



RIDLEY PARK DESIGN GUIDELINES

Opening the Door
to New Possibilities for
Historic and Older Homes

Expressly reserved for use at:

Ridley Park, Pennsylvania 19078

This book was prepared for the homeowners of Ridley Park, a unique 19th-century planned community in Delaware County, Pennsylvania, with the assistance of a Certified Local Government Grant from the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. 1995 Philadelphia Historic Preservation Corporation.

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Ridley Park is a remarkable place. Unlike many modern suburbs which have been described as faceless and bland and their buildings uninspired, the planners and developers of Ridley Park had nobler aspirations for this 19th-century suburban community.

Happily, Ridley Park survives today as a prime example of exemplary early suburban goals. It is still conveniently connected to Philadelphia by commuter railroad, the reason for its development in the first place. Its streets are attractively laid out according to an 1870 plan that overlaid curved and winding roads with a more traditional grid. Interspersed are parks, a lake, and greenways. It is compact: from anywhere in the borough, one can walk to school, church, the small business district, Borough Hall, and cultural institutions like the Barnstormers.

Unlike many of its modern suburban counterparts, Ridley Park presents a friendly face to resident and visitor alike, and walking in Ridley Park can be a pleasure. Sidewalks and paths are abundant. Mature trees and well-kept lawns and gardens provide the Borough with a park-like setting. Houses have been sited on their lots to provide enough breathing room between neighbors, yet maintain sufficient cohesion and rhythm to the streetscape that create a comfortable sense of habitation and community.

The Victorian-era and early 20th-century houses of Ridley Park are a visual treat. Good examples of Queen Anne, Shingle, and Colonial and English Revival styles abound. Turrets, balconies, Victorian “gingerbread”, and a great variety of windows, doors and chimneys delight passersby. Many homeowners have, in a sense, presented a gift to the public by painting their homes in lively and evocative colors. The pride of home ownership is evident by the fact that almost all properties are well-maintained; the message is, “We like living in Ridley Park!”



These Queen Anne houses on West Hinckley Avenue provide a pleasing rhythm to the streetscape.

Perhaps the best testimony to Ridley Park’s character is the nearly universal presence of front porches on its older homes. One senses that these porches are not merely ornamental, but used as originally in-

tended, as a transitional zone between the public space of the sidewalks and streets and the private interior spaces of the homes. The porches in Ridley Park are places where neighbor can still interact with neighbor. Contrast this with the typical modern suburban house which has no front porch, and the most prominent feature presented to the passerby is a large and faceless garage door!

Just the fact that so much survives in Ridley Park that represents the best of the early suburban ideal, is commendable. Community pride is evident everywhere; but its citizens should not take the borough's qualities for granted. What was originally planned – and has been subsequently maintained, either consciously or unconsciously – can be lost! The character and attractiveness of a place can disappear over time, usually imperceptibly, piece by piece. The original planners and founders of Ridley Park have presented today's residents with a wonderful place, and it is the present generation's responsibility to protect that inheritance.

WHY IS RIDLEY PARK THE WAY IT IS? A Short History

To appreciate what Ridley Park is today, one should understand its origins: it is fundamentally a planned railroad suburb. The idea of a suburb is fairly recent. Until the last century, virtually everyone lived in a city, a small town or a rural area. By the mid 1800s, a new notion arose, namely a residential community built at the edge of an industrial city on which it was economically dependent and connected by convenient public transportation, usually a railroad. The first suburbs in America were refuges for the rich wishing to escape urban grime, crime and, truth be told, the masses of people of lower social status.

By the late 1800s, though, American suburbs were developed for a different population, the middle class which consisted of bankers, retailers, teachers, and a host of middle-management professionals. Ridley Park is such a suburb.

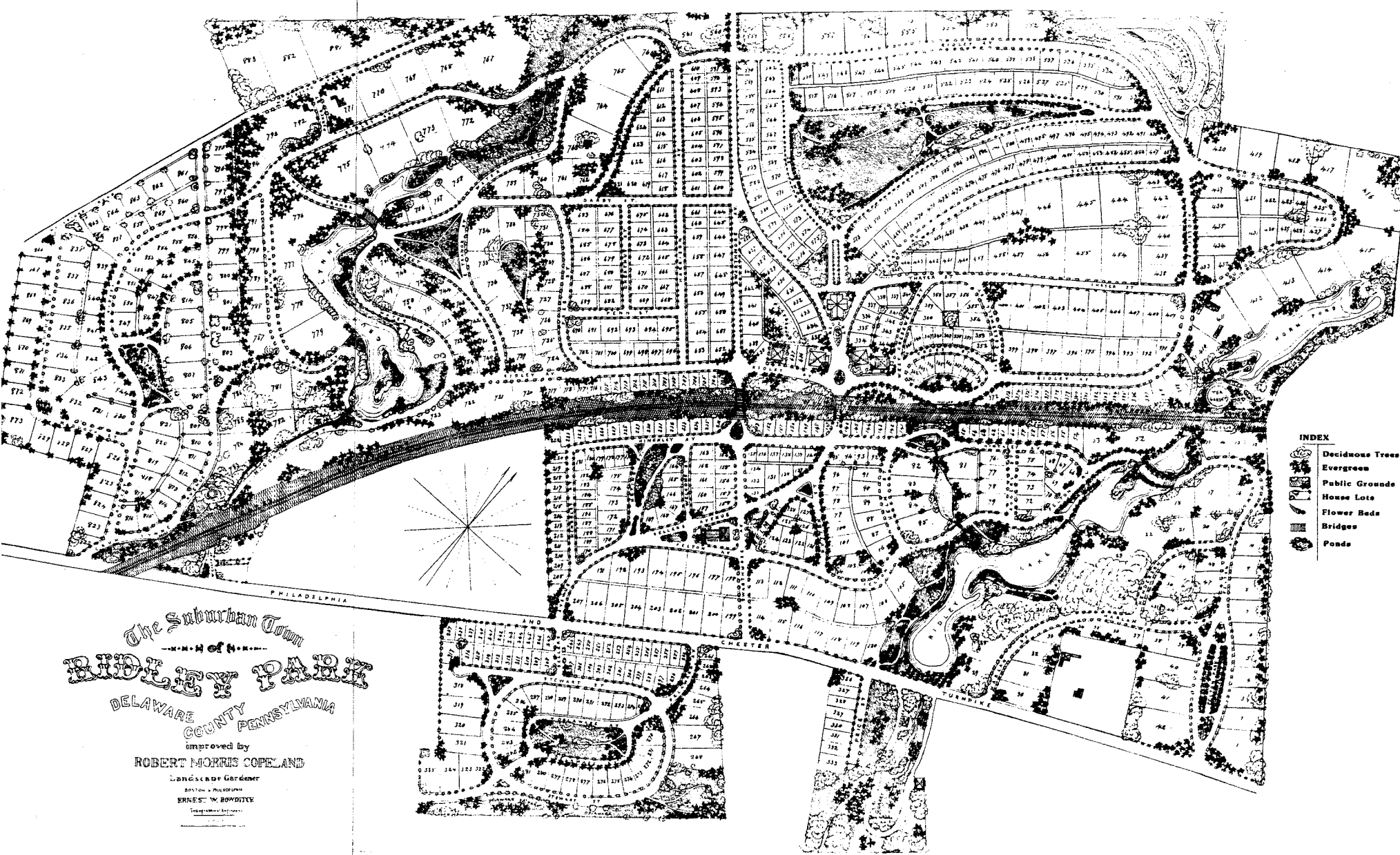
The developers and investors who planned Philadelphia suburbs were often associated with one of the railroads: the Pennsylvania, the Reading, the B & O or, as in the case of Ridley Park, the Philadelphia, Wilmington & Baltimore Railroad. Towns such as Wayne, Chestnut Hill, Overbrook Farms, Prospect Park and Sharon Hill were developed along railroad lines as real-estate ventures. Their investors made money

by selling building lots or ready-to-move-in houses. They often acted as mortgage lenders as well.

