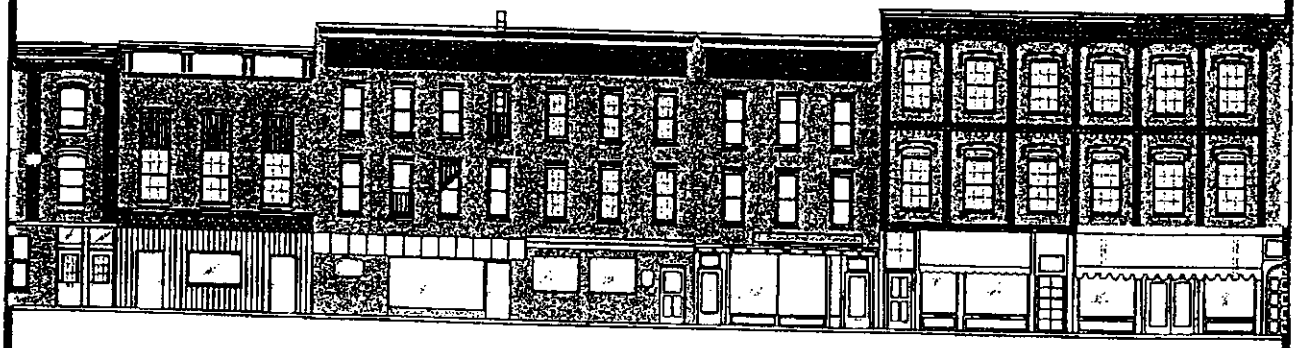
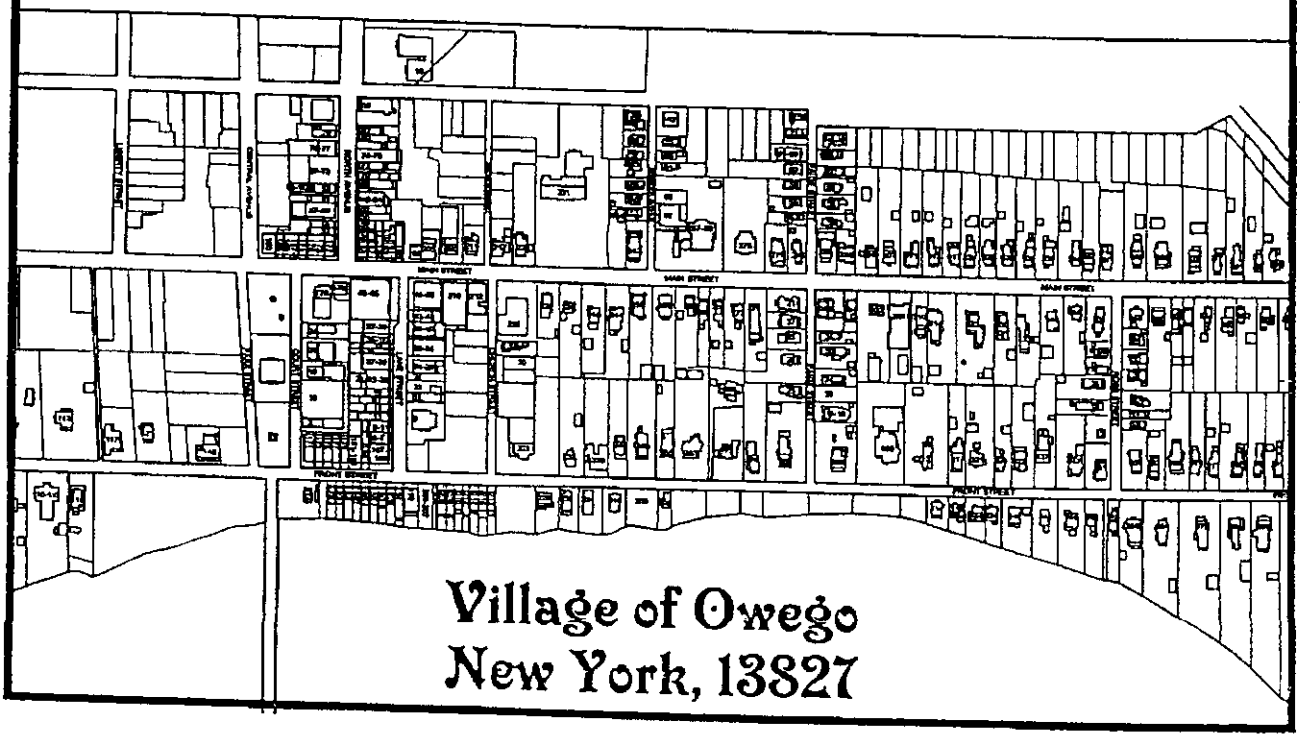
Owego Historic Preservation Commission



Design Guidelines



Village of Owego
New York, 13827

Owego Historic Preservation Commission (OHPC)

Mission

The OHPC's goal is to preserve and enhance the historic character and spirit of the Village of Owego. People who visit, live or work in the Historic District of Owego (see maps - in the appendix) all benefit from the historic nature of the Village, and the Commission strives to assist those property owners who endeavor to maintain or restore Owego structures.

The OHPC must review and approve all exterior renovation, restoration, and new construction in the Historic District. Two main criteria are used to determine project appropriateness:

- ⇒ The project must maintain or restore the historic style, material and character of the building,
- ⇒ The project design, detail and construction should help to protect the property from future deterioration.

The Commission often works with applicants to refine their projects and help provide information and resources. The vast majority of projects presented are approved; good research, preparation and presentation of materials will greatly aid in efficient review and approval.

The Commission pays very close attention to the building materials and construction details of proposed projects. Some modern building products and techniques are not compatible with historic construction methods, and can actually cause rapid deterioration of the building structure. As the Commission must consider the well-being of the community in the years ahead, some modern building materials are expressly prohibited.

In maintaining the Historic District of Owego, the Historic Preservation Commission benefits owners by improving property values and boosting commerce and tourism.

This **Design Guidelines** booklet provides home and shop owners with a practical guide to property restoration. It is a consensus of ideas, thoughts, and methods that have proven successful in the revitalization of many communities. It focuses on the buildings that we live with every day, and emphasizes each building's architectural merit, recognizing that these structures unify our past, and are the keys to Historic Owego's future. It is not intended to cover every condition - all projects are reviewed individually for appropriateness.

Exterior Detail

Architectural Details

Original historical and architectural details on buildings should be retained and maintained. Any changes to the exterior must have OHPC approval. Where the details have deteriorated, preference should be to repair or reproduce the original, with similar materials, maintaining same design, size, color, and configuration. New materials may be considered, if appropriate to the original design. However, metal or vinyl is not permitted to replace or cover wood, brick or stone, since these materials detract from period detail and encourage destruction of underlying original materials. Where original design elements have been destroyed or lost, look to old photographs or other documentation for historically faithful reproduction.

If the owner of a more modern structure wants to create a more historic appearance, assessing neighboring structures often provides a design guide. Owners anticipating this type of change should document the desired changes and consider the impact to the adjoining structures. The changes should blend with the streetscape, and take into consideration materials, color, size, configuration, and style. Changes to provide a building with character more in keeping with Historic Owego may be considered if appropriate documentation (photos, postcards, color palette, architectural drawings) accompanies the application.

Windows and Doors

Windows and doors should retain the original shape and size as the original design. Any design change requires OHPC approval. If a window had been altered from original by a past replacement, the owner shall have the option of retaining the window or door configuration as currently exists, however, the preference of OHPC is to return to original design. Windows and doors should maintain the same material, operation, frame size, sidelights, and muntin design (profile style, size and configuration) where possible. Windows should not be blocked out or tinted; they shall retain their original transparency; where historically appropriate, decorative (removable) items such as stained or leaded glass may be considered. Window Signage requires OHPC & other village approvals.

Where possible, original windows should be retained. Weather stripping, renovation, and caulking will contribute to energy efficiency. For further energy conservation, storm windows may be considered, however, they must have the same configuration as the original window. The preference of the OHPC is to apply storms windows to the inside of the window.

Replacement windows where needed should be wood, with the same style, design, muntin profile as the original. Design change may be permitted if a return to original is planned. Window dividers, or muntins, should be true dividers or applied to the exterior of the unit; "between the glass" type is not permitted. Metal wrapping of sills and other window elements should be discouraged, since that encourages structural decay.

Where storm doors are needed, full view glass design should be used, and the door should be the same color as the existing door or surround. Traditional door hardware is encouraged.

Building Address Numbers

The building address numbers should follow Village code for safety, in terms of size, color and location. They should be of a color that contrasts but complements the building exterior. Decorative plaques, which use historic font type and style, are encouraged. Historic style mailboxes or baskets are encouraged.

General Notes

If changes to a building are proposed, OHPC approval is required and the application should be accompanied by documentation showing that the proposed changes were features of an earlier or original design (photos, postcards, drawings). All new elements must be constructed of materials sympathetic to and in harmony with the historical style of the structure. Vinyl or aluminum application over exterior is not permitted. Vinyl may be used to replace existing vinyl in some cases, however, the OHPC prefers replacement of old vinyl, aluminum, or asbestos with more original material, such as clapboard, shingle, or brick. For best results, follow manufacturing guidelines or professional standards when applying products, or consider using a licensed professional to complete the work.

Building Exterior and Surface

Wood

Clapboard has existed on buildings in the Village for more than 150 years, and can last indefinitely, with proper care. Clapboards should be repaired or replaced with wood siding with the same profile and style. In some cases alternate clapboard siding material (such as cementitious clapboard) may be considered, provided the original profile and style match the original. Painting should match the original.

Decorative wood detail should also maintained and repaired, and if needed replaced, with items faithfully copying the original in material, style, size and configuration.

Paint

Painting can make a dramatic improvement to an historic building, but requires regular maintenance and periodic repainting. Color changes require OHPC approval. Paint colors should be from an "historic color" selection, and should complement the age and style of the structure. Look to the community and surrounding buildings for ideas, and consider the impact on the streetscape.

Masonry

If masonry (brick) has deteriorated, re-pointing or replacement may be required. All work and replacement should match the existing as closely as possible in style, color,

type, bond pattern, and size. When re-pointing, use a mortar appropriate for the brick type.

If cleaning, use the gentlest method possible, since sandblasting or chemical cleaning may damage exterior brick, leading to penetration of dirt and moisture. Many of Historic Owego's brick structures use material from the quarry on the current site of Brick Pond, and may rapidly deteriorate if improperly repaired or harshly cleaned.

Signs and Awnings (Commercial and Public Buildings)

Signs must follow Village Code ordinance, however, design, layout, placement, material and color must be approved by the OHPC for historic suitability. Most historic commercial structures have a natural location for signage (horizontal lintel over store entrance is one example), so this space should be utilized if possible. Color and style should complement the structure, design, and function of the building. Carved wooden signs and signs painted on marine or signboard should be considered where appropriate. Use of historic font, design, and color palette is encouraged, as is preservation of existing "historic" painted wall signs. New mural signs in a historic style may be considered by the OHPC but will still need to comply with Village Code.

Lighting the sign should be done with exterior lights or spotlights; backlighting, neon, or flashing lights are not permitted. Consult village codes for more information.

Awnings on commercial properties must be approved by the OHPC, and must comply with Village Code. OHPC approval will depend on historic appropriateness, with review of design, material, logo, style, configuration, location, and color. Applications should include documentation, such as photos or drawings, to demonstrate compatibility with both the structure and streetscape. Material should consist of fabric, canvas, or alternative compatible with the original structure. Hard, or shed roof awnings with solid roofing material such as shingles or metal are discouraged.

Roofing

The weather in this region requires periodic repair or replacement of roofing materials. Changing existing roofing materials requires OHPC approval. Where possible, repairing and maintaining existing roof material (such as slate) is encouraged. Consider using professional architects and contractors with roofing experience to determine the extent of the repair. When replacement is required, the material should complement the structure's age, style, and protection requirements. OHPC will consider a variety of materials, including slate, newer slate-like products, architectural-grade composition, wood shingles, and metal. Application to the OHPC should include samples of intended materials.

Glossary

Cornice:	Any molding at the top of the building.
Frieze:	Flat panels just under the molding at the top of the cornice.
Brackets:	Large decorative triangular shaped wood or metal pieces directly under the Molding at the top of the cornice. Also called corbels
Transom:	Any windows directly above main display windows or doors, but under signboard.
Muntins:	Structural division between panes of glass in window.
Mortar:	The mix of cement and sand used between joints in masonry.
Trim:	The wood molding or boards at the edges of the building or surrounding windows or doors.
Repointing:	Replacement of old mortar or missing mortar.
Lintel:	The area above the display and transom windows that runs horizontally just below storefront cornice, for signage.
Façade:	The front of the building.
Sidelights:	Vertical panes of glass surrounding entry door.

Resources

Owego Historic Preservation Commission 178 Main Street, Owego, NY (607) 687-3555

Village of Owego Code Enforcement Office 90 Temple Street, Owego, NY (607) 687-2233

Tioga County Historical Society/Tioga County Museum 110 Front Street, Owego, NY (607) 687- 2460 contact: Emma Sedore, Historian

New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation PO Box 189 Waterford, NY 12188-0189 (518) 237-8643

National Trust For Historic Preservation 1785 Massachusetts Ave, NW, Washington, DC 20361 (202) 588-6000

A Field Guide To American Houses.
Virginia and Lee McAlester. Alfred A. Knopf, 1994

Historic Architecture: Broome County, N.Y. and Vicinity.
Eugene D. Montillon. Broome County Historical Society, 1972

House Styles in America.
James C. Massey and Shirley Maxwell. Dovetail Publishers, 1996

Paint In America - The Color of Historic Buildings.
Roger W. Moss, Editor. Archetype Press, 1994

A Victorian House-builder's Guide: "Woodward's National Architect of 1869.
George E. Woodward & Edward G. Thompson. Dover, 1988

The Visual Dictionary of American Domestic Architecture.
Rachel Carley. Owl Books, 1997

Publications: Old House Journal Restore Media LLC, 1000 Potomac St., NW, Suite 102 Washington, DC 20007

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