

New Graduate Degree in Historic Preservation and Design offered by UMass Amherst and Hancock Shaker Village

Starting in Fall 2010, – UMass Amherst and Hancock Shaker Village will offer a new two-year new master's degree program that combines the university's programs in architecture and public history with on-site training and courses utilizing the Village's National Historic Landmark site The Master of Science in Design with a concentration in historic preservation will offer advanced study of traditional building materials, preservation theory, and building systems utilizing the architecture, archives, collections, and library at Hancock Shaker Village. Students and professionals already working in historic preservation and architectural conservation will earn the degree through the university's Continuing and Professional Education program. Students will study and conduct fieldwork side-by-side with Hancock Shaker Village staff and visiting experts on topics such as building restoration, town planning, and historic site administration. A unique highlight will be the special focus on Shaker ideals, building methods, and historic craft and trade knowledge as they apply to modern life.



Steven Bedford, an architectural historian for more than 20 years with special expertise in cultural resource investigations and management, will direct the new program and teach American Building and Preservation Theory courses. Overall, the new degree program is expected to enroll 10 to 12 students in the first year, later expanding to 25 or 30.

“I’m enthusiastic about working and teaching in such a rich cultural landscape,” said Bedford. “I think it’s the first instance of a building preservation program located within a National Historic Landmark. Excellent examples of late 18th through early 20th century architecture are right at hand.”

Bedford noted that in this era when designers, builders, and architects increasingly seek sustainable and intelligent energy alternatives, Hancock Shaker Village and UMass Amherst will be rediscovering lessons from buildings handed down by “a culture whose principles and ethos were based completely on what we now call sustainability.” The new degree program should also help raise awareness of academic research and advanced restoration techniques in the traditional building community, he pointed out.

For more information about the UMass Amherst Hancock Shaker Village Graduate Degree in Historic Preservation and Design, contact Steven Bedford at 413.443.0188 ext. 239 or sbedford@hancockshakervillage.org.

Hancock Shaker Village is one of the most visited cultural venues in the Berkshires of western Massachusetts. Visited by nearly 70,000 people annually, the Village brings the Shaker story to life, and preserves it for future generations. It is a center for reflection on the values of principled living that the Shakers embraced – equality, community, sustainability, and responsible land stewardship – that still resonate today. For more information, call 800.817.1137 or see www.hancockshakervillage.org.