

HHPC News

The Newsletter of the Hightstown Historic Preservation Commission

What's Going On?

Volume 01

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Why is there a Historic Preservation Commission?



201 STOCKTON STREET

HISTORIC DISTRICT RECEIVES GRANT \$\$\$

Hightstown has received a federal grant to replace all of the curbing and sidewalks in the Historic District, which includes portions of Rogers, Church, Academy and Stockton Streets. Additionally, the Civil War Memorial and its grounds will be restored, and the Rogers Avenue juncture at Stockton Street will be narrowed. Additional trees and green space between the walkways and streets will also be planted throughout the District. The Borough has solicited bids from contractors for this major streetscape improvement project, and the selected contractor will soon be announced. The project is currently on schedule to begin construction in early August, 2010.

The significant level of funding for this project, \$1.7 million, was secured by leveraging our 76 historic assets listed on the NJ state and federal registers of historic places. The new streetscape will enhance historic preservation, appreciation and the walking experience within Hightstown's Historic District. New Jersey's State Historic Preservation Office guided the design of the historic streetscape, whereby the walkways in front of each historic structure are to be rehabilitated based on historic evidence as to whether the historic walkways were bluestone or brick. The majority of the District's walkways will be brick in a herringbone pattern, with a few properties returned to their original bluestone walks. Where original brick and bluestone walkways have survived from the past, those walkways will be removed, the ground leveled and the original walks will be reset in place with any broken materials replaced. The entire District will be easily identified with a consistent granite curb that will help to delineate the boundaries of the 14.35 acre historic area.

Stay tuned for public meetings to be scheduled with further details. In the meantime, should you have any questions please feel free to contact the HHPC project leader, Dan Buriak at 609-937-3229.

To Protect and Maintain Hightstown's Heritage

Hightstown Historic Preservation Commission Ordinance

<http://www.hightstownborough.com/ordinances/borough-code> (Chapter 2-45)

The Hightstown Borough Council has established an ordinance to enable the Historic Preservation Commission to educate, advise and protect the homes within the historic district. Are you in the district? Right now, there is only a zoning map to tell you if you are part of the Historic District. In time there will be signs and other special indications. For now, your receipt of this newsletter is because you are in the Historic District.

We are doing our part to establish Hightstown as a destination; a place that heritage tourists seek out to stroll through our Historic District, and imagine a time of horse drawn carriages and cold iced tea on the porches sitting with neighbors talking about the new railroad station.

The goals of the Historic Preservation Commission are:

1. To identify, record and maintain our Historic District and other designated landmarks throughout the Borough of Hightstown.
2. To act as an advisory commission to the Planning Board, the Mayor, and the Council in planning the Borough's revitalization.
3. To monitor and recommend to the Mayor and Council, the submission of any grants related to historic preservation.
4. To provide enthusiasm whenever possible for our Historic Heritage.
5. To provide publications and educational opportunities to promote

Historic Preservation in the Borough of Hightstown.

6. To review, and render advice and recommendations to the property owners within the District towards maintaining and / or renovating their homes.

Towards this end as a homeowner within the District any work planned that structurally alters the house, that requires a building permit, or that is planned for the exterior of your house (other than painting) shall be reviewed with the Historic Preservation Commission. The Commission will then render an Opinion.

Examples of changes which require an Opinion which do not require a permit are changes to windows, window trim, doors and door trim, fascia, soffits, exterior wall materials, gingerbread, dentils, brackets, metal relief, lights, porches, etc.

We want to help you maintain the character of your house and offer you ideas that will coordinate with the era when your house was built.

Remember that just because the big box home center doesn't stock it, doesn't mean that it isn't available. Or, that because they do stock it, that you should use it. Your house is special and we want to help you keep it that way.

We meet the third Thursday of the month at 7:30pm in the Council Chambers at Borough Hall. Please stop in and see us. We would be happy to talk to you about your home.

NO INTERNET? Not to worry. Please call 609-490-5100, and leave your address. We will make you a copy and drop it off.



District Awards

Be the first to receive the coveted District Award.
Issued Bi-annually

DISTRICT AWARD certificates will be issued by the Hightstown Historic Preservation Commission two times a year to the resident that improves or maintains their historic property as per the objectives of Subsection 2-45.1 of the Historic Preservation Commission Ordinance.

The resident will receive a certificate of award suitable for framing, a \$25 Visa gift card and a news piece on the Downtown Hightstown webpage.



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Historic District Signage

The Historic Commission is researching signage options both for the entrances to the district and for each house. Residents will be able to purchase a small plaque establishing their house as a nationally recognized historic structure and showing the date or approximate date that the house was built.

When a design is selected and a cost established, all residents will be notified.



A Pattern Book for Hightstown

The Historic Commission is compiling a Pattern Book for Hightstown. This book will act as an aid for homeowners, contractors, and developers wishing to do work on houses in Hightstown. The main portion of the book will focus on each style or type of house found in Hightstown (not just within the historic district) and what types of architectural ingredients make up that style. There will be background about the styles and pictures from primarily within Hightstown of these various styles and elements.

Also, there will be chapters on additions, maintenance, porches, windows, historic glass, and many other interesting visual aspects about the house and structures of Hightstown.

We are finalizing the images to be included and putting the finishing touches on the text and drawings. We hope to first "publish" the book electronically, and then seek a grant to print hard copies for sale.

The publishing date is not yet set, but hopefully by fall of this year.



District Events

Semi-annual porch tour. Ride the horse drawn carriage, talk to one of our notable dignitaries from time gone by, listen to docents talk about the history of our houses. Next tour, fall of 2011.

Ghost Tour. Walk with us at nightfall through the cemeteries and we will tell you some early stories. Ghosts have been seen in some of our houses. We can tell you stories about each of them.

Walking Tour. We will be creating a self guided walking tour that can be taken at your leisure. Take a stroll and learn about the houses in the District. Where did the town doctor live, where was the Friday club started, and more...



Demolition Ordinance

What began as a part of the Historic Preservation Ordinance to protect our historic houses from demolition has become a Borough wide ordinance.

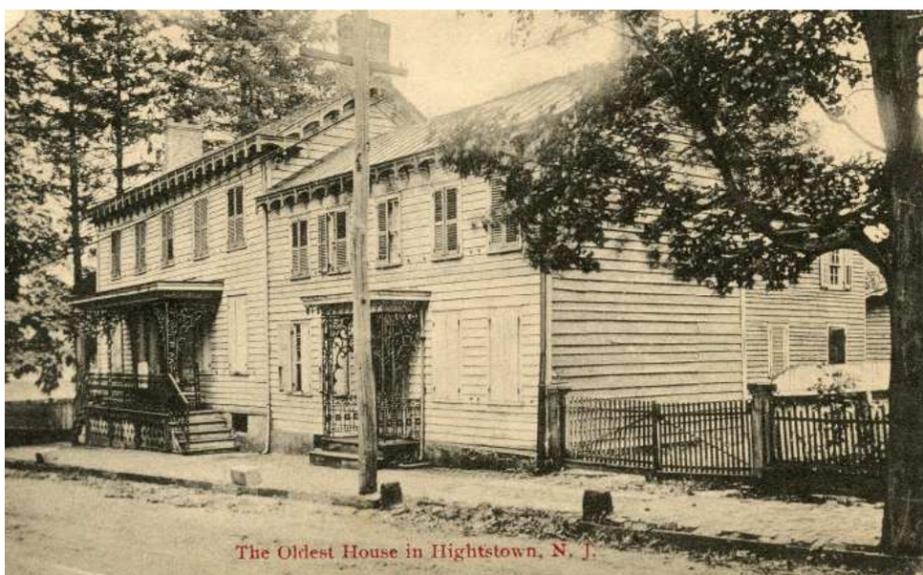
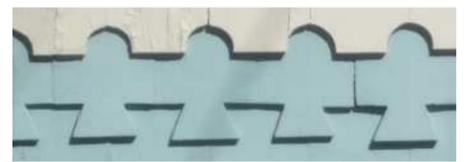
While we can not keep people from demolishing homes, we can require that certain requirements are met before tearing down a house.

As part of the ordinance, there is a paragraph that requires that the HPC go into the house to take pictures, and measurements before the house is destroyed forever.

To further protect our houses throughout town, we are updating the Historic Element within the Borough Master Plan to call out certain houses and structures which are important to our heritage. This is a tool for the Planning Board to arm them with substantiated reasons why a structure should not be torn down or altered.



All of the images found in this newsletter will be part of the Pattern Book.



The Oldest House in Hightstown, N. J.

