

DISTRICT MASTER PLAN FOR THE DOUGLASTON HISTORIC DISTRICT

1. Introduction

(a) The Douglaston Historic District was designated a New York City historic district by the Landmarks Preservation Commission (the “Commission”) on June 24, 1997. As a result, the Commission must approve work on or modifications to buildings, other improvements, such as fences and paving, and landscape improvements within the boundaries of the historic district. Work may be approved by the Commission in two ways: by the Commission’s staff pursuant to rules codified in Title 63 of the Rules of the City of New York, and by the full, eleven-member Commission after a Certificate of Appropriateness public hearing.

This District Master Plan for the Douglaston Historic District (the “Master Plan”) will govern certain types of alterations to buildings, other improvements and landscape improvements within the Douglaston Historic District, and authorizes the staff to approve such work if it meets the requirements of the Master Plan. In particular, the Master Plan will govern certain additions to buildings, outbuildings and other new construction.

Work that does not meet the requirements of the Master Plan will be subject to the Commission’s existing rules and procedures. Certain work may be eligible for a staff-level permit as set forth in Title 63 of the Rules of the City of New York. Work that does not meet the requirements of either this Master Plan or the rules in Title 63 must be approved by the full Commission at a Certificate of Appropriateness public hearing.

(b) Description of the District

The Douglaston Historic District contains more than 600 houses set along landscaped streets on a mile-long peninsula extending into Little Neck Bay, at the northeastern edge of Queens adjoining Nassau County. Most of the houses in the historic district were built as part of the planned suburb of Douglas Manor as developed by the Rickert-Finlay Company in the early twentieth century. These houses were designed in a variety of styles including the many variants of the Colonial Revival, expressions in the English manner such as Tudor Revival, English Cottage, and Arts and Crafts styles, as well as the Mediterranean Revival. In most cases, they were designed by local Queens architects, including over a dozen who lived in Douglas Manor itself or nearby. The district includes three houses of the Craftsman type pioneered by Gustave Stickley. Eight of the houses in the district were designed by Josephine Wright Chapman, one of America's earliest successful female architects, and they constitute an important body of her work. The Douglaston Historic District survives today as an important example of an early twentieth-century planned suburb adapted to the site of a nineteenth century estate. The stylistically varied suburban residences, the distinctive topography and the landscaped setting create a distinct sense of place and give the district its special character.

(c) Relationship of the Master Plan to the Douglas Manor Restrictions.

In developing Douglas Manor, the Rickert-Finlay Company adopted and imposed a number of deed restrictions (the “Deed Restrictions”) to control the layout, spacing and design of improvements. These covenants, which are still in force today and apply to all of the houses in the historic district, significantly contributed to the architectural and landscape character of the area. Several of the most relevant of the Deed Restrictions are summarized here for reference purposes:

- (1) No building shall be erected nearer than 20 feet to the front line and side street line of a lot.
- (2) No fence, except hedge or shrubbery, will be permitted within 20 feet of the front line or side street line of any lot.
- (3) No outbuilding shall be erected nearer than 60 feet to the front line of any lot.
- (4) No building of any character having what is known as a "flat roof" shall be erected.

Because of the importance of the Deed Restrictions in creating and maintaining the character of the area, and because these restrictions are legally binding on building owners, all applications for additions, new buildings, new outbuildings, or the installation of fencing or retaining walls will be referred to the Douglas Manor Association (DMA) for separate review. No application will be processed under the Master Plan if the DMA objects to the proposal on the ground that it violates the Deed Restrictions.

2. Statement of Regulatory Policy.

The Master Plan is premised on the following regulatory principles:

As described in the designation report for the Douglaston Historic District, the Commission finds that the houses and other structures substantially built in whole or in part before January 1, 1945, make a significant architectural contribution to the Douglaston Historic District. Houses and other structures substantially built after December 31, 1944, do not make a significant contribution to the historic district, with the exception of 8 Beverly Road, 321 Hollywood Avenue, 350 Ridge Road and 6 Knollwood, which will be treated as contributing. Consequently, the Master Plan provides greater flexibility for approving changes or additions to buildings built after December 31, 1944.

The Commission also finds that significant landscape improvements contribute to the unique and special character of the Douglaston Historic District. These landscape improvements include mature trees (especially those located in the front and side yards), concrete sidewalks, and cobblestone gutters. Proposed work to add landscape improvements, such as paths and fences, or to modify or remove existing, significant landscape improvements shall require approval from the Commission.

Finally, the Commission finds that the Deed Restrictions were instrumental in creating and maintaining Douglaston’s architectural character. Therefore, the Commission will abide by

the Deed Restrictions to the extent the restrictions are consistent with the Commission's standards and mandate.

3. Definitions. The following terms shall meanings set forth below.

"Addition" shall mean an extension or increase in the floor area or change in height of an existing building that increases its external dimensions.

"Commission" shall mean the New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission as established by Section 3020 of the New York City Charter.

"Contributing building" shall mean a building in the Douglaston Historic District built, in whole or in part, prior to January 1, 1945, including buildings that have undergone subsequent remodeling and alterations, and the following properties built after December 31, 1944: 8 Beverly Road, 321 Hollywood Avenue, 350 Ridge Road and 6 Knollwood. In addition, a new building or a building with a substantial addition or modification approved by the Commission shall be deemed a contributing building for purposes of the master plan.

"Demolition" shall mean the dismantling or razing of all or part of an existing Improvement or significant Landscape Improvement.

"Fence" shall mean all fences of whatever material but shall not include fencing designed to delineate planting areas where the proposed fencing is less than 18 inches in height.

"Improvement" shall mean any building, structure, place, work of art or other object constituting a physical betterment of real property, or any part of such betterment other than a Landscape Improvement.

"Landscape Improvement" shall mean a physical betterment of real property or any part thereof, consisting of natural or artificial landscape, including but not limited to grade, terrace, body of water, stream, hedge, mature tree, path, walkway, road, plaza, wall, fence, step, fountain, or sculpture.

"Landmarks Law" shall refer to New York City Charter Section 3020 and Chapter 3 of Title 25 of the Administrative Code of the City of New York.

"LPC" shall mean the Landmarks Preservation Commission acting in its agency capacity to implement the Landmarks Law.

"LPC Staff" shall mean the staff of the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

"Mature Tree" shall mean any tree with a trunk diameter of 12 " or greater.

"Minimally Visible" shall mean that something is barely or partially visible and does not

call attention to itself or detract from any significant architectural features. Visibility is measured from a public thoroughfare. For the purposes of determining visibility, the staff may take into account the distance and angle at which the addition becomes visible.

“Non-contributing building” shall mean a building in the Douglaston Historic District built after December 31, 1944; or a pre-1945 building that is described in the Designation Report as having been completely altered subsequent to 1945.

"Outbuildings" shall refer to any permanent structure, such as a garage or carriage house, garden or tool shed, detached from, but dependent on and appertaining to, the main house.

"Permanent Fixture" shall mean a structure, ornament, or equipment that is anchored to the ground structurally or which is plumbed for water circulation.

"Permit" shall mean any permit or approval, other than an Authorization to Proceed, issued by the Landmarks Preservation Commission in accordance with the Landmarks Law.

- (1) "PMW" shall mean a Permit for Minor Work as defined by Section 25-310 of the Landmarks Law.
- (2) "CNE" shall mean a Certificate of No Effect as defined by Section 25-306 of the Landmarks Law.
- (3) "CofA" shall mean a Certificate of Appropriateness as defined by Section 25-307 of the Landmarks Law.

"Portable furniture or equipment" shall mean small items such as benches, bird baths, or play equipment that are not anchored structurally to the ground, which can be moved, and/or are not plumbed for water circulation.

"Primary Facade" shall mean a facade facing a street or public thoroughfare or a facade that possesses significant architectural features.

"Public Thoroughfare" shall mean any publically accessible right of way including, but not limited to, a street, sidewalk, public park, and path.

