

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION



Cumberland's Historic Preservation Tradition

Public and private efforts toward recognizing and conserving the historic character of Cumberland began at least as early as 1972 when the Washington Street Historic District was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places. This was a reaction to the demolition of many historic buildings downtown during the federally-supported Urban Renewal era of the 1960s and 1970s. Perhaps the sharpest loss experienced during this time was the demolition of the Queen City Railroad Station in 1972. Seeking to ensure the protection of Washington Street's historic properties against similar outcomes, the City passed its first preservation ordinance in 1974.

In 1976, a city-wide historic resources survey and conservation plan, completed by Land and Community Associates of Charlottesville, VA, recommended a comprehensive set of policies and actions to help the City's overall community revitalization strategy. At about the same time, as part of an effort to stabilize the downtown's retail market, Baltimore Street was closed to traffic and transformed into an outdoor pedestrian mall. In 1983, as part of the ongoing efforts to help revitalize the City's central retail and business district, most of downtown Cumberland was designated a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places. While listing on the National Register did not (and does not) offer protection against demolition or alteration, National Register status did make all of the historic properties in the district eligible for substantial federal tax credits for rehabilitation.

Cumberland's most recent preservation initiative came in 1993 with the Maryland legislature's establishment of the Canal Place Preservation and Development Authority. The Authority was created to support the National Park Service in the preservation and enhancement of the C&O Canal National Park Corridor, specifically at its Cumberland terminus in and around the Western Maryland Railroad Station known as Canal Place. One of the state legislature's primary directives to the Authority was the creation of a comprehensive action plan based upon preservation-based initiatives. This plan maps out a strategy to help Cumberland reposition itself regionally in the competitive heritage tourism market. This Design Guidelines handbook is part of that effort. Its intention is to contribute to the ongoing efforts, dating back to the early 1970s, to provide direction and guidance for the citizens of Cumberland in protecting and enhancing the rich architectural and cultural heritage of their city.



North Centre Street residential and commercial buildings.

“The preservation of sites, structures and districts of historical, archaeological or architectural significance together with their appurtenances and environmental settings is a public purpose in the City.”

-- Zoning Ordinance, Section 11.02 Purpose

REFERENCE

The Historic Preservation Ordinance is codified in Section 11 of the Zoning Ordinance for the City of Cumberland, MD. It can be found online at: <http://www.cumberlandmd.gov/DocumentCenter/Home/View/189>

SUGGESTION

See the corresponding map (Chapter 1 - Page 6) and consult with the Historic Planner/Preservation Coordinator at the Cumberland Department of Community Development to determine whether your property is subject to this ordinance.

The Historic Preservation Ordinance

The Historic Area Regulations, known as the historic preservation ordinance, is a section of the local zoning ordinance that provides the City of Cumberland the legal framework within which it can designate and regulate historic sites, structures, and districts in order to preserve the unique character of the City.

The purpose of the City’s historic preservation ordinance is to:

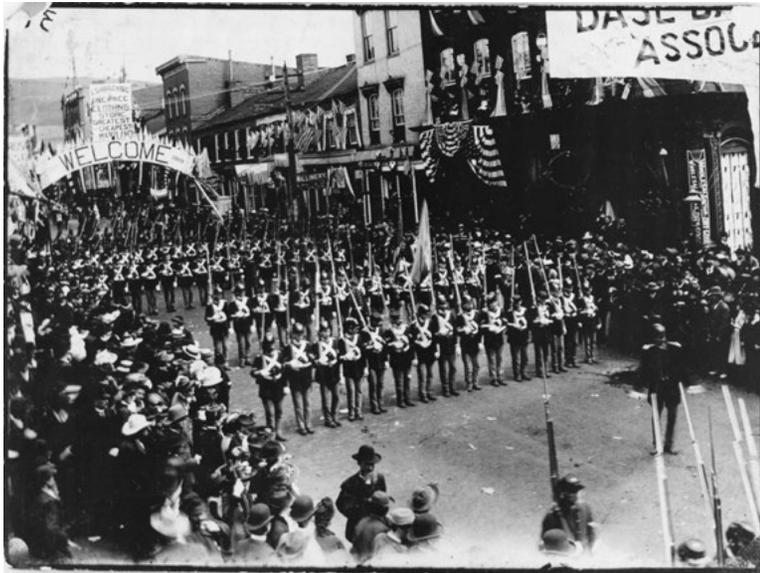
- » Promote the preservation and appreciation of the sites, structures, and districts which reflect elements of cultural, social, economic, political, archaeological or architectural history;
- » Strengthen the local economy;
- » Stabilize and improve property values in and around such historic areas; and
- » Foster civic beauty.

The historic preservation ordinance created the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), which is the governing body that regulates changes to historic areas. The City of Cumberland recognized the Canal Place Preservation District as an important conveyor of the City’s rich architectural heritage. As such, it has been judged as a place worth conserving and part of the City’s public legacy. Heritage is conveyed equally by both the richly stylized houses on Washington Street built for the City’s affluent, and also by the commercial downtown and the modest vernacular houses built for its working families. Preservation and maintenance sensitive to the historic styles and methods of construction ensures the preservation of Cumberland’s special character and the enhancement of property values.

The historic preservation ordinance applies to locally zoned historic areas and locally designated landmarks. This currently includes the Canal Place Preservation District and a select number of individual landmarks outside these boundaries.

REFERENCE

The Historic Preservation Commission Bylaws and Rules of Procedure can be found online at: <http://www.ci.cumberland.md.us/DocumentCenter/View/357>



REFERENCE

The City of Cumberland purchased the photographic collection from Herman and Stacia Miller in 1982, for “preservation and future historic planning uses of the city.” The collection of over 2,000 images is searchable online, here: <http://www.ci.cumberland.md.us/303/Photo-Collection>

The Historic Preservation Commission

The HPC is composed of a group of seven volunteer members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council, who are tasked with upholding the historic preservation ordinance. Among the HPC’s primary powers and duties is to review Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) applications, which are required prior to receiving an Historic Area Work Permit for work within the City’s Preservation District.

*The Historic Preservation Commission is charged with considering the effect that a proposed project would have upon the **exterior architectural features** of a property as seen from a **public street or right-of-way**, as well as upon the general historic and architectural character of the district.*

Permits are issued for those projects that the HPC determined has met the intent of the historic preservation ordinance, as outlined in the guidelines contained within this handbook. See Chapter 2 for a detailed explanation of the application and review process.

The HPC is supported by the Preservation Coordinator in the Department of Community Development. Together, they provide technical guidance to property owners with questions regarding design and maintenance issues, as well as direction to those seeking assistance for rehabilitation projects. The HPC seeks to balance the City’s public objective of community preservation with the financial ability of a property owner or applicant. Contact the Department of Community Development to learn about the resources available.

The City maintains a collection of technical reference sources that may assist property owners in gaining further understanding of recommended preservation techniques and approaches. In addition, the HPC and the Preservation Coordinator can direct people to collections of historic photographs of buildings and city streetscapes which may aid property owners researching or trying to locate older views of their building.

“The Commission shall adopt rehabilitation and new construction design guidelines for designated landmarks, sites, structures, and districts which are consistent with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation. Guidelines may include design characteristics intended to meet the needs of particular types of sites, structures, and districts, and may identify categories of changes that are so minimal in nature that they do not affect historic, archeological, or architectural significance and require no review by the Commission. These guidelines shall be utilized by the Commission in its review of applications.”

--Zoning Ordinance, Section 11.05 Powers and Duties



View towards Downtown Cumberland from Washington Street.

The Preservation District Design Guidelines

The purpose of this handbook is to establish specific criteria by which Cumberland’s HPC and code enforcement officer can administer the provisions of the City’s historic preservation ordinance. The guidelines contained in this handbook place the burden of responsibility on the applicant, rather than on the City of Cumberland or its HPC. The intent of these guidelines is not to inhibit individual initiative, but rather to define the arena in which individuals can operate without diminishing the collective historic character of the preservation district.

It should be understood that the handbook’s guidelines are based conceptually upon the *Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Buildings*. These principles should be thought of as guideposts for determining the various approaches to preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. This handbook amplifies the intent of the *Secretary’s Standards* with guidelines that specifically address local conditions. In no case is it the intent of this handbook to contradict the *Secretary’s Standards*.

WHO USES THIS DOCUMENT?

The HPC, the Preservation Coordinator and other City staff will consistently reference this handbook to help make decisions on COA applications as well as to advise property owners on appropriate courses of action.

