



ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Village Of Ossining, New York



ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN GUIDELINES

for

The Village Of Ossining, New York

May 1, 2011

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When you consider plans for your property, and before consulting this document, learn the Village land use requirements described in the Zoning Code, A link to the code can be found at www.Villageofossining.org.

This is the body of law governing land use. Study the appropriate sections and confirm what you learn with the Planning and Building Departments.

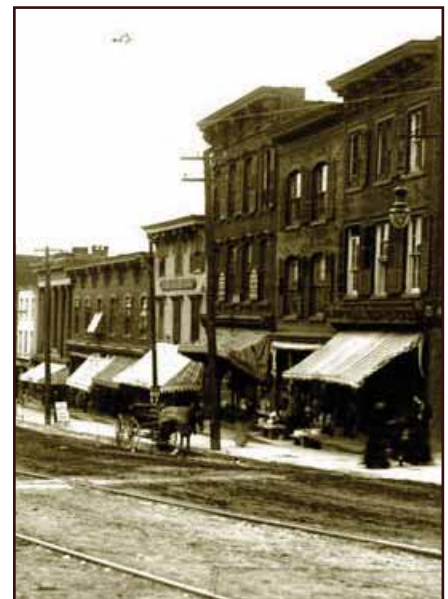


1 Guidelines: The Village of Ossining

Ossining is an outstanding river Village. Its greatest strengths are the River, the hills sloping down to it, a dynamic history expressed in the variety of streets, parks, and architecture left by past residents - and the diversity and enterprise of its present residents.

Ossining's architecture displays great variety, not a uniform style from a particular era. It expresses an evolution, with strong examples of eras of settlement and growth through over three centuries. In addition to Sparta Historic and Architectural Design District and the Downtown Historic District, many parts of the Village contribute to its unique appeal.

While no set of regulations and recommendations can fully address Ossining's rich diversity, **this document offers a framework for project planning.** It is not intended to frustrate design creativity but rather to provide a context for



thoughtful and constructive changes to the buildings, sites and streetscapes within the Village. By providing consistency in process and results, guidelines can encourage investment. They can promote stable property values and reduce the opportunity for disputes that might otherwise waste residents' and builders' time and money. And finally, they can suggest ways in which building conservation, properly done, means energy conservation and can help slow climate change.

Preservation of the unique strengths of Ossining

- Attracts like-minded and visionary investors
- Enriches experience for residents and visitors
- Maintains property values
- Protects against unplanned, disruptive change
- Encourages cohesive neighborhoods
- Conserves energy

Reasons for this guide

This guide has two purposes:

1. For residents, developers and visitors, to describe community patterns and celebrate community strengths that can be the building blocks for future community development.
2. To assist Village residents, developers, volunteer boards and staff to plan change within the Village in a way that will preserve and intensify its unique character in environmentally responsible ways.

Readers will find three levels of guidance:

1. **Assistance** for owners and builders looking for information on historic styles and practices, sensible preservation and energy conserving techniques, and land and garden planning. Websites in the appendices will connect you with useful expertise.
2. **Recommendations** of sound architectural practice for districts covered in these guidelines.
3. **Regulations** which must be followed for plan approval in Historic Districts and Landmarks.

How to Read the Guidelines:

The guidelines recommend baseline approaches to building and site improvements applicable in historic districts, adjacent neighborhoods and commercial arteries.

- If your project is located on a commercial artery or in an adjacent neighborhood you should follow “**all properties**” recommendations as noted throughout the Guidelines.
- If your project is in a HADD district see the “**all properties**” headings and then move on to the “**Historic Districts**” headings for the particular requirements of your neighborhood.

See **Section 2** for the neighborhoods covered in this document.

Village Role

A responsive structure to sustain the core Village character is in place in Ossining. It guides inevitable change in the community. Caretakers of Ossining’s architectural and neighborhood character are professionals at the Village Building and Planning Departments and two boards composed of dedicated volunteers: the **Board of Architectural Review and the Historic Preservation Commission**.

Village REVIEW BOARDS

The Board of Architectural Review (BAR)

The seven-member Planning Board serves as the Board of Architectural Review. The Planning Board/BAR is charged with the review of all new construction and all exterior alterations to existing structures requiring a building permit. During its review, the BAR evaluates the proposed alteration(s) or new construction for the degree of similarity, dissimilarity, and compatibility of the proposed new work with the architectural character of the neighborhood.

Appointed by the Village Manager for five year terms, the BAR meets monthly. Chapter 270, Sections 270-56 through 270-58 of the Village of Ossining Zoning Code specify the BAR/Planning Board responsibilities.

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC)

Appointed by the Village Manager, the seven-member Historic Preservation Commission is comprised of Village residents with demonstrated interest or expertise in the fields of architecture, planning or history. The HPC meets monthly. Chapter 270, Section 270-25 of the Village of Ossining Zoning Code lists the duties and powers of the HPC.

Both local and nationally recognized Historic Districts and Historic Landmarks are categorized as “Historic Architecture” by the Village. As such, if exterior changes are planned for these properties, the proposed alterations are reviewed by the Historic Preservation Commission.

The Commission grants **Certificates of Appropriateness (COA)** for compatible exterior alterations to designated historic landmarks as well as compatible exterior alterations to existing structures and new construction within locally-designated historic districts.

In addition, the HPC advises the Planning Board/Board of Architectural Review and the Building Department in matters affecting the character of historic landmarks within the Village. Non-locally landmarked properties beyond the limits of historic districts may be referred to the HPC by the BAR for an advisory opinion if the BAR so wishes.

The HPC can initiate or hear applications for designation of historic landmarks and historic districts and make recommendations for such designation to the Village Board of Trustees. The Commission surveys Village resources to identify structures and districts of cultural, architectural and/or historic significance meriting landmark designation. It promotes and presents public education programs to raise public awareness of the value of historic, cultural and architectural preservation.

Applicants can apply for relief from a Commission denial, but have to meet very strict standards on the basis of hardship. They can file an appeal within 30 days to the Zoning Board of Appeals.

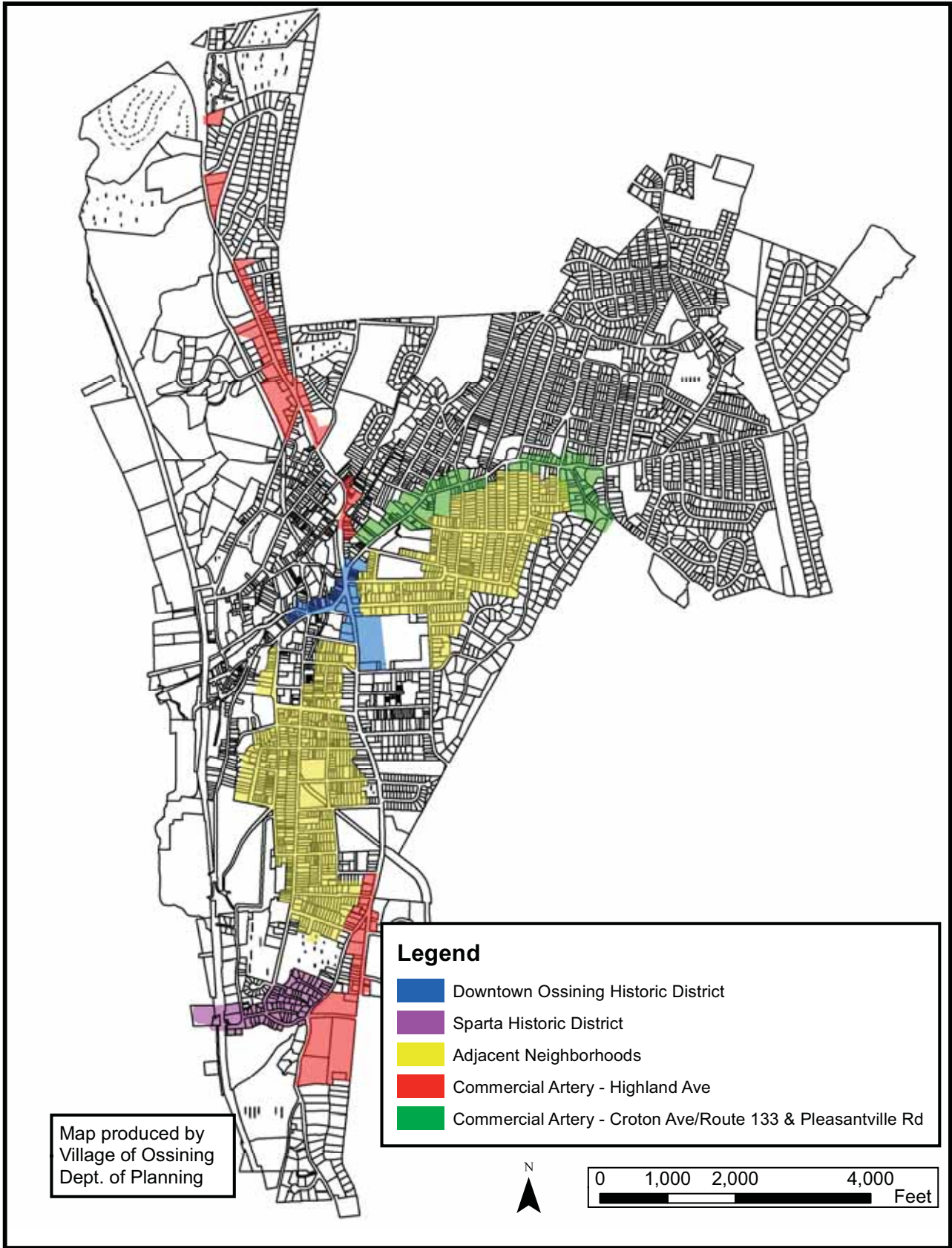
2 Guideline Subject Areas: Descriptions and Special Considerations

The *Village of Ossining: Architectural Design Guidelines* treat three key areas of architectural review in the Village: **Historic Districts and Architecture** (blue and purple facing pages), **Neighborhoods Adjacent to Historic Districts** (yellow), and **Commercial Districts** (green and orange).

To determine which guidelines apply to your property, consult the map. Owners of properties in HADD districts must be granted a COA from the HPC before undertaking changes. Owners of properties in adjacent districts will follow the standard Village approval process. Historic guidelines for these properties are recommendations—not pre-approval requirements. However, they will be considered by the BAR in evaluating proposed construction. On occasion, the Planning Board/ BAR refers projects of historic interest to the HPC for review. The more an owner follows these recommendations in his/her project, the more likely approval will be granted promptly.

Ossining’s two **Historic Districts** are Sparta HADD and the Downtown Historic District. The Village of Ossining defines “Historic Architecture” as a district, individual building, structure, or site that has been designated as having historical significance and whose character communicates a distinctive architectural and cultural heritage. Historic Districts are concentrations of buildings and sites that are united by a common historic plan, development, and architectural significance. While the majority of properties within a Historic District may hold historic significance, the historic significance for all properties is not equal. In this case, properties within a Historic District are designated as “contributing” and “non-contributing”.

- **Contributing:** Buildings and sites that have been identified as a fundamental part of the historic fabric of the Historic District. These properties are architecturally significant or date from a common historical period.
- **Non-contributing:** Properties that are not architecturally or historically significant. In many cases, they are structures that were built in a later time period than the Historic District’s “contributing” properties; in some cases, old buildings have been so altered over time that they no longer meet standards of contributing structures.





Sparta Historic District

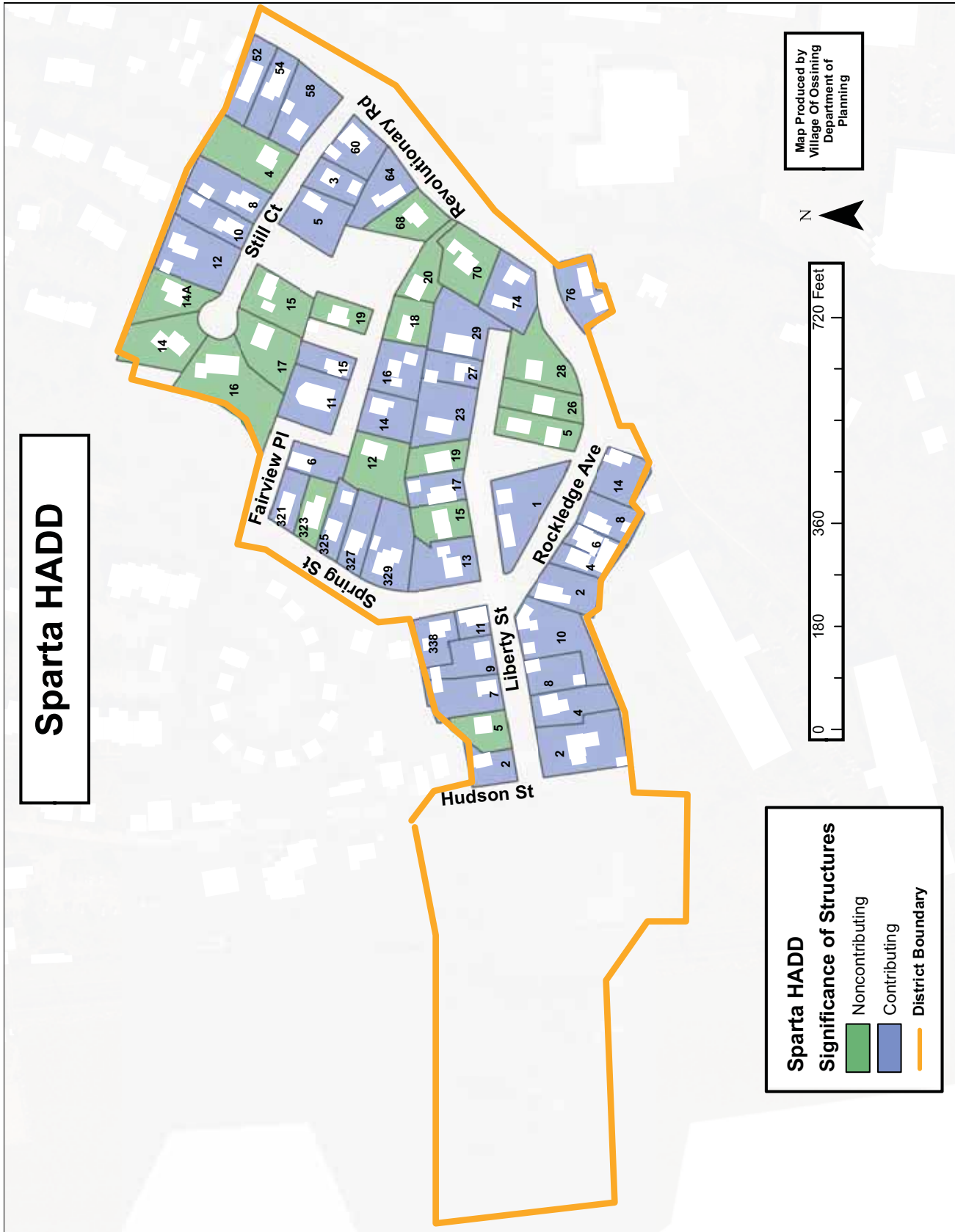
Most historic architecture in Sparta dates from the 19th and early 20th century, representing the two significant development periods of the district. Many of the buildings were originally built for utilitarian functions—not as style statements. Building forms and massing are generally simple with decorative elements from varying architectural styles. As the needs of homeowners evolved over time and older architectural fashions became dated, many Sparta buildings evolved with their owners’ tastes. Often, new materials were introduced, original decorative features were encased or replaced, exteriors were painted and the original forms were expanded upon and updated. As a result, most of the buildings reflect renovation campaigns, and few buildings are pure examples of a building style.

The historic buildings of Sparta are characteristically freestanding, two and three stories high and either wood framed or brick. The irregular topography of the district has shaped aspects of the building’s designs. The street grid has bends that result from the topography, and on individual lots, buildings have been slid or twisted on the site to accommodate the slope. Front entrances tend to be oriented to the prominent street and commonly accented by a front porch or portico and stairs. Columns with or without brackets with varying levels of detail support porch roofs. Almost all the streets within the district have sidewalks, and walkways lead from sidewalks to main house entrances. Driveways run either alongside or behind the homes, and almost all properties have front and back yards, and in most cases, side yards as well.

Design Considerations: Sparta Historic District

The architectural and landscape diversity of the Sparta District means that one guideline does *not* fit all cases with respect to roof shapes or entry forms or the siting of additions and new structures. Sparta in particular has significant structures and portions of structures that have survived from its history of change and redevelopment. It has not in previous centuries been frozen in time and has a heterogeneous character that can tolerate a moderately wide range of modifications.

That diversity should not mean that all the existing conditions should be used as precedents by applicants and reviewers. They will have to keep in mind the underlying intent of the guidelines, which is to ensure that proposed changes are consistent with the identity, cohesiveness and architectural integrity of the overall district. In Sparta, this may mean using applications to guide the district in a path that enhances its best historic buildings and landscape features. Attempts to create typical suburban or “flat yard” improvements should be resisted in a district characterized by diverse structures nestled around hilly winding streets. The scale of buildings and site elements should be kept small and differentiated, not large or monolithic.





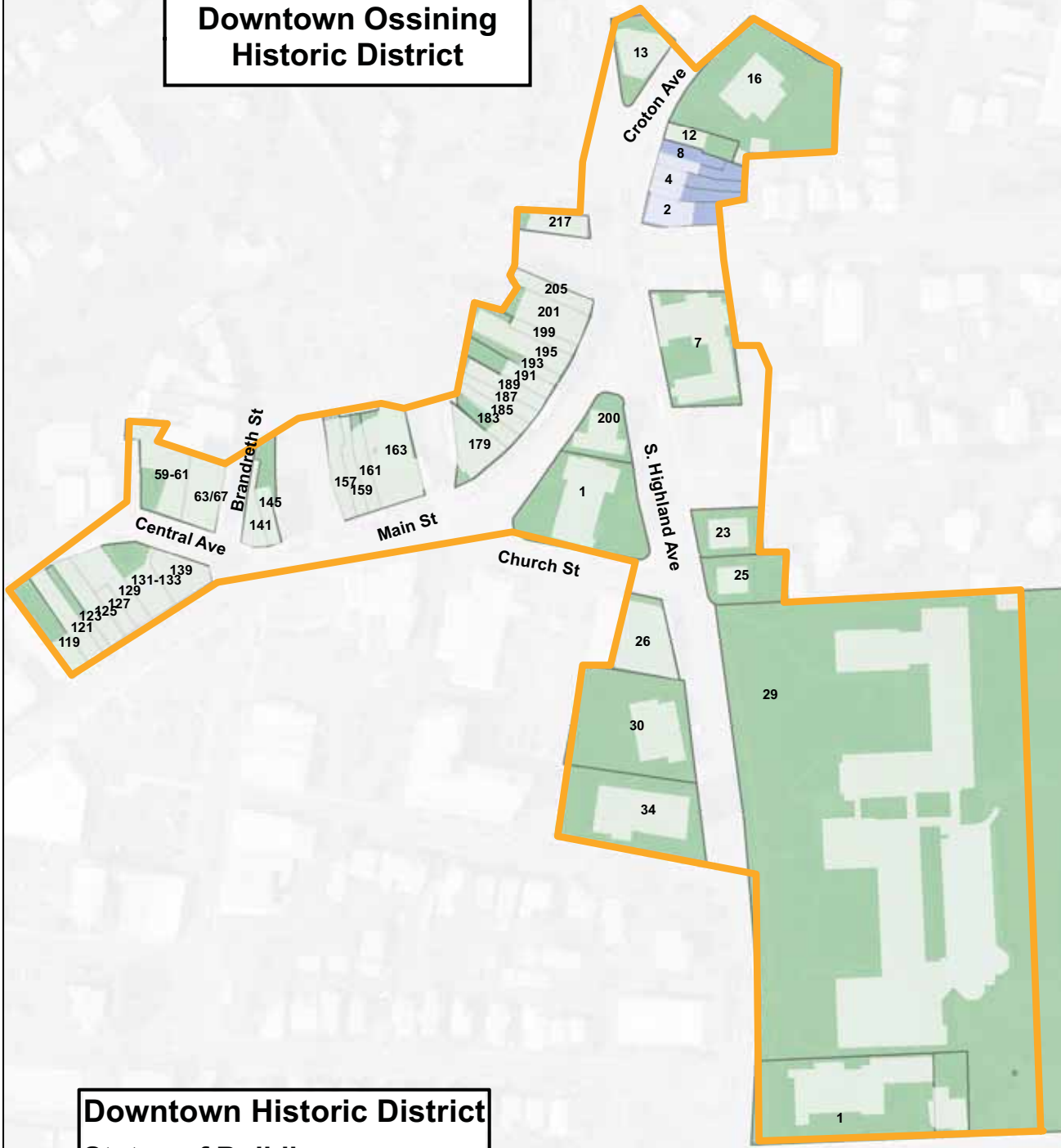
A row of vintage facades is visible from a vantage point on the property of the 1874 First Baptist Church

Downtown Ossining Historic District

The Downtown Ossining Historic District, commonly referred to as the Downtown Crescent, is located in the heart of the Village of Ossining at the intersection of Highland Avenue (Route 9), Main Street and Croton Avenue. Throughout the mid-to-late 19th century and into the early 20th century, the Downtown Crescent served as the civic, religious and historic core of the Village. The district is situated on the main thoroughfare between Highland Avenue (Route 9A) and the waterfront. With Main Street extending to the west, the district follows the inclining topography of the land to include Church Street, the southern end of Main Street and properties lining both sides of Highland Avenue south to Emwilton Place and north to the base of Croton Avenue.

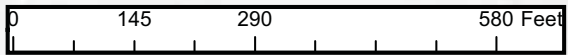
The district is a largely intact group of buildings built in the popular styles of the second half of the 19th century and first decades of the 20th century: Italianate, Greek Revival, High Victorian, Gothic, Neo-Gothic Revival, Renaissance Revival, Beaux Arts, Collegiate Gothic, Art Deco, and the Neo-Renaissance and Neoclassical Styles. They represent the commercial development and burgeoning prosperity of Ossining. Most dating from 1870-1933, the buildings retain much of their original scale and architectural character.

Downtown Ossining Historic District



**Downtown Historic District
Status of Buildings**

- Contributing
- Noncontributing
- District Boundaries



Map produced by Village of Ossining Department of Planning



Downtown facades have distinct top, middle and bottom sections.



Prominent eclectic "retail detail".



The 1870 First Presbyterian Church.

The district is a mix of two, three and four story predominantly masonry structures. The Crescent, an almost intact series of handsome masonry buildings on the north side of curving Main Street, is a showpiece of late 19th century mercantile architecture. The imposing buildings with decorated facades facing a wide sidewalk following the street's curve make Ossining a special place, outstanding among River Villages.

Buildings are uniformly set back from the street and abut each other with no room for side yards or alleys. Most have commercial space on the first floor with housing above. Ground floors share common commercial features: large windows, sheltered entrances, awnings and signage. Many buildings share Italianate architectural features, including symmetrical facades, dominant stone window hoods and sills, segmented arch windows, ornate wood and cast metal cornices, weighty brackets, and flat roofs.

