



Frequently Asked Questions – Proposed Work

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Q: What are the restrictions/specifics on doing the work yourself? Do we have to hire specific people to do this work?

You can do any portion of the work yourself that you want. And any materials you use are eligible expenditures (apart from tool purchases). You can also hire anyone you wish for your project, but we do maintain lists of craftsmen that are skilled at everything from masonry and window repair to plastering.

Q: Do you deny projects?

It is important to know that any work done, prior to review and approval is done at risk of a denial. We highly recommend that prior to any work starting, you submit it for review and approval. We also welcome to have preliminary discussions with us prior to a formal submittal to better understand what this program can and can't approve.

There is some proposed work you should discuss with us early in the design process so that we can help you avoid problems that might disqualify you from the tax credits. For example...

- 1 - When elements are too badly damaged to be repaired and require replacement (like windows)
- 2 – If walls are proposed to be added or removed from the interior
- 3 – If new additions are proposed to be added to the building
- 4 – If surrounding buildings are proposed to be demolished or modified
- 5 – If new buildings or outbuildings are proposed to be added (on this or nearby sites)
- 6 – If parking lots are added or the site around the building modified

Q: What work qualifies for the credit?

All your proposed work must meet the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation.

- Link: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation/rehab/index.html>

Q: I have rotting wood; can I replace everything?

You can replace damaged wood (whether on floors, exterior siding, roof sheathing, etc) but we want you to photo document the problem and only replace the damaged boards, not replace entire floors or entire sides of the building. We do allow you to relocate and consolidate good wood if you are interested. For example, if 25% of your exterior siding has rot in it, you could take off good wood from a rear (least visible) façade and move it to the front and side façades. Then rebuild the rear façade in new material. This solves

several problems. The new replacement wood may not be a perfect match. The new replacement wood will not last as long as the historic material (we have seen new wood siding that fails after as short as 15-20 years while the historic wood is still in good shape). Because labor is the highest cost, when you must replace this new material again down the road, it is much more cost effective to replace one area than go back and patch in new material all over the building.

Q: What are acceptable replacement siding options?

Per the previous answer, you will want to consolidate good material on primary facades first. For areas where you are missing material, salvaged wood siding (from other buildings), new wood siding and hardi board can be acceptable replacement material, depending on the location and specifics of the building (this work should be reviewed and approved prior to start of work). It is important to match the lap, thickness and profile of the original siding as well as match the historic way the siding turns building corners.

If you use new wood siding, it is very important to prime/paint the back side of the siding before installation and prime/paint all your end cuts prior to installation. If you have the time and a place to store it, you may want to let the new siding age for a couple months to draw down the moisture content and allow the wood to stabilize (green wood can warp quite a bit, even after it is nailed up).

Hardi board is only acceptable at rear facades or in locations where it is not highly visible. Additionally, hardi board should be smooth faced. The faux grain hardi board is not acceptable. Hardi board comes in a number of thicknesses, and it is important to match the historic thickness.

Q: Can I replace my kitchen?

We typically allow a great deal of leeway when it comes to kitchen remodels. If you have kitchen cabinets that are less than 50 years old, you can remove this non-historic material and replace it with new kitchen cabinets. But if you have a built-in wood cabinet (for example - a butler's pantry) that might be historic, we will need to review this.

Q: Can I replace my bathroom?

We typically allow a great deal of leeway when it comes to bathroom remodels, but we would like to see photos of your bathrooms and a better description of your work to confirm this.

Q: I remove a wall to make two rooms into one larger room?

The wall that you want to remove will need to be reviewed with our office. Without being able to see a photo of the wall in question and without knowing the floor plan of the building, we can't tell you what the impact of this change will be. If it is a non-historic wall that was added in the last 50 years, then it can be removed easily. If it is a historic

wall and you want to open up two rooms to each other to create a larger room, we will have to review and discuss this issue. Depending on site specific issues, there may or may not be options to explore that might meet your needs and still meet the standards.

Q: We want to refinish the floors throughout the building to make everything consistent. Would this be allowable?

“Make everything consistent” is a bit broad. If you have historic maple floors in the front of the building and historic pine floors in the rear of your building, then we would want you to keep both species of wood flooring. This would be an important characteristic of your building and speaks to the desire of the original builder/owner to spend more money on the public portions of the building than the less public portions of the building.

Q: What do you need to approve our brick tuckpointing?

The important thing is that the mortar should be a lime mortar and not a cement mortar. Your mason should familiarize himself with the Standards regarding mortar.

- Link: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/2-repoint-mortar-joints.html>

This is the typical mortar condition that will need to be followed....

