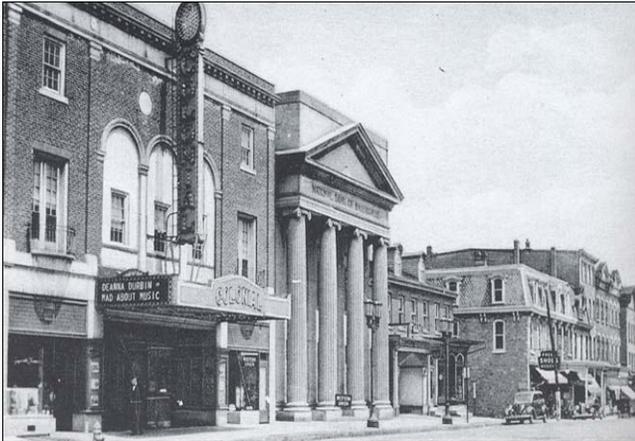




Borough of Phoenixville Historical Architectural Review Board

DESIGN GUIDELINES



Bridge Street and much of the Phoenixville Downtown Historic District retains much of its historic integrity as demonstrated by this 1938 photograph. Old photographs and postcards can be important resources when trying to understand the architectural character and scale of a specific period or to replicate missing building features during a restoration or rehabilitation project.



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE HISTORIC DISTRICT?

The Phoenixville Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) encourages the economic development and revitalization of the Phoenixville Downtown Historic District while attempting to minimize the burden on long-term property owners.

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

- Increase neighborhood stability and property values;
- Foster economic development;
- Increase business district investment, and revitalize older commercial areas by attracting new customers;
- Provide funding opportunities to property owners with grants and financial incentives to improve their historic buildings and structures;
- Preserve the physical history of the area and promote an appreciation of the physical environment;
- Foster community pride and self-image;
- Increase awareness and appreciation of local history; and
- Increase tourism.

These guidelines were developed in conjunction with the Phoenixville Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB). The HARB reviews Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applications for proposed exterior alterations to properties within the Historic District that are visible from a public way. The applicant is responsible for complying with the provisions of the Zoning and Building Codes at the time of application. The applicant must obtain a COA as well as all necessary permits prior to proceeding with any work. For more information, or to obtain permit applications, please call the **Zoning Officer at Borough Hall at (610) 933-8801**.

Please review this information during the early stages of planning your project. Familiarity with this material can assist in moving a project quickly through the approval process, saving applicants both time and money. Additional information and *Guidelines* addressing other historic building topics are available at Borough Hall and on its web site at www.phoenixville.org.

HISTORIC PHOENIXVILLE

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PHOENIXVILLE¹

Phoenixville began after the mid-eighteenth century as a site for grist milling and iron mills. This small scale industry brought permanent residents so that by the end of the eighteenth century homes were clustered near the banks of the French Creek.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, the iron industry expanded enormously, fostering a rapid increase in Phoenixville's population. Despite periodic flooding, rendering the necessity for major rebuilding, the iron industry grew from a few small rolling and slitting mills at the end of the eighteenth century to several larger blast furnaces and finishing mills by the middle of the nineteenth century. With the completion of the Chester County Canal in 1828 and the Philadelphia and Reading Railroad in 1837, the iron industry gained easier access to raw materials and more efficient transportation of finished products.

The expansion of the iron and steel industry in Phoenixville fostered commercial growth so that Phoenixville became one of the largest commercial centers in Chester County in the second half of the nineteenth century. The expansion of the iron and steel industry also fostered population growth that in turn spurred the construction of worker housing. Phoenixville has the largest collection of company-built and company-owned worker housing in Chester County.

Phoenixville also has an outstanding collection of high-style residences owned by industrial entrepreneurs. The growth of iron and steel mills in Phoenixville led to construction of high style buildings for company owners and entrepreneurs.

Phoenixville's collection of Victorian commercial buildings constructed between 1850 and 1890 is unique in northern Chester County. Phoenixville continued as a major commercial and industrial center in Chester County through World War II. The Phoenix Iron and Steel Company continued to be the largest employer in Phoenixville. The firm also continued engineering and product research, and expanded its plant. For instance, a machine shop was constructed next to the blooming mill to facilitate growing production. Phoenixville Iron and Steel's expansion in turn spurred further residential and commercial growth in town.

¹ This information was extracted from the *National Register of Historic Places Inventory – Nomination Form*, 1986.

Phoenixville's industrial base has gradually changed and declined since World War II. The steel industry has felt the brunt of burgeoning foreign competition and intense national competition. As the steel mills laid off workers, smaller service-oriented businesses opened to employ some of the jobless. Today, Phoenixville's industrial might in Chester County is a thing of the past.... Many of the town's historic commercial buildings survive to portray Phoenixville's past commercial role. And the outstanding collections of worker housing and industrial entrepreneurs' mansions serve to illustrate Phoenixville's architectural prominence in Chester County.



The Columbia Hotel and its distinctive wood porch has been an important feature of East Bridge Street for over 100 years.

PHOENIXVILLE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

The area identified as the Phoenixville Downtown Historic District includes predominantly commercial and mixed use (residential / commercial) buildings, the majority of which are from the period of dramatic growth, 1850 to 1930.

The commercial and civic center of Phoenixville reflects the prosperity and diversity of the community of the mid-nineteenth-century. The architecture of the Historic District reflects the variety of styles from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

WHAT IS PHOENIXVILLE'S DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT?

A Historic District is a bound area, which includes resources such as buildings, structures, objects or sites, whose distinctive character conveys a unique architectural and cultural heritage. Since the enactment of the State of Pennsylvania's Historic District Act 167 in 1961, many municipalities have passed local historic district ordinances.

The unique quality of Phoenixville's architectural heritage was recognized in 1986 with the listing of the Historic District on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1994 the Borough of Phoenixville passed Historic District Ordinance No. 1736 to preserve for future generations significant buildings and structures and landscape features reflective of the historical and cultural heritage of Phoenixville's commercial central. Maps delineating the boundary of the Phoenixville Downtown Historic District are available at Borough Hall and on the Borough's web site at www.phoenixville.org.

WHAT IS HARB?

The Phoenixville Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) is a public advisory body created by state and local laws. The HARB helps to protect the architectural and cultural heritage of the Phoenixville Downtown Historic District by considering the effects of proposed exterior changes to buildings and properties within the district and commenting on the appropriateness of those changes.

HARB members must be residents, property owners, or conduct business within the Borough of Phoenixville, except in the case of the building inspector. The HARB shall be composed of seven members, including a registered architect, a licensed real estate broker, a Borough staff building inspector, a structural engineer or qualified building contractor, and three persons with knowledge of and interest in the preservation of the historic district.

