

***Researchers Guide for
Developing a Context for Evaluating Post World War II Suburbs
for National Register Eligibility***

The goal is to summarize the historical development and potential significance of the Post World War II subdivision, 1945-1965. In order to evaluate a resource's significance as an example of such a housing development, it is necessary to place it in its local and regional context.

Suburban development, from the railroad suburbs that emerged in the nineteenth century around Philadelphia, to the streetcar and early automobile suburbs of the early twentieth century, to the Post World War II and early freeway suburbs that sprang up quickly and with force in the mid-twentieth century, has had a great impact on both Pennsylvania's history and landscape.

There are general character-defining features of a postwar housing development, particularly ones that followed Federal Housing Administration (FHA) minimum property requirements or the Urban Land Institute's Community Builder's Handbook. For example, the curvilinear subdivision design was standard, and there was a "protection of values through appropriate deed restrictions (including setbacks, lot sizes, and minimum costs of construction)." In general, postwar subdivisions tended to be outside of the urban city center and located near interstates and highways. Subdivisions were designed to provide an open space feel with landscaped streets, private yards, and often community parks. Most often, the builders offered a limited number of house plans and architectural styles. New shopping centers, parks, schools, churches and other community facilities were often located in or immediately adjacent to the housing development. Often housing developments consist of one or more "phases" developed within a close time period, with dwellings that either continue the setting and architectural styles or develop into later house plans and practices of that later period.

Since postwar subdivisions are a ubiquitous property type, not all examples will automatically be significant. This document has been created to provide guidance in determining significance of the common postwar subdivision using various trends and criterion shown to be widespread in Pennsylvania. This does not mean that all postwar subdivisions were "cookie cutter" or consisted of mass-produced housing or "tract homes." Modern architects and landscape architects created aesthetically united subdivisions, used progressive materials and designs, and worked in harmony with their surroundings. **Therefore, it is possible that some subdivisions may not fit under the trends or criterion discussed here.**

Please be aware that Public Housing is NOT covered under this Researcher's Guide. The PHMC has on file copies of the draft *Public Housing in the United States, 1933-1949, Multiple Property Submission* and the draft *Public Housing in Philadelphia Multiple Property Submission* for those interested in pursuing this avenue of research.

It is the PA SHPO's position that rigorous evaluation of a property's significance and integrity must be employed to reduce a vast group of similar resources to a meaningful list. Instead of applying typicality of the resource as an indicator of significance, evaluation under the National Register criterion should identify additional important qualities as outlined in this document, and

by selecting the outstanding examples, a list of truly important postwar suburbs can be assembled from a large number of similar resources.

In order to identify meaningful patterns which can be used for a basis of evaluation, it will be necessary to evaluate any given subdivision in a broader context than the immediate neighborhood or even municipality in which it is constructed. For Pennsylvania, Post World War II housing developments date from 1945 to 1965.

Please note that if the majority of homes in a given subdivision are less than 50 years of age, a case for exceptional importance (Criterion Consideration G) will be required.

The U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register Bulletin [*Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places*](#) provides a history of suburban neighborhoods in the United States. This bulletin was produced in conjunction with a national multiple property listing entitled [*Historic Residential Suburbs in the United States, 1830-1960, MPS*](#).

For additional information on preparing a Historic Context for Individual Properties and Historic Districts, please see BHP's [*Historic Context Guidelines*](#).

Documentation Standards

1. Associated Property type

A. *Pennsylvania Post-World War II Housing Developments, 1945-1965 Historic District*
The National Park Service has stated that State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO) can establish property types and subtypes for common resources based upon variations in style or form, geographic ranges and time brackets. Since Pennsylvania has diverse settlement patterns, topography and regional variations of architectural styles, it is the decision of the PA SHPO to establish the subtype based upon Pennsylvania's general chronological suburban development pattern. According to National Register Bulletin *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places*, a historic residential suburb is

“a geographic area, usually located outside the central city, that was historically connected to the city by one or more modes of transportation; subdivided and developed primarily for residential use according to a plan; and possessing a significant concentration, linkage, and continuity of dwellings on small parcels of land, roads and streets, utilities, and community facilities. The various types of postwar suburban neighborhoods developed between 1945 and 1965 that meet this definition include:

- Planned residential communities;
- Single residential subdivisions of various sizes;
- Groups of contiguous residential subdivisions that are historically interrelated by design, planning, or historic association;
- Concentration of multiple family units, such as duplexes, double and triple-deckers, and apartment houses.”

