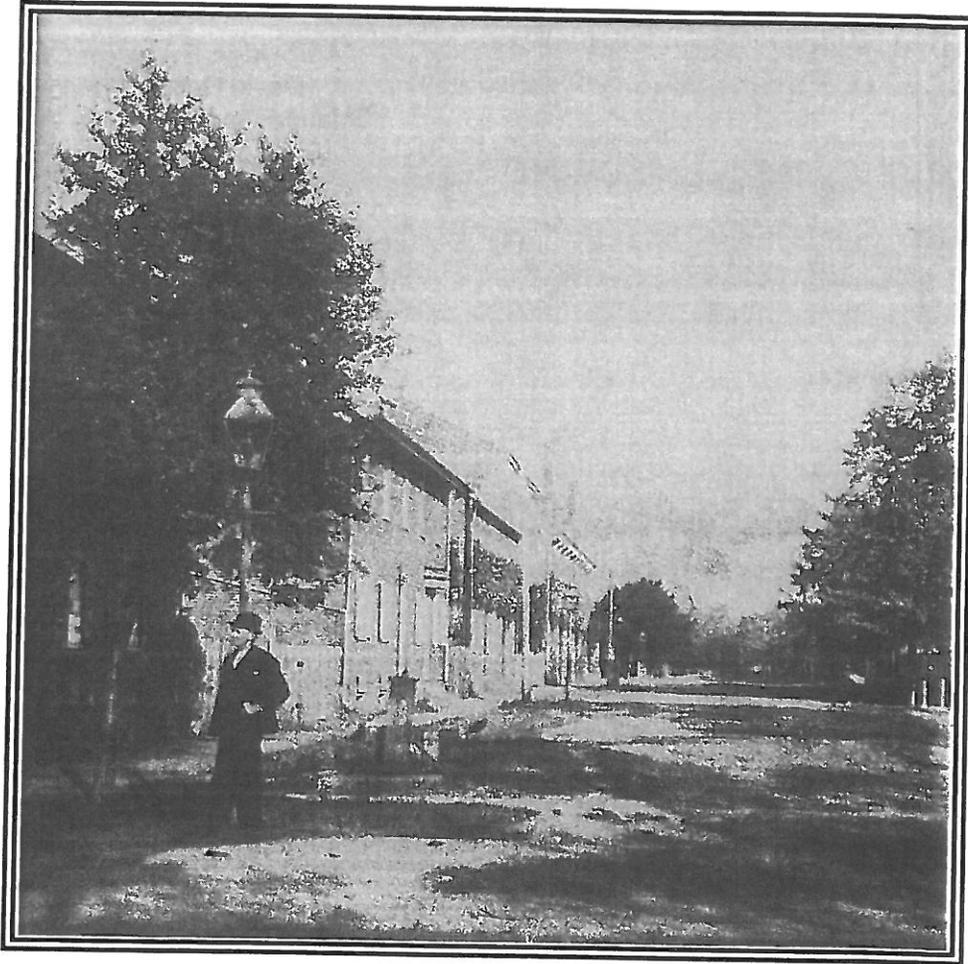


# Design Guidelines

## Ambridge Historic District Ambridge, Pennsylvania



### Borough of Ambridge Historical Architectural Review Board

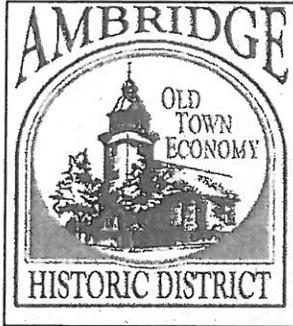
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## Acknowledgments

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Brookville, Pennsylvania  
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Spring, 2001



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## INTRODUCTION

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The physical appearance of any community is the direct reflection of the attitudes and values of the citizens. Well-maintained neighborhoods and business districts suggest a higher degree of community pride than do neighborhoods and downtowns which are unkempt and shoddy. Beyond that, a town's appreciation of itself is often reflected in its attitude toward the preservation of its historic buildings. Much of our community's character and attraction is owed to the variety of historic architecture found within the Ambridge Historic District. Dating from the early years of the nineteenth century through the early twentieth century, the district's built environment represents many of the styles popular during this span of more than a century, and, most especially, the distinctive architecture produced by the George Rapp's Harmony<sup>1</sup> Society, which in 1824 established the utopian settlement here as the third and last of the Society's communities. The area between Route 65, Thirteenth Street, Beech Alley and Church Street is owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania; the balance of the historic district is in private ownership. If the character of Ambridge's historic community is to be maintained, it is important for property owners, tenants, and community leaders to be aware that methods for dealing with older buildings often differ from treatments for newer buildings, and that choosing the wrong treatment can cause serious, irreversible damage to historic properties. These *Design Guidelines* are an introduction to historic preservation in Ambridge and provide both general and specific recommendations to assist with good decision-making regarding the buildings within the district. The *Guidelines* deal with residential as well as commercial and institutional architecture. Some discussion is included regarding features--porches, for example--which may be more common to homes than commercial buildings.

Design guidelines such as these can help to avoid hasty or mis-informed alteration of historic architecture by offering preferred options for dealing with significant architectural features and by specifying precise treatments for solving common maintenance-related issues. Most importantly, however, is the fact that owners and tenants of properties within the Ambridge Historic District must be familiar with these *Guidelines* if they intend to make physical changes to the exterior of their properties.

### A PUBLIC POLICY FOR PRESERVATION

In 1971 the Ambridge Borough Council adopted Ordinance 900 which protects and preserves the distinctive architectural character of the properties in the Ambridge Historic District.

Ordinance 900 was enacted under the umbrella of state legislation (Act 167 of 1961) which permits Borough Councils to establish local legislation to protect historic properties within their respective communities. As required by Act 167, the Ambridge ordinance has been reviewed and approved by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Pennsylvania's public-sector history agency which provides guidance to preservation initiatives across the Commonwealth. By approving this Ordinance, the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission recognized the importance of the Ambridge Historic District and set in motion the process of establishing a Historical Architectural Review Board (often referred to as a "HARB"), which advises both Borough Council and property owners on issues related to the preservation of Ambridge's historic architecture.

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<sup>1</sup>The followers of George Rapp are also interchangeably referred to as "Rappites" and "Economists."

In adopting Ordinance 900, the Ambridge Borough Council established the goal of conserving the historic character of the Ambridge Historical District through the following distinct processes:

**PROTECTION**, defined as the act or process of applying measures which will affect the physical condition of a property by guarding it from deterioration or from any other threat. In the case of historic buildings and structures, such treatment is generally of a temporary nature and anticipates future historic preservation intervention.

**STABILIZATION**, the process of applying measures which create a weather-resistant enclosure to assure the structural stability of an unsafe or deteriorated property while maintaining the essential form as it exists at the present.

**PRESERVATION**, the application of treatments which sustain the existing form, integrity, and material of a building or structure. Preservation may include initial stabilization work, where necessary, as well as ongoing maintenance of historic building materials.

**REHABILITATION**, the act or process of returning a property to a state of usefulness through repair or alteration, making possible an efficient modern use while preserving those portions or features of the property which are significant to its historical, architectural, and cultural character. Historic rehabilitation involves the identification of a building's significant features and the treatment of these features in an architecturally-compatible and sympathetic manner.

**RESTORATION**, the act or process of accurately recovering the form and details of a property and its setting as it appeared at a particular period of time by means of the removal of later features or by the replacement of missing earlier features.

**RECONSTRUCTION**, the act or process of reproducing the exact form and detail of a vanished building, structure, or object, of a part thereof, as it appeared at a specific period of time.

## THE HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD

The Ambridge Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) is a seven-member volunteer body whose members are appointed by the Borough Council to a six-year term. Act 167, the state legislation which established the local historic district process, states that the HARB must include a registered architect, a licensed real estate broker, the Borough's Building Inspector, and persons with knowledge of and interest in the preservation of historic properties. At least four members of the HARB must be property owners in the Ambridge Historic District. The HARB members are appointed by your elected Borough Council members from a field of knowledgeable people who are sensitive to the character of the Ambridge Historic District and who want to work with owners and tenants in developing successful construction plans.

In no way does the Ambridge Historic District require the creation of museums throughout the district or the application of museum-quality conservation treatments to the buildings within the district. Ordinance 900 provides protection and a degree of aesthetic control only over the *exterior architectural character* of the buildings in the district. There is no restriction on the sale or leasing of any privately-held property in the district and it is not necessary to notify the HARB of sale or lease of property within the district. However, in order to avoid misunderstandings, it is recommended that existing owners and potential new owners or tenants become familiar with the process.

### FOR ALL WHO ARE PLANNING EXTERIOR ALTERATIONS, ADDITIONS, NEW CONSTRUCTION, AND/OR DEMOLITION

If a property owner, tenant, or contractor plans to undertake any alterations or additions to the exterior of properties located in the historic district (including the installation of signs, awnings, or fences), Ordinance 900 requires that the plans be submitted to the Borough Office for review by the HARB. Other than the general requirements of the building permit process in Ambridge, *no permit or review is required for interior alterations, except as such alterations may effect the exterior appearance of the property.* However, the HARB does review all business use applications in the district.

Applications should be filed with the Borough **at least ten days prior** to the HARB meeting at which the project is to be reviewed. This is an important part of the procedure for securing a Certificate of Appropriateness within the Ambridge Historic District, since the proposed work must be reviewed by the HARB before a Certificate of Appropriateness and a Building Permit are issued. The HARB's review will be based upon these *Design Guidelines*. Applicants will always be notified of the date and place of the HARB meeting when the plans will be reviewed, so that they can attend and be an active part of the process.

After reviewing the proposed project, the HARB will offer its opinion as to the appropriateness of the work and its conformity to the *Design Guidelines*. If the HARB finds that the proposed work meets the *Guidelines*, a Certificate of Appropriateness will be issued within seven days and the project can proceed accordingly.

If it is the decision of the HARB that the proposed work does not conform to the *Guidelines*, the HARB will recommend to Borough Council that the Certificate of Appropriateness be denied. Council will review the issue and will either support the recommendation of the HARB or will reverse the HARB's recommendation and order the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness.

**If for any reason the Building Permit is revoked, the Certificate of Appropriateness is automatically revoked as well and the applicant must begin the approval process anew.**

### WHEN IS A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS REQUIRED?

Any treatment which affects the exterior of the building and is visible from the street requires the approval of the HARB, *before the work begins*. This includes the modification of nearly every aspect of the building exterior and includes window changes, modifications to doors, roofs, and porches, the installation of siding, storefront remodeling, fences, signage, and awnings.

The HARB is aware that the needs of the twenty-first century are vastly different from those of the nineteenth, when most of the buildings in the district were built. The HARB is keenly interested in helping owners and tenants to find appropriate and cost-effective ways to meet modern requirements without seriously affecting the architectural integrity of the property. Seldom will an historical or exact reproduction be recommended by the HARB. Owners and tenants within the Ambridge Historic District are encouraged to consult with the HARB concerning physical aspects such as landscaping, paving, etc., so that the result will be in harmony with the general historic and architectural character of the district.

### EMERGENCY REPAIRS

In isolated cases, the Building Inspector of the Borough of Ambridge may determine that a building within the Ambridge Historic District requires immediate repair or stabilization in order to protect the building, its contents, or the public. In such cases, the owner of the building may make temporary repairs to accomplish such stabilization as is necessary to protect the building, its contents, or the public. Owners should do no more work than is reasonable to provide such protection without complying with the other provisions of these *Design Guidelines*.

### BENEFITS OF PROPERTY OWNERSHIP IN THE AMBRIDGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Historic preservation assists with the revitalization, stabilization, and enhancement of our community. In many cases an important result of preservation activities is increased property values, a fact which has been demonstrated in communities and neighborhoods with established historic districts. The creation of an historic district typically results in improved property maintenance and a heightened sense of cooperation, all of which is directed at making Ambridge a better place in which to live, work, and play. Historic designation fosters community cohesion, identity, and pride, along with an appreciation of the historic character of the community and concern for its future.

Important financial benefits are available to property owners in the Ambridge Historic District. One of the most attractive of these is a 20% Rehabilitation Investment Tax Credit which is available to individuals and corporations who invest in the rehabilitation of income-producing properties. In simple terms, the tax credit is equal to 20% of the cost of the rehabilitation, and includes exterior and interior work, mechanical systems, roofing, etc. Additional information on this program is available from the Pennsylvania Bureau for Historic Preservation, a division of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, at 717-783-

8946.

Low-interest loan funding (typically lent out at an 8-year term at 5% interest) is available through Preservation Pennsylvania, our state's only statewide preservation organization. Preservation Pennsylvania may be contacted at 717-234-2310.

Nonprofit and governmental owners of historic properties may apply for matching grant funds (up to \$100,000) from the Keystone Historic Preservation Fund. That program is administered by the Pennsylvania Bureau for Historic Preservation, 717-783-8946.

The Beaver County Community Development Agency operates other financial incentive programs as well. These initiatives are subject to change depending upon funding. Interested individuals may contact the Agency at 724-775-4711.

The Ambridge Historical Economic Development Committee was in the early stages of its development at the time of preparation of these *Design Guidelines*. Current information may be secured by contacting the Ambridge Borough Office at 724-266-4070.

*Each of these programs has specific requirements and the contact persons for each should be consulted prior to the commencement of any project for which financial incentives is sought.*

#### THINGS TO REMEMBER

The HARB always welcomes questions relating to exterior improvement, restoration, and sensitive rehabilitation of properties in the Ambridge Historic District. Before making any commitment for exterior alterations to buildings within the Ambridge Historic District, owners, tenants, or contractors should consult with the HARB and obtain all the necessary permits. The HARB meets at the Borough Building on a published monthly schedule; contact the Borough Office for specific information regarding the meeting schedule.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION  
CALL THE AMBRIDGE BOROUGH OFFICE AT (724) 266-4070**

# THE PROCESS OF SECURING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS IN THE AMBRIDGE HISTORIC DISTRICT

Applicant makes an appointment with the Code Enforcement Officer to discuss project (recommended) and may wish to meet with HARB prior to completing application; proceed to Step 2

Applicant completes an application for review by the HARB and submits it to the Code Enforcement Officer 10 days prior to the HARB meeting; proceed to Step 2a or 3

Application is complete or requires additional information and it is returned to the Applicant; return to Step 1 or 2

Applicant meets with HARB to discuss project; proceed to Step 3a or 4

HARB determines that the project must be modified in order to conform to *Design Guidelines*; go to Step 3b or 3c

Applicant makes necessary changes to scope of project and returns to Step 3

Applicant is willing to make recommended changes to scope of work; proceed to Step 3d

Step 4

Borough Council upholds recommendation of HARB; go to Step 4b

HARB recommends to Borough Council that the application be denied; go to Step 4b or 4c

HARB approves application and issues Certificate of Appropriateness; proceed to Step 5

Step 5  
Applicant proceeds with project

Borough Council reviews HARB decision and overrules recommendation of HARB; proceed to Step 5

Applicant chooses an alternative scope of work and returns to Step 1 or proceeds to Step 6

Step 6  
Applicant appeals the decision of Borough Council decision as prescribed by law

## EXTERIOR SURFACES

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### 1.0 Masonry Wall and Foundation Surfaces

1.1 Exposed masonry surfaces should remain exposed. Historic masonry surfaces should not be covered with artificial materials (dryvit, vinyl or aluminum siding, T-111, etc.).

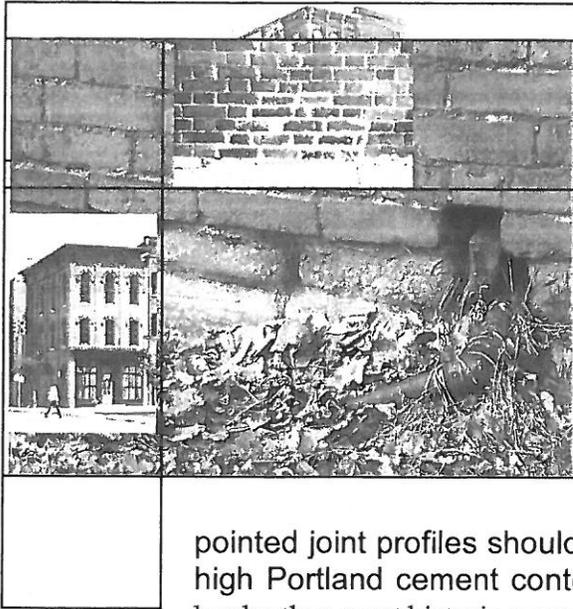
1.2 Previously unpainted masonry surfaces should not be painted, since paint will obscure defining features such as joint profiles and bonding patterns and will also create an instant and continuing maintenance expense for the future.



