Preserving Our Village Heritage

The Commission's Role

The Fairport Historic Preservation Commission (FHPC) is charged with implementation of the Fairport Historic Preservation Local Law. The Commission seeks to protect, enhance and perpetuate Fairport landmarks in a manner consistent with our changing society, and by so doing promote the economic, cultural, educational and general welfare of the village and its residents.

The Commission has developed a consistent set of procedures for the designation process, ensuring proper consideration of individual properties and to preserve structures that provide historical significance and architectural beauty to Fairport. Properties under consideration must meet at least one of the criteria specified by the law and in many cases meet several of these criteria.

Landmark Designation

Stabilize & Increase Property Value

Studies[1] show that local designation of landmarks can stabilize and often increase property value. Landmark status can increase sale potential and loan value due to lending institutions' perception of greater value.

There is also the gratification in owning an identified structure of architectural and/or historic integrity. Designation insures that the building's special historic, architectural or cultural character will be protected from destructive or insensitive rehabilitation in the future.

Special History or Architecture

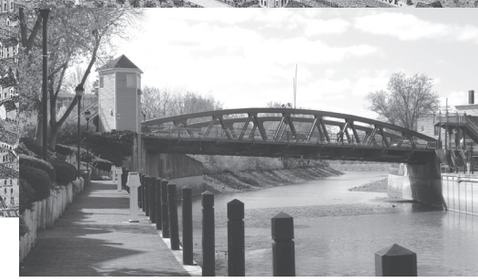
A landmark is a property or building designated by the FHPC as significant to the village because of its history or architecture. When a property has been designated as an historic landmark, the village of Fairport officially recognizes that the property has special historic and/or architectural value and that the property is an important part of our heritage.

Preservation helps to maintain a community's unique identity and connection to earlier times, events and people.– Jean Keplinger, Town Historian

Criteria for Designation

Once a landmark has been tentatively designated the Commission will conduct a public hearing to determine if the property meets one or more of the standards for designation. The property owner is notified and encouraged to attend and participate in the hearing.

Martin Wood house at 42 West Street is regarded as the best example of Greek Revival architecture in Fairport. Martin Wood was a local farmer and built the house in 1851. The farm extended from West Street to Woodlawn, which was named for him.



Per the Landmark Society, the Main Street Lift Bridge is "one of the most unusual bridges in NYS". The circa, 1914 bow-string structure was designed by F. P. Williams. It has no two angles the same and there are no square corners on the bridge.

A property may be designated as a landmark based on one or more of the following five criteria:

- Possess special character or historic or aesthetic interest or value as part of the cultural, political, economic or social history of the locality, region, state or nation;
- Is identified with historic personages;
- Embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style;
- Is the work of a designer whose work has significantly influenced an age; or
- Because of a unique location or singular physical characteristic, represents an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood.

It is important to preserve buildings that have distinct architectural characteristics of a period, and that may also have historical significance. Such preservation makes the Village a charming and desirable place to live.– C. Douglas and Susan Angevine

Changing Landmark Buildings

Maintaining an Historic Property

Normal maintenance that does not alter the appearance of a landmark property would not require approvals from the FHPC. Examples are repairing windows or replacing a roof with like material. A change in paint color would NOT require review of the Commission.

Changes That Require Approvals

Any change in appearance of a landmark property including exterior alteration, restoration, reconstruction, demolition, new construction or moving of a landmark property, that is visible from the public way, will require the property owner to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA).

Martin Sperbeck bought 100 acres in 1817 and built a blockhouse of squared timbers at 200 S. Main. His brother, a trapper, built a cabin where the Village Hall is now. Legend states that the path between the two residences became S. Main. Since designation in March 2009, the front porch has been lovingly recreated.

Changing Landmark Buildings cont.

This does not mean changes cannot be made, but the FHPC must review the proposed changes and find them to be appropriate.

The FHPC will look at overall design and scale of the project to determine whether it is compatible with the landmark building. Materials, window size and arrangement, roof shape, consistency with architectural features and placement will be reviewed.

If an element of the property, such as a brick fence, has been specifically mentioned in the landmark designation, the Commission would require a COA application to determine how the proposed change might alter that element.

The Commission is knowledgeable about architectural styles and materials and can suggest resources and style details that would enhance a landmark structure's new construction or restoration project.

This carriage house at 84 S. Main was built circa, 1885. Brackets below the eaves are from the Italianate period, the same style as the home. The interior doors move on huge hinges and the small windows facing north are for the horse stalls.

This early 1800's farmhouse at 234 S. Main was built by Abner Wight. He married Huldah Perrin, sister to Glover Perrin, an original settler. Their son, Asa, was the first white child born here, who lived to adulthood.

Application Process

A Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) is needed before any work on exterior changes to a designated landmark begins.

Application forms are available from the village building department and will require plans, maps and drawings of the proposed project. The applicant or agent will appear before the FHPC to explain the proposed changes. This process ensures that special qualities of landmark buildings are not compromised or destroyed.

If a COA is required for a project, it is in addition to and not in lieu of any other permits or approvals that may be required for a project of that type. If a proposal also requires Zoning and/or Planning Board approval, the applications can be made at the same time.

Our renovation and roof project required a COA. The Commission's approval required several changes. Everything historic preservation suggested made the project better.

– Chic Gray, First Congregational Church of Christ

Commission Meetings

Regularly scheduled meetings are generally on the first Thursday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Fairport Municipal Commission Building, 43 Liftbridge Lane East and are open to the public.

For more information on the FHPC and designated landmarks, go to the village website at: www.fairportny.com and the Perinton Historical Society site at: www.PerintonHistoricalSociety.org

The bank at 58 S. Main was built in 1924 in the Renaissance Revival style popular at the time for important civic and commercial buildings. It represents strength, permanence and pride and is a good example of traditional Main Street style.

The bank image is from the collections of the Rochester Museum & Science Center, Rochester, NY.

The information contained in this brochure is introductory only and is not intended to cover all aspects of the Fairport Historic Preservation Local Law.

[1] Rypkema, Donovan D., The Economic of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader's Guide. Washington, DC: The National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2005.

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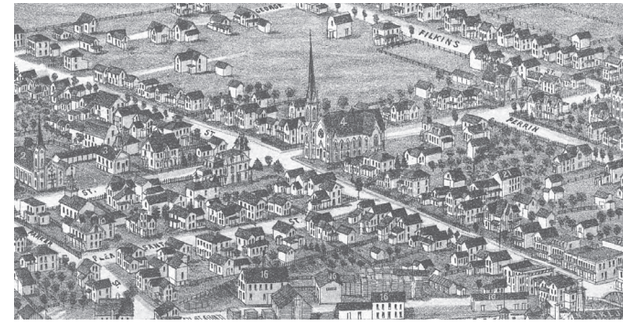

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