

Reorienting historic house museums: An anarchists guide

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ABSTRACT: Although other types of cultural sites are experiencing growth, Historic House Museums (HHMs) are seeing declining visitation, financial instability, and misguided Board stewardship. (Rocco 2013) All too often, HHMs are places where a well-intended docent points at obscure portraits, and gestures into barren rooms while sharing a seemingly fact-based, exclusive narrative about the great deeds of the great, white man who once lived in the home. There are few actual signs of habitation or the complexity of family life, and any opportunity for a shared, meaningful, and human connection across generations disappears in the stark museum atmosphere. Frozen in a pre-determined period of historic interpretation, HHMs fall harshly out of sync with the larger community as demographics change around them. They have become autonomous, self-referential and insular in an era defined by social media, mass communication and the collaborative process.

The well-meaning Board and staff leadership of HHMs, with expertise primarily in museum studies, history and collections management, is ill equipped to deal with either the contemporary understanding of context, or the civic engagement expertise of urban designers and architects. *The Anarchist Guide for Historic House Museums (AGHHM)* attempts to bridge some of those disciplinary boundaries and offers a comprehensive strategy for reorienting HHMs from a curated museum setting to a new paradigm of real-life habitation. This more inclusive *re-orientation* is organized under four guiding themes of *Community, Experience, Habitation and Shelter*, and is illustrated as *The Anarchist Guide for Historic House Museums Graphic Manifesto*

The Historic House Trust of New York City has tested the *AGHHM* concepts at several of its historic house sites. *AGHHM* inspired events have been undertaken at NYC's Morris-Jumel Mansion and have led to substantial increases in the number of first-time visitors, press, and funding/earned revenue. A follow-up study funded by a \$100,000 grant from the New York Community Trust is now underway to design, launch and evaluate an *Anarchist Plan* for the Latimer House Museum in Queens. The former home of African-American inventor and electrical pioneer Lewis Howard Latimer, the house is located in what has become a Chinese/Korean community, and offers a compelling narrative that has the potential ability to bridge the past and the present, and act as a center of social history, explorative experience and common identity.

KEYWORDS: historic, house, museum, community engagement

INTRODUCTION

House museum professionals are struggling to find answers - ways to make house museums meaningful and relevant to diverse 21st-century audiences. The fallacy of this exercise is that perhaps house museum professionals shouldn't try to do it alone. - Rachel Abbot

There are over 15,000 Historic House Museums (HHMs) in the United States. The organizational health of most of them is in decline. Frozen in a pre-determined "period of interpretation", many are viewed as irrelevant and unresponsive having fallen out of sync with the changing communities that surround them. HHMs have become out-dated, autonomous, and insular, a detrimental condition in a modern era characterized by easy communication and collaboration. (Vaghn 2008)

All too often, HHMs are places where a well-intended docent points at portraits, and gestures into barren rooms while sharing a seemingly fact-based, exclusive narrative about the great deeds of the great, white men who once lived in the home. There are few signs of habitation or the complexity of family life, and any opportunity for a shared, meaningful, and human connection across generations disappears.

The critique of HHMs is not new. In 1998, the Philadelphia Athenaeum's symposium focused on the challenges then being faced in HHMs, as did Moe's influential 2002 article: "Are there too many house museums?" (American 1998 and Moe 2002) Their shared ideas came together in 2007 when national leaders of historic sites gathered at the Kykuit National Historic Site to discuss these and other challenges being experienced by their institutions. In response, the attendees stated that innovation, experimentation, and collaboration would be essential to HHM sustainability, acknowledging that success would be dependent on the local leadership's willingness to change its structure, programs, and services, and generate more varied ways to utilize their resources to enrich people's lives.

Towards that goal, the Historic House Trust of New York City (HHT) is working to address the disconnect between time, place and shared experience, and is experimenting with new ways of operating house museums. The organization is a nonprofit that operates in tandem with the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation to aid in the preservation of 23 city-owned historic properties located in public parks in all five boroughs. This out-of-the-box thinking is expressed in the organization's Mission Statement:

Historic sites are not static antiquities – they are living institutions uniquely poised to address current issues while retaining their connections to the past. HHT is therefore dedicated to preserving its member sites, protecting their collections, engaging diverse audiences, educating visitors and sustaining the nonprofit organizations that operate the houses. (Historic, 2013)

1.0 THE ANARCHIST GUIDE TO HISTORIC HOUSE MUSEUMS

The *Anarchist Guide for Historic House Museums (AGHHM)* was developed out of frustration with the traditional, existing museum perspective on the operations of HHMs. These best practices seemed to hinder innovation and experimentation as they were developed from the perspective of artifact and collection management rather than visitor experience. Consequently, the *AGHHM* advocates for the holistic re-examination of the current HHM model of seemingly pristine preservation to one that inverts traditional museum operations and encourages a shared experience through the expression of human habitation. We use of the term "Anarchist" not to be merely sensational, but rather to reflect the systemic and fundamental changes needed to address the dire extent of problems most Historic Homes now face. We seek to politely rebel against the well-meaning but increasingly irrelevant rules that typically define the Historic House Museum experience.

We advocate for a comprehensive strategy from a shared authority that reorients HHMs towards a more diverse audience borrowing state-of-the-art community engagement, experience and habitation tactics from urban design, public art, film and experiential theater. (Ryan and Vagnone, 2013) This more inclusive *re-orientation* of HHMs is demarcated through an evolving list of 24 concepts and 30 tactics organized under





Anarchist Guide to Historic House Museums: Finding the Poetic in Other People's Homes		
Engage mind/body/neighborhood/city/world Don't talk about your stuff - ask about theirs Avoid the bait-n-switch and "one-offs" Don't be afraid to fail		
AGHHM Category	Concepts	Tactics
SHELTER (architectural) <i>the building of the home</i> 	wealth location politics age authentic operations	Be honest about the illusion of authenticity Embrace contemporary vistas and neighborhoods as a form of condition preservation Stop treating everything like a Rembrandt - because everything is not (unless you actually have one) Use multiple theories of preservation in the same historic house museum (not purist) Remove all "black holes" in the physicality of preservation of the building and grounds. Recognize the ebb and flow of the physicality of a structure (use as well as maintenance) Trace building materials from origin through use (labor/social/cultural) Consider "universal access" as a part of preservation
HABITATION (physical) <i>the furnishing of the home</i> 	EATING (taste) COOKING (smell) SPEECH & HEARING (sound) HANDS & FEET (touch) SEEING (visual) life cycle health garments daily cycle gender social	Create environments that are natural and about habitation appropriate to the narrative Create environments that reflect all day cycles (sleep/wake/ day/night/light/dark) Utilize complex and non-pure collection relationships (multiple eras represented) If appropriate, embrace clutter objects as part of the curated interior (clean/mess) Strive for a "N.U.D.E." expression of habitation (Non-linear, unorthodox, dactylic and experimental) Believe in the intelligence of the guest Create habitation from several viewpoints at once (adult/child/servant/slave/dog/visitor) Create habitation through "movements" not stage-sets Pay particular attention to "USE" as a determining factor in curated interiors
COMMUNITY <i>the home within its context</i> 	representative persons and lives historic and current events historic and current economies gender	Be welcoming (signage, languages, social & cultural interests) Investigate the neighborhood "six football fields" around the HHM (languages/ethnicities/culture) Locate "Reverse Affinity Groups" - find out what is wanted and provide it Undertake a strategy of "Seven Touches" and send visitors away with a parting gift Capitalize on all forms of personal "fingerprinting" - use social media as a form of conversation/dialogue Set up a citizens advisory group - listen - substantially modify historic house uses as needed Set up one day a month as a "community day" and spend it outside of the HHM
EXPERIENCE (behavioral) <i>the home-life</i> 	social and personal seasonal social order and activity	End the passive tour - choreograph the experience to represent real life De-centralize the experience to allow visitors to feel a sense of ownership Kill the silence - engage all of the senses in creating an holistic experience Eliminate all denied spaces by making the movement through the house as real as possible Fully consider tactility of the building and the collections Fully embrace the concept of simultaneity, conjecture, rumor and gossip to expand the experience

Figure 1. The *Anarchist Guide to Historic House Museums*. Source: Vagnone and Ryan, 2013.

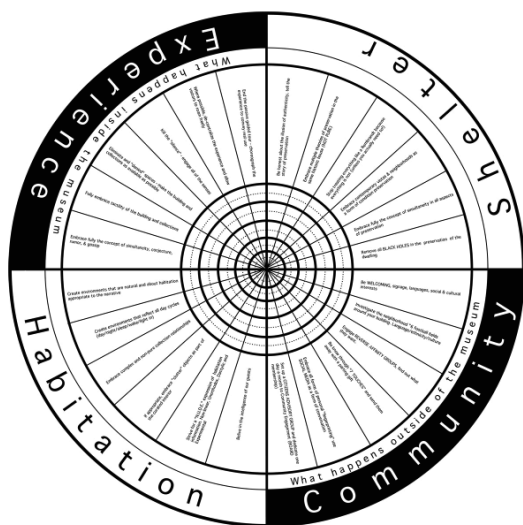
four themes of *Community*, *Experience*, *Habitation* and *Shelter* (Figure 1). When addressed simultaneously, these themes can produce a new genre of historic house museums that is an expression of the community and embraces the visitor experience through tactile engagement than more traditional, best museum practices.

Shelter tactics question expensive, pure notions of preservation. Instead of restoring every house according to the highest standard, HHMs would adopt a spectrum of condition and be honest about the illusion of authenticity. Multiple theories of preservation and conservation would be employed and preservation work would be seen by visitors while underway. Unpreserved parts of a building would become areas of teaching and inspiration, rather than remain hidden and off-limits. HHMs would embrace the fabric and energy of the current context instead of operating in an imagined, pastoral past.

Habitation tactics in the *AGHHM* introduce radical changes to historic house interiors by encouraging a experience that relays the anachronistic realities of historic interiors shunned by frozen-in-place furnishing plans. With the *Anarchist* model, the specific items that populate the house would often change, like they do in any house, to suggest the rhythm of household life - seasons, celebrations, room function, births, and deaths. Objects placed in the HHM would contribute to both the historic context and the current vitality of the space through actual use, rather than deaden it by their untouched permanence.

The seven tactics under the *Community* theme of the *AGHHM* prioritize relationship building, and the development of relevant narratives with local communities. Collections and research would no longer solely dictate docent-led tours and programming. Instead, HHM staff would identify and approach "reverse-affinity" neighborhood groups that heretofore have had little connection to the historic site, identify shared interests, with their members, and build new narratives that make the sites more relevant to local communities. By building on the interests of reverse affinity groups, HHMs can increase their visitation by expanding their mission to house soup kitchens, provide community meeting rooms, space for learning new skills/languages/trades, and exhibition/gallery spaces. These new functions can then be melded with the collections and historic narratives to create an entirely new model for connecting communities to their local historic sites.

Experience based tactics in the *AGHHM* promote the loosening of the boundaries that separate visitors from the HHM, and the increase of sensory engagement. Just as the earlier inhabitants of the HHM had free movement throughout their home, so too should today's visitors. Narratives about members of the family and household would be shared, not just the head of the household. Rumor, gossip and conjecture within the narratives would be embraced, acknowledging the holes in primary, historic source material. Very little of the HHMs' collections would remain in locked, glass cases, or behind velvet ropes; almost everything would be accessible. Engaging visitors' senses through light, scent and sound installations would bring the house to life and encourage visceral, immediate connections. Simply put, HHMs would feel like homes, not museums. Visitors would feel more like welcome and invited guests, rather than intruders onto a frozen stage set.



The *Anarchist* tactics are depicted in a *Graphic Manifesto* circular plan intended for use as a self-assessment tool. (Figure 2) The concentric rings allow for a recording of up to five HHM initiatives for each of the tactics by coloring in the applicable components of the graphic. A successful and balanced *Anarchist* approach with multiple initiatives underway would result in marks growing concentrically from the center. An evaluation of an HHM adhering to a more traditional model of docent-led tours through pristinely restored interiors would result in very few marks.

