FUTURE DIRECTIONS IN SMALL TOWN PRESERVATION:
INCORPORATING SOCIAL VALUE ASSESSMENT IN REVITALIZING “MAIN STREET”

By

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and approved by

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Abstract of the Thesis

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Despite the surge of national, state, and local preservation initiatives since the passage of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, many American towns continue to experience a decline in the vitality of their Main Streets. Local historic preservation laws and regulations may help a town maintain its historic character and attract residents and visitors to sustain vibrant town life. However, these regulatory features may be lacking when trying to address the complex, myriad challenges facing small towns, such as loss of industry or the construction of a new highway that draws traffic away from a downtown commercial district. Preservation advocates may be more effective in revitalizing communities if they focus on preserving the intangible aspects of small-town life, as well as physical resources, by assessing the social and cultural value of places within downtowns just as they would assess a resource for its historic, aesthetic, or archaeological value during the preservation process. In order to explore the effectiveness of past and current revitalization and preservation efforts within small towns, this thesis will compare preservation initiatives of two communities in Hunterdon County, New Jersey: Lambertville and Flemington. In particular, the role and function of a Business Improvement District, which is a more recent type of organization that
functions in public-private partnership, is explored in the Flemington case study.

These organizations, such as Business Improvement Districts, have the potential to uphold traditional forms of historic preservation while incorporating new ideas and methods of preserving the culture of small towns by engaging with community members to ensure that their initiatives and programs reflect the social and cultural values of small town communities.
Acknowledgements

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In addition, I would like to dedicate this thesis to Dawn Raia, owner of Café Galleria and City Market in Lambertville, New Jersey. Sadly, Dawn recently lost her battle with cancer, but she left a legacy that will remain with her community for years to come. Dawn had a natural ability to connect with her community and brought many people together through her work. She became an unofficial leader and embodied the spirit of a vibrant place.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Throughout the 20th century, small towns have faced many challenging trends that threaten their function as sustainable places to live and work. Succumbing to economic depression due to loss of industry, residents might have moved out of downtown areas to find better work opportunities or more affordable housing. As well, “big box” stores, strip mall development, and highway travel have competed with “Main Street,” drawing business away from town centers to their peripheries. Sociologists Hanna, Dale, and Ling’s assessment of the social value stemming from community interaction in downtown centers indicates a need for these places to be sustained so that towns can continue to function, that is, to retain their value as a source for commodities and services, civic involvement, cultural events and social interaction. According to Hanna, Dale, and Ling:

Downtowns served as places where people interacted, met informally and gathered together for social and recreational events; their design was a product of a “natural” progression of small town growth, which provided a space for interaction, for relationships, thus creating meaningful place. Towns invested in the architecture of their downtown, and the centre became a place of pride.¹

Hanna, Dale, and Ling’s description of a functioning town is important: they acknowledge that preserving historic architecture contributes to a sense of pride,

but they concentrate on the value of town centers as cultural, social, and commercial hubs.

The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 made it possible to identify, evaluate and protect our historic monuments, buildings, sites and objects as a way of preserving them for the benefit of future generations. The Act enabled states to establish Historic Preservation Offices to oversee the regulation of preservation law. By the 1970’s, local municipal governments flexed their power to designate historic districts and pass ordinances to protect resources within those districts. In addition, the federal government and many state governments provided tax-incentives for preservation-minded development. Professional fields in city planning, archaeology, architectural preservation, architectural history, and preservation law, to name a few, emerged. Numerous planning and preservation consulting firms, as well as many non-profit organizations were established to carry out and assist in preservation initiatives.

In spite of this collective effort toward preservation, many different kinds of places and spaces in America have decayed, lost their vibrancy, been gentrified or redeveloped in a way that negatively affects passing on a way of life or preserving cultural heritage. These places include disadvantaged historic neighborhoods within larger cities, villages in rural areas, and many small towns, which serve as bastions of American culture. The challenges facing America’s downtown business districts present opportunities for preservationists to use their expertise and knowledge to find better, more effective and realistic solutions to preserve or re-establish spaces that contribute to the social, cultural, and economic health of a community. Historic
preservation practice, as defined by the criteria of significance under the National Register, limits assessment of the significance of a building, site or other resource to the criteria of historical, architectural, and aesthetic value. As a result, preservationists lack a cohesive, professionally accepted method to express how such a resource might have a deeper, sociocultural meaning that might impact its preservation.

Heritage practitioners Marta de la Torre and Randall Mason define *cultural significance* as “the importance of a site as determined by the aggregate of values” that would include “those held by experts – the art historians, archaeologists, architects, and others – as well as other values brought forth by new stakeholders.”

Potential new stakeholders of cultural heritage sites include members of the public and professionals from other fields such as sociology, anthropology, environmental studies and economics. Preservationists seeking to assess sociocultural values of places within small towns to affect preservation efforts should seek to incorporate methodologies from these related fields and tap their expertise.

In 2004, historic preservationist Ned Kaufman, founder of “Place Matters” and Pratt Institute’s graduate program in Historic Preservation, wrote, “Preservation profession picks prudence over passion,” to open his essay “Moving Forward, Futures for a Preservation Movement.”

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3 *Place Matters* is a non-profit organization created in 1998 that works to identify and preserve historically and culturally significant places within New York City communities, *for more information see placematters.net*. Accessed on 2/3/2014.
Antoinette Lee, who, two years before,\(^5\) had similarly criticized the state of the preservation field, Kaufman adamantly urges preservation professionals to adapt current methodologies that focus too much on “problems of authenticity, integrity, architectural quality, stylistic purity, and significance.”\(^6\) Both Kaufman and Lee observe that the practice of preservation as a field has relied too heavily on basing assessment of what should be preserved - and how to preserve it - on the historic, aesthetic, and architectural significance of the built environment. This practice excludes both a policy and a methodology for the assessment of social and cultural values of cultural heritage resources that would otherwise direct and inform the process of preservation in terms of how people relate to the places they inhabit. Should preservationists incorporate an assessment of social and cultural value into their methodology, the practice would be more effective in preserving not only historical buildings but, moreover, the cultural practices and social connections happen because of place and that give buildings and sites meaning within a community.

Deciding what should be preserved and how best to preserve it has traditionally been the work of architects, planners, architectural historians, and archaeologists who work within the context of legal precedents, regulatory practices and professional standards. Bringing new perspectives to address social assessment of cultural heritage sites might present an ethical complication to the professional work of heritage practitioners by challenging their authority as experts and the

designated stewards of heritage. In her paper *Heritage and Social Change: Anticipating Future Trends*, presented at the 2010 ICOMOS Scientific Symposium in Dublin, sociologist Diane Barthel-Bouchier advises that being open to other perspectives should be viewed less as a threat to the profession and more as an opportunity to build trust with the community being served. Barthel-Bouchier presents the notion that “high status practitioners are often separated from contact with the public,” but that the public tends to be most impressed by professionals “who display a willingness to engage” as they are “concerned with whether heritage conservation adds appreciably to the quality of their lives and that of their communities.”

A formal practice of assessing social significance might, however, present a challenge to the existing profession by creating more complexity to an already complex field and oppose long-held professional standards and methods. However, as Kaufman points out, the challenges preservationists encounter are “big, emotional, and socially complex,” but entirely within the preservation field’s scope, and that facing these issues is in fact crucial to the communities they serve.

More than a decade before preservationists began to describe social value in historic preservation, Carol Rose began discussing the importance of a community’s role in preservation that would contribute to a more democratic decision-making process. Rose, an expert in property and land use law, discusses the unintended consequences of historic preservation, which might result in the displacement of

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9 Kaufman, 394.
people, such as low-income residents and minority groups, as property values increase. The issue raises questions of “what elements of the past are to be preserved, and why should their preservation take the form of maintaining buildings or groups of buildings?” Rose suggests that there needs to be a “coherent rationale to explain and direct public involvement in preservation activities,” and with this information, preservation policy and practice should be informed.  

According to this rationale, Rose asserts “the chief function of preservation is to strengthen local community ties and community organization.” The idea that preservation strengthens community by providing a sense of place reflects what Rose defines as the most recent phase of the preservation movement in the United States. Much of the preservation happens at a local level, but many small communities have struggled to incorporate preservation guidelines and procedures that have been in available since the 1960’s. How will new methodologies of assessing social and cultural significance be created and administered within the preservation practice in order to assist smaller towns where resources are limited?

While Historic Preservation Ordinances and Historic Preservation Commissions continue to play a crucial role in local preservation, as in Lambertville, New Jersey, many towns are currently seeking new solutions in order to foster cultural preservation and economic revitalization within their communities. In

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11 Ibid. 479

studying the small town of Flemington, New Jersey, it is evident that organizations such as Business Improvement Districts (BID) are positioned at the center of the work; they coordinate with local government councils and planning boards to focus on economic revitalization, sidewalk and streetscape improvements, community outreach, and cultural heritage tourism. While these types of organizations may invoke the term “revitalization” rather than “preservation” in their mission statements, Business Improvement Districts share a common goal with Historic Preservation Commissions: to maintain vibrant downtowns. The new organizations present an opportunity for preservation professionals to collaborate and explore how these organizations can harness traditional historic preservation practices while creating new opportunities to revitalize “Main Street.” Perhaps it will be in coordination with Business Improvement Districts and similar organizations such as National Main Street Organizations that preservation methodology that incorporates social value assessment can be brought into practice. The emergence of organizations like the Flemington Business Improvement District indicates that there is a recognized need within communities for additional structural support toward preservation goals.

While this thesis will concentrate on the role of Business Improvement Districts because of the establishment of such an organization in Flemington in 2011, the work of Main Street Organizations also present downtown centers with much needed support in revitalization efforts. In 1980, the National Trust for Historic Preservation formed a program called The National Main Street Center (NMSC), resulting from a three-year study conducted by the National Trust in order
to research “the reasons so many downtowns were dying, identify the factors affecting downtown's health, and develop a comprehensive revitalization strategy to save historic commercial buildings.” Because the study was so successful in determining the factors for decay and then developing a method for improvement, the newly formed National Main Street Center took their blueprint for downtown revitalization and has applied it to over 2,000 communities since the 1980’s:

Cumulatively, commercial districts taking part in the Main Street program have generated more than $55.7 billion in new investment, with a net gain of more than 473,000 new jobs and 109,000 new businesses, and over 236,000 buildings rehabilitated. Every dollar a community uses to support its local Main Street program leverages an average of $18 in new investment, making Main Street one of the most successful economic development strategies in America.\(^\text{14}\)

The strategy the Main Street Center employs is straightforward and comprehensive, but not so strict, such that it can be applied downtown centers in urban settings, rural areas, or small to mid-sized towns. After identifying a local organization to carry out revitalization activity, the full NMSC arsenal can be fully applied, at the heart of which is the Main Street Four-Point Approach (organization, organization, organization).

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promotion, design, and economic restructuring). In addition, the NMSC provides workshops, networking, and a wealth of guides in strategic planning for downtowns, with a clear goal “to encourage preservation-based economic revitalization.”15

It is probable that there are many similarities between the structure, organization, and strategies employed by both Main Street Organizations and Business Improvement Districts. To explore the formation, role, function of neighborhood revitalization organizations, Flemington Business Improvement District, as an example, will be studied and discussed in chapters four and five of this thesis. While neither Flemington nor Lambertville currently utilize a Main Street Organization, future study of Main Street Organizations, as distinct from Business Improvement Districts, is warranted given the research presented in this thesis.

Case Studies: Lambertville and Flemington, New Jersey

The towns of Lambertville and Flemington are located a mere eleven miles from one another in Hunterdon County, New Jersey. The impetus for including both towns in this study is to explore the effectiveness of traditional preservation methods, such as implementing historic preservation ordinances and establishing historic preservation commissions, as they contribute to the sustained vibrancy of a downtown. The downtown centers in both Lambertville and Flemington have been negatively affected by business leaving these areas. While Flemington is currently

15 Ibid.
struggling to regain its vibrant downtown, Lambertville is, in comparison, flourishing.

Lambertville, New Jersey (pop. 3,890)\(^\text{16}\) is located along the Delaware River in the southeastern corner of Hunterdon County. Due to Lambertville being a river town, a surge in economic growth during the Industrial Revolution revolved around Lambertville’s location along transportation routes for goods moving along the U.S. eastern coast from Pennsylvania to New York. The wealth brought by the manufacturing associated with transporting goods along the Delaware and Raritan

Canal, and, later, the Belvidere-Delaware Railroad, resulted in the creation of handsome homes along tree-lined streets. For Lambertville, an economic downturn began in the 1920’s after manufacturing facilities closed and automobiles slowly replaced the canal and railroad transportation systems; the town remained economically depressed until the 1980’s, when historic preservation initiatives began to help bring back the economy by attracting retail shops and restaurants. During the revitalization process of the downtown business district, Lambertville promoted historic preservation by designating a National and State Historic District in 1983, revitalizing the Central Business District, creating a Historic Preservation Commission, and enacting a local Historic Preservation Ordinance in 2001.

As will be discussed in greater length and detail in chapter 5 of this thesis, the reasons why traditional historic preservation methods worked successfully for the Lambertville community is due, in part, to Lambertville’s unique history, population, geography, local leadership, and civic participation. Had any of these factors been different, it is probable that Lambertville would not have had such success in reclaiming its local economy to the extent that it did, nor would it be as well preserved, physically and culturally. The question remains, however, as to whether the local population’s needs are truly being met in light of lack of job opportunities, high housing costs and taxes, gentrification, and a tourism industry that is both a lifeline and a nuisance.

17 Interview with Cynthia Ege, 8/6/2013.
Northeast of Lambertville is the borough of Flemington, New Jersey (pop. 4,582).\textsuperscript{18} If Lambertville could be dubbed “a no man’s land” in the 1980’s, Flemington was the opposite. With an active downtown business district, new shopping outlets drawing visitors from the local region and as far away as New York City, and with its growing population, Flemington was successfully maintaining its role, as it had done throughout the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, as the bustling county seat. Unfortunately, during the late 1990’s through the 2000’s, Flemington’s historic downtown center became economically depressed due to the growth of retail and residential developments along both its fringes and in Raritan Township, which geographically surrounds the smaller Borough of Flemington. Although Flemington Borough and Raritan Township are separate municipalities, residents of Raritan Township have a Flemington postal address, and the two municipalities are collectively regarded as “Flemington.” This thesis will focus on the preservation and revitalization of the downtown business area of the Borough of Flemington, as it is historically and currently considered by local residents to be the historic downtown center of Flemington and Raritan Township.

Since the election of a new mayor in 2010, the local government in Flemington Borough has taken an active role in initiating the economic and cultural revitalization of the downtown. To start, Mayor Erica Edwards reassessed the Borough’s organizational support of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), and in doing so, ensured that the HPC was better staffed and had proper leadership. It followed that the HPC was able to restructure its membership and be more

effective in planning and executing initiatives. Then, in 2011, the Flemington Borough Council passed a Historic Preservation Ordinance,\(^{19}\) signaling its regulatory support of the Historic Preservation Commission’s recommendations for preservation of structures in the historic district.

In addition to bolstering preservation activities, in 2011 the Borough Council created the Flemington Business Improvement District (FBID) to attract and retain downtown business. The FBID has become active in creating a vision for the revitalization of the downtown business area, which includes a linear Main Street and its adjacent side streets (see Figure 10, page 68). The mission of the Flemington BID is to attract, retain, and revitalize business in the Borough. Toward these broad goals, the BID has initiated a town planning project in the form of adaptive reuse of historic structures or redevelopment of structures found to be not historically significant, to create a visually appealing and safe environment, to organize cultural events, and to help market the businesses within the Borough.\(^{20}\) Considering the wide scope of the FBID’s directives, it has substantial potential to affect change within the community. While Lambertville made its economic recovery without the help of a Business Improvement District, perhaps the aid of such an organization in Flemington is necessary due to the different nature of Flemington’s circumstances related to the downtown’s economic decline.

Factors such as history, population, geography, development, quality of local leadership, availability of informal gathering spaces, and civic activism and participation or lack thereof are different for Lambertville and Flemington. In the

\(^{19}\) Ord. No. 2010-17

\(^{20}\) See www.DowntownFlemington.com
development of the study of both cases, the various factors affecting each town’s
unique situation will be further explored in order to discuss how cultural
preservation methods function within each town. How should this methodology be
changed in order for preservationists to make an impact on revitalization in towns
like Flemington? To explore solutions to this question, preservationists should
explore how Business Improvement Districts can be considered as an additional
vehicle through which preservation goals can be advanced.

Thesis Methodology

In the first chapter of this thesis, a review and discussion of academic
research that investigates social value and its implications in building an
understanding of the significance of place will serve to inform the discussion of the
case studies of preservation initiatives in two small towns, Lambertville, New Jersey
and Flemington, New Jersey, discussed in chapters three and four of this thesis,
respectively.

The two towns were chosen for this study for many reasons. First, they share
some comparable attributes: they are of similar size in population and in geographic
area, they both have historic districts, they share the heritage of Hunterdon County,
and they have similar demographics. Both have a “Main Street” or central downtown
business area, with residences and offices above ground-level commercial spaces;
single-family homes are placed further from the town centers, and continue on the
surrounding streets.
Second, historical information, first-person accounts and city records were made accessible because Flemington Borough is my hometown and because Lambertville has been my residence and place of work for over four years. I conducted several formal semi-structured interviews of historic preservation leaders and citizens (see Appendix A for all research questions). These interviews were prearranged (via email or phone) and done in many different kinds of spaces - a coffee shop, an office, restaurants, a church, and at city hall and usually lasted 30 minutes to an hour. In conducting my interviews, I would prepare a set of approximately six questions relating to the individual's role within the community, as either a leader, organizer, or resident. I would print the questions before the interview and record notes during the session. Each person interviewed gave formal permission for his or her names and statements to be used in this thesis.

I conducted interviews in order to develop a better understanding of past preservation practices, to get a first person perspective of a town's history via oral record, and to inform the consideration of future trends as to the nature of small town living by investigating current feelings about how the town functions. Before the interview, I usually knew something about the person already, such as their profession or how long they had lived in town, because I had previous informal contact with them or because I had been recommended by someone else to interview the subject.

In addition to interviews, I engaged in participant observation methods in several ways. For example, I attended planning meetings, council meetings, and historic preservation meetings in each town from 2009 through 2014. I also have
initiated volunteer work with the Flemington Business Improvement District, where I am currently completing a survey of local business owners in order to provide the organization with feedback to assess progress and strengthen communication with the business community. In Lambertville, I worked at a local social hub, Rojo's coffee shop, where, on a daily basis, I could engage in informal dialogue about news around town and be kept informed about events and issues that allowed me to better understand other residents’ concepts of their lives as related to town living.

In addition to observing formal and informal dialogue at specific places such as cafes and city hall meetings, during 2010-2011, I started an informal local community group in Lambertville that targeted involvement of the “millennial” generation to start conversations about larger systemic issues, such as environmental, cultural and social concerns facing our local community. We would gather in different locations such as a member’s house or a local restaurant. Members of the group would shift over time, but over the dozen or so meetings, there were over fifty people in attendance with two dozen more on a list serve who would stay informed and participate electronically. As such, the direction of this thesis is equally born from, and informed by, observations and conversations with local people and of a review of academic research relating to how people value and perceive place and how those perceptions can affect quality of life through place.
Chapter 2: Social Value as a Criterion in the Assessment of Cultural Heritage

This thesis will explore the definition and application of social value in small towns, and how an understanding of social value as a concept and as assessment tool can lead to the preservation and revitalization of a small town. Scholars worldwide have defined social value in context with other values of cultural heritage, and have researched its application in the assessment of cultural resources, such as buildings, sites, monuments, and cultural landscapes. Particularly important to the vitality of “Main Street” in a small town are its sustained meeting places such as a café, “five and dime,” barbershop, market, beauty parlor, bar, or church. These kinds of places provide for natural, informal interaction between community members, and make the town feel accessible, welcoming, and sustainable. In being key components of small town life, and therefore part of its cultural heritage, these types of places should be identified, protected, and maintained by preservation professionals and be encouraged by civic revitalizationists.

In 1979, the Australia ICOMOS Charter for the Conservation of Places of Cultural Significance, widely known as the Burra Charter, introduced the international heritage profession to the concept of social value, by listing social value alongside the values of historical, aesthetic, and scientific ways to assess the significance of cultural heritage. In the Burra Charter, these four values combine to result in the overall cultural significance of heritage. The Australian Heritage

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Commission Act incorporated these values in 1975, and in 1990, adopted the following criteria to evaluate cultural heritage resources for Australia’s National Register:

(a) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place’s importance in the course, or pattern, of Australia’s natural or cultural history;

(b) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place’s possession of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Australia’s natural or cultural history;

(c) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place’s potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of Australia’s natural or cultural history;

(d) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place’s importance in demonstrating the principal characteristics of:

   (i) a class of Australia’s natural or cultural places; or

   (ii) a class of Australia’s natural or cultural environments;

(e) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place’s importance in exhibiting particular aesthetic characteristics valued by a community or cultural group;

(f) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the place’s importance in demonstrating a high degree of creative or technical achievement at a particular period;

(g) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the
place’s strong or special association with a particular community or cultural
group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons;

(h) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the
place’s special association with the life or works of a person, or group of
persons, of importance in Australia’s natural or cultural history.

(i) the place has outstanding heritage value to the nation because of the
place’s importance as part of Indigenous tradition.22

Criterion (G), in which heritage can be shown to have “strong or special
associations with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural, or
spiritual reasons” allows for the assessment of social value when considering
cultural heritage. However, as Byrne, Brayshaw and Ireland, researchers with the
Australian Heritage Commission, explain in their research on Australian heritage
practices in the 2003 report Social Significance, A Discussion Paper, “while it is
criterion (G) which specifically references the social-community value it is clear that
any of the other criteria could also be the elements of the way a community values a
place.”23 In their report, Byrne, Brayshaw and Ireland critique the Burra Charter’s
“four-in-a-line concept” that presents the four categories of values as such:

Aesthetic – Historical – Scientific – Social

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22 Australian Heritage Council, Guidelines for Assessment of Places for the National
Heritage List (Canberra, Australia: Commonwealth of Australia, Department of the
Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts, 2009)

Research Unit, Cultural Heritage Division (NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service
2nd ed., 2003), 85.
As an alternative to the Burra scheme, which makes it seem as though social value is either less than, or equivalent to, the other values, Byrne, Brayshaw and Ireland propose that a more accurate way to conceptualize value would be to contain aesthetic, historical and scientific within the larger context of social value.\textsuperscript{24}

Scholars and institutions within the heritage profession have called for more focus on incorporating a cultural resource’s social value in preservation practice by including views from the community in order to guide decision-making. Starting in 1995, a series of reports by the Getty Conservation Institute enlisted the research of scholars in various fields related to preservation including economics, architecture, planning, environmental studies, anthropology and cultural heritage in order to study the economics and values of cultural heritage.\textsuperscript{25 26} Emerging from their research, heritage practitioners Marta de la Torre and Randall Mason present one of the leading issues in the final report, Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage, to be “the lack of recognized and widely accepted methodologies for the assessment of cultural values.”

