

New directions in reviews

Guest editor's note

Reviews of historic house museums are quite rare in The Public Historian. For one thing, exhibition content rarely changes in a traditional house museum, not to mention that these exhibitions don't stand entirely apart from a site's historic preservation, tours, and other aspects of visitor engagement. These factors, combined with the local rather than national impact of many historic homes and the prevalent sense that they aren't sources for innovative content, have generally left historic house museums outside of a significant source for constructive criticism from academic audiences.

In developing this special issue, I wondered whether exhibit reviews could be rethought to better serve the public historians working in small museums, including historic homes. How might we review the larger experience of a site beyond one exhibition? Could standards be developed for examining these sites, and might transparency of these standards help to create a more vibrant dialogue between reviewers and the sites they observe?

In a somewhat different context, Franklin Vagnone, Executive Director of the Historic House Trust of New York City, and University of North Carolina Architecture Professor Deborah Ryan, with the assistance of Olivia Cothren, have worked to develop a fresh take on best practices for historic house museums, which will be described in detail in their forthcoming book, The Anarchist's Guide to Historic House Museums (Left Coast Press, expected publication fall 2015). Their rubric is intended to be a self-evaluation tool, rather than a third-party review, but its transparent, participatory, and holistic approach offers an interesting counterpoint to standard review protocol. I've asked them to apply their methods to two historic houses as an experiment in rethinking exhibit reviews, and I encourage readers to post their impressions and comments at <http://publichistorycommons.org/tph/>.

LJL

The Anarchist Guide to Historic House Museums: Evaluation Methodology for Historic House Museums

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“Don’t you want to preserve old things?”

“Trying to preserve a century by keeping its relics up to date is like keeping a dying man alive by stimulants.”

F. Scott Fitzgerald, *The Beautiful and Damned*

“Tyranny is the deliberate removal of nuance.”

Albert Maysles, through #Russell Brand

What is The Anarchist Guide to Historic House Museums?

WE ARE HOUSE MUSEUM LOVERS AND PROFESSIONALS who care deeply about historic house museums (HHMs). At the same time, we want to take a critical, but practical look at shortcomings of these fragile sites. As we discuss HHMs, the first question we often hear is, “Are there are too many of them?” Although many of our colleagues seem to revel in arguing over the answer, we wonder if the question is really a smoke screen of sorts, distracting HHMs from working on the problems many of them share. We have also often heard that, “If we just were awarded more grants, we would be fine,” and the umbrella statement that, “People just don’t care about history any

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longer, it's not taught in schools anymore." These perspectives blame outside forces for the plights most HHMs are facing today, and by focusing on absolutes, they leave little possibility for a course correction or a more nuanced understanding. In fact, it is rare that anyone discusses the inherent, systemic challenges facing historic house museums.

Because the traditional HHM audience is aging, attendance is shrinking, budgets are tightening, competition from both nonprofits and commercial offerings is increasing, and new types of communication methods are growing, we believe that house museums need to take bold steps and expand their overall purpose not only to engage communities surrounding them, but also by becoming deeply collaborative with the type and quality of experience guests receive.¹ Our interest is consciously outside of the widely accepted *Characteristics of Excellence for U.S. Museums*, by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), in large part because accreditation, although valuable, does not necessarily produce a house museum that is compelling or exciting. We believe most visitors put little value on such a label and rather judge a HHM by their experience.

Further, most of today's museum best practices find their germination in art museums, not HHMs. Our impression is that the goal of museum best practices has been to make historic house museums more like art museums and less like houses. Making such pointed statements has gotten us labeled anarchists, menaces, and idiots by some museum administrators.² So we understand that it is quite possible that some readers will vehemently disagree with our outlook. Consequently, we ask you to momentarily suspend your disbelief and allow us to expand upon the past several years of our research, and explain our findings on how to address the fragile and threatened historic house museum world.

