

# WEST CHESTER COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

**BOROUGH OF WEST CHESTER  
CHESTER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**

**February 24, 2011**

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## **I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The West Chester Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan is an initiative of both West Chester Borough and the West Chester Business Improvement District. It was prepared to evaluate the current state of historic preservation initiatives in the Borough and recommend changes and new initiatives to help insure the protection of the Borough's built environment. The planning process involved an extensive community participation component that included a public workshop and individual meetings with six active neighborhood associations. The project was prepared under the direction of the West Chester Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan Task Force, which included representatives from Borough Council, the Planning Commission, the Historical and Architectural Review Board and the Business Improvement District.

Historic preservation has been an established force in planning and development in the Borough, which has enabled it to remain an attractive, compact and walkable community. Local initiatives to maintain and improve the Borough's character date to the 1920s and 1930s with the formation of the West Chester Civic Association and the Concerned Citizens of West Chester, and more active preservation movements began in the post WW II period as buildings were threatened and even demolished to make way for new development and parking. Significant events in this period included the successful effort in 1958 to convince the National Bank of Chester County to reuse rather than demolish the Sharpless-Darlington Building at 13 North High Street. Other buildings were lost however, including the Thomas U. Walter designed County Prison at Market and New Streets in 1960, the Turks Head Inn at Market and High Streets in 1964, and the Mansion House Hotel at Market and Church Streets and Old Main on the then West Chester State College campus in the early 1970s. The loss of these buildings motivated citizens to call for stronger preservation initiatives. The Borough Council authorized the formation of the Board of Historical Review in 1972 and formally adopted a local historic district ordinance and established the Board of Historical and Architectural Review (HARB) in 1988. While West Chester can definitely be considered one of Pennsylvania's most successfully preserved small towns, this plan was prepared to insure that preservation efforts continue.

The plan includes a development history of the Borough, an inventory of historic resources and local preservation programs and ordinances, an evaluation of current and future needs and a recommended action program to enhance and improve preservation initiatives.

### **Development History**

West Chester developed over a period of 280 years (c. 1730 to 2010). Its origins reach back to the farms bounded by the crossroads, but its first role was as a small crossroads hamlet with a tavern as its sole commercial enterprise. It grew into the government center for the County of Chester, and by the early 1800s had added more commercial enterprises as well as buildings for educational, religious, and social activities. By the end of the Civil War it was ready to become a light-industrial center as well. From approximately 1865 to 1930, West Chester was the governmental center for Chester County as well as being the marketing, social, and cultural center for southeastern Chester County. The Great Depression slowed down West Chester's growth and development, as it did in many other communities across the country. The Borough rebounded in the 1940s with an emphasis on construction for residential, commercial, and recreational activities.

West Chester's historic resources reflect two important aspects of the Borough's development. First, they reflect its physical development from c. 1730 until today. An adjunct to this aspect, the architecture reflects the sophisticated social and cultural atmosphere created by West Ches-

ter's commercial and industrial prosperity. Second, these resources represent the economic and social evolution of the Borough as evidenced by the various commercial, governmental, educational, religious, and industrial buildings.

The Borough is able to reflect its rich cultural history and long history of development because only about 10 percent of the resources located within its three historic districts are non-contributing, i.e., they do not contribute to the historic integrity of the Borough. These 460 non-contributing resources do not detract from the Borough's overall historic integrity for two reasons. First, for the most part, they are non-contributing by reason of age, not because of a loss of individual integrity. And second, they are scattered throughout the Borough, occurring either individually as infill or in small pockets that reflect either a re-development effort or new development of vacant land. It is this overall integrity of historic fabric that defines West Chester's character as a governmental, commercial, light industrial, residential, social, and cultural center.

## Historic Resources

The inventory of the Borough's historic resources is presented under Existing Conditions. It is primarily based on the 1979-1982 survey prepared by Alice Kent Schooler and the 2003 inventory prepared by Jane Dorchester as part of the overall project leading to the West Chester Historic District (Boundary Increase) National Register nomination in 2004. In addition to these inventories, which included individual buildings and structures, the Existing Conditions section also includes a discussion of the three National Register Historic Districts in the Borough – the West Chester State College Quadrangle Historic District listed in 1981, the West Chester Downtown Historic District listed in 1985, and the "Boundary Increase" Historic District, which was listed in 2005.

This inventory includes 4,278 individual resources within 3,364 properties or tax parcels. Of those 4,278 resources, 4,206 are classified as buildings, 29 are classified as structures, 8 are classified as objects, and 35 are classified as sites.

## Local Programs and Ordinances

The Borough has pursued several direct and indirect historic preservation initiatives over the years, which include the following:

1. Local Historic District. The Historic District ordinance was adopted in 1989 creating the Board of Historic and Architectural Review, or "HARB." The Local Historic District was initially the same as the National Register Downtown Historic District. The HARB replaced the West Chester Historic Commission, created in the 1970s to designate historic buildings and review proposed renovation and demolition of designated buildings.
2. West Chester Business Improvement District Authority. The "BID" was established in 2000 to manage and promote business development within the context of Borough's historic town center. It replaced an earlier "Main Street" program and a "Commerce Director" position located in the Borough Hall.
3. Historic Carriage House Ordinance. This ordinance was adopted in 2001 as a component of the Zoning Ordinance to provide an incentive to maintain historic carriage houses by permitting alternative uses.
4. Retail Overlay District Ordinance. This ordinance was adopted in 2002 to encourage retail uses along the core commercial blocks of the town center.

5. Height Overlay District Conditional Use Standards. This ordinance was adopted in 2008 to provide for building heights exceeding 45 feet , but not more than 90 feet. To help protect the historic streetscapes of the business district the ordinance provides Architectural Design Standards [§112-33.1.B.(7)] and Historic Preservation Standards [§112-33.1.B.(8)].

### **Current and Future Needs**

Current and Future Needs were identified throughout the course of the project, primarily through the community participation process. Needs are categorized according to the following topics:

1. Education / Better Information
2. Protect Resources Outside the Local Historic District
3. Historic Resources Preservation/Rehabilitation
4. Expand the National Register District(s).
5. Other Issues, Suggestions and Concerns.

Some resources were considered to be threatened – either in imminent danger of demolition or those that currently have no protection or preservation incentive mechanisms in place. Those identified as in danger of demolition include two houses at 122-124 and 126 West Miner Street that are currently proposed for demolition as part of an expansion plan for the First Presbyterian Church and one building at 104 East Market Street (the State Farm Building) which has been proposed for demolition as part of an approved plan for the redevelopment of the adjacent Yearsley's Hardware Store site.

Significant resources lacking protection include two sub-groups: Resources outside the Local (HARB) Historic District, but within one of the three National Register Historic Districts, and resources outside the National Register Districts, but included in the 2003 West Chester Historic Resource Inventory.

### **Plan Recommendations**

Plan recommendations are included in the Implementation Program and Action Plan. The recommendations are presented according to the items listed under Current and Future Needs. In addition to the scope of each recommendation, an implementation program is also included to identify the action needed, groups' and agencies' responsibilities and a time frame to achieve each recommendation. While this plan looks to the HARB to oversee most of the implementation strategies, other Borough Boards and Commissions – such as the Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Business Improvement District Board – can also contribute in these efforts. The Borough is also fortunate to have an active network of Neighborhood Associations that can be called on to help implement activities in their respective neighborhoods. This Plan also recognizes a role for professional preservation services that the Borough has used for special projects, such as the National Register Historic District Nominations, and for on-going needs associated with administering the Local Historic District review process.

## **II. COMMUNITY GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES**

Based on the Public Participation and working with the Plan Task Force, the following goals and objectives were developed for the West Chester Comprehensive Historic Preservation Plan.

### **Goal 1: Preserve and protect the historic character of the Borough.**

Objectives:

- Define the historic character of the borough using information from its development history and both historic and recent historic research and historic resources surveys of the Borough.
- Review existing tools used to advance historic preservation in the Borough to examine their effectiveness and need for improvement.
- Investigate other available historic preservation tools to determine their appropriateness for addressing the Borough's preservation needs.

### **Goal 2: Increase public awareness about the Borough's historic and architectural resources and appropriate preservation techniques.**

Objectives:

- Include an extensive public participation program in the planning process to promote the value of historic preservation, help residents better understand the existing preservation tool and initiatives in the Borough, and to solicit comments regarding resident and property owner concerns about historic preservation.
- Inventory existing public awareness programs and explore ways to improve and expand these programs.

### **Goal 3: Identify historically significant resources.**

Objectives:

- Compile a brief development history of the Borough to better provide a historic context for the evaluation of the historic resources and preservation needs.
- Evaluate the results of the 2003 Borough Historic Resources Inventory.
- Compile maps of the Borough's historic resources and its local and National Register historic districts.

### **Goal 4: Provide a list of plan recommendations that identify implementation responsibilities and likely funding scenarios.**

Objectives:

- Recommend actions to help promote public knowledge of existing historic resources and available tools to help advance their preservation.
- Recommend new and/or expanded preservation initiatives as required to address identified preservation needs.
- Identify responsibilities among the Borough commissions and agencies for specific implementation tasks.
- Identify funding sources that may be available to help with the plan implementation process.



### **III. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE DEVELOPMENT HISTORY OF WEST CHESTER<sup>1</sup>**

West Chester's development between c. 1730 and 1979 can be divided roughly into four periods, as follows:

- Pre-Borough Development, c. 1730 to 1798
- Early Borough Development, 1799 to 1829
- Commercial and Industrial Development, 1830 to 1930
- Mid-Twentieth Century Development, 1931 to 1979

Three factors played a significant role in the development of West Chester. First, the street grid pattern established in 1786 would be followed more or less religiously until the mid-Twentieth Century, when the suburban fashion for winding and dead-end roads was introduced in residential developments inserted near the Borough's boundaries or as infill into the traditionally laid-out Borough. Second, the Borough limits, established in 1788 when it became a County Town<sup>2</sup>, have never changed. And third, and most importantly, it has been the County Seat of Chester County almost since its inception and so therefore the center of government for Chester County for 211 years.

From 1786 through 1930, West Chester grew steadily. Development expanded, more or less, out from the intersection of Gay and High Streets, towards the boundaries of the Borough. The southwest quadrant saw the first planned residential development which was started in 1829 by William Everhart; however, there were pockets within the ever-expanding Borough that weren't developed until long after the surrounding neighborhood. Nevertheless, if one were to walk from the courthouse in a straight line in any direction, the architecture along the way would tell an accurate story of the development of West Chester from at least 1799 until at least 1960, when West Chester's outward growth was restricted to outlying pockets and infill.

#### **Pre-Borough Development Period, c. 1730 to 1798**

The Borough of West Chester grew out of a small hamlet named "Turk's Head" after the tavern that stood at its center. The tavern was built in c. 1755 as a log home, but because of its location at the crossroads of the Philadelphia Road to Lancaster and the Wilmington Road to the Great Valley, its owner, Phineas Eachus, soon felt compelled to apply for a tavern license in order to accommodate the many travellers on the roads. The hamlet of Turk's Head had come into existence by 1768 when Eachus was forced to sell the tavern because of financial difficulties.<sup>3</sup>

By the 1760s, a good number of the inhabitants of Chester County had settled in the farthest reaches of the County. These folks found it increasingly inconvenient to have to travel from the far corners of the County to the County Seat at the Borough of Chester on the Delaware River to conduct legal business, including the recording of deeds and registering of wills. They began

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<sup>1</sup>For more information about West Chester's development history, please see the references listed in the bibliography.

<sup>2</sup>At this time period, when a county seat was established and if it was established as part of a larger municipality, it was first designated a "County District", then it could become, with an increase in population, a "County Town", and then finally, once it had reached a designated population, it could become a full fledged municipality in its own right.

<sup>3</sup>Jane E. Dorchester, "West Chester in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century: From Small Hamlet to Thriving County Town," in *West Chester, the First 200 Years: 1799-1999 Bicentennial Souvenir*, ed. Paul A. Rodebaugh, Jeffrey Rollison and Eric Chandlee Wilson (West Chester, Pa.: West Chester Bicentennial History Committee, 1999), p. 2.

agitating to have the County Seat moved to a more central location in the County. This agitation set off a 25-year struggle between those inhabitants located close to the County Seat at Chester and those who lived farther afield.<sup>4</sup>

By September 1777, when the British Army marched through the hamlet on its way to the Battle of the Clouds (near present-day Hershey's Mill, East Goshen Township), the hamlet consisted of the brick Turk's Head Tavern (constructed in 1768 to replace the log one), one log school house, one log store, and a handful of farmhouses in close proximity<sup>5</sup>, including the Taylor Tenant House, constructed in c. 1730 (now a ruin), the Dower House, constructed in c. 1750 (still extant), and the Newlin-Parke Farmhouse and its spring house, constructed in c. 1750 (both still extant).



**Figure 1: Hoopes-Ashbrige House, Pre-Borough Development Period**

By 1784, there were enough inhabitants of Chester County in favor of moving the County Seat to a more centralized location that the State Assembly finally took the matter seriously. With the help of some local enterprising farmers, the village of Turk's Head, located as it was at the important crossroads of the Philadelphia and Wilmington Roads, was designated as the site of the new County District. One result of this designation was that the street grid pattern still in existence today was established in 1786. The original grid consisted of three streets running east and west, Chestnut, Gay, and South (now Market) Streets, and three streets running north and south, Walnut, High, and Church Streets. On September 25, 1786, after a very contentious fight, including the raiding of the site of the new courthouse, the Chester County Courts were removed to the newly constructed courthouse in the County District located at Turk's Head.<sup>6</sup> By the end of 1786, the village consisted of one courthouse, four taverns, one schoolhouse, one store, and a handful of houses situated within the newly established street grid.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, the farms located within the Borough boundaries were expanding their physical plants to accommodate second and third generation owners. For example, the Hoopes-Ashbrige Farmhouse (still extant) was constructed in 1786 for Samuel Hoopes on a portion of the Hoopes Farm, one of the original farms located within the Borough limits. Many of these buildings were constructed of log or frame and so were replaced in later development periods with buildings constructed of more substantial and permanent materials.

The inhabitants of the tiny hamlet of Turk's Head quickly became boosters of that place. By 1787, they thought that being a mere County District was inhibiting their village's ability to grow. So they petitioned the State Assembly to designate the village a County Town, which would allow them to elect their own Justices of the Peace. On March 3, 1788, the State Assembly obliged and went several steps further. "An Act For Erecting a Certain District of Country in Which the Court-House in Chester County Stands into a County Town" officially gave West Chester its name and laid out its boundaries as they exist today.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 3.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, ps. 3-4.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, ps. 4-5.

At the same time, those inhabitants of the County living in and around the Borough of Chester decided that they had had enough. They petitioned the State Assembly to create a new County with the Borough of Chester as its County Seat. On September 26, 1789, the State Assembly created the County of Delaware with Chester as its Seat.

Between 1786 and 1798, the County Town of West Chester began to grow steadily. This growth came about because the County government provided a variety of work opportunities that attracted employees who then became residents of the County Town. At the same time, anyone having any kind of business with the County was forced to visit, and quite often stay in, West Chester. This influx of people then attracted a variety of commercial ventures to the County Town. These commercial ventures, mostly taverns, shops, and stores, provided goods and services to County employees, and residents of and visitors to West Chester.

By the time the County of Delaware had settled itself at Chester (c. 1791), the County Town of West Chester consisted of one courthouse, one newly erected public records building, one church, six taverns, one schoolhouse, at least two stores, Aiken's Drugstore building constructed in 1793 (still extant) and the McGuirk-Darlington Building constructed in c. 1795 (still extant), and a growing number of houses<sup>9</sup>, including the Smith-Sharpless House constructed in 1791 (still extant) and their accompanying outbuildings.

By 1798, West Chester had become a hub for transportation with seven major state or turnpike roads that were laid out between c. 1730 and 1798 and that connected the Borough to the outside world. All of these roads are still extant, although their roadbeds have been changed and modified over time (please see Map #1: West Chester's Early Roads). These roads are as follows:

1. The Goshen Road, laid out prior to 1735 and extended into East Bradford Township in 1743, became the northern border when the Borough was established. This road connected Philadelphia with East Bradford Township.<sup>10</sup>
2. The Philadelphia (Great) Road, laid out in 1735, connected Philadelphia with points west as far as the Brandywine Creek.<sup>11</sup>
3. The Wilmington to Great Valley Road, laid out prior to 1753, connected the mills, quarries, and farms of the Great Valley (Chester County) with the port of Wilmington, Delaware.<sup>12</sup> The intersection of the Philadelphia and Wilmington Roads still serves as the heart of the Borough of West Chester.
4. The Boot Road, laid out in 1789, connected West Chester with the Lancaster Road and points northeast. It utilized parts of Goshen Road.<sup>13</sup>
5. Brandywine Creek to West Chester Road, laid out in 1790, connected West Chester with the Brandywine and points south and west.<sup>14</sup> Part of this road became the southern boundary of the Borough.
6. The Strasburg Road, laid out in 1793-1794, connected Philadelphia and Strasburg, Lancaster County and utilized parts of Goshen Road and the Philadelphia Road.<sup>15</sup>
7. The West Chester Turnpike, laid out in 1798, connected Philadelphia with West Chester and utilized parts of the Philadelphia Road and Strasburg Road.

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid, p. 2.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid, ps. 4-5.

