

HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN

Syracuse

*New York*



A COMPONENT OF THE SYRACUSE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN



# **SYRACUSE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN**

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**2012, City of Syracuse**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The *Historic Preservation* is a component of *Syracuse's Comprehensive Plan 2040* – an update of Comprehensive Plan 2025 adopted by Common Council in 2005. This component is based on a comprehensive preservation planning document created by a 2003 graduate-level SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry urban design studio class. Bureau of Planning & Sustainability staff condensed the document to its most essential and achievable policy recommendations that will help guide the overall preservation program and the potential revision of the Landmark Preservation Ordinance.

The specific goals and policy recommendations of the *Historic Preservation* component include:

- I. Celebrate Syracuse's History and Heritage as Embodied by Historic Resources
- II. Promote the Economic Opportunities and Benefits of Historic Preservation
- III. Prioritize Preservation in Syracuse's Land Use Regulations and City Operations

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# SYRACUSE LANDMARK PRESERVATION BOARD

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Louise Birkhead  
Tim Bonaparte  
Cynthia Carrington Carter  
Julia Haftka-Marshall  
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Joe Saya

## **Plan Advisors**

Chris Capella-Peters  
Beth Crawford  
Randy Crawford  
George Curry

## **Preservation Planner**

Kate Elliot Auwaerter



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# INTRODUCTION

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*Hanover Square,  
Downtown Syracuse*

One of the City of Syracuse's greatest assets is its tremendous collection of historic and cultural resources. Some of these resources are truly unique and of regional if not national significance. Resources such as the Niagara Mohawk Building, the Weighlock Building, and Clinton Square stand out as major parts of the urban landscape; their importance as regional landmarks is unquestionable. Other historic properties are more personal, less prominent, but equally important to the community. These range from high-style Victorian mansions the city's Northside, to the early-20th century streetcar suburbs of Berkeley Park and Sedgwick Farms, to the modest middle-class and workers' housing of the Near Westside and Southside. Also noteworthy are the community's collection of historic parks and green spaces including the large designed landscapes of Thornden, Elmwood and Onondaga Parks, and the smaller neighborhood parks such as Kirk or Loguen Parks. These are the places – both monumental and personal – that give meaning to Syracuse as a place and form its identity. They are the tangible evidence of the past that provide physical ties to the events and persons that shaped the community.

Good stewardship of the city's historic resources is also important to forward the economic development and investment goals of the community. The revitalization of Armory Square and Franklin Square are obvious demonstrations of the economic benefit of preserving and repurposing Syracuse's unique urban fabric. This model of success is now being replicated in other parts of downtown Syracuse, including South Salina Street and the Lakefront, bringing formerly vacant properties back to life and creating an attractive urban environment that is historic in appearance and modern in outlook. The city's unique historic architecture and urban places and livable, walkable neighborhoods provide a unique marketing tool to attract and retain new businesses, employees, and residents.

Over the years, the City's preservation program has evolved alongside the growing appreciation for the community's historic assets. The following Historic Preservation plan establishes the City's preservation policy, providing transparency and predictability to property owners. It focuses on adopting nationally recognized best practices in the preservation field, calls for the continued pursuit of the comprehensive inventory and proactive local nominations, identifies and recommends economic incentives for local designation, and provides guidance for the future revision to the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance. The goals and actions provided herein will contribute to the City's ongoing efforts to create a sustainable community that provides a high quality of life for current and future generations.

*Syracuse City Hall; 1891.  
Architect: Charles Colton*



# OVERVIEW OF SYRACUSE'S MUNICIPAL PRESERVATION PROGRAM

In 1975, the City of Syracuse launched its formal preservation program with the adoption of the Landmark Preservation Ordinance. The Ordinance provides a means of recognizing important historic resources within the community through the designation of historic districts (local Preservation Districts) and individual landmarks (local Protected Sites), and provides protection of these designated resources through the Certificate of Appropriateness process. Overseeing the administration of the Ordinance is the Syracuse Landmark Preservation Board (SLPB), a nine-member, all-volunteer board appointed by the Mayor. The SLPB reviews landmark nominations and makes recommendations to the Planning Commission and Common Council for the designation of local sites and districts. The SLPB also reviews applications for Certificates of Appropriateness, which are required for any work that impacts the material appearance of a local Protected Site or property within a Preservation District. The SLPB has the ability to approve or deny any Certificate of Appropriateness.

*North Salina Street  
National Register  
Historic District*

The Landmark Preservation Ordinance has been revised a number of times since 1975. In 1981, the definition of "material change of appearance" was clarified and broadened to include a property's site in addition to the structure itself. That same year, the appeals process for Certificate of Appropriateness denials was revised. The original process referred all appeals back to SLPB; the revision redirected appeals to the City Planning Commission. The last significant amendment was in 1993, which added a new article (Article 8) creating a demolition review process for any building or structure that is listed in or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, or is eligible for local Protected Site designation.

Since its adoption, the City has designated 58 local Protected Sites, which include a range of residential, religious, and governmental resources as well as historic designed landscapes. In addition, the City has designated four local Preservation Districts including two downtown districts (Columbus Circle and Hanover Square) and two residential districts (Sedgwick-Highland-James and Berkeley Park). This represents nearly 500 properties that fall under the jurisdiction of the Landmark Preservation Ordinance and the Landmark Preservation Board.

*The Alton Simmons House;  
Van Rensselaer Street. An Arts  
and Crafts cottage designed by  
prominent Syracuse Architect  
Ward Wellington Ward and a  
local Protected Site.*

With some overlap with locally designated properties, there are currently over 80 historic resources listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places. There are also 12 National Register-listed Historic Districts. Hanover Square became the city's first historic district listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1976, followed shortly thereafter by the nominations of the Hawley-Green Street and the North Salina Street Historic Districts. In the mid-1980s, the former Walton Tract in the southwestern section of Downtown, once targeted for urban renewal, caught the attention of local artists and, shortly thereafter, a number of developers. The area was given the name Armory Square and listed in the National register in 1983. Over the next 25 years, other neighborhoods and areas of the city were nominated to the National Register including South Salina Street (former Village

of Danforth), two sections of the Strathmore neighborhood, Berkeley Park, and most recently, the Scottholm Tract on the city's Eastside.