We have branded our research *The Anarchist Guide to Historic House Museums* but instead, we could have used the word *parrhesia*, which simply means frank speech, an idea associated with Michel Foucault. *Parrhesia* infers a position that is "not concerned with absolutes; it does not seek to find 'the truth.'" Rather, *parrhesia* is about "having the courage and ability to speak up against a dominant or commonly held opinion . . . contesting what is often taken for granted or what has become sedimented and routinised."³ Or we could have used the term *reculturing*, meant to encourage the shifting of "the core values and practices of a museum community, starting with its education practices."⁴ Such a shift would "require working with visitors' agendas in

1. <http://arts.gov/publications/2008-survey-public-participation-arts>; <http://www.urban.org/nonprofits/>; <http://www.pewinternet.org/fact-sheets/mobile-technology-fact-sheet/>.

2. <http://twistedpreservation.com/2015/01/12/you-are-an-idiot/>.

3. Claire Robins, "After-Image: The museum seen through fiction's lens," *Photographies*, 7, no. 2 (2014): 149–162, quote; Michel Foucault (Joseph Person, ed.), *Fearless Speech* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001).

4. Doris Ashe and Judith Lombana, "Reculturing Museums: Working Toward Diversity in Informal Settings," *Journal of Museum Education* 38, no. 1 (March 2013): 69–80, quote p. 72.

mind; developing a sense of shared purpose, practices, values and beliefs; a deep commitment for collaborating with all visitors; developing reflective and collaborative practices for improvement; and, most crucially, sharing power at all levels.”⁵ *The Anarchist Guide* is about reimagining the visitor experience at HHMs, and recognizing that for many guests, the visit is a kind of beige, neither visceral, engaging, or memorable. How do we know this? We have been asking questions and listening to the answers, even when they stung.

In order to better understand this phenomenon, our first step was to focus on the positive attributes of the domestic realm and the variables that produce the poetic, intimate feelings of comfort, welcome, engagement, and belonging. Our participant researchers and students figuratively took us into their own houses and apartments as they documented through maps, drawings, and videos how they lived and what gave their home lives meaning. For comparative purposes, we then documented the variables and elements of the typical historic house museum, including, but not limited to, the visitor experience. As we analyzed the data, we compared this research from the house museum experience with the previous investigations of personal dwelling spaces. A picture began to emerge not of what was in HHMs, but what was missing. *The Anarchist Guide to Historic House Museums* is in large part derived from those gaps, or the concepts ubiquitous in our own houses, but absent from most HHMs. Granted there are obvious differences between our own personal domestic dwellings and HHMs, but why do so many previously inhabited house museums not feel anything remotely like homes? Why do they seem fossilized, rather than living, breathing entities? The disconnect is what alienates many visitors.

A shift to bridging this gap and valuing more emotive experiences is underway in a handful of historic house organizations. Some of the twenty-three historic house museums comprising the Historic House Trust (HHT) of New York City are a part of this rethinking process. So dedicated is the organization to innovative thinking that in the 2012 Annual Report, HHT Board Chair John Gustafsson wrote, “Second guess everything that you think is fundamental to the historic house world. Do not assume that you can’t reach a new audience. Do not assume that you have to keep people at bay when they are on your site. Do not assume that the story of your house ended a hundred years ago. Open your mind. Create. Cooperate. Communicate.”⁶

The HHT supports many of the pilot projects cited in our research. This symbiotic dialogue is presently nurturing the New York Community Trust-funded *LatimerNOW* project at the Lewis H. Latimer House, launching NEA-funded site-specific art happenings in Historic Richmond Town, Old

5. Thao Mai and Doris Ashe, “Tracing our Methodological Steps: Making Meaning of Families’ Hybrid ‘Figuring Out’ Practices at Science Museum Exhibits,” in *Putting Theory into Practice: Methodologies for Informal Learning Research*, eds. D. Ash, J. Rahm and L. Melber (Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2012), 97–118.

6. John Gustafsson’s Board Chair message, Historic House Trust Annual Report, 2012, 1.

Stone House, and Latimer House, partnering with Morris-Jumel Mansion, and creating an *Innovation Lab* at Dyckman Farmhouse Museum. In addition, an HHT collection-wide think tank, branded *shatterCABINET* is currently underway with funding from the 1772 Foundation and The Chipstone Foundation. It is from these pilot projects that we have been able to refine our evaluation matrix.

