

STATE OF NEW MEXICO

## DEPARTMENT OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS HISTORIC PRESERVATION DIVISION

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### National Register of Historic Places: Identifying and Preserving the Cultural Heritage of New Mexico

The National Register is our country's official list of historic buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts worthy of preservation. The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) nominates eligible properties in New Mexico to the National Register so they can receive preservation benefits and incentives. The National Register is maintained nationally by the U.S. Department of the Interior.

Being listed in the National Register helps preserve historic properties. It provides formal recognition of a property's historical, architectural, or archaeological significance based on national standards used in every state. National Register designation identifies significant historic properties that can be taken into account in a broad range of preservation and development activities. It also insures that these properties will be considered in the planning of state or federally assisted projects.

#### Properties listed in the National Register may qualify for specific preservation benefits and incentives, including:

- State and federal preservation grants for planning and rehabilitation
- Federal and state investment tax credits
- Preservation easements to nonprofit organizations
- Fire and life-safety code compliance alternatives

National Register listing does not place obligations on private property owners, nor does it place restrictions on the use, treatment, transfer, or disposition of private property. National Register listing does not lead to public acquisition of property nor does it require public access to property.

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 of age) and that it still look much the way it was in the past. In addition, the property must be:

- associated with events, activities, or developments that were important in the past; or
- associated with the lives of people who were important in the past; or
- significant in the areas of architectural history, landscape history, or engineering; or
- have the potential to yield information through archaeological investigation that would answer questions about our past.

Certain kinds of properties, such as moved or reconstructed buildings, are generally not eligible for National Register listing; exceptions are made if these properties meet special criteria.

## **The National Register Does . . .**

- Identify significant buildings, structures, sites, objects and districts according to the National Register Criteria.
- Encourage the preservation of historic properties by documenting their significance.
- Provide information about historic resources for planning purposes.
- Facilitate the review of federally funded, licensed, or permitted projects to determine their effects on historic properties.
- Assist state government agencies in determining whether their projects will affect historic properties.
- Make owners of historic properties eligible to apply for federal grants for historic preservation projects.
- Provide federal and state tax benefits to owners of taxable historic properties if they rehabilitate their properties according to preservation standards.
- Ensure that listed properties are considered in decisions by the State of New Mexico, counties, and municipalities (NMSA 1978, 1989, 1992).
- Allow consideration of fire and life-safety code compliance alternatives when rehabilitating historic buildings.
- List properties only if they meet the National Register Criteria for evaluation.

## **The National Register Does Not . . .**

- Restrict the rights of private property owners or require that properties be maintained, repaired or restored.
- Require property owners to follow preservation standards when working on their properties, unless they wish to qualify for tax benefits.
- List individual properties if the owner objects, or list historic districts if the majority of property owners object.
- Automatically invoke local historic district zoning or local landmark designation.
- Stop federally assisted government projects.
- Stop state assisted development projects. Guarantee that grant funds will be available for all properties or projects.
- Automatically stop the permitting of surface mining activities.
- Mandate that special consideration be given to compliance with life safety and fire codes.
- List individual properties if the owner objects, or list historic districts if the majority of property owners object.
- Provide a marker or plaque for historic properties. Property owners may obtain markers or plaques at their own expense.

In New Mexico, properties are nominated to the National Register by HPD. HPD invites nomination proposals from property owners, historical societies, preservation organizations, civic and business associations, governmental agencies, and other individuals or groups who are interested in using the National Register to preserve historic properties. Individuals, organizations, and agencies requesting National Register nominations carry out research and provide supporting documentation meeting state and federal standards with guidance and assistance from HPD. Proposed nominations are reviewed by HPD and the Cultural Properties Review Committee. Approved nominations are listed in the State Register of Cultural Properties and submitted by HPD to the National Park Service in Washington, D.C. for final review and listing in the National Register.

**For questions visit our website [nmpreservation.org](http://nmpreservation.org) or contact Steven Moffson, State and National Register Coordinator at (505) 476-0444 or [steven.moffson@state.nm.us](mailto:steven.moffson@state.nm.us)**