



Haverford Township Historical Society



HAVERFORD TOWNSHIP HISTORIC RESOURCES

By Richard D. Kerr and Kathy Case

This is a summary overview of published documents as well as township ordinances and codes pertaining to historic resources and preservation in Haverford Township, Delaware County, Pennsylvania.

1936-1937: WPA Project #4889

This first known published inventory of historic resources in Haverford Township is from 1936-1937 and covers all of Delaware County. It was created by workers paid under the Works Progress Administration (WPA), a Depression-era federal jobs creation program. The Haverford Township Historical Society owns and preserves a three-volume copy of this project:

[Delaware County, Pennsylvania; Report of Historic-sites Survey; W. P. A. Project No. 4889; 1936-37](#)

The compilation of 53 locations in Haverford Township does not include some major sites and strangely includes structures that were no longer in existence at that time. Although the document is flawed and contains factual errors, it is still important.

[Delaware County, Penna.; A Survey with Maps of Historic Graveyards; W. P. A. Project #4889; 1936-37](#)

This two-volume set, providing detailed information and maps about historic cemeteries, remains unmatched.

1939: Haverford Township Historical Society (HTHS) Established

In 1939 the Secretary for the Haverford Township Board of Commissioners convened a meeting of interested people that led to the founding that year of the Haverford Township Historical Society. The Historical Society (<https://haverfordhistoricalsociety.org>) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization relying on volunteers, members and donors. It is not part of Haverford Township government and receives no funding into its budget from the Township. As part of its mission to preserve and present township history, it partners with the Township, looking after three Township-owned historical buildings (Nitre Hall, Lawrence Cabin and the Federal School), providing public events, school programs, and contributing toward the upkeep of the buildings. The Society at its own expense preserved from demolition, dismantled and relocated the Lawrence Cabin from its original site along Darby Creek to a site next to Nitre Hall in Powder Mill Valley Park. It has also built historically appropriate support structures (a summer kitchen and a storehouse) by Nitre Hall. Its significant historical collections (paper archives, photographs, objects and library) are housed in Nitre Hall.

1942: Historical Map by George Rosengarten (HTHS)

Even before the Historical Society was formed, active member George Rosengarten had been developing a map of the township that featured historical and institutional sites. He completed, published and distributed it in 1942, bearing the title "Haverford Township / Delaware County Pennsylvania / Historical Map." He hand-drew the map, with drawings depicting the buildings and sites. His key to the sites included 40 numbered entries, both existing at that time or previously removed, as well as 15 churches identified by alphabetical letters. A revised version of Rosengarten's work was

issued by HTHS and dated 1982 (the 300th anniversary of the 1682 founding by William Penn), with the revised title “Haverford Township / Historical Society / Delaware County Pennsylvania.”

1979: Friends of the Grange

Haverford Township bought the historic Grange Estate for preservation in 1974. Subsequently, the Friends of the Grange, Inc., a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, was established in 1979 “for the purposes of the preservation of and the promotion and sponsorship of meaningful cultural and environmental activities and uses” of this Township-owned property. The Friends (<https://thegrangeestate.net>) are headquartered at the Grange Estate. Haverford Township appoints three members to the Friends’ Board of Directors and provides funding to the organization.

1994: Haverford Township Historic Resources Survey

In 1994 the Delaware County Planning Department completed the Historic Resources Survey; Haverford Township; Delaware County, Pennsylvania, with substantial involvement by Margaret E. Johnston and other members of the Haverford Township Historical Society. This document, part of a series done by the County, included 119 sites in the township, some of which had multiple entries within them, creating a total of 150 entries.

Derivation of totals:

1. Survey numbers are sequential and continuous from HA-01 through HA-119, so there are 119 sites in the 1994 HRS book.
2. The book’s Map Key (pgs. 13-16) lists 149 entries including sub-letters, but fails to note that HA-042 has 2 sub-letters, thus making an actual total of 150 entries.
3. There are two other issues with the 1994 HRS book, which do not affect the totals. The Map Key wrongly lists HA-031-D as the Allgates “Greenhouse (razed 1986)”, while the survey sheet for HA-031-D is for the “Allgates Estates- Cabin” (still intact at that time, but now ruins). The 1994 HRS book also lists HA-111-A as the building at 2341 Darby Road (part of the same continuous structure as HA-111-B: 2333-2339 Darby Rd.), but the photos and survey sheet were incorrectly completed for 2343 Darby Rd., a non-descript one-story tack-on to the back of the 3-story corner building at 1-9 E. Eagle Rd.
4. Six listings (4 continuous commercial blocks, the HA-036 condo adaptive re-use, and the HA-108 Merion Golf Club- East Course) each have a single assigned HRS number, but in fact have multiple Tax Parcel ID numbers within them. When those parcels are broken out and counted separately, the effective number of places needing tracking increases by 33 from 150 to 183.

1997: Haverford Township Historic Preservation Ordinance

The 1994 Historic Resources Survey became the basis for a Historic Preservation Ordinance added to the Township Code on June 9, 1997 (Ordinance No. 2273). This ordinance established an Historic Preservation District Overlay to the Zoning Map and an Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB).

2009: Haverford Township Historical Commission Established

The 1997 Historic Preservation Ordinance was amended on December 14, 2009 (Ordinance #2580). (See <https://ecode360.com/12188649>). This amendment retitled the 1994 Delaware County Historic Resources Survey as the “1994 Township Survey,” established an Historic Resource Overlay. It also created a Board-appointed, seven person Historical Commission (different from the non-profit Historical Society) to maintain an official list and map of historic resources, and to make formal recommendations to the Board of Commissioners on matters of historic preservation, including renovation or construction work on Township-listed historic structures, and the addition or removal of structures from the Township list. The Haverford Township Historical Commission is administered through the Township (610-446-1000; zoning@havtwp.org).

2011: Expansion of Historical Commission

On February 14, 2011 (Ordinance 2624-2011), Haverford Township increased the Historical Commission from seven members to nine members.

2013: Removals from the Historic Resource List and Overlay

On July 8, 2013 the Board of Commissioners voted to remove 10 entries from the Historic Resource List and Overlay, upon petitions from the property owners. An additional 6 entries (2 under HA-042) of the 150 in the 1994 Township Survey had been razed in the intervening years since that survey was published, reducing the active HA-xxx site total by 15 from 119 to 104, reducing total entries by 16 from 150 to 134, and reducing unique Tax Parcel IDs by 16 to an effective total of 167 instead of 183.

2021: Additions to the Historic Resource List and Overlay

In 2021, the Historical Commission proposed 11 properties to be added to the Historic Resource List and Overlay. Three (3) were approved by the Board of Commissioners on November 8, 2021, adding HA-120 through HA-122. These raised the number of active HA-xxx sites from 104 to 107, and the total number of current entries from 134 to 137. When Tax Parcel ID's are broken out and counted separately, the effective current total needing tracking is 170.

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