WHAT DOES THE HARB REVIEW?

HARB reviews exterior changes to properties within the Phoenixville Downtown Historic District which are visible from a public street, sidewalk or way. The review includes the general design, arrangement, texture, permanent color and materials of proposed work in relation to similar features within the Historic District's period of significance. The HARB considers the effect of the proposed change upon the general historic and architectural nature of the Historic District.

Some items that are reviewed by the HARB include:

- **Exterior Building Envelope:** Including roofs, walls, foundations, windows, doors, cornices, trim, storefronts, porches, decks
- **Site Features:** Including walls, fences, arbors
- **Secondary Buildings:** Including garages, sheds
- **Business Signage:** Including both signs, awnings



The iron balcony requires regular maintenance.

PRESERVATION IS MAINTENANCE

Regular maintenance helps to preserve buildings and property, protect real estate values and investments, and keeps Phoenixville an attractive place to live, work and visit. To encourage the area's continued upkeep, the Borough of Phoenixville encourages regular maintenance for all buildings and structures. Lack of regular upkeep can result in accelerated deterioration of building elements and features. Small openings or unpainted surfaces can allow moisture penetration and eventually deterioration. In the case of historic buildings, these features often represent character defining elements that are difficult and costly to replace. Long-term lack of maintenance can impact a building's structure, resulting in expensive repairs.

It is prudent for property owners to inspect their properties regularly to identify potential problems. If problems are detected early, minor maintenance may not only improve a property's overall appearance and value, but also can prevent or postpone extensive and costly future repairs. Regular maintenance items typically include painting, and cleaning gutters and downspouts. It is also prudent to inspect the roof and any signs of moisture infiltration, open joints, and cracks or bulges.

The HARB encourages:

- Semi-annual reviews of buildings and structures to identify maintenance and repair needs
- Prolonging of the life of original materials on historic structures through regular maintenance
- Avoiding replacement of original materials with newer materials

HARB REVIEW GUIDELINES

When reviewing a proposed project, the HARB review is guided by principals contained in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. In the *Standards*, “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.” The *Standards for Rehabilitation* offer property owners and tenants common-sense guidelines to provide sensitive contemporary uses for their sites while retaining their architectural and cultural heritage.

In reviewing projects, the HARB encourages sensitive rehabilitation involving the least amount of intervention or change as identified in the following guidelines:

- **Identify, retain, and preserve** the overall form, materials, and details that are important in defining the architectural and historical character of the building and site.
- **Protect and maintain** historic materials and features. This involves protection from other work that may occur in proximity to the historic materials, and also protection through regular maintenance. A regular program of protection and maintenance usually involves the least degree of intervention and can prevent or postpone extensive and costly work.
- **Repair rather than replace** deteriorated historic materials and features. Repairs maintain the building in its current condition while making it weather-resistant and structurally sound. Repairs should involve the least intervention possible, concentrating specifically on areas of deterioration. When repair is not possible, the HARB encourages replacement in-kind, reproducing by new construction the original feature exactly, including the original material, finish, detailing, and texture. Although not preferred, substitute materials are acceptable when they convey the original appearance and finish of the original feature.
- **Replace** missing or deteriorated historic materials and features when the extent of deterioration precludes repair. Similar to repair, the preferred approach is to replace the entire feature in-kind to match the original material, finish, detailing, and texture. Since this is not always technically or financially feasible, substitute materials are acceptable when they convey the original appearance and finish of the original feature.



The upper floors of this building retain the historic character and detailing including the multicolored cornice, highlighting the detailing, and arched headed windows. The storefront, although a replacement, complements the historic building.

- **Reconstruct** missing historical features if adequate historical, pictorial, and physical documentation exists so that the feature may be accurately reproduced. The addition of features from other historic buildings or addition of historical elements for which there is no documentation is discouraged, although historic buildings can provide a guide for new construction.
- **Alterations, adaptive reuse and additions** are sometimes needed to ensure the continued use of a building. An alteration or adaptive reuse involves returning a building to a useful condition while saving those parts that represent its historical, architectural or cultural significance. It is important that alterations and adaptive reuses do not radically alter, obscure or destroy character-defining spaces, materials, features, or finishes. If considered, new

additions should be clearly differentiated but compatible in size, mass, form, fenestration, detailing and style with the historic building, constructed at a less visible side or rear elevation so the character-defining features are not radically changed, obscured, damaged, or destroyed.

- **New construction** is appropriate in cases where previous buildings have been removed or historic buildings have been replaced with newer construction that is not compatible with the context of the Historic District. New construction should be compatible with the general design, arrangement, texture, and materials in relation to similar features of buildings and structures of the Historic District's and streetscape's period of significance from 1850 to 1930.

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION

The following *Standards for Rehabilitation* were developed in 1995 by the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior. They are the national standard to guide rehabilitation work on historic resources and are used by Phoenixville's HARB when rendering its recommendations.

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.

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.
3. 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.
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. 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.
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.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall 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 historic property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will 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.

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. Prior to undertaking work, a documentation plan for Rehabilitation should be developed.

THE COA REVIEW PROCESS

To have the Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application reviewed by the HARB, it must be submitted with appropriate materials to the Zoning Officer at Borough Hall at 140 Church Street no less than 15 days prior to the regularly scheduled meeting. The HARB generally meets bi-monthly. Please confirm the meeting date with the Zoning Officer. It is required that a property owner or representative to attend the HARB meeting. Please contact the Zoning Officer at (610) 933-8801 to confirm the next meeting date.

Prior to the HARB meeting, the Zoning Officer will review the application and provide a determination concerning the application's completeness. Incomplete applications will not be forwarded for review by the HARB. At their meeting, the HARB can recommend approval as submitted or with conditions; tabling for further consideration or pending additional information; or denial, with recommended changes to result in an approved application.

The HARB's COA recommendation becomes an agenda item for the next scheduled Borough Council Meeting, generally held on the second Tuesday of the month, at 7:00 p.m. at Borough Hall, unless the next meeting would make five working days notice to the applicant impossible. Attendance at this meeting is optional. Similar to the HARB, Borough Council can recommend approval as submitted; approval with conditions; tabling for further consideration or pending additional information; or denial, with recommended changes to result in an approved application. Please see additional suggestions under economic hardship in this guide.

If the COA is approved by Borough Council, or approved with conditions, the applicant can then obtain a building permit for the approved work from the Code Enforcement Office, provided the application complies with all other Borough codes. The denial of a COA application will result in disapproval of the building permit application. The applicant can appeal Borough Council's decision to the County Court of Common Pleas within the time specified by law.