"Secondary Facade" shall mean a side or rear facade that does not face a public thoroughfare.

"Significant Architectural Feature" shall mean any character-defining external architectural component of a building, including but not limited to an architectural ornament (such as decorative ironwork), roof, entranceway, porch, building material (including the kind, color, and texture of the material), and the type and style of any window, door or light.

"Significant Landscape Improvement" shall mean any Landscape Improvement that is a character-defining element in the historic district, contributing to the special aesthetic and

historic character for which the district was designated, including but not limited to those Landscape Improvements identified in the Designation Report and mature trees located in the front yard.

4. Alterations to Contributing Buildings.

(a) Additions and Outbuildings.

(1) **Rear Yard Additions.** A proposal to add an addition at the rear of a building shall meet all of the following criteria:

- (i) The addition would not result in the alteration or loss of significant architectural features.
- (ii) The addition is not visible, or is minimally visible, from a public thoroughfare. For purposes of determining visibility, the staff may take into account the effect of seasonal variations in greenery.
- (iii) The addition is subordinate to and harmonious with the roof line of the existing building.
- (iv) The addition will be designed to match or be harmonious with the original building in terms of materials, details, and finish.
- (v) The addition will not result in the loss of or damage to significant landscape improvements.
- (vi) The addition, excluding decks, will not result in a total building footprint that covers more than 30 percent of the lot.

(2) **Other Additions and Outbuildings.** Proposals to add other additions or outbuildings shall meet all of the following relevant criteria:

- (i) The addition or outbuilding is less than 80 square feet in floor area.
- (ii) If the proposed work is to add an enclosed, attached addition to the side of the existing building, the addition reinforces the symmetry or asymmetry of, and is subordinate to, the existing structure and is substantially set back from the principal facade of the existing structure. An unenclosed addition, such as a porch, may align with the plane of the principal facade(s).
- (iii) If the proposed work is to add an addition, the addition will not result in a total building footprint that covers more than 30 percent of the lot.

- (iv) If the proposed work is to add an outbuilding, the outbuilding is situated in the rear yard of the property, or elsewhere so as not to call undue attention to itself or detract from the main house, and is set behind the plane of the principal facade(s) of the existing building and is subordinate to such building.
 - (v) The addition or outbuilding is lower than the original building and the roof slope and configuration match or are harmonious with the original structure.
 - (vi) The addition or outbuilding is designed to match or be harmonious with the original house in terms of materials, details, and finish.
- (b) Alterations to Windows. The LPC's window guidelines, as set forth in Title 63, sections 3-01 through 3-04, of the Rules of the City of New York shall apply with the exceptions noted below.
- (1) Replacement Window Sash and Frames.
 - (i) Primary facades. Replacement windows on primary facades shall replicate the historic sash and frames in terms of configuration, operation, material, finish and details. If no historic documentation on the particular house exists, other houses of similar style in the historic district may be used as models for determining the characteristics of the sash and frames.
 - (ii) Secondary facades. Replacement windows on a secondary facade that is visible from a public thoroughfare shall match the historic sash and frames in terms of material, details, operation, configuration and finish. Replacement windows on a secondary facade that is not visible from a public thoroughfare do not need to match the historic sash and frames in any manner.
 - (2) New Window Openings, Sash and Frames in Secondary Facades.
 - (i) Visible Secondary Facades. For a secondary facade that is visible from a public thoroughfare, new window openings shall be consistent with the style of the building and the symmetry or asymmetry of the original or historic fenestration, and shall not result in destruction or modification of significant architectural features or by their proximity detract from such significant architectural features. New sash and frames for such new window openings shall match the original or historic sash and frames in terms of material, details, operation, configuration and finish.
 - (ii) Non-visible Secondary Facades. For a secondary facade that is not visible

from a public thoroughfare, new window openings shall not result in the destruction or alteration of significant architectural features. New sash and frames for such new window openings do not need to match the historic sash and frames in any manner.

