

AGENDA

AMBLER BOROUGH PLANNING COMMISSION

- I. CALL TO ORDER** **September 28, 2021 (7:00 PM)**

- II. ROLL CALL**

- III. APPROVAL OF:** August 24, 2021 Minutes

- IV. OLD BUSINESS:**
 - 1. Input requested to create a conceptual plan incorporating identified community needs and improvements for each park in the Borough to be used as part of a larger Master Park Plan.

- V. NEW BUSINESS:**
 - 1. Input requested to explore ways to preserve Ambler's historic resources.
(Introduction presentation by Ms. Spross and Code Officer)

- VI. ADJOURNMENT**

What is the Historic District Act?

The Historic District Act (AUTHORIZING POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS TO CREATE HISTORIC DISTRICT Act of Jun. 13, 1961, P.L. 282, No. 167, Cl. 53), known as Act 167, authorizes political subdivisions to create historic districts within their geographic boundaries, to appoint Board(s) of Historical Architectural Review, to empower the protection of the character of local historic districts, and regulate the built environment within its boundaries.


What is the Municipalities Planning Code?

The Municipalities Planning Code (Act of 1968, P.L.805, No.247), known as the MPC, empowers counties and municipalities, individually or jointly, to plan their development and to govern the same by zoning, subdivision and land development ordinances and additional tools.

What is the difference between local historic districts created by the Historic District Act and the MPC?**Historic District Act (Act 167):**

- Authorizes municipalities to review work on buildings or properties in the historic district, such as:
 - Demolition
 - New construction
 - Repairs, alterations, additions
 - Signs
- Regulates within one or more defined historic districts
- Historic district must be certified by PHMC as "historical"
- A Board of Historical Architectural Review (often referred to as the Historical Architectural Review Board or HARB) is appointed by the governing body
- Governing body approves issuing a Certificate of Appropriateness
- Zoning or Codes Enforcement Officer issues the appropriate permit (building, demolition or sign)

Municipalities Planning Code (MPC):

- Authorizes municipalities to review changes to historic buildings and properties in historic districts, including their setting and landscape
- Municipality can also provide zoning incentives to encourage preservation and discourage demolition or inappropriate changes
- May establish a zoning overlay to regulate dispersed historic resources as well as historic districts
- 
- Some municipalities establish a Historical Commission to review applications for changes on designated properties covered by the ordinance

For more information on community planning, please visit the PHMC website at
www.phmc.pa.gov/preservation/community-preservation

NOTE: This document provides a general summary of these programs and laws as they are most commonly applied in PA; individual municipalities may implement preservation programs in various forms and combinations, including the use of different terminology.

What is a Historic District?

A historic district is typically a collection of historic resources (such as buildings, sites, structures, and objects) within a defined boundary that are collectively significant at the local, state, or national level for its historical associations or architectural merit. Typically, the historic resources within a historic district are 50 years old or older and retain integrity, which generally means that the resource has not changed significantly over time.

For example, a historic district may include commercial, residential, industrial, and institutional buildings that have been built over time and reflect a community's development. A historic district may also include only one part of a community, such as a residential neighborhood, that is a good example of historic architectural styles.

What is a Local Historic District?

A local historic district is one designated by municipal ordinance under the Historic District Act (also known as an Act 167 district) or the Municipalities Planning Code (MPC) within the municipality's geographic boundaries.

What is a National Register Historic District?

A National Register historic district is one listed in the National Register of Historic Places under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.

What are the differences between a local and National Register historic district?**Local Historic Districts:**

- Protect a municipality's historic properties from demolition and inappropriate construction or alteration through a local design review process
- Designate properties and district boundaries based on local criteria and procedures
- Offer no financial assistance or tax incentives unless such are provided by local ordinance
- Require a local board or commission to review and act on all work proposed in the district based on local design guidelines and/or standards
- Allow private owners to use their property within the restrictions of the local zoning ordinance

National Register Historic Districts:

- Intended to protect properties in the district during the planning process for projects involving federal funding, licenses or permits
- Criteria for evaluating eligibility and defining district boundaries are established at the federal level by the National Park Service
- Makes income-producing properties eligible for the federal historic tax credit Program
- Requires owners to meet the Secretary of the Interior's *Standards* when rehabilitating their property with the assistance of federal funding or tax credits
- Does not restrict a private property owner's use of their property if no federal funding is involved, nor does it obligate owners to preserve or restore their property for the benefit of the public

Borough Of Ambler

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Memorandum

To: Ambler Borough Planning Commission
From: Glenn Kucher, Code Enforcement Officer
Date: September 24, 2021
Re: 2004 DRAFT Historic Preservation Ordinance Timeline

The Ambler Borough's Historic Resource Comprehensive Survey was conducted by the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society and The Conservancy of Montgomery County in 1999. This is a four-volume inventory of over 900 properties was used as a basis for a proposed Historic Preservation Ordinance that was put created by the Borough Planning Commission and Montgomery County Planning Commission in 2003 – 2004 according to Planning Commission minutes.

