

EVALUATION CHECKLIST FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL PROPERTIES

SIGNIFICANCE

CRITERION D

_____ Define the relevant context and level of significance (local, state, or national). This may be done simultaneously with the next step.

_____ Review the archaeological literature (gray and scholarly) pertaining to sites of this type.

_____ Identify the important research questions/themes that can be addressed by sites of this type.

_____ Demonstrate what this site could potentially add to that body of knowledge (e.g. datasets recovered or potentially available).

CRITERION A, B, OR C (See **Evaluating Archaeological Sites Under Criteria other than D** below)

_____ Consider all Criteria that may be applicable to the property (Ask, what other values does the property have besides information potential?) and demonstrate the strength of association between that event, person, architectural feature, or other value and the property. A comparative context is useful in these evaluations.

INTEGRITY

CRITERION D

_____ If there has been excavation, demonstrate that the quality of the data (e.g. horizontal spatial relationships, stratigraphic relationships, etc.) is sufficient to answer the important research questions identified.

_____ It may be helpful to consider the National Register's seven aspects of integrity as they apply to archaeological properties. However, it is not necessary if a discussion of archaeological integrity is provided. See **Assessing the National Register Integrity of Archaeological Sites** or the National Register Bulletin, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Archeological Properties* for further guidance.

_____ If there has been no excavation, demonstrate that there is a high likelihood that the site retains integrity (e.g. a land-use history

demonstrating that the site has not been subjected to impacts that would compromise its integrity), and any additional information with regard to determining archaeological integrity. For example, information such as artifacts collected or mapping from a walkover survey, identification of above ground features such as swails, depressions, foundations, or other ruins, and comparison with historic maps, if possible. Comparison with similar sites or site types may also provide information on potential or expected data sets. Non-invasive methods of survey or inventory can also be helpful, such as Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR), Side Scan Sonar, Soil Resistivity, or other remote sensing techniques.

CRITERION A, B, OR C

_____ It is important to consider the National Register's seven aspects of integrity and specifically, how they apply to archaeological properties. See **Assessing the National Register Integrity of Archaeological Sites** below, or the National Register Bulletin, *Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Archeological Properties* for further guidance.

A NOTE ABOUT INTEGRITY

An evaluation of integrity *always* comes after an evaluation of significance. Integrity is a relative measure and its definition depends upon the historic context and significance of the archaeological property. For Criterion D evaluations, for instance, a property may not have good stratigraphic integrity, but may still be able to answer significant questions. A rare site type, for instance, may have disturbed deposits, but may still be eligible because of the information it contains.

A NOTE ABOUT CONTEXT FOR CRITERION D

The importance of the information, as well as the degree of integrity necessary is oftentimes related to the area of significance of the property, the amount of research in a given area and the level of significance (local, state, or national). For instance, a lithic scatter in some parts of Pennsylvania may not be significant while a lithic scatter in other parts of Pennsylvania may be.

Evaluating Archaeological Sites Under Criteria other than D

As with any other resource, context is crucial for evaluating archaeological sites under any of the Criteria. The context must be based on the Criteria and areas of significance claimed for the property. The fact that a resource is simply associated with a larger trend is not enough to make it significant under Criterion A (e.g. not every school is significant for education, etc.); the association must be significant. Likewise, under Criterion C, it is not enough for a property to simply exemplify a significant architectural pattern, that pattern must be significant within a particular context and the property must convey that significance. Under Criterion B, a property must be associated with the productive life of the person, or why the person is significant, and the context must demonstrate this association. A comparative context is needed to make these arguments.

Pre-Contact Sites

For Pre-Contact archaeological sites (as well as historical archaeological sites and other non-archaeological properties), the National Park Service has been moving in a new direction of late. NPS has been trying to evaluate sites holistically and consider all four Criteria.

Criterion A:

A fully excavated archaeological site would not be eligible under Criterion D because its information potential is gone; however, that site could be eligible under Criterion A if it can be demonstrated that it is associated with important events or trends in the history of archaeological or anthropological theory (see the National Register Bulletin *Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Archeological Properties*). The resource category would still be site, but in the broader meaning of the term presented in the NR Bulletins. Keep in mind, though, that a site need not be fully excavated to be eligible under Criterion A for association with important trends or events. Type sites could also be eligible for their role in defining a chronology or cultural group. Examples would include Meadowcroft in western PA—since it basically opened the door for consideration of much greater time depth in North American prehistory—or an archaeological type site, such as the site that defines the Shenks Ferry culture in Pennsylvania. The context would have to focus on how the site defined the complex or time period and the archaeological materials would still have to have enough integrity to show that connection.

