

HISTORIC PRESERVATION SERIES



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DETERMINATIONS OF ELIGIBILITY

The National Historic Preservation Act requires federal agencies to consider the impacts of their undertakings on properties included in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. This is commonly called Section 106 review. The first step is to determine if historic or archaeological sites that might be impacted by a project are significant and retain enough physical integrity to make them eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The legal responsibility for the determination of eligibility (DOE) resides with the managing federal agency, and includes state and local governments when they assume the responsibility of a federal agency under certain programs.

Documentation requirements

A DOE is based on a description and evaluation of a property, a statement of significance, selected list of sources, maps, photographs and other illustrations. Properties include buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts. Any property where a DOE is requested must have an Alaska Historic Resources Survey (AHRS) number. The documentation for a DOE does not have to be on a National Register nomination form. The information required for a DOE, however, is much the same as that required for listing.

Consideration is given to both the criteria of significance and the physical integrity of a property. The evaluation should consider the historic context of the property, including its relation to other known historic properties. Many properties might not warrant an individual eligibility determination, but might prove to be a contributing element of a historic district that does meet the criteria of significance. Listed below are elements needed to accompany a request for a DOE.

Physical description and integrity (National Register section 7)

1. How did the property look during its period of significance?
2. How has the property changed since its period of significance? The emphasis should be on how the property looks today and what features from the period of significance it retains.
3. What properties are included in the determination? For a district (3 or more contributing properties), it is important to identify **all** properties within the boundaries and then explain why each is contributing or non-contributing.
4. Does the property have integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association?
5. The information should be supplemented with photographs, site plans, and maps showing site boundaries.
6. Archaeological property determinations should address age (absolute is best, relative is acceptable) and site content.

Significance and historic background (National Register section 8)

1. What criteria and criteria considerations for evaluation apply? All criteria must be considered. Justify why criteria and criteria considerations apply and/or why they do not. The criteria are:
 - a. association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
 - b. association with the lives of persons significant in our past.
 - c. embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
 - d. have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The criteria considerations are:

- a. a religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historic importance.
 - b. a building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event.
 - c. a birthplace or grave of a historic figure of outstanding importance if there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life.
 - d. a cemetery that derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events.
 - e. a reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived.
 - f. a property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historic significance.
 - g. a property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.
2. What is the period of significance? For archaeological sites, the place in the cultural chronology and the culture should be identified.
 3. What are the areas of significance (themes)?
 4. What is the level of significance (local, regional, state, national)?

These four elements should be integrated and discussed in a paragraph-length statement of significance. The statement of significance should be supported with additional paragraphs that provide the historic information (the story) about the property. The historic information should *focus on the property*.

Selected resources (National Register section 9)

1. Published sources that provided information, but not an exhaustive list of every source consulted.
2. Names of people who provided information through interviews, at meetings, or in telephone conversations, with dates of contact.
3. Office files and other unpublished sources (often called grey literature) that provided information.

Basic resources:

How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation
How to Complete the National Register Registration Form

Additional resources:

How to Complete the National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form
Researching a Historic Property
Guidelines for Evaluating and Nominating Properties That Have Achieved Significance Within the Past Fifty Years
Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes
Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Properties Associated with Significant Persons
Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Traditional Cultural Properties
Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Cemeteries and Burial Places
Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating and Registering Historic Mining Properties
Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Historical Archaeological Sites and Districts

36 CFR Part 63, Determination of Eligibility for Inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places

The references above are available through the internet at <https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/> or from the Office of History and Archaeology. The office also has a complete list of National Register bulletins available.