

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

TODD M. SINAI, PRESIDENT

June 17, 2026 - 7:40 PM

AGENDA

1. Call to Order

2. Roll Call

3. Approval of Minutes

- a. Minutes of a stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners held on May 20, 2026, as distributed.

4. Announcements

The Board met in Executive Session on June 3, 2026 and will meet on Wednesday, June 17, 2026 to receive reports from its professional staff.

Friday, June 19, 2026, Juneteenth, is a legal Holiday. The Township Administration Building and Libraries will be closed for business. There will be no refuse and recycling collection.

A Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Workshop will be held on Wednesday, June 24, 2026 at approximately 6:00 p.m.

Friday, July 3, 2025, is a legal Holiday in observance of Independence Day. The Township Administration Building and Libraries will be closed for business. There will be no refuse and recycling collection.

5. Public Privilege of the Floor

The Floor is open to provide the opportunity for the public to address the Board on any non-agenda item or any other public matter in which the Township has jurisdiction or authority.

Response to Public Privilege of the Floor - Appropriate time for any member of the Board, the Township Manager, or designated staff person to address and correct any statement made by a member of the public during the Public Privilege portion of the agenda.

6. Public Comment

The Floor is open to provide the opportunity for the public to address the Board on matters relating to agenda items which will be voted upon at this meeting.

Response to Public Comment - Appropriate time for any member of the Board, the Township Manager, or designated staff person to address or respond to any statement made by a member of the public during the Public Comment portion of the agenda.

7. Consent Calendar

Consent Calendar items are grouped together in the last section of the agenda which is marked "Consent Calendar." If there is a request from any member of the Board for separate discussion of any item listed on the Consent Calendar, the item will be removed from the Consent Calendar and considered during the appropriate Committee portion after non-consent items listed under that Committee are addressed.

- a. **AWARD OF CONTRACT - RIVER ROAD CULVERT REPAIR**
- b. **AWARD OF CONTRACT - ARDMORE PUMP STATION GENERATOR REPLACEMENT**
- c. **REAPPOINTMENT OF PENSION TRUSTEE**
- d. **AUTHORIZATION TO ADVERTISE ORDINANCE - CHAPTER 145, VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC - MORRIS AVENUE PARKING RESTRICTIONS**
- e. **AUTHORIZATION TO ADVERTISE ORDINANCE - CHAPTER 145, VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC - SABINE AVENUE AND SABINE CIRCLE PARKING RESTRICTIONS**

8. Building and Planning Committee

A meeting of the Building & Planning Committee will be held on Wednesday, June 17, 2026 at approximately 7:10 p.m. at which time the following items may be referred to the Board of Commissioners for action: Authorization To Advertise Proposed Ordinance - Chapter 155 - Bala Village Amendments - Z-26-001; Waiver Of Township Code Section 111-4.2 Regulating Open Containers For The Aki Matsuri Fall Festival In Schauffele Plaza; Waiver Of Township Code Section 111-4.2 Regulating Open Containers For A 2026 Fifa World Cup Gathering; Approval Of Certificates Of Appropriateness; Approval Of Historical Commission Applications; Reappointments To The CASSD Board of Directors. Additional information may be found on the agenda for the aforementioned Building & Planning Committee meeting.

- a. **RECEIPT OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION REPORT**

9. Finance Committee

The Consent Calendar contains items referred from the June 3, 2026 meeting of this Committee (items a - c).

10. Police Committee

The Consent Calendar contains items referred from the June 3, 2026 meeting of this Committee (items d - e).

11. Public Works Committee

A meeting of the Public Works Committee will be held on Wednesday, June 17, 2026 at approximately 7:00 p.m. at which time the following items may be referred to the Board of Commissioners for action: Resolution - Authorizing A Public Hearing Regarding The Intention To Vacate Morris Avenue, Wynnewood. Additional information may be found on the agenda for the aforementioned Public Works Committee meeting.

12. Adoption of Ordinances

- a. **ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE - 2025 DEFICIENCY AMENDMENT**
- b. **ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE - CHAPTER 5, ADMINISTRATIVE CODE; ARTICLE III, OFFICERS - COMPENSATION AMENDMENTS**
- c. **ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE - CHAPTER 92, PROPERTY MAINTENANCE - LEAF BLOWER AMENDMENTS**

13. Unfinished Business

14. New Business

15. Adjournment



Township of Lower Merion
A FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIP

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Finance

ITEM: **AWARD OF CONTRACT - RIVER ROAD CULVERT REPAIR**

Consider for approval to award a contract for River Road Culvert Repair to the following low bidder in accordance with bids received on Thursday, May 21, 2026 at 11:00 A.M. prevailing time and the recommendation of the Finance Committee:

Jurich, Inc.

Total Lump Sum Bid	\$233,267.00
Total Bid Contingency Items (2-1 – 2-2)	16,950.00
Total Bid Add Alt. Items (3-1)	<u>70,000.00</u>
Total Bid	\$320,217.00



Township of Lower Merion
A FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIP

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Finance

ITEM: **AWARD OF CONTRACT - ARDMORE PUMP STATION GENERATOR REPLACEMENT**

Consider for approval to award a contract for Ardmore Pump Station Generator Replacement to the following low bidder in accordance with bids received on Thursday, May 21, 2026 at 11:00 A.M. prevailing time and the recommendation of the Finance Committee:

AJM Electric, Inc.

Total Lump Sum Bid	\$222,300.00
Total Bid Contingency Items (2-1 – 2-6)	7,190.00
Total Bid Add Alt. Items (3-1, 3-3, 3-4)	<u>20,080.00</u>
Total Bid	\$249,570.00



Township of Lower Merion
A FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIP

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Finance

ITEM: **REAPPOINTMENT OF PENSION TRUSTEE**

Consider for approval the reappointment of Matthew Taylor to serve the Municipal Police Pension Fund and the Township Employee Pension Fund as a Trustee for a three-year term to expire June 2029.



Township of Lower Merion
A FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIP

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Police

ITEM: AUTHORIZATION TO ADVERTISE ORDINANCE - CHAPTER 145, VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC - MORRIS AVENUE PARKING RESTRICTIONS

Consider for approval authorizing the Township Secretary to advertise notice of intent to adopt an ordinance to amend the Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 145 thereof, entitled Vehicles And Traffic, Article XV, Schedules, §145-115, Schedule XV: "Parking Prohibited At All Times" by rescinding the no parking zone on the west side of Morris Avenue located 390 feet south of New Gulph Road and extending for 125 feet, and by the addition of a no parking zone on the west side of Morris Avenue starting 347 feet southwest of New Gulph Road and extending southwest for 217 feet.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Draft Ordinance - No parking - Morris Ave - New Gulph.docx](#)

AN ORDINANCE

NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE To Amend The Code Of The Township Of Lower Merion, Chapter 145 Thereof, Entitled Vehicles And Traffic, Article XV, Schedules, §145-115, Schedule XV: “Parking Prohibited At All Times” By Rescinding The No Parking Zone On The West Side Of Morris Avenue Located 390 Feet South Of New Gulph Road And Extending For 125 Feet, And By The Addition Of A No Parking Zone On The West Side Of Morris Avenue Starting 347 Feet Southwest Of New Gulph Road And Extending Southwest For 217 Feet.

Section 1. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 145, entitled Vehicles and Traffic, Article XV, Schedules, §145-115, Schedule XV: Parking Prohibited at All Times, is hereby amended by repealing the following regulation:

§145-115. Schedule XV: Parking Prohibited at All Times.

<u>Name of Highway</u>	<u>Side</u>	<u>Limit</u>	<u>Location</u>
Morris Avenue	West	All Times	390 feet south of New Gulph Road South for 125 feet.

Section 2. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 145, entitled Vehicles and Traffic, Article XV, Schedules, Section 145-115, Schedule XV: Parking Prohibited at All Times, is hereby amended by the addition of the following regulation:

§145-115. Schedule XV: Parking Prohibited at All Times.

<u>Name of Highway</u>	<u>Side</u>	<u>Limit</u>	<u>Location</u>
Morris Avenue	West	All Times	347 feet southwest of New Gulph Road Extending southwest For 217 feet.

Section 3. Nothing in this Ordinance or in Chapter 145 of the Code of the Township of Lower Merion, as hereby amended, shall be construed to affect any suit or proceeding in any Court, any rights acquired or liability incurred, any permit issued, or any cause or causes of action existing under the said Chapter 145 prior to the adoption of this amendment.

Section 4. The provisions of this Ordinance are severable, and if any section, sentence, clause, part, or provision thereof shall be held illegal, invalid, or unconstitutional by any Court of competent jurisdiction, such decision of the court shall not affect or impair the remaining

sections, sentences, clauses, parts, or provisions of this Ordinance. It is hereby declared to be the intent of the Board that this Ordinance would have been adopted as if such illegal, invalid, or unconstitutional section, sentence, clause, part, or provision had not been included herein.

Section 5 This Ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its approval as required by law.

Approved by the Board this day of , 2026.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Todd M. Sinai, President

ATTEST:

Jody L. Kelley, Secretary



Township of Lower Merion
A FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIP

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Police

ITEM: AUTHORIZATION TO ADVERTISE ORDINANCE - CHAPTER 145, VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC - SABINE AVENUE AND SABINE CIRCLE PARKING RESTRICTIONS

Consider for approval authorizing the Township Secretary to advertise notice of intent to adopt an ordinance to amend the Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 145 thereof, entitled Vehicles And Traffic, Article XV, Schedules, §145-118, Schedule XVIII: Parking Time Limited, by removing a 2-hour parking limitation between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. except Saturday and Sunday on both sides of Sabine Avenue from Penn Road east for a distance of 182 feet; by prohibiting parking at all times on the west side of Sabine Avenue between Penn Road and North Wynnewood Road and on the northeast side of Sabine Circle from Sabine Avenue To the end of the cul-de-sac; by enacting a 2-hour parking limitation between the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. except Saturday and Sunday on the east side of Sabine Avenue between Penn Road and North Wynnewood Road; and by enacting a 4-hour parking limitation between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. except Saturday and Sunday on the southwest side of Sabine Circle from Sabine Avenue to the end of the cul-de-sac.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Draft Ord - Sabine Parking Regulations.docx](#)

AN ORDINANCE

NO _____

AN ORDINANCE To Amend The Code Of The Township Of Lower Merion, Chapter 145 Thereof, Entitled Vehicles And Traffic, Article XV, Schedules, §145-118, Schedule XVIII: Parking Time Limited, By Removing A 2-Hour Parking Limitation Between The Hours Of 8:00 A.M. To 6:00 P.M. Except Saturday And Sunday On Both Sides Of Sabine Avenue From Penn Road East For A Distance Of 182 Feet; By Prohibiting Parking At All Times On The West Side Of Sabine Avenue Between Penn Road And North Wynnewood Road And On The Northeast Side Of Sabine Circle From Sabine Avenue To The End Of The Cul-De-Sac; By Enacting A 2-Hour Parking Limitation Between The Hours Of 7:30 A.M. To 4:00 P.M. Except Saturday And Sunday On The East Side Of Sabine Avenue Between Penn Road And North Wynnewood Road; And By Enacting A 4-Hour Parking Limitation Between The Hours Of 8:00 A.M. To 3:00 P.M. Except Saturday And Sunday On The Southwest Side Of Sabine Circle From Sabine Avenue To The End Of The Cul-De-Sac.

The Board of Commissioners of the Township of Lower Merion hereby ordains:

Section 1. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 145, entitled Vehicles and Traffic, Article XV, Schedules, §145-118, Schedule XVIII: Parking Time Limited, is hereby amended by removing the following regulation:

§145-118. Schedule XVIII: Parking Time Limited

<u>Name of Highway</u>	<u>Side</u>	<u>Time Limit/Hours</u>	<u>Location</u>
Sabine Avenue	Both	2 hrs./8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. except Sat. and Sun	From Penn Road east for a distance of 182 feet

Section 2. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 145, entitled Vehicles and Traffic, Article XV, Schedules, §145-115, Schedule XV: Parking Prohibited at All Times, is hereby amended by the addition of the following regulations:

§145-115. Schedule XV: Parking Prohibited at All Times

<u>Name of Highway</u>	<u>Side</u>	<u>Location</u>
Sabine Avenue	West	Between Penn Road and North Wynnewood Road
Sabine Circle	Northeast	From Sabine Avenue to the end of the cul-de-sac.

Section 3. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 145, entitled Vehicles and Traffic, Article XV, Schedules, §145-118, Schedule XVIII: Parking Time Limited, is hereby amended by the addition of the following regulations:

§145-118. Schedule XVIII: Parking Time Limited

<u>Name of Highway</u>	<u>Side</u>	<u>Time Limit/Hours</u>	<u>Location</u>
Sabine Avenue	East	2 hrs./7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. except Sat. and Sun	Between Penn Road And North Wynnewood Road
Sabine Circle	Southwest	4 hrs./8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. except Sat. and Sun.	From Sabine Avenue to the end of the cul-de-sac.

Section 4. Nothing in this Ordinance or in Chapter 145 of the Code of the Township of Lower Merion, as hereby amended, shall be construed to affect any suit or proceeding in any Court, any rights acquired or liability incurred, any permit issued, or any cause or causes of action existing under the said Chapter 145 prior to the adoption of this amendment.

Section 5. The provisions of this Ordinance are severable, and if any section, sentence, clause, part, or provision thereof shall be held illegal, invalid, or unconstitutional by any Court of competent jurisdiction, such decision of the court shall not affect or impair the remaining sections, sentences, clauses, parts, or provisions of this Ordinance. It is hereby declared to be the intent of the Board that this Ordinance would have been adopted as if such illegal, invalid, or unconstitutional section, sentence, clause, part, or provision had not been included herein.

Section 6. This Ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its approval as required by law.

Approved by the Board this day of , 2026.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Todd M. Sinai, President

ATTEST:

Jody L. Kelley, Secretary



Township of Lower Merion
A FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIP

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Building & Planning

ITEM: **RECEIPT OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION REPORT**

Consider for approval to receive the Historic Preservation Report prepared by Greg Prichard, Historic Preservation Planner, dated May 2026. Action on this item was postponed at a stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners held on May 20, 2026.

Note: The Report showing proposed edits by staff as well as a summary of those edits are attached.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Historic Preservation Report - Markup of Edits - 06-12-2026.pdf](#)

[Historic Preservation Report - Summary of Edits.docx](#)

A REPORT ON
HISTORIC PRESERVATION
for
LOWER MERION
TOWNSHIP

2026

PREPARED BY GREG PRICHARD, HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLANNER

PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS IN MAY, 2026

BUILDING & PLANNING DEPARTMENT

CHRISTOPHER LESWING, DIRECTOR

CHARLES DOYLE, ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

COLLEEN HALL, SENIOR PLANNER

ELIZABETH HORWITZ, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLANNER

SARAH CARLEY, PLANNER

HOLLY COELLO, PLANNER

ANGELA FORNEY, PLANNING TECHNICIAN

PAM MARINO, PLANNING TECHNICIAN

JASON EMMEL, GIS TECHNICIAN

SECTION 2.5 BY SAM AFSHARIPOUR, PLANNING INTERN

ADDITIONAL CONTENT BY:

LOWER MERION CONSERVANCY

PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL & MUSEUM COMMISSION

PS&S, LLC (SECTION 4.6)

A REPORT ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

for

LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

2026

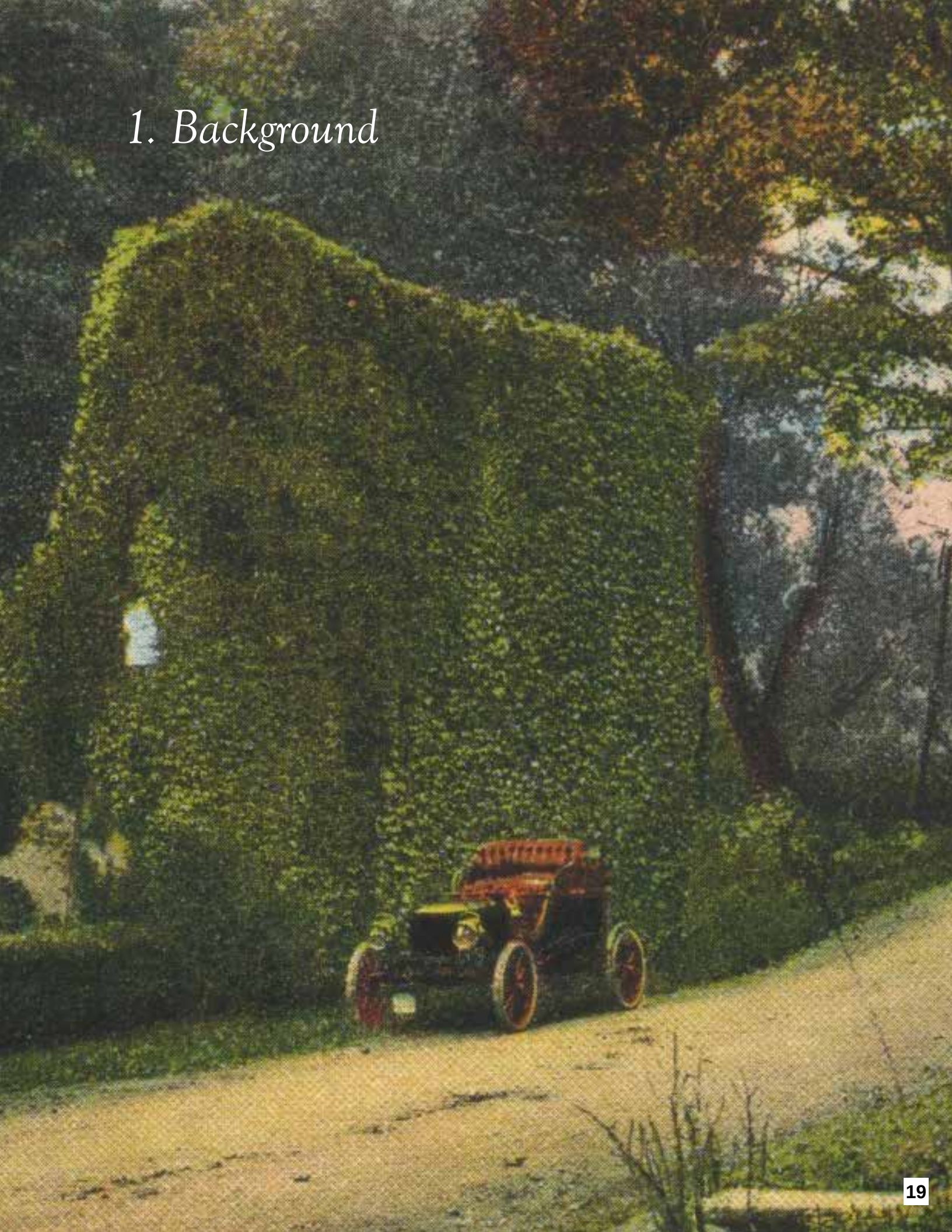
F O R E W O R D

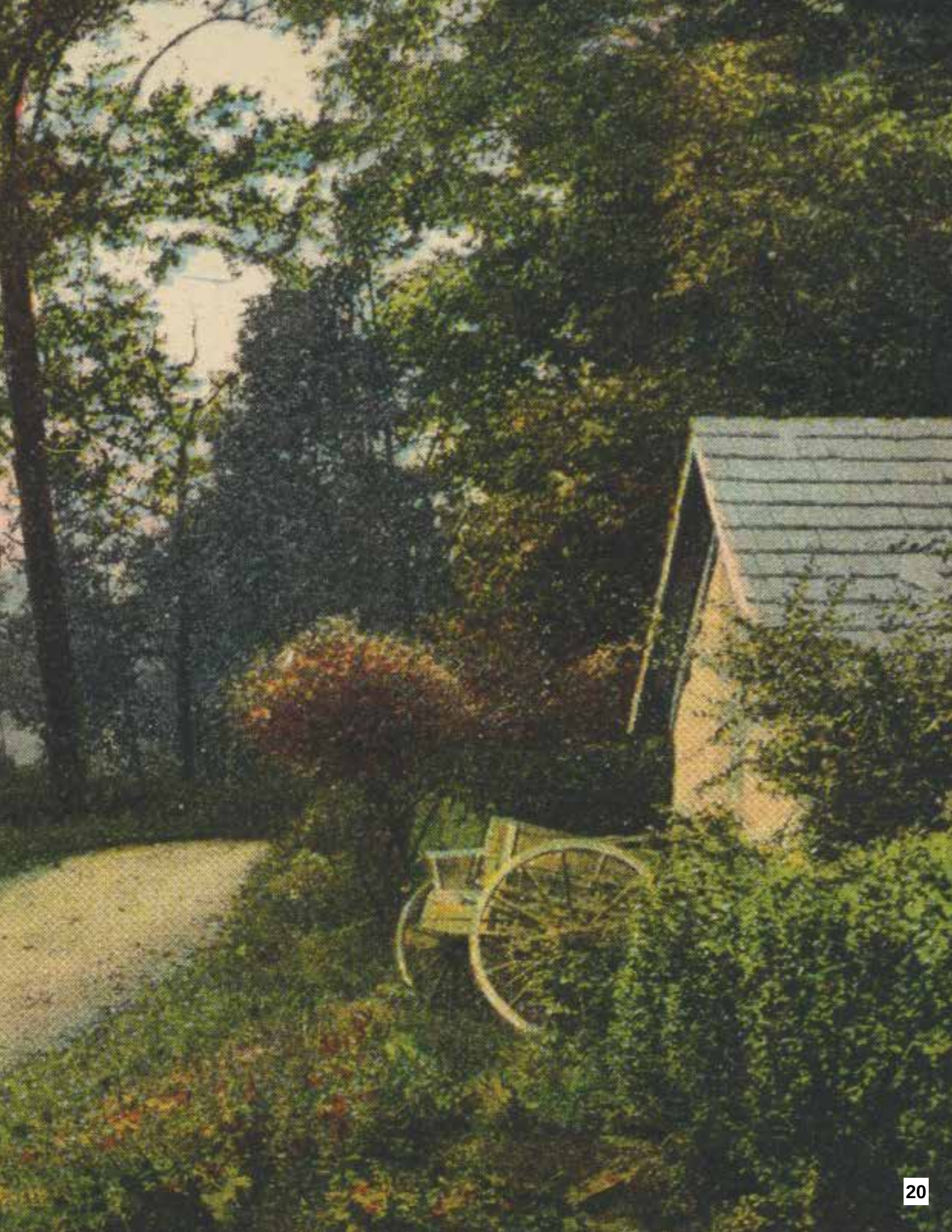
It has been a quarter-century since Lower Merion Township adopted its most comprehensive historic preservation ordinance, which resulted in the formation of the Historical Commission and the Historic Resource Inventory. This action addressed a need expressed by Lower Merion citizens and Township leadership to establish a process to consider historic preservation in the assessment of changes within the community. Since that time, the Township has encountered various challenges to its historic preservation efforts as well as opportunities to use historic preservation as an effective planning tool to improve quality of life in the community. The purpose of this **Report** is to assess the effectiveness and consequences of these historic preservation efforts and to formulate recommendations to improve the Township's historic preservation initiatives and processes.

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1. Background





1. Background



1.1. ca. 1910 postcard showing the remains of the grist mill along Mill Creek. The mill sat on the property of I. Layton Register, who stabilized the ruin and may have been the Township's first proactive preservationist.



1.2. The area covered by the Mill Creek Valley Conservation Agreement of 1941.

The government and citizens of Lower Merion Township have long recognized the historical significance of the township. Long before the advent of “historic preservation” as a movement or discipline, residents worked to preserve remnants of history across the landscape. One example of an early act of preservation dates to the turn of the 20th century, when I. Layton Register of Gladwyne stabilized the ruin of the ca. 1746 John Roberts grist mill beside Mill Creek.¹ Further stabilized through the efforts of the Lower Merion Historical Society, this ruin stands today at the heart of the Mill Creek Historic District.

Further efforts to save and recognize the area’s early past have included the continuous restoration and occupation of 17th century landmarks including Merion Friends Meetinghouse and Penn Cottage. While age is not always considered a criteria appropriate for assigning significance, the endurance of these buildings has been a source of fascination for centuries. With each successive generation, a re-evaluation of progressively newer buildings has occurred, resulting in increasing levels of appreciation for Victorian architecture, 20th century revivalist styles and, most recently, post-war modern architecture. This expansion of historical appreciation has generally followed national trends toward recognizing the significance of these styles and eras, though Lower Merion Township contains a higher than average proportion of significant examples of many architecture and building types.

Significant effort has been made throughout the 20th and 21st centuries to preserve the Township’s heritage. This work has been extraordinarily progressive among municipalities in the Philadelphia suburbs. The following are examples of the numerous milestones of preservation in Lower Merion Township.

1941: The Mill Creek Valley Conservation Agreement

The properties adjacent to Mill Creek in Gladwyne are of great historic significance. This pioneering agreement sought to preserve “the Mill Creek Valley as a place of natural beauty and a strictly residential district.”² The agreement placed restrictions on properties within the designated area for buildings, fences, and tree cutting. Though the historic preservation impact of the agreement was indirect, the agreement set the stage for the designation of the Mill Creek local and

1 “An Historic Pennsylvania Mill.” *The American Architect and Building News*. September 7, 1907. 52.

2 “The Mill Creek Valley Conservation Agreement,” Township of Lower Merion, March 1, 1941.

National Register Historic Districts and other areas of historic significance in the succeeding decades.

1962: Harriton House and the Historic District Ordinance

A year after the Pennsylvania State Legislature adopted the Pennsylvania Historic District Act (Act 167 of 1961),³ which authorized local governments to create historic districts overseen by Boards of Historical Architectural Review, Lower Merion Township adopted the Historic District ordinance with the Harriton Historic District in Bryn Mawr as its first locally protected area.⁴ This district contains a single historic site, the 1704 Harriton House, which was once owned by Continental Congress secretary Charles Thomson. The Township has owned the Harriton House property since 1969 and the non-profit Harriton Association restored it as an interpretive historic site in time for the Bicentennial in 1976.

1974: First Historic Resource Survey

A “Plan for Preservation of Historic and Cultural Resources” published by the Montgomery County Planning Commission in May, 1974 identified 78 historic sites in Lower Merion Township, each ranked in terms of priority for preservation. This survey broadly examined historic properties in the Township, focusing on the oldest structures but also 20th century resources such as the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Suntop Homes.⁵

1979: Comprehensive Plan

Lower Merion’s fourth Comprehensive Plan was the first Township effort to identify historical and cultural resources worthy of protection. The Plan included a list of 75 of the Township’s most significant resources, from late 17th century structures to the Barnes Foundation (which was then just over 50 years old). Regarding those resources, it stated: “This plan recommends that all 75 sites be preserved for posterity. A review of the sites indicates that creation of an historical district may not be appropriate because there are too many sites spread across the township. Rather, each structure should be designated as historical to prevent further demolition.”⁶



1.3, 1.4. Harriton House prior to restoration in 1970 (above) and after, ca. 1979 (below). Though a Township-owned property subject to HARB review and Board of Commissioners oversight, the property is managed by the non-profit Harriton Association, which was founded the same year as the formation of the Historic District.



1.5. Cover of the 1975 Montgomery County Planning Commission Inventory of Historic and Cultural Resources, which identified 78 sites worthy of preservation in Lower Merion Township.

3 The Historic District Act: https://www.phmc.state.pa.us/Portal/Communities/BHP/historic_district_act.pdf

4 Township of Lower Merion Ord. No. 1373, adopted 1-17-1962.

5 “Plan for Preservation of Historic and Cultural Resources.” Montgomery County Planning Commission, May 1974; “Inventory of Historic and Cultural Resources.” Montgomery County Planning Commission, March 1975.

6 Comprehensive Plan 1979, Lower Merion Township, v. 2, p. 92.



1.6. The center of Gladwyne in 1980.



1.7, 1.8, 1.9. Three views of buildings within the Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District in the mid-1990s, shortly after the establishment of the District.

1980: Gladwyne and Mill Creek Historic Districts

Concern about uncharacteristic development in the heart of Gladwyne led to a significant community effort to expand the 1962 Historic District ordinance to designate the village center and Mill Creek area. The grassroots effort began in 1976 “by a small group of local property owners seeking historic recognition for these two areas,” which grew “considerably over the ensuing years in community-wide interest, participation, and concern,” especially following the demolition of an 1870s church on Righters Mill Road for the construction of townhouses.⁷ The historical significance of Gladwyne (Merion Square) and the Mill Creek area centered around the Roberts Mill was established by these community volunteers, who conducted a complete survey. The Board of Commissioners adopted the ordinance to amend the Historic District ordinance (Chapter 88 of the Township Code) in its entirety, which also established the Board of Historical Architectural Review (BHAR, now more commonly known as HARB).⁸

1990: Comprehensive Historic Sites Mapping Project⁹

The Philadelphia Historic Preservation Corporation conducted an assessment of 81 “study areas” and made several recommendations on protecting historic properties and their settings. This report laid the foundation for the Township’s eventual ordinance protecting individual historic resources.

1992: Certified Local Government

Lower Merion Township achieved Certified Local Government (CLG) status, allowing the Township to comment on National Register applications, apply for CLG grants, and other benefits. The status also required the Township to adhere to certain guidelines.¹⁰

1993: Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District

A portion of downtown Ardmore was designated as Lower Merion’s fourth Historic District.¹¹ Though the Gladwyne Historic District contained some commercial buildings, the Ardmore district is almost exclusively commercial, which substantially expanded HARB’s role in reviewing such

7 Becker, Gloria O. “Gladwyne Historic Preservation Study,” for the Gladwyne Civic Association, 1980.

8 Township of Lower Merion Ord. No. 1902, adopted 4-16-1980.

9 Comprehensive Historic Sites Mapping Project Summary Report, Philadelphia Historic Preservation Corporation, January, 1990

10 Lower Merion has been a CLG since February 3, 1992.

11 Township of Lower Merion Ord. No. 3326, adopted 6-8-1993.

properties. The majority of applications to HARB since have been projects in the Ardmore district.

1997: Merion Friends Meeting/General Wayne Inn

A change in use of the historic General Wayne Inn on Montgomery Avenue prompted the creation of a Historic District to ensure its preservation. The adjacent Merion Friends Meeting, ca. 1695, was included within the district boundaries.¹²

2000: Historic Resource Inventory/Historical Commission

The decades-long effort to survey historic properties in the Township by the Lower Merion Historical Society, Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, and others culminated in the adoption of an ordinance creating the Historic Resource Inventory (HRI) and Historical Commission (HC). The HC was created with the authority to oversee changes to the significant buildings, structures, and sites listed in the Inventory and not located within local Historic Districts. Chapter 88 of the Township Code was also amended to accommodate these individually designated resources and the HC review process. The HRI was established as an appendix to the Code (Chapter A180).¹³

2007: Haverford Station Historic District

A district adjacent to the Haverford train station was created, combining a small commercial area along Haverford Station Road with residential blocks to the west. It encompasses a wide array of time periods and styles including mid-19th century vernacular, Victorian “Queen Anne,” and early 20th century suburban developments.¹⁴

2010: English Village Historic District

Prompted by community action, Wynnewood’s English Village neighborhood, a significant Tudor Revival enclave built from a single cohesive plan in the mid-1920s, was designated as the Township’s seventh Historic District.¹⁵

2018: Historic Objects and Criteria Revision

An ordinance was adopted to allow for the designation of Historic Objects and to revise the designation criteria for Class I and II Historic Resources.¹⁶



1.10. View of late 19th century homes on West Lancaster Avenue in the Haverford Station Historic District.



1.11. The English Village Historic District.



1.12. Example of a historic milestone that was designated as a Class I Historic Resource in 2018 following an amendment to the Code allowing for such objects to be included in the Inventory.

12 Township of Lower Merion Ord. No. 3490, adopted 6-17-1998.

13 Township of Lower Merion Ord. No. 3560, adopted 3-15-2000.

14 Township of Lower Merion Ord. No. 3820, adopted 7-11-2007.

15 Township of Lower Merion Ord. No. 3912, adopted 5-19-2010.

16 Township of Lower Merion Ord. No. 4139, adopted 7-18-2018.



1.13. Stabilized mill worker tenement ruins in Rolling Hill Park.



1.14, 1.15. The cottage at Rolling Hill Park, designed for the estate of Irwin Megargee, before and after restoration by the Lower Merion Conservancy.

1.1 Public/Private Partnerships

Lower Merion Township has found success in partnering with community organizations to preserve historic places. With a combination of grant funds, public and private contributions, and the combined efforts of Township staff and non-governmental organizations, several historic preservation projects have been successfully completed.

Rolling Hill Park

The Township's park system was enhanced significantly in 1995 with the acquisition of Rolling Hill Park in Gladwyne, the 100+ acre former Megargee/Pew estate. The property contains a multitude of significant natural features as well as remnants of historic communities that once operated as industries along Mill Creek.

Alongside the picturesque hiking trails of the park stand the ruins of mid-19th century stone tenements that were the homes of mill workers. Long since abandoned, the sturdy stone walls remain although the unroofed buildings are open to the elements. Utilizing grant funds, those ruins were stabilized to stand as monumental features of the park.

The last remaining usable structure in Rolling Hill Park is a small cottage built for the estate in the 1890s. It is believed to have been designed by Minerva Parker Nichols, the first independent woman architect in the U.S. The cottage was restored for use by the Lower Merion Conservancy, a non-profit organization founded in 1995 to educate residents on environmental and historic preservation issues and to advocate for those causes.

Cynwyd Station

The SEPTA Regional Rail station at Cynwyd built by the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1890 became the terminus of the Cynwyd (formerly R6) Line with the abandonment of the western extension of the line in the 1980s. The station's condition deteriorated when its use as a ticket office and public waiting room ceased.

The Lower Merion Historical Society, which was founded in 1949 as a non-profit organization dedicated to local history, took on the project of restoring the station with Township and SEPTA support. The adaptive reuse of the station resulted in the refurbishment of the former station agent's residence as a modern apartment, transforming the ground floor into rentable retail space, and designating the station as a trailhead for the Cynwyd Heritage Trail. The Historical Society also assisted the Township with the creation of a series of interpretive signs for the Cynwyd Heritage Trail marking significant historical features.

The successful restoration of Cynwyd Station showed that partnerships do not have to be limited to the local government and community non-profits. The involvement of SEPTA was an encouraging sign that agencies with broader missions may be willing to work with local groups to preserve and adaptively re-use their historic assets.

In fact, community organizations have historically been crucial forces in the preservation and upkeep of train stations owned and operated by large entities. Over a century ago, the Merion Civic Association applied pressure and influence on the Pennsylvania Railroad, then one of the largest corporations in the world, to ensure that their community's station would remain open and exemplify the railroad's highest standards of quality.

The dissolution of the Pennsylvania Railroad and its successor, Penn Central, led to challenges and opportunities in each of the communities it served. Thankfully, SEPTA, which took over maintenance of the stations along the Main Line (Paoli-Thorndale Line) in 1983, immediately sought adaptive re-use solutions for these historic stations and encouraged community involvement. The civic associations in Merion, Wynnewood, and Haverford are among the community organizations that have taken it upon themselves to not only advocate for their stations' upkeep and re-use, but have also actively taken part in beautification efforts to plant flowers and keep station grounds in good order.

Ashbridge House

The historic Ashbridge House has been owned by Lower Merion Township since the 1940s. Over the last 80+ years, the house has been used as a polling place and spaces within it have been occupied by various non-profit organizations. In order to maintain an active presence on the property and better utilize the resource, New Horizons Senior Center began to occupy the house in 2026. Modifications to the house were reviewed thoroughly by the HC.

Conclusion: The Township has extended its efforts to preserve historic properties beyond the standard review processes by partnering with organizations on narrowly-defined projects.

Recommendation 1.1: Lower Merion Township should continue to support the efforts of local organizations to preserve Historic Resources on Township properties and lend support to efforts connecting local organizations with transit agencies and other semi-governmental entities outside of the Township.



1.16. Cynwyd Station in 1970.



1.17. Cynwyd Station in 2012, following restoration by the Township in partnership with the Lower Merion Historical Society.



1.18. The HC reviewed modifications to Ashbridge House, including a large rear addition, prior to New Horizons Senior Center's occupation of the building in 2026. The house contributes to the Class I property and the work was managed by the Township's Parks & Recreation Department. The HC's consultation on various aspects of the project was essential to its success as an appropriate alteration.

