TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
real places telling real stories
Evaluating Historic Resources for Significance and Integrity

Texas Historical Commission
NATIONAL REGISTER BULLETIN
Technical information on the National Register of Historic Places: survey, evaluation, registration, and preservation of cultural resources

How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation
“The National Register of Historic Places documents the appearance and importance of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in our prehistory and history. These properties represent the major patterns of our shared local, State, and national experience.”

National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation
Evaluating Historic-Age Resources

The information provided in this presentation may be used for any historic resources survey, even if there is no intent to apply for a National Register of Historic Places listing.
Historic Resource Categories
A **building** is created principally to shelter any form of human activity.

**Examples include:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administration building</th>
<th>Carriage house</th>
<th>Church</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City hall</td>
<td>Courthouse</td>
<td>Barn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dormitory</td>
<td>Fort</td>
<td>Garage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel</td>
<td>House</td>
<td>Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mill building</td>
<td>Office building</td>
<td>Post office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>Social hall</td>
<td>Shed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable</td>
<td>Store</td>
<td>Theater</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A **structure** is built for purposes other than creating human shelter

Examples include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aircraft</th>
<th>Apiary</th>
<th>Automobile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bandstand</td>
<td>Boats and ships</td>
<td>Bridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cairn</td>
<td>Canal</td>
<td>Carousel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corncrib</td>
<td>Dam</td>
<td>Earthwork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fence</td>
<td>Gazebo</td>
<td>Grain elevator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highway</td>
<td>Irrigation system</td>
<td>Kiln</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighthouse</td>
<td>Trolley car</td>
<td>Tunnel</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
An **object** is primarily artistic in nature or is relatively small in scale and simply constructed.

Examples include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boundary marker</th>
<th>Fountain</th>
<th>Milepost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monument</td>
<td>Sculpture</td>
<td>Statuary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A **site** is the location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archeological value regardless of the value of any existing structure.

**Examples include:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Battlefield</th>
<th>Campsite</th>
<th>Cemeteries*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ceremonial site</td>
<td>Designed landscape</td>
<td>Habitation site</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural feature having cultural significance</td>
<td>Petroglyph</td>
<td>Rock carving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rock shelter</td>
<td>Building or structure ruins</td>
<td>Shipwreck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trail</td>
<td>Village site</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A **district** possesses a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity of sites, buildings, structures, or objects united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business districts</th>
<th>Canal systems</th>
<th>Groups of habitation sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College campuses</td>
<td>Farms with large acreage/numerous resources</td>
<td>Industrial complexes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irrigation systems</td>
<td>Residential areas</td>
<td>Rural villages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation networks</td>
<td>Rural historic districts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
When conducting a historic resources survey, the resources need to be evaluated for significance within their historic context.

In order to do this, a local history needs to be compiled.

Research on local history should be done at the beginning of the project before going out to do the survey work in order to understand the potential significance of the historic resources.

For more information regarding this topic, please see the presentation on Historic Contexts.
When conducting a historic resources survey, the historic resources should be evaluated for their historical significance and integrity.

**Significance**: importance

**Integrity**: ability of a resource to convey its significance
Determine how the theme of the context is significant in the history of the local area, the state, or the nation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Significance Areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>Architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Art</td>
<td>Commerce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Planning &amp; Development</td>
<td>Conservation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Heritage</td>
<td>Exploration/Settlement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry</td>
<td>Invention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>Literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military</td>
<td>Performing Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics/Government</td>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social History</td>
<td>Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Archeology</td>
<td>Communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications</td>
<td>Economics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment/Recreation</td>
<td>Health/Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Architecture</td>
<td>Maritime History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Significance

A property’s Period of Significance is the time in which it achieved its historical significance.

- It may be a single year, like the construction date of an architecturally significant property, or
- an extended period of time, like the period that an important historical figure lived in a particular residence.

Additionally, each historic resource should be assigned a Level of Significance:

- Local
- State
- National
Evaluation of Significance

The historic resource should be at least 50 years old, and be associated with an important historic context (local, state, or national).

When evaluated within its historic context, a property must be shown to be significant for one or more of the four Criteria for Evaluation.

A: Association with historic events or activities
B: Association with important persons
C: Distinctive design or physical characteristics
D: Potential to provide information about prehistory or history
Criterion C is for Design and Construction.

Buildings and structures should all be evaluated under Criterion C as they are physical entities.

The other Criteria (A, B, and D) should also be evaluated, but other types of information and research are needed for assessment.
Evaluation under Criterion C

- Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or
- Represents the work of a master, or
- Possesses high artistic value, or
- Represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction
**Integrity** is the ability of a property to convey its significance.

To be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, a property must not only be significant under the National Register Criteria, but it also must have integrity.

Historic properties either retain integrity or they do not. Within the concept of integrity, the National Register criteria recognizes seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity.

*If the historic resource does not have any historical significance, then there is no need to evaluate integrity.*
Evaluation of Integrity

- **Location** – Is the property in its original place?
- **Setting** – Is the historic character of the surroundings intact?
- **Materials** – Are the original components intact?
- **Workmanship** – Is there evidence of the builder’s level of skill?
- **Design** – Is the original arrangement apparent (form, plan, style)?
- **Feeling** – Does the property evoke a historic period of time?
- **Association** – Is the property intact enough to retain a link with historic persons or events?
Evaluation of Integrity

How much historic fabric remains intact?
Evaluation of Integrity

- Replacement siding
- Replacement windows
- Rear addition on corner lot
- Possible porch replacement

These changes adversely affect Materials, Workmanship, Design, and Feeling. This resource lacks sufficient integrity.
Evaluation of Integrity

- Retains horizontal wood siding
- Retains exposed rafters
- Retains decorative shingles in gable ends and on skirting
- Retains square box columns on porch
- Retains original windows
- On original location

This residence retains sufficient integrity of Location, Materials, Workmanship, Design, and Feeling.
Evaluation of a District

When conducting a historic resources survey for a district, the components can comprise both individually distinctive features that serve as focal points and features that lack individual distinction.

It may even be considered eligible if all of the components lack individual distinction, provided that the grouping achieves significance as a whole within its historic context.

In either case, the majority of the components that add to the district’s historic character, even if they are individually undistinguished, must possess integrity, as must the district as a whole.
Evaluation of a District

Each component within a district needs to be evaluated and given a designation of Contributing or Noncontributing.

**Contributing**: present during period of significance *and* possess historic integrity for that period.

**Noncontributing**: built or substantially altered after the period of significance *and/or* lack integrity.
Contributing

- Present during period of significance, and
- Relates to the documented historical significance, and
- Possesses good degree of integrity
Noncontributing Resources

Noncontributing

- Not present during period of significance, or
- Not related to the documented historical significance, or
- Lacks sufficient integrity

Outside period of significance (too new)

Lacks integrity due to extensive alterations
Contributing vs. Noncontributing Resources

Contributing resources enjoy all the same benefits of individually listed properties.

Noncontributing status is not necessarily permanent and can be reversed.
For More National Register Information

THC National Register of Historic Places Program webpage
For More National Register Information

How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation Bulletin
http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/
For More Survey Information

THC Historic Resources Survey Program webpage
http://www.thc.state.tx.us/preserve/projects-and-programs/historic-resources-survey
To receive a free THC Survey Packet, send an email request to:
leslie.wolfenden@thc.state.tx.us
Texas Historical Commission (THC)
www.thc.state.tx.us

- Historic Resources Survey Program
  - Historic Resources Survey Coordinator: Leslie Wolfenden
  - 512.463.3386
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