Ridley Park's original investors formed the Ridley Park Association in 1870 and hired a Boston team to design the town: landscape architect Robert Morris Copeland and architect Theophilus Chandler. Although Copeland's 1870 plan for Ridley Park was later revised, and many of the particulars never built, much of the original scheme was carried out and survives to this day:

- The Borough centers around the Ridley Park railroad stop that connects the town to Philadelphia.
- The streets were ultimately laid out in a manner that combines a traditional grid-like pattern with others which are picturesquely curved and winding. Some of the early streets are Sellers and Swarthmore Avenues; East and West Ridley Avenues; East and West Hinckley Avenues; Poplar Walk; Dupont Street (originally called Darby Street); and Ward, Cresswell, Felton, Nevin and Harrison Streets.
- Manmade landscape amenities were built such as Ridley Park Lake, Ridley Green and mini-parks on Nevin Street and along the north side of the rail stop.
- Although primarily residential, the Borough was designed to integrate other necessary property uses for the convenience of residents:
 - A small central business district on East Hinckley Avenue just south of the rail station.
 - A civic center on Ward Street just north of the rail station which includes the borough hall (originally the firehouse), a Carnegie library, the Barnstormers Theater (originally the Community Hall), and a park (on a site now shared with the fire station).
 - Religious properties: the Ridley Park Association enticed churches to build in the town with offers of free land and financial assistance. Surviving from the borough's early days are the Ridley Park Baptist and Presbyterian churches, and Christ Episcopal Church.

This development did not occur haphazardly. For many years, it was planned and controlled by the Ridley Park Association. Although property buyers could, and often did, build a house of their choosing, the



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The Suburban Town
RIDLEY PARK
DELAWARE COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA
Improved by
ROBERT MORRIS COPELAND
Landscape Gardener
BOSTON & PHILADELPHIA
ERNEST W. BONDITY
Town Planner

lot sizes and building set-backs were determined by the town planners. In some cases, someone would develop an entire block on speculation. Perhaps the most notable example of this is the row of Queen Anne-style houses along West Hinckley Avenue with their parade of towers and turrets which define this attractive street.

Ridley Park was incorporated as a Borough in 1887, and thereafter the influence of the Ridley Park Association gradually declined until all the building lots were sold. But the vision of these early developers, planners and architects remains visible at every hand, in the town's parks and lake, the placing of commercial and civic centers the layout of the streets, and the subdivision of the building lots.

There is a saying, "The whole is greater than the sum of the parts." Ridley Park certainly has many noteworthy "parts" – especially its individual homes. But it is the whole ensemble, which captures the spirit of an ideal planned suburb, that is perhaps most worth appreciating.

Much of Ridley Park is composed of single-family homes. This was the original intent of the Borough's developers, for it would promote stable, well-kept neighborhoods and community pride. The wisdom of this original purpose is evident today, for one of Ridley Park's chief assets is its wonderful collection of comfortable and architecturally pleasing houses.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF RIDLEY PARK

In two ways the houses of Ridley Park stand out: the extensive use of architectural styles and natural building materials, primarily wood. Unlike Philadelphia and most of its suburbs whose older residences were almost always built of brick or stone, Ridley Park's homes of the late 1800s and early 1900s are predominantly wood frame, covered with wood shingle or clapboard siding, and decorated with wooden porches, bay windows, turrets, gable ornament and so on. In this respect, the houses of Ridley Park are more like those of the same era as found in New England or the Midwest.

Think of architectural style as fashion for buildings. In the same way that automobiles or clothes are intentionally designed to be fashionable,

so too were houses. Buildings of the same style share certain characteristics: similar shapes, materials, colors, ornamentation or size, for example. When combined in a distinguishable way, all these factors add up to a certain look.

Many buildings are not pure examples of one style, but often combine different styles into an unique design. This is the case for many houses in Ridley Park. Nonetheless, there are several easily discernible styles that are prevalent in Ridley Park, and they fall into two eras: the Victorian era (generally, in Ridley Park, from the 1880s to just after the turn of the century), and the Post-Victorian era (from about 1900 to the 1930s). Most Victorian styles tend to be fanciful and heavily ornamented – “gingerbread” is a word sometimes used. Queen Anne and Shingle are two predominant Victorian styles in Ridley Park. Post-Victorian styles are generally more restrained and often are modeled after earlier, historical styles, those of colonial America or medieval England, for example.



The Queen Anne style (406 East Ridley).

The Queen Anne Style (circa 1880 to 1900)

This style is, by far, the most prevalent Victorian style in Ridley Park. Although loosely based on late-Medieval English houses, “uninhibited exuberance” is perhaps a more apt description that captures the spirit of a Queen Anne house. An explosive celebration of texture, ornament, and color is a hallmark. The composition of a Queen Anne house is irregular and asymmetrical: all kinds of dormers, bay windows, porches and balconies, towers and turrets, roof shapes, tall decorative chimneys, and projecting gables are combined into an energetic whole.

Queen Anne houses sport a variety of materials. In Ridley Park a Queen Anne house might be brick or stone on the first floor, combined with upper stories of wood clapboard or fanciful wood shingle siding, topped by a slate roof. Machine-turned wood spindles might decorate the porch, or jigsawn brackets adorn the eaves and cornices. Windows come in all varieties, often on the same house: leaded glass, small panes surrounding a central large pane, arched, or banded into pairs or threes.

Traditionally Queen Anne houses were painted in a rich palette of several colors that emphasized the variety of materials and ornament. This tradition is being kept alive by numerous homeowners in Ridley Park.

Queen Anne houses are scattered throughout the borough, but there are several notable concentrations. The turreted “sisters” along West Hinckley Avenue is one good example. So too are the large Queen Annes along both sides of East and West Ridley Avenues.

The Shingle Style (circa 1880 to 1900). As its name implies, the most defining characteristic of a Shingle-styled house is its “skin” of wood shingles that covers most exterior surfaces, although in Ridley Park, as elsewhere, the first story might be stone. Shingle-style houses are contemporary with Queen Anne houses, and share some characteristics, but are generally more restrained in their ornament and composition.



The Shingle style (507 North Swarthmore).

Broad expanses of wall surfaces are emphasized, and roof lines are sweeping and broad. A balcony or porch of a Shingle house might be recessed into the main body of the house, in contrast to the *projecting* balconies or porches of a Queen Anne house. The use of exterior color was more restrained as well: Shingle-style houses were typically stained deep, rustic colors such as dark brown or green.

The Shingle style originated and flourished in New England, and spread to the Midwest and west coast. It was never as popular in the Philadelphia area, however, although examples are seen in such suburbs as Swarthmore or Bryn Mawr. Thus Ridley Park’s concentration of Shingle-styled houses are unusual and significant. It might be that the style was brought to Ridley Park by its original New England designers, architect Theophilus Chandler and landscape planner Robert Copeland.

Many of the borough’s Shingle houses stand on, or near Morton Avenue, with scattered examples elsewhere. The broad roof lines and

wide gables of this style can be seen at 507 North Swarthmore Avenue. The shingles cladding these homes are almost exclusively straight-edged (flat butt), unlike the more ornamental fancy-butted shingles of the Queen Anne style. For decorative effect, sometimes the courses of shingles followed the curves of an arched window.

While Victorian-era houses predominate in Ridley Park's Historic District, Post-Victorian houses (circa 1900 to the 1930s) are abundant elsewhere in the borough, and include some wonderful examples of certain styles, including:



The Colonial Revival style (21 West Sellers).

The Colonial Revival style (circa 1895 to 1930s) is a reinterpretation of the types of homes built in the American colonies during the 18th century and during the time of the early republic, that is, from about 1790 to the 1820s. Colonial Revival houses often combine various colonial styles, mixed with contemporary features, and are almost always larger than their historical prototypes.

The Colonial Revival houses in Ridley Park follow national trends for the style: many are symmetrically arranged, with a central entry and a balanced window arrangement. The massing of the houses is often a rectangular box topped by simple gable or hipped roofs, often with dormers. Here, as in other Philadelphia suburbs, these rectangularly shaped homes were often turned sideways to the street, so that they would fit in a standard 40-to-50-foot wide building lot.

Typical ornamentation includes a decorative pediment over the door, a cornice (eave) embellished with teeth-like dentil blocks, and columned entry porticoes or porches. The porches are as likely to be on the sides of the house as in front. Siding is usually clapboard or wood shingles.

Excellent examples of the style are Borough Hall (1896) and 21 West Sellers Avenue. A subset of the Colonial Revival style is commonly known as the Dutch Colonial, which is distinguished by a gambrel roof. Among examples in Ridley Park is 102 Poplar Walk.

The English Revival style (circa 1900 to 1940) is a catch-all term that describes houses loosely based on rural, medieval English houses. Other terms for the style are Tudor or Half-Timbered. The latter refers to the common effect of an exposed timber skeleton (which is non-structural) infilled with stucco. In Ridley Park, as elsewhere, half-timbering is often combined with wood-shingle siding, as at 3 East Ridley Avenue, or with first stories of stone.

Other distinguishing features of English Revival houses are steeply pitched gable roofs, prominent chimneys, and tall, narrow windows that are usually banded together in pairs or threes. A nickname for this type of house was “Stockbroker Tudor”, since it was a favorite of businessmen commuting between the bustling city and the quiet suburbs, certainly an apt description for Ridley Park’s examples.

