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**California Office of Historic Preservation
Technical Assistance Series #13****How to Nominate a Property as a California Historical Landmark or
California Point of Historical Interest**

This handout is intended to be used in conjunction with the publication entitled *Instructions for Recording Historical Resources* (March 1995) which contains the forms required for all applications and information on how to fill them out.

Introduction

This handout describes the criteria and procedures for nominating an historical resource under two of these state registration programs: California Historical Landmarks (Landmarks), established in 1932, and California Points of Historical Interest (Points), established in 1965. The Office of Historic Preservation, State Historical Resources Commission (Commission) and the Department of Parks and Recreation administer these two registration programs in accordance with provisions of the California Public Resources Code (PRC), Sections 5020.4, 5021, 5022, 5022.5, 5031 and 5032. (The text of these sections of the Public Resources Code can be found in the Appendix C.)

The OHP, a part of the Department of Parks and Recreation, is the state agency responsible for statewide administration of historic preservation programs in California. The OHP provides staff to the State Historical Resources Commission, which holds public hearings on registration program applications. The Commission consists of nine members appointed by the Governor of California.

Because there are hundreds of properties in the State of California that have played a prominent part in history and are important to the State or community in which they are located, it is necessary for the Commission to apply strict and consistent criteria in the registration of historical resources.

For the Landmarks and Points programs, the Public Resources Code authorizes the Commission to:

- Receive and evaluate applications for registration of buildings, structures, sites, or places as Landmarks or Points. The commission shall recommend Landmarks and Points that it determines meet the criteria.
- Maintain a register that identifies Landmarks and Points by number and description.

- Recommend to the Department of Parks and Recreation the criteria and standards for acceptance of historical buildings, structures, sites, or objects for registration as Landmarks or Points.
- Recommend to the Office a standard design and detail for the marker or plaque that may be erected at registered Landmarks.
- Recommend to the Department the type of directional sign that may be erected at registered Landmarks and Points.

The Commission will review and evaluate all applications for registration of Landmarks or Points at regular meetings of the Commission. The Commission will recommend registration and marking of Landmarks and Points to the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation. As a result of the Director's action to designate a Point or Landmark, the resource will also be listed in the California Register of Historical Resources.

For information on other historical resource registration programs administered by the OHP, please see the Technical Assistance Series handout #2, entitled *Historical Resource Registration Programs in California*; this information can also be accessed on the OHP website at <http://ohp.cal-parks.ca.gov/programs/intro.htm>.

Landmark and Point Criteria

California Historical Landmarks

The basis for the landmark criteria is to be found in Sec. 5031 (a) of the Public Resources Code. All resources must be of statewide historical importance to California. They must demonstrate their statewide significance by meeting one of the following three requirements:

- *The property is the first, last, only, or most significant historical property of its type in the region.* The regions are Southern California, Central California, and Northern California. If a property has lost its historic appearance (integrity) it may be listed as a site.
- *The property is associated with an individual or group having a profound influence on the history of California.* The primary emphasis should be the place or places of achievement of an individual. Birthplace, death place, or place of interment shall not be a consideration unless something of historical importance is connected with his or her birth or death. If a property has lost its historic appearance (integrity) it may be listed as a site.
- *The property is a prototype of, or an outstanding example of, a period, style, architectural movement, or construction, or...it is one of the more notable works, or the best surviving work in a region of a pioneer architect, designer, or master builder.* An architectural landmark must have excellent physical integrity, including integrity of location. An architectural landmark generally will be considered on its original site, particularly if its significance is basically derived from its design relationship to its site. (Note: Only preeminent examples will be listed for architectural importance. Good representative examples of a style, period or method of construction are more appropriately nominated to other registration programs.)

Resources moved from their original locations will not qualify for landmark designation unless they are significant for architectural value, or if they are the surviving structure most importantly associated with a prominent person or historic event. Two sites cannot be recognized for identical significance. Only one location, either the original site or the new site of the moved resource, shall be designated. The Commission will determine which location is more appropriate for the designation.

