

This presentation provides an overview of the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places, as well as the role of the Department of Historic Resources (DHR) in nominating properties to the Registers. After a review of the benefits of Register listing, the presentation explains the basic process for evaluating if a property is eligible for listing.

Specific, detailed guidance about particular aspects of preparing National Register nominations also is available on DHR's website, [www.dhr.virginia.gov](http://www.dhr.virginia.gov), and DHR's Regional Offices are available to assist property owners and consultants who wish to submit a National Register nomination to our office.

# DHR's Register Program

- **The National Register of Historic Places and the Virginia Landmarks Register make up DHR's Register program.**
- **Both provide permanent documentation and honorary recognition of Virginia's significant historic, architectural, and cultural resources.**

The Department of Historic Resources (DHR) is the State Historic Preservation Office in Virginia. Our mission is to foster, encourage, and support the stewardship of Virginia's significant historic, architectural, and cultural resources.

DHR's Register Program administers the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic Places (the latter on behalf of the National Park Service). The registers offer honorary designation of the Commonwealth's significant historic district, battlefields, archaeological sites, buildings, and other types of historic properties. The honorary designation of Register listing both provides permanent documentation of irreplaceable historic resources and encourages their continued preservation.



The Virginia Landmarks Register (VLR) and the National Register of Historic Places (National Register) are the state's and the nation's official lists of historic properties. The Department of Historic Resources (DHR) manages the VLR, and the National Park Service (NPS) manages the National Register, in partnership with DHR in Virginia.

Both registers were created in 1966; the National Register was established by the National Historic Preservation Act and the VLR was established in the *Code of Virginia*.

DHR has two review boards that are tasked with approving VLR and National Register listings.

The Board of Historic Resources is appointed by the Governor, and officially lists properties in the VLR.

The State Review Board is appointed by DHR's Director, and recommends nominations for the National Register be forwarded to NPS.

Listing in the VLR and the National Register is a purely honorary designation that imposes no restrictions on private property owners. Owners of individually nominated properties must grant permission for the property to be nominated. In a historic district, a majority of owners (50% + 1) must support the district's nomination.

In order to be listed in the Registers, a property must have historical significance. Although there are many beautiful properties on the Registers, aesthetic beauty is *not* required for listing. And many beautiful properties have multiple areas of significance that go beyond aesthetics. Sound historical research and an understanding of historic architecture, engineering, and/or archaeology are the basis for establishing a property's significance.

# Evolution of the Register Program

## Early Days of DHR's Register Program

- Established in 1966 under the National Historic Preservation Act
- The first group of National Register Nominations listed in 1968
- First National Historic Landmarks designated in Virginia in 1960
- All nominations were written by DHR staff until the mid-1980s.
- Decisions about register eligibility were made by individual staff and Board Members
- Federal rehabilitation tax credits became available during the 1980s
- State rehabilitation tax credits became available during the 1990s

## Today's Register Program

- Over 2850 Register listings, making Virginia a national leader in number of listings
- Most nominations are written by property owners or professional consultants
- Decisions about register eligibility made by committee of 6-8 staff and State Review Board
- 124 National Historic Landmarks also have been designated

DHR was established in 1966 after the National Historic Preservation Act authorized states to create a state historic preservation office (SHPO). Among the responsibilities given to SHPOs was administering the National Register of Historic Places program within their respective states. The Virginia General Assembly charged our agency with administering the Virginia Landmarks Register as well.

The first Virginia properties were listed in the Registers in 1968. Nominations were generally written by DHR staff until the mid-1980s. Individual staff and board members made decisions about what properties should be nominated.

The federal historic tax credit program, which is available only to National Register-listed properties, started in the 1980s, and a state rehabilitation tax credit was introduced in the 1990s and made available both to National Register- and VLR-listed properties. Since then, Virginia has been a national leader in the number of National Register listings we have each year.

Register nominations now are mostly written by owners and professional consultants. National Register eligibility decisions are typically made by a DHR staff committee and the State Review Board, while the Board of Historic Resources approves properties for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register.

We also have over 124 National Historic Landmarks (NHLs), all of which are significant to our entire nation's history and heritage. The NHL program is managed by the National Park Service, which works with DHR to identify properties appropriate for NHL designation.

# Economic Benefits of Register Listing



Mineral Depot, Mineral Historic District

## Easements

May lower tax burden

Lessens inheritance taxes

Preserves property

## Rehabilitation Tax

### Credits

State and federal credits available

Properties listed in the Registers are eligible for two voluntary and highly popular programs.

