

**HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

**Historic Resources**

The many historic resources in the Milford planning area are key components of the traditional small town character so critical to the local lifestyle and tourism based economy. The preservation of these resources in this time of rapid growth and development is one of the basic tenets of this *Comprehensive Plan*.

According to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, six individual structures in the Milford planning area and three historic districts are listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and two are eligible for listing. (See *National Register of Historic Places Sidebar*.) The structures are listed in the *National Register Listing Table*.

NATIONAL REGISTER LISTINGS	
Description	Date Listed
<b>Milford Township</b>	
Gifford Pinchot House (National Historic Landmark)	1963
<b>Milford Borough</b>	
Hotel Fauchere and Annex	1980
Forester’s Hall and Milford Post Office	1983
Jervis Gordon Grist Mill Historic District	1985
Milford Historic District - commercial area	1998
Milford Historic District - residential area	2002

**Milford Township**

The limited number of designated or eligible structures in Milford Township does not mean that it does not have a rich history. Many of the older homes and buildings in the Township, along with the agricultural landscape itself, add to the historic fabric of the entire Milford planning area. In fact, the Township encompassed the entire planning area until 1874 when the Borough was incorporated as a separate municipality. The history and current historic fabric of the Milford community simply cannot be divided between the Township and Borough. The two municipalities evolved from a common source and will continue to change as one community.

**National Register of Historic Places**

The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation's official list of cultural resources worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect our historic and archeological resources. Properties listed in the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. The National Register is administered by the National Park Service, which is part of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission manages the National Register of Historic Places for Pennsylvania. National Register properties are distinguished by having been documented and evaluated according to uniform standards. These criteria recognize the accomplishments of all peoples who have contributed to the history and heritage of the United States and are designed to help state and local governments, federal agencies, and others identify significant historic and archeological properties worthy of preservation and of consideration in planning and development decisions.

Listing in the National Register, however, does not interfere with a private property owner's right to alter, manage or dispose of property. It often changes the way communities perceive their historic resources and gives credibility to efforts to preserve these resources as irreplaceable parts of our communities. Listed historic districts enable municipalities to control the exterior appearance of structures.

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

- Recognition that a property is of significance to the nation, the state, or the community.
- Consideration in the planning for federal or federally assisted projects.
- Eligibility for federal tax benefits for income producing properties.
- Qualification for federal assistance for historic preservation, when funds are available.



Grey Towers (Source: www.pinchot.org.)

**Milford Borough Historic Districts**

The three historic districts in Milford Borough listed on the National Register include:

- The Jervis Gordon Grist Mill Historic District at the intersection of Water Street and SR 2001 including some six acres.
- The Borough’s traditional central business district encompassing some twenty-two acres along a section of Broad Street and parts of intersecting Harford, Ann, Catharine, and High Streets, as well as a small section of Fourth Street which intersects Harford Street.
- A 240-acre area which incorporates virtually all of the historic architecture of the community as well as small areas of Dingman Township and Milford Township northwest of the Borough and a parcel containing a former resort hotel immediately northeast of the Borough in Milford Township.



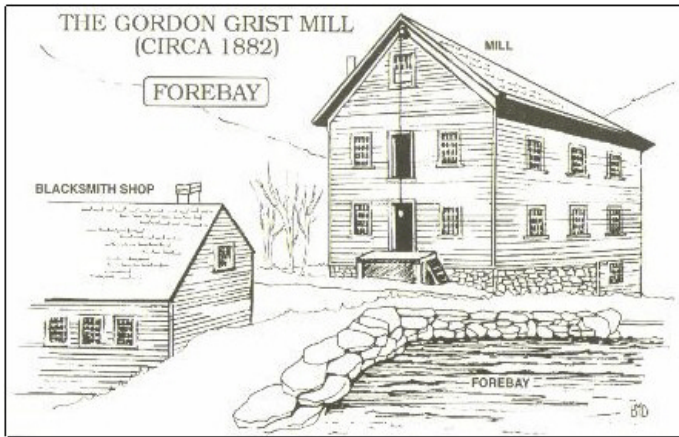
Forester’s Hall (Source: www.fs.fed.us.)

The traditional central business district was listed on the National Register in 1998 following a detailed study and application to the National Park Service prepared by Taylor and Taylor Associates of Brookville, PA under contract to the Historic Preservation Trust of Pike County, Inc.. The application states: *No particular architectural style, date, or method of construction predominates in any single part of the district. The district’s overall character is that of an architecturally-cohesive business district of a mid-to-late-nineteenth century resort community-county seat, containing a mixture of commercial architecture – including hotels – interspersed with residences and governmental and religious institutional buildings. The overall cohesion of the district is created by its dense development and by a general lack of significant concentrations of intrusions.* The District includes some fifty-five contributing historic resources, five buildings previously listed on the National Register, and fourteen non-contributing buildings.



