

LANDMARK TOWNS OF BUCKS COUNTY

BOROUGH OF MORRISVILLE FAÇADE PROGRAM GUIDELINES

DESIGN CHALLENGE GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Landmark Towns of Bucks County offers matching grants for storefront and facade improvements in the Morrisville Borough downtown business district up to a maximum amount of \$5,000 per storefront for significant improvements based on the merits of the project. Design challenge grants are intended to stimulate private investment in the preservation of historic downtown architecture and to foster image-making improvements in the four downtowns that comprise the Landmark Towns, which are: Morrisville, Yardley, Bristol Borough and New Hope.

Funding for the Landmark Towns Façade Program is provided by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) through the Pennsylvania Main Street Program. Grants are made in accordance with policies established by Landmark Towns, and the Borough of Morrisville. Landmark Towns administers the program.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Any person(s) or legal entity owning a property or leasing a commercial property in the Morrisville Borough Main Street district (see attached map) is eligible to apply. Qualifying commercial properties include single-purpose retail and office buildings and mixed-use buildings containing combinations of retail, office, and residential apartments.

In cases where more than one storefront exists within the same facade, each storefront can receive its own grant for eligible grant activities. A storefront shall be defined as having its own unique entrance, interior space, and display window. Multiple businesses that share one storefront shall be considered one applicant. The façade is the part of the building facing the street or streets. It includes the entirety of the face of the building from the ground up. Regardless of the upper floor uses, the whole façade should have a unified color scheme.

Property Owners with Multiple Properties may submit more than one application annually. Currently, there is no limit to the number of applications a property owner may submit in one year and the Landmark Towns Design Committee may approve more than one application to a single property owner in the same year. Applicants with a corner property may apply for a front and side façade grant. Grants are awarded only to applicants that have submitted all required application materials and a non-refundable \$50.00 application fee by the annual deadline to be determined. If all monies are not expended within one grant period, an extension may be granted.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Eligible Activities include: major maintenance, repair, rehabilitation and restoration of commercial and residential storefronts and facades are eligible activities. Projects must achieve visible results that enhance the Borough of Morrisville's downtown image, marketability, and economic vitality.

Ineligible Activities include: Landscaping, fences, walls, site improvements, paving, parking lots, and sandblasting.

DESIGN STANDARDS

Project activities must conform to The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties with Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Buildings. The general standards are as follows.

1. A property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.
2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive 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 deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities, and where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archaeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. 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 that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Design Guidelines

Character: The Borough of Morrisville enjoys a variety of architectural styles. It is the goal of this design program to see that each building is presented in its most appealing form and the original character of the building is preserved and enhanced. A property should be used for its characteristic

purpose, or be placed in a new use that requires reasonable changes to the defining properties of the exterior of the building and its site and environment.

Signage: Signs play an important role in how a business is initially perceived. Not only are they a marketing tool, but they also set the appearance from a roadway. Signage should project an atmosphere that is welcoming and inviting to members of the community and visitors. Consistent signage adds to the character of the area in which it is placed, and should be considered to be a unifying factor in a town. Lighting should be external, using spotlights directed onto the sign. Neon signs will not be considered, for this program.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Landmark Towns of Bucks County Design Challenge Grants are intended to stimulate private investment in the Morrisville Borough Main Street project area. The outlined project area is roughly:

- East and West Bridge Street, from Park Avenue to Morris Avenue
- North and South Pennsylvania Avenue, from Union to Railroad Avenue

The program seeks to preserve and restore historic downtown architecture and to foster image-making improvements to all downtown properties regardless of their historic significance.

Projects must achieve visible results that enhance the downtown image, marketability, and economic vitality. Design Challenge Grants have the following specific objectives:

1. Reduce or eliminate vacancies in the core of downtown Morrisville Borough, and promote the adaptive reuse of commercial buildings;
2. Bring substandard building conditions into compliance with basic health, safety, and building codes and enhance the visual appeal of downtown businesses;
3. Facilitate compliance with federal ADA access requirements; and
4. Assist with the preservation of historic commercial buildings and assure that such buildings are rehabilitated in an appropriate manner.

Grant applicants are encouraged to use the services of design professionals and to attend Landmark Towns educational sessions on 'good design practices.' Landmark Towns facilitates compliance with the required design standards by providing technical and design assistance to Grant applicants if available.

APPROPRIATE ACTIVITIES

A variety of commercial property improvements, including major maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and restoration of storefronts and facades are appropriate activities as is certain new construction. Some examples of appropriate grant activities include:

1. Brick and Stone Masonry - Structural repairs, cleaning, re-pointing, and painting.
2. Architectural Metals - Repair, cleaning, refinishing, painting, duplication, and restoration of exterior building components, e.g., cast iron, pressed tin.
3. Doors and Windows - Maintenance, repairs, replacement, and restoration of window sash, exterior doors, and installation of storm windows in conjunction with other significant facade improvements.