Historic Preservation Easements allow property owners to place their historic property under perpetual legal protection if they so choose, while retaining private ownership. The easement remains in place even if the property is sold, willed or otherwise transfers ownership. The property owner is required to maintain the historic character of the property. Easements can benefit property owners by lowering the owner's tax burden and lessening inheritance taxes. Information about easements is available at <http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/easement/easement.htm>.

Tax Credits are available to owners wishing to rehabilitate a historic building. The state and federal programs are administered by DHR. The state credit is available both to income-producing properties and owner-occupied dwellings. The federal credit is available only for income-producing properties. Any rehabilitation work must meet the U.S. Secretary of the Interior's standards and guidelines for rehabilitation of historic properties. Information about tax credits is available at [http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/tax\\_credits/tax\\_credit.htm](http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/tax_credits/tax_credit.htm).

# Community Benefits

Community  
Investment

Local Pride



Bank of Louisa, Mineral Historic District

Register listings can bring about community benefits by encouraging community investment and active preservation efforts, encouraging revitalization of areas in bad condition, and participation in Main Street programs.

Every community has important history worthy of documentation. National Register nominations can encourage residents to learn about their local history and gain a tangible sense of pride in their community.

The research required to prepare a National Register nomination can help establish authentic heritage tourism events such as walking tours, brochures, festivals, farmers markets, and other activities. Many real estate agents emphasize local historic character in real estate sales materials. Local history and preservation programs also can feature in economic development programs designed to attract new businesses and residents.

## Personal Benefits



Westend

Plaques

Pride of Ownership

Entry in VLR book

The personal benefits of listing in the Registers are equally important to many owners. Owners of individually listed properties and contributing resources in historic districts may purchase a customized plaque for display on their home or property. DHR maintains a list of fabricators who will work with owners to design an appropriate plaque.

Many property owners are justifiably proud of their historic properties and seek Register listing to assure that their property's history and significance is documented for future generations. Owners also often expend time, energy, and funds to maintain their property in a way that preserves their historic integrity, and these efforts are worthy of recognition through Register listing.

DHR also has featured all VLR-listed properties in our publication, *The Virginia Landmarks Register*. The last printed edition was published in 1999, and we plan for the next edition to be an online publication.



# Evaluating a Property for Listing



Virginia has a 2-step process for evaluating and nominating properties to the VLR and National Register. The first step is the Preliminary Information Form (PIF), which is available for download on DHR's website at [http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/downloading\\_register\\_forms.htm](http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/downloading_register_forms.htm). DHR's staff in our regional offices are available to assist with preparation of the PIF. Basic architectural, historical and location information about the property and some current photographs are needed to complete the PIF.

Every PIF is evaluated by a staff team made up of archaeologists, architectural historians, and historians, who recommend whether the property appears to meet program requirements. The PIF also will be presented to the State Review Board at one of its quarterly meetings. The State Review Board is made up of professionals from a variety of academic disciplines. They will take staff recommendations into account and also may recommend additional areas of investigation, or request that a particular topic is highlighted.

The next step is completing the actual National Register nomination form, which also is available for download at [http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/downloading\\_register\\_forms.htm](http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/downloading_register_forms.htm). Both Registers use the same form, which is published by the National Park Service. Completing the form requires substantial historical and architectural research. Professional consultants are available to assist property owners with the form; DHR maintains a list of consultants who work in Virginia.

Nominations are presented at one of our 4 Board meetings each year. The Board of Historic Resources approves nominations for listing in the Virginia Landmarks Register; listing occurs immediately. The State Review Board recommends nominations to proceed to the National Register; DHR staff then send the nomination to the NPS, which typically takes 45 days to review and approve a nomination.