The American Four Square (circa 1900 to 1925) is a term that describes a house form, of which Ridley Park has many examples. As its name implies, the distinguishing characteristic of a Four Square house is its almost cubical mass topped by a hipped roof. These two-story, four-rooms-per floor homes have restrained exterior ornament. In Ridley Park, some Four Squares have stone first floors topped by wood-shingled second stories. The ornament might relate to the Colonial Revival style (202 Cresswell) or the Shingle Style (408 Morton).

It should be reemphasized that the use of particular building *materials* contribute much to the character of the architectural styles found in Ridley Park, as much as architectural ornament. Ridley Park is fortunate to have many homes which retain their original siding materials, particularly wood shingle, which adds significantly to the character of the borough’s Queen Anne and Shingle-style homes. Numerous original slate roofs also survive in serviceable condition, and add to the authenticity of individual buildings.



An American Four-Square house with Colonial Revival style details (40 West Ridley).

A great variety of original window sash, porch details, spindlework and jigsawn ornament also survive on homes throughout the borough. Not only do these elements give each home character but, taken as a whole, give Ridley Park a visual richness and variety that cannot be recreated.

A final observation: scattered throughout the borough are “architectural accessories” which contribute to the historical authenticity of Ridley Park. These include numerous original and early garages and carriage houses, brick driveways, iron fences and stone retaining walls. Are these worth preserving? Certainly, especially since these reminders of an earlier time are rapidly disappearing from the American scene. Ridley Park residents have an opportunity to maintain and protect these rare surviving amenities.

**PROPERTY
MAINTENANCE:
A Wise
Investment**

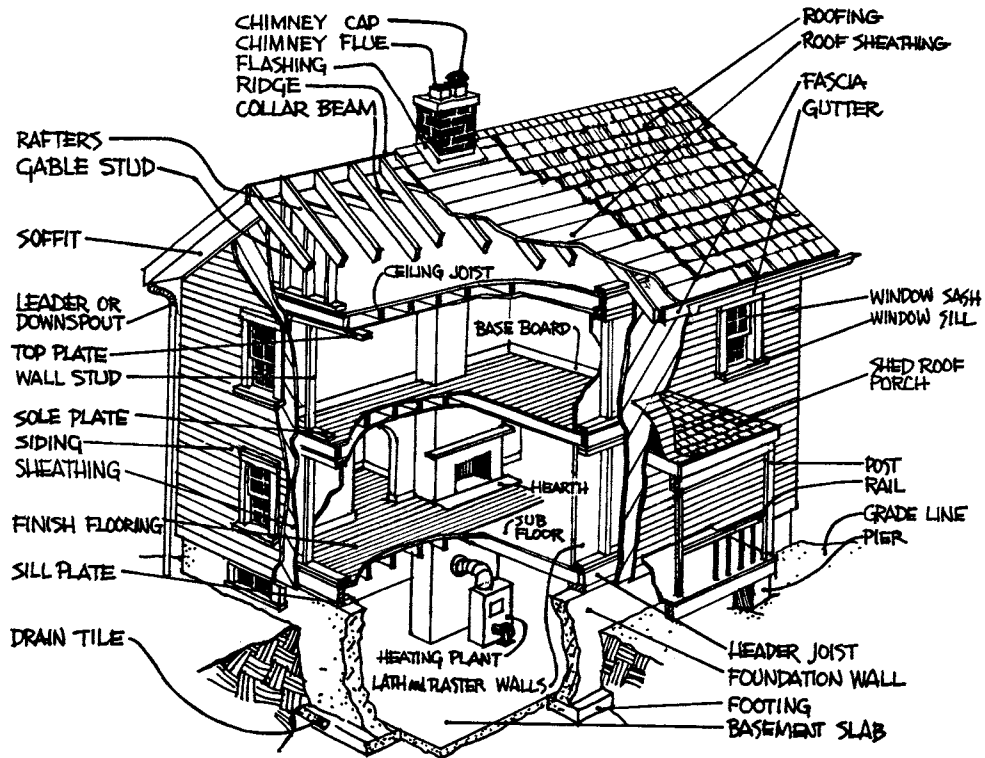
“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure,” goes the old adage. Nowhere is this wisdom as true as when providing consistent and conscientious ongoing maintenance to older properties.

The upkeep of an older house can seem like a daunting and never-ending task. Many homeowners feel trapped in an endless cycle of responding to one repair crisis after another. A more efficient, and ultimately less costly approach is to initiate a systematic annual inspection and routine maintenance program that permits homeowners to “get ahead of the game.” This is known as preventive maintenance. It’s wiser to invest smaller amounts of time and money on a regular basis to identify and correct potential problems before they become major, expensive repair issues. Maintenance is a constant process, not something that can be done once and forgotten.

Any building, even a new one, is in a constant, but slow state of deterioration. This is not only due to the wear and tear of daily use, but primarily to the negative effects of the natural environment, e.g. wind, sun, airborne pollutants, animal and plants, and especially rain, ground water and other forms of moisture.

Consider a common situation: Falling autumn leaves clog a house’s gutters and downspouts. Without an annual clean-out, the rainwater conduction system will fail. Underground drains become clogged. Rainwater backs up in downspouts and overflows gutters. This misdi-

rected rainwater will find its way behind wooden eaves and cornices, and even migrate into the roof's rafters and sheathing boards, or behind exterior wall surfaces. Or rainwater will spill over clogged gutters onto the ground, splashing back onto the wall's siding materials or saturating the ground near the foundation.



Often a homeowner's first awareness of this problem will be damaged plaster on interior walls, or peeling paint on soffits. Further investigation might reveal rotted cornices, rafters and siding materials. *What was initially a simple maintenance job – cleaning out gutters annually – has mushroomed into an expensive and widespread repair problem.*

Prolonging the useful life of original materials through routine maintenance – versus replacement with newer materials – not only preserves the original appearance of an older home, but also makes good economic sense. Some examples: Original, old-growth wood resists deterioration better than new-growth replacement wood. Or, a *well-maintained* slate roof is not only more attractive, but can be expected to out-perform and out-live an asphalt replacement roof with a life expectancy of only twenty-five years. Original copper is a far superior roof flashing material than the aluminum or asphalt-based flashing material used today.

A critical first step in building maintenance is undertaking an initial assessment of the building's existing conditions. Think of this as a kind of "major medical check-up" which establishes the overall current health of the building. Thereafter, less rigorous, cyclical inspections – "annual check-ups", if you will – should occur on a regular basis.

Keep two things in mind when conducting inspections: First, track down the *root causes* of problems noted. Second, don't defer! *Take action* to remedy problems as soon as possible, before they become worse.

EXTERIOR INSPECTION AND MAINTENANCE CHART

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Roof, dormers				•						•		
Water conduction systems	•			•			•			•		
Cornice, eaves				•						•		
Chimney, fireplace				•						•		
Walls, foundation				•							•	
Pest control				•					•			
Siding materials				•						•		
Doors, windows					•						•	
Exterior finishes					•						•	
Exterior stairs			•			•				•		
Organic growth				•					•	•		
Exterior paving						•						
Vegetation/lawns/gardens					•		•				•	
Fire detect., security syst.	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
Fire control, extinguish. syst.		•										

In this section, homeowners will find two related documents: an Inspection and Maintenance Chart, and an Inspection and Maintenance Checklist. The items addressed pertain to the exterior of buildings only. Interior elements and finishes, heating, plumbing and electrical systems are not covered in this guide.

The chart is a “year at a glance” guide that indicates for Ridley Park homeowners which inspection and maintenance tasks are recommended each month. Note that some items – fire detection and security systems, for example – should be inspected often, while others – exterior finishes, for example – can be inspected semi-annually.

The Checklist consists of guidelines that correspond to the items in the chart, and tell homeowners what to look at, how to identify particular problems, and what kind of repairs may be needed. (The next section of this guide will explain in more detail appropriate repair procedures.)

Again, if problems are noted, the sooner corrective action is taken, the less expensive and more effective repairs will be. This is especially true for items that indicate structural weaknesses, unsafe conditions or architectural elements that are actively deteriorating.

I. ROOFS. A sound, tight roof is the first line of defense against the number-one enemy of an old house: water. If the roof is in overall bad shape, plan to repair or replace it soon. Binoculars will be useful in inspecting roofs.

**INSPECTION
CHECKLIST FOR
OLDER
BUILDINGS**

A. Roofing Materials

1. What is the roofing material?

slate ___; asphalt shingle ___; wood shingle ___; other ___.

