



Glossary of Preservation Terms

Adaptive Reuse

The conversion of a building to a use other than that for which it was originally designed, optimally, respecting the historic features of the building.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

State law mandating that any project that may have an effect on the environment, including on cultural/historic resources, must analyze the possible negative effects of the proposed project prior to implementation.

California Register of Historical Resources

The State's list of significant historic resources, which includes resources significant at both the state and local levels. Also includes any site listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Certified Local Government (CLG)

Refers to a local government, certified or approved by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), which has an appointed commission to oversee the survey and inventory of historic resources, to review areas for historically significant structures, and to develop and maintain community planning and education programs.

Context Statement

Scholarly document that outlines the historic context for evaluating the significance of a historic resource.

Contributing Structure

One of the buildings or site features that give a historic district its significance – a building that was built within the “period of significance” and that sufficiently retains its historic features.

Cultural Heritage Master Plan

Plan passed in 2001 by the Los Angeles City Council as a blueprint for future city historic preservation policies.

Cultural Landscape

Preservation of cultural landscapes, or areas “where the interaction between man and nature created a unique whole” or “places in nature that have acquired significant associations with human activities and human events . . . these landscapes seem to retain their natural forms and features, [but] they are transformed in the minds of those who associate historic events with them.”

Demolition by Neglect

Allowing a building to fall into such a state of disrepair that it becomes necessary or desirable to demolish it. Property owners have been accused of permitting demolition by neglect on purpose, in order to save on rehabilitation costs.

Easement

Legal protection (recorded in a property deed) for distinguishing features of the interior or exterior of a property or in the space surrounding a property because such features are deemed important to be preserved. For example, a new property owner may be prevented from making changes or additions to a building, structure, or landscape by an easement in the property deed itself. These are sometimes specified as preservation easements or conservation easements.

Eligible

Meets the criteria for listing in the National Register or California Register, but not officially listed, often because the property owner has objected to designation. Eligible buildings are considered “historical resources” under CEQA.

Eminent Domain

The powers granted to a public agencies to condemn private property, at fair market value, for specific public purposes.

Environmental Impact Report (EIR)

A detailed environmental study required by CEQA in order to provide specific information to decision makers about a proposed project. Under CEQA, “historical resources” (see below) cannot be demolished or adversely altered without preparation of an EIR, which studies alternatives to the proposed project. A Draft EIR is the first document issued and gives the public the opportunity to submit comments. A Final EIR incorporates the responses to these public comments and is presented to the decision making body for approval (or “certification”).

Façade

The exterior surface of a building.

Historic-Cultural Monument (HCM)

The official term for historic landmark designation for resources in the City of Los Angeles. More than 1,000 HCMs have been designated.

Historic District

A geographically definable area that possess a significant concentration of buildings or sites that have been united architecturally or historically. Individual buildings in a district need not be individual historic landmarks; they can derive their significance in association with the district. A district occasionally also comprises individual elements separated geographically but thematically linked by association or history (e.g., fire stations, Home Savings Banks, or separate sites related to the Japanese-American Internment of World War II). Historic districts in Los Angeles are known as Historic Preservation Overlay Zones, or HPOZs (see below).

Historic Fabric

The physical material of a building, structure, or city that is historic.

Historic Preservation Overlay Zone (HPOZ)

The official name for historic districts in the City of Los Angeles; the city had designated twenty-nine HPOZs as of March 2014.

Historic Resources Survey

A process of systematically identifying, researching, and documenting properties that reflect important themes in a city's growth and development, such as architecture, city planning, social history, ethnic heritage, politics, industry, transportation, commerce, entertainment, and others. Historic resources include buildings, structures, objects, cultural landscapes, natural features, and groupings of resources or areas known as historic districts.

Historical Resource

Refers generally to any historic building or site; in California, a "historical resource," as defined in CEQA, is any building or site listed in or eligible for listing in the California Register. Often called "historic resource" in common parlance.

Initial Study

An element of CEQA; the process by which a project is first evaluated under CEQA to determine whether an EIR is required.

Integrity

Term that describes whether a historic resource is intact, considering whether it has maintained its historic location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling (sense of place), and historic association.

Lead Agency

An element of CEQA; the government agency responsible for the proper completion and evaluation of a project's environmental impacts.

Mills Act

A California state law implemented by local governments whereby property owners enter into contracts with the locality, agreeing to maintain their historic property according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation (see below) in return for a reduction in their property taxes.

Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)

An element of CEQA. If a proposed project will have a minimal effect on the environment, and these effects can be reduced to a level of "insignificance" through specific mitigation measures, project proponents prepare a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND). This statement is less burdensome than is an EIR.

Mitigation

An action reducing the harm that a development project causes to the environment or to a historic building.

ModCom

Informal name for the Los Angeles Conservancy's Modern Committee.

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

A federal statute that requires environmental review for projects funded with federal money (like CEQA, but at the federal level).

National Historic Landmark (NHL)

A district, site, building, structure, or object of national historical significance, designated by the Secretary of the Interior under authority of the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and entered in the National Register of Historic Places.

National Register of Historic Places

The comprehensive list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of national, regional, state, and local significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture kept by the National Park Service under authority of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966.

National Trust for Historic Preservation

National nonprofit, membership-based historic preservation organization, based in Washington, D.C., with a field office in Los Angeles.

Non-Contributing Structure

A building that does not contribute to the significance of an historic district, either because it was built outside the "period of significance" or has been excessively altered.

Notice of Preparation (NOP)

An element of CEQA; the first notice that an EIR will be prepared regarding a project.

Office of Historic Preservation (OHP)

The state office that administers historic preservation programs for the State of California, maintains the California Register, and assists local governments through the Certified Local Government (CLG) program.

Office of Historic Resources (OHR)

The main office at the City of Los Angeles, located within the Department of City Planning, which addresses historic buildings and districts.

Period of Significance

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

Planning and Land Use Management (PLUM) Committee

Subcommittee of the Los Angeles City Council responsible for land use, including HPOZs.

Preservation

Focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and the retention of a property's features that have achieved historic significance.

Reconstruction

The re-creation of a historic building that has been damaged or destroyed; the new building resembles the original and is constructed based on historical, archaeological, and/or architectural documents.

Rehabilitation

The act or process of making a compatible use for a historic structure through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features that convey its historical, cultural, and architectural values.

Rehabilitation Tax Credits

The federal government's most significant tax incentive for preservation, offering a 20% credit for rehabilitation of qualifying, income-producing historic structures.

Restoration

A process that maintains or returns a property to a particular period of time in its history, while removing later alterations from other periods.

Section 106

Refers to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, which requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their proposed activities on properties included, or eligible for inclusion, in the National Register of Historic Places.

Section 4(f)

A provision in the Department of Transportation Act that prohibits federal approval or funding of transportation projects that require "use" of any historic site unless (1) there is "no feasible and prudent alternative to the project," and (2) the project includes "all possible planning to minimize harm."

SHPO

State Historic Preservation Officer –an official within each state appointed by the governor to administer the state historic preservation program and carry out certain responsibilities relating to federal undertakings within the state.

Standards

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation—Ten basic principles created to help preserve the distinctive character of a historic building and its site, while allowing for reasonable change to meet new needs and uses.

Statement of Overriding Considerations

An element of CEQA; a mechanism by which a lead agency can make findings that override significant environmental effects found in an EIR and approve a project.

SurveyLA

The Los Angeles Historic Resources Survey, the first-ever comprehensive program to identify significant historic resources throughout the city.

Sustainability

The conservation and improvement of our existing built resources as part of efforts to combat climate change, including reuse of historic and older buildings, greening the existing building stock, and reinvestment in older and historic communities.

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