The primary level of evaluation for this property type is the subdivision or the development. For the most part, individual residences are not sufficient to reflect the theme of postwar suburban development. Evaluation should focus on identifiable neighborhoods (with similar styles or variations of a style), development names, or distinctive patterns that separate groups of housing. If the subdivision consists of a combination of single family dwellings, multi-family dwellings and apartment housing, use the subtype classification of the resource that makes up the majority of the subdivision. This may be a rare instance, since due to issues with the Federal Housing Act of 1949's provision regarding apartments and multi-family housing, the FHA established new zoning codes to halt multi-family housing units from being constructed within single-family housing developments.

1. Subtypes

a. Single family dwelling subdivision: includes buildings designed and constructed specifically to function as residential single family owner-occupied dwellings, built between 1945 and 1965, situated on individual lots within a large tract of land that was subdivided as a housing development. This subdivision subtype includes the buildings, landscape features, ancillary features, and associated components located within the subdivision's platted boundary.

b. Multi-family dwelling subdivision: includes buildings designed and constructed specifically to function as duplexes, twins, triplexes or fourplexes, residential owner-occupied dwellings. These buildings contain two or more side-by-side housing dwellings, and were constructed between 1945 and 1965. This subdivision subtype includes the buildings, landscape features, ancillary features, and associated components located within the subdivision's platted boundary.

c. Multi-family rental dwelling subdivision: includes buildings designed and constructed specifically to function as multi-residential rental dwellings. These buildings are generally between one and four stories tall, contain self-sufficient apartment units and were constructed between 1945 and 1965. This subdivision subtype includes the buildings, landscape features, ancillary features, and associated components located within the subdivision's platted boundary.

The "subdivision" is the basic unit of evaluation. It must have an "identity" that is definable by:

1. Housing style and/or character
2. Overall subdivision layout
3. Design elements of housing and landscape
4. Role of developer
5. Some degree of planning
6. Inclusion of infrastructure and amenities

The majority of the subdivision's construction date cannot have been earlier than 1945. Therefore, if the subdivision was platted earlier, and had the majority of its dwellings constructed outside of 1945-1965, the subdivision is not considered postwar. To be considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the subdivision must exhibit the characteristics associated with its period of development.

These subtypes do NOT include public housing projects. Public housing, which is defined as a form of housing owned by a government authority and established to provide decent and safe rental housing for eligible low-income families, is covered under a separate multiple property submission.

d. Associated component (suburban school, shopping center and religious architecture): while these resources are not part of the subtype resource type, they can be important associated components of the postwar subdivision, since they often “served as the principal centers of civic life in suburbs, where other community institutions had yet to develop,” and thus as contributing elements have their own registration requirements (Domenic Vitiello, *Historic Educational Resources of Pennsylvania MPS*, 74). ***Please note that they do not have to be present within a subdivision for the subdivision to be eligible.***

1. Must have been constructed and established during the period of significance
2. Must be located within or adjacent to the subdivision
3. Must retain the character-defining architectural features associated with their construction.

It is important to include these components if it is known that the builder/developer specifically planned for, built or put aside land for future development of these resources. There must be a demonstrable relationship in order to include these within a district boundary, particularly if they are on the periphery of the district.

1.Schools

Policies of the Federal Housing Administration (FHA), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) spurred basic trends in public school design and development; and regarding postwar suburbs, this created sprawling campuses of one- or two-story schools that mimicked the subdivision that bordered them. “Although the history of mid- and late-twentieth century school architecture has largely yet to be written, it was deeply informed by Modernists who designed most public schools, like other public buildings of this period, in large, rectangular volumes of reinforced concrete or brick marked by regular registers of windows intended to express the sober democratic purpose of the activity within their walls” (Vitiello, 76). For those interested in researching this type of postwar resource in more depth, listed below are various avenues of research:

The Pennsylvania State Archives. Record Group 22 ([Records of the Department of Education](#))

Pennsylvania State Archives. Record Group 78 ([Records of the State Public School Building Authority](#)).

