

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE: 2022
Middle Smithfield Township - Monroe County, Pennsylvania

G. HISTORIC RESOURCES

The goal of historic resource protection is to retain the unique features and heritage of a community as found in its natural and built environment for enjoyment by future generations. These sites and structures help communities to create an identity through an understanding of past traditions, and fostering a sense of local pride. This section will summarize the existing historic resources in Middle Smithfield Township and how the Township can achieve its historic resources protection goals.

Middle Smithfield Township was incorporated in 1794 as part of Pike County. Historically, development has been concentrated along the Delaware River to the south and east of the Township, rather than in the steep hills of the north. A survey conducted by the Monroe County Planning Commission in 1980 summarized development in the Township this way:

"There is a distinct difference between the large, sturdy farms in the southern part of the Township, and the smaller, plain structures on the northern hills. Stone and brick structures were built in the southern portion, while the structures in the northern part are exclusively wooden. There are frame houses in the southern section and the typical "Pennsylvania farmhouse" is throughout the Township."

Whether stone, frame or brick, Middle Smithfield's structures reflect a rich history of Pennsylvania farming, nineteenth century resort communities and boarding houses, and villages that sprang up as a result of the Delaware Valley Railroad. Many valuable historic structures were lost in Middle Smithfield in the 1960's when the land was cleared to make way for the ill-fated Tocks Island Dam project. Others decline in the hands of the National Park Services due to insufficient funding, use, or maintenance. However, significant resources do exist throughout the Township, and there is ample opportunity to protect this history for the benefit of future generations.

Tables 4-4, 4-5 and 4-6 list important historic sites as identified by the National and State Historic Registers, the Pennsylvania Historic and Museum Commission (PHMC), and by the Monroe County Planning Commission. Map 4-4 depicts many of these locations.

Table 4-4: Historic Sites & Structures Listed on the National Register of Historic Places

ID*	Property	Date Built	Description
1	Captain Jacob Shoemaker's House	1810	
2	Schoonover's Mountain House	1850-1860	Resort/Boarding House
3	John Michael Farm House	1875	
4	Zion Lutheran Church	1851	
5	John Turn Farm Site	Early 19 th C.	Only outbuildings remain
6	Cold Spring Farm Spring House	Early 19 th C.	

* Locator label found on Map 4-4.

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Table 4-5: Historic Sites & Structures Eligible for the National Register of Historic Places

ID*	Property	Date Built	Description
7	Shoemaker-DeWitt Inn Site	19 th C.	Shoemaker's Village
8	Daniel Clark House/William Clark House	19 th C.	Frame
9	Horace Van Auken House	19 th C.	Frame
10	Caroll Bradford Property	1935	Weatherboard
11	Margaret Leffert Property	1940	Log
12	Herman Sigel Property	1940	Log
13	Susan Sommers Property	1935	Weatherboard
14	Marion Stine Property	1935	Log
15	Angle Property/William Rake & Frank Klinger	1860	Weatherboard
16	Middle Smithfield Presbyterian Church	1833/1964	Frame
17	Resica Falls Village Archeological Sites	1864	