(c) Repair and Replacement of Existing Metal or Vinyl Siding. New metal or vinyl siding shall not be permitted, except that repair or replacement of a maximum of 25 percent of the existing, grandfathered siding with new siding that matches the material, detail and color of the existing siding shall be considered ordinary repair and maintenance. In determining the percentage of grandfathered siding that can be replaced, the staff shall take into account previous approvals for replacement of siding.

(d) Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning. The LPC's rules governing the installation of heating, ventilation and air conditioning ("HVAC") equipment, as set forth in Title 63, section 2-11, of the Rules of the City of New York shall apply with the exceptions noted below.

(1) Installation of through-wall HVAC.

- (i) Through-wall installation of HVAC equipment shall not be permitted on primary facades.
- (ii) Through-wall installation of HVAC equipment shall be permitted on visible secondary facades provided the installation meets all of the following criteria:
 - (A) The installation will not result in damage to significant architectural features.
 - (B) The HVAC unit will be centered beneath a window opening.
 - (C) The HVAC unit will be mounted with an exterior rimless architectural grille that is mounted flush with the exterior wall and is finished in a manner that matches or blends in with the surrounding facade material.
- (iii) Through-wall installation of HVAC equipment shall be permitted on non-visible or minimally visible secondary facades, provided that the installation meets all of the following criteria:
 - (A) The installation will not result in damage to significant architectural features.
 - (B) The HVAC unit will be mounted flush with the exterior wall and is finished in a manner that matches or blends in with the

surrounding facade material.

- (2) Installation of HVAC equipment in side yards not facing a public thoroughfare or rear yards is permitted provided the installation meets all of the following criteria:
 - (A) The HVAC equipment is not visible or is minimally visible from a public thoroughfare or is made not visible or minimally visible by the planting and maintenance of permanent vegetation designed to screen such equipment from view throughout the year.
 - (B) The installation of the HVAC equipment does not damage or eliminate significant architectural features or landscape improvements.
- (e) Replacement of Roofing Material. Replacement roofing shall be of the same roofing material as the existing roof or match the style and material of the original or historic roof, except that replacement roofing material that is not the original or historic material shall be upgraded to better approximate the historic roofing material where feasible alternatives exist. For example, existing asphalt shingles shall be upgraded with asphalt shingles that better approximate the color and details of the historic or original materials.
- (f) Shutters and Doors.
 - (1) Shutters. New shutters shall match the details and finish of the existing shutters. If the building does not have shutters, the new shutters shall be proportioned to fit the window opening and shall match the details and finish of shutters appropriate to the architecture of the building.
 - (2) Doors. A new door shall match the materials, details and operation of the original or historic door or, if the original or historic door does not exist, of other original or historic doors of buildings of the same or similar period and style.
- (g) Telecommunications Equipment. No permit is required for the installation of conventional television antenna on the roof. The installation of other telecommunications equipment, including satellite dishes, shall meet the following requirements:
 - (1) Satellite dishes and antennae of less than 24" in diameter may be installed on a roof or secondary facade if such equipment will be either not visible or minimally visible from a public thoroughfare.
 - (2) Telecommunications equipment may be installed in side or rear yards provided such equipment will be either not visible or minimally visible from a public thoroughfare, or is made not visible or minimally visible by the planting and

maintenance of permanent vegetation designed to screen such equipment from view throughout the year.

5. Alterations to Non-Contributing Buildings. A proposal for alterations and/or additions or outbuildings to be added to non-contributing buildings shall meet all of the following criteria:

(a) Overall Form and Footprint.

- (1) The work does not increase the overall height of the building, as measured from the highest roof ridge line.
- (2) The work does not increase the existing footprint of the building by more than 20%. In determining whether this criteria is being met, the staff shall consider the original size of the building at the time of designation and whether there has been a previous approval for an addition.
- (3) The addition, excluding decks, does not result in a total building footprint that covers more than 30 percent of the lot.
- (4) The addition is not to be added to a facade that faces a public thoroughfare, except that a vestibule for a front door may be approved if it meets the following criteria:
 - (i) It is no greater than 30 square feet;
 - (ii) It is designed to be highly transparent;
 - (iii) It is subordinate and relates to the composition of the primary facade; and
 - (iv) It does not change the orientation of the front door.
- (5) The work is otherwise compatible with the massing and form (i.e.: symmetry or asymmetry) of the existing building and the scale of the addition will not overwhelm the existing building.
- (6) The work does not adversely affect any significant landscape improvement.
- (7) Outbuildings. Proposals to add outbuildings shall follow the criteria listed in Section 4.a.2 of these rules, except that a detached garage structure of up to 400 square feet in floor area may be approved, provided the garage is located at the rear corner of the lot.

