



PRESERVATION HOTLINE #9

South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office, South Carolina Department of Archives and History

scdah.sc.gov

Selecting a Consultant for Cultural Resources Surveys and Evaluations

There are many Federal, State, and local laws that require taking cultural resources (i.e., prehistoric and historic sites, districts, buildings, structures or objects) into account prior to performing certain federal or state funded, licensed, or permitted activities. These include the National Historic Preservation Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, the South Carolina Coastal Zone Management Act, and the South Carolina Mining Act.

When selecting a consultant for doing cultural resource surveys and evaluations, it is essential that they be qualified professionals with appropriate areas of expertise. Agencies, institutions, corporations, associations, or individuals will be considered "qualified" when they meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards (36 CFR 61 and Federal Register 48:44738-44739). The qualifications for archaeologist, architectural historian, and historian are listed at the end of this document. It is recommended that you contact at least three companies to get a cost estimate and a scope of work for your proposed project. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) maintains lists of project professionals including archaeologists, architects, architectural historians, and historians, but cannot recommend a specific organization or individual. Visit the SHPO website at <https://scdah.sc.gov/historic-preservation/technical-assistance/publications/project-professionals-lists> or call 803-896-6172 to obtain a copy.

Please note that inclusion on these lists should not be construed as an endorsement by the State Historic Preservation Office; therefore, it is extremely important that you investigate the credentials of potential consultants. While cost is always a primary consideration when conducting business, the most cost-efficient contract within the regulatory environment may not necessarily be the one with the lowest bid. Work that is conducted in a timely and efficient manner that meets the requirements of the regulatory process may result in a cost savings in the long-run. Below are some questions to ask that will help ensure the quality of a consultant's work.

Questions to Ask the Consultant

- What is his or her area of expertise? Prehistoric or historic archaeology, architectural history, underwater archaeology, historic research, etc?
- How many full-time employees does the company retain?
- How many years of experience does each of these employees have? How long have they been with the company? What is their area of expertise?
- How many survey or testing projects have they completed in the last year in South Carolina?
- Provide references for your last three contracts in South Carolina.

Questions to Ask References

- Were you satisfied with the work that was performed?
- Were the deadlines met?
- Did the consultant complete the project within the proposed budget or were there substantial cost overruns? Were these additional costs justified?
- Were there any problems? If so, what were the causes?
- Would you hire the consultant again?

Questions to Ask the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

- Are you aware of similar projects that the professional has worked on in the last three years?
- Has the State Historic Preservation Office reviewed any of these projects?
- What were the names of the most recent projects reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office?

Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards

Archaeologist: The minimum professional qualifications for an archaeologist are a graduate degree in archaeology, anthropology, or closely related field plus: 1) at least one year of full-time professional experience or equivalent specialized training in archaeological research, administration, or management; 2) at least four months of supervised field and analytic experience in general North American archaeology; and 3) a demonstrated ability to carry research to completion. In addition to these minimum qualifications, a Principal Investigator must have at least one year of full-time supervisory experience in the study of related resources (e.g., historic archaeology, prehistoric archaeology or underwater archaeology).

Architectural Historian: The minimum professional qualifications for an architectural historian are a graduate degree in architectural history, historic preservation, or a closely related field with coursework in American architectural history; or a B.A. in architectural history with a concentration in American architecture; or a B.A. in architectural history, art history, historic preservation, or a closely related field plus one of the following: 1) at least two years of full-time experience in research, writing, or teaching in American history or restoration architecture with an academic institution, historical organization or agency, museum or other professional institution; or 2) substantial contribution through research and publication to the body of scholarly knowledge in the field of American architectural history.

Historian: The minimum professional qualifications for a historian are a graduate degree in history or closely related field; or a bachelor's degree in history or closely related field plus one of the following: 1) at least two years of full-time experience in research, writing, teaching, interpretation, or other demonstrable professional activity with an academic institution, historic organization or agency, museum, or other professional institution; or 2) substantial contribution through research and publication to the body of scholarly knowledge in the field of history.

Questions? SC Department of Archives & History / 8301 Parklane Road / Columbia, SC 29223 / 803-896-6172

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