



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

# Historical Resources Board

## UNOCCUPIED HISTORICAL SITES MINIMUM MAINTENANCE GUIDELINES

**ADOPTED UNANIMOUSLY BY HRB ON MARCH 28, 2002**

### BACKGROUND

While the word maintenance conjures up mundane tasks of scrubbing, cleaning, polishing, dusting, scraping, sanding, painting - its critical importance in the preservation of historic resources should not be overlooked. Maintenance is preservation. All too often, serious preservation problems arise because ordinary, routine maintenance has been deferred or is nonexistent. With regular maintenance, the life of a structure or resource can be measurably extended without the loss of historic fabric. Maintenance of historical resources deserves consideration from property owners and other responsible entities. If a resource is to be preserved, adequate planning and funding is required for all maintenance needs.

Section 143.0250(f) of the City of San Diego's Land Development Code establishes that *"...Designated historical resources that are unoccupied shall be maintained in a manner that preserves their historical integrity..."*. This provision was incorporated into the code to address instances where historical resources are in danger of demolition by neglect. The City's Code further requires that historical resources be maintained, restored, rehabilitated, or developed in accordance with US Secretary of the Interior's Standards. Owners of designated historical properties have the opportunity to participate in the "Mills Act" Program, a contractual option that provides a reduction in property taxes in exchange for the preservation (through appropriate maintenance) of historic resources. Despite this option, throughout the City of San Diego there are instances of historical resources in danger of deterioration and demolition by inadvertent or deliberate neglect. Gross negligence in routine maintenance, repair work, and security results in the deterioration and possible loss of the historic fabric of the City's historic resources. The goal of the proposed Guidelines is to assure that each historical resource is maintained and is in a readily occupiable state. The following report identifies guidelines that may be used to accomplish the goal.



### Planning Department

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## **Introduction**

The intent of The Unoccupied Historical Resources Minimum Maintenance Standards and Guidelines is to preserve and maintain the unique environmental qualities and historic fabric of a designated historic resource or a contributing structure to a designated historic district in the City of San Diego in accordance with the US Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The standards and guidelines are consistent with the purposes of the current Land Development Code implemented by the City Council on January 1, 2000, and all other applicable codes and regulations of the City of San Diego.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the proposed Guidelines are:

- A. To preserve, protect, and perpetuate the cultural, social, economic, architectural, landscape elements and historic fabric unique to the historic resource site or district;
- B. To maintain awareness of the unique aesthetic, architectural, and historic qualities of the resource site or district through education and neighborhood involvement;
- C. To stabilize the historic authenticity, economic vitality, and aesthetic value of the historic resource site or district;
- D. To assist homeowners and other parties with restoration, alteration, or additions to buildings, so the historic and architectural qualities of the historic resource site or district are maintained and preserved;
- E. To eliminate blight, prevent need for demolition, destruction, and neglect of important resources of San Diego history;
- F. To guide maintenance of historic resources, so they are compatible with the scale, style, and character of other designated resources within the neighborhood and surrounding district.
- G. For purposes of maintenance repairs every effort shall be made to restore the site so that its historical integrity is preserved in a manner consistent with the US Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

## **Standards and Guidelines**

Every owner or person in charge of an historical resource or contributing structure to a historic district shall keep in good repair all of the exterior features of such resource or structure. Every owner or person in charge shall also keep in good repair all interior features of such resource or structure which, if not properly maintained, may cause or tend to cause the exterior features to deteriorate, decay, become damaged, or fall into a state of disrepair that results in site and neighborhood blight. All designated resources or contributing structures within a historic district shall be preserved against such decay, and shall be maintained in a ready state for occupancy. To help meet the objectives of minimum maintenance, the following standards are established.

Weatherproofing:

- A. Structures shall be maintained in a watertight condition to preclude intrusion by dry rot and other decay problems caused by water. Moisture is often the source of structural damage, and it should be effectively controlled through proper site and structure maintenance.
- B. Deteriorated, insufficient, or ineffective waterproofing or weather protection of exterior walls, roofs, foundations, floors, windows, or doors shall be promptly addressed and repaired to prevent further decay, deterioration, blight, or possibility of injury to members of the public or property.

Building Facade:

- A. The facade shall be properly maintained through repair, paint, or any necessary treatment, so as to prevent decay, water or moisture intrusion, blighting conditions and damage to the property's historic value.
- B. Defective or insufficient weather protection for exterior treatments and facades, including lack of paint or protective covering shall be promptly addressed, and repaired, rehabilitated, or restored to prevent further decay, deterioration, blight, and possibility of injury.

Roofing:

- A. Structural roofing shall be maintained through proper treatment and repair, so as to prevent decay, demolition by neglect, blighting conditions, loss of historic fabric, and injury.
- B. Defective materials or deterioration which may cause any or all portions of ceilings, roofs, ceiling and roof supports, or other horizontal members to split, buckle, or improperly age shall be promptly addressed, and repaired, rehabilitated, or restored to prevent further decay, deterioration, blight, loss of historic fabric, and possibility of injury.

Foundation:

- A. The foundation, flooring, and floor supports shall be properly maintained so as to prevent decay, demolition by neglect, blighting conditions, loss of historic fabric, and possibility of injury.
- B. Deteriorated or inadequate foundations, defective or deteriorated flooring or floor supports shall be promptly addressed, and repaired, rehabilitated, or restored to prevent further decay, deterioration, blight, loss of historic fabric, and possibility of injury.

Interior:

- A. Electrical, plumbing, and other mechanical equipment necessary for the daily use of the resource or structure shall be maintained in working order that would allow immediate occupancy of a structure or site.
- B. Deteriorated, defective, or inadequate electrical, plumbing, and other mechanical equipment shall be promptly addressed, and repaired, rehabilitated, or restored to prevent further decay, deterioration, blight, loss of historic fabric, and possibility of injury.
- C. If electrical and plumbing systems cannot be brought into working order they shall be turned off.

Site (Landscape and Site Infrastructure):

- A. The grounds of a historic resource site, including the hardscaping, vegetation, and site infrastructure shall be maintained in a safe condition through proper irrigation and landscape management (pruning, weed abatement, storm water drainage etc.) To prevent damage to the landscape.
- B. Potential safety, health, and fire hazards through neglect such as falling branches, overgrown landscaping, litter, or vector infestation shall be promptly addressed and corrected to prevent further decay, deterioration, blight, loss of historic fabric, and possibility of injury.
- C. Built site elements include: site walls, pavement (patios, walkways, drives, decks) and features (fountains, fireplaces) shall be maintained in safe condition.

**Historical Resources Board Review**

If it is determined by the Historical Resources Board that a historic resource site or contributing structure to a historic district subject to the Board's review and approval is threatened with demolition by neglect, the Board may do either of the following:

- A. Request the City Manager or Neighborhood Code Compliance Department to notify, in writing, the property owner(s), any person(s) having a right, title, or interest in the property, and the occupant(s) or responsible party for the maintenance of the property of the Board's finding of unlawful neglect of the property. The notice shall specify the minimum items of repair or maintenance necessary to correct or prevent further deterioration or demolition from neglect.
- B. The Board may request updates on site maintenance activity from the Neighborhood Code Compliance Department.
- C. Neighborhood Code Compliance Department will consult with HRB staff on appropriate actions to assure consistency with US Secretary of the Interior's Standards, the use of State Historic Code, and permit requirements.