ARCHITECTURAL SURVEY,
INVENTORY,
AND
BEST PRACTICES

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**Survey & Inventory: Definitions**

- **Survey** – Documenting resources
- **Inventory** – Documentation on known resources

**Survey builds an inventory**

- **Section 106** – Same methods, different structure
- Usually the first step in successful NRHP / MPDF nominations
What is Survey?

- Identifying and Evaluating Resources

- “Resource” is anything that can be listed in the National Register, and is usually over 50 years of age

- Involves photography, site assessments, and archival research
Survey – When To Do It

- When resources have not been evaluated
- When unsure if resources are present or not
- When entering an area not previously surveyed
What is Inventory?

- The documentation compiled on resources
- Record of evolution of resource(s)
- Critical for local governments to maintain for research, education, and regulatory purposes
Survey Plans as a Tool

- A plan for future survey or inventory
- Prioritizes where to look and what projects to undertake
- Road map for use of limited funds and staff time
Survey Planning: What to Consider

- What resources are most important to your mission/community?
- What does your public care about?
- What is threatened?
- What are your abilities?
Planning a Survey

- Things to consider:
  - Goals and purpose of survey
  - Available resources
  - Resource types
  - Geography
Survey Project – Key Components

Before beginning, every survey project should:

- Determine the purpose of the survey (research questions)
- Establish a justified boundary for project area
- Conduct preliminary research about project area
- Develop survey methodology
Levels of Survey

1. Windshield
2. Reconnaissance
3. Intensive
Windshield Survey

- No survey forms
- No formal data collection
- Brief report (or memo)

Best for:
- First look at unknown area
- Rapid condition check
Reconnaissance Survey

- Possible survey forms (not required)

- Basic data collection

- Formal report

- Best for:
  - First look before more staff time and resources available
  - District-level evaluations
  - Evaluations of post-war housing

- Can recommend future intensive
Intensive Survey

- SHPO or Agency Evaluation Forms
- Detailed data collection
- Formal report

Best for:
- Evaluations for individual eligibility
- Compliance survey
- HABS documentation (Level 1 only)
Intensive Evaluations

- Every state/agency has different methodology
- All intensive survey forms should include:
  - Basic identification information
  - Description of resource
  - Evaluation of eligibility for NRHP
  - Map & location information
  - Shapefiles (optional but VERY helpful)

Don’t Forget Districts!
Intensive Evaluation Terminology

- “Eligible” = individually eligible for the NRHP

- “Not Eligible” = not individually eligible for the NRHP

- “Contributing / Non-contributing” – refers to a larger historic district

- “Unevaluated”
Activity: Brainstorm Your History

Take 1 minute and write down up to 5 areas within your jurisdiction that might benefit from a targeted survey project.
Dealing with Survey Results

- Data Collection
- GIS
  - Story Maps
  - Arches
- Mapping / Cartography
Survey Reports

- Must follow SOI Standards & Guidelines for:
  - Identification
  - Evaluation

- Should always include:
  - Historic/architectural/archaeological context
  - Methodology for evaluation
  - Findings/Results
  - Recommendations
Architectural Classification

- Style
- Type
- Vernacular
Style vs. Type

- Common to exclude building type

- Many properties do not have a style but usually have a type
Style

- Fashion
- Ornamentation
- “Skin” of the building
Vernacular Architecture

- Combination of design, workmanship, and material features that are unique to a particular geographic area.
- Influenced by environment and culture
- Not a bucket for resources without style
# In Defense of Good Data

## Common Data/Survey Problems
- Incomplete or unclear survey forms
- No or vague justification for eligibility
- No maps/shapefiles or vague maps
- Poor descriptions of character-defining features

## Long-term Problems
- Confuses/fails to help future researchers
- Slows down resource mgmt./planning process
- Slows down data entry into databases
- Makes HTC projects difficult to manage
- Makes local design review difficult to structure/manage
Summary

- Survey vs. Inventory
- 3 levels of Survey
- Survey Planning
- Architectural Classification