Coinciding with the local designations and nominations to the National Register has been the City's ongoing effort to comprehensively survey and document all of the community's historic resources. The City of Syracuse's inventory of historic resources began in the 1970s, in response to requirements of federal Community Development Block Grant funding, and therefore focused on low- to moderate-income neighborhoods qualifying for these funds. The scope of the City's survey efforts has broadened over time to include larger areas of the city and specific categories of resources such as the architecture of Archimedes Russell and Ward Wellington Ward, and historic designed landscapes. Most recently, the City oversaw surveys of the Scottholm Tract (which resulted in a National Register nomination), the Park Avenue neighborhood, and the former Village of Danforth on the city's Southside.

The primary source of funding for many of these surveys has been the Certified Local Government (CLG) program. The CLG program is a federally sponsored program coordinated in New York State by the State Historic Preservation Office, which provides access to technical assistance, training, and grants to qualified communities. The City of Syracuse was designated a CLG community in 1985.

No community is ever "done" investigating and documenting its historic resources, as the historic context is always changing and the definition of significance evolves. As the City's historic preservation program also evolves, it is important to continue documenting historic assets and connecting the public to this information. But the City must also explore ways to ensure that all significant properties are protected, even if they have not yet been identified and documented.

*Images, right:  
Syracuse's historic resources range from the monumental and well known, to the personal and everyday. Interior of the Landmark Theater (top); a Syracuse residential streetscape (bottom).*





# POLICIES, GOALS, & RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

The following chapter describes the three broad the goals of the municipal preservation program, which are:

**Goal 1: Celebrate Syracuse’s History and Heritage as Embodied by Historic Resources**

**Goal 2: Promote the Economic Opportunities and Benefits of Historic Preservation**

**Goal 3: Prioritize Preservation in Syracuse’s Land Use Regulations and City Operations**

Each goal is followed by policies and realistically feasible actions that will support a proactive, transparent, and professional preservation program.

## **GOAL 1: CELEBRATE SYRACUSE’S HISTORY AND HERITAGE AS EMBODIED BY HISTORIC RESOURCES**

Historic resources—including buildings, structures, sites and objects—are physical reminders of the Syracuse community’s shared history and help define us as a place and a community. Efforts to maintain, preserve and protect these resources should be recognized and honored. In addition to providing protection for historic resources, an effective historic preservation program should be a resource for educational materials regarding local historic resources as well as a resource for technical information for owners and stewards of historic properties.

### **Actions**

#### **1.1 Continue documentation and evaluation of historic resources throughout City.**

*Historic resource surveys are an important planning and advocacy tool. They provide information about the location, condition and integrity of the city’s historic properties, which assists in planning how and where to direct City resources. In addition, information collected from these surveys adds to the understanding of the city’s history and development. Surveys are also an excellent opportunity to introduce residents to the history of their neighborhoods and to build pride in neighborhood resources.*

- Include robust public participation component and publications or other products in all future neighborhood survey projects in order to engage residents in the documentation of the history of their neighborhoods and increase interest in the built environment.
- Ensure historic documentation results and landmark nominations/designations are shared with the OHA, PACNY, and the Onondaga County Public Library system, and are downloadable from the City’s website.

- Continue to apply for Certified Local Government (CLG) and other funds for historic resources survey and documentation projects.
- Continue to partner with local universities to complete survey projects and educate future preservationists.

*City staff has developed a successful relationship with the SUNY ESF Department of Landscape Architecture as well as Cornell University's Historic Preservation Planning program. Working with faculty and students helps meet City survey goals and also provides valuable practical experience for students training to be the next generation of preservation planners.*

## **1.2 Promote comprehensive education programs and publications regarding the city's historic resources and the local preservation program.**

*City preservation staff should partner with local not-for-profits to compile, publish and distribute educational materials regarding the city's historic resources as well as develop workshops on pertinent issues.*

- Partner with and assist the Onondaga Historical Association (OHA), Preservation Association of New York (PACNY), TNT Planning Councils and others in their ongoing efforts to create educational materials, and events and public presentations related to the history and development of the city. Work in partnership with the PACNY, other neighborhood groups, and the TNT program to develop workshops and other educational opportunities on specific and timely preservation-related topics.

*Many issues, such as the reuse or repurposing of vacant historic religious properties, former-industrial properties, or decommissioned schools, for example, pertain to more than just a single property or neighborhood in the city and could be the topic of public presentations and publications.*

- Make available through the City website educational materials helpful to owners of historic properties, including guidelines for basic repair and maintenance, weatherization, repair of historic windows, and sensitive alterations.

*There is a wealth of information available regarding care and maintenance of historic properties. By linking to relevant sites and providing basic technical information, the City's preservation program webpage can be a useful source for property owners.*

- Provide educational materials and conduct regular information sessions specifically for property owners in preservation districts or of local Protected Sites.

*Preservation staff should meet on an annual basis with property-owner groups and organizations from the City's local Preservation Districts to discuss the function of the Syracuse Preservation Ordinance, the Certificate of Appropriateness process and the Landmark Preservation Board (SLPB), as well as other topics such as the*

*Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.*

- Work with Greater Syracuse Board of Realtors to disseminate information about the city's historic resources.

*Preservation staff can provide information to local realtors regarding properties listed in the National Register or are locally designated, as well as materials on financial incentives and municipal design review requirements associated with these properties.*

### **1.3 Establish an annual Mayor's Award for Excellence in Historic Preservation.**

*Municipal award programs will demonstrate the City's support for private preservation activities and initiatives, acknowledge the investment in the good stewardship of shared heritage, and bring attention to the value of these projects to the community—both economically and culturally.*

### **1.4 Create a marker program for historic resources throughout the city.**

*Signage will identify and bring attention to the city's historic resources, will be a point of pride for property owners, and will provide an educational opportunity for residents and visitors alike.*

- Identify a "standard" historic marker for historic properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places as well as designated Local Protected Sites that might be purchased by property owners.
- Incorporate signage identifying National Register-listed historic districts, local Preservation Districts, and conservation districts throughout the city into existing street signs.

