



MODULE
01

Preservation Toolkit

An Orientation to Preservation & Adaptive Reuse

Preservation and reuse can mean different things to different people. From “freezing places in time” as a museum, to repairing and adapting places for a new active use. This orientation will introduce you to common preservation terms and resources, explain what listing in the National Register of Historic Places does and does not do, and outline standards for rehabilitation.

Background

The first noted preservation effort in the United States was Ann Pamela Cunningham and the Mt. Vernon Ladies Association’s crusade in the 1850s to save Mount Vernon. 1906 marked the beginning of the U.S. government’s involvement in historic preservation with the passage of the Antiquities Act and the creation of the National Monuments program.

Today, preservation in the United States is guided by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which introduced Historic Preservation Offices in each state, and created the National Register of Historic Places. Later federal additions to the field include the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, which guide and promote preservation throughout the country; and Historic Tax Credits, a major incentive for rehabilitation of historic properties.

What is Preservation?

Preservation “is a movement in planning designed to conserve old buildings and areas in an effort to tie a place’s history to its population and culture. It is also an essential component to green building in that it reuses structures that are already present as opposed to new construction.”¹ Preservation compliments the fields of community planning, architecture, and history.

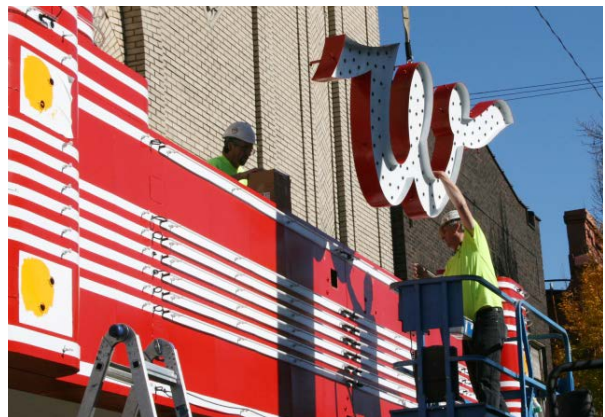
Historic buildings and sites embody the story of a place – the values, culture, craftsmanship, and resources of its people. Preservation saves, restores, repurposes, and enhances those places to revitalize our communities. Decades ago the term “preservation” may have conjured images of house museums filled with antiques. But today it focuses on retaining historic buildings for active use as an integral element of authentic, livable communities. Preservation and reuse fosters sustainability and economic development and is oriented toward the future, not the past.

“Preservation is simply having the good sense to hold on to things that are well designed, that link us with our past in a meaningful way, and that have plenty of good use left in them.”

— Richard Moe, former president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation

“Why spend all this effort recycling cans and bottles, and throw away entire buildings?”

— Donovan Rypkema, president, Place Economics



Whiteside Theater, Corvallis

¹ Amanda Briney, *Historic Preservation: An Overview of Historic Preservation and Its Importance to Urban Planning*, <http://geography.about.com/od/urbanecomicgeography/a/historicpreserv.htm>.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of historic resources significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, and culture. Oregon is rich in historic places, with roughly 2,000 individual resources and 124 districts listed.²



One of the first decisions to make when working to restore and reuse a historic building is whether to nominate it for the National Register. There are many misconceptions about the restrictions and benefits that go along with being listed which we briefly address here.

Qualifications for listing

- A building, structure, district, site, or object, generally at least 50 years old
- Historically significant (important events, significant people, architecture, engineering, or archeology) at the local, state, or national level.
- Retains historic integrity in a majority of seven aspects (Location, Design, Setting, Materials, Workmanship, Feeling, and Association)

Benefits of the National Register in Oregon

- Permanently documented in the national record for posterity
- Opportunity to seek federal Historic Tax Credits of 20% of rehabilitation costs (for privately held commercial buildings and multi-family housing)
- Eligibility to apply for grant funding (usually for non-profits only)
- Special Assessment (for residential and commercial properties)
- Flexibility in code compliance or use (varies by local jurisdiction)

The National Register of Historic Places does NOT:

- Give the federal government control over your property
- Protect your property against demolition
- Regulate its sale or alteration

² Oregon Parks & Recreation Department, *Oregon Heritage Bulletin 4*, http://www.oregon.gov/oprd/HCD/docs/Heritage_Bulletins/HB04_Nat_Reg.pdf.



Mercantile and Milling Company Building, Enterprise

Any restrictions placed on historic properties are the result of LOCAL ordinances, many of which use National Register listing as a criteria for imposing review of alterations or restrictions on demolition. In most communities in Oregon outside of Portland there are no restrictions applied to National Register properties. Contact your local Planning Bureau for more information. If a property owner is utilizing Historic Tax Credits, Special Assessment, or other publically-funding assistance, rehabilitation must meet the Secretary of Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.

How to place your property in the National Register

- Gather historic information on the property (See How to Organize and Build Community Support).
- Contact the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and complete a Historic Resource Record (HRR) form to confirm eligibility.
- Complete the National Register Registration form (work with SHPO or a preservation professional)
- Present the nomination to the State Advisory Committee on Historic Preservation

The process of approving a National Register nomination can take up to a year, though some benefits are available to a property while the application is in process. In Oregon, only the owner of a private property may nominate it for the National Register. Public properties may be nominated by any citizen.

