

PERSPECTIVES FROM THE FIELD

Creative Use of Mixed Media to Mitigate Historical Resource Impacts: Garrison Historic District, Fort Lewis, Washington

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Recent Department of Defense priorities are transforming the nation's military bases. As the result of base closures and reuse/

redevelopment initiatives, many bases are rapidly changing, potentially affecting valuable cultural and historic resources. A creative approach to protecting and mitigating the loss of resources is examined in the Garrison Historic District on Joint Base Lewis–McChord (JBLM). JBLM, which is located in the Puget Sound region of Washington State, is the largest military base west of the Mississippi. The mitigation project, funded by the United States (US) Army Corps of Engineers (hereafter, Corps), demonstrates the tangible benefits of creatively repurposing historic and culturally significant facilities. These benefits include increasing awareness and appreciation of historical and cultural resources, improving public access to information, and encouraging reuse and recycling of districts and facilities.

While cultural resource teams advocate for the protection of historic and cultural resources at military bases, the need to address mission requirements frequently overrides resource protection goals. However, major planned actions require impact assessments as part of the planning and review process, providing an opportunity to inventory, evaluate, and develop mitigation measures for affected resources.

In 2010, the Fort Lewis Army Post and the McChord Air Force Base were officially combined to form JBLM. Impacts associated with future construction, demolition, and related infrastructure projects are analyzed in the Fort Lewis Master Plan and the Grow the Army Environmental Impact Statement (GTA EIS). The adverse effects



Figure 1. A typical open-bay barracks configuration circa 1935. Source: Joint Base Lewis–McChord (JBLM) Historical Archives, cataloged by Historical Research Associates.

of these actions on historic properties in the Fort Lewis Garrison Historic District are documented. The project actions serve to mitigate the adverse impacts in accordance with 36 CFR 800.8 by documenting historic properties and interpreting the historic significance to soldiers, their families, and civilians, as well as local, state, and national communities.

The JBLM Garrison Historic District will likely be affected by future expansion plans. Historic structures may be removed or modified, and transportation and security improvements may affect the character and configuration of the District. As planned mitigation, the Corps retained a consultant team led by AECOM to produce a range of products designed to inform, communicate, and entertain a general audience, with some specific content directed toward children 6–12 years in age. Tasks

included conducting research, assessing the feasibility of adaptive reuse, and creating a range of materials to increase understanding and appreciation. The consultant team responded with a comprehensive and fresh approach that included the use of multimedia to make information accessible and interesting to the general public.

Historical Research Associates (HRA) led the *archival research*, collecting and indexing of historic documents from national, state, local, and on-base archives. Figure 1 is one example of the many historical images collected from the archives and included on the website, the interpretive signs, the film, and in the walking-tour guide.

Stourwater Pictures produced an engaging *documentary film* (*Passing the Torch: The Building of Fort Lewis*, 2010) about life on Fort Lewis from the early to mid 1900s.

The film draws from the archival information, highlights historic structures with still images, and includes historic sound clips, as well as newly created interviews and narrations.


A *self-guided tour map* (Figure 2) directs visitors to key sites and structures where engaging *interpretive signs* (Figure 3) presenting supporting photos and narratives will be installed, both designed by AECOM.

Architectural building and neighborhood studies that illustrate how historic shop buildings could be adaptively reused (Figure 4) were developed by the architectural design firm atelierjones and AECOM, respectively. Potential new uses include retail, restaurant, classroom, child care, and administrative. The illustration of neighborhood adaptive reuse along Pendleton Avenue (Figure 5) suggests redesigned streets, parks,




Figure 2. A portion of the Garrison Historic District Self-Guided Tour Map showing how important buildings and sites are keyed to supporting images and text on the map's reverse side. Source: AECOM, rendering by Jim Collins.


Greenwood Neighborhood



Greenwood neighborhood indicated by this color




A typical streetscape in the Greenwood neighborhood



Similar to the barracks, most of the NCO single-family houses are arranged in a horseshoe shape around a shared green space, 1940


The Neighborhood

The Greenwood neighborhood began taking shape in 1929, when five one-story homes were built with clay barrel tile roofs. The remaining single-family, one-and-one-half-story brick homes were constructed between 1931 and 1939. In 1939, 12 two-and-one-half-story, five-unit townhouses were completed at the north end of the neighborhood.