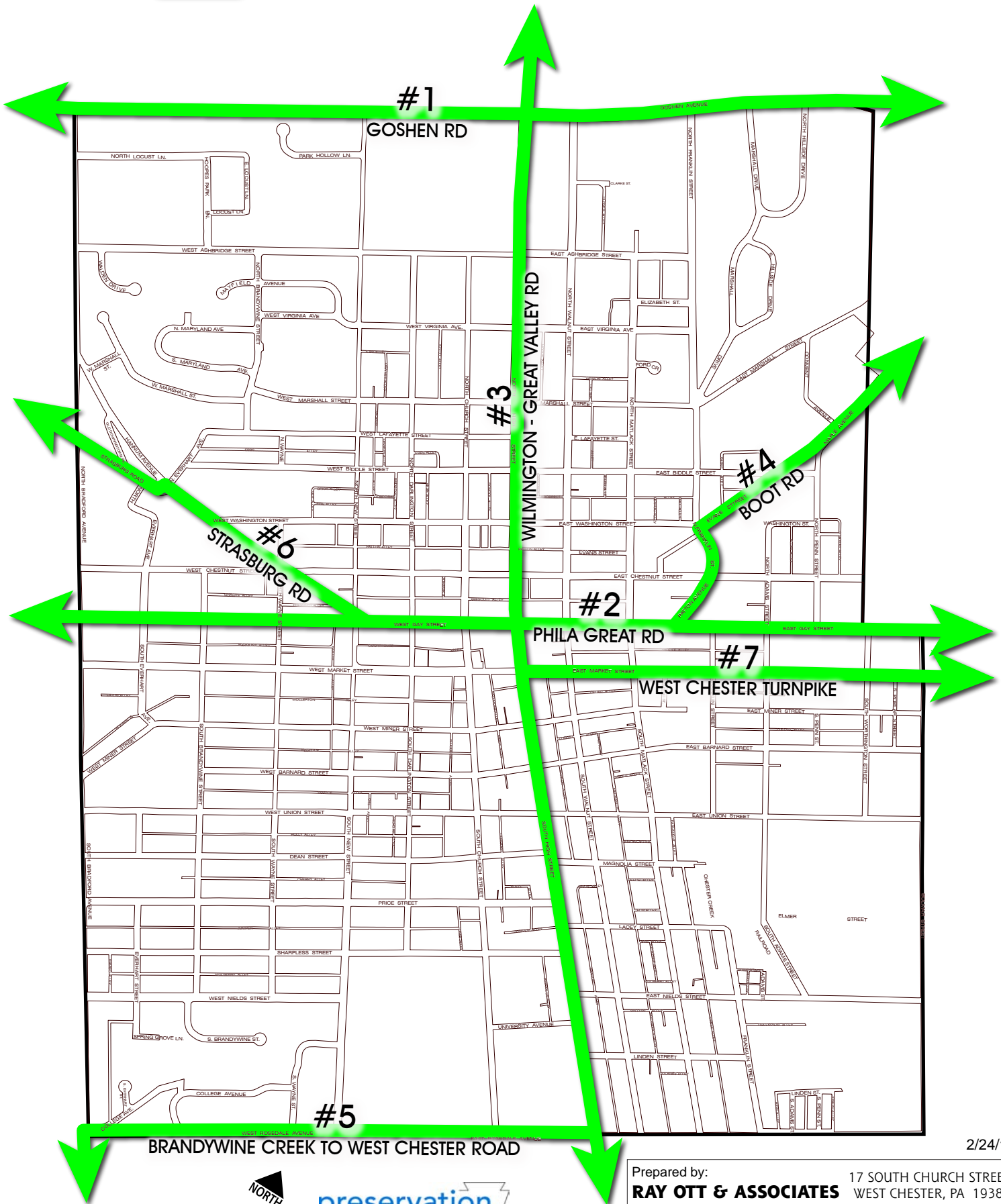
<sup>15</sup>Ibid, p. 5.

In conclusion, during the Pre-Borough Development Period, the Borough's character changed from that of a rural hamlet to one of a thriving village. It grew from a tiny, rural hamlet surrounded by agricultural lands to a small, but thriving, village which served as the county seat but was still surrounded by predominately agricultural lands. Its predominate landmarks were the Chester County Courthouse and the Public Records Building and while stone and brick, which eventually would become the ubiquitous construction material of the Borough, had already been introduced, log and frame were the predominate building materials of this development period. At the same time, folk or vernacular was the predominate style of the village's buildings. The village evinced a mix of urban buildings, such as taverns and stores, and agricultural or rural buildings, such as barns and spring houses, with a sprinkling of residential buildings and carriage houses and stables.

Today, there are ten extant resources from this development period located within the Borough's boundaries. They represent the Borough's early agricultural, commercial, and governmental roots and include three farmhouses, the ruins of a tenant house, one springhouse, one stable/carriage house, the site of the original courthouse and public records building, two shop buildings, and one urban house.

**BOROUGH OF WEST CHESTER  
COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN  
MAP #1: HISTORIC ROADS**

 **HISTORIC ROADS**



2/24/11

## Early Borough Development Period, 1799 to 1829

On March 28, 1799, after thirteen years of steady growth, the State Assembly passed an Act incorporating the Borough of West Chester as a full-fledged municipality of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.<sup>16</sup>

Once West Chester became a borough, its growth increased exponentially. There are several reasons for this increase. First, as the County government grew, it attracted both more employees who moved to the Borough and more shops and stores, as well as offices, providing goods and services to both the County and Borough residents and visitors. These shops, stores, and offices also provided employment opportunities in their own right that attracted even more residents. Urban houses that were constructed during this time period include the following extant buildings: the William Brown House constructed in c. 1815, the Sharpless-Kift House constructed in 1818, the Dr. W. K. Thorp House constructed in c. 1820, two of the houses in Ogden's Row, the first row of houses constructed in West Chester (c. 1829), and the Judge Thomas Bell House constructed in c. 1829.

Second, once the influx of residents rose from a trickle to a steady stream, general commercial development increased. Extant commercial buildings constructed during this period include Ehne's Bakery constructed in c. 1820 and the Hemphill Building constructed in c. 1825. Third, the farms within the Borough limits were continuing to increase their physical plants in response to the needs of the farm families. The Sharpless Homestead and its stable (both still extant) were constructed in c. 1805 on the Sharpless Farm, the Spackman-Reynolds Farmhouse (still extant) was constructed in c. 1810 on the Spackman Farm, the William Bennett Farmhouse (still extant) was constructed in c. 1810 on the Bennett Farm, and the Spring Grove Farmhouse (still extant) was constructed in c. 1820. And fourth, as more residents settled in the Borough, they began to demand cultural and social amenities, especially schools for the education of their children.



**Figure 2: Hemphill Building, Early Borough Development Period**

Early on, West Chester became a center for education. In fact, the village of Turk's Head boasted a log school (demolished) before it became the County District. The earliest academy or private school in West Chester, founded in 1813, was the West Chester Academy (demolished). Following closely on the heels of the need for schools was an increased need for places to worship. By 1798, the Roman Catholics had already established Christ Church (demolished) on West Gay Street. The Society of Friends followed next when they erected their meeting house on North High Street in 1813 and the Methodists soon followed in 1816 with a small meeting house (demolished) erected at the back of a lot fronting West Gay Street.

By the 1820s, West Chester was prosperous and cultivated enough to be perceived as a desirable place for the well-to-do to live. Two of the earliest mansions to be built within the Borough limits were constructed during this period. They are the Timothy Brick Mansion (still extant) constructed in c. 1820 and the Shields Mansion (still extant) constructed in c. 1825.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid, p. 6.



In 1829, another state road was proposed to be laid through West Chester. This proposed road was to start in New Hope, Bucks County, Pennsylvania and end in Cecil County, Maryland. The road was to enter the Borough in the northeast quadrant, utilize existing streets to wend its way south and west and, originally, it was to exit the Borough via West Union Street. Before the road was laid out, William Everhart, an enterprising businessman of the Borough looking for development opportunities, purchased the 110-acre Wollerton Farm in the southwest quadrant and laid out new streets (named after such friends as Charles Miner and William Darlington), extended Church Street south, subdivided the farm into lots for residential use and sold or developed them. These lots were laid out between Market and Barnard Streets, and, originally, from High to New Streets (the development was later expanded west to Wayne Street). At the same time, Everhart was helping to develop West Chester's business district by offering store lots and erecting the Mansion House Hotel along West Market Street<sup>17</sup> (then known as South Street). By the time the New Hope to Maryland Line State Road was laid out by the state, it exited the Borough along the newly laid Miner Street, instead of Union Street. Today, Route 842 out of West Chester follows, more or less, the route of this road. Everhart's very successful development venture started the building boom that characterized West Chester's Commercial and Industrial Development Period.

In conclusion, during the Early Borough Development Period, the Borough's character changed from that of a thriving rural village to one of a thriving young borough. It grew from a small, but thriving, village which served as the county seat but was still surrounded by predominately agricultural lands to a young borough which was a thriving market and governmental center surrounded by agricultural lands; however, by the end of this developmental period, the agricultural lands located within the Borough limits had begun to be drastically reduced. Its predominate landmarks, besides the Chester County Courthouse and the Public Records Building, included several taverns and the first of many mansion houses erected by the well-to-do. By the end of this period, West Chester's physical appearance had changed from being predominated by frame and log construction, to being predominately brick and stone, including serpentine. At the same time, folk or vernacular was still the predominate style of the Borough's buildings, although there were a sprinkling of buildings designed in the Federal or Greek Revival styles. The Borough still evinced a mix of urban buildings, such as taverns and stores, and agricultural or rural buildings, such as barns and spring houses, but with a growing number of urban residential buildings as well as the necessary carriage houses and stables.

Today, there are twenty-five extant resources from this development period located within the Borough's boundaries. They represent the Borough's agricultural roots and its early commercial, social, and cultural growth and include (but are not limited to) four farmhouses, one stable, four urban houses, four shops, two mansion houses, one commercial building, and two row-houses.

### **Commercial and Industrial Development Period, 1830 to 1930**

As transportation technology matured, West Chester, as a county seat, became an obvious and natural destination point for railroads. The first railroad to link the Borough to the outside world was the West Chester Railroad which was constructed in 1832 and linked West Chester with the Pennsylvania Railroad's Main Line at Intersection (now the Borough of Malvern).<sup>18</sup> The

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<sup>17</sup>Alice Kent Schooler, "First Everhart Tract Historic District" (Harrisburg, Pa.: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Inventory of Historic Places, 1981), p. 8a, photocopied.

<sup>18</sup>Jim Jones, Railroads of West Chester 1831 to the Present (West Chester, Pa.: By the author, 2006), p. 11.



**Figure 3: Sharpless Separator Works, Commercial & Industrial Development Period**

completion of this railroad was the impetus for the building boom in West Chester<sup>19</sup> which was begun by William Everhart in 1829. The second railroad, the West Chester and Philadelphia Railroad, was laid out between 1851 and 1858 and connected West Chester directly to Philadelphia, via Media, Delaware County (this railroad still exists, but none of its accompanying buildings survive). These railroads were first utilized by local farmers who took advantage of them in order to market their produce in Philadelphia, Wilmington, Lancaster, and points in between and local business owners who used them to have goods and supplies delivered to them. However, industry did not follow hard on the heels of the creation of the railroads. By the eve of the Civil War, West Chester was a bustling market town whose major “industries” were such commercial enterprises as “banks, [private] schools, and firms like James Agnew’s cigar shop which employed ten people”<sup>20</sup> and agricultural-based light industries such as horticultural nurseries as well as planing mills. By the time the Civil War had ended, however, West Chester had made business connections during the War that stood her enterprising citizens in good stead after the War. Then, and only then, did the industrialization of West Chester begin.<sup>21</sup> The industries that developed between 1864 and 1930 included, but were not limited to, a wheel works, an agricultural machine manufacturer, two tag manufacturing companies, numerous brickyards and cement block manufacturers, lumber and stone yards, an electric company, several construction companies, a crayon company, a cold storage company, a street railway company, a telephone switchboard manufacturing company, a gasoline engine manufacturing company, a mushroom growing company, a grocery packaging company, an air compressor company, and a radiator manufacturing company.

Two of these industries came about in order to take advantage of the availability of specific natural resources. The east end of West Chester is located within the flood plain of Goose Creek

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid, p. 10.

<sup>20</sup>Jim Jones, Made in West Chester The History of Industry in West Chester, Pennsylvania 1867 to 1945 (West Chester, Pa.: By the author, 2003), p. 13.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid, p.14.

(which eventually empties into Chester Creek). This flood plain provided a steady supply of clay of a quality suited for construction purposes. This supply of clay led to the establishment of numerous brickyards, mostly located on the east side of West Chester. One of the most successful brickyards, located at Franklin and Barnard Streets, was owned by Colonel Henry Guss, who remodelled the Rivinus-Hickman-Guss House (still extant) into a Victorian Villa.<sup>22</sup> At the same time, West Chester had easy access to stands of hickory and other timber used for manufacturing wagon wheels; as the supply of hickory dwindled in New England because of the Civil War and its huge demands for lumber, wagon wheel manufacturers began ordering wheel spokes from West Chester's Hoopes Brothers.<sup>23</sup> As a result of the demand for hickory wheel spokes and the proximity of a good supply of hickory and other timber, the Hoopes Brothers established a wagon wheel works which they located on East Market Street in 1867. By 1870, the works was manufacturing entire wheels, not just the spokes, as well as other wooden items such as hatchet handles<sup>24</sup>.

Many of these industries were located in buildings originally constructed for commercial purposes. As some of these industries grew, they constructed bigger facilities for themselves making way for new industries who moved into their old smaller quarters. Today, many of the buildings utilized by these industries still exist, including the 1850 Haines Planing Mill building, the c. 1884 Hoopes Brothers and Darlington Wheel Works office building, the Denney Tag Company building (constructed in 1841 as a school and expanded after c. 1888 when "the Denney" moved in), the c. 1895 George Kerr Lumberyard office building, the Sharpless Separator Works complex which was constructed between c. 1894 and 1901, the c. 1900 Atlantic Refining Company building complex (the tanks are gone), the 1901 Sun Electrical Manufacturing Company building, the 1908 Keystone Tag Company building, the c. 1925 Lasko Manufacturing Company building, and the c. 1929 Grocery Store Products building, to name a few.

West Chester was and is foremost a commercial center; so while industry began to develop and the county government grew and residents' demands for the finer things increased, commerce continued quietly and steadily to build a strong economic base for the Borough and its diversity of ventures and enterprises. By 1870, West Chester was such an important market town for the County's farmers, some of whom travelled from as far as fifteen miles away, that it was able to support two market houses, one on or along West Market Street and one on North Church Street. The Church Street Market House, constructed in c. 1870, is still extant.

At the same time, commercial ventures continued to move into the Borough. These ventures included banks, department stores, commercial garages, insurance companies, and printing presses as well as stores supplying basic goods and products, and specialty shops. Many of the buildings associated with the major commercial ventures are still extant. They include: the West Chester Pottery House constructed in c. 1831, the Bank of Chester County constructed in 1836 and designed by Thomas U. Walter, the Chester County Trust Company building constructed in 1905, the Farmers & Mechanics (F&M) building constructed in 1907, Benson's Department Store building constructed in c. 1910, the Turk's Head Garage constructed in c. 1910, the First National Bank of West Chester constructed in 1912 and designed by Baker and Dallett, the Templeton Printers Building constructed in 1929, the F. C. Woolworth (Woolworth's) building

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<sup>22</sup>Alice Kent Schooler, "Historic Sites Survey of the Borough of West Chester" (Harrisburg, Pa.: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Bureau for Historic Preservation, 1980-1981), "Rivinus-Hickman-Guss House", Survey Form #42-029-WC-19A-15.

<sup>23</sup>Morning Republican, 28 March 1899; "Biography of Thomas Hoopes", [1925] (Hagley Museum Manuscript Collection, Accession #1294, Item #2).

<sup>24</sup>Made in West Chester, ps. 23-24.

constructed in c. 1930, the Greentree Building constructed in c. 1930, and the West Chester Laundry constructed in c. 1930, to name a few.

All of these commercial and industrial ventures were supported by a steady influx of workers and laborers, most of whom settled in the Borough. Many of these folks lived in boarding homes and apartments. But as the Nineteenth Century wore on, many of them, including upwardly mobile African-Americans, found that they were able to purchase their own homes. In fact, of the 2,602 houses inventoried in 2003 as having been constructed between 1830 and 1930, 2,511 were constructed for the working classes (i.e. persons who did not own their own businesses but worked for others instead).

As the African-American residents became more economically independent, they began making more contributions to West Chester's culture and society, above and beyond helping to provide the muscle power for West Chester's economic growth. These contributions include the establishment of businesses, restaurants, hotels, and social clubs. Among the extant buildings that housed African-American enterprises are: Moses Hepburn's Magnolia House Hotel constructed in c. 1860; 34 West Gay Street, the location of Charles Burns' Great Oyster House (1891 to 1916) which was also the location of James Spence, Jr.'s Restaurant (1920s); James Spence, Sr.'s Spence's Cafe or Oyster House constructed in c. 1890 and remodelled in c. 1906; the Captain Levi M. Hood Lodge constructed in c. 1890, Star of the West Tent building constructed in 1897, and McCormick's Hall (aka Star Social Club) constructed in 1908.

At the same time, the County government grew as the population in the County increased. By the 1840s, the needs of the County had outgrown the original courthouse erected from 1784 to 1786 and the public records building erected in 1791. The County hired architect Thomas U. Walter and from 1846 to 1848 a new courthouse (still extant) was erected on the courthouse lot behind and to the north of the old courthouse. When the new building was completed, the old one was torn down. The County continued to grow at such a pace that in 1891, T. Roney Williamson was hired to design the first annex to the building, facing Market Street.