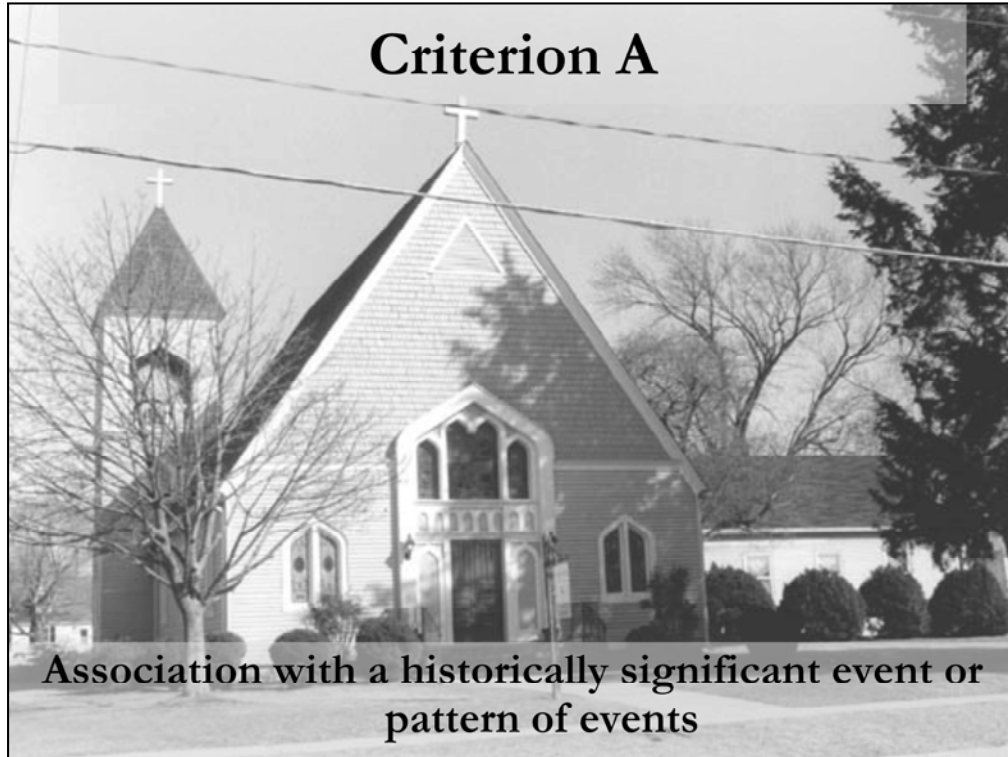
## What Kinds of Properties can be Nominated?

1. Property achieved significance at least 50 years ago or is of exceptional importance
2. Property must meet one of the Register Criteria
3. Property must retain physical integrity

The basic program requirements for nominating a historic property are that it has achieved significance at least 50 years ago, or is of exceptional importance; that it meets at least one of the 4 Register Criteria; and that it has physical integrity (or intactness) such that the property still conveys its historic character and associations.

The term “significance” has a particular meaning when it comes to the National Register and Virginia Landmarks Register. The quality of *significance* in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is found to be present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess *integrity* of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and that *meet at least one* of the four Register Criteria.

The Register Criteria are discussed individually on the following slides, followed by an explanation of the various aspects of integrity. A property must meet one of the Register Criteria *and* have integrity in order to have *significance* as defined by the National Register program. It is possible for a property to meet a Register Criterion but lack integrity, in which case it will not be significant; by the same token, a property can have integrity but if it does not meet a Register Criterion, it will not have significance.



There are four Register Criteria, which are designated alphabetically from A through D.

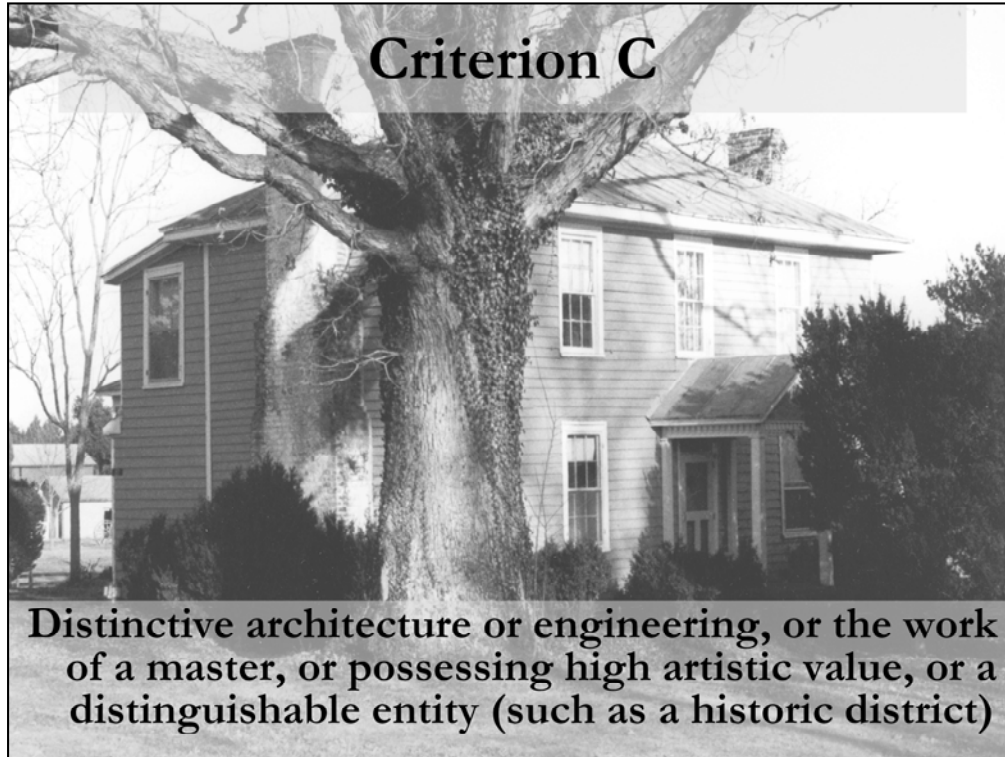
Register Criterion A applies to properties that are directly associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history. Association with agriculture, education, industry, and transportation are just a few examples of the events and patterns of development for which a property may be eligible for the Registers.

