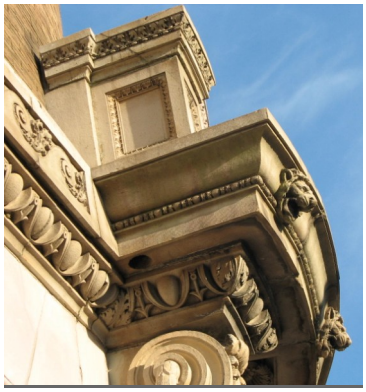
Historic Troy - A Property Owner's Guide

Troy's Historic Districts and Landmarks Commission and Troy's Historic Review Committee are your partners in preservation.



Photos by Sloane Bullough and Christopher Eastman unless noted otherwise .

Mayor
Lou Rosamilia

Throughout the country, values of properties in local historic districts are higher than similar properties outside of historic districts, when all other factors are equal.

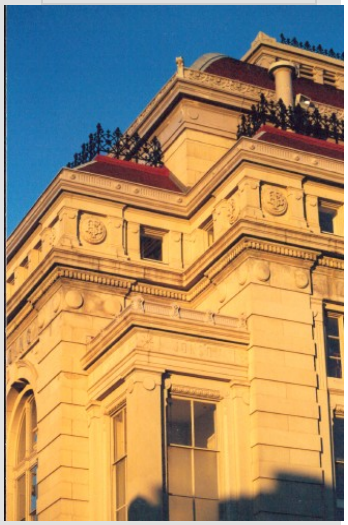


Photo by Jill Malouf.

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Troy's Historic Districts: Reflections of its Industrious Past

The city of Troy has some of the finest 19th-century architecture in the country. Buildings throughout the city are a tangible representation of a story of a city that grew to great importance by being in the right place at the right time. Located at the head of navigation on the Hudson River, the city took full advantage of its position at the crossroads of major transportation routes including the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers, the Erie and Champlain Canals, and a vast network of railroads.

Many diverse industries developed, harnessing the waterpower of streams flowing into the Hudson. The diverse skills of the local workers transformed raw materials into products that were shipped around the world. These included steel, shirt collars, bells, cast iron stoves and surveying instruments. Troy was also home to educational pioneers, abolitionists, and the equal rights movement.

The fine architecture in Troy's local historic districts is a reflection of Troy's 19th-century industrial success. The commercial buildings are a mix of manufacturing, banking, and retail establishments. The residential buildings are a mix of houses built by industrial leaders featuring ornate architectural details and working class housing in more simplified versions of grand late 19th-century townhouses.

Maintaining the evidence of the extraordinary story of the industrious Americans who settled in the city of Troy is a worthy endeavor. Preserving Troy's 19th-century architecture helps create an inviting historic atmosphere that will allow the story to live on now and for future generations. It will also attract visitors and potential residents who want to live in a dynamic city that was once home to forward thinking industrialists and is now home to a forward thinking community of people who take pride in the breathtaking historic districts they call home.

"The greenest building is the one that's already built"
Carl Elefante
www.thegreenestbuilding.org

Historic preservation: the ultimate recycling.

The Historic District and Landmarks Review Commission

As guardian of Troy's Historic Districts, the Historic District and Landmarks Review Commission (HDLRC) works with property owners planning rehabilitation and new construction that will impact the exterior appearance of their buildings to make sure the work conforms to Troy's local historic district standards.

The Historic District and Landmarks Review Commission relies on the Historic Review Committee, a three-member body of volunteers with knowledge of Troy's history, architecture, and historic preservation practices. The members are appointed by the mayor—one member is recommended by the Rensselaer County Historical Society; another member is recommended by the Hudson-Mohawk Industrial Gateway.

The committee reviews proposed plans on both commercial and residential properties from owners and contractors and makes recommendations to the HDLRC based on the city's Historic District Regulations and guidelines (City of Troy Code, Chapter 47). The Planning Commission is the official body making approvals but the recommendations of the committee weigh heavily.

Owners, tenants, design and real estate professionals, and contractors should become familiar with Troy's Historic District Guidelines. A printed copy is available in the Planning Department in Troy City Hall and can be obtained by calling 518-279-7392. The Guidelines and the Commission's meeting schedule can be found at www.troyny.gov.

The Regulations and Guidelines

Lack of maintenance or inappropriate treatment of older buildings can cause serious, expensive, or irreversible damage to irreplaceable historic buildings.

Troy's Local Historic District Regulations and Guidelines are based on the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation. They outline specific procedures for compliance, encompassing nearly every aspect of maintenance and renovation. They describe preferred, time-tested treatments for preserving historic materials and details and common challenges that owners of historic buildings are confronted with in maintaining their properties.

