Chapter 4
Historic Resource Protection Plan

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Minisink Longhouse Dig, Dr. Herbert Kraft, Delaware Water Gap (Courtesy National Park Service)

The Upper Delaware River Valley, including Delaware Township, contains evidence of a rich and unique past. Archaeological investigations in the area, motivated by the proposed construction of the Tocks Island Dam, uncovered artifacts supporting human occupation of the valley as early as 12,000 years ago. These are some of the earliest inhabitants of the North American continent. Native American inhabitants subsisted in the valley until circa 1758 when European-American settlers forced the last of the Minisink Indians to leave.

Post-European settlement of the area, beginning in the early 18th century, centered around agriculture and later progressed to recreation and tourism. Dingmans Ferry became a vacation destination for many affluent city dwellers. Numerous hotels and inns were built in 19th and early 20th centuries, and were supplied by surrounding farm operations.

The aim of historic resource protection is to retain the identity of a community or region as reflected in its natural and built environment. It ensures that the community's heritage and unique character are preserved to be appreciated by future generations. Historic resources provide a sense of place that fosters a connection to the community and a sense of pride among its residents. They also provide an awareness of the community's roots and traditions, and are a valuable educational tool. However, with increasing development pressure, many historic

structures and sites are sacrificed or altered to the point that their historic value is lost.

Delaware Township lost many valuable historic structures when the National Park Service demolished Dingmans Ferry to make way for the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. However, several significant resources remain throughout the township, and the township still has an opportunity to preserve its history.

GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Overview

The goals and objectives pertaining to historic resources were formulated by the Comprehensive Plan Task Force and Delaware Township residents during the initial monthly meetings and the first public meeting. Goals are broad statements of the community's desires and vision for the future, while the objectives list specific actions designed to achieve the goals.

Goal #1

Protect historic resources.

Objectives

- Identify and evaluate historic resources.
- Educate property owners on the significance and value of historic resources, and of the opportunities for their preservation.
- Encourage adaptive re-use of historic structures.
- Identify funding sources for historic preservation.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Overview

The discussion of existing conditions provides an inventory of the township's historic resources, issues related to their current condition, and current protections afforded by the township and other agencies. Historic resources are categorized as National Register Listed sites, National Register Eligible sites, and Historic Resources of Local Significance (Map A-2).

National Register Sites

The National Register of Historic Places was established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. In Pennsylvania, the program is administered by the state's Bureau for Historic Preservation, a department within the Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission (PHMC). Properties listed on the Register include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture. National Register properties are evaluated and selected according to uniform criteria. The

program is designed to assist state and local governments, federal agencies, and others identify significant historic and archeological properties worthy of preservation and of consideration in planning and development decisions. Listing in the National Register does not interfere with a private property owner's right to alter, manage or dispose of property. However, it often changes the way communities perceive their historic resources and gives credibility to efforts to preserve these resources as irreplaceable parts of our communities. The benefits of being on the National Register include tax incentives for rehabilitation of income producing properties, and tax deductions for donation of easements. (Source: Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission)

The PHMC's Bureau for Historic Preservation provides services to assist in the National Register process, including technical assistance to preparers of National Register nominations, guidance on conducting architectural and historic surveys, evaluation of National Register eligibility, and nomination of properties to the National Register of Historic Places. The State Historic Preservation Board reviews all nominations. If approved, the nomination is then sent to the National Park Service, which either approves or denies the nomination. If approved, it is entered into the National Register of Historic Places.

There are two sites in Delaware Township listed on the National Register of Historic Places (Map A-3):

The Marie Zimmerman Home and Farm

Marie Zimmerman Home
(Courtesy JoAnn & Ted Parsell)

The Zimmerman farm complex is located on a nearly 1,300-acre tract of land overlooking the Delaware River and a rural panorama of New Jersey. It consists of a large stone main house, two large frame barns, a smaller frame house, and associated outbuildings. The main house was designed in 1912 by Marie Zimmerman, a renowned artist and craftswoman. The complex symbolizes the social "transformation of the Upper Delaware Valley into an early exurban playground for the cityborn affluent."

