

## **THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN ELEMENT**

**11/07/18 DRAFT WITH UPDATED EDITS**



*Aerial View of Stirling, 1949*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law (MLUL) requires the Planning Board to prepare a Master Plan that, in addition to required Elements, may contain a variety of other elements, including a historic preservation plan. The Purposes of Zoning in the MLUL include the following statement regarding historic preservation:

“To promote the conservation of historic sites and districts, open space, energy resources and valuable natural resources in the State and to prevent urban sprawl and degradation of the environment through improper use of land.”

N.J.S.A. 40:55D-2

For Long Hill Township, the importance of the community’s historic assets makes such a historic preservation element an essential Master Plan component.

Long Hill Township and its Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment can effectively use historic preservation concepts as part of a comprehensive neighborhood conservation and improvement strategy. By supporting the preservation of historic structures and maintaining the historic character of existing streetscapes and villages, the township will be able to prevent inappropriate development and destruction of resources. As a result, the town can retain and enhance the historic and environmental qualities that have made it a desirable place for people to live.

Most people find in Long Hill Township’s rural-influenced surroundings a setting in which they feel comfortable and at home. The individual buildings, properties and the tree-canopied roads that connect them fit together in a traditional arrangement that has deep roots in our past. As such, these patterns represent a historical identity that can be recognized and understood in contrast to modern development patterns, which often seem patternless and haphazard. The historic development patterns still clearly evident in Long Hill today reflect an organization and coherence in the landscape in many ways.

Compared with neighboring towns, Long Hill Township has preserved a significant amount of its historic character. The township contains over 70 sites or districts of historical significance, based on National Register and New Jersey Register of Historic Places criteria. Beyond that, the township is still visually shaped by the survival of the early set-

tlement pattern and road alignments making up its historic neighborhoods and streetscapes.

Long Hill Township, therefore, is the trustee of a significant historic legacy, dating back to the early 1700's, of old homes, buildings and villages, old roads and bridges, remaining old fields and vegetation. The true historic significance of this legacy, however, lies in how these elements all fit together into landscapes that are still clearly reflective of the early settlement pattern of rural America: small villages originally surrounded by farm areas.

Historic Preservation is guided by public law and codes at the federal, state and local levels. Long Hill Township has relied on best practices and guidance as embodied in the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, Public Law 89-665; 54 U.S.C. 300101 *et seq.*, amendments and updates. The New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office (NJ SHPO) was established under this federal system and manages the National Register of Historic Places in-state for the federal government. Long Hill does not have its own local historic preservation ordinances. However, local historic preservation from a planning perspective is **guided** by grants **received** from **the Morris County Historic Preservation Trust Fund** which uses the federal guidelines embodied in the Secretary of The Interior requirements to determine eligibility and standards.

Since 1996, master planning in Long Hill Township has sought to preserve the township's deep historical roots and rural past. Those goals are also central to this Master Plan.

The Historic Preservation Advisory Committee of Long Hill Township (HPAC) was established by ordinance 2-35.1-4 in 1996 to provide expert guidance on issues related to preserving Long Hill Township's historical assets.

The 2013 Reexamination Report concluded, "Since the adoption of the 1996 Master Plan and the 2003 Reexamination there have been very few changes in the assumptions, policies, and objectives forming the basis for the Master Plan and Development Regulations."

## **LONG HILL TOWNSHIP'S HISTORIC ASSETS**

The 1987 Morris County Historic Sites Survey and its successor updated documents (commonly referred to as the Acroterion Report) identified seventy-nine historic sites and structures, four historic districts and seven streetscapes in Long Hill Township. Acrote-

tion, Inc. used a wide variety of criteria when evaluating the sites during this inventory including: construction date and source of date; style; builder or architect; form/plan type; foundation; exterior wall fabric; roof/chimneys; siting, description and relating structures; surrounding environment; significance; original use/present use; physical condition; threats to the site; register eligibility; and, boundary.

The original inventory, with subsequent ongoing updates developed by the County of Morris with local input, provides a useful initial basis for future efforts by the Township to plan for the preservation of the historic resources within its boundaries. That inventory has been updated for this Master Plan, and can be found in [Appendix XX](#).