(b) Materials and Finishes. The proposed materials and finishes shall match the materials and finishes on the existing structure, or blend with the facade materials of contributing

structures described in Section 4 above. For example, if the existing house has a brick veneer, this veneer may be matched and used at the addition. Alternatively, wood shingle or stucco, materials typically found at the historic houses within the district, may be employed in the addition, if the LPC Staff determines that the material will be compatible with that of the existing structure.

- (c) Roof. The roof profile shall match the profile of the existing structure or is compatible with the character of the historic district.
- (d) Windows. Replacement windows and new window openings may differ from the existing windows in size, material, and finish. However, the new windows and window openings at the primary elevations must be consistent with the architectural style of the building and regular in shape, pattern, and finish.
- (e) Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning. The LPC's rules governing the installation of heating, ventilation and air conditioning ("HVAC") equipment, as set forth in Title 63, section 2-11, of the Rules of the City of New York shall apply with the exceptions noted below.
 - (1) Installation of through-wall HVAC.
 - (i) Through-wall installation of HVAC equipment shall not be permitted on primary facades.
 - (ii) Through-wall installation of HVAC equipment shall be permitted on visible secondary facades provided the installation meets all of the following criteria:
 - (A) The installation will not result in damage to significant architectural features.
 - (B) The HVAC unit will be centered beneath a window opening.
 - (C) The HVAC unit will be mounted with an exterior grille that is mounted flush with the exterior wall and is finished in a manner that matches or blends in with the surrounding facade material.
 - (iii) Through-wall installation of HVAC equipment shall be permitted on non-visible or minimally visible secondary facades, provided that the installation meets all of the following criteria:
 - (A) The installation will not result in damage to significant architectural features.

- (B) The HVAC unit will be mounted flush with the exterior wall and is finished in a manner that matches or blends in with the surrounding facade material.
 - (iv) Installation of HVAC equipment in side yards not facing a public thoroughfare or rear yards is permitted provided the installation meets all of the following criteria:
 - (A) The HVAC equipment is not visible or is minimally visible from a public thoroughfare or is made not visible or minimally visible by the planting and maintenance of permanent vegetation designed to screen such equipment from view throughout the year.
 - (B) The installation of the HVAC equipment does not damage or eliminate significant architectural features or landscape improvements.
- (f) Telecommunications Equipment. No permit is required for the installation of conventional television antenna on the roof. The installation of other telecommunications equipment, including satellite dishes, shall meet the following requirements:
 - (1) Satellite dishes and antennae of less than 24" in diameter may be installed on a roof or secondary facade if such equipment will be either not visible or minimally visible from a public thoroughfare.
 - (2) Telecommunications equipment may be installed in side or rear yards provided such equipment will be either not visible or minimally visible from a public thoroughfare, or is made not visible or minimally visible by the planting and maintenance of permanent vegetation designed to screen such equipment from view throughout the year.

6. Demolition of Non-Contributing Buildings. An application to demolish a non-contributing building shall be processed for a CNE by the LPC Staff, provided that the applicant has obtained approval for a replacement structure, or for a landscape plan if cleared property is to be annexed to that of an adjacent structure.

7. Alterations to Significant Landscape Improvements.

- (a) General Principles. The design and maintenance of landscape improvements was an integral part of the character of the original Douglas Manor and the subsequent development of the suburb of Douglaston, and such features contribute to the special character of the historic district. Proposed work on significant landscape improvements, including driveways, sidewalks, cobblestone gutters, distinctive yard paving, must be

approved by the LPC staff or the Commission.