TIMING FOR REVIEW

Typically, a minimum of six to eight weeks is required from the submission date of the COA application to the issuing of a building permit. Incomplete submissions will extend the application review time period. Including all required materials with a complete application expedites the review process. Contact the Zoning Officer for assistance at (610) 933-8801.

APPLICATION SUBMISSION MATERIALS

To have a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) application reviewed by the HARB, it must be submitted with the appropriate materials. Please contact the Zoning Officer at Borough Hall at (610) 933-8801 to confirm the required submission materials for your project. The information generally needed for review of a construction application is:

- Scaled architectural drawings with appropriate notes
- Scaled site plan for new construction or additions
- Color photographs of the lot or all elevations of the building or structure where the construction or alteration will occur
- Photographs of streetscapes adjacent to and across from the proposed construction activity
- Reasons for any deviations from the *Design Guidelines* including financial feasibility and documented cost estimates or alternatives, if appropriate

The information generally needed for review of a demolition application is:

- Identification of the owner of record and date of purchase
- A scaled site plan and/or floor plans
- Photographs showing what is proposed for demolition
- Statement of reasons for demolition
- Photographs and a written description of deteriorated condition if demolition is due to deterioration
- Maintenance history of the building by the current owner
- Explanation why rehabilitation, reuse or modification is not feasible or desirable
- Proposed future use of the building and/or site and the timeline for implementation
- Statement of disposition of significant architectural features and building materials

WORK COMPLETED WITHOUT A COA

Occasionally it is necessary to revise projects after approvals have been obtained. If any changes are proposed after approval for a COA, please contact the Zoning Officer to determine whether any additional reviews may be required. A HARB representative will review all completed work for compliance with the approved COA. Completed work that is not in compliance with the approved COA is subject to fines and possible removal.



The Phoenixville Downtown Historic District includes this group of buildings along South Main Street.

WHEN IS A COA NOT REQUIRED?

Although most exterior changes within the Phoenixville Downtown Historic District are subject to HARB review, there are some instances in which HARB review is not required. If there is any question as to whether HARB review is required, property owners are strongly encouraged to contact the Zoning Officer prior to commencing with the project.

- The HARB does not review exterior alterations or modifications not visible from a public street or way. When considering whether a proposed project is visible from a public way, its location will be reviewed from adjacent and rear streets, sidewalks, etc. If any portion of the project would be visible from the public way after its completion, it is subject to HARB review.
- The HARB does not review any interior changes, unless they affect the exterior appearance of the building, although building permits may be required for interior work.
- A COA is also not required for what in the Board's opinion constitutes in-kind repair or replacement for "ordinary maintenance and repair." Property owners must demonstrate that their project constitutes "ordinary maintenance and repair" and will be requested to provide photographs, project descriptions and information regarding proposed materials to the Zoning Officer for review.
- If the applicant files and receives an approved "Historic Preservation Certification" from the United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, the HARB shall advise in favor of granting a COA.
- The HARB does not review paint colors when the proposed work is limited to re-painting of a previously painted existing building or feature.

REPAIRS AND REPLACEMENT

When it is no longer feasible to maintain a historic feature, repairs or replacement in-kind may be necessary. Repairs maintain the building in its current condition while making it weather-resistant and structurally sound, concentrating specifically on areas of deterioration. Similar to maintenance, repair costs and effort can be minimized if the problem is addressed early, preventing or postponing costly future repairs. As an example, it might be possible to repair an existing wood window rather than incur the much higher expense to replace windows.

When repair is not possible, the HARB encourages replacement in-kind. Although it is tempting to install newer materials such as vinyl siding or replacement window systems, many of these materials are not compatible with historic building systems and can lead to costly future repair needs. In the case of vinyl siding, it can trap moisture within a wall cavity and rot the framing.

The HARB encourages:

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



The stepped opening along the brick mortar joint can provide a means for moisture infiltration. The size of the open joint and evidence of previous patching attempts suggests a structural problem that should probably be evaluated by an architect or engineer.

ALTERATIONS WITHIN THE PHOENIXVILLE DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT

Alterations, renovations, adaptive reuse, new construction and demolition are sometimes needed to ensure the continued use of a building or to provide new uses within the Historic District. When considering work that goes beyond simple maintenance and repair, the HARB encourages applicants to blend their project harmoniously with the historic fabric of the area.

New construction and additions are encouraged to be designed to be compatible with the character of the Phoenixville Downtown Historic District and the streetscape. In the case of demolition of all or part of a building or structure, applicants are encouraged to consider the historic value of the property to the streetscape and District as a whole, and pursue alternative actions such as adaptive reuse or additions.

ADDITIONS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS

Additions to existing buildings within the Historic District can provide increased commercial and habitable space while maintaining the historic character of the original building and streetscape. In conformance with *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*, an addition to a building within the Phoenixville Downtown Historic District should be subordinate to the historic building and read clearly as an addition. Contemporary design and additions to existing properties should not destroy significant architectural material, and should be compatible with the design of the property and the neighborhood.

Whenever possible, additions should be constructed in a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic building would be unimpaired. Although construction that is not visible from the public way is not reviewed by the HARB, ideally it should follow the *Design Guidelines*.

The HARB encourages:

- Construction of additions at side or rear elevations wherever possible that are subordinate to the historic building, and compatible with the design of the property and neighborhood
- Construction of additions so that the historic building fabric is not radically changed, obscured, damaged, or destroyed



This new building appears to be several buildings with slight variations in the cornice and storefront heights. The design visually divides the building into smaller parts with varying detailing along its primary elevation, complementing the architecture of the Bridge Street streetscape.

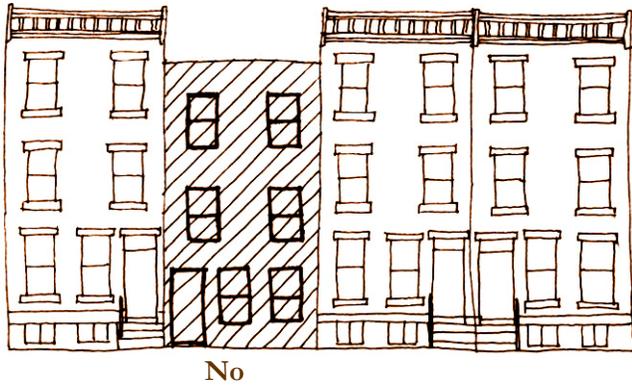
NEW CONSTRUCTION

New construction within a Historic District can dramatically alter the appearance of the district and its streetscape. Because of the sensitivity of the area, the property owner should take great care when proposing new construction within the Historic District and contemporary design will be reviewed within the context of the streetscape and the neighborhood.

