Historic Preservation in Larchmont
Frequently asked questions
What is the Historic Preservation Task Force?

The Historic Preservation Task Force (HPTF) was established in 2017 by the Larchmont Village Board of Trustees and Mayor. The primary goal of the HPTF is to research historic-preservation legislation and resources, identify Larchmont’s “features and objects” of historic interest and value, and to make recommendations regarding historic preservation in Larchmont to the Village Board. The HPTF created this brochure to engage Larchmont residents as part of its community outreach efforts.

What is historic preservation?

Historic preservation is an official means of identifying buildings, properties and cultural artifacts as important contributors to a community and its heritage, and recognizing a collective responsibility to protect these resources. By officially designating historic landmarks individually, or as broader historic districts encompassing groups of important structures, the special qualities of a community can be protected.

Why should Larchmont adopt a historic preservation law?

Larchmont is an historic community blessed with buildings of significant character and importance. The historical, architectural, and cultural heritage of our community is among the most important assets of the Village. Dozens of communities of similar age and character in Westchester County and New York State have opted to establish historic preservation laws to recognize and protect their significant historic, architectural and cultural resources. A historic preservation law, if enacted in Larchmont, may protect and enhance our shared heritage.

Do other Westchester municipalities have historic preservation laws? Which ones?

20 of the 43 municipalities in Westchester County have adopted historic preservation laws, with provisions tailored to the particular desires of each community. Westchester communities with historic-preservation laws include:

- Village of Ardsley
- Town of Bedford
- Town of Cortland
- Village of Dobbs Ferry
- Town of Greenburgh
- Village of Irvington
- Village of Mamaroneck
- Town of New Castle
- Town of North Castle
- Town of North Salem
- City of New Rochelle
- Village of Ossining
- City of Peekskill
- Town of Pound Ridge
- City of Rye
- Town of Scarsdale
- Village of Tarrytown
- City of White Plains
- City of Yonkers
- Town of Yorktown

How does a building become a designated historic property?

Significant buildings, properties and artifacts are usually identified by professional architectural historians and are published in a Historic Resources Inventory and Survey (HRIS). The community’s Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) reviews the HRIS and, according to established criteria, proposes specific properties for designation. The local Board of Trustees reviews the HPC’s recommendations and determines designation. Once designated, properties are subject to review of proposed exterior
Owners’ responsibilities would be no different from what they are now. Residents of Larchmont take the care of their homes seriously. It is all part of cherishing our homes and of sharing a sense that we live in a very special historic village. Owners of designated properties, like their neighbors, would be required to maintain designated properties in good condition and submit certain proposed exterior alterations for review against recognized and well-articulated guidelines. Such review would typically not be required for maintenance-level upkeep of existing features.

Absolutely. Historic-preservation designation does not prohibit modifications to designated properties. The type of review needed would depend on the proposed alterations, in a manner similar to the present reviews by our Village’s Zoning, Planning, and Architecture Review Boards.

Restoration refers to meticulous repairs to the appearance of a building in a specific period of its history, usually tied to a historic event or era, and using original period materials. Rehabilitation involves repairs following the general architectural style of the property, taking advantage of efficient contemporary materials and techniques.

This touches on the essence of historical preservation. Preserving historically designated properties would be the primary goal of a community’s preservation effort. Proposed demolitions of designated properties would need to be submitted for
disagreement with the original review process and/or economic hardship.

The economic impact of historic-preservation legislation has been studied and reported in universities and by various state and municipal entities across the country. The results of these studies are generally consistent, showing that local historic districting stabilizes and enhances property values. Other reports, however, raise questions about the property-value assessment methodologies used in landmarking and historic districts studies and encourage further study. The Larchmont Historic Preservation Task Force is continuing to review this issue.

Will I need permission to paint my designated house a new color?

While some communities with historical designations have guidelines for these types of changes, that is not true of all such communities. Should the Village enact historical-preservation guidelines, proposed changes to the exterior of designated properties would be submitted for review under the same criteria used for historic designation.

Replace my windows?

Yes. Additions can be made to designated properties after submitting the proposed design for review, applying the same criteria upon which the original designation was based. Other pertinent reviews mandated by the Village’s Zoning, Planning, and Architecture Review Boards would still be required.

Can I add an addition to my designated house?

Historic designation is typically limited to exterior elements of buildings, without restrictions on interiors. However, interiors of particular aesthetic or historical significance, such as where a famous person lived or worked, or where a significant event occurred, can sometimes be designated also.

Would there be any restrictions on remodeling the interior of my designated house?

Landscaping is typically not included in historic-preservation designation. Landscaping changes remain subject to other local restrictions.

Can I change the landscaping?

Yes. An appeals process to historic-preservation designation is part of every historic-preservation law. An owner would have the right to challenge the designation under a variety of conditions, including