

# *"Discovering Collingswood"*

A Master Plan for the Borough of Collingswood

Historic Preservation Plan Element

JUNE 1999

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## Historic Preservation Plan Element

Prepared for:

Borough of Collingswood Planning Board as part of the Community's Master Plan Analysis

Prepared By:

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(The original of this report has been signed and  
sealed in accordance with the law)

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# COLLINGSWOOD MASTER PLAN HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN ELEMENT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### I. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Historic Preservation Master Plan element is to identify local historic resources, evaluate current issues regarding those resources, and recommend implementation measures to conserve, re-use, rehabilitate, and protect the physical legacy of Collingswood's proud past. Recognizing this goal, in February 1986 the Commissioners adopted an ordinance amending the Borough's land development regulations to create a local historic preservation overlay zone and a Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). Collingswood's historic preservation ordinance provides a legal mechanism to encourage the protection and preservation of properties in the local historic district.

In 1990, Collingswood's Haddon Avenue downtown district and the adjacent historic residential area around Knight Park, Merrick Villa, and Park Avenue, were placed on the state and national registers of historic places in recognition of their historic and architectural significance. Listing on the state and national register has no regulatory impact, however, it does provide property owners protection from adverse actions by the local, state, and federal government, such as highway and public infrastructure projects.

### II. HISTORIC PRESERVATION GOALS

Collingswood recognizes its deep historic roots and understands that its historic properties are unique resources, which should be conserved and protected for future generations. It also recognizes that those resources must be adapted, from time to time, to meet changing lifestyles. This means that the Borough must play an active role in the stewardship of those properties that it identifies as significant and worthy of preservation.

The following local historic preservation goals are recommended for the Borough of Collingswood:

- Continue to identify and evaluate the significance of historic properties;
- Continue to review and implement municipal policies that involve adaptive re-use, rehabilitation, and protection of significant historic properties;
- Continue to support the Borough's Certified Local Government program and the Historic Preservation Commission's certificate of appropriateness program;
- Continue to provide technical assistance and guidance necessary to property owners so that they may better preserve and improve their historic properties;

- Increase public awareness about the Borough's historic districts and properties
- Incorporate historic preservation policies into the Borough's downtown revitalization strategies;
- Maintain and strengthen support and partnerships between local historic preservation community groups, neighborhood organizations, and state and federal historic preservation agencies;
- Implement feasible measures to ensure the preservation and proper stewardship for the Borough's Collings-Knight House; and
- Assist in establishing economic incentives to encourage the rehabilitation and protection of historic properties in the Borough's residential neighborhoods and commercial districts.

### III. ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Buildings often reflect the popular designs and styles of the period in which they were built. The highest concentration of architecturally and historically significant properties identified in the Borough's 1984 study were in the downtown and around Knight's Park, which are now designated as the Collingswood Residential Historic District and the Collingswood Commercial Historic District. The majority of the homes and businesses in these districts were constructed between 1888 and 1941 and represent the Late Victorian and Colonial Revival architectural styles. Most still retain those characteristic features that make them charming, beautiful, and architecturally significant.

The Borough's 1984 survey also identified four other concentrations of historic and architecturally significant properties that should be considered for historic recognition. These potential historic districts include an area around the intersection of Fern and Maple Avenues, a second area between Harvard and Washington Avenues, a third between White Horse Pike and Browning Road, and a fourth area between Bettewood and Lees Avenues. Recent redevelopment studies have also identified the properties along Collings Avenue west of White Horse Pike as a potential historic district.

The two major threats to the protection of historic resources in the Borough are the economic constraints of local property owners and incompatible alterations and (re)development in the local historic district.

### IV. IMPLEMENTATION

Many of the Borough's historic preservation goals can be accomplished through a series of measures involving the registration of historic properties, education and technical assistance, financial incentives, and public advocacy. The following recommended implementation measures could be used to further the Borough's historic preservation goals.

- Listing on the state or national register
- Revise the boundaries of the local historic preservation overlay zone to coincide with the state and national register historic district
- Retain a historic preservation firm to prepare an inventory and evaluation of the potentially eligible individual properties and the four identified potential historic districts and individual properties.
- Create a campaign to market the advantages and benefits of historic preservation to the citizens of the community. Such a campaign would include promotional materials such as brochures, handouts, and maps, providing capsulized information about the historic district and historic preservation
- Incorporate special street signage or markers within the historic district to alert property owners and visitors that they are in a special place.
- Reinvigorate code enforcement policies
- Explore the use of additional state and federal government programs
- Contact appropriate agencies for additional program assistance and information such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation, the National Park Service, Mid-Atlantic Regional Office (Philadelphia), and the NJ Department of Community Affairs.

#### V. SUMMARY

Historic preservation embodies the public appreciation and respect for those parts of the built environment that bear witness to our local and national heritage. In essence, historic preservation is the method by which local governments, businesses, property owners, residents, and institutions join together to take pride in their collective history and their community's own identity and character. Historic properties are often fragile resources, which, if left unprotected, may fall prey to deterioration, demolition, and irreversible alteration.

The goals and objectives outlined in this element help meet the challenge of preserving the historic character and qualities of Collingswood. Through these actions, Collingswood will be empowered to conserve its historic treasures while adaptively re-using them, where appropriate, to meet the requirements of today's society. In this way, Collingswood can be confident that its physical past will be enjoyed by its present and future residents.