Two Greenwood residents pose with their catch

Noncommissioned Officers' Quarters



A 1939 photo of a newly constructed five-unit townhouse

Individual land use areas within the post plan followed 1920s and 1930s town-planning principles. This planning is especially evident in the family housing areas, Greenwood being the location of the NCO quarters. Design criteria included establishing standard building setbacks and lot sizes, a well-established road hierarchy and a unified pedestrian circulation system, and the incorporation of open spaces with formal and informal characteristics. The design featured many windows and a sunroom to make them cozy and comfortable.



NCO house constructed in 1929 with clay barrel tile roof

Joint Base Lewis-McChord

Garrison Historic District






Figure 3. The Greenwood Neighborhood sign is one of 12 site signs designed to increase the appreciation of the buildings and sites in the JBLM Garrison Historic District. Source: AECOM.



Figure 4. Depicted is the concept developed by the architectural design firm atelierjones for adapting some of the historic shop buildings to meet new mission needs. Source: Jim Collins.

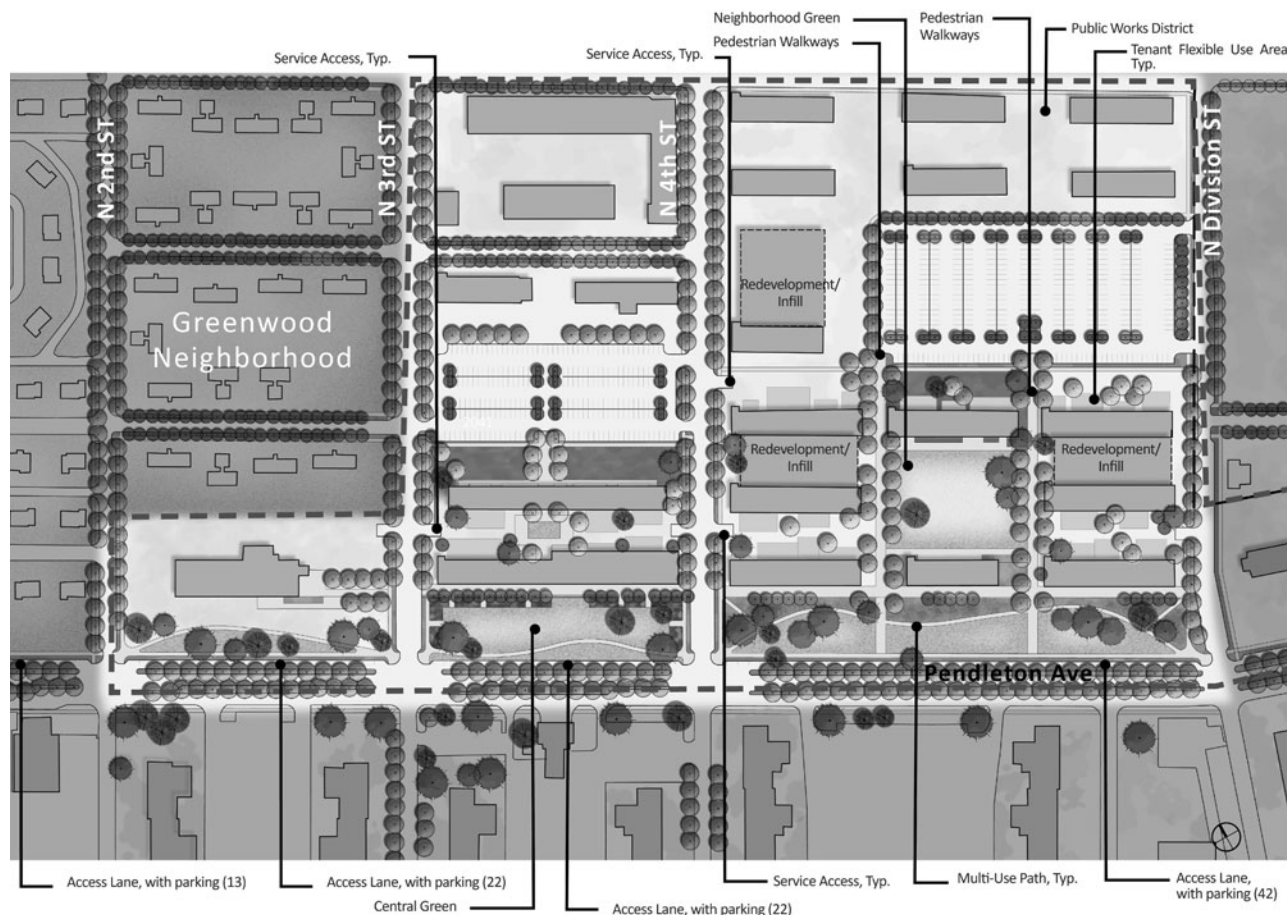


Figure 5. Neighborhood adaptive reuse along Pendleton Avenue within the Garrison Historic District on JBLM. Source: AECOM.

and landscapes to include diverse neighborhood services, retain character and scale of the District, and meet new mission and sustainability requirements.

