Historic Preservation, Sustainability and Energy Conservation

Historic buildings are an important part of the many neighborhoods that make up the City of Los Angeles. These architectural treasures are reminders of the City’s history and valuable aesthetic and cultural assets. The sustainable development of historic buildings through preservation, rehabilitation and reuse of historic buildings, conserves land and reduces waste and energy. The purpose of this pamphlet is to provide tips for energy conservation and maintenance while preserving your historic property.

Historic buildings were traditionally designed with many sustainable features that respond to climate and site. When effectively restored and reused, these features can bring about considerable energy savings without utilizing modern technology. To help maintain a balance between preserving your home and being energy conscious, below are some simple conservation tips that can help reduce your energy use and costs.

**Maintenance Tips for Historic Homes**

**Conduct an Energy Audit**

Energy Audit conducted by a professional can reveal smaller, more cost effective solutions to make your home more energy efficient.

**Preserve Original Windows and Doors**

Weather stripping, fixing or replacing caulking around existing windows and doors, and repairing cracked glazing will improve efficiency and are more cost effective than replacement.

**Check for Leaks**

Seal any leaks in areas such as doors, windows, vents, fans, ducts, and plumbing pipe connections to avoid unnecessary energy consumption.

**Insulate**

Properly insulate attic, basement and crawl spaces and use insulated shades and curtains to control heat gain and loss through windows.

**Reuse Old Materials**

Reuse existing materials or find used items at an architectural salvage yard to cut down on replacement costs and reduce the amount of waste going into landfills.

**Shade**

Use operable windows, shutters, awnings and vents as originally intended to control temperature and ventilation.

**Landscape**

Trees and vegetation provide shade, reduce the amount of pavement and reduce cooling costs. Deciduous trees can provide shade in the summer and sunlight in the winter, and evergreen trees can provide a windbreak year round.

**Prevent Termites and Dry Rot**

Prevent termite damage by storing wood products 20 feet away from your home and maintaining a one-inch gap between the soil and wood sections of your building. Seal all cracks and holes around the foundation to avoid water damage and dry rot.
Solar Installations
Solar equipment can be an effective means of energy conservation; however, installation of solar panels on historic properties requires specific considerations. The following guidelines have been developed based on the Secretary of Interior’s Standards on sustainability.

Limit Damage to Historic Features
Solar panels on a historic building should be installed in a manner that does not damage historic roofing material or negatively impact the building’s character defining features.

Panel Visibility
Install low-profile solar panels on a historic building that are not visible or only minimally visible from the public right of way.

Panel Profile
When feasible, install solar panels horizontally, flat or parallel to the roof to reduce their visibility.

Panel Location
When feasible, solar panels should be installed on non-historic additions, where it will have minimal impact on the historic building.

For more information on Energy Saving/Conservation Tips:

- Energy audit booklet (DIY guide)
- Sustainability Guidelines
- Insulation
  http://energy.gov/energysaver/articles/where-insulate-home
- Solar Panels

For further questions, please contact your HPOZ Planner, or visit http://www.preservation.lacity.org/hpoz for more information.

Image Sources
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