

Guide for Architectural Design

Oley Township Historic District, Berks County, PA



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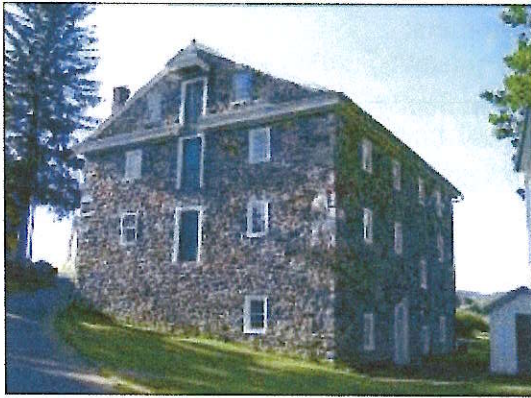
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CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION



Bieber Mill, largely intact as it was originally designed and built in 1809. One of the few remaining mills in Oley Township.

What is the Oley Township Historic District?

A historic district is an area, delineated by an official boundary, which includes resources such as buildings, structures, objects or sites, whose distinctive character conveys a unique architectural and cultural heritage. Since the enactment of the State of Pennsylvania's Historic District Act in 1961, many local municipalities have passed local historic preservation ordinances that established historic districts. Oley Township passed its historic preservation ordinance initially in 1991, and amended it in 2005. Oley's 15,000 acres comprise one of the largest historic districts in the country. The district encompasses most of the Oley Valley, a rural farming landscape, remarkably preserved, with the village of Oley at its center.

Oley also has the distinction of being the only entire township in Pennsylvania listed in the national Register of Historic Places, occurring in March of 1983. This represents a first-of-its-kind designation, due to its inclusion of a large amount of land to provide the proper context for the total collection of rural historic buildings. Oley Township achieved this honor because of the overall integrity of its historic resource. Within its sheltering hills are the buildings and landscape features that depict a panorama of rural development from the time of settlement to present day. See an [interactive map](#) of buildings with significant historic character listed as part of the National Register nomination.

What are the Benefits of Owning Property in a Historic District?

Although each property owner can define the benefits of a historic district based upon their personal experience, historic districts have been found to:

- Increase neighborhood stability and property values;
- Foster economic development, increase business district investment, and revitalize older commercial areas by attracting new customers;
- Preserve the physical history of the area;
- Promote an appreciation of the physical environment;
- Foster community pride and self-image;
- Increase the awareness and appreciation of local history; and
- Increase local tourism.

(See more information from the National Register nomination: [narrative of the history and background](#); and [narrative on the architectural styles of Oley Township](#))

How to Use This Guide

This document is a guide for property owners, design professionals, contractors, the local review boards or commissions, and elected officials. It is intended to help provide for actions consistent with the Township's Historic Preservation Ordinance (No. 320), manage change, and protect historic and architectural resources within the Oley Township Historic District.

This guide is not meant to impose rigid restrictions; rather it is intended to provide guiding principles that, when taken into consideration, will result in preserving the distinct character of Oley Township.

This design guide provides information regarding the historic importance of Oley Township and its architecture, and is intended to prevent hasty decisions about altering or demolishing historic buildings by identifying significant buildings and features, outlining preferred options, and specifying appropriate treatments. This guide should be used in addition to the Secretary of the Interior's [Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines on Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring and Reconstructing Historic Buildings](#), which are referenced in Chapter Two. It should also be used in conjunction with the Oley Township Zoning Ordinance and Oley Township Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance.

Suggested Reading

- Pendleton, Philip E. *Oley Valley Heritage, The Colonial Years: 1700-1775*, 1994.
McAlester, Virginia & Lee *A Field Guide to American Houses*, Knopf, 1991

CHAPTER TWO

OLEY TOWNSHIP HARB INFORMATION

What is the Oley Township Historic District?

In March of 1983 the entire Township of Oley was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This represents a first-of-its-kind designation, due to its inclusion of a large amount of land to provide the proper context for the total collection of rural historic buildings. Oley's 15,000 acres comprise one of the largest historic districts in the country.

Oley Township achieved this honor because of the overall integrity of its historic resource. Within its sheltering hills are the buildings and landscape features that depict a panorama of rural development from the time of settlement to present day. Oley has the distinction of being the only entire township in Pennsylvania listed in the National Register of Historic Places. The district encompasses most of the Oley Valley, a rural farming landscape, remarkably preserved, with the village of Oley at its center.

What is the HARB?

The Oley Township Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB) is a public advisory body created by Oley Township Ordinance No. 320, enacted May 9, 2005, establishing the entire Township as a Local Historic District, as authorized by the Pennsylvania Historic District Act 167 of 1961. There are more than 2300 Local Historic Districts in the United States.

What Gives the HARB Authority?

The Oley Township Board of Supervisors is obligated and authorized to protect and preserve historic resources by both Federal and State mandate, including the US National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Constitution of Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania History Code, and the Pennsylvania Municipal Planning Code.

CONSTITUTION OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, Article 1, Declaration of Rights, Section 27, Natural Resources and the Public Estate:

"The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and to the preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and esthetic values of the environment. Pennsylvania's public natural resources are the common property of all the people, including generations yet to come. As trustee of these resources, the Commonwealth shall conserve and maintain them for the benefit of all the people." Oley's Historic Resource: The Oley Township Historic District has honored status as the first complete township listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The defining character of Oley Township Historic District includes the Main Street village center, 5 smaller villages and settlements, 250 years of historic architecture including more than 400 stone buildings, an excellent example of agricultural heritage with more than 150 Pennsylvania German farmsteads, rural lifestyle, and remarkable vistas of these highest

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quality farmlands preserved and protected by the surrounding hills. But as times change, development, and potential for loss of historic character is real. In the 1980's the National Historic Trust selected Oley as part of a pilot rural preservation program, and in the 1990's, Preservation Pennsylvania listed the Oley Township Historic District as At Risk. In recent years, development pressures have only increased as the cities and towns surrounding Oley have grown.

Since 1991, the Oley Township Historic Architectural Review Board has served the Board of Supervisors of Oley Township, as stewards of this historic resource. In 2005, the historic district was expanded to include the entire township. The authority is Oley Township Historic District Ordinance 320, which is authorized by the 1961 Pennsylvania Historic District Act. The HARB reviews plans for exterior building alterations visible from a public way, including new construction, fences, and signs. The HARB represents the interests of all citizens of Oley Township including the neighbors of existing structures, new developments and construction sites.

The Ordinance requires that before beginning construction or alteration, an Application to the Board of Supervisors for Certificate of Appropriateness must be made with the Building Inspector. The HARB provides a monthly meeting for discussion of these applications, and is required to review and advise the Supervisors about each application in a timely manner. One of three recommendations is possible.