Vitiello, Domenic. [Historic Educational Resources of Pennsylvania MPS](#)

2 .Shopping Centers

The principles in FHA's *Planning Neighborhoods for Small Houses* offered a comprehensive approach in planning residential subdivisions and adjacent shopping centers. For those interested in researching this type of postwar resource in more depth, listed below is an avenue of research:

Cohen, Nancy. *America's Marketplace: The History of Shopping Centers* (Greenwich Publishing Group, 2002)

3. Religious Architecture

Religious architecture in Pennsylvania varied during the postwar period, and can range from Revival styles to Modern styles. Religious Architecture -Associated components can be of any style or type as long as they were constructed within the postwar period. Church and synagogue design "reflected the era's tension between embracing all things modern and ecumenical while at the same time, preserving tradition. Religious architecture, once among the most tradition-inspired forms of the built landscape, transitioned rapidly after World War II from the Interwar Revivalism to a near standardized model of religious buildings in the 1950s based on a fusion of various modern styles with features going back to the roots of ancient and Medieval worship. Catholic, Jewish, Orthodox and a wide range of Protestant congregations constructed buildings that looked remarkably similar - even interchangeable. As modernism continued in liturgy, theology, and design, these groups ventured into constructing more experimental and nontraditional designs by the early 1960s." (Wichita State University, "[Postwar Religious Architecture.](#)"). For those interested in researching this type of postwar resource in more depth, listed below are various avenues of research:

Christ-Janer, Victor and Mary Mix Foley. *Modern Church Architecture: A Guide to the Form and Spirit of 20th Century Religious Buildings*. New York: Dodge Book Department of McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1962.

Price, Jay. [When Traditional Could Be Modern: Religious Buildings in Kansas after World War II](#) (contains information about national trends)

2. Physical description and Integrity description

The goal is to provide an understanding of the overall age of the suburb, its scale and character development, its component parts and how they relate to each other in both spatial and historic terms, and its integrity (for further information regarding integrity, please see the Integrity section #4). For further guidance, please refer to the U.S. Department of Interior, National Park Service, National Register Bulletin [Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places](#).

1. Since the overall development plan and components of a postwar resource may be as significant as the individual houses, careful attention must be paid to describing the overall appearance of the subdivision and to the existence of the modern amenities so often touted as the advantage of postwar suburban living (such as nice yards, landscaping, lighting, sidewalks, curbs, utilities, social facilities, etc.).
2. Describe the current general layout or plan, landscaping features, lighting and signage, physical relationship between components and their locations, road patterns, general quality of construction, sense of cohesiveness and/or subdivision character.
3. Include a description of the setting (including the surrounding areas, such as other subdivisions of varying ages, malls, highways, farmland, etc.).
4. Describe the predominant architectural styles and specific distinctive examples located within the subdivision. In addition,
 - a. Identify the number and type of house patterns/designs in the development and describe how they differ (by design, materials, quality of construction, and also variations in lot size).
 - b. Identify which types predominate and whether they are concentrated in particular parts of the development or randomly distributed, or some other distribution pattern.
 - c. Identify and describe structures, objects, playgrounds, pools, schools, common areas – and where they are located in relation to other resources
5. When assessing the integrity of the subdivision as a whole, pay attention to individual components (changes to houses) and also be sure to describe the overall integrity of the district. For instance, have houses been altered but the plan, landscape, etc. remain? Has the landscaping changed? Have social amenities disappeared? Have original features been removed and replaced with newer components?

3. Context

A. Criterion A.

Residential districts are often evaluated under Criterion A for their association with events or patterns that have made a significant contribution to the broad historical patterns of the country, the state, or the region. Specifically, that could include housing developments that were created by taking advantage of the various trends in legislation and/or community planning and development occurring prior to and during the postwar period, including the Federal Housing Administration, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, the Housing Act of 1949, *Brown v Board of Education of Topeka*, even the Federal Aid Highway Act or the Interstate Highway Act. **However, suburbs should be specifically placed in their local and regional socio-economic contexts in a way that meaningfully reflects the broad changes affecting communities. Therefore, it is not sufficient to state that most of the housing reflects postwar Federal Housing Administration (FHA) or Veterans Administration (VA) minimum standards construction trends or they are a part of the suburb's development. While these events in the suburb are a reflection of a more general national pattern, it is necessary to understand them more clearly as part of regional and local patterns and to compare them on a regional basis.**

The goal is to understand the creation and evolution of the development, its role or place in the local context of housing, economic development, zoning, etc, and how it compares to other examples of subdivision development (locally, regionally or on a larger scale depending on the possible level of significance). Identify other subdivisions, their characteristics, and who were their developers. Compare the surveyed subdivision with other subdivisions in the area. Base comparisons on the complexity and scale of the development, features other than housing and curvilinear streets, distinctiveness of the architecture; impact on local residential housing supplies; creation of infrastructure, and innovativeness of the plan/financing/design. According to the National Park Service guidelines, "if the appropriate context does not exist, it must be developed with as much data as possible before an evaluation can be attempted. Otherwise, the evaluation must be deferred." When evaluating significance within the context, you must consider the relevance of the property to the theme; the ability of the nominated property to illustrate the theme; comparison with other properties that represent the theme; and whether sufficient integrity exists to represent the theme.

Please note: when compiling a context for postwar housing, it is not necessary to describe and document the area's seventeenth, eighteenth or nineteenth century development and history unless in some way it had a direct bearing on postwar development.

Points of consideration and questions to ask when documenting significance under Criterion A include but should not necessarily be limited to:

(Please see the [Pennsylvania Suburbs](#) website for avenues of research for National and Pennsylvania Trends)

Pennsylvania Trends

1. **Economic Trends:** trends that influenced the economic prosperity in employment, incomes, and geographical organization of metropolitan areas

a. Transportation: trends related to the form of transportation, its regulations, and legislation that created access to the areas outside of the city limits, and how it served the residents in the suburbs in the form of access to jobs, schools, businesses and homes.

b. Land Use and Planning: trends related to municipalities regarding subdivision planning and land use (which includes residential, commercial and industrial).

1. What role, such as zoning changes and creation of infrastructure, did the borough or township play in these developments? Did the borough or township seek to curb a certain type of development?
2. Evaluate the local economy, such as industry including labor supply and job opportunities, and commercial facilities. Do the same for infrastructure (sewers, water, trash pick up, street lighting, overhead or underground utilities)
3. Evaluate social facilities – schools, churches, libraries, entertainment, playgrounds.
4. Evaluate related business facilities – shopping centers, gas stations, etc.
5. Did such facilities already exist; were they developed simultaneously with the subdivision?
6. Were they developed by the same developer?
7. Pay attention to local zoning, tax structures, real estate offices and brokerage firms, and financial institutions

c. Developer: trends related to how developers and builders planned and implemented construction of subdivisions from the initial purchase of the land to the selling of lots and/or houses. Using the National Register Bulletin *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places* determine what type of developer was involved in the project and what type of development was planned and constructed.

1. Identify the type of developer and the type of development.
2. How many other subdivisions were developed by this developer?
3. Did the developer offer financing for the lots and/or building?
4. Was there a homeowners association?
 - a. A Civic or Home Association was a type of political organization, some with bylaws, constitutions and elected officers, whose official goal is to improve neighborhoods through volunteer work by its members. Those goals could include introduction of sidewalk and street signs variances, enforcement of development covenants, establishment of a neighborhood crime watch, or annual picnic or other social or community events. Per Evan McKenzie in *Privatopia: Homeowner Associations and the Rise of Residential Private Government* as late as 1962, there were fewer than 500 home associations in the United States, but by the end of the 1960s they

had grown to 10,000 nationwide. This was due to the 1963 Federal Housing Administration's policy of promoting home associations to its home mortgage guarantees. Further research avenues include:

McKenzie, Evan. *Privatopia: Homeowner Associations and the Rise of Residential Private Government*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996.

Stabile, Donald. *Community Associations: The Emergence and Acceptance of a Quiet Innovation in Housing*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group, 2000.

5. Was there a model home?
6. What types of advertising or mass marketing campaigns were developed?
7. Was there any consumer surveying done?
8. Does the development have a specific name given it by the developer?
9. Was there customization of models, colors, trim, materials, etc.?
10. Was there racial segregation and/or discrimination?

2. Cultural and Social Trends

a. Housing and Population: Trends in demographic (gender, age, race, income, homeownership, etc.) characteristics, and the choices of residential locations.

1. Be sure to explain why new housing was needed, as well as how it happened and make clear that the creators of the subdivision and housing types were trying to solve problems more serious than economic viability.
2. Identify the existing number of housing units in the municipality when the subdivision was created. The document from the Pennsylvania State Data Center (Penn State) *Pennsylvania Housing Characteristics 1990* includes numbers of residential housing by municipality, by decade.
3. Explain the World War II and postwar phase of the city's social and economic development.
4. Who was moving into and out of the city and why?
5. What was the basis of the demand for housing?
6. Are there areas in the townships outside of the city that experienced similar residential development, particularly residential development for people working in the city?
7. Who were the developers behind these residential developments; were there one or a few or several, and what construction/business strategies did they adopt?
8. What was the role of local banks?

b. Segregation and/or Discrimination: trends in racial, ethnic or religious segregation and/or discrimination in residential developments, either by restrictive covenants, sales, rental or financing opportunities.

1. Was the community specifically targeted towards African Americans?
2. Did the community specifically exclude African Americans or other ethnic or religious groups?

3. Was there a biracial group or committee involved in the subdivisions development?
4. Were there minority owned financing companies involved?
5. Was there documented violence, protest, panic selling or other avenues of protest to the construction of the development or the opening up of sales or rentals to minorities?
6. Was there a minority architect, developer, construction firm or company involved?
7. Were other areas in the region become desegregated or opening to minorities, resulting in “white flight”?

B. Criterion B

The National Register Bulletin Historic Residential Suburbs states that Criterion B can apply “to neighborhoods that are associated with important developers and best represent their contributions to significant local or metropolitan patterns of suburbanization. Subdivisions representing the work of prominent site planners, architects, or landscape architects should be evaluated under Criterion C, unless they also served as their residence during an important period of their career.”

1. Builders and/or developers: while small-scale builders or developers may have had relative lucrative success, generally unless it can be proven that they had a major impact on suburban planning and development beyond the local level, they will not be eligible under Criterion B. To show significance under this criterion will require that the resource built or developed by builders and/or developers had shaped the scale of suburban development in a particular region, with an appropriate context.

Points of consideration and questions to ask when documenting significance include but should not be limited to:

- a. What was his/her marketing philosophy?
- b. How did he/she view his/her role as a molder of the lives and social interactions of his/her prospective buyers?
- c. What was his/her degree of success?

C. Criterion C

Historic districts evaluated under Criterion C must:

1. Be a collection of residential architecture that illustrates an important example of a distinctive type of construction, period, or method of construction, or:
2. Be the work of one or more master architect(s)/designers; or
3. Reflects principles of design important in the history of community planning and landscape architecture, or is the work of a master landscape architect, site planner, or design firm; or

4. Embodies high artistic values through its overall plan including the design of entrance ways, streets, homes, and community spaces

Generally, under Criterion C a postwar subdivision could be considered significant if it has distinctive architectural style, design, engineering, and landscape features demonstrating the important trends in postwar subdivision design for the defined periods. However, average or ordinary examples are not likely to qualify under Criterion C. A postwar suburb will not be eligible under Criterion C *simply because it has housing that retains integrity.*

The architectural styles and/or types listed below are not a comprehensive catalog, however they have been found to be the most common and documented housing types used during the postwar. For more information, please see our postwar [Suburbs Field Guide](#) pages. Character-defining features for all the styles and types listed below are the overall shape of the house, its materials, craftsmanship, decorative (or lack of) details, as well as the aspects of its site and setting. The minimum character-defining features for each style and/or type is as follows:

Single Family

Ranch

1. Single story
2. Long, low-pitched roofline
3. Hipped, cross-gabled or side-gabled roof forms
4. Rectangular, L-shaped or U-shaped design
5. Rectangular or ribbon windows
6. Often has a large living room “picture” window
7. Open and simple floor plans
8. Attached garage or carport
9. Moderate or wide projecting eaves
10. Partially enclosed courtyards or patios

Split Level

1. Multiple level front façade
2. Low-pitched, irregular roofline
3. Asymmetrical façade
4. Large picture window
5. Basement level garage
6. Usually at least three levels (including basement)
7. Horizontal lines

Minimal Traditional

1. Boxy appearance
2. Small, generally one story
3. Moderately pitched gable roof with minimal overhang
4. Lack of decorative exterior detailing
5. Shallow entry porch or portico

Cape Cod

1. Generally one and a half stories
2. Steep pitched roof with side gables

3. Side chimney
4. May have dormer windows

Raised Ranch (Split Entry)

1. Two stories
2. May have an integrated garage
3. Partially submerged basement with finished rooms and windows
4. Low pitched gable roof
5. Rectangular or ribbon windows
6. Often has a large living room picture window

Neo Eclectic

Neo Colonial

1. Side low pitched gabled roof
2. Two stories in height
3. May have a pediment, transom or sidelights at front door
4. Dormer windows are sometimes present
5. Colonnaded entry porch on some variations of the style
6. Symmetrical window and door placement

