



Request for Proposals:
Historic Context Study of African American
History
&
Women's History
Decatur, Alabama

Submittals to be received on or before 5pm CST on June 9, 2023

Background: The City of Decatur has five National Register Districts, and six individual National Register Nominations. Narratives for African Americans and women are limited in our three oldest National Register Districts (Bank Street/Old Decatur (1980/1985), New-Decatur Albany (1995/1999), and New Decatur/Albany Residential (1983/2004). There are two National Register districts (East Old Town and West Old Town, 2012) that address the African American community, but the narrative is limited. In 2022 the City of Decatur received an Underrepresented Communities Grant from the National Park Service to develop two Historic Context Statements, one for African Americans in the City of Decatur, the other for women. This project will catalyze updates to existing National Register nominations, and hopefully provide starting points for new nominations.

Purpose: The City of Decatur sees proposals from qualified consultants interested in undertaking research to identify themes, establish associated property types (either buildings in existing nominations, or buildings that have not yet been identified) for African American history and the history of women within the city. The period of significance will be primarily from approximately the 1880s through the early 1970s. There are three extant buildings (all in the National Register) that pre-date the Civil War, the research for those three would have a longer period of significance accordingly.

Scope of Work: Consultant must complete outlined tasks in a 12 month period, with complete deliverables due June 2024. Community roll out, presentations to the city's Historic Preservation Commission, and the city updating existing National Register documentation will occur after the June 2024 deadline.

Task 1: Project Management

Consultant will coordinate project activities and ensure that tasks are completed within scope, budget, and schedule. Project kick off, schedule and coordination of tasks and deliverables must be completed in consultation with the City of Decatur's Historic Preservation Specialist.

Task 2: Recruit an advisory board of local experts for review of Context Documentation

Consultants will work with the city's Historic Preservation Specialist and the Historic Preservation Commission to identify and recruit an advisory committee of local experts to assist in community outreach, in addition to reviewing any existing research and documentation.

Task 3: Background Research

Consultant will research important themes related to African American and women's history in Decatur, and identify associated resources, both within the current National Register Districts and outside of them. Research should be organized into thematic groupings.

Task 4: Survey Documentation

Consultant must verify the integrity of resources associated with the developed historic context in Task 5. Documentation of each extant resource must include a chart with the building address, condition, and integrity for each site, organized by National Register District, with one category for resources outside existing districts. Resources should be mapped by location, with a distinct map for each National Register district, and a larger map for resources located outside existing districts. (City GIS can create maps if given the raw data.) Digital photographs of each extant resource must be included if buildings are still standing.

Task 5: Complete Historic Context Documentation

The Consultant will complete Historic Context Statement based on guidance set forth in the NPS White Paper: The Components of a Historic Context. The historic context is based on the research and analysis from Task 3 and will highlight important themes associated with the history of African Americans and women in the City of Decatur, and properties that

represent and illustrate specific themes should be identified. The Historic Context Statement will also provide analysis for establishing historic significance based on National Register Criteria A-D, taking into consideration the seven aspects of integrity. A bibliography of sources used for the study must also be included.

The final deliverable should include two spreadsheets of identified resources that can be sorted by theme or location. Spreadsheets should include the resource name, address, designation status, National Register eligibility, and theme. Context Statement should be submitted in a format that is suitable for public distribution, with clear text and strong graphic components (photographs, maps, etc.).

Task 6: Podcasts

One of the deliverables for this project is the production and hosting of two (2) podcasts. The podcast component of the project will help reach community partners who may no-longer live within our city, creating connections to share historic data. The podcasts will also record and amplify marginalized stories, often in the voices of those communities. Each podcast will be approximately 25 minutes in length.

Task 7: Public Presentation

A final public presentation by the consultant will be at the June 11, 2024 Historic Preservation Commission meeting.

Estimated start date for the project is June 15, 2023. Final research and documentation must be submitted by May 2024.

Budget proposal should not exceed \$62,000, including Podcast services.

Submittal Format:

All responses to this RFP shall, at a minimum, include the following:

Scope of services and approach and methodology for accomplishing the scope of services

Firm's expertise and the expertise of any sub-consultants.

At least two other Historic Context Statement or Multiple Property Document completed by the firm in the last 5 years. (digital format is fine)

Names and resumes of key personnel to be involved in the project. Team members need to meet 36 CFR Part 61 "Professional Qualifications Standards" of the Secretary of the Interior Standards. Submittals for each team member should include a resume, description of experience, references, samples of work, and project approach.

References from three recent clients who have employed the firm for similar projects

Please include proposed timeline with start/end date for each task. Consultants selected for the project must meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Professional Qualifications standards for a historian.

Deadline to Submit Proposals: Please submit electronically to Caroline Swope cswope@decatur-al.gov by 5pm, June 9, 2023.

Submittals to be received on or before 5pm CST on June 9, 2023

The city will evaluate qualifications based on the criteria listed below:

Professional and educational qualifications of the project staff: 20%

Prior experience with context studies for underrepresented communities:
20%

Quality of Historic Context Statements: 25%

Quality of podcasts: 15%

References: 10%

The City reserves the right to reject any proposal and to interview a consultant or multiple consultants as it sees fit. There is no guarantee that a contract award will be made pursuant to this RFP. This RFP may be modified or amended at any time and for any reason in the discretion of the City. Should interviews be required, the selected consultant or consultants will be notified of their interview time, and the interview may be conducted at the Decatur City Hall or over the phone, as determined by the City.

Acknowledgements: This project is being supported in part by an Underrepresented Communities grant from the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, Department of the Interior.

Cover Photos: Carolyn Courtner Smith, Alabama's first licensed architect, Matthew Banks, Decatur's second black City Councilman, and Eva Sterrs, owner of the "The Guardian" newspaper

Submittals to be received on or before 5pm CST on June 9, 2023