

HISTORIC PRESERVATION SERIES



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Guidelines for Preparing a Historic Properties Survey Report

A historic properties survey is a study designed to identify and evaluate properties in a defined area to determine whether or not they may be of historic, architectural, engineering, or cultural significance. In many instances, the information gathered through surveys is used to nominate a property to the National Register of Historic Places.

The following outline is for a historic properties survey report. The essential components of a survey report are historic context, identification of property types, property data, and evaluation. The properties need to be individually and collectively evaluated for their significance.

Introduction:

- brief introduction to historic preservation and explanation of the reasons including goals and priorities for conducting the survey
- description of the survey area
- explanation of the survey methodology

Historic Context (focus on the concepts of “time”, “place”, and “theme”):

- identification and description of the historic theme(s) of the **region** and important people, events, and dates
- identification and description of the historic theme(s) of the **community**
- discussion of the historic theme(s) and period of significance for the **specific survey area** (downtown commercial center, residential neighborhood, etc.)

Property Types:

- identification of properties critical to illustrating the historic theme (extraction and mill sites for a mining site; processing plant, wharves, and offices for a cannery, etc.)
- grouping and identification of properties in the survey area
- discussion of properties in the survey area that do not apply to the theme

Property Data:

- each historic property in the survey area should have an Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRs) reference number
- include the property’s location, legal description, and verbal boundary
- identify the property owner(s) and provide corresponding address(es)

- give a physical description of each property, changes to it over time, appearance at the end of the period of significance; its history; and evaluation of its historic significance
- current and, when available, historic photographs of each property must be included
- include map(s) of survey area.
- statement as to why the property is being recommended as a contributing or non-contributing element to the historic theme(s) identified for the survey area submitted

Evaluation:

- explanation of the criteria used to evaluate a property individually and as a member of a district.
- selection of the time period (1920-1929, 1910-1930, etc.) that most of the historic properties in the survey area represent
- assessment of whether or not there are a sufficient number of properties with enough physical integrity from the period of significance to illustrate the historic theme(s)
- identification of properties with themes
- discussion of fieldwork or further research that needs to be done
- recommendations

Additional Information:

- bibliography
- site maps, additional photographs, drawings, etc
- appendices (copies of original documents, pertinent legislation, etc.)

Additional Information:

U.S. Department of Interior,
National Register Bulletin 24: Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation Planning.
Interagency Resources Division, National Park Service, Washington, D.C., Revised 1985.

Historic Properties Survey Report Example:

City of Dillingham,
Inventory of Historic Buildings, Phase 2, Dillingham, Alaska. Dillingham Historic Preservation Commission, 1993.