

FLORIDA'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION TOOLKIT

A guide for protecting our state's historic places

HANDS-ON GUIDE TO PRESERVATION



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Florida Trust for Historic Preservation

The Florida Trust for Historic Preservation is the statewide nonprofit dedicated to protecting Florida's extraordinary history and heritage, and sharing the inclusive and diverse stories of those who came before us. The Florida Trust is a 501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit organization, funded through public support and our members. Founded in 1978, the Florida Trust has collaborated to save irreplaceable Florida treasures like the Historic Florida Capitol and is a statewide partner of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.



National Trust for Historic Preservation

The National Trust for Historic Preservation is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to protecting significant places representing our diverse cultural experiences by taking direct action and inspiring broad public support. For decades, the National Trust has been committed to the goal of ensuring that the full American story is represented in the places we save. As the leading advocate for the protection of significant places and cultural landscapes, we help Americans protect and reuse irreplaceable historic resources; model best practices in stewardship and interpretation through our network of National Trust Historic Sites; and promote investment in historic urban neighborhoods and Main Streets to build stronger communities.

Toolkit created with assistance from:



Adrienne Burke, AICP, Esq.
Community Planning Collaborative LLC
info@planningcollab.com
planningcollab.com



Sarah Marsom
Heritage Resource Consultant
me@sarahmarsom.com
sarahmarsom.com

Design by:

Karen Essic Creative
karenessic@gmail.com
karenessic.com

Additional Assistance:

Bender and Associates Architects
J.J. Scott, MLD Architects
David Luna, Cinematographer
Austin Historical
Florida Trust Board of Trustees
Preservation advocates across the state

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HANDS-ON GUIDE TO PRESERVATION

In this section, you'll find:

- Creating a Historic Building Condition Assessment
- Building Maintenance Checklist
- Researching Property History
- Renovating, Restoring and Reusing Historic Buildings
- Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation
- Basic Historic Building Terminology
- General Building Materials in Florida
- Common Building Issues in Florida
- Tips for Finding and Working with Contractors and Design Professionals
- Working in Historic Cemeteries

CREATING A HISTORIC BUILDING CONDITION ASSESSMENT

The first and most important step in maintaining a historic building is to start with a plan. Whether you have an already well-maintained building or are at the beginning of a preservation journey with a building that needs some love, doing a condition assessment is a good first step in identifying priorities and needs for the structure.

To create that assessment, we recommend starting with the outside of your building. Issues on the outside can affect the inside and are preservation priorities. You can go through most of these steps yourself to get a general sense of the building's condition, but for safety and expertise, we recommend working with a professional when you can. Ideally the professional has experience working with historic buildings.

The two most important areas to review are the **top** and **bottom** of a building. Some start at the bottom, while others the top. Either works, just be sure to consider all exterior components as you do your review.

PRO TIP

Document!

As you go about evaluating and assessing your building, document as you go. At a minimum, this could involve taking detailed photos. If you are able and can hire an architect to come in and review the building and come up with plans, that is an extra measure. Having your existing conditions documented will help create a baseline for where you started. It can also help explain how the building has changed over time and provide evidence for past changes.

Step 1. Start at the top!

We recommend you begin with the roof. It is important to eliminate and prevent any moisture concerns from the top, because moisture issues will impact the entire building. In order to remain safe, we recommend doing a visual inspection from the ground if possible and hiring a professional to assist you with accessing the roof itself.

- A.) **Inspect your roof and find out if it is actively leaking or if the roofing material is degrading in any way.** For instance, there could be a tile that has come loose during storm season and created a weak point, or it could be that your asphalt roof reached the end of its 10 to 15 year lifespan. You may be able to identify a potential roof leak from water damage inside the building.
- B.) **During a roof inspection, it is important to also check gutters and downspouts.** You want to ensure your gutters are well affixed to your home and not clogged in any capacity. You also need to ensure downspouts are directing water away from the building's foundation. It is important water is directed away from the building and there are no opportunities for moisture to collect around the foundation.



The James E. Scott Homes building in Miami was restored by the Miami-Dade County Public Housing & Community Development department for reuse as housing units. Credit: Sarah Cody-Adelman

PRO TIP

Be Aware of Risks

Your historic building may have been constructed with materials that can potentially be harmful, like asbestos or lead. It is important to work with qualified professionals to identify these materials. They can also help with you determining how to address those materials.



The team from Austin Historical is installing newly restored windows in the Elizabeth Bishop House in Key West.

Step 2. Move to the bottom.

Determine the state of your foundation through a quick visual inspection. One thing to look for again is water intrusion. If your home has experienced moisture damage, it may have foundation issues. Moisture is not the only cause for concern with a historic building's foundation - as soil shifts, so do our buildings.

- A.) **Look for moisture or pooled water** around the outside of the building's foundation. Cracks on the inside walls of the building may also be a sign of a foundation issue.
- B.) **Assess the condition of your foundation's material.** Is the brick in good condition or is it soft and flaking? Is your mortar falling out around your concrete blocks?

Step 3. Assess your building's various points of entry — doors and windows.

These areas create weak points that can allow heating and cooling to escape, as well as allowing moisture into the building.

- A.) **Check the functionality of your windows and doors.** Do they easily open and close? Windows and doors expand and contract with the seasons, but a best practice is to have functional windows.
- B.) **Have an energy audit done at your home.** These audits will help you know where heating/cooling is exiting at a higher volume than you would desire. Professional energy audits are the most thorough way to understand any issues, but you can start with a do-it-yourself approach: www.energy.gov/energysaver/do-it-yourself-home-energy-assessments
- C.) **Are the sills below your doors and windows level or are they uneven?**

Step 4. Check the outside walls.

Walk around your building and look at your siding/primary building materials. Is paint flaking off? Is your mortar intact? Does it look like there is any wood rot? These are maintenance concerns, but they are of less urgency than the roof, foundation or doors and windows.

Step 5. Review your landscaping.

- A.) **While ivy and other vegetation can look lovely growing on an old building, it is actually causing damage** by trapping moisture and could also potentially cause issues with the stability of the building's exterior surface. If you want that look, you can install trellises for plants, maintaining a generous space between the building and the trellis.
- B.) **Do you have any large trees near your home?** Roots can cause damage to plumbing and a building's foundation. This is important when planning long term maintenance of your old trees, but also as you plan any updates to your landscaping.
- C.) **Has your mulch piled up along the base of your building?** Mulch traps moisture and it is best to avoid it piling up too high on the side. Are your plants growing too close to the building? It's recommended to keep a three-foot buffer between any vegetation and the building.

As you go through Steps 1-5 to assess your home's condition and determine what project should be tackled first, we recommend you prioritize the roof. Repairing any moisture issues, starting with a roof can prevent further damage caused inside the home due to moisture. Repairing any structural issues, such as stabilizing a foundation is a good next step. It can be tempting to prioritize interior repairs/renovations that impact the livability or use of your building, but addressing roof and structure concerns will prevent future headaches as you make your historic house your home.