The *Design Guidelines* on the following pages are intended to provide the elements and principals of appropriate design to allow maximum creativity while allowing plans for new construction to be assessed fairly, objectively and consistently. These *Design Guidelines* are intended to encourage the designer of new construction to consider existing historic buildings as a starting point in the design process and not the final goal.

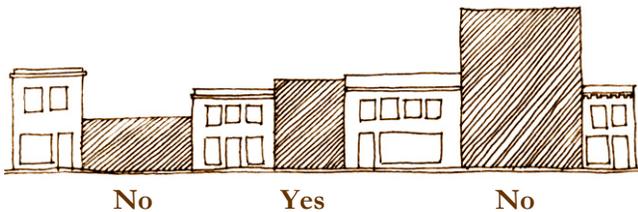
The HARB encourages:

- Preservation of the cohesive ambiance of the Historic District with compatible, sympathetic, and contemporary construction
- Matching setbacks (distances to property lines) of adjacent buildings on a streetscape
- Compatible siting, proportion, scale, form, materials, fenestration, roof configuration, details, and finishes



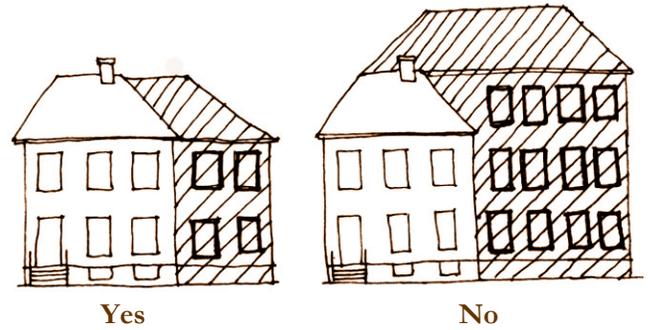
When several adjoining buildings in the same row are the same size, variation can be very obtrusive. The new building is entered at the sidewalk level and has lower floor-to-floor heights. As a result, the overall building height is lower and is inappropriate for the streetscape.

Size and Scale: New construction should reflect the dominant cornice and roof heights of adjacent buildings and the proportions of building elements to one another and the streetscape. In cases where the street does not have an obvious or dominant rhythm of cornice heights and window openings, the decision of the HARB recommendation will be based on a consideration of actual height and massing of the proposed building within the streetscape.



The size of the center building generally conforms to the remaining buildings on the streetscape. However, the new building to the left is significantly smaller while the new building to the right is significantly larger.

In Phoenixville, where two- to four-story buildings are the norm, buildings that digress from these standards by any great degree seriously impact the Historic District. If large scale construction is considered, particular attention will be given to the location, siting, setbacks (distance to the property lines,) façade treatments (materials, window and door openings, etc.) and the effect of the proposed building on the streetscape and Historic District as a whole. An addition should be smaller than the original building with similar floor-to-floor and first floor heights.



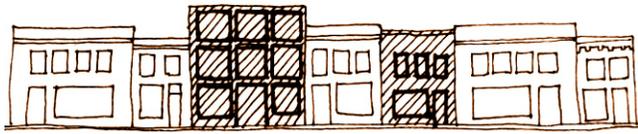
The addition to the left is the appropriate scale, proportion, overall form and window pattern as the existing building. The addition to the right is significantly larger than the existing building and is visually overwhelming and inappropriate.

Proportions: New construction should relate to the dominant proportions of the buildings on the streetscape while new additions should relate to the dominant proportions of the existing building. The proposed design should closely reflect the height and width ratios of the overall building proportions as well as that of doors, windows, porch bays and storefronts.



The proportions of the windows are significantly taller at the first and third floors and shorter at the second floor than the existing buildings. The proportions are not appropriate for the streetscape.

Massing: Massing refers to the overall composition of the major volumes of a building. The façades of new construction should reflect the feeling of lightness or weight of neighboring buildings with similar proportions of solids (walls or siding) to voids (storefronts, windows and door openings) and projecting porches, bays and overhangs. The massing of additions should complement, but not necessarily match the original building. For example, a glassed-in side porch might be a “lighter” variation of the original façade massing. However, a solidly infilled side porch might not be appropriate.



No Yes

Many of the commercial buildings within the Historic District were constructed of masonry with smaller window openings at the upper floors and larger storefront windows. The third building from the left with very large window openings is inappropriate while the third building from the right with the punched window openings is appropriate.

Orientation: The principal façade of new construction should be orientated in the same direction as the majority of the buildings on the streetscape. In the case of new construction on a corner site, the front façade should face the same direction as the existing buildings on the street and follow the rhythm of the streetscape.

When adding to an existing building, the addition should be located, planned, and detailed so as to not confuse the dominant historic orientation of the original building. The addition should not have the effect of creating a new primary façade. The addition should not be visually dominant, and should be screened from the street as much as possible.



The entrance on the principal thoroughfare was removed from this corner commercial space and relocated to the right side elevation of the building. The rhythm of the principal thoroughfare has been disrupted and the juxtaposition of the side elevation entrance is visually confusing and has the effect of creating a new dominant façade.



Yes

Although the details have been simplified in the new building, the rhythm and pattern of the new window openings are similar to the existing buildings and the overall design is appropriate.

Rhythm and Patterns: The rhythm and patterns of principal façades of new construction should reflect and maintain neighborhood and streetscape patterns. The rhythm and patterns of principal façades of an addition should reflect the original building.

Rhythm and patterns across the width of a façade typically includes number of bays and the location and spacing between doors and windows. Vertical considerations for rhythm and patterns include floor-to-floor heights, first floor height above the ground, cornice heights, and the vertical distance between rows of windows and windows and cornices. In some instances, where the proposed use for a new building prevents maintaining rhythms and patterns, the applicant is encouraged to incorporate detailing to suggest them.



No

Yes

The floor-to-floor and roof heights of the addition on the building to the left vary from the existing building. The drawing to the right indicates a more appropriate solution where the floor-to-floor and roof heights are similar to the existing building.



No

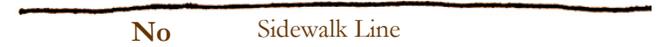
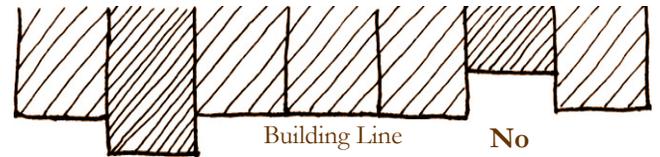
The existing buildings typically have two windows at each floor with a door at the first floor. The rhythm and pattern of the windows at new building is different and alters the character of the streetscape.

Storefronts, Window and Door Openings: For new construction, the size, shape, design, proportions and placement of storefronts, windows and door openings should be similar to the surrounding historic buildings. For additions, the size, shape, design, proportions and placement of windows and door openings for an addition should be similar to the existing building. Windows should be functionally similar, such as double hung windows, and have similar muntin or grid patterns as the neighborhood’s historic buildings. Doors should reflect the historic proportions of windows and panels.



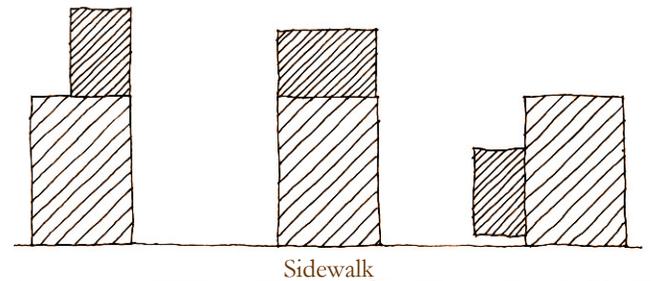
This building’s architectural details including the window surrounds and roof cornice have been highlighted by using a multicolor paint scheme.

Architectural Details: The character-defining features and details of the historic neighborhood buildings should be reflected in the design for the new construction and additions. These architectural details include roof form, porches, porticos, cornices, lintels, arches, quoins, chimneys, projecting bays, and the shapes of window and door heads. In many instances these details can be “simplified” to provide compatibility without requiring duplication of historic features.



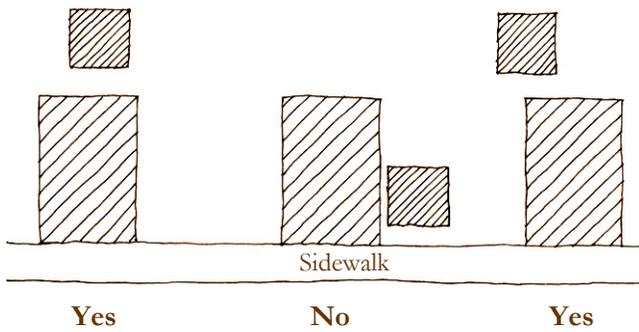
New construction should not step forward from or recede back from adjacent buildings on the streetscape.

Streetscapes: New construction should reflect prevailing setbacks, (distances between the building and the property line or street or sidewalk,) and physical elements that define the historic buildings on a streetscape, such as brick walls, wrought iron fences, building facades or combinations of these which form visual continuity and cohesiveness with the period buildings.



The visibility of the left and middle additions would be limited from the sidewalk and the street. The addition to the right is very visible from the sidewalk and street and should be avoided.

Additions should be positioned to have the least visible impact from the street, with additions at front façades strongly discouraged and rear additions generally most appropriate. Additions at side elevations are generally appropriate, although it is recommended that they be held back as far as possible from the street.



The visibility of the secondary structures at the right and left is limited from the sidewalk and the street. The secondary structure in the middle is very visible from the sidewalk and street and should be avoided.

Secondary Structures: Secondary structures include but are not limited to sheds, garages, detached decks, hot tub enclosures and animal shelters. Similar to additions, secondary structures should be subordinate to the primary structure on the lot and visually compatible with the primary building and not compromise its historic character.

The HARB encourages:

- Secondary structures to be located on the site in a manner that limits their visibility from the public ways
- Secondary structures be designed in a manner that is stylistically compatible with the primary building and in conformance with the *Design Guidelines*



The HARB discourages approval of aluminum siding or capping. Aluminum siding and capping can trap moisture and cause damage to underlying materials. It is also subject to denting and can be difficult to repair.

Materials and Textures: New construction should use materials and textures in a manner that is sympathetic to the historic buildings in the streetscape. Materials should be of a similar or complementary color, size, texture, scale, craftsmanship, and applicability to the function performed. Traditional materials common in the Historic District, such as brick, wood, stone and terra cotta are recommended.

A sympathetic use of materials should not imply that materials used in new construction will duplicate the old in detail, nor that new construction attempt to duplicate historic structures. Rather, it is a matter determining the compatibility of the new with the old.

Materials and textures for new additions should either match or be sympathetic to those found on the original building. If the materials for the addition are different, they should be subordinate that the original building.

In the case of Phoenixville where many of the buildings are constructed of brick or stone; brick, wood siding and stucco are appropriate wall materials for an addition. However, a brick addition would not be appropriate for a wood building.

The HARB discourages approval of the following materials:

- Vinyl or metal siding or capping
- Asphalt siding on wall surfaces
- Synthetic stucco (EIFS or Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems)
- Painted or exposed concrete or concrete block masonry
- Ornamental pierced concrete masonry walls and screens, chain link fencing, vinyl fencing
- “Antiqued” brick
- Unpainted wood
- Carpeted porch floors
- Replacement windows with only internal or interior muntins
- Colonial picture windows, jalousie windows, dark or tinted glass windows



These residences have been renovated to include first floor commercial space while maintaining their overall residential character.

ALTERATIONS AND RENOVATIONS

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

In many instances, changes are driven by business owners installing new signage or renovating storefronts to reflect their commercial identity. In the case of residential property owners, an alteration could be the enclosing of a porch. The proposed change can impact both the individual building as well as the streetscape as a whole.

Although the HARB supports individualization and commercial identity, they encourage applicants to understand the important design features on an existing building and streetscape and recommend design changes that are as compatible with those features as possible.

The HARB encourages:

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

ADAPTIVE REUSE

In adaptive reuse projects, alterations or renovations might be necessary to utilize a building for a different purpose from which it was originally designed. (It should be noted that proposed new uses must be permitted by the Zoning Code.) Similar to alterations or renovations, great care should be given to the original building and its relationship to the alteration or renovation. It might not be appropriate to reuse a building with numerous windows as a theater where windows are not desirable. However, there are many instances where adaptive reuse can provide new life for a historic building.

Examples of Adaptive Reuse:

- Conversion of a house into apartments or offices
- Reuse of historic storefronts
- Conversion of industrial or commercial buildings into housing
- Conversion of institutional buildings into commercial or residential space

Benefits of Adaptive Reuse:

- Retention of Historic District character and high quality historic materials and craftsmanship
- Promotes stability of ownership and occupancy in the Historic District
- Potential cost savings over new construction
- Presence of established neighborhood and existing infrastructure
- Increased opportunity for economic development within the Historic District while retaining the historic character of the area



This former bank building has been adapted and is now used as the offices of the local newspaper.

