



**HISTORIC DISTRICT
REVIEW COMMISSION
Regular Meeting**

February 21, 2023

5:30 pm

Third Floor Conference Room



HISTORIC DISTRICT REVIEW COMMISSION

Meeting Agenda

February 21, 2023

5:30 p.m.

Third Floor Conference Room

Call to Order

Roll Call

Linda Armstrong, John Carr, Kathy Chelton, Vern Drottz, Aimee Gray, Matt Grundy, Brett Rinker, Katie Schmidt

- I. Approval of Meeting Summary: February 7, 2023 HDRC Meeting Summary
- II. Current Business

HDRC Case #23-003J (Amendment to 21-020J) Consideration of a change in material size of architectural features at 462 E Kansas, Jewell Historic District, a 353 Tax Abatement project.

HDRC Case # 23-001J Consideration of an after the fact COA for a temporary ADA ramp at 471 E Kansas, Jewell Historic District

III. Other Business

- a. Administrative Approvals since the February 7, 2023 meeting:
 - i. 23-002J 439 E. Miller like in-kind window replacement on addition.
- b. Miscellaneous matters from the Commission:
- c. Miscellaneous matters from Staff:
 - i. Dail Hobbs resigned from the Commission

IV. Adjournment

LIBERTY HISTORIC DISTRICT REVIEW COMMISSION
Meeting Summary
February 7, 2023
5:30 pm
Council Chambers

Roll Call: Linda Armstrong, John Carr, Kathy Chelton, Vern Drottz, Aimee Gray, Matt Grundy, Katie Schmidt

Present: Linda Armstrong, John Carr, Kathy Chelton, Vern Drottz, Aimee Gray, Matt Grundy, Katie Schmidt

Absent: Dail Hobbs, Brett Rinker

Applicant: Greg Canuteson owner of 20 E Franklin

Staff Present: Jeanine Thill, Community Development Manager

Staff introduced Katie Schmidt, newly appointed commissioner and introductions were done. Katie is filling the vacant seat of Doug Wilson.

Chairman Grundy called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

Approval of Meeting Summary: December 6, 2022 HDRC Meeting Summary

A motion was made by Commissioner Gray to approve the December 6, 2022 meeting summary as presented. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Carr. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Current Business

HDRC Case# 23-001LS Consideration of a COA for exterior improvements at 20 E. Franklin, Liberty Square Historic District, a 353 Project

- Commissioner Drottz recused himself, as he is working on this project with the applicant.
- Vice Chairman Carr asked if the sashes will be one over one or six over six. Mr. Drottz said they will be one over one.
- Mr. Drottz commented that the new awning will raise the scale a bit and may help it resemble the older look.
- There was discussion if the historic photo provided by the applicant was the correct photo.
- Mr. Drottz said there was a fire that altered that side of the square in the 1920's or 30's.
- Vice Chairman Carr said he really likes the proposed door and the light fixtures.
- Vice Chairman Carr asked Mr. Drottz for more explanation of what the appropriate trim will be.
- Mr. Drottz said that currently the building has inappropriate fluted colonial trim and they will replace it with a more basic trim.
- Vice Chairman Carr commented that the proposed windows have been approved before by the Commission.
- Commissioner Gray asked if they are removing the pediment above the door.
- Mr. Drottz confirmed that they are, and that there is brick behind it.
- Commissioner Gray asked if they are doing anything to the east elevation.

- Mr. Drottz said they are replacing the lower six windows on the east elevation with Andersen A-Series one over one windows. There were two floors added to the building many year ago, prohibiting larger windows to fill in the original openings.
- Commissioner Gray suggested a natural paint color, perhaps a terra cotta color, to blend with the brick.

A motion was made by Commissioner Armstrong to approve the application as presented, because it meets the Design Guidelines and provides a much needed and restoration to the structure. The motion was seconded by Vice Chairman Carr. The motion passed 6-0-1.

HDRC Case# 23-002LS Consideration of a COA for exterior improvements at 20 N. Main, Liberty Square Historic District, a 353 Project

- Vice Chairman Carr commented that the like in kind work and application seems straight forward.
- Commissioner Chelton asked about the awning. Chairman Grundy said the awning was not original to the building.

A motion was made by Commissioner Gray to approve the application as presented, because it meets the Design Guidelines and UDO. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Schmidt. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Other Business

- After the Fact COA for an ADA Ramp at 471 E Kansas, Jewell Historic District. Staff asked the commission for direction on how they wanted to handle this temporary ramp. The application explained that the homeowner has terminal cancer and had this installed when her son was in town recently. It will likely only be needed for a year, per the homeowner. They carefully removed a portion of the front porch balustrade and put it in the basement of the home for safekeeping until the ramp is no longer needed.
- Vice Chairman Carr commented that the homeowner used to be on the HDRC and they take good care of this home. They had custom work done on the balustrade, it is clear that they pay attention to detail on the exterior.
- The commission asked staff to find out how we handle a temporary COA. And if we can regulate ADA ramps. Staff will ask the State Historic Preservation Office. (SHPO)

A motion was made by Commissioner Armstrong to continue this agenda item, pending research by staff, feedback from the SHPO and a legal opinion on ADA accommodations and what we can forbid or temporarily approve. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Chelton. The motion passed 7-0-0.

Administrative Approvals since the last meeting: None

Miscellaneous matters from the Commission:

- 462 E Kansas. Vice Chairman Carr said he has noticed some dimensions of architectural features on the house appear to have been removed or altered. The casings around the windows are wider than what was there before. The central banding

is not where it was originally, it ran across the top of the head casings on the windows. It was right above it and it is not that way now. There is now siding above it and it is no longer on the back of the house. These changes do not emulate what was there before and it swallows up the existing sills. Also, there is a bottom apron flush under the sills, typical of newer construction. It is inappropriate and was not on the home originally. Also, the gable eave system is gone.

- Chairman Grundy said what we approved was putting it back the way that it was. And if he isn't putting it back that way, then he needs to come back and see the Commission.
- Staff will follow up with Mr. Personett.

Miscellaneous matters from Staff:

- Staff reported that the new and replacement historic district signs have been installed, including three new ones installed on N. Water for the Lightburne District.

The meeting adjourned at 6:21pm.



HDRC Case No. 23-003J

Staff: Jeanine Thill, Community Development Manager

HDRC Meeting Date: February 21, 2023

GENERAL INFORMATION

Application: Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations, after the fact modifications in size of architectural details at 462 E. Kansas, a 353 Tax Abatement Project

Applicant: Capstone Homes/ Ken Personett

Location: 462 E. Kansas St.

District: Jewell Historic District

NRHP Status/category: Contributing

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

SITE HISTORY

The house at 462 E. Kansas was built circa 1857 adjacent to William Jewell College and is one of the oldest residences in Liberty. The structure is undistinguished with plain wood moldings and modest decoration on the second story porch posts. There is a single stack brick chimney.

DESCRIPTION & DETAILS

- Modifications were made to the size and profiles of architectural details, that do not appear to be like in kind. (see details and explanation from the applicant in Memo, Exhibit C).
 - Bed molding was changed to crown molding
 - East gable eaves- replacement does not appear to be like in kind.
 - Frieze board under gable appears to be too long, it should terminate short of end of soffit.
 - Door and window casings are too large, should match original.

ANALYSIS

Unified Development Ordinance (“UDO”) - The Unified Development Ordinance outlines design principles that have been adopted for all historic districts and landmarks in the City of Liberty.

Design Guidelines (“DG”) - Design Guidelines were established to give the HDRC general guidance in making subjective preservation choices in accordance with accepted best practices and the Secretary of the Interior standards for historic preservation.

30-72. District HP, Design Principles

2. Alterations: Alterations shall restore a structure's original elements, materials, and appearance, if economically or physically feasible. Alterations affecting the exterior of a structure shall preserve all significant original exterior elements, including building materials, doors, windows, and decorative elements. Elements that are not original, but which may have acquired significance by virtue of age or craftsmanship, shall also be preserved. Alterations that disguise or sheath original elements and materials will not be permitted.

The replacement of the architectural details on the home do not appear to be like in-kind, as previously approved by the Commission.

PREVIOUS CASES / ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

21-020J HDRC Approved Exterior Alteration and like in-kind repairs.

21-020J Was Amended, HDRC approved replacement of the siding, due to extensive deterioration.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

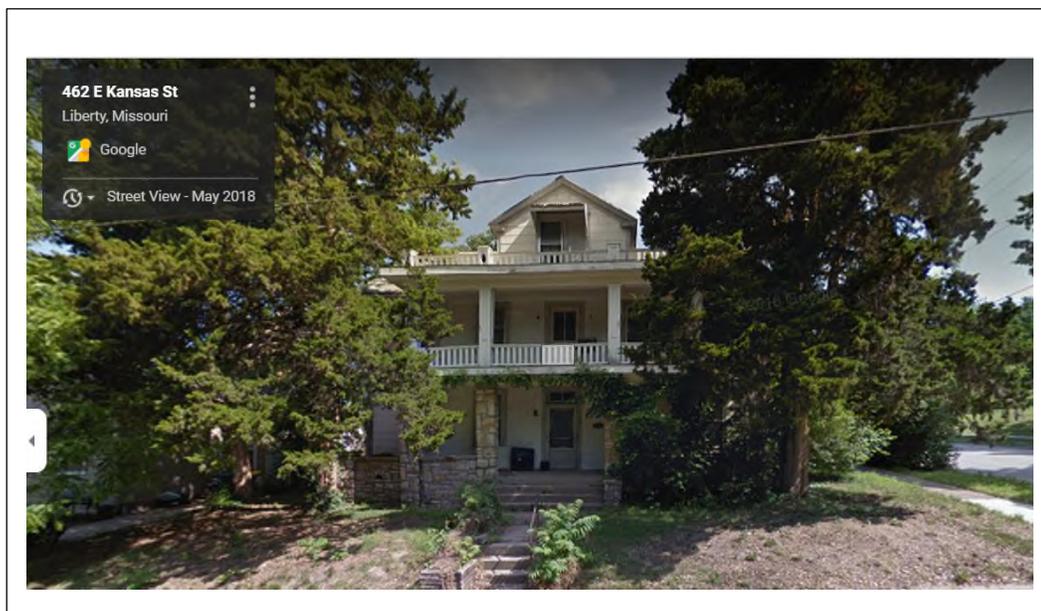
With the following stipulations, staff recommends approval if the original materials are not salvageable:

- The frieze board under gable to match the original size
- The correct bed molding and cove molding made to match the original
- Door and window casings to match the original, and
- Gable eaves to match the original.

