James
Hotel de Talleyrand	Paris	France	Jacques-Ange Gabriel and Jean-Francois Chalgrin	1767-1769	1950	George C. Marshall Center, Law Office, World Monument's European Headquarters
Hotel Pontalba or Hotel Rothschild	Paris	France	Louis Visconti	1836-1842	1948	Ambassador's Residence
Athens Chancery	Athens	Greece	Walter Gropius	1961	1961	Chancery
New Delhi Chancery	New Delhi	India	Edward Durell Stone	1954	1954	Chancery
Palazzo Margherita/ Twin Villas	Rome	Italy	Gaetano Koch	1886-1890	1946	Chancery

Site	City	Country	Architect	Date Built	Date Acquired by the U.S. Gov't	Current Use
Villa Taverna	Rome	Italy	Unknown, R: Carlo Busiri Vici	16th Century, R: 1920	Leased: 1933, Bought: 1948	Ambassador's Residence
Ambassador's Residence	Tokyo	Japan	H. Van Burren Magonigle and Antonin Raymond	1931	1931	Ambassador's Residence
Tangier Old Legation	Tangier	Morocco	Unknown	Unknown	1821	Tangier-American Legation Museum
Villa Otium	Oslo	Norway	Henrik Bull	1911	1924	Ambassador's Residence
Manila Chancery	Manila	Philippines	Juan M. de Guzman Arellano	1940	1940	Chancery
Seoul Old American Legation	Seoul	South Korea	Unknown	Unknown	1884	Guesthouse
Byne House	Madrid	Spain	Manuel Caldero	1885, R: 1930s	1944	Residence of the U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission to Spain
Ambassador's Residence	Hanoi	Vietnam	M. LaCollonge	1921	1995	Ambassador's Residence

Table 1: Designated Properties

***R: Renovation**

LA: Landscape Architecture

CHAPTER FOUR

CASE STUDIES

These case studies reveal the various efforts of the United States Foreign Service to encourage and sponsor the preservation, diplomatic potential, and better understanding of its historically and culturally significant diplomatic properties. The distances between posts, national and cultural differences, individual character and diverse leadership of each of the resources mean that techniques that are used successfully at one designated site are not necessarily adopted at others. Because of these differences, such an adoption might not be appropriate at all times and at all locations. However, a more standardized approach to the Register properties, one that systematically tests and takes advantage of the successful ideas of the various posts, like those mentioned in this chapter, would prove worthwhile. Chapter Five will offer suggestions for developing such an approach in addition to suggestions for the further legitimization of the Register.

Physical Preservation

For the past several years, beginning in 1999, the Hotel de Talleyrand in Paris has been the focus of a meticulous restoration by OBO. The various rooms have been returned to their eighteenth- and nineteenth-century states (See Figure 1, p. 4). The restoration team, spearheaded by Vivien Woofter in Washington, D.C., and Candice Nancel, Director of the George C. Marshall Center, in Paris, followed a demanding preservation protocol, outlined as follows:

With the understanding that our current era is a part of the chain of history of a place, three important principles of good preservation practice have been applied to this work.

The first is the concept of reversibility; treatments should be reversible in the future without detriment to the original element. The second principle is to make allowance for future solutions to technical problems, with methods that have yet to be invented. Thus, by leaving as many of the original features as possible, the door is opened to future research. The third principle is that by leaving some visibly unrestored sections of an element in the finished space, the viewer is able to visualize the effect of the work, and the materials and their patinas that have formed over time are preserved for future study.¹

The restoration combined the skill and proficiency of many experts in historic architecture and décor, including Fabrice Ouziel, a historical and technical consultant, carpenters, gilders, and paint analysts.²

Hubert de Givenchy, a member of the Restoration Steering Committee, remarked, “The restoration of this historically significant building mirrors the great respect Americans hold for French history, art and architecture.”³ This quote by a prominent Frenchman is evidence that the Hotel de Talleyrand’s restoration is helping to fulfill the building’s potential as an agent for diplomacy. The Hotel de Talleyrand’s State Apartment, now the George C. Marshall Center, houses “The Marshall Plan: The Vision of a Family of Nations,” an exhibit that celebrates the efforts and collaboration of the nations involved in the Marshall Plan.⁴

The United States posts that feature buildings designated under the Register take special care to submit to the historic preservation authorities and laws of the host country. When wear and tear began to show on the front façade of the United States Embassy in Prague, the Schoenborn Palace, the Embassy applied to the Prague Monuments Commission for permission

¹ Linda Stevenson, “The State Apartment: Restoration and Craftsmanship,” in *Concorde: Hotel de Talleyrand, George C. Marshall Center*, ed. Susan Douglas Tate and Linda Stevenson, *Concorde: Hotel de Talleyrand, George C. Marshall Center* (Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Publications Office, 2007), 98.

² Stevenson, “State Apartment,” 97.

³ Crumley, “Foreign Assets.”

⁴ Susan Douglas Tate and Linda Stevenson, “Stewardship and Adaptive Use: The Hotel de Talleyrand Enters a New Millennium,” in *Concorde: Hotel de Talleyrand, George C. Marshall Center*, ed. Susan Douglas Tate and Linda Stevenson (Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Publications Office, 2007), 127.

to paint (see Figure 10, p. 44). This process delayed the necessary maintenance work, but the Monuments Commission understood the situation, appreciated the United States Government's cooperation, and expedited the application.⁵

The respect that the United States Government shows the Czech Republic through its treatment of the countries' shared heritage stands out in direct relief next to other nations' treatment of Prague's architectural patrimony. Two other countries own Petschek family properties in the same neighborhood as the United States' Villa Petschek. Both nations have paid little attention to their buildings' preservation, other than to keep the structures painted.⁶ OBO has recently completed a couple of major preservation projects on the Villa Petschek, including a multi-million dollar repair of the building's stucco. The United States' concern with preservation and maintenance makes for a very good impression in contrast with other countries' negligence.

Adversely, evidence of deterioration or poor care of a property can work against the United States. Post staff must remain aware of the constantly evolving state of the buildings and on the lookout for slight changes and telltale signs of disrepair. As Thomas Nave, Facility Manager in Prague, was leading me through the Schoenborn Palace and the Villa Petschek, he was constantly receiving updates on the condition of the buildings, taking notes on evidence of possible deterioration, and checking on the state of past repairs.

Post staff must also remain sensitive to the host country's perception of the properties: its opinion of what is important and deserves preservation. When the American Embassy in Prague cut down some of the older and larger trees behind the Schoenborn Palace, officials in Prague Castle actually called to complain. The Castle, which towers over the rest of the historic city,

⁵ Thomas Nave, conversation with author, Prague, Czech Republic, March 12, 2009.

⁶ Thomas Nave, conversation with author, Prague, Czech Republic, March 12, 2009.

has a view of the Embassy's backyard and Glorietta. Officials in Prague Castle, the seat of the Head of State of the Czech Republic, were upset by the destruction of the trees due to their age and the ensuing alteration to the terrain.⁷



Figure 25: Glorietta behind the Schoenborn Palace⁸

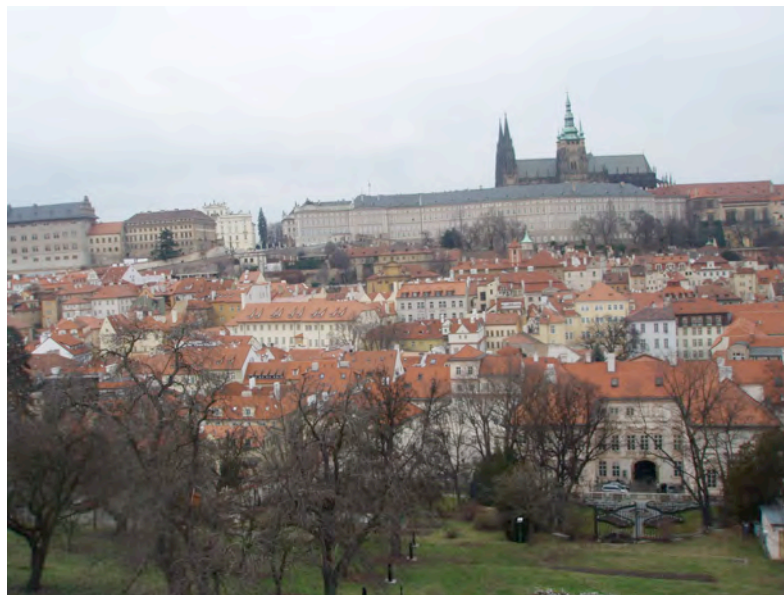


Figure 26: View of Prague Castle from Schoenborn Castle's Glorietta⁹

⁷ Thomas Nave, conversation with author, Prague, Czech Republic, March 12, 2009.

⁸ Image by Rebecca Hager.

⁹ Image by Rebecca Hager.

Opening to Scholarship

As construction was underway for a new garage after World War II, post staff in Rome discovered a first-century AD underground passage beneath the Palazzo Margherita. The tunnel, or *cryptoporticus*, would have been used in the past as a passage or as a refuge from the heat.¹⁰ The Embassy completed a two-year archeological excavation and stabilization of the *cryptoporticus* in 1998.¹¹ The “sensor-equipped and climate-controlled” passage is “often visited by scholars of antiquity studying its exceptional state of preservation and life in the Roman, early Christian, and Renaissance eras.”¹² These *cryptoporticus* tours assist scholars in their research and give the United States a good name as the Embassy grants access to this piece of shared heritage.



Figure 27: *Cryptoporticus* Wall Drawings¹³

¹⁰ Trueheart, “The Group,” 46.

¹¹ Trueheart, “The Group,” 47.

¹² Trueheart, “The Group,” 47.

¹³ Image from Department of State.

The American Embassy in Rome often enlists the aid of Italian experts and craftsmen in its preservation projects. When security upgrades for the Palazzo Margherita uncovered Imperial Roman lead water pipes, the Embassy hired an Italian archeologist to document and preserve the engineering remains.¹⁴ The Embassy also collaborated with Italian artisans in the restoration of *Saturn's Fable*, a seventeenth-century painting by Daniel Seiter on the Palazzo's ceiling.¹⁵ Claudio Strinati, Soprintendente per il Polo Museale Romano, wrote: "The Embassy of the United States of America in Rome deserves the highest praise for promoting the restoration of an important painting by Daniel Seiter...it is the result of a brilliant technical collaboration carried out with the scientific advice of the Soprintendenza per il Polo Museale Romano."¹⁶

The Villa Petschek is an excellent example of a site on the Register that could benefit from outside scholarship at the same time as the scholarship could improve the Villa's diplomatic potential. The Villa Petschek passed to the United States with its furniture and art collection mostly intact and the addition, besides, of many furnishings from estates in the area.¹⁷ Otto Petschek had been greatly interested in new innovations in mechanics and engineering and had equipped his home with some highly unusual features for the time, such as windows that sink into the ground at the push of a button and an indoor swimming pool.¹⁸ Together, all of these things mean that the United States possesses some very unique and noteworthy resources in the Villa Petschek.