This Ordinance proposed to establish prerequisites to the demolition of building deemed historically significant, provided criteria for historical significance, establish an inventory based on the Ambler Borough Historic Resource Comprehensive Survey of historically significant buildings and provide penalties for violation. This Ordinance was voted NOT to be advertised by Borough Council in November 2004 therefore ending the process.

ORDINANCE NO. _____
AMBLER BOROUGH, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, PA

**AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING PREREQUISITES TO THE DEMOLITION
OF BUILDINGS DEEMED HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT; PROVIDING
CRITERIA FOR HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE; ESTABLISHING AN
INVENTORY OF HISTORICALLY SIGNIFICANT BUILDINGS; PROVIDING
PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION.**

An ordinance providing for the protection and preservation of Historic Buildings within the Borough of Ambler by discouraging their demolition. This ordinance defines criteria by which buildings may be considered historic by the Borough, and adopts a Historic Building Inventory based on these criteria.

When an application is submitted for a demolition permit for buildings on the Historic Building Inventory, this ordinance requires the Codes Department to notify the Planning Commission so that it may review the proposal. The Codes Department is hereby required to withhold issuing a demolition permit until a 45-day waiting period has passed since the date of the first Planning Commission meeting after the submittal of the application for a demolition permit.

During the 45-day waiting period for demolition of Historic Buildings, alternatives to demolition and recommendations for possible reuse of the Historic Building may be suggested to the applicant by the Planning Commission and/or Ambler Borough Council. If after the 45-day period the Codes Department approves the demolition of the Historic Building, demolition of the Historic Building shall not commence until the building has been documented in conformance with standards defined in this ordinance.

Article 1 Legal Authorization

Pursuant to authority contained in the Act of 1968, Public Law 805, No. 247, as enacted and amended, known as the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code (sections 603, 604, and 605), the Borough of Ambler shall hereby create an ordinance in order to promote, protect, and facilitate the preservation of areas of historic significance and to preserve the historic values in the environment.

Article 2 Purpose and Intent

1. Pursuant to Article 1, Section 27 of the Pennsylvania Constitution which states that:

The people have a right to clean air, pure water, and preservation of the natural, scenic, historic and aesthetic values of the environment.

It is the purpose and intent of the Borough of Ambler to preserve and protect buildings of historic value that exist within the Borough. The Borough of Ambler has many Historic Buildings worthy of preservation from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Preservation of these Historic Buildings is in the best interest of the health, prosperity and welfare of the people of the Borough of Ambler by enhancing property values, improving aesthetics of the built and natural environment, and creating the potential for heritage tourism.

2. The Ambler Borough Historic Building Inventory was established to identify the most historically important buildings to the Borough. Many of the residential and non-residential buildings now considered historic by the Borough were built by the Keasbey and Mattison Company. Keasbey and Mattison played a major role in the development of the Borough and left a historical and architectural legacy the Borough wishes to preserve.
3. The purpose of implementing a waiting period before a demolition permit is issued is to allow time to formulate options for reuse of the structure or alternatives to its demolition, which can be suggested to the building owner as a way of preserving the historic building(s).
4. The goal of documenting Historic Buildings in the Borough of Ambler is to provide architects, engineers, scholars, preservationists, and interested members of the public with information on the historical, architectural, technological, or cultural significance of a building. Placed on permanent deposit with the Codes Department, the historic documentation will serve as a permanent record of the growth and development of the Borough's built environment.

Article 3 Definitions

For purposes of the Historic Building Inventory the following definitions shall apply:

Building – Any construction having a minimum of three enclosed walls and a roof. Examples include, but are not limited to, a house, garage, barn, shed, school, train station, or privy.

Demolition – The complete dismantling, removal, razing or destruction of a building. Also physically moving a building from its original foundation.

Historic Building - A building shall be designated historic if it is on the attached Historic Building Inventory [see Appendix].

A building qualifies for the Inventory if it is:

1. A building that is a National Historic Landmark *; or

2. A building that is individually listed in, or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places *; or
3. A building that does not meet designations 1 or 2 above, but meets at least one of the following criteria, as determined by the Planning Commission, with timely input from interested local or state organizations, and accepted by Borough Council:
 - a. Is of significant character, interest or value as part of the development, heritage or cultural characteristics of the Borough, County, Region, Commonwealth or Nation, or is associated with the life of a person significant in the past; or
 - b. Is associated with an event of importance to the history of the Borough, County, Region, Commonwealth or Nation, or
 - c. Embodies an icon associated with an era characterized by a distinctive architectural style; or
 - d. Embodies distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style or engineering specimen; or
 - e. Is the noteworthy work of a designer, architect, landscape architect or designer, or engineer whose work has significantly influenced the historical, architectural, economic, social, or cultural development of the Borough, County, Region, Commonwealth or Nation; or
 - f. Contains elements of design, detail, materials or craftsmanship which represent a significant innovation; or
 - g. Is part of or related to a commercial center, park community or other distinctive area which should be preserved according to an historic, cultural or architectural motif; or
 - h. Owing to its unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of the neighborhood, community or Borough; or
 - i. Has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history; or
 - j. Exemplifies the cultural, political, economic, social or historical heritage of the community.

