

What is the National Register of Historic Places?

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of properties that are recognized for their significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering and/or culture. National Register properties include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects and they can be significant to a local community, a state, a Native American tribe, or the nation as a whole.

The National Register of Historic Places program was established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and is administered by the National Park Service. In Pennsylvania, the National Register program is managed by the Pennsylvania State Historic Preservation Office (PA SHPO), which is a bureau within the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC).



Cranolieth, Philadelphia

What qualifies a property for listing in the National Register of Historic Places?

National Register properties are distinguished by having been documented and evaluated according to uniform standards. These criteria recognize the accomplishments of all peoples who have contributed to the history and heritage of the United States and are designed to help state and local governments, federal agencies, and others identify important historic and archeological properties worthy of preservation and of consideration in planning and development decisions.

To be eligible for listing in the National Register, a property must meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. These criteria require that a property be old enough to be considered historic (generally at least 50 years old) and that it still look much the same way as it did in the past. In addition, the property must:

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



Moravian Tile Works, Bucks County

Typically, cemeteries, birthplaces, 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 less than 50 years old are not 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 independently meet special criteria.

How are properties in Pennsylvania included in the National Register?

PHMC's State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) manages the National Register of Historic Places program in Pennsylvania.



Irving Female College, Cumberland County.

Generally, the steps in the National Register process are as follows:

1. **Historic Resource Survey Form (HRSF):** This form provides descriptive and historical information about the property (building, site, structure, object, or district) being nominated such as when it was built, what it looks like, and why it is significant.
2. **Determination of Eligibility:** Using the National Register criteria, SHPO staff review the HRSF and determine if a property is eligible for listing in the National Register. Staff determinations are not a guarantee that a nomination will be successful and a property listed in the National Register.
3. **National Register Nomination:** If the property is determined eligible, the next step is to complete the National Park Service's National Register Nomination form. Guidance is available via the internet from the National Park Service and the SHPO. SHPO staff can also provide technical assistance to applicants.
4. **State Review Board:** Completed nominations are submitted to the Pennsylvania Historic Preservation Board. The Board reviews the nomination, evaluates whether or not the property meets the criteria for listing, and assigns the property's level of significance. The Board recommends approved properties for listing to the National Park Service.
5. **National Park Service:** The National Park Service has the final authority to list a property in the National Register. Properties approved by the Board are sent to National Register staff in Washington, D.C. for official listing in the National Register.

For more information, please visit the National Park Service website at <http://www.nps.gov/nr/faq.htm> or contact PA SHPO National Register staff at www.phmc.pa.gov/preservation/about.