

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES



The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation. It is a documentation tool, maintained by the National Park Service, used to record the existence of sites that contribute to our local, state, and national heritage.

WHAT DOES IT DO

- **Recognize and describe properties** that are significant to architectural, social, cultural, archaeological, or engineering history
- **Make properties eligible** to apply for funding sources like state and federal historic tax credits and other preservation grants
- **Provide notability and support** from preservation agencies like SHPO, NPS, and Historic Landmarks Commissions to help protect properties from endangerment.

WHAT DOES IT NOT DO

- Restrict the use, sale, or alteration of a property
- Penalize owners for making changes to a property
- Force owners to open a property to the public
- Absolutely prevent the demolition of the property
- Automatically provide or guarantee funding for the restoration of a property

Did you know that Elkins, WV has four National Historic Districts?

The latest, the Graham-Davis NHD, was just established in November 2021.



STILL HAVE QUESTIONS WANT TO LEARN MORE



WV STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICE

This is a great place to start with all your questions about historic preservation. You will work with them to list your property on the National Register and navigate the entire Historic Tax Credit process.

Main Office: 304-558-0220
SHPO Tax Credit Coordinator: 304-558-0240

LOCAL ELKINS/RANDOLPH INFORMATION ELKINS MAIN STREET

304-637-4803 | downtownelkins.com

A great local business and preservation connection. Knowledgeable about projects and regulations in the Elkins area.

WOODLANDS DEVELOPMENT AND LENDING

304-404-2300 | woodlandswv.org

Tax credit application questions, technical assistance, building assessments, non-traditional lending and grants.

PRESERVATION ALLIANCE OF WV

304-345-6005 | pawv.org

WV's statewide resource for preservation grants, trainings, technical assistance, historic contractor recommendations, and general project support.

ELKINS HISTORIC LANDMARKS COMMISSION

304-637-6501 | historicelkins.com

City of Elkins' official local preservation agency. Helps with National Register nominations and historic districts.

LEARN MORE BY SEARCHING THESE TERMS:

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE HISTORIC PRESERVATION

FEDERAL HISTORIC TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

WV STATE HISTORIC TAX CREDIT PROGRAM

SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S
STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION



*Demystifying
Preservation*
**FOR DOWNTOWN
BUILDING OWNERS**



FIVE COMMON PRESERVATION MYTHS:

MYTH #1

Preservation costs a lot more than new construction.

While this can be true in some cases, **it is usually less expensive to upgrade and repair an existing structure** than to pay for its demolition and the construction of an entirely new building of equal quality. And remember: if your building contains asbestos, or other hazardous materials, you will also have to pay to properly dispose of them if you choose to demolish it.

MYTH #2

If my building is listed as historic I'll never be able to make any changes or modern updates to it.

Being listed on the **National Historic Register does not impose restrictions on a property**. Regulations and restrictions may come into effect if the building lies within a local historic district subject to separate zoning ordinances or if public funding sources are used to restore the property.



MYTH #3

Old buildings are not environmentally friendly and should be replaced.

With minor upgrades to mechanical systems and weather-proofing, **historic buildings can be as energy efficient as modern ones**. The phrase “they don't build 'em like they used to” is true: historic materials are almost always higher quality, better performing, and longer lasting than materials available today. More importantly, reusing an existing building utilizes its *embodied energy* -- the collective environmental impact already encompassed in the building's original materials and construction. Replacing historic buildings throws that embodied energy into landfills and adds to the environmental impact with additional new construction.

“The greenest building is the one that is already built.”

-Carl Elefante, American Institute of Architects

MYTH #4

Historic downtowns and neighborhoods are outdated and prevent economic growth.

Studies consistently show that **historic buildings are positive economic drivers** for businesses and residents alike. The character and architectural details of older structures make each historic downtown truly unique and give communities a one-of-a-kind landscape that tells their story and builds a sense of pride. These distinct experiences draw in outside visitors and encourage local businesses.

MYTH #5

If I restore my historic building, I will have to make it exactly the way it was in a specific time period.

Most downtown projects allow for flexibility in blending historic elements with modern uses. NPS recognizes four different approaches for treating historic properties: preservation, reconstruction, restoration, and rehabilitation. Adaptive reuses of a historic structure often fall into the rehabilitation category.



WHAT ARE HISTORIC TAX CREDITS

The Federal Historic Tax Credit (HTC) program is administered by the National Park Service and the IRS. It offers building owners an income tax credit equal to 20% of the qualifying costs required to rehabilitate their certified historic structure in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. West Virginia also has a State HTC which offers an additional 25% of costs.

Using both federal and state tax credits together, property owners can receive tax credits equal to up to 45% of qualifying rehab costs per project!

WHAT PROJECTS QUALIFY FOR HTCS

To be eligible for HTCs a building must be:

- Listed on the National Register of Historic Places OR a contributing structure in a National Historic District
- Rehabilitated according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation
- Used for an income-producing purpose for at least five years after the project is completed
- Meet the “substantial rehabilitation test”, meaning that the cost of the project must exceed the greater of \$5,000 or the building's adjusted basis.

HOW DOES THIS PROGRAM WORK

The property owner will submit a 3-part application to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the National Park Service (NPS) over the course of the project. When the project is complete and approved by NPS, the owner will be issued a notification of credits to file with their tax return. Often the owner will enter a limited partnership with a third-party funder like a bank who will provide financing for the project in return for the tax credits. The credits are generally claimed in the first taxable year that the building is placed into service.

OK COOL. SO WHAT'S THE CATCH

HTCs are such a great deal that of course some rules must be followed to qualify and maintain eligibility.

- Acquisition costs, legal fees, furnishings, and other indirect or non-structural costs do not qualify to contribute towards the calculation of eligible costs for HTCs.
- HTCs cannot be used for private, owner-occupied residences. Homeowners should look into the WV Residential Rehabilitation Tax Credit.
- HTCs can be recaptured by the IRS if the building is sold, ceases to be income-producing, or is physically altered without SHPO/NPS approval before the end of the 5-year holding period.