## **BACKGROUND**

### **Existing Historic Built Environment**

Long Hill Township's historic homes illustrate the evolution of American architecture from East Jersey Vernacular, Colonial, Georgian, Federal, and Greek Revival dwellings, through the rich variations of Victorian styles, to Craftsman and Bungalow homes and the repeated iterations of Colonial Revival from 1876 to the present day. The overall prevalence of traditional architectural designs, when combined within the context of historic roads and villages, therefore, creates the essential visual character of the community.

Many of these identified historic properties have significant extant historic outbuildings. Whenever possible, these ancillary structures should be retained as a contributing part of the historic context of the site.

In the future, as development occurs in accordance with zoning requirements, the proportion of old to new will diminish. That does not necessarily mean, however, that historic patterns or historic significance need to diminish or disappear.

### **Historic Streetscapes, Bridges and Roadways**

Many of Long Hill's roads represent an important historic legacy central to the character and quality of life of the town. Notwithstanding Long Hill's proximity to a large metro-

politan area, its older roads and some bridges have remained relatively unchanged for generations. The scale and design of the township's roads and bridges have an important impact on the rural and historic character of the community. The Morris County Historic Sites Survey identifies seven such streetscapes. They each retain a high degree of historic integrity by virtue of containing a substantial number of houses from the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries, and includes properties with significant outbuildings. The concept of designating a roadway itself, and its associated narrow width, tree-lined sides and vistas is an accepted concept in preservation. (An example is the Tempe Wick Road district through Mendham and Harding Townships; *Tempe Wick Road/Washington Corners Historic District (ID#316) NR Reference #: 00000959.*)

The tree canopy is particularly important on the scenic and historic roads of Long Hill Township. The canopy reinforces the rural nature of the community as well as the Township's commitment to preserving the environment.

Morris County has adopted a policy of "context sensitive design" for its roads and bridges. This policy ensures that the unique local elements, that are an integral part of county roadways and bridges, including scale, road width, and aesthetic character, are considered during the design phase of County projects. Road or bridge improvements that are undertaken should be designed in accordance with the overall goal of preserving Long Hill's environmental quality and historic heritage. An example would be the reconstruction of the White Bridge on White Bridge Road in 2004, which retained the visual look and feel of the late 19th century pony truss bridge it replaced while meeting all contemporary road engineering requirements.

[Insert Photo #1, Long Hill Road Streetscape, Millington, early 1900s]

## **Historic Areas**

Millington:

- Millington's history dates back to the early 18th century. Its importance as a crossing point on the Passaic River and water-driven mills established its early regional significance. The original peripheral road rights-of-way still exist, but

a portion of the one-time mixed-use village core has been altered by later industrialization. The railroad, built in the 1870s, encouraged industrial growth in this part of southern Morris County.

- An early agricultural machinery manufacturing company first established some of Millington's economic base and post-colonial historic housing pattern. This was followed by a building materials factory which in the early decades of the 20th century expanded to absorb and replace some of Millington's original pre-industrial street layout with a large factory site.
- Millington's present-day historic core is anchored by two National and State Register of Historic Places listed buildings, the Millington Schoolhouse and the Millington Railroad Station. The village has been cited by Morris County as a potential historic district.

[Insert Photo #2, Millington Station postcard]

#### Stirling:

- Stirling originated as a post-Civil War planned industrial village. Laid out in rectangular blocks on once-open farmland, a town plan was drawn featuring a park, a lake, and curving drives on the hill. Trains began to run through Stirling in early 1872. The largest of the factories was built on Railroad Avenue where by 1885 skilled French and Italian weavers were turning out 2,000 yards of silk a week.
- Through the decades, the mixed-use factory town survived the ups and downs of the early 20th century. The self-contained village housed workers, shops and several industrial sites. During World War II Stirling's large workforce labored full time to fill the critical need for aircraft components. In 1974, operating as a foam plastic manufacturer, the one-time silk mill factory building burned beyond salvage.
- Following WWII and into the present day Stirling retained its nearly-intact original layout and a considerable amount of its earliest building stock which still shapes the scale of the community 150 years after its inception. Some original factory sites have been repurposed for housing and the railroad is now a suburban commuter line.
- Stirling has changed relatively little during the better part of a century. It retains a high degree of historic integrity and contains a significant percentage of

old buildings to new. Even in the post-industrial era of the 21st century, the historical essence of the community remains strong as both a desirable community and architectural evidence of New Jersey's planned industrial past.