## **GOAL 2: PROMOTE THE ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND BENEFITS OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

Once viewed as a luxury that a community could rarely afford, preservation is now commonly recognized as central to a strong and growing economy. The City of Syracuse should actively seek to promote existing incentives that will drive the revitalization of the city's marketable historic assets as well as seek out new incentives that will encourage the reuse of existing properties over demolition.

### **Actions**

#### **2.1 Pursue the creation of additional financial incentives for local landmark designation and promote the use of those that are currently available.**

*Currently, National Register listing comes with almost all of the preservation incentives and very few restrictions. In contrast, local designation, which is the most effective preservation tool to prevent inappropriate alteration of historic properties, comes with*

*very few incentives and almost all of the restrictions. Incentives are needed to make local designation more attractive to property owners.*

- Form a task force of subject-matter experts to develop recommendations for programs and financial incentives that would make local designation more desirable to property owners.
- Encourage PACNY or another qualified not-for-profit organization to develop a preservation easement program for properties that are designated local landmarks or located in preservation districts.

*A historic preservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement, typically in the form of a deed that permanently protects an historic property. A property owner who donates an easement may be eligible for tax benefits, such as a Federal income tax deduction. Façade easement programs work well in all types of real estate markets. In addition to local designation, the conservation agreement will ensure long-term protection of important local landmarks.*

- Promote and market the use of Section 444a of the local Real Property Tax Law to the owners of local Protected Sites and properties within local Preservation Districts.

*The City of Syracuse adopted the “Ithaca Law” in 1997 with revisions in 2010. This provision applies only to locally designated historic properties and provides a 10-year property tax exemption (100% for the first five years) on any increase in value of the property attributable to approved rehabilitation projects.*

## **2.2 Promote, in coordination with Neighborhood & Business Development, the use of State and Federal Rehabilitation Tax Credits for Income-Producing Properties and New York State Homeownership Rehabilitation Tax Credit.**

*The state and federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit programs for income producing properties are two of the most important incentives driving the revitalization and redevelopment of National Register listed historic properties, and have been used widely in downtown Syracuse. The state’s Residential Rehabilitation Tax Credit program has been a successful investment tool for homeowners in other parts of New York State and can also benefit historic properties in Syracuse.*

- Identify National-Register eligible properties and encourage their nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.
- Create and post on the City’s website a map of local census tracts that are eligible for New York State’s rehabilitation tax credit programs.
- Advocate for the renewal of the New York State Residential Rehabilitation Tax Credit program, which sunset in 2014.

*The City should support its renewal and its expansion to additional census tracts.*

### 2.3 Promote the rehabilitation of existing buildings over new construction by private individuals and via publicly sponsored projects.

- The City should promote reuse and rehabilitation over demolition in its efforts to create a more sustainable community.

*Preservation encourages the reuse of existing materials, creates a market for more highly skilled jobs, maximizes the investment in public infrastructure, and retains Syracuse's marketable historic character.*

- Implement more aggressive enforcement of building code violations that, if fixed, may prevent the further deterioration of vacant and abandoned properties, whether landmark-eligible or not.
- Work with the Syracuse Lead Program to identify lead remediation and encapsulation strategies that minimize harm to historic properties. Investigate what treatments may accomplish the goals of the lead-remediation program but minimize harm to historic properties.
- Continue to promote the rehabilitation over demolition or new construction in the City's CDBG and HOME programs.
- Continue to ensure that no property is demolished using City funds without an interior inspection and evaluation of its rehabilitation potential by City code inspectors (excluding emergency situations). The evaluation will be based on a reasonable investment by the typical investor. In addition, all properties will be reviewed for historic and/or architectural significance by City preservation staff (see 3.5 below).

## GOAL 3: PRIORITIZE PRESERVATION IN SYRACUSE'S LAND USE REGULATIONS AND CITY OPERATIONS

The City of Syracuse operations and budget decisions have a direct impact on historic resources. It also can influence privately owned historic properties through the Preservation Ordinance and other laws and policies, such as the local property tax incentive for the rehabilitation of locally designated properties. City operations, budgeting decisions and regulations should protect historic resources as cultural and economic community assets.

### Actions

#### 3.1 Review and update City's Landmark Preservation Ordinance.

*The Ordinance, which was adopted in 1975, is in need of review and possible amendment for consistency with best practices. Areas for consideration and possible revision include, but are not be limited to:*

- *Procedures for defining economic hardship when appealing a SLPB decision to the Planning Commission.*
- *Definitions of which actions require a Certificate of Appropriateness. Revisions to*

*Article 8 pertaining to review of demolition permits to capture all eligible properties, not just those previously surveyed (see 3.5 below).*

### **3.2 Consistently enforce the Certificate of Appropriateness process for all local Protected Sites and properties within local Preservation Districts.**

- Work with the Division of Code Enforcement and Department of Law to review Certificate of Appropriateness enforcement procedures to ensure consistency. Document this process and share with Code Inspectors and Building Permit Officials. Make process publicly available on the historic preservation program website.
- Clarify enforcement procedures with Code Enforcement and the Law Department for situations in which work on a local Protected Site or property within a Preservation District was completed without a Certificate of Appropriateness.
- Require permits for any work that requires a Certificate of Appropriateness.

*Currently, activities such as window and roof replacements, painting, and some site-work do not require a permit from the Division of Code Enforcement. As a result there are no follow-up inspections of completed work to determine if the work was done according to the specifications approved in the Certificate of Appropriateness.*

### **3.3 Promote local landmark designation of properties already listed in the National Register of Historic Places.**

*These properties are already identified as meeting the local eligibility criteria, which largely mirror those of the National Register. Local designation provides a stronger mechanism to protect these properties from inappropriate alteration. A focus should be placed on commercial and downtown properties in particular, as these tend to engender a sense of ownership among the larger community, contribute to communal Syracuse identity, and are among the most significant landmarks in the region.*

### **3.4 Require SLPB staff meet the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications for Historic Preservation Planners as outlined in 36 CFR Part 61 (see Appendix B).**

*Staff to the SLPB should meet these nationally recognized professional requirements in order to make administrative approvals of minor Certificate of Appropriateness applications, provide advice to other departments upon request for consultation, and in order to review development proposals for their impact on historic properties. This is necessary in order to implement Recommendation 3.5, below.*

