

## Centre County Planning Opportunities

# Historic Resources

### Centre County Comprehensive Plan — Phase II Implementation Strategies

## Introduction

In 2003, the Centre County Board of Commissioners adopted a County-wide Comprehensive Plan which included background studies, inventories of existing conditions, goals and recommendations. These recommendations, revised and updated, continue to serve as a vision and a general direction for policy and community improvement. Those specific to historic preservation will be discussed here along with implementation strategies to achieve the recommendations. For more detailed background information please refer to the 2003 Comprehensive Plan available on the Centre County Planning and Community Development web-page:

<http://www.co.centre.pa.us/planning/compplan/default.asp#county>

Centre County seeks to balance growth, protection of resources, investment in compatible new building development, and incentives for the rehabilitation of historic properties. Much of this effort includes stewardship, community outreach and expert professional service.



No longer are municipalities given the option to include historic preservation in their zoning ordinances and comprehensive plans, they are required to do so by the provisions of the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC), Act 247 of 1968, as reenacted and as amended.

## The Keystone Principles

In 2005, Pennsylvania adopted the "Keystone Principles for Growth, Investment and Resource Conservation", a set of principles that have focused Pennsylvania on reinvestment and reuse of its assets.

Initially intended for state agencies, these principles are becoming embraced by local governments as a tool to guide local decisions and have become adopted into county comprehensive plans.

- Redevelop first
- Provide efficient infrastructure
- Concentrate development
- Increase job opportunities
- Foster sustainable businesses
- Restore and enhance the environment
- Enhance recreational and heritage resources
- Expand housing opportunities
- Plan regionally and implement locally
- Be fair

**This plan update recommends county-wide adoption of these principles.**

## County-wide Planning Goals Adopted 2003

**#1 — Identify, preserve, enhance and monitor agricultural resources.**

**#2 — Identify, preserve, and monitor environmental and natural resources.**

**#3 — Preserve historic and cultural resources.**

**#4 — Ensure decent, safe, sanitary and affordable housing in suitable living surroundings, compatible with the environment for all individuals.**

**#5 — Appropriately locate and maintain existing and proposed community facilities, utilities, and services for all residents.**

**#6 — Identify and promote economic development initiatives to maintain and grow a diverse economic base in each of the County's planning regions.**

# Current Trends and Considerations

Preservation planning is a process that organizes preservation activities (resource identification, evaluation, registration and treatment of historic resources) in a logical sequence.

It is based on the following principles:

- Important historic resources cannot be replaced if they are destroyed. Conserve properties by adaptively using them in place, avoid harm, destroy only when necessary.
- Preservation planning must begin before the identification of all significant properties has been completed. Use existing information and acquire new information as needed.
- Include public participation in the planning process.

Essentially, *historic preservation planning* inventories existing conditions and develops an implementation program to protect significant historic and cultural resources. It is an important tool in effectively balancing growth while safeguarding the built and natural environment. It keeps community character intact and enhances quality of life for local residents and families.

The first attempt to catalog historic resources in Centre County came in 1971 when Curtin Village and the Eagle Ironworks were listed as a district in the National Register of Historic Places. By the end of the 1970s the Centre County Historic Registration Project and Historic Sites Survey had documented over 500 prehistoric and historic sites and successfully completed 29 nominations for National Register Listing. Currently, 42 individual properties, 17 districts, and 3 archaeological sites have achieved listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation.

Centre County's National Register listed properties compiled by planning region are found at the conclusion of this chapter. In addition, visit:

<http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/pa/Centre/state.html> or [www.arch.state.pa.us](http://www.arch.state.pa.us)

Due to the impacts of economic development and/or economic decline, and the ever present possibility that historic resources may be affected by encroachment of

human activities, unintended land use conflicts, or rapid physical deterioration due to neglect, the County's planning regions have been ranked in descending order based upon adverse impact potential.

- \* Penns Valley
- \* Nittany Valley
- \* Mountaintop
- \* Centre Region
- \* Upper Bald Eagle
- \* Moshannon Valley
- \* Lower Bald Eagle

Preserving Centre County's past requires a community based effort for success and highlights the importance of education in the preservation process. There are three major opportunities for educational programs: school programs, adult programs, and community events. Partnerships between individuals, preservation organizations, interest groups and government officials are often formed. The role of County government in this partnership is to fully integrate historic preservation planning into the local public policy decision-making process.



*Round Barn  
Potter Township  
Centre County*

**Local Programs that impact historic preservation:**

**Heritage Tourism, Main Street and Elm Street programs, and local historic district ordinances**

**"Preservation brings new jobs, new businesses, good wages, significant tourist traffic, and economic benefits."**



*Philipsburg Borough, Centre County*

"The focus in the historic preservation movement has gradually shifted from the preservation of individual historic sites to the preservation of those features that provide each municipality with its unique character and identity, or "sense of place." Consequently, historic preservation consideration should play a central role in any comprehensive plan that seeks to maintain the unique character of a community while accommodating growth and change."

Samuel C. Slaymaker III, Slaymaker Heritage Law, Lancaster, PA

## Buildings and Places at Risk

The historic preservation of large building forms and unique community landmarks can require special considerations. Furthermore, once vacant these places, due to their size, unique character and unfortunate circumstances, are threatened by neglect, making demolition often times the first option considered by a land owner seeking an economically viable solution.



There are over 150 cemeteries in Centre County, ranging in size from small family plots to large, multi-acre parcels, with thousands of burial sites.