Hotel Fauchere (Source: www.fauchere.com.)

In 2002, again based on a detailed study and application by the Historic Trust and Taylor and Taylor, the 240-acre historic district was listed on the National Register. As noted in the application the district’s *overall character is that of an architecturally-cohesive, mid-to-late-nineteenth century resort community/ county seat. The district*



Jervis Gordon Grist Mill

(Source: dvasdweb.dvasd.k12.pa.us/pppike/MillsofMilford.htm.)

contains a substantial and architecturally-distinctive residential area interspersed with a small number of commercial, and institutional buildings whose overall cohesion is created by its dense development and by a general lack of significant concentrations of non-contributing elements. The district contains 347 contributing historic resources including three contributing structures (the 1867 Broad Street Bridge over Vandermark Creek, the 1902 Mott Street Bridge over Sawkill Creek, and a substantial cast iron fence surrounding the site of the Milford Inn.

### Borough Preservation Process

The National Register listing of the two historic district was the culmination of the preservation effort supported by the Historic Preservation Trust of Pike County, Inc., a community based, nonprofit corporation. Other participants included:

- Milford Community House Board
- Milford Borough Council
- Milford Business Council
- Milford Garden Club
- Milford Shade Tree Commission
- Milford Square Enhancement Committee
- Pike County Historical Society
- Pinchot Institute

Preservation efforts included a Borough-wide survey conducted in 1999 which found that 91% of respondents supported the preservation of historic public buildings, 86% supported preservation of historically significant commercial buildings, and 82% supported preservation of architecturally important residences.

### Benefits of Historic Preservation

Since the 1970s, mounting evidence has shown that historic preservation can be a powerful community and economic development strategy. Evidence includes statistics compiled from annual surveys conducted by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and statewide Main Street programs, state-level tourism and economic impact studies, and studies that have analyzed the impact of specific actions such as historic designation, tax credits, and revolving loan funds. Among the findings:

- Creation of local historic districts stabilizes, and often increases residential and commercial property values.
- Increases in property values in historic districts are typically greater than increases in the community at large.
- Historic building rehabilitation, which is more labor intensive and requires greater specialization and higher skill levels, creates more jobs and results in more local business than does new construction.
- Heritage tourism provides substantial economic benefits. Tourists drawn by a community's (or region's) historic character typically stay longer and spend more during their visit than other tourists.
- Historic rehabilitation encourages additional neighborhood investment and produces a high return for municipal dollars spent.
- Use of a city or town's existing, historic building stock can support growth management policies by increasing the supply of centrally located housing.

Source: *Planning Commissioners Journal*, No. 52, Fall 2003, p. 4.

### Borough Historic District Ordinance

The Pennsylvania Historic District Act enables local municipalities in the Commonwealth to govern, by locally adopted ordinance, the architectural integrity of structures and appurtenances in an historic district certified by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. In the case of Milford Borough, the commercial historic district is a vital component of the community's small town character and appeal, and therefore, its economic viability and quality of life. Recognizing the importance of maintaining this

historic character, and supported by the positive results of the community survey, the Borough Council adopted a Historic District Ordinance on December 6, 1999. The Historic District Ordinance applies to the entire Commercial Zoning District and the entire Limited Commercial Zoning District.

**Recent Community Survey**

The results of the community survey conducted as part of this *Comprehensive Plan* suggests continued public support for historic preservation. The survey asked if the commercial historic district and ordinance have benefitted the Borough. Most respondents view the preservation effort as positive and a number believe additional eligible areas should be included. The detailed results are reported below.

RESPONSE	# of responses
The commercial historic district has been positive for the Borough.	112
The Borough should not be involved in historic preservation.	38
The commercial historic district has done little to benefit the Borough.	35
Additional eligible areas should be included in the regulated historic district.	25
I need more information before deciding.	19
I did not realize there was a locally regulated historic district.	3

**Historical Architectural Review Board**

The Historic District Ordinance establishes the seven-member Architectural Review Board (ARB) to advise the Borough Council on the appropriateness of any proposed construction, alteration, repair, restoration or demolition of any buildings in the designated historic district. The Ordinance is not intended to memorialize historic structures or prohibit any changes. Instead, the goal is to ensure that any changes are in keeping with the style of the structure and the fabric of the historic district. In addition, the ARB reviews the appropriateness of all signs, awnings, mountings and brackets, and illumination on the exterior of buildings, and all window signs visible from a public way. The ARB recommendation is based on guidelines intended to preserve the historic integrity of the buildings in the

Historic District. A Certificate of Appropriateness must be issued by the Borough Council before a building permit can be issued for any such work.