Philosophical Background

We are inspired by the work of Randy Roberts, who wrote about the *framework of being*, in relation to museums, a phenomenon in which:

People can be truly present, without distraction and “busyness.” This does not necessarily mean a quiet, contemplative space; it is, rather, about holistic involvement in experience whether it is filled with joy, anguish, awe or any other mix of emotions. To understand museums as sites of “being” rather than educational institutions challenges the notion that museums are about learning. It suggests rather, that museums are about immersion in exploration of self and spirit, about experiences that lead to fulfillment of human nature, to authenticity, and to being present in the present while being aware of the past and the future.⁷

In contrast, good museum practice is usually described as “rigorous, precise, penetrating, factual, methodical, systematic, critical, definitive, objective, scientific, and professional. It is defined against everything that is sloppy, woolly, superficial, speculative, subjective, anecdotal, picturesque, impressionistic, literary, unsystematic, unmethematical, uncritical, unscientific, and amateurish,” or just about anything that could solicit an emotional response.⁸ A house museum moves from its origins as a domestic dwelling teeming with “woolly, sloppy and impressionistic” life to a place of “systematic, objective, professionalism.” In the process, the poetry of the house is often lost in the translation. It is this poetry that we hope to restore.

The Five Critiques

The Anarchist Guide to Historic House Museums is our attempt to identify the substantive problems HHMs have, define nuanced traits, gather real-time, site-specific, locational data, and step into the world of applied ideas. Based on our own research gathered through the creation and use of ten research tools, we have derived the following five critiques of the traditional HHM:

7. Randy C. Roberts, “Questions of Museum Experience: Being, Being With and Finding Connection on Conversation,” *Museums and Social Issues* 8, nos. 1 & 2 (November 2013): 89–101.

8. Peter Burke, “Fuzzy Histories,” *Common Knowledge* 18, no. 2 (Spring 2012): 239–48.

Critique one: *Historic house museums reflect political and social propaganda*, often telling only partial truths to the communities that surround them. Those of us in the HHM field see our work as telling accurate, historical information, while guests sometimes see what we do as reductive, selective, and biased.

Critique two: *Historic house museums have nothing relevant to contribute to conversations*. Many people perceive house museums as insular, self-referential, and culturally old-fashioned.

Critique three: *Historic house museums are boring*. We are often asked by HHM staff why they do not get repeat visitation. Perhaps it is because the experience they offer is not engaging in a way that fulfills guests' expectations, or as one respondent remarked, was a "waste of 45 minutes of my life."

Critique four: *Historic house museums have been narrowly curated* and do not reflect real life use. Instead, guests often experience HHMs like doll-houses, as they move along the length of a room or hallway while voyeuristically peering into the stage-set of a furnishings plan.

Critique five: *Historic house museums are too expensive to preserve and engage in deceptive conservation practices*. We have often been told that HHMs are black holes of need: as soon as one portion of the building is restored another needs work. The goal seems to be to not let the public know how much effort and money it takes to keep up these homes.

These five critiques then formed the basis for an evaluative structure built around the Themes of *Community, Communication, Experience, Environment, and Shelter*.

Community prioritizes relationship-building and developing narratives with local communities as the key to successful reinterpretation and reorganization of historic houses.

Communication recognizes how information can connect the house museum and its surrounding community. Attention is given to both latent and manifest forms of communication.

Experience promotes the loosening of the boundaries that separate visitors from the house and in turn, increases sensory engagement. Simply put, historic houses should feel like homes, not museums.

Environment introduces radical changes to historic house interiors to better reflect habitation. Artifacts must contribute to both the historic context and vitality of the space, not deaden it.

Shelter questions expensive notions of pure preservation. Instead of restoring every house according to the highest standard, HHMs should be empowered to adopt a spectrum of conditions and be honest about the illusion of authenticity. Houses must embrace the fabric and energy of the current built environment instead of operating in an imagined, pastoral past.

The five thematic categories then provided an organizing structure for thirty-two Markings and 160 evaluative questions. Together, they create a metric and evolving manifesto that calls for the holistic deconstruction of the traditional HHM, and the reestablishment of a paradigm from the perspective of human habitation.

Our methodology has developed over the last four years as we have worked to both understand the interrelated challenges faced by HHMs and to build holistic answers that address the complexity of the problems. The *Anarchist Guide* concepts consider not only the physical and environmental aspects of a house museum, but also the scope, breadth, diversity, and communication of interpretive material. In the forthcoming book, we make the case for widening the edges of history to include the more intangible and wooly aspects of the stories. We argue for the use of conjecture, rumor, and gossip, as well as the reduction of the superlatives' battle for the oldest, biggest, longest, etc., that we call the "narcissism of details." Quite simply, we feel as though historic house museum environments and interpretations need to express the quirky, idiosyncratic stories of history.

Evaluative Matrix

The *Guide's* conceptual structure is depicted in the *Anarchist Chart*, a circular matrix intended to emphasize the interconnectedness of historic house issues while also graphically illustrating the strengths and weakness of particular sites. In doing so, we score elements that are not normally found within standard museum practice, such as issues related to visitor access, tour behaviors, and the flexibility of interpretive content. Although organized around a bulls-eye center, the *Chart* radiates out from the center with a five-tier grading matrix that allows HHMs to evaluate their site relative to each of the thirty-two Markings and 160 evaluative questions. Together, these provide a metric for scoring that is explained in detail in the *Anarchist Guide to Historic House Museums*.

Pilot Evaluations Using the Anarchist Guide Criteria

At the request of Lisa Junkin Lopez, guest editor of this issue of *The Public Historian*, we agreed to make public the evaluation of two HHMs using the *Anarchist Guide Chart* in hopes of giving a sense of the tone of the *Anarchist Guide* approach. To illustrate its widespread applicability, we chose two historic house museums that exist in distinctly different communities, with equally unique interpretations.

The first house museum, the Morris-Jumel Mansion (MJM), is part of the Historic House Trust of New York City and is located in a predominantly Dominican and Spanish-speaking (74%) area of upper Manhattan called Washington Heights. Built in 1765, MJM has been operated as a house museum

since 1904. The mansion features three concurrent interpretive stories: Colonial New York City (1765–1775); the Revolutionary War era; and the nineteenth century, the residence period of the infamous, flamboyant socialite and businesswoman Eliza Bowen Jumel (1810–1865).

The second house museum we evaluated was Körner's Folly (KF), built in 1878 in Kernersville, a small town in the piedmont region of North Carolina. With around 25,000 residents, the town's demographics are drastically different than MJM's neighborhood (84% white, 9% African American, and 7% Latino). The house became a HHM in 1995, hiring its first executive director in 2000. The primary period of interpretation spans the life of the house and the Körner family from 1878–1960.

Evaluation One: Morris-Jumel Mansion

The Morris-Jumel Mansion originally stood at the center of a large agricultural estate, but now finds itself in the midst of a vibrant community that bears no resemblance to the early Harlem Heights neighborhood. MJM has served as the study site for a Columbia University *Anarchist Guide* Historic Preservation seminar, and hosted several *Anarchist Guide* pilot studies, mostly concerning community engagement strategies and contemporary art installations by local artists. In February 2015, we assisted MJM Executive Director Carol S. Ward in completing the 160 question *Anarchist Guide* evaluation process, and we interviewed her regarding the efforts and activities recently undertaken at the Morris-Jumel Mansion. The results can be seen below and in the circular *Anarchist Chart*. The Markings in each of the five Themes are scored and averaged on a scale of 1 to 5.