Applicants who study the handbook and consult with the City’s Preservation Coordinator prior to finalizing their project plans and COA application may be more assured that their proposals will comply with the objectives of the City’s preservation ordinance.

WHEN DOES THIS DOCUMENT APPLY?

This document applies to all properties located within a Historic Area, as designated by the City of Cumberland. As of 2015, this includes the properties within the Canal Place Preservation District, the boundaries of which are



First Presbyterian Church on the site of Fort Cumberland.

TIP

The document is intended to be interactive, with links to send you to applicable guidelines within the document and to external reference materials. Please contact the Preservation Coordinator should you find a broken or missing link.

APPENDICES

- » Appendix A includes general maintenance guidance for historic masonry, wood, and metal materials.
- » Appendix B contains an overview of common 20th-century building materials.
- » Appendix C is a glossary of standard architectural terms.

shown on the accompanying map (Chapter 1 - Page 6). The work regulated by the historic preservation ordinance include new construction, reconstruction, alteration, restoration, rehabilitation, additions, and demolition of a building or structure. Elevations visible from any public right-of-way will be subject to these guidelines - even if the right-of-way is farther from the building than the adjacent street. Because Cumberland is situated in a valley and buildings in the District are visible from greater distances, the HPC will consider how projects could impact viewsheds of the District. It is important to contact the Preservation Coordinator ahead of time to confirm whether your proposed work is subject to review. See Chapter 2 for procedural information.

HOW DO I USE THIS DOCUMENT

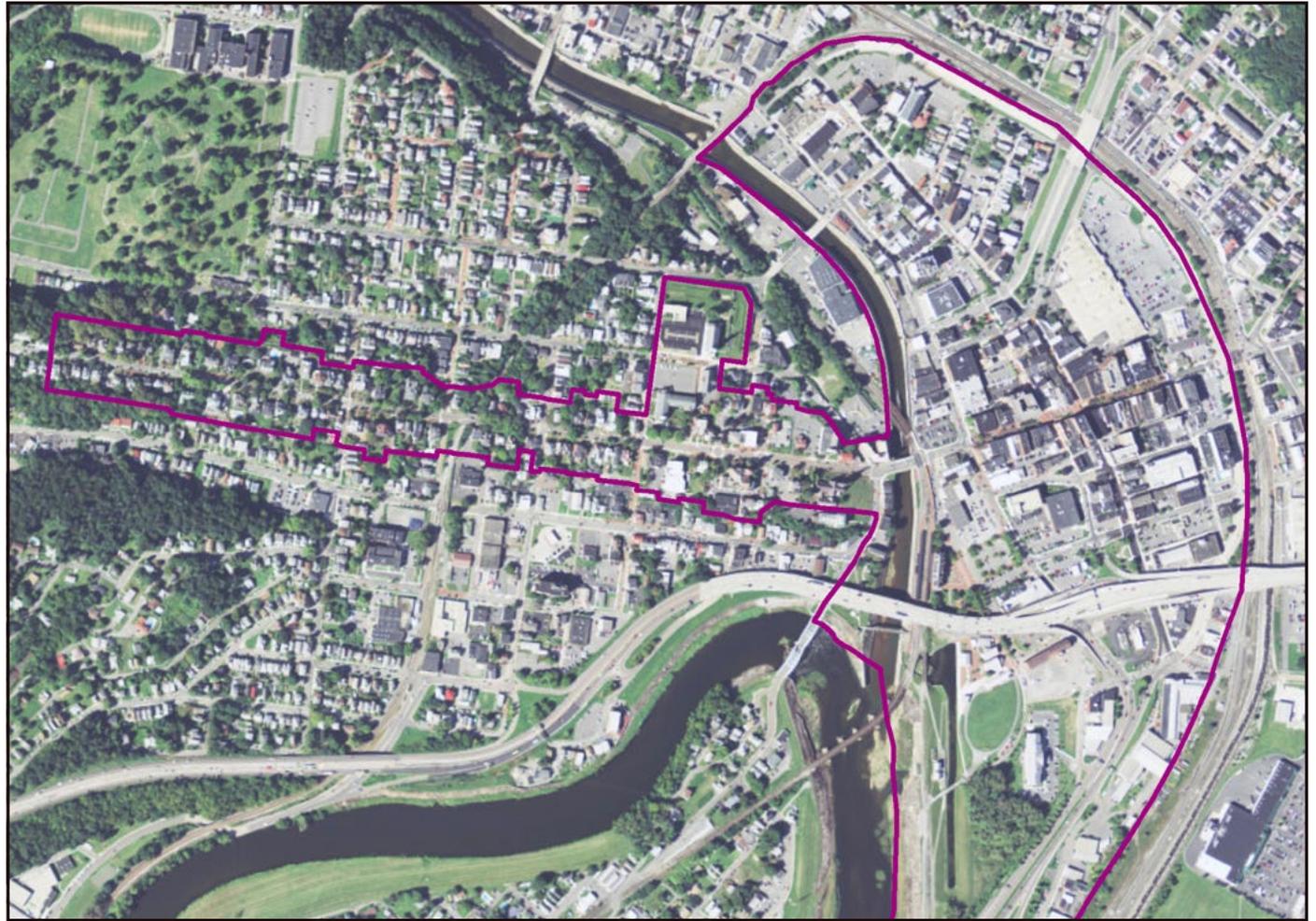
This document should serve as a guide for all proposed work on properties protected under the Historic Preservation Ordinance.

