
HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN ELEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Historic preservation essentially refers to the recognition and preservation of the history, culture, and physical characteristics of a community. Fostering an understanding and appreciation for the historic landmarks, buildings, and events is an important step in providing a sense of identity and pride. Through the co-operative efforts of local governments, businesses, property owners, residents and institutions communities can collectively celebrate their history and culture.

This element of the Highlands Borough Master Plan is intended to provide an overview of the important historic elements within the Borough. This element can serve as a reference point for the Borough to continue the critical step of identifying and increasing an awareness of the community's historically important structures and sites. With an understanding of these sites and a proactive and stewardship role toward historic preservation, a community can protect its history and culture for future generations.

To meet the above goals and objectives, this element of the Master Plan provides a brief summary of Highlands' history, reviews the Borough's efforts in the area of historic preservation, and provides a review of some of the important historical resources that have been identified by the Borough. Based on this information and historic efforts undertaken nation-wide, recommendations are made to assist and guide the historic preservation efforts of Highlands Borough. This information is intended to be compatible with other areas of the Master Plan which promote elements such as architectural compatibility, public and recreational space, conservation, and economic development.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

The highest point on the east coast, Highlands Borough was the first land sighted by explorers and millions of immigrants approaching America. Highlands Borough has a colonial history with roots as far back as the 16th century. In 1525, Highlands was first seen by the Italian explorer Giovanni de Verrazano. Other explorers followed, including Henry Hudson, who sailed his ship, the Half Moon, into Sandy Hook Bay in 1609. The land that is now the Highlands was purchased by the British settler Richard Hartshorne from American Indians in 1677, and the first European settlement followed in 1678.

The hills of the Highlands played an important role in the American Revolutionary War as a strategic point for both the British and Colonial armies. During the years after the American Civil War,

Highlands prospered as a resort town. Sailing ships, steamboats, ferries, railroads and trollies brought numerous visitors to the scenic hills of the Highlands. Highlands Borough was officially incorporated in 1900, and in the years that followed, fishing, clamming, boating, and shipbuilding became the main industries in the Borough.

Highlands Borough is probably best known for its Twin Lights. First built in 1828 and later replaced in 1862, the Twin Lights is the only twin lighthouse in the world, and was the first to use kerosene, electricity, and the revolutionary Fresnel lens. When operating, it was the nation's most powerful light, and was visible for 22 miles at sea. In 1899 the Twin Lights was the site of Guglielmo Marconi's first practical radio demonstration, and in the mid 1930's it was the site of America's first experiments with radar. After many years of service, the Navesink Light Station was decommissioned in 1949. In 1962, the State of New Jersey acquired Twin Lights from the Borough of Highlands and opened it as a museum. Twin Lights is now on both the State and National Registers of Historic Places.

Today, scenic and historic Highlands Borough is still known for its marinas, fishing industry, and excellent seafood restaurants. The Historical Society of Highlands and the Twin Lights Historical Society are active in their preservation, promotion and promulgation of Highlands history.

RECENT HISTORIC PRESERVATION EFFORTS IN HIGHLANDS

The Historical Society of Highlands promotes and preserves historical information, artifacts, sites, and structures pertaining to Highlands' history. The Historical Society meets monthly at the Robert Wilson Community Center, and has produced several books and other publications on the history of the Borough.

The Society consists of four Board members (President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer). An annual membership can be acquired for a fee of five dollars. In addition to meeting about once a month, the Society sponsors annual events such as the Highlands House Tour each June.

The Society has reproduced a historical booklet of Highlands' history that is available to the public. The Society has not officially designated any historic districts or areas of Highlands, although it does maintain a list of historic buildings, some of which may be eligible for designation as state and national historic buildings.

The Twin Lights Historical Society was formed in 1956 by a group of citizens concerned about the decaying condition of the famous lighthouse. After the New Jersey Division of Parks and Forestry took over the lighthouse as a National Historic Site in 1962, the Society assisted with the preservation and restoration of the buildings. A maritime museum was established in the North Tower of the lighthouse, and today one of the Society's major responsibilities is the collecting and maintaining of historic objects displayed in the museum. The museum and gift shop are open year-round with varying hours.

IDENTIFICATION OF HISTORIC BUILDINGS AND AREAS

Twin Lights and the Route 36 Bridge over Shrewsbury River are the two official historical sites within the Borough.

1. Twin Lights (Navesink Lighthouse) is on both the State and National Historic Registers.
2. Route 36 Bridge over Shrewsbury River is under State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) opinion.