2. Historic Districts





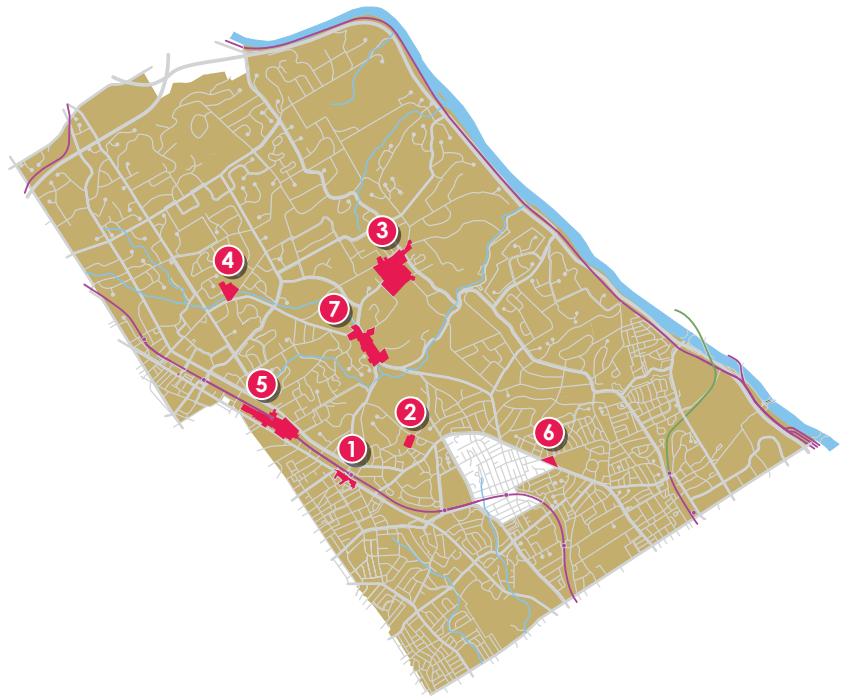
Shops on West Lancaster Avenue, Ardmore

2. Historic Districts

As defined in the Township Code, a Historic District is “an area that possesses a group of buildings, structures, objects, sites, or other constructed or naturally occurring features that have been recognized for their local historical or cultural significance by the Board of Commissioners having determined that it conforms to an established set of criteria and having received certification from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.”

There are currently seven local Historic Districts in Lower Merion Township, all of which are under the review authority of HARB. Though different, local Historic Districts may have similarities with the boundaries and definitions of National Register Historic Districts.

- 1 Ardmore Commercial Center
Designated in 1993
- 2 English Village
Designated in 2010
- 3 Gladwyne/Merion Square
Designated in 1980
- 4 Harriton
Designated in 1962
- 5 Haverford Station
Designated in 2007
- 6 Merion Friends Meeting/General Wayne Inn
Designated in 1998
- 7 Mill Creek
Designated in 1980



2.1 Composition of the Districts

Of the seven districts, two are zoned exclusively residential, one is exclusively commercial, two are combined residential-commercial, and two are institutional. Those with institutional properties are centered around notable individual resources rather than large collections of properties.

The majority of properties within local Historic Districts are residential, though the majority of applications reviewed by HARB are commercial, with most applications pertaining to the Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District. Since that District's creation, HARB's largest impact has been to downtown Ardmore, accounting for 56% of applications within the last ten years.

2.2 National Register and Local Historic Districts

It is important to understand the differences between Historic Districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places and those designated on the local level. Like individually designated properties, the purposes of National Register Historic Districts are distinctly different than those of local districts, though their boundaries are sometimes identical or similar.

- Properties within National Register Historic Districts are not restricted from modifications or even demolition. Such changes within local Historic Districts can be regulated by the municipality.
- Commercial developments within National Register Historic Districts may be eligible for federal and state tax credits for rehabilitation projects.
- Projects within National Register Historic Districts receiving federal funding must go through the Section 106 process, which provides oversight to ensure that federal funds, licenses or permits do not contribute to a negative impact on a resource.

A district’s eligibility for National Register status does not necessarily mean that a local Historic District would be the best option for historic designation at the municipal level. As required by the Historic District Act, HARBs only review “the appropriateness of exterior architectural features which can be seen from a public street or way, only.” ¹ National Register Historic Districts are often clustered similarly, but could also be areas that are linked thematically in ways that would not be effective if designated locally.

The the following areas in Lower Merion Township have been listed as National Register Historic Districts:

- **Gladwyne²**
Same boundaries are covered by the local Historic District designated in 1980.
- **Bryn Mawr College³**
Not designated as a local Historic District; contains 11 Class I Historic Resources and 15 Class II Historic Resources.

Resources in Historic Districts by Type

- Commercial

● Residential
- Institutional

● Transportation

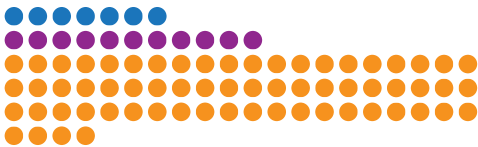
Ardmore Commercial Center



English Village



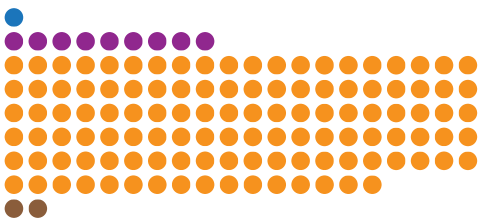
Gladwyne/Merion Square



Harriton



Haverford Station



Merion Friends Meeting/
General Wayne Inn



Mill Creek



1 Act of Jun. 13, 1961, P.L. 282, No. 167, Section 4(b).
2 Resource # 1980RE00444
3 Resource # 1979RE00003



2.1. A section of West Laurel Hill Cemetery.

- **West Laurel Hill (Laurel Hill West) Cemetery⁴**
Certain specific structures within or associated with the cemetery are individually designated on the local level.
- **Mill Creek⁵**
The same boundaries are covered by the local Historic District designated in 1980.
- **Mill Creek - Boundary Increase⁶**
The National Register Mill Creek district was expanded substantially in 1996, adding 132 resources to total more than 585 acres. The contributing resources within the boundary increase were included in the HRI in 2000, both as Class I and Class II Historic Resources. The former Dorrance estate at 1543 Monk Road was individually listed on the National Register in 2023⁷ and was subdivided into five lots the same year, each individually designated by the Township as Class I Historic Resources.
- **Westminster Cemetery⁸**
Currently has no local designation.

The following areas have been determined eligible to become National Register Historic Districts:



2.2. One of the Haverford College faculty residences of on College Lane. Though the majority of the campus is located within Haverford Township, several significant buildings including this row of residences are across the Lower Merion Township border.

- **Haverford College⁹**
Partially sited in Lower Merion Township, the majority of the district is located in Haverford Township. There are currently 9 Class II Historic Resources within the portion of the campus in Lower Merion Township.
- **Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District¹⁰**
The National Register Historic District was deemed eligible prior to the creation of the local district.
- **English Village¹¹**
The same boundaries are covered by the local Historic District designated in 2010.

4 Resource # 1990RE00642
 5 Resource # 1980RE00560
 6 Resource # 1984RE02199
 7 Resource # 2023RE03898
 8 Resource # 2005RE01285
 9 Resource # 2012RE00291
 10 Resource # 1991RE00062
 11 Resource # 1991RE00502

- **Pennsylvania Railroad: Main Line (Phila. to Harrisburg)¹²**

The entire Amtrak rail corridor between Philadelphia and Harrisburg has been deemed eligible as a National Register Historic District, which subjects alterations to contributing buildings (including many of the train stations in Lower Merion) to PHMC review. At the local level, three passenger stations are locally designated as Class I Historic Resources, and one passenger station and one former freight station are locally designated as Class II Historic Resources. One Class I-designated station is also located within a local Historic District.

- **Oakwell/Stoneleigh Complex¹³**

Both Oakwell and Stoneleigh are currently in the HRI as Class II Historic Resources. Other parcels within this eligible district that were once part of the estate are not locally designated but could potentially be eligible.

The high number of large estates with sweeping landscapes in Lower Merion Township illustrates the need for individual designation of most historic properties that otherwise contribute to National Register Historic Districts. Although both local and National Register districts are collections of resources that are thematically linked, the limited review authority of HARBs over local Historic Districts necessitates the individual designation of potential Historic Resources within National Register Historic Districts.

The expansive Mill Creek Historic District, especially after its 1996 boundary increase, exemplifies the need for individual local designation of properties within National Register Historic Districts. In terms of age and historic significance, there is hardly another area in the Township more worthy of preservation. The district includes a variety of historic sites, from early homesteads to mills to significant 20th century estates. This wide variety of resources is also defined by the landscape: while some buildings are extremely close to public roads, others are set deep within expansive properties. The varying topography of the landscape also creates visual buffers. Because local Historic Districts are only governed by what can be viewed from the Public Way, most work that would impact the historic elements of the sites would not be reviewable if designated as a local district where HARB's review authority is limited, as defined by the Historic District Act. These Historic Resources can only receive proper local review if individually designated rather than as Contributing Resources within a Historic District.

In 2023 the Oakwell/Stoneleigh complex in Villanova was determined eligible for the National Register as a Historic District



2.3, 2.4. The Stoneleigh mansion (above) and one of the garden structures (below) that were formerly part of the estate are included in the National Register district nomination area. The mansion is a Class II resource and the garden structures are undesignated locally.

12 Resource # 1995RE45037

13 Resource # 2023RE00074

rather than on the National Register individually because of the contiguous properties' shared history as parts of the former Bordine estate. These thematic connections make their designation as a district logical for the purposes of the National Register. However, district designation on the local level would not be useful due to the placement of the historic buildings and structures at the deep interior of the sites. The Stoneleigh mansion is only visible from a distance at certain times of year from County Line and Spring Mill Roads. Its carriage house, the Oakwell mansion, and the associated historic garden structures are not visible from any public roadway. As with many of the properties in the expanded Mill Creek National Register Historic District, local Historic District designation of the complex would be ineffective. Only individual Class I or II designation with review by the Historical Commission can provide proper local oversight of large properties such as these.

Benefits of National Register Districts in Commercial Areas

The downtown core of Wayne, another Main Line community, was designated as a National Register Historic District in 2013. The area is not a local Historic District, but the National Register designation allowed for owners of income-producing properties to take advantage of the 20% Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit (RITC).¹⁴ The tax credit is also available to contributing properties within local Historic Districts **that are certified by the National Park Service for tax credit purposes**; therefore, property owners within ~~districts in Lower Merion including~~ the Ardmore Commercial Center **and Gladwyne** Historic Districts could be eligible for tax credits for renovation projects as long as other requirements, such as adherence to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, are met. The application and interpretation of the Standards ensure that any modifications are done appropriately in a way that does not negatively impact the specific property or the district as a whole.

Conclusion: Lower Merion contains a variety of commercial areas that could be eligible for local Historic District designation, National Register Historic District designation, or both. However, local designation could be difficult to attain due to the potential reluctance of property owners to adhere to the HARB's standards for alterations. Instead, attaining National Register Historic District status would allow property owners to benefit from tax credits for specific projects. Incentivizing through financial relief will encourage historic preservation in these areas without imposing new regulations on property owners.

Recommendation 2.2a: Although National Register Historic Districts provide few benefits to residential areas, the tax credits available to income-producing properties make exploring the potential for the National Register designation of commercial centers a worthwhile effort. Central business areas such as Bryn Mawr and Bala Village could potentially be eligible for designation as National Register Historic Districts, which would allow for developers to earn tax benefits for renovations that meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

Recommendation 2.2b: Promote the fact that commercial properties in downtown Ardmore and Gladwyne ~~and on Haverford Station Road~~ are eligible for tax credit projects. Coordinate with the Downtown Ardmore District and other groups to educate property owners about this opportunity.

2.3 Potential Residential Historic Districts

During the 1990s the Township hired consultants including the Philadelphia Historic Preservation Corporation to conduct extensive surveys of the Township to identify potential historic resources and districts for local designation. A survey completed in 1990 identified 81 "study areas" containing potential resources and districts. At the time, the only designated districts containing residentially-zoned properties were Gladwyne and Mill Creek. Though these areas were undeniably significant to the history and development of the Township, this survey determined that other residential areas exhibited a similar level of significance and integrity.

The survey identified the boundaries of seven distinct residential areas believed to meet the qualifications for local Historic District status, some being adjacent to one another:

- South Ardmore - Ardmore Avenue District
- South Ardmore - South Wyoming Avenue District
- South Ardmore - Cricket Avenue District
- South Ardmore - Walnut Avenue District
- South Ardmore - Linwood Avenue District
- South Bryn Mawr District
- South Bala District
- South Bala - Tudor District

On the advice of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the five proposed Ardmore districts were merged into



2.5. Homes within the surveyed South Bala - Tudor District. The uniquely crafted rowhomes are special for their unusual masonry.



2.6. A home within the boundaries of the Ardmore Avenue Historic District proposed in the 1990s. Since the time the district was conceived, this home was individually designated and received Conditional use approval for a medical office use.



2.7. Homes on South Wyoming Avenue, Ardmore.

a single potential “South Ardmore Historic District” and the two proposed districts in South Bala were also combined.

Official designation of these districts was not undertaken. Instead, the commercially-zoned Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District was viewed as the priority and designated in 1993.

Many of the most historically or architecturally significant properties within the potential districts identified in the survey were individually designated with the adoption of the Historic Resource Inventory in 2000. However, some entire areas were excluded from the Inventory, including the Cricket Avenue corridor, the Walnut Avenue area, and the South Bala Tudor District, which is composed mainly of 1920s rowhouses exhibiting unique stonework.

The South Ardmore - Linwood Avenue District was determined eligible for the National Register by the SHPO in 1992. Interest in designating this area was revived in the mid-2010s with an effort to create a new Historic District comprising most of the area originally outlined in the 1990s. This area is composed of a section of Ardmore south of Lancaster Avenue including two significant planned developments (the Leshner-Hood and Walter Bassett Smith tracts) and additional historic residences at the periphery. This proposed district exhibited a great deal of consistency in architecture, form, and period of construction. Research into how the land was developed resulted in a significant narrative involving the developers and their architects, who included D. Judge DeNean, William L. Price, and Heacock & Hokanson. The effort was initiated by the residents of the neighborhood and the Lower Merion Conservancy, which led historical tours of the area and advocated for the district designation. Opposition from some residents concerned about the requirements of HARB oversight contributed to the proposal not proceeding. Since the discussions occurred, several changes transpired within the proposed district boundaries that would likely have received recommendations of denial from HARB, from inappropriate exterior modifications to the total demolition of an original Smith-built house at 37 Simpson Road.

Community input has also led to the creation of a Historic District. The designation of English Village as a local Historic District in 2010 resulted from the unsympathetic alteration of a contributing property. The small neighborhood had been a National Register Historic District since 1991, and the contributing properties within had been individually designated as Class I Historic Resources subject to review by the HC. While other local Historic Districts had been created based on location and period of significance, English Village is especially cohesive, with boundaries based around a single planned development built in the 1920s.

Given the number of planned subdivisions in Lower Merion which share a historical narrative, architectural consistency, and period of construction, the possibilities for new districts like

English Village are numerous. While the story of English Village is unique in many ways, there are a significant number of planned neighborhoods in Lower Merion whose stories are less known. With further research, it is likely that these developments could be eligible for Historic District designation.

Conclusion: While the 1990 survey resulted in several potential districts that likely remain eligible for local listing, the large number of properties within these areas, including the dense South Bryn Mawr District, would result in the imposition of new standards across a combined area containing exponentially more residential properties than are currently overseen by HARB. It would therefore not be feasible to enact these districts as originally proposed while maintaining HARB's current high standards for appropriate alterations. More carefully targeted areas exhibiting a higher quality of architecture and historical significance, such as the proposed South Ardmore Historic District of 2015, would be more manageable and defensible as potential new districts.

Recommendation 2.3a: Consider a re-examination of the 1990s-era Historic District studies, including recent changes to the areas, thematic connections between properties/developments, and reasonable boundaries.

Recommendation 2.3b: Consider the adoption of new Historic Districts in residential areas based on recent research into planned developments and observations of historical and architectural consistency.

2.4 Potential Commercial Historic Districts

Since the designation of Ardmore's downtown as a local Historic District in 1993, that area has seen significant positive changes. Through HARB oversight and the consistent application of Design Guidelines, the revitalization of Ardmore over the last thirty years has been implemented in a way that respects and acknowledges the historic architectural fabric of the built environment. HARB oversight has also restricted development where it was determined to have an adverse impact on the Historic District.

HARB oversight within the two hybrid commercial-residential districts, Gladwyne and Haverford, has also ensured that the historic character of those areas has been retained. Within Historic



2.8. The Bryn Mawr Trust building would be a Contributing Resource to a Downtown Bryn Mawr district.



2.9. The historic integrity of Bala Village was significantly impacted by the 2019 demolition of several buildings that would have been Contributing Resources to a potential district.



2.10. The former Narberth branch of the Merion Title and Trust Company stands at the northern end of the North Narberth Avenue commercial block.

Districts that contain properties representing a mixture of zoning designations, the installation of signage and the replacement of original elements such as windows can have a greater impact on the surrounding character.

The following commercial areas are potentially qualified to become local Historic Districts:

Downtown Bryn Mawr

A significant number of historic buildings are located in the downtown core of Bryn Mawr, rivaling or exceeding the number of historic buildings in downtown Ardmore. While some significant resources including the Bryn Mawr Theatre and Bryn Mawr Fire House are individually designated, other properties including the former Main Point folk music venue and primary branch of the Bryn Mawr Trust Co. are not designated. Rows of commercial storefronts retain a high degree of integrity and would also contribute to a potential district.

Bala Village

Though a significant portion of the commercial area was demolished in 2019 for a redevelopment project now under review, the village retains much of its integrity with the former Egyptian Theatre (currently Class I) at its core. A potential district could continue north to include Cynwyd Station (currently Class II) and commercial buildings on the east end of Montgomery Avenue, including the former Bala Cynwyd Post Office.

North Narberth Avenue

The western end of the Anthwyn Farms subdivision contains a row of commercial spaces bordering Narberth Borough, along with a former branch of the Merion Title & Trust Co. Though small, this group of 1920s commercial buildings contributes to the overall historic character of downtown Narberth (which is part of a local Historic District overseen by the borough's HARB) which largely retains its architectural integrity.

Recommendation 2.4: Consider the impact and benefits of designating new local Historic Districts in commercial areas. Begin a dialogue with stakeholders in these areas to explain the restrictions and opportunities that designation would bring.

2.5 Façade Program Audit

For over 30 years the Township has taken a proactive approach to improving commercial areas through the distribution of façade improvement grants. In the winter and spring of 2024, Lower Merion Township hired an intern to examine past façade program activities and to make recommendations for the future based on past practice and direct conversations with program implementors in other communities. The following section is adapted from that report.¹⁵

The objective of the commercial façade grant program is to encourage coordinated public and private investments to renovate and restore façades throughout the Township’s commercial areas to enhance the character and economic viability of business districts, preserve historical and architectural building elements, and achieve a cohesive exterior design in commercial areas.

Commercial façades often provide the first visual impression of a community and its vitality. Building façades are an important part of an area’s character, helping shape public spaces, strengthen place recognition, and contribute to pedestrian and customer comfort and engagement. Retaining the historic qualities of commercial centers offers benefits to community character as well. Façade improvements can play a key role in revitalization programs, streetscape design plans, and growth strategies.

Background

In 1998, the Township established the Office of Economic Development to organize public/private partnerships and enhance visual appeal and competitive vitality across the entire Township to attract, promote, and retain a wide variety of businesses. To help achieve this, the Office of Economic Development sought to improve the aesthetic appearance of Lower Merion’s business districts by establishing a façade improvement program. Since 2001, the Township has offered commercial tenants and property owners competitive incentive funds through grants and zero percent loans to increase commercial rehabilitation activity.

In addition to the Township’s own façade grant program, the Downtown Ardmore District (formerly Ardmore Initiative) has also managed its own façade program in downtown Ardmore since the 1990s. The Downtown Ardmore District was originally founded as a main street program in 1988, called the “Ardmore Main Street Program,” serving Ardmore’s downtown business district.



To better inform how the Township’s façade grant program should operate moving forward, Township staff met with staff in other municipalities administering similar grant programs to gain insight into best practices and challenges they commonly face. Those consulted included:

- The Lancaster City Alliance
- The City of Philadelphia’s Storefront Improvement Program (SIP)
- The West Palm Beach (Florida) Downtown Development Authority (DDA)
- The Easton (Pennsylvania) Main Street Initiative
- The City of Evanston (Illinois)
- The City of Alameda (California)

15 Afsharipour, Sam. “Lower Merion Township Commercial Façade Grant Program Report - Program History and Recommendations.” June, 2024.

Township Façade Grants by Funding Source, 1991-2023



- **DCED (141 Projects)**
\$411,781.09 (56%)
- **County Revitalization Program (28 Projects)**
\$275,450.03 (37%)
- **CDBG (2 Projects)**
\$52,481.55 (7%)

In 1993, the Township chartered it as a Business Improvement District (BID) called “Ardmore 2000,” until it later changed its name to the Ardmore Initiative and later the Downtown Ardmore District, which continues to operate as a BID today.¹⁶

The funding structure and implementation of the Township’s façade program has changed over time. Over the course of the façade program’s history, three main funding sources have been utilized: the Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Development’s Community Revitalization Program, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) Keystone Communities Program, and federal funding through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program.

Program Statistics

Based on available project records, there have been at least 171 total projects funded throughout the Township between 1991 and 2023. Over this 32-year period, available records contain some gap years in which there is no funding activity, specifically between 1996-2001 and in the year 2020. Total funding has amounted to at least \$739,712.67, with \$679,712.67 in grants coming from state funding through DCED and local funding through the County Revitalization Program, with the remaining \$52,481.55, in the form of loans coming from federal CDBG funds. Total project costs, composed of matching grants plus applicant spend, have amounted to at least \$2,225,989.29.

For project records in which both date of application and project completion were available, the average project length from application submission to grant distribution was 176 days (5.8 months). The most common façade improvements have been projects involving awnings, signage, painting, windows, lighting, and doors.

The average grant amount awarded per year between 2002-2023 was \$32,367.27. During the Downtown Ardmore District’s grant program between 1991-1995, the data on the annual distribution of the \$60,000 awarded over that period is unavailable. The breakdown of the grants awarded and number of projects funded per year can be seen in Appendix E.

Broken down by commercial districts, most façade projects through the program were completed in Ardmore, and consequently, Ardmore received the most grant funding. This is a function of

¹⁶ A BID is a non-profit municipal authority that levies assessments on property owners within a defined geographic area to fund capital improvement programs and community initiatives within the boundaries of the “district.” BIDs provide supplemental services to those already put forth by their local, municipal government.

Ardmore’s status as the only commercial area in the Township to qualify for façade grant funding through the County’s Revitalization Program and the efforts of the Downtown Ardmore District to continue awarding project grants in downtown Ardmore over the years through the DCED funding it has applied for and received. Ardmore was followed by Bryn Mawr, then Merion-Cynwyd, and lastly, Bala Village, in that order.

Program Recommendations and Best Practices

1. Online Application

To streamline the application process and assist Township staff with application review and organization, the façade program should use an online application process to replace the paper applications it has traditionally used. Conversations with program implementers in other communities highlighted the benefits of an online system for filtering and organizing applications, the ease of access to information it provides staff, and the reduction in administrative issues presented by processing and storing paper applications.

Philadelphia SIP uses Formstack to process its online applications and then pipelines applications into Quickbase, which has a Formstack integration function, helping to ease application sorting, produce spreadsheets, optimize outreach, and cross reference with census block data. This higher degree of data management seems more helpful for Philadelphia SIP’s purposes, given its large budget and the number of applications and grants it processes annually, but would seem unnecessary for the Township use case. The City of Evanston’s façade program also uses Formstack to process online applications. West Palm Beach DDA uses Submittable for its online applications and transfers application data into an Excel spreadsheet to filter and track applications.

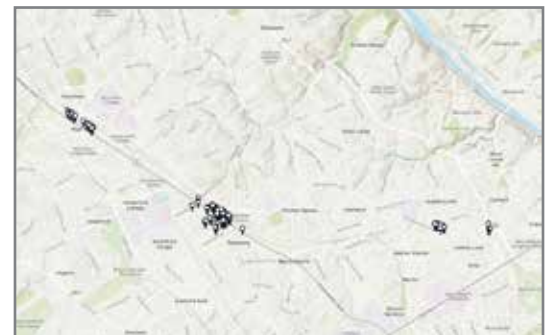
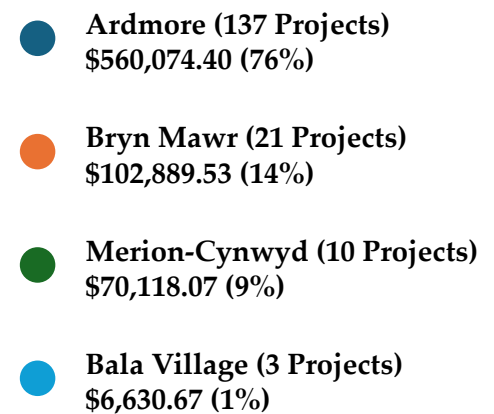
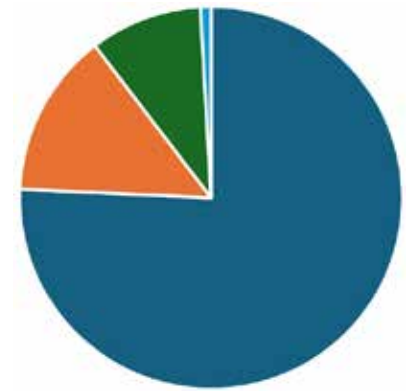
2. Eligibility Guidelines

In establishing program guidelines and criteria going forward, the Township should draw from previously published Township guideline documents and those outlined by the other façade programs consulted.

General criteria to consider retaining from Township guidelines:

- All façade work proposed under the grant program should conform with the Township’s building and safety codes and follow the storefront standards outlined in the Township’s zoning code (§ 155-3.9) and found in the “Ardmore Storefront Design

Façade Grants by Commercial District, 1991-2023



2.11. Map showing the distribution of projects funded throughout the Township 2002-2023. Interactive online version contains additional project information, including before and after images, grant amount received, total project cost, and improvements made:

<https://lmt.maps.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?layers=c331ac690e-854a5181540a5b0accaa8c>



2.12-2.16. Case Study 1: 9 Station Avenue

This mixed-use building has undergone various façade changes over many decades, including storefront alterations and the removal of balconies. In 2009, the building received a \$20,000 façade grant, which the Township funded through Montgomery County's Revitalization Program. This project involved painting portions of the façade (leaving the upper-story brick unpainted) and installing new deck railings for the apartments on the upper floors, returning some balcony space (above).

Delice et Chocolat received a grant in 2018 from the Ardmore Initiative for \$4809.94, funded through DCED. This grant was used to install new awnings and signage (opposite page). The transformation from retail chain (Radio Shack) to café has helped energize this corner property, attracting more customers and connecting the ground floor business to the streetscape, with the café now featuring outdoor seating.

Guidelines" document, which is also compatible with traditional "Main Street" commercial buildings found in Bala Village, Bryn Mawr, and Merion-Cynwyd. Work on historic buildings should also follow the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

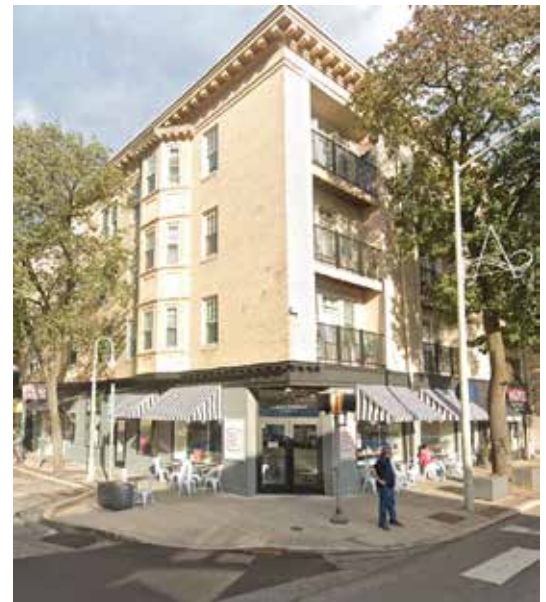
- Projects in a locally designated Historic District may be subject to review by the Township's Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB).
- Property owners must be current on all municipal taxes, including but not limited to real estate taxes, school taxes, and have no liens filed against their properties in Lower Merion Township.
- The Township's façade program will be a reimbursement program, matched on a 50/50 basis by the applicant, with reimbursement only available once all work has been verified as completed and paid. Applicants must pay contractors by check or money order, not cash, to allow the Township to verify proof of payment.
- Applicants are eligible for only one grant per year per business but may apply in multiple years, as long as funding is available.
- For comparison, the City of Evanston's program prevents properties that have received a grant within the past ten years from participating, unless the business/building undergoes a change of use that is significant enough to warrant a change in storefront. Similarly, the City of Alameda's guidelines state, "owners may be eligible to apply for and receive one façade grant every five (5) years on any individual building" and "Tenants may be eligible to apply for and receive one façade grant every five (5) years on any individual storefront. A new tenant at a particular address may apply for a new façade grant, as long as the ownership of the business has changed."
- If the applicant is not the property owner, the applicant will need written approval from the property owner to participate in the program.
- Applicants must complete the proposed work within 6 months of approval. Those who cannot complete the work within this timeframe must receive approval for an extension or risk losing the grant.

Criteria to consider adopting from other programs:

- Contractor Requirements
 - The City of Evanston's program requires one of the three contractor estimates it requests to be from an Evanston-based contractor.
 - Lancaster City Alliance recommends maintaining partnerships with reliable, quality contractors who are locally based. Its program offers applicants who do not already know who they prefer hiring the option to have a contractor recommended for them to simplify the process of selecting one. Lancaster City Alliance's contractor database includes over 75 contractors it has partnered with on projects, one-third of which are locally based, which can provide additional benefits to local economic activity.
 - While the Township may not be able to offer explicit recommendations on contractors, it could offer applicants a list of vendors to choose from on the façade program webpage that have expressed interest in working with façade program participants, similar to the vendor list that the City of Alameda provides a link to on its program website.¹⁷
- Lease Requirements
 - The City of Evanston also requires applicants who are not property owners to provide a current lease with a minimum of five years remaining from the date of application or provide evidence that the business has operated in Evanston for over five years.
 - The Township could require something similar, though with a lower minimum year threshold to allow for more flexibility but still ensure some continuity/longevity with the investments made into businesses through the façade grants. However, this additional requirement may be tedious for applicants, discourage applications, and otherwise act as an unnecessary hurdle that the Township may want to avoid altogether, as there was no such requirement for the Township's program in the past.

A list of common *eligible* improvements from previous Township guidelines and the other façade programs consulted:

- Signage



¹⁷ <https://www.alamedaca.gov/files/assets/public/v/1/departments/alameda/econ-dev-amp-comm-services/public-art/vendor-list-fy-2023-2024-7-14-23.pdf>



2.17-2.21. Case Study 2: 25-27 West Lancaster Avenue

This building has undergone a few changes since its construction in 1905, originally built to host stores and apartments and becoming the decades-long home to Harrison's Department Store. The Township's façade grant helped maintain the building's historic character while contributing to the evolution of its use.

In 2007, Junior League Thrift Shop, which replaced Harrison's Department Store, was approved for a façade grant, which the Township funded through Montgomery County's Revitalization Program. The project involved a total façade renewal, including new windows, doors, painting, and lighting (opposite page, bottom). The project was completed in April 2008 with a total cost of \$89,796.76. It received a \$20,000 façade grant from the Township.

- Awnings
- Exterior façade lighting
- Exterior painting (with the exception of unpainted brick)
- Masonry/brick pointing
- Windows/glazing
- Exterior doors
- Roof work (for roofs facing the public right-of-way)
- Cornices
- Fascia, tile, canopies, trim, metal work and other decorative elements
- Restoration/preservation of historic elements/properties appropriate to the design of the building and other improvements contributing to the visual enhancement or accessibility of a property as it relates to the public right-of-way
- Removal of elements inappropriate to the design of the building
- Exterior stairways
- Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act

A list of *ineligible* improvements compiled from the standards of the Lancaster City Alliance, Philadelphia SIP, City of Evanston, and City of Alameda:

- Painting of unpainted brick or stone surfaces
- Sandblasting of paint on brick or stone surfaces
- Capping over original woodwork, capping of trim details around doors and windows, soffits, or dormers
- Any work that reduces the size of masonry openings/eliminates windows
- Any work that covers previously uncovered masonry (e.g. brick, stone, limestone, etc.) with paint, stucco, siding, etc.
- Vinyl windows
- Vinyl awnings
- Internal window grids (dividers between the glass)
- Non tongue-and-groove deck boards for porch floor replacement
- Covering of transom windows above doors and storefront windows
- Sidewalk repair
- Routine building maintenance, such as repairing a leaking roof, replacing broken glass, or replacing rotten wood (They may only be considered if a part of the larger scope of work)
- Any interior work
- Roof work that does not face the public right-of-way or directly abuts to a new or renovated façade
- Exposed conduits for exterior lighting
- Electrical work that involves more than providing service to the façade

- Security systems

The City of Alameda’s program further outlines the types of businesses *eligible* to participate:

- Retail, restaurant, theater or service businesses.
 - Service businesses include, among others: personal and pet care services (barber shops, beauty salons, nail salons, pet grooming, etc.), repair services (auto, furniture, electronics, etc.), laundry and dry-cleaning services, caterers, hotels, and fitness centers.
 - Other commercial businesses/property types (cultural, office, etc.) are considered on a case-by-case basis.

The Township may also want to create a list of the types of businesses *ineligible* to participate in the program, which could also be included as a notice on the website and application itself.

- West Palm Beach DDA’s program includes the following list of ineligible participants on its application: national franchises, financial services (state and federal), wholesale shops, national brands, tattoo parlors/body piercing shops, smoke and vape shops, medical marijuana dispensaries/CBD products, night-clubs and liquor stores, any business with code enforcement violations or debt to the city, or any business not permitted by city code.
- The City of Evanston’s program also has a list of ineligible participants, including: national franchises/for profit corporations with more than ten locations outside of Evanston (unless the organization is headquartered in Evanston); occupants or owners of buildings that are not current with property taxes, water bills, or properties possessing any sort of non-mortgage liens (i.e. mechanics lien, etc.); persons who have one or more outstanding City of Evanston parking tickets; buildings in excess of an 80,000 square foot footprint; churches or other religious organizations; government offices and agencies (non-governmental tenants are eligible); new construction less than 5 years old; and properties that have received storefront improvement funds within the past ten years (unless change of use is significant enough to warrant change in storefront).
- In the City of Alameda’s program, businesses within shopping centers and business parks are ineligible to participate.

3. Evaluating Applications

Among the programs Township staff met with, each generally processed and funded applications on a first-come first-served basis until grant money ran out, with Lancaster City Alliance and





2.12-2.24. Case Study 3: 57-59 East Lancaster Avenue

Pennywise Thrift Shop was approved for a façade grant in 2007, which the Township funded with a \$20,000 grant through the Montgomery County Revitalization Plan. This project involved an extensive renewal of the existing building, including new windows, lighting, awnings, painting, and stucco and roof work. A shingled roof was removed from the front of the building to reveal the original 1928-era façade elements. The project was completed in March 2008 at a total cost of \$85,000.

Philadelphia SIP occasionally being more selective on certain projects on a case-by-case basis, due to the greater flexibility afforded to those programs by their funding structures. Most programs also require pre-application meetings to discuss the scope of work with applicants and determine how well the intended changes align with the objectives of the façade program. This also allows applicants to clarify questions or any confusion prior to submitting their application, helping reduce potential back and forth with applicants about incomplete or ineligible applications.

To help guide application review, the Township should consider developing a scoring system. The Easton Main Street Initiative's rubric can be used as a model to emulate. Its score sheet contains six criteria with a maximum possible score of 160 points, with applicants needing at least 96 points (60%) to pass. Criteria on the Easton Main Street Initiative score sheet includes:

- Impact of Proposed Development (40 points maximum)
- Project Location (30 points maximum)
- Building Ownership (30 points maximum)
- Primary Use of Building (20 points maximum)
- Use of Design Professional (10 points maximum)
- Additional Discretionary Points (30 points maximum)

The Township may also want to include criteria that weighs improvement types proposed and frequency of applications from applicants/businesses that received a grant in a recent funding cycle, which would apply similar limitations that the cities of Evanston and Alameda place on their programs. Given that awnings, signage, and painting have been the most common improvements throughout the Township façade program's history, scoring on improvement type could help prioritize project work that outlasts specific businesses, such as improvements on restoring a building's historic elements, rather than projects with "temporary" improvements like signs or awnings, while scoring on frequency would give less favor to applicants that seek grants multiple times in consecutive funding cycles, which hinders other businesses and areas from benefiting from the program. Thus, criteria for a Township scoring rubric could include scoring based on:

- Impact of Proposed Development
 - Whether improvements restore a building's historic elements, are consistent with building design, and their degree of visual impact.
- Project Location
 - Which commercial district the project is located in, with more weight given to districts that have received fewer façade grants in the past.

- Building Ownership
 - Whether the applicant/commercial tenant owns or rents the building.
- Primary Use of Building
 - The type of commercial property (retail, restaurant, mixed use, etc.).
- Applicant Frequency
 - Whether it is an applicant's first time applying for a grant or if they have received one before (and how long ago).
- Additional Discretionary Points
 - An overall assessment of project importance, quality, and community impact (enhance the commercial areas aesthetic appeal, stimulating economic activity, etc.)

The façade program could also form an application review committee to source greater collective input on projects. Despite the potential obstructionist drawbacks of forming such a committee, as underscored by West Palm Beach DDA's experience with one, the Township could establish a review committee on a trial-run basis for six months or a year to judge its effectiveness. To allow for quicker action on applications and minimize potential obstacles and tediousness stemming from the participation of other Township departments, the Township's committee should remain internal to the Planning Department, like Philadelphia SIP's "Design Review Committee." The Township's committee could consist of four total members, including a planner, a senior planner, the historic preservation planner, and the zoning officer, who will be an advisor to the committee but not have voting privileges. Additionally, although there are more potential downsides to forming a committee that also includes inter-departmental and/or non-Township rather than an exclusively internal one, such a committee could also be considered on a trial basis and judged in comparison to the efficacy of the internal-only committee.

4. Target Blocks

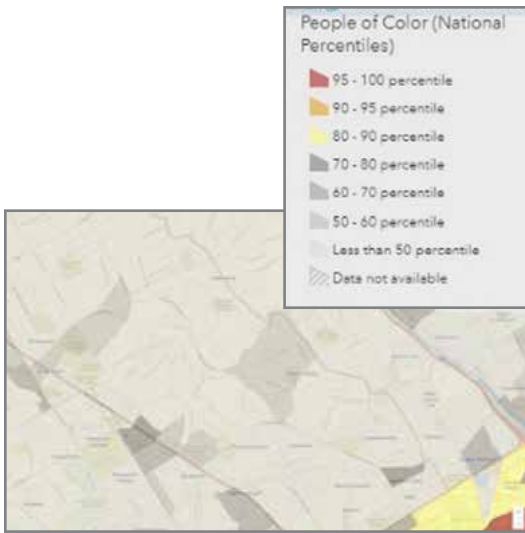
To help focus grant spending across the Township, the façade program should identify and prioritize funding for specific properties or blocks that align with selected criteria to determine areas and buildings that could benefit from grant funding the most, maximizing the program's "bang for the buck." Outlining standardized criteria for targets can help guide decisions on program priorities into the future, as the Township's commercial areas and businesses continue to experience changing economic and physical conditions in the years ahead.



2.25-2.27. Case Study 4: 34 East Lancaster Avenue

In 2008, J.R. Monaghan's Pub and Grill was approved for a \$20,000 façade grant, through the Montgomery County Revitalization Program. With the building vacant at the time, the grants helped to transition the building into an economically viable space. It underwent many renovations, including the replacement of non-original windows, new lighting, brickwork restoration, and woodwork. The project was completed in June 2008 with a total cost of \$40,761.

J.R. Monaghan's closed in 2011 and was replaced by Jack McShea's Restaurant and Bar. Façade grants also helped facilitate this transition in 2012. This \$5,000 grant was managed by the Ardmore Initiative and was funded through DCED. The scope of work included new lighting, signage, and stucco. The project was completed in November 2012 with a total cost of \$13,268.02.



2.28. People of Color (National Percentiles) in Lower Merion Township.



2.29. Low-Income Individuals (National Percentiles) in Bala Village and Merion-Cynwyd.

Target Block criteria:

- Socioeconomic factors: The Lancaster City Alliance and Philadelphia’s SIP both had explicit equity goals that the Township, where possible, could benefit from mirroring. Although more residential-oriented, Lancaster City Alliance’s façade grant program tries to target and prioritize applications from historically underinvested areas in the city. The program also reaches out directly, including with door-to-door outreach, to low-income homeowners and owners of properties they want to encourage to apply. Philadelphia’s SIP has what it calls “targeted façade improvements,” mainly targeting specific legacy businesses and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) businesses for funding.¹⁸
- Lack of conformity to Storefront Design Guidelines (Zoning and Historic)
- Visual impact (e.g. corner properties)
- Ability to restore historic integrity
- Long vacancies (>1 year)

Using the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool, Figures 2.12 and 2.13 show socioeconomic status in the Township’s commercial areas, with Figure 2.12 illustrating the percent of people of color in the Township and Figure 2.13 showing the percent of low-income individuals.^{19, 20} The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission’s Indicators of Potential Disadvantage database can also be used as a resource to gather socioeconomic data and assist with equity considerations.²¹

18 A legacy business is one that has been operating for a significant number of years, often at least 25 to 30 years, and is recognized for its longstanding contributions to the community, maintaining traditional practices, or holding cultural or historical significance.

19 Per the EPA’s Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool, percent of people of color is defined as “the percent of individuals in a block group who list their racial status as a race other than white alone and/or list their ethnicity. That is, all people other than non-Hispanic white-alone individuals. The word “alone” in this case indicates that the person is of a single race, not multiracial.”

20 Per the EPA’s Environmental Justice Screening and Mapping Tool, percent of low-income individuals is defined as the percent of individuals whose household income was less than 200% of the poverty level in the past 12 months.

21 <https://www.dvrpc.org/products/web21032>

Regarding data on people of color, the Bala Village and Merion-Cynwyd commercial areas are at 73% of the national percentile, Bryn Mawr's commercial district is at 56% of the national percentile, and Ardmore's commercial district is at 65%. Regarding data on low-income individuals, the main relevant block in the Township overlaps the Bala Village and Merion-Cynwyd commercial areas and is at 76% of the national percentile.

5. Advertising

As the Township restarts its façade grant program, promoting the availability of new funding will be important to maximizing utilization, impact, and awareness among businesses.

An initial social media push for the program should accompany the rollout once funding is secured and ready to disburse. Posts promoting the program should direct people to a refreshed Township website page on the façade program. The façade program webpage could detail requirements for the program, a brief history of the program including overall numbers of previous projects and grants distributed, link to the online application, and possibly some examples of locations that received funding with before and after pictures, as the program progresses over time. The City of Evanston's façade program web page could be a useful model to work from for a simple outline that is easy to follow.

Door-to-door outreach with one-page flyers could also be useful, especially to specific businesses or businesses along target blocks that the Township wants to prioritize. Lancaster City Alliance also emphasized door-to-door outreach for blocks on which they want to focus investments. Flyers with program information could also be handed out during relevant events or meetings hosted by the Township or partner organizations.

Once projects are under construction, signs or posters should be displayed on the buildings to communicate that improvements are being made through funding from the Township's façade grant program. Lancaster City Alliance uses advertising signage on projects under construction, and projects using DCED funds are required to place signs in building windows to convey DCED's contribution to the project. Signs should include an identifiable logo for the Township's grant program, which could include a silhouette of an identifiable commercial building in the Township, for instance.

Once the program is underway and begins attracting interest, a suggestion to consider adopting from Easton Main Street Initiative is to maintain a spreadsheet with a record of people who have reached out with interest in the program and to contact those who did not apply or did not receive grants during the current cycle and encourage them to apply once funding becomes available again in the next cycle.



2.30-2.31. Case Study 5: 828 West Lancaster Avenue

The Bryn Mawr Running Company was approved for a façade grant in 2011, which the Township funded through DCED. This project included installing a new awning and signage. The project was completed in November 2012 with a total cost of \$6,000. It received a \$3,000 grant from the Township.

6. Potential Challenges

A key challenge mentioned by the program administrators in other communities was the difficulty of maintaining communication with businesses to increase awareness of the program, an issue that falls under the broader umbrella of advertising and devising effective outreach strategies.

The Lancaster City Alliance highlighted a challenge in instances when property owners only seek to make minor improvements, when other improvements are evidently needed, such as those that could help restore a building's historic character. It is sometimes difficult to strike a balance between property owners' wishes to make only a minor change with encouragement to undertake more extensive improvements. Lancaster City Alliance also found it difficult at times to maintain relationships with quality contractors and contractors who do high-quality, specialized work on specific parts of façades, such as specialty windows, cornices etc., that they can recommend to applicants.

As noted earlier, the effectiveness of an application review committee is another issue that may arise. West Palm Beach DDA disbanded its committee for being "more trouble than it was worth," and Philadelphia SIP also questioned the efficacy of using a committee. Instead of being used only to provide helpful suggestions to improve projects, it can become a vehicle to obstruct and reject improvements and projects altogether, depending on the tendencies of committee members.

Regarding DCED funding, Easton Main Street Initiative stressed the issues faced in recent years with the limitations of DCED's maximum grant of \$5,000 not being enticing enough to attract applicants, as labor and material costs continue rising. As a result, some people may simply avoid the façade program entirely, opting to not jump through the hoops associated with receiving DCED funds, such as needing three contractor estimates on their project or having prevailing wage requirements kick in on more expensive/extensive projects over the \$25,000 threshold. Lancaster City Alliance also noted having issues achieving impactful project outcomes with a grant range of \$5,000 to \$10,000, due to costs of labor and materials. The program has attempted to alleviate this challenge by increasing grant awards on a case-by-case basis to reach optimal project outcomes, but given its more unique sources of funding relative to other façade programs, this flexibility is specific to the program's circumstances.

7. Funding Guidance

The Township's façade program averaged at least \$32,000 per year in grants awarded and completed roughly 7 projects annually. As previously noted, some façade program administrators

from other communities have expressed concerns over rising labor and material costs and how these factors can limit the extent to which grants can positively impact project outcomes, particularly for programs including those funded through DCED that offer only a \$5,000 maximum grant. As a result, these administrators find that there are potential applicants who choose to forgo applying for façade grants rather than going through the requirements of an application process for a grant amount with a diminished perceived value. The Township's façade grants should provide enough of an incentive to attract an adequate number of applicants.

To fund the program to a sufficient level, there are different funding sources available to consider. As there has not been a Montgomery County program offering funding to support municipal façade grant programs since the County Revitalization Program ceased in 2011, the main potential funding sources include: CDBG, DCED, and Lower Merion Township's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget. The Township could also offer information about tax credits for historic buildings to applicants who may qualify.

- CDBG:

CDBG funding is not typically utilized by other façade programs and has strict guidelines on its use, as it must be used to target and eliminate a specific, publicly designated slum or blight condition or be used on a project that benefits low- and moderate-income individuals. Since 2001, the Township has made CDBG funding available for façade improvements through its "Zero Percent Façade Improvement Loan Program," though it is unclear how many façade projects have participated in this program over the years. In correspondence dating back to 2004, the Township's former Office of Economic Development Director acknowledged these hurdles, finding that "these funds are additionally encumbered with additional application guidelines, which can further delay use of these funds. These administrative burdens serve as disincentives as to their use as compared to use of grant funds that can stimulate improvements more quickly."

For the purposes of this program, it is probably preferable to avoid CDBG funding, as the hurdles a project must clear prior to successfully utilizing it run counter to the objective of the program to encourage and incentivize applicants by demonstrating the ease of accessibility and use of funds. The program should be streamlined and as simple as possible for applicants. CDBG could be a source of funding if part of a longer-term Planning Department goal anticipated beforehand to redevelop a specific area in the Township that could more easily qualify for such funding, like a project the department knows will be



2.32-2.33. Case Study 6: 863 West Lancaster Avenue

The Grog Grill was approved for a façade grant in 2017, which the Township funded through DCED. This project included installing new piano-hinged façade doors replacing the building's single window to create a more open and inviting eating space further connecting the storefront to the street. The project was completed in December 2017 with a total cost of \$13,200. It received a \$5,000 grant from the Township.

primarily benefiting low- to moderate-income Township residents.

- DCED:

DCED's Keystone Communities Program is a frequently used source of funding by other façade programs in Pennsylvania. Given that the Township has used DCED funds in the past successfully, the Township should have a good chance of receiving approval for funding, should it apply for it. However, there are additional burdens associated with DCED funding that should be taken into consideration.

Funding projects through DCED will involve greater administrative requirements, such as requiring applicants to provide three contractor estimates for their projects and triggering prevailing wages for more costly projects, and will limit maximum grant awards to \$5,000, a figure which has not been increased since the Township first used DCED funding for the façade program nearly two decades ago. As previously noted, perceptions of the value and attractiveness of this \$5,000 maximum continues to decline as material and labor costs keep rising. DCED also does not grant more than \$50,000 total for façade programs. Additionally, pursuing funding through DCED would mean counterproductively competing with the Township's BIDs for DCED money.

- Township Capital Improvement Program (CIP):

The most straightforward source of funding would be a line item through the Township's CIP. This would allow for more consistent funding year-to-year and more freedom with the use of funds, such as increasing the maximum grant amount. It would also allow the Township to decrease burdens on façade program staff by offering the flexibility to limit certain administrative and application burdens associated with funding through state or federal programs, including reducing contractor estimate requirements or increasing program boundaries as needed.

- Historic Tax Credits:

Federal and state tax credits are available for projects that involve work on qualified historic buildings being restored as income producing properties. These include the federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit (RITC) and the Historic Preservation Tax Credit (HPTC) available through DCED. However, these tax credits can only be utilized by individuals or businesses, not the Township. Nevertheless, information on these

tax credits can be an additional resource the Township could provide applicants who may qualify.

- The RITC is the largest federal historic preservation incentive program, offering a 20 percent tax credit for eligible projects. Project eligibility is as follows:
 - The building must be listed on the National Register, either individually or as a contributing building within a National Register Historic District, or be a contributing building to a Certified Local District (a locally designated historic district that has been certified by the National Park Service).
 - The building must be used for income producing purposes, for example: office, retail, residential rental, bed and breakfast, and light manufacturing uses. It must be a depreciable building and not used as a private residence.
 - Rehabilitation work itself must be undertaken according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
 - The project must meet the "substantial rehabilitation test," where the amount of money to be spent on the rehabilitation must exceed the adjusted basis of the building or \$5,000, whichever is greater. Generally, projects must be finished within a 24-month period.
 - After rehabilitation, the building must be owned by the same owner and operated as an income producing property for five years.
- For the HPTC through DCED, most applicants are offered up to a 25 percent tax credit on qualified expenditures, with tax credits not to exceed \$500,000 in any fiscal year. Eligible projects must include a qualified rehabilitation plan that is approved by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission as being consistent with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.
- Of the commercial districts in Lower Merion Township, only the boundaries of the Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District as well as commercial areas within the Gladwyne ~~and Haverford Station Historic~~ districts would qualify for historic tax credit funding, as no other commercial districts are either National Register ~~or Locally designated~~ Historic Districts ~~or certified by the NPS for tax credit purposes.~~

With these potential funding sources in mind, a funding structure for the program will likely best be suited by relying on



2.34-2.35. Case Study 7: 134 Bala Avenue

Pescatore Restaurant was approved for a façade grant in 2011, which the Township funded through DCED. This project included installing new lighting, awnings, and windows with graphics. The project was completed in December 2011 with a total cost of \$5,899. It received a \$2,949.50 grant from the Township.

either the CIP or a combination of both CIP and DCED funding.

A reasonable request for funding through the CIP could fall between \$30,000 - \$50,000, given the average annual grant funding in the past of over \$32,000 and rising material and labor costs since the façade program has been paused. To further justify requesting this budget range, the Township's 2005 Ardmore Revitalization Plan submitted to Montgomery County sought to fund 3-5 façade grants annually, with a program budget of \$35,000, at a time when Ardmore dealt with a high number of inactive façades and vacant storefronts.

A \$50,000 budget request, for instance, could translate to at least five projects funded at a larger grant maximum of \$10,000. This would allow the program to restart in a strong fashion in its first year, offering a more attractive incentive that should draw in enough quality applicants. And if the program generates high enough interest, it may justify an even higher CIP line-item request in later years, budget permitting, with staff potentially being more capable of handling more façade projects after streamlining program structure and processes in the first year or two.

Additionally, depending on how much staff capacity the Planning Department seeks to dedicate to the program, these CIP funds could also be coupled with DCED funding to increase the grant pool and expand the program in later years, if the façade program is unable to secure increased funding through the CIP. For instance, requesting an additional \$25,000 from DCED, coupled with \$50,000 in CIP funding, would fund at least five more projects, allowing the Township to help finance at least ten projects annually, five at a \$5,000 maximum and five at a \$10,000 maximum.

However, the CIP remains the most ideal funding source. This would also allow the Township to confidently "outsource" administration of most façade grants in downtown Ardmore to the Downtown Ardmore District, which relies on funding through DCED and maintains a strong record of managing its façade program, leaving the Township to centralize a program that places a greater focus on funding to other commercial areas, while also funding some projects in Ardmore as the program sees fit.

8. Staff Considerations

Based on conversations with other façade program implementors, most programs sought two staff members to oversee administrative duties, to varying degrees according to the volume of applications they process.

Historically, the Township has averaged nearly 7 façade grant projects per year since 2002, with this potentially being a low estimate, as some completed projects may not be documented in Township archives. Considering this estimated average, and the number of applications the Township's façade program is likely

to process annually going forward, it seems unnecessary for the Township to hire another staff member solely dedicated to managing the program. It would be more realistic to have two existing staff members manage the program in addition to their other regular responsibilities, with their shared responsibility over it likely to occupy roughly 20% of their capacity.

An additional factor to consider is how the amount of funding for the program moving forward will impact the amount of time staff will need to dedicate to the program. Higher levels of funding than the amounts with which the Township's program operated in the past could potentially correlate to a greater number of applications received and projects approved, requiring more staff time devoted to managing a larger, more active program. Establishing an application review committee will also add to the amount of time staff devotes to the façade program, depending on how often the review committee meets. The amount of time Township staff dedicates to the program as it restarts in its first year may be higher, as it will likely be more time consuming to formally establish processes, streamline administrative duties, and troubleshoot issues that arise, before the program runs smoother and becomes easier to manage in future years.

Conclusion: Past façade grant and rehabilitation efforts managed by the Township and its partners have been very successful in maintaining the quality and maintenance of the Township's commercial districts, especially Ardmore.

Recommendation 2.5a: Restart the Township's Commercial Façade Grant Program and consider implementation of the recommendations made in the 2024 Commercial Façade Grant Program Report, including implementing an online application process, establishing new eligibility guidelines, a new application evaluation process, targeting of eligible areas, and revised advertising and promotion.

Recommendation 2.5b: Work with the Downtown Ardmore District and business associations within local Historic Districts to promote the benefits and eligibility of income-producing commercial properties to apply for federal and state historic preservation tax credits.

2.6 Traditional Neighborhood Districts

The Township has received feedback from residents of some residential neighborhoods expressing concern about the erosion of the consistent architectural fabric with tear-downs and the construction of new homes that are out of scale or character with the surrounding area.

These neighborhoods may not meet the qualifications or have the resident support to become local Historic Districts, which would require a thorough review process for most kinds of exterior alterations to properties. Rather than regulating changes to architectural details, a focus on larger changes to properties, such as demolition/reconstruction and the scale and massing of additions, may address the majority of the concerns. The properties located within a “Traditional Neighborhood District” (TND) zoning overlay would be subject to this additional review.

The Township began a dialogue with the residents of the Anthwyn Farms neighborhood to consider the designation of their neighborhood as a Traditional Neighborhood District. Anthwyn Farms was laid out primarily in the 1910s and ‘20s on former farmland at the edge of Narberth Borough. Because it was developed several decades after most of the Borough, Anthwyn Farms was excluded from the boundaries of the Borough when it gained independence from the Township in 1896. Staff saw the potential Anthwyn Farms district as a case study for other possible TNDs. The following section is paraphrased from the report and survey of Anthwyn Farms written by Planning Department staff in 2024.

Introduction

Lower Merion Township is characterized by high-quality residential architecture and the collective attributes of its well-designed residential neighborhoods. The preservation of this character can be facilitated through land use policy. Issues impacting tear downs/rebuilds, speculative subdivision, and inappropriate new construction that is inconsistent in mass and scale with the prevailing pattern are documented in the Township’s 2011 Issues Report and the 2016 Comprehensive Plan.

The 2011 Issues Report first identified tear downs and rebuilds as an issue in the Gladwyne area, where conventional one-story suburban homes of the 1950s and 1960s were being replaced with larger, bulkier 2-2.5 story homes exhibiting a dramatic increase in building coverage and significantly more lot coverage.

The Report identified the primary motivation to tear down and rebuild existing homes as economic. New, larger homes significantly increase a property’s sale price and assessment. There is also potential for the creation of additional lots via demolition and



Traditional Neighborhood Types

-  Late 19th-Early 20th Century
Mansion District
Styles: Shingle, Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival
-  Late 19th-Early 20th Century
Suburban Neighborhood
Styles: Shingle, Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival
-  Late 19th-Early 20th Century
Dense Neighborhood
Styles: Vernacular, Tudor Revival
-  1920s-era
Upper-Class Suburban Neighborhood
Styles: Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, Spanish Revival
-  1920s-era
Middle-Class Suburban Neighborhood
Styles: Tudor Revival, Craftsman, Dutch Colonial, Modern
-  Mid-20th Century
Post-War Neighborhood
Styles: Colonial Revival, Modern
-  Existing Historic District

2.36. A preliminary analysis of “traditional” neighborhoods: areas that were planned as a single subdivision or developed in a consistent neighborhood pattern, found that significant portions of the Township exhibit these qualities. This map is based on eras of development ranging from the late 19th to the mid-20th centuries.

subdivision, further increasing the economic incentive to demolish older homes.²²

The Report concluded that in addition to changing the architectural pattern of neighborhoods, tear down/rebuilds also negatively impact neighborhood character through the removal of large trees and mature plantings.

“The impact to neighborhood character by the removal of large trees and mature plantings to accommodate larger buildings should not be underestimated. The alteration of the communal landscape makes new construction very noticeable and contributes to the perception that new construction is more massive because it is set off from the landscape rather than integrated into the landscape. The loss of mature plantings also increases construction costs by generating a need for expensive, during-construction and postconstruction stormwater management.”

(page 71, 2011 Lower Merion Township Issues Report)

The Township’s 2020 Comprehensive Zoning update and 2022 Subdivision and Land Development Code (SALDO) update addressed several of the issues of tear downs/rebuilds by increasing minimum lot frontage requirements to reduce inappropriate residential subdivision and eliminating cul-de-sacs as a permitted road type in order to reduce speculative property assembly.²³

The 2020 Zoning Code update included form provisions such as requiring new construction to meet predominate front setbacks and limiting projections within frontage yards in order to maintain neighborhood character. The update also explored establishing a Neighborhood Conservation District Overlay Zone to provide targeted supplemental regulations to protect the character of neighborhoods with a common development history and unity of mass, scale, and style. This Overlay Zone would be an alternative to the designation of residential neighborhoods as Historic Districts, with applied supplemental zoning protections but without state authorization or a formal design review process for every building permit as mandated by State Historic District enabling legislation.

22. Township land use policy recognizes the need to preserve neighborhood character while also appropriately permitting the logical modernization of the Township’s housing stock. The diversity of styles and quality of residential dwelling units precludes a uniform approach to balancing these goals.

23. Prior to the adoption of the updated SALDO in 2022, cul-de-sacs were commonly utilized to maximize lot yield in residential subdivisions.

Staff explored the Neighborhood Conservation District concept, introduced the idea at public meetings, and identified several neighborhoods as potential pilots. Ultimately the expedited approval process of the Code Update prevented the concept from being fully explored and incorporated into the Zoning Code in 2020.

Anthwyn Farms Case Study

In late 2022, staff was approached by residents of the Anthwyn Farms neighborhood who were concerned about the recent construction of new homes that were significantly larger and bulkier than existing housing stock. This new construction also required stormwater management systems which negatively impacted the root zone area of existing and future street trees as well as trees within private properties.

The residents met with staff and provided detailed studies of the character-defining qualities of their neighborhood. There were indications that the 2020 zoning changes contributed to speculative tear downs for larger modern homes because the updates allowed for significantly more impervious surface on each lot than was previously permitted.²⁴

Initial discussions centered on defining the neighborhood boundaries and reducing the maximum impervious surface allowable within the neighborhood, adding maximum building coverage requirements and additional form standards to reduce the boxiness of new construction to maintain prevailing architectural articulation. The intent was that reduced lot coverage would decrease potential building footprints and reduce the need for additional stormwater management systems in property frontages.²⁵

The neighborhood spans several zoning districts and contains a total of 187 single-family residential properties, 8 commercial properties, and 1 multi-family residential property. Of the single-family residential properties, the majority (176) are zoned LDR4 while 11 are zoned LDR3. The following analysis only focuses on the properties zoned LDR4.



2.37. A view of Avon Road within the Anthwyn Farms neighborhood. A sense of continuity is created by the scale, design, and massing of residences, as well as street trees and other landscape features.



2.38. 1926 Main Line atlas detail showing the Anthwyn Farms area, the lots in which were by then nearly completely developed.

24. Prior to 2020, the neighborhood was zoned R-4 with a maximum permitted impervious surface allocation of 39% and a maximum permitted building area of 30%. The 2020 zoning update redesignated Anthwyn Farms as LDR4 Low Density Residential with a maximum permitted impervious surface of 45% and no limitation on building area.

Lots in the neighborhood average 7,500 square feet and have an average of 2858 sq ft (38%) of impervious surface. The additional impervious surface permitted via the rezoning potentially adds approximately 450 square feet of lot coverage. A property with 39% coverage would be permitted 2,925 square feet of impervious and a property with 45% coverage would permit 3,375 square feet of impervious surface.

25. Code adjustments relating to tree protection during construction and tree damage as a result of construction are being addressed separately from issues relating to building size and lot coverage.

Anthwyn Farms: Zoning Analysis

Potential for Subdivision: The minimum lot area for properties zoned LDR4 is 7,500 square feet and the minimum lot frontage is 60 feet. There is no potential for additional subdivision within the neighborhood. While a handful of properties have sufficient lot width for subdivision, no properties within the neighborhood have the necessary lot width and lot area required for subdivision.

Potential for Building Expansion: While there is no potential for additional subdivision within the neighborhood, there is potential for the expansion of existing buildings. An analysis of zoning requirements and building activity prior to and after the 2020 Zoning change from R4 to LDR4 indicates a range of impervious and building coverage amounts throughout the neighborhood.

Anthwyn Farms: Defining Characteristics

1. Lot Width and Setbacks

Anthwyn Farms has a generally consistent pattern of lot widths. Lots to the interior of blocks are generally 50 feet wide. There are a few minor deviations from the pattern at corners, double lots, or along the curving roads of Hampton and Iona Avenues where the curve makes rigid 50-foot uniformity impractical.

The neighborhood has a consistent pattern of building setbacks as a result of the uniformity of lot widths and the majority of homes being constructed according to the same zoning regulations. There is general uniformity of both front and rear setbacks, which reinforces both a communal streetscape with large shade trees and generous rear yards.

2. Architecture

- **Roofs:** Typically roof forms are a combination of side-gabled and front-gabled forms. Dutch Colonial homes with side- or front-facing gambrel roofs are also well represented.
- **Porches:** A substantial number of homes in the neighborhood have front porches, though some have been enclosed to create additional interior space.
- **Architectural styles:** The neighborhood is fairly typical of the early 20th century, when revivalist styles were most popular. Some common styles in Anthwyn Farms include Tudor Revival, Colonial Revival, and Dutch Colonial Revival. Many of the shorter homes in the neighborhood can be classified as Craftsman or Bungalow-type homes.

- Garages: Nearly all garages are single-story and single-bay, and are located at a rear corners of lots.

3. Height

Of the homes within the Anthwyn Farms study area, the vast majority (nearly 83%) are 2.5 stories in height. 6% of the homes are 1.5-story bungalows, 7% are 2 stories, and 4% are 3-story. The 3-story homes include older homes with substantial upper-story additions and new construction resulting from recent tear down-rebuilds in the neighborhood.

TND Neighborhood Overlay

TND Overlays have the potential to address issues affecting Anthwyn Farms while also establishing a tool that could potentially be adapted to other neighborhoods facing development pressures that threaten their established character, including tear downs and new construction inconsistent with existing mass and scale. Creating a Traditional Neighborhood District overlay in the Zoning Code could potentially be applied to any single-family residential district. The TND would be applicable to neighborhoods exhibiting a common development history and a unity of design. TNDs could also span multiple zoning districts.²⁶

Traditional Neighborhood District Supplemental Standards

To ensure that new construction is consistent with the mass and scale of the neighborhood, staff is recommending that TNDs include supplemental standards requiring that new construction meet the predominate rear yard setback and be consistent with predominate building height and with the established massing and articulation of the district. Standards could also cap the size of accessory structures at 500 square feet. The Zoning Code includes a definition of Predominate Setback which will need to be modified to differentiate between Front and Rear Predominate Setbacks,

26. After consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office, staff, and the Township Solicitor, it has been determined that a potential Zoning Overlay should be referred to as Traditional Neighborhood District (TND) instead of a Neighborhood Conservation District (NCD). This is a change in name only and reflects the legislative basis of the TND Overlay in Article VIIA of the MPC Traditional Neighborhood Design which states:

“A traditional neighborhood development may be developed as a form of urban infill where existing uses and structures may be incorporated into the development.”

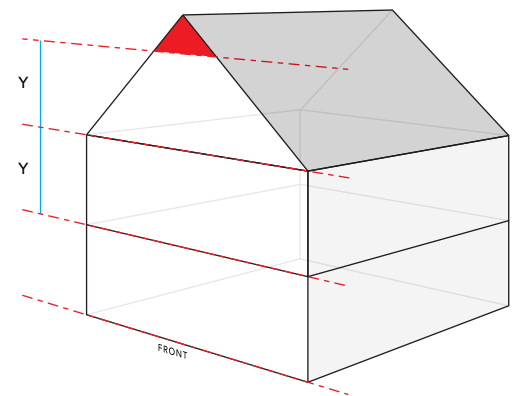
Designating an overlay as a TND compared to an NCD avoids confusion with NCDs that have been established elsewhere across the state and are based upon state historic preservation enabling legislation.

though the Code already contains standards for measuring Pre-dominate Front Setbacks.

The following standards would address the identified issues:

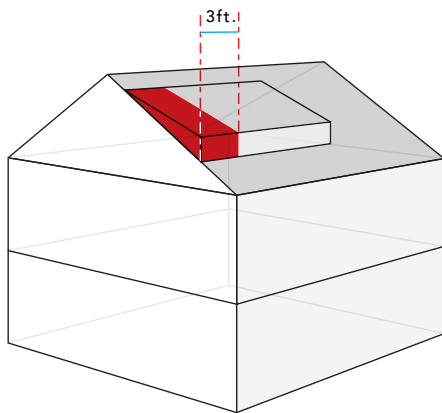
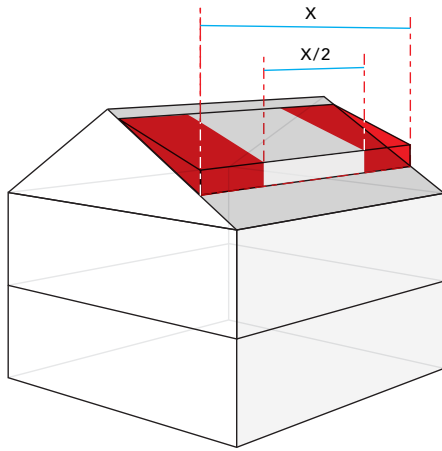
- All new construction must meet the predominant rear setback. The LDR4 District currently requires that new construction match the prevailing front yard setback. The prevailing lot width of the neighborhood and existing side yard setbacks have created a regular pattern of development visible from the street. New development is in turn directed upwards and to the rear of lots. The neighborhood also has an established pattern of rear yard setbacks. Recent tear-downs and larger rebuilds have broken this pattern and extended building mass deeper into the rear of lots. This issue can be addressed by instituting a requirement that prevailing rear yard building setbacks be maintained.
- New construction resulting from tear-downs must be consistent with the prevailing frontage occupation and the prevailing rear yard setback.
- The goal of requiring new construction to be consistent with the prevailing building envelope is consistent with the purposes of the Traditional Neighborhood Development (TND) provisions of Article VII-A of the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code. These provisions are intended to provide regulatory flexibility for communities to preserve traditional or prevailing character consistent with municipal comprehensive plans. A core objective of the 2016 Lower Merion Comprehensive Plan is “ensuring that new development is compatible with the mass, scale, intensity and use of existing villages and neighborhoods.”
- New buildings should not exceed the prevailing building height of the neighborhood, which is 2.5 stories.²⁷
- If unbroken by chimneys or other architectural elements, the roof ridge height of the third floor on a façade could be limited to the vertical dimension of the second story from floor to ceiling. (See Fig. 2.39)

Sloping roofs characterize the neighborhood’s pattern of building heights and roof forms. There is a tendency in newer construction to ‘square off’ upper floors and dormers to create

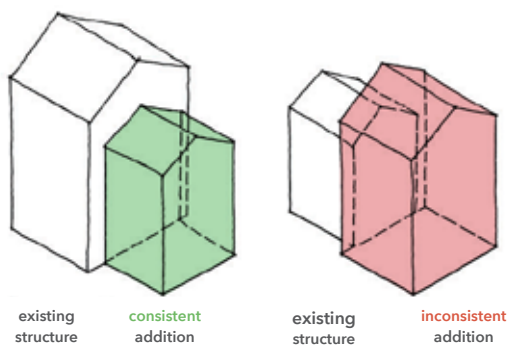


2.39. Any part of a façade wall on a third story level above the height of the second floor (Y) would not be permitted.

27 Definition of Half Story: “An uppermost story which is usually lighted by dormer windows and in which a sloping roof replaces the upper part of the front wall. Exterior vertical walls of Half Stories are limited to 3 ft. Half Stories may not occupy greater than 75% of the floor area of the floor below.”



2.40, 2.41. A third floor dormer would not be permitted if more than 50% of the overall roof width (X) or extend within three feet of the edge of the eave.



2.42. Consistent and inconsistent additions in relation to existing buildings.

additional living area. The 'squaring off' of upper floors results in redeveloped properties having more mass and bulk compared to surrounding properties, diminishing the established architectural rhythm of the neighborhood. The bulkiness of new construction can be addressed by requiring that new construction be consistent with the prevailing building envelope.²⁸

The following standards would apply to dormers that create usable third floor space:

- Limit aggregate width of third floor dormers to 50% of the width of the façade it/they occupy. (See Fig. 2.40)
- Third floor dormers must be set back at least 3 ft. from the façade of a street-facing elevation. (See Fig. 2.41)
- Roof pitches of third floor dormers must be at least 5:12.

Limiting Additions and Accessory Structures²⁹

- An addition to a historic building should be a secondary form that preserves the form of the existing building. A proposed addition should be no larger than two-thirds the street frontage of an existing building. (See Fig. 2.42)
- No sizable trees should be removed for the construction of an addition or accessory structure. Construction may not disturb woodlands or any area within the dripline of trees greater than 15 inches dbh. Disturbance of trees between six and 15 inches should be prohibited if an alternative location is feasible.
- Instituting a predominant building envelope requirement without also limiting overall impervious or building coverage could potentially result in inappropriate expansions of accessory structures. This can be addressed by capping the size of accessory structures at the prevailing size of 500 sq. ft., while permitting a deviation of up to 15% provided that the applicant can demonstrate consistency with neighborhood pattern and scale.
- Accessory structures and additions to existing homes could extend up to 15% provided that the applicant can demonstrate consistency with the neighborhood pattern and conformance with these regulations. (See Fig. 2.43)

28. Building envelopes measure the three-dimensional building volume permitted by zoning.

29. The underlying district permits up to 45% impervious surface coverage. This provision would eliminate the potential to construct large accessory buildings that are inconsistent with the established neighborhood pattern.

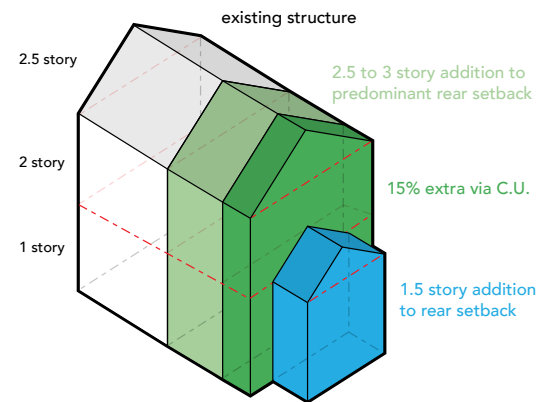
The Zoning Code currently contains standards for building heights in relation to roof pitches in LDR districts (such as Anthwyn Farms).

§ 155.4.1.C(4) For a building with a low-sloped roof, the height is limited to two stories and 28 feet maximum. For buildings with a steep-sloped roof, roof pitch greater than 5:12 up to and including 12:12, the maximum height is three stories and 35 feet maximum.

Required Code Updates

In order to create neighborhood-level zoning controls, the Zoning Code would need to be amended to create a TND Overlay District in which individual neighborhood districts could be established, the limits of which would be legally defined similarly to how Historic Districts are described in Chapter 88. Once a TND Overlay is created, a potential Anthwyn Farms TND overlay district could be established with prevailing building envelope and maximum accessory building coverage provisions. It is envisioned that the TND Overlay would provide a structure for evaluation and consideration of additional neighborhood-targeted zoning tools to maintain the existing architectural pattern, form, and character.

Recommendation 2.6: Consider the possibilities and implications of Traditional Neighborhood District zoning overlays and work with residents to explore how TND designation would achieve preservation goals in their neighborhoods.



2.43. An illustration showing which elements of additions would be permitted, including the 15% allowance via Conditional Use.

3. Historic Resources





The Maybrook Mansion, Wynnewood

3. Historic Resources

Historic Resources outside of local Historic Districts have been regulated under the Township Code since 2000. Prior to this time, Township leadership recognized that there were important Historic Resources located outside of the boundaries of Historic Districts overseen by HARB. This led to a yearslong survey effort to identify potential resources and to determine how to enact ordinances to protect them.

The oversight of Historic Resources outside of districts is the duty of the Historical Commission (HC), as stipulated in the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC).¹ This is different enabling legislation than the law that permits the creation of Historic Districts and HARBs, Act 167 (the Historic District Act). The way that Historic Resources are regulated and HCs operate is also different from Historic Districts and HARBs; an HC has review authority over all sides of a resource beyond what is visible from the Public Way. Otherwise, the HC reviews applications based on the same Federal and local Standards and Guidelines for the treatment of historic properties as HARBs.



3.1. Distribution of Class I Historic Resources

3.1 Composition of Historic Resources

There are currently 177 Class I and 575 Class II Historic Resources in the Township outside of Historic Districts. The majority of these resources were designated with the initial adoption of the Historic Resource Inventory ordinance in March, 2000.²

Prior to the adoption of that ordinance, owners of properties recommended for inclusion on the Inventory were given the opportunity to opt-out of historic designation. As a result, 91 properties were excluded from the Inventory at the request of their owners, or about 12% of the current number of Class I and II resources. In the years since, 8 of those potential resources were demolished and 18 were added to the Inventory (including ten resources within the Maybrook complex). A full list is found in Appendix C.

Properties located within Historic Districts that had been established by 2000 were included in the Historic Resource Inventory as Class I resources. While the regulations governing those properties did not change (they remained under the purview of HARB), the classification allowed these properties to take advantage of use and relief incentives made available to Class I Resources.



3.2. Distribution of Class II Historic Resources

1 Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code - Act of 1968, P.L.805, No.247 as reenacted and amended.

2 Lower Merion Township Ordinance 3560, adopted March 15, 2000.

The majority of Resources in all classification categories are residentially zoned. 76 Class I resources (~63% of the total, not counting Historic Objects) are residential, as are 433 Class II resources (75% of the total) and 222 properties within Historic Districts (61.6% of the total). Properties with commercial and institutional zoning make up smaller shares. Railroad stations are counted separately in the totals.

3.2 Inventory Amendments Since 2000

The designation of several hundred Historic Resources with a single ordinance in 2000 was a monumental act of progress in the Township’s efforts to protect historic properties. Since 2000, the majority of Inventory amendments have been the result of Conditional Use applications that required Class I or II designation in order to obtain relief. About 20 Resources have been added to the Inventory through this process, indicating that Conditional Use is a successful way to incentivize and encourage historic designations. A full list of Conditional Use approvals involving Historic Resources since 2000 is found in Appendix B.

An effort to designate new resources occurred in 2018. At that time, 8 institutional, commercial, or transportation-related properties were added to the Inventory in addition to two significant groups of Historic Objects. This list of candidates was compiled by a committee composed of members of the HC, Lower Merion Conservancy, and Lower Merion Historical Society.

Traditionally, the Board of Commissioners has been reluctant to individually designate residential properties without the consent of the property owner, and has been skeptical of applications submitted by individuals not affiliated with the property in question. In the City of Philadelphia, applications for additions to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places (the equivalent of Lower Merion’s Historic Resource Inventory) by outside parties are so numerous that the city’s Historical Commission has empowered a Committee on Historic Designation to review these nominations on a monthly basis. Advocacy organizations based in the city are often the applicants who propose these designations, which require property owner notification but not consent.

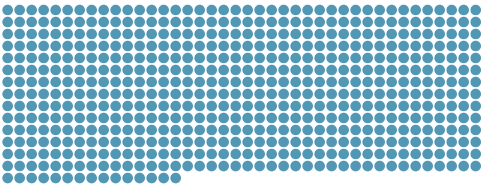
One major difference between the City’s process and the process followed by Lower Merion Township (as established in the Municipalities Planning Code) is that the Philadelphia Historical Commission has the authority to add a property to the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places or to designate entire Historic Districts without the consent of City Council. Lower Merion’s Historical Commission, in its role as an advisory board, can only recommend designations to the Board of Commissioners, which makes the final determination.

Historic Resources by Class

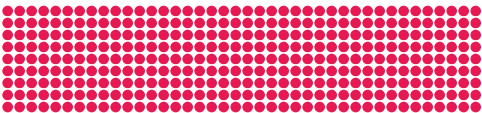
Class I (177)



Class II (575)



Historic Districts (360)



Opted Out in 2000 (91)



Class II Demolitions Since 2000 (27)



Historic Resources by Type

- Commercial
- Residential
- Institutional
- Transportation
- Object

Class I (177)



Class II (575)



Historic Districts (360)





3.3. The demolition of the “La Ronda” mansion in 2009 received widespread attention and led to a major public discussion about the limitations of Class II designation. An application to demolish the home was accepted by the Township in April of that year, and in May the HC and Building & Planning Committee attempted to move forward with a Class I designation upgrade. The property was eligible to become a Class I resource at that time because it had been determined eligible for the National Register in 2000. Because the demolition application was already in review, the designation did not move forward. In June, the Board of Commissioners imposed a 90-day delay on the demolition, and demolition commenced in October. Following the mansion’s demolition, Class I designation of La Ronda’s outbuildings on other parcels was not pursued.



3.4. 17 Elliott Avenue in Bryn Mawr was found by the HC to be eligible for Class I designation in 2024 based on five of the ten designation criteria. The application was submitted by an outside party and the property owner was opposed to designation. Given the lack of precedent to designate residential properties when opposed by owners and despite the property’s significance as affirmed by the HC, the Board of Commissioners voted against advertising an ordinance to apply Class I designation to the property.

As an advisory board, Lower Merion’s HC makes recommendations for designation based solely on a potential resource’s adherence to the designation criteria. The Board of Commissioners considers other factors, including economic factors, the wishes of the property owner, and public input.

The involvement of advocacy and history-focused organizations in Lower Merion in a wide array of efforts beyond historic preservation issues is among the reasons they might be reluctant to step into roles that could be seen as political or in any way controversial. The 2018 designation effort worked well as a collaborative project in which a small list of potential resources was identified with support from multiple community stakeholders and the Township’s HC taking a leading role.

The nomination of properties by individuals or activists without property owner support has to date been met with opposition from Township leadership. If residential property owners are opposed to the designation of their homes and the imposition of associated regulations (even if designation also allows for incentives), the Board of Commissioners is likely to side with the property owner rather than the third-party nominator. While proactive nominations by concerned citizens could result in the protection of threatened or potentially threatened properties, it could also result in unintended consequences such as Board disapproval. A nomination could be seen as a hostile act attracting unwanted attention and publicity, which could lead to sudden actions that are counter to the nominator’s intent. Direct engagement between concerned citizens and property owners outside of an official Township process is more likely to result in a positive preservation outcome than an unsolicited and potentially unwelcome nomination.

While there will likely never be a sweeping designation of Historic Resources on the scale of the 2000 ordinance, a consistent review of potential resources should be ongoing. New opportunities, threats, and discoveries can inspire the consideration of new Historic Resources, and community-led efforts to designate new resources are likely to succeed when supported by positive, direct engagement with stakeholders.

Conclusion: Community-led efforts to designate new resources are likely to succeed if nominators directly engage with stakeholders and receive their support, though, depending on other circumstances, designation is not always the most effective way to preserve a historic property.

Recommendation 3.2: Support designation efforts while facilitating positive dialogue when other solutions are more likely to effectively achieve historic preservation goals.

3.3 Residential and Commercial Historic Resources

Designating residential and commercial properties can be challenging politically. Commissioners, who have the final say on whether an ordinance is passed to amend the Inventory, can receive direct feedback from constituents who may be opposed to historic designation.

Approximately 75% of all properties in the Township are residentially zoned and 65% of the Historic Resources currently designated (including properties within Historic Districts) are residential. Lower Merion is truly a place defined by its homes, a fact reflected in these numbers.

Residential property owners are also the most likely to oppose historic designation, which is reflected in the list of property owners who opted out of designation when the original ordinance was passed in 2000. About 80% of the opt-outs from that time were residential properties.

A fear of regulation and local government oversight of changes to a property are the primary reasons homeowners are reluctant to historic designation. Many believe that designation would harm property values and prevent planned modifications by current or future property owners.

Commercial property owners are likely to be wary of designation for many of the same reasons. While commercial storefronts in downtown areas such as Bryn Mawr may retain a high degree of historic integrity, extensive alterations are sometimes seen as necessary for the benefit of businesses.

While the “negatives” of historic designation are usually highlighted, the positive benefits are often not fully understood or promoted. Through Regulated or Conditional Use approvals, owners of designated properties can obtain use and relief incentives that are not available to undesignated properties. Designated income-producing properties could also be eligible for grant funding and tax credits. Such incentives can add significant value to these properties and allow for improvements that would not be possible without designation.

Conclusion: Historic designation is often perceived as a negative action that prevents property owners from making certain kinds of changes to their properties. The benefits of designation are less widely understood.

Recommendation 3.3: More actively promote the incentives available to historically designated properties and promote designation as a positive way to modernize properties and allow them to produce income.



3.5, 3.6. In 2025, the residential properties located at 600 Black Rock Road, Bryn Mawr (top) and 468 Rockland Avenue, Merion Station (bottom) were given elevated designation at the request of their owners. 600 Black Rock Road, a work of architect Charles Barton Keen known as “Swarthmore Lodge,” was upgraded from Class II to Class I status. 468 Rockland Avenue, a portion of which is believed to date to the 18th century, was previously undesignated and was added to the Inventory as a Class II Historic Resource. These property owners understood the historical importance of their properties and voluntarily sought designation in order to ensure some level of protection or oversight.



3.7. The Conklin Memorial Gateway on the Haverford College campus would likely qualify for Class I designation. It was an early work of pioneering African American architect Julian Abele.

3.4 Evaluation of Institutional Historic Resources

Institutional campuses are among the most significant and publicly recognizable historic areas in the Township. The clustered, thematically-linked buildings, structures, landscapes, and objects that comprise these university, private school, private club, and religious properties are among the most historically and architecturally significant resources in Lower Merion.

A consistent re-evaluation of institutional properties is warranted because of the frequent and sometimes unexpected changes in ownership and function of these properties. Large institutions often acquire adjacent properties that could have historical significance, and institutional needs often require the adaptation or replacement of resources that may merit protection.

In 2006 the Township recognized the need for a thorough evaluation of current and potential Historic Resources located within educational campuses. A survey funded through a CLG grant evaluated three university and seven private school campuses.³

The 2006 survey recommended the designation of 28 unlisted properties as Class II Historic Resources and the upgrade of one Class II resource to Class I.

Much has changed since 2006: the criteria for designation have been modified to allow for more qualities of historic properties to be considered and eliminated National Register eligibility or designation as a requirement for Class I listing; new research has shed light on the histories of these properties; and some institutional campuses have changed through the acquisition of adjacent properties and the demolition of buildings.

With these present-day factors in mind, a new evaluation of institutional campuses has been conducted. The 2026 evaluation recommends the following updates:

Colleges & Universities

Bryn Mawr College

- Upgrade 2 Class II resources to Class I
- Designate 2 unlisted buildings as Class II

Haverford College

- Upgrade 9 Class II resources to Class I
- Designate 4 unlisted buildings and structures as Class I

Rosemont College

- Upgrade 7 unlisted buildings to Class II



3.8. Currently Class II, Beechwood House at the Shipley School would likely qualify for Class I designation.

3 One of the private school campuses surveyed, the Episcopal Academy, later became the Maguire Campus of St. Joseph's University.

St. Joseph's University

- Designate 9 unlisted buildings on main campus as Class II
- Upgrade 1 Class II resource on Maguire Campus to Class I
- Designate 9 unlisted buildings on Maguire Campus as Class II
- Designate 3 unlisted buildings on Berwick Road as Class II

Private Schools

Baldwin School

- Designate 4 unlisted buildings as Class II

Friends Central Lower School

- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II

Friends Central Upper School

- Upgrade 1 Class II resource to Class I
- Designate 3 unlisted buildings as Class II

Gladwyne Montessori School

- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II

Kosloff Torah Academy

- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II

Rosemont School of the Holy Child

- Upgrade 1 Class II resource to Class I
- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II

Shipley School

- Upgrade 2 Class II resources to Class I
- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II

Waldron Mercy Academy

- Upgrade 1 Class II resource to Class I
- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II

Private Clubs

American Legion Post 355

- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II

Ardmore Masonic Hall

- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class I

Merion Cricket Club

- Designate 4 Elbow Lane residences as Contributing Elements



3.9. Ardmore Masonic Hall may qualify for Class I designation due to its history and prominent presence on Ardmore Avenue.



3.10. Houses on Elbow Lane designed by Walter K. Durham that are now part of the Merion Cricket Club campus could qualify for inclusion as Contributing Elements to the Club's property.



3.11. Gracemere Honors House at Rosemont College (owned by the Society of the Holy Child Jesus), the former Alba B. Johnson residence, may qualify for Class I designation.



3.12. Our Mother of Good Counsel Church is a significant work of Edwin Forrest Durang. The school building on the church property is listed in the Inventory, but the church itself is not.

Philadelphia Country Club

- No changes
- *(Since 2000, 1 Class II resource has been demolished)*

Non-Profit Organizations

Devereux

- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II

Henry Foundation

- Upgrade 2 Class II resources to Class I

Idlewild Farm

- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class I

Stoneleigh

- Upgrade 1 Class II resource to Class I
- Designate 2 structures as Contributing Elements

Religious Organizations

Palace Missions

- Designate 2 unlisted buildings as Class II

Society of the Holy Child Jesus

- Upgrade 1 Class II building to Class I
- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II

Churches & Synagogues

Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church

- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II

Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church

- Upgrade 3 Class II resources to Class I
- Designate 6 residential buildings as Class II or Contributing

Church of the Good Shepherd

- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II

Church of St. Asaph

- Upgrade 1 Class II resource to Class I

Congregation Beth Hamedrosh

- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II

Our Mother of Good Counsel

- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class I

Household of Faith Deliverance Worship Center

- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II

Saints Memorial Baptist Church

- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II

St. Christopher's Church

- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II

St. Colman Catholic Church

- Designate 2 unlisted buildings as Class I

St. Luke United Methodist Church

- Designate 2 unlisted buildings as Class II

St. Mary's Episcopal Church

- Upgrade 1 Class II resource to Class I
- Designate 1 building as Contributing

St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church

- Designate 4 unlisted buildings as Class I
- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II

Zion Baptist Church

- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II

Cemeteries

Har Hasetim Cemetery

- Upgrade 2 Class II parcels to Class I

West Laurel Hill (Laurel Hill West) Cemetery

- Evaluate unlisted buildings and landscapes for Class I listing

Westminster Cemetery

- Evaluate unlisted buildings and landscapes for Class I listing

Lower Merion School District Properties

Bala Cynwyd Middle School

- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II

Belmont Hills Elementary School

- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II

Gladwyne Elementary School

- Designate 1 unlisted building as Class II



3.13. Saints Memorial Baptist Church in Bryn Mawr is among a group of small Black churches that have been under-recognized in the Inventory. In 2026 several of these churches attained Determinations of Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places through the assistance of the Lower Merion Conservancy.



3.14. A portion of Har Hasetim Cemetery, a significant historic Jewish cemetery in Gladwyne. Its current stewards have expressed interest in expanding the cemetery's current Class II designation.



3.15. Merion Elementary School is one of the Lower Merion School District's most architecturally significant buildings. Currently a Class II resource, it was determined eligible for the National Register and may qualify for Class I designation.



3.16. The Shapiro House in Penn Valley, designed by Louis Kahn, is among the significant undesignated Mid-Century Modern buildings in the Township that could qualify for Class I status.

Lower Merion High School/Arnold Field

- Designate 2 unlisted objects as Class II

Merion Elementary School

- Upgrade 1 Class II resource to Class I

A more detailed list of the resources and potential resources evaluated is found in Appendix D.

While this evaluation assesses what resources would *potentially* be eligible on each of these institutional campuses based on the designation criteria, designation is not recommended without careful consideration of other factors.

3.5 Further Expanding the Inventory

The Township contains a multitude of potential resources that go beyond the present composition of the Inventory. New research and discoveries have revealed the remarkable architectural histories of a large number of properties and the stories of the people and communities (including Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color, or "BIPOC" communities) that enlivened those properties. The appreciation of additional typologies and eras, including Mid-Century Modern architecture, has expanded greatly in recent years. The 2016 Comprehensive Plan stated that 11,000 properties are likely eligible for inclusion on the Inventory based on age, and while age is not a criteria for designation, it does indicate potential alignment with the criteria.⁴

When the Township was surveyed for potential Historic Resources in the 1970s, '80s, and '90s, sources of historical information were limited. Most historical narratives, especially for the oldest resources in the Township, were compiled based upon available printed materials, which were often secondary sources. Weekly newspaper columns specializing in local history promoted an interest in local history but were thinly sourced. While these articles drew a great deal of public interest and were largely well-written and researched based on the materials available, they also perpetuated (mostly minor) inaccuracies.

Since that time, the internet has made available countless primary sources, including digital facsimiles of architectural journals and local publications such as the *Philadelphia Real Estate Record and Builders' Guide*. The entire 55-year run of that weekly publication is now available and searchable through the efforts of the Athenæum of Philadelphia, providing researchers with an unmatched record of architecture and construction in the region.⁵

4 Lower Merion Township Comprehensive Plan, 2016, p. 281.

5 <https://www.philageohistory.org/BuildersGuide/>

Lower Merion Township is also fortunate to have a substantial record of building activity archived in its permits and building plan files. This archive documents more than a century of construction in the Township starting with the first building permit issued in 1920.

Permits have been archived on microfilm cards dating back to that year. Building Plan archives begin in 1926, with a handful of earlier plans surviving in the archive. Some plans have been removed from the archive over the years, but basic documentation (such as construction dates and architect names) is found in the permits associated with those projects.

The data found in the permits and building plans that have been cataloged thus far have given significant insight. This research has revealed precise information including construction dates and the names of architects, builders, and original property owners. This is the kind of information that can assist in establishing a case that a resource has the necessary criteria to become historically designated.

The Township's permits and plans had never been thoroughly cataloged prior to 2016. Starting that year, student interns began documenting the contents of this massive archive in an electronic database. Significant work has resulted in the cataloging of the first two decades of the Township's records.

The first 10,000 building plans in the Township's numbering system date from 1920 to 1963, a period of time representing a majority of the potential resources that are likely to qualify for designation under the criteria. The discoveries made since the beginning of the cataloging effort have revealed facts that would likely make many properties qualify for designation.

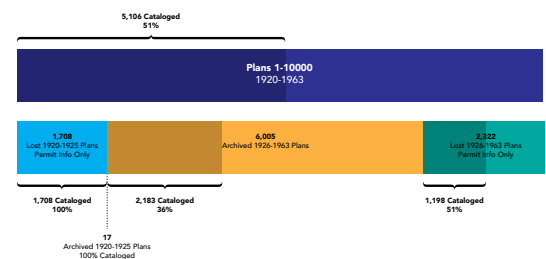
To date, just over half of the permit and plan records within that 43-year time period have been cataloged.

The continuation of the cataloging process is essential to preserve the Township's priceless record of its own past and to ensure that this record is available to interested property owners and historical researchers. Staff has formulated the following goals to maintain and expand the database:

- **Continue cataloging permit and plan records.** Work with local universities to find internship and volunteer opportunities.
- **Link actual addresses to plan information.** Before proper mailing addresses had been assigned to them, many permits refer to parcels by their distance from intersections. A card catalog maintained by the Building & Planning Department containing the information necessary to cross-reference plans and permits with their actual addresses should be combined with the permit and plan database.



3.17, 3.18. The Township's vast architectural records include permits dating back to 1920 on microfilm cards (top) and thousands of building plans dating back to 1926 (above).



3.19. The status of plan and permit cataloging efforts as of 2026.



3.20. Screen shot of the Philadelphia Architects & Buildings Project, the Athenæum of Philadelphia's vast database of architectural records spanning the greater Philadelphia area.

- **Add plan information and references to the Historic Resource Inventory map.** This will expand the usefulness of the online GIS-based map beyond the current Inventory of Historic Resources and allow for researchers to quickly and easily determine if additional properties might qualify for designation.
- **Submit information to the Philadelphia Architects and Buildings Project (PAB).** PAB⁶ is the region's most complete and accessible database of historic property information. The addition of the data from Lower Merion's archive to PAB would greatly increase the public's knowledge of Lower Merion's architecture and expand upon the catalogs of local architects whose work might not be well-documented.

Recommendation 3.5a: Consider designating new Historic Resources utilizing research from past surveys and newly discovered sources and consider expanding underrepresented categories of resources including historic objects, Mid-Century Modern architecture, and BIPOC histories.

Recommendation 3.5b: Continue to catalog the Township's historic plan archives and use the data found to assist in determining new potential Historic Resources.

3.6 Public Access of Survey Data



3.21. Screen shot of a Historic Resource Inventory database entry from the retired database.

The State Historic Preservation Office requires that CLGs make all Historic Resource survey data available to residents. With a Historic Resource Inventory as complex as Lower Merion's, this has proven to be a technical challenge. For several years a version of the Inventory containing narrative information and black and white survey photos was available on the Township website. Because this data was static and not linked directly to the database, it represented a snapshot in time that could not be updated when the Inventory was amended. A technical upgrade to the Township website was incompatible with this method of displaying Inventory data, which made the data publicly inaccessible though it remained safe on the Township's servers. During this period, Inventory entries were provided individually as PDF files to those who requested them.

The creation of a Geographic Information System (GIS) Technician position in the Building & Planning Department

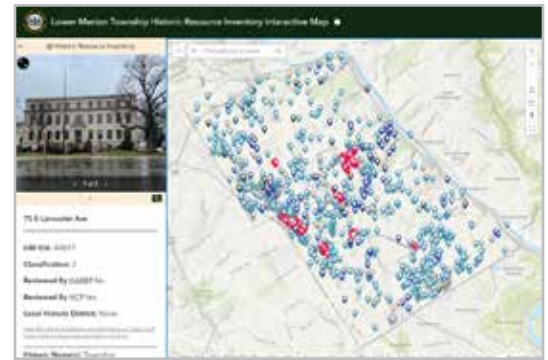
presented an opportunity for a new system to be developed from scratch using the existing HRI database. The new map-based interface⁷ displays information from years' worth of surveys including historical narratives drawing from a multitude of sources within a totally new user experience. In addition, recent photos of nearly all designated Historic Resources compiled from a new photographic survey funded by a CLG grant have been included.

Resource pins are color-coded in accordance with the established colors of Historic Resource types used on other maps and official documents. Magenta pins represent properties within Historic Districts, dark blue pins indicate Class I Historic Resources, and light blue pins represent Class II Historic Resources. In addition, resources that have been demolished are shown as dark gray pins and light gray pins represent surveyed properties that are not currently designated. In addition to browsing the Inventory via the map interface, users can search for included properties by typing addresses into a search box.

The expectation that owners of Historic Resources who are seeking information about the HARB/HC review process will be users of this map was considered carefully during the development process. As such, another goal of the map is to provide users with quick access to information relating to the regulatory process for Historic Resources. References to the HARB and HC link directly to the Township webpages for those advisory boards, and visitors are provided with links to the official HARB/HC Design Guidelines webpage at various points.

Following the launch of a public beta version of this interactive map in March 2025, staff began conceptualizing a more feature-rich version of the map utilizing the same data with advanced filtering options and more features. This will allow users to filter search results by architect or date range, view additional information on Contributing Elements to each Historic Resource, and more. The inclusion of this information will be of use to researchers and help the Building & Planning Department determine priorities for future historic designations and classification upgrades.

It is fitting that this map launched on the 25th anniversary of the adoption of the original ordinance that created the Historic Resource Inventory. Providing this level of survey information in an interactive interface is very unusual for a municipality of Lower Merion's size, but it is hoped that this map can serve as a model for how other communities can present historic survey data to the public.



3.22. Screen shot of the interactive Historic Resource Inventory map, showing the locations of Historic Resources on the right and details on the selected property in the left sidebar.

7 <https://www.lowermerion.org/hri/>

4. Historic Preservation in the Code





Lower Merion Township Administration Building, Ardmore

4. *Historic Preservation in the Code*

The Code of Lower Merion Township is a constantly evolving document, updated several times each year via ordinances passed by the Board of Commissioners to meet present-day needs. Sections of the Code periodically receive substantial updates, most recently the Zoning Code (in 2020) and Subdivision and Land Development Code (“SALDO,” in 2022).

The Historic Preservation sections of the Code have received incremental updates since the Historic District chapter was first adopted in 1962. At that time, Harriton House was the only historic site in the Township protected in any way. As functions of the HARB have changed and their responsibilities over other areas been added, amendments have been made to accommodate these changes. Yet at its core the chapter retains its original intent.

4.1 Overview

Chapter 88 of the Code of Lower Merion Township contains the majority of historic preservation regulations. It is the chapter that first established historic preservation in Lower Merion in 1962 and was amended to codify the formation of HARB and two additional Historic Districts in 1980.

Since that time, Chapter 88 has been amended to include additional Historic Districts as well as the description and duties of the Historical Commission and the Historic Resource Inventory. Additional regulations that apply to Class I and II properties were included in Chapter 62 of the Code in 2005. The incentives available to Historic Resources are described in the Zoning Code (Chapter 155) and the Historic Resource Inventory is found in Chapter A180.

Combined, the regulations found in the Code create a robust defense of historically designated properties while also providing these properties with benefits not available to undesignated properties.

Across the nation, communities with historic preservation regulations impose a wide range of protections across a broad spectrum. At the most basic end, local regulations can require HARB/HC input on proposed demolitions. Oversight of additions and other major modifications to historic properties are often commonly applied. Lower Merion also regulates the replacement of significant architectural elements such as windows, roofing, and siding.

While Lower Merion’s preservation regulations are broad in scope, it is worth noting that some municipalities go farther to regulate changes to historic properties. Many communities regulate paint colors in Historic Districts, for example, and the City of Philadelphia allows for the designation of historic interiors.

4.2 Recommended Code Edits

Township Staff thoroughly reviewed the Code sections pertaining to Historic Districts and Resources for errors, omissions, and needs for clarification. In addition, similar edits and updates have been compiled for Chapter 62, which is composed of locally-applied changes to the International Building Code pertaining directly to Historic Resources.

The recommended major edits are as follows:

Throughout:

- The term “objects” should consistently be included in the list of historic elements consisting of “buildings, structures, objects and sites.” Objects were added to the definition of Historic Resources in 2018 but the list of historic elements was not updated in all locations.
- References to the definition of “Historic Resource” should be revised for consistency with the definition in the Zoning Code, to be “properties containing contributing buildings, structures, objects and sites...” (underlined text is new). The use of terms adopted in the 2020 Zoning Code rewrite including “Contributing Element” and “Noncontributing Element” have also been added where applicable.
- Pronouns should be made gender neutral.

Chapter 62

- References to specific sections in the International Building Code should be modified.
- 62-2.**D.1.(b)** “Historic neighborhood” should be revised to “Historic District.”
- 62-2.**D.1.(c)** Add requirement that paint, stucco, and other coatings to unfinished exterior masonry surfaces of Historic Resources must be reviewed and approved.
- 62-2.**D.3.** The use of the term “demolition” should be clarified in the context of notice and posting requirements and its broad definition in the Zoning Code. Established Township practice has been to post notices on properties when a Contributing Element to a historically designated property is proposed to be fully demolished or removed, and the text of this section should be modified to reflect this practice and intent.

- 62-2.D.6.(a)(iii) Description of HC subcommittee review process should be added.

Chapter 88

- Rename the entire chapter from “Chapter 88, Historic Districts” to “Chapter 88, Historic Districts and Historic Resources,” to fully reflect the scope of this chapter.
- 88-1.1: *Definitions*. The present iteration of Chapter 88 references seven terms that are defined in “155-2.1: Definition of terms.” There are ten other terms in the Zoning Code that refer directly to Historic Resources and should be referenced in this section.
- 88-2.F(2)[1]: *Description of Boundaries*. A note in the Code states that the Haverford Station Historic District “shall take effect and be in force from the date the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission certifies, by resolution, to the historical significance of the district within the limits hereinabove defined.” The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission certified the district on September 19, 2007, so this note can now be removed.
- 88-6: *Certificate of Appropriateness Required for Issuance of Building Permits*. Added clarification that HARB does not review changes to the content of signs and awnings.
- 88-10: *Decision to Counsel Against Granting of Certificate; Recommended Changes*. Added description of HARB subcommittee review process.
- 88-18: *Historic Resource Inventory*. The description of “Historic Resource” should be revised in two instances for consistency with the definition in the Zoning Code, to be “properties containing contributing buildings, structures, objects and sites...” (underlined text is new).
- 88-19: *Special Requirements for Building Permits – Historic Resources*. Direct references to each section of Chapter 62 should be added.

Chapter A180

- A180-1: *Buildings, Sites, Structures and Objects Enumerated*. For consistency with the definition of “Historic Resource” found in the Zoning Code, the description of the Historic Resource Inventory should be edited from “buildings, sites, structures and objects” to “properties... which contain contributing buildings, sites, structures and objects.”

In addition to these edits recommended by Staff, the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) reviewed the Code and provided recommendations. The following text comes directly from the SHPO's evaluation.

There are several areas of the current HARB and Historical Commission ordinances that could be modified to be more in line with the CLG program standards and best practices. None of these recommendations should be taken as legal advice. The review and assessment of the ordinance is based on PA SHPO staff's experience and knowledge of historic preservation ordinances but should not be a substitute for the advice of the municipal solicitor. Recommendations include the following:

Adding an Economic Hardship Clause

Economic hardship provisions have often been referred to as a 'safety valve' for historic preservation ordinances. They are a formalized opportunity to "provide relief from the regulatory requirements in circumstances where denying a COA or similar approval would result in unreasonable economic hardship. The ordinance must include criteria for determining whether a hardship exists that are consistent with State and Federal statutes and applicable case law and articulate a procedure for considering hardship claims."

Lower Merion Township's ordinance does not currently have a formal economic hardship procedure or criteria, although the concept of hardship is referenced. To comply with the CLG program standards, the Township should add an economic hardship procedure including criteria to determine whether such a hardship exists.

Classification of Historic Resources

The current Historic Resource Ordinance creates two classes of individually designated historic resources, Class I and Class II. The major distinction between these two classes is that the final decisions of the Board of Commissioners are binding in relation to Class I resources, but not Class II resources. In addition, the designation requirements are also different as Class I resources must meet three of the criteria in category A and at least one in category B.

In general, the PA SHPO does not support the classification of historic resources as it appears to prioritize certain groups' histories over others and can confuse applicants and members of the public. PA SHPO staff would recommend that the Township revisit the classification of resources.

In addition, the fact that decisions related to Class II resources are not binding is not consistent with the CLG program standards. Per the requirements, “Decisions made by the governing body or administrative official pursuant to the review process in the ordinance must be binding on the applicants.” Through the information gathered by PA SHPO staff, it became clear that the lack of binding decisions is also challenging for those involved in the Township’s preservation program. The lack of binding decisions has resulted in the loss or drastic alteration of properties that Township residents believe are protected and regulated. PA SHPO staff acknowledges that making changes to the ordinance to either remove classification entirely or to make decisions regarding Class II resources binding may be difficult. With that in mind, recommendations are as follows:

- Assess the benefits and drawbacks of the classification system. If the desire is to retain classification:
 - Review and reassess all Class I and Class II resources to ensure that resources are appropriately classified based on established criteria.
 - Assess whether other preservation tools may be helpful or needed to address historic properties in Lower Merion Township.
 - Ensure that decisions regarding Class II resources are binding.
 - Based on best practices, all resources should be reviewed the same way to avoid administrative error and confusion for applicants. However, the CLG program standards do not expressly prohibit there being a difference between the types of projects reviewed based on classification. Whatever is reviewed for Class II resources should be binding.

Definitions

The current ordinance has a robust list of definitions, however for the purposes of the preservation section of the ordinance it may be prudent to consider several additional definitions. For example, defining addition, alteration, and public way would be helpful in clarifying what these terms mean in the context of the preservation portion of the code. In canvassing those involved with the program, several individuals noted that many applications are not complete when they proceed to the HARB or Historical Commission for review. Defining in the code what constitutes a complete application—even in general terms—would assist the HARB, Historical Commission, and applicants. PA SHPO staff, therefore, recommends adding definitions for the items noted above and assessing the ordinance to determine if any additional definitions would be helpful.

There are several aspects of the current review requirements and process that will be addressed in this section. First, the organization of the review process section is quite difficult to follow. This may be unavoidable as the section seeks to replicate the pattern seen in other part of the ordinance. If the section cannot be reevaluated for clarity, PA SHPO staff recommends implementing other strategies to facilitate understanding of the process such as review process handouts, flow charts, or handbooks which could be hosted on the Township website with the other resources on the Design Guidelines webpage. These resources may be the best solution if addressing this in the ordinance is not possible.

In addition, in the demolition delay section of the ordinance, associated with the activities of the historical commission, there are several references to the HARB which arise seemingly out of nowhere. Because the role of the HARB is not readily apparent in this section, PA SHPO staff would recommend clarifying the duties of the HARB in the Historical Commission's demolition delay process.

In addition to clarifying the role of the HARB, there may be room for additional documentation to ease the burden of demolition review on both the HARB and Historical Commission. Currently, the application requirements do not appear to require a structural report; however, assessment of the stability of a building by a structural engineer or architect experienced in historic preservation is extremely pertinent. Assessment of structural condition, feasibility of repair, and the cost to make a building habitable versus its value, can help determine whether or not it is appropriate to allow for demolition of a contributing or individually designated historic resource. While structural reports can be costly, the addition of an economic hardship process to the ordinance will allow a safety valve to circumvent this requirement where appropriate. The inclusion of the requirement to produce a structural report on the other hand will provide both the HARB and Historical Commission with critical information for decision making. PA SHPO staff would recommend including a structural report in the required materials for demolition applications.

Lastly, the HARB and Historical Commission currently utilize sub-committees as an avenue to review final details, a process which appears to work well for both boards and applicants, however the process is not addressed in the ordinance. PA SHPO staff recommends addressing this process in the ordinance, outlining the circumstances in which sub-committees are permitted, the process to call them, the number of board members required, and their intended outcome.

Administrative Reviews

One of the many assets that Lower Merion has is a full-time staff person dedicated to managing the Township's historic preservation program. Having full-time, professional staff provides an opportunity for the Township to streamline reviews for simple or routine projects through administrative reviews. At present, the ordinance does not clearly state whether administrative reviews are permitted, although the design guidelines indicate that staff can review in-kind replacement. There may be other project types that could be added to the permitted administrative review such as signs, awnings, or minimally visible alterations. Administrative reviews should be enabled through the ordinance and PA SHPO staff recommends the Township assess project types that could be added to the current list of administrative reviews.

Minor Technical Edits and Clarification

While addressing other concerns in the ordinance, there is an opportunity to address minor technical concerns as well to improve the clarity of the ordinance and make it more inclusive.

- **References to 'the Board':** There are several instances in which 'the Board' is mentioned but it is not clear if that refers to the HARB or the Board of Commissioners. PA SHPO staff recommends clarifying these references to facilitate understanding of the ordinance.
- **Numbers:** The ordinance currently includes numerals rather than numbers spelled out. To avoid problematic typos or errors, PA SHPO staff recommends spelling out the number and including the numeral in parenthesis, e.g., Sixty-five (65).
- **Calendar vs. Business Days:** Similar to the references to numbers noted above, for the sake of clarity it is important to be explicit in noting calendar versus business days in the ordinance. PA SHPO staff recommends adding this information to the ordinance and any associated instructions for applications.
- **Certification of Appropriateness:** As the term Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) appears capitalized in the enabling legislation, all references to COAs should be capitalized.