Preservation Standards³

Historic properties taking advantage of government incentives such as Historic Tax Credits or Special Assessment are required to adhere to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. These standards are the guiding principles for preservation in the United States, "intended to promote responsible preservation practices that help protect our Nation's irreplaceable cultural resources."⁴ These responsible preservation practices are categorized in four different treatments: Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction (see <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards.htm>). Most projects follow the Standards for Rehabilitation.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation⁵

- A historic resource will be used as it was originally built or repurposed with minimal change to its historic fabric.
- The historic fabric of a resource 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.
- Historic resources will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Creating a false sense of history, by making it look old or like other buildings is not advised.
- Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
- Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.



- 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.

³ Definitions for the Secretary of the Interior's Standards are borrowed from the National Park Service, *Preservation Terminology*, https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_10.htm.

⁴ NPS Online, "The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties," <http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/>.

⁵ National Park Service, Standards for Rehabilitation, <https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments/treatment-rehabilitation.htm>.

- 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.
- Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
- New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the historic resource. 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.
- 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.

Glossary of Preservation Terminology^{6,7}

<i>Term</i>	<i>Definition</i>
Adaptive Reuse	Using a historic resource for a purpose other than was originally intended (ie. a historic warehouse repurposed as offices or condominiums). Also see Rehabilitation .
Alteration	The act of changing a historic structure including its use, exterior and interior elements, making additions, conducting partial demolition, replacing features or elements, sand or water blasting, chemical cleaning, and/or the removal of existing elements.
Assessment	The act of evaluating and interpreting an existing historic resource.
Certified Local Government (CLG)	A federal program designed to promote historic preservation at the local level that is administered by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Local governments meet certain qualifications to become “certified” and thereby qualify to receive matching grants.

6 National Park Service, *Preservation Terminology*, https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_10.htm.

7 Preservation Virginia, *Glossary of Historic Preservation Terms*, https://preservationvirginia.org/docs/Glossary_of_Historic_Preservation_Terms.pdf.

Character Defining Features	Elements of a historic resource that contribute to its overall value, historic integrity, and/or historic significance. See Historic Integrity and Historic Significance. See also https://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/17-architectural-character.htm .
Compatible Design	Closely aligning architectural, context, setting, style, and historic character.
Conditional Use	Zoning exception, which allows a property owner to use their land in a way that is not regulated by existing zoning ordinances or within an existing zoning district.
Designation	Status of a historic resource on the National Register of Historic Places or local and state heritage lists
Façade	The exterior face of a building. Typically the front or most decorative wall, and those walls facing a public way or space.
Historic Context	A narrative that groups information about historic properties based on a shared theme, specific time period and geographical area.
Historic Conservation Easement	A customizable deed restriction that runs with title of the property to all future owners protecting the property in perpetuity against demolition or inappropriate alterations. (Available through Restore Oregon)
Historic Integrity	The retention of physical characteristics that existed during the property’s historic or prehistoric period. These include location, design, setting or context, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. See https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb15/nrb15_8.htm .
Historic Fabric	Original or old building materials or construction.
Historic Resource	A district, site, building, structure or object that holds significance in American history, architecture, engineering, archeology or culture at the National, State, or local level.
Historic Significance	Determining why, where, and when a historic resource is important.

Historic Tax Credits	A federal income tax credit of 20% for income-producing buildings (commercial and residential rental). See www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm (also called “Certified Rehabilitation”)
National Register of Historic Places	The official list of the Nation’s historic places worthy of preservation based on significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture.
Period of Significance	The span of time in which a historic resource is designated significant based on events or activities that have occurred.
Rehabilitation	The process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, which makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural, and cultural values.
Replace In-kind	Replacing historic fabric with new elements that match in appearance, size, shape, design, scale, color, material, and craftsmanship.
Special Assessment of Historic Properties	An Oregon state program that freezes the assessed value of a property for a 10-years; restricted to buildings listed on the National Register that will be appropriately rehabilitated in accordance with the Secretary of Interior Standards. www.oregon.gov/oprd/HCD/SHPO/pages/tax_assessment.aspx .
State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)	The agency that manages and administers programs for the protection of the state’s historic and cultural resources, including the National Register, Special Assessment, and Historic Tax Credits.

Preservation Matrix

This matrix identifies the hierarchy of preservation organizations throughout the State and Nation that are dedicated to preserving America’s historic resources, and from which you can find information or resources for preservation of your historic place.

	<i>Public Sector</i>	<i>Private Sector</i>
<i>National</i>	National Park Service (Dept of the Interior)	National Trust for Historic Preservation
<i>State</i>	State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) Oregon Main Street Program Heritage Commission Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO)	 RESTORE OREGON SAVING HISTORIC PLACES
<i>Local</i>	Certified Local Governments (CLGs) City Landmarks Commissions & Historic Review Boards	Local Preservation Organizations Bosco-Milligan Foundation Lower Columbia Preservation Society PreservationWorks Historical Societies

This module is part of the Preservation Toolkit developed by Restore Oregon to provide a general orientation to the decisions and processes of historic preservation and reuse. Every project is unique and the information presented does not attempt to address all the aspects or variables that may be encountered. The engagement of a qualified preservation professional is encouraged.

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== If Historic Places Matter to You, Join Restore Oregon! ==



Since 1977 Restore Oregon has worked to preserve, reuse, and pass forward the historic homes and buildings, bridges and barns, churches and Main Streets that make Oregon, Oregon.

As a nonprofit, our ability to advocate, deliver programs, and produce materials like the Preservation Toolkit depends on the support of people like you. We invite you to stand up for the historic places that matter to you and become a member by visiting us at restoreoregon.org/join.

Thank you!



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