

CHELTENHAM TOWNSHIP

Cheltenham Township is one of the oldest townships in Montgomery County, and includes a rich and varied architectural history dating from the 17th century. Early mills along the Tookany Creek and its tributaries allowed for 19th century industrial development, and its picturesque setting attracted wealthy Philadelphians who developed their elaborate estates, marking the Township's Gilded Age. Improved transportation at the turn of the century made it possible for Philadelphians to live in the newly developing suburbs of Wyncote, Elkins Park and Melrose Park, commuting to work in the city.

In an attempt to document and preserve Cheltenham's rich history, LaMott and Wyncote were listed as Historic Districts on the National Register of Historic Places in 1985 and 1986 respectively, as were several individual properties. In addition, Cheltenham's Historical Commission continues to document individual buildings throughout the Township.

As we begin the 21st century, it is important to balance the needs of progress with Cheltenham's rich history. Through organizations such as the Boards of Historical and Architectural Review [BHAR], Cheltenham Township's Main Street Program and the Historical Commission, this balance is addressed through advocacy, information and education.

WHY PRESERVATION?

- Increases stability and property values
- Fosters economic development, increases business district investment and revitalizes commercial areas
- Preserves physical history of the area
- Promotes appreciation of environment
- Fosters community pride and self-image
- Increases local history appreciation
- Increases local tourism

PRESERVATION RESOURCES

There are several preservation resources available depending on the type or location of the property as well as the information requested. Some groups provide technical or code requirement assistance, while others can suggest approaches to historic property research.

ORGANIZATIONS

- LaMott and Wyncote BHARs [properties within historic districts]
- Cheltenham Township's Main Street Program [properties within Main Street districts]
- Cheltenham Township Historical Commission [historic research, museum]
- Old York Road Historical Society [historic research]
- Historical Society of Montgomery County [historic research]
- Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission [historic research, technical assistance, tax credits]
- Preservation Pennsylvania [education, advocacy, technical assistance, funding]
- Pennsylvania Downtown Center [properties within Main Street districts]
- National Park Service [historic research, technical assistance, tax credits]
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- For information about these organizations please call the Township Administration Building at [215] 887-6200, ext. 112

WEB ADDRESSES

- www.cheltenhamtownship.org
- www.cr.nps.gov
- www.nationaltrust.org

PUBLICATIONS

- *Preservation Briefs*: National Park Service
- *Preservation*: National Trust for Historic Preservation
- *Old House Journal*

HISTORIC DISTRICTS

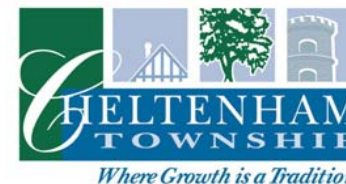
Exterior property changes within the LaMott or Wyncote Historic Districts that are visible from a public street or sidewalk are subject to BHAR review. To determine whether your property is within a historic district or a proposed project is subject to review, please contact Building and Zoning Office at the Township Administration Building at [215] 887-6200, ext. 213.

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Dominique M. Hawkins, AIA, of Preservation Design Partnership in Philadelphia, PA, prepared this publication.



PRESERVING HISTORIC CHELTENHAM TOWNSHIP



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

What are the options for roof replacement?

Although it is always preferable to repair existing roofing or replace roofing to match the original, it is understood that some historic roofing is beyond repair and particularly expensive, including slate and wood shingles.

TIPS

- Compare roofing and installation costs with the warranty period
- Select a roofing material that is visually compatible with the original
- Retain architectural features including dormer windows, chimneys, eaves and soffits
- Use flashing materials that have a longer life span than the roofing

AVOID

- Installing too many layers of roofing and overburdening the support system

What is necessary for fence installation?

Fencing can define the edge of a property, contain children or animals, and keep unwanted trespassers off a property. If it is not properly installed, however, it can create a visual barrier between the street and building.

TIPS

- Repair existing historic fencing
- Install historically appropriate fencing for the building's style
- Install fencing to the rear of the property
- Contact Zoning Officer regarding placement and height regulations

AVOID

- Tall or solid fencing at front yards

Should I replace my drafty windows?