Once exterior concerns have been addressed, you can confidently address any inside issues such as electrical, mechanical and plumbing, cosmetic changes and any other outside concerns.

As you finish your condition assessment and determine what repairs need to be done, do not feel pressured to address them all at once. You can create a plan with phases based on your budget, your needs and your desires to restore/repair your historic building. If you have recently purchased your home, you can utilize your home inspection documents to help determine priorities. If the inspection document does not describe short term and long term maintenance concerns, you will find helpful tips on identifying contractors later in this section. Quality contractors will also help you assess the urgency for your repairs.

PRO TIP

You don't have to do everything at once!

You may be tempted to rush in and accomplish everything. Doing your condition assessment and creating a plan is a good way to prioritize what is the most important. Owning a historic resource is an evolving process and there will most likely always be a project. So take your time and know that things will get done as you can.

BUILDING MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

SPRING

Clean gutters

Inspect and repair paint and caulk (sealant)

Paint window sills as needed

Inspect wood for rot — siding, trim, etc. Sand, prime and repaint as needed.

Trim trees and bushes, remove any vegetation growing on the structure

Prepare for hurricane season

Inspect roof for any damage

Have plywood, storm shutters or other hurricane protection ready.

Gather sandbags or other water barriers

Remove and store storm windows or hurricane shutters

SUMMER

Clean, refinish and seal any decking and stairs

Inspect brick and stone mortar, specifically the joints

Inspect stucco for cracks or damage

Service AC system, clean coils and inspect ductwork

Change AC filters monthly

FALL

Clean chimney

Check flashing around chimney

Clean gutters

Pressure wash concrete sidewalks and driveways

Change AC filters monthly

WINTER

Replace window screens with storm windows if needed

Add weather stripping as needed

Store hurricane shutters

Change AC filters monthly

RESEARCHING PROPERTY HISTORY

Learning about the history of your house and neighborhood can be a fascinating journey and there are several steps you can take to uncover its past. Here's a step-by-step guide:

Gather basic information

Start by collecting any existing documents or records related to your house, such as the deed, title and previous ownership documents. These can provide valuable information about the property's history.

Visit your local historical society or archives:

Local historical societies, archives and libraries often maintain records and documents related to properties in the area. They may have old maps, photographs, newspapers and other historical resources that can help you trace the history of your house.

Research property records

Check with your county or city's government offices to access property records. You can often find information on past owners, property assessments and construction dates. Some records may be available online, while others may require an in-person visit. Deeds and subdivision plats also can uncover information about whether any historic covenants existed that prohibited different races and religions from owning the property.

PRO TIP

Check Building Permit and Property Approvals

Information on your property can also be found through building permits and other property approvals from your local government. These approvals may include applications for land use or zoning cases, or past historic approvals. Historic approvals are often called Certificates of Appropriateness. These types of permit records can show you changes that have been made to your property over time.

PRO TIP

How do I use Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps?

Sanborn Fire Insurance maps are detailed, color-coded street maps created primarily for assessing fire insurance liability in urban areas in the United States. These maps were produced by the Sanborn Map Company, which was founded by D.A. Sanborn in the late 19th century. The maps were used by insurance companies to evaluate the risk of fire damage to buildings and structures.

Sanborn maps often have detailed property information, like building footprints, what the building was used for, what materials the building was made of and surrounding properties. Because the maps were updated regularly over time, you can see the evolution of a building.

The University of Florida has digitized Sanborn maps for many communities in the state. You can access them here: ufdc.ufl.edu/collections/sanborn

Examine old maps and aerial photographs

Old maps and aerial photographs can reveal how the land and neighborhood have changed over time. You can compare different maps from various years to track any alterations or expansions to your property.

Research property records

Check with your county or city's government offices to access property records. You can often find information on past owners, property assessments and construction dates. Some records may be available online, while others may require an in-person visit. Deeds and subdivision plats also can uncover information about whether any historic covenants existed that prohibited different races and religions from owning the property.

Talk to long-time neighbors

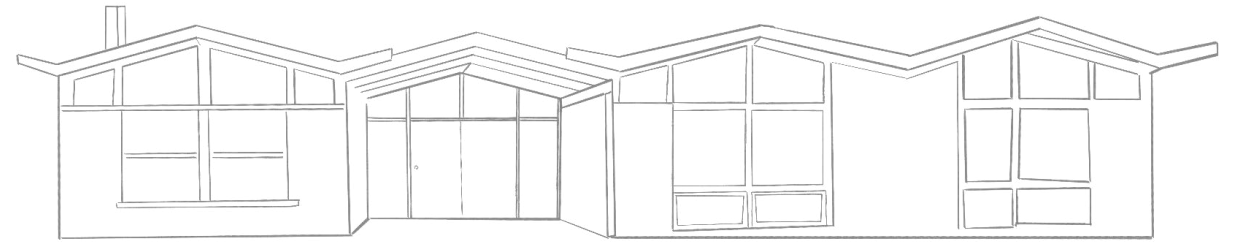
Neighbors who have lived in the area for many years may have valuable insights into the history of your house or the previous owners. They might share anecdotes, stories, or even photos.

Visit the local library:

Your local library may have historical books, city directories, or newspapers that contain information about your house and its previous occupants. Librarians can be a helpful resource in your research.

Search online databases

There are various online resources and databases where you can search for historical information about your house, property, or neighborhood. Websites like Ancestry.com, Historic Map Works and local historical society websites can be valuable sources of information. Specific map information is sometimes available from different sources, like universities. For example, the University of Richmond in Virginia maintains a national map that looks at how redlining affected various cities.



Inspect your house

Examine your house for any physical clues to its history, such as architectural details, building materials, or markings. These can provide hints about the construction date and any renovations.

Document your findings

Keep organized notes and records of the information you gather. Create a timeline of your house's history, noting key dates and significant events.

Consider professional help

If you encounter roadblocks or need more in-depth research, you can hire a professional historian or genealogist who specializes in house history research.

