Understanding Historical Significance

Unit 12.1
CAL FIRE Certified Archaeological Surveyor Training
February 25–March 1, 2019

Mike McGuirt
CCI Cultural Resources Lead
CAL FIRE Sacramento HQ
michael.mcguirt@fire.ca.gov
Key Objectives

• To make you aware of a process that we advise you to avoid

• To provide an overview of why determinations of historical significance are important in CAL FIRE’s cultural resources program

• To provide you with a basic primer on how determinations of historical significance are developed under the Forest Practice Rules (FPR) and the Archaeological Review Procedures for CAL FIRE Projects (ARP)
The Focus of Historic Preservation Is Significant Cultural Resources

Historically Significant Cultural Resources

Total Inventory of Cultural Resources
Is a Determination of Historic Significance Simply a Matter of Common Sense?

Nope!

Historical significance is ascribed to a cultural resource through a regulatory process, not through anecdotal opinion.

“Well, that doesn’t look very important!” (Often spoken with great indignation)
Historical Significance under CEQA

What are significant cultural resources called under CEQA?

“Historical Resources”
Historical Significance under CEQA

California Register of Historical Resources Resource Types

1. Building  
2. Site  
3. Structure  
4. Object  
5. Historic District  
6. Area  
7. Place  
8. Tribal Cultural Resource
9. Record  
10. Manuscript

¹ PRC § 21074
Historical Significance under CEQA

California Register of Historical Resources Significance Criteria

1. It is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States;

2. It is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history;

3. It embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values; or

4. It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.
Historical Significance under CEQA

A cultural resource is *historically significant* and therefore qualifies as a “historical resource” under CEQA if the resource possesses significant

- Associative values (Important events or people)
- Design values (Important buildings, structures, or objects)
- Information values (Important information)

CEQA Guidelines 15064.5(a)(3)
Historical Significance under CEQA

Integrity

• Historical resources eligible for listing in the California Register must meet one of the criteria of significance and retain enough of their historic character or appearance to be recognizable as historical resources and to convey the reasons for their significance.

• Integrity is the authenticity of an historical resource's physical identity evidenced by the survival of characteristics that existed during the resource's period of significance.
Historical Significance under CEQA

The 7 Elements of Integrity

1. Location
2. Design
3. Setting
4. Materials
5. Workmanship
6. Feeling
7. Association
Historical Significance under CEQA

The Evaluation Process, Part I

1. Is the cultural resource of an appropriate type?
2. What is the prehistoric or historic theme relative to which the resource’s historical significance is to be evaluated? What is the resource’s context?
3. What is the resource’s period of significance?
4. Which or how many of the California Register criteria is (are) relevant to the resource? How is each criterion relevant?
5. What is the geographic reach of the resource’s significance? Local, state, or national significance?
Historical Significance under CEQA

The Evaluation Process, Part II

6. Does the resource retain enough integrity to convey the values for which it is significant? With reference to the seven elements of integrity, articulate how the resource retains enough integrity to convey each value for which it is found to be significant.
Historical Significance under CEQA

Who Gets to Determine That?

The CEQA Lead Agency
Historical Significance at CAL FIRE

Z’berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act (PRC § 4511 et seq.)
  ↓
Forest Practice Rules (14 CCR § 895 et seq.)
  ↓
Article 14 Archaeological and Historical Resource Protection (14 CCR §§ 929, 949, 969 et seq.)
  ↓
California Environmental Quality Act (PRC § 21000 et seq.)
  ↓
CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR § 15000 et seq.)
  ↓
Archaeological Review Procedures for CAL FIRE Projects (Agency Guidance)
Historical Significance under the Archaeological Review Procedures for CAL FIRE Projects

What are significant cultural resources called under the Archaeological Review Procedures?

“significant archaeological or historical sites”
Historical Significance under the Archaeological Review Procedures for CAL FIRE Projects

The Evaluation Process

See Article 14 of the Forest Practice Rules
Historical Significance at CAL FIRE

Z’berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act (PRC § 4511 et seq.)

→

Forest Practice Rules (14 CCR § 895 et seq.)

→

Article 14 Archaeological and Historical Resource Protection (14 CCR §§ 929, 949, 969 et seq.)

→

California Environmental Quality Act (PRC § 21000 et seq.)

→

CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR § 15000 et seq.)

→

Archaeological Review Procedures for CAL FIRE Projects (Agency Guidance)
Historical Significance under the Archaeological Review Procedures for CAL FIRE Projects

Who Gets to Determine That?

Your CAL FIRE Archaeologist
Historical Significance under the Forest Practice Rules

What are significant cultural resources called under the Forest Practice Rules?

“significant archaeological or historical sites”

“Native American archaeological or cultural sites”
Historical Significance under the Forest Practice Rules

**The Evaluation Process** (14 CCR § 929.7, 949.7, 969.7)

1. Verify that the resource is a “specific location which may contain artifacts, or objects where evidence clearly demonstrates a high probability that the site meets one or more of” the FPR 5 criteria of historical significance.

2. “Utilize any information provided by Native Americans, archaeological, historical or ethnographic data pertinent to the region and to the cultural resource, and the physical characteristics of the archaeological or historical site.”
Historical Significance under the Forest Practice Rules

Forest Practice Rules Significance Criteria (14 CCR 895.1)

a. Contains information needed to answer important scientific questions.
b. Has a special and particular quality such as the oldest of its type or best available example of its type.
c. Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.
d. Involves important research questions that historical research has shown can be answered only with archaeological methods.
e. Has significant cultural or religious importance to Native Americans
Historical Significance under the Forest Practice Rules

Who Gets to Determine That?

For plan submissions and submissions of Emergency Notices of 3 Acres or More
- CAA and CAL subject to review and approval of CAL FIRE Archaeologist
- Final determination of historical significance, based on the advice of a professional archaeologist, goes to the Director

For submissions of Emergency Notices of Less Than 3 Acres
- The RPF or the RPF’s supervised designee
Conclusion

The Generic Evaluation Process

1. What’s the cultural resource’s type?
2. What prehistoric or historic theme(s) apply to the resource?
3. What is the resource’s period of significance?
4. Which California Register criteria apply, and why?
5. What’s the geographic reach of the resource’s significance?
6. Does the resource retain enough integrity to convey the values for which it is significant? How?
Questions?