

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The pasts of the Boroughs of East Lansdowne and Lansdowne are inescapable in recognizing their contemporary identities. Visual reminders, such as street patterns, landscapes, homes, and buildings promote the area's proud heritage. The significant historic places in each borough are community assets, and planning for the protection of these resources is the mission of this chapter. Many older communities across the county are recognizing that if they are to thrive in the future, they must not ignore their history but embrace and build upon it.

Much like how a community's built environment arrives to present day through phases, the historic preservation of these resources is also a process. Preservation consists of three steps: **identification**, **evaluation**, and **protection**. First, a community must *identify* those buildings, areas, or landscapes, which exhibit historical characteristics and significance. Once a general listing has been created, each record must be carefully *evaluated* to collect and document correct historical and physical data, in order to determine the level of integrity it has retained and where the resource fits in with the history of the community, region, or nation. Finally, the community establishes appropriate and secure methods of *protection*, so that these resources will be preserved for future generations.

Municipalities who value their roots foster a stronger sense of community identity. Since East Lansdowne and Lansdowne still exhibit much of their history through the built environment and desire to protect their unique characters, the Boroughs should continue to actively pursue historic preservation through the steps described above and as guided by this chapter.

GOAL – Identify and evaluate noteworthy historic development patterns, individual places, and character-defining features, and protect and maintain these historic resources of regional heritage as a means to reinforce community identity, generate economic vitality, and sustain the continuity of the most valued places for the future.

HISTORIC COMMUNITY CHARACTER

Objective 4-1 – *Identify* elements contributing to the area's unique historic community character, including development patterns, and design strategies for retaining and preserving those most valued.

The community character of the plan area, East Lansdowne and Lansdowne Boroughs, is comprised of historical development patterns, which predominate in both municipalities.

Lansdowne and East Lansdowne
Comprehensive Plan



Historic Lansdowne Theater



Victory Temple in East Lansdowne, built in 1911

Since the physical growth of a community provides the built environment that residents and visitors use in shaping their version of that place's identity, these elements are essential to examine.

Historic Development Patterns

Like many Delaware County municipalities, both East Lansdowne and Lansdowne began as agricultural communities, gradually evolving as commuter suburbs with the development of trolley and rail lines in the mid 19th century. The historical growth patterns coincide with modern day neighborhoods and municipal boundaries, providing illustration to the steps in these Boroughs' evolutions. The patterns discussed in this section contribute to the contemporary identity of the area, and provide the basis for guiding new development as well as preservation and revitalization.

Residential

Early agricultural farmstead development – There are reminders of this agricultural development period, including some still-existing boundary lines, scattered farmhouses, and early county roads – like Baltimore Pike and Lansdowne Avenue (then called Haverford-Darby Road). However, much of the overall sense of the area as it was in the 18th and early 19th century has been transformed throughout the ages.

In the earlier days of Delaware County, East Lansdowne was a single farm, owned by Dr. George Smith. Atlases indicate that there was just one farmhouse and barn. Other farms and wooded parcels abutted this one, except on the southernmost side of the current municipality. This is where Baltimore Pike separated one farm from another, and now one municipality from another.

Lansdowne was also sprawling farms and countryside, however this larger land area was comprised of a patchwork of over 25 individually owned parcels. There are still a small number of structures remaining that pay homage to the early farming days of the area, including the Borough's oldest house on Owen Avenue. During this period of development, both municipalities were considered part of Upper Darby Township.

19th century mansion/summer home development – Like other first generation suburbs, agricultural parcels in Lansdowne were bought by wealthy city dwellers, and transformed into elite mansions and summer homes. Sometimes the farmhouses were adapted; more often new homes were constructed. Some of these large homes were built for the executives of the mills and factories that were once the basis for the regional economy. Many of these architectural gems still exist, and their legacy still adds vitality to the subsequent development schemes in which they are scattered.

At this time, East Lansdowne was still one farm. While there were no construction projects by the well-to-do, the 120 acres of open space must have added to the fresh country setting for those spending time in the area.

Lansdowne, on the other hand, found popularity with the trend of country estate and mansion building as well as tourist hotels. The Pennock family had their successful florist business in South Lansdowne, as well as their large Victorian residence. These wealthy families, including Colonel Thomas Scott - once president of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, each built one or a handful of noteworthy structures throughout Lansdowne. A number of the original hotels and large homes still exist today, but now as unique apartment buildings, like the Essex House, “Devonshire,” and the Windermere. Carriage houses are another surviving element from this time and also the remains of the exotic Japanese garden that once existed around a Windermere Avenue home.

