



Facts Regarding Historic Districts Listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register and National Register of Historic Places

Historic District Designation Summary:

1. Increases public awareness of a community's historic resources and encourages preservation;
2. Does not restrict in any way the private property owner using private funds;
3. Mitigates the negative impact of federal government-funded projects;
4. Provides financial benefits, mainly in the form of tax incentives and easements.

1. Listing a historic district in the Virginia Landmarks Register and/or National Register of Historic Places officially recognizes the cultural, architectural, and landscape features of a historically significant area, bringing them to the attention of the community, state, and nation. Ideally, listing furthers community efforts to preserve the area's historic and natural features.
2. Listing a historic district in the Registers does not restrict an owner's use of his or her property in any way as long as private, non-government funds are used. It does not, for example, prohibit any owner from altering or demolishing any buildings, nor does it restrict subdivision or sale. Register listing does not require a property to be open to the public.
3. Register listing can help lessen the negative impact on a historic property from federal government projects. By law, an environmental review is required for any federally funded, licensed, or permitted projects – such as road building, utility installation, and public housing projects. Also, certain state projects are reviewed for their impact on historic resources. If any project is deemed to have an adverse effect on historic buildings, archaeological sites, or landscape features within a historic district, those impacts must be considered and mitigated to the extent possible.
4. Register listing confers financial benefits on historic district property owners. First, it allows the owner of a contributing building within the historic district to claim state investment tax credits for certified rehabilitations. The rehabilitation tax credits are dollar-for-dollar reductions in income tax liability for taxpayers who rehabilitate historic buildings. Owners of income-producing historic resources also may apply for federal tax credits. Additionally, owners of Register-listed properties may be eligible for certain federal grants and programs designated for historic preservation, when available. Properties listed in the Virginia Landmarks Register also are eligible for DHR's historic preservation easement program.

Additional information is available at the Department of Historic Resources Register program webpage, <http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/register/register.htm>.

Further information about the National Register of Historic Places is available at <https://www.nps.gov/nr/>.

What National Register Historic District Designation Does Not Do

- It does **not** prevent an owner from making changes to their property.
- It does not prevent an owner from demolishing their property.
- It does **not** require an owner to restore or renovate their property.
- It does **not** restrict an owner's use of his or her property.
- It does **not** automatically preserve a building or keep a property from being demolished.
- By itself, it does **not** increase or decrease property values or taxes. (Property values and consequently property taxes are influenced by many factors including location, improvements, supply and demand, zoning, surroundings, local and national economic conditions, business cycles, and actions of national, state, and local governments.)

Selecting Boundaries for Historic Districts

A historic district is a collection of resources (buildings, sites, structures, objects) that share a similar period of development and physical character. The boundaries for a historic district are delineated by evaluating the following elements:

- Physical, natural boundaries – rivers, lakes, hills, valleys, etc.
- Manmade features – roads, highways, etc.
- Political boundaries – corporation lines, wards, etc.
- Age of the resources (generally at least fifty years old).
- Architectural style of the buildings.
- Associations with significant persons, cultural groups, or historical events.
- Integrity – how much has been lost to demolition or incompatible development.