

Borough of Chatham

Annual Report

2009

Historic Preservation Commission

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**Members of the Commission who served in 2009 were:**

Janet Siegel, Architect	Patty Gavalakis
Eleanor Smith, Secretary	Colleen Foley
Lee Nordholm	Isobel Mitchell
Mindy Pitonyak	

*The Commission also benefited from the attendance of Bruce Harris, Council Liaison.*

**Our 2009 agenda included the following:**

- 1. 407 Main Street:** The Commission continued to monitor the construction of the HSBC Bank branch. The Commission was, however, disappointed to note that one of the large, mature trees at the front of the property was removed during construction. Keeping the trees at the front of the site was an important issue to the Commission, and would have significantly enhanced the building. Also disappointing is the amount of light that the building spills onto the site. Nonetheless, the Commission is generally satisfied that the final structure is an improvement over the original building proposed.
- 2. Sign Committee:** Members of the Commission participated in Borough Sign Committee meetings to represent the concerns of the Commission when applications for signage approval in the Historic District were under consideration by the Sign Committee. In 2008, signage was a continuing concern for the Commission. We provided input on the “gateway” signage at the entrance to the Borough, on the Fuoco exterior signage and building painting, the AT&T store sign on Main Street and the Turpin sign at 168 Main Street. Given the importance of signage generally in the Main Street Historic District, the Commission believes it would be appropriate to have a more formal role in the signage committee. The Commission understands that members of the Borough Council are reviewing the sign ordinance and would suggest that consideration be given to involving the Commission in that process.
- 3. Review Guidelines:** The Commission completed work on a brochure to provide guidance to individuals seeking to present projects to the Commission for consideration. Among the issues addressed in the brochure are the types of projects to be reviewed by the Commission, when in the project development process projects should be reviewed by the Commission, and the types of information that should be submitted by applicants to enable an effective review by the Commission. The Commission is hopeful that the brochure can reinforce the need to seek Commission review of projects located in the Historic District prior to demolition or other alternation of structures in the Historic District. Janet Siegel and Lee Nordholm were instrumental in this effort.
- 4. Jan Westfall Preservation Flag Award:** Commission members identified and discussed several candidates for the Flag Award which recognizes efforts to preserve older

structures in the Borough. After much discussion, the Commission elected to present two Flag Awards for 2009: to the Nall Family and their home on Fairmount Avenue, and to the Jenson Family and their home on North Hillside. These two homes represent very different types of renovation and restoration efforts and the Commission wanted to highlight the spectrum of preservation efforts underway in the Borough. The Flag Awards were presented at the Borough Council meeting on October 26, 2009.

5. **Looking Forward:** The Commission has begun an effort to investigate the concept of preservation easements as a possible way to encourage and support the restoration of structures in the Historic District. The Commission anticipates that this initiative will be a focus of the group in 2010.
6. **Membership:** Lastly, Janet Siegel has decided to leave the Commission after ten years of truly dedicated service. The members of the Commission wish to thank Janet for all of her hard work and for her expert guidance. She will be missed.