

What Are These Preservationists Talking About?

A Guide to Preservation Terms

Area of Significance: aspect of historic development, in which a property made contributions for which it meets the National Register criteria, such as agriculture or politics/government.

Certified Local Government (CLG): a local government officially certified to carry out some of the purposes of the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended. In Hawai'i this includes Kaua'i County, Maui County, and Hawai'i County.

Character-Defining Features: the physical characteristics of the property that contribute to or display its historic significance. These can include design, overall shape of the building, architectural details, site placement, aspects of its environment and site, fixtures, materials, and workmanship. Any future changes are judged against the features to determine whether they would be appropriate alterations.

Contributing Resource: a building, site, structure, or object adding to the historic significance of a property.

Criteria: general standards by which the significance of a historic property is judged; see National Register criteria.

Criteria Considerations: additional standards applying to certain kinds of historic properties.

Cultural Affiliation: archeological or ethnographic culture to which a collection of sites, resources, or artifacts belong.

Cultural Resource: building, site, structure, object, or district evaluated as having significance in prehistory or history.

Eligible or Eligibility: a formal determination that is made by a qualified preservation professional about whether or not a property qualifies for designation on the National Register of Historic Places.

Historic Context: an organizing structure for interpreting history that groups information about historic properties which share a common theme, common geographical location, and common time period.

Historic Property: any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object.

Historic Significance: the importance of a property to the history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture of a community, State, or the nation. Significance is achieved through: Associations with events, activities, or patterns; Association with important persons; Distinctive physical characteristics of design, construction, or form; Potential to yield important information.

Historic Integrity: authenticity of a property's historic identity, evidenced by the survival of physical characteristics that existed during the property's historic or prehistoric period. These include materials, design, feeling, location, association, workmanship, and setting.

Noncontributing Resource: a building, site, structure, or object that does not add to the historic significance of a property.

Period of significance: span of time in which a property attained the significance for which it meets the National Register criteria.

Treatment Type: there are four general ways of caring for historic properties. The appropriate treatment type depends on the individual case, including the relative importance or rarity of the resource, the value it holds to the community, its physical condition, and the needs of current users. The four approaches for treatment are Preservation (Maintaining it as-is), Rehabilitation (Alterations or improvements that make the property usable today while retaining historic integrity), Restoration (Returning a property to its appearance in a certain time period), and Reconstruction (Exact replica of a historic property).

Effect: The impact of a project on a historic property is called an effect. Effects include direct as well as indirect and cumulative outcomes. Effects can be beneficial—such as restoring lost features or providing needed maintenance—or adverse. Adverse effects include such items as partial or total destruction or inappropriate alterations of the property, or detrimental alteration of the surrounding environmental, such as visual, spatial, noise or atmospheric impingement. Effect is judged against the qualities of both significance and integrity to determine if the impact would lessen the property’s eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

Sources: National Park Service, Glossary of National Register Terms
 Kiersten Faulkner, Historic Hawai’i Foundation List of Preservation Terms