
Chapter 10

Character

Parcel and street patterns, building style or architecture, building materials and physical amenities in public spaces define a distinguishable visual character. Over time as materials, technology and building practices change, development introduces new kinds of character. This contemporary character is added along the edges where communities grow and also in the older business centers and neighborhoods through redevelopment.

Changing character is not in itself good or bad. Some communities decide they value a certain visual character and put in place regulations, incentives, or promotions to conserve that character over time. Other communities like to see a progression of styles, patterns, and materials or have no preference.

Officials of Hanover Borough in the mid-1990s felt that the historical architectural character in the Borough was worth highlighting. They submitted an application to the National Park Services to have a specific portion of the Borough listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Hanover Borough Historic District. The application was reviewed by the State Historic Preservation Office and recommended to the National Park Services. The National Park Service approved the designation in 1997. Listing on the National Register provided credibility to the Borough's claim of historic character and some promotion of the district as a tourism destination to those that follow and visit National Register sites. The designation provides no preservation of the architectural style of buildings for which the district was recognized.

Structural additions and façade modifications within the district have introduced building character that is inconsistent with the district's historic character. In response, the Borough and the Hanover Area Chamber of Commerce developed a façade improvement program to help fund restoration or improvements that are consistent. This incentive has been used but has not removed all of the mid to late 20th century intrusions or deterred other intrusions from occurring. Some residents would like to see the Borough commit to local historic preservation and others oppose.

This section characterizes the Hanover Historic District at the time of its application and outlines alternative for local historic preservation. It also discusses features of public spaces that contribute to distinctive community character.

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THE HANOVER HISTORIC DISTRICT

The Hanover Historic District is roughly bounded by Elm Avenue, Middle Street at Ridge Avenue., Spring Avenue at York Street, Granger Street at Baltimore Street, and Commerce Street at High Street. This area comprises 18th to early 20th century single- and multi-family domestic dwellings and commercial structures that served as banks, specialty stores, government facilities and schools. Its overall appearance is strongly influenced by Victorian-era architecture of the mid to late 19th century.

The district includes five distinctive areas:

- the downtown Center Square area
- the residential mid-section
- Victorian residential neighborhoods in the north central portion of the Borough
- one 20th century residential neighborhood, and
- the industrial area along the railroad.

Historically, buildings in the downtown were positioned against one another and flush against the sidewalk. The tallest, signature and landmark buildings were located around Center Square with large churches located just a block or two away. Larger industrial lots were located along the railroad corridor. Buildings were constructed of brick, stone or frame in distinctive architectural styles. Styles vary along many streets, as buildings were built or replaced to serve the needs of the time.



A few blocks from Center Square in each direction in largely residential neighborhoods along Locust, McAllister, Middle Pleasant, and Walnut Streets and Centennial, Ruth, and Second Avenues, buildings are 2½ -story dwellings or duplexes with an occasional rowhouse. They sit fairly close to one another and flush against the sidewalk or set back only a few feet. Most have small rear yards with a garage access by an alley. One of the most frequently found types of dwelling in these

neighborhoods is a rather narrow L- or T-shaped Colonial Revival and/or Queen Anne residence. American Four-squares and Pennsylvania German vernacular houses (four-bay 2½-story houses with two central front doors) stand side-by-side with these Victorian era dwellings.

Victorian residential neighborhoods are found in the north central portion of the Borough along Eichelberger, McCosh and Stock Streets, as well as along Fourth and Frederick Streets.

Early 20th century homes, many built in variations of the Colonial Revival style, comprise neighborhoods along Baer, Fleming, Meade, and Potomac Avenues, as well as Princess and South Streets, Stephen Place, and Young Circle. Both the Victorian and early 20th century

homes were often built with rear garages and alley access. The application also made note of the district's tree-lined streets and Center Square, parks, and "lawns, gardens, trees, and shrubbery" in residential areas. Community building, such as churches and schools, are commonly found among these neighborhoods and there are few truly commercial structures.

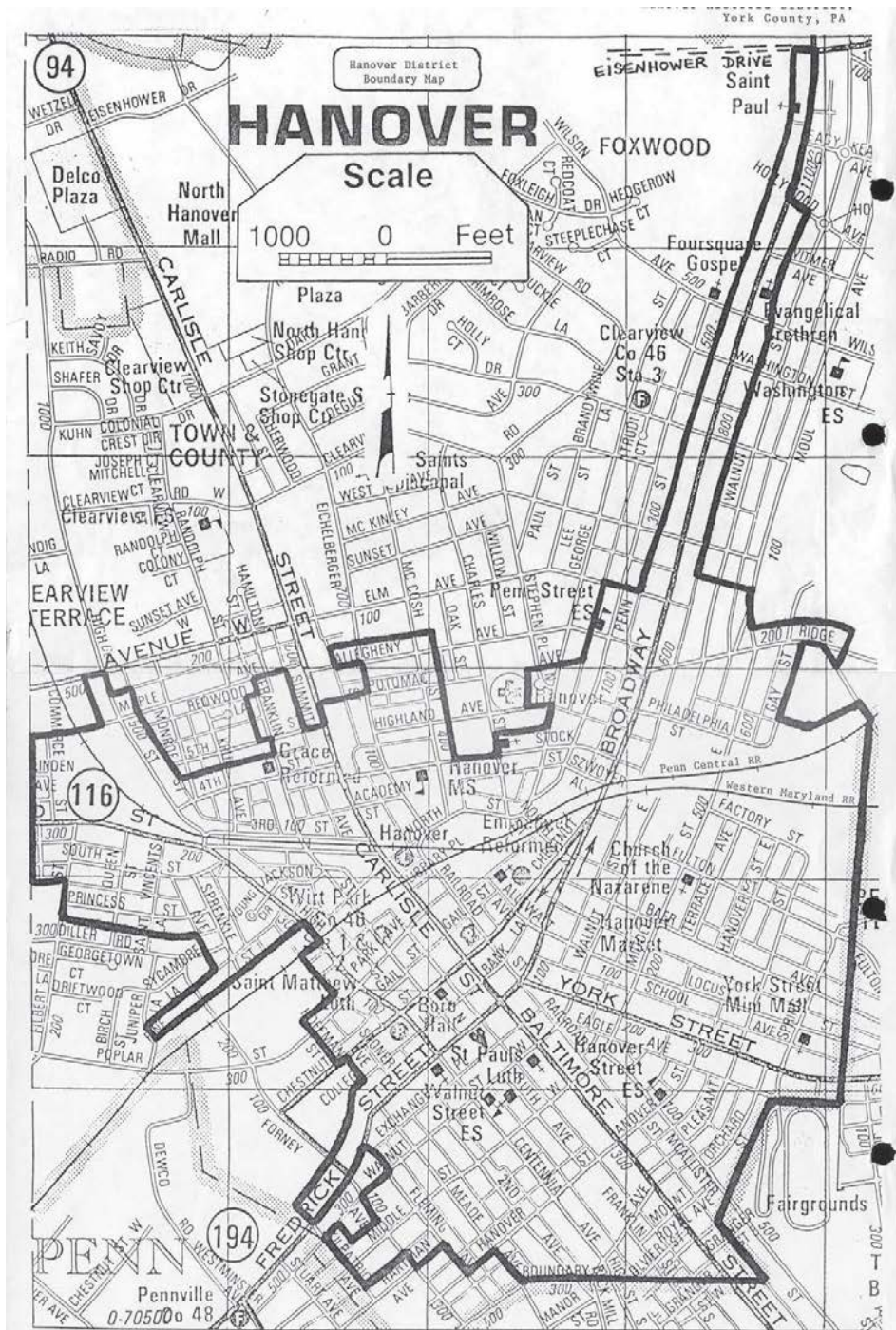


Figure 10-1 The Hanover Historic District, listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1997

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The industrial areas are noted for their brick, one to four story structures along Factory, High, North, Philadelphia, and Railroad Streets and along Carlisle and Broadway where they intersect with the railroad.

ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTER AS DESIGNATED

The significance of the downtown's architectural character lies in its reflection of periods of economic prosperity and community growth. Several buildings retain the names of their original owners, early businessmen in the community, on their upper façades. Business and industry have remained strong, enabling community leaders and average citizens to maintain older properties with integrity. For many years, the affluence of property owners afforded them the ability to maintain buildings with architectural integrity.

CHARACTER INTRUSIONS

As the community's value became more diverse and economic interests changed, the standard for architectural character has fallen. In the past 50 years, buildings have been lost to destruction or demolition; notable gaps in the building pattern are found in the 100 and 200 blocks of Baltimore, Carlisle, Frederick and York Streets. A few buildings have been severely neglected, such as State Theater and the former Montgomery Ward building on Frederick Street, and the Goodfellow Chevrolet Building at the corner of Railroad and Chestnut Streets and Waltersdorff Furniture on Baltimore Street; some may be beyond feasible restoration.



Where buildings were sound, facades were “improved.” Many facades were modified with new prefabricated doors and windows and contemporary additions or covered with new materials. Indeed some were intended to display a modern architectural style, such as Square Commercial Center, and others again to reduce maintenance. In addition, there were visual intrusions (distractions) by the installation or upgrade of transportation infrastructure. New buildings have been built, such as the current M&T Bank building and Rite-Aid on Baltimore Street, generally with a larger footprint and lower height, larger modular materials and fewer architectural details.

CHALLENGES

The future of the district's historic architectural character and its contribution to the community's identity is unclear. The most prosperous businesses are now located outside of the downtown and not vested in downtown real estate. Many of the current property owners are absentee landlords with few social, civic or economic connections to the Hanover Area. As a result, buildings are deteriorating from neglect. Without action, the architectural character will continue to erode over time.

OTHER NOTABLE HISTORIC BUILDINGS

Several buildings in the Borough are listed individually on the National Register. These and other notable historic buildings offer opportunities for local historic preservation.

The Eichelberger Professional Building, located at 195 Stock Street, was built in 1896 in the Georgian Revival style. A. W. Eichelberger, founder of the Eichelberger Academy, was a local railroad baron and benefactor of community activities. The private school was used as a high school from 1900 to 1917, a grammar school until 1931, as a high school from 1932 to 1964, and finally as a junior high school (Hanover Middle School) until 1991. The property was purchased privately from the Eichelberger heirs in 1993 and renovated as a performing arts theatre and professional office building.¹ It was listed on the National Register of Historic places in 1995.



The George Nace (Neas) House is a Georgian residence located at West Chestnut and High Streets was built around 1783 by Mathias Neas, a tanner, and later acquired by the eldest son, George Neas, Jr., who served as Hanover's third postmaster from 1790 to 1813, and was the first representative of the borough of Hanover (known as a burgess) in 1815. He also served several terms in the state legislature. The home was later occupied by Mathias Nace Forney (1853-1908), an editor and inventor whose reversible seats made railroad passenger traffic more practical, and his steam locomotive was the marvel of its day. It was listed on the National Register of Historic places in 1972.

The old Hanover Post Office at the corner of Broadway and Locust was designed by James Knox Taylor in 1910, and opened in 1913. The building was constructed of smooth cut sandstone. The postal service moved their facilities to a new location in 1969. In 1972, the old building was renovated to serve as a clothing store operated by Trone and Weikert, Inc. In 1991, it was converted to office suites. Despite changes to the building, the building's integrity is very good, and its most important features have been preserved. It was listed on the National Register of Historic places in 1992.



The Gitt Memorial Library was once the home of J.W. and Elizabeth Gitt. Gitt was publisher of the "Gazette and Daily" newspaper in York, PA from 1915 to 1972. Their son, Charles, was Assistant Editor of the same for thirty-some years. The house was built in 1928 by the Gitts and

¹ "National Register of Historic Places Inventory Nomination Form: Eichelberger High School" (PDF), accessed February 20, 2013.

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Elizabeth's mother, Clara Moul, as a summer house in the Pigeon Hills to the north of town and quickly became a permanent residence. In the late 1930s, after the death of Mrs. Moul, her side of the house was altered. The random width oak floors were originally railroad ties, which were trimmed and cut at C.E. Moul Co. The beams in the library came from a barn on the Gitt farm at Cross Keys, and the cornerstone of the barn was built into the stone fireplace. Elizabeth's environmental concerns are evident in the solar panels on the roof, (1968) and the solar panels on the lawn, (1970) for hot water and first floor heat. The library includes the personal papers of J.W. and Charles Gitt. Visitors to the library have included Governor Gifford Pinchot and Huston Thompson, Attorney General in F.D.R.'s cabinet, among others. The Gitt Memorial Library is available for use for private events.



The Hanover Theater, formerly the State Theatre, was open on Frederick Street from 1928 to 1986. Indirect lighting, "modern heating and cooling" and lights in the seats along the aisles were among the innovations included. The building was designed by William Harold Lee, and decorated by Arthur Brounet, who often collaborated with Thomas Lamb, the most prolific theater architect of his day. Today there are only two complete Brounet-decorated theaters still in existence, the Hanover Theater and the Byrd Theatre in Richmond, VA. One of the storefronts was used as a candy store and the other as a shoe store. The ticket booth that we see today was moved from

the Park Theater (which was once the Hanover Opera House) to the Hanover Theater around 1960.²

On the southwest corner of West Elm Avenue and the railroad tracks in Hanover stands a three-story brick building that housed the Charles P. Ketterer Wagon Factory, a manufacturer of wagon wheels, light delivery wagons, trucks and vans, and later motor truck bodies, as indicated by the lingering paint on the building. The factory was in operation from the 1850s to 1908 under management by Ketterer as the Ketterer Manufacturing Company and from 1908 to 1915 by George D. Hopkins as the Hopkins Manufacturing Company. The most successful of specialty wagons were sold to American Telephone and Telegraph for use during the installation of long distance lines.