Early suburbanization (1880s to turn-of-the-century) – With rising industrialism in the late 1800s, environmental conditions of city living were worsening and new perspectives on rural living became widespread. In 1858 the West Chester and Philadelphia Rail Road line was laid across the region. There were three stations providing easy access to East Lansdowne and Lansdowne: Fernwood, the Darby Road Station (now Lansdowne Station), and Kellyville. Commuter suburbs were beginning their birth, expanding so that neighborhoods within walking distance to the rail line were quite popular.

During this period, Lansdowne experienced a small development boom, which now provides much of the distinct built environment for which it is known. It was around this time that developers began to show interest in the area, and the neighborhoods of large Victorian twins and singles were built, still visible today in the National Register districts (see pg. 8 for more detailed explanation). Still popular at this time was the “anti-city” attitude that proliferated during the summer retreat development of a few years earlier, when the “Romantic” outlook dominated in all art forms. Gingerbreading and other decorative elements on the cottages and turreted Queen Anne homes provide illustration.

Later suburban development (turn-of-the-century to pre-WW2) – After the turn of the century, many large landholdings in the area were beginning to be developed, especially with the approaching popularity of the automobile. Because of this, homes could be built farther away from the train lines, and closer together.

This period saw almost all of East Lansdowne’s growth, in a time where towns were built with homes close together on grid-patterned streets. Wood, Harmon and Company bought the farm tract in 1902, had it surveyed and parceled out into 1458 lots, and began selling and building homes, both twins and singles of various styles. They took time to



Smith Family Farmhouse in East Lansdowne



Willowbrook in Lansdowne, an example of early mansion development

Lansdowne and East Lansdowne
Comprehensive Plan



Queen Anne style house in East Lansdowne



Early Suburban development, East Lansdowne

provide various amenities to their new residents when developing during this time, such as the flower pots that lined the center of wide Penn Boulevard, new cement sidewalks, gas street lamps, and shady street trees planted every year from Borough funds. The land surface of East Lansdowne had been completely developed by 1940, assuring the community's visual layout will remain as a testament to early suburban development.

Lansdowne's northern neighborhoods illustrate much of this fashion of expansion – with the varied twins and singles and comfortable tree-lined streets, extending farther away from the railroad lines. However, the Borough also experienced pockets of “themed” development during the 1920s, such as Gladstone Manor and Montbard.

Industrial

19th and early 20th century industrial development –

Having been developed as a unified residential community, there was no plan for industrial development in East Lansdowne. The mills and factory complexes in adjacent Upper Darby and nearby Lansdowne provided jobs for many of the Borough's early residents, and they could retreat back to their community of homes each evening.

The Darby Creek, flowing as Lansdowne's southwest boundary, provided a point of early industrial development in the form of grist and paper mills. A number of the original mill buildings and houses, including owner Joseph Cruikshank's residence at 213 Scottdale Road, are still standing in the area called Matthew's Hollow along the creek. Later, this area as well as The Knoll were used in the filming of several movies by the Lubin Film Company. Also notable was the Pennock family's florist business, which had its start in early Lansdowne.

Structures from the days of early industry were built to last, using strong materials such as stone from native quarries. Although there may not be much lucrative use today for a gristmill in Delaware County, the buildings are priceless reminders of the industrious settlers of Lansdowne and East Lansdowne and the region as a whole. Also, these are distinctive structures, their preservation essential to maintaining a unique identity for the area. Adaptive reuse, or giving an entirely new function to the inside of an older building, is an innovative way to use the buildings in retaining the character of the area.

Commercial

Early commercial centers –

The small commercial areas of East Lansdowne were, and still are, situated along the periphery of the community, along Baltimore Pike, Long Lane, and Oak Avenue, as these edges corresponded with existing or developing commercial and industrial nodes of adjacent towns. The first store was Davis' Drug Store on the northeast corner of Baltimore Pike and Lewis Avenue, built in 1902. The pattern for the growth of these areas corresponds with factors contributing to the normal creation of self-sufficient

Lansdowne and East Lansdowne
Comprehensive Plan

communities, such as the trolley lines that ran down Baltimore Pike. Most of the commercial growth along this main road took place between 1911-1914.