1. The HARB recommends the issuance of the Certificate of Appropriateness with or without changes to the application.
2. The HARB does not recommend issuance, or
3. There is no decision due to conflict or lack of quorum, and the Applicant is recommended or chooses to appeal directly to the Board of Supervisors.

Note that the HARB does not approve or deny the application; rather, the HARB make a simple recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

There is limited due-process concern in the application or review process, until it reaches the Board of Supervisors. Currently, The Oley Township Historic District Ordinance provides general guidance to the HARB, but relatively little specific requirements or prohibitions, particularly regarding new development. The HARB has freedom to consider each application in physical and historical context of the impact to the Historic District in whole or in part, and may consider future impact to historic heritage, and make its recommendation accordingly. The HARB is directed to consider financial feasibility in their recommendations, and there are provisions for applicants to make claim of financial unreasonableness or economic hardship. There is an express exclusion for agricultural buildings on working farms. In all applications, the decision to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness and/or Building Permit rests solely on the Board of Supervisors.

It is expected that the relationship with owners, builders and developers will be mutually cooperative and encouraging of creating the best possible final result, and will be conversational in tone. It is noted that these discussions may overlap Zoning, Planning, Building Code, and perhaps Conservation District concerns as well as Historic District Ordinance issues, and it is understood that conflicts arising will be noted, but must be resolved in their appropriate forum.

What is the HARB's Role?

The HARB conducts monthly public meetings, as posted at the Township building, and has the duty to advise the Oley Township Board of Supervisors on the following:

- The advisability of issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the repair, erection, replacement, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, demolition, or razing of any building or structure in whole or in part within the township;
- Preserving and protecting open space within the township;
- Changes that will promote the cultural, economic, and general welfare of the township; and
- Actions that will foster the aesthetic value of the community by providing visual compatibility with the surrounding properties and to enhance the overall ambiance of the township.

In most instances, property owners or tenants will be invited to meet with the HARB when applying for a Certificate of Appropriateness for a proposed project at their building or site.

What is a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA)?

Property owners must obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the Board of Supervisors as well as all necessary permits prior to proceeding with any work. Based on its review, the HARB recommends to the Board of Supervisors whether to issue a COA for the proposed work. The COA is the approval statement signed by the Board of Supervisors which certifies the historical appropriateness of a particular request for the erection, alteration, reconstruction, restoration, demolition or razing of all or a part of any building or structure within the historic district, and authorizes the issuance of a building permit for said request.

The application for COA must include the following information:

- The exact location of the area in which the work is to be done;
- A description of the exterior changes to be made or the exterior character of the structure to be erected;
- A list of the surrounding structures with their general exterior characteristics;
- The effect of the proposed change upon the general historic and architectural nature of the District;
- The appropriateness of exterior architectural features of the building which can be seen from a public street or way; and
- The general design, arrangement, texture and material of the building and the structure, and the relation of such factors to similar features of building or structures in the District.

See the [Oley Township HARB Certificate of Appropriateness Application](#).

What Changes to Land or Buildings Require HARB Review?

The HARB reviews all proposed new construction and exterior changes to existing buildings and structures. The types of work reviewed by the HARB include, but are not limited to:

- Exterior repair, replacement, alteration and renovation including additions, new construction and roofing;
- Adaptive reuse, demolition and building relocation;
- Fences, walls, garden structures and out-buildings;
- Signs and awnings.

What Changes to Land or Buildings Do Not Require HARB Review?

The HARB does not need to review the following changes:

- Modifications to existing non-residential structures or proposed non-residential structures used on a working farm;
- Cosmetic changes to buildings built after 1940 and before the adoption of the Ordinance in 2005;
- Re-roofing where roofing materials and architectural details are not being changed.

Property owners or tenants of properties in Oley Township should be aware that proposed exterior changes, except repainting, are subject to review by the Township HARB. The HARB reviews the proposed changes to determine whether they are appropriate to the individual property, and within the township as a whole, in regard to the architectural style, general design, arrangement, location, and materials.

Note: HARB review is not a substitute for a Township building permit, nor for compliance with other Township zoning, building, and safety codes.

HARB Considerations for Alterations and Renovations to Buildings

Each property has a unique history and place in the Oley Township Historic District. The HARB considers the following aspects of a property to determine whether it should be viewed as an exceptional, primary, or secondary resource:



Secondary resource

- less concern about preserving historic fabric
- NPS General Application
- New construction standards may apply
- Modern building materials generally not of concern



Primary resource

- Moderate concern about preserving historic fabric
- Repair rather than replace preferred
- Replace in like & kind - moderate
- Encourage documentation
- SOI standards almost always apply



Exceptional resource

- Adamant about preserving historic fabric
- Repair rather than replace strongly preferred
- Replace in strictly like & kind
- Document and maintain all historic building materials
- SOI standards always apply

What is the COA Review Process?

Prior to beginning work, obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) Application from the Building Inspector at LTL Consultants, 1 Town Center Dr., Oley, PA 19547. Apply at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting at which the application is expected to be reviewed. Applicants should submit all required materials, including drawings and photographs of the existing site, with their completed application, to expedite the review process.

HARB meetings typically occur the fourth Thursday of each month at the Oley Township Municipal Building, 1 Rose Virginia Road, Oley, PA 19547.

At the meeting, an application hearing will be held utilizing established standards, including The Oley Township Historic District Ordinance and The US Secretary of the Interior's Treatment for Historic Properties. The hearing will determine whether the changes are appropriate to the individual property and the district as a whole, in regard to architectural style, general design, arrangement, location, and materials. It is recommended that the applicant or a project representative attend the meeting to assist the Board in determining the nature of the proposed changes.

The application may be recommended for approval with or without conditions, tabled pending additional information, or recommended for disapproval.

The HARB's recommendation letter will become an agenda item for consideration at the next scheduled Board of Supervisors meeting, typically held on the second Tuesday of the month at the Oley Township Building. Applicants may attend this meeting to discuss their application with the Supervisors.

If approved, a Certificate of Appropriateness will be issued. The applicant may then obtain building permits and begin work, provided the application complies with all applicable zoning, building and other codes. Should the Board of Supervisors deny an application, their decision may be appealed according to provisions outlined in the Oley Township Local District Ordinance and the PA Municipal Code.

Property owners considering changes are welcome to attend HARB meetings to ask questions and solicit input during the planning process. Copies of the Oley Historic District Ordinance and other helpful materials including standards and guidelines are available at the Code Office. You may contact the Township Office at (610) 987-3423 to confirm meeting dates.

What is the Application Review Procedure?

Upon receipt of a completed application for a Building Permit or a Certificate of Appropriateness for work to be done in the Township's Historic District, the Township Building Inspector will determine whether the project should be forwarded to the HARB for approval review. If so, he will forward copies of the completed applications to the HARB. The Building Inspector is unable to issue a building permit for any project where the Board

of Supervisors must first issue a Certificate of Appropriateness in accordance with Township Ordinance No. 320.

