

What is historic preservation?

“Historic preservation is a conversation with our past about our future. It provides us with opportunities to ask, ‘What is important in our history?’ and ‘What parts of our past can we preserve for the future?’

Through historic preservation, we look at history in different ways, ask different questions of the past, and learn new things about our history and ourselves. Historic preservation is an important way for us to transmit our understanding of the past to future generations.

Our nation's history has many facets, and historic preservation helps tell these stories. Sometimes historic preservation involves celebrating events, people, places, and ideas that we are proud of; other times it involves recognizing moments in our history that can be painful or uncomfortable to remember.”

—From the National Park Service

Historic preservation looks like this



and this.



Historic preservation does not always look like this.



“Today’s preservation movement recognizes the need for more complete, inclusive representation of communities across the nation, which are increasingly socio-economically, racially, ethnically, culturally, and generationally diverse. Preservation efforts must prioritize inclusion in order to tell an accurate and comprehensive story—and to remain relevant.”

—From the National Trust for Historic Preservation