- » Chapter 2 describes the steps and documentation required to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- » Chapter 3 is an updated historic context for Cumberland, which should be used to provide a basic understanding of the significance of a building within the broader history of the City.
- » Chapter 4 provides a basic explanation of the architectural styles and building types found primarily in Cumberland's Canal Place Preservation District. Use this guide to understand which details on your building are considered to be character defining and thus important to preserve.
- » Chapter 5 contains all design guidelines for planning and executing a successful project within the District. They include general guidelines that should be followed on all projects within the protected Historic Area, guidelines for specific historic building features, as well as guidelines for alterations, additions, new construction, and demolition.
- » Chapter 6 provides instruction for demolition and economic hardship applications.

CANAL PLACE PRESERVATION DISTRICT



Overview of the entire Canal Place Preservation District Boundary.



Detail view of the Washington Street Historic District and Central Business District areas.

Defining Historic Preservation

Historic preservation is often mistakenly interpreted as a painstaking and expensive process to restore a building to its original condition. *This is rarely the reality.* Rather, historic preservation, as a philosophy and professional field, embraces a whole range of acceptable approaches all intended to preserve and extend the useful life of a historic property. The suitability of each approach depends on the condition, use, age, significance, and financial disposition of the property in question.

Specific guidance and additional information about the four approaches to the treatment of historic properties (preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction), is available online through the National Park Service at: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/four-treatments.htm>

The four main approaches, as defined and described by the *National Park Service*, are as follows.

“Preservation is defined as the act or process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property.” This approach places a high premium on the retention of all historic fabric through conservation, maintenance and repair. It reflects a building’s continuum over time, through successive occupancies, and the respectful changes and alterations that are made.

“Rehabilitation is defined as the act or process of making possible a compatible use for a property through repair, alterations, and additions while preserving those portions or features which convey its historical, cultural, or architectural values.” This approach emphasizes the retention and repair of historic materials, but more latitude is provided for modern upgrades and alternate uses.



Pershing Street, downtown Cumberland.

“Restoration is defined as the act or process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of features from other periods in its history and reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period.” This option may be taken by an individual or institution who voluntarily chooses to restore their property as authentically as possible to a certain period of time.

It is not the intent of the Commission to require property owners to restore their property to its original appearance or one from a specific period of time.

“Reconstruction is defined as the act or process of depicting, by means of new construction, the form, features, and detailing of a non-surviving site, landscape, building, structure, or object for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its historic location.” These guidelines establish limited opportunities for this approach.

Both Preservation and Rehabilitation standards focus attention on the preservation of those materials, features, finishes, spaces, and spatial relationships that, together, give a property its historic character. In reality, the most common historic preservation approach is rehabilitation: the process of upgrading the inner workings of a building to meet contemporary needs while also preserving its essential historic character. Unlike preservation or restoration, the rehabilitation approach is flexible enough to accommodate additions and alterations to historic properties. It is this approach, adopted by the City of Cumberland and elaborated upon by the guidelines of this handbook, which forms the basis for regulatory oversight in the preservation districts of Cumberland.



George Washington’s Headquarters on Greene Street, a reconstruction.

