



Understanding the Secretary of the Interior's Standards

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties... Although the name may sound intimidating and bureaucratic, The Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties formulated by the National Park Service, have long been used by most preservation organizations, including the State Historic Preservation Office and State Local Historic Districts, as the standard guidelines for restoring, rehabilitating and preserving our state's architecturally and historically significant sites.

How does one understand these guidelines in the context of your project? Briefly, the Secretary's Standards ten guiding principals promote:

1. Making every effort to use the building for its original purpose.
2. Do not destroy distinctive original features (or features that help define the building).
3. Recognize all buildings as products of their own time.
4. Recognize and respect through your project changes that have taken place over time.
5. Treat sensitively distinctive stylistic features or examples of skilled craftwork.
6. Repair rather than replace worn architectural features whenever possible. When replacement is necessary, new material should match the old in design, composition, and color.
7. Clean facades using the gentlest methods possible. Avoid sandblasting and other damaging methods.
8. Protect and preserve affected archeological resources.
9. Design compatible contemporary alterations that do not destroy significant historic or architectural fabric.
10. Design and build new additions so they can be removed without impairing the underlying structure.





The Secretary of the Interior's Standards promote responsible preservation practices and are further broken down into four approaches to the treatment of historic buildings: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration and reconstruction.

- **PRESERVATION:** This treatment places a high value on keeping historic fabric through conservation, maintenance and repair. It reflects a property's change over time (respecting changes and alterations that are made through successive occupancies). *Owners would use this approach if they wanted to stabilize and preserve a historic building to keep it the way it looks now.*
- **REHABILITATION:** This treatment emphasizes the retention and repair of historic materials, but allows for more replacement (it assumes the property is more deteriorated prior to the work). Alterations and additions for an updated/new use are acceptable. *An owner would use this approach if they wanted to update a building for a continuing or new use through repair, alterations, and additions.*
- **RESTORATION:** This treatment focuses on keeping materials from one specific time period in a building's history. It allows for the removal of materials from all other time periods. This treatment is generally selected for interpretive purposes, by museums for example. *An owner would use this approach if they wanted to backdate the building to an earlier period by removing later features.*
- **RECONSTRUCTION:** This treatment establishes opportunities to re-create a non-surviving landscape, building, structure, or object using all new material (for interpretive purposes). *A property owner would use this approach if they were to reconstruct a building that has vanished.*

These four approaches were developed to help protect our irreplaceable cultural resources by promoting consistent preservation practices. The guidelines assist in applying the Standards to work on all historic building types and materials, the exterior and interior, as well as the building site and setting.

Colorado Preservation, Inc. (CPI) is the statewide, nonprofit historic preservation advocacy organization. Since 1984, CPI has promoted the economic, community, and individual benefits of saving places through advocacy, education and outreach. CPI works to ensure historic places that are important to our state remain protected as community assets saved for the enjoyment of future generations.

CPI collaborates with leaders in local and county government and nonprofit organizations and by engaging historic property owners and interested citizens. We have a diverse portfolio of successes including hands-on development and extensive surveys which serve as models for preservation statewide. We are proud to help Coloradans save the historic places that matter to them and hope you will join us.

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