



DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX CREDIT PROGRAM  
GUIDANCE FOR CARRYING OUT PROJECT WORK THAT IS  
CONSISTENT WITH THE STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION**

All project reviews carried out under the State of Delaware Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program (Program) are reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and the Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* (Standards Guidelines). These Standards and Guidelines are broadly worded so as to be able to guide in the rehabilitation of all historic structures, whether they are industrial complexes, warehouses, schools, commercial structures, or residences. The underlying concern expressed in the Standards and Guidelines is the preservation of significant historic materials and features of a building in the process of rehabilitation. The Standards and Guidelines apply with equal force to both interior and exterior work, and the Delaware State Historic Preservation Office (DE SHPO) reviews the entire rehabilitation project including any attached, adjacent or related new construction. The Standards and Guidelines are to be applied to rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility. Certification of the Rehabilitation is based on whether the overall project meets the Standards. Proposed work that does not appear to be consistent with the Standards will be identified during the DE SHPO review of the *Historic Preservation Tax Credit Application, Part 2 – Certification of Rehabilitation* (Part 2 Application), and advice will be given to assist property owners, architects, or builders in bringing the project into conformance with the Standards and Guidelines. Owners are not held responsible for rehabilitation work undertaken by a previous owner. The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* are as follows:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall 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 architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall 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.

The following information should be noted and addressed if a rehabilitation project is to be carried out to be consistent with the above Standards. It includes advice and concerns on the overall project, the exterior, the interior, additions and site work.

**OVERALL ISSUES** - As used throughout this section, “feature” refers to almost any building component from wood trim to chimneys to porches. The recommended approach is to repair building features. Replacement “in-kind” is allowable if the original feature is substantially deteriorated. “In-kind” refers to using the same material. Denial of certification may result if replacement of original materials is excessive or unnecessary. Sound original materials are a part of the history of the building and should be left in place with only the deteriorated portions repaired or replaced

- **Demolition (Exterior or Interior)** - Specify condition and assess significance of each section proposed for demolition. For projects in which major demolition is proposed due to structural problems, a report from a structural engineer experienced in the examination of historic buildings may be required as justification for demolition. The DE SHPO staff will discuss the need for a structural engineer’s report upon review of the Part 2 Application.

- **Existing Outbuildings** - The rehabilitation of existing outbuildings, including garages, smokehouses, kitchens, barns, etc. may be eligible for Credits if the outbuilding contributes to the historic significance of the property or district. Due to the significant contextual relationship which exists between principal buildings and outbuildings, contributing buildings should not be relocated. Demolition of outbuildings which contribute to the significance of the property or district should be avoided as it may result in denial of certification.
- **Loss of Historic Fabric due to Fire, Vandalism, or Unsympathetic Rehabilitation by a Previous Owner** – “Fabric” refers to any construction material. If there is loss of historic fabric due to any of these conditions, then a site visit by the DE SHPO prior to undertaking any rehabilitation work is mandatory. Where the DE SHPO staff have not verified conditions of the buildings prior to rehabilitation, and the Part 2 Application supporting documentation shows extensive interior reconstruction, denial of certification may result.

**EXTERIOR** - Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values. Restoration of a building to its earliest appearance is not required. Many historic buildings have been altered in the past and sometimes these alterations gain significance in their own right. The form and detailing of those architectural materials and features that are important in defining the historic character of a building are to be identified, retained, and preserved. Those materials and features identified as character-defining should be protected and maintained. When additional work is necessary, repairing the features is recommended. Repairs may include patching, piecing-in, splicing, consolidating, and limited replacement in-kind. If the level of damage and deterioration is so extensive that it precludes repair, then replacement of an entire character-defining feature with new material following physical or historical evidence is appropriate. Some alterations may be necessary, but it is important that such alterations do not radically change, obscure, or destroy character-defining materials, features, or finishes. Alterations should be carried out so that, if removed, the essential historic character and materials of the building are unaffected.

