



Historic & Heritage Building Restoration

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What is Historic & Heritage Building Restoration

The concept of historic and heritage building restoration is similar to how it sounds. It is the process by which we restore, or bring to life, forgotten buildings. Restoration contrary to rehabilitation, preservation, or reconstruction, focuses on emphasizing the buildings' time period and removing other periods. It isn't as easy to restore a historic building, as many think. The process takes more than cleaning and cosmetic fixes.

Restoration, Renovation, Rehabilitation, Conservation: What Does it All Mean?

Do we restore or conserve?

When we read about historic architecture we often encounter the terms restoration, renovation, conservation or rehabilitation. However, these terms have very specific meanings when used in particular contexts which can be quite different from how they are commonly understood. It can be especially confusing when speaking to preservation professionals who use these terms following established definitions. We frequently hear people describe their efforts to "restore" their 1890s home by remodeling or updating the kitchen and plumbing or installing French doors. Is this truly a restoration? Keep reading to find out how a preservation professional uses these terms so we can all be on the same page and avoid confusion.

Restoration: A true restoration is the process of returning a building to its appearance and condition at a specific period in time. This means making a house look exactly like it did at a certain date, including recreating the wallpaper, matching historic paint colors and matching or reproducing fixtures and hardware. True restorations are quite rare and largely limited to house museums like Mt. Vernon or Monticello. Many of the things called restorations really aren't. The example I gave above of remodeling and updating a kitchen and plumbing is not, in fact, a restoration.

Renovation: If remodeling and updating a kitchen and plumbing is not a restoration, what is it? It is a renovation. Renovation is the process of making something look and function like new. Replacing period HVAC, cast iron plumbing and knob-and-tube wiring or adding French doors is a renovation since you are making an historic building work and function like a new building. Although a renovation can be quite sensitive to the historic nature of a building and preserve as much as possible, it is a different act. Although there can be some overlap between restoration and renovation, it is good to understand the differences.

Rehabilitation: Rehabilitation means something very similar to renovation, but it is often used in a slightly different context. Rehabilitation is the process which seeks to preserve the historical portions or features of a building while making the building compatible with a new

use. A good example is rehabilitating a brick, 1870's horseshoe factory to be used as lofts or commercial space. This term is often used in conjunction with tax credits which encourage the preservation of historic building for contemporary, income-producing businesses.

Conservation: Conservation is also fairly rare and normally done in house museums. Conservation is the preservation of particular building features for the future. In other words, it is the process of arresting decay or decline so that the original workmanship and materials survive as they are now found. This might mean cleaning and protecting a fresco in a church so that it doesn't continue to be degraded by leaking water or soot. It is different from restoration because restoration would mean returning the fresco to its appearance when the church was built. However, restoration can be a destructive process because, in order to make the fresco appear new, you would have to alter or destroy some of the original workmanship. Sometimes the materials and workmanship have such historical value that we simply halt their decay and leave things as they are so that we can appreciate them as examples of historic craftsmanship.

Can You Renovate a Historic Building? What is Involved in Restoring a Building?

Renovation of a heritage building is possible but will take time, effort, and research. Architects are similar to physicians in that they must first diagnose the problem, and then recommend a treatment. If the project requires restoration of old buildings versus rehabilitation or reconstruction, then it must take in to account what was present during that building's time period, code compliance, construction means, and methods, and accurately representing its relevant features.

What are Key Factors That Need to Be Taken in to Consideration When Choosing to Restore a Historic Building

Key factors when looking to restore historic buildings include (as previously mentioned), maintaining a building's original character and structure, paying attention to historic building restoration code and regulations, and ensuring materials and methods are true to the time period. Additionally, local, state and federal boards of historic preservation need to be contacted so that their rules, regulations, and guidelines can be incorporated.