2. Are shingles missing, broken, or warped?

If so, check for possible water damage in attic, and have professional building inspector assess condition of roof (individual shingles or entire roof may need to be replaced).

3. Asphalt shingles: are mineral granules getting thin? Are there loose granules accumulating in the gutters? Do edges of shingles look worn? Are the shingles cupping?

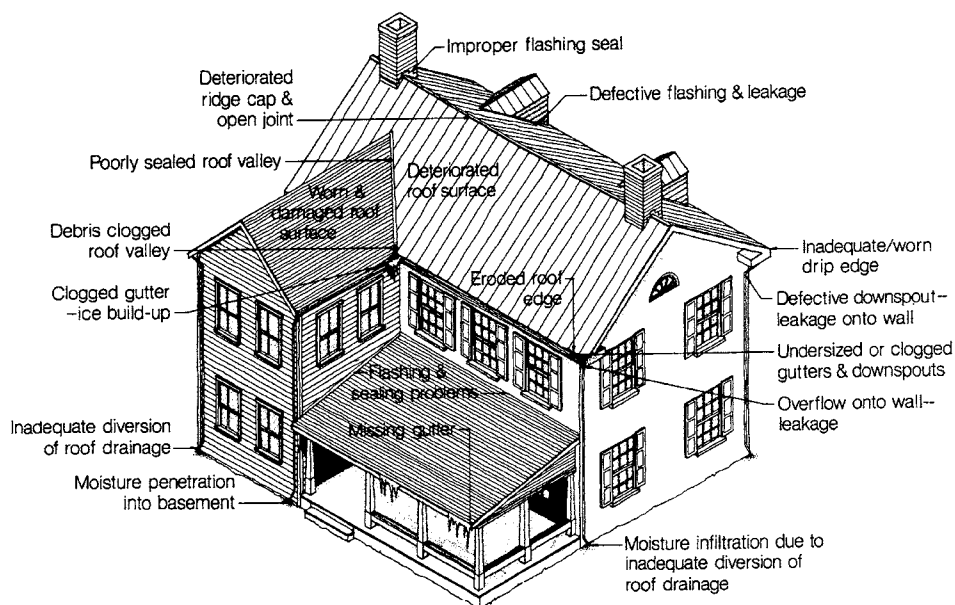
These are signs of aging.

4. Flat roofs: Any signs of bubbles or cracks in the asphalt or roofing felt? Any signs of ponding (standing water)?

If so, positive drainage must be reinstated.

5. Any corroded, loose, split or missing flashing around chimneys, in valleys, along dormers, or on ridges?

Flashing is the weakest, but most critical part of the roof system, and damage should be corrected quickly.



COMMON ROOF & DRAINAGE PROBLEMS

B. Water Conduction System

1. Are gutters and downspouts loose, deteriorated, or missing? Are there holes or cracks in the gutters and downspouts? Do built-in, flat or pole gutters need replacing?

Replace, repair or paint as necessary.

2. Are leaves or debris clogging the gutters or downspouts?

Inspect and clean out system semi-annually. Adding gutter screens can reduce debris in gutters.

3. Are there low spots in the gutters? Does rainwater drain properly to the downspouts?

Rehanging gutters with proper drainage may be needed.

4. Is there evidence of ice damming during the winter?

Mounds of ice at the eaves and extremely long icicles are two signs of poorly maintained gutters.

5. Do overhanging tree branches impede proper rainwater conduction?

Trim back selectively, if necessary.

C. Roof Structure

1. Does the ridge or any other part of the roof sag?
This could be a normal condition that comes with age, or the result of rotted rafters. If so, have a professional inspect.
2. Are rafters (visible in attic) rotted, especially at ends, or cracked? Is there evidence of water staining or damp spots in attic?
If so, determine source of moisture.
3. Is attic ventilated with a soffit, gable, or ridge vent?
Unvented attics retain moisture, and shorten the life of roofing materials.
4. Do the eaves or cornices have rot, loose pieces, or show signs of badly peeling paint?
*These could be signs of roof leaks that are spilling water into the cornice. Determine source of, and correct water infiltration. **Note:** it may be difficult to determine underlying problems with cornices and eaves which have been covered with vinyl or aluminum; however do not assume that ongoing problems are not occurring just because they cannot be seen.*

D. Chimneys

1. Is the brick or stone loose, cracked or crumbling? Is mortar missing or loose?
If so, have mason inspect and correct.
 2. Is there a chimney cap or screen that keeps debris and squirrels out? Does chimney flue need cleaning? Do old chimneys flues have tile linings?
(There are several methods to re-line old chimneys without having to rebuild the chimney.)
 3. Is chimney leaning?
If so, it may need to be rebuilt from roof up.
-

II. WALLS

A. Structure

1. Do exterior walls seem plumb? Are there bulges in the walls (sight along walls to determine)?
2. Do doors and windows line up squarely in their frames?
3. Does the siding (clapboards or shingles) undulate? Are there cracks in the stucco?
4. Are porches sagging or pulling away from the house?
5. *All the above conditions may indicate structural flaws. Consult with professional to ascertain underlying cause.*

B. Water and Termite Damage

1. Any signs of veins of dirt on exterior walls?
These may be termite mud tunnels. Any evidence of insect holes or hives? If so, have exterminator inspect.

C. Roof Structure

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2. Any signs of rotted, "punky" wood? Water stains? Split or cracked wood or stucco?
Check soundness of suspicious areas by probing pen knife into wood surface. Problem areas can be wood siding and sills at or near foundations, basement windows and light wells, porches and steps. If water damage is evident, determine sources of moisture.
3. Is vegetation too close to house, or climbing on walls?
This may trap water and promote rot. Remove or trim plants away from exterior walls.

C. Siding Materials

1. Are there loose, cracked or missing clapboards or wood shingles?
Reattach or replace if loose or missing.
 2. Are wood siding shingles worn or warped?
This may indicate they are near the end of their usefulness, particularly on west and south exposures.
 3. Is asbestos siding cracked, missing, or loose?
*Reattach or replace if necessary. **Note:** Contact Borough for proper disposal procedures if asbestos shingle siding is removed.*
-

III. DOORS, WINDOWS AND TRIM

1. Is decorative woodwork firmly attached, and tightly caulked at joints to prevent water penetration?
Problem areas include porch balustrades, columns and bases.
2. Are there open joints around door and window frames, and trim?
If so, caulk joints.
3. Has any original trim or siding been covered with vinyl or aluminum?
If so, it may be hiding rot or other damage, and may actually accelerate deterioration.
4. Do doors and windows fit properly?
If not, determine cause.
5. Is there any wood rot, especially at window sills and rails, door thresholds and lower rails?
If so, determine cause of moisture.
6. Are doors and windows weatherstripped?
7. Is window glass intact and secure? Are window panes properly glazed with glazing putty intact, and painted?
If not, replace glazing putty, and paint.
8. Is there debris trapped behind storm windows or doors? Are weep holes in storm windows clogged?
If so, open weep holes at sill with screwdriver to permit drainage and evaporation.

9. Are stair treads and railings secure?

Reattach or repair as necessary.

IV. MASONRY AND FOUNDATIONS

A. Bricks and Stone

1. Any cracks in masonry walls?

Horizontal or hairline cracks in mortar are usually not a problem; cracks that run vertically through bricks may be more serious. Enlist a professional to determine cause.

2. Are there any bows or bulges apparent when sighting along walls?

If so, have a professional inspect.

3. Any sign of spalling (chips or fragments falling from face of masonry) or rotting (crumbling) on brick or stone?

These are usually signs of a moisture problem or other distress.

4. Any other signs of moisture problems?

Symptoms include moss or fungal growth, stains or efflorescence (a white, salt-like powder). Determine moisture source, and correct.

B. Foundations

1. Any signs of differential settlement (low spots) along the foundation?

If so, have a professional determine cause.

2. Is ground water and downspout water properly diverted away from building with correct grading and splashblocks under leaders?

Regrade away from building if necessary.

3. Are masonry porch footings or piers sinking or leaning?

If so, they may need to be rebuilt or stabilized.

C. Masonry joints

1. Is mortar in joints soft and crumbling, loose or missing?

*If so, determine root cause (e.g., moisture problem, aging), and repoint as necessary. **Note:** it is essential that repointing match the composition (usually soft, lime mortar for pre-1920s houses), color, texture and tooled finish of the original.*

2. Any open joints between masonry walls and doors, windows, etc.?

If so, caulk joints.

V. FINISHES (Paint and Stains)

1. Is paint powdering or chalking to a dull, powdery surface?

This is usually sign of aging, and it may be time to repaint.