Through these four guiding principles, the *AGHHM* inverts the typical house museum approach with a reiterative process intended to build relationships,

inclusiveness, access and interest. In doing so, the *AGHHM* is potentially a groundbreaking effort to promote and measure innovation in historic house museums across the United States.

Figure 2. The *Anarchist Graphic Manifesto*. Source: Vagnone and Ryan, 2013.

2.0 TESTING AND DEVELOPMENT

The *AGHHM* has been developed through and tested in architectural studios, museum studies programs, and preservation classes at the Cooperstown Graduate Program, the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, NYU, and Columbia University. The methodology of these initial studies was comparative and focused on the analytical, emotive, and behavioral mapping of habitation in HHMs and personal contemporary dwellings. (Ryan and Vagnone).

In follow-up classes, students further explored the four *AGHHM* themes from a personal perspective through the production of one-minute smartphone videos and created *Anarchist Plans* for three HHT properties: Van Cortlandt House Museum, Edgar Allan Poe Cottage and Morris-Jumel Mansion Museum. The findings and recommendations from those studies were presented at the 2013 ARCC Conference in Charlotte, the American Association of State and Local History, Cooperstown Graduate Program, Cosmopolitan Club of New York City, Great Camp Sagamore, Greater Hudson Heritage Network, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museumwise, New York State Historic Preservation Organization, Parsons the New School for Design, and NYU.

Concurrent to these efforts, a social media campaign was initiated to gauge public response and solicit peer review. The *Anarchist Guide to Historic Houses* Facebook page and Twitter account provide a forum to exchange progressive ideas on historic houses. The *Anarchist Guide* LinkedIn group now has over 687 international members, most of whom are museum

professionals who review *Anarchist* tactics and ideas, and share on-the-ground practices that reflect their intent.

3.0 CASE STUDY AND PILOT PROJECT

3.1. The Morris-Jumel House

You've got to know the rules to break them. That's what I'm here for, to demolish the rules but to keep the tradition - Alexander McQueen (British Fashion Designer and Couturier 1969 - 2010)

The Morris Jumel Mansion (MJM) is Manhattan's oldest private residence. British Colonel Roger Morris and his American wife Mary Philipse built it as the family's summer home in 1765. During the Revolutionary War, they returned to England and the house was used by General George Washington as his headquarters during the Battle of Harlem Heights in the fall of 1776. After the war, the mansion exchanged hands many times until French emigrant and wine merchant Stephen Jumel and his wife Eliza purchased it in 1810. Twenty years later, Mr Jumel passed away, and his wife Eliza, who had become one the wealthiest women in New York, married U.S. Vice President, Aaron Burr. It was a marriage of convenience. He was attracted to her money, she to his position. Their union lasted less than a year. Once divorced, Eliza lived in the mansion until her death at the age of 90. Sold in 1903 to NYC, MJM became a house museum in 1904.

Eliza had the longest tenure in MJM, and yet, her story has been largely untold. Women's narratives often remain overshadowed by the men who lived along side them, due in large part to HJM's historical role and political purpose, especially when overseen by patriotic societies like the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), or the Colonial Dames. Both organizations were founded in the 1890s with a mission, "to teach patriotism by erecting monuments and protecting historical spots, by observing historical anniversaries, by promoting the cause of education, especially the study of history, the enlightenment of the foreign population, and all that makes for good citizenship". (Butcher-Youngmans 1993) MJM fills a similar role as a notable site in American history. And yet, it is Eliza's story that now attracts the most interest.

Born in Providence, Rhode Island to a prostitute and raised in a brothel, Eliza was a kept woman from the age of 16. After a pregnancy, she was moved by her protector to NYC and became an actress. There she met a French sea captain, and traveled with him to Paris where she learned about French Fashion. When she returned to NYC, she started a millinery business with her newfound knowledge. But when her shop was unsuccessful, she turned her shop girls into prostitutes and became their madam. Eliza rented her shop from Stephen Jumel, who became her patron, and eventually, her husband. (Braver, 2009)

In April 2013, MJM embraced the rumor and gossip that had long surrounded Eliza, through an exhibition that featured 18th and 19th Century-style corsets that were created by designer and couturier Camilla Huey. Entitled *The Loves of Aaron Burr: Portraits of Corsetry & Binding*, the show focused on the lives of Eliza, an earlier wife of Burr's, his mother, and four of his purported 12 mistresses. Most of the women were authors, diarists or letter writers, and the exhibition attempts to present their creative pursuits as if emerging from their intimate attire. (Feiden, 2013)

As if acknowledging the *Anarchist Guide*, Chloe Wyma wrote in the *BlouinArtinfo* that, "Camilla Huey's feminist retelling of history is well-intentioned; and her beautiful, exquisitely executed couture pieces are a breath of contemporaneity in the Morris-Jumel Mansion's hallowed halls. As art objects, however, they aren't as titillating as the bodice-ripping gossip they resurrect. (Wyma, 2013)

Washington and Burr's narratives, and the house's role in the country's political history have overshadowed the stories of these women's lives. *The Loves of Aaron Burr* brings them to the forefront. According to Carol Ward, MJM's Executive Director, the exhibition, "was part of its

new campaign to lure non-traditional museum-goers, like art lovers and fashion aficionados. The old model of historical houses is dying off. They can be very static and passive, so the idea is to reactivate the space and make it less of a museum and more like an active house.” (Feiden, 2013)



Figure 2. Corsets from *The Loves of Aaron Burr: Portraits of Corsetry & Binding*. Source: Camilla Huey

The intent of the exhibition was not simply to boost attendance by flirting with racy sensationalism, but rather pay homage to Alexander McQueen's 2011 exhibition *Savage Beauty* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in which fashion was presented to convey turbulent, historic narratives. Often inspired by 19th Century Victorian Gothic, McQueen embraced “dialectical oppositions” with themes of horror and romance, life and death, lightness and darkness, and the interplay between victim and aggressor. Huey’s work makes manifest similar political themes within a domestic context, where sex and power were intertwined. (Campbell, 2012)

The Loves of Aaron Burr was both praised by art critics and broke attendance records. The show broadened the typical audience found visiting historic house museums. Compared to the same period of the previous year, there was a 560% increase to an opening event, a 30% increase in house visitation, and a 60% increase in revenue from the gift shop.

Carol Ward credits *The Anarchist's Guide to Historic House Museums* for providing the safe space and impetus for these ongoing initiatives. Through her direction, the House has embraced three of the four guiding themes and 9 of the 30 tactics. MJM staff have improved the *Experience* of the house by (1) ending the passive guide tour, (2) allowing visitors to roam freely, (3) killing the silence, and (4) embracing conjecture, rumor and gossip. In terms of the *Habitation* of the house, the programs (5) allowed participation in the changing cycle of day and night, (6) embraced NUDE (Non-linear, Unorthodox, Dactylic and Experimental) expression, (7) and illustrated belief in the intelligence of the guests. *Community* was built by (8) engaging reverse affinity groups (people’s whose primary interest in visiting was about something other than the historic house), and (9) using social media as a form of conversation.

The *Anarchist Guide* broadened interest in the MJM, but anecdotal evidence would suggest systemic and fundamental changes to the operations are needed to truly embrace the AGHHM concepts. Successive rounds of all four *Anarchist* themes will be needed to judge the validity of the *Manifesto*. As thought leaders in museum studies, curators and museum directors like Rhianedd Smith, Robert Boast, Viv Golding and Thomas Campbell have suggested, longevity of cultural and historic sites may ultimately rest not just in building community, but becoming relevant enough to remain at its center.

3.2. Latimer House Pilot Project

To further develop, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of all 24 tactics of the *Anarchist Guide*, the Historic House Trust submitted a grant application to use the Lewis H. Latimer House as a pilot site for the *AGHHM* concepts. The New York Community Trust funded a \$100,000, 2-year pilot study in 2013 to conceptualize, develop and launch a complete *Anarchist Plan* at the Lewis H. Latimer House in Flushing, Queens. This project aims to re-imagine the Latimer House Museum as a community place that bridges the past and the present, and unites diverse communities by acting as a center of social history, explorative experience, and common identity.

