

# Guide to Rehabilitation and Construction in the Milton Historic District



Provided by:

The Town of Milton's Historic Preservation Commission

*(This guide is also available online at the Town of Milton's website at <http://milton.delaware.gov/>)*

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## Introduction to Historic Preservation in Milton Delaware

In the mid-eighteenth century, the settlement at the head of the Broadkill River that would become today's Town of Milton was known as Osborne's Landing. It quickly became one of Sussex County's most important settlements. During the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Milton became a shipbuilding center with several sawmills, granaries, gristmills and many stores. With the



decline of the shipbuilding industry in the late nineteenth century, some skilled labor was diverted into building homes of various architectural styles for Milton's well-to-do ship captains and merchants. Eventually Milton's economic development slowed and gave way to other industries such as button-blank making, shirt-making and canning. With the economic slowdown, traditional updating of homes within the community slowed. This was a blessing in disguise. Without the funds to introduce home renovations, much of the historic fabric in the town was left unchanged. To this day Milton is blessed with many beautiful structures dating back to the eighteenth century.

The National Preservation Act of 1966 established the National Register of Historic Places to preserve the historical and cultural foundation of the nation. In 1982, the Town of Milton Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

In 2006, the Town of Milton became one of several Certified Local Governments in the state of Delaware. As Certified Local Government, the Historic Preservation Commission is required to:

- Enforce state and local legislation for the designation and protection of historic resources.
- Maintain a system for survey and inventory of historic properties.
- Provide for adequate public participation in the historic preservation program.

- Review National Register nominations through the Historic Preservation Commission.

In 2004, the Milton Town Council, through Ordinance established a Historic Preservation Overlay District. This Ordinance ensures that the heritage and economic well-being of the Town is strengthened through the preservation of Milton's architectural and historic resources. The Ordinance also promotes the use of the Milton Historic District for the education, pleasure and welfare of both Milton citizens and visitors. The Ordinance established the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to ensure that homeowners maintain the integrity of their properties. It ensures that any and all maintenance and repair of existing properties within the Historic Overlay District maintains the integrity of the District. The HPC reviews preservation and renovation plans and acts as a resource for homeowners.

The HPC offers this User Guide to property owners and potential homeowners in the Town of Milton. This brochure contains the following information for homeowners:

- A map of the local Historic Preservation Overlay District
- Guidance for property owners within the Overlay District about the historic review process
- The Secretary for Interior Standards on Rehabilitation
- Designation of Historic Sites
- Application for demolition
- Information about Federal and State Rehabilitation Tax Credits

We look forward to working with you to preserve the historic Town of Milton!





Milton Historic District  
Name of Property

Sussex, Delaware  
County and State

## Milton Historic District



## HISTORIC DISTRICT:

In addition to being a Certified Local Government (CLG), and having a National Register Historic District recognized by the National Parks Service, the Town of Milton has its own local Historic Preservation Overlay District (see map). The Town of Milton has decided, by ordinance, to identify this historic district. Within the district, it is acknowledged that the heritage and economic well-being of the town is strengthened by:

- a. Preserving its architectural and historic resources
- b. Conserving property values
- c. Fostering Milton's architectural and historic character
- d. Strengthening the local economy
- e. Promoting the use of the district for the education, pleasure and welfare of our citizens and visitors

The Milton Historic District includes, but is not limited to, unimproved lands and most of the Town's historic structures. The district's architectural value and setting is shaped by the interaction and focus of many and varied structures. Accordingly, within this district, demolition, new construction or additions, signs, and alterations are all subject to review by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The review is based on the Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.



## SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS FOR REHABILITATION:

The HPC bases their reviews on the ten Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings put forth by the National Park Service. Additionally, they are used to determine if rehabilitation qualifies as Certified Rehabilitation for Federal tax purposes. A project must be determined by the Secretary to be in keeping with the historic character of a structure and the historic district in which it is located. The Standards are to be applied to rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

The ten Standards for Rehabilitation 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.

7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.

8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.

9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property.

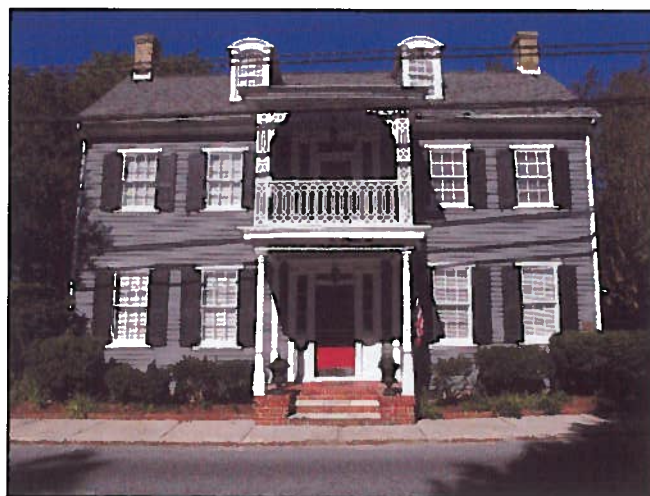
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property would be unimpaired.



