



DHR | Virginia Department of Historic Resources

Guide to the Essentials for Evaluating and Nominating a Property to the National Register of Historic Places and Virginia Landmarks Register¹

In order for a resource to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, it must be *significant*. The quality of *significance* in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess *integrity* of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and that *meet at least one* of the Criteria for Evaluation. When evaluating a property for National Register eligibility and preparing a National Register nomination, these are essential aspects of significance that must be considered:

- Criteria for Evaluation
- Criteria Considerations
- Area(s) of Significance
- Period of Significance
- Level of Significance
- Integrity

Criteria for Evaluation

There are four broad areas of Criteria for Evaluation that encompass the aspects for which a resource can be significant.

Criterion A. Applies to properties that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

Criterion B. Applies to properties that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Criterion C. Applies to properties 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.

Criterion D. Applies to properties that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

¹ Information contained in this guide is taken directly from National Register Bulletin 16A, *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, which was prepared by the National Park Service as a guide to researching and writing a National Register nomination for a historic property. The full text of the bulletin is published online at <http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/bulletins/nrb16a/>. The same criteria and nomination form are used for nominating a property to the Virginia Landmarks Register.

Criteria Considerations

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:

Criteria Consideration A. A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance.

Criteria Consideration 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.



1. Listed in the Registers in 2013, Elmwood Cemetery in Norfolk meets Criteria Considerations C and D.

Criteria Consideration C. A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life.

Criteria Consideration 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.

Criteria Consideration 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.

Criteria Consideration F. A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance.

Criteria Consideration G. A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.

Area(s) of Significance

The “area of significance” refers to the historic theme with which a property is associated under the applicable Criteria for Evaluation (Criterion A, B, C, and/or D, as listed above). A property must be associated with at least one area of significance to qualify for listing in the Registers. Following is a list of the areas of significance used by the National Park Service:

AGRICULTURE - The process and technology of cultivating soil, producing crops, and raising livestock and plants.

ARCHITECTURE - The practical art of designing and constructing buildings and structures to serve human needs.

ARCHEOLOGY - The study of prehistoric and historic cultures through excavation and the analysis of physical remains.

Prehistoric - Archeological study of aboriginal cultures before the advent of written records.

Historic - Archeological study of Aboriginal cultures after the advent of written records.

Historic - Archeological study of non-Aboriginal cultures after the advent of written records.

ART - The creation of painting, printmaking, photography, sculpture, and decorative arts.

COMMERCE - The business of trading goods, services, and commodities.

COMMUNICATIONS - The technology and process of transmitting information.

COMMUNITY PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - The design or development of the physical structure of communities.

CONSERVATION - The preservation, maintenance, and management of natural or manmade resources.

ECONOMICS - The study of the production, distribution, and consumption of wealth; the management of monetary and other assets.

EDUCATION - The process of conveying or acquiring knowledge or skills through systematic instruction, training, or study.

ENGINEERING - The practical application of scientific principles to design, construct, and operate equipment, machinery, and structures to serve human needs.

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION - The development and practice of leisure activities for refreshment, diversion, amusement, or sport.

ETHNIC HERITAGE - The history of persons having a common ethnic or racial identity.

Asian - The history of persons having origins in the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent.

African American/ Black - The history of persons having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.

European - The history of persons having origins in Europe.

Hispanic - The history of persons having origins in the Spanish-speaking areas of the Caribbean, Mexico, Central America, and South America.

Native American - The history of persons having origins in any of the original peoples of North America, including American Indian and American Eskimo cultural groups.

Pacific Islander - The history of persons having origins in the Pacific Islands, including Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia.

Other - The history of persons having origins in other parts of the world, such as the Middle East or North Africa.

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT - The investigation of unknown or little known regions; the establishment and earliest development of new settlements or communities.

HEALTH/MEDICINE - The care of the sick, disabled, and handicapped; the promotion of health and hygiene.

INDUSTRY - The technology and process of managing materials, labor, and equipment to produce goods and services.

INVENTION - The art of originating by experiment or ingenuity an object, system, or concept of practical value.

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE - The practical art of designing or arranging the land for human use and enjoyment.

LAW - The interpretation and enforcement of society's legal code.

LITERATURE - The creation of prose and poetry.

MARITIME HISTORY - The history of the exploration, fishing, navigation, and use of inland, coastal, and deep sea waters.

MILITARY - The system of defending the territory and sovereignty of a people.

PERFORMING ARTS - The creation of drama, dance, and music.

PHILOSOPHY - The theoretical study of thought, knowledge and the nature of the universe.

POLITICS/GOVERNMENT - The enactment and administration of laws by which a nation, State, or other political jurisdiction is governed; activities related to political process.

RELIGION - The organized system of beliefs, practices, and traditions regarding mankind's relationship to perceived supernatural forces.

SCIENCE - The systematic study of natural law and phenomena.

SOCIAL HISTORY - The history of efforts to promote the welfare of society; the history of society and the lifeways of its social groups.

TRANSPORTATION - The process and technology of conveying passengers or materials.



2. Barton Lodge was listed in the Registers in 2013 for its significance under Criteria A, B, and C in the areas of Commerce, Social History, and Architecture.

OTHER - Any area not covered by the above categories.

Period of Significance

The period of significance is the length of time when a property was associated with important events, activities, or persons, *or* attained the characteristics which qualify it for National Register listing. A period of significance usually begins with the date when significant activities or events began giving the property its historic significance; this is often a date of construction, a date of an event (i.e., a battle, opening of a business, establishment of a settlement, etc). For prehistoric properties, the period of significance is the broad span of time about which the site or district is likely to provide information; it is often the period associated with a particular cultural group.



3. The Stafford Training School was listed in the Registers in 2012-2013 under Criterion A for its significance in the areas of Education, Ethnic Heritage: African American, and Social History.

Examples:

Barton Lodge, 1898-1961 – begins with the construction date of the dwelling, and ends when the Lettie Pate Evans Foundation transferred the property to St. Luke’s Episcopal Church.

Stafford Training School, 1939-1966 – begins with the date of construction and ends with the racial desegregation of Stafford County public schools.

Level of Significance

On the National Register nomination form, there are three levels of significance. A property must have at least one level of significance. Occasionally a property may have more than one level of significance, depending on its history and characteristics.

Local significance – associated with local events, activities, and/or persons important to local history.

Statewide significance – associated with events, activities, and/or persons that reflect the history of the State and the ways in which the property is one of the best of similarly associated properties in the State to represent the theme.

National Significance – reflects an important aspect of the history of the Nation as a whole or has contributed in an exceptional way to the diverse geographical and cultural character of the Nation. National significance must be explained through a comparative analysis of how the property relates to other properties nationwide having similar associations. Association with a nationally important historic

person, such as George Washington, or historic event, such as the Vietnam War, or with a nationally significant architect, such as Frank Lloyd Wright, does not automatically bestow national significance on a resource. The resource itself must be demonstrated to have national significance through its historic associations.

Integrity

The term *integrity* refers to the ability of a property to convey its significance. Before the integrity of a property can be evaluated, a researcher must determine why, where, and when a property is significant, define the essential physical features that must be present for a property to represent its significance, and determine which aspects of integrity are most essential to the property being eligible.

Properties must retain the ability to communicate their significance through the following 7 aspects of integrity:

- Location - The place where the historic property was constructed or where the historic event occurred.
- Design - Combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.
- Setting - The physical environment of a property.
- Materials - Physical elements used at a particular time and in a particular pattern to form a historic property.
- Workmanship - Physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during a given period in history or prehistory.
- Feeling - The property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.
- Association - The direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.



4. Listed in the Registers in 2014, the Tangier Island Historic District is significant at the statewide level in the areas of Commerce; Ethnic Heritage: Native American, African American; Industry, Maritime, Military, and Religion, and at the local level in the areas of Architecture and Archaeology: Prehistoric and Historic.

In order to retain integrity a property must possess at least one, and typically several, of these aspects.

Integrity and condition are not the same. A property can have physically deteriorated condition yet retain integrity. A property that has been updated repeatedly over the years may lose integrity unless care has been taken to retain historic fabric and features. This applies to buildings, sites, structures, objects, and historic districts.

Archaeological integrity:

An archaeological site must retain intact soils and cultural deposits, that is, the soil stratigraphy (layers) have not been disturbed by erosion or man-made forces, thereby making it possible to read the site. A site must retain scientific integrity – it must have the potential to tell us something important in history or prehistory.