**COLLINGSWOOD MASTER PLAN  
HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN ELEMENT**

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# COLLINGSWOOD MASTER PLAN HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN ELEMENT

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. WHAT IS HISTORIC PRESERVATION?

Historic preservation embodies the public appreciation and respect for those parts of the built environment that bear witness to our local and national heritage. In essence, historic preservation is the method by which local governments, businesses, property owners, residents, and institutions join together to take pride in their collective history and their community's own identity and character. Historic properties are often fragile resources, which, if left unprotected, may fall prey to deterioration, demolition, and irreversible alteration.

In many communities, the protection of historic resources in the built environment is as important as the protection of air and water quality, open spaces, and wildlife found in the natural environment. The purpose of this Historic Preservation Master Plan element is to identify local historic resources, evaluate current issues regarding those resources, and recommend implementation measures to conserve, re-use, rehabilitate, and protect the physical legacy of Collingswood's proud past.

### B. RECENT HISTORIC PRESERVATION EFFORTS IN COLLINGSWOOD

Local history is very important to Collingswood residents, for it is all around them. Collingswood was first settled in 1681 and incorporated as a borough in 1888. Collingswood's history dates to the early 1680s when Quaker colonists established their farmsteads on the banks of the Newton Creek seeking religious freedom and a new life in America. However, local clans of Native Americans, the Lenni Lenape, had occupied this area thousands of years earlier. Its modern history began in the 1870s when a small community began to develop around a station on the commuter railroad into Camden. Not surprisingly, Collingswood has a multitude of historic and architecturally significant resources, e.g. places, structures, and neighborhoods, worthy of distinction and appreciation.

Interest in Collingswood's history and historic resources was renewed in the 1960s during the state's tercentennial celebration and further strengthened in the 1970s with the country's bicentennial. The first complete survey of Collingswood's historic properties was made in 1984 following the tercentennial of the Borough's first settlement and as a prelude to the Borough's Centennial Anniversary in 1988. The survey identified many

individual historic properties and several areas where historic resources were concentrated. It also laid the framework for local appreciation of one of the Borough's most important assets, its historic downtown commercial district and surrounding historic Victorian era neighborhoods.

These concentration areas were then mapped to form potential historic districts around Knight Park, in Merrick Villa, along Park Avenue west of Lees Avenue, and along Haddon Avenue between Fern and Zane avenues. In February 1986, the Commissioners adopted an ordinance amending the Borough's land development regulations to create a local historic preservation overlay zone and a Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). Collingswood's historic preservation ordinance provides a legal mechanism to encourage the protection and preservation of properties in the local historic district.

In 1990, Collingswood's Haddon Avenue downtown district and the adjacent historic residential area around Knight Park, Merrick Villa, and Park Avenue, were placed on the state and national registers of historic places in recognition of their historic and architectural significance. Listing on the state and national register has no regulatory impact to private property owners; only local historic preservation regulations, like Collingswood's, have that authority. The state and national register listing, however, does provide property owners protection from adverse actions by the local, state, and federal government, such as highway and public infrastructure projects.

The Borough's reasons for designating this overlay zone, where exterior changes to properties are reviewed by the HPC for their appropriateness and compatibility to surrounding historic fabric, were provided at the adoption hearing, but are not specified in the Ordinance. In addition to the goal of protection of historic resources for future generations, the local reasons for historic preservation include promotion of civic beauty, citizenship, education, recreation, neighborhood stabilization, and economic development. It is recommended that the Ordinance be amended to articulate the reasons why the Borough's historic preservation regulations were adopted, as noted above.

#### C. HISTORIC PRESERVATION GOALS

Collingswood recognizes its deep historic roots and understands that its historic properties are unique resources, which should be conserved and protected for future generations. It also recognizes that those resources must be adapted, from time to time, to meet changing lifestyles. This means that the Borough must play an active role in the stewardship of those properties that it identifies as significant and worthy of preservation. The following local historic preservation goals are recommended for the Borough of Collingswood:



- Continue to identify and evaluate the significance of historic properties of Collingswood's past;
- Continue to review and implement Collingswood's municipal policies that involve adaptive re-use, rehabilitation, and protection of significant historic properties;
- Continue to support the Borough's Certified Local Government (CLG) program and the Historic Preservation Commission's certificate of appropriateness program;
- Continue to provide technical assistance and guidance necessary to property owners so that they may better preserve and improve their historic properties;
- Increase public awareness about the Borough's historic districts and properties and improve education efforts in order to improve Collingswood's public and self-image;
- Incorporate historic preservation policies into the Borough's downtown revitalization strategies;
- Maintain and strengthen support and partnerships between local historic preservation community groups, neighborhood organizations, and state and federal historic preservation agencies;
- Implement feasible measures to ensure the preservation and proper stewardship for the Borough's Collings-Knight House; and
- Assist in establishing economic incentives to encourage the rehabilitation and protection of historic properties in the Borough's residential neighborhoods and commercial districts.

## II. IDENTIFICATION

### A. LOCAL HISTORY

The history of Collingswood is a proud one. The community began in 1677 when a group of Irish Quakers purchased 1,600 acres to establish a "New Town" along the banks of current Newton Creek. The place that is now Collingswood was originally the plantations of the Zane and Thackara families, whose house still stand today. The Collings-Knight house was built on the foundations of the original Zane homestead, which later descended to the families that founded the modern Borough. The Thackara House is located on Eldridge Avenue in West Collingswood, near the site of the old Newton Meeting, the Quaker pioneers' community center.

This land between the Cooper River and Newton Creek was mostly forested, except for an old Indian field near the Newton meetinghouse and along the stream banks. The Stokes-Lee House is associated with another early family, which operated a public landing and a tavern on the Newton Creek near the head of navigation. This property was later operated as a Kalium (potassium) Mineral Spring and health resort in the Nineteenth century. As the Zane and Thackara families prospered and more colonists moved into the area, the land that is now Collingswood became prime farmland. Agriculture was the principal economic activity in Collingswood up until just after the Civil War. Local residents traveled to market in Camden and Haddonfield or to nearby mills in Haddon Township.

Although a railroad line between Camden and Absecon (Atlantic City) was opened in 1856, a regular stop was not scheduled in Collingswood until 1871. This stop was located at the Collings Avenue crossing (now the elevated PATCO line), and was called the "Collings Road Station" or "Two Sticks" to the locals. The village of "Stonetown", which consisted of about twenty homes (c1850) along Haddon Avenue near Crescent Boulevard, was the only significant community at the time. Some Philadelphia industrialist and businessmen even established summer homes in Collingswood along the White Horse Pike and Haddon Avenues. One extant example of a summer retreat is the French-Hurley House on the White Horse Pike. The house was built by Samuel French, one of the founders of the Smith-Kline-French chemical company and later owned by Camden mercantilist William Hurley.

The most prosperous Collingswood resident was Edward Collings (E. C.) Knight, who was a grandson of Richard Collings and made a fortune in wholesale greengrocery and sugar refining. He later invented the railroad sleeping car, for which he sold the patent rights in 1859, then became a major power in the railroad industry. The Knight family had estates in Cape May, Newport, and Ashville along with other railroad magnates of the period.

Knight bought the Collings family farm, where he was raised as a child, in 1868. He operated it as a gentleman's farm with dairy cattle, beef cattle, and horse breeding for a period, purchasing other nearby farms to increase his holdings.

After the railroad station opened in 1871, local businesses began to develop along Haddon Avenue. A post office for the village was opened in 1878 and named "Collingswood" in 1881. By 1885, E. C. Knight's Collingswood Land Company owned or controlled about three-quarters of the present Borough and was ready to develop Camden's second streetcar suburb. The other streetcar suburb was developed a few years earlier at Merchantville. In 1886, Collings partnered with another prominent landowner William Tatem and brickyard owner E. E. Magill to form the Collingswood Real Estate Company. (Tatem's brick 1854 house still stands at the corner of Maple and Frazier Avenues.) The village's population soon exploded from less than 200 residents in 1880 to more than 1,600 in 1900. By 1930, the community's population grew eight-fold to more than 12,700.

Knight and his partners received approval for their petition to incorporate the Borough of Collingswood from Haddon Township in 1888. Initial development in the Borough focused around the Collingswood Station and to some extent around the West Collingswood Station on the Philadelphia and Atlantic Railroad. Eventually, commercial, industrial, and institutional uses followed the homeowners, settling along the railroad lines and Haddon Avenue. Knight planned and improved a 63-acre town common and park in the center of the Borough in honor of his mother. This large greensward is still used by Borough residents for a variety of recreational purposes. The suburban residents of Collingswood found a ready supply of local and Camden architects to design and build in the high Victorian and Colonial Revival styles of the pre Depression Era period. During the Depression, the County park commission developed the extensive parkway systems along the Cooper River and Newton Creek now enjoyed by Borough residents.

After the Great Depression and World War II, the remaining vacant tracts of the Borough were developed with suburban-style housing along Newton Lake and the Cooper River, and in West Collingswood. The Haddon Avenue commercial district remained a vibrant part of the Borough, until modern shopping centers in nearby townships opened in the 1960s and 1970s. Renewed interest in the downtown and nearby historic neighborhoods began to surface after the American Bicentennial in 1976, and became more prominent after the Borough's Centennial Anniversary in 1988. Eugene Orowitz, later Hollywood-actor Michael Langdon, is Collingswood's most famous resident from the modern historic period. A playground in Knight Park was dedicated in his honor in 1996.

## B. ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Buildings often reflect the popular designs and styles of the period in which they were built. The highest concentration of architecturally and historically significant properties identified in the Borough's 1984 study were in the downtown and around Knight's Park, which are now designated as the Collingswood Residential Historic District and the Collingswood Commercial Historic District (See Figure HP-1). Both of these districts are on the state and national registers of historic places, which provides a level of status for the community and the property owners, as well as a minimal degree of protection from the local, state, and federal governments in cases of adverse condemnations. The majority of the homes and businesses in these districts were constructed between 1888 and 1941 and represent the Late Victorian and Colonial Revival architectural styles. Although many of them are common or "vernacular" examples of these styles, most still retain those characteristic features that make them charming, beautiful, and architecturally significant.

The boundaries of the Borough's local historic district are basically the same as the state and national register districts, with some exceptions. Some properties outside the state and national districts are in the local district, which is a confusing situation for property owners. Properties in the local district, but outside the state and national district boundaries, are required to meet the same local rehabilitation standards as their neighbors, but are not afforded the same tax credit and government protections. This discrepancy should be reviewed and corrected, if possible.

Some of Collingswood's most historic properties are not in the local historic district, which affords the greatest level of protection from incompatible alteration. There are only two structures in Collingswood dating from the colonial period, the Stokes-Lee House (c1700) on Lees Lane and the Thackara House (1754) on Eldridge Avenue. Both of these private properties are on the state and national register of historic places for their architectural and historical significance, but neither is in the Borough's local historic district. The Collings-Knight House (c1820), a Borough-owned museum, is in the Borough's local historic district and on the state and national registers for its architectural and historical significance, too. This property, which is associated with the history of the Borough's two founding families, is a cherished local landmark.

