

## **WELCOME TO ST. MICHAELS**

It is possible to see the history of St. Michaels in its historic buildings and streets which date back over two centuries. Physical reminders of early history give depth and richness to the Town, to past events and to people's lives. Historic preservation allows the legacy of the past to be protected and remembered. It allows for the past to be integrated with the present and reminds us that the old has a useful place alongside the new. The preservation of historic buildings and structures includes consideration of the integrity of the location, neighborhood, design, setting, materials and workmanship.

### **HISTORY**

St. Michaels grew around an early Anglican (now Episcopal) parish church, established in 1677, but settlement was slow to follow. In the late 1770s James Braddock, an agent with a Liverpool mercantile firm, laid out lots and streets around a central market square—St. Mary's Square. The town early thrived as a shipbuilding town, building the fast schooners designed for evading blockades and privateering. It survived an attack by British forces on the morning of August 10, 1813, by the efforts of the Talbot County militia. Local legend claims the town was spared because lanterns were hoisted on the masts of ships and treetops to divert the British cannon fire. After the Civil War, the town boomed with the growth of the oyster industry. Much of the historic district, including the commercial structures of Talbot Street, was developed as a result of this relative prosperity in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. St. Michaels retains much of this character, although the seafood industry has been supplanted by tourism.

### **WHY DO WE HAVE HISTORIC DISTRICTS?**

The St. Michaels Historic District was created in 1972 to safeguard the heritage of the Town of St. Michaels by protecting and preserving buildings, structures,

sites, objects, public ways and views located in the town that reflect the Town's cultural, social, political, and architectural history. The preservation of the above elements serves not only to protect the educational, cultural, and economic values of the Town and its citizens, but also to promote these values to the public.

### **WHO IS ON THE HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION?**

The Commission consists of five members appointed by the Commissioners of St. Michaels to a term of three years. Under a specific set of regulations and guidelines, the Commission deals with exterior architectural changes. The Commission is required by law to review the appropriateness of most exterior design changes, additions, new construction and demolition.

### **DOES HISTORIC DISTRICTING AFFECT MY PROPERTY VALUE?**

Your decision to purchase a property in the historic district was a sound financial move. Historic districting helps to protect property values and local merchants' investments. Studies by the National Trust for Historic Preservation have shown that historic districting brings consistency to the maintenance of property values. In historic districts throughout the country, realtors report that preservation and conservation efforts supported by historic district designation or individual listing increases property values over comparable properties without such protection.

### **WHAT IF I WANT TO MAKE CHANGES TO MY HOME OR BUSINESS?**

Any owner/resident within the district contemplating work on any part of his/her property that is "visible from a public way" should notify the Historic District Commission by filing an application for work or building.

- Work includes any alterations, rebuilding, new construction, restoration, removal, demolition or changes in exterior composition.
- Elements subject to review include, but are not limited to, foundations, siding, doors and windows, roofs and chimneys, porches, shutters, signs, accessory structures such as sheds, driveways and walkways, fences and arbors, as well as landscape features and formal gardens.
- The Historic district guidelines include, but are not limited to architectural style, general arrangement and setting, building materials, style of windows, lights, signs and other exterior features.
- Only exterior property changes that are visible from a street or public place are included.
- Occupancy, usage, and other zoning issues are not reviewed, nor are any interior alterations.

### **HOW DO I FILE AN APPLICATION?**

No building or demolition permit may be granted for exterior work in the district without a certificate from the Historic District Commission.

- Guidelines and applications can be obtained at the Edgar M. Bosley, Jr. Municipal Building (Town Office) 300 Mill Street, St. Michaels, on-line at [www.townofstmichaels.com](http://www.townofstmichaels.com) or by calling 410-745-9535 during regular business hours.
- Completed applications should be returned to the above noted address.
- Completed applications must include photographs, material list, elevations, manufacturer's illustrations, site plans and the applicable fee.
- Completed applications must be filed 10 days prior to the regularly scheduled Historic District Commission meeting which is held on the first Thursday of each month.

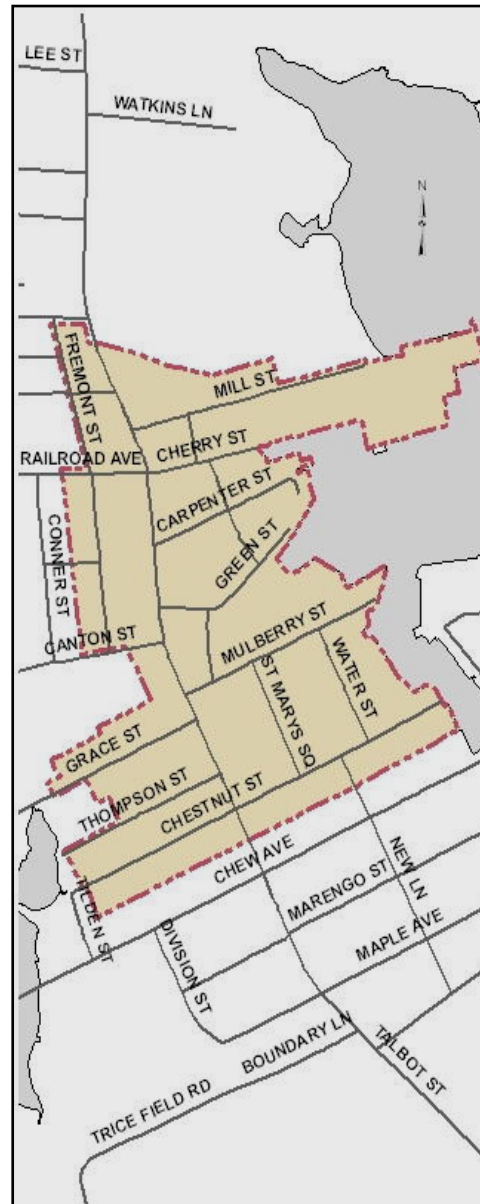
## SEEKING FINANCIAL HELP

State tax credits are available for any contributing property in the Historic District. For commercial properties Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit may also be available. For additional information please go to [www.marylandhistoricaltrust.org](http://www.marylandhistoricaltrust.org).



Distributed by the Authority of the Commissioners of St. Michaels and the St. Michaels Historic District Commission.

## St. Michaels Historic District



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Locust Street, St. Michaels, c. 1910  
Photo by Thomas Sewell, courtesy of Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum