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Imagining Poe

Interpretation at the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site

Prepared by the
National Park Service Harpers Ferry Center
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Imagining Poe

Symposium on Resource Management and Interpretation
Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site
June 16, 2004

INTRODUCTION

The Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania was established in 1978 to commemorate the life and work of the writer, editor, and critic. Edgar Allan Poe lived in Philadelphia for six years from 1838 to 1844. For part of that time Poe, his wife Virginia and her mother Maria Clemm occupied this house on North Seventh Street. While the house is original it has not been restored to its 1840's appearance.

Numerous modifications to the interior and exterior of the structure have occurred over the years. The interior spaces have been modified and another building has been attached to the Poe House and obliterated features on the east side of the house. Today the interior is simply a shell, with interior surfaces stripped to reveal historic wall finishes, trims, and fixtures.

Bare walls of the Poe House Interior

The symposium *Imagining Poe* was organized by the National Park Service to generate creative ideas for interpreting Edgar Allan Poe and the interior rooms of the original Poe House. A second objective was to develop innovative approaches for preserving and restoring these rooms.

The German Society of Pennsylvania headquarters located around the corner from the Poe house hosted the symposium. The National Park Service and the symposium participants thank the German Society and Hardy von Auenmueller, Acting President, for their generous hospitality.

THE SYMPOSIUM

The symposium participants embraced their task with energy and enthusiasm. At the end of a stimulating day participants had contributed many ideas that will benefit future planning and development for the National Historic Site.

Superintendent Bomar welcomed the group

Symposium participants met at the Poe House with welcomes by Mary Bomar, Superintendent of Independence National Historical Park, and Steve Sitarski, Site Manager of Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site. Michael Paskowsky, Project Manager from Harpers Ferry Center, coordinated the symposium and facilitated introductions.

Mary Jenkins, Park Ranger, described the methods used to interpret Edgar Allan Poe and the Poe House to visitors from the time the house opened to the public in 1980. Helen McKenna- Uff, Park Ranger, told about the many interpretive opportunities provided to the public today including a number of outreach services.

Doris Fanelli, Curator, Charles Tonetti, Historic Architect, and Alvin Holmes, Historic Architect, led a tour of the house. They discussed the restoration of the house and the evidence for the restoration revealed by historic research.

After a break the symposium resumed at the German Society. Steve Sitarski introduced the Long- Range Interpretive Plan for the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site. The LRIP defines the overall vision and long- term (5- 7 years) interpretive goals of the park. Future interpretive development and implementation will be guided by this plan.

INTERPRETIVE THEMES

This symposium recognized and expanded upon previous interpretive planning activities including the Interim Interpretive Plan (1980) and the Long Range Interpretive Plan (2003). The themes identified in the LRIP remain an important point of departure and are listed below:

Human Creativity

Poe's life is a case study in the expression of and society's reaction to creative genius.

Poe's Body of Work
Poe demonstrated the breadth of his creative genius by mastering and even pioneering a variety of literary forms.

Poe's Continuing Literary Influence
Poe's influence on literary expression as well as popular culture began during his lifetime and continues today.

Poe's Life and Times
Poe's personal life as well as the literary world in which he made his living had an impact on his creative expression.

A highlight of the symposium was a talk by Dr. Robert Regan, Professor Emeritus at the University of Pennsylvania, on Poe's legacy in Philadelphia. Dr. Regan described Poe's six years in Philadelphia as the key years of his career, especially for his production of short stories. Dr. Regan explained how myths about Poe began circulating after his death by Poe's detractors were repeated by admirers such as Charles Baudelaire until these myths have passed down to us today.

In a breakout session two groups, the Black Cats and the Ravens, brainstormed to identify the best interpretive attributes of the Poe House and to describe what the house itself can tell us about Poe and his stay there.

The larger group reconvened to discuss the ideas presented in the breakout sessions.

Participants enjoyed excellent box lunches at the German Society. Thanks to Ann Dadura who coordinated the lunches and snacks.

After lunch Park Ranger JoAnne Schillizzi gave a perspective on how Edgar Allan Poe is interpreted at other sites. These sites include the Edgar Allan Poe House and Museum in Baltimore, the Edgar Allan Poe Cottage in New York administered by the Bronx Historical Society, the Poe Museum in Richmond, and Poe's room at the University Virginia in Charlottesville. Eric Knight and Andrew McDougall described ways interpreters present Poe to the public through personal services.

