

Over 150 buildings throughout town help form the historic character of Pleasant Valley. The 2006 Community Survey respondents overwhelmingly support keeping historic buildings intact, as well as ensuring that new buildings fit with the historic character of the hamlets.

Unfortunately, most of Pleasant Valley's historic structures do not have any formal protections. Only a few properties are listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Newcomb-Brown Estate on Route 44, and the Bloomvale Historic District on Route 82 including the Bloom House and the Old Mill at the Falls. There has been a loss of some important historic structures and a consequent transformation away from the historic character of the hamlets, especially in the town center.



Potash House in Pleasant Valley hamlet

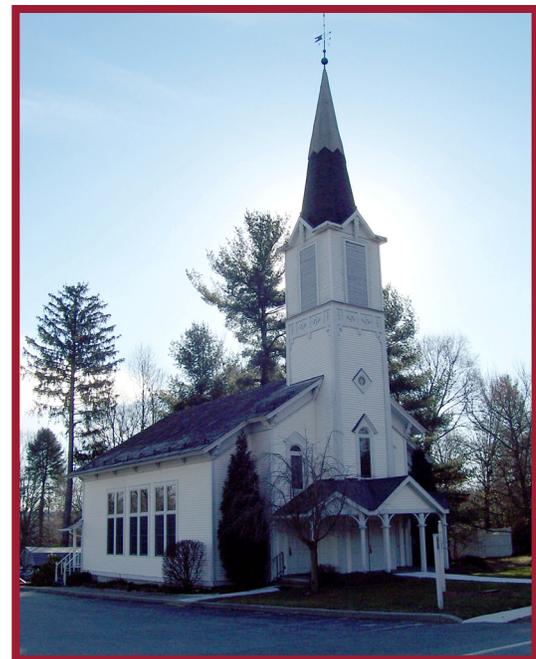
In 1986 the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development organized an inventory of Pleasant Valley's historic properties as part of a countywide survey. A historian from the Dutchess County Historical Society, Stephanie Mauri, mapped significant scenic views and stone walls and documented over 150 structures and sites in Pleasant Valley that were sufficiently intact and architecturally distinctive to meet the survey standards established by the State Historic Preservation Office. These sites were determined to merit further historic research toward local landmark designation or possible nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

The Town Historian, Olive Doty, has since reviewed the survey and listed 48 sites as critically important to the Town's history. In 2002, a zoning amendment was adopted creating a local Historic Register, whereby an owner of an historic structure can elect to be included in the Historic Register of the Town. This designation requires that any exterior alterations or any construction or demolition of a structure that is listed must first obtain a certificate of appropriateness from the Planning Board or certificate of economic hardship from the Zoning Board of Appeals. To date, twelve of the forty-eight sites have been approved as part of the Historic Register.

Identify

As supported by the results of the 2006 Community Survey, one goal of the Town is to identify, protect, and restore Pleasant Valley's historic structures, sites, and roadside cultural features, and ensure that new development respects historic traditions. Further steps need to be taken to prevent destruction or major alterations to existing historic structures, especially in the hamlet centers. Stricter regulations are needed to protect valued historic buildings in the Town.

The first step of identifying historical buildings has already been completed. The Town Historian, the Dutchess County Department of Planning and Development, and town residents have already identified the historic and cultural resources and sites that potentially need protection.



The Presbyterian Church in Salt Point was built in 1861

Protect

In order to realize the second goal of protecting these sites, the Pleasant Valley historic survey should be supplemented with additional historic research for the purpose of National Register nominations. There should also be a local designation of historic districts within the hamlets. Local designation is especially important, as a local zoning law is generally stronger than being placed on the State or National Register. The local law is the combined voice of residents who have agreed to use local laws as a tool to preserve the historic character of their residences, commercial businesses, and streetscapes for long-term public benefit. In addition, a local historic preservation law could control inappropriate “exterior remodeling” and demolition within an entire historic district.

Restore

Achievement of the second and third goals, protection and restoration of historic structures, will require regulations that provide standards for the sensitive rehabilitation of historic properties that are being restored or adapted to new uses. The regulations should also ensure that new development be compatible with the setting, scale, and design of surrounding historic structures and landscape elements. Through the development review process and Highway Department policies, the Town should strive to retain stone walls, tree-lined roads, bluestone walks, barns, dams, cemeteries, and other cultural features of the landscape.

In addition, Pleasant Valley should develop detailed design guidelines for historic structures to be included within the Zoning Code. Written recommendations on architecture, streetscapes, signs, and maintenance of historic structures are needed to help define the concept of architectural compatibility. This would provide positive guidance to applicants and help streamline the development review process. Design review is a key component that can protect the Town from historically destructive renovation, incompatible new architecture, or unnecessary demolition.

The Town’s history, particularly within its hamlet centers, should be promoted through the use of educational materials in the local schools and library, in displays at the Town Hall, and in conjunction with driving, cycling and walking tours. The promotion of local historic qualities can result in economic benefits through tourism and enhanced business recruitment potential. Tourists and businesses alike gravitate to a town that cares about its appearance and character.

Implementation Strategies: Historic Preservation

Short-term:

- 3.1 Provide design guidelines in the Town's zoning law that help preserve the historic character and are used in site plan review for projects in the hamlets.
- 3.2 Include architectural review as part of the site planning review process.
- 3.3 Identify structures with historic and/or aesthetic value which may be included in regulations for historic preservation, and designate historic districts (i.e. Salt Point Hamlet, Main Street area of the Pleasant Valley hamlet).

Long-term:

- 3.4 In conjunction with interested property owners, nominate historic sites for the National Register of Historic Places.