

## **IX. HISTORIC PRESERVATION ELEMENT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The historical importance of Princeton and the exceptional qualities of its historic architecture and setting have long been recognized both in New Jersey and throughout the country. The authors of *Mansions, Mills, and Main Streets*, a 1975 guide to history and architecture within a 50-mile radius of New York City wrote:

In 1910 Montgomery Schuyler, dean of American architectural critics, advised the “lover of good architecture” to “go to Princeton.” Good advice then; better still today, for few communities have inherited such an extraordinary legacy and guarded it more devotedly through the years. There are literally hundreds of structures of outstanding merit, from all periods, in the green valley between the Stony Brook and the Millstone River.

This wealth of historic and cultural resources creates the unique character that is Princeton. The Historic Preservation Element’s purpose is to enable the community to identify, promote, and encourage the preservation and use of these historic sites, buildings, structures, bridges, roads, and districts for the benefit of future generations.

### **1996 POLICY STATEMENT**

The policy expressed in the Historic Preservation Element is to promote and encourage the preservation and enhancement of those buildings, structures and areas of historic and aesthetic value that reflect the cultural, social, economic, and architectural history of Princeton. Historic architecture is an essential element of Princeton’s physical image today. Historic preservation is undertaken in order to retain buildings and areas for the education, pleasure and welfare of the people of Princeton. The protection and enhancement of historic sites and districts also attracts visitors to Princeton providing an economic benefit to the community.

### **PRESERVING HISTORIC PROPERTIES THROUGH OFFICIAL DESIGNATION AT THE NATIONAL, STATE, AND LOCAL LEVELS**

#### New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended through 1992, promotes a federal/state/local partnership in historic preservation. Among other provisions, it established the National Register of Historic Places to recognize properties of state and local as well as national significance. It provides a measure of protection for properties listed on or determined eligible for the National Register from federally funded, licensed or assisted projects. The responsible federal agency is required to assess the impact of its proposed undertaking on listed or eligible properties and attempt to avoid or mitigate any adverse impact in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and a Federal Preservation entity, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

New Jersey established a State Register in 1970 (N.J.S.A. 13:1B-15.128) with the same criteria for eligibility as the National Register, making listing on the New Jersey Register a pre-requisite for National Register listing. Listing on the New Jersey Register offers a degree of protection against state or publicly funded projects. State register encroachments are reviewed by the State Historic Sites Council in conjunction with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). Appendix D contains the sites and districts in Princeton listed on the State and National Registers and properties which have received a SHPO Opinion of Eligibility or a Determination of Eligibility.

The relationship between these state and national register properties and locally designed historic sites and districts are discussed in the Existing Locally Designated Historic Districts section of this element.

#### Locally Designated Historic Districts

Locally, Princeton has a long history of public and private preservation efforts. In 1967, Princeton Borough and Township created by ordinance a Joint Historic Sites Commission to study historic preservation and propose a common preservation ordinance. The commission conducted a partial survey in 1968 and proposed an ordinance in 1977 which would have created a joint landmarks commission to designate and regulate historic sites and districts. This ordinance was not adopted. Instead, a more comprehensive survey, the Princeton Architectural Survey, was undertaken and completed in 1981.

In 1985, Princeton Borough passed Ordinance #85-12, amending Sections 17A-1, 17A-2, and 17A-203 of the Code of the Borough of Princeton, New Jersey, 1974, and adding Sections 17A-27.1 et. seq. The ordinance designated three historic districts as zoning overlays, the Central Historic Preservation District, the Jugtown Historic Preservation District, and the Mercer Hill Historic Preservation District.

The ordinance was amended in 1986 to add a fourth district, the Bank Street Historic Preservation District. The ordinance established a Historic Preservation Review Committee (HPRC) as an advisory body to the Princeton Regional Planning Board and the Princeton Borough Zoning Board of Adjustment to review and comment upon proposals for alteration and new construction within the historic districts. HPRC also assumed the review powers exercised by the Site Plan Review Advisory Board (SPRAB) in areas of Princeton Borough within the historic districts.

In 1987, Princeton Township also passed a local historic district ordinance. This established a Princeton Township Historic Preservation Commission, and set forth its powers and the standards to be used in exercising them. The ordinance provided that the commission would exercise powers previously delegated to SPRAB for minor applications within designated historic districts and would share such powers with SPRAB for major applications. In addition, the ordinance contained a new Subdivision XIII of Article XI, enabling the Township to designate Historic Buffer Zoning Districts. Fifteen sites and districts have been designated by ordinance. These and more recent additions are listed in this Element.

#### **1996 - 2001 GOALS**

- I. Identify and document historic buildings, structures, sites, roads and districts.**
- II. Promote appropriate utilization of historic properties.**
- III. Protect and enhance historic properties.**
- IV. Protect historic and scenic sites from governmental projects.**
- V. Promote appreciation of historic properties.**

### **1989-1996 CHANGES**

Since 1989, there have been a number of actions to ensure that historically significant sites in the Princeton Community will be preserved. In Princeton Borough, the focus was on design review within the four locally-designated historic districts. In Princeton Township, there were ordinance changes to facilitate preservation efforts: a program for premapping sites was begun, several properties were listed on the State and National Registers, and one new local zoning overlay district was created.

#### Additions to the State and National Registers:

- In 1989, the Princeton Battlefield Historic District was enlarged to include the Stony Brook settlement and the White Farm.
- In 1990, Lake Carnegie was placed on State and National Registers.
- In 1992, the Donald Herring Estate was placed on State and National Registers. This District was enlarged for local designation as the Donald Herring Estate-Old Arreton Road Historic District.
- In 1995, the Mountain Avenue Historic District was placed on the State and National Registers.

#### Ordinance Changes

A number of technical changes have been made to the ordinances which control historic preservation in Princeton Township. Three notable amendments were adopted in 1992.

- Premapping definitions for properties in historic districts were enhanced.
- Archaeological studies and surveys for major development projects are required to be registered in the New Jersey Museum Site Registration Program.
- Permitted the board of jurisdiction to require, when appropriate, a stabilization plan of historic properties for major development projects.

**1996-2001 Strategies**

**I. Identify and document historic buildings, structures, sites, roads and districts**

- A. Expand, maintain, and update the Princeton Architectural Survey.
- B. Focus additional surveys on historic and scenic roads, bridges, streamscapes, landscapes, especially those which may be endangered.

**II. Promote appropriate utilization of historic properties**

- A. Promote original and/or present use of historic properties in their original location whenever feasible and encourage sympathetic adaptive use when original or present use is no longer feasible.
- B. Review zoning ordinances to ensure they encourage the preservation of historic properties and revise zoning ordinances to make them compatible with preservation goals.
- C. Encourage cluster zoning, utilization of transfer of development rights for non-contiguous planned development as allowed by MLUL, and other mechanisms to utilize historic properties and protect their historic landscape features.
- D. Require local officials to consider preservation goals in interpreting regulations and building codes; train local officials quickly in the new New Jersey Rehabilitation Code if and when it takes effect
- E. Work with landowners, public and private agencies to encourage the preservation, acquisition and maintenance of endangered historic properties.

**III. Protect and enhance historic properties**

- A. List by importance those historic properties, sites, buildings, structures, and districts that require protection and recommend appropriate local ordinances to effect that protection.
- B. Review boundaries of locally designated districts and revise boundaries as appropriate in accordance with standards set forth in this Element.
- C. Encourage state legislation permitting Transfer of Development Rights for historic properties.
- D. Revise Borough Ordinances as needed to enable the designation of individual properties.
- E. Intervening or surrounding properties that significantly affect the quality and character of an existing or potential historic site (or sites) should be reviewed for inclusion in a historic buffer district. A historic buffer district ordinance should be studied as a means to protect historic preservation districts.

