



IMPORTANT INFORMATION

for Property Owners
in Utica's Scenic & Historic
Preservation District

PRIOR APPROVAL IS REQUIRED BEFORE EXTERIOR WORK ON ANY PROPERTY (RESIDENTIAL OR COMMERCIAL) LOCATED WITHIN THE DISTRICT CAN PROCEED. THIS BROCHURE EXPLAINS HOW THE APPROVAL PROCESS WORKS, WHY IT IS IMPORTANT AND HOW IT BENEFITS BOTH PROPERTY OWNERS AND OUR CITY.



Your Proud Heritage

If these walls could talk...

If the walls of the many older buildings in Utica's Scenic & Historic Preservation District could talk, what stories they would tell...

...of important meetings between powerful political and industrial leaders that shaped not only our City, but the nation itself;

...of the excitement in new homes and businesses springing up everywhere as Utica grew into one of the country's most prosperous and progressive communities;

...of the daily lives of the working men, women and families who were the backbone of that development.

The historic structures that still populate the District are not only symbols of the City's proud past, they continue to contribute to its vitality today — as homes, businesses, meeting places, cultural centers and more.

Owning such a property is both a privilege and a responsibility.

Time to Preserve

Thankfully, today these buildings are once again valued for their beauty, character, usefulness and potential to serve future generations. However, that was not always the case.

It was the loss of historic properties like Bagg's Square, Utica's Old City Hall and 2 Rutger Park — during the "urban renewal" movement of the 1960s and continuing into the 1990s — that triggered two turning points in local historic preservation: formation of the private-sector Landmarks Society of Greater Utica; and creation, through Common Council Ordinance No. 313, of Utica's Scenic and Historic Preservation Commission.

The Commission advises the Common Council and property owners on issues related to the preservation of Utica's historic resources, principally those within the Scenic & Historic Preservation District.



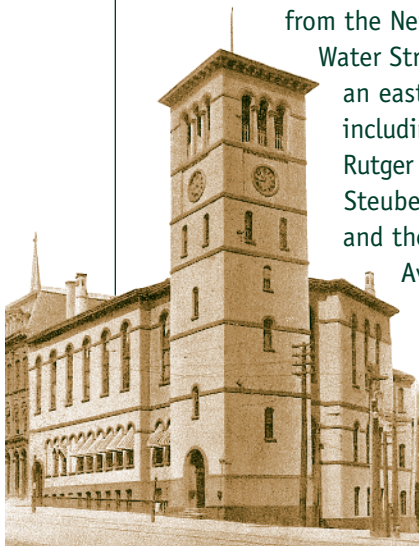
It also rules on whether a restoration project is appropriate, based on the Design Guidelines for properties within the District.

Utica, an area known as “the brewery district,” bordered approximately by Varick, Schuyler and Columbia streets.

What is the Scenic & Historic Preservation District?

The District encompasses some 1,500 properties and parcels of land along the path of much of the City’s earliest and most noteworthy development.

Generally, it includes Genesee Street north from the New Hartford town line to Water Street at the railroad tracks; an eastern extension off Genesee including areas around South and Rutger streets, Park Avenue and Steuben Park; Pleasant Street and the Parkway east to Tilden Avenue; Herkimer Road in north Utica from Leland Avenue to the Schuyler town line; and in west



Why a District?

Identifying areas of special historical significance, which include prime examples of architectural styles that characterized the 19th and early 20th centuries, creates awareness and brings focus to those properties most deserving of historic preservation. It allows common building and renovation standards to be applied, promoting pride in the District, protecting property values and stimulating economic vitality in the neighborhoods.

Communities across the nation have recognized the preservation and revitalization of such districts as “smart growth.” Smart not only from a preservation standpoint, but because older buildings offer benefits like abundant space for lower rent, which smaller and start-up businesses can better afford; and locations where roadways,



utilities and public transportation are already in place. No new land is consumed and vacant buildings are put back on the tax rolls.

Experience in other cities has shown that the values of properties located within scenic and historic districts increased significantly when design standards were implemented.

How Does the Scenic & Historic Preservation Commission Operate — and How Does It Help Property Owners?

The Commission is a five-member volunteer body whose members are appointed by the Mayor for a five-year term. They include at least one architect, a nominee each from the Landmarks Society and the Oneida County Historical Society, and others knowledgeable about historic preservation.

