



ARCHITECTURE DIVISION

The Texas Historical Commission (THC) Architecture Division works to preserve and protect Texas' diverse architectural heritage. Staff members provide design and rehabilitation advice to assist with preserving properties that span the state's rich history, from majestic historic county courthouses and commercial buildings to Spanish missions and vernacular log cabins.

What We Do

The division manages the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program, Texas Preservation Trust Fund grant program, and Preservation Tax Incentive program and reviews projects under federal and state laws that protect historic properties.

Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program

Texas courthouses are among the most widely recognized, used, and appreciated assets in our communities. Texas has more historic courthouses than any other state, with 235 still in active government use. The THC's nationally recognized and award-winning Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program was created by the Texas Legislature in 1999. The program provides matching grants to assist county courthouse restoration projects throughout the state. To date, the legislature has appropriated \$271 million to the program, which has assisted 90 county courthouse restorations.

Texas Courthouse Stewardship Program

The Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program, and its local partners have made significant financial investments to restore many valuable historic courthouses throughout the state. In order to protect and preserve these buildings for future generations, the Texas Courthouse Stewardship Program was created in 2005 to assist counties by fostering facility planning, budgeting, and training. The goal is to prevent the facilities from returning to a state of deferred maintenance and disrepair.



The 1912 Cooke County Courthouse was rededicated in 2011.

Specific program activities include site visits and easement monitoring, training workshops, maintenance planning, and technical consultations.

Texas Preservation Trust Fund

The Texas Legislature established the Texas Preservation Trust Fund (TPTF) in 1989. The fund is currently managed by the Texas Treasury Safekeeping Trust Company. The TPTF investment earnings are administered as matching grants to qualified applicants for the acquisition, survey, restoration, preservation or for the planning and educational activities leading to the preservation of historic architectural and archeological properties and associated collections of the State of Texas. Competitive grants are awarded on a one-to-one match basis and are paid as reimbursement of eligible expenses incurred.

Preservation Tax Incentives

Federal and state tax credits exist as incentives for owners of historic properties. The Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives Program includes a 20% income tax credit for the rehabilitation of historic, income-producing buildings. Established by the Texas Legislature in 2013, the new Texas Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program

offers a 25% tax credit for the certified rehabilitation of historic buildings by businesses or non-profits. It may be used separately or in conjunction with the federal tax credit.

Staff assists property owners and developers to qualify for these tax credits. The THC monitors projects to ensure compliance with the program with the National Park Service in administering the federal tax credit.

Since 1981, staff has reviewed more than 1,100 Federal tax projects, representing more than \$1.5 billion in construction costs.

Reviews and Assessments

- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires that federal agencies take into account the effects of projects that receive federal funds, licenses, or permits on historic properties. Division staff evaluates construction projects and works with project proponents to avoid or minimize any impacts to historic structures.
- Significant historic properties designated as Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks or State Antiquities Landmarks require THC review of proposed changes. Division staff issues permits and provides approvals as necessary.
- Staff consults with property owners seeking to meet Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Texas Accessibility Standards to minimize changes to the historic integrity of their sites.
- Under authority of special legislation established in 1975 to protect the state's unique collection of county courthouses, staff reviews proposed changes to courthouses and their grounds.

Preservation Covenants and Easements

The agency holds protective preservation covenants and easements on nearly 250 of the state's most significant cultural landmarks. These protections are formal agreements between the property owners and the THC to ensure long-term preservation of the property. Division staff conducts periodic inspections and reviews proposed structural changes to these properties.

Special Projects

Emergency Response

Staff works with state and federal agencies in response to natural disasters that impact historic structures.



Granger City Hall, a Recorded Texas Historic Landmark, received a FY 2015 Texas Preservation Trust Fund planning grant for structural stabilization.

Historic Building Maintenance

The division oversees the care and maintenance of the THC buildings, which include an antebellum home, an 1880s church, and a 1940s apartment house. Staff prepares architectural plans and specifications for rehabilitation projects related to the structures.

How to Reach Us

Staff members are available to answer questions and provide preservation assistance. Please contact us at:
Phone: 512.463.6094
Fax: 512.463.6095
Email: architecture@thc.state.tx.us



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories

PO. BOX 12276 • AUSTIN, TX 78711-2276
PHONE 512.463.6100 • FAX 512.475.4872
www.thc.state.tx.us