* Note: Determination of National Historic Landmark designation and listing of buildings to the National Register of Historic Places is made by the National Park

Service. Eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places is determined by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, which maintains and publishes a list of National Register Listed and Eligible Properties in Pennsylvania.

Historic Building Inventory – An inventory of buildings judged to be historically significant to the Borough of Ambler. The buildings’ historical significance was determined based on the definition of “Historic Building”, above. [Construction dates of buildings on the inventory were derived from Ambler Borough records, 1930 Sanborn maps, the “Historic Resource Comprehensive Survey of Ambler Borough”, conducted by The Wissahickon Valley Historical Society and The Conservancy of Montgomery County; and the Montgomery County Board of Assessment.]

Article 4 Procedure for Review of Application for Permit to Demolish a Historic Building

Duties of Codes Department - Upon receipt of a complete application to demolish a building on the Historic Building Inventory, the Codes Department shall inform the Planning Commission such a permit has been requested, and shall specify the address and the location on lot of the building proposed for demolition. The Codes Department shall not issue a demolition permit until 45 days have passed after the first planning commission meeting after the demolition permit application was submitted and **Article 5 Documentation of Historic Buildings** has been followed by the applicant.

Duties of Planning Commission - Upon receipt of notice from the Codes Department that a demolition application has been received for a specified building on the Historic Building Inventory, the Planning Commission shall take the following actions:

1. Review the proposed demolition. The Planning Commission shall provide Borough Council with a report consisting of a copy of the record of review of the proposed demolition of the Historic Building. The Planning Commission and/or Borough Council may suggest alternatives to demolition and recommendations for possible reuse of the building to the applicant.
2. If, after the 45-day waiting period for demolition of Historic Buildings, the Codes Department approves the demolition of the Historic Building, demolition of the Historic Building shall not commence until **Article 5 Documentation of Historic Buildings** has been followed.

Article 5 Documentation of Historic Buildings

1. In cases where the applicant has applied for a demolition permit for a building determined to be historic, the applicant or a party retained by the applicant shall

document the Historic Building in conformance with the standards specified below:

- a. Photograph(s) - The applicant shall provide photographic images of the exterior and interior views of the Historic Building, or shall arrange for the Borough Codes Enforcement Officer (or Officer's designee) to take the photographs. The photographs shall be taken in such a way as to provide a general sense of perspective. This can be accomplished by taking photographs from various angles and by taking photographs of all sides of the building. Photographs shall be provided in electronic format (i.e., disk or CD).
 - b. Sketch Plan – The applicant shall provide a floor or site plan. This plan does not have to be to exact scale, but features shall be shown in proper relation and proportion to one another. The plan shall be drawn in ink on paper with one of the following dimensions: 19" X 24", 24" X 36", or 34" X 44".
 - c. Short Historical Report and Copy of Deed – The applicant shall provide a short written report explaining any historical features that did not appear in the submitted photographs. A copy of the deed or other documentation of the building's age, if available, shall be provided.
2. In cases where the applicant has applied for a demolition permit for a building determined to be historic, the applicant or a party retained by the applicant shall document the Historic Building in conformance with the standards specified below:

Article 6 Enforcement

No building on the Borough's Historic Building Inventory, or which the Borough Council determines meets the definition of "Historic Building" per this ordinance, shall be demolished, removed or razed, in a manner inconsistent with the provisions of this ordinance. Such action is a violation of this ordinance and shall subject the violator to a fine of one thousand dollars, as well as to injunctive relief, costs, and reimbursement of attorneys fees.

Article 7 Periodic Review and Update of Historic Building Inventory

The Borough Planning Commission shall review, on an annual basis, the Historic Building Inventory. During this review the Planning Commission may make necessary changes to the list, pending approval by Borough Council. The Planning Commission may add properties to the Historic Building Inventory that meet criteria for Historic

Building under **Article3, Definitions**, and may subtract properties from the list that no longer meet the historic criteria (this may result from a building being altered or falling into disrepair to an extent that it no longer retains its historic integrity).

This Ordinance is effective upon adoption. SO ORDAINED this ____ day of June, 2004.