Two other ante-bellum homes, the Tatem House (1854) on Maple and Frazier Avenues and the French-Hurley House (c1850) on the White Horse Pike, are also architecturally and historically significant landmarks, but neither is in the local historic district, or on the state or national registers. Recognizing their significance to the community's heritage, the Historic Preservation Commission should consider recommending to the Borough Commissioners that the Stokes-Lee House, Thackara House, Tatem House, and French-Hurley House

properties should be included as satellite sites in the local historic district. Such designation, in accordance with Ordinance standards, would provide a greater level of protection for the preservation of these local landmarks.

The Borough's 1984 survey also identified four other concentrations of historic and architecturally significant properties that should be considered for historic recognition. These potential historic districts include an area around the intersection of Fern and Maple Avenues, a second area between Harvard and Washington Avenues, a third between White Horse Pike and Browning Road, and a fourth area between Bettewood and Lees Avenues. Several individually significant properties outside those potential districts were also identified in the study:

- A grand Victorian House at 1033 Collings Avenue,
- An International Style house at the corner of Browning and Maple Avenues,
- An Arts & Crafts Style house at the corner of Maple and Fern Avenues, and
- Another distinctive Victorian home at 825 Linwood Avenue.

Recent redevelopment studies have also identified the properties along Collings Avenue west of White Horse Pike as a potential historic district.

In order to be eligible for listing on the state and national register of historic places, a property must be at least fifty years of age and demonstrate a high degree of physical integrity and significance in history or architecture. While a large percentage of the buildings in Collingswood are more than fifty years old, most of them may not possess such a level of integrity or significance for listing on the state and national register. Whether the above-mentioned properties are actually eligible for state and national register listing as historic individual properties or historic districts is unknown at this time. Additional studies are needed to evaluate their potential.

After these studies are finished the HPC and the Planning Board should also evaluate whether the local historic district should be enlarged to include those potentially eligible properties. This decision should be based upon the resources' degree of significance and potential threats to the resources' physical and architectural integrity. If the resources are eligible for state and national historic designation, it is recommended that the Borough apply for matching funds to prepare nomination papers for those districts so that they too can be afforded the special status, government protection, and tax credit benefits as those properties already so designated. Such state and national designation would not, however, have any bearing on an individual property owner's ability to alter to demolish their property if they wished; only inclusion in the local historic district would provide that level of protection for those historic resources.

### III. EVALUATION

#### A. RESOURCE THREATS

The two major threats to the protection of historic resources in the Borough are the economic constraints of local property owners and incompatible alterations and (re)development in the local historic district.

##### 1. Economic Constraints

The economic impact concerns of historic property owners are not unique to Collingswood, and are commonly heard in most historic urban areas in the beginning stages of revitalization. Haddonfield, Camden, Woodbury, Bridgeton, Mount Holly, among others, have all experienced similar problems. The following is a list of those general historic preservation economic concerns and comments on their applicability to Collingswood:

##### a. Ownership Patterns

The socio-economic conditions of the historic part of the Borough have changed considerably as suburban areas in the Borough and surrounding municipalities grew in the post World War II period. Many of the grand Victorian homes were erected for upper-middle and upper income families with sufficient capital to maintain their properties. The businesses in the downtown were once the community's major source of commerce, with little competition from other suburbs.

Many of the current owners and rental residents of the historic district are seniors or starting families on limited incomes that may have difficulty maintaining and restoring their properties. Storeowners also have a hard time making end meet. This is one reason why the local historic district overlay zone has been focused on a definable core historic preservation policy area, and has not been extended to the surrounding areas since 1986.

##### b. Neglect/Deferred Maintenance

Typically, the longer maintenance is deferred on a property, the more deteriorated the roof, chimney, foundation, walls, windows, etc., are going to be when it is time to fix them. The cycle of neglect sometimes snowballs to the point of significant code violations or cover-ups, e.g. vinyl siding or stucco. Property owners should be encouraged to phase projects over a multi-year period to keep costs manageable.

c. Pure Restoration vs. Rehabilitation

Often owners will complain that once their property is historically designated, the Borough or Federal government will require them to "restore" it and they can't afford it. A listing on the state or federal register is primarily an official recognition of the significance of an individual property or district, and does not empower either the state or federal governments in any way to regulate individual property owner rights.

Inclusion in the local historic district zone means that the owner will be required to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness, which will be reviewed for the impacts that any exterior alterations or improvements will have on the property. The Borough's Historic Preservation Commission does not require restoration, but compatible rehabilitation with the existing building fabric.

d. Improvement Costs vs. Re-sale Value

It is quite possible that the property owner that improves (rehabilitates) his/her house may not achieve what he/she expected at re-sale if neighboring houses are not fixed-up, but that is always a calculated risk. Over the long term, the local historic district overlay zone review procedure ensures all property owners that the general condition of neighboring properties will improve. This may affect property values and tax rates, but again that all depends on the local real estate market.

e. Collings-Knight House

The Borough owns this cherished landmark along Collings Avenue opposite Knight Park and leases it to a local non-profit organization. The organization operates the property as an old house museum dedicated to the memory of these two families and the individuals who founded the community in the 1880s. Tours and programs at the property are limited due to the poor condition of the house and the costs of the extensive repairs needed to make it fully functional. The group has been trying to raise funds to complete the necessary repairs for more than a decade, but the task seems insurmountable. The property is almost never occupied and rarely opened for visitors.

