

INTRODUCTION

Closter's historic buildings and districts reflect the community's rich heritage and give it a strong sense of place. Early farmhouses and their barns and other accessory buildings evoke the community's agrarian past. Closter retains an outstanding number of stone houses that are examples of the unique regional type of building associated with the Dutch-American cultural group. The sturdy walls and foundations of local stone in their materials and workmanship recall specific places and times. The early growth of our new nation is documented in Closter's handsome Federal period and Greek Revival style houses. The community's history as a railroad suburb after 1859 is visible in the many picturesque late-19th-century residences located near the railroad station. The "Main Street" commercial area along Closter Dock Road and the infill of the earlier residential areas with interesting early 20th-century architecture typical of early automobile suburbs evidence the continuum of history. The prefabricated Lustron House reflects technological advances of the mid-20th century. The diversity of Closter's historic environment is well documented in publications and in historic sites surveys.

The Borough of Closter recognizes that the preservation and protection of its historic landmarks and districts are important to the community. The historic properties contribute to the community's unique sense of place, inspire civic pride, and enhance knowledge of local heritage. Their preservation contributes to economic welfare through stabilized and improved property values and through reinvestment in the historic properties. Since the enactment of the State of New Jersey Municipal Land Use Law, Section 107 of Title 20:55D, many local municipalities, including Closter, have passed local historic preservation ordinances. In 1998, the Borough created a Historic Preservation Commission, and in 2001, the Borough adopted a revised historic preservation ordinance which was amended in 2002. The ordinance is found in the Code of the Borough of Closter, at http://www.e-codes.generalcode.com/codebook_frameset.asp?t=ws&cb=0218 A.

The Closter historic preservation ordinance includes the following policy goals:

- Safeguard the heritage of Closter by preserving resources within the Borough which reflect elements of its cultural, social, economic, and architectural history.
- Encourage the continued use of historic and/or noteworthy buildings, structures, objects, and sites and facilitate their appropriate reuse.
- Maintain and develop an appropriate and harmonious setting for the historic and architecturally significant buildings, structures, sites, and districts within the Borough.
- Stabilize and improve property values within the Borough.
- Foster civic pride in the history and architecture of the Borough.
- Encourage proper maintenance of, and reinvestment in, the buildings and structures in the Borough.
- Regulate appropriate alteration of historic sites as well as new construction within or near historic districts to ensure compatibility with the existing environment and the Master Plan of the Borough.
- Discourage the unnecessary demolition or other destruction of historic resources.
- Further the public's knowledge of the history and development of the Borough, as well as its appreciation of the Borough's historic sites.
- Enhance the visual and aesthetic character, diversity, continuity, and interest in the Borough and its neighborhoods.
- Encourage beautification and private investment in the Borough.
- Promote the economic welfare of the Borough through the preservation of historic sites and landscapes.

Section 35-51, Code of the Borough of Closter.

CLOSTER HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

The Closter Historic Preservation Commission (CHPC) is a municipal land use regulatory commission that has as its mission to promote the preservation of historic buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts in the Borough. The five members and two alternate members of the CHPC are appointed by the Mayor with the advice and consent of the Council. All members serve without pay. One member must be knowledgeable in building design and construction or architectural history. Another member must have knowledge of or demonstrated interest in local history.

Among the CHPC's responsibilities are:

- To survey buildings, structures, objects, sites, and districts (historic resources) in the Borough and to evaluate them in accordance with Closter's criteria of significance regarding designation of resources as Closter [Landmarks*](#) and [Landmark Districts*](#).
- To propose to the Borough Council those historic resources which it finds worthy of Landmark designation following the designation procedures of the Ordinance.
- To nominate historic resources in the Borough for inclusion in the National and/or New Jersey Registers of Historic Places. Refer to the *Appendix* for information about the Registers.
- To advise governmental officials and agencies on matters which have potential impact on historic resources in the Borough or on the physical character and ambience of any portion of the Borough.
- Promote historic preservation through advisory, educational, and informational functions.
- To make recommendations to the Planning Board and Borough Council in the preparation and periodic updating of the Historic Preservation Element of the Master Plan for the Borough including, but not limited to, the addition or deletion of historic sites and districts identified in the Borough's Master Plan.

- To make recommendations to the Planning Board and Borough Council on the historic preservation implications of any proposed or adopted zoning or development ordinance(s) or proposed or adopted elements of the Borough's Master Plan.
- To approve or disapprove applications for [Certificates of Appropriateness \(C/A\)*](#) and [Minor Applications*](#) for proposed exterior changes on a property within a Landmark District or of individual Landmark status.

CHPC receives every application submitted to either the Planning Board or the Board of Adjustment for historic properties identified in any component element of the Master Plan. The Commission may provide its advice on the historic preservation implications regarding these applications for development to the Planning Board of Adjustment, the Borough Council, and all other officials and agencies of the Borough. This advice for properties that are not designated Landmarks or located in designated Landmark Districts will not take the form of a Certificate of Appropriateness. In providing this advice the CHPC will use the criteria for designation and the standards for review (Sections 35-54. A and 35-56, Code of the Borough of Closter).



The Isaac Naugle House, which was probably built about 1770, is one of Closter's designated Landmarks. This photograph shows the rear of the house and a side with a later porch.

* Words and phrases followed by * are defined in "Definitions and Abbreviations" in the *Appendix*.

PURPOSE OF THESE GUIDELINES

These design guidelines provide the Closter Historic Preservation Commission, other governmental officials and agencies, and property owners and occupants in the Borough with guidance on appropriate methods for the maintenance and rehabilitation of historic buildings and districts. They also contain recommendations for the design of new construction on historic properties or within historic districts, whether additions to existing buildings, entirely new buildings, structures, or objects, or new public amenities and streetscape features.

The CHPC does not seek to prevent change. Change is expected and reinvestment in the community's historic buildings and districts is encouraged. These guidelines are designed to help accommodate change so that modifications enhance the unique character of the historic resource and so that those features that are a significant part of the property's and Closter's heritage are preserved.

These guidelines provide information and guiding principles and links to additional technical information on how to maintain and rehabilitate historic materials and buildings. Awareness of the information contained here at the beginning of project planning should help a historic property owner and his/her design professionals develop projects that effectively preserve historic features in cost-effective manners.

While the guidelines are useful for determining appropriate work on any historic property in the Borough, they are especially useful to applicants in need of a Certificate of Appropriateness (C/A) for work proposed on designated Landmarks and properties within designated Landmark Districts. Knowledge of these guidelines will help them understand the types of work which will receive approval from the CHPC. It is important to remember that each historic property is unique. The guidelines here are a framework on which to base proposed work. They are not rigid rules. The CHPC will evaluate each application for a C/A on a case-by-case basis. To best accommodate changes, additions, and alterations, the CHPC encourages common sense, flexibility, good design, and respect for the historic buildings that are our community's heritage.

PROCEDURES FOR SECURING A CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS

When is a C/A required?

A Certificate of Appropriateness is required for an exterior modification of a property within a Landmark District or of individual Landmark status. Please consult the list of "Designated Landmarks in Closter" in the *Appendix* to determine whether a property is designated. Requirements for a C/A may vary for properties with individual Landmark status and for those within a Landmark District. Within a Landmark District, there may be different treatment requirements for a [Key Contributing Building*](#), a [Contributing Building*](#), or a [Non-Contributing Building*](#). The C/A alone may not be sufficient. The project also must comply with zoning, building, safety, sign, lighting, and any other applicable codes and obtain other required permits. For some projects, the C/A is the only permit required.

