



**New York State
Parks, Recreation and
Historic Preservation**

KATHY HOCHUL
Governor

ERIK KULLESEID
Commissioner

May 26, 2022

Suzanne Cahill, Planning Director
City of Kingston
City Hall - 420 Broadway
Kingston, New York 12401

Re: Historic Preservation Landmarks Commission - Request for Advisory Opinion
Application - 106-122 Green Street

Dear Suzanne Cahill,

I am writing to you in my capacity as the Certified Local Government Representative in Eastern New York for the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (OPRHP). The Certified Local Government (CLG) program is a federal program in partnership with the National Park Service and administered at the state level by our office. The intent of the program is to encourage, enable and support local historic preservation efforts, using "best practice" models in both legislation and process. Chief among the goals is to enable local governments to understand and protect historic resources as a part of their unique sense of place. Including historic preservation as an integral part of municipal government has been proven to be a strong element of economic revitalization efforts, potentially stabilizing property values, attracting investment, and raising the visibility of a community and its historic assets.

We understand that on Thursday, May 5, 2022, the City of Kingston Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission (HLPC) and the Heritage Area Commission (HAC) met jointly to continue discussion on the application for replacement windows at 106-122 Green Street, also known as the Sleight-Tappen House. At the conclusion of the discussion and review, the HLPC and HAC requested an advisory opinion from OPRHP.

We reviewed the HLPC Application for Review for 106-122 Green Street, public comments, DAR response to public comments, and the DAR Chapter House Window and Shutter Plan, all of which are available to download on the city website. We also viewed the joint HLPC and HAC April and May meetings on the city's YouTube channel.

The application materials do not make a convincing argument for replacement of the historic wood windows. We support the HLPC's request for a conditions/assessment survey, prepared by a qualified historic preservation consultant. An assessment should include detailed photos of all windows proposed for replacement, keyed to an existing conditions site plan, documenting the condition. Keep in mind, the assessment may recommend a mix of repair and replacement.

Historic wood windows are a character defining feature. The old growth wood found in historic windows is much more durable than modern wood and they can be made energy efficient with storm windows and weather stripping. We recommend that historic wood windows are retained and repaired wherever possible. Repair can include renewal of finishes, material repair using epoxies, replacement of

component parts and additions such as weather stripping. While it may be possible to repair even severely deteriorated windows, repair of deterioration beyond a certain level is not practical or reasonable and replacement becomes the appropriate treatment.

Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature such as a historic wood window, the new window should match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Factors to consider in evaluating the match of a replacement window – the degree to which the window is recessed into the wall, window frame size and shape, glass size and divisions, sash elements width and depth (rails, stiles, and muntins), materials and finish, and glass characteristics.

If the conditions assessment recommends replacement, a sample of the proposed replacement product – the Marvin Ultimate Wood Double Hung Insert as indicated in the application - should be submitted to the HLPC to determine whether it is an appropriate match. OPRHP typically recommends a true divided light sash. Additionally, we recommend a set of dimension drawings of the existing and proposed windows be submitted for the HLPC to compare. A side-by-side comparison of historic and new will also aid in HLPC's assessment.

The owner may consider applying for a grant. Environmental Protection Fund Parks, Preservation and Heritage (EPF) grant funding is available to improve, protect, preserve, rehabilitate, restore or acquire properties listed on the State or National Registers of Historic Places. Funds are available to municipalities or not-for-profits with an ownership interest. Grants can fund up to 50% of the total eligible project cost; up to 75% if the project is located in a high-poverty area. Grant awards are capped at \$500,000. More information can be found here - <https://www.parks.ny.gov/grants/>.

While we are sympathetic to the property owner's situation as we understand the custom replacement windows were already purchased, the owner stated in the application materials and during the joint HLPC and HAC meetings that they researched windows for two years. Within those years there was no communication with the city regarding HLPC approval for window replacement. The owner also indicated at the joint HLPC and HAC meeting that the cost to repair was the same as replacement. We understand that there was a misinterpretation of what requires HLPC review. Proposed replacement of historic windows is never considered a replace in-kind project even if it is wood with wood. Not only are historic windows extremely important for a building's architectural integrity, many were also made to be repaired. Most can be retrofitted to be more weather-tight rather easily, resulting in a better "return" on investment and a far "greener" approach than buying new windows. A modern replacement window will never be exactly the same as a historic window.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at 518-268-2148 or linda.mackey@parks.ny.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda Mackey".

Linda Mackey
Certified Local Government Representative, ENY
NYS OPRHP