

OFFICE OF HISTORIC RESOURCES GUIDANCE



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Applying Historic Preservation Standards To Designated Historic Resources Affected By The Palisades Fire Emergency

On January 13, 2025, Mayor Karen Bass issued Emergency Executive Order No. 1, to expedite recovery and rebuilding in the aftermath of the destructive Palisades Fire. Among the directives in the order, the Mayor instructed Los Angeles City Planning to publish a list detailing the status of properties with designated historic resources, following inspections by the Los Angeles Department of Building and Safety (LADBS). The Department is also charged with providing guidance on the application of the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

Based on inspections conducted by LADBS, City Planning’s Office of Historic Resources (OHR) compiled this summary of fire impacts to designated historic resources within the Pacific Palisades area. LADBS confirmed that other fires within the City of Los Angeles in January 2025 did not destroy or damage historic resources.

The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards (Standards), referenced in the Mayor’s order, serve as the benchmark for federal and local governments nationwide in managing proposed changes to historic properties. Compliance with the Standards is required for projects affecting designated City Historic-Cultural Monuments (local landmarks) under the City of Los Angeles Cultural Heritage Ordinance.

To provide greater clarity and facilitate expedited processing of requests related to designated historic resources in the affected area, below is some guidance for property owners and community members on the application of the Standards in the aftermath of the fire, addressing four potential scenarios:

1. Complete destruction of the historic resource

If the fire has completely destroyed all significant (character-defining) features of the designated historic resource, historic preservation reviews will not in any way delay the clearance of the property or construction of new structures, once environmental clean-up has been completed. While the property will retain its historic designation, new construction on the property will not be reviewed for compliance with the Standards.

2. Partial destruction and partial retention of the historic resource


If significant architectural or historic features remain after the fire and if the property has not been declared an imminent hazard that could jeopardize public safety or cause damage to an adjacent property, review under the Standards would determine whether significant architectural or historic features can be repaired or rehabilitated. Under [State Public Resources Code Section 5028](#), the State Office of Historic Preservation would review and make a determination, within 30 days of a request, as to whether the designated historic structure may be demolished or significantly altered.

3. Potential reconstruction of a historic resource

The Secretary's Standards do not require that a destroyed historic resource be reconstructed in a manner that would seek to recreate or duplicate its lost historic features. However, a property owner that voluntarily wishes to pursue a faithful reconstruction, rather than an entirely new project, should utilize the [Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Reconstruction](#). These Standards are meant to guide the accurate duplication of lost historic features and elements, in a way that helps ensure that they are substantiated by documentary or physical evidence, rather than conjecture.

4. Considerations for vacant historic properties

If a designated historic resource remains undamaged by the fire, it is possible that it still may remain unoccupied for a significant period of time, while environmental clean-up and full restoration of local public services are completed. The National Park Service, which promulgates the Secretary's Standards, has issued a



[Preservation Brief](#) that for more than three decades has served as a useful guide to such situations, offering best practices for temporarily securing, stabilizing, and monitoring vacant historic buildings.

For questions regarding this guidance document, please contact Planning.PalisadesRebuild@lacity.org.