



Leesburg

II. PRESERVATION BASICS FOR REHABILITATION

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A. Preservation Approaches

These design guidelines express a basic **rehabilitation** credo of “retain, repair, and replace.” In other words, do not remove a historic element unless there is no other option, and do not replace an element if it can be repaired.

Terms such as preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation are often used interchangeably. However, by definition, they signify different approaches to the work to be performed on a historic structure.

The following definitions are based on the National Park Service’s Preservation Terminology as used in *The Secretary of Interior’s Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties*.

Preservation focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of a property’s form as it has evolved over time. For example, the repair of a window using an epoxy consolidant, thereby retaining its historic form, would be considered preservation.

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.

Rehabilitation is the act of bringing an old building into use by adding modern amenities, meeting current building codes, and providing a use that is viable.

For instance, in the case of the reuse of a historically residential building for a commercial use, the addition of an elevator or an accessible entry to the building would be considered rehabilitation.

Rehabilitation assumes that at least some repair or alteration will be needed in order to provide for an efficient contemporary use. However, these repairs and alterations must not damage or destroy materials, features or finishes that are important in defining the building’s historic character.

Restoration depicts a property at a particular period of time in its history, while removing evidence of other periods. Restoration projects are usually undertaken by museums and seek to capture a building at a particular time in its history.

Reconstruction re-creates vanished or non-surviving portions of a property that can be determined by physical evidence and by historic photographs, drawings, or by other research. For instance, reconstruction may be undertaken by a museum or other entity for interpretive purposes.



A view looking south on King Street in the 1920s (above left) and today (above right).



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B. Maintenance and Rehabilitation

1. General Considerations

A building may need rehabilitation for a number of reasons. It may be in poor condition, or it may have been insensitively remodeled in the past. Similarly, certain changes may be desired in order to add modern conveniences to a building.

Before rehabilitation begins, maintenance is critical. If an older structure is properly maintained, it should not require extensive rehabilitation except for necessary modernization of mechanical systems and periodic replacement of items that wear out, such as roofs and paint. Good maintenance practices can extend the life of most features of a historic building.

Specific maintenance issues and tips are covered in *Appendix B: Maintenance & Rehabilitation*. If a historic building has been insensitively remodeled over the years, it may require some rehabilitation to return it to a more historically appropriate appearance.

Preservation Briefs are technical bulletins published by the National Park Service and written in accordance with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* (see *Appendix A*) which can provide valuable detailed information for your project.

Over forty different subjects are covered in the *Preservation Briefs* which are available online at www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm and in the Leesburg Department of Planning, Zoning and Development.

These guidelines are based on *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* but provide more specific information and guidance for property owners in Leesburg's Old and Historic District.

2. Protective

Maintenance Requirement

Section 7.5.9B of the *Town of Leesburg Zoning Ordinance* (see *Appendix F*) addresses the maintenance of historic properties in the Old and Historic District. The purpose of this section is to prevent demolition by neglect and to avoid any detrimental effect on the historic district.

Insufficient maintenance can include the deterioration of the structure, ineffective protection from the elements, lack of upkeep of the grounds, and hazardous conditions. Particular items covered include boarding up doors and windows; stabilizing walls, roofs, and other parts of the building or structure; providing positive drainage from the structure; and termite treatment.



Brick structures should be inspected regularly for signs of weather or moisture-related deterioration. Older brick may lose its hard outer surface leaving it vulnerable to moisture penetration. Mortar joints may crack or erode, allowing another avenue for moisture to enter an exterior wall.



Well-maintained, wood-clad frame structures may last indefinitely. Paint should be inspected for condition on a regular schedule as its condition may be the first warning signs of a moisture problem within the structure. Any junction between elements, such as between siding and window trim, should also be checked for soundness.