Abstract
Polly Seddon
pollyseddon@hotmail.com
May 2008
Advisor: Carol Clark
Readers: Judith LaBelle, James Lindberg

Farm to Table: Developing A New Historic Preservation Paradigm for Working Farmsteads

The family farm retains a complex physical and social identity in twenty-first century America. Even as fewer and fewer people are directly involved in agriculture, the role of farming in American life engenders debate as visions of red barns, green pastures, and wholesome products clash with industrial scale agriculture, rural sprawl, and processed foods. Diverse policy discussions pertaining to land use, cultural identity, public health, and environmental safety have coalesced around the buildings, fields, and products of the farm, creating multi-faceted connections-and tensions-across the country. Through four agricultural case studies in Wisconsin, California, New York, and Vermont, this thesis evaluates and critiques the largely peripheral role the field of historic preservation has assumed in these debates and argues that preservationists can offer a critically important perspective. The research explores new annunciations of historic significance and authenticity that wed traditional discussions of architectural form with other dimensions of historic continuity emerging from the foods and fields of the farm. By better integrating preservation goals with those of farmers, farming advocates, and agricultural policy-makers the work forges a central role for holistic historic preservation planning in agriculture.

NOTE:
This is a first-rate piece of work in the way it wrestles with planning policy discussions that surround historic farmscapes. Polly covers four case studies in far-flung settings, and each is relevant to her exploration of the links between preservation and historic farms. Having the National Trust's expert in her topic as a reader was invaluable, and the 4-15 review yielded recommendations that she present a more concrete discussion about the players in this field. In the weeks since the revew, she has worked effectively to advance her topic and make the thesis draft far more scholarly than what was initially presented in the March version.

During the week of 4-28, I will be reading the revised thesis drafts from 3 students that have the potential to be the one I would recommend for honors in preservation planning. Each have made edits and rewrites following the 4-15 review, in consultation with me and other advisors. I will tell Janet Foster my recommendations regarding HP planning honors once I am back in the office on May 6.

--Carol Clark

*************
Need a new ride? Check out the largest site for U.S. used car listings at AOL Autos. (http://autos.aol.com/used?NCID=aolcmp00300000002851)