



Draft Historic Buildings Strategy



Van Campen Inn (New Jersey) operated by
a park volunteer group for interpretation

Park Community,

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation and Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River are special places—for 12,000 years people have lived in, worked on, traveled through, recreated within, and experienced the beauty and bounty of these lands and waterways. Evidence of this rich history can be found throughout the park—in archeological sites, in cultural landscapes, and in historic buildings and properties; it is an important part of what makes this park significant. Today, the 286 historic buildings on 97 properties remaining in the park range in condition from good to poor. To ensure that the most important of those properties can be preserved into the future, an objective, criteria-based Historic Buildings Strategy (HBS) has been developed.

Using the HBS, a multi-step prioritization tool developed earlier in this process, each of the park's historic properties have been ranked into one of four categories. These categories will determine the level of funding, maintenance, and preservation that each will receive as funding becomes available in the future.

You play an important role in helping us to complete the HBS by reviewing the results and providing feedback and additional information where needed. Your voice remains important in this process, helping ensure that the stories of those who were here before us can continue to be told and experienced.

Sincerely,

Sula Jacobs, Superintendent
Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
Middle Delaware National Scenic and Recreational River

Background

Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (the park) was established through the acquisition of land from non-federal entities. Incidental to the land procurement process, the buildings on that land were also acquired. The National Park Service acquired more than 1,000 buildings from the US Army Corps of Engineers as a result of the Tocks Island Dam Project and subsequent establishment of the park. The buildings were not critical to the park’s mission at the time, many were vacant, and there were inadequate resources to repair or maintain all of them. It is unlikely that adequate resources will be available in the future to preserve and maintain all historic buildings in the park.

There are over 500 buildings within the park, of which 286 are listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and are considered “historic.” Of those buildings, 170

are in New Jersey, and 116 are in Pennsylvania. Many buildings are found in groupings, such as on a former farmstead where there is a house, outbuildings, and agricultural landscape features such as fields and fencerows. These are referred to as “historic properties” in the draft HBS. There are 97 historic properties within the park; 65 historic properties are in New Jersey, and 32 are in Pennsylvania.

The draft HBS is a means to help the National Park Service prioritize which historic properties in the park will be preserved and maintained in the long term. To determine which properties to include in the plan and which priority to assign to each property, each was evaluated for historical significance, the physical condition of buildings, and their interpretive value related to their historic context.



Peirce House, used by the National Park Service for offices

Historic Buildings Strategy

The National Park Service used NRHP criteria for evaluating the historic significance of properties to determine which properties are considered “historic” and thus would be included in the draft HBS. Once the park determined which properties would be included, all historic properties were assessed using a multi-step categorization process, which assigns a priority to each of the park’s 97 historic properties—A, B, C, or D (see pages 4 and 5). This page defines some of the attributes of the HBS process.

Historic significance is the recognition of the accomplishments of all peoples who have made a significant contribution to our country’s history and heritage. The overall historic significance of properties within the park was assessed through examination of the following attributes:

- National or state significance
- Located within a historic district
- Rarity of the type or period of the historic resource
- Historic integrity
- Exemplification of multiple historic contexts

Historic integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance. The NRHP defines seven aspects of integrity: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

All properties included in this plan were evaluated for these seven aspects of integrity and were determined to have retained enough integrity to convey their historic significance. When a building has deteriorated into poor or extremely poor condition, its integrity is diminished or ceases altogether. Similarly, when buildings on a property no longer exist (e.g. through collapse or fire), the integrity of the property as a whole can diminish to the point where it is no longer listed or eligible for listing on the NRHP.

Nelden Stonehouse, operated by a park partner group for interpretation

Historic context serves as the framework within which NRHP criteria are applied to specific properties. The draft HBS evaluated how well each property showcases historic contexts which influences how much interpretive value the property has for park visitors. Interpretive value is how visitors experience a sense of place, or how well a property provides a visitor experience within the framework of the historic context(s). All historic properties in the park have one or more of the following historic contexts:

