

Gum Springs Heritage Resource Study

Glossary of Common Historic Preservation Terms*

Adaptive Use: A new use for a building other than its historic use, usually involving some modifications.

Archaeology: The scientific study of material remains of human culture from the past recovered through excavation.

Archaeological Site: A location where evidence of past human activity remains below the ground. Cemeteries are primarily treated as archaeological sites.

Architectural Review Board (ARB) (Fairfax County): This Board is appointed by the Board of Supervisors whose role is to protect and enhance the resources that give a historic (overlay) district its architectural, cultural, or archaeological significance. It is responsible for upholding public interest(s) as embodied in the Historic Overlay District Ordinance within the Zoning Ordinance.

Architectural Survey: The process of identifying and gathering information on a community's cultural and historic architectural resources within a geographical area.

Artifact: Objects made or used by people of historic or cultural significance.

Building: A feature of the built environment created to shelter any form of human activity, such as a house, barn, church, hotel, or similar structure.

"By-right" Development: A use or development of a property that is permitted in a given zoning district. By-right development does not need a rezoning, special exception, or special permit subject to meeting the requirements of the Zoning District. Public hearings are not required for by-right development. By-right development is subject to all other requirements of applicable codes and ordinances (i.e. the Zoning Ordinance, Public Facilities Manual, Building Code, etc.), and does not require public notice.

Character-defining Features: Prominent or distinctive aspects, qualities, or characteristics of a historic property that contribute significantly to its physical structure or appearance.

Conservation or Preservation Easement: A means by which the owner of historic property can ensure the continued preservation after the property passes from his or her stewardship. Conservation or preservation easements also enable owners to realize federal, state, and local tax savings.

Conservation (Overlay) Districts: Conservation districts are typically enacted as overlays to underlying zoning restrictions and employ a variety of tools to preserve a neighborhood's character defining features such as design review and the application of development controls that address mass and scale, such as set-back distances from property lines, lot coverage, Floor to Area Ratio (F.A.R). and height allowances. By tailoring the zoning and design restrictions to respond to the specific concerns of a neighborhood, local jurisdictions can protect the special characteristics that a neighborhood would like to preserve. Fairfax County does not currently

use Conservation Districts as a preservation tool, but it could be considered in the future.

Contributing Resource: A building, structure, object, or site adding to the significance of a historic district.

Cultural Heritage: The National Park Service defines Cultural Heritage as a fairly broad term that can apply to both the tangible—physical places and objects we can touch—and the intangible—stories, songs, and celebrations we experience in the moment.

Cultural Landscape: A geographic area (including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein), associated with a historic event, activity, or person, or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic significance.

Cultural Resource: Physical elements associated with past human presence. These include archaeological sites; historic buildings, structures, objects or districts; traditional cultural properties; cemeteries; and cultural landscapes.

Deed of Gift (oral history): A deed of gift agreement defines how a narrator of an oral history would like materials or rights related to an oral history to be managed as a donated collection.

Design Guidelines: Standards of appropriate activity to preserve the historic and architectural character of a building, structure, object, or site. In Fairfax County, each Historic Overlay District has design guidelines which are specific to the unique characteristics of the district.

Eligible for listing: Meets the criteria for listing in a historic register but is not officially listed.

Feature: A detail on a building, structure or site. Features may include (but are not limited to): the overall physical shape of a building, materials, craftsmanship, decorative details, and various site and landscape characteristics.

Historic Context: A unit created for planning purposes that groups information about historic properties based on a shared theme, specific time period and geographical area.

Historic District: A geographically definable area with a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united by past events or aesthetically by plan or physical development. A district may also comprise individual elements separated geographically but linked by association or history.

Historic Overlay Districts (HODs): Historic Overlay Districts are enacted as zoning overlays to underlying zoning restrictions and are created to promote those unique areas, sites, and buildings that are of special architectural, historic, cultural, or archaeological significance to local residents and visitors. HODs are designated by the Board of Supervisors and administered by the Architectural Review Board (ARB). ARB review is required for any project in an HOD with exterior work requiring a county building permit. More information about when a county building permit is required can be found on the county's Land Development Services' website here: <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/landdevelopment/when-permit-required>

Historic Preservation: The process of identifying, protecting, enhancing, and interpreting buildings, structures, sites, objects, districts, and landscapes of historic and cultural significance.