The steps to preserving these sacred places begins with location and documentation — a task that has been an ongoing project of the Centre County Genealogical Society. Ceme-

### Cemeteries

tery lawn maintenance and care, and cleaning and repair of gravestones and ironwork are very time consuming, require special skills, and can pose a major deterrent to long-term preservation. Escalating maintenance costs often exceed perpetual care accounts established years ago.

[www.savinggraves.org](http://www.savinggraves.org)

The **2007 Census of Agriculture**, which has been taken every five years since 1790, will count historic barns for the first time. The information should be available by early 2009. A historic barn is a barn older than 50 years of age.

### Barns, Sheds, and Outbuildings

This category includes accessory buildings associated by use to historic properties. They exist not only in the rural landscapes but also in the alley-ways of core communities as carriage houses and garages. A myriad of uses can be associated with these buildings from the traditional shelters for farm animals and crops, to laundry buildings, summer kitchens, smokehouses, spring houses, and granaries.

Age, obsolescence and sprawl take their toll on these properties. . . .”Barns are disappearing from the American landscape at a tremendous rate. Even rural counties often have only one quarter of the barns they had just 50 years ago. Rural historic resources throughout the country are in a fight for survival. “ Source: “The Barn Door: Newsletter of the National Barn Alliance, Fall 2007 Volume 1, Issue 1. page 7.

[www.barnalliance.org](http://www.barnalliance.org)



“Older sacred places are vibrant and productive centers of community service that benefit the public at large, and are at risk because of their age and often fragile physical condition”.

Source: Cohen, Diane and A. Robert Jaeger. “Sacred Places At Risk”. Partners for Sacred Places. 1998, page 4

Deferred maintenance, unavailable and/or minimal funds for capital improvements, and a decline in congregational giving place our

### Religious Buildings

churches and their human service programs at risk. Major challenges range from roof replacement, tower stabilization, masonry repointing and stained glass window repair.

This issue “embodies an ironic disparity — between how much communities depend on their sacred places and how little community leaders contribute to keeping these invaluable places in good repair.” (“Sacred Places at Risk”: page 32)

A **white elephant** is a valuable possession which its owner cannot dispose of and whose cost (particularly cost of upkeep) exceeds its usefulness.

Source Wikipedia

This term is often used for large buildings whose original use no longer exists, the utilities no longer meet current standards, and / or the building has an inefficient building configuration for modern uses. The options are usually limited to: do nothing, tear it down, use it for mu-

### “White Elephants”

seum space (a potential financial pitfall), or adaptively reuse it for a new purpose.

Central Pennsylvania examples of adaptive reuse include hotels, train stations, theatres, granaries, grist mills, and factory buildings.

# Historic Preservation Tools and Techniques a

**“The overwhelming majority of what we call “historic properties” have no international, in most cases not even national importance. But they have local importance to the people who live there.”**

**Donovan D. Rypkema**

A wide variety of methods and resources are available to both the public and private sector to protect historic properties. Knowing these resources is key to developing successful preservation strategies, and achieving a strategy is dependent on a strong citizen participation process. The following tools provide a broad range of opportunities and levels of regu-

lation. All historic preservation efforts should include a public education component. It is vitally important that residents and local officials gain an understanding of the resources and their historic value.

The character and type of historic resources in Centre County vary by geographic region; however, there are

common steps in the preservation planning process.

The two forms of state enabling legislation that empower Pennsylvania’s and Centre County’s local governments to protect historic resources within their municipal boundaries are the Historic District Act of 1961, as amended; and the PA Municipalities Planning Code, Articles III and VI.

**Source Material:** Information for this chapter has been collected from a variety of sources which are referenced accordingly. However, much credit must be given to the PA Historical and Museum Commission’s 2007 document by Michel R. Lefevre titled, ‘Historic District Designation in Pennsylvania’. This document is available by linking to the community preservation page at: [www.phmc.state.pa.us/bhp](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/bhp)

## a Historic Preservation Planning

Historic preservation planning provides local governments with a process to identify historic and cultural resources; to consider the issues, problems, and opportunities associated with the identified resources; to explore the possibility of county-wide and regional approaches to management of important resources; and to develop goals, policies, and strategies for the appropriate use, conservation, preservation, and protection of the resources.

In Centre County, historic preservation planning has traditionally been done as a component of a municipal or regional

comprehensive plan. In conformity with plan goals, there are a combination of approaches that municipalities can take to protect and promote their historic built environment, as well as plan for residential and commercial revitalization. These include listing an area or neighborhood as a historic district in the National Register of Historic Places and protecting the historic district by means of a stand-alone local historic district ordinance or by including a historic preservation section in a zoning ordinance. The choice depends on the municipalities objectives, the status of the historic resource or resources, and the public’s receptivity to local government regulations.

## a Historic Resources Inventory

In keeping with the definition established by the National Register of Historic Places, a “historic resource” is one with architectural, engineering, archaeological, or cultural remains present in districts, sites, buildings, or structures that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association. Each site should be associated with one or more of the following historical or cultural themes:

Those that are associated with the events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of history.

Those that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

Those that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values; or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.

Those that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important to prehistory or history.

The first step in any preservation program is a survey of existing historic resources. Surveys, either previously conducted as in the 1970-era Centre County Historic Site / Registration Project, new, or updated, are the standard tool for demonstrating that buildings and structures to be protected have “important historical, architectural, archaeological or cultural interest”.

