

St. Louis Cemetery No. 1

Guidelines for Preservation & Restoration



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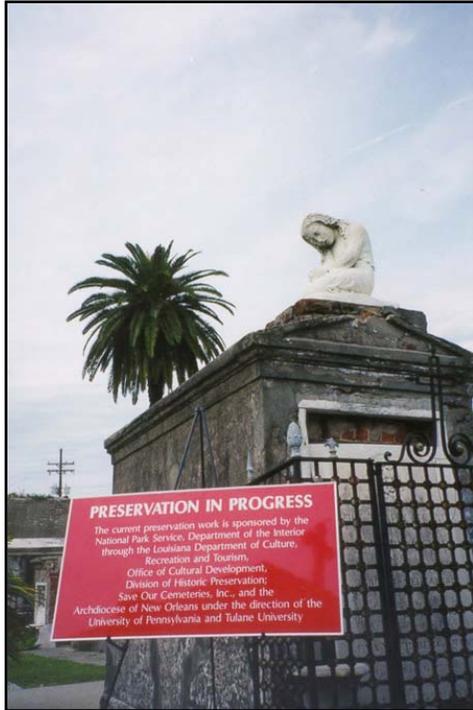
The Graduate Program in Historic Preservation
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Before Work Begins



Bergamini Tomb (#12). One of the SOC pilot projects, 2001.

All preservation standards and guidelines, whether national or international, exist to encourage the responsible treatment of cultural heritage. All are based on conservation principles which begin with logical planning and work sequences that will ensure that the best decisions are made for any necessary interventions.

Many projects require the help of professionals, and a familiarity with basic

conservation principles and concepts helps the owner or steward understand the extent of work required and when to bring in professional assistance.

Many such documents start with the principles established in the *Venice Charter*, an ICOMOS charter developed by an international group of conservation professionals and architects in 1966. ICOMOS, the International Council on Monuments and Sites, is an international group linked with UNESCO, with national committees in over 105 countries, including the United States. Individual countries often craft their own version of guidelines from these principles. The *Burra Charter* from Australia, the *Appleton Charter* from Canada, and from the United States, the *U.S. Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* are good examples.



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Seven statements derived from the *Illustrated Burra Charter* simplify the concepts that underlie many of the charters, standards and guidelines and provide an important starting point before considering any work:

Seven Key Concepts:

- Value the historic character of the place itself is important
- Understand the cultural significance of the place
- Understand the physical fabric
- Make decisions based on significance and condition
- Do as much as necessary, as little as possible
- Keep records of all the work
- Do everything in logical order

For projects at St. Louis Cemetery No. 1, the following order of work is suggested:

1. Do the preliminary archival research
2. Document everything “as was” (in its historic or original condition) and “as is”
3. Conduct a condition assessment
4. Follow fact-based decision making
5. Develop a preservation plan

6. Perform conservation treatments
7. Plan for periodic maintenance
8. Celebrate success

Helpful Websites:

ICOMOS

<http://www.icomos.org/>,

<http://www.icomos.org/usicomos/>

Australia Burra Charter

<http://www.icomos.org/australia/burra.html>

<http://www.marquis-kyle.com.au/burra99.htm>

Additional ICOMOS Charters

http://www.international.icomos.org/e_charte.htm

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings

<http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/standguide/index.htm>

American Institute for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works (AIC)

<http://aic.stanford.edu/>

St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 Survey

<http://www.noladeadspace.org>

Preliminary Research

For many of the tombs in St. Louis Cemetery No. 1, the severity of tomb conditions will be

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such that only qualified conservators and restoration professionals, metalworkers and masons will do the actual tomb preservation and repair work. However, the most important investigation for the project can be done by anyone interested in archival research and detective work. All this phase takes is careful attention to detail, creative thinking, good notes, and considerable perseverance and patience.

Key questions to be answered in this stage of the project include:

- When was the tomb built?
- Who had it built?
- If a family tomb, what is the original family name?
- Who designed or built it?
- What were the original materials of construction?
- Were additions and/or new vaults added? When?
- Who has been interred in the tomb?
- What historical and military significance are attached to those interred?
- What did the tomb look like at various times?
- What did the alley neighborhood look like?

- Were there tablets, statues, crosses metalwork or other decorative elements that are now missing?
- What plantings, pathway elements were near?
- What family traditions of maintenance and visitation can be documented?
- Are there family photographs that can be collected and archived?
- Who possesses the deed to the tomb now?
- Who, if anyone, is maintaining the tomb now?
- Has the tomb been closed permanently?
- Has the tomb been placed in the Perpetual Care program with the Archdiocese?

