

## **LANDMARK PROTECTION FOR HISTORIC PLACES IN THE CITY OF WHITE PLAINS**

### **WHAT IS THE WHITE PLAINS HISTORIC PRESERVATION LAW?**

In May 2015, recognizing the importance of our City's rich history and the need to protect remaining historic properties and structures, the White Plains Common Council authorized the City's first Historic Preservation Law. The law authorized the creation of the Historic Preservation Commission (the "Commission"), which has the authority to recommend historic properties and districts in the City to the Common Council for greater protection through landmark designation. Landmark designation creates a higher level of review for any proposal to alter or demolish a historic property.

### **WHAT MAKES A PROPERTY ELIGIBLE AS A HISTORIC LANDMARK?**

To be eligible as a landmark, a historic property must meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Possesses special character, historic, aesthetic interest or value as part of the cultural, political, economic or social history of the City, region, state or nation;
- Derives its primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance;
- Identifies with persons or events significant in local, state, or national history;
- Is a cemetery that derives its primary importance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events;
- Is the birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance;
- Embodies the distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style;
- Is the work of a noted designer, architect, or builder;
- Yields or may likely yield information important to the study of the prehistory or history of the region, state, or nation.

### **HOW IS A PROPERTY OR DISTRICT NOMINATED TO BECOME A LANDMARK?**

A property or group of properties possessing one or more of the above criteria can be nominated for landmark or historic district status by either the owner(s) of the property or by the Commission. After the Commission proposes the designation of a landmark or district, a public hearing will be set to gather further information and take testimony. If the Commission finds that the property meets one or more of the above criteria, or a majority of properties in a district meet one or more of the above criteria, the Commission will issue a report to the Common Council recommending designation of the property or properties as a landmark or historic district. A designation will become final 45 days after the recommendation is noticed on the Common Council's agenda unless the Council objects.

### **WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF A PROPERTY BEING DESIGNATED A LANDMARK?**

- Preservation – Enables property owners to ensure that the historic character of their home, business or neighborhood is preserved for the future through the protection of landmark status.
- Prestige- Landmark designation brings a measure of stature, notoriety and exposure to a landmarked property, its owner and the community by focusing on the historical, cultural and aesthetic heritage that the property represents in our community, and the effort to maintain it.
- Economic Value – A well preserved and maintained historic property may better retain or grow in financial value and desirability due to its unique historic status.
- Financial Benefits – Landmark status may result in certain financial benefits only available to owners of historic landmarks such as private preservation grants, public funding such as Community Development Block Grants, and tax abatements offsetting the value of improvements made for the purpose of historic preservation.

To obtain a landmark application, or for more information, visit <http://www.cityofwhiteplains.com/historic> or contact Building Commissioner Damon Amadio at (914) 422-1269.