Lansdowne's main commercial center is located at and around the intersection of Baltimore and Lansdowne Avenues and developed there around the 1890s and early 1900s, an early crossroads development. From office buildings to the National Register Lansdowne Theatre, this "heart of the community" provides an excellent example of local commercial districts, essential to Borough residents before the days of shopping malls and driving to superstores. There are also a small number of other commercial groupings scattered around the perimeter of the community, such as the Tudor-style strip on Baltimore Avenue, west of Martin Drive.



South Lansdowne Avenue: examples of early commercial development in Lansdowne still exist today

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Boroughs should...

- 4-1 Identify (or continue to identify) significant neighborhoods that are successful examples of both early and later suburban development patterns. Develop significant design criteria for each neighborhood, including elements such as set back, bulk, height, rooflines, architectural styles, building types, and other streetscape features such as well-designed sidewalks, curbs, and street trees.

Funding Programs: CDBG
PHMC
DCED Elm Street Program

Technical Assistance: DCPD

- 4-2 Develop voluntary design guidelines using the design criteria established for each neighborhood. The information may include preferred rehabilitation and maintenance alternatives and can be made available to residents and developers as they apply for construction permits, in order to preserve the historic nature of the housing stock. The process and results provide awareness to residents.

Funding Programs: CDBG
PHMC
DCED Elm Street Program

Technical Assistance: DCPD

- 4-3 Target historic business centers and established strips, which offer opportunity for continued retail use, and consider “Main Street” type programs.

Funding Programs: CDBG
National Trust Main Street Program
DCED Main Street Program

Technical Assistance: DCPD

- 4-4 Identify vacant or underutilized commercial or industrial sites for adaptive re-use and consider creating redevelopment schemes that take advantage of the historic character of these places.

Funding Programs: DCED Community Revitalization Program
Historic Tax Credits

Technical Assistance: DCPD

HISTORIC RESOURCES

Objective 4-2: Prepare Borough-wide inventories that represent a full range of significant historic resources providing the necessary documentation for evaluation and preservation.

Historic preservation is the act of safeguarding significant places from the past. *Historic resources* can include any portion of a community's built environment that is 50 years or older, important to the individuals of the community, the region, or the nation. Similarly, they may encompass all of a community's key features, including elements like parks and open space, and archaeological resources left beneath the ground by residents of long ago. Some of these older resources are significant and should be protected and preserved, while others may meet this age criterion but have little historic significance, and not warrant protection.

The historic resources that make up the Boroughs of East Lansdowne and Lansdowne are not only represented in the composition and development patterns. The above section focused on preserving the regional character by understanding the "big picture" better such as protecting neighborhoods and commercial districts; it is also essential to evaluate architectural styles and each individual resource that makes each borough what they are.



Gladstone Manor in Lansdowne

Snapshots and Architectural Styles

These two Boroughs may share a common name and a regional similarity, but they are indeed individual communities with separate histories and unique characters.

East Lansdowne is almost exclusively residential, and having been sold, designed, and built within a very short period of time has given it a very orderly and consistent feel as a community. Outside of the small commercial districts along Baltimore Pike and Oak Avenue and Long Lane, the Borough is filled with shady tree-lined residential streets, providing a uniquely safe, walkable, and homey environment. There is an abundance of Victorian Vernacular, Craftsman Bungalow, and American Foursquare styles of homes, present in both twins and singles, illustrating the fashion and themes of early 20th century residential architecture. Many of these homes have retained a great deal of integrity, including an great quantity of original fishscale shingles on the Victorians. Baltimore Pike, as the southern boundary, places East Lansdowne in a location that is easily accessible both to adjacent Delaware County communities as well as a direct link to Philadelphia. Penn Boulevard, north to south down the center of town remains a wide street, serving as a reminder of days before when the trolley line ran through from 69th Street.