4. Exterior Woodwork - Maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, and restoration of sills, window and door frames, bulkheads, storefront and roof cornices, window hoods, decorative moldings.
5. Storefronts - Removal of inappropriate coverings and additions, maintenance, repair, rehabilitation, lighting and restoration of display and transom windows.
6. Signage - Maintenance, repair, removal, and replacement in connection with real property improvements, not to exceed \$1000 per storefront.
7. Painting - Surface preparation, cleaning, painting.
8. Awnings – Installation of or repair of fabric awnings in connection with real property improvements, not to exceed \$2000 per storefront.
9. Design Assistance – Architectural, historic preservation, and graphic design services up to 10% of grant not to exceed \$500.
10. Lighting – External lighting fixtures both for signage and building lighting, not to exceed \$3000 per storefront.
11. Shutters- Installation, repair or replacement
12. Windows-Repair or replacement of any portion of the window that is visible from the street
13. Roofing- Roof work may be done only if the roof is clearly visible from the street

TERMS OF GRANT AWARD

Landmark Towns of Bucks County Design Challenge Grants are awarded on a 50-50 matching cost basis. The maximum Design Challenge Grant that may be awarded is \$5,000 per storefront for projects costing up to \$10,000 or more. Grants are made on a cost reimbursement basis, following a process of application, design review and approval, and construction. Receipt of grant awards is contingent upon submittal of construction cost invoices from bona fide contractors or tradesmen. A final site inspection by the Landmark Towns Regional Coordinator and one other representative from the Landmark Towns Design Committee to ensure scope of work is consistent with application is required for payment in full. Property owners who choose to do their own work will be reimbursed for materials and pre-approved professional fees only.

NO FUNDING WILL BE PROVIDED FOR WORK COMPLETED BEFORE THE APPROVAL PROCESS AND WITHOUT SATISFACTORY FINAL SITE INSPECTION.

There is a 90 day project deadline for completion of work from the date of Notice to Proceed. Extensions may be granted under certain circumstances only with approval by Landmark Towns Regional Coordinator.

STATE AND LOCAL REGULATIONS

1. Properties will be inspected in accordance with the Code of Ordinances requirements for Morrisville Borough to establish the scope of work necessary to comply with the basic health,

safety, and property maintenance requirements of the International Building Code (formerly known as the Building Officials and Code Administrators-BOCA Code). All rehabilitation work financed in connection with the Design Challenge Grant Program must conform to the applicable requirements of Morrisville Borough codes and regulations, including Zoning.

2. Any questions about Borough codes, regulations or zoning contact Morrisville Borough Code Officer @ 215-295-8181. Office hours are Monday –Friday, 8:00-4:00
3. Contractor must conform to Pennsylvania Department of Labor and Industry Prevailing Wage standards if the cost of the project exceeds \$25,000. See number 4 below for more details.
4. “The Pennsylvania Prevailing Wage Act (43 P.S. s165-1 et seq.; 34 Pa. Code s 9.101 et esq.) may be applicable to this project. If applicable, the grant recipient is responsible for including prevailing wage rates in all bid documents, specifications, and construction contracts pertaining to the project. The Department of Labor and Industry (L&I) has final authority to make all prevailing wage applicability determinations”. A copy of this letter would be forwarded to L&I for a formal determination of applicability of prevailing wage requirements.

Please Note: Prevailing Wage requirements are generally applicable to grants for construction, demolition, reconstruction, alteration, repair work, renovations, build-out and installation of machinery and equipment in excess of \$25,000. Any questions as to final prevailing wage obligations should be directed to the Bureau of Law Compliance at 800-932-0665

REVIEW AND APPROVAL

All Design Challenge Grant applications and completed projects are subject to review and approval by the Landmark Towns Design Committee. Any and all disputes to be resolved by the Executive Board of Landmark Towns.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

This Design Challenge Program is a “Scheduled Program”, meaning all applications will be due on a scheduled date in order to receive funding from the Design Challenge Grant Program. If all grant funds are not allocated after the review of the formal applications, the application process will be reopened to eligible property and business owners on a first-come, first-serve basis, until all funds have been allocated.

All applicants (or their project representative) will be required to attend a one hour workshop on Good Design and Desirable Facades and complete the following process:

1. Meet with the Landmark Towns Regional Coordinator and/or Design Committee Designee with approval from Regional Coordinator
 - Bring a current photo of your property.
 - Present any appropriate applications if applicable
 - Discuss your plans for the property.
 - Understand the property’s historic architecture.
 - Present a rudimentary sketch of the work to be accomplished.
2. Complete application
 - Secure architect or design assistance, if needed.

- Provide an estimate for project. Note: Two estimates may be required depending on scope of work.
 - Complete and sign all sections of the application.
 - Return application to Regional Coordinator, Landmark Towns of Bucks County, #2 Canal's End Road, Bristol, PA 19007.
3. Grant approval
- Landmark Towns of Bucks County Design Committee will review application for approval or refer questions or concerns to the applicant.
 - Landmark Towns office will provide a contract document, and a Notice to Proceed if application is approved.
 - Once approved, applicant will be required to secure all necessary permits required for construction
4. Execute project
- Work cannot begin until the contract document is signed by both parties.
 - Work must comply with approved project description.
 - Property owner/lessee must agree to allow "Partial Project Funding made available through DCED, during the project and for 30 days after completion of the project
 - Certificate of Occupancy (CO) must be issued by Morrisville Borough Code Officer
 - Project must be completed within 90 days unless otherwise agreed.
5. Finish project
- Once project is completed, send an "after" photo, and copies of the paid receipts to the Landmark Towns Regional Coordinator, and copies of cancelled checks that indicate the work has been paid in full.
 - Within one month of receiving copies, Landmark Towns will reimburse the applicant in accordance with the terms of the grant barring any unforeseen difficulties.
 - Completed work must be in accordance with approved description of project to be eligible for reimbursement.