Historic Significance: The meaning or value of a building, structure, object, site, or district

based on criteria for evaluation for a historic register. Resources are evaluated within their historic contexts, and how it represents an aspect of the history of a town, city, county, cultural area, or region. Historic significance typically stems from a combination of association and integrity.

History Commission (Fairfax County): The Fairfax County History Commission was established by the County of Fairfax in 1969. The purpose of the Commission is to advise the County Government and to promote and encourage public interest in all matters bearing on the history of Fairfax County. Members are appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

Integrity: Integrity is the ability of a resource to convey its significance. Integrity is conveyed through a place's location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

Inventory of Historic Sites: Fairfax County's list of historically significant sites, which are approved for listing by the Fairfax County History Commission. To be listed in the inventory, a property must retain historical integrity and meet one or more of the inventory criteria, which address county heritage, architecture, association with significant people or events, archaeology, etc.

National Register Criteria for Evaluation (Criteria): The established principles for assessing the eligibility of properties for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

National Register of Historic Places (NRHP): The official list of structures, sites, objects, and districts that embody the historical and cultural foundations of the nation, as managed by the National Park Service.

Non-Contributing Resource: A building, structure, object, or site that does not add to the significance of a historic district.

Object: An object is a material thing of functional, aesthetic, cultural, historical or scientific value that may be, by nature or design, movable yet related to a specific setting or environment.

Oral History: A method of gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events. Oral history is both the oldest type of historical inquiry, predating the written word, and one of the most modern, initiated with tape recorders in the 1940s and now using 21st-century digital technologies.

Period of Significance: Span of time in which a property attained the importance for which it meets the criteria for historic designation.

Placemaking: A collaborative process for enhancing and shaping public open spaces and streets which capitalizes on a local community's assets, inspiration, and potential while acknowledging the importance of what is already there. Heritage resources can contribute to a community's placemaking efforts through preserving and interpreting historic buildings and sites, centering the community's history, celebrating its cultural heritage, and fostering collective memory.

Preservation Plan: According to the National Association of Preservation Commissions, a preservation plan identifies and articulates community preservation goals, lets current and future property owners know how the community intends to grow, helps eliminate confusion

about the purpose of the local preservation ordinance, educates the public about the community's history and heritage, creates an agenda for future preservation work and creates a way to measure preservation's progress. Preservation plans also encourage economic development and strengthen political understanding of historic preservation policies. For example, Arlington County recently updated their Historic and Cultural Resources Preservation Plan, which can be accessed here: [Arlington County Historic and Cultural Resource Preservation Plan](#)

Preservation: A tool for the treatment of a historic property which focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of the property's form as it has evolved over time. Protection and stabilization are included in this treatment. This treatment option places a high premium on the retention of all historic fabric through conservation, maintenance and repair. It reflects a building's continuum over time, through successive occupancies, and the respectful changes and alterations that are made. This treatment option is the first choice, where possible. (From the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Buildings)

Rehabilitation: A tool for the treatment of a historic property which acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character. This treatment option for historic structures emphasizes the retention and repair of historic materials, but more latitude is provided for replacement because it is assumed the property is more deteriorated prior to work than a property where preservation is the selected treatment option. Preservation and Rehabilitation standards both focus attention on the preservation of those materials, features, finishes, spaces, and spatial relationships that, together, give a property its historic character. This treatment option is the second choice, where possible. (From the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Buildings)

Reconstruction: A tool for the treatment of a historic property which recreates non-surviving portions of a property for interpretive purposes. This treatment option establishes limited opportunities to re-create a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object in all new materials. (From the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Buildings)

Restoration: A tool for the treatment of a historic property which accurately depicts the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. (From the Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Buildings)

Site: The location of a significant event, occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself maintains historical or archeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure.

Stewardship: The careful, responsible, and sustainable management of the natural and cultural resources for present and future generations.

Structure: A manmade built feature which is not intended for human habitation. Examples include agricultural outbuildings, aqueducts, bridges, and railroads.

Traditional Cultural Property or Place (TCP): A property which is important for its associations with the cultural practices, traditions, beliefs, lifeways, arts, crafts, or social institutions of a living community. A traditional cultural property is generally eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places because of its association with cultural practices or beliefs of a living community that (a) are rooted in that community's history, and (b) are important in maintaining the continuing cultural identity of the community.

Treatment: Work carried out to achieve a particular historic preservation goal. For a building, it may be preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, or reconstruction.

**Adopted from the Fairfax County Park Authority Cultural Resource Management Plan Glossary, the National Park Service, and other authoritative preservation sources.*