Don Branch, Bill Brown, and Michael Paskowsky presented a variety of interpretive media techniques the National Park Service has used to interpret other historic structures including Wayside: Home of Authors at Minuteman National Historical Park and Alcatraz Island, the prison that is now part of Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

With the benefit of the many ideas generated from the previous discussions the Black Cats and Ravens met in groups to brainstorm creative options for interpreting Edgar Allan Poe in the context of restoring and preserving the Poe House.

The Black Cats and Ravens came back together to present and discuss their ideas. The following are the concrete proposals that came out of this work. The flip chart notes from the breakout sessions are listed as presented at the symposium as attachment. The same is provided below, but organized to correspond with the Park interpretive themes.

Human Creativity

4. Explain Poe's writing process.
12. Rangers and visitors will recite Poe's works.
23. Present the house as a springboard to Poe's literary genius.
25. Show the first- hand newspaper reports that Poe used in his works.
26. Provide a focus for Poe's comedies.
27. Show how Poe was tied to the Antebellum South.
33. Describe Poe's work as a critic and editor.

Poe's Body of Work

2. Present Poe's comedies in a variety of methods.
12. Rangers and visitors will recite Poe's works.
13. Discuss and explain the basis of the myths about Poe.
14. Demonstrate Poe's knowledge of the science of his time.
15. Demonstrate Poe's global influence then and now.
23. Present the house as a springboard to Poe's literary genius.
28. Demonstrate and create a sound tour on Poe's importance to Europeans.
30. Provide take- home materials for visitors to continue their study and appreciation of Poe.
33. Describe Poe's work as a critic and editor.

Poe's Continuing Literary Influence

11. Record contemporary writers on the importance of Poe to their work.
13. Discuss and explain the basis of the myths about Poe.
15. Demonstrate Poe's global influence then and now.
17. Add the Gimbel "Shrine" and Poe Collection in the Free Library of Philadelphia to the new brochure.

19. Keep empty Poe- like feel.
23. Present the house as a springboard to Poe's literary genius.
24. Provide outdoor benches for reflection.
28. Demonstrate and create a sound tour on Poe's importance to Europeans.
30. Provide take- home materials for visitors to continue their study and appreciation of Poe.
32. Encourage contributors to use the website as a place to publish findings on Poe.
34. Demonstrate directly how Poe is influential today.
35. Compare Longfellow and Poe in their time and today, how they have been revered and reviled.
36. Explain Poe's influence in France and in Russia.

Poe's Life and Times

Use first hand news reports in personal and non- personal interpretation.
Present Poe in the context of his time.
Place Poe in the context of his status as a literary figure.
In place of furnishing the home place an object in each room to spark ideas.
9. Restore the rooms to their original color and replace the mantle pieces.
13. Discuss and explain the basis of the myths about Poe.
14. Demonstrate Poe's knowledge of the science of his time.
15. Demonstrate Poe's global influence then and now.
16. Use computers to present personal life stories about the family.
18. Furnish the house to achieve an evocative rich experience.
22. Create a sense of the 19th century within the house.
29. Update the video on Poe's life in Philadelphia with more action shots.
31. Present the Philadelphia of Poe's time as it was in mid- 19th century.
37. Explain Poe's financial story, how he was famous, but not rich. How he wrote out of passion and not for money.
38. Tell about the personal tragedies in Poe's life.

General Comments

6. Develop audio tours in a variety of languages.
7. Continue to develop the park website.
10. "The Man is too big for this house."
20. Evaluate present visitor experience.
21. Consider virtual tours.

Furnishings Issues

39. The characteristics of leaving the Poe House empty:
    a. More space, more circulation for visitors.
    b. Empty space conforms to visitors' expectation of a "Poe- like" space.
    c. There will be no evidence of family: i.e., Poe's wife and mother- in- law.
    d. Artists can interpret Poe and the space with performance art.
40. The characteristics of filling the house with furnishings, exhibits, or other media:
    a. Scrim has potential to visually fill the house and to create unexpected effects.
    b. Sound can be used to populate the space.
    c. Artist renderings can create multiple perspectives.
    d. The space can be transitory and evolving with a variety of techniques.
    e. People will ask what is real.
    f. Furnishings can become a distraction from interpretation of Poe.
    g. Poe was richly sensitive. His writings were descriptive and can be mined for ideas of how to decorate the house.
41. Discussion of Poe's life in 1840s Philadelphia:
    a. A tangible building can help communicate the life of the period.
    b. Poe's house is evidence that he had a marriage and a home life.
    c. The place gives clues to his circumstances, especially his financial circumstances.
    d. Poe's creativity and diligence can be demonstrated.
    e. 1840s Philadelphia can be presented as a backdrop to his literary legacy.
    f. Restoration of the house can include east windows and his porch roof.
    g. The house can have a new house look- - as it was in 1840- - with whitewash.
    h. "Vibes"
    i. Explain that the streetscape was different.