With these modifications, the application meets the standards for review and the historic district design guidelines, therefore staff recommends approval of HDRC case #23-003J.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Exhibit A: Vicinity Map
2. Exhibit B: Inventory Data Sheet
3. Exhibit C: MEMO to HDRC from Staff/ email communication with applicant and staff
4. Exhibit D: Existing Conditions Photos (7 pages)





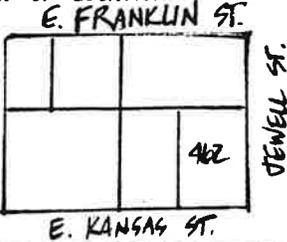
HDRC Case #23-003J
462 E. Kansas



EXHIBIT A:
VICINITY MAP

MISSOURI OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ARCHITECTURAL/HISTORIC INVENTORY SURVEY FORM

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1. NO. Roll E #23 2. COUNTY Clay 3. LOCATION OF NEGATIVES Liberty City Hall-Comm. Dev. | 4. PRESENT LOCAL NAME(S) OR DESIGNATION(S) 462 E. Kansas St. 5. OTHER NAME(S) | 1. NO. Roll E #23 2. COUNTY Clay 4. PRESENT LOCAL NAME(S) OR DESIGNATION(S) 462 E. Kansas St. |
| 6. SPECIFIC LEGAL LOCATION TOWNSHIP _____ RANGE _____ SECTION _____ IF CITY OR TOWN, STREET ADDRESS | 16. THEMATIC CATEGORY Architecture 17. DATE(S) OR PERIOD c. 1909 1857-'59 | 28. NO. OF STORIES 2½ 29. BASEMENT? full YES (X) NO () 30. FOUNDATION MATERIAL limestone block 31. WALL CONSTRUCTION frame & masonry 32. ROOF TYPE AND MATERIAL gable/ asphalt shin. 33. NO. OF BAYS FRONT 5 SIDE 2 34. WALL TREATMENT asbestos shingle 35. PLAN SHAPE rectangular |
| 7. CITY OR TOWN IF RURAL, VICINITY Liberty, Missouri 8. DESCRIPTION OF LOCATION  | 18. STYLE OR DESIGN Vernacular 19. ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER unknown 20. CONTRACTOR OR BUILDER unknown 21. ORIGINAL USE, IF APPARENT residence 22. PRESENT USE apartment 23. OWNERSHIP PUBLIC () PRIVATE (X) 24. OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS IF KNOWN | 36. CHANGES (EXPLAIN IN NO. 42) ADDITION () ALTERED () MOVED () 37. CONDITION INTERIOR unknown EXTERIOR poor 38. PRESERVATION UNDERWAY? YES () NO (X) 39. ENDANGERED? BY WHAT? YES () NO (X) 40. VISIBLE FROM PUBLIC ROAD? YES (X) NO () 41. DISTANCE FROM AND FRONTAGE ON ROAD 20' |
| UTM Coordinates: A 379580 4344980 B 377440 4344700 C D 10. SITE () BUILDING (X) STRUCTURE () OBJECT () 11. ON NATIONAL REGISTER? YES () NO (X) 12. IS IT ELIGIBLE? YES () NO (X) 13. PART OF ESTAB. HIST. DISTRICT? YES () NO (X) 14. DISTRICT POTENTIAL? YES () NO () NAME OF ESTABLISHED DISTRICT | 25. OPEN TO PUBLIC? YES () NO (X) 26. LOCAL CONTACT PERSON OR ORGANIZATION Liberty, Mo; Community Develop. 27. OTHER SURVEYS IN WHICH INCLUDED | 5. OTHER NAME(S) |
| 42. FURTHER DESCRIPTION OF IMPORTANT FEATURES Perhaps second story loggia is original but third story balustrade is not. Dormer windows facing S have been converted to doorways. The structure is undistinguished with plain wood moldings and modest decoration on second story porch posts. There is a single stack brick chimney. | <div style="border: 2px solid black; padding: 20px; width: 100%;"> <p style="font-size: 24px; margin: 0;">X</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">PHOTO MUST BE PROVIDED</p> </div> | |
| 43. HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE Having a similar scale, elevation and floorplan so as to be compatible with nearby structures. | 6. TOWNSHIP RANGE SECTION | |
| 44. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT AND OUTBUILDINGS Located in a residential neighborhood consisting of late 19th and early 20th century housing stock. | 45. SOURCES OF INFORMATION Water permit # 8=0610 J.J.Meirowsky 7-1-09 | |
| RETURN THIS FORM WHEN COMPLETED TO: OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION P.O. BOX 176 JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI 65102 PH. 314-751-4096 | 46. PREPARED BY C. Millstein/P. Glenn 47. ORGANIZATION Liberty-Community Dev. 48. DATE SPR. 86 49. REVISION DATE(S) EXHIBIT B | |

IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED, ATTACH SEPARATE SHEET(S) TO THIS FORM



MEMO

Date: February 21, 2023

TO: HDRC

FROM: Jeanine Thill, City of Liberty Preservation Staff

RE: 462 E Kansas Alterations as discussed at the 2.7.23 HDRC Meeting. Alterations appear to be different than like in-kind, as previously approved. Staff requested that Mr. Personett attend the 2.21.23 HDRC meeting to explain further.

On 2.8.23 staff sent Mr. Personett an email outlining the following observations related to 462 E. Kansas:

- Window Millwork- Windows are "picture" framed. Casings are larger than original. Added apron (please duplicate original)
- Outside Corner Caps- Decorative top under soffit- should have 2x flat cap not 1x
- Central frieze/banding- Appears smaller and not in the same location in relation to the window head casing as original. Secondary 1x is too wide. Missing on the north side.
- East Gable Soffit system has been removed
- Gable returns have been changed from flat to pitched, please duplicate original.

Email Reply on 2.10.23 from Mr. Personett:

Hi Jeanine,

Thanks for the e-mail. Mostly just communication breakdown between myself and the framer.

- Window Millwork- Windows are "picture" framed - will correct. Casings are larger than original - most of the window frames are proud to the siding so we butted 1x4 up to frame, but due to house movement some frames are flush or inset to siding so we ran trim over the top of frame and to make up the difference used 1x6. but only on the east side. Added apron (please duplicate original) -
- Outside Corner Caps- Decorative top under soffit- should have 2x flat cap not 1x - will double the 1x, don't think Hardi has a 2x product.
- Central frieze/banding- Appears smaller - slightly smaller but the widest trim board available from Hardi - and not in the same location in relation to the window head casing as original - house has settled on the north, we matched location on front of house and the difference you see is the band ins now level. Secondary 1x is too wide - again, working with what is available for manufacturer but once the crown molding is added I think it will look very similar to original. Missing on the north side - will correct..
- East Gable Soffit system has been removed - it was rotten and will be replaced.
- Gable returns have been changed from flat to pitched, please duplicate original - will correct.

So, fixing most. Some minor differences due to either material size availability and/or accommodating for 167 years of movement, but the modifications are literally a matter of inches.

Exhibit C



Exhibit D Existing
Conditions on 2.15.23
East Elevation
Pg 1 of 7



North Elevation
Page 2 of 7 Photos



East Elevation
Page 3 of 7 Photos



NE Elevation
Page 4 of 7 Photos





NE Elevation
Page 6 of 7 Photos



West Elevation
Existing Conditions
Page 7 of 7 Photos

Historic District Review Commission

The City of



HDRC Case No. 23-001J

Staff: Jeanine Thill, Community Development Manager

HDRC Meeting Date: February 21, 2023

GENERAL INFORMATION

Application: After the Fact Certificate of Appropriateness for a temporary wheelchair ramp

Applicant: Nita Geilker

Location: 471 E. Kansas St.

District: Jewell Historic District

NRHP Status/category: Contributing

File Date: February 2, 2023

SPECIFIC INFORMATION

SITE HISTORY

This Queen Anne Victorian residence was built in 1890 by Dr. Enoch Miller, son of Madison Miller. It features the typical Queen Anne details: an irregular plan, a variety of materials, a wrap-around porch with elaborate porch details, and the wrought iron cresting along the roof line. An attached garage was added later to the southwest corner of the house.

PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION

The temporary metal wheelchair ramp was installed due to medical necessity. The applicant stated that they carefully removed the front porch rails and spindles where he attached the ramp and they have it safely stored in the basement, for replacement when the is no longer needed, which is estimated to be within a year.

ANALYSIS

Unified Development Ordinance (“UDO”) - The Unified Development Ordinance outlines design principles that have been adopted for all historic districts and landmarks in the City of Liberty.

Design Guidelines (“DG”) - Design Guidelines were established to give the HDRC general guidance in making subjective preservation choices in accordance with accepted best practices and the Secretary of the Interior standards for historic preservation.

| | |
|---|---|
| DG: Sec. 30-72. District HP, design principles. | Staff Analysis |
| 2. Alterations: Alterations shall restore a structure’s original elements, materials, and appearance, if | The temporary removal of the front porch rail and spindles is appropriate |

economically or physically feasible. Alterations affecting the exterior of a structure shall preserve all significant original exterior elements, including building materials, doors, windows, and decorative elements. Elements that are not original, but which may have acquired significance by virtue of age or craftsmanship, shall also be preserved.

to temporarily accommodate for wheelchair accessibility. The State Historic Preservation Office agrees that a temporary COA is appropriate.

PREVIOUS CASES / ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

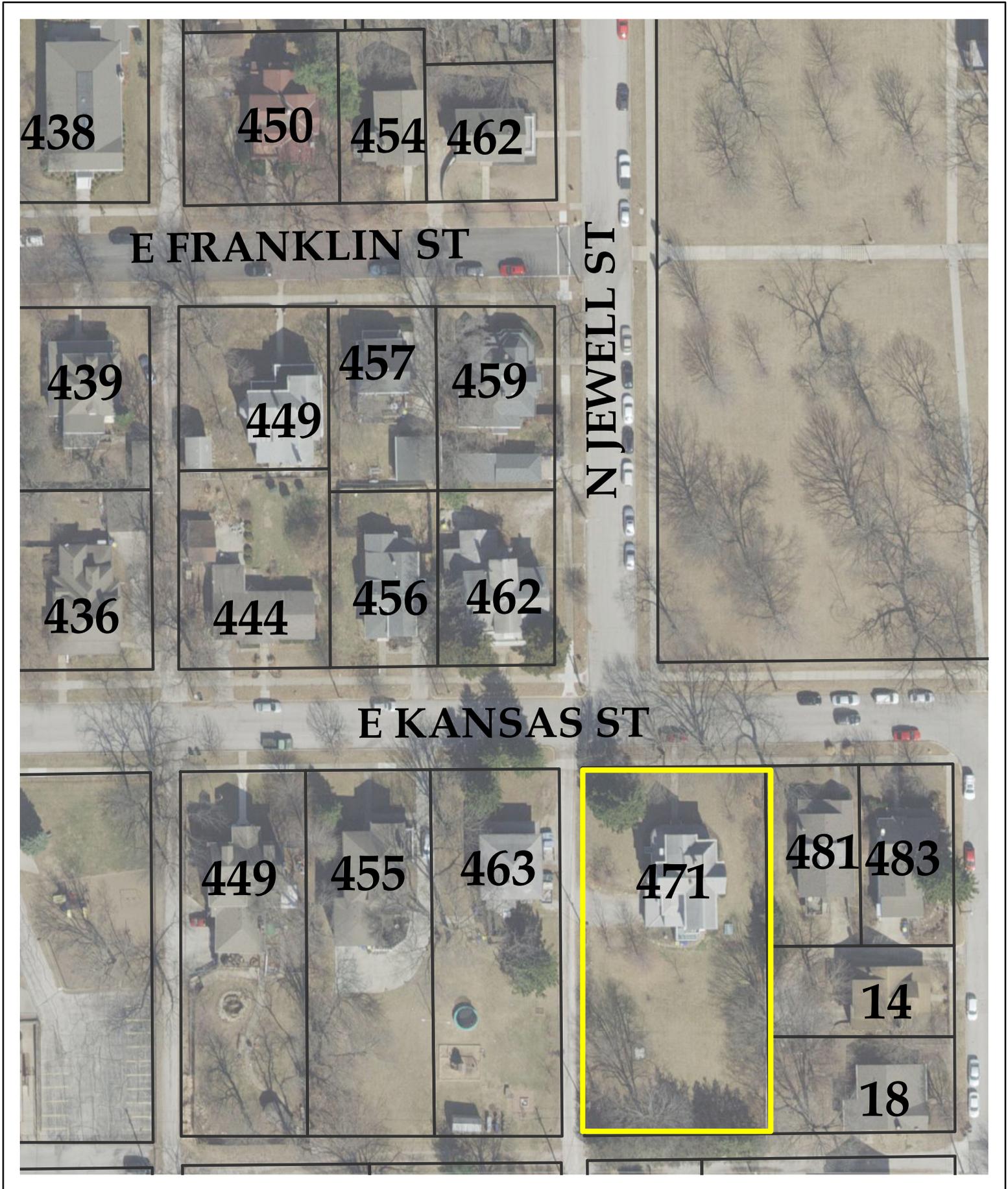
STAFF RECOMMENDATION

With the stipulation that the ramp is removed after it is no longer medically necessary and the original railing is put back in place, the application meets the standards for review and meets the Historic District Guidelines, therefore staff recommends approval of HDRC case #23-001J

ATTACHMENTS

1. Exhibit A: Vicinity Map
2. Exhibit B: Inventory Data Sheet
3. Exhibit C: Preservation Briefs 32 "Making Historic Properties Accessible"





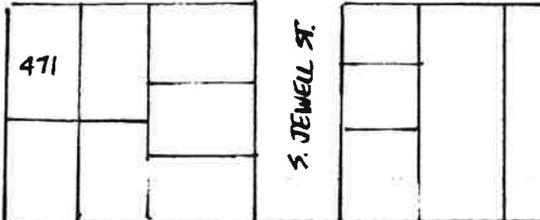
HDRC Case #23-001J
471 E. Kansas



EXHIBIT A:
VICINITY MAP

MISSOURI OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ARCHITECTURAL/HISTORIC INVENTORY SURVEY FORM

| | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|-------------------|
| 1. NO. Roll E # 21 | | 4. PRESENT LOCAL NAME(S) OR DESIGNATION(S) 471 E. Kansas St. | | 1. NO. Roll E # 21 | |
| 2. COUNTY Clay | | 5. OTHER NAME(S) | | | 2. COUNTY Clay |
| 3. LOCATION OF NEGATIVES Liberty City Hall-Comm. Dev. | | | | | |
| 6. SPECIFIC LEGAL LOCATION TOWNSHIP _____ RANGE _____ SECTION _____ IF CITY OR TOWN, STREET ADDRESS | | 16. THEMATIC CATEGORY Architecture | | 28. NO. OF STORIES 2½ | |
| 7. CITY OR TOWN IF RURAL, VICINITY Liberty, Missouri | | 17. DATE(S) OR PERIOD 1911 1889-90 | | 29. BASEMENT? full YES (X) NO () | |
| 8. DESCRIPTION OF LOCATION E. KANSAS ST. | | 18. STYLE OR DESIGN Victorian: Q.A. Spindlework | | 30. FOUNDATION MATERIAL brick | |
|  | | 19. ARCHITECT OR ENGINEER unknown | | 31. WALL CONSTRUCTION frame | |
| | | 20. CONTRACTOR OR BUILDER unknown | | 32. ROOF TYPE AND MATERIAL hip & cross gable/ asphalt | |
| UTM Coordinates: A 379580 4344980 B 377440 4344700 C D | | 21. ORIGINAL USE, IF APPARENT residence | | 33. NO. OF BAYS FRONT 4 SIDE 3 | |
| 10. SITE () BUILDING (X) STRUCTURE () OBJECT () | | 22. PRESENT USE residence | | 34. WALL TREATMENT asbestos shingle | |
| 11. ON NATIONAL REGISTER? YES () NO (X) | | 23. OWNERSHIP PUBLIC () PRIVATE (X) | | 35. PLAN SHAPE irregular | |
| 12. IS IT ELIGIBLE? YES () NO (X) | | 24. OWNER'S NAME AND ADDRESS IF KNOWN C. Don & Neita F. Geilker 471 E. Kansas | | 36. CHANGES (EXPLAIN IN NO. 42) ADDITION (X) ALTERED () MOVED () | |
| 13. PART OF ESTAB. HIST. DISTRICT? YES () NO (X) | | 25. OPEN TO PUBLIC? YES () NO (X) | | 37. CONDITION INTERIOR unknown EXTERIOR fair | |
| 14. DISTRICT POTENTIAL? YES () NO () | | 26. LOCAL CONTACT PERSON OR ORGANIZATION Liberty, Mo; Community Develop. | | 38. PRESERVATION UNDERWAY? YES () NO (X) | |
| 15. NAME OF ESTABLISHED DISTRICT | | 27. OTHER SURVEYS IN WHICH INCLUDED | | 39. ENDANGERED? BY WHAT? YES () NO (X) | |
| 42. FURTHER DESCRIPTION OF IMPORTANT FEATURES This Queen Anne residence is characterized by an irregularity of plan and massing and a preference for surface texture(imbricated shingles gables ends). Roofs are high and multiple with typical "widow's walk" provided by the wrought iron railing on the top of the structure. Windows are narrow double-hung sashes with entablature surrounds. Note Eastlake detailing of encircling verandah (over) | | <div style="border: 2px solid black; width: 100%; height: 100%; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> <p>PHOTO MUST BE PROVIDED</p> </div> </div> | | 40. VISIBLE FROM PUBLIC ROAD? YES (X) NO () | |
| 43. HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE A particularly attractive example of Victorian architecture in this late 19th century neighborhood. | | | | 41. DISTANCE FROM AND FRONTAGE ON ROAD 20' | |
| 44. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENT AND OUTBUILDINGS Located in a residential neighborhood consisting of late 19th and early 20th century housing stock. | | | | 5. OTHER NAME(S) | |
| 45. SOURCES OF INFORMATION Water permit # 8-0580 W.F.Au11 8-4-11 | | 46. PREPARED BY C. Millstein/P. Glenn | | | 6. TOWNSHIP |
| 47. ORGANIZATION Liberty-Community Dev. | | 48. DATE SPR. 86 | | RANGE | |
| 49. REVISION DATE(S) | | EXHIBIT B | | | SECTION |
| RETURN THIS FORM WHEN COMPLETED TO: OFFICE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION P.O. BOX 176 JEFFERSON CITY, MISSOURI 65102 PH. 314-751-4096 | | | | | |

IF ADDITIONAL SPACE IS NEEDED, ATTACH SEPARATE SHEET(S) TO THIS FORM

Sketch map of location

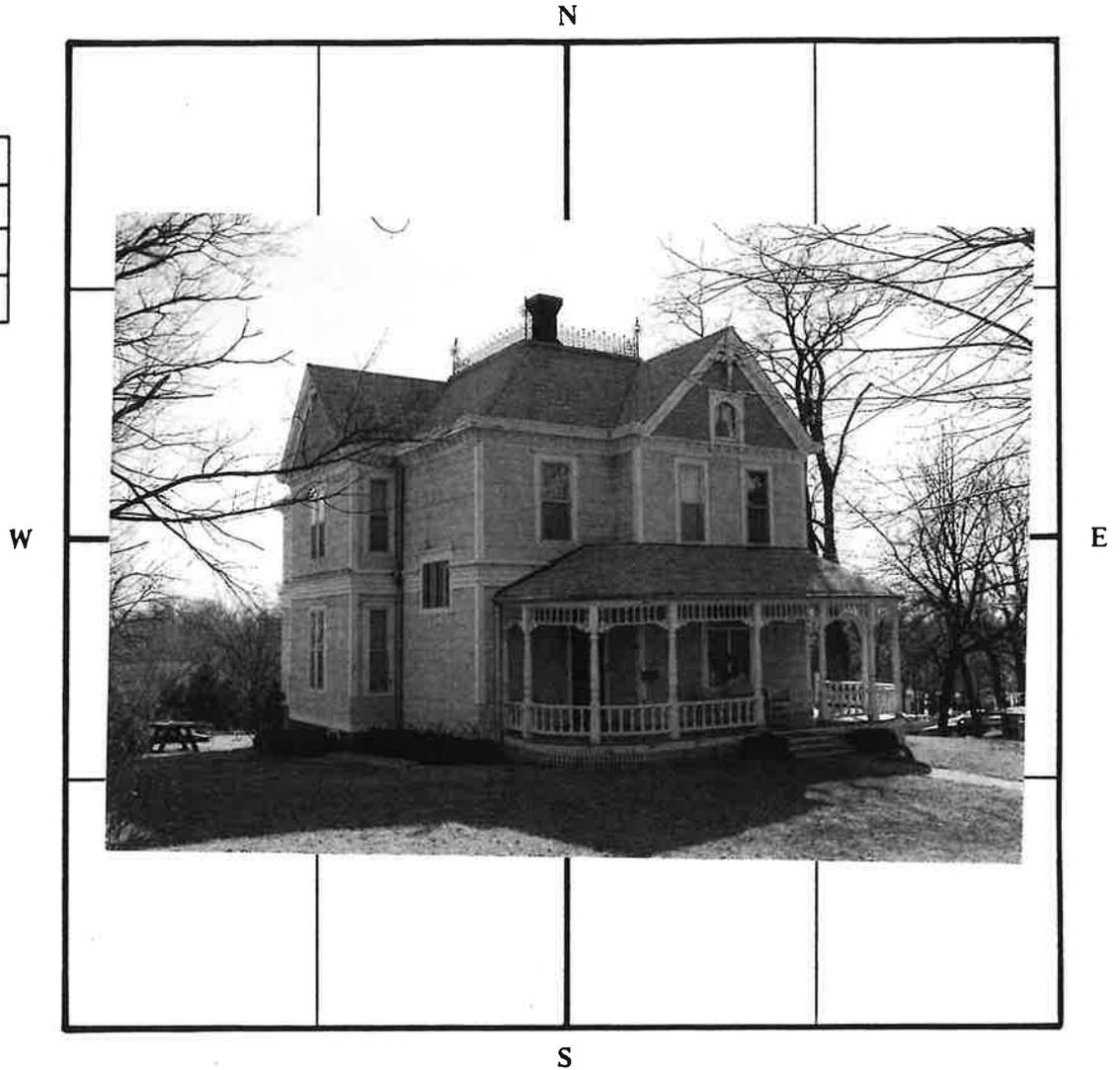
Site No. _____

Section _____ Township _____ Range _____

Indicate the chief topographical features, such as streams and elevations. Also indicate houses and roads. Indicate the site location by enclosing the site area with dotted line. Note scale of map and portion of section included in sketch map. Include drawings, photographs, etc. on additional pages.

Indicate part of section included in sketch map.

| | | | |
|--|--|--|--|
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| | | | |
| | | | |



Notes:

turned porch posts, balusters and spindlework. There is a single stack paneled brick chimney. Garage level parking area extended out at ground level.

THIS IS PROBABLY THE ONE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THIS DATA FORM!

Please Attach a copy of a topographic map with the site marked on it.

32 PRESERVATION BRIEFS

Making Historic Properties Accessible

Thomas C. Jester and Sharon C. Park, AIA



U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
Cultural Resources
Heritage Preservation Services

Historically, most buildings and landscapes were not designed to be readily accessible for people with disabilities. In recent years, however, emphasis has been placed on preserving historically significant properties, and on making these properties—and the activities within them—more accessible to people with disabilities. With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990, access to properties open to the public is now a civil right.

