Glossary

Addition — A non-original element placed onto an existing building, site or structure.

Alteration — Any act or process which changes the exterior architectural appearance of a building.

Appropriate — Suitable to or compatible with what exists. Proposed work on historic properties is evaluated for "appropriateness" during the design review process.

Certificate of Appropriateness — A document giving approval to work proposed by the owner of a property located within a locally-designated historic district or designated as a local landmark. Specific conditions, set forth by the Board of Architectural Design and Historic Review and to be followed during the project, may be specified in the document. Possession of a Certificate of Appropriateness does not remove any responsibility on the part of the property owner to acquire a building permit prior to beginning the project.

Character — Those individual qualities of buildings, sites and districts that differentiate and distinguish them from other buildings, sites and districts.

Compatible — Not detracting from surrounding elements, buildings, sites or structures; appropriate given what already exists.

Component — An individual part of a building, site or district.

Contemporary — Of the current period; modern.

Contributing — Essential to the full significance of a historic district. (A "contributing building" in a historic district is one that may be of limited individual significance but nevertheless functions as an important component of the district.)

Context — The setting in which a historic element or building exists.

Demolition — Any act or process that destroys a structure in part or in whole.

Element — An individual defining feature of a building, structure, site or district.

High Style — A completely authentic or academically correct interpretation of an architectural style; a "textbook" example of one particular style and not a composition of several different styles.

Historic District — A geographically definable area designated as possessing a concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects of historic, archaeological, architectural or aesthetic value.

Historic Site — A site worthy of protection or preservation, designated as historic for its historic, archaeological or aesthetic value.

Historic Structure — A structure worthy of preservation, designated as historic for its historic, archaeological, architectural or aesthetic value.

House Type — A definition based on floor plan, height and sometimes roof shape, having nothing to do with architectural style. Most houses that fall into a particular type are of vernacular design, meaning that their designs are based on regional tradition and utilize regional materials.

Infill — New construction within a historic district, generally situated on the site of a demolished structure but possibly on a site never previously developed.

Landmark — A building, structure, object or site worthy of preservation, designated as historic for its historic, archaeological, architectural or aesthetic value.

Maintenance — Routine care for a building, structure or site that does not involve design alterations.

Neglect — The failure to care for a property in such a manner as to prevent its deterioration. Neglect is often not intentional, but may lead to very serious deterioration of materials and even structural systems.

New Construction — The construction of a new element, building, structure of landscape component; new construction involves the introduction of designs not original to the building, structure or site.

Preservation — The process of taking steps to sustain the form, details and integrity of a property essentially as it presently exists. Preservation may involve the elimination of deterioration and structural damage, but does not involve reconstruction to any significant degree.

Reconstruction — The process of reproducing the exact form of a component, building, structure or site that existed at some time in the past.

Rehabilitation — The process of returning a building to a state of utility while retaining those elements essential to its architectural, historical and/or aesthetic significance.

Repair — Any minor change to a property that is not construction, removal, demolition or alteration and that does not change exterior architectural appearance.

Restoration — The process of returning a building to its appearance at an earlier time (though not necessarily to its original appearance). Restoration involves the removal of later additions and the replacement of missing components and details.

Setting — The immediate physical environment of a building, structure, site or district.

Significant — Possessing importance to a particular building, structure, site or district; essential to maintaining the full integrity of a particular building, structure, site or district.

Site — A place or plot of land where an event occurred or where some object was or is located.

Stabilization — Maintaining a building as it exists today by making it weather-resistant and structurally safe.

Streetscape — All physical elements that may be viewed along a street.

Structure — Anything constructed or erected which has, or the use of which requires, permanent or temporary location on or in the ground, or which is attached to something having a permanent location on the ground, including, but not limited to, the following: buildings, gazebos, signs, billboards, tennis courts, radio and television antennae and satellite dishes (including supporting towers), swimming pools, light fixtures, walls, fences and steps.

Style — Showing the influence of shapes, materials, detailing or other features associated with a particular architectural style.

Vernacular — Based on regional tradition and utilizing regional materials.

Sources for Mainetenance and Resource Rehabilitation

Preservation Briefs
National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services Division

1 The Cleaning and Waterproof Coating of Masonry Buildings

2 Rejointing Mortar Joints in Historic Brick Buildings

3 Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings

4 Roofing for Historic Buildings

6 Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic Buildings

7 The Preservation of Historic Glazed Architectural Terra-Cotta

8 Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings

9 The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows

10 Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork

11 Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts

12 The Preservation of Historic Pigmented Structural Glass

13 The Repair and Thermal Upgrading of Historic Steel Windows

14 New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns

15 Preservation of Historic Concrete: Problems and General Approaches

16 The Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Buildings

17 Architectural Character: Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character

18 Rehabilitating Interiors in Historic Buildings

19 The Repair and Replacement of Historic Wooden Shingle Roofs

20 The Preservation of Historic Barns

21 Repairing Historic Flat Plaster-Walls and Ceilings

22 The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stucco

23 Preserving Historic Ornamental Plaster

24 Heating, Ventilating, and Cooling Historic Buildings: Problems and Recommended Approaches

25 The Preservation of Historic Signs

26 The Preservation and Repair of Historic Log Buildings

27 Maintenance and Repair of Architectural Cast Iron

28 Painting Historic Interiors

29 The Repair, Replacement, and Maintenance of Historic Slate Roofs

30 The Preservation and Repair of Historic Clay Tile Roofs

31 Mothballing Historic Buildings

32 Making Historic Properties Accessible

33 The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stained and Leaded Glass

34 Applied Decoration for Historic Interiors Preserving Composition Ornament

35 Understanding Old Buildings: The Process of Architectural Investigation

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36 Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes

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37 Appropriate Methods for Reducing Lead: Paint Hazards in Historic Housing

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38 Removing Graffiti from Historic Masonry

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39 Managing Moisture Problems in Historic Buildings

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40 Preserving Historic Ceramic Tile Floors

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