The Warehime-Myers Mansion at 305 Baltimore Street was built by Clinton N. Myers of Hanover Shoe Company. The Sheppard Mansion at 117 Frederick Street was the home of Mr. Harper Donelson Sheppard. Both the Myers and Sheppards' residences were designed by Herman Miller, an architect from Philadelphia. The bowling alleys in each basement are still intact, as are the intricately Greek Key design border in the oak floors throughout the

² <http://www.hanovertheater.info/history.htm>, accessed February 20, 2013.

Warehime-Myers Mansion. William Warehime purchased the home from the Myers family in 1997.

The 1901 high-style brownstone building at 4 Center Square on Frederick Street continues to display excellent integrity as the current home of Lincoln Investment Planning.



TOOLS FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

THE FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

On behalf of Hanover Borough, the Hanover Area Chamber of Commerce administers grants and loans for building façade improvements in downtown, providing an incentive for private investment in downtown restoration projects and property reinvestment. The façade program is available to property owners interested in exterior improvements, such as minor as painting, lighting and signage replacement, and awning installation, that restore the historic appearance of the building through masonry projects and door and window replacement. Design assistance is also an eligible expense. The program is funded in multi-year cycles with a grant from the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development. The program was closed in June 2013 and is currently awaiting response to its current grant application.

Property owners meeting the grant criteria can obtain a grant of up to \$5,000 per property to help off-set expenses. Grants are made on a cost reimbursement basis, following a process of application, design review and approval, and construction. The selection of Façade Improvement Grant recipients is based solely on project merit and not on financial need.

Any person(s) or other legal entity owning property in the Central Business District is eligible to apply; leasing tenants are also eligible with consent of the property owner. Funds for the grant program are limited, and priority may be given to applicants who have not previously received rehabilitation grants, and who are proposing a project that is consistent with the program's design standards.

In addition to the grants, the Chamber offers low interest loans (3% fixed interest, 10-year payback, up to \$50,000) to help finance the cost of larger projects—up to 50% of the project costs.

In 2010, the Chamber renewed its program guide, which defines eligible projects and design standards and offers design guidance to improve the character of the downtown as a whole. The program guide also recognizes the potential for property owners to qualify for rehabilitation tax credits.

OTHER OPTIONS FOR HISTORIC AND ARCHITECTURAL PRESERVATION

Ensuring the preservation of existing historic character will require the municipalities to establish policies and programs with that aim. The extent could range from district-wide to case-by-case preservation, and entire building to façade only preservation. In addition, preservation could be highly formalized or heavily incentivized.

THROUGH MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP

- Prepare a historic resources inventory. In order to manage the size of the effort, municipalities should focus on areas at-risk for structural modification, expansion, or complete redevelopment.
- Develop and implement a historic preservation plan for the same key locations. With an up-to-date inventory, municipalities can develop a plan for which historic resources to protect (and which to leave in private hands), how to protect them (through public ownership, façade easement, etc.), and how to interpret or explain their value to citizens and visitors. A historic preservation plan should include tasks that:
 - Categorize resources into themes for interpretation; think about how resources might be compiled as a themed walking tour.
 - Evaluate alternative means of preservation, conservation, stewardship and interpretation.
 - Determine a best approach(es) for each property.
- Establish/Lead an Anchor Building Restoration Program.

THROUGH REGULATION

- Enact a local historic district and associated historic preservation regulations.
- Establish a Historic Architectural Review Board.
- Require the submission of a historic resources impact statement.
- Require any demolition permit issued by the Borough to allow an opportunity for documentation by historical society or similar entity.
- Adopt a design review ordinance.

THROUGH PROMOTION WITH PARTNERS

- Encourage façade preservation by easements through a conservancy; encourage local contributions/sponsorships of façade preservation.
- Support collective purchasing of building maintenance/restoration services.
- Initiate a recognition or certification program for historic structures. A certification program would acknowledge each site with a certificate, plaque or other marker and supplement the inventory of known historic resources for possible reference in land use/development incentives.

