

Introduction

This handbook is intended to assist in the preservation of the Saratoga Springs Historic District, a locally-designated geographic area rich in historic architecture. It is also a guide to the Saratoga Springs Design Review Commission (DRC), the board that reviews and approves proposed changes to properties in the historic areas. The handbook is an attempt to provide a clear statement of the issues that concern the DRC, the principles that guide its decisions, and the process it follows.

The handbook also defines the character of the historic environments that the DRC is empowered to protect. Definitions of historic character are both difficult and subjective, but it is necessary to understand our architectural heritage in order to preserve it. Saratoga is an extraordinary and unique city. Its extravagant and flamboyant nineteenth-century history left a tangible impression on our boulevards, streets, and alleyways that is unmatched in America.

The DRC's primary goal is to preserve and protect the physical legacy of our past: buildings that are invaluable and irreplaceable. The DRC has a second purpose, which is to foster the same spirit of architectural creativity that shaped the city's development. That spirit is a celebration of art and craft. It must be kept alive.

USING THE HANDBOOK

The four sections of this handbook take the user from an understanding of the general principles of historic preservation to the application of these principles in specific areas and on specific projects in Saratoga Springs.

Chapter One outlines the history of the preservation movement in Saratoga Springs.

Chapter Two describes the goals and objectives of Design Review, and outlines the application and review process for working with the Design Review Commission. In this chapter, you will find a list of the information you will need to provide as part of your application for Design Review.

Chapter Three sets out the principles of design and preservation that the Design Review Commission (DRC) uses when evaluating proposed changes to buildings. It includes principles of architectural design, questions of a building or building element's significance, and a discussion of the types of change and their effects on historic structures.

Chapter Four describes the Historic District, and the wonderful diversity of building types, styles, and uses found in this locally designated area. Each area in the district has its own distinct historical, architectural, and topographic character. A separate section describes the architecture of each area, evaluates its existing conditions, and presents specific review considerations for projects within that area.

Chapter Five includes a description of each of the major architectural styles that can be found in the Saratoga Springs Historic District. Guidance on historic color choices is also provided in this chapter.

Chapter Six contains a glossary of architectural terms.

**GUIDELINES FOR THE PRESERVATION OF
SARATOGA SPRINGS HISTORIC DISTRICTS**

Acknowledgements

Funding for the 2007 update of the Guidelines for the Preservation of Saratoga Springs Historic Districts was provided in part by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Certified Local Government program. Several of the photographs included in this book are from the Beckerman Archive, Saratoga Springs Preservation Foundation, Dr. Mark Beckerman, photographer.