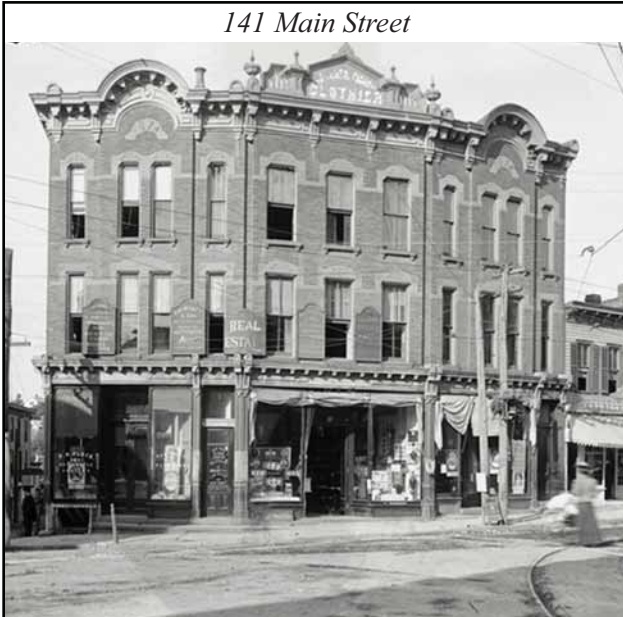
Together the surviving downtown buildings have a cohesiveness of massing, style and materials. They have the classic "faces" of American retail districts, with distinct articulated tops creating a varied profile, a solid middle with punched windows for the apartments or offices on upper levels and an open glassy bottom to show retail wares at street level to pedestrians and vehicles passing by.

The larger civic and religious buildings along Croton and Highland Avenues are freestanding, situated with a variety of angles and differing setbacks. The four churches within the district were constructed before the turn of the 20th century and possess Gothic style architectural elements commonly found in American church construction throughout the third quarter of the 20th century. The civic, banking and educational structures built after the turn of the 20th century within the district represent a variety of styles including Art Deco, Beaux Arts and Renaissance Revival. (See appendices for more on the history of the Downtown).

Then and Now

Comparing the 19th Century photographs of Downtown Ossining to the contemporary image below is not only fun, but it displays the developments and alterations to a building over time. Both 141 Main Street and Ossining National Bank buildings have had small alterations in the time between the images, such as the removal of signage features and replacement windows. Yet key architectural features, including building mass, window and door openings sizes, and materials, are the character defining features of Downtown Ossining and provide a tangible connection to the past.

141 Main Street



1873 Ossining National Bank Building





looking west down Main Street from the First Baptist Church grounds

Design Considerations: Downtown Ossining Historic District

The “Crescent,” adjacent vintage commercial buildings and neighboring landmarks including historic churches establish a clear scale and architectural patterns that renovations, additions and new construction must take into account.

This does not mean that there is not a place for new or innovative contemporary architecture in or near the downtown. The best way to pay homage to historic buildings is with a design effort that is equal to the architectural and building craft traditions that produced the original structures. Respect for the scale, form and materials of the older buildings can infuse the design of an addition or infill building without dictating that it become an imitation. Copycat structures are inappropriate.

To reinforce the dense urban retail core, new structures can take their cue from the older buildings. However, taking inspiration from the past does not mean cherry-picking architectural gestures from disparate sources to “historicize” a new structure.

Urban renewal left its mark on this district, leaving the north side of Main Street intact while leveling the south side and altering the scale of the overall ensemble. Development of the south side of Main Street deserves the highest scrutiny. The exceptional nature of the north side calls for architecture and construction across the street of an excellence that does not compete with or distract from Ossining’s treasured historic core.



ABOVE: Density, similar heights, richly detailed roof cornices and unifying sign entablatures contribute to a streetscape that is both coherent and interestingly varied.



LEFT: The L-shape of this mid - 20th century building bears little relation to the aligned front-ages across the street. A dense hedge prevents the open space created from relating to the Aqueduct Trail it overlooks to the right.



ABOVE: On the south side of Main Street, a clearly modern design approach is one way of highlighting, even literally reflecting, the integrity of historic architecture across the street.



LEFT: Anachronistic and insensitive details such as brick piers, wrought iron railings, and white gutters and leaders compound the problems created by trying to fit a massive new element such as this covered walkway into an historic context.



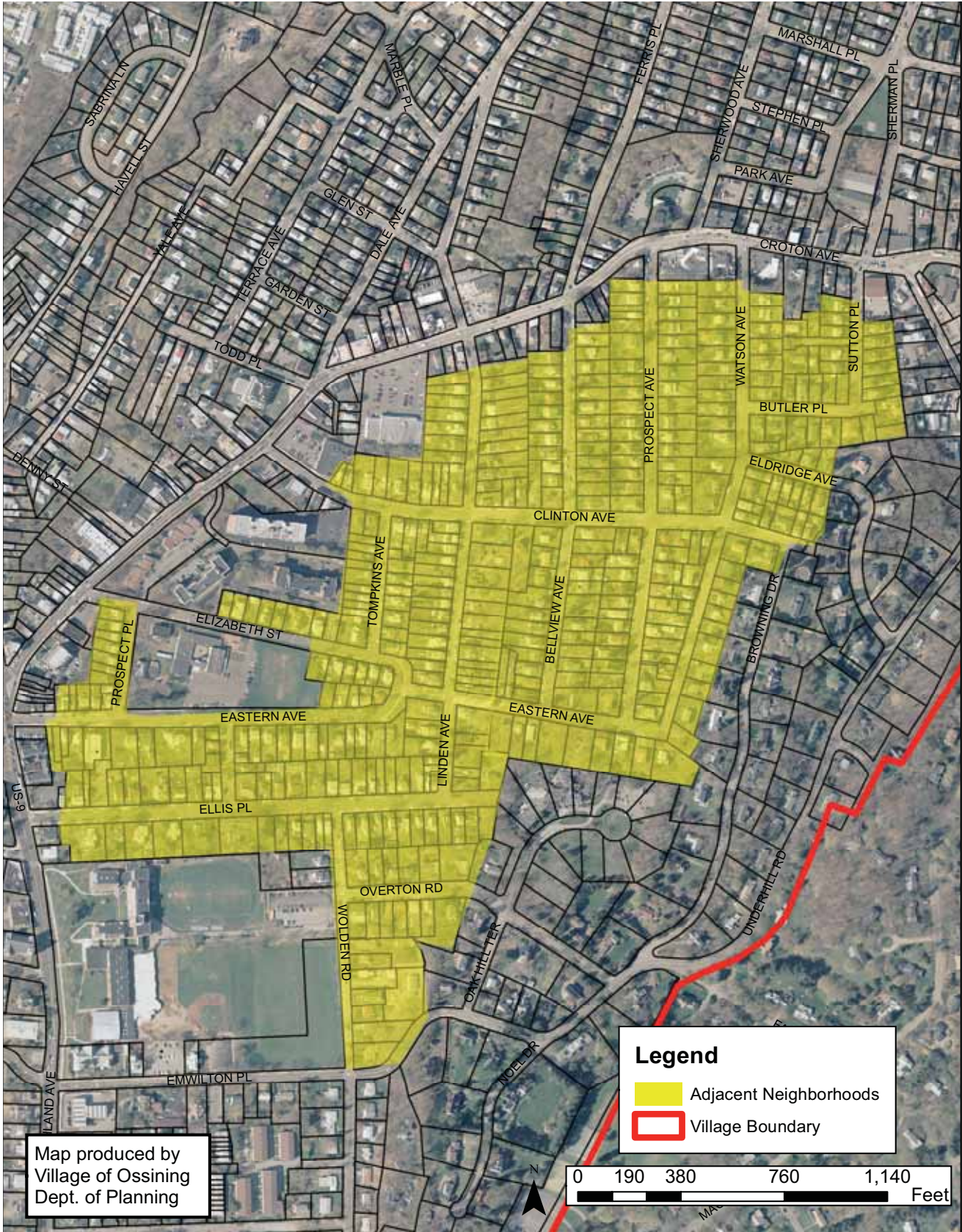
Neighborhoods adjacent to the historic districts contain a great diversity of housing types. This important collection demonstrates ways of making good-looking low rise, medium density housing from extended frontages (LEFT) to two and three family houses (RIGHT).

Adjacent Neighborhoods

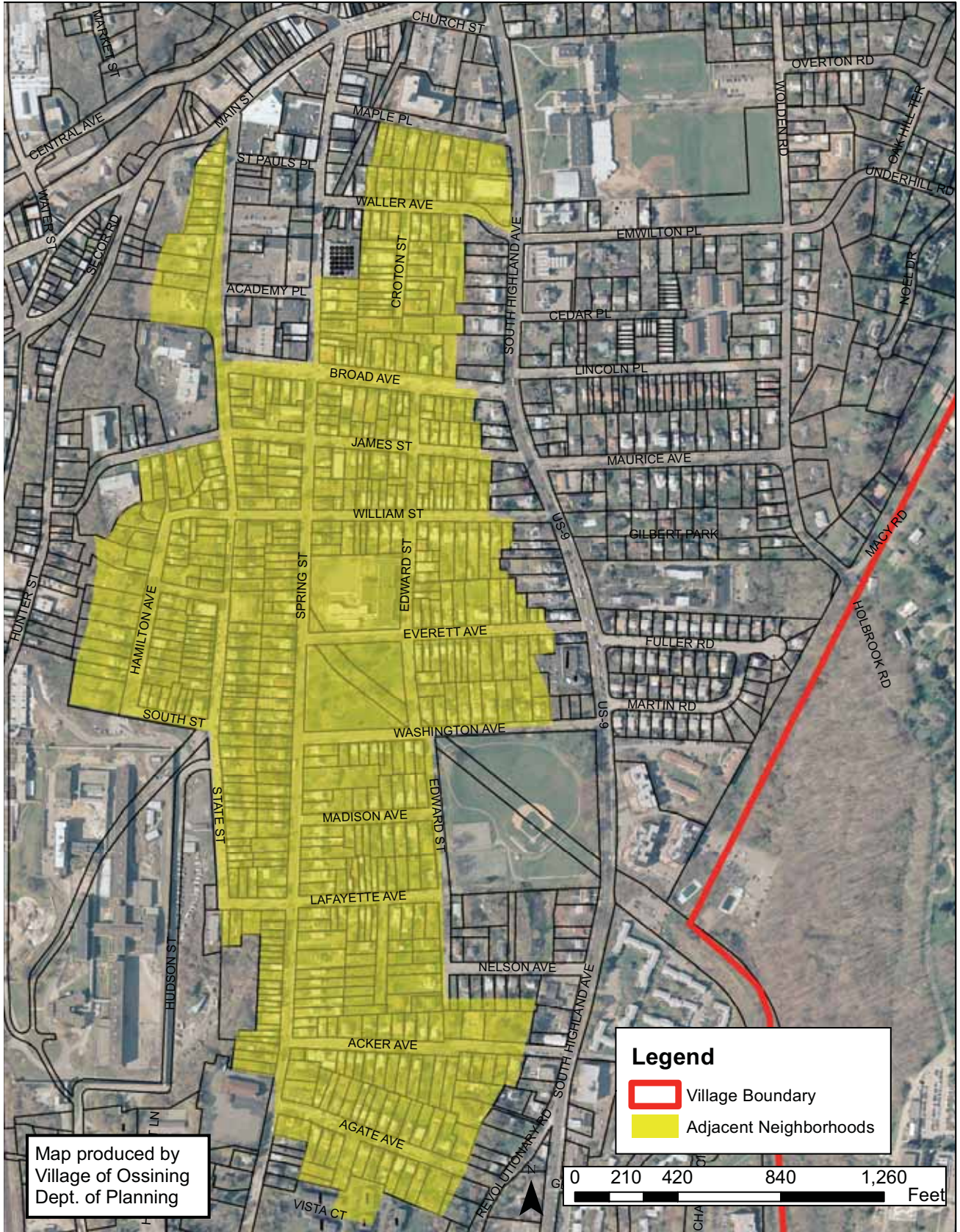
A number of streets adjacent to the historic districts contain significant collections of well-preserved mid-19th-early 20th century building stock. South of the Downtown Historic District, these areas include the residential portions of Spring Street and State Street, Hamilton Avenue, and a number of nearby side streets west of Route 9 such as William Street, Washington Avenue, Waller Avenue and Agate Avenue. It also includes areas east of the Downtown Historic District centered on the Ellis Place neighborhood as well as nearby streets immediately to the east and northeast of this neighborhood that are of a similar visual character, such as Belleview Avenue, Linden Avenue, and Watson Avenue. Please see the map of Adjacent Neighborhoods for additional information.

Within these areas, the original patterns of development are largely uninterrupted. Similar building forms, arranged in parallel placement and close proximity give the neighborhoods a cohesive identity. Large swaths of housing stock in the Adjacent Neighborhoods retain the scale, form and character of their construction era in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This collection is unique in the Hudson River Villages and the region and is one of the remarkable urban design assets of the Village of Ossining.

While there are a few buildings that garner attention as vintage structures of note, it is the procession of front porches, of simply decorated gable ends and of slightly modeled roof shapes that create an assemblage of note. While many alterations have been made and “skins” of many houses are now of non-historic materials, renovation and new construction in these neighborhoods deserve thoughtful planning and review.



Adjacent Neighborhood East of Highland Avenue



Adjacent Neighborhood West of Highland Avenue

Design Considerations: Adjacent Neighborhoods

Ossining’s remarkable collection of repetitive housing stock, built for a growing workforce, is viable housing today. The repeated forms, each with personal touches, can add up to successful neighborhoods. For this reason it is worth paying attention to incremental changes that may affect the larger assemblage. Most importantly, wholesale demolition or interruptions of scale (the “Big House” or “McMansion” phenomenon) should be discouraged or prohibited. Fortress landscaping in which a property is heavily fenced and cut off from the street and neighbors reduces the potential for community cohesion. Approval reviews, public policies and publicly disseminated information should encourage the migration of exterior treatments back to original materials or to contemporary sustainable and code compliant equivalents. The integrity of the larger collection is an asset for each property, one that can enhance each owner’s equity as well as the intangible benefits of “neighborhood”.



Subtle changes, porch enclosures, small additions, new siding, create diversity from buildings which were built from similar plans.



Scale, porches, alignment and detailing promote coherent identity.



Left and right symmetry, varied column detailing, the retention of original elements like lattice create successful pairs and groupings.



The skills of 19th and 20th century local builders are still on display.



Automobile uses have transformed Croton Avenue.



Commercial uses now occupy many front yards.

Commercial Arteries

Two commercial arteries into and through Ossining introduce many people to the Village: **Croton Avenue** and **Highland Avenue**.

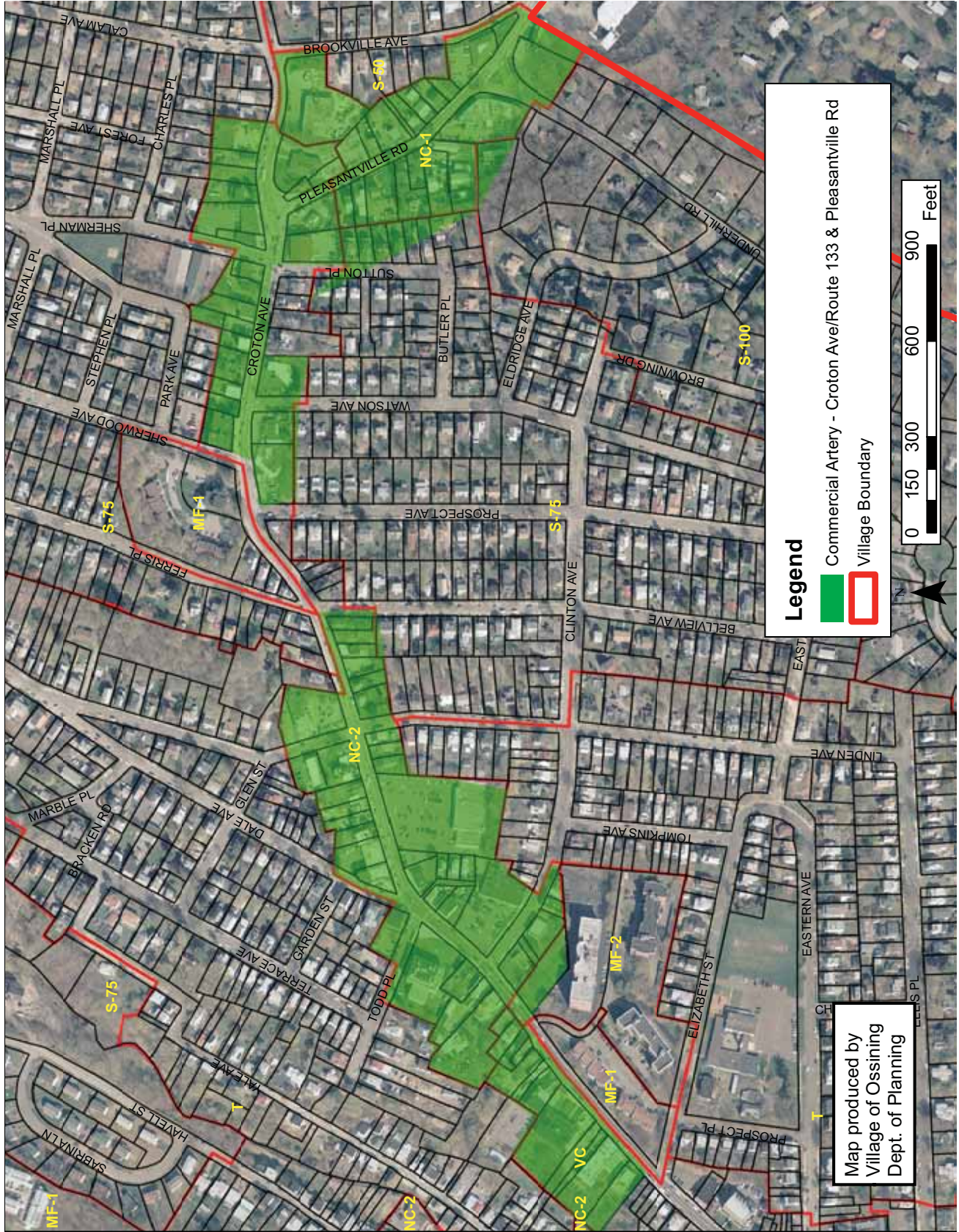
On its path from Brookville Avenue to Highland Avenue/Route 9, the **Croton Avenue/ Route 133 and Pleasantville Road** area is a compendium of land use patterns, building types and functions, and architectural styles and eras. The placement and orientation of surviving late 19th-early 20th century houses on Croton Avenue tell us that once the road served both vehicles and people walking along the sidewalks. In the first half of the 20th century some of these houses were converted to commercial use with rectangular block additions in front and display windows on the street. Early to mid-20th century apartment buildings arranged along the sidewalk with parking in the rear continued this walker-friendly pattern. Later trends brought mini-malls with strip buildings set back and parallel to traffic flow with parking in front, separating the pedestrian from the storefronts. Some mid to late 20th century corporate and bank developments played a variation on this pattern. The buildings are placed at various distances and angles to traffic flow with parking and landscaping in the leftover space. Walls and windows are often blank, and large signage and/or logos recognizable to car traffic identify the buildings. These drive-in/drive by buildings offer no interesting detail to pedestrians.



Strip malls interrupt the earlier development pattern.



Leftover spaces between different construction eras.



Croton Avenue Commercial Artery

Design Considerations: Croton Avenue

Public policies and approval reviews of proposed changes along Croton Avenue must take into account the great diversity of siting, parking forms, and architectural styles that have resulted from succeeding eras of development. New buildings and additions should reinforce the continuity along the Avenue and attempt to screen or conceal parking without making it difficult to park, following the pattern of *some* of the earlier development. The low rise scale should be maintained, and because of the variety, the scale of abutting neighbors should influence the scale of proposed changes. Design should not consist of simply filling out the bulk allowed by the underlying zoning regulations.

Careful control of the retail overlay—signs, lights, entrances, display windows—on formerly fully residential buildings can improve the visual appeal of the neighborhood as well as long term property values. Such a strategy can preserve and acknowledge residential uses on the upper floors rather than losing them in an unconstrained proliferation of commercial development. While there are important destination retail establishments on Croton Avenue, its value as a neighborhood should also be recognized. Residents can reinforce pedestrian uses, sustain local business, provide 24 hour surveillance and security and help create a healthy, diverse margin for local businesses.

Signage and ground floor improvements especially should offer interesting detail to pedestrians, encouraging foot traffic on both sides of the street that is important for long term economic health.



Low key commercial overlays help retain the neighborhood's residential character.



Destination uses have been inserted in places along Croton Avenue and should be treated as exceptions.



Scale shifts are abrupt along Croton Avenue; continuity at street level should be promoted.



Signage ranges from chain store monotony to vibrant hand done efforts; there is room for improvement.



The apartment house is a background contributor; its residents provide street life and security.



This commercial addition does harm to the context.



Highland Avenue

Highland Avenue (Route 9) is Ossining's segment of the old post road that linked New York with Albany. It and the railroad are the threads that string the River Villages together. Twenty-first Century Highland Avenue, glancing by neighborhoods of major historic significance, landmark churches and grand houses, is bordered by strip mall and apartment building architecture interspersed with small strings of late 19th early 20th century houses.