The Latimer House (LH) was the home of African-American inventor and electrical pioneer Lewis Howard Latimer from 1903 until his death in 1928. The House became a member of the Historic House Trust in July 2008, making it one of the most recent additions to HHT. Currently, Latimer House has no Executive Director or staff. The Board consists of approximately ten passionate volunteers invested in seeing the house flourish but as yet unable to create sustained initiatives. The caretaker, an art handler and museum professional, operates as *de facto* staff member, opening the house on weekends and giving tours to visitors. The house has few collections; its main interpretive element is a bland, text-based panel exhibition in one room. In 2012, monthly attendance at the site ranged from 16 to 125 visitors. The house's location in the center of a diverse residential community, the willingness of its Board and caretaker to test new ideas, the lack of collections and regular programming, the current low visitation and a compelling narrative that includes social and cultural diversity, African-American history, science and technology among other topics render Lewis H. Latimer House a prime host for its pilot *Anarchist* initiative.

Piloting the *AGHHM* philosophy at the LH is the most focused effort to date to better understand and attract new audiences. This objective is particularly appropriate for Latimer House, as the house does not possess a visitation base that it could risk alienating with the major changes that may come about with this project. The main objective is making the local community aware of the Latimer House and foster shared ownership of the site. Due to barriers both real (limited open hours, language) and abstract (lack of accessible or interesting content, perceived elitist attitude of the museum), LH has struggled to attract its most immediate local community. The project's framework will allow HHT staff and a consulting team to draw from their own successes with community involvement while helping to conceptualize ways for LH to engage its neighborhood and use local interests to update narratives.

To begin the project, an analysis of Latimer House was undertaken per the *Anarchist Guide Graphic Manifesto*. For each criterion, the house was rated on a scale of 1 to 5 for each tactic. An average score of less than one point for each of the four guiding themes was recorded. To address these challenges, a project team was formed of 12 Edward I. Koch Fellows who are working in concert with project consultants and HHT staff to design and implement an *Anarchist Plan* for the house. The Fellows' skill sets are purposefully broad including theater, arts, civic engagement, finance, museum studies, communications, preservation, and collection management. Collectively, the fellows speak seven languages.

An initial survey of the neighborhood has revealed the importance of their broad expertise. Latimer House is surrounded by diverse but segregated neighborhoods. The single-family house is located just a half mile from Flushing's main intersection at Main Street and Roosevelt Avenue, the third busiest in NYC, and home to one of the largest Chinese communities outside of China.

More than half of Flushing's population was born outside of the United States, and do not speak fluent English. Immigrants come from all parts of China, although over 80% speak Mandarin. Many own small businesses, a large part of Flushing's economy. According to the New York State Comptroller's 2011 report, almost 90 percent of Flushing's businesses had fewer than 10 employees, making the city one of the largest hubs for small business in the nation. Changing census numbers between 2000 and 2010 suggest that the Chinese

immigrant community is contributing to the aging of Flushing's population, where family units live together with cousins, siblings, aunts and uncles, and grandparents. (Dickerson, 2013)

Between Main/Roosevelt and the Latimer House are other concentrations of Latino, Taiwanese and Korean immigrants. The four groups generally do not mix.

The *Anarchist Plan* must address the unique demographics of Flushing especially since the racial make-up is so drastically different than when Lewis Latimer lived in the neighborhood and it was primarily African American. To do so, the project team will undertake extensive community outreach efforts including meetings with elected officials, liaising with local businesses, hosting "town halls", surveying visitors, tracking social media activity, and identifying reverse-affinity groups.

