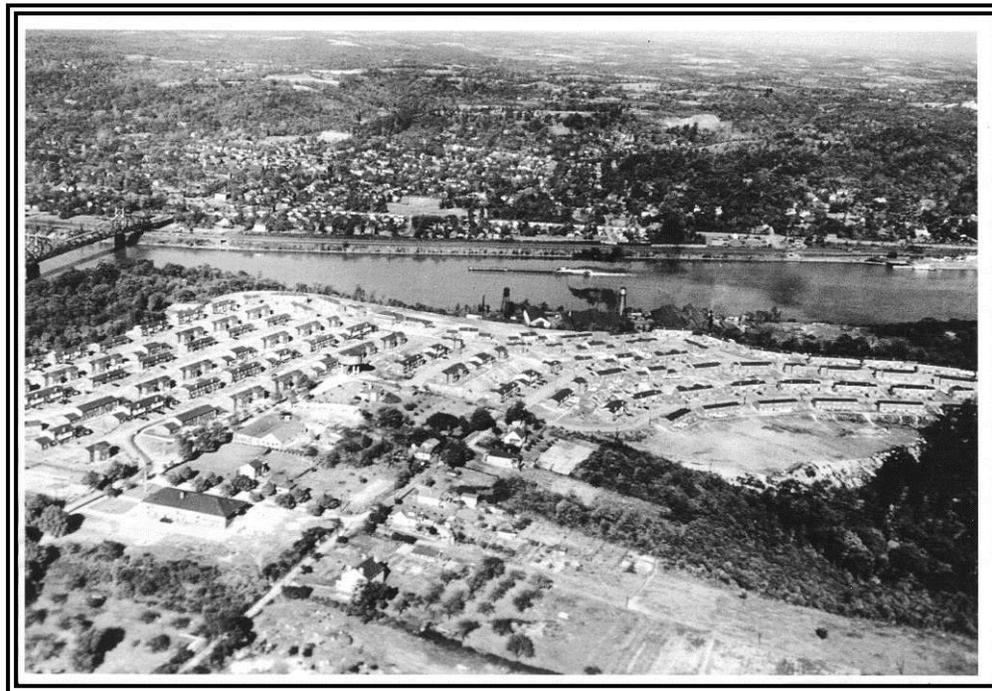


# **Mooncrest Historic Overlay District**

## **DESIGN GUIDELINES**

**Moon Township Code of Ordinances**  
**Chapter 27**

**Listed on the National Register of Historic Places**  
**September 2013**



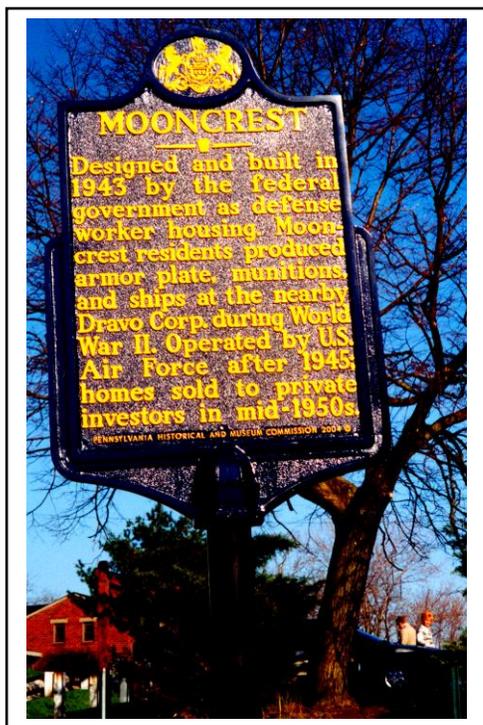
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# Introduction

