

THE PRESERVATION POST

BY ANGELA NEWMAN



photo credit: National Trust for Historic Preservation

“THE GREENEST BUILDING IS THE ONE THAT’S ALREADY BUILT”

I love historical buildings! They have architecture and craftsmanship that we don't really see in today's new builds unless its a high-end home. When I watch a program on TV showing an old home being rehabilitated, some will say they want to 'save' the character-defining features and the home's charm. I have to admit, I sometimes find myself literally changing the channel because they are not really saving the features, style, or historical aspects.

There is so much emphasis and hype and excitement around the sledge hammer busting up cabinets and fixtures and throwing them into a dumpster to be carried away to the landfill. Why not have that same level of excitement for preservation or reuse of material?

I'm not an over-the-top fanatic about a 'green environment' but I do advocate for saving as much material and reusing where possible. And if not using in the rehabilitation process, then remove the materials (wood, appliances, cabinets, etc) so they can be brought to salvage stores and allow others to reuse them.

Many times when historical homes sit empty for years, cities will demolish them and a developer will come in and build something 'new' in its place with the intention of building a more energy-efficient home. Yet, many of these old homes were built with energy efficient components of its time and place (based on its location). There are many options in making an old home energy-efficient without demolishing it or removing its character-defining features.

As a Realtor and passionate about sustainable preservation, I am very well aware of the housing shortages in the U.S.. We have so many old residential homes sitting in disrepair that can be rehabilitated to fit modern needs, preserving the original character and history while providing additional housing. This is true for former manufacturing plants and office buildings that can be adapted for a different use.

By doing so, we can provide much needed housing, capture embodied energy, reduce the amount of construction material that ends up in our landfills and preserve our buildings and history. A win-win situation.

ARCHITECTURE ARCHIVES

American Four-Square



American Four-Square homes were popular between 1900-1930 across the United States. It's a square cubed shaped home typically with 4 rooms on the main floor, 4 on the second floor and could easily be configured for larger spaces or add-ons. They typically have hipped roofs and dormers.

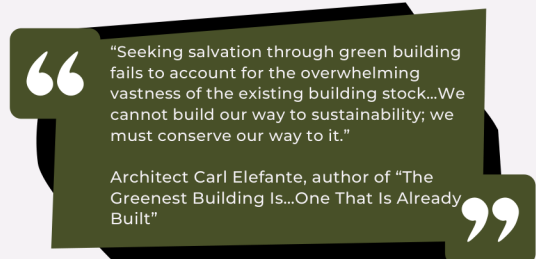
Variations of the Four-Square included either the Prairie style, Colonial style or Craftsman features such as exposed rafter tails. It was a simplistic and practical home.



Angela Newman

Angela is a Realtor specializing in historical properties. She is passionate about historic preservation, communities and small businesses. She holds an MBA and is currently studying for her Graduate Certificates in Historic Preservation from Boston Architectural College and Sustainable Preservation from Cornell University.

Her desire to bring awareness to and advocate for old homes is what inspired her to create, 'Historic District Walking Tours' and social media platforms to promote her community.



“Seeking salvation through green building fails to account for the overwhelming vastness of the existing building stock...We cannot build our way to sustainability; we must conserve our way to it.”

Architect Carl Elefante, author of “The Greenest Building Is...One That Is Already Built”