Upon the HARB's receipt of a completed Building Permit or Certificate of Appropriateness application, the HARB will schedule the project for its next regularly-scheduled meeting or special meeting. At least ten days prior to the scheduled HARB meeting, the Township will notify the owner of the project or his or her representatives and invite them to appear and explain their project to the HARB. Upon completion of its discussions with the owner or his or her representatives, the HARB will form its recommendation on the issuance of a COA and forward it to the Board of Supervisors in writing no later than forty-five working days after the hearing/meeting date. The Board will consider the HARB's recommendation and decide upon the issuance of the Certificate of Appropriateness. (*See notes on [Conducting a Successful Design Review Meeting.](#)*)

If the HARB chooses to recommend against the Board's granting of a Certificate of Appropriateness, it can inform the owner of the project or his or her representatives of any modifications to the plans and specifications that would protect the distinctive historical character of the Historic District and/or the architectural integrity of the building or structure. The HARB can also withhold its report to the Board for five (5) days from its decision to allow the owner of the project time to decide whether or not to make the suggested changes. If the project owner decides to make the necessary changes, he or she shall inform the HARB, which will, in turn, inform its Board accordingly.

Upon receipt of the HARB's recommendations, the Board of Supervisors will consider at their next regularly scheduled or special meeting whether to issue the Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed project. The project owner will be informed in advance of the Board's scheduled meeting where his or her project will be considered so that they may attend this meeting and speak to their application. The Board may either a) issue a Certificate of Appropriateness authorizing the Building Inspector to issue a permit for the work covered; or b) not issue the COA, and include in writing the reasons for its rejection. Those reasons will be forwarded by the Board to the Building Inspector, the project owner and to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The Board's written statement will also explain suggested modifications that could be made to the plans and specifications that would meet the conditions for protecting: (1) the distinctive historical character of the District; and, (2) the architectural integrity of the building or structure.

(Refer to an [abstract of the Township of Oley Historic Preservation Ordinance](#) that describes the Application Review Procedure. See an [Application Checklist](#) to be included with any Certificate of Appropriateness Application. See an in-depth [description of General HARB Standards regarding the Application review procedure](#))

Unreasonable Economic Hardship

A property owner within the Township's historic district may file a claim with the Township when he or she believes that a recommendation of the HARB, or determination by the Board, precludes a reasonable return or a reasonable beneficial use of the property. Such a claim of unreasonable economic hardship will need to be supported by sufficient evidence submitted by the property owner or his or her representative to prove the claim.

Should the HARB support the property owner's evidence, it can investigate whether there are other uses currently allowed that could provide the property owner with a reasonable return. The HARB may seek the assistance of preservation organizations in developing solutions. While doing so, the HARB can also ask the Board of Supervisors to delay issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness for demolition for up to ninety days. The HARB may ultimately choose to recommend to its Board that special economic incentives be developed to assist the property owner in achieving a reasonable beneficial use.

Should the HARB or the Board of Supervisors ultimately be unable to find a solution that will relieve the owner's claimed economic hardship, a Certificate of Appropriateness will be issued by the Township for demolition of the historic resource.

Appeal

Upon receipt of a written disapproval of the Board of Supervisors, the Township's Building Inspector will disapprove the building permit application and inform the permit applicant. According to Township ordinance, the building permit or COA applicant may appeal this disapproval to the Berks County Court of Common Pleas within the time specified by law. In either case of approval or disapproval, the Board of Supervisors shall notify the applicant of its decision within five days of its meeting at which the application was considered. Should the Board fail to notify the applicant of its decision within thirty (30) to forty-five (45) working days of its review, it shall be assumed that the application is deemed approved.

Enforcement

The Oley Township Building Inspector is responsible for insuring that property owners within the Township comply with the Historic Preservation Ordinance provisions. Property owners may be subject to a fine for failing to comply with these District provisions or conditions of COA approval. *(For specific enforcement provisions, see [Oley Township Historic Preservation Ordinance No. 320](#)).*

Checklist of How to Prepare for the Application Review for Alterations and Renovations to Buildings in the Historic District

- Review/Reference Standards
 - [Municipal ordinances](#) and design guide
 - Secretary of the Interior Standards for [Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, & Reconstructing Historic Buildings](#)
 - [General HARB Standards](#)
- Review exceptions
 - Built after 1940
 - Not visible from public way
 - Re-roofing like in kind
 - Working farm buildings
- Identify the Nature of the Project
 - Location
 - Proximity to other historic properties
 - Context of historic buildings to each other
 - Proximity to historic villages
 - Age of structure
 - State of preservation
 - Historic recognition
 - Distance from public way
 - Signs and accessories/fences
- Identify Type of Project
 - Rehabilitation/restoration/reconstruction
 - Additions
 - Out buildings

CHAPTER THREE

GUIDELINES FOR HARB DETERMINATION FOR BUILDINGS IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

General Design Guidelines

When repairing features on a historic building it is important to retain as many of the original features as possible. If replacement is necessary, materials that match the original in size, shape, color, and other visual characteristics should be used. Repair work must be completed before any replacement work. In either case, it is imperative to adhere to the original design and features of the building. Not doing so will alter the integrity of the building, diminishing its historical value.

Windows and doors are one of the most important features to preserve on historic buildings. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has published a helpful document entitled *[Repair or Replace Old Windows: A Visual Look at the Impacts](#)*. This document is a valuable resource and can also be found online at http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/weatherization/windows/additional-resources/nthp_windows_repair_replace.pdf

The National Park Service has also made available a series of Preservation Briefs that provide owners of historic buildings with guidance on preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration. The following is a list of the NPA Preservation Briefs and their links. See also <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm>. Each Brief can be downloaded as a PDF file.

Below are excerpts from the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings.

Windows

Recommended

- Maintaining windows on a regular basis to ensure that they function properly and are completely operable.
- Retaining and repairing historic windows when deteriorated
- Weather stripping and caulking historic windows, when appropriate, to make them tight.
- Installing interior or exterior storm windows or panels that are compatible with existing historic windows.
- Maintaining existing, reinstalling or installing new, historically-appropriate shutters and awnings.
- Repairing or reopening historically-operable interior transoms, when possible, to improve air flow and cross ventilation.

Not Recommended

- Neglecting to maintain historic windows and allowing them to deteriorate beyond repair.
- Removing repairable historic windows and replacing them with new windows for perceived improvement in energy performance.
- Replacing repairable historic windows with new insulated windows.
- Removing historic shutters and awnings or installing inappropriate ones.
- Covering or removing existing transoms.