SHPO's technical support to local municipalities is an essential service to ensure a consistent statewide application of historic preservation regulations. Yet some regulations apply better to

some communities rather than others. Township staff review of the SHPO evaluation is as follows:

- The addition of an **economic hardship clause** and the wording thereof will be explored.
- The issue of **classification** is examined in Section 4.3.
- The inclusion of **definitions** such as addition, alteration, and public way will be considered in a future update to the Zoning Code.
- Explanations of the **Project Review Requirements and Process**, including flow charts, have been added to quick reference sheets found on the Design Guidelines webpage.¹
- The Code will be amended to clarify the roles of the HARB and HC where no distinction is made.
- The HARB and HC **subcommittee review process** will be described in the Code.
- Regarding **administrative reviews**, staff currently conducts limited reviews of building permit applications. Applications that might not require review include ones that are considered “repairs,” replacements found to be “in-kind” (such as the replacement of asphalt shingle roofs with new asphalt shingle roofs, as long as no other elements are being replaced), and changes to properties in Historic Districts that are not visible from the Public Way. If content on signs and awnings (such as wording or logos) is being changed, no review is required. Additional opportunities to streamline application reviews will continue to be explored.
- All minor **technical edits and clarifications** will be made as suggested.

Conclusion: The Township Code has not evolved to best reflect current practice. Edits have been made haphazardly in a way that is difficult for those using the Code, including property owners, advisory board members, and Township Staff, to follow.

Recommendation 4.2: While the substance of what is currently written in the Code needs to be retained, the text of the Code will benefit from being reorganized, expanded, clarified, and rewritten where necessary. The recommendations compiled by Staff and most of those recommended by PHMC should be adopted.

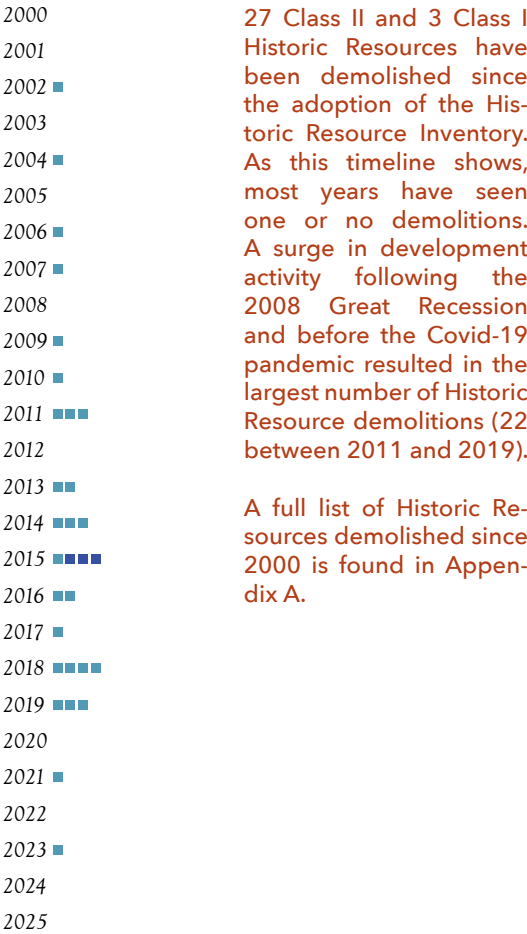
1 <https://www.lowermerion.org/design-guidelines>



4.1. An 1886 carriage house in Haverford was demolished in 2023. Its Class II designation was unable to prevent the Township from issuing a permit to demolish the building.

Historic Resource Demolitions by Year

- Class I
- Class II



4.3 Classification

Historic Resources are defined as Class I or Class II resources in the Township Code. While Contributing Resources within most Historic Districts are also listed in the Inventory as Class I Historic Resources, this section pertains only to Resources outside of districts that are overseen by the Historical Commission.

Class I Historic Resources have the highest level of protection and are so designated due to their greater level of significance.

Separating Historic Resources into classes is not universally accepted as ideal historic preservation practice. However, where criteria are clear and can be consistently applied, classification has been used as an effective way to apply stricter standards to more significant resources while allowing a larger number of resources to follow less strict requirements.

The use of different classes for Historic Resources is common practice internationally. In England, Historic Resources are classified on a national scale to a single set of criteria and are separated into three classes, or “Grades:” 1, 2*, and 2. The Grade with the highest level of protection, Grade 1, constitutes just 2.5% of the Historic Resources throughout the UK, demonstrating that this higher level of protection also requires a higher standard of proof for significance. This nationwide classification system is managed by Historic England, a public body of the British government which maintains the National Heritage List for England and oversees changes to listed properties.

The SHPO discourages classification, stating in their evaluation of Lower Merion Township:

“In general, the PA SHPO does not support the classification of historic resources as it appears to prioritize certain groups’ histories over others and can confuse applicants and members of the public. PA SHPO staff would recommend that the Township revisit the classification of resources.”

Additionally, the evaluation notes that the review process for Class II Resources is non-binding, which is counter to CLG guidelines.

“...the fact that decisions related to Class II resources are not binding is not consistent with the CLG program standards. Per the requirements, ‘Decisions made by the governing body or administrative official pursuant to the review process in the ordinance must be binding on the applicants.’”

Concern has also been expressed locally by the Historical Commission, members of the public, and members of the Board of Commissioners regarding recent applications involving Class II

Resources that were found to be inappropriate but could not be denied. Recent examples include the complete replacement of a historic terra cotta tile roof with a solar panel system and the demolition of a carriage house built in 1886.

Frustration over the HC and Commissioners' lack of ability to control inappropriate changes has led to comments about how the requirements of Class II designation could be revised to result in outcomes that better achieve the Township's historic preservation goals. The majority of applications reviewed by the HC each month involve Class II properties, with Class I properties reviewed much less frequently. As a result, most of the HC's efforts result in recommendations that cannot become requirements.

This lack of authority held by the HC (and by extension the Board of Commissioners) over Class II resources is sometimes seen as proof of the futility of Class II designation. It is true that the HC must, at times, review applications that it strongly believes to be inappropriate, but cannot recommend any action stronger than a delay of up to 90 days. These instances, though infrequent compared with recommendations of approval, are difficult for the Commission to make given that the group's members are aware that their action will have little impact on the project's final outcome.

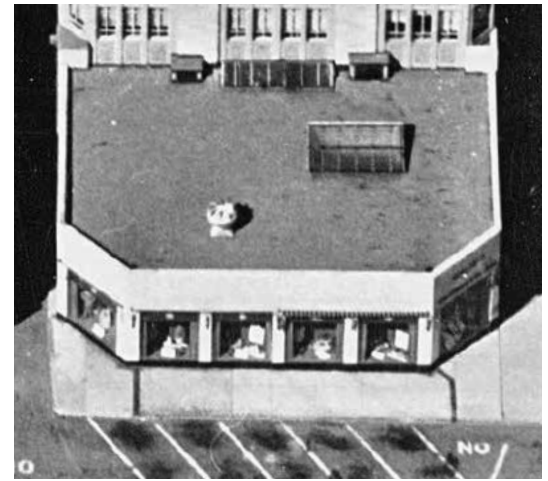
Despite these challenging circumstances, it is worth noting that the bulk of the HC's input on changes to Class II properties results in far more positive impacts. Nearly every review of a Class II Resource concludes with a recommendation to make modifications that will positively change the outcome of a project. Almost half of these recommendations also assign subcommittees of HC members to continue to work with applicants to make sure that their work is being done to high historic preservation standards with appropriate materials and changes that better adhere to the Township's Design Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.

Applicants often appreciate this input, and despite a slightly larger expense to amend architectural plans and change materials, the final outcome improves upon the initial submission. Applicants are almost always willing to accommodate the HC's suggested changes to their plans rather than accepting a delay.

Class II designation should therefore not be thought of as the "protection" of a Historic Resource. The service that the classification provides is *advanced design review* by the experienced professionals on the HC, a means to encourage the appropriate alteration of Historic Resources through a positive dialogue rather than a prohibition on inappropriate alterations.

A sweeping change to the definition of Class II designation and the process by which Class II Resources are reviewed could result in unintended consequences. A more balanced, targeted approach would therefore be preferable.

The following are options for revising Class II designation, including changes to the process and potential consequences.



4.2, 4.3, 4.4. An example of the impact of the HC's role in steering projects with Class II designation in a more appropriate direction through their "advanced design review" process was in the 2025 review of changes to a historic (ca. 1931) storefront in Suburban Square. The limestone façade of the retail space had originally consisted of large glass openings separated by limestone pilasters (top). Those pilasters were removed many years ago. An incoming tenant's original design (middle) presented to the HC made no reference to those pilasters, but a revision as a result of HC review paid tribute to those missing architectural elements with additional vertical mullions (bottom).

Option 1: Eliminate Class II, make all resources Class I

This option would empower the Township to prevent the demolition or inappropriate alteration of any Historic Resource, a power currently reserved only for the 177 individually designated Class I resources and 360 properties located within Historic Districts. The combined number of resources would more than double by adding 575 Class II resources.

This change would undoubtedly result in challenges to the amendment which could result in a weakening of the regulations or even a challenge to the designation of all 575 Class II resources.

Option 2: Alter the Definition of Class II

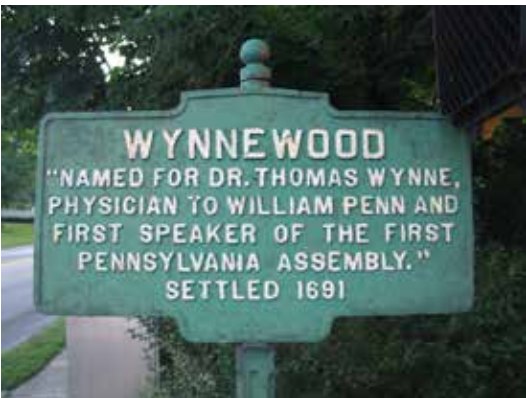
Changing the requirements for Class II-designated properties to align more closely with Class I could result in the same challenges as Option 1. Amending the Code to allow the Board of Commissioners to deny an application involving a Class II resource that is deemed inappropriate would essentially be akin to imposing Class I regulations on Class II properties, but without the benefit of the Zoning incentives available only to Class I resources. A compromise solution may be to give the Board of Commissioners the ability to deny an application to fully demolish a Class II resource but not deny other proposed alterations.

Option 3: Targeted Upgrades

A resource-by-resource evaluation of all 575 Class II resources would undoubtedly find that a significant number would meet the current criteria for Class I designation. The list of Class I Historic Resources was initially limited because of the National Register eligibility or listing requirement, which was changed in 2018.

Staff believes that a significant number of current Class II Historic Resources would qualify for Class I designation, comprising a combination of residential, commercial, and institutionally zoned parcels across all 14 wards. An effort to evaluate these resources would not be insignificant, would require the input of Historical Commission members (perhaps as a subcommittee), and would benefit from the expertise of other members of the community knowledgeable about historic preservation and Lower Merion's history.

In 2025, staff identified a number of historic objects that qualified for Class I designation, including all 42 Class II-designated historic street signs in Merion and Merion Park. Several unlisted historic roadside objects including the two "Ardmore" Keystone Markers and six "Wynnewood" Keystone Marker variants were also found to meet the criteria for Class I designation. The



4.5, 4.6. Examples of an Ardmore Keystone Marker and a Wynnewood variant marker. Likely dating to the 1920s, these roadside signs were designated as Class I Historic Objects in 2025.

subsequent upgrading of these objects as Class I resources serves as an example for how Historic Resources can be identified and designated according to their adherence to the criteria.

Option 4: Remove Designation of Class II Resources, Only Regulate Class I Resources

Under this option, current Class II Historic Resources would receive no oversight from the Historical Commission review process. While occasional demolitions of these resources would occur as they do now, the lack of any review of exterior alterations to these properties would result in work that is less appropriate to their historic character. Property owners will not benefit from the input of experts on the Historical Commission and dozens of projects each year will move forward without the refinements that frequently result from non-binding Historical Commission review.

Conclusion: Despite the Township’s inability to require applicants to make appropriate adjustments to their plans involving Class II Historic Resources, there is still value in the review of Class II resources. Applicants benefit from the expertise of the HC and the majority of projects are adjusted to better comply with the Township’s Design Guidelines as a result of HC review.

Recommendation 4.3a: Establish a committee to evaluate the current list of Class II Historic Resources and to make recommendations for potential upgrades to Class I designation (Option 3 above). The committee should form a list of Class II properties recommended for upgrades based on the current designation criteria, and the Township should proceed quickly with the process to amend the Inventory accordingly.

Recommendation 4.3b: Evaluate potential historic objects for designation.

4.4 Incentives for Historic Resources

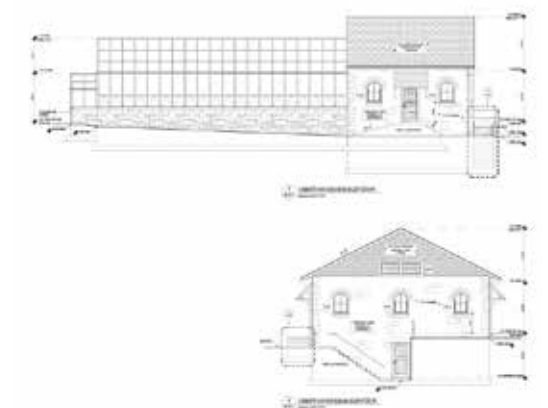
The “carrot and stick” approach is common in the implementation of historic preservation law. If a government wishes to preserve Historic Resources by imposing regulations on property owners, it is fair to also offer those owners incentives that may not be available to non-historic properties.



4.7. A Class II Historic Resource on Dove Lake Road was fully renovated with input on all details through the HC review process in 2021.



4.8. Changes were made to the design of a pedestrian bridge connecting to the WCAU Building (a Class II resource) as a result of HC review in 2024. These changes, though small, made the project more appropriate for the resource.



4.9. In 2024 the HC reviewed the construction of a new greenhouse on the Stoneleigh property, a Class II resource. Even though the new building replaced a non-contributing structure, the HC’s review was essential to ensure that the work would not have a negative impact upon this significant historic property.



4.10. The William Penn Inn on Lancaster Avenue in Wynnewood, a successful adaptive reuse project that took advantage of Historic Resource incentives to complete a successful multifamily conversion that preserved the resource.

Lower Merion Township took this approach with its adoption of the Historic Resource Inventory in 2000. The Historic Resources Overlay District made a group of incentives available via Conditional Use to Class I and II Historic Resources, including properties within local Historic Districts that were listed by address in the Inventory. The incentives were described in the Zoning Code and were revised in the 2020 Zoning Code update.²

An important requirement of Historic Resource incentives is that the properties receiving the benefits provide a covenant ensuring the permanent protection of the resource’s façade.³ These covenants are recorded with the Montgomery County Recorder of Deeds and run with each property.

Background

Since incentives were made available to owners of Historic Resources in 2000, approximately 55 property owners have taken advantage of these incentives through the Conditional Use process (see Appendix B). About half were for relief from form standards and the other half were for uses, with a handful seeking both relief and use incentives. Single family residences, multi-family developments, and institutions alike have benefitted from these incentives, which have been applied in creative ways to produce successful outcomes for complicated projects.

Historic Resource incentives give property owners the ability to modernize existing buildings in ways that could be more attractive than replacing them with new structures. Several redevelopment projects in the Township have effectively used these incentives to preserve buildings that may otherwise have been demolished. The adaptive reuse of historic structures such as the William Penn Inn in Wynnewood and the First Baptist Church of Ardmore allowed those historic structures to be retained as financially successful conversions into multifamily dwellings.

Conclusion: Given a track record of successes, the incentive program can be considered a major positive historic preservation success that has resulted in the permanent protection of several significant Historic Resources.

Current Incentives

Form relief incentives are usually fairly straightforward requests to expand or retain nonconformities when the constraints of

2 Lower Merion Township Zoning Code: § 155-7.1 HROD Historic Resources Overlay District.
3 Lower Merion Township Zoning Code: § 155-7.1.B(3)

property boundaries and coverages are difficult to overcome.

The most effective applications of use incentives have been for the conversion of large historic buildings into multi-family dwellings and the creation of accessory dwelling units.

Other incentives have been seldom or never used. The “Cultural studio/gallery/museum” use has never been applied for but could be an appropriate and low-impact use, such as for a house museum. The “Lodging/bed-and-breakfast” use has also never been utilized, though its implementation could potentially create either opportunities or conflicts depending upon the location of the resource and the challenges created by neighbors.

Additional incentives could be applied, but some would be difficult or legally complicated to pursue. The most commonly requested incentive is of a financial nature. Staff is often asked if designation will result in tax breaks or other monetary benefits. Such benefits are not allowed under the rules governing the Township, though some financial incentives are available through other means. National Register-listed properties or ones contributing to National Register districts are eligible for federal tax incentives if owners record façade easements. Income-producing properties (potentially including bed-and-breakfast uses and multi-unit rentals) could be eligible for historic preservation grants. Renovations to properties of this kind can also be eligible for federal tax credits. Grant opportunities for single-family residential properties are virtually non-existent outside of loans for low-income homeowners.

Incentives Within Historic Districts

Upon the adoption of the Historic Resource Inventory in 2000, all Contributing Resources within Historic Districts were listed as Class I resources. At the time, status as a Contributing Resource to a district was among the criteria for Class I designation and five of the current seven local Districts had been designated.

The two Historic Districts created since 2000 are the Haverford Station (2007) and English Village (2010) Historic Districts. The homes in the English Village district had been listed individually as Historic Resources prior to the formation of the district. Only some of the Contributing Resources within the Haverford Station Historic District had been listed on the Inventory prior to that district’s adoption. While the addresses of these properties remained on the Inventory, the Board of Commissioners refrained from listing the other addresses within the district as Class I Historic Resources, which would have been consistent with established practice.

The exclusion of the Haverford properties from the Inventory did not limit the Township’s regulation on those properties. Through the HARB review process, the Board retained the ability to deny an application found to be inappropriate, which is identical to the restrictions placed on Class I-designated properties.



4.11. Heritage at Haverford was an economically viable project thanks to the construction of a new twin residence between two historic homes within the Haverford Station Historic District. The moving of one of those homes to the edge of the lot, using form relief incentives via Conditional Use, created space for the new construction.

The lack of designation in this district did not make properties within the district automatically eligible for Conditional Use review. Under the Historic Resources Overlay District, only properties designated as Class I or II Historic Resources can apply for uses or form relief incentives; properties located within the boundaries of local Historic Districts that are not listed by address on the Historic Resource Inventory are ineligible for these incentives.⁴

The exclusion of the Haverford Station Historic District from the Inventory, which is inconsistent with the treatment of other local Historic Districts, has resulted in a burdensome process for property owners in the district who wish to take advantage of historic incentives. The “Heritage at Haverford” development on Old Lancaster Road could not be possible without setback and impervious coverage relief. Similarly, the expansion of a home on Barrett Avenue would not have been feasible without an infringement of six inches into a side yard setback. In each of these cases, the property owners were required to list their properties on the Inventory before proceeding with their Conditional Use applications; this involved a review of the Historical Commission (the only advisory board that has the authority to recommend amendments to the Inventory), the review of the Planning Commission and Building & Planning Committee, and the advertisement and adoption of an ordinance by the Board of Commissioners. These steps lengthened an already complicated process by a matter of months for each applicant.

Similarly, for regulated uses that can be approved by the Zoning Officer without the need for a Conditional Use hearing, a simple approval can be held up by the requirement for a property owner within the Haverford Station Historic District to obtain designation via ordinance by the Board of Commissioners.

If the remaining undesignated but contributing properties within the Haverford Station Historic District were added to the Historic Resource Inventory, bringing that district into parity with all other local districts, it would introduce no new regulations and would greatly simplify the process by which a property owner could obtain Historic Resource incentives.

Recommendation 4.4a: The Historic Resource Overlay incentive program should be continued, but has the potential for refinement. Periodically re-evaluate current incentives and consider their consequences.

4 § 155-7.1.B(1): “The provisions of Article VII, Conservation and Preservation Overlays, shall apply to all Class 1 and Class 2 Historic Resources and contributing resources in local historic districts designated by the Board of Commissioners and identified on the Historic Resource Inventory, unless stated otherwise.”

4.5 Application of Building Codes

In communities like Lower Merion that are largely built-out, most building permits issued are for work to existing buildings. While new buildings are required to comply with stringent codes relating to zoning, safety, and methods of construction, the requirements for work on existing buildings allows many elements to remain that would not be permitted in new construction.

The Building Division of Lower Merion’s Building & Planning Department works under the 2018 version of the International Existing Building Code (IEBC), including Appendices A and B.

Existing buildings not undergoing a repair, rehabilitation project, or addition are “grandfathered” from having IEBC requirements applied retroactively. Changes to buildings deemed “Historic Buildings” are also exempt from some requirements. The IEBC lists the following as “Historic Buildings:”

1. Listed, or certified as eligible for listing, by the State Historic Preservation Officer or the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places, in the National Register of Historic Places.
2. Designated as historic under an applicable state or local law.
3. Certified as a contributing resource within a National Register, state designated or locally designated historic district.

Under these definitions, each Historic Resource in Lower Merion designated Class I or II, properties located within local Historic Districts, and properties listed in the National Register or contributing to a National Register Historic District are considered “Historic Buildings.”

The application of Building Codes to Historic Buildings is outlined thoroughly in *National Park Service Preservation Brief 51: Building Codes for Historic and Existing Buildings: Planning and Maximizing their Application*.⁵

Accessibility

Since the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became Federal law in 1990, owners of places of public accommodation are required to provide access to interior spaces and restroom facilities,



4.12. The Historical Commission reviewed the design of an appropriately designed ADA-compliant ramp on the front elevation of the former Barnes Foundation in Merion Station, a Class I Historic Resource. The design was refined as a result of the HC review process.

5 Kaplan, Marilyn E. “Preservation Brief 51: Building Codes for Historic and Existing Buildings: Planning and Maximizing their Application.” National Park Service, June, 2024.

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1739/upload/preservation-brief-51-building-codes.pdf>

among other amenities. Possibly more than any other regulation, the ADA has led to the modification of countless publicly accessible historic buildings through the construction of access ramps, the addition of elevator towers, and other changes to make these locations more accessible.

While such changes can have a negative impact on a historic building's original fabric, well-designed solutions to these requirements can be compatible with the existing architecture and comply with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. While the HARB and HC can review such elements, reviews should be undertaken with the understanding that, by law, these solutions must be implemented, even if the plans initially conceived can be changed to become more appropriate for the historic context. Massing and materials are among the aspects of a project that can be considered, and clever ways to mask these new features or design them to match historic features can be designed.



4.13. Example of a gas meter on a home in English Village, located just feet from the curb line.

Utility Meters

Utility companies and regulators have increasingly sought to relocate gas and electric meters to more convenient, prominent, and visible locations on the exteriors of buildings. The prominent placement of meters can have a substantial impact on the character of a Historic Resource or Historic District, especially if the subject property is close to a public way or if the nature of its architecture provides few potential meter locations.

PECO, the primary supplier of gas and electric service to within Lower Merion Township, must comply with the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC)'s requirement to place all indoor gas meters outdoors by 2034. PECO is also subject to PA Code § 59.18., which allows for owners of Historic Buildings (the definition of which is shared with the IEBC) to apply for waivers from meter relocation standards, allowing interior meter locations to be considered if owners of historically designated properties request such placement.⁶ Safety is a primary consideration, and PECO will consider other factors, including the locations of gas regulators and vent piping. Older installations often do not meet current codes and must be brought up to modern standards to mitigate risk and make utility connections as safe as possible. Still, according to PECO, the majority of waiver requests are granted if property owners can prove that historic designation applies to their property.

The potential to apply for this waiver is available to the hundreds of historically designated properties in Lower Merion, including properties within Historic Districts. It is also available to properties that are eligible for the National Register of Historic

Places or located within listed or eligible National Register Historic Districts, which includes some properties that are not also locally designated.

This option is not widely known to the public, yet the Township has consulted with PECO on the placement of meters in some high-visibility areas including English Village. A public education campaign to make owners of historic properties aware of the possibility of exemption would further promote the benefits of historic designation.

Code/Preservation Compromises

Certain codes, particularly those related to safety, cannot be circumvented for the sake of maintaining historic fabric. The requirement for windows to comply with egress standards is one example. Many historic double-hung sash windows are not compliant with these standards in settings such as second and third floor apartments over commercial storefronts. The method of operating windows on these levels often must be changed in order to comply with these standards. Because the window openings themselves are usually large enough to meet the requirement, replacement windows can become casement windows that open to the full width and height of that opening. While the original function is lost, the general design features of the original window can be replicated through the application of light divisions and the use of a thicker central horizontal muntin, which would resemble a meeting rail of a double-hung window assembly if noticeably thicker than other muntins.

Painted brick

The painting of masonry, especially brick, is seen as an inappropriate modification that irreversibly alters the appearance of a façade and causes long-term deterioration. It is the only use of paint that is explicitly reviewed by the HARB and HC, as it involves a physical change to a material rather than simply a change in color. While some paints are formulated to allow masonry to breathe and for moisture to escape rather than be trapped, brick is often painted with inappropriate finishes that can trap moisture and cause damage. Reversing the painting process is also expensive, time-consuming, and damaging to the underlying material.

The painting of brick and other masonry is a choice usually made by short-term property owners and tenants who seek to change the appearance of a building to meet their aesthetic preferences or brand standards. It is the responsibility of the Township, through the HARB and HC, to consider the long-term consequences of any alteration to a Historic Resource beyond current occupants and well into the future.



4.14. The center horizontal muntins of the modern replacement windows in this dormer window found in the Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District were made thicker to replicate the appearance of a meeting rail. Even though an egress-compliant casement window will not replicate the visual depth of a double-hung window, design choices like this can help a replacement window retain proportions and a visual link with historic windows.



4.15. When an incoming tenant began to paint this brick façade in the Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District in 2025, the unapproved work was stopped. After multiple meetings and detailed review of the work by HARB and the Board of Commissioners, the work was allowed to proceed given the relative insignificance of the 1953 commercial addition, the ineffectiveness of a chemical paint removal test, and the potential damage that would have been caused by more invasive removal techniques. The unpermitted work resulted in a fine to the business owner and the delay in the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.



4.16. A previous owner of this undesignated commercial building in Rosemont painted the brick façade years ago. When a new owner preferred unpainted brick, they used an abrasive method to remove the layer of paint, which brought back the building's original appearance but also caused irreparable damage to the brick that is likely to hasten deterioration. This sort of abrasive treatment is counter to Secretary of the Interior's Standard 7.

Painting a façade surface that was not intended to be painted is a cheaper and faster way to cover up damage or blemishes than solving the root problem. Damage to masonry should always be addressed prior to painting, and while an additional exterior coating can provide protection from water intrusion, water will still enter at imperfections. The painting of a brick wall of an apartment building in Davenport, Iowa may have contributed to that wall's collapse in May, 2023. Damage to that wall was not properly addressed before being painted, and the resulting engineering report stated that improperly applied paint will "actively prevent water from being able to evaporate from the wall system as required."⁷ Three died in the collapse, which required the entire building to be demolished and left its surviving residents displaced.

It is not uncommon for businesses to alter the exteriors of the buildings they occupy, and, if renting, landlords often allow painting and other surface coatings in order to retain or attract tenants. Yet the future of the building can be impacted by this momentary impulse. Should the next occupant of the space not find this treatment to their aesthetic liking or branding standards, remedies include repainting the surface (thus creating multiple layers of paint on top of historic material) or attempting to remove the paint, usually through insensitive means. The inappropriate removal of elements including paint is such a pervasive historic preservation issue that one of the ten *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* addresses it. Standard 7 reads: "Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible."

Recommendation 4.5a: Consider prohibiting the application of surface coatings, including paint and stucco, on currently unfinished masonry façades, including stone and brick, applicable to designated historic buildings and other existing structures in commercial zoning districts.

Deconstruction

The Lower Merion Conservancy has identified the conventional demolition of buildings as a major issue of both historical and environmental concern. A Township analysis of building permits found 300 permits to demolish buildings between 2010 and 2021 in a mix of residential, commercial, and institutional zones.

It is believed that nearly all of these demolitions were conventional in nature, essentially smashing buildings to pieces using

wrecking balls, bulldozers, and other heavy equipment. As the Conservancy observed in a memo on the subject, conventional demolition “is not defensible; it is environmentally destructive and socially irresponsible. It is also a practice that a growing number of communities across the U.S. have either limited or prohibited.”

The Conservancy continued:

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, 80% of construction debris from building demolitions is treated as trash. Accommodating this trash necessitates the continual creation of landfills – sites that threaten biodiversity, leach toxins into the land and water, and emit methane gas from organic materials, including wood materials. Conventional demolition also impacts the environment in indirect ways; as old materials are discarded new materials must be manufactured. The energy required to produce these goods introduces significant amounts of greenhouse-warming gases into the atmosphere. The EPA estimates that the manufacture of building materials accounts for 11% of yearly global CO₂ emissions. Further, demolition has a negative impact on the ecosystem. It is especially detrimental to the health of forests; by eliminating reuse opportunities for old lumber, it encourages logging, a practice that destroys habitat, diminishes biodiversity, contributes to soil erosion, pollutes water, and disrupts photosynthesis – a process that pulls CO₂ from the air.

Fortunately, there is a sustainable alternative to conventional demolition. This is through deconstruction, an approach that involves disassembling a building piece by piece so that its component parts can be recycled or reused. Unlike demolition, deconstruction directs up to 90% of building material from tear-downs (including wood, masonry, metal, and other products) to new uses. As a strategy for protecting the environment, this approach is obviously preferable to demolition. Deconstruction also facilitates the preservation of historic building materials. Materials salvaged from buildings constructed before World War II are especially well-suited for reuse or recycling because they are historically and architecturally interesting. Many of the materials used in the construction of older buildings also tend to be more durable than their modern-day counterparts. Buildings constructed before 1940, for example, usually contain wood from old-growth trees. This wood is hard, rot resistant, and long lasting. This wood is not readily available through building supply chains because old-growth trees are protected from logging. Durable masonry materials from older buildings, including high quality brick and stone, also have strong potential for reuse. Wissahickon schist, for example, a local stone that is well-loved and easily recognizable for its glittery appearance, has high re-use value. In the marketplace, the expense of this



4.17. Instead of being demolished via conventional means like this undesignated early 1900s home in Bryn Mawr, buildings could be deconstructed to preserve valuable materials and decrease the environmental impact of putting reusable building materials in landfills.

stone reflects its scarcity; nationally, only one quarry continues to supply it. Schist recovered from a deconstruction can help fill this gap.

Although deconstruction can be more expensive than conventional demolition (it is labor-intensive and time consuming), many of the costs associated with this sustainable approach can be recovered through the sale of the materials removed from a building. Deconstruction also benefits the local community; it produces jobs that require skilled labor, it provides opportunities for job training, and it creates a marketplace for salvaged material. In addition, property owners who donate items salvaged through deconstruction can receive tax deductions.

Lower Merion is ideal for deconstruction. A third of its housing stock was erected before 1939. The materials used in the construction of these buildings is valuable, both from an economic and environmental standpoint. Although transitioning from demolition to deconstruction will be challenging, it (like updating the Inventory) could be accomplished through a phased approach. First, local deconstruction experts that have experience working in the region can explain the process and advise the Township on best practices for encouraging and implementing strategies that would fit the needs of the Lower Merion. The Township could also implement pilot programs to test the efficiency, practicality, and economic impact of deconstruction in the community. Ideally, deconstruction could be used for most buildings constructed before 1940. At a minimum, however, the Township should require deconstruction for Class II properties that are the subject of demolition permits.

Efforts to promote deconstruction are gaining steam in some parts of the country, including in upstate New York, where a collaborative network of community leaders and academics called CR0WD (Circularity, Reuse, and Zero Waste Development)⁸ was recently formed to address the vast system of building material waste within New York State. The existence of such a group is possible thanks in part to the network of organizations and businesses in that region that resell repurposed materials. While a similar network is burgeoning in the Philadelphia region, a larger infrastructure will be necessary to make such efforts thrive in Lower Merion.

Recommendation 4.5b: Consider the benefits and consequences of requiring the deconstruction of buildings of a certain age and construction quality, which could both reduce the number of unnecessary demolitions in the Township and bring new life to recycled materials.

4.6 Preserving Historic Viewsheds

The definition of “Historic Resource” in the Township Code includes “sites” along with buildings, structures, and objects. A very small number of the designated resources in the Inventory fall within this category, and a smaller number of Historic Resources count undeveloped portions of parcels as Contributing Elements. Yet many Historic Resources are defined in part by the visibility of the historic elements of the properties from public ways, making the open spaces adjacent to built elements significant parts of the Resource.

The pioneering 1941 Mill Creek Conservation Agreement (described in Section 1) applied scenic protections to open space in a specific scenic zone, though efforts have since been made to identify other potential scenic areas throughout the Township. In 1993, South Street Design Company and Campbell Thomas & Company completed a Scenic Road Corridor and Viewshed Analysis⁹ identifying the Township’s significant scenic areas. The study’s Executive Summary began:



4.18. An example of a significant historic viewshed.

For many, ‘what makes Lower Merion, Lower Merion?’ is the blending of its natural setting — topography and vegetation — with its man-made elements — architecture and landscape architecture. The visual connection with its history from the earliest fords and mile markers through later settlement patterns of farms, estates, and railroad suburbs illustrates a harmonious continuity of development within an area rich in natural beauty.

The Analysis classified the Township’s roads into six typologies, identified Scenic Road corridors, and called for public education and legal protection alike for the preservation of these corridors. The Executive Summary concluded:

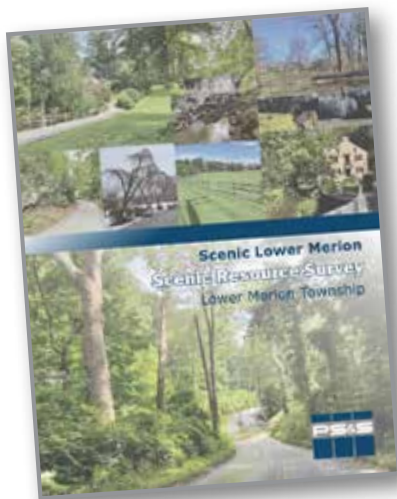


4.19. The 1993 Scenic Road Corridor and Viewshed Analysis survey map.

The public landscape must be understood and recognized as integral to the character of the township. It is as much a part of Lower Merion’s heritage as are its historic structures, yet it has no legal protection. Because the number of intrusions it can absorb before its character irrevocably changes from the scenic to the banal cannot be quantified, steps must be taken to preserve it now.

In the more than three decades that passed since the creation of this Analysis, the Historical Commission was formed, the

9 South Street Design Company and Campbell Thomas & Company. “Scenic Road Corridor and Viewshed Analysis, Township of Lower Merion Department of Planning and Community Development,” May 1993.

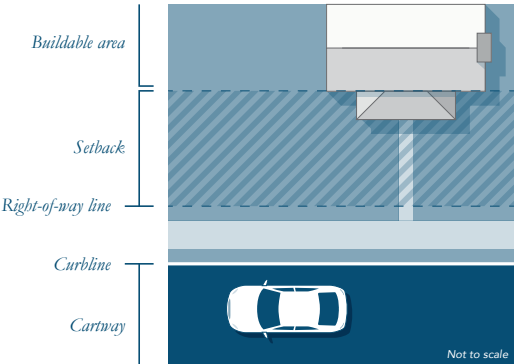


4.20. Cover of the 2025 “Scenic Lower Merion” study by PS&S.

Front Setback Dimensions By Residential Zoning District

LDR1	100 ft.
LDR2	50 ft.
LDR3	40 ft.
LDR4	Predominant *
MDR1	Predominant *
MDR2	Predominant *
MDR3	Predominant *

* See Township Code § 155-3.4l, Predominant setback. Where the predominant setback does not apply, the front setback shall be a minimum of 10 feet and a maximum of 20 feet.



4.21. Existing Setback Dimensions recommended for Scenic Resource Zoning Overlay.

Historic Resource Inventory created, and various Township regulations including the Zoning Code and Subdivision And Land Development Ordinance (SALDO) have been re-written. Changes to several significant scenic properties, including the subdivision of a large historic property on Monk Road in Gladwyne, inspired the Planning Department to consider a need for a revised study of the Township’s historic viewsheds, including recommendations for how they can be legally protected.

A two-phase study, funded in part with PHMC CLG grants, was created by consultants PS&S and finalized in 2025.¹⁰ The final report, titled “Scenic Lower Merion,” builds upon the 1993 Analysis with a thorough new survey, digital mapping, and recommendations for the legal protection of scenic corridors.

The following text from the Study outlines the recommendations resulting from the survey:

1. Scenic Resource Zoning Overlay

To establish a regulatory framework within which scenic resources can be maintained and protected, PS&S recommends that Lower Merion Township use the identified scenic resources to create a Scenic Resources zoning overlay. Due to the seasonal and vegetative variability of views within scenic resources, a standardized distance from the centerline of the public right-of-way is recommended to establish the boundaries of the zoning overlay. Due to their similar programmatic objectives, PS&S recommends that existing zoning setback requirements be used to establish the area between the edge of the cartway and the setback line as the regulated scenic resource zone, within which are applied the recommended landscaping standards and suggested plantings. While the following recommendations are intended for the public rights-of-way, owners of private roadways included within the identified scenic resources are also encouraged to consider application of the processes and guidelines.

