Historic Resource Surveys

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Overview

Three topics:

1. Define a historic resources survey, both the process and product
2. What to look for in a survey report
3. Learn the benefits of conducting a survey
Historic Resource Surveys: What are they?

- Means by which we identify and document historic resources and evaluate their significance
- Survey is both a *process* and a *product*
What is a historic resource?

Districts, Buildings, Sites, Structures or Objects which:

• Exemplify a period of history
• Association with significant historical events
• Association with the lives of persons significant in our past
• Embodying a particular style, type or method of construction; possess high artistic values
• Yield or potential to yield information important to history or prehistory.

• These will be identified in your survey!
Survey: the process

- Research and Planning
  - Define the purpose and scope
  - Investigate the historical background of the survey area
  - Gather information on specific properties using both primary and secondary sources
- Develop a historic context
  - Broad pattern of historical development in a community or region that may be represented by historic resources
  - Most influential factor in defining the structure of a survey effort.
Survey: the process

- Identify buildings, structures, sites, objects and districts that are of sufficient age to be historic resources
  - Field survey
  - Photos and descriptive info
- Evaluate potential resources identified in field survey
  - Use the historic context as a framework
  - Use the established criteria such as National Register of Historic Places, California Register of Historical Resources, and local landmark criteria.
A few notes about the process

- **Funding Surveys**
  - CLGs can apply for a CLG grant to fund a project
  - Building surveys into general plan, specific plan and environmental review documents
  - “Chip away” vs. “all in one shot”
- **Using volunteers**
- **Numerical Rating Systems**
- **Archaeology**
Parts of the survey report

- Introduction
- Survey Methodology
- Historic Context
- Summary of Survey Results/Resources Identified
- Bibliography
- End matter: Inventory & DPR523 forms
Parts of the survey report: Survey Methodology

SM establishes parameters:

- Geographic area
- Period of time in history
- Reconnaissance or intensive level
- Identify data gaps or survey constraints
  - Examples:
    - Classes of resources which would be exempt from survey
    - Portions of districts fall outside of the project area
Historic Context

- A historic context is a broad pattern of historical development in a community or region, that may be represented by historic resources.

- Tells the stories that explain
  - How
  - When, and
  - Why

The built environment developed or looks the way it does.
Sacramento 1848

How, When, and Why?

Present-day Sacramento
Historic Context

- Not just a historical overview
- Adds information about common themes, places, and time to historic development
  - For example:

  Context: Residential Development and Suburbanization, 1850-1980
  Theme: Early Residential Development, 1880-1930
  Sub-Theme: Early Single-Family Residential Development, 1880-1930

- Focus on property types rather than on individual buildings
  - Connects history with built environment
- A historic context is a specialized form of historical writing with specific goals and requirements.
Historic Context

- It provides an organizing structure for grouping information about historic properties that share a common theme, place and time.

- Contexts can be organized by:
  - **Theme:**
    - Economic, Political, Social History
    - Person or groups influencing the area
    - Architectural styles, building types,
  - **Geography:**
    - Nation, State, Region, City, Community, or Neighborhood
  - **Chronology:**
    - Prehistoric or Historic period
Summary of Survey Results

● Presents results of field survey
  – Narrative Summary
  – Tabular results
  – Tell you what resources are extant from the different contexts, themes, property types

● Reconnaissance Level:
  – Visual survey which will provide guidance for future surveys
  – Will not provide an evaluation of identified resources

● Intensive Level: Provides evaluations and OHP status code
The Forms

- Standard for recording information about historic properties
- Currently revising the series
- Technology has changed the way we record historic resources, surveys are moving away from using the DPR523 forms.
OHP now will consider using spreadsheets, databases as substitutes to DPR523 forms

Must provide a certain number of minimum fields required to incorporate into the OHP inventory.

Call to discuss
Maintaining survey and inventory data

- Continue to add to and maintain your inventory of surveyed properties and designated resources.
- Recommend that survey information be updated every 5 years as needed.
Public access to Survey Records

- Allow public to view data by incorporating survey information into their GIS system.
- Public can search and query by property type, address/location, architectural style, architect, and date of construction.
Questions about Survey Process and Products?
What can you do with a survey?

- Acknowledges that these resources have value to ourselves and future generations
- Identification of historic resources helps determine which of those resources should be preserved
- Facilitates environmental reviews (CEQA and other land-use decisions)
  - Complete historic context and reconnaissance surveys in areas that may be prone to development
  - Surveys sort out potentially historic versus non-historic properties within the extensive survey area; and
What can you do with a survey? (cont’d)

- Develop preservation goals and strategies
  - Design guidelines
- Identify additional information needs
Landmark designation

- Three levels of designation:
  - Federal Programs: National Register of Historic Places
  - State Programs: California Register of Historical Resources, California Historical Landmark, California Point of Historical Interest
  - Local Landmark programs

- Each local government defines their own landmark criteria.
  - Define what is significant to the community
  - Lays out the procedures for locally designating a property
  - Establish a process for appeals
Why establish a Local Landmark program?

• Landmark designation helps stabilize property values and may lead to an increased valuation of property in the future. The designation of property also enhances the jurisdiction’s attraction to visitors and is a stimulus to the economy.

• Environmental – Preservation, protection and adaptive reuse of historic and cultural resources are “green” strategies.

• Cultural - Designation of a property preserves cultural assets and strengthens the ethnic and social character of a neighborhood.
Questions?

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