SAIC’s dynamic Master of Science in Historic Preservation (MSHP) prepares graduates to revitalize the built environment through the comprehensive exploration of science, history, creative arts, politics, and technology.

SAIC’s MSHP program is an intensive two-year program covering restoration design, materials conservation, architectural history, preservation planning, and specific areas of interest through elective coursework. Students gain valuable professional experience through internships, and investigate an area of personal and professional concern in great depth through a two-semester thesis tutorial.

MSHP faculty are respected professionals who believe that preserving and reusing historic buildings, furnishings, sites, and landscapes contributes significantly to the health of our culture and society. Their professional affiliations in Chicago and abroad provide a powerful network of connections. Nearly all department projects involve Chicago or Chicago-area buildings and sites, often resulting in community-based projects. Students also have the option to participate in faculty-led interdisciplinary study abroad opportunities that build intercultural competency.
DEPARTMENTAL HIGHLIGHTS

Buildings, signs and monuments from our recent past (1935-1975) are disappearing from the landscape at an alarming rate. These resources are often thought to be too old to be fresh and too new to be historic. Through the diligent work of SAIC HPres students, over 4,100 commercial, religious, industrial and institutional buildings of merit have been documented in 53 municipalities since 2006 as part of the “Suburban Cook County Survey” with help from the Jocarno Fund through Landmarks Illinois.

SAIC HPres students were awarded third prize in the distinguished HALS Challenge 2016 for their measured drawings of the Lincoln Park Lily Pond, a masterwork of Prairie School design by landscape architect Alfred Caldwell. The National Park Service annual award is given to the best documentation of a noteworthy work of American landscape architecture. The same team was awarded an Honorable Mention in the distinguished HABS Holland Prize 2016 for their documentation of the iconic Chess Pavilion, a 1957 reinforced concrete canopy on Chicago’s lakefront.

The SAIC Historic Preservation Department, along with our partners, the Association for Preservation Technology Western Great Lakes Chapter (APT WGLC), the Glessner House Museum and the American Institute of Architects Historic Resources Committee (AIA HRC), sponsored a workshop on Non-Destructive Evaluation of Historic Buildings.

Throughout its two-year restoration, SAIC HPres students received guided construction tours of the $23M restoration of Frank Lloyd Wright’s Unity Temple in Oak Park, IL. They observed concrete repair techniques, witnessed the recreation of Wright’s original stained plaster finishes and learned about the rebuilding of the zinc-camed stained glass lay lights. The project has served as a model of best practices for modern conservation.

Recent thesis projects include “Wacker’s Manual: Tool for Progressive Reform and Model for City Planning Education,” a review of the 1911 publication that served generations of CPS children. “Preserving Affordable Housing in Chicago’s Residential Hotels” looked at the conversion of single room occupancy units (SROs) into affordable housing using tax credits for historic preservation. The personal experiences of people negatively affected by Chicago’s urban renewal in the 1950s was the topic of “The Making of North Kenwood.” Another student identified appropriate methods for preserving first century artifacts in “A Mitzvah in Historic Preservation: The Need for Conservation of Roman Jewish Stone Epitaphs.” And pigmented structural glass was the focus in “Preserving Canada’s First Subway: Vitrolite and the TTC.”