The majority of Lower Merion’s scenic resources include portions of multiple properties. In particular, Scenic Zones and Scenic Corridors include numerous adjacent properties – several of which, although located within scenic contexts, do not individually contribute to the area’s scenic character. Accordingly, PS&S recommends that Lower Merion Township conduct a survey of individual properties within the limits of the scenic resources identified in this report in order to determine which properties do or do not contribute to the scenic character of the resource. The recommended landscaping standards should then be applied to properties that contribute to the scenic resource.

10 PS&S. “Scenic Lower Merion: Scenic Resources in Lower Merion Township **Montgomery** County, PA,” August 2025.

2. Scenic Resource Potential Effect Review/Visual Impact Assessment

Projects on Properties Partially within or adjacent to the Scenic Resource

As noted above, many scenic resources are collections of natural and/or manmade landscapes that cumulatively produce a cohesive and recognizable scenic effect. Accordingly, these resources may span several properties that individually are not inherently significant or particularly scenic. Additionally, views from the public right-of-way within scenic resources are dependent upon several ephemeral factors, including:

- Seasonal variations in foliage and leaf coverage
- Natural plant lifespans
- Climate change/natural disaster damage
- New construction/demolition

Due to this variability, changes such as new construction projects beyond the limits of the zoning overlay may have a visual effect on the scenic resource. To address these potential effects, PS&S recommends that Planning and Zoning applications for projects on properties partially or entirely within the zoning overlay demonstrate the proposed project's potential visual effect (a Visual Impact Assessment) on the scenic resource as viewed from the public right-of-way. Methods of demonstrating potential visual effects should appropriately convey a sense of the potential effect and include graphic representations as necessary. PS&S recommends that an advisory review body, such as a Scenic Resource Advisory Committee, be established to review, comment on, and approve or deny applications that include Visual Impact Assessments.

3. Scenic Resource Landscaping Guidelines and Recommendations

The following recommendations are designed to preserve the natural character and aesthetic of Lower Merion Township by regulating hedge heights, tree clearances, and setbacks from public rights-of-way. These guidelines aim to protect scenic zones, corridors, and views while ensuring safe and visually appealing streetscapes. Accordingly, these guidelines should be considered for landscaping within the Scenic Resource zoning overlay. PS&S recommends development of a complete, publicly accessible set of Scenic Resource Planting and Landscaping Guidelines. These guidelines should explain and illustrate in detail landscaping and planting recommendations included below and in the town's existing relevant ordinances.



4.22. Map of the Mt. Pleasant-Arrowmink Scenic Zone, as proposed by PS&S, with Historic Resource parcels identified in dark blue (Class I) and light blue (Class II). The study contains maps of several similar zones and corridors.

Hardscaping: It is recommended that site hardscape elements between the cartway and setback line incorporate materials that are complementary and compatible with the style and character of the contextual architecture and landscape setting.

- **Paving:** Paved landscape elements, such as driveway aprons, terraces, sidewalks, and curbing, should use materials that are visually and stylistically compatible with adjacent or nearby properties.
- **Feature Walls:** For the preservation of the viewshed corridor and to maintain sightlines, it is recommended that a maximum height of 4 feet be maintained for front yard landscape feature walls. It is encouraged that the material used for constructing the walls be compatible with the style and finishes of the contextual residential architecture or landscape setting. The use of brick, stone, or stucco is recommended, either in the form of full depth construction or in the form of a veneer that is mortared to a poured-in-place concrete or concrete block core.
- **Gate Posts:** Gate posts should be designed to minimally affect views of the property from the public right-of-way. Use of traditional masonry building materials like brick or stone is recommended. Concrete, concrete block, or frame construction posts should be clad in a masonry or stucco veneer.

Lighting: Exterior site lighting shall conform to Chapter 105, Article III of the Township of Lower Merion municipal code. Additional recommendations for lighting in the scenic corridor include:

- A maximum mounting height of 16 feet for all pole-mounted fixtures is recommended in order to provide a pedestrian scale of fixture verticality in the scenic corridor. All proposed light fixtures shall be full-cutoff and have downward-facing light sources.
- It is recommended that the color temperature of outdoor light fixtures in residential areas be between 2700 Kelvin and 3500 Kelvin (warm white) for consistency and visual comfort.
- It is recommended that the finish color for the fixtures and poles be compatible with the contextual architecture or site features.
- Due to the potential for light trespass and glare, it is recommended that the use of angled floodlights in front yards along the scenic corridor is not permitted.
- Site lighting intensity shall conform to the Township of Lower Merion municipal code.

Maximum Hedge Height Restriction: Views of scenic resources from the public right-of-way are increasingly blocked by large, dense hedges along property boundaries, with the unintended consequence of creating unnatural walled corridors along the township's

roads. In order to maintain scenic views from vehicles and for pedestrians, PS&S recommends:

- **Prohibition of Hedges Taller than 4 Feet:** Any hedge, shrub, or vegetative screening within the determined scenic setback from the public right-of-way should not exceed a maximum height of 4 feet. This also applies to hedges adjacent to scenic views that create the potential to block the views from public right-of-way. This restriction is intended to:
 - Protect sightlines for vehicular and pedestrian traffic;
 - Maintain open vistas for scenic resources;
 - Promote consistent streetscape aesthetics.

Property owners should be responsible for trimming and maintaining hedges to ensure they do not exceed the recommended height limit. Failure to comply with this recommendation should potentially result in enforcement actions, including trimming at the owner's expense.

Tree Understory Clearance Requirement: For main thoroughfares, Lower Merion Township currently maintains a 16 foot minimum clearance for tree canopies that extend into or over the public right-of-way. While this clearance protects vehicles from damage, it does not address foliage adjacent to the public right-of-way that blocks views into the surrounding landscape. Accordingly, PS&S recommends:

- **A Minimum 9-Foot Ground Clearance for Trees:** Newly planted deciduous trees that have reached a height of at least 25 feet within the determined scenic setback from the public right-of-way should be trimmed and maintained so that there is a minimum clearance of 9 feet from the ground plane to the lowest branch. The minimum of 9 feet is intended to maintain sightlines for both pedestrians and drivers or passengers in vehicles with a higher clearance off the ground. This ensures:
 - Unobstructed pedestrian and vehicular movement under tree canopies;
 - Adequate visibility of public signage and lighting;
 - Views of scenic resources from the public rights-of-way.

While this minimum clearance is essential to maintaining views of scenic resources from the public right-of-way, uniform application of this clearance to existing trees would produce an unnaturally level understory. However, the township should consider selectively applying the minimum clearance to trees surrounding scenic resources adjacent to the public right-of-way; for example,

trimming select trees surrounding Idlewild Farm or the Maier Tract in order to make the scenic views more publicly accessible. Newly planted trees that fail to meet this clearance requirement should be seasonally pruned at the owner's expense to maintain compliance.

Standards for Densely Planted Vegetation: As noted above, closely planted trees and hedges that effectively create vegetative walls result in unnaturally restricted corridors along the public rights-of-way. Closely planted vegetation that effectively acts as a wall or screen should be subject to the organizational standards and height limitations established in Lower Merion ordinance § 155-3.7 Fences and walls. This helps to avoid such plantings from blocking views of or infringing upon the visual character of scenic resources.

Prohibited Plant Species: As per § 59-1 of Lower Merion's code, the deliberate planting of fast-growing, dense, invasive and/or noxious plant species that could obstruct views or spread uncontrollably, such as bamboo, thistles, and multiflora rose, should be avoided within scenic resources (See ordinance § 59-1 Declaration of objectionable and poisonous vegetation as health hazard and nuisance). Beyond obstructing views, invasive plant species are likely to have a direct adverse effect on scenic resources, particularly within resources that are noted for their natural qualities and native species. To the extent possible, current instances of prohibited species should be removed from within scenic resources. The removal and control of existing prohibited plant species within scenic resources should be prioritized.

Recommended Plant Species: Newly planted trees and shrubs within scenic resources should comply with the recommendations of Lower Merion ordinance § A177-1 Recommended trees and shrubs and § A177-2 Planting specifications.

Planting Consultation: Owners of historically designated properties partially or entirely within the scenic resource zoning overlay should be encouraged to collaborate with the Township's Historical Commission, Planning Department, and Shade Tree Division to select appropriate plant species and maintain the scenic integrity of these areas.

Enforcement and Monitoring: Property owners should be responsible for maintaining their hedges, trees, and plantings in compliance with these guidelines. The Township should conduct periodic inspections to ensure adherence in areas designated as scenic resources. Non-compliant plantings should be subject to removal, pruning, or trimming at the property owner's expense if they violate height, clearance, or setback requirements.

4. Cultural Landscape Survey

As noted in Scenic Resource Definitions, although Lower Merion's scenic resources are the product on the Township's landscapes, this report was not designed to be a survey of Lower Merion's cultural landscapes. However, because Lower Merion's character-defining scenic resources are dependent on its landscapes, a comprehensive cultural landscape survey would be an invaluable tool for the Township and Historical Commission. Similar to the Township's extensive inventory of historic resources, a cultural landscape survey would identify and assist in the maintenance and preservation of the Township's many significant historic landscapes. In addition to the recommendations included in this report, a cultural landscape survey would in turn also help protect the integrity of Lower Merion's scenic resources through the protection of individual historic landscapes.

Township Planning Staff worked with PS&S to formulate and refine the study and recommendations. In brief, these recommendations are distilled to the following:

Recommendation 4.6a: Establish a Scenic Resource Zoning Overlay applying to identified Scenic Zones and Scenic Corridors. Through a public engagement process, determine priority zones and corridors based on need, community interest, and historic significance.

Recommendation 4.6b: Establish a process for a Scenic Resource Potential Effect Review/Visual Impact Assessment, taking into account the unique qualitative and seasonal aspects of each area to be assessed.

Recommendation 4.6c: Establish Scenic Resource Landscaping Guidelines and Recommendations to regulate features including lighting, hardscaping, and plantings, with effective enforcement and monitoring.

5. Advisory Boards





The Barnes Foundation, Merion Station

5. Advisory Boards

The Lower Merion Township Board of Commissioners relies upon the expertise of several advisory boards for the review of various types of applications. The individuals who serve on these advisory boards are members of the community who have expertise or experience in those specific areas.

Advisory boards do not directly make decisions. They provide written recommendations to the Board of Commissioners who then make final decisions based upon a variety of factors which may extend beyond the advisory board's specific purview. While advisory boards' educated input is essential and informs the Commissioners' decisions, their comments and motions are not binding.

The HARB and Historical Commission are the two Township advisory boards that provide input on applications involving Historic Districts and Historic Resources.

5.1 HARB

The Board of Historical Architectural Review (now more commonly referred to as the Historical Architectural Review Board, or HARB) held its first meeting on September 4, 1980 with Robert DeSilets serving as chair. The HARB reviewed three applications at that inaugural meeting, all in the Gladwyne/Merion Square Historic District, one of which was recommended for denial of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

HARB's role has been relatively consistent ever since that first meeting in 1980. Its goal to preserve the overall historic integrity of Lower Merion's Historic Districts and Resources has always been the core of its mission. HARB's jurisdiction is limited to the boundaries of the seven locally designated Historic Districts, though its counsel was relied upon more widely before the formation of the Historical Commission in 2000.

For its first two decades, HARB was the only official body in the Township dedicated to historic preservation, which led the Board of Commissioners to consult with HARB for advice on properties and projects located outside of the local Historic Districts. On occasion, Conditions of Approval for Land Development projects outside of local Historic Districts required that HARB provide input on alterations to existing buildings that were deemed (but not designated) as historic, and to review the appropriateness of potential construction on vacant lots adjacent to historic buildings. After 2000, any reviews relating to designated Class I or II Historic Resources became the responsibility of the Historical Commission.

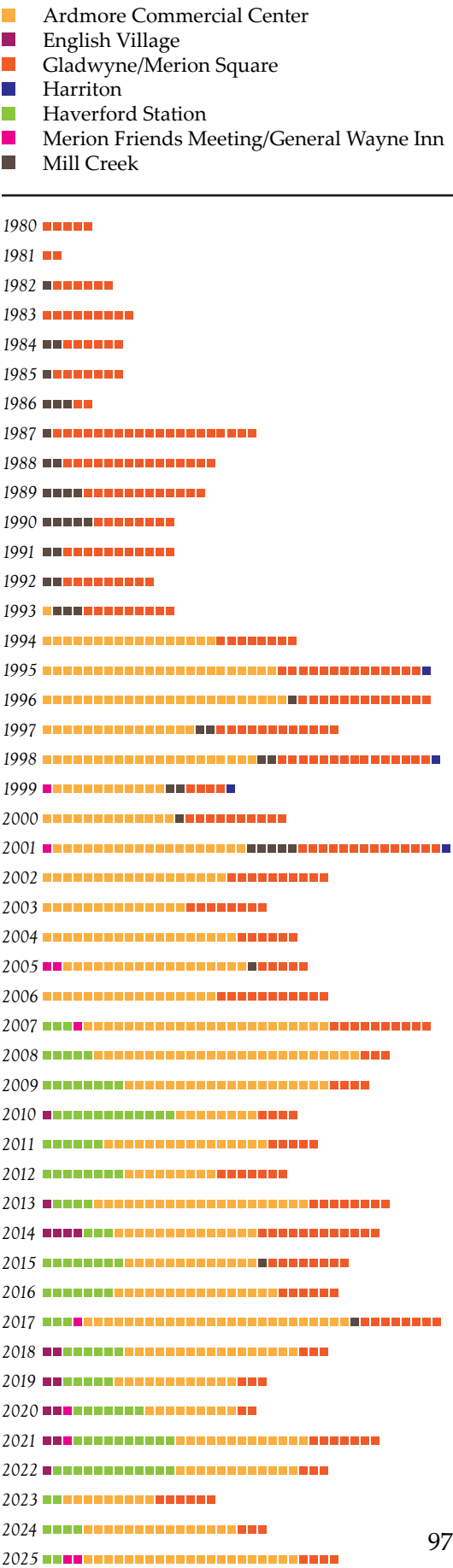
Some specific examples of projects outside of local Historic Districts that received and benefited from HARB input before the formation of the HC included the Smith mansion on Mary Waters Ford Road, which was subdivided from a Township park property. HARB was tasked with ensuring that no inappropriate modifications were made to it with regular visits to the property. When a notable mid-1880s home at 461 West Lancaster Avenue in Haverford was threatened with demolition in 1994 for the creation of a five-unit townhouse development, HARB was asked to provide input on the applicant’s proposal. Discussions centered around the potential for integrating the existing home into the development or relocating the home to another location on the site. The project did not proceed and the home was adaptively repurposed as a private music school. In 2007, the Haverford Station Historic District was formed with this house as one of its most significant and recognizable landmarks.

The creation of the HC allowed HARB to focus exclusively on projects within the boundaries of its growing number of local Historic Districts. Two districts were the first to be created in 1980: Gladwyne/Merion Square and Mill Creek. Due to the number of properties and amount of activity there, the Gladwyne district dominated HARB agendas during its first few years.

The creation of the Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District in 1993 greatly expanded HARB’s role. Here, the advisory board had oversight of primarily commercial buildings, with a new emphasis on applications for signage serving businesses within the historic commercial downtown of Ardmore. This new emphasis relegated alterations to residential properties as a secondary function of the HARB until the creation of the Haverford Station Historic District in 2007. Since then, applications within the Haverford district have occupied on average about a quarter to a third of HARB’s yearly applications.

No less important are the smaller local districts that are more specialized than the neighborhoods and commercial centers. Projects at Harriton, General Wayne Inn/Merion Friends Meeting, and English Village have been more sporadic over the years, but HARB’s oversight of these crucially important districts is essential to their preservation. The General Wayne Inn, for example, was designated as part of a district at a crucial time of transition in its history, and HARB’s oversight has ensured that its integrity could be maintained through various functional and physical changes. Similarly, the community-led effort to create the English Village district has given HARB the opportunity to provide input into some significant changes within that unique residential community.

HARB Applications Over Time





5.1, 5.2. The demolition of contributing buildings within the Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District (above) allowed for the construction of the Cricket Flats mixed-use development (below).



5.3. The historic house at 503 Old Lancaster Road being moved to a new foundation at the end of the parcel.

Recent Significant Applications

While the majority of HARB's reviews result in recommendations for approval or approval with modifications, HARB must sometimes recommend denial or changes to an application that are not agreeable to the applicant. HARB has reviewed a handful of complex applications within the past ten years that have resulted in extended discussion and appeals to the Board of Commissioners and higher authorities.

- In 2015 and 2016, HARB reviewed an application to demolish three properties located on Cricket Avenue at the southern boundary of the Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District for the construction of a large mixed-use building. Though not unanimous, HARB's recommendation to allow the project to proceed was made to encourage positive commercial growth within downtown Ardmore. The resulting "Cricket Flats" project benefited from multiple HARB reviews to ensure that the architecture, material palette, and details of the resulting building were in keeping with the qualities of the greater Historic District. HARB continues to review new signage for the ground floor retail uses in the building.
- In 2017, a series of applications involving a triangular group of parcels in the Haverford Station Historic District were reviewed. The eastern parcel contained a small, mid-19th century residence, a group of garages, and a large paved area formerly used by a landscaping firm, while the western parcel contained another 19th century dwelling. Neighbors were eager for a new use to occupy the unattractive lot, which was also uncharacteristic to the Historic District. An initial proposal involved the demolition of one home and construction of a larger single-family home as well as a new twin residence with front-facing garages. HARB expressed concern about both the loss of the contributing home and the use of front-facing garages. The location of the historic residence was an impediment to constructing any new residences on the property, but a solution was found in moving the house to the eastern tip of the triangular lot. To its west, a new twin residence with rear garages was built in a manner that HARB felt was in keeping with the character of the Historic District. The collaborative process between the developer and HARB led to a successful project that preserved a relocated contributing house while removing a blighted lot.
- In 2019 and 2020, HARB reviewed an application to dramatically transform the Ardmore Theatre, one of the Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District's most significant landmarks and considered by many to be underutilized in its current retail

use. The building's owners proposed a restoration of the "head-house" of the theatre, removing the present (ca. 1950) marquee and installing one that would have better matched the original. The rear auditorium portion of the building, totaling about two-thirds of its overall footprint, would have been demolished and replaced by a seven-story residential tower with architecture resembling the adjacent One Ardmore Place (which is not located within the district boundaries). A revised plan proposed the retention of the walls of the rear section and building additional levels within them. HARB recommended denial of the application due to its significant impact on the building, citing Secretary of the Interior's Standards 1, 2, 9, and 10. The Board of Commissioners upheld HARB's denial. The applicants appealed the decision, which was upheld by the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas and Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court in 2021. As of this writing, the resource retains its retail use and the theatre's historic fabric and integrity remain.

- In 2021, a national furniture retailer sought to modify the façade of a vacant storefront in the Haverford Station Historic District. The Colonial Revival-style building dating to the 1920s was faced with unpainted brick, and the incoming retailer's corporate design standards called for painting the brick façade white. Painting unpainted brick is not considered an appropriate alteration under the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the Township's Design Guidelines. As such, HARB recommended denial. The Board of Commissioners weighed HARB's standards against the desire to have the space occupied, which the retailer said could only be done if they were permitted to paint the façade. The Board voted to allow the painting to proceed, which was also supported by the Haverford Civic Association.
- In 2022, HARB reviewed an application to make various alterations to the front porch of a residence in the Haverford Station Historic District. HARB recommended approval of six of the eight proposed alterations to the porch, including replacing columns and reproducing brackets. However, it found that two of the proposed changes, wrapping a beam in a new material and covering the ceiling rafters, was both visually inappropriate and could hasten long-term deterioration of original elements. The Board of Commissioners upheld HARB's recommendation to deny those two proposed changes, which the applicant appealed to the Montgomery County Court of Common Pleas. In 2024, the court found in favor of the Board of Commissioners' action, saying that the decision was made appropriately based upon the HARB's detailed justification and the wording of the Township Code and enabling legislation. The applicant appealed to Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court, which



5.4, 5.5. Rendering and side elevation of the proposed partial demolition and expansion of the Ardmore Theatre.



5.6, 5.7. The brick façade on Haverford Station Road, before and after being painted by its new tenant. The project also included improvements to the entry surround and storefront windows that HARB reviewed favorably.



5.8-5.10. The reconstruction of two historic “Colonial Block” façades in downtown Ardmore did not follow the approved plans in terms of proportions, window placement, cornices, and other details. HARB sought to ensure that the work matched the original façade (top) as closely as possible. Work could not be adequately observed while scaffolding was tarped (center), and was only revealed to be out of keeping with the approved plans once tarps were removed (bottom).

heard the case in June 2025 and upheld the lower court ruling.

- In 2023, the second and third story façades of two adjacent storefronts in Ardmore’s “Colonial Block” on West Lancaster Avenue were demolished due to structural concerns. HARB had not reviewed or approved any application to replace these façades, requiring a prolonged process in which the property owner worked with HARB over multiple meetings to adequately replicate the qualities of the elements that had been removed. The finished construction revealed various deviations from the approved plans, necessitating a continuing process through 2026 to help the project come into compliance. The property owner’s reluctance to work with HARB at the earliest stages of the review process resulted in delays, fines, and construction expenses that would have been avoided had they coordinated with staff and properly followed the review process.

While HARB’s historic preservation priorities often align with that of Township leadership, Commissioners often take other factors into consideration. Decisions are not always unanimous, and the Commissioners sometimes vote counter to HARB’s recommendation when those factors outweigh preservation concerns. The application of paint on a brick façade in the Haverford Station Historic District was one example where the appeal of commercial activity at a property and the tenant’s requirement to apply their established design language outweighed HARB’s concerns about the long-term impact of that change on the historic building. While HARB has a duty to provide recommendations that have the best interests of the historic buildings in mind and to support the intent of their Design Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation, the Commissioners must weigh those concerns against a broader range of factors. Although the Commissioners have a record of taking historic preservation concerns very seriously, those concerns are sometimes outweighed.

Conclusion: HARB conducts its reviews impartially and consistently based on its own Design Guidelines and the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards. As the decisions resulting from appeals have proven, HARB’s recommendations have been properly and defensibly worded. The actions of the Building Department and Board of Commissioners have shown that the wider Township review and approval process takes historic preservation and HARB’s comments seriously in their own efforts to make sure that changes to the Lower Merion community are positive ones for all.

5.2 Historical Commission

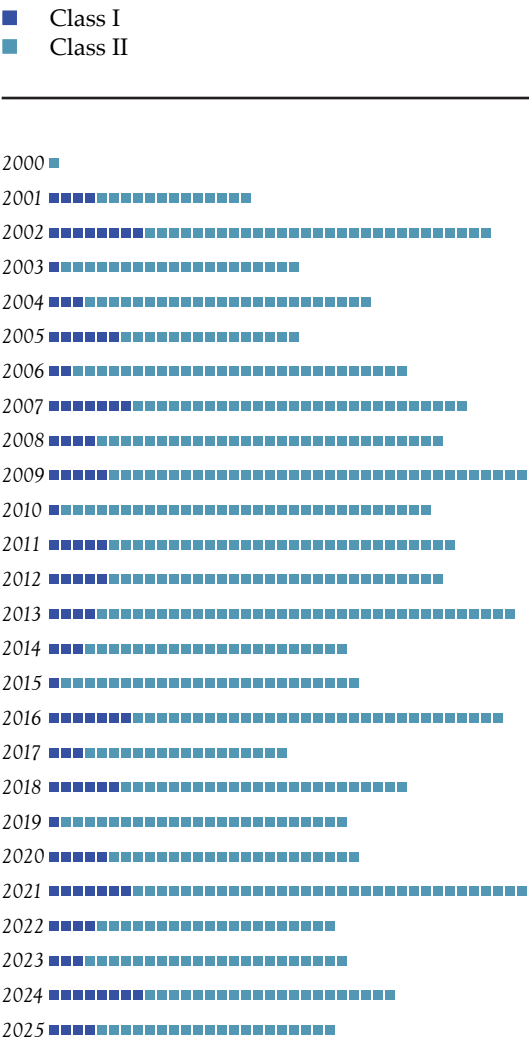
After years of advocacy on the part of HARB and the wider historic preservation community, Ordinance 3560 was adopted on March 15, 2000 to officially establish a Historical Commission and create a Historic Resource Inventory. The ordinance set forth criteria for the designation of Historic Resources, the creation of a Historic Resource Overlay District (the legislative zoning layer that allowed for the designation of individual parcels as Historic Resources), building permit requirements, and the incentives available to historically designated properties. The ordinance also established Chapter A180 of the Township Code, which contains a complete list of all Class I and II Historic Resources in the Township. This 51-page ordinance was the most significant single preservation-related act in the Township’s history.¹

The first of three organizational meetings of the Lower Merion Township Historical Commission took place on May 23, 2000. These meetings set forth the procedure of the Commission and familiarized members with their new roles. The first public meeting of the Commission was held on June 29, 2000 with Judy Meyer serving as Chair. The first item formally discussed by the Commission was a proposal to apply an Accessory Dwelling Unit incentive to a carriage house in Villanova.

Over the course of the succeeding quarter-century, the Historical Commission has met on a near-monthly basis to review proposed changes to properties containing Class I or II Historic Resources not within a local Historic District. The majority of agenda items have been for the review of Class II resources. The Commission also provides input on Conditional Use applications (including applications taking advantage of Historic Resource incentives), Land Development applications, and applications to amend the Inventory. It is the responsibility of the Commission to review and make recommendations on amendments to the Inventory, including adding, removing, and changing the designations of historic properties.

The Commission reviews applications large and small, from window replacements to full demolitions to new construction on institutional campuses. In addition to their role in the greater regulatory process, the Commission seeks to educate property owners on the benefits of appropriate construction techniques. Undertaking projects with a focus on historic preservation can be perceived by property owners as daunting, and, like HARB, the HC has always seen its role as being a public educator as much as an advisor to the Board of Commissioners.

HC Applications Over Time



1 Township of Lower Merion Ord. No. 3560, adopted 3-15-2000.



5.11. Smith Cottage during renovations.



5.12. Erdman Hall at Bryn Mawr College, a significant work by mid-20th Century architect Louis Kahn, was designated as a Class I Historic Resource in 2018.



5.13. The main upper campus building at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, which was designated as a Class I Historic Resource in 2018.

Recent Significant Applications

Like HARB, the HC has seen its share of challenging applications in recent years. Most of these challenges have resulted from the subject properties having Class II designation, which has limited the Board of Commissioners' ability to make binding decisions.

- In 2011, the Township subdivided a portion of Smith Memorial Park in Belmont Hills in order to sell a small residence located on the property. The purpose of the sale was to preserve the residence, which was given Class I designation and protected with a façade easement. In 2017, the purchaser of the property received approval from the HC to construct a large addition onto the side of the dwelling and make other improvements. A subcommittee was assigned to work with the applicant on further details, which were revealed in inspections to have been built incorrectly. Approved plans were not followed and some historic integrity was compromised, but changes made during the course of construction improved the finished product as a result of inspections and subcommittee input.
- The HC's authority to review additions to the Historic Resource Inventory has resulted in updates to the Inventory both individual and comprehensive in scope. A group convened in 2018 to consider a list of potential additions to the Inventory. The HC recommended ten additions (or groups of additions) to the Inventory, including, for the first time, Historic Objects. The resulting ordinance adopted by the Board of Commissioners added the Barnes Foundation, two historic train stations, a modern dormitory building at Bryn Mawr College, Ashbridge House, and St. Charles Borromeo Seminary as Class I Historic Resources, and Har Hasetim Cemetery as a Class II Historic Resource. 14 milestones and 42 Merion street signs were the first Historic Objects in the Township's history to be designated.
- One of the historic properties that the Board declined to designate as a Class I Historic Resource in 2018 was Clairemont, the Horace Trumbauer-designed Morris Clothier estate in Villanova that had been adapted for use as a college and then an Islamic cultural center. The property was identified by the Lower Merion School District as a potential site for a new middle school, which would necessitate the demolition of the mansion and contributing outbuildings. The Board of Commissioners foresaw this need, and Clairemont remained a Class II resource. In 2019, the HC reviewed an application to demolish the mansion and carriage house, which could not be denied due to the property's Class II status. All structures were demolished and the property is now the site of Black Rock Middle School.

- In 2021, the owner of a Class II Historic Resource in Wynnewood proposed removing a deteriorated clay tile roof and installing a solar roof system. The proposed use of a novel new material showed how the invention of new materials and technologies can sometimes challenge the HC's guidelines, which speak to mounted solar panels but do not address the quickly changing product landscape of new systems that more closely resemble traditional roofing. Unable to recommend denial, the HC recommended a 90-day delay in the issuance of a permit. The Board of Commissioners waived the recommended delay, contingent on salvageable tiles being made available for reuse.
- The WCAU Building on City Avenue operated as a television studio from 1952 until 2018. It was one of the first purpose-built television studios in the U.S., designed by a prominent Philadelphia architect and pioneer of modernism. The network vacated the building and sold it to an adjacent commercial entity, which sought to repurpose the building and make various exterior modifications. Applications to make these changes and significantly alter its historic fabric were reviewed by the HC in 2023 and 2024. Despite strong objections from the HC, work was able to proceed due to the building's Class II status limiting the Board of Commissioners' ability to impose requirements.

5.3 Support and Guidance

The skills and experience of the members of HARB and HC are likely unmatched among similar groups in suburban Philadelphia, if not among municipalities statewide. Lower Merion is truly fortunate to have such a wealth of experienced professionals living within its borders who are willing to give their time to improve the community and maintain its historic character.

Even the most experienced professionals need guidance to interpret the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, the Township Code, and the many nuances of endless varieties of historic preservation projects. Fortunately, the Township has been able to provide resources to make sure these advisory boards make decisions using the best possible information and guidance.

Consultant Review

The Township has relied on the expertise of historic preservation consultants for advisory board assistance since 1997. Since that time, the consultant has reviewed every application submitted to HARB and attended the formal meetings to provide direct feedback. The consultant assumed the same role for the HC upon its formation in 2000. The consultant formerly performed numerous



5.14. Clairemont, the former Morris Clothier mansion in Villanova, was demolished for the construction of Black Rock Middle School.



5.15, 5.16. The tile roof of a Class II Historic Resource in Wynnewood was replaced with a solar tile system despite the HC's determination that the change was inappropriate.



5.17. The WCAU Building in Bala Cynwyd during construction that the HC found to have a negative impact on the resource.



5.18. In unusual circumstances, Township staff, consultant, and advisory board members meet with property owners and contractors on-site to advise on what will be required for a complete review process. As each property and each application are unique, extra guidance is sometimes helpful to ensure a speedy and thorough review.

other tasks, including the drafting of HARB and HC meeting minutes, before those tasks were assumed by Township staff.

Since 2015, the Township has contracted with Frens & Frens Studio (now a division of Patterhn Ives LLC), based in West Chester, for historic preservation consulting. This consultant assists staff and both preservation advisory boards by reviewing all applications, communicating with applicants and design/construction professionals as necessary, and attending meetings to present their comments and interact directly with applicants. Each of the consultant's recommendations cite all applicable Secretary of the Interior's Standards, which are the basis for decision-making in preservation-focused applications.

This assistance has been crucial to the complete and thorough review of HARB and HC applications, providing a level of professional design expertise beyond that of Township staff, as well as the time to thoroughly review applications beyond what most of the volunteer members are able to contribute.

In the review of more complicated applications, the consultant has also provided helpful background information to the Building & Planning Committee through contributions to staff memos. These memos can provide additional justification for a recommendation, technical information, and visual diagrams.

Dedicated Staff

Prior to 2016, the HARB and HC were staffed by various members of the Building & Planning Department. The creation of a Historic Preservation Planner position placed the responsibilities of staffing each group under one role, ensuring greater consistency between the activities of the two advisory boards.

This position has also allowed other Planning staff members to focus on Land Development and other tasks typically under the authority of the Planning Commission, while the Historic Preservation Planner has worked with department colleagues to dovetail HARB and HC reviews into projects that require Planning Commission input, Conditional Use review, Zoning Hearing Board review, and other kinds of inter-departmental assessments.

Administrative Review

Currently, the Historic Preservation Planner must review all building permit applications submitted to the Building & Planning Department involving properties listed on the Historic Resource Inventory to determine whether the proposed work would potentially impact the historic integrity of the resource. Applications that are deemed to have no impact, including the in-kind replacement of materials (such as roofing) and non-invasive repairs to existing elements, are not sent to the HARB or HC for review.

It has been suggested, including by the SHPO, that staff could go a step further to administratively approve applications that clearly meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and the Township's Design Guidelines. As the SHPO's 2024 evaluation of the Township states, "Having full-time, professional staff provides an opportunity for the Township to streamline reviews for simple or routine projects through administrative reviews." Enabling such a process would require a Township Code amendment and careful consideration of what types of applications would be eligible for this type of review.

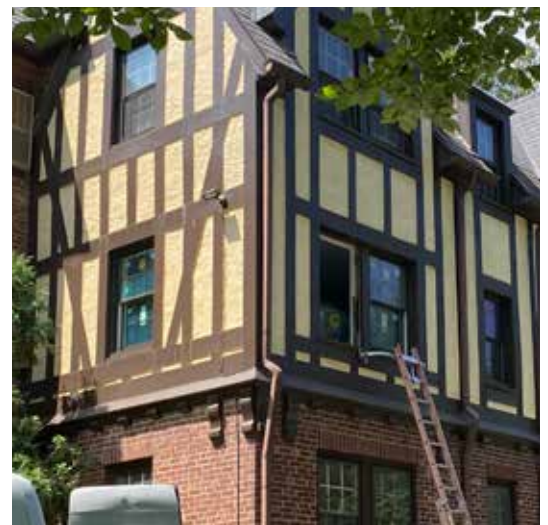
Staff has identified a specific situation where administrative review would be of particular use. There are several multi-unit condominium buildings that are designated as Historic Resources. In these buildings, individual unit owners are responsible for maintenance (in coordination with management and associations). Without coordination, exterior work to individual units can be done inconsistently and inappropriately. Even if in accordance with HARB or HC guidelines, the use of differing products for elements such as windows can create a look of disunity.

HARB has worked with the Graystone Condominium Association to establish standards for their building in the Haverford Station Historic District. In addition to window replacement, these standards address exterior conduits to supplement HVAC systems.

York Lynne Manor on City Avenue, a significant Class II-designated Tudor Revival-style complex, has also dealt with work conducted by individual unit owners, some of it inconsistent with Township guidelines. Following a late 2024 review of a window replacement project, the Historical Commission and staff initiated a dialogue with condominium management and Association members to establish easily approvable standards for window repair and replacement projects. It is hoped that future window projects that adhere to these standards can be reviewed administratively in order to avoid a lengthy HC review process for each incoming (appropriate) window application.

Conclusion: Standards for exterior alterations of historic buildings that have multiple ownership interests are applied inconsistently and are potentially in conflict with HARB/HC guidelines for appropriateness.

Recommendation 5.3: Perform outreach to the owners and management of multiple-unit condominium buildings that are Historic Resources to establish standards for appropriate alterations, especially for window replacement.



5.19. An inappropriate window replacement at York Lynne Manor.



5.20. Cover of the 2021 Lower Merion Township Design Guidelines prepared by Patterhn Ives, LLC.



5.21. Examples of the Design Guidelines Quick Reference sheets created by staff utilizing content from the Design Guidelines.

Design Guidelines

Design Guidelines are commonly adopted in communities with historic preservation ordinances in order to provide guidance to property owners, applicants, architects, and advisory board members. While each application is unique, following Design Guidelines that outline the HARB and HC's expectations upfront typically leads to smoother reviews.²

Lower Merion Township has adopted two sets of Design Guidelines documents over time. The first set was developed by HARB and a consultant in the mid-1990s and focused primarily on changes within Historic Districts. While the information contained in these Guidelines was generally applicable to all historic properties, their focus on Lower Merion's Historic Districts in descriptions and imagery left out the significant number of resources designated in 2000. Being "HARB"-branded also did not clearly convey their applicability to Historical Commission-reviewed projects.

Using CLG grant funds matched by the Township, a new set of Design Guidelines was created by Frens & Frens Studio of Patterhn Ives LLC (which has also served as the Township's historic preservation consultant since 2015) and was adopted in 2022. This extensive document covers a variety of subjects with applicability both within Historic Districts and to individual Historic Resources. This document is available to all residents as a PDF document on the Township website.

Recognizing a need to make more specific guidelines available to residents in a more concise format, staff created a series of Design Guidelines "Quick Reference" sheets for digital and print distribution using content from the full document. The subjects covered in these sheets include common application types including windows, roofing, additions and new construction, and the requirements and process for Class I, Class II, and Historic District properties. These reference sheets, the full Design Guidelines document, and other resources were compiled on a dedicated Township web page.³ The Quick Reference sheets are also available in paper form at the Building & Planning Department.

Conclusion: The Township provides a significant number of resources to residents and applicants to help them understand the review process and HARB/HC standards, and should continue to refine and expand these offerings.