In a later chapter of Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage, “Assessing Values in Conservation Planning: Methodological Issues and Choices,” Randall Mason posits, “Too often, experts determine significance [of a site or building] on

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{24} Ibid, 8.
\item \textsuperscript{25} R. Mason, ed., Economics and Heritage Conservation (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 1999); E. Avrami and R. Mason, eds., Values and Heritage Conservation (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2000); M. de la Torre and R. Mason, eds., Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2002).
\item \textsuperscript{26} de la Torre and Mason define value as a “positive set of characteristics or qualities perceived in cultural objects or sites by certain individuals or groups” in Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage (Los Angeles; Getty Conservation Institute) 2002, 4.
\end{itemize}
the basis of a limited number of established criteria.” Here, Mason is referring to the criteria that are used to determine cultural heritage significance for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The four basic criteria, well known and applied by preservation professionals, assess buildings, districts, sites, objects, and monuments includes the following:

(A) That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

(B) That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or

(C) That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

(D) That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.27

Cultural geographers Cresswell and Hoskins explore an example illustrating the deficiencies of the existing National Register Criteria. Cresswell and Hoskins introduce the grassroots historic preservation efforts of residents, stallholders, local blues musicians, and patrons of Chicago’s Maxwell Street Market to save it from being demolished to make way for new apartment buildings, parking lots and recreational areas. The Maxwell Street Market was known for its diversity,

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27 36 CFR 60.4
immigrant population, vibrancy and contribution to the development of urban blues musicians in an area of the city known as Chicago Blues.28

In order to give the site more protection, the grassroots organization, the Maxwell Street Historic Preservation Coalition, nominated the Maxwell Street Market to the National Register. However, despite many proponents in the neighborhood who felt as though their experience of the market linked them to the past as well as contributed to the vibrancy of their present community, the State Historic Preservation Office found that the historic structures built during the period of significance (1880-1944) did not provide enough material to warrant evidence of structural integrity. Too much of the original historic fabric had been altered or replaced over the one hundred years of continual use. Cresswell and Hoskins reflect on this decision that, “despite the fact that all places, and all material objects, are fluid and changeable, historical significance is attached in this reasoning to objects that are perceived to have stayed the same.” Ultimately, the assessment of social significance, had it been a part of the current National Register criteria, would have addressed the value of “living” heritage - giving merit to how stakeholders of this site valued their connection to place.

Mason’s conceptualization of values goes beyond the National Register criteria for evaluating significance of heritage. He identifies and describes the many values of heritage so that methodologies for assessing each can be better sculpted to

inform sustainable heritage management and planning. First, Mason separates values into two categories (1) sociocultural and (2) economic. Under the sociocultural category he lists five values: historical, cultural/symbolic, social, spiritual, and aesthetic, whereas economic value is divided into use/market value or non-use/non-market values. It is assumed that many of the values may either overlap or be in conflict with one another. Though more complex, this scheme recalls that of Byrne, Brayshaw and Ireland, as it places several values within the larger social context.

Mason states that social values of heritage facilitate social connections and networks that might include:

use of a site for social gatherings such as celebrations, markets, picnics or baseball games – activities that do not necessarily capitalize directly on the historical value of the site but, rather, on the public, shared-space qualities. The kinds of social groups strengthened by these kinds of values could include everything from families to neighborhood groups to ethnic groups to special interest groups.

Mason further indicates that this type of social value leads to “place attachment.” Place attachment occurs when people develop a deep symbolic or emotional bond to their environment. One of the characteristics of this type of bond is that a person will take on the role of protector and steward of the place and give time, money, and effort toward its preservation.

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29 Mason in *Assessing the Values of Cultural Heritage*, 5.
30 Mason, ibid, 12.
Place Attachment to “Third Places” in Downtowns

One of the first studies that began to explain place attachment as applied to residents’ attachment to a neighborhood was Marc Fried’s 1960’s research on the displacement of a working-class neighborhood in Boston’s West End to make room for luxury housing; Fried provides description of their profound feelings of loss and grief after being forced out and witnessing the destruction of their beloved neighborhood. Further studies of place attachment by numerous scholars have since added to place attachment research showing how people form bonds with many different kinds of places such as outdoor settings like public parks, natural open spaces like fields and forests, places of spiritual significance, and workplaces.

In Place Attachment in Commercial Settings: A Gift Economy Perspective, marketing experts Debenedetti, Oppewal, and Arsel have analyzed how people establish bonds with commercial businesses that leads them to behaviors of reciprocity, loyalty and stewardship. Place attachment happens through a process of engagement such that “social connections are informal and disconnected from typical commercial norms: customers’ frequency of patronage is not acknowledged through economic incentives but through marks of friendship and respect.” This social connection creates a feeling of “homeyness,” which leads to the patron to give

back to the place in terms of “ambassadorship,” in actively recruiting selected newcomers to the place, and “over-reciprocating,” in the form of tipping, sending postcards, and helping to clean up or offering a special skill to make improvements to the place or venue.\textsuperscript{34}

These kinds of informal, but familiar, interactions that create social bonds associated in commercial settings speak directly to the activities that occur in what Ray Oldenburg defines as “the third place.” This type of place is primarily defined by what it is not, being neither home (the “first” place) nor work (the “second” place). Third places are ones that form “the core settings of informal public life.” Oldenburg uses the term “third place” to conceptualize “a generic designation for a great variety of public places that host the regular, voluntary, informal, and happily anticipated gatherings of individuals beyond the realms of work and home.”\textsuperscript{35}

Examples of third places include cafés and restaurants, coffee shops, bookstores, pubs, hair salons, markets, town squares, sidewalks and parks – places that have naturally been a part of small towns and downtown areas. Oldenburg goes on to describe the character of these types of places, which have several features in common:

1) they act as a leveler: no one is denied entrance due to status

2) conversation is the main activity


3) accessible and accommodating, opening after work and in close proximity to home
4) frequented by “regulars” who accept newcomers
5) the mood is playful and cheerful
6) they are plain, ordinary places
7) provide a sense of home away from home: they are familiar

Making sure that third places are preserved is essential to maintaining quality of life in small towns. In studying the experience of a small town community in British Columbia, Canada, cultural geographers Hanna, Dale and Ling find that “dispersion of shopping, services and housing to the edge, and the emergence of sprawl...can reinforce social segmentation, weaken places of social intersection and erode social capital.”

Social capital is a concept that has been studied within the field of sociology throughout the 20th century, and many scholars have defined the term in various ways. In his article, Social Capital: Its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology, sociologist Alejandro Portes discusses three top definitions of social capital. The first is Pierre Bourdieu’s definition, which is the “first systemic contemporary analysis of social capital.” Bourdieu defines social capital to be “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or

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36 Oldenburg, ibid., 20-42.
37 K. Hanna et. al., ibid., 33-4.
recognition.” In *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*, Robert Putnam explores the decline of American civic and social life, and in doing so introduces the idea of social capital to the mainstream American culture. He defines social capital in terms of civic involvement, in that “social capital refers to connections among individuals - social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them.” Portes points out, however, that social capital should not, necessarily be intrinsically imbued with a “positive” nature. Social capital is simply the result of human connection – but it does not automatically imply a morally “good” outcome as a result of its accumulation. Like the town of Merritt, British Columbia as described in Hanna, Dale and Ling’s study, towns suffer due to the fragmentation of place and identity; however, building social capital through the revitalization of place can act to accelerate social and economic change, “resulting in an exponential and virtuous cycle of community development.” Further, they found that communities that have more social capital provide “resilience, sustainability and capacity to cope with stresses, transition and unique events.” Oldenberg’s “third places” and the traditional spatial organization of a downtown that combines smaller streets, mixed uses, historic places, sidewalks

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41 Hanna et. al., ibid., 35.
and open public spaces support social capital. Hanna, Dale, and Ling conclude that local planning organizations should look to “residents’ notions of quality of place to frame the discussion and illustrate issues” that would present links to social capital and social and economic well being.

Methodology for Assessing Social Value of Place

Hanna, Dale, and Ling point to local planning organizations to lead investigations of how communities feel about the place in which they live, and that this information is useful and essential to guide strategic development of revitalization planning projects. In the 2002 Getty Conservation Institute report, anthropologist Setha M. Low suggests that various anthropological and ethnographic methods can be utilized in order to assess sociocultural values in heritage planning and management, as this research can “describe the place attachment of groups within the geographical community” and “identify local site use and disuse…and understand the motivations, norms, values, intentions and symbolic meanings underlying that use and disuse.”43 In her comprehensive explanation of different types of methodology and research design, Low gives an overview of qualitative methods in cultural anthropology, and then moves to a discussion of constituency analysis to identify stakeholders and ethnosemantics, which Low defines as the process of developing a common language between

professionals and the public to describe values of a place. She concludes that an application of the National Park Service (NPS) methodology known as REAP (Rapid Ethnographic Assessment Procedures) would be among the most effective of methodologies for assessing sociocultural value of a resource. REAP methodology combines physical traces mapping, behavioral mapping, transect walks, individual interviews, expert interviews, group interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and historical and archival research. The data is then analyzed quantitatively by coding the responses and producing cultural resource maps which can be compared and interpreted.44

When integrating anthropological and ethnographic methodologies to a project, Low suggests that a professional anthropologist who is experienced in this type of research should direct its implementation, yet volunteers from the community could be easily trained to carry out much of the work. This would give the community members an opportunity to carry out research, empowering the community further and bridging the gap between professionals and the public.45

Who would initiate a REAP assessment of a cultural resource, historic building or site? It may be possible for local planning boards or local historic preservation committees to take on this responsibility. However, these governmental groups typically set their regulations and practices according to state law and directives from state offices, such as the State Historic Preservation Office. In order to be implemented on a governmental level, REAP methodology would need to be administered through the state offices before being made available to the

44 Ibid., 37-38.
45 Ibid., 36, 47.
local government committees. As an alternative, local community organizations such as a Business Improvement District or a Main Street Organization may be targeted by town planning boards or local historic preservation committees to initiate REAP projects. Business Improvement Districts and Main Street Organizations are being created in towns as well as cities in order to revitalize neighborhoods and act as an intermediary organization between the local government and the public. These organizations are typically registered as non-profit entities, but are funded, mostly or in part, by taxes from local commercial property holders.

As will be discussed further in Chapter 3, the local planning board of Lambertville, New Jersey had its residents fill out a survey about historic preservation and town planning during the mid-1990’s, in order to get a sense of how the community felt about the place in which they lived. As a result, the planning board considered the responses to the survey when moving forward with implementing a historic preservation committee, ordinance, and guidelines. Whereas the survey could not be regarded as a replacement for a more comprehensive REAP assessment, it provides an example of a local governmental organization initiating and implementing social value assessment. In Chapter 4, Flemington’s Business Improvement District, established in 2011, will be discussed as a potential organization through which assessment of social value can take place on a more comprehensive level.

