

HISTORIC PRESERVATION TERMS

The following definitions pertain to historic preservation terminology:

Building: Principally shelters any form of human activity. Buildings eligible for the National Register of Historic Places must include all of their structural elements.

Character: Defined by form, proportion, structure, plan, style or material. General character refers to ideas of design and construction such as basic plan or form. Specific character refers to precise ways of combining particular kinds of materials.

Cultural Resource: Any district, site, building, structure or object listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Disposition of Smithsonian property: Sale, lease or transfer of Smithsonian property.

Historic buildings: Structures that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Historic district: A geographical area or theme which possesses a significant concentration, linkage or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development. Examples are Georgetown and the National Mall.

Historic fabric: Original or old building materials (masonry, wood, metals, marble) or construction.

Historic integrity: The retention of sufficient aspects of location, design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling or association for a property to convey its historic significance.

Mediation process: The opportunity to resolve differences in person.

National Historic Landmark: The Historic Sites Act of 1935 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to recognize historic places judged to have exceptional value to the nation.

National Register of Historic Places: The official roster of the nation's historic properties, sites, districts, structures, objects, and landmarks.

Rehabilitation: The process of returning a property to a state of utility, through repair or alteration, and makes possible an efficient contemporary use while preserving those portions and features of the property which are significant to its historic, architectural and cultural values.

Restoration: The process of returning a site to its original form through repair or reconstruction.

Reversible: An addition which is made without damage to the project's original condition.

Site: The location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined or vanished, where the location itself possesses architectural, historic, cultural or archaeological value.

Structure: Term used to distinguish from buildings those functional constructions made usually for purposes other than creating human shelter. Examples include fences, bandstands and bridges.

Undertaking: Any project or other action involving the expansion, modification, development or disposition of the physical plant or any site or building.