REPOINTING

*Repointing mortar must match the color, texture, strength, joint width, and joint profile of the existing historic masonry. Specifications and repointing samples should be reviewed and approved by the State Historic Preservation Office before proceeding with this work. Good quality overall and close-up color photographs of the masonry both **before** and **after** repointing must be submitted with the Request for Certification of Completed Work.*

Therefore, a brief description from your mason of their proposed work along with before and after photos would need to be submitted. We also recommend that a small test area on a less visible façade be done first to everyone’s satisfaction before the entire building is repointed / tuckpointed.

Q: We want to replace our drafty historic windows to improve the energy efficiency of the building. Can we do this and still get the credit?

We consider the historic windows to be a very important and character defining feature of the building, so we don’t allow historic windows to be torn out and replaced. But we do understand that you want to eliminate drafts and make the building more energy efficient. We recommend that you get a window restoration expert to inspect your windows. These experts can tighten up the window, make it open and close smoothly and can install interior or exterior storm windows that will dramatically improve the energy efficiency of the window (on par with a new replacement window). They can even restore or rebuild rotting or heavily damaged windows. Lastly, a typical replacement window will take between 40 and 240 years to pay back the energy

savings it cost to install. Most replacement windows require replacement every 25 years.

Often you can make much less expensive improvements elsewhere in the building that will realize a much higher energy savings. Better insulation at your roof and a higher efficiency heating and cooling system are typically a better investment in your building.

Q: The existing roof is asphalt shingles, and it is in poor condition. What is an acceptable replacement roofing material?

You can put a new asphalt shingle roof on it (you will need to send us a photo/manufacturer product sheet showing the color/pattern) or you can put a new roof on it that matches the one that it historically had. To figure this out, you either need to find historic photographs (showing a different roofing system) or the easier option is to strip off the current roof and see what remnants of old roofing remain. Typically, in valleys and around chimneys, you will find bits and pieces of the old roof because they never took it all off. Then send us photos that document these remnants along with a photo/manufacturer product sheet showing the color/pattern of the proposed new roof.

Q: Can I install new can lights?

Our review principally focuses on preserving the existing historic fabric of your building. When adding new elements, there is a great deal of leeway allowed. But new elements should be sympathetic, they should be subserviant to the surrounding historic fabric and they shouldn't create a false sence of history. So a can light fixture passes these three tests. But I am reminded of the words of a reader of Old House Journal who said, "There are so many gorgeous, authentic reproduction light fixtures – why anyone would illuminate a meticulous old-house renovation with a spaceship canopy of tin cans poked into a white drywall ceiling is beyond me." That being said, sometimes can lights can solve a lighting problem that a reproduction fixture can't. W recommend that can lights be used sparingly and not as a standard solution to add additional lighting in each room.

Q: Do you regulate paint color?

If you have unpainted surfaces (like brick or varnished wood) they need to be left unpainted.

At the federal level, the National Park Service does want to review proposed colors. You should submit your proposed colors and a verbal description of where each color goes (or a colored elevation... this can be quite crudely done). You should also find historic photos of the building (likely a black and white image) and submit these photos with your color choices. While a black and white image can't show us color, it will show which parts of the building were lighter colored and which parts were darker colored and how the different colors accentuated the lines and elements of the building.

If you are interested in a historically accurate color palette, we suggest doing a search based on the style of the building (Victorian, federal, craftsman, etc.) and the decade that it was constructed (each decade had a different set of paints available based on limited selections of colors and dyes).

Q: What if something changes?

At any time, you can modify your scope of work and submit an amendment form (this form is in the same location that the part 1 and 2 forms are) describing your proposed change. We understand that actual conditions in the field might be different than you thought and require changes. We also understand that sometime budget issues require a redesign and again, we understand. The amendment will get reviewed and approved (potentially with more conditions) and this lets you have assurance that your changes will meet the standards. You can call or email your project reviewer at any time with questions.

Q: Do you do site inspections?

We do not have the travel budget to do site inspections. But if our staff are in town, it is possible that they will look at the project. If we want to get a tour or see the work that is occurring inside of the building, we will give you advanced notice so that it can be scheduled. Sometimes it is just a simple drive by and those may not always be scheduled. If something appears to be incorrect, your project reviewer will give you a call and we can discuss it.

Q: Can you come do a site visit? I am happy to pay the cost for your travel....

You can schedule a meeting here in our office and bring photos (inside and out) and napkin sketches of what you want (and then submit a tax credit application). If there are some tricky site issues that require a visit, once we have an application, we can come visit later.

Q: Are there any other good sources of information?

This FAQ covers big topic issues very briefly. The National Park Service has a wide range of really well researched articles on restoration and meeting the standards. We encourage you to search for their site for much more in-depth information. You can find information here...

- <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.html>
- <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/tech-notes.html>
- <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/applying-rehabilitation/standards-bulletins.html>

Q: Who can I talk to more about this?

You can reach out to our Site Development Program Manager Katie Wilborn at katherine.wilborn@ky.gov.