



HELP US PRESERVE THE HISTORIC CHARACTER OF MOUNTAIN LAKES

Why did you move to Mountain Lakes?

The natural beauty of rolling hills, woodlands and many beautiful lakes? The excellent school system and warm, welcoming community? Chances are, you were also charmed by the elegant historic homes, churches, schools, train station and “downtown” area that are a vital fabric of our special community.

As residents, we are all entrusted with the preservation of our history.

Surprisingly, there is currently *no protection*, in the form of regulation or incentives, for the non-residential historic landmark structures in the Borough that make our town unique.

Imagine Mountain Lakes without the beautiful puddingstone walls and bridges, the Station, St. Peter’s Church, the Community Church, Briarcliff School, and of course, everyone’s favorite gathering place, Hapgoods, as well as the iconic Midvale building the restaurant resides in.

Loss of these structures (or their alteration in a way that is not consistent with their historic character) would have a profound impact on the character of our community as a planned residential park community designed by developer Herbert Hapgood.



Data-driven case studies conclude that maintaining and preserving architectural heritage makes long-term economic sense for communities and real estate values.

How the HPC Impacts Our Town

The Mountain Lakes Historic Preservation Committee (HPC) was chartered by the Borough Council over 25 years ago. HPC accomplishments and activities include:

- ◆ The listing of the Mountain Lakes Historic District in the National and State Registers of Historic Places;
- ◆ Gathering, maintaining and displaying an extensive archive of our precious historic documents, photographs and artifacts;
- ◆ Building a growing archive of oral histories from senior Lakers;
- ◆ Salvaging original architectural components of Hapgood and Belhall houses for use in future restorations;
- ◆ Advising the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment on applications for development;
- ◆ Taking the lead in formulating the Borough’s groundbreaking 2012 Historic Preservation Incentives ordinance designed to encourage preservation, and discourage demolition, of Mountain Lakes’ original historic homes by offering broad zoning incentives to owners who preserve their homes.
- ◆ In furtherance of a recommendation contained in the Borough’s Master Plan, the HPC consults with, and provides expertise to, Borough officials on questions relating to the implementation of this ordinance.

Landmark Historic Buildings Recommended for Protection

Briarcliff and Lake Drive Schools, St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, Community Church, the Boulevard and Crane Road Entrance Gates, the Esplanade, Mountain Lakes Club, the Masonic Lodge, Grimes House on Craven Road, the Station, and the Midvale Stores.

SUPPORT THE ORDINANCE TO PROTECT MOUNTAIN LAKES' KEY LANDMARKS

For 10 years, an important component of the historic preservation element of the Borough's Master Plan has been an ordinance that would establish a list of "Key Landmarks" consisting of various historic governmental, institutional and commercial structures in the Borough, and would "prohibit demolition or the significant alteration of the exteriors of Key Landmarks."

Imagine our town without our treasured iconic historic buildings and community focal points.



Help us protect Mountain Lakes' Key Historic Landmarks.

Please email our Borough Council members and urge them to take prompt action

The HPC has prepared a draft ordinance amending the Historic Preservation article of the Borough's land use ordinance to implement this Borough policy of protecting our important landmarks.

The proposed ordinance, which was initially presented in draft form to the Borough Council for discussion on June 10, 2019, would accord "landmark" status to the Borough's most important historic structures.

Over 90 New Jersey municipalities, including towns such as Chatham, Chester, Harding, Madison, Millburn, Montville, Morris Township, and Washington Township, all have similar ordinances, the vast majority of which are much broader in scope than the proposed update in Mountain Lakes.

The updated ordinance would not prohibit upgrading or renovating landmark properties,

but would restrict their demolition, and require that major exterior renovations and repairs be done in a manner that preserves their historic character.

Why the Midvale Stores are Important to our History

While all of the structures have significant historic value, only the original Midvale Stores buildings are owned and operated privately as a commercial property, and therefore most likely subject to a short-term redevelopment decision that could have a lasting, negative impact not only on its immediate neighbors, but on the very character of the town that we as taxpayers hope to preserve. In fact, there was a serious development proposal made to the Borough Council involving the complete demolition of these buildings.

The Midvale Stores buildings were an integral part of Herbert Hapgood's vision of the importance to a community of having its own commercial center, and are the only remaining commercial buildings built by Hapgood that occupy the Mountain Lakes streetscape. In addition to their architectural significance, these buildings also served a variety of public uses marking significant milestones in Mountain Lakes history, including use as one of the earliest public schools, the location where the Community Church held church services before the church building was completed in 1914, an early location of the public library, and for nearly half a century from the time of its founding on March 20, 1913, the site of J. Yaccarino & Sons grocery store and a focal point of the life of the community.

The updated ordinance, if enacted, would leave final decisions on any exterior renovation application to the Planning Board, a voluntary group of Lakers who are approved by the elected members of the Borough Council. The people entrusted to preserve our history would ultimately be accountable to all voting, taxpaying residents.

Email your council members at: dShepherd@mtnlakes.org; lBarnett@mtnlakes.org; tmenard@mtnlakes.org; dhapper@mtnlakes.org; jHorst@mtnlakes.org; cKorman@mtnlakes.org; alane@mtnlakes.org