

Town of Bedford
Historic Building Preservation Commission
Executive Summary
Overhaul of Historic Building Preservation Law

In 2003, the Town Board adopted a Historic Building Preservation Law to protect historic structures located outside the Bedford Village and Katonah Historic Districts. The Board appointed a Historic Building Preservation Commission (HBPC) to issue permits under the law. Following four public information sessions, five Town Board work sessions and extensive public comment, the HBPC recommended to the Town Board an overhaul of the law. The recommendations were based on a professionally prepared Historic Building Survey by TKS Historic Resources, and by the HBPC’s extensive research into preservation law and procedures; including consultation with the NY State Historic Preservation Office to assure alignment with best practices (National Register criteria, U.S. Secretary of the Interior’s standards, NY State model code). [The recommendations were as follows:](#)

- Reduction in the number of properties regulated.
- Significant reduction in HBPC authority.
- “As of right” activities (no historic approval required) increased and clearly stated.
- A tiered property classification system to allow for an administrative permit (no HBPC review) for the majority of properties.
- Certification process by the property owner’s professional to cut time and expense.
- Partial rebate in building permit fees for historic work.
- Awards to recognize historic property owners for their valuable stewardship of Bedford’s heritage.
- A significantly enhanced Town webpage to increase transparency and disseminate information on procedures, property classifications, resources, and updates.
- Plain English rewrites of many provisions.

The following comparison table shows the significant reduction in the number of projects and properties requiring HBPC review and significant streamlining of the process for projects that remain subject to review.

| CURRENT SCOPE & PROCEDURES | OVERHAUL SCOPE & PROCEDURES |
|--|--|
| Properties requiring HBPC permit: 807* • The law requires that <u>all</u> permit applications affecting any Historic Building be referred to the HBPC for permit approval Properties for which administrative permits are available: 0 | Properties requiring HBPC permit (Tier 1): 258 • As-of-right projects are defined (no historic application or review for permit) • Substantial alteration or demolition will be subject to HBPC review for permit Properties for which administrative permits are available (Tier 2): 349 • Only demolition will require a permit; review and approval will be by Town Planner (no HBPC review) |
| Demolition, as defined, requires significant interpretation and is subject to confusion | “Demolition” is defined in plain English with measurable, quantifiable language |
| Properties eligible for rebate in building permit fees: 0 | Properties eligible for partial rebate in building permit fees: Tier 1 properties: 258 Tier 2 properties: 349 ** Unclassified Historic Buildings: 269 ** Bedford Village and Katonah Historic District 96** |

* Includes all known 19th century buildings, as required by the current law

** Upon *voluntary* adherence to HBPC recommendations, following *voluntary* application and review by the HBPC