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National Park Service

Historic Preservation Tax Incentives

[NPS.gov](https://www.nps.gov/) (<https://www.nps.gov/>) / [Home](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/index.htm) (<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/index.htm>) / *The Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation*

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The **Standards for Rehabilitation** provide direction in making appropriate choices in planning the repairs, alterations, and additions that may be part of a rehabilitation project. The accompanying **Guidelines** apply the Standards and describe specific treatments that do and do not meet the Standards. The Standards for Rehabilitation are [codified in 36 CFR Part 67](#) (<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/upload/regs-nps-36-cfr-67.pdf>), are regulatory for the Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program, and are the Standards most often used by local historic district commissions nationwide.

The Standards for Rehabilitation are the criteria used to determine if a rehabilitation project qualifies as a certified rehabilitation. The intent of the Standards is to assist the long-term preservation of a property's significance through the preservation of historic materials and features. The Standards pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and the interior of historic buildings. The Standards also encompass related landscape features and the building's site and environment, as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. To be certified, a rehabilitation project must be determined by the Secretary to

be consistent with the historic character of the structure(s) and, where applicable, the district in which it is located. The following Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, [taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility \(https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/upload/role-economic-technical-feasibility-applying-standards.pdf\)](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/upload/role-economic-technical-feasibility-applying-standards.pdf).

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall 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 architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings

The [Guidelines \(https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/guidelines-rehabilitating-historic-buildings.htm\)](https://www.nps.gov/articles/000/guidelines-rehabilitating-historic-buildings.htm) assist in applying the Standards to rehabilitation projects in general; consequently, they are not meant to give case-specific advice or address exceptions or rare instances. For example, they cannot tell a building owner which features of an historic building are important in defining the historic character and must be preserved or which features could be altered, if necessary, for the new use. Careful case-by-case decision-making is best accomplished by seeking assistance from qualified historic preservation professionals in the planning stage of the project. Such professionals include architects, architectural historians, historians, archeologists, and others who are skilled in the preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of the historic properties.