This Preservation Brief introduces the complex issue of providing accessibility at historic properties, and underscores the need to balance accessibility and historic preservation. It provides guidance on making historic properties accessible while preserving their historic character; the Brief also provides examples to show that independent physical accessibility at historic properties can be achieved with careful planning, consultation, and sensitive design. While the Brief focuses primarily on making buildings and their sites accessible, it also includes a section on historic landscapes. The Brief will assist historic property owners, design professionals, and administrators in evaluating their historic properties so that the highest level of accessibility can be provided while minimizing changes to historic materials and features. Because many projects encompassing accessibility work are complex, it is advisable to consult with experts in the fields of historic preservation and accessibility before proceeding with permanent physical changes to historic properties.

Modifications to historic properties to increase accessibility may be as simple as a small, inexpensive ramp to overcome one entrance step, or may involve changes to exterior and interior features. The Brief does not provide a detailed explanation of local or State accessibility laws as they vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. A concise explanation of several federal accessibility laws is included on page 13.

Planning Accessibility Modifications

Historic properties are distinguished by features, materials, spaces, and spatial relationships that contribute to their historic character. Often these elements, such as steep terrain, monumental steps, narrow or heavy doors,

decorative ornamental hardware, and narrow pathways and corridors, pose barriers to persons with disabilities, particularly to wheelchair users (See Figure 1).

A three-step approach is recommended to identify and implement accessibility modifications that will protect the integrity and historic character of historic properties:

- 1) Review the historical significance of the property and identify character-defining features;
- 2) Assess the property's existing and required level of accessibility; and
- 3) Evaluate accessibility options within a preservation context.

1) Review the Historical Significance of the Property

If the property has been designated as historic (properties that are listed in, or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or designated under State or local law), the property's nomination file should be reviewed to learn about its significance. Local preservation commissions and State Historic Preservation Offices can usually provide



Figure 1. It is important to identify the materials, features, and spaces that should be preserved when planning accessibility modifications. These may include stairs, railings, doors, and door surrounds. Photo: National Park Service files.

copies of the nomination file and are also resources for additional information and assistance. Review of the written documentation should always be supplemented with a physical investigation to identify which character-defining features and spaces must be protected whenever any changes are anticipated. If the level of documentation for a property's significance is limited, it may be necessary to have a preservation professional identify specific historic features, materials, and spaces that should be protected.

For most historic properties, the construction materials, the form and style of the property, the principal elevations, the major architectural or landscape features, and the principal public spaces constitute some of the elements that should be preserved. Every effort should be made to minimize damage to the materials and features that convey a property's historical significance when making modifications for accessibility. Very small or highly significant properties that have never been altered may be extremely difficult to modify.

Secondary spaces and finishes and features that may be less important to the historic character should also be identified; these may generally be altered without jeopardizing the historical significance of a property. Non-significant spaces, secondary pathways, later additions, previously altered areas, utilitarian spaces, and service areas can usually be modified without threatening or destroying a property's historical significance.

2) Assess the Property's Existing and Required Level of Accessibility

A building survey or assessment will provide a thorough evaluation of a property's accessibility. Most surveys identify accessibility barriers in the following areas: building and site entrances; surface textures, widths and slopes of walkways; parking; grade changes; size, weight and configuration of doorways; interior corridors and path of travel restrictions; elevators; and public toilets and amenities (See Figure 2). Simple audits can be completed by property owners using readily available checklists (See Further Reading). Accessibility specialists can be hired to assess barriers in more complex properties, especially those with multiple buildings, steep terrain, or interpretive programs. Persons with disabilities can be particularly helpful in assessing specific barriers.

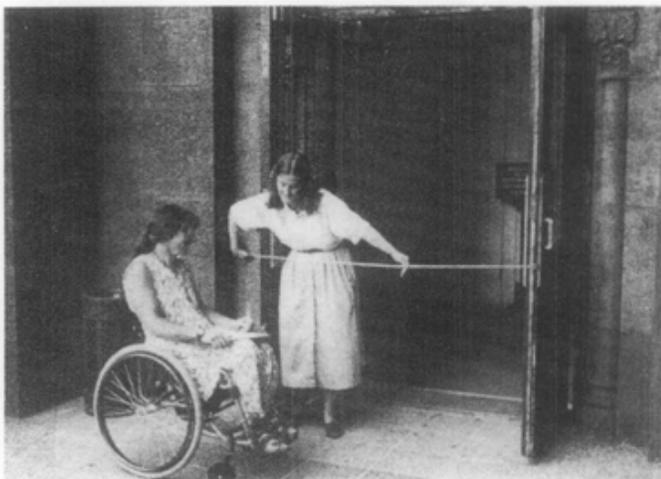


Figure 2. Surveys of historic properties can identify accessibility barriers. Persons with disabilities and accessibility consultants should participate whenever possible. Photo: Thomas Jester.

All applicable accessibility requirements—local codes, State codes and federal laws—should be reviewed carefully before undertaking any accessibility modification. Since many States and localities have their own accessibility regulations and codes (each with their own requirements for dimensions and technical requirements), owners should use the most stringent accessibility requirements when implementing modifications. The Americans with Disability Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) is the document that should be consulted when complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements.

3) Identify and Evaluate Accessibility Options within a Preservation Context

Once a property's significant materials and features have been identified, and existing and required levels of accessibility have been established, solutions can be developed (See Figure 3). Solutions should provide the greatest amount of accessibility without threatening or destroying those materials and features that make a property significant. Modifications may usually be phased over time as funds are available, and interim solutions can be considered until more permanent solutions are implemented. A team comprised of persons with disabilities, accessibility and historic preservation professionals, and building inspectors should be consulted as accessibility solutions are developed.

Modifications to improve accessibility should generally be based on the following priorities:

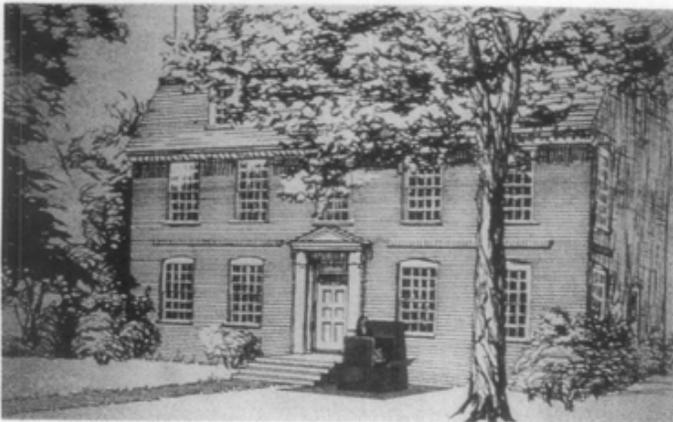
- 1) Making the main or a prominent public entrance and primary public spaces accessible, including a path to the entrance;
- 2) Providing access to goods, services, and programs;
- 3) Providing accessible restroom facilities; and,
- 4) Creating access to amenities and secondary spaces.

All proposed changes should be evaluated for conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's "Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties," which were created for property owners to guide preservation work. These Standards stress the importance of retaining and protecting the materials and features that convey a property's historical significance. Thus, when new features are incorporated for accessibility, historic materials and features should be retained whenever possible. Accessibility modifications should be in scale with the historic property, visually compatible, and, whenever possible, reversible. Reversible means that if the new feature were removed at a later date, the essential form and integrity of the property would be unimpaired. The design of new features should also be differentiated from the design of the historic property so that the evolution of the property is evident. See *Making Historic Buildings Accessible* on page 9.

In general, when historic properties are altered, they should be made as accessible as possible. However, if an owner or a project team believes that certain modifications would threaten or destroy the significance of the property, the State Historic Preservation Officer should be consulted to determine whether or not any special accessibility provisions may be used. Special accessibility provisions for historic properties will vary depending on the applicable accessibility requirements.



A.



B.



C.

Figure 3. Before implementing accessibility modifications, owners should consider the potential effect on their historic property. At the Derby House in Salem, Massachusetts, several solutions to make the entrance accessible were considered, including regrading (a); a lift (b); and a ramp (c). The solution, an entrance on a secondary elevation, preserves the building's architectural significance and is convenient to designated parking. Drawings: National Park Service Files..

In some cases, programmatic access may be the only option for extremely small or unaltered historic properties, such as a two-story house museum with no internal elevator. Programmatic access for historic properties refers to alternative methods of providing services, information, and experiences when physical access cannot be provided. It

may mean offering an audio-visual program showing an inaccessible upper floor of a historic house museum, providing interpretive panels from a vista at an inaccessible terraced garden, or creating a tactile model of a historic monument for people with visual impairments.

Accessibility Solutions

The goal in selecting appropriate solutions for specific historic properties is to provide a high level of accessibility without compromising significant features or the overall character of the property. The following sections describe accessibility solutions and offer guidance on specific historic property components, namely the building site, entrances, interiors, landscapes, amenities, and new additions. Several solutions are discussed in each section, referencing dimensions and technical requirements from the ADA's accessibility guidelines, ADAAG. State and local requirements, however, may differ from the ADA requirements. Before making any modification owners should be aware of all applicable accessibility requirements.

The Building Site

An accessible route from a parking lot, sidewalk, and public street to the entrance of a historic building or facility is essential. An accessible route, to the maximum extent possible, should be the circulation route used by the general public. Critical elements of accessible routes are their widths, slopes, cross slopes, and surface texture. Each of these route elements must be appropriately designed so that the route can be used by everyone, including people with disabilities. The distance between the arrival and destination points should also be as short as possible. Sites containing designed landscapes should be carefully evaluated before making accessibility modifications. Historic landscapes are described in greater detail on pages 10 and 11.

Providing Convenient Parking. If parking is provided, it should be as convenient as possible for people with disabilities. Specially designated parking can often be created to improve accessibility (See Figure 4). Modifications to parking configurations and pathways should not alter significant landscape features.

Creating an Accessible Route. The route or path through a site to a historic building's entrance should be wide enough, generally at least 3 feet (91 cm), to accommodate visitors



Figure 4. Parking designated for people with disabilities is provided near an accessible entrance to the Springfield Library in Springfield, Massachusetts. Photo: William Smith.

with disabilities and must be appropriately graded with a stable, firm, and slip-resistant surface. Existing paths should be modified to meet these requirements whenever possible as long as doing so would not threaten or destroy significant materials and features.

Existing surfaces can often be stabilized by providing a new base and resetting the paving materials, or by modifying the path surface. In some situations it may be appropriate to create a new path through an inaccessible area. At large properties, it may be possible to regrade a slope to less than 1:20 (5%), or to introduce one or more carefully planned ramps. Clear directional signs should mark the path from arrival to destination.

Entrances

Whenever possible, access to historic buildings should be through a primary public entrance. In historic buildings, if this cannot be achieved without permanent damage to character-defining features, at least one entrance used by the public should be made accessible. If the accessible entrance is not the primary public entrance, directional signs should direct visitors to the accessible entrance (See Figure 5). A rear or service entrance should be avoided as the only mean of entering a building.



Figure 5. A universal access symbol clearly marks the Arts and Industries Building in Washington, D.C., and a push plate (right) engages the automatic door-opener. Photo: Thomas Jester.

Creating an accessible entrance usually involves overcoming a change in elevation. Steps, landings, doors, and thresholds, all part of the entrance, often pose barriers for persons with disabilities. To preserve the integrity of these features, a number of solutions are available to increase accessibility. Typical solutions include regrading, incorporating ramps, installing wheelchair lifts, creating new entrances, and modifying doors, hardware, and thresholds.

Regrading an Entrance. In some cases, when the entrance steps and landscape features are not highly significant, it may be possible to regrade to provide a smooth entrance into a building. If the existing steps are historic masonry, they should be buried, whenever possible, and not removed (See Figure 6).

