



# **Frequently Asked Questions – Local Landmarking Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission City of Kingston, NY**

1. **What is an individual local landmark and a local landmark district?** A local landmark is a property recognized for its historic or cultural significance to the community. A local landmark district is a group of buildings, structures, and sites that are significant for their historical and physical relationships to each other. Properties in districts may not be significant individually but gain meaning from their proximity and association with each other.
2. **Where can I access resources to research my property’s history?** Property owners and residents of the City have numerous resources available to them to learn about a property’s history – these resources include, but are not limited to, the City’s Library, NYS’s Cultural Resource Information System (CRIS), the Friends of Historic Kingston, the City’s Planning, Assessor, Building, and Engineering Departments, the City Historian, the Ulster County Clerk’s Office, Ulster County Hall of Records, the Ulster County Archivist, and the town of Kingston Clerk’s Office.
3. **If I want to make improvements or do work on my property, where do I go?** Prior to the commencement of work, we encourage property owners and/or their contractors to contact the Planning Department and the Building and Safety Division to determine the level of review required.
4. **How often are projects approved?** Projects are reviewed by the HLPC at their monthly meetings. A majority of projects are approved as is or with mutually agreed upon conditions.
5. **What is the difference between the Kingston Heritage Area and a Local Landmark District?**

<b>Kingston Heritage Area</b>	<b>A Local Landmark District</b>
This is a historic overlay covering parts of Kingston created by NYS in 1987 as part of its Urban Cultural Park program to preserve and promote historic resources. Exterior projects to properties visible from the public right of way are subject to desk level review. Desk Reviews are generally turned around within one week.	A district is a group of buildings, structures, and sites that are significant for their historical and physical relationships to each other. Properties in districts are not usually significant individually but gain meaning from their proximity and association with each other. A district may include any number of properties. Projects to the exterior of properties are subject to review if they may impact the structure or streetscape. Most projects fall into the category of in-kind and are reviewed at desk level.

6. **What criteria determine if a property or district is eligible for landmarking?** Properties must usually be more than 50 years of age to be considered for listing. Meet one or more of the four criteria listed below by possessing significance in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association.
  - A. A property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
  - B. A property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
  - C. A property is embodying the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction.
  - D. A property is that has yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.
7. **What is the difference between eligible, contributing, and non-contributing properties on cultural resource survey map?**

**Eligible:** A property that is generally 50+ meets one or more of the National Register’s four criteria. Properties must usually be more than 50 years of age to be considered for listing and retaining its integrity.

**Contributing:** A contributing building, site, structure, or object adds to the historic architectural qualities, historic associations, or archeological values for which a property is significant because:

- a) it was present during the period of significance and possesses historic integrity reflecting its character at that time or can yield important information about the period, or
- b) it independently meets the National Register criteria. Contributing buildings are listed in the National Register of Historic Places and are treated the same as buildings that are individually listed in the NRHP.

**Non-contributing:** A non-contributing building, site, structure, or object does not add to the historic architectural qualities, historic associations, or archeological values for which a property is significant because:

- a) it was not present during the period of significance,
- b) due to alterations, disturbances, additions, or other changes, it no longer possesses historic integrity reflecting its character at that time or is incapable of yielding important information about the period, or
- c) it does not independently meet the National Register criteria.

8. **How long does it take to landmark an individual property or district?** An individual landmark may take between a week to several months of research, review, and public commentary before the HLPC can recommend landmarking to the CoK's Common Council. A local landmark district requires community support, an intensive historic and cultural resource survey, a justified boundary, and a justified period of significance. As such, historic districts generally require at least a year to account for their greater complexity and the additional need for public comment.
9. **How does local landmarking protect and benefit a building and/or a neighborhood?** Landmarking raises awareness of the property's significance, helping to ensure that preservation issues are considered early and effectively in the planning process. Local landmarking provides property owners with a tool to prevent unwanted change for their neighborhood's streetscape. Local landmarking ensures projects are reviewed by city staff to conform with zoning code and the Secretary of Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties. Districting also provides property owners with knowledgeable resources that can guide your projects, and access to any incentives only set aside for historic properties.
10. **Must owners of landmarked buildings open their buildings to the public?** No. There is absolutely no requirement to open historically designated properties to the public.
11. **Will a property owner be able to transfer their property to their children?** Yes. Historic designation in no way affects the transfer of property from one owner to another.
12. **Will landmarking (individually or in a district) affect local property taxes?** No – this is a common misconception. Historic designation has no direct bearing on local property taxes. Taxes are evaluated on your property's condition, size, improvements, and against similar properties. If a property owner enhances their property, that could result in an increased assessed value and higher taxes – this is true regardless of the property's location. The City of Kingston is working to reinstate a 10-year graduated tax abatement program for qualifying exterior preservation projects to historically designated properties. Any non-historically designated property will not qualify for the tax abatement program.
13. **How can an owner get a historic plaque to display on his or her building?** The City of Kingston Planning Office has plaques available for locally landmarked structures. Please reach out to the Historic Preservation Administrator to learn more about acquiring a plaque.
14. **How do I find out if my building is already locally landmarked or on the National Register?** Contact the City Of Kingston's Historic Preservation Administrator in the City's Planning Office.
15. **Does local landmarking impact your homeowner's insurance?** Every insurance company is different. Insurance companies *typically* do not automatically increase premiums or drop homeowners because their property is designated historic. In the event of a partial or total loss, the City's Historic Landmarks Code *may not* require you to rebuild an exact replica of your historic home with historic materials. New construction may be required to conform with city code and display design elements that harmonize with their surroundings.
16. **Can I paint my locally landmarked property a different color?** Yes. Painting is considered a non-permanent alteration. If you are repainting the building in the same color or if you're changing the color but keeping it within a historic color palette and design from a recognized historic paint manufacturer, then the project may be reviewed at desk level. Desk level reviews are regularly turned around within one week. If you choose colors from outside a historic palate that are substantially different, then the project will need review before the Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission.