



State Historical Building Safety Board Information Manual

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State Agency Projects

Health and Safety Code 18961 was enacted into law in 1982. In 1984 the State Historical Building Code was amended to change Section 18961 by requiring that state agencies use the alternative provision of the State Historical Building Code. The review in 18961 provided the State Historical Building Safety Board (Board) with an authoritative role in state agency activities affecting qualified historical structures and properties. In addition, the mandate in Section 18961 that all state agencies “shall consult” with the Board prior to taking action indicates that the state agency must initiate consultation for review with the board. Section 18961 was amended to “*improve the review procedure by insuring that applicable state agencies adequately review the State Historical Building Code and seek the input of the Board prior to making decisions affecting*” qualified historical structures and properties (Assembly Committee on Governmental Organization).

1. State Agencies shall apply, administer and enforce the provisions of the State Historical Building Code (Health & Safety Code S. 18954, 18959). This means that all state agencies, for qualified historical structures and properties, (as defined in Health & Safety Code, S. 18955) under state ownership or control, for any analysis, planning, development, project, alteration, maintenance, or any other process that may affect the significance of, or elements or features of, qualified historical structures and properties, shall use the State Historical Building Code (or California Historical Building Code) to provide alternatives to any state code so as to preserve, encourage conservation and provide a cost effective approach to preservation of the resource and safety of users and occupants. If there is a question regarding these provisions, pursuant to Health & Safety Code 18961, state agencies shall consult with the State Historical Building Safety Board for determination of what constitutes qualified historical structures and properties, what constitutes an alternative to “code,” and what projects or processes may be affected by the State Historical Building Code.
2. State agencies shall request review of each project at the earliest planning/budgeting phase to alert the State Historical Building Safety Board to a pending project (Health & Safety Code 18961), and obtain information and consultation on effective use of the State Historical Building Code as it relates to any action that affects preservation of significance, elements and features of a historic building, structure, or property.
3. There are other responsibilities under Public Resources Code 5024.5, the California Environmental Quality Act and Executive Order W-26-92 where the State Historical Building Safety Board review of proposed actions may be initiated by a broad range of actions and programs that affect historic properties.



Code Compliance

The State Historical Building Code (SHBC) is a mandate for reasonable alternatives to the requirements of "regular" codes and ordinances, applicable to all qualified historic resources. It is to be administered by the local building official, recognizing that advisory service, precedents and Board rulings are available from the State Historical Building Safety Board, which is the final administrative authority on the SHBC's application. And while "health and safety" are issues that may never be ignored, it is important to identify parameters to contain that otherwise-too-subjective term.

In the broadest sense, anything less than the "perfect" building may be perceived by some to pose a compromise with health and safety. Thus, even the rise and run of a stairway, if not in compliance with the most current issue of the triennial building code, could fall into this category. Yet we know that buildings legally remain open and in operation for generations, although clearly out of compliance with provisions of subsequent building codes. Thus it must be acknowledged that issues of non-compliance with the regular code, which routinely exist in ongoing occupancies, cannot logically be considered to constitute a hazard to life safety.

However, conditions do arise in structures which require immediate attention, and which cannot be permitted to continue, even in existing ongoing operations. These are the "health and safety" issues which the SHBC may not overlook, nor would it want to. The statutes which establish the Historical Building Code, Health and Safety Code Sections 18950 through 18961, guarantee, in Section 18957, that local building and fire officials shall not be prevented from addressing these issues. But to attempt to apply Section 18957 to the broader issues of routine non-compliance would place more restrictions and demands on historic resources than are made of a community's existing occupied building stock. This is the exact opposite of the legislative intent of the SHBC.

A very appropriate "rule of thumb" is that any condition or non-code-compliant situation which, in an existing ongoing occupancy, would demand immediate correction, is a condition which clearly applies equally to qualified historic resources. Conversely, any condition or non-code compliant situations which are permitted to continue within existing occupancies, are also permissible in qualified historic buildings. This "rule of thumb" is entirely consistent with standard code enforcement operations throughout California, and it provides a reliable framework within which to make appropriate decisions relative to the need for alterations.

This "rule of thumb" has two common-sense-driven partial exceptions. If the rehabilitation project requires structural work, owners are encouraged to integrate into the work a reasonable improvement to the ability of the structure to resist seismic activity. Historic buildings are not exempt from local seismic upgrading ordinances, but the SHBC continues to govern the upgrading. Likewise, we as a society are committed to provide the highest degree of accessibility for people with disabilities that can be reasonably achieved without peril to



the historic resource. And here too, the latitude provided by the SHBC, working with the ADA, makes possible reasonable solutions on a case-by-case basis.



Code Updating Triggers

An important, useful and cost-effective feature of the State Historical Building Code (SHBC) is that it does not recognize the "triggers" typically found in regular code. What this means that, for qualified historical properties governed by the SHBC, the degree or amount of rehabilitation work, the preceding length of vacancy, or even a change of occupancy, may not be used as justification for an automatic requirement for other types of additional upgrading, or for full regular code compliance (Sections 8-106, 8-403, 404).

This is especially important in the field of access compliance and seismic upgrading. Historic resources are not exempt from these two mandates, although work undertaken because of these mandates continues to be governed by the SHBC. When work is undertaken on historic resources to remedy deficiencies in these two critical areas, such "triggers," requiring additional upgrading work, if invoked by jurisdictions, would serve as a major impediment to the correction of access or seismic deficiencies. In a "worst case" scenario, the added expense of "trigger" requirements could result in the loss of the resource.

With the continued viability of historic properties the primary goal of the Historical Building Code, triggering mechanisms, which are routinely found in many Codes and Ordinances, pose an unwarranted threat to the continued existence of these properties, and are thus categorically excluded. The "accessibility triggers" accompanying state-mandated seismic upgrading are a partial exception: in the interest of reasonable accessibility, these projects require a case-by-case evaluation, governed by the SHBC.



Fire Protection

The SHBC's Chapter 8-8, on Fire Protection, states in its first paragraph that its purpose "is to provide a reasonable level of fire protection...based primarily on life safety to the occupants and to fire-fighting personnel."

Recognizing the primary goal of life safety, when does the SHBC require fire sprinkler protection?

1. In every historical detention facility [8-804(c)]; and
2. In every historical building whose construction, occupancy or use constitutes a distinct fire hazard [8-804(a)].

Under what circumstances may an automatic sprinkler system be utilized as a substitute for specific regular code requirements?

1. Within cited limitations, sprinkler system may take the place of some elements of an approved automatic fire alarm system [8-805(a),Exception 2]; and
2. On a case-by-case basis, in lieu of enclosure of vertical shafts and stairwells [8-809, Exception 2].

Under what circumstances may a partial sprinkler system, connected to the domestic water supply, be utilized as a substitute for a regular code requirement?

1. On a case-by-case basis where historic exterior walls and/or windows would normally require alternative construction and/or other protection, because of their proximity to property lines [8-806(a)]; and
2. Where historic combustible roofing materials would otherwise be prohibited [8-810].

The foregoing specific listed circumstances are not to be construed as limiting other options. The SHBC is a mandate for the case-by-case evaluation and adoption of measures which will provide a reasonable degree of defense from risk, and assumes that, as a performance code, jurisdictions, engineers and owners will cooperate in effecting a solution at minimum loss of historic fabric or historic character.

Given the value we place on historic resources, it seems paradoxical to find in Paragraph 8-801 that, "It is not the intent to protect the property..." This language sets priorities, making clear that apart from insuring a reasonable level of life safety, there is a need to compromise where measures intended for property protection threaten or conflict with the preservation of significant historic and architectural features. Moreover, built into the SHBC is the latitude to pursue, evaluate and adopt any rational combination of materials and methodologies



which will provide a reasonable level of life safety. Detection technology has permitted us to recognize that they, together with smoke seals, may now be a building's most effective life-safety combination.

That fire sprinklers, installed in a manner that neither threatens nor defaces historic fabric, and that can be accomplished within the financial constraints of the owners, are a distinct and highly desirable bonus, cannot be denied. But once a reasonable level of life safety for occupants and fire-fighting personnel has been established, anything beyond must be understood as a bonus, not a mandate. For this reason, there may arise circumstances where partial fire sprinkler systems, or even no fire sprinkler systems, may be appropriate, however otherwise desirable. And while we may not neglect the life-safety of fire fighting personnel, the safe evacuation of building occupants can almost universally be achieved by means of early detection and warning systems, most of which can be installed with little or no threat to historic fabric.

Finally, it must be recognized that, with respect to qualified historic buildings, jurisdictions are enjoined [H&S 13143.2(e) & 13143.5(h)] from generating alternatives to, or more stringent fire, panic, and related standards than, those which exist in the California Building Standards Code, which, for historic buildings is Title 24, Part 8, the SHBC.



Health and Safety Code

[Click here to access the Health and Safety Code](#)



Seismic and Structural Upgrades

Earthquake damage repair and mandated seismic upgrading have generated a great deal of discussion regarding the appropriate degree of intrusiveness of seismic work vis-a-vis the latitude available under California's Historical Building Code (SHBC) which governs all qualified historical buildings. Technology with regard to archaic materials and methods of construction is rapidly advancing. Specific site seismicity, materials testing and stress analysis are tools which continue to be refined, permitting much more informed structural evaluation than in the past. The SHBC permits and encourages these new technologies in addressing the retrofit of historic resources. It must be recognized however, that, while the SHBC is a call for making the least intrusive modifications necessary to retain the viability of California's historic resources, a justifiable case can readily be made that, when addressing seismic stability, this is not a call for the barest minimum of work, but rather a call for the most prudent balance of intrusion and preservation that will effect the highest reasonable level of protection against future significant damage or loss of the historic resource.

In California, a building's ability to resist seismic activity is a key factor in its continued viability. It must also be acknowledged that there is a hierarchy of values of historic resources, which can justify, for those buildings of great historic significance, a highly intrusive seismic upgrading program. The most notable example of this is California's State Capitol which is, essentially, a reconstruction, albeit an extraordinarily well documented one. Thus, if one were to look at the comparative cost-benefit ratio, there is greater value to a community in a historic resource, hence there is justification for greater expense to protect that value.

The protection, preservation and continued viable use of California's historic resources demands of us the application of today's technology to yesterday's construction materials and methodology, recognizing and utilizing the strengths inherent in archaic materials and methodologies which have permitted them to withstand the test of time. Building on this foundation, and supplementing it with the best in seismic resistance technology, we are committed to incorporate a reasonable level of seismic resistance in the least intrusive manner.

It is rationally indefensible to misuse the SHBC in order to fund, at a lower level than its non-historic peers, the earthquake repair of a structure identified as an historic resource. And it is a misreading of the SHBC to interpret it as a license to merely "paint the cracks" of historic buildings. The SHBC's commitment is to the **preservation** of these resources, by implementing, on a case-by-case basis, the solution which best fulfills the unquestionably long-term goal that word implies.



Incentives

The State Historical Building Code (SHBC) is state law, occupying Sections 19950–18961 of California’s Health and Safety Code. And while the protection and preservation of California’s heritage of historic properties are justification enough for its existence, Section 18951 lists among its purposes, “to encourage ... a cost-effective approach to preservation.” If for no other reason, its potential for tangible rehabilitation cost-savings is a significant incentive for listing an historic property and invoking the SHBC.

The latter may represent an investor’s viewpoint, as opposed to a preservationist’s viewpoint, but the simple fact is that—from either perspective—beyond dealing with genuine issues of safety, the less tinkering with an historic building, the better. Vintage cars are a good illustration: Society acknowledges that, typically, any alteration to a vintage car usually diminishes both its aesthetic and its monetary value. Consequently, one must have an overriding reason to make alterations. The parallel to historic buildings should be obvious. It must be recognized that every alteration to an historic resource diminishes our ability to accurately perceive and thus to understand our past. For this reason, ideally, alterations to historic buildings should be generated only by overriding issues of safety. Moreover, it is a disservice to both history and owners, as well as a violation of the spirit of the SHBC, for architects or jurisdictions to attempt to require more.

