

TOWNSHIP OF LOWER MERION
Building and Planning Committee
Issue Briefing

Topic: Historic Resource Inventory Amendments

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I. Action To Be Considered By The Board:

Discussion of amendments to the Historic Resource Inventory (Chapter A180) in the Township Code.

II. Why This Issue Requires Board Consideration:

Amendments to the Township Code will require Board action.

III. Current Policy Or Practice (If Applicable):

Amendments to the Inventory are periodically conducted. These suggested amendments are largely to “clean up” and update outdated sections of the Inventory.

IV. Other Relevant Background Information:

These amendments come after a thorough review of each entry in the Township’s Historic Resource Inventory, cross-referenced with the Township Right-of-Way database, the Montgomery County property database, and the detailed Township Historic Resource Inventory database. Properties fall into one of nine amendment categories being proposed. Below is a description of each kind of amendment:

Section 1. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 155, Zoning, Chapter A180, Historic Resource Inventory, shall be amended to correct spellings and other minor errors:

(25 properties) These are addresses that were entered erroneously or are otherwise inconsistent with the official Township street name database, including conjoined words and incorrect directional identifiers. Correcting these is simply a housekeeping measure, as the properties are designated appropriately in all Township databases.

Section 2. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 155, Zoning, Chapter A180, Historic Resource Inventory, shall be amended to modify the addresses of the following resources to improve consistency with the Township's official address listing:

(20 properties) Several properties are known by more than one address, and others have had address changes since the Inventory was enacted. This section modifies the addresses in the Code to match the addresses in the official Township street name database. No new properties are being designated in this section; all listed are currently designated under incorrect or alternative (not official) addresses.

Note: BC048, 10 Monument Road/393 East City Avenue goes by both addresses in the official Township and County databases; both addresses are included here, though they refer to a single parcel.

Section 3. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 155, Zoning, Chapter A180, Historic Resource Inventory, shall be amended to upgrade the historic mill ruin on Mill Creek Road (a contributing resource to the Mill Creek Historic District) from Class 2 to Class 1:

(1 property) This is a contributing Historic Resource to the Mill Creek district that had been assigned Class 2 designation in the Code. Contributing resources to Historic Districts are always designated Class 1.

Section 4. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 155, Zoning, Chapter A180, Historic Resource Inventory, shall be amended by assigning new ID numbers to designated resources that have been subdivided or otherwise altered due to subdivision or land development:

(14 properties) These additions to the Inventory are largely the result of designated historic resources being subdivided, including the Odd Fellows property in the Gladwyne Historic District and the Arbors at Athens church conversion in Ardmore. These new entries do not cover additional area but they are new individual addresses. In addition, the Palmer Chapel (on the 6 Lancaster Avenue property) and additional addresses for All Saints Church (Wynnewood) and Suburban Square are proposed for addition to ensure that all parts of these already designated historic resources are covered under the Code.

Section 5. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 155, Zoning, Chapter A180, Historic Resource Inventory, shall be amended by removing duplicate listings:

(5 properties) These are additional or obsolete addresses for properties that are already listed elsewhere in the Code. If these entries are removed, no historic resources will be taken off the Inventory.

Section 6. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 155, Zoning, Chapter A180, Historic Resource Inventory, shall be amended by removing demolished resources:

(10 properties) These historic resources have been lost since the last time the Code was amended and the addresses either no longer exist or are used by non-historic new construction.

Section 7. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 155, Zoning, Chapter A180, Historic Resource Inventory, shall be amended by adding the following resources in the Harriton Farms development:

(6 properties) In 1998, when this property was developed, the HARB was tasked with reviewing alterations and/or additions to six historic structures located within it. This was prior to the creation of the Historical Commission and Historic Resource Inventory, and when the Inventory was created these properties were not added to Chapter A180 despite retaining Class 1 designation. In addition, the responsibility of reviewing these properties should be transferred to the Historical Commission.

Section 8. The Code of the Township of Lower Merion, Chapter 155, Zoning, Chapter A180, Historic Resource Inventory, shall be amended by adding the following designated Class 1 historic resource, owned by Lower Merion Township:

(1 property) Despite being designated in all Township databases (and having gone to the Historical Commission for review as recently as 2016), Appleford was somehow excluded from the official Inventory listing in the Code.

V. Impact On Township Finances:

The implementation of these updates will use minimal staff time to implement, including the mailing of letters to affected property owners.

VI. Staff Recommendation:

Staff recommends taking this step to update and clarify the Historic Resource Inventory.