Applications may be submitted for individual buildings, groupings of related buildings or for well-preserved and defined "historic districts" composed of landmarks from the same era or period.

Landmarks must be fifty years of age or older. Resources less than fifty years old will be considered for designation only if they possess exceptional design merit or historical significance that transcends the fifty-year age requirement.

Landmarks must be visibly accessible from a public thoroughfare.

All applications must be accompanied by sufficient research and substantiated by historical proof and bibliographical documentation. All applications will be reviewed by the staff of the Office of Historic Preservation before they are presented to the Commission.

California Points of Historical Interest

The criteria governing the designation of Points are the same as those that govern the Landmark program, but are directed to local (city or county) areas. Points should meet the Landmark criteria stated above within a local geographical context.

No historical resource may be designated as both a Landmark and a Point. If a Point is subsequently granted status as a Landmark, the Point designation will be retired.

Preparing the Landmark or Point Application Packet

1. Cover Sheet (DPR 26)

Complete, as a cover sheet, the DPR 26 form (contained in Appendix A of this publication) and check the box indicating whether the application is for California Historical Landmark designation or California Point of Historical Interest designation.

2. Primary Record (DPR 523A)

The Primary Record is found in the *Instructions For Recording Historical Resources (Instructions . . .)*, following page 25. You may carefully cut the form out, make a copy of the form, or request the form on disk from the Office of Historic Preservation. Instructions for preparing the form begin on page 5. Please provide all information requested in bold type or designated by an asterisk. Additionally, please provide the address for the property on line P2c. In section P10, please type either California Historical Landmark Application or California Point of Historical Interest Application.

When preparing the physical description, please remember to provide a full narrative description of the property as it appears today and as it appeared historically. Note the date of construction, architectural style, exterior construction materials, type of roof, number of stories, basic plan, and distinguishing architectural features. Fully describe any changes that have been made to the building since its original construction. Other buildings, structures, and objects on the property such as carriage houses, barns, garages, sheds, fountains, and pools should also be fully described and dated, as should significant landscape and garden features.

All buildings, structures, and objects should be identified as contributing or noncontributing depending on whether or not they relate to the significance of the property.

If the form does not provide enough space for the full description of the property, use continuation sheets from the *Instructions . . .* booklet.

3. Evaluation Form (DPR 523 B,C, or D)

An appropriate evaluation form must accompany all Landmark and Point applications. Three forms are available to choose from: Building, Structure, Object (BSO) Record; Archaeological Site Record; and District Record. These forms are found in the instructions manual following the Primary Record.

Most Landmark and Point applications will have a Building, Structure, Object Record attached. If you have any questions about the appropriate evaluation form

to use, please see Appendix 5 in the *Instructions . . .* booklet or call the Office of Historic Preservation.

Instructions for preparing the evaluation form begin on page 10 of the *Instructions . . .* booklet.

Remember when preparing the statement of significance to provide specific information about the events, persons, architectural styles, or methods of construction that make the property significant in social, cultural, economic, agricultural, political, military, or architectural history. The statement of significance should specifically identify the historic function of the property, the historic themes represented by the property, and the period of time when the property played a significant role or acquired significance.

All statements must be supported by reference to some form of evidence. Supporting documentation may include published and unpublished books, manuscripts, historic photographs, oral histories, and personal recollections or knowledge.

Use continuation sheets for additional space.

4. Maps

Provide a sketch map clearly showing the boundary of the nominated property, the footprint of all resources, a scale, and an arrow showing the north direction.

Boundaries should be drawn to include the full extent of the historic resource.

5. Photographs

Provide good, clear photographs (color or black and white) of the building and its surroundings. Photographs should show all elevations of the building, views of the building in its setting, and significant exterior and interior features. Other significant features of the property should be photographed, such as carriage houses, garages, sheds, etc.

Photographs should be submitted loose. They should be numbered, dated, and labeled with the property name, the view (e.g., east side, photographer facing west), a brief description of what is shown, and name of photographer.

6. Slides

Provide at least one color slide of the property showing the full front elevation of the building. Additional slides of secondary elevations, secondary buildings, or important details may also be submitted.