The *Public Works Cultural Resources website*, created to provide a framework for future website expansion (Figure 6), was developed by IO Web Solutions (<http://www.lewis-mcchord.army.mil/publicworks/culturalresources/>). The resource sections are constructed to be easily updated by JBLM's information resources department. The Garrison Historic District page (Figure 7) features the documentary film and includes an historic narrative, virtual tour, photos, audio clips, related documents, and three interactive games to engage younger visitors (<http://www.lewis-mcchord.army.mil/publicworks/culturalresources/garrison.html>). The site is

designed for a general audience; however, scholars will find a compendium of historic documents, applications for the National Register, and an index of archive materials.

An effective mitigation strategy is multi-dimensional, with an approach that considers the feasibility of adaptive reuses; includes researching, documenting, and interpreting the resources; and uses mixed media (film, signs, print, and website) to reach and inform a broad audience.

A mitigation approach should include assessing the feasibility of adaptive reuse, as well as research, documentation, education, and interpretation of the resources. Due to restricted access on many military installations, the use of mixed media (film, signs, print, and website) can reach a

broader audience. A website overcomes geographic limitations and should be designed to attract people of all ages, abilities, and levels of interest.

Careful planning and ongoing communication are needed to coordinate the work of an interdisciplinary team. A single graphic concept can be used in multiple products. Team members who work on multiple products bring different perspectives on how to make information accessible and meaningful, but they will also have different information needs. As an example, standard methodologies for collecting and indexing archival information by historic research personnel should include securing reproduction rights or collecting images at the resolution required by film producers. Building and site designers will need building plans to under-

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CULTURAL RESOURCES

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U.S. ARMY
Integrated Cultural Resources
Management Plan

INTEGRATED CULTURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN

! CULTURAL RESOURCES STEWARDSHIP
The mission of the Cultural Resources Management Program (CRMP) is to make Joint Base Lewis-McChord a great place for Families and Soldiers to live and train, and support surrounding communities by protecting and promoting valued cultural and historical places and practices. By promoting cultural resource stewardship and ensuring compliance with the historic preservation law the CRMP sustains the military mission. The program promotes the preservation and productive use of significant historic buildings and landscapes, conducts archaeological surveys, and excavations to identify and protect important historic places. The program plays a key role in establishing a stable and enduring consultation when military decisions have the potential to significantly affect protected tribal resources or Treaty-reserved rights. At Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM), the Cultural Resources Department strives to maintain these resources in a sustainable manner through a comprehensive program that considers preservation, resulting in sound and responsible stewardship.

The Cultural Resources Management Program consists of three main areas: Historic Buildings and Landscapes, Archaeological Sites, and Tribal Consultation.

At present, the Cultural Resources Management Program manages over 350 historic buildings and historic landscapes in three historic districts: Fort Lewis Garrison Historic District, Old Madigan Historic District and the McChord Historic District, as well as individual National Register eligible buildings and structures such as Liberty Gate, the Red Shield Inn, the Rainier Ordnance Depot Gate and Headquarters Building, and Carey Theater.

JBLM CRMP also manages approximately 400 known archaeological sites. These include American Indian sites, Hudson's Bay Company sites, American pioneer homestead sites and military sites. In addition, the CRMP conducts archaeological surveys prior to development or construction.

! ICRMP PLAN
Army regulations and Department of Defense (DoD) instructions require every military installation to have an Integrated Cultural Resources Management Plan (ICRMP). The ICRMP serves as a long-term guide to accomplish the missions of the cultural resources program. Five-year ICRMPs are a part of the installation master plan and aid the decision-making processes for cultural resources management and procedures. The ICRMP integrates the entirety of the installation's cultural resources program with ongoing mission activities, allowing for ready identification of potential conflicts between the installation's mission and cultural resources. The plan also identifies compliance actions necessary to maintain the availability of mission-essential properties and acreage.

