

Preservation Guidelines

KINGSTON, NEW YORK



Background photos: Will Falter

The border design used throughout the brochure is based on the tracery in the front door sidelights of the 1818 Ulster County Courthouse at 285 Wall Street in the Stockade District of Kingston.

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Design by Marian McCorkle, Printing by Lithography By Design March, 2006

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Introduction

One of New York State's first settlements, the City of Kingston has grown up around some of its first buildings. Today, these 17th and 18th century limestone buildings

form the center of Kingston's unique presence in the landscape of the Hudson Valley. Around these buildings stand notable examples of American architecture that span a 300-year period. As Kingston expanded, the people who founded a new commercial area along nearby Rondout Creek moved into new residential neighborhoods built in the styles of their day, according to designs favored by individual builders and owners.

In time, many buildings were adapted for new uses, some were replaced with newer buildings, and others modernized for more efficient use.



Although some notable buildings have been lost, much of Kingston's architectural past remains, offering evidence of the city's progression of industries, occupations,

people, and ways of life. The city's architecture enriches the daily life of Kingston's residents; it also attracts visitors. Kingston's historic buildings and all their details are a unique resource that can never be replaced.

What is "Historic Preservation?"

Historic preservation is the idea that a place's most historic and characteristic buildings – homes, commercial storefronts, government buildings – can and should be preserved. Accordingly, local, state, and federal governments have instituted ways of recognizing buildings and districts considered worthy of preservation for present and future generations. These government programs encourage preservation of designated buildings and areas and regulate the changes that are made to them.

Although historic buildings can be lost through outright demolition, the effect of slow change or lack of maintenance of a group of buildings – losing one small detail at a time – can have just as dramatic an effect over time. For this reason, the historic preservation movement encourages the retention of the original configuration and the original details of a building.

In general, historic preservation is most likely to succeed when a building continues to have valuable use, when a neighborhood can be enjoyed, and when the cost of preservation can be affordable.

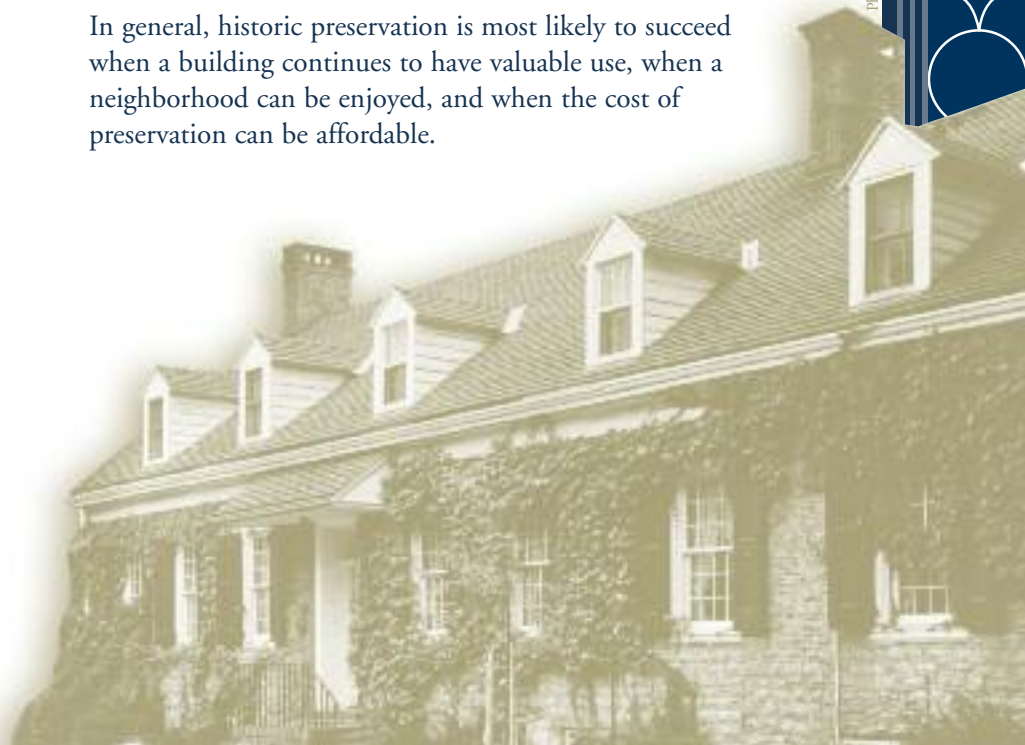


Photo: Will Falter

Benefits of Historic Preservation

- ⊗ Attracts tourists
- ⊗ Attracts industry (a better, more stable community in which workers can live)
- ⊗ Attracts small businesses who prefer to locate in a historic district
- ⊗ Ensures a pleasant and interesting city to live in
- ⊗ Provides a sense of continuity with the past and a better perspective on the future

A Part of Kingston's Heritage Area

Kingston's historic buildings and districts form a significant part of Kingston's Heritage Area, an ongoing program supported by the State of New York. With a theme emphasizing the role of Kingston and Rondout in the state's transportation history, the Heritage Area in Kingston includes two visitor's centers with museums at 307 Clinton Avenue in the Stockade District and at 20 Broadway in the Rondout District. The Heritage Area designates the Broadway thoroughfare as a corridor connecting the two parts of Kingston.



Kingston's Historic Districts

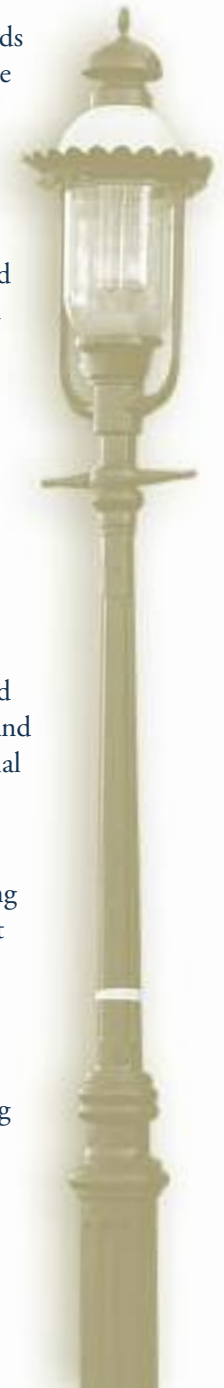
In 1966, with the help of a newly-formed Friends of Historic Kingston, the city began to recognize and designate certain buildings and districts as assets to the city's current and future residents. By 1991, the city had established four historic districts.

In its first landmark ordinance, Kingston created a Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission and designated as a local historic district the area within the lines of the stockade fence where the first settlers had lived. The Stockade District is also listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places.

In 1979, the city designated a large part of the former village of Rondout, from McEntee Street near the top of the slope down to the Rondout Creek and including the remaining part of the commercial district on Broadway and the West Strand. The new Rondout –West Strand Historic District is also on the State and National Register of Historic Places.

In 1985, the Chestnut Street Historic District, overlooking the Rondout District and containing the former homes of the more affluent Rondout residents, was listed on the State and National Register of Historic Places. In 1998, it was designated a local historic district.

In 1988, Fair Street Historic District, containing the former homes of affluent uptown residents built in the latter part of the 19th century, was designated a local historic district.



The Design Review Process

KINGSTON'S LANDMARKS ORDINANCE

The present Landmarks Preservation Ordinance, replacing the original Ordinance of 1966, amends the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Kingston and declares that “it is... a matter of public policy that the protection, enhancement, perpetuation and use of...sites...structures and areas of historic interest of importance within the City of Kingston is a public necessity...”.

The Ordinance identifies the local landmarks districts and describes the Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission – how its membership is constituted and its role in reviewing applications for change to buildings within locally designated historic districts.

The Ordinance itself can be obtained through the offices of either the City Planner or Building Safety, or by going directly to the city’s web site <http://www.ci.kingston.ny.us>. In addition to summarizing the Ordinance and the design review process, the guidelines you are reading offer suggestions for building changes apt to meet approval from the Commission.

KINGSTON'S LANDMARKS COMMISSION

The Commission has seven members, each serving a three-year term. Terms are staggered so that one or two members must be reappointed each year. Members must be city residents. The Commission includes the City Historian, who is a permanent member, and at least one member who is a licensed, practicing architect. In addition, at least one member must reside in a city historic district. Although not required, Commission members sometimes include a member who is a practicing attorney and a member (in addition to the architect member) who is familiar with local construction practices and resources.

DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION

In addition to reviewing proposed changes to buildings within landmark districts, the Commission recommends to the Common Council landmarks and historic districts in the city that merit the recognition and protection that is provided by designation. The Commission also encourages the active interest of owners and other city residents in landmark buildings.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE REVIEWED

For a designated landmark or a building within a locally designated landmark district, any exterior change to your building that is visible from the street needs to be reviewed. If you are simply repairing or replacing something with the same material that is currently on your building or repainting in exactly the same color, no review is required.