Incorporating Ramps. Permanent ramps are perhaps the most common means to make an entrance accessible. As a new feature, ramps should be carefully designed and appropriately located to preserve a property's historic character (See Figure 7). Ramps can often be incorporated behind

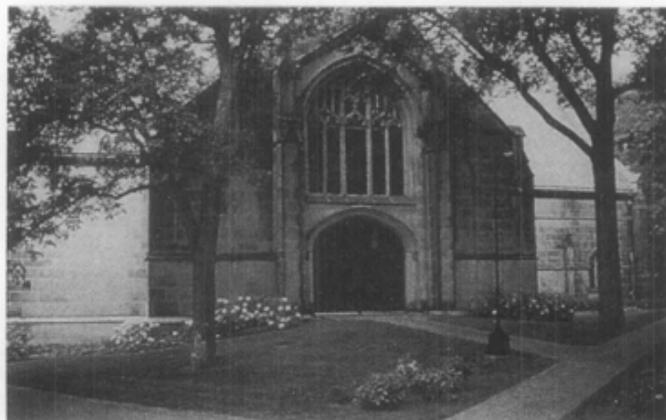
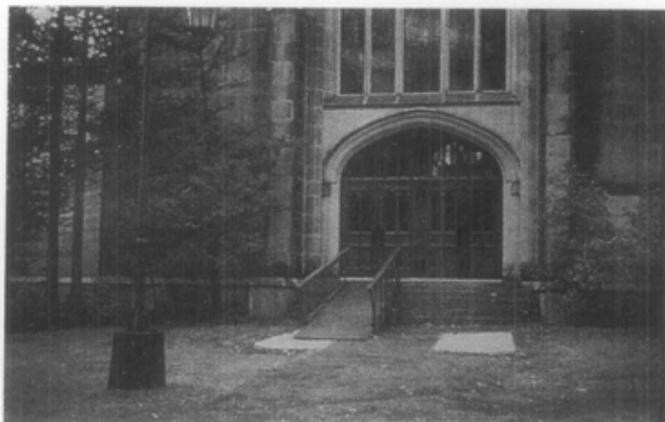


Figure 6. Entrances can be regraded to make a building accessible as long as no significant landscape features will be destroyed and as long as the building's historic character is preserved. The Houghton Chapel (a) in Wellesley, Massachusetts, was made accessible by regrading over the historic steps (b). Photos: Carol R. Johnson & Associates.



Figure 7. This ramp is convenient for visitors with disabilities and preserves the building's historic character. The design is also compatible in scale with the building. Photo: William Smith.

entrances used by everyone whenever possible, preferably where there is minimal change in grade. Ramps should also be located to minimize the loss of historic features at the connection points—porch railings, steps, and windows—and should preserve the overall historic setting and character of the property. Larger buildings may have below grade areas that can accommodate a ramp down to an entrance (See Figure 8). Below grade entrances can be considered if the ramp leads to a publicly used interior, such as an auditorium, or if the building is serviced by a public elevator. Ramps can often be incorporated behind



Figure 8. A new below-grade ramp provides access to Lake MacDonald Lodge in Glacier National Park. Photo: Thomas Jester

historic features, such as cheek-walls or railings, to minimize the visual effect (See Figure 9).

The steepest allowable slope for a ramp is usually 1:12 (8%), but gentler slopes should be used whenever possible to accommodate people with limited strength. Greater changes in elevation require larger and longer ramps to meet accessibility scoping provisions and may require an intermediate landing. Most codes allow a slightly steeper ramp for historic buildings to overcome one step.

Ramps can be faced with a variety of materials, including wood, brick, and stone. Often the type and quality of the materials determines how compatible a ramp design will be with a historic property (See Figure 10). Unpainted pressure-treated wood should not be used to construct ramps because it usually appears temporary and is not visually compatible with most historic properties. Railings



Figure 9. This ramp was created by infilling the window-well and slightly modifying the historic railing. The ramp preserves this building's historic character. Photo: Thomas Jester.



Figure 10. This brick ramp provides access to St. Anne's Episcopal Church in Annapolis, Maryland. Its design is compatible with the historic building. Photo: Charity V. Davidson.

should be simple in design, distinguishable from other historic features, and should extend one foot beyond the sloped area (See Figure 11).

Ramp landings must be large enough for wheelchair users, usually at least 5 feet by 5 feet (152.5 cm by 152.5 cm), and the top landing must be at the level of the door threshold. It may be possible to reset steps by creating a ramp to accommodate minor level changes and to meet the threshold without significantly altering a property's historic character. If a building's existing landing is not wide or deep enough to accommodate a ramp, it may be

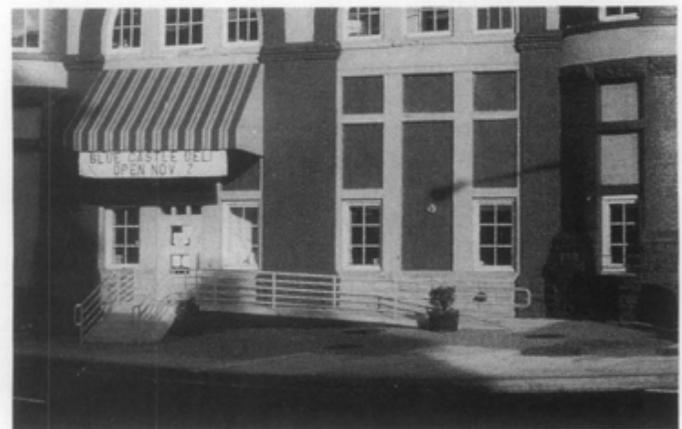


Figure 11. Simple, contemporary railings that extend beyond the ramp slope make this ramp compatible with the industrial character of this building. Photo: Thomas Jester.

necessary to modify the entry to create a wider landing. Long ramps, such as switchbacks, require intermediate landings, and all ramps should be detailed with an appropriate edge and railing for wheelchair users and visually impaired individuals.

Temporary or portable ramps are usually constructed of light-weight materials and, thus, are rarely safe or visually compatible with historic properties. Moreover, portable ramps are often stored until needed and, therefore, do not meet accessibility requirements for independent access. Temporary and portable ramps, however, may be an acceptable interim solution to improve accessibility until a permanent solution can be implemented (See Figure 12).



Figure 12. The Smithsonian Institution installed a temporary ramp on its visitor's center to allow adequate time to design an appropriate permanent ramp. Photo: Thomas Jester.

Installing Wheelchair Lifts. Platforms lifts and inclined stair lifts, both of which accommodate only one person, can be used to overcome changes of elevation ranging from three to 10 feet (.9 m-3 m) in height. However, many States have restrictions on the use of wheelchair lifts, so all applicable codes should be reviewed carefully before installing one. Inclined stair lifts, which carry a wheelchair on a platform up a flight of stairs, may be employed selectively.

They tend to be visually intrusive, although they are relatively reversible. Platform lifts can be used when there is inadequate space for a ramp. However, such lifts should be installed in unobtrusive locations and under cover to minimize maintenance if at all possible (See Figure 13). A similar, but more expensive platform lift has a retracting railing that lowers into the ground, minimizing the visual effect to historic properties (See Figure 14). Mechanical lifts have drawbacks at historic properties with high public visitation because their capacity is limited, they sometimes cannot be operated independently, and they require frequent maintenance.

Considering a New Entrance. When it is not possible to modify an existing entrance, it may be possible to develop a new entrance by creating an entirely new opening in an appropriate location, or by using a secondary window for an opening. This solution should only be considered after exhausting all possibilities for modifying existing entrances (See Figure 15).

Retrofitting Doors. Historic doors generally should not be replaced, nor should door frames on the primary elevation be widened, as this may alter an important feature of a historic design. However, if a building's historic doors have been removed, there may be greater latitude in designing a compatible new entrance. Most accessibility standards require at least a 32" (82 cm) clear opening with manageable door opening pressures. The most desirable preservation solution to improve accessibility is retaining historic doors and upgrading the door pressure with one of several devices. Automatic door openers

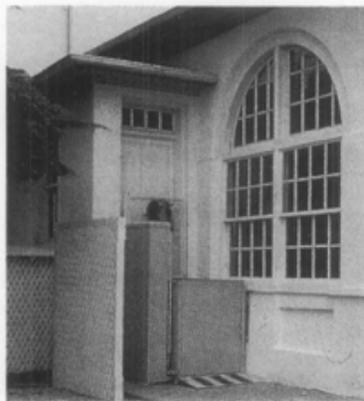


Figure 13. Platform lifts like the one used on this building require minimal space and can be removed without damaging historic materials. Shielded with lattice work, this lift is also protected by the roof eaves. Approach path should be stable, firm, and slip resistant. Photo: Sharon Park.

Readily Achievable Accessibility Modifications



Many accessibility solutions can be implemented easily and inexpensively without destroying the significance of historic properties. While it may not be possible to undertake all of the modifications listed below, each change will improve accessibility.

Sites and Entrances

- Creating a designated parking space.
- Installing ramps.
- Making curb cuts.

Interiors

- Repositioning shelves.
- Rearranging tables, displays, and furniture.
- Repositioning telephones.
- Adding raised markings on elevator control buttons.
- Installing flashing alarm lights.
- Installing offset hinges to widen doorways.
- Installing or adding accessible door hardware.
- Adding an accessible water fountain, or providing a paper cup dispenser at an inaccessible water fountain.

Restrooms

- Installing grab bars in toilet stalls.
- Rearranging toilet partitions to increase maneuvering space.
- Insulating lavatory pipes under sinks to prevent burns.
- Installing a higher toilet seat.
- Installing a full-length bathroom mirror.
- Repositioning the paper towel dispenser.



Figure 14. At the Lieutenant Governor's Mansion in Frankfort, Kentucky, a retracting lift (b) was installed to minimize the visual effect on this historic building when not in use (a). Photos: Aging Technology Incorporated.

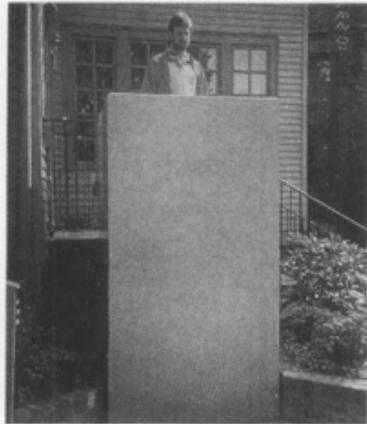


Figure 15. A new entrance to the elevator lobby replaces a window at Faneuil Hall in Boston, Massachusetts. The new entrance is appropriately differentiated from the historic design. Photo: Paul Holtz.

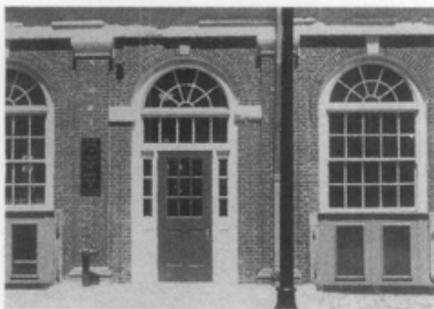


Figure 16. During the rehabilitation of the Rookery in Chicago, the original entrance was modified to create an accessible entrance. Two revolving doors were replaced with a new one flanked by new doors, one of which is operated with a push-plate door opener. Photo: Thomas Jester.

requirements. If the threshold is deemed to be significant, a bevel can be added on each side to reduce its height (See Figure 17). Another solution is to replace the threshold with one that meets applicable accessibility requirements and is visually compatible with the historic entrance.