It may not be possible to answer all of the above questions, but many answers and clues can be obtained through a combination of oral history interviews, archival and documentary sources, inferred data and physical evidence.

Oral history evidence comes from family members and friends who might remember anything about the history of the tomb and those interred. Start with the oldest relatives and family friends who might have direct knowledge, then talk to younger relatives who can relate events of more recent times and also might have recollections of information gathered from older generations now deceased. Oral history information can be fascinating and



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rich with many family history facts beyond the topic of the tomb. However, one must be careful in accepting everything related as the complete truth, as memories and perceptions of events long ago are not always completely correct, or in the proper chronological order. Yet, even if some of the information is inaccurate, these interviews can provide many clues to facts that may later be confirmed through archival research.



*Ladies Decorating Wall Vaults, ca. 1900,
THNOC,1985.126.43.*

It is also during these interviews that family members often remember where old photographs and letters are stored that relate to the tomb's history. The photographs are very important as they can show tomb changes in construction details and color, tomb conditions and the surrounding neighborhood of tombs, plantings and paths over time.

Letters were often exchanged after a death in the family and often included comments on the interment history, the ceremony, flowers, and tomb related burial specifics.

New Orleans has a wealth of excellent resources for archival research. The **Resources Section** at the end of this document provides a good starting list. Many of the resources have on-line search functions. With a little bit of homework on-line, an effective research plan can be developed to ensure that no information or image is missed.

Carefully pursue every lead using family names, key events, and the specific tomb number and location, if available. The survey recently completed for St. Louis Cemetery No.1 is available on-line at www.noladeadspace.org with a map showing each tomb referenced by the most obvious family name, a 2001 survey number (PNTHNOC), the number given the tomb for a 1981 survey by Save Our Cemeteries and The Historic New Orleans Collection (THNOC) and the Archdiocese lot number. THNOC has photographs from the 1981 survey keyed to their number. The Archdiocesan Cemeteries keeps ownership and interment records by their lot number.



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There are also numerous photographic images at The Historic New Orleans Collection, the New Orleans Public Library and the Louisiana State Museum that show historic site-wide or neighborhood views. Specific tombs can be identified by researchers with a good knowledge of the tomb's location. The archival resources may have files on family documents that might detail when tombs were built, who designed them, who has taken care of them and how they were planted and decorated for funerals and All Saints' Day. Old receipts may specify the type of marble, stucco or brick used, and how it was to be worked.

stored or recovered stolen elements. In recent years, many items were pilfered from the cemeteries. Some have been recovered and placed in safe storage until owners can identify them. With good photographic documentation there exists a small chance that missing elements from the tomb can be located.



All Saints' Day decorations, L. Hannah 2001.

If photographic images show that tablets, crosses, statuary, metalwork or other decorative details were once part of the tomb, contact Save Our Cemeteries, Inc. or the local authorities for information on



Two examples of comparison photographs from 1973 and 2001. Between the family photographs and the images archived in the local historical collections, many lost details can be recovered.



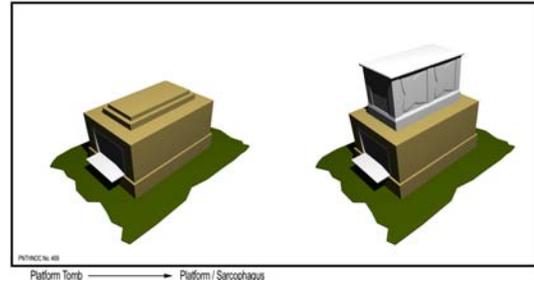
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Inferred data, or educated guesses, are cautiously used when no written or photographic image data are available. If there are no images of the specific tomb, gather information and images of tombs in the neighboring vicinity, tombs of close family friends and tombs known to have been built in a similar timeframe. Once all the available data have been gathered, the limited use of inferred data can bridge gaps and lead to better preservation plans. However, care should be taken that extensive conjecture is not allowed during the research phase. For example, the most deceptive clue can be the apparent style of the existing tomb. There is a good chance that the tomb has experienced at least one addition or make-over. Today's physical evidence sometimes can suggest the tomb's original appearance.



Tomb #208 (left) with dismantled marble sarcophagus panels on roof of #207, 2002.



*Reconstructed evolution of Tomb #208.
(J. Hinchman, 2002)*

Depending on the condition of the tomb, there may be many layers of physical evidence open to view. Note the type(s) and size(s) of brick and how the brickwork is laid. Changes in brick type, size and coursing may indicate how or when a change was made to the tomb. How many stucco layers exist and what color are they? Can multiple colors of limewash still be seen? Look for sheltered areas where small samples of the finish might still be available for study. Component and finish analysis is best left to architectural conservators, but careful notes at this stage can help determine the extent of conservation and funding that will be required.



