The Historical Building Safety Board

The SHBC enabling legislation (Health and Safety Code, Part 2.7, Sec. 18950, et seq.) has established the State Historical Building Safety Board (SHBSB) in the Division of the State Architect.

The Board, composed of representatives of the design and construction industry, state agencies and local governments, is authorized to act as a consultant on the SHBC to state and local agencies. Chief among the Board’s duties are to advise, consult with state and local agencies on matters of administration and enforcement of the code and hear appeals. Regulatory agencies may consult the Board for advice and counsel for specific problem cases. The Board, functioning in this capacity, has responded to many jurisdictions throughout the state with reviews of specific issues. Individual property owners may appeal directly to the Board under certain conditions; however, typically, they should first exhaust the local appeals process and then they should work with local officials who in turn can arrange for appeals or requests for advice from the Board concerning specific code compliance problems. Fees will be collected to pay for state costs.

Examples of SHBC Use

Over the years, countless historic resources throughout California have been restored, reconstructed or rehabilitated, using the SHBC. They run the entire spectrum - from farmhouse buildings to homes to commercial, educational, religious and civic buildings; and they include many of the major Landmarks of California’s historic and architectural legacy. The application of this Code has facilitated the revitalization efforts of many California cities, and has been particularly successful in the preservation of the “OLD TOWN” sectors of communities. Federal officials, encouraged by the government to utilize applicable local codes, have consulted with the SHBSB and have utilized the SHBC intent for construction at Camp Pendleton and Port Hueneme. The California Department of Parks and Recreation has utilized the SHBC for restoration at the Santa Cruz Mission State Historic Park, for selected structures at Fort Ross in Sonoma County, at San Diego Old Town and in Old Sacramento. Additionally, the SHBSB has issued recommendations to assist jurisdictions as to the applicability of the SHBC to restoration of their historic resources. Aspects of the SHBC have been utilized in other states and countries including Washington, Oregon, Nevada, West Virginia, Arizona, Illinois, Kansas, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

Additional Information

Copies of the SHBC may be obtained from the International Conference of Building Officials:

ICBO
5360 Workman Mill Road
Whittier, California 90601-2298
(800) 284-4406

Ask for item number 158F98, the California State Historical Building Code, Part 8, Title 24.

For more information contact:

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For State Historical Building Safety Code information on the web, go to www.dgs.ca.gov and click on “California’s State Historical Building Code.”
CALIFORNIA’S
State Historical Building
Safety Code

Intent
The intent of the State Historical Building
Code (SHBC) is to protect California’s
architectural heritage by recognizing the
unique construction problems inherent in
historic buildings and offering an alternative
code to deal with these problems. The SHBC
provides alternative building regulations for
the rehabilitation, preservation, restoration or
relocation of structures designated as historic
buildings. SHBC regulations are intended to
facilitate restoration or accommodate change
of occupancy so as to preserve a historic
structure’s original or restored architectural
elements and features. While the code
provides for a cost-effective approach to
preservation, it also provides for occupant
safety, encourages energy conservation and
facilitates access for people with disabilities.

Background
In 1975, the State of California adopted into
law Senate Bill 927, which created the
authority for the SHBC and for an advisory
board to prepare regulations to implement the
code. The SHBC is unique among state
regulations. The authority of this document
required that state agencies responsible for
building construction regulations work in
harmony with representatives of other design
and construction disciplines. After years of
careful deliberation, the comprehensive
SHBC regulations were adopted in August
and October, 1979.

Relationship to Other Codes
There are various model codes in use in the
United States. The Uniform Building Code
(UBC), published by the International
Conference of Building Officials, is the code
referenced in the California Building Code
(CBC), and used by California jurisdictions.
The 1997 UBC contains a provision relating
to historic structures; Section 3403.5 encour-
gages code enforcement officials to consider
retaining historic and architectural integrity
while providing for an acceptable level of life
safety. The SHBC goes beyond Section
3403.5 by providing a specific and compre-
prehensive set of alternative regulations. Local
jurisdictions generally utilize a combination of
state law and the CBC for enforcement
purposes. Since Senate Bill 2321 in 1984,
local enforcing authorities, such as building
and fire officials, are to use the SHBC, with
the regular code, when dealing with historic
structures. Under the SHBC, officials are
provided with latitude necessary to exercise
the judgement required to retain the viability
of historic structures.

SHBC Defined
The SHBC is contained in Part 8, Title 24,
California Code of Regulations. Title 24
(California Building Standards Code) con-
tains all state agency regulations relating to
building construction. The SHBC may be
obtained as an excerpt from Title 24 as a
single document. State law requires that all
jurisdictions maintain a copy of Title 24.
Sections of the SHBC deal with use and
occupancy, structural, mechanical and
plumbing, fire protection and access for
people with disabilities, as well as other
subjects.

How to use the SHBC
The SHBC applies to all qualified historic
structures, districts and sites. To be qualified,
designation must come from federal, state or
local authority and includes structures listed
on the following:

- National Register of Historic Places
- California Register of Historic Resources
- California Registered State Historic
  Landmarks
- Points of Historic Interest
- State recorded and evaluated local
  inventories
- City or County inventories of historic or
  architecturally significant sites, land-
  marks, or districts

The California State Historical Building
Code, Title 24, Part 8, of the California Code
of Regulations is the only building code in
California appropriate to historic structures,
districts and sites. It mandates that reason-
able alternatives be sought and adopted
where historic fabric or historic features are
threatened by the requirements of the regular
code. Enforcement rests with local jurisdic-
tions subject to appeal as outlined on the
reverse side of this brochure.