Share your findings

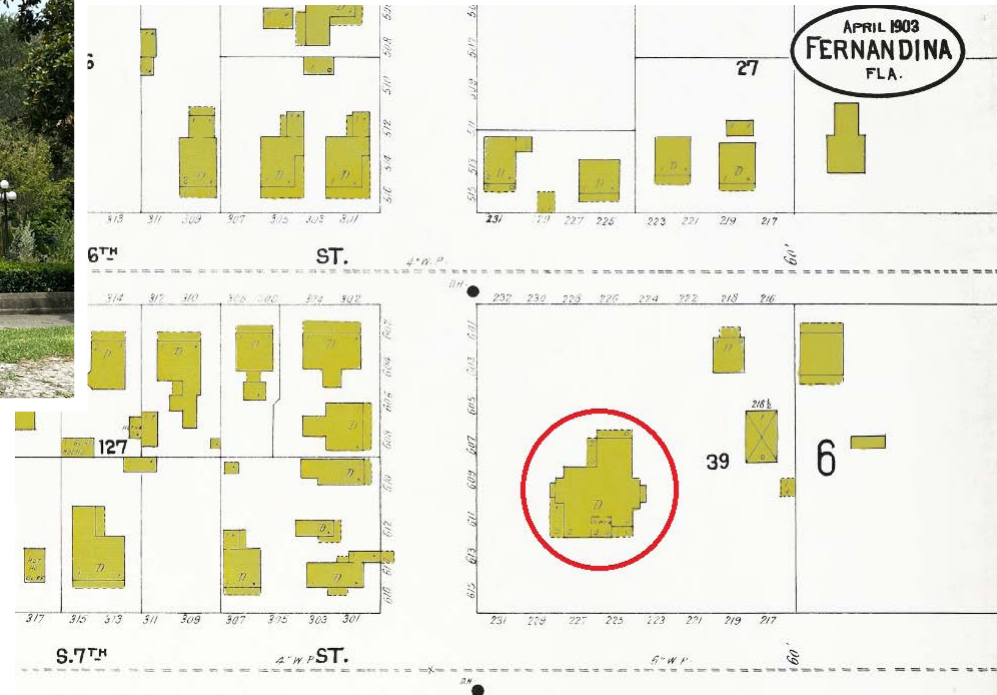
Once you've uncovered the history of your house, consider sharing it with your local historical society or community. It can contribute to the collective knowledge of your area's history.

Remember that researching the history of your house can be a time-consuming process, and some information may be challenging to find. Be patient and persistent in your efforts, and you may uncover a wealth of interesting details about your home's past.





Researching Property History: the Fairbanks House



Sanborn Fire Insurance Map illustrating the Fairbanks House (in red circle), 1903.
Credit: University of Florida Library Digital Collections

Italianate residence, the Fairbanks House, in Fernandina Beach, 2023.
Credit: Adrienne Burke



Historic image of the Fairbanks House. Credit: Amelia Island Museum of History

RENOVATING, RESTORING AND REUSING HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Terms to know in working with historic buildings:

- **Preservation** involves maintaining the historic building in its existing condition, with minimal changes.
- **Reconstruction** is rebuilding a historic building that has been destroyed, using the original plans and materials as much as possible.
- **Rehabilitation** involves making changes to the historic building to make it functional, while still preserving its historic character.
- **Adaptive reuse** is reusing an existing building for a purpose other than what it was first built or designed for.

The most common types of restoring historic buildings are **rehabilitation** and **adaptive reuse**.



At the time of its construction in 1913, the Union Terminal Warehouse was the largest commercial building in Florida. Today it is being renovated into workforce housing, retail, artist space and restaurant and coffee shop space. Credit: Ennis Davis

PRESERVATION



The Marion Theater, located in Ocala was opened in 1941.
Credit: Mark Krancer

REHABILITATION



A modern kitchen added to the 1908 Florida Trust house.
Credit: Florida Trust

RECONSTRUCTION



Mission San Luis in Tallahassee, FL is a reconstruction of the 1656 Spanish Mission. Credit: State Archives of Florida /Florida Memory

ADAPTIVE REUSE ALL SAINTS CINEMA



All Saints Cinema, located in Tallahassee, FL, has set up their theater in an 1858 railroad freight warehouse. The building is now used to screen foreign and independent films.
Credit: Tom Flanigan

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* are a set of guidelines for the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic buildings. The standards were developed by the Secretary of the Interior in 1976 and are intended to ensure that historic buildings are preserved and rehabilitated in a way that respects their historic character.

The standards cover a wide range of issues, including the use of the building, the retention of historic materials, the avoidance of changes that create a false sense of historical development and the preservation of distinctive features. The standards are intended to be flexible and can be adapted to the specific needs of each building.

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* are an important tool for the preservation of historic buildings. They help to ensure that these buildings are preserved for future generations and that their historic character is respected.

Many local governments use these standards in addition to local design guidelines.

PRO TIP

Learn to Identify Distinctive Features

Distinctive features is a term to explain elements of a building that make it unique. As an example, let's look at Georgette's Tea Room in Miami's Brownsville neighborhood. Georgette's opened in 1940 as a social venue for prominent Black residents and visitors.

Georgette Tea Room's distinctive features include:

- A red barrel tile roof
- Prominent roof eaves
- Casement and jalousie-style windows with multi-pane glass
- Symmetrical window openings
- Metal awnings
- Stone entryway with attached planters
- Decorative metal porch railings and supports
- L-shape building plan



Georgette's Tea Room in Miami.
Credit: Adrienne Burke

Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation:

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Quick Summary

1. Find an appropriate use

2. Preserve historic character

3. Do not create false history

4. Preserve significant changes

5. Preserve historic fabric

6. Repair before replacement in kind

7. Always be gentle

8. Protect archaeological resources

9. Use compatible new design

10. New construction must be reversible



Built in 1891 as a hotel this building now serves as administrative offices for the University of Tampa. Credit: Florida Trust



Built in the 1880's this building at Nehrling Gardens was successfully renovated. Credit: Florida Trust



The Julia Sunday home in Pensacola is a residential property built in 1901. John Sunday, a formerly enslaved Union soldier, businessman, landowner, state legislator and civic leader, built the house for his wife Julia. Credit: Florida Trust

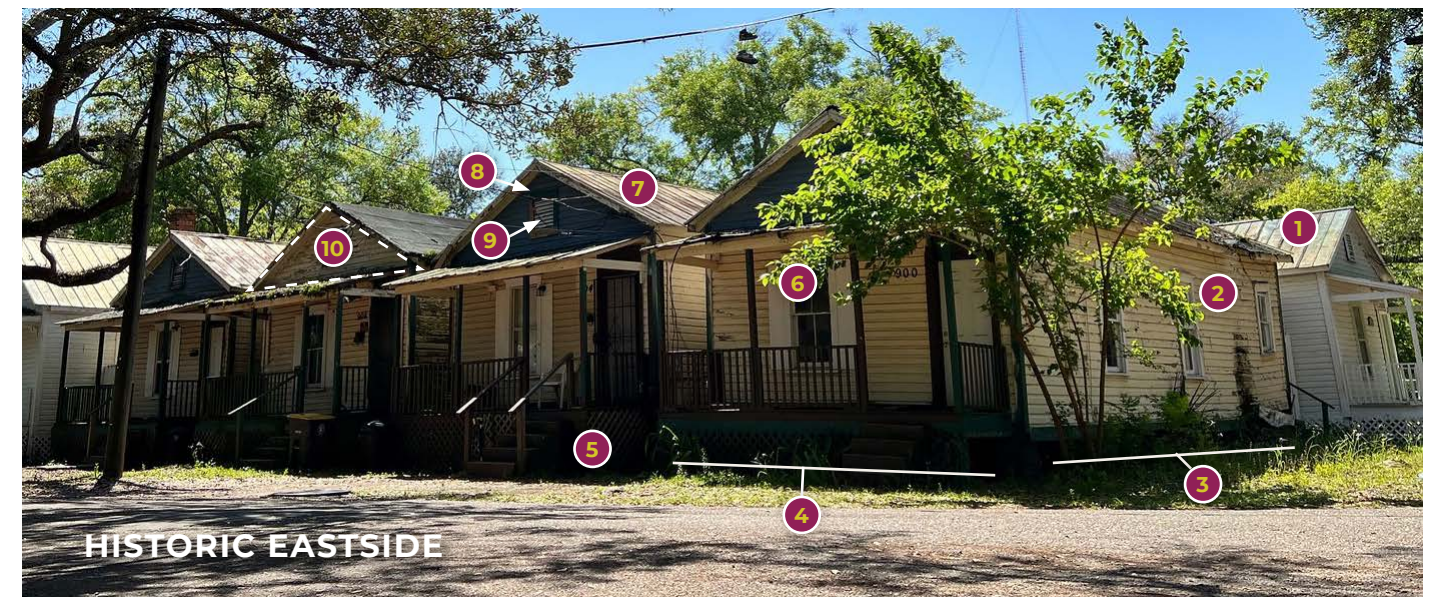
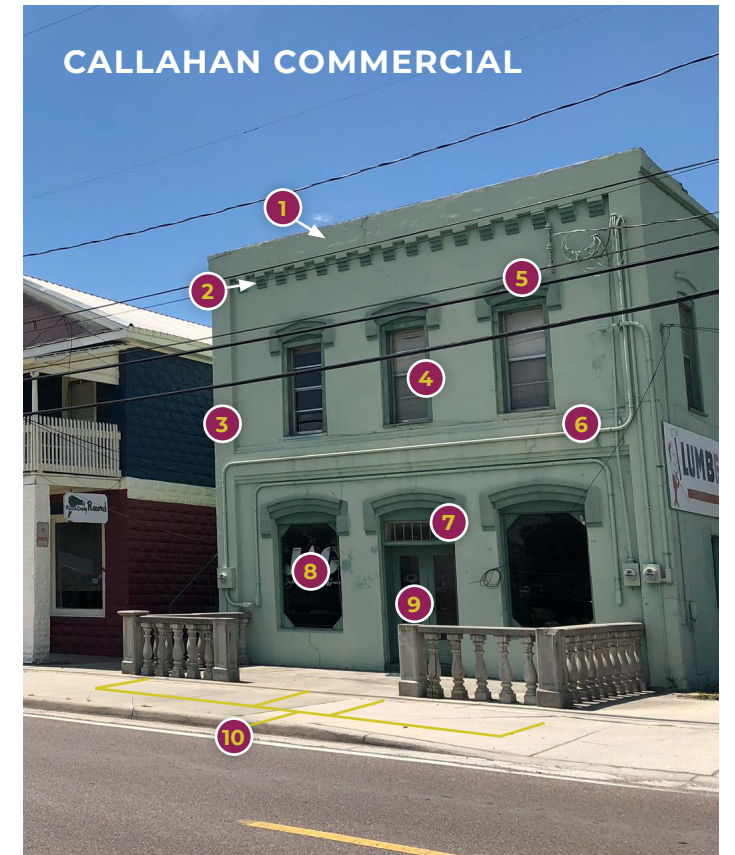
BASIC HISTORIC BUILDING TERMINOLOGY

Understanding building terms commonly used in historic preservation will help you communicate about your building's needs.



- Bargeboard** - a board, typically ornamental, fixed to the gable end of a roof to hide the ends of the roof timbers
- Collar Beam** - a horizontal wooden joist or beam connecting two rafters and forming with them an A-shaped roof truss.
- Bay Window** - a window or a series of windows that project outward from a wall
- Onion Dome** - a roof shape that resembles an onion
- Finial** - a distinctive ornament at the apex of a roof
- Gabled Dormer** - a window that projects vertically from a sloping roof, it has a peak at the top and a roof that slopes downward on either side
- Eaves** - the part of a roof that meets or overhangs the walls of a building
- Doric Column** - a smooth cylindrical column with minimal ornamentation, typically adorned with a square top
- Transom** - a window directly above a door
- Balusters** - a short pillar or column typically used in railings

- Plain Cornice** - a piece that forms the top edge of a building
- Corbeling** - the fashioning of corbels
- Pilaster** - a rectangular column affixed to and projecting from a wall
- Sash Window** - window is made of one or more movable panels
- Segmental Arch Lintel** - a lintel is a horizontal support of timber, stone, concrete, or steel across the top of a door or window; a segmental arch is a type of arch with a circular arc of less than 180 degrees, in this instance the terminology describes a specific style of lintel.
- Continuous Sill** - a shelf or slab of stone, wood, or metal at the foot of a window or doorway; it is continuous when it is the same sill used across the face of building for multiple windows or doors
- Transom** - a window directly above a door
- Display Window** - a large unobstructed window on a commercial building, which allows people to view the retail space
- Recessed Entry** - a door that is set back from the rest of the facade
- Bays** - the space of division of a wall within a building between two rows of columns, piers, or other architectural members. For example, this structure has 3 bays, which are identified by the two windows and the door.



