

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Historic resources provide a sense of place and heritage that fosters a connection to the community and has important economic, social, and education benefits. The aim of historic resource protection, therefore, is to retain the heritage and identity of a community or region as reflected in its natural and built environment and to ensure that the community’s history and unique character, and the benefits they afford, are preserved for future generations.

Franklin Township contains a number of significant historic buildings, structures and landscapes. However, as development pressure increases, historic resources become more susceptible to alteration and to demolition to make way for new development. The Township’s historic resources are an integral part of the community’s and the region’s identity and character and their protection is important, especially in the face of increasing development in the region.

Historic resource preservation begins with an inventory and documentation of the resources. At present Franklin Township has no such inventory or documentation, nor does it have any program for the protection of historic resources. This *Comprehensive Plan*, therefore, focuses on encouraging the Township to create an inventory of significant historic resources in order to begin the preservation effort. Once inventoried, appropriate protection measures can be identified.

Pennsylvania has more than 100,000 historic resources identified by the National Register of Historic Places. Thousands more could be identified across the state, in cities, towns and villages, and rural areas. This rich heritage is under threat—from abandonment and demolition of decaying urban building stock, destruction of rural landscapes and prime farmland for housing and business, and highway construction to accommodate the tidal wave of trucking and passenger traffic. As with our natural resources, we must strengthen our values and develop strategies to maintain our historic resources. Historic resources are worth saving. Without these resources, communities would lose their integrity, identity, and their attractiveness to newcomers. The goal is to strike a balance between development and saving what’s important to the community’s past.
 Source: *Better Models for Development in Pennsylvania*, p. 83.

HISTORIC RESOURCES GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Historic Preservation Goal:

Protect historic resources as an important part of the character of the Township.

A number of historic resources are found in Franklin Township, ranging from residences, farms and orchards, and outbuildings, to churches, to a former Grange Hall. Buildings were erected as part of a growing community, and although many of the early structures are now gone, the many which remain add tremendously to the character of the community and the region. In addition to buildings, stone walls and fences are significant historic features throughout the Township. Originally an integral part of early agricultural practices, stone walls and fences are now being incorporated into home design and as the prime feature in landscaping. The preservation of historic buildings, structures and landscapes and encouraging new development to be consistent with the existing historic character are critical to the future of Franklin Township.

Objectives:

Historical Society	<p>Work with the Luzerne County Historical Society to promote historic preservation in the Township.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Local Historical Society</u> – Consider the creation of a local historical society charged with identification and documentation of historic resources in the Township.
Identify & Evaluate	<p>Develop an inventory of historic resources and evaluate the resources for inclusion on a local register or the National Register.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Inventory</u> –Inventory and document all historic resources in the Township based on a set of qualifying criteria. • <u>Historic Register</u> – Create a local historic register and, based on the inventory of historic resources, consider nomination of qualifying resources to the National Register of Historic Places.
Adaptive Reuse	<p>Encourage the adaptive reuse of historic resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Adaptive Reuse</u> - Allow adaptive reuse of older homes and structures to enable owners to adequately maintain them.
Design Guidelines	<p>Develop guidelines for residential and commercial development to encourage historically sensitive design.</p>
Education	<p>Educate property owners on the significance and value of historic resources and the opportunities for their preservation.</p>
Funding	<p>Take advantage of funding sources for historic resource preservation.</p>

BRIEF HISTORY

The Franklin Township region contains evidence of a rich and unique past. Early Native Americans subsisted in the region for many hundreds of years. The Iroquois, Delaware and Lenni-Lenape tribes established settlements along the Susquehanna, Delaware, and Lehigh Rivers, and hunting and scouting parties frequently traversed the region. By the mid to late 1700s, European settlers forced the last of the Native Americans to leave.

European settlement of the region arose from the Yankee-Pennamite Wars, which resulted from conflicts over the Penn land grants and Connecticut’s claim to northern Pennsylvania. In a compromise reached in 1786 to end the second Yankee-Pennamite War, Luzerne County was established. In the 1790s, settlement occurred throughout the region with the “Connecticut Yankees settling in their favorite townships and the Pennsylvania Germans settling in the southern parts of the county.”¹ Franklin Township was established in 1843 and expanded to its present day boundaries in 1848. Early settlers in the Township included Gideon Bebee, the Pease family, Ezra Olds, Michael Munson, Elisha Brace, William Brace, Benjamin Chandler and Joseph Cone.