Salvatore Pasceri, Council President

ATTEST: _____
James Dillon, Borough Secretary

APPROVED: _____
Charles T. Wahl, Mayor

Checklist for Applicants Requesting Demolition Permits for Historic Buildings in Ambler Borough

If the Ambler Codes Department receives an application for a building that is on the Borough's Historic Building Inventory, as listed in **Ordinance No. ___, Appendix**, the applicant will be notified and following shall apply:

1. The Planning Commission and/or Borough Council may make recommendations to the applicant concerning alternatives to demolition and possible reuse of the Historic Building.
2. The Borough Codes Department shall not approve the demolition of the Historic Building until a minimum of 45 days has passed from the date of the first Planning Commission meeting after the application for demolition was submitted.
3. If, after the 45-day waiting period, the Codes Department approves the demolition of the Historic Building, demolition of the Historic Building shall not commence until the applicant, or if the applicant chooses, the Borough Codes Enforcement Officer (or Officer's designee) has documented the Historic Building in conjunction with **Ordinance No. ___, Article 5 Documentation of Historic Buildings**. If the applicant directs the Borough Codes Enforcement Officer to document the building there will be no cost to the applicant.

In cases where the applicant has applied for a demolition permit for a building on the Historic Building Inventory, the applicant, Borough Codes Enforcement Officer (or the Officer's designee) shall document the Historic Building in conformance with the following standards (at a minimum):

- a. Photograph(s) - The applicant shall provide photographic images of the exterior and interior views of the Historic Building, or shall arrange for the Borough Codes Enforcement Officer (or Officer's designee) to take the photographs. The photographs shall be taken in such a way as to provide a general sense of perspective. This can be accomplished by taking photographs of the building from various angles, and by including photographs of all sides of the building. Photographs shall be provided in electronic format.
- b. Sketch Plan – The applicant shall provide a floor or site plan. This plan does not have to be to exact scale, but features shall be shown in proper relation and proportion to one another. The plan shall be drawn in ink on paper with one of the following dimensions: 19" X 24", 24" X 36", or 34" X 44".
- c. Short Historical Report and Copy of Deed – The applicant shall provide a short written report explaining any historical features that did not appear in the submitted photographs. A copy of the deed or best documentation available shall be provided. This shall include the date the building was constructed, if available.

After Step 3. has been completed and approval of the building's demolition has been granted by the Codes Department, and provided all other required permits, administrative approvals and procedures have been obtained or followed by the applicant, demolition of the Historic Building may commence.

**HISTORIC RESOURCE
COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY**

of

AMBLER BOROUGH

Conducted by

**The Wissahickon Valley Historical Society
&
The Conservancy of Montgomery County**

Funded by

**The Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission
&
The Arcadia Foundation**

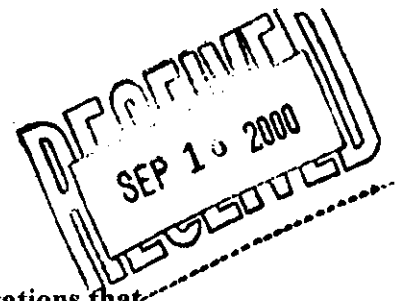
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Project Direction

The Conservancy of Montgomery County
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Mary Lou McFarland, Project Director for the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society

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We would like to thank the following individuals who allowed us access to their properties for the purpose of data collection and photography:

Jeanne Betts
Wayne Reed Davis

II. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Purpose and Criteria

This Historic Resource Comprehensive Survey for Ambler Borough was conducted between March and December 1999 by the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society under the supervision of the Conservancy of Montgomery County. The purpose of the survey was to identify those resources built before 1940 within the borough boundaries. This date was chosen based on the major influence of the Keasbey & Mattison Company and its cofounder, Dr. Richard V. Mattison, on the construction of housing and commercial properties through the 1930s.

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission defines a Comprehensive Survey as:

1. A complete windshield survey of a definable geographic area that makes historical sense or a definable theme or pattern that makes historical sense; the survey identifies everything that relates to the area or theme or pattern;
2. The information that is gathered is not sufficient to answer the question as to whether a property is eligible for listing in the National Register but it will tell what research questions need to be answered to make that decision;
 - a. limited research is done;
 - b. research should reflect historical "benchmarking; select appropriate records such as a municipal atlas or directory or a similar document that provides a reference point in time against which to evaluate all properties identified;
 - c. evaluation statements should be provided on Form 89B that explain what the next step is in making a National Register eligibility finding;
3. All properties in a Comprehensive Survey are over 50 years old.

It should be noted that the investigative level of this survey was "comprehensive" as opposed to the more rigorous "intensive" level. Therefore, no determinations as to National Register of Historic Places significance were made, only whether or not a resource would contribute to a district. This should not imply that the potential is not there, merely that additional research is needed to make that determination.