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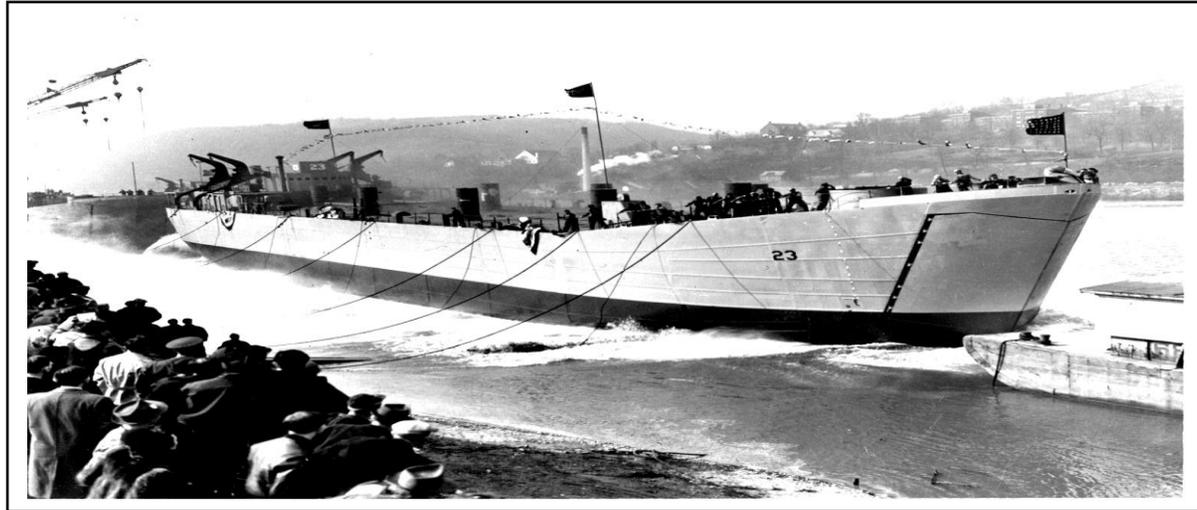


Approved by the Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission, the Mooncrest Historic Marker was dedicated at a ceremony held on April 15, 2004

Mooncrest was certified by the Pennsylvania History and Museum Commission as a site worthy of application for recognition on the National Registry of Historic Places List on March 17, 2005, with the establishment of Mooncrest as a Historic District. Mooncrest has been recognized as a significant example of war time worker housing in site design and building type. On September 18, 2013, Mooncrest was listed on the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A in the area of Community Planning and Development and Social History.

World War II had an immense impact on the life of our nation. In 1943, in response to the need for war production worker housing, the Mooncrest community was constructed under the Lanham Act. As production of goods to supply the war effort accelerated, many families relocated to production centers. Moon Township, still a largely rural area, became home for nearly 400 of these families, in the Township's first planned residential area, Mooncrest. Many of those family members, both men and women were employed at the Dravo Shipyards on Neville Island; engaged in the building of Landing Ship Tanks, or LST's, or at American Bridge or local steel plants. Members of these families went into the military services and were sent into battles in Europe and the South Pacific. The local Air Base housed military personnel in Mooncrest, a nearby source for dependent and enlisted housing.