Actions requiring a C/A include:

All building permits and development applications involving activities that affect the exterior of a property within a Landmark District or of individual Landmark status also require a C/A. These actions include:

- Demolition or partial demolition of a building/structure or any part thereof on a property in a Landmark District or on a Landmark.
- Relocation of any improvement within a Landmark District or on a Landmark.
- All changes to the exterior architectural appearance of any improvement within a Landmark District or at a Landmark by addition, alteration, or replacement.
- Any new construction of an improvement in a Landmark District or on a Landmark, whether it is an addition to an existing building, structure, accessory building, or object; or a new building, structure, object, or landscape feature.
- Site plans or subdivisions affecting a property within a Landmark District or a Landmark.
- Zoning variances affecting a property within a Landmark District or a Landmark.

The C/A is required for some work at Landmark properties and properties of Key Contributing and Contributing Buildings in Landmark Districts that would not otherwise require a building permit:

This work includes, but is not limited to:

- Any roof repairs or repairs to roof structures that change the exterior appearance or do not replicate existing materials, colors, textures, and workmanship, including removal of small decorative historic roof features (cresting, weathervanes, finials, etc.).
- Any masonry repair, including repointing, cleaning, or waterproofing.
- Exterior sandblasting of any material. (It is usually not permitted.)
- Painting or staining of previously unpainted or unstained exterior materials. (A C/A is not required for painting or staining when the materials were previously painted or stained.)
- Any replacement of windows and doors.
- Installation of storm windows and doors or new gutters and leaders that may not be compatible.
- Any removal of exterior trim on the building, including from its porches. Any repairs to windows and porches that do not replicate the original materials, including replacement of porch railings.
- Installation of new awnings on a residential building.
- Installation of new shutters.
- Demolition of an accessory building of less than 100 square feet.
- The addition of an accessory building of less than 100 square feet when it is visible from the [public view](#)*

Actions at Landmark properties and properties in Landmark Districts not requiring a C/A:

- Emergency repairs needed to preserve the continued habitability of the Landmark or the improvement in a Landmark District and/or health and safety of the occupants or others and when they follow the procedures outlined in Section 35-55 B (1) of the Code of the Borough of Closter.
- Changes to the interiors of buildings and structures that cause no exterior change.
- Ordinary repairs and maintenance which do not constitute a change to the exterior appearance. These are limited to:
 - Exterior repainting or staining of previously painted or stained features.
 - Weather stripping and caulking windows and doors. Maintenance and repair of existing windows and doors resulting in no change in the design, scale, material, or other appearance.
 - Installation of storm windows that are compatible with the architectural period or design of the building. (If there is any question whether the storm windows are compatible, consult with the CHPC.)
 - Maintenance and repair of existing roof materials, involving no change in the design, scale, material, or appearance of the roof.
 - Repair of existing roof structures, such as dormers and chimneys, using the same materials resulting in no change in the design, scale, material, or other appearance.
 - Maintenance and repair of existing shingles, clapboards, or other siding using the same materials that are being repaired or maintained.
 - Replacement [in-kind](#)* of existing shingles, clapboards, or other siding maintaining the architectural integrity of the structure.
 - Repairs to existing signs, shutters, outdoor displays, fences, hedges, street furniture, awnings, driveways, parking areas, and sidewalks using the same materials, scale, design, and other appearance features.
 - Maintenance and repair of existing porches and exterior trim using the same materials, design, scale, or other appearance.

STEPS FOR IMPLEMENTING A PROJECT REQUIRING A C/A

Step 1. Contact the Closter Building Department at 277 Closter Dock Road, located just west of the Borough Hall, during normal business hours for a C/A application and other required construction application(s) for the planned work. The C/A application is also available on the Internet for download at

<http://www.closterboro.com/forms/permits.shtml>.

It is advisable to verify with the Zoning Official that a C/A is required and what other permits and approvals are required.

Note: All CHPC reviews take place prior to an applicant's appearance before the Planning Board or Zoning Board of Adjustment because a report containing the CHPC's findings is required as part of the package filed with these Boards for projects on Landmark properties and within Landmark Districts.

Step 2. Refer to these design guidelines while planning and designing your project. If you have questions about the appropriateness of a proposed activity, you may request an informal review by the CHPC of the concept plan for the project. Neither the applicant nor the CHPC shall be bound by any informal review.