Format Used

A printout of all borough properties was obtained through the Montgomery County Board of Assessment office, which contained year-built information for each property. The printout was divided into folders by street and all properties built prior to 1940 were highlighted. Sixteen volunteers were assigned to collect the appropriate data using the Pennsylvania Historic Resource Survey Forms, including the first two pages of

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the Data Sheet (Form 89B) and the Photo/Site Plan Sheet (Form 89A). **A total of 912 resources were surveyed.**

A consultant was hired by the Conservancy of Montgomery County to provide guidance for the project. She was responsible for answering technical questions from the volunteers, reviewing all forms, determining architectural style and National Register evaluations, and preparing the final report and recommendations

Field investigations were conducted from the public right-of way and consisted of recording architectural information, and taking at least one photograph of each building, preferably the front elevation and/or a view that would highlight the most significant architectural features. Significant secondary structures, such as carriage houses and garages, were also photographed. Photographers used only 35mm black and white film, 400 ASA.

All properties surveyed were keyed to a base map prepared by the Montgomery County Planning Commission, indicating property lines as of June, 1992.

Limitations

Every attempt was made to conduct accurate data collection and photography but there were some limitations as follows:

--The "year built" date on the printout from the Montgomery County Board of Assessments may not necessarily be the correct date. Where time allowed, historical society records and maps were researched to provide more accurate information.

--The weather conditions, the equipment available to each photographer, siting of the buildings and vegetation affected the quality of the photography. Since volunteers completed this work with their own equipment, in their photographs they concentrated on highlighting the buildings as well as possible.

--Under the Physical Description section of Form 89B, some information could not be collected due to certain factors such as the siting of the building, additions, or materials applied over the original materials.

--Although every attempt was made to identify and document all buildings built before 1940, there may be some missing from the survey due to incomplete information or incorrect year-built dates in the Montgomery County Board of Assessments records.

--Addresses on buildings may not necessarily coincide with those on the survey forms and the tax records.

II. Survey Methodology – Page 3 of 3

Some further clarification on the forms:

--The word "vernacular" was used to describe simpler, local versions of high style buildings where historic character remained for the most part, intact.

Report & Photograph Accessibility

Copies of the Historic Resource Survey and Report are available at the following locations:

Wissahickon Valley Historical Society
1895 School House
799 Skippack Pike
Blue Bell, PA 19422
215-646-6541

Borough of Ambler
122 E. Butler Avenue
Ambler, PA 19002
215-646-1000

Montgomery County Planning Commission
P. O. Box 311
Court House
Norristown, PA 19404
610-278-3722
Office Location: One Montgomery Plaza, Norristown, PA

If photographs other than the one shown on the Photo/Site Plan Sheet (Form 89A) are indicated on the form, it should be noted that they can be located in the offices of the PA Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation, Harrisburg, PA, 717-787-4363, and the archives of the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society, 1895 School House, 799 Skippack Pike, Blue Bell, PA 19422, 215-646-6541.

III. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF AMBLER

Incorporated in 1888, the Borough of Ambler has a rich history and a wealth of unique architecture that has evolved from the first settlers in the late 17th century through the Industrial Revolution and the establishment of the Keasbey and Mattison Company in the 1880s. With its beginnings as a small milling and agricultural area to its evolution as one of the most important industrial centers in the United States, Ambler's built environment is an important and tangible reminder of the past and an indicator of the potential to further revitalize the town.

In the late 17th century, an Englishman, William Harmer, purchased 408 acres from William Penn, which eventually became the village of Wissahickon. He built a gristmill along the Wissahickon Creek, which flows through the west side of town. By the second quarter of the 18th century, eight mills were in operation along the creek and its tributaries, including gristmills, sawmills, cider mills, and a fulling mill. As farmers from surrounding areas needed access to the mills, roads began to be laid out. Mount Pleasant Avenue was the first road (1730), followed by Butler Pike (1739), and Church Street (1744). Bethlehem Pike, the eastern boundary of the present-day Ambler, was built in the late 17th century.

With the establishment of the road system, houses were built as more people settled in the area. During the Revolutionary War, Washington's troops marched throughout the area. Foraging parties cleared many local farms of their stores and local taverns became important outposts for military espionage. Many Revolutionary War soldiers are buried in the surrounding churchyards.

Like other small villages in 19th century, Ambler arose at the junctures of two crossroads, in particular, Bethlehem Pike and Butler Pike, which is now located at the eastern edge of town. The change from an agricultural village to a town began in 1855 when the North Pennsylvania Railroad came north from Philadelphia, establishing stations at Penllyn, Wissahickon (Ambler), Camp Hill and Fort Washington. Unfortunately, a terrible train accident occurred at the Camp Hill (now Fellwick) station in 1856 and over 60 people were killed and over 100 injured. Mary Johnson Ambler, whose home still stands at the juncture of Reiff's Mill Road and Main Street, turned her home into a temporary hospital for the injured. The Wissahickon station was renamed Ambler in 1869 in honor of Mary Ambler's heroic actions.