Steve Sitarski organized the event

Steve Sitarski closed the symposium by thanking all participants for their efforts, excitement, and enthusiasm. We now have an opportunity for approaching the interpretation, restoration, and preservation of the Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site in creative, non- traditional ways that will do justice to Poe's legacy and establish connections with park visitors.

INTERPRETIVE APPROACHES

The symposium confirmed the huge potential for building upon and expanding the excellent interpretive program currently in place. It also shed light on new avenues to explore.

The intent of this section of the report is to create a list of potential approaches that draws on the ideas developed during at the symposium. It is not intended to be a list of final recommendations; but rather to serve as a springboard for additional discussion and the creation of recommended approaches.

While the focus of the symposium was the Poe House itself, the adjacent structure now used as a visitor contact center, can not be ignored.

FURNISHINGS / STRUCTURE / INTERIOR

A great deal of discussion at the symposium centered on the appropriate use of the actual space to provide insight into the life of Edgar Allan Poe and his family and to provide context to the world in which they lived. The stark interior with its bare walls and empty rooms is an evocative experience that allows visitors to create their own mental images. However, the one certainty there is about the interior, is that it did not look as it does now during Poe's occupation. The Poe family moved in to a newly constructed house as its first occupants and furnished it with their belongings.

It is recognized that our responsibility for the preservation of the resource and our obligation to be accurate in our presentations are important considerations in the approach decided upon.

To Furnish or Not to Furnish

There were two general schools of thought on this subject. One favored at least the partial use of furnishings while the other view objected to that treatment primarily due to the lack of solid evidence and the reliance on conjecture. There are distinct advantages and disadvantages to the two different approaches.

In addition to outright furnishing of the structure, other less intensive approaches were considered including the selective use of objects to suggest the historic use of the space and to spark discussion. It was suggested that only specific rooms be furnished, such as Poe's writing room, rather than the entire house. It was also noted that while no original furnishings are extant, it is possible to make reasonable assumptions about the kind of furnishings, floor and window treatments that would have been typical of the neighborhood and

period. The argument against such approach is the lack of primary evidence and the reliance on conjecture will compromise authenticity.

Filled or Empty Space

Recognizing that the symposium was not to make specific recommendations and that the term "furnishing" conjured up different perceptions and attitudes, the group looked at the issue from a different perspective. They pondered the merits of simply having the space "filled" or "empty."

Leaving the space empty allows the greatest degree of flexibility in conducting visitors though the house. It could provide opportunities for encouraging active visitor participation, by considering the empty rooms as a stage for reading, demonstrations and performance art. It also has the least impact on circulation through the small structure. The drawback is that this approach leaves no tangible link with the author or his family but it eliminates the risk of conjecture associated with furnishing.

A number of ideas for filling the space were also discussed. Several ideas focused on providing images about how the space may have appeared. Techniques such as theatrical scrim and projection systems were considered to provide multiple artistic interpretations of how the interiors appeared during the historic period. Accenting architectural elements like mantle pieces might also be considered. But the central problem still remains the lack of primary sources to document the overall historic appearance.

Restoration

The term "restoration" also generated much discussion with regard to interior finishes. With the lack of adequate evidence or documentation, a restoration to the historic period is impossible. However, the desire to "finish" existing conditions was a strong sentiment. The bare plaster walls, peeling paint, missing framing and mantels create an inaccurate impression. It was proposed that a strategy for finishing the wall surfaces needs to be developed.

EXHIBITS

A great number of ideas were generated that centered around the exhibition and/or presentation of material to visitors. Conceivably the approach could take the form of traditional 2- dimensional or 3- dimensional displays, or could be incorporated into the personal services program or presented by electronic media.

Inherent in this discussion is the question of location. To what degree is it appropriate to infringe on the historic space? Although outside the immediate

focus of the symposium, there is also the possibility of redesigning the current displays in the adjacent building to provide an introductory experience.

Theatrical Scrim

One technique presented at the symposium was the use of theatrical scrim to present alternating views. By controlling the source of light the viewer sees either the foreground or the background. This ancient technique has been used for centuries to dramatize an otherwise static scene. A demonstration using the false chimney in the basement received favorable commentary and raised questions about its possible use at the Poe House.

Controlled lighting behind the scrim fabric reveals a hidden scene, in this case dramatizing the setting for *The Black Cat*.

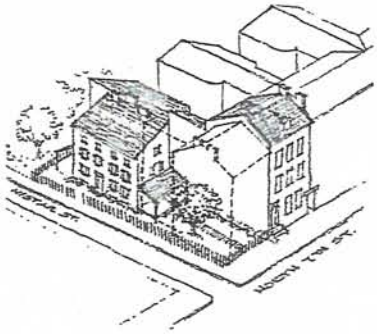
Projected Images

In lieu of scrim which may be difficult to stage in the small rooms of the Poe House it may be possible to project images on the wall. These might be used to populate the spaces with illustrations suggesting their use. It would also be possible to provide multiple images enabling visitors to select alternate views.

The drawback to developing alternate views is that they will rely on artistic interpretation which introduces a degree of conjecture and requires projection equipment that may infringe on the space and may negatively impact historic fabric.

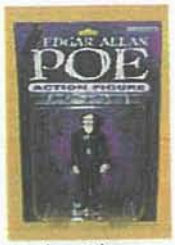
3-Dimensional Models

3- dimensional models could be considered as a method of illustrating the evolution of the Poe House and adjacent buildings. They could be constructed in such a way as to be tactile models to accommodate visually impaired visitors. This approach would help visitors visualize the changes that occurred over time.



Popular Culture

Another method to illustrate the long and continuing influence of Edgar Allan Poe is to gather a myriad of items that reflect his legacy. Items like artwork, comic books, action figures, record albums, movie posters, and musical lyrics can make a dramatic statement about the author's staying power.



Action Figure

Movie Poster

Raven Cuff Links

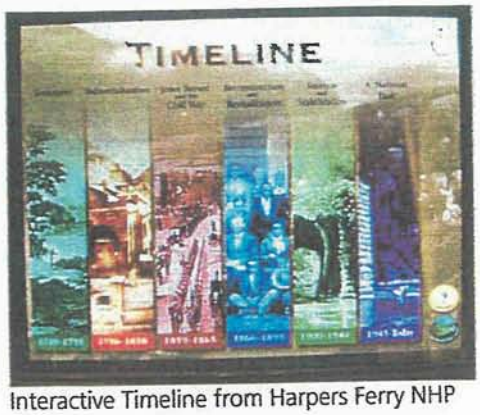
Movie Poster

Record Album Cover

First Day Cover

Timeline

Timelines are another effective way to illustrate context and influence. They can be presented as 2- dimensional or 3- dimensional graphics on a wall or can be developed as interactive elements as illustrated below.



Interactive Timeline from Harpers Ferry NHP

This map traces Brown's movements over time.

AUDIOVISUAL PROGRAMS

Audiovisual programs have a great potential to contribute to interpretation at the site. Ranging from sit- down theatrical experiences to stand- alone programs and personal devices, they provide the opportunity to present a wealth of text, images and sounds to augment the visitor experience.

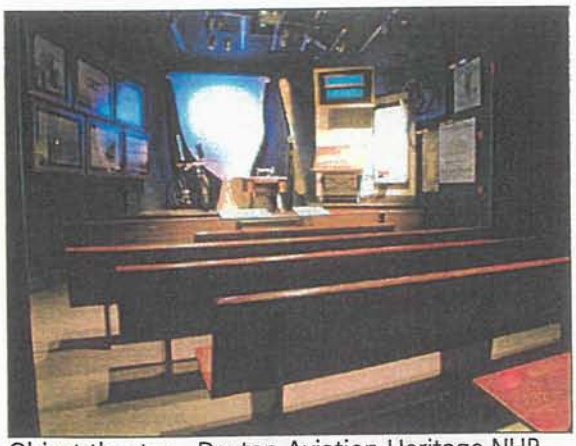
Theatrical Presentation

A variety of suggestions were offered to add to information presented in the current program shown in the small theater. This amounts to creating a new program that would more dramatically tell the story of Poe's life and times. Some of the ideas that might be incorporated into a new program include the following with cross references to ideas listed in the breakout sessions in parenthesis:

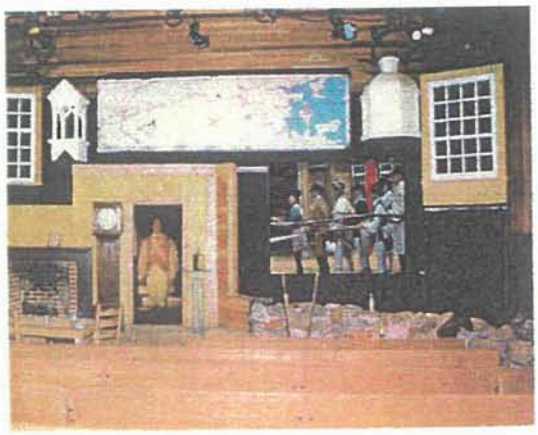
- Use first hand news reports (1)
- Present Poe in the context of his times (3)
- Explain Poe's writing process (4)
- Place Poe in the context of his status as a literary figure (5)
- Record contemporary writers on the importance of Poe to their work (11)
- Demonstrate Poe's knowledge of the science of his time (14)
- Demonstrate Poe's global influence now and then (15)
- Provide a focus for Poe's comedies (26)
- Show how Poe was tied to the Antebellum South (27)
- Update the video on Poe's life in Philadelphia with more action shots (29)
- Present the Philadelphia of Poe's time as it was in the mid- 19th century (31)
- Describe Poe's work as a critic and editor (33)
- Demonstrate directly how Poe is influential today (34)
- Compare Longfellow and Poe (35)
- Explain Poe's influence in France and Russia (36)
- Explain Poe's financial story (37)
- Tell about the personal tragedies in Poe's life (38)

Object Theater

In addition to a traditional video projection it is possible to create a more dramatic set that utilizes props, stage settings, lighting and sound effects to make a more three- dimensional experience. This approach could add a degree of realism and create a mood that might be more difficult to achieve with video alone.



Object theater—Dayton Aviation Heritage NHP



The Road to Revolution Minute Man NHP

Audio Recordings

In addition to a standard video presentation, the program could be expanded to provide recordings of Poe's work. This could be accomplished in a number of ways. Approaches can be lumped into two broad categories, mobile devices and fixed systems. Mobile devices are items such as CD- ROM's, MP- 3 Players, cell phones, PDA's, audio wands and headsets that individual users transport from location to location. The audio, video, text, or graphic content can either be contained in the individual instrument or transmitted through an IR (infrared), RF (radio frequency), wireless (wifi) or satellite signal (outdoors).

Fixed systems are permanently placed at specific locations. They might be in the form of a self- contained message repeater or transmitter that could be incorporated into an architectural space like a closet, incorporated in an exhibit structure or kiosk, or could be incorporated into a wayside exhibit. Furthermore some systems can be self- triggering which minimizes the possibility of user error and frustration. The systems can also be multi- channel to serve a wide range of audiences such as different age school groups, disabled visitors, or foreign language speakers.

ELECTRONIC / WEB

Electronic media and the internet were also discussed. It should be our goal to repurpose content developed for the interpretive media for web use in the form of an expanded website.

PDA's and Pocket PC's

Interpretive content could also be delivered by more sophisticated equipment such as Palm Pilot's, camera phones, and pocket PC's that could provide text and graphics. The drawback to such an approach is the initial cost of equipment and the operational problem of distributing, collecting, and maintaining the equipment.

Interactive Kiosk

There is great potential for the use of interactive programs to provide a wealth of information about the author and his family. This medium has the ability to present a wealth of information that is presented in such a way as to enable users to select what interests them. It could tap into his literary work, illustrate selected portions of literary magazines, map his life's geographic journey, and provide links to his influence and legacy.

PERSONAL SERVICES

There is no doubt that personal interpretation has a place at the Edgar Allan Poe NHS. It is the most versatile way to meet the needs of a broad audience.

EXTERIOR

A new wayside exhibit is currently in production that will add a degree of exterior interpretation. As noted among the ideas generated at the symposium one general goal was to present the Philadelphia of Poe's time as it was in the mid- 19th century. This idea recognizes that both the appearance of the neighborhood has changed as well as the historic structure itself.