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Document Everything!

As information is collected, it is often useful to catalog the notes and images in chronological order. Document everything, as an unrelated note may later be the key to solving an important part of the puzzle. As the information grows, put all the pieces available together to develop the “As Was” image of the tomb, at several points in time, if possible.

It is also critical to carefully document the “existing” state of the tomb. The use of high resolution digital or standard photography is the easiest method for this documentation. Use large enough images to see all decorative details and conditions. Take photographs of each elevation and the roof. Close-up photographs of the tablet system, tablet condition and inscriptions, all carved details, the cornice profile, precinct elements, metalwork, and all plaques, planters and any unattached elements are recommended. Carefully date each photograph and note the time of day, weather conditions and location of the photograph on a photograph log that will



Fragments stored beside a tomb, 2002.

remain with the photographs. It is often useful to take photographs at several times; once on a clear day and once just after a heavy rain to document any flooding problems.

Keep a detailed inventory to document all tablets, sculpture, planters, plaques, ironwork and furniture whether fully attached or in fragmented form by the tomb. Fragments should be photographed where found, and a precise record kept which will identify all of the elements. This is useful should elements be stolen and later retrieved. All of the fragments should be marked (on their reverse side) with the location where they were found, using chalk or a graphite pencil.



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Decision Making

After gathering all available historical information and documenting the current condition of the tomb, decisions must be made on how to approach preservation of the tomb. At this point, many factors such as budget, urgency of conditions, time, significance, impact on the family, and impact on the surrounding tombscape must all be balanced. Another family decision is whether the tomb will be permanently closed or restored to the state that it will be able to support future interments or offered for re-sale.

Research may have shown several time periods to have been equally significant, yet the material analysis might only provide clear evidence on only one period. That would weight the restoration to the time best documented. Both the roof and the marble tablet may be in very poor condition. If funds are limited, the roof repairs should be considered a higher priority, as a compromised roof can quickly lead to structural failure of the whole tomb.

To help analyze the factors for decision-making, a decision matrix with value ratings and a decision tree that points out the available options can be very helpful.



Mr. Bill Hylan, a descendant of Bernard de Marigny and caretaker for the family tomb, #606, discusses burial practices and tomb restoration with the team, 2001.



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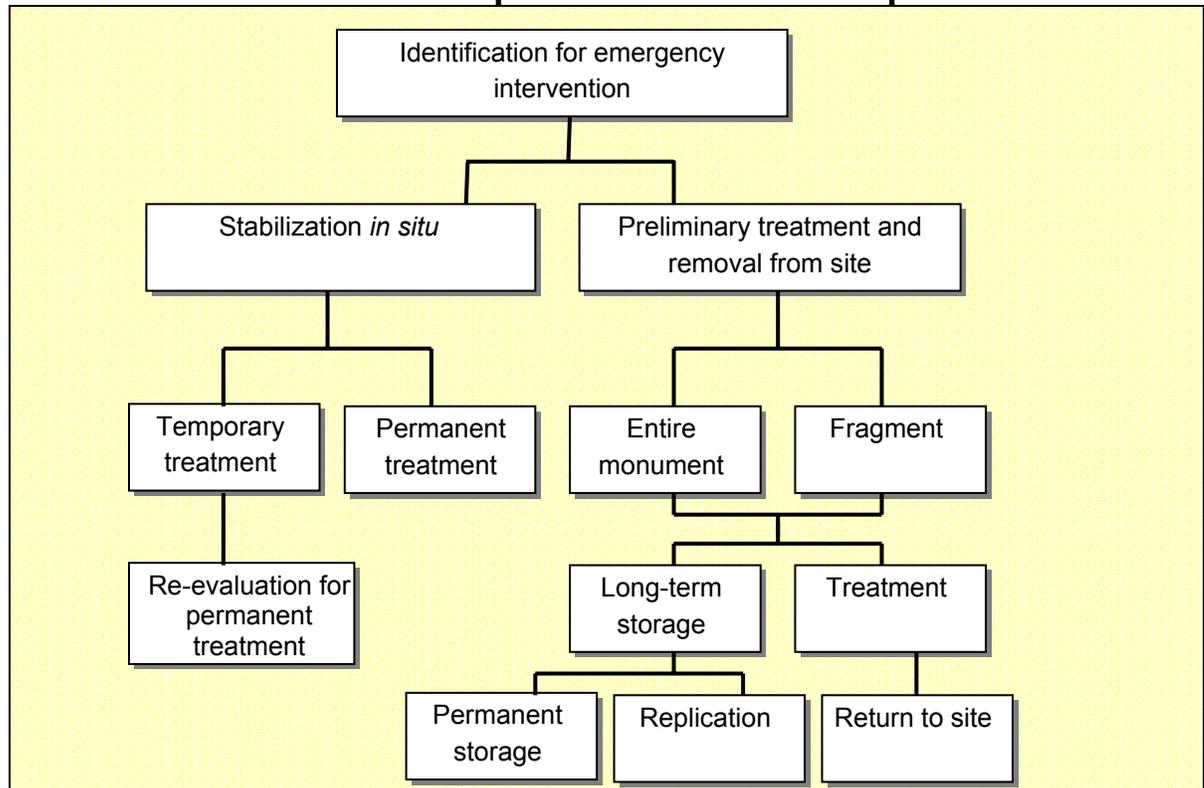
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Decision Matrix – Valuing the Interventions