With that said, it is recognized that there are times when the continuing viability of a building does require major alterations—usually within the building’s shell. But it is clearly in the best interest of the building’s historic integrity as well as to an owner’s financial advantage to tailor the new use so that it can be sensitively integrated into the vintage space with minimum alteration. This is the first of the ten “Standards” published by the federal government for its own historic building rehabilitations and for projects rehabilitated under the federal tax credit incentive program for private investors. The *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation* have been adopted by both the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) and the State Historical Building Safety Board. State-owned historic resources, as well as resources governed by many local preservation ordinances, require compliance with these Standards, and the SHBC is the tool which can make compliance with these Standards both achievable and cost effective.

Listed below are some of the issues the SHBC addresses, all of which facilitate sensitive and cost-effective rehabilitation:

1. Accessibility - Both ADA and the SHBC make provisions for reasonable levels of equivalency for, and under special circumstances, exemption from accessibility mandates.



2. Seismic/Structural - SHBC governs these issues, permitting design based on real values of archaic materials, and solutions based on engineering principles and judgments rather than on prescriptive formulas.
3. Energy - Qualified historic buildings are exempt from California energy standards, which most vintage structures cannot meet without alteration or loss of historic features.
4. Triggers - The “triggers” for full upgrading to current standards, with respect to length of vacancy, change of occupancy, or percentage of value of the work proposed, and which exist in other codes, are not recognized by the SHBC, which concentrates instead on the sensitive resolution of genuine safety considerations.



Implementation

The fastest growing sector of America's tourist industry is tourism related to history. All across the nation, whether in a metropolis or out in the country, "Old Town" has become a major destination, with a major positive economic impact. In every community, the social, economic and environmental benefits of historic preservation have become unarguable.

California communities are finding it valuable to establish and maintain their own inventories of historic resources and districts, ideally coordinating their work with the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP). By means of local inventories, especially when maintained in the jurisdiction's data bank, local planning and building agencies should be able to immediately identify their historic resources whenever projects and/or permits are under consideration.

By this means of identification with, say, a distinctive historic designation stamp on all documents, staff is able to instantly recognize the requirement to invoke the special protective state and local preservation mandates. In addition, with respect to historic resources, more and more jurisdictions are realizing the need for early consultation, and implementing a comprehensive gathering of all interested parties when a project is at the schematic level, recognizing that only in this way can the broad flexibility provided by the State Historical Building Code (SHBC) be fully utilized. And building officials are finding in the SHBC the latitude necessary to exercise, within state law, the judgement required to insure the survival of our cultural legacy of historic structures.

These steps not only expedite the completion of historic preservation projects, they also pay dividends in both staff time savings and in solutions more sensitive to the community's cultural legacy. Moreover, use of the SHBC is a near certain guarantee that the rehabilitation will be more cost effective. Finally, California law (H&S 18959) requires that the jurisdiction "administer and enforce" the SHBC. Thus, jurisdictions may not deny an owner the protection of the SHBC; but rather should inform owners and agents of historic properties of the provisions of the SHBC, and its applicability to their project, just as they routinely inform owners of the applicable codes with respect to non-historic buildings.

The State Historical Building Safety Board (SHBSB) and its staff provide a resource to owners, architects and jurisdictions in helping to formulate the reasonable alternatives and reasonable equivalencies which are key to the SHBC's implementation. Finally, when necessary, the SHBSB will hear formal appeals and establish formal rulings which, by statute, are the final administrative authority with respect to interpretation of the SHBC.



Additions and Expansions

The State Historical Building Code (SHBC) was created by legislation in 1975 giving authority to the State Historical Building Safety Board to write regulations, and have consultation, review and appellate functions for code and regulation issues relating to qualified historic buildings, structures and properties.

A major feature of the State Historical Building Code is that it is a state law, a statute within the [Health and Safety Code](#) and the creation of regulations is separated by Health and Safety Code Section [18944.7](#) from the California Building Standards code adoption process.