2. Is paint peeling, curling or blistering?

This is usually a sign of a moisture problem, or of incompatible paint layers. Determine cause and correct before repainting.

3. Are there signs of mildew on finish surfaces?

This is sign of excessive moisture. Correct cause, and use fungicide before repainting.

4. Are there signs of “alligatoring”, checking or heavy, uneven paint surfaces?

This is sign of too many old paint layers; paint may have to be stripped before repainting.

5. Are wood shingles stained?

(Stains are better finishes than paint for shingle siding.) Is stain coat worn? If so, re-stain with semi-transparent or solid stains.

COMMON-SENSE REPAIR AND PRESERVATION PROCEDURES FOR OLDER HOUSES

Any building, regardless of its age, will require repairs from time to time. After a thorough inspection of an older property (see preceding section), homeowners will no doubt have identified a list of repair needs which may seem overwhelming at first. Keep in mind, however, that repairs can be prioritized, that is, some should be done immediately, while others can be deferred – but not indefinitely! – to a later time.

Conditions that indicate a structural weakness or unsafe situations (e.g., collapsing stairs), or that are causing the active deterioration of parts of the building (e.g., roof leaks) should be corrected first. Conditions that are primarily cosmetic in nature, or could be characterized as “improvements” can be deferred. Identifying a prioritized short list of repairs that can realistically be accomplished *annually* is one good way to start.

Owners of older or historic houses are sometimes intimidated by the term “restoration” or “preservation”, presuming these procedures will be expensive and impractical. In fact, for the typical old-house owner, preservation is little more than commonsense repairs and maintenance as applied to the sometimes special conditions and materials of an older building. Good preservation procedures are not necessarily more expensive. Indeed, doing proper repairs to older buildings almost always saves money in the long run, versus slapdash or expedient repairs which may initially seem cheaper but actually represent a false economy.

An example: To thoroughly and professionally prepare – scraping, sanding, feathering the edges, priming – an exterior surface in advance

of painting will initially cost more, but will result in a paint job that can be expected to last ten years, as opposed to a poorly-prepared paint job that might fail in as soon as three years. “Do it right the first time!” certainly applies to old-house repairs.

The U.S. Department of the Interior has developed *The Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation and Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* – commonly known as the “Standards”. Despite its formidable title, the Standards are simply ten commonsense principles that are applicable not only for museum-level restorations, but for routine repairs to any old house. The standards are reprinted here, with some annotated explanations in parenthesis. Keep in mind that the Standards establish good guiding principles for repair and maintenance procedures. They are not intended to be specific how-to’s, some of which will be addressed in this section, following the Standards.

The following Standards are to be applied to specific rehabilitation projects in a reasonable manner, taking into consideration economic and technical feasibility.

(1) A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment. (In other words, if an old house in Ridley Park was originally designed to be a single-family dwelling, its best current use is also a single-family dwelling, as opposed to, say, a multi-family conversion.)

(2) The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided. (Example: the removal of an original front porch on an older Ridley Park house will diminish its character.)

(3) Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken. (That is, in an attempt to “restore” an old house, don’t add “antique” elements that were never there.)

(4) Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved. (For example: An early

**THE SECRETARY
OF THE
INTERIOR’S
STANDARDS FOR
REHABILITATION**

addition to a Ridley Park house – even if that addition is not of the same style as the original section – should be preserved for its own value.)

(5) Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved. (Example: don't remove or cover over cornice brackets or decorative trim if artificial siding is added.)

(6) Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical or pictorial evidence. (For example, when replacing or repairing deteriorated porch elements, match the original to the extent possible.)

(7) Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. (First ask: Is cleaning even necessary?)

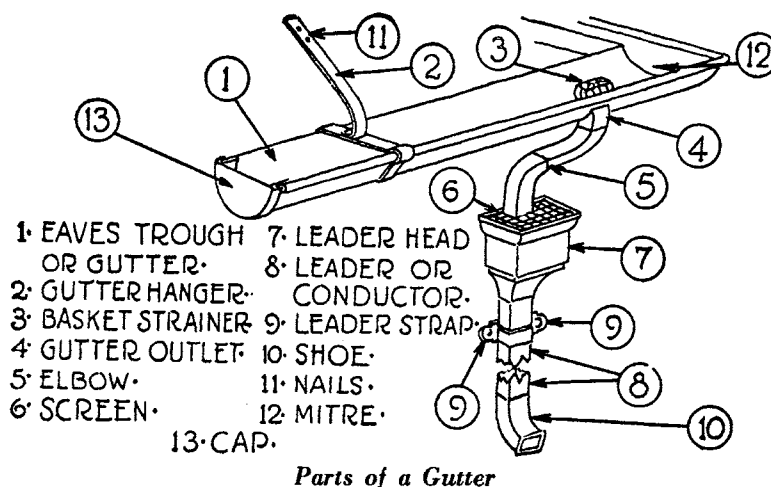
(8) Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken. (Keep an eye out for historical artifacts, particularly when digging near foundations.)

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

(10) New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired. (See the section on Additions and Alterations.)

While the Standards set the tone for good repair and maintenance procedures, some specific information regarding situations that Ridley Park homeowners will typically encounter is presented here:

Roofs. Give high priority and attention to repairs to the **rainwater conduction system**, which is critical to the effectiveness of a roof. Replace or repair only specific, individual components which have failed, rather than prematurely abandoning the entire original system which was designed for the house. Replacement components should match the materials and dimensions of the originals. Do not mix metals: For example, attaching new aluminum components to original copper sections will set up an electrolytic reaction that can quickly corrode the aluminum parts.



When replacing an entire roof, it's wise to invest as much into high-quality **flashing** materials and craftsmanship as the roof itself. Choose a roofing contractor that is experienced and attentive to the details of flashing, gutters and downspouts. Also, be aware that the standard, off-the-shelf gutter and downspout components widely used today may be undersized for the rainwater volume created by complex and steeply-pitched roofs of older houses.

Many homes in Ridley Park retain their original roofs, most notably **slate roofs** along with such metal details as ridge cresting or finials. Not only do these early roofs add to the character of the house, but in many cases are still functional.

Individual slates may fall out from time to time. This does not mean the slate itself is failing, but rather that the nails that hold them in place have rusted. It is usually less expensive to have a roofer experienced with slate replace these individual dislodged slates – on an annual basis for example – than to completely replace the roof prematurely.

All roofing materials will eventually wear out, however. The entire replacement of an original slate roof with a new slate roof will be more expensive than replacement with, say, asphalt shingles. However, a good-quality, new slate roof can be expected to last one hundred years or more, compared to, typically, twenty-five years for asphalt shingles.

It's best to remove deteriorated roofing materials before installing new shingles. This is not only required by local building codes, but will allow for the inspection and repair of the underlying sheathing materials or nailing strips.

Nowadays, roofing manufacturers offer a variety of "look-alike" shingles, usually asphalt, that imitate slate or wood shingles. If choosing **imitation shingles**, keep in mind that original roofs in Ridley Park were usually slate, not wood shingle, so an imitation "wood" shingle roof is a less appropriate choice. Be mindful also that original roofing materials were usually dark colors – black, grays, deep reds or greens – so replacement shingle colors should be chosen accordingly. Light-colored shingles can give a house an unbalanced appearance. If the attic is properly vented, which should be done in any case, a dark shingle will not build up excessive heat in the building.

Exterior Wood Elements. Most early houses in Ridley Park are not only constructed of wood frame, but have wood clapboard or shingle siding, wood window and door units, and a variety of wooden decorative elements such as lathe-turned porch posts and balusters, jig-sawn brackets, spindlework, and applied gable ornament.