Community: MJM scored a 2.6

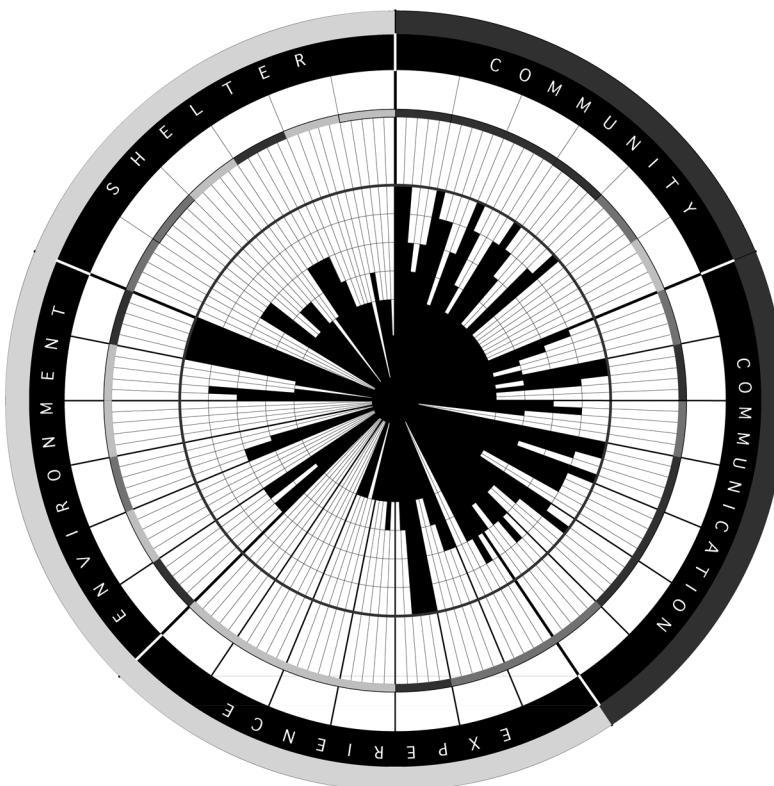
Given the staff's focused and strategic efforts on community engagement in recent years, Morris-Jumel Mansion unsurprisingly does fairly well in the Community category. The site regularly advertises and creates social media content in both English and Spanish, partners with local organizations, attends community meetings, and offers the house to community groups as meeting space. The staff understands the neighborhood and attempts to engage new audiences, although rarely hosts nontraditional experiences or events outside of the site.

Communication: MJM scored a 2.9

The site has successfully made a conscious effort to diversify the staff and hire Spanish-speaking members in an effort to better communicate with the majority of its neighbors, continue a robust social media strategy, and not get

Anarchist Guide to Historic House Museum Evaluation Matrix Morris-Jumel Mansion

February 2015

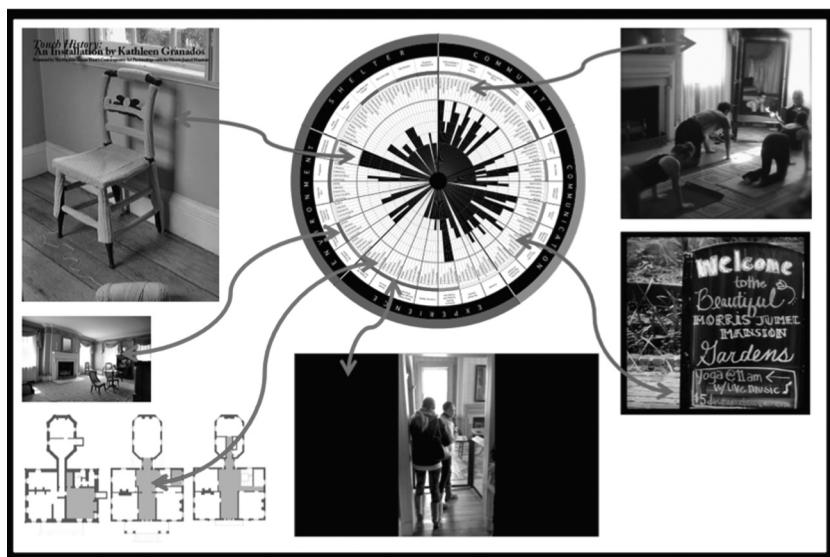


Anarchist Guide to Historic House Museums evaluation matrix for Morris-Jumel Mansion, New York City. (Courtesy of Frank Vagnone. Image may not be reproduced outside of this context.)

lost in details or the romanticism of the narrative. Although members of the staff are deeply engaging and the presentation is not scripted, the basic tour remains static with limited opportunities to engage visitors in dialogue.

