



THE
GEORGIA TRUST
for HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Advocacy Toolkit







Where to start?

Want to advocate for a historic property in your area? Researching the property and discovering its significance is a perfect place to start. Gather as much background information as possible before enlisting others to join your cause. When advocating for the preservation of a historic property, initiating early action is crucial. Identify like-minded community members who recognize the property's significance and collaborate to raise awareness and prevent its demolition or inappropriate development. Engaging with local news outlets and media can increase visibility and attract broader support. Additionally, contacting local legislators to emphasize the property's historic value effectively advances the preservation effort. Furthermore, attending local Historic Preservation Commission meetings and advocating for the property during the public statement session is an effective way to raise awareness among preservationists about your cause and its significance.

Learn More:
[10 Steps to Start Saving Places - National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

Use this guide to learn more about the best way to advocate with these steps and additional information:

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Learn More about the Site



Understanding more about the property is a key first step. This includes what makes it historic and the details of the threat. By gathering background information about the property, you will be better prepared to take further action for its preservation. This knowledge is beneficial when convincing others to join your efforts. The more you know about the property's history and significance, the more compelling your case will be to potential supporters.

Learn More:

[How to Save a Place: 12 Tips To Research & Know the Threat - National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

[Research and Documentation - Georgia Historic Preservation Division](#)



What Makes a Site Historic?

Age

Typically, a property should be at least 50 years old. However, properties younger than 50 years may also be considered historic if they have been studied and recognized for their historical significance.

Integrity

The property must retain its historic physical integrity, meaning it should be relatively unchanged and maintain its essential character-defining features. For buildings and structures, this involves preserving their original state. For archaeological sites, the site should be relatively undisturbed. Traditional cultural properties must still be recognizable and used or revered by affiliated cultural groups.

Significance

A property must have historical significance, which can be established in three ways:

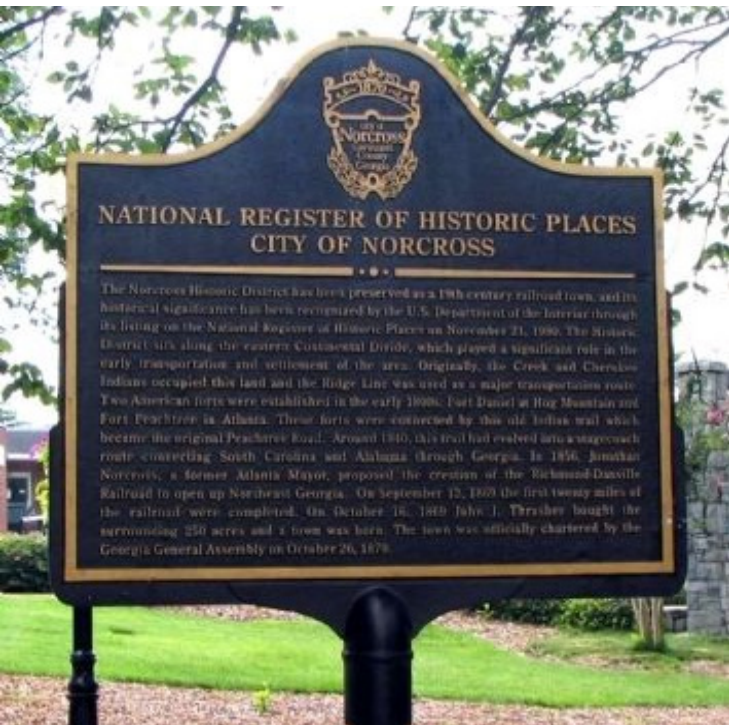
- Association with significant individuals, events, activities, or developments.
- Embodying distinctive architectural characteristics, high artistic values, or fine craftsmanship.
- Potential to provide valuable information about the past through various forms of investigation and analysis.



Is the Property Designated as Historic?

See “**Understanding Designation**” on p. 8 of this document to learn more about what historic designation means and the different types.

You can also learn more in the [Georgia Historic Preservation Handbook](#) under “Preservation Tools” on p. 27.



Rally Support



Arguably, the most crucial aspect of advocacy is garnering support for your cause. There are numerous ways to raise awareness around historic preservation. Whether it's contacting your local legislator to discuss the importance of protecting a historic property or joining an online group dedicated to preservation efforts, every action contributes to building support. Every effort, no matter how small, is valuable in gaining the support needed to advance your cause effectively.

Learn More:

[How to Save a Place: Become an Advocate - National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

Connect with Preservation Groups

Connecting with and joining established organizations, especially your local preservation groups, is a great way to find like-minded people who may provide additional tools or resources to help bring awareness to and save a site.

Learn More:

[How to Save a Place: Understand Local, State, and Federal Preservation Groups - National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

Find Preservation Groups:

Search online to see if there are any nearby historical societies or preservation organizations. You can also search [The Georgia Trust's Preservation Directory](#) or [The Georgia Historic Preservation Handbook](#) (p. 13 and 173).



How The Georgia Trust Can Help:

As the statewide non-profit preservation organization, The Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation works for the preservation and revitalization of Georgia's diverse historic resources and advocates their appreciation, protection and use. The Georgia Trust has a [Places in Peril program](#), which seeks to identify and bring attention to historic sites threatened by demolition, neglect, lack of maintenance, inappropriate development, or insensitive public policy. Visit our website www.GeorgiaTrust.org to learn more.



Getting the Word Out

Social media is an excellent tool for advocating for the preservation of historic properties. It helps in connecting like-minded individuals and raises awareness and attention around the cause. Local media coverage, articles, blogs, and other forms of online content also play crucial roles in this advocacy, amplifying the message and engaging broader audiences effectively.

Learn More:

[How to Save a Place: Get the Word Out - National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

[9 Questions to Ask When Using Social Media to Save Places- National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)



Talking to Elected Officials



Contacting your local legislators and expressing your concern for a historic property is a great way to garner attention as well as initiate meaningful change.

Attending local commission, council or community meetings where historic properties are being discussed is a key way to stay up to date and to voice concerns during the decision making process.

Calling

- Introduce yourself and the property you are advocating for, as well as where it is located.
- Explain how they can help you in your fight.
- Ask if you can count on their commitment to your cause,
- Be brief! (Under 5 minutes)

Writing a Letter

- Introduce yourself and express your interest in the historic property. Clearly state your reason for writing.
- Explain the specific action you are requesting. Support your request with relevant reasons, such as historical significance, data, expert opinion, personal experience, or rebuttals to opposing viewpoints.
- Thank them for considering your perspective and offer help if needed.
- Keep it concise! (3-5 paragraphs)

[Find Your Local Legislator](#)



Tools and Resources

This section offers additional information that may be helpful in understanding and advocating for historic preservation.



Understanding Historic Designations

A historic designation is separated into three categories: federal, state, and local. Federal designations include sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks. State designations are more straightforward and help protect a site from state government actions and assist a property owner in receiving state funding, tax benefits, and other incentives. Local designations require a community to establish a code and a design review board. Local designations are the most effective at keeping a city's historic integrity intact.

Learn More:

[Historic Designations 101 - National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

National Register of Historic Places FAQ

What is the National Register of Historic Places?

The United States official list of historic properties that are worthy of preservation

What does it mean when a property is on the National Register?

The property has undergone an evaluation process, and it has been determined that the property has significant historical value. A property being on the list assists owners in qualifying for federal grants, tax breaks, and incentives.

Can a property on the National Register be demolished?

Unfortunately, yes. The National Register offers recognition to a historical site but not protection.

What is the difference between National Register designation and local historic district designation?

The National Register program is a convenient and credible way to identify a community's historic resources, while a local district designation further protects and enhances those resources through the process of design review.

National Register vs. Local Designation

Although the National Register of Historic Places may be more well known, it is a common misconception that the designation will prevent a historic property from being demolished. Often, local designation through the creation of local historic districts or local landmarking offers the best opportunity for protections through local review processes.

Learn More:

[Historic District Comparison - Georgia Historic Preservation Division](#)

[Introduction to Historic Preservation Ordinances - Georgia Historic Preservation Division](#)

How to determine if a site has historic designation:

Searching for a property on the National Register of Historic Places:

You can search by city, county, state, or property name in the National Park Service's online database using the link below. However, remember that properties can change names over time.

[National Register Online Database](#)

Contact the Georgia Historic Preservation Division

You can also check to see if the property is historically designated on a state or local level:

The National Register of Historic Places is administered in Georgia by the [Historic Preservation Division](#) in the Department of Community Affairs. They also oversee state-level designation and can provide contact information for local Certified Local Governments and Historic Preservation Commissions that might oversee local designation in your area.

Visit their website at www.dca.ga.gov/georgia-historic-preservation-division

Or contact nationalregister@dca.ga.gov.



To determine if a site is locally designated, you can also reach out to your City or County Planning Commission to see if the property might be part of any local historic districts or be locally landmarked.

Section 106 and Environmental Review

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 requires federal agencies to consider the potential effects their actions may have on historic properties. Historic properties include those that are listed in the National Register of Historic Places or are eligible for listing. Under Section 106, each federal agency must consider public views and concerns about historic preservation issues when making final project decisions.

Learn More:

[**An Introduction to Section 106 - Advisory Council on Historic Preservation**](#)

[**Protecting Historic Properties - Advisory Council on Historic Preservation**](#)

[**Environmental Review and Compliance - Georgia Historic Preservation Division**](#)



Example:

In 2017, the Calvary Episcopal Church and nearby Lee Street Bridge in Americus were threatened when the Department of Transportation, a federal agency, proposed replacement of the Lee Street Bridge with a larger, elevated bridge to allow for taller train cars to pass on the railway below the bridge. This initiated the Section 106 review process due to the potential impacts on historic properties. Mitigation led to a redesigned bridge that met modern codes and maintained the height of the previous bridge, so as not to obstruct the church's view and thereby preserving the area's historic integrity.



