

City of North Olmsted Landmarks Commission Annual Report 2016



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Introduction

The mission of the Landmarks Commission is to protect, preserve and perpetuate the structures and districts which reflect the City's heritage. The Commission encourages education and creates an environment that promotes the community's historic sites, events and citizens in order to foster civic pride.

The following annual report documents the activities and accomplishments of the Landmarks Commission during 2016 and sets forth goals for the coming year.

Members

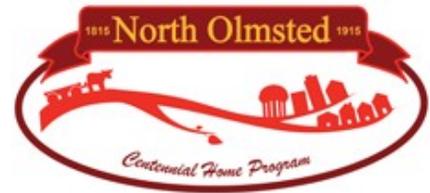
David Neville, Chair
Jim Morse, Vice Chair
James Dubelko
Thomas Dubowski

Duane H. Limpert
Gretchen Schuler
Paul Schumann

Centennial Home Program

The Centennial Home Program is an initiative to identify and recognize homes in North Olmsted that were built in or before 1915, the city's centennial year, in order to acknowledge their local historical significance and importance to the community.

Landmarks Commission members researched old maps, deeds and tax records to create an initial list of those homes which meet the age criteria for recognition. The owners of those homes will be contacted by the Commission. In addition to receiving an official certificate, homeowners of centennial homes will be able to purchase and display a unique commemorative plaque celebrating their home's place in North Olmsted history.



The official launch of the program is anticipated in 2017. To assist, staff developed a logo, certificate, plaque design, press release and other materials to educate the community about the initiative.

Centennial Home Research Highlight

The Alexander family, from Connecticut by way of New York, arrived in the area in the 1830s. They purchased 150 acres of land in the Dover Township lots 39 and 40. Many of the homes still standing in these lots were built by relatives of the Alexander family. James Alexander was the first to build his home in Dover Township in 1836. Henry Wetherwax, married to Cornelia, the daughter of James Alexander, built his home in 1845. James' son, Charles "Silas" Alexander, built his home in 1836. One of Silas' sons, Chauncey, was a Civil War veteran and his family went on to develop Alexander Road. Silas' daughter Olive, married to Fred Elliott, built a couple of houses along Clague Road. Lester Alexander, another son of Silas', was also a Civil War veteran, and his family was responsible for developing Carriage Lane in addition to building more homes on Clague Road.

Certificates of Appropriateness

The Landmarks Commission reviews proposals for demolition, construction or alteration of any landmark or property within a landmarks district. The Landmarks Commission holds public hearings and issues certificates of appropriateness for proposals which meet the criteria for acceptable work. For guidance, the Commission looks to the Secretary of the Interior's standards for rehabilitation.

The Landmarks Commission considered Certificate of Appropriateness requests for three residential properties in 2016:

- 26487 Butternut Ridge – Request to replace wood siding with vinyl siding, denied
- 25346 Butternut Ridge – Request to install new vinyl windows, approved
- 25747 Butternut Ridge – Request to build a new garage, approved

Significantly, the Commission also considered a request from the North Olmsted City Schools for the construction of the new High School/Middle School Complex at 27301 Butternut Ridge Road. The commissioners approved of the architectural design of the new high school/middle school complