



# MEMORANDUM

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**Date:** April 22, 2020

**To:** Elwood Penn, IV, Director Planning Division, West Virginia Division of Highways

**From:** Matthew Bray, RK&K

**Re:** Harpers Ferry High Street Design Study  
State Project No. U319-HAR/PE-2.00  
Federal Project No. TAP-2017(082)DTC

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On behalf of the West Virginia Division of Highways (WVDOT), Rummel, Klepper & Kahl, LLP (RK&K) completed preliminary cultural resource tasks in anticipation of future coordination required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, and its implementing regulations at 36 CFR Part 800. All key personnel meet or exceed the Secretary of the Interior's (SOI) Professional Qualification Standards (36 CFR Part 61) for architectural history, history, or archaeology.

The Harpers Ferry High Street Design Study includes the development of three alternatives to improve pedestrian and vehicular safety along portions of High Street, extending from Hog Alley to approximately 300 feet east of Church Street. Option 1 would generally leave the existing sidewalk and roadway conditions unchanged, but would evaluate existing features such as retaining walls, railings, and downspouts for replacement. Option 2 for consideration would be the closure of one lane of traffic permanently between Hog Alley and Public Way. Option 3 would be the shifting of roadway alignment between Hog Alley and Public Way. This option would shift the existing traffic lanes approximately two (2) feet to the south and widen the existing sidewalk equivalently.

Based on a review of the preliminary design alternatives and the boundary for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)-listed Harpers Ferry Historic District, a preliminary area of potential effects (APE) was developed to identify potential character-defining features of the district and to avoid potential adverse effects through avoidance or treatment strategies in accordance with the SOI's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties (see **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**). The preliminary APE does not account for potential indirect effects, such as audible or visual, extending outward from the footprint of the proposed work. Further consideration of effects to those historic properties not directly impacted by proposed pedestrian and vehicular improvements should occur during Section 106 coordination in the design phase of the project. However, given the scale and nature of the proposed improvements, these types of effects, if present, seem unlikely to result in an adverse effect finding in regard to the Harpers Ferry Historic District or contributing elements within.

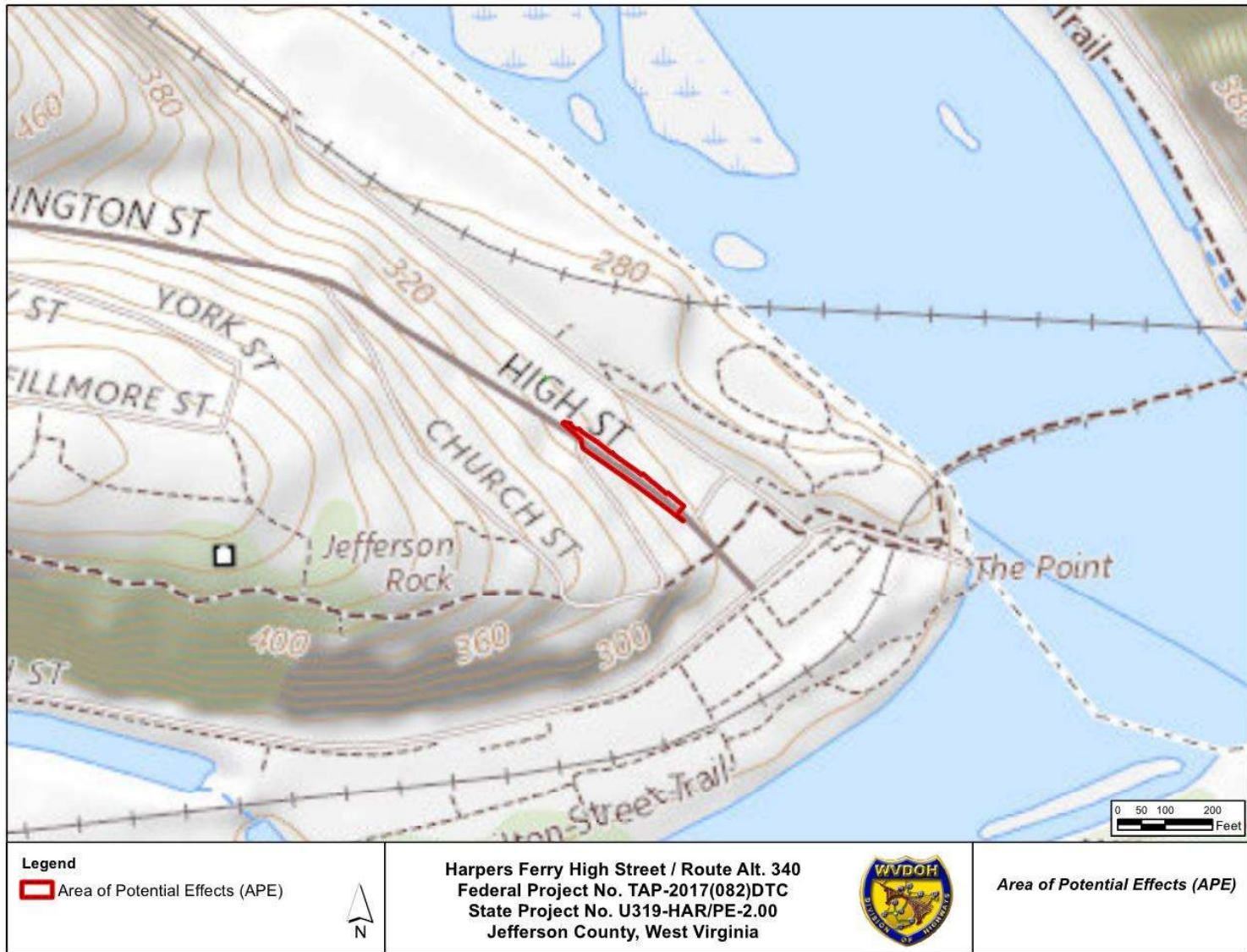


Figure 1: Project APE Depicted on Harpers Ferry, WV (2019) USGS 7.5-minute Topographic Quadrangle

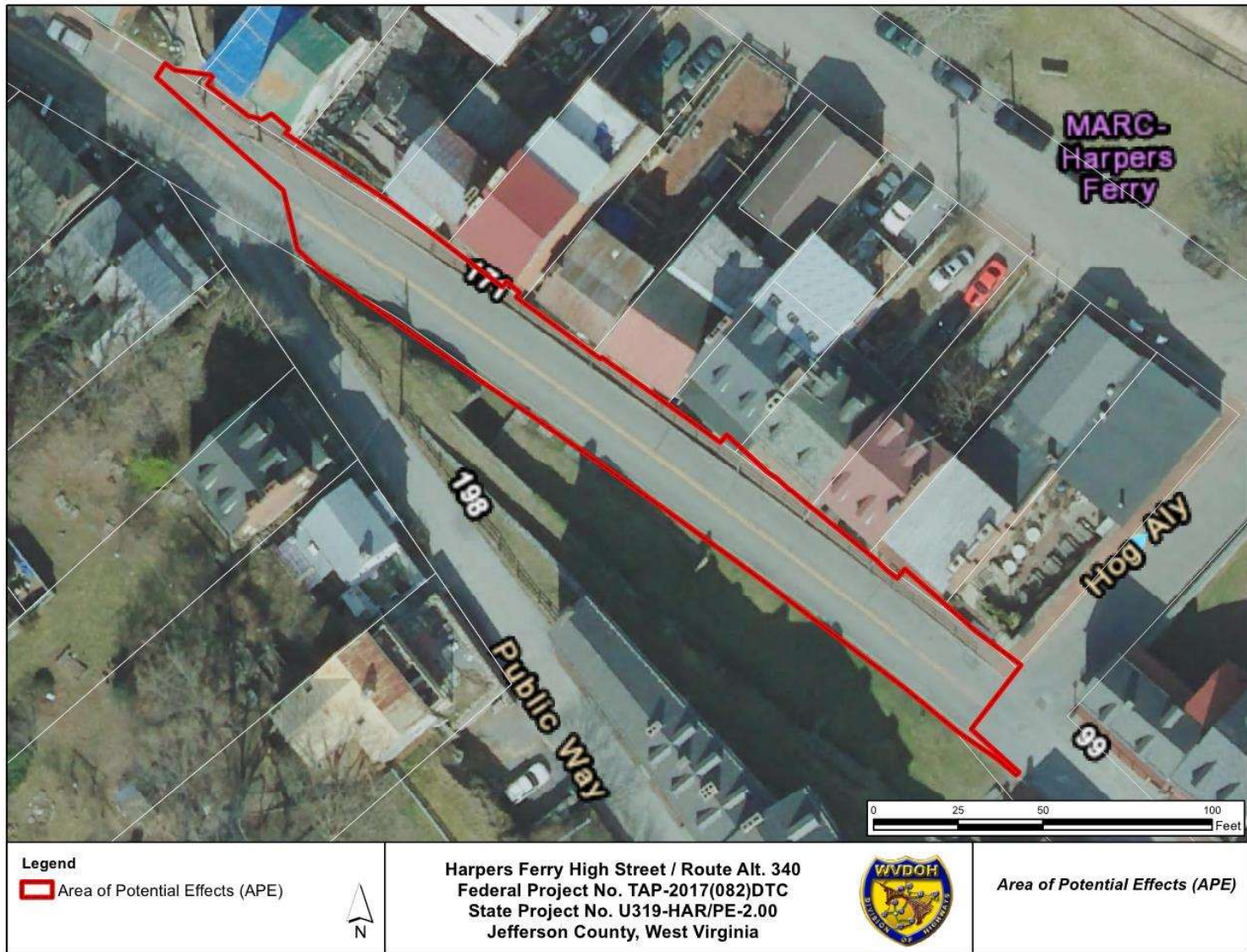


Figure 2: Project APE Depicted on Aerial Imagery

The Harpers Ferry Historic District encompasses the Corporation of Harpers Ferry, excluding all land within the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park and administered by the National Park Service. The town occupies approximately one half a square mile. The district contains 266 resources, of which 173 are contributing buildings, 82 are noncontributing buildings, and 11 objects, sites, or structures. The district is locally significant under Criterion C: Architecture. It was listed in the NRHP in 1979 and an amendment was completed in 2010 to provide a comprehensive list of resources and expand the period of significance from 1790 to 1958 (WVDCH 2010). **Table 1** includes a list of contributing resources to the Harpers Ferry Historic District located adjacent to the preliminary APE.

**Table 1: Contributing Resources to the Harpers Ferry Historic District**

Map Number (amended 2010)	Resource Number	Name/Address	Date	Description
57	JF-0063-0001	144 High Street	ca. 1841	Three-story, Federal-style building
58	JF-0063-0004	148 High Street	ca. 1820	Three-and-a-half story, side-hall building
59	JF-0063-0005	154 High Street	ca. 1835	Three-and-a-half story, side-hall building
60	JF-0063-0006	156 High Street	ca. 1820	Two-and-a-half story, side-hall building
61	JF-0063-0009	160 High Street	ca. 1870	One-story, side-hall building
62	JF-0063-0008	164 High Street	ca. 1840	Two-story, Federal-style building
63	JF-0063-0010	168 High Street	ca. 1850	Three-story, side-hall building
64	JF-0063-0011	170 High Street	ca. 1839	Two-story, Federal-style I-house
65	JF-0063-0022	175 High Street	ca. 1820	Three-story, Federal-style I-house
66	JF-0063-0020	179 High Street	ca. 1840	Three-story, Greek Revival-style building
67	JF-0063-0013	180 High Street	ca. 1844	Two-story, Italianate-style residence
69	JF-0063-0015	188-192 High Street	ca. 1840	Two-and-a-half-story duplex
70	JF-0063-0019	189 High Street	ca. 1820	Three-story I-house

71	JF-0063-0016	196 High Street	ca. 1859	One-and-a-half-story I-house
72	JF-0063-0017	195 High Street	ca. 1840	Two-and-a-half-story, Federal-style I-house
73	JF-0063-0028	201 High Street	ca. 1826	Two-and-a-half-story, Federal-style house
74	JF-0063-0030	200 High Street	ca. 1829	Three-story, massed-plan house

High Street

High Street was laid out in 1852. In the 1920s, High Street was regraded and paved in concrete with concrete curbs and gutters to better accommodate automobile traffic (Crosbie and Lee 2009). Subsequently the road materials, including asphalt and curbing, have likely been replaced several times. While it retains its original locale, grade, and name, the brick paving is no longer extant and it is considered a noncontributing structure within the historic district (WVDCH 2010). Based on current project alternatives, the proposed work to the street surface would not constitute an adverse effect.