## HISTORIC PRESERVATION

### COMMISSION:

The Historic Preservation Commission shall be authorized to conduct meetings and hearings and issue rulings as necessary. Meetings shall be scheduled and open to the public and notification of meetings posted on the Milton Town website and community bulletin board.



### PROCEDURES:

Before the construction, alteration, reconstruction, moving or demolition of any structure on property within Historic District or on an historic site that would affect the exterior appearance of a structure, the owner or representative must file an application with the Town of Milton for permission from the HPC.

#### Actions NOT requiring review:

1. Repair and/or replacement of existing windows or doors, using identical material and configuration.
2. Maintenance, repair and/or replacement of existing roof material, involving no change in design, scale or material.
3. Repair and/or replacement of existing roof structures, such as cupolas, dormers and chimneys.
4. Repair and/or replacement of existing shingles, clapboards, or other siding.
5. Replacement or repairs to existing shutters, fences or retaining walls, using the same materials as those items being replaced.
6. Change of paint color.



## APPLICATION PROCESS FOR ACTIONS OTHER THAN DEMOLITION:

The applicant shall apply for a building permit. If the proposed site is in the Historic District, or is designated as an historic site, the Project Coordinator shall notify the applicant that the designated project must receive approval from the Historic Preservation Commission unless the scope of the project falls under the above subsection. The Project Coordinator shall make best efforts to assist the applicant as much as reasonable with the process, including the completion of the application and notification of the meeting date, location and time.

The application shall include ten copies of the following:

1. A site plan, (or survey) sealed by a professional engineer or surveyor, as required by Town Code, identifying all existing and new structures, required setbacks and easements.
2. Plan and elevation drawings of the proposed change, construction, alteration, or modification.

3. A description and/or provision of samples illustrating the type and texture of the materials to be used for the exterior.
4. Current photographs of the property to include front, side, and/or rear street views if applicable.
5. Current photographs of adjacent and neighborhood properties, including the streetscape of both sides of the street on which the subject property is located.
6. An architectural rendering for new house construction, proposed additions or a significant alteration of an existing structure.

The HPC will endeavor to arrive at a decision at the first meeting at which the application is presented; however if the HPC decides that it needs more information or time in which to make a decision, it shall either place the application on the agenda for the next meeting or schedule a special meeting.

The HPC may either grant approval, grant approval with conditions, or deny the application. A denial shall include the reasons that the proposal does not meet the criteria.

The applicant shall have the opportunity to resubmit the application with modifications; such resubmissions shall meet the same requirements as the original.

A \$50 application fee is required.

**CRITERIA:** In reviewing plans for any construction, change or demolition, the HPC shall base its decision on these considerations:

1. Historic or architectural value and significance to its relationship to the historic district.
2. Relationship of the exterior architectural features of the structure to the remainder of the structure. Distinctive stylistic features and/or examples of skilled craftsmanship shall be preserved.
3. General compatibility of exterior design, arrangement, texture and materials proposed to be used with other structures contributing to

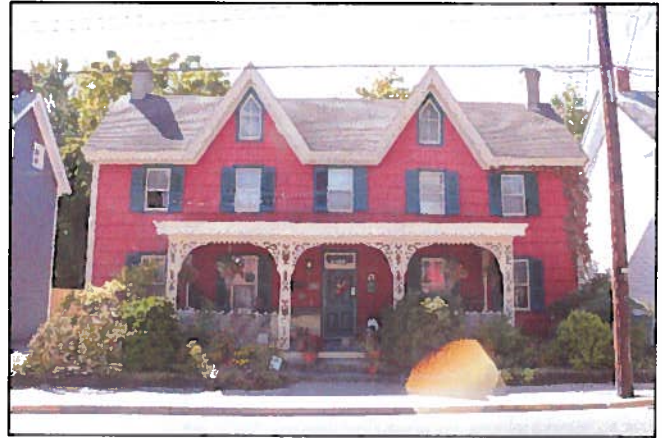


the established character of the Milton Historic District.

4. When application is made to demolish a structure or any part thereof, the impact of its removal from the area in which it is located and its structural condition should be considered.
5. When application is made to move a historic structure, the potential loss of history to its original site and to the Historic District as a whole, and the reasons for not keeping the structure at its present location may be considered. Because of the potential loss of its contributing resource status and its loss to the Milton Historic District, these actions are generally discouraged.
6. When application is made for new construction in the Historic District, said work shall be differentiated from the old. For relocating an existing structure from outside the Historic District into that district, the general compatibility in style, scale, composition, usage, massing and construction of other structures in the neighborhood shall be considered.
7. A proposed new structure, or any alterations to an existing structure in the Historic District, or to a designated historic site, shall be permitted to expand to the height and yard setbacks permitted in the zoning district for that particular property.
8. The effect of the proposed structure on the health, safety and general welfare of the Town



of Milton, its residents and visitors.



## DESIGNATION OF HISTORIC SITES:

Owners of properties outside of the boundaries of the Historic District may request their property be designated as a Town of Milton historic property. Upon recommendation of the HPC, the Mayor and Town Council will make a designation after considering the following aspects:

1. **Location:** The relationship between a property and its location is often crucial to understanding why the property was created or why something happened there. Historic associations help to capture the identity of the property.
2. **Design:** The combination of elements that create the form, style, space and structure of a property can reflect historic functions, technologies and aesthetics. The design results from conscious decisions made during the original conception and applies to many fundamental aspects of the creation of the property.
3. **Setting:** The character of a historic property in which it played its historical role, the setting involves *how* the property relates to the surrounding features and open space. It reflects the basic physical conditions under which a property was built and the functions it was intended to serve.
4. **Materials:** The combination of physical elements used to create a historic property often reveals the preferences of those who



created the property and indicates the availability of particular types of materials and technologies.

5. **Workmanship:** The evidence of artisan's labor and skill in constructing a site can apply to the entire property, or its individual components. Workmanship can provide evidence of the technology of a craft and reveal the application of these technologies in many ways.
6. **Feeling:** The property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense from a specific period of time results from physical features that convey the property's historic character.
7. **Association:** Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. Properties retain this association if the physical features present convey its historic character.



## STANDARDS:

A proposed new structure or any alterations to an existing structure located in the Historic District or designated as an historic site shall conform to the Town Code of the Town of Milton and/or any other prevailing law or code in place at time of application. The following standards shall be used by the HPC in preserving architectural integrity and ensuring the compatibility of new construction and alterations within the Historic District:

**Roofing materials:** Acceptable materials include wood, slate, metal, asphalt shingles, as well as

roofing materials, which bear resemblance to these materials. Repair materials shall be consistent with the existing roofing material. When a flat roof is otherwise consistent with the design criteria established in this article, the rubber membrane or similar material may be used.

**Siding material:** All materials shall be consistent with and appropriate in design, texture and other visual qualities to the style and period of the structure. Siding, including brick, stucco, wood, cement and vinyl, can all be considered but, if used, shall not interfere with the historical architectural details of the structure.

**Foundation material:** Traditional foundations, including brick and brick veneer, are encouraged. Concrete block is permitted; however, the foundation is to be covered in stucco so as to disguise the block joints.

**Chimney styles and materials:** Chimneys in public view should be of brick or stucco. Metal chimneys are acceptable for use in nonpublic view.

**Porches:** If a porch is to be installed in new construction or alteration, it shall adhere to the height line and average depth of other porches in the historic district. When existing structures with porches are renovated, owners shall preserve both the porch and its architectural detailing.

**Windows:** New structures or alterations to existing designated historic sites and construction or alterations to structures in the Historic District shall have windows that are compatible.

**Architectural Details:** This term applies to such building features as window and door trim styles, cornices, ornamental brackets, porch and entrance balustrades, porch pillars, corner pilasters, gable



peak ornamentation, lattice work, traditional paneled and louvered shutters and similar details. The applicant shall ensure the design motif of the any addition is compatible with the existing historic structure; and, in the case of alteration to an existing structure, the architectural details on the exterior shall be preserved.

**Walls, fences and gates:** Materials shall be of a type compatible with the architecture of the Historic District and designated historic properties to which the walls, fences or gates would be included or affixed. Natural materials are encouraged, but man-made materials similar in appearance will be considered.

## STATE AND FEDERAL TAX CREDITS:

Historic property owners may be eligible for significant tax credits for renovations that comply with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. For eligible projects, awarded tax credits can be applied against the applicant's state

income tax, or can be transferred, sold, or assigned to any person or corporation with Delaware income tax liability, or to banks, to be applied against their franchise tax liability. For more information, contact the Milton Town Hall- (302) 684-4110.



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Center for Historic  
Architecture + Design

# **HPC Application Package Checklist**

**\*10 packages required\***

- ☐ **Application with necessary information completed**
- ☐ **Application Fee (\$50.00)**
- ☐ **Site Plan**
- ☐ **Existing Site Photos**
- ☐ **Street Scape Photos**
- ☐ **Sample Materials**
- ☐ **Architectural Drawings Example**
- ☐ **Other as Required**