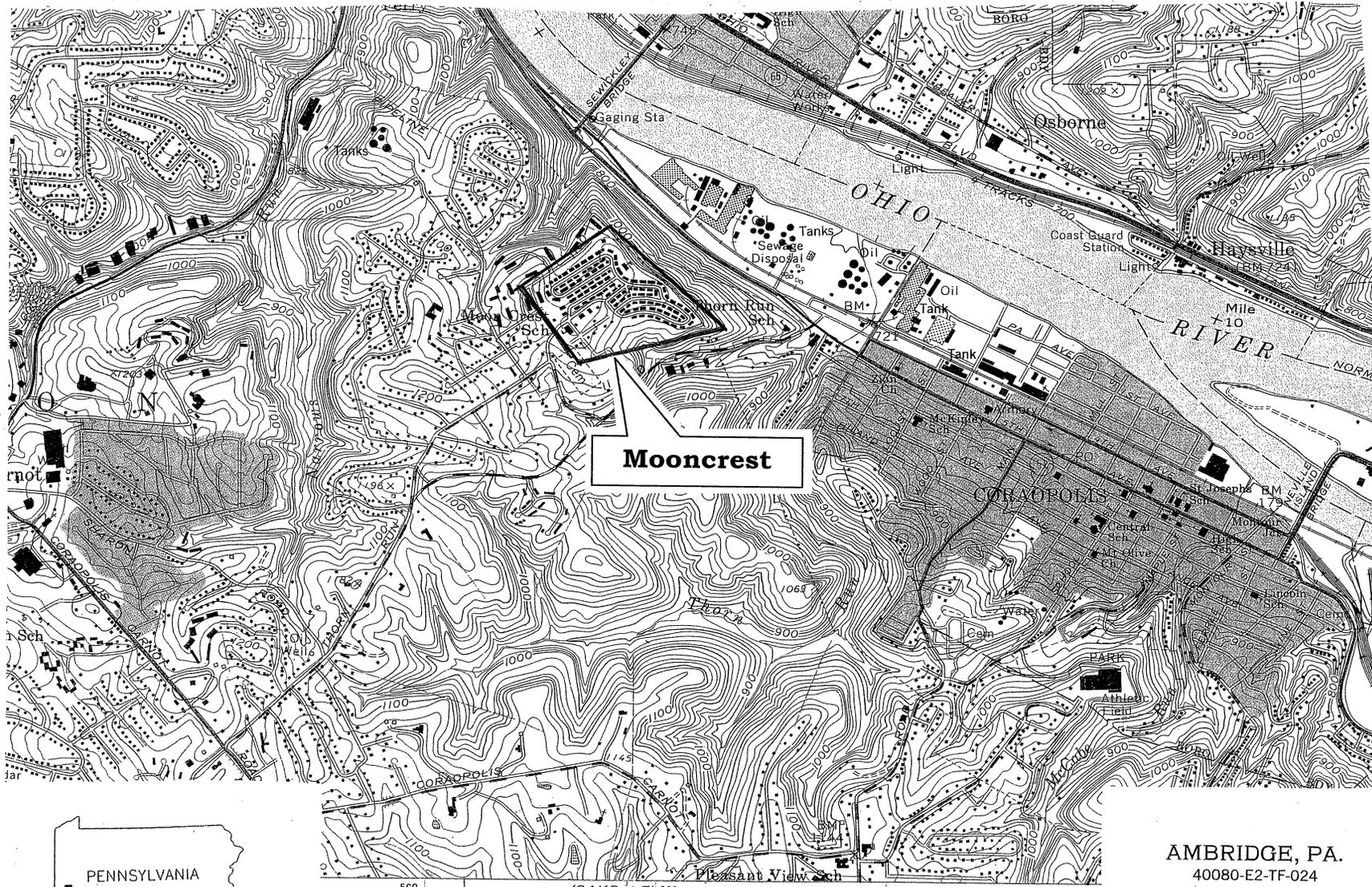
Mooncrest was the home of the first Moon Township Municipal Services Building, which included: police, fire and municipal services offices. A school was located at the entrance to the housing plan, and a "Quonset hut" school, affectionately known as the "Tin-can School", held the over-flow of children from the post war baby boom. Many Moon Township residents recall fond memories of their school years in Mooncrest, including State Representative Mark Mustio, who attended the "Tin-can School". Mooncrest was also home, for a short time, to the family of the first United States Director of Homeland Security and former Commonwealth Governor, Thomas Ridge.



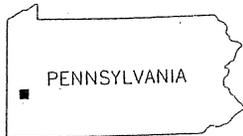
The launching of LST 1 at the Neville Island yard, the first of this class of vessel anywhere. (Landing Ship Tank)

Many war production worker communities, like Mooncrest, were constructed during the WWII period. However, most of those communities were eventually sold by the federal government to County Public Housing Agencies or were sold as cooperative apartment/town home complexes. Mooncrest was sold into private hands, building by building, at almost cost; with preference given to military, veterans and war production workers. This arrangement came about because of the protests of military families residing in the community who were not permitted, at that time, to purchase cooperatively owned property. These families wanted the opportunity to stay in the sturdily built redbrick community and put down their roots. Mooncrest became the home of many of the “Greatest Generation” as the post war years progressed. As families purchased entire buildings, containing two, four or six units of housing, they often rented portions to others. Over time, this allowed the accumulation of savings to purchase larger, single family homes in the fast-growing community of Moon Township or the surrounding area. For some of the original Mooncrest buyers, Mooncrest is still their family home base. Properties have been passed from generation to generation.