WHAT DOES NOT NEED TO BE REVIEWED

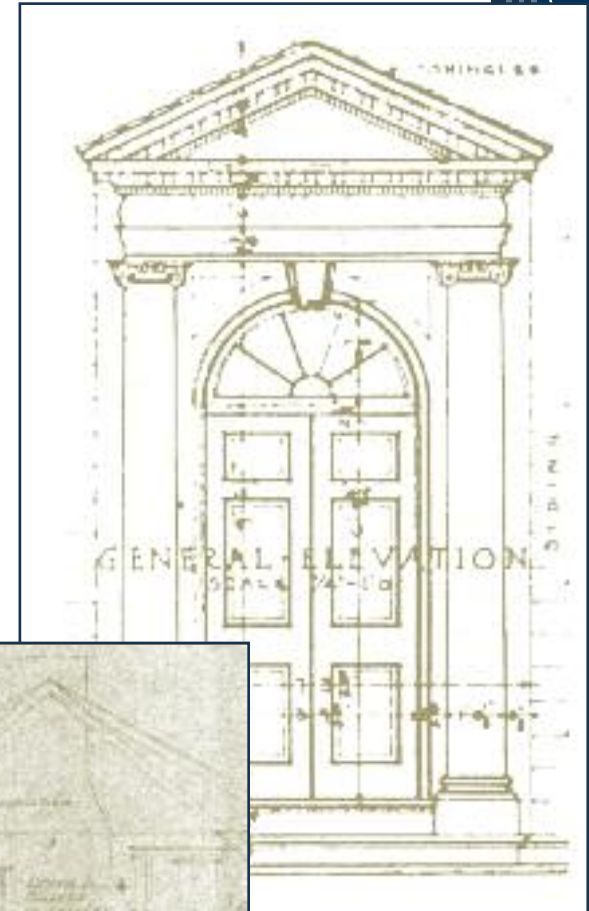
- ✘ The use of your building, this is covered by other parts of the Zoning Ordinance.
- ✘ Interior changes to your building with the rare exception being those buildings whose interiors have been designated as historic.
- ✘ Exterior changes that are not visible from the street — commonly, the rear of your building unless it is visible from another street.
- ✘ Replacement of roofs, siding, and other exterior features in the same material.
- ✘ Removal of dangerous conditions if ordered by a qualified public official such as the Fire Marshall or Building Inspector.

The Review Process: How it Works

1. Bring your plans (pictures and/or drawings; a professional version is not required) to the City's Building Safety Department and fill out an application for a Landmarks review at the same time you apply for a building permit.
2. Then attend the next monthly Landmarks meeting where your application will be reviewed and voted on. Ordinarily, the meeting takes place the first Thursday of each month at 7:30 pm, usually at City Hall, 420 Broadway. Call the Building Safety Division (845-331-1217) for the exact location. **IMPORTANT:** If your application doesn't already include them, bring pictures or drawings of your proposed designs or changes with you to the meeting.
3. The Commission will review your proposal change and then vote on it. Occasionally, a meeting at your building will be recommended. The Commission uses national, state, and local guidelines, but regards each application as a unique situation.
4. Following the meeting, the Commission sends a letter to you and to the Building Safety and Planning departments with approval, approval with stipulations, or disapproval.
5. The Building Safety Department provides the permit and ensures conformity.
6. Applicants can appeal the Commission's decision on the basis of hardship to the Zoning Board of Appeals.
7. For projects requiring Planning Board approval, the Planning and Landmarks boards coordinate approval.

Ways to Expedite the Process

1. Take advantage of resource materials and this guideline in making your plans.
2. You may want to request an informal review, opinions, or advice from the Commission before your formal application. Call City Hall (845-331-0080) to get the name of the Commission chairman and arrange for an informal discussion of your plans, possibly at your building, before applying formally. The Commission includes at least one architect and often includes other members with practical building experience as well as restoration expertise.
3. Don't forget to provide pictures or drawings with your application or bring them to the meeting.



Restoration Guidelines

1. Avoid removing architectural parts or details from your building. These are usually what make your building distinctive. Instead of removing, restore the feature. In the long run, your building is apt to be worth more when you resell it.
2. Try to find out what architectural style (or styles) your building is. Then make any changes so that they are consistent with this style. Learning your building's style can be done by consulting one of the books at the end of this guideline or by talking to a Commission member.
3. Try to discover what your building used to look like. Frequently, there will be a picture in the file on your building in the Tax Assessor's office at City Hall. Consider restoring any features that have been changed or removed.

These guidelines are based on the cumulative experience of Kingston's Landmarks Commission; the Standards for Rehabilitation from the U.S. Department of the Interior and its series of Preservation Briefs.

These guidelines are used by the Commission as part of its design review. However, each application is regarded as a unique case and, as a result, there may sometimes be an exception to a guideline.



4. Use original materials when making replacements; don't use artificial materials. For example, use wood rather than vinyl or aluminum siding and windows.
5. Clean surfaces using the least abrasive method. Never sandblast brick or masonry surfaces; if cleaning is necessary, use the mildest chemical that will be effective. Consider carefully whether cleaning is really necessary.

The Importance of the "Streetscape"

Historic districts are areas that have "neighborhood" effect: every building contributes something to the district yet the effect is different than its individual parts. You can appreciate the effect by trying to see your district through the eyes of a first-time visitor. If your district's streetscape has a particular character or diversity, it is created as a result of a number of individual buildings and details, each of which contributes to the total effect. For this reason, the Landmarks Commission tries to review proposed changes for their effect on the total streetscape as well as their effect on the individual building.

