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## Modernist Icon Could Set Precedent for American Preservation

GETTYSBURG, PA -- While the National Park Service and preservationists battle in court over the fate of Gettysburg's vacant Cyclorama Building, a Boston firm has imagined its many potentials, and with it, the future of American preservation.

The 1961 Cyclorama Building, designed by renowned modernist Richard Neutra, represents one of America's first visitor centers in our National Parks. Overlooking the battlefields of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, the buildings' contents were moved last year to a new, larger facility in preparation for demolition and a return of its site to the appearance of Civil War times. This motive has been countered by an international outpouring of support from preservationists to retain the building.

Intrigued by the debate surrounding the high-profile modernist icon, Boston firm CUBE design + research has outlined a series of strategies for rethinking the preservation of the Cyclorama Building. One such strategy proposes to relocate the building to the existing American Civil War Museum site, and refurbish it as a Map Museum with the Gettysburg Electric Map as its centerpiece. Preservationists in Gettysburg have been trying to bring the Electric Map out of storage, and the owner of the Civil War Museum has previously expressed interest in the Cyclorama Building. CUBE thinks the combination of the iconic Cyclorama Building, the Electric Map, and the Civil War Museum would create a powerhouse attraction and revive the business district.

Jason Hart, partner of CUBE says, "The Electric Map attracted more visitors than the Cyclorama painting, but the Park Service didn't plan for it in their new facilities. Why don't we take the two big relics the Parks Service would rather toss out and put them together?"

But CUBE's proposal stretches beyond traditional reuse. They imagine the building in various disassembled states - like car parts, the building could be cut into museum-quality pieces for educational exhibits, public art, or for use as urban furniture. Parts of the building could remain on the site and serve as a monument and gathering spot for tours, or as an informant for the battlefields themselves through a series of camera-like observation cuts. Another strategy proposes the building be linked to other ailing mid-century buildings across the country to form a network of transit housing that would trigger economic development, promote environmental sustainability, and renew otherwise forgotten marvels as architectural destinations for all travelers. Christine Madrid French, Director of the Modernism + Recent Past Program of the National Trust for Historic Preservation and longtime advocate for the building, supports opening a new dialogue about the full range of possibilities for reuse of the Cyclorama Center.

While the traditional all-or-nothing proposition of preservation rages on over the Cyclorama Building, CUBE has opened a debate on the future of American preservation. The Department of Energy estimates 17% of all buildings, 52 billion square feet, will face the prospect of demolition over the next 30 years. The strategies applied to the Cyclorama Building could be applied to any building. CUBE's proposal argues that it is, in fact, possible to preserve our cultural heritage while embracing our future, and in the process create a new kind of layered architecture. For more please visit: [www.modernpreservation.com](http://www.modernpreservation.com).

**CUBE design + research, LLC** is a design practice centered on big ideas. They approach projects with the broadest perspective to identify opportunity. While they focus on client-driven projects, CUBE is cognizant of every project's ability to impact the pressing issues of our time. They believe thoughtful design can enrich and alter the experience of life. Their work balances utility and comfort while challenging convention. CUBE seeks to make sense of the richness and ambiguities of modern life through design capable of moving the human spirit. **Contact** CUBE Partner, Jason Hart, JHART@CUBEWORK.COM, 617 869 5962 ###