

Borough of Marietta, PA, Heritage Plan

Foreword:

Marietta is a unique community given both its large number of restored historical dwellings and its location along the wooded Susquehanna river. This plan is a vision that seeks to highlight and utilize these unique features of this lovely Borough as a basis for a revitalizing its economy, continuing to attract residents and visitors, and maintaining a high quality of life. These developments will happen if Marietta's historical, recreational, environmental and cultural resources, as well as its historic connection to the river, are cherished and preserved. It will take the diversity and strength of the entire community coming together to continue to articulate and implement this vision for Marietta to secure its rightful place as a gem of Lancaster County and Central PA.

Introduction to the Concept of a Heritage Plan:

A Heritage Plan is a plan to promote and protect a town's historical, recreational, environmental and arts and cultural resources; to make it a destination location; and to spur economic development. With the completion of the Northwest Lancaster County River Trail bike and hiking path that runs from Columbia to Falmouth and the new Marietta Zoning ordinance, the information gathering being undertaken of both residents and visitors under the auspices of the "placemaking" grant from the Lancaster County Conservancy's Susquehanna Riverlands program, and Marietta beginning work on dealing with storm water runoff with its recent National Fish and Wildlife Federation grant, it is an opportune moment to envision the development of Marietta in a manner that preserves its historical, cultural and natural resources.

Background:

From the large inventory of individual historic buildings to the historic fabric of streetscapes to the remains of the canal bed, and iron furnaces, Marietta is a treasure trove of history of a 19th century industrial town set in along the wooded shoreline of the wide Susquehanna.

These riches should be preserved for their intrinsic value and interest, but it is also true that heritage tourism gives a community the opportunity to tell the story of its unique role in Pennsylvania's history and in the development of our nation, while generating sustainable economic activity. Preserving and sharing the history of

Marietta also dovetails with efforts at ecological conservation, as its history is interwoven with the vitality of the Susquehanna river and its watershed. The Borough of Marietta has worked with West Hempfield Township, East Donegal Township, Conoy Township and the Borough of Columbia to complete a bike and hiking trail that extends for 14 miles and runs through the Marietta woods along the shores of the Susquehanna. The trail follows the route of the historic Pennsylvania Mainline Canal and uses some of the original towpath that remains along the corridor. There are archeological remains along the trail, such as abandoned canal locks and the remaining structures of iron furnaces at Chickies Rock, and the trail features periodic historic markers as well as dramatic views of the river. The trail is bringing many bikers and hikers to Marietta's fine restaurants and taverns along the Trail/Rail/River district, to its National Historic Register District which includes its quaint downtown, and to its forested river banks.

History

Situated along the scenic Susquehanna River in Central Pennsylvania, the area that includes the Borough of Marietta was settled early in the 18th century. In 1740, Rev. James Anderson received a patent for a ferry across the river. The area thereafter was known as Anderson's Ferry until 1803 when David Cook laid out lots for a town called New Haven that was to become the east end of Marietta. In 1804, James Anderson IV laid out lots for a town he called Waterford that became the west end of Marietta. In 1812, these two towns were incorporated to form the borough of Marietta, a name that was possibly formed by combining the names of members of the incorporators' families. It was the first borough to be incorporated outside of what is now the city of Lancaster. Further development by Jacob Grosh, John Myers and Benjamin Long extended the boundary of the borough. The west end of town, laid out by John Pedan, James Mehaffey and James Duffy and known historically as Irishtown, was not annexed until 1967. Through its long history, Marietta has always had about 2,500 inhabitants, resulting in its retaining its small-town charm.

Growth was brisk for a few years, but was slowed by the economic crisis or panic of 1817. The economy rebounded when the Pennsylvania Canal was located through the town between the years 1825 and 1832. The canal boats and river rafts loaded with lumber, coal and other commodities kept the town bustling. Local deposits of iron ore and limestone, the raw materials needed for smelting of iron by anthracite coal-fired hot blast furnaces, led to eight furnaces being built in

the two miles along the river between Marietta and Columbia. The canal trade began to fade with the coming of the railroads about 1850 as the demand for pig iron for rails grew. The era of The Industrial Revolution led to Marietta's having the first chartered bank in the county—The First National Bank of Marietta. Mansions were built in the town, and there were lavish parties attended by Presidents Grant and Cleveland, Supreme Court justices and railroad magnates. This boom subsided in the early 1900's when Pittsburgh became the center of steelmaking.

