

The Covert-Brodie-Pollok House 28 • First Town of Greece Landmark

*L*ANDMARKS:
PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE
FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
TOWN OF GREECE

THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

*I*n October 1997, the Greece Town Board adopted a preservation ordinance to safeguard the heritage of the Town by protecting and enhancing the landmarks which represent cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history. The ordinance was also intended to foster, encourage, and advise the preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of structures.

The ordinance is similar to those enacted by more than 170 other municipalities across New York State, in that it protects designated properties. However, the Greece ordinance differs from most other communities because a building or property can only be designated if the property owner agrees to the designation.

Once a property is designated a Town of Greece Landmark, it will be guided by the provisions of the Preservation Ordinance. This brochure is designed to answer some of the questions and concerns about what designation entails.

THE GREECE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

The Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) consists of seven members, appointed by the Greece Town Board. All members are Greece residents who have demonstrated interest in, competence with, or knowledge of historic preservation.

Responsibilities of the HPC include:

- Designating landmarks.
- Reviewing Certificate of Appropriateness and Hardship applications.
- Promoting the preservation of landmarks within the town.
- Making recommendations to the Town's Board of Zoning Appeals and Planning Board concerning applications before these boards relating to properties that include landmarks.
- Increasing public awareness of the value of historic, cultural, and architectural preservation through public education programs.



LOCAL LANDMARKS

What is a Local Landmark?

A local landmark is any building, structure, place, or site, which has been designated by the Historic Preservation Commission as having architectural or historical significance, according to the criteria listed in the Town's Historic Preservation Ordinance.

What is the Importance of Local Landmark Designation?

Locally designated landmarks highlight sites that have historical and/or architectural importance. While the State and Federal governments have registers for historic buildings, that's all they are—official lists of significant sites; they offer no protection from demolition. **Local landmark designation** is the *only* landmark designation that has the power to save a building from demolition or inappropriate alterations.

What are the Criteria for Local Landmark Designation?

To be considered for local landmark designation, a property or building must meet *one or more* of the following criteria:

- Possesses special character or historic or aesthetic interest or value as part of the cultural, political, economic, or social history of the town, region, state, or nation.
- Is identified with historic persons.
- Embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style.
- Is the work of a designer whose work has significantly influenced an era.
- Represents an established and familiar visual feature of the community because of a unique location or single physical characteristic.

What are the Benefits of Local Landmark Designation?

- Landmark laws prevent the hasty, thoughtless demolition of, or inappropriate alterations to, buildings and places with historical and architectural qualities.
- Historic preservation regulations have the potential of

- stabilizing property values and may even increase values.
- An owner who is rehabilitating or restoring an *income-producing property*, which is a designated local landmark and is also listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or contributes to the character of an historic district, may be eligible for certain Federal income tax credits.
- Location in an historic district tends to increase both the loan value and sales potential of a property.

THE DESIGNATION PROCESS

How is a Local Landmark Designated?

- Property owner submits an application.
- Commission reviews application and visits site.
- Public hearing is held. Commissioners, property owner, and any interested parties present documentary, testimonial, and other evidence regarding the historic, architectural, or cultural importance of the proposed landmark.
- Commission votes to confer or deny landmark designation.

How to Apply for Landmark Status

Applications are available from the Town of Greece Department of Development Services. You may pick up an application at the Greece Town Hall (1 Vince Tofany Boulevard, off Long Pond Road, north of Latta Road), or call 723-2432 to have one sent to you.

Reminder: The Town of Greece Historic Preservation Ordinance requires the permission/approval of the property owner for landmark designation. Therefore, it is advised that the owner of the property initiates the application process.

Is Assistance Available During the Application Process?

Members of the Commission, as well as the town staff assigned to the Commission, are available to answer questions and assist applicants with the application process. An extensive survey documenting 101 sites of historic and architectural significance was completed by the Town in 1995 with the help of the Landmark Society of Western New York.

Information contained in the survey can be very helpful in completing a landmark application. It is available at the Town Hall and the Greece Historical Society (595 Long Pond Road,

located next door to the Town Hall). Contact the Department of Development Services (723-2432) to find out if your property is part of the survey, or if you have any questions on the designation process.

WHAT IS A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS?

Once a landmark is designated, certain types of actions affecting the site require review by the Commission. An owner who wishes to make alterations to the *exterior* of a local landmark must first obtain a permit, known as a Certificate of Appropriateness (C of A), from the Commission. A building permit will not be issued until a C of A has been granted.

Please note: A designated local landmark requires approvals from the HPC for any exterior changes made to the building or site. The Commission has no control over interior changes, as long as no evidence of such changes appears on the exterior.

What Projects Require a C of A?

Any new construction, reconstruction, demolition, or moving of a building designated as a Town Landmark, as well as any change in material or appearance of the *exterior* of a property that can be seen from a street or other public right-of-way, requires a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Removal of a porch.
- Adding a window or changing its original configuration.
- Putting an extension/addition onto a house or building.
- Moving a driveway or building a fence.
- Removing trees, shrubs, outbuildings, wells, walkways, or other site features if they were originally or subsequently included in the designation.

What Projects Do Not Require a C of A?

Normal maintenance that does not alter the appearance of a property, changes to interior spaces (unless spaces are open to the public), or architectural features not visible from a public street or right-of-way do not require a Certificate of Appropriateness.

Some examples are:

- Repairing windows.
- Replacing roof with the same material.
- Rebuilding a chimney without changing its design or material.
- Restoring a fence using the same materials.
- Changing the exterior paint color.

What is the Application Process for a C of A?

Application forms are available from the Department of Development Services at the Greece Town Hall. The completed application and required documents, such as plans, maps, and drawings must be submitted at least four weeks prior to the next HPC meeting.

A public hearing will be held during that meeting, where the Commission, the owner of the landmark, and other interested parties may present documentary, testimonial, or other evidence regarding the merits of such a request.

The Commission must approve, approve with modifications, or deny the application within 60 days of the receipt of the completed application. Once the C of A is approved, the owner can then proceed to obtain the other necessary building and zoning permits.

COMMISSION'S DECISION-MAKING AND THE HARDSHIP CLAUSE

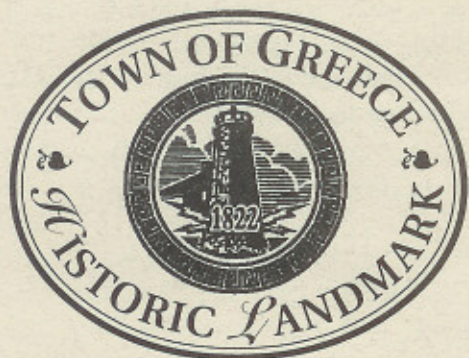
The Historic Preservation Commission has certain guidelines it must follow in granting a Certificate of Appropriateness, therefore, its decisions cannot be arbitrary. (For example, the Commission cannot accept or deny a proposed alteration simply because it does or does not like the plans.) The alteration or new construction must be compatible with the historic, special, or unique character of the landmark.

An applicant whose C of A has been denied may apply to the Town Board for relief from landmark designation on the grounds that such a designation constitutes a hardship.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

The information contained in this brochure is introductory and not intended to cover all aspects of the Town's Preservation Ordinance or the responsibilities of the Historic Preservation Commission and landmark owners.

If you have any questions, please contact the Department of Development Services (723-2432) at the Greece Town Hall.



PRODUCED BY THE HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION
TOWN OF GREECE, AUGUST 1999.
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GRAPHIC DESIGN BY LORENE S. MULHERN
PRINTING BY LYELL QUICKPRINT, INC.