Experience: MJM scored a 1.3

MJM consistently facilitates immersive theater experiences, yoga in its period rooms, and innovative special needs tactile programming, and is



Graphic representation of how the *Anarchist Guide* evaluation matrix involves a simultaneous assessment of the five guidelines, dissected into thirty-two markings, and fleshed out by 160 evaluation questions. All of these components are described in detail in *The Anarchist Guide to Historic House Museums* (Left Coast Press, Fall 2015). (Courtesy of Frank Vagnone. Image may not be reproduced outside of this context.)

comfortable in publically embracing a wide range of conjectural elements in its interpretation, but the daily visitor experience still largely adheres to the traditional tour format with barriers that block entry to the majority of the rooms, forcing the standing hallway tour. Other than special events, there is little focus in engaging all of the senses on a typical tour.

Environment: MJM scored a 1.8

The site runs a sophisticated contemporary art program and immersive theater pieces, but continues to exhibit the collections and period rooms in a traditional manner highlighting objects and decorative arts. There is almost no attempt to express either the detritus of habitation or the cycles of the day or life, and there is very little opportunity to allow for personal exploration.

Shelter: MJM scored a 1.3

Although there are a few signs in the park, the imposing nature of the house does little to position it as part of the community. There is little opportunity given to creating multiple levels of preservation, involving the guest in preservation efforts, or seeking an understanding of the site and house below the cosmetics of the surface.

Morris-Jumel Summary Evaluation

Participating in this exercise shed light on the site's strengths and weaknesses. On the plus side, Ward has taken tremendous risks with MJM's communications and innovative immersive events, and they have paid off by garnering positive press and critical acclaim. The well-considered and compelling interpretation includes items of both fact and conjecture. Morris-Jumel's embracing of the more fuzzy side of interpretation has produced a more fully human presentation of the historical figures. However, MJM has yet to reevaluate and overhaul its basic visitor experience and period room environments. The process of preservation is not usually highlighted as an integral aspect of the interpretation, and the architectural form and decorative arts remain the primary areas of focus.

The *Anarchist Chart* illustrates that it is not enough for a house museum to focus on just one Thematic area. Instead, HHM staff must consider the house and the visitor experience as a gestalt, recognizing that one aspect of the site serves and affects all the others. Although it is intended as a snapshot of a particular moment in time, the *Chart* will help Morris-Jumel identify issues to work on as it looks toward the future.

Evaluation Two: Körner's Folly

Körner's Folly is a fairly new historic house museum, and it presents a foil to the more well-established Morris-Jumel Mansion. In fact, the relatively recent professionalization recently brought to Körner's Folly may very well be one of the things that differentiate it from other sites.

Originally built as a showcase for his furniture and interior designs in the late nineteenth century, Jules Körner considered his home a beloved folly and an ever-evolving artistic expression that was never truly complete due to his penchant for renovation and imagination. His family was equally passionate about music, theater, and community-building, often inviting friends and neighbors into their unique home for concerts and shows. In 2015, Körner's Folly was the focus of a University of North Carolina, Charlotte *Anarchist Guide* on-site evaluation, which subsequently led to our further investigation and test evaluation. In February 2015, we assisted Executive Director Dale Pennington in completing the *Anarchist Guide* assessment. The results can be seen below and in the circular *Anarchist Chart*. The Markings in each of the five Themes are scored and averaged on a scale of 1 to 5.