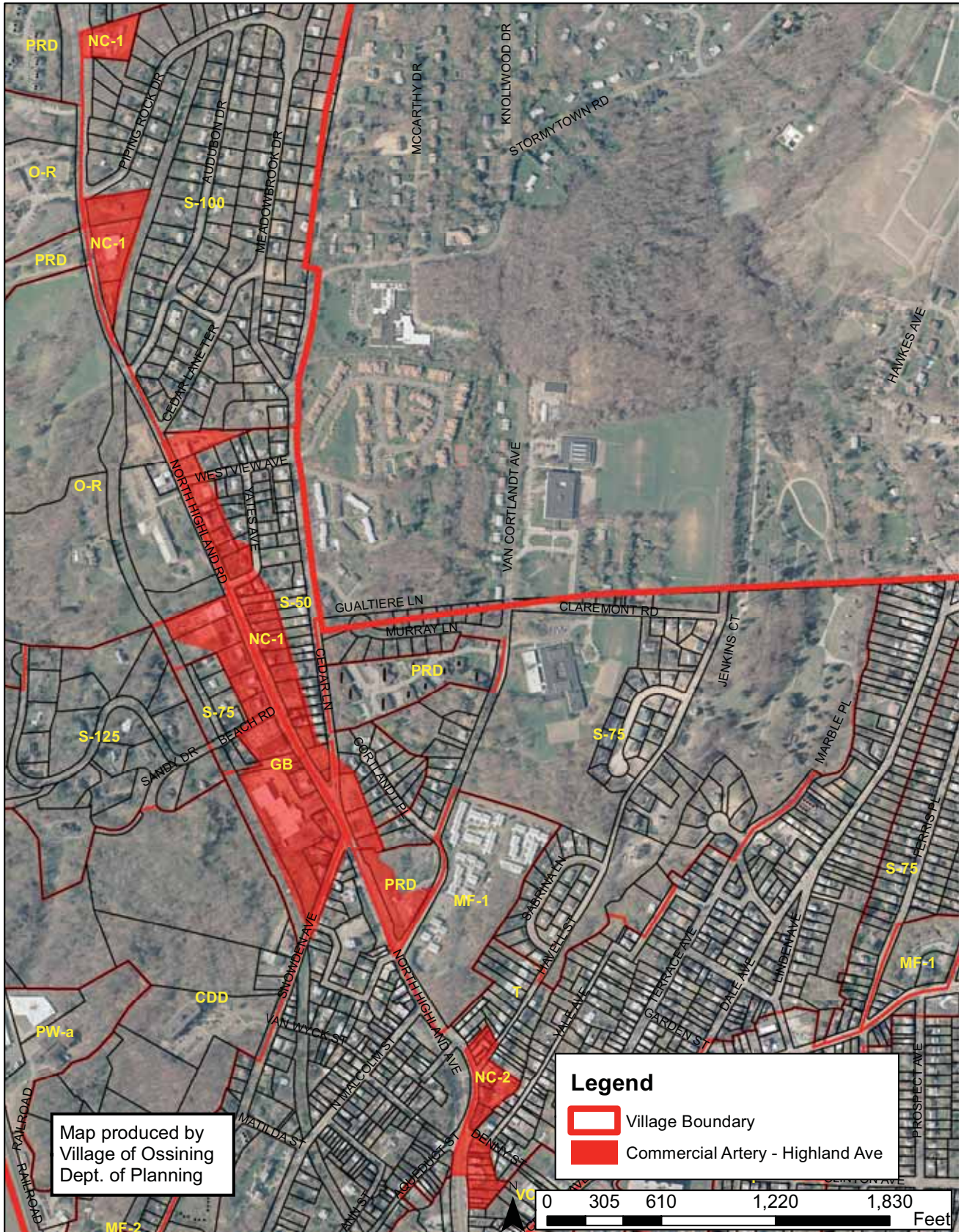
Highland Avenue is divided by the downtown district into two zones, North Highland and South Highland.

Big signs, legible from a car moving above the speed limit, announce food and services to meet practical needs. The Arcadian Shopping Center south of Village center is an auto oriented shopping plaza with a shared parking area in front of and behind commercial buildings. North of the Arcadian Center and across Highland Avenue from it, are individual enterprises or small professional buildings, each with prominent signs, separate parking in front and/or behind, and one or two curb cuts.

Given the importance of the artery for inter-Village traffic and the commercial "ecosystem" well established along this corridor, change in this area should address its livability rather than attempt a wholesale stylistic makeover. The remaining vintage single family residences hold their own in this busy environment when they are well-maintained with historic features intact.



Note the importance of this location on the N.Y. Albany route.

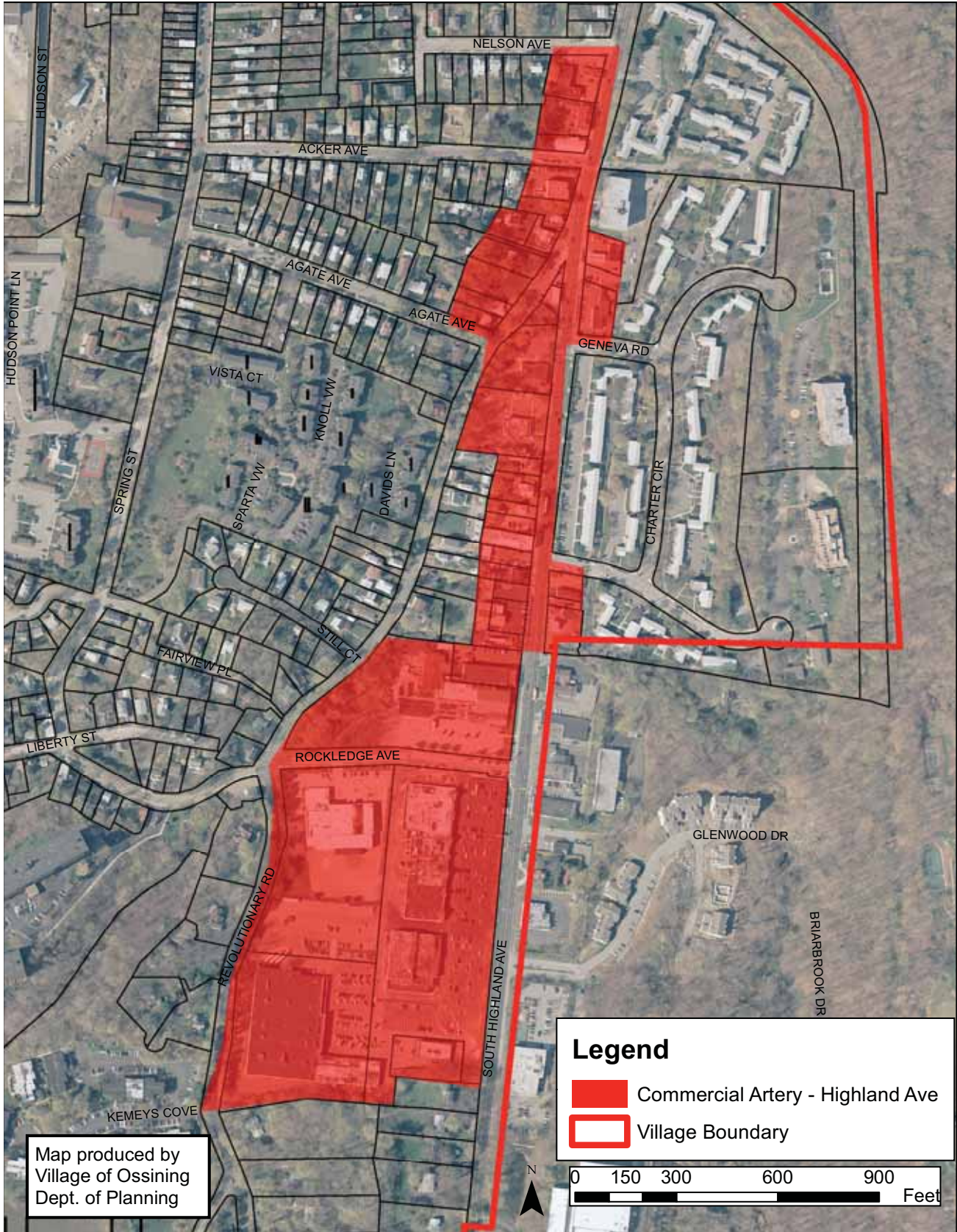


Map produced by
 Village of Ossining
 Dept. of Planning

Legend

- Village Boundary
- Commercial Artery - Highland Ave

North Highland Avenue Commercial Artery



South Highland Avenue Commercial Artery

Design Considerations: Highland Avenue Urban design decisions will be more important than purely architectural ones to the visual, architectural and economic improvement of the commercial portions of Highland Avenue. Streetscape improvements that create a pedestrian scale, including traffic calming, crosswalks, plantings, sidewalks and benches, are part of the solution. Signage controls have to take into account a merchant’s needs to make his location known and, for those businesses truly dependent on traffic, to reach potential customers passing in cars.

It does not seem likely that a single style or pattern could be successfully imposed on Highland Avenue businesses, so continuity may depend on the amenities provided at the street edge, such as street trees, sidewalks, bollards and signage. The number of signs per property can be limited, as well as their size. Site plans can limit the amount of paved surface to the minimum, yielding both visual and environmental benefits. While new buildings should not mimic antique designs on this strip, architecture on Highland Avenue should measure up to the venerable Albany Post Road—one of New York’s oldest trade and mail routes.



North Highland Avenue is one-sided in this stretch, looking south towards downtown.



Asphalt devoted to automobile related uses should not be allowed to expand beyond the bare minimum.



Sidewalk & plantings provide minimal relief



Not a hospitable place for pedestrians.



3 The Importance of Landscape in All Areas

The land around your building is not just left over space. It can be useful, it can be beautiful to look at from inside and from the street, it can help you green Ossining and it can set the tone of your neighborhood. Community satisfaction grows when an area is comfortably walkable, when in summer it is well shaded, at night adequately (but not overly) lit, when buildings and yards are interesting to look at and unappealing functional elements are well screened. The way landscape is managed can either knit a neighborhood together or create a characterless array of isolated elements.

Open space and vacant lots are candidates for development. A well-considered landscape plan can integrate new construction into existing neighborhoods. Openness and shared views can coexist with strategic screening. With Village sanction, left over space can morph into community gardens or micro-parks with seating for dog walkers and people waiting for the school bus. Whatever the use, the landscape is the connective tissue of the neighborhood.

While structures survive, much of the historic landscape has vanished. We know that the land around Ossining was cleared for agriculture. Most trees in the early Village settlements and emerging suburban clusters were smaller than the mature trees shading many Ossining residential areas now. In the middle of the 19th century, homeowners were moving away from a utilitarian agricultural style to a “union between the house and grounds” in the words of Andrew Jackson Downing whose book, *Landscape Gardening and Rural Architecture*, made him the Martha Stewart of his day. He wrote, “...we have...a large class of independent landholders, who are able to assemble around them, not only the useful and convenient, but the agreeable and beautiful, in country life.” Downing set a course for land use that continues to influence landscape patterns to this day.

That old landscapes have disappeared increases detective work for Sparta homeowners seeking to develop their grounds in keeping with their houses. For properties in historic districts and historic landmarks, unless you have an image of your property dating from the era in which your structure was built, changes you intend should be guided by records of land planning and planting trends of the period. The Ossining Historical Society is a good start for your inquiry. Appendices offer sources of excellent information on both historic landscape patterns and on contemporary best practices for environmentally responsible land management.

4 Sustainability

The preservation and repair of existing buildings is a sustainable activity. Demolition followed by new construction adds not only to the waste stream the Village has to deal with, but also to the greenhouse gases heating the planet. The preservation mantra of “retain, repair, replace” complements the sustainability trio of “reduce, reuse, recycle”.

Many of the older buildings in Ossining were built before the era of cheap energy and have (or had) “green” features such as porches or large overhangs shading the interior, shade trees, operable windows and shutters, and wind driven attic ventilators. Preserving or restoring these features is equally or more sustainable than adding solar collectors or geothermal systems, which require large amounts of energy for their manufacture and installation.

The most cost-effective green strategies such as insulation and air sealing do not dictate architectural style or prevent new buildings from fitting their context.

These guidelines, therefore, are designed to help chart a sustainable future for Ossining. You will find recommendations for sustainable approaches imbedded in the guidelines for the rehabilitation of old and historic structures and landscapes in the Village. Before undertaking improvements on your building, it is smart to commission an Energy Audit so you understand what energy conserving measures you can include in the work you are contemplating. Benefits to the planet and to your pocketbook can be substantial. Information is available from your utility supplier and state agencies such as the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (see appendices for contact).



New techniques like infra-red photography highlight heat leaks and help builders make old and historic buildings energy efficient while retaining character.



Sparta: porch shades the house, saving energy for cooling. Porous paving reduces runoff & recharges the aquifer.



Rain Garden conserves water



Exuberant wood detailing and surfaces require skilled repairs.



Historic masonry needs special care. See masonry section & appendices



Wasp nests & biological growth compound the damaging scars of amateur repairs, wasp nests, and weather.

Maintenance

A requisite for sustainable preservation is maintenance. All building materials, new or old, will deteriorate over time and will require repairs during the life of a building. Seasons, weather, insects and vegetation eat away at buildings.

Maintaining materials and mechanical systems significantly slows this deterioration process; extends the life of your building; and can save money and energy over time. With “good housekeeping,” you preserve the architectural integrity of your building and its property value. Vigilant upkeep protects you from costly repairs resulting from deferred maintenance. Take time to understand the chain of impacts a single delayed repair may produce. For example, a clogged gutter results in water staining and removing paint on the face of a building, water overflowing the gutter close to the building seeps through foundation walls, leading to a wet basement, rotting interior wood, termites and mold.

A maintenance plan will not be the same for each building, and each program should be tailored to the overall size, shape, function, and usage patterns of the individual property. Character defining forms, details and materials should be identified and routinely inspected and repaired. Building assemblies and systems that protect quality of life for occupants should receive routine attention. These include but are not limited to roofs, gutters, window and door weather stripping, railings, and exterior step surfaces. Equipment should be regularly inspected and serviced.

When developing a maintenance plan for your property, refer to the guidelines outlined in Secretary of the Interior Standards for Historic Preservation (See Appendices). These guidelines are recognized as the national standards for the treatment of historic properties and are used in countless preservation projects throughout the country. The standards are divided into four treatment categories: preservation, restoration, rehabilitation and reconstruction. Each treatment addresses technical, philosophical and practical issues that arise during work on historic properties and can assist you as you determine the proper techniques for repairing your building. (see appendices for maintenance references).

Summary

Neighborhood enrichment starts with understanding, respecting and maintaining what survives from the past. Before contemplating changes, adopt a robust program of maintenance for your building and grounds. A face-lift of a vintage building—even if no *change* is intended—should advance from protection and maintenance, through low-impact repair, to replacement with exact replication *if* a significant building element is conclusively beyond repair. The landscape context should complement the strengths of the buildings. New construction should grow from the existing built and unbuilt landscape. Minimizing its environmental footprint, new construction can be both respectful of the neighborhood and its history, and true to its own time.



5 Core Principles Underlying the Guidelines for Historic Buildings

Guiding Principles

The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Historic Preservation are the national standards for the treatment of historic properties and govern countless preservation projects throughout the country (see links and a copy of the ten standards in the Appendices). The standards are supplemented by *Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings* which provides useful advice for owners and professionals working on historic properties. The guidelines cover common materials, features and assemblies, as well as energy conservation, maintenance and accessibility. While the *Standards* address historic buildings primarily, they provide advice generally useful for the rehabilitation of American building stock. The Guidelines suggest a model approach to all projects which is followed by increasingly intense levels of intervention that may be required to achieve rehabilitation goals.

Identify, Retain and Preserve

This capsule phrase describes the initial process of determining the qualities, features or components of a site or structure that are most important to determining its historic character. Once that identification has been made, it is then possible to look at the levels of treatment that are required to retain and preserve those character-defining elements.

Protect and Maintain

Protection involves the least degree of intervention and is often a preventive measure. Maintenance can include rust removal, caulking, re-application of protective coatings, painting, cleaning of roof and gutter systems, and installation of safety equipment. These types of repairs should be included in any maintenance plan and regularly executed.

Repair

When additional work is required, repair is recommended. Repair work should begin with the least amount of intervention possible, such as piecing in, splicing, consolidating or otherwise reinforcing or upgrading accordingly. Repairs can also include in-kind replacement or with comparable substitute materials of extensively deteriorated elements.

Replace

Replacement should only be undertaken when an entire character defining feature has failed. The replacement should use the same or comparable materials and match the existing in shape, dimensions and finishes. Do not replace an exterior feature that could be paired or preserved with reasonable effort and cost.

Tax credits

Federal and state tax credits may be available for various categories of substantial rehabilitation of properties in an historic district or on the National Register of Historic Places. This financing can provide critical funding for commercial and residential rehabilitations of historic properties. For more information consult the Office of Historic Preservation at the NY State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation. (see appendices)

6 Planning your Project

Think of the architecture of the Village as testimony—an exact and unique expression of the life and economy of the region. Just as you would not rephrase or ornament the United States Constitution or your great-grandmother’s handwritten letter, you should not willfully alter the original architectural expression of Ossining’s past. Historic architecture should speak truthfully.

At the same time, historic architecture cannot simply be a relic frozen in time. It now houses modern families and activities and must accommodate new technologies. The challenge for all of us inhabiting historic buildings and living or working in historic districts and transitional areas is to preserve the strongest statements of the past while living 21st century lives.

How to submit a good application

For HADD districts, the applicant must submit an application to the Historic Preservation Commission. In other districts applications are reviewed by the Planning Board/Board of Architectural Review.

To speed the process toward approval, read the Zoning Code and then study the *Architectural Design Guidelines* at the outset. Understanding the *Guidelines* and following the recommended steps will prevent surprises, time-consuming detours and dead ends. Applicants should have a developed and clearly documented project before submitting an application for Board and Committee approval. Consult with Village staff to learn what types of documentation will best explain your proposed project—e.g. drawings, architectural plans, current photographs of your property and that of immediate neighbors, historic photographs of your property or illustrations of features you seek to incorporate in your own project and learn what material samples may be required. To be heard, your application must be complete. If you have questions about your project and application, you should contact the Planning Department.

Know Your Building

To identify what form and attributes to preserve and reinforce in your buildings:

- Try to discover the original construction date and dates of later major changes to the building. This dating will tell you what styles were *likely* to have been used by the original builder and later renovator(s). The Planning Department may be able to help you date your building.
- Observe the shape—massing—of your building. Look at the footprint, the roof line(s), the proportions floor to floor, porch to façade, window to window. Look for clues to the original overall approach to materials: were they simple or varied and decorative? Sometimes this involves peeking under the more recent layers of materials to see the older ones. Finally, focus on individual features, such as windows, doors, porches, trim, chimneys, etc. These are all clues for identifying the character of your building.
- Influential architects during the 19th century such as Andrew Jackson Downing and Alexander Jackson Davis were adapting common architectural forms from England into patterns books where design elements were accessible to a bustling nation. Their pattern books (see bibliography A7 primary source) are still useful guides for owners of properties built in the 19th century.
- Consult an architect or contractor trained in historic preservation to study the evidence of building campaigns in your structure. Types and sizes of wood, nails, and joinery techniques are all clues to the era of construction.
- Use the Appendices of these Guidelines as a reference source prior to beginning your project. Resources in the appendices include links to architectural field guides, a glossary of architectural terms, and contact information for technical building resources.



This historic photo shows rooflines and massing, siding and roofing, porch trim, railings and lattice, garden design and window awnings probably added at a later date.

A Resource:

Detailed information about many notable local properties can be found in *Village of Ossining, New York: The Significant Sites and Structures Guide*. This publication, prepared by the Village, Ossining Historical Society, and local volunteers, is available through the Village web site or by contacting the Planning Department.

To identify the style(s) of your building, get help from the Planning Department, Building Department, Historical Commission, or Historical Society. A Preservation Architect or Architectural Historian can assist you in distinguishing the key character defining features of your property. Reference materials listed in the Appendices will help you zero in on the architectural trends that shaped your building.

How to Read these Guidelines:

The guidelines recommend baseline approaches to building and site improvements applicable in historic districts, adjacent neighborhoods and commercial arteries. Projects on the commercial arteries and adjacent neighborhoods should follow “**all properties**” recommendations as noted throughout the Guidelines. Particular requirements for projects in HADD districts are specified under the “**Historic Districts**” headings following those for “**all properties**”.

7 Architectural Styles

Ossining’s early settlement, its economic growth during the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th leaves us with today’s wealth and variety of historic architecture. Few of Ossining’s buildings neatly fall into a single style category today. Architectural trends overlap and evolve.

Buildings change as time passes, needs and fashions change, owners’ finances shift and new building technologies become available. Many of Ossining’s buildings have been incrementally modified over time.

As a rule, Ossining’s houses are simple, solid examples of 19th and 20th century American building craft, not exceptional examples of an individual style. Nevertheless, it is helpful to understand architectural styles to evaluate your own building before embarking on changes, so that the new work reinforces the style or blend of stylistic elements particular to your structure and neighborhood.

To understand unfamiliar terms, see the glossary in A7. See Appendices for style references.



Public buildings like this Beaux Arts “Jewel Box” bank adopted more formal styles.



The First Baptist Church is rendered in a “Stick Style” variation of Gothic Revival that is strongly related to other house carpentry in the Village (see below).



8 Building Elements

Roofs

A wide variety of roof forms is visible throughout the Village of Ossining. Gable roofs predominate, but a survey of local historic structures reveals a range of forms including Beaux Arts buildings with pyramidal hipped roofs, Victorians with complex cross gables, and commercial buildings with flat roofs and decorative parapets. Roof shape and pitch play a major part in defining the mass and style of a building. Chimneys, dormers, gutters and downspouts are roof elements integral to the character of the building. Additional paraphernalia on a roof detracts from that building character.

Most historic buildings have lost their original roofing materials and today have contemporary asphalt roofs. Some wood shingle, slate, metal and ceramic tile roofs can still be found, although in diminishing numbers, throughout the Village. Some owners have preserved original roofing or replaced it with historically appropriate materials.

Reroofing materials are the most common change made to historic roofs. Weigh alternatives carefully when planning to re-roof. Besides the strong visual appeal and look of authenticity of historically appropriate materials, when maintained, these roofs can last up to 100 years—much longer than the standard 20 to 30 year lifespan of contemporary asphalt roofing.

The reroofing process presents an opportunity to improve energy performance as well as appearance. It may be possible, for example, to add a thin layer of insulation under the new roof without noticeably affecting appearance. That insulation will help reduce heating and cooling bills and prolong the life of the roofing materials by reducing stress from temperature swings. Lighter color roofing materials also tend to have a longer life and reflect more heat away from the building in summer.



The original pattern & scale of roof materials enhanced the roof forms. Substitute materials like the “shadow” shingles above should be judged case by case. Studies show that original materials like slate and copper are the LEAST expensive on a life cycle basis.



The retention of the tile roof on a pivotal structure adds value and durability, and positively impacts the entire downtown district.



The coated metal substitute on the First Baptist Church roof differs from the original slate but has texture, shadow and a long life.



The retention of the arched insets and base flashing are good. The metal cap should be smaller.



This traditional gable dormer has a good scale; the valley and sidewall flashings should be improved.



Gutters and leaders should be tidy and match siding and trim colors and conditions.

Roof Features

Chimneys

Original chimneys were built in keeping with the building use and style. Many chimneys are made of brick or stone. A waterproof and stable chimney must have sound mortar joints suitable for the historic masonry units it is made of. For re-pointing an existing chimney, select mortar to match the historic mortar in strength (softer than modern mortar, as it contains lime) and color. A mason experienced with historic buildings will know how to match the mortar not only in strength, cement color and sand granule size and color, but also in joint spacing and profile as well.

Dormers

A dormer is a volume projecting from a sloped roof. A dormer window is a vertical window in that projection. The size, number and shape of dormers have a major impact on the appearance of the structure. With a repair, the dormer's outer walls should match the exterior walls of the building. Do not wrap roofing material around dormer walls.

Gutters and downspouts

Early gutters were made of such materials as wood, copper and galvanized metals. More recent gutters are often made of aluminum and vinyl. Proper water management is crucial to the life of a building. Keeping gutters and leaders leaf-free and intact protects the walls of the building from water-scouring, reduces water migrating into the basement and storm washout of soil around the building. Copper and stainless steel have the longest useful life, as much as 100 years, or more. Galvanized steel can last for 50 years or more with proper care, and its lifetime can be longer if it is kept painted. Plastic, aluminum and vinyl gutters have a shorter lifetime, partly because they are generally more easily distorted or damaged. New non-lead bearing coatings are available to substitute for such historic materials as lead-coated copper or lead/tin flashing and solders.