1.3 Some previously-painted masonry surfaces should be re-painted. If owners wish to clean the paint from historic masonry surfaces, this treatment should be undertaken only using the gentlest effective means possible. In no case should abrasive cleaning (i.e., sandblasting, water-blasting, blasting with nut shells, etc.) be used. Further guidance for masonry cleaning is found in the U. S. Department of the Interior's Preservation Briefs No. 1, *The Cleaning and Waterproof Coating of Masonry Buildings* and No. 37, *Removing Graffiti from Historic Buildings*. Copies of this material are available from the Borough Office.

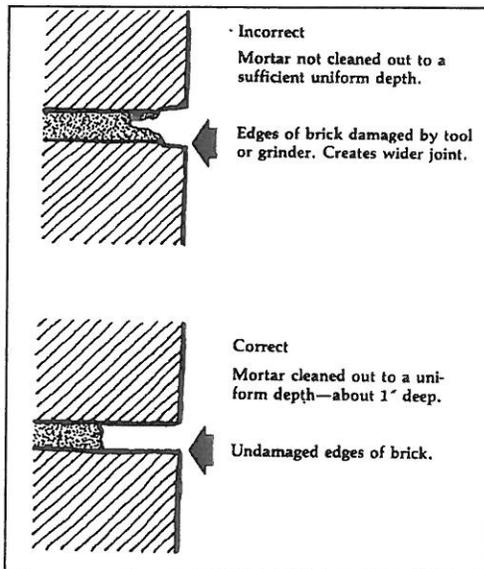
1.4 A test patch should be taken prior to beginning a major cleaning project, since the masonry may not be suitable for cleaning due to its age or condition, or the presence of replacement materials that are better masked with paint. Always inspect the building fully before beginning a cleaning project; window and door openings may have been altered and in-filled with brick that does not match the original, and the building may look better re-painted than cleaned.

1.5 Masonry cleaning, particularly paint-stripping, must be undertaken in an environmentally-responsible fashion. The paint on older buildings in Ambridge is likely lead-based, and when removed should be disposed of



properly.

1.6 If repointing of historic masonry is necessary, the mortar should duplicate the original in color and composition and the re-pointed joint profiles should match the original. The use of mortar with a high Portland cement content should be avoided, since it is considerably harder than most historic masonry and can cause irreversible damage to the historic masonry units. Further guidance for repointing is found in the U. S. Department of the Interior's Preservation Brief No. 2, *Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Brick Buildings*. Copies of this material are available from the Borough Office.

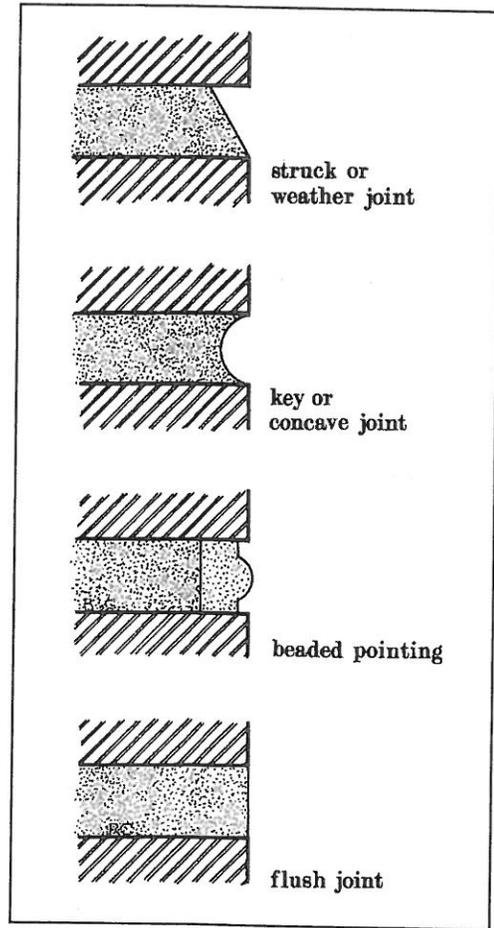


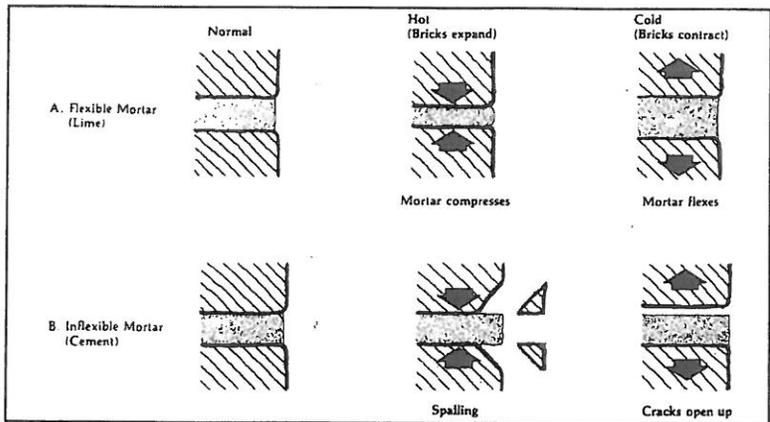
as manufactured by the ---- Co recommended by the manufacturer be applied to pre-wet masonry and dwell on the surface long enough paint and staining are loosened walls will be rinsed with a cold pressure exceed 500 psi at 4 to 5 gpm, fan-tip nozzle held no closer than the surface. If needed, an appropriate solvent will be applied with excessive staining.

The mortar joints will be set with matching mortar in the proportion of one part Portland (ASTM C-150, Type II), two parts lime (ASTM C-207, Type S), and six parts sand (ASTM C-144). The mortar should match the color, texture, composition and width of the original mortar.

**Sample specification for masonry cleaning and re-pointing projects**

The building will be cleaned using the ---- cleaner,





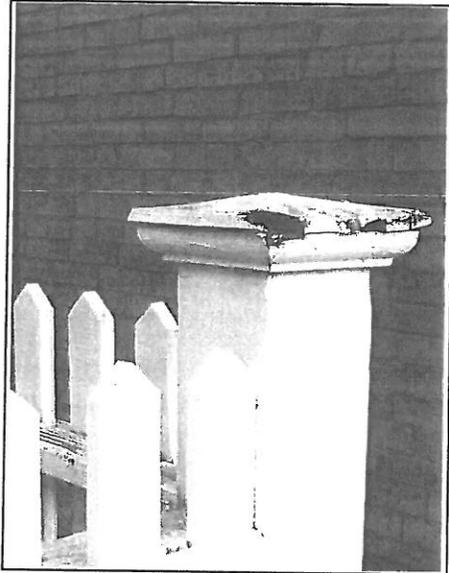
1.7 If patching or replacement of brick is necessary, used brick should be used, with the surface of the brick intended for the exterior being so placed. Replacement bricks that fail to match the original in size, shape, and color should not be used.

1.8 Most foundations within the Ambridge Historic District are of sandstone, which may be subject to

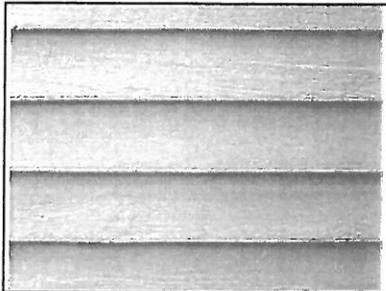
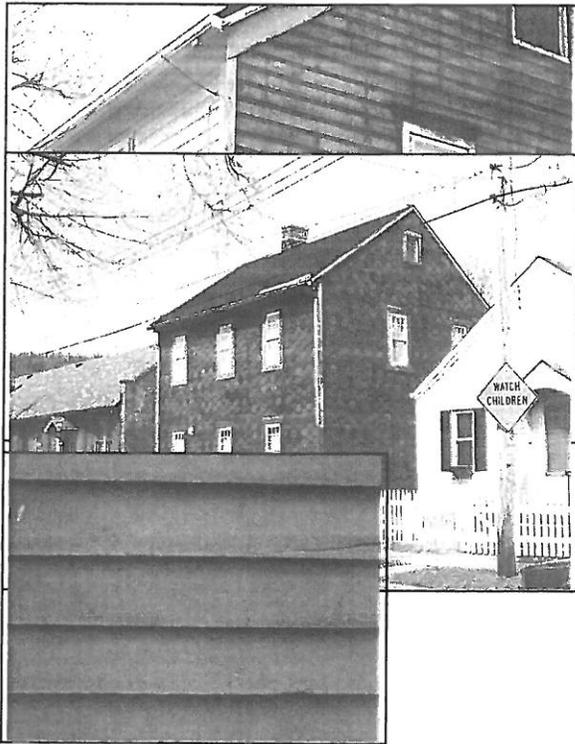
delamination ("sloughing off"). Care should be taken to avoid the replacement or covering of historic foundations and also to keep them free from concentrations of excessive moisture.

## 2.0 Wood Surfaces

- 2.1 All surfaces of wood should be kept free from moisture penetration.
- 2.2 Damaged wood siding should be repaired rather than replaced.



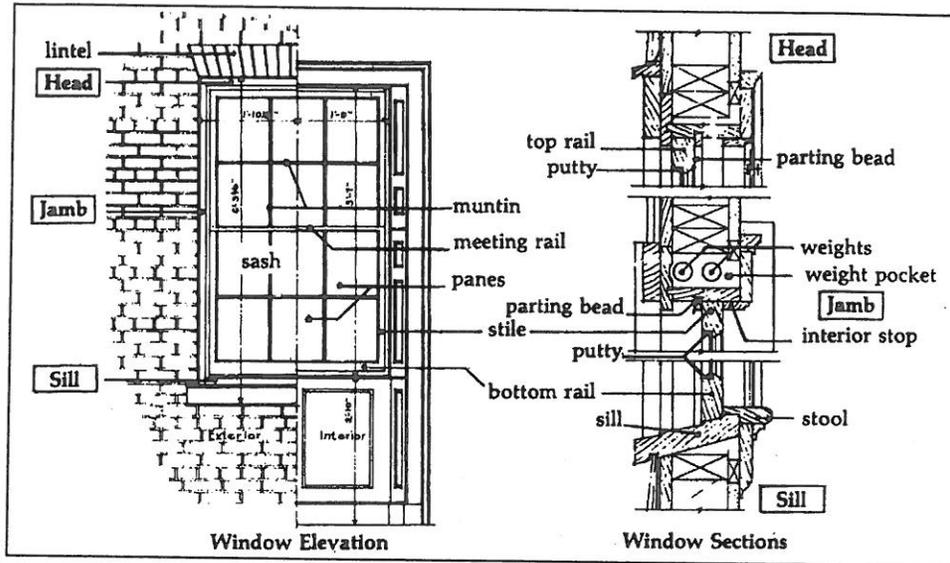
- 2.3 When replacement of deteriorated wood is necessary, it should be carried out with new wood of matching size and profile.
  - 2.4 Deteriorated wood surfaces should never be painted or otherwise covered without identifying and treating the initial causes of the deterioration.
  - 2.5 New wood should be back-primed (painting the surfaces which are not to be visible) prior to installation and all previously-painted wood surfaces should be scraped, sanded, and cleared of debris prior to painting.
  - 2.6 Deteriorated wood should be repaired using epoxy wood consolidants wherever possible.
- 2.6 The removal of non-historic siding from wood buildings is encouraged. Care should be taken to plan for the repair of the original material after the non-historic siding is removed.
- 2.7 The application of non-historic siding material is discouraged throughout the Ambridge Historic District. Its approval will be on a case-by-case basis, and its application should always incorporate the retention of door and window frames and the use of corner boards.



Above are the three traditional forms of wood siding which are found on Harmonist buildings throughout the Ambridge Historic District. From left to right, the styling styles are *weatherboard*, *beaded weatherboard*, and *shiplap*. Siding replacement projects for Harmonist buildings should be confined to one of these forms.

## WINDOWS AND DOORS

### 3.0 Windows and Doors



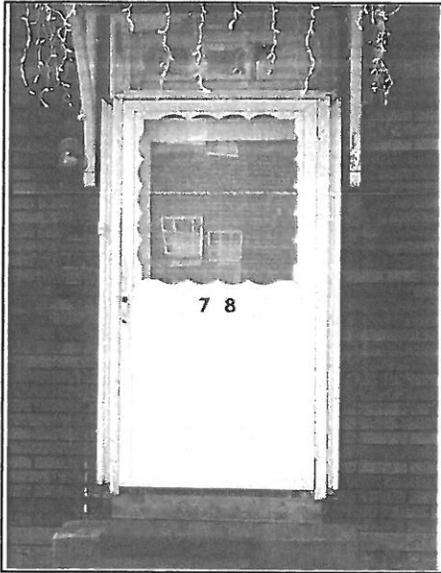
3.1 Windows and doors are among the most defining features on the buildings in the Ambridge Historic District, and can account for as much as one-third of a building's surface area. As such, their care is extremely important and alter-

ations should be carefully planned. The relationship of wall surface to openings--often called the "rhythm" of the windows and doors--should be maintained.



3.2 The overall size of window and door openings should not be modified and openings that have been changed should be returned to their original dimensions whenever feasible.

3.3 Windows and doors should be repaired rather than replaced. If replacement is necessary, such treatment should be undertaken using units that match the original as closely as possible in material, configuration of panes, and dimension.



3.4 Avoid the temptation to “early up” a building by installing windows with small-paned sash unless the historic appearance of such sash can be documented. Many buildings in the Ambridge Historic District were constructed after large sheets of plate glass became available, and the use of small-paned sash in these buildings is inappropriate.

3.5 Storm doors and windows may be used in the Ambridge Historic District, but their finish should not be shiny; they should be painted to match the other trim on the building. Full-glass storm doors are preferred; in all cases, storm doors should expose as much of the inside door as possible; “cross-buck” storm doors are architecturally inappropriate and should not be used.

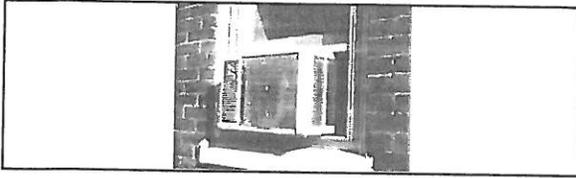
3.6 If exterior storm windows are used, they should fit the opening of the windows without having to infill any portion of the opening or flattening any portion of an arch. Storm windows should be installed within the window opening, rather than on the outside surface of the building or the window frame and dividers should match those on the primary window unit.



3.7 Interior storm windows offer a highly effective solution to air infiltration and do not compromise the exterior appearance of the window; often, a window with a curved sash has a flat-topped inside frame which can easily accommodate an interior storm

window.

3.8 Shutters should be used only when their original appearance can be documented by physical evidence (shutter hinges, silhouettes, or holes in window frames) or through a photograph. If shutters are to be used they should be hung onto the face of the window frame--not the wall--using hinges and should be sized to fit one-half of the window opening. Shutters should be only of wood construction. Harmonist buildings used shutters only on the first story.



3.9 Avoid the placement of window air conditioners where they will be easily seen from the street; attempts should be made to insert units on secondary elevations.

3.10 The use of glass block should be restricted only to properties whose age is compatible with the use of such material, i. e., twentieth-century buildings.

- 3.11 Window sills and surrounds which have been damaged or lost should be repaired with units which match other similar buildings in the district
- 3.12 Consult additional guidance found in U. S. Department of the Interior Preservation Brief No. 3, *Conserving Energy in Historic Buildings* and in Preservation Brief No. 9, *The Repair of Historic Wooden Windows*. Copies of this material are available from the Borough Office.