Historic District Regulations and Guidelines address issues relating to:

- Demolition
- Exterior alterations to existing primary and accessory buildings
- New construction and infill
- Commercial storefronts and façade details
- Windows and doors
- Roofs, chimneys, and porches
- Signs and awnings
- Fences
- Accessibility
- Paint scheme selection

The Guidelines also contain a wealth of information about Troy's history and architectural styles.

The Application Process

Approval of the work is granted as a Certificate of Appropriateness, which is required in Troy's Local Historic Districts before a building permit can be obtained.

Applications for the Certificate must be filed with the City of Troy Planning Department at least 10 days prior to the meeting of the Commission at which the project is to be reviewed.

The following items must be included with the application:

1. Address and map, survey, or site plan indicating the exact location of the proposed work.
2. Photographs of the existing conditions of the property.
3. Elevation drawings of the proposed work, if available or a written description other wise.
4. Samples of colors and materials to be used.
5. Scale drawings of any proposed signage showing dimensions, materials, lettering, colors, illumination, and location of the sign on the property.

Incomplete or unclear applications will be returned to the applicant, and the review process may be delayed.

The Commission reviews and acts on each application in 30 days or less of its receipt of the application. If the plan does not conform to the Guidelines, the Commission will work with the applicant until a design that does conform to the Guidelines is found to be acceptable by the Commission.

Questions about rehabilitation of buildings in or outside the districts can be directed to the Troy Planning Department, at 518-279-7392. It is the goal of the Commission to be as helpful as possible in guiding property owners and others on how to comply with Troy's Historic District Regulations and Guidelines. Members of the Commission are committed to adhering to the Regulations and Guidelines and to maintaining the character of the city of Troy through the stewardship of its historic buildings to benefit residents and businesses through out the city.

Financial Incentives for Rehabilitation of Historic Properties

Tax credits are available for rehabilitation of homeowner occupied and commercial buildings listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of a district or individually. Commercial buildings that are in the process of being listed in the National Register are also eligible. Owners can receive credit for 40% of their expenses for rehabilitation of commercial properties and up to 20% for residential properties.

Many restoration projects in downtown Troy were made possible by tax credits. The Conservatory, The Chasan Building, The Market Block, and The Gurley Building all received credits. Quite a few homeowners in downtown Troy have also received historic rehabilitation tax credits for masonry restoration, window repair, painting, kitchen remodeling and heating.

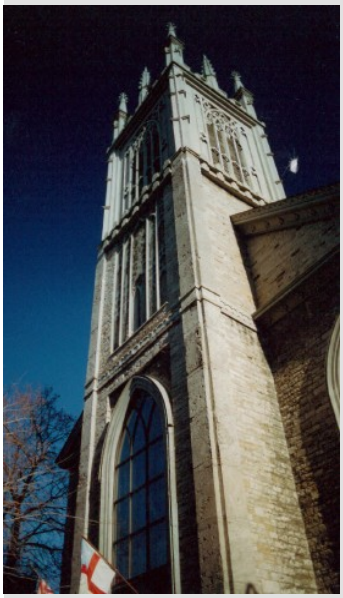

Photo by Jill Malouf

Preservation champions and protects places that tell the stories of our past. It enhances our sense of community and brings us closer together.

One of the best ways to improve the value of your neighborhood is to get involved in preservation.

National Trust for Historic Preservation

City of Troy New York

Troy City Hall
433 River Street
Troy, NY 12180

Hours 8:30 to 4:30
518-279-7168 Phone
518-268-1690 Fax
www.troyny.gov

To:

Congratulations!
You own property in one of Troy's Historic Districts. Troy's historic architecture is among its most distinctive characteristics. Preserving these buildings will benefit you, your neighborhood, and the city at large. We are your partners in preservation. We look forward to helping you celebrate the historic legacy of your property.

Troy Historic Review Committee
Troy Department of Planning & Economic Development
Troy Historic Districts and Landmarks Review Commission
Troy Bureau of Code Enforcement

Resources to Help Owners make Appropriate Decisions

Local Resources

City of Troy www.troyny.gov email planningcommission@troyny.gov
Rensselaer County Historic Society www.rchsonline.org
The Hudson-Mohawk Industrial Gateway www.hudsonmohawkgateway.org
Lansingburgh Historical Society www.lansingburghhistoircalsociety.org
The Washington Park Association http://wpa-troy.org/

State and Federal Resources

NYS Parks and Recreation–
State Historic Preservation Office www.nysparks.com/shpo
Tax credits: www.nysparks.com/shpo/tax-credit-programs/ or call 518-237-8643.
Preservation League of New York State www.preservenys.org
Secretary of the Interior Standards
www.nps.gov/hps/tps/standguide/rehab/rehab_standards.htm
Preservation Briefs http://www.nps.gov/tps/how-to-preserve/briefs.htm