Dissimilar metals may damage each other through a process known as galvanic action. Charts like the following are available that indicate which metals can be used together in specific applications.

Dissimilar Metals									
Galvanic corrosion potential between common construction metals									
	Aluminum	Brass	Bronze	Copper	Galvanized Steel	Iron/Steel	Lead	Stainless Steel	Zinc
Aluminum		1	1	1	3	2	2	3	3
Copper	1	2	2		2	1	2	1	1
Galvanized steel (zinc)	3	2	2	2	3	3		2	3
Lead	2	2	2	2	3	3		2	3
Stainless steel*	3	1	1	1	2	2	2		1
Zinc	3	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	

1. Galvanic action will occur with direct contact.
 2. Galvanic action may occur.
 3. Galvanic action is insignificant between these metals.

This chart provides guidance when combining metals, such as copper and aluminum.

Flashing

The material used for flashing will often determine the lifetime of a roof system, especially an historic one. Tile or slate, for example, might well outlast galvanized flashing. Care in the selection and the craft of flashing is fundamental to all roofing projects, whether or not located in an historic district.

Roof Ventilation

Roofs will last longer if they stay cool and can dry out. There are old-fashioned as well as contemporary techniques for keeping roofs cold and dry. The traditional techniques are ventilation of the attic under the roof or the use of spacers under the roofing to allow air to move under the material, drying it out and keeping it cooler. With the advent of unvented attics that tighten the building envelope and save energy, the spacer technique must be used, employing spacers or “smart” bumpy membranes that allow air movement under roofing. On pitched roofs, the air must exit through vents at the ridge. These vents should be installed to minimize their visual impact. Some vents allow the outlet to be on one side, so they can be facing away from the most important view.

Rooftop Equipment

There is a variety of kinds of equipment that tend to clutter the exteriors of buildings, including the roofs. They include plumbing vents, fan outlets, air conditioning condensers, TV antennas, satellite dishes, electrical service boxes and more recently, renewable energy features such as solar panels or



Traditional roof furring provides ventilation for shingles above.



Antennae create clutter and can provide entrance points for water.



Mechanical systems should be concealed to the extent possible



laminated solar panels integral to roof (above) reduce visual impact by comparison to panels (below)



Equipment placement could be better integrated with the building.



Original sunburst & special dormer details still carry the day in spite of roofing gaps and the reduced glass openings of replacement windows.

wind turbines. It is important to understand the function of each item to successfully minimize the negative impact it has on appearance. It is sometimes possible to eliminate features, or to negotiate an alternative installation with the service provider or installer. Careful placement is the first step, followed by various techniques for screening and camouflaging the equipment, minimizing the exposure from the most likely vantage points affecting neighbors or the public.

Roofs and Roof features

all properties

do:

- Understand the nature of the existing roof sheathing and roof ventilation before replacing the roofing system.
- Preserve the original roof form including shape, pitch, line, overhang and integral functional or decorative features.
- Use appropriate repair techniques to maintain, protect and repair historic features, materials and details.
- Replace in kind materials damaged or deteriorated beyond repair. If possible, limit replacement to the area needing repair.
- Select a flashing material compatible with existing roofing materials.
- Use new roof materials that match historic materials as closely as possible in design, composition, dimension, pattern, texture, color and detail.
- Look at mockups or samples of the proposed roofing materials in place where they will ultimately be installed.
- Design new dormers to match existing dormers in style, shape, materials and trim detailing.
- Keep the scale of new dormers subordinate to the larger roof form.
- If a roof must be entirely replaced, select materials and installation appropriate in material, scale and texture to the period of the structure.
- Lengthen the life of the roof and building through regular inspection and maintenance: clean gutters and downspouts, repair flashing, repaint trim, maintain ventilation, fix leaks promptly.
- Place new paraphernalia such as an air conditioning unit, satellite dish or solar panel on the roof(s) least visible to the public way; use building-integrated features (for example photovoltaic systems integrated into roofing material or solar cells imbedded in glass windows or skylights).

don't

- Change distinctive roofs, dormers and chimneys that are important to the character of your building.
- Extend dormers so they obliterate the original roof boundaries or edges.
- Remove and discard sound historic material.
- Delay repairs on roof and roof features.
- Substitute materials notably different in appearance from surviving or known original roof materials.
- Use dissimilar metals that promote galvanic action (e.g. copper and aluminum in contact).
- Permanently remove a roof feature (such as chimney or dormer).
- Replace a roof feature with a new feature notably different in appearance from the original (such as replacing copper gutters with white aluminum, a masonry chimney with metal).



Ossining has many distinctive roofs.



Historic Districts

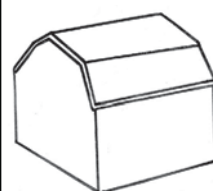
do

- Use probes to determine existence and nature of original underlying materials before specifying or ordering new materials.
- Retain and preserve surviving viable original roof cladding materials and detailing.
- Use replacement materials identical to original or that match in color, size, exposure, thickness and texture the materials in place during the building's period of significance.
- Base replacement of missing roof features or details on accurate documentation of the original if available or upon a new design consistent with the historic character of the building and similar neighboring buildings.
- Site or install equipment on the side of the building most shielded from public view; provide a model, computer simulation or on-site mockup satisfactory to the review board.

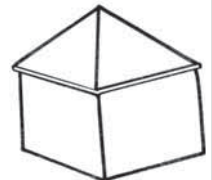
don't

- Install "woven" shingle valleys or follow other contemporary roofing shortcuts.
- Use imitation materials with grain, color, thickness or sheen different from the original.

SOME POPULAR HISTORIC ROOF FORMS IN OSSINING



GAMBREL



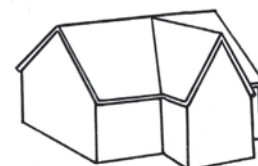
PYRAMID



MANSARD



GABLE FRONT



CROSS GABLE



The exterior surface treatment must work together with lighting and window details.



Natural color shingles pick up colors in the stone below; paint colors complement both.



Commercial buildings often have a durable palette of natural & cast stone, terra cotta, hardwood and metals which nevertheless require specialized maintenance.

Exterior Walls and Trim

Exterior wall surfaces define a historic building's massing and form. In Ossining, historic buildings are commonly clad in wood, brick, and stucco. Residential, commercial and institutional buildings also display attractive stone, terra cotta, and metal surface materials - appropriately expressing the variety of styles and tastes incorporated into 18th, 19th, and early 20th century architectural designs. Surface materials, details, textures, and finishes provide tangible clues to a building's historic authenticity.

Consideration of texture, pattern, scale, and detail of original exterior wall and trim material is appropriate when preparing to repair or replace damaged or deteriorated exterior walls and trim work. In most cases, selective replacement is all that is necessary. Owners are encouraged to match the historic characteristics of the original material such as the distinct bonding pattern of a brick wall, the texture and depth of wood siding, and the three dimensional quality of wood molding.

Replacing or covering up historic wall materials with artificial sidings (vinyl, aluminum), concrete board, faux stone or brick, stucco-like coatings, or other non-compatible materials is not appropriate as it diminishes the architectural integrity of the historic building. Installation of these materials often means removing or concealing valuable historic architectural trim and details. Although frequently advertised as "maintenance free" or "low maintenance" many contemporary siding products prove to not be as durable as the original materials, and their recent production makes them less environmentally-friendly.

all properties

do

- Match the structure's original materials in all dimensions (thickness, exposure and profile) and texture.
- Retain and preserve walls that contribute to the overall historic character and form of a historic building, including their functional and decorative features and details.
- Maintain and repair the material surfaces and details of exterior walls using maintenance and methods appropriate to the specific material.

- Replace in kind any portion of an exterior wall that is damaged or deteriorated beyond repair. Match the original in design, material, dimension, texture, pattern, detail, and color. Replacement should be limited to the repair area only. If it is not feasible to replace in kind, substitution should be compatible and historically sensitive.
- Replace a missing exterior wall feature with a new feature or detail that is based upon accurate documentation (photographs, written records, etc.) of the original; new designs should match historic elements in scale, material, and detail.

don't

- Install materials that differ from the original materials in thickness, exposure, or texture when replacing or repairing siding.
- Introduce or remove windows, doors, chimneys, bays, or other features on character-defining exterior walls.
- Install conjectural designs not based on evidence.
- Paint or coat historically unpainted brick walls; coatings can slow down masonry's ability to dry out, trapping moisture that can freeze and damage the assembly.
- Sandblast or strip with harsh chemicals painted masonry known to have been painted early in the building's existence.

Historic Districts

do

- Conserve original materials.
- Replace with identical materials at the end of the feature's useful life.

don't

- Replace or cover historic exterior wall materials such as clapboards, brick, stone, or stucco with contemporary non-compatible materials such as vinyl, aluminum, or reinforced siding; this applies also to features, or details such as corner boards, brackets, cornices, and other trim work.



Well tended historic shingling and a carefully executed color scheme work together-note gutters and leaders painted to match siding & trim.



Visible history: it's worth looking for original clapboards still lurking under the more recent aluminum and asbestos layers.



When re-siding try to create an air space under the siding with a smart air barrier to prolong siding life.

Wood

With proper and consistent maintenance, original wood features (siding, shingles, and trim) can last for hundreds of years. Old growth wood used for those features is much harder and rot resistant than most wood available on the market today. Unfortunately though, neglect can lead to deterioration due to water, fungus, mold, and insects.

Most of Ossining's building stock is wood-framed and wood-clad. Wood clapboard, board and batten, and shingles are present in Historic Districts and buffer neighborhoods alike. Clapboard siding is the most common wood material used on exterior wall surfaces.

Wood trim serves both a decorative and functional purpose. It serves as a transition to decorative elements such as doors, windows, cornices, and porches while also sealing siding and shingles at joints, corners, and openings – protecting the building from water infiltration. If your building has been insulated it is especially important to prevent water from finding its way into crevices in the exterior. Wet walls promote mold growth. Uninsulated walls are dried out by interior heat so mold is deterred, though at great expense of energy and money.

Historic siding, cornices, brackets, window architraves and pediments are valuable and often irreplaceable. Duplication of these elements requires expensive custom shaping. It is imperative to avoid situations where water can stand on flat surfaces or accumulate on decorative features.

Keep painted wood surfaces painted and clean. Paint protects historic wood from moisture and ultraviolet light. If you need to remove paint, use the most gentle means possible (such as gentle hand-scraping, hand-sanding or peel-off paint removers) to preserve historic wood for the years ahead. New wood should be back-primed and coatings should be applied to all cut ends. Follow EPA guidelines when dealing with materials painted before 1973, which may contain lead.

Repair wood features by patching, consolidation, and other supported preservation methods, and when repair is not possible, replace in kind. Replacement of an entire wood feature (such as a cornice) in kind should be supported by historic documentation - such as physical evidence (original parts of the wood cornice) or images (historic photos, drawings).

Masonry

Architecture throughout the Village of Ossining is constructed with a variety of masonry types including brick, stone, terra cotta, stucco, and mortar. With good maintenance and proper repairs, these materials can last for centuries. As with all materials though, improper maintenance and poorly executed repairs lead to problems. Masonry can also deteriorate as a result of water infiltration, and abrasive cleaning. When preparing for a historic masonry project, identify masonry features that are key to the building's overall historic character. It is important to notice and document masonry unit type and size, masonry color, bonding patterns, mortar joint type and size, and coatings. Observe and record, for example, the range of brick colors on your building. It often takes a blend of three or more brick colors to match the overall visual effect of the existing masonry; they are seldom uniform and homogeneous.

Repair historic masonry by reusing existing historic bricks or stones whenever possible. Match colors, textures, sizes, shapes, bonding pattern and compressive strength of historic material with new replacement masonry units and stucco. Repoint deteriorated historic mortar with a mortar compatible in strength, color, and joint profile. Softer, high lime mortars were used in historic buildings and give them the ability to expand and contract without cracking or doing damage to softer masonry elements. Mortar available at the local hardware store is generally too hard (it is primarily Portland Cement) and in a generic color. The texture and color of the sand aggregate is often key to the success of a match.

Spend time researching and choosing a contractor with appropriate training and experience working with historic masonry and stucco. It will make a dramatic difference in the results and longevity of the restoration. If ivy and other vegetation cover masonry walls, carefully probe to see if they are concealing or contributing to any underlying deterioration. Vegetation does not automatically produce such damage, however, and can be on occasion an important character defining element. Ivy can help insulate your building. If you determine that vines are penetrating cracks in masonry, cut the vine stems low, allow it to brown and die, and then remove it so you do the least damage possible.

Clean masonry using the gentlest means possible. It is best to avoid harsh chemicals that can permanently damage masonry; many effective methods for cleaning masonry involve water only. Sandblasting or using harsh chemicals to clean masonry, for example, can permanently damage historic masonry by removing their original protective finish and making them susceptible to rapid weathering.

Paint Colors

Paint colors should be appropriate to the style and setting of the building. Color selection should not only enhance the building being painted but also complement surrounding buildings.

Simple color schemes for walls and decorative features are preferable. The colors selected for the storefront portion of the building should be used throughout the painted exterior of the overall building. This unifies the upper and lower portions of the building's façade. 19th and early 20th century color schemes often employ 4 or more colors to distinguish body (siding) and 3 other elements, often including doors, window sash and trim. There are numerous publications that illustrate approaches to historic paint colors (see bibliography).

A paint analysis can pay great dividends in identifying the history of the building. Using carefully removed paint chips or "bullets", a trained conservator can microscopically identify the colors and paint types used on the exterior or the interior in different eras.

Assume that paint layers placed before 1973 contain lead. Any work that involves those layers must follow the Environmental Protection Agency's rules. See appendices for contact information.



Paint sampling in the final location can ensure that the colors work as intended in daylight, which tends to make colors look lighter and often cooler than on small paint chips.



Skylights

A skylight is a two-edged sword. It can bring welcome light into a building's interior. At the same time, it can create uncomfortable conditions in the interior in summer and winter by virtue of heat gain or heat loss; and it can disrupt an old or historic building's appearance.

In old buildings, adding skylights is a common strategy for making use of previously unused spaces such as attics. Their insertion, however, should be carefully designed, and they should be no larger than absolutely necessary. From a sustainability point of view, while daylight can reduce artificial lighting, the increase in air-conditioning loads from an inappropriately designed skylight would more than wipe out the potential energy savings. Where historic skylights exist, they can often be repaired or carefully reglazed with contemporary glass.

all properties

do

- Look for ways to introduce light from vertical windows or clerestories rather than skylights.
- Use flat, low profile skylights following the roof slope.
- Install moveable shading underneath to reduce heat gain.
- Match the skylight frame to the roofing color.
- Make skylights as small as possible.
- Locate new skylights away from the primary public view.

don't

- Install bubble skylights or skylights built up on high curbs.
- Install skylights near the eaves or overhang at the lower edge of a roof.
- Use reflective glass.

Historic Districts

do

- Restore original glazing and frame materials.
- Retain "lay lights" and other features associated with historic skylights.

don't

- Replace historic skylights with a different shape, profile or color.



do

retain & restore original materials



don't *use frames that contrast with roof color*

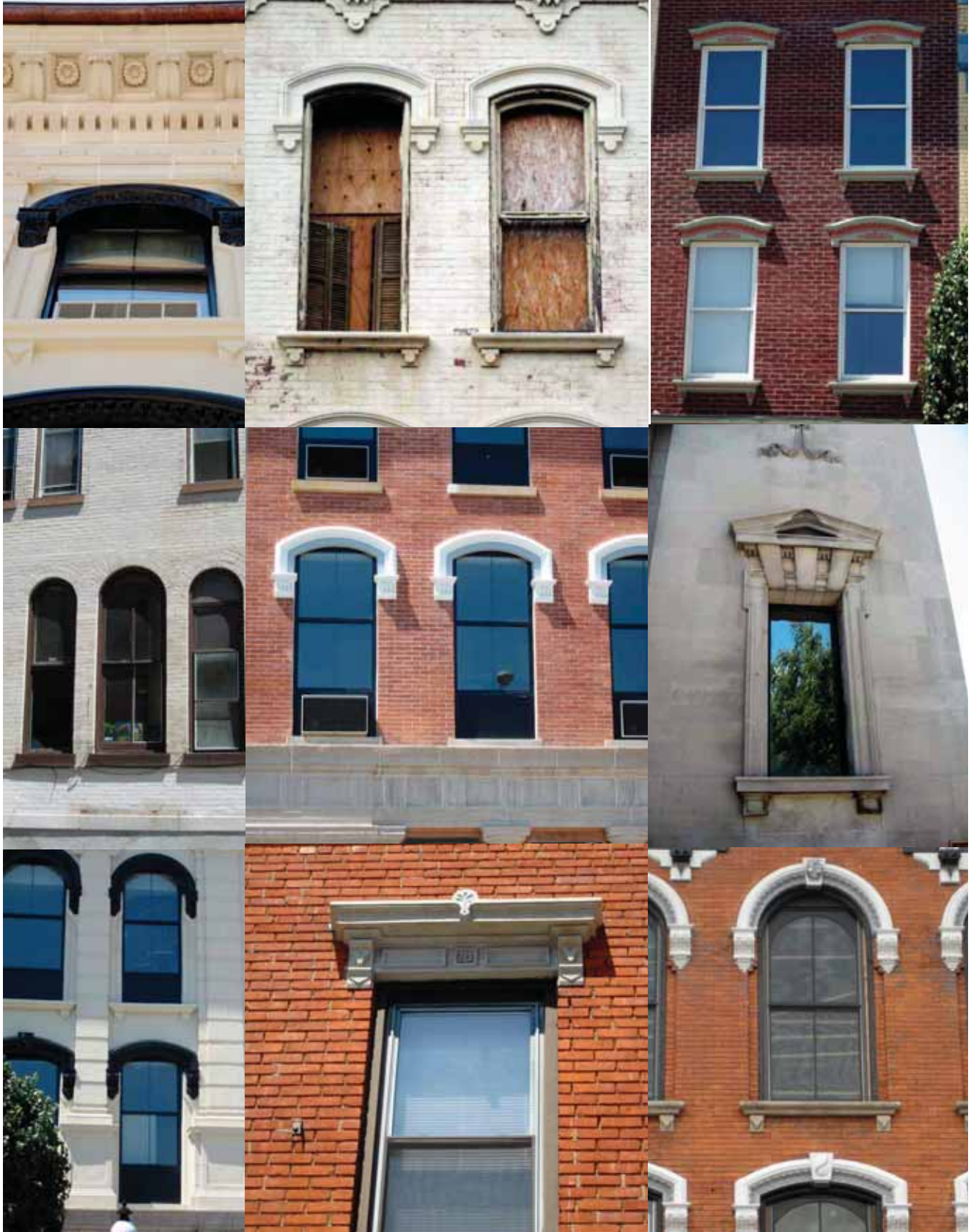


do *allow clearances for drainage--this case is a little too tight*



do

retain & restore original assemblies





THE WINDOWS OF OSSINING

The variety of window hood molds illustrates the richness of Ossining downtown architecture.

Windows

- Install new skylights visible from street level



Historic windows often were shaped to a gable end like the above.



There are many historic round-top windows, but they have been over-used in renovations.



A hood or surround can add grace to a simple double hung window.

Windows add depth and variety to historic building facades and can be critical in determining a building's character. In Ossining, one finds many window styles: double hung, casement, tilting, awning and fixed. The wood double-hung window is most common in residential buildings, and can be found in houses of a variety of architectural types.

Windows provided daylight and ventilation before electric lighting and air conditioning systems. Know your building's period of construction and style before planning changes to your windows. This will help you choose appropriate measures and materials.

If your property has original wood windows, retain and repair them. The cost of repair may be as great as replacement, but it is usually less. Repair is less disruptive to the existing building's fabric. Replacement also normally requires compromises in appearance. Common conditions such as flaking paint, broken glass, failing putty or jammed hardware are easily repaired and do not require replacement. If a window component is beyond repair, replace *in kind* only the deteriorated element while keeping the rest of the window. Matching key features, such as muntin profiles, rail and stile proportions and glazing patterns is important to preserving the character of your building. New windows in contemporary materials and proportions change a façade's depth and profile and compromise the character of the building.

Historic windows can achieve a high level of energy efficiency if care is taken. Make sure the interior and exterior trim is tight and well caulked around the window unit. Re-putty around glass panes, install weather stripping around the sash, install pulley seals, and repair or rehabilitate sash locks so meeting rails meet and can be pulled together tightly to eliminate drafts. Add interior or exterior storm windows for additional winter protection. By rehabilitating historic windows, you are preserving historic character and conserving energy that would otherwise be spent in the demolition of old and manufacture of new windows.

all properties

do

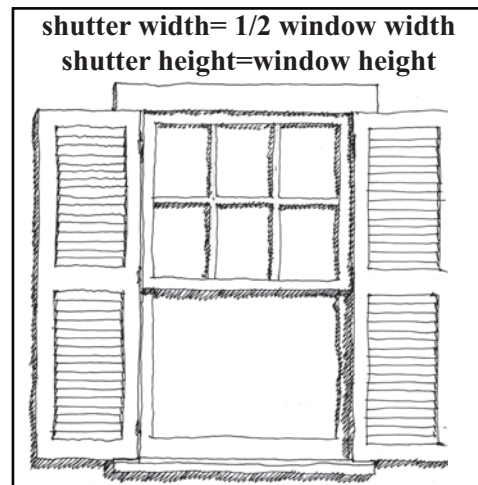
- Retain historic materials and repair existing windows
- Match original materials, dimensions, glazing and trim when replacing units.
- Follow EPA lead paint precautions.
- Install storm windows or screens that do not obscure the original windows; for double-hung windows, for example, align the horizontal bar or rail with the original meeting window rail; install wood or aluminum storm and screen windows in colors that match the original window casing or paint them accordingly.
- Implement a regular maintenance plan.
- Install true divided-light windows rather than snap-in or flat muntin grids.
- Plan size and location to match the window vocabulary and patterns already evident in the building.
- Pay attention to the energy performance of your window system.
- Install shutters sized to match the adjacent windows.
- Match shutter style (for example louvered or recessed paneled) to original.

don't

- Replace historic materials with contemporary products such as fiberglass, vinyl or metal.
- Enlarge or shrink window openings on public sides of buildings.
- Change opening sizes or shape to accommodate standard window sizes.
- Conceal original windows.



Above: a well-proportioned traditional double hung window, with head flashing, casing and sill.



Shutters should follow the proportions in the diagram above, as in the example below.



Historic Districts



Above: correct installation of shutter and storm window; below: incorrect shutters.



do

- Match original muntin widths and profiles.
- “Simulated” divided lights, or double glazing with internal non-reflective spacer bars and surface projecting muntins may be permitted in historic districts on a case by case basis—for example where a “true” divided light would require a muntin width not in keeping with the original conditions or pattern.
- Windows may be added in building walls not visible to the public street on a case by case basis.

don't

- Enlarge or shrink window openings.
- Remove window hoods, hardware, ornament or shutter hardware.
- Insert stained or etched glass without evidence that you are restoring a lost element from your building .
- Add shutters where none existed in the past.
- Install shutters that do not match the window dimensions.



high performance historic double hung window rehabilitation:

- remove stops (note pre-drilled grommet holes at left)
- remove excess paint on window sash
- replace chains or ropes
- install interlocking weatherstripping all sides of sash and jambs
- install pulley seals over pulleys
- lubricate runners on jambs
- install high quality storm window (metal triple track version shown at left)

Doors

Doors throughout Ossining vary in size, shape, ornamentation and color. Wood paneled doors are prevalent, and levels of ornamentation and glazing vary according to architectural style.

Doors are among the most heavily used building elements, subject to intense wear and tear. A cyclical maintenance routine should include regular inspection, careful repair, and painting. Avoid replacing an original door unless the door has deteriorated beyond repair. Use the original material if available. Contemporary materials, such as vinyl and aluminum, are inappropriate. Match key features, such as glazing, rail and stile proportions, and panel sizes, as closely as possible in order to retain the character and architectural integrity. Decorative trim, entablatures, sidelights and transoms dating from the original installation are as significant as the door. These key features should not be altered; retain original door opening sizes.

Whether you are adding storm/screen doors, or replacing worn out units, you will find that the new installation, properly weatherstripped, can increase energy efficiency in your building. Storm/screen doors should be constructed of wood and should be as transparent as possible, providing maximum visibility of the historic door. Avoid installing any storm/screen with vertical stiles, inappropriate ornamentation, or of an incompatible material.

Door Hardware

Door hardware is found in a diversity of sizes, shapes, materials, finishes and details. Individual hardware components vary with the size of the door and the style of the building. Larger doors require heftier hinges. High-style buildings commonly have heavily ornamented pieces while an early 20th century residence might retain original stock hardware from a contemporaneous mail-order catalog. Historic hardware provides a level of architectural detail that can be lost when an insensitive replacement is installed. Original pieces, including knobs, rosettes, hinges, locks and backplates, should be retained and repaired. Hardware components can often become built up with layers of paint and not operate efficiently. Removing the paint, cleaning, and polishing will restore the finish and make the hardware operate more smoothly.



Successful historic entries consist of an assembly of elements including railing, step, molded surround and finally the doors themselves.



Original hardware adds to historic character.



The door as the centerpiece of a welcoming entry sequence.



Original detailing can survive with good maintenance.



New garage doors (below) can approximate original doors though operation may have changed.



all properties

do

- Match the original door type and overall configuration of glass, panels and detail.
- Use appropriate repair techniques to maintain, protect and repair historic features, materials and details
- Install a wood storm or screen door to increase energy efficiency
- Select a unit that provides maximum visibility of the historic door
- Use colors that are compatible with the door and trim paint schemes
- Install weatherstripping and caulking to decrease energy loss
- Retain door surrounds, trim and details, such as decorative entablatures, moldings, pilasters, sidelights, and transoms
- Regularly paint or varnish exterior door
- Retain original hardware, recondition if needed

don't

- Alter door opening size, dimensions and proportions
- Remove or conceal original door molding
- Replace historic wood door with a contemporary material, such as vinyl or aluminum
- Construct a new opening in front façade
- Purchase doors made of non-sustainably harvested tropical hardwoods

Historic Districts

do

- Repair and restore original doors, using epoxy consolidants or Dutchmen (exact material patches) as required.
- Use materials identical or equivalent to those available when the building was originally constructed.
- Conceal contemporary equipment and security apparatus.

don't

- Strip doors to wood finish that were originally painted
- Use undocumented excessively plain or ornamented designs

Ornamentation and Details

Exterior decoration of 18th century buildings followed local builders' craftsmanship traditions. In the 19th century, pattern books offered a wealth of design ideas to builders, and many ornamental features were mass produced offering a wide array of decoration to middle class customers. With this information and these materials available, builders and their customers explored styles as they never had before. This leaves present property owners with intriguing puzzles to solve.

Understand the style(s) of your property and recognize common ornamental features before you consider any repair work. Note surface materials, textures, and finishes that determine the character of a decorative feature. Retain and recondition all surviving original exterior details. Many decorative elements can be easily repaired through securing loose components, cleaning and painting. Extremely deteriorated features can be replaced to match the existing. In some cases, missing or severely deteriorated ornamentation on the front façade of a building can be replaced with ornament from a wall less visible to the public. If exact replication of a failed or missing element is not possible, a replacement should be fabricated with the same size, scale, texture, and three-dimensionality of the missing feature. If a building has lost much of its original detail, new decoration should be designed based on historic images or documentation. Avoid installing features borrowed from other styles and historic periods.

Most exterior decorative elements are exposed to weather and subject to deterioration. As with all historic architecture, routine inspections will identify key features that require special attention and upkeep. Following a maintenance plan will preserve original materials and features, prevent costly repairs or replacement, and retain a building's architectural integrity.



Ornament often celebrates the functions of architectural elements.



Surviving columns and cornice hold their own amid later accumulated clutter and railing.



Ornament often has a dressier side (rt. above) facing the major street.



The rhythm of original detailing animates facades(above) and records history (below).



*Sisters under the Skin:
The building on the right probably has the original eaves bracket detailing hidden--and well preserved--under the blank aluminum soffit.*



Ossining has numerous examples of tour de force ornamental carpentry.

all properties

do

- Develop an understanding of a building’s architectural style and typical decorative elements before repairing, altering, removing or adding exterior ornamentation.
- Follow a routine inspection and maintenance plan.
- Retain and preserve surviving original decorative elements
- Replace extremely deteriorated ornamentation to match the existing in scale, size finish and overall style.
- If a decorative element is missing, use existing fabric or historic photographs when designing replacement features.
- Save removed components to use as templates for replacement.

don’t

- Add new decoration for which you have no documentation.
- Conceal ornamentation or, aside from exceptional circumstances, replace it with substitute materials.
- Fabricate a new feature in a different style.

Historic Districts

do

- Find and supply photographs or other documentation for proposed details.
- Install new elements using the same material as the historic element; in special cases, such as high cornices or for column bases, where long term maintenance is unlikely to occur or is not sustainable, substitute materials may be permitted on a case by case basis, so long as they produce the same texture and finish as the original and are not detectable from ground level as substitutes.

don’t

- Substitute stock elements that visibly vary from the original.
- Introduce new ornamentation that is either more elaborate or more plain than the original.
- Cover original wooden features with contemporary materials such as vinyl or aluminum which can trap moisture and conceal and accelerate the deterioration of the building.

Porches and Porticos

Porches, porticos and front entrances are prominent elements of a building façade and play a major role in defining a building's character. The particulars of these entrance features are indicators of the era and style of the building. As significant features of the “face” of a building, porches and porch details should be preserved and retained through ongoing maintenance and prompt repair. Character defining elements include overall size and proportion, columns, brackets, railings, balustrades, balusters, steps and lattice (see glossary in appendices).

Historically, porches were outdoor living spaces where residents could gather and observe and greet passersby. Porches and porticos shelter people from the weather as they arrive and leave the building. The overhang of porches facing south and west shaded front windows and cooled the building, and they were often located to receive prevailing breezes. Porch floors were usually finished with tongue and groove, painted pine boards oriented perpendicular to the building and sloping from the building face to the porch exterior. They were often built on piers, with latticework between the piers to improve the appearance and deter animals from entering and nesting under the porch. These features present special challenges to those planning to renovate. Ideally porches should remain as open rooms and should not be enclosed.

In the years following original construction, many residents have enclosed porches—some adding screens against insects, some creating sun rooms with an array of either seasonal or permanent windows. Some have fully enclosed their porches with solid materials and few windows.

New work on enclosed porches not original to the building should attempt to restore the articulation and transparency of the previous porch by spacing, recessing and enlarging windows and door(s) to obey the original porch pattern.



Welcoming entry porches will shed water away from the arrival path.



Replacement of a missing porch should be based on physical evidence (e.g. ghosts of old framing, relic foundations and post holes) and pictorial documentation (e.g. old photos of your house or photos of a twin house in your neighborhood with an extant porch, or examples of similar houses in historic pattern books). Match the original location of the porch. Most importantly, the facade should remain proportionally and stylistically balanced.

If there is a compelling reason to enclose a porch, it should be done in keeping with the overall scale, materials, and detailing of the building. The new porch should be made as transparent as possible, retaining and highlighting original porch proportions and features if feasible. Standards for success are especially high for porches at the front façade.

An unheated seasonal enclosure is most sustainable, and reversible in the future. Elements overlaid on an historic building, such as storm windows, storm doors or porch enclosures, can be acceptable if in the future they could be cleanly removed to reveal the original form and materials. That quality is called “reversibility” and is a basic tenet of good preservation practice. If the enclosure is to be heated or cooled, special care should be taken to insulate ceiling, walls and floor of the room and to weatherize the new construction because of its exposure to the climate.

If a porch element is beyond repair, a new component should be purchased or fabricated that matches the material. Replacements for missing elements should be sensitively installed to complement the building’s overall character and scale.



The sustainable tradition of breezy, shaded porches goes back to the Village’s earliest structures.



Sensitive enclosures (above) exist; more expedient ones (note comparison below) are more common.



all properties

do

- Retain original scale and proportions of porch.
- Retain and preserve surviving columns, railing and balusters.
- Provide in-kind decorative element replacements where needed.
- Paint the wooden elements of the porch.
- Maintain a gentle outward pitch on flooring of open porches.

don't

- Replace railing with a different pattern or spacing.
- Add porch ornamentation for which you have no documentation or evidence.
- Enclose a porch at the front of the building without compelling reasons, artful design and high energy performance.
- Add columns or brackets where none historically existed.
- Replace wood steps, flooring, and framing with concrete or tile.
- Replace old tongue and groove flooring with decking.

Historic Districts

do

- Research and restore original colors and finishes.
- Reconstruct missing features using solid physical or documentary evidence.

don't

- Use imitation replacement materials—with the exception of painted fiberglass column bases matching existing.



Porches with original scale and materials march up and down Village streets (above) and occasionally wrap impressively around corners (below).



An otherwise successful portico entry is marred by the inappropriate use of masonry cheek walls where there should be a railing.

Lattice

Lattice was often used on the exterior of buildings as a decorative and screening element. The form of lattice that is most easily obtained today is quite different from lattice originally used on buildings in Ossining. Lattice commonly available today is comprised of wider strips with larger open spaces, and it is laid out diagonally in 4 X 8 sheets. While there are exceptions, most original lattice had a denser pattern of closed and open spaces and was installed in a vertical and horizontal grid. A close look at the few surviving fragments of original lattice around the Village should bear out this pattern.

Lattice was sometimes installed with a shadow color to accentuate the recess under a porch. It was housed in a thick frame attached to porch piers or pillars and subdivided into relatively small framed segments held only a few inches above ground level. It was often clipped or otherwise attached so that it was removable to allow access to the crawl space. Occasionally it was mounted as a decorative element on the side of a building or between the railing and porch roof to provide privacy or a framework for vines without cutting out visibility completely.

There are now sources that once again supply lattice in a variety of materials and sizes suitable for old and historic buildings.

all properties

do

- Retain and preserve surviving original lattice.
- Retain original scale and proportions of lattice.
- Install lattice in framed sections.
- Use solid body stain to match original colors.
- Make sections removable or hinged for access and repairs.
- Orient lattice vertically and horizontally unless there is strong evidence of an original diagonal arrangement.
-

don't

- Remove original lattice and framing.
- Change lattice orientation.
- Staple lattice sheets directly to framing.

Historic Districts

do

- Use wood.
- Follow neighborhood patterns in reconstructing missing lattice.

don't

- Install plastic lattice or framing.



A careful search of older Village structures and documentary sources is rewarded with examples (above) of original lattice patterns: organized on a horizontal and vertical grid, densely spaced and in framed panels.



Another search also finds examples (left and right) of how not to treat lattice: not framed in panels, diagonal layout, more open than closed.



Lattice is best employed on buildings in a framed panel as at left, not as architectural wallpaper as at right.



Storefronts



Storefronts are the welcoming face of commercial districts and a key element in building facades. Attractive storefronts encourage pedestrians or passersby in vehicles to slow down, linger and shop.

Ossining boasts a notable collection of 19th century and early 20th century commercial buildings in its downtown as well as in other commercial areas. Many of the buildings' facades have survived intact and continue to reflect popular architectural styles of their original construction period. Most are 3-4 story mixed-use buildings with commercial space on the first floor and residential above. Masonry façades frame recessed entryways and showcase large plate glass display windows. Storefronts connect buildings directly with the pedestrian world. This streetscape has great continuity in the downtown, where the most important collection of historic commercial buildings exists.

Increasing appreciation of historic downtowns and commercial districts is based on their architectural character and the economic dynamism they provide. Most commercial district success stories have had historic preservation as a major component. Thoughtful changes and careful rehabilitations can increase business for owners, increase property values, and attract visitors.

Storefronts are frequently altered by changes in use and to express contemporary tastes, and in the process buildings risk an erosion of their historic character. Maintaining, preserving, and restoring historic storefronts is especially important to downtown character. Well preserved buildings provide enduring “packages” for the changing contents of a retail zone. Alterations that replace or conceal original details (wood, brick, glass, etc) detract from a building's inherent character, as do replacement materials such as vinyl, fiberglass, or aluminum. Alterations that change the size of the storefront opening or display window area also diminish its historic character.



*LEFT:
A traditional commercial building has a clear top, middle and a storefront at the bottom.*

*RIGHT:
A recent door (and the AC unit overhead) is a jarring note in this solid historic storefront housing a variety of useful services.*



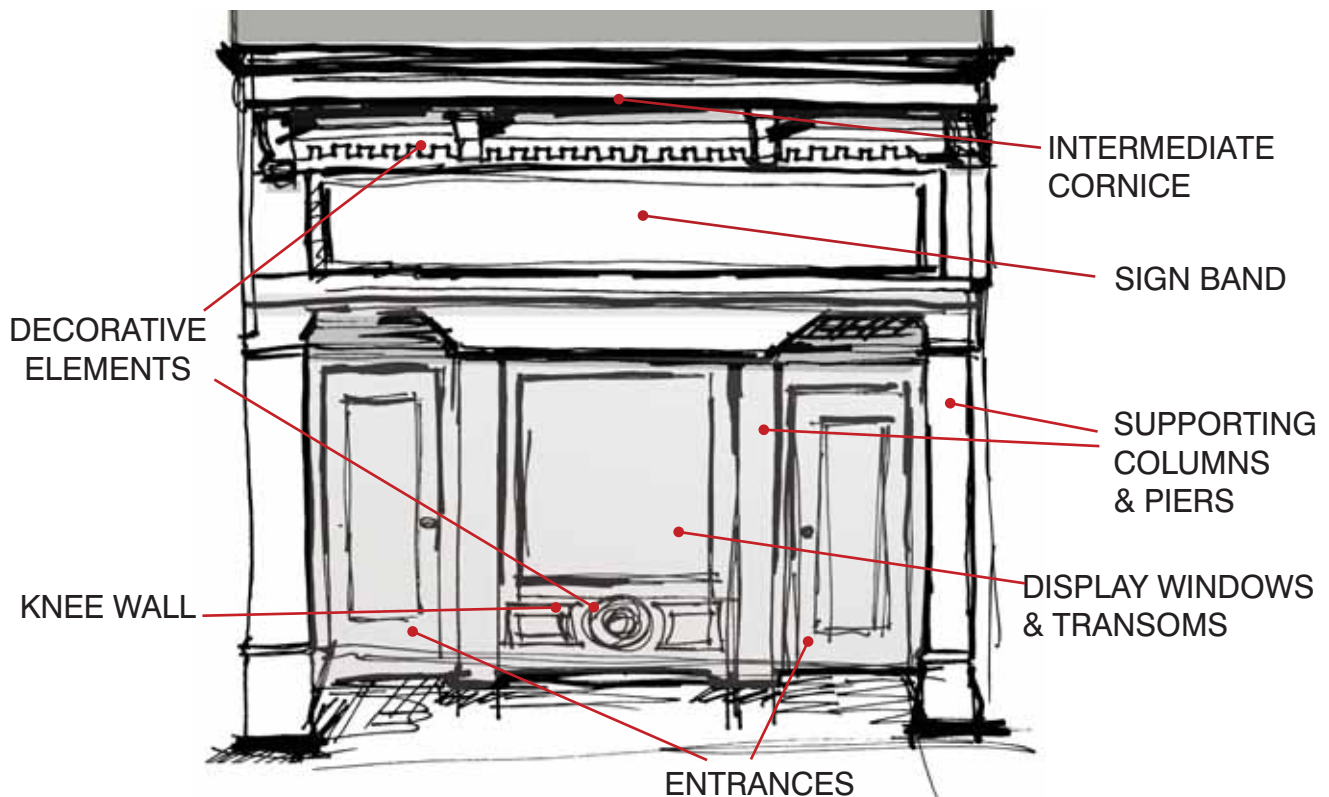
do

- Take cues for new work from the surrounding context and reinforce its character.
- Retain and preserve storefronts and elements sympathetic to surrounding commercial buildings and districts including overall materials, dimensions, colors, signage types, and special features including display windows, transoms, mid-cornices and lighting.
- Develop an understanding of the building's style prior to making changes and identify the type of storefront that would be characteristic of that style's design; if conjecture or adaptation to current retail needs is necessary, err on the side of simplicity rather than ornateness.
- Retain original inset entries.
- Use storefront contents to provide interest to passersby .
- Light storefront interiors to provide interest and security at street level in the evening.

don't

- Let signage accumulate into distracting clutter.
- Install features whose size, color, operating mode, or shape are significantly at variance from the pattern of surrounding buildings and businesses.

Traditional Storefront Features





This great example celebrates its origins at the top and its contemporary uses at the bottom.



Inviting traditional recessed entries provide shelter and increase display frontage.

Historic Districts

do

- Preserve and restore any surviving elements, such as stained or specialty glass, transoms, tin ceilings, window frames and signage.
- Remove soffits or dropped ceilings that conceal original elements.
- Search for historic documentation of the building's configuration before making changes. Reconstruct faithfully using identical materials.
- Maintain and rehabilitate the features, materials surfaces, and details using repair methods appropriate to the storefront material.
- Replace in kind any portion of a storefront that is damaged or has deteriorated beyond repair. Match distinctive historic storefront materials in design, material, dimension, pattern, texture, color, and detail; limit replacement to the damaged area if feasible and consider installing substitute material only if it is not technically feasible to replace the damaged storefront materials in kind.

•

don't

- Depart from the particular character defining pattern of the individual building or historic district, such as a repeated cornice design, repeated materials palette, or arrangement of storefront glass to sign cornice above.
- Use replacement materials that were unavailable when the building was originally constructed.
- Install features lacking historical, pictorial, or physical documentation.

Signage

Historically during the 19th and early 20th century, signs were a key feature of storefronts and continue today to shape the character of a business district. Within the Downtown Historic District, signage should be compatible in design with the historic character of the district and should be installed in a manner that does not diminish or damage important architectural features. Size, materials, graphics, and legibility of the typeface, color, and method of attachment must be considered when designing new signage for the historic commercial area.

In the commercial arteries signage is often multiplied by merchants' perceptions that more signs and bigger signs will improve their business. In fact legibility is often improved by sign controls that reduce the visual clutter and "noise" in the vicinity of the store. Limiting letter size and the number of signs permitted per establishment can further these goals.

On South Highland especially signage is directed at people in vehicles moving at higher speeds than in the downtown or on Croton Avenue. Many of the signs are independent pole signs rather than signs on buildings. Larger letter sizes should be permissible there. Illuminated signs should emphasize stencil cut illuminated letters rather than backlit solid lettering, since that will reduce stray light, glare and clutter, while enhancing the message going to people passing by.

Smaller signs are appropriate on Croton Avenue, since it is a mixed use neighborhood. Signs should be exclusively on buildings themselves rather than on separate sign standards or poles, though small (less than 6 sf) signs may be acceptable in front yards if required for identification.

all commercial districts

do

- Install signs in scale with the whole building as well as the storefront.
- Make signs compatible with the graphics, colors and style of the building and its neighbors.
- Locate signs on the traditional sign cornice over the first story on older commercial buildings.



Standoff lettering is effective and reinforces the architecture.



The original punched transoms strengthen the sign panel above and send daylight further into the space.



Storefront and signage can provide a contemporary feeling while reinforcing traditional architecture.



Handmade signs could be effective if better located and with less clutter



Different sign types can co-exist on the same building without obscuring the architecture.



Signage can be an important part of an overall facade treatment and color scheme.

- Respect neighboring signs and buildings with placement and size.
- Pick up on existing horizontals and reinforce architectural features with sign placement.
- Use stencil cut letters rather than solid letters on a backlit field.
- Use cool energy efficient light sources on timers for illuminated signage.
- Limit signage on Highland Avenue to one flag or pole sign attractor and one confirming identifier on the building.

don't

- Use signs covering or obscuring significant architectural features or obscuring visibility through the windows.
- Multiply signage on the same property or business.

Historic Districts

do

- Use pin-up individual letters or hand-painted signs.
- Choose historic mounting method (e.g. hanging or building mounted) where known.
- Mount signs following current codes.
- Illuminate signs from the exterior rather than interior, if lighting is required.

don't

- Install animated signs or strobes.
- Employ plastic or vinyl box signs.
- Use plastic letters.
- Use foam signs.
- Use cardboard or posters, except in poster boxes.

Awnings

Awnings made of canvas, and various other types of materials, often shaded storefronts during the 19th century. The installation of awnings can shelter pedestrians from inclement weather and harsh sunlight, reduce glare, and also conserve energy by controlling the amount of sunlight shining onto storefront windows.

If an awning is desired, select one made of soft canvas or vinyl coated canvas. Install it so that it does not damage the building or obscure distinctive architectural features.

all properties

do

- Use shapes and styles that reinforce the pattern of adjacent businesses
- Use materials that reinforce the pattern of adjacent businesses
- Maintain dimensions that reinforce the building character

don't

- Obscure visibility
- Use fixed awnings with cedar or plastic shakes
- Use aluminum canopies
- Use glossy or leatherette finished vinyl

Historic Districts

do

- Use traditional operable straight eave awnings in documented historic patterns
- Use canvas, vinyl coated canvas or matte finish polyester
- Match exactly the width of the display window below

don't

- Cover up existing sign cornices or any historic features
- Use waterfall or other fixed contemporary awning types



Over storefronts, operable awnings over storefronts are a flexible, traditional solution.



The signage and business front are fighting the architecture in this case.



"Afterthought" signs can detract from a store's image.

Additions and New Construction

Additions and new construction can quickly change neighborhood character. Guidelines can reinforce those aspects of character that the community considers most positive, such as residential scale, street side articulation, appropriate building placement on the property, ratio of built to unbuilt area on the site and architectural style. The guidelines should communicate shared goals that challenge rather than limit the creativity of designers and builders.

