



# Listing a Property in the National Register of Historic Places in Michigan: An Overview of the Process and Requirements

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## Introduction

Thank you for your interest in listing a historical property in the National Register of Historic Places. This document is meant to provide an overview of the process and requirements for listing a place in the National Register. Just as each historic place is different, the process from initial inquiry to preliminary evaluation to listing in the National Register will vary from one degree to another. This document is not meant to cover every variation in the process or every property type. Rather, it is meant to provide general information for the most common types of properties and experiences so that property owners, developers, officials, and preparers of nominations can better plan their projects. We encourage anyone with questions about listing a property in the National Register to contact SHPO staff as early in the process as possible.

## Overview

In general, the process of listing property in the National Register includes the following steps:

1. Completion of a *National Register of Historic Places Preliminary Questionnaire* (available at [www.michigan.gov/nrhp](http://www.michigan.gov/nrhp)), and evaluation of the property's eligibility for listing in the National Register by SHPO staff.
2. Preparation of a National Register nomination (*National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, maps, photographs, etc.) by the applicant, or a consultant hired by the applicant.
3. Review and approval of the nomination materials by SHPO staff (please note that multiple drafts are typical for all nominations and historic districts often require more drafts than individual properties).
4. Presentation of the property to the State Historic Preservation Review Board for its approval, by the applicant, or a consultant hired by the applicant.
5. Submission of the nomination materials to the Keeper of the National Register by SHPO.
6. Listing of the property in the National Register of Historic Places by the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places.

Each of these steps is explained in greater detail in the following pages. Please note that this document is not an exhaustive manual or guide to completing a National Register nomination in Michigan, it is meant simply as an overview of the process. For more information on completing a National Register nomination, please see [General Guidance and Requirements for National Register of Historic Places Nominations in Michigan](#).

## Timeframe

Listing a property in the National Register of Historic Places is not a quick process. In the most advantageous situation, the process will take several months. Typically, the process takes between twelve and eighteen months, but the length of time depends upon a great many factors. This timeframe takes into consideration research and preparing a preliminary questionnaire to listing in the National Register of Historic Places by the Keeper of the National Register. Preparers can minimize the time it takes to complete the nomination process by reviewing applicable NPS and SHPO guidance both prior to and during the nomination process. Several documents can be found at the National Register program page at the SHPO website, [www.michigan.gov/nrhp](http://www.michigan.gov/nrhp).

### **The National Register of Historic Places Preliminary Questionnaire and evaluation by SHPO staff.**

If the property has not been evaluated by SHPO, the place to begin is the with *National Register of Historic Places Preliminary Questionnaire*, found at the National Register page of our website, [www.michigan.gov/nrhp](http://www.michigan.gov/nrhp).

In some cases, SHPO staff evaluated a property as eligible for listing in the National Register some ten, twenty, or thirty or more years ago. When SHPO opinions (sometimes referred to as “determinations”) are ten or more years old, a *National Register of Historic Places Preliminary Questionnaire* is required for our opinion.

Once the necessary materials have been gathered and the preliminary questionnaire has been completed, please send it to SHPO (see Submission of Materials to SHPO at the end of this document for more information).

While SHPO staff will make every effort to review preliminary questionnaires within thirty days, workloads, resources, and project complexity may result in additional review time. We encourage applicants to plan for between forty-five and sixty days for SHPO to review a questionnaire.

After we have reviewed the questionnaire, we will provide our formal opinion by letter. In some cases, we may request additional information before completing an evaluation. Once we receive the additional information, we will continue our review, and provide our opinion by letter.

If we evaluate the property as appearing to meet the criteria for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, we will encourage you to proceed with preparing a full *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (NPS Form 10-900) and accompanying documentation needed to nominate the property.

## Preparing a National Register Nomination

### *National Park Service Guidance*

Preparing a National Register of Historic Places nomination requires the developing a package of materials (the nomination) that includes a *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, photographs, maps, and, sometimes, other documentation.

Please visit the National Register's official website, [www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm](http://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/index.htm), for the following basic tools:

- NPS Form 10-900, *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* template (available only in Microsoft Word)
- National Register Bulletin 16A, *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form* – the basic NPS “how-to” manual for preparing a nomination
- National Register Bulletin 15, *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*
- National Register Bulletins 12 and 21, *Defining Boundaries for National Register Properties* (with Appendix, Definition of National Register Boundaries for Archeological Properties)
- National Register Bulletin 39, *Researching a Historic Property*

Preparers are also encouraged to review the additional bulletins and guidance and sample nominations found on the National Park Service's website. SHPO may also be able to provide sample registration forms, maps, and so on that can assist in the preparation of a new nomination.

### *SHPO Guidance*

In addition to reviewing National Park Service guidance, preparers should also review SHPO guidance, available at the National Register page of the SHPO website, [www.michigan.gov/nrhp](http://www.michigan.gov/nrhp). In particular, preparers should review:

- *General Guidance and Requirements for National Register of Historic Places Nominations in Michigan*
- *Photograph Requirements for National Register Nominations in Michigan*
- *Map Requirements for National Register Nominations in Michigan*
- *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Pre-Submission Self-Review Checklist*
- *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Package Checklist*
- *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Deadline Calendar*
- *Michigan State Historic Preservation Office Style Guide*

Reviewing these documents prior to beginning, and referencing these documents throughout, the nomination process will foster an efficient and successful process.

### *Sample Nominations*

Sample nominations are available at the National Register page of the National Park Service website and through SHPO. SHPO recommends reviewing applicable, listed nominations prior to completing both the preliminary questionnaire and the NRHP registration form. In some cases, we will provide sample nominations for dissimilar property types when they demonstrate important aspects of a nomination. For example, an applicant may nominate a bank building, but we may send a completed nomination for an apartment building because it demonstrates concepts like historic context and comparative analysis better than existing bank building nominations.

### *Thematic Nominations and Context Documents*

One of the keys to successfully completing a National Register nomination is the development of a historic context. Historic context provides the framework for evaluating the significance of place, and thus determining its eligibility for listing in the National Register. This concept is explained in detail in the NPS and SHPO documentation described previously. The SHPO website, contains a number of thematic nominations and context documents that may aid in completion of a preliminary questionnaire or a nomination. These documents are available at: <https://www.michigan.gov/historic-preservation/programs-and-services/national-register-of-historic-places/michigan-thematic-contexts/>.

### *Who Prepares the National Register Nomination?*

Due to workload and resources, SHPO staff prepares few nominations in-house. It is the interested party's responsibility to complete the necessary research and prepare the nomination package. In some cases, it is advantageous to hire a professional historic preservation consultant.

SHPO cannot proceed with the process of nominating a property to the National Register until the application is complete and in final form. See the list of required items to complete the National Register nomination package under **Before We Place Your Property on the Agenda for a State Historic Preservation Review Board Meeting** below.

Property owners interested in hiring a professional consultant may refer to, [Consultants Meeting Federal Qualifications for Archaeology, History, and Architectural History](#), the SHPO list of consultants who meet federal qualifications for these disciplines. Please note that inclusion in this list does NOT constitute endorsement, approval, or certification on any firm or individual by SHPO, the State of Michigan, or any agency thereof. It is a list of individuals who meet minimum federal professional qualifications as described in 36 CFR Part 61. When selecting a consultant, we recommend soliciting multiple quotations, checking references, and reviewing work samples, as experience and expertise vary. The SHPO list of consultants is also available at the bottom of the National Register page of the SHPO website, [www.michigan.gov/nrhp](http://www.michigan.gov/nrhp).

### ***Submitting a First Draft of the Nomination***

Once a first draft of the nomination – registration form, photographs, maps, etc. – has been completed, we encourage preparers to review the materials against the [National Register of Historic Places Nomination Pre-Submission Self-Review Checklist](#), found on our website. This checklist is not required and does not need to be submitted with the nomination materials. The checklist is a tool that addresses many of the general aspects of a nomination that SHPO staff considers during their review. Please note, the checklist is not a complete set of requirements, nor does use of the checklist constitute a completed or approved nomination or that the property will be listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

When submitting a first draft of a nomination, please provide a completed *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, a draft set of photographs, draft locational maps, and all other items noted in the [National Register of Historic Places Nomination Package Checklist](#), found at the National Register page of the SHPO website.

**SHPO staff will review the nomination materials and respond to you with our comments, questions, and advice.** Due to the number of preliminary questionnaires and nominations we receive and SHPO capacity, we may not be able to review all projects as quickly as we would all like. We fully understand delays are frustrating, and SHPO staff will make every effort to review questionnaires and nominations within a reasonable amount of time, but applicants should plan for between forty-five and sixty days for SHPO staff to review the preliminary questionnaire.

SHPO staff uses the Track Changes feature of Microsoft Word and may provide a separate evaluation letter that provides additional information. Once SHPO has reviewed the draft nomination materials, the review nomination form and the evaluation letter will be sent to the preparer. Once the preparer has addressed the revisions, the revised draft nomination should be sent to SHPO for review. This process repeats until the nomination is complete.

**A note on site visits:** unless SHPO staff is familiar with the property, a site visit may be necessary during the nomination process as it may facilitate review of the preliminary questionnaire and the nomination.

### ***Before We Place Your Property on the Agenda for a State Historic Preservation Review Board Meeting***

Applicants and their consultants should review the [National Register of Historic Places Nomination Deadline Calendar](#) and the [National Register of Historic Places Nomination Package Checklist](#). The deadline calendar provides useful dates for developing a timeframe for your project, and the submission checklist enumerates all of the materials that are needed before a nomination package is considered **complete and in final form**. “Complete and in final form” means that the final version of the nomination incorporates all revisions noted by SHPO staff.

## **Presentation to the State Historic Preservation Review Board**

The process of nominating a property to the National Register of Historic Places includes review and consideration of the property and the nomination package by the [State Historic Preservation Review Board](#). Part of this review includes the presentation of the property and nomination to the Review Board at one of its meetings, which are currently held three times per year.

The presentation to the board (and by extension, the public) is made by the property owner or their consultant through a short presentation using electronic images in a Microsoft PowerPoint presentation. SHPO staff does not present nominations to the board. Presentations of individual properties are limited to no more than seven (7) minutes. Presentations of historic districts are limited to no more than ten (10) minutes.

Guidelines on preparing a presentation to the review board are available upon request.

### ***Notification Requirements for Nominations***

Prior to the meeting of the State Historic Preservation Review Board, SHPO must notify certain individuals that we intend to nominate the property for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. For single-property nominations preparers must provide correct mailing information for each full or partial property owner, the chief elected official of the county, and the chief elected official of the municipality in which the property is located.

For historic district nominations preparers must provide correct mailing information for each full or partial owner of property within the historic district, including noncontributing buildings and vacant parcels; the chief elected official of the county; and the chief elected official of the municipality in which the property is located. For each property the list must provide both the property address and the owner's correct mailing address. In addition to a complete mailing address, the list must contain: the appropriate salutation (Mr., Mrs., Dr., Rev., and so on) the full name of the individual, and their title. Telephone numbers and email addresses are not needed. For districts containing twenty or more properties, the mailing list must be provided in .xls or .xlsx (Microsoft Excel) format.

SHPO provides written notification to property owners, local elected officials, and other interested parties. This notice includes a statement of our intent to nominate the property as well as the date, time, and place of the Review Board meeting. Recipients are invited to attend the meeting and submit comments relative to the nomination of the property. Notifications also include a list of property owner rights and the results of listing a property in the National Register.

For properties in non-Certified Local Government (CLG) communities, notification is sent between 30 and 75 days prior to the Review Board meeting date.

For properties in CLG communities, SHPO sends notification between 60 and 120 days prior to the Review Board meeting date. For a list of CLG communities in Michigan, please visit [the Certified Local Government webpage of the SHPO website](#).

In the case of historic districts with more than fifty property owners, federal regulations allow SHPO to publish a general notice in a local newspaper in lieu of sending individual letters to owners. Applicants or sponsors of historic districts with more than fifty property owners are responsible for the cost of the placing the general notice.

## **Submission of the Nomination to the National Park Service and Listing in the National Register of Historic Places**

Once the nomination materials have been approved by the Review Board and State Historic Preservation Officer, they are forwarded to the National Register of Historic Places, National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior. NPS historians review and act on nominations within 45 days of receipt. A nomination may be approved, returned for revision, or returned as not eligible for listing in the National Register. Returned nominations are revised by the preparer. In the event of a returned nomination, SHPO staff will contact the preparer to discuss NPS comments and the required revisions. SHPO is informed of new National Register listings weekly by email, and notifies the property owner, preparer, and the parties noted above by letter as soon thereafter as possible.

## **Other Information**

### ***A Note on File Types and Applications***

The State of Michigan utilizes the Microsoft Office suite of applications. The *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* must be submitted in Microsoft Word .doc or .docx format. Registration forms submitted in PDF, or another, format will be returned to the preparer.

Photographs may be submitted in JPEG, TIFF, or RAW format.

Maps and figures may be submitted in JPG or PDF format.

Review Board presentations must be submitted in Microsoft PowerPoint .ppt or .pptx format.

### ***Submission of Materials to SHPO***

Preliminary questionnaires, first drafts, and final materials may be submitted to SHPO on either a USB drive (also referred to as a “flash” or “thumb” drive) or a CD or DVD. The SHPO will generally communicate with applicants via email during the nomination process on the best way of transmitting nomination materials.

All photographs, materials, and media (CDs, USB drives, etc.) submitted to the SHPO become the property of SHPO and will not be returned. Additionally, submitted materials, including photographs, may be used in printed or digital promotional materials.



Please send the completed questionnaire or nomination package to:

National Register Coordinator  
State Historic Preservation Office  
300 North Washington Square  
Lansing, Michigan 48913.

***Deadlines***

Please see the [Nomination Deadline Calendar](#), found on the National Register page of the SHPO website for a list of dates and prospective dates of upcoming meetings of the State Historic Preservation Review Board as well as a list of deadline dates for completed nominations.