Maintaining Original Character & Structure

There is often a desire to put a modern spin on the restoration of old buildings. However, a true-to-character historic restoration will include maintaining the building's

structural/form and character. Additionally, when an element or aspect needs attention, proper historic restoration should seek to repair rather than replace. If replacement is necessary, the new piece should aspire to match the original in texture, material, design, color, size, and features. Consider the surrounding area and its community. Many historic and heritage buildings offer a rich history of architectural and design elements that might not be present today. Conduct research on the building itself including the community. Was there anything significant? What was the area known for? Did these buildings have any significant or identifiable features? Were they constructed in a certain way - different from others?

Ensuring Your Restorations of Old Buildings are Up to Code

Like many architecture and construction projects, it is imperative that your building is up to code. Historic buildings have their own particular codes and regulations that they must meet. Hiring or consulting historic building restoration companies and architects would be in your best interest if you are not already an expert on the subject matter. Leaning on the expert advice of those who have already overcome similar challenges will save you time, money, and headaches.

Maintaining the Material & Method Integrity

The entire renovation of a heritage building must be true to the time during which it was constructed. Both materials, spaces, features, and methodology must be retained and preserved. Historic buildings serve as a museum or historic evidence/documentation of a particular time period. "each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use." The time period in which you are emulating should be compatible and identifiable from your work.

Steps on How to Restore Historic Buildings

1. Conduct Research:

Proper and in-depth research is necessary as we are preserving a piece of history.

2. Conduct Proper Documentation:

Documentation is key throughout the process. Whether you are working with us, another firm, or by yourself, it is important to properly document what is existing, as well as what you are adding. Historic restoration is centered on maintaining the integrity of the time period in as many aspects as possible without adding additional features that weren't originally present.

3. Hire Historic Building Restoration Companies & Architects:

Before diving head-first into a restoration project, you must be mindful of historic regulation codes, features, and architectural features. Hire an expert building restoration company or expert building restoration architect

The Importance of Historical Building Restoration

Here in the Kurdistan, we have a wealth of beautiful heritage and listed buildings. Unfortunately, many of these lovely old buildings have fallen into disrepair over the years, due to abandonment, neglect, poor management, or simply just a lack of funds.

We understand the importance behind preserving these heritage structures for years to come. Historical building renovation is undeniably a delicate and time-consuming process, but one that is ultimately highly rewarding.

Restoring heritage buildings of great historical value or cultural significance is incredibly important. But why should we bother expending large amounts of time and effort to restore buildings such as these?

In a nutshell, the restoration of historic buildings was first undertaken in an attempt to ensure that historical architecture and heritage buildings were preserved for the future. Some buildings are also specifically marked down as listed buildings, meaning that restoring these buildings has an even greater significance.

Preserving the past for the future

Historical building restoration not only preserves high-value buildings for the future, it also preserves our country's past. As a country, we have such a long, rich and detailed history and these buildings reflect that. They are the visual representation of our history; a testament to the architectural prowess of our ancestors. For that reason, allowing these buildings to fall into disrepair is, ultimately, to disregard all of that history and the lessons we can learn from it.

Saving heritage buildings from demolition is also important to the growth of the economy in the local area in the long term. Not only do historical building restoration projects bring in a whole host of builders, decorators, tradesmen, craftsmen, and contractors like us, but they will actually also boost the local economy through the tourism and leisure industries further down the line once the renovations are complete. Restoring larger historical buildings can be an extremely effective way of boosting the local economy.

However, it is vital that historical building restoration projects are completed in a sustainable, long-lasting manner. This will ensure that the restoration is easily manageable and will be much easier to maintain in years to come. The key to historical building restoration is to protect the property for the long term, and our sustainable approach to restoration recognizes that.

Historic building restoration helps preserve a region's history, culture, and legacy. Historic restoration also protects the environment by reusing existing buildings, which diminishes landfill waste and the use of natural resources.

However, while historic building restoration encourages preserving original materials, any component damaged beyond repair or not meeting current codes will need upgrading or replacement. These types of improvements must strive to maintain the original aesthetics and character of the building.

For example, for building facade historical restoration or replacement, architectural program offers an innovative solution for restoring and maintaining a building's cultural facade. Our products can also improve a structure's energy efficiency, safety, and occupant comfort level.