For the sacrifices made by the veterans who made Mooncrest home in the post war period, for the dedication and skill put into the war production effort by the families who called Mooncrest home, for its example of war production housing and residential planning design; Mooncrest was declared a local Historic District by Moon Township on March 17, 2005. The utilitarian style of the sturdy redbrick homes, the pedestrian friendly layout of its streets and pathways, its parks and, now mature, tree buffers between streets are worthy of preservation for working families now and into the future.



**Mooncrest**



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

568 (OAKDALE) 569 570 10'

4964 NW

SCALE 1:24 000

CONTOUR INTERVAL, 20 FEET  
 NATIONAL GEODETIC VERTICAL DATUM OF 1929

**AMBRIDGE, PA.**  
 40080-E2-TF-024

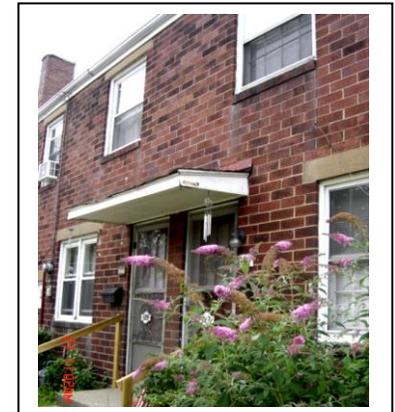
1960  
 PHOTOREVISED 1990  
 DMA 4965 II SW-SERIES V831

## Purpose

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The purpose of the Mooncrest Historic District Guidelines is to encourage the preservation of historic buildings and homes using rehabilitation techniques. These techniques are economical yet do not sacrifice historic architectural features. The Township of Moon, the Pennsylvania Historic Museum Commission, and local residents have identified these features as being important to the neighborhood and the community. The Guidelines are to be used as part of the requirements established by Chapter 27 in the Moon Township Code of Ordinances.

The guidelines are intended to protect the historic character of the district. They are based on the principle that architectural features, which are visible from the street, are more important from a historic district standpoint and should be preserved if possible. Those features that are not visible are less significant to the district character, so greater flexibility is allowed in terms of rehabilitation techniques. While consistent in principle with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation in advocating the preservation of historic features and materials, the guidelines emphasize flexibility on changes which will not have a strong, visible impact on the historic district.



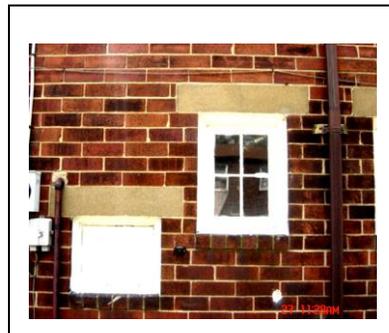
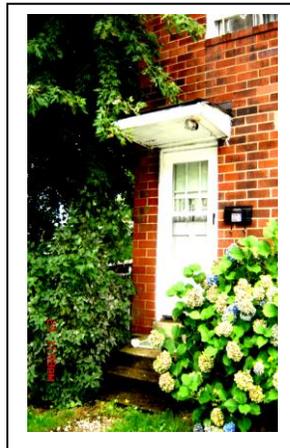
# Planning Process

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Identify the most historically significant features of the building. Prioritize these features in terms of their visibility from the street, giving preference to the exterior of the building over its interior, and to the public, first floor interior spaces over less important interior spaces. Following this approach, it would be more important to keep historic features on the front of the building than on the back of the building. *A pre-planning consultation with the Zoning Officer is recommended.*

Significant street view features include but are not limited to;

- Stoops, porches, entrances;
- Foundation, steps, exterior walls;
- Chimneys, roofs, exterior trim;
- Windows, coal chutes, dryer vents;
- Driveways, landscaping, fences;
- Utilities, cables, satellite dishes.



**Collage of good examples of original and rehabilitation options**

## Rehabilitation Options

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The rehabilitation options are ranked, like the Secretary of the Interior's Rehabilitation Standards (see Appendix pg.17), to favor keeping important historic features rather than replacing them. So, the first option, which calls for the repair of important historic features, is the most desirable from a preservation standpoint. It is the least intrusive rehabilitation choice and often – depending on existing conditions – the least expensive rehabilitation option.