Sidewalks are sometimes overlooked. Remember that a building owner is responsible for the sidewalk. Try to preserve existing bluestone sidewalks as part of the historic streetscape and consider re-introducing bluestone sidewalks and walls when those built with more modern materials need replacement.

The Overall Shape

Perhaps the most obvious feature of any building is its overall configuration or shape. If you plan to expand your building, consider your expansion to the rear of the building where it will be least visible.

Architectural Details

Existing architectural features give a building its character. These features include such parts as columns, brackets and cornice work, decorative brickwork, and porch trim. If they are original or an historic addition, they should be retained, repaired, or replicated. If a replacement is to be made, it should be identical in scale, material, proportion, and accuracy of detail, although in some cases, a simplified design may be used.

In general, the use of an artificial replacement for wood clapboard siding or as a cover for brick or other original siding material is discouraged.

Siding

WHY NOT ARTIFICIAL SIDING?

Artificial siding is not recommended for the following reasons, based on published guidelines from the Department of the Interior:

1. Replacements look artificial, in spite of frequent claims to the contrary.
2. Aluminum siding is vulnerable to denting and vinyl to cracking. Partial replacement may be impossible if the manufacturer changes the design or color specifications.
3. The underlying wood may be exposed to deterioration due to entrapped moisture. The artificial siding usually conceals deterioration until it reaches an advanced state.
4. Application of artificial siding often results in the loss of trim detail.
5. Artificial siding contributes little to insulation.

6. In time, as artificial siding begins to require paint, maintaining it will cost almost as much as maintaining wood siding.
7. Artificial siding comes in a limited choice of colors. In some cases, the sun will fade the color.

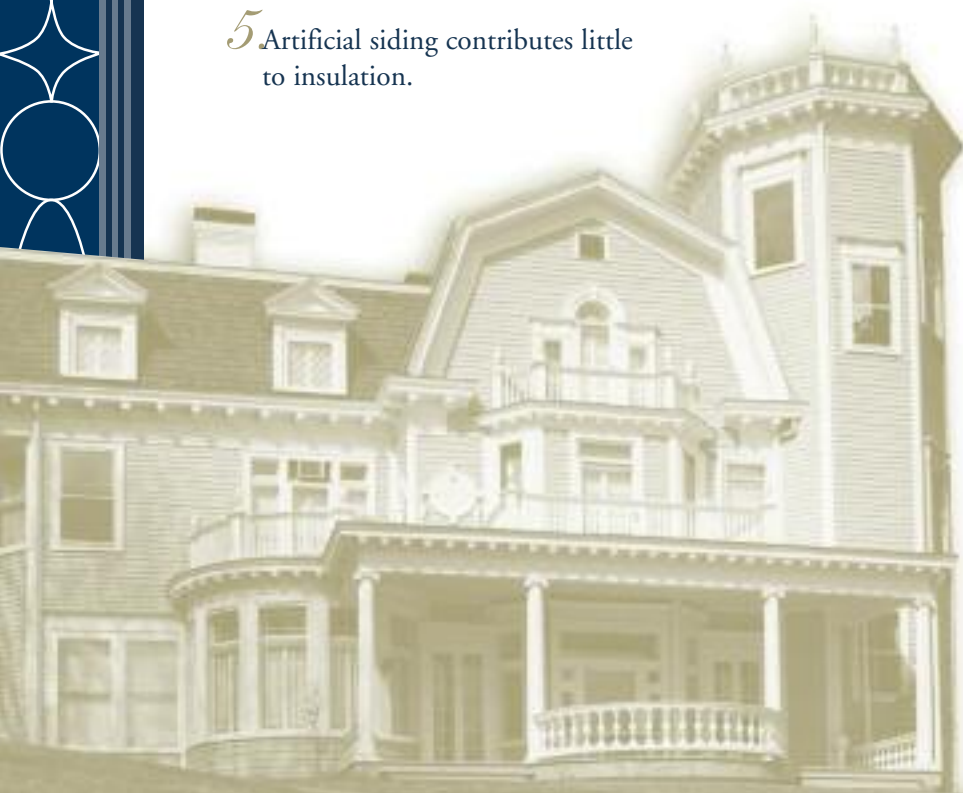
HOW TO PRESERVE WOOD SIDING

The preservation of wood siding is vital to preserving a landmark building. Pieces of broken siding can be replaced, usually at modest cost. Badly weathered siding should be given a penetrating application of boiled linseed oil (one part oil; one part of turpentine) after removal of weathered paint, followed by conventional priming and finish coats.

Trim, where weathered, should be thoroughly cleaned of paint and given an application of a high quality preservative, following manufacturer's directions.

Where window frames or other parts have rotted, they usually can be restored using epoxy consolidants, avoiding the need to buy new windows and preserving the original window appearance. Good marine-type wood fillers should be used for filling damaged places.

Traditional trim woodwork can usually be duplicated at a reasonable cost in local millwork shops if extensive deterioration precludes epoxy consolidation. The Commission can provide further information.