Around 1868, the first housing development was planned northwest of Butler Avenue on Main Street by Jonathan Lukens. He also laid out the cross streets of Forest, Walnut, Race and a parallel street, Spring Garden. This was considered a desirable location in close proximity to the railroad. Unfortunately, over a ten-year period, Lukens experienced considerable financial trouble, especially with his holdings on Butler Avenue and an unprofitable saw mill located therewith. The money he invested to lay out Race Street to accommodate the mill strained his finances and he eventually was forced to sell his interests.

III. Historical Background of Ambler – Page 2 of 2

Soon after Lukens's venture, the most important development to occur in the history of the town was the establishment of the Keasbey and Mattison Company. Founded by Dr. Richard V. Mattison and Henry G. Keasbey, the company was relocated from Philadelphia to Ambler in 1882. Operations were established along the railroad corridor for access to transportation and water from the Wissahickon Creek, which flows nearby. The company built its success on quinine products and a headache remedy called Bromo Caffeine. Pharmacies around the world carried this popular product.

For many years Dr. Mattison had been fascinated by the potential of asbestos manufacturing and had researched its potential extensively. By 1886, the company moved into production of asbestos products becoming one of the world's largest asbestos manufacturing facilities by the turn of the century. Production included asbestos paper and millboard for insulation purposes, and asbestos roofing shingles. Asbestos was also used in military equipment and the company thrived during the early 1900's with the United State's involvement in World War I. During this time, offices were established in Philadelphia, New York, Chicago, Washington, Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, Boston, St. Louis, Buffalo, Cincinnati, Cleveland and London, England. In addition to the manufacturing plant in Ambler, there were plants located in Canada and St. Louis.

Dr. Richard V. Mattison, company founder and President, fancied himself a baronial lord. He built an elaborate estate called "Lindenwold" with a castle, two lakes, and fifty acres of lawns and gardens, now located in Upper Dublin Township and directly across Bethlehem Pike from Ambler Borough. He also had a summer home, "Bushy Park", in Newport, R. I. and was listed in the Newport Social Register from approximately 1898 through 1933. Dr. Mattison was instrumental in establishing the water and electric companies in Ambler and also served to help incorporate Ambler as a Borough in 1888.

The Keasbey and Mattison Company was the impetus for growth in Ambler creating many new jobs and building over 400 company homes. Dr. Mattison established the Ambler Real Estate Improvement Company to purchase land over the years for this purpose. He hired stone masons in Italy to move to Ambler and build the beautiful stone houses that still exist today.

Dr. Mattison passed away in 1936 having declared bankruptcy a few years before due to the Depression. Since he retained ownership of the houses that he built, his real estate was repossessed by the bank and sold to private individuals. Since his death, Dr. Mattison's influence on the Borough of Ambler is still felt today with the many existing structures built during his lifetime. They are a testament to his profound influence on Ambler and his creation of a vast architectural and historical legacy.

IV. SURVEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Historic Resource Survey identified 912 resources within the Borough of Ambler dating prior to 1940. Numerous architectural styles were identified including Colonial Revival, Beaux Arts, Italianate, Tudor, Victorian, Bungalow, Craftsman, and Queen Anne. Approximately 90% of the buildings surveyed retain architectural integrity and were determined to contribute to a potential historic district or districts.

The following recommendations are made regarding the findings:

-- Ambler Borough, the Ambler Main Street Program, the Wissahickon Valley Historical Society, citizens and business owners should utilize this survey as a planning document. It provides tangible and fundamental information on the irreplaceable architecture and fascinating history of Ambler, which needs to be highly prioritized in future planning endeavors.

-- Further research should be conducted on those buildings determined to contribute to a potential historic district. Additional information should be compiled on the history of each building, including deed research.

-- National Register of Historic Places and local historic districts should be established to help protect the buildings from demolition and insensitive alterations. A National Register district is imperative to help attract investors who can benefit from the rehabilitation tax credits available for renovating eligible income-producing buildings. Pending federal and state legislation provides for tax credits on the rehabilitation of private homes, which, if enacted, would provide additional incentives to homeowners in a National Register district.

-- A major historic district focus should be Butler Avenue and Main Street, which is the central business district. This is a very dynamic area, both architecturally and historically, but is subject to change. It is important that those buildings identified in the survey be preserved. A strong business district will create a spillover effect to surrounding residential areas. Many residential areas also retain architectural integrity and should be preserved with historic district incentives. This will help to provide cohesion and integrity to the history and architecture of the borough and can provide a forum for increasing community support, spirit and pride, as well as economic prosperity for property owners.

-- Buildings dating from 1940 – 1949 should be photographed and surveyed, since many of them retain architectural integrity and fall within the 50 year age criteria established by the PA Historical and Museum Commission.

