Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

Peyton Hall, FAIA
HISTORIC RESOURCES GROUP
• Introduction and Rationale for Standards
• When the Standards are Applied
• Selection of the appropriate Standards
• Discussion of the Standards for Rehabilitation
• Case Studies
• Introduction and Rationale for Standards

“Why are there criteria?”

- Since the 19th century western culture has pursued an evolving definition of cultural heritage and how it should be treated. The need for definitions, “do’s,” and “don’t’s” arose quickly as the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 instituted Federal programs and grants.
When the Standards are Applied

- Federal undertakings (i.e., grants, Section 106)
- Historic preservation investment tax credits
- California Environmental Quality Act
- State grants
- Many local landmark ordinances
• Selection of the appropriate Standards

“What ‘Standards’ are we talking about here?”

36 CFR 68: The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties
36 CFR 67: The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation
“...the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, 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. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.”
REHABILITATION

“...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.”
• “...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 a restoration project.”

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RECONSTRUCTION

“…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.”
REFERENCES

• The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (36 CFR 68)
  http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/overview/choose_treat.htm

• The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation (36 CFR 67)
  http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/TPS/tax/rhb/stand.htm

• Discussion of the Standards for Rehabilitation
NPS CHECKLIST FOR REHABILITATING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

• Check available documentation.
• Evaluate historic character (the way it looks today).
• Assess architectural integrity, including existing physical condition.
• Plan for rehabilitation work.
• Check codes and other legal requirements.
• Check use of federal funds/review requirements.
• Check available publications.
CONCEPTS IN THE STANDARDS

1. New uses require minimal change to defining characteristics.
2. Preserve historic character; avoid removal of materials or alteration of spaces.
3. Avoid false historicism.
4. Preserve alterations which have acquired significance over time.
5. Retain distinct features and finishes.
CONCEPTS IN THE STANDARDS

6. Repair rather than replace deteriorated features.
7. Use gentle cleaning techniques.
8. Preserve significant archeological resources.
9. Related new construction shall not destroy historic materials and should be “compatible.”
10. Reversibility.
STANDARD 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.

• How is minimal change defined?
• How does use impact design?
STANDARD 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.

• What is historic character?
• How does it relate to character-defining features?
CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

“Visual aspects and physical elements that comprise the appearance of a historic building, and that are significant to its historic, cultural, and architectural values. These can include the overall shape of the building, its materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, interior spaces and features, as well as the various aspects of its site and environment.”
ASSESSMENT OF CHARACTER-DEFINING FEATURES

Complete a thorough building survey, including a prioritized list of features and finishes:

1. **Highly significant** - should always be protected and preserved.
2. **Significant** - should be carefully repaired or, if necessary, replaced in-kind or to match all visual qualities.
3. **Non-significant or altered** - removal, rigid enclosure, or replacement may occur.
STANDARD 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.

• What is false historicism?
STANDARD 4

Most properties change over time. Those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.

- What is significance over time?
- How are alterations assessed?
STANDARD 5

Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
STANDARD 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.

• When to repair? When to replace?
• How does use impact design?
STANDARD 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.

• What are appropriate cleaning techniques?
STANDARD 8

Significant *archaeological resources* affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

• How are archeological resources relevant?
• How do they relate to findings about the built environment?
STANDARD 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.

• How is compatibility defined?
STANDARD 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.

• How is reversibility defined?
• Is this concept overused?
REFERENCES

• Preservation Briefs
  http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/TPS/briefs/presbhom.htm

• Preservation Brief 14: New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns

• Examples
Pacific Electric Building, 100-134 E. Sixth St., Los Angeles
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Pacific Electric Building, 100-134 E. Sixth St., Los Angeles

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Pacific Electric Building, 100-134 E. Sixth St., Los Angeles
Pacific Electric Building, 100-134 E. Sixth St., Los Angeles
612 S. Flower Street, Los Angeles
612 S. Flower Street, Los Angeles
612 S. Flower Street, Los Angeles

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612 S. Flower Street, Los Angeles
612 S. Flower Street, Los Angeles
612 S. Flower Street, Los Angeles
Royal Laundry Building, 443 S. Raymond Av., Pasadena, CA

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Royal Laundry Building, 443 S. Raymond Av., Pasadena, CA
Royal Laundry Building, 443 S. Raymond Av., Pasadena, CA
Design & Historic Preservation: Additions, Infill & Adjacent New Construction

GUIDANCE FROM THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE et al.

HISTORIC RESOURCES GROUP
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE:

1. Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties,
2. Guidelines
3. Preservation Briefs

Web searches:

“Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties”
Select “Rehabilitation”

“Preservation Brief 14”
There is not a clear, bright line, that distinguishes the differences between additions to historic buildings and new construction adjacent to historic buildings. As with most matters of design and planning, the differences are defined by the site, setting, and project. A large new building connected to a smaller old building by a narrow “hyphen” or tunnel presents the same design problem as a large new building that stands next door to a smaller old building. Therefore, below is guidance from the Standards for Rehabilitation, Guidelines to the Standards, and Preservation Briefs that are relevant to the view of new buildings as additions to a historic site, campus, or district.
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 shall 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 such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.
STANDARDS for REHABILITATION

An earlier (1983) version of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation no. 9 reads:

“Contemporary design for alterations and additions to existing properties shall not be discouraged when such alterations and additions do not destroy significant historical, architectural or cultural material, and such design is compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character of the property, neighborhood or environment.”

The current (1995) version reads:

“New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall 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.”
STANDARDS for REHABILITATION

Commentary:

In revising Standard no. 9, NPS may have intended to remove the misinterpretation of language meant to not discourage contemporary additions as connoting encouragement of contemporary design for additions to historic buildings. Without interpreting intent, it is nevertheless clear that the revised Standard no. 9 is neutral on the issue of style, and does not encourage or discourage the range of alternatives that might include subtly differentiated new construction in a matching historicist design, or new construction in a “contemporary” style. Concurrently with differentiation, however, is the challenge of compatibility with historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing.
The following statements distill the National Park Service guidance (these statements are emphasized by bold and italic letters in the text below):

"...a modern addition should be readily distinguishable from the older work; however, the new work should be harmonious with the old in scale, proportion, materials, and color."

“Plan the new addition in a manner that provides some differentiation in material, color, and detailing so that the new work does not appear to be part of the historic building. The character of the historic resource should be identifiable after the addition is constructed.”
GUIDELINES for REHABILITATION

Alterations/Additions for the New Use

Some exterior and interior alterations to a historic building are generally needed to assure its continued use, but it is most important that such alterations do not radically change, obscure, or destroy character-defining spaces, materials, features, or finishes. Alterations may include providing additional parking space on an existing historic building site; cutting new entrances or windows on secondary elevations; inserting an additional floor; installing an entirely new mechanical system; or creating an atrium or light well. Alteration may also include the selective removal of buildings or other features of the environment or building site that are intrusive and therefore detract from the overall historic character.
GUIDELINES for REHABILITATION

Building Site
Recommended:

Retaining the historic relationship between buildings and the landscape.

Designing new onsite parking, loading docks, or ramps when required by the new use so that they are as unobtrusive as possible and assure the preservation of the historic relationship between the building or buildings and the landscape.

Designing new exterior additions to historic buildings or adjacent new construction which is compatible with the historic character of the site and which preserves the historic relationship between the building or buildings and the landscape.

HISTORIC RESOURCES GROUP
GUIDELINES for REHABILITATION

Building Site
Not recommended:

Removing or radically changing buildings and their features or site features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the property so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

Introducing a new building or site feature that is out of scale or of an otherwise inappropriate design.

Introducing new construction onto the building site which is visually incompatible in terms of size, scale, design, materials, color, and texture; which destroys historic relationships on the site; or which damages or destroys important landscape features.
GUIDELINES for REHABILITATION

Setting (District/Neighborhood)

Recommended
Alterations/Additions for the New Use: Designing and constructing new additions to historic buildings when required by the new use. New work should be compatible with the historic character of the setting in terms of size, scale design, material, color, and texture.

Not recommended
Introducing a new building or landscape feature that is out of scale or otherwise inappropriate to the setting’s historic character, e.g., replacing picket fencing with chain link fencing.