## 2. Inappropriate Development

The second major threat to historic resources in the Borough is inappropriate development, e.g. altering, rehabilitating, and demolishing resources, without concern or regard for their historic status. Most of these problems are also common among municipalities in the initial stages of their historic preservation program, and most can be attributed to a lack of information/guidance or communication between property owners and developers, zoning and construction code officials, and the local historic preservation commission.

Most of the Borough's historic preservation efforts in the past ten years have involved managing applications for building alterations in the designated historic district. The HPC's record in helping to restore and rehabilitate the downtown and nearby residential neighborhoods has been quite successful. Vintage porches, Victorian ornamentation, and historic paint colors have returned to Collingswood after years of hiding. The quality of life in the downtown residential neighborhoods and along Haddon Avenue and Collings Avenue has improved significantly. One of the Borough's greatest obstacles over the past ten years has been in disseminating information about rehabilitation in accordance with acceptable standards.

Over the past thirty years, architects, historians, and craftspeople have worked together with the National Park Service to develop a set of guidelines that property owners could use to ensure that their historic resources are appropriately maintained, rehabilitated, and restored. Today, these widely-used guidelines are known as the "Secretary of the Interior's Standards" and have been adopted by the Borough's historic preservation commission as the methods to use when working on historic properties in the local historic preservation zone. A copy of these Standards can be found in Appendix A

The "Standards" do not require owners to "restore" their property, but simply advise them that it is:

- Better to preserve (maintain) than to repair,
- Better to repair than to restore,
- Better to restore than to reconstruct, and
- Modern alterations should be done in a manner which respects the structure's original design and physical integrity.

The Borough's historic preservation regulations also include standards for new construction, alterations, and additions to historic properties, as well as evaluation criteria for requests to demolish or relocate properties.



The majority of the implementation recommendations in the next section of this element deal with improving communication to avoid the following types of inappropriate development:

- Inappropriate alterations/materials;
- Work without a Certificate of Appropriateness or other required permits;
- Demolition or significant alternations based on perceived re-use limitations, vacancy, and/or threats to public health and safety.

The purpose of this historic preservation element is not to evaluate whether the HPC's policies on vinyl siding and wooden sash windows is correct or warranted. These are detailed preservation policy issues far beyond the scope of this element. The goal is to provide the HPC a framework for making policy decisions that work for Collingswood and to recommend strategies for getting that information to property owners to help them preserve their buildings.

## B. CURRENT PROGRAMS

Collingswood adopted its Historic Preservation Ordinance in 1986 and has periodically updated it in accordance with the Municipal Land Use Law. The HPC is charged with advising and assisting the Borough Commissioners, the Planning Board, and the Zoning Board of Adjustment on historic preservation issues and for reviewing exterior alterations, improvements, new construction, and demolition within the local historic district overlay zone. It is fully authorized to approve, approve with conditions, or deny application for a Certificate of Appropriateness in that zone and uses the Secretary of the Interior's Standards as its guidelines for determining the appropriateness of applications. The Construction Official is the HPC's enforcement officer. Penalties for violating the ordinance are not ambiguous. The Historic Preservation Ordinance specifies that HPC violations are considered violations of the Borough Land Development Code, with penalties commensurate with any other violation.

The major players in the Borough's historic preservation program are the Zoning and Construction Code Office, the local Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), and, to some extent, the local Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment. The Zoning and Construction Code Office operates like most other municipalities, coordinating development with the HPC and the community development office. Applications for zoning and construction permits are reviewed to determine whether they are in the local historic district by way of a coded tax parcel map. If a property is located in the district, the property owner/developer is given and HPC application to complete.

The application provides some basic information about the process and the time of the regularly scheduled meetings. It is at this point that many property owners first learn (or are quickly reminded) that they are in a local historic district. Some owners who do exterior renovations without a building permit or a HPC Certificate of Appropriateness are also informed that they are in the district during construction or after the fact. This "gotcha" syndrome is a major complaint to the Borough. Over the past decade, the HPC has adopted rehabilitation policies for a variety of issues and circumstances in the historic district. Increased awareness of the Borough's historic preservation program, district boundaries, and rehabilitation standards, is a critical element in the process, which needs serious attention.

All of the HPC members are local residents who volunteer their time and expertise to help administer the Borough's historic preservation agenda. The Borough does provide secretarial support and legal assistance, when necessary. Although the Borough's Planning and Zoning Boards rely on the advice of appointed professional engineers and planners, Collingswood does not provide a budget for any professional historic preservation consultant. This makes the HPC's task more difficult.

In order to assist applicant's the HPC and the Borough have developed a "Citizens Guide To The Collingswood Historic District" (1986, 1995), which provides a general overview of the HPC process and some rehabilitation guidance. Design assistance guides have been published for portions of the Haddon Avenue historic district and the West Collingswood area (outside the district). There is, however, no standard literature available for local property owners about fixing up their homes and storefronts. Literature and ready information about rehabilitation topics is greatly needed. Although the Ordinance empowers the HPC to provide advisory, educational, and informational services to promote historic preservation in Collingswood, its workload has forced it to spend most of its time reviewing applications. Prioritization of educational and promotional efforts must be emphasized.