As the County government grew, so did the Borough government. Between 1830 and 1930, the Borough grew from providing very basic services such as maintaining the streets and fire protection, which was all volunteer (as it is today), to providing all the basic services residents have come to expect in order to insure their health, welfare, and safety. West Chester's first fire company, First West Chester, was founded in 1799, Goodwill was founded in 1833, and Fame was founded in 1838. Of these three companies, two of their fire halls still stand: First West Chester's 1888 T. Rooney Williamson designed building and Goodwill's 1900 building. By 1848, the Borough was supplying fresh water to the residents and businesses of the Borough through a gravity-fed water supply system. The waterworks was located at the highest point of the Borough, which is the northeast corner of East Biddle and North Matlack Streets, and the reservoir was located further north in the northeast corner of the Borough. A caretaker's house was constructed near the reservoir and a park, Marshall Square, was laid-out around the waterworks. The Reservoir House, constructed in c. 1850, is still extant as is Marshall Square Park. The waterworks were replaced in 1889 by a monument to the 97<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment. Originally, the Borough government leased space for its offices in various buildings including the McConkey Mansion (demolished) and the Farmers and Mechanics (F&M) Building. Eventually, the Borough Burgesses decided it was time the Borough had its own building. In 1912, the first Municipal Building was constructed. It is still extant.

Other government services that were located in the Borough included a Post Office. While the Post Office was established in 1804, it was located in various buildings, including stores and

taverns, until 1907 when a Post Office Building was constructed. The West Chester Post Office still operates out of this building. The West Chester Armory, now known as the Maj. John Charles Groff Memorial Armory, was constructed between 1916 and 1917. It was designed by Philip Johnson and is still used today to house Company B of the Pennsylvania National Guard.

With the continuing expansion of the County government and the commercial and industrial development of West Chester came an increase in residential development and a demand for such social and cultural amenities as more and improved schools, more houses of worship, and newspapers, libraries, meeting halls, auditoriums, and social clubs. The West Chester Academy, established in 1813, went through several permutations until 1871, when it became West Chester State Normal School. In 1927, its name was changed to West Chester State Teachers College.<sup>25</sup> Four of the original resources from the Normal School era and four original resources dating from its days as West Chester State Teachers College are still extant on the campus of West Chester University. Other academies, boarding schools, and private, parochial, and public schools followed the Academy, including Price's School opened in 1830<sup>26</sup>, Joshua Hoopes' School opened in 1836,<sup>27</sup> the High Street Friends School constructed in c. 1850, the St. Agnes Parochial School constructed in 1910, and the Biddle Street Public School constructed in 1917. Both the private schools lasted for at least one generation and the buildings are still extant. The Friends School and St. Agnes School are still active in their original buildings and the Biddle Street School is still extant.

After the Catholics, Quakers, and Methodists, the next religious group to erect a place of worship in the Borough were the Presbyterians. They erected their first and still extant church building, designed by Thomas U. Walter, in 1834. They were quickly followed by the African Methodist Episcopalians, the first African-American congregation in West Chester, who constructed their first building (extant) in 1834 on West Miner Street, in 1861 they moved to a building (demolished) at the corner of East Barnard and South Adams Streets, and in c. 1868 they moved into their present church which was enlarged in 1879. In 1841, the Methodists moved to a new church building (extant), also designed by Thomas U. Walter, before moving on to their final edifice, designed by Wesley Blithe, in 1916. Between 1853 and 1861, the Roman Catholics replaced their 1798 Christ Church with the first St. Agnes Church, which was then replaced with the current church building, designed by Henry D. Dagitt, in 1926.<sup>28</sup> The Baptists erected their extant church, purportedly built to a design by Samuel Sloan, in 1857<sup>29</sup>, and the Episcopalians erected their current church, designed by Rev. John Bolton, in 1868.<sup>30</sup> In the same year, the Society of Friends enlarged their 1813 meeting house by removing its western half and replacing it with a large two-story brick addition. Another seven extant religious buildings, not specifically mentioned, were constructed between c. 1830 and c. 1930.

Once schools and places of worship were established in the Borough, the residents began looking for other ways to improve their lives. Newspapers, libraries, meeting halls, auditoriums, social clubs, and places of entertainment were established and flourished. Many of the buildings erected to house these amenities still exist today, some still being used for their original purposes. These buildings include the Village Record (newspaper) building constructed in 1833, the

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<sup>25</sup>Richard J. Webster, "West Chester State College Quadrangle Historic District" (Washington, D. C.: Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places Office, 1981), p. 8.1, photocopied.

<sup>26</sup>"West Chester Sites Survey", "Misses Price's Seminary", Survey Card #42-029-WC-20A-10.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid, "Joshua Hoopes' School", Survey Card #42-029-WC-11A-3.

<sup>28</sup>Alice Kent Schooler, Livable West Chester (West Chester, Pa.: Chester County Historical Society, 1985), p. 43.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid, p. 42.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid, p. 63.

Chester County Times (newspaper) building (aka the Lincoln Building) constructed in 1834, the Chester County Cabinet of Natural Sciences constructed in 1836 and designed by Thomas U. Walter, Horticultural Hall constructed in 1848 and designed by Thomas U. Walter, the West Chester Public Library constructed in 1889 and designed by T. Rooney Williamson, the Italian Social Club constructed in 1912, the New Century Clubhouse constructed in 1914 and designed by Ralph E. White, the Masonic Lodge constructed in c. 1920, the West Chester YMCA building constructed in c. 1920, the Odd Fellows Hall constructed in 1921, and the Warner Movie Theatre lobby constructed in c. 1930 and designed by Rapp and Rapp (the auditorium was demolished in c. 1982).

Once West Chester was linked to Philadelphia and points west and north by rail, it became a destination of choice for the wealthy looking for a convenient, quiet, but sophisticated place to resort to in summer or retire to in old age. Many of the stately homes found throughout the Borough were built for wealthy Philadelphians and Baltimoreans as their summer or retirement homes as well as for prominent citizens of the Borough. Extant stately homes include the Philip Sharpless Mansion constructed in 1839, the Rivinus-Hickman-Guss Mansion constructed in c. 1845, Mayfield constructed in 1848, the Fawkes-Lee Mansion constructed in c. 1850, the Joshua Hartshorne House constructed in 1866, the Charles Pennypacker House constructed in c. 1870, the Cedarcroft-Monaghan House constructed in 1872 and designed by Addison Hutton, the Addison Hutton designed "Four Sisters" constructed in 1873, the Sybilla Brinton House constructed in 1873, the Gideon Miles House constructed in c. 1873, the Holding House constructed in 1876, Broadlawns constructed in 1881 and designed by T. Rooney Williamson, the Mary Thomas Mansion constructed in 1882 and designed by Frank Furness, the William Hayes Mansion constructed in 1889 and designed by T. Rooney Williamson, the Charles Walker House constructed in c. 1900 and designed by Charles Walker, Mia Manor constructed in c. 1900, the Matson-Green House constructed in 1902, Eyre View constructed in 1902 and designed by Philip Johnson, and the Hause-Kauffman House constructed in c. 1915 and designed by Duhring & Okie, to name just a few.

With the advent of wealth and leisure, the residents of the Borough began demanding the establishment of parks. Marshall Square (now known as Marshall Square Park), established in 1848<sup>31</sup> and Everhart Park, which grew out of the privately owned Everhart's Grove and was established in 1905<sup>32</sup>, were the first of the ten parks that are now located within the Borough's boundaries. Many of the original features of Marshall Square Park and Everhart Park are still extant.

After World War I, West Chester's steady growth began to slow down. But the development of West Chester went on a pace. From 1915 through 1930, much of the development of West Chester involved the rebuilding or expansion of commercial, industrial, and residential buildings as West Chester's boundaries began to be reached.

In conclusion, during the Commercial and Industrial Development Period, the Borough's character changed from that of a young, thriving borough to a sophisticated, important urban center. It grew from a young borough which was a thriving market and governmental center surrounded by agricultural lands to a successful commercial, governmental, social, cultural, residential, and industrial center still surrounded by agricultural lands. This development period was a period of

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<sup>31</sup>Jane E. Dorchester, "Marshall Square Park History," in Marshall Square Park Master Plan, Ray Ott for Cee Jay Frederick Associates (West Chester, Pa.: West Chester Recreation Commission, 1989), p. I.1.

<sup>32</sup>Borough Council of West Chester, Minutes of Special Meeting (November 17, 1905) in West Chester Borough RG2 S1 SSB Box 2/6, "Borough Council Meeting Minutes" (October 11, 1899 to June 10, 1908). West Chester, PA: Chester County Historical Society.



drastic changes, in every direction; it saw an unprecedented explosion of growth. By the end of this period, active farming had ceased within the Borough limits but much of the land still remained open, reminders of West Chester's rural roots. However, West Chester was no longer a rural center. It had become an active urban center characterized by majestic stone banks, imposing brick or stone public institutional buildings, impressive brick, stone, or stucco mansion houses, ubiquitous brick homes of all sizes and shapes, quiet parks, and thriving commercial and industrial enterprises constructed of brick connected to the outside world by an extensive rail system and dominated by the Thomas U. Walter-designed stone Chester County Courthouse. At the same time, numerous examples of every major architectural style had been erected in the Borough. These styles included, but were not limited to, Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Italianate, Second Empire, Queen Anne, and Colonial Revival. By the end of this period, buildings constructed in a recognizable architectural style outnumbered those constructed in folk or vernacular styles. West Chester's character, that of a sophisticated, urbane, commercial, governmental, social, cultural, and residential urban center, was solidified during this development period.

Today, there are 3,744 extant resources from this development period located within the Borough's boundaries. They represent the building boom which occurred in the Borough between 1830 and 1930 and its agricultural roots and commercial, social, cultural, and industrial growth. A little under half of the extant built environment of West Chester was constructed during this time period. Some of these buildings replaced earlier buildings, but most of them represent original construction.

### Mid-Twentieth Century Development Period, 1931 to 1979

With the Great Depression came the first real slowdown in West Chester's commercial, industrial, and residential development since its incorporation. However, in spite of the slowdown, some development did occur. Today, fifteen commercial or industrial buildings constructed between 1930 and 1942 still exist. They include the Bell of Pennsylvania Building constructed in c. 1935, the Citgo gas station constructed in c. 1940, and **seven mushroom houses constructed in c. 1940**. With the advent of World War II, the commercial, industrial, and residential development of West Chester started to rise steadily again. The Borough's industrial development got a boost after G. Raymond Rettew and Charles Heathcote (both residents of West Chester) devised



**Figure 4: West Nields Street Houses, Mid-Twentieth Century**

a manufacturing method that enabled the mass-production of penicillin; the "miracle" drug much in demand for use by the troops during World War II. The first mass-produced penicillin was manufactured in West Chester, starting in 1942.<sup>33</sup> After the war, residential development outpaced commercial and industrial development which eventually had stopped by c. 1980. There are 375 residential resources constructed between 1931 and 1979 still extant. There are 49 industrial or commercial buildings constructed between 1942 and 1980 still extant, including the National Foam industrial complex constructed in c. 1942, the Mosteller Department Store constructed in 1946, the Bell Telephone Building constructed in c. 1950, the Commonwealth Sav-

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<sup>33</sup>Made in West Chester, p. 63-64.

ings and Loan building constructed in 1963, the Dime Savings Bank of Chester County building constructed in 1964, and the Penn Mutual building constructed in 1979. Residential development continued through the 1990s, in spite of some building moratoriums that were imposed in order to give the Borough a chance to upgrade its infrastructure. After a long hiatus, commercial development started up again in 2000 and has continued through 2010.

As an accompaniment to the continuing residential development, the Borough's residents demanded more cultural, social, recreational, and religious venues. The following cultural, social, recreational and religious resources constructed between 1931 and 1979 are still extant: Walnut Street Park established in 1939, West Chester Golf and Country Club constructed in c. 1940, West Chester Community Center (now Charles A. Melton Center) constructed in c. 1940, Reformed Presbyterian Church constructed in c. 1940, Greenfield Park established in 1941, Harrison Theater constructed in c. 1945, Rice's Temple African Union Methodist Protestant Church constructed in 1949, the West Chester YWCA constructed in c. 1950, Nields Street Park established in c. 1950, Bernard F. Schlegal Post 134 American Legion building constructed in c. 1960, Mosteller Park established in 1960, and the West Chester Salvation Army Headquarters constructed in c. 1977.

In conclusion, during the Mid-Twentieth Century Development Period, the Borough's character was solidified as an important urban center. It grew from a successful commercial, governmental, social, cultural, residential, and industrial center still surrounded by agricultural lands into a commercial, governmental, social, cultural, and residential suburban center. However, it was no longer surrounded by agricultural lands; with the advent of the post World War II era, the farms that had surrounded West Chester succumbed to the pressures of suburbanization. This development period also saw the decline in West Chester's industrial strength and the disappearance of the last of its rural spaces in response to demands for more residential development. That residential growth reintroduced the use of frame cladding as well as the use of asphalt, asbestos, aluminum, and vinyl siding; although brick was still a popular construction material. The Colonial Revival was the predominate architectural style of this development period. Regardless of these changes, West Chester's character remains much as it was at the end of the previous development period; it is a sophisticated, urbane, commercial, governmental, social, cultural, and residential center. Its character is defined by its historic fabric which, for the most part, has been preserved.

Today, there are 499 extant resources from this development period (1931 to 1979) located within the Borough's boundaries. For the most part, these resources represent the final build-out to the Borough's boundaries and the beginning of the trend to replace existing buildings with newer ones. They also represent the establishment of the Borough as a "bedroom" community for larger industrial and commercial centers, including the surrounding burgeoning suburbs.

**Table 1: Development Period Resource Counts**

Historic District	Development Periods				Total
	Pre- Borough	Early Bor- ough	Commercial & Industrial	Mid-20th Century	
WC Downtown HD	4	14	476	32	526
WCSC Quad HD	0	0	4	3	7
2003 WC HD Inventory	6	10	3,263	464	3,743
Individual Resources	0	1	1	0	2
<b>Total</b>	10	25	3,744	499	4,278

## Conclusion<sup>34</sup>

The Borough of West Chester has developed over a period of 280 years (1730 to 2010). Its origins reach back to the farms bounded by the crossroads, but its first role was as a small crossroads hamlet with a tavern as its sole commercial enterprise. It grew into the government center for the County of Chester, and by the early 1800s had added more commercial enterprises as well as buildings for educational, religious, and social activities. By the end of the Civil War it was ready to become a light-industrial center as well. From approximately 1865 to 1930, West Chester was the governmental center for Chester County as well as being the marketing, social, and cultural center for southeastern Chester County. The Great Depression slowed down West Chester's growth and development, as it did in many other communities across the country. The Borough rebounded in the 1940s with an emphasis on construction for residential, commercial, and recreational activities.

West Chester's historic resources reflect the Borough's development in three ways. First, they reflect its physical development from 1730 until today: if one were to walk from the courthouse in a straight line in any direction, the architecture along the way would tell an accurate story of the development of West Chester from at least 1799 until at least 1960, when West Chester's outward growth was restricted to outlying pockets and infill. Second, their architecture reflects the sophisticated social and cultural atmosphere created by West Chester's commercial and industrial prosperity that lasted from c. 1800 to c. 1930. And third, West Chester's historic resources reflect the Borough's development as a County-wide center of commerce, government, religion, education, transportation, industry, and culture.

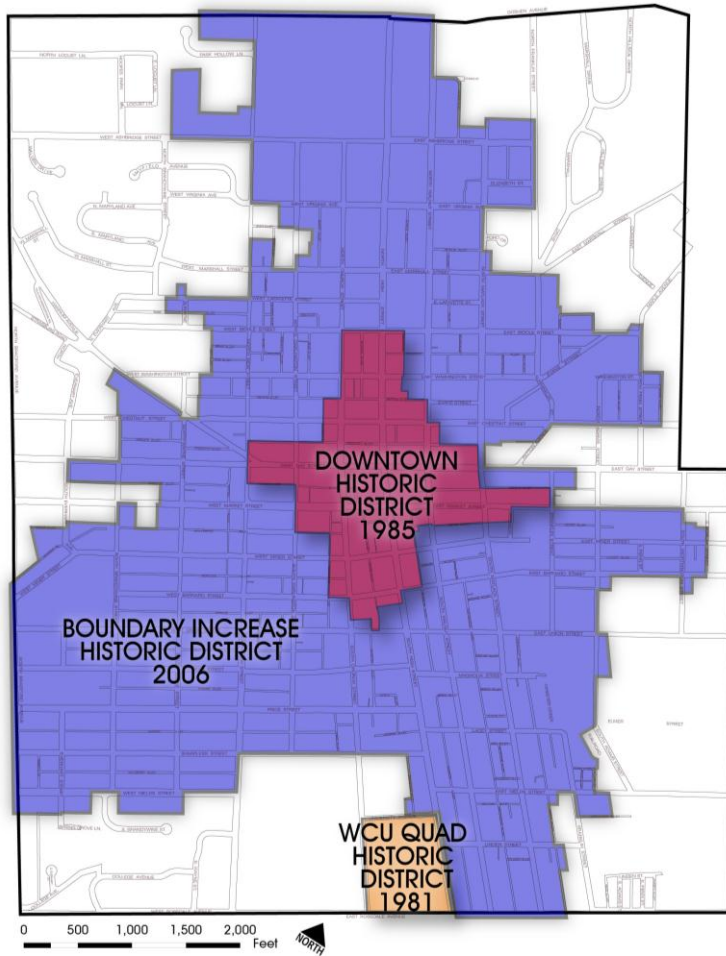
The Borough is able to reflect its rich cultural history and long history of development because only about 10 percent of the resources located within its three historic districts are non-contributing, i.e. they do not contribute to the historic integrity of the Borough. These 460 non-contributing resources do not detract from the Borough's overall historic integrity for two reasons. First, for the most part, they are non-contributing by reason of age, not because of a loss of individual integrity. And second, they are scattered throughout the Borough, occurring either individually as infill or in small pockets that reflect either a re-development effort or new development of vacant land. It is this overall integrity of historic fabric that defines West Chester's character as the governmental, commercial, social, and cultural center of Chester County, Pennsylvania.

