



## Chapter 9

# DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR INTERIOR LANDMARKS

Architectural interiors offer a rich history of a building over time. Pristine, unaltered interiors may reveal an aesthetic of a certain era or owner. Interiors that have been altered by each succeeding generation provide a history of change and technological improvements. Unfortunately, interiors that have been heavily renovated are often stripped of all their previous history. Historic public interior guidelines help property owners formulate preservation plans for the rehabilitation, preservation, and continued use of historic public interiors and assist in determining the appropriateness of such plans. These guidelines apply to permanent and temporary construction projects for landmark interiors, as well as rehabilitation or new construction projects that may impact them.

The following design guidelines for interior landmarks provide information on general considerations, distinctive interior architectural features, distinctive interior materials and finishes, paint and color, and new construction and archeology within interior landmarks.

### 9.1 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

The following general considerations will assist property owners and designers when planning alterations to a landmark interior:

Identify and assess character-defining interior architectural features. Wherever possible, retain character-defining features of interior spaces including floor plan, ceiling height, and distinctive features, materials, and finishes.

Examples of distinctive materials include wood, iron, aluminum, cast iron, marble, terra cotta, tile, stucco, plaster, and brick.

Examples of important historic finishes include decorative wood flooring, carpeting, wallpaper, paint, plaster, and other applied ornament.

Examples of significant architectural features include cornices, brackets, railings, columns, interior shutters, baseboards, fireplaces, window and door moldings, stairs and walls, fixed furniture, light fixtures, and hardware.

- Avoid the removal or alteration of any historic interior feature whenever possible.
- Repair deteriorated interior architectural features, wherever possible. Do not alter significant interior architectural features during the repair process.

- Replace interior architectural materials and features that are deteriorated beyond repair with new materials and features that match the original in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities. The use of materials that were unavailable when the building was constructed is discouraged.
- Replace missing architectural features based on accurate duplication of features, substantiated by historical, physical, or pictorial evidence rather than on conjecture.
- Historic interiors should be recognized as products of their own time. Alterations that have no historical basis and seek to create an earlier, historic appearance are discouraged.



*Lloyd Street Synagogue, 1845*

- Previous changes to an interior that have acquired historic significance in their own right should be recognized and respected. Intrusive changes that have resulted in harm to historic building fabric or in the loss of historical significance and integrity may be reversed as part of a rehabilitation project.
- The Commission takes lead-based paint hazards very seriously. For projects that propose the alteration or removal of features contaminated with lead-based paint, the Commission will take into account the significance of the finish or feature in question, what impact that an abatement proposal will have on the historic character of the building, and the requirements of applicable federal, state, and local laws in the project review. CHAP follows HUD's definition of a lead-based paint hazard; for this and more information on lead-based paint hazards, please refer to Section 8.14.

## 9.2 DISTINCTIVE INTERIOR FEATURES

Important interior public spaces, such as lobbies, reception and entrance halls, parlors, theaters, auditoriums, and significant industrial or commercial spaces, are distinguished by their character-defining features. The following addresses the preservation of key interior features that are often damaged during rehabilitation work.

### OVERALL PLAN, PROPORTIONS, AND CONFIGURATION

- Retain and preserve interior spaces, including size, configuration, proportion, and relationship of rooms and corridors, that are important in defining the historic interior.
- Do not subdivide character-defining interior spaces either vertically, through the insertion of new partitions, or horizontally, through the insertion of new floors or mezzanines. The addition of interior partitions may be considered if they do not damage or destroy structural systems or obscure or damage character-defining spaces, features, or finishes.
- Non-historic partitions installed during earlier renovations may be removed in order to restore the room to its original proportions and size.
- Do not cut through floors and ceilings where this work would damage character-defining interior spaces.
- Install new stairways, floor elevations, fire escapes, and other code required elements in a manner which does not diminish the integrity of the interior.

### VERTICAL CIRCULATION

- Retain and preserve character-defining stairs and elevators in their historic configuration and location. The

installation of alternative fire suppression systems, such as sprinklers or fire-rated glass enclosures, may permit the retention of historic stairs.

- Retain the original material and architectural features of stairs, such as steps, hand rails, balusters, columns, brackets, and decorative materials, wherever possible. If these materials must be replaced, the new materials should match the old as closely as possible.
- Retain and preserve existing historic elevator cabs and other character-defining elements, such as call buttons or floor indicators, whenever possible. Original cabs can often be upgraded with new elevator systems in order to meet current building codes.
- If required by building code, place new stairs and elevators in secondary spaces or service areas.

### CEILINGS

- Retain and preserve the original ceiling height, materials, and ornament, whenever possible. Deteriorated ceiling materials should be replaced with new material that matches the old in composition, size, shape, color, texture.
- Do not install suspended ceilings below ornamental ceilings or in spaces where high ceilings define interior character.



*Tiffany-designed interior of St. Marks Evangelical Lutheran Church; a Baltimore City Public Interior Landmark.*

CHAP



*Sitting room of Mount Clare, 1753*

- If suspended ceilings are installed in secondary spaces, design new ceiling soffits to be well set back from the windows so the suspended ceiling is not visible from the exterior.

