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## **8. HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

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# **HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

## **Historic Preservation Planning**

In 1976, the Morris County Planning Board adopted the first Historic Preservation Plan Element to the Morris County Master Plan. This document identified the need for and value of historic preservation, while also identifying preservation tools, funding sources, government support programs, private organizations and recommendations for municipal, county, state and federal historic preservation. Lastly, it identified a preliminary inventory of 268 historic sites based on information from the National Register of Historic Places, the Historic American Buildings Survey and the New Jersey Register of Historic Places.

## **Morris County Heritage Commission**

In 1970, the Board of Chosen Freeholders created the Morris County Heritage Commission. This nine-member commission acts as an advisory body to the Morris County Freeholders, promotes awareness of Morris County's heritage and provides advice and support to local historic preservation groups in Morris County.

The Heritage Commission has taken a leading role in the preservation of Morris County's historic records. In 1978, the commission created an archival program to insure the accessibility of Morris County historic documents and helped create the Morris County Archives as the county's official document repository. The commission employs a County Archivist to maintain various records and assist researchers with investigations concerning such items as building contracts, records of the Surrogate, roadway records, court records, and Morris County Freeholder minutes, among others.

In 1987, the Morris County Heritage Commission sponsored a comprehensive and county specific historic sites survey for each

municipality in Morris County. The survey documented sites of known or potential historic significance through review of specific data, field observation, photographs, maps and National Register listings covering sites dating from 1700 to 1940. The survey contained 2,850 sites of known and potential historic significance.<sup>1</sup>

The survey is currently being updated by staff of the Morris County Preservation Trust. This update incorporates the use of county GIS and will take a number of years to complete due to the level of detail and documentation being recorded. When finished, it will form the basis for an update of the Historic Preservation Element of the Morris County Master Plan.



*Glen Alpin, Harding Township*

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<sup>1</sup> In both the 1976 and 1987 documents, the number of sites identified did not necessarily reflect the actual number of separate buildings or structures, since a district or group listed as one site may contain a number of individual buildings or structures.



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## **Morris County Historic Preservation Trust Fund**

In November 2002, Morris County voters approved a referendum to use a portion of the Open Space and Farmland Preservation Trust program monies to fund historic preservation projects.

The Morris County Historic Preservation Trust Fund Review Board considers grants for the acquisition, stabilization, rehabilitation, restoration or preservation of historic resources by municipalities, qualified non-profits and the county. The Board’s membership consists of two at-large representatives, four municipal representatives, one member of the Morris County Heritage Commission, three appointees with professional expertise in historic preservation, one person each from the disciplines of preservation architecture, architectural history and restoration, and one appointee with a background as an archeologist, historic landscape specialist, historic site manager or curator or engineer with historic preservation expertise. Staff is provided by the Preservation Trust Division.

All funded activities must be in conformance with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. To be eligible for the program, historic resources must be listed, or certified as eligible for listing on the New Jersey and National Registers of Historic Places.

Based on the recommendations of the Historic Preservation Trust Fund Review Board, the Morris County Freeholders have provided funding to municipalities, nonprofit groups and the Morris County Park Commission through the annual program to help preserve historic resources throughout the county. These funds have been made available for “construction” and “non-construction” purposes. “Construction” grants provide funding for restoration, rehabilitation and protection of historic resources. “Non-construction” grants provide funding for acquisition, architectural assessments, reports, and other plans related to the implementation of historic preservation projects.

Between 2003 and 2006, \$4.86 million was awarded through 78 grants to 39 historic sites located in 24 municipalities. A total of 51 “construction” grants were awarded with a median grant amount of \$80,000. A total of 27 “non-construction grants” were awarded with a median grant amount of \$16,320.<sup>2</sup>

### **Yearly Morris County Historic Preservation Trust Fund Awards**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of Projects</b>	<b>Total Funding<sup>3</sup></b>
2003	18	\$750,000
2004	16	\$1,000,000
2005	21	\$1,500,000
2006	23	\$1,600,000



*Ford-Faesch House, Rockaway Township*

A wide variety of historic sites and structures are funded under this program. Historic homes and farmhouses/farmsteads are most prevalent with other grants going to preserve or maintain such

<sup>2</sup> Morris Preservation Trust, July 2006

<sup>3</sup> Figures rounded.