<sup>34</sup>For more information about West Chester's development history, please see the references listed in the bibliography.

#### IV. EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section is based on the findings of the 2003 Historic Resource Inventory conducted as part of the West Chester Historic District (Boundary Increase) National Register nomination process. It discusses the inventory findings for the 4,278 resources inventoried at that time, including those located within the two historic districts (West Chester State College Quadrangle Historic District and West Chester Downtown Historic District) that existed in 2003. Some general statistics are given here; specific information is given in tabular form below. There were 3,364 properties inventoried encompassing

4,278 individual resources. Of those 4,278 resources, 4,206 are classified as buildings, twenty-nine are classified as structures, eight are classified as objects, and thirty-five are classified as sites. Of the 3,364 properties inventoried, one property is listed as a district (the West Chester State College Quadrangle Historic District is considered one property with seven resources located on it), 448 properties are listed in the West Chester Downtown National Register Historic District, 2,788 properties are located in the West Chester Historic District (Boundary Increase), and 127 properties were inventoried but are not located within any historic district. Of the 3,364 properties inventoried, fifteen properties are listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places. Of those fifteen individually listed National Register properties, fourteen are located within one of the three National Register Historic Districts (Figure 1) and one is not located within any of the districts.



**Figure 5: National Register Historic Districts**

Below is the table summarizing the above statistics and separating them by Historic District.

**Table 2: Property Count and Resource Type Summary**

Historic District	Properties	Buildings	Structures	Sites	Objects	Total
WC Downtown HD	448	489	1	8	4	502
WCSC Quad HD	1	7	0	0	0	7
WC HD (Boundary Increase)	2,788	3,710	28	27	4	3,623
Outside HDs	127					146
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,364</b>	<b>4,206</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4,278</b>



# BOROUGH OF WEST CHESTER COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN MAP #2: HISTORIC RESOURCES INVENTORY

## NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

- HISTORIC DISTRICT (BOUNDARY INCREASE), 2005
- DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT, 1985
- WCU QUADRANGLE HISTORIC DISTRICT, 1981

## LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT

- CERTIFIED LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICT, CREATED 1988, CERTIFIED 1994, EXPANDED 2006

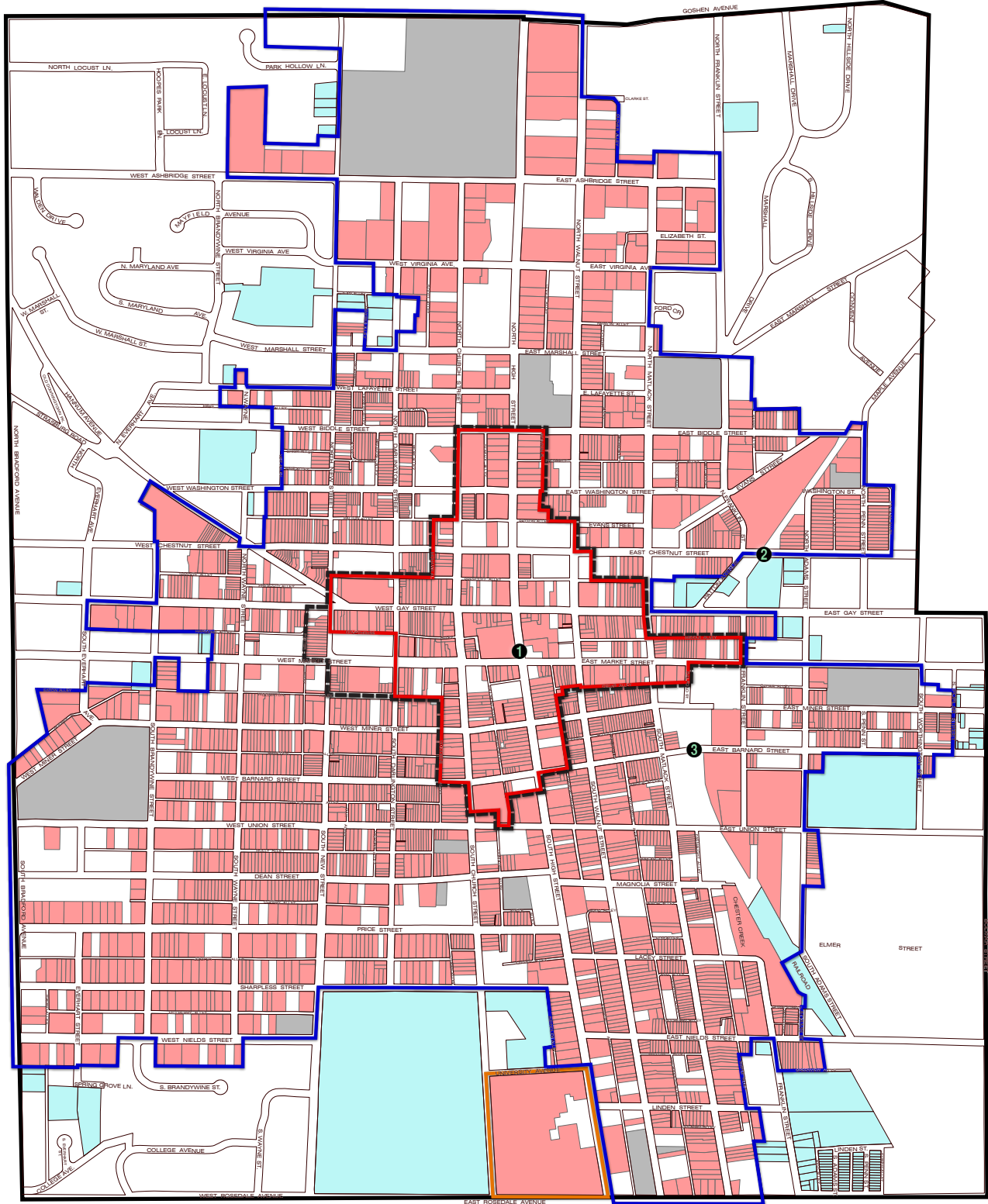
## PARCELS WITH HISTORIC RESOURCES

- CONTRIBUTING\*
- CONTRIBUTING & NON CONTRIBUTING\*
- RESOURCES NOT IN HISTORIC DISTRICTS

## OTHER HISTORIC RESOURCES

- ① DARLINGTON FOUNTAIN
- ② RR BRIDGE - E. CHESTNUT ST.
- ③ RR BRIDGE - E. BARNARD ST.

\* CLASSIFICATION USED IN NATIONAL REGISTER HISTORIC DISTRICTS NOMINATIONS.



Sources:  
- Chester County GIS Land Records  
- 2003 West Chester Historic Resource Inventory  
Spreadsheet, as updated in 2007-2008, geo-coded  
by Ray Ott & Associates 2010.



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preservation  
PENNSYLVANIA



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1/27/11

## Resource Functions

The National Park Service (NPS) identifies two types of Resource Functions: Historic and Current.<sup>35</sup> Historically, the most significant functions for which the resources inventoried were used include domestic (2,813), commerce (165), industry (32), religion (21), education (18), social (13), and governmental (8). Today, the majority of resources inventoried function as domestic entities (2,823). Other important current functions include commerce (432), religion (24), social (22), government (21), education (17), and industry (6).

The tables below list the major historic and current resource functions by historic district.

**Table 3: Major Historic Resource Functions**

Historic District	Domestic	Commerce	Industry	Religion	Edu.	Social	Gov't
WC Downtown HD	312	99	0	8	2	8	5
WCSC Quad HD	0	0	0	0	7	0	0
WC HD (Boundary Increase)	2,501	66	32	13	9	5	3
Outside HDs							
<b>Total</b>	2,813	165	32	21	18	13	8

**Table 4: Major Current Resource Functions**

Historic District	Domestic	Commerce	Industry	Religion	Edu.	Social	Gov't
WC Downtown HD	116	288	0	7	0	15	13
WCSC Quad HD	0	0	0	0	7	0	0
WC HD (Boundary Increase)	2,707	144	6	17	10	7	8
Outside HDs							
<b>Total</b>	2,823	432	6	24	17	22	21

## Architecture

The term "architecture" is being used in its most general sense - having to do with buildings, their construction, their type or form, and their style where applicable.

## Resource Types

The majority of resources (1,439) inventoried were twins; in addition, 1,040 rowhouses and 649 singles. There were 3 Pennsylvania farmhouses inventoried - physical evidence of West Chester's origins as a country hamlet. There were 52 bungalows, 5 four-squares, 41 ranches, and 41 Cape Cods inventoried, as well as 44 apartment houses, sometimes located in complexes. Outbuildings inventoried included 186 carriage houses and 531 garages. Three spring houses, again strong reminders of West Chester's rural origins, were also inventoried.

The table below lists the major resource types by historic district.

**Table 5: Major Resource Types**

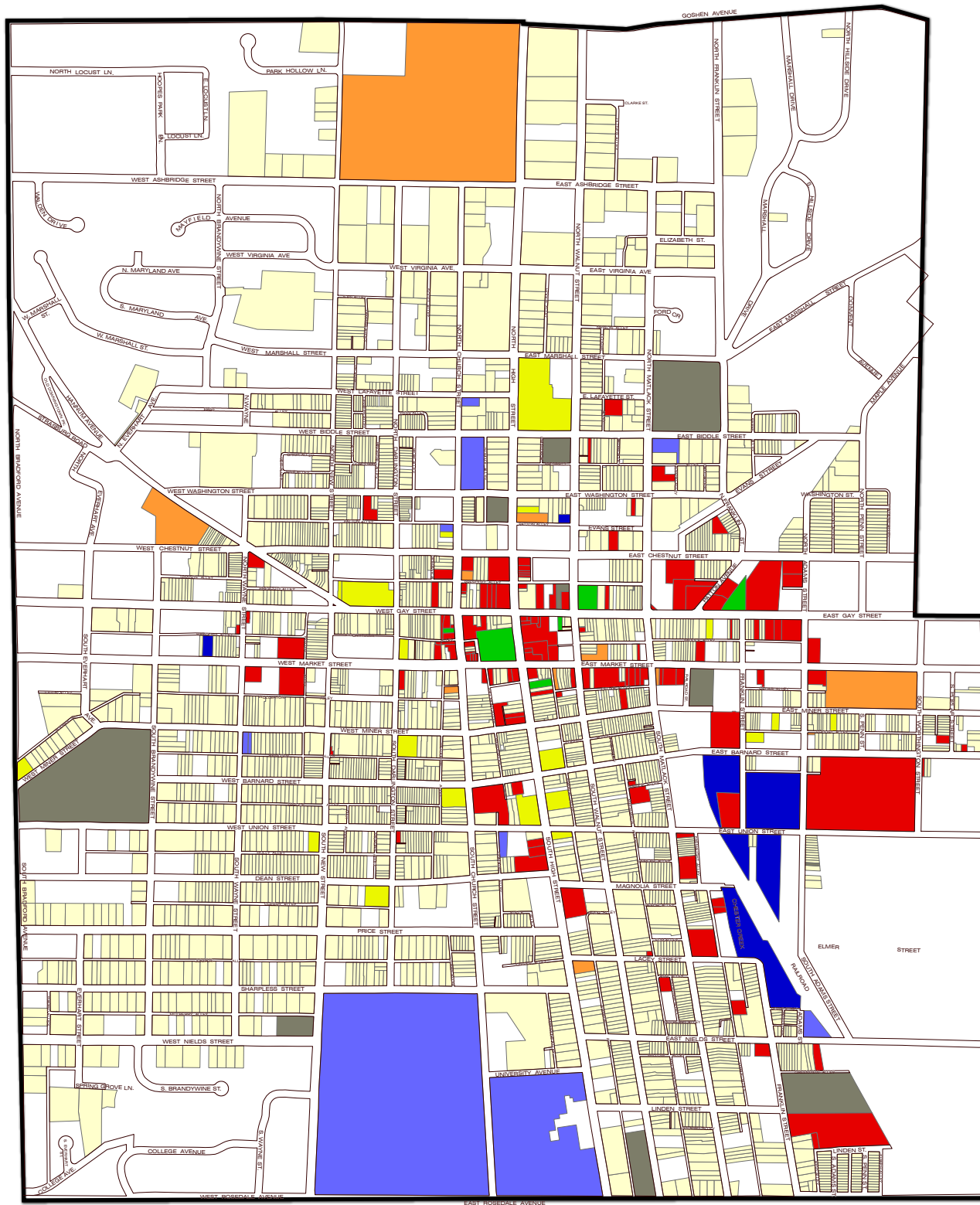
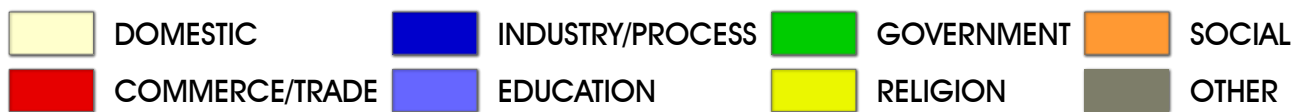
Historic District	Twin	Row	Single	Apt. House	Bunga-low	Cape Cod	Carriage House	Garage
WC Downtown HD	90	288	53	3	0	0	22	17
WCSC Quad HD	0	0	7	0	0	0	0	0
WC HD (Boundary Increase)	1,349	752	589	41	52	41	164	514
Outside HDs								
<b>Total</b>	1,439	1,040	649	44	52	41	186	531

<sup>35</sup>National Park Service, National Register Bulletin: How to Complete the National Registration Form. Ps. 18-23.



# BOROUGH OF WEST CHESTER COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

## MAP #3: HISTORIC RESOURCE FUNCTIONS



Sources:  
 - Chester County GIS Land Records  
 - 2003 West Chester Historic Resource Inventory  
 Spreadsheet, as updated in 2007-2008, geo-coded  
 by Ray Ott & Associates 2010.



0 500 1,000 1,500 2,000 Feet

preservation  
PENNSYLVANIA

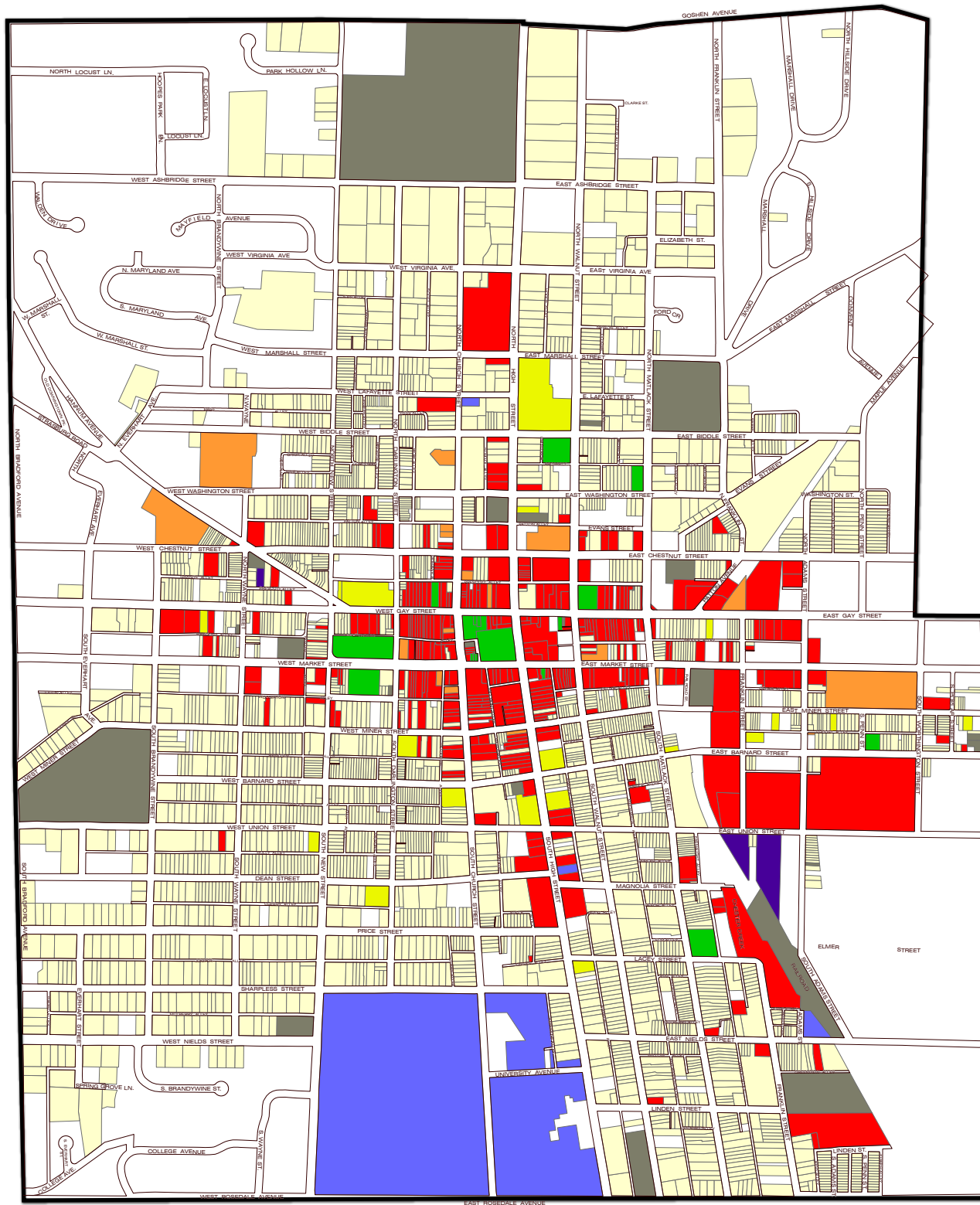
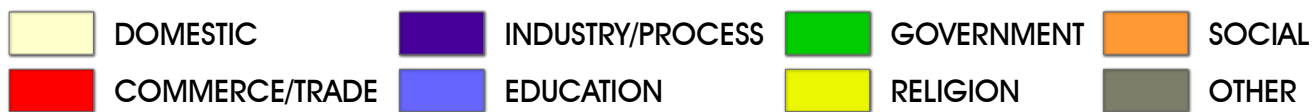


Prepared by:  
**RAY OTT & ASSOCIATES**  
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 610.429.9993

1/27/11

# BOROUGH OF WEST CHESTER COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN MAP #4: CURRENT RESOURCE FUNCTIONS



Sources:  
- Chester County GIS Land Records  
- 2003 West Chester Historic Resource Inventory  
Spreadsheet, as updated in 2007-2008, geo-coded  
by Ray Ott & Associates 2010.