### **3.5 Revise Article 8 of the Preservation Ordinance to require staff review of demolition permits for all properties over 50 years old to determine whether they retain enough integrity and possess adequate significance for SLPB review. In addition, a list of exceptionally significant properties less than 50 years of age may be prepared by preservation staff and approved by the SLPB.**

*Article 8 of the Preservation Ordinance refers demolition permit applications to the SLPB only for properties that have been previously surveyed and identified on the City's "Historic Properties List". However, the city's historic resources survey is live and on-going. A static historic properties list is therefore inadequate when used as the trigger for demolition review. . In keeping with national best practices, the determination of potential eligibility and thus further preservation review should be made by qualified staff. In this manner properties will not fail to be reviewed upon application for a demolition permit simply because they have not yet been evaluated in a survey and placed on a list.*

### **3.6 Continue to include SLPB review and comment on historic properties as part of any City design review process.**

*As part of the City's Project Site Review process, the SLPB provides comment on any project that involves exterior alterations to properties that are eligible for local designation or as listed in or eligible for the National Register. As the City considers potential amendments to Project Site Review, the role of the SLPB should not be diminished in any revised design review process.*

- SLPB review should be based on the age of the property (50 years old or older) rather than listing on the City's "Historic Properties List". Staff will provide initial review to determine eligibility prior to being routed for SLPB design review and consultation.

### **3.7 Allow for the creation of Conservation Districts within the Syracuse Zoning Ordinance.**

*Many of Syracuse's neighborhoods possess an identifiable character derived from their historic development, but have been too altered to qualify for preservation district designation. Nevertheless, their pattern of streets and blocks, building forms and styles, and overall composition are valuable community assets worth preserving. Defining such areas as conservation districts can provide meaningful recognition to and ultimately protect these important neighborhoods.*

The table below summarizes review procedures described in goals 3.5-3.7.

<i>Property Type</i>	<i>Review Procedure</i>
Local Protected Site or located in a Local Preservation District	Certificate of Appropriateness procedure. Some activities may be administratively approved. Appeals heard by Planning Commission.
Property in a Conservation District	Major alterations to existing buildings and new construction should conform to adopted design guidelines specific to that district. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Triggered by permit application.</li> <li>• Staff will review for compliance with guidelines.</li> <li>• Appeals heard by Planning Commission.</li> </ul>
Property over 50 years old	<p><i>Review triggered by demolition permit application:</i> Staff reviews for integrity/significance. If determined potentially eligible, further evaluate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obtain information regarding property history from survey and/or other sources</li> <li>• Obtain information regarding current condition and potential for rehabilitation</li> <li>• Assess if rehabilitation is financially feasible</li> <li>• Assess whether rehabilitation or demolition is consistent with neighborhood plan</li> <li>• Require documentation of building if demolition is determined acceptable</li> </ul> <p><i>Triggered by design review for exterior alterations (currently under Project Site Review):</i> Evaluate their eligibility and refer to the SLPB for comment if the property appears eligible for local or National Register designation, or is listed in the National Register.</p>

### **3.8 Ensure that SLPB members and preservation staff receive annual training.**

*Some SLPB members are required by ordinance to have professional backgrounds pertinent to historic preservation while others are not, although they might have an interest in community history and historic properties. Additionally, staff might meet professional preservation qualifications, but nonetheless must stay current with changes in preservation philosophy, policy and practices. Participating in a wide variety of continuing education events will improve the effectiveness of both the board and its staff.*

- Provide training opportunities that address basic historic preservation philosophy and policies, particularly for lay members of the SLPB.
- Provide training opportunities specific to design review, exposing both board members and staff to advances in preservation methods and materials.
- Provide training opportunities regarding evaluation of historic significance.
- Provide training opportunities regarding general procedural issues related to administration of the preservation ordinance.

### **3.9 Refer all State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) and National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) reviews for which the City Planning Commission or other City board is the lead agency to preservation staff for review and comment on the proposed work's impact on historic resources.**

*Utilizing preservation staff review should not add to project review times. Staff should recommend specific mitigation be required of the developer if the project appears to have a negative impact on historic resources and/or the historic pattern of the built environment.*

- Ensure that preservation staff reviews SEQRA records and Environmental Review Records for direct as well as indirect impacts of a project on resources over 50 years of age.

### **3.10 Provide staff technical assistance and in-kind support to key preservation projects.**

*To the extent feasible, City staff should provide technical assistance and advice to local preservation advocates and partners; including advice on rehabilitation projects, grant applications, locally supported landmark nominations, and other preservation activities pursued within the community.*

### **3.11 Create a comprehensive maintenance plan for City-owned historic properties.**

*Having a plan and budget for routine maintenance as well as complete rehabilitation projects for the community's public historic properties will result in sound financial decisions regarding capital improvements and use of city labor forces. It also will put the City in a competitive position for grants to support specific projects. Lastly, such a plan will establish the City as a good steward of historic resources and set an example for other owners of historic properties.*

### **3.12 Communicate the value of historic preservation and historic resources to all City departments to incorporate into their operations, resource management, and planning efforts.**

*Preservation should be one of the issues considered when planning for the City's annual operating budget and Capital Improvement Program, as well as the maintenance of City-owned properties. City staff in all relevant departments should reference the historic resource inventory when planning capital project and work directly with the preservation staff to limit impacts to historic resources and neighborhoods. The City should lead by example through sensitive treatment of historic resources.*

### **3.13 Provide educational materials and opportunities for newly elected officials and newly appointed department heads regarding historic preservation.**

*New members of public boards, Department heads who have an impact on historic properties, and elected officials can be strong advocates for the protection of historic properties and have a responsibility to consider the impact of their actions on these important community resources. The Planning Commission and the Syracuse Common Council in particular play a large role in the preservation and protection of historic properties. Education and outreach to these individuals can ensure that preservation is thoughtfully weighed against competing priorities in their decision making.*

# SYRACUSE LANDMARK PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

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## Syracuse Zoning Ordinance PART C; SECTION VII LANDMARK PRESERVATION

### ARTICLE 1 Legislative Intent

It is desirable to take measures to provide for the creation of Preservation Districts and Protected Sites in furtherance of the following public purposes, which are found to promote the economic, cultural, educational and general welfare of the residents of the City of Syracuse:

- A. To provide for the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of those districts and structures which are illustrative of the growth and development of the City of Syracuse and which are of particular historic or aesthetic value to the City;
- B. To recognize and insure the preservation of those elements of the City's past which represent many and varied architectural, artistic, and cultural achievements which cannot be duplicated or otherwise replaced;
- C. To promote the use of Preservation Districts and Protected Structures as a means of providing enjoyment and unique educational benefit by perpetuating the physical evidence of Syracuse's past;
- D. To stabilize and improve property values in such areas and otherwise promote their reuse;
- E. To protect and enhance the City's attractions to tourists and visitors and the support and stimulus to business and industry thereby provided;
- F. To foster civic pride in those elements of the City's past which give Syracuse its unique character and set it apart from other cities.

