Consultant's Guide to Survey & National Register Files

State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

http://shpo.sc.gov

South Carolina Department of Archives & History

http://scdah.sc.gov

This brochure is intended to assist consultants using the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) files as part of studies undertaken to comply with federal and state historic preservation regulations. It provides an overview of the information included in the SHPO files and a step-by-step checklist for searching for properties that are listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Access and Availability

The SHPO historic properties files are available by request through the Research Room at the Archives and History Center. This facility is open Tuesday-Saturday 8:30 am to 5 pm, except for state holidays.

Research room staff are responsible only for making SHPO files available. They do not interpret information on historic properties or advise consultants on specific projects. Consultants requiring assistance should schedule an appointment with an appropriate member of the SHPO staff by visiting **http://scdah.sc.gov/aboutus/Pages/agencydirectory.aspx**.

Select SHPO historic property file information is also available on our website under "Online Research" at **http://shpo.sc.gov/research/Pages/default.aspx** or by visiting the web links cited in this brochure.

Information Included in the SHPO Files

The SHPO files are mainly comprised of two sets of data: properties that are listed in the National Register and properties that have been recorded by survey and cultural resource management (CRM) projects.

National Register Files

The National Register files include information on properties that are listed individually or as part of a historic district. The paper files include the nomination forms, photographs, and maps. They sometimes include copies of historical sources or other additional information. A compiled list of National Register properties in South Carolina organized by county and date of listing is available in the Research Room. You can use the National Register paper files by requesting them in the Research Room, or you can view scanned nomination forms, historic district maps, and select photographs online at **http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/nrlinks.htm**. You can also use the Archives' Online Records Index **http://www.archivesindex.sc.gov/** to search National Register records by location, individual, or topic. Additionally, all National Register Multiple Property Submission (MPS) and Multiple Resource Area (MRA) nomination cover documents are available with other contexts and historic background studies at **http://shpo.sc.gov/research/Pages/conreps.aspx**.

The quality of National Register nominations varies greatly. Many early nominations are limited in detail, and property boundaries may be vague. Some historic district nominations lack a comprehensive inventory of contributing and non-contributing properties. Nominations for properties listed in recent years tend to be better documented and typically include greater historical and architectural detail. In general, however, the nomination for any listed property includes sufficient information for consultants conducting review and compliance studies to determine if a project will affect historic properties.

Statewide Survey Files

The survey files include information on historic properties documented by various projects conducted since the early 1970s. The files are organized by county and date of project and generally include a project report, historic property survey forms, photographs, and maps. Summary information about survey projects is found in the *Finding Aid to Records of the Statewide Survey of Historic Properties*, available in the Research Room, or online at **http://shpo.sc.gov/programs/Pages/Survey.aspx**. Select countywide, municipal, and thematic survey reports are available online with other contexts and historic background studies at **http://shpo.sc.gov/research/Pages/conreps.aspx**.

Information included in the survey files varies in quality and scope of coverage. Projects conducted from the mid-1970s through the mid-1980s focused on surveying historically significant small towns, particularly downtown and older residential districts, and properties of obvious significance in rural areas. Beginning in 1986, the SHPO began conducting comprehensive countywide surveys in accordance with current methodological standards. The quality of documentation and coverage of recent survey projects is generally good, but in some cases important properties may have been overlooked. Properties

located in inaccessible areas, for example, may not have been recorded. The survey files also include information from surveys conducted for review and compliance purposes from the late 1980s to the present.

Searching for Information: A Checklist
Consultants should use a three-step process for searching SHPO files:

1: *Search ArchSite* **http://archsite.cas.sc.edu/ArchSite/**, *the online Geographic Information System (GIS) maintained by the SHPO and the South Carolina Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (SCIAA).*

ArchSite data may be accessed at a computer workstation in the Research Room (registration required). ArchSite includes two applications designed for specific users: Public View and Subscription View. More information regarding accessing ArchSite can be found at **http://shpo.sc.gov/research/Pages/ArchSite.aspx** and **http://archsite.cas.sc.edu/sciaainfo/subscription_overview.htm**.

The following data layers are available on ArchSite:
- ◆ National Register-listed properties
- ◆ Buildings and structures evaluated for National Register eligibility (surveyed after 1990)
- ◆ Areas surveyed for cultural resources (primarily since 1998)
- ◆ Countywide historic architectural survey data for 13 counties
- ◆ Archaeological sites
- ◆ Civil War earthworks thematic survey data

2: *If ArchSite indicates historic properties in or near the project area, check the Survey and National Register files for more detailed information about the historic properties.*

If National Register properties were identified, ask to see the National Register files in the Research Room or view them online at **http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/nrlinks.htm**. If surveyed properties were identified, proceed to the following step.

3: *Check the* Finding Aid to Records of the Statewide Survey of Historic Properties. The *Finding Aid*, which is an index to surveys

arranged by county, includes brief information about each survey conducted. It is available in the Research Room or online at **http://shpo.sc.gov/programs/Pages/Survey.aspx**. You will

need to check the *Finding Aid* — even if no sites were found in ArchSite — to determine if survey material exists for the project area. If the *Finding Aid* indicates that there was a survey in the project area you should ask to see the project report, site survey forms, and maps for the survey.

A Word of Warning
Consultants should bear the following in mind when searching the SHPO files: simply because the files contain no information on National Register-listed or surveyed properties in a specific area does not mean that no historically significant properties exist in that specific area. Most parts of the state have not been covered by a comprehensive survey, and in many counties few properties have been listed in the National Register. Fieldwork is often necessary to determine if historic properties are located in or near an area that will be affected by a project.

Considerations in Using SHPO Files
- ◆ Historic properties in many parts of the state have never been surveyed. Less than half of the state's counties have been comprehensively surveyed. For many areas, the SHPO files contain limited or virtually no information.
- ◆ Much of the information in the SHPO files is no longer current. A property determined eligible for the National Register ten years ago, for example, may have since lost its integrity and historical character, rendering it ineligible. At the same time, properties that were less than fifty years old at the time of a survey may have since become eligible for the National Register. Fieldwork is often necessary to confirm, update, or add to the information in the SHPO files.
- ◆ Properties included in the SHPO survey files are not necessarily significant. To be surveyed, a property must be at least fifty years old and retain some of its historic appearance. No other requirements exist. Most surveyed properties are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.
- ◆ Data from the SHPO files should not be publicized without consent. Looting of archaeological sites for profit and vandalism of abandoned buildings are serious, ongoing problems.
- ◆ Data from the SHPO files should not be redistributed. Properties are continually added to the survey files, typically at a rate of 1,000 annually, and new listings to the National Register are made frequently. Consultants are responsible for checking the SHPO files for the most current information.
- ◆ The SHPO files mainly include information on above-ground properties. CRM reports and archaeological site forms are available at the SC Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology, 1321 Pendleton St., Columbia, SC, 803-777-8170 or **http://www.cas.sc.edu/SCIAA/**.

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