HISTORIC BUILDING MATERIALS

Although the HARB encourages regular maintenance and the retention of historic materials as long as possible, they do recognize that all materials, new or old, do wear and eventually will pass their useful life span and require replacement. The following information is presented as a guide to applicants regarding the general care of building systems and potential replacement materials. The HARB will be happy to speak with each applicant individually if there are specific questions regarding proposed materials at their property.

ROOFING

A building's roof provides the first line of defense against the elements and its design greatly affects the overall appearance of a building. Therefore, regular inspection, review and maintenance of roofs and drainage systems are critically important to its longevity.

The HARB encourages:

- Regular roof inspections, maintenance and repair – regular maintenance and repair of slate can add years of life to an existing roof
- Replacement roof materials or new materials for additions and new construction that are sympathetic in appearance to historic materials
- Retention of decorative roof elements such as chimneys, cresting, finials, eaves and cornices
- Maintaining existing roof forms and heights for existing buildings or additions and using sympathetic roof forms and heights for new construction
- Replacement when necessary, matching original color, pattern, material and texture



Roofs can be dominant architectural features, particularly in examples such as these Mansard roofs. At the left, the slate roof has been retained while at the right, the dimensional asphalt shingles simulate the appearance of slate. In both cases, the roof cornice has been painted to highlight the architectural details.

The HARB discourages:

- Adding or altering rooftop features at areas visible from a public way that change a roof configuration such as skylights, television antennae or dishes, solar collectors, mechanical equipment, roof decks, chimney stacks and dormer windows
- Adding new features that are out of character, scale, materials or detailing to the historic building
- Covering, enclosing or removing eaves and cornices



Although most of the exterior woodwork in Phoenixville can be found as decorative elements on masonry buildings, it plays an important role in providing character and distinguishing architectural style. The variety of wood shingles at this corner tower including beveled, octagonal and diamond shingles, provide a rich texture and represent a character-defining feature that should be maintained. It would be difficult to replicate the variety with artificial materials.

EXTERIOR SIDING AND WOODWORK

Exterior siding and trim acts as the skin of a building, shedding water and deflecting sunlight and wind. Aesthetically, the siding can be an important design feature helping to define a building's architectural style. With proper maintenance exterior woodwork can last for centuries; however, improper maintenance can result in problems and deterioration for water, fungus, mold and insects.

The HARB encourages:

- Regular maintenance, repair and repainting of exterior woodwork
- Retaining and leaving exposed decorative wood elements such as brackets, spindles, cornices, columns, posts, etc.
- Installing cementitious board siding in lieu of vinyl siding at side and rear elevations and additions



Installing artificial siding over decorative elements, particularly on the front elevation, can greatly change the appearance of the streetscape. Artificial siding can trap moisture and deteriorate the underlying woodwork. Maintenance and repair of the woodwork is encouraged.

The HARB discourages:

- Vinyl or aluminum siding over wood, brick, stone or stucco – it alters the historic appearance and can promote trapped moisture and deterioration
- Wood grained, wavy edged, vertical and textured plywood simulated siding – their appearance is not historically appropriate



This yellow brick building with terra cotta detailing differs from the primarily red brick buildings along Bridge Street. The original second floor window configuration has been maintained.

MASONRY AND STUCCO

Exterior masonry, including stone, brick, terra cotta and stucco, provides a strong, durable and attractive appearance with relatively low maintenance. Historic masonry walls tend to protect a building's interior from the weather and act as the principal load bearing system. Aesthetically it acts as an important design feature, helping to define a building's style and add visual interest to the streetscape.

The HARB encourages:

- Regular maintenance, repair and repointing with compatible mortar in material, hardness, composition, color and joint style – Incompatible mortar often too hard and can lead to spalling or chipping of the bricks or stones, it can also be visually mismatched

The HARB discourages:

- Installing stucco over brick, stone or terra cotta walls
- Using Portland cement based mortar for repointing – it is typically too hard for most historic masonry and can result in damage including spalling
- Installing artificial stucco (EIFS or Exterior Insulation and Finish Systems)
- Masonry cleaning with harsh chemicals, sand blasting, power washing, grinders or metal brushes
- Painting of previously unpainted masonry



Many of the buildings along Bridge Street are red brick. This example includes two-toned, brick-arched window heads and stone window sills. Painting of brick is discouraged since it can dramatically change a building's appearance and cause damage to the brick surface.

WINDOWS

Windows simultaneously act as interior and exterior building feature that regulates light and air. Historically windows comprised approximately one quarter of an exterior wall's surface area, and defined the building's architectural style.

The HARB encourages:

- Regular window maintenance, repair and repainting
- Installing interior or exterior storm windows
- Installing simulated divided light replacement windows that match the material, historic size, shape, operation, muntin pattern, profiles and detailing to the greatest extent possible

The HARB discourages:

- Decreasing, increasing or altering window size or shape to allow for installation of stock window sizes or picture windows
- New window openings at publicly visible elevations
- Installing tinted or colored glazing
- Installing vinyl replacement windows without external muntin grids



The residential scale of this bay window is appropriate for the building. It is currently being used as a display window.



Doors are an important transition into a building. This paired door, typical of the Italianate style, features large glazed openings and a leaded glass transom window.

DOORS

Similar to windows, doors help to regulate the passage of air and light into a building, but they also allow the passage of people, and help define a building's style or use. A commercial door varies from a residential door, and stylistically a door for a modest worker's house is very different than an elaborate Queen Anne door.

The HARB encourages:

- Regular door maintenance, repair and repainting
- Installing screen and storm doors, if needed, that are stylistically appropriate for the existing door
- Installing replacement doors that match the historic size, shape, operation, glazing, muntins, paneling, profiles and detailing to the greatest extent possible

The HARB discourages:

- Plain modern flush doors or modern flush doors with historically inappropriate window configurations
- Enclosure or removal of existing transom windows or sidelights

STOREFRONTS

Storefronts are often the most character-defining feature of a commercial building. Alterations or renovations might be necessary to adapt historic commercial buildings for modern use or to reflect a business' identity.

