

## HISTORIC PROPERTIES RESOURCES

With the passage of the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), access for people with disabilities to all public spaces is now a civil right. For over the last decade there has been a focus on preserving historically significant properties and on making their buildings and activities more accessible to people with disabilities. Historic property owners, design professionals and administrators should evaluate properties thoroughly, to identify the applicable federal and state accessibility requirements, to explore alternatives and to implement solutions that provide independent access and are consistent with accepted historic preservation standards. According to the Department of Justice's *Title III Technical Assistance Manual*, p. 32 and following:

[The ADA requires barrier removal in historic buildings] if it is readily achievable. However, the ADA takes into account the national interest in preserving significant historic structures. Barrier removal would not be considered "readily achievable" if it would threaten or destroy the historic significance of a building or facility that is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places under the National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. 470, et seq.), or is designated as historic under State or local law.

Establishing a written record of planning and evaluation will be a good beginning and serve as a good faith effort to comply with the spirit of the ADA, thus reducing the risk of complaints. If, during the process, an owner believes that it is necessary to use either the alternative minimum requirements, or the alternative methods to achieve accessibility because full compliance with accessibility requirements would "threaten or destroy" a building's significance, then the [State Historic Preservation Officer \(http://www.achp.gov/shpo.html\)](http://www.achp.gov/shpo.html) (SHPO) should be consulted. However, before consultation, specific information should be gathered to enable the SHPO to determine whether a proposal would threaten or destroy a property's historic significance. Owners should be prepared to submit: interior and exterior photographs; architectural plans and elevations for both existing and proposed conditions; explanations of all alternatives considered; and documentation of consultation with local preservation and accessibility officials and any interested persons, including individuals with disabilities and organizations representing such individuals. **It is important to follow the required consultation process and not proceed without written documentation.** Alterations made for accessibility should conform to requirements in ADAAG to ensure compliance. Finally, owners should plan carefully and consider accessibility solutions that provide the highest level of accessibility and preserve the features and materials that convey a property's historic significance. For example, a lift should only be used as a last resort, as lifts require frequent maintenance and are awkward to use.

There is a wealth of guidance available on making historic properties accessible while preserving their historic character. **Access can be achieved in most all instances with careful planning, consultation and sensitive design.**

The ***Making Historic Properties Accessible Preservation Brief*** produced by the U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service Preservation Assistance Division is a valuable resource concerning accessibility and historical properties and is available at: <http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/briefs/brief32.htm> This Brief introduces the complex issue of providing accessibility at historic properties, and underscores the need to balance accessibility and historic preservation. It provides guidance on making historic properties accessible while preserving their historic character; the Brief also provides examples to show that independent physical accessibility at historic properties can be achieved with careful planning, consultation, and sensitive design.

## **Historic Properties Resource Directory**

### **Access Board**

1331 F Street, N.W. Ste. 1000

Washington, DC 20004-1111

Phone: (800) USA-ABLE

(202) 272-0080

TDD: (202) 272-0082

Internet: <http://access-board.gov>

**Description:** The Access Board is an independent federal agency devoted to accessibility for people with disabilities. Key responsibilities of the Access Board include:

- Developing and maintaining accessibility requirement for the built environment, transit vehicles, telecommunications equipment, and for electronic and information technology
- Providing technical assistance and training on these guidelines and standards
- Enforcing accessibility standards for federally funded facilities.

### **Adaptive Environments Center**

374 Congress Street, Ste. 301

Boston, MA 02210

Phone: (617) 695-1225

Fax: (617) 482-8099

Email: [info@adaptiveenvironments.org](mailto:info@adaptiveenvironments.org)

Internet: <http://www.adaptiveenvironments.org>

**Description:** Adaptive Environments Center provides architectural consulting services, conducts educational seminars, and produces publications on accessibility, including award-winning design guidelines. Publications list available.

**Advisory Council on Historic Preservation**

1100 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Ste. 809

Washington, DC 20004

Phone: (202) 606-8503

Fax: (202) 606-8672

Email: [achp@achp.gov](mailto:achp@achp.gov)

Internet: <http://www.achp.gov>

**Description:** The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation is an independent federal agency that promotes historic preservation nationally by providing a forum for influencing Federal activities, programs, and policies that impact historic properties. It provides directory of *State Historic Preservation Officers and Deputies*. It lists all 50 State Historic Preservation Officers, which administer the national historic preservation program at the state level and can provide guidance on accessibility issues. An independent Federal agency, the ACHP promotes historic preservation nationally by providing a forum for influencing Federal activities, programs, and policies that impact historic properties.

**American Cultural Resources Association (ACRA)**

6150 East Ponce De Leon Ave.

Stone Mountain, GA 30083

Phone: (520) 721-4309

Fax: (520) 298-7044

Email: [cdore@sricrm.com](mailto:cdore@sricrm.com)

Internet: <http://www.acra-crm.org>

**Description:** ACRA's mission is to promote the professional, ethical and business practices of the cultural resources industry, including all of its affiliated disciplines, for the benefit of the resources, the public, and the members of the association by:

- Supporting the business needs of cultural resources practitioners
- Promoting professionalism in the cultural resources industry
- Providing educational and training opportunities for the cultural resources industry
- Influencing public policy
- Promoting public awareness of cultural resources consulting and its diverse fields

**American Institute of Architects**

1735 New York Ave., N.W.

Washington, DC 20006-5292

Phone: (202) 626-7300

Fax: (202) 626-7547

Email: [infocentral@aia.org](mailto:infocentral@aia.org)

Internet: <http://www.aia.org>

**Description:** The American Institute of Architects is the voice of the architecture profession dedicated to serving members, advancing their value, and improving the quality of the built environment.

