

# New York State and National Registers of Historic Places

## HELP FOR NOMINATION SPONSORS: INDIVIDUAL RESOURCES



Thank you for contacting the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). We welcome your interest in proposing a property for nomination to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. Listing benefits properties by providing them with recognition and honor, ensuring that they are included in local planning decisions, and, in some cases, by providing eligibility for various preservation incentives.

The National Register of Historic Places (National Register) was established under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and its counterpart, the State Register of Historic Places, was established under the New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980. New York leads the nation in the National Register program, with more than 6,000 listings, including approximately 120,000 properties. The New York SHPO prides itself on the number, quality, and diversity of our nominations, representing themes important in the history of the nation, the state, and in numerous small villages and hamlets across New York. From architecture to space travel, from ancient archaeological sites to the Urban Renewal projects of the recent past, from sites associated with the Underground Railroad to those associated with LGBT civil rights, the National Register is intended to recognize everyone's history.

Preparing a National Register nomination for an individual property is the responsibility of the sponsor and can be a lengthy process. Our job is to help and guide you every step of the way, from reviewing your preliminary application, to presenting your project to one of the four quarterly meetings of the New York State Board for Historic Preservation (SRB), to preparing it for final submission to the National Park Service. *Occasionally*, National Register staff is able to take a more active role in individual nominations, depending on the resource's preservation needs, staff priorities and workloads, and the abilities of the sponsor. The most successful projects are the result of collaborative work; it is always the sponsor's role to provide the research and documentation needed to support a property's eligibility.

Please let us know if you have any questions. For information and assistance, visit [parks.ny.gov/shpo](https://parks.ny.gov/shpo) or call **518-237-8643** to identify your National Register representative, who will be your primary point of contact for the project.



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## WHO CAN SPONSOR A NOMINATION?

Many nominations for individual properties are sponsored by their owners, often an individual, family, or other group. Other times, a nomination may be sponsored by a historical society, church group, non-profit, developer, business, municipality, or one of many other interested parties. Although anyone may sponsor a nomination, the State Historic Preservation Office requires that all owners be informed at the beginning of the process, and sponsors will need to demonstrate owner support before they begin the nomination.

## GETTING STARTED



The first step in sponsoring a nomination for an individual resource is to discuss the project with the National Register representative for your county. These discussions are important. Your representative may already be familiar with the property, the area, or the local context, and/or may already have documentation about it or similar properties on file. A thorough discussion may give the representative a good idea of potential eligibility or at least a direction to guide you for further research. The representative may want to schedule a site visit before the application is completed. A frank discussion of your preservation goals and objectives may also help your representative advise you on other preservation options. Upon learning

your goals, the representative might suggest that something else should be done before, or even instead of, National Register listing.

## HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE TO GET MY PROPERTY LISTED?

It depends! Nomination and listing on the State and National Registers is a lengthy process that varies depending on the complexity of the project, the skill of the applicant and/or consultant, and the workload of the National Register representative. The process from start to finish can take a year or two, if not longer for complex projects. The increasing popularity and widespread use of preservation incentives has led to an extremely high demand for preservation assistance that staff cannot always meet. You can help expedite your project by engaging the services of a good preservation consultant, providing high quality research, and sending in complete materials promptly. Staff are eager to work with engaged sponsors. As the expert on your project, with the best access to local archives and materials, your active participation in developing the nomination is essential to moving the process along more quickly.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND INTEGRITY

To be considered eligible for the National Register, properties must meet one of four criteria *and* retain integrity. In short, significance + integrity = eligibility. The criteria require that a property be associated with an important event or theme; or an important person; or represent an important design/type/method of construction in architecture, landscape or engineering; or provide information about the past through archaeology. Properties can meet more than one of these criteria, but at least one is required for nomination. Properties can be nominated individually, in districts, or as part of multiple property nominations, depending on their individual circumstances. Although they must *generally* be more than 50 years old, there is a process for evaluating properties that have not reached that threshold.

Although there are many ways of preparing a nomination package, sponsors must demonstrate how a property is associated with an important theme in local, state or national history and that it is intact enough to illustrate that theme. A school, for example, might be associated with educational history (the development of local school districts in a town or school consolidation in a county), and it might also represent architectural history (how architects incorporated new education department regulations for health and safety or the popularity of colonial revival design in the 1920s). To be eligible, the school must also retain the features that illustrate these themes. Even if a resource is associated with a very important event, if it is so changed that you can no longer understand how the event took place, it will not meet the eligibility criteria. A school that has been gutted, for example, can no longer illustrate how classrooms were laid out for maximum light and air.



### Seven Aspects of Integrity:

- Location
- Design
- Setting
- Materials
- Workmanship
- Feeling
- Association



What does it mean for a historic property to have integrity? Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. The National Register breaks integrity down into seven aspects reflecting a holistic approach to understanding a resource. The location and setting of a rural schoolhouse, for example, provides information about the community that used it. Changes to design, materials, and plan can make it hard to understand how a building was designed or used. Can the building shown on the right still provide information about Greek Revival style architecture?

## THE STATE AND NATIONAL REGISTER PROCESS IN NEW YORK STATE

This is a brief outline of the process for listing a property on the State and National Registers. Details are explained below.

1. **Discuss** the proposed listing with your county's National Register representative.
2. Submit an **application for NR listing**, which consists of the preliminary information form and the statement of owner support, preferably through CRIS, the SHPO's online cultural resources data base. Applications may also be submitted through the mail.
3. Wait for your National Register representative to **evaluate the eligibility** of the property and contact you to discuss it.
4. Develop a **draft nomination** under the guidance of the National Register representative. Your representative will provide a **required items checklist** for the nomination.
5. When the draft meets all documentary requirements, the National Register representative will **schedule an official review** by the New York State Board for Historic Preservation (SRB).
6. The SHPO will **notify owners and officials**.
7. If the **SRB** believes the property is eligible, it will **recommend that it be nominated** to the National Register.
8. Final documents will be presented to the State Historic Preservation Officer for review and approval; if the officer concurs with the board, he or she will **list the property on the State Register and nominate it to the National Register**.
9. The nomination will be **sent to the National Park Service (NPS)**.
10. NPS will review the nomination and, if it concurs, **list the property on the National Register**.
11. **Final notifications** will be sent out.
12. **Celebrate** the listing!



Metholatum Company Building, Buffalo, Erie Co  
Listed on the State & National Registers, 2017

## THE PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM

The **PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM** is a brief questionnaire that asks about the property's type, function, materials, physical appearance, and location on a map; it also asks for a brief overview of its history and significance and an idea about which National Register criteria you believe it meets. A good application will be based on research, provide accurate information, and have clear representative photos of the building (exterior and interior), any outbuildings, and its setting. Once staff has informed you that the proposed property meets the criteria for listing, your representative will also discuss the appropriate themes, period of significance, contributing and non-contributing features, boundary, and other aspects of the proposed nomination. He or she will also present additional research needs or questions if necessary. If he/she hasn't already, the representative will schedule a site visit. After the application has been thoroughly vetted, then you are ready to prepare the draft nomination. You will be given a checklist of required material.



Stillwater Mountain Fire Observation Station, Webb, Herkimer County  
Listed on the State & National Registers, 2017

## THE NOMINATION

Many nomination sponsors hire a professional consultant to prepare the National Register nomination (or even the application) for them. This is not required; however, it can expedite the process. The SHPO cannot recommend specific consultants, but you can ask your state or regional historic preservation nonprofit for this information. We strongly urge you to check references before hiring anyone. Make sure that the applicant has *completed* a project of similar size or complexity. The SHPO is responsible for ensuring that the nomination meets documentation standards established by the National Park Service. Nominations should be clear and well written, address the registers criteria, and follow standard grammar and bibliographic guidelines. Grammar and citations must follow the format in the *Chicago Manual of Style*.

The National Register nomination is composed of three types of information: data, essays and technical information (maps and photos). National Register Bulletin *How to Complete the National Register Form* (available at <https://www.nps.gov/nr/publications/index.htm>) offers specific guidance on completing nominations. Other NPS bulletins cover nominations of specific types of resources, such as cemeteries, battlefields and suburbs. By far the most important items are the two essays, **Section #7, description**, which provides a complete current description of the resource, its site, landscape and all dependencies, and **Section #8, significance**, which must contain a complete history of the property and explain exactly which of the criteria the resource meets and why. Staff can provide you with a more detailed outline for completing these essays. The New York SHPO does not require that you submit the information on the actual National Register template. We prefer to receive information as Microsoft Word documents to allow for editing.

## REVIEW

When the draft is nearing completion, your National Register representative will work with you to identify a date for review by the SRB. Typically the review date will be one to two months after the completion of the draft to allow time to complete the owner notification requirements. The SRB meets four times a year, so timing for every project will vary. Your National Register representative will present the nomination to the SRB, which reviews all of New York's State and National Register nominations. Owners and consultants are welcome but not required to attend; however, the SRB is always happy to hear from people who are passionate about historic resources.

## OWNER NOTIFICATION

The owner of the property and the chief local official of the appropriate municipality must be notified in writing that the state intends to bring the nomination to the SRB and they must be given an opportunity to comment on the proposal. If there are multiple owners (married/unmarried couples, multiple family members, etc.), EACH of them must be notified individually. The SHPO is required to send these notification letters at least 30 days in advance of the SRB meeting. If the property is located within a community that has a certified local government (CLG) historic preservation commission, the chief elected official and the commission will receive notification and a copy of the nomination 60 days in advance. If the nomination is approved by the SRB and signed by the State Historic Preservation Officer, property owners and elected officials will receive a letter notifying them that it has been listed on the State Register. If the nomination is approved by the National Park Service, another letter will be sent informing owners and local officials that the district has been listed on the National Register.



## NOMINATION AND LISTING

If the proposal is approved by the SRB, your National Register representative will prepare the nomination for final submission to the State Historic Preservation Officer, who is also the commissioner of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. The commissioner confers State Register status and forwards properties to the National Park Service for consideration and listing on the National Register. Review at the National Park Service typically takes 2-3 months, which includes a public comment period. Thanks to all your hard work, in collaboration with NY SHPO, to create an excellent nomination, we hope for a positive response. We look forward to celebrating with you!

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