

# National Register of Historic Places

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is the National Register of Historic Places?

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Properties listed in the National Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. These historic places can be significant at the national, state, or local level. The National Register was created through the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and is maintained by the National Park Service.

### What are the criteria for listing a property on the National Register?

- Your individual property or a group of properties may be eligible for the National Register if it represents the work of a master architect; is characteristic of a significant architectural movement; or if it is associated with significant events or persons in local, regional, or national history.
- Properties must typically be greater than 50 years old to be listed on the National Register, unless they are exceptionally significant.
- A group or collection of properties can be eligible together as a Historic District. A Historic District must meet the same criteria listed above.

### What are the benefits of listing my historic property?

- A National Register listing is an honor that signifies that your property is an important part of America's cultural heritage and worthy of preservation.
- Listed properties may qualify for grants, tax deductions for donation of protective easements, or tax credits for qualified rehabilitation activities (see below).
- Consideration of impacts to your property from federally funded or licensed undertakings, as well as a mandate to minimize, avoid, or mitigate impacts to your property per the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act.

### What are the restrictions of listing my historic property?

- The National Register does **not** restrict a property owner's private property rights.
- Owners of National Register properties can remodel, renovate, sell, or even demolish their property with no restrictions. However, significant modifications may result in removal from the National Register.
- The federal, state, or local governments regulate alterations to historic properties when government funds have been invested. If you have not received government grant funds or tax benefits (grants, tax credits, etc.) then you have no restrictions as a homeowner.

### Can I apply for grant money or tax credits?

- Income-producing properties (including rentals) may be eligible for a 20% federal income investment tax credit through the Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives program. To qualify, properties must undergo rehabilitation according to set preservation standards.
- In Kentucky, National Register property owners, not just income-producing, may be eligible for a historic rehabilitation tax credit through the Kentucky Heritage Council, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).
- Owners of listed properties may apply for federal, state, and local historic preservation grants, when available.

## **How will listing on the National Register affect my property value?**

Listing on the National Register generally does not decrease property value and, in some cases, may actually increase the value or marketability of a property.

## **Can I still modify, remodel, or renovate my historic property after listing?**

**Yes.** Unless your home is subject to the above restrictions (receiving federal tax credits, protected under a local historic preservation ordinance, etc.), listing on the National Register does not restrict your right to modify your home. Severe alterations may, however, result in removal from the National Register.

## **What if I don't want my property listed?**

- Any owner or partial owner of private property who chooses to object to listing must submit to the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) a notarized statement certifying that the party is the sole or partial owner of the private property, as appropriate, and objects to the listing.
- When an individual nominated property belongs to a single owner, the property will not be listed if the owner objects. If the property has multiple owners, each owner gets one vote. The majority vote will decide.
- When a district is nominated, each owner or partial owner has one vote regardless of what part of the property or how much property the individual owns. The majority vote will decide. An individual property owner cannot opt out of a nominated district to which the majority of owners have not objected. If a majority of the private owners of the properties making up a nominated district should object, the district or property will not be listed.
- If a property cannot be listed in the National Register due to owner objection, the property is not eligible for federal preservation grants or tax credits until the objections are withdrawn and the property is listed.
- If a property cannot be listed in the National Register due to owner objection, the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) will submit the nomination to the Keeper of the National Register for a determination of eligibility for listing. If the property is determined eligible, then you still receive consideration of impacts to your property from federally funded or licensed undertakings, as well as a mandate to minimize, avoid, or mitigate impacts to your property per the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act.

## **Where can I go for additional information?**

- National Register of Historic Places: <http://www.nps.gov/nr/>
- Federal Historic Preservation Tax Incentives: <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/>
- Kentucky Heritage Council: <http://heritage.ky.gov/>
- Kentucky Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credits: <https://heritage.ky.gov/historic-buildings/rehab-tax-credits/>
- Preservation Kentucky: <http://preservationkentucky.org/>
- National Trust for Historic Preservation: <http://www.preservationnation.org/>

*"A listing on the National Register of Historic Places is an honor. A source of pride for you and your family, this special recognition from the federal government can only give your old house the prestige it deserves as an important part of our American past."*

*– Bob Vila, host of This Old House, in "All About The National Register," Popular Mechanics, December 1989.*