### ARTICLE 2 Definitions

- A. Preservation District:  
An area of the City of Syracuse delineated on the Zoning Map of such City which (1) meets some or all of the criteria enumerated in Section V and which, by reason of such factors, constitutes a distinct section of the City; and (2) is designated as a Preservation District pursuant to amendment of the Zoning Ordinance.
- B. District:  
Preservation District.
- C. Exterior Building Component:  
Any exterior structural, ornamental, or functional element of a structure which shall be open to public view including, but not limited to, type, color and texture of building materials; entry ways; fenestration; lighting fixtures; roofing; sculpture and carving; steps; rails; fencing; vents and other openings; grillwork; signs; canopies; and other attachments.
- D. Interior Building Component:  
Any structural, ornamental or functional element of a structure located within the interior of a public building or other building accessible to the general public, including but not limited to entry ways; lobby area;

hallways and corridors; auditoriums and places of public assembly; galleries and exhibition areas; and interior courtyards.

The structural, ornamental or functional elements referred to herein shall include, but not be limited to: type, color and texture of building materials; lighting fixtures; flooring; ceilings; ornamental woodwork; moldings and trim; casings; stairs; rails; masonry; paintings and works of art; sculpture and carving; doors; transoms and sidelights; fenestration; skylights; and other interior elements.

E. Protected Site:

A parcel of land, together with a building or structure thereon, not located in a Preservation District, which nevertheless (1) meets one or more of the criteria enumerated in Section V; and (2) is designated as a Protected Site pursuant to amendment of the Zoning Ordinance.

F. Material Change of Appearance:

The treatment of property designated as a Protected Site or situated within a Preservation District, including the land and improvements, which is described in any of the following categories:

1. A change in bulk, location or mass of exterior building components and, if designated, interior building components, of any structure, including partial or total demolition or construction of new structures or additions to existing structures.
2. A change in the texture or material composition of exterior building components of a structure.
3. A change in color.
4. Any process used to clean or treat exterior or interior building components of a structure which can reasonably be expected to cause discoloration, pitting or other change in the surface or durability of the material being treated, including power blasting, whether or not involving the use of additives.
5. Any change in design or location of advertising on the exterior of any structure, or sign work as defined by the Sign Ordinance of the City of Syracuse.
6. Any activity constituting excavation, modification to land contours, or installation of pavement for parking lots, driveways or sidewalks.
7. Any activity involving the deposit of refuse, waste or fill on land not previously used for such purposes.

G. Ordinary Maintenance or Repair:

Routine repair, replacement or maintenance of electrical or mechanical installations, or of damaged or worn parts or surfaces; including repainting, landscaping and treatment of flat roof areas not visible to the general public.

H. Preservation Restriction:

An easement or other interest less than a fee interest, in favor of the City of Syracuse, in a Protected Site or a structure in a District.

I. Certificate of Appropriateness:

A certificate issued by the Landmark Preservation Board authorizing a material change of appearance of a Protected Site or within a District, subject to other applicable permit requirements.

J. Dangerous Conditions:

A determination made by an enforcement agency that circumstances exist, which if not corrected, constitute a threat to the life, health or safety of the general public or such other persons for whose protection such regulations were intended. Such determination may be verbal or in writing. The term "enforcement agency" shall refer to any public agency or official having jurisdiction to issue orders affecting the life, health and safety of persons within the City of Syracuse, including by way of illustration, police, fire, civil defense, health, building and related code enforcement personnel.

### ARTICLE 3 Landmark Preservation Board

A. Jurisdiction and Purpose:

To effectuate the goals of this Ordinance, there is hereby established in and for the City of Syracuse the Syracuse Landmark Preservation Board, hereinafter called the Board.

B. Composition and Selection:

The members of the Landmark Preservation Board shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the Mayor. The Board shall consist of nine (9) members of whom at least five (5) shall be City residents, and appointments shall include the following:

One (1) member from a list of no less than five (5) names submitted by the Onondaga Historical Association;

Two (2) members from a list of no less than seven (7) names submitted by the Central New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects;

One (1) member from a list of no less than five (5) names submitted by the Syracuse Conservation Advisory Council;

One (1) member from a list of no less than five (5) names submitted by the Greater Syracuse Real Estate Board;

One (1) member from a list of no less than five (5) names submitted by the Landmarks Association of Central New York;

Three (3) members shall be appointed at large, at least one (1) of whom whose principal occupation involves finance or real estate management.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, if any of the above-named organizations shall fail to submit such lists as specified within thirty (30) days of the Mayor's written request that such list be submitted, then the Mayor shall appoint such members as he deems appropriate.

Members shall serve for three (3) year terms, except that of the members initially appointed following the adoption of this Ordinance, one-third (1/3) shall be appointed to a two (2) year term and one-third (1/3) shall be appointed to a one (1) year term. Vacancies shall be filled by the Mayor in the same manner as provided for other appointments. A Chairperson shall be selected by the Board, from among its members, for a one (1) year term.

Members of the Landmark Preservation Board shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for actual expenses necessarily incurred in performance of their duties.

C. Powers and Duties:

1. The Landmark Preservation Board shall make recommendations to the City Planning Commission and the Common Council for Designations of Districts and Protected Sites pursuant to Article 5 herein, and issue Certificates of Appropriateness pursuant to Article 6 herein.