The borough is remarkable for its large inventory of homes on the National Register of Historic Places, the majority of which date back to the 19th century. There are 430 properties on this National Register and their proximity creates streetscapes that capture the look and feeling of nineteenth century life. The Borough has always been associated with various aspects of life on the Susquehanna River, from its being a hub for raft traffic down the river, to its many factories in the 19th Century along the river, to the famous ferries that brought out-of-state visitors to York and beyond. Lying on an S-bend in the wide and powerful Susquehanna, the borough also abuts Chickies Rock, a geological marvel. Scientists believe this sheer rock face was uplifted from the river bottom from the shifting of the Earth's tectonic plates thousands of miles away.

The borough has always been a magnet for artists, scientists, and artisans, as well as a hub of the river life in taverns. The Pennsylvania School of Art and Design started in Marietta and grew here until its later move to Lancaster. Dr. H. M. Alexander and his son-in-law, Dr. Gilliland were pioneers in the research and development of vaccines, most notably for smallpox and rabies, which are still manufactured and researched here by the later companies of The Gilliland Laboratories, Wyeth Laboratories and now GlaxoSmithKline. The town has a historical museum in its Old Town Hall, the Union Meeting House (which has recently been further landscaped and restored), and a repertory theater company, as well as many dining places.

Ongoing Plans to Preserve Heritage:

- 1) Identify, conserve, and preserve the borough's heritage resources as a basis for retaining and enhancing strong community character and sense of place.
 - Create and maintain a comprehensive, GIS-based inventory of the borough's tangible heritage resources such as buildings, structures, objects,

sites, and districts. This includes but is not limited to archeological, historic, and cultural sites; landscapes; byways; archives; and hand-crafted products.

-- Create and maintain a comprehensive database of the borough's intangible heritage resources – cultural traditions such as music, storytelling, dance, and food traditions, together with the locations where they take place.

-- Develop new – and enhance existing – tools and strategies for the conservation and preservation of the borough's most significant tangible and intangible heritage resources.

2) Integrate the conservation and preservation of heritage resources in the economic development and revitalization of the borough's varied resources.

--Promote historic and cultural resource conservation and preservation as an economic tool in the revitalization of Marietta and its neighborhoods.

--Develop additional heritage tourism opportunities as a form of economic development that is both sustainable and asset-based.

3) Ensure that new development respects and complements the patterns, character, and scale of the borough's historical and natural features.

-- Promote context-sensitive design for development according to the new form-based zoning ordinance.

4) Promote strong leadership, collaboration, awareness, and responsibility in the conservation of the borough's heritage resources among the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

--Identify county and local governments that can serve as role models in promoting the preservation of the borough's heritage resources.

-- Facilitate the coordination of all appropriate public, private, and non-profit groups involved in heritage preservation-related activities.

-- Strengthen the involvement of Borough Council in heritage conservation, and ensure that it is an integral part of municipal plan

-- Encourage local residents to volunteer in interpretive programs at publicly and privately operated historic and cultural venues.

-- Build the public's awareness of heritage resources and the value of conserving and preserving them.

5) Celebrate and promote the borough's heritage resources.

-- Support existing local and county-wide recognition programs for heritage resources and activities, and implement new ones.

--Already there are very successful events and programs that celebrate and highlight this heritage, such as the Marietta Candlelight House Tour each December, sponsored by the Marietta Restoration Associates or the "Discover Marietta PA" walking tour (accessible via any digital device), the Pig-iron Festival, Marietta Day, The Historic Marietta Bike Race, and other programs still to be developed.

6) Ensure that adequate financial resources and incentives are available to implement the borough's heritage preservation goals by applying for any applicable grants.

-- Advocate for new and existing County, and State legislation that provides legislation to provide financial incentives for the conservation and preservation of heritage resources.

--Develop new financial support and incentives for the conservation and preservation of heritage resources by pursuing grant opportunities.