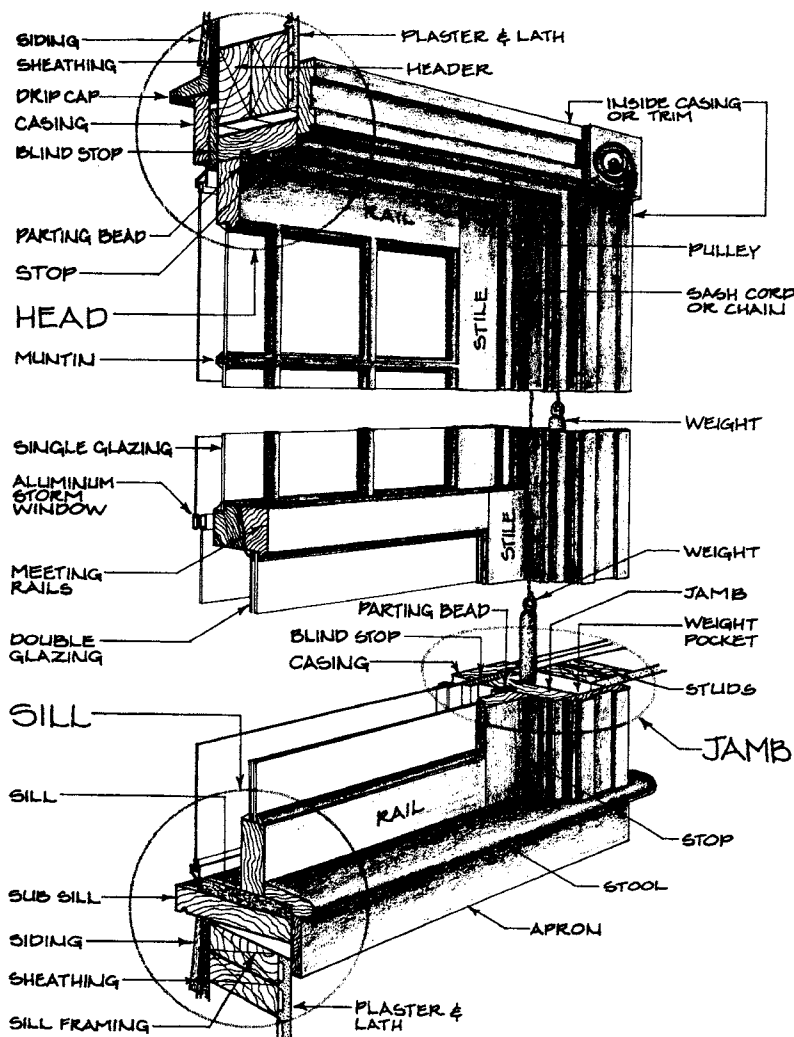
Exterior wood will last a long time – centuries even – if properly maintained. This usually means the **keeping the wood dry**, by providing a protective coat of paint (or stain), keeping joints well sealed with caulk and ensuring that rainwater runs off properly. Horizontal surfaces are particularly prone to decay. Be sure that susceptible areas such as window sills, porch floors, or stairs treads retain the almost imperceptible, but critical forward pitch which will shed rainwater.

Another element prone to decay is **column bases**. Original porch columns were usually designed with hollow cores, and sat on plinth blocks (bases) that were vented on the sides. This allowed air circulation to dry out moisture. Replacement columns should contain similar details.

A general rule of thumb for **rotted wood** is: replace only the sections decayed rather than scrapping a whole architectural element that is otherwise sound. An experienced carpenter can “piece in” new sections of wood that replace rotted parts. Partly rotted elements can also be saved by using special wood fillers or chemical consolidants. This can be particularly successful for window sills in which the wood grain has severely “opened up”.

Most exterior wood was, and is, protected from water and sunlight with paint (exception: wood shingle siding, which was traditionally stained). Avoid the practice of stripping exterior woodwork in order to give it a “natural” look by using clear finishes.

The proper **preparation** of wood in advance of repainting is critical. There’s no need to remove all previous paint coats. Just remove



damaged, deteriorated or flaking paint down to the next sound layer. Hand-scraping and sanding are the best methods. Chemical stripping is usually unnecessary, and open-flame, sandblasting or waterblasting methods are destructive and dangerous.

Original **window and door units** are complex architectural features made up of many components (see illustration). This also means, however, that individual parts which have deteriorated can be repaired or replaced without having to abandon the whole unit. An experienced carpenter can patch, slice, consolidate, or otherwise reinforce parts as needed, usually at a less expensive cost than total replacement.

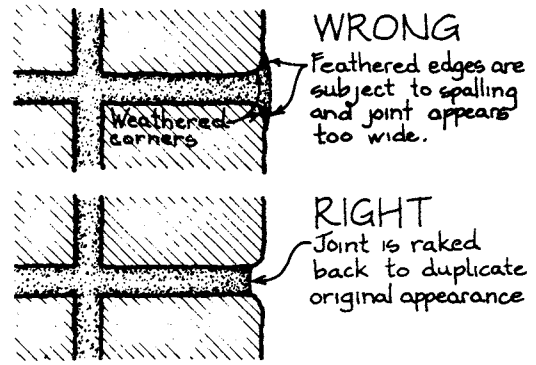
Masonry (stone and brick). Although most homes in Ridley Park are wood frame, a significant number are at least partially brick or stone, typically on the first story, topped by a frame second story. Moreover, many foundations and, of course, chimneys are of masonry construction.

The chief point to make here is that the standard methods and materials for the repair of modern masonry construction are often not compatible, and may even be destructive, if applied to older masonry construction. Therefore it is essential that a masonry contractor be experienced with, and sensitive to older masonry (see section on Using Professionals).

Think of the **mortar joints** in a masonry wall as the “glue” that holds the wall together, and as the means to keep water from infiltrating the wall. These joints will need to be repointed periodically. In most cases, repointing is just a routine maintenance procedure necessitated by the inevitable, but natural weathering away of the original mortar. Keep these points in mind when repointing:

- First determine if there are causes of mortar deterioration that should be *corrected before* repointing. In some cases the erosion of mortar joints is exacerbated by excessive water infiltration caused by leaking roofs or gutters, missing or disconnected downspouts, damp foundation conditions, or differential settlement of the building.
- Thoroughly rake out deteriorated old mortar before repointing. Hand-raking the joints is the preferred way to do this. Using powered saws, hammers or chisels can easily damage old brick or stone.

- Use a repointing mortar that duplicates the strength, composition, color and texture of the original mortar. Traditionally the original mortar in these joints was *intentionally softer* than the surrounding bricks or stone, due to the presence of lime in the mix. Portland cement is substituted for the traditional lime in modern mortars, and results in mortar which will be too hard for the older, softer bricks found in early Ridley Park houses. Therefore, mortars used for repointing must be “cut” (softened) by the addition of some lime.
- Repoint only those joints which have eroded; this is known as *spot pointing*. Repointing the whole wall, including sections in otherwise good condition, is unnecessary and expensive. Similarly, if individual bricks or stones need to be replaced, replace only those units, not entire sections.



In Ridley Park, most masonry walls will not need **cleaning**; heavy industrial air-borne pollution or graffiti is not common here. If masonry walls are to be cleaned, test a section first, starting with the gentlest method. Often, scrubbing the masonry with a soft bristle brush with warm water and common household detergent will work. Stronger means – high-pressure water or chemical cleaners – should only be done by experienced professionals, and only after gentler methods have failed, and test patches done. Under no circumstances should aggressive blasting methods – e.g. sand blasting – be done. This will cause irreparable damage to older brick, and even stone.

In most cases, “waterproof” **protective coatings** are not recommended: These water repellents seldom work for more than a couple years, and in some cases may even entrap moisture. More effective is to correct the *root causes* of excessive moisture in masonry walls.

Similarly, it is not recommended to **paint** brick walls that have never been painted. However, some brick walls of Ridley Park houses *were* traditionally painted. In these cases, if the paint is sound, don’t remove it.

ADDITIONS AND ALTERATIONS TO OLDER HOUSES

Over time, virtually all buildings change. New uses supersede old ones: a carriage house is converted to an apartment, for example. Families grow, requiring additional living space. Outmoded kitchens and bathrooms are remodeled and enlarged.

How can homeowners respect the original character of an older house while, at the same time, gain more living space or more modern amenities? Fortunately, there are some time-tested guiding principles that can direct homeowners toward alterations and additions that are sensitive to the authenticity of the original architecture and achieve the desired conveniences for modern living.

Additions:

- First ask, is an addition really needed? Perhaps re-configuring existing spaces will achieve the same goal, and save lots of unnecessary expenses. An architect or interior designer can advise homeowners on how to reorganize inefficient living spaces in a better way. “New” spaces can be found by converting dead-end hallways, or underused basements or attics, or by rearranging inefficient interior partition walls.
- Get good design advice. Retaining an architect will be a good investment.
- Contact the Borough’s code enforcement officer, and – if the building lies within the Ridley Park historic district – the Historic Architecture Review Board. They can advise homeowners in the early stages if a proposed addition complies with local requirements. A building permit is usually needed.
- Consider the context. In other words, what are the traditional building materials, styles, forms, and details found in neighboring buildings? Walk around the block noting local building traditions for inspiration. In Ridley Park, for example, there is a strong tradition of wood-frame construction, and wood-shingle siding.
- Site new additions where they will have minimal effect on the original architecture of the building. This usually means placing additions on the rear of a house, or occasionally on

the side. A ground-level addition will usually be less obtrusive than adding an additional story to a house.