THROUGH VOLUNTARY EFFORTS AND INCENTIVES OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

- Prepare and publish historic review and design guidelines. Community character, whether historic or recent, can add cultural and economic value to new construction by designing structures and neighborhoods that appear to belong together and belong in their surrounding community or landscape. Local or vernacular building styles often share similar building or building complex layouts, rooflines, door and window placement, and porch design and placement. They may also share material types and dimensions that can often be well-imitated even with modern materials. Photographs, such as those taken in conjunction with a historic resource inventory update, can provide a visual library to review, define and evaluate building styles in the preparation of a patternbook or design guide.
- Establish incentives for developers to preserve and re-use historic structures and façades, e.g. additional density or uses not permitted by the base zoning. Incentives can encourage developers to consider cultural and economic values and evaluate the feasibility of incorporation and re-use of a historic feature or features in their plans. Such will not be feasible in all cases, but the incentive provides a basis for municipal-developer discussion about the issue. “Historic features” will need to be defined, e.g. by age or by reference to an inventory.

As our assets age, decisions must be made about which historic resources to save, which to rehabilitate and reuse, which to memorialize, and which to clear for other uses.

PA Historic Preservation Plan, 2012-2017

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER OUTSIDE THE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Outside of the Hanover Historic District, other neighborhoods have a consistent character from a somewhat later point in time. Desirability and property values in these neighborhoods are influenced by the homes themselves and the character of other homes that surround them.

- Clearview, from Clearview Road north to Dart Drive between Eichelberger and George Streets. This is the Borough’s low density, large lot residential neighborhood. Streets are loosely gridded. Lots have generous setbacks in front, side and rear. Homes are one and two story single family detached structures built in the 1960s and 1970s.
- Thornhill off Hickory Lane just east of PA 194/Abbottstown Pike. This neighborhood offers large custom homes in a countryside setting.

These neighborhoods aren’t considered historic—at least not at this point in time. Over the decades, modifications and rebuilding in the case of fire could introduce features or styles that are significantly different. Some neighborhoods privately control or restrict character through a covenant, thus protecting their property values. Others look to the municipality to provide guidance or regulation as a special district to that same end.

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At this point, there's no need to take up action on these neighborhoods, unless requested by the residents. It is simply noted that neighborhoods of non-historic character are present and the character of recent and ongoing development impacts property values.

PUBLIC SPACES

Public spaces are places where people come together to participate in their communities. Spaces where there are regularly lots of people are characterized as great or successful spaces. Why? In part due to location but also due to the intentional design of the spaces and its amenities for access, comfort and interest, activities, and the ability to interact or observe others, or sociability.

STREETSCAPES

As streetscapes are planned, refreshed or renewed, in downtown or in other parts of the Hanover Area, consider the aesthetic and comfort qualities that each of these features provides. Improvements could be made over the long term, in conjunction with street and utility maintenance and improvements.

- A physical environment, including building facades, scaled to people traveling at walking speed creates a sense of belonging and security
- Continuous sidewalk and crosswalk conditions for all abilities with clear widths for two persons walking side-by-side invite pedestrians, moms with strollers, etc. and give equal access to persons with disabilities
- Street trees provide shade, green color, and seasonal interest
- Seasonal plantings offer color and seasonal interest in beds, raised planters, baskets, etc. at or near eye level
- Places to sit, e.g. benches, walls, and sculptures, provide relief and a place to from which to observe community activity
- Thematic/Seasonal/Event banners make people aware of community culture and activities
- Permanent or seasonal public art represents culture, art and history and creates landmarks for meeting and gathering

Not all streets need to be great places, but perhaps the “main street” of each neighborhood connecting to other “main streets” in adjacent neighborhoods could be great streets. Where two great streets intersect, there could be a special park or “commons”. In less dense areas, street trees and sidewalks may be the only elements that symbolically connect individual properties as one community.



Figure 10-2 What Makes a Great Place? Project for Public Spaces. Used with permission.

PARKS AND CIVIC PLACES

The features of streetscapes are also applicable to parks and civic places. In addition, as gathering places, signage and maintenance are of extreme importance. Scheduled special events are a way to introduce completed improvements and give new residents and visitors a reason to find these community treasures. Identification signage express welcomes and provides assurance that a first time visitor has arrived at their destination. Maintenance and repair indicates a priority for safety.

Major improvements would be made over the long term, in conjunction with other improvements, by "friends of the park" organizations, scouts or community service efforts, etc.



Figure 10-3 Benefits of Place (diagram), Project for Public Spaces. Used with permission.

CIVIC BUILDINGS

Finally, any new civic buildings, whether public or private, can demonstrate character through the design and orientation of the building and the open space around it. At present, the only public facility anticipated is a new transfer center for rabbittransit. As plans are drawn and the Borough considers its formal attitude toward historic preservation such as guidance for new structures, this building could make a lasting architectural contribution to the Hanover Area.

PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Prepare a historic resources inventory.
2. Develop and implement a historic preservation plan for the same key locations.
3. Establish/Lead an Anchor Building Restoration Program.
4. Enact a local historic district and associated historic preservation regulations.
5. Establish a Historic Architectural Review Board.

6. Require the submission of a historic resources impact statement.
7. Require any demolition permit issued by the Borough to allow an opportunity for documentation by historical society or similar entity.
8. Adopt a design review ordinance.
9. Encourage façade preservation by easements through a conservancy; encourage local contributions/sponsorships of façade preservation.
10. Support collective purchasing of building maintenance/restoration services.
11. Initiate a recognition or certification program for historic structures.
12. Prepare and publish historic review and design guidelines.
13. Evaluate the effectiveness of the façade improvement program.
14. Establish incentives for developers to preserve and re-use historic structures and façades, e.g. additional density or uses not permitted by the base zoning.
15. Make improvements to streetscapes beginning in downtown with Center Square and the adjacent blocks.
16. Enhance public parks with amenities. Begin with community parks and sports complexes where large numbers of people gather.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COMMUNITY CHARACTER

The historic character of the Hanover Historic District was developed with the construction of each building, park, and civic space over more than a century. That process continues with each structural addition, streetscape enhancement, and park development. The tangible and intangible qualities of these features have a direct impact on the identity, desirability and quality of life throughout the Hanover Area.

GOAL

Our goal is to maintain and enhance our historic district, distinctive neighborhoods and civic spaces to add value to property and our community.

OBJECTIVES

To achieve this goal, the Borough and Township need to:

1. Define the Borough's philosophy toward historic preservation
2. Strengthen use policies and development standards to reflect existing character.
3. Enhance public parks and civic spaces with quality amenities.

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LEADS AND PARTNERS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Main Street Program and Manager can help create a downtown environment that is attractive and welcoming.

There is no local or countywide historic preservation organization. However, residents in York County are exploring an umbrella organization for historic preservation according to a May 23, 2013 article in the York Daily Record/Sunday News.

Recommendations	Leads; Partners	Priority: Year of Completion
Define the Borough's philosophy toward historic preservation		
1. Prepare a historic resources inventory.	Borough	Medium: 2020
2. Develop and implement a historic preservation plan for the same key locations.	Borough	Medium: 2021
3. Prepare and publish historic review and design guidelines.	Borough	Medium: 2022
4. Establish/Lead an Anchor Building Restoration Program.	Borough	Medium: 2024
5. Initiate a recognition or certification program for historic structures.	Borough and Township	Low: 2021
Strengthen use policies and development standards to reflect existing character.		
6. Enact a local historic district and associated historic preservation regulations.	Borough	High: 2016
7. Establish a Historic Architectural Review Board.	Borough	High: if desired
8. Require the submission of a historic resources impact statement.	Borough	Medium: 2022
9. Require any demolition permit issued by the Borough to allow an opportunity for documentation by historical society or similar entity.	Borough	High: 2016
10. Adopt a design review ordinance.	Borough	High: 2016
Establish Incentives for the Private Sector		
11. Evaluate the effectiveness of the façade improvement program. Explore how the program could be used more widely and have more impact. Determine if such changes are feasible, including additional funding, which might be solicited from the private sector.	Borough and Chamber	Medium: 2015 or before the next grant application

Recommendations	Leads; Partners	Priority: Year of Completion
12. Encourage façade preservation by easements through a conservancy.	Borough; Conservancy	Medium: 2014
13. Support collective purchasing of building maintenance/restoration services.	Chamber, Main Street Hanover	Low: 2015
14. Establish incentives for developers to preserve and re-use historic structures and façades, e.g. additional density or uses not permitted by the base zoning.	Borough	Medium: 2022
Enhance public parks and civic spaces with quality amenities		
15. Make improvements to streetscapes beginning in downtown with Center Square and the adjacent blocks.	Borough; Township	High: Ongoing
16. Enhance public parks with amenities. Begin with community parks and sports complexes where large numbers of people gather.	Borough and Township	Medium: Ongoing

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