



Repetitive Floor Plans

Multistory buildings such as office towers and hotels typically have a single floor plan that is repeated on all of the floors above the commercial and public function levels. Lobbies, ballrooms and commercial spaces, where they exist, are generally character-defining aspects of a building, yet much of the basic sense of how a tall building is organized is embodied in the plan of its upper floors.

Because the organization of a building is usually a significant part of its historic character, the retention of the plan that defines that organization is necessary if a project is to meet the Standards. Although the retention of all historic fabric is to be encouraged, the functional needs of most rehabilitations usually involve substantial changes to existing interior partitions. What change is acceptable under the Standards is determined by the hierarchy of the components of the specific building.

Corridors are significant public spaces and the primary elements in repetitive plans, making both the corridor space itself and any historic fabric that defines it important to preserve. Partitions that divide the space behind the corridor walls are relatively less significant to the concept of the building, and thus acceptably subject to greater change.

Owners of projects with repetitive floor plans should be encouraged to retain the existing historic corridors on all floors. Projects that propose to retain only a few representative floors generally do not meet the Standards. When a project seeks to reduce historic corridors, changes should be limited to those that modestly diminish the extent of the space without destroying the overall configuration. Corridors in the wings of "L" "H" or "E" shaped plans may be shortened in some cases, but they may not be eliminated. The core of the plan where primary corridors meet the elevators is generally a significant space in a repetitive plan and is the area that can accommodate little alteration.

September 1999

* * *