Doors

Recommended

- Identifying, retaining, and preserving entrances and their functional and decorative features such as doors, fanlights, sidelights, pilasters, entablatures, columns, balustrades, and stairs
- Stabilizing deteriorated or damaged entrances as a preliminary measure, when necessary, prior to undertaking appropriate preservation work.
- Protect and maintain the masonry, wood and architectural metals that comprise entrances
- Repair entrances by reinforcing the historic materials using recognized preservation methods.
- Replacing in kind extensively deteriorated or missing parts of repeated entrance features when there are surviving prototypes.

Not Recommended

- Altering entrances and porches which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building so that, as a result, the character is diminished
- Replacing historic entrance and porch features instead of repairing or replacing only the deteriorated material.
- Failing to stabilize a deteriorated or damaged entrance or porch until additional work is undertaken, thus allowing further damage to occur to the historic building.
- Failing to provide adequate protection to materials on a cyclical basis so that deterioration results.
- Removing material that could be repaired, using improper repair techniques, or failing to document the new work.

Siding

Recommended

- Preserving wood features such as siding, cornices, brackets, window architraves, and doorway pediments; and their paints, finishes and colors.
- Stabilizing deteriorated or damaged wood as a preliminary measure, prior to undertaking preservation work.
- Providing proper drainage so that water is not allowed to stand on flat, horizontal surfaces or accumulate in decorative features.
- Applying compatible paint coating systems following proper surface preparation.
- Repainting with colors that are appropriate to the historic building and district.

Not Recommended

- Replacing historic wood features instead of repairing or replacing only the deteriorated wood; changing the type or paint or finish and its color.
- Failing to stabilize deteriorated or damaged wood until additional work is undertaken, thus allowing further damage to occur.
- Failing to remedy the causes of wood deterioration including faulty flashing, leaking gutters, cracks and holes in siding, deteriorated caulking joints and seams, or insect or fungus infestation.
- Removing paint that is firmly adhering to, and thus, protecting wood surfaces.
- Failing to undertake adequate measures to assure the protection of wood features.

Roofing

Recommended

- Preserving the functional and decorative features including: roof shape, such as hipped, gambrel, and mansard; decorative features such as cupolas, cresting, chimneys, and weathervanes; and roofing materials such as slate, wood, clay tile, and metal.
- Stabilizing deteriorated or damaged roof as a preliminary measure prior to undertaking appropriate preservation work.
- Protecting and maintaining a roof by cleaning the gutters and downspouts and replacing deteriorated flashing.
- Protecting a leaking roof with plywood and building paper until it can be properly repaired.
- Repairing a roof by reinforcing the historic materials. The new work should be unobtrusively dated.

Not Recommended

- Altering the roof and roofing materials which are important in defining the overall historic character of the building.
- Changing the type or color of roofing materials.
- Failing to stabilize a deteriorated or damaged roof until additional work is undertaken, thus allowing further damage to occur.
- Failing to clean and maintain gutters and downspouts properly so that water and debris collect and cause damage.
- Allowing roof fasteners to corrode so that roofing material is subject to accelerated deterioration.
- Removing materials that could be repaired.
- Failing to reuse intact slate or tile when only the roofing substrate needs replacement.

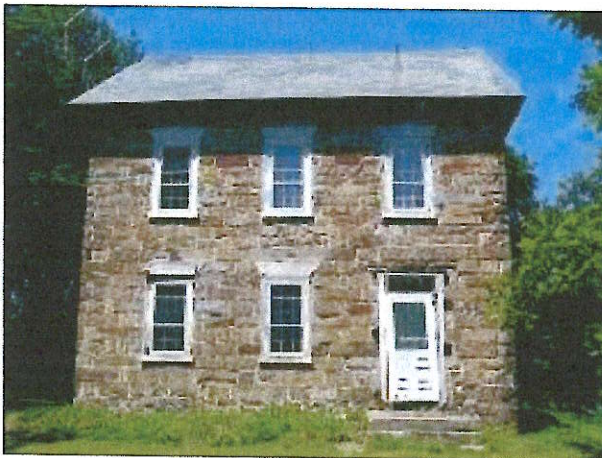
Guidelines for HARB Determinations

When reviewing a proposed project, the HARB is guided by: 1) Township Ordinances; 2) principles contained in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*; and 3) the Oley Township Guide for Architectural Design. In reviewing projects, the HARB encourages property owners to cause the least amount of intervention or change to their buildings or structures as identified in the following the Secretary of the Interior's excerpted standards:

- Identify, retain, and preserve the overall form, materials, and details that are important in defining the architectural and historical character of the building and site.
- Protect and maintain historic materials and features. This involves protection from other work that may occur in proximity to the historic materials, and also protection through regular maintenance. A regular program of protection and maintenance usually involves the least degree of intervention, and can prevent or postpone extensive and costly work.
- Repair rather than replace deteriorated historic materials and features. Repairs maintain the building in its current condition while making it weather-resistant and structurally sound. Repairs should involve the least intervention possible, concentrating specifically on areas of deterioration. When repair is not possible, the HARB encourages replacement in-kind, reproducing by new construction the original feature exactly, including the original material, finish, detailing, and texture. Although not preferred, substitute materials are acceptable when they convey the original appearance and finish of the original feature.
- Replace missing or deteriorated historic materials and features when the extent of deterioration precludes repair. Similar to repair, the preferred approach is to replace the entire feature in-kind to match the original material, finish, detailing, and texture. Since this is not always technically or financially feasible, substitute materials are acceptable when they convey the original appearance and finish of the original feature.
- Reconstruct missing historical features if adequate historical, pictorial, and physical documentation exists so that the feature may be accurately reproduced. The addition of features from other historic buildings or addition of historical elements for which there is no documentation is not appropriate.
- Alterations and additions are sometimes needed to continue use of a building. An alteration involves returning a building to a useful condition while saving those parts that represent its historical, architectural or cultural significance. It is important that alterations do not radically alter, obscure, or destroy character-defining spaces, materials, features or finishes. An addition, however, is new construction at the exterior of an existing building and should be avoided. If considered, new additions should be clearly differentiated but compatible in size, mass, form, fenestration, detailing and style with the historic building, constructed at a less visible side or rear elevation and so the character-defining features are not radically changed, obscured, damaged, or destroyed.



The ancillary house on the Kaufman farm, the site of one of the best-preserved and most significant collection of early German-influenced buildings in existence in the United States. Note the restoration of the building has been accomplished with appropriate materials, and detail.



The 1804 Peters home, above and right, shows examples of original details, some of which can be repaired and preserved and some of which must be replaced. As of early 2008, this home and other historic structures on the property are undergoing extensive preservation and restoration.