What is the purpose of social value assessment? Social value assessment would enable communities to identify certain places within their borders as
meaningful because of their ability to act as “third places,” that is, places that are familiar, “homey,” easily accessible, close to home, act as levelers, are cheerful, have ‘regulars,’ but are usually ordinary places, such as a market or coffee shop. The health and sustainability of a small town depends, in part, on these types of “third places” – preservationists should provide a mechanism to identify key community places and plan for their protection and continued vitality. In the next two chapters, the case studies of Lambertville and Flemington will provide an opportunity to discuss the range of options and tools small towns have as a way of preserving and revitalizing their “Main Streets.”
Chapter 3: Case Study of Lambertville, New Jersey

Lambertville History

As a prelude to the research of Lambertville’s historic preservation initiatives during the 1980’s and 1990’s, some background historical and demographic information will be given in order provide a context for further discussion. While this paper will focus on the history of the Lambertville area after European contact as its primary source of cultural heritage relevant to the preservation of the small American town, it is appropriate to acknowledge the archaeological evidence of the previous societies’ presence in the area. A tribe or tribes of the Lenape, who were later renamed the “Delaware” by settlers, were the original inhabitants of this area.46 After most of the native population left or were forced out of the area by new English landowners, archaeological discoveries by the ensuing settlers and their descendants made it clear that tribes had been living, intermittently and over several generations, near the mouth of Alexauken Creek, which flows into the Delaware River at the northern boundary of present-day Lambertville.47

Lambertville’s colonial history is most often told via the histories of the first landholding families that settled the area in the early 18th century due to their influence on the town’s place in history, the plan/layout of the town, and the naming

of the town. The Holcombe family, in 1707, and the Coryell family, in 1732, were the first to settle the area, followed by the Lamberts from 1735 to 1746, who purchased a small amount of the Holcombe property. The area was divided between the Holcombes to north and the Coryells to the south, who both farmed the land. Their land was bordered on the west by the Delaware River and to the east by a high ridge that was residentially developed in the late 19th century and is not considered, then or now, part of the downtown area of Lambertville.

Not until 1849, when it was incorporated as a town, was Lambertville exclusively known by this name; from 1732, when Emanuel Coryell purchased the rights to a ferry operation, the area was known as Coryell’s Ferry. In 1765, John Coryell purchased the ferry rights on the Pennsylvania side of the river to allow dockage across the river; “Coryell’s Ferry” then became the name of the Pennsylvania settlement across the river as well.

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49 Petrie, ibid., 10.
50 The ferry service had previously been owned and operated by Samuel Coates since 1702, when he was a land owner before either the Holcombes or Coryells settled, built structures, and began farming, see Petrie, ibid., 16.
51 Interestingly, the Holcombes and the Coryells greatly resented the change in name, a process that began in 1812, when Senator John Lambert established a post office and appointed his nephew as the postmaster. According to Petrie, the two “founding families” thought of the Lamberts as “newcomers,” refusing to acknowledge the name for over forty years, until use of multiple names over decades became too confusing for the growing town to bare, see Petrie, ibid., 51.
52 Ibid, 43.
53 To this day, there is a “Ferry Street” meeting the river in both Lambertville and in New Hope, continuing as if it there is an imaginary road across the river.
Most important to the historic legacy of Lambertville’s residents today is the role their town played during the Revolution. According to historian Alfred Petrie, James Monroe offers an account from the infamous night that Washington crossed the Delaware in order to stop the Hessians. According to this account, Washington sent 50 troops, led by Lt. Monroe, to Coryell’s Ferry (what is now called Lambertville) in order to provide more protection further north of the area now known as Washington’s Crossing. In the ensuing battle, Lt. Monroe was injured by a bullet in his shoulder, and was taken under care of Abraham Coryell at his tavern. Records from the tavern provide evidence that Washington and his troops stayed in Coryell’s Ferry at least three times during the war, crossing the river at this juncture during the summers of 1777 and 1778.  

From this point in history, Coryell’s Ferry proved itself as a crucial strategic place along the river for the military operation and as a good place for fishing, farming and, soon after, industry. The ferry operation also became the only geographical point along the Delaware River at which travelers on the Old York Road would cross. Stagecoaches would carry passengers from Philadelphia to New York City in two days time, stopping for the night on either side of the river.  

It was during the 19th century when Lambertville achieved its industrial growth, and with it, wealth and development of the town infrastructure. In the wake of the American Revolution, the river towns opposite one another made progress by constructing a bridge through the establishment of the New Hope Delaware Bridge Company in 1812. Once the bridge was built, Bridge Street was constructed in

55 Petrie, ibid. 37-43.
Lambertville, and to this day serves as the main corridor of town. It was during this point when the town made the transition in name from “Coryell's Ferry” to first “Lambert's ville,” and then “Lambertville” in 1849.\textsuperscript{56}

Lambertville’s rapid industrial growth hit its stride during the 1830’s with the construction of the feeder canal,\textsuperscript{57} which connects to the Delaware and Raritan canal system and travels north to New Brunswick. The canal construction required many laborers, who came by the thousands mainly in the form of Irish immigrants.\textsuperscript{58}

Soon after, in 1851, the Belvidere-Delaware Railroad opened; this train could take goods and passengers south to Trenton and on to Philadelphia. By 1854, an extension of the rail line to Flemington to the northeast, and to Phillipsburg, to the north, along the river, allowed for yet more economic growth. Industries and businesses that developed in Lambertville as a result of the canal and rail transit systems included carriage making, flax and flour mills, a brewery, marble yards, a foundry, saw mills (the entire area was known for lumbering), a rail yard that serviced and manufactured train parts, paper manufacturing, rubber mills, and a machine shop.\textsuperscript{59} In 1872, the town had grown so much that its population reached over 5,000, and so it was reincorporated as a city.\textsuperscript{60} Even more factories, producing

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., 50-51.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid. 60.
\textsuperscript{58} The large influx of Irish immigrants caused much friction within the social dynamics of the town, as they were of a differing religion to the previous English Protestant stock as well as being mainly illiterate. Cultural clashes ensued, as riots by the workers began occurring regularly; more concern, however was the spread of a cholera outbreak stemming from the deplorable living conditions of the Irish immigrant shanties, established on the south end of town (61).
\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 65-72.
\textsuperscript{60} Though the current population is now 3,890 (US Census 2010) it is still incorporated as a city – making it the smallest “city” in New Jersey.
a vast array of items such as hairpins, wagon wheel spokes, toilets, and rubber boots sprang up in the later part of the 19th century.\textsuperscript{61}

By the time Petrie published his history of Lambertville in 1947, many factories had closed due to changing economies and markets, new inventions, and a phase-out of the canal and eventually, the rail system. In Petrie’s day, however, there were still several manufacturing facilities, which had replaced some of the old industries. These included “flatware, hosiery, lace, luggage, women’s and children’s garments, pocketbooks, novelties, ceramics and bottled gas.”\textsuperscript{62}

Pam Caprio, who grew up in Lambertville in the 1950’s and 60’s recalls that the town was usually bustling – there was always something to do and plenty of amenities for the local population. “It was a working town,” she said.\textsuperscript{63} This latter phrase, which is heard from many older, long-time residents, refers to the range of job opportunities in the offices and factories around the town. Most people worked, shopped and lived in town, which contributed to the sense of community and the fact that “everybody knew everybody” and that “it was a self-contained town.” For instance, Caprio remembers going to “Smutzies,” a soda counter that had light snacks, with her girlfriends after school, or going to Trenton on the train ("Alone!"), which was then still in operation. The various parts of Lambertville that Caprio describes recalls a typical American town during that time of peace in our country’s history: an ice skating rink; the Strand Theater ("There was always a theater!"); Cavalo Park at the south end of town where Mrs. Burrows, a local school teacher, would look

\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 78.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 85.
\textsuperscript{63} Interview notes, 8/12/2013.
after working parent’s children in the summertime; three butcher shops; two
supermarkets; St. John’s Catholic Church, “the one place” where the Irish and the
Italian immigrants had to get along; and clothing and shoe stores for every member
of the family.

The socioeconomic pattern in Lambertville began to change in the late 1970’s
and early 1980’s, when regional shopping areas were established, such as the
Quakerbridge Mall and Oxford Valley Mall, and subdivision development of the
surrounding farmland began. Pam Caprio commented that many local residents
moved out of town because of the dwindling amenities (the clothing shops, markets,
restaurants and eateries, and movie theater and ice rink all closed) and the
availability of newer, more affordable housing outside of town. As a new group of
people located to Lambertville, it became a “bedroom community” to larger towns
and cities such as Trenton and Princeton because there was little work and business
in town. The newer residents who began moving to Lambertville during the late
1970’s and early 1980’s wanted the quintessential “small town” experience that had
authentically taken place for over a hundred years, but by this time, very little of
what made the town wealthy and primed its development remained.

Historic Preservation in Lambertville

Most of the manufacturing and industry faded away by the 1970’s, which led
to a general economic decline. Dusty antique shops comprised the majority of the
downtown retail district, but many of the commercial and retail businesses closed;
however, younger families began purchasing older homes that had fallen into disrepair or had historically incongruent modern additions. Gradually, these new homeowners would repair or restore their houses. Thus, historic preservation in Lambertville started with the private homeowners. The new residents purchased the historic homes at reasonable prices and were intent on restoring and preserving the neglected buildings. It is important to consider the influence of this generation of residents in Lambertville, both those new to town and those whose family lineages stretched to the earliest settlers, because their interest in maintaining the historic character of their homes set a tone for the preservation of the town on a grander scale; they recognized that they were not simply fixing individual structures, but that their work contributed to the preservation of the town as a cultural landscape.

Stewart and Betsy Palilonis are local residents who moved to Lambertville in 1977 and have remained in their quaint Victorian home, which they have restored over many years to resemble what it had been from a picture taken in the late 1800’s. They rebuilt the broad period porch that had been removed and eliminated aluminum awnings placed over the windows. Later active in preserving Lambertville, the Palilonis’ were among a small but steadily growing population of new residents at the time, most of who were replacing long-time residents who could no longer find work in town.

Stewart Palilonis, along with some other like-minded neighbors, became concerned over the preservation of historic structures when a grand Victorian style-home known as the “Stryker building” after its owner, was demolished and replaced
with a gas station located at the entrance to the town. According to Stewart,\textsuperscript{64} many of the residents were upset about the landmark house being destroyed to make way for the ensuing development (which was a gas station), and it was a motivating factor for the local government to afford more protection for historic structures by designating a historic district downtown, creating a Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), and eventually passing a historic preservation ordinance. Fortunately for historic preservationists in Lambertville, much of the housing stock had survived through the 1970’s due to the depressed local economy and lack of incentive for developers to invest in building new construction. Interestingly, it was the lack of resources and the resulting stagnation of progress that probably saved the town during an era when most places saw so many of their beloved older buildings being demolished and replaced with mid-century modern architecture. Most building construction in Lambertville occurred between 1800 and 1900, as 84 percent of the buildings were constructed in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. To this day, only about 15 percent of the buildings were erected after 1900.\textsuperscript{65}

In the late 1970’s, a group of dedicated townspeople took the first step toward historic preservation efforts by nominating Lambertville’s historic downtown as a historic district on the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register of Historic Places by commissioning a survey of historic architecture.\textsuperscript{66} The survey led to the designation of the Lambertville Historic District in 1983, which included the area from the Delaware River to Route 29 and Route

\begin{footnotes}
\item[64] Palilonis, interview notes, 4/12/2013.
\item[66] Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
179 from north Cherry Lane to south of Weeden Street; the area essentially includes all of the low-lying areas of the town. In addition, several individual historic buildings were also placed on the National and State Registers as a result of the survey.

Figure 2: The Lambertville State and National Historic District, designated in 1983. Source: Lambertville Historic Preservation Master Plan Element (2001)
As per recommendations in the 1995 Re-Examination Report of the Lambertville Master Plan, the Planning Board created a Historic Preservation Plan Element, followed by the creation of a local historic district, installation of a Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and the passage of a Historic Preservation Ordinance in 2001. According to the 1998 Land Use Plan Element, the debate as to whether or not a local historic district should be created had been ongoing since the late 1980’s.