Most historic wood windows can be repaired or parts selectively replaced, with complete window replacement as a final option. Weather stripping and interior storm windows can be added to older windows without detracting from their appearance. If replacement windows are necessary, select replacements that match the original to the greatest extent

possible, including materials, style and appearance. Older windows, doors and shutters are sometimes available in architectural salvage shops. New replacement windows are not always suitable for historic buildings.

TIPS

- Repair existing windows, install weather stripping and interior storm windows
- Replacement windows should match original to the greatest extent possible
- Exterior aluminum storm windows can be painted to match window frame color
- Retain existing operable historic shutters

AVOID

- Installing replacement windows with only an internal or interior muntin grid

Can I clean my masonry building?

Masonry can soil as atmospheric deposits collect on the surface. However, the weathered surface often acts as a protective coating or crust. Removal of the surface while removing dirt can cause significant harm to the remaining stone or brick. Therefore, great care should be taken when attempting cleaning.

TIPS

- Repair mortar prior to and following cleaning
- Use the gentlest means possible, beginning with plain water and a natural bristle scrub brush, adding mild soap if needed

AVOID

- Sandblasting, grinders and wire brushes that can damage the surface of bricks and stone
- Severe chemicals that strip protective coatings

How do I repair missing mortar?

The mortar between stones and bricks expands and contracts with changes in temperature and moisture, slowly weathering away, cracking or falling out. Cracked or open joints allow moisture to migrate into walls or a building's interior, potentially causing substantial damage. Repairing damaged or missing mortar as early as possible minimizes potential damage.

TIPS

- Mortar for older buildings is typically hydrated lime, sand and water
- New mortar should match the original mortar in color, texture and profile
- Use hand tools to clean out mortar joints

AVOID

- Portland cement or hard mortars that can damage old bricks and many types of stone
- Cleaning out joints with power tools that can damage masonry

Can paint be removed from masonry?

Paint can sometimes be removed from brick and stone using chemical processes, although not always successfully. Many paint removal chemicals are dangerous and should be used only by professionals. In addition, older buildings might be painted with lead paint that can be hazardous. Therefore, paint removal is best left to professionals.

TIPS

- Consult with a professional and follow all directions carefully
- Clean using the gentlest means possible; test various products in an inconspicuous area
- Protect all people, pets, wood surfaces, plants and cars during removal process
- Collect and dispose of all chemical residue and paint chips as required by the Township

AVOID

- Sandblasting, grinders and wire brushes that damage brick and stone surfaces
- Harsh chemicals that strip protective coatings

Should I install vinyl or aluminum siding?

Many people install vinyl or aluminum siding because they believe it to be a maintenance-free alternative to wood siding or masonry, or as a means of achieving a "fresh" appearance and covering an existing problem. The cost of repairing an existing wood or masonry wall can be comparable to installing artificial siding. Artificial siding tends to hide problems that continue to deteriorate or accelerate, increasing

future problems. Artificial siding can also be difficult to repair in the future, particularly if your style or color is no longer manufactured.

TIPS

- Repair existing wood or masonry walls in kind
- If artificial siding is the only option, repair existing wall surfaces and causes of damage prior to installation
- Prior to removal of artificial siding, investigate to be sure the original walls can be restored at a price that you can afford
- Old aluminum siding can be sold for scrap

AVOID

- Installing artificial siding over existing walls

What do I need to install signage?

A well designed and well placed sign or awning can make a good impression, attract potential customers and unify a streetscape. By contrast, a confused, poorly designed or poorly placed sign or awning can overwhelm buildings, detract from the area, or give an inappropriate impression, turning customers away and potentially damaging historic materials or finishes. Historically, signs and awnings were attached to and placed near buildings. New signs can use similar features to both enhance the character of the building and convey the necessary information to the public.

TIPS

- Signage or awnings should relate to the property and streetscape
- Provide business information clearly
- Contact Zoning Officer regarding regulations

AVOID

- Signs or awnings that detract from or conceal important building features
- Taped or temporary signs

This guide is intended to provide general information, but does not replace consultation with qualified architects, contractors, the BHARs and the Township's Building and Zoning Office. All projects are subject to Township review for compliance with zoning, building and safety codes.