¹⁴ Griffin, "Good Fences."

¹⁵ Valeria Brunori, "The Restoration of the Painting by Daniel Seiter," in *Saturn's Fable: Analysis of a Restoration and Artistic Research on a Painting by Daniel Seiter*, ed. Valeria Brunori (Rome: Gangemi Editore, 2005), 15.

¹⁶ Claudio Strinati, Presentation to *Saturn's Fable: Analysis of a Restoration and Artistic Research on a Painting by Daniel Seiter*, ed. Valeria Brunori (Rome: Gangemi Editore, 2005), 10.

¹⁷ U.S. Department of State, "Ambassador: Ambassador's Residence," http://prague.usembassy.gov/ambassadors_residence.html (accessed June 8, 2009).

¹⁸ Thomas Nave, conversation with author, Prague, Czech Republic, March 12, 2009.

Unfortunately, the United States has been unable, primarily for financial reasons, to inventory, study, and preserve many of these features. Prague post staff might consider inviting scholars from local universities with expertise in appropriate areas to view, and use in their own research, certain aspects of the estate. For example, currently staff are unaware of what books compose Otto Petschek's library because they are wary of disrupting and potentially damaging the manuscripts, but an expert might be able to safely identify them at the same time as he enriches his own research.

Valeria Brunori's approach to the culturally significant property of the American Embassy in Rome, which she curates and preserves, bears imitation by other United States posts: "We're not only asking for the Italian authorities' scientific support, as we catalog and restore and preserve the ones [buildings and other elements of Italy's patrimony] we have, we are also inviting their involvement, drawing on their expertise."¹⁹

Opening to the Public

Amid the restoration of the George C. Marshall Center, the United States Embassy in Paris and the World Monuments Fund sponsored a lecture series on the history and preservation of the Hotel de Talleyrand.²⁰ Baron Guy de Rothschild was among the featured lecturers. He spoke of his childhood growing up in the Hotel de Talleyrand. He remembered his eighteenth birthday party at the Hotel – all of the guests had left midway through the celebration in order to

¹⁹ Trueheart, "The Group," 47.

²⁰ Candice Nancel and Vivien Woofter, "Private Support Joins Public Initiative: Restoration of the Hotel de Talleyrand State Apartment," in *Concorde: Hotel de Talleyrand, George C. Marshall Center*, ed. Susan Douglas Tate and Linda Stevenson (Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Publications Office, 2007), 132.

greet Charles Lindbergh and the *Spirit of St. Louis* upon their arrival in Paris.²¹ Baron Rothschild's participation in the event represented the approval of one of France's most well respected citizens and families for the project. The successful lecture series gave a wider audience both access to the site and a better understanding of what its preservation would mean.

After the American Embassy in Rome restored the *Venus* by Giambologna that had been found in the Palazzo Margherita, it took steps to enable wider access to the statue. Over the course of 1993 and 1994 the *Venus* was on display at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. Since its return to Italy, the *Venus* has sat in the Palazzo Margherita's Grand Staircase Gallery. "The special lighting makes the statue visible from the Via Veneto. This public view is especially prized by the people of Rome since this Venus is the only work by Giambologna in Rome."²² The Embassy has given the greater public of both Italy and the United States access to the remarkable statue.

In another instance of granting public access to the Register's sites, in 2008 the American Embassy in Rome opened the Palazzo Margherita for a "Night at the Embassy" event. Staff had to veritably kick people out of the Embassy at the end of the night and the ambassador described it as the best diplomatic event of his whole tour.²³ The event was geared mainly towards the international diplomatic community, but it illustrates the great potential in the United States' preservation and maintenance of its diplomatic buildings and their shared heritage.

Elizabeth Helman Minchilli, in an article on the Villa Taverna and its garden, examined the estate's capacity for diplomacy when put to work hosting the many functions that an ambassador's residence must support. Minchilli spoke to Ambassador Ronald Spogli and his

²¹ Candice Nancel, conversation with author, Paris, France, March 10, 2009.

²² Bruschini, *Palazzo Margherita*, 6.

²³ Vivien Woofter, conversation with author, Washington, D.C., February 9, 2009.

wife, Georgia. In 2008 the Spoglis hosted more than 250 events in the Villa and its garden.²⁴

The Spoglis added a pizza oven to the garden and “While sit-down dinners for twelve in the dining room are still on the agenda, people love to come to Villa Taverna for pizza...The Italian press thinks it’s amusing that we are serving something as ordinary as pizza, but since they are calling it ‘pizza diplomacy,’ then I guess it must be working!”²⁵

When there is an ambassador in residence, all of the residences are used for entertaining on an almost constant basis. The Hotel Rothschild in Paris hosts 700-800 events a year. On some days the Residence holds functions over breakfast, lunch, dinner, and cocktails.²⁶ The American Embassy in Paris does an ingenious job of aiming smaller events at different sectors so that many receive access to the building, but in manageable quantities and intervals. The Hotel Rothschild periodically hosts exhibitions of art by and receptions for Embassy staff in its ballroom. The ambassador, on occasion, invites members of the French film industry to view new American films on a large screen in the Residence.²⁷ This sort of “targeting” gives those outside of the international diplomatic community access to the historic resources and a more personal connection with the United States.

Education: Literature and other Media

The American Embassy in Paris has done an excellent job of publishing information about the Hotel de Talleyrand and the Hotel Rothschild. OBO’s ART in Embassies Program and Curatorial Services Program have indirectly or briefly discussed several of the Register’s sites in their pamphlets on the artwork and furnishings of the structures, but the American Embassy in

²⁴ Minchilli, “Villa Taverna,” 106.

²⁵ Minchilli, “Villa Taverna,” 153.

²⁶ Candice Nancel, conversation with author, Paris, France, March 10, 2009.

²⁷ Candice Nancel, conversation with author, Paris, France, March 10, 2009.

Paris has issued a couple of books that deal directly and entirely with the buildings' architecture and history. *Concorde: Hotel de Talleyrand, George C. Marshall Center* (2007), delves into both the history and preservation of the Hotel de Talleyrand, and *The American Ambassador's Residence in Paris* (2007) discusses the Hotel Rothschild's history and the long diplomatic relationship between France and the United States. Winfield House and a few other listed sites have similar publications. Post staff can give these to influential and interested visitors of the buildings.

During the recent exterior stucco repair at the Villa Petschek a crew from the Gema Art Group filmed the extensive preservation project. The Group interviewed Embassy staff and workers involved in the stucco repair, asking them questions about the preservation and the history of the estate. The American Embassy was unable to finance the production and distribution of the film.²⁸ However, the production of similar documentaries in the future might be a good way for the United States to educate others about the nation's mission, architectural patrimony, and preservation work.

Exhibits, permanent or floating, are a relatively inexpensive way to communicate ideas on a long-term basis. They are primarily low-maintenance and can serve as entertainment and edification for visitors to the building who are waiting on consular assistance or some other business. The consular section of the Schoenborn Palace features a permanent exhibit on the history and preservation of the section's painted roof rafters. The exhibit is simple and composed of a couple of encased display boards with close-up pictures of the painted rafters and descriptions of their history, preservation, and artistic heritage. The description reads:

The United States Embassy is privileged to conduct its work in a richly historic area of Prague. Recently we learned that several ceilings in the Consular Section date from the

²⁸ Thomas Nave, conversation with author, Prague, Czech Republic, March 12, 2009.

late European Renaissance. They have been conserved and restored through the dedicated efforts of the American and Czech professionals of the U.S. Embassy. Working from 2001-2006, they developed a network of expertise and financing that enables us today to view the vitality and artistry which graced this building in the 1600s.

The painted ceilings were uncovered in July 2001, when the rooms above the Consular Section were being remodeled. All construction stopped when the first old, sagging floor boards were turned over and workers noted the stencil decoration and paintings. Consultation with art historians revealed the potential significance of the discovery and a plan was developed to uncover and preserve the ceilings. This meant documenting, cleaning, soaking the panels in resin, and carefully replacing them in order to continue the remodeling project. Several years later, in tandem with the renovation of the Consular Section, the ceilings were again exposed and restored to their current beauty.

Here is what we know about these ceilings. In 1587, four noblemen's residences stood on the site of the present day U.S. Embassy. During the Renaissance period, wooden construction elements were a common feature of the houses in this area, the Marketplace (Trziste) of Mala Strana. Colorful stencils were often applied to the topside of the wood and paintings on the deck panels of the ceilings were an important esthetic element, particularly in a prestigious room facing the main street.

Some deck panels in the Consular Section ceilings are painted with "official" ornamentation, featuring military armature, an imperial eagle and coat of arms. In a rare find, one corner deck, now located behind the Consular windows, features the mark of the artist's guild and initials. Moving away from the street, perhaps to more private quarters, the motifs became more decorative and include roses and animal and figural motifs. This part of the painted ceiling could not be uncovered due to technical problems. Copies of its motives, however, were used to fill in blank spaces of the restored ceiling.

Appreciation for these painted motifs waned and the construction of wooden deck ceilings ended completely during the reign of Empress Maria Theresa. She ordered that all the wooden ceilings be covered by plaster for fire safety reasons. We know, from the discovery of a note placed in a bottle, which is displayed as you enter the Embassy, that these wooden deck ceilings were plastered over at the beginning of the 19th century.

The restoration of the Renaissance ceilings were completed in 2006 by Jiri Masek, Tomas Skorepa and Jiri Riha, experts who have also worked on historic sites in Prague, Cesky Krumlov and Prachatice. In addition, the U.S. Embassy is deeply appreciative of the advice and assistance offered by the National Institute for the Care of Historic Monuments in Prague throughout the project.²⁹

²⁹ Display in Consular Waiting Rooms of Schoenborn Palace, Prague, Czech Republic (accessed March 12, 2009).



Figure 28: Roof Rafter Exhibit in the Consular Section of the Schoenborn Palace³⁰



Figure 29: Painted Roof Rafters in the Schoenborn Palace³¹

³⁰ Image by Rebecca Hager.

The description carefully addresses all that it should in order to effect diplomacy as well as education. This includes the United States' efforts, the recruitment of local aid, the preservation's careful attention to detail, and the United States' appreciation of the host country's heritage.

Funding

Garnering funding for preservation activities is a tricky issue for posts to deal with, but several of them have offered excellent examples of how to do so with success and grace. When the American Embassy in Paris embarked on a nearly five million dollar restoration of the Hotel de Talleyrand (or the George C. Marshall Center), it had to confront the issue head on. Vivien Woofter said of the restoration, "the State Department usually finances infrastructure repairs, but when it comes to interiors, we often have to rely on donations from the private sector. So far, though, this project has generated a lot of enthusiasm. It intertwines European and American history, and that speaks to a lot of people."³²

In raising the funds, staff enlisted the help of former ambassadors, officials, and others connected with the site. This Honorary Steering Committee garnered contributions for the project from both the private and public sectors. Additional funding came from creative sources, such as the sale of limited edition commemorative scarves "showing flags from 17 Marshall Plan participating countries and architectural details from the State Apartment of the Hotel de Talleyrand."³³ For this project the State Department appealed to stakeholders in the building and took advantage of the part that the Hotel had played in a larger heritage than that of the United

³¹ Image by Rebecca Hager.

³² Crumley, "Foreign Assets."

³³ Nancel and Woofter, "Private Support," 131.

States. Candice Nancel, Director of the George C. Marshall Center, has said, “Our decision to put together an exhibit on the Marshall Plan isn’t just Americans tooting their own horn – it’s a way to honor a U.S.-European collaboration that set aside national barriers and set forth a vision of the European Community.”³⁴

The Department of State seriously considered selling the Villa Petschek in the 1990s. It thought that the mansion was so excessive that it gave the wrong impression to the general public.³⁵ The estate’s opulence could give people the mistaken idea that the United States had spent an inappropriate amount of money on the purchase of a palace, which few Americans would ever see, for its ambassador. The United States decided not to sell the Villa, but post staff are still wary of people’s perception of the Ambassador’s Residence. The American Embassy in Prague’s website features several pages on the history of the Schoenborn Palace and the Villa Petschek. In a smart move, post staff included a thorough account of the Villa Petschek’s purchase among the description of the estate’s past. It reads:

The Residence, the Deputy Chief of Mission’s house, and the Staff-house were purchased on July 20, 1948 for \$1,570,000. At the same time, the Consulate General building in Central Bratislava was purchased for \$150,000. This contract was signed by the Minister of Finance, representing the Czechoslovak Government. This total cost of \$1,720,000 for all properties did not represent any dollar expenditures to the US Government. The amount was credited to the Czechoslovak government against surplus property debts to the US Government. After the Communist accession to power in 1948, and the ensuing sharp deterioration of US-Czechoslovak relations, assets and credits were frozen, and the Czechoslovak Government ceased payment on surplus property debts. This entire account, along with various other debts and financial claims, was included in the 1982 Gold Claims agreement between the US and Czechoslovakia. Thus, because of the way the debts and claims were finally handled, the Residence was acquired without any actual loss to the US Treasury. The Petschek family filed a claim for reimbursement for the property and received compensation they deemed appropriate from the Czech government.³⁶

³⁴ Crumley, “Foreign Assets.”

³⁵ Thomas Nave, conversation with author, Prague, Czech Republic, March 12, 2009.

³⁶ U.S. Department of State, “Ambassador: Ambassador’s Residence.”

The blurb can easily be found by anyone interested in the properties or their initial costs. It answers any questions about the United States Government's reasoning behind purchasing a building worth more than one million dollars in 1948. It also assures the interested reader that the Petschek family was compensated for its loss. The United States' possession of the property is not at the expense of the Petscheks who had to leave in the face of Nazi occupation.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations for the improvement of the Secretary of State's Register of Culturally Significant Property are aimed at legitimizing and formalizing the designation process and making the Register more effective as a preservation and diplomatic tool. The Register is based on sound principles and values but, like all such tools, needs periodic reassessment and reevaluation. This is especially true in the case of the Register as it is still relatively young at ten years of age and has faced little in-depth study. Time and the actual implementation of the Register have begun to reveal the Register's strong points and those areas that could be improved upon. These recommendations for the development of the Register stem from the examples illustrated in the previous chapter and from personal conversation with OBO staff and CRC members.

Basic Structure Changes

The following recommendations depend on some basic changes to the current structure of the Register (I.)¹. They assume greater participation from the affected posts, better understanding of the nature of the sites on the part of post officials, the oversight of a Register Manager, and the development of the Register as a recognizable brand. Several of these changes are already being effected, in large part, by the HMP, but others will require a great deal of time and effort before they are implemented.

¹ See Table 3: Recommendations Summary, p. 85.

While the CRC currently initiates and prepares most of the Register nominations,² the following recommendations necessitate a greater awareness of the historic resource on the part of the affected post, in addition to its cooperation with the suggested changes (Ia.). These recommendations aim at making the Register a more active tool through a formal application process, widespread education, and public awareness. All of these things will demand relatively sophisticated responses from the staff of the designated buildings which currently vary widely in their approach to the historic nature of their resources. This being said, the resulting increased viability of the Register as a diplomatic tool should more than compensate for any initial inconveniences, which will, admittedly, be inescapable. In addition, the increased prestige of the Register should make designation more attractive to post staff and prompt them to initiate their own nominations.

The new HMP will, in the future, be working to regularize maintenance expectations, performances, treatments, and work schedules in the face of the vicissitudes of individual taste or preference. The development of exhaustive maintenance guides and preservation plans will likely do much to make post staff and officials more aware of the unique character and needs of historic, but still active, sites. A more comprehensive briefing of post officials, such as ambassadors and facility managers, before they take up their work may help to allay any misconceptions that they might have about the proper maintenance and preservation of a site, or the understanding of its character (Ib.). It would also assist in clarifying what their roles would be as stewards of the United States' and host country's heritage.

OBO's employment of a formal or informal, but preferably full-time, Register Manager would significantly decrease the burden of designation on a post (Ic.). The Manager could,

² Kevin Sarring, conversation with author, Washington, D.C., February 9, 2009.

among other things, assist in arranging the designation events (at home and abroad), building up publicity for the Register, managing the Register's websites, and overseeing the nomination process. For the Register to meet its full potential, with a corresponding increased profile, someone must be on staff who can devote their time and attention to its maintenance and enrichment. It would be too much for the CRC to take on alone.

A significant part of the Register Manager's duties would be working to develop the Register as a brand, for lack of a better word (Id.). Ideally, designation on the Register should spur an automatic understanding of the listed building as an outstanding architectural and/or cultural site that is maintained with the highest level of care and commitment. The Register must be marketed, not for profit, but for recognition, which will in the end enable preservation and diplomacy. Branding might mean the creation of a logo or the authorship of a book series but, above all other things, it would mean the consistent implementation of a set of preservation and maintenance standards. Register designation should be a recognizable symbol of the United States' commitment and an expression of the importance of the building and the level of its care and protection.

OBO should consider adopting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation as its official default approach to the buildings designated under the Register.³ In the absence of applicable preservation standards in the host country, use of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines would stand as a professional, accepted, and recognized approach to the sites' preservation. While OBO policy is

³ James K. Reap, conversation with author, Athens, Georgia, October 7, 2009.

to “follow the spirit” of the NHPA,⁴ this does not carry as much weight as a commitment to adhere to a set of well-known and understood standards for preservation and restoration.

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines recognize the challenges of adapting historic fabric to a modern use and would not put an undue burden on OBO or post staff. It is likely that the HMP’s forthcoming maintenance manual will run along the same lines as the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines, but the Standards and Guidelines are more widely known and their public use will, for now at least, prompt a better understanding of the Department of State’s standard of care, maintenance, and conservation.

Currently most of the Register’s properties are approached and governed as individual sites, rather than as parts of a collection. The various buildings and grounds are wonderfully unique and should and could not be approached in identical ways. However, there is a place for a more standardized format within which the individual sites could function according to their own particular resources and needs. Branding would assist in the development of such a template.

Changes to the Nomination Process

The creation of a more formal nomination process would go a long way towards legitimizing (formalizing, or improving the public perception and understanding of) the Register (II.). Currently there are no restrictions as to how many sites can be admitted onto the Register each year or guidelines as to how often nominations are to be reviewed. The Register loses legitimacy because of its lack of a formal review and competition-based designation system.

⁴ OBO CRC answers to questions – received 2/2/09.

The Register could be improved by the implementation of restrictions allowing for only three new designations every four years (IIa.).

Such a restriction and a set date for decisions on new listings would help to establish the Register as a serious and formal tool with an established, standard, and refined approach to its designated buildings. The limit on the number of new designations would also add an element of competition that would increase the desirability and prestige of designation on the Register. Its exclusivity and high standards would make listing on the Register more attractive to different posts and of more significance to the public.

A three every four years restriction would prevent the number of designations from getting out of hand. The State Department never intended for the Register to act as a comprehensive list of all of the Department's historic properties. It is not feasible for the State Department to commit to the retention, preservation, and maintenance of every one of its older buildings.⁵ A cutoff at three new listings every four years ensures that the number of designations does not exceed the State Department's ability to commit to them. In addition, designation every four years ensures that there is plenty of time for the Register's Manager to develop a relatively elaborate public relations campaign for the new listings and for the actual designation ceremony. It would also give the nomination committee plenty of time to review the nominations.

On New Designations

An emphasis on greater post and public awareness is a major component of these recommendations. If recognition is the only real benefit of designation, it is important that

⁵ Jonathan Blyth, conversation with author, Washington, D.C., February 9, 2009.

recognition occurs.⁶ The sites on the Register have plenty of potential, not much more is required than that the Department of State draw attention to them. The designation period offers a good opportunity for generating some one-time and large-scale publicity, in addition to the day-to-day actions that can keep people and governments aware of and interested in the Register's sites (III.).

The Register should hold official sign-in ceremonies every four years (IIIa.). The first designation ceremony offered an excellent model for future ceremonies to follow. Thomas Jefferson's desk in the State Department's Treaty Rooms exudes the appropriate air of tradition, formality, and ceremony. If possible, the Secretary of State should be a part of the ceremony, officially signing in the new sites.

The newly designated buildings themselves should also host ceremonies (IIIb.). Past ambassadors and post staff, in addition to host country dignitaries and the press, should be invited to these designation ceremonies. In the past, retired post officials have played a large part in providing or finding funding for preservation and maintenance activities at their old posts. As with Paris and the Hotel de Talleyrand, newly designated posts should consider hosting lecture series on the history and preservation of their historic buildings, and, perhaps, the history of the diplomatic relationship between the United States and their host countries.

In addition to the initial ceremony, there are several ways OBO staff can celebrate and advertise the new designations. OBO staff should seek to get spreads on the new sites published in local, national, and global architecture and preservation magazines and journals (IIIc.). With new designations only every four years, magazines could afford to feature the newly included sites prior to each ceremony without overexposing the subject.

⁶ Thomas Nave, conversation with author, Prague, Czech Republic, March 12, 2009.

