



Design issues are often at the core of preservation projects, and sometimes all that's required is some practical advice, visualization of what could be, or investigating some alternatives to help move a project forward. The Designing for Preservation Solutions (DPS) program provides Certified Local Governments (CLGs) and their partners with focused design assistance from PA SHPO staff on design issues involving specific buildings and projects in their communities.

How DPS Works



Under this program the PA SHPO staff can provide preliminary design consultation and services for preservation projects within CLG communities throughout the Commonwealth. These services are provided at no cost to the municipal government or partnering organizations as a benefit of the community's participation in the CLG program. The goal of the program is to help communities achieve preservation outcomes for historic buildings by:

- providing guidance and design expertise at critical moments in project planning
- identifying and troubleshooting challenging design issues
- visualizing opportunities



The DPS program is intended to give project sponsors and communities enough information to make decisions about a project. This could include exploring what uses might be most appropriate for a building, identifying alternatives for accessibility improvements, or producing schematic designs for façade improvements. This program is **not** intended to provide construction drawings, bid specifications, or detailed technical reports that would normally be prepared by architects, engineers, or other design professionals. DPS will, however, provide partners with graphics and written summary documents that will help communicate ideas and recommendations to outside designers and to stakeholders.

Requesting DPS Assistance



The DPS program is a benefit of a community's designation as a CLG and is available to the municipal government, Main Street organizations, community development corporations, history/preservation organizations, and other community organizations for projects within the boundaries of the CLG. Requests from organizations other than the local government will need to be endorsed by the municipality when the request is submitted to the PA SHPO.



There are no deadlines for DPS and requests are accepted on an ongoing basis. Each request will be reviewed to determine whether PA SHPO staff can provide the assistance requested within the desired timeframe. While the PA SHPO will make every attempt to support as many projects as possible, limited capacity and ongoing projects may affect availability and scheduling. Most projects will take about 30 days to get started, thus DPS is probably not well suited for projects that are urgent or deadline-driven.

Designing for Preservation Solutions

Technical Assistance for Pennsylvania Communities

To request DPS assistance, please email the Community Preservation Coordinator for your region with the following information:



- Name, title, organization, email address, and phone number for project contact
- Property/project location, including street address and map
- Property owner name and whether the requesting organization has permission to access the property
- Photographs of the building and project location (exterior and interior if available). Include photos of the property in context, including adjacent properties and streetscapes.
- Description of the project and issues/questions you are seeking assistance with
- Description of your goals, desired outcomes, and anticipated products
- Timelines and deadlines for the project
- Letter of support from municipality (if request is coming from a partner organization)

Please limit your request to 2 typed pages or the equivalent.

Eligible Requests for Assistance



The PA SHPO staff includes preservation practitioners with diverse backgrounds and experience including architecture, private sector consulting, city/regional planning, nonprofit management, and preservation tax credit programs. Depending on the nature of the resources and the assistance requested, different members of the PA SHPO staff will be engaged to provide the best possible guidance and products for the project. Examples of the kinds of questions/requests that DPS can assist with include, but aren't limited to:

- developing options for adapting a historic commercial building for a new use
- conceptualizing possible designs for reorganizing spaces and functions within a building
- investigating and visualizing changes to the façade of a historic building
- identifying opportunities to improve accessibility in and around a historic building
- analyzing code compliance issues and preservation-friendly alternatives for historic buildings



Each building and project is unique, so there's no standard approach, product, or outcome to a request for assistance. In some instances, the project's goals can be met through a site visit and in-depth discussion. Other projects might benefit from a line drawing or augmented photography, while some may involve a detailed technical memo. The PA SHPO can produce limited graphics including schematics drawings, plans and layouts, and line work perspective developed in Revit. At the end of the project, the SHPO staff will summarize the goals and outcomes, along with all graphics, in a memo that will help partners have productive conversations with other stakeholders.