It was also suggested that some seating be provided to provide a contemplative area. Other possibilities include landscaping to reflect the period of Poe's occupancy and even to add some architectural elements on the grassy lawn to suggest the cityscape. It would also be possible to add some sort of audio recording that would be accessible 24 hours a day. Since Poe is associated with the macabre having interpretation at night in addition to the raven silhouette could help satisfy that need.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It was agreed that personal services in the historic house was the most effective and versatile method to provide a quality visitor experience. Furthermore, it was decided to limit media development within the historic structure.

The historic house should be distinguished and separated from the museum exhibit and theater experience. More in depth interpretation is recommended to be accomplished with new media and exhibit content in the reception and theater areas focusing on the four primary interpretive themes. Other recommendations include the following:

1. Theatrical scrim displays may be used to provide views of historic Philadelphia and possibly to dramatically portray the Black Cat story in the basement.

2. Rooms throughout the historic house will be finished with wall board and painted white, interior wood trim and fireplace mantle pieces will be

replaced. An analysis will be conducted to identify and interpret significant architectural features.

3. Interpretation in the historic house will be accomplished primarily by personal services. In order to offer interpretation for those visitors who are unable to experience a personally guided tour, a portable audio program will be developed with the option of developing programs for different segments of the visitor population.

4. The current museum and theater space should be distinguished from the historic house. Visitor flow into the museum space and sales area will be analyzed with attention to functionality, accessibility, and security.

5. Produce an updated orientation/interpretive video for the theater which includes interpretation of Philadelphia in the 1840s. The script will be written so that the program can be audio described for visually impaired visitors. The use of a caption board is recommended

6. New exhibits will replace the current exhibits. They will be planned and designed to interpret human creativity in conjunction with Poe's body of work, his life and times and his continuing literary influence. The themes will be designed to provide layered interpretation. A series of interactive video programs will provide an opportunity to learn more about each theme.

7. A video tour of the house is recommended to provide accommodation for visitors unable to navigate through the building.

NEXT STEPS

This report documents the planning activity to date and outlines some of the interpretive techniques and recommendations discussed during the symposium. It will serve as the foundation for more comprehensive and specific media development to follow. The key project milestone events are listed below. At each stage plans are submitted for review and approval.

Restoration Approach and Details

A detailed plan needs to be prepared showing areas where thin wallboard will be reversibly fastened to disturbed wall surfaces. It may be possible to salvage the plaster walls in some of the rooms on the upper floors. Similarly decisions regarding the finishes need to be made if anything other than white paint or

whitewash is proposed. A plan for reinstalling elements such as baseboards, door trim, mantels, etc., also needs to be developed.

Schematic Plan

As the next step in media development, a schematic plan will be prepared to evaluate ways of accomplishing the interpretive objectives. Its purpose is to articulate the "big picture" and describe the broad scope of the project. It is understood that the four primary themes shall be addressed. An analysis of the space in the museum room, the reading room and AV room will be conducted to consider optimum space utilization and possible levels of development. The plan will also describe recommendations for interpretive media within the Poe House itself such as dramatic scrim in the basement, limited illustrations (if any) on the walls, and use of the closets as display venues.

A "design to" budget and proposed project schedule will be developed.

Concept Plan and Design Development

Once a basic approach has been defined more comprehensive and focused planning and design occur. This will be based on extensive research to identify potential storylines, and determine the availability of graphic resources and artifacts that could be the basis for exhibits. Similarly treatments for audiovisual and interactive computer programs, as well as exhibit text will be drafted. Drawings and models may be produced to facilitate visualization of the concept and elevations and graphic layouts of exhibits, the design of lighting fixtures and the specification of electronic components will be detailed.

Develop Final Media Planning & Design Package

Upon approval of the concept plan, appropriate corrections and revisions are made and a final package is developed to produce the various media elements. This includes the writing of exhibit text and labels, the finalization of graphic layouts, the acquisition of art, graphics, artifacts and storyboards and scripts for audiovisual and interactive elements of the museum.

Media Production and Installation

Once the media planning and design is completed the various elements are reviewed and approved for production. Exhibit production is contracted with an exhibit fabrication firm. A schedule is developed for shop inspection and installation is coordinated with the completion of building renovation. Similarly, the audiovisual and computer interactive elements are contracted with appropriate firms. The programs are reviewed at key milestones including script, rough cut and fine cut.