Figure 3: Map of the Local Lambertville Historic District, whose boundaries focus on the Central Business District, and are less extensive that that of the National and State designations. Source: Lambertville Historic Preservation Master Plan Element (2001)

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The current City Clerk, Cindy Ege, who grew up in Lambertville and served on the City Council and Planning Board for several years, described how members of the Council and Planning Board came together to initiate historic preservation regulatory practices at the local level as well as revitalize the downtown business district. With more and more residents investing in restoring their historic homes, property values began to rise and Lambertville began to attract tourists and new business investment to the downtown commercial area, known as the Central Business District (CBD). According to Ege, the members of the Planning Board were passionate about maintaining the historic character of the town, yet they also acknowledged that the more intangible qualities of Lambertville - such as its “small-town feeling,” where community members form lasting bonds and support one another both socially and professionally - was just as important a characteristic to preserve as the historic buildings.

A core group of dedicated planning board members and city council members worked together to maintain this simple, straightforward vision, while also understanding that it was common sense to communicate with local residents, such as to invite them to public meetings, in order to inform the historic preservation planning initiatives of the local government. Ege says that there was a strong sense of responsibility to the community so that they could “understand why they were doing what they were doing.” In 1994, the Planning Board surveyed the community as an integral part of its process in deciding how best to serve the needs of the community. Charlie Huschet, Chair of the Planning Board at the time, along

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69 Interview with Cindy Ege, 8/6/2013.
70 Ege, interview notes, 8/6/2013.
with other volunteers went door to door, hand delivering the survey, which asked basic questions about what residents valued in a community and what they liked about their town.71 At first, residents were against a historic preservation ordinance, but after they realized that the local government wasn’t going to regulate their choice of paint color and had bigger, broader concerns, they became supportive.

The Board had an interest in protecting older structures, but wanted to “balance the historic beauty with cultural heritage but keep the personal artistic tastes of the home owners.”72 When residents became concerned about the city’s control over paint choices, the Planning Board did not concentrate on that aspect of preservation. Instead, they made the focus of historic preservation initiatives on the Central Business District because they realized that new homeowners “were already fixing them up.”73 With their focus on the CBD, they wanted to maintain retail and commercial spaces on first floors and residential space upstairs.

When making the case for historic district designation, the 1977 historic survey, in line with the sentiments of the townspeople toward their town, states:

Lambertville’s prosperity never reached the point of ostentatious wealth; the city never hosted great estates or high society hotels, restaurants, or shops.

Instead, Lambertville has always been clearly not a museum piece or a precious arty tourist center but a place where people live, work, and shop.

The real significance of the Lambertville Historic District arises from the combination of all the architectural criteria that are necessary for historic

71 Ege, interview notes, August 6, 2013. Unfortunately, Lambertville City Hall did not retain a copy of the survey questionnaire for review in this thesis.
72 Ege, interview notes, August 6, 2013.
73 Ibid.
district nomination with the real, lived-in quality of the town. The beautiful Victorian homes still house middle-class families, the shops are still on Main Street, the hotel has been a hotel since 1812 – the town still functions and looks much like it did in the late 19th century.74

Is Lambertville preserved now, in 2014, to reflect the vision presented in 1977? The above description of Lambertville is one that points toward valuing historic preservation as well as an acknowledges the “real lived-in quality” and “middle-class families” that characterizes the place just as much as the historic features do, if not more so. Many current residents will tell you that sometimes they avoid going downtown on weekends due to the throngs of tourists grazing slowly from window to window as if Lambertville were a “museum piece.” But for the most part, the town has retained its self-contained quality, where people feel as though they can connect with their neighbors easily.75

However, Lambertville is not without its challenges for the next generation. When Lambertville experienced economic growth during the Industrial Revolution, the manufacturing industries provided for many blue-collar jobs. The town’s residents could easily find work and affordable housing through the early part of the 20th century. Currently, the high cost of living, high local property taxes, and rising housing costs have become concerns, as the children of Lambertville’s older generations often cannot afford to stay.76 Despite these obstacles, however, the

75 Interview with Lambertville resident of fourteen years, Allison Kopicki on 9/12/2013.
beauty of the town and its social accessibility – that you can meet and talk to people on the street or in cafes and stores – makes it a desirable place to live, and one in which people will fight to stay.

The Third Spaces and Resulting Social Capital of Lambertville

Ray Oldenberg’s definition of a “third space” is a place that is neither home (“first place”) nor work (“second place”), but a place where one can meet others informally, either planned or spontaneously. Lambertville has a wealth of “third spaces.” Residents, workers, and business owners engage with one another regularly and informally in many kinds of third place settings, such as the local cafes, bars, churches, restaurants, hair salons, art galleries, yoga studios, music venues, and playgrounds. Residents also sift through ideas and issues in public places such as parks and playgrounds, on the sidelines of sports fields, on the sidewalk.

Figure 4: Photographs of customers and baristas at Rojo’s Roastery, which is a coffee shop in Lambertville. Photographs by Allison Richard
Whereas some might dismiss a portion of the conversations as gossip, this informal discussion builds consensus within the community rather than creating hostile divides, and makes any new, significant development within the town subject to public review. Issues are talked about to such length that the town planners and mayor can gain a general understanding about how the community feels about projects before the formal meetings of the Council, Planning Board and Board of Adjustments take place. As a resident within the town for four years, I have observed these sorts of informal meetings on several occasions. For instance, while working at Rojo’s Roastery, a coffeehouse and local haunt, Mayor David DelVecchio would routinely solicit feedback and opinions on issues concerning the town from familiar staff and customers.

To explain how this kind of process can happen in Lambertville, we can look to a specific instance that involved the community in a decision over a proposed adaptive reuse plan of a vacant church in the center of Lambertville. The Bridge Street Foundation, a non-profit organization whose mission is to purchase historic buildings and readapt them for the arts, purchased the First Baptist Church at 57 Bridge Street in 2011. In 2012, the Bridge Street organization created a plan for the redevelopment of the church, built in 1868 of Romanesque Revival architecture, as a 400-seat music venue with a 150-seat restaurant and bar.


78John Sievers, “Lambertville’s First Baptist Church has Future as Restaurant and Theater,” Lehigh Valley Live, August 12, 2012.
Lambertville has been known for decades for its embrace of the arts, as the town is home to many artists, art galleries, music studios, and the Rago auction house, but many residents and business owners became strongly opposed to the proposed music venue at the First Baptist Church. Various factors of concern contributing to the dissent included an increase of traffic, a potential increase of late-night noise disturbance from patrons, tour buses and restaurant deliveries.

blocking the street, trash pick-up, and competition with the other restaurants.\textsuperscript{79} The largest concern, however, was parking availability.\textsuperscript{80} Ironically, a large parking lot is situated directly across the street from the vacant church, yet it is owned and operated by St. John’s Catholic Church, which was not willing to relinquish their parking access during any of the times that the activities at the proposed venue would occur.

To address parking, the Bridge Street Foundation proposed that they would provide an incentive for ticket-holding patrons to park in a lot on Route 179, half a mile away and in West Amwell Township and provide a shuttle bus into town.\textsuperscript{81} However, the organization could not provide evidence that they could guarantee that patrons would realistically use this service and not try to find parking in town, which is already a challenge on weekend evenings. Also, the director could not ameliorate concerns about the bus holding up traffic while letting patrons on and off. While the director of the Bridge Street Foundation made several attempts to address these concerns, the organization ultimately withdrew their application for building use permits and variances that would have allowed them to create the music venue and restaurant, citing that the proposal had become too controversial.


\textsuperscript{81} Ibid., Sievers, June 1, 2013.
within the community. Instead, however, the Board of Adjustments granted them permission to use the space for classrooms and offices.

Commitment to dialogue and common sense are core values of Lambertvillians. This notion is evidenced through the later actions and comments of Lambertville’s Mayor, David DelVecchio, after the Bridge Street Foundation’s eventual withdraw of their proposed project in July 2013. Mayor DelVecchio created a community task force in response to the controversy, stating that, “Many times before, we have found that when we allow applicants and community members to sit down outside of the often-adversarial tone of an official hearing, we can make real progress and create better plans.” Through the work of the task force, the Mayor entrusted that “we will not only see a project that best reflects the values of our city, but one that also represents the ability of our community to work together for everyone’s benefit.” It becomes clear from DelVecchio’s statements that the leadership in Lambertville sets a tone that progress and consensus in town planning and preservation can be obtained through local, public discourse, both formally and informally.

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82 Ibid., Kiriluk-Hill, July 9, 2013.
In contrast to the Bridge Street Foundation’s method of communication with the community, local restaurant owner Dawn Raia embraced community input while she established her restaurant, Caffé Galleria, in its new location in a historical home on North Union Street. Granted, Raia’s venue was much smaller in scale and lacked the musical focus, however, she still had to get a parking variance, zoning and building permits, and answer to her surrounding neighbors’ concerns about garbage pickup, delivery traffic, and potential disturbance to the neighboring historic cemetery of the First Presbyterian Church. While Raia spent over a year consulting with professionals on design, town planning, historical architecture, construction and the food industry to inform her business model for the Caffé Galleria, she also engaged with many residents, workers, and business owners to contribute to her understanding of what people would value in her business. At the very least, she planted awareness of her endeavors, but, to a greater extent, she nurtured the community’s attachment to place.

When Raia made her presentation to the Planning Board to get parking variances and commercial zoning permits, her outreach to the community had a positive effect on her project; over a hundred people packed themselves into the city hall meeting space in an overwhelming show of support for her proposals. Not only did Raia build support within the community for her requests, but she also brought in local architect and city planner Michael Burns who presented to the board and the community that walkable communities provide public spaces, such as sidewalks and town squares, and are a healthy and essential part of the downtown experience. The twenty-two parking spaces that the parking ordinance required for a business
like Raia’s were incongruent to this idea. While Burn’s presentation might have not been necessary to gain approval for the ordinance, it provided professional validation and a coherent explanation of the values Lambertvillians already uphold in their daily lives.

Both the Bridge Street Foundation’s First Baptist Church and Dawn Raia’s Caffé Galleria present specific instances in Lambertville where the intersection of “third place” and social capital come together to affect change within the community on a grand level. More often, however, the variety of third places in Lambertville contributes to the quality of life in subtle, habitual ways. This contribution to quality of life comes from the interactions that happen in an ongoing, casual basis that allows people to engage with their environment and the people within it in a familiar, ongoing, and personal way. For instance, a Mexican restaurant and grocery store called Tacos Cancun originally catered to the immigrant population, yet it is now frequented regularly by the Lambertville population at large. Because there is a sense of “homeyness” and familiarity (not to mention the food is delicious), the residents have embraced a sense of ambassadorship – bringing in others they think will enjoy the food and welcoming nature of the owner and staff.

Many other places like the Tacos Cancun restaurant and grocery exist in Lambertville. Bars and restaurants such as the Swan, the Boathouse, Bell’s, The Inn at the Hawke, Deanna’s, Caffé Galleria, the City Market and the Lambertville House function as community gathering spaces, some showcasing local music talent. Indeed, there are many places where music and art are performed and celebrated, as in the coffee shops and galleries downtown. It is common to stroll down Bridge
Street on a Saturday afternoon and join a crowd around a local musician performing on the sidewalk.

Further, the local organizations such as the Public Library, the Lambertville Historical Society, and the Chamber of Commerce hold events and festivals that reflect the history and culture of the town. The Shad Festival, held annually in May, celebrates the run of these big fish up the Delaware River. Families who have been fishing for generations set up nets at dusk and display for anyone who wants to watch, just how it was done two hundred years ago. Another yearly tradition falls in October: the Lambertville Historical Society’s Historic House Tour, an event that is in its 31st year, draws thousands of participants. The Historic House Tour is important because it unites Lambertvillians in identity affirmation through the town’s unique spaces. As a volunteer docent for the tour, I have been witness to the sense of pride owners have for their spaces. They have become stewards of their historic homes, and of their town, as they transform each of their “first places” into “third places.”

