

Frequently Asked Questions about Historic Preservation and Historic Properties

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

Properties eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places generally must be fifty years old or older, and must meet the following criteria of significance and integrity.

Criteria of Significance: Properties are evaluated in relationship to major historic and prehistoric themes in a community, state, or the nation. A property may be significant if it relates to any one or more of the following four aspects of American history:

- (A) Association with historic events or activities,
- (B) Association with an important person in history,
- (C) Distinctive design or physical character, or
- (D) Potential to provide important information about prehistory or history.

Criteria of Integrity: A property must also maintain enough of the original qualities that make it significant. These qualities of integrity include: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

How do I nominate a property to the National and/or Arizona Register of Historic Places?

Any individual, organization, government office, consultant, or public entity may prepare and submit a National Register Nomination. Nomination forms and instruction booklets have been prepared by the Department of the Interior, National Park Service and are available through the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) at <http://azstateparks.com/shpo/nationalregister.html> or National Park Service at <http://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/forms.htm>.

The National Register Coordinator and other staff at the State Historic Preservation Office are available to provide technical assistance. Completed forms are submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office for review and referral to the Arizona Historic Sites Review Committee.

The Arizona Historic Sites Review Committee (HSRC) is Arizona's official State and National Register of Historic Places review board as mandated by state law and federal regulations. Its nine members represent the fields of history, archaeology, architecture and related fields. The committee typically holds public meetings three times a year to review nominations and advise the State Historic Preservation Officer on properties that should be placed in the National and Arizona Registers of Historic Places. Once a nomination has been reviewed and approved by the Arizona Historic Sites Review Committee, the property is placed in the Arizona Register of Historic Places and forwarded to the Keeper of the National Register for a final review and listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

What are the benefits of having a property listed in the National Register of Historic Places?

Local communities, states and the nation benefit from having tangible links to the past events, people, and artistic expressions that have molded the character of our nation.

- Listing is recognition of a property's importance in local, regional, or national history.
- Property owners are eligible for a number of grant and tax incentives as well as technical assistance in rehabilitation and maintenance of their historic property.
- Listing properties has financial benefits for communities by contributing to the revitalization of neighborhoods and business districts and by promoting tourism.
- Property owners may be eligible for a property tax reduction through enrollment in the State Historic Property Tax Reclassification Program.

How does listing in the National or State Register of Historic Places protect and preserve a property?

- Recognition and appreciation of historic properties and their importance.
- Consideration in state or federal project planning and in state or federally assisted projects.
- Eligibility for federal and state tax benefits.
- Consideration in decisions to issue federal permits.
- Qualification for federal and state grant assistance.

If my home is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, will I be prohibited from making changes to my property?

No, you are not prohibited from making changes to your home. In order to ensure that the changes you make do not negatively affect the historic integrity of your property and cause your property to be delisted from the Register, the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Office recommend that you follow the Secretary of Interior's Standards. Contact the State Historic Preservation Office for technical assistance http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/rehab/rehab_standards.htm .

How are properties worthy of nomination to the National and State Registers identified?

Surveys to identify National Register Properties and the documentation of these properties for the inventory is accomplished in a number of ways including: By the SHPO staff, through grants, by consultants, by Certified Local Governments, by state and federal agencies complying with state and federal legislation, and by neighborhood associations and private property owners. The State Historic Preservation Office provides inventory forms that are used to document pertinent information about the property. The SHPO reviews documentation provided and makes a determination of eligibility for the National and/or State Registers of Historic Places.

Who maintains the list of eligible properties and properties listed in the National and State Registers of Historic Places?

The State Historic Preservation Office maintains an inventory and documentation for properties listed on the Arizona and National Registers of Historic Places. The office also maintains a listing of properties that have been determined Register-eligible.

How much time does it take to nominate a property to the Register?

This depends on the type and location of the property, among other things. The nominator frequently must research and photograph the property and must complete the required forms and submit them to the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (<http://azstateparks.com/shpo>), where the nomination is reviewed by staff and scheduled for review and approval by the State Historic Review Committee, which meets at least three times a year. National Register nominations are approved by the National Park Service in Washington, D.C. All of this can take about one and a half years.

What are the sources of assistance available to assist me with my National Register property?

Grants Programs:

- Certified Local Government (CLG) grants: Ten percent of the Historic Preservation Fund Grant allocated annually to the states by Congress is passed through to Certified Local Governments (CLG) for matching grant-in-aid projects. Grants are awarded through a competitive process administered through the State Historic Preservation Office for activities such as: survey, inventory, stabilization, documentation, National Register nomination, rehabilitation, and planning. Depending on the availability of federal funds allocated, survey and planning grants may also be available. Funding for the Historic Preservation Fund Grant Program does not come from taxpayers' money, but from fees for offshore mineral leases.

Tax Incentive Programs:

- The State Historic Property Tax Reclassification Program is designed to aid residential and commercial entities that seek to maintain and/or rehabilitate National Register-certified properties. The non-income producing portion of the program offered a reclassification of property effectively reducing up to fifty percent the tax assessment for owners of buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The owner of the property enters into a 15-year agreement with the state under which the property must be maintained according to the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and must be used for non-income producing purposes. The non-income producing component aids property owners who are rehabilitating commercial properties by freezing their tax base for ten years. This allows property owners to make improvements that will increase the usage and value of the building without significant property tax increases. Again the owner must maintain the property according to the Secretary of Interior's Standards.
- The Federal Investment Tax Credit Program authorizes a twenty percent investment tax credit for substantial rehabilitation of commercial historic properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The rehabilitation plans and specifications are reviewed and approved by the State Historic Preservation Office and then are forwarded to the National Park Service for final certification.

How do I enroll in the State Historic Property Tax Reclassification Program?

Owners of properties in Historic Districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and who are living in contributing properties to the historic districts, are eligible to enroll in the state's Historic Property Tax Reclassification Program, which will **reduce their annual property tax between 40 and 45 percent**. Learn more at: <http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/hcd/owners-historic-properties>.

How do I know if I am getting the property tax break and if I am enrolled in the State Historic Property Tax Reclassification Program?

The best way to tell if you are receiving the property tax break is to start by reviewing either your tax bill from the assessor's office or by searching your property on the Pima County Assessor's web site (<http://www.asr.co.pima.az.us/>). Next, review the category for Legislative Class and assessment ratio. If your property is enrolled in the program, the Legislative Class should be the number "6" and the assessment ratio should be 5%. Residential properties that are not enrolled in this program will display a Legislative Class of 3 or 4 and have an assessment ratio of 10%.

If you are not receiving the property tax break and your residential property is a contributor to a historic district, you can obtain a copy of the form at: <http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/hcd/owners-historic-properties>. You must submit your enrollment forms to the Pima County Assessor's office by August 31st.

Do I get a plaque for my historic building if it is listed in the National Register?

The National Register does *not* maintain a plaque program for listed properties, but many owners of local, state, or nationally registered houses often mount a plaque on their property. A number of private companies manufacture suitable plaques.

Can I demolish my historic building?

Yes, but within the City of Tucson, architectural documentation is required for issuance of a demolition permit for any building 50 years of age or older. Please contact the Tucson Historic Preservation Office for more information at 520-837-6961 or 520-837-6968.

How do I schedule Historic Design Review for my historic property located within a Historic Preservation Zone?

Contact Frank Dillon, Lead Planner at City of Tucson Development Services Department; phone: 520-837-6957 or email: Frank.Dillon@tucsonaz.gov. To find out more about Tucson's Historic Preservation Zones: <http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/preservation/historicpreservationzones>.

What are the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation?

The Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings are excellent resources for all work done on historic homes. These guidelines are used to determine whether the historic character of a building is preserved in the process of rehabilitation. The guidelines recommend responsible methods and approaches and list treatments that should be avoided. A copy can be obtained from your State Historic Preservation office or online at:

http://www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/rehab/rehab_standards.htm

Do You Have Tips for Choosing an Architect or Contractor?

The Arizona State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and statewide preservation organization will be an excellent resource for you, as they will know of architects and contractors who have worked on historic buildings in your state.

How do I find out if my home is historic?

By using the Tucson Historic Preservation Office's helpful interactive online mapping tools, you can find Assessor's effective dates of construction, historic district boundaries, and links to historic property documentation. Click the following link to learn more

[:http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/preservation/historicdistrictsandproperties](http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/preservation/historicdistrictsandproperties)

How do I research the history of my home?

- Search for deeds, tax records, property abstracts, and maps to determine your house's previous owners and the history of the building. City or county records offices can help you begin.
- Look through city directories, census records, and insurance maps for information on the house's previous owners. The public library and local historical society will have this information.
- Conduct a search of the house and its yard. An architect or archaeologist can offer advice as to what to look for, and don't forget to search the rafters and crawl spaces for records the former owners may have left behind.
- To determine whether the house is a designated historic structure on the local, state, or national level, or to find out if it is within a historic district, contact your State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) or go to the following: .
<http://cms3.tucsonaz.gov/preservation/historicdistrictsandproperties>
- If your house is in a historic district, you may need local approval to make any changes to the exterior. Ask the City of Tucson Historic Preservation Office.
- For additional tips on researching the history of your home, please visit the National Trust Library's website at this link: www.lib.umd.edu/NTL/Houseguide/index.html