

## History of Historic Preservation (National)

The information below was summarized and excerpted from:

Norman Tyler, *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to Its History, Principles, and Practice* (New York: Norton, 1994, 2000).

- 1816 Independence Hall
- 1853 Mount Vernon
- 1872 Yellowstone National Park
- 1889 Casa Grande / Mesa Verde National Park
- 1906 Antiquities Act – establishes penalties for destroying federally owned sites or objects of historic or scientific interest.
- 1916 National Park Service created
- 1926 Williamsburg restoration begins
- 1931 Charleston, South Carolina – creates first historic district with regulatory control to prohibit “...factories or other buildings or businesses which would detract from the architectural and historical setting.” This historic district was followed by the creation of other historic districts: Vieux Carre (New Orleans) in 1936, San Antonio in 1939, Alexandria, Virginia in 1946, Williamsburg in 1947, Winston-Salem in 1948, and Georgetown in 1950.
- 1930s Great Depression New Deal programs including the Civil Works Administration, the Public Works Administration, the Section of Fine Arts and the Works Progress Administration which provides employment to unemployed architects, craftspeople, artists, etc.
- 1933 Historic Sites Act – establishes a policy “to preserve for public use historic sites, buildings and objects of national significance for the inspiration and benefit of the people of the United States.”
- 1949 The National Trust for Historic Preservation creates the purpose of linking the preservation efforts of the National Park Service and the federal government with the activities of the private sector.
- 1949 Housing Act and 1954 Urban Renewal Act  
The Housing Act and the Urban Renewal Act provide new development stimulus in urban areas by making available federal funds to purchase and clear deteriorated neighborhoods. Federal officials believed that the first step in redevelopment was to clear “blighted” areas and make cleared sites available for new investment. In many instances private investment didn’t come to these areas in the central cities which left cities with large vacant areas where older neighborhoods had once stood.
- 1950-60s Historic preservation and environmental concerns increase due to the destruction of buildings and the natural environment caused by urban renewal and interstate highway system projects.
- 1961 Jane Jacobs writes *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* which recognizes the intrinsic value in the existing fabric of the city and that preservation of the built environment maintains the fabric of communities.
- 1966 National Trust for Historic Preservation publishes *With Heritage So Rich* to convey the architectural and historical heritage of significant structures that had been lost and proposes,  
*“...an expanded role for preservation to be supported by the federal government. The report included recommendations for accomplishing this goal, which would include a comprehensive survey of historically and architecturally significant buildings, sites, structures, districts, and objects, and their inclusion in a national register. The report also recommended the formation of a partnership between federal, state, and local governments to deal specifically with preservation by establishing a national advisory council on historic preservation and designating preservation officers in every state, as well as a program of financial incentives for preservation to balance the incentives already available for new construction and demolition.”*
- 1966 National Historic Preservation Act passes following the recommendations of the previous report. The Act establishes the National Register of Historic Places, encourages the concept of locally regulated historic districts, authorizes enabling legislation to fund preservation activities, encourages the establishment of the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs), and establishes an Advisory Council on Historic Preservation among other provisions.  
*“The National Preservation Act recognized the need for the designation of individual properties, but also recognized that in many instances it is necessary not only to preserve a building but also the context in which it and adjacent buildings are placed. Therefore, the idea of designating groups or assemblages of buildings as historic districts represented a significant conceptual shift.”*

## **History of Historic Preservation (Local)**

*“The roles of the various levels of government – federal, state, and local – are quite distinct. The federal role is to fund activities, set out an overall superstructure of preservation activities, and ensure consistency of approach from state to state. The federal government also monitors its own properties and activities and provides incentives to encourage appropriate work at historic buildings. But it has virtually no regulatory power and thus no ultimate power over owners of historic properties. At the state level, SHPOs encourage surveys of significant historic resources and facilitate federal activities, providing a link between the federal and local levels of government and state laws authorized for local programs. But state preservation officials also have limited regulatory power over historic properties.*

*The real protective power of historic preservation is found at the local level. This point cannot be overemphasized. Only at the local level can historic properties be regulated and protected through legal ordinances...These powers are reserved for local governments because of the underlying philosophy that each community should determine for itself what is historically significant, what is of value to the community, and what steps should be taken to provide protection.”*

-- Norman Tyler, *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to Its History, Principles, and Practice*

- 1966 National Historic Preservation Act establishes State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs)
- 1967 Governor Knowles designates the director of the Wisconsin Historical Society as the official liaison to the National Park Service (NPS).
- 1969 City of Madison prepares for historic preservation movement
- 1970 Madison’s “Mapleside” demolished for Burger King
- 1970 Common Council adopts City of Madison Landmarks Ordinance and creates Landmarks Commission. The Ordinance establishes the policies and procedures to designate historic buildings as landmarks and approve exterior alterations. \*The Ordinance (excluding the historic district sections) has been revised and amended in small part over the years.
- 1971 Common Council adopts amended Ordinance language giving the Commission authority to delay demolition of an historic building for up to one year
- 1972 Wisconsin SHPO hires first permanent historic preservation staff person
- 1972 Wisconsin SHPO drafts enabling legislation for historic district designation by municipalities
- 1974 Common Council adopts Ordinance amendment which provides for the designation and implementation of local historic districts
- 1976 Mansion Hill Historic District designated (first local historic district in Wisconsin)
- 1979 Third Lake Ridge Historic District designated
- 1985 University Heights Historic District designated
- 1993 Marquette Bungalows Historic District designated
- 1997 Common Council amended the Ordinance language to be the body to designate landmarks
- 2002 First Settlement Historic District designated

### Additional Resources:

Richard Bernstein, *A Guide to Smart Growth and Cultural Resources Planning* (Wisconsin Historical Society, 2000).

James Marston Fitch, *Historic Preservation: Curatorial Management of the Built World* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990).

*Historic Preservation Legislation in Wisconsin*, State of Wisconsin Legislative Reference Bureau, Informational Bulletin 96-2, February 1996.

Donovan D. Rypkema, *The Economics of Historic Preservation* (Washington D.C.: The National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1998, 2002, 2005, 2008).

Steven W. Semes, *The Future of the Past: A Conservation Ethic for Architecture, Urbanism, and Historic Preservation* (New York: Norton, 2009).

Robert E. Stipe, *A Richer Heritage: Historic Preservation in the Twenty-First Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

Norman Tyler, *Historic Preservation: An Introduction to Its History, Principles, and Practice* (New York: Norton, 1994, 2000).