Introducing new construction into historic districts that is visually incompatible or that destroys historic relationships within the setting.

HISTORIC RESOURCES GROUP
GUIDELINES for REHABILITATION

Building Site
Not recommended:

Removing or radically changing buildings and their features or site features which are important in defining the overall historic character of the property so that, as a result, the character is diminished.

Introducing a new building or site feature that is out of scale or of an otherwise inappropriate design.

Introducing new construction onto the building site which is visually incompatible in terms of size, scale, design, materials, color, and texture; which destroys historic relationships on the site; or which damages or destroys important landscape features.
GUIDELINES for REHABILITATION

New Additions to Historic Buildings

Recommended

Constructing a new addition so that there is the least possible loss of historic materials and so that character-defining features are not obscured, damaged, or destroyed.

Considering the design for an attached exterior addition in terms of its relationship to the historic building as well as the historic district or neighborhood. Design for the new work may be contemporary or may reference design motifs from the historic building. In either case, it should always be clearly differentiated from the historic building and be compatible in terms of mass, materials, relationship of solids to voids, and color.

Placing a new addition on a non-character-defining elevation and limiting the size and scale in relationship to the historic building.
Preservation Brief 14: New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings, Preservation Concerns

Because a new exterior addition to a historic building can damage or destroy significant materials and can change the building's character, an addition should be considered only after it has been determined that the new use cannot be met by altering nonsignificant, or secondary, interior spaces. If the new use cannot be met in this way, then an attached addition may be an acceptable alternative if carefully planned. A new addition should be constructed in a manner that preserves significant materials and features and preserves the historic character. Finally, an addition should be differentiated from the historic building so that the new work is not confused with what is genuinely part of the past.
Preservation Brief 14: New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings, Preservation Concerns

The National Park Service interest in new additions is simply this--a new addition to a historic building has the potential to damage and destroy significant historic material and features and to change its historic character. A new addition also has the potential to change how one perceives what is genuinely historic and thus to diminish those qualities that make the building eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Once these basic preservation issues have been addressed, all other aspects of designing and constructing a new addition to extend the useful life of the historic building rest with the creative skills of the architect.
Preservation Brief 14: New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings, Preservation Concerns

The intent of this Brief, then, is to provide guidance to owners and developers planning additions to their historic buildings. A project involving a new addition to a historic building is considered acceptable within the framework of the National Park Service’s standards if it:

1. Preserves significant historic materials and features; and
2. Preserves the historic character; and
3. Protects the historical significance by making a visual distinction between old and new.
Preservation Brief 14: New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings, Preservation Concerns

To meet National Park Service preservation standards, a new addition must be "compatible with the size, scale, color, material, and character" of the building to which it is attached or its particular neighborhood or district. A new addition will always change the size or actual bulk of the historic building. But an addition that bears no relationship to the proportions and massing of the historic building—in other words, one that overpowers the historic form and changes the scale will usually compromise the historic character as well.

Some historic structures such as government buildings, metropolitan museums, or libraries may be so massive in size that a large-scale addition may not compromise the historic character. Yet similar expansion of smaller buildings would be dramatically out of scale. In summary, where any new addition is proposed, correctly assessing the relationship between actual size and relative scale will be a key to preserving the character of the historic building.
Preservation Brief 14: New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings, Preservation Concerns

Making a Visual Distinction Between Old and New

The following statement of approach could be applied equally to the preservation of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of National Register significance: "A conservator works within a conservation ethic so that the integrity of the object as an historic entity is maintained. The concern is not just with the original state of the object, but the way in which it has been changed and used over the centuries. Where a new intervention must be made to save the object, either to stabilize it or to consolidate it, it is generally accepted that those interventions must be clear, obvious, and reversible. It is this same attitude to change that is relevant to conservation policies and attitudes to historic towns..."
Preservation Brief 14: New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings, Preservation Concerns