² For more about Design Guidelines, see PHMC's "Principles and Standards for Design Guidelines in Pennsylvania Communities." https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/phmc/documents/preservation/about/documents/DesignGuidelines_Standards_FINAL.pdf

³ <https://www.lowermerion.org/design-guidelines/>

5.4 Additional Consultation

As previously noted in this chapter, the members of the HARB and HC embody an extraordinary amount of collective knowledge and professional experience. Their expertise is sometimes requested for projects outside of regular application reviews.

Given the large number of properties owned by the Township that contain older buildings, historically designated or not, the unique knowledge of HARB and HC members could be more frequently called upon for advice outside of the regular review process. The Township's Facilities Management Division and the Township Engineer's Office could seek advice from HARB and HC members for various renovations to Township properties while respecting the volunteer nature of their role within the Township.

The Township is occasionally asked to participate in the Section 106 process. As **defined** **described** by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, "Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA) requires federal agencies to consider the effects on historic properties of projects they carry out, assist, fund, permit, license, or approve throughout the country."⁴ The Township is most frequently contacted about Section 106 reviews for telecommunications projects, such as cellular antennas. HARB occasionally reviews such projects within Historic Districts.

The Township is given the opportunity to review other projects with federal connections, including along the Amtrak-operated railroad. For more than a decade, the proposed Zoo to Paoli Electrification Transmission Project, which will see the installation of significantly taller pylons along the railroad to support additional electrical lines, has been under review through a public engagement process. As the railroad is adjacent to two local Historic Districts, HARB provided input on the project in its early stages. A historic (but not designated) electrical substation in Bryn Mawr is being demolished as part of the project, and input from the HARB and HC was sought, provided, and successfully integrated into the mitigation for the loss of the building.

Recommendation 5.4: Township departments responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of older Township-owned buildings can seek the advice of the HARB and HC when considering renovations or upgrades to those sites and buildings, even those that are not historically designated.



Bryn Mawr Substation



Initial Amtrak monument concept



Revised monument design based on Township comments

5.22-5.24. The Bryn Mawr Substation, built by the Pennsylvania Railroad in 1914-15 to support the initial electrification of the "Paoli Local" commuter line, is set to be demolished in conjunction with Amtrak's Zoo to Paoli Electrification Transmission Project. Amtrak proposed mitigating the loss by integrating lettered panels from the façade of the structure into the wall surrounding the substation site, which will remain active but no longer use the outdated infrastructure. Comments collected from the HARB and HC recommended the reuse of additional salvaged elements from the structure and architectural features that reflect its design details. Amtrak was able to refine their design to accommodate these suggestions, proving the effectiveness of the Section 106 process.

4 <https://www.achp.gov/protecting-historic-properties/section-106-process/introduction-section-106>



5.25. Historical Commission Chair Christian Busch addresses the assembled audience at the 2017 Historic Preservation Awards held at the Levering Mill Tribute House.



5.26. Most award ceremonies have been held at the Merion Tribute House. The 2024 ceremony provided an opportunity to recognize the Merion Community Association on the occasion of the Tribute House's centennial year.

5.5 Historic Preservation Awards

In practice and perception, historic preservation is often considered a taxing endeavor emotionally, financially, and of time. The benefits of historic preservation efforts become clear as a result of many hours spent by staff, property/business owners, professional consultants, and volunteer advisory board members, but observers may only be aware of the effort that goes into the review process before any physical work is done.

In recognition of the tangible and long-lasting positive impact that these projects have on the larger community, the HARB and HC organize periodic award ceremonies to pay tribute to successful projects and individuals who have provided time and expertise to the Township's historic preservation efforts. It is an opportunity to admire the results of the significant work done by the Township, architects, builders, and property owners to make sure that the historic places that enrich the Township are preserved.

HARB began holding annual award ceremonies in 1994 to recognize successful projects and individuals who have had a positive impact on historic preservation in Lower Merion. The HC joined in recognizing preservation projects upon the Commission's 2000 formation. Many awardees had appeared before one of these groups, though eligibility has not been limited to historically designated properties. Awards are divided into eight categories in two groups:

Preservation Award Categories

- **Residential and Non-residential**
Restoration, preservation, rehabilitation or adaptive use of an historic building, structure or landscape.
- **Small Projects**
New historic district signage or restoration, preservation or rehabilitation of an historic building, structure or landscape with a cost under \$15,000.
- **Compatible New Construction**
New buildings and/or structures compatible with the surrounding historic environment.
- **Award of Recognition**
Preservation, rehabilitation or adaptive use of an historic building, structure or landscape resulting in great positive impact in preserving or enhancing the historic character of the surrounding community.

Initiative Award Categories

- **Service**
A person, organization, or group that has made a significant contribution through support and involvement in preservation projects or community enhancement.
- **Stewardship**
Efforts by an individual, organization, or group on behalf of a significant historic resource.
- **Communications/Education**
Publications, media coverage, educational programs, or curricula furthering preservation goals and education.
- **Robert DeSilets Award**
A person, organization, or group that has made an overwhelming contribution to historic preservation efforts through their dedicated support and involvement.

The Robert DeSilets Award, the equivalent of a “lifetime achievement award” for historic preservation in Lower Merion Township, has traditionally been the final award presented at each ceremony. The award is named for longtime HARB chair and historic preservation advocate Robert DeSilets, who in 1997 was recipient of the “Honor Award” later named for him. Other recipients of the Honor/DeSilets Award have been Ann Hutchinson, Robert Duncan, John & Donna Powell, the Neighborhood Club of Bala Cynwyd, Christine Jones, Max Buten, Howard G. Wilson & Ricki Petersen, Michael Weilbacher, Marty Piltch, Gerald Francis, and Ted Goldsborough.

Conclusion: For 30 years, the Historic Preservation Awards have been a successful way to highlight the positive impact of historic preservation on the community, recognizing the projects and individuals that have contributed to the preservation of Lower Merion’s historic fabric.

Recommendation 5.5: Continue to host periodic Historic Preservation Award ceremonies and consider additional ways to positively promote the efforts of those who have made a significant impact to enhance historic preservation in Lower Merion Township.



5.27, 5.28. Former Lower Merion Historical Society President, retired teacher, and longtime local history advocate Ted Goldsborough was 2024 recipient of the Robert DeSilets Award.

6. Summary of Recommendations





West Lancaster Avenue, Ardmore

6. Summary of Recommendations

Background

- 1.1 Lower Merion Township should continue to support the efforts of local organizations to preserve Historic Resources on Township properties and lend support to efforts connecting local organizations with transit agencies and other semi-governmental entities outside of the Township.

Historic Districts

- 2.2a Although National Register Historic Districts provide few benefits to residential areas, the tax credits available to income-producing properties make exploring the potential for the National Register designation of commercial centers a worthwhile effort. Central business areas such as Bryn Mawr and Bala Village could potentially be eligible for designation as National Register Historic Districts, which would allow for developers to earn tax benefits for renovations that meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards.
- 2.2b Promote the fact that commercial properties in downtown Ardmore and Gladwyne and on Haverford Station Road are eligible for tax credit projects. Coordinate with the Downtown Ardmore District and other groups to educate property owners about this opportunity.
- 2.3a Consider a re-examination of the 1990s-era Historic District studies, including recent changes to the areas, thematic connections between properties/developments, and reasonable boundaries.
- 2.3b Consider the adoption of new Historic Districts in residential areas based on recent research into planned developments and observations of historical and architectural consistency.
- 2.4 Consider the impact and benefits of designating new local Historic Districts in commercial areas. Begin a dialogue with stakeholders in these areas to explain the restrictions and opportunities that designation would bring.
- 2.5a Restart the Township's Commercial Façade Grant Program and consider implementation of the recommendations made in the 2024 Commercial Façade Grant Program Report, including implementing an online application process, establishing new eligibility guidelines, a new application evaluation process, targeting of eligible areas, and revised advertising and promotion.
- 2.5b Work with the Downtown Ardmore District and business associations within local Historic Districts to promote the benefits and eligibility of income-producing commercial properties to apply for federal and state historic preservation tax credits.
- 2.6 Consider the possibilities and implications of Traditional Neighborhood District zoning overlays and work with residents to explore how TND designation would achieve preservation goals in their neighborhoods.

Historic Resources

- 3.2 Support designation efforts while facilitating positive dialogue when other solutions are more likely to effectively achieve historic preservation goals.
- 3.3 Actively promote the incentives available to historically designated properties and promote designation as a positive way to modernize properties and allow them to produce income.

3.5a Consider designating new Historic Resources utilizing research from past surveys and newly discovered sources, and consider expanding underrepresented categories of resources including historic objects, Mid-Century Modern architecture, and BIPOC histories.

3.5b Continue to catalog the Township's historic plan archives and use the data found to assist in determining new potential Historic Resources.

Historic Preservation in the Code

4.2 While the substance of what is currently written in the Code needs to be retained, the text of the Code will benefit from being reorganized, expanded, clarified, and rewritten where necessary. The recommendations compiled by Staff and most of those recommended by PHMC should be adopted.

4.3a Establish a committee to evaluate the current list of Class II Historic Resources and to make recommendations for potential upgrades to Class I designation (Option 3 in this section). The committee should form a list of Class II properties recommended for upgrades based on the current designation criteria, and the Township should proceed quickly with the process to amend the Inventory accordingly.

4.3b Evaluate potential historic objects for designation.

4.4 The Historic Resource Overlay incentive program should be continued, but has the potential for refinement. Periodically re-evaluate current incentives and consider their consequences.

4.5a Consider prohibiting the application of surface coatings, including paint and stucco, on currently unfinished masonry façades, including stone and brick, applicable to designated historic buildings and other existing structures in commercial zoning districts.

4.5b Consider the benefits and consequences of requiring the deconstruction of buildings of a certain age and construction quality, which could both reduce the number of unnecessary demolitions in the Township and bring new life to recycled materials.

4.6a Establish a Scenic Resource Zoning Overlay applying to identified Scenic Zones and Scenic Corridors. Through a public engagement process, determine priority zones and corridors based on need, community interest, and historic significance.

4.6b Establish a process for a Scenic Resource Potential Effect Review/Visual Impact Assessment, taking into account the unique qualitative and seasonal aspects of each area to be assessed.

4.6c Establish Scenic Resource Landscaping Guidelines and Recommendations to regulate features including lighting, hardscaping, and plantings, with effective enforcement and monitoring.

Advisory Boards

5.3 Perform outreach to the owners and management of multiple-unit condominium buildings that are Historic Resources to establish standards for appropriate alterations, especially for window replacement.

5.4 Township departments responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of older Township-owned buildings can seek the advice of the HARB and HC when considering renovations or upgrades to those sites and buildings, even those that are not historically designated.

5.5 Continue to host periodic Historic Preservation Award ceremonies and consider additional ways to positively promote the efforts of those who have made a significant impact to enhance historic preservation in Lower Merion Township.

Appendix A: Historic Resource Demolitions Since 2000

These 27 Class II Historic Resources were demolished between 2000 and 2023.

HRI ID	Address	Class	Year	Reason
BC036	211 Belmont Avenue	2	2018	Redevelopment
BM067	651 Black Rock Road	2	2021	Redevelopment
BM090	843 Old Lancaster Road	2	2014	Redevelopment
BM091	847 Old Lancaster Road	2	2014	Redevelopment
BM113	1013 Wyndon Avenue	2	2011	Institutional Expansion
BM116	1030 Mt. Pleasant Road	2	2009	Redevelopment
BM131	1309 Wendover Road	2	2019	Institutional Expansion
BM134	1320 West Montgomery Avenue	2	2019	Institutional Expansion
BMC34	322 Morris Avenue	2	2015	Lack of Need
BMC98	233 North Roberts Road	2	2011	Lack of Need
BMC99	239 North Roberts Road	2	2011	Lack of Need
GL115	847 Black Rock Road	2	2002	Redevelopment
GL116	851 Merion Square Rd	2	2004	Redevelopment
GL232	1601 Spring Mill Road	2	2006	Lack of Need
GL241	1805 Youngs Ford Road	2	2018	Abandonment
GL242	1862 Aloha Lane	2	2010	Redevelopment
HA025	210 Cuylers Lane	2	2023	Condition/Lack of Need
NA006	128 Fairview Road	2	2017	Redevelopment
NA008	200 Fairview Road	2	2013	Redevelopment
NA018	715 Conshohocken State Road	2	2014	Redevelopment
VI003	250 Broughton Lane	2	2013	Redevelopment
VI004	256 Broughton Lane	2	2018	Redevelopment
VI029	800 Eagle Farm Road	2	2016	Redevelopment
VI081	1860 West Montgomery Avenue	2	2019	Redevelopment (School)
VI085	950 Stoke Road	2	2007	Redevelopment
WW011	125 McClenaghan Mill Road	2	2018	Redevelopment
WW037	407 Mill Creek Road	2	2016	Redevelopment

These 3 Contributing Resources in the Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District were demolished for a redevelopment project.

HRI ID	Address	Class	Year	Reason
AR087	47 Cricket Avenue	1	2015	Redevelopment
AR094	53 Cricket Avenue	1	2015	Redevelopment
AR149	55 Cricket Avenue	1	2015	Redevelopment

Appendix B: Conditional Use Approvals Since 2000

Year	Incentive	Address	HRI ID	Resource Name	Class
2017	Use Incentives	44 Linwood Ave.	AR082		2
2012	Use Incentives	105 Ardmore Ave.	AR102		2
2022	Use Incentives	216 Glenn Rd.	AR125		2
2014	Use Incentives, Setback Reduction	120 E. Athens Ave.	AR175	First Baptist Church of Ardmore	2
2008	Use Incentives	34 Derwen Rd.	BC015		2
2014	Use Incentives	104 Birch Ave.	BC121		2
2001	Use Incentives	151 N. Merion Ave.	BM021	Bettws-y Coed, Bryn Mawr College	2
2011	Setback, Impervious Surface Reduction	802 W. Montgomery Ave.	BM082		2
2008, 2013	Use Incentives, Setback Reduction	324 Avon Rd.	BM160		1
2002	Impervious Surface Incentive	230 N. Merion Ave.	BMC89	Dalton Hall, Bryn Mawr College	2
2002	Impervious Surface Incentive	215 N. Roberts Rd.	BMC96	Cambrian Row, Bryn Mawr College	2
2002	Impervious Surface Incentive	221 N. Roberts Rd.	BMC97	Cambrian Row, Bryn Mawr College	2
2015	Use Incentives	310, 312, 314, 316, 322, 324 Righters Mill Rd.	Various	Odd Fellows Hall, Gladwyne Methodist Church(Gladwyne Commons)	1
2025	Use Incentives (Via Regulated Use)	901 Youngs Ford Rd.	GL117		1
2023	Setback Reduction	917 Merion Square Rd.	GL121		1
2007	Use Incentives, Setback Reduction	1000 Black Rock Rd.	GL153		1
2005	Use Incentives, Impervious Surface	1400 Mill Creek Rd.	GL217	Barker Mill	1
2008	Setback Reduction	1439 Abbey Ln.	GL222	Soapstone Farm	2
2011	Use Incentives	1485 Mill Creek Rd.	GL223	Chadwick Mill Complex/Fernside	1
2006	Setback Reduction	1780 Aloha Ln.	GL239	Woodmont Outbuilding	2
2005	Setback Reduction	302 Righters Mill Rd.	GL260		1
2014	Setback Reduction	716 Black Rock Rd.	GL291		2
2013	Use Incentives	108 Avon Rd.	HA015	Louis Clarke House	2
2020	Setback Reduction	130 Avon Rd.	HA019		2
2018	Impervious Surface Incentive	325 W. Montgomery Ave.	HA022	Merion Cricket Club	1
2006	Impervious Surface Incentive	450 W. Lancaster Ave.	HA052	The Haverford School	2
2007	Use Incentives	110 Grays Ln.	HA090		2

Items highlighted in green indicate Resources that were added to the Inventory to unlock Conditional Use incentives.

Appendix B: Conditional Use Approvals Since 2000 (Continued)

Year	Incentive	Address	HRI ID	Resource Name	Class
2018	Setback, Impervious Surface Reduction	501 Old Lancaster Rd.	HA116		2
2018	Setback, Impervious Surface Reduction	507 Old Lancaster Rd.	HA117		2
2020	Setback Reduction	565 Barrett Ave.	HA187		2
2010	Setback Reduction	511 Thornbury Ln.	HA217		2
2007	Use Incentives	88 Merbrook Ln.	MS011	Beacom Hill Farm	2
2003	Setback Reduction	515 Conshohocken State Rd.	NA015		2
2012	Use Incentives, Impervious Surface	362 Sprague Rd.	NA037	Tibbets Barn	2
2021	Setback, Impervious Surface Reduction	39 Fairview Rd.	NA038		2
2007	Setback Reduction	264 N. Ithan Ave.	VI005		2
2015	Use Incentives	330 Spring Mill Road	VI007	Stoneleigh	2
2020	Use Incentives	746 Mt. Moro Rd.	VI024		2
2000	Use Incentives	1502 Old Gulph Rd.	VI052		2
2006	Setback Reduction	1515 Spring Mill Ln.	VI055	Penn Acre	2
2011	Use Incentives	1835 Old Gulph Rd.	VI077	Pear Grove	1
2021	Use Incentives	1851 Mallard Ln.	VI079		
2002	Use Incentives	101H & 1 Cherry Ln.	WW001		2
2012	Use Incentives, Impervious Surface	6 Lancaster Ave.	WW002	Palmer (Chapel)	1
2016	Use Incentives	232 N. Wynnewood Ave.	WW018	Maybrook Gatehouse	2
2016	Use Incentives	325 Penn Rd.	WW026A	Maybrook Mansion	1
2016	Use Incentives	355 Penn Rd.	WW026G	Maybrook Building Ruin	2
2016	Use Incentives	359 Penn Rd.	WW026H	Maybrook Carriage House	1
2016	Use Incentives	359 Penn Rd.	WW026I	Maybrook Potting Shed	1
2016	Use Incentives	355 Penn Rd.	WW026J	Maybrook Barn	1
2015	Setback Reduction	1032 Cedargrove Rd.	WW052	William Penn Inn	2
2008	Setback, Impervious Surface Reduction	608 Loves Ln.	WW055	English Village Residence	1
2011	Impervious Surface Incentive	1001 Remington Rd.	WW073	Temple Beth Hillel Beth El	2

Items highlighted in green indicate Resources that were added to the Inventory to unlock Conditional Use incentives.

Appendix C: 2000 Inventory Opt-Outs

When the Inventory was proposed for adoption in 1999, owners of properties were given the one-time opportunity to request that their properties be removed from the Inventory. Several more opted out after a determination of Class I eligibility in late 2000. This list is the best effort to provide an accurate accounting of properties excluded from the Inventory as a result of voluntary opt-outs.

HRI ID	Address	Class	Resource Name
AR078	59 Greenfield Ave	2	Autocar Industry
AR104	107 Linwood Ave	2	Garrlyd
AR136	346 W Lancaster Ave	2	
AR139	1335 W Wynnewood Rd	1	St. Paul's Cemetery
BC001	15 St Asaphs Rd	2	
BC005	7 Conshohocken State Rd	2	Church of St. Asaph Barn
BC027	123 Old Lancaster Rd	2	
BC034	200 Conshohocken State Rd	2	
BC037	227 Belmont Ave	1	West Laurel Hill Cemetery
BC045	335 Righters Ferry Rd	2	Miller-Bell House
BM012	40 Rosemont Ave	2	
BM016	49 Thomas Ave	2	
BM018	121 Pennswood Rd	2	Kingston
BM020	130 S Bryn Mawr Ave	1	Gerhard Building
BM029	301 N Ithan Ave	2	
BM030	301 Thornbrook Ave	2	Herzruhe
BM035	322 Thornbrook Ave	2	
BM042	416 Morris Ave	2	
BM043	423 Colebrook Ln	2	Colebrook Outbuilding
BM046	435 N Ithan Ave	2	Crefeld
BM071	709 Pennstone Rd	2	Harriton Farmhouse
BM083	809 Morris Ave	2	House in the Wood
BM093	854 Mt. Pleasant Rd	2	
BM094	874 W Lancaster Ave	2	
BM098	905 New Gulph Rd	2	
BM118	1101 W Montgomery Ave	2	
BM127	1244 Montrose Ave	2	Mrs. F. H. Ziegler House
BM128	1246 Montrose Ave	2	
BM133	1316 Wendover Ave	2	
BM135	1341 W Montgomery Ave	2	Castaña

 Items highlighted in green have subsequently been added to the Inventory.

 Items highlighted in red have subsequently been demolished.

Appendix C: 2000 Inventory Opt-Outs (Continued)

HRI ID	Address	Class	Resource Name
BM140	1512 Montgomery Ave	2	
BM160	324 Avon Rd	1	Alscot Colony Cottage
GL018	35 W Old Gulph Rd	2	Clovelly
GL035	134 Maplehill Rd	2	Walter K. Durham House
GL042	221 Righters Mill Rd	2	
GL089	429 Dove Lake Rd	2	
GL106	801 Merion Square Rd	2	Skylands
GL183	1120 Vaughans Ln	2	
GL186	1132 Stony Ln	2	
GL197	1221 Rose Glen Rd	2	Jacobs Cottage
GL219	1414 Youngs Ford Rd	2	Dr. Samuel Dixon House
GL229	1550 Monk Rd	1	Monk's Elbow
GL235	1626 Spring Mill Rd	2	House at Woodmont
GL287	939 Black Rock Rd	2	
HA023	151 Cheswold Valley Rd	2	
HA024	201 Cheswold Ln	2	Cheswold Lodge
HA035	255 Farm Rd	2	Dolobran Outbuildings
HA041	333 Old Gulph Rd	2	Oaklands
HA046	404 Richard Knoll	2	Ballyheather Outbuilding
HA047	407 Rose Ln	1	Casper Wistar Morris House
HA051	425 Glyn-Wynne Rd	2	
HA061	504 Waldron Park Dr	2	Ballyheather Outbuilding
HA067	519 W Montgomery Ave	2	
HA071	539 Avonwood Rd	2	Avonwood Court
HA082	438 Old Lancaster Rd	2	
HA087	401 Old Gulph Rd	2	Dove Mill House
MS007	35 Berwick Rd	2	
MS012	117 Raynham Rd	2	Maroebe
MS017	204 Civic Cir	1	Merion Train Station
MS018	215 Meeting House Ln	2	Lodge House
MS020	221 Merion Rd	2	
MS031	265 Merion Rd	2	

Items highlighted in green have subsequently been added to the Inventory.

Items highlighted in red have subsequently been demolished.

Appendix C: 2000 Inventory Opt-Outs (Continued)

HRI ID	Address	Class	Resource Name
MS033	50 Lapsley Ln	1	Barnes Foundation
MS035N	261 City Ave	2	Loyola Center
MS037	347 Bowman Ave	2	
MS038	350 N Highland Ave	2	Linlithgow
MS044C	380 N. Latches Ln	2	Windrim Hall
MS044E	394 N. Latches Ln	2	Albert Barnes House
MS046	380 N Highland Ave	2	Sogno Mio
MS048	390 Sycamore Ave	2	
NA005	126 Righters Mill Rd	2	
NA012	317 Conshohocken State Rd	2	Penshurst Outbuilding
NA031	1434 Flat Rock Rd	2	
VI002	234 Broughton Ln	2	Dulles House
VI019	601 Matsons Ford Rd	2	Sunnybrook
VI031	803 Stoke Rd	2	Underhill House
VI036	1300 Mt. Pleasant Rd		Red Rose Inn
VI043	1300 Valley Rd	2	Levering Farm
VI044	1308 Mt Pleasant Rd	2	Red Rose Farm Outbuilding
VI053	1501 Conshohocken State Rd	2	Eastwick
VI057	1530 W Montgomery Ave	2	Low-Walls Carriage Hse.
VI060	1614 Lark Ln	2	The Meadows
VI064	1653 Mt Pleasant Rd	2	
VI073	444 Devereux Dr	2	After-all
VI087	1107 Brynllawn Rd	2	
WW005	100 Lancaster Ave	2	Lankenau Hospital
WW009	110 Lancaster Ave	2	Lankenau Hospital
WW026	331 (325) Penn Rd	1	Maybrook (10 resources)
WW051	524 Clothier Rd	2	Maple Grove
WW072	100 E. Wynnewood Rd	1	St. Charles Borromeo
WW074	1010 Cloverhill Rd	2	
WW076	1058 Indian Creek Rd	2	Ingeborg outbuilding
WW079	1118 Indian Creek Rd	2	
WW086	1110 Indian Creek Rd	2	
WW096	75 E. Wynnewood Rd	1	Wynnewood Train Station

Items highlighted in green have subsequently been added to the Inventory.

Items highlighted in red have subsequently been demolished.

Appendix D: Institutional Resource Analysis

This analysis examines buildings and other potential Historic Resources located within institutionally zoned properties in Lower Merion Township. Included are recommendations for designation from a 2006 CLG-funded campus study and present-day recommendations based upon the current Historic Resource designation criteria. For more about this analysis, see Chapter 3.4.

 Recommend Class I designation/upgrade

1. Universities/Colleges

 Recommend Class II designation

1A. Bryn Mawr College

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
330 N Roberts Rd	Batten House	BMC00	Class 2	Class 2
801 Yarrow St	Benham Gateway	BMC01	Class 2	Class 1
217 N Roberts Rd	Trefa	BMC02	None	None
219 N Roberts Rd	Aelwyd	BMC03	None	None
241 N Roberts Rd	Schwartz Gym	BMC04	None	None
815 Yarrow St	Clarissa Donnelley Haffner Language Halls	BMC06	None	None
1013 Wyndon Ave	Hubbard House	BMC13	Class 2	Class 2
1025 Wyndon Ave	Mayview	BMC15	None	None
1029 Wyndon Ave	Child Study Institute	BMC16	None	None
151 N Merion Ave	Bettwsy-coed	BMC21	Class 2	Class 2
146 N Merion Ave	Miriam Coffin Canaday Library	BMC22	None	None
909 W Montgomery Ave	Pen-y-Bryn	BMC25	None	None
229 N Roberts Rd	Pensby	BMC26	Class 2	Class 2
140 Morris Ave	Human Resources (Ty-Bach)	BMC40	None	None
150 Morris Ave	Eleanor Donnelly Erdman Hall	BMC41	Class 1	Class 1
300 Morris Ave	Healy Property	BMC42	None	None
200 N Merion Ave	Rockefeller Hall	BMC65	Class 1	Class 1
320 N Roberts Rd	Brecon Hall	BMC71	Class 2	Class 2
719 New Gulph Rd	Arnecliffe	BMC74	Class 2	Class 2
780 New Gulph Rd	Guild Computer Center	BMC75	None	None
900 New Gulph Rd	Chemistry Building & Science Library	BMC76A	None	None
900 New Gulph Rd	Biology Building	BMC76B	None	None
900 New Gulph Rd	Park Hall	BMC76C	None	None
900 New Gulph Rd	Greenhouse	BMC76D	None	None
900 New Gulph Rd	Physical Sciences Building	BMC76E	None	None

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
910 New Gulph Rd	Carpenter Shop	BMC77	None	None
1000 New Gulph Rd	Longmaid House	BMC78	None	None
150 N Merion Ave	Marjorie Walter Goodhart Hall	BMC80	Class 1	Class 1
210 N Merion Ave	James E Rhoads Hall	BMC81	Class 1	Class 1
212 N Merion Ave	M Carey Thomas Library	BMC82	Class 1	Class 1
215 N Merion Ave	Wyndham Hall	BMC83	Class 2	Class 1
218 N Merion Ave	Pembroke Hall, West	BMC84	Class 1	Class 1
220 N Merion Ave	Pembroke Hall, East	BMC85	Class 1	Class 1
224 N Merion Ave	Taylor Hall	BMC86	Class 1	Class 1
225 N Merion Ave	Helfarian (Dolgelly)	BMC87	None	Class 2
229 N Merion Ave	Cartref	BMC88	None	Class 2
230 N Merion Ave	Dalton Hall	BMC89	Class 2	Class 2
800 New Gulph Rd	Denbigh Hall	BMC90	Class 1	Class 1
804 New Gulph Rd	Merion Hall	BMC91	Class 1	Class 1
815 New Gulph Rd	Thicket carriage house	BMC92	Class 2	Class 2
817 New Gulph Rd	The Thicket	BMC93	Class 2	Class 2
816 New Gulph Rd	Marie Salant Neuberger Centennial Campus Center	BMC94	Class 2	Class 2
820 New Gulph Rd	Radnor Hall	BMC95	Class 1	Class 1
215 N Roberts Rd	Clynnoc	BMC96	Class 2	Class 2
221 N Roberts Rd	Dolwen	BMC97	Class 2	Class 2
300 Airdale Rd	BMC School of Social Work		None	None

1B. *Harcum College*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2006 Rec. Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
730 West Montgomery Ave	Melville Hall	BM079A	Class 2	Class 2	Class 2
712 West Montgomery Ave	Klein Hall	BM079D	None	None	None
706 West Montgomery Ave	Bedford Hall	BM079E	Class 2	Class 2	Class 2
708 West Montgomery Ave	Dental Programs Center	BM079F	None	None	None
704 West Montgomery Ave	Vet. Services Building	BM079G	None	None	None
642 West Montgomery Ave	President's House	BM079H	Class 2	Class 2	Class 2
636 West Montgomery Ave	Maintenance Shed	BM079I	None	None	None
632 West Montgomery Ave	Academic Center	BM079J	None	None	None
610 West Montgomery Ave	Richter Hall	BM079K	Class 2	Class 2	Class 2
604 West Montgomery Ave	Pennswood Hall	BM079L	None	None	None

1C. *Haverford College*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
1 College Ln	College Lane House #1	HA001	Class 2	Class 1
2 College Ln	David Scull, Jr. Residence	HA002	Class 2	Class 1
3 College Ln		HA003	Class 2	Class 1
4 College Ln	Richard M. Jones Residence	HA004	Class 2	Class 1
5 College Ln	Professor J. Rendel Harris	HA005	Class 2	Class 1
6 College Ln	Rittenhouse	HA006	Class 2	Class 1
7 College Ln	Palmer	HA007	Class 2	Class 1
8 College Ln	Jane Bispham Residence	HA008	Class 2	Class 1
9 College Ln			None	Class 1
	Skating Lodge (1948)		None	Class 1
8 Railroad Ave	Merion College	HA009	Class 2	Class 1
	Conklin Memorial Gateway		None	Class 1
	1883 Gateway & Lancaster Ave. walls		None	Class 1

1D. *Rosemont College*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2006 Rec. Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
1414 West Montgomery Ave	Main Building	BM137A	Class 1	Class 1	Class 1
1418 West Montgomery Ave	Cornelia Connelly Hall	BM137B	None	Class 2	Class 2
1420 West Montgomery Ave	Gertrude Kistler Memorial Library	BM137C	None	Class 2	Class 2
1402 West Montgomery Ave	Good Counsel Hall	BM137D	None	Class 2	Class 2
1416 West Montgomery Ave	Mayfield Hall	BM137E	None	Class 2	Class 2
1404 West Montgomery Ave	Immaculate Conception Chapel	BM137F	None	Class 2	Class 2
1432 West Montgomery Ave	McShain Performing Arts Center	BM137G	None	Class 2	Class 2
1422 West Montgomery Ave	Cardinal Hall	BM137H	None	None	None
1406 West Montgomery Ave	Kaul Hall	BM137I	None	Class 2	Class 2
1426 West Montgomery Ave	Alumnae Hall	BM137J	None	None	None
1430 West Montgomery Ave	Heffernan Hall	BM137K	None	None	None
1400 West Montgomery Ave	Lawrence Hall	BM137L	None	None	None
1424 West Montgomery Ave	White Hall	BM137M	None	None	None
Montgomery Ave./Wendover Rd.	"Rathalla" walls and bridges		None		Class 1

1E. *St. Joseph's University (Main Campus)*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2006 Rec. Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
333 City Avenue	McShain Hall	MS035A	None	None	None

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2006 Rec. Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
333-A City Avenue	St. Mary's Hall	MS035B	Class 2	Class 2	Class 2
333 City Avenue	Claver House	MS035C	None	None	Class 2
14 Lapsley Lane	St. Thomas House	MS035D	None	Class 2	Class 2
20 Lapsley Lane	Bronstein Hall	MS035E	None	Class 2	Class 2
20 Lapsley Lane	Bronstein Garage	MS035F	None	None	None
30 Lapsley Lane	Xavier Hall	MS035G	None	Class 2	Class 2
40 Lapsley Lane	St. Albert's Hall	MS035H	None	Class 2	Class 2
40 Lapsley Lane	Mossbawn / St. Albert's Annex	MS035I	None	None	None
15 Lapsley Lane	Regis Hall	MS035J	None	Class 2	Class 2
15 Lapsley Lane	Regis Annex	MS035K	None	Class 2	Class 2
21 Lapsley Lane	Boland Hall	MS035L	None	Class 2	Class 2
41 Lapsley Lane	Jordan Hall	MS035M	None	Class 2	(Demolished)
261 City Avenue	Loyola Center	MS035N	Class 2	Class 2	Class 2
263 City Avenue	Loyola Center Carriage House	MS035O	Class 2	Class 2	Class 2
265 City Avenue	Loyola Center Outbuilding	MS035P	Class 2	Class 2	Class 2
81 Lapsley Lane	Hogan Hall	MS035Q	None	Class 2	Class 2
240 North Latches Lane	Sullivan Hall	MS035R	Class 2	Class 2	Class 2
240 North Latches Lane	Sullivan Garage	MS035S	None	None	None

1F. *St. Joseph's University (Maguire Campus)*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2006 Rec. Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
356 North Latches Lane	Duperreault Hall	MS044A	Class 2	Class 2	Class 2
358 North Latches Lane	Ziff Carriage House	MS044B	None	None	Class 2
380 North Latches Lane	Windrim Hall	MS044C	Class 2	Class 2	Class 2
382 North Latches Lane	Windrim Hall Garage	MS044D	None	None	None
394 North Latches Lane	Quinn Hall	MS044E	None	Class 2	Class 2
412 North Latches Lane	Music Studio Shed	MS044F	None	None	None
412 North Latches Lane	Nicoletti Music Studio	MS044G	None	None	Class 2
470 North Latches Lane	Gabriel Hall	MS044H	None	Class 2	Class 2
460 North Latches Lane	Gabriel Hall Garage	MS044I	None	Class 2	Class 2
362 North Latches Lane	Maintenance Shed	MS044J	None	None	None
364 North Latches Lane	Fine Arts East	MS044K	None	None	Class 2
376 North Latches Lane	Merion School	MS044L	None	None	None
390 North Latches Lane	Chapel / Foley Campus Center	MS044M	Class 2	Class 2	Class 1
430 North Latches Lane	Connelly Hall	MS044N	None	None	None
434 North Latches Lane	Squash Courts	MS044O	None	None	(Demolished)

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2006 Rec. Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
440 North Latches Lane	Paris Auditorium / Dining Hall	MS044P	None	Class 2	Class 2
424 North Latches Lane	Toland Hall	MS044Q	None	Class 2	Class 2
420 North Latches Lane	Upper Sports Complex	MS044R	None	None	None
450 North Latches Lane	Maintenance Shed	MS044S	None	None	None
480 North Latches Lane	Raynham Hall		None		Class 2

1G. *St. Joseph's University (Off Campus)*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
30 Berwick Road			None	Class 2
35 Berwick Road		MS007	None	Class 2
39 Berwick Road	Paul Monaghan Residence		None	Class 2
50 Lapsley Lane	Barnes Foundation / Arboretum	MS033	Class 1	Class 1
	Barnes Foundation Greenhouse	MS033	Contributing	Contributing
	Barnes Foundation Outbuildings	MS033	Contributing	Contributing
701 City Avenue			None	None

2. Private Schools

2A. *Bala Cynwyd Library/French International School*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
150 N. Highland Ave	Bala Cynwyd Library/French International School		None	None

2B. *Baldwin School*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2006 Rec. Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
701 West Montgomery Ave	Main Building	BM069A	Class 1	Class 1	Class 1
135 Morris Ave	Red Gym	BM069C	None	None	Class 2
731 West Montgomery Ave	Johnson School House	BM069E	None	Class 2	Class 2
715 West Montgomery Ave	Rosamond Cross Science Building	BM069G	None	None	None
620 West Montgomery Ave	Lower School	BM069H	None	None	None
136 Radnor Street	Residence/White Gate Studios		None		Class 2
140 Radnor Street	Residence		None		Class 2
144 Radnor Street	Residence	BM069I	None	None	(Demolished)
160 Radnor Street	Head of School Residence	BM069J	None	None	None

2C. *Caskey Torah Academy*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
742 Argyle Rd	Caskey Torah Academy	WW071	Class 2	Class 2

2D. *French International School*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
23 W. City Ave	French International School		None	None
6 Bala Ave		BC004	Class 2	Class 2