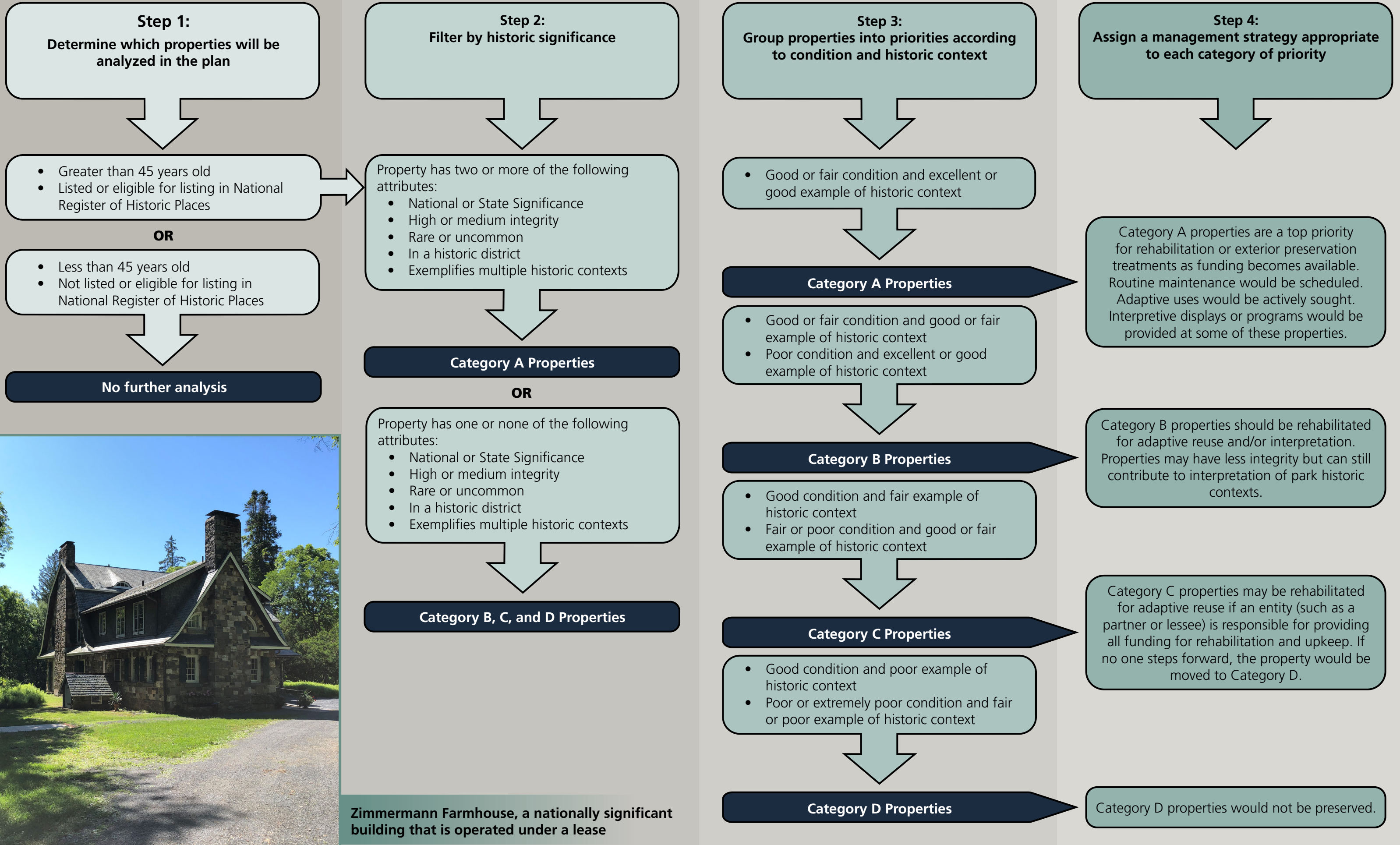
- European Settlement (1609-1790)
- Agriculture
- Industry & Quarrying
- Transportation
- Villages
- Schools
- Churches
- Recreation

Condition of a property is categorized as good, fair, poor, or extremely poor. Definitions for these conditions are as follows:

- Good: Can be preserved in existing condition with routine maintenance. Minor structural repairs may be required.
- Fair: Some localized structural problems/failures. Structural repairs are required. Minor strengthening may be required.
- Poor: Severe and/or extensive structural problems. Major structural repairs and strengthening are required.
- Extremely Poor: Collapse is imminent. Repairs or strengthening are not feasible.



Historic Buildings Strategy Property Prioritization Flowchart



Priortization of the Properties

Category A Property

Westbrook-Bell House, New Jersey



Category A properties are the most historically significant properties in the park, in good or fair condition, and have high interpretive value. The park has identified 48 Category A properties; 20 of these properties are currently vacant.

