



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Bucks County Historical Society Unveils Conceptual Enhancement Plans for Fonthill Castle Property

DOYLESTOWN, PA – Fonthill Castle, operated by the Bucks County Historical Society (BCHS), unveiled conceptual plans for future site improvements to its 69-acre Fonthill Castle property located in the heart of Doylestown, PA at a gathering in Doylestown Borough Hall last Wednesday, February 8, 2023.

At the meeting, BCHS CEO Kyle McKoy presented the organization's conceptual plans for the transformation of the grounds surrounding Fonthill Castle to local government officials. Officials in attendance included State Representative Tim Brennan, District Director for Rep. Brian Fitzpatrick Kyle Melander, Event Director for PA State Senator Steve Santarsiero Nancy Adam, Bucks County Commissioner Gene DiGirolamo, Bucks County Chief Operating Officer Margie McKeivitt, Doylestown Township Manager Stephanie Mason, Doylestown Borough Mayor Noni West, Doylestown Borough Council President Jack O'Brien, Doylestown Borough Council Members Amy Popkin and Wendy Margolis, Doylestown Borough Manager John Davis, Deputy Borough Manager and Director of Public Works & Planning Phil Ehlinger, and Doylestown Borough Director of Building and Zoning Karyn Hyland.

The Bucks County Historical Society is exploring plans to conserve and enhance the open space surrounding Fonthill Castle, private land owned by BCHS that is enjoyed by the public year-round, and seeks to realize Henry Mercer's vision to foster education and enjoyment of both the arts and nature.

In 2022, BCHS secured a state grant in order to develop a master plan for future site improvements to the historic property and the surrounding 69 acres of woodlands, with the goal of amplifying Henry Mercer's long-lasting legacy in Bucks County.

The state grant included a vital comprehensive site study of the entire property, including the woodlands, waterways, vehicular and pedestrian access, and environmental studies of natural flora and fauna, in order to improve community access and usage for residents and visitors alike.

BCHS hired OLIN, an internationally recognized landscape architecture, comprehensive planning, and urban design firm based in Philadelphia, to envision a plan whereby the land surrounding Fonthill Castle would be multifunctional and serve both as an educational venue and an environmentally-enhanced space for diverse habitats.

The conceptual plans draw on the project's pillars of community, ecology, and wellness. They include proposals to restore the landscape and improve plant and species habitats, revitalize the "Little House in the Woods" as a new space for environmental and ecological education, enhance educational opportunities and community program spaces, and expand the existing Fonthill Woodlands trail system to encourage outdoor exploration for all visitors.

The primary goals of this initiative are to reveal and enhance cultural resources, demonstrate leadership in conservation ecology, promote wellness, engage the community, and expand Fonthill Castle's educational mission.

"For over 45 years, the Bucks County Historical Society has been dedicated to stewarding Henry Mercer's mission to create a space in harmony with its environment for the public to experience nature at Fonthill Castle," said Kyle McKoy, CEO of the Bucks County Historical Society. "Our conceptual plans to transform the grounds of this historic landmark will usher this mission into a new era, enhancing 69 acres of land open to the public, conserving Bucks County's natural beauty, and providing educational and community-building opportunities for generations to come."

Fonthill Castle was built between 1908-1912 and was the home of Henry Chapman Mercer. Mercer built Fonthill Castle as his residence and showplace for his collection of tiles and prints. The castle serves as an early example of reinforced concrete and features forty-four rooms, over two hundred windows, and eighteen fireplaces. Fonthill Castle's interior features Mercer's renowned, hand-crafted ceramic tiles designed at the height of the Arts and Crafts movement.

Today, Fonthill Castle is operated by the Bucks County Historical Society as a historic house museum and community cultural gathering place.

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About the Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle

Located in Doylestown, Bucks County, PA, the Mercer Museum and Fonthill Castle are historic castles celebrating the legacy of Henry Chapman Mercer (1856-1930), American archaeologist, anthropologist, ceramicist and scholar. Both sites are operated by the Bucks County Historical Society (BCHS).

The Mercer Museum, one of Bucks County's premier cultural attractions and a Smithsonian affiliate, features both local and national seasonal exhibits as well as a core museum collection of over 50,000 pre-Industrial tools. This permanent collection offers visitors a unique window into pre-Industrial America through sixty different crafts and trades and is one of the world's most comprehensive portraits of American material culture. The museum also features a research library that is a center for local history related to Bucks County and the surrounding region, with its roots dating back to the founding of the Bucks County Historical Society in 1880.

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The Mercer Museum is located at 84 South Pine Street, Doylestown, PA, 18901. Fonthill Castle is located at 525 East Court Street in Doylestown, PA, 18901.

The Mercer Museum & Fonthill Castle are open Tuesdays – Sundays from 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. For up-to-date ticket and schedule information, please visit mercermuseum.org.

About OLIN Studio: <https://www.theolinstudio.com/>

**For additional information or to schedule an interview with
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