Lansdowne provides an excellent example of a commuter suburb with a more gradual development history. Growth patterns are evident, starting at the railroad tracks, extending towards the commercial heart at Baltimore and Lansdowne Avenues, and stretching out into variations of residential neighborhoods developed over time. Large mansions and estates have been cleverly adapted into modern-day apartments, and many of the characteristic Victorian homes are well kept, exhibiting the grandeur with which they were originally constructed. Pockets of architecturally similar housing exist throughout the town, from singles to twins to rowhousing. Though Lansdowne seems to have an overwhelming number of Queen Anne Victorian homes, there are many very well maintained Colonials, Tudors, Dutch Colonials, American Foursquares, Federal and Georgian Revivals. The abundance of tree-lined streets and sidewalks offer a feeling of an established and friendly community. This is further supported by the variety of landscapes, including a number of parks and the Darby Creek greenway. Lansdowne retains a rich historical feel, while providing modern-day suburban living.

While Lansdowne and East Lansdowne are their own separate communities, they still share the similar architectural types prevalent throughout Delaware County. Although many styles of buildings can be found in the Boroughs, the following images highlight some of the most commonly seen. For a complete architectural styles guide of Delaware County with greater explanation of detail, please contact DCPD.

The varied mix of these architectural styles is what fills each Borough with the visual images and community identity with which they are often associated.

Lansdowne and East Lansdowne
Comprehensive Plan



Local Examples
of Architectural
Styles

1. Stick Victorian style
2. Craftsman style
3. Foursquare style
4. Queen Anne style
5. Georgian style
6. Dutch Colonial style
7. Tudor style

Windshield Surveys

The inventories created for this comprehensive plan are intended to summarize each borough's historic built environment. These preliminary inventory lists, also known as windshield surveys, are a crucial first step for preservation planning. These inventories are separated by Borough, instead of for the combined plan area, as subsequent preservation planning is typically done on a municipal level. The inventories combine individual historic resources and representative examples of groups of resources that share a common development pattern or style. Some references may not seem historic, as they are from the more "recent past," however, they still qualify as legitimate entries in a borough inventory as they can represent a strong neighborhood character in their own right. It is also important to note that while the resources listed on the windshield survey are certainly significant to each Borough's history, they may not be eligible for listing on the National Register.

These windshield surveys were created through research and site visits. They are not complete listings of every resource within the Boroughs. They should be considered as the groundwork for a more comprehensive and detailed survey each community should take the time to complete to ensure local preservation.

National Register Designation

Significant community treasures, both above-ground architectural or below-ground archaeological, can be determined worthy of receiving national distinction. These historic resources are placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Resources can be listed individually or as part of a district. To receive listing on the Register, a resource must be noteworthy on the grounds of displaying distinctive characteristics of that particular period, potential to yield important historic or prehistoric information, and/or association with events in history or the lives of significant persons. Although this designation shows a high level of historic merit, it does not offer ultimate protection to the resource in question, with the exception of a review requirement when federal funding is involved.

Currently, East Lansdowne does not have any of their community resources listed on, or determined eligible for, the National Register. However this does not mean that there are no significant buildings or potential National Register resources in the Borough.

Lansdowne Borough currently has four properties listed on the National Register as well as one that has been determined to be eligible for listing. Those listed are the Henry Albertson Subdivision, Lansdowne Park Historic District, the Lansdowne Theatre, and the Twentieth Century Club of Lansdowne. Lansdowne High School is eligible and can be placed on the Register once the application process is completed.

TABLE 4-1
LANSDOWNE HISTORIC RESOURCE WINDSHIELD SURVEY

Map #	Name/Location	Comments
1	215 West Berkley	Built c.1800s; farmhouse originally part of the Isaac Lobb property and sheep farm
2	Montbard**	Proposed district; built in the 1920s; designed by Henry Koedding to have the appearance of a French Village
3	156 West Plumstead Avenue*	Example of brick and stone twin, various styles prevalent in this area; likely built c1910-1920s
4	Ardmore Avenue Elementary School - 161 West Ardmore Avenue	Built c.1920s when Griffith's Lake was drained and filled
5	Lobb Farmhouse - 14 West Albermarle Ave	Built 1858; stucco over stone Federal style farmhouse
6	236 Wabash Avenue*	Example of twins of various styles, prevalent in this part of town; including Tudor, Victorian, Craftsman; likely built c1910-1920s
7	Lansdowne High School	National Register Eligible; built 1927; designed by Joseph Linden Heacock and built by John McShain in the Italian Renaissance style
8	Countess Brolasky's - 23 East Greenwood Avenue	Built c.1880; stone and wood Queen Anne Victorian mansion
9	Lansdowne Park Historic District**	National Register Listed; built between 1889-1898 up to 1912; variety of styles including Dutch Colonia, Tudor and Georgian Revival; and different Victorians; possibly the largest collection of Queen Anne-style buildings in the region
10	Lansdowne Presbyterian Church - Lansdowne and Greenwood Avenues	Built 1915
11	Lansdowne Friends School 110 North Lansdowne Avenue	First built 1902, additions and alterations 1950; Tudor Revival style; originally a residence
12	Lansdowne Meeting NW Corner of Lansdowne and Stewart	Built 1831 by the Orthodox members who split from Darby Meeting

