



Maryland Façade Improvement Program

Preservation Compliance Frequently Asked Questions

All state-funded capital projects are subject to the [Maryland Historical Trust Act](#).

DHCD has a Programmatic Agreement with the Maryland Historical Trust to streamline the review process, so all reviews are coordinated by DHCD staff.

What building upgrades need to be reviewed and why?

- All capital improvements need to be reviewed by our Preservation Officer, and if necessary, the Maryland Historical Trust.

What Standards are being applied for the historic review?

- The Department and the Trust apply the Federal Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation ("the Standards"). The [Standards](#) are ten general principles that when applied, ensure that the essential character-defining features of a historic property are preserved to the greatest extent possible. The Standards are written in a general manner so that they can be applied broadly to a variety of property-types and circumstances. The National Park Service's [Guidelines](#) go into more detail about historic features and recommended treatments.

How do I know if a building is considered historic?

- Properties that have been officially listed in the National Register or determined eligible for listing are mapped on [MEDUSA](#). Non-historic properties located within historic districts must be reviewed to ensure that the work is compatible with the historic district and will not harm the historic district.

What if my property is located outside of a historic district?

- The Standards also apply to properties that are considered eligible for listing in the National Register. There are thousands of historically significant properties across Maryland that have not been surveyed or evaluated, so we review everything to ensure that potentially eligible properties receive preservation consideration as well.

Construction has already started. Can I still receive a grant?

- Generally, any work that was completed prior to applying to the program is not eligible for funding. We request that MFIP awardees initiate historic preservation review as early as possible. Work that begins or is completed prior to review that violates the Standards will not be reimbursed.

Does the work paid as a match require review?

- Yes, by participating in the grant program, all changes to the building are subject to review, regardless of whether it will be reimbursed with grant funds. Property owners should not segment the project or withhold information from the Department regarding portions of the project that do not meet the Standards but are being paid for by the applicant's dollar match.

Can applicants change paint colors or paint a mural?

- You may choose whatever paint colors you like. New murals should be limited to areas of the building that are already painted or are a non-historic wall surface. For example, a non-historic concrete block or stucco wall is an appropriate surface for a mural, but a historic bare brick or stone wall is not.

Can ADA accessibility improvements be made?

- Yes, bringing buildings up to date to modern code requirements and making them more accessible is a high priority for the Department. Alterations must be done sensitively and avoid destroying historic materials and should be reversible whenever possible.

Can applicants make energy efficiency upgrades including replacing old windows and doors?

- Historic windows and doors are considered significant character-defining features of a building and should be restored and preserved whenever possible. Original windows and doors can be made more energy efficient by repairing, repainting, reglazing, adding weatherstripping, and/or adding interior or exterior storm windows as necessary. The desire for new energy efficient, "low maintenance" windows or doors is not enough justification for replacement of the original features.
- If original windows and doors are truly deteriorated beyond repair (cannot be repaired by epoxy patches, stripping, repainting, reglazing, etc.), then replacement of the units may be warranted. Replacement units should match the original as closely as possible in material, size, style, and other visual qualities. Non-historic windows or doors, including existing vinyl windows, may be replaced "in kind" with new vinyl windows.

CONTACT US WITH QUESTIONS.

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