- Stirling's historical significance and National Register eligibility was validated by the NJ State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) letter of July 21, 2004 following a review of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966. **Add a copy of SHPO opinion to Appendix XX**
- Application for Stirling's National and State Historic Register listing has not yet been executed. Other villages and streetscapes and individual structures and sites within the Township have been reviewed by qualified professionals hired by Morris County and been determined to be likely candidates for Register listing. A listing of these sites can be found in **Appendix XX**.

**[Insert Photo #3, Main Avenue Stirling 1930s]**

Gillette:

- A once-rural settlement, Gillette developed its separate identity when a train stop was established in the 1870s at the eastern end of Passaic Township. Industrialization was limited, but included mining and rail-shipping clay for pottery fabrication at factories in New Jersey's urban centers. Patterns of development reflected a continued agricultural base which gradually shifted to a commuter suburb served by rail and automobile in the 20th century.
- The Gillette crossroads at the intersection of Valley Road and Mountain Avenue are still identifiable as a distinct village with historic buildings at the core. Morris County identified historic segment to the east and west along Valley Road in its historic site survey. This area includes the original Gillette Village Center crossroads.
- The greater Gillette area's historic significance is defined by its historic streetscapes and byways designated in this document.

[Insert Photo #4, Gillette Center, Valley Road 1950s]

Meyersville:

- The hamlet of Meyersville is a gateway to the southern end of the Great Swamp National Wildlife Refuge and its surrounding watershed. The historic cross-roads retains the scale and integrity of its days as a farming center of the Great Swamp's agricultural economy.
- Meyersville center's early 20th century expansion as a hillside summer vacation colony set the context and completed the historic streetscape which exists nearly intact today.

[Insert Photo #5, Meyersville from Long Hill, 1906]



## **GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

The Land Use Element of this Master Plan makes specific recommendations, which this Historic Element explicitly supports, for how future development or re-development should take place in the villages of Millington and Stirling and the hamlet of Meyersville. It also provides more general guidance for the smaller historic core of Gillette.

There is a compelling need to preserve the distinctive character of the villages of Long Hill Township. The historic structures, sites, and street settings that contribute to the village character of Long Hill Township deserve respect and should be maintained and enhanced in such a manner that the architectural and cultural heritage which they reflect is preserved. New construction or reconstruction should complement existing structures which have historical significance. Where historic structures exist today and are compatible with neighboring uses, they should be permitted to remain and to make reasonable improvements necessary in a manner consistent with their historical style.

Preservation efforts should center on the continuation of historic settlement and landscape patterns. The Historic Preservation Advisory Committee should, as one of its defined duties, provide information and guidance to the township boards, governing body and property owners to help with development and redevelopment in historic areas in ways that continue or compliment these patterns.

Long Hill officials should work closely with the utility companies and Morris County to preserve the historic tree canopy as much as possible. Clear cutting along the historic street right of way by utility companies should be discouraged by the Township.

Creation of Long Hill National Register Historic Streetscape Districts would enable the township to use the review powers of the Section 106 process to control road width, speed, and road “improvements” which tend to suburbanize and homogenize communities, and wipe out the scenic qualities that provide the setting for many individual historic buildings. A listing of these streetscapes can be found in [Appendix XX](#).

Millington:

Millington village development should foster connections with the historic architectural aspects of the two buildings on the National and State Registers of Historic Places - the Millington Railroad Station and the Millington Schoolhouse.

**Stirling:**

Development of the core village should carefully follow the goals and recommendations specified in the Land Use Element for Stirling. Stirling's unique character as a small scale urbanized "factory town" guides how future development and re-development should take place. Typically, these buildings will combine commercial uses on the first floor and residential units on upper floors.

Lot consolidation and infill may be desirable in the Stirling core village in order to maximize the potential for the village to evolve into a thriving walkable community with a strong, sustainable commercial base. Such new development, however, should still meet the goal of harmonizing with the desired visual look and feel of the historic village and seek to support the criteria of the State Historic Preservation Office's description of the Stirling Workers' District.

**Meyersville:**

Retention of the hamlet's crossroads and the hillside settlement's precedents should carefully follow the goals and recommendations specified in the Land Use Element for Meyersville. Through the years Meyersville has been actively protected from prior threats as diverse as strip mall and condo development and airport development from the Port Authority of NY & NJ. Maintaining the essence of the existing historic hamlet is a frequently expressed municipal goal.

