

Madison's Commitment to Historic Preservation

The Borough of Madison has long been aware of its history, and the community is proud of the role buildings from the past play in creating a place that is enjoyed by long-time residents and newcomers alike.

The Borough included a Historic Preservation Element into its 1992 Master Plan and it has retained this element through updates since, most recently in 2011. In the 1991, the downtown was recognized as a place of historic and architectural significance by being listed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Madison Civic and Commercial Historic District. In 1999, the Madison Borough Council adopted a historic preservation ordinance (Borough Code 39-99) establishing a Historic Preservation Commission with responsibility to oversee exterior changes to buildings within this historic district.

In 2005, the Bottle Hill Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Extending along Ridgedale Avenue, one of the oldest thoroughfares in the Borough, the district showcases domestic architecture from the 18th through the early 20th century. In 2008 the Bottle Hill Historic District was also adopted as a local historic district, covered by the historic preservation ordinance so that exterior changes to buildings in the district are reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission.

In 2005, the Borough undertook a major project to preserve the Luke Miller House. An 18th century banked house, built in the vernacular style common to the region at the time, it stood along Ridgedale Avenue. The house was slated for demolition as part of a subdivision of the land. With the help of several conservation-minded groups, the Borough purchased the entire property. The land was subdivided, attaching most of the acreage around the house to adjacent Summerhill Park. The house and a minimally-sized lot were then sold to private owners with easements to preserve character-defining features. The cooperation between the Open Space & Recreation Committee, the Historic Preservation Commission, and the Borough's Mayor and Council led to an important preservation victory. (For more information, see <http://lukemillerhouse.com/pe.htm>)

In 2015, Morris County updated the Cultural Resources Inventory for Madison. The direct link is: <http://www.rosenet.org/DocumentCenter/View/3649/2014-108-Madison-Report-10-15-2015?bidId=>

For 20 years now, the Historic Preservation Commission has reviewed applications for renovations, rehabilitation, and yes, demolition, within the historic districts. They have guided property owners in keeping the architectural qualities of Madison while allowing the community to continue to develop to meet modern needs. An awards program, last presented in December 2018, (see minutes of Madison Borough Council Meeting December 10, 2018) recognizes outstanding preservation efforts within the Borough, and adds to public understanding of local history and places.