Map #	Name/Location	Comments
13	Henry Albertson Subdivision Historic District**	National Register Listed; built between 1880s – 1940s; variety of styles including Colonial and Tudor Revivals, Queen Anne Victorians; Frank Furness may have designed namesake's house on Balfour Circle
14	The Windmere - 164 West Baltimore Avenue	Built c.1880s by Dr. DeForest Willard; Italianate apartment building; originally a tourist hotel
15	Willowbrook - 14/16 Ardmore Avenue	Built c.1836-65; part of the estate of Dr. DeForest Willard; Italian Villa style
16	Pilling Estate - 42 Windermere Avenue	Built c.1889-92; had noted Japanese gardens designed by S. Furukawa
17	72 Windermere Avenue	Built 1892-98 by Homer Stewart; owned by Hannah Pennock; Queen Anne style estate
18	20/22 Runnemedede Avenue	Built 1892-98; Romanesque style
19	30 Runnemedede Avenue*	Built 1892-98; Queen Anne style; similar homes very prevalent throughout the borough
20	Polly Bonsall House - 12 Owen Avenue	Built 1732, 1790 by Jacob Bonsall; oldest home in the borough; also used as a social club; Georgian Vernacular style
21	35 West LaCrosse*	Built c.1892-1902; Queen Anne/Shingle style twin home; representative of many homes in the borough
22	Barker Building - 14-16 North Lansdowne Avenue	Built 1896; early commercial building; Second Empire style; designed by Furness' firm
23	St. John the Evangelist - Baltimore and Lansdowne Avenues	Built 1900
24	Lansdowne Theatre - 29 North Lansdowne Ave	National Register Listed; built 1927 in the Hollywood Moorish style
25	Lansdowne Baptist Church - Lansdowne and LaCrosse Avenues	Built 1887
26	St. Philomena's Roman Catholic Church – Baltimore and Highland Avenues	Built c.1910
27	William Penn Tree - 47 East LaCrosse	1682; Recognized as having stood when William Penn arrived in Pennsylvania; town logo; landmark??
28	Funeral Home - 67-69 East Baltimore Avenue	Built 1895; bought and converted by Beers Funeral Home in 1914 – 1948; Queen Anne style
29	Lansdowne Trust Company - Baltimore and Lansdowne Avenues	Built 1925-26 for the Trust Company; most recently Fidelity Bank

Lansdowne and East Lansdowne
Comprehensive Plan

Map #	Name/Location	Comments
30	Borough Hall - 12 East Baltimore Avenue	Built 1903; originally used as firehouse until 1912
31	25 South Lansdowne Avenue	Built 1893; originally opened as a Co-operative market; Second Empire style
32	Pennock Building - 27-35 East Lansdowne Avenue	Built c.1891 by Casper Pennock; site of the Post Office 1896-1919
33	Philadelphia Suburban Water Co.22 Madison Avenue	Built c.1902-1910; designed by John Torrey Windrim
34	Lansdowne Train Station	Built 1902; designed by Frank Furness; restored after fire in 1992
35	Gladstone Manor**	Proposed district; built in the 1920s; designed by E.A. Wilson to have the appearance of an English Village; one of the earliest themed real estate developments in the Philadelphia area
36	Matthew's Hollow Proposed District**	Built c.1778-1820s; millhouses for the nearby grist and paper mills; named for John Matthews – owner and operator; includes notable homes including 213, owned by Joseph Cruikshank
37	The Knoll Proposed District**	Built 1904; group of 5 homes built by Quaker families; various styles
38	Devonshire - 99 Lansdowne Court	Built c.1857 believed by Col. Thomas Scott (see above); Victorian/Stick style
39	Twentieth Century Club 84 - South Lansdowne Avenue	National Register Listed; built 1913; Tudor Revival community center and club house
40	Ath-Dara - 85 South Lansdowne Avenue	Built c.1901 by Seymour Eaton; converted into apartments in 1929; Tudor Revival mansion
41	86 Lansdowne Court	Built c.1875 by Col. Thomas Scott, president of the PA railroad; converted into apartments; Victorian
42	100 South Lansdowne Avenue	Built c.1866-c.1935 believed by the Bonsall family; Georgian Vernacular style
43	Violet - 35 Violet Lane*	Built c.1875 by Abraham Pennock; Victorian style
44	Bethel AME Church - Bartram and Maple Avenues	Built c. 1915, 1929