Moving Through Historic Interiors

Persons with disabilities should have independent access to all public areas and facilities inside historic buildings. The extent to which a historic interior can be modified depends on the significance of its materials, plan, spaces, features, and finishes. Primary spaces are often more difficult to modify without changing their character. Secondary spaces may generally be changed without compromising a building's historic character. Signs should clearly mark the route to accessible restrooms, telephones, and other accessible areas.

Installing Ramps and Wheelchair Lifts. If space permits, ramps and wheelchair lifts can also be used to increase accessibility inside buildings (See Figures 18 & 19). However, some States and localities restrict interior uses of wheelchair lifts for life-safety reasons. Care should be taken to install these new features where they can be readily accessed. Ramps and wheelchair lifts are described in detail on pages 4-6.

Upgrading Elevators. Elevators are an efficient means of providing accessibility between floors. Some buildings have existing historic elevators that are not adequately accessible for persons with disabilities because of their size, location, or detailing, but they may also contribute to the historical significance of a building. Significant historic elevators can usually be upgraded to improve accessibility. Control panels can be modified with a "wand" on a cord to make the control panel accessible, and timing devices can usually be adjusted.

Retrofitting Door Knobs. Historic door knobs and other hardware may be difficult to grip and turn. In recent years, lever-handles have been developed to replace door knobs. Other lever-handle devices can be added to existing hardware. If it is not possible or appropriate to retrofit existing door knobs, doors can be left open during operating hours (unless doing so would violate life safety codes), and power-assisted door openers can be installed. It may only be necessary to retrofit specific doorknobs to create an accessible path of travel and accessible restrooms.

(operated by push buttons, mats, or electronic eyes) and power-assisted door openers can eliminate or reduce door pressures that are accessibility barriers, and make single or double-leaf doors fully operational (See Figure 16).

Adapting Door Hardware. If a door opening is within an inch or two of meeting the 32" (81 cm) clear opening requirement, it may be possible to replace the standard hinges with off-set hinges to increase the size of the door opening as much as 1 1/2" (3.8 cm). Historic hardware can be retained in place, or adapted with the addition of an automatic opener, of which there are several types. Door hardware can also be retrofitted to reduce door pressures. For example, friction hinges can be retrofitted with ball-bearing inserts, and door closers can be rethreaded to reduce the door pressure.

Altering Door Thresholds. A door threshold that exceeds the allowable height, generally 1/2" (1.3 cm), can be altered or removed with one that meets applicable accessibility

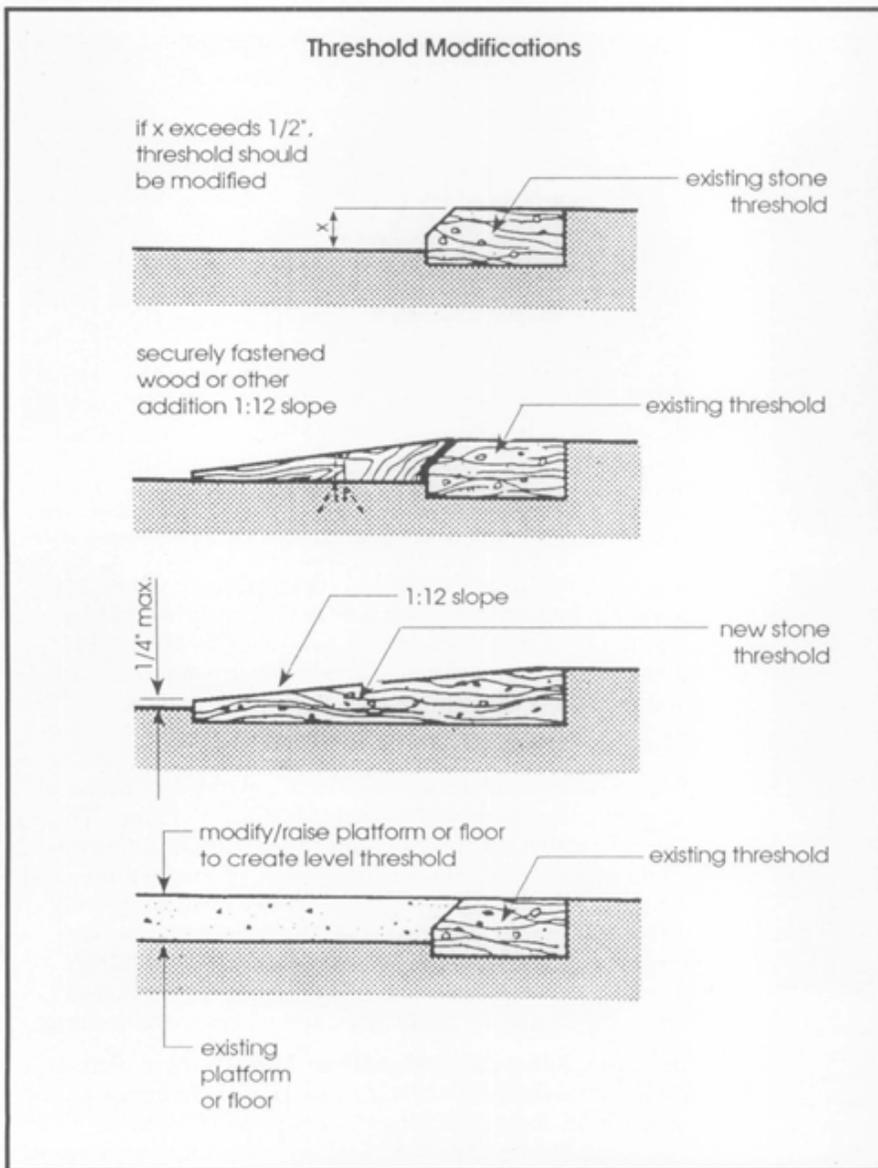


Figure 17. Thresholds that exceed allowable heights can be modified several ways to increase accessibility. Source: Uniform Federal Accessibility Standard (UFAS) Retrofit Manual.

Modifying Interior Stairs. Stairs are the primary barriers for many people with disabilities. However, there are some ways to modify stairs to assist people who are able to navigate them. It may be appropriate to add hand railings if none exist. Railings should be 1 1/4" (3.8 cm) in diameter and return to the wall so straps and bags do not catch. Color-contrasting, slip-resistant strips will help people with visual impairments. Finally, beveled or closed risers are recommended unless the stairs are highly significant, because open risers catch feet (See Figure 20).

Building Amenities

Some amenities in historic buildings, such as restrooms, seating, telephones, drinking fountains, counters, may contribute to a building's historic character. They will often require modification to improve their use by persons with disabilities. In many cases, supplementing existing amenities, rather than changing or removing them, will increase access and minimize changes to historic features and materials.

Upgrading Restrooms. Restrooms may have historic fixtures such as sinks, urinals, or marble partitions that can

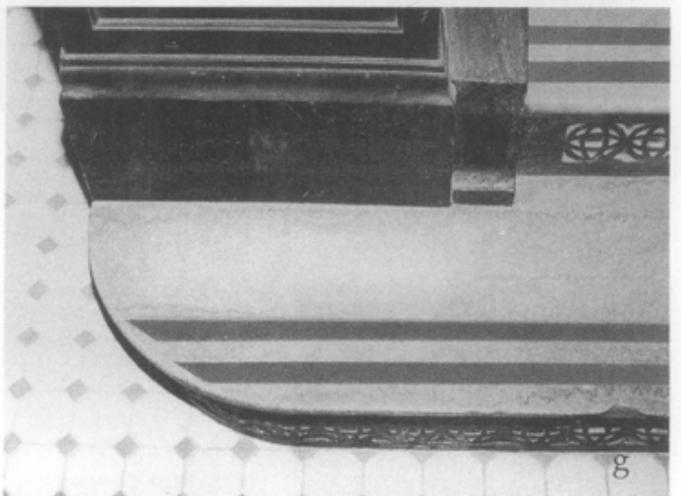
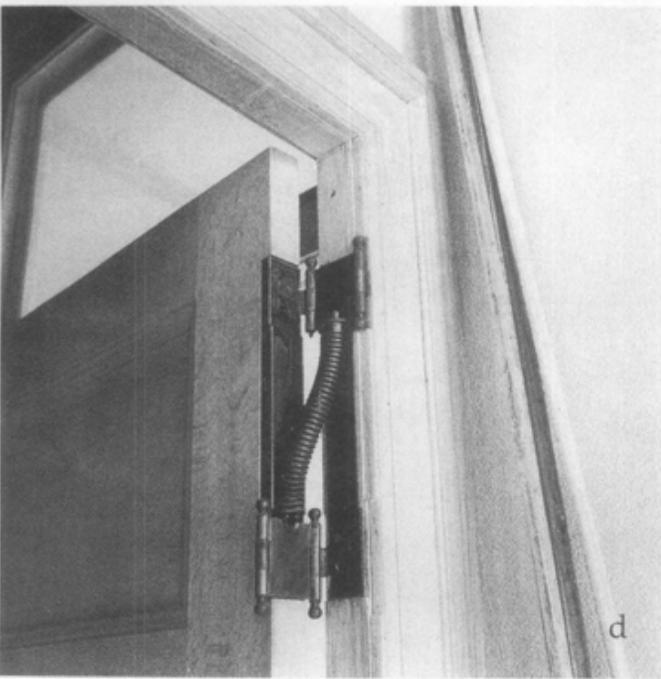
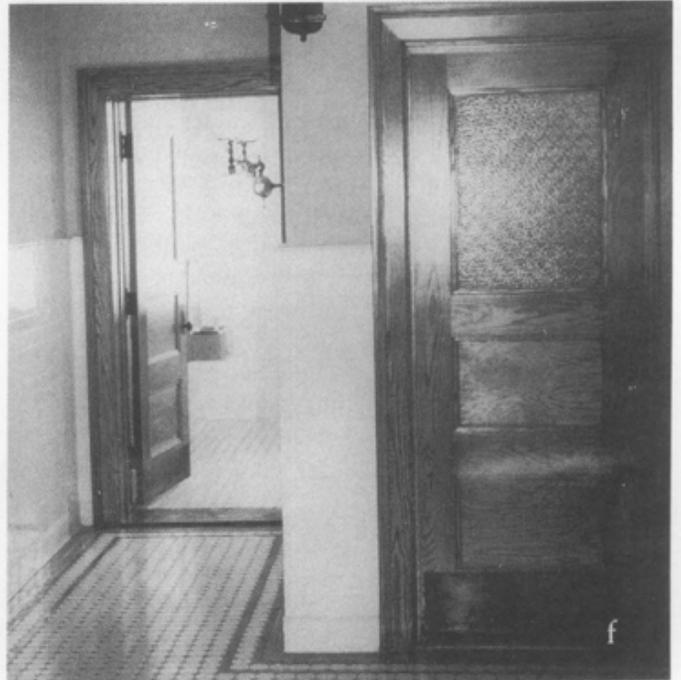
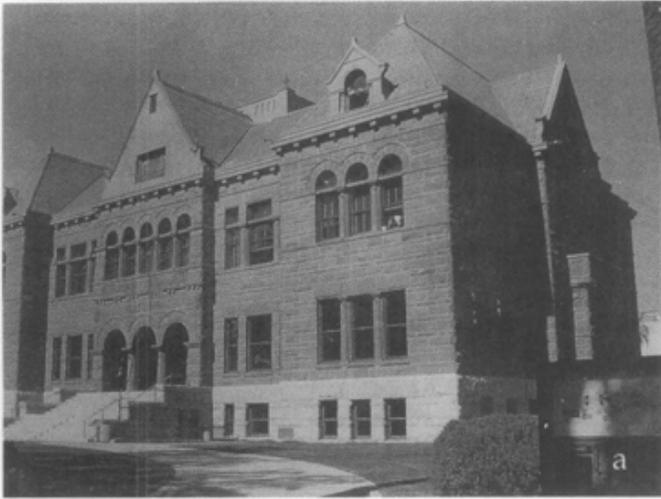
be retained in the process of making modifications. For example, larger restrooms can sometimes be reconfigured by relocating or combining partitions to create an accessible toilet stall. Other changes to consider are adding grab bars around toilets, covering hot water pipes under sinks with insulation to prevent burns, and providing a sink, mirror, and paper dispenser at a height suitable for wheelchair users. A unisex restroom may be created if it is technically infeasible to create two fully accessible restrooms, or if doing so would threaten or destroy the significance of the building. It is important to remember that restroom fixtures, such as sinks, urinals, and partitions, may be historic, and therefore, should be preserved whenever possible.

Modifying Other Amenities. Other amenities inside historic buildings may require modification. Seating in a theater, for example, can be made accessible by removing some seats in several areas (See Figure 21). New seating that is accessible can also be added at the end of existing rows, either with or without a level floor surface. Readily removable seats may be installed in wheelchair spaces when the spaces are not required to accommodate wheelchair users. Historic water fountains can be retained and new, two-tiered fountains installed if space permits. If public telephones are provided, it may be necessary to install at least a Text Telephone (TT), also known as a Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD) (See Figure 22). Historic service counters commonly found in banks, theaters, and hotels generally should not be altered. It is preferable to add an accessible counter on the end of a historic counter if feasible. Modified or new counters should not exceed 36" (91.5 cm) in height.



Figure 18. Symmetrical ramps at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C., provide access to the hotel's lower level. The design for the ramps respects the historic character of this landmark building. Photo: Thomas Jester.

MAKING A HISTORIC BUILDING ACCESSIBLE



The Orange County Courthouse (a), located in Santa Ana, California, was rehabilitated in the late 1980s as a county museum. As part of the rehabilitation, the architect sensitively integrated numerous modifications to increase accessibility. To preserve the building's primary elevation, a new public entrance was created on the rear elevation where parking spaces are located. A ramp (b) leads to the accessible entrance that can be opened with a push-plate automatic door-opener (c). Modifications to interior features also increased accessibility. To create an accessible path of travel, offset hinges (d) were installed on doors that were narrower than 32 inches (81.3 cm). Other doors were rethreaded to reduce the door pressure. Beveling the 1" high thresholds (e) reduced their height to approximately 1/4 inch (.64 cm). The project architect also converted a storeroom into an accessible restroom (f). The original stairway, which has open grillwork, was made more accessible by applying slip-resistant pressure tape to the marble steps (g). And the original elevator was upgraded with raised markings, alarm lights, and voice floor indicators. Photos: Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA.

MAKING HISTORIC LANDSCAPES ACCESSIBLE

To successfully incorporate access into historic landscapes, the planning process is similar to that of other historic properties. Careful research and inventory should be undertaken to determine which materials and features convey the landscape's historical significance. As part of this evaluation, those features that are character-defining (topographical variation, vegetation, circulation, structures, furnishings, objects) should be identified. Historic finishes, details, and materials that also contribute to a landscape's significance should also be documented and evaluated prior to determining an approach to landscape accessibility. For example, aspects of the pedestrian circulation system that need to be understood include walk width, aggregate size, pavement pattern, texture, relief, and joint details. The context of the walk should be understood including its edges and surrounding area. Modifications to surface textures or widths of pathways can often be made with minimal effect on significant landscape features (a) and (b).

Additionally, areas of secondary importance such as altered paths should be identified -- especially those where the accessibility modifications will not destroy a landscape's significance. By identifying those features that are contributing or non-contributing, a sympathetic circulation experience can then be developed.

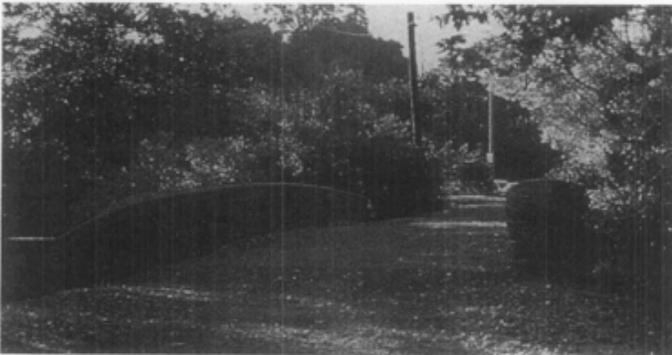
After assessing a landscape's integrity, accessibility solutions can be considered. Full access throughout a historic landscape may not always be possible. Generally, it is easier to provide accessibility to larger, more open

sites where there is a greater variety of public experiences. However, when a landscape is uniformly steep, it may only be possible to make discrete portions of a historic landscape accessible, and viewers may only be able to experience the landscape from selected vantage points along a prescribed pedestrian or vehicular access route. When defining such a route, the interpretive value of the user experience should be considered; in other words, does the route provide physical or visual access to those areas that are critical to understand the meaning of the landscape?

The following accessibility solutions address three common landscape situations: 1) structures with low integrity landscapes; 2) structures and landscapes of equal significance; and, 3) landscapes of primary significance with inaccessible terrain.

1. The Hunnewell Visitors Center at the Arnold Arboretum in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, was constructed in 1892. Its immediate setting has changed considerably over time (c). Since the existing landscape immediately surrounding this structure has little remaining integrity, the new accessibility solution has the latitude to integrate a broad program including site orientation, circulation, interpretation, and maintenance.

The new design, which has few ornamental plants, references the original planting design principles, with a strong emphasis on form, color, and texture. In contrast with the earlier designs, the new plantings were set away from the facade of this historic building,



(a.) To improve accessibility in Boston's Emerald Necklace Parks, standard asphalt paving was replaced in selected areas with an imbedded aggregate surface that is more in keeping with the landscape's historic appearance. Photo: Charles Birnbaum.



(b.) The Friendly Garden at Ranchos Los Alamitos, a historic estate with designed gardens in southern California, was made accessible with limited widening of its existing approach path. Photo: Ranchos Los Alamitos Foundation.



(c.) Hunnewell Visitor's Center before rehabilitation, revealing the altered landscapes. Photo: Jennifer Jones, Carol R. Johnson and associates.



(d.) Hunnewell Visitors Center's entrance following rehabilitation, integrating an accessible path (left), platform, and new steps. Photo: Charles Birnbaum.

allowing the visitor to enjoy its architectural detail. A new walk winds up the gentle earthen berm and is vegetated with plantings that enhance the interpretive experience from the point of orientation (d). The new curvilinear walks also provide a connection to the larger arboretum landscape for everyone.

2. The Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site overlooks the San Ramon Valley, twenty-seven miles east of San Francisco, California. The thirteen-acre site includes a walled courtyard garden on the southeast side of the Tao House, which served as the O'Neill residence from 1937-44 (e). Within this courtyard are character-defining walks that are too narrow by today's accessibility standards, yet are a character-defining element of the historic design. To preserve the garden's integrity, the scale and the characteristics of the original circulation were maintained by creating a wheelchair route which, in part, utilizes reinforced turf. This route allows visitors with disabilities to experience the main courtyard as well.
3. Morningside Park in New York City, New York, designed by Frederick Olmstead, Sr., and Calvert Vaux in 1879, is sited on generally steep, rocky terrain (f). Respecting these dramatic grade changes, which are only accessible by extensive flights of stone stairs, physical access cannot be provided without destroying the park's integrity. In order to provide some accessibility, scenic overlooks were created that provide broad visual access to the park.



(e.) This view shows the new reinforced turf path at the Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site that preserved the narrow Historic Path. Photo: Patricia M. O'Donnell.



(f.) Steep terrain at Morningside Park in New York City cannot be made accessible without threatening or destroying this landscape's integrity. Photo: Quennell Rothschild Associates.



Figure 19. Inclined lifts can sometimes overcome interior changes of elevation where space is limited. This lift in Boston's Faneuil Hall created access to the floor and stage level of the State Room. Photo: Paul Holtz.

Considering a New Addition as an Accessibility Solution

Many new additions are constructed specifically to incorporate modern amenities such as elevators, restrooms, fire stairs, and new mechanical equipment. These new additions often create opportunities to incorporate access for people with disabilities. It may be possible, for example, to create an accessible entrance, path to public levels via a ramp, lift, or elevator (See Figure 23). However, a new addition has the potential to change a historic property's appearance and destroy significant building and landscape features. Thus, all new additions should be compatible with the size, scale, and proportions of historic features and materials that characterize a property (See Figure 24).

New additions should be carefully located to minimize connection points with the historic building, such that if the addition were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the building would remain intact. On the other hand, new additions should also be conveniently located near parking that is connected to an accessible route for people with disabilities. As new additions are incorporated, care should be taken to protect significant landscape features and archeological resources. Finally, the design for any new addition should be differentiated from the historic design so that the property's evolution over time is clear. New additions frequently make it possible to increase accessibility, while simultaneously reducing the level of change to historic features, materials, and spaces.

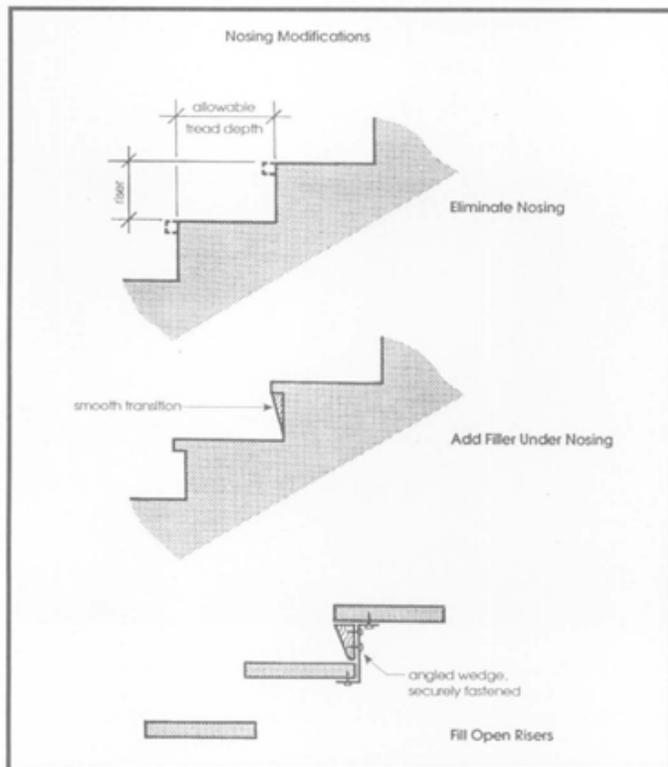


Figure 20. In certain situations it may be appropriate to modify stair nosings for persons with mobility impairments. Whenever possible, stairs should be modified by adding new materials rather than removing historic materials. Source: UFAS Retrofit Manual.

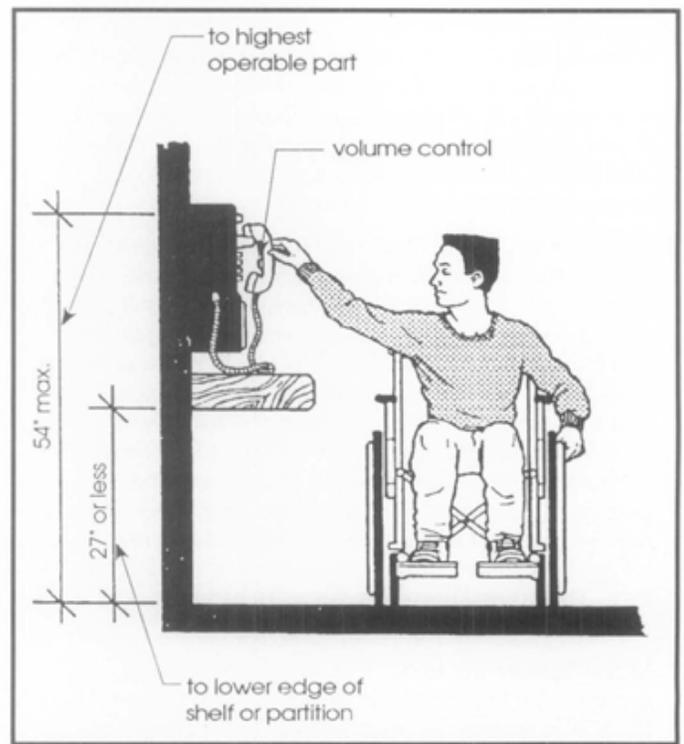


Figure 22. Amenities such as telephones should be at height that wheelchair users can reach. Changes to many amenities can be adapted with minimal effect on historic materials, features, and spaces. Source: UFAS Retrofit Manual.

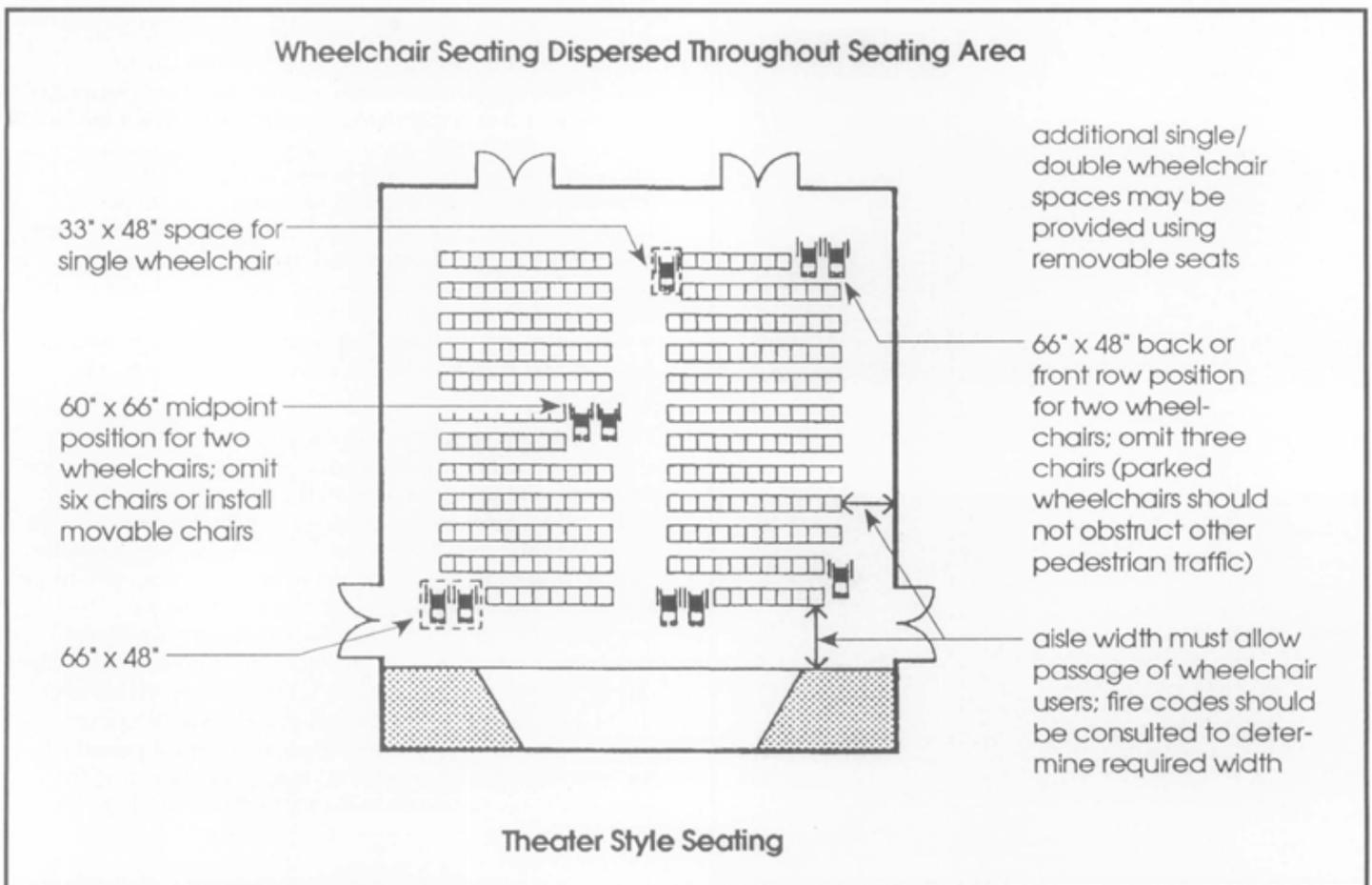


Figure 21. Seating in historic theaters and auditoriums can be changed to accommodate wheelchair users. Accessible seating areas should be connected to an accessible route from the building entrance. Source: UFAS Retrofit Manual.

Federal Accessibility Laws

Today, few building owners are exempt from providing accessibility for people with disabilities. Before making any accessibility modification, it is imperative to determine which laws and codes are applicable. In addition to local and State accessibility codes, the following federal accessibility laws are currently in effect:

Architectural Barriers Act (1968)

The Architectural Barriers Act stipulates that all buildings designed, constructed, and altered by the Federal Government, or with federal assistance, must be accessible. Changes made to federal buildings must meet the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS). Special provisions are included in UFAS for historic buildings that would be threatened or destroyed by meeting full accessibility requirements.

Rehabilitation Act (1973)

The Rehabilitation Act requires recipients of federal financial assistance to make their programs and activities accessible to everyone. Recipients are allowed to make their properties accessible by altering their building, by moving programs and activities to accessible spaces, or by making other accommodations.

Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)

Historic properties are not exempt from the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements. To the greatest extent possible, historic buildings must be as accessible as non-historic buildings. However, it may not be possible for some historic properties to meet the general accessibility requirements.

Under Title II of the ADA, State and local governments must remove accessibility barriers either by shifting services and programs to accessible buildings, or by making alterations to existing buildings. For instance, a licensing office may be moved from a second floor to an accessible first floor space, or if this is not feasible, a mail service might be provided. However, State and local government facilities that have historic preservation as their main purpose—State-owned historic museums, historic State capitols that offer tours—must give priority to physical accessibility.

Under Title III of the ADA, owners of “public accommodations” (theaters, restaurants, retail shops, private museums) must make “readily achievable” changes; that is, changes that can be easily accomplished without much expense. This might mean installing a ramp, creating accessible parking, adding grab bars in bathrooms, or modifying door hardware. The requirement to remove barriers when it is “readily achievable” is an ongoing responsibility. When alterations, including restoration and rehabilitation work, are made, specific accessibility requirements are triggered.

Recognizing the national interest in preserving historic properties, Congress established alternative requirements for properties that cannot be made accessible without “threatening or destroying” their significance. A consultation process is outlined in the ADA’s Accessibility Guidelines for owners of historic properties who believe that making specific accessibility modifications would “threaten or destroy” the significance of their property. In these situations, after consulting with persons with disabilities and disability organizations, building owners should contact the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to determine if the special accessibility provisions for historic properties may be used. Further, if it is determined in consultation with the SHPO that compliance with the minimum requirements would also “threaten or destroy” the significance of the property, alternative methods of access, such as home delivery and audio-visual programs, may be used.



Figure 23. New additions to historic buildings can be designed to increase accessibility. A new addition links two adjacent buildings used for the Albany, New York, Visitor's Center, and incorporates an accessible entrance, restrooms, and signage. Photo: Clare Adams.

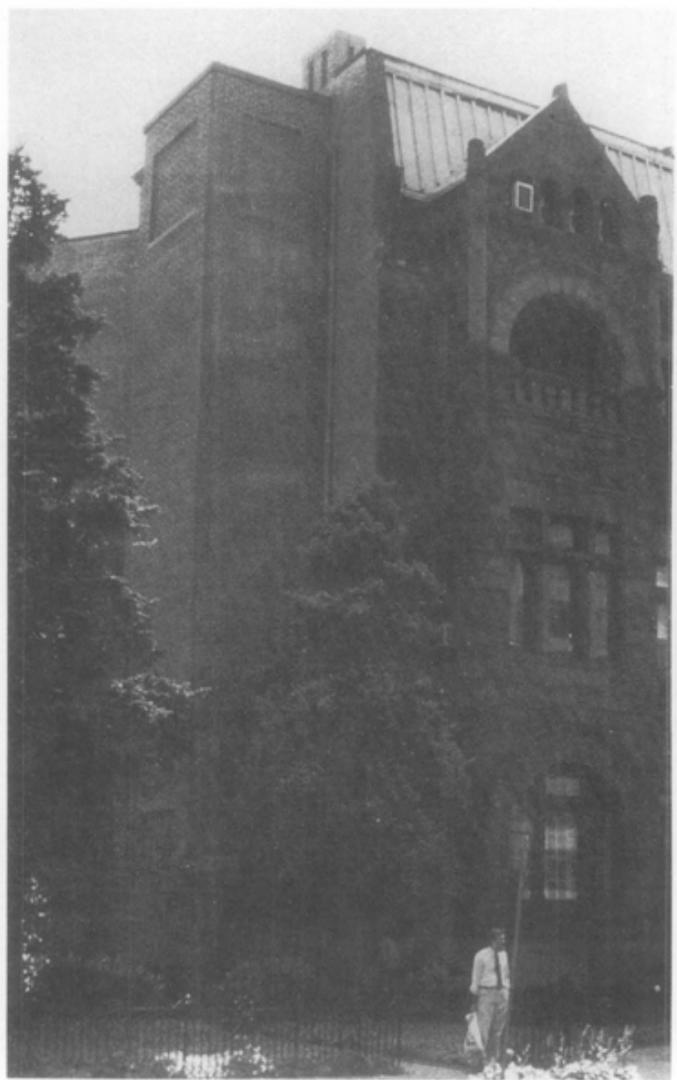


Figure 24. Creating an accessible entrance with a new elevator tower requires a compatible design. This elevator addition blends in with the historic building's materials and provides access to all public levels. Photo: Sharon Park.

Conclusion

Historic properties are irreplaceable and require special care to ensure their preservation for future generations. With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act, access to historic properties open to the public is a now civil right, and owners of historic properties must evaluate existing buildings and determine how they can be made more accessible. It is a challenge to evaluate properties thoroughly, to identify the applicable accessibility requirements, to explore alternatives and to implement solutions that provide independent access and are consistent with accepted historic preservation standards. Solutions for accessibility should not destroy a property's significant materials, features and spaces, but should increase accessibility as much as possible. Most historic buildings are not exempt from providing accessibility, and with careful planning, historic properties can be made more accessible, so that all citizens can enjoy our Nation's diverse heritage.



Photo: Massachusetts Historical Commission.

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