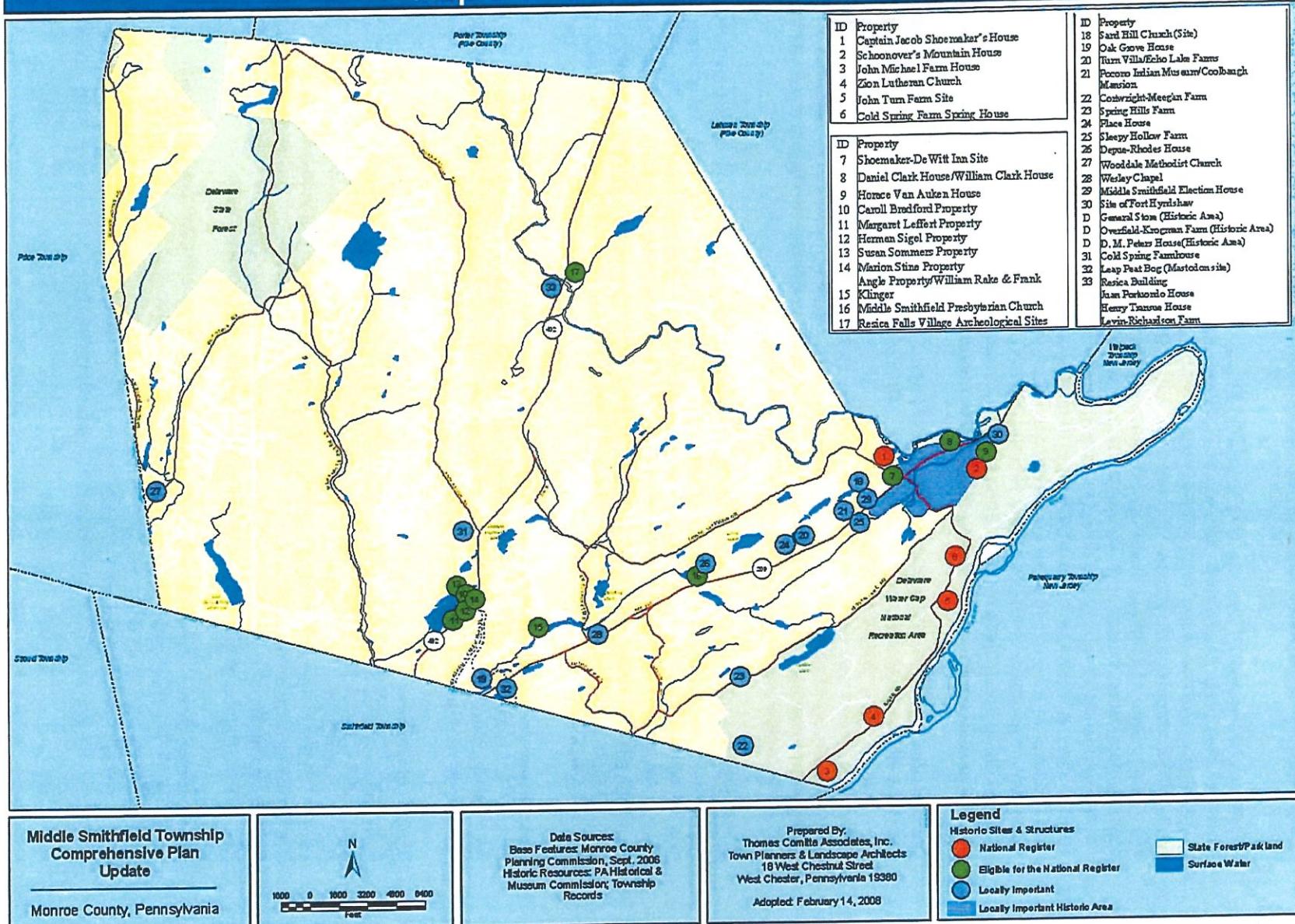
Source: PA Cultural Resources GIS at www.dot7.state.pa.us/ce>SelectWelcome.asp

Table 4-6: Locally Important Historic Sites & Structures

ID*	Property	Date Built	Description
18	Sand Hill Church (Site)	1854	Building demolished in 1973
19	Oak Grove House	ca. 1860	Resort/Boarding House
20	Turn Villa/Echo Lake Farms	ca. 1870	Resort/Boarding House
21	Pocono Indian Museum/Coolbaugh Mansion	1790/1900	Frame
22	Cortwright-Meegan Farm	1856	Stone
23	Spring Hills Farm	ca. 1830	Stone
24	Place House	ca. 1820	Stone
25	Sleepy Hollow Farm	ca. 1780	Stone
26	Depue-Rhodes House	ca. 1850	Brick
27	Wooddale Methodist Church	1875	Frame
28	Wesley Chapel	1856	Brick
29	Middle Smithfield Election House	1905	Frame
30	Site of Fort Hyndshaw	1756	
D	General Store (Historic Area)	19 th C.	Shoemaker's Village
D	Overfield-Krogman Farm (Historic Area)	19 th C.	Shoemaker's Village
D	D. M. Peters House(Historic Area)	19 th C.	Shoemaker's Village
31	Cold Spring Farmhouse	ca. 1780	
32	Leap Peat Bog (Mastodon site)	N/A	
33	Resica Building		
	Juan Portuondo House	ca. 1819	Frame
	Henry Transue House	ca. 1870	Frame
	Levin-Richardson Farm	1855/1930	Frame

Source: Monroe County Planning Commission Historic Preservation Plan (1980) and Historic Legacy (1980).
 * Locator label found on Map 4-4.

Map 4-4: Historic Resources



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There are two important items to note regarding the preceding lists. First, it is important to note that these lists are not comprehensive, but may and should grow as additional structures come to the attention of the Township, reach the 50-year mark, or are considered by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the State Historic Preservation Officer. The Leap Peat Bog, where a complete mastodon skeleton was recovered and is now on display at the Pennsylvania State Museum is recognized as a Historic Site and Structure by the State. However, this site could be considered in the future for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. A replica of the mastodon foot is on display at the Township Municipal building,. The Cold Springs Farm site is an additional site for future consideration by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the State Historic Preservation Officer. As such sites and structures become eligible for evaluation for regional and national significance, more sites and structures from the twentieth century may be deemed worthy of preservation.

Second, designation on the National Register of Historic Places does not guarantee that a structure will be protected or even maintained. The Tocks Island Dam project demonstrated this when, despite State designation, the Army Corps of Engineers destroyed nine buildings before the project was begun and the planning was terminated. However, designation does provide a variety of benefits and options that can assist property owners in protecting a designated resource. These include tax credits for appropriate rehabilitation and renovation, technical assistance, and access to grants and other sources of funding.

In addition, the National Park Service (NPS) has developed a set of standards and conditions that determine eligibility. The standards offer four distinct approaches to treatment of historic properties, including: preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction. The National Park Service has developed a set of guidelines to accompany each standard, which include concepts about maintaining, repairing, and replacing historic materials, as well as designing new additions or making alterations. The NPS has a A, B, C, D ranking regarding their historic properties.

Historic Resource Protection Goal:

Protect the natural, cultural, scenic, and historic resources of Middle Smithfield Township, while allowing economic development; and advocate the protection of these resources in adjacent municipalities.

Recommendations:

Protection of these important cultural and historic resources is an ongoing challenge, but more so in times of rapid growth such as those experienced by the Township in recent years. This growth is expected to continue in the near futureMany historic structures are found along and adjacent to the Route 209 corridor, an area slated for concentrated development and redevelopment. It is not the intent of the Township that these sites and buildings inevitably be razed to make way for new development, but assessed and evaluated for their ability to continue to function and contribute to the community in a meaningful way.

The Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area, which is a 70,000 acre area, with recreation area encompassing parts of Monroe, Northampton and Pike counties in Pennsylvania, is proposed to be upgraded to a National Park. The recreational area has more than 3 million visits annually, and an upgrade to a National Park would provide a larger budget to help pay for the needed amenities and infrastructure and would prove more protection to

the area. The Delaware Water Gap would be a National Park with a preserve, which would secure hunting and fishing activities.

However, as in many places, it is not only the pristine examples of a particular style of architecture that contribute to the character and identity of a place. Vernacular buildings have the ability to contribute greatly to the overall experience of a place. In Middle Smithfield, this can be found in the stone walls, small outbuildings, and other similar features which can more easily be incorporated into new development.

There are several strategies that the Township and greater community can take to protect these resources and protect the character of the area:

1. Provide access to education and encourage a greater awareness of the value of these resources to the community's identity and history. This awareness should focus not only on the value of resources for maintaining the unique character and identity of Middle Smithfield, but also to contribute to its economic base through tourism. As tourism is already the largest industry in Middle Smithfield Township, historic resource protection and ecotourism can supplement the attractions for visitors to the area.
2. Consider implementing a tiered approach to historic resource protection through the Township Ordinances. This would allow the Township to place a high degree of emphasis on National and State designated properties and buildings, a mid level degree on properties and buildings eligible for designation, and lesser degrees of emphasis on properties and buildings of lesser integrity, but nonetheless valued by the community. This would permit the Township to focus on protecting resources that have the greatest value to the community, while permitting them to co-exist with needed economic development.
3. Encourage rehabilitation of existing buildings. Rehabilitation not only allows for the continued viability of older buildings, which tend to be outdated in terms of the modern amenities, but also can provide a good source of affordable alternatives to the new single-family detached dwellings that are out of reach for many of Middle Smithfield's residents. The Township may consider permitting the conversion of older single-family detached dwellings into multifamily dwellings to encourage their continued viability.
4. Encourage the adaptive reuse of existing buildings. Examples of adaptive reuse are already evident across the landscape. The prime example is the reuse of older farmhouses as boarding houses for tourists in the latter half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Examples of reuse that are often seen today is the reuse of a farmhouse as a new community center or clubhouse or the conversion of single family houses into commercial, office or mixed use units. Other features, such as walls and fences, can also be incorporated alongside new development.