Distinction Between A National Historic District and Marietta's Heritage District

Significance of The National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of the United States is the official recognition by the U. S. government of cultural resources worthy of preservation and is administered in partnership with state governments. In Pennsylvania the State agency is The Pennsylvania State and Historical Museum Commission. A National Register Historic District is a geographically definable area, urban or rural, possessing a significant concentration, linkage or continuity of sites, buildings, structures or objects united by past events or aesthetically, by plan or physical development.

The National Register is administered by the National Park Service, an agency within the U.S. Department of Interior.

Marietta's Heritage District

Marietta's Heritage District follows the boundaries of its central National Register District but does not presently include the Chickies District.

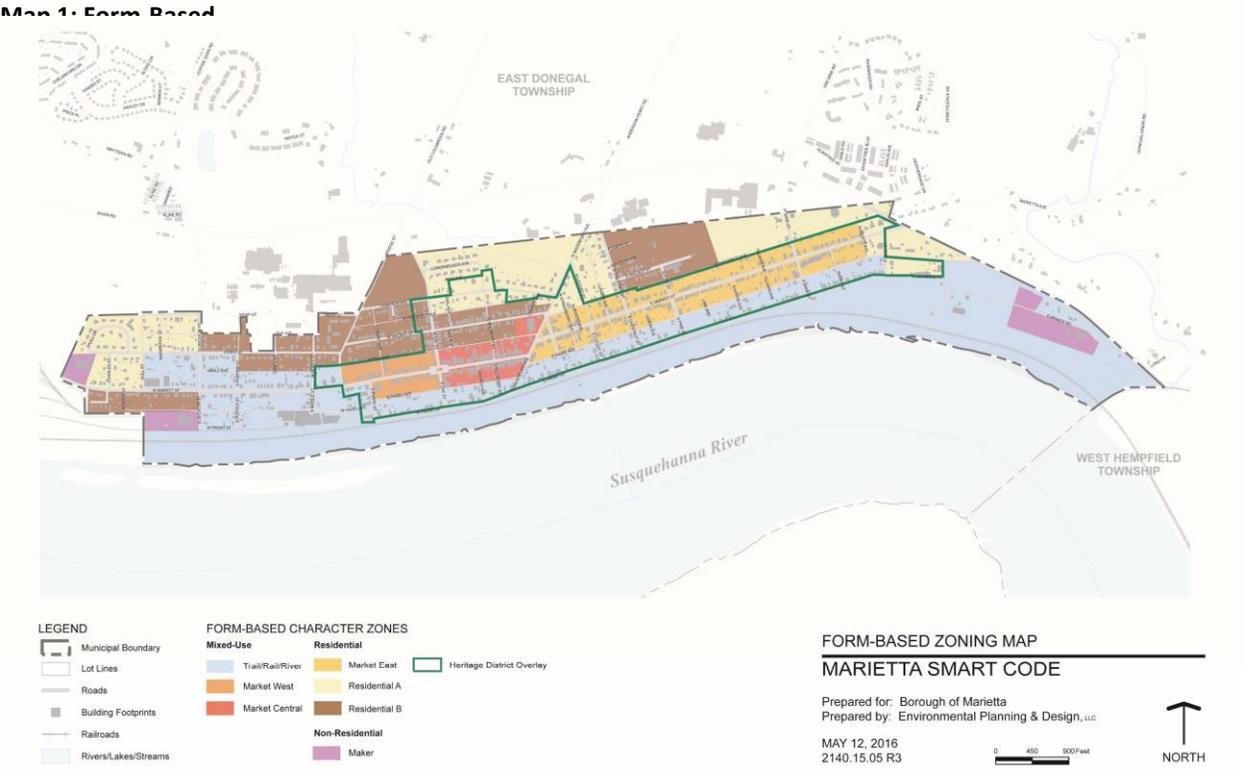
This Heritage District, enabled by the Municipal Planning Code (MPC), is not the same as a local Historic District which is strictly regulated by a Historic Architectural Review Board (HARB). Article VI of the MPC provides local governing bodies with zoning powers for, among other purposes, "the preservation of natural, scenic, and historical values ... and the regulation of places having unique historical, architectural or patriotic interest or value." This use of zoning to protect historic resources was further reinforced by Act 68 of 2000 which says "zoning ordinances shall provide for protection of natural and historic resources independent of the Historic District Act.