1-5, 5 Most urgent, Lowest cost or time, highest positive impact	Urgency	Cost	Time to implement	Family Impact	Total
Repair compromised roof	5	1	4	5	15
Patch stucco cracks	4	3	4	2	13
Completely re-stucco tomb	2	2	2	4	10
Limewash tomb	3	5	5	5	18
Conservation of tablet(s)	4	3	2	4	13
Re-fabricate metalwork	1	1	1	3	6
New marble cross, angel, etc.	1	1	1	5	8

A decision matrix can be used to value weight the numerous variables that go into a decision. This is a flexible tool, and the interventions valued can be a much larger list than the example above, according to the specific project or decision to be made. In the above, repairing the roof is most urgent, is relatively low in cost, and is a large visible project that would please family members that improvements are being made. Limewashing the tomb is not that urgent, yet it can be done so quickly and inexpensively, and creates such a large visual impact, that it also rates quite high as an intervention to be done early.

Decision Tree – Illustrates the path various treatment options can take

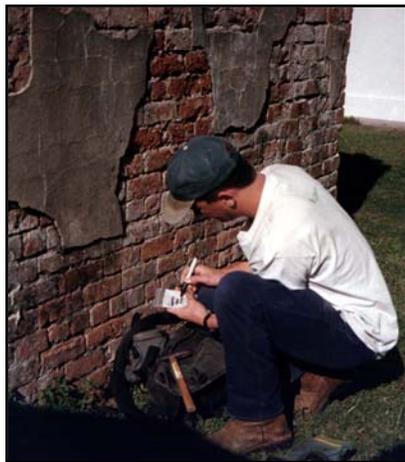


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Develop a Preservation Plan

Elements of the Preservation Plan have already been considered in the decision-making phase and these steps usually happen concurrently. The first draft of the costs and timing plan might be sketched with very broad numbers, or valued by just the rating system used in the decision matrix. Having the major repairs and preservation options framed out before talking to contractor or preservation professionals facilitates the discussion. Based on their assessments and cost estimates, a more complete draft can be compiled. As resources are secured for the work and final quotations are received, the final plan of costs, timing and work can be confirmed.



Surveying condition, 2001.

During this phase, future maintenance should also be discussed and planned. What will be required and who will do it? For example, if lime washing will become an annual event in the future, the contractor or conservator should understand that clearly stated formulations are to be provided and that some demonstrations and training of family members will be part of the job.

Seek Professional Help

As stated throughout, many of the preservation and restoration needs of the tombs at St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 will need to be addressed by professional conservators, craftspeople and restoration masons. Save Our Cemeteries, Inc. is developing a resource list of qualified people for work on the aboveground tombs of New Orleans, as well information on conservation materials and suppliers. The American Institute



Stabilizing a roof in Alley 9L, 2002.



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for Conservation of Historic & Artistic Works (AIC) has a very informative website describing the role and responsibilities of conservators and includes a downloadable brochure, *Selecting a Conservator*, available at <http://aic.stanford.edu/faic/refer.html>.

The professionals will want to see all of the information collected in the Preliminary Research and Condition Assessment phases and they may conduct additional assessments specific to their specialty to develop a firm plan for action with cost and timing estimates for the project. Conservators and contractors should present to the tomb owners information on tomb condition; recommendations on cleaning, conservation and repair; sequencing and coordination plans, as well as cost proposals for performing all work. They should also be willing to supply data on all products to be used. In addition, if they conduct preliminary tests on the tomb, they should furnish a report that includes information on environmental conditions (including temperature, relative humidity, wind conditions, and sun exposure); cleaning and conservation materials and methods (including concentration, number of applications, method and order of applications);

equipment, water and/or application pressures, and accessory materials. The procedure and the completed test areas will then serve as the standard by which all subsequent work is to be judged.

