

Guidance on Credentials

No one form of academic program is acknowledged to be the sole means by which an individual can become an architectural historian. Advanced degrees in art and architectural history form the primary bases for entering the discipline; nevertheless, comparable preparation in other fields such as historic preservation, American history, American studies, history, or cultural studies in other areas, geography, archaeology, and folk-life also may provide expertise in assessing aspects of the built environment in their historic context. Furthermore, architects, landscape architects, building conservators, and those practicing in professional design and planning fields may have expertise in facets of architectural history, as well as others who may have acquired expertise with little or no formal education in the field.

In all the above cases, a demonstrated record of achievement related to the historical subjects in question, rather than training or professional practice per se, should be considered the essential basis for one's qualifications to testify as an expert on matters pertaining to architectural history in a given case. Moreover, simply having an interest in old buildings or being involved with efforts to preserve them should not be considered an adequate basis for such testimony.

In presenting qualifications, architectural historians should be specific in enumerating their areas of expertise in applicable periods, building types, and geographical areas with respect to the case.

Guidance on Research

A foremost responsibility of architectural historians intending to testify on the significance of a property or properties is to familiarize themselves with that work to the fullest extent possible, including onsite study and relevant contexts, such as:

- x other work of the period(s), type(s), and designer(s) involved;
- x work employing similar materials, construction techniques, or systems;
- x work commissioned by the same or comparable clients, occupied by the same or comparable clients, or occupied by the same or analogous groups; and
- x the physical setting in both its historic and current dimensions.

In cases involving one or more properties within a designated historic district, or a precinct that has the potential to become a historic district, the full nature of the contribution of the property or properties to that district should be carefully considered. This information may be acquired by examining and assessing the validity of existing research or conducting new research or consultation with colleagues if needed. Testimony must be explicit regarding the degree to which it is based on original research or on the work of others.

Many subject areas have received little or no scholarly attention, and the absence of research should not necessarily preclude responsible efforts to save significant pr