Download complete ICRMP Plan (PDF) »

Figure 6. Website landing page for JBLM Cultural Resources with sections for archaeology, historical buildings, Native American connection, and contact information (<http://www.lewis-mcchord.army.mil/publicworks/culturalresources/>). Source: Website by IO Solutions; content by AECOM.

stand the historic, engineering, and design significance of structures; however, the filmmaker may be most interested in the people who used the building and the lifestyles the building supported.

Early in the process, the website designers must understand the hosting and information posting procedures, standards on programming languages, public accessibility requirements, and public affairs concerns regarding messages. Military bases have many security concerns that must be addressed throughout the process. Base historians are familiar with resources and often can verify the accuracy of information, as some information has been inaccurately archived in national databases.

Ideally, the research will precede content development for website, film, interpretive programs, and architectural designs. On the JBLM project, an aggressive time frame required the preliminary design of signs, website, and film script to be initiated concurrent with the research. Interim progress reviews were challenging as the team attempted to present features of the website or layout of signs without the benefit of completed research.

Interdisciplinary collaboration has inherent challenges, including diverse experiences, different ways of working, and sometimes conflicting ideas on approach and priorities. It is precisely this diversity of perspectives and experience that con-

tributed to a successful project and a less conventional response. The project benefited from a shared commitment by the entire team, including the client, to creativity and quality. In addition, the contracting officers, managers, and project sponsors were engaged and willing to be flexible on schedule and protocol for interim reviews and submittals. The result was a creative mitigation program that appeals to diverse audiences; informs, communicates, entertains, and promotes increased understanding in the appreciation and preservation of resources; and perhaps even serves as a national example of how to protect and mitigate the loss of historical resources on changing US military bases.

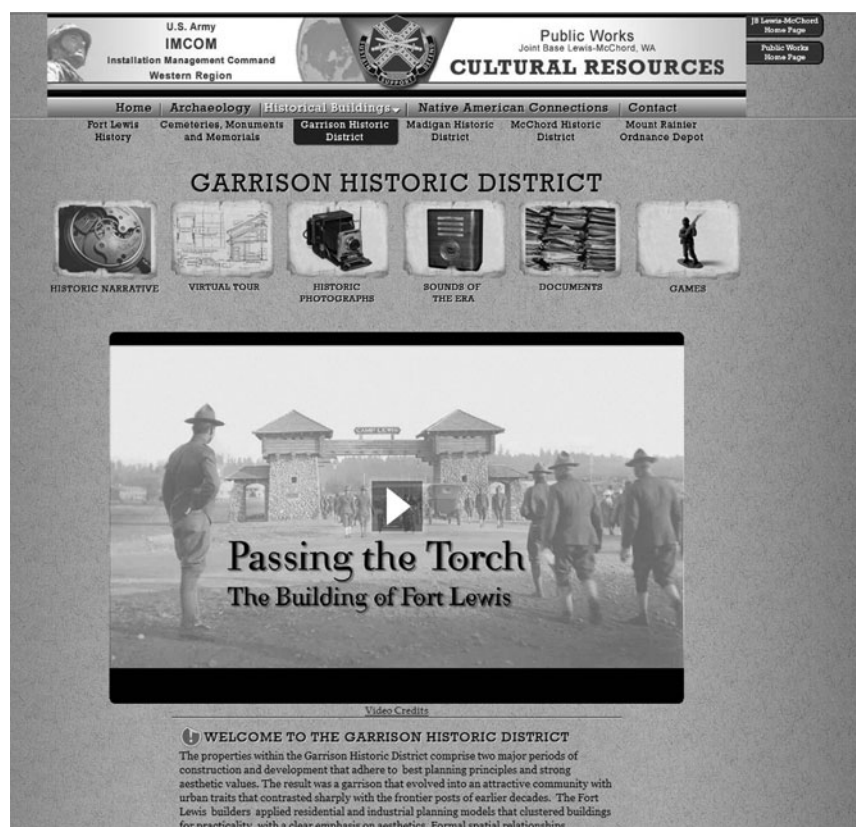


Figure 7. Website landing page for the Garrison Historic District features the film, *Passing the Torch: The Building of Fort Lewis*, produced by Stourwater Pictures for JBLM (<http://www.lewis-mchord.army.mil/publicworks/culturalresources/garrison.html>). Source: Website by IO Solutions.

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- Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum
- Fort Nisqually Living History Museum

We honor those who built and maintain the Garrison Historic District.

Reference

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