All building projects are renovations, depending on the perspective from which you see them. As you zoom out from the most minor changes proposed for an existing building to the insertion of a new building in a neighborhood, the scale of renovation, of the object whose character will change, enlarges from the building to the larger lot and its neighbors to the entire neighborhood. The guidance at each scale comes from the best aspects of the style of the building, the feeling of the adjoining buildings and the overall character of the larger neighborhood.

Scale and placement are the most important characteristics to control for new buildings; stylistic details are secondary. Fresh, creative architectural approaches should not be discouraged if they represent a level of effort and excellence that meets the historic or neighborhood standard. The best buildings that have survived from previous eras do not have to be surrounded by half-hearted facsimiles of themselves; they may benefit more from the best efforts of our own era. In some cases quiet “background” buildings may be the best approach, rather than aggressive structures that call attention to themselves or upstage historic landmarks.



*LEFT:
Comfortable scale,
material and a few
simple details can
help new build-
ings relate to their
context.*

*RIGHT:
Introducing rustic
materials like the
stone quoining on
the right, where
they don't otherwise
exist, can strike a
false note.*



Additions:

An acute observer of an addition to an intact historic building should be able to distinguish the new work from the original. The addition can use materials and proportions of the original, or it can be a distinct, contemporary design. In either case, the addition should not overpower the original and should sit well in its larger context

all properties

do

- Site additions so they are less prominent than the existing building, which in general means located to the side or rear.
- Size additions so they are subordinate in scale to the existing building and its neighbors.
- Study approaches that create connectors to independent volumes rather than additions that “fatten up” and distort the original volume.
- Offset rather than align additions with the planes of the existing building.
- Meld small changes into the existing architectural composition.
- Adopt a clear design approach to the relationship between existing and new construction. In general detailing similar to but discernably different from existing historic patterns is recommended. Use a connector or “hyphen” between the original structure and an addition in a different style or form and distinguish clearly between them.
- Harmonize materials on new additions with existing.
- Undertake new additions and adjacent or related new construction so that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the existing property and its environment will be intact.
- Protect significant existing landscape features during construction. (See Trees, page 89)

don't

- Obscure or remove the best or character-defining elements of the existing structure.
- Align the plane of new work with existing and thereby erase the outline or shape of the original building.
- Juxtapose natural materials with imitation materials.
- Overwhelm the original or neighboring buildings with the size or shape of the addition.

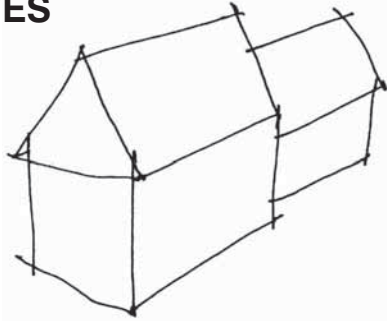


Connecting main structure and addition with a “hyphen” (see above and below) can help maintain an appropriate scale.



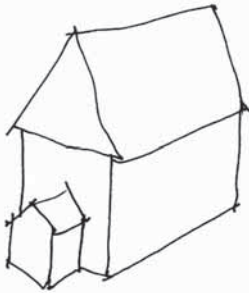
Unsympathetic additions can result in an unattractive hodge-podge of volumes and styles.

YES



*additions are best to the rear
(above) NOT in front (below)*

NO



Historic Districts

do

- Distinguish between existing and new construction.
- Review and follow the Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation (see appendices) .
- Pay special attention to material type, profiles, ornament, exposure and texture .
- Harmonize new work with existing patterns of solid (siding) and void (windows).

don't

- Move historic structures around on the site or to another site unless it is the final remaining way of saving the structure.
- Deconstruct and rebuild existing buildings unless it is the only method of securing the structure.
- Locate new work where it impacts historic fabric.
- Create pseudo-historic additions.



Filling Out the Envelope:

You can see the result of the push to expand all over Ossining. The first direction is into porches, attics and basements. While getting more use out of the footprint can be positive, additions that are not carefully designed can disfigure the building and have a negative impact on the neighborhood.



all properties

do

- Site new buildings and their landscape elements so they follow the neighborhood patterns of lot placement with similar setbacks.
- Size new structures so they are sympathetic in scale to existing buildings.
- Site accessory structures behind the primary one .
- Use materials compatible with the context.
- Respect the façade designs and rhythms of nearby structures.
- Protect significant existing landscape features during construction. (See “Trees” in landscape section p. 87-88)

don't

- create artificial mounds or land forms under or around new structures; ground floor level should relate to the existing grade in a manner similar to neighboring buildings.
- Mirror or closely copy an adjacent existing building.
- Overwhelm the neighboring buildings with out of scale construction.



The Secretary of the Interior's standards say: "The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment." Successful small additions like the one above can employ materials and details similar to the original and still differentiate themselves.

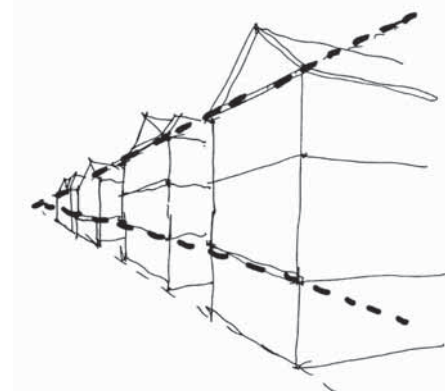
Historic Districts

do

- Use materials consistent with the neighborhood's character-defining palette (for example, clapboards and shingles, or stone and stucco).
- Adopt and acknowledge established district patterns and motifs.
- Use contemporary building techniques, including sustainable methods and materials.

don't

- Position a new principal or accessory structure to disrupt important local views or settlement patterns.
- Use imitation materials in an historic district.
- Use conjecture to design in an imitative style or building form inconsistent with the current or historic context.



Infill construction should reinforce alignments--cornice lines, height, porch lines, floor elevations--from the neighboring buildings.



2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2

new construction should reinforce the rhythms and spacings of the existing neighborhood



Land Form: Issues and Opportunities

The hilly topography of Ossining enlivens the landscape. As buildings climb up and down the slopes, each has a different slice of sun and wind and view. This produces a dynamic visual mingling; different types of neighborhoods, properties and uses see each other. One person's back yard looms over another's side porch; a homeowner's view out to the River oversees a commercial parking lot. A front yard is often not the only part of the property the public sees. As strip mall and supermarket shopping have become more popular, parking lots—at first necessary bleak expanses of paving—are on the way to becoming public plazas. Regulations and recommendations for land use must deal with these challenges and opportunities. Careful landscape planning can soften the impact of change and improve relationships between dissimilar uses.

Issues and Opportunities

all districts

do

- Screen between commercial and institutional parking lots and residential neighbors: screening can be dense evergreen trees and shrubs in ample planting areas and/or fencing of style, materials and construction compatible with the character of the adjoining neighborhoods.
- Place tree islands within parking lots to cool and beautify.
- Between and within parking areas, locate clear, comfortable, accessible pedestrian walkways enhanced by low level lighting if necessary and shaded by trees.
- For proposed changes to properties within clear view of a retail “plaza” and unable to be screened, carefully consider the impact of these changes on the plaza experience. This is a case where Ossining's hills put more property on public view and require more careful treatment.

don't

- Plan changes that will have a negative effect on pedestrians and neighbors.
- Erect property line visual barriers where adjacent uses are compatible and do not require separation for security or privacy.



Screening would reduce the impact of commercial parking and loading zone off S. Highland on a residential neighborhood to the west.



Back yards in view from a Sparta public street.



View from Four Seasons Marketplace parking lot.



Residential porches overlook unscreened parking lot.



River view above Croton Avenue.



A timeless garden element enhances a shady yard.



Garbage shed belongs in non-public area.



Locate drying away from public view.

Things in the yard

For all districts, the goal should be to “furnish” your yard in keeping with the character of the neighborhood. Proposed changes and additions to your property should harmonize with the character of your house and the character of similar neighboring properties. The Planning Department can advise you which of the items listed below call for Village review.

Items include but are not limited to:

- Air conditioning equipment
- Back up generator
- Clothes-drying structure or ropes
- Compost pile or container
- Dog house
- Garage
- Garden house
- Gazebo, pergola, arbor
- Ornamental garden pool or water feature
- Permanent barbeque installation or fire pit
- Permanent built-in outdoor furniture
- Play equipment
- Propane tank
- Rain barrel
- Solar panels secured to ground
- Splash block
- Sports paraphernalia—basketball hoop, soccer goal etc.
- Storage structure/tool shed
- Trash and recycling containers
- Vegetable garden
- Wading or swimming pool, spa and pool equipment

The Do’s and Don’t’s to follow apply principally to the Sparta Historic District and suggest an approach that homeowners in that District should contemplate. They are useful advice for all residents wishing to enhance the appearance of their properties.

General directive for the Sparta Historic District: if the new element in your yard *might* have existed when the house was young—such as an outbuilding or arbor—and if it will be visible to the public, design and paint it to harmonize with the house. If the new element obviously is of recent origin and serves a modern use, hide it.

all properties

do

- For historic yard elements needing repair: repair, rehabilitate, replace in kind existing elements. Take your material and color cues from the existing primary and accessory buildings on the property so they have a family resemblance.
- For new structures: use materials, construction methods and forms familiar in the period of your house.
- Locate at the back or side of the house, where they are least visible to the public, modern elements such as air conditioning and pool equipment, play structures, wading pools, garbage sheds etc.
- Screen modern elements from public view with dense, period appropriate fencing and/or evergreen vegetation.
- If elements such as rain barrels and splash blocks must be at the front corners of the house, screen them.

don't

- For structures: fabricate an “old-fashioned look” from another historic period.
- For historic structures especially: mimic the construction of your house so perfectly that house and outbuilding appear to have been built by the same builder at the same time. This is part of keeping the historic record straight.



Screening would reduce the impact of this boat parked in Sparta.



Unscreened splash block.



Subtle colors of this play structure reduce its visual impact.



Low dry-laid wall provides excellent drainage for garden bed.



This 20th c. masonry wall was a favorite in the Hudson valley suburbs.



Weep holes at base of large retaining wall relieve water pressure.

Retaining walls, steps and grade changes

Shaping land well makes for livable landscapes. The hills of Ossining call for careful design and engineering, sound construction and clever water management. Residents have devised dramatic overlooks, impressive terracing and ingenious step sequences—all contributing to the Village’s appeal.

all properties

do

- Make sure you have the appropriate level of professional help when shaping your land. Consult an engineer or landscape architect to assess the safety and aesthetics of a proposed change. If appropriate, commission professional drawings to ensure that storm water issues are addressed and the work meets standards for health and safety.
- Consult the Ossining Building Department to learn what kind of professional services you will need to design and file your work.
- If your property has trees, and if you are considering a grade change, consult an arborist about what measures you need to take to protect vegetation. You may learn that your proposed construction will affect a tree’s root system so seriously that the tree may die or be too dangerous to keep on your property.
- Recognize the impact your changes may have on properties above and below you. Changes may affect views, available sunshine and drainage patterns.
- Use sound proven materials for new masonry work.
- Follow guidance and requirements from the Building Department on storm water management during construction to minimize impact on neighbors.

don’t

- Undertake a project on your own without thorough mastery of earthworks issues and techniques on sloping sites.
- Allow your land form changes to alter drainage patterns and affect your neighbors.

Sparta Historic District

Changes should be in keeping with historic site improvement patterns in the district. Early landowners worked with the lay of the land, accepting natural slopes and using modest terracing to provide level areas; they did not employ our current engineering technology that allows radical changes in topography.

do

- Repair and maintain existing walls and steps from both original site work and from eras later than your house's construction date unless these elements are beyond repair or no longer useful. Repairs should be consistent with the construction era of the site element; match stone or brick and mortar color and construction details.
- For newer site elements *beyond* repair, build new features based on documentation of the original site features that predated the intermediate failed elements.
- If no documentation can be found, follow masonry conventions from the period of house construction. These may include dry laid stone walls, mortared stone walls, or concrete walls with stone veneer, brick walls or concrete walls with brick veneer.

•

don't

- Build high retaining walls to support oversized flat areas that lack precedent in your neighborhood.
- Place in public view fanciful landscape embellishments from masonry traditions uncommon in the Hudson Valley.
- Use contemporary interlocking concrete blocks and timber construction (so-called railroad ties.)

(see appendices for information sources on masonry construction)



For a new retaining wall complementing a c. 1910 property, the mason pieced together three kinds of brick and mixed shaped stone. A mockup with sample mortar was reviewed for compatibility with existing masonry before construction.



Masonry in good condition, though from a later period than the historic house, should be kept.



Regular maintenance will prolong the life of this connecting stairway.



This highly successful gate is period appropriate for the house, suits the informal path and can screen non-historic elements in the side and back yards.



Chain link fence does not improve the neighborhood.



Fences

all properties

Fences are useful to enclose pets, constrain toddlers and protect gardens from deer and wandering neighbors. Opaque fences afford privacy and screen clutter from public view. High fences at the perimeter of a property and especially at the front property line are unwelcoming and isolate the property from the community. Fencing should serve necessary practical purposes while contributing to the appeal of the neighborhood. Fencing around parcels in transition awaiting development should be designed and *maintained* not to detract from the character of the neighborhood.

Sparta Historic District

Front yard fencing was discouraged by 19th century tastemakers. The design and detailing of suburban fencing was part of the builder's craft so when fencing *was* used, it often coordinated well with the house.

do

- If a fence is required, it should be low so the house behind it is visible from the street.
- Use wood and dark metal (wrought iron or similar); avoid plastic and chain link fencing.
- If you cannot find documentation of an original fence to replicate, select a form known to have been used in the period of your house.
- Paint or stain a wooden fence to complement the colors of your house. Raw wood fences were put up in rural areas in the time-span of the District, but they were uncommon in suburbanizing communities like Sparta.
- For a metal fence, assume a simple iron picket fence to be appropriate unless you have specific documentation of a more elaborate wrought iron fence on your property.
- To keep pets and children in the front yard, attach dark-colored vinyl coated wire mesh *behind* a traditional wood slat or board fence.

- If needed to hide non-historic elements from public view, build board or lattice privacy panels in traditional forms. Each panel should have a wooden frame. Unless you have historic images from your property showing the lattice grid in a diagonal orientation, the lattice grid should be installed on vertical/horizontal axes. Lattice should be stained or painted to harmonize with the colors of your house. Locate these enclosures toward the rear of the property. See Lattice.

don't

- Build a fence that will hide your house and front yard.
- Install fences along side property lines unless there is a definite practical need.



Regular repainting or restaining will protect this appropriate picket fence.



This iron picket fence provides a see-through frame for the gardens beyond.



Neighborhood character and the appeal of these undeveloped properties would increase with attractive, well-maintained fencing.





Electrified sconces have become a convention for exterior lighting of vintage houses. They are embellishments that post-date many historic structures.



Exterior Lighting

Exterior lighting was minimal during most of Ossining’s development. In the 20th century, a porch light or sconce at the door showed the way to the front entrance. Street lights if any were widely spaced. Heavy use of landscape lighting on residential properties only took hold in the middle of the 20th century. Today we are accustomed to much more outdoor illumination and depend on it for security. New understandings about the environmental and cost-benefits of reduced landscape lighting have produced the Dark Sky initiative (see appendices). This innovative approach to exterior lighting dovetails with efforts to approximate the character of historic Ossining.

Understanding night vision will help you plan appropriate exterior lighting. Eyes adapt to low light levels. The glare of a direct light source overrides that adaptation, and blinds the eyes to potential hazards in darker areas that would otherwise be visible.

all residential districts

do

- Increase the general visibility on your property by reducing glare in outdoor lighting.
- Light your own property so it contributes to the safety and continuity in your neighborhood.
- For way-finding—e.g. the paths to the front door, garbage enclosure and garage—and lighting for outdoor recreation areas, use inconspicuous contemporary “dark sky” fixtures that conceal the light source while illuminating paths, drives, and patios.
- If desired, use illumination without spill to light your street address.
- Adopt ways to reduce electricity use such as timers, light or motion sensors and fluorescent or LED lamps.

don’t

- Allow light to trespass from your property to that of your neighbors.
- Have outdoor lights on longer than functionally necessary.

Sparta Historic District

do

- Choose porch and front door lights consistent with the period of your house.
- If your house pre-dates pumped gas or electrification, choose new lighting in the form of the earliest fixtures that might have been added to your property; later houses probably have also lived through a succession of owners and technologies, and today's residents should select fixtures for porch and front door that suit the scale, materials and style of their structure's character defining elements; new energy thrifty sources are available for many styles.
- Minimize landscape lighting to low levels for safety and way-finding; use inconspicuous contemporary "dark sky" fixtures. Choosing dark sky fixtures prevents light pollution and avoids false historicity.

don't

- Choose generic old-fashioned fixtures such as nautical lanterns and colonial lamplights unless you know they were used by original owners of your property.
- Throw light on facades, trees and shrubs.

Commercial districts and Downtown Historic District

do

- Light store interiors for visibility.
- Use energy efficient lighting techniques.
- Install dimmers or other variable controls.
- Adopt "Dark Sky" lighting fixtures and placement to minimize glare and stray light.
- Design individual lighting with adjacent street and retail lighting in mind.
- Envision the color of the light source .
- Conceal wires to light sources.
-

don't

- Use unshielded exterior floodlights.
- Allow visibility of light sources upward or sideways from off your property.
- Install animated and tracer lighting.



Graceful early to mid-20th c. garage downlight is relatively glare free and relates to the early days of motoring.



Like the garage light above, these simple fixtures have for a hundred years been a good looking and effective solution for sign lighting.



Spotlight should be deeply shielded and mounted high to prevent glare that can endanger motorists.



A combined drive might benefit both properties above, as in the example below.



Informal parking tracks allow more green-and less paving-on the property.

Cars

By far the most striking change in the landscape since earlier days in Ossining is the vast increase in numbers of cars, the loss of green space to paving for the storage of cars and the widening and hardening of road and path surfaces. Sacrifice of lawn and garden space in the front yard for supplementary parking compromises the property's character. The appearance of a twenty-first century car in the yard of a carefully restored 19th century house is the elephant in the room.

Large, unshaded parking lots are bald patches in otherwise leafy Village terrain. Sun-baked pavements become heat islands, uncomfortable to walk in and increasing the air conditioning demands of neighboring buildings.

As has been described elsewhere, many residential areas *not* in designated historic districts are rich with vintage houses and mid-sized yards and deserve as much green space as a homeowner can manage. All recommendations for Historic Districts should be contemplated when dealing with parking in these districts.

all residential districts

do

- Use existing garages to store cars when they are not in use.
- Locate supplementary open air parking at the back of the property if feasible.
- Screen supplementary open air parking with vegetation or fencing.
- Reduce the paved drive and parking area as much as possible.
- For a single family household, rather than building a double-wide parking bay, try tandem parking.
- Consider a combined drive with your next door neighbor. With shared maintenance and plowing, individual costs are lower, storm water runoff is reduced and plants in the additional unpaved area will lower ambient temperatures in summer while taking up CO₂.
- Consider open grid pavement if you anticipate *infrequent and temporary* need for additional drive area and off-street parking. This honeycomb structure, inter-planted with grass, can give the impression of continuous lawn while being structured to hold the weight of a car. Cars parked for long periods of time will shade out and kill the grass. Heavy traffic will kill the grass.

- Attempt to contain storm water running off your pavement in a slow-percolating swale or rain garden.

don't

- Pave where you don't have to.
- Park cars in front of your house in your front yard.
- Select paving materials incompatible with the character of your house and neighborhood.

Sparta Historic District

do

- Screen supplementary open air parking with vegetation or historically appropriate fencing.
- Use gravel as a drive surface if the slope is not so great that *only* a hard continuous surface will be practical. Gravel predates asphalt and concrete; it allows rainwater to percolate into the ground, reducing runoff. It is both historically and environmentally sound.
- Consider double ribbon paving strips in grass leading to rear parking. This driveway form was popular in the 1920's.

commercial areas

do

- Plan layout and circulation paths for the comfort of pedestrians.
- Plan tree and vegetation strips and islands in and around the paved area.
- Consider porous paving for parking surfaces and for swales collecting water on the site.
- Consider a rain garden to collect, clean and meter out stormwater.
- Consider roof-shaded parking; light colored roofs can have high reflectance compared to asphalt, reducing heat absorption; they can support photovoltaic panels to generate electricity; they can be planted green roofs, again, cooler than asphalt, filtering stormwater and reducing and slowing its discharge into storm drains.
- Try to connect your parking area with adjacent parking lots for pedestrian traffic if appropriate.

don't

- Pave more than you have to.
- Light more than necessary for safety.



Open grid paving supports grass & stays green if use is light.



Trees, shade, and pedestrian paths would improve this parking lot.



This little strip makes it hard to walk to the shopping center.



Inappropriate front yard use.



Bluestone paths on stone dust and gravel bed are often appropriate for older properties



Stepping stones (above & below) form attractive paths and allow maximum water absorption



Paths

Paths should be safe and comfortable to navigate. As with drives, residents should try to minimize storm water runoff from impervious surfaces.

all residential districts

do

- Use porous paving if feasible: gravel, step stones, concrete or severe weather brick pavers well-laid on a compacted pervious gravel bed.
- Pave no more than necessary for safe, comfortable walking.
- With efforts to contain water run-off, concrete and asphalt surfaces are acceptable in non-historic districts.

Historic Districts

- Use porous paving if feasible: gravel, step stones, or severe weather brick pavers well-laid on a compacted pervious gravel bed. Concrete pavers on a gravel base may be acceptable if they are inconspicuous or are indistinguishable from brick.
- Avoid obviously fake simulated stone and paving in ornamental patterns inconsistent with the style and era of your house.
- If your property already has non-historic paving or cement steps where once there would have been stone or brick, make repairs to these elements with materials consistent with *their* period of origin. If they are beyond repair, rebuild with materials contemporary with your building.
- In areas out of public view, consider porous paving to reduce storm-water runoff.

Paths for handicap access into the house must have an 8.3% (or shallower) slope with flattened landings at designated intervals; a handrail is required if the slope is greater than 5%. (Please consult the Building Department for any additional local regulations.)

All property owners should attempt to integrate accommodations for wheelchair access into the overall design of the property, and try to keep the principal public face of the building unencumbered. The house should continue to follow the patterns of the neighborhood.

all residential districts

do

- For private houses requiring handicap access, if feasible, try to place the ramp leading to the front entrance along the side of the house or in another less visible location.
- Provide a smooth wheelchair travel surface.
- Consider low plantings to screen the sloping face of the ramp.

Sparta Historic District

do

- If a handrail along the ramp is necessary, select a design that will be least conspicuous and can be easily screened. If the handrail *must* be visible, select a railing consistent in material and color with your porch rail or other trim on the house.
- Provide a smooth wheelchair travel surface. A gravel/stone dust surface well-compacted is preferable to gravel alone. For wheelchairs, paving units should have tight joints to minimize bumps. A relaxation of strict historic standards can be considered for travel surfaces.
- Screen the non-historic sloping line of the ramp with low plantings.

commercial accessibility

do

- Review accessibility requirements and applicable codes with professional and building code officials.
- Implement least complicated and intrusive code compliant measures.



Especially suitable for vintage properties, drylaid paving brick (above as a border and below as a path) permits some water infiltration into the soil.



This tidy arrangement of strip edging may lack historic precedent. Garden research may suggest a more period appropriate approach.

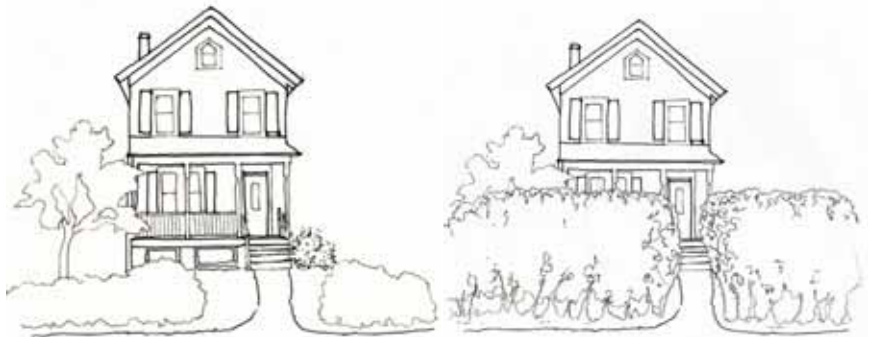
Garden Planning

In the 19th century, Downing and his disciples counseled the swelling ranks of suburban residents on how to manage and enjoy their small pieces of land. He discouraged fences and plantings blocking views of the front of the house. New contraptions to cut grass (early mowers) allowed homeowners to grow lawns, features strongly promoted by Downing and other tastemakers. Ideally, front lawns of individual properties were to run together so neighbors would share views of long expanses of lawn up and down the street. Not everyone followed these directives, but the lawn “fashion” as a suburban feature endures. Some recent trends replace much of the yard area devoted to lawn with shrubs, perennials and grasses to increase plant diversity and reduce watering, mowing, fertilizer and pesticide use.

Foundation plantings became customary only after the First World War when building construction included exposed masonry foundations made of utilitarian materials that needed to be concealed. Before that, building and porch fronts were on view, often punctuated by a select few ornamental shrubs carefully placed.



Study old photos to get a sense of old landscape choices.



yes

no



Merged lawns unify the neighborhood and enlarge the sense of space.

Plant selection

From first European settlement, there was an exchange of seeds and plants between the new and old worlds. American gardeners relished plants imported from Europe and the Orient, so a faithful reconstruction of an historic Ossining garden might include so-called “exotic” plants used when the house was built. Today, while many exotics coexist with native plants as good neighbors, some imported plants have proved invasive and threaten our native ecosystems. Present day gardening favors the use of native plants. In many Westchester neighborhoods, deer limit plant selection to a few “least likely to be eaten” plants.

Watering

Historic gardens did not have automatic sprinkler systems. Plants—whether native or exotic—should not require supplementary watering after an establishment period unless there is a severe drought. Selecting water-thrifty plants is both historically faithful and environmentally sensible.

all properties

do

- Inventory and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of your property.
- Understand the limits of the landscape materials you are working with. For example, don't try to make a row of trees in a tight shady spot do what a fence can do better. Don't use a fence (or just a fence) if there is generous room and sunlight for a hedge.
- Follow informed advice on plant selection for your needs, soil, sun exposure, slope and level of maintenance. Landscape changes should be guided by best horticultural practices.
- Select water thrifty plants.
- If you must irrigate, use drip irrigation and moisture sensors, so you consume as little water as possible.
- Maximize absorption of water on your property: e.g. porous paving, French drains, cross slope swales, rain gardens, well-tended mulch.
- Avoid using plants known to be invasive in our region
- Avoid construction producing radical grade changes to your property unless there is a compelling need.
- Consider the impact your property has on your neighbors and on the character of the street.



Drought tolerant plants predominate in this Sparta cottage garden.



Old-time sustainable watering method.



The foreground barberry hedge was popular throughout the 20th century. Barberry is highly invasive and should not be planted today.



Low plantings in the 19th c. manner reveal house & porch details.



Trees are important “architectural” features framing river views.

Historic Districts

do

- Include some lawn in the front yard.
- Use foundation plantings only if your house was built after 1918.
- Consult references on 18th and 19th century gardening if your house calls for an earlier garden style.
- To select plants for a new historic garden carefully, first consult references showing what was planted in this region in your property’s time period.
- Then check to see if any of the then-popular plants have turned out to be a threat to our ecosystem (as, for example, Japanese barberry, winged euonymus or Norway maple).
- And finally, learn what safe substitutions can be found that mimic the visual character of the harmful exotic plants.

don’t

- Fence or hedge in such a way that you hide the front of your house.
- Introduce old-fashioned garden styles from eras unrelated to your house.
- Plant species unavailable in the period of your house.
- Plant a garden that will require irrigation in periods of normal intermittent rainfall.

Trees

Mature trees now grace many older Hudson Valley suburbs. Trees impart a sense of history while cooling our communities, reducing pollution and taking up CO₂. Trees are character-builders in a neighborhood, some rising to informal landmark status.

If you are considering removing a tree to make way for a new feature on your property, assess what the loss of shade will do to the temperature of your house and your air conditioning bills, and of your neighbors’, if the tree shades your neighbor’s house. Think about the impact of your shade tree on the comfort of the public way by your property.

The Village requires a tree permit for tree removal in most cases (see appendices).

Construction impact on trees

If you are contemplating changes to your property—such as garden terracing, a new structure or house addition or a new driveway, understand that the root system of a mature tree extends well beyond its drip line (see next page). Most of its roots are found in the top 6 to 24 inches of soil. Changes in grade—either digging and cutting roots, or adding soil and smothering roots—have a profound, enduring negative effect on the health of the tree. Instead of trenching, use an auger or air spade to install underground piping and utilities. Plan your changes with this in mind. See link to *Healthy Roots and Healthy Trees* in the appendices as well as more on trees and construction.

all properties

do

- Inventory your trees and assess the “jobs” they are doing on your property for screening, shade and beauty as well as the problems they may be creating such as buckling walkways, moisture capture near the house, branch drop, root competition etc.
- If you see your trees as important assets to your property, establish a schedule for regular tree inspections by a certified arborist and follow recommendations for maintaining their health and safety.
- Plan grade changes and construction activity mindful of the fragility of tree root systems. Consult a certified arborist for best ways of protecting trees you want to enjoy in the future.

don't

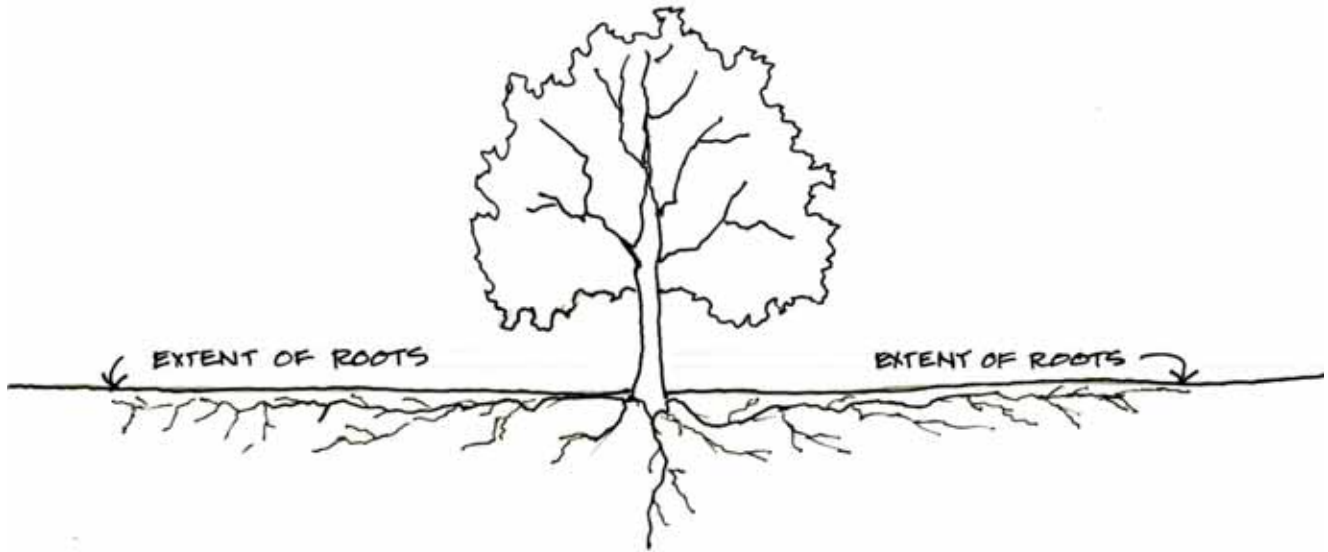
- Put new parking areas (causing soil compaction) under old trees you want healthy.
- Allow construction activity, materials storage and soil stockpiling on the root systems of trees you want to keep that are beyond the minimum zone necessary for construction.
- Top trees. The issues are well discussed in sources on the web (see appendices).



Some magnificent specimen trees anchor Ossining neighborhoods, providing welcome shade and a sense of scale.



Two years later three trees shown above were dead.



Most fine roots supporting tree life grow in the top 6 inches of soil.

Tree Root Area Rule of Thumb

young trees

- Measure diameter of trunk at 4 ½ feet above grade
- Multiply results by 0.75.

•

So 9” diameter young tree should have a circle of undisturbed soil with a radius of 6.75 feet—total diameter of 13.5 feet.

mid-aged trees

- 1.0 times trunk diameter at 4 ½ feet above grade

old trees

- 1.25 to 1.5 times trunk diameter at 4 ½ feet above grade

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So a 40 inch diameter tree should have a circle of undisturbed soil with a radius of 60 feet—total diameter of 120 feet.

The materials below are arranged in the sequence of the chapters of this manual. Of course, many topics and references extend beyond the chapter assigned to them here.

APPENDICES

www.villageofossining.org, the Village of Ossining website, is the place to start when seeking procedural information.

A1 Introduction

<http://www.heritagepreservation.org/>. This national organization addresses the preservation of artifacts and collections. It is useful for general information about the conservation of materials and can be one tool for raising consciousness about saving relics of our cultural heritage.

A2 Guideline Subject Areas

Sparta: Brief history

The following historic summary was adapted from *Village of Ossining, New York Significant Sites and Structures Guide (2010)*.

Sparta was designated a Historic and Architectural Design District (HAAD) by the Village of Ossining in the 1970s as an area of building stock both historically and architecturally significant to the Village. The district, with its winding and undulating streets, spans roughly 200 acres at the southern tip of Ossining and includes 62 structures. The district is bordered by Revolutionary Road to the east and includes Liberty Street, Fairview Place, Still Court, Rockledge Avenue, and portions of Hudson Street and Spring Street.

Sparta was established in 1790 as an independent hamlet within the Town of Mount Pleasant. Originally part of the 30,000 acre Philipsburg Manor, twenty-nine acres of the estate was purchased by English immigrant Peter Drowley after the Revolutionary War, and the land was subdivided into 300-square foot parcels. Dutch, English and French Huguenot families settled on the land, and Sparta residents benefited from a direct access point to the river and the waterfront industry. The success of river commerce quickly became the livelihood of Sparta as the hamlet emerged as a thriving waterfront community at the beginning of the 19th century.

As the 19th century progressed and the neighboring villages of Sing Sing and Scarborough prospered, Sparta's growth was quickly stemmed. As a result, little economic and physical development occurred during the mid-to-late 19th century, leaving much of the building stock intact. At the close of the 19th century, Sparta was annexed by Sing Sing Village and thus incorporated into the present day Village of Ossining.

In the early 20th century, entrepreneur Frank A. Vanderlip purchased several dozen of the Sparta properties with a vision of developing and marketing the neighborhood for the 1920s professionals seeking to "flee New York City confines." Buildings that were considered historically or

architecturally significant were renovated, and severely dilapidated properties were demolished. Between 1919 and 1922, the building stock was updated, infrastructure upgrades completed, and Sparta's appearance was freshened to accommodate the expectations of the marketed new residents. Today, the layers of developments and alterations are illustrated in the varied building styles and materials found in the Sparta Historic and Architectural Design District.

The following historic information is based on the *Village of Ossining, New York Significant Sites and Structures Guide, 2010* and the *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form for Downtown Ossining Historic District (August 25, 1988)*.

Downtown Ossining Historic District: Brief History

Like Sparta, the twenty-nine acre Downtown Ossining Historic District was originally part of Frederick Phillipse's vast Philipsburg Manor Estate. Following the Revolutionary War, the land was subdivided and bought by private owners, and Ossining began to emerge as a prominent waterfront settlement. Since the Village's 1813 incorporation, the downtown rose to prominence over the course of the 19th century, peaking during the industrial heyday in the last quarter of the 19th century. The physical development of the downtown between 1840 and 1933 paralleled the Village's growth and prosperity as a transfer hub for industrial goods between New York City and northern Westchester.

A series of fires in the 1870s destroyed much of the downtown leaving few historic buildings intact from the early development period. Most of the buildings in the district today were erected after the fires during the late 19th - early 20th century. Masonry construction replaced earlier wood frame buildings following the fire.

Since the mid 20th century, the Village has undergone a number of economic and physical changes. During 1970's urban renewal, many historic buildings on the south side of Main Street were razed. Many historic buildings were preserved, and in 1988, the Downtown Historic District was added to the National Register of Historic Places with thirty-five contributing buildings and two contributing structures. The First Baptist Church and the Old Croton Aqueduct are individually listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

A3 The Importance of Landscape in All Areas

<http://tclf.org/> The Cultural Landscape Foundation produces a newsletter and conferences throughout the country. It advocates passionately to save vanishing landscapes with an emphasis on landscapes by notable designers. Articles are interesting and accessible.

A4 Sustainability: Maintenance.

See Chapter 8 Appendix for more on sustainability and the landscape

<http://www.conedsolutions.com/>

<http://www.nyserda.org/programs/>

Guidance on energy economies from Con Edison and the New York State Energy Research Development Authority.

Carroon, Jean. *Sustainable Preservation: Greening Existing Buildings*. Hoboken, NJ. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. 2010. This thoughtful book wedds advanced preservation and environmental thinking.

Environmental Building News presents carefully edited articles on both time-tested and innovative environmentally sensible building practices. It is an invaluable source of information on this fast developing field. <http://www.buildinggreen.com/>

Consumer Reports is a time-honored reference evaluating quality and performance of consumer items. The publication places emphasis on energy conservation, noting Energy Star ratings where applicable. www.consumerreports.org

Fine Homebuilding <http://www.finehomebuilding.com> is information rich on construction methods with excellent commentary on problem-solving.

The Journal of Light Construction is aimed at contractors and hands-on homeowners working in residential construction. Advice is current and detailed and illustrations are clear. www.jlconline.com

The U.S. Green Building Council is responsible for LEED—Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design—a rating system with protocols to improve building sustainability. Until recently, LEED has targeted new construction, though it is now dealing with existing buildings and LEED ND—neighborhood design—which considers sustainable factors in community planning.

http://www.cityofbeaufort.org/client_resources/beaufort%20preservation%20manual.pdf

Sort through this detailed southern manual for clear explanations and illustrations of historic building patterns, restoration and maintenance approaches.

A5 Core Principles Underlying the Guidelines for Historic Districts

<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/tax/rhb/stand.htm> directs you to information regarding appropriate treatments for preserving a historic property. The National Park Service hard copy publications are *The Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation* and *The Secretary of the Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*.

www.preservationbooks.org is the publications website for the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Books deal with the underlying philosophies of historic preservation, economics of preservation; tax advantages; preservation of particular building types; design reviews and regulations; architectural elements; neighborhood protections and Main Street revitalization, to sample from their list. The publications list represents the collected thinking of preservationists (and activists for community development) from across the country.

Rypkema, Donovan. *Economics of Historic Preservation: A Community Leader's Guide*. Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2005. This vigorously argued book provides a solid economic rationale for community historic preservation. It is a valuable tool for board members asserting the benefits of appropriate controls.

Tax Credits

<http://nysparks.state.ny.us/shpo/tax-credit-programs/>. New York State historic tax credit information.

A6 Planning Your Project: How to Submit a Good Application

Current application forms are available from the Village of Ossining's Planning and Building Departments or from www.villageofossining.org; on the home page, look for Forms and Permits.

A7 Architectural Styles

Glossary of Common Architectural Terms

Some definitions shown below are quoted from Cyril M. Harris. *Dictionary of Architecture & Construction*. New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993. Some are quoted from Baker H. Morrow. *A Dictionary of Landscape Architecture*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987.

arch – a curved structure designed to support weight above. Arches can also be used as a decorative element on an exterior facade. Types of arches can include round, pointed, segmental, and Tudor.

architrave – in Classical architecture, the top portion of an entablature, consisting of a decorative, engraved horizontal molding.

backplate – a flat piece of wood or metal on a wall or ceiling to which fixtures or fittings are attached.

back prime – to apply paint or stain on the reverse or hidden side of an object, usually for protection against the weather; with wood, to provide protection from moisture so wood does not cup or become distorted.

baluster – a short, vertically-oriented member designed to support a handrail. A row of repeating balusters form a *balustrade*.

bay – a vertical opening on the exterior façade of a structure. This term is commonly used to describe a building's exterior dimensions. For example: *4 bays wide, 5 bays deep*.

bay window – a window in a protruded bay, or the bay itself.

board and batten – a type of wall cladding for wood-frame houses; closely spaced, applied boards or sheets of plywood, the joints of which are covered by narrow wood strips.

bonding pattern – a repeated pattern of masonry units in a planar surface.

brace – a stiffener in a wall assembly, often diagonal.

bracket – any overhanging member projecting from a wall to support a weight (such as a cornice) acting outside the wall.

cheek wall – a narrow, upright section of wall, often forming the side of a masonry element such as a porch or stoop; in landscape construction, a wall built alongside a series of steps to retain abutting earth.

clapboard – a type of house siding consisting of horizontal beveled pieces of wood that are thinner at the top than the bottom.

column – a vertically-oriented structural support. In Classical architecture, the appearance and configuration of columns on a given structure was based upon three schools of design known as *Doric*, *Ionian*, and *Corinthian*.

compressive strength – the maximum compressive stress which a material is capable of sustaining.

consolidation – binding wood fibers or other fragments together with a material such as epoxy to achieve an intact, durable form.

corbel – a Classical architectural element consisting of a decorative molding extending from a wall for structural support, decorative purposes, or both; usually masonry.

corner board – a board which is used as trim on the external corner of a wood-frame structure and against which the ends of the siding are fitted.

cornice – a molded horizontal projection or mold that crowns or finishes the top of a mall, façade, building or storefront; the uppermost and most prominent part of a Classical entablature.

course – a layer of masonry units running horizontally, sometimes as a decorative band.

crenellation – a decorative roof element designed to lend the appearance of a Medieval castle that consists of a series of vertical cutouts made into a parapet. Utilized at times in Gothic Revival architecture and various subtypes, such as Collegiate Gothic.

dentil – small, tooth-like moldings, usually found on a structure's cornice.

dormer – a structure projecting from a sloping roof that usually has a vertical window or vent.

double hung window – a window with two sashes, one of which slides over the other.

downspout – a vertical pipe, often of sheet metal, used to conduct water from a roof-drain or gutter to the ground, subsurface pipe, splash block or cistern.

dutchman – a small piece or wedge inserted as filler to stop an opening, or, a small piece of material used to cover a defect, to hide a badly made joint etc.

eave – on a roof, the underside of the portion of the roof that projects beyond the edge of a wall.

entablature – in Classical architecture, beams or horizontal band (molds) supported by columns.

façade – the exterior face of a building which is the architectural front, sometimes distinguished from the other faces by elaboration of architectural or ornamental details.

fanlight – a semicircular window opening over a doorway. See also *Transom*.

flashing – a thin impervious material placed in construction (e.g. in mortar joints and through air spaces in masonry) to prevent water penetration or to provide water drainage, especially between a roof and wall, and over exterior door openings and windows.

frieze – the central portion of a Classical entablature, located between the architrave below and the cornice above, also horizontal trim connecting the siding and cornice at the top of a façade (exterior) or wall (interior).

gable roof – a type of roof containing a triangle-shaped vertical surface between a roof’s ridge and eaves.

galvanic action – an electrochemical action which takes place when dissimilar metals are in contact in the presence of an electrolyte, resulting in corrosion.

http://www.pemnet.com/design_info/galvanic.html gives a basic description of the phenomenon.

galvanized metal – galvanized iron sheet metal of iron coated with zinc to prevent rusting; used extensively for flashings, roof gutter, gravel stops, flexible metal roofing, etc.

gambrel roof – a type of roof in which each of its sides has two different slopes between the central ridge and the eaves; commonly found on Dutch Colonial structures.

glazing – setting glass in an opening; the glass surface of a glazed opening.

glazing bar – one of the vertical or horizontal bars within a window frame which hold the panes of glass; a muntin.

half-timbering – the use of exposed wood framing on exterior of a structure. Originally used on Medieval-era structures in Europe, it is commonly associated with Tudor Revival structures in the United States and is often false half-timbering, purely a decorative element.

hipped (hip) roof – a roof which slopes upwards from the adjoining sides of a building, requiring “hip” rafters at the corners.

keystone – on an arch, the stone located at the highest point, defining the position of the other stones that make up the rest of the arch.

knee wall – a low wall that is less than one story tall and normally meets a sloping roof or ceiling

lancet window – also known as a pointed arch window, these are narrow, tall windows in which the top of the opening is curved, with the two vertical sides meeting at a point; common on Gothic Revival structures.

lattice – a network, often diagonal, of strips, rods, bars, laths, or straps of metal or wood, used as protection, screening or for airy, ornamental constructions.

laylight – a glazed opening in a ceiling to admit light (either natural or artificial) to a room below.

leader – a vertical pipe, often of sheet metal, used to conduct water from a roof-drain or gutter to the ground, subsurface pipe, splash block or cistern.

lime mortar – a mortar made by mixing lime putty and sand; often used in historic masonry because of its flexibility and compatibility with softer masonry units.

lintel – a horizontal member located above a window or other opening.

louver – an assembly of sloping, overlapping blades or slats; may be fixed or adjustable; designed to admit air and/or light in varying degrees and to exclude rain and snow; esp. used in doors, windows and the intake and discharge of mechanical ventilation systems.

medallion – a decorative circular or oval shaped ornament.

meeting rail – in a double-hung window, the horizontal member at the top of the lower sash, or the horizontal member at the bottom of the upper sash.

modillion – a horizontal bracket or block at the underside of a cornice.

molding – a member of construction or decoration so treated as to introduce varieties of outline or contour in edges or surfaces...as on cornices, capitals, bases, door and window jambs and heads, etc. may be of any building material, but almost all derive from wood or stone prototypes.

muntin – a secondary framing member to hold panes within a window, window wall or glazed door; also called a glazing bar, sash bar, window bar, or division bar.

oculus - a circular window or opening, often placed in a central location on a structure's façade.

parapet – a wall at the edge of a roofline, often extending beyond it, that defines the end of the structure's façade and the beginning of the roof.

pediment – the triangular surface of a gable roof, or a similarly-styled triangular molding surrounding a window or entryway.

pilaster – an engaged column or pier; a simulated pillar that projects slightly from the wall, often with capital and base.

plumbing vent – or stack vent or soil vent pipe; a pipe penetrating the roof that vents sewer gasses from household drains.

portico – a porch or covered walk consisting of a roof supported by columns, often at a structure's entry.

profile – in architecture, the outline of a built assembly.

quoins – decorative brickwork or stonework utilized at the corners of a structure's exterior walls.

rail – a horizontal piece in a frame or paneling as a door rail, or in the framework of a window sash.

ridge – line at the intersection of upper edges of two sloping roof surfaces

rosette – a round pattern with a carved or painted conventionalized floral motif; a circular or oval decorative wood plaque used in joinery, such as one applied to a wall to receive the end of a stair rail; an ornamental nailhead or screwhead.

sandblast – to use sand, propelled by an air blast on metal, masonry, concrete, etc., to remove dirt, rust, or paint, or to decorate the surface with a rough texture.

sash – a frame that encloses a window’s glass surface.

sheathing – the covering (usually wood boards, plywood, or composite boards) placed over exterior studding or rafters of a building; provides a base for the application of wall or roof cladding.

shingle – a roofing unit of wood, asphaltic material, slate, tile, concrete, asbestos cement, or other material cut to stock lengths, widths, and thickness; used as an exterior covering on sloping roofs and side walls; applied in an overlapping fashion.

side light – a framed area of fixed glass at the side of a door or window.

sill – the lowest horizontal component of a window opening.

skylight – in a roof, an opening which is glazed with a transparent or translucent material; used to admit diffused light to the space below.

soffit – the exposed undersurface of any overhead component of a building, such as an arch, balcony, beam, cornice, lintel, or vault.

spacer bar – a metal or plastic element used to separate layers of architectural glass.

splash block – a small masonry block laid on the ground below a downspout to carry roof drainage away from a building and to prevent soil erosion.

springer – the lowest stone on each side of an arch.

stile – one of the upright structural members of a frame, as at the outer edge of a door or a window sash.

terra-cotta – hard, unglazed fired clay; used for ornamental work and roof and floor tile.

tongue and groove flooring - wood flooring boards joined by the insertion of the tongue of one board into the corresponding groove of the adjacent board.

transom – a glazed area or window located above a doorway or other opening.

valley – the trough or gutter formed by the intersection of two inclined planes of a roof.

vousoir – a wedge-shaped stone used in the construction of an arch.

waterfall awning – rigid curved metal framework with a stretched awning cover.

window hood – a projected architectural element over a window opening; also called a hood mold or label.

