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Who is this for? How might this public differ from that of an ordinary museum (or theme park)?

Response by graduate architecture students on a group visit to Greenfield Village. This was the first visit for 2/3 of the participants.

These seven study questions were given by the instructor, Malcolm McCullough

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From observation alone, Greenfield Village appears to appeal to relatively erudite families and the nostalgic elderly. It differs from an ordinary museum in that the coddled ‘objects’ of importance rest in a distinctly artificial ground where the visitor is embraced by and more or less immersed in an historically-oriented pageant-world, rather than being shuffled past untouchable gems showcased behind glass or rope. That the village is comprised of actual historical houses, structures, practices, and artifacts (and even a genetic clone of 300+ year-old Red Ash) from across the country gives Greenfield Village less of a styrofoam-hat-theme-park quality.

Greenfield Village is for Henry Ford. The park is a collection of his history and is meant to convey that history to everyone that visits. This public differs from that of an ordinary museum or theme park in that the focus is on a singular person rather than a culture. It is Henry Ford’s reality.

This is not a theme park in the traditional sense of the word. When you say theme park 99% of people think of Cedar Point, Kings Island and the mother of all theme parks Disney Land. However this attraction may have more of a theme than most of the parks out there. This is for the distinguished thrill seeker. People don’t come here to be frightened by riding the newest roller coaster, or to meet someone dressed up as their favorite animated character. People come here to be placed in an experience. They come to experience a way of life that was simpler, slower, and friendlier. People come to this attraction to slow down themselves, even if it is only for the day.

Greenfield Village seems very much geared toward families, school groups, and foreign tourists. A large part of that may be my personal hang-ups with regards to the “preserved.” I felt very much as though this was presented as the pinnacle of society and that we have since fallen. Its didactic nature keeps it at a distance from a theme park, and its physical presence and inclusion of livestock and fields make it seem far removed from the climate controlled gallery spaces of the traditional museum, though I could not for a moment argue against the fact that if not a museum, Greenfield Village is nothing more than a collection of misplaced houses. It is sort of ironic that such antiquity is preserved by the foundation of the very man that pioneered a vast part of the world’s modernization. But then, perhaps it is in a

carefully regulated environment that such novelty belongs, removed as much as possible from the goings-on at the proving grounds not one hundred meters away.

Anyone who takes an interest in history and technology. The environment is very seductive and tries to put you in an 'authentic' culture of that time period. It is a very engaging museum which you walk around and interact with the public and paid entertainment.

As for a majority of public domains the inherent question of whom the space serves is constantly in flux. In the case of Greenfield Village (GV) this question becomes blatantly obvious. This environment is based on a system of ideals--models of perfection. Every good citizen of the world should aspire for an existence such as that of GV. Therefore, the experience of GV is for anyone who believes in the utilitarian utopia which is based on hard working values. Exist for the greater good, define your existence by the happiness of others—drive a ford. An ordinary museum is confined to the walls which define it. There is little room for interpretation; there is little room for intuition. One must see and be seen in this manner as they walk through the space. A preconceived notion exists of what should and should not be experienced. You see the exhibit and move to the next. GV is more subjective. No true walls define your path. This is not to say that a prescribed message is not inherent in the subject matter. In fact one might argue that the message of GV is stronger than that of a museum. Even though the subject of control is less tactile does not mean that it is nonexistent. Covertly, one is controlled in a thriving three dimensional image. It is just more fun that way.

Greenfield Village seems to be targeted toward young children and school groups. This differs from other museums/parks that tend to have a greater variety of attractions and exhibits for all ages.

Greenfield Village is here for everyone. The history contained within the historical buildings certainly has significance for all Americans and beyond. While this may differ from Cedar Pointe in that it does not contain "extreme" thrills, anyone who can appreciate the DIA can enjoy Greenfield Village.

I feel this site is, or more accurately, has become, a theme park for old people. In a way, this village, with its history seeming to abruptly stop before our time, offers the ideal setting for grandparents to recall their "good ol' days." Us youngins like are theme parks & museums full of action and adventure. Give us our flashy displays, rides and computer graphics!

It is designed for visitors who interested in the history of American's technology development. Or for elder people who feel like Most of the times it serves for people who lives in the neighborhood as a place to have a walk.

Greenfield Village is for anyone interested in experiencing America's historical background through the centuries from its founding. This "museum without walls" provides a village which imitates the different ways people in this country lived, farmed, worked, and adapted to new technologies. Greenfield Village is different than normal museums because it throws you back in time with all details taken into consideration. As mentioned above, it is a "museum without walls" allowing people to actually feel as if they were walking the streets of historical American cities. These details range from glass transistors on the electric lines above to the very first Ford vehicles roaming the streets.

I think this is intended for anyone with an interest in American History. To some extent I think there is an implied prerequisite that a visitor understands the basics of history, without which it would be challenging to put so many "snippets" into their proper context. With its strong educational component, both the visitor and the experience differ greatly from a themepark; the Village is intended much more for an afternoon stroll than a weekend of thrills.

2

What person from the past highlighted here at this park would you most like to have a dinner conversation with, and why?

Mrs. Mattox, without a doubt. I really want to know just how happy Mrs. Mattox is with her new home that includes running water and electricity and *modern* furniture, as the guide cheerfully volunteered very much without being asked, just as I was wondering about the idea of buying someone's home and putting it on display a thousand miles away in a climate as foreign to it and its newspaper-clad walls as the idea of mass rail transit is to the Detroit population at large. And I should love to taste her peach cobbler, which was made "right here in the kitchen." Yes, here, but not *here*. Or, rather, there, but really not *there* at all.

I would want to have a dinner conversation with Noah Webster to discuss the impact his works have on society and what prompted him to do the works in the first place.

I would like to have a conversation with Thomas Edison, but it would have to be right after he finalized one of his inventions. I would like to be present when all the hard work and innovation comes to a head and what he spent years on perfecting finally works. I would like to be present to experience the joy of that moment.

Though not highlighted (and perhaps because of this), and if they were able to be transported into the contemporary realm, I would enjoy sitting down to a meal with the various servants and slaves that would doubtless have had much to do behind the scenes 'back then', and who would doubtless not know what to make of Greenfield Village.

I would like to have dinner with Mr. Webster and ask him how he feels about the Greenfield Village and the incorporation/display of his most valued work there.

Ok that first one got to lengthy, so here we go. I would love to have dinner with Robert Frost. I would like to ask him in reference to *The Road Not Taken*, why he did not go left.

Henry Ford, of course. I have always been aware of his place in American history but I was not aware of the lengths he took to establish himself as an "innovator." I can't imagine all of the ideas he must have come up with in order to have so many successful ventures.

Thomas Edison because he would be a very interesting person to hold a conversation with about his inventions and about his life style.

I would have to say Henry Ford, because I am genuinely intrigued by his desire to bring American history together

in one place, and to find out why he thought these particular pieces were so important.

Ever since I was a child I looked up to my uncle who flew as an amateur pilot. Even though I am studying to become an architect, I would love to some day acquire my pilot's license. Having a dinner conversation with the Wright Brothers would be an extraordinary experience. To hear their stories of success and failures and the different experiments dealing with flight would be an incredible conversation.

The president of Henry Ford Museum, Patricia E. Mooradia?

Edison. I wonder about the research process of an invention, which could work in a similar way as architecture design, to search for better solution.

George Washington Carver. I think he was extremely intelligent, humble, devoted to his work, and perhaps way ahead of his time.

3

Main Street is the center of this park, the basic idea that Disney took from here, and the focal image of much nostalgia in recent urban development. What close-up details tell you most about this image?

The close up details of main street illustrate the importance of the walking city center. Being able to accomplish your daily tasks all within walking distance creates an easier lifestyle and a greater sense of community.

It's basically small-scale commerce tempered by the diametric aspects of municipal and moral oversight in a seemingly public arena...

One could argue that the main street of any location is the focal point. I don't think Ford or Disney came up with anything new in their design. The nostalgia of it lies in the fact that this is a way of life that you don't have anymore, now people have everything they need in a big box store. The appropriate collection of buildings arranged along a single street converging on the town square is a detail that shows this is an idea of the past.

The detail most telling about the image of "Main Street" is the doors of the shops that swing open in the opposite direction that the modern day code calls for.

I was rather disappointed with the Main Street portion. It seemed desolate and bare. How unfortunate that my diet coke came not from a bottle but rather from the fountain soda machine all but hidden from view.

The carousel, makes me think of suburbia life style.

I think the openness of the town green and its connections of the major "ideals" (church, school, government, and local business all located on the green) was very interesting. It very much recalled the town centers of all the old Puritan Colonial New England towns near where I grew up, which, I will admit, are quite pleasant town centers usually full of activity and happy people.

The main street incorporates a downtown feel with community interaction in a public realm

In looking at the image portrayed by GV and its Main Street

Social interaction is what makes this whole idea work. It provides an identity to the place and the blanket of grass pulls you towards a common meeting ground where you can visualize your surroundings and gather your thoughts.

The Main Street area terminating in the communal lawn seems to adhere to all the canonical ideals of a "town

center" without capturing the feeling of a true town center. For example, the Town Hall and Chapel stand symbolically opposite one another on the lawn, replicating the ideal, while to one corner a mechanical carousel drones on, quickly destroying the attempt at historical image. There's no problem sacrificing authenticity for appeal.

Contain everything. Seen from the front of the taste of history restaurant, where red and green peppers are growing, the area indicates a space which is small but contains everything.

One is taken back to the walkable city of the past. What a novel idea, within walking distance every necessity is provided for. This sense of community proximity has been lost for some time in reference to where most people really live. However, your nearest strip mall/historic downtown are only a drive away.

It is interesting to me that people long so much for the nostalgia of Main Street but only choose to experience it with its subtle (or not-so-subtle) modern upgrades. Would we feel as nostalgic walking down Main Street if our shoes were muddied from the unpaved street, or if we couldn't conveniently purchase a cookie and a diet coke? It makes one question, did the "Main Street" that we all feel nostalgic about ever really exist? Or have we selected only those elements that create this image – quietly tossing aside the harsher realities of life in that era?

4.

Porches and Parlors is perhaps the main collection here, namely one of houses. What spirit does all this seem to have in common, and how do the given interpretations best represent or misrepresent that?

Social community seems to be the best interpretation of Porches and Parlors where the homes begin a realm of public identity which extends from inside the parlor to the porches (both public spaces in homes). When exploring the individual homes it was extremely apparent that as homes grew over the centuries, the parlor and porch spaces of these structures grew to support this communal perspective.

I suppose the spirit is one of uniformity seen in the regular placement of the various houses, all fronting and set back equally from the road. No house seems to own its property – I don't recall any fences. In reality, these houses and the families that inhabited them were sited and came from eras and places much less equalized.

The spirit of this area is very Norman Rockwell. The idea of the perfect suburban community where you come home from work and dinner is sitting on the table, you have a BBQ on Sunday afternoon with your neighbors and the paperboy and milkman still deliver. I think these values are very well represented here. The streetscape is orientated this way and the Model-T and bicycle traffic add to its nostalgic charm.

This collection best represents the way in which public space within the American home was used in different parts of the country during this time period.

Porches and Parlors is certainly an impressive collection of housing types, however, I stumble with regards to their perceived authenticity all along Maple Lane: they appear to be in a neighborhood, albeit a neighborhood that never could have been. While each is obviously authentic, I get caught up with the notion of a "vestigial pastiche" that occurs when they are placed in such close proximity to one another, if that makes any sense at all.

They are all family houses or farms, they seem to depict how people used to live a country life hundreds years ago, and how they product food, cloth, water and meat.

I felt a lot of the houses tried to represent America's hard work approach to living. This was seen at the colonial cottage, where they cook, farm, and knit for themselves, up to many of the houses of distinguished Americans, where there was no pretense, they were small and unassuming homes scarcely adorned, letting us know that

they came from very little as well and worked hard to get to where they were. Nothing was given to them.

Porches and Parlors contain the spirit of social interaction. If you are on your front porch or enjoying a nice summer afternoon relaxing in your parlor, you are offering yourself to interaction within your family, friends, and community. Whether it is inviting your neighbor to come say hello or having a casual conversations with family and invited guests, these spaces become a place to see and be seen.

The Porches and Parlor seem to be linked as a representation of American Heritage or American Innovators. The given interpretations struggle to represent this in a cohesive way as the homes are from all different eras and different locales: American-built wood homes adjacent to Swiss limestone constructions. The interiors of the homes with "stand-in" furniture are especially disappointing misrepresentations of history. If something is protected from the public by a screen or glass barrier, does that automatically give it worth and value?

The Porches and Parlors collection is intended to be a sampling of "home life" in America's past, embodying the hardworking American spirit in a variety of ways. The collection certainly carries the tone that Main Street sets, but again on a very selective basis, not only in the homes themselves, but in the aspects of home life that are portrayed.

The Porches and Parlors segment enhances the nostalgia already established on Main Street. One feels like they are viewing authentic history the kind you cannot buy (unless you go to liberty craftworks, but that's next). Since history in this case and actually the rest of the park is directly replicated, a surreal reality is created. Visitors are confronted by the houses, historical personal, and the present day personal (I found myself wanting to run away from the present day personal, while being moderately intrigued by the historical personal). These images are (re)presented as authentic, however in order to reiterate historical themes reality is skewed. Could these houses be only footprints on the ground? Could they be viewed from a different perspective, like that of ruins? History is not contained in a perfect vacuum—it is a palimpsest.

The spirit seems to be a very warm, calm and simplistic lifestyle. (compared to what we interact with in today's society)

All the houses are trying to tell the real story happened in the past in a full scale way. While, the public space among them tend to create an exhibition area which makes the former and the latter contrast in a way of reality and fiction.

5.

Liberty Craftworks seems the antithesis of Ford's main innovation, the assembly line. What is it doing here? ‘

Greenfield Village is a tribute to something much greater than the assembly line, it is a celebration of general innovation and ingenuity, which the Liberty Craftworks displays. One would hope that Henry Ford recognized the innovators of the past and saw a value to the rich legacy of *the craft*, which was severely diminished by the invention of the assembly line and the lure of \$5/day.

Liberty Craftworks' may just be Ford's nod to the past, a rung of the progress(ive) ladder just before his innovative use of specialization. Perhaps calling out his predecessors, precursors was the best way to juxtapose differences in conditions and practices between the Fordist and Pre-Fordist eras. The Craftworks areas also remind us that craft and masters of it were still concurrent and relevant for practices and goods outside of the manufacture of automobiles. It's also a great way to make a profit of off archaically modeled handiwork.

Liberty Craftworks is included as a further example of the innovations that were created during the time period. It serves as a reminder that the assembly was not the only invention during his life.

Man and machine is the main theme in both Liberty Craftworks and the assembly line. I don't think that Ford would have been opposed to any of the rudimentary machinery shown here. This display shows the innovation that came before the assembly line and the craftsmanship and work that was required to produce a product. Automation was only the next step in the long process of technology.

To be honest, I don't remember Liberty Craftworks.

Handcraft is also a way of labor production, in fact, it is the ancestor of machinery production. Within the scope of production development, handcraft should be worship in this tour.

When I think of Henry Ford, I think of innovation and technology. "Liberty Craftworks" lets us know that we were in dire need of some innovation and technology. But we see his spirit in the Craftworks section, such as in the "Weaving Shop" where they had the Jacquard Loom, which used punched hole cards to create weaving patterns (the "shop worker" described it as the "world's first computer"). I think that this type of innovation is what Ford took and enhanced.

Before the invention of the assembly line by Ford, skilled craftsmen and women would be responsible for creating goods for trade and supply. Without the start of trades and skilled people to produce goods, I do not feel that the assembly line could have been created. The assembly line was created by taking the responsibility of one person creating a particular trade or object, and designating the production to several people on an assembly line. This was done to revolutionize speed and efficiency in these products.