The Centre County Historical Society is in the process of updating the Centre County Historic Sites Survey, and serves as an invaluable local resource for research. The Society’s contact information is as follows:

Centre County Historical Society, Centre Furnace Mansion  
1001 East College Avenue, State College, PA 16801  
814-234-4779 info@centrecountyhistory.org  
<http://www.centrecountyhistory.org>

## a National Register Listing

This program was established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, and is managed by the PA Bureau for Historic Preservation. Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture.

Listing in the National Register does not interfere with a private property owner's right to alter, manage, or dispose of property. It does, however,

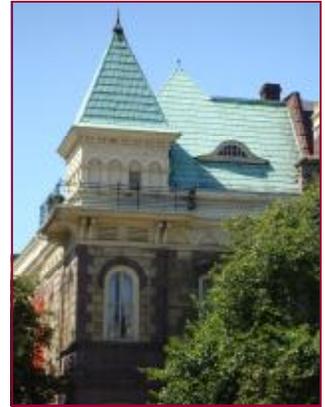
give credibility to efforts to preserve these resources as irreplaceable parts of our communities.

Listing in the National Register contributes to preserving historic properties in a number of ways:

- Recognition that a property is of significance to the nation, the state, or the community.
- Consideration in the planning for federal or federally assisted projects.

- Eligibility for financial incentives such as federal tax benefits.
- Qualification for federal assistance for historic preservation, when funds are available.

National Register listing is an honorary designation that does not require public access to a property, nor an obligation to restore property according to any restrictive guidelines.



*Bellefonte National Register Historic District*

## a Historic Marker Program

Every January, the PA Historical and Museum Commission accepts nominations for state historical markers from individuals, historical societies, schools, organizations, and others interested in preserving local history. The major factor in determining qualification for a marker is that the person, place, or event be of state-wide or national historical significance. Approximately 20 -

30 marker nominations are approved each year. PHMC provides one-half of the cost of the manufacture of the marker and works with the nominator on a dedication program or ceremony during which the marker is unveiled.

Centre County has 29 markers installed under this program. The majority of markers are in the Bellefonte and

State College area. Opportunities exist throughout the county for future markers. The public's awareness of historic sites builds appreciation for local heritage sites and furthers their preservation, reuse, and rehabilitation.

Local communities may establish their own designation programs.



*Rush Township Centre County*

## a Historic Preservation Easements

An easement is a legal method used to protect a property in perpetuity. A historic easement may protect the property, the structure, or just the façade or interior and may be purchased by or donated to a historical society, government entity, non-profit or any other vehicle which has the capability to receive and to manage the easement.

Financial benefits in the form of reduced federal income and estate taxes are incentives for entering into a voluntary easement agreement. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requires that the easement preserve either a certified historic structure or a historically important land area to qualify for federal tax deductions.

**“When we build let us think that we build forever. Let it not be for present delight, nor for present use alone; let it be such work as our descendants will thank us for, and let us think, as we lay stone on stone, that a time is to come when those stones will be held sacred because our hands have touched them, and that men will say as they look upon the labor and wrought substance of them,**

**“See! This our fathers did for us.”**

**John Ruskin**

In Centre County, 27 projects have participated in the RITC program generating approximately \$102,000 of private investment per project. The majority of projects have been located in Bellefonte Borough; however, in recent years the Holmes-Foster-Highlands Historic District in State College Borough has benefited from three projects. Located in the 27 RITC projects were 28 rehabilitated low-moderate income housing units.

Statewide, the projects tend to be much larger generating approximately \$1.8 million of private investment per project.



Maintaining lot and height requirements consistent with the streetscape character is an important aspect to consider with the adoption or amendment of local zoning ordinances.

## a Historic Preservation Tax Incentives

The Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit (RITC) Program, for historic preservation, as established under the Internal Revenue Codes, is one of the most widely used incentive programs in Pennsylvania to promote the preservation of historic resources. There are two credits, a 20 percent credit for buildings listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, and a 10 percent

credit for unlisted buildings or non-contributing buildings in a National Register District built before 1938. Each credit is based on the total amount of rehabilitation expenses and must exceed the value of the building to qualify.

Rehabilitation expenditures must be capital in nature and depreciable as real property to qualify for a credit. This includes new plumbing, me-

chanical, and electrical systems, sprinklers, life safety systems, elevators, stair towers, brick and façade cleaning, and any other work including cosmetic changes to the structural components of the buildings. Architect's fees qualify; however, acquisition, landscaping, and building enlargement costs do not.

For more information, visit: <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/index.htm>

## a Historic Preservation through Zoning

Zoning ordinances emphasize the use of property, while historic district ordinances, authorized by the Historic District Act, regulate changes to the exterior of buildings. If a municipality has a zoning ordinance and a separate historic district ordinance, the zoning regulations remain unaffected. In a sense, one could consider the historic district ordinance as an "overlay" on the zoning map.

It is unwise to combine zoning and historic district regulations within a municipal zoning ordi-

nance because the historic district regulations specify the formation of a HARB or commission, and the legality of their advisory role in the issuance of zoning permits may be indefensible.

Presently, zoning regulations and/or subdivision ordinances appear to be the best legal tool available to municipalities to regulate *dispersed* historic resources that cannot be included within a historic district.

To avoid accusations of arbitrary and capricious rulemak-

ing in the historic resource designation, municipalities should develop criteria for inclusion based on sound research and planning. The resource list could include National Register listed and eligible resources as well as other resources based on historic significance criteria.

Another aspect of zoning consistent with historic preservation planning will be discussed under Form-Based Codes and Traditional Neighborhood Development.

## a Form-Based Codes

Form-based codes are most commonly used to guide the building form and design of new development. Their primary emphasis is on visual aspects, such as: building height and bulk, parking locations, open space, and the relationship of buildings to the street and to one another.

These codes work well for mixed use districts, especially in neighborhood and town

centers. They recognize that uses may change over time, but the buildings will endure.

The existing patterns of development in a municipality form the basis for preparation of a form-based code; and it is important to seek public input in this process. A typical community analysis includes a roadway analysis (walkways, setbacks, landscape features); street-defined blocks

(shape, size, alley locations, parcel dimensions); building types (height, accessibility, service areas); open space (front and side yard setbacks, parks, ridge tops); parking; and natural features (views, creeks, significant landscape elements).

Form-based zoning is graphics-based and text is supported with photos and sketches.

## a Traditional Neighborhood Development

Another option for consideration by local governments that wish to maintain a community's residential character is the incorporation of standards and conditions for Traditional Neighborhood Development. These provisions should be included within the municipality's zoning ordinance.

In the case of new development a traditional neighborhood development designation shall be in the form of an overlay zone. In the case of either an outgrowth or extension of existing development

or urban infill, a traditional neighborhood development designation may be either in the form of an overlay zone, or as an outright designation, whichever the municipality decides. By use of these standards, outgrowths or extensions of existing development may include development of a contiguous municipality.

Municipalities who enact traditional neighborhood development provisions may also incorporate provisions for transferable development

rights, on a voluntary basis.

Forms of traditional neighborhood development include any of the following or a combination thereof:

- New development
- An outgrowth or extension of existing development
- Urban infill where existing uses and structures may be incorporated into the development

## a Local Historic Districts

Where a concentration of historic properties exist it is possible to protect them by means of a stand-alone local historic district ordinance.

This process includes:

- Documentation of the existing historical and architectural resources using a consistent survey process.

- Public education of the survey findings and the cultural and economic value of the community's built environment.
- Consensus building to determine how best to preserve the community's assets.
- Certification of the district's historical signifi-

cance by the PA Historical and Museum Commission (PHMC), as required by the PA Historic District Act.

- Technical assistance is available from the PHMC's Bureau for Historic Preservation and at [www.phmc.state.pa.us](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us)

## a Historic District Ordinance Adoption

Pennsylvania's state enabling legislation specifies that all counties, boroughs, and townships may create and define, by ordinance, a historic district within its geographic limits, upon public comment and certification by the PHMC to the historical significance of the district within the limits defined in the ordinance.

The most important element of this ordinance is the creation of a Board of Historical

Architectural Review (HARB) or Historic District Commission, whose responsibility is to review all proposed exterior building changes visible from public rights-of-way within the municipality. The Board and Commission both serve in an advisory capacity to the elected officials of the municipality who approve or deny Certificates of Appropriateness for the proposed work.

It is important to note that listing in the National Register of Historic Places is not a requirement for designation of a local historic district.

Two historic district ordinances exist in the county:

- Bellefonte Borough
- Millheim Borough



Millheim Borough



## a Conservation District Alternative

Conservation districts do not emphasize the preservation of historical architectural detailing of buildings but instead focus on the protection and management of environmental and natural resources, such as rural agrarian landscapes. Typically these ordinances regulate demolition, major alterations, and new construc-

tion, and emphasize compatible design.

Traditionally, conservation districts have been used in older areas of urban environments where the housing stock may be modest both in size and in architectural detail. It is not a requirement that the area be listed or eligible for listing in the National Register

of Historic Places.

Formation of a review agency such as a historic commission is usually specified in the ordinance.

The City of Lancaster, Bethlehem and several other PA communities use a conservation district alternative.

## a Demolition Delay Ordinance

A demolition delay ordinance is used to protect significant historic resources from immediate demolition. The intent is to provide a waiting period for interested parties to explore

alternatives to demolition thereby providing an opportunity for preservation of the resource. The length of the waiting period imposed in Pennsylvania municipalities

varies; however, a reasonable consideration would establish a period of time not to exceed 90 days; after which a demolition permit would be granted.



Undisclosed location — outside of Centre County

## a Historical Commissions

An historical commission is an advisory board to the elected officials and is created by ordinance or resolution. In those municipalities that have established a stand-alone historic district or conservation district ordinance and have added a historic preservation article to their zoning ordinances, the historical commission's responsibilities (with approval from the governing body) can

encompass preservation and education planning activities, as well as helping to draft historic preservation design standards and guidelines.

Historical commissions can undertake projects, apply for grant funding, develop a preservation plan, conduct a comprehensive survey of historic resources, organize old house tours or fairs, participate in related activities and

events, and publish walking tours.

State College Borough's Historic Resources Commission functions in this role.

The historical commission should not be confused with an Historical and Architectural Review Board which is mandated by historic district ordinance adoption under the Historic District Act.



State College Borough Centre County

## a Certified Local Government

Federal certification of a local government's adherence to a historic preservation program comes in the form of Certified Local Government (CLG) status. The primary requirement in Pennsylvania is the enactment of a local historic district ordinance. The Na-

tional Park Service, through this designation, certifies that the local government has met all the requirements of the CLG program.

Municipalities who achieve CLG status have the added benefit of eligibility for grant

funds that provide 50 percent funding from the PHMC for consultant services and educational programs.

The only CLG community in Centre County is Bellefonte Borough.

## a Design Guidelines

Design guidelines when adopted as part of an ordinance serve as a regulatory tool, policy guide, and design resource. However, some communities in Pennsylvania have developed design guidelines as an educational and promotional tool.

Essentially, design guidelines serve as a conscious approach to balance “pure” preservation ideals with “budgetary realities”. They guide the preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of significant structures, and provide sensitive integration of

new additions and development in a historic district.

The purpose of design guidelines is to promote a municipality’s community development objectives to preserve and enhance local character and community heritage by



*Bellefonte Academy*



*Bush House  
Bellefonte*



*Philipsburg Fire*

## a Fire Safe Building Rehabilitation

“Modern methods of fire detection and fighting have reduced the number of people who die in fires each year, but the number of historic buildings and other cultural resources damaged by fire has remained steady for more than a decade, at about 2,000 annually nationwide.”

(Preservation Magazine: November/December 2002, page 31)

“... The devastating effects of fire are shared by all buildings; (however), they are greatest for the historic building that cannot be replaced. . . . A community’s loss of a single building affects the vi-

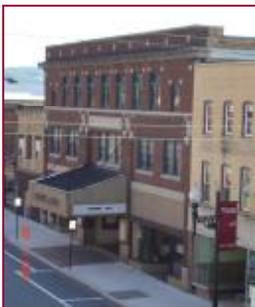
ality of an entire street or neighborhood.” The ensuing neighborhood deterioration encourages new construction and results in a loss of community identity. (Watts and Kaplan. Fire Safe Building Rehabilitation. NFPA, 2003)

Aside from earthquakes, lightning strikes, arson, and a myriad of possibilities classified as accidental, historic buildings are susceptible to improper construction activity, unsafe activities, and inadequate or antiquated electrical and mechanical systems.

It is essential that owners of historic buildings conduct a

fire assessment of their buildings to identify potential sources of fire such as paint stored near the furnace, the over use of extension cords, or the removal of paint using an open flame. The complete rehabilitation of a historic buildings should incorporate the sensitive installation of fire detection and fire suppression equipment.

In 2009, Bellefonte Borough will be publishing a document listing alternatives, equipment suppliers, and techniques for the prevention of fires in historic buildings.



*Rowland Theatre  
Philipsburg Borough  
Centre County*

## a Preserve America

Preserve America is a national initiative that encourages and supports community efforts to preserve and enjoy cultural and natural heritage. Major components of the program include awards, grants, recognition, and educational outreach.

Becoming designated as a “Preserve America” Community is a first step toward eligibility for a “Preserve America” grant.

Preserve America communities protect and celebrate their heritage, use their historic assets for

economic development and community revitalization, and encourage people to experience local history through education and heritage tourism. Philipsburg Borough in Centre County has attained this designation. It is one of 25 PA communities to achieve this recognition.

More information about this program can be found at:

<http://www.preserveamerica.gov>

# Implementation Strategies and Opportunities

## Inventory rural landscapes, villages and buildings of historic significance for possible historic district



*Unique Penns Valley Corn Crib*

In recent decades, farmland and entire ways of agricultural and rural life have become vulnerable to suburban and rural growth and development.

and College) was declared eligible for listing as a Rural Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places.

Step One: Complete field surveys and publish results of Penns Valley Inventory.

Step Two: Evaluate inventory process and update accordingly.

Step Three: Compile a priority listing of rural landscapes / geographic areas to survey.

Step Four: Research and gather public input for development of rural landscape district guidelines.

The inventory of all contributing and non-contributing buildings is now being completed and will become part of the final National Register nomination package.

Protecting irreplaceable rural landscapes should continue with the following steps:

In April 2002, the Penns / Brush Valley Region comprised of two Boroughs (Centre Hall and Millheim), five townships (Gregg, Haines, Miles, Penn and Potter), and small portions of two additional townships (Harris



*Penns Valley Farmstead*

## Continue to support the update of the Centre County Inventory of Historic Resources in partnership with the Centre County Historical Society.



*Viaduct Bridge: A historic engineering resource on the Beech Creek Railroad, Rush Township*

A survey or inventory of historic resources is the foundation upon which preservation planning is built. Centre County government should continue to support the Centre County Historical Society's efforts to update the 1970-era county-wide historic site survey. Achieving this recommendation includes the following steps:

Step One: Map all known cultural resources.

Step Two: Secure copies of all prior survey information for access in the Centre County Planning and Community Development Office.

Step Three: Devise a time-frame for conducting the updated survey with emphasis

given to growth and development pressure.

Step Four: Contribute matching funds or facilitate in-lieu fees toward a survey update.

Step Five: Create an architecture and history webpage under the Centre County Government website.

## Protect probable areas for archaeological resources throughout the County.



*Industrial Archaeology: Tipple located along railroad right-of-way in Rush Township*

Achieve this recommendation through a collaborative effort between the Centre County Planning and Community Development Office, Centre County Historical Society, PA Historical and Museum Commission, Bald Eagle Archaeological Society, and the Centre County Geographic Information Systems office.

The mapping of known and probable locations of archeological settings and sites was previously completed; however, historic and pre-historic sites appear to be intertwined.

Step One: Identify and map historic archeological sites and pre-historic sites as two distinct resource types.

Step Two: Update Centre County Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) to provide for an archeological site assessment when a known or probable site location is to be impacted by proposed development.

Step Three: Encourage local governments with SALDO control to do the same.

# Implementation Strategies and Opportunities

## Modify ordinances to promote preservation and conservation measures.

The Centre County Planning and Community Development Office should continue to facilitate actions that modify existing county and municipal ordinances to promote standards consistent with historic preservation techniques. Sections 603, 604 and 605 of the PA Municipalities Planning Code provide the legal basis for this process.

Step One: Identify obstacles that inhibit infill, rehabilitation and redevelopment (IRR) of existing properties. An IRR Self Audit is available from the PA Department of Community and Economic Development to aid in this project.

Step Two: Conduct field visits and discussions to evaluate existing conditions.

Step Three: Initiate changes to municipal ordinances that promote infill, rehabilitation and redevelopment. New development should be in character and in scale with existing neighborhoods, villages, downtowns and landscapes.

Step Four: Address these specific issues in the process:

- Design street layout in context with the landscape.
- Place emphasis on corner lots, permitting building orientation toward corner in higher density residential districts and downtowns.

- Maintain consistent rhythm between buildings.
- Maintain consistent or average front yard setbacks.
- Consider utilizing impervious surface rather than lot coverage standards to provide opportunity for creative improvements such as green roofs.
- Develop provisions to optimize relationship between lot size, building size and frontage.
- Hide the car: Establish maximum widths for street-facing garages.
- Establish height standards consistent with streetscape and address distinct architectural elements and exterior grade variations.
- Create incentives such as density bonuses in return for special architectural details and fenestration.
- Respect the street by orienting the main building entries toward the front lot line or primary street.
- Permit accessory buildings such as carriage houses and period garages to be used as studio apartments and

'granny flats' .

- Define minimum and maximum setbacks for new accessory buildings based upon desired neighborhood characteristics and compatibility.
- Define maximum building area requirements to control size and scale of accessory buildings.
- Treat outdoor cafes as an accessory use and define requirements for development such as clear sidewalk passage area, seasonal barriers, etc.
- Require service and loading areas to be located beyond required setback area and permit screening with architectural design treatments and/or landscaping.
- Reinforce the street edge of parking lots through the use of hedges, fencing or masonry walls.
- Require interior landscape medians for parking lots with a lot frontage greater than 130 feet.
- Draft off-street parking credits based on use and provide options for shared parking and use of public transportation.
- Allow generally compatible 'similar uses' within traditionally heterogeneous

districts.

- Treat drive-thru facilities as an accessory use and define specific standards based upon context.
- Require sidewalks along all streets.

**“Respect local community character in new construction.”**



*New home located in historic district.*

# Program Applicability in Centre County

## Neighborhoods, Villages and Downtowns

The probability that a property in an older neighborhood, village or downtown in Centre County will retain, or increase in value over time is strongly dependent on the reinvestment or disinvestment decisions of neighboring property owners. In an effort to reduce this uncertainty, local governments can engage in a variety of actions intended to build awareness for historic preservation with the long term goal

of achieving historically appropriate building decisions. Historic district designation may be a means to stimulate property rehabilitation and community reinvestment in infrastructure. However, as neighborhoods, villages and downtowns explore these options much consideration must be given to the timing of the efforts. Without proper education, historic preservation tools and techniques will not be

achievable at the local level.

There are many first steps that can be taken in the process to protect historic resources and the options will vary by location and the architectural significance and historical importance of the resources.

Encourage Centre County municipalities to establish objectives for the protection of their historic properties.

**Character-Defining Features: Elements of a building or landscape that collectively contribute to its significance**

**Landscape Features:**

- Topography
- Vegetation
- Circulation

- Water Features
- Structures and Objects

**Building Features:**

- Distinguishing Physical Aspects
- Building Materials
- Craftsmanship
- Decorative Materials

## Rural Landscapes

Penns and Brush Valleys comprise a 'historic vernacular landscape', which is defined as a landscape that evolved through use by the people whose activities or occupancy shaped it. These landscapes reflect the physical, biological, and cultural character of everyday lives.

This county comprehensive plan update recommends identifying other rural landscapes worthy of documentation and preservation. Priority should be given to the consideration of how a community's

cohesiveness will be affected by the loss of landscape character as well as the overriding consideration brought on by development pressures.

Rural preservation strategies, like the application of the US Department of Interior's *Standards for Rehabilitation* for building and construction projects, should secure and emphasize continuity of form, order, use, features, or materials while acknowledging that change is inevitable. Sometimes change is subtle and barely perceptible and at other

times it is strikingly obvious. It is this strikingly obvious intrusion in the historic landscape that historic preservation planning strives to prevent.

Centre County in keeping with its strong emphasis on farmland preservation must recognize that continuation of the historic farm use can lead to changes in the physical form of the farm to accommodate new crops and equipment. Use, significance, integrity, and geographical context must all be taken into consideration.

## Archaeological Sites

Archaeological sites include both pre-historic and historic resources. Pre-historic includes Native American resources from 16,000 years ago to the early 18th century. Historic resources include remnants of man-made build-

ings and structures such as industrial sites and villages.

Centre County has archaeological site files recorded with the PHMC. Analyzing these locations by type for patterns of development, and consider-

ing important variables such as soil type, slope, distance to water and settlement patterns would prove useful in the long range transportation planning process for highway development in new, undisturbed locations.



*Limestone Industrial Remains Centre County*

# The Economic Value of Preserving Historical and Cultural Resources

The preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration of historic sites can be a powerful community and economic development strategy. Supporting statistics have been compiled from many sources throughout the United States by the National Trust for Historic Preservation, 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.

Of importance to Centre County's economy are the following:

◆ Heritage Tourism

In a 2005 study conducted by the Central Pennsylvania Convention and Visitors Bureau, historic attractions were listed by 55.6% of the respondents as an important factor in their decision to visit Centre County.

Tourism research has documented that heritage visitors

in Pennsylvania stay a full day longer than other visitors and their average daily expenditure was greater. Heritage tourism, when done right, preserves local culture and enhances the quality of life for local residents even in the down cycles of visitation.

◆ Community Revitalization

"Main Street" and "Elm Street" programs join historic preservation goals with local economic development goals. At the present time, Philipsburg Borough is the only Centre County community participating in the PA "Main Street" program.

These programs build on the rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of existing vacant and underutilized historic buildings to enhance local economic development opportunities.

◆ Small Business Development

Historic building rehabilitation, which is very labor intensive adds greater local economic

impact than new construction. For example, new construction is generally half labor and half materials. Conversely, rehabilitation is 60-70% labor. A community that rehabilitates 2-3% of its building stock each year has perpetual employment for construction trades people.

Small business has generated 60 to 80% of all net new jobs annually over the last decade, according to the Small Business Administration. In 2006, in Centre County, the number of business establishments employing less than 20 people equaled 2,796 or 84% of all businesses. For many independently owned and operated businesses, an historic building offers an attractive alternative for location and affordable rent. The PA "Main Street" program strongly promotes the adaptive reuse of existing downtown buildings for incubator space for new businesses.

◆ Property Values

Historic preservation makes sound economic sense as documented by many studies nationwide. In Hollidaysburg, Blair County, research conducted in 1997 documented that not only historic district properties sold for greater value but also those properties located in close proximity to the historic district boundary. In this case the historic district "spilled" over to the adjacent properties. The full report is accessible at the Hollidaysburg, PA historic district webpage located in the subheading "About Hollidaysburg":

[www.hollidaysburgpa.org](http://www.hollidaysburgpa.org)



Central PA Festival of the Arts, State College

## The Role of Historic Preservation in the Future of Centre County is Conservation — the conservation of taxpayers' dollars, local heritage, and the natural environment.

The relationship between sprawl and the abandonment of buildings was missed by many for years. Basic to this issue is the cost of providing roads, fire protection, water and sewer service, schools, public transportation, and police protection further and further into the rural area of the County while at the same time abandoning existing buildings in areas where the infrastructure already exists. The conversion of historic buildings for new uses, as has been done with the Brockenhoff House Hotel, the Garman Opera House, and the PA Match Company Factory in Bellefonte, retains important community assets, adds to the local tax base, generates local jobs, contributes to heritage-based tourism efforts, and uses existing infrastructure.



PA Match Factory Buildings, Bellefonte

## Interrelationships

Recent revisions to the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code specify that a comprehensive plan include a statement of interrelationships among various plan components with emphasis given to environmental, energy conservation, fiscal, economic development and social impacts. Additional information of relevance to this discussion as it relates to historic resources can also be found in other 2003 Comprehensive Plan Chapter Updates titled: Agriculture, Economic Development, Housing, and Land Use; and in the newly completed Centre County Greenways Plan.

### Introduction:

Development is both necessary and desirable to maintain and improve the quality of life for people who live in Centre County but unplanned or poorly planned development can have significant impacts on cultural resources. Communities want their local economies to grow and yet it is important to do so without losing what makes them special: scenic landscapes, historic downtowns, and places of unique cultural character. This is important for Centre County's rural landscapes as well as for its neighborhoods, villages and downtowns.

### Environmental Impacts:

- Historic preservation supports the reuse of older and historic buildings thereby reducing local demand for disposal services. In 2008, approximately 18 – 25% of Centre County's solid waste was generated from construction and demolition waste – a number slightly lower than in prior years due to the downturn in the construction industry.

- Conserving the rural landscape as has been underway in Penns and Brush Valleys can protect historic resources as well as agricultural lands and open space. In the 2005 Conversion Study conducted by the Central PA Convention and Visitors Bureau, nearly 92% of the respondents stated that the most important factor in their decision to visit Central PA was the scenery. Thus conservation of rural districts would be an important factor in the County's tourism industry.

### Energy Conservation:

- Embodied energy: Construction and building materials require energy to produce. The conservation and preservation of the existing built environment saves energy and costs versus the expenditure required for new construction.
- Historic neighborhoods, due to their location in close proximity to centers of population, are typically "walkable" and accessible by public transportation, thereby decreasing dependence on automobiles, reducing pollution and dependence on fossil fuels.

### Fiscal:

- Downtown revitalization promotes efficient land use and takes advantage of existing public infrastructure. Existing streets, sewer and water service, public transportation, and community services such as libraries and recreation facilities benefit adaptive reuse and revitalization efforts.

- As sprawl has intensified, astute taxpayers and local officials have become aware of how land use affects a municipality's "bottom line". Research currently underway by the Penn State Department of Agriculture documented the Cost of Community Services (COCS) for a broad range of land use categories. Walker Township, Centre County, was one of several PA municipalities to participate in this project. For every dollar of revenue residential land development contributed to Walker Township and the Bellefonte Area School District, it cost \$1.08 to provide municipal services to that land.

- Development that increases the tax base without increasing the demand for additional municipal services has a positive impact on the local municipal and school district budgets.