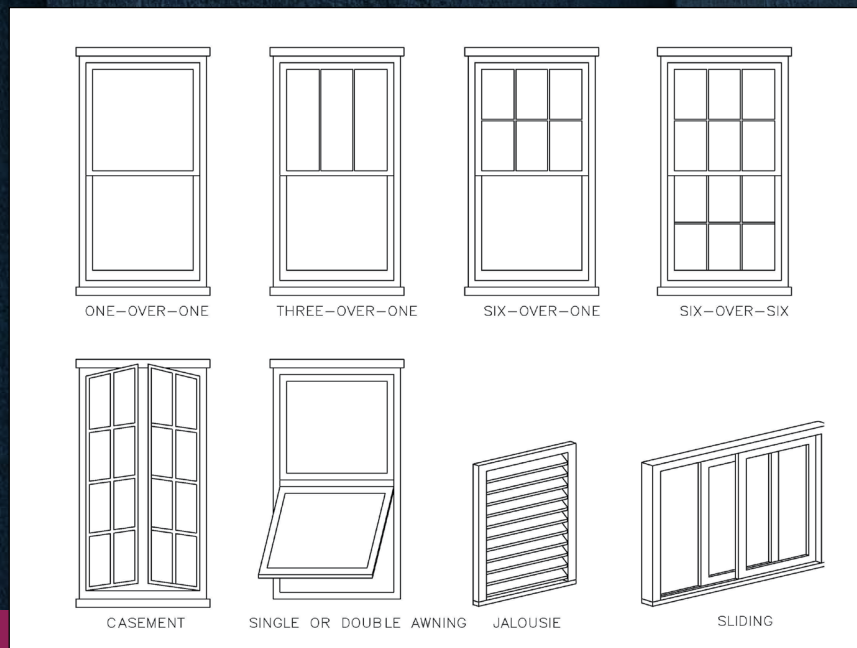
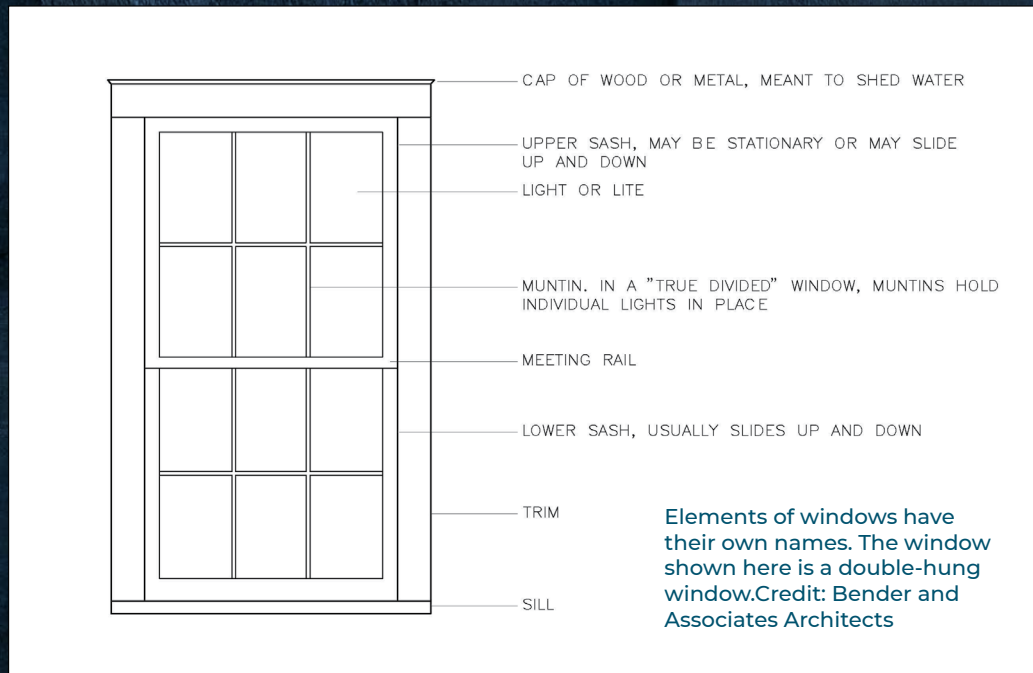
- Standing Seam Tin Roof** - a metal roof
- Weatherboard Siding** - a timber board, with a groove (rabbet) along the front of its top edge and along the back of its lower edge, that is fixed horizontally with others to form an exterior cladding on a wall or roof
- Elevation** - the side or back portion of a structure
- Facade** - the face of the structure
- Lattice** - a structure consisting of strips of wood or metal crossed and fastened together with square or diamond-shaped spaces left between
- Sash Window** - window is made of one or more movable panels
- Gable** - a roof with two sloping sides and a gable at each end
- Soffit** - the underside of an architectural structure such as an arch, a balcony, or overhanging eaves.
- Gable Vent** - a type of passive ventilation found, as the name suggests, in the gable ends of a house
- Pediment** - the triangular upper part of the front of a building

Historic windows also have their own terms to know. Each part of a window has a name and there are also different types of windows.

PRO TIP

Preservation Goes Beyond the Building

Did you know that historic preservation is not just about the building? Your entire parcel tells a story of neighborhood development and the natural environment. Be mindful about additional curb cuts, maintaining a detached garage, old trees, sidewalks, etc.. Some historic districts require permission for modifying these elements.



Window types go by different names. One of the most common types of historic windows is called a double-hung window. This type of window then can have different glass panels, called lights. In this example, all of the windows on the top row are double-hung windows. The number of glass panels in the top and bottom window give those windows their names: one-over-one, three-over-one and so forth. Credit: Bender and Associates Architects

General Building Materials in Florida

Here are some common building materials used in Florida historically:

Wood: Wood was the most common building material in Florida due to its availability and ease of use. It was used for everything from framing houses to building bridges.

Brick: Brick was also a popular building material, especially in urban areas like Jacksonville. It was more durable than wood and could withstand the heat and humidity of Florida.

Concrete: Concrete became widely used in the 20th century as a durable and low-maintenance building material. It is often used for foundations, sidewalks and roads. It also makes up the walls of many historic structures, especially homes built from the 1940s-1960s.

Metal: Iron or steel was used for structural elements in buildings, such as beams and columns. It is also used for decorative elements, such as railings and gates. Metal was also incorporated into different types of windows.

Glass: Glass was used for windows and doors. It allowed light into buildings and provided a view of the outdoors.

Tile: Tile was used for floors, roofs and walls. It is a durable and attractive material that can withstand the heat and humidity of Florida.

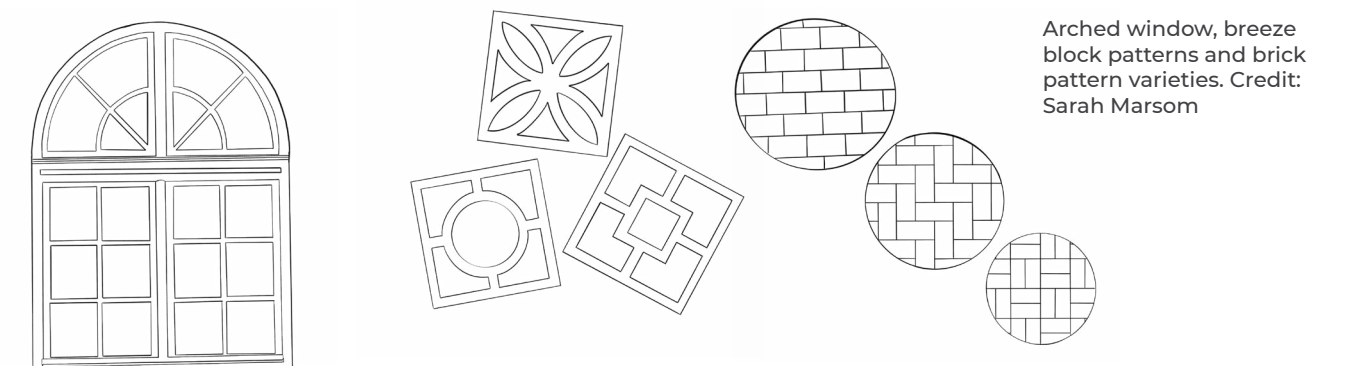
Stucco: Stucco is a building material that is applied to the outside of buildings. It is almost like a thin layer of concrete that can be applied to frame or concrete structures.