As guardian of the District's historic character, the Commission works with property owners planning new construction, restoration, alterations or renovations that will impact the exterior appearance or architectural integrity of the building, to make sure the project conforms to Utica's Design Guidelines for Scenic and Historic Preservation.

The Commission hears and reviews proposed plans from owners, architects and contractors, on both commercial and residential projects, ranging from signage or facade issues to such basic things as painting or fencing homes.

It has the authority to approve or reject the plan, including proposed demolitions. Approval, through the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness, is required before a Building Permit can be obtained. The Commission also monitors projects for compliance once work is underway.

The Commission meets monthly on a published schedule, with meetings held in the Common Council Chambers at Utica City Hall.



What's in the Design Guidelines and Why are They Important?

Methods for dealing with older buildings often differ from those applicable to contemporary ones. Choosing the wrong treatment can cause serious, irreversible damage to irreplaceable historic properties.

Based on the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation, Utica's Scenic and Historic Preservation Design Guidelines outline specific procedures for compliance in 13 categories, encompassing virtually every aspect of improvement or renovation. They describe preferred, time-tested treatments for dealing with architectural features and common maintenance-related issues.

The Guidelines cover:

- Streetscapes
- Demolition
- New Construction and Infill
- Older Alterations to Existing Buildings
- Dependencies, Outbuildings and Other Associated Structures
- Commercial Architecture, including Storefronts and Facades
- Exterior Surfaces
- Windows and Doors
- Roofs, Chimneys and Porches
- Painting
- Signage and Awnings
- Fences
- Accessibility

In addition, the Guidelines contain a wealth of information about Utica's history, the many architectural styles its buildings represent, and properties that have been designated local landmarks and on the State and National registers.

The Guidelines also include a map of the Scenic and Historic Preservation District and a sample application for a Certificate of Appropriateness.



Prior Approval Must Be Obtained for Any Exterior Change!

Owners, tenants, design and real estate professionals, and contractors should become familiar with the Guidelines. Prior approval is required before any project that will change the exterior a property in the District can proceed.

How Does the Application and Approval Process Work?

Any project involving alterations to the exterior of a structure in the Scenic & Historic Preservation District must be approved by the Commission. Approval is granted in the form of a Certificate of Appropriateness, which is required before a Building Permit can be obtained.

Applications for the Certificate must be filed with the City at least 10 days prior to the meeting of the Commission at which the project is to be reviewed. The Commission's evaluation will be based upon the Design Guidelines. Applicants are notified of the date of the meeting at which their plan will be reviewed.



A printed copy is available from the Department of Urban and Economic Development at Utica City Hall (315-792-0181). The Guidelines can also be downloaded by going to City Government Links — Find Scenic & Historic Information on the City's Web site, www.cityofutica.com.

The following must be included with the application:

- A map, survey or site plan indicating the exact location of the proposed work
- Photograph(s) of the existing property



- Elevation drawings of the property, if available
- Samples of colors and/or specific materials to be used
- If the project includes signage, a scale drawing of the proposed sign showing dimensions, materials, lettering, colors, illumination and location of the sign on the property.

Unclear or incomplete applications will be returned to the applicant.

The Commission reviews and acts on each application within 45 days or less of its submission. In the event that a plan does not conform, the Commission will work with the applicant until a satisfactory design is developed.

Questions about improvements, restoration or rehabilitation of properties in the District are welcome at any time and can be directed to the Department of Urban and Economic Development at City Hall.

Your Partner in Preservation!

It is the Commission's goal to be a helpful partner in providing guidance to property owners and others on how compliance with the Design Guidelines can be achieved. Commission members are committed to communicating the spirit and content of the Guidelines in a way that brings a win-win result for all parties — well-preserved historic properties that are valuable assets for owners and the community.

The Commission is your ally, not an adversary, in historic preservation!

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This pamphlet provides only a brief summary of Utica's Scenic & Historic Preservation program. For more information, including a copy of the Design Guidelines, contact the Department of Urban and Economic Development at City Hall (315-792-0181) or visit City Government Links — Find Scenic & Historic Information at www.cityofutica.com.

It is also suggested that you visit www.uticalandmarks.org, the Web site of the Landmarks Society of Greater Utica.

CITY OF UTICA

Scenic & Historic Preservation Commission
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