

NATIONAL REGISTER FACT SHEET 3

HOW HISTORIC PROPERTIES ARE LISTED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Who Administers the National Register Program?

The National Register of Historic Places is a list maintained by the National Park Service of buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture, and that meet criteria for evaluation established by the [National Historic Preservation Act of 1966](#). Nominations to the National Register are submitted from each of the states by the **State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)**. In North Carolina, the SHPO is the Deputy Secretary of the Office of Archives and History. The section that administers the National Register and related programs is the [State Historic Preservation Office \(HPO\)](#). The personnel of the Historic Preservation Office serve as staff for the SHPO in National Register activities and duties.

In every state, a review board examines potential nominations and makes recommendations to the SHPO regarding the eligibility of properties and the adequacy of nominations. In North Carolina, the review board is called the **National Register Advisory Committee (NRAC)**. The NRAC meets thrice annually (February, June, October) to consider the eligibility of properties for nomination to the National Register. Nominations prepared under the supervision of the HPO staff and recommended for nomination by the NRAC are forwarded to the SHPO for review and formal nomination. They are then forwarded to the Keeper of the National Register in the National Park Service in Washington, D.C. Final authority to list properties in the National Register resides with the National Park Service.

How are Eligible Properties Identified?

Properties and districts that may be eligible for the National Register are usually brought to the attention of the HPO staff and the NRAC either (1) through a county or community survey of historic properties co-sponsored by the Historic Preservation Office and a local government or organization; (2) by interested individuals who provide preliminary information about properties to the HPO staff; or (3) through historic property surveys conducted as part of the environmental review process.

Persons who seek National Register listing for properties that have not been recorded in survey projects co-sponsored by the Historic Preservation Office may submit a "[Study List Application](#)" to the HPO. If adequate information and color views of the property are included with the application, the NRAC will consider the property at its next quarterly meeting. If in the opinion of the NRAC the property appears to be potentially eligible for the National Register, it is placed on the Study List. This action by the NRAC authorizes the HPO staff to work with the owner to coordinate a formal nomination of the property to the National Register.

The NRAC can best evaluate the eligibility of an individual property within the context of a community-wide or regional inventory of historic or prehistoric properties. This provides a basis for comparing the relative significance of similar types of historic or prehistoric properties in a community or region. *In counties or communities where no such inventory has been assembled, the NRAC will sometimes find it necessary to defer a decision about the eligibility of an individual property until a comprehensive survey of historic properties has taken place.* Likewise, the NRAC may consider some properties as contributing components within larger districts but not as individually eligible. [Information about grants](#) to local governments for local historic property surveys and nominations is available from the Historic Preservation Office.

What is a National Register Nomination?

A National Register nomination is a scholarly and authoritative document that thoroughly describes and evaluates a property's setting and physical characteristics, documents its history, assesses its significance in terms of its historic context, and demonstrates how it specifically meets [National Register criteria for evaluation](#). It is supported by professional quality photographs, maps delineating the property's boundaries, and other materials and information. The nomination must be prepared according to federal and state guidelines.

Who Prepares National Register Nominations?

Most nominations are prepared by private consultants hired either by individual property owners or by local governments or organizations. Nominations of archaeological sites are sometimes prepared by professional archaeologists as part of their on-going research. HPO National Register staff is responsible for reviewing, editing, and processing nominations prepared in these ways. Due to the great demand for National Register nominations and the small number of HPO staff, the HPO is unable to prepare nominations as a public service.

An owner of a Study List property who seeks to have it listed in the National Register may hire a private consultant to prepare the nomination. A list of qualified consultants is available from the Historic Preservation Office. HPO staff cannot quote fees, and fees will vary depending on the consultant and the complexity of the nomination. An owner may expect to pay a professional historian, architectural historian, or archaeologist the equivalent of 40 to 80 hours of time at a professional hourly wage.

Some owners are interested in preparing their own nominations and are capable of doing so. The level of description, historical documentation, analysis, and writing in every nomination must meet accepted professional standards. The SHPO will not submit substandard nominations to Washington, and HPO staff cannot make major revisions or provide detailed critiques of inadequate nominations. Because documentation of archaeological properties generally involves data collection, analysis, and interpretation requiring specialized training, nominations of archaeological properties are always prepared by professional archaeologists.

What Happens to the Finished Nomination?

The nomination is reviewed by members of the National Register Advisory Committee at one of the regular thrice yearly meetings. If the NRAC recommends that the nomination be submitted to the National Register, it is signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer and forwarded to the Keeper of the National Register. At the National Register office, the nomination is reviewed and the decision to list or not list is made within not less than 15 and not more than 45 days of receipt. If the property is listed, the HPO will notify the owner and provide a certificate stating that the property has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Owners who desire plaques may order them from private commercial suppliers. The HPO does not provide plaques or recommend any particular supplier, but a list of manufacturers is available on request.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: National Register Coordinator
 [Survey and National Register Branch](#)
 State Historic Preservation Office
 4617 Mail Service Center
 Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-4617 919/814-6587

Offices of the Survey and National Register Branch are at 109 E. Jones Street in Raleigh. For information about archaeological sites and the National Register, contact the Office of State Archaeology, 4619 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4619, telephone 919/814-6554.

Please see the Historic Preservation Office website: [State of North Carolina Historic Preservation Office](#)