-- Buildings that were once part of the Keasbey and Mattison Company still exist along the railroad corridor and the Maple Avenue area. Two were photographed but

IV. Survey Findings & Recommendations - Continued

access to the others was not available. Photography and data collection should be undertaken for the remaining buildings in the very near future since many are vacant and in disrepair. A structural engineer experienced in the reuse of historic buildings should assess the buildings. It is also recommended that this area be part of a National Register Historic District so that tax credits can be obtained for the rehabilitation of the buildings. The historical significance of the Keasbey and Mattison Company is quite impressive, especially with its international influence, and those buildings that were part of the complex should be given the utmost preservation priority.

--The building located at 219 Race Street c. 1960 was designed by renowned architect Robert Venturi but could not be included in the survey due to the 50-year age limit criteria.

Overall, Ambler Borough contains a wealth of historic and architectural resources unique to the borough. This creates a wonderful opportunity to enhance these resources, using them as a focal point in planning and economic revitalization. In this age of suburban sprawl, many people are looking to live and work in towns like Ambler because of the unique history and architecture. These factors can help the borough capitalize on the past while insuring a promising future for its citizens.

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VI. PROPERTY INDEX

**1999 Ambler Borough
Historic Resource Survey
List of Buildings Surveyed
By Address & (# of Resources)**

Belmont Avenue (25)

29
33
35
37
39
41
49
50-52-54-56-58 (5 rowhouses)
55
59
63
103
107
111
115
119
123
218
237
243
245

Bethlehem Pike (22)

50
54
60
64
68
72
76
80
84
88
92
98
100
108
116

Bethlehem Pike (continued)

120
126
134
148 (2 buildings – house & garage)
156
232-295 (1 building)

Butler Avenue – West (14)

1
6
7
10
12
21 (Train Station – Inbound)
21 (Train Station – Outbound; 2 buildings)
118
124
127
300
302
304

Butler Avenue – East (70)

3
6
11
12
13
15-19 (1 building)
23
27
30
31
33-37 (1 building)
34-38 (1 building)
39-41 (1 building)
57
61-69 (2 buildings)
81
83-85 (1 building)
87
91
95
100
101

Butler Avenue – East (continued)

106-114 (1 building)
107
113-115 (2 buildings)
117-119 (1 building)
122
123
125-129 (1 building)
135
140
141-143 (1 building)
150
158
166
172
217
232
236
259
269
275
281
301
304
309
310
315
321
324
325
330
332
335 (2 buildings – house & barn)
338
342
344
346-348-350-352-354-356 (6 rowhouses)
355 (church)
355 (parsonage)
359
361

Center Street (4)

9
11
14-16 (1 building)

Center Street (continued)

17

Chestnut Street (South) (36)

5-7-9-11-13-15 (6 rowhouses)

100-102-104-106-108 (5 rowhouses; duplex to rear also under 100/102 = 7 buildings)

101

103

105

107

110

112

113

115

116

200

204

206

208

210

212

214-216-218-220-222-224-226-228 (8 rowhouses)

Church Street (East) (29)

6

8

10

12

14

16

18

20

22

24

26

28

30

32

34

36

38

40

42

44

46

48

Church Street – East (continued)

50
52
54
56
58
60
432

Edgewood Drive (3)

313
401
437

Euclid Avenue (24)

300
301
305
308
309
313
314
317
320
321
325
329
330 (2 buildings – house & carriage house)
332
333
336
337
340
342
345
346
349
350

Fairview Avenue (23)

309
310
313
314
317
318

Fairview Avenue (continued)

322
323
329
332
333
337
341
345
346
349
352
353
356
357
361
368
369

Forest Avenue (40)

12
13
16
41
61
63
101
104
106
110
111
116
118
120
122
134
138
228 (2 buildings – house & carriage house)
234
238
245
250
303
306
309
310

Forest Avenue (continued)

314
315
318
326
330
336
343
346
352
356
360
366
372

Glen Mawr Drive (4)

106
107
108
109

Greenwood Avenue (36)

107
109
113
115
116
118
120
121
122
123
124
125
127
131
132
133
135
136
137
139
140
141
143
144

Greenwood Avenue (continued)

145
147
149
152
155
156
157
159
160
162
166
170

Heckler Street (5)

309
310
313
317
318

Hendricks Street (17)

9
10
16
19
20
24
27
28
31
32
35
36
43
51
53
55
219

Highland Avenue (10)

306 (2 buildings – house & garage)
310
314 (2 buildings – house & garage)
326
330

Highland Avenue (continued)

331 (2 buildings – house & garage)

332

Knight Road (1)

328

Lemon Street (6)

83

85

87

89

91

93

Lindenwold Avenue (27)

208

213

216

217

221

234

251

300

301

308

311

314

320

326

327

332

333

337

338

342

343

348

349

353

354 (2 buildings – house & garage)

359

Locust Street (11)

103
105
109
111
201
203
207
209
211
213
215

Main Street – South (7)

