

SAN FRANCISCO
PRESERVATION BULLETIN NO. 21

**The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of
Historic Properties, 1995**

Rooted in over 120 years of preservation ethics in both Europe and America, The Secretary of the Interior's Standards (Standards) for the Treatment of Historic Properties are common sense principles in non-technical language. They were developed by the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service to help protect our nation's irreplaceable cultural resources by promoting consistent preservation practices.

The Standards may be applied to all properties that have been designated as historical resources: buildings, sites, structures, objects, and districts.

It should be understood that the Standards are a series of concepts about maintaining, repairing and replacing historic materials, as well as designing new additions or making alterations; as such, they cannot, in and of themselves, be used to make essential decisions about which features of a historic property should be saved and which might be changed. But once an appropriate treatment is selected, the Standards provide philosophical consistency to the work.

In 2000, the San Francisco's Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board (Landmarks Board) adopted the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties when reviewing alterations to designated historical resources through Article 10 of the Planning Code. For the purposes of (California Environmental Quality Act) CEQA, if a building, structure or object meets the Act's definition of "historical resource," the *Standards* are implemented to insure that alterations are consistent with the objectives set forth in the *Standards*.

Administered by the San Francisco Planning Department Neighborhood Planning Team's Preservation Technical Specialists, use of the *Standards* has provided a consistent level of evaluation and review of projects by both Planning Department staff and the Landmarks Board on projects that may compromise the integrity and/or level of significance of designated (Article 10) or identified (CEQA) historical resources.

For both Article 10-designated historic resources and CEQA-identified historical resources, the *Standards* will be applied to any work involving new construction, exterior alteration (including removal or demolition of a structure), or any work involving a sign, awning, marquee, canopy or other appendage for which a City permit is required.

Four Treatment Approaches

There are *Standards* for four distinct, but interrelated, approaches to the treatment of historic properties -- preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction. The Planning Department's Preservation Technical Specialists will use the appropriate treatment based on the objectives of each project. The four approaches are:

Preservation -- Focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of a property's form as it has evolved over time. Protection and stabilization measures are included under this treatment.

Rehabilitation -- Acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character.

Restoration -- Depicts a property at a particular period of time in its history, while removing evidence of other periods.

Reconstruction -- Re-creates vanished or non-surviving portions of a property for interpretive purposes.

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Preservation

Preservation is the *act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property*. Any work on the resource, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is also appropriate. Within **Preservation**, the following treatments apply:

1. A property will be used as it was historically, or be given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships. Where a treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and, if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate, and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material will match the old in composition, design, color, and texture.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

Note: When the property's distinctive materials, features, and spaces are essentially intact and thus convey the historic significance without extensive repair or replacement; when depiction at a particular period of time is not appropriate; and when a continuing or new use does not require additions or extensive alterations, **Preservation** may be considered as a treatment.

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Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation is the *act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values*. Within **Rehabilitation**, the following treatments apply:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in a such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Note: When repair and replacement of deteriorated features are necessary; when alterations or additions to the property are planned for a new or continued use; and when its depiction at a particular period of time is not appropriate, **Rehabilitation** may be considered as a treatment.

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Restoration

Restoration is the *act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period.*

The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate. Within **Restoration**, the following treatments apply:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use which reflects the property's restoration period.
2. Materials and features from the restoration period will be retained and preserved. The removal of materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize the period will not be undertaken.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate and conserve materials and features from the restoration period will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.
4. Materials, features, spaces, and finishes that characterize other historical periods will be documented prior to their alteration or removal.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the restoration period will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated features from the restoration period will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials.
7. Replacement of missing features from the restoration period will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence. A false sense of history will not be created by adding conjectural features, features from other properties, or by combining features that never existed together historically.
8. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
9. Archeological resources affected by a project will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
10. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

Note: When the property's design, architectural, or historical significance during a particular period of time outweighs the potential loss of extant materials, features, spaces, and finishes that characterize other historical periods; when there is substantial physical and documentary evidence for the work; and when contemporary alterations and additions are not planned, **Restoration** may be considered as a treatment.

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Reconstruction

Reconstruction is the *act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.*

Within **Reconstruction**, the following treatments apply:

1. Reconstruction will be used to depict vanished or non-surviving portions of a property when documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture, and such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property.
2. Reconstruction of a landscape, building, structure, or object in its historic location will be preceded by a thorough archeological investigation to identify and evaluate those features and artifacts which are essential to an accurate reconstruction. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
3. Reconstruction will include measures to preserve any remaining historic materials, features, and spatial relationships.
4. Reconstruction will be based on the accurate duplication of historic features and elements substantiated by documentary or physical evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different features from other historic properties. A reconstructed property will re-create the appearance of the non-surviving historic property in materials, design, color, and texture.
5. A reconstruction will be clearly identified as a contemporary re-creation.
6. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

Note: When a contemporary depiction is required to understand and interpret a property's historic value (including the recreation of missing components in a historic district or site); when no other property with the same associative value has survived; and when sufficient historical documentation exists to ensure an accurate reproduction, **Reconstruction** may be considered as a treatment.

Information in this Bulletin provided by the National Park Service. For more information on The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, consult the National Park Service website: www.nps.gov.

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