Sometimes, the historic building has already been unsympathetically altered or neglected to the extent that the first option is not a viable choice. This situation triggers consideration of the second option – replace to match the historic feature or material.

**Decisions about which option is most appropriate should recognize the flexibility that the guidelines provide as they emphasize the importance of the building's street façade and are less concerned with changes to the rear.** Decisions about specific options should also be made with an understanding of the entire scope of the rehabilitation and what is best for the overall project.

Tax credits are available to owners of certified historic buildings in income producing use. **Property owners seeking State and/or Federal tax credits for rehabilitation of historic buildings must obtain approval of their rehabilitation plans from the PA State Historic Preservation Office prior to beginning of any work.** There are no grant or tax credit programs available to private homeowners.



Typical street scape

## Neighborhood's Historic Character

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The historic character of the Mooncrest Historic District is defined by the design of the neighborhood community. Located at the top of a bluff above the Ohio River, Mooncrest offers sweeping views of the river valley below. With one entrance road and seven blocks of circular interconnecting streets and sidewalks, it provides safety from heavy vehicular traffic and a strong sense of community among neighborhood residents. The setbacks, spacing and orientation of the buildings along neighborhood streets contribute to the character of the neighborhood. Mooncrest is a green neighborhood with mature trees in areas between each street, two neighborhood parks and is surrounded by wooded hillsides. Visual changes to the buildings, the street front facades and the front yards/drives must be carefully considered and thoughtfully planned

- If changes to the front yards are necessary, it is important to retain the original arrangement of front walkways and steps that typically lead directly up to the front stoop.
- It is important to preserve the building front facades, specifically preserving the relationship of the width and height of windows, doors and maintain the porch projections.
- It is also important to locate new meters, lines, pipes, transformers, satellite dishes, mechanical equipment, and communication equipment inconspicuously so that the street façade of the house is not compromised.
- Even larger changes such as compatible garages, storage buildings, and decks can usually be accommodated in rear yard locations without compromising the building's street façade.
- While privacy or safety concerns may lead to the addition of fencing in the rear yard, it is not historically appropriate to add such utilitarian fencing – especially vinyl or chain link fencing – in front yards or in highly visible side yard areas.

The guidelines that follow address various elements of the building exterior. But, it is important to relate the options selected for the individual exterior elements back to the overall appearance of the building from the street and, in turn, the visual impact of the selected option on the neighborhood's historic character.

# Building Site and Building Exterior

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## Foundations, Chimneys, Steps, Exterior Walls: Rehabilitation Options



Chimneys, masonry, brickwork and foundations are important features.



- 1. Retain and repair significant historic masonry foundations, chimneys and exterior walls - including their materials and features.**

Repointing is generally the best method of repairing deteriorated brickwork. Correct repointing requires the removal of loose mortar and replacement with new mortar to match the original in composition, color, strength, and texture. Duplicate old mortar joints in width and in joint profile. Do not paint unpainted exterior masonry. If it was already painted, repaint to match original brick or stone. Exterior building features, like chimneys for example, whether it is used or not, must be retained. **If all or parts of historic foundations, chimneys, or exterior walls are missing or too deteriorated to repair, remove any severely deteriorated masonry and replace to match the original.**
- 2. Cleaning masonry should be done only when necessary to halt deterioration or to remove heavy soiling.**

Clean masonry and exterior brick surfaces and walls with the gentlest method possible, such as low-pressure water and detergents, using natural bristle brushes.
- 3. Deteriorated stucco exterior should be removed rather than replaced.**

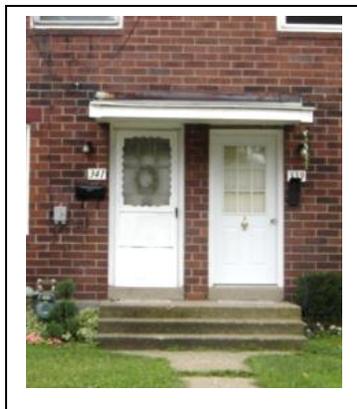
The original underlying exterior brick surface should be gently cleaned and restored.
- 4. Satellite dishes and similar antenna devices must be in the rear and not visible from the building's street facade.**
- 5. Features such as furnace intake/exhausts** are not permitted in the front façade. Utilizing The chimney of piping to rear is recommended.
- 6. Exterior Wiring** must be installed in workmanship manner. Abandoned wires/cables must be removed from building.

