

An Important Message Regarding Historic Buildings

The physical appearance of a city is a direct reflection of its people, culture, and history. The City of Binghamton is committed to preserving and maintaining its historic buildings in order to foster and promote a sense of pride in our past and for our future.

To this end, the City has produced a series of flyers on Historic Preservation in the City. Inside these flyers you will find some basic information on various historic preservation topics and places you can go for more information.



AVAILABLE HISTORIC PRESERVATION FLYERS

Preserving Our Past: An Introduction to Historic
Preservation in Binghamton

The Benefits of Historic Preservation:
Community, Economics, and the Environment

Historic Buildings: What You Need to Know
Before You Begin Work

Historic Buildings: Information for Owners

Going Green: Eco-Friendly Tips for Historic
Homes

City of Binghamton

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PRESERVING OUR PAST

AN INTRODUCTION TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN BINGHAMTON

City of Binghamton

Planning, Housing, and
Community Development

Preserving the Past: An Introduction to Historic Preservation in Binghamton

WHAT IS HISTORIC PRESERVATION?

Historic Preservation is the practice of maintaining and preserving those buildings, structures, and objects which hold a special level of significance in the history of the community. In most cases, historic preservation efforts are carried out at the local level by government agencies, local interest/nonprofit groups, or individuals.

Historic buildings are typically broken up into two types: individual resources and as part of historic districts. An individual resource is just what it sounds like: a single building or site, which is significant by itself. A historic district, by contrast, is a larger collection of buildings which, when looked at as a group, help to tell a specific part of a community's history. Whether listed individually or as part of a district, all designated historic buildings have been determined to be significant at the national, state, or local level, and are therefore considered worthy of preservation.

WHAT MAKES A BUILDING SIGNIFICANT?

To be determined significant, a building must typically be at least 50 years old, have a relatively high level of integrity, and meet at least one of the four National Register of Historic Places criteria:

- A. Association with important events which have helped shape the broad patterns of history;
- B. Association with an important individual;
- C. Has a high degree of architectural value; or
- D. Has or likely will yield archeological information.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN THE CITY OF BINGHAMTON

The City of Binghamton established the Commission on Architecture and Urban Design, which also serves as the Landmarks Commission, in 1964 with an expressed purpose to "achieve better design for Binghamton in both private and public sectors." Since that time, the Commission and City have worked to ensure the historic character and feel of Binghamton is maintained into the future.

The City and the Commission are guided by the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, which sets out how historic preservation efforts should be carried out. The City and the Commission also use a set of Design Guidelines, which establish the basic architectural and design principles to be used when working with historic buildings.

When someone wants to make changes to a historic building, the Commission judges the project based on the regulations of the Ordinance and the standards of the Design Guidelines. Once the proposed project has been reviewed, a Certificate of Appropriateness is issued.

A Certificate of Appropriateness is the document issued by the Commission stating whether a proposed project involving a Historic Building is in keeping with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, which are the federal standards for historic preservation projects. Any project in the City of Binghamton which changes the exterior appearance of a Historic Building or a building in a Historic District, **must** have a Certificate of Appropriateness before work can begin. This includes anything from new construction to putting on a fresh coat of paint.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION GROUPS IN THE AREA

- Preservation Association of the Southern Tier (www.pastny.org)
- Binghamton Downtown Inc. (www.downtownbinghamton.org)
- Preservation League of New York State (www.preservenys.org)

MORE INFORMATION ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION

- The National Trust for Historic Preservation (www.preservationnation.org)
- The National Park Service (www.nps.gov)
- New York State Historic Preservation Office (nysparks.state.ny.us/shpo/)
- Binghamton Department of Planning, Housing, and Community Development (www.cityofbinghamton.com)

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