Map of Marietta showing National Historic District:

The area outlined in green within the Borough Map indicates the boundaries of Marietta's National Historic District. Over half of Marietta Borough has been designated as such through three nominations. The original district was added to the National Register on 18 July, 1978 and was roughly bounded by West Market Street, Waterford Avenue, West Front Street and Biddle Street. Six years later the Marietta Historic District Boundary Increase was listed on 17 August 1984. This extension is bounded by Waterford Avenue, Prospect Alley, Clay Street and East Front Street. Finally, on 28 December, 2005, the Chickies Historic District was accepted to the National Register and comprises approximately 600 acres roughly bounded by the Susquehanna River, Chickies Creek, Long Lane and Bank Street. This nomination impressed the review panel so much that they gave it a rating of "statewide importance."

The nomination process for achieving this status requires a substantial written justification and a detailed inventory of all contributing structures.

Marietta also has three structures that are listed individually as historic landmarks: 104 East Front Street, 606 East Market Street and the Silk Mill, 50 North Pine Street.



Inventory of Historical Properties:

There are 430 properties that have been inventoried and placed on the National Register of Historic Homes (see appendix A for the list of properties). They constitute Marietta’s official resource of historic buildings. The Heritage District coincides with the National Register boundaries indicated by the green outline in the center of the map and is protected by the new Zoning Ordinance (July, 2016) In this Ordinance, demolition protections of historic properties are articulated in sections of the related new SALDO (April, 2016).

Objectives to be Achieved by this Plan in Future Borough Development:

As a whole, infrastructure improvements should be undertaken with care, so that significant resources are not lost in the process. Adverse impacts to cultural heritage resources should be avoided unless other solutions are shown to be infeasible

Cost alone should not be the only factor in deciding whether important resources are retained. Rather than addressing preservation concerns on a case by case basis, only when a building or structure is threatened with demolition, municipalities should encourage historic preservation and adhere to the form-based newer zoning regulations that protect resources.

Friendly Available Help If You Are Planning a Building Project in a Historical Area

When residents and others planning to undertake building projects that have an impact upon historical properties or upon the character of historically designated neighborhoods, apply for a building permit, they will be required to consult with the Planning Commission, which also acts as a historical heritage advisory committee, to get advice and suggestions about ways to undertake their projects in ways that will safeguard the historical nature of the property or neighborhood area that are also cost effective. There are no binding requirements that can be forced upon builders, but the Borough hopes it can engage in a helpful and collegial dialogue that can assist with projects. Some of the helpful suggestions will be about local merchants and contractors who may have money-saving ideas about historical resources and materials available in the surrounding community.

In addition, those undertaking such projects are encouraged and welcomed to consult with the Borough staff, Planning Commission, zoning officer, or the Planning, Zoning, and Environmental committee for further helpful suggestions about local merchants and contractors to work with to access historical resources and materials available in the community. There are local “architectural salvage warehouses” or “artifact banks” where property owners can find a wide range of historic architectural items. There are also existing tax credits available for the restoration of historic properties for commercial use and a new Federal bill pending Congressional approval.

If you have any questions about this plan, please feel free to call the Marietta Borough Municipal office at 717-426-4143. They will answer questions or put you in contact with other members of the Marietta Borough government and community who can assist you.

Background Information and Ideas from the Secretary of the Interior's Standards For Rehabilitation of Historic Properties:

These federal government standards are helpful in providing the Borough with guidelines that can be of use in advising restoration projects. They are not to be enforced as standards in the Borough as they are in this federal document, but they point out the main concerns that could be considered when dealing with historic properties and neighborhoods.

These standards (U.S. Department of the Interior regulations, 36 CFR 67) pertain to historic buildings of all materials, construction types, sizes, and occupancy and encompass the exterior and the interior, related landscape features and the building's site and environment as well as attached, adjacent, or related new construction. The standards were designed to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility and they give evidence of the areas of national concern about differing towns' historical heritage. Even though we in Marietta are not restricted by these standards, to know about them as background can help us in the Borough think of new ideas to assist one another in planning projects to historical properties and neighborhoods.

The standards are:

1. "A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment."
2. "The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided."
3. "Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken."

4. “Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.”
5. “Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.”
6. “Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.”

Following this Plan are a number of appendices that display some of the historic features of Marietta Borough through images.