

SEWICKLEY BOROUGH

Request for Proposals for:

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR PREPARATION OF “DESIGN GUIDELINES AND PRESERVATION MANUAL” FOR THE SEWICKLEY BOROUGH HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Contact:

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Key Dates/Deadlines

RFP Issue Date: MARCH 10, 2026
Deadline for Questions: APRIL 22, 2026
Proposal Due Date/Time: APRIL 29, 2026 @ 4 P.M.
Anticipated Interviews (if any): MAY/JUNE 2026
Anticipated Award/Notice to Proceed: JUNE/JULY 2026

I. Purpose and Background

Sewickley Borough is soliciting proposals from qualified professional planning and preservation consulting firms to prepare a “**Design Guidelines and Preservation Manual**” (the “Manual”) for the **Sewickley Borough Historic Districts**. The Manual will be used to support and implement the **Sewickley Borough Historic Districting Ordinance** and the Borough’s historic preservation review process, including Certificates of Appropriateness.

The Historic Districting Ordinance expresses the Borough’s policy objectives, including preserving and restoring the Borough’s historic, cultural, and architectural qualities and maintaining a harmonious outward appearance of structures. The Ordinance also contemplates establishment and use of guidelines for the issuance of Certificates of Appropriateness and provides that the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation are to be used to the extent approved by Borough Council and not inconsistent with applicable law.

The Manual should be comparable in organization and level of detail as the following examples:

- [Design Guidelines and Preservation Manual for the Beaver Historic District](https://beaverpa.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Design-Guidelines-and-Preservation-Manual-Beaver-Historic-District.pdf)¹
- [Mt. Lebanon Design Guide](https://mtlebanon.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/DownloadableDesignGuide.pdf)²

¹ <https://beaverpa.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Design-Guidelines-and-Preservation-Manual-Beaver-Historic-District.pdf>

² <https://mtlebanon.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/DownloadableDesignGuide.pdf>

II. Project Goals

Proposals should address a work program that accomplishes the following:

1. Produce a clear, practical Manual that can be used by property owners, design professionals, staff, the Historic Review Commission, and Borough Council to evaluate exterior work within the Historic Districts.
2. Provide standards and guidance that are consistent with the Sewickley Borough Historic Districting Ordinance framework, including use of the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation to the extent approved by Council.
3. Create a document that is user-friendly, graphic-forward, and suitable for publication in both print and digital formats.
4. Include implementation guidance, including recommended administrative processes, submittal checklists, and training support.

III. Scope of Services

The selected consultant will be expected to complete, at minimum, the following tasks. Offerors may recommend refinements or additional tasks, provided they clearly identify added scope and associated costs.

Task A. Project Initiation and Work Plan

- Kickoff meeting with Borough staff.
- Confirm project schedule, communication protocol, and engagement plan.
- Compile and review relevant Borough materials (including ordinance provisions, existing guidance, prior studies, and district maps).

Task B. Existing Conditions and Context

- Review and summarize the Historic District's development patterns, character-defining features, and architectural typologies.
- Identify key issues encountered in review of exterior work, including recurring questions from applicants, staff, or reviewing bodies.
- Develop a photographic and/or illustrative base suitable for the Manual (street/structure examples, typical materials, typical details).
- The September 17, 2024 [Cultural Landscape Inventory and Public Engagement Survey](#)³ should be reviewed and utilized as may be appropriate.

Task C. Manual Development (Core Content)

Prepare a Manual that, at a minimum, includes:

1. **Introduction and Intent**
 - Purpose, applicability, and how to use the Manual.

³ <https://www.sewickleyborough.org/220/Historic-Review-Commission>

- Relationship to the Historic Districting Ordinance and Certificate of Appropriateness review.
2. **Historic District Character and Architectural Overview**
 - Character areas, architectural styles, streetscape qualities, and building types.
 3. **General Preservation Principles**
 - Rehabilitation approach aligned with Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for Rehabilitation (as applicable).
 4. **Guidelines for Work on Existing Buildings (non-exclusive/sample categories)**
 - Overall preservation approach and character-defining features (identify/retain significant features; repair first; replacement standards).
 - Building envelope and primary materials (masonry, stone, brick, wood, siding, stucco; cleaning, repair, repointing, patching; material reuse).
 - Openings and architectural elements (windows, doors, shutters, trim, decorative details; repair vs. replacement; appropriate materials and profiles).
 - Roofs and drainage systems (roof forms and materials; flashing; gutters and downspouts; chimney conditions visible from the public way).
 - Porches, stoops, steps, railings, and balconies (reconstruction/repair standards; safety upgrades that preserve character).
 - Finishes, coatings, and color (paint and stain practices; historically appropriate palettes; avoidance of damaging treatments).
 - Mechanical, electrical, and communications equipment (visibility; screening; routing of conduit/cabling; rooftop equipment standards).
 - Site features visible from public ways (walls, fences, walkways, stairs, decks/patios, fireplaces, landscaping elements; compatibility and materials).
 - Accessibility-related exterior changes (ramps, lifts, handrails; approaches that minimize visual impacts while meeting applicable requirements).
 - Commercial features, if applicable (signage and business storefront elements).
 5. **Guidelines for Additions and New Construction**
 - Siting, massing, scale, proportion, facade composition, setbacks, compatibility, and differentiation.
 6. **Demolition/Removal of Non-Contributing or Non-Historic Features, Additions, and Alterations)**
 - Provide criteria to distinguish historic/contributing elements from non-historic additions/alterations.
 - Establish standards for when removal of non-historic features is appropriate, with an emphasis on preserving historic fabric and avoiding adverse impacts to character-defining features.
 7. **Administrative Tools and Appendices**
 - Application guidance and checklists.