#### IV. IMPLEMENTATION

Many of the Borough's historic preservation goals can be accomplished through a series of measures involving the registration of historic properties, education and technical assistance, financial incentives, and public advocacy. The following recommended implementation measures could be used to further the Borough's historic preservation goals.

##### A. REGISTRATION

Benefits to state or federally listed property owners include protection from publicly funded projects, such as a road widening which might call for a building's demolition. Listing on the state or national register may also provide certain investment tax credits to income-producing properties. Registration also builds public awareness in local history, as well as community pride. The following registration measures are recommended to protect the Borough's historic resources:

1. Although the present zone includes most of the older buildings in the Borough, it is recommended that the boundaries of the local historic preservation overlay zone be revised to coincide with the state and national register historic district. Those properties already listed on the state and national registers, such as the Stokes-Lee House and the Thackara House, should also be added as satellite sites to the historic district. Additional consideration should be made for the Tatem House and French-Hurley House, which also appear to be individually eligible for listing.
2. The Borough, in consultation with the HPC, should retain a historic preservation firm to prepare an inventory and evaluation of the potentially eligible individual properties and the four identified potential historic districts and individual properties. The firm should also evaluate the significance of those properties identified in the 1984 historic resource survey and later surveys. Such a project may cost between \$10,000-\$15,000, and may be eligible for matching funds from the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office because Collingswood is a Certified Local Government (See below).
3. When the above analysis and evaluation is completed, the HPC, Planning Board, and the Commissioners should meet to discuss:
  - a. Whether there are any additional individual sites, areas, or districts that are architecturally and historically significant, and
  - b. Whether they should be protected by inclusion in a local historic district or by some other means.

4. Like most local historic house groups in this region, the Collings-Knight Historical Society spends most of its time raising money to "save" the Collings-Knight House property, which it leases from the Borough. If this goal is achieved, the group will then need to continue to raise money to maintain the house and perpetuate the cycle of repairs. The Borough should re-evaluate whether the existing relationship and lease is the best stewardship policy. Previously, the Borough leased the property to a tenant, which occupied and maintained the historic house, opening the formal rooms for special occasions and holidays. Other historic groups, such as the Philadelphia Landmarks Commission, have found this type of arrangement to be in the best interest of the historic property and the property owner.

## B. EDUCATION AND LOCAL TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Perhaps the strongest historic preservation resource in the Borough is its Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), which is composed of citizens with strong backgrounds in local history, architecture, construction, and business. Property owners often benefit from the HPC's guidance and advice when they apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness. However, many property owners do not find out about the local historic preservation zone regulations or the Commission's talents until their development plans are already made.

In addition to the lack of information about the local historic preservation zone, there does not appear to be a strong local historic preservation advocacy group that would support the Commission's work and help residential neighbors fix up their old buildings. Such a group does exist for commercial properties along Haddon Avenue. Their efforts in façade painting, sign design and window display assistance, and tree and flower plantings have done wonders for the downtown. The following education and local technical assistance measures are recommended to protect the Borough's historic resources:

1. To ensure all future property owners and developers are informed about the local historic preservation overlay zone, the Zoning Map should be amended to show a hatched or shaded area to reflect its boundaries. A tax parcel printout of properties should be included in the Ordinance and be made readily available to the Zoning and Code Construction Officers. The revised Zoning Map can then be purchased by or distributed to local realtors, developers, property owners, businesses, community groups, etc. to get the message across.
2. A general information letter, signed by the Mayor, reminding property owners of the Borough's historic preservation goals, recent accomplishments, review procedures, and local contacts should be

(re)mailed to the property owners in the historic preservation overlay zone. The tax assessor should also mail this letter and other relevant information about the district (see below) to every new property owner after a title transfer and recordation. A follow-up letter geared to businesses along Haddon Avenue should also be sent, perhaps in a mailing with the local business association.

3. A primary historic preservation resource area, where property owners could pick up their Certificate of Appropriateness applications, such as the Construction Code Office, should be identified so that property owners and other interested people could find out how the local review process works. People seeking additional information about the process, local rehabilitation standards, local history and architecture, should be directed to the Borough Library, which has the personnel and capability to provide people with such information during regular business hours, nights, and weekends.
4. Promotional materials, such as brochures, handouts, maps, etc, providing capsulized information about the historic district and historic preservation should be developed in consultation with the HPC. A brochure that could help property owners understand and discover their building's architecture and history would be very useful, such as was done for West Collingswood and the Borough of Haddonfield. The "Citizens Guide To The Collingswood Historic District" (1986, 1995), which includes a historic district map and explains the local historic preservation process should be made available to every property owner in the district, realtors, local contractors, etc. Numerous extra copies should be available at Borough Hall and the Library. The cost of the (re)design and publication of these materials may be minimized by using local high school or college (Rutgers, Rowan, Temple, Drexel, Penn, etc.) talents, each university having significant urban history, commercial design, and student internship programs. Matching funds may also be available from the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office if the Borough becomes a Certified Local Government (See below).
5. The unpublished "Collingswood Centennial Walking and Automobile Tour" program, developed by historian George Palmer in 1988, is one of the best ways to introduce citizens and residents to historic Collingswood. The narrative should be re-scripted and designed to fit in a handy brochure or folding map, and made available at the Borough Hall, Library, local stores and shops, realtors, and other public places. Although historical awareness is the primary purpose of this tour, the Borough also benefits gained by introducing numerous potential new shoppers, residents, and business clients to historic Collingswood in a friendly, fun, interesting, and easy manner.