## ROOFS, CHIMNEYS, AND PORCHES

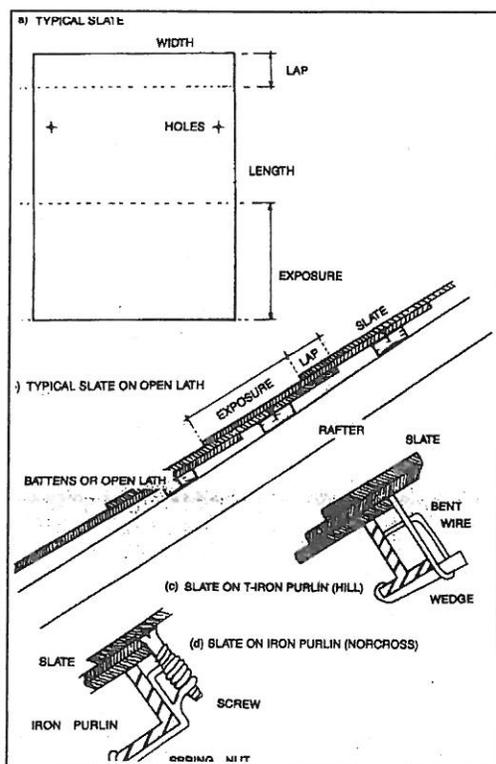
### 4.0 Roofs, Gutters, and Downspouts



4.1 Attend to all structural and drainage systems (gutters, flashing, coping, etc.) before undertaking any roof project.

4.2 The form and pitch of historic rooflines should always be maintained.

4.3 Historic roofing material should be repaired, rather than replaced whenever feasible.



4.4 If a roof is highly visible, then replacement material should match the original as closely as possible in scale, texture, and color. If the roof surface is not visible--such as on a commercial building with a nearly flat pitch--then a contemporary material such as rubber is acceptable.

4.5 The replacement of existing roofing material with new material which matches in color, composition, and texture is generally preferred.

4.6 Avoid re-roofing over an existing roof.

4.7 Ornamental features applied where a roof and wall intersect--such as gable-end trim and cornices--are highly significant elements and should always be repaired as needed and retained.

4.8 Vents should be placed on inconspicuous elevations.

#### Guide to Slate Replacement & Repair:

The following guidelines are provided to assist in the repair/replace decision making process:

1. Consider the age and condition of the roof versus its expected

serviceable life, taking into account the type of slate employed.

2. Calculate the number of damaged and missing slates. Is the number less than about 20%? Is the roof generally in good condition? If so, the roof should be evaluated for *repair* rather

than replacement. Also, keep in mind that the older a roof becomes, the more maintenance it will likely require.

3. Determine if active leaks are present and identify their source.

**Do not assume the slates are leaking**--gutters, valleys and flashings are more likely candidates. "False leaks" can be caused by moisture condensation in the attic due to improper ventilation.

4. Check the roof rafters and sheathing for moisture stains. Poke an awl into the wood to determine if it is rotted. Remember that very old, delaminating slates will hold moisture and cause adjacent wood members to deteriorate even if there are no apparent leaks.

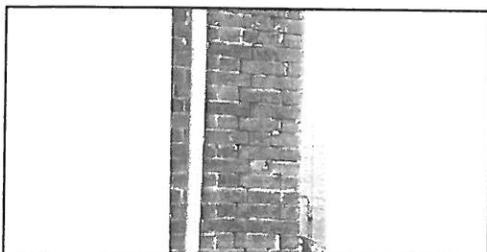
5. Are many slates sliding out of position? If so, it may be that ferrous metal fasteners were used and that these are corroding, while the slates are still in good condition. Consider salvaging the slates and re-laying them on the roof. If the slates have worn around the nail holes, it may be necessary to punch new holes before re-laying them.

5. Consider the condition of the roof's flashings. Because slate is so durable, metal flashings often wear out before the slate does. Examine the flashings carefully. Even the smallest pinhole can permit large quantities of water to enter the building.

7. Is the deterioration of the slate uniform? Often this is not the case. It may be that only one slope needs replaced and the other slopes can be repaired. In this way, the cost of replacement can be spread over many years.

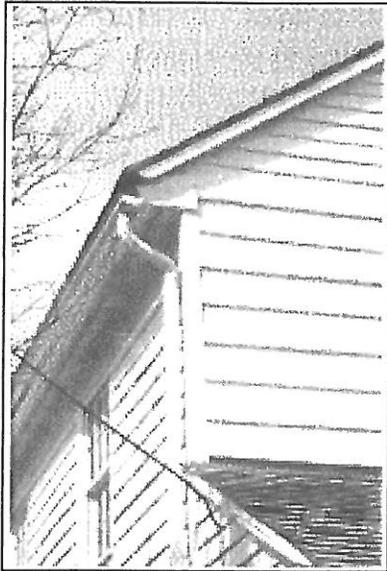
8. Press down hard on the slates with your hand. Sound slates will be unaffected by the pressure. Deteriorated slates will feel brittle and will crack. Tap on slates that have fallen out or been removed. A full, deep sound indicates a slate in good condition, while a dull thud suggests a slate in poor condition.

9. Are new slates readily available? Even if replacement is determined to be necessary, the existing roof may have to be repaired to allow time for documentation and the ordering of appropriate replacement slates. [From Preservation Brief No. 10 *The Repair, Replacement, and Maintenance of Historic Slate Roofs*]



4.9 Replacement gutters and downspouts should be of a full-round or half-round form and should be painted to match the closest surface (wood trim, brick, etc.). These features may be of terne plate, stainless steel, or aluminum.

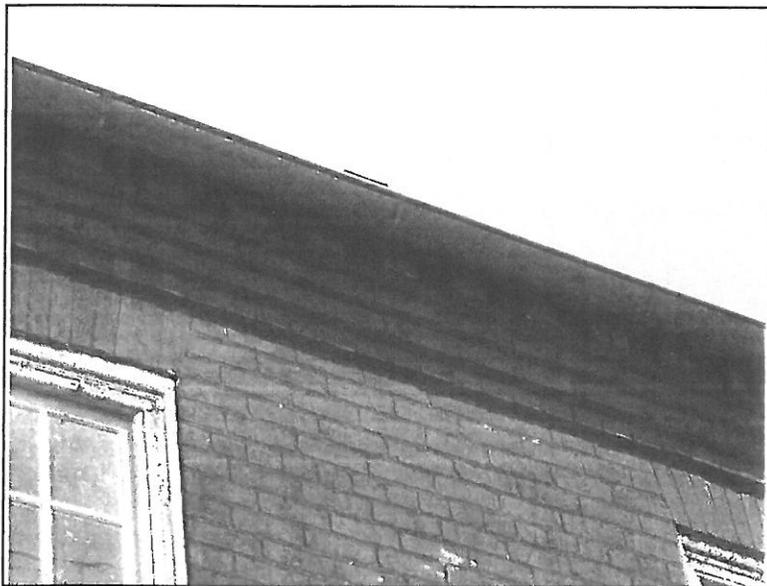
should be painted according to the manufacturer's specifications.



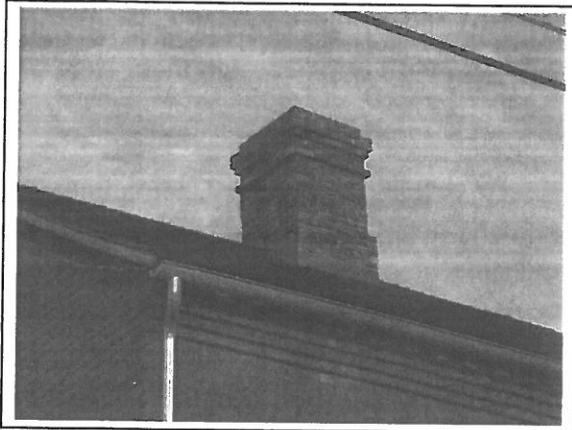
4.10 New flashing

4.11 Satellite dishes, antennas, etc. should be small and should be located inconspicuously and attached in a manner that does not harm historic building materials. Locations not observable from the street are ideal.

4.12 Consult additional detailed roofing-related guidance found in U. S. Department of the Interior Preservation Briefs No. 4, *Roofing for Historic Buildings* and No. 29, *The Repair, Replacement and Maintenance of Historic Slate Roofs*. Copies of this material are available from the Borough Office.



## 5.0 Chimneys and Other Areas of Moisture Penetration

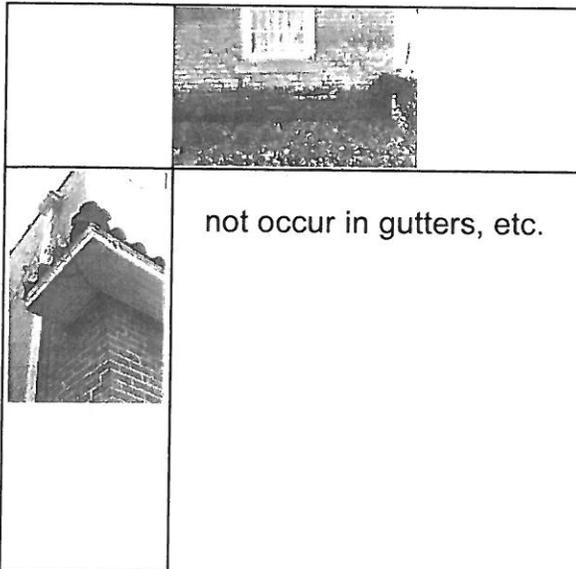


5.0a Chimneys, dormers, and snowguards are important architectural features and should be retained in any roofing project. Chimney rehabilitation and reconstruction should match the original in dimension, materials, brick pattern, details, and form as closely as is possible.

5.0b The parging (stuccoing) of previously--unparged chimneys is not acceptable.

5.0c Exposed portions of flue liners should be painted with heat-resistant paint to match the color of the brick chimney.

5.0d Boxed wood or sided chimneys are not permitted.

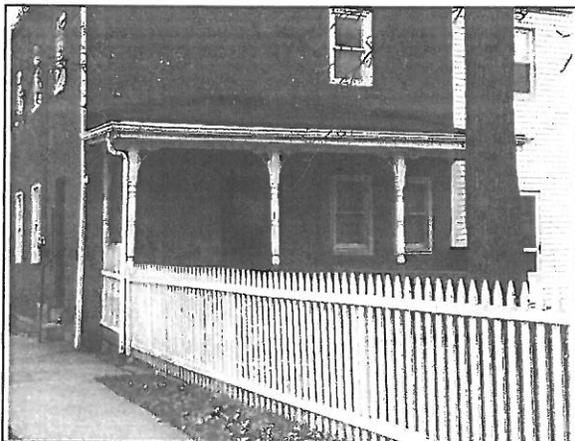


5.0e Proper cyclical maintenance is vital if Ambridge's historic buildings are to be maintained properly. Owners should assure that moisture is kept away from foundations and that excessive accumulation of dirt does

not occur in gutters, etc.

## 5.1 Porches

- 5.1a Some properties in the Ambridge Historic District retain their original or early porches. Porches may not be on primary elevations, but they are nonetheless important features and should be retained.



5.1b Porches will last nearly indefinitely if they are properly maintained and kept watertight. Some components of porches are more exposed to the elements than are others, but all elements--columns, posts, balusters, stairs, floors, lattice skirts, brackets, etc.--should be kept in a watertight condition by routine caulking and painting.

5.1c Porches should not be enclosed to create additional living space. If enclosure is necessary, it should be carried out in such a manner that it is reversible and that historic features are not damaged or destroyed. Every effort should be made to assure that the enclosed porch still looks like a porch, not an enclosed room.

- 5.1d Avoid the construction of new porches without evidence that an earlier porch existed on the property. Similar properties within the district can be examined to determine the size, configuration, and materials of porches.
- 5.1e Porch components should be repaired rather than replaced. If deterioration is too severe, then replacement units should match the original. Contemporary stock replacement components--columns and balusters, for example--are often not scaled properly to match historic buildings and should be avoided.

## PAINTING

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Paint provides protective measures and decorative treatments, which have significant effects on the appearance of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century architecture within the Ambridge Historic District.

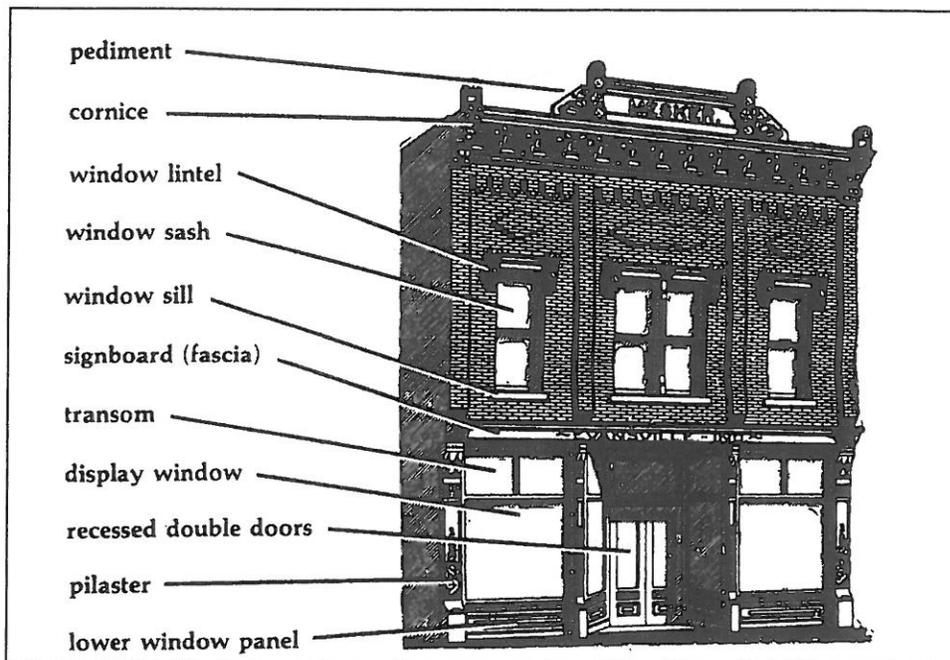
- 6.1 If paint failure is occurring, always identify and treat the source of the problem before beginning a painting project.
- 6.2 All surfaces should be dry and properly prepared prior to painting. Careful scraping and hand-sanding will assure that the surfaces are free of debris.
- 6.3 Caulk all joints carefully; caulking not only provides for a more uniform painted surface but can also assist in creating a more energy-efficient building.
- 6.4 Prime all surfaces prior to painting; surfaces of new wood that will not be exposed should be "back-primed" prior to installation in order to assure the longest durability.
- 6.5 Never remove paint from wood wall surfaces by abrasive methods. Sandblasting will damage the wood irreparably and water-blasting subjects the surface to an unusually high volume of moisture and can cause long-term moisture infiltration problems.
- 6.6 Ideally, oil-based paint should be applied over oil-based paint, and latex over latex; oil over latex will fail and should not be used.
- 6.7 Clear finishes and stains are not appropriate for historic buildings within the Ambridge Historic District.
- 6.8 If pressure-treated wood has been used for a project, it should be painted as recommended by the manufacturer and using appropriate colors.
- 6.9 Take all necessary precautions relative to lead paint in accordance with state and local regulations.
- 6.10 Property owners are urged to use historically-appropriate paint colors and to place the colors on the building (lights and darks) as they would have been placed historically. A specific color palette for Harmonist buildings is available from the administrative offices at Old Economy Village. Sources of information on appropriate paint color selection and placement appear in the Bibliography.
- 6.11 Great care should be taken if removing paint with devices which produce heat to lift layers of paint; such devices can ignite the very old and exceedingly dry building materials found throughout the district.
- 6.12 Consult U. S. Department of the Interior Preservation Brief No. 10, *Exterior Paint Problems on Historic Woodwork*. Copies of this material are available from the Borough Office.

## COMMERCIAL ARCHITECTURE

### 7.0 Commercial Architecture, General

All issues set forth in Sections One through Six are applicable to commercial buildings. The following specialized information applies to buildings originally erected for commercial uses.

- 7.1 The facades of the historic commercial buildings in the Ambridge Historic District consist of three major components: the storefront--the first story; the upper facade--the second and third story; and the cornice--the decorative feature at the top. Each



of these elements is important and should be maintained accordingly.

- 7.2 Consult closely with the Borough Building Inspector regarding the rehabilitation of commercial buildings, since specialized code requirements exist for such properties.

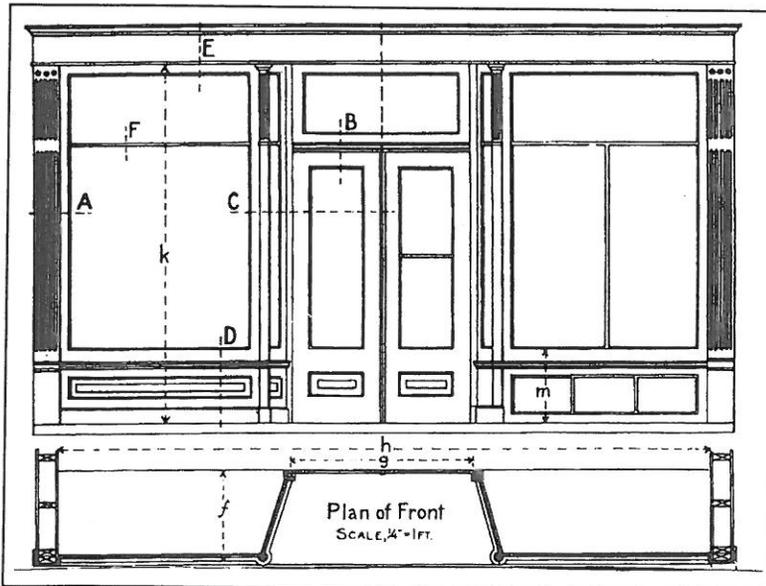
7.3 Consult detailed guidance found in the following specialized publications dealing specifically with historic commercial facades:



- U. S. Department of the Interior Preservation Brief No. 11, *Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts*.
- Preservation League of New York State Technical Publication No. 2, *A Practical Guide to Storefront Rehabilitation*
- National Main Street Center publication, *Keeping Up Appearances: Storefront Guidelines*.

Copies of all these materials are available from the Borough Office.

#### 7.4 Storefront



7.4a As with other types of buildings, avoid the use of historically-inappropriate materials. Storefronts are highly visible and materials should be of the best possible quality.

7.4b The storefront area should remain as transparent as possible. Display windows should not be reduced in size; if the retail space is converted to a different use, privacy can be assured by using blinds or curtains.

7.4c If display windows are replaced, replacement should use thermopane glass and should retain traditional display window dimensions.

7.4d If transom windows are found above the display windows, they should be retained, particularly if they are of art glass. In new storefront construction, transoms may or may not be included within the design.

7.4e. Bulkheads below the display windows should be retained. If new bulkheads are to

be installed, they should be of wood, and may have recessed panels (molding strips applied to the surface should be avoided). They should not be any more than about twenty inches in height.

- 7.4f Significant surviving historic elements, such as storefront cornices and cast iron features, should be retained and re-used in any rehab project.
- 7.4g Entry doors set flush with the building should be avoided. Instead, doors should be recessed within an entryway set at about a thirty-degree angle to the plane of the building, as shown on the drawing on page 18. The recessed and sloping entry provides a more inviting entrance and creates additional sight line opportunities for visual merchandising.
- 7.4h The storefront should be visually “contained” within the vertical structural piers of the building. As depicted in the drawing above, storefront materials and color should not spill onto the piers which frame the storefront.
- 7.4i Substitute materials conveying the same sense as the original may be considered for rehabilitation projects.



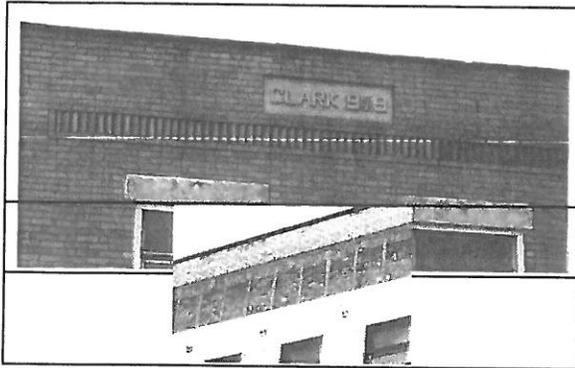
## 7.5 Upper Facade

7.5a Windows should be retained within the upper facade without alteration to their openings; refer to guidelines for windows in Section 3, above.

7.5b Original exterior surfaces should be retained or restored if presently covered or altered; refer to comments about masonry cleaning, wood wall surfaces, repointing, and painting, above.

## 7.6 Cornice

- 7.6a Cornices in the Ambridge Historic District should be retained and repaired as needed.
- 7.6b Brick cornices should be repointed as needed; refer to repointing guidelines, in Section 1, above.
- 7.6c Wood cornices should be repaired, primed, and painted; refer to painting guidelines in Section 6, above.



7.6d Metal cornices may be repaired as one would repair metal on an automobile--using body putty or a similar material--and then selecting appropriate colors for the final finish coat.

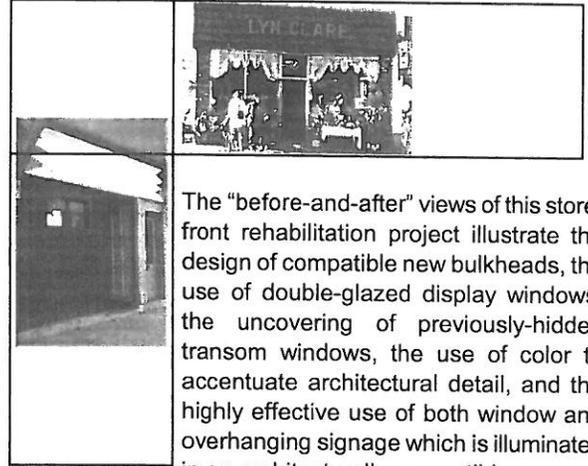
7.6e Cornice replacement projects which seek to replace lost wood or metal features may employ wood or a synthetic such as "Fypon" or an equivalent, but should always match the scale of the original feature

### Guidelines for Rehabilitating Existing Historic Storefronts

1. Become familiar with the style of your building and the role of the storefront in the overall design. Don't try to "early up" a storefront. Avoid stock "lumberyard colonial" detailing such as pedimented frontispiece entrances, coach lanterns, pent roof overhangs, wood shakes, non-operable shutters, and small-paned windows except where they existed historically and where the presence of such features can be documented.
2. Preserve the storefront's character when a new use occurs on the interior. If less exposed window area is desirable, consider the use of interior blinds and insulating curtains rather than altering the existing historic fabric and window-to-wall ratio.
3. Avoid use of materials that were unavailable when the storefront was constructed; this includes vinyl and aluminum siding, anodized aluminum, mirrored or tinted glass, artificial stone, and brick veneer.
4. Choose paint colors based on the building's historical appearance. In general, do not coat surfaces that have never been painted. For some storefronts, contrasting colors may be appropriate, but avoid too many colors on a single facade. [Adapted from Preservation Brief No.11, *Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts*]

### Guidelines for Designing Replacement Storefronts

1. **Scale:** Respect the scale and proportions of the existing building in any new storefront design.
2. **Materials:** Select construction materials which are appropriate to the storefront: wood and glass are usually more appropriate replacement materials for Ambridge storefronts than is masonry which tends to overpower the storefront and its individual components.
3. **Cornice:** Respect the horizontal separation between the storefront and the upper facade. In many cases, a cornice or fascia board was provided to accommodate the storefront signage. Such design is appropriate for new fronts as well.
4. **Frame:** Maintain the historic relationship of the storefront to the facade of the building and the streetscape. Most storefront frames are generally composed of horizontal and vertical elements and entire storefront should not be recessed behind the plane of the rest of the building.
5. **Entrances:** Differentiate the primary retail entrance from any secondary access to upper floors. In order to meet current code requirements, out-swinging doors generally must be recessed. Entrances should be placed where there were entrances historically, particularly when suggested by architectural detailing on the upper stories.
6. **Windows:** The storefront generally should be as transparent as possible. Use of glass in doors, transoms, and display areas allows for visibility into and out of the store.
7. **Secondary Design Elements:** Keep the treatment of secondary design elements such as graphics and awnings as simple as possible in order to avoid visual clutter both for the building and for the streetscape. [Adapted from Preservation Brief 11, *Rehabilitating Historic Storefronts*]



## 8.0 Signage

The quality of the graphic message conveyed by a business district or a neighborhood in which commercial uses are permitted is nearly as important as is the district's architectural message. In older areas such as the Ambridge Historic District, signage should be designed in such a way that it does not impact adversely on the historic buildings found therein.



8.1 Secure a sign permit from the Borough Office; permits are required for most signage.

8.2 Signage should be installed in a manner that does not obscure or destroy significant features on a building.

8.3 Signage should be mounted so that holes can be patched easily; whenever possible, mount signs in mortar joints, not directly into the masonry units. If holes or hangers from earlier signs remain, try to make use of them.

8.4 Signs should be externally illuminated, not internally illuminated. "Gooseneck" lights should be used for signage hung from buildings and "up-lighting" should be used for free-standing ground signs.

8.5 Some commercial storefronts retain their natural sign-bands, constructed when the building was new. Signs should be placed within these areas, either using painted signboards or individual three-dimensional letters.

8.6 The use of signage on converted residential buildings should be particularly sensitive to the original character of the property and the site; free-standing signage should be designed with attention to its visual impact on the building and the streetscape.

8.7 Window signs may be used in the Ambridge Historic District, but care should be taken to assure that inadequate interior ventilation will not cause the graphics to deteriorate.

8.8 The widespread use of neon, which involves delicate glass tubes filled with electrified gas, occurred in the 1920s and is appropriate only for a limited number of buildings located along Merchant Street.

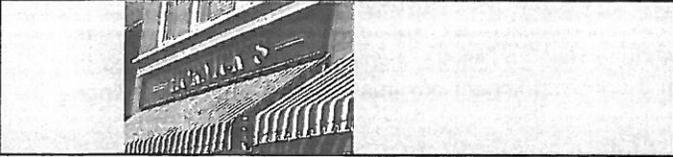
8.9 When a building has more than one commercial use, a building directory may be used in place of signage for each tenant, which can often result in a property's cluttered appearance. Directories should be as carefully crafted and compatible with the property as any other exterior treatment.



### General Guidelines for the Design and Installation of Signs on Commercial Buildings in Ambridge

1. Signage should express an easily-understood, simple message.

2. Choose lettering styles which are easily read.



3. Signs should be installed within the storefront area of the building; they should not "spill over" onto the storefront's vertical piers or onto the upper facade.

4. Lettering should occupy about 60% of the area of the signband; graphics should not be too small to be read or so large that they overpower the storefront.

5. Whenever possible, choose colors which are compatible with the character of the district and with the individual building.

6. Avoid the use of internally-illuminated signs; in the context of a historic district, signs should be externally illuminated.

7. Signs should be compatible with the character of the district and the building with relation to their size, color, placement, and method of illumination.

## 8a Awnings

Awnings can be a highly effective means of providing visual excitement to an individual building or a commercial area.



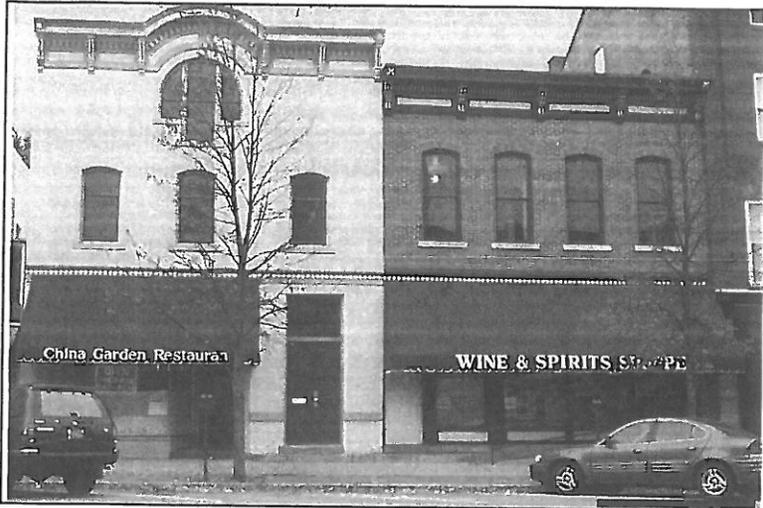
8a.1 Like signage, awnings should be attached to buildings with a minimal effect on the architectural fabric.

8a.2 While awnings are easily removed and usually cause no irreversible damage to the building, it is recommended that the traditional sloped awning form be used rather than awnings with more contemporary curved profiles or flat "marquee" canopies.

8a.3 Awnings may be installed on a fixed, rigid frame of piping or may be retractable.

8a.4 Since natural materials such as cotton and canvas are very susceptible to decay, it is recommended that awning fabric be of a synthetic

material, such as "Sunbrella," or an equivalent.



8a.5 Whenever possible, fabric color should be coordinated with the color of the building, storefront, signage, or other building component.

8a.6 Graphics may be painted or sewn onto the valance, the sideflap, or the banner of the awning.

8a.7 Proposed awning installation on buildings with a historic residential character will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

8a.8 Consult detailed guidance found in the National Main Street Center publication, *Awnings for Main Street*, a copy of which is available from the Building Inspector whose office is located in the Borough Building.

## DEPENDENCIES, OUTBUILDINGS, ETC.

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### 9.0 Dependencies and Other Associated Buildings

Dependencies include carriage houses, outbuildings, and garages, and are primarily found in the residential portion of the Ambridge Historic District.

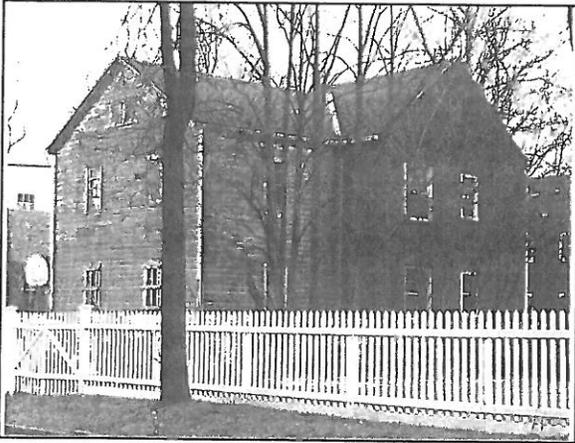
- 9.1 Historic dependencies should be treated with the same care as the principal buildings which they serve, and should be repaired and retained.
- 9.2 Follow the maintenance techniques discussed above for principal buildings, since they apply to dependencies as well.
- 9.3 Adhere to the requirements for demolition of dependencies, which are the same for the requirements for other types of buildings; they appear in Section 11 of these *Design Guidelines*.

## EARLY ADDITIONS, MODIFICATIONS, ETC.

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### 10.0 Older Alterations to Existing Buildings

The character of the Ambridge Historic District evolved over a long period, and many changes which have occurred to the buildings in the district have acquired significance in their own right. Before removing features which may not be original, it is important to evaluate their own character and appearance.



10.1 Each property in the Ambridge Historic District should, be viewed as a product of its own time, whether that time is the mid-nineteenth century or the earlier decades of the twentieth century.

10.2 When early modifications--porches, additions, etc.--are architecturally compatible with the overall character of an individual building, such modifications should be respected as reflecting the long life of the property.



10.3 Do not demolish added features which were installed on buildings within the historic district without fully investigating their condition and the effect that such removal will have on the main building.

## DEMOLITION

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### 11.0 Demolition in the Ambridge Historic District

In any historically-sensitive area, the demolition of significant properties is an irreversible and negative action whose impact will be felt in the district forever. Demolition is seldom an acceptable treatment for historic buildings in the Ambridge Historic District.

11.1 Demolition of buildings in the Ambridge Historic District shall not be undertaken unless it can be proven that:

- The building's structural failure has been clearly demonstrated by the presentation of sufficient documentation by an engineer or architect, or
- The safety of the public requires that the building be demolished, or
- All feasible alternatives to demolition have been explored by the owner, including rehabilitation, stabilization, repair, and the sale of the property to an owner who is able to undertake the rehabilitation process, or
- An economic hardship exists which prevents the owner from rehabilitating the property, or
- The building does not contribute to the character of the Ambridge Historic District because of its age or the degree to which it has been altered.



11.2 Any demolition project must assure that adjacent properties will not be damaged.

11.3 In the unlikely event that demolition of a significant building is approved, the owner should consider making available salvageable architectural artifacts for re-use in rehabilitation/restoration projects within the district.

