

OAHP Recommended Minimum Standards for Identification & Evaluation of Postwar Subdivisions

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Post-World War II residential subdivisions differ from the suburban developments which preceded them in terms of the large numbers of resources within subdivisions, the limited architectural styles/building types represented, the relatively short periods of time for the original construction, and the fact these subdivisions were both mass marketed and designed as major land use developments including houses and other community facilities such as schools, parks, libraries, and strip malls. For this reason the identification and evaluation of such areas require a specialized approach. This document describes the minimum identification standards OAHP has developed and strongly recommends for use on all surveys of postwar residential subdivisions with construction dates of sixty years or less. This time period was chosen as a moving target to facilitate the documentation of resources which share similar development patterns and for which sufficient research materials may not exist in standard repositories. The approach described below is NOT intended to record older railroad or streetcar suburbs; such resources still should be documented using the Architectural Inventory Form (#1403) for each building or structure within the survey area as described in the most recent version of the *Colorado Cultural Resource Survey Manual* (see http://www.coloradohistory-oahp.org/crforms/crforms_man.htm).

The approach described below will allow for determinations of eligibility (Criterion A or C) for Section 106 projects. Areas of significance could include Community Planning and Development, Commerce, Social History and Ethnic Heritage. Applications for SHF or CLG grant programs to perform surveys of postwar subdivisions utilizing the suggested guidance will be acceptable (as long as they meet other program guidelines); projects proposing to complete more historical context or to intensively survey a higher proportion of the resources within the chosen subdivision may score more competitively in those programs. These minimum standards offer consistency across all OAHP departments dealing with historical & architectural survey. In addition, this approach corresponds with the National Register Bulletin *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places* (NPS, 2002) and the companion National Register Multiple Property Documentation Form *Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States, 1830—1960* (NPS, 2002).

The minimum standards call for the creation of three products: reconnaissance survey forms, intensive-level survey forms, and a survey report.

- A **comprehensive reconnaissance survey** of the entire subdivision utilizing an individualized form based upon the architectural characteristics of the models built within the subdivision should be completed for each property. Keep in mind some initial research will be necessary to develop an appropriate reconnaissance form. Key information to gather includes details about the number of house models, the characteristics of these models, copies of maps for the entire survey area, and information regarding subdivision names and all applicable builder-developers involved in construction. Separate, developer-specific reconnaissance forms may need to be developed for survey within in a single subdivision if different developers were involved or selling off of lots to various developers occurred; these forms still should be based upon the character-defining elements of the models. OAHP developed a sample comprehensive reconnaissance form for the Harvey Park South subdivision in Denver- see <http://www.coloradohistory-oahp.org/programareas/infoman/pwwII.htm> and click on Harvey Park South Architectural Features Recording Sheet (Reconnaissance Form).
- Following the comprehensive reconnaissance survey, a **selective intensive survey** of key examples for each identified model within the subdivision should be completed. When choosing the resources to be surveyed at the intensive level, a minimum of one example of each model within the subdivision must be documented on an Architectural Inventory Form (#1403). Consultation with OAHP will be crucial at this point in the project since decisions regarding exactly how many intensive forms are needed will be based upon not only the reconnaissance survey results but also project-specific aspects such as the overall survey area, nature of changes to the homes, and context-specific issues affecting subdivision development. Possible properties to survey intensively may include most intact, least intact, and homes exhibiting the most common alterations for the subdivision (for example, conversions of garages to living

space or replacement of picture windows with bay windows). All evaluations on the intensive survey forms for individual National Register eligibility (unlikely), existence of a National Register Historic District (NRHD) with appropriate boundaries, and the contributing or noncontributing status of resources within a NRHD must, at a minimum, be based upon both local context appropriate to the project area and consideration of key events which spurred subdivision development. In most cases references to existing regional, state or national contexts will be appropriate or make for a more competitive grant application. Again, consultation with OAHP regarding the contexts best suited for resource evaluation must be undertaken.

- The third strongly recommended product, a **survey report**, should follow the format and requirements established for intensive level survey reports in the most recent version of the *Colorado Cultural Resource Survey Manual*.
- This report should include details regarding both the comprehensive reconnaissance and the selective intensive survey completed during the project. Given the emphasis on subdivisions instead of individual resources the survey report should include both narrative and visuals addressing subdivision location, subdivision design, and the houses, landscapes, and community facilities within all subdivisions surveyed.

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