



APPENDIX A – HISTORIC PRESERVATION PRINCIPLES

The strategies and recommendations outlined in the Historic Preservation Plan for Allentown are informed and guided by the principles of historic preservation that have been developed and honed by practitioners in the field over the years. Preservation is a practical discipline that can accommodate growth and change while continuing to preserve the characteristics that make a place special. The principles that have been developed in the field of historic preservation, in general, recognize the importance of preserving authentic historic fabric to the maximum extent possible.

Building uses come and go, but once lost, original historic fabric can never be recovered. The maintenance and preservation of original historic fabric, features, materials, and design elements, therefore, is central to a sound preservation approach. A key objective of the Historic Preservation Plan is to encourage and promote the preservation and maintenance of historic building fabric through many different types of endeavor and in as many ways as possible.

The principles of historic preservation are embodied in the topic of *Preservation Treatments* and in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, both of which are discussed below.

Preservation Treatments

The historic preservation field uses a variety of terms to describe the treatments that may be applied to historic buildings and landscapes. Although sometimes these terms are used loosely in discussion, they have specific meanings that are important to distinguish. The four key preservation treatments include: Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction.

Preservation is defined as the 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 features, generally focuses on the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features. Removals, extensive replacement, alterations, and new additions are not appropriate.

Preservation stresses protection, repair, and maintenance, and is a baseline approach for all historic resources. As the exclusive treatment for a historic property, preservation implies minimal or no change. It is therefore strictly applied only to buildings and resources of extraordinary significance that should not be altered.

In Allentown, the 1841 Bogert Covered Bridge and other historic buildings in the Saltzburg Historic District along the City park system's Lehigh Parkway are examples of buildings and structures worthy of a preservation treatment.

Rehabilitation is defined as the process of creating a compatible use in a historic property through carefully planned minimal alterations and compatible additions. Often referred to as adaptive reuse, rehabilitation protects and preserves the historic features, materials, elements, and spatial relationships that convey historical, cultural, and architectural values.

Rehabilitation acknowledges the need to alter or add to a property to meet continuing or new uses while retaining historic character. New, expanded, or upgraded facilities should be designed to avoid impacts to historic elements. They should also be constructed of compatible materials. Retention of original historic fabric should be a primary consideration in undertaking a program of rehabilitation and adaptive reuse.

Rehabilitation is perhaps the most important and widely used treatment in the field of historic preservation, particularly in communities that are revitalizing and adapting to new uses. Rehabilitation is the appropriate treatment for most historic commercial buildings remaining in Center City Allentown and along the City's historic corridors.

Restoration refers to returning a resource to its appearance at a specific previous period of its history. Restoration is the process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular time by means of removal of features from other periods in its history and the reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period.

In restoring a property to its appearance in a previous era, historic plans, documents, and photographs should be used to guide the work. Limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, as well as code-related work to make a property functional, are all appropriate within a restoration project.

In Allentown, highly significant historic buildings such as the 1770 Trout Hall at the Lehigh Valley Heritage Museum, considered to be Allentown's oldest home, was appropriate for restoration treatment following end of its use by Muhlenberg College. Restoration was undertaken through the removal of large additions and the rehabilitation of historic features.

Reconstruction is defined as the process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a non-surviving historic property using new construction for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its original location. A reconstruction is a new resource made to replace an historic resource that has been lost. Reconstruction is a rarely used

preservation treatment applicable primarily in educational and interpretive contexts.

Of these four terms, *Preservation* requires retention of the greatest amount of historic fabric, features, and materials. *Rehabilitation* acknowledges the need to alter or add to a property to meet continuing or new uses while retaining historic character. *Restoration* allows for an accurate depiction of the property's appearance at a particular time in its history. *Reconstruction* establishes a framework for re-creating vanished historic elements with new materials. Preservation and Rehabilitation are the most appropriate and applicable treatments for most historic buildings and landscapes.