**Government Printing Office**

Superintendent of Documents  
732 North Capitol Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20401  
Email: [admin@gpo.gov](mailto:admin@gpo.gov)

Internet: <http://bookstore.gpo.gov>

**Description:** The Government Printing Office sells *Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* and *Preservation Brief 32: Making Historic Properties Accessible* by Thomas C. Jester and Sharon C. Park of the National Park Services, which introduces the complex issue of providing accessibility at historic properties. It provides guidance on making historic properties accessible while preserving their historic character.

**Historic Windsor, Inc.**

P.O. Box 1777  
Windsor, VT 05089-0021  
Phone: (802) 674-6752  
Fax: (802) 267-6179

Email: [histwininc@vallie.net](mailto:histwininc@vallie.net)

Internet: <http://www.preservationworks.org>

**Description:** Historic Windsor, Inc., distributed, "Entrances to the Past," a U.S. Park Service video produced on accessibility and historic preservation that focuses on the dual need to achieve reasonable access solutions for disabled people and the need to preserve historic buildings for future generations.

**National Center on Accessibility (NCA)**

501 North Morton Street Ste. 109  
Bloomington, IN 47404  
Phone: (812) 856-4422  
TTY: (812) 856-4421  
Fax: (812) 856-4480

Email: [nca@indiana.edu](mailto:nca@indiana.edu)

Internet: <http://www.indiana.edu/~nca/>

**Description:** The NCA provides training, technical assistance, and research on the inclusion of people with disabilities in parks, recreation and tourism.

**National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers**

Halls of the States  
444 North Capitol Street, N.W., Ste. 342  
Washington, DC 20001  
Phone: (202) 624-5465  
Fax: (202) 624-5419

Internet: <http://www.ncshpo.org>

**Description:** The National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers is the professional association of the state government officials--called State Historic Preservation Officers or SHPOs--who carry out the national historic preservation program as delegates of the Secretary of the Interior, pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act. SHPOs have a statutory responsibility to foster the enactment and enforcement of historic preservation ordinances by local government.

### **National Park Service**

Preservation Assistance Division

1849 C. Street N.W.

Washington, DC 20240

Phone: (202) 354-2054

TTY: (202) 343-3679

Internet: <http://www.nps.gov>

**Description:** The National Park Service publishes, *Preserving the Past and Making it Accessible for People with Disabilities*, *Preservation: Tax Incentives for Historic Buildings*, and *Accessibility Checklist for Historic Properties*.

### **National Trust for Historic Preservation**

1785 Massachusetts Ave., N.W.

Washington, DC 20036-2117

Phone: (202) 588-6000

Fax: (202) 588-6038

Internet: <http://www.nationaltrust.org>

**Description:** The National Trust for Historic Preservation publishes, *The Impact of the Americans with Disabilities Act on Historic Structures* by David Battaglia. This is a guide that reviews how a number of organizations have taken innovative approaches to preserving the past while making it accessible to everyone.

### **Preservation Action**

1054 31<sup>st</sup> Street N.W., Ste. 526

Washington, DC 20007

Phone: (202) 298-6180

Fax: (202) 298-6182

Email: [mail@preservationaction.org](mailto:mail@preservationaction.org)

Internet: <http://www.preservationaction.org>

**Description:** Preservation Action advocates federal legislation to further the impact of historic preservation at the local, state, and national level.

### **Sachs Morgan Studio**

224 West 30th Street, Ste. 1400

New York, NY 10001

Phone: (212) 765-4144

Fax: (212) 765-4142

Email: [info@sachsmorganstudio.com](mailto:info@sachsmorganstudio.com)

Internet: <http://www.sachsmorganstudio.com/>

**Description:** Sachs Morgan Studio (SMS), Theatre Design Specialists provides comprehensive services for the planning and design of theatres, including space planning and programming, conceptual design and specification of theatre equipment, and stage technology and interior design. SMS has specific expertise in developing solutions to the problems of poor access. Experts in historic properties, SMS renovated the historic Opera House at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, receiving the 1997 American Institute of Architects Award.

### **The Association for Preservation Technology International (APT)**

4513 Lincoln Ave., Ste. 213

Lisle, IL 60532-1290

Phone: (630) 968-6400

Fax: (888) 723-4242

Email: [info@apti.org](mailto:info@apti.org)

Internet: <http://www.apti.org/indexmain.htm>

**Description:** APT is the premier cross-disciplinary organization dedicated to promoting the best technology for conserving historic structures and their settings. APT connects a network of architects, conservators, trades people, consultants, planners, curators, landscape architects, engineers, developers, educators, and students.

### **The Preservation Trades Network, Inc. (PTN)**

P.O. Box 10236

Rockville, MD 20849-0236

Phone: (866) 853-9335

Fax: (866) 853-9336

Email: [info@ptn.org](mailto:info@ptn.org)

Internet: <http://www.ptn.org>

**Description:** PTN is a non-profit organization that brings together the building trades in the field of historic preservation, restoration and conservation of heritage, buildings, architecture, engineering and historic structures.

**See also:** The following resource directories are from the National Arts and Disability Center at UCLA.

- [Assistive Devices, Services and Products for Physical and Program Accessibility](http://www.nadc.ucla.edu/ACCESSIBLESERVICES.cfm) (<http://www.nadc.ucla.edu/ACCESSIBLESERVICES.cfm>)
- [Americans with Disabilities Act and the Arts](http://www.nadc.ucla.edu/ADAArts.html) (<http://www.nadc.ucla.edu/ADAArts.html>)