



City of Saratoga Springs

General Information

Historic District Design Guidelines

Saratoga Springs' neighborhoods are unique and nationally recognized for their historic qualities. The Historic Review process is in place to ensure that the architectural integrity of individual historic buildings and the historic character of the districts, as a whole, are preserved and maintained.

HISTORIC DISTRICT GUIDELINES FOR YOUR USE

These Historic District Design Guidelines were developed as a reference tool for building owners considering exterior changes to an existing structure, building an addition, or constructing a new building.

These Guidelines are intended to:

- Protect the historic architectural character of the City's Historic District and help direct the quality of new construction that takes place within the District.
- Encourage the preservation and rehabilitation of existing historic structures within the city whenever possible.
- Protect existing historic structures by ensuring that exterior changes and new construction are compatible in architectural style and character to the original building and district.
- Encourage creative and interesting designs which reinforce the tradition of quality design and contribute to the architectural history of the community.

DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

Building owners wishing to build, add-to, or alter exterior features of a property within the Historic District must first submit an application describing the project to the Design Review Commission. No Design Review Commission approval is required when making in-kind repairs that do not change existing materials or design. The Design Review Commission (DRC) is a seven-member citizen board, appointed by the Mayor, responsible for reviewing and approving most exterior changes and new construction within the local Historic District.

Prior to starting any project, applicants are encouraged to contact the Office of Planning and Economic Development staff to determine what approvals are necessary for your project. They can provide you with the proper applications and guide you through the review process.

Additional information on the Historic Review requirements and process may be found in "Historic Review" Article of the City Zoning Ordinance, found at www.saratoga-springs.org.

PLANNING FOR YOUR PROJECT

It is important to note the following when planning your project:

- Every building is unique. Even buildings that look identical have a few details or a setting that distinguishes them from other buildings. This means that what is appropriate for one building might not be appropriate for another. Each building is reviewed on an individual basis.
- Through the years, some buildings have been altered or details have been removed. Although it might be preferred to restore these buildings to their original appearance, the Commission acknowledges that some of these changes may contribute to the historic character of the building and that an exact restoration is not always economically practical.

U.S. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS OF REHABILITATION

A majority of the properties located within the City's Historic District are also listed on National Register of Historic Places. The Historic Design Guidelines are based on The U.S. Secretary of the Interior "Standards for Rehabilitation" which outlines the treatment of properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

1. Property shall be used for its historic purpose or be placed in a new use that requires minimal change to the defining characteristics of the building and its site and environment.

U.S. SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR'S STANDARDS OF REHABILITATION CONTINUED

2. The historic character of a property shall be retained and preserved. The removal of historic materials or alteration of features and spaces that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.
4. Most properties change over time; those changes that have acquired historic significance in their own right shall be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property shall be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical or pictorial evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, such as sandblasting, that cause damage to historic materials shall not be used. The surface cleaning of structures, if appropriate, shall be undertaken using the gentlest means possible.
8. Significant archeological resources affected by a project shall be protected and preserved. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures shall be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction shall not destroy historic materials that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and shall be compatible with the massing, size, scale, and architectural features to protect the historic integrity of the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction shall be undertaken in such a manner that if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Assistance & Research

Identifying the architectural style and the date of construction for your historic property, and those that surround it, and referencing historic images may also help guide your project. There are several resources available within the community to assist:

Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation

112 Spring Street, Suite 203
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
(518) 587-5030
www.saratogapreservation.org

Saratoga Springs History Museum

George S. Bolster Photograph Collection
1 East Congress Street
Canfield Casino, Congress Park
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
(518) 584-6290
www.saratogahistory.org

Saratoga Springs Public Library

Saratoga Room
49 Henry Street
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
(518) 574-7860
www.sspl.org

National Park Service Technical Preservation Briefs

Provide guidance on preserving and rehabilitating a wide-range of subjects - roofing, windows, masonry, exterior cladding, etc.
<http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm>

While it is not required, you may wish to consult a design professional for assistance with the process and developing your plans.

City of Saratoga Springs
Design Review Commission
Office of Planning & Economic Development
474 Broadway, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

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