Masonry



1. Cleaning should be done using the least damaging method, ranging from washing with a mild detergent and soft bristle brushes to chemical cleaning. Sandblasting is not acceptable since it (1) destroys the patina and general appearance of the surface, (2) exposes it to acid and water deterioration, and (3) removes mortar that may be difficult to match correctly.
2. Painting is recommended for brick surfaces that have been previously been painted. Painting is not recommended for brick surfaces that have never been painted.
3. Water-repellant coating should only be used under certain conditions. Consult the Commission or an historic preservation specialist.
4. Mortar should be replaced as follows:
 - A. Older, softer bricks need a softer mortar. Use a mortar that simulates the old lime and sand mortars in appearance and composition. A mixture of one part of white masonry cement, two parts of lime, and seven to nine parts of the smallest available mesh sand (to match the original sand) is recommended. This mortar will match the bricks in expanding and contracting during freezing and thawing. A hard, modern mortar with Portland cement content is likely to damage the bricks during freeze/thaw periods.
 - B. The existing mortar joint should be matched when repointing. In general, the mortar joint should be concave since this provides a better bond between brick and mortar.
 - C. The mortar should be tinted, if necessary, to match the color of the original as closely as possible.
 - D. If the brick needs to be replaced, it should match the original size, color and texture of the original as closely as possible.

The Roof

The original roof shape should be preserved. Adding skylights or enlarging dormer windows where they are prominently visible from the street is discouraged. However, skylights and roof changes on the side of the house away from the street can be considered.

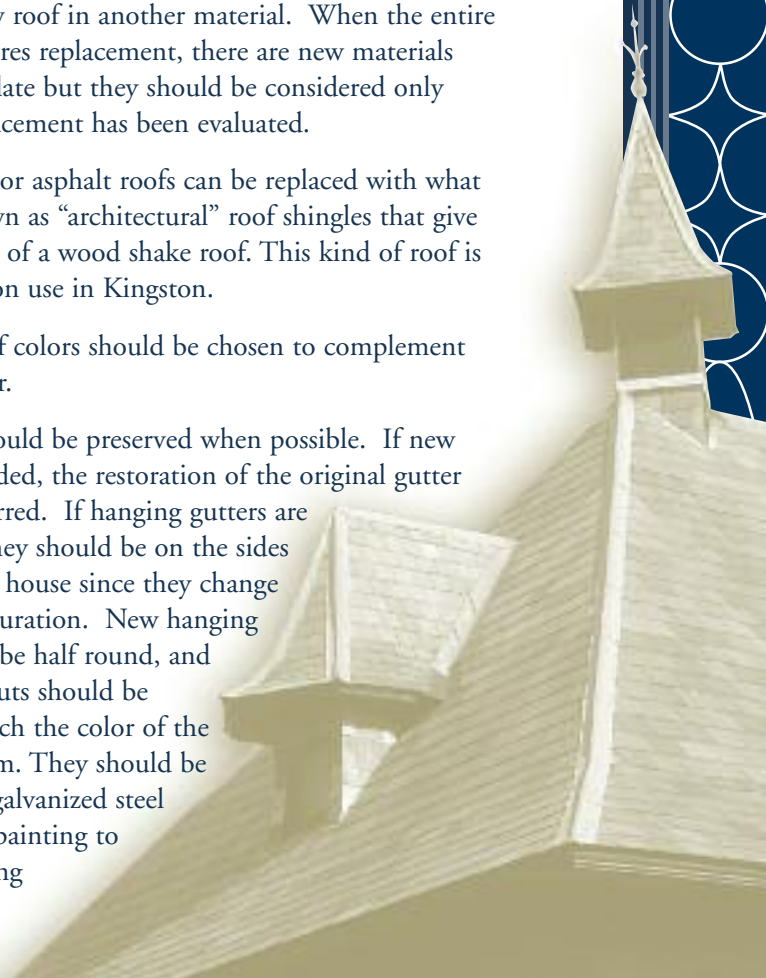
Television antennae, satellite dishes, air conditioning units, and similar devices should be placed in an inconspicuous location.

Slate roofs should be preserved if at all possible. A somewhat discolored or imperfect original slate roof has a pattern and character that will be impossible to duplicate. It is usually better to repair and patch such a roof than do an entirely new roof in another material. When the entire slate roof requires replacement, there are new materials that simulate slate but they should be considered only after slate replacement has been evaluated.

Existing shake or asphalt roofs can be replaced with what is usually known as “architectural” roof shingles that give the appearance of a wood shake roof. This kind of roof is now in common use in Kingston.

In general, roof colors should be chosen to complement the siding color.

Box gutters should be preserved when possible. If new gutters are needed, the restoration of the original gutter system is preferred. If hanging gutters are to be added, they should be on the sides and rear of the house since they change the roof configuration. New hanging gutters should be half round, and new down-spouts should be painted to match the color of the building or trim. They should be coated with a galvanized steel primer before painting to minimize flaking and peeling.



