

Engaging Places LLC

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Engaging Places, LLC, is a design and strategy firm that connects people and historic places. We help museums, historic sites, non-profit organizations, cultural institutions, and governmental agencies assess current performance and conditions; conduct visitor and audience research; design custom solutions, strategies, and plans; provide benchmarking and develop measurable outcomes; and train staff, volunteers, and boards to better engage with their audiences and become more sustainable. We've worked with places as small as a one-room schoolhouse and as big as a city, as venerable as a National Historic Landmark and as new as a site still under development, as physical as a Main Street and as intangible as a blog. Our work not only meets the professional standards of the American Alliance of Museums, American Historical Association, National Association for Interpretation, and the Secretary of the Interior, but also responds to national and international trends to anticipate future best practices.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Strategic and transition planning	Facilitation and consensus building
Interpretive planning and implementation	Collections policies and management
Program assessment and evaluation	Staff training and development
Marketing and branding	Online and social media
Non-profit financial management	Fundraising and membership development

CLIENTS

- Arroyo Seco Parkway National Scenic Byway (California)
- The Breakers (Preservation Society of Newport County)
- Chesterwood (National Trust for Historic Preservation)
- Dana Thomas House (State of Illinois)
- Drayton Hall (National Trust for Historic Preservation)
- Peter F. Drucker Archives (Claremont Graduate University)
- Henry Ford's Fair Lane (University of Michigan)
- Louis Kahn's Fisher House (Pennsylvania)
- Haas-Lilienthal House (San Francisco Architectural Heritage)
- Jensen Alvarado Historic Ranch and Museum (Riverside County, California)
- Pennsylvania State Museum (Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission)
- James Madison's Montpelier (Virginia)
- National Japanese American Historical Society (California)
- Philip Johnson Glass House (National Trust for Historic Preservation)
- President Lincoln's Cottage (National Trust for Historic Preservation)
- Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden (California)
- Sewall-Belmont House and Museum (Washington, DC)
- William Seward House Museum (New York)
- Supreme Court of the United States (Washington, DC)
- Vermont (Bermuda National Trust)

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MAX A. VAN BALGOOY, PRESIDENT

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Max A. van Balgooy is a national leader in historical interpretation and community engagement, with extensive experience in developing solutions in collaboration with diverse audiences, including volunteers, staff, trustees, residents, scholars, design professionals, business leaders, and elected officials. He has more than 35 years of experience working in museums, historic preservation, heritage tourism, and historic sites, including senior positions at the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Workman and Temple Family Homestead Museum and was one of the organizers of the Kykuit Forums on Historic Sites Stewardship in 2002 and 2007. A recognized researcher, author, speaker, and blogger on the trends, challenges, and opportunities facing museums, historic sites, and cultural organizations, he is a frequently requested facilitator, trainer, and consultant on business strategy, historical interpretation, public programming, marketing, and online media, especially in the areas of best and future practices.

He currently serves on the Council of the American Association for State and Local History, teaches in the museum studies program at George Washington University, and serves as a peer reviewer in the Museum Assessment Program of the American Alliance of Museums. He received his M.A. in history from the University of Delaware as a Hagley Fellow, his B. A. in history from Pomona College, and participated in the Historic Deerfield Summer Program in Early American History and Material Culture and the Attingham Summer School for the Study of Historic Houses and Collections.

CLIENTS

Designed, implemented, evaluated, or consulted on a wide range of projects related to business strategy, historical interpretation, community engagement, and economic sustainability to museums, historic sites, heritage areas, preservation organizations, government agencies, and cultural institutions such as:

- Aiken-Rhett House (Historic Charleston Foundation)
- Arroyo Seco Parkway National Scenic Byway (California)
- The Breakers (Preservation Society of Newport County)
- Chesterwood (National Trust for Historic Preservation)
- Dana Thomas House (State of Illinois)
- Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs (State of Delaware)
- Drayton Hall (National Trust for Historic Preservation)
- Henry Ford's Fair Lane (University of Michigan)
- Haas-Lilienthal House (San Francisco Architectural Heritage)
- Pennsylvania State Museum (Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission)
- James Madison's Montpelier (Virginia)
- Molly Brown House (Historic Denver)
- Mount Pleasant (Philadelphia Museum of Art)
- Morris-Butler House (Indiana Landmarks)
- National Air and Space Museum (Smithsonian Institution)
- Philip Johnson Glass House (National Trust for Historic Preservation)
- President Lincoln's Cottage (National Trust for Historic Preservation)
- William Seward House Museum (New York)