Community: KF scored a 2.4

In keeping with the designed, historic relationship of Körner's Folly with the community, the present organization has chosen to remain deeply

imbedded with its surrounding area. Not only is significant space donated to community activities for theater, meetings, and community events, the staff actively pursues community relationships through personal attendance at off-site meetings and events of other organizations. The HHM is considered a community asset and continues to engage the surrounding community at ever increasing levels. On the other hand, the staff has not yet targeted new audiences outside of its standard demographic or taken the legacy of the site into situations that are not a part of normative museum practice, activities that would have resulted in an even higher score.

Communication: *KF scored a 3.6*

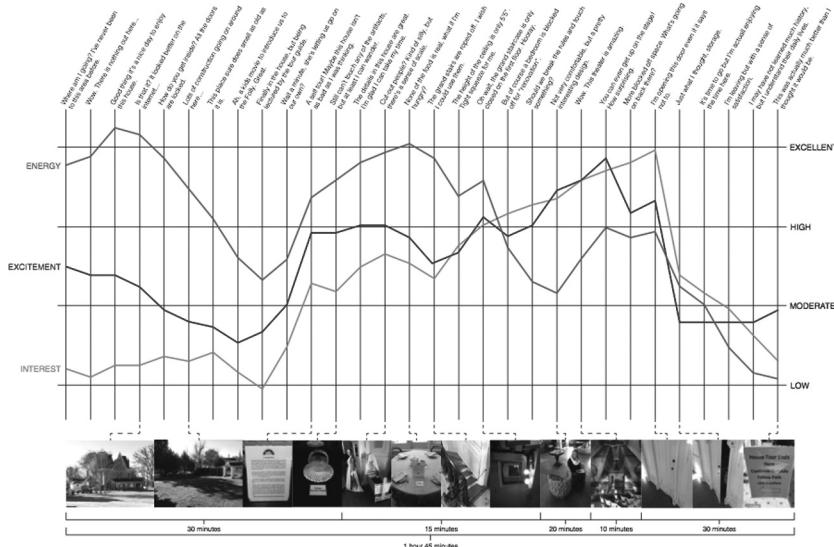
One of the strongest contributors to Körner's Folly's success in this Thematic area is in how well they communicate their mission, activities and legacy with their community. The interpretive narrative has been designed in such a way as to allow for informal, chatty, conversational dialogue with guests. There is no attempt to step back in time; rather the staff addresses the current situation and prior knowledge of guests as a component of the basic tour. So well communicated is this informal quality that community members will just pop in and sit down to chat. Because of the intertwined quality of the house and family narrative, there is very little attempt to distinguish Körner's Folly from other historic sites with a contrived narcissism of details.

Experience: *KF scored a 2.9*

Körner's Folly allows for personal, self-directed investigation of the house and site. Guests can sneak around and test their limits. Although lacking in a formal multisensory strategy, the Folly nonetheless facilitates an immersive tactile experience, which allows for gossip, conjecture, and rumor. In fact, in keeping with the family history of hyperbole, the present staff allows for the same stretching of the narrative. In our student's evaluation of the experience, this site proved itself as one of the few house museums studies with consistently high marks in energy, excitement, and imagination.

Environment: *KF scored a 2.5*

Even though the HHM has extensive collections of one-of-a-kind furniture pieces designed by members of the family, the environment reaches beyond the love of decorative arts, and embraces a holistic view of the environment. Although still traditionally presented with no detritus of habitation, the interior curation does dedicate significant spaces to marginalized characters in the primary family history. However, there has thus far been no attempt to



An example of an *Interest, Excitement and Energy* evaluation of the visitor experience for Körner's Folly by Christopher Pockette. This anarchist guide tool is one of ten research tools used to help document thirty-two markings of the Anarchist Guide to Historic House Museum's evaluation matrix. The IEE graph connects location and artifacts with emotional levels. It also allows for a stream-of-conscious textual narrative. Shown here, and unusual in our research, is that Körner's Folly received consistently high levels of visitor emotional responses related to access and environmental tactility. University of North Carolina at Charlotte, College of Architecture student project, instructed by Deborah E. Ryan and Franklin Vagnone, 2015. (Courtesy of Christopher Pockette. Image may not be reproduced outside of this context.)

engage contemporary visions of the narrative and environment through site-specific happenings or installations.

Shelter: KF scored a 3.7

Oddly enough, because Körner's Folly has not been totally restored, the in-between states of preservation allow for a very rare quality of preservation voyeurism. In fact, Körner's Folly may want to reconsider their goal of restoring the entire house back to a more bounded period of interpretation, and instead embrace the more nuanced states of decay. Rather than attempting to hide the decay, they have taken down the curtains to show cracks and water stains. Such proactive acknowledgment of preservation issues can only expand and add layers to a visit to the site. So fully embracing is this type of overlap between the HHM's interpretation and preservation that Executive Director Pennington felt there was no boundary between object, architecture, and stories. To her, they all flowed together as a cohesive narrative.

Körner's Folly Summary Evaluation

The site earned high scores in Communications, Experience, and Shelter given its informal tone, self-guided tours, and immersion into Kernersville's physical landscape. The HHM is located on the town's Main Street, and while it anchors the bustling historic district, the house also contributes to the contemporary life of the town on a regular basis by offering a gathering space for community organizations.

Jules Körner was no stranger to the occasional odd fixation and the site carries his quirky torch today by draping the porch in black fabric on the anniversary of the assassination of Körner's idol, President Lincoln, and decking the house with flags and festoons to celebrate Lincoln's birthday.

The site does recognize room for improvement in the category of Community, as it has not yet formed targeted strategies to engage Kernersville's modest but close-knit Hispanic community and has never publicized the site in nontraditional spaces to potential visitors. Similarly, its Environment efforts also need attention. Beyond exploring at their own pace, there are few opportunities for visitors to engage the physical environment of the space or fingerprint their visit with singular experiences. Strong opportunities exist. For example, it seems that such an inventive space would be a natural fit for local artists, although Körner's Folly has not yet commissioned any contemporary interpretations. But overall, the site presents a rare case for HHMs. The house has become an essential part of this community not for its historic qualities, but for the high-quality, user-directed experiences it provides visitors, and the friendly attitude it projects towards its neighbors.

Conclusion

The generous and honest participation by Morris-Jumel Mansion and Körner's Folly in this exercise has yielded revealing results that they can now use as a tool in their strategic planning efforts. The chart offers enough detail to identify specific areas to target, while simultaneously revealing big-picture themes that contribute to understanding the site as a whole.

The *Anarchist Guide* marks a pause in our research where we step back and measure results. The Markings make sense to us, but their value is in how effective they can be at a wide variety of sites. We want *The Anarchist Guide* to be a living guide that helps HHMs to not only survive, but to thrive in a rapidly changing world. The evaluation of Morris Jumel and Körner's Folly are only the beginning. Rather than being read as a series of conclusions, we hope the book will be a point of departure towards embracing the poetics of preservation and making the HHM experience about the trials, tribulations, passions, and joy in the lives of yesterday and today.

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DEBORAH RYAN has a twenty-five-year history of assisting communities and their leaders with challenges relating to development, urban open space, downtown revitalization and civic engagement. She is an associate professor of Architecture and Urban Design at the University of North Carolina, Charlotte where she was the founding and former director of the Charlotte Community Design Studio, the off-campus, public outreach arm of the College of Architecture. Her community work includes serving on the Charlotte Mecklenburg Planning Commission, Zoning Committee, Arts and Science Council, the University City Partners Board of Directors, and the city's Public Art Commission.

OLIVIA COTHREN currently serves as Manager of Development and Special Initiatives at the Historic House Trust of New York City (HHT), a role in which she has been able to exercise her diverse museum skill set. Olivia manages the Historic House Trust's development efforts including fundraising and special events and creatively contributes to initiatives such as the Contemporary Art Partnerships program and the Jeanette and Paul Wagner Educational Program for Children with Disabilities. She holds a MA in Museum Studies from the Cooperstown Graduate Program. Her master's thesis explored partnerships between historic sites and social service agencies that resulted in job-skills programming for underserved populations. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Greater Hudson Heritage Network.