- F. Review and develop new design standards as needed for historic districts.
  - G. Encourage parking design for historic districts that is unobtrusive, minimizing the effect on the historic character of the setting. Parking should be limited to that necessary to serve the proposed use.
  - H. Accept donations of property, grants of easements, and other forms of less than fee-simple ownership of historic properties.
  - I. Encourage utility companies to plan, schedule, and design infrastructure improvements in a manner that is sensitive to the scale and character of historic and scenic roads and bridges. Develop design standards and other preservation tools for historic bridges and roads
- IV. Protect historic and scenic sites from governmental projects**
- A. Nominate additional sites and districts to the State and National Registers. Investigate other types of designation or legislation that might be available for historic roads and bridges and to protect the mature landscape and historic streetscape elements along these corridors.
  - B. Encourage governmental officials to plan, schedule, and design infrastructure improvements in a manner that is sensitive to the scale and character of historic and scenic roads and bridges. Develop design standards and other preservation tools for historic bridges and roads.
  - C. Promote public awareness of government projects which conflict with community preservation goals.
- V. Promote appreciation of historic properties**
- A. Make available to local officials and the general public the Princeton Architectural Survey and all designation surveys, photographs, and maps. Prepare and disseminate brochures and/or guides to historic architecture and preservation in Princeton.
  - B. Work with homeowners and the business community to develop a comprehensive signage system to inform the public of historically significant sites throughout the community.

## **CRITERIA AND STANDARDS FOR DESIGNATING LOCAL HISTORIC SITES AND DISTRICTS**

Eligibility for local designation of sites and historic preservation districts is the same as for the State and National Registers. The designated area must be historically or architecturally significant on the national, state, or local level, possess integrity (i.e. a high degree of character-defining features) from the period during which it earned its significance. Criteria: The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, culture, and engineering is present in districts, sites, buildings, structure, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials workmanship, feeling, and association, and :

- A. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our past; or
- B. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. that have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Principles to be used in delineating the boundaries of historic districts are listed in Appendix D.

## **CRITERIA AND STANDARDS FOR DESIGNATING HISTORIC BUFFER DISTRICTS**

Historic buffer districts should include intervening or surrounding property significantly affecting by the quality and character of existing or potential historic site or sites. A historic buffer district serves as a buffer zone to historic preservation districts. By virtue of their location, historic buffer districts serve as a gateway or transition to existing or proposed historic preservation district and changes to its streetscape, landscape, or buildings visually affect the historic preservation district to which it connects.

Prior to the designation of a historic buffer district, a brief report which includes a statement of significance, building descriptions, photographs, boundary description/justification, map, statement of what is subject to review, relation to adjacent historic district and design standards or guidelines must be prepared.

## **EXISTING LOCALLY DESIGNATED HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

### Princeton Borough:

1. Jugtown District- This area, at the intersection of Nassau and Harrison Streets was originally settled in 1695 by John Horner. In the early 1900s, it was a thriving hamlet of houses, stores, and a pottery works. The district consists of approximately 25 properties, and along with the 18th and early 19th century Jugtown houses, it includes the late nineteenth and early twentieth century residences along Evelyn Place.

2. Central District - This district encompasses the core of the central business district as well as Princeton University buildings fronting on Nassau Street. It features key buildings which represent diverse periods and architectural styles. These range from Nassau Hall and Bainbridge and MacLean Houses from the mid-eighteenth century to the Greek Revival Nassau Presbyterian Church to the Tudor Lower Pyne to the Collegiate Gothic Madison and Holder Halls to the Colonial Revival Palmer Square.
3. Bank Street District - The wood framed buildings which line Bank Street represent a highly cohesive and well-preserved residential district of vernacular Queen Anne style houses of the late nineteenth century.
4. Mercer Hill District - Primarily residential in character, this district includes the Einstein house, Morven, a number of homes designed by Princeton's noted architect/builder, Charles Steadman, and clusters of Victorian houses. Key institutional buildings include Trinity Church and Princeton Theological Seminary's Alexander Hall.

The local Jugtown district boundaries are the same as the State and National Register Jugtown District; its significance is detailed on the nomination form submitted to the Registers. The remaining three districts fall within, but do not coincide with the Princeton Historic District entered on the State and National Registers. The significance and boundary justification for these three districts were prepared by the Joint Historic Preservation Commission whose report formed part of the legislative history for the Borough ordinance establishing these districts. The significance and boundary justification for the Bank Street Historic District were prepared by the Princeton Borough HPRC.