6
401
403
405
407
409
411

Main Street – North (62)

10
11
12
13
19
22 (located at Butler Avenue/Short Street/Railroad Station- does not front on Main)
24-26 (1 building, duplex; listed on tax records under 32 N. Main)
27
31
32 (two retail stores)
32 (Craft Lumber Yard office)
35
37
47
51
59
61
66
100
103
104
106
107

Main Street – North (continued)

108
110
111
112
115
128
131
132
135
139
147 (address on building – 31 Belmont Avenue)
201
203
205 (2 buildings – house & garage)
207
209
211
213
215
217
219
225
227
229
231
260
269
271
273
275
276
277
279
280
284
288
292
296

Maple Street (1)

Keasbey & Mattison Co. Power Plant

Mattison Avenue (51)

105
109
111
115
117
118
120
121
122
124
129
138
139
143
200
202
204
206
207
208
209
210
211
212
214
215
216
218
220
224
300
301
304
305
307
308
309
311
319
330

Mattison Avenue (continued)

331
335
336
339
342
343
347
351
360 (3 buildings – house, barn & garage/apartment)

Mount Pleasant Avenue (11)

7
15
21
27
31
98
100
160 (see 257 Mt. Pleasant Ave. in tax records)
165
206
217

North Street (28)

1 (see 3 North Street in tax records)
3 (2 buildings – house & garage)
5
6
7
8
10
11
12
13
14
15
17
19
21
23
24
25
27
29
33

North Street (continued)

35
36
37
41
111
180

Orange Avenue (31)

3-5-7-9-11-13-15 (7 rowhouses)
17-19-21-23-25-27-29-31-33-35-37-39 (12 rowhouses)
45
73
75
81
83
84
85
86
88
90
92
94

Park Avenue (19)

11
15
120
124
128
132
136
140
144
147
148
150
151
162
180
182
186
190
300

Pleasant Acres Drive (1)

307

Poplar Street (4)

106

118

120

126

Race Street (10)

4-6-8 (3 rowhouses)

52

56

100

106

110

114

117

Reiff's Mill Road (5)

3

50

54

57

58

Ridge Avenue – South (1)

11-13 (1 building)

Ridge Avenue – North (35)

24 (2 buildings – church & parsonage)

25

27

31

35

36

37

39

42

43

45

46

49

51

54 (2 buildings – house & carriage house)

64

Ridge Avenue – North (continued)

68
111
122
126
127
129
226
230
234
238
242
246
250
254
258
269 (address on building – 279 N. Ridge Avenue)
278

Rosemary Avenue (59)

110
112
114
116
118
124
126
128
136
138
149
159-161-163-165-167-169 (6 rowhouses)
162
164
201
204
206
207-209-211-213-215 (5 rowhouses)
208
210
212
214
216
217
218
220

Rosemary Avenue (continued)

221
222
224
225
226
232
234
238
300
308
311
315
318
319
323
324 (2 buildings – house & garage)
325
328
329
338
346
352
364

School Street (16)

20
24
28
32
34
36
38
40
48
50
52
54
56
58
60
62

Southern Avenue (3)

321
323
325

Spring Garden Street – South (14)

5
7
9
11
13
15
17
19
21
23
25
27
29
110

Spring Garden Street – North (39)

23
29
37
39
41
43
56
60
118
126
202
206
209
210
213
214
217
218
221
222
225
226
230
238

Spring Garden Street – North (continued)

242
250
258
262
265
266
269
270
273
274
277
282
286
288
294

****Note 52 N. Spring Garden is listed under 25 Walnut Street**

Tennis Avenue (41)

40
44
48
52
56
57
60
102
103
105
106
110
111
113
114
118
122
130
131
134
138
142
145
146
150
156

Tennis Avenue (continued)

176
180
326
338
340 (2 buildings, house & garage)
400
404
408
412
416
420
424
456
460

Trinity Avenue (29)

209
211
213
215
218
224
232
237
242
245
246
250
254
255
301
307
311
317
321
327
332 (2 buildings – house & garage)
333
336
337
340
341
349
353

Valley Brook Road (2)

325

327

Walnut Lane (2)

240

244

Walnut Street (8)

4

17

20

25 (duplex at corner of Walnut & Spring Garden Streets)

25 (house and address at 52 N. Spring Garden Street)

40

44

46

Water Street (9)

181-183-185-187-189-191-193-195-197 (9 rowhouses)

Wissahickon Avenue (6)

Keasbey & Mattison Superintendent's Office (no number assigned)

2

4

6

14

16

Woodland Avenue (10)

322

324

331

335

339

343

345

347

349

351

York Street (1)

18

Total Resources Surveyed/Photographed = 912

VII. MAPS

(Please Note: The base map used to key properties surveyed and the 1894 T. M. Fowler Map of Ambler are located in the pocket sections of Volume 1.)