11.4 *Any proposed demolition project must secure a Certificate of Appropriateness from the HARB and a permit from the Building Inspector.*

## NEW CONSTRUCTION, INFILL, ETC.

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### 12.0 New Construction/Infill within the District

The construction of new buildings within historic areas presents exciting challenges. New buildings add vibrancy and life to older sections, but their design must be carried out in such a way that they complement, rather than detract from, the streetscape. The following issues are important when planning new construction within the Ambridge Historic District:

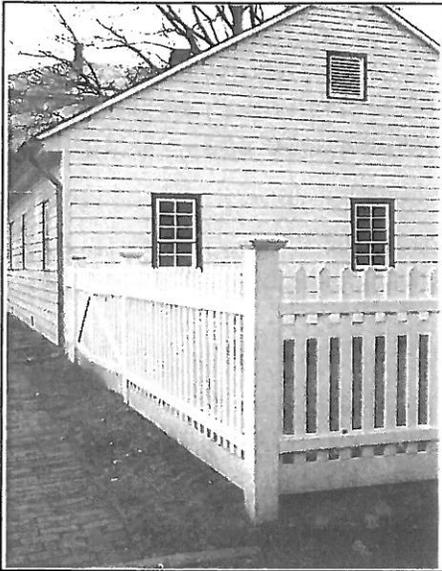
- 12.1 *Location:* New construction should be oriented in conformity with the other the buildings on a given street, and the prevailing setback of the street should be maintained by any new construction. If such setback is contrary to current zoning and subdivision regulations, variances should be sought in order to maintain the prevailing setback.
- 12.2 *Scale:* New construction should be compatible in scale with the other buildings in the area. New construction of a massive scale should not occur within the historic area, nor should very small, out-of-proportion buildings be added to the building stock of the district.
- 12.3 *Rhythm:* New construction should mirror the historic window and door rhythm and the height of the various elements--windows, rooflines, etc.--of the other buildings in the neighborhood.
- 12.4 *Massing:* New buildings should incorporate the same general patterns of massing, including window and door forms, roof profiles, and building shapes as are evident in the existing architecture of the district
- 12.5 *Materials:* New buildings should incorporate the same exterior materials as exist on the historic buildings within the Ambridge Historic District. Large expanses of glass and synthetic materials such as vinyl, aluminum, Z-brick, "lava rock," T-111, etc. should be avoided.
- 12.6 *Additions:* Additions to historic buildings should generally be made on a secondary elevation, with a minimal impact on historic features, and should be made in such away that, if removed in the future, historic material would not be irreparably damaged.
  - 12.6a Additions should use materials compatible with the historic building and should incorporate appropriate massing, scale, window and door proportions, etc.
- 12.7 New construction and in-fill projects along the Merchant Street commercial corridor are handled on a case-by-case basis. Designs should follow the guidance set forth throughout these *Design Guidelines*.
- 12.8 New construction in the historic residential areas should follow the general design characteristics of Harmonist architecture.

## STREETSCAPES

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### 13.0 Streetscapes

The appearance of the streetscape within the Ambridge Historic District will directly affect the overall visual success of the area for years to come. The planning and implementation of streetscape improvement projects should be carried out with the following issues in mind:



- 13.1 Streetscape development should not impact negatively upon historic buildings or their components.
- 13.2 Street lighting devices should be appropriate to the character of the district.
- 13.3 Traffic signal poles and municipal signage should be as complementary as possible to the historic character of the area and should be kept to a minimum.
- 13.4 The installation of plant material should not interfere with commercial activity within the district (i.e., plant trees so that they will not directly block store signage).
- 13.5 Dumpsters should be located at the rear of buildings or at other inconspicuous sites, and should not damage or obscure significant historic features of the building, site, etc.
- 13.6 Whenever possible, utility lines should be buried in conduit—including street light and private service lines.
- 13.7 The placement of utility entrances should occur at rear elevations or other inconspicuous sites. In all cases, *concealment* is the most important factor with respect to utility service and historic buildings.
- 13.8 The use of "street furniture" is encouraged, providing such items are compatible with the character of the district. Such items should be of a period-appropriate design and care should be taken that they are constructed for long-term outside public use.
- 13.9 The installation of brick sidewalks in the historic district is encouraged.



13.10 Any public or private streetscape initiative should include a maintenance plan, whether it is a plant maintenance plan or a plan to repaint light poles. Maintenance should be budgeted annually in the financial plan of the Borough or whatever other organization has oversight for the initiative.

13.11 Streetscape improvements should be developed in accordance with state and national accessibility

code requirements.

13.12 Interpretive signage should complement the architecture of the district and should be affixed to buildings without damage to historic fabric.

13.13 Landscaping treatments should not obscure historic resources or features of the district.



13.14 Landscaping should avoid the radical modification of historic contours, and should always be designed to encourage drainage away from foundations. Plant material should be installed a sufficient distance away from foundations to permit adequate drainage.

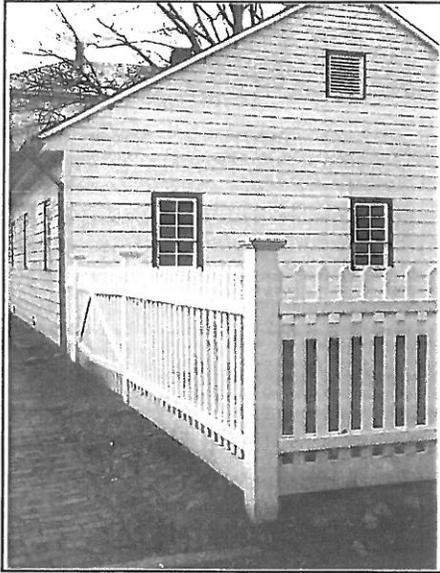
13.15 Retaining walls, when visible from a public street, should be constructed of traditional masonry materials (i.e., brick or stone). The use of more contemporary treatments such as railroad ties or pressure-treated lumber is discouraged.

13.16 Parking lots should maintain existing street setbacks and should include plant material to reinforce the setback and visually "soften" the appearance of the lot.

13.17 All parking areas should be adequately lighted, using period-appropriate lighting devices with buried power cables.

13.18 Historic fences within the Ambridge Historic District should be repaired and retained.

13.19 The construction of new Harmonist-style picket fencing is encouraged. Such fences include pointed pickets and support posts located about eight feet apart. Designs should be based upon the fencing surrounding the Rapp House.



13.20 New fences within the district should be of wood construction and should be painted in keeping with the traditional fences of the Harmonist Society.

13.21 Fences of non-traditional material and form, i.e., split rail, chain-link, etc. should not be installed.

13.22 Dumpsters and trash cans should be kept on rear elevations and should be shielded from view to the greatest extent possible. If they are visible from the street, they should be fenced appropriately or screened with plantings.

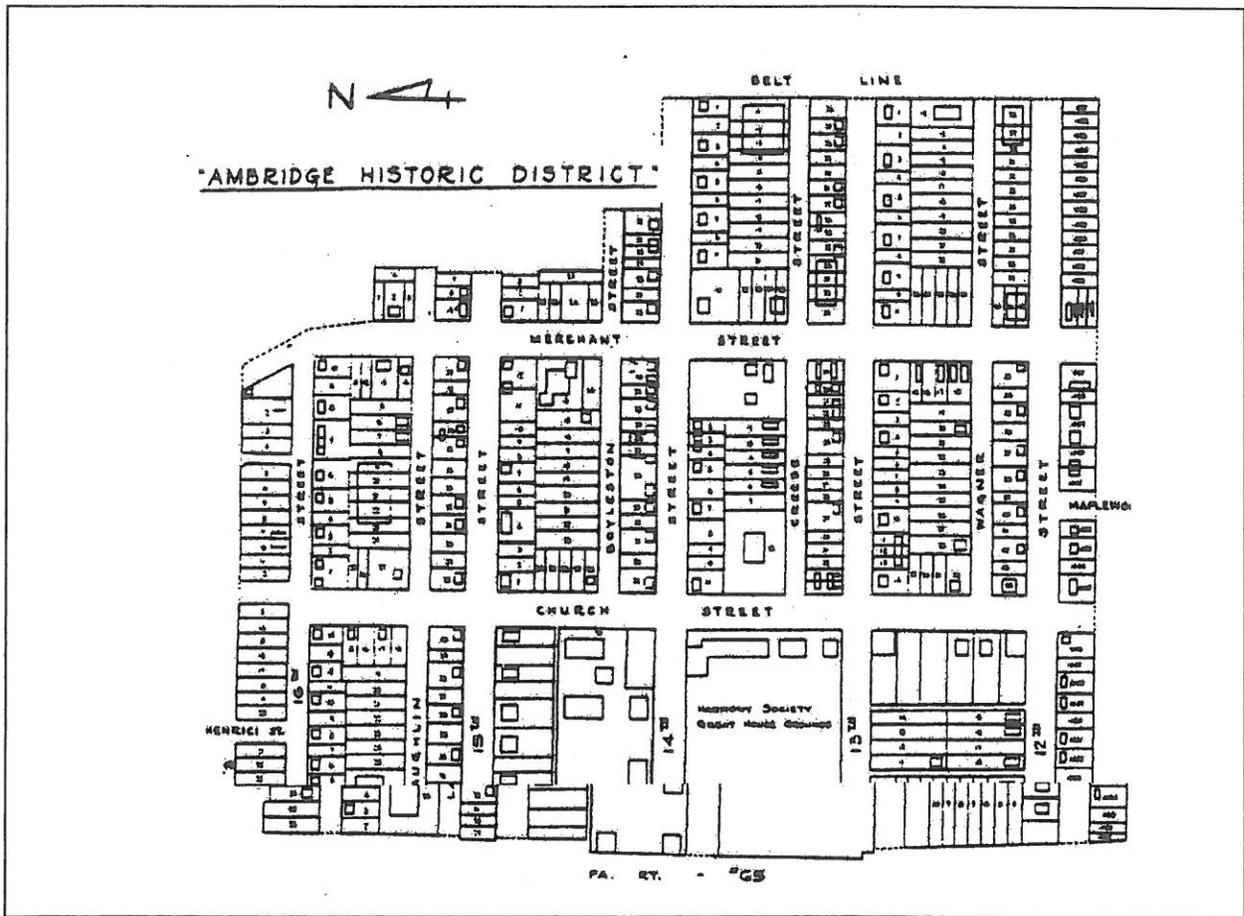
13.23 Trash cans should be placed at curbside after 6:00 P.M. on the day preceding collection, and should be removed on the day of collection.

## SITE PLAN/LAND USE APPROVALS

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- 14.1 The oversight for all requirements for subdivision and land use which are in effect for the Borough of Ambridge are delegated to the HARB for review and approval. Always consult with the HARB prior to initiating any subdivision or land use plan.

APPENDIX A: Map of the Ambridge Historic District



This map illustrates the area of the Borough of Ambridge which is protected by the Historic District Ordinance. Not every building is depicted on the map, but all of the area shown on the map falls under the jurisdiction of the HARB.

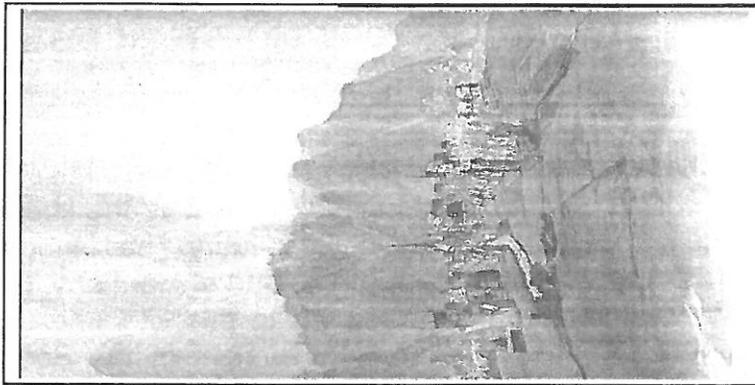
## APPENDIX B: AN ABBREVIATED HISTORY OF THE AMBRIDGE HISTORIC DISTRICT<sup>2</sup>

**SUMMARY NARRATIVE** The Ambridge Historic District includes the last vestiges of the village of Economy, which was a utopian community operated by the Harmony Society from the mid-1820s until the first decade of the twentieth century. The Harmonists, as they were known, had established two earlier communities--one at Harmony, Pennsylvania and one at New Harmony, Indiana--before returning to this site where they remained until the organization was dissolved. Under the oversight of the Society's founder, George Rapp, and later of his son, Frederick, the Harmonists developed extensive fields, vineyards, and orchards in the community and became entrepreneurs on a large scale, active in the production of wool and the processing of cotton, in the growth of regional railroads, and in the exploration of petroleum in the oil fields of northwestern Pennsylvania. The Society also erected distinctive houses and public buildings, many of which have been preserved in the community and add considerably to its overall character and importance. Late in the nineteenth century, the Society began to dwindle, and it was dissolved in 1905. Some of the Harmonist holdings in Economy had been sold in the 1890s and in the early years of the twentieth century the American Bridge Company was established at Economy; the name of the community was formally changed to Ambridge, in recognition of the dominance of that industry in the village. The commercial architecture along Merchant Street and the array of twentieth-century housing on the interior of the district is the result of the growth of Ambridge and the prosperity of the American Bridge Company.

**EXPANDED NARRATIVE** Situated along the Ohio River approximately eighteen miles northwest of Pittsburgh, the Ambridge Historic District consists of a commercial area along Merchant Street and a substantial residential neighborhood which, in addition to early twentieth-century architecture, contains the remaining buildings of the Harmony Society, a German communal sect. The Harmonists, as they became known, settled in Ambridge in 1825 and built a community that was to exert a decisive influence on the economy and development of the region throughout the balance of the nineteenth century. The historic district lies on a level plain immediately east of Pennsylvania Route 65 and includes the National Historic Landmark known as Old Economy Village, which is a six-acre museum complex containing more than a dozen major Harmonist buildings, owned and operated by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Surrounding the museum site is a grid of streets lined with nearly one hundred privately-owned Harmonist residences and associated buildings. Most of the Harmonist buildings date to period of the Society's early ascendancy, between 1825 and 1840, and are architecturally the result of a blending of American and German influences.

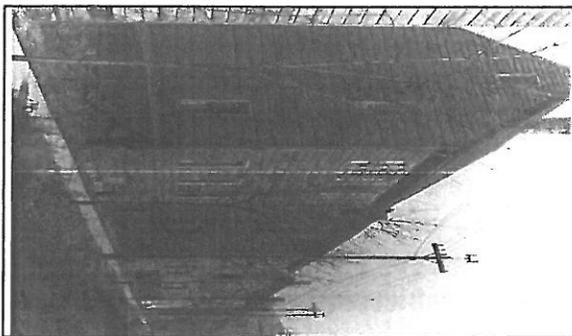
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<sup>2</sup>Historical material for this section was drawn from the 1985 National Register of Historic Places nomination for the Economy Historic District and from the 1986 National Historic Landmark nomination for the same area. Specific citations for these documents appear in the Bibliography. The draft material was reviewed by Mary Ann Landis, Site Administrator and Raymond Shepherd, Historian, at Old Economy Village. Their assistance was greatly appreciated by the HARB.



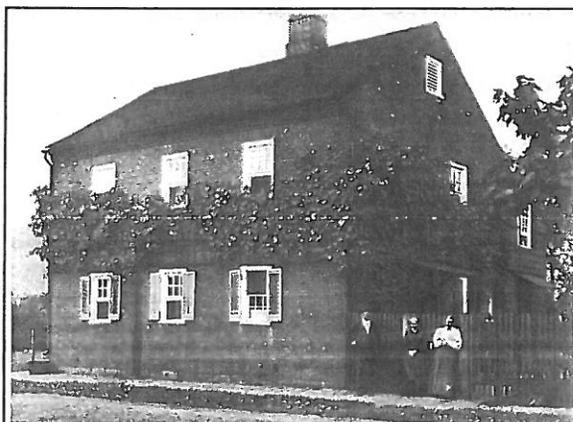
The Harmonist settlement formerly contained vast fields, vineyards, and orchards with ten thousand apple trees, along with substantial industrial buildings. Although these features have been lost, the historic district's original physical core remains largely intact. The Ambridge Historic District includes a

twelve-block rectangular grid formed by three thoroughfares running north-to-south (Routes 65, Church, and Merchant Streets) and five streets running east-to-west (Twelfth through Sixteenth Streets). With the dissolution of the Harmony Society early in the twentieth century, four narrower east-to-west streets—Wagner, Creese, Boyleston, and Laughlin—were laid out between the original Harmonist streets. The Bungalows, American Foursquares, Dutch Colonial Revival cottages, and automobile garages which line these newer streets occupy what were originally the interior reaches of the once-spacious Harmonist residence lots, areas reserved for household gardens and outbuildings.