2. In carrying out the aforementioned duties, the Board shall have the power to:

(a) adopt such regulations pertaining to its duties as it may deem necessary to effectuate the

purposes of this Ordinance. Copies of such regulations shall be filed with the City Clerk and the City Planning Commission;

- (b) retain or employ professional consultants, secretaries, clerks or other such personnel as may be necessary to assist them in carrying out their duties, to the extent that funds are appropriated and available therefore;
  - (c) conduct surveys, in consultation with public or private agencies as appropriate, of buildings for the purpose of determining those of historic and/or architectural significance and pertinent facts about them;
  - (d) formulate and publish recommendations concerning the preparation of maps, brochures, and historical markers for selected historic and/or architectural sites and buildings;
  - (e) cooperate with and advise the Mayor, the Common Council, and other public and private agencies in matters involving historic and/or architectural sites and buildings;
  - (f) advise owners of historic buildings on problems of preservation and restoration.
3. Nothing contained in this Ordinance shall be construed as authorizing the Board in acting with respect to an application for a Certificate of Appropriateness or in adopting regulations in relation thereto, to waive any regulation or laws relating to height and bulk of buildings, area of yards, courts and other open spaces, density of population, the locations of trades and industries, or location of buildings designed for specific uses.
  4. The Board may, in exercising or performing its powers, duties or functions under this Ordinance with respect to any structure in a District or to any Protected Structure apply or impose, with respect to the construction, reconstruction, alteration, demolition or use of such structure, determinations or conditions which are more restrictive than those prescribed or made by or pursuant to the applicable District regulations contained herein or to any other applicable provisions of law.
  5. The Landmark Preservation Board shall, prior to final action by the Common Council as provided for by Article 5, Subsection A, Subparagraph 3, review any proposed modification of the application of the elements constituting a material change in appearance as defined in Article 2, Subsection F(6), and submit its recommendations on such modifications to the Common Council prior to final action.

#### **ARTICLE 4 Regulated Conduct**

- A. No material change in appearance as hereinabove defined shall be made within a designated District or to a Protected Site except as hereinafter provided. Nothing in this Ordinance shall be construed to prevent the ordinary maintenance or repair of any exterior building component in a District or of a Protected Site which does not involve such a material change in appearance.
- B. This Ordinance shall apply to all Protected Sites and to all buildings, structures, outbuildings, walls, fences, steps, topographical features, earthworks, paving and signs within a designated District, provided however that it shall not apply to the construction, alteration or demolition of any structure where prior to date of public notice of any proposed designation:
  1. The applicant has in good faith either:

- (a) undertaken contractual commitments which require him to do such construction, alteration or demolition or
- (b) obtained a permit to do such work and such work has actually commenced.

## **ARTICLE 5 Designation of Preservation Districts or Protected Sites**

### **A. Designation of Exteriors and Interiors**

- 1. Designation of a Protected Site, may apply to the exterior only, or to the interior only, or to both. The designation shall include a specific reference as to whether the interior or exterior or both is intended; where such specific reference is omitted, the designation shall be deemed to apply to the exterior only.
- 2. Designation of a Preservation District shall be deemed to apply to the exterior only of structures or sites therein, except that interiors of any structure within the District may be designated by specific reference thereto.
- 3. Anything to the contrary herein notwithstanding, at the time of designation of a Preservation District, or at any time thereafter as an amendment to said designation, the control elements constituting a "Material Change of Appearance" as defined in Article 2, Subsection F of this Article may be modified in their application to said preservation district by deleting the specific element contained in Subsection F(6), provided however, that any such modification shall have been submitted to the Landmark Preservation Board for its review and comments prior to final action.

### **B. No Preservation District or Protected Site, as the case may be, shall be designated unless it is found to possess one (1) or more of the following characteristics:**

- 1. association with persons or events of historic significance to the city, region, state or nation;
- 2. illustrative of historic growth and development of the city, region, state or nation;
- 3. in the case of structures, embodying distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or representing the work of a master, or possessing unique architectural and artistic qualities, or representing a significant and distinguishable entity whose component may lack individual distinction;
- 4. in the case of districts, possessing a unique overall quality of architectural scale, texture, form and visual homogeneity even though certain structures within the district may lack individual distinction;
- 5. in the case of interiors, possessing one (1) or more of the characteristics enumerated in 1, 2 or 3 above and, in addition, embodying distinctive characteristics of architectural scale, form and visual homogeneity, which are an integral part of the character of the structure in which the space is contained.

### **C. Designation of a Preservation District or a Protected Site shall become effective only after public hearing upon approval of such designation in the manner provided by law. The Landmark Preservation Board or any person, group or persons or association may petition the City Planning Commission for adoption of such a designation. In addition to any other notices required by law, the Planning Commission shall notify the Board ten (10) days prior thereto of any hearings bearing on a proposed designation or change thereof.**

### **D. The resolutions and/or recommendations of the City Planning Commission with respect to any proposed designation or change thereof, together with the recommendations of any of the Board shall be forwarded to the City Clerk, who shall transmit copies of the same to members of the Common Council. The Council shall**

either adopt, modify or reject the recommendations of the Planning Commission with respect to a proposed designation or change thereof.

Within five (5) business days after a designation by Council of a District or Protected Site becomes effective, notice of such designation shall be sent to all affected property owners, and to all city and county departments having power to administer and enforce any laws, codes or regulations governing real property within the City, and a certified copy of the designating ordinance shall be filed in the office of the Clerk of Onondaga County and indexed against the affected parcels of land.

