



# RENEW > Historic Preservation

## Cultural, Historical, and Architectural Resources

A wealth of historic resources reflecting Philadelphia's rich and diverse past are found throughout the Lower Northeast. Protecting these historic sites, while also allowing new development, can strengthen the district's sense of place. The broad range of development throughout the Lower Northeast presents challenges and opportunities for historic preservation. While several of the district's historic sites appear on local and federal historic preservation registers, their geographic dispersion makes the creation of a traditional historic district problematic. Instead, this plan proposes that historic resources of the Lower Northeast be grouped into a series of thematic historic districts focused on three key historical periods:

### Rural Oxford Township Thematic Historic District

Prior to the 1850s, the portion of the Lower Northeast to the north of Frankford—a rural area of farms, country homes, and small villages—was known as Oxford Township. Although development has overtaken farmland, many historic sites, including historic cemeteries, civic institutions, and transportation infrastructure, testify to the Lower Northeast's once-pastoral character.

### Frankford Industrial Village Thematic Historic District

During the Industrial Revolution, Frankford became a major manufacturing center, producing everything from textiles to military weaponry for the rapidly industrializing nation. Frankford helped the city earn its reputation as the "Workshop of the World," a tradition evident in the district's historic mills, infrastructure, and workers' housing.

### Lower Northeast Suburban Development Thematic Historic District

In the early 20th century, a new suburban style of development became prevalent in the Lower Northeast. New transportation infrastructure—especially Roosevelt Boulevard and the Frankford El—facilitated a wave of housing, community facilities, and commercial development, which today illustrate the automobile-based development that distinguishes the Lower Northeast from other parts of the city.

## National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the federal government's official list of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects deemed worthy of preservation. Owners of income-producing properties listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places or of properties that are contributing resources within a National Register Historic District may be eligible for tax credits for the rehabilitation of the historic structure.

The John Ruan House and the Adams Avenue Bridge over the Tacony Creek are listed on the National Register, and Friends Hospital is a National Historic Landmark. In addition, eleven schools in the Lower Northeast are listed on the register as part of the Philadelphia Public Schools thematic district.

## Philadelphia Register of Historic Places

Philadelphia Historical Commission (PHC) is responsible for ensuring the preservation of historically significant buildings, structures, sites, objects, interiors, and districts in the city. The Commission identifies and designates historic resources, listing them on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. It regulates preservation through the City's building and other permitting processes.

Currently, there are no historic districts within the Lower Northeast listed on the Philadelphia Register of Historic Places. There are 16 properties in the Lower Northeast individually listed on the Philadelphia Register. An additional three properties that are related to the history of the area, but stand just beyond the district's boundaries, are listed on the Philadelphia Register.



Philadelphia2035  
Citywide Vision

**Goal 8.1:**  
Support sensitive  
development that  
preserves and enhances  
Philadelphia's multifaceted  
past.



*Friends Hospital (Source: Mike E. Rerali, Jr.)*



*Rush House, Knights of Pythias Greenwood Cemetery*



## Cultural, Historical, and Architectural Resources

### Recommendations

38. Develop historic preservation plans that include zoning recommendations, conservation tools, and recommended historic designations for the Frankford Industrial Village, Rural Oxford Township, and Lower Northeast Suburban Development Thematic Historic Districts.

> Implementing Agencies: PHC, PCPC | CW Objective: 8.1.1

39. Prioritize the preservation and rehabilitation of the following buildings and sites through local historic designation, adaptive reuse, and increased awareness:

- 1548 Adams Avenue (c. 1728, possibly the oldest surviving structure in Frankford)
- Fishers Lane bridge
- 4651 Leiper Street, Blumhaven
- 4704 Leiper Street, Bromley/Garsed Mansion (Frankford Y)
- 6304 Castor Avenue, Bushrod Branch of the Free Library
- 4800 Langdon Street, Engine 70 Fire Station
- 1652–54 Foulkrod Street, Frankford Fire Station
- 5021 Rutland Street, Frankford War Memorial
- Italianate gatehouse at Cedar Hill Cemetery
- 1196 Adams Avenue, Tremont Mills
- 4647 Leiper Street, Greenwood Mansion
- 4650 Frankford Avenue, former Circle Theater

> Implementing Agencies: PHC, PCPC, Historical Society of Frankford | CW Objectives: 8.1.1, 8.1.2, 8.1.3

40. Protect the character of the Northwood neighborhood through the following mechanisms:

- Include outstanding residential examples in the Lower Northeast Suburban Development Thematic Historic District; and
- Develop a Neighborhood Conservation Overlay (NCO) district for portions of the neighborhood.

> Implementing Agencies: PHC, City Council, PCPC | CW Objective: 8.1.1

41. Develop a historic walking tour of Frankford to highlight its history as a major industrial center.

> Implementing Agencies: PHC, Historical Society of Frankford | CW Objective: 8.2.1



*Tremont Mills*



*1548 Adams Avenue*



*4704 Leiper Street,  
Bromley/Garsed Mansion*



*Frankford War Memorial*



*4651 Leiper Street, Blumhaven*

