

7. Foundations

Context & Character

Foundations are a significant feature of historic buildings. The design of a foundation is influenced by location, proportions, types of materials used and pattern of openings. Above ground foundations can be visually differentiated from the wall above by a change in plane. For example, masonry foundations are often separated from the main wall by a plain or modeled ledge or projection. In other cases, foundations are distinguished from walls by a change in material. The arrangement of these elements, an important architectural characteristic, should be preserved. Proper maintenance and repairs will help ensure the longevity of historic foundations.

Design Objective

Preserve and maintain original foundation design, profile, texture and materials.

General

7.1 Original foundations should be preserved and maintained.

- This would include original foundation materials, finish, design and detailing.
- Avoid covering original foundations with other materials or finishes.

7.2 Masonry guidelines for cleaning, care, and repair of masonry foundations should be followed.

- See the design guidelines on Building Materials & Finishes in Chapter 3.

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Foundation walls with high quality materials and intricate detailing are important in establishing the architectural character of a historic building.



Moisture, wind-borne grit and pollutants can affect all types of foundation materials.

7.3 If replacement foundations are necessary, match the original as closely as possible.

- Replacement materials should match the historic foundation.
- Install using similar construction techniques if possible.
- It may be necessary to consult with a historical architect, architectural conservator, or experienced contractor to identify the appropriate treatment.

7.4 Direct water away from foundations as much as possible.

- Site and direct irrigation devices away from foundations.
- Woody shrubs and trees should be kept away to prevent damage to historic materials.
- Downspouts should drain away from foundations through the use of splashblocks, drains, site grading etc.
- Avoid contact between foundation and salts or other ice melts to avoid destructive effects on historic masonry.