Mansard

1. Faux mansard roof (sloping upper wall surface), typically covered in shingles
2. Generally two stories
3. Most likely have recessed windows in roof

Neo Classical

1. Pediment over the front door
2. Columned front porch

Contemporary

Flat roof subtype– influenced by the International Style, also referred to as “American International”

1. No decorative detailing
2. Various combinations of wood, brick or stone wall surfaces
3. Grouped windows, often of non-traditional size and proportion
4. Landscaped setting
5. One story

Gabled roof subtype - influenced by Craftsman and Prairie Styles

1. Overhanging eaves, often with exposed roof beams
2. Gables supported by heavy piers, use of wood, brick and stone wall cladding
3. Generally one story
4. Unusually shaped windows or groups of windows
5. Dramatic or oversized entryway

International

1. Flat roof, sometimes with cantilevered sections
2. Metal casement windows, sometimes arranged in ribbons
3. Smooth walls, often of stucco
4. No decorative detailing at windows, doors, walls or roofline
5. Asymmetrical plan
6. Recessed entry

Multi Family

Rental

To provide adequate rental housing, the FHA also played a role in the approval of designs and creation of standards for large-scale rental housing communities, especially for defense workers and veterans. These rental units were usually two or three story multiple-family dwellings, sometimes intermingled with row houses or duplex units. Suburban locations with neighborhood amenities were preferred for FHA approval of multi-family dwellings, since they were viewed as contributing elements to stable real estate values. The FHA issued “Architectural Bulletins” suggesting economical and efficient designs for multiple family dwellings which also addressed issues like safety, fresh air, natural light, green space, and privacy. Large complexes were designed to serve as villages including pedestrian amenities and space for stores, offices and recreational centers. FHA approval gave access to federally backed mortgages, so builders were eager to meet government standards (National Register Bulletin *Historic Residential Suburbs*).

Often described as "garden apartments" the Multi-Family Rental property type is a complex of two or more apartment buildings which contain multiple units within a multi-story structure. The building(s) are horizontally oriented and are clustered around a common area. The common area can be an open space, courtyard, parking lot, swimming pool facilities or other feature. These apartment buildings are generally constructed without architectural detailing; however, it will vary from region to region, and one may find it in a variety of styles or types. For further information in regards to apartment housing, please see Debbie Abele and Liz Wilson's "[Scottsdale \[AZ\] Multifamily Housing Survey](#)." As one of the first cities to focus on surveying this type of resource, it is an excellent source for understanding the national trends of multifamily housing.

Residential

This resource is also known as semi-detached housing; or as a duplex, triplex or fourplex. Multi-family residential houses were typically constructed with a symmetrical façade with multiple entrances. They were generally constructed without architectural detailing, however will vary from region to region, and one may find it in a variety of styles or forms.

Subdivision Plan/Layout

Mid 20th century neighborhoods were often constructed following a curvilinear plan as recommended by the Federal Housing Administration (created in 1934), not the rectilinear grid of traditional urban development. The FHA was responsible for establishing guidelines for development and for reviewing subdivision plans to enable financing and low cost mortgages. The FHA’s “desirable standards” included careful location of the subdivision to accommodate topography and natural features, appropriate street widths and grades for traffic needs, elimination of sharp corners and dangerous intersections, long blocks to eliminate unneeded cross streets, generous lot plans, access to parks and playgrounds, establishment of community or property owners organizations. The Urban Land Institute, a non-profit research organization devoted to urban planning and development was formed in 1936 to support home builders and real estate

professionals. The ULI published the first addition of the Community Builders Handbook in 1947 advocating curvilinear subdivisions. This publication became the industry standard for community development. By the late 1940s these neighborhood planning concepts had become institutionalized into the design of new residential communities. This form of land development, repeated throughout the country, would create the post-WWII suburban landscape (National Register Bulletin *Historic Residential Suburbs*).

Streetscape and landscape features that are located in or visible from the public right-of-way contribute to the significance of the historic district since they were created in concert with the housing stock. Significant character defining features include driveways, sidewalks, curb cuts, street trees, street patterns, parking patterns, open spaces, setbacks, building placement, and building orientation on a lot.