Maintenance is Preservation

General maintenance should be a regular part of any property, particularly historic buildings. Lack of regular upkeep, such as the gutter cleaning and painting, can result in accelerated deterioration of building elements and features. In the case of historic buildings, these features may represent character-defining elements of the building that are difficult and costly to replace. Regular, smaller investments of money at a property to identify and correct potential problems may not only improve its overall appearance and value, but also can prevent or postpone extensive and costly future repairs.

Toward this end, the HARB encourages:

- Prolonging of the life of original materials on historic structures through regular maintenance;
- Avoiding replacement of original materials with newer materials; and
- Avoiding demolition by neglect.

Repairs and Replacement

When it is no longer feasible to maintain a historic feature, repairs or replacement in-kind may be necessary. Repairs maintain the building in its current condition while making it weather-resistant and structurally sound, concentrating specifically on areas of deterioration.



An example of a well-maintained home in the Township where the upkeep and maintenance is a worthwhile investment. This home retains most if not all of its original architectural elements. Replacement of the original shutters, shown here, would be significantly more-expensive than maintaining them in good condition.

When repair is not possible, the HARB encourages replacement in-kind. Similar to a regular maintenance program, these activities can prevent or postpone extensive and costly future repairs.

The HARB encourages:

- Non-intrusive repairs, focused at deteriorated areas, stabilizing and protecting the building's important materials and features;
- When repair is not possible, replacement in-kind to the greatest extent possible, reproducing by new construction the original feature exactly, matching the original material, size, scale, finish, detailing, and texture, and utilizing similar techniques; and
- When replacement in-kind is not possible, the use of compatible materials and techniques that convey an appearance similar to the original feature, similar in design, color, texture, finish, and visual quality to the historic elements.

Alterations and Renovations

Alterations and renovations are sometimes needed to ensure the continued use of a building, but have the potential to alter the historic district's character. When considering alterations or renovations, great care should be given to the original building and its relationship to the alteration or renovation.

The HARB encourages:

- Identification, retention, and preservation of the character-defining features of the historic building;
- Minimal alteration to the original design, materials, and features;
- New design elements and scale that are compatible with the historic building and district; and
- Use of materials and techniques that are compatible to the historic building and district.

Adaptive Reuse

In adaptive reuse projects, alterations or renovations might be necessary to utilize a building for a different purpose from which it currently or was originally designed. Owners should check with the Township to be sure the new use being considered is allowed by zoning. Similar to alterations or renovations, great care should be given to the original building and its relationship to the alteration or renovation.



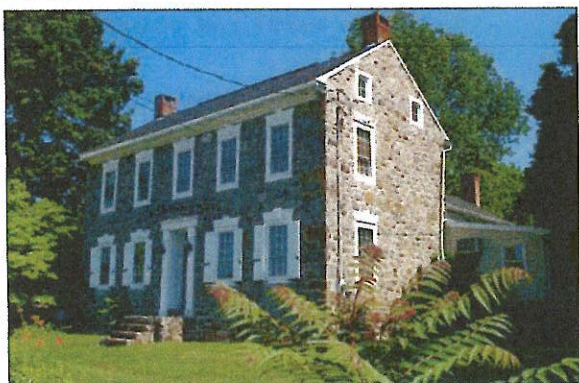
An example of a barn adapted for reuse as a home outside of the township. This represents an addition and renovation that was not sensitive to the original architecture and, as a result, little is left of the original character of the barn. Instead, what is most apparent is the broad field of vinyl siding and awkward fenestration.

Examples of adaptive reuse include:

- Conversion of a house to apartments or offices;
- Reuse of historic storefronts;
- Conversion of industrial or commercial buildings into housing; and
- Conversion of institutional buildings into commercial space.

Benefits of adaptive reuse include:

- Retention of historic district character and high quality historic materials and craftsmanship
- Promotion of stability of ownership and occupancy in the township
- Potential cost savings over new construction
- Presence of established neighborhood and existing infrastructure



Additions and New Construction

Additions to historic buildings and new construction within the Historic District can dramatically alter the appearance of the District and its surrounding landscape. Although the duplication of historic styles is not encouraged, contemporary design must be reviewed within the context of the historic district. Because of the sensitivity of the contributing landscape, property owners

should take great care when proposing either an addition or new construction in Oley's Historic District.

The HARB encourages:

- Preservation of the cohesive ambiance of a historic district with compatible, sympathetic, and contemporary construction
- Compatible siting, proportion, scale, form, materials, fenestration, roof configuration, details, and finishes
- Construction of additions at secondary elevations whenever possible, subordinate to the historic building, and compatible with the design of the property and neighborhood
- Construction of additions so that the historic building fabric is not radically changed, obscured, damaged, or destroyed

Demolition

The demolition of buildings within the Township's Historic District is considered a drastic action since it alters the character of the streetscape, surrounding buildings, as well as the demolition site. Once buildings that contribute to the Historic District and history of the community are destroyed, they cannot be replaced, and the District may be compromised.



An example of the recent demolition of a historic stone home in Amity Township, Pennsylvania, where there is no Historic District ordinance. This late 18th Century stone home was razed in favor of the vinyl-sided home visible in the background. Adding insult to injury, none of the material from the stone home was salvaged for reuse.

To avoid these impacts, the HARB encourages:

- An evaluation of the significance of the building in the Historic District; and
- All attempts to reuse a historic building be exhausted prior to considering demolition.

The HARB does not recommend demolition unless:

- The proposed demolition involves a non-significant addition or portion of the building, provided that the demolition will not adversely affect those portions of a building that are significant; and
- The proposed demolition involves a non-significant building, provided that the demolition will not adversely affect those parts of the site that are significant.

Demolition by Neglect

An important requirement of the Historic Preservation Ordinance No. 320 is that all buildings and structures within the Township of Oley Historic District are to be maintained in good repair, structurally sound, and reasonably protected against decay and deterioration. Examples of such deterioration include:

- Deterioration of exterior walls or other vertical supports;
- Deterioration of roofs or other horizontal members;
- Deterioration of exterior chimneys;
- Deterioration of crumbling of exterior stucco or mortar;
- Ineffective waterproofing of exterior walls, roofs or foundations, including broken window or doors; and
- Deterioration of any feature so as to create a hazardous condition which could lead to the claim that a demolition is necessary for the public safety.

The National Park Service (NPS) has several publications that describe standards for preservation and guidelines for preserving historic buildings.

(For a brief outline of the [NPS standards for preservation, reconstruction, rehabilitation, and restoration](http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/), or go to <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/>.)



An early photo of the Moravian boarding school, built in 1742, and now the victim of deterioration and demolition. The half-timber construction was unique and there are no other remaining examples known in the township or in Berks County.

COA Application Checklist for Repairs and Replacements

The following are required submissions to be included with a COA Application:

- Certificate of Appropriateness Application
- 4"x6" (or larger) labeled photographs showing all public views of the building or structure
- Samples or catalogue cuts of materials to be used
- Any additional information required by the HARB after an initial consultation or review

CHAPTER FOUR INFILL IN VILLAGE AREAS

General HARB Standards for New Construction

Generally speaking, as pertains to new construction, the goal of the Oley Township Historic Architectural Review Board is to avoid the harshness of many modern developments by engaging owners and developers in building attractive, high-quality, natural-looking homes and buildings that blend in immediately, and exceptionally well, with the historic district landscape and surrounding neighborhoods. Note that historical and physical context matters. Development and alteration in proximity to well preserved historic village homes or farmsteads will be judged differently than similar activities in areas where there is less to protect.

Generally, developers are encouraged to bring their best, most elegant designs, duplicate them infrequently, and place custom homes where possible. Note that a small and simple wood or brick clad cottage style home may be more "appropriate" in much of the township than a much more expensive and much larger vinyl clad neo colonial stock builder home. This is not to say that the latter home may not be approved, but by all means, take some time to survey the surrounding areas, understand important historical structures nearby, prior to selecting your design. During the design process, consider the impact of your plans on the surrounding area. Consider the view from the street and from your neighbors' homes.

There are a many, many beautiful masonry homes in the valley, so extensive use of masonry exteriors is favored, including stone, brick, and stucco. Consider full masonry fronts, and even full masonry exteriors. Consider natural rather than manufactured stone veneer. Take care and consider limiting color and style choices. For instance, note that there are a lot of soft red brick homes in Oley Township, so consider avoiding washed, sanded or pink or hard-red brick looks. Note that there are very few river rock or ashlar stone homes in the valley.

There are also many beautiful frame homes and buildings in the valley. Use upgraded architectural building materials for roofing shingles and siding. Use natural and or paintable fiber-cement board materials whenever possible. When specifying vinyl siding, select molded and restoration grade products over standard grades, and take care in design with molding, window and door headers, corner boards, and soffit and eave details to provide a natural look. Avoid improbable or superfluous vents, port hole windows or gratuitous architectural details.

Remember that in many settings, far more citizens will be viewing the backs and sides of the new construction than the fronts, so continue architectural features around sides and back, including shutters, window and door headers and moldings, masonry chimneys, etc. Avoid blank walls of vinyl siding, by including windows on the sides of houses, and avoid flush gable ends, in favor of exposed or overhanging soffit details and shadow lines. Provide side entrance garages where possible. Use upgraded garage doors exclusively. Avoid

Oley Township Historic District Guide for Architectural Design

improbable-looking raised or cantilevered pressure treated decks in favor of more porch-like details and construction. Use landscaping, fencing and land features to soften the harsh effects of new construction and improve relations with the neighborhood and the township.

Likewise, community areas and structures, including in retaining and drainage areas may have high impact on surrounding areas. Take care to provide tasteful and attractive features such as mailboxes, light poles, community buildings and utility structures, street trees, structural retaining and decorative walls, fences, landscaping and signage. Avoid sub-development signs at street entrances. Avoid street lighting in favor of individually controlled house lighting.

The HARB finds it very helpful to and encourages meetings with developers and owners in the planning stages, prior to application, to discuss preliminary plans, and answer questions about the Ordinance and process. We encourage all applicants to attend at meetings where their applications are being discussed, and to bring as much detail as they deem reasonable. Photos of the area and site, examples of building materials, drawings and sketches are very helpful. We recommend reviewing the ordinance prior to making design decisions and application. By all means do not buy materials or begin construction prior to approval.



There are many beautiful masonry homes in the valley.

HARB Review Criteria for Village Infill

This chapter addresses the design of new structures and their addition to the existing historic setting of Oley Township. It is intended to guide the Planning Commission and HARB's evaluation of new construction and to assist architects and developers when planning and designing new buildings.

The HARB will approach infill development and new subdivisions according to the context of the proposed buildings and the site. Whether the property is considered to be of exceptional, primary, or secondary significance in the Historic District will depend upon the following criteria, as applicable:



Secondary areas

- Located far from primary resources or out of public view
- mixed era neighborhoods
- mixed residential and commercial uses in the area
- neighborhoods constructed after 1940



Primary areas

- Located in, or in visual proximity to:
- Villages
- Main Street zones
- Historic Landscapes or landscapes of historic significance



Exceptional areas

- Located on or near exceptional buildings and farmsteads

General Guidelines

The design guidelines outlined in [Section 500 Design Guidelines of the Oley Township Zoning Ordinance](#) subsection F suggest that design of new structures must be compatible with the existing character and building patterns of the historic district. New buildings can be designed in a manner that is consistent with the historic district regardless of their architectural style.

New buildings should be compatible with the size, scale, color, material and character patterns of the district, sub-area or block. New buildings may be designed in a variety of architectural styles including styles that are intentional restorations, inventions within an historic style, or abstract reference to styles present in the district, so long as the design reflects the sense of place of the specific district and creates a continuity of character.



A historic stone barn structure in Oley.



This contemporary structure has an abstract reference to the historic stone barn structures in Oley.



New structures are to be compatible with nearby buildings.



Victorian architecture with mansard roof.

Proportion of Building's Front Facade

- Preserve the relationship between the width of the front of the building and the height of the front of the building.



The base is highlighted with an entrance portico, the middle includes regular floor, fenestration of the upper floor, and the top is a roof with chimneys.

Links

[Residential Window Field Guide](#)

Proportion of Openings within the Building and Rhythms of Solids to Voids in the Front Facade

- Preserve the relationship of width to height of windows and doors.
- Preserve the relationship between a recurrent alteration of strong and weak architectural elements thereby maintaining a rhythm of solids to voids.



Windows create a pattern of voids in the wall space.

Rhythm of Spacing of Buildings on Streets

- Preserve the existing rhythm of recurrent or repeated building masses to spaces between each building.



Buildings have a similar setback from the roadway and are spaced in a regular pattern.

Rhythm of Entrance and/or Porch Projections

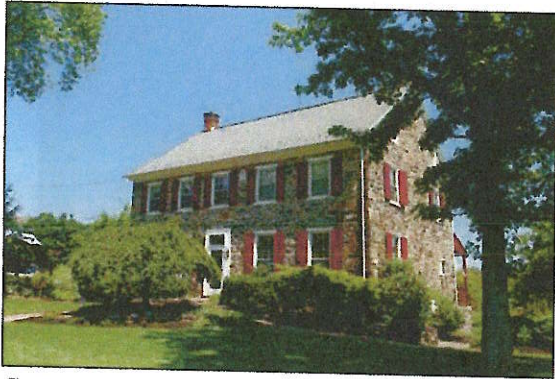
- Preserve the existing rhythm of entrances or porch projections to maintain a pedestrian scale.