Dingmans Ferry Dutch Reformed Church

Dingmans Ferry Dutch
Reformed Church, 2006

The original Dutch Reformed congregation was established in the Minisink region in 1737. It was served by four churches located throughout the region, and one traveling minister. Members from Dingmans Ferry would attend services where and when they could. By the end of 18th century, population growth enabled new churches to be built closer to their members and the single congregation was abandoned. By 1850, a new church was established in Dingmans Ferry.

The Dingmans Ferry Dutch Reformed Church is significant for its Greek Revival style and the "tradition of rural simplicity in building technique that prevailed in the Upper Delaware Valley until at least the beginning of the 20th century." (Citation) It is also significant for its role in the social and cultural history of the region. The church is one of the only remaining structures of old Dingmans Ferry, and is located across from the Delaware Cemetery where many of the area's pioneer families are buried. It currently serves as a private residence. Most of the original interior has been removed

National Register Eligible

In order to be eligible for the National Register, a resource must meet one of four criteria. They are (1) the resource made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; (2) the resource is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; (3) the resource has distinctive characteristics of a building typeT, period, or method of construction, that represent the work of a master, possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; and (4) the resource has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history. (Source: Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission)

A resource that meets any one of the four eligibility criteria is given a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) by the Bureau for Historic Preservation. That resource, however, might never obtain a listing on the National Register. Resources in Delaware Township that have received a DOE are (Map A-3):

Sproul Electric Generator Building

The Sproul Electric Generator Building is a one story stone building noted for its historical contribution to the region's industry as an energy extraction and processing facility. Its date of construction is unknown. It received a DOE in 1978, and its nomination was approved by the state and sent on the NPS in 1979.

Sproul Caretaker's House & Stable

The Sproul Caretaker's House & Stable was built in 1930. It is a bungalow-style dwelling with a stable. It received a DOE in 1992.

Dingmans Ferry c. 1890 (Courtesy Delaware Twp Historical Society)

Dingmans Falls Complex and Access Road

The Dingmans Falls Complex extends along the access road from Mollineaux Road and runs approximately 0.8 miles to the parking area. It includes the Dingmans Falls gorge with its wooded hillsides, developed area, trail and foot bridges, and the Silver Thread and Dingmans Falls. Its historical significance derives from its attraction as a cultural landscape and recreation area drawing visitors since the early nineteenth century. Contributing elements include its setting, a house and shed (built by Isaac and Charlotte Dingman who acquired a piece of land in the gorge in 1888), the foot trail to the falls, and the entrance road.

Goldhart House

The Goldhart House is two-story dwelling of wood and stone in the Italian Villa style. Its date of construction is unknown. A DOE and nomination to the National Register were given circa 1992.

Dingmans Ferry River House

The Dingmans Ferry River House was built near the Dingmans Ferry Bridge in 1804 by Judge Daniel W. Dingman. It is a two-story stone farm house with a slate roof that was used as a single-family

dwelling. It received a DOE in 1977. Its nomination was approved and sent to the NPS in 1978, and was apparently returned to the state in 1978.

Emery House

The Emery House, which received eligibility in 1977, has since been lost to fire.

Locally Significant

Historic resources of local significance are those that have not been nominated for the National Register, but are still meaningful and important to the community's heritage. To date, the township has inventoried approximately 20 Historic Resources of Local Significance. Documentation is maintained by the Delaware Township Historical Society.

Of special note is the Millard House, which is certified as a Pike County Historic Resource. The home is located on Milford Road 2/10 of a mile before the Lehman Township line. The land is said to have originally been a farm and part of the Walking Purchase. The house was built in 1818 by the Van Gorden family. It was next owned by the Van Auken, then the Dance family. It was sold again, and is currently owned by the Millard family.