D. Criterion D

To be considered eligible under Criterion D, a postwar subdivision must furnish or have the potential to furnish information that contributes to our understanding of Pennsylvania postwar lifestyle during 1945-1965. The primary importance of a site under this context will be its potential to contribute to modern research questions in the field of Archaeology. These questions may include: understanding of changes to landscape and the built environment; cultural patterns; market interaction spheres; and class, ethnicity and race.

In the past, very little archaeological research has been undertaken on sites dating to the post war period. This has largely been a consequence of the recent date of these sites as well as an absence of many of the most productive feature types and artifact data sets commonly present on earlier historic sites. Stratified features such as middens, privies, and wells are considerably less common on very late historic sites (i.e. mid-twentieth century). This is a consequence of a limited time depth for stratified feature development, the widespread establishment of municipal services, such as garbage pickup and public sewer/water, as well as changing cultural attitudes on hygiene and sanitation. The lack of stratified features, and the absence of the concurrent artifact assemblages resulting from the archaeological excavation of these features, considerably limits the number of traditional research questions that can be answered through archaeological survey. Similarly, it has become increasingly evident that the traditional methods used to study historic (i.e. eighteenth and nineteenth century) material culture in this country cannot be applied in the same way to very late historic archaeological sites. Consequently, it may be necessary to develop new research questions along with new methodologies in order to adequately study late historic period sites such as post war residential properties and suburbs.

Avenues for Future Research

Based on the limited amount of archaeological survey that has taken place to date on very late historic residential sites, two groups of features appear to hold some promise for gleaning important information about site occupants through archaeology. These features are single episode features (i.e. post holes, pits, planting holes, etc.) and features resulting from larger scale construction and/or demolition of outbuildings or landscaping. The presence of diagnostic modern materials within these features can be used to seriate a series of overlapping events, and ultimately may be used to track changes to the site over time and thereby the changes in the

culture and attitudes of the residents. Given the absence of stratified features, what in the past may have been considered 'disturbance', unworthy of further study, may prove to be the contexts with the most information potential.

For the study of post war suburbs it is important for archaeologists to think beyond individual site boundaries. While the basic unit of study should continue to be at the household level, post war suburbs were not built in isolation, but rather were constructed as part of a larger whole. As noted above, many suburbs have specific rules governing setbacks, landscaping, additions, and other activities that can significantly influence what can happen on an individual site. Also, the communities that form within these developments can impact choices made on an individual property. These outside influences not only should be taken into account as part of a thorough archaeological analysis of a later historic period property, but could also provide the basis for a new series of archaeological research questions.

Archaeological Integrity

An archaeological site must provide important information and also demonstrate archaeological integrity. For archaeology, integrity should be measured in light of the current state of archaeological knowledge for that region, the research questions being addressed and the unit of analysis. For example, the standards of integrity for a region without a robust archaeological record would be less stringent than for an area that is well-documented archaeologically. In addition, a site where the significance lies in its ability to provide information about change over time should have discrete deposits that can be directly associated with different time periods. The above are only two general examples to guide assessments of integrity.

Keep in mind that archaeology can be used to support evaluation under any Criterion or area of significance.

4. Integrity

The National Park Service has stated that for common property types, the integrity requirements are more stringent, and the context statement may specify that individual properties must meet all seven aspects of integrity to be evaluated as significant. The PA SHPO considers the postwar suburb to be a common property type; therefore, it is the decision of the PA SHPO that all seven aspects of integrity must be present. Integrity is not a relative measurement, resources either retain integrity or they do not.

Subdivisions must possess integrity in each of the following elements to be considered for National Register listing as an historic district:

1. Development plan

a. The principals upon which the development's plan was based upon, including community planning, engineering architecture and landscape architecture that had been fulfilled when the subdivision was built. These can include but are not limited to:

1. The siting of the house due to restrictive covenants.
2. Planned variation in range and diversity of style; or no variation in range and diversity of style.
3. The provision of community facilities in the initial plan, whether it was constructed at the same time as the subdivision or at a later date.
4. There must be a retention of spatial relationships between buildings and other buildings, the landscape, and associated features. In addition, the subdivision must retain some semblance of its original spatial relationship to other development or lack of development.

2. Road system

a. Postwar suburbs by nature were constructed on the peripheral of a city, and thus usually depended upon artery transportation routes such as freeways and highways for their existence. Those historic transportation systems cannot have been relocated or removed.

b. The subdivision must still be a self-contained unit with limited access to exterior streets and maintains its interior road system.

