

## TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

### ARCHITECTURE DIVISION

## Why Should I Hire Historic Preservation Professionals?



Inside an 1891 safe from the Hood County Courthouse

Hiring an appropriate historic preservation professional will improve the quality of your project, save you time and money, and help to protect your historic property. There are professional archeologists, historians and preservation architects who have the education and experience to guide your development or preservation project. These various professionals often work as a team with you to help guide your development or preservation project.

This document is designed to help you find and hire preservation professionals best suited to your project.

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## WHAT SERVICES DO HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROFESSIONALS PROVIDE?

Historic preservation professionals can assist your development or preservation project in different ways.

Archeologists find and evaluate the remains of past cultures buried in the ground. Their work often includes a visual survey of the land to locate sites and careful excavation to find information for analysis, or help you achieve site avoidance.

Architectural historians and other historians study our built environment. They consider the historical and architectural importance of buildings constructed more than 50 years ago, and provide historical research, consultation and documentation. Groups of buildings in districts, structures such as bridges and objects such as ships may also be considered important for their design or history.

Preservation architects prepare plans for appropriate work on historic buildings, and direct the work to preserve important features and avoid damage. This work can include restoring a building to its original appearance or rehabilitating it to serve a new use while keeping its historic look. Preservation architects also help plan the efficient use of building space, and can make drawings of a historic building to use in rehabilitation or as a record of a building that will be torn down. Although this brochure describes three types of preservation professional generally employed on preservation projects, there are other types of professionals who are sometimes involved. You should consider if a preservation planner, landscape architect, engineer or other preservation professional is appropriate for your project.

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## WHO IS A QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL?

Preservation professionals must have both a good education and the right work experience to be qualified to work on historic preservation projects. Qualification standards listed in the federal publication *Archeology and Historic Preservation: Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines* establish levels of education and work experience appropriate for each profession.

This publication is available from the Texas Historical Commission.



The stained glass dome of the Cameron County Courthouse

## ARCHEOLOGISTS

Many environmental and engineering firms, private consulting firms and university programs have archeologists on staff who specialize in doing work that meets state and federal regulations. As a service to project sponsors, The THC's Archeology Division distributes also encourages firms and agencies needing archeological expertise's to use the Council of Texas Archeologists (CTA) Contractors List (found at [www.thc.texas.gov/cta\\_web/Contractor/CTA\\_CL\\_Frame.htm](http://www.thc.texas.gov/cta_web/Contractor/CTA_CL_Frame.htm)) as one of the ways of finding of qualified professionals archeologists who perform this type of work. To select the archeologist most suited to your project:

- Obtain the CTA Contractors List from the THC or from the CTA web page at [thc.texas.gov/ctaweb/Contractor/CTA\\_CL\\_Frame.html](http://thc.texas.gov/ctaweb/Contractor/CTA_CL_Frame.html)
- Find professionals with experience in your region
- Get bids
- Check references and review work examples
- Get bids
- Ask the Archeology Division about the defaulted permit status of each archeologist
- Check for honors and commendations such as the THC Awards of Merit Excellence in Archeology.

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## ARCHITECTURAL HISTORIANS, HISTORIANS AND RELATED PROFESSIONALS

Qualified architectural historians, historians and professionals from closely related fields such as folklore, cultural geography, museum studies or planning may specialize in historic resource surveys or research projects. These preservation professionals can help with historic preservation projects and applications for historical designation, the formal recognition of a historic property's importance, and preservation planning. You should be aware, however, that some professionals who have considerable experience may not have direct experience with your type of project. As a service to project sponsors, the THC's History Programs Division will refer you to property owners or communities who successfully completed similar projects. Other sources of information include local preservation commissions, academic institutions and professional organizations. To select the architectural historian, historian or related professional most suited to your project:

- Contact property owners or communities with successful projects similar to yours
- Obtain resumes and additional references from the professionals involved in those projects
- Get bids



Harrison County Courthouse

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## PRESERVATION ARCHITECTS

Historic buildings often have unique designs, materials and construction methods that may not be familiar to an architect who does not specialize in historic preservation. Preservation architects have training and experience working on historic buildings, and are often able to work more efficiently, cost effectively and produce better projects. To find a qualified preservation architect, contact your local American Institute of Architects (AIA) chapter [www.aia.org](http://www.aia.org) and the Texas Society of Architects (TSA) office in Austin [www.texasarchitects.org](http://www.texasarchitects.org) for referrals Also seek referrals from property owners in your area with projects similar to yours. Other preservation professionals, such as preservation planners, landscape architects and engineers may also be important to include on your project team, depending on the type of work needed. The architect you select will help to assemble appropriate professionals and qualified contractors for your project. During the interview process, ask to meet at the architect's office so you can see where the work will be done. Discuss possible services, scheduling requirements and the philosophy with which the architect would approach your project. Base your final decision on your confidence in the firm, comments from references, the firm's preservation design ability, technical competence and professional services. If a team approach will be used with other professionals, such as engineers and landscape architects, you should also examine samples of their past work. Once you select a firm you should have more detailed discussions about the project scope of work, budget and range of fees the architect anticipates. Fees can be stated in several different ways including lump sum, a percentage of the construction cost, the project cost plus a fixed fee or some combination of these. Sign a contract before

starting any work. The AIA has standard contract forms that are often used. To select the best preservation architect for the job:

- Contact the AIA and TSA to ask for referrals
- Contact property owners or communities with successful projects similar to yours
- Obtain resumes and other information on firms
- Interview firms and review examples of completed work
- Check references
- Check for honors and commendations in preservation such as the THC Awards of Merit Excellence in Architecture.



Goldleaf eagle on the LaSalle County Courthouse



Ellis County Courthouse

## GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR SELECTING A PRESERVATION PROFESSIONAL:

- Talk directly with the professional about your project
- Check for professional experience with projects similar to yours
- Review examples of completed work
- Check references very carefully; ask questions about the acceptability and timeliness of the work performed.

## LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS

State and federal historic preservation laws require that qualified professionals be employed on historic preservation projects.

Property owners and project sponsors have legal responsibilities when:

- A project involves federal funds, licenses, permits or approval;
- Project land is owned or controlled by a state agency or a political subdivision of the state; and
- A historical designation, preservation easement or covenant requires review of proposed work. The National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to consult with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to minimize damage to important historic and prehistoric properties whenever projects involve federal funds, licenses, permits or approval. In Texas, the Executive Director of the THC serves as SHPO. Projects reviewed under the National Historic Preservation Act must be conducted by professionals who meet the qualification standards listed in the federal publication Archeology and Historic Preservation: Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines (copy available from the THC). Under the Antiquities Code of Texas, project sponsors are required to obtain permits from the THC for work proposed on designated historic buildings and to notify the THC whenever projects occurring on land owned or controlled by a political subdivision of the state involve disturbance to 5 or more acres or the excavation of 5000 or more cubic yards of soil, when a project will occur in a historic district or if an archeological site is recorded within the project area. An archeological permit may only be issued to a professional archeologist who meets the definition of Principal Investigator presented in the Rules of Practice and Procedure, which are contained in Title 13, Texas Administrative Code, Chapter 26. Under this definition, a Principal Investigator must be a professional archeologist who holds a graduate degree and/or is listed in the Register of Professional Archeologists or has successfully completed investigations under an Antiquities Permit prior to June 1, 1993. In addition, a Principal Investigator who holds a defaulted permit is

ineligible to receive a new permit (a permit goes into default when permit obligations have not been completed by the expiration date of the permit). The Rules of Practice and Procedure also specify levels of education and experience for historians and architects hired to work on projects under the Antiquities Code. Historians must have a graduate degree in history or a closely related field, or a bachelor degree in history or a closely related field plus one of the following: two years of professional experience or substantial research and publication in the field of history.

- Preservation architects must have a professional degree in architecture or a state license to practice architecture, plus one of the following: at least one

year of graduate study in architectural preservation or closely related field, or at least one year of full-time professional experience on historic preservation projects. State law also requires that the THC be notified in writing of proposed work on historic courthouses and Recorded Texas Historic Landmark buildings. In addition, owners of buildings that have received federal or state financial assistance in the past, through grants or income tax credits, are required to provide written notification of proposed work.

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## Contact the Texas Historical Commission for more information:

Archeology Division	512-463-6096
History Programs Division	512-463-5853
Division of Architecture	512-463-6094

Visit [thctexas.gov](http://thctexas.gov) for information regarding state and federal historic preservation laws and regulations.

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