Economics of Preservation

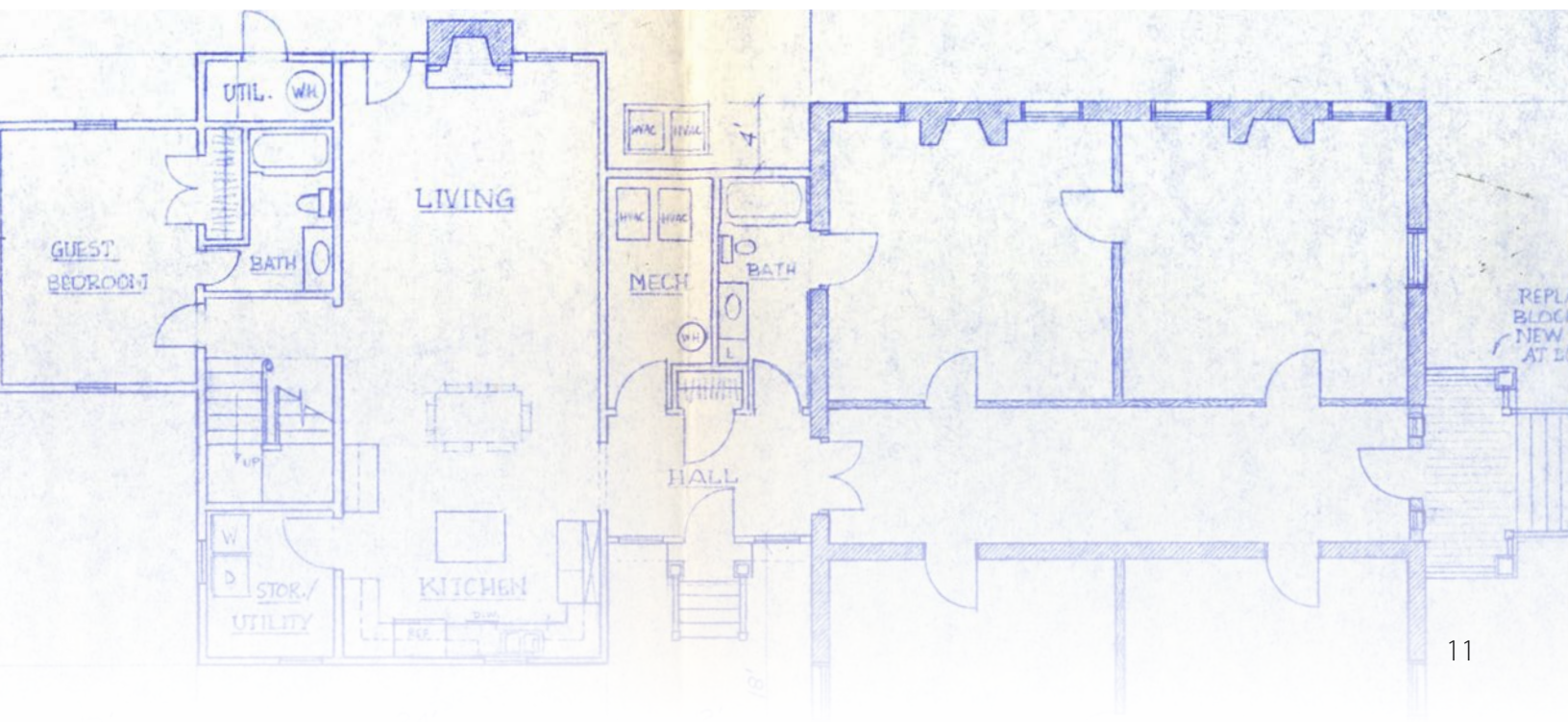
Why Preservation Makes Economic Sense

There are a multitude of reasons to invest in preservation. Preservation creates jobs, increases heritage tourism, and raises property values. Furthermore, those who invest in preservation can receive grants, tax credits and incentives.

Learn More:

[Why Old Places Matter? - National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)

[Why Do Old Places Matter? Economics - National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)



Economic Incentives and Funding for Historic Preservation

There are a number of state and national programs that provide financial assistance to aid historic preservation efforts, through tax incentives and grant programs. See below for more.

Tax Incentives

A few tax incentives are available for the rehabilitation of historic properties, which are administered by the Georgia Department of Community Affairs Historic Preservation Division. Learn more [here](#).

Grants

[Georgia Trust Grants and Fellowships](#)

[Georgia Department of Community Affairs Historic Preservation Division Grants](#)

[National Park Service Grants](#)

[National Trust for Historic Preservation Grants](#)

[National Fund for Sacred Places](#)

Learn More:

[How to Fund Your Preservation Project - National Trust for Historic Preservation](#)



Additional Links and Resources

- [National Trust for Historic Preservation: Tools & Tips](#)
- [Georgia Historic Preservation Division \(State Historic Preservation Office\)](#)
- [Georgia Historic Preservation Handbook: A Layman's Guide to Historic Preservation in the State of Georgia](#)