Liberty Craftworks seems to add to the overall sense of nostalgia Greenfield Village tries to evoke. It might not relate to mechanization and the factory, but it does relate to the idea of American Heritage demonstrated elsewhere. Plus, it's "active" rather than "passive" learning for the kids.

The gift shop containing objects that are not necessarily mass produced as Ford vehicles are is bringing the visitor back a simpler time when each piece within the home might have been unique. When the sense of artistry in the most common household items still existed.

To bring in more revenue and provide individuals something to remember the experience.

Well Liberty Craftworks is here so you can see the process of making things. These are not only historical things and processes; you can take part of this history with you. That's right; consume history in the form of hand blown glass Christmas ornaments. Like the message I spoke of earlier (drive a Ford) what is the point of observing history if you cannot physically obtain that history. What would be the point, what would be the profit? Oh yea you better take lots of pictures too!

They contribute the area in a functional way, to complete the development of technology.

6

What did you learn about the history of technology, and how did the up-front ideology of the place affect or not affect that?

It reinstated the fact that things used to take forever to make. Watching the printing lady make one print of Benjamin Franklin was painful. Lift top, place paper, spread ink, close top, roll in, crank down, crank up, roll out, lift top, take out Ben. Repeat over and over. The up-front ideology reinstated that *everything* took forever, not just printing, but also making glass, tin, clothes, etc. But it was interesting to see a little about how the technology advanced. People saw something that was slow and worked to improve it (i.e. the Jaquard Loom, production line, etc.).

The ideology of the place helped to show the affects technology had on the social aspects of life during that time.

I think you lose your frame of reference when you walk through the park. Technology developed over a long period of time and originated in many places. One can start to think that everything and everyone originated from one spot at one time in one perfectly arranged village.

Technology is the solution to everything. Remove primitivism and replace it with innovation. Henry Ford has the answer!

I am not sure if a pure message of technological history was defined for me. I however, did learn that Noah Webster spoke twenty languages and had seven daughters. There was also something about the electric light bulb but I was taken away by a real recording of Edison when he was eighty years old. Sigh, it was like he was almost there. Diluted and confused are the best words for the actual history of technology in GV, but who cares you can still get your Christmas ornaments.

I can't say that I did learn too much about technology at all. The only portion of the entire Village that seemed to evoke that for me was the printing press in Liberty Craftworks and the Roundhouse, where I found out that the Village's locomotives are actually worked on in there every night. The rest of the park seemed to contain little educational value with respect to technology. Maybe whatever technological lesson was present got shrouded in the "blast to the past" ideology.

I felt that everything was kind of dismembered from one another. It seems as though the technology is explained through one event at a time and not a series of inventions

that led to each invention or new manufacturing technique.

I learned that the history of technology in the United States starts with a few very innovative men/women that through their own ambition and curiosity took it upon themselves to develop things that had never been conceived of. While the ideas and visions of the individuals highlighted at Greenfield Village are idealized in that particular setting and the benefits of their work surround us each and every day, it is also important to note these inventions have led to some of the most horrific events in human history.

The history of technology represented at Greenfield Village is quite amazing. It was very apparent how technology has adapted and evolved through American history as people before us developed new ideas to make daily living more efficient and most times easier. I feel that with the progression of the different districts in the village made it much easier to see how this technology advanced over the centuries through the farming, the trades people, the main street, and into Edison at work.

Technology evolution counts for the endeavor of human being. I think the purpose of the park is to worship their work and inspire us to pursue technology advancement. However, I don't feel like that way so much, especially we were in a famous writer house, and there were the elegant furniture, but not so much about how the writer's work.

In visiting Menlo Park, I learned that Edison did not want Henry Ford to move the complex – that he'd wanted it to remain on New Jersey soil. Ford therefore dug up and relocated to Dearborn tons of Jersey dirt so that the laboratory could follow. Ford's up-front vision for the Village and desire to include the forefront in technological invention as represented by Edison's lab was matched by his efforts to acquire it. This instance shows how vital was the idea of the preservation of technological history and its integration into Ford's Village.

The development of technology influences people's living environment first in a functional way and further culture way. Seen from the low height of the interior space of the Daggett farmhouse, the interior height is influenced by the underdeveloped heating system, while people just organized their life to fit the spacial situation.

Too often we think of technology as something that emerged in the late 19th century, and barely existed prior to that. I am constantly amazed at what people were capable of producing, discovering, and harnessing prior to the 20th Century. The Gunsolly Carding Mill, for example, houses a beautiful piece of precision machinery, the process of which is still utilized today in the textile industry.

The support structures for handling so many visitors cannot always stay hidden in the background. What detail of experience design caught your attention?

I think no body would like to stand in a house without a interpreter but only a amplifier. I think interpreter should step up front and talk to the visitor directly. In this way we can actually got some more information about the history of technology.

While the vaccum cleaner left next to the speaker in the Frost house was amusing, it was the motion sensors that were most off putting. On several occasions when entering an exhibit alone I was startled by the recordings responding to my presence.

The main experience of detail design was the moments closer to the periphery of the Village where the brick barrier was in constant view and the modernity beyond made blatant. You struggle to stay within the feeling of any time period once inside, but especially when the sights and sounds of the real train outside of the Village are made to compete with the choo-choo within brick wall.

I think there were a couple of things that did not belong with the others. The vast expanses of perfectly paved roads and sidewalks took away from the overall experience. The fire hydrants, ADA ramps on the side of historical houses public restrooms and concession stands also detracted from the experience.

Most obvious were a) the large pendant speakers at the front of the town hall, b) the fire hydrant not so well hidden within the apple orchard on the farm, c) the transportation of a pile of leaking garbage bags in a worker's tractor cart, and d) the placement of a speaker and vacuum cleaner on one of the inaccessible residential staircases.

The support structures of Greenfield Village are actually noticeable from most areas of the park. A visitor that is fully aware of the surroundings will be able to notice where the image is only a loose skin over the back of house. At the same time some of the support structures are incorporated into the image of the park. The roundhouse is an example of this incorporation as they use it to maintain the steam engine train used within the village.

Although much of the support was quite well hidden, at the Cotswald house I remember peering in a window only to find the working kitchen of a café that was closed due to the off season. I felt like I violated some set of rules,

but at the same time was violated by the lack of authenticity of such a discovery. But then, is the fact that part of the house really is used as a kitchen take away from the experience or render it more authentic? And then I wondered whether or not we really want situations to be real or just feel as though they are real; do we really want live on the village green, or just in a gated community called the village green? As a society, are we even comfortable with the real, for the real is uncontrollable.

Motion sensors and speakers that began to play as you walked into the space/room and the vacuum cleaner perched on a step next to a speaker leading upstairs.

I loved seeing the juxtaposition of trash cans in front of a colonial home, or the storm drain that was covered by an overturned cooking pot. Or the back room of the English Cottage House filled with trash and cardboard boxes plainly visible through the windows. But my favorite was sitting on the town green and feeling the attention to detail from the various time periods, all while a plane is making its approach to DTW right above the trees.

Greenfield Village seems very experienced in the capability of controlling large amounts of visitors. Things that I noticed that detailed this were large amounts of parking spaces on the perimeter of the village, many entrance gates that were large enough to hold a large group of people, a entry and exit sequence for people who travel by car and bus, as well as lots of pedestrian friendly areas surrounding the village. I also noticed private trails and drives that allowed for all the behind the scene actions to take place so that the large amounts of visitors did not notice.

The support services are very apparent in the village, particularly in the food service areas.

The high frequency of the automatic announcer in many houses indicates the large amount of visitors, although we didn't see that many during our visit

Wait that was not a real town, as for the theatricality of hiding the service space a true drama exists. Boundaries are blacked out and fenced off. Exhibition spaces are in glass boxes, people loom over your shoulder. A glimpse of a back alley is overlooked. One wants to believe that it is not there.