To begin building relationships across such diverse constituencies, community engagement will focus on the shared narrative of *Aspiration*. Lewis Latimer's life story was one of achievement. The child of escaped slaves, he was a civil war veteran and self taught draftsman. He rose through the ranks of an attorney's office from a delivery boy to a patent consultant, becoming a sort of renaissance man working on inventions by day while also playing flute, writing plays and poetry, and being actively engaged in the Unitarian Church. His largely fulfilled hopes and dreams were probably not unlike those of the many immigrants who arrive in Flushing each day, although few know of their commonality.

Whether through a town hall gathering, or over lunch at one of Flushing's many restaurants, the civic engagement campaign will have three primary components. The first phase of the project will focus on gathering the hopes and dreams of local residents, as well as the challenges that stand in the way of their being achieved. LandDesign's "Meeting-in-a-Box", Ryan-Harris's "Food for Thought" methodology using disposable paper placemats as survey instruments, and Candy Chang's "Before I Die" and "Career Path" community walls, where participants individually share their life choices within a larger artistic frame, will serve as precedents for the outreach. (Chang, 2013)

In the second phase, neighbors will be invited to the Latimer House to participate in events that acknowledge their shared aspirations. Invitations will be extended by way of person-powered, mobile engagement carts that will be moved throughout the surrounding neighborhoods. The carts may be modeled after Michael Graves and Ralph Appelbaum's New Jersey Hall of Fame Mobile Museum albeit at a more modest scale, or inspired by the emerging field of Tactical Urbanism as a sort of pop-up sidewalk experience. The carts may evoke Wunderkammers or cabinets of curiosities, like Museum, NYC's one room exhibition space tucked away on Cortlandt Alley behind the street level doors fronting an abandoned freight elevator.

The third phase of engagement will occur on the grounds and inside the Latimer House. Yet even then, the conversation will be focused on the guest rather than the host, with an attempt to serve the needs and interests of the visitors. In celebration of Mr. Latimer's many interests and his work as a part-time tutor teaching English as a second language, the LH could be resurrected as a place of life-long learning, providing space for afterschool lessons in math, science, music and history. It could be a place where new ideas about energy and resource conservation are discussed, or simply where free light bulbs are distributed, building on the annual "Lamp Trade" program that already occurs during the Historic House Trust celebration.

4.0 ASSESSMENT AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES

The final phase of the Latimer *Anarchist* project will focus on assessment. Many of the ideas suggested in the *Anarchist Guide to Historic House Museums* and the actions proposed in the *Anarchist Plan* will be new and provocative. They might not be measurable. They might fail. The project team will remain flexible and anticipates needing to change and adapt some of its plans according to feedback from the Latimer House Board and community members. If some initiatives are not resonating with the community, the Task Force will evaluate results and create new recommendations.

HHT expects to see measurable outcomes from the *Anarchist* pilot at the Latimer House, including:

- Increased site accessibility and community presence, greater visitation and use of the site, and more representation of the community in Latimer House's narrative and programming
- Increased interactivity at Latimer House, such as less restricted visitor movement through the house, handling of objects by visitors and the introduction of light and sound installations
- Noticeable changes to interiors at Latimer House, such as the introduction of reproduction items and the presence of the detritus of habitation
- Increased emphasis on community engagement at Latimer House, such as the establishment of social media pages and the presence of community-driven themes within narratives
- Noticeable changes to preservation at Latimer House, such as embedding information on the house's preservation within the narrative and the presence of multiple theories of preservation,

Ultimately, the goal of the Latimer House Pilot Project is to fully test and consequently refine the *Anarchist Guide* concepts. To that end, the Task Force will conduct a final evaluation of the *Anarchist* initiatives using the *Anarchist Graphic Manifesto*. The process will track improvements in each of the four guiding themes and suggest actions that will further advance Latimer House towards this new paradigm through an *Anarchist* Sustainability Report.

By successfully piloting this approach, the Historic House Trust aims to emerge as a leader in progressive historic house museum management and operation. In turn, the Lewis H. Latimer House will be able to implement exciting historic house management principles in a supportive environment, thus beginning to attract the attention of new audiences. Other HHT houses will also benefit by participating intimately in the development of this project. By piloting these *Anarchist* ideas, HHT and its member houses can collaboratively begin to chart a new course for the future of historic house museums.

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