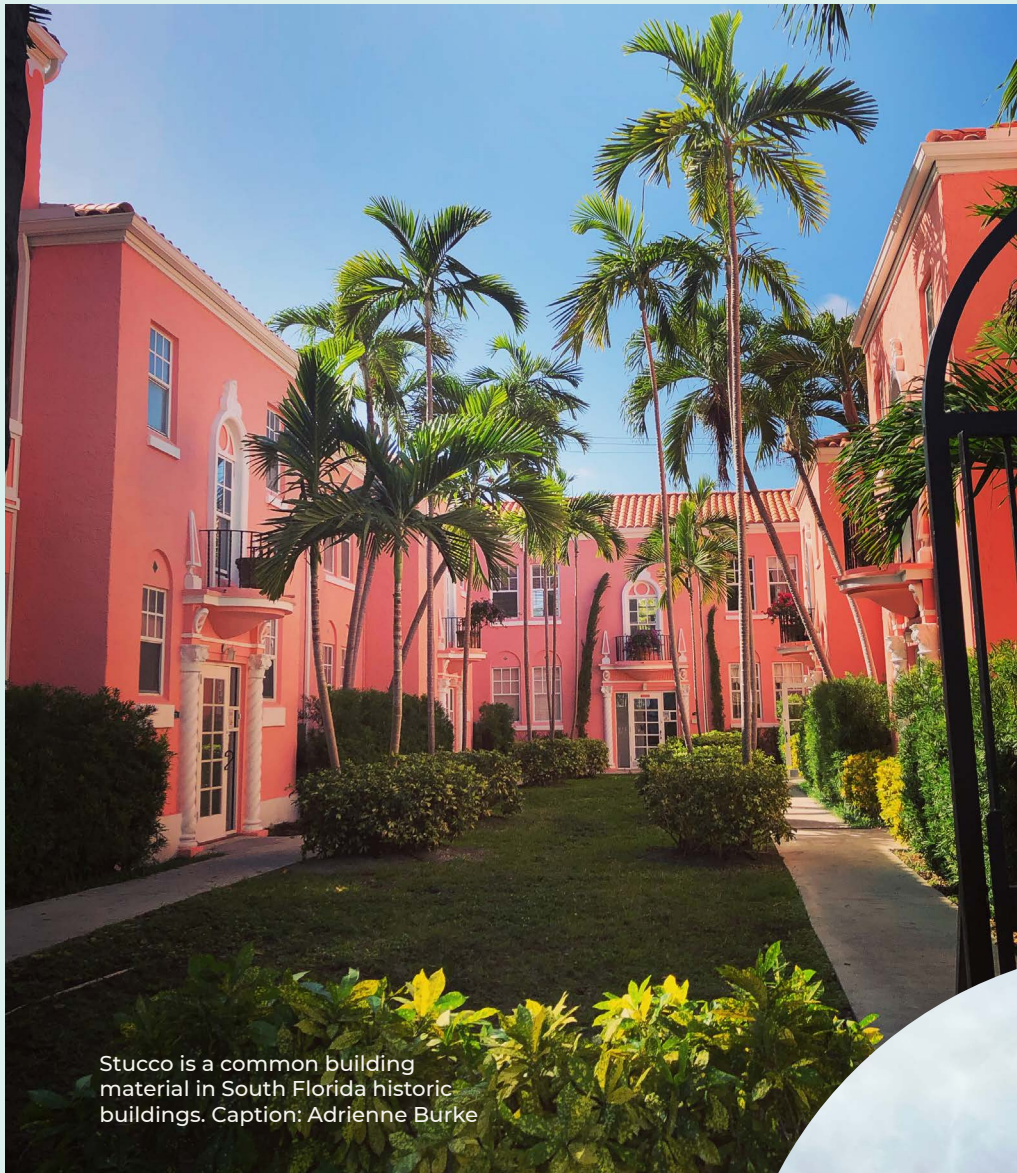
Stone: Stone is not a very common building material in Florida, except in certain locations where naturally-occurring limestone was used, such as in Southeast Florida with oolitic limestone or in the Gainesville area, where it is known as chert rock.

Coquina: Some historic buildings in Florida use coquina, which is a rock made of shell fragments of ancient mollusks and other sea creatures. It functions as a natural type of concrete.

Tabby: Tabby is also used in some historic Florida buildings. It is a manmade combination of lime from burned oyster shells mixed with sand, water, ash and other shells. Like coquina, it functions like concrete and was used in buildings and roads.

Breeze Block: Breeze blocks are patterned concrete blocks that are used as decorative elements in mid-20th century buildings. They are often used to create walls or other outdoor features.





Stucco is a common building material in South Florida historic buildings. Caption: Adrienne Burke

PRO TIP

Know What You Can Replace

If you have historic building material on your property and are interested in replacing it, check with your local government before making those plans. If your property is subject to design review requirements, you will want to understand how and if you can replace those historic materials with new materials. This varies by community so it is important to understand how your city addresses this issue.

The Nassau County Courthouse includes arched glass windows, metalwork, brick and wood. Credit: Adrienne Burke



Common Building Issues in Florida

Maintaining historic buildings in Florida comes with its own set of challenges. Florida's climate, which includes high humidity, intense heat and the threat of hurricanes, can significantly impact the preservation of historic structures. Here are some common issues faced in maintaining historic buildings in Florida:

Moisture and Humidity:

Florida's high humidity levels can lead to moisture-related problems such as mold, mildew and rot. This can be particularly challenging for historic buildings with materials that are sensitive to moisture.

Hurricane Damage:

Florida is prone to hurricanes and these storms can cause severe damage to historic structures. Wind, rain and storm surge can compromise the integrity of buildings and result in the loss of historic fabric.

Saltwater Intrusion:

Coastal areas in Florida are susceptible to saltwater intrusion, which can accelerate the deterioration of building materials, especially if the structure is located close to the ocean.

Insect Damage:

Florida's warm climate supports termite and other insect activity, posing a threat to wooden elements of historic buildings. Regular inspections and preventive measures are essential to control insect damage.

Sun Exposure:

Prolonged exposure to intense sunlight can cause fading and deterioration of building materials, especially on the exterior. This is a common concern for historic structures with delicate finishes and architectural details.

Pest control is a priority!

Florida is known for a wide variety of pests. Having a handle on the pest situation at your property is very important. Before you invest in repairs and maintenance, you want to be sure they'll be protected from unwanted visitors like termites.

PRO TIP

TIPS FOR FINDING AND WORKING WITH CONTRACTORS AND DESIGN PROFESSIONALS

Building Code Compliance:

Balancing the need to comply with modern building codes while preserving the historic character of a building can be a challenge. Retrofitting for safety and accessibility often requires careful planning to minimize impact on historic features.

Material Availability:

Finding historically accurate replacement materials can be challenging. Some traditional materials may no longer be readily available, requiring careful sourcing and sometimes custom manufacturing.

Land Use Pressures:

In rapidly developing areas, historic buildings may face pressure for redevelopment. Zoning changes and increased urbanization can impact the surroundings and context of historic structures.

Lack of Maintenance Funding:

Historic preservation often requires ongoing maintenance and restoration efforts, which can be costly. Securing funding for these projects can be a significant challenge, especially for privately-owned historic buildings.

Public Awareness and Education:

Ensuring that property owners and the general public are aware of the importance of historic preservation is crucial. Lack of awareness can lead to neglect and a loss of valuable historic resources.

This section is geared to finding contractors that can help you with construction projects at your building, but a similar process can be followed for finding a design professional such as an architect.

