

The Parts of a National Register Nomination

Experienced consultants will have developed their own methods for organizing and writing National Register nominations. We hope the following information will help those writers attempting the process for the first time.

In addition to the fill-in-the-blank portions of the National Register form, a nomination includes two narratives. The first (which is located in Part 7 on the form) is a physical description of the candidate. Called a significance statement, the second narrative (which is located in the form's Part 8) relates the reason(s) the writer believes the candidate to be eligible for listing. Both narratives must contain numerous specific pieces of information, as related in Bulletin 16A: *How to Complete the National Register Registration Form*. Additionally, the federal reviewer in the National Register Program at the National Park Service has certain content expectations that we strive to meet.

Before you begin writing your significance statement, look at those for all the properties in the candidate's parish and/or all the similar properties in the state. You may get ideas and even sentences or paragraphs that you can use in your write-up. There is no need to rewrite something already satisfactorily written. These nominations can be found in the Division's online National Register Database, which can be reached via the following URL: <http://www.crt.state.la.us/dataprojects/hp/nhl/index.asp>.

The following content suggestions, learned through years of experience, reflect the successful approach to nomination preparation practiced by the Louisiana Division of Historic Preservation's National Register program.

Part 7: Physical Description of Candidate

First paragraph:

Historic Name of Property

Construction Date

Style Designation

Location

Brief Description of Setting

Construction Material

Number of stories

Last sentence: statement that, despite whatever the problems are (briefly refer to them, i.e., alterations, additions, etc.), the property remains eligible for NR listing

Second paragraph:

If the property has been moved, that needs to be discussed up front. Describe:

Original setting

New setting

Emphasize similarities

Describe how move was accomplished, i.e., what was done to the house in order to move it. For example, perhaps the roof was removed or the building was cut in half. For a smaller building, perhaps it was moved all in one piece. It is important that Washington understand that the building was not completely disassembled and reassembled piece by piece on the new site. The latter is considered a reconstructed building and is ineligible. It is also important to stress that the new site is still an appropriate location for the candidate. For examples, see the Les Chenes Verts and Reymond House (both East Baton Rouge Parish) nominations in our National Register Database.

Descriptive paragraphs:

Description of stylistic features, exterior and interior

Description of floor plan

Discussion of alterations:

Mention all the important alterations.

Group like things together to make this group of items seem shorter

We don't include things like electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and changes in roofing materials (unless, for the latter) the actual pitch of the roof has been changed.

For examples, see any nomination prepared after 1995 in our National Register Database.

Assessment of Integrity, Including Mitigation of Alterations

“Integrity” means retaining historic appearance, materials, location and associations.

“Mitigation” means telling why the alterations are not as bad as they seem and why they are not significant enough to prevent listing the candidate on the Register. For example, you might say:

“Although the columns are replaced, they are exact copies of the originals as shown in a c. 1900 historic photograph.”

If you can't mitigate something, you make a statement like this:

For an architectural case: “The loss of the columns is regrettable but all the other important architectural features that contribute to the significance

of the building remain intact.” For an example, see the Dixon House (Ascension Parish) nomination in the National Register Database.

For a historical case: “There is no doubt that someone from the historic period would recognize the building if he visited the site today.” In fact, this sentence should almost always be included in the mitigation statement for historical nominations. For an example, see the Burr’s Ferry Earthworks (Vernon Parish) nomination in the National Register Database.

Concluding Statement of Integrity/Mitigation Paragraph:

Confirm that enough integrity survives for property to represent whatever case you are making. Confirm that the property is an appropriate candidate for the National Register. Use words like “strong”, “appropriate,” “excellent”, etc. If the property has a weak technical case, use something like “viable” or “legitimate” candidate.

Part 8: Significance Statement

First Paragraph of All Nominations:

Name of Property

Level of significance (local, state or national)

Applicable Criterion (A, B, C, D or a combination of these)

Area of Significance: architecture, social history, commerce, etc, see Bulletin 16

Reason for Significance:

Include context for architectural nominations, i.e., “rare example of Italianate style within the town of Hammond.”

Include Period of Significance and why chosen (if not already clear) for Historical Nominations, i.e., “The period of significance ranges from 1916 – 1945, the years in which the school operated.”

For Historical Nominations:

Following Paragraphs: Begin the historic context here.

Develop the context as fully as you can. Sometimes contexts are long and sometimes they are short, depending upon the subject. How you approach the context will depend, partly, upon the level of significance you are claiming for the candidate and its history.

For a property of national significance:

Summarize the national history of the industry, event, etc. Then move to its history/context within Louisiana. Next, give a brief review of the history/development of the parish and/or town where the candidate is located. You can find many examples of these histories in the online National Register database on our web site. Don't hesitate to copy the wording exactly when it fits. Finally, discuss the development of the event, industry, etc., and its impact, at that site. For examples, see the Shreveport Municipal Memorial Auditorium (Caddo Parish) and Evergreen Plantation (St. John the Baptist Parish) nominations in our National Register database..

For a property with state significance,

Summarize the history/context of the candidate within Louisiana. Tell how and why the industry, event (or whatever) developed here. Next, give a brief review of the history/development of the parish and/or town where the candidate is located. You can find many examples of these histories in the online NR database. Don't hesitate to copy the wording exactly when it fits. Finally, discuss the development of the specific event, industry, etc., that the candidate represents and its impact on the state. For examples, see the Cinclare Sugar Mill Historic District (West Baton Rouge Parish) and Lutcher & Moore Lumber Company Headquarters Building (St. James Parish) nominations in our National Register database..

For a property with local significance:

Discuss the history of the industry/event on the state level. Next, relate the history of the candidate's development and its impact at its local site. Give as many details as you can regarding the history of the event and the contribution it made. The emphasis should be upon why the property is important locally. For an example, see the Joseph H. Kurth, Jr. House (Vernon Parish) nomination in our National Register database.

For Architectural Nominations:

For local level (parish or city/town) significance:

Second Paragraph: Historical Background

Give a brief review of the history/development of the parish and/or town where the candidate is located. The second paragraph is usually the best place to put this information.

Third and Following Paragraphs: Architectural Background

Louisiana's federal reviewer requires a discussion of the applicable style's history, development nationally and locally, and its characteristics. We have begun to develop these discussions and encourage you to use them. However, to date only a few are ready. We will continue to develop and share this material as time permits. In the meantime, do not hesitate to consult with the National Register staff about this content requirement.

Final Paragraphs: Architectural Significance

Describe the general architectural context of the area in which the candidate is located. How old is the building patrimony? What kinds of architectural styles are found there? Again, you can find some examples in the online database.

Explain how the candidate fits into this context. How many examples are of the same style as the candidate? Are they poor examples with only one or two motifs associated with the style, or are they highly developed examples with lots of ornament? Specifically name the best of these and describe them briefly. Have they been altered? How does your candidate rate when compared to the others like it? Is your candidate better or not as well developed as these? Washington wants to know why the candidate deserves to be listed while other, similar properties do not.

Sometimes the above is sufficient, but sometimes a final sentence is needed to summarize the case. It can be similar, but not identical to, the last sentence in the mitigation statement in Part 7.

For state and national level significance:

We do not want a brief developmental history of the state or the nation! Instead, you might begin your discussion of the architectural style's developmental history and characteristics here. Then continue as outlined above.