

HISTORIC STRUCTURE REPORT FORMAT

Historic Structure Reports provide a valuable foundation for the rehabilitation, restoration, stabilization or reconstruction of an historic building. They are particularly important if the proposed work involves fabricating significant missing architectural or landscape features, recapturing the appearance of a property at one particular period of its history, removing later additions, or substantially modifying existing historic fabric. This document provides a project architect with the information necessary for making appropriate decisions on restoring or removing fabric, and on period of restoration, as recommended in the "Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties." The report should basically provide a clear description of the building's architectural history: its original appearance, what changes were made and when, and its present condition. In addition, it should provide guidance with respect to any proposed new work.

The following is the recommended format for a historic structure report:

Table of Contents

Forward or Introduction (when appropriate)

- Purpose of the report
- Preservation objectives

Brief History of the Property

- Significance and historic events, local and regional, persons associated, ownership history, etc. (Much of this information should be available in existing local/national nomination forms.)

Construction History

- (original, and subsequent alterations)
- Chronology
- Historical documentation (letters, diaries, vouchers, newspaper articles, etc.)
- Site work (including ordering of materials, construction, unusual craft work, etc.)
- Reference to craftsmen/builders/architects associated with the property
- Early views, photographs, etc., showing appearance at different periods
- Physical investigation (e.g. analysis of paint layers relative to construction events) may be necessary to clarify which construction events are historic.

Architectural Evaluation

- Assessment of all exterior and interior features and finishes.
- Identification of those architectural features, materials and finishes that are character-defining and therefore significant, and which must be preserved in the course of project work.
- Prioritization of these features (premiere, important, contributing, non-contributing).
- Room-by-room evaluation, including identification of materials, construction techniques, features (lighting, paneling, wainscoting, radiators, glazing, cabinetwork, fireplaces) and finishes.
- Prioritization of architectural significance of spaces (premiere, important, contributing, non-contributing).
- Description and evaluation of building mechanical systems (heating, lighting, plumbing, electrical, etc.)

Existing Conditions

- Analyze existing conditions, damage, structural problems, materials deterioration, etc.
- Prioritize repair/stabilization work.
- Assess the need for materials conservation.

Maintenance Requirements

- Outline the need for a plan and program for general and periodic maintenance, recognizing that deferred maintenance is not an option for historic resources.

Archeology

- Depending on the nature of the property, its site and setting, and on potential funding sources, it may be desirable or necessary to include this section to address any archeological concerns associated with any proposed stabilization plans or project work.

Proposed Work

- Recommendations for any proposed work based on existing conditions and preservation objectives (this might include a list of work priorities, phasing, estimated costs)
- Categories of work: Architectural, Structural, Mechanical, Electrical, Archeological, Conservation, and others.

Drawings and Photographs

- Copies of original drawings and specifications, along with similar documentation of subsequent alterations are of great importance. Drawings of the existing facility are also important. Historic and current photographs are of critical importance. A good, clear set of current photographs in 35mm format is indispensable in understanding the building; use at least one 36 print roll each for the exterior and also for the interior, including overviews and details. As complete a package as possible of this type of documentation should be provided.

Bibliography (as needed)

References (as needed)

Appendices (as needed)