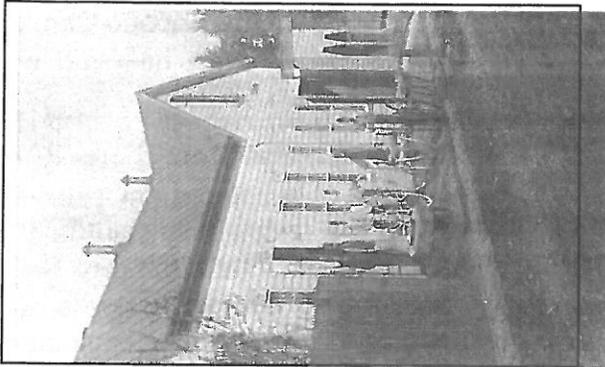
Unlike the two earlier Harmonist settlements at Harmony, Pennsylvania (1805-1815) and New Harmony, Indiana (1815-1824), the Economy settlement within the Ambridge Historic District had no central square; the intersection of Fourteenth and Church Streets was the functional if not the physical center of the community. Fourteenth Street forms the district's central east-west axis, and was home to many of the Harmony Society's important community public and residential properties,

including the Feast Hall/Museum Building, the home of the Society's founder George Rapp, business leader Frederick Rapp's house, the tailor shop with its large wine cellar, and the public hotel which contained the community's tavern. Church Street, running north-south, served as the site of the church and provided a general dividing line separating the community, public, and industrial areas to the west nearer the river from the residential and agricultural lands to the east.



The Harmonist street names were both practical and descriptive. Fourteenth Street was originally called "Store Gasse" (Store Way) because the Society's store, open to the public, was located thereon; by the mid-nineteenth century, it was known as Main Street. Twelfth Street was first called "Obere Gasse" (Over Way) and later became known as South Street;

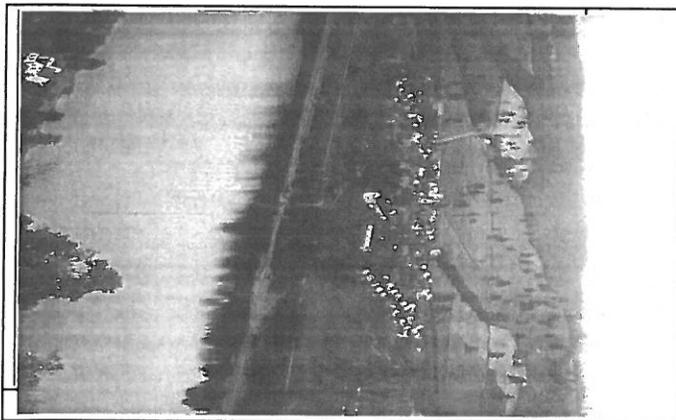
Thirteenth Street was called "Gelbe Gasse" (Yellow Way) and later Pitt Street, since at its eastern end this street linked with the older Pittsburgh Road; Fifteenth Street was "Untere Gasse" (Under Way) and later Mill Street, due to its siting near the flour and cotton mills. Sixteenth Street was "Roth Gasse" (Red Way) and was later known as North Street. The north-south streets were called Muhlen, Kirchen (Church) and Bauern (Farm) Streets and later West, Church, and East Streets, respectively. West Street eventually was enlarged and became Ohioview Avenue, now Route 65. The reasoning behind the Harmonists' naming of Yellow and Red Streets remains shrouded in mystery.



Karl J. R. Arndt described the group as "the most successful, wealthiest, and longest lived of the many nineteenth century [utopian] groups in America that wanted to improve life on earth by communal living." The Ambridge Historic District, which includes the surviving buildings of the Society's third and final home, is the relatively complete physical remnant of the Society and its way of life, and derives additional architectural significance for the early twentieth-century residential and

commercial neighborhood which developed after the demise of the Harmony Society in 1905.

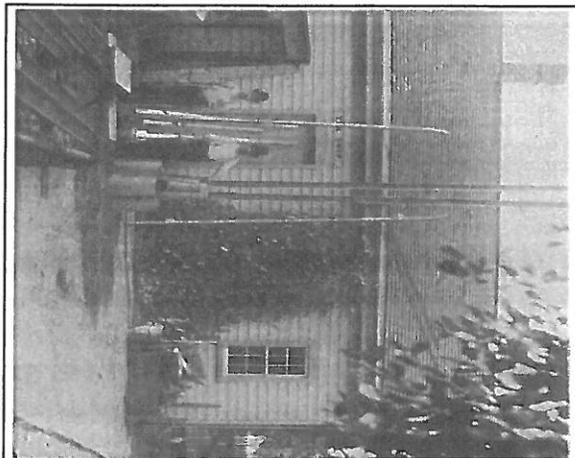
In addition to its importance as an early nineteenth-century alternative religious group, the Harmony Society played a significant role in the economic development of western Pennsylvania. Its members were manufacturers of wool, cotton, silk, and whiskey, participated in the development of the oil industry, laid out and developed the community of Beaver Falls, and were involved in the partial financing and ownership of the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie Railroad. The buildings of the Ambridge Historic District are the physical legacy of the Harmony Society's most successful period and the general residential development which followed. The district's buildings stand as a large collection of early nineteenth-century vernacular architecture notable for its overall craftsmanship, as a blend of German and American stylistic elements peculiar to the Harmonists, and as an early twentieth-century residential and commercial neighborhood.



The Harmonists were German pietists from the Wurttemberg area who followed their leader, George Rapp, to America in the early years of the nineteenth century in pursuit of religious, economic, and social freedom. Like other pietist groups, they sought a more direct relationship with God than was provided in conventional Lutheran orthodoxy. In the process, they wished to minimize the role of the church, its ceremonies, and its dogma. The Harmonists' faith was

based heavily on the Book of Revelations and was galvanized by "Father" Rapp's charisma as spiritual leader and prophet. The group was incorporated as a Society in 1805, and

thereafter the Harmonists practiced a lifestyle that included pacifism, the communal sharing of property and wealth, celibacy, and a dedication to manual labor. They believed that Christ's imminent return to earth would restore mankind to its original purity. Not surprisingly, considerable conflict arose within the Society over some of these tenets—celibacy and the sharing of wealth in particular. George Rapp and his adopted son, Frederick, were criticized as being dictatorial, un-Christian, and cruel both in their treatment of Society members and in the management of the Society's wealth. Whatever the point of fact, the Harmonists combined their religious beliefs and lifestyle in the Ambridge Historic District with an extraordinary degree of economic success, while at the same time preparing for the Second Coming of Christ, which they believed would occur before 1850.



George Rapp believed that the act of building a town served to unite the community spiritually and physically. The Harmony Society built three complete towns within the first thirty years of its existence. They established the underpinnings of their new society at Harmony, Pennsylvania (1805-1815) and at New Harmony, Indiana (1815-1824). Based upon their experience in town-building in the

first two settlements, they erected their new community, named Economy, the remains of which are now encompassed by the Ambridge Historic District. Economy was the longest-lived of the Harmonist communities, enduring from 1824 to 1905.

Rapp's background as a vinedresser and weaver in Germany reinforced his emphasis on the importance of manual labor. Although the Harmonists designed their new buildings "in the American manner," the Society retained elements of their German heritage, including their Swabian dialect and traditional costume. A wooden gate beneath which visitors passed at the entrance to Economy emphasized the physical and philosophical

separation of the community from the surrounding world.

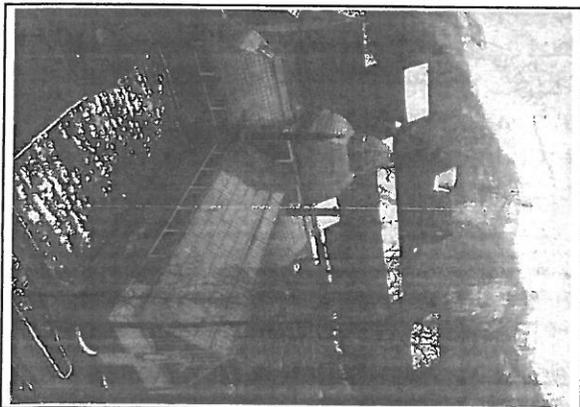


In sharp contrast to the Harmonists' two earlier settlements, Economy's productivity was based more on industry than on agriculture. This fact is reflected in the acreage of Economy, the smallest of the three settlements, with approximately 3,000 acres; Harmony eventually included about 6,000 acres and New Harmony, about 20,000.

Intending to remain at Economy, the Harmonists built and purchased the most advanced machinery with which to produce their wares and Harmonist "salesmen" on the East Coast and in the Ohio and Mississippi valleys acted as agents for the Society's products.

All goods were sold under the name of the Harmony Society by the authority of Frederick Rapp, the Society's business manager and its temporal leader. Much of Rapp's correspondence was in German and the full extent of the Society's business dealings and involvement in finance and politics was not widely known at the time. However, historian Arndt credits Frederick Rapp ( 1786-1834) as being "one of the most influential and powerful manufacturers and private bankers of the United States." Originally trained as a draftsman and stone mason, Rapp was cultured, traveled, and acquainted with and adept at dealing with prominent American businessmen and politicians. Unlike most of the Harmonists, including his adopted father George Rapp who spoke a little English, Frederick spoke English in addition to the Harmonists' native Swabian dialect. Shortly after the Society's arrival in Indiana, Frederick Rapp was elected to the state's Territorial Legislature and helped draft the state constitution in 1816. He subsequently served on the committee which selected and laid out the site of Indianapolis. Forty years old in 1826, Frederick was at the height of his abilities at Economy, even as spiritual leader George Rapp, then seventy, was becoming less vigorous. In short, Frederick Rapp was best equipped to deal with the mainstream of American life. Under his direction, Harmonist industry flourished during the Society's first two decades at Economy. After his death in 1834, the combined problems of an aging population, a wool industry which had never fully recovered from a major fire in 1833, and the obsolescence of machinery which had once been state-of-the-art could not be overcome. Large-scale manufacturing ceased at Economy by the 1850s, although the Society's entrepreneurial activities continued in the petroleum industry, in railroads, in other manufacturing, and in their investments.

The wool and cotton mills were the Harmonists' most important early industries at Economy. The factories occupied two of the Society's first and largest buildings (not extant), which were three-story brick structures situated at the southwest and northwest edges of the district, respectively. A traveler's account of Economy in 1826 describes the products of both mills as being of high quality and already in great demand. The wool, from the desirable Merino and Saxon sheep, was dyed and woven into various cloths, among which the red flannel was most popular. Cotton cloth was produced in solid colors as well as a mix of blue and white, called cassinet. The machinery used in both factories in 1826 included some acquired in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia and others made on-site at Economy. Travelers remarked on the fact that the Harmonists placed vases of flowers on their machines, as though to improve their working environment and perhaps also to more fully integrate their industrial activities with their otherwise modest and formerly agrarian lifestyle.



By 1833, when a detailed inventory of Harmonist real estate and machinery was recorded, the Society claimed over \$50,000 worth of real estate and equipment related to the cotton and wool factories alone. In addition, they were operating a variety of smaller industries, including a flour mill, brewery, distillery, saw mill, and tannery, along with shops for the production of soap, hats, wagons, and saddles, steam washing, a blacksmith, turner, linen weaver, carpenter, tinsmith, potter, doctor, and cooper. One hundred nineteen houses of brick and wood had been erected, as had the community's

public buildings and a school. The Harmonists were nearly self-sufficient and had become a model community.



The late 1820s saw the beginning of the Harmonists' successful experimentation with the silk industry. Following a suspicious 1833 fire which destroyed the wool factory, it became particularly important to expand the Society's industrial development. George Rapp brought experts in the cultivation of silk worms to Economy and by 1843 travelers remarked on the existence of mulberry plantations at

the settlement. The Society produced award-winning silk in a variety of colors and patterns throughout the 1840s.

Brewing and distilling were other successful industries, with equipment valued at \$1,800.00 in 1833. In addition, the Society's store, one of its most substantial buildings, was erected shortly after the Harmonists' arrival at Economy and sold a variety of community-made goods to the public, purchased goods from Philadelphia for resale, and served as a distribution center for members.



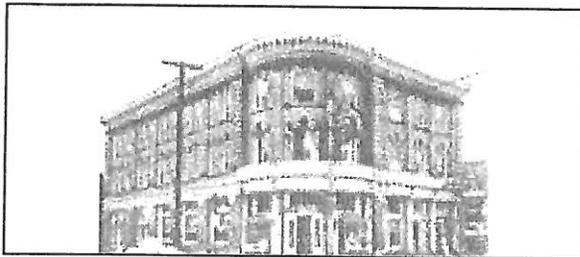
The Harmonists' agricultural and industrial skill, coupled with their position as a reliable and steady labor force, resulted in the Society's amassing considerable assets, estimated as early as the 1830s to be in the range of half a million to more than two million dollars. In the second half of the century, with its membership aging rapidly and its industry practically dormant, the Society turned to investments to provide the necessary income both for the operation of the community and for the Society's anticipated return to

Jerusalem upon Christ's return. Finance was not new to the organization; the Society had previously loaned money to the State of Indiana and shortly after the organization was established at Economy in 1826, Pittsburgh's mayor requested a loan of \$20,000. Throughout its history, the Society was considered to be financially stable, entrepreneurial, and even charitable.

Under the management of the Society's senior mission, trustees--first in the person of former storekeeper Romelius Baker (1793-1868) and later Jacob Henrici (1804-1892)--in the second half of the nineteenth century the Society began investing in oil, real estate, canals, and railroads. The Economy Oil Company operated in the oil fields of Warren County as early as 1860, less than one year after Col. Edwin L. Drake's discovery of oil at Titusville. The Harmonists acquired land for the town of Beaver Falls, which they platted and promoted by building a bank and several factories, including a cutlery manufactory

employing two hundred Chinese workers. Geneva College located in Beaver Falls through the efforts of the Harmony Society, which also operated the Harmony Brickworks and the Economy Planing Mill Company, both active in the 1890s. The Society invested in five different railroad lines, of which the Pittsburgh and Lake Erie was most important. Trustee Jacob Henrici served as an officer of the P & LE and as its President for four years. The Harmony Society was the railroad's major stockholder.

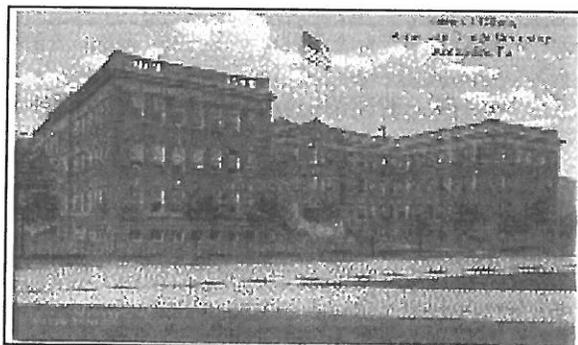
Following Jacob Henrici's death in 1892, John Duss (1860-1951) served as senior trustee and managed the Society, which by that time began to dwindle considerably. Eventually, financial difficulties arose and Duss was forced to liquidate Society assets in order to satisfy creditors. In 1903, Duss resigned in favor of his wife and two years later, with only three living members, Mrs. Duss formally dissolved the Society. A subsequent legal battle resulted in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania "inheriting" the acreage and buildings of the present museum site.