Flip Chart Notes from Break-out Sessions

BLACK CATS:

Personal/Non-Personal Media

- House: both
- First-hand news reports: photocopy, mount as wall (1) exhibit / (2) part of educational program
- Comedies:
  (1) theatrical performance
  (2) special topic talk
  (3) sound bytes within exhibit
  (4) bulletin
  (5) recitation within tour
- Poe in concept of his time:
  (1) timeline
  (2) map of area where he worked
  (3) recreate view from front window; market place view on Spring Garden
  (4) interactive recreation of neighborhood
  (5) publishing houses in Philadelphia as compared to Baltimore and Richmond
  (6) Computer generated activities to create 3-dimensional images
- Poe's writing process: he was directly involved: decorate one room as his work room. Philosophy of composition describes writing process for "The Raven". "The House of Poe" – Wilbur's essay addressing Poe's creative process accessible only when one is semi-conscious
- Poe as a literary figure: not recognized as great until "The Raven." (can merge with Longfellow piece). Can be shown via (1) film or (2) family tree of authors; (3) by a light-up globe and by computer.
- Audio-tour on Poe's importance to Europeans; outside walking tours; hook up to cell phones – great for teens.
- Continue website interaction with users

- In place of furniture put an object in a room (artifact, projected image) to spark ideas. With a piano, for example, one could play music from the time period as it influenced the writer.
- Restore rooms to original color; mantle pieces.
- The Man is too big for this house!
- Computer Screen: Tap into his editorial work; prices of literary magazines; sounds of criticisms
- Relevance today: (1) recordings of contemporary writers, such as Maya Angelou, (2) study stations available
- Renditions for Poe's works – rangers, visitors, recordings
- Myths about Poe: process of ratiocination allows students to dispel these myths
- Align Poe's knowledge of science to national standards
- Audio tour: different versions to include foreign languages, different levels of students, virtual tour for those unable to access stairs
- Globe or computer technology to show Poe's global influence then and now
- Computer plug-ins to personal life stories about the family
- Add Gimbel "Shrine" and Poe Collection (Free Library of Philadelphia) to the new brochure for Poe House

RAVENS:

Furnishings for Poe?

- Furnished was an evocative, rich experience
- Visitors find emptiness as Poe-like feel
- There is no evidence surviving on Poe furnishings – NPS policy requires documentation
- Artistic opportunities within the house
- Poe moved into a new house – difficult to furnish within current walls
- Ghost furniture can evoke imagination
- Evaluation of visitor experience
- Does Philadelphia need another furnished house museum
- Opportunity of virtual tours for ideas in furnishings
- Bareness simple and helps strengthen interpreters
- Sense of 19th Century needed

Interpretation of Visitor Services

- House: springboard to Poe's literary genius
- Outdoor benches to provide area for reflection
- First-hand newspaper reports Poe used in his own works
- Provide a focus on Poe's comedies
- Put Poe in context
- Work on process of who Poe is and how he created his works
- Associated with Antebellum South
- Where Poe stands as a literary figure
- Poe is more important to Europeans: "sound tour"
- Update video on Poe's life in Philadelphia – have more action rather than still shots
- Provide materials upon which visitors will want to continue their study/appreciation of Poe
- Philadelphia as a city during Poe's time
- Website: a place to publish findings about Poe
- Visitors invited to consider how Poe thought to create his works
- Keep bare rooms – leave much to the imagination – PLEASE!
- Poe and science need to be interpreted in the house
- Poe as critic and editor
- Poe is still influential today – make these connections
- Rangers recitation of Poe is compelling. Some visitors recite.
- Myths can dictate tours; break them down
- Tours focuses are flexible and tailored towards groups
- Longfellow v. Poe
  Revered v. reviled
- Poe in France: influence in Russia
- Financial story: famous, but not rich. Wrote out of passion, not for money.
  Ethical Question ------- Napster
- Personal tragedies
- Grip at the free Library

Empty

- More space – circulation
- "Poe like" visitor expectation
- No evidence of family
- Artists can interpret – "Performance Art"

Filled

- Scrim has potential
- Sound
- Artist rendering multiple perspectives
- Transitory – Evolving
- Is it real?
- Poe richly sensitive – descriptive