- **Changes to Building Exterior** – The extent to which a building’s exterior appearance can be altered and still be considered to meet the Standards depends on the significance of the architectural features and the visibility of the area in which the proposed changes are to take place. The primary façade is generally the one that is visible from public rights-of-way and should be left as intact as possible. There is more latitude given to changes to secondary or rear facades, as long as they do not contain significant architectural features.
- **Decorative Features and Ornamentation** - Existing decorative trim should be retained and repaired. It is not required that missing trim be restored; however, if such work is planned, there should be good historical evidence to support the design for the replacement. If historic architectural trim is masked with material in such a way that it obscures its historic character, denial of certification may result.
- **Doors** – Original doors are significant features of virtually all historic properties. Applicants are strongly encouraged to retain and repair historic doors. Replacement doors should replicate the materials and design of the original door. Where their replacement is proposed, their existing condition should be documented and the design of the replacement door specified. For purposes of improving energy efficiency, the installation of exterior storm doors is recommended instead of replacing original doors. For storm doors, specify type, finish and location. Storms doors may be metal or wood. Aluminum storm doors are acceptable as long as they contain full height glass and the finish is painted or baked-on enamel. Specify design, finish and location.
- **Masonry Cleaning** – Every method of exterior cleaning carries with it some risk of damage to building materials. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to clean masonry only when necessary to halt deterioration or to remove graffiti and severe staining. Indicate the condition of each material to be cleaned. Specify what the cleaning is intended to accomplish (soot removal, paint removal, etc.) and what process is to be used on each masonry element. Provide supporting material to show that method selected is the gentlest means possible for the project. Abrasive cleaning methods such as sand-blasting are prohibited; however, high-pressure water blasting can be equally as damaging, even if no sand or other aggregate is added to the water. Summarize results of test patches, and include close-up color photographs of masonry surface before and after cleaning as evidence that the method being proposed will not damage masonry surface or the mortar. For all exterior masonry cleaning involving chemical processes, provide cleaning products to be used on each type of masonry, the strengths (percentage), water pressure to be used measured in pounds per square inch (psi), amount of water to be used, measured in gallons per minute (gpm), and the nozzle tip (measured in degrees) to be used.
- **Masonry Re-pointing** – If done improperly, re-pointing can cause damage to a building’s structure and visual appearance. It is important that the composition of the new mortar duplicate the original mortar of the existing building in strength, color, and detailing. The method used to remove deteriorated mortar is also an important consideration. Hand chiseling of deteriorated mortar joints is the method least likely to cause damage to brick or stone. Cutting the mortar out with masonry saws and removing it with power chisels can sometimes be performed without damaging the brick but if these operations are performed carelessly, they can cause permanent damage to the masonry. The composition of the new mortar must be in keeping with the original mortar. Too often, especially in brick walls and chimneys, mortar joints are re-pointed with Portland cement compounds that are harder than the bricks themselves and consequently result in the face brick cracking or spalling (falling off). A reasonably soft mortar should contain at least as much hydrated lime as

Portland cement, and preferably two or three times as much for pre-1875 buildings and those having a softer hand-made brick. The appearance of the new joints should match the original. The primary concerns with the visual appearance of the joints are the color and texture of the replacement mortar, the joint width, and the tooling. If the mix contains Portland cement, white Portland cement should be used rather than gray Portland cement. The aggregate or sand is used in the mortar mix to provide the appropriate color but, if needed to achieve a color match, a masonry pigment can be added. Mortar takes four weeks of curing time before the final color is reached. The new mortar joints should be slightly recessed from the face brick since bringing the mortar joint flush with the face brick will create a visually thicker mortar joint. Because of the potential damage that can result from any type of re-pointing, a test patch should be completed by the contractor to demonstrate competency in removing existing or original mortar. Re-pointing should be limited to those joints that are deteriorated. If done properly, the newly pointed work will match that of the rest of the building. Limited re-pointing is the most economical procedure as well as the best preservation practice. The Part 2 Application should indicate deteriorated areas that require repair and provide evidence that re-pointing mortar will match the original in composition (i.e., ratio of lime, cement, sand and any additives), color, texture, and tooling. For extensive re-pointing work, a test patch should be prepared and be reviewed by the DE SHPO after it has cured for four weeks..

