

Use of the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards*

The Charleston Vision and urban design principles set forth in the Historic Preservation Plan should form the foundation for maintaining a sense of place in Charleston. These visionary statements and principles set a course for the BAR, City government, and residents to ensure that Charleston's growth contributes to its unique sense of place for decades to come. However, established standards and design principles are needed for the Board of Architectural Review to evaluate the steadily increasing variety and number of projects before it. Some ambiguity allows the BAR and staff to use best judgment, ensuring the flexibility necessary for a growing, diverse place; but clear standards will provide an invaluable framework for evaluating historic structures and landscapes.

The Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* provide widely accepted guidelines for changes to historic buildings, with room for flexibility on a case by case basis. The *Standards* are a series of concepts about maintaining, repairing and replacing historic materials, as well as designing new additions or making alterations. They cannot, in and of themselves, be used to make decisions about which features of a historic property should be preserved and which might be changed. But once an appropriate treatment is selected, the *Standards* provide philosophical consistency to the work.

The Secretary's *Standards* are common sense principles in non-technical language. They were developed to help protect our nation's irreplaceable cultural resources by promoting consistent preservation practices. The updated Historic Preservation Plan recommends that the *Standards* should be included in staff, BAR, and public education, and cited in relevant applications and BAR decisions. Consideration is currently being given to adapting the *Standards* to fit Charleston's unique circumstances. However, there has been significant public apprehension over the adoption of the *Standards* in any form. This document and its attachments are an attempt to respond to citizen concerns by reviewing how other communities have approached the same issue.

Methodology: As a starting point, the surveyor gathered information from a list of communities identified during the research phase of the Preservation Plan update as having adopted the *Standards*. To expand the sample set, the National Park Service website provided a list of 51 National Historic Landmark districts. The 44 districts which were of appropriate size (i.e., included multiple unrelated buildings) were cross-checked against locally-designated districts in their respective jurisdictions to see if the boundaries corresponded to one another. If so, the surveyor conducted documentary research to ascertain whether the city had adopted the *Standards*, either by

its legislative body (as a municipal ordinance) or by its historic preservation commission (as part of design guidelines or bylaws).

Findings: Communities across the United States have codified the use of the *Standards*. Just a few examples include Annapolis, MD; Savannah, GA; Philadelphia, PA; Chicago, IL; Providence, RI; and San Francisco, CA. Also, the sample preservation ordinance offered by the South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office includes the *Secretary's Standards in toto* as part of its template. Typical language includes statements such as "[A] proposed alteration shall be reviewed... to determine whether the alteration conforms to the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Treatment of Historic Properties*" (Monterey, CA). Likewise, the Tarpon Springs, FL, ordinance requires that "In reviewing an application for a Certificate of Approval, the [Heritage Preservation] Board shall consider the following criteria", one of which that "The renovation of contributing structures... shall meet the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Properties*." Entities as geographically varied as Charlotte-Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, and Spokane, Washington; and cities as significant as Beaufort, South Carolina, and Galveston, Texas, use the *Standards* to review proposed alterations within their National Historic Landmark Districts.

The attached chart summarizes which of the communities surveyed have formally adopted the *Standards* in some fashion and also identifies the form of adoption (i.e., whether by Council ordinance or as Commission bylaws). Of the forty-four National Historic Landmark districts included, the *Standards* are used in twenty-four. Fourteen cities with NHL districts do not use the *Standards*, although some use guidelines whose language is very similar (and probably drawn from the *Standards*). The remaining six cities either lack historic preservation commissions or do not have the information online. Twenty-two cities with historic districts that are not National Historic Landmarks were also researched. Of those, all but one use the *Standards* for review (one uses them in certain circumstances but not in all cases).

To summarize, a majority of the communities surveyed base project reviews on compliance with the Secretary's *Standards*. Use of the *Standards* falls into two categories: adoption as part of the historic preservation zoning ordinance or adoption as part of design guidelines or bylaws. In general, cities that incorporate them into the ordinance use the Federal language verbatim. Those using them as a basis for design guidelines typically adapt the language to suit their particular needs, although some guidelines state specifically that the commission follows the *Standards* in reviewing projects.