With its long history of development, Highlands Borough has several other buildings and sites that should be preserved to protect the historic value they produce to the community. Some of these buildings are structurally sound and have a rich history and community significance dating back nearly three centuries. The following is a list of sites that the Historical Society has identified as having historical significance. Once the sites are investigated, it may be determined that some of them are eligible for listing on the State and National registers of historic places⁹.

Further studies many need to be commissioned in Highlands to determine other buildings that are eligible for registration as well as techniques for preservation and rehabilitation

The Historical Society of Highlands Borough in conjunction with the Borough Planner should work to determine eligibility and to seek available funding to document sites and preservation techniques. Properties potentially having historical significance include:

1. The building currently occupied by the Clam Shanty located on Shrewsbury Avenue.
2. Sears Building located at the corner of Bay Avenue and Atlantic Avenue
3. Sea Scape Manor Bed & Breakfast located on Grand Tour

⁹ For a property to be designated as a state or national historic place it must be at least 50 years of age and demonstrate a high degree of physical integrity and significance in history or architecture.

4. Water Witch House Bed & Breakfast
5. Grand Lady by the Sea Bed & Breakfast located on Navesink Avenue.
6. Stone stairs extending up cliff from Shore Drive

PRESERVATION STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

Historic Preservation Standards

The *Secretary of the Interior* is responsible for advising Federal agencies on the preservation of historic properties listed in or eligible for listing on the *National Register of Historic Places*. They have developed *Standards for Rehabilitation*, which serve to assist in the long-term preservation of a property's signification through the preservation of historic materials and features¹⁰. The Standards pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the building exterior and interior. In addition they encompass related landscape features and the building's site and environment, as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. The Standards for rehabilitation are as follows:

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 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.

¹⁰ The Standards for Rehabilitation have also been used to determine the appropriateness of a proposed work projected of registered properties within the Historic Preservation Fund grant-in-aid program, as well as if a rehabilitation qualifies as a Certified Rehabilitation for Federal tax purposes. Generally speaking to be certified for Federal tax purposes, a

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning structures, if appropriate shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archaeological 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.

Historic Preservation Guidelines

A threat to the remaining historic resources in Highlands Borough is inappropriate management of resources, which includes altering, rehabilitating, or demolishing without an understanding or appreciation for their historic importance. The *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* were established in the late 1970s through the National Park Service in conjunction with architects, historians and craftspeople. They are intended to assist in applying the above standards to projects to ensure that historic resources are appropriately maintained, rehabilitated, and restored.

The recommended course of action for property owners are prioritized into seven areas to address.

1. Identify, Retain, and Preserve – The identification, retention and preservation of the form and detailing of architectural features which define the historic character of a building is the number one priority for rehabilitating historic buildings. Even minor interventions that change the historic character of a building can have the cumulative effect of destroying a building's historic character.
2. Protect and Maintain – After identifying materials and features to be retained, protecting them is the next important step. Protection includes the maintenance of historic material through treatments such as rust removal, caulking, limited paint removal, and re-application of protective coating; the cyclical cleaning of roof gutter systems; or installation of fencing, protective plywood, alarm systems and other temporary protective measures.
3. Repair – When the physical condition of historic features requires additional work, repairing is recommended. The guideline for repairing historic materials such as masonry, wood, and architectural metals begins with the least degree of intervention possible such as patching, piecing-in, splicing, or consolidating.
4. Replace – Replacing should only be an option when deterioration is so severe to be considered beyond repair. When replacing however, a compatible substitute or prototype should be used. Ideally the same type of material should be used, but substitute material is acceptable if the form and design of substitute material convey visual appearance of remaining parts.
5. Design for Missing Historic Features – Where an important architectural feature is missing, its recovery is always recommended in the guidelines as the preferred course of action. Therefore, if it is desirable to recreate the feature, and adequate historical, pictorial, and physical documentation exists to accurately reproduce the feature, then it should be designed and built based on the information. Another option is to produce a replacement feature based on a new design that is compatible with the remaining character, but that does not give a false historical appearance.
6. Alterations/Additions to Historic Buildings – Alterations or additions to an historic building may include construction of an additional building, installing a new mechanical system, inserting a new floor, adding new entrances or windows, and so on. While such alterations or additions to the exterior or interior of a building may be made to extend the use of the building, it is recommended that they should not dramatically change, obscure, or destroy the historic features, materials or finishes.
7. Energy Efficiency / Accessibility Considerations / Health and Safety Considerations – As with any other building, historic buildings need to consider factors such as energy conservation, accessibility, and health and safety code requirements. Similar to the above guidelines it is suggested that changes made to accommodate these considerations should be approached with

care not to radically change, obstruct, damage, or destroy the historic features, materials or finishes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the areas addressed in the preceding sections of this portion of the Master Plan, the following recommendations are made to meet the goals and objectives of promoting historic preservation within Highlands Borough.

