

The following pages were extracted from the "Village of Port Chester Comprehensive Plan", https://www.portchesterny.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlif1096/f/uploads/finalportchestercomprehensiveplanadopted12-17-2012_0.pdf prepared by BJB Planning, 115 Fifth Avenue, NY, and adopted by the Board of Trustees December 17, 2012. The Plan identifies a number of Historic asset, with specific historic recommendations; the Plan was accepted and signed in agreement by:

Mayor Dennis G. Pilla

Trustees: Daniel Brakewood
John Branca
Bart Didden
Joseph D. Kenner
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10.0 HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

While new development and revitalization play central roles in a community's social and economic prosperity, preservation of unique architecture and historically significant features is no less essential. Port Chester has several resources that contribute to the Village's historic and cultural fabric. In the face of increased growth and development, preservation and enhancement of these valuable resources is critical.

10.1 HISTORICAL RESOURCES

A. Historical Societies

Port Chester Historical Society

The Port Chester Historical Society maintains the Bush-Lyon Homestead, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Its collections include antique furniture and historical artifacts related to Port Chester.

Westchester County Historical Society

The Westchester County Historical Society was founded in 1874 as a nonprofit organization and is currently based in Elmsford. Its mission is to promote the knowledge and understanding of history in Westchester County. The Society collects and preserves books, manuscripts, maps, photographs, and other publications that area significant to the County's history . The Society also hosts historically relevant events, including lectures and book signings.

B. National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the Nation's official list of historic places worth of preservation, which include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering, and culture. Generally, properties eligible for listing in the register are at least 50 years old; younger properties must be exceptionally important to be eligible for listing.

The Village of Port Chester currently has five (5) resources listed on the National Register of Historic Places (see Figure 10-1):

Bush-Lyon Homestead

The Bush-Lyon Homestead is located on King Street in John Lyon Park. The building has an architectural/engineering historic significance and has a domestic historic function. The Homestead was acquired by the Village in 1925, was added to the National Register Sites in 1982 and is currently a museum.

Capitol Theater

The Capitol Theater is located at 147-151 Westchester Avenue and has an architectural historic significance. The period of significance of the Capitol Theater is from 1925-1949 when it had a recreation and cultural historic function. The 1,835-seat theater has been operating as a special events facility and is scheduled to reopen in mid-2012 as a live concert venue.

Port Chester Post Office

The Port Chester Post Office is located at 245 Westchester Avenue. The building has a colonial revival architectural style and its interior is ornate with murals painted by Dominico Mortellito in the Mexican muralist tradition of Diego Rivera and Jose Clemente Orozco. The period of significance of the Post Office is from 1925-1949 when it had a government historic function. The building was listed on the Register in 1989 and still operates as a post office.

Life Savers Building

The Life Savers Building is located on North Main Street and is a symbol of the area's industrial heritage. The period of significance of the Life Savers Building is from 1900-1924 when it had a historic function as a candy factory. Life Savers operations ceased in 1985 and the building was subsequently converted to condominiums.

St. Peter's Episcopal Church

St. Peter's Episcopal Church, located at 19 Smith Street, was constructed in 1889-90 and represents a late Gothic Revival style of architecture. It was added to the National Register in 2006.

B. Archaeologically Significant Areas

Port Chester contains one large archaeologically sensitive area in the southern end of the Village. See Figure 10-2. Archaeologically sensitive areas are designated when a site of some archaeological significance is discovered, and represents both the site itself and a surrounding buffer zone between approximately one-half and one mile in radius. Tracts of land, bodies of water, or some combination of the two can be found in these areas. Significant areas are designated for innumerable reasons related to the preservation of the history and culture in a region, but all are similarly valued for the nonrenewable nature of the site itself and its associated materials. The New York State Historic Preservation Office holds detailed descriptions and locations of specific archaeological significant sites confidential. Future development in a significant area may require a Phase I Archaeological Survey.

10.2 CULTURAL RESOURCES

The Port Chester-Rye Brook Public Library

The Port Chester Library was founded in 1876 and has been in its present location at 1 Haseco Avenue since 1926. Since that time, the building has undergone a 9,000 square foot expansion and recently underwent renovations including the addition of an elevator, a doubling in the size of the children's section, and the addition of two meeting rooms. The library is a member of the Westchester Library System, and currently serves a population of more than 36,000 and is funded by both the Villages of Port Chester and Rye Brook.

Port Chester Senior Community Center

The Senior Community Center, located at 220-222 Grace Church Street, provides free recreational, nutritional, and support services to senior citizens. The Center also provides transportation and low cost meals, shopping trips, and exercise classes, and occasionally offers events and overnight trips to participants as well.

10.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation # 1: Preserve Port Chester's historic resources that contribute positively to the Village's unique character

- Protect and preserve the unique architectural character of Downtown Port Chester by drafting and implementing a program of design guidelines for Main Street between Westchester and Horton Avenues.
- Protect and preserve the Village's historic resources through the use of design standards, zoning controls, easements and other tools that would not impose undue hardships on property owners.
- Establish local incentives for historic preservation, such as designating a neighborhood historic district that would not impose undue hardships on property owners.
- Develop a Historic Resources Survey to investigate and document historic structures, sites and resources in the Village that could be used to establish a neighborhood historic district.
- Educate residents, owners and local real estate firms/agents of historic property incentives, funding low interest loan resources and related state and federal regulations.
- Educate property owners of the importance of high quality urban design and historic preservation.
- Promote historic preservation through financial mechanisms, including grants and tax incentives.
- Explore options to adopt a Sliding Scale Tax Incentive to encourage redevelopment and reinvestment of designated historic structures.

- Restore and revitalize the Bush Homestead. Seek out non-profit groups and / or grants to turn this facility into a living history education center.
- Support the adaptive reuse of historic buildings.
- Restore and enhance currently designated historic structures.
- Consider participating in the Certified Local Government (CLG) program.
- Apply for designation as a "Preserve America Community."
- Create a Village-sponsored awards program that recognizes projects that exemplify design excellence and historic preservation.
- Foster partnerships with preservation organizations to organize public information campaigns .
- Support student involvement in historic preservation and design practices.

Recommendation #2: Sustain and strengthen the vibrant arts and cultural community that contributes to the economy, education, employment and quality of life throughout the Village

- Encourage commemorative reenactments and historical events to bring people together and substantiate the Village's historical identity.
- Market local historical events as tourist destinations.
- Uncover distinct cultural values and history in the Village's neighborhoods and take steps to honor their significance.
- Continue to support outdoor concerts and events in the Village parks and other appropriate locations .
- Display local art from artists and students in appropriate locations.
- Support further development of small and mid-sized venues for music, performance and visual arts exhibitions.
- Update the fee schedule for outdoor events to adjust for associated overhead expenses.
- Continue communication with the arts and cultural community, designating a specific organization, such as the Port Chester Council for the Arts, to act as a liaison .
- Collaborate with the School District to develop partnerships with arts organizations and higher educational institutions to increase exposure of students to arts and cultural activities.

Recommendation #3: Continue to integrate the arts and entertainment into the Village's economic development activities

- Continue to highlight the richness and diversity of Port Chester ' s arts and cultural activities, institutions and attractions in economic development and marketing plans.
- Conduct an assessment of entertainment venues to determine the economic and social impacts and identify strategies to promote a healthy arts and entertainment district in the Village's Downtown or waterfront.

- Evaluate opportunities for strengthening the Village's cultural facilities and organizations and provide support as feasible.
- Evaluate the feasibility of an outdoor signature events space on the waterfront.
- Include arts and cultural organizations, institutions and businesses in business recruitment and retention efforts.
- Encourage arts-based business incubators to nurture new businesses in the Village.
- Consider establishing a Citizen's Advisory Group that would be responsible for reviewing issues and initiatives pertaining to historic and cultural resources and making recommendations to the Village on optimal strategies and implementation efforts.

End of quoted material. Complete 2012 BFJ Planning Report is available online at:

https://www.portchesterny.gov/sites/g/files/vyhlf1096f/uploads/finalportchestercomprehensiveplanadopted12-17-2012_0.pdf

The above information is presented here in response to the Port Chester Board of Trustee's recent decision to permit the demolition of large sections of Main Street. Zoning changes that were considered, and approved after the above Report was issued, are being cited as the reason such demolition is permitted and encouraged. It is the considered opinion of the Port Chester Main Street Association that the BFJ Planning Report was properly researched and documented, and that the Board of Trustees has chosen to ignore the recommendations of a qualified City Planner, resulting in the loss of significant valuable historic aspects of the downtown area.

Port Chester Main Street Association

www.portchestermainst.org

January 11, 2022