Princeton Township:

1. Kingston Mill Historic District - (Settled in 1683) - A rural industrial early settlement area centered on a grist mill located on the Millstone River. This district includes the Mill, Gulick Farm, and several 18th century buildings. The boundaries of the local district coincide with those of the National and New Jersey Registers.
2. Princeton Battlefield-Stony Brook Settlement Historic District - (Settled c. 1686-1777) - This district was placed on the National Register in 1966, and enlarged in 1972 and again in 1989. It contains the site of the Battle of Princeton, Quaker Meeting House, Mercer Street bridge over the Stony Brook and the Stony Brook bridge on Route 206 which are National Historic Landmarks. In 1989, the district was enlarged to encompass the area of the Stony Brook settlement established by the first Quaker settlers in the community. The enlarged district is also on the National and New Jersey Registers.
3. Olden Manor (c. 1720) - Olden Lane - This site was owned by the Oldens, one of Princeton's pioneering families, from the 1690's to the 1920's. It has served as the residence of the director of the Institute for Advanced Study; its most famous resident has been Robert Oppenheimer.

4. Mansgrove (c. 1725) - Terhune Road - John N. Simpson built the main block of this house in the 1800's. Mansgrove has strong associations with one of Princeton's pioneering landowners, Judge Thomas Leonard.
5. Maybury Hill (c. 1725) - 346 Snowden Lane - Maybury Hill was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1971. The older portion of the house dates back to the middle of the 18th century with an expansion in the 19th century. Joseph Hewes, a signer of the Declaration of Independence for North Carolina, spent his boyhood here.
6. Castle Howard (c.1760) - Castle Howard Court - It is thought that this building was constructed by Richard Stockton, an uncle of the signer of the Declaration of Independence. There have been many prominent owners which included members of the Stockton family, John Witherspoon, and Captain Howard, a British military officer.
7. Tusculum (c. 1773) - Cherry Hill Road - Tusculum was the summer home and farm of John Witherspoon, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and President of the College of New Jersey (now Princeton University). The National and New Jersey Register boundaries are confined to 20 acres surrounding the house.
8. Joline-Gulick House (c. 1830-57) - Princeton-Kingston Road - This house consisted originally of one structure, a Greek Revival house with a Victorian Wing. The two houses were separated and the Victorian wing was placed on the adjacent lot to the north. The older, main portion is one of the best examples of a vernacular Greek Revival domestic building. Its addition is a distinctly Victorian house, rare in Princeton Township.
9. Delaware and Raritan Canal Historic District - (c. 1832) - The canal was completed in the early 1830's and the Princeton Basin became a shipping terminus. The State of New Jersey owns the canal and it presently serves as a canal state park. The canal is listed on the National and New Jersey Registers of Historic Places.
10. Princeton Basin - (Settled 1834) - This district was significant in regional transportation and commerce from 1834 until 1932. Located along the banks of the Delaware and Raritan Canal, the area developed as a small industrial and shipping center. Seven nineteenth century frame structures survive on the north and west sides of Basin Street.
11. Drumthwacket (c. 1835) 344 Stockton Road - This building on Route 206 is owned by the State of New Jersey and is the official residence of the Governor. The property is on the National and State Register of Historic places. The center block is the original Greek Revival mansion of Charles Smith Olden, who served as Governor during the Civil War.
12. Drumthwacket Outbuildings (c. 1896-99) - The estate's six outbuildings, on Lover's Lane, Greenhouse Drive and Parkside Drive, are designated locally as individual sites.
13. Constitution Hill (c.1896-97) - Constitution Hill East - Constitution Hill is an outstanding example of the work of the Philadelphia firm of Cope & Stewardson in the Tudor Revival

- Style. A 1979 residential cluster, which echoes the Tudor Revival architecture, surrounds the two original buildings but still retains the ambiance of Princeton's turn of the century estates.
14. Edgerstoune (1903) - Winant Road - This house, built for Archibald D. Russell and designed by William Russell of the firm Clinton and Russell of New York City, was the centerpiece of a 273.7 acre estate. It is a good example of the English Tudor Revival. It now serves as the administration building of the Hun School.
  15. Donald G. Herring Estate-Old Arreton Road (c. 1919) - This estate is on the National and New Jersey Registers. The local district is larger and includes two buildings which comprised part of the original Princeton Hospital buildings. These buildings were moved to Arreton Road in 1952.