References—Architectural Styles

Baker, John Milnes. *American House Styles A Concise Guide*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1994. This guide includes many styles and breaks them down into more specific groups than most. Entries are shorter than those in other books.

Blumenson, John J. G. and Nikolaus Pevsner. *Identifying American Architecture: A Pictorial Guide to Styles and Terms: 1600-1945*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1978.

Harris, Cyril M. *American Architecture: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. New York and London. W.W. Norton and Co., Inc.: 1995. Thorough, definitive and accessible guide to the built environment.

Howard, Hugh, *How Old Is This House?* New York: The Noonday Press, Farrar Strauss and Giroux, 1989. A user-friendly guide to dating houses by their construction techniques and hardware. Includes brief descriptions of historic styles.

Jeffrey Howe, Editor. *The Houses We Live In: An Identification Guide to the History and Style of American Domestic Architecture*. San Diego: Thunder Bay Press, 2002. Exhaustive! Detailed descriptions, explanatory line drawings and diagrams, and color photographs explain and illustrate a plethora of architectural styles.

McAlester, Virginia and Lee. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986. One of the better summaries, including both diagrams and photographs, of historic architectural “styles” in America.

Mitchell, Eugene, Ed. *American Victoriana: Floor Plans and Renderings from the Gilded Age*. San Francisco. Chronicle Books, 1979.

Poppeliers, John C., S. Allen Chambers, Jr., and Nancy B. Schwartz. *What Style is It? A Guide to American Architecture*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2003. A brief, concise style guide.

Schweitzer, Robert A., and Michael W.R. Davis. *America’s Favorite Homes: Mail-Order Catalogues As a Guide to Popular Early 20th-Century Houses*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990.

Primary sources guiding 19th century house construction; guides include floor plans and elevations of recommended styles.

Cleaveland and Backus. *Village and Farm Cottages*. Watkins Glen, NY, American Life Foundation, 1982.

Reprint of 1856 publication. User-friendly guidance for construction of modest houses.

Downing, A.J. *The Architecture of Country Houses*. New York, Dover, 1969.

Republication of original 1850 edition.

Downing, A.J. *Victorian Cottage Residences*. New York, Dover, 1981.

Reprint of 1873 fifth edition of Downing's 1842 work.

Read, S.B. *Village and Country Residences*. New York, The Lyons Press, 2000.

Reprint of 1878 Orange Judd publication.

Sloan, Samuel. *Sloan's Victorian Buildings*. New York, Dover, 1980.

Circa 1850 pattern book from a popular Philadelphia architect.

Vaux, Calvert. *Villas and Cottages: The Great Architectural Style Book of the Hudson River School*. New York, Dover, 1970.

Reprint of the 1863 2nd Edition.

Web Sources

Antique Home available at <http://www.antiquehome.org/House-Plans/> Extensive collection of period house plans from the end of the 19th century through mid-20th.

Architectural Styles from Old House Journal available at <http://www.oldhouseweb.com/architecture-and-design/architectural-housing-styles/> Well illustrated thumbnail descriptions of common American house styles.

NYC Landmarks Commission Rowhouse Styles available at <http://www.nyc.gov/html/lpc/downloads/pdf/pubs/rowhouse.pdf>

Architectural Styles from Tiny Timbers available at <http://tinytimbers.com/buildingstyles.htm>

State of PA Style Guide available at http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/architectural_field_guide/2370 ; http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/suburbs_field_guide/5905

Sears Roebuck has a web archive of house plans from 1908-1940. Images, descriptions and prices give an excellent picture of the tastes and means of the construction periods.

<http://www.searsarchives.com/homes/index.htm>

A8 Building Elements: Restoration Information

Periodicals of general interest

www.oldhouseonline.com opens to an array of Old House periodicals and more.

Old House Journal Magazine, Old-House Interiors, Early Homes

Old House Journal is full of useful articles for owners of historic houses. Published 6 times a year.

Many articles are also available online at www.oldhousejournal.com

Traditional Building

An excellent resource for locating manufacturers and tradesmen.

www.traditionalbuilding.com

Books

Foulks, William G. *Historic Building Facades. The Manual for Maintenance and Rehabilitation*. New York: John Wiley and Sons, In., 1997. Although this book is targeted at urban buildings, homeowners will find the chapters on inspection, mortar, stone, and brick helpful. More technical than the other sources.

Poore, Patricia. *The Old House Journal Guide to Restoration*. New York: Penguin Books, 1992. An excellent, thorough and user-friendly guide to caring for your historic house.

Taylor, Julie, ed. *Northeast Preservation Sourcebook*. Vienna, VA: Preservation Publications, LLC, 1999. A directory of 6,500 regional preservation suppliers, including manufacturers, contractors, and design professionals. Updated frequently.

<http://www.preservationnation.org/issues/> The National Trust for Historic Preservation offers useful guidance for owners of vintage buildings on such subjects as weatherization and lead paint. A visit to their website links you to countrywide efforts to maintain America's legacy.

National Park Service (NPS)/Department of the Interior offers restoration standards, design guidelines and useful technical information including the entire preservation briefs and tech notes series. An easy to use, detailed and illustrated guide to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation is available at www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/standguide/

Preservation Briefs provide guidance on preserving, rehabilitating and restoring historic buildings. While the site is slow to open, it is well worth the wait. Study the Table of Contents to find material relevant to your property. <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm>

Tech Notes (also slow to open) are similar to Preservation briefs and offer case studies of restoration problems and solutions. They are available at:

<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/technotes/tnhome.htm>

Historic New England

Historic New England offers information on subjects such as historic paint colors, funding sources, finding contractors, and more. See especially their Preservation and Publications listings.

www.historicnewengland.org

Roofing Information

Jenkins, Joseph. *The Slate Roof Bible: Understanding, Installing and Restoring the World's Finest Roof*. Joseph Jenkins, Inc., 2003.

<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/roofingexhibit/introduction.htm>

“From Asbestos to Zinc: Roofing for Historic Buildings.”

This site is an electronic version of an exhibit prepared for roofing professionals attending the 1999 Roofing Conference and Exposition for Historic Buildings in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. With good illustrations, it includes information on different types of historic roofing and gutters and modern variations.

“Preservation Brief No. 4: Roofing for Historic Buildings.”

available at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief04.htm>

“Preservation Brief 19: The Repair and Replacement of Historic Wooden Shingle Roofs.”

available at www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief19.htm

“Preservation Brief 29: The Repair, Replacement, and Maintenance of Historic Slate Roofs.”

Available at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief29.htm>

“Preservation Brief 30: The Preservation and Repair of Historic Clay Tile Roofs.”

Available at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief30.htm>

Slate Roof Stand-Ins: A buyer's guide to man-made substitutes for natural stone.

Available at www.oldhousejournal.com/magazine/2002/july/slate.shtml

“Standing Seam Metal Roof” *Old House Journal*, July/August 2002

Masonry information

London, Mark. *Masonry: How to Care for Old and Historic Brick and Stone*.

Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1988.

“Brick by Brick” *Old House Journal*, May/June 1994.

Includes a glossary of brick types and masonry materials to aid in matching.

“Mastering Brick Maintenance,” *Old House Journal*, May June 1994.

Good guide to maintaining brick exteriors.

“Preservation Brief 01: Assessing Cleaning and Water-Repellent Treatments for Historic Masonry Buildings,”

Available at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief01.htm>

“Preservation Brief 02: Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Masonry Buildings.”

Available at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief02.htm>

“Preservation Brief 22: The Preservation and Repair of Historic Stucco.”

Available at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief22.htm>

Paint: Lead and safety

www.epa.gov/getleadsafe This site describes the risks of lead paint and the new certification program for dealing with lead paint.

Go to nps_hps-info@nps.gov to order a hard copy of *Appropriate Methods for Reducing Lead-Paint Hazards in Historic Housing*.

Delany, Marc and Livingston, Dennis. *Maintaining a Lead Safe Home: A Do-It-Yourself Manual for Home Owners and Property Managers* paper, 1997.

Mantenga Su Casa Segura sin Plomo is the Spanish version.

Paint schemes

Rossiter, E.K. and F. A. Wright. *Authentic Color Schemes for Victorian Houses: Comstock's Modern House Painting 1883*. Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc. 2001

An unabridged reproduction of an 1883 painting guide with many color plates showing authentic color schemes for Queen Anne houses.

Moss, Roger. *Century of Color: Exterior Decoration for American Buildings, 1820-1920*. Watkins Glen, NY: The American Life Foundation, 1981.

Includes many historic color plates of Four Squares, Colonial Revival, and Queen Anne style houses and an architectural glossary.

Moss, Roger W. (Editor). *Paint in America: The Colors of Historic Buildings*. Washington, D.C.: The National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994.

A more technical guide that includes chapters on paint analysis techniques, paint technology, and painting techniques.

Moss, Roger W. and Winkler, Gail Caskey, *Victorian Exterior Decoration. How to Paint Your Nineteenth Century American House Historically*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1992.

A clearly written guide to paint treatments and shifts in fashion through the 19th century including advice on how to achieve historic colors with currently available products.

Schweitzer, Robert. *Bungalow Colors – Exteriors*. Salt Lake City. Gibbs-Smith, 2002. This possibly out-of-print book is worth hunting down if you are dealing with a bungalow. It offers a thorough, fully illustrated analysis of the development of bungalow color ways.

Bock, Gordon. “Colorful Issues in Choosing Exterior Paint,” article available at www.oldhousejournal.com/magazine/2001/march_april/exterior_paint/default.shtml

<http://www.welshcolor.com/index.html> Website of company that does paint analysis. Their promotional materials explain the testing process.

“Preservation Brief 10: Exterior Paint Problems” <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief10.htm> Good leads on proper preparation, application, paint selection.

“Preservation Brief 28: Painting Historic Interiors.” <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief28.htm> Although this article is about interior paints, it includes useful sections on paint investigation, paint formulations, and surface preparation.

The entire National Trust Historic Color paint collection listing colors in all National Trust Properties is found at this site.

<http://www.preservationnation.org/about-us/partners/corporate-partners/valspar/paint.html>

An associated link,

<http://www.valsparpaint.com/en/explore-colors/color-selector/index.html#> offers an extensive array of colors to help you with paint selection.

Shutters

http://www.oldhousejournal.com/magazine/2002/august/shutters_dos_donts.shtml

Brief clear article on shutters.

Additions and New Construction

Byard, Paul. *The Architecture of Additions: Design and Regulation*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1999. A thoughtful architect/lawyer examines significant and often controversial additions through history. Must reading for Ossining board members.

Shirley, Frank. *New Rooms for Old Houses*. Newton, CT: Taunton Press, 2007. The architect author helps readers work comfortably within American house styles to meet new space needs. Illustrated with examples of successful alterations/additions.

A9 Land Form: Issues and Opportunities

Historic properties

“Preservation Brief 36: Protecting Cultural Landscapes: Planning, Treatment and Management of Historic Landscapes.” Available at <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief36.htm>

<http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/tps/briefs/brief32.htm> This Preservation Brief provides excellent grounding in making historic properties accessible.

Adams, Denise Wiles, *Restoring American Gardens: An Encyclopedia of Heirloom Ornamental Plants*. Portland, Cambridge: Timber Press, 2004.

Well illustrated, inclusive, clear overview of the development of American garden tastes and plant selections. Especially useful for those interested in middle class garden habits.

Doell, M. Christine Klim, *Gardens of the Gilded Age*. Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1986. An apt and excellent overview of garden design and practice on prosperous properties in the 19th century.

Downing, Andrew Jackson, *Landscape Gardening and Rural Architecture*. New York. Dover Publications, 1991 reprint of 1865 7th edition.

A primary source. Inspiration and advice from America’s tastemaker on home and grounds. Downing’s works launched a Hudson Valley landscape style that spread across the country.

Favretti, Rudy J., *For Every House A Garden: A Guide for Reproducing Period Gardens*. Chester, Connecticut: Pequot Press, 1977.

Thumbnail descriptions of period-appropriate gardens.

Favretti; Rudy J., and Putnam, Joy. *Landscapes and Gardens for Historic Buildings*. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1978.

Leighton, Ann. *American Gardens in the Eighteenth Century “For Use or for Delight”*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1986.

Leighton is an excellent first reference for information on plant usage.

Leighton, Ann, *American Gardens of the Nineteenth Century “For Comfort and Affluence”*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1987. Leighton has culled contemporary garden writers, and plant catalogs to provide a bountiful overview of 19th century gardening.

Scott, Frank, *Victorian Gardens: The Art of Beautifying Suburban Home Grounds*. New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1879 (reprint) Watkins Glen: American Life Foundation.

A Downing disciple, Scott offers detailed instruction on landscape construction and plants and gives guidance on planning village improvements.

Sternberg, Guy. “Living History” *Old House Journal*, November/December 2002, pages 31-35.

Sustainable Landscape Planning: Glossary of Green Building Terms

Definitions culled from a glossary from a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design of the U.S. Green Building Council) publication for New Construction can help you manage your property in environmentally desirable ways.

biodiversity - the variety of life in all forms, levels and combinations, including ecosystem diversity, species diversity, and genetic diversity.

drip irrigation - a high-efficiency irrigation method in which water is delivered at low pressure through buried mains and sub-mains. From the sub-mains, water is distributed to the soil from a network of perforated tubes or emitters. Drip irrigation is a type of micro-irrigation.

ENERGY STAR rating - the rating a building earns using the ENERGY STAR Portfolio Manager to compare building energy performance to similar buildings in similar climates. A score of 50 represents average building performance.

erosion -- a combination of processes in which materials of the earth's surface are loosened, dissolved or worn away, and transported from one place to another by natural agents (such as water, wind or gravity).

graywater (also spelled greywater and gray water) - defined by the Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC) in its Appendix G, titled "Graywater Systems for Single-Family Dwellings," as "untreated household wastewater which has not come into contact with toilet waste. Graywater includes used water from bathtubs, showers, bathroom wash basins, and water from clothes-washer and laundry tubs. It shall not include wastewater from kitchen sinks or dishwashers."

The International Plumbing Code (IPC) defines graywater in its Appendix C, titled "Graywater Recycling Systems," as "wastewater discharged from lavatories, bathtubs, showers, clothes washers, and laundry sinks."

Some state and local authorities allow kitchen sink wastewater to be included in graywater. Other differences with the UPC and UOC definitions can probably be found in state and local codes. Project teams should comply with the graywater definitions as established by the authority having jurisdiction in their areas.

greenhouse gases - gases such as carbon dioxide, methane and CFCs that are relatively transparent to the higher-energy sunlight, but trap lower-energy infrared radiation.

heat island effect - occurs when warmer temperatures are experienced in urban landscapes compared to adjacent rural areas as a result of solar energy retention on constructed surfaces. Principal surfaces that contribute to the heat island effect include streets, sidewalks parking lots and buildings.

impervious surfaces - surfaces that promote runoff of precipitation volumes instead of infiltration into the subsurface. The imperviousness or degree of runoff potential can be estimated for different surface materials.

invasive plants - both indigenous and non-indigenous species or strains that are characteristically adaptable, aggressive, have a high reproductive capacity and tend to overrun the ecosystems in which they inhabit. Collectively they are one of the great threats to biodiversity and ecosystem stability.

light pollution - waste light from building sites that produces glare, is directed upward to the sky or is directed off the site.

native (indigenous) plants - plants that have adapted to a given area during a defined time period and are not invasive. In America, the term often refers to plants growing in a region prior to the time of settlement by people of European descent.

open-grid pavement - defined for LEED purposes as pavement that is less than 50% impervious and contains vegetation in the open cells.

perviousness - the percent of the surface area of a paving material that is open and allows moisture to pass through the material and soak into the earth below the paving system.

regionally extracted materials - for LEED for New Construction purposes, projects must have their sources for materials within a designated radius of the project site.

remediation - the process of cleaning up a contaminated site by physical, chemical or biological means. Remediation processes are typically applied to contaminated soil and groundwater.

stormwater runoff - water volumes that are created during precipitation events and that flow over surfaces into sewer systems or receiving waters. All precipitation waters that leave project site boundaries on the surface are considered to be stormwater runoff volumes.

sustainable forestry - the practice of managing forest resources to meet the long-term forest product needs of humans while maintaining the biodiversity of forested landscapes. The primary goal is to restore, enhance and sustain a full range of forest values—economic, social and ecological.

wetland vegetation - plants that require saturated soils to survive as well as certain tree and other plant species that can tolerate prolonged wet soil conditions.

References for Sustainable Landscapes

Thompson, J. William and Sorvig, Kim, *Sustainable Landscape Construction: A Guide to Green Building Outdoors*. Washington, D.C., Island Press, 2000.

Authoritative discussion of environmentally progressive landscape planning and construction approaches. Excellent guidance on water use, energy conservation, sustainable maintenance.

Horticultural information

There are countless excellent contemporary how-to gardening books and references about classes of plants. Googling a topic will yield both authoritative information from experts and anecdotal lore from devoted gardeners. Some books listed below explore the benefits of native plants.

Dirr Michael A., *Dirr's Hardy Trees and Shrubs: An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. Portland, Oregon. Timber Press, 1997. This is an unparalleled basic reference.

Summers, Carolyn. *Designing Gardens With Flora Of The American East*. New Brunswick, New Jersey and London. Rutgers University Press, 2010.

Attractive volume by a Hudson Valley writer describing the benefits and uses of native plants.

Tallamy, Douglas W., *Bringing Nature Home*. Portland, Oregon. Timber Press. 2007.
Informed advocacy for use of native plants to promote ecosystems.

Westchester's Native Plant Center with a display garden at Westchester Community College, www.nativeplantcenter.org, offers programs, trips and an annual native plant sale. The organization promotes increased use of native plants.

Cornell University is a leader in horticultural research and teaching. The University offers excellent downloadable publications on plantings and especially useful planting recommendations for developed areas. <http://hort.cals.cornell.edu/cals/hort/extension/publications.cfm>

Westchester County's Cornell Cooperative Extension is at 26 Legion Drive, Valhalla (914-285-4620) <http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/westchester> Reach the local agent at westchester@cornell.edu. The local Coop Extension offers programs and answers questions about gardening.

[Don't plant these!](#) is an excellent pdf created by the Village of Irvington Tree Commission showing the most serious invasive plants and best substitutes.

Tree selection, protection, pruning

<http://hort.cals.cornell.edu/cals/hort/extension/publications.cfm>

Cornell's DVD and online publications can help you select size- and culture- appropriate trees for your property. "Tough Trees for Tough Sites" (DVD) and "Recommended Urban Trees" (downloadable) are especially useful.

<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/garden/02926.html> Clear discussion of the importance of root health for tree survival; issues to address during construction.

Two authoritative pieces on tree topping problems.

<http://www.utextension.utk.edu/publications/spfiles/sp549.pdf>

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/publications/sul7.pdf>

Village of Ossining Tree Ordinance

Permits for tree cutting are now required in the following example circumstances:

- If a tree is 10 inches or greater in diameter at breast height
- Any tree 6 inches or greater on slopes over 25% or on any unimproved lot.
- Significant or protected trees.
- Clear cutting: Removal of ten trees on one acre of land with a six (6) inch DBH or greater or any proportion of 10 trees on one acre depending on the lot size rounded up to the nearest whole number within any twelve-month period.
- Property owner filing for a subdivision or site plan approval requiring removal of trees on the property

Copies of the complete Tree Ordinance are available at Village of Ossining Building and Planning Departments, and online at www.VillageofOssining.org.

Deer

The Cooperative Extension, many local nurseries, websites of neighboring state horticultural groups and of mail-order nurseries all have lists of plants more or less likely to be eaten by deer. Talk to your neighbors about the food preferences of your local herd.

Water management

http://www.epa.gov/oaintrnt/stormwater/best_practices.htm

This is a very thorough and complete source of information on storm water management.

<http://www.villageofossining.org/Cit-e-Access/webpage.cfm?TID=24&TPID=10918>

This site offers highly practical information on the impact of homeowner grounds keeping on the region's healthy water supply and guidance for best practices.

Outdoor lighting

<http://www.darksky.org/mc/page.do?sitePageId=58881> Recommendations from the International Dark Sky Association explain objectives and economies of modified lighting.