## WINDOWS AND DOORS

- Retain and repair existing window and door elements and openings, including window sash, transoms, glass, lintels, sills, frames, molding, doors, and all hardware, whenever possible. Do not introduce new window or door openings into the principal room elevations or alter window or door openings to fit new stock windows and doors.
- For fire rating purposes, building officials may allow the retention of original doors and glazing if equivalent levels of protections are offered through alternate methods such as sprinklers.
- If new sash and doors must be used, these should duplicate the size, material, design, and hardware of the older existing ones. Do not use Plexiglas where there is no historic precedent.
- Storm windows and doors (while normally installed to the exterior) may be installed on the interior if they are visually unobtrusive, do not damage existing frames, and can be removed in the future. Storm windows should match the interior trim color. Mill finished aluminum and vinyl frames can be painted. Stark white aluminum finishes are discouraged because the intense artificial color does not dull with age. Some manufacturers produce an off-white finish, which is more acceptable.

## RAILINGS

- Do not remove historic railings at balconies or other locations. Railings are important elements of the design and character within a structure.
- Do not replace railings with new railings of an inappropriate design or material.

## STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS

- Weakened, damaged, or inadequate structural members and systems should be promptly stabilized, repaired, or reinforced.
- When addressing structural problems to an historic interior, a structural engineer's report may be requested.

## MECHANICAL, ELECTRICAL, AND PLUMBING SYSTEMS

- Retain and preserve visible character-defining mechanical, electrical, and plumbing system elements, such as heat registers, vents, fans, radiators, switch plates, light fixtures, and plumbing fixtures, where possible.
- New interior light fixtures should be an appropriate size and placed in an appropriate location. Avoid selecting oversized fixtures.
- Install new mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems in a way that does not alter, damage, or destroy character-defining spaces, features, and finishes. Locate new bathrooms or equipment rooms in secondary spaces or service areas. Install ducts, pipes, wiring, and security and telecommunications cables as inconspicuously as possible utilizing secondary spaces, attics, basements, and existing closets.
- Avoid furring-out exterior walls to add insulation and suspending new ceilings to hide ductwork.

## 9.3 DISTINCTIVE INTERIOR MATERIALS AND FINISHES

### GENERAL

- Protect and maintain distinctive interior materials and finishes, including masonry, wood, architectural metals, and plaster, with appropriate maintenance treatments such as cleaning, rust removal, limited paint removal, and re-application of protective coating systems. See Additional Resources for relevant publications on proper preservation treatments.
- Preserve and restore historic finishes such as painting, staining, gilding, graining, and other decorative finishes whenever possible.
- Retain the original color and texture of interior materials and finishes (including early signage or artwork) whenever possible.
- Do not remove undamaged historic interior materials.

### CLEANING

- Clean masonry, wood, architectural metals, and plaster only when necessary to halt deterioration or to remove

graffiti and stains. Indiscriminate removal of paint may cause damage.

- Clean architectural metals such as bronze, cast iron, steel, pressed sheet-metal, aluminum, and zinc with an appropriate method. Do not alter the color, texture and tone of the metal.
- Use the gentlest methods possible when cleaning the surface of interior materials and finishes. Cleaning methods that will damage the historic building materials are not allowed.
- Evaluate cleaning methods in a small test area first in order to observe any potential adverse effects.

## MASONRY, WOOD, AND ARCHITECTURAL METALS

Please see relevant sections on masonry, wood, and architectural metals in Chapter 8 Design Guidelines for Historic Buildings for treatment of these materials.

## PLASTER

- Stabilize loose or bulging plaster, particularly at ceilings and surfaces with ornamental plasterwork.
- Repair plaster with a plaster mixture that matches the original mix in composition, appearance, and texture as closely as possible.
- Do not remove plaster to expose bare masonry walls unless there is a documented historical precedent.

## 9.4 PAINT AND COLOR

- A professional paint analysis of historic interior finishes is encouraged prior to undertaking rehabilitation work, whenever possible.
- Remove paint and other clear finishes using the gentlest method possible and in compliance with all federal, state, and local regulations. Applicants must follow Maryland Department of Environment's Lead Poisoning Prevention Program and all laws pertaining to the safe removal of lead paint. Contractors must be certified by the Maryland Department of the Environment and accredited by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. For more information, please see Section 8.14 Lead-Based Paint Hazards.
- Repaint or refinish interior surfaces with a compatible paint or other coating system.
- Repaint with colors and sheen levels that are appropriate to the historic interior. Paint colors must be submitted for approval.
- Interior lighting strongly affects the perception of colors. Finalize interior paint colors after establishing the type,



*Restoration of the murals in the entrance hall of the Senator Theatre; a Baltimore City Public Interior Landmark.*

location, and intensity of interior lighting. If possible, final paint color selection should be done after lighting has been installed.

- Do not remove paint or other finishes from architectural features that were never intended to be uncoated.
- Repainting with the same color as existing color is considered maintenance and does not require a Notice to Proceed.

## 9.5 ARCHEOLOGICAL FEATURES

Excavations that occur within interior spaces or as part of adjacent new construction may impact potential archeological resources. Archeological resources are most likely to be located under basement and kitchen floors. When undertaking excavation within a landmark interior, follow the general guidelines below:

- Make every reasonable effort to protect and preserve archeological resources affected by or adjacent to any project.
- Leave known archeological resources intact.
- Minimize ground disturbance to reduce the possibility of destroying unknown archeological resources. When ground disturbance is necessary, hire a qualified archeologist to monitor and document the excavation.