- Keep the size and scale of additions smaller than the original building. Most successful additions “read” as secondary.
- Keep the design of the addition simple. Additions that are overly fussy or pretentious will distract from the original architecture. Moreover, many designers feel that “upgrading” materials on an addition – for example, mating a new brick wing to an old wood-frame house – doesn’t work well.
- Recess the addition. That is, the walls of an addition should lie behind the plane of the walls of the original house. Not only does this help distinguish the old and new parts of the building, but mitigates the addition’s impact, even if its bulk approaches the original house. Sometimes a recessed “hyphen” addition, connecting two larger building sections, is a successful design solution.



New porch addition on left respects the design of original porch on right (304 Kenney).

- Without exactly mimicking the architecture of the original, employ the same basic materials and proportions of the original architecture. For example, if the main house is sided with wood shingles, use them on an addition as well. If bands of double-hung windows are used on the original, they will work well on an addition. Conversely, large, plate-glass or sliding aluminum windows don’t mix well with more traditional types of windows.
- Keep new roofs similar to the old ones, that is, retain the same pitch, shingle color and type (hipped, gabled, etc.). A lower ridge line on the addition will work well.

Alterations:

Sometimes an existing, older building just won't work efficiently for modern needs. Perhaps a new, handicapped-accessible entry is required. Or original siding is beyond repair and must be replaced. Alterations needn't diminish the character of the original architecture, however, if some guiding principles are considered:

- First, consider **alternative design** options which will have the least impact on the original architecture. For example, can an existing doorway be made handicapped accessible, instead of introducing a new doorway? The solution that is least intrusive is often the one that is least expensive as well.
- **Preserve** and incorporate original materials and details whenever possible. Locate alterations where they will have the least visible impact. For example, it's better to enclose an existing rear or side porch, than a highly-visible front porch.
- Keep **rooftop alterations** to a minimum, since these will be highly visible. If necessary, it's better to introduce new skylights, vents, or dormers on the rear, rather than on the front.
- **New openings** for additional windows and doors work best on rear or out-of-the-public-view side elevations.
- Original **windows and doors** are valuable character-defining elements of any older house. They can usually be rehabilitated at a cost equal to or less than replacing them with new units. However, if new units are necessary, try to match the proportion, style, type, color, pane or panel configuration, and details of the originals. Fortunately, manufacturers today offer a wide variety of new windows and doors many of which replicate "traditional" styles.
Another option is having old window units retrofitted with modern weatherstripping, seals, and energy-efficient double-glazed glass, while retaining the original sash and frame. The price of this kind of retrofit is usually less than new, replacement units.

- The addition of **storm doors and windows** are nearly universal in a place with a climate such as Ridley Park's. However, choose storm doors and windows that don't compete with or obscure the original doors and windows they are covering. Nowadays, storm units come in a variety of colors and styles that are compatible with the house's architecture.

The meeting rails of double-hung storm windows should align with the meeting rails of the original window. Storm units should be attached *within* the window or door frames if possible, instead of *over* them.

- **Enclosing porches** is one way homeowners capture additional year-round living space. It's difficult to enclose an original porch without having a drastic effect on the original architecture, however, so first consider alternative design options for gaining additional space.

If porches are to be enclosed, there are some design guidelines which will mitigate the effect. First, take inspiration from the design of early, even original enclosed porches, numerous examples of which survive in Ridley Park. Many early, original enclosed porches in Ridley Park incorporate transoms and window styles appropriate to their era, and they can serve as the design inspiration for modern enclosures.



Good example of early porch enclosure (102 Poplar Walk).

New enclosures should be designed to retain the visual effect provided by the original columns, railings, brackets, scrolls and other porch details. This usually means recessing the new enclosure walls behind these character-defining elements, rather than wrapping the enclosure around or over these original features. Moreover, in order to minimize the visual effect of new enclosure walls, it's better to use large

sheets of glass (double-glazed, if energy efficiency is an issue) rather than solid materials.

- Modern **artificial siding** materials – vinyl and aluminum – are common in Ridley Park as elsewhere. Rarely do these substitute siding materials enhance the original architecture of an older house and, unfortunately, usually diminish its character. Properly maintained (see repair section), original wood siding will not only last a long time, but adds historical and re-sale value to a house.



Despite addition of vinyl siding, original architectural details have been retained (35 West Sellers).

If original siding is unsalvageable, and if replacement with a similar material is economically unfeasible (however, don't presume that artificial siding is cheaper than wood siding!), artificial siding can be applied in a more sensitive way than was the norm in the recent past. Keep these pointers in mind:

- Remove unsalvageable original siding to reveal the sheathing materials. This will uncover moisture problems that should be corrected before the artificial siding goes on. Furthermore, applying artificial siding over original siding has the effect of thickening the exterior wall, and obliterating the profiles and relief effects between the wall surface and window and door frames and trimwork.
- Choose an artificial siding that closely approximates the type and texture of the original material. Avoid overly grainy or rough-hewn textures; after all, the original materials were intended to look as smooth and finished as possible. Also choose artificial siding with an exposure (the vertical dimension of the exposed part of a clapboard or shingle) that approximates the original. An overly wide exposure reduces the visual effect of a wall.
- Don't cover architectural elements with artificial siding. An experienced siding contractor should be able to work around cornice brackets, corner boards, window and door frames,

- and decorative trim, leaving these elements for all to enjoy.
- Don't enclose or cover over eaves or cornices.
- Choose a siding color that is appropriate to the era of the house but, remember, vinyl colors are permanent.

Most home maintenance and even routine repairs lie within the capabilities of the typical Ridley Park homeowner. There may be instances, however, when homeowners should get help from professionals.

WORKING WITH PROFESSIONALS

Some of the areas in which building professionals can prove invaluable are: the assessment and correction of structural problems, e.g., why is a wall bulging?; the assessment, specification, and correction of major repairs, e.g., the replacement of a roof; and the design and specification of additions or alterations.

Three types of building professionals can be of help: the Ridley Park Historical Architectural Review Board; architects and engineers; and contractors who specialize in old-house work.

The Ridley Park **Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB)** is appointed by Borough Council to determine whether or not proposed work in the borough's Historic District (see page 34) best serves and conforms to the intent to protect the historic buildings in the district. One of the main responsibilities of the HARB is to make recommendations to Council regarding requests by property owners for a "Certificate of Appropriateness" for exterior alterations, demolitions, additions, or rehabilitations to properties within a historic district.

Beyond that role, the HARB also serves as a consultant to old-house owners. Members of the HARB represent the professions of architecture, planning, real estate, historic preservation, and building inspection. Individually and collectively these members possess a wealth of knowledge and experience regarding the maintenance and repair of older houses.

Homeowners contemplating exterior changes to properties in the historic district are encouraged to contact the Code Enforcement Officer at Borough Hall (532-2100) as early as possible so that HARB members may advise during the early stages of a building project. The

HARB is a no-cost resource that can constructively advise homeowners on a range of issues regarding the repair, alteration or maintenance of older properties.

Architects and engineers can diagnose problems and proscribe remedies regarding an old house. Don't presume that using their services represents an added expense. An architect can supply a wealth of advice for what may be a minimal consulting fee.

In most cases, getting the right advice and information from a professional will save money in the long run by preventing unnecessary or inappropriate work, or costly mistakes. For example, an architect may advise on how an older slate roof can be repaired more inexpensively than replaced. Some of the areas in which an architect or engineer can help are:

- Overall assessment of a building's condition.
- Assessment of specific problems especially structural issues (structural engineer), deterioration of materials, or electrical or mechanical systems.
- Writing contract documents and specifications (instructions to contractors) for repair projects.
- Supervising construction or rehabilitation projects.
- Designing additions or alterations.

Choose an architect with both experience with, and appreciation for, historic buildings. Request that a prospective architect supply references for similar projects that he/she has done. Check these references for the client's satisfaction with the services of the architect.

Where to find an appropriate architect? Referrals can be given by the HARB or the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects (215/569-3186). Another good source is from neighbors who have retained architects for old-house projects.

Contractors carry out the actual repair or rehabilitation work, or construct additions. During the planning stages, they can also advise on alternative methods of construction or ways to control construction costs.

In general, except for routine work, contractors should not be asked to provide design services; this is a role for an architect. The homeowner – with the advice of an architect or other independent building professional – should define the exact scope and nature of construction work, rather than have a contractor define the work. This assures objectivity and cost control.

