



Learning From Design and Construction Failures
November 7-8, 2008
Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA

MEETING REPORT

1. Attendance

A total of 46 people attended (37 registered plus invited speakers and others; nineteen were members). List of attendees is available on request.

2. Facilities

The meeting was held at the Georgia Tech Student Center on campus. The room and supporting facilities were adequate, although some difficulty was encountered in finding the building and then the room.

3. Program

A program schedule was available and included a technical program, business sessions and keynote speakers.

Technical Program

Three paper sessions were held over two days in a single track. Each session comprised four papers which adhered to the conference theme of failure and response. All were of a high quality and earned the respect of the audience. Papers or abstracts of each presentation were made available to the attendees on a CD.

The program concluded with a presentation by three speakers from the GT College of Architecture on Atlanta 1908 – a Design and Construction Perspective to coincide with the centennial of the Architecture program at the College.

The powerpoint presentations of the majority of the speakers have been archived.

Business Sessions

These comprised an Annual General Meeting and an informal business session. Copies of the meeting notes are attached.

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Meeting Report, continued

Keynote Speakers

Ochsendorf, Berkebile and Wermiel gave extraordinarily high quality lectures on the importance of construction history in engineering, recovery from the Kansas City Hyatt disaster and the search for fireproof construction in the late nineteenth century.

Program Summary

Ochsendorf led a discussion on what was to be learned from the program with the following conclusions and comments:

- the subject choice was an excellent one – failure rather than success. The variety of ‘takes’ on the subject illustrates the diversity of professional disciplines and specialties that CHSA can bring together.
- several papers identified lost or forgotten technologies relevant today in a society more attentive to sustainability.
- others focused on failures of modern technologies and designs and their lack of integration with long term maintenance.
- while the main focus in this conference has been on N.America, we need to encourage studies in non-American subjects.
- several comments applauded the audience mix of academics and practitioners.
- missing subjects were noted as:
 - economic history
 - building typology
 - construction documentation
 - building services
 - history of construction itself
 - is the history of our industry characterized more by evolution or revolution?
- we still need to define more clearly why CHSA is distinctive from the other industry historical associations.
- in conclusion it was agreed the conference had been an excellent start and that we can look forward to the third international congress in Germany in May 2009, a second CHSA event in 2010 and (hopefully) the fourth congress in Chicago in 2012.

Construction History Society of America

Inaugural Meeting, Atlanta, November 7-8, 2008

General Session Notes

1. Frequency and type of meetings

It was agreed that biennial national meetings would be more manageable than annual ones, with the next scheduled for 2010, probably in the spring.

David Dubbelde presented a case for holding this at Utica College. University of Pennsylvania also expressed interest.

Smaller local or regional events are to be encouraged of more modest proportions. Consider joint events with 'sister' organizations.

2. Newsletter

Appeal was made for contributions – articles up to 600 words, paragraphs, anniversaries, news, events, etc, etc.

Agreed to e-distribution of UK newsletters.

3. Construction History

Submissions are sought for the Society's highly regarded journal. Details at UK website. They also wish to have one or more of our members on the editorial board.

4. Formation of Interest Sub-groups

Richard Etlin suggests instituting these groups. Agreed it was a good idea, but it is up to the individuals to create these by notifying the Management Committee. We will advertise them in the newsletter and at the website.

5. Membership Drive

It is vital that we increase our membership numbers to build on our momentum and raise the level of our revenues. The Georgia Tech subsidy expires at the end of the year and we must maintain the same level of service.

Minimum target is 100 regular and 20 institutional members. Ideas suggested were:

- every member to renew
- each to target bringing in two new members during the year
- essential to sign up with Paypal to permit renewal over the internet
- need to broaden level of awareness of our existence with all industry organizations
- approach trade and material organizations for institutional memberships
- when speaking or at conferences take CHSA brochures (get from Atefe) and spread the word
- identify institutions that should be supporting us. BB offers to market them.

6. Membership dues and finances

It is intended to raise the regular dues from \$60 to \$75. Renewals before December 31st can be at the old \$60 rate. Notices will be sent out soon. Institutional to remain at \$250. BB will circulate a financial report and proposed budget at year-end.

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General Session Notes, continued

7. Inventory of Construction History (& related) Courses

Anat Geva is maintaining an inventory of these and passed out a spread sheet.
Anyone presenting a course or knowing of one not listed, to notify AG.

8. Proposal for 4th International CH Congress in Chicago

Tom Leslie is heading up a small committee pulling together a proposal to take to the next international congress to obtain agreement for the fourth congress in Chicago 2012.
Anyone willing to help should contact TL direct.

9. CHSA Awards program

Decided this is a little premature.

10. Website

We are looking for a webmaster willing to maintain, update and expand our ‘starter’ site.
Robert Gerhart is studying possibilities.

11. Archives, artifacts & records

Something we should be considering for the future.