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## Architectural Styles and Time Periods



**Figure 6: Architectural Styles**

A total of 2,114 resources were classified according to their architectural style. Many resources, either of folk or vernacular origins or substantially renovated or remodeled, are not classified by architectural style. The most significant architectural styles identified during this Inventory were Federal (224 resources), Greek Revival (222 resources), various versions of the Gothic Revival (174 resources), Italianate (441 resources), Queen Anne Revival (276 resources), and Colonial Revival (278 resources). There were 293 resources that were classified as "Other." Other architectural styles include Dutch Colonial Revival, Georgian Revival, Brutalism, Neo-Colonial Revival, and various French and Mediterranean Revivals. Also, there were 753 resources that could not be classified by a specific architectural style, but could be placed into one of three NPS-specified architectural time periods (National Park Service 1997a:24-26); they were Mid-19th Century (380 resources), Late Victorian (283 resources), and Late 19th Century & Early 20th Century Revivals (90 resources).

The tables below list the major architectural styles and time periods by historic district.

**Table 6: Major Architectural Styles**

Historic District	Federal	Greek Revival	Gothic Revival	Italianate	Queen Anne	Colonial Revival	Other
WC Downtown HD	98	37	2	93	21	23	26
WCSC Quad HD	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
WC HD (Boundary Increase)	126	185	169	348	255	255	264
Outside HDs							
<b>Total</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>441</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>293</b>

**Table 7: Major Architectural Time Periods**

Historic District	Mid-19th Century	Late Victorian	Late 19th Century & Early 20th Century Revivals
WC Downtown HD	54	2	1
WCSC Quad HD	0	0	0
WC HD (Boundary Increase)	326	281	89
Outside HDs			
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>283</b>	<b>90</b>

## Construction Materials

The data below represent construction materials used to clad, in whole or in part, the exterior of the resources inventoried. The majority of resources (2,204) inventoried are clad in brick. The next most significant building material is stucco, with which 726 resources are clad. There are 318 resources clad in wood, be it weatherboard, shingles, or wood in some other form. At the same time, there are 447 resources that have been clad in synthetic siding. Stone (231), including serpentine stone, and concrete (48) come in a distant fourth and fifth as construction materials.

A note should be made here that, for the most part, whatever a resource is clad in denotes its structural construction material(s) as well. In other words, except for those resources constructed after World War II or clad in stucco or a synthetic siding, the exterior construction material of a resource will be its structural construction material as well. For example, a brick-clad rowhouse has a load-bearing brick structural system.

The table below lists these construction materials by historic district.

**Table 8: Facade Construction Materials**

Historic District	Brick	Stucco	Wood	Synthetic Siding	Stone	Serpen- tine	Concrete
WC Downtown HD	356	72	38	16	41	9	13
WCSC Quad HD	2	0	0	0	2	3	3
WC HD (Boundary Increase)	1,846	654	280	431	157	20	32
Outside HDs							
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,204</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>318</b>	<b>447</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>48</b>

## Property Integrity

Integrity, which is a judgment of the authenticity of a property's historic identity and character, was rated *high*, *medium*, *low*, or *poor*. Only historic properties, that is, properties over 50 years old, were judged for integrity. In order for a property to have high integrity, it had to exhibit all of its character-defining architectural elements intact and all or most of its subsidiary elements intact. A medium integrity rating was given when some character-defining elements were missing, inappropriately clad, or remodeled, or when most or all of the subsidiary elements were missing, inappropriately clad, or remodeled. A low rating indicates that most of the character-defining elements were missing, inappropriately clad or remodeled and most or all of the subsidiary elements were missing, inappropriately clad, or remodeled. A poor rating indicates that all of the character defining elements were missing, inappropriately clad or remodeled and most or all of the subsidiary elements were missing, inappropriately clad, or remodeled.



The installation and use of inappropriate siding, such as aluminum, vinyl, asphalt, or asbestos, was the most frequent cause of degrading a property's integrity rating because of the destructive manner in which it is so often installed. Cornice brackets, ornate window and door lintels, and other decorative features, often character defining, are frequently removed to accommodate the installation. In a few cases, properties were given lower integrity ratings because, while they had been remodeled using appropriate cladding, their integrity had been degraded or lost due to a combination of the use of inappropriate replacement windows and doors and inappropriate changes to their rooflines or massing.

Below is the table summarizing the Integrity of each inventoried property.

**Table 9: Property Integrity Summary**

Historic District	High	Medium	Low	Poor	Total
WC Downtown Historic District	152	261	13	2	428
WCSC Quadrangle Historic District	1	0	0	0	1
WC Historic District (Boundary Increase)	941	1,616	68	0	2,625
Outside HDs					
<b>Total</b>	1,094	1,877	81	2	3,054

### Property Condition

Property condition was given an *excellent*, *good*, *fair*, or *poor* rating. All the properties inventoried during this project were given a condition rating, regardless of whether they were deemed to be contributing or non-contributing. Condition was judged principally by two aspects of the property's external appearance: its visible structural integrity and its visible state of repair. Structural integrity applies to the property's stability (was it listing or sagging?), while state of repair addresses the condition of the exterior paint, pointing, siding, roofing, etc.

Below is the table summarizing the condition of each inventoried property.

**Table 10: Property Condition Summary**

Historic District	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Total
WC Downtown Historic District	226	215	6	1	448
WCSC Quadrangle Historic District	1	0	0	0	1
WC Historic District (Boundary Increase)	1,628	1,228	56	3	2,915
Outside HDs					
<b>Total</b>	1,855	1,443	62	4	3,364

### Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources

Each inventoried resource was assessed in relation to its ability to contribute or not to the integrity of either the West Chester Downtown Historic District, the West Chester State College Quadrangle Historic District, or the West Chester Historic District (Boundary Increase). A resource was deemed to be contributing if it did not substantially detract from the integrity of one of the historic districts. Generally, that means that if a property was given an Integrity rating of high, medium or low, its resources were considered to be contributing resources. Not only is cladding important to the integrity of the historic district, but massing, roofline, and proportional size also contribute equally to its integrity. For the most part, as long as a property's main resource's massing, roofline, or proportional size had not been inappropriately altered, it was giv-

en at least a low “Integrity” rating. If a property’s main resource’s massing, roofline, or proportional size had been substantially inappropriately altered, then it was given a poor rating.

While a resource’s function can also detract from the integrity of a historic district, historically, West Chester never had clearly delineated residential, commercial, and industrial districts that contained resources whose primary function matched that of the district. Instead, pockets of commercial or industrial activity were found within residential districts and residential resources were located throughout commercial and industrial districts. Only with the advent of zoning regulations did residential, commercial, and industrial districts become more clearly segregated. Therefore, function has not been taken into consideration when judging a resource’s ability to contribute to the character of the historic district.

One result of the 2003 Inventory was that the resource counts for the West Chester Downtown Historic District had to be revised. When the Downtown Historic District was first surveyed in 1984, it was found to contain 429 contributing and 11 non-contributing resources for a total of 440 resources; in the course of this Inventory, it was found to contain 470 contributing and 32 non-contributing resources for a total of 502 resources. There are several reasons for the difference between the two counts. First, at the time of the first survey, outbuildings such as garages and carriage houses were not counted as individual resources unless the outbuilding was considered to have outstanding significance. The 2003 Inventory was charged with counting each and every permanent resource within the Historic District; consequently, 42 carriage houses, garages, and other outbuildings, both contributing and non-contributing, were counted. Second, seven contributing buildings have been lost to fire or demolition since the original survey was undertaken. Third, two resources originally listed as non-contributing solely because of their age are now listed as contributing resources since their 50th anniversaries have been past. Fourth, two new resources were erected on un-built lots not counted during the 1984 survey. And fifth, one resource, the Hickman Fountain, was returned to its original site within the Historic District from a site located outside the Historic District.

Below is the table summarizing contributing and non-contributing resources.

**Table 11: Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources Summary**

<b>Historic District</b>	<b>Contributing Resources</b>	<b>Non-contributing Resources</b>	<b>Total</b>
WC Downtown HD	470	32	502
WCSC Quadrangle HD	6	1	7
WC HD (Boundary Increase)	3,352	417	3,769
Outside HDs			
Total	3,828	450	4,278

## Conclusion

The Borough of West Chester has been developed over a period of 280 years (1730 to 2010). Its origins reach back to the farms bounded by the crossroads, but its first role was as a small crossroads hamlet with a tavern as its sole commercial enterprise. It grew into the government center for the County of Chester, added more commercial enterprises as well as educational, religious, and social activities by the early 1800s, and by the end of the Civil War was ready to become a light-industrial center as well. From approximately 1865 to 1930, West Chester was a thriving center for a wide variety of residential, commercial, governmental, educational, religious, social, and industrial activities. This prosperity introduced recreational and cultural activities to the roster. The Great Depression slowed down West Chester’s growth and development,



as it did in many other communities across the country. The Borough rebounded in the 1940s with an emphasis on residential, commercial, governmental, educational, religious, social, and recreational activities which continue today.

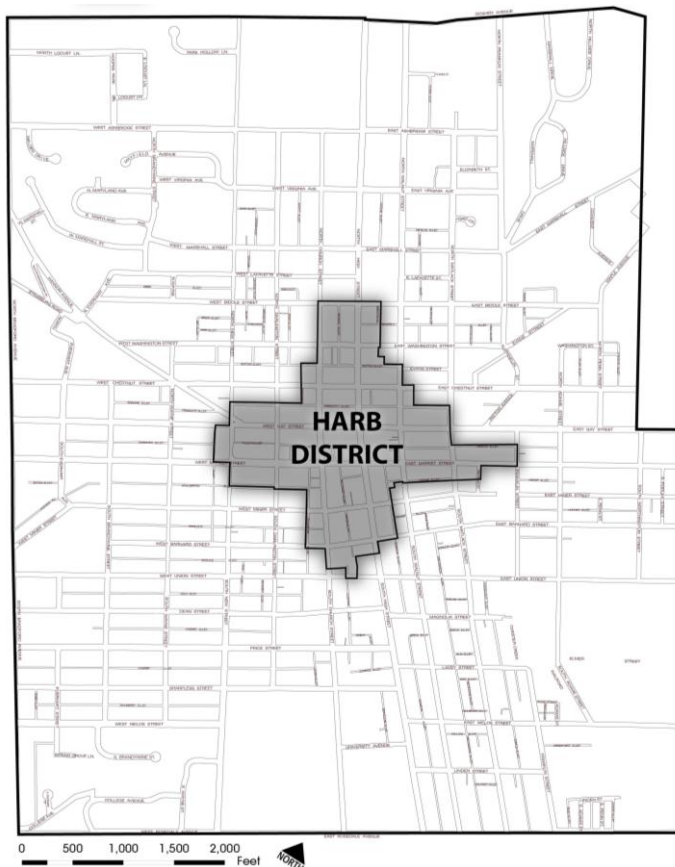
The resources inventoried during this project reflect two important aspects of the Borough's development. First, they reflect its physical development from 1730 until today. In adjunct to this aspect, their architecture reflects the sophisticated social and cultural atmosphere created by West Chester's commercial and industrial prosperity. Second, they reflect the themes of commerce, government, education, religion, and industry and such subset themes as transportation and culture.

The resources inventoried are able to reflect the Borough's rich cultural history and long history of development because only about 10 percent of the resources are non-contributing. The 450 non-contributing resources located within the project site do not detract from the integrity of any of the historic districts for two reasons. First, for the most part, they are non-contributing by reason of age, not because of a loss of individual integrity. And second, they are scattered throughout the project site, occurring either individually as infill or in small pockets that reflect either a re-development effort or new development of vacant land.

## V. LOCAL PROGRAMS AND ORDINANCES

The Borough has pursued several direct and indirect historic preservation initiatives over the years, which include the following:

1. Local Historic District. The Historic District ordinance was adopted in 1989 creating the HARB. The Local Historic District was initially the same as the National Register Downtown Historic District. The HARB replaced the West Chester Historic Commission, created in the 1970s to designate historic buildings and review proposed renovation and demolition of designated buildings.
2. Certified Local Government. The Certified Local Government Program is a preservation partnership between local, state and national governments focused on promoting historic preservation at the grass roots level. The program is jointly administered by the National Park Service (NPS) and the State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) in each state, with each local community working through a certification process to become recognized as a Certified Local Government (CLG). CLGs then become an active partner in the Federal Historic Preservation Program and the opportunities it provides. West Chester became a CLG in 1993.
3. West Chester Business Improvement District Authority. The “BID” was established in 2000 to manage and promote business development within the context of the Borough’s historic town center. It replaced an earlier “Main Street” program and a “Commerce Director” position located in the Borough Hall.
4. Historic Carriage House Ordinance. This ordinance was adopted in 2001 as a component of the Zoning Ordinance to provide an incentive to maintain historic carriage houses by permitting alternative uses.
5. Retail Overlay District Ordinance. This was adopted in 2002 to encourage retail uses along the core commercial blocks of the town center.
6. Height Overlay District Conditional Use Standards. This ordinance was adopted in 2008 to provide for building heights exceeding forty-five feet, but not more than ninety feet. To help protect the historic streetscapes of the business district the ordinance provides Architectural Design Standards [§112-33.1.B.(7)] and Historic Preservation Standards [§112-33.1.B.(8)].



**Figure 7: HARB District**

## Board of Historical & Architectural Review -- HARB

The HARB is appointed by Borough Council to review development and signage in the local historic district. While this district was originally the same area included in the West Chester Downtown National Register Historic District, it was expanded in 2006 to include the 200 block of West Market Street and the first block of North New Street to address anticipated development pressures associated with the construction of the new Chester County Justice Center.

The HARB consists of nine members appointed to alternating three-year terms and meets at 7:00 PM on the first Thursday of every month to review proposed renovations, demolition, new development, and signage in the HARB district. It was established in 1989 according to the provisions of the Pennsylvania Historic District Act (Act 167 of 1961) with the formal adoption of an Historic District ordinance that is codified as Article XI of the Borough Zoning Ordinance.

In addition to their regular review work, the West Chester HARB has been extremely active in pursuing other preservation initiatives. With the assistance of local architects Frens and Frens, LLC, they published the Design Guidelines for the West Chester Historic District in 2002, and the Historical and Architectural Survey of the Proposed Justice Center Area in 2001. The Design Guidelines provide property owners and businesses with detailed information on appropriate renovation practices and advice on how to obtain HARB approval for new construction and renovation projects. The Justice Center Survey provides detailed information about the historical development history and architectural significance of the historic Chester County Courthouse block – the block bound by High, Market, Church and Gay Streets that has become known as the “First Block” – and successfully lead to the relocation of the proposed Chester County Justice Center to West Market Street.