The post or the CRC might choose, at the point of designation, to publish small guidebooks on the various properties. These guidebooks can be given to distinguished visitors of the sites and perhaps sold to others, with any profits going towards the further preservation of the sites. The official designation of a building would be a good time to kickoff a fundraising campaign for the preservation or maintenance of that particular site. In this case, staff would need to be very sensitive about whom they approached and how, taking their cue from the fundraising campaign for the preservation of the Hotel de Talleyrand.

Staff would need to ensure that prospective donors did not feel that they were being asked to support foreign luxuries. The designation ceremony and host lecture should assist in helping people understand the important role that these sites play and in making them feel like a part of the buildings' histories. Staff can likely avoid conflicts by keeping abreast of the current feelings toward the sites – perhaps merchandising a site if there is widespread understanding and acceptance of its nature, or only accepting from those who are connected with the site if the situation is more sensitive. The widespread distribution of the guidebooks would likely depend on this sort of assessment.

In addition to these public fundraising efforts, the nominated posts should be required to set aside embassy funds for preservation work. These monies can help to fund initial conservation projects, educational presentations, and designation events. A financial commitment to a building's preservation is more likely to ensure a post's dedication to the building's conservation and to get said conservation off to a good start than a simple agreement to honor designation.

Changes to the Day-to-Day Management of the Register

Much can be done on a day-to-day basis, aside from the initial designation, to encourage awareness of the Register and to fulfill its mission (IV.). The first step would be to budget for the production and posting of the planned plaques (IVa.). The CRC has already designed the plaques: they wait funding, but they are a worthy expense. It is important that the buildings possess some outward sign that identifies them with the Register.

Thorough inventories of the historic fabric in the designated properties should be performed either as part of the nomination process or immediately after designation (IVb.). An inventory of a building's furniture, features, and significant characteristics will ease the way to opening the structure to outside research and the development of preservation plans. The public does not need to know about all of a site's assets, but the managers of the facility must be aware of them in order to properly maintain and take advantage of them, and to know if, when, and from whom to ask assistance. The HMP is working to develop preservation plans, and designated sites can only make it easier for the Program and themselves by obtaining the explicit knowledge of what they have and what it means. If a system does not already exist, the various posts might consider establishing an application process by which scholars can apply to study the buildings and their furnishings.

⁹ Image by Rebecca Hager.



Image 30: *The Schonborn Palace; Report on the American Legation Building Prague (sic)*, Photos of Furnishings in the Schoenborn Palace at the time of its purchase by the U.S. Govt.⁹

The Register and its management should be responsible for conducting periodic economic appraisals of the designated properties (IVc.). These appraisals would keep the Department of State informed of what the buildings are worth. The Register's buildings are major resources and the United States' Government's understanding of what they are worth might make the Department of State and Congress more willing to invest in their preservation and maintenance. In addition, a close watch on the value of the buildings and their furnishings can help to determine if designation on the Secretary of State's Register affects a building's worth.

Post staff should also consider implementing permanent or floating displays in the public areas of the designated buildings, such as the consular waiting rooms (IVd.). Displays can educate, enlighten, and entertain. They can illuminate the history and significance of a building as they describe the United States' efforts to preserve the structure. Displays are most often low-maintenance and do not need to disrupt a room's décor. The exhibit on the painted rafters in

Prague's Schoenborn Palace is an excellent example of an informative and subtle display. The "The Marshall Plan: The Vision of a Family of Nations" exhibit is larger, but it manages to interpret a very important time in the history of the Hotel de Talleyrand: a time that is not otherwise evidenced in the State Apartment which has been restored to an earlier period. Displays would be most effective with description or commentary in both English and the host country's language.¹⁰

OBO might also consider publishing a book, similar to Elizabeth Gill Lui's *Building Diplomacy*, on the properties in the Register (IVe.). Such a publication could make the public aware of the sites as architecturally and historically significant buildings that deserve attention, as other important American buildings do. *Building Diplomacy* is beautifully photographed and has some wonderful information on some of the designated properties, but it does not cover them all or mention the Secretary of State's Register, except briefly in a footnote. A book that combines pictures and descriptions of all of the properties could easily suggest the idea of the Register buildings as a unique collection. Viewing the Register as a collection, as it is, encourages the perception of the sites as destinations that can be visited as a series and appreciated for their own beauty and importance, not simply for what they house.

Websites

One of the easiest ways for OBO to immediately improve the Register's profile is through the development of its websites (V.). There should be some mention of designation on each listed embassy's website, perhaps a small logo on its home page (Va.). Many of the embassy's websites currently have links to a brief history of the embassy, some with one or two

¹⁰ Thomas Nave, conversation with author, Prague, Czech Republic, March 12, 2009.

pictures and mentions of the architectural significance of the structure. The American Embassy in Prague's website has links to very informative descriptions of the history of both the Schoenborn Palace (<http://prague.usembassy.gov/palace.html>) and the Villa Petschek (http://prague.usembassy.gov/ambassadors_residence.html). Ideally the Register's Manager should develop individual websites, in a standard format, for each designated building (Vb.). These sites could be linked to the main embassy websites and could include pictures, histories, architectural descriptions, descriptions of and updates on preservation activities, information on how to donate to a building's preservation, and how to apply to research or visit the properties.

The public website for the Register could also use updating (Vc.). It is currently a very beautiful PDF with great information about the sites, but it communicates very little about the Register itself. The public would receive a better understanding of the Register if information about the nomination process, how to donate, contact information, and links to embassy websites were included. The public website is also slightly outdated and does not yet include the last three designated properties.

