

Surroundings

May/June 2004



A.D. MARBLE & COMPANY PUBLICATION

An Overview of the National Register of Historic Places

Stephanie Foell is an architectural and landscape historian. She has extensive experience researching, documenting, and evaluating a broad range of historic resources throughout the United States.



Stephanie Foell
Senior Architectural
Historian

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of significant properties. Created by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is maintained by the National Park Service on behalf of the Secretary of the Interior. It documents both the physical appearance and historic significance of properties.

The National Register has established four criteria to evaluate the significance of properties. According to the National Register, the quality of significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

The National Register recognizes five types of properties.

Buildings shelter human activity. Examples include houses and stores. **Structures** serve purposes other than housing human activity. Examples are bridges and silos.

Objects include constructions that are either small in scale or artistic in nature. Statues and fountains are objects. **Sites** are locations of significant events or prehistoric or historic occupations. A battlefield and the location of a former village are sites. **Districts** are concentrations of buildings, structures, sites, and/or objects united by plan or development. Streetcar suburbs and mill villages



'Clover Croft' Mansion
Athens Historic District, Athens, PA

*Linking Environmental
Issues to Solutions in Transportation*

A.D. Marble & Company
375 East Elm Street
Suite 200
Conshohocken, PA 19428



Colonel C.F. Wells, Jr. House
Athens Historic District, Athens, PA

are districts.

Most properties need to reach 50 years of age before becoming eligible for listing. This allows properties to be placed in proper perspective in the continuum of history. However, some properties, such as buildings by Modern master architects, are exceptionally significant and can be listed prior to reaching 50 years of age.

Historians, architectural historians, and archeologists must develop historic contexts to determine the property's place within greater trends in history. Properties can be designated for local, state, or national significance.

For a property to be eligible under **Criterion A**, it must be associated with an event marking an important moment or with a greater trend in history. Under **Criterion B**, a property is eligible if it is associated with the productive life of a person or group of people whose contributions to history are documented. **Criterion C** applies to properties that are significant for their physical design and include architecture, landscape architecture, and engineering. It also applies to districts, whose individual components may not be eligible for listing, but which collectively are significant. Properties that contain information that aids in the understanding of prehistory or history are eligible under **Criterion D**. This criterion can apply to built resources, but it usually involves archaeological sites.

To be eligible for the National Register, a property must have integrity, which is its ability to convey the reason that it is significant. The National Register recognizes seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Most National Register properties have at least several aspects of integrity. Properties in poor condition may still have high degrees of integrity.

By carefully evaluating properties according to these guidelines, the National Register of Historic Places recognizes significant resources for their importance in American history. Evaluating properties for eligibility is a critical step in the Section 106 process of many projects completed by A.D. Marble & Company for state, local, and federal clients. Whenever possible, impacts to resources that are eligible for the National Register should be avoided or mitigated.

For more information on the National Register of Historic Places, visit www.cr.nps.gov/nr/.

Stephanie Foell can be contacted at (410) 902-1421, or via e-mail, sfoell@admarble.com.



A.D. Marble & Company
375 East Elm Street
Suite 200
Conshohocken, PA 19428