Step 3. File your application for a C/A with the required eleven (11) copies of the application form and attachments no later than two weeks before the next date of the CHPC meeting—sooner if possible. This is to ensure adequate time for review by the Zoning Official, who must sign off on your project's compliance with the Village's land use ordinance, and by the CHPC members or its consultant/staff prior to the public hearing. Your application may be hand delivered to the Closter Historic Preservation Commission, Closter Building Department, 277 Closter Dock Road, Closter, NJ, or mailed to the Closter Historic Preservation Commission, 295 Closter Dock Road, Closter, NJ 07624.

Please consult the *Appendix* for "The Content of the Application for a Certification of Appropriateness (C/A)".

Minor Application

The Chairman of the CHPC or a committee of Commissioners appointed by the Chairman may review minor work without holding a public hearing.

A Minor Application is any application for a C/A which:

- Does not involve demolition, relocation, or partial demolition.
- Does not involve new addition or new construction.
- Is a request related to fences, signs, lighting, paving, or streetscape work which will comply with these design guidelines and will not substantially affect the characteristics of the Landmark or property within the Landmark District.
- Covers minor changes during construction to an approved C/A.
- Covers minor changes to Landmarks and properties within Landmark Districts that conform to these guidelines such as the addition of compatible shutters and masonry repairs.
- Changes to a Non-Contributing Building in a Landmark District, such as window replacement with no change in size and location, changes to roofing materials which are compatible, and awnings that conform to guidelines and do not substantially affect the characteristics of the Landmark District.

When minor work is found to be appropriate, the Chairman can approve a C/A for minor work or amend an existing C/A. The process for an approved Minor Application skips Step. 5. If the work is found not to be appropriate, the application must be scheduled for a public hearing before the full CHPC and is no longer considered to be a Minor Application.

Step 4. The application will either be scheduled for full review by the CHPC at a public hearing or, if for minor work, will be reviewed as a Minor Application.

For C/A applications other than Minor Applications, the CHPC usually meets the fourth Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at Borough Hall. The CHPC will inform applicants in writing of the time, date, and place of the review hearing. The review must be listed as an agenda item at the public hearing. No walk-ins are permitted.

Step 5. An applicant is not required to attend or be represented at the scheduled public hearing where the C/A application is reviewed by the CHPC. It is to the applicant's benefit to be available at the public hearing to answer questions about the application. The CHPC encourages applicants to attend. An owner may also want the architect, other design professional, contractor, or craftsperson to attend. In the event no one is present on the applicant's behalf and questions arise from Commissioners, the application may be denied when mutually agreeable modifications otherwise may have led to its approval. Please note that the CHPC's action may take the following forms: recommend approval of the C/A, recommend against its issuance, or recommend conditions that must be met before the issuance of a C/A.

Step 6. The CHPC will make a written report on the application to the Building Department within 45 days of the referral of the application to the CHPC unless the applicant agrees to an extension of this time period. It will also file a second report with the Planning Board within ten (10) days of the CHPC decision. This report must be attached to any application to the Planning or Zoning Board or to any application to the Building Department for construction, subdivision, zoning variance, sign, fence, or other permit or license. It is also needed to begin work that only requires a C/A.

If the CHPC report recommends the work or sets conditions that the applicant will meet; and the work conforms to requirements for the requested type of permit, and no additional review is needed by the Planning Board or the Board of Adjustment; the Building Department will issue a permit for the work as recommended by the CHPC. If the work covered by the C/A approval is not done within two years of its issuance, the approval will expire automatically and the applicant will have to apply again. No assignment to others

of the rights granted by the C/A is permitted. In the cases where demolition is permitted, the C/A shall be valid for one year from the date of the CHPC approval. The one-year period cannot be extended.

If the CHPC does not favorably recommend the application, the Building Department will neither issue a C/A nor other permits for the work. The applicant has the right to appeal. This procedure is explained in Section 35-57, D. (3) of the Code of the Borough of Closter.

Step 7. The C/A must be posted at the site where it is visible to the public throughout the duration of construction.

Step 8. When a C/A has been issued, the Construction Officer shall inspect the work occasionally and shall report the results to the CHPC. The applicant is subject to violations and penalties for not following the conditions of the C/A.

If during the process of conducting the work, plans require modification from those approved by the CHPC, an application must be made for approval of the changes. Minor modifications may be approved by the Chairman of the CHPC as a Minor Application. If the Chairman does not find the changes appropriate, or if the changes are extensive, the application for an amended C/A should be scheduled for a public hearing before the full Commission.



The Abram and David Demaree House is a designated Closter Landmark. The early 19th-century stone house retains some outstanding exterior trim. The dormers and porch are later additions. The large property is an important link to Closter's agrarian heritage.

GUIDELINES FOR C/A DECISIONS

GENERAL CRITERIA FOR REVIEW

When reviewing applications for Certificates of Appropriateness, the Closter Historic Preservation Commission and other Borough agencies and officials use the standards for review found in Section 35-56 of the Code of the Borough of Closter. The general criteria for review are:

1. The impact of the proposed change on the historic, architectural, and/or cultural significance of the Landmark or Landmark District.
2. The importance of the Landmark or the building, structure, object, or site to the nation, state, region, or municipality, and the extent to which its historic or architectural interest would be adversely affected to the detriment of public interest.
3. The use of any Landmark or Landmark District involved in the proposed change.
4. The extent to which the proposed action would adversely affect the public's view from the street of a Landmark or building, structure, object, or site located within a Landmark District.
5. The impact that the proposed change would have on the architectural or historic significance of the Landmark or Landmark District and the visual compatibility of the proposed change with adjacent buildings, structures, objects, and sites.

Information on how to identify what are the important character-defining features of a historic building or property may be found in the *Architecture in Closter* section of these guidelines.

The CHPC will apply the review criteria for properties of individual Landmark status and of Key Contributing Buildings and Contributing Buildings in Landmark Districts in similar fashion. However, in a Landmark District the impact on the District will be considered, as well as the impact on the individual property. For applications related to Non-Contributing Buildings within a Landmark District, the CHPC will focus on how the proposed change impacts the Landmark District, particularly the **streetscape*** in which the building is located, not on how it impacts the Non-Contributing Building.

REHABILITATION

Standards for rehabilitation of Landmarks and Key and Contributing Buildings in Landmark Districts are included in the Code of the Borough of Closter (Section 35-56. B). They are used by the Closter Historic Preservation Commission when rendering its decisions. They are a series of commonsense concepts about maintaining, repairing, and replacing historic materials, as well as designing new additions or making alterations. These standards were developed by the National Park Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior to help protect our nation's irreplaceable cultural resources by promoting consistent preservation practices. Initially written in 1976, they have undergone some expansion and revisions and are the national standard to guide rehabilitation work on historic resources.

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation

Fortunately, the National Park Service and the New Jersey Historic Preservation Office have developed extensive online and paper-published informational materials, guidelines, and technical studies regarding the interpretation of these *Standards* and the proper treatment of historic features and materials. These documents are useful resources for anyone undertaking a project involving a historic property. The *Standards* are:

1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.
2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive historic materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property shall be avoided.
3. Each property shall be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or architectural elements from other buildings, shall not be undertaken.

4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.
5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a historic property will be preserved.
6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary or physical evidence.
7. Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.
8. Archaeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.
9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the property and its environment.
10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

RESOURCES FOR REHABILITATION

National Park Service, Technical Preservation Services, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/index.htm>

National Park Service, *Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings*, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax/rhb/index.htm>

National Park Service, *Electronic Rehab*, interactive site to learn about the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/technotes/tnhome.htm>

National Park Service, *the Good Guides, Caring for Your Historic Building*, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/care/index.htm>

National Park Service, *Preservation Briefs*, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/briefs/presbhom.htm>

National Park Service, *Preservation Tech Notes, Case Studies*, <http://www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/technotes/tnhome.htm>

New Jersey Historic Preservation Office, *FYI Publications*, <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/hpo/4sustain/info.htm#f or>

NEW ADDITIONS AND CONSTRUCTION

The CHPC expects some new additions and new construction within Landmark Districts and on some Landmark properties. The goal is to regulate these changes so that the historic fabric and the architectural character of the Landmark or Landmark District are preserved. Contextual designs where the new is compatible with the old are recommended. The CHPC's specific criteria for the review of new construction is outlined and discussed in the *New Additions and New Construction* chapter of these guidelines.

DEMOLITION

The demolition of a Landmark or a Key Contributing or Contributing Building in a Landmark District radically alters the character of the historic property or district. Such demolition is rarely considered an appropriate action. Some Landmark properties and Landmark Districts have Non-Contributing Buildings or elements that can

be demolished without negatively impacting the significance of the property or district. An example of where a demolition will likely receive approval is the removal of a storage shed that was erected within the last 20 years and is not of architecturally compatible design with the principal Landmark building on the property. Another example where approval is probable is the proposed demolition of a non-significant later modification to a Landmark when the demolition will not adversely affect the historic fabric. The demolition of a Non-Contributing Building within a Landmark District is another approvable option. Any replacement addition, building, structure, or object will need to meet the criteria for new addition and new construction.

Closter's review criteria for demolition of any building, structures, object, or site located on a property within a Landmark District or of individual Landmark status specify that the following factors be considered:

1. Its historical, architectural, cultural, and aesthetic significance.
2. Its use, its intended use, and/or the use for which the building, structures, object, or site was originally designed and the feasibility of the continuation of its designed use.
3. Its importance to the Borough and the extent to which its historical or architectural value is such that its removal would be detrimental to the Landmark, Landmark District, and/or to the public interest.
4. The extent which it is of such old, unusual, or uncommon design, craftsmanship, texture, or material that it could not be reproduced or could be reproduced only with great difficulty.
5. The extent to which its retention would promote business, create new positions, attract tourists, students, writers, historians, artists, or artisans, encourage study and interest in American history, stimulate interest and study in architecture and design, educate citizens in American cultural and heritage, or make the Borough a more attractive and desirable place in which to live.
6. The probable impact of its removal upon the ambience of the Landmark or Landmark District.

7. The structural soundness and integrity of the building, structure, object, or site and the economic feasibility for its restoration or rehabilitation so as to allow for its reasonable use.
8. The threat to the public health and safety as a result of deterioration or disrepair of the building, structure, object, or site.
9. The technological feasibility of structural rehabilitation.
10. The interference with the charitable purposes of any nonprofit or charitable organization if demolition is not permitted.

Section 35-56.D., Code of the Borough of Closter.

RELOCATION

The CHPC reviews requests to move to a new location any building, structure, object, or feature located on Landmark property or located within a Landmark District. The following factors are considered for a relocation request:

1. The impact of the loss of integrity suffered as a result of the removal from the original and/or historic location; and, if located within a Landmark District, the impact of that loss integrity upon the district as a whole.
2. The reasons for not retaining the building, structure, object, or feature at its present location.
3. The compatibility, nature, and character of the areas adjacent to both the present site and the proposed site as they relate to the protection of historic properties and districts.
4. In the event that the proposed new location is on a Landmark property or within a Landmark District, the impact on the visual compatibility of the adjacent buildings, structures, objects, or sites.
5. The likelihood of significant damage to the physical integrity of the building, structure, or object itself.

Section 35-56.E., Code of the Borough of Closter.

RESOURCE FOR RELOCATION

National Park Service, John Obed Curtis, *Moving Historic Buildings*, 1975. Reprinted 1991 by W. Putnam. Available from Publications Department, International Association of Structural Movers, P.O. Box 2637, Lexington, SC 29071-2637.