

SAN FRANCISCO
PRESERVATION BULLETIN NO. 7

THE STATE HISTORICAL BUILDING CODE (SHBC)

PURPOSE OF THE STATE HISTORICAL BUILDING CODE

The intent of the State Historical Building Code (SHBC) is to protect California's architectural heritage by recognizing the unique construction problems inherent in historical buildings and offering an alternative code to deal with these issues. The SHBC provides alternative building regulations for the rehabilitation, preservation, restoration or relocation of structures designated as "historic."

SHBC regulations are intended to facilitate restoration or accommodate change of occupancy so as to preserve a historic resource's original or restored architectural elements and features. While the SHBC provides for a cost-effective approach to preservation it also provides for occupant safety, encourages energy conservation and facilitates access for people with disabilities.

MAJOR PROVISIONS OF THE SHBC

The SHBC, which is contained in Part 8, Title 24 of the California Code of Regulations, has been in effect in California since 1979. The principal sections of the SHBC address use and occupancy issues, fire protection, means of egress, alternative accessibility provisions, alternative structural regulations, archaic materials and methods of construction, mechanical, plumbing and electrical requirements as well as a chapter on historic districts, sites and open spaces. The revised SHBC became effective on July 21, 1998 by the State Historical Building Safety Board. These revisions include changes to the accessibility chapter, which make code language consistent with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

DEFINITION OF A QUALIFIED HISTORIC RESOURCE

A qualified historic resource is defined as any building, site, structure, object, district or collection of structures and their associated sites deemed of importance to the history, architecture or culture of an area by an appropriate local, state, or federal governmental jurisdiction. This shall include designated buildings or properties on, or determined eligible for, official national, state or local historical registers or official inventories, such as the National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, State Historical Landmarks, State Points of Historical Interest, and officially adopted city or county registers, inventories, or surveys of historically or architecturally significant sites, places or landmarks. All are deemed qualified historic resources pursuant to Chapter 8-2, Section 8-218, which is the definition section of the SHBC.

LOCAL APPLICATION OF THE SHBC

When applying the SHBC to a proposed project, the first step is to determine whether the subject property is a "qualified historic resource" pursuant to the definition provided. If a property is not currently listed on any local, state or national historic register, the

project sponsor may submit a California Register of Historical Resources or National Register of Historic Places nomination to the State Office of Historic Preservation (OHP) for an evaluation of the cultural resource. Contact the OHP at (916) 653-6624 for additional information.

Project sponsor requests to utilize the SHBC locally are made with the Department of Building Inspection (DBI). *Call the Technical Services Division of DBI at (415) 558-6205 for more information about the SHBC.*

SUMMARY

The ideal rehabilitation solution for a historical resource is to retain historic materials and character while simultaneously exceeding minimum life-safety standards. The SHBC offers owners of historic resources the opportunity to bring the resource into conformance with the performance standards of the City's Building Code while maintaining architectural and historical characteristics and features.

OTHER INFORMATION

Copies of the 2001 State Historical Building Code are available by calling the International Conference of Building Officials (ICBO) at their toll free number 1-800-284-4406. The SHBC can be ordered as a stand-alone document (Part 8, Title 24, California Code of Regulations) or obtained as part of the California Building Code (Part 2, Title 24 California Code of Regulations) where it is included as Division II, Chapter 34.

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