The written regulations, the California Historical Building Code (CHBC), are entitled “code” as well, but are in reality regulation adopted pursuant to Building Standards law. The CHBC is Part 8 of Title 24 of California’s Code of Regulations. Another important feature of the CHBC is that it is not a “stand alone” code. It relies on a “regular adopted code” such as the latest adopted California Building Code to be the standard from which alternatives are derived.

An often overlooked part of this legislated code is that the nature and extent of its reach and authority can extend into arenas where other statutes affect historic buildings or structures (*Health and Safety Code Section [18956](#)*). While non-building regulations are not addressed in the CHBC, the SHBC (*Health and Safety Code Sections [18958](#) and [18959.5](#)*) gives authority for expansion or limitation of the reach and authority through adoption of regulations by the State Historical Building Safety Board. Other state agencies may adopt rules and regulations governing the rehabilitation, preservation, restoration, related reconstruction, safety, or relocation of qualified historical buildings, structures and properties within their jurisdictions (*Health and Safety Code, Section [18954](#)*).

To facilitate standardization of application of the code, the State Historical Building Safety Board is given authority for [appeals and review functions](#). The code is for the most part a set of performance criteria based on reference to regular code. The authority for determination of the performance of a particular alternative “as reasonably equivalent” to that of the regular code is the decision of the State Historical Building Safety Board through the consultation, review and appeal process.



Consults, Appeals, and Reviews

The State Historical Building Safety Board (Board) has interpretive and appeal authority for determining equivalency and acceptability of designs that are proposed as equivalent or reasonably safe alternatives to the prescriptive mandates of regular code. The Board has created three ways to access the review and appeals activities described in the State Historical Building Code. The three are: information requests with the Executive Director, consultations with the Executive Director and the Executive Committee, and appeal to the State Historical Building Safety Board.

Contacts to the board should be made through the Executive Director for the Board. The Executive Director works for the State Architect as staff to the board. The Executive Director is responsible for coordinating all aspects of the State Historical Building Code program for owners, designers, jurisdictions, and agencies. The authority and responsibility for reviews and appeals rests with the State Historical Building Safety Board.

For more information on reviews and appeals see the 2007 California Historical Building Code, Chapter 8-1, Section 8-104 and Health and Safety Code, Section 18960.

State Agencies

State agencies shall consult with the Board for review prior to undertaking any action or decision which affects historic buildings, structures or properties (Health and Safety Code, S. 18961). Reviews may be initiated by sending a request to attend meetings, participate in proposal review, and/or consultations with designers and decision makers. It is recommended that information or Informal Consultation begin with initiation of the budget process for projects planning.

Any board member representing a state agency may bring issues to the Board for information, review an action by providing information under New Business on any agenda, or by submitting a request for an agenda item to the Executive Director.

Information

Questions about the code and its application are made to the Board staff. The phone and e-mail are answered on a regular basis, usually the same day received. [Contact the State Historical Building Safety Board.](#)

Before a Consultation takes place, it is recommended that the "appellant" has approached the building official or administering authority and has clearly defined the issue or issues between the administering authority and project proponent to be reviewed. The same applies for state agency projects. The appropriate code administering authority shall have been contacted and any issues brought to the Board in a timely manner prior to final approvals.



Informal Consultation

Consultations with Board staff, by phone or e-mail, are done on an informal basis. Requests for an official letter may necessitate review by the Executive Committee or the full board. Generally, informal consultations are answered by citing the latest California Historical Building Code or the Health and Safety Code. Some can be assisted by citing examples from the Selected Case Studies Book (available from the [California Preservation Foundation](#)). Information and opinion provided by phone is based on the information provided. Staff may request additional information or request consultation with all parties to the issue before an opinion is issued.

Quasi-Formal Consultation

Consultation with the Executive Committee. Consultation with the Executive Committee will be referred by the Executive Director.

Formal Appeal and Decision

The full Board has the authority to hear appeals and make decisions regarding issues determined by the Board to be of “statewide importance.”