In 1894, John Duss had sold some of the Harmony Society's farmlands to the Berlin Iron Works. When the U. S. Steel Corporation was established in 1901, it absorbed the Berlin operation at Economy and the following year erected a plant for the American Bridge Company, partially on the lands of the former Berlin Iron Works. The

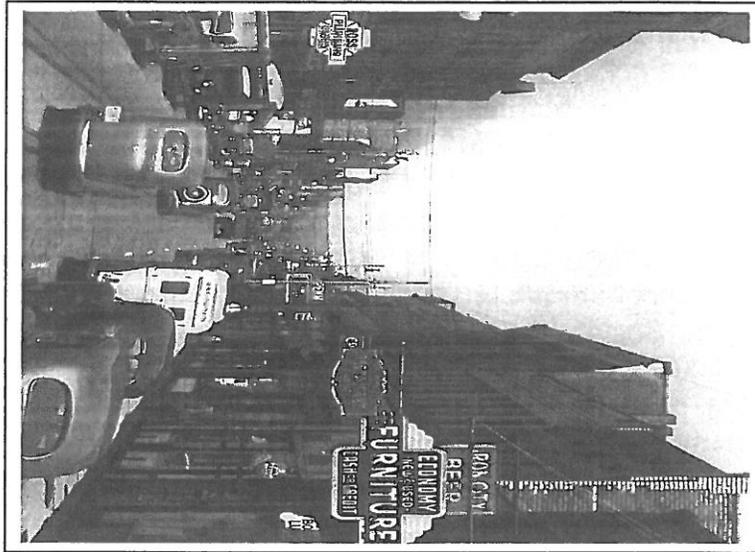
new bridge manufacturer was in need of homes for its workers and acquired additional Harmonist farmlands and laid out a new community which they named Ambridge, after their own company.

The next decades of the Ambridge Historic District were tied to the fortunes of the bridge producers. New streets were laid out within the old Harmonist community and houses were erected following architectural designs popular during the first two quarters of the twentieth century. Some Harmonist properties were replaced by newer buildings and Merchant Street developed as the business district of the community, containing brick commercial buildings and hotels. The growing industrialized community even had its own woman architect, Mrs. Elsie Mercur Wagner, whose work was noted in an early twentieth-century architectural periodical.<sup>3</sup>



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<sup>3</sup> *Ohio Architect and Builder* (August, 1904).



Facing increased development pressures in the last decades of the twentieth century and in response to a heightened awareness of historic preservation, in 1971 the Borough Council of the Borough of Ambridge passed Ordinance 900, which established the

locally-designated Ambridge Historic District and extended protection to the district's historic architecture. In 1985, the Economy Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places and the following year the district was designated a National Historic Landmark, establishing the significance of the district, not only to the history of Beaver County and Pennsylvania, but to the nation as a whole.

## APPENDIX C: THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE AMBRIDGE HISTORIC DISTRICT<sup>4</sup>

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The first homes erected in 1824 by the newly-arriving Harmonists were likely of log construction. The oldest extant buildings in the district are reputed to be the log house at 1427 Church Street and the frame house at 500 Church Street. It is thought that both were moved to the site to provide shelter for Society members during the construction of other buildings. Founder George Rapp occupied the frame house, known as the "Blaine Mansion," while workers occupied the log house.

The earliest extant building constructed by the Harmonists is the brick residence located on the northeast corner of Fourteenth and Church Streets. Other buildings on Fourteenth Street are known to have been under construction at the same time.

With the exception of the Harmonist Church, all of the major extant Harmonist buildings with notable architectural character lie within the museum complex, west of church Street and spanning Fourteenth Street. The Feast Hall opened in 1827 and, more than any other except perhaps the Church, was the Harmonists' central meeting place. The property housed a school room, library, music room, museum, and drawing school, and its second-floor hall was used for the Society's celebrations. The Feast Hall's steep gambrel roof is a Germanic architectural feature which was also used in the cotton mill and the hotel, which were both significant, though no longer extant, Harmonist properties. German design influences are also seen in the 1825 Granary, another of the larger remaining Harmonist buildings.

The c. 1826 Rapp House was the home of founder George Rapp and the attached smaller brick house was occupied by his adopted son Frederick, who became the community's business manager. George Rapp's house reflects the Harmonists' desire build "in the American manner," although it shows German influence in the clipped gables of the roof, which were removed in the late nineteenth century and were later restored. Although not particularly ornate, the Rapp House nonetheless incorporates a variety of architectural details no longer found elsewhere in the district, including classically-derived frontispieces, carved stone steps, decorative transoms, and a two-story rear porch.

Other major buildings located on the museum grounds are the community kitchen, located beside the Rapp House and used when celebrations were held in that building, cabinet and tailor shops, a store, and a warehouse. The entire museum complex is the result of major restoration undertaken by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania beginning in 1938 and continuing at the time of the preparation of these *Design Guidelines* in 2001.

The Harmonist Church lies across Church Street from the George Rapp House and is one of the district's most significant buildings, both as the focal point of the Harmony Society's spiritual life and as a work of architecture in its own right. The Ambridge Historic District's most conspicuous building, the church incorporates a tall cupola/clock tower of brick and stone with a tiered cap housing the Society's distinctive one-handed clock.

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<sup>4</sup>The architectural history of the district is drawn from the National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmark nomination documents for Economy. Citations of these documents appear in the Bibliography.

Erected over a three-year period beginning in 1828, the design of the church has traditionally been credited to Frederick Rapp, as have the designs of all the other major Harmonist buildings. Because the building has always been used a house of worship, it has suffered relatively few alterations and is the best preserved Harmonist building outside the grounds of the museum.

While significant Harmonist architecture obviously exists within the context of the restored Old Economy Village and the Harmonist Church, the extent and duration of the Harmonist community and its successor in the prosperity of the American Bridge Company are best understood with reference to the residential neighborhood and the commercial district along Merchant Street.

The residential neighborhood retains a distinct appearance and atmosphere due to the homogeneity of the Harmonist houses and their regular spacing along the streets. The rise of the twentieth century is evident in the mostly brick homes built throughout the district after the creation of the American Bridge Company in 1903.

The Harmonist houses are built either of Harmonist-produced brick or of wood frame clad with lap siding. The houses are almost uniformly of two stories, with a three bay facade and side elevations of two bays in width. The homes are gable-roofed and were originally roofed with wood shingles. This roof treatment was eventually supplanted by standing seam metal, slate, asbestos shingling, and finally by composition shingles. The original plan of the Harmonist houses incorporated the principal entry door opening from the side elevation. Many of the wood frame houses have been clad in non-historic siding, including insul-brick, other types of asphalt shingles, asbestos shingles, aluminum, artificial stone, and vinyl siding. The brick houses have generally been less subject to cladding in non-historic materials, but are often painted.

The Harmonists were not unfamiliar with the building of homes or communities. At Economy they employed the same methods of construction they had used in their two previous settlements. When building in wood, a braced-frame system of construction was employed, with each floor framed as an independent unit. Rather than placing a ridge pole at the peak of the roof, the Harmonists constructed each set of rafters as an independent truss with the ceiling rafter as its bottom chord. Chimneys were built as structurally-independent units and ran diagonally through the attic, exiting the roof at the ridge. Some original chimneys survive within the Ambridge Historic District, squat of proportion and situated just off-center along the roof ridge. Insulation in the form of wood slats wrapped with mud and straw and known as "dutch biscuits" was used and brick was placed between the wall studs on the first floor of frame buildings.

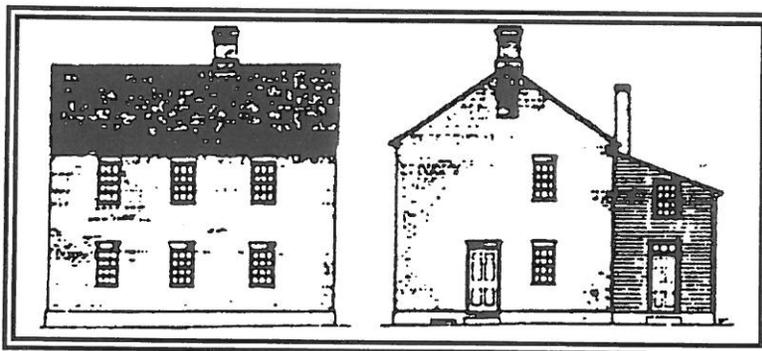
The Harmonist house plan, basically identical in all of the houses, consisted of three rooms on each floor, two small rooms and one large one. On the first floor were an entry/stair hall, kitchen, and larger living/sleeping space. Bedrooms were on the second floor. Shed-roofed additions of wood clad in lap siding and one room deep are appended to nearly all of the brick houses. Research suggests that the sheds were added after 1858 and before 1889, well after the construction of the original brick sections. Few wood houses exhibit the shed additions; where they do, the sheds are of similar configuration to those on brick houses.

The exteriors of the brick houses were designed with several features both

functional and attractive; most of the brick houses retain at least some of these elements. The simple facade of common-bond brick was enlivened with jack arches above windows and doors and a corbeled cornice along the long sides of the house. The decorative corbeling may also have facilitated water run-off by extending the roof line from the exterior walls by several inches. Doorways were rather deeply recessed, and shared the same wood surround of multiple beading as the windows. Most original doors were of a six-paneled form. On the shed additions, doors had simple transoms, to admit more light to this small space.

As originally built, houses were equipped with partial basements, accessible from a trap door in the entry hall and cross-ventilated by air shafts leading to windows just above foundation. Although many of these small basements have since been enlarged, some of the original ventilation openings with their thick stone lintels remain.

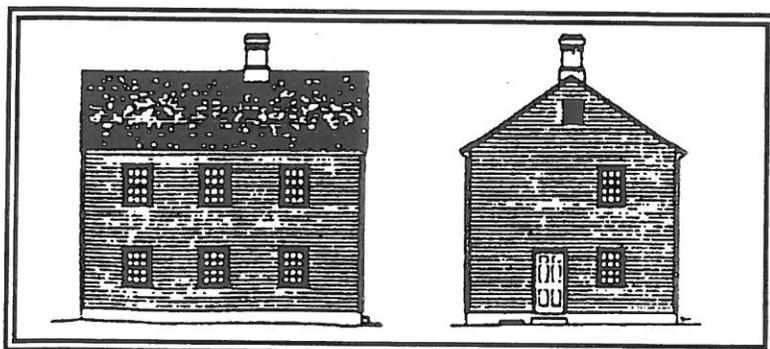
Four principal house types from the Harmonist tradition are found in the Ambridge Historic District.



**Two-Story**

This house form employs a three-by-two-bay plan with a laterally-oriented gable roof and a corbeled brick chimney offset on the ridge. In several examples, the plan is two-by-two bays, variant forms which appear to original. The brick is laid in common bond with flat arches above the windows and doors, corbeling at the cornice,

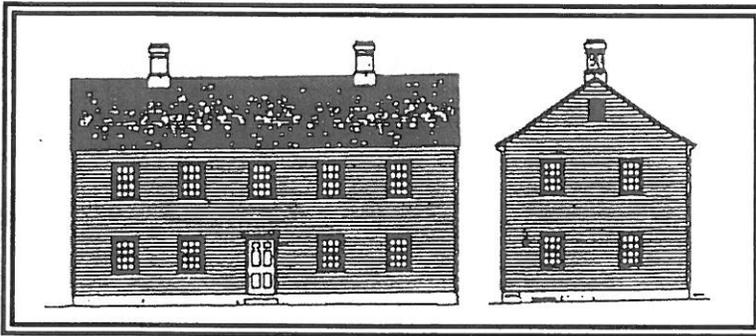
and a watertable immediately above the stone foundation. Windows are flat-topped, with double-hung six-over-six sash, except for small, single attic windows in each gable end. The door is located on the gable end of the house, rather than on the street-side elevation. Most houses of this type have a shed-roofed wood addition on the rear, one room wide, with its own door, also on the end of the house. These additions were constructed during the Harmonist era, probably shortly after the original construction of the main house. Throughout the Ambridge Historic District this house type appears with the highest degree of physical integrity.



**Two-Story**

These houses are nearly identical to the two-story brick houses except for their wood construction. Houses of wood are more easily altered than are brick buildings. Many Harmonist properties of this type have been considerably changed with the application of non-historic siding and roofing material, the alteration of

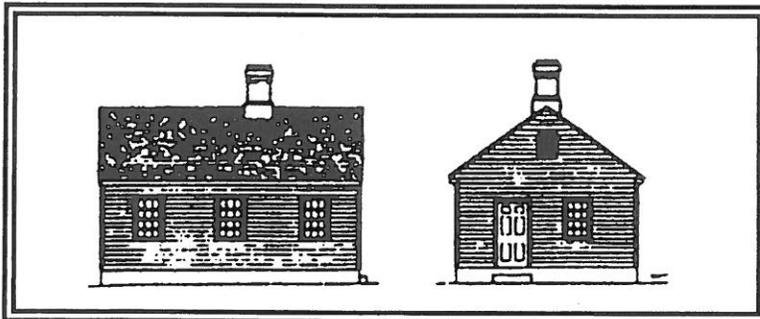
window size and the installation of replacement window sash, the occasional addition of altogether new window openings, the addition of eave returns, and the addition of a door on the street-side elevation. In spite of the common alterations to these wood houses, they nonetheless remain important visual elements throughout the Ambridge Historic District, both because of their location relative to the street and to other Harmonist buildings, and because they do retain the basic elements of the Harmonists' residential design--form, massing, fenestration pattern, and unique structural details.



**Two-Story Frame Double House**

These buildings have five bays on the lateral elevation and two bays on the gable end, multiple chimneys, and windows of taller proportions than the smaller house types. The alterations to these buildings are similar to those evident on two-

story frame houses.



**One-Story**

Houses of this type are one story in height with a half-story attic above and incorporate a two-by-three bay configuration, a gable roof with gable-end orientation to the street, and a central chimney.

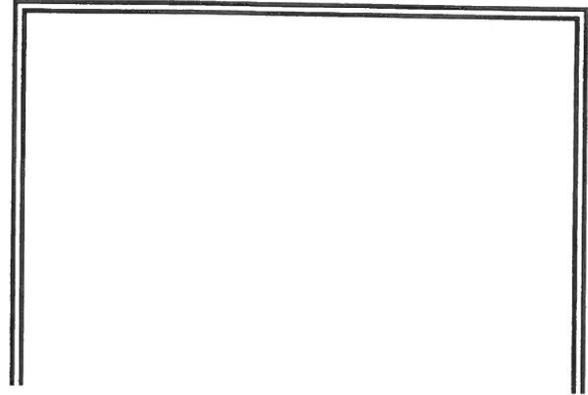
**Other Ambri**



Following the demise of the Harmonist Society in 1905, the ascendancy of the American Bridge Company, and the establishment of the Borough of Ambridge, new residencies rose throughout the community. These houses followed the more modest of the architectural styles of the first thirty years of the twentieth century. Among the formal styles represented in the twentieth-century reaches of the Ambridge Historic District are the following:

**Bungalow**

These small-scale homes are of one and one-half stories, with laterally-oriented gable roofs and recessed front porches. The rooflines are often punctuated by dormers which increase the useable floor space and allow the penetration of light into an otherwise



dark second story. They were a popular American house type from about 1910 through the 1940s.

### **Colonial Revival**

These are homes which derive their influence from the designs of pre-Revolutionary America. Included among these in Ambridge are residences executed the style of the Dutch Colonial Revival with distinctive gambrel roof forms.

### **American Foursquare**

Likely the most common American house type of the first forty years of the twentieth century the houses are basically square in plan two or two-and-one-half stories in height and are usually capped with hipped roofs with dormers. They typically have a one-story front porch, also with a hipped roof. Occasionally, Foursquares appear with art glass windows.



### **Vernacular**

This term refers to buildings built with reference neither to particular formal styles or to culturally-linked architectural traditions. Often vernacular buildings were the products of local builders whose designs were based upon regional preferences, materials availability, etc. In addition to many individual homes, the commercial architecture of the Ambridge Historic District is essentially vernacular in character.

Interspersed among the Harmonist homes and early twentieth-century domestic architecture were other buildings serving functions such as a doctor's office, workshops for the making of barrels, hats, a wagon shed, and a wine press house. It appears that only

the major industrial buildings, which required an ample water supply from the Ohio River or produced noxious odors, were relegated to the outskirts of the community. The smaller non-residential buildings were generally designed to be comparable in scale and materials with the houses with which they were associated.