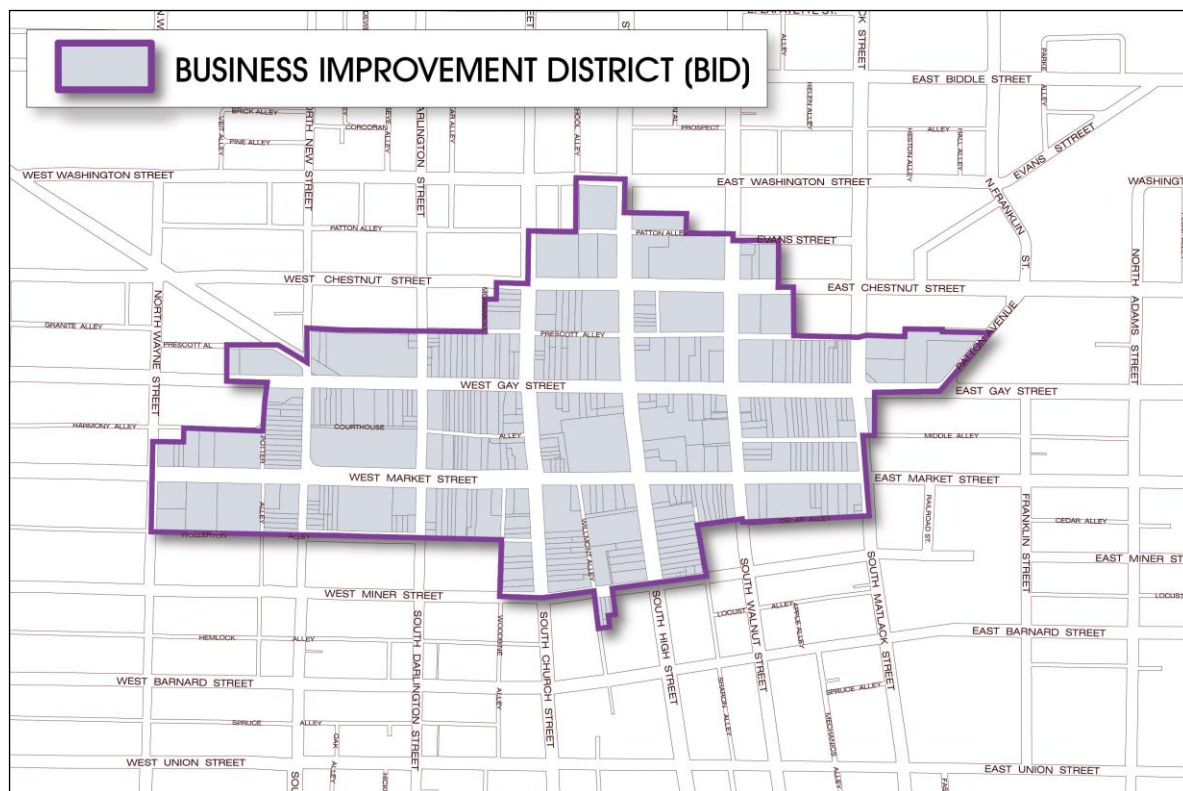


Figure 8: BID District

## West Chester Business Improvement District Authority

In 2011, the “BID” is beginning its 11<sup>th</sup> year. It was established in compliance to state legislation (Act 130 of 2000, P.L. 949; 73 P.S. § 831) that authorizes municipalities to create BIDs to “initiate and administer programs to promote and enhance more attractive and safer commercial, industrial, residential and mixed-use neighborhoods; economic growth; increased employment opportunities; and improved commercial, industrial, business districts and business climates.” In essence, BIDs are “self-help through self-assessment”, similar to the Common Area Maintenance (CAM) fees used to finance operations of shopping centers and office parks. Originally organized as a municipal “authority,” the state enabling legislation has since been amended to, among other changes, to eliminate the “municipal authority” requirement and change the term to “neighborhood improvement district.”

The 15-member BID Board is appointed by Borough Council to five-year terms. They meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 8 AM and board members also participate in one or more of several committees -- Advocacy, Customer Attraction, Business Attraction and Design --, which also include other residents, business and property owners. The BID employs an Executive Director and Administrator, both full-time. It is funded with a 0.00275% (2.75 mills) assessment on the assessed value of all non-residential properties in the district and an allocation from the Borough.

The BID uses the borough’s historic and architectural character to attract businesses and customers to the downtown district. When funds were available, the BID has administered façade improvement grants for projects that received prior HARB approval.

## Historic Carriage House Ordinance

This ordinance (§112-100.2) originated as a recommendation of the Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2000, which included an inventory of 105 extant carriage houses. The ordinance

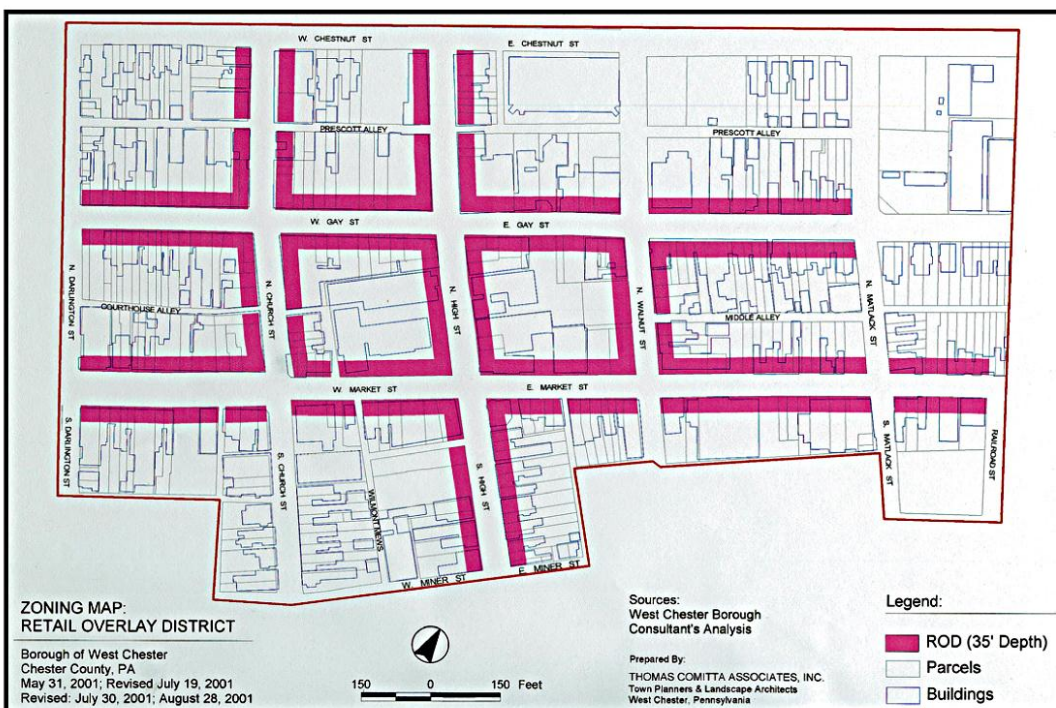


Figure 9: Retail Overlay District



provides for uses in addition to the permitted uses in the underlying zoning district as an incentive to maintain and improve historic carriage houses. These uses include a dwelling unit, an office and an artisan studio, which are permitted as “conditional uses.” As part of the conditional use review process, the proposed carriage house renovations must be reviewed by the HARB.

### Retail Overlay District Ordinance

This ordinance (§112-30.1) was adopted in 2002 to encourage retail uses along the core commercial blocks of the town center. The ordinance limits the permitted principal uses within the first 35 feet of the first floor to retail and restaurant uses. This not only helps to preserve the historic storefronts along these blocks, it also promotes retailing as a viable business district use. More than other industries, downtown retailing depends on a concentration and continuity of retail uses.

### Height Overlay District Conditional Use Standards

This ordinance was adopted in 2008 to provide for building heights exceeding 45 feet in the “HO-75 Height Overlay District.” To help protect the historic streetscapes of the business district the ordinance provides Architectural Design Standards [§112-33.1.B.(7)] and Historic Preservation Standards [§112-33.1.B.(8)]. In addition to the HARB review if a project is in the HARB District, the Architectural Design Standards provide for the HARB review of proposed buildings exceeding 45 feet that are outside the HARB District “in order to make recommendations to Borough Council concerning the architectural design standards for the proposed building,” but not concerning a certificate of appropriateness. The Historic Preservation Standards encourage, but do not require the preservation of “contributing” historic resources, and the detailed documentation of historic resources that are proposed for demolition as part of height overlay development.

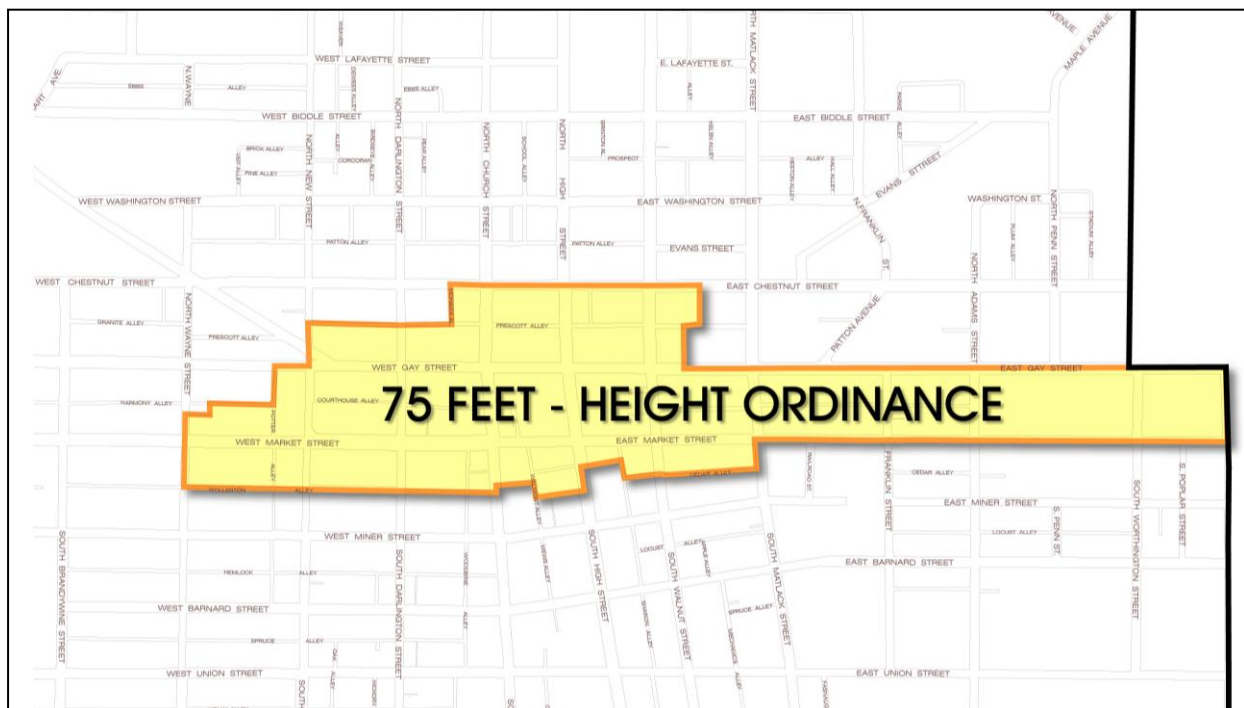


Figure 10: Borough Height Overlay Zoning District

## VI. CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS

Historic preservation needs includes those expressed at public and neighborhood meetings, and those evaluated by the Task Force.

### Public Participation

An extensive public participation program was undertaken as part of the needs assessment in order to better understand resident concerns regarding historic preservation in the Borough. This included meetings with eight neighborhood/park associations and one (1) public workshop attended by approximately 20 residents at the Borough Hall. The neighborhood and park association meetings attendance is shown in Table 12 and their relative service areas within the Borough are shown in Figure 3. These meetings were held in public buildings or private homes within the respective neighborhoods.

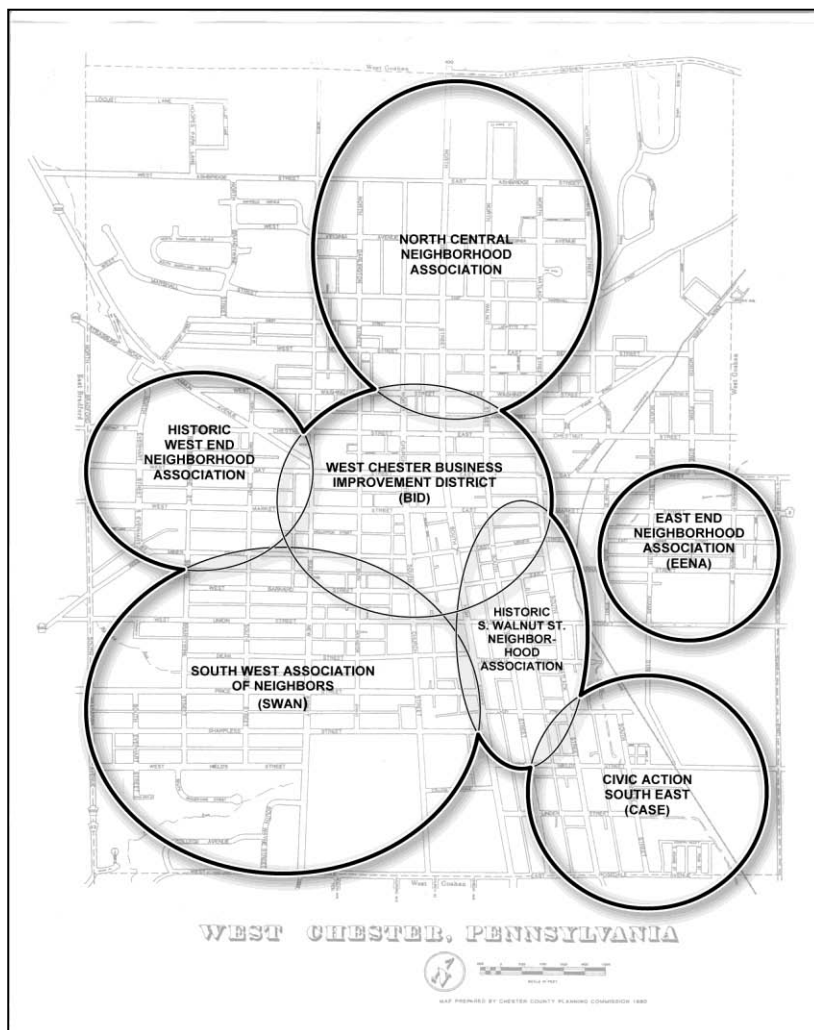


Figure 11: West Chester Neighborhood Associations

Table 12: Neighborhood Meetings

Association	Mtg. Date/Time	Place	Attend.
Southwest Association of Neighbors	March 9, 7 pm	Reformed Presby. Church	18
Historic West End Neighborhood Association	April 21st, 7:00 pm	private residence	14
North Central Neighborhood Association	April 26, 7 pm	Hickman Home	13
Historic S. Walnut Street Neighborhood Association	April 28, 7 pm	private residence	22
North West Neighborhood Association	NOT ACTIVE		--
Civic Action Southeast (CASE)	July 7, 7 PM	Public Works	9
East End Neighborhood Association	July 7, 7 PM	Public Works	2
West Chester Business Improvement District Board	July 12, 8 AM	BID Office	12
Friends of Marshall Square Park	January 13, 7 PM	private residence	12
Friends of Everhart Park	February 14, 7:30 PM	Borough Hall	5
Total Attendance			107



Lists of observations and concerns from each meeting were compiled and edited with the Task Force to develop the following future preservation needs and action themes:

### 1. Education / Better Information

- a. **Property Owners.** Better efforts should be made to inform/educate residents about the value of historic preservation and that proper preservation methods do not necessarily equate to higher renovation and maintenance costs.

Make the landlords aware of the 20% historic tax credit, which provides landlords with an incentive to maintain the architectural integrity of historic buildings. Since it's only available for investment properties, they are the only ones that can use it in residential neighborhoods. With over half of the housing stock in West Chester consisting of rental units, there may be significant opportunities for the use of this program.

- b. **Walking Tours.** Walking tours are a useful education tool which should be encouraged and expanded.
- c. **Borough Website.** The Borough website (<http://www.west-chester.com>) can be used to provide historic preservation information and links to other preservation sites.
- d. **Preservation Workshops.** Organize a once-a-year preservation workshop geared to home owners.

### 2. Protect Resources Outside HARB District

- a. **Expand HARB District.** Extend the district along High Street, south to Rosedale and north to Ashbridge where there are a number of investment properties and properties in non-residential use.
- b. **"HARB Light."** Provide a limited review function for all properties within the recently expanded National Register Historic District.
  - i. Proposed demolition -- Review and rule on the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.
  - ii. Renovation / addition projects -- Require a review before the HARB to inform renovators about the architectural value of their property and proper renovation techniques. This would serve as an advisory/education function only and the HARB would not rule on the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

### 3. Historic Resources Preservation/Rehabilitation

- a. **Revolving Fund Program.** Consider the establishment of a revolving fund program to purchase, convert/renovate and resell properties to owner-occupants. This could serve as a possible basis for the establishment of a Neighborhood Improvement District organization to oversee the program.
- b. **Blighted and Abandoned Property Conservatorship Act (PA Act 135 of 2008).** Consider using this act, which allows the appointment of a third party to take possession and control of a property in order to make repairs and return the property to productive use.
- c. **Seek Grant Funding for Low-Income Home Owners.** Through the sponsorship of the West Chester Business Improvement District, the Borough participated in the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development "Elm Street" program. This program provided grant funding to help improve streetscapes (sidewalks and street trees) and building facades in the East End Neighborhood.

- d. **Historic Park Resources.** The two *friends of parks* associations expressed concern the future maintenance and repair work done in the parks should respect the integrity of the park's historic structures and features – such as the gazebos, brick and stone drainage swales and other buildings.

**4. Expand National Register District.**

The expanded district did not include all properties classified as contributing in the 2003 Historic Resource Inventory. The possibility of including these properties in an amended Boundary Increase Historic District should be considered. Residents of the Rosedale Homes/Rosedale Village questioned why their neighborhood was not included.

**5. Other Issues, Suggestions and Concerns.**

- a. **Historic Streetscapes.** Land development codes, review and enforcement procedures should consider the preservation and enhancement of Borough streetscapes. An example is the inappropriate use of front yards for parking.
- b. **West Chester University Expansion.** The Borough should work with the WCU to help ensure that future expansion projects do not adversely impact the historic integrity of resources in and adjacent to expansion areas.

**Threatened Resources**

Threatened resources include those in imminent danger of demolition and those that currently have no protection or preservation incentive mechanisms in place.