Identification and Registration of Historic Resources

The establishment of the Historical Society of Highlands Borough was an important step for the community in terms of historical preservation. In addition to gathering and preserving important documents, artifacts, and memorabilia, the Society has identified a series of buildings that are worthy of preservation and may be eligible for registration as state and national historic places.

Encouragement of registration at the state or federal level not only raises public awareness, but also protects certain properties from publicly funded projects that could result in demolition or destruction of a historic building or site. In addition, listing on the state or national register may also provide certain investment tax credits to income-producing properties.

In co-operation with the Historic Society, the Borough could play an important role in identifying buildings that may be eligible for historic preservation. A consultant could be hired to prepare a comprehensive inventory of eligible properties for registration. Such a study could also detail the important historic features, materials, and designs within the Borough so that residents could recognize and appreciate these elements.

Public Education on Historic Preservation

The Historical Society already plays an active role in the public education of Highlands residents in terms of historic preservation. Many residents, however, are unaware of the importance of historic preservation and what it means to the community. To further educate the public the Borough may consider collaborating with the Historical Society to produce promotional materials, such as brochures, handouts, and booklets, which outline the importance of historic preservation. Manuals can be produced to assist the public in identifying historic properties and architectural features, and provide relevant technical assistance and guidance for preservation and rehabilitation of historic

property and features. Matching funds for such a project may be available from the New Jersey government.

Promoting the Historic Character of Highlands Borough

The information provided in this element of the Master Plan shows the wealth of historic qualities within Highlands Borough. With a well-organized historic preservation plan, the Borough may be in the position to market the history of Highlands as a tourist attraction. There are many steps that can be taken to highlight Highlands' historic features and attract people from other areas of the state and country.

Wall murals depicting historic themes of Highlands are one possibility of building on the character of Highlands' past while simultaneously attracting tourists to the Borough. Many cities and communities have established wall mural committees to identify themes, locations, and works that are both aesthetically attractive and serve to reflect the community's history.

A community rich in historic resources can also organize self-guided tours through its Borough. Brochures can be used and distributed to tourists to guide them to historic buildings and landmarks.

Investigate Expansion of the Community Center

Explore the possibility of expanding the Borough's community center to provide a full-time home for the Historical Society. The new space would provide a permanent meeting place for the Society, and could house archives and exhibits.

Identify the Borough's Historical Assets With Plaques

Work to identify the Borough's historic assets with plaques at key sites or buildings to identify historic elements.

Exploring Government Agency Support

This section of the Master Plan has emphasized that historical elements should be considered resources or assets within a community. Preservation, rehabilitation and promotion of these resources however do require investment. For this reason, identifying funding support through State or Federal programs is essential. The Borough might consider contacting the following agencies for program assistance in developing its historic preservation plan:

1. National Trust for Historic Preservation - Provides 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) -Provides technical information on building rehabilitation and conservation issues, matching grants to encourage preservation efforts, tax incentives for income-producing properties, and promotes the preservation of significant historic battlefields associated with wars on America soil. Also, through the “Save America’s Treasures” program, provides grants for preservation and/or conservation work on nationally significant intellectual and cultural artifacts and nationally significant historic structures and sites.
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.
4. NJ Historic Trust (Trenton) – Provides support and protection for New Jersey’s historic resources through a variety of grant, loan, and property donation programs.
5. NJ Historic Preservation Office (Trenton) -This office provides a variety of technical information and support for historic preservation activity. It can provide further assistance in completing the National Register nomination process. This office also implements the Certified Local Government (CLG) program which provides program development matching funds to qualifying municipalities with an appropriately-managed local historic society. 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.
6. Preservation New Jersey (Trenton) - As the major non-profit, statewide historic preservation advocacy group, this organization is the general clearinghouse for information and local referrals. The organization offers workshops and conferences on private and public preservation planning issues and on technical matters related to restoration. Membership includes notification of programs, technical assistance, and subscriptions to its quarterly newsletter.
7. NJDEP Green Acres Program (Trenton) – Provides low-interest loans to counties and municipalities for the acquisition or development of land for public outdoor recreation or conservation purposes. Eligible projects include historic sites.