### Economic Development:

- Heritage tourism: Tourism spending supports job creation, and federal, state, and local tax revenues. In 2006, leisure travel in PA contributed 72% of the total travel spending and supported 11% of all jobs in the Commonwealth. In Centre County, visitors in 2006 spent \$387 million, a total of 8,755 people were employed in the county's travel industry, and \$38 million was generated in state and local taxes. (Shifflet, D.K. *The Economic Impact of Travel and Tourism in Pennsylvania – Travel Year 2006*). Heritage

## Examples of Adaptive Reuse



## Interrelationships

travelers spend more and stay longer.

- “Given the growth of hospitality-dependent economies among small to mid-sized towns, these places, which represent the majority of communities, are often the most vulnerable, yet they also hold the greatest potential to craft a responsible tourism ethic, from which citizens can build a sustainable travel economy.” Dan Shilling, author of *Civic Tourism: The Poetry and Politics of Place*, 2007. The mission of civic tourism is to reframe tourism’s purpose, from an *end* to

a *means* – that is, from a market-driven growth goal to a tool that can help the public preserve and enhance what they love about their place, while revitalizing the local economy. No other place is quite like Centre County with its streetscapes, scenery, cultures, and history.

### Social / Community Development:

- Tourism development while so vitally important because of its economic impact can, if uncontrolled by the development of mass tourism opportunities, have a potential negative im-

act on fragile historic resources, and affordable housing options. Residential revitalization coupled with historic district designation tends to increase housing prices and may “gentrify” neighborhoods driving out the current, lower-income residents.

- If the revitalization of downtowns and neighborhoods results in positive impacts for the residents then positive impacts will result from increased visitors. Community development must balance growth and development through community consensus building.

- Support for faith-based institutions is needed in order to maintain many community services. Partners for Sacred Places has suggested a program, “Percent for Capital”, that would set aside a portion of every dollar donated for community service toward repairing the physical infrastructure of the buildings housing the service.

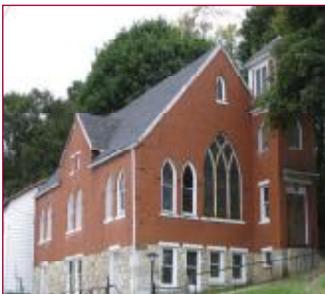
## County Work Program Goals

- Continue to support the Centre County Historical Society and develop basis for a county-wide historic preservation advisory committee and the development of construction guidelines.
- Facilitate the completion of the implementation strategies sited in this document.
- Provide technical assistance for the use of historic preservation tools and techniques.
- Use GIS mapping to document and support the inventory of historic resources.
- Promote economic and community development that supports historic preservation.



*Centre Furnace Mansion*  
Home of the Centre County Historical Society  
College Township

## Statewide History Themes



*St. Paul African Methodist Episcopal Church*  
Bellefonte, PA  
Constructed 1859

Each year the PA Historical and Museum Commission recognizes a theme important in Pennsylvania history. The proposed agency-wide themes for 2008 –2015 are listed here as an opportunity for local municipalities to plan and incorporate events, historical research, resource inventories, promotions and education. If planning an event for several years in the future, please visit the PHMC website to confirm changes or new additions to the proposed list shown here. Past themes have focused on agriculture, schools, archaeology, and small towns.

|      |                                  |
|------|----------------------------------|
| 2008 | 75th Anniversary of the New Deal |
| 2009 | Energy                           |
| 2010 | African American History         |
| 2011 | Religion                         |
| 2012 | Music                            |
| 2013 | Civil War                        |
| 2014 | Civil Rights                     |
| 2015 | Foodways                         |

County of Centre



## Centre County Planning Opportunities

Prepared by:  
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FIND THIS INFORMATION

ON THE WEB

[HTTP://WWW.CO.CENTRE.PA.US/151.ASP](http://www.co.centre.pa.us/151.asp)

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## Definitions:

**Adaptive Reuse:** A process that adapts buildings for new uses while retaining their historic features.

**Certified Local Government:** "Certified Local Government" or "CLG" means that a municipality has been certified by the State Historic Preservation Officer as having established its own historic preservation commission and a program meeting Federal and State standards.

**"Elm Street":** Grant funds for planning, technical assistance and physical improvements to residential and mixed use areas in proximity to central business districts.

**"Main Street":** A community-driven, comprehensive methodology used to revitalize older, traditional business districts.

**National Register of Historic Places:** The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 assigns the National Register of Historic Places a central role in recognizing buildings, sites, districts, structures, and objects significant in American history, archaeology, architecture, engineering, or culture, and identifying them as worthy of preservation.

**National Register-eligible property:** A historic property which is determined eligible for inclusion in the Register because it meets the National Register criteria, as specified in the Department of the Interior regulations at 36 CFR 60.4.

**National Register-listed property:** A historic property that has been formally listed in the National Register of Historic Places and accepted by the Secretary of the Interior.

**Preservation:** Retention of historic building materials through conservation, maintenance and repair.

**Reconstruction:** The re-creation of non-surviving sites, landscapes, buildings, structures or objects in all new materials.

**Rehabilitation:** Emphasizes the retention AND repair of historic materials with more latitude provided for replacement because it is assumed that the building is more deteriorated prior to work.

**Restoration:** Focuses on the retention of building materials from the most significant time in a property's history, while permitting the removal of materials from other periods.

**For More Information:** <http://www.preservationdirectory.com/PreservationGeneralResources/GeneralResourceCategories.aspx>