- Photo examples (appropriate/inappropriate treatments).
- Glossary of architectural terms.

Note: The manual should be structured to support the Commission’s role in administering historic district reviews and to produce clear, implementable standards and guidelines.

Task D. Stakeholder and Public Engagement

The consultant will be expected to lead/facilitate:

- A targeted engagement process to ensure the Manual is practical for applicants and Borough administration.
- Project working meetings with Borough staff and the Historic Review Commission to confirm goals, review draft content, and test the guidelines against common application scenarios.
- Public-facing engagement opportunities (public meetings, online forums, or workshops) to introduce the project, explain how the Manual will be used, and receive input from residents, property owners, design professionals, and real estate professionals.

Task E. Drafting, Review, and Finalization

- Prepare a Draft Manual for review by Borough staff and designated review bodies.
- Revise and prepare a Final Manual suitable for Borough publication and use.
- Provide an editable source file package (e.g., Word/InDesign plus image files) and a press-ready PDF.

Task F. Implementation Support and Training

- Provide a training session for the Historic Review Commission, staff, and Borough Council on how to use the Manual in the Certificate of Appropriateness process.
- Provide a short “implementation memo” summarizing recommended next steps, including any suggested updates to application forms or administrative procedures.

IV. Deliverables

At minimum, the consultant shall deliver:

1. **Project Work Plan and Outline** (early deliverable)
2. **Draft Manual** (digital)
3. **Final Manual** (digital, press-ready PDF, and editable source files)
4. **Training Session and Training Materials** (slides/handouts)
5. **Implementation Memo** (brief)

V. Project Schedule

Offerors shall propose a schedule with key milestones. The Borough’s preference is completion within approximately 12 to 18 months of Notice to Proceed.

VI. Proposal Submission Instructions

1. Proposals shall be sent to:

Borough of Sewickley
Attn: Donna Kaib, Borough Manager
601 Thorn Street
Sewickley, PA 15143
Phone: 412-741-4015
DKaib@sewickleyborough.org

2. Format and Copies:

- Please submit five (5) paper copies plus one (1) searchable PDF via email.
- Clearly mark the outside of the package and the subject line of the email submission: **“Proposal: Sewickley Historic District Design Guidelines and Preservation Manual”**

3. Deadline: Proposals must be received no later than: **April 29, 2026 @ 4 P.M.** Late proposals may be rejected.

VII. Contents of Proposal

At minimum, proposals shall include and/or demonstrate the following:

1. Cover Letter (designating primary contact)

2. Firm Qualifications and Relevant Experience

- Similar guideline/manual projects (preferably historic districts and municipal review processes)
- Experience working with historic district commissions/boards with an emphasis on communities within the region and/or of a similar size and composition.

3. Project Team

- Names, roles, resumes
- Identification of any subconsultants

4. Proposed Approach

- Demonstrate understanding of the Scope of Services and overall assignment

5. Work Plan and Schedule

- Tasks, deliverables, and timeline

6. Fee Proposal

- Proposed fee structure (lump sum, or time-and-materials with not-to-exceed cap)
- Hourly rates by labor category
- Estimated hours by task (if time-and-materials)
- Reimbursable expenses, if any

7. References

- At least three municipal references for similar work

8. Work Product Samples

- Sample manuals, guidelines, or comparable publications (in their entirety if possible).

VIII. Evaluation and Selection Process

- Proposals will be evaluated on a best-value basis using criteria such as:
 - Demonstrated qualifications and relevant experience
 - Quality and clarity of proposed approach and work plan
 - Understanding of the Borough's goals and the intended use of the Manual in review processes
 - Proposed project team expertise and availability
 - Public engagement approach
 - Fee and overall value
 - Quality of prior comparable work products
- The Borough may, at its discretion, shortlist firms for interviews and/or request best-and-final offers.

IX. Terms, Conditions, and Borough Reservations

1. **Reservation of Rights:** The Borough reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, waive informalities, request additional information, and negotiate scope and price with the selected firm.
2. **Contract:** The selected firm will be required to enter into a written professional services agreement acceptable to the Borough.
3. **Insurance:** The selected firm shall maintain insurance customary for professional consulting engagements, including commercial general liability, workers' compensation, and professional liability/errors and omissions, in amounts acceptable to the Borough.
4. **Public Records:** Proposals may be subject to the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law, with appropriate treatment of confidential proprietary information consistent with law.
5. **No Obligation:** Issuance of this RFP does not obligate the Borough to award a contract or pay any costs incurred in proposal preparation.
6. **Questions and Addenda:** All questions shall be submitted via email to Donna Kaib, Borough Manager by **April 22, 2026**. The Borough may issue written addenda following the close of questions and prior to the proposal due date; Offerors are responsible for contacting the Borough prior to submission to monitor for addenda and are expected to address any such addenda in their proposals.