

# CAN ANY PROPERTY BECOME A LOCAL LANDMARK?

## Criteria for Local Landmark designation:

- Any individual building, structure or site that is listed on the National and/or State Register, or that is declared eligible for the National and/or State Register shall automatically qualify as a local landmark
- A site or building associated with a person who has contributed to an historical or cultural township, state or national event
- Any structure, building, house, or grouping of these (district), as well as man-made or natural landscape sites which are significant in exemplifying the cultural, social, economic, or historical heritage of the Township
- Individual houses and supporting structures or districts that exhibit architectural value in either reflecting an historic era or reflecting a specific architectural type, or that exhibit significant architectural innovation or are the work of a particularly significant architect or builder
- Any building, site or other structure related to accepted folklore, legend, or a significant historic event
- Any site containing ruins that have important prehistoric or historic value

To read more about the mission of the Landmarks Commission in the Township Ordinance scan the QR code.



## Historic Cemeteries Grant

- Up to \$500 per year is available for maintenance of local historic cemeteries on private lands. Contact [CChrusz@MontgomeryNJ.gov](mailto:CChrusz@MontgomeryNJ.gov) for more details.

## LANDMARKS COMMISSION MEETINGS ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC.

They are held multiple times through the year in the Municipal Center. Please check the township's meeting page for the dates. You are invited!

# LOCAL HISTORIC SITES

### Rock Brook Bridge

A local curiosity, this bridge built in 1820 lost one of its three stone arches to flood waters and was repaired in 1891 with a steel span in place of the missing arch. Hurricane Ida demolished it completely, and Somerset County has agreed with Landmark's wish to restore its famous profile so it will look as it did for more than a hundred years.



### Bedensville Schoolhouse

Built in 1853, Bedensville School is typical of the one-room schools throughout the township that made a free eighth grade education available to all children. Montgomery's first high school was not built until 1968. The schoolhouse was moved, restored and refurbished by volunteers and now stands behind Orchard Hill Elementary School where it is a part of their history curriculum.



### Mt Zion AME Church

Built in 1899, this African Methodist Episcopal church served its congregation for over 100 years. It has been home to the Stoutsburg Sourland African American Museum (SSAAM) since 2016, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2023, with the support of Somerset County, a full historic restoration was completed.



### Dirck Gulick House

Built in 1752 of local field stone by Dirck Gulick, this typical Dutch farmhouse was restored onsite by Van Harlingen Historical Society and is preserved and maintained as their research library.



## LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION EST. 1989



*A rendering of an historic English-style bank barn by Elrich Endersby of the NJ Barn Company. Barns such as this would have been a frequent site in Montgomery Township prior to the 1920s. Unfortunately, this barn has been lost and the rural heritage it represents is in jeopardy. The Landmark Commission seeks to preserve what is left.*



**Montgomery Township occupies the traditional territory of the Unami band of the Lenape Peoples.**

## WHY HAVE A LANDMARKS COMMISSION?

A Montgomery Township ordinance explains that the role of the Landmarks Commission is to advise the township on matters affecting historically and architecturally significant property, structures and areas.

Montgomery Landmarks Preservation Commission is an advisory arm of our municipal governing body. It keeps a list of the sites in the township which are of historic interest, and endeavors to see that their significance is not overlooked or neglected. The Commission is notified whenever an application or event involves or affects any of these properties and its comments or concerns become a matter of record and must be considered. Members are volunteers who are appointed by the mayor.

## DO YOU LIVE IN AN HISTORIC HOUSE?

If so, you probably support the mission of the Landmarks Preservation Commission already!

Architectural details and craftsmanship make historic houses distinctive and meaningful. The Landmarks Commission works to ensure historic charm is not replaced or defaced by industrial standardization.



## KEEPING THE OLD WHILE USING THE NEW

Owning an historic property is an environmentally-conscious choice. Good quality raw materials are already in place, and the land does not need to be unnecessarily disturbed. But needs have changed over time, and updating or retrofitting an historic house can feel more like a labor of love than a practical decision.

## 250 YEARS OF TOWNSHIP HISTORY

In the late 17<sup>th</sup> century New Amsterdam Dutch began pouring into the Upper Raritan transforming this region into family farms. Their chief crops were grains. A profitable trade developed between the region and New York City so much so that Montgomery Township became known as the breadbasket of New York.

Montgomery farmers grew comfortably rich and built houses to reflect their new wealth, some of which still stand today. The legacy of the Dutch farmers, much like the legacy of the country, depended on the institution of slavery. Farms were large, machinery was nonexistent so successful farming relied on slavery which has been overlooked in the historic accounts until recently.

Montgomery became a township with its own local government in 1772. During the subsequent Revolution, the township's roads became important arteries for the warring armies and were sustained by local livestock, water and grain.

The heyday of the Dutch began dwindling with the introduction of railroads that could bring carloads of grain from the Great Plains. The local farmers shifted to other cash crops and dairy, the products of which fueled the surrounding cities as the nation grew. By the 1920's family farms were being abandoned. Suburbia crossed the Millstone River in the 1960's and after rapid development and subdivision, only a pleasantly rural aspect remains.



## TO RETAIN MONTGOMERY'S RURAL CHARACTER, WE MUST WORK TO PROTECT AND MINIMIZE IMPACTS TO HISTORIC SITES AND DISTRICTS.

### This may include:

- Planting green buffers between old and new
- Improving stormwater management to reduce destruction by flooding
- Opposing cell towers within historic districts
- Requesting developers to preserve historic structures on their land
- Attending public hearings to promote historic preservation

## BENEFITS TO LISTING YOUR PROPERTY

- Advice and possible technical or monetary support
- Property value may increase
- Sense of pride and community identity
- Official brass plaque or recognition if desired
- Local Landmarks List offers some protections state and national lists do not
- Preservation may affect future appreciation
- Possible state tax benefits
- Listing a property helps to ensure it is preserved for present and future owners to enjoy.

## IF A PROPERTY IS DESIGNATED A LOCAL LANDMARK

Whenever owners of listed historic property want to make changes to a facade visible from the street, a simple one-page preservation plan must be submitted to the Landmarks Commission for review prior to getting a permit. Commission recommendations are advisory only and may be appealed.

Ordinary exterior painting and maintenance or any interior renovation work is not subject to Commission review.