Windows, Doors and Shutters

Although windows and doors may seem like commonplace parts of a building, they are extremely important features to preserve in their original form.

PRESERVING WINDOWS, DOORS AND SHUTTERS

1. Before replacing windows, doors or shutters, consider restoring them. Areas of rotted wood can be replaced with an epoxy consolidant. A missing paneled shutter that has a match can be produced at a local millwork shop.
2. Replacement doors and windows should be appropriate to the design and style of the building and, in general, should match the original in size, shape, design, and material.
3. Existing 6-over-6, 4-over-4, or 2-over-2 window sash may be replaced with 1-over-1 sash, although the original sash pattern is preferred.
4. Door openings should not be changed in size. Original transoms should be retained.
5. The design of replacement shutters should be appropriate to the building period.

In general:

A. Paneled, board and batten, or stationary louvered shutters should be used on buildings before 1840.

B. Shutters of movable louver design are appropriate for buildings after 1840.

6. Shutters should not be attached to the wall surface and should have dimensions equal to the window height and one-half of the width of the window for each shutter.



STORM DOORS AND WINDOWS

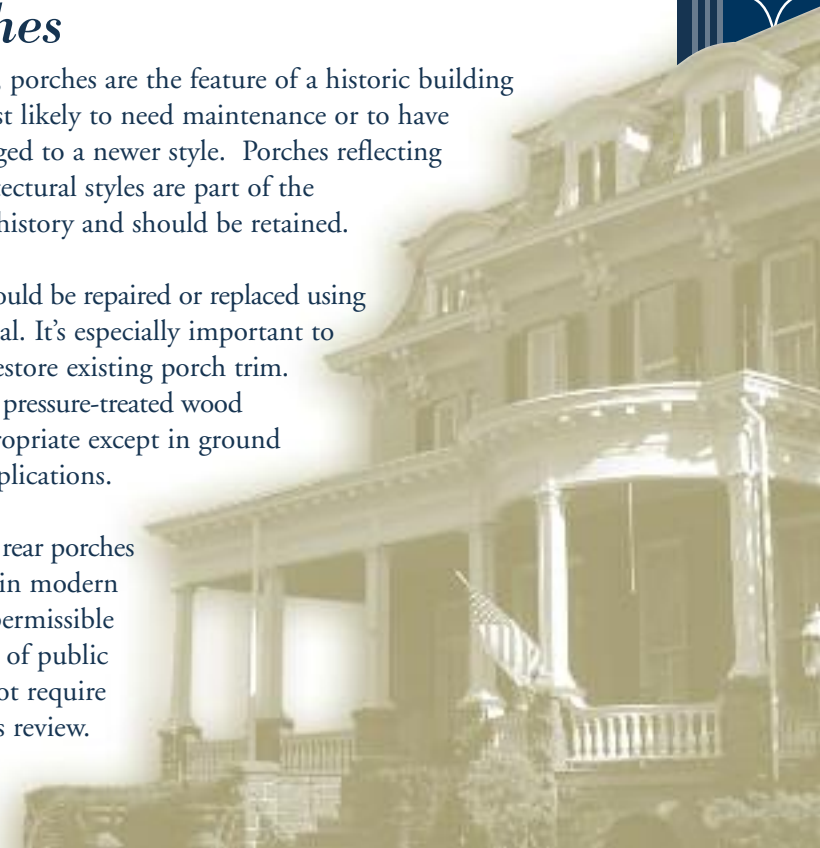
1. The use of wood storm windows and doors is encouraged.
2. When used, metal storm doors and windows should be painted to match adjacent window or sill trim. A wood or metal storm door should conflict as little as possible with the appearance of the primary door. Ornamental motifs on the storm door are not appropriate. In some cases, anodized aluminum is an appropriate choice when it has a dark finish that blends well with existing trim.
3. Consider installing interior storm windows in order to leave the exterior unchanged. Most of the storm framing is obscured by the drapes and the interior storms can be painted to match the adjacent trim.

Porches

Over time, porches are the feature of a historic building that is most likely to need maintenance or to have been changed to a newer style. Porches reflecting later architectural styles are part of the building's history and should be retained.

Porches should be repaired or replaced using like material. It's especially important to retain or restore existing porch trim. The use of pressure-treated wood is not appropriate except in ground contact applications.

In general, rear porches and decks in modern styles are permissible and, if out of public view, do not require Landmarks review.



Landscaping, Walls and Fences

Landscaping should be compatible with architectural features of the historic landmark or district and should be generally consistent within a district.

Historical walkways and garden ornaments should be retained.

Original walls and fences should be preserved and restored where at all possible. Cast iron and wrought iron fences are a particularly visible feature of a district. In general, fences other than original ones should be of masonry, wrought iron, or wood. Fences in front yards should be low in height and open in visibility. Along the side and rear of a property, they can be used to reinforce the building setback. New fences should be in a style that is sympathetic with the building architecture. In general, chain link, split rail and stockade fences should not be used.