Whether one is purchasing a daily cup of coffee or celebrating an annual event, these practices take place in buildings, sites or public spaces that are unique to Lambertville. Many are “third spaces,” which are mainly locally owned commercial and retail spaces; some are culturally significant and exemplify the town’s architecture, culture, history, people or overall character. Many former industrial spaces, such as the Laceworks building, the Spokeworks factory, and the site of a former ceramic factory, now known as the Canal Studios, have been re-purposed as multi-use, adaptive reuse spaces. These industrial spaces are
commercially zoned but are surrounded by residences, making them a walkable, integrated part of the town. A sustainable vibrancy is created in these spaces because of the variation of use; for instance, the Canal Studios houses a ballet school, artist studios, private offices, an indoor soccer academy, a café, and a music school with recording and practice space. The variety of services and business attracts many demographics of the town's residents and reaches a regional audience as well.

The various businesses create an opportunity for people to meet one another and form relationships that they wouldn't otherwise, such as an entrepreneur with a start-up business conversing with a mother dropping her children at ballet class, or an aspiring artist meeting a more established one, or a student connecting with a potential employer. These types of spaces lead to a sort of cross-pollination, which allows for the town to feel as though it is livable and that opportunities can spark
and develop – a product of social capital. This kind of activity mimics what happens in a traditional town setting, where ground-level shops line the street. These types of spaces, unique to a place, have stories and mysteries that local people discover as they return to the place again and again, creating a sense of attachment, community, ambassadorship and stewardship. The continued interaction leads to an overall sense of belonging and a sense of identity that is firmly rooted in a specific place.

Truly, Lambertville’s cultural preservation begins with its people. Chain restaurants and “big box” stores that line highways and are surrounded by parking lots lack the ability or the potential to provide patrons with a type of experience that would create place attachment in the same way that, for instance, Rojo’s Roastery or Caffé Galleria would. Surely, one can get to know “regulars” or staff at these establishments to build relationships, however, there is little opportunity for the patron to give back to the establishment in terms of stewardship or ambassadorship. The potential to develop a dynamic relationship between a person and a place is lessened, and the result a loss of attachment to place and community. Social capital is diminished rather than being bolstered by routine, common social interaction that happens when people within a community see one another frequently on the sidewalk and in third places. The result is a loss of place attachment to a unique place, and further, little option for forming identity through one’s place.

Beginning in 1970’s, and continuing to the present, the local leadership in Lambertville has consistently upheld its coordination and dialogue with the local population, both in its residents and commercial business owners. The historic
preservation efforts throughout the 1980's and 1990's leading to the present, have acknowledged Lambertville’s industrial growth as important to the cultural heritage of the area, as most of the buildings were constructed during the late 19th century, which acted as a bedrock upon which the cultural and social aspects of preservation were built. This has led to a success in revitalization efforts. The town has changed from a manufacturing town to a tourist town; however, it has maintained, and continues to build, third spaces, which makes the town still feel like it is self-contained and close-knit, and, in doing so, preserves the most authentic and significant aspects of small town life.
Chapter 4: Case Study of Flemington, NJ

Whereas Lambertville dipped into economic decline and has, to an extent, recovered through focus on bettering the community through preservation efforts, the historic Borough of Flemington is currently experiencing hardship. The local government, business owners, and residents are now challenged with bringing back vibrancy and economic stability to Main Street and the immediate neighborhood. But the causes of historic Flemington’s economic decline and its threatened cultural heritage are different than that of Lambertville’s, and because of this, it is probable that the solution to its recovery will also be different. After exploring Flemington’s history and recent past in relation to the preservation of its unique cultural heritage, this chapter will investigate new methods, in addition to traditional historic preservation efforts, which Flemington’s leadership are implementing in order to revitalize Main Street.

Flemington History

Located in a beautiful valley within a rural area, Flemington Borough (pop. 4,582)\textsuperscript{85} is entirely surrounded geographically by the much larger Raritan Township (pop. 22,185)\textsuperscript{86}. Like Lambertville, Lenape Indians were the original inhabitants of what is now Flemington, and the area was marked by many Indian trails. The valley had good soil and wind protection from the surrounding hills, making it a habitable place.

\textsuperscript{85} U.S. Census Bureau. http://www.census.gov/censusexplorer/censusexplorer.html

\textsuperscript{86} Ibid.
location. One of the first settlers to the area in 1738 was German immigrant Johann Philip Kase, who was known for his amicable negotiations with Chief Tuccamirgan.87

Flemington Borough was originally named “Flemings,” and then “Flemington village,” after Samuel Fleming. Fleming purchased land in 1756, and established a tavern at the intersection of two Indian trails. The Borough of Flemington, as it is today, gained sovereignty from the larger, surrounding area of Raritan Township and became a separate municipality as late as 1910, with an official confirmation by the State of New Jersey in 1931;88 however, Flemington village was designated the county seat as early as 1785.89,90 This is significant because it spurred Flemington village’s growth and established its function to not only act as a center for governance but as a center for commercial trade that supported the county’s farming practices. Historians of this region note the importance of the agricultural industry as part of the cultural heritage of Hunterdon County and Flemington’s role in providing a place for that industry to produce and sell goods and provide gathering spaces for farm associations.91

According to James Snell, one of the region’s leading historians in the late 19th century:

90 Note: When Flemington’s original courthouse burned down in 1826, Lambertville made an unsuccessful attempt to take the county seat.
There are few places of its size that possess at once the rural beauty, the repose and quiet, and the conveniences of the metropolis in so great a degree as Flemington, all which seem happily blended. And in that distant future for which we write we venture to prophesy that Flemington will stand in the fore-front of the villages of the State.\(^92\)

At the time of his reflections, it would appear Snell was on the right track in his predictions, as Flemington built upon its early industry and commerce that included small tradesmen and mechanics, blacksmiths, earthenware producers, watch makers, tailors and milliners, taverns and county stores. By the end of the 19\(^{th}\) century, the town included a steam gristmill, sash and blind factory, marble and granite providers, a brickyard, and carriage and wagon manufacturer. Flemington also had many goods and services that provided all one would need for daily life such as shoes and clothing, dry goods, tobacco, hardware, groceries, lumber, coal, among other items.\(^93\) Yet most of the trade, transportation, and manufacturing was largely concerned with farming, as Hubert Schmidt states in his 1946 account of rural practices in Hunterdon County, “the social organizations and cultural growth have been those engrossed in gaining a livelihood from the soil, and the political outlook has always been typically rural.”\(^94\)

Throughout the 18\(^{th}\) and 19\(^{th}\) centuries, farmers grew a variety of native and non-native crops, such as pumpkins, wheat, rye, barley, oats, corn, potatoes, melons, squash, and many other types of vegetables and flowers. From the later 19\(^{th}\) through

\(^{92}\) Snell, ibid., 338.
\(^{93}\) Ibid, 330-38.
\(^{94}\) Schmidt, 3.
20th centuries, peach orchards provided for a booming market until overproduction followed by an insect infestation collapsed sales.\textsuperscript{95} Sheep and swine breeding increased until about 1850 until those industries began declining through the 20th century.\textsuperscript{96}

Farming industries that had particular growth in the first half of the 20th century were in the chicken and egg production, diary farming, and beekeeping. In 1918, the Dairymen's League Cooperative Association formed in Flemington, creating a milk receiving station that became one of the largest in the country and in 1933 the Hunterdon County Milk Producers Association collected here to perform bargaining activities. Rivaling the dairy operations in scale was the chicken and egg industry; in 1912, leading poultry producers of the county formed the Hunterdon Poultry Association, which led to the opening of the Flemington Egg Auction in 1930 and sponsorship of the Flemington Auction Market Cooperative (whose historic building still stands and is known locally as “The Old Egg Auction”). With the expansion of the Flemington Auction Market, poultry and livestock, along with eggs, were sold.\textsuperscript{97} In concert with Rutgers University's Agricultural Department, the Poultry Association held the Hunterdon County Egg-Laying Contests and egg auctions since the 1930's, which would draw hundreds of people from the area and supported the industry by allowing the buying and selling to occur in a centralized

\textsuperscript{95} Adams, ibid. 277.
\textsuperscript{96} Schmidt, 112, 150.
location and for the rest of the county to see what the farmers were producing.\textsuperscript{98}

Thus, the egg auction was established to fulfill the needs of the local farming economy, but grew to serve as an anchor for the community on a cultural and social level. It rooted local identity in place and reflected the cultural heritage practices of farming in Hunterdon County. The farming industry, combined with the numerous local commerce enterprises that supported these activities, therefore reinforced Flemington as a regional cultural and economic center.

Changes to Flemington in the Past 50 Years

Throughout the 1940’s and 1950’s, the Flemington Egg Auction became the largest in the country. By the 1950’s, however, the poultry market began to suffer from overproduction and rising costs of feed, which led to a decline in the market.\textsuperscript{99}

By the 1970’s, the Flemington Egg Auction closed and the building was turned into office space.

\textsuperscript{98} Ibid. 155-159.

While the site continues to be a preserved historic building because it falls
within the downtown historic district of Flemington, as listed on the National and
State Registers, the Old Egg Auction is a ghost of Flemington's farming-based
heritage and economy. Similar places around the town reflect the same statement:
the Agway property, which supplied farming equipment, now lies desolate and
empty on the north end of Main Street, and the former Hunterdon County
Fairgrounds, which hosted a popular traditional 4-H fair each year since the late 19th
century, was paved over in 2009 to make room for a collection of big box stores and
chain establishments.¹⁰⁰

By the 1960’s, the identity of Flemington Borough as a center for the region's
farming community began to change. As has happened in so many other places in

America, the practice of farming became less valuable than the value of the land itself. Most of the suburban developments and commercial strip establishments occurred in the surrounding township of Raritan, as it had provided the farmland. As a result, the population in Raritan Township increased dramatically in the second half of the 20th century; in 1950 the population was 2,814, and by 2000 it had reached 19,809. Flemington Borough maintained its status as a bustling commercial center, however, because it was the first town in the region to build an outlet retail center, the Liberty Village Shopping Outlets. Opening for business in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s it became popular with tourists and locals alike who enjoyed the quaint, pedestrian-only setting. Connecting Liberty Village to Main Street is an area called Turntable Junction, built in 1965, which consists of shops housed in faux historic buildings, made to look like early American farmhouses, arranged around a small park with a gazebo.

Main Street, Turntable Junction, and Liberty Village comprise the commercial areas of Flemington Borough, and, in combination, thrived as a small downtown area until the early 1990’s. Flemington’s downtown was supported by many attractions in and around the Borough, such as the Flemington Fairgrounds and Speedway, two movie theaters, the Flemington Cut Glass Factory, and the restaurant and bar of the historic Union Hotel, located at the center of town. Sadly for Flemington, all of these attractions are now demolished or empty.