Protecting both the village and its distinct rural village identity through a buffer zone of landscape elements and controlled development is desirable. The buildings and spaces show a relationship to each other that is largely unchanged from 100 or more years ago.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Encourage the enactment of historic ordinances that create locally designated Historic Village Districts and Streetscapes as recommended by the Morris County His-

toric Sites Survey and/or the NJ State Historic Preservation Office (NJ SHPO). Make application to NJ SHPO for listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places for these districts. Detailed descriptions of these properties can be found in Appendix XX and on the map on page xx,

Village Districts:

- Stirling Worker's District (State and National Register eligibility determined in 2000; final Register nomination to be completed).
- Millington Village
- Meyersville Village
- Long View (Meyersville) Summer Colony

Rural Historic Streetscapes:

- Long Hill Road Streetscape: Basking Ridge Road to Chatham Township border
  - Mountain Avenue Streetscape: Morristown Road to bend in road northwest of Cottage Place
  - Central Avenue Streetscape: High Street to north border of proposed Stirling Worker's District.
  - White Bridge Road Streetscape: Full length from Passaic River to Great Swamp USF&W Meyersville trail head
  - Valley Road, Gillette Streetscape: Mountain Avenue to Norwood Avenue
  - Valley Road, West Streetscape: West of Main Avenue to Bernards Township border
  - Norwood Avenue Streetscape: at Valley Road
  - Oaks Road Streetscape, above the Passaic River, Millington
2. Enact an ordinance to delay demolition of listed historic structures to allow sufficient time to document the site and identify and salvage artifacts.
  3. Require a separate demolition hearing before issuing a demolition permit for any cited or listed historic property. The HPAC will report its findings to the appropriate board for further discussion by that board regarding these properties.
  4. Require that advice and recommendations regarding demolition of historic structures be provided by qualified expert(s) who meet the requirements of US Code of Federal

Regulations, 36 CFR Part 61 and are familiar with the Secretary of the Interior guidelines for preservation. ([https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch\\_stnds\\_9.htm](https://www.nps.gov/history/local-law/arch_stnds_9.htm))

5. Ensure that the HPAC has the requisite expertise, through its members or as needed, outside consultants, to carry out its responsibilities as stipulated in its enabling ordinance 2-35.1-4 including updating the local historic sites survey.
6. Permit HPAC to engage the services of a Historic Preservation Architect or equivalent, qualified under Secretary of the Interior Guidelines defined in 36 CFR part 61 to advise, review and make recommendations to the committee as to historic planning, project management and presentation to other government bodies.
7. Require that any commercial or mixed use development or redevelopment in Long Hill Township's historic villages/hamlet strongly support the goals and recommendations of the Master Plan Land Use Element and comply with Long Hill Township's architectural design standards as stipulated in Ordinance 152.
8. Where appropriate, provide bulk incentives for property owners to encourage continued preservation.
9. Require that in-fill development is compatible with the scale of density and traditional design of Long Hill's historic development patterns and character.
10. The Planning Board, in close collaboration with the Historical Preservation Advisory Committee, should identify existing buildings that best represent the desirable architectural styles characteristic of this kind of 19<sup>th</sup> century community.
11. Track the NJ state government historic preservation tax incentives introduced in Trenton for later incorporation into the Long Hill Township Master Plan.
12. Continue to encourage appropriate signage and street amenities to nurture a sense of history and community pride.
13. Provide historical programs open to the public at the Old Millington Schoolhouse.
14. Expand the display of Long Hill historic artifacts at the Old Millington Schoolhouse to showcase the township's history.

**PHOTO INSERTS**

[Insert Photo #1, Long Hill Road Streetscape, Millington, early 1900s]



Caption: Long Hill Road Streetscape, Millington, early 1900s



[Photo #2, Millington Station postcard]



Caption: Millington Railroad Station circa 1920s

[Photo #3, Main Avenue Stirling 1930s]



Caption: Main Avenue, Stirling, 1930s

[Photo #4, Gillette Center, Valley Road 1950s]



Caption: Gillette Center, Valley Road 1950s

[Insert Photo #5, Meyersville from Long Hill, 1906]



Caption: View of Meyersville from Long Hill. 1906



*Draft Historic Element*



Elm Street School, Stirling c. 1888



Central School, Stirling 1950s

*Draft Historic Element*



Millington Fire House, early 20th century



Stirling Train Station, 1920s (demolished 1960s)



Meyersville Presbyterian Church, 1950s