Typically, it is better to repair an older stone fence than to build a new one, since the original stone is part of the history of the district.

Street Trees

The Commission encourages historic districts to work with the City and private programs to maintain the trees and other plantings along a street that give the streetscape an effect that is consistent with its historical character and history. This applies to both residential and business streets.



General Color Guidelines

EARLY STONE HOUSES, UNTIL ABOUT 1750:

The stone was unpainted. Trim colors include white (most common), dark red, ochre, and Spanish brown. Shutter colors were predominately black, dark green, or the same as the trim.

GEORGIAN, UNTIL 1790:

Relatively few of these houses exist in Kingston. Base colors included natural, dark brown, dark red, ochre, dark green, and deep buff. The trim and shutters were typically painted the same color as the base color. The door could be dark brown, black-green, dark blue, dark red, or dark grey.

FEDERAL, UNTIL 1840:

Base colors were pale yellow, off-white, beige, pale green, and medium grey. Trim and shutters were lighter than the base color; typically white, buff, and pale yellow. The door color was black or natural.

GREEK REVIVAL, UNTIL 1850:

The base color was typically white, buff, pale yellow, green-grey, blue-grey, or pale grey. Trim and shutters were olive green, grey-blue, dark bottle green, green-black, buff, white, or black. A white base color with green shutters was typical. The door color was dark green, black, or medium blue.

GOTHIC, ITALIAN VILLA AND OTHER EARLY VICTORIAN BUILDINGS, FROM 1840 TO 1870:

The base color was usually in a pale earth tone, such as buff, grey, mustard, light brown, or light pink. Trim and shutters were darker than the base color, including black, chocolate, red, dark grey, dark green, or dark brown. The door was frequently unpainted wood, often oak.

You are not required to paint your building in its original colors assuming you can determine what they were.

However, you are encouraged to paint your building in historically accurate colors or something close to them.

Colors should be selected that are similar to those typically used for your building and its style at the time it was built.

Guidance is available from the Commission.

Guidelines for Commercial Areas

ITALIANATE, UNTIL ABOUT 1885: Base colors included white, buff, yellow ochre, green-grey, pale grey, dark brown, and medium red. Trim and shutters typically contrasted strongly, with colors including pale yellow, dark green, and medium grey. Door colors included black.

QUEEN ANNE, UNTIL ABOUT 1900: These typically ornate buildings were generally painted deep, rich colors, such as deep blue, dark ochre, or slate, but could also be painted in lighter colors, such as tan and medium grey. Trim often included several different colors, usually darker than the base color. Trim and shutter colors included golden yellow, dark grey, dark brown, beige, red, chocolate, and olive green. The door color could be unpainted oak or one of a number of different colors.

COLONIAL REVIVAL, FROM 1890 TO 1920: The base color was typically light, such as a pastel tan or grey. Trim and shutters were frequently white.

“ECLECTIC,” FROM 1885-1920: Many houses in this period are predominantly in one style but have a blend of other style elements. In the case of the common mixture of Queen Anne and Colonial Revival, consider that the Colonial Revival style is somewhat later and probably should predominate in choosing color schemes.

Most paint manufacturers provide a line of historical colors from which you can choose.

Colors should blend with and complement the overall color schemes on the same street. Bright and obtrusive colors are discouraged. Painted brick should be painted, but unpainted brick should remain unpainted.

Building Facades

In the Stockade and Rondout Districts, Kingston has many distinctive commercial buildings of the 19th and early 20th century. Each of these commercial districts has its particular character. The Stockade District on Wall Street includes a long facing row of mostly Italianate buildings with an occasional glimpse of Classical Revival and Art Deco, all against the background of Kingston's early stone buildings. In Rondout, the mostly Italianate facades include examples of Rondout's own cast iron works and are sited in close proximity to Rondout Creek and other reminders of Rondout's industrial history. Retaining the character of these historical commercial districts is an important part of Kingston's preservation activity. Much of this effect relies on preserving the facades of these buildings.

In general, the original configuration of a storefront should be maintained. In particular, the original window size should be preserved and the existing sill height should be maintained.