What caused this bustling downtown to fall into such disregard? Until the 1990’s, Flemington hadn’t felt the negative effects of a large, regional mall established within 20 miles like other towns such as Lambertville had already faced since the 1970’s. That changed in 1989 when the Bridgewater Commons Mall, complete with a new movie theater, opened about 15 miles away. Then, in the mid-1990’s, two other factory outlet stores were established within a 50 to 60 mile...
radius of Flemington, which pulled more customers from the region. After that, in the late 1990’s and early 2000’s, yet another wave of competition came from “big box” stores developed in Raritan Township, which needed to generate a bigger tax base to support its exploded population growth. With all of these elements working against the economic stability of downtown Flemington, the Borough suffered long before the “Great Recession” of 2008, although once it hit, it was devastating. Retail sales in Flemington dropped from $280 million in 2002 to $176 million in 2011.\footnote{Strategic Advisory Group. \textit{Market Research & Feasibility Analysis: Executive Summary Report}. 2012. Commissioned by the Flemington Business Improvement District.}

Compounding the damage, Raritan Township opened a Walmart Supercenter in 2009 and new “lifestyle” outlets in 2010, which significantly impacted retail in Flemington Borough by shifting the percentage of local dollars spent in the region.

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Local Response to the Decline of Flemington Borough’s Downtown

In considering the decline of downtown Flemington, it seems that a specific local landmark, the Union Hotel, held a linchpin to the resurgence of local preservation efforts. Built in 1878 in the Second Empire style, the Union Hotel is a grand four-story building with a Mansard roof and a wide porch located in the heart of the downtown on Main Street, just opposite the Hunterdon Country Courthouse. The hotel is widely known in the town for its historic significance,\footnote{The hotel gained notable fame in the 1930’s for housing the sequestered jury and providing a hub for journalists during the notorious “Trial of the Century” of Bruno} but also for its
social and cultural value. Although the business had not operated as a hotel since the 1970's, it had remained open as a restaurant and bar, specifically, the last bar in downtown Flemington. In 2008, however, the owners could no longer manage the facility and closed the business. After more than year of inactivity, the owners then put the building on the market. The hotel now stands a powerful symbol at the heart of Main Street, impressing upon the local community the urgency of the decline.

![Image of the Union Hotel](image)

Figure 9: The Union Hotel pictured here in 2006, while a restaurant remained in operation. Photograph by Daniel Case

Hauptman, who was accused of kidnapping the child of legendary aviator Charles Lindbergh. The building is recognized for its architectural and historical significance in its listing on the State and National Registers of Historic Places.
In 2010, the Borough Council enacted New Jersey State’s Local Redevelopment and Housing Law,\(^{104}\) which gives authority to a municipality to adopt a redevelopment plan for a “specifically delineated project area” that can be proved to lack proper development by criteria of unsafe, dilapidated or unsanitary conditions that would have a negative effect on the “morals or welfare of the community.”\(^{105}\) As the building had been neglected for decades and was in a state of disrepair, the Council easily passed an ordinance in October of 2010 for the Union Hotel Redevelopment Plan, hoping to entice a developer to undertake the project.\(^{106}\)

After several attempts to match a developer with the project, the building was eventually purchased in January 2013 by local restaurateur Matt McPherson and marketing consultant Liam Burns under their company, Flemington Union Hotel, LLC.\(^{107}\)

Currently, the redevelopment remains in the planning stages, but a more complex challenge in this case has to do with the liquor license, which was sold by the previous hotel owners to Bensi, a franchise Italian chain restaurant located in a strip mall area at the edge of the Borough. Despite contestation from Flemington Borough residents, the transfer of the license was upheld, leaving downtown with no available liquor licenses.\(^{108}\) According to a New Jersey State law passed in 1948,

\(^{104}\) N.J.S.A. 40 A:12-1, et.seq.

\(^{105}\) N.J.S.A. 40A: 12A-5d


\(^{108}\) The Borough of Flemington has three liquor licenses that all belong to establishments along the fringes of the Borough. Those licenses “in excess” had been
the population of the municipality dictates the number of available liquor licenses.\textsuperscript{109} Flemington would need a population increase of 3,000 in order to qualify for another liquor license, which is highly improbable. To solve the problem of attaining a liquor license, the Flemington Union Hotel, LLC then bought the Bensi Restaurant with the liquor license in the summer of 2013. The restaurant was reopened as a private, locally owned establishment as Gallo Rosso Ristorante. It was a bold and expensive maneuver, but at least the liquor license is again owned by the same purveyor as The Union Hotel, LLC. In theory, Gallo Rosso could transfer the license to The Union Hotel once it reopens.

The year 2010 marked a fresh start for Flemington, as newly elected Mayor Erica Edwards not only led the Council to commit to helping redevelop the Union Hotel, but to make sure that all of the various committees and commissions serving the Borough were fully staffed and had a clear understanding of their goals, missions and responsibilities. In 1980, Flemington had followed the trending local preservation movement, and established a Historic District with the National Register and created a Historic Preservation Commission with an ordinance that set its goals and organization.\textsuperscript{110} The Flemington Borough Historic District encompasses Main Street and branches out to some side streets or parts of side streets that include historic or contributing structures (see map, Figure 10, below).
Figure 10: Map of the Flemington Historic District by Clarke, Caton, Hintz planning and architectural design firm of Trenton, New Jersey. The Historic District is outlined in blue.
The commitment from the town to preserving its historic character was strong in the early years of the HPC, and there was an overall sense of stewardship toward historic buildings and the heritage they embodied. The developments of the new shopping areas of this time, Turntable Junction and Liberty Village, were viewed as contributing to the charm and vibrancy of the town, as the areas were well taken care of and pedestrian-friendly. However, as time passed, the HPC became disorganized and inactive.

When Elaine Gorman, now the chair of the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), was appointed to the HPC in 2008, she was surprised to learn that the commission only had three members, lacked an appointed chair person or organization of the members, and that they only met if there was an application for exterior changes to a historic structure within the district. With new leadership from Mayor Edwards, Gorman took the initiative and filled out the Board of the HPC to have five regular members and two alternate members. Also, the Mayor appointed a liaison from the Borough Council to sit in on the HPC meetings.\footnote{111} Gorman praises her experience working with the current board, stating how gratifying it is to work with “a group of people who bring to the table different areas of expertise but a total commitment to Flemington Borough, to the integrity of the (Historic) District, to a working ethic,” and that she feels supported by the Council, particularly because of the inclusion of a Preservation Element to the Master Plan.\footnote{112}

\footnote{111} Which, as Gorman noted, that it this structural organization was actually in the bylaws of the HPC as directed by the HPC Ordinance, found in §1404 of the Local Land Ordinance.

\footnote{112} Gorman, interview notes, 3/11/14.
Gorman expressed that the current HPC board “is still fighting the bad feelings that unfortunately were created many years ago by a former HPC.” To combat the perception of inactivity, the HPC board that Gorman has headed for over five years has reached out to the community in many ways in order to create a sense of stewardship, civic pride, and appreciation for historic structures. In a letter to the editor of the local paper, the *Hunterdon County Democrat*, in June of 2011, Vice-Chair Anelle Disisto explained the role of the HPC to residents to create awareness and explain the purpose of their work:

We all contribute to the vision that a revitalized Flemington will again become a hub for local business, commerce and social activity. Maintaining a home is a major undertaking; maintaining an historic home is an even greater one. It is an honor that brings both recognition and responsibility… These reviews ensure the ongoing integrity of the district, encourage maintenance of properties, provide an increased understanding and appreciation of our heritage, and contribute to the economic health of the borough.\(^{113}\)

The HPC sends regular mailings in the form of letters and postcards to inform the public of their presence and role within the community, and sponsors community events, such as a plein air arts festival and informational sessions on historic structures and proper maintenance of historic structures. With all of the public outreach, they now complete over 30 formal historic preservation reviews per year, up from five to seven reviews per year, after changes were made to the organization.

\(^{113}\) Disisto, Anelle, “Flemington’s Historic Preservation Committee wants to help residents,” from *Letters to the Editor, Hunterdon County Democrat*, June 27, 2011.
The HPC also gives informal reviews of historic preservation proposals, which help property owners in making accurate choices and guides them through the process. To support all of the work, the HPC now meets with more frequency than in the past, meeting twice a month, with one session for review of applications and the other devoted to a work session.

The HPC’s purpose and guidelines for historic reviews are outlined in the Historic Preservation Ordinance,¹¹⁴ which was revised in 2010 by the Borough Council. The guidelines in the ordinance follow the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards Treatment of Historic Structures, and are bolstered by an additional set of guidelines created by the HPC, Planning Board and architectural firm, Clark Caton Hintz, that are yet more specific to the architecture of Flemington. Generally, in what is considered a “weak” ordinance, the HPC is only effective if the Planning Board enforces and utilizes their recommendations and suggestions. If the Planning Board is more sympathetic to the demands of developers and property owners, suggestions by the HPC will have little effect in the outcome of historic preservation. According to Gorman, the Planning Board takes the recommendations of the HPC most of the time, however, they can occasionally be persuaded by a property owner who is adamant in ignoring the HPC’s recommendations.

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¹¹⁴ Ord. No. 2010-17
Downtown Revitalization: The Flemington Business Improvement District

In 2011, the Council of Flemington Borough passed an ordinance to create a non-profit organization called a Business Improvement District (BID)\(^{115}\) whose purpose is to serve as a management corporation to the business district\(^{116}\) by “work[ing] toward recruiting, revitalizing and retaining businesses in the business district of the Borough of Flemington.”\(^{117}\) Beginning in the 1980’s and gaining popularity through the 1990’s, Business Improvement Districts serve as an organizational tool for local governments to organize and fund a “self-help” type of initiative.\(^{118}\) The organization is funded through an additional local tax, based on assessed property value, of commercial properties and residences with over five units within the Borough of Flemington. Directed by an elected Board of Trustees, members of the BID comprise four committees of 1) marketing and advertising 2) safety and beautification 3) planning and design 4) event coordination. Under direction of the Board and the committees, is the job of the Executive Director to implement strategies and plans that follow their vision.\(^{119}\)

\(^{115}\) Passed under N.J.S.A. 40:55-65. et seq., which refers to a Special Improvement District (SID), a name synonymous with Business Improvement District.

\(^{116}\) As defined in the *By-Laws of the Flemington Business Improvement District Management Corporation, Inc.* Adopted April 5, 2011. Article II. 2.01.

\(^{117}\) FBID Mission Statement.


\(^{119}\) Interview with Megan Jones-Holt, FBID Director, 12/4/2013.
In an interview with the Executive Director, Megan Jones-Holt described aspects of the three-part strategy of the organization as guided by the mission. First, she emphasized implementation of long-term planning to attract investors and recruit new businesses. In the fall of 2013, the FBID contracted the planning and design firm Terra Noble Designs, who indentified six areas in the Borough which they assessed to be underused and in need of redevelopment, and have created design plans that developers could use as guides if they were to be contracted to redevelop an identified area. In envisioning what the town could look like, Tim Delorn of Terra Noble Designs explained that Flemington needed to concentrate on increasing population by attracting developers to build higher density housing downtown, create a “restaurant row,” small theatre or performing arts district, and sculpt attractive public gathering spaces for outdoor festivals. Delorn presented the designs at a public meeting in the Hunterdon County Court House on Main Street.\(^{120}\)

As a part of the “streetscape project,” new lighting along sidewalks, signage, flower urns placed along sidewalks, and meeting ADA regulations are part of the plan that the BID hopes will connect parts of the borough – historic Main Street, the Liberty Village Outlets, and the strip mall shops along the larger, busier roads around downtown - that currently feel physically disjointed.\(^{121}\) Using visual markers, such as signage or plantings to unify downtown areas may function to


provide helpful, symbolic indicators for a town that is facing the challenge of re-conceptualizing their community’s identity through place.

While the design plans for redevelopment have been one of the most visible and lofty activities of the Flemington BID, the organization is also targeting business improvement strategies that engage the community. One of the main concerns of business owners along Main Street is a lack of pedestrian traffic. The BID plans to attract locals and visitors from the surrounding region with music attractions on Main Street, such as a fall Jazz Festival and “Music on Main” on Wednesday evenings during the summertime. Working directly with business owners and their employees, the BID hosts ongoing workshops for local businesses to learn more about marketing, website improvement and online presence, and window displays and signage. In addition, the organization is developing an active online presence and via their website and social media pages to give updates, hold marketing campaigns, and post events.

Many aspects of the Flemington BID position the organization to make a profound change and positively influence the quality of life in Flemington given the variety of projects currently underway as well as their potential to use their resources to incorporate community building in their approach to revitalization. In taking a closer look at the bylaws of the FBID, not only is it their purpose to “promote and implement the economic revitalization and general welfare” of the Borough, but also to “promote and preserve the cultural, historic, tourist, and civic
interests” of the community. Seth Grossman, who is the Ironbound BID Director in Newark, New Jersey and Director of the Institute of Business Improvement Districts at Rutgers University School of Public Affairs and Administration, lauds the potential of BID organizations because “unlike purely economic agencies, BIDs are so localized that they are extensions of the community, and their true nature is community development” and can “act as vehicles for accelerated citizen involvement and dialogue.”

BIDs are private sector management corporations that are born from the public sector that have access to public support and resources enabling them to compete with well-funded private organizations in the suburbs while staying true to the grassroots effort from which they were established. Grossman notes that “in almost every case BIDs are created by choice through community-based planning processes,” which enable BID managers to “step onto the cutting edge of new public administration as revitalizationists, facilitators of value-based community identity, and the managers...that eventually sustain that identity.”

The Flemington BID has the capacity to build social capital and initiate assessment of social value of the built environment by engaging directly with the community. While it can choose to accomplish this unilaterally, they could partner with the HPC. As a manager of town revitalization, the BID director can step into the

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122 By-Laws of the Flemington Business Improvement District Management Corporation, Inc. Adopted April 5, 2011. Article II Purposes. 2.01 (b) and (c).
123 Grossman 2008, ibid., 292
role of preservationist by coordinating with the Historic Preservation Commission
who, as discussed above, has been increasingly active and committed to engaging
the public in preservation initiatives. The two organizations are faced with the same
set of circumstances: the decline of the downtown and the loss of a vibrant
community. Call it revitalization or preservation – the goal is one in the same: to
reestablish a place where people want to live, work, and play while retaining its
unique historic character.
Chapter 5: Lambertville and Flemington: A Comparison and A Conclusion

In studying both Lambertville and Flemington in terms of their unique historic backgrounds, geography, population, historic preservation initiatives and recent growth and development, one can gain an understanding of how New Jersey town revitalization has occurred in the past and how it may occur in the future.

The revitalization of Lambertville occurred during a time when Business Improvement Districts were not yet common to the United States. The town leveraged efforts from citizens who were committed to historic preservation and understanding how the community valued place. It had the dual benefits of being situated on a river across from the already popular destination of New Hope, and of its surrounding area, which could not be built upon because of its steep slopes. With the river on one side, and a steep hill on the other, Lambertville remained a self-contained town where one can easily walk or bike. Today, Lambertville continues to be active and vibrant, with adaptive-reuse, mixed-use spaces, parks, third spaces, offices, retail and residences that are intermingled throughout the town.

The revitalization happened over a 20-year period, slowly and steadily, relying on its citizens’ commitment to maintain the unique historic quality. By reaching out to locals, the leadership in the town cultivated civic pride and community development, and in turn cultivated place attachment. This produced a feedback loop; as more people began to realize that the leadership was motivated and guided by their values of the place, more people began to want to live, work, and play in Lambertville, producing and furthering place attachment and fostering social
capital. The continual building of social capital has resonance: citizens feel as though they are the caretakers and stewards of their place and feel as though their values are reflected within the leadership of the local government.

Flemington has the potential to re-establish this kind of social capital feedback loop that has been cultivated in Lambertville, although Flemington faces an entirely different set of circumstances. Instead of being situated in between a large river and steep, rocky slopes, the Borough is surrounded by suburban sprawl, highways, strip malls and “big box” stores - the farmland of Raritan Township provided ample space for these 20th century developments. Being the county seat, Flemington also has many county government offices that do not contribute to the tax base. Another hurdle is the aforementioned lack of liquor licenses; whereas Flemington has only one available license that could eventually be transferred to the Union Hotel, Lambertville had eleven liquor licenses at the time of the 1948 NJ liquor law, and so they were all grandfathered in. Granted, Lambertville is a sleepy town at night as the bars usually close by 11 or 12 pm and most of the nightlife scene is a walk away in New Hope.

The Flemington BID should be cautious moving forward in actualizing their re-development plans so that new developments to the town do not diminish the historic quality and individual character that roots citizens’ identities and creates place attachment. Some critics of BID planning projects claim that they are branding campaigns that “create a homogenous marketable image that, coupled with capital improvements that emphasize the implementation of uniform street furniture, create generic streetscapes” that can contribute to a “Disneyifcation or over-
regulation of public space.” This type of design would work against the idea of celebrating a town’s unique features that give it character. As BIDs implement projects such as streetscape design, they could avoid a bland, homogenous design by embracing what makes the town unique. To determine these qualities, however, communication with the community must occur. This is a point at which a REAP assessment would be helpful, if not essential.

A new space that has opened recently in Flemington exemplifies both a commitment to historic preservation as well as attention to third space principles. The Stangl Factory, which used to house the Fulper Pottery Company, was rehabilitated as a mixed-use, adaptive reuse space. The historic factory maintains much of its original structure and fabric, as well as the impressive beehive kilns. Housed in the Stangl Factory are now a restaurant, a coffee shop, a locally owned clothing store, an art gallery, a pottery studio, and a central open space that supports a weekly farmers’ market and craft market. The open space can also be rented out for parties, gatherings, art fairs, and concerts.

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The Stangl Factory is reminiscent of Lambertville spaces that have been rehabilitated in a similar way: old factories that house multiple kinds of businesses under one roof. In Lambertville, for example, are the Canal Studios and the
Spokeworks Factory, in which a yoga studio, Rago Auction House Annex, and multiple artist studios call home. Not only do the buildings retain their historic character to some degree, but also they are “third places”, retail, and commercial businesses that benefit from the presence of one another’s proximity.

Looking toward the future, the Flemington Business Improvement District may consider including an assessment of the community’s sociocultural value of the places they inhabit. Implementation of projects, workshops and cultural events guided by this assessment would be effective in having a role in reestablishing a sense of connectivity to places and community. The FBID is now working with the Stangl Factory manager to coordinate future events and gatherings. This marks an important development in the relationship between this local organization and its community’s creation of a new “third space.”

The efforts of the Council, BID and HPC have potential to be successful in their revitalization efforts by working toward a shared vision. This vision needs to be realized, solidified, and directed by engaging residents and business owners to assess the value of the place in which they live and work. The BID has access to resources such as funding, membership, and volunteers in order to complete such work. An option may also be to create a partnership with the HPC to create and implement that assessment through survey methodologies, which may be accomplished by commissioning a cultural resource management firm staffed with anthropologists and archaeologists trained to carry out a REAP assessment. This work will open a dialogue, create interest, and build trust between the organizations and the public they serve. In conceptualizing preservation as a process that
continually must react to destabilizing pressures, kick-starting social capital in this way will serve to buffer, support and sustain revitalization.

The tools put in place by policies such as the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and the regulatory procedures set by the National Secretary of the Interior’s Standards have carried the preservation movement through to the present, but they can only go so far. These policies are insufficient in instructing communities to use methodology such as REAP assessment to evaluate sociocultural value. As we have seen in Lambertville, a community’s leaders are capable of assessing its residents’ value of place through ad-hoc grassroots community outreach programs. However, as BIDs are called to do the work of preservationists, developing a more academically-sound methodology can be a way of measuring their success and holding them accountable. These will be the relevant issues and questions as BIDs move forward in creating their goals and initiating projects. As a result, future local preservationists, whose goals are to revitalize and protect small towns and “Main Street,” may work less frequently with Historic Preservation Commissions and more often with a Business Improvement District, or related organizations, such as Main Street Organizations.
Appendix A: Questionnaires Used in Semi-Structured Interviews

Note: All persons interviewed have given permission to have their names and any information presented at the interview to be included in this thesis. The author, Allison Richard, has kept notes and signed permission notices in her possession for review.

Interview Questions for Stewart Palilonis: April 12, 2013

1) When did you move to Lambertville?

2) How and why did you become involved in historic preservation?

3) Did you witness historic preservation initiatives in Lambertville? If so, can you describe the process of how historic preservation evolved in Lambertville?

4) What is your role in the Historic Preservation Commission?

5) Was historic preservation a controversial issue when it was being incorporated in the master plan and as an ordinance? If so, how did this get resolved?

Interview Questions for Cindy Ege: August 6, 2013

1) How long have you lived/worked in Lambertville?

2) Have long have you worked with the City and what have been your roles? Have you held other positions (voluntary or otherwise)?

3) What was your involvement, if any, with the development and implementation of the Historic District, the HDC and the Historic Preservation Ordinance?
4) Who were some key initiators of the historic preservation activities? Did they work in concert with one another over the years as the survey, districting, and ordinances came to fruition?

5) Were the majority of townspeople for or against preservation? Were there different groups/stakeholders with differing opinions? Describe changes over time.

6) Do you think that these laws and procedures function well for the town? Are there any improvements that you think could be made?

Interview Questions for Pam Stoltz: August 12, 2013

1) Where/when did you live in Lambertville? Do you still feel like it’s home?

2) Where did you shop/eat/hangout growing up? Are any of these places still there?

3) Did you live in Lambertville in the late 1980’s/early 1990’s when the local government became involved in historic preservation and revitalization of the downtown area? If so, were you witness to any changes and how did it affect you?

Interview Questions for Allison Kopicki: September 12, 2013

1) When and why did you move to Lambertville?

2) Are you happy living here? Do you plan to stay for a long time?

3) What are some of the best qualities and worst qualities of living here?

4) Do you work in town or commute? Discuss any affects this answer has on your living in town.

5) What is your educational/professional background?
6) If in any way, how are you involved with your community/town? Would you say that being a part of your community and your participation in it is important to you, either personally or professionally?

Interview Questions for Megan Jones-Holt: December 4, 2013

1) How long have you been with the BID? Are you originally from the area? Could you tell me a bit about your professional background?

2) What is your organization’s strategy to achieving its goals?

3) Have you chosen to incorporate any advice or research from a third party, such as a consulting firm, or other non-profit organization that specialize in restoring downtown business, in order to further your goals and inform your decision-making? If so, which companies or organizations are involved and to what extend and why?

4) Do you feel as though the community is embracing your vision and/or efforts? Please describe positive and/or negative feedback within the community.

Interview Questions for Elaine Gorman: March 11, 2014

1) How long have you been a resident of the Flemington Borough?

2) Can you describe your professional background? (Particularly in historic preservation, architecture or history if applicable.)

3) When and why did you become a member of the HPC?

4) Was the HPC established concurrently with the Flemington Historic District designation on the State and National Registers of Historic Properties (1980)?
5) Do you know how or why the HPC was established? For instance, did the local government feel as though historic properties in the Borough were threatened after the development of Liberty Village and Turntable Junction?
6) Do you feel as though the role of the HPC has changed since it was established? For instance, with the passage of the Historic Preservation Ordinance in 2010, do you feel as though the HPC has been more effective?
7) How has the HPC reached out to residents and business owners of historic properties? Is there an element of stewardship?
8) Based on your experience as both a resident and HPC member, do you think that the local government considers historic preservation to be a priority in the revitalization of the town?


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