

## **OVERVIEW AND FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS NEVADA STATE REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

Created in 1979 by the Nevada State Legislature, the Nevada State Register of Historic Places (or NVSRHP) is the state's official list of properties worthy of preservation. Since 1979, many properties have been listed recognizing a diverse array of historical, architectural, and archaeological resources around Nevada.

### ***1. Who lists a resource in the State Register?***

The State Register is managed by the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office (NVSHPO), who maintains all of the state standards for the program. Listing of the resource requires agreement between the property owner, the State Historic Preservation Officer, and the Nevada State Board of Museums and History. However, the program also receives support from local governments, non-profit groups, and Nevada citizens.

### ***2. What types of properties are eligible for the State Register?***

The State Register can accept any building, structure, object, site, or district (a concentration of several buildings, structures, objects, and/or sites) that meets the eligibility requirements of the program. First, the resource should demonstrate significance to history, architecture, or archaeology in some way. The property should have gained that importance fifty years or more from the present. However, in addition to age and importance, the resource must also demonstrate good historic integrity to the period in which it became important.

### ***3. What are the benefits of listing a property in the Nevada State Register of Historic Places?***

For most owners of a property listed in the State Register, the primary benefit is the prestige and notoriety gained from ownership of a resource important to local, state, or national history. Public and non-profit owners of State Register-listed properties may qualify for the Commission for Cultural Centers and Historic Preservation (CCCHP) grant program, coordinated by the NVSHPO. Nevada also has an Open Space Assessment program, governed by NRS 361A, which allows county governments to zone certain properties as open space, reducing the property tax liability of the owner. Owners interested in this program should contact their local county assessor to see if and how their county participates in the program.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has compiled research about the [long-term benefits of preserving important historic resources](#), and found that in general, preservation promotes the concept of sustainable communities, with sustainability measured in economic, social, and environmental terms.

**4. Does listing in the State Register affect my private property rights?**

No. Listing a resource in the State Register has no effect on existing property rights. There is no provision in the enabling state law [NRS383.085] that authorizes any federal, state, or local government to regulate privately-funded projects affecting historic resources that are on private property. However, under Nevada state law [NRS 383.121], properties of historic, archaeological, or paleontological importance that are on public land in Nevada (including local governments), must coordinate their efforts with the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office to maximize the preservation of publically-managed resources. For more information about how NRS 383.121 might affect you, visit the NVSHPO website, or contact the SHPO Review and Compliance Manager.

**5. My property has already been considered historic and when I make changes or updates, they are reviewed by a government commission. Why is this different than the State Register?**

While the State Register does not change any property rights, local governments in Nevada can create their own historic registers, and if they so wish, can adopt zoning and building code provisions for those historic properties. This is a separate process from the State Register and is enacted by your city or county government.

Local preservation ordinances are authorized and governed under Nevada state law, specifically NRS Chapters 384 for Historic Districts, and Chapter 278 for Planning and Zoning. Many local governments use the state and federal historic registers as a tool for their own planning and zoning decisions. Once a property is listed in the State Register, some local governments and/or their citizens seek to ensure the protection of these important resources under a local zoning ordinance for historic preservation. However, in these cases, a local government must designate the property in a local historic register or equivalent before imposing regulations. Listing in the State Register alone does not authorize local governments to regulate private property for historic preservation purposes.

The Comstock Historic District (CHD) is a special State district established by the legislature in 1969 for the protection of resources that reflect Nevada's foundations as a state. Property within the CHD is regulated by State statute under NRS 384, and overseen jointly by the NVSHPO and the Comstock Historic District Commission.

## **6. What is the “fifty-year rule”?**

In general, any property that is nominated to the State Register should have become important at least 50 years ago. However, this “rule” is more a “guideline” that discourages the consideration of properties that might be too young for researchers to truly understand their importance. Exceptions are made for resources that are rare or exceptional in some way. The period of fifty years is somewhat arbitrary, but allows enough time and perspective for historians to develop a context in which to evaluate the importance of a particular resource.

## **7. Who can be involved with a nomination to the State Register?**

The nomination process for the State Register is open to the public at all stages. Any person or organization can nominate a property provided that they can complete the State’s nomination form. However, there are certain individuals and entities that *must* be involved as a matter of State law:

- A. *The property owner* – State law requires that the owner of a nominated property be notified of the nomination and that the owner must sign an agreement indicating their support for said nomination before the property can be listed.
- B. *The Nevada State Historic Preservation Office* – Under State law, all nominations to the State Register must be submitted to the NVSHPO for review before they are submitted to the Board of Museums and History for acceptance. The NVSHPO maintains staff familiar with the process and requirements for listing, and can assist nominating individuals in completing the necessary documentation. The NVSHPO also submits the final document to the Board of Museums and History.
- C. *The Nevada Board of Museums and History* – This governor-appointed board serves as Nevada’s “state review board,” a body that must approve State Register nominations along with the state historic preservation officer and the property owner. The Board reviews all nominations for completeness, accuracy, and eligibility, and if approved, the Chair of the Board signs the nomination. The Board includes several specialists in historic preservation and related fields.

## **8. I want to make sure I am preserving my historic property well. Where do I find help?**

The Department of the Interior, through the NPS’ Technical Preservation Services (TPS) Division, provides guidance for the maintenance of historic properties. This guidance is referred to as [\*The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic\*](#)

[Properties](#) (or, the *Secretary's Standards*). Private property owners using private funding for development are under no obligation to use the *Secretary's Standards*, but may elect to do so to ensure that their property reflects the history for which it is important, and ensure their property continues to be listed in the State Register.

For assistance in applying the *Secretary's Standards*, property owners are encouraged to check first with their local government regarding any local regulations with which the owner is legally obligated to comply. The local government may have a preservation specialist or a local board or commission member with experience applying the *Secretary's Standards* that can be of assistance as well. The NVSHPO can also provide technical assistance to property owners on their request, however, assistance from the NVSHPO to private property owners is not binding, and is for the owner's benefit and consideration only. Nevada also has several non-profit organizations devoted to historic preservation that may be of help, including [PreserveNevada](#), the [Nevada Preservation Foundation](#), and the [Historic Reno Preservation Society](#).

*For additional information about the State Register, including obtaining copies of previous nominations or discussing options, technical assistance for owners of listed properties, or for submitting new nominations, please contact:*

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