***Imminent Demolition***

There are two resources that are currently under direct threat of demolition:

1. 122-124 and 126 West Miner Street

These two adjacent buildings -- circa 1844 and 1837, respectively, -- are currently proposed for demolition as part of an expansion plan for the First Presbyterian Church. While they are within the West Chester National Register Historic District (Boundary Increase), they are not in the HARB District. The proposed land development plan was recently denied by the Borough Council based on technical zoning issues. If this issue is resolved, these buildings could possibly be demolished. These buildings were included among Preservation Pennsylvania's annual listing of the state's most endangered historic properties, *Pennsylvania at Risk 2010*, which concluded that "The demolition of these two historic buildings will result in a significant loss of the community's historic fabric and will erode the historic character of the larger community."



**Figure 12: 122-124 and 126 West Miner St**

2. 104 East Market Street (State Farm Building)

At circa 1865, three-bay, three-story Italianate building most recently used as offices for a State Farm Insurance agency. While the building is proposed as part of an approved plan for the redevelopment of the adjacent Yearsley's Hardware property for first floor retail space and upper floor residential condominium units, the project is on-hold in response to the current financial crisis and the building still stands. Given the financial situation, it may be possible that the building may still be economically viable for reuse. To accommodate this possibility it is important the building be secured and properly mothballed.



**Figure 13: 104 East Market Street  
(State Farm Building)**

***Significant Resources Lacking Protection***

Significant resources lacking protection include two sub-groups:

1. Resources outside the Local Historic District (HARB), but within one of the three National Register Historic Districts.

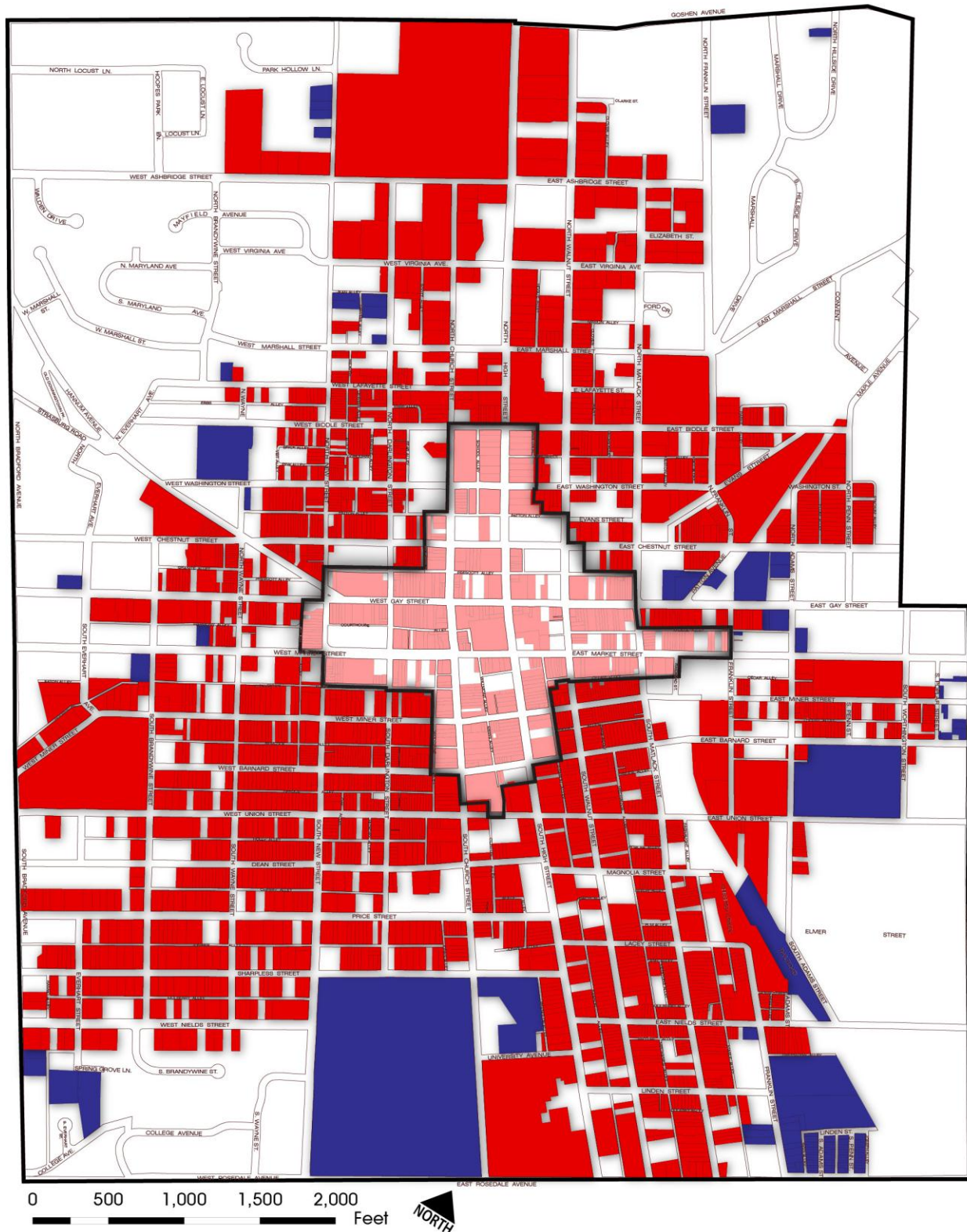
While the National Register provides some incentive for historic preservation, it does not provide any administrative protection, such as is provided through the HARB review and approval process. This was consistently noted throughout the public participation process where there was a general consensus that it was not desirable to extend the complete HARB review process throughout the Borough's National Register Districts, but instead enable the HARB or a "Historical Commission" to review and advise on proposed projects. As proposed, this review procedure would require attendance at a HARB meeting to present the project and solicit advice from the HARB. For renovation and maintenance related projects this would be for consultation only, and the HARB would not rule on the issuance of a *Certificate of Appropriateness*. It was generally suggested, however, that the HARB be empowered to recommend action on proposed demolition.

2. Surveyed resources outside the National Register Districts, but included in the 2003 West Chester Historic Resource Historic Preservation Standards Inventory.

The expanded District did not include all properties classified as contributing in the 2003 Historic Resource Inventory. The possibility of including these properties in an amended Boundary Increase Historic District should be considered.



- RESOURCES WITHIN HARB DISTRICT
- RESOURCES OUTSIDE HARB, IN NATIONAL REGISTER
- RESOURCES OUTSIDE HARB, OUTSIDE NATIONAL REGISTER



Map 5: Resources Lacking Local Protection

February 24, 2011

## **VII. IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM/ACTION PLAN**

The recommendations presented below were developed during the course of this project. In addition to the scope of each recommendation, an implementation program is also included to identify the action needed, groups' and agencies' responsibilities, and a time frame to achieve each recommendation. While this plan looks to the HARB to oversee most of the implementation strategies, other Borough Boards and Commissions – such as the Planning Commission, Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Business Improvement District Board – can also contribute in these efforts.

This Plan also recognizes a role for professional preservation services that the Borough has used for special projects, such as the National Register Historic District nominations, and for ongoing needs associated with administering the Local Historic District review process. Professional preservation planning services are also available through the Chester County Planning Commission and Chester County's Historic Preservation Services division of the Chester County Parks and Recreation Department. Another organization available to support local preservation efforts is the Chester County Historic Preservation Network, which is an affiliation of local organizations and individuals dedicated to protecting and preserving Chester County's historic resources and landscapes through education, facilitation, and public and private advocacy. The HARB is encouraged to become involved in this organization.

Finally, the Borough is also fortunate to have an active network of Neighborhood Associations that can be called on to help implement activities in their respective neighborhoods.

### **1. Education / Better Information**

- a) **Property Owners.** Better efforts should be made to inform/educate residents about the value of historic preservation and that proper preservation methods do not necessarily equate to higher renovation and maintenance costs.

Make the landlords aware of the 20% historic tax credit, which provides landlords with an incentive to maintain the architectural integrity of historic buildings. Since it's only available for investment properties, they are the only ones that can use it in residential neighborhoods. With over half of the housing stock in West Chester consisting of rental units, there may be a significant opportunities for the use of this program.

**Implementation Strategy:** Prepare memo or brochure about the National Register Districts and how the Tax Credit works. Mail or email to all landlords and post on the Borough and BID websites.

**Responsibility:** HARB, with the assistance of the Neighborhood Associations (for residential landlords) and the Business Improvement District (BID) (for properties in the town center).

**Timeframe:** One year.

**Funding:** Possible grant funding. Have the BID Director research. However, cost should be minimal.

- b) **Walking Tours.** Walking tours are a useful education tool which should be encouraged and expanded.

**Implementation Strategy:** Inventory all existing walking tours, identify groups and individuals responsible for these tours and map their extent to see if there are areas not cur-

rently covered. Work with walking tour groups – such as the Chester County Historical Society, the West Chester Old Fashion Christmas organization (primarily the Chamber of Commerce of Greater West Chester) and the Chester County Parks and Recreation “Town Tours and Village Walks” program – on the possibility of creating new walking tour routes and/or increasing the number of walking tours given.

**Responsibility:** HARB, West Chester Parks and Recreation Commission.

**Timeframe:** On-going.

**Funding:** Local, volunteers.

- c) **Borough Website.** The Borough website (<http://www.west-chester.com>) can be used to provide historic preservation information and links to other preservation sites.

**Implementation Strategy:** Establish a section on the Borough website to post preservation information. Seek volunteers and/or Borough staff to help with the design of the website and posting information. Make maintenance of this site one of the on-going responsibilities of the HARB, and have a Board member assigned the responsibility of overseeing the site.

**Responsibility:** HARB

**Timeframe:** One year to set up section on website, and on-going maintenance.

**Funding:** Research possible grant funding if necessary to hire professional assistance in setting up the site. On-going work to be done with volunteers.

- d) **Preservation Workshops.** Organize a once-a-year preservation workshop geared to home owners.

**Implementation Strategy:** HARB should work with the Borough Neighborhood Associations and the BID to organize a once-a-year workshop.

**Responsibility:** HARB and Neighborhood Associations.

**Timeframe:** Three years to set up first workshop, then ongoing.

**Funding:** Seek possible sponsorship from area building supply industry.

- e) **Heritage Tourism & Marketing.** Concerted efforts should be made to promote West Chester as a historic destination to inform visitors and residents of its historic character. Resources can be found with the National Trust for Historic Preservation which named West Chester one of America's "Dozen Distinctive Destinations" in 2006. West Chester and Doylestown were the only communities in Pennsylvania to ever receive this national honor. The annual list promotes heritage tourism by recognizing those communities that are outstanding in their historic preservation practices and offering visitors an excellent small town experience. "West Chester is a wonderful historic destination that has achieved a standard many communities strive to emulate," said Richard Moe, president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. "West Chester is a real, living, dynamic town that appreciates and capitalizes on its rich past, while keeping a watchful eye on the future."

Further, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) selected West Chester as one of the first Classic Towns of Greater Philadelphia. This program is aimed at growing, revitalizing and supporting the region's historic suburbs. The initiative is designed to promote selected communities as great places to live, work and play.



**Implementation Strategy:** West Chester BID through partnerships with West Chester Borough, the Chester County Conference & Visitors Borough, the Greater Philadelphia Tourism & Marketing Corporation, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, Pennsylvania Tourism agencies, National Trust for Historic Preservation, Heritage Travel Inc., and Preserve America.

**Responsibility:** West Chester BID.

**Timeframe:** Ongoing.

**Funding:** Grant funding.

- f) **HARB Brochure.** The HARB should prepare a brochure to educate the public about the fundamentals of the review procedures for projects in the Local Historic District. This should include the types of projects that are required to receive a Certificate of Appropriateness.

**Implementation Strategy:** The HARB should seek professional help to develop a well prepared brochure. This should also be posted on the Borough website.

**Responsibility:** HARB

**Timeframe:** One year.

**Funding:** Research possible grant funding if necessary to hire professional assistance.

## 2. Protect Resources Outside HARB District

- a) **Expand HARB District.** Extend the district along High Street, south to Rosedale and north to Ashbridge where there are a number of investment properties and properties in non-residential use.

**Implementation Strategy:** Prepare map amendment, have Borough Council adopt map amendment and forward to PHMC for approval. Contact PHMC, Bureau for Historic Preservation for current procedure and requirements.

**Responsibility:** HARB

**Timeframe:** Three years.

**Funding:** Volunteer / minimal expense.

- b) **“HARB Light.”** Provide a limited review function for all properties within the recently expanded National Register Historic District.

i) Proposed demolition -- Review and rule on the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

ii) Renovation / addition projects – Require a review before the HARB to inform renovators about the architectural value of their property and proper renovation techniques. This would serve as an advisory/education function only and the HARB would not rule on the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

**Implementation Strategy:** There are two possibilities to implement this recommendation: (1) as a separate HARB District with an associated HARB Ordinance amendment to provide for a different review process, or (2) as a Zoning Ordinance amendment similar to the “Historical Commission” ordinances that have been adopted in Pennsylvania under the Municipalities Planning Code, Section 105, which includes “to promote the

preservation of this Commonwealth's natural and historic resources" as a purpose of the MPC.

The MPC "Historical Commission" approach would not require PHMC approval of the map and ordinance. The HARB could also serve as the "Historical Commission" for the purposes of administering the expanded local historic district.

**Responsibility:** HARB, Planning Commission, Borough Council (to adopt ordinance)

**Timeframe:** Four years.

**Funding:** Borough budget process.

### 3. Historic Resources Preservation/Rehabilitation

#### a) **Blighted and Abandoned Property Conservatorship Act (PA Act 135 of 2008).**

Consider using this act, which allows the appointment of a third party to take possession and control of a property in order to make repairs and return the property to productive use.

**Implementation Strategy:** Use the recently created West Chester Redevelopment Authority to administer a program under the provisions of this act. Develop and fund a local program to utilize the provisions of this act to identify threatened historic resources and prevent the deterioration of historic properties in the Borough.

**Responsibility:** HARB, West Chester Redevelopment Authority (RDA), Borough Council (to authorize funding for such a program.)

**Timeframe:** Five years. Due to the cost of this program, and limited current need, it may not be financially feasible for a program like this to be established in the Borough.

**Funding:** While this program would theoretically allow the cost of repairing properties to be recovered by placing a lien on the property, this would require a considerable initial investment or borrowing, such as with a bond issue.

#### b) **Seek Grant Funding for Low-Income Home Owners.** Through the sponsorship of the West Chester Business Improvement District, the Borough participated in the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development "Elm Street" program. This program provided grant funding to help improve streetscapes (sidewalks and street trees) and building facades in the East End Neighborhood.

**Implementation Strategy:** Since the Pennsylvania Elm Street program is a relatively new, evolving program with very limited funds, the best strategy may be to monitor the program and be prepared to pursue it if funding becomes available. Under current policy, only communities with established Business Improvement Districts are eligible. It is also required that the BID apply for and administer the program.

**Responsibility:** BID

**Timeframe:** On hold. Monitor state legislation and funding.

**Funding:** Monitor state legislation and funding.

#### 4. Expand National Register District.

The expanded District did not include all properties classified as contributing in the 2003 Historic Resource Inventory. The possibility of including these properties in an amended Boundary Increase Historic District should be considered.

**Implementation Strategy:** Review historic resources at the perimeter of the Boundary Increase Historic District for possible inclusion in a new National Register Nomination.

**Responsibility:** HARB

**Timeframe:** Five + years.

**Funding:** Volunteer research, grant and/or Borough funding to hire a consultant.

#### 5. Other Issues, Suggestions and Concerns.

- a) **Historic Streetscapes.** Land development codes, review and enforcement procedures should consider the preservation and enhancement of Borough streetscapes and development patterns. New development, including additions to existing buildings and structures should conform to and enhance these established patterns and forms. Examples of inappropriate development features front parking, buildings setbacks that do not conform to existing setbacks and building height.

**Implementation Strategy:** Review the Zoning Ordinance to ensure that it accommodates new development in a manner that conforms with and enhances the Borough's historic streetscape parameters, including building setback, building height, parking and street trees.

**Responsibility:** Planning Commission, HARB, Codes Enforcement Office

**Timeframe:** Five years.

**Funding:** Volunteers / Planning Commission, or Borough/grant funding to hire a consultant.

- b) **West Chester University Expansion.** The Borough should work with the WCU to help ensure that future expansion projects do not adversely impact the historic integrity of resources in and adjacent to expansion areas.

**Implementation Strategy:** Maintain a working relationship with the WCU that includes discussions for proposed WCU expansion and potential property acquisitions.

**Responsibility:** Borough Council

**Timeframe:** On-going.

**Funding:** NA

- c) **Borough Parks.** Future maintenance and repair work done in the parks should respect the integrity of the park's historic structures and features – such as the gazebos, brick and stone drainage swales, and other buildings and features.

**Implementation Strategy:** The park friends organizations should meet with the Borough Department of Public Works to prepare park maintenance guidelines.

