



Town of Rochester Historic Preservation Commission Secures State Grant

The Town of Rochester has been notified that it has received a coveted Preserve New York grant from the Preservation League of New York State. The Town was one of only 14 communities in the entire state to receive funds.

The \$5,000 award will go to the Historic Preservation Commission, which requested funds to research facets of Rochester's architectural treasures and share the information with Town residents. The study, called a cultural resources survey, will update an earlier one from 1993. The consultant for both surveys is Harry Hansen, of Kyserike Restorations in High Falls, a leading preservationist. When his survey is completed, Hansen will present the results to Town residents in a variety of local forums.

Rochester is already known for having one of the largest inventories of 18th and early 19th century stone houses in the country. The new survey will focus primarily on buildings from a later era when Rochester's development was shaped by the presence of the Delaware & Hudson Canal and after that, the Ontario and Western Railroad. It was a time when agriculture flourished and local residents welcomed thousands of New York City residents to its summer resorts.

Pam Duke, Town Supervisor, hailed the award, saying, "Educating the community about our architectural heritage is an important function of the Historic Preservation Commission. Rochester's architectural legacy is something we can all take pride in and is another step toward preserving our township's rural character."

The Preserve New York Grant Program is a partnership program of the Preservation League and the New York State Council on the Arts. “This program supports outstanding local preservation projects throughout the state,” said Jay DiLorenzo, President of the Preservation League. “Since 1993, Preserve New York has awarded nearly \$1.2 million in direct support to 201 projects.”

“At its August, 2007 meeting, the Preserve New York grant program panel selected 14 projects in 12 counties around the state to share \$87,200 in funding,” said Erin Tobin, Regional Director of Technical and Grant Programs in eastern New York for the Preservation League. “But with over \$224,000 in project requests this year, the competition for these funds was intense. The League is delighted to help advance the efforts of the Town of Rochester’s Historic Preservation Commission with this grant.”

According to Anne Van Ingen, Director of the Architecture, Planning and Design Program and Capital Projects for the New York State Council on the Arts, “We have seen the tangible benefits of the strategic grants made by the Preserve New York Grant Program, and are especially gratified that state funds made available through Preserve New York leverage private investment, help save historic neighborhoods and downtowns, and celebrate New York’s incomparable architectural legacy.”

Rochester’s grant will allow Hansen to examine a variety of structures, ranging from the former train station and Barley’s General Store, both on Main Street in Accord, to an unusual group of plank and log structures in the hills above the Rondout Valley that are linked to the 19th century tanning industry. The Friends of Historic Rochester, also located on Main Street, will aid Hansen in his research and will house his report and research materials. Alice Cross, Chair of the Historic Preservation Commission, brokered the arrangement with the Friends.