## Criterion B

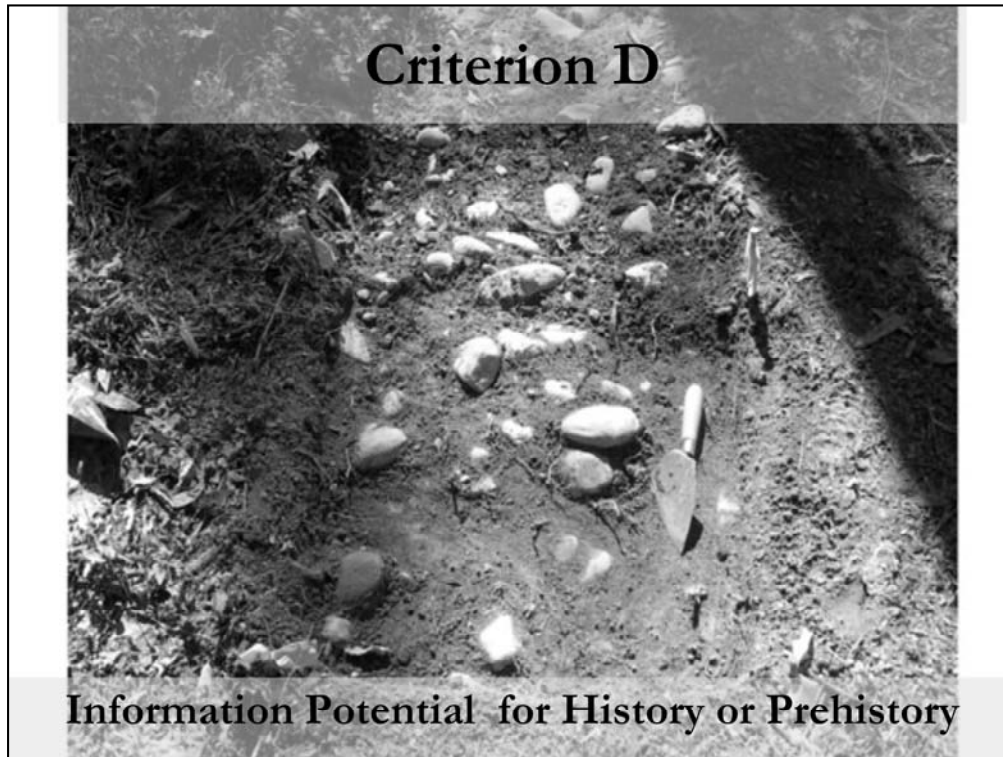


For a property to be listed in the Registers under Criterion B, it must be directly associated with an individual (or more than one individuals), each of whom has made a significant contribution to history at the local, state, or national level. The property should be the location of the significant person's active career or contributions to history, whether it is a dwelling, place of business, government building, church, school, research laboratory, farm, artist's studio, or other type of property.