¹ “History of Luzerne County”. http://www.luzernecounty.org/living/history_of_luzerne_county

HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

Overview

Before protection of the Township’s historic resources can begin, the resources must first be inventoried and documented. This can be accomplished via the creation of a township historical commission or local historical society charged with preparing the inventory and accompanying documentation. Resources should be identified and inventoried according to a set of criteria that determine whether they should be considered significant. They can be further evaluated to determine whether they are locally or nationally significant. The Township can seek technical assistance for this effort from organizations such as the Luzerne County Historical Society, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC) and Preservation Pennsylvania.

Historic Preservation Planning
A well-conceived preservation planning process serves to:

- *Establish a basis of public policy about historic resources;*
- *Educate and inform residents and others about their community’s heritage and its value;*
- *Identify opportunities for economic growth based on the community’s historic and architectural character.*
- *Ensure consistency among various local government policies that affect the community’s historic resources;*
- *Lay the groundwork for adopting a local historic preservation ordinance or strengthening an existing one;*
- *Eliminate uncertainty or confusion about the purpose, meaning, and content of a community’s preservation ordinance;*
- *Inform existing and potential property owners, investors, and developers about what historic resources the community wants to protect as it grows;*
- *Create an agenda for future preservation activities; and*
- *Facilitate compliance with federal and state historic preservation and environmental quality laws.*

Preservation plans serve several purposes:

- *educating elected and appointed officials, municipal staff, property owners, investors, and others about the status of historic resources within the community and the economic benefits of preservation;*
- *formally documenting existing conditions, issues, opportunities, and challenges;*
- *providing information on tax and other incentives for preservation;*
- *offering discussion and analysis regarding preservation of historic resources, and establishing a roadmap for future efforts;*
- *setting out the roles and responsibilities of the public, private, and nonprofit sectors with regard to the preservation of historic resources.*

Source: *Planning Commissioners Journal*, No. 52, Fall 2003, p. 6.

Locally Significant Resources

Locally significant historic resources can be defined as resources that are important to the history and culture of Franklin Township, the region, the Commonwealth, or the nation, but that are not listed on the National Register of Historic Places. They can be districts, historical and archaeological sites, buildings, structures, objects, or landscapes. According to the general standard, a resource must have been in place for at least 50 years to be considered historic. In addition to the longevity requirement, possible criteria for eligibility for listing as a locally significant historic resource are (the resource must exhibit at least one of the criteria):

- Has significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or

cultural characteristics of the Township, region, Commonwealth or nation; or

- Is associated with the life of a significant person in the past; or,
- Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the Township, region, Commonwealth or nation; or,
- Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or,
- Is the work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the Township, region, Commonwealth or nation; or,
- Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represents a significant innovation; or,
- Is part of or related to a distinctive area which should be preserved according to a historic, cultural or architectural motif; or
- Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristics, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the community; or,
- Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in pre-history or history; or,
- Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

Potential candidates for recognition as a locally significant historic resource are the Grange property, the Village of Orange, cemeteries, and other sites, buildings, structures, objects, or landscapes throughout the Township. A Township historical commission, local historical society, or the Township Planning Commission should identify these resources.

National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places was established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. In Pennsylvania, the program is managed by the Bureau for Historic Preservation (BHP), a department within the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission. The program is designed to assist state and local governments, federal agencies, and others identify significant historic and archeological resources worthy of preservation and of consideration in planning and development decisions. Properties listed on the National Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. To be eligible for listing on the National Register, a property must meet the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. These Criteria require that a property be old enough to be considered historic (generally at least 50 years old) and that it still look much the same way as it was in the past. In addition, the property must meet one of the following criteria²:

² Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, *National Register of Historic Places Fact Sheet*.

- Be associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- Be associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- Embody the distinctive characteristics of a building type, period, or method of construction, or represent the work of a master, or possess high artistic values, or represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- Have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

A committee of BHP staff review information submitted to the BHP to determine whether a resource is eligible for the National Register (using the criteria above). If found eligible, the resource is given a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) and the nomination process can begin. The State Historic Preservation Board reviews all nominations to the National Register. Upon determination of its level of significance and that the resource meets the Criteria for Evaluation, the nomination is sent to the National Park Service (NPS), which either approves or denies the nomination. If approved by the NPS, the resource is entered into the National Register of Historic Places.