Article 5 Amended: March 2, 2009

## **ARTICLE 6 Procedure for Issuance of Certificate of Appropriateness**

- A. Notwithstanding any inconsistent ordinance, code, rule or regulation concerning the issuance of building or other permits, no material change of appearance in any designated feature of a structure in a designated District or of a designated Protected Site shall be commenced without issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Board, nor shall any building or other permits for such change be issued without such a Certificate of Appropriateness having first been issued. The Certificate of Appropriateness required by this Section shall be in addition to, and not in lieu of, any building or other permit that may be required by any state or local law or regulation.
- B. Application for a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be submitted to the Board in such form and including such information as the Board may require.
- C. Issuance of Certificate
  1. Within a reasonable time after application is filed, the Board shall determine whether the proposed material change will be appropriate to the preservation of the District or the Protected Site in view of the purposes of this Ordinance. In passing upon appropriateness, the Board shall consider the historical and architectural value and significance, architectural style, general design arrangement, texture, material and color of building component involved and the relationship thereof to other structures in the immediate neighborhood, in addition to any other pertinent factors such as practical difficulties related to spatial utilization, cost of labor and materials, and the like.
  2. If the Board approves a material change proposed, the Board shall issue a Certificate of Appropriateness, which shall specify the work to be done. In issuing such Certificate the Board may prescribe any conditions that it deems to be necessary to carry out the intent and purposes of this Ordinance. A Certificate issued pursuant to this Section shall relate solely to proposed plans accompanying the application or otherwise submitted to the Board for official consideration prior to issuance of said Certificate. It shall be unlawful to deviate from the plans, including any modifications required as a condition of the issuance of such Certificate unless and until an amended Certificate shall be applied for and issued. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Board shall not issue any such Certificate unless and until it has been advised by the agencies or departments having jurisdiction that there is no impediment to the issuance of any building or other permit as may be required by applicable state or local law or regulation, for said work.
  3. Any determination of the Board which either denies a Certificate or which authorizes the issuance of a Certificate subject to conditions, may be appealed within ten (10) days of the receipt of such determination by the applicant to the City Planning Commission. The City Planning Commission shall have all the authority of the Board in viewing such application and shall decide such application de novo. Included in its review the City Planning Commission may consider those factors enumerated in Subparagraph 1 of this paragraph and may consider relevant economic factors associated with the affected property or properties.

4. Notwithstanding the foregoing, if the Board fails to issue a Certificate or notify the applicant of its determination not to issue a Certificate, within thirty (30) business days after application therefor is filed, or within such additional time period as the Board and the applicant may agree, such application shall be deemed approved.

**D. Removing Dangerous Conditions**

Anything to the contrary notwithstanding, where an enforcement agency orders the construction, removal, alteration, or demolition of or to any improvement on a Protected Site or in a Preservation District, for the purpose of remedying conditions determined to be dangerous to life, health or safety and such activity would result in a material change of appearance requiring the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness, the following shall apply:

1. If such agency determines that the procedures attendant to a Certificate of Appropriateness will prevent timely compliance with its order, the requirement for a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be considered waived. Such agency shall within three (3) days provide written notification of its order to the Board together with a statement of reasons for the order.
2. If such agency determines that the procedures attendant to a Certificate of Appropriateness will not prevent timely compliance, a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be applied for. Any such determination shall require that the reasonable party make application to the Board for a Certificate of Appropriateness and a copy of such determination shall be submitted within three (3) days to the Board. The issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness shall be mandatory in such case but the Board may, where appropriate, condition the Certificate of Appropriateness in such a way as to abate or minimize any material change of appearance provided that the enforcement agency concurs that such conditions will not prevent the danger from being eliminated.

**ARTICLE 7 Publicly-Owned Property**

The procedure contained in this paragraph shall supersede the requirements for a Certificate of Appropriateness. Plans for the construction, reconstruction, alteration or demolition of any improvement or proposed improvement which:

- (a) is owned by the city, county, state or federal government or is to be constructed upon property owned by the city, county, state or federal government; and
- (b) is or is to be located on a Protected Site or in a Preservation District shall prior to final City action approving or otherwise authorizing the use of such plans with respect to securing the performance of such work, be referred to the Board by the governmental agency having responsibility for the preparation of such plans. Within twenty (20) business days after such referral, the Board shall submit its recommendations thereon to the Mayor, the Council and the referring agency. Failure of the Board to submit such recommendations shall be deemed approval by the Board.

Provisions of this article shall not apply in the following area or territory: bounded on the east by Montgomery Street; on the south by E. Onondaga Street; on the west by the west line of Montgomery Street; and on the north by East Jefferson Street. All elements within this area or territory shall be subject to the requirements pertaining to certificates of appropriateness.

Article 7 Amended: June 11, 1990

## **ARTICLE 8 Demolition of Buildings or Structures Designated on the State and/or National Register of Historic Places or City of Syracuse Inventory of Buildings or Structures Identified as Eligible for Such Designation or as a Protected Site**

### Legislative Intent:

The purpose of this section is to prevent the demolition of building(s) or structure(s) designated on the state and/or national register of historic places or which is enumerated on a City of Syracuse inventory of buildings or structures which have been formally identified as eligible for designation on the state or national register of historic places or as a Protected Site in the City of Syracuse by establishing a procedure for a determination as to whether such building(s) or structure(s) shall be designated as a Protected Site pursuant to the Zoning Rules and Regulations of the City of Syracuse, as amended, upon application for a demolition permit with the City. Said inventory heretofore mentioned and on file in the office of the City Clerk was prepared pursuant to a State grant and reviewed by the Syracuse Landmark Preservation Board and the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation to determine whether building(s) or structure(s) shall be identified as eligible for such designation. Said inventory may be amended to include additional building(s) or structure(s) and said amendments shall be filed in the Office of the City Clerk and shall be subject to the provisions of this Article.

#### A. Demolition Permit:

1. Whenever an application is filed with the appropriate city department for a demolition permit of any building or structure designated on the state and/or national register of historic places or enumerated on a City of Syracuse inventory of buildings or structures described above, said city department shall forward a copy of said application to the Landmark Preservation Board within two (2) business days of receipt of the same.
2. Any owner of property who proposes to demolish any building or structure designated or enumerated as provided in paragraph 1 above, may prior to the filing of an application with the appropriate city department for a demolition permit request the Landmark Preservation Board to initiate the procedure set forth in this article for a determination whether said property shall be designated as a Protected Site as if an application for demolition had been filed.

#### B. Public Hearing:

The Landmark Preservation Board shall hold a public hearing for consideration as to whether said building or structure shall be recommended for designation as a Protected Site in the following manner:

1. Notice of such hearing shall be published in the city newspaper at least ten (10) days prior to the hearing;
2. A copy of the hearing notice shall be sent to each contiguous property owner, the applicant for the demolition permit, the owner of the property as appears on the City assessment rolls if not the applicant, the county legislator for that district, each member of the City Common Council, the Common Council president, each member of the City Planning Commission, the City Clerk, the Corporation Counsel, the Director of the Division of Code Enforcement, the City Fire Prevention Bureau, and the Preservation Board;
3. Informal notification shall be sent to every address within four hundred (400) feet of the subject property; and
4. Compliance with the aforementioned paragraphs 2 and 3 shall not be a condition precedent to proper notice and no hearing action taken thereat shall be deemed invalid or illegal because of any failure of the notification provided in said paragraphs.