7. Letter of Support from Owner(s) to Register the Property

Written permission from the owner(s) to register the property must accompany the application.

8. Letters of Support

Letters of support are not required, but are welcome and become part of the public record.

9. Supplementary Materials Appendix

Supplements to the application should be placed at the end of the application. Such materials may include newspaper articles, scholarly reports, additional graphics, and photocopied materials. (Staff may edit applications to keep them to reasonable size, before they are sent to the Commission.)

Completed applications are submitted to the OHP, at the above stated address, where they are reviewed and scheduled for hearing by the State Historical Resources Commission. Applications will not be scheduled for a hearing until they are considered complete by OHP staff.

The Commission meets quarterly, generally every February, May, August and November. Please call the OHP for exact meeting dates and deadlines for receiving applications.

Should you have any questions as you prepare the application material, please do not hesitate to contact the Registration Section of the Office of Historic Preservation at (916) 653-6624.

Plaques and Signage

Landmark Plaques

The request for a plaque and the proposed historical text will be considered by the Commission for recommendation to the Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation. The historical text must be submitted with the plaque request. The Office of Historic Preservation reserves the right to edit the text, which must be informative, factually accurate, and documented with respect to the history and importance of the site. Advertising or promotion for the current owner or business at the site shall not be permitted.

All landmark registrations up to and including No. 769 were registered without benefit of approved criteria. It is the policy of the State Historical Resources Commission that all applications for plaques for these early landmarks will be approved only if the landmark site conforms to the existing criteria for significance and documentation.

Plaques can be purchased by private donors after approval has been obtained through the procedure outlined above. In such cases, the plaques are ordered through the Department of Parks and Recreation and the donor is billed directly.

All applications for plaques must be accompanied by written approval from the landowner upon whose land the plaque is proposed to be placed.

Highway Directional Signs

The Public Resources Code provides for the placement of signs on highways and roads indicating that a Landmark or Point lies ahead. In order to determine if a designated property qualifies for an enamel directional sign, and to request such a sign, please contact the district traffic engineer in the district office of the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in which the Landmark or Point is located.

Removal of Landmark or Point Designation

The Commission may withdraw the designation of a Landmark or Point for cause. The following may be grounds for removal:

- Substantial error in professional judgement as to whether the property meets the criteria for evaluation.
- Substantial procedural error in the nomination process.
- In the case of designation for architectural significance, a substantial loss of physical integrity, including marked changes in the setting of the resource, shall be grounds for removal. In general, any action that destroys or erodes the integrity or the significance that was the basis for the architectural designation shall be grounds for withdrawal of the official registration.
- In the case of designation for historical significance, a substantial loss of integrity or the demolition or destruction of the resource shall result in the designation being renamed as the "Site of . . ."

Appendix A: Application Cover Sheet

*This form is not available in electronic format.
For a hard copy, please contact the Office of Historic Preservation at (916) 653-6624.*

Appendix B: Application Checklist

- Cover sheet (DPR 26). See pages 10 and 15.
- Primary Record (DPR 523A). See page 10.
- Appropriate evaluation form (DPR 523B, C or D). See pages 10-11.
- Sketch Map(s). See page 11.
- Photographs. See page 11.
- One or more color slides. See page 11.
- Letter(s) of support from property owner(s). See page 12.
- Letter of support from local government. See page 12.
- Supplementary materials. See page 12.

Appendix C: Sections of California Public Resources Code Related to Landmarks and Points Programs

The full text of all State of California codes can be found on the internet at <http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/calaw.html>.

5021. Registration of State Landmarks and Points of Interest; publications of archeological investigations.
The department shall consider all recommendations for registration made by the commission, and shall register, as state historical landmarks, those buildings, structures, sites, or places which the department deems to be important historical resources and shall register, as points of historical interest, those buildings, structures, sites, or places which the department deems to be historical resources of sufficient historical interest to qualify for the placement of signs pursuant to Section 5022.5. The commission shall maintain a register which shall identify by number and description such historical landmarks and points of historical interest. The department may publish results of office and field archaeological investigation annually and shall issue additional publications, such as detailed site reports and area resource reports, as necessary, to inform the public and educational institutions.