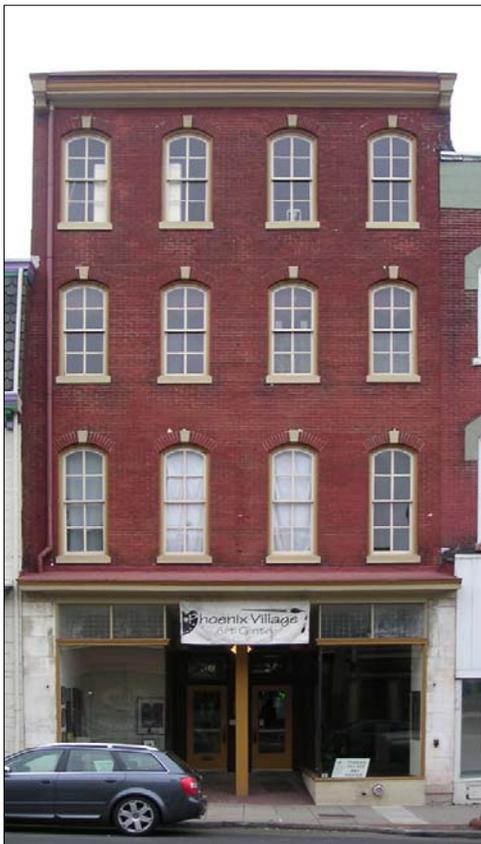
The HARB encourages:

- Preservation of historic storefronts and minimizing alterations or removal of historic materials
- Modifications that are sensitive to the historic character
- Installing signage or awning designs that are sympathetic to the style of a building and minimizes damage to historic features
- Installing signage and awnings in locations that complement a building's architectural features

The HARB discourages:

- Internally illuminated box signs
- Removal of historic storefront materials such as wood, cast iron and terra cotta
- Installing tinted or colored window glazing
- Reducing original storefront window opening sizes

This building features large storefront window openings that contrast with the smaller upper floor windows.



This commercial building has a series of storefronts with a unified appearance achieved through detailing, signage and paint color.

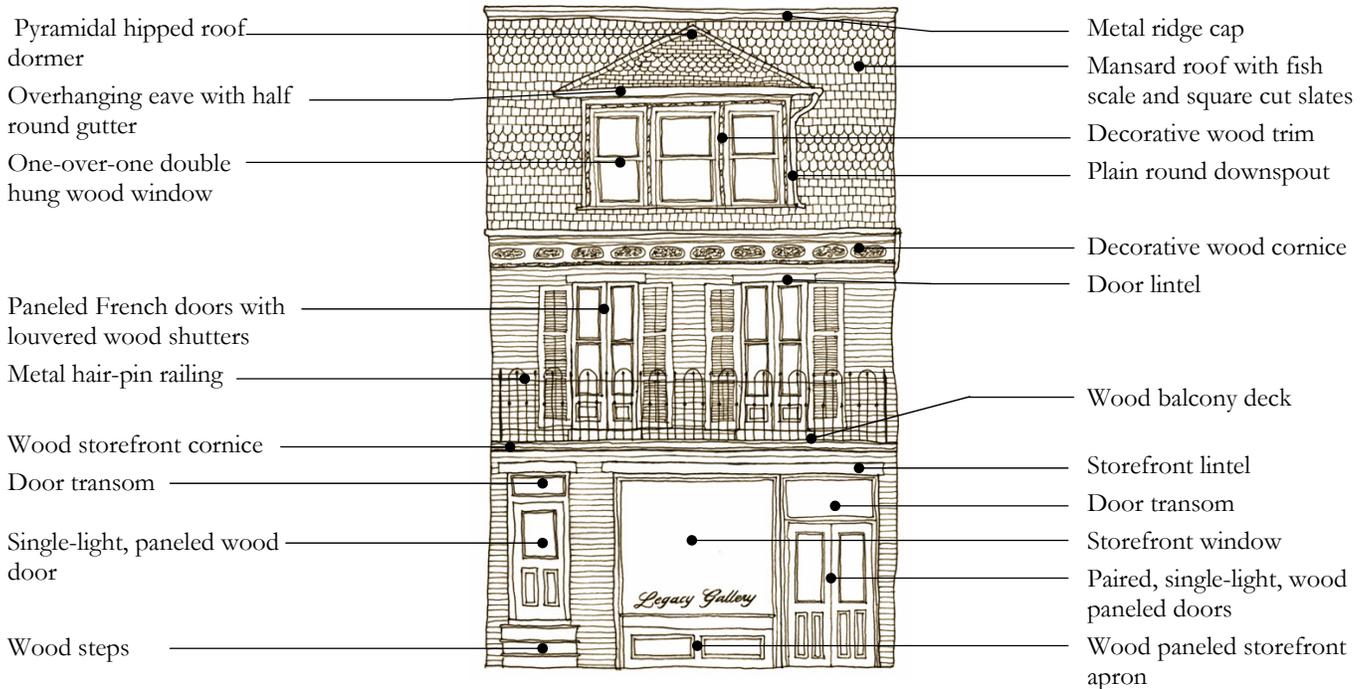
BASIC READING ABOUT MAINTENANCE AND PRESERVATION

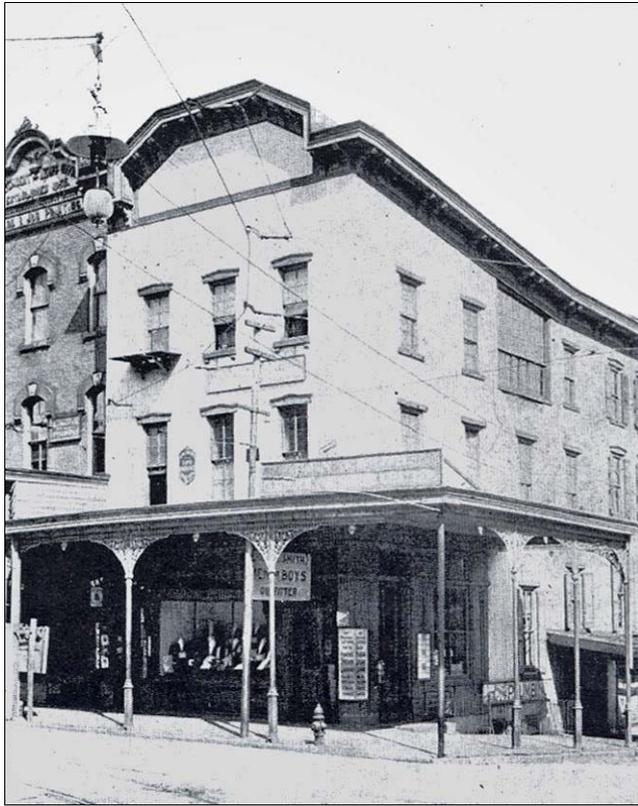
Contact your local or regional library or bookstore for the following publications:

- Kitchen, Judith L. *Caring for Your Old House*. Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1991.
- Heritage Preservation and National Park Service. *Caring for Your Historic House*. New York: Abrams, 1998.
- National Trust for Historic Preservation. *Landmark Yellow Pages: Where to Find All the Names, Addresses, Facts, and Figures You Need*. 2nd ed. New York: Preservation Press, 1998.
- Poore, Patricia. ed. *The Old House Journal: Guide to Restoration*. New York, NY: Dutton, 1992.
- Preservation Sourcebook, Mid-Atlantic Edition, 1998: The Comprehensive Directory of Products and Services for Historic Preservation and Restoration*. Vienna, VA: Preservation Publications, LLC, 1997.
- Contact the US Government Bookstore or visit www.nps.gov for the following publications:
- Preservation Briefs*. Washington, DC: National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services.
- Technical Preservation Services, National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior. *Respectful Rehabilitation: Answers to your Questions About Old Buildings*. Washington, DC: The Preservation Press, 1982.
- Weeks, Kay D. and Anne E. Grimmer. *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties: with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring & Reconstructing Historic Buildings*. Washington, DC: National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, 1995.

GLOSSARY OF ARCHITECTURAL TERMS:

The following diagrams represent composite buildings that provide a basic vocabulary of architectural elements and terms.





This 1912 photograph, of the northwest corner of Bridge and Main Streets, features the former John Smith business. In 1912, the store specialized in selling clothing for men and boys. It would later house a variety of businesses over the years, including McFadden's in the 1950s prior to being destroyed by fire in 1970. The site now houses a small park, with the Phoenixville mural painted on the side of the adjacent building, now the Steel City Coffee House.

DEMOLITION IN THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

The complete or partial demolition of buildings within the Historic District is considered a drastic action since it alters the character of the streetscape, surrounding buildings and the demolition site. Once buildings that contribute to the Historic District and history of the community are destroyed, they cannot be replaced.

This could represent a lost educational resource for the community whether the building was an example of past construction techniques, or has associations with a significant individual or event in our history. As a result, demolition of a significant building within a Historic District is rarely considered to be an appropriate option. Potential alternatives to demolition include the construction of an addition, increasing the size and potential use, or adaptive reuse.

ECONOMIC HARDSHIP

In some instances, a property owner is unable to obtain a reasonable return or beneficial use for a property, or the HARB's recommendation is beyond their financial means. If HARB agrees that the owner will suffer unreasonable economic hardship and the Borough cannot recommend an alternative to relieve economic hardship, the Board may recommend in favor of a proposed demolition.

For an applicant to seek a HARB recommendation for demolition based upon economic hardship, a property owner must demonstrate that the existing building can not be rehabilitated so that they are able to obtain a reasonable return or beneficial use of their property. The property owner will be requested to supply information regarding economic hardship including:

- Form of ownership and operation of property – sole proprietorship, for-profit, non-profit, limited partnership, joint venture, or other
- Name and address of previous owner
- Date property acquired by present owner, purchase price and equity in property
- Appraisals or market value analyses within the previous two years
- Information demonstrating that the sale of the property would be impracticable
- Information demonstrating that commercial rental could not provide a reasonable return
- Information demonstrating that potential alternative uses for the property have been explored and were deemed to be impracticable

The HARB encourages:

- An evaluation of the significance of the building in the historic district
- That all attempts to reuse a historic building be exhausted prior to considering demolition

The HARB will not recommend approval for demolition unless:

- The proposed demolition involves a non-significant building, addition or portion of the building, provided that the demolition will not adversely effect those portions of the site or adjacent properties that are significant
- The applicant has demonstrated that they have exhausted all other options and they will suffer undue economic hardship

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Q: How do I make sure that my project will be approved by the HARB?

A: It is helpful to have an understanding of what makes your property architecturally or culturally significant when considering a project. This will allow you to make informed decisions about the proposed project with an understanding of some of the issues considered by the HARB.

Q: Is the review process expensive? Do I need to hire an outside professional?

A: Please contact the Zoning Officer to determine if there is a fee associated with the review process. Proper preparation and filing complete applications on time can reduce the additional time required to complete the process. Carefully reviewing this brochure and the application package for the Certificate of Appropriateness prior to hiring a design professional or contractor can assist in the early planning stages of your project.

Individuals are welcome to submit applications for work without the assistance of a design professional or contractor. If retaining the services of a professional, it is helpful to work with architects, contractors, sign manufacturers, etc. who are familiar with the requirements within the Phoenixville Downtown Historic District. Prior to the submission of an application, verify that the application is complete and all materials are included with your submission.

Q: Is there a way to expedite the review process?

A: It is important to thoroughly complete the application and submit all requested materials to the Zoning Officer at Borough Hall to be placed on the following meeting agenda. It is suggested that you call the Zoning Officer directly for the next month's submission deadline and meeting date.

Q: I am planning a complex project. When is the best time to talk to the HARB?

A: The best time to talk to the HARB is early in the process before you invest a lot of time and money into the design process. If you would like to discuss your project informally with the HARB to obtain an initial review and feedback about potential concerns prior to finalizing your plans, please contact the Zoning Officer in the Code Enforcement Office at Borough Hall at (610) 933-8801.

Q: Can I begin construction immediately after I get the HARB's approval?

A: The HARB review is necessary but not sufficient for the granting of a building permit. Each project is also subject to Borough review for compliance with zoning, building, and safety codes, and the applicant must obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness and all necessary permits prior to proceeding with any work. If the HARB recommends an application for approval, that recommendation is considered at the next Borough Council meeting. If Borough Council grants approval, then the applicant is free to obtain a COA and any required building permits. To minimize delays, it is recommended that building code applications be submitted for review concurrently with COA applications. In general, it is possible to obtain an approved COA and all necessary permits approximately two weeks after the HARB meeting.

Q: Who can help me?

A: All applicants are encouraged to contact the HARB at the earliest stage of their project. This initial meeting can help move a project quickly through the review process saving both time and money. If you would like to discuss your project informally with the Borough to obtain feedback about potential concerns prior to finalizing your plans, please contact the Zoning Officer at Borough Hall at (610) 933-8801.

Q: What if I need an emergency repair resulting from a sudden occurrence?

A: Temporary repairs resulting from a sudden occurrence such as a fallen tree are permissible if necessitated to maintain weather, security and/or safety can be made to the Code Enforcement Office prior to submitting a HARB application. Any temporary repairs are subject to future review by HARB. A HARB application must be submitted and a COA issued prior to making final repairs.

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Dominique M. Hawkins, AIA, of Preservation Design Partnership in Philadelphia, PA, prepared this publication.