**Responsibility:** Friends of Everhart and Marshall Square Parks, Department of Public Works.

**Timeframe:** One year and then on-going.

**Funding:** NA

## **APPENDICES**

- A: Bibliography
- B: Neighborhood Association Meetings,  
Sample Agenda
- C: Public Workshop Flyer
- D: Public Workshop Agenda
- E: Legal Basis for Historic Preservation
- F: West Chester Historic Preservation Timeline

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## B: SAMPLE NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING AGENDA

### RAY OTT & ASSOCIATES

PLANNING AND LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE

17 SOUTH CHURCH STREET  
WEST CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA  
19382-3243

tel: 610-429-9993

fax: 610-429-9994

rayott@rayott.com

### WEST CHESTER BOROUGH COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

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#### Task Force

Jim Jones  
*Borough Council*

Andrew Rodriguez  
*Planning Commission*

William McLaughlin  
*Historic & Architectural  
Review Board*

Malcolm Johnstone  
*West Chester Business  
Improvement District*

**Neighborhood Meeting: Reformed Presbyterian Church  
Tuesday, March 09, 2010 – 7 PM**

#### Agenda:

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#### **1. Project Scope – Plan will include the following sections:**

- a) Development History
- b) Inventory of Existing Conditions
- c) Assessment of Current and Future Needs
- d) Community Goals, Objectives and Strategies
- e) Implementation Program/Action Plan
- f) Funding Sources, Tools and Implementation Methods
- g) Establishing the Legal Basis for Historic Preservation

#### **2. Project time frame.**

- a) Although the PHMC/Preservation Pennsylvania work scope provides for 18 months (and so does our proposal), we feel this project can be completed in less than 8 months.

#### **3. Existing Historic Resources.**

##### Historic Districts

- West Chester Historic District (National Register)
- Downtown Historic District (National Register & HARB)
- West Chester University Quadrangle Historic District (National Register)

##### Individual Historic Resources

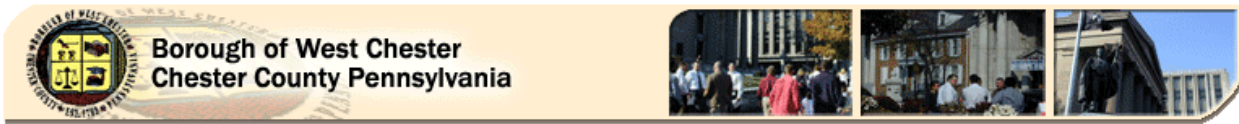
- "Contributing Resources" in National Register Historic Districts
- Resources in 2007 inventory but outside any of the Historic Districts

#### **4. Existing Historic Preservation Tools in the Borough**

- a) Historic and Architectural Review Board -- HARB
- b) Design Guidelines
- c) Historic Preservation Tax Credit for investment properties in NR Historic Districts
- d) WC Certified Local Government -- A designation established under the National Historic Preservation Act. Enhances eligibility for grants and preservation programs.
- e) West Chester BID – business district promotion, occasional façade/signage grants
- f) Zoning restrictions in the Town Center "Height Overlay District"

#### **5. Questions, Observations and Suggestions – Your historic preservation concerns?**

## C: PUBLIC WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT



# PUBLIC MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

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## HELP US PROMOTE HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN WEST CHESTER

Please join the Preservation Plan Task Force  
for a special meeting to discuss the

# WEST CHESTER BOROUGH COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

In order to accommodate resident participation, the Task Force will be holding a **"Public Planning Workshop"** to focus on historic preservation issues within the Borough and your neighborhood..

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### Planning Issues Include:

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| • Existing survey of historic resources | • Walking Tours                    |
| • Threats to historic buildings         | • Appropriate renovation practices |
| • Historic District regulations         | • Historic Tax Credits             |

**Time: Wednesday, October 20, 2010 @ 7:30 PM**

**Where: Council Chambers (main meeting room)  
West Chester Borough Hall  
401 East Gay Street  
West Chester, PA**

**Join us to help continue the revitalization of West Chester!**

## D: PUBLIC WORKSHOP AGENDA

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### WEST CHESTER BOROUGH COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

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Public Workshop -- West Chester Borough Hall  
October 20, 2010

WORKSHOP GROUP: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Public Workshop Objectives:**

Discuss the following aspects of Historic Preservation in West Chester and what can be done to advance preservation practices and initiatives in the Borough.

1. Heritage Education

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2. Economic Development

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3. Additional Cultural/Historic Resource Surveys

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4. Local Historic Resource Protection

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5. Sustainable Development, including Approaches to Accommodate Downtown Parking

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6. Heritage Tourism Opportunities

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7. Adaptive Reuse of Existing Buildings

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8. Other

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## **E: LEGAL BASIS FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

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### **National Register of Historic Places (Federal)**

The National Register of Historic Places is the official inventory of the nation's historic places. Authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, the National Park Service's National Register of Historic Places is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect America's historic and archeological resources. The National Register helps qualified historic properties receive preservation benefits and incentives. It also qualifies owners of income producing properties for historic income tax credits for substantial improvements to registered properties.

#### *National Register Eligible Resources*

In order for a resource to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it first needs to be deemed eligible for inclusion on the National Register. The State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania reviews all National Register nomination applications. As part of the nomination process, all owners of property included in the nomination and the government officials for the locality in which the resource is located are notified of the intent to nominate. Local officials and property owners may comment on the nomination, and owners of private property may object to or concur with the nomination. If the owner of a private property or the majority of owners of a property or in a district with multiple owners objects to the nomination, the SHPO may still forward the nomination to the National Park Service for a determination of eligibility. However, these properties will not be listed; instead, the Keeper of the Register retains the information on the property, including the nomination form, with a notation that they have been determined eligible for listing, but have not been included on the National Register. Therefore, National Register Eligible resources are those resources that have been determined to be eligible for listing in the National Register, but have not been formally listed.

### **Section 170(h) of the Internal Revenue Code (Federal)**

Section 170(h) of the Internal Revenue Code provides for the sale or donation of conservation easements that can be used to preserve historic resources. Such actions may qualify as taxable income deductions as charitable contributions.

### **PA Act 167 (The Historic District Act)**

This 1961 Act authorizes counties, cities, boroughs, incorporated towns and townships to create historic districts within their geographic boundaries providing for the appointment of Boards of Historical and Architectural Review; empowering governing bodies of political subdivisions 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.

### **PA Act 247 (the Municipalities Planning Code)**

The MPC provides for the protection of historic resources through the preparation of historic surveys and for creating a plan for the protection of historic resources. Section 105 of the MPC also includes "to promote the preservation of this Commonwealth's natural and historic resources" as a purpose of the MPC.

## F: WEST CHESTER HISTORIC PRESERVATION TIMELINE

*(Compiled by Jane Dorchester, 2006)*

YEAR	EVENT
1923?	West Chester Civic Association formed?
1930s?	Concerned Citizens of West Chester formed?
March 30, 1937	Meredith Hardware Store Building on W. Gay St., torn down and three smaller store fronts erected – Kaufman's Furniture leased 2nd and 3rd floors, Furniture Store was next door to this building
1940s	Trend to tear down old buildings & replace them with parking lots or new construction simulating "Colonial" architecture started
July 16, 1941	Buildings at 24 and 26 W. Gay St. collapsed during renovations of buildings in order for them to be used by Mosteller's Store.
1944?	Free Parking Lot at SW corner W. Washington and N. Church Sts.; former site of Creamery and skating rink, demolished for parking lot?
1945	The Abner Pyle Mansion on S. High St., just above E. Rosedale Ave., was torn down to make way for the Colonial Arms Apartments.
1946	Colonial Arms Apartments erected
1946	Leonard Heimlion bought old William A. Pierce building on N. High St., just south of Gay St. and had front dismantled and remodelled (it had had a pressed brick front with ornamental windows to third floor).
pre-1948	Gas Station erected on N. High St. across alley from Armory and at rear of Painter Mansion which stood at NW corner of N. High and W. Chestnut Sts.
1948?	Painter Mansion at NW corner of High and Chestnut Sts. torn down?
November 15, 1948	First metered parking lot in WC opens on E. Chestnut St. at or near an abandoned PARR siding and a lot owned by the Atlantic Ice Co. and Fisher and Son [now part of Mosteller Parking Garage Lot].
1949	Wooden awning (street canopy) at NW corner of High and Miner Sts. removed.
1952	Short Line Bus Lot on S. High St. just below W. Market St. turned into the second metered parking lot in Borough; was the bus depot and before that the terminal for the WC Street RR Co. The Ticket Office and Waiting Room were demolished to make way for the parking lot.
November 3, 1953	Eagle Hotel, NW corner of E. Gay and N. Walnut Sts. completely gutted by fire.
post-1953	Hoopes Bros and Darlington Wheel Works torn down
1954	Grant Apartment Building, (aka the Dr. Joseph Jones House), 113 S. High St., razed to make way for parking lot [next to Methodist Church]
1955	Church of the Sure Foundation (W. Union St.) torn down for a parking lot for proposed shopping center on High St.
April 23, 1955	Boro votes to purchase an apartment house and lot, known as the Wyeth-Penrose Building, at SW corner E. Chestnut and N. Walnut Sts. for parking lot; it is located next to an existing parking lot.

YEAR	EVENT
May 16, 1955	Wawassan Apartments, formerly Farmers Hotel and Brandywine Inn, converted to apartments in 1919 by Patrick Corcoran, on W. Market St. and near Darlington St., sold to Borough to expand the 200 block Market St. parking lot that adjoined it.
April, 1956	Wawassan Apartments building torn down to expand existing parking lot.
May, 1956	Patrick J. Reilly Estate house (former West Chester House Hotel) and lot at Hannum Ave. and W. New St. sold to Borough to make way for parking lot
May, 1956	129 & 131 W. Chestnut Sts. demolished to make way for parking lot
December 15, 1956	Parking lot replacing Patrick J. Reilly Estate house (former West Chester House Hotel) opened for business
1957	Veit House between W. Washington and W. Biddle Sts., west of Wayne St. sold to Elks Club
1957	Board of Directors of National Bank of Chester County announce plans to demolish 13 N. High St. (Sharpless-Darlington Building) and 18 thru 24 E. Gay St. to make way for parking lot, and walk-up and drive-up tellers.
1958	First call for an impartial commission to perpetuate and enhance the unique and dignified charm of West Chester (by Bernie Ball, seconded by Mary M-P Allinson who specifically called for a Preservation of Landmarks commission) in response to bank's plan to raze 13 N. High St.
May, 1958	President of National Bank of Chester County announces that bank will reconsider plan to demolish 13 N. High St. (Sharpless-Darlington Building) [they didn't demolish the building] after five months of protests from concerned citizens both of West Chester and Chester County.
Summer?, 1958	18 thru 24 E. Gay St. demolished to make way for National Bank of Chester County's parking lot and drive-up window.
December 26, 1959	Demolition started on twin house at SW corner of Market and New Sts. in order to widen south side of Market St. from New St. to WC Laundry Building by 11 feet
1960s	Trend to either "colonialize" existing, often old, buildings or to tear down old buildings & replace them with buildings replicating "colonial" architecture accelerates
1960s	Trend to tear down old buildings & replace them with new architecture started
pre-1961	County Jail at NE corner of New and Market Sts. demolished
1962	New County Building at site of demolished County Jail erected
1962	The Cornwell Building, aka Darlington Building, at SE corner of S. High and E. Market Sts. demolished to make way for new Chester County Federal Saving & Loan Building.
August 21, 1963	Work began to remove third floor of 21 N. High St. (owned by National Bank of Chester County and Trust Company)
1964	Meconkey Mansion torn down for new (1964) Courthouse Annex which was being constructed when the Turks Head Inn was torn down



YEAR	EVENT
1964	Turks Head Inn torn down to make way for Dime Savings Bank addition
1965	Joseph Marshall House auctioned as part of the Estate Sale of Annie Y. Stone
1966	House at SE corner of S. High and Linden Sts. demolished
Autumn, 1966	Jacob Kehmle House, E. Gay St. [opposite site of present Borough Hall] torn down
Autumn, 1966	Another call for a historical and architectural ordinance [in conjunction with demolition of Kehmle House]
c. 1968?	Borough forms Blue Ribbon Committee to study economic development and revitalization of West Chester?
c. 1968	Borough announces plans to tear down the Chestnut Street Meetinghouse
1968	Concerned Citizens of West Chester? start fight to save the Meetinghouse
post-1968	2nd Empire Building at NE corner of N. Franklin and E. Market Sts. torn down
1969	Chestnut Street Meeting House torn down. Originally it was to make way for parking garage – got another parking lot instead; “Citizens for Responsive Government” persuaded Borough Council that parking garage was doomed to failure
1970s	Trend to tear down old buildings for whatever purpose accelerates
1970	Hoopes House at NW corner E. Washington and N. Walnut Sts. torn down for a parking lot for staff of Chester County Health Department housed in former Memorial Hospital on N. Walnut St. [now Hazlett Building]
1971?	Gay Street Mall Project born? (according to a May 1982 DLN story by Nancy Darnell)
1971	Old Main demolished to make way for New Main on the campus of West Chester State College (now WCU)
1972	Mosteller Parking Garage construction started as a result of Chamber of Commerce and Retail Merchants Association’s concern for deterioration of downtown West Chester – their answer was to lobby for a parking garage to ease parking problems.
1972	New parking garage being erected
June 22, 1972	Borough Council agrees to let Thomas Walsh form a formal Historical Review Committee using members of the former, informal committee (date for this committee is unknown) as committee members
July, 1972	Borough advised to look to build new Borough Hall as DLN Building would only be good for 5-10 years (presumably in the amount of space available in existing building)
July 12, 1972	House at 315 E. Market St. demolished
September 13, 1972	Salvation Army appealed to Zoning to be allowed to erect a 2-story addition to their building for 2 apartments and a store.
December 13, 1972	Thomas Walsh, appointed Chair of Historical Review Board, asked that ordinance be changed to have 5 members, instead of just 3.

YEAR	EVENT
c. 1973?	Blue Ribbon Committee dissolved?
1973	Ordinance to enlarge Board of Historical Review enacted (date unknown) and additional committee members appointed: Thomas Walsh (3 years) , Chair, Bernice Ball (3 years), Arthur James (2 years), Warren Burton (2 years), Mark Rowan (1 year)
1973	C.E.T.C.H.? appears to be concerned with redeveloping or revitalizing housing stock - was this the Ad Hoc committee appointed by Borough Council to look into better housing for WC?
1973	DLN Building next to F&M Building demolished: Borough's Parking Consultant strongly urges Borough to build a parking garage in its place, but Borough settled for parking lot instead (as advocated by Chamber of Commerce)
March, 1973	Direction Associates, Inc. hired to do a study of the downtown business district.
April, 1973	Mr. Ginter petitions Council to put condos on Devereux Site (which is where?)
April, 1973	Historical Review Board held first organizational meeting
April 7, 1973	Mosteller Parking Garage completed and opened
May, 1973	Revitalization Committee for Central Business District established
June, 1973	Subdivision of Broadlawns (NE corner of Virginia Ave. and Church St.) into 4 lots okayed
July, 1973	Direction Associates gives formal report on and hands over Study of Central Business District.
1975-1979?	Gay Street Design Committee established with John Laurento as Chair (25 members), they in turn, designed the Gay Street Revitalization Project.
c. 1976-1979?	Fred Cadmus restores Country Lawyer Building (NW corner Church and Market Sts.)
c. 1976-1979?	Larry Ginter built Hamilton Bank on site of Mansion House Hotel
c. 1976-1979?	Penn Mutual built addition to building on E. Gay St. [next to Green Tree Building]
c. 1976-1979?	YMCA decided to stay in West Chester and build addition to its building on NW corner, Chestnut and Walnut Sts.
c. 1976-1979?	American Bank renovated building at SW corner of High and Gay Sts.
1979	West Chester Historic Sites Survey started; conducted by Alice Kent Schooler
1979-1983	SE National Bank re-landscaped parking lot (on E. Gay St.)
1979-1983	Quaker Bakers restored their facade (on E. Gay St.)
1979-1983	Baldwin's Book Store restored their facade (on E. Gay St.)
1979-1983	Lagoy's Law Firm restored their facade (was Glick Shoe Store on Gay St.)
1979-1983	Mershon/MacFadden restore two facades for The Bar and The Restaurant (on W. Gay St.)
1980s	Trend to tear down old buildings for whatever purpose accelerates

YEAR	EVENT
1980	High Street School torn down for Burger King
1981	Gay Street Mall Project physically started
March, 1981	West Chester Historic Sites Survey finished
December, 1981	West Chester State College Quadrangle Historic District placed on the National Register of Historic Places, nominated by Dr. Richard Webster
1982	139-141 E. Market St. collapses: Front elevation had just received a coat of stucco and was due to have structural flaws attended to on its interior. The buildings were part of East Market Street Redevelopment Project.
c. 1983?	Joseph Marshall House/Salvation Army Headquarters torn down
c. 1983	Warner Theatre partially demolished
1983	Biddle Street School Auditorium (Devereux Property?) demolished to make way for Townhouse complex
October, 1983	Rehabilitation of houses in the 100 and 200 Blocks of East Market Street; as of October 6, 1983, 2 properties were rehabbed for three families, 3 houses were removed to provide "open space in the once highly congested blocks" (was this a euphemism for the two that collapsed while undergoing renovation?). And 4 properties were awaiting rehab.
1985	West Chester Downtown Historic District placed on the National Register of Historic Places, nominated by Ray Ott
1985	Wooden Chestnut Street Bridge demolished
1987?	Gay Street Mall Project physically finished
1988	Grant application for money to implement Main Street Manager Program accepted
November, 1988	West Chester's Historic District Ordinance passed
December, 1988	Board of Historical Review dissolved
1989	Main Street Manager Program started
January, 1989	West Chester Borough Historical and Architectural Review Board meets for the first time
1990	New Borough Hall Built
1990	Gay Street School demolished
1991	Main Street Manager Program ends; funding runs out
1995	First attempt to regulate height of buildings in Borough by Ordinance