6. The HPC should encourage local support from sympathetic organizations, such as Proud Neighbors, the Newton Colony Historical Society, and the Collingswood Horticultural Society, that could help it with its outreach mission. Increased communication and friendly relations with the downtown merchants and businesspersons' association is also recommended.
7. The Borough should consider incorporating special street signage or markers within the historic district to alert property owners and visitors that they are in a special place. This type of recognition is usually a source of pride for those neighbors in the district and increases awareness of the Borough's HPC and certificate of appropriateness program. The use of "Historic Collingswood" banners on Haddon Avenue has been quite effective in increasing awareness of the downtown's special character. Such signage is an important tool for Historic Collingswood, which seeks to distinguish itself from other surrounding towns.

#### C. LOCAL FINANCIAL INCENTIVES/ASSISTANCE

Reinvigorated code enforcement policies, joined with low-cost incentives, e.g. low- interest loans, forgivable grants, and exceptions from certain standards/code requirements, can do much in bringing about substantial improvement in historic districts. Although registration and education can reduce the threats of inappropriate development, amelioration of economic constraints for historic property owners is a general housing and downtown economic (re)development concern.

#### D. ADDITIONAL STATE AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

The Borough has successfully incorporated the Neighborhood Preservation Program (NPP) and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program in its rehabilitation and improvement of numerous historic properties and older neighborhoods. Because these programs utilize state and federal funding, adverse effects to historic properties are reviewed and mitigated in accordance with the New Jersey Register of Historic Places Act and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Although state and federal funding for historic preservation activities continues to be cut, the Borough may wish to contact the following agencies for additional program assistance:

1. National Trust for Historic Preservation, Mid-Atlantic Office (Philadelphia)

They provide technical support for local government organizations ranging from site visits, guest speakers, promotional materials and media, and program development grants.

2. National Park Service, Mid-Atlantic Regional Office (Philadelphia)

They provide technical information on building rehabilitation and conservation issues and rehabilitation investment tax credits for income-producing properties.

3. NJ Department of Community Affairs (Trenton)

In addition to the Neighborhood Preservation Program, there is also a Main Street program, which provides downtown commercial revitalization support, such as marketing, design, and business development. Local Main Street communities include Merchantville and Hammonton, which have dedicated staff people to administer the program. Collingswood should evaluate whether such a state-sponsored program is necessary and cost-effective.

4. NJ Historic Preservation Office (Trenton)

This office has provided the Borough with a variety of technical information and support for historic preservation activity over the years, and can provide further assistance in completing the National Register nomination process. The office also implements the Certified Local Government (CLG) program which provides program development matching funds to qualifying municipalities with appropriately-managed local historic preservation commissions. Neighboring CLG's include Camden, Gloucester City, Haddonfield, and Haddon Heights.

The Borough has been a CLG community for almost a decade. The benefits of CLG status include state grants, state and federal government information exchange, and participation in the National Register and statewide preservation planning process. CLGs are expected to maintain and support their municipality's historic preservation ordinance, commission, planning, local survey, public participation, and registration process. Due to budgetary cutbacks, only CLGs receive HPO grants. Of the 567 municipalities in the state, about one-fourth have local historic preservation commissions, and only about 40 of them are CLGs.

5. NJ Historic Trust (Trenton)

The Trust provides matching funds for "bricks and mortar" historic preservation projects to local governments and private non-profit organizations, such as local historic societies, museums, and churches. Currently, the Borough has an \$85,000 grant to rehabilitate the Borough Waterworks building on Johnson Boulevard.

6. Preservation New Jersey (Princeton)

As the major non-profit, statewide historic preservation advocacy group, this organization is the general clearinghouse for information and local referrals. The Borough is a member of this coalition.



**EXHIBIT A**

**SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS**

## **The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation**

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are ten basic principles created to help preserve the distinctive character of a historic building and its site, while allowing for reasonable change to meet new needs.

The Standards (36 CFR Part 67) apply to historic buildings of all periods, styles, types, materials, and sizes. They apply to both the exterior and the interior of historic buildings. The Standards also encompass related landscape features and the building's site and environment as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. (The HPC only applies the Standards for impacts on the exterior appearance of historic structures and its surroundings. Interior alterations are not reviewed by the HPC.)

Rehabilitation projects must meet the following Standards, as interpreted by the National Park Service, to qualify as "certified rehabilitations" eligible for the 20% rehabilitation tax credit.

The Standards are applied to projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.

7. 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.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

# The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties, 1995

## Four Treatment Approaches

There are Standards for four distinct, but interrelated, approaches to the treatment of historic properties--preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction.

**Preservation** focuses on the maintenance and repair of existing historic materials and retention of a property's form as it has evolved over time. (Protection and Stabilization have now been consolidated under this treatment.)

**Rehabilitation** acknowledges the need to alter or add to a historic property to meet continuing or changing uses while retaining the property's historic character.

**Restoration** depicts a property at a particular period of time in its history, while removing evidence of other periods.