The location of these districts is shown on the Historic Districts of Princeton map found at the end of this Element.

Two National Register Historic Districts are not locally designated:

The **Mountain Avenue Historic District** is on the north side of Mountain Avenue between the west side of the Mountain Lakes Preserve and Quarry Lane. It forms a unique enclave of middle-class suburban development of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and is associated with the shift of a long-established local family from agriculture to other pursuits.

The **Lake Carnegie Historic District** includes the first artificially made lake in the United States created for crew racing. Since its construction in 1905-06, it has been the site of Olympic trials in 1936 and 1948, and several national major intercollegiate rowing events.

## **SUGGESTED HISTORIC SITES AND DISTRICTS**

The following listings compiled by the Borough's Historic Preservation Review Committee and the Township's Historic Preservation Committee should be evaluated for nomination on the New Jersey and National Registers. Based upon the results of these evaluations designation as local historic sites, districts or buffer districts should be considered.

### Princeton Borough

1. "Club Row" on Prospect Avenue.
2. "Andersontown" District to the west of Jugtown linking the CBD and Jugtown.
3. Extension of boundaries of Mercer Hill Historic Preservation District.
4. Central Residential District, bounded roughly by back lots on the west side of Vandeventer Street, part of Humbert Street, east side of Moore Street (with possible extension to take in Victorian houses east of Moore on Hamilton), back lots of properties on Nassau Street.

5. Tree Streets including Chestnut, Pine, Maple, Linden and Spruce Street.
6. Guernsey Hall and Marquand Park.
7. Morven Tract, bounded south by Stockton Street, west in part by rear lines of Library Place properties and part by Elm Road, north by Wescott, east by Bayard Lane.
8. Greenholm, consisting of 8 properties on a private lane.
9. Prospect House - acquired by the University in 1878, was the University President's home and residence of Woodrow Wilson.
10. Chancellor Green Student Center, Princeton University.
11. "Sesquicentennial" Campus Blair Hall, Campbell Hall, Stanford Little Hall, Princeton University.
12. Extension of existing Central Historic Preservation District on the east side of University Place to include railroad station
13. West College - the Graduate College, located at the end of College Road.
14. Princeton Cemetery at northeast corner of Witherspoon and Wiggins.
15. Witherspoon-John Street area.
16. Fitz-Randolph and Broadmead area.

Princeton Township:

1. Snowden Lane study area, including properties on Van Dyke and Herrontown Road, as well as the Veblen House and surrounding land in Herrontown Woods.
2. Institute for Advanced Study Historic District, including Fuld Hall and the visiting members' housing designed by Marcel Breuer.
3. Ledlie Laughlin House, 203 Drakes Corner Road approximately 2,400 feet from the Great Road.
4. Greenlands (Textile Research Institute), 601 Prospect Avenue, at the corner of Prospect Avenue and Riverside Drive East.
5. Toll House, southeast corner of Nassau Street and Riverside, as well as the Princeton Preparatory School gates on the northeast corner.
6. Colross, near The Great Road off the PDS main drive.