Making a Visual Distinction Between Old and New

The National Park Service policy on new additions, adopted in 1967, is an outgrowth and continuation of a general philosophical approach to change first expressed by John Ruskin in England in the 1850s, formalized by William Morris in the founding of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1877, expanded by the Society in 1924 and, finally, reiterated in the 1964 Venice Charter--a document that continues to be followed by 64 national committees of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). The 1967 Administrative Policies for Historical Areas of the National Park System thus states, "...a modern addition should be readily distinguishable from the older work; however, the new work should be harmonious with the old in scale, proportion, materials, and color."
Preservation Brief 14: New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings, Preservation Concerns

In summary, then, these are the three important preservation questions to ask when planning a new exterior addition to a historic resource:

1. Does the proposed addition preserve significant historic materials and features?
2. Does the proposed addition preserve the historic character?
3. Does the proposed addition protect the historical significance by making a visual distinction between old and new?

If the answer is YES to all three questions, then the new addition will protect significant historic materials and the historic character and, in doing so, will have satisfactorily addressed those concerns generally held to be fundamental to historic preservation.
The Jewish Museum, NYC: Felix & Frieda Warburg Mansion
original design by C. P. H. Gilbert, 1908
addition by Kevin Roche, 1993
Children’s Museum of Pittsburgh
1890’s post office; 1939 planetorium, joined by addition by
Koning Eizenberg Architects, 2004
The “Hyphen”
Addition at rear
Addition on top
Perspectives of Practice

Sharon Park, FAIA, formerly Chief of Technical Preservation Services at the National Park Service, and Robert Miklos, FAIA, present a four-step methodology for good design at significant resources:

1. Research and analyze (know the building and site)
2. Restore the idea (uncover hidden features; protect features; repair features; use the “idea” of the building to guide what should be saved or altered)
3. Achieve mission and function (integrate the new program so as to manage impacts on historic character, including new additions that provide program uses in order to protect integrity of historic features)
4. Create a new identity (create an integrated, unified composition that respects the old yet recognizes the new as part of the cohesive design; integrate a substantive change of appearance without a loss of character of the historic buildings).[1]
Perspectives of Practice

Park & Miklos’s four steps define the process, but are consistent with the fundamentals of differentiation and compatibility stated by the National Park Service.

Compatible design is usually defined as ‘capable of existing together in harmony.’ When applied to historic preservation projects, it typically refers to the design of additions to historic buildings, modifying historic interiors, and constructing new buildings in historic districts or landscapes.

“However, creating a compatible design is only one way in which architects relate new to old. Norman Tyler suggests two others are often used, matching the new to the old, and contrasting the new and the old. In matching, new buildings or additions seek to replicate the adjacent historic properties as much as possible, making it difficult, if not impossible, to tell them apart. This approach often appeals to owners of historic properties and civic organizations. On the other hand, advocates of a contrasting approach argue that the design of new additions or buildings should be of contemporary design and clearly articulate new from old. Architects often favor the contrasting approach because they feel it gives them freedom to interpret the environment in today’s architectural idioms in much the same way as the original architects did in their day.”

David Ames
The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards prefer compatibility, where new work is “differentiated from the old and [to] be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale, and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the [historic] property and its environment. The standards reject the matching approach, arguing that the integrity and significance of an historic property would be undermined if new work were not visually distinguished from the original. They also reject the contrasting approach because too much distinction between the new and old would also compromise the integrity and significance of the historic property.

David Ames
The design issues of compatibility versus differentiation are similar to the treatment of additions to historic buildings. Design responses vary, from the slavish replication of form and details of the original buildings, to the confrontation of the historic setting by a building that does not acknowledge that it has a context. Rare is the successful design at the extreme ends of the scale.

Michael J. Mills
Perspectives of Practice

It is good to ask that the architecture of our time in our historic city environment be differentiated from the old, compatible with the old, enrich our cities, and provide a point of reference to future generations for the building art and architectural theory of the early 21st century. The pursuit of all of these goals, if accomplished, still do not dictate a single approach, theory, palette of materials, or “style.” Nor does this seemingly simple concept guarantee that things will be done well.

As with all visual art, it is culturally acceptable to debate right and wrong, to have preferences, and ultimately, to allow for alternative approaches that represent both differentiation and compatibility. The discussion of additions during the modern American historic preservation movement is important, complex, and evolving.

Compatibility is very particular to building, site, and place.
Case Study
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Thank You.