Attached is a list of web sites which can be accessed for more detailed information from these examples.

Links to Cities Using the Standards:

Davis, CA

www.city.davis.ca.us/cmo/citycode/detail.cfm?p=40&q=1861

Los Angeles, CA

www.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll?f=templates&fn=default.htm&vid=amlegal:lapz_ca

Monterey, CA

<http://66.113.195.234/CA/Monterey/index.htm>

Palo Alto, CA

www.cityofpaloalto.org/knowzone/news/details.asp?NewsID=538&TargetID=127

Pasadena, CA

www.ci.pasadena.ca.us/planning/deptorg/dhp/standard.asp

San Francisco, CA

www.sfgov.org/site/planning_index.asp?id=24996

Boulder, CO

www.ci.boulder.co.us/files/PDS/historicpres/pdfs/admin_reg_d.pdf

Washington, DC

http://planning.dc.gov/planning/frames.asp?doc=/planning/lib/planning/DC.HP_Regulations_10A.pdf

Fort Myers, FL

www.municode.com

Tampa, FL

www.tampagov.net/dept_Historic_Preservation/

Atlanta, GA

www.atlantaga.gov/government/boards/districtregulations.aspx

Augusta, GA

www.augustaga.gov/departments/planning_zoning/docs/pdf/hpc/hpc ordinance.8.27.04.pdf

Columbus, GA

http://library4.municode.com/default/template.htm?view=browse&doc_action=setdoc&doc_keytype=tocid&doc_key=2204b45842d7dfa54d55dbb3a87f1525&infobase=10583

Chicago, IL

www.cityofchicago.org/Landmarks/pdf/Guidelines_for_Alterations_to_Historic_Buildings.pdf

Annapolis, MD

www.annapolis.gov/info.asp?page=8530

Frederick County, MD

www.co.frederick.md.us/index.asp?NID=173

Chapel Hill, NC

www.townofchapelhill.org/common/modules/documentcenter2/documentview.asp?DID=186

Charlotte, NC

www.cmhpf.org/homehcdisc.htm

Pinehurst, NC

www.villageofpinehurst.org/VillageGovernment/Departments/Planning/LocalHistoricDistrict

Fargo, ND

www.ci.fargo.nd.us/attachments/7d2ec397-f7e6-4913-a983-b12563fd9532/FargoLDCSept2005.pdf

Cape May, NJ

www.capemaycity.com/ask_hpc.htm

Philadelphia, PA

www.phila.gov/historical/textonly/permits.html

Spruce Hill Historic District (Philadelphia, PA)

<http://sprucehill.uchs.net/ordinance.htm>

Newport, RI

<http://municipalcodes.lexisnexis.com/codes/newport/>

Providence, RI

www.providenceplanning.org/matriarch/MultiPiecePage.asp_Q_PageID_E_104_A_PageName_E_BoardsCommissionsPHDCOver

Beaufort, SC

www.cityofbeaufort.org/depts/planning/udo/udo.pdf

Greenville, SC

www.greenergreenville.com/development/zoning/LMO_manual.asp

Lexington, SC

www.lexsc.com/bzord.htm

SC State Historic Preservation Office (sample ordinance)

www.state.sc.us/scdah/fs7modelord.htm

Deadwood, SD

www.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/South%20Dakota/deadwood_sd/title_17zoning

Galveston, TX

www.cityofgalveston.org/city_services/pdf/Chapter2.pdf

Richmond, VA

www.ci.richmond.va.us/forms/docs/comdev/Old_Historic_Dist.pdf

Williamsburg, VA

www.ci.williamsburg.va.us/dept/planning/drg/ch01.pdf

Spokane, WA

www.historicspokane.org/design_review.htm

King County, WA

www.metrokc.gov/exec/bred/hpp/assist/T13_dsign_rview.doc