Listing on the National Register does the following:³

- Honors a historic property by recognizing its importance to its local community, state or the nation;
- *Encourages* the preservation of historic properties by documenting their significance;
- Facilitates the review of federally funded, licensed, or permitted projects to determine their effects on historic properties;
- Provides an opportunity to consult with government agencies to mitigate projects that will adversely affect historic properties;
- Provides information about historic resources for planning purposes;
- Offers federal tax benefits to owners of income producing (depreciable) historic properties if they rehabilitate their properties according to preservation standards.

Listing on the National Register does not:⁴

- Restrict the rights of property owners;
- Require that properties be maintained, repaired, or restored;
- Prevent destruction of a resource by federal, state, local, or private development;
- Guarantee that grant funds will be available for projects;

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

- Require property owners to follow preservation standards on their properties (unless they wish to apply for tax benefits)

There are currently no historic resources in Franklin Township listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Nominations for three bridges have been submitted, but each was determined to be ineligible. However, if any resource that may be eligible for the National Register is identified, the Township should support its nomination.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Once inventoried the Township’s historic resources can receive formal protection through measures enabled by the PA Historic District Act (Act 167 of 1961) and the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. This adds a level of protection to identified historic resources by providing a means to review activities that could lead to the alternation or destruction of resources.

Local Historic District Act

Pennsylvania’s Local Historic District Act (Act 167 of 1961) *authorizes counties, cities, boroughs, incorporated towns and townships to create historic districts within their boundaries providing for the appointment of Boards of Historical Architectural Review; empowering governing bodies to protect the distinctive historical character of these districts and to regulate the erection, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, demolition or razing of buildings within the historic districts.* Historic districts established by local ordinance under the Local Historic District Act must be “certified” by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Certification means that the district has been determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and authorization has been given to protect the character of the district through regulatory means. The Historical and Architectural Review Board (HARB) must contain at least five members comprised of a registered architect, licensed real estate broker, the municipal building inspector and at least two others with interest or knowledge of local history or historic preservation. The HARB advises the governing body whether to issue permits for work proposed on buildings within the district.

Benefits of Historic Preservation

Since the 1970s, mounting evidence has shown that historic preservation can be a powerful community and economic development strategy. Evidence includes statistics compiled from annual surveys conducted by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and statewide Main Street programs, state-level tourism and economic impact studies, and studies that have analyzed the impact of specific actions such as historic designation, tax credits, and revolving loan funds. Among the findings:

- *Creation of local historic districts stabilizes, and often increases residential and commercial property values.*
- *Increases in property values in historic districts are typically greater than increases in the community at large.*
- *Historic building rehabilitation, which is more labor intensive and requires greater specialization and higher skill levels, creates more jobs and results in more local business than does new construction.*
- *Heritage tourism provides substantial economic benefits. Tourists drawn by a community’s (or region’s) historic character typically stay longer and spend more during their visit than other tourists.*
- *Historic rehabilitation encourages additional neighborhood investment and produces a high return for municipal dollars spent.*
- *Use of a city or town’s existing, historic building stock can support growth management policies by increasing the supply of centrally located housing.*

Source: Planning Commissioners Journal, No. 52, Fall 2003, p. 4.

Designation as an Act 167 Certified Historic District might be an option for the village of Orange if it holds historical significance (i.e. if it can be determined eligible for the National Register) and if property owners support the certification and are willing to adhere to the district’s regulations. If certification as a historic district is not supported or feasible, the Township can still recognize the Village as a locally significant resource.

Municipalities Planning Code

The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code enables municipalities to plan for and act to preserve and protect historic resources. It states that *preservation or protection, when used in connection with . . . historic resources, shall include means to conserve and safeguard these resources from wasteful or destructive use.* The MPC also states “*where zoning districts are created, all provisions shall be uniform for each class of uses or structures, within each district, except that additional classifications may be made within any district for places having unique historical, architectural or patriotic interest or value.* Although not having the force of provisions under the Local Historic District Act of regulating with specific design standards, a municipally organized historical commission could act in a support capacity by conducting research, providing data on historic resources and making recommendations for historically sensitive development. The zoning ordinance could formalize the review process for historic resources and include incentives such as increased lot coverage or reduced building setbacks to support such sensitive development. Franklin Township currently have no zoning provisions for historic resource protection under the MPC; therefore, historic resources are left virtually unprotected.

FUTURE PLANNING POLICIES

Overview

Future planning policies are intended to promote the Township’s historic resource protection goals by guiding future decisions and actions related to historic resource protection.

Policies

The following policies are intended to preserve the Township’s historic resources, which contribute to the community’s identity and character:

- Inventory and document the Township’s historic and archaeological resources and pursue National Register listing where appropriate.
- Pursue technical and financial assistance for historic resource identification and preservation.
- Promote public education to raise awareness of Franklin Township’s history and historic resources.
- Establish protection measures enabled by the Municipalities Planning Code and the Local Historic District Act.
- Promote preservation of historic buildings and structures during the land development process.
- Preserve historic buildings by incorporation in commercial areas as commercial uses.
- Preserve historic resources by promotion as recreational or tourist destinations.
- Preserve farms and orchards, physical features and landscapes that represent the Township’s history.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

- Overview** Implementation strategies are the specific means by which the Township can achieve its historic preservation goals. The strategies take the form of regulatory provisions included in the zoning, subdivision and land development ordinance, and other ordinances, as well as non-regulatory initiatives.

- Historic Resource Inventory**
 - Organize a Township Historical Commission or Historical Society charged with the task of creating a historic resource inventory.
 - Maintain a map and database (e.g., Geographic Information Systems) of historic resources along with documentation on each resource.
 - Seek assistance from historic preservation organizations, including the Luzerne County Historical Society, the PHMC and Preservation Pennsylvania for inventorying and documenting resources and nominating resources for the National Register.
 - Seek funding from organizations such as the National Park Service, National Trust for Historic Preservation, PHMC, and Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, and from programs such as the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program.

- Education and Outreach**
 - Conduct a public outreach program, perhaps through a newsletter and the Township’s web site, to provide educational materials on the Township’s history and historic resources.

- Recreation**
 - Incorporate historic resources into recreation, trail and open space planning.

- Ordinances**
 - Once historic resources are inventoried, amend the zoning ordinance to include historic resource protection provision that will:
 - Prohibit demolition by neglect.
 - Facilitate the adaptive re-use of historic resources.
 - Provide incentives for rehabilitation of historic resources.
 - Require a historic resources impact assessment for development in proximity to a historic resource.
 - Require review of demolition, alteration, erection, reconstruction, and restoration of historic resources.
 - Allow home occupations in all zoning districts as a means of encouraging productive use of historic structures which tend to be larger and more difficult to maintain.
 - Incorporate the preservation of historic resources in conservation design for residential and commercial development.

- Site and Sign Design Guidelines**
 - Prepare and adopt design guidelines for residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional development to encourage the most efficient use of land and development consistent with historic character.

- Certified Local Government**
 - Apply to become a Certified Local Government (see sidebar on next page).

CERTIFIED LOCAL GOVERNMENT HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM

The Certified Local Government Program is a preservation partnership between local, state and national governments focused on promoting historic preservation at the grass roots level. The program is jointly administered by the National Park Service (NPS) and the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) in each state, with each local community working through a certification process to become recognized as a Certified Local Government (CLG). CLGs then become an active partner in the Federal Historic Preservation Program and the opportunities it provides.

Why become a CLG? The key reason is the access certification provides to the expert technical advice of the State Offices as well as the NPS. Partnerships with the National Alliance of Preservation Commissions, Preserve America, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the National Main Street Center are also networks that CLGs have an opportunity to tap into. Of course, access to Federal funding is another benefit, making certified communities able to access the portion of Federal funds set aside by each SHPO for just CLGs annually. Being a CLG also shows your community's commitment to keeping what is significant from the past for future generations. As a certified town, city, or county seeking other opportunities, it becomes easy to demonstrate a readiness to take on a preservation project and be successful.

What is a CLG required to do?

A community must show both the state and NPS that they are committed to historic preservation. They can do this by addressing the following minimum goals.

- * Establish a Preservation Commission*
- * Establish an ordinance*
- * Maintain an active survey of local historic resources*
- * Participate in the National Register process*

(Source: www.nps.gov/history/hps/clg)