



Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Key Historic Preservation and Green Building Organizations Partner on Critical Building Reuse Study

Study will Shed Light on Value of Building Reuse

Washington, D.C. – (May 25, 2010) While much research in recent years has explored the merits of constructing new green buildings, there's relatively little data available on the economic and environmental benefits of building reuse. That soon will change thanks to an innovative partnership between the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Portland, Oregon-based Green Building Services and Seattle-based Cascadia Green Building Council. The three groups are joining forces to design and execute a study that has the potential to reshape the way people think about the existing built environment.

The ground-breaking study will quantify the value of building reuse in a number of different situations. For example, the study will examine the types of environmental impacts avoided when homeowners reuse and retrofit an existing house rather than tear one down and construct a new green home in its place.

"We can't build our way out of the climate change crisis. We have to conserve our way out, and this study provides us with a unique and crucial opportunity to help people understand the environmental value of building reuse," said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust. "Ultimately, it is our hope that this study will provide the green building industry, residential and commercial building owners, developers, and policy makers with the information they need to make informed choices about the reuse and retrofit of existing buildings."

According to Ralph DiNola, principal at Green Building Services, "Buildings consume approximately 40% of all energy used in the U.S., so they are a big part of the problem, and, by necessity, they have to be an integral part of the solution. As we work to dramatically reduce the operating energy of buildings, the energy and environmental impacts embodied in the building's structure become a more significant part of the equation. With this study, we aim to provide real clarity about these impacts."

The study, which is made possible by a grant from the Summit Foundation, will employ a Life Cycle Assessment (LCA) evaluation to look at the differences between energy, carbon, water and other environmental impacts in new construction and building reuse. The LCA study will examine a variety of building types in four regions of the United States with the goal of gaining a sophisticated understanding of when and why building reuse makes the most fiscal and environmental sense. This research requires a

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comprehensive understanding not only of existing buildings, building materials and methods, but also of the numerous development forces at play in shaping the built environment, many of which cannot be easily quantified.

Jason F. McLennan of the Cascadia Green Building Council said, “Throughout their lifecycle, building materials are responsible for a whole range of adverse environmental impacts - from destructive resource depletion and energy-intensive manufacturing, to accumulation of toxins after their disposal. This important study will provide key missing data for the green building industry as we advocate for lower environmental impacts through building and material reuse.”

The study is expected to be completed in early 2011. Other key members of the project team include: Elizabeth Heider, Skanska’s Senior Vice President; and Jonathan Dettling, Quantis’ US Director.

About the National Trust for Historic Preservation

The National Trust for Historic Preservation (www.PreservationNation.org) is a non-profit membership organization bringing people together to protect, enhance and enjoy the places that matter to them. By saving the places where great moments from history – and the important moments of everyday life – took place, the National Trust for Historic Preservation helps revitalize neighborhoods and communities, spark economic development and promote environmental sustainability.

About Green Building Services, Inc.

One of the most comprehensive sustainable development consulting firms in the United States, Green Building Services Inc. helps clients successfully adopt green building and facility management practices. With offices in Portland, Sacramento, Orlando and Houston, GBS serves clients across the United States and worldwide. To learn more visit www.greenbuildingservices.com or contact 866.743.4277.

About Cascadia Green Building Council:

The Cascadia Green Building Council (Cascadia) is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit and one of three original chapters of the US Green Building Council and a member of the Canada Green Building Council. Cascadia is the originator of the Living Building Challenge, and represents Oregon, Washington, Alaska and the Province of British Columbia. Its mission is to effect market change toward sustainable building and design in the Cascadia bioregion. www.cascadiagbc.org

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