- **Painting and Paint Removal** – The re-painting of existing, painted surfaces does not require lengthy discussion in the Part 2. The use and placement of historically appropriate paint colors will enhance the rehabilitation of the historic property, but it is not required. If painting previously unpainted brick or masonry is proposed, denial of certification may result. Removal of paint must be carried out in a manner that does not damage the building material. High pressure water-blasting can be damaging to wood siding and architectural features. The methods of paint removal must be specified in the Part 2 Application.
- **Porches** – Applicants should clearly indicate the extent of deterioration when discussing repair of historic porches. Non-existent porches should not be reconstructed unless there is good physical evidence of their design.
- **Roof** – The roof and related features including cresting, dormers, cupolas and chimneys, and the size, color, and patterning of the roofing material are extremely important in defining the building’s overall historic character and a weather-tight roof is essential to the preservation of the entire building. Certain types of roofing such as slate, clay tile, or metal may be visually prominent and their loss would negatively impact the overall significance of the building. If the roofing material is a character-defining feature of the building, then it is recommended that the roof be repaired with only the deteriorated or missing materials replaced. If the historic material is too deteriorated to repair, then replacement in-kind or with a compatible substitute material which conveys a similar visual appearance may be acceptable. For roofs where the original roofing material has already been replaced, restoration of original material is not required. Applicants should specify the type of existing roofing material, the original roofing material (if known), and method and extent of roof repair. Additions of new roof features such as skylights and roof vents may be acceptable if they have a low profile and are not visible from the primary elevation. The Part 2 Application should include documentation of their size and projection above the surface of the roof and the construction material. In addition, their location should be indicated in a drawing or sketch plan. Any repairs to or removal of chimneys should also be noted. Gutters and downspouts should generally have a baked enamel finish so that they can be painted to match the trim.
- **Siding** – Specify extent of deterioration, estimated percentage of replacement of siding that will be required, replacement material, and if applicable, cleaning and paint removal techniques. Justification for the use of replacement siding must be provided as well as the type of material and location of placement. The concealment of original materials with artificial siding reduces the architectural integrity of the building since most of the original surface is hidden from view. The use of artificial siding may also accelerate structural problems, as well as conceal them. Additionally, the installation of artificial siding materials often results in the removal of character-defining features such as corner boards, bracketed eaves, and door and window casings. Use of artificial replacement siding may result in denial of certification.
- **Storefront Alterations** - Justify changes to storefronts and provide photographs of the areas to be altered. Information should be provided as to when the existing storefront was constructed and its current physical condition. If a reconstruction of the storefront is planned, state the basis for the proposed new storefront design. Applicants are strongly discouraged from introducing a storefront or new design element on the ground floor that alters the character of the structure and its relationship with the street or that causes destruction of significant historic material.
- **Windows** – Original windows are significant features of virtually all historic properties. Applicants are strongly encouraged to retain and repair historic windows. Replacement of original windows should occur only when the existing is deteriorated beyond repair. The wholesale replacement of original windows is rarely necessary, and is generally not accepted. Reasons other than complete deterioration, including peeling paint or paint build-up, rotten sills, broken muntins (dividing bars), broken glass, or energy efficiency, do not justify wholesale replacement. For any proposed window repair, specify existing conditions, material, finish, size and light configuration. Where window replacement is proposed, indicate the condition of existing windows (sash, glazing, muntins, etc.) and the reasons for proposed replacement. Photographs and window surveys must be provided as evidence of severe deterioration. In addition, provide data on the cost of repairing existing windows versus installing replacements. Where replacement of existing windows appears justified by supporting documentation and where the windows are an integral part of the building’s design and character, replacement sash should match the original in material, size, pane configuration, color, trim details, and planar and reflective qualities. The use of tinted or reflective glass including “Low-E” glass often causes a change in character and may result in denial of certification. Replacement glass must be clear and non-reflective. Artificial muntins

are generally unacceptable, including those that are surface-mounted and those sandwiched between layers of double-glazing; muntins should actually divide the panes of glass. Scaled drawings comparing the existing windows with the replacement windows should be provided. The use of inappropriate replacement windows will result in denial of certification as will the replacement of original windows for reasons other than severe and irreparable deterioration. For purposes of improving energy efficiency, the installation of interior or exterior storm windows is recommended rather than replacing original windows. For storm windows, specify type, finish and location. Storm windows may be wood or metal. Aluminum storm windows are acceptable as long as the metal tracks are mounted so that they do not protrude from the face of the window opening; the meeting rail is aligned with that of the existing sash; and the finish is painted or baked-on enamel. Glass in storm windows should also be clear, rather than tinted or “Low-E.”

**INTERIOR** - In reviewing interior work, the effect of the proposed work on significant interior features and spaces is examined. The level of significance of interior spaces largely depends on whether the spaces are “primary” or “secondary.” Primary spaces are those that are important to the character of the building and should always be preserved; generally, secondary spaces may be altered. In single family homes, primary spaces usually include parlors and living rooms, dining rooms, halls, and stairways. Secondary spaces may include bathrooms, kitchens, rear stairways, and most bedrooms. Those materials and features identified as character-defining should be protected and maintained. When additional work is necessary, repairing the features is recommended. Repairs may include patching, piecing-in, splicing, consolidating, and limited replacement in-kind. If the level of damage and deterioration is so extensive that it precludes repair, then replacement of an entire character-defining feature with new material following physical or historical evidence is appropriate. Some alterations may be necessary, but it is important that such alterations do not radically change, obscure, or destroy character-defining spaces, materials, features, or finishes. Alterations should be carried out so that, if removed, the essential historic character and materials of the building are unaffected.

- **Decorative Features and Ornamentation** – Interior features which are important in defining the character of a building should be repaired rather than replaced. Character-defining features include but are not limited to the following: columns, cornices, baseboards, fireplaces and mantels, historic paneling, wainscoting, doors, window and door casings, decorative plaster, and staircases. If original features need to be removed during rehabilitation, they should be re-installed in their original locations. The use of salvaged architectural features from other buildings is inappropriate if the effect is to create a “new” historic appearance. Be as descriptive as necessary to fully indicate the existing conditions and the nature of the proposed work. Discuss by room or by element (e.g. stairs, plaster moldings, ceiling and base moldings, mantels). Issues related to stairs which do not meet fire codes should be discussed with the DE SHPO.
- **Door and Fire Code Issues** - Applicants are strongly encouraged to retain and repair historic doors. In general, replacement doors should match the originals. Any issues related to meeting the fire code should be discussed with the DE SHPO.
- **Floor Plan** – A building’s floor plan is often one of the key elements in defining the historic character of a building. Since the layout of rooms is an important distinguishing feature of a building, changes to the floor plan should be limited to secondary spaces and should not affect character-defining features or primary spaces. Generally, walls should not be inserted into primary spaces, nor should the walls defining these primary spaces be removed. For projects that include changes to a building’s floor plan, a sketch floor plan of the building showing the existing room layout and the proposed alterations must be provided. This plan does not need to be professionally drafted but must be understandable and include the locations of doors, windows, fireplaces, stairs, etc.
- **Heating, Ventilating, and Air-conditioning (HVAC) Systems** –Installation of new HVAC systems should be planned to cause the least alteration possible to the building’s floor plan, interior features, and exterior elevations, and the least damage to the historic building materials. Installation of ducts, and pipes should not obscure character-defining features and should be concealed whenever possible within attics, crawl spaces, closets, service rooms, or wall cavities. Indicate what effect the new equipment and duct work will have on the historic building material. If the HVAC system requires removal of windows or portions of walls, describe alternative systems considered in the design process and why the proposed system was chosen. Installation of systems that cause damage to the historic building material or cause visual loss of character may result in denial of certification.
- **Insulation** – In order to improve energy efficiency of historic buildings, insulation with the proper vapor barrier should be installed in the attic and crawl spaces. Fiberglass batt insulation with an attached vapor barrier may be installed easily within these spaces. Blown-in insulation within the attic is also acceptable if a vapor barrier is provided. If a building’s exterior walls are opened up during rehabilitation, the installation of fiberglass batt insulation with vapor barrier is appropriate. Opening walls expressly for the purpose of installing insulation is not recommended, nor is blown-in insulation in exterior walls without an effective vapor barrier. Without a vapor barrier, moisture may condense within the wall cavity, leading to moisture damage to the building’s structure. The Part 2 Application must specify type, location, and method of installation. If wall insulation will be installed, indicate the change (in inches) to ceiling and wall surfaces and to trim.
- **Painting and Finishes** – Interior repainting and the installation of wall papers will usually meet the Standards. If original decorative paint finishes remain in the building, their treatment should be discussed with the DE SHPO. Also of concern are proposals to paint features which have been historically unfinished or to strip historically painted features.