Step 1: Identify your restoration and/or renovation projects.

Walk around your home to do your maintenance plan. Identify what appears to need maintenance as a priority, and secondly, what you want to do to the building to meet your needs and wants. Revisit your condition assessment and maintenance plan.

Step 2: Create a Candidate List

A.) Reach out to your local historic preservation office if your community has one, regardless of if your building has a historic designation. Your city or county preservation officer or planning department can help you find out if it has a historic designation, if you don't already know. If your community has a historic preservation office:

Confirm if your property needs architectural review. If the answer is yes, ask the staff member:

1. If they are open to doing a site visit to your property to discuss what you would like to do and how that fits into their review and approval process.
2. For the guidelines pertaining to the specific exterior projects you seek to do:
 - Inquire about what projects can be approved by staff and what projects require going before the architectural review board. For example, if you are restoring your wood windows that may be a staff approval, which would give you approval to begin work faster than if you have to go before the review board. If you are building an addition to your home, you would need to go before the review board which would likely be a multi-month process.
 - Request a copy of their review application and the calendar of deadlines. If they have approved any projects similar to yours lately. You should review recent agendas from your local historic preservation or architectural review board to assess recent projects that have been approved. As you review the agendas, you will find names of contractors. If a contractor name comes up frequently, it is



Left: Lead remediation at the Dixie House.
Credit: Florida Trust

Above: Termite damage on a hardwood floor. This damage is about three inches long and an inch in depth.
Credit: Florida Trust

safe to assume they are comfortable working with historic homes. Use agendas as a way to begin your draft list of contractors.

B.) If there is no local historic preservation office for your community, we recommend for you research and identify local historical societies and neighborhood nonprofits for historic areas. These organizations may have lists of contractors they could provide or be able to tell you names of companies that work frequently on historic homes.

- Walk or drive around a historic area and look for contractor signs in yards.
- Ask your neighbors in person and/or online on neighborhood Facebook Groups, Next Door, etc.. Word of mouth referrals are a wonderful way to learn about contractors, while simultaneously receiving a review in regards to the quality of that contractor's craftsmanship. You can also review contractor business reviews online and through the Better Business Bureau.

While we recommend you begin your contractor search with local resources/organizations you can also review the database on the Window Preservation Alliance website (contractors featured on this website frequently restore more than windows) and connect with the Florida Trust for Historic Preservation.

Step 3: Interview Time

Once you have identified 2-3 contractors, you will begin to schedule site visits with them to get quotes for work. This will help you assess their ability to successfully accomplish your project.

1. If your home is in a historic district or is individually designated, you can use the architectural review guidelines to assist your communication. You can use the guidelines to communicate the standards expected of the work ex: the type of window that should be utilized or standards for building an addition.
2. If your home is historic by age, but not designated, you can utilize the National Park Service's Preservation Briefs to help you communicate work expectations. The National Park Service has created Preservation Briefs as a way to clearly communicate best practices for repairs performed on historic structures. There are preservation briefs for wood siding, roofs, removing graffiti, installing solar panels and more.
3. Ask the contractors about their previous experience working with historic buildings. Do they have photos of previous work on their website and/or social media? Are they speaking confidently about their ability to do preservation work?
4. Ask about the contractor's experience working with your city or county's Building Department and the local historic preservation process, if that applies. Ensure that they follow rules for getting historic approvals, building permits and any other necessary requirements.

PRO TIP

Allow for Plenty of Time to Find a Contractor

Contractors are very busy in Florida these days. If you have a project you'd like to do, be aware that it may take months to find a contractor and get your work on their calendar. Plan ahead and start your contractor research early. Be aware that smaller projects may take longer to get scheduled.

Step 4: Review Quotes

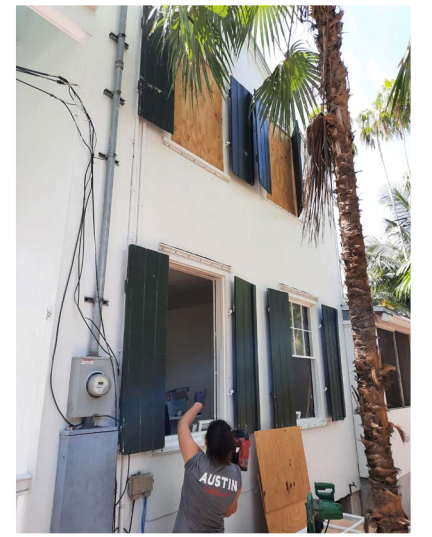
Once you have received your quotes, it is important to assess the scope of work they have written. Does the work reflect your onsite conversation with the contractor? Does the work express the preservation standards you communicated and reflect the work standards set by the National Park Service Preservation Briefs and/or local architectural design guidelines? Does the quote have a clearly communicated timeline? Ideally, you will select the contractor who has communicated that they understand your request and is within your budget and timeline.

We recognize that your budget impacts your decision. If your budget is swaying your contractor decision away from the individual/company who you feel is most qualified to do the work, we recommend you:

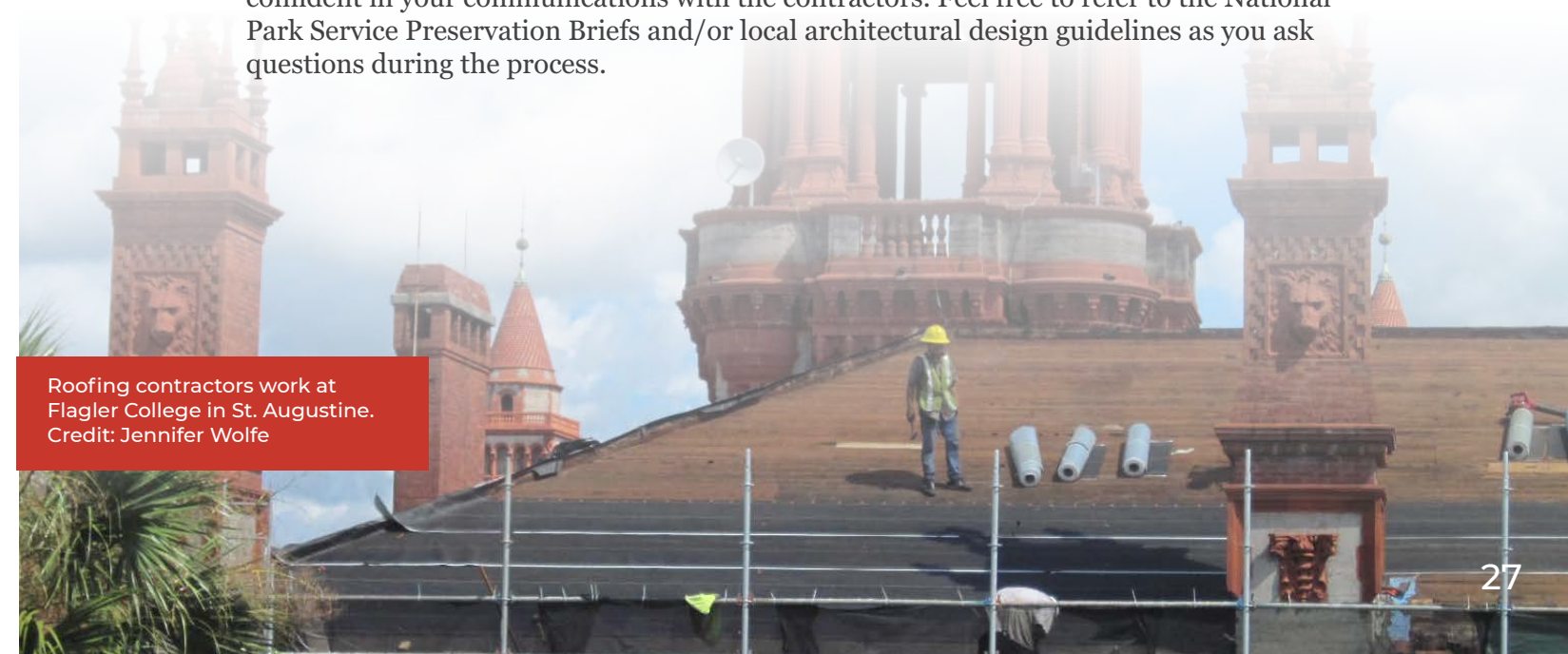
- A. Ask about the payment plan. Do they require a deposit and then payment in full once work is completed? Do they offer a financing plan?
- B. Does the contractor know of any state or federal incentives? For example, you may be able to get an incentive when upgrading your heating and cooling system to a more environmentally friendly option.
- C. Can the work be split into phases? For example, can you repair two windows this year and two next year?
- D. Is there any work that you can do that will save some money if you have the time and are comfortable with getting your hands a little dirty?

Step 5: Hire your contractor!

Congratulations, you found a contractor who fits within your budget and is able to successfully execute your restoration/renovation project for your historic building. Remember to check in on the work periodically to ensure it is meeting your standards. It is easier for a contractor to change their work process at the beginning instead of the end of a project. You want to be satisfied with the work that has been executed and to be confident in your communications with the contractors. Feel free to refer to the National Park Service Preservation Briefs and/or local architectural design guidelines as you ask questions during the process.



Team from Austin Historical installs newly restored windows at the Elizabeth Bishop House in Key West. Credit: David Salay



Roofing contractors work at Flagler College in St. Augustine. Credit: Jennifer Wolfe

WORKING IN HISTORIC CEMETERIES

Preserving historic cemeteries is important for a variety of reasons including:

- maintaining cultural, historical and artistic legacies,
- providing educational opportunities,
- supporting genealogical research and
- contributing to the heritage and identity of communities.

Protecting historic cemeteries reflects a recognition of the importance of our shared history and the people who shaped it. **Before working in a historic cemetery, reach out to the owner of the cemetery first before doing any work to get permission.** This is often a local government, but it may be privately owned. If you cannot locate the owner, reach out to your local government.

One way you can help historic cemeteries is working on the landscaping. If you decide to tackle landscaping in a historic cemetery, there are a few things to keep in mind. The priorities are keeping participants safe and being as gentle as possible to avoid damaging any headstones or plots.

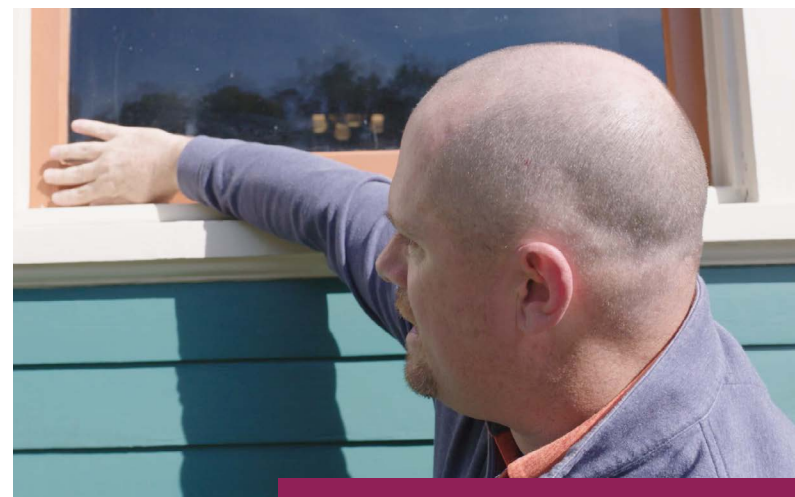
- Work with an organization like the Florida Public Archaeology Network in your region to understand best practices in landscaping for cemeteries in your area. FPAN can also share information on what types of plants or landscaping were likely used with burials and should be preserved if possible.
- FPAN can also provide guidance on grave goods that may have been used with burials and should be left in place.
- Check the stability of headstones and other features before removing or trimming any adjacent landscaping.
- Avoid using heavy equipment and use manual tools and smaller equipment instead.
- Avoid using weed wackers close to headstones. Use manual tools instead.
- Do not attempt to do tree work without professionals.

Another way you can help take care of historic cemeteries is cleaning headstones. More advanced headstone work such as resetting stones and repairing damaged stones is best left to professionals.

Removing paint from historic brick at the St. Augustine Waterworks. Credit: Jennifer Wolfe



An electrician works on a historic building. Credit: Jennifer Wolfe



Architect J.J. Scott doing a historic property assessment. Credit: David Luna

Cemetery Headstone Cleaning

General cleaning process:

1. First gently brush away any dirt or debris from the stone using a soft, dry brush.
2. Wet the stone with water.
3. If using D/2 Biological Solution, spray the stone. Water alone can be very effective, however.
4. Using a soft brush, start at the top of the stone and gently clean in a circular manner, working towards the bottom.
5. Clean the stone with water again.

Stone cleaning is complete, until next time.

DO

- Use soft brushes or toothbrushes
- Use water
- Use D/2 Biological Solution

DON'T *(all of these can damage stones)*

- Use metal or abrasive brushes
- Use bleach
- Pressure wash
- Make gravestone rubbings

PRO TIP

Always make sure the stone you are working with is stable before attempting to clean. If it does not seem stable, move on to another stable headstone.

The Mordecai family headstones before and after Friends of Bosque Bello headstone cleaning event, 2019. Water and D/2 Biological Solution were used to clean the stones. The Moredecais were a prominent African American family in Fernandina. Credit: Adrienne Burke



Florida Public Archaeology Network staff guide volunteers on proper headstone cleaning technique at Mount Olive Cemetery in Jacksonville. Credit: Adrienne Burke



It is best to leave more advanced headstone repair to professionals. The use of incorrect materials can lead to situations such as this epoxy mess on a historic headstone in Ocala. Credit: Adrienne Burke



D/2 Biological Solution is safe to use for cleaning headstones. This solution can be cut with 50% water and still work effectively. The solution continues to clean even after use, and will last for some time. Credit: Adrienne Burke



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