Pedestrian friendly elements include porticoes, pent roof, porch, or awning.

Relationship of Materials and Textures

- Preserve the predominant materials of the District such as brick, stone, stucco, wood siding or other material.
- Preserve the predominant textures of the District which may be smooth, such as stucco or rough, such as brick with tooled joints or horizontal wood siding or other textures.
- No vinyl or aluminum siding is permitted on the exterior of any masonry wall of a building or structure. No capping with aluminum or vinyl material is allowed on the exterior of character-defining feature of a building or structure.



Stone



Wooden siding



Mixed materials and details



Brick



Stucco

Links

[Historic Paint Colors](#)

Relationship of Architectural Details

- Preserve character-defining features of buildings, such as architectural details including, but not limited to, cornices, lintels, arches, quoins, balustrades and iron work, chimneys, etc.



Victorian structure exhibits character-defining architectural details such as cornices, lintels, balustrades and dual brick chimneys.



Architectural details include front porch and dual brick chimneys.

Relationship of Roof Shapes

- Preserve compatible roof shapes such as gable, mansard, hip, flat, gambrel and/or other kinds of roof shapes.



Gable



Hip with dormers



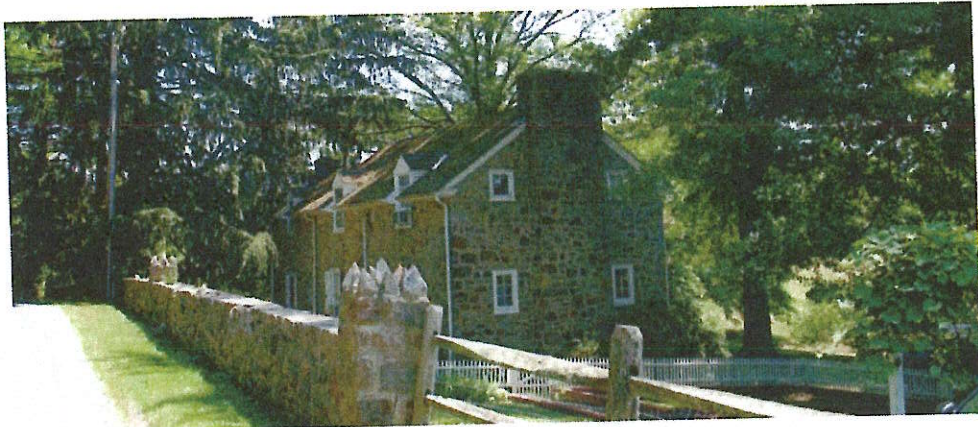
Flat



Mansard

Walls of Continuity

- Preserve physical elements which comprise streetscapes such as brick walls, wrought iron fences, building facades or combinations of these which form visual continuity and cohesiveness along the street.



Stone wall and split rail fence define the street



Iron fence defines streetscape



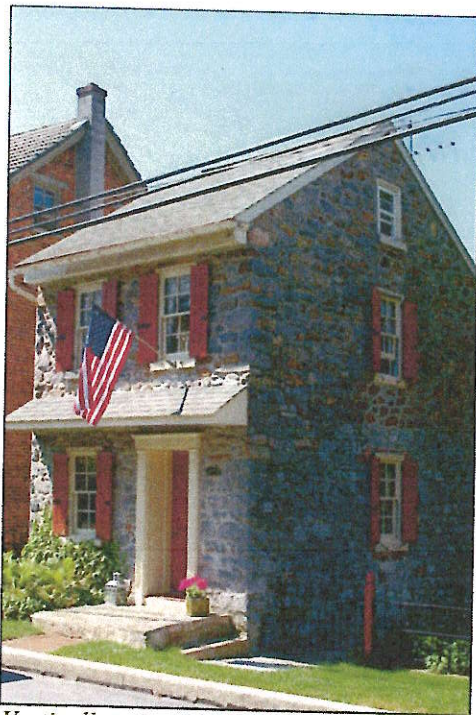
Retaining wall and fence define a wall of continuity

Directional Expression of Front Elevation

- Preserve the orientation of structural shapes, plan of openings and architectural detail that reflect a predominantly vertical or horizontal character to the building's façade.



Horizontally oriented facade



Vertically oriented facade

Scale

- Preserve the scale of the built environment created by the size of units of construction and architectural detail that relate to the size of persons. In addition, preserving building mass in relation to open space.
- The height of any new building is not to exceed ten percent (10%) of the height of the tallest building or structure within two hundred (200) feet, to be measured from the building. This requirement also applies to any proposed modifications to existing buildings or structures.



Large rural residence located within significant areas of open space



Modestly sized residence on a smaller suburban lot

COA Application Checklist for Renovations, Alterations, Additions, New Construction & Demolition

The following are required submissions to be included with a COA Application:

- Certificate of Appropriateness Application
- 4"x6" (or larger) labeled photographs showing:
 - All sides of the existing buildings and structures
 - The surrounding site of the existing buildings and structures
 - The adjacent sites, buildings and structures including adjacent properties and those across streets or ways
- Scaled drawings indicating all proposed changes and notations for new materials:
 - Site plan including adjacent sites and buildings
 - Floor plans illustrating changes
 - All elevations illustrating changes
 - Details of new exterior elements
- Samples or catalogue clippings of materials to be used
- Any additional information required by the HARB after an initial consultation or review.

Notes

CHAPTER FIVE COMMON RENOVATION PROJECTS

Signage

No sign or permanent external advertising display of any kind is permitted except for advertising informing the public of a service, business, occupation or profession that exists on the property on which the sign is located. New signs require review by the HARB for conformity in exterior material composition, exterior structural design, external appearance and size with similar signage used in the Historic District.



Business and signage in Oley

COA Application Checklist for Signs

The following are required submissions to be included with a COA Application:

- Certificate of Appropriateness Application
- 4"x6" (or larger) labeled photographs showing:
 - All public views of the existing building
 - The existing building and adjacent buildings
- Copies of scaled drawings indicating:
 - Façade elevation with proposed sign or awning
 - Elevation and detailed dimensions of sign or awning with letter style, logo and layout
 - Detail of attachment or building
 - Detail of illumination (if applicable)
 - Detail of edge treatment (if exposed)
- Samples of materials and colors to be used
- Any additional information required by the HARB after an initial consultation or review.

Links

[Oley Township Historic District Ordinance](#)

Fences

Privacy fences and vinyl fences are discouraged within view of public streets and within the villages. Strongly encouraged are:

- wooden fences or fences constructed of other paintable materials
- garden fences used to delineate a front yard against a public street and in villages
- replacing metal or wire fences with like and kind new metal or wire fencing



Wooden picket fence with gate used to delineate a front yard, painted to match trim on building

COA Application Checklist for Fences

The following are required submissions to be included with a COA Application:

- Certificate of Appropriateness Application
- 4"x6" (or larger) labeled photographs showing:
 - All public views of the fence location
 - The existing building and adjacent buildings
- Copies of scaled drawings indicating:
 - Site plan including adjacent sites and buildings
 - Elevation and detail of fence style
- Samples of materials to be used
- Any additional information required by the HARB after an initial consultation or review.

Porches and Decks

The following is summarized from the National Park Service's Technical Preservation Services: Preserving Historic Wooden Porches

Porches are significant because of the special character they impart to a historic building and their role in our social and cultural history. A porch is an open sheltered part of a building, providing a covered entrance and, where larger, serving as an outdoor activity room. It represents an outward extension of a building, a place guests can initially be sheltered from the weather, even welcomed and entertained. Like all historic building features, wood porches require routine maintenance to prevent decay. Understanding how a porch is put together and the factors that cause deterioration will help considerably in carrying out both maintenance and needed repairs. Regular maintenance pays off not only with a good appearance but also by reducing the need for future repairs. With both maintenance and repairs, emphasis should be placed on preserving the historic fabric and significant features of a porch. Where components are deteriorated beyond repair or missing altogether, new pieces should be installed that match the historic ones. Fortunately, good craftsmanship and the use of quality replacement materials as needed will be rewarded with repairs that last. Attentive care will result in the historic porch retaining its charm both in appearance and in function.

It is strongly encouraged to construct new porches and decks with paintable surfaces, and to avoid contemporary-design decks in historic settings.



A porch is an open sheltered part of a building, providing a covered entrance and serving as an outdoor activity room.

Links

[45 Preserving Historic Wooden Porches](#)

Utilities

Modern conveniences in telecommunications, electric, gas, water service, heating, and air conditioning are understandably an integral part of modern development. However, these amenities can visually and physically alter structures and streetscapes with above-ground wiring and equipment. When designing a new building, consider the following treatment of modern utilities.

In village, commercial, and industrial districts, place dumpsters at the rear of the building or behind enclosures such as walls or fencing. Service equipment, such as heat pumps, air conditioning units, and utility meters should be placed at the rear or side of the building out of public view. In some cases, it will be necessary to screen service equipment using landscaping, fencing, or walls. Mechanical equipment such as satellite dishes and solar panels to be installed out of public view, such as on a rear shed or garage.



Various utilities are in public view that could be relocated to be less visible.



Satellite dish on rear garage out of public view.

Links

[National Alliance of Preservation Commissions Sample Guidelines for Solar Panels in Historic Districts](#)
[Secretary of the Interior's Illustrated Guide on Sustainability for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings](#)

Accessibility

The passage of the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)* on July 26, 1990, guarantees accessibility to properties open to the public. The goal of the ADA is to encourage barrier free access that promotes independence for people with disabilities to the highest degree practicable. The challenge for architects is to provide accessibility for individuals with disabilities to shops and businesses without compromising the character-defining elements of the Historic District.

- Plan to provide barrier free access that promotes independence for disabled persons to the highest degree practicable while preserving architectural features.
- Seek the most appropriate location for new elevators and ramps, or disguise them with compatible design features.
- Design ramps to be compatible with the structure and site.
- Construct ramps of materials equal to or similar to the materials of adjacent stairs and walks.
- Use landscaping to minimize the visual impact of ramps and elevators.



Barrier-free access can be introduced at the side or rear of a historic building to minimize visual impact to the Historic District.

Links

Americans with Disabilities Act website: www.ada.gov

[32 Making Historic Properties Accessible](#)

Notes

Multiple horizontal blue lines for writing notes.

CHAPTER SIX LINKS AND REFERENCES

Important Links

The following is a list of The National Trust for Historic Preservation's Tip Sheets and a sample of informational literature from the National Park Service and the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

- 1 Cleaning and Water-Repellent Treatments for Historic Masonry Buildings
- 2 Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings
- 3 Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings
- 4 Roofing for Historic Buildings
- 5 The Preservation of Historic Adobe Buildings
- 6 Dangers of Abrasive Cleaning to Historic Buildings
- 7 The Preservation of Historic Glazed Architectural Terra-Cotta
- 8 Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings: The Appropriateness of Substitute Materials for Resurfacing Historic Wood Frame Buildings
- 9 The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows
- 10 Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork
- 11 Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts
- 12 The Preservation of Historic Pigmented Structural Glass (Vitrolite and Carrara Glass)
- 13 The Repair and Thermal Upgrading of Historic Steel Windows
- 14 New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concerns
- 15 Preservation of Historic Concrete
- 16 The Use of Substitute Materials on Historic Building Exteriors
- 17 Architectural Character—Identifying the Visual Aspects of Historic Buildings as an Aid to Preserving their Character
- 18 Rehabilitating Interiors in Historic Buildings — Identifying Character-Defining Elements
- 19 The Repair and Replacement of Historic Wooden Shingle Roofs
- 20 The Preservation of Historic Barns
- 21 Repairing Historic Flat Plaster—Walls and Ceilings
- 22 The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stucco
- 23 Preserving Historic Ornamental Plaster

24 Heating, Ventilating, and Cooling Historic Buildings: Problems and Recommended Approaches

25 The Preservation of Historic Signs

26 The Preservation and Repair of Historic Log Buildings

27 The Maintenance and Repair of Architectural Cast Iron

28 Painting Historic Interiors

29 The Repair, Replacement, and Maintenance of Historic Slate Roofs

30 The Preservation and Repair of Historic Clay Tile Roofs

31 Mothballing Historic Buildings

32 Making Historic Properties Accessible

33 The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stained and Leaded Glass

34 Applied Decoration for Historic Interiors: Preserving Historic Composition Ornament

35 Understanding Old Buildings: The Process of Architectural Investigation

36 Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes

37 Appropriate Methods of Reducing Lead-Paint Hazards in Historic Housing

38 Removing Graffiti from Historic Masonry

39 Holding the Line: Controlling Unwanted Moisture in Historic Buildings

40 Preserving Historic Ceramic Tile Floors

41 The Seismic Retrofit of Historic Buildings: Keeping Preservation in the Forefront

42 The Maintenance, Repair and Replacement of Historic Cast Stone

43 The Preparation and Use of Historic Structure Reports

44 The Use of Awnings on Historic Buildings: Repair, Replacement and New Design

45 Preserving Historic Wooden Porches

46 The Preservation and Reuse of Historic Gas Stations

47 Maintaining the Exterior of Small and Medium Size Historic Buildings

How do I paint a historic Building? (National Park Service)

Residential Window Field Guide (National Trust for Historic Preservation)

Roofing Tips and Strategies (National Trust for Historic Preservation)

Repair or Replace Old Windows – A Visual Look at the Impacts