



# Town of Wilton Historic Preservation Tools

**Historic District and Historic Property Commission**

March 10, 2022

Highlights from Historic Preservation Tools Report 6/2020  
for BJB Consulting and Wilton Center Master Plan Sub-Committee



# Considerations

- **Loss of historic buildings to commercial development.**
- Scattered location of historic buildings vs. contiguous district
- Concerns about specific buildings/areas: Rt 7, Cannondale.
- Existing regulations are old or confusing and may need revisions: Adaptive Reuse, Demolition delay, design guidelines.
- Need for varied housing types.
- Communication has been varied rather than consistent among boards.

# Recommended Action: Regulatory (Ordinance/Zoning)

**Harriman Report Recommendation 2.1** *Details: SEE PAGE 4 and 8 (Appendix A has proposed revisions)*

**Evaluate, modify, and expand 29-5.C5 (Adaptive Use of Historic Structures) and 29-5.C8 (Historic/Architecturally Significant Buildings) to commercial districts as well as residential ones.**

- Option 1: 29-5.C5 (Adaptive Use of Historic Structures, page 91): Add the General Business (GB) and Design Retail Business (DRB) Districts to the first paragraph to allow adaptive reuse of historic structures in commercial districts for all land uses listed in that section. (This would include mixed use buildings or sites.) Note that this option would fulfill Recommendation 2.2.a, below.
- Option 2: 29-5.C8 (Historic/Architecturally Significant Buildings, page 97): Remove the word “residential” from the article so that the article applies to all historic buildings. Note that this option would fulfill Recommendation 2.2.a, below.
- Option 3: The alternative is to establish a section that applies only to buildings in a commercial district, incorporating the recommendations below. Footnote (g), as noted below could be used as the basis for this new section.



# Recommended Action: Regulatory (Ordinance/Zoning)

## Harriman Report Recommendation 2.2 *Details: SEE PAGE 5*

Consider adding incentives for preservation of historic buildings as part of mixed-use development.

- Allow a variance on dimensional standards to preserve historic building(s) and ensure new buildings/additions do not dominate the original. The DRB already has some incentives related to height and Floor Area Ratio (FAR).
- Allow multiple buildings on a site with one or more historic buildings. Consider cluster development to preserve original location of historic building(s) relative to the street and each other.
- Allow mixed-uses to be distributed among buildings rather than by floors; for example, residential could be provided in a historic building and retail/office/restaurant in a new building on the same site.
- Increase number of dwelling units per acre in exchange for preservation of historic building(s) on site.
- Establish design guidelines that address the relationship of existing and new buildings to each other, the street, and adjacent buildings and the reuse of historic buildings. Such guidelines should include site design as well as building massing, use of materials, and treatment of the façades for new construction, including additions.
- Tie historic preservation to sustainable building and landscape design.
- Streamline approval process and requirements in exchange for reuse/preservation.



Recommended Action: Regulatory (Ordinance/Zoning)

### **Harriman Report Recommendation 2.3 *Details: SEE PAGE 6***

Review model Historic Preservation Ordinance from the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation.

<https://www.preservationct.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Preservation-Model.pdf>

### **Harriman Report Recommendation 2.4 *Details: SEE PAGE 6***

Review the model Deconstruction Ordinance from the Connecticut Trust for Historic Preservation (CT Trust) to ensure that historic building elements are preserved if the building is demolished.

<https://www.preservationct.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Model-Deconstruction-Ordinance-170208.pdf>





# Recommended Action: Financial

## **Harriman Report Recommendation 3.1** *Details: SEE PAGE 6*

Partner with the CT Trust to identify funding sources for historic preservation relative to development, including tax credits for commercial development and homeowners, preservation easement, and the CT Trust's revolving loan fund.

## **Harriman Report Recommendation 3.2** *Details: SEE PAGE 7*

Partner with the CT Trust to identify and implement funding sources for historic preservation relative to development.

## **Harriman Report Recommendation 3.3** *Details: SEE PAGE 7*

- Consider the appropriateness of property tax abatements under Connecticut General Statutes, Chapter 203., Section 12-121e.

## **Harriman Report Recommendation 3.4** *Details: SEE PAGE 7 of Report*

- Encourage eligible property owners to donate a conservation easement for historic preservation in exchange for a Federal tax deduction.