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entities as historic museums, one-room school houses, historic religious buildings, grist mills, and even train stations.

### **County Owned Historic Sites and Structures**

Historic structures and sites abound throughout Morris County, and the county government is caretaker of many of these sites. Perhaps the most widely recognized of these is the historic Morris County Courthouse in Morristown. The Courthouse, constructed in 1827, is listed on the National and New Jersey Registers of Historic Places and continues to be a functioning and vital part of county government.

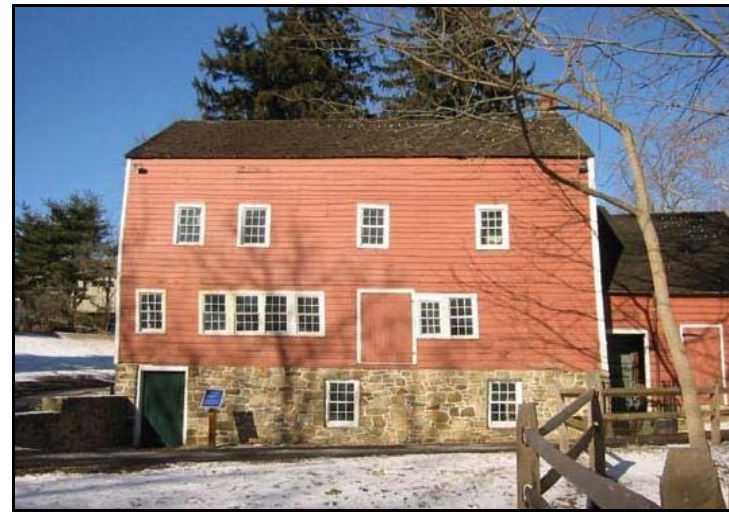


*Morris County Courthouse, Morristown*

Most county-owned historic sites and structures are contained within the properties of the Morris County Park Commission. County parks contain various historic structures, sites, landscapes and areas of archeological importance. Additions to the park system often include historically significant resources.

Five Park Commission properties, containing many historic structures, are listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. The Commission also maintains a sixth site, the Morris Canal, on behalf of Wharton Borough.

- ◆ *Nathan Cooper Grist Mill* (Cooper Mill) – Chester Township
- ◆ *Merchiston Farm* (Bamboo Brook) – Chester Township
- ◆ *Whippany Farm* (Frelinghuysen Arboretum) – Morris and Hanover Townships
- ◆ *General Revere House* (Fosterfields Living Historical Farm) – Morris Township
- ◆ *Speedwell Village* (Historic Speedwell) – Morristown
- ◆ *Morris Canal* (Hugh Force Park) owned by Wharton Borough.



*Telegraph Factory - Speedwell Village, Morristown*



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Historic preservation is an essential part of the Park Commission mission. The Division of Historic Sites within the Park Commission directly manages, staffs and operates the museums of Speedwell Village, the Cooper Mill and the Fosterfields Living Historical Farm, providing interactive education programs. The Division coordinates various historic programs and activities and is responsible for the care, maintenance and preservation of all historic sites and structures throughout the park system.

The Morris County Park Commission continues to examine the eligibility of county-owned sites and structures for inclusion on the State and National Registers of Historic Places. For example, Willowwood Arboretum in Chester Township is currently being considered for historic site registration.

### **Local Historic Commissions, Committees and Historic Preservation Groups**

At present, 22 municipal Historic Commissions and/or Landmarks Advisory Committees provide advice to local Planning Boards and Boards of Adjustment regarding applications for development that may affect historic sites or historic districts.<sup>4</sup> These Commissions and Committees are also involved in the identification of these sites and the development of plans and regulations associated with their protection. In addition, there are about 45 other private associations, foundations and societies devoted to local historic preservation located throughout the county.<sup>5</sup> Many of these organizations have been recipients of Morris County Historic Preservation Trust funding.

<sup>4</sup> Morris County Preservation Trust Survey as of 1/23/2006.

<sup>5</sup> Morris County Heritage Society Directory as of 8/2/2005.

### **Local Historic Preservation Plan Elements**

Additional support of local historic commission and preservation group activities is often provided by local municipalities in the development of Historic Preservation Plan Elements in the local master plan. The Municipal Land Use Law permits the development of these master plan elements with the purpose of indicating the location and significance of historic sites and districts, identifying the standards that may be used to assess worthiness for historic site or district identification and to analyze the impact of other master plan elements on the preservation of historic sites and districts. At last count, at least 20 municipalities had Historic Preservation Plan Elements as part of their master plan.<sup>6</sup>



*First Presbyterian Church of Hanover, East Hanover Township*

<sup>6</sup> Morris County Preservation Trust Survey as of 1/23/06.

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## **Municipal Funding for Historic Preservation**

Many municipalities in Morris County also fund historic preservation activities through their municipal open space tax. Of the 29 municipalities in Morris County that have a dedicated open space tax, 13 allow the use of the tax for historic preservation purposes.<sup>7</sup>



*Cooper Mill, Black River County Park Chester Township*



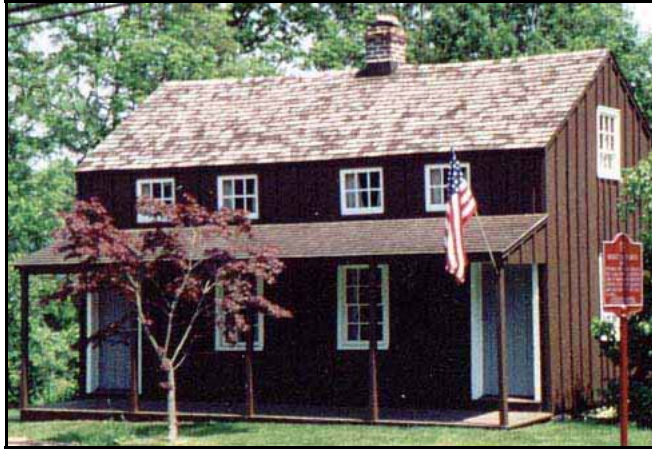
*The Willows at Fosterfields, Morris Township*

## **Trends / Issues**

- ◆ As redevelopment within centers and other developed areas of the county occurs, greater public awareness and education of historic resources and the benefits of preservation will be required to ensure protection of these resources. Greater public awareness is also needed to promote the creation of compatible redevelopment plans in areas with historic and/or architecturally significant structures.
- ◆ Continued funding support for historic site acquisition, rehabilitation and maintenance will be needed. Although county support through the Preservation Trust is anticipated to continue, increased local and nonprofit support will be needed to accomplish long term preservation goals. The continued amendment of additional local open space trust funds to allow the use of funding for historic preservation purposes will help to address this issue.
- ◆ The use of digital technology by Morris County in updating its historic sites survey will lead to increased and “real-time” data sharing with municipalities.

<sup>7</sup> Morris County Preservation Trust, 2005.

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*Bridget Smith House, Mine Hill Township*

- ◆ With growing demands on local discretionary funding, the identification of economically viable uses for historic structures will become more important. The fostering of historic tourism and the sensitive adaptive reuse of historic structures will become increasingly necessary to support and maintain these resources. County and local historic preservation funding efforts can help support this adaptive reuse and redevelopment, promoting future economic growth while respecting the past.



*Acorn Hall, Morristown*



*Ralston Cider Mill, Mendham Township*