2E. *Friends Central School - Lower Campus*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2006 Rec. Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
250 Old Gulph Road	Lower School Building	WW020A	Class 2	Class 2	Class 2
230 Old Gulph Road	Art and Music Building	WW020B	None	None	None
210 Old Gulph Road	Light Lab	WW020C	None	Class 2	Class 2
200 Old Gulph Road	Smith House	WW020D	None	None	None
204 Old Gulph Road	Garage	WW020E	None	None	None

2F. *Friends Central School - Upper Campus*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2006 Rec. Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
1101 City Avenue	Upper School Building	WW077A	Class 2	Class 2	Class 1
1085 City Avenue	Blackburn Library	WW077B	None	Class 2	Class 2
1087 City Avenue	Rex Gymnasium	WW077C	None	Class 2	Class 2
1083 City Avenue	Middle School Building	WW077D	None	Class 2	Class 2
1075 City Avenue	Facilities Maintenance Building	WW077E	None	None	None
1079 City Avenue	Shallcross Hall	WW077F	None	None	None
1095 City Avenue	Language Arts Classroom	WW077G	None	None	None
1091 City Avenue	Fannie Cox Center	WW077H	None	None	None

2G. *Gladwyne Montessori School*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
920 Youngsford Road	Merion Square School	GL123	Class 1	Class 1
922 Youngsford Road	Caretaker's House	GL124	Class 1	Class 1
900 Youngsford Road			None	Class 2

2H. *Haverford School*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2006 Rec. Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
450 West Lancaster Ave	Wilson Hall	HA052A	Class 2	Class 2	Class 2
430 West Lancaster Ave	Severinghaus Hall	HA052B	None	None	None
424 West Lancaster Ave	Centennial Hall	HA052C	None	None	None
420 West Lancaster Ave	Maintenance	HA052D	None	None	None
440 West Lancaster Ave	The HUB	HA052E	None	None	None
434 West Lancaster Ave	Crossman Hall / Dining Hall	HA052F	None	None	None
444 West Lancaster Ave	Van Pelt Hall	HA052G	None	None	None
460 West Lancaster Ave	Athletic Complex	HA052H	None	None	None
25 Buck Ln	Palmer House	HA052I	None	None	None

2I. *Kohelet Yeshiva High School*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
223 N. Highland Ave	Drake Linden Hall	MS021	Class 2	Class 2

2J. *Kosloff Torah Academy*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
26 Montgomery Ave	Kosloff Torah Academy		None	Class 2

2K. *Rosemont School of the Holy Child*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
1344 West Montgomery Ave	Falcon Hill	BM136	Class 2	Class 1
1301 Wendover Ave			None	Class 2

2L. Shipley School

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2006 Rec. Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
814 Yarrow Street	Main Building	BM084A	Class 2	Class 2	Class 1
800 Yarrow Street	Brownell House	BM084B	Class 2	Class 2	Class 2
804 Yarrow Street	Brownell Carriage House	BM084C	None	Class 2	Class 2
810 Yarrow Street	West Middle School	BM084D	None	None	None
831 West Montgomery Ave	Squash Courts	BM084E	None	None	None
139 North Merion Ave	Maintenance Facility	BM084F	None	None	None
141 North Merion Ave	Maintenance Facility	BM084G	None	None	None
125 North Merion Ave	125 North Merion Avenue	BM084H	None	None	None
119 North Merion Ave	119 North Merion Avenue	BM084I	None	None	None
117 North Merion Ave	117 North Merion Avenue	BM084J	None	None	None
841 West Montgomery Ave	Head of School Residence	BM084K	Class 2	Class 2	Class 2
931 West Montgomery Ave	Beechwood House	BM107	Class 2		Class 1
1305 Waverly Road	Athletic Field		None		None

2M. St. Charles Borromeo Seminary

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
100 East Wynnewood Rd	1866-1871 Seminary	WW072	Class 1	Class 1
	1925-1928 Seminary	WW072	Class 1	Class 1
	Watchman's House	WW072	Class 1	Class 1
	Service Building	WW072	Class 1	Class 1
	Stairway 1	WW072	Class 1	Class 1
	Stairway 2	WW072	Class 1	Class 1
	Roadway System	WW072	Class 1	Class 1
	Fencing & Gates	WW072	Class 1	Class 1

2N. St. Katherine's School

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
930 Bowman Ave	St. Katherine's School		None	None

2O. St. Thomas of Villanova

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
1245 West Lancaster Ave	St. Thomas of Villanova		None	None

2P. *Waldron Mercy Academy*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2006 Rec. Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
551 Montgomery Avenue	Mother House	MS063A	Class 2	Class 2	Class 1
300 Meeting House Lane	Mercy Child Care Center	MS063B	None	Class 2	Class 2
513 Montgomery Avenue	Waldron Academy	MS063C	Class 2	Class 2	Class 2
515 Montgomery Avenue	Merion Mercy Academy	MS063D	None	None	None
525 Montgomery Avenue	Mother Mary Catherine McCauley Convent Center	MS063E	None	None	None
272 Meeting House Lane		MS063F	None	None	None
276 Meeting House Lane	St. Anne's	MS063G	None	None	None
276A Meeting House Lane		MS063H	None	None	None
276B Meeting House Lane		MS063I	None	None	None

3. Clubs

3A. *American Legion Post 355*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
850 Conshohocken State Road	American Legion Post 355		Class 2	Class 2

3B. *Ardmore Masonic Hall*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
35 Ardmore Avenue	Ardmore Masonic Hall		None	Class 1

3C. *Cynwyd Club*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
332 Trevor Lane	Cynwyd Club		None	None

3D. Merion Cricket Club

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
325 W. Montgomery Avenue	Merion Cricket Club		Class 1	Class 1
	The Cottage		Class 1	Class 1
	Locker Room Building		Class 1	Class 1
210 Elbow Lane			None	Contributing
218 Elbow Lane			None	Contributing
222 Elbow Lane			None	Contributing
226 Elbow Lane			None	Contributing

3E. Philadelphia Country Club

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
1601 Spring Mill Road	Kirkner House / Bellevue Farm Gatehouse	GL232	Class 2	(Demolished)
1601 Spring Mill Road, Gladwyne	Camp Discharge	GL233	Class 2	Class 2

3F. Stony Lane Swim Club

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
1830 Lafayette Road	Stony Lane Swim Club		None	None

3G. VFW Post 6956

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
320 River Road	VFW Post 6956		None	None

4. Organizations

4A. Devereux

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
444 Devereux Drive	Devereux; After-all; Northwick	VI073	None	Class 2

4B. Idlewild Farm

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
955 Amies Lane	Idlewild Farm Preserve (all structures)	BM175	None	Class 1

4C. *Henry Foundation*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
801 Stony Lane	Henry Foundation	GL108	Class 2	Class 1
1509 Lafayette Road	Taylor Homestead	GL225	Class 2	Class 1

4D. *Riverbend*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
1950 Spring Mill Road	Riverbend Environmental Educational Center	GL243	Class 2	Class 1

4E. *Saunders Woods*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
1020 Waverly Road	Saunders Woods/Shady Dell Farm	GL169	Class 1	Class 1
1020 Waverly Road	Saunders Woods/Shady Dell Farm	GL170	Class 1	Class 1

4F. *Stoneleigh*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
330 Spring Mill Road	Stoneleigh	VI007	Class 2	Class 1
	Stoneleigh Carriage House		Class 2	Contributing
	Greenhouse		None	None
	Garden Trellis		None	Contributing
	Pool House		None	None
	Maintenance Shed		None	None

5. Residential & Day Care

5A. *Beaumont*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
601 North Ithan Ave	Beaumont	BM054	Class 2	Class 2
1117 Old Gulph Road	Beaumont Gatehouse	BM121	Class 2	Class 2

5B. *Day Care*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
129 Argyle Road, Ardmore		AR113	Class 2	Class 2

5C. *Louise Strawbridge House*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
11 St. Asaphs Road	Louise Strawbridge House	BC070	Class 2	Class 2

5D. *Mary J. Drexel Home*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
238 Belmont Ave	Mary J. Drexel Home	BC041	Class 2	Class 2

5E. *Saunders House*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
100 Lancaster Ave	Saunders House		None	None

5F. *Symphony Square*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
35 Old Lancaster Road	Symphony Square		None	None

5G. *Waverly Heights*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
1400 Waverly Road	Waverly Heights	GL218	Class 2	Class 2

6. Historic Sites

6A. *Harriton House*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
500 Harriton Rd	Harriton House	BM047	Class 1	Class 1
500 Harriton Rd		BM048	Class 1	Class 1
502 Harriton Rd	Penn's Cottage	BM049	Class 1	Class 1
504 Harriton Rd		BM050	Class 1	Class 1
506 Harriton Rd		BM051	Class 1	Class 1

7. Religious Organizations

7A. Jewish Community Center

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
45 Haverford Road	Jewish Community Center	WW004	Class 2	Class 2

7B. Merion Square Scout House

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
355 Conshohocken State Rd	Former Baptist Church	GL067	Class 1	Class 1

7C. Mikvah

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
111 Union Ave			None	None

7D. Palace Missions

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
1622 Spring Mill Rd	Woodmont Mansion Gatehouse	GL238	Class 1	Class 1
	Barn	GL238	Class 1	Class 1
	Guest House	GL238	Class 1	Class 1
1201 Woodmont Rd	Woodmont Mansion Gatehouse	GL193	Class 2	Class 2
	Maintenance Building 1			Class 2
	Maintenance Building 2			Class 2
	Father Divine Library/Museum			None

7E. Society of the Holy Child Jesus

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
1341 West Montgomery Ave	Castaña	BM135	None	Class 1
1308 Wendover Ave	Gracemere Hall	BM130	Class 2	Class 1

8. Churches & Synagogues

8A. Ardmore Presbyterian Church

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
7 W. Montgomery Ave	Ardmore Presbyterian Church	AR012	Class 2	Class 2
15 W. Montgomery Ave	Parish House	AR031	Class 2	Class 2

8B. Ardmore United Methodist Church

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
216 Argyle Road	Ardmore United Methodist Church		None	None

8C. Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
50 South Merion Ave	Bethel African Methodist Episcopal Church		None	Class 2

8D. Bryn Mawr Presbyterian Church

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
637 W. Montgomery Ave	Sanctuary	BM062	Class 2	Class 1
	Chapel		Class 2	Class 1
	Education Building		Class 2	Class 1
	Ministries Center		Class 2	Class 2
119 Radnor Street	Main Line Adult Day Center		None	Contributing
125 Radnor Street			None	Contributing
127 Radnor Street			None	Contributing
129 Radnor Street			None	Contributing
143 Radnor Street			None	Contributing
121 Fishers Road			None	Contributing

8E. Church of the Good Shepherd

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
1116 W. Lancaster Ave	Church of the Good Shepherd	BM120	Class 2	Class 2
19 Montrose Ave	Rectory/Parish House		Class 2	Class 2
1111 County Line Rd	Play & Learn		None	Class 2

8F. *Church of the Holy Apostles*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
Remington Road	Church of the Holy Apostles		None	None

8G. *Church of the Redeemer*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
220 Pennswood Road	Rectory	BM023	Class 1	Class 1
200 Pennswood Road	Church of the Redeemer	BM024	Class 1	Class 1
230 Pennswood Rd	Parish House	BM176	Class 1	Class 1

8H. *Congregation Beth Am Israel*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
1301 Hagys Ford Road	Congregation Beth Am Israel		None	None

8I. *Congregation Beth Hamedrosh*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
200 Haverford Road	Congregation Beth Hamedrosh		None	Class 2

8J. *Gladwyne Presbyterian Church*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
1321 Beaumont Drive	Gladwyne Presbyterian Church		None	None

8K. *Har Zion Temple*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
1500 Hagys Ford Road	Har Zion Temple		None	None

8L. *Household of Faith Deliverance Worship Center*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
130 E. Athens Ave	First Church of Christ, Scientist		None	Class 2

8M. *Lower Merion Baptist Church*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
911/915 New Gulph Road	Lower Merion Baptist Church	BM104	Class 1	Class 1

8N. *Lower Merion Synagogue*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
123 Old Lancaster Road	Lower Merion Synagogue		None	None

8O. *Main Line Assembly of God*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
221 Ashland Avenue	Church on the Hill		None	None

8P. *Our Mother of Good Counsel*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
31 Pennswood Road	Our Mother of Good Counsel	BM008	None	Class 1
31 Pennswood Road	Our Mother of Good Counsel School	BM007	Class 1	Class 1

8Q. *Penn Wynne United Presbyterian Church*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
140 Overbrook Parkway	Penn Wynne United Presbyterian Church		None	None

8R. *Presentation BVM Church*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
240 Haverford Road	Presentation BVM Church		None	None

8S. *Saints Memorial Baptist Church*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
51 South Warner Ave	Saints Memorial Baptist Church		None	Class 2
52 South Warner Ave	Parking Lot and House		None	None

8T. *St. Asaph's Church*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
27 Conshohocken State Rd	St. Asaph's Church	BC013	Class 2	Class 1
	Rectory			Contributing

8U. *St. Christopher's Church*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
320 Righters Mill Road	St. Christopher's Church		None	Class 2
	Rectory		None	Unknown

8V. *St. Colman Catholic Church*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
101 Argyle Road, Ardmore	St. Colman Catholic Church		None	Class 1
111 Argyle Road, Ardmore	School		None	Class 1
11 Simpson Road, Ardmore			None	None

8W. *St. John Vianney Church*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
354 Conshohocken State Rd	St. John Vianney Church	GL065	Class 1	Class 1
	Rectory	GL065	Class 1	Class 1

8X. *St. Luke United Methodist Church*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
75 Pennswood Road	St. Luke United Methodist Church		None	Class 2
Rectory			None	Contributing

8Y. *St. Mark's Armenian Catholic Church*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
400 Haverford Road	St. Mark's Armenian Catholic Church		None	None

8Z. *St. Mary's Episcopal Church*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
36 Ardmore Ave	St. Mary's Episcopal Church	AR071	Class 2	Class 1
	Rectory	AR071	Class 2	Contributing

8AA. *St. Matthias Church*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
134 Bryn Mawr Ave	St. Matthias Church	BC028	Class 2	Class 2

8BB. *St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
415 East Athens Ave	St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church	WW043	None	Class 2
1335 W. Wynnewood Road	St. Paul's Cemetery		None	Class 1
1337 W. Wynnewood Road	Dutch School House		None	Class 1
1338 W. Wynnewood Road	Sexton's House		None	Class 1
1345 W. Wynnewood Road	Parsonage		None	Class 1
435 East Athens Ave	Parsonage		Class 2	Class 2

8CC. *St. Sahag & St. Mesrob Armenian Apostolic Church*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
630 Clothier Road	Ballytore	WW062	Class 2	Class 2

8DD. *Temple Adath Israel*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
128 Old Lancaster Road	Temple Adath Israel	MS013	Class 2	Class 2

8EE. *Temple Beth Hillel-Beth El*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
1001 Remington Road	Temple Beth Hillel-Beth El	WW073	Class 2	Class 2

8FF. *Zion Baptist Church*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
219 W. Spring Avenue	Zion Baptist Church		None	Class 2

9. Cemeteries

9A. Calvary Cemetery

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
	Calvary Cemetery		None	None

9B. Har Hasetim Cemetery

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
1110 Greaves Lane	Har Hasetim Cemetery		Class 2	Class 1

9C. Merion Memorial Park

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
59 W. Rock Hill Road	Merion Memorial Park		Class 2	Class 2

9D. Odd Fellows Cemetery

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
318 Righters Mill Road	Odd Fellows Cemetery		Class 1	Class 1

9E. West Laurel Hill (Laurel Hill West) Cemetery

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
215 Belmont Ave	West Laurel Hill Cemetery	BC037	None	Class 1
450 Monument Road	West Laurel Hill Cemetery Gatehouse	BC054	Class 1	Class 1

9F. Westminster Cemetery

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
701 Belmont Ave	Westminster Cemetery		None	Class 1

10. Lower Merion School District

10A. Bala Cynwyd Middle School

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
510 Bryn Mawr Ave	Bala Cynwyd Middle School		None	Class 2

10B. Belmont Hills Elementary School

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
200 School Street	Belmont Hills Elementary School		None	Class 2

10C. Black Rock Middle School

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
1860 West Montgomery Ave	Clairemont	VI081	Class 2	None

10D. Cynwyd Elementary School

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
101 West Levering Mill Rd	Cynwyd Elementary School	BC101	Class 2	Class 2

10E. Gladwyne Elementary School

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
230 Righters Mill Road	Gladwyne Elementary School		None	Class 2

10F. Harriton High School

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
600 North Ithan Ave	Harriton High School		None	None

10G. Merion Elementary School

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
549 Bowman Ave	Merion Elementary School	MS067	Class 2	Class 1

10H. *Lower Merion High School*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
	Lower Merion High School		None	None
301 East Montgomery Avenue	LMSD Administration Building	AR132	Class 1	Class 1
	Arnold Field		None	None
	Historic Object: Stone Pillars at Arnold Field		None	Class 2
	Historic Object: Philadelphia & Columbia Railroad Monument		None	Class 2
	Historic Object: "Enter to Learn, Go Forth to Serve" from façade of demolished high school		None	Class 2

10I. *Penn Valley Elementary School*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
301 Righters Mill Road	Penn Valley Elementary School	NA036	Class 2	Class 2

10J. *Penn Wynne Elementary School*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
250 Haverford Road	Penn Wynne Elementary School	WW019	Class 2	Class 2

10K. *Welsh Valley Middle School*

Address	Name	HRI ID	Current Classification	2026 Rec. Classification
325 Tower Lane	Welsh Valley Middle School		None	None

Appendix E: Façade Program Statistics (1991–2023)

These statistics were compiled for the Lower Merion Township Commercial Façade Grant Program Report (June, 2024) based on available data.

Year	Amount Funded	Number of Grants
1991-1995	\$60,000.00	32
2002	\$23,797.50	6
2003	\$7,333.79	3
2004	\$8,894.15	4
2005	\$58,166.28	6
2006	\$7,860.00	2
2007	\$61,362.64	8
2008	\$79,547.28	14
2009	\$36,266.40	6
2010	\$51,872.89	6
2011	\$39,056.95	11
2012	\$64,299.47	13
2013	\$37,974.95	10
2014	\$28,173.52	9
2015	\$35,342.51	11
2016	\$20,129.00	5
2017	\$52,723.77	10
2018	\$12,845.39	5
2019	\$3,427.63	1
2021	\$32,481.55	1
2022	\$7,534.00	4
2023	\$10,623.00	4
Total	\$739,712.67	171
Average Since 2002	\$32,367.27	6.6
Per District: Ardmore	\$560,074.40 (76%)	137 (80%)
Per District: Bala Village	\$6,630.67 (1%)	3 (2%)
Per District: Bryn Mawr	\$102,889.53 (14%)	21 (12%)
Per District: Merion-Cynwyd	\$70,118.07 (9%)	10 (6%)

Appendix F: Township-Owned Historic Resources

The following designated Historic Resources are owned by Lower Merion Township and are under the management of the Departments of Public Works, Parks & Recreation, and Libraries. Some resources, such as Appleford and Harriton, are overseen by outside community groups in coordination with the Township.

Individually Designated Resources

Address	Name	HRI ID	Classification	Department
108 Ardmore Ave	Ardmore Free Library	AR018	Class 1	Libraries
75 E. Lancaster Ave	Township Administration Building	AR097	Class 1	Facilities Management
215 Lippincott Ave	Township Pumping Station/Warehouse	AR128	Class 2	Public Works
50 Ashland Ave	St. Andrew's Mission/Belmont Hills Community Center	BC019	Class 2	Parks & Recreation
1301 W. Montgomery Ave	Ashbridge House	BM129	Class 1	Parks & Recreation
9 S. Bryn Mawr Ave	Upland/Bryn Mawr Community Center	BM162	Class 2	Parks & Recreation
24 E. River Rd	Flat Rock Park Building	GL009	Class 2	Parks & Recreation
40 E. River Rd	Flat Rock Park Comfort Station	GL019	Class 2	Parks & Recreation
1247 Rose Glen Rd	Mill Creek Pumping Station	GL205	Class 2	Public Works
1301 Rose Glen Rd	Rolling Hill Farm Caretaker Cottage	GL209	Class 1	Parks & Recreation
770 Mt. Moro Re	Appleford	VI028	Class 1	Parks & Recreation

Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District

Address	Name	Department
43, 53-55 E. Lancaster Avenue	Parking Lots	Parking Services

Gladwyne Historic District

Address	Name	HRI ID	Classification	Department
915 Youngs Ford Rd	Gladwyne Park	GL300	Class 1	Parks & Recreation

Harriton Historic District

Address	Name	HRI ID	Classification	Department
500 Harriton Rd	Harriton House and Historic Site	BM047	Class 1	Parks & Recreation

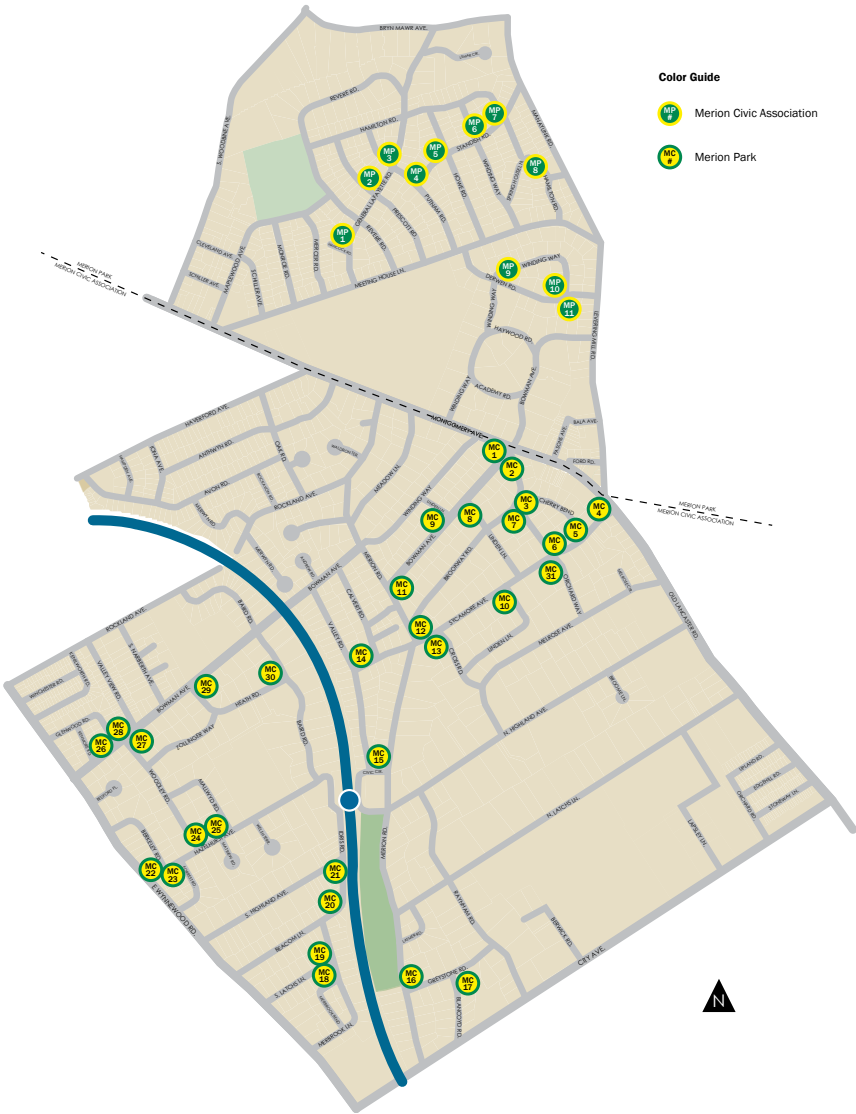
Haverford Station Historic District

Address	Name	HRI ID	Classification	Department
340 W. Montgomery Ave	Sharpe Bird Sanctuary	HA103	Unclassified	Parks & Recreation

The following Historic Objects are Township-owned or adjacent to Township properties. Although they are similar to street signs and thus under the authority of PennDOT, work at any of these addresses needs to take the safety and preservation of these milestones and signs into account. The 42 “Merion”-style street signs found throughout the Merion Station and Merion Park neighborhoods are directly under the authority of Lower Merion’s Public Works Department for repairs, painting, and relocating. Any such work, as well as potential removal, must be reviewed by the Historical Commission. Other historically designated signs (such as Keystone Markers) are not included in this list as they were installed by county or state agencies.

Historic Objects

Address	Name	HRI ID	Classification	Department
In front of 75 E. Lancaster Ave (Township Administration Building)	Lancaster Road Milestone 7	O-MS3	Class 1	Facilities Management
In front of 5 S. Bryn Mawr Ave (Ludington Library)	Lancaster Road Milestone 9	O-MS5	Class 1	Libraries
In front of 313 Montgomery Ave (Ford Road Parking Lot)	Old Lancaster Road Milestone 7	O-MS11	Class 1	Parking Services
Various	42 street signs throughout Merion Civic Assoc. boundaries and in Merion Park	O-MC _x	Class 1	Public Works



Merion Civic Association/Merion Park street sign location map

Summary of Edits to A Report on Historic Preservation for Lower Merion Township

June 12, 2026

Title: ~~A Historic Preservation Plan for Lower Merion Township~~
A Report on Historic Preservation for Lower Merion Township

P. 17:

Third bullet point: “Projects within National Register Historic Districts receiving federal funding must go through the Section 106 process, which provides oversight to ensure that federal funds, licenses or permits do not contribute to a negative impact on a resource.”

P. 20:

Benefits of National Register Districts in Commercial Areas

The downtown core of Wayne, another Main Line community, was designated as a National Register Historic District in 2013. The area is not a local Historic District, but the National Register designation allowed for owners of income-producing properties to take advantage of the 20% Federal Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit (RITC).¹⁴ The tax credit is also available to contributing properties within local Historic Districts that are certified by the National Park Service for tax credit purposes; therefore, property owners within ~~districts in Lower Merion including~~ the Ardmore Commercial Center and Gladwyne Historic Districts could be eligible for tax credits for renovation projects as long as other requirements, such as adherence to the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards, are met. The application and interpretation of the Standards ensure that any modifications are done appropriately in a way that does not negatively impact the specific property or the district as a whole.

Recommendation 2.2b: Promote the fact that commercial properties in downtown Ardmore, and Gladwyne ~~and on Haverford Station Road~~ are eligible for tax credit projects. Coordinate with the Downtown Ardmore District and other groups to educate property owners about this opportunity.

P. 39:

Last bullet point on page: “Of the commercial districts in Lower Merion Township, only the boundaries of the Ardmore Commercial Center Historic District as well as commercial areas within the Gladwyne ~~and Haverford Station Historic D~~istricts would qualify for historic tax credit funding, as no other commercial districts are either National Register ~~or Locally designated~~ Historic Districts or certified by the NPS for tax credit purposes.”

Spelling Fixes and Other Minor Edits

- p. 44: Caption for fig. 2.37: change “Athwyn” to “Anthwyn.”
- p. 60: Footnote 4: change “Comprehsive” to “Comprehensive.”
- p. 61: Last paragraph: change “Beofre” to “Before.”
- p. 67-68: Four references to sections in Chapter 62 should begin with “62-2-**D**.”
- p. 88: Footnote 10: change “Mongomery” to “Montgomery.”
- p. 96: “The Board of Historical Architectural Review (now more commonly referred to ~~has~~ the Historical Architectural Review Board, or HARB)”
- p. 107: “As ~~defined~~ **described** by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation...”
- p. 124: Change “Arboreum” to “Arboretum.”



Township of Lower Merion
A FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIP

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Finance

ITEM: **ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE - 2025 DEFICIENCY AMENDMENT**

An Ordinance of the Township of Lower Merion to amend Ordinance No. 4324 adopted December 17, 2025, making a change in certain appropriations, some of which have proven to be larger than needed and some to be insufficient, and authorizing the proper Township Officers to make the required transfers from and to appropriations heretofore made of receipts not heretofore estimated or from unappropriated fund balances.

This Ordinance was authorized for advertisement at a stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners held May 20, 2026 and duly advertised in the June 7, 2026 edition of the Main Line Times & Suburban.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Proposed Ordinance - 2025 Deficiency Amendment TBA 06-17-2026.pdf](#)

AN ORDINANCE

NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE of the Township of Lower Merion To Amend Ordinance No. 4324 Adopted December 17, 2025, Making A Change In Certain Appropriations, Some Of Which Have Proven To Be Larger Than Needed And Some To Be Insufficient, And Authorizing The Proper Township Officers To Make The Required Transfers From And To Appropriations Heretofore Made Of Receipts Not Heretofore Estimated Or From Unappropriated Fund Balances.

The Board of Commissioners of the Township of Lower Merion does hereby enact and ordain:

Section 1: The Township of Lower Merion Ordinance No. 4324, is hereby amended to provide supplemental appropriations from the following Township unappropriated fund balances in order to meet actual 2025 expenditure requirements:

<u>TOWNSHIP FUND</u>	<u>AMOUNTS</u>
AFFORDABLE HOUSING FUND	\$3,000
SANITARY SEWER FUND	\$20,000
EQUIPMENT FUND	\$130,000

Approved by the Board this _____ day of _____, 2026.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

Todd M. Sinai, President

ATTEST:

Jody L. Kelley, Secretary



Township of Lower Merion
A FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIP

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Governance & Administration

ITEM: ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE - CHAPTER 5, ADMINISTRATIVE CODE; ARTICLE III, OFFICERS - COMPENSATION AMENDMENTS

An Ordinance to amend the Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 5, Administrative Code, Article III, Officers, §5-7, Compensation, to codify the compensation for the Office of Township Commissioner and Township Tax Collector; and increase the annual compensation for the Office of Township Commissioner from \$4,000 to \$6,000, consistent with § 55603(c) of the First Class Township Code, with the effect that only Township Commissioners elected to serve terms beginning January 3, 2028 or January 7, 2030, and any Township Commissioners subsequently elected or appointed thereafter with respect to those terms, shall receive the raise.

This Ordinance was authorized for advertisement at a stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners held May 20, 2026 and duly advertised in the June 7, 2026 edition of the Main Line Times & Suburban.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Proposed Ordinance - BOC & Twp Treas Salary Codification TBA 06-17-2026.pdf](#)

AN ORDINANCE

NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE To Amend The Code Of The Township Of Lower Merion, Chapter 5, Administrative Code, Article III, Officers, § 5-7 Compensation, To Codify The Compensation For The Office Of Township Commissioner And Township Tax Collector; And Increase The Annual Compensation For The Office Of Township Commissioner From \$4,000 To \$6,000, Consistent With § 55603(c) Of The First Class Township Code, With The Effect That Only Township Commissioners Elected To Serve Terms Beginning January 3, 2028 Or January 7, 2030, And Any Township Commissioners Subsequently Elected or Appointed Thereafter With Respect To Those Terms, Shall Receive the Raise.

The Board of Commissioners of the Township of Lower Merion hereby ordains:

Section 1. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 5, entitled Administrative Code, Article III, Officers, § 5-7, Compensation, is hereby amended to read as follows:

§ 5-7 Compensation.

- A. The compensation of the officers referred to in §§5-5 and 5-6 of this chapter shall be provided for in the annual Township budget as adopted, and any amendment to such budget, and as otherwise provided for by law;
- B. The annual compensation for Township Commissioners shall be \$4,000. For all Township Commissioners duly elected or appointed hereafter to serve terms beginning January 3, 2028 or later, the annual compensation shall be \$6,000.
- C. The annual compensation for Township Tax Collector shall be \$6,000; The Township Tax Collector shall, in addition, be entitled to charge those fees set forth in Chapter A167 hereof.
- D. The annual compensation for Township Commissioner or Tax Collector shall be established by ordinance in accord with the First-Class Township Code.

Section 2. Nothing in this Ordinance or in Chapter 5 of the Code of the Township of Lower Merion, as hereby amended, shall be construed to affect any suit or proceedings in any

Section 3. Nothing in this Ordinance or in the Code of the Township of Lower Merion, as hereby amended, shall be construed to affect any suit or proceedings in any Court, any rights acquired or liability incurred, any permit issued, or any cause or causes of action existing under the said Code of the Township of Lower Merion prior to the adoption of this amendment.

Section 5. This Ordinance shall take effect and be in force from and after its approval as required by law.

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE
TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION

ATTEST:

Jody L. Kelley, Secretary



Township of Lower Merion
A FIRST CLASS TOWNSHIP

AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION

COMMITTEE: Sustainability

ITEM: ADOPTION OF ORDINANCE - CHAPTER 92, PROPERTY MAINTENANCE - LEAF BLOWER AMENDMENTS

An Ordinance to amend the Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 92, entitled Property Maintenance, Article III thereof, Gas Powered Leaf Blowers, to revise the definitions of Gas Powered Leaf Blower, Electric Powered Leaf Blower and Leaf Blower; to specifically exempt leaf removal equipment manufactured with the engine and blower housing permanently integrated into a wheeled chassis, including walk-behind, stand-on, riding, and tow-behind leaf blowers; and to otherwise reformat portions of Article III.

This Ordinance was authorized for advertisement at a stated meeting of the Board of Commissioners held May 20, 2026 and duly advertised in the June 7, 2026 edition of the Main Line Times & Suburban.

ATTACHMENT(S):

[Proposed Ordinance - Leaf Blower Amendments TBA 06-17-2026.pdf](#)

AN ORDINANCE

NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE To Amend The Code Of The Township Of Lower Merion, Chapter 92, Entitled Property Maintenance, Article III Thereof, Gas Powered Leaf Blowers, To Revise The Definitions Of Gas Powered Leaf Blower, Electric Powered Leaf Blower And Leaf Blower; To Specifically Exempt Leaf Removal Equipment Manufactured With The Engine And Blower Housing Permanently Integrated Into A Wheeled Chassis, Including Walk-Behind, Stand-On, Riding, And Tow-Behind Leaf Blowers; And To Otherwise Reformat Portions Of Article III.

Section 1. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 92, Property Maintenance, Article III, Gas Powered Leaf Blowers, § 92-5, Definitions, the definition of Gas Powered Leaf Blower, Electric Powered Leaf Blower, and Leaf Blower, shall be amended to provide as follows:

Chapter 92. Property Maintenance.

* * * * *

Article III Gas Powered Leaf Blowers

§92-5 Definitions.

* * * * *

Gas Powered Leaf Blower

Any ~~handheld, backpack, or tow behind leaf blower, or other device fitting the~~ definition of leaf blower below, which is directly powered by an internal combustion or rotary engine using gasoline or other hydrocarbon fuel. ~~An electric powered leaf blower that is plugged into an operating generator that is powered by an engine using gasoline or a mixture of gasoline and oil blend as fuel shall be deemed a gas powered leaf blower.~~

Electric-Powered Leaf Blower

Any ~~device fitting the definition of leaf blower below, which is handheld or backpack~~ leaf blower powered only by electric means, including but not limited to battery-powered leaf blowers, and corded leaf blowers.

Leaf Blower

A device that is commonly or primarily used, designed or operated to produce a current of air for the purpose of moving, pushing, propelling, dispersing, redistributing or blowing leaves, dust, dirt, gardening or grass clippings and cuttings, trimmings from trees and shrubs, refuse, debris, or other similar material other than snow or water,

whether portable and carried, or other similar machine. ~~Mounted and/or towed leaf vacuums utilized to pull leaves into a truck shall be excluded from this definition.~~

Section 2. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 92, Property Maintenance, Article III, Gas Powered Leaf Blowers, § 92-6, Gas Powered Leaf Blowers - Prohibitions, shall be amended by the removal of sub-section E thereof, to provide as follows:

Chapter 92. Property Maintenance.

* * * * *

Article III Gas Powered Leaf Blowers

* * * * *

§92-6 Gas Powered Leaf Blowers - Prohibitions.

- A. Beginning June 1, 2026 and for every year thereafter, the use of gas powered leaf blowers shall be prohibited from June 1 to October 1 (“Summer”) and from January 1 to April 1 (“Winter”) each year. This seasonal restriction shall apply to all persons and entities, including residents, commercial landscapers, contractors, and property maintenance personnel, on all properties within the Township.
- B. Beginning January 1, 2028 and for every year thereafter, the use of gas powered leaf blowers shall be prohibited from January 1 to October 1 each year.
- C. Beginning January 1, 2029 and for every year thereafter, the use of gas powered leaf blowers shall be prohibited for the entire year.
- D. The use of electric-powered leaf blowers shall be permitted all year.
- ~~E. These restrictions shall not apply during snowfall and within 24 hours after snow has ceased to fall.~~

Section 3. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 92, Property Maintenance, Article III, Gas Powered Leaf Blowers, § 92-6, Gas Powered Leaf Blowers, shall be amended by the addition of §92-7. Exemptions, to provide as follows:

Chapter 92. Property Maintenance.

* * * * *

Article III Gas Powered Leaf Blowers

* * * * *

§92-7 Exemptions. The following are exempt from the restrictions set forth in §92-6 above:

