

# ***PROTECTING OUR PAST FOR THE FUTURE***

## **The Historic Preservation Commissions of the Village and Town of New Paltz**



***North Chestnut Street, New Paltz, c. 1910***

***To protect, enhance and perpetuate the architectural heritage of New Paltz***

### ***What are the Historic Preservation Commissions (HPCs)?***

The Historic Preservation Commissions of the Village and Town were created by Municipal Codes (Village Code Chapter 9; Town Code 140-118) to protect the community's significant historic, architectural, and cultural resources. These volunteer commissions are charged with designating historic landmarks, recommending the creation of historic districts, and reviewing all proposed exterior changes to designated properties.

### ***What is a historic landmark?***

A historic landmark is a property officially designated by one of the two Commissions as possessing special character, historical significance, or aesthetic value to the community.

### ***What is a historic district?***

A historic district is a group of properties designated for its special character, historical significance, or aesthetic value. A district may contain a variety of styles or periods but must represent a distinct area of the community. All properties in a historic district need not be historic, yet all are regulated by the designation.

### ***What does designation mean to owners?***

Ownership of designated properties, or ownership of property within a designated historic district, requires owners to act as responsible stewards of our community's irreplaceable cultural heritage. To accomplish this, owners are required to obtain prior approval from the appropriate Commission before making exterior alterations or major landscape changes to ensure that the

changes do not negatively affect the historic character of the property or district. However, designation does not freeze a property or district in time. Alterations and new construction can continue, but Commission review is required to protect the historic integrity of the property or district.

***What changes require Commission prior approval?***

Except for routine maintenance and replacing “like-for-like” materials, all exterior work on historic district properties or designated historic landmarks – including shed installations, permanent landscape alterations, and any change in windows or exterior colors – requires Commission review. Exterior work includes changes to existing structures as well as the construction of new structures on the property.

***Are there changes that would not require Commission prior approval?***

Commission approval is not required for ordinary maintenance and like-for-like repair of the exterior (see above), or for interior alterations that do not affect the exterior. Approval of paint colors is required only if color changes are proposed.

***How can I get prior approval for changes to my property?***

Contact the appropriate Historic Preservation Commission or Building Department early in your planning to determine if your project requires a Certificate of Appropriateness. If it does, complete an application for the Commission’s review. A public hearing may be necessary for changes that require a building permit.

***My contemporary home is in a historic district. Does review also apply to me?***

Yes. Exterior changes, including major landscape changes, to all properties in historic districts are subject to review to protect the overall character of the district.

***Can the Commission require me to make repairs and maintain my property?***

The law requires that designated properties be kept in good repair to prevent “demolition by neglect.” This regulation is similar to the legal requirement that all buildings in the community be maintained in safe condition. When you need to make repairs, please contact the Building Inspector or the Historic Preservation Commission as early as possible for advice about historic preservation and other municipal requirements.

***Can the Commission require me to restore my building to the way it looked when it was new?***

No. All aspects of a property’s history are considered important, not just the earliest. The Commission reviews proposed changes only to prevent alterations that would adversely affect the property’s historic integrity.

***Can a designated building ever be demolished?***

An owner may apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish a designated building if retaining it presents an extreme economic burden, with no possibility of earning a reasonable return. This standard is a strict one, however, requiring the owner to prove the hardship claim conclusively.

## Interactive Map of Historic New Paltz

(<http://hpc.townofnewpaltz.org>)

An interactive map of the Town and Village of New Paltz is available for history enthusiasts, educators, students, and local home owners to explore the collection of historic facts, pictures, and stories about the properties that comprise the long and vibrant history of New Paltz. The online map site highlights local historic preservation efforts and includes an introductory video, an animated timeline showing New Paltz's development, descriptions of each hamlet and the Village of New Paltz Downtown Historic District.

### **VIDEO: *Historic Preservation and the Village of New Paltz***

[https://youtu.be/8JDkbUP\\_6k8](https://youtu.be/8JDkbUP_6k8) and [www.villageofnewpaltz.org/historic-preservation-commission](http://www.villageofnewpaltz.org/historic-preservation-commission)

This 23-minute video features the experiences and testimonials of elected officials, commission volunteers, and citizens who have worked with the Commission. It explores the history and principles of architectural preservation and applies them to the local context. Realized with the help of a state grant from the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, the video is available on YouTube and posted on the Village HPC's website.

#### ***For more information:***



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