

Myths and Misconceptions about the National Register of Historic Places

Myth #1: “If my property is listed in the National Register, I won’t be able to change it in any way, and I don’t want my property to become like a museum.”

Fact: Owners of registered historic properties may make changes to their properties. Historic preservation laws and guidelines are not meant to prevent change, but, rather, to sensitively manage change. The tool used to manage the change is the Secretary of the Interior’s *Standards for Rehabilitation*, the nationally accepted benchmark for evaluating changes to historic properties. These *Standards* allow for updating interiors and building additions. Read the *Standards* at <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation.htm>.

Myth #2: “If my property is listed in the National Register, small projects will become cumbersome because they must be approved by the State Historic Preservation Office.”

Fact: The State Historic Preservation Office only reviews projects that require local building/demolition permits and projects involving governmental funding. The state office does not review small projects, such as painting, that do not require local permits. No provision of this law can restrict the agricultural use of any land used for agricultural purposes. Find more information about the State Preservation Law online at <http://www.kshs.org/14648>

Myth #3: “If a property is listed in the National Register, it will be protected forever and can never be demolished.”

Fact: National Register designation ensures a more thorough review of major projects and demolition proposals, but it does not prohibit demolition. In Kansas, if an owner requests a local permit for a project involving a property that is listed in the National Register OR the Register of Historic Kansas Places (state register), the SHPO must review the permit request. If the SHPO determines the proposed project will adversely affect the historic property and recommends that the city/county not issue the permit, the owner has the opportunity to make their case to the local governing body. If the property owner demonstrates that there are no feasible alternatives to the proposed project, the governing body may choose to issue the permit. Other members of the public have the opportunity to present alternatives for the governing body to consider.

Myth #4: “If my property is listed in the National Register, there’s lots of government money available to help me fix it up.”

Fact: There are few large government or foundation grants available to owners of historic properties, and even those few typically limit eligibility to government agencies or non-profits. Kansas, however, is a leader in funding preservation projects. The SHPO administers three incentive programs available to owners of listed historic properties: Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit program, State Rehabilitation Tax program, and Heritage Trust Fund grant program. Find out more at <http://www.kshs.org/p/find-funding/14613>

Myth #5: “I will be required to make my property available to the public if it is listed in the National Register.”

Fact: Hundreds of private properties in Kansas are listed on the National Register, and, although owners may open their property for special events, this is not required. Many of the first buildings listed in the National Register were open to the public as museums, and this may have led many to believe public visitation is required for all listed properties.

For Further Information:

Websites:

Kansas Historical Society

www.kshs.org

National Park Service

www.nps.gov

National Register of Historic Places

www.nps.gov/history/nr/index.htm

National Trust for Historic Preservation

<http://www.preservationnation.org/>

Contacts:

State Historic Preservation Office

Kansas Historical Society

6425 SW 6th Avenue

Topeka, KS 66615

785-272-8681 ext. 240

kshs.shpo@ks.gov

Patrick Zollner, Deputy SHPO

785-272-8681 ext. 217

patrick.zollner@ks.gov

Jamee Fiore, National Register / Survey
Coordinator

785-272-8681 ext. 216

jamee.fiore@ks.gov

Lauren Jones, Review and Compliance

785-272-8681 ext. 225

lauren.jones@ks.gov

Rick Anderson, National Register Historian

785-272-8681 ext. 227

rick.anderson@ks.gov

Katrina Ringler, CLG / Historic
Preservation Fund grant

785-272-8681 ext. 215

katrina.ringler@ks.gov

Kristen Johnston, Tax Credits

785-272-8681 ext. 213

kristen.johnston@ks.gov

Robert McLaughlin, Tax Credits

785-272-8681 ext. 228

robert.mclaughlin@ks.gov

Bethany Falvey, Heritage Trust
Fund grants

785-272-8681 ext. 226

bethany.falvey@ks.gov