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National Park Service

Historic Preservation Tax Incentives

New Construction within the Boundaries of Historic Properties

It is possible to add new construction within the boundaries of historic properties if site conditions allow and if the design, density, and placement of the new construction respect the overall character of the site. According to the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation](https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/secretarys-standards-rehabilitation.htm) (<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/taxincentives/secretarys-standards-rehabilitation.htm>) – Standard 9 in particular – and the [Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings](https://www.nps.gov/cros/tps/rehab-guidelines/rehabilitation-guidelines-1997.pdf) (<https://www.nps.gov/cros/tps/rehab-guidelines/rehabilitation-guidelines-1997.pdf>), new construction needs to be built in a manner that protects the integrity of the historic building(s) and the property's setting.

In addition, the following must be considered:

- Related new construction – including buildings, driveways, parking lots, landscape improvements and other new features – must not alter the historic character of a property. A property's historic function must be evident even if there is a change of use.
- The location of new construction should be considered carefully in order to follow the setbacks of historic buildings and to avoid blocking their primary elevations. **New construction should be placed away from or at the side or rear of historic buildings and must avoid obscuring, damaging, or destroying character-defining features of these buildings or the site.**
- Protecting the historic setting and context of a property, including the degree of open space and building density, must always be considered when planning new construction on an historic site. This entails identifying the formal or informal arrangements of buildings on the site, and whether they have a distinctive urban, suburban, or rural character. **For example, a historic building traditionally surrounded by open space must not be crowded with dense development.**
- **In properties with multiple historic buildings, the historic relationship between buildings must also be protected. Contributing buildings must not be isolated from one another by the insertion of new construction.**
- As with new additions, the massing, size, scale, and architectural features of new construction on the site of a historic building must be compatible with those of the historic building. When visible and in close proximity to historic buildings,

the new construction must be subordinate to these buildings. New construction should also be distinct from the old and must not attempt to replicate historic buildings elsewhere on site and to avoid creating a false sense of historic development.

- The limitations on the size, scale, and design of new construction may be less critical the farther it is located from historic buildings.
- As with additions, maximizing the advantage of existing site conditions, such as wooded areas or drops in grade, that limit visibility is highly recommended.
- Historic landscapes and significant viewsheds must be preserved. Also, significant archeological resources should be taken into account when evaluating the placement of new construction, and, as appropriate, mitigation measures should be implemented if the archeological resources will be disturbed.

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ORGANIZATIONS

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(<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1345>)

Technical Preservation Services
(<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739>)