

Central Lansingburgh Historic District Nomination

Prepared by Marissa Marvelli of Neil Larson & Associates for City of Troy. Sept 6, 2022



504-512 Second Ave. October 2021. Photo: Marissa Marvelli

The City of Troy is sponsoring the nomination of a new historic district for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This district honors the history and architecture of Lansingburgh in North Troy. Listing in the National Register provides important economic incentives for preservation. In particular, it qualifies many property owners to participate in historic tax credit programs.

Why is Lansingburgh worthy of preservation?

Lansingburgh has a long and rich history. It was conceived in 1770 by landowner Abraham J. Lansing who envisioned a thriving riverport market center for raw products from the Mohawk Valley and upper Hudson River region. That year he hired a surveyor to map a plan for his farm into a rectangular grid of blocks, streets, alleys, and a central village green. Many of the early settlers were Dutch-Anglo Albanites and New Englanders who were deeded building lots in exchange for annual quit rents to be paid to Lansing or his heirs. By 1788 Lansingburgh was “thronged with merchants and emigrants” necessitating the expansion of the street grid. Early industries included slaughtering, tanning, beermaking, shipbuilding, gun making, cracker baking, oilcloth and brushmaking. The last two became Lansingburgh’s largest industries. Employment in factories attracted many new residents to Lansingburgh in the mid- and late 19th century, including Irish, German, and later Danish immigrants. This population growth was reflected in the development of new commercial, civic and church buildings, and social halls, as well as more diversified housing, large and small, reflecting hierarchies of class and wealth. Despite the

inevitable impact of time and changing fortunes over its 250-year history, Lansingburgh retains significant elements of its architectural heritage starting with the 18th-century grid plan itself and proceeding through a full catalog of 19th-century domestic, commercial, church and civic architecture as landmarks of the progress and the successes of the community.

The Central Lansingburgh Historic District nomination has been prepared by Neil Larson & Associates, a historic preservation consultant based in Kingston, NY. Principal Neil Larson has been responsible for scores of successful resource surveys and historic district nominations, including ones in Schnectady, Saratoga Springs, New Paltz, and Rhinebeck. Research and field survey work was done by associate Marissa Marvelli.

What is the National Register?

Established by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the National Register of Historic Places is the official list of historic properties that have been recognized as significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, or culture. The Division for Historic Preservation of the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (also known as the State Historic Preservation Office or SHPO) coordinates the National Register program in New York State as well as the parallel State Register program.

What is a historic district?

Properties can be listed in the National Register as individual buildings/structures or as historic districts. Districts are groupings of properties such as residential neighborhoods, commercial downtowns, and industrial complexes. District boundaries are drawn based on a number of factors, most importantly the history of the neighborhood and the “historic integrity” (how intact the historic appearance is) of the buildings within the proposed boundaries.

Does this mean I won't be able to make changes to my home/building?

No. The National Register does not restrict what private property owners can do to their properties. In fact, as long as state/federal funding or permits are not being used, a property owner can demolish a building that is listed in the National Register. Protection only exists when state and/or federal money and/or permitting is involved in a project. The most common such occurrence is when a Department of Transportation is reconstructing or widening a roadway. If you choose to take advantage of the tax credit programs, the State Historic Preservation Office will have to review your proposed work. If you do not choose to utilize this financial incentive, the State does not review changes to your property.

What are the benefits of National Register listing?

- Build community pride
- Access to historic tax credit programs
- Expands grant opportunities for organizations including churches
- Recognizes & documents a neighborhood's development & history
- Marketing tool for attracting residents, businesses, & visitors to Lansingburgh

Historic Tax Credit Programs:

For Homeowners

The New York State Historic Homeowner Tax Credit Program provides tax credits on your NYS income tax worth 20% of qualified expenditures, up to \$50,000.

SHPO staff review proposed work and help property owners determine the best approaches to rehabilitation objectives. In general, projects should strive to retain and repair original, historic materials. Proposed work is reviewed according to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation.

Typical qualifying work includes repairs to:

- walls, masonry, finishes (interior and exterior), floors, ceilings, windows and doors, chimneys, stairs (interior and exterior) roofs;
- components of central air conditioning or heating systems, plumbing and plumbing fixtures, electrical wiring and lighting fixtures;
- elevators, sprinkler systems, fire escapes and other mechanicals.

Projects such as landscaping, fencing, additions or other work outside the historic building generally do not qualify.

For Owners of Income-Producing Properties

Owners of "income-producing properties" (commercial and apartment buildings for example) can take advantage of both the State and Federal Rehab Tax Credit Programs. The state commercial tax credit is used in conjunction with the federal tax credit. Each provides tax credits worth 20% of Qualified Rehabilitation Expenditures. For projects under \$2.5 million, the state credit is 30%. Together, the federal and state programs offset up to 50% of QREs, with the state tax credit capped at \$5 million.

The work performed must meet federal preservation standards as established by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation and be approved by the National Park Service (NPS). SHPO staff review projects and work with property owners to determine the best approaches to rehabilitation objectives. In general, projects should strive to retain and repair original historic materials, including windows.

Most interior and exterior work is eligible for the tax credit. This program essentially covers the entire building, inside and out, from top to bottom. Project components such as site work, new additions or other work outside the historic building generally do not qualify.

