

Town of New Paltz Historic Preservation Commission
Town Hall, Route 32
New Paltz, NY 12561

October 14, 2015

Mr. Calimano - Chair
Town Planning Board

Mohonk Foothills Project

Dear Mr. Calimano and Members of the Planning Board,

The Historic Preservation Commission reviewed the report entitled Assessment of Potential Adverse Impacts to Historic Resources with Proposed Mitigation Measures, dated September 12th 2015, submitted by our consultant Neil Larson, of Larson Fisher Associates, at our meeting on September 23rd, 2015 and has identified the following key considerations for your Board's approval of the project:

1. **Paving of the Allée:** The paving of the pin oak allée should preserve the historic integrity of the feature. A pervious surface, preferably a gravel with bluestone content, was recommended in earlier discussions.
2. **Location of Services:** The potential adverse visual impacts the proposed parking area will have on the Testimonial Gateway are not adequately mitigated in the plans provided. The applicant should be requested to shift the congregating area and visitor services to one side or the other of the proposed site and out of direct view of the historic building.
3. **Location of access to the Hasbrouck House:** The Wawarsing Turnpike is a significant historic feature that will be significantly altered by the proposed project. The section providing access to the Hasbrouck House appears to be essentially intact to its historic dimensions and features. Widening the road will have a potential adverse effect as will the proposal to construct a 10-ft.-wide "dry swale" along the easterly side of the roadway.

Every effort should be made to preserve the historic road materials and roadside features to mitigate the potential adverse impacts of the road widening. An alternative to the proposed paving is needed, as well as more detailed plans for the preservation of the roadside. The portion of the roadway proposed to be bypassed by a new entry from Rt.299 should be preserved as-is rather than "reclaimed as upland meadow."

The construction of a "new vehicle turnaround" at the northeasterly end of the Wawarsing Turnpike will also have a potential adverse impact on the integrity of the historic roadway. The need for the "turnaround" should be reconsidered. Removing it and preserving the scale, materials and roadside characteristics would eliminate the need to mitigate this potential adverse impact.

An alternative that would remove any potential adverse impacts to the Wawarsing Turnpike would be to construct a new road along the tree-line on the easterly side of the meadow east of the turnpike. This impact would be mitigated by the preservation of the historic turnpike and the reduced visual impacts to the house

4. **Ponds:** The ponds on the property have returned to a natural state in recent decades and were used for nature education classes in the 1960s. The ponds should be maintained for their current ecological conditions. Pond-edge trails, as recommended in the Mohonk Preserve LAMP document (p. 103) are suggested.

John Orfitelli
Chair, Town of New Paltz Historic Preservation Commission