Gauging the Relationship between Contextual Growth and Structural Neglect

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A B S T R A C T

Population and land use out-migrations from urban to peripheral areas can result in non-functional, unmaintained historic structures which deteriorate to the point where removal is cheaper than removal – or demolition by neglect. The increasing rate of neglected historic structures is a growing concern. There is a need for research investigating connections between urban growth management and its effect on neglect. This paper applies Newman's (2013) conceptual model of measuring neglect to Geographic Information Systems, comparing rates of neglect in historic Doylestown, Quakertown, and Bristol boroughs in Pennsylvania, USA utilizing different amounts of peripheral agricultural preservation. Comparisons are made examining descriptive statistics on existing conditions, a Polychoric correlation evaluating relationships between drivers of neglect, and a cross-comparative GIS spatial analysis. Results indicate as amounts of peripheral preserved farmlands increase, neglect can be lowered.
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1. Urban Dynamics and Heritage Neglect

Forrester (1969) theorizes that the city is a living organism whose form takes its shape as the result of a combination of external forces. Further, actions and interactions of cultures are a product of the desires, necessities, and values of a city's actors and give meaning to its form (Newman, 2015). This theory presupposes that comprehension of the built environment must be considered in conjunction with the understanding of both exogenous and endogenous factors and their causal relations (Ben-Hamouche, 2013). Listokin (1997) takes this theory a step further, positing that growth management and preservation of the built environment are fundamentally connected; he also states that these connections are, however, not fully understood. Local policies do not conserve built heritage fully (Pickerill & Pickard, 2007). For example, evidence from historic areas in Germany has shown that contextual economic and political changes significantly impact historically preserved buildings (Alberts & Brinda, 2005).

Historic preservation has a primary objective to protect structures and districts of historic prestige from alteration, degradation, and demolition (Ben-Hamouche, 2013). Historic urban areas require high levels of support to retain structural viability, safeguard the integrity of heritage structures, and stimulate local economies. Urban spatial change is largely tied to alterations in contextual land uses, threatening many elements