Map 4-1 – Lansdowne Historic Resources

Map 4-2 – East Lansdowne Historic Resources

TABLE 4-2
EAST LANSDOWNE HISTORIC RESOURCE WINDSHIELD SURVEY

Map #	Name/Location	Comments
1	270 Hirst Avenue*	American Foursquare style example
2	254/256 Hirst Avenue*	Victorian style twin example
3	236 Hirst Avenue*	Craftsman Bungalow style example – built c.1910
4	112 Hirst Avenue*	Victorian Vernacular example – built prior to 1909
5	28/30 Melrose Avenue*	Dutch Colonial twin example (see also 62/64 Beverly Avenue)
6	142 Melrose Avenue*	American Foursquare style example – built prior to 1909
7	147 Melrose Avenue*	Queen Anne Victorian example – built c1902
8	210 Lexington Avenue*	Craftsman Bungalow style example – built prior to 1909
9	Borough Hall - Emerson and Lexington Avenues	Built 1913/1930
10	164 Lexington Avenue	Stone and frame Victorian, owned by Fire Company, with intact stone barn/carriage house – built c1902
11	110 Lexington Avenue	Stick Victorian home – built c1902
12	500 block Pembroke Avenue**	Large Victorian Vernacular and American Foursquare twins and singles – built c1910
13	Victory Church - 601 Pembroke Avenue	Previous Trinity ME Church – built c1911
14	68 Lexington Avenue	Smith family farmhouse; built 1863
15	500 block Baltimore Avenue**	Early commercial row, Tudor style – built c1920s
16	11 Penn Boulevard*	Victorian Vernacular example – cosmetically altered; built prior to 1909
17	Immanuel Lutheran Church - Penn Boulevard and Pembroke Avenue	Built 1907
18	104 Penn Boulevard*	Victorian Vernacular example – built prior to 1909
19	120 Penn Boulevard*	Victorian Vernacular example – built prior to 1909
20	St. Cyril's Church - 153 Penn Boulevard	Built 1928
21	156 Penn Boulevard*	Craftsman Bungalow style example
22	168 Penn Boulevard*	Victorian Vernacular example
23	163 Lewis Avenue*	Queen Anne Victorian example – built prior to 1909
24	43 Lewis Avenue	First home built in East Lansdowne in 1902, by the Shoemaker family
25	31/33 Lewis Avenue*	Tudor style twin example
26	25/27 Lewis Avenue*	Craftsman style twin example
27	22 Lewis Avenue	Dutch Colonial home
28	64 Wildwood Avenue*	Colonial Revival example – built prior to 1909
29	130/132, 134/136, 138/140 Beverly Avenue**	Group of Craftsman style twin homes

Lansdowne and East Lansdowne
Comprehensive Plan

Map #	Name/Location	Comments
30	Oak Avenue Commercial Building	Tudor style building with half timbering

* Denotes a representative example of a particular style of architecture found throughout the Borough; does not indicate that this is necessarily the best or only occurrence. Additional addresses listed in comments are not comprehensive.

** Denotes a district or area of similar homes, built as a group at one time or built with a similar architectural style and feel. Does not necessarily imply that National Register Historic District eligibility. Additional addresses listed in comments are not comprehensive.

Source: DCPD Windshield Survey, 2003.

Archaeology

In an effort to encourage the protection of below-ground historic resources for long term planning and review procedures, a Countywide archaeological survey was produced in 1991. The Delaware County Archaeological Inventory and Management Plan provides information by municipality, and consists of maps indicating areas with the potential of both native and early settler archaeology, previous archaeological testing and a computerized database.