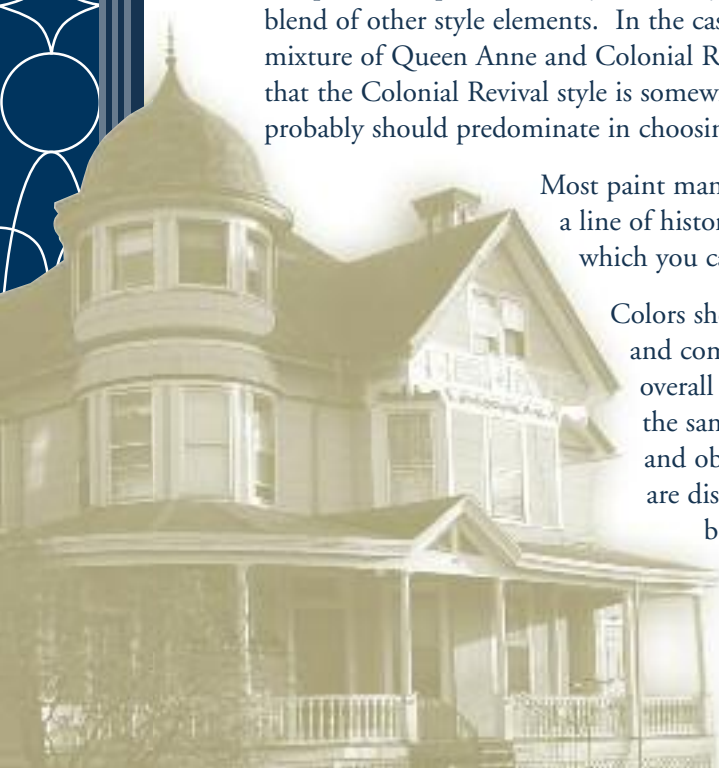
Original transoms, doors and ornamentation should be retained and repaired wherever possible.

Columns (such as the cast-iron columns on Rondout storefronts) that divide the storefront into bays, and cornices that separate the ground-floor storefront from upper floors, should not be covered or removed.

In addition to the preceding guidelines, these further guidelines apply to commercial buildings in Kingston's historic districts. In Rondout, also see the Design Guidelines for the Rondout Waterfront. In other parts of Kingston, see the Planning Department for other guidelines that may be in development.



Photo: Will Fuller



Lighting

Exterior lighting should be consistent with the overall design of the building.

Awnings

Awnings should approximate original awnings in style and traditional canvas construction, and be placed where awnings historically existed.

An awning should be of a scale so that it could fit inside the opening of the space it covers.

Signage

Signs should be consistent in size and visual impact along the streetscape. Although each individual sign can reflect a store's unique character, it must not be inconsistent in design quality with the overall signage in the district.

Signs can be placed along a storefront cornice, be painted on the window(s), or hang over the sidewalk. The size of a sign should be consistent with the size of the signs on other storefronts of a similar store width.

Neon signs and those illuminated from within are generally not encouraged. However, a sign may be lit with a spotlight of appropriate scale.

A sign should not detract from the building's architecture.

Historic signs that identify the building's original use should be retained and refurbished where possible.

Parking Lots and Street Furniture

Parking lots should not detract from the visual quality of the district. Screening with landscaping, masonry walls, and fencing should be used to minimize the view of parked vehicles from other properties, from the street, and from other public areas.

Street furniture such as benches and trash containers are encouraged. These should be consistent in scale, color, and design with the character of the historic district.

Information Sources

All of these sources are available in the Kingston Historic Preservation Library at the Kingston Library, 55 Franklin Street. In addition, some of them are available in the City Planning office. Most are in print and orderable through local bookstores.

THE VALUE OF HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Donovan D. Rypkema. *The Economics of Historic Preservation – A Community Leader's Guide*. National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1994.

KINGSTON HISTORY

Marc Fried. *The Early History of Kingston and Ulster County, N.Y.* Marletown, Kingston, New York: The Ulster County Historical Society, 1975.

Marius Schoonmaker. *The History of Kingston, New York*. Burr Printing House, 1888.

ARCHITECTURAL STYLES

Virginia and Lee McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses*. New York: Knopf, 1984.

Helen Wilkinson Reynolds. *Dutch Houses in the Hudson Valley Before 1776*. New York: Dover Publications, 1965.

Carol Rifkind. *A Field Guide to American Architecture*. New York and Scarborough, Ontario: New American Library, 1980.

PRESERVATION, RESTORATION, AND MAINTENANCE

Various authors, A.I.A. *Preservation Briefs*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of the Interior, 1975 and later dates.

Some titles include:

- *The Cleaning and Waterproof Coating of Masonry Buildings* (Preservation Brief 1)
- *Repointing Mortar Joints in Historic Brick Buildings* (Preservation Brief 2)
- *Aluminum and Vinyl Siding on Historic Buildings* (Preservation Brief 8)
- *The Repair of Historic Windows* (Preservation Brief 9)
- *New Exterior Additions to Historic Buildings: Preservation Concern* (Preservation Brief 14)

Clem Labine's Traditional Building – The Professional's Source for Historical Products. A periodical. 69 A Seventh Avenue, Brooklyn, New York.

Moss, Roger W. and Gail Caskey Winkler. *Victorian Exterior Decoration: How to Paint Your Nineteenth Century American House Historically*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1987.

National Trust for Historic Preservation. *Main Street; Keeping Up Appearances: Design Guidelines*. Washington, D.C.: National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1983.

The Old House Journal Company. *Old House Journal Yearbooks 1976-Present*. Brooklyn, New York.