

# CITY OF KINGSTON

## Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission

planning@kingston-ny.gov

Suzanne Cahill, Planning Director



Steven T. Noble, Mayor

March 11, 2019

City of Kingston Planning Board  
City Hall  
420 Broadway  
Kingston, NY 12401

Dear Chairman Platte and members of the Planning Board,

The Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission, as an involved agency, supports the Planning Board's request to be the lead agency in the SEQR process for The Kingstonian project. Along with our support, we would like to share with you general concerns we have about this project as you determine its significance. Our concerns are informed by the project applicants' public presentations and our review of their EAF Part 1 dated Nov 27, 2018.

The information provided therein suggests that the proposed action has the potential to effect significant environmental features, including archaeological and architectural resources, topography and community character. Specifically:

- The project site has the potential to yield information important in history or prehistory, such as evidence of the former presence of the stockade which crossed on or near to this site and/or other previously unknown archaeological resources. Such evidence was unearthed nearby on Clinton Avenue in 1970. This site has been identified as archaeologically sensitive by the NY State Historic Preservation Office.
- This project involves the demolition of an existing architectural resource in the Stockade Historic District and may seek to replicate this building, which might create a false historical record.
- This project involves new construction in the Stockade Historic District. Potential impacts include those that are construction-related, such as falling objects, vibration (from blasting or pile-driving), dewatering, flooding, subsidence, or collapse. The project's close proximity to two architectural resources—the Senate House and grounds and the John Tremper House at 1 North Front Street—may negatively impact them if adequate precautions are not taken.
- Additionally, new construction may impact the visual context of the district, including the architectural components of the district's buildings in this area (e.g., height, scale, proportion, massing, fenestration, ground-floor configuration, style), streetscapes, skyline, landforms, and openness to the sky. The project may also impact the visual context of the Senate House, a significant state landmark.
- This project proposes changes to a significant landscape feature of this historic district: the bluff, an important element to interpreting the district's history. The National Register nomination for the Stockade Historic District states:

"To this day, the boundary lines of this stockade are formed by Green Street, Main Street, Clinton Avenue, and North Front Street and are still intact. Also, amazingly enough, almost the entire bluff promontory forming the perimeter of this area, elevated above the lowland, is still comparatively intact.

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Therefore, of the three first settlements in New York State—Albany (Fort Orange, New York (New Amsterdam), and Kingston—it is only Kingston that the authentic elements of an original fortification remain. Documents indicate that this log palisade was in existence until the early eighteenth century, having been kept in repair as protection against later Indian raids. While this area at present is surrounded by commercial development, aerial photography has recently indicated the existence of outlines suggesting that the angle itself may as yet be relatively undisturbed. This area forms a sharp bluff and this may account for its preservation.”

Taken together—demolition, new construction, and changes to topography—this project may impact the area’s community character or sense of place. The potentially large impacts on the Stockade Historic District and nearby landmark buildings described above weigh toward a positive declaration of environmental significance, we believe. As an involved agency, the HLPC asks that the Planning Board keep these historic preservation issues and concerns in mind as you review and classify the significance of the Kingstonian.

This project will be subject to an Article 14.09 environmental review under the New York State Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation Law. A draft EIS can serve as the review procedure for complying with subdivisions (b) and (c) of Section 428, Part 8 of this law. Thank you for your time and consideration. We value your service to our community.

Sincerely,

Mark Grunblatt

Chair, Historic Landmarks Preservation Commission

Cc: Mayor Steve Noble  
New York State Historic Preservation Office  
James Noble, Kingston Common Council Alderman-at-Large  
Andrea Shaut, Common Council Member, Ward 9  
Patrick O’Reilly, Common Council Member, Ward 7, and HLPC liaison  
Hayes Clement, Heritage Area Commission, Chair