(b) The LPC staff shall approve the following work if it meets all of the relevant criteria set forth below:

(1) Modifications to an existing wall, step, path, driveway, railing, fence, gate, and gate post, permanent garden structure or pavilion, sidewalk or street gutter. The proposed work shall match the existing or historic condition or style in terms of the materials, details, finish and design, or be compatible with materials traditionally found throughout the district. In the latter case, the substitute material shall be installed in a manner that is consistent with the installation of such material elsewhere in the district in terms of details, finish and design. For example, driveways may be modified using the existing materials or be replaced with the historic paving material or a paving material traditionally found throughout the district, such as crushed bluestone, concrete, asphalt, paving with grass strips, Belgian block borders and aprons, large dimension rectangular bluestone pavers, and rectangular red clay brick in a running or herringbone pattern.

(2) Construction of new landscape improvements.

(i) Lot line fencing. Where permitted by the Douglas Manor Restrictions, lot line fencing shall be no higher than six (6) feet and:

(A) for fences on the side lot line, be constructed of wood, with the finished side of the fence facing away from the property, and be set back from the plane of the primary facade(s);

(B) for fences at the rear lot line, be constructed of any material, provided the fence is not visible from a public thoroughfare or permanently obscured from view by vegetation.

(ii) Other Fencing. All other fencing visible from a public thoroughfare shall be of wood, with the finished side facing away from the property, shall be of a style appropriate to the architecture of the building, and shall be no higher than six feet. All proposals for fencing in front of a primary facade shall be reviewed by the full Commission, except for fencing to delineate planting areas where the fencing is no higher than 18 inches.

(iii) Driveways, paths, patios, and walkways shall be constructed of materials that match the existing or historic paving materials, or paving materials traditionally found throughout the district.

(A) New driveways to new garages shall be no wider than 11 feet and

shall be straight, although it may have a turn-around. No curved or circular driveway shall be allowed. A new driveway may have a wider dimension as it approaches and meets the garage.

- (B) New patios shall be appropriately scaled in relation to the building and facade and shall be located in the side or rear yard.
 - (iv) Stone walls and retaining walls for planting. Stone walls at the perimeter of the property shall be no higher than 18 inches and shall be constructed of materials that match the existing or historic materials. Retaining walls for planting beds shall be no higher than 8 inches and shall be constructed of materials that blend into the landscape features, such as natural colored stone, dark masonry or natural colored railroad ties.
 - (v) Swimming pools, and their related fences, and decks shall be either not visible or minimally visible from a public thoroughfare.
- (3) Work Affecting Mature Trees.
- (i) A mature tree located in the rear yard of a property may be removed in connection with the construction of an approved addition or outbuilding.
 - (ii) A mature tree may be removed because such tree is dead or seriously diseased, or where such tree is causing, or threatening to cause, significant damage to a building on the lot or adjacent lot(s). In such a case, the application shall include a report from a certified arborist regarding the health of the tree, in the case of a dead or dying tree, or an architect or engineer setting forth how the tree is damaging or threatening to damage a building.
- (c) The following types of work do not require approval from the Commission:
- (1) Pruning or planting of trees, hedges or shrubs.
 - (2) Removal of hedges.
 - (3) Planting of seasonal flower beds or vegetable gardens.
 - (4) Installation of garden furniture, ornaments or play equipment.
 - (5) Installation of temporary enclosures, such as party tents.
 - (6) Repairing existing paving areas with matching materials.

8. **Procedures.** Applicants shall submit a properly signed application and all necessary materials in support of their application. In addition, the application shall include a letter from the Douglas Manor Association stating that the proposed work does not violate the Douglas Manor Restrictions. In accordance with the procedures set forth in the Implementation Rules, the LPC staff shall issue an Authorization to Proceed for work that complies with the criteria set forth in the Master Plan. Applications that do not meet the requirements of this Master Plan shall, depending on the work being proposed, be treated as a request for a certificate of no effect or permit of minor work or a certificate of appropriateness and shall be processed accordingly.