- All formal appeals must be processed by the Board staff and placed on a meeting agenda.
- Three of the four regularly scheduled meetings are usually held in Sacramento. It is possible to schedule a special meeting on the third Thursday in any month. Costs for a special meeting are likely to be assessed (2007 California Historical Building Code, Section 8-104). The Board has the authority to recover costs associated with board reviews and appeals. It is essential that the appellant attend the meeting to present the issue to the Board.
- Where possible, all parties to the issue should attend to present their positions. If all parties are not able to be present, the Board may solicit their input formally. This applies especially to state agencies and board member agencies.
- Appeals and decisions must be made on an issue by issue basis. Issues must be clearly defined, and information understood by all parties to the issue. The issues to be discussed should be clearly documented from the earliest steps.
- A formal process will be followed by the Board during the hearing of appeal. Each of the following will be drafted by Board staff as an information packet for the board. All available information will be included from all of the parties to the issue.
 - A determination of statewide importance of the issue will be made.
 - A determination of qualification of the building, structure or property will be made.
 - Presentations of the facts of each issue will be made by all who may wish to contribute.



- A determination of the facts on each issue before the board, as known and available to the Board, will be made.
- A discussion of the alternatives (or interpretation or determination) will be held, for the purpose of determining their reasonable equivalence to regular code, or providing for health and life safety of occupants and public.
- A decision will be rendered by the board on each issue before the board, or as determined by the board during the hearing.
- The determinations and decisions will be formally adopted by vote of the board for each issue and determination.
- Decisions will be made in writing (published), to all of the parties to the issue, and filed with the Building Standards Commission, per Health and Safety Code, S. 18960, (c).(2).
- Decisions are the final administrative procedure of the Board as intended by Health and Safety Code S. 18960, (c.) (1), (2), (3) and are precedent setting.

Post Appeal

The State Historical Building Code does not provide the Board any authority to enforce issuance of permits or approvals. Beyond appeal, where issues involve the right of an owner to use the State Historical Building Code, the owner must seek advice of legal counsel. The Board and staff cannot provide advice.



SHBSB Duties and Responsibilities

The duties and responsibilities of the State Historical Building Safety Board are described in Health and Safety Code, Division 13, Part 2.7, Sections 18950 to 18961. A summary of the board's functions and responsibilities include (but are not limited) to the following:

- shall adopt rules and regulations pursuant to the State Historical Building Code (Health and Safety Code, S. 18950-61).
- shall adopt and submit alternative building standards for approval by the Building Standards Commission.
- may adopt, amend, and repeal other alternative rules and regulations under Part 2.7 which the board has recommended for adoption under subdivision (b) of Health and Safety Code, S. 18960.
- shall coordinate and consult with other applicable state agencies affected by this part (Health and Safety Code, Div. 13, Part 2.7) except as provided in Health and Safety Code, S. 18943.
- any change or modification (per Health and Safety Code, S. 18944.7) shall be filed and will not be effective until filed with the State Historical Building Safety Board.
- is established as a unit within the Division of the State Architect.
- shall act as consultant to the State Architect.
- shall act as a review body to state and local agencies with respect to interpretations, administration and enforcement.
- shall accept appeals from any party if the issue is of statewide importance.
- shall report decisions in printed form.
- shall report decisions to the Building Standards Commission.
- may accept requests for interpretation by local agencies.
- shall report interpretations to the Building Standards Commission.
- may charge a reasonable fee not to exceed costs for services.
- shall receive for review, prior to taking any action or making decisions on variances or appeals which affect historical buildings, from all state agencies which enforce and administer approvals, variances, or appeals procedures or decisions affecting the preservation or safety of the historical aspects of historical buildings.
- shall be composed of qualified experts in their respective fields who shall represent various state and local public agencies, professional design societies and building and



preservation oriented organizations. Each of the following shall have one member who shall serve without pay, but receive expenses while serving.