Authenticity and Integrity

Central to the assessment of historic resources and their potential for change are the concepts of authenticity and integrity. **Authenticity** with respect to a historic building is associated with the preservation of authentic building fabric and features. Authenticity is different from historical appearance. An antique chair has great value because it is the real thing, while a replica of an antique chair has much less value. Similarly, a historic building with authentic features and fabric from its period(s) of historical significance is of higher value than a building with contemporary replacements, replicas, or reconstructions. The preservation of authentic historic building fabric is of primary concern with any historic building.

Integrity relates to the degree to which any individual building retains its authentic building fabric and features. Buildings with high integrity can generally accommodate very little change, while buildings with low integrity can often accommodate a considerable amount of change. In the evaluation of a historic resource, the level of integrity of the historic resource should be assessed.

Authentic building fabric and features that result in a building having high integrity should be preserved to the maximum extent possible. Changes to buildings with low integrity are easier to accommodate. Assessment of authenticity, integrity, and the degree of change that a historic building can accommodate must be made on a case by case basis.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards

The philosophy that guides the implementation of recommendations included in this Historic and Cultural Assets Plan is based on a set of guidelines entitled *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, commonly called the "Secretary of the Interior's Standards" or simply the "Standards."

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* were created by historic preservation professionals to provide guidance in the appropriate treatment of historic resources. The *Standards* were first established by the federal government in 1966 to provide guidelines for the appropriate treatment of buildings and resources impacted by federal projects. Because of their usefulness, they have been adopted throughout the field of historic preservation.

All federally funded and permitted activities affecting historic resources are evaluated with respect to these standards, including the use of rehabilitation tax credits. The *Standards* were developed specifically to prevent unintended damage to or loss of historic resources by federal actions, such as those that occurred as the result of the wholesale demolition of historic neighborhoods through urban renewal as occurred in urban areas in the 1950s and 60s.

An individual set of standards was developed for each of the four preservation treatments noted above. Just as the treatment of Rehabilitation is appropriate for most projects, the ***Standards for Rehabilitation*** are applicable to most projects being undertaken for historic buildings and landscapes.

In the language of community planners, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards* are a list of “best practices” for historic preservation. They are a touchstone for all activities affecting historic buildings and landscapes and help ensure that important issues about the care of historic buildings and landscapes are not forgotten in the process of making decisions about other issues. When the *Standards* are used in the context of a new construction project involving an historic building, they provide a starting point for the discussion of proposed changes to the building’s historic character and fabric. They were developed to ensure that policies toward historic resources were applied uniformly, even if the end result may be different in every case.

All preservation activities, whether they are publicly or privately funded, can be informed and enhanced by understanding the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*. Because the *Standards* outline a sensitive approach for assessing changes to historic properties, they are often included in design guidelines, preservation plans, ordinances, and regulations that govern activities affecting local historic districts. These *Standards* articulate basic principles that are fundamental to historic preservation. Although they have been modified over the years to accommodate changing views of historical significance and treatment options, their basic message has remained the same.

The durability of the *Standards* is testimony not only to their soundness, but also to the flexibility of their language. They provide a philosophy and approach to problem solving for those involved in managing the treatment of historic buildings, rather than a set of solutions to specific design issues. Following a balanced, reasonable, and disciplined process is often more important than the exact nature of the treatment option that is chosen. Instead of predetermining an outcome in favor of retaining or recreating historic features, the *Standards* help ensure that the critical issues are considered.

For federal projects and federal agencies, the language of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* is codified in 36 CFR Part 68 (the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, *Parks, Forests and Public Property*, Chapter 1 *National Park Service, Department of the Interior*, Part 68). A related federal regulation, 36 CFR Part 67, addresses the use of the *Standards* in the certification of projects receiving federal rehabilitation tax credits.