C. Determination of the Board:

The Board shall make its determination within forty-five (45) days of the date of filing of the application for demolition permit with the City of Syracuse or request as set forth in paragraph A.2. Failure to take action thereon within such time shall be deemed a determination not to recommend the subject premises be designated as a Protected Site. All decisions of the Board recommending the designation of a building or structure for Protected Site classification or the issuance of a demolition permit shall be made in accordance with the rules of procedure of the Landmark Preservation Board.

In the event the Board recommends the designation of the subject property as a Protected Site, the Chairperson or his designee shall appear at the public hearing of the Planning Commission to give testimony on behalf of the Preservation Board. All decisions of the Board shall be recorded by the secretary of the Board and the secretary shall be responsible for transmitting a copy of the decision of the Board to the following:

1. City Clerk,
2. City Planning Commission,
3. Commissioner of Community Development,
4. Applicant for the permit, or his designee, and
5. Owner of the subject property if not the applicant.

D. Designation:

The Landmark Preservation Board, in exercising its powers and duties under this section to determine if the building or structure proposed to be demolished shall be designated as a Protected Site, shall consider the following:

1. Association with persons or events of historic significance to the city, region, state or nation;
2. Illustrative of historic growth and development of the city, region, state or nation;
3. In the case of structures embodying distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction or representing the work of a master, or possessing unique architectural and artistic qualities, or representing a significant and distinguishable entity whose component may lack individual distinction; and
4. In the case of interiors, possessing one (1) or more of the characteristics enumerated in 1, 2 or 3 above and, in addition, embodying distinctive characteristics of architectural scale, form and visual homogeneity, which are an integral part of the character of the structure in which the space is contained.

E. Exemption:

This Article shall not apply to building(s) or structure(s) which have been determined by the Director of the Division of Code Enforcement to constitute an imminent danger or hazard to public health, safety or welfare. In such cases said Director may exercise his emergency powers to cause said building(s) or structure(s) to be immediately demolished.

F. Miscellaneous:

1. The procedure for designation of building(s) or structure(s) as a Protected Site shall be completed in accordance with the provisions of Part C, Section VII of the zoning Rules and Regulations of the City of Syracuse, as amended.
2. The provisions of this article shall supersede any inconsistent ordinance, code, rule or regulation of the City of Syracuse, except Articles 6 and 7 herein.

Article 8 Adopted 8/9/93

**ARTICLE 9 Construction with Other Laws**

Anything herein to the contrary notwithstanding, Ordinance No. 510 1974 is hereby incorporated herein and extended until ninety (90) days following the first meeting of the Landmark Preservation Board. Notice of the date of such first meeting shall be published in the official newspaper of the City.

Amended 8/9/93 (Article Renumbering)

*Ward Wellington Ward-designed lantern, Alton Simmons House. (right)*



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# PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FOR PRESERVATION PLANNERS

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## Professional Qualifications for Historic Preservation Planners

[http://www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/arch\\_stnds\\_9.htm](http://www.cr.nps.gov/local-law/arch_stnds_9.htm)

The following requirements are those used by the National Park Service, and have been previously published in the Code of Federal Regulations, 36 CFR Part 61. The qualifications define minimum education and experience required to perform identification, evaluation, registration, and treatment activities. In some cases, additional areas or levels of expertise may be needed, depending on the complexity of the task and the nature of the historic properties involved. In the following definitions, a year of full-time professional experience need not consist of a continuous year of full-time work but may be made up of discontinuous periods of full-time or part-time work adding up to the equivalent of a year of full-time experience.

### History

The minimum professional qualifications in history are a graduate degree in history or closely related field; or a bachelor's degree in history or closely related field plus one of the following:

1. At least two years of full-time experience in research, writing, teaching, interpretation, or other demonstrable professional activity with an academic institution, historic organization or agency, museum, or other professional institution; or
2. Substantial contribution through research and publication to the body of scholarly knowledge in the field of history.

### Archeology

The minimum professional qualifications in archeology are a graduate degree in archeology, anthropology, or closely related field plus:

1. At least one year of full-time professional experience or equivalent specialized training in archeological research, administration or management;
2. At least four months of supervised field and analytic experience in general North American archeology, and
3. Demonstrated ability to carry research to completion.

In addition to these minimum qualifications, a professional in prehistoric archeology shall have at least one year of full-time professional experience at a supervisory level in the study of archeological resources of the prehistoric period. A professional in historic archeology shall have at least one year of full-time professional experience at a supervisory level in the study of archeological resources of the historic period.

### Architectural History

The minimum professional qualifications in architectural history are a graduate degree in architectural history, art history, historic preservation, or closely related field, with coursework in American architectural history, or a bachelor's degree in

architectural history, art history, historic preservation or closely related field plus one of the following:

1. At least two years of full-time experience in research, writing, or teaching in American architectural history or restoration architecture with an academic institution, historical organization or agency, museum, or other professional institution; or
2. Substantial contribution through research and publication to the body of scholarly knowledge in the field of American architectural history.

### **Architecture**

The minimum professional qualifications in architecture are a professional degree in architecture plus at least two years of full-time experience in architecture; or a State license to practice architecture.

### **Historic Architecture**

The minimum professional qualifications in historic architecture are a professional degree in architecture or a State license to practice architecture, plus one of the following:

1. At least one year of graduate study in architectural preservation, American architectural history, preservation planning, or closely related field; or
2. At least one year of full-time professional experience on historic preservation projects.

Such graduate study or experience shall include detailed investigations of historic structures, preparation of historic structures research reports, and preparation of plans and specifications for preservation projects.

*Back Cover:*

*Mission Landing Condos; adaptive reuse of a historic industrial building in the Franklin Square Neighborhood. (top)*

*A Greek Revival residence at 409 Court Street. (bottom)*

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