A birthplace or a gravesite can be nominated, but usually that is done if it is the only thing left with a direct link to that person. When using Criterion B, a childhood home or a dwelling occupied during retirement also is not preferred unless it is the only physical property that remains extant from the person's life. There are exceptions to this, however, such as the Robert Russa Moton Boyhood Home in Prince Edward County. In his autobiography, Moton described the profound influence his boyhood home and childhood experiences had on his later career, making it appropriate to nominate the property under Criterion B for its association with a significant person.



This is the category that many people think of when they hear about National Register listed properties. Criterion C covers architecture and engineering, as well as the work of a master, or a property with high artistic value, or a distinguishable entity such as a historic district or a large farmstead. Although many, many beautiful buildings are listed in the National Register for their outstanding architectural style, the architecture does not have to be majestic to meet Criterion C. It can be representative of the construction methods of a particular time, or of the design attributes of a particular style, or it can be illustrative of an important type of craftsmanship or workmanship. Resources other than buildings also are eligible under Criterion C, such as dams, power plants, pumping stations, canals, bridges, roads, and other types of engineering works that are demonstrative of the engineering and construction methods of their historic period.



Criterion D applies to properties which have yielded or could yield important historic or prehistoric information. Such a property is usually an archaeological site but a cultural landscape or a building might also qualify here. What distinguishes Criterion D is its emphasis on the property's ability to provide information – what can be learned by studying the property? What research questions can be answered?

For archaeological sites, DHR strongly recommends that professional archaeologists prepare the nomination because a thorough understanding of the information potential is needed.

## Criteria Considerations

- *Criteria Consideration A.* A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance.
- *Criteria Consideration B.* A building or structure removed from its original location but which is significant primarily for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event.
- *Criteria Consideration C.* A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no other appropriate site or building directly associated with his or her productive life.

Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, or graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years shall not be considered eligible for the National Register and VLR. However, such properties will qualify if they are integral parts of historic districts that do meet the Register Criteria or if they fall within one of the categories listed on this and the following slide.

## Criteria Considerations (cont.)

- *Criteria Consideration D.* A cemetery which derives its primary significance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events.
- *Criteria Consideration E.* A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived.
- *Criteria Consideration F.* A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historical significance.
- *Criteria Consideration G.* A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.

A property owner who seeks to nominate one of the property types listed in this and the preceding slide should consult with DHR's regional staff when preparing a Preliminary Information Form (PIF) for the property. This is to assure that adequate documentation is available to demonstrate that the property in question will meet one of the Criteria Considerations.



## Evaluating Integrity

Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance

- Before you can evaluate the integrity of a property you have to know why, where, and when a property is significant.
- Define the essential physical features that must be present for a property to represent its significance.
- Determine which aspects of integrity are most essential to the property being eligible.

Integrity is the property's ability to convey its significance. Before integrity can be evaluated, it must be known why a property is being considered for listing. Is it for the architectural style? Because it was the location of an important battle? Did a scientific discovery happen here? Is there a prehistoric village site here?

When it is known why a property is historically important, then it can be decided what physical features are needed for the property to express its significance. The property may not have every feature, but if it has the ones that are essential, then it probably can be considered to have integrity.

## 7 Aspects of Integrity

Properties must retain the ability to communicate their significance through:

- Location
- Design
- Setting
- Materials
- Workmanship
- Feeling
- Association

In order to retain integrity a property must possess several, and often most, of the aspects.

The seven aspects of integrity address specific elements, such as materials and setting, but also general ones, like feeling, or the overall impression. All 7 aspects of integrity do not necessarily apply to every kind of historic property. For example, a Civil War battlefield is not something that was designed in advance of the military engagement. Integrity of workmanship may not be applicable to a landscape design. In those instances, integrity of the aspects that do apply is what is evaluated.

A holistic view is taken with all elements, but if some have changed it may not spell disaster, as each property is considered based on its unique circumstances. The balance of integrity and significance is very important.

Each aspect of integrity is considered in greater detail on the following slides.

## Location

The place where the historic property was constructed or where the historic event occurred.



O.H.P. Tanner House, Mecklenburg County, ca. 1769/1820, Listed

A historic property generally should remain in the same place where it originally was constructed. For some properties, like battlefields, it is impossible to move the site, so integrity of location always is maintained. But buildings, bridges, monuments, and sculptures all can be moved. It's not necessarily easy, but it can be done. If a resource like this is moved, it is generally considered to have lost integrity of location.

There are some exceptions, such as train locomotive, boats, and ships, all of which by design are intended to be mobile. In cases when the resource no longer is mobile, it should be placed in a permanent location appropriate to its historic use, such as a railyard, dry dock, or transportation museum. A formerly mobile resource placed in a location completely unrelated to its historic use, such as moving a locomotive to a vacant farm field, will not have integrity of location.