# Building Site and Building Exterior

## Stoops, Porches, & Parking Areas, Entrances: Rehabilitation Options



Original door and stoop



Good example of replacement doors with screen doors and stoop.

Front stoops are prominent features of many buildings/units in the Mooncrest Historic District and should be retained where possible. Exceptions can be made for ADA Compliance.

1. **Retain and repair historic stoops and entrances – including their materials, features, and details.** Every effort should be made to retain and repair the stoop and its roof. Deteriorated lead paint on stoops and roof require additional precautions and procedures during rehabilitation – the appendix includes more on lead paint. If all or parts of a historic stoop or entrance are missing or are too deteriorated to repair, remove any severely deteriorated components and replace to match the original as closely as possible
2. **If the stoop entrance is replaced by a front porch feature, it may be no larger than six (6) feet projection from the building façade and may extend to the near edge of the nearest window.** Materials, forms, colors and textures must be compatible with those of the period in which the buildings were designed. The slope of the roof must match the main slope of the dwelling which is 5/12.



3. **Street numbers** must be 3 inches in size and visible from the street.
4. **Garbage receptacles** may be kept along the front of the building if cans are contained.

# Building Site and Building Exterior continued

## Stoops, Porches, & Parking Areas: Rehabilitation Options

**Parking requirements** have changed over the years. Historically, each Mooncrest unit was allotted one, single parking area. To meet the needs of today but maintain the historic streetscape character, it is acceptable to pave parking according to the following guidelines; For a 2-3-bedroom unit, two paved parking spaces must be provided. For the one-bedroom unit, one paved spaced must be provided. Green space must be provided between required parking areas. Continuous paved area across the lot is prohibited. In no case should there be more than four paved parking spaces without a green space break. Below are examples:



# Building Site and Building Exterior

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## Exterior Trim work: Rehabilitation Options



Fascia Board along  
roof pitch



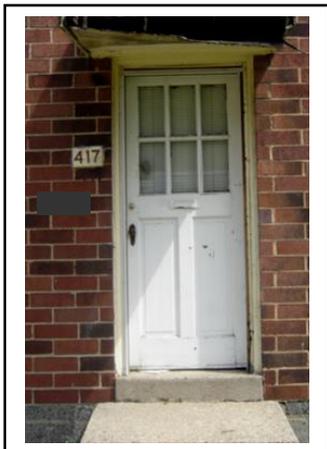
Coal chute door-  
Note: Lintel is original  
Must not be not painted

- 1. Retain and repair significant historic exterior trim work, including their materials and features. If original trim work is covered over with substitute materials, remove the substitute and repair the original trim work.**  
Routine maintenance of wood trim involves preventing moisture infiltration by sealing exposed joints and maintaining a sound paint coating. Deteriorated lead paint on trim work requires additional precautions and procedures during rehabilitation. The appendix provides more information on lead paint. Repainting trim in white is recommended.
- 2. If all or parts of the historic exterior trim work are missing or too deteriorated to repair, remove any severely deteriorated components and replace them to match the original as closely as possible.**  
Historic wood trim work can often be duplicated with readily available stock trim.
- 3. If the original trim work is covered over with an intact substitute material, consider retaining the substitute material and repairing as necessary.**  
Replacement trim work must closely match the original, especially in dimension. A simplified or similar stock version of the original can often provide a compatible substitution.
- 4. Shutters were not original to Mooncrest buildings and are not permitted.**
- 5. Coal chutes must be maintained. If the chute must be used for a dryer vent, then the vent must be white and blend with the chute.**

# Building Site and Building Exterior

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## Exterior Doors: Rehabilitation Options



Original door



(acceptable)  
Replacement door

The front doors of historic houses are usually consistent with the architectural style of the house. Within the district, solid wood doors with clear glazing in a three over three pane pattern above a lower two paneled area are quite typical.