- Office of the State Architect.
- The State Fire Marshal.
- The State Historical Resources Commission.
- The California Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board.
- California Council, American Institute of Architects.
- Structural Engineers Association of California.
- A mechanical engineer, Consulting Engineers Association of California.
- An electrical engineer, Consulting Engineers Association of California.
- California Council of Landscape Architects.
- The Department of Housing and Community Development.
- The Department of Parks and Recreation.
- County Supervisors Association of California.
- League of California Cities.
- The Office of Statewide Health Planning and Development.
- The Department of Rehabilitation.
- The California Chapter of the American Institute of City Planners.
- The Department of Transportation.
- The California Preservation Foundation.
- The Seismic Safety Commission.
- The California Building Officials.
- BOMA California

The 20 members listed above shall select a building contractor as a member of the board.



What is Historic Preservation?

Historic Preservation is not “frosting,” “fluff” or “fad.” It is tested and sound social, economic and environmental policy.

Communities fight for the tourist dollar, and tourism centered around our historic legacy is the fastest growing segment of that industry.

Historic preservation affirms environmental sensitivity. Just think of the many railroad tank-cars full of fuel required to bake—for a full week—the countless bricks that make up a vintage building. How much more respectful of our earth and its resources to conserve that huge investment in non-renewable fuel, rather than to consign it, along with all that labor and all those materials, to a non-biodegradable heap of landfill.

Historic preservation has demonstrated its ability to turn "inner cities" around, replacing decay, indifference and crime with a sense of "roots," a sense of place, and a feeling of community pride. In the process, the cost of crime diminishes while the community's tax revenues increase.

A civilization (or a community) is judged by the monuments it leaves behind. Historic preservation educates and enriches the mind and spirit of a people. We must never forget that it is we who are the stewards of this priceless legacy. And may we accept with deep resolve the obligation to bequeath it—as unaltered as possible—to future generations.



Find out if your property is qualified

The Office of Historic Preservation

Computer lists of the National Register and California Register.

Local Planning Office

The planning department is most usually the best place to find local lists.

Local Heritage or History Commissions

These governmental organizations can create and have a list. Local neighborhood or preservation organizations: these groups may have access to official lists, but can't create official lists.

Local Neighborhood or Preservation Organizations

These groups may have access to official lists, but can't create official lists.

Local, State and Federal Agencies that Promulgate Projects

Many agencies that create, fund and accomplish capital projects are subject to the California Environmental Quality Act. One of the processes of the California Environmental Quality Act is to identify and declare eligibility for all historical properties that could be affected by the project. Properties identified in those projects and declared eligible are “qualified.” Those lists are usually not distributed widely. Contact any agency that may have had a project in your vicinity. The environmental divisions of Caltrans, Department of Water Resources, Department of General Services/Real Estate Services Division, local water agencies, and local public works departments are places to query.

Other Options

Petition your local jurisdiction for an individual designation, create a NR nomination and apply to the Office of Historic Preservation, or petition the Office of Historic Preservation for a finding of eligibility.



Historic Structures Reports

This is a study of the historical building, structure or property that identifies the history, style, construction, the historically significant and character defining features and fabric and often includes a description of the condition of the structure interior and exterior.



Character Defining Features and Fabric

Preservation Brief 17 – Architectural Character

Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving Their Character.
Lee H. Nelson, FAIA.

This booklet provides essential guidance to help property owners and architects identify those features of historic buildings that give the building its visual character so that their preservation can be maximized in rehabilitation. 12 pages. 27 illustrations. 1988. To access this information click on the link below.

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/17-architectural-character.htm>



How to Read a Historical Building

The Walk Through – Learn to Identify the Visual Character of a Historic Building

The web “Walk Through” service is specifically designed to help owners, architects, developers, maintenance personnel, and members of historic preservation commissions identify those tangible elements or features that give historic buildings their unique visual character. To access this web service, click on the link below.

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/education/walkthrough/index.htm>



Contact

Headquarters Office

Department of General Services
Division of the State Architect

1102 Q Street, Suite 5100
Sacramento, CA 95811

SHBSB Technical Assistance Help Line

(916) 445-7627
shbsb@dgs.ca.gov

PLEASE DO NOT SUBMIT PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION.