



Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve

Preservation Resource Manual



Kineth Farm Watertower - c.1896

One of only two watertowers of this type on Whidbey Island (both in the Reserve), this 2011 grant project replaced deteriorated siding; reshingled shop and tower roofs; rebuilt exterior stairs; repaired windows, doors, and deteriorated trim, and put on a new coat of paint.



Introduction

Ebey's Landing Historical Reserve was established in 1978 "...to preserve and protect a rural community which provides an unbroken record from 19th century exploration and settlement...to the present time." One of the most difficult issues facing the still-working landscape of the Reserve has been an accelerating loss of the significant historic buildings that represent that "unbroken record." More than 40 barns, outbuildings and farmhouses that date back to the 1850s have disappeared in the last four decades. Through various local preservation programs and partnerships, the Reserve works to ensure the historical legacy of our community remains an integral element of the evolving landscape.

The Ebey's Forever Grant Program was established in 2009 as a means of furthering that mission - supporting the preservation, rehabilitation, and continued use of heritage buildings within the Reserve. To date, 45 historic structures have received often critical funding for brick-and-mortar preservation work through this program. As a result, over \$800,000 has been invested directly into the continued life of these irreplaceable buildings. Not only is the lion's share of this money going back into the local economy, but all the grant funding for the work is raised through private donation - one neighbor to another. Overall, the Ebey's Forever Grant Program serves as an inspiring example of how a vibrant community can keep its history alive.

This manual was developed to offer some general direction on preservation materials, labor and information, and to briefly describe some of the benefits available to historic property owners interested in preservation. More specific assistance is available by contacting the Reserve's Preservation Coordinator at the number listed below.

Work on historic buildings is a process of discovery - of connection, of changing lives, of looking into the (occasionally strange) decisions of past homeowners and contractors. We hope that whatever preservation work you undertake is as enjoyable and interesting as it is productive. Thank you for your stewardship.

If you have questions about the grant program, please contact:
Sarah Steen at sarah_steen@partner.nps.gov or (360) 678-6084



A Coupeville Lion removes rot during a restoration grant project on the 1855 Alexander Blockhouse

Selecting Contractors

Unfortunately, Reserve staff cannot give contractor recommendations for preservation work. But here are some good tips on how to find the right people to hire for your preservation project.

1. GET RECOMMENDATIONS

One really good source for local contractor recommendations is the pool of Ebey's grantees. With the wide variety of preservation projects we've been involved in over the last five years, it is likely that whatever kind of work you'll be doing someone we know has dealt with similar issues. Also, contractors who have worked on our grant projects are generally more familiar with preservation standards and techniques. Staff would be happy to put you in touch with former grantees who can recommend (or not recommend!) specific contractors.

Asking neighbors and other community members for recommendations is often another good way to find reliable local contractors. However you go about identifying potential hires - whether through a friend, a grantee, or in the phone book - always ask the contractor for client references and examples of past projects. This is a common and invaluable practice in the trades, and good contractors will be ready and able to provide this information.

2. INTERVIEW

A phone and/or in-person interview can help you form an idea of the communication style and experience level of various contractors. It is vital that you and your contractor communicate well, and the contractor should be able to answer all of your questions clearly and satisfactorily. Some good things to know upfront might be whether they've worked on historic structures before, and if so, what kind of work they have done. Or, what does their project schedule look like - how many other projects they might have going on at the same time as yours. Ask questions that will clarify their methods and experience, then follow up on their answers. Go look at past projects or current jobsites, and again, talk to past clients. It's important to understand as best you can at the outset how they work and how they will work with you.

3. REQUEST BIDS

Typical construction project costs run roughly 40% materials, with the remainder covering labor/overhead and profit (usually 15-20%). For preservation projects that sometimes require specific skills and materials, that percentage breakdown can change, but this baseline is a useful place to start when looking at project bids. After thoroughly reviewing your project scope with the contractor, request that they break down the costs of labor, materials, profit margin and other expenses in their bid, to make assessment and comparison with other bids easier.

Don't let price be your guide! Lowball bids might be the result of cutting corners, or just underestimating the requirements of this type of project (often resulting in increased costs later). Either way, it's not a good place to start. Aside from technical competence, how well you and the contractor communicate is the single most important factor in the selection process - more important than a low estimate. It's better to spend more and get someone you are comfortable with, and who knows how to do the work.



Old County Courthouse - 1855

The Old County Courthouse, now a residence, is the second oldest standing public building in Washington State. Although it was the first building here to incorporate locally milled lumber in its construction, it's the only known timber-frame house in the Reserve.

Successive Ebey's Forever Grants in 2013 and 2014 replaced the cedar shingle roof, rebuilt the south chimney, repaired upper and lower story windows and wood trim.





Van Dam Farmhouse - 1904

Built by a local farming family just after the turn of the century, this farmhouse was in very rough shape when the current owner bought it as a restoration project. A 2013 grant helped put a new foundation under the structure. Salvaged beams from the Collins Building in Everett were used as cribbing to lift the house as the basement was excavated underneath. Rotting sill plates and beams were replaced as part of the project, leaving the house sitting sound and level on a new concrete foundation.



4. GET IT ALL IN WRITING

When you've gone through the process and found a contractor you're happy with, draw up a contract that details every step of the project, including a payment schedule; proof of liability insurance and worker's compensation payments; a start date and projected completion date; and any specific materials and products to be used. Projects involving historic structures can sometimes require flexibility (as unexpected issues are often discovered along the way), but the bones of your agreement, including how contract changes would be made if they're needed, should be in place before the project begins.

[Special thanks and credit to This Old House for their web article on hiring a contractor. More useful information on this and other topics can be found at www.thisoldhouse.com]

Material Sources

Finding appropriate materials for preservation work can sometimes be a project in itself, so be aware that Reserve staff can help source specific materials. We might know of an unusual resource - someone with a good contact, a historic building being deconstructed and offering salvage materials, options for wood restoration or matching historic siding, etc. Feel free to request assistance in sourcing materials at any point during the course of your project. Listed below are a few preservation-useful products and companies.

- Abatron**
www.abatron.com
 - "LiquidWood" epoxies, consolidants
 - "Sarco" window glazing compound
 - "Bora-care" wood treatment
- Rejuvenation**
www.rejuvenation.com
 - door and window hardware
- Wm A. Killian**
www.killianhardware.com
 - door and window hardware
- American Antique Hardware**
www.americanantiquehardware.com
 - salvaged hardware
- Ballard Reuse**
www.ballardreuse.com
 - architectural salvage (Seattle)
- Second Use**
www.seconduse.com
 - architectural salvage (Seattle)
- Skagit Building Salvage**
www.usedbuildingmaterials.com
 - architectural salvage (Mt. Vernon)
- Hanson's Building Supply**
(360) 321-3200
 - lumber, millwork (Langley)
- Limback Lumber Co.**
www.limbacklumber.com
 - lumber, millwork (Seattle)
- Simmonds Glass**
www.simmondsglass.com
 - glass (Anacortes)
- Island Paint & Glass Co.**
www.islandpaintandglass.com
 - glass (Oak Harbor)

Information Sources

Thanks to the internet, there is a great deal of easily accessible public information on preservation materials and techniques. Numerous websites provide do-it-yourself repair/construction tips and technical advice. Some of the most useful sites and sources for work on historic buildings are listed below.

National Park Service

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm>

<http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/applying-rehabilitation/standards-bulletins.htm>

<http://www2.cr.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/tech-notes.htm>

Two of the most useful (and most authoritative) technical information series for historic building owners are offered by the National Park Service in the form of targeted preservation 'briefs' and 'bulletins.' The bulletins are used primarily during the planning stages of a rehabilitation project, providing guidance on how to apply the Secretary Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. The briefs are more hands-on in content, offering solutions to common problems and recommending construction techniques designed to maintain both functionality and historic character.

Also offering useful guidance for construction projects on historic buildings is an older NPS technical series called 'Preservation Tech Notes.' Notably, this series has a number of articles on insulating and restoring historic windows. Information in this series tends to be older than that of the briefs (and at times out of date), but can still be a good place to start.

Washington Trust for Historic Preservation

www.preservewa.org

Washington State Department of Archeology & Historic Preservation

www.dahp.wa.gov

With information on state-specific preservation programs and resources, these two sites are good for institutional contacts (i.e. historical societies), state codes and laws, information about heritage barns (and the Trust's heritage barn grant program), preservation contractor listings, and guidance on valuable but often overlooked tax incentives for preservation projects.

Online Trade Magazines & Article Databases

Old House Journal
www.oldhousejournal.com

This Old House
www.thisoldhouse.com

Old House Web
www.oldhouseweb.com

Preservation Directory
www.preservationdirectory.com

These websites are often great resources for how-to articles, preservation organizations, and materials information and suppliers. Homeowner forums found here can be very handy as well.

Building Permits & Design Review

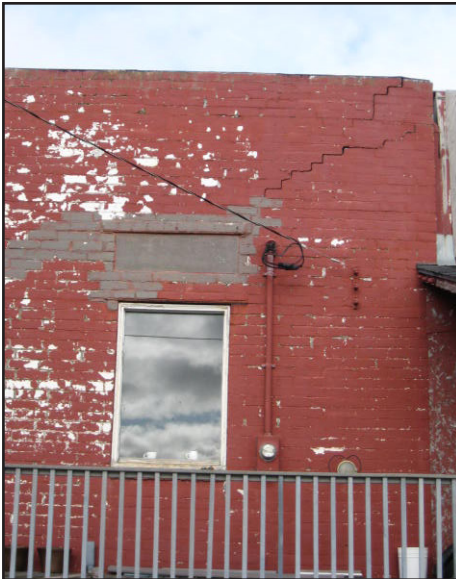
Building Permits - Depending on project type, scale, and location, you may be required to obtain building permits and/or go through the Reserve's Design Review process before beginning work. Pre-project discussions with Reserve staff and Coupeville or Island County planning staff will help clarify what permits, if any, you'll need. (cont.)



Crockett Barn - 1895

One of the Reserve's iconic structures, the Crockett Barn was built in the mid-1890s by local shipbuilders turned carpenters, the Lovejoy brothers. This large barn has over forty wood window sash of varying design, most of which were in need of restoration work. A 2012 Ebey's Grant helped repair and reglaze nearly all of them. The Crockett Barn is now operated as a rentable event venue.





Hingston-Trumball Store - 1942

This commercial style brick building (unusual in the Reserve) was constructed to expand the adjacent 1903 false-front wood frame general store and post office operated by the Hingston Family in San de Fuca.

Ebey's Forever grant projects in 2011 and 2013 repaired masonry and repointed deteriorated mortar on the north and south elevations; restored glass block transom inserts, windows, and the rear entry door; installed new Duralast roofing membrane; and dealt with pest control issues under the building.



Design Review - Many people are not aware that the Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve shares its boundaries with the Central Whidbey Island National Historic District. In an effort to protect the integrity and historic character of the District/Reserve, the Town of Coupeville and Island County each passed ordinances forming a joint Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), and establishing a set of Design Guidelines applicable to all properties within the Reserve. Based on the Secretary's Standards for the Rehabilitation of Historic Properties, these guidelines serve as baseline standards for construction and development here. They primarily address exterior modifications to historic and non-historic structures, new construction, as well as various siting, public space, and land use practices. In addition to compliance with various County, State and local construction and land use codes, many projects in the Reserve require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) issued by the HPC prior to beginning any construction work.

Contact Reserve staff anytime if you have questions about this process. Town of Coupeville and Island County Planners' contact information is listed below.

Town of Coupeville: Tammy Barconi (360) 678-4461 x3
 planner@townofcoupeville.org

Island County: Michelle Pezley (360) 678-7817
 m.pezley@co.island.wa.us

Other Preservation Incentives

There are a number of valuable (and often underutilized) preservation incentives available to historic building owners interested in preserving their properties.

Special Valuation

Offered by the state of Washington, this tax incentive program was established to help offset property tax increases that can occur with preservation/rehabilitation projects on historic properties. Under Special Valuation, qualified rehabilitation costs that equal at least 25% of the historic building's assessed value (within a 24-month period prior to application) can be subtracted from the newly assessed value of the property for 10 years. Your project could certainly help reach that 25% threshold. More information can be found on DAHP's website: <http://www.dahp.wa.gov/special-valuation>

Federal Preservation Tax Credit(s)

This is a 20% federal income tax credit aimed at private investment in commercial historic properties. While often used on larger-scale rehabilitation projects, many smaller businesses in historic buildings here may qualify (including businesses using agricultural buildings). More information can be found on DAHP's website: <http://www.dahp.wa.gov/tax-credits>

Washington Trust's Heritage Barn Grant

Grant funding for rehabilitation projects on Washington State's historic barns is available on a biannual basis (next cycle starts in 2015), and can be used as match funding for the Ebey's Forever Grant Program. More information on the grant program and the State's Heritage Barn Register can be found on the Washington Trust for Historic Preservation website: <http://preservewa.org/Heritage-Barn-Grant-Program.aspx>

Coupeville Historic Waterfront Assoc. Facade Improvement Grants

A program just getting underway in 2015, CHWA is offering Facade Improvement grants to historic buildings in the downtown commercial core of Coupeville. More information can be found on their website: <http://coupevillehistoricwaterfront.com/>

Post-Project Maintenance

Now that some of the larger-scale preservation and repair work on your structure has been done, your attention can shift to maintaining it. All buildings, old and new, require regular care to limit deterioration. Given the importance of material integrity in a historic building, preserving original building elements (whenever possible) is preferable to installing new material. To ensure that a building retains its integrity, it's a good idea to set up a seasonal building maintenance schedule to remind you of any inspections or work that needs to be done. It will also help you prioritize maintenance tasks, preventing avoidable, costly, future repairs. Some good questions to consider when setting up your maintenance plan are listed below.

What needs to be done? Make a list of the problems you see during inspection. Use a camera to record any identified problems.

When should it be done? Prioritize tasks. Problems that raise safety issues, suggest structural instability or that allow water to enter the building need to be dealt with first.

Who will do the work? You may be able to do some of the work yourself, but recognize when it might be best to bring in a professional.

How much will it cost? In the long run, the costs associated with regular maintenance will be less than waiting to do repairs, which may also be more disruptive.

Reserve staff would be happy to work with you to assess current material conditions and develop a seasonal maintenance plan.



Fort Casey Plotting Room - 1915

Built in 1915, this plotting room was an integral part of Battery Moore's targeting system. It contained the staff and mechanical equipment used to calculate projectile trajectory for the Battery's 10-inch disappearing gun.

A 2013 grant helped replace rotted foundation wood sills, rebuild double-hung windows and entry door, install gutters, and repair deteriorated stucco along the base of the building.



Treat the Cause, Not the Symptom

When you find poor conditions, determine the fundamental cause(s). Ask the five “W” questions (who, what, where, when and why). Begin with the obvious and let the questions lead you to the unknown.

Example:

Why did the cornice fall off? *It was weak and the ice pulled it down.*

Why was it weak? *Excessive moisture and decay caused the weakness.*

Where was the moisture? *It was found in the cornice and the gutter.*

Why was the moisture in the gutter? *Debris buildup trapped it there.*

Where did the debris come from? *Trees overhanging the roof.*

So debris buildup is a cause. Rebuilding the cornice and implementing a preventative plan to clean the gutters regularly should help. But debris buildup may not be the only problem. If you ask a few more questions, you might find a more fundamental cause. What other moisture problems are there? Well, ice buildup was one.

Why was there so much ice buildup? Just inside the cornice, water condensed on the inside of the bathroom walls due to heat loss. The lack of insulation let heat rise to the roof, melting the snow and forming an ice dam. Without going farther in your investigation, the problem with the cornice would have cropped up again because a fundamental cause, heat loss, was left untreated. A more effective treatment would control the heat loss with insulation, and the moisture with vapor barriers and ventilation of the cornice.

Be certain you find the most fundamental causes for poor conditions or you will be left treating only symptoms. It is tempting to look at an obviously damaged cornice and fix the cornice, without determining underlying causes of deterioration. But if you repair damaged materials without discovering why they needed it, you'll likely be repeating those repairs of yours relatively soon.

[*Source: www.oldhousechronicle.org/archives/volo2/issue14/technical/maintenance.html]



Ebey's Forever Grant Projects 2011-2014

2011

Hancock Granary
 Kineth Water Tower
 Hingston-Trumball Store
 Sheepherder's House
 Sherman Farm Barn
 Zylstra Law Office

2012

Alexander Blockhouse
 Bearss/Barrett Brooder Shed
 Crockett Barn
 Elkhorn Saloon
 Keith Outbuilding
 Kineth House
 Kinney House
 Leach House
 Masonic Lodge No. 15
 Pearson-Engle House
 Smith Barn

2013

Cawsey-Perkins House
 Comstock Barn
 Crockett Motor Shed
 Fort Casey Plotting Room
 Hancock Wood Shed
 Highwarden House
 Holbrook Boat Shop
 Old County Courthouse
 Hingston-Trumball Store
 Sherman Bulk Shed
 Strong Barn
 Van Dam House

2014

Armstrong House
 Black-Lindsey Barn
 Comstock Barn
 Engle Watertower
 Nienhuis Barn
 Old County Courthouse
 Smith Prairie Barn
 Strong "Model T" Garage