**Reconstruction** re-creates vanished or non-surviving portions of a property for interpretive purposes.

## Choosing an Appropriate Treatment

Choosing an appropriate treatment for a historic building or landscape, whether preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, or reconstruction is critical. This choice always depends on a variety of factors, including its historical significance, physical condition, proposed use, and intended interpretation. The questions that follow pertain specifically to historic buildings, but the process of decision-making would be similar for other property types:

- Relative importance in history. Is the building a nationally significant resource--a rare survivor or the work of a master architect or craftsman? Did an important event take place in it? National Historic Landmarks, designated for their "exceptional significance in American history," or many buildings individually listed in the National Register often warrant Preservation or Restoration. Buildings that contribute to the significance of a historic district but are not individually listed in the National Register more frequently undergo Rehabilitation for a compatible new use.
- Physical condition. What is the existing condition--or degree of material integrity--of the building prior to work? Has the original form survived largely intact or has it been altered over time? Are the alterations an important part of the building's history? Preservation may be appropriate if distinctive materials, features, and spaces are essentially intact and convey the

building's historical significance. If the building requires more extensive repair and replacement, or if alterations or additions are necessary for a new use, then Rehabilitation is probably the most appropriate treatment. These key questions play major roles in determining what treatment is selected.

- Proposed use. An essential, practical question to ask is: Will the building be used as it was historically or will it be given a new use? Many historic buildings can be adapted for new uses without seriously damaging their historic character; special-use properties such as grain silos, forts, ice houses, or windmills may be extremely difficult to adapt to new uses without major intervention and a resulting loss of historic character and even integrity.
- Mandated code requirements. Regardless of the treatment, code requirements will need to be taken into consideration. But if hastily or poorly designed, code-required work may jeopardize a building's materials as well as its historic character. Thus, if a building needs to be seismically upgraded, modifications to the historic appearance should be minimal. Abatement of lead paint and asbestos within historic buildings requires particular care if important historic finishes are not to be adversely affected. Finally, alterations and new construction needed to meet accessibility requirements under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 should be designed to minimize material loss and visual change to a historic building.

## **Standards for Preservation**

Preservation is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize the property, generally focuses upon the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features rather than extensive replacement and new construction. New exterior additions are not within the scope of this treatment; however, the limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a preservation project.

**PRESERVATION AS A TREATMENT.** When the property's distinctive materials, features, and spaces are essentially intact and thus convey the historic significance without extensive repair or replacement; when depiction at a particular period of time is not appropriate; and when a continuing or new use does not require additions or extensive alterations, Preservation may be considered as a treatment.

1. A property will be used as it was historically, or be given a new use that maximizes the retention of distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships. Where a treatment and use have not been identified, a property will be protected and, if necessary, stabilized until additional work may be undertaken.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The replacement of intact or repairable historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate, and conserve existing historic materials and features will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
6. The existing condition of historic features will be evaluated to determine the appropriate level of intervention needed. Where the severity of deterioration requires repair or limited replacement of a distinctive feature, the new material will match the old in composition, design, color, and texture.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

## **Standards for Rehabilitation**

Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.

**REHABILITATION AS A TREATMENT.** When repair and replacement of deteriorated features are necessary; when alterations or additions to the property are planned for a new or continued use; and when its depiction at a particular period of time is not appropriate, Rehabilitation may be considered as a treatment.

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.
4. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.
5. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
6. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.
7. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
8. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
9. Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.



10. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
11. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in a such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

## **Standards for Restoration**

Restoration is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period. The limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems and other code-required work to make properties functional is appropriate within a restoration project.

**RESTORATION AS A TREATMENT.** When the property's design, architectural, or historical significance during a particular period of time outweighs the potential loss of extant materials, features, spaces, and finishes that characterize other historical periods; when there is substantial physical and documentary evidence for the work; and when contemporary alterations and additions are not planned, Restoration may be considered as a treatment. Prior to undertaking work, a particular period of time, i.e., the restoration period, should be selected and justified, and a documentation plan for Restoration developed.

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use which reflects the property's restoration period.
2. Materials and features from the restoration period will be retained and preserved. The removal of materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize the period will not be undertaken.
3. Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Work needed to stabilize, consolidate and conserve materials and features from the restoration period will be physically and visually compatible, identifiable upon close inspection, and properly documented for future research.
4. Materials, features, spaces, and finishes that characterize other historical periods will be documented prior to their alteration or removal.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize the restoration period will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated features from the restoration period will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials.

7. Replacement of missing features from the restoration period will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence. A false sense of history will not be created by adding conjectural features, features from other properties, or by combining features that never existed together historically.
8. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
9. Archeological resources affected by a project will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
10. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.

## **Standards for Reconstruction**

Reconstruction is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.

**RECONSTRUCTION AS A TREATMENT.** When a contemporary depiction is required to understand and interpret a property's historic value (including the recreation of missing components in a historic district or site ); when no other property with the same associative value has survived; and when sufficient historical documentation exists to ensure an accurate reproduction, Reconstruction may be considered as a treatment.

1. Reconstruction will be used to depict vanished or non-surviving portions of a property when documentary and physical evidence is available to permit accurate reconstruction with minimal conjecture, and such reconstruction is essential to the public understanding of the property.
2. Reconstruction of a landscape, building, structure, or object in its historic location will be preceded by a thorough archeological investigation to identify and evaluate those features and artifacts which are essential to an accurate reconstruction. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
3. Reconstruction will include measures to preserve any remaining historic materials, features, and spatial relationships.
4. Reconstruction will be based on the accurate duplication of historic features and elements substantiated by documentary or physical evidence rather than on conjectural designs or the availability of different features from other historic properties. A reconstructed property will re-create the appearance of the non-surviving historic property in materials, design, color, and texture.
5. A reconstruction will be clearly identified as a contemporary re-creation.
6. Designs that were never executed historically will not be constructed.