3. Architectural character

The housing stock must retain significant portions of the original style or type of exterior materials on the primary facade

4. Landscape character

Subdivision landscape feature the placement of an individual house, garage and yard in relation to the one located next door, in addition to the overall landscape character of the subdivision as a whole.

Seven Qualities of Integrity

Location is the place where the subdivision was constructed, where it is located geographically and physically. The boundaries that historically defined the suburb and the historic district being nominated must remain and correspond. The historic location of the subdivisions streets, houses and associated components, and the size and shape of the house lots must remain. Properties must be located on their historic footprints where setbacks and building orientation are true to the original design.

Design is the composition of elements comprising the form, plan and spatial organization of a subdivision. The majority of the housing stock must follow the expected pattern of their architectural style or form in terms of size, number of stories, construction materials, massing, roof lines and general appearance. The housing development must follow the expected pattern of its designed and completed form.

To be a contributing element to a district, some alteration of the original housing stock may be permitted if

1. They retain their original massing, with the exception of unobtrusive additions to the rear of the buildings.
2. Alterations to windows and doors must not have changed the fenestration pattern, size of openings and locations.
3. The attached or integrated garage has been converted to a living space, as long as a new entry door has not been added.

Alterations to the original housing stock that will deem the resource as non-contributing include:
The addition of an attached or detached garage on a house form/style that did not originally have one. That includes examples of intrusive size, location or appearance of an additional garage.

To be a contributing element to a district, some alteration of the original suburban school, shopping center, or religious architecture may be permitted if

1. They retain their original massing, with the exception of unobtrusive additions to the rear of the buildings
2. Alterations to windows and doors must not have changed the fenestration pattern, size of openings and locations.

Setting is the physical environment of the subdivision. It relates to the character of the place in which the resource played its historical role. If the subdivision was originally designed to be on the fringe of the city or separated from other development, but is no longer, that could constitute a loss of setting. Postwar subdivisions were designed to have an open space and semi-rural setting, which was created by the planning and implementation of landscaped streets, private yards and community parks. The loss of this physical environment can constitute a loss of setting.

Materials include the building materials of dwellings and other structures. While do-it-yourself (DYI) projects became a postwar phenomenon, it is the PA SHPO's opinion that at this time in the review of postwar resources, it is not an area of significance nor can it be used as an argument for change in the materials, workmanship and design in the area of integrity. For more information regarding the history of DYI, please see the National Building Museum's [Do-It-Yourself: Home Improvement in 20th Century America](#)

In the matter of landscaping and the subdivision's infrastructure, integrity of materials must be ascertained. This would include the survival of planned and implemented elements including street trees, open spaces, curbs and sidewalks.

Workmanship is the retention of craftsmanship that went into the construction of the resource. This generally involves such familiar skills as carpentry and stone or brick masonry involved with traditional construction. It also refers to the skilled use of technologies not associated with traditional craftsmanship such as work with reinforced concrete, steel frame construction, pre-fab methods and the like.

Feeling is the property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. This includes an area that was consciously designed or developed to create a distinct sense of place as a residential suburb.

Association is the direct link between an important historic resource or person and a historic property.

5. Mapping See BHP's [Standards for the PA Historic Resource Survey Forms: Boundaries, Maps & Photography](#); BHP's [How to Complete the Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form](#) and/or BHP's [Guidelines for National Register Submissions](#).

6. Photography See BHP's [Standards for the PA Historic Resource Survey Forms: Boundaries, Maps & Photography](#); BHP's [How to Complete the Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Form](#) and/or BHP's [Guidelines for National Register Submissions](#)

7. Documentary Evidence

It is reasonable to expect surveyors to collect such information regarding the creation and marketing of the subdivision. However, do not confuse the availability of documentation with significance of the resource.

Minimum resources and documentation required include:

Historic maps

Aerial photographs

U.S. Census Records – income and housing units

Local or County Ordinances, including zoning regulations developed specifically for subdivision development within the municipality

Historic Newspapers articles (including advertisements for the development). These should be readily available, if not; the preparer must state why and/or where they looked.

Additional resources and documentation (not required):

Subdivision Plats, Site Plans, Architectural Drawings, Construction Plans or Planting Plans as submitted to the municipality

Records of Neighborhood Associations

Tax parcel information for the development

Historic Photographs; Promotional brochures

City, County and Regional Plans

Oral History

Style Books and Landscape Guidebooks

Trade Directories, Catalogs and Periodicals