**Figure 3: View of High Street Road Surface, Facing West**

## Sidewalks

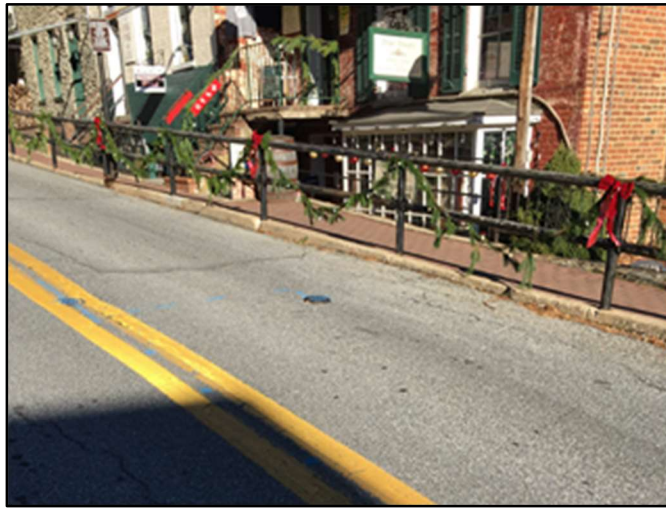
The sidewalks on High Street consist of concrete or brick pavers with concrete curbs abutting the road and on the interior side of the sidewalks. The sidewalks are at or below grade with the asphalt roadway. Iron railings are located within the outer concrete curbs. Iron railings occasionally appear on the interior concrete curbs. The sidewalks appear to have two major construction campaigns: the earliest is the bricks that are red in hue and large in size. Based on color, size, and weathering, these bricks were potentially laid pre-1958 (**Figure 4**). The other campaign consists of darker, smaller bricks that likely occurred post-1958 (**Figure 5**). A smaller campaign consists of one patch of concrete located.... Although brick sidewalks are not specifically addressed as contributing elements to the Harpers Ferry Historic District, they are an historic element that could be character-defining. Based on current project alternatives, some sections of potentially pre-1958 sections of brick sidewalk would be replaced. Overall, existing brick pavers should be removed and reset in these locations, if possible. If this is not feasible, replacement pavers should be of a similar appearance. Overall, areas of new sidewalk should maintain the current appearance and materials (brick pavers) so as to preserve the sense of setting and feeling within this area of the Harpers Ferry Historic District.



**Figure 4: View of Potential Pre-1958 Brick Sidewalk** **Figure 5: View of Potential Post-1958 Brick Sidewalk**

## Railings

The iron railings are a twentieth-century addition to the Harpers Ferry Historic District and serve to protect pedestrians on the sidewalks from passing cars on the adjacent road. They consist of two rounded rails parallel to the ground supported by rounded vertical rails (**Figure 6**). The iron railings are modern and generally detract from the intact nineteenth-century appearance of the Harpers Ferry Historic District. As such, they are not considered character defining features to the historic district.



**Figure 6: View of Railing on North Side of High Street, Facing Northwest**

### Downspouts

Many of the buildings have copper and metal downspouts that form an open square as they lead from the roof and continue to the railing where they terminate, expelling water into the street (**Figure 7**). Other downspouts continue vertically along the corner of a building where they terminate beneath the sidewalk. While the materials have overwhelmingly been replaced with modern ones, the downspouts are a character-defining feature in this portion of the Harpers Ferry Historic District. The existing downspouts should be maintained, if feasible, or replacement downspouts (functioning or non-functioning) should be installed. Every effort should be made to retain the general appearance, even if that requires installation of non-functioning downspouts in places. The loss of downspouts along High Street would likely constitute an adverse effect to the Harpers Ferry Historic District, as well as to individual contributing buildings.



**Figure 7: View of Downspouts on North Side of High Street**

## Walls

Some sections of the sidewalk do not have an interior concrete curb, but instead have a brick or stone retaining wall associated with a building. Other walls are adjacent to a concrete curb without sidewalks. These appear to be mostly nineteenth century. Many stone retaining walls are dry stone walls. Others are made of fieldstone. The retaining walls vary in height and distance from the sidewalk. Stone is featured prominently in Harpers Ferry, owing to its Pennsylvania influence (National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet, Harpers Ferry Historic District). These retaining walls maintain a high level of integrity and are character defining features in the Harpers Ferry Historic District. Based on current project alternatives, limited impacts would occur to stone walls, many of which are located on the south side of High Street and are outside of the area impacted by proposed improvements. However, careful review of the selected alternative should be conducted to ensure that impacts to stone walls are avoided. Impacts to some sections of stone wall would likely constitute an adverse effect to the Harpers Ferry Historic District, as well as to individual buildings.