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Summary

In addition to the National Register, there are two pieces of legislation in Pennsylvania that enable historic resource protection. Pennsylvania Act 167 of 1961 (the Historic District Act) "authorizes counties, cities, boroughs, incorporated towns and townships to create historic districts within their boundaries providing for the appointment of Boards of Historical Architectural Review; empowering governing bodies to protect the distinctive historical character of these districts and to regulate the erection, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, demolition or razing of buildings within the historic districts."

The Delaware House, Dingmans Ferry (Courtesy Delaware Township Historical Society)

Under Act 167 of 1961, municipalities have the authority to enact local historic regulations, within historic districts, as it sees fit. Restrictions may range from the use of historic resources to their aesthetics. Applications pertaining to historic resources are reviewed by the Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB), which then makes a recommendation to the governing body. There are currently no historic districts in Delaware Township.

The second piece of legislation is the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (Act 247). Under Act 247, municipalities may regulate historic resources; however, regulations are administered by the zoning officer and appeals are presented to the zoning hearing board. Historic resources must be classified by level of significance (Class 1, 2 or 3) and regulations must be uniform for each class. Act 247 also permits the establishment of a historic commission. This commission has no legal authority; it acts in a support capacity, conducting research and providing data on historic resources.

Delaware Township currently has no zoning provisions for historic resource protection under Act 247. While community volunteers are active in the Delaware Township Historical Society, they are not a formally organized historical commission under Act 247.

FUTURE PLANNING POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

Future planning policies and recommendations are suggested measures intended to achieve the township's historic resource protection goals. These policy recommendations will guide future decisions and actions related to historic resource protection.

Recommendations

The history of the Upper Delaware River Valley and Delaware Township are extremely important, providing evidence of early human settlement and marking a significant social and cultural transformation of the 19th and early 20th centuries. To preserve this important and unique past, the following policy recommendations are suggested:

- Continue the identification of historic sites (nationally and locally significant) and pursue National Register listing.
- Promote public education to raise awareness of the Township's history and historic resources.
- Promote preservation of historic buildings and structures during the land development process.
- Preserve historic buildings by incorporating them in commercial areas as commercial uses.
- Preserve historic sites by promoting them as recreational or tourist destinations.
- Pursue technical assistance and funding for historic resource identification and preservation.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Overview

Implementation strategies are the specific means by which the township can execute the future planning policy recommendations. They take the form of regulatory provisions included in the zoning, subdivision and land development ordinance, and other ordinances, as well as non-regulatory initiatives. The following implementation strategies are organized according to zoning ordinance amendments, subdivision and land development ordinance amendments, and additional measures.

Zoning Ordinance

Zoning Ordinance amendments intended to implement the planning policies and recommendations pertaining to historic resource protection are as follows:

- Create a historic resource protection ordinance to:
  - Require demolition review.
  - Prohibit demolition by neglect.
  - Include provisions for alteration of historic resources.
  - Include provisions for use and adaptive re-use of historic resources.
  - Promote preservation of historic resources through Open Space Development, whereby historic resources can be incorporated into open space set asides with public access.
  - Provide incentives for rehabilitation of historic resources.

SLDO

Subdivision and Land Development Ordinance amendments intended to implement the planning policies and recommendations pertaining to historic resource protection are as follows:

- Revise design standards to promote historic resource protection.

Additional Measures

Additional measures intended to implement the planning policies and recommendations pertaining to historic resource protection are as follows:

- Officially recognize the township Historical Commission.
- Inventory and document historic resources and archaeological sites (both nationally and locally significant).
- Seek assistance from historic preservation organizations, such as the PHMC and Preservation Pennsylvania for inventorying and documenting resources and nominating resources for the National Register.
- Create a system for efficient storage, mapping, and retrieval of historic resource data (for example, Geographic Information Systems) and maintain a historic resources database at the township.
- Seek funding from organizations such as the National Park Service, National Trust for Historic Preservation, PHMC, DCNR, and Pike County, and from programs such as the Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credit Program.
- Conduct a public outreach program, perhaps through a township newsletter or web site, to provide educational materials on the township's history and historic resources.
- Establish an open space and trail system that links and provides access to historic resources.