**1. Retain and repair significant historic doors – including their materials and features.**

The front door is not a stock exterior door size and replacement typically must be pre-ordered, making their repair, rather than replacement preferable. Installing weather-stripping, re-caulking exposed joinery, and maintaining sound paint films are typical ways an original door is upgraded. Deteriorated lead paint on exterior doors requires additional precautions and steps during rehabilitation. See the appendix for more information on lead paint.

**2. If a historic door is missing or too deteriorated to repair, replace to match the original. Exterior door openings cannot be reduced or enlarged. It is important to match the existing opening dimensions.**

This option usually requires having a new door pre-ordered at your local building supply store. The size of the historic front door is 34 inches. If insulating the interior front wall, a 10" extended jamb must be ordered with door to match depth dimension.

# Building Site and Building Exterior

## Windows: Rehabilitation Options



Original window

Double hung wood windows in two varieties of pane configurations punctuate the facades of houses throughout the historic district. Given their visual prominence, every effort should be made to save and maintain historic windows.

1. **Retain and repair significant historic window sash and frames – including their materials and features.**

Wood windows require routine re-caulking and repainting to prevent deterioration. Proper maintenance and weather-stripping can improve energy efficiency of existing windows as can the installation of storm windows. Deteriorated lead paint on windows requires additional precautions and steps during rehabilitation. See the appendix for more information on lead paint.



Complying Storm window

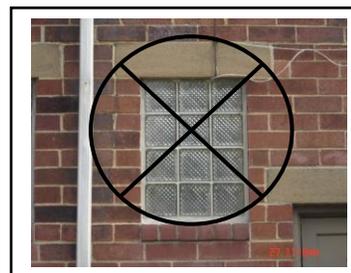
2. **If all or parts of a historic window are missing or are too deteriorated to repair, remove any severely deteriorated components and replace them to match the original as closely as possible.** If neglect has seriously deteriorated a historic window on the street façade or a visible side façade, it is required to replace it with the same size window that matches the original. Note: Restored Coal Chutes must match original but may have a Dryer Vent camouflaged in the center (see page 12)



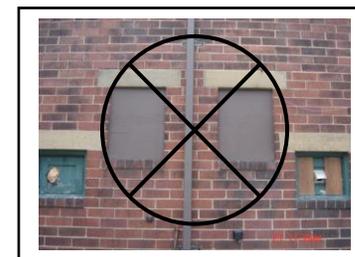
Replacement windows, door, restored coal chute, and stoop roof. Note the lintels above windows are not painted.



Restored Coal Chute and Utility Room Window



This is not permitted



This is not permitted

# Building Exterior

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## Roof: Rehabilitation Options



Simple gable roofs are the standard in the Mooncrest Historic District. The original roofing shingles have generally been replaced over the years.

1. **Retain original roof slopes, roof lines and significant historic roof features including soffit and fascia, and chimneys and proper shingles.**

Beyond maintaining a sound roof surface, keeping moisture from penetrating the roof planes requires routine cleaning of gutters and downspouts and maintenance of flashing around chimneys and beneath roof valleys.



2. **Owner cooperation is strongly encouraged. When single unit owners in the same building cooperate, you can avoid vastly different looks in color that detract from the historic features of the buildings.** Typically, when a roof is in need of replacement in an area of a building, other areas are deteriorate also and should be replaced at the same time.

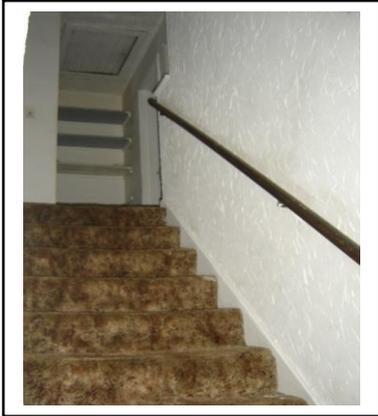


3. **If all or parts of a historic roof or roof features are missing or are too deteriorated to repair, remove any severely deteriorated components and replace to match the original.**

Depending on the specific feature, this option may involve a variety or work from rebuilding a chimney to replacing the wood soffit and fascia. Roofing shingles must be replaced with asphalt or composition shingles. Dimensional shingles are not historically correct and are not permitted. Recommended colors are black, brown, light green, light gray or beige composition shingles.

