

HISTORIC RESOURCES PLAN

Historic resources are buildings and other structures that are remnants of the area's heritage and early development. History and culture, as described in Chapter II, are evident throughout the two boroughs. Conserving historic structures, sites and landscapes is an important goal of this comprehensive plan.

PRESERVING THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Berks County Planning Commission recently completed an inventory of properties in the County on the National Register of Historic Places. These are sites that are formally certified as having national historic significance. Neither Bally nor Bechtelsville contain any of these sites. However, there are several structures in the two boroughs with local historic merit.

The following recommendations are intended to further preservation of historic resources and to preserve the small town qualities of Bally and Bechtelsville:

- Encourage local preservation groups to compile an inventory of historic resources in Bally and Bechtelsville and to seek official recognition for the area's eligible historic properties.
- Encourage conservation easements and historic facade easements to preserve private historic resources.

- Establish special sign requirements for historic properties.
- Install historic style welcome signs at key gateway entrances to both boroughs.
- Make productive use of historic buildings to ensure their proper maintenance, while being sensitive to the architectural characteristics of the exterior of the building and the site.
- Do not demolish buildings that contribute to the area's small town charm.
- Retain the exterior features visible from a street that give a building its historic character.
 - These features include windows, dormers, doors, porches, porch roofs and trim, moldings and other details at the juncture of front walls and roofs.
 - Special attention is needed to avoid covering brick or trim with siding. If features are deteriorated beyond repair or were removed in the past, they should be replaced with features that are similar in appearance.
- Maintain the scale, spacing, proportions, setbacks and materials of older buildings in any new construction visible from a public street.
 - Scale and proportions are especially important concerning rooflines and the spacing and sizes of windows, dormers and doors. For example, the spacing and sizes of window frames should be consistent with the historic style of the building and/or adjacent buildings.

- Front doors should be constructed of wood. If modern storm doors are used, they should be primarily constructed of glass or plexiglass to allow views of the front door.
- Modern-style bay windows should be avoided.
- Windows (other than first floors of storefronts) should appear to be separated into sashes and/or panes.
- Material type, color and texture of older buildings should be used in new construction.
- Retain changes that have occurred over time that are compatible with and add to a building's character.
 - Modern materials may be suitable if they appear the same as older materials.
- Ensure new additions are compatible with historic buildings and that a) the addition does not destroy historic features, b) similar proportions and scale are used, c) the site of the addition is carefully planned and d) compatible materials are used.
 - Wherever possible, additions should be placed on the rear of the building. If additions are placed on the side of the building, they should be setback from the street.
 - Modern alterations (such as wood decks, satellite antennae, skylights, sliding doors, garage doors and sunrooms) should be kept to the rear of buildings.
- Use colors that were common during the period of construction, including using color to highlight attractive trim and other details.
- Clean brick and other masonry with water, brushes, mild detergents and/or steam cleaning. Avoid use of sandblasting or use of harsh chemicals to avoid deterioration of the bricks over time.
- Repoint brick joints with mortar as needed and joints of other materials should be regularly caulked to ensure stability and waterproofing.
- Remove signs that are too high, too large, internally lit, constructed of plastic or that cover attractive features of the building.
 - Modest-sized wood signs that are scaled to the pedestrian and in proper proportion to the walls to which they are attached should be added.

In the future, a small pamphlet should be published and distributed to property owners which would expand on these ideas and further enhance restoration and preservation in Bally and Bechtelsville.