The street plan of Economy was an orderly pattern with specific considerations which contributed to the aesthetic quality of the settlement. Buildings sited along the street alternated with open lots, creating a consistent pattern of construction and vacant lots. Following the dissolution of the Harmonist Society in 1905, several new streets were opened and development resulted in the construction of new houses in previously vacant lots.

## APPENDIX D: BIBLIOGRAPHY

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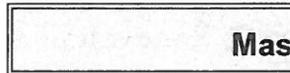
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<sup>7</sup>This map should not be regarded as accurate.

## **APPENDIX E: GLOSSARY OF ARCHITECTURAL TERMINOLOGY**

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The following terms are typical of those which are used with reference to historic buildings and the process of review by the Ambridge HARB. More detailed dictionaries of general architectural terms are listed on page 62.

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>air infiltration</b> | the penetration of air into a property through cracks or holes in the exterior surfaces of the building  |
| <b>alteration</b>       | any physical change to an existing property; with reference to the Ambridge Historic District, changes to any portion of a property which is visible from the street   |
| <b>awning</b>           | a covering installed over a door or window to provide shelter from the elements, to add color to the exterior of the property , and, in commercial cases, for signage; typically and historically constructed of fabric, awnings were also fabricated of metal and plastic in the mid- to late-twentieth century |
| <b>baluster</b>         | a small, vertical feature that supports a hand rail in a balustrade, which may be modest (such as a simple 2" × 2" element) or decorative, as balusters turned on a lathe  |
| <b>balustrade</b>       | a railing on a stair or porch, including upper and lower rails between which is a row of balusters   |
| <b>bay window</b>       | a window assembly which that projects outward from the wall of a building and typically rests upon a foundation  |
| <b>blocking in</b>      | the addition of materials to a window or door opening, either to decrease the size of the opening or to fully close the opening  |
| <b>bracket</b>          | a generic term referring to an architectural element, often ornamented with scrolls or other trim, which projects outward from a wall surface and supports a cornice, eave, etc.   |
| <b>bulkhead</b>         | a panel at the base of the display windows of a storefront   |
| <b>casement</b>         | a window unit that opens by swinging in or out to one side   |

|                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <b>caulking</b>                       | a flexible material for sealing cracks and filling joints between materials to prevent leakage   |
| <b>Certificate of Appropriateness</b> | statement of approval recommended by the Historic Architectural Review Board and approved by Borough Council, that certifies the compatible nature of a request for the construction, alteration, reconstruction, repair, restoration, demolition, or razing of all or part of any building within the Ambridge Historic District, following a determination of compatibility according to applicable criteria, and that authorizes the issuance of a building permit for such request |
| <b>character</b>                      | the aggregate of physical attributes belonging to a building or other historic property  |
| <b>character-defining feature</b>     | any particular physical feature that distinguishes a building or other historic property and enables it to be classified as a particular type, style, form, etc.   |
| <b>clapboard</b>                      | an exterior wood siding applied horizontally in such a way that the thicker edge of each board overlaps the thinner edge of the board below  |
| <b>compatible</b>                     | a term describing a physical alteration to a property that maintains or restores the significant features of a property  |
| <b>compatible substitute</b>          | a new material used to replace an old material which cannot be feasibly retained; in order to be compatible, the new material must be similar to the old in appearance and must be consistent with the existing materials in its physical properties   |
| <b>corner board</b>                   | a vertical board installed at the corner of a wood structure; generally narrow in proportion, horizontal siding abuts the corner board from both sides of the building   |
| <b>cornice</b>                        | a composite of moldings which project from the top of prominent architectural features, such as walls, windows, or doors   |
| <b>cyclical maintenance</b>           | the regular, scheduled maintenance and upkeep of all elements of a property  |
| <b>delamination</b>                   | the separation of layers of a material, such as sandstone  |
| <b>demolition</b>                     | the purposeful destruction of all or part of a historic property   |
| <b>demolition by</b>                  | the destruction of a historic property by a lack of maintenance  |

|                      |   |
|----------------------|---|
| <b>neglect</b>       | over a long period of time  |
| <b>dentil</b>        | a small block-like feature which, when installed alternatively with blank spaces, appears tooth-like and serves as a decorative element in cornices and other molding bands |
| <b>deterioration</b> | the loss of a material's stable condition, often the result of weathering and/or a lack of maintenance  |
| <b>dormer</b>        | a window assembly that projects from a sloping roof and is capped by a roof of its own  |
| <b>downspout</b>     | a vertical conduit, typically of metal and interconnected with a gutter, which carries moisture away from a roof  |
| <b>eaves</b>         | the underside of that part of a roof which extends beyond the plane of the building   |
| <b>efflorescence</b> | a white dust-like covering which appears on masonry walls and is created by the crystalline deposit of salts which occurs after moisture in a wall evaporates               |
| <b>elevation</b>     | one of the walls of a building; the principal elevation is typically referred to as the facade, while the others are referred to as "secondary" elevations                  |
| <b>facade</b>        | the front wall or principal elevation of a building   |
| <b>feature</b>       | a distinguishable single part of a greater unit, such as one of the various architectural elements of a building  |
| <b>finish</b>        | the composite of the texture, color, reflective characteristics, and other visual qualities of the surface of a building  |
| <b>flashing</b>      | sheet metal installed at the joints in a roof to inhibit moisture penetration   |
| <b>form</b>          | the overall shape of a historic property, which significantly contributes to its character and appearance   |
| <b>foundation</b>    | the masonry base of a building that rests directly on the ground and provides structural support to the assembly of the building above                                      |
| <b>frame</b>         | the wood surrounding a door or window, to which the door or window is appended  |
| <b>gable</b>         | the triangular portion of the end of a building with a double-sloping roof, including the portion from the level of the eaves to the ridge                                  |

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|--------------------------------|--|
| <b>gable end</b>               | referring to a building with a gable roof, that elevation which includes the triangular gable  |
| <b>gable(d) roof</b>           | a pitched roof form whose sides are inclined at the same angle and intersect in the center of the building   |
| <b>galvanized</b>              | an adjective which describes materials, such as gutters or downspouts, which have a rust-inhibiting protective coating of zinc   |
| <b>gambrel</b>                 | a roof form consisting of a gently-angled slope above a more steeply pitched slope, typical of the twentieth-century Dutch Colonial Revival-style homes in the Ambridge Historic District                            |
| <b>glazing pattern</b>         | the arrangement of glass panes in a door or window   |
| <b>gutter</b>                  | a shallow channel, generally of metal, which is appended below and extends along the eaves to divert rainwater away from the roof; gutters are typically connected to a downspout                                    |
| <b>hipped roof</b>             | a roof form sloping upward from all exterior walls   |
| <b>historic preservation</b>   | that broad range of activities intended to protect and conserve the various elements which constitute the built environment  |
| <b>historic rehabilitation</b> | the process of returning a historic property to a state of usefulness through compatible repair or alteration, enabling a suitable contemporary use  |
| <b>lintel</b>                  | a structural element which horizontally spans a window or door opening   |
| <b>louvers</b>                 | a series of flat, angled slats interrupted by spaces in a framework, typically intended to admit air, such as in a shutter   |
| <b>masonry</b>                 | stone, brick, or terra cotta, installed to allow the weight of an individual unit to be carried by the unit below, typically with mortar in the joints between the units.  |
| <b>massing</b>                 | the overall composition of the exterior of a building, including features such as the size and shape of the principal volumes of a building, window-to-wall ratio, etc. that contribute to the building's appearance |
| <b>molding</b>                 | decorative trim designed in a wide variety of geometric profiles   |

and intended to provide ornament to buildings and individual building elements

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| <b>mortar</b>                | a composition containing, at a minimum, sand, water, lime, and, sometimes Portland cement, which is placed between individual units of masonry, evenly transferring the load downward through the masonry units                        |
| <b>muntin</b>                | the small molding that separates the individual panes of glass in a window sash  |
| <b>oriel</b>                 | a projection from the main wall of a building which starts above the ground level and, unlike a bay window, does not rest upon a foundation  |
| <b>outbuilding</b>           | a detached building which is secondary to the main building, including properties such as garages, carriage houses, summer kitchens, ice houses, sheds, and barns; also referred to as “dependency”                                    |
| <b>Palladian window</b>      | a three-part window form which incorporates a round-arched center window flanked by shorter flat-topped windows  |
| <b>physical evidence</b>     | existing historic features of a building upon which new or restored building elements are based  |
| <b>photographic evidence</b> | historic views which provide irrefutable evidence regarding the prior appearance of a building and that can be used to design new or restored building elements which are architecturally appropriate to the character of the building |
| <b>pitch</b>                 | the slope of a roof or other element   |
| <b>pointing</b>              | the process of placing mortar between masonry units after the units have been laid   |
| <b>priming</b>               | the painted preparation of a surface by applying a first coat prior to applying the finish coat  |
| <b>reconstruction</b>        | the process of replicating the missing original materials, form, and appearance of a building, documented by physical or photographic evidence or historical research  |
| <b>repoint</b>               | the process of repairing existing mortar joints by removing defective or deteriorated mortar and applying new mortar, thus restoring the strength and appearance of a masonry wall   |
| <b>reversible</b>            | adjective which describes an alteration technique which can be   |

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
|                             | removed in the future without damage to the original historic materials and character of the building   |
| <b>rhythm</b>               | the ordered repetition of those elements which comprise the exterior walls of a building and provide the building with its overall character  |
| <b>ridge</b>                | the line created by the intersecting of meeting of two sloping roof surfaces  |
| <b>sandblast</b>            | the cleaning method which employs sand, propelled by a pressurized air or steam, to remove dirt, paint, or other materials from a wall surface; this treatment is typically harmful to historic materials because it accelerates the loss of features of the historic material along with the dirt build-up or paint accumulation |
| <b>sash</b>                 | the assembly which holds the window glass   |
| <b>scale</b>                | the relationship of the various elements of a building to one another or of one building to its environs.   |
| <b>setback</b>              | the distance between a building and its lot line  |
| <b>shed roof</b>            | a roof form with a single slope, as with the historic additions to many Harmonist buildings in the Ambridge Historic District   |
| <b>shingle</b>              | thin, overlapping components of roofing or siding, installed in overlapping courses to prevent water infiltration   |
| <b>shutter</b>              | a hinged panel that covers a window or other opening; may be louvered or paneled  |
| <b>siding</b>               | nonstructural exterior wall covering of a wood building   |
| <b>sill</b>                 | the projecting horizontal base of a door or window, or the horizontal unit of lumber that rests on the foundation and forms the base of a wood frame wall   |
| <b>window-to-wall ratio</b> | the relationship in dimension between the solid parts of a wall and the openings in the wall, generally including both door and window openings   |
| <b>spalling</b>             | the chipping or flaking of brick or stone, typically attributed to the freeze-thaw process, sandblasting, chemical action, or building shifting   |
| <b>storefront</b>           | the ground level front of a commercial building, including display windows, an entrance, signage, etc.  |

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>streetscape</b> | the built environment of the street and its individual components, such as the pavement, sidewalks, buildings, signs, traffic lights, street furniture, other pedestrian amenities, landscaping, etc.   |
| <b>synthetic</b>   | an adjective referring to contemporary manufactured materials which were unavailable historically and which are often used to replace historic materials; also referred to as "artificial" or "non-historic"  |
| <b>terne</b>       | corrosion-resistant alloy which combines lead and tin   |
| <b>vernacular</b>  | representing popular local building practices employed without the use of formal architectural expertise  |
| <b>water blast</b> | the use of propelled water to remove dirt, paint, or other materials from a wall surface, typically harmful to historic materials if applied at too strong of a pressure due to the loss of parts of the historic material along with the dirt or paint |

This Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness has been modified slightly to fit the format of these *Design Guidelines*.  
Original copies of the Application may be obtained from the Borough Office

**BOROUGH OF AMBRIDGE, PENNSYLVANIA  
APPLICATION FOR CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS**

If the affected property is located within the boundaries of the Ambridge Historic District, as defined by Ordinance No. 900, then this Application must be submitted to the Building Inspector as a supplement to the Building Permit Application. **IMPORTANT:** All applicants must complete Sections I, II, and III

**I. IDENTIFICATION OF APPLICANT**

|                   | Name | Complete Mailing Address | Telephone |
|-------------------|------|--------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Applicant      |      |                          |           |
| 2. Property Owner |      |                          |           |
| 3. Contractor     |      |                          |           |

I hereby certify that I am the owner of record or that the proposed work is authorized by the owner of record and that I have been authorized by the owner to make this Application as his/her authorized agent.

Signature of Applicant \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Application \_\_\_\_\_

**II. LOCATION OF PROPERTY**

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

**III. DESCRIPTION OF WORK**

Describe the full extent of the exterior changes to be made to the property or the exterior characteristics of the structure (building, fence, etc.) to be erected. Attach plans or sketches in sufficient detail to enable the Historical Architectural Review Board to determine if the proposed work is appropriate to the stated purpose of the Ambridge Historic District Ordinance. Please attach photographs and other supplementary materials (catalog cuts, etc.) that will enable the Board to understand fully the extent of the project.

**~~TO BE COMPLETED BY HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW BOARD~~**

Comments, including recommendations on plans, specification, materials, and scope of work, if any, which in the opinion of the Board would protect the distinctive historic character of the Ambridge Historic District .

**APPLICANTS-DO NOT WRITE ON THIS SIDE OF THE APPLICATION  
BOROUGH OF AMBRIDGE, PENNSYLVANIA BOARD OF ARCHITECTURAL REVIEW**

IV. REVIEW V. REPORT

In determining the recommendations to be made to Borough Council concerning the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness authorizing a permit for the construction, within the Ambridge Board shall consider the following measures:  
alteration, reconstruction, restoration, demolition, or razing of all, or part of any building

The written report to Borough Council concerning the Board's recommendation on the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness shall set out the following matters: Historic District, the

1. The effect of the proposed change upon the general historic and architectural nature of the District
2. The appropriateness of the exterior architectural features which can be seen from a public street or way;
3. The general design, arrangements, texture, material, and color of the building or structure and the relation of such factors to similar features of buildings or structures within the district
4. The height of any new building or structure shall not exceed the height of the tallest adjacent building or structure by more than ten (10) percent. This requirement shall also apply to any proposed modifications to existing buildings or structures .
5. In cases where applications for proposed demolition occur, the Board shall, where deemed necessary, recommend to the Borough Council that the proposed demolition be postponed for a period not to exceed nine (9) months. However, in the event that demolition cannot be avoided, then the moving of a building shall be encouraged as an alternative to demolition if there is no other way to preserve the building.

1. The exact location of the area in which the work is to be done
2. The exterior changes to be made or the exterior character of the structure to be erected
3. A list of the surrounding structures with their general exterior characteristics
4. The effect of the proposed change upon the general historic and architectural nature of the district
5. The appropriateness of exterior architectural features of the building which can be seen from a public way or street
6. The general design, arrangement, texture, material, and color of the building or structure and the relation of such factors to similar features or buildings within the District
7. The opinion of the Board (including and dissent) as to the appropriateness of the work proposed as it will preserve or destroy the historic aspect and nature of the District, and
8. The specific recommendations of the Board as to the issuance by Borough Council or its refusal to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness

**VI. ACTION OF THE REVIEW BOARD**

- Approval
- Disapproval

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Vote: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Secretary

**VII. ACTION OF BOROUGH COUNCIL**

I hereby certify that a Certificate of Appropriateness was \_\_\_\_\_ approved / denied \_\_\_\_\_ by the Borough  
Council of the Borough of Ambridge on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

\_\_\_\_\_ Secretary

**VII. RECORD OF EVENTS**

**REVIEW BOARD**

Date

A. Received by Review Board

**BOROUGH COUNCIL**

Date

B. Returned to Owner.

A. Received Recommendation from Board of  
Architectural Review

- to be modified
- for additional information

**C. Disapproval:**

- Indication to Applicant of Action and Recommendation
- Recommend Disapproval to Borough Council

**D. Approval:**

- Recommend Approval to Borough Council

**B. Disapproval:**

- Letter to Applicant \_\_\_\_\_
- Copy to Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission \_\_\_\_\_

**C. Approval**

- Certificate of Appropriateness \_\_\_\_\_

**BUILDING PERMIT OFFICER**

- A. Building Permit Issued \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Project Completed \_\_\_\_\_