The Register is an effective tool that is relatively self-sustaining and self-explaining as long as people are made aware of it. As the Register ages there are a few actions that can be taken to mold it into a fully mature list with legitimacy and prestige. A view of the circumstances from within the State Department might make some of these suggestions impossible or invalid, but hopefully, these recommendations, offered from an outside viewpoint, at the least might encourage some fresh ideas and a new way of approaching the Secretary of State's Register.

Recommendations Summary

- I. Basic Structure Changes**
 - a. Greater participation from the affected posts
 - b. Better understanding of the nature of the sites on the part of post officials
 - c. The oversight of a Register Manager
 - d. The development of the Register as a brand
- II. Changes to the Nomination Process**
 - a. Accept three new designations every four years
- III. On New Designations**
 - a. Official sign-in ceremonies every four years
 - b. Host ceremonies at newly designated buildings
 - c. Develop publications on the designated sites
 - d. Set aside embassy funding for preservation
- IV. Changes to the Day-to-Day Management of the Register**
 - a. Produce and post the planned plaques
 - b. Perform thorough inventories of the properties and their furnishings
 - c. Conduct periodic appraisals of the properties
 - d. Implement permanent or floating displays in the sites' public areas
 - e. Publish a book on the Register and its collection of properties
- V. Websites**
 - a. Make sure there is a mention of designation on each listed embassy's website, perhaps a small logo on the home page
 - b. Develop individual sites with a standard format that link to the main embassy websites
 - c. Update the Register's public website

Table 3: Recommendations Summary

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

In 1909 a group of enterprising American businessmen banded together to encourage Congress to allocate money for the construction and purchase of diplomatic buildings abroad. The businessmen had found themselves at a disadvantage in the countries where they were trying to conduct business due to the inferior and generally embarrassing nature of the various American embassy headquarters. Since the AEA's stand the United States has acquired quite a collection of buildings, either representative of the host country's architectural heritage or the result of the United States' building movement. The architecture of these structures encompasses a variety of styles, time periods, and resources. All together they make for a remarkably unique and eclectic collection of global architecture. The sites' architectural, historical, and cultural significance are strong arguments for their continued preservation and maintenance.

The potential in the physicality, embedded meaning, and heritage of the United States' diplomatic structures for improving the nation's status with its host countries, is of even greater importance today than it was a century ago. The way the United States Government maintains and interprets its historic properties overseas, whether they had a history before they were acquired by the United States or whether they were built to serve the United States' diplomatic corps, affects the host country's perception of the foreign nation.

The development of the Secretary of State's Register of Culturally Significant Property through the creative and dedicated efforts of State Department personnel was a significant step

towards the recognition and preservation of these historic properties. Although it does not legally bind the Department of State to a certain standard of preservation, designation on the Register is an expression of the State Department's commitment to the long-term protection and maintenance of a property. The Register was initiated as an honorific measure meant to make posts more aware of the significance of their properties, and the United States more aware of its overseas heritage. It was also designed to "establish a framework for the Department to provide a professional stewardship of the properties that require special consideration."¹

To some extent the Register has accomplished all of these things. But like all such tools, the Register and its effects deserve periodic reevaluation to judge what is being done well and what aspects need improvement if it is to fulfill its potential. The purpose of this thesis has been to perform such an evaluation of the existing state of the Register and provide suggestions for improvements to its process, management, and expectations. These recommendations are based on the Register's need for recognition as a formal and prestigious inventory with a high standard of preservation and maintenance, in addition to the fulfillment of its primary impact of awareness. The suggestions include the implementation of regulations regarding how often and how many new sites are designated, more intense designation procedures, the employment of a Register Manager, and the dissemination of more information on the Register and its properties.

The Register has the potential to impact a variety of maintenance, preservation, and diplomatic concerns. It is very young and is still growing and developing in the face of a variety of financial challenges in addition to others that are peculiar to diplomatic properties, such as security. In the future, among other things, the Register should be examined to assess the affect the HMP has had on the preservation of the designated properties. Opportunities for further

¹ Bonnie R. Cohen to Madeleine K. Albright, memo, November 2000, State Department, Washington, D.C.

study also include the potential of Register properties and other historic State Department sites for adaptive reuse. Despite its tacit commitment (which ideally should be formalized as the State Department develops a more standard approach to the Register's properties), challenges of spatial and security needs might force the State Department into considering abandoning even its designated sites. Exploration of adaptive reuse, like that in the Hotel de Talleyrand and Tangier Legation, would allow for the continued life and preservation of the buildings despite the exhaustion of their past uses.

One of the most vital and attractive things about the Register is its multi-disciplinary nature. It addresses, not one, but many, areas of interest and impact, such as diplomacy, history, sustainability, architecture, and international cooperation. In a period of scarcity of resources and trust, the Register serves to address several growing concerns through a relatively simple process. Based on the idea that care and preservation of architecture, history, and culture can express care for a people, at the same time as it fulfills the basic needs of the diplomatic corps, the Secretary of State's Register of Culturally Significant Property, if it continues to mature and adapt, can become an amazing yet subtle agent of progress for the United States. One that is mindful of the past as it relishes the present and the future.

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APPENDIX A
ACRONYM INDEX

AAP	Architectural Advisory Panel
AEA	American Embassy Association
CHP	Cultural Heritage Program
CRC	Cultural Resources Committee
FBO	Foreign Service Buildings Office
FSBC	Foreign Service Buildings Commission
HMP	Heritage Maintenance Program
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
OBO	Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations