

SECTION 1

Purpose of Design Standards

Introduction

The historic village that residents enjoy and visitors admire today is not an accident, but rather the product of decades of continuous community stewardship. This effort is a partnership of residents, property owners, business people, and the Village of Palmyra's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC).

The Village of Palmyra was one of the first communities in Wayne County to adopt an historic preservation ordinance. The village contains an unusually well-preserved collection of historic homes, stores, public buildings, and churches.

Most of the village's historic buildings are vernacular interpretations of popular nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century architectural styles. Unique resources include a concentration of Federal-era buildings and an Erie Canal district. The central section of the village is designated an historic district and several individual properties are listed in the National and State Registers of Historic Places.

During the 1980s, several of the village's important historic buildings were threatened, and some were changed with historical accents removed. To prevent further erosion of the village's character, Village officials enacted an historic preservation ordinance. Adoption of the ordinance was made in 2008.

The purpose of the HPC is to educate the community on the value of its historic architecture, to guide the course of further development to preserve our history, and improve the village's aesthetic character. The appointed members of the HPC can review applications once a month to consider the appropriateness of proposed changes to village properties. The Board also serves as a resource to community members and to assist applicants in finding both practical and architecturally appropriate options for additions and alterations.

Preservation regulation has had positive effects. Residents are proud of our community. The charm of the village's residential and commercial neighborhoods has attracted a tremendous amount of investment. Village homes have increased in value. The charm of the Main Street business district has attracted specialty retail stores and has kept storefronts in a challenging era of chain stores located a short drive away. As well-tended villages have become rare, Palmyra has emerged as a regional destination for tourists, some of whom arrive at the Port of Palmyra Marina. The Village of Palmyra is recognized around the state for the encouragement its preservation program provides to community residents. The success of the village's preservation efforts has encouraged Village officials to tackle other issues. None of this would have occurred without the protection afforded by a preservation ordinance.

Today, preservation is an integral part of life in our village. Despite the Village's past efforts, we cannot afford to become complacent as new threats emerge each year. Continued vigilance and balanced design review are the best ways we can preserve the village and its outstanding historic legacy for future generations.