## Design

Combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property.



Hanshill, Amherst County, 1925, Listed

Design is a combination of elements, such as form, plan, massing, style, and construction method, that when examined as a whole illustrate how the property was meant to look and function when it was constructed. For a building, it can be helpful to have original architectural drawings so that we can see what the architect's original vision was and compare that to the physical edifice. The same is true with bridges, dams, trestles, rocket launch pads ... pretty much anything that required a professional's expertise to design. But design also matters when the historic property is the product of vernacular traditions. In Virginia, the I-house is a great example of a vernacular tradition. This house form has a central hall with a room to either side. It can be one room deep or two rooms, and one story high or two stories. But a crucial element of the integrity of design is its central hall with the flanking rooms. If the central hall has been truncated or partitioned to form rooms, then we would say that an I-house has lost integrity of design.



# Setting

The physical environment of a property.

Selden Hall, Virginia Beach,  
1932, Not eligible

Photos ca. 1960s and 2009



Integrity of setting is related to integrity of location, but they are not the same. A property can have integrity of location, but not integrity of setting, and vice versa. When we refer to setting, we mean the property's physical environment. Is it in a rural or urban or suburban environment? Is it in a commercial or residential area? What was that environment like when the property first was built, and how has it changed over time? Selden Hall in Virginia Beach shows how dramatically setting can change. This was a formal estate at one time, but dense development has surrounded it on all sides – even to the point that a large building has been constructed just a few feet from it. In a situation like this, we would say that the property has lost integrity of setting.

## Materials

Physical elements used at a particular time and in a particular pattern to form a historic property.



I-house, Dinwiddie County, ca. 1840s, Not eligible

Photos ca. 1930s and 2009  
Vinyl siding, replacement windows, replacement porch



Integrity of materials refers to the historic fabric of a property – the original construction materials, or the landscaping materials, that were used when a property was built. The presence of historic materials adds to a property's authenticity, its direct link to the past, in a way that even the best replacement materials can not match. When considering integrity of materials, a balance must be struck between the necessity to replace or repair worn out materials, or to accommodate changing technology, and maintaining that link to the past. Updates that have been made with attention to preserving historic fabric and character can be made; DHR staff are available to advise property owners on sensitive updates.

A typical example where the balance has tipped the wrong way is this I-house in Dinwiddie County. The photo on the left shows its historic appearance, and the one on the right shows how it looked a few years ago. The original wood siding has been covered (or maybe even replaced) with vinyl siding. The front porch was added at an unknown date, but doesn't bear much resemblance to the historic version, and what used to be a door above the porch roof now is a window. The windows have replacement vinyl sash. Taken together, these alterations cumulatively have eroded the house's integrity of materials.

## Workmanship

Physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during a given period in history or prehistory.



Baker-Strickler House,  
Louisa County, ca. 1859,  
Listed

Integrity of workmanship is intimately connected to integrity of materials. Workmanship refers to the specific techniques, methods, and crafts of a historic time and people. For example, many of Virginia's historic plantations have houses built of handmade brick composed of locally quarried materials, and shaped and constructed by enslaved African Americans. The Shenandoah Valley features numerous construction methods associated with the German immigrants who settled in the area. Many of these building traditions endured well into the nineteenth century. Above, the Baker-Strickler House in Louisa County has a wealth of stylized and detailed interior finishes that were the product of local artisans, and as such it has a high degree of integrity of workmanship.



## Feeling

The property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time.



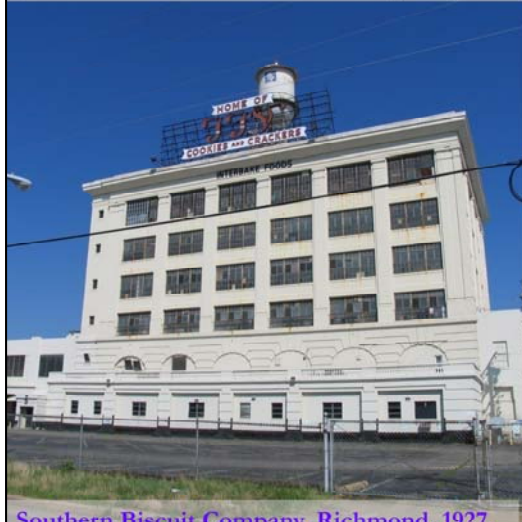
County Training School/Julius Rosenwald High School, Northumberland County, 1928, Not Evaluated