Benefits of Historic Preservation

In a city where the vast majority of its building stock dates from the late 1800s to early 1900s, the presence of history is as tangible as the building next door. While that building likely is not considered an individual historic landmark, the work of a master craftsman, or the setting of a famous historic event, it does contribute to the character of the block and to the overall sense of place within Cumberland. The anonymous, vernacular, “buildings next door” form something greater than the sum of their parts. It is this overall character of a historic district that provides communities and places with something much more significant than just a historic designation: it also carries social, economic, and environmental benefits.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC

“In economics, it is the differentiated product that commands a high premium. If in the long run we want to attract capital, to attract investment in our communities, we must differentiate them from anywhere else.”

--Donovan Rypkema, PlaceEconomics

In Cumberland, where cultural heritage tourism is a large part of the current economy, preservation plays a large role in offering a variety of activities and attracting visitors. Cultural heritage travelers spend approximately one-third more money per trip and take slightly more trips per year than the average U.S. traveler.

Studies in numerous communities across the country have consistently shown that revitalized historic neighborhoods improve the municipal tax base and act as magnets to businesses looking for a healthy community climate in which to establish or relocate a business.

Historic properties are established resources within the existing infrastructure, often built with workmanship and materials superior to modern construction. They have a longer lifespan and as such, the cost of rehabilitating these existing



Late 20th-century investment at Canal Place.

buildings often compares very favorably with new construction in undeveloped areas. Rehabilitation projects provide more local jobs since a greater percentage of the overall project cost is for labor. This in turn fuels the local economy more than new construction, much of which is outsourced through prefabrication.

A list of economic benefits from the National Trust for Historic Preservation can be found at: [http://my.preservationnation.org/site/DocServer/Economic Benefits of HP April 2011.pdf?docID=9023](http://my.preservationnation.org/site/DocServer/Economic_Benefits_of_HP_April_2011.pdf?docID=9023)

ENVIRONMENTAL

The “greenest” building is the one that already exists!

Historic preservation encourages the use and reuse of existing buildings and infrastructure, to the greatest extent possible. Approximately 25% of the waste being added to our nation’s landfills is from demolition and construction activities. Think of it this way: demolishing a typical two-story “Main Street” commercial building negates all environmental benefits of recycling 1,344,000 aluminum cans. This is because historic buildings contain *embodied energy*, the energy associated with extracting, processing, manufacturing, transporting, and assembling building materials. All buildings contain embodied energy but historic buildings in particular often contain more, as they are constructed with more material, more workmanship, and over more time than their contemporary counterparts. Demolishing such a resource is throwing to waste a significant amount of energy that had been in productive use for decades. (source: [http://my.preservationnation.org/site/DocServer/Economic Benefits of HP April 2011.pdf?docID=9023](http://my.preservationnation.org/site/DocServer/Economic_Benefits_of_HP_April_2011.pdf?docID=9023))

In addition to the buildings themselves, rehabilitation also takes advantage of existing public resources by reusing the infrastructure in which the City has already invested. It directs development to existing areas, where roads, sewers, parks, and schools have already been constructed. It saves money for both the government and taxpayers alike.



View northeast across the Market Street Bridge towards downtown.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Many existing buildings have inherent energy efficient features original to the design of the building. Most buildings in Cumberland were constructed prior to the invention of modern-day conveniences like heating and cooling systems and relied on traditional construction techniques and older building technologies for comfort.

For example, glass traditionally comprised less than 20% of a building elevation, which minimized the potential for heat loss. New construction often has a higher glass-to-wall ratio and, thus, a greater potential for heat loss even with modern glazing. Interior or exterior shutters help curb heat intake while storm windows can reduce heat loss; both preserve the historic windows and help to maintain a high degree of historic character. Thick masonry, including the brick so prevalent throughout Cumberland, has inherent thermal characteristics that regulate the temperature within the building; naturally keeping it cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter.

A preservation brief published by the National Park Service: *Improving Energy Efficiency in Historic Buildings*, provides a thorough overview to these issues. This is available online at: <http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs/3-improve-energy-efficiency.htm>.

FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

When regular maintenance and occasional upgrading is not sufficient to make the historic building usable, the City of Cumberland, the State of Maryland, and the Federal government have created a significant number of financial incentives to help property owners with the rehabilitation or restoration of their historic buildings. While certain preconditions are required, these programs can significantly help offset the cost of rehabilitation and substantial repair. Contact the Department of Community Development for information.



Baltimore Street.