Category C Property

Brisco Mountain (Bensley) House, Pennsylvania



Category C properties may have some historic significance, but are in fair or poor condition, and most have fair or poor interpretive value. There are 11 Category C properties, of which 9 are currently vacant.

Category B Property

Andrew Snable House, New Jersey



Category B properties are often not as historically significant as Category A properties but are in good or fair condition and have high or moderate interpretive value. There are 27 Category B properties, of which 15 are currently vacant.

Category D Property

Blasi House, New Jersey



Category D properties are the lowest priority for historic preservation efforts. These properties are in fair to extremely poor condition, and have fair or poor interpretive value. There are 11 Category D properties; 9 of these properties are currently vacant.

Getting Involved

Public Participation and the Historic Buildings Strategy

Public participation has been an important element of the draft HBS. The park has provided information to the public during open houses in 2016 and sought feedback on the prioritization process (the flowchart presented on pages 4 and 5) in 2017. After considering all the comments received, the park revised the process and used it to categorize the park’s historic properties as presented in the draft HBS document (available at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/DEWA_HBS).

During this comment period, we are requesting your written feedback on how the properties were prioritized. Properties are listed by priority and described in Appendix B and Appendix C of the draft HBS document.

Given the prioritization criteria and flowchart, and the information on each property in Appendices B and C of the draft HBS document, please tell us if each of the properties is in the proper category. If not, please provide specific examples, your assessment, and why you believe it has been improperly categorized with supporting information if possible.

Please share any important information that is missing or incorrect, particularly if it could change how a property is categorized. Please state the building or property and tell us specifically what is missing and where the information can be found or provide the correct information with a source so that it can be verified.

Join Us for a Meeting

Please join us to learn about the National Park Service’s progress with the draft HBS. We are providing both virtual (online) and informal, in-person meeting options. For both formats, park staff will provide information on the HBS and meeting attendees will have the opportunity to informally ask questions.

Virtual Meeting

Date: Wednesday, July 28, 2021

Time: 7:00 - 8:00 pm

Link: <https://bit.ly/DEWAHB21>

Please log in several minutes in advance to ensure you have a good connection and are ready to access the meeting when it begins.

Informal Meetings

Date: Tuesday, August 3, 2021

Time: 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Location: Kittatinny Point Pavilion, New Jersey

Date: Thursday, August 5, 2021

Time: 6:00 - 8:00 pm

Location: Milford Beach Pavilion, Pennsylvania

Leasing Historic Properties

The best means of long-term preservation of high-priority properties is to ensure the buildings are occupied. Historic properties may be leased to private individuals, businesses, non-profit organizations, or other government agencies.

Leasing provides for occupancy, upkeep, and preservation, as well as revenue from lease payments that are put back into maintaining the building. Leasing is a complex process to initiate and oversee, requiring a substantial amount of oversight by the National Park Service and often a substantial commitment from the lessee.

Uses that would be appropriate for leased properties include residences, vacation rentals, educational or community facilities, workshops, offices, retail stores, and more. The National Park Service has and will continue to periodically request proposals for leasing specific historic properties to the public, non-profit and for-profit organizations, and other government agencies.

Visit the following link for more information on leasing: <https://www.nps.gov/dewa/learn/management/leasing-historic-buildings.htm>

How to Comment

Please share your written comments no later than **August 10, 2021**.

There are three ways to submit written comments:

1. Submit comments in writing at one of two informal meetings:

Tuesday, August 3, 2021
Kittatinny Point pavilion
in New Jersey
6-8pm

Thursday, August 5, 2021
Milford Beach pavilion
in Pennsylvania*
6-8pm

2. Submit comments electronically at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/DEWA_HBS

3. Mail comments to:

Superintendent
Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area
Attn: Historic Buildings Strategy
1978 River Road
Bushkill, PA 18324

* Fees at Milford Beach will be waived for attendees during the informal meeting

Before you include your address, phone number, email address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment, including your personal identifying information, may be made publicly available at any time. You may request that the NPS withhold your name and/or address from public disclosure. If you wish to do this, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your comment and make such a request by checking the box "keep my contact information private" on the website. The NPS will honor such requests to the extent allowable by law, but individuals should be aware that the NPS may still be required to disclose personal identifying information.



**McCarty House (Pennsylvania),
constructed in 1788 and the only
remaining building on a former farmstead**



**Peters House (Pennsylvania),
one of two remaining historic
properties in the Village of Bushkill**