

THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
AND RELATED PROGRAMS
1969

The National Register of Historic Places records the story of a nation. It is a roll call of the tangible reminders of the history of the United States. It is a list of distinction identifying for the people those properties worthy of preservation for their historic value.

Congress called for such a list in the Historic Sites Act of 1935 and the Historic Preservation Act of 1966. The 1966 act said:

The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to expand and maintain a national register of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology and culture, hereinafter referred to as the National Register

The National Register is the official schedule of the nation's cultural property that is worth saving. According to further provisions of the act, it is a protective inventory of irreplaceable resources across the face of the land. In building the future it is the guide to a richer environment with visible continuity with the past.

The National Register is published periodically with pertinent information about each property. The first edition, prepared by the National Park Service, contained over a thousand entries. The list continues to grow. Between the lines of this book, the discerning reader may sense the heartbeat of the United States.

The Historic Sites Act of 1935 placed the national Park Service squarely in the field of historic preservation. This act gave extensive responsibilities to the Secretary of the Interior through the National Park Service to effectuate a national policy of historic preservation. The Historic Preservation Act of 1966 expanded the Department's responsibilities, authorizing a program for the preservation of additional historic properties through the Nation. An expanded National Register was authorized as a major instrument in this program.

All historical areas in the National Park System, together with those properties eligible for designation as National Historic Landmarks, are of national significance and thus qualify automatically for the National Register. Properties of State or local significance may be nominated by the States and will be placed on the Register on approval of the National Park Service.

Nominations are made by a State Liaison Officer appointed by the Governor to supervise the program within the State. A professional staff conducts a statewide historic survey and reports its findings to a professional review committee. If the property meets National Register criteria, the committee recommends it for nomination.

Additions to the National Register are printed periodically in the Federal Register. A published version containing more details is available biennially from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. (Write to that office for pricelists).

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

The following criteria are designed to guide the States and the Secretary of the Interior in evaluating potential entries (other than areas of the National Park System and National Historic Landmarks) to the National Register:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- (A) that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- (B) that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- (C) that embody 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; or
- (D) that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, or graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years shall not be considered eligible for the National Register. However, such properties will qualify if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria or if they fall within the following categories:

- (A) a religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or
- (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; or
- (C) a birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate site or building directly associated with his productive life; or
- (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; or
- (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; or

(F) a property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historical significance; or

(G) a property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.

THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

In the Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Congress established an Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to advise Congress and the President in this field. The Council consists of the Secretaries of the Interior, Housing and Urban Development, Commerce, and Treasury; the Attorney General; the Administrator of the General Services Administration; the Chairman of the National Trust for Historic Preservation; and 10 citizens appointed by the President.

The Council meets four times a year. In addition to its advisory duties to the President and the Congress, it coordinates the historic preservation activities of Federal departments and agencies. To safeguard National Register properties in some measure from Federal highways, dams, and other projects, Congress gave the Advisory Council an unusual power of review. In Section 106, the act provides:

The head of any Federal agency having direct or indirect jurisdiction over a proposed Federal or federally assisted undertaking in any State and the head of any Federal department or independent agency having authority to license any undertaking shall, prior to the approval of the expenditure of any Federal funds on the undertaking or prior to the issuance of any license, as the case may be, take into account the effect of the undertaking on any district, site, building, structure, or object that is included in the National Register. The head of any such Federal agency shall afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation . . . a reasonable opportunity to comment with regard to such undertaking.

Although this section provides no injunctive power to halt Federal undertakings that threaten historic properties, it does assure that historical values will be considered in Federal project planning. When conflicts with historic values cannot be avoided, the Advisory Council provides a high-level forum for assessing the public interest and recommending courses of action.

In evaluating "effect" within the meaning of Section 106, the Advisory Council is guided by the following criteria:

A federally financed or licensed undertaking shall be considered to have an effect on a National Register listing (districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects, including their settings) when any condition of the undertaking creates a change in the quality of the historical, architectural, archeological, or cultural character that qualified the property under the National Register criteria for listing in the National Register. Generally, adverse effect occurs in conditions which include, but are not limited to:

1. Destruction or alteration of all or part of a property.
2. Isolation from, or alteration of, its surrounding environment.
3. Introduction of visual, audible, or atmospheric elements that are out of character with the property and its setting.

GRANTS FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The National Historic Preservation Act authorizes Federal grants-in-aid to the States and to the National Trust for Historic Preservation on a matching basis. The grants may be used for statewide surveys, the preparation of statewide historic preservation plans, and the acquisition and restoration of individual properties. Grants for individual preservation projects may be made through the States to other eligible public or private recipients.

To qualify for aid, properties must be listed in the National Register, be consistent with a statewide historic preservation plan approved by the Secretary of the Interior, and need financial assistance or be owned by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The State Liaison Officer directs his State's grant-in-aid program, its historical surveys, and its preservation planning. Questions about any feature of a State's historic preservation program should be addressed to this official. A list of Liaison Officers is provided elsewhere in this folder.

RELATED PROGRAMS

Historic American Buildings Survey. This program for recording important examples of American architecture is conducted in cooperation with the American Institute of Architects and the Library of Congress. The records--photographs, measured drawings, written data--are deposited in the Library of Congress, where they are available for inspection and study.

Recording by HABS is evidence that a building is worthy of preservation. Most recorded buildings will be entered in the National Register either as National Historic Landmarks or by nomination of the States.

National Park Service Archeological Program--Archeological research and protection are other major responsibilities of the National Park Service. Prehistoric ruins were among the earliest areas set aside for Department of the Interior protection. The Antiquities Act of 1906 provided the Department with initial protective and research powers in respect to archeological resources. The Act of 1916 creating the National Park Service charged that agency with protection of historic resources in the National Park System. The Historic Sites Act of 1935, the Reservoir Salvage Act of 1960, and the Historic Preservation Act of 1966 greatly broadened these responsibilities.

The Service now conducts a program of salvage archeology where highway construction, dams, pipelines, and other projects threaten sites rich in prehistoric or historic data. A large proportion of the archeological fieldwork in this country is conducted under the Inter-Agency Archeological Salvage Program, sponsored by the Service.

The National Historic Landmarks Program. The Historic Sites Act of 1935 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to make a survey of historic sites and buildings to identify those of national significance. Potential landmarks are evaluated by the Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments, and are recommended to the Secretary of the Interior.

Sites and structures found nationally significant by the Secretary are eligible for designation as national Historic Landmarks and are immediately recorded in the National Register. Upon the owner's agreement to adhere to accepted preservation precepts, Landmark designation is recognized by the award of a bronze plaque and a certificate. The program began in 1960.

Properties eligible for Landmark designation are listed in a booklet entitled National Parks and Landmarks. Studies leading to the selection of National Historic Landmarks are published in a series of books. The booklet and the books are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402. (Write to that office for pricelists).

A Register of Natural Areas: Parks--Landmarks. The first areas in the Register of Natural Areas were designated in 1964. This program is similar to that of the National Historic Landmarks. Natural areas considered of national significance are cited by the Secretary of the Interior as eligible for recognition as Registered Natural Landmarks, regardless of ownership. At the Secretary's invitation, the owner may apply for a certificate and a bronze plaque designating the site.

Environmental Education Landmarks. The third part of the National Landmarks Program was started in 1968. These Landmarks are designated for use of schools and the general public for teaching the principles of environmental awareness.

Other Programs. Among the newer programs of the National Park Service is a plan to identify and recognize significant engineering landmarks. The Service works closely with the American Society of Civil Engineers and the Library of Congress in establishing a graphic, documentary record of the Nation's distinctive engineering accomplishments.

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and companion legislation place important responsibilities for historic preservation on all Federal departments and agencies. For most of them the responsibility is primarily a statutory obligation to exercise care in all undertakings affecting cultural properties worthy of preservation.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development, however, as well as the Department of the Interior, has been given important new authority to undertake programs of active aid and encouragement to historic preservation. For information about the programs of the Department of Housing and Urban Development, write to the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, D.C. 20410.

On the basis of 1966 and 1968 legislation, the Department of Transportation has adopted policies and programs giving maximum consideration to the effect of projected transportation facilities on the quality of the environment. Cultural properties are among the environmental elements given special attention. For further information write to the Secretary of Transportation, Washington, D.C. 20590.