The entire Borough of East Lansdowne is included in the zone of Suburban Park development (1900-1940). This designation suggests a low potential for below-ground archaeological resources due to previous ground disturbance, reflecting the history of the Borough having been developed during one short period, from farm to town.

According to the Plan, Lansdowne has retained a few small areas of potential for underground artifacts, mostly in the undisturbed areas surrounding the banks of the Darby Creek. These relate to the mill complexes, which once produced various goods on these streams, such as cotton and paper. However, it is believed that most native and early settler historic sites have likely been damaged due to the high-density suburban development that occurred.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Boroughs should...

- 4-5 Create a complete and official survey of historic resources from the inventory provided in this plan, where more specific information concerning the most significant places would be collected, and further preservation planning could be based. The Plan should be amended to include this survey when completed.

Funding Programs: CDBG
PHMC grants

Technical Assistance: DCPD

- 4-6 Consider nominating key historic resources and districts to the National Register.

Funding Program: PHMC grants

Technical Assistance: DCPD

- 4-7 Consider a joint municipal grant for creating and distributing maintenance manuals for the key architectural styles they share.

Funding Program: PHMC grants

Technical Assistance: DCPD

PRESERVATION PLANNING IN THE BOROUGH

Objective 4-3: Assess preservation efforts to date for both municipalities and determine which are the most appropriate levels of local participation for *protecting* historic resources.

Historic preservation can be mandated, encouraged, and protected at all levels of government in various capacities. No longer relegated to the few historically minded members of a community, preservation activities entered the realm of governmental actions with the enactment of the National Preservation Act of 1966. While nationally recognized designations may promote awareness of historic resources, preservation is most directly effective at the *local* level, since the municipality is the only body legally allowed to create and mandate preservation regulations. Not taking full advantage of these legal opportunities may result in the Boroughs losing valuable historic fabric and community character.

The municipal bodies are the only level of government able to create legal preservation regulations. The Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code Act 247 (MPC) specifically enables local government to plan for and regulate cultural resources. However, simply having the MPC as a guide for local municipalities does not ensure protection. It is the responsibility of each borough to become an active participant in preservation.

Municipal Commissions/Task Forces

A historical commission or task force is the most common type of group that can be appointed by the municipality to formally oversee the Borough's preservation efforts. Usual activities can include recording historical data, identifying significant community resources in survey format, acting as a review board for historic overlays and districts as well as subdivision and land development plans, redevelopment, and revitalization plans, advising residents and officials on potential historical activities, and recommending incentives and methods for preservation. Though not mandated by law, its members are appointed by the municipal officials, and should include both Borough residents and officials. Another way to create a formally recognized advisory body is by establishing a task force or subcommittee of the Borough Council or Planning Commission. Neither East Lansdowne nor Lansdowne currently have appointed commissions.

Municipal Historic Ordinances

Local governments have the ability to protect historic resources through establishing ordinances. Many communities are wary of historic ordinances however; as they feel they may limit a homeowner's personal control over their property. This is simply not the case. Historic ordinances are created to directly reflect the characteristics the

community values most, and can be as rigid or as flexible as the Borough decides. An ordinance can influence rehabilitation, demolition, new development, and financial incentives. The ultimate goal of such an ordinance is to maintain the shared character of the community.

Adoption of a Certified Local District through an Act 167 historic district ordinance is the most important tool for protection of clusters of historic resources in a municipality. Once certified by PHMC, this ordinance provides local review of changes in the district. It places another layer of regulations upon the base zoning of the area, whether it is commercial, residential or industrial. The district does not need to be listed on the National Register. State-enabling Act 167 (1961 P.L. 282) authorizes the local government to:

- Delineate an historic district within the municipality;
- Establish an Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB), that serves in an advisory capacity to the municipal governing officials;
- Determine guidelines to regulate physical changes within the district; and
- Create a review process for the HARB leading to granting or not granting changes within the district.

Many misconceptions exist about this kind of ordinance. It is true that the design guidelines can be very strict and may place limits on many homeowners' exterior alterations. However, the guidelines should reflect community values relative to the district and can be created to be as strict or as lenient as desired. In some cases, they may only affect new construction or any additions (not alternations) made to existing housing. Some municipalities' districts may regulate all changes including the color of paint on the existing structure. Examples of elements that can be regulated by design guidelines are height, bulk, roofline, proportions, façade openings, compatibility with architectural detail, building materials, color, fences, walls, and exterior lighting. It is strongly advised that residents of the proposed district be included in the planning process very early to elicit their cooperation. The steps for establishing an historic district ordinance and examples of model historic district ordinances prepared by PHMC are available at the Delaware County Planning Department.