A general contractor manages larger projects which will use various subcontractors or specialty building trades. If the project is limited in scope or involves primarily one building trade (e.g., painting), only that subcontractor may be needed. In addition, keep these pointers in mind when selecting contractors:

- Choose contractors experienced with the special needs of older houses. Does a contractor seem to understand and *appreciate* historic properties?
- Ask for references for several, *recent* projects that are similar in nature to yours. Check these references for quality of work, timeliness of completion, finishing on budget and willingness to work with the homeowner.
- For larger projects, receiving three or more competitive bids is advisable. An architect can provide bid documents for a homeowner.
- Don't automatically take the lowest bid. Look for the best value combining a competitive price with experience and a thorough understanding of the project.
- Get it in writing! That is, have a signed contract between the homeowner and contractor which includes, at minimum:
 - The full price of the job.
 - The specific work the contractor agrees to, including the type and quality of materials and methods to be used.
 - A time schedule including start and finish dates.
 - A schedule of payments. Generally, don't pay more than one-third up front, and retain about one-third until all work is completed.
 - Who's responsible for clean up.

Referrals for appropriate contractors can come from neighbors, HARB members, or an Architect. Again, check references!

**RIDLEY PARK
HISTORICAL
ARCHITECTURAL
REVIEW BOARD**

The Historical Architectural Review Board (HARB) was established by Borough Ordinance to protect Ridley Park's architectural and historic resources within a new Historic District. The HARB consists of seven members appointed by Borough Council to four-year terms. Members include a registered Architect, a licensed real-estate Broker, a member of the Borough Planning Commission and the Borough Building Inspector. Two members of the Board must reside in the District. The HARB advises Borough Council on the appropriateness of proposed building and maintenance projects within the Historic District. Borough Council makes the final decision on proposals and issues the Certificate of Appropriateness.

An owner of a building in the Historic District must secure a Certificate of Appropriateness from Council for any exterior work visible from any public right of way which alters the character of the existing structure or impacts on the character of the District. This work may include replacement of windows, doors, trim, siding and other nonstructural elements. However, prior approval of certain work by Borough staff may not require a Certificate of Appropriateness. Consult the Borough Code Enforcement Officer and the Ordinance (see #1 under Application Procedures, following). *A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for more extensive work such as additions, new construction or demolition.*

In accordance with the Historic District Ordinance, the HARB must first assess the architectural and historical significance of a building under review. It must also weigh the economic feasibility of restoration and determine the extent of original material that can be stabilized and preserved. After these assessments, the HARB determines the appropriateness of the proposed alterations and considers the compatibility of design, materials, and texture with other such features in the District. The impact on the historic and architectural character of the District is also of importance in the evaluation process.

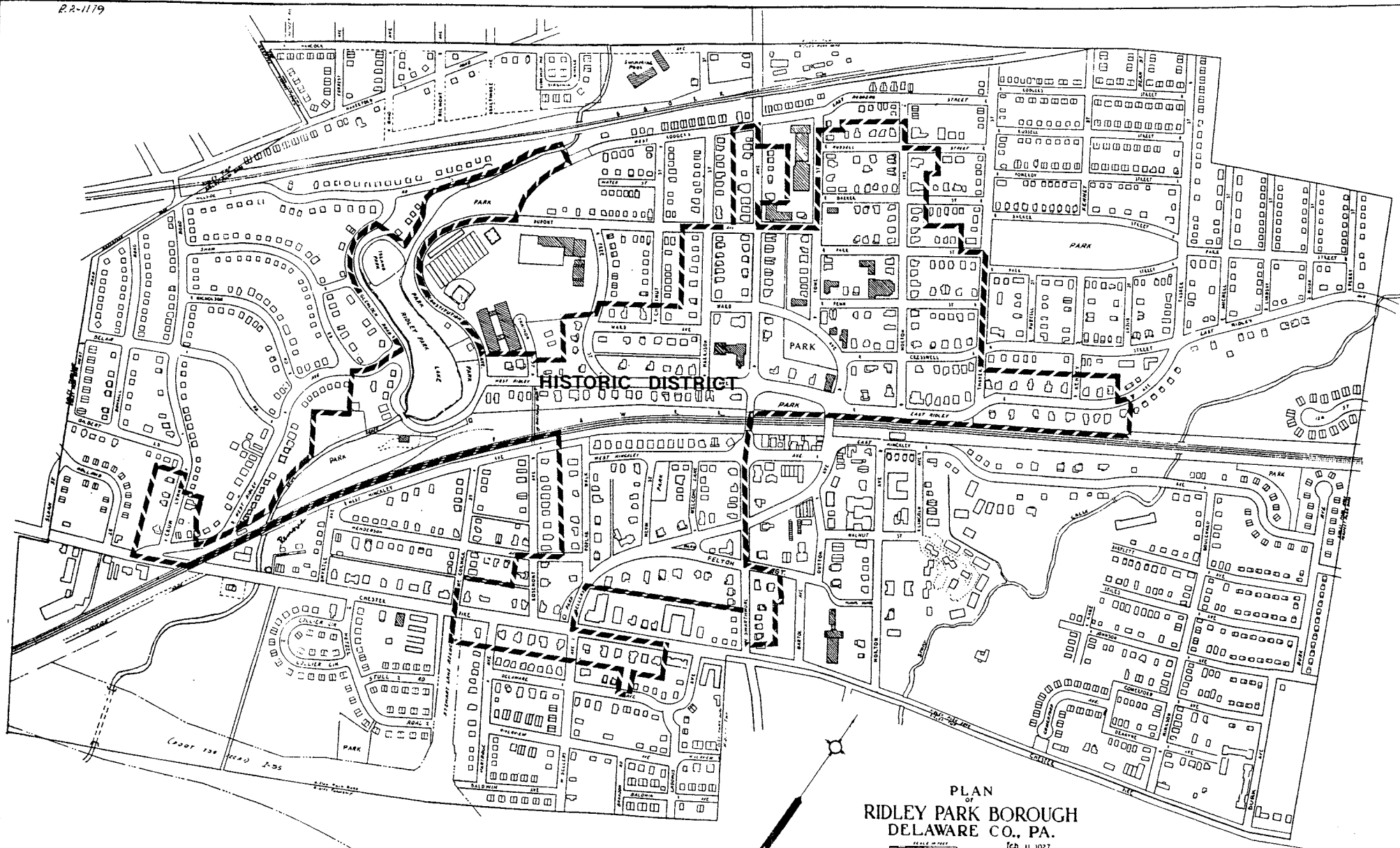
If the HARB finds the proposed work acceptable, it recommends to Council that it issue a Certificate of Appropriateness. If the Board finds the application unacceptable, it will generally give guidance and suggest design changes. An appeal to Borough Council may be made by an owner who disagrees with a decision made by the HARB. The role of the HARB is to advise Borough Council; final decisions rest with the Council, not the HARB. Borough Council, however, bases its decision on the same factors as the HARB.

Although by ordinance its role is regulatory, the HARB is eager to offer guidance to property owners on appropriate design choices for their historic properties. *Early, informal discussion about a prospective project with individual Board Members or at one of the regular monthly meetings is encouraged.* A copy of the ordinance is available at Borough Hall for your review.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

While the Ridley Park Historical Architectural Review Board will be a homeowner's most logical source of information regarding the repair and maintenance of older buildings, these other local and regional organizations may also provide additional assistance or information:

- **Ridley Park Public Library:** has numerous materials on historic houses, restoration, repairs; call 583-7207 for list.
- **Bureau for Historical Preservation, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission:** offers free copies of many technical briefs on a wide range of repair and restoration procedures such as roofing, masonry pointing, painting, windows. For complete list of publications, write or call: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, P.O. Box 1026, Harrisburg, PA 17108-1026; (717) 787-4363.
- **Delaware County Planning Department, Office of Preservation Planning:** resource for local history, historic districts, National Register of Historic Places. Toal Building, Second and Orange Streets, Media, PA 19063.
- **The Philadelphia Historic Preservation Corporation:** publications, consultation, professional services. 1616 Walnut Street, Suite 2310, Philadelphia, PA 19103; (215) 546-1146.
- **National Trust for Historic Preservation, Mid-Atlantic Regional Office:** publications, membership programs, Center for Historic Houses. One Penn Center, 1617 J. F. Kennedy Boulevard, Suite 1520, Philadelphia, PA 19103; (215) 568-8162.



PLAN
OF
RIDLEY PARK BOROUGH
DELAWARE CO., PA.

--- HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARIES
 ■ CHURCHES, SCHOOLS and PUBLIC BUILDINGS

SCALE OF FEET
 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
 Feb. 11, 1927
 CHAS. E. HENNING
 CIVIL ENGINEER
 100 N. 14th St.
 PHILADELPHIA, PA.
 R.D. 1179

Credits:

Photographs by J. Randall Cotton.

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