5022. Landmark and Point of Interest Plaques.
The department may contract with or cooperate with public or private agencies for suitable plaques, markers, and directional signs at the site of, or on the approaches to, registered historical landmarks or points of historical interest, including signs on highways and roads.

5022.5. Landmark and Point of Interest Directional Markers.
There shall be two categories of places of historical significance: the registered historical landmark and the registered point of historical interest. The location of the point of historical interest shall be designated by a sign indicating "Point of Historical Interest" with an appropriate direction, which sign shall be erected and maintained by the Department of Transportation, as to state highways, or the county authorities or city authorities, as to streets or highways under their jurisdictions. A local historical group or organization may raise a marker or plaque at a registered point of historical interest. Nothing herein shall require the signing of such points where parking is not available or where such signing would cause a traffic safety hazard or would interfere with the normal flow of traffic.

5022.6. Landmark and Point of Interest Markers; design; misdemeanor violation.
The department shall adopt standard design and detail for the marker and for the plaque which may be erected or raised at registered historical landmarks. The use of such marker or plaque shall be prescribed by rule adopted by the department. Any person who maliciously or for commercial purposes, or contrary to such rule, uses or allows to be used any reproduction or facsimile of such standard marker or plaque in any manner whatsoever is guilty of a misdemeanor.

5023. Landmark and Point of Interest Markers; duty to maintain.
(a) It shall be the duty of the Department of Transportation to keep in repair all objects or markers adjacent to a state highway which have been erected to mark registered historical

places and to keep such monuments or markers free from vegetation which may obscure them from view.

(b) It shall be the duty of the county authorities, in charge of county highways, and all city authorities, with respect to streets and highways under their respective jurisdictions, to keep in repair or cause to be kept in repair all objects or markers adjacent to a public highway which have been erected to mark registered historical places and to keep such markers and monuments free from all vegetation which may obscure them from view.

(c) It shall be the duty of the department to keep in repair or cause to be kept in repair all objects, markers and monuments designating any registered historical places in respect to which no obligation in respect thereto is imposed on other governmental agencies by this section, and the department shall keep such markers and monuments free from all vegetation which may obscure them from view.

5031. Qualified Historical Property.

"Qualified historical property" means privately owned property which is not exempt from property taxation, is visually accessible to the public, and which is:

(a) All landmark registrations up to and including Register No. 769, which were approved without the benefit of criteria, shall be approved only if the landmark site conforms to the existing criteria as determined by the California Historical Landmarks Advisory Committee or as to approvals on or after January 1, 1975, by the State Historical Resources Commission. Any other registered California historical landmark under Article 2 (commencing with Section 5020) of this chapter, except points of historical interest, and which satisfies any of the following requirements:

(1) The property is the first, last, only, or most significant historical property of its type in the region;

(2) The property is associated with an individual or group having a profound influence on the history of California; or

(3) The property is a prototype of, or an outstanding example of, a period, style, architectural movement, or construction, or if it is one of the more notable works, or the best surviving work, in a region of a pioneer architect, designer, or master builder; or

(b) A property which is listed on the national register described in Section 470A of Title 16 of the United States Code; or

(c) A property which is listed on a city or county register or inventory of historical or architecturally significant sites, places or landmarks, provided, that such property satisfies any of the requirements set forth in paragraph 1, 2 or 3 under subdivision (a).

5032. Additional criteria.

(a) "Qualified historical property" pursuant to Section 5031 includes:

(1) Individual sites having structures.

(2) Facades or portions of entire sites.

(3) Historic districts.

(b) "Qualified historical property" does not include individual sites without structures.

(c) Commercial operation in itself does not necessarily disqualify a landmark's registration. However, should a commercial enterprise by its physical development plans, or its proximity, impact, excessive use, or management philosophy so dilute or erode the significance of or quality of the landmark's integrity, then an adverse effect shall have occurred and its registration may be withdrawn.