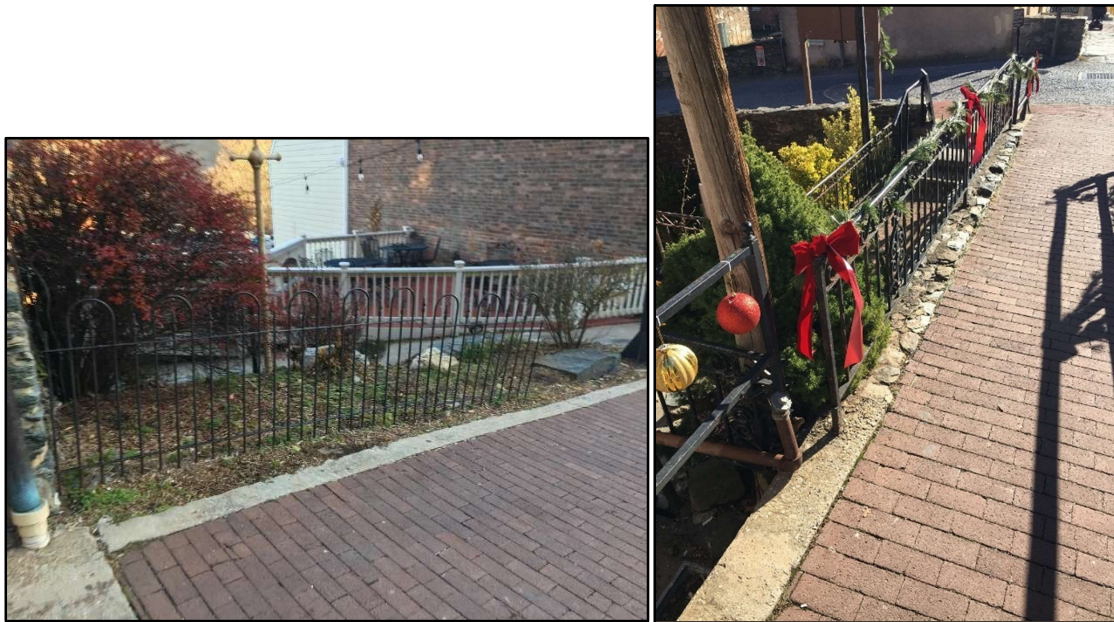


**Figure 8: View of Stone Walls on South Side of High Street (Outside of Direct Impacts)**

## Iron fences

Several of the buildings have iron fences bordering their property in varying patterns and types (**Figure 9**). Many of these appear to be modern replacements, but sections of older fencing may exist. They are not character defining features and do not characterize the Harpers Ferry Historic District but could be considered contributing elements to some of the individual buildings. Based on current project alternatives, no impacts would occur to these fences, but care should be given should impacts occur. Avoidance or replacement in-kind would be recommended actions should sections of fence be impacted.





**Figure 9: View of Decorative Iron Fences on North Side of High Street**

### Steps and Entryways

Several of the buildings have small flights of steps leading from the sidewalk to the ground floor of the building or to the level below grade. Some buildings have wooden steps leading to a front entrance (**Figure 10**). Several of the buildings also contain small concrete steps and planters at their entryway (**Figure 11**). While the materials have overwhelmingly been replaced with modern ones, the various steps and entryways are a character-defining feature in this portion of the Harpers Ferry Historic District. Furthermore, many are likely important features to individual buildings. Based on preliminary project plans, steps will not be impacted by proposed project improvements. However, care should be given should impacts occur. Avoidance or replacement in-kind would be recommended actions should portions of steps or entryways be impacted.



**Figure 10: Wooden Steps on North Side of High Street**



**Figure 11: View of Concrete Steps and Planters on North Side of High Street**

### Summary and Recommendations

Based on a review of the preliminary design alternatives, there are several potential character-defining elements along High Street that could be impacted, depending in part on the final alternative selected. Particular attention should be paid to brick sidewalks and downspouts. Avoidance or replacement in-kind would both be acceptable treatments that can be developed based on the alternative chosen. Furthermore, while impacts appear to be minimal to elements such as stone retaining walls, iron fences, and steps/entryways, care should be given in implementing specific designs in and around areas that contain these features. Overall, Option 1 and Option 2 present an acceptable balance of new construction and retention of existing historic elements. With careful review of specific designs, both alternatives can be constructed with minimal potential for adverse effects. Option 3 presents a greater potential for creating adverse effects, both in terms of specific impacts to character-defining features such as sidewalks and downspouts, but also in terms of impacts to the overall sense of setting, feeling, and association along High Street.

## REFERENCES

- Corporation of Harpers Ferry, Historic Landmarks Commission. 2017. "Harpers Ferry Historic District Inventory of Contributing Resources." <https://www.harpersferrywv.us/landmarks/invcontstruc.pdf>, accessed March 2020.
- Corporation of Harpers Ferry, Historic Landmarks Commission. TBD. "Harpers Ferry Historic District Standards and Guidelines." <http://www.harpersferrywv.us/landmarks/HFHDstandards.pdf>, accessed March 2020.
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