The next aspect of integrity is feeling. This aspect is meant to apply to how a historic property captures the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. The school pictured here is a good example for evaluating feeling. On the exterior, its doors and windows are boarded up and it has practically no architectural detailing. It could be a large house, or maybe a store or commercial building of some sort. Maybe it was a mill? For most observers, it would be hard to say unless they were very familiar with the building types and forms that historic schools often used. But on the interior, this building story's becomes clear. It retains the corridors, multiple doors, and small rooms of a school. The rooms themselves feature blackboards. Anyone who has attended a school, even the high-tech classrooms of today, is probably going to recognize this building as a school. So although the exterior of the building is fairly anonymous, the interior still has integrity of feeling. This example also makes another important point – integrity can be present in one part of a property, but not in another; the lack of integrity in one portion does not automatically disqualify a property from listing in the Registers.

## Association

The direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property.



Southern Biscuit Company, Richmond, 1927,  
Listed under Criteria A and C



“Association” means that the property has a direct link to something significant – an event, a person, an architectural design, a vanished culture. Tenuous associations are not considered to be sufficient to make a property eligible for the registers. For instance, the old joke used to be that the countryside was full of houses with plaques that said “George Washington slept here.” Well, maybe he did and maybe he didn’t, but just the fact that Washington may have passed by a place does not make that place significant. There has to be some kind of direct connection between the place and something that Washington did that was historically significant. Obviously, his home, Mt. Vernon is a great example of such a place. But a tavern site in Winchester where he stopped one day for dinner really is not.

That said, the duration of an association does not have to be lengthy in order for a place to be significant. Many Civil War battles lasted a few hours, but the places where they occurred can still have significance, as long as they also retain integrity.

A more commonplace property also can have integrity of association, such as the Southern Biscuit Company pictured here. This was the home of the Southern Biscuit Company for almost eighty years. The company is locally significant for its association with commerce and manufacturing in Richmond, and its association with industrial design. Their former headquarters conveys its association through the historic signage and equipment still present today.

**Integrity and condition are not the same.**



Thornton House, Halifax County, ca. 1833, deteriorating condition but retains integrity. Listed under Criteria A and C



The last thing to know about integrity is that integrity and physical condition are not synonymous. A property can be in poor physical condition but retain integrity. By the same token, a property that has been updated and altered over the years may be in good physical condition but it will lack integrity if the changes have been unsympathetic to the historic character or resulted in removal of large amounts of historic materials.

The Thornton House in Halifax County illustrates how poor condition does not equal poor integrity. This was the home and place of business for Dr. Richard Thornton during the nineteenth century. The floor plan retains its original configuration, with spaces provided for the medical practice as well as living quarters. Although the building has been vacant for several years, it is still structurally sound and much of the historic fabric is intact. We can say that the property still has many aspects of integrity.

## Archaeological integrity:

A site must retain intact soils and cultural deposits, that is the soil stratigraphy (layers) have not been disturbed by erosion or man-made forces, thereby making it possible to read the site. A site must retain scientific integrity – it must have the potential to tell us something important in history or prehistory.

Werowocomoco,  
Gloucester County,  
Listed



Although Virginia has many important archaeological sites, DHR does not receive a lot of nominations for them. One reason is the expense and expertise required to document an archaeological site. But for the archaeological sites in Virginia that are on the Registers, they also had to possess integrity. The less disturbed a site is, the better, as we can get a clearer picture of what happened and when. Integrity for archaeological sites also refers to the site's ability to yield information that is important in history or prehistory. For prehistoric sites, we can ask if there are enough features to shed light on cultural traditions, food procurement strategies, ritual activities, settlement size, or other important aspects of life in prehistoric Virginia. For historic sites, we may be able to learn about people and events that were under-represented in historic records, such as enslaved Africans, immigrants, and Virginia Indians, or we may be able to learn about a particular activity, such as making pottery, that was never recorded because at the time its manufacturing process was well understood, or they did not think it important enough to write down, or records were lost, or any of a host of reasons.



## Sources of Information

**DHR – Central and Regional Offices:**  
[www.dhr.virginia.gov](http://www.dhr.virginia.gov)

**National Park Service, National Register  
of Historic Places:**  
<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/>