When entering into a contract with a conservator or restoration contractor, owners should stipulate that the work be done under proper environmental conditions. Specifically, none of the work should be conducted at surface and air temperatures below 50 degrees Fahrenheit, or above 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Treatments are not to be done during rain or when there is a chance of rain within 24 hours after application. These environmental restrictions often restrict the timing for conservation work in New Orleans.

Finally, cleaning materials and conservation treatments should not be applied when winds are sufficient to carry any airborne chemicals or powders and fumes to unprotected surfaces.

Make sure that the contractor protects the public as well as all surrounding landscape and lawn areas, non-masonry surfaces, and surfaces not designated for treatment or replacement, from contact with the cleaning materials and conservation treatments. Any work undertaken in the cemetery must first be filed with the Archdiocesan Cemeteries before beginning.

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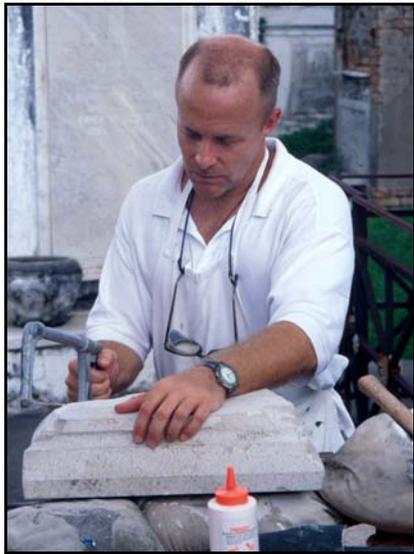


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Sources & Assistance

See the **Resources Section** for many useful documentation and conservation resources and websites. Contact Save Our Cemeteries, Inc. for further information on professional assistance and conservation materials.



Local sculptor fabricating a replacement stone.

The Secretary of Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties

The *St. Louis Cemetery No. 1 Preservation Guidelines* address the full range of treatments, as presented in *The Secretary of*

Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties including Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, & Reconstruction, and ranging from simple stabilization to criteria for new design. (The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration and Reconstruction are listed on the following pages.) The St. Louis Cemeteries display a tradition of continuity reflecting the values and sensibilities of the past and present. In addition to preserving the valuable physical heritage they embody, such traditions should also allow expressions and forms of construction to continue.

For this reason, and since there are areas of total loss and infill to be considered, criteria for reconstruction are being proposed. For the primary tomb structure, traditional types should only be considered for a newly built tomb. However, for missing metalwork or decorative elements, the guidelines are intended to allow and encourage freedom for new expression, while respecting and building on the existing historical precedents.

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Secretary of Interior Standards

Codified as 36 CFR Part 68 in the July 12, 1995 Federal Register (Vol. 60, No. 133.)

Text duplicated from: Kay D. Weeks and Anne E. Grimmer, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*, Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 1995.

Preservation:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships. Where a treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and, if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate, and

conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material will match the old in composition, design, color, and texture.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.



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Rehabilitation:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will 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 elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and where possible, materials. Replacement of

missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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.

Restoration:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use which reflects the property's restoration period.



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2. Materials and features from the restoration period will be retained and preserved. The removal of materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize the period will not be undertaken.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate and conserve materials and features from the restoration period will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.
4. Materials, features, spaces, and finishes that characterize other historical periods will be documented prior to their alteration or removal.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the restoration period will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated features from the restoration period will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials.
7. Replacement of missing features from the restoration period will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence. A false sense of history will not be created by adding conjectural features, features from other properties, or by combining features that never existed together historically.
8. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
9. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
10. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

Reconstruction:

1. Reconstruction will be used to depict vanished or non-surviving portions of a property when documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture, and such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property.
2. Reconstruction of a landscape, building, structure, or object in its historic location will be preceded by a thorough archeological investigation to identify and evaluate those features and artifacts which are essential to an accurate reconstruction. If such resources must



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be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

3. Reconstruction will include measures to preserve any remaining historic materials, features, and spatial relationships.
4. Reconstruction will be based on the accurate duplication of historic features and elements substantiated by documentary or physical evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different features from other historic properties. A reconstructed property will re-create the appearance of the non-surviving historic property in materials, design, color, and texture.
5. A reconstruction will be clearly identified as a contemporary re-creation.
6. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.



*Top image – rebuilt Perpetual Care tomb.
Middle image – traditionally maintained family tomb.
Bottom image – recent SOC restoration.*

