

PENNSYLVANIA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE SURVEY FILES

SITE IDENTIFICATION CRITERIA

The following represent Pennsylvania Archaeological Site Survey (PASS) site identification criteria and definitions developed by the Section of Archaeology, The State Museum of Pennsylvania and the Bureau for Historic Preservation, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

According to guidance from the National Register of Historic Places, "A site is the location of a significant event, a prehistoric or historic occupation or activity, or a building or structure, whether standing, ruined, or vanished, where the location itself possesses historic, cultural, or archaeological value regardless of the values of any existing structure." (NR Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation 1997:5) The National Register refers to "pre- and post-contact" archaeological sites. Post-contact sites would be those "dating from time periods since significant contact between Native Americans and Europeans." (NR Bulletin: Guidelines for Evaluating and Registering Archeological Properties 2000:9) This would include sites containing an above-ground component, as well as sites with no standing structures.

Project assemblages that will be submitted to the State Museum for curation, but do not meet any of the definitions below, should be recorded on the Isolated Find / Non-Site form. These forms should be submitted to the Bureau for Historic Preservation for review and assignment of a general county catalog number by The State Museum, Section of Archaeology. That numeric designation must be used in labeling the assemblage.

PREHISTORIC SITES (PRE-CONTACT)

Definitions

1. Three or more culturally modified objects, excluding Fire-cracked rock (FCR), found within a 15 m diameter area while surface collecting a plowed field represent a site.
 - a. Three or more flakes or any combination of flakes and tools (lithics, pottery sherds, etc.) found within 15 m of each other represent a site in plowed contexts.
 - b. Single points are usually considered isolated finds, however, **all** Paleo-Indian point localities should be recorded as sites because of the sparseness of debris from Paleo-Indian sites.
 - c. Isolated **diagnostic** pre-contact artifacts (points, ceramics, etc.) should be fully recorded on Isolated Find / Non-Site Documentation forms. These will not be assigned official PASS site numbers but will be given separate numbers that can be used for curation and they will remain on file as important information concerning prehistoric land use.
2. Two or more flakes and/or other culturally modified items in adjacent shovel tests spaced no more than 15 M apart represent a site
3. Five or more finished tools recovered within an acre indicate the presence of a site, and the recorder should further refine site boundaries within that area (unless it is a village site covering more than an acre).
4. The presence of any subsurface culturally derived feature requires designation of the locality as a site.

HISTORIC (POST-CONTACT) SITES

Following federal standards, "Historic" structures and sites are defined as being 50 or more years of age and thus requiring evaluation for significance.

For the Pennsylvania Archaeological Site Survey (PASS), record **all** of the following as historic archaeological sites. General PASS forms or industrial site forms are required for each site and, on some types of sites, an Historic Resource Survey Form (HRSF) may also be needed. The artifacts, 50 years old or older, should be curated according to the State Museum guidelines. They must be assigned site and catalog numbers.

Definitions

1. Any debris scatter* that contains diagnostic artifacts that are 50 years old or older, is a site. Multiple debris scatters may be indicative of a larger historic resource. Boundaries should be established based on documentary research where possible, in tandem with visible natural or cultural landscape features. Site boundaries should reflect the most stable period of site occupation. For additional guidance, consult *Cultural Resource Management in Pennsylvania: Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations* (2008).
2. Any above ground historic structure and associated historic debris scatter*. Also, any debris scatter within 100 feet (ca. 30 meters) of a foundation/ruin is a site, provided the latter is clearly not a modern (less than 50 years old) feature.
3. Historic artifacts associated with known yards/lots in urban situations, even if there are no remaining structures and the yards are deemed ineligible for the National Register, must be recorded as historic sites.
4. Any subsurface historic structure or surface ruin of a historic structure represents a site. (Some ruins may require an HRSF form).
5. Record all historic industrial localities as sites using the Industrial Resource form. Canals, iron furnaces, mills, logging camps, preserved sections of old roads, etc., should all be recorded. Information about past industrial sites may come from historic records, standing structures, ruins, in-ground features, or artifact assemblages. Our new Industrial Site form is designed to capture information from all of these sources. Industrial Sites are now included in our files in both the Historic Resource Survey (HRF) and the Archaeological Site Survey (PASS). Since the most basic information is usually historic in nature, all such sites are given a Keynumber in the HRF. The history of the complex and the descriptions of any buildings or features can be recorded best in this file. It is important for the recorder to determine what the actual resource included. Individual pieces of an industrial complex can be treated as inventory items within the resource, and should not be recorded as separate resources. If and when artifacts are collected, a PASS number will also be assigned so the artifacts can be processed and curated. The data collected in the PASS file is best suited to recording information about the artifacts. So, in many cases, the same resource will have joint records in both files. Essentially, the artifact assemblage described in the PASS file becomes an inventory item of the historic resource.
6. Site status of made land contexts not associated with structural remains will be assessed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (BHP).

* A debris scatter is defined as 10 or more artifacts representing at least two different artifact types within one acre in a plowed field. Shovel tests would require three diagnostic artifacts of at least two different artifact types in adjacent units at 15-meter (ca. 50-foot) intervals.