



What is the Historic Preservation Commission?

The City of Corning, NY created a Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) in 2008 to:

- Protect and enhance the historic landmarks which represent distinctive elements of the City of Corning's historic, architectural and cultural past;
- Foster civic pride in the accomplishments of the past;
- Protect and enhance the City of Corning's attractiveness to visitors and support the stimulus to the economy thereby provided; and
- Insure the harmonious, orderly and efficient growth and economically feasible development of the City of Corning's historic assets.

The HPC is comprised of volunteer Commissioners who live in the city, are nominated by the Mayor and are approved by the City Council. Its meetings are published on the City's website and are open to the public. Meeting agendas may include review of applications from homeowners, commercial property owners, and developers. The Commission also discusses how to advance its mission through outreach and education.

What makes a property or landmark historic?

New York State uses federal criteria by which properties may be assessed for historic value and historic designation

to the State and National Registers of Historic Places. This involves examining the property's age (generally at least 50 years old), historic significance, and integrity (does it still look much the way it did in the past). Nominations are submitted to the New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). State and federal historic designation does not impact a property owner's rights to make changes to their property. There is a separate process for requesting local historic landmark designation which requires filing an application with the HPC and approval by the City Council.

Corning's Historic Districts

Sometimes, an entire neighborhood or district is deemed historically significant, and all the properties within it become part of a historic district. Historic districts may have non-contributing properties. Corning has two state and federally designated historic districts: Southside Historic District and Market Street Historic District. Properties within these districts *may* qualify for state and federal historic tax credits which are administered by the New York State Historic Preservation Office. Individual property owners may also apply for state and federal historic designation of their property regardless of whether they are in a historic district.

Why do we designate historic properties?

Historic designation has many potential benefits for property owners, including qualification for state and/or federal tax credits for some approved repairs and improvements. These benefits can incentivize the revitalization of properties. The National Park Service states that historic designation tends to stabilize neighborhoods and increase property values.

Does historic designation limit property owners' rights?

State and federal historic designation does not normally limit a property owners' rights to alter a structure in any way, including aesthetically. The exception to this is when the property owner is seeking state or federal grants or tax credits. Properties designated as local historic landmarks may require a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) from the Historic Preservation Commission for certain changes, repairs, or improvements as specified in the Corning's City Code and determined by the City's Code Enforcement Office.

Property owners may voluntarily request local land designation and apply for COAs for two main reasons:

- Local designation and COAs are required to receive local property tax benefits that can offset the cost of large improvement projects.
- The COA process helps property owners ensure the use of historically appropriate building materials and methods, which can help maintain both the structural and historic integrity of their properties while they live there and by future owners who will continue to be bound by any such local designation in perpetuity.

How can the Historic Preservation Commission help me?

HPC members are happy to help community members both formally and informally. The Commission reviews applications for local historic status designation and COA applications for desired changes to locally designated structures. Contact the City's Director of Planning and Economic Development (607) 962-0340 ext. 1117, or a member of the Historic Preservation Commission, to learn more.

RESOURCES FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION:

- **City of Corning Code Chapters 119 and 120**
<https://www.cityofcorning.com/>
- **New York State Historic Preservation Office**
<https://parks.ny.gov/shpo/>
- **Preservation League of New York State**
<https://www.preservenys.org/>
- **Landmark Society of Western New York**
<https://landmarksociety.org/>
- **and a book**
Virginia McAlester. *A Field Guide to American Houses, The Definitive Guide to Identifying and Understanding America's Domestic Architecture*. NY: Knopf, 2014. 2nd ed. McAlester's volume is the authoritative guide to the different styles of house architecture found in the U.S. from its beginning to the present time; it includes line drawings and photographs of thousands of houses, including four houses right here in Corning!



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