The Pros of Historic Preservation and Restoration

Historic preservation and restoration of community landmarks can provide economic, sustainable, and cultural benefits to building owners and the community. However,

successfully achieving these benefits typically requires the help of a qualified and experienced historic building restoration expert.

Economic Advantages of Historic Restoration

- Increases real estate values and encourages local businesses, which helps keep historic spaces economically viable.
- It allows for the continued use of high-quality, durable building materials. For instance, historic masonry restoration preserves the character and cultural value of historical buildings' facades.
- Existing usable space—quicker occupancy.
- Rehabilitation often costs less than new construction.

Benefits of Retrofitting Historic Buildings for Sustainability

Recycling of building materials

- Reduces the need for new materials, saving natural resources
- Less construction and demolition debris, reduces landfill waste
- Less hazardous material debris

Energy savings

- No energy needs for demolition and new construction
- Reuse of embodied energy in building materials and systems
- Retrofitting allows for more energy-efficient materials, like wall systems, windows, doors, etc.

Cultural Advantages of Historic Building Restoration

- Historic restoration helps retain a community's history, aesthetics, and appeal.

Best Practices for Historic Building Restoration

The best practices for historic building restoration should preserve the original aesthetics of a structure while retaining and repairing the original building's features. However, it should also allow new technologies and equipment to meet applicable codes, ensure occupants' comfort and safety, and protect the environment through sustainable building materials and practices.

The Benefits of Historic Building Restoration

For most people, "historic" means "old" and "not worth the trouble." However, as the saying goes, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder," and for most contractors, there are a number of

valuable cultural and practical reasons for historic building restoration and preservation. For starters, historic buildings are part of a city's history and can potentially offer opportunities for a future growth.

Historical buildings are often made with long-lasting and durable materials which can also make them quite an investment. Also, historic buildings often have a particular type of architectural design and craftsmanship that simply cannot be duplicated and choosing to operate a business out of a historic building can also prove to be beneficial to your company's brand.

Why Historic Building Restoration is Worth the Investment

Here are a few more benefits that can come from restoring a historic building if you're still on the fence about making the investment.

Building Restoration Strengthens Neighborhoods

Historic building restorations are assets to the community and, for some communities, new construction can look out of place if it's placed in the middle of a historic neighborhood. This can actually make it harder for you to rent out or sell the property after it is constructed. According to the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation, home values within a historical district rise quicker than they do in more modern areas and buyers are willing to pay a premium for homes in historic districts.

A community is culturally richer when they have a tangible presence of historical eras and residents take pride in the history of their neighborhood.

Rather than demolishing or disposing of historic buildings, restoring and rehabilitating them will provide a positive impact on the community.

Historic building restoration isn't just money-saving opportunity in terms of building materials, building preservation is an opportunity to responsibly invest in a visually interesting building. Yes, historic building restoration conserves natural resources, but it also provides you with usable and attractive buildings on land that has already been developed and provides contractors with existing elements of historical structure that cannot be replicated.

Safeguarding the core of historic buildings provides you with a building that no other building looks remotely similar to and provides visitors with a nostalgic sensation each time they enter.

Historic Buildings Have Intrinsic Value

As we mentioned earlier, historic buildings are assets to their existing communities, as well as to you. When you tear down a historic building, you never quite know what exactly is being destroyed. Some buildings of a certain era could have been built with materials such as rare hardwood or heart pine from old-growth forests that no longer exist.

Tearing down the building can result in destroying pieces of history that can never be brought back, but this also destroys the opportunity for you to use the historic landmark as a selling point. People like to know the history of the building they are moving into as the history of a building contributes to its personality. The goal with historical restoration is to maintain and accentuate its particular character and identity to attract visitors and potential tenant.

Some Example of Heritage and Historical building In Kurdistan and Sulaymaniyah City.

Sofy Karim House



Hoyel Farah



Seray Slemany







Osman Chawash House



Qalay Sherwana