- **Plumbing and Electrical systems** - The repair, replacement, and installation of all plumbing and electrical systems is allowable as long as the installation does not adversely impact the significant historical features of the building. However, the costs of fixtures associated with these systems may not be included as part of the “qualified” expenditures.
- **Walls, Floors, and Ceilings** – The Standards encourage the repair and retention of these features. Replacement materials should convey the same visual appearance as the original. For example, gypsum wallboard, if finished smooth, is an appropriate substitute for flat plaster. In replacing walls or ceilings with wallboard, it is important that care be taken to maintain the historic relationship between any existing trim such as door and window casings, baseboards, and ceiling moldings. Changes in ceiling height are generally discouraged as is the furring-out of walls and exposing masonry surfaces unless the condition is supported by historical evidence. In the Part 2 Application, be specific about describing existing materials and indicating whether they are original, and whether significant removal or repair is needed. Wooden floors may be restored or they may be covered with wall-to-wall carpet.

**ADDITIONS AND SITE WORK** – “Qualified expenditures” related to these work elements are as follows: 1) the costs associated with new additions where the combined square footage of all additions does not exceed 20% of the total square footage of the historic portion of the Certified Historic Property as long as the new addition preserves the character-defining features of the property, and the new construction is adequately differentiated from the existing building; 2) the costs associated with achieving ADA compliance where the square footage of this addition, in combination with all other additions, does not exceed 20% of the total square footage of the historic portion of the Certified Historic Property as long as the ADA work is designed in a manner to minimize any adverse impact on the property, and preserve its character-defining features; and 3) the costs associated with paving and landscaping which do not exceed 10% of the total “qualified” expenditures of the project.

- **Additions** - New exterior additions must be compatible with the Certified Historic Property with respect to site, size, scale, material, and detailing. In general, additions should be placed so as to not be visible from the main façade of the building. New additions which overwhelm or significantly alter the historic character of the building may result in denial of certification. Applicants are strongly encouraged to obtain DE SHPO approval before undertaking projects involving new additions. Site plans and elevation drawings of the new addition must be submitted. In accordance with Standard 8, the DE SHPO should be consulted if the project will involve significant ground-disturbing activities so that the likelihood of significant archaeological resources in the project area can be evaluated.
- **ADA Compliance, including Handicapped Ramps** – If this work is included in the project, then a drawing or sketch elevation to show their impact on the historic building is required. Their location should be indicated on any site plans or sketch plans.
- **Site Work** - Because site work may affect the relationship of a structure to its site, change the historic landscape, or otherwise damage the historic character of the property, it is considered an important part of the rehabilitation project review. All site work should be described and will be reviewed by the DE SHPO. Avoid making changes to the ground level near the building except to achieve positive drainage away from the building or for the installation of a drainage system. New plantings and sidewalks are allowable as long as drastic changes in the character of the site do not occur. Plantings should be placed sufficiently away from the building so that roots will not damage the foundation and moisture will not be trapped against the foundation. Parking should be located to the rear of the site or away from public view.

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Copies of the Standards and Guidelines are available without cost from the DE SHPO at 21 The Green, Suite A, Dover, DE 19901, 302-739-5685 and on the NPS web site at: [http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/rehab/rehab\\_index.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/rehab/rehab_index.htm). Further guidance is contained in a series of Preservation Briefs and other technical publications prepared by the National Park Service at: <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/care/sitemap.htm>.

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