Criterion B:

Archaeological sites could be eligible under Criterion B if they are associated with a significant person. If that person were an archaeologist, for instance, the context would need to examine the sites excavated by the archaeologist and demonstrate why a particular site best represents the

archaeologist and his contributions to the field. A good example would be Pecos in New Mexico for its association with A.V. Kidder. In general, sites associated with culturally significant pre-Contact persons or deities are evaluated as Traditional Cultural Properties.

Criterion C:

Sites eligible under Criterion C must “embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master or possess high artistic value or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.” The latter often refers to districts. The first portion of the criterion could refer to a structure or artistic expression associated with a specific cultural period or type (e.g. Late Woodland or Algonquian). The context would need to establish what the distinctive characteristics of the type are or how it possesses high artistic value and why this site is a significant example. For example, mounds could be significant under Criterion C for Architecture because they embody the distinctive characteristics of building traditions during a certain period of prehistory. The remains do not, necessarily have to be visible aboveground; this criterion could refer to a village plan and layout, for instance. In terms of artistic value, petroglyph sites are works of art that can be easily evaluated under Criterion C because they both embody the distinctive cultural traditions of a specific prehistoric period and possess artistic value.

Contact and Historic Sites

For Contact and Historic sites, it may be easier for the layperson conceptually to understand the case for significance under Criteria other than D because they may be more familiar with such resources and, often, may be able to “see” them. Keep in mind, however, that archaeologists often “see” patterns in the archaeological record that can convey significance for events, architectural or artistic features, or persons.

Criteria A and B:

For Criteria A and B, keep in mind that the archaeological record is just another line of historical evidence, **equally as important as** the written record or oral history or historic mapping, and so on; therefore, it can be easily used to support Criterion A or B significance. Documentation and explanation is key to making the case for historical archaeological sites under Criterion A or B. Documentation can take the form of photographs, maps, etc. and the preparer must be able to explain the significance and integrity of the site and make it clear to the layperson. Areas of significance and integrity are also key to evaluating an archaeological site under Criterion A or B. In addition, the site does not need to contain above-ground remains (this will be touched on more in-depth in the next section on integrity). As mentioned previously, as with any property

being nominated to the National Register under Criterion A, association with a significant trend or event does not necessarily make a site eligible; the association must be significant as well. Examples would include the archaeological remains of Thomas Edison's laboratory or the remains of a fort significant in the French and Indian War, etc. In addition, Native American sites can be eligible under Criterion B if the person associated with the property is individually significant within a particular context, such as Cornplanter. As with all Criterion B properties (not just archaeological), you must demonstrate the strength of the association between the person and property and consider what other properties exist to convey that aspect of the person's significance and discuss why this particular property is the best one to do that (a comparative context). The preparer must evaluate significance first and consider if the property is a rare example or the only property left to convey a certain aspect of a person's productive life. For both precontact and historic properties, archaeological sites are very important to consider under this Criteria if there are no other properties associated with a person.

Criterion C:

The above discussion of Criterion C applies equally here. Again, context is key: identify the distinctive characteristics of the type, period, or method of construction and demonstrate how this site is a significant example of it. Examples of historical archaeological sites that could be eligible under Criterion C include the ruins of a steel mill that clearly embodies the distinctive characteristics of the type (see the National Register Bulletin *Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Archeological Properties*). Other good examples might be the archaeological remains of industrial sites such as mills, canals, or furnaces where the archaeological remains can clearly convey or represent a significant pattern of building for a class of resources. As with any resource, a comparative context and integrity should be considered. While above ground remains may help strengthen the case for significance (because they are visible and non-archaeologists can "see" them), below ground remains may also be eligible under this Criteria. Some properties were intentionally built below ground (like mining properties, such as the Experimental Mine for instance).

Integrity

When evaluating archaeological sites under Criteria other than D, an important consideration (beyond the area of significance), is integrity as applied to archaeological sites (see **Assessing the National Register Integrity of Archaeological Sites** below). Integrity is relative to significance. Consider what other properties can represent this particular resource under the context. As mentioned previously, an archaeologist must be able to read the significance and be able to communicate it

through the National Register nomination. A couple of recent examples include the Shade Furnace Archaeological District which had above-ground remains (ruins) and the Dennis Farm which had remains of the farmhouse and numerous outbuildings. Ruins are not required for a property to be eligible under Criteria other than D; however, they may help strengthen the case, or be easier for a non-archaeologist to understand. An example of a site that was eligible for A is the Thomas Carlin's Sons Foundry (36AL0535) which was found deeply buried in Pittsburgh. It met the Iron and Steel Resources MPDF Criterion A Registration Requirements, however.

If a property was not meant to be permanent (for instance, a WPA-era building that was built for the duration of a project), it cannot be held against a property if the building is no longer standing, particularly if foundations or other archaeological features remain.

Under Criteria A and B, the essential physical features during a site's association with an event or person must be intact. Setting, Feeling, and Association, as applied to archaeological sites, are very important. Would the person recognize the property today? If a property has poor integrity, but it is the only property left associated with that person, however, the property might still be eligible. Likewise, if you are considering an archaeological property and the structure once on the property is no longer standing, the property might still be eligible under Criterion B if the other aspects of integrity (setting, feeling, etc) are still intact and there are no other properties associated with this aspect of the person's significance that exist.

Under Criterion C, Materials, Workmanship, and Design, as applied to archaeological sites would be paramount.

Keep in mind that while Setting and Feeling might require a person to discuss visible surroundings, other aspects of integrity such as materials, workmanship, association, location, and design can easily be represented by below ground or non-visible (to the non-archaeologist) resources.

Assessing the National Register Integrity of Archaeological Sites

The following is a brief overview of how to apply the National Register's seven aspects of integrity (location, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, setting, and association) to archaeological sites nominated under any of the four Criteria of significance. It provides general guidance as to what aspects of integrity are most important under each of the Criteria, keeping in mind that different aspects of integrity may mean slightly different things or have more or less weight, depending on the Criterion or Criteria under which the site is significant, as well as its area(s) of significance. For Criterion D, the research questions being asked of the site are a very important consideration when assessing integrity.

For Criterion D, integrity of location, materials, design, and association are generally of paramount importance. Location is relatively straightforward; if the site remains in the place it was formed, it can be said to retain integrity of location. The place where the site formed is important, not necessarily the place where the record was created. Materials refers to the degree to which artifacts, ecofacts, and features have survived and is dependent on the research questions being asked. For example, if the research questions focus on the importance of floral resources in the diet, the site would need to yield seeds, cultivars, processing tools, etc. to retain integrity of materials. Design refers to the relationships or patterning of artifacts, ecofacts, and features. For example, a plowed site may retain integrity of design if the relationships between artifacts, ecofacts, and features remain as they were historically or prehistorically. Association under Criterion D refers to the relationship between the data present at the site and the research questions being asked. For example, if the research questions focus on status, the site would need to yield ceramics, personal items, etc. that are indicators of status. Remember, while a discussion of the National Register's seven aspects of integrity is helpful in establishing an argument for archaeological integrity under Criterion D, a nomination does not have to have such a discussion if the property is only nominated under D. As long as the nomination discusses the level of preservation or quality of information contained within a district, site, or excavated assemblage in relation to the important research questions the property can answer, this is sufficient.

For Criteria A and B, location, design, setting, feeling and association are, generally, most important. As mentioned above, location means that the site remains in the place where it was formed. For archaeological sites significant under Criterion A or B, design means something slightly different; it refers to the layout or plan of a site. For example, if a military encampment site retained its avenues, tent platforms, and general layout, it would be said to retain integrity of design. To retain integrity of setting and feeling, the environment of the site should remain as it was historically. For example, if a site was originally a rural farmstead and the surrounding area remains a primarily rural, agricultural area, the site could be said to retain integrity of setting and feeling. For archaeological sites significant under Criterion A or B, association means something slightly different; it refers to the site's relationship to the historic event/trend or person for which it is significant. For example, a farmstead site significant for its role in an

important battle would need to yield artifacts and features related to the battle to retain integrity of association for Criterion A.

Under Criterion C, design, materials, and workmanship are most important. As with Criteria A and B, design for Criterion C refers to the layout or plan of a site. For example, a stockaded village that represents a significant example of a type would be said to retain integrity of design if it retains its historic or prehistoric design and layout. For archaeological sites significant under Criterion C, integrity of workmanship is a reflection of the builder(s)'s or designer(s)'s skill in producing the original resource. For example, a house site that clearly shows the hand of a skilled architect or builder would retain integrity of workmanship, whether there are above-ground remains or not. For archaeological sites significant under Criterion C, integrity of materials is a reflection of the elements used to create the original resource. For example, a house site consisting of well-preserved architectural remains could be said to retain integrity of materials under Criterion C, regardless of whether the house is still standing or not.

As mentioned previously, this guidance is not meant to produce an exhaustive description of the seven aspects of integrity as they apply to archaeological sites. The evaluation of integrity is based on several factors including the Criterion or Criteria under which the site is being nominated, as well as the Area(s) of Significance. Further discussion of the aspects of integrity as they apply to archaeological sites is available in the National Register Bulletin *Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Archeological Properties* and *Assessing Site Significance: a Guide for Archaeologists and Historians* by Donald L. Hardesty and Barbara J. Little (Published by AltaMira Press, California, 2009).

BHP Supplemental Guidelines for Nominating Archeological Sites and Districts to the National Register of Historic Places

This guidance is for use in conjunction with the National Register Bulletin *Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Archeological Properties*. If we have not commented on an item in the instructions below, follow the appropriate National Register Bulletin.

Keep in mind that one goal of nominating archeological sites and districts to the National Register of Historic Places is to increase the “visibility” of archeology for the public; therefore, the nomination should be concise and comprehensible to the layperson. The nomination is not meant to be a technical report; however, the nomination can include a technical report as an appendix.

In the narratives, do not give exact locational information, unless the location is generally known or if the locational information should be available for research or education or tourism, etc. All other information that should be restricted (see National Register Bulletin 29, *Guidelines for Restricting Information about Historic and Prehistoric Resources*) should be placed on a separate continuation sheet. In addition, do not enter the property owner information on the form. Provide this information on the notification sheet.

On the form, enter N/A for all categories that do not apply to the site or district.

Writing a Physical Description for an Archeological Site or District

1. **Introductory Paragraph:** The introductory paragraph is a critical part of the narrative. Write it so that it can stand on its own as an abstract that reads as a concise overview of the resource. Provide an overview of the physiography, **general** location(s), topography, and setting of the site or district. Identify the time period or archaeological period of occupation. End the introduction with a brief discussion of the site’s or district’s integrity, including approximately how much of the site has been impacted, both by excavation and by other impacts.

2. Describe, in a general way, the physical characteristics of the site or district, including site size(s) (both the horizontal and the vertical extent), site type(s), datasets present or potentially present (e.g. artifacts, ecofacts, features) and absolute or relative date(s). For multi-component sites or districts, describe each significant component separately, including vertical location(s) and extent(s) for stratified sites.

3. Describe the current and past setting and appearance of the site or district. Describe the current setting, appearance, topography, climate, vegetation, and wildlife. Then, if different, describe the setting, appearance, topography, climate, vegetation, and wildlife for each period of significance. Include a discussion of the site’s geomorphology, sedimentation, and soil development, as well. This description should not cover every period during which the site was occupied, but should cover only the period(s) identified as significant in Section 8.

4. End the description with an explanation of the property's overall physical integrity. Summarize all natural and cultural impacts to the site or district. In this discussion, include an overview of all previous research at the site, both professional and avocational/amateur. Include background research, extent and purpose of any fieldwork and mapping, dates, and researchers and their affiliation. You must then assess how these impacts affect the property's ability to reflect its significance. If the site is eligible under Criteria other than D, the preparer will need to discuss each aspect of integrity (as applied to archaeological sites; see **Assessing the National Register Integrity of Archaeological Sites** above) individually, then summarize overall integrity. If the site is eligible under only Criterion D, the preparer must discuss the archaeological integrity.

SECTION 8 – STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Significant Dates (Form)

For prehistoric sites or districts, if several radiocarbon dates were obtained, place them in a table on a continuation sheet. The table should include the lab number, ¹⁴C date, and provenience of the sample. For historical archeological sites or districts, list the significant dates as you would for other properties; these can be based on artifacts, historic documents or maps, etc.

Narrative

Writing a Statement of Significance for an Individual Property

1. Introductory paragraph: Begin the narrative Statement of Significance with a Summary of Significance. List the Criteria and Areas of Significance for which the site or district is significant. For each dataset identified in the Physical Description, briefly explain how it demonstrates the site's significance. This information should be expanded upon and justified in subsequent paragraphs. Identify the Period(s) of Significance and briefly explain how the beginning and ending dates were chosen.
2. Summarize the property's history in one or a few paragraphs. For Criterion D, to establish the importance of the information from the site, provide an overview of the current state of knowledge for the Period(s) of Significance. Remember, an archaeological site can be significant under Criteria other than D. For examples of archaeological sites that are significant under Criteria A, B, or C, consult the National Register Bulletin *Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Archeological Properties* or **Evaluating Archaeological Sites Under Criteria other than D** above.
3. Next, for each Criterion and Area of Significance explain why the property is significant. Compare the property to others of the same or similar period, characteristics, or association. For examples of other properties used in comparison, be sure to use their name or site number, **general** locations, and brief descriptions. For multi-component sites, treat each component separately within the nomination.

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

Sketch Map/District Map

For archeological sites or districts, submit two copies of a site plan labeled with historic name, county and state. Include a clearly-labeled National Register boundary, north arrow, and scale bar. Be sure to locate all contributing and noncontributing resources and number/vantage point of each photo, where applicable. Also submit maps labeled with historic name, county and state. Include the clearly labeled National Register boundary, north arrow, scale bar, and location(s) of previous fieldwork.

Black and White Photographs

Submit two sets of black and white photos, properly labeled (*How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*, page 64). One set is for state files, the other for the National Park Service files in Washington, D.C. If a continuation sheet is used for photo information, the resource name, county, state and photo number must be labeled on each photograph. **Photographs must be processed according to the *National Register's Photographic Imaging Policy*.**

Provide photos of the setting, representative features (plan and profile); representative wall profiles, if applicable; and representative artifacts.