**ARB Design Guide**

The Architectural Review Board, with the assistance of Richard Sutter and Associates of Holidaysburg, PA, recently updated the design guidelines in a very detailed format. The new *Milford Design Guide* provides property owners an invaluable resource for planning and completing building renovation and construction. It includes:

- A brief Borough history and a description of all of the architectural styles in the Historic District.
- A building maintenance checklist.
- Details about the various parts of buildings – walls, roofs, windows, doors, etc.
- A description of the ARB and how the review and approval process works.
- An extensive appendix with a glossary of technical terms and information sources.

The *Milford Design Guide* notes:

*ARB assesses the architectural and historical significance of the property and considers the effect of the proposal on the overall district, street, individual building, and the building's component features. To help make its decision, ARB applies the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, . . . These guidelines were developed by the United States Department of the Interior following several decades of preservation activity. They are accepted as the national standard for rehabilitating historic buildings,*

*In determining the compatibility of the proposed project, ARB also considers a number of issues specifically identified in Milford's Historic District Ordinance, such as proportions, window placement, and materials. This design guide clarifies these matters, and provides information in greater detail than is given in the Ordinance. Consequently, this design guide is an important tool that ARB can use in its decision making process.*

*After ARB has considered all of these materials and issues, it votes on the proposal and sends its*

*recommendation to the Milford Borough Council. Milford Borough Council makes the final decision on the application by using the same information as ARB in its determination.*

### **Sign Design Assistance**

As part of a continuing commitment to the historic character of the Borough, the Historic Preservation Trust of Pike County, Inc., is committed to assisting business owners in the Commercial and Limited Commercial Zoning Districts (the areas governed by the Historic District Ordinance) with signs that are consistent with the heritage of the building and/or business. This is a community based effort that has been invaluable to the preservation effort.

### **Borough Actions**

The Borough should continue and strengthen the historic preservation program by:

- Making additional public investments in the Borough to enhance its historic character. (e.g., streetscape improvements.)
- Improving the public information efforts of the ARB about the benefits of historic preservation and how the Borough ordinance works. A web site would be a good approach.
- Integrating the historic district ordinance with the zoning ordinance – each is aimed at protecting overall community property values while balancing individual property rights with the public benefit.
- Carefully evaluating the range of commercial uses in the Commercial and Limited Commercial Zoning Districts to ensure historic district compatibility.
- Continuing to allow *no impact* home occupations in all zoning districts as a means of encouraging productive use of historic structures which tend to be larger and more difficult to maintain.
- Requiring that parking areas for new commercial and institutional buildings be to the side and rear of the building.
- Prohibiting parking in the front yards of residential properties and that garages be accessed from alleys

### **Historic Preservation Planning**

*A well-conceived preservation planning process serves to:*

- *Establish a basis of public policy about historic resources;*
- *Educate and inform residents and others about their community's heritage and its value;*
- *Identify opportunities for economic growth based on the community's historic and architectural character.*
- *Ensure consistency among various local government policies that affect the community's historic resources;*
- *Lay the groundwork for adopting a local historic preservation ordinance or strengthening an existing one;*
- *Eliminate uncertainty or confusion about the purpose, meaning, and content of a community's preservation ordinance;*
- *Inform existing and potential property owners, investors, and developers about what historic resources the community wants to protect as it grows;*
- *Create an agenda for future preservation activities; and*
- *Facilitate compliance with federal and state historic preservation and environmental quality laws.*

*Preservation plans serve several purposes:*

- *educating elected and appointed officials, municipal staff, property owners, investors, and others about the status of historic resources within the community and the economic benefits of preservation;*
- *formally documenting existing conditions, issues, opportunities, and challenges;*
- *providing information on tax and other incentives for preservation;*
- *offering discussion and analysis regarding preservation of historic resources, and establishing a roadmap for future efforts;*
- *setting out the roles and responsibilities of the public, private, and nonprofit sectors with regard to the preservation of historic resources.*

Source: *Planning Commissioners Journal*, No. 52, Fall 2003, p. 6.

whenever possible.

- Developing a sidewalk improvement program that extends beyond Broad and Harford Streets to preserve existing sidewalks and extend the sidewalk network.

#### **Township Actions**

- Conduct an inventory of historic resources in the entire Township to include Indian sites, buildings, old roads, etc.
  - Consider the development of a local historic register program.
  - Incorporate the preservation of historic resources in conservation design for residential development.
  - Continue to allow home occupations in all zoning districts as a means of encouraging productive use of historic structures which tend to be larger and more difficult to maintain.
- C Prepare and adopt design guidelines for commercial, industrial, and institutional development to encourage the most efficient use of commercial land and development consistent with the Township's character.