



South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, South Carolina Department of Archives and History

scdah.sc.gov

National Register Listing / Local Historic Districts

Communities across South Carolina use the National Register of Historic Places and local historic district overlays to help preserve historic properties. Both designations recognize and encourage the protection of historic properties, but they are quite different. They are complementary programs that can work effectively either independently or together to meet the historic preservation needs of a community.

National Register Listing

The National Register is the nation's official list of historic, architectural, and archaeological resources worthy of preservation. South Carolina has over 1,500 National Register listings, both individual properties and historic districts.

Authority and Administration: In 1966, the National Historic Preservation Act created the National Register and established federal listing criteria. Each state and territory has a State Historic Preservation Officer who identifies eligible properties and, in conjunction with a State Board of Review, submits nominations to the Keeper of the National Register at National Park Service in the U.S. Department of the Interior. In South Carolina, the State Historic Preservation Officer is W. Eric Emerson, Director of the Department of Archives and History.

Protection: Properties listed in the National Register may be eligible for historic preservation tax credits and grants, and receive some protection from the potential adverse effects of federal projects (funded, licensed, or approved) or projects requiring certain State certifications. National Register properties that are owned or leased by the State also receive some protection.

Local Historic District Designation

Local governments can adopt a historic preservation zoning ordinance, which enables them to designate properties of historical or architectural significance. The local governing body, guided by the recommendations of its planning, zoning, and historic preservation commissions, chooses the properties. Over forty cities, towns, and counties in South Carolina have designated local historic districts and individual landmarks by adopting this type of ordinance.

Authority and Administration: South Carolina cities, towns, and counties can enact zoning laws that provide for "the preservation and protection of historic and architecturally valuable districts and neighborhoods" under South Carolina Code of Laws Section 6-29-870. Historic preservation zoning focuses on building appearance rather than use.

Protection: A historic preservation zoning ordinance establishes a board of citizens — often called a historic preservation commission, design review commission, town appearance committee, board of architectural review, or historic district commission — to review proposed exterior changes to locally designated historic properties. The ordinance protects historic properties by requiring board approval before property owners can build, demolish, or make alterations within designated areas. (See also *Hotline #10: Frequently Asked Questions About Local Historic Districts*.)

National Register Listing

- Designates historic properties based on uniform national criteria and procedures.
- Historic district boundaries based on actual distribution pattern of intact historic properties in the area.
- Provides recognition by the federal government that an area has historical or archaeological significance.
- Provides limited protection from the effects of federally-funded, licensed, or permitted projects and projects certified or permitted by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) - the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, and the Division of Mining and Solid Waste Permitting.
- Provides some protection for State-owned or leased properties.
- Eligible to apply for state and federal tax incentives for preservation projects. May qualify for a property tax incentive for rehabilitation if the local government has passed an ordinance.
- Qualifies non-profit and government owners for federal preservation grants when funds are available.
- *Does not* prevent the demolition of historic properties.
- *Does not* require owners to follow design guidelines when property is rehabilitated unless the project involves federal funds or a federal license or permit, a DHEC permit or certification, a historic preservation tax incentive, a historic preservation grant, or the property is owned or leased by the State.

Local Historic District Designation

- Designates historic properties on the basis of local criteria and local procedures.
- District boundaries based on the distribution pattern of historic properties and other community considerations.
- Protects a community's significant historic properties and areas through local recognition, a design review process, or community planning.
- May qualify for a property tax incentive for rehabilitation if the local government has passed an ordinance.
- *Does not* qualify property owners for federal preservation grants or state or federal tax incentives.
- Can provide for review of proposed demolitions; usually delays and may prevent demolitions to allow for consideration of preservation alternatives.
- Typically requires local commission approval for new construction and exterior changes to historic properties.

Questions? SC Department of Archives & History / 8301 Parklane Road / Columbia, SC 29223 / 803-896-6172

The activity that is the subject of this fact sheet has been financed, in part, with federal funds from the National Park Service, Department of the Interior. However, the contents and opinions do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the Department of Interior. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or handicap in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office of Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240.