The Act 167 local district has distinct advantages for historic preservation, most notably the local control and design guidelines that are tailored to the individual municipality. It is the most effective way in which to preserve the community as well as the buildings. The potential disadvantages center around neglecting the requirement of community involvement from the very beginning and the necessity of having HARB members whom are knowledgeable about architectural styles and are able to consistently interpret and enforce the guidelines.

Another useful tool for municipal level preservation is the zoning overlay district, adopted into the community's local zoning ordinance. No matter if the historic resources are clustered in groups or widely scattered, a zoning overlay includes the resources identified in the official municipal survey. This overlay can apply regulations and

incentives in addition to those of the base zoning. These regulations can address such factors as:

- Historic impact studies as a part of the existing land development process;
- Demolition of historic resources;
- Design guidelines;
- Buffering or visual protection;
- Additional or conditional uses; and
- Alterations and additions.

Incentives, such as special and conditional use opportunities, can be given to the property owners of these identified resources. A developer of a property that contains an identified historic building can be offered incentives to retain and reuse the structure. Some incentives could include an expansion in uses, increased density, and parking bonuses, which are especially valuable in encouraging the reuse of some of the larger homes found in Lansdowne and East Lansdowne, now too big for a single family. For instance, an historic home in the overlay zone could be used for a small shop or office, even though it is in a residential zone on the community's base-zoning map.

The review body for activities that take place within an historic overlay district is generally an Historical Commission. This is an appointed advisory board, but its general responsibilities can consist of more than its review function. Like a HARB, the Historical Commission can review for appropriate alterations within the overlay zones, but it may also become the "keeper" of the history of the municipality and be in charge of updating the survey, providing information distributions to the citizens, and National Register nominations.

Historic overlay zoning has advantages similar to the Act 167 district in its flexibility to the needs of the community and advisory review body. It is especially useful for protection of scattered sites and resources. Perhaps in the case of Lansdowne and East Lansdowne the incentives for reuse of historic buildings is the greatest benefit. However, it is necessary that the municipality complete an official historic resources survey before they are able to establish the zoning overlay.

Protection of historic resources at the local level can be achieved through any number of ordinances and zoning activities, whichever best meets the needs of the community. The Act 167 district and HARB approach, as well as municipal zoning through overlay districts, local landmark designations, and demolition ordinances are all viable legislative tools for preservation. Neither borough currently has historic ordinances in place, which leaves the municipalities vulnerable to losing precious resources (see Appendix X for more detailed information regarding these preservation tools).

Citizen Involvement

East Lansdowne and Lansdowne have incredibly proud citizens, and without the support of these dedicated residents, the towns would not exist. Citizen involvement is an

integral part of the preservation process. The Greater Lansdowne Civic Association serves as an overseer of Lansdowne's history, a group of dedicated individuals who are striving to preserve the elements that give Lansdowne its historical feel and charm. However, the group is a private entity, not under the guidance of the municipality, and therefore does not satisfy the allowed sections of the MPC in assuming the role of a formally recognized municipal advisory body.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The Boroughs should...

- 4-8 Consider the creation of an official historic preservation advisory body such as an Historical Commission.

Funding Programs: PHMC grants

Technical Assistance: DCPD

- 4-9 Consider establishing an Act 167 District, using the boundaries of existing National Register Historic Districts for example, and form accompanying Historic Architectural Review Board to maintain the consistency of the historic buildings and landscape (Lansdowne).

Funding Programs: PHMC grants

Lansdowne and East Lansdowne
Comprehensive Plan

Technical Assistance: DCPD

- 4-10 Consider establishing historic preservation ordinances or historic overlay districts and amending preservation language into the Borough's zoning ordinance (see appendix C for specific examples).

Funding Programs: PHMC grants

Technical Assistance: DCPD

- 4-11 Form their own citizen-led group (East Lansdowne) or Lansdowne should consider extending an invitation to East Lansdowne to become a part of Greater Lansdowne Civic Association to become a combined force for area preservation.

Technical Assistance: DCPD