The *Standards* are published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and are available online, including definitions for the four preservation treatments discussed above.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are particularly useful when considering the appropriate maintenance of historic buildings; the alteration of older buildings as necessary for reuse, safety, and accessibility; and the construction of new buildings in an historic context. The ten standards that comprise the *Standards for Rehabilitation* are quoted below followed by a brief discussion of the implications of each. Additional discussion of the *Standards for Rehabilitation* may also be found online.

STANDARD 1 – *A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.*

Standard 1 recommends compatible use in the context of adaptive reuse and changes to historic buildings and landscapes. This standard encourages property owners to find uses that retain and enhance historic character, not detract from it. The work involved in reuse projects should be carefully planned to minimize impacts on historic features, materials, and spaces. The destruction of character-defining features should be avoided.

STANDARD 2 – *The historic character of a property 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.*

Standard 2 recommends the retention and preservation of character-defining features. It emphasizes the importance of preserving integrity and as much existing historic fabric as possible. Alterations that repair or modify existing historic fabric are preferable to those that require total removal.

STANDARD 3 – *Each property will 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 elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.*

Standard 3 focuses on authenticity and discourages the conjectural restoration of an entire property, feature, or design. It also discourages combining and/or grafting historic features and elements from different properties, and constructing new buildings that appear to be historic. Literal restoration to an historic appearance should only be undertaken when detailed documentation is available and when the significance of the resource warrants restoration. Reconstruction of lost features should not be attempted without adequate documentation.

STANDARD 4 – *Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.*

Standard 4 recognizes that buildings change, and that many of these changes contribute to a building's historical significance. Understanding a building's history and development is just as important as understanding its original

design, appearance, and function. This point should be kept in mind when considering treatments for buildings that have undergone many changes.

Most historic buildings contain a visual record of their own evolution. This evolution can be identified, and changes that are significant to the history of the building should be retained. The opportunity to compare multiple periods of time in the same building lends interest to the structure and helps communicate changes that have occurred within the larger landscape and community context.

STANDARD 5 – Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

Standard 5 recommends preserving the distinctive historic components of a building or landscape that represent its historic character. Workmanship, materials, methods of construction, floor plans, and both ornate and typical details should be identified prior to undertaking work.

STANDARD 6 – 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.

Standard 6 encourages property owners to repair historic character-defining features instead of replacing them when historic features are deteriorated or even missing. In cases where deterioration makes replacement necessary, new features should closely match historic conditions in all respects. Before any features are altered or removed, property owners are urged to document existing conditions with photography and notes. These records assist future choices that are appropriate to the property's historic character.

STANDARD 7 – 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.

Standard 7 warns against using chemical and physical treatments that can permanently damage historic features. Many commercially available treatments are irreversibly damaging. Sandblasting and harsh chemical cleaning, in particular, are extremely harmful to wood and masonry surfaces because they destroy the material's basic physical properties and speed deterioration.

STANDARD 8 – Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

Standard 8 addresses the importance of below ground prehistoric and historic features. This issue is of most importance when a construction project involves excavation. An assessment of a site's archeological potential prior to work is recommended. If archeological resources are present, some type of mitigation should be considered. Solutions should be developed that minimize the need for excavation of previously unexcavated sites.

STANDARD 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.*

STANDARD 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 9 and 10 are linked by issues of the compatibility and reversibility of additions, alterations, and new construction. Both standards are intended to

- 1) minimize the damage to historic fabric caused by building additions, and
- 2) ensure that new work will be different from, but compatible with, existing historic conditions. Following these standards will help to protect a building's historic integrity.

In conclusion, the basis for the *Standards* is the premise that historic resources are more than objects of aesthetic merit—they are repositories of historical information. It is important to reiterate that the *Standards* provide a framework for evaluating preservation activities and emphasize preservation of historic fabric, honesty of historical expression, and reversibility. All decisions should be made on a case by case basis. The level of craftsmanship, detailing, and quality of materials should be appropriate to the significance of the resource.