- **Living in 1840s in Philadelphia**
- Tangible building
- "He had a Life"
- Place gives clues to life cycle circumstances
- Creativity/diligence
- Backdrop to literary legacy
- Restoration
  - East windows
  - Porch roof
- New house look – white wash
- "Vibes"
- Street scape different

Imagining Poe

A Symposium on Resource Management and Interpretation
Edgar Allan Poe National Historic Site
Wednesday June 16, 2004

Objectives

By the end of the forum, participants will…

1. Develop creative approaches to interpretation of the interior rooms of the original Poe house.

2. Develop creative approaches to resource preservation and restoration of the interior rooms of the original Poe house.

Morning Agenda

8:30	**"Know Thy Neighbor"** Welcome and Introductions	Stephen Sitarski, Site Manager Mary Bomar, Superintendent Michael Paskowsky, Project Manager
8:45	**Overview of Visitor Services**	Mary Jenkins, Park Ranger Helen McKenna-Uff, Park Ranger
9:30	**Touring the House** Review of Historic Structure Report & Furnishing Plan	Doris Fanelli, Curator Charles Tonetti, Historic Architect
10:00	*Break*	At the German Society
10:15	**Long Range Interpretive Plan** Interpretive Goals & desired visitor experiences	Stephen Sitarski, Site Manager
10:30	**"Poe's Legacy in Philadelphia"** Why is this site important?	Robert Regan, Professor Emeritus University of Pennsylvania
11:00	**"Putting Your Best Foot Forward"** Break-out session to identify the best interpretive attributes of the Poe House To identify significant clues and what the original house tells us	
11:30	**Group Discussion & Summary**	
12:00	*Lunch*	At the German Society Box lunch provided to participants

Afternoon Agenda

12:45	***"A Man on the Move"*** Interpretation at Other Poe Sites	Joanne Schillizzi, Park Ranger
1:00	**Group Discussion & Summary**	
1:15	**"This Old House"** Interpreting Historic Structures	Don Branch, Designer Ben Miller, Planner Bill Brown, Curator Michael Paskowsky
1:45	*Break*	
2:00	**"The Heart (Tell-Tale) of the Matter"** Break-out session. What are the best creative options for interpretation, historic preservation and restoration?	
2:45	**Group Discussion & Summary**	
3:30	**Wrap Up and Summary** Review of Next Steps	
4:00	**Conclusion**	

Symposium Location:
German Society of Pennsylvania
611 Spring Garden Street
Philadelphia, PA 19123
(215) 627-2332

PARTICIPANTS

John Alvita, Franklin Institute
John Baldino, Teacher, Wilson Junior High School
Leo Blake, Site Manager, Walt Whitman House
Mary Bomar, Superintendent, INDE
Don Branch, Designer, HFC
Bill Brown, Planner, HFC
Julia Canonica, Volunteer, EDAL
Patricia Conway, Chair, Mid- Atlantic Council for National Parks
Kathy Dilonardo, Interpretive Planner, NERO
Doris Fanelli, Chief, Cultural Resource Management, INDE
Gloria Glasheen, Teacher, Pennsbury High School
Jeff Groff, Director, Wyck House
Alvin Holmes, Architect, Author of EDAL Historic Structures Report
Matt Ifill, Park Ranger, Walt Whitman House
Kate Jefferson, NERO intern works for Kathy Dilonardo
Mary Jenkins, Supervisory Interpretive Ranger, INDE
Sean Kelly, Program Director, Eastern State Penitentary
Eric Knight, Interpretive Rander, EDAL
Amy Lam, Graduate Student works for Patricia Conway
David Langston, Research Associate, HFC
Randy Mason, Associate Prof. of Architecture, University of PA
Andrew McDougall, Park Ranger, INDE
Helen McKenna- Uff, Interpretive Ranger, EDAL
Ben Miller, Planner, HFC
Patty Mousely, Director, Graeme Park
Michael Paskowsky, Project Manager, HFC
Dennis Reidenbach, Assist. Superintendent, INDE
Robert Regan, Professor Emeritus of English
Joanne Schillizzi, Interpretive Ranger, EDAL
Chris Semtner, Director, Richard Poe Museum
Steve Sitarski, Manager, EDAL
Linda Thomas, Project Specialist, HFC
Charles Tonetti, Historic Architect, INDE
Megan Venno, NERO, intern
Hardy von Auenmueller, The German Society of Pennsylvania