

HISTORIC PRESERVATION SERIES



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GUIDELINES FOR CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT (CLG) REVIEW OF NOMINATIONS TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

One of the responsibilities of a local historic preservation commission, required to be a Certified Local Government for historic preservation programs, is to serve as a reviewer of nominations to the National Register of Historic Places for properties within the local jurisdiction. The local commissions review comments and vote on determination of eligibility for listing, which becomes part of the package formally submitted to the Keeper of the National Register. The local commission also serves as a forum for property owners and interested individuals to discuss the property and the program and is to solicit comments from local tribal entities.

The local historic preservation commission is to determine if a property meets established criteria and retains enough physical integrity to warrant inclusion in the national list of properties worthy of preservation. The commission member's review prepared documentation to determine if it establishes that the district, site, building, structure or object is significant in American history, architecture, archaeology or culture. A property can be of local, state or national significance. The documentation also must establish that the property has integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and its appearance is similar to that during its period of significance.

The CLG has 60 days to respond to a request from the Office of History and Archaeology, unless it requests additional time. After the local commission considers a nomination, its comments and record of action are to be provided in writing to the OHA. The minutes of the meeting can be sent, a form can be created, or a letter can be written. The local commission's action regarding eligibility needs to reference the appropriate criteria for evaluation, indicate that any criteria considerations have been adequately addressed, and note the period and areas of significance.

The National Register criteria for evaluation include:

- A. The property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. The property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. The property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
- D. The property has yielded, or may be likely to yield information important to prehistory or history.

For a property nominated for its architecture, the architect on the local historic preservation commission, or consultant, must agree the property is eligible for listing under that criterion. For a property nominated for its archaeological potential, the archaeologist on the commission, or consultant, must agree the property is eligible for listing under that criterion.

Cemeteries, birthplaces, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, properties that have been moved, reconstructed properties, commemorative properties, and those less than 50 years old need to meet special criteria considerations. The National Register documentation must specifically address any consideration that applies. Properties in these categories will qualify for the National Register if they are integral parts of districts that meet the criteria above, or if they meet the following:

- A. A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance.
- B. A property moved from its original location, but significant primarily for its architectural value, or which is the surviving building or structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event.
- C. A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life.
- D. A cemetery which 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 if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historical significance.
- G. A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.

An owner might oppose a property's listing regardless of its significance, usually because of a fear of being unable to develop or use the property as desired. Some owners might want a property listed that does not have sufficient historical significance, usually to take advantage of certain tax incentives and grant programs. Such factors are not to be taken into consideration by the local historic preservation commission. The commission's responsibility is to apply professional, technical standards in an unbiased fashion to determine if properties meet the uniform national criteria. Local historic preservation commissions are encouraged to make determinations on National Register eligibility using contexts they have established.

Sources for additional information:

How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation
How to Complete the National Register Registration Form
Manual for State Historic Preservation Review Boards