7. 919 Lawrenceville Road, 19th century farm house on Route 206 approximately 500 feet from the Lawrence Township border.
8. 940 Princeton-Kingston Road on the north side between Shady Brook and Dodds Lanes.
9. The Cedar Grove Community located on the west side of Old Great Road.
10. Mount Lucas Community from Ewing Street to Poor Farm Road.
11. Ridgeview Road Houses.
12. The two trolley rights of way: The Johnson Line (along University Place, Alexander Road and through the Institute for Advance Study) and Trenton Traction Company (Johnson Park Area).
13. The Old Princeton Water Co. buildings near the D & R Canal and the old water pumping station in the Rodgers Wildlife Preserve.
14. Cemeteries:
  - The Johnson Family Cemetery-Off Fairway Drive
  - The Heirs of William Updike - Pretty Brook Road
  - The Heirs of Emma Updike - Drakes Corner Road
  - The Dean Mathey Cemetery- Pretty Brook Road
15. All properties (not already in local districts) from the Princeton Architectural Survey of 1981 and in the Bassett Survey of 1967.
16. Rosedale House at Rosedale Road and Rosedale Lane.
17. Albemarle - Boy Choir School on Lambert Drive.
18. The Princeton Water Company, structure at Lower Harrison Street.
19. The Princeton Township Historic Districts - not already listed on the State and National Registers (designation and boundaries prepared by Heritage Studies and dated October 30, 1987).
20. Mountain Lakes Preserve.
21. North side of Mountain Avenue.  
Inter-Municipal Properties
  1. The Graduate College.
  2. Alexander Street Historic District: consider connection to the existing Mercer Hill District.

### Roads

1. "King's Highway" and "Linclon Highway" - Princeton-Kingston Road, Nassau Street, Stockton Street, Stockton Road (Route 27 and Route 206).
2. "Kingston and Princeton Branch Turnpike" - Mercer Street, Mercer Road, Princeton Pike (Route 583).
3. Alexander Street - Formerly known as Canal Street when Commodore Robert Stockton opened the D & R Canal in 1834. Later, the street was re-named for the Rev. Dr. Archibald Alexander who was the first professor (President) of the Princeton Theological Seminary.
4. Quaker Road - The Quaker Meeting House, founded by the original Quaker settlers, was built on this road. Additionally, this road played an important part in the Battle of Princeton.
5. Harrison Street, from the Township border to Nassau Street - This street was laid out in 1749. John Harrison ran a store which supplied silks, velvets and other goods to the Continental Congress when it was in session here.
6. Washington Road - Originally called Penns Neck Road, it now honors George Washington (1732 - 1799) who won the pivotal Battle of Princeton during the Revolutionary War that reversed the tide flowing against the Americans.
7. Pretty Brook Road - This road is named after the Stony Brook.
8. Drakes Corner Road - Theodore Drake, for whom the road was named, owned a large farm near the corner where he had a large peach orchard and a great herd of cattle.
9. Snowden Lane - This lane led to the home of Samuel Finley Snowden who was pastor of the First (now Nassau) Presbyterian Church from 1795-1801. Joseph Hewes, a signer of the Declaration of Independence grew up on Snowden Lane in Maybury Hill.
10. Cherry Hill Road (sections adjacent to historic sites and significant scenic vistas) - One of the highest point in Princeton, is Ridge View Road and Cherry Hill Road, before the present growth of trees, it is said the view was spectacular. Also on this road is a classic Georgian stone mansion "Tusculum", built by John Witherspoon in 1773 while he was president of Princeton University.

### Bridges

The following bridges should be studied to determine if they are eligible for designation as a local, state or national historic structures.

1. Washington Road Bridge (designated State and National Registers)

2. Harry's Brook Bridge (designated State and National Registers)
3. Kingston Bridge (designated State and National Registers)
4. "Dinky" railroad bridge over Stony Brook. In addition, older culverts should be identified and reviewed as potential protected structures
5. Remains of the bridge on Snowden Lane, northeast of Maybury Hill
6. John Pack Selnor bridge over the Stony Brook in the Institute Woods (the "swinging bridge")
7. Mercer Street Bridge over the Stony Brook (designated State and National Registers)
8. Route 206 Bridge over the Stony Brook (designated State and National Registers)
9. Trolley Line Bridge piers and abutments

## **GATEWAYS**

Almost all of the entrances to Princeton are visually recognizable as marking a transition to an area with a distinctive character, conveying the sense of a place differentiated from its surroundings. These "gateways" do not necessarily coincide with municipal boundaries, but rather with geographical features and historical development related to the growth of Princeton's transportation network. Many of these gateways are associated with historic districts, sites and structures. Appendix D discusses the gateway in greater detail.

Historic preservation map