## Building Interior

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While interior changes are obviously less visible and consequently less important in preserving the overall character of the historic overlay district, it is still important to carefully plan the interior rehabilitation.

Interior changes should be designed so that the most public and visible interior spaces are not compromised. Front entry areas are principal public interior spaces that would warrant special attention. Secondary spaces, like bedrooms, kitchens, and bathrooms are less public and generally less significant to preserve. Many times, historic interiors require additional closets and bathrooms as well as updated and enlarged kitchens to accommodate contemporary lifestyles. In planning such changes look for ways to incorporate them into secondary spaces and consider their impact on the original floor plan and any special historic features.



The full rehabilitation of a historic building includes many upgrades that can have visual consequences. It is important to install new building systems – including plumbing lines, electrical service, cable lines and mechanical systems – with care so that alterations to the historic building are minimized and its character defining interior spaces and features are not compromised. Utility lines and mechanical systems including satellite dishes cannot be run across the front of the buildings.

**Structural renovations, new mechanical systems and additions requires building code compliance and approval by the Township Building Code Official.**

New additions and adjacent new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

## Appendix

### Secretary of the Interior's Rehabilitation Standards

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*The United States Department of the Interior developed ten national standards which address the rehabilitation of historic buildings. The standards describe a hierarchy of appropriate preservation treatments. That hierarchy values ongoing maintenance and protection of historic properties to minimize the need for more substantial repairs and, in turn, values repair over replacement of historic features.*

*The Secretary of the Interior's Standards are used in reviewing rehabilitation projects for federal and state Preservation Tax Incentive programs.*

1. A property shall be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property should be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historical properties, shall not be undertaken.
4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of the deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used.
8. Archaeological resources shall be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials, features and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent of related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would unimpaired.

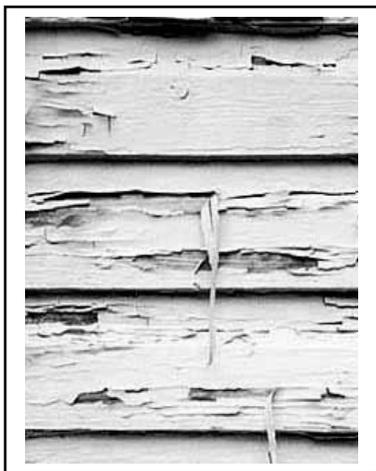
## Appendix continued

### Resources

The Township of Moon  
1000 Beaver Grade Road  
Moon Township PA 15108  
412-262-1700 Zoning Officer  
<http://www.moontwp.com>  
<http://www.ecode360.com/MO1356>

Heritage Preservation Services  
National Parks Services  
1849 C Street NW (2255)  
202-513-7270  
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/>

### Lead-based Paint



Washington DC 20240  
PA Bureau for Historic Preservation  
Western Regional Office  
101 Commonwealth Place  
Pittsburgh PA 15222  
412-565-3575  
c/o Fort Pitt Museum  
<http://www.phmc.state.pa.us/bhp/>

PA Historical and Museum Commission  
State Museum Building  
300 North Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17120  
717-787-3362  
<http://www.phmc.state.pa.us>

Lead-based paint was commonly used in buildings well into the twentieth century. Consequently, most buildings constructed prior to 1950 contain it. Although its use has been prohibited since the 1978, the presence of lead based paint in most buildings, including historic buildings, is an ongoing concern. Lead is a toxic substance, which poisons the human body and attacks both its organs and systems.

For additional information on the safe treatment of lead-based paint, contact:

National Lead Information Center 1-800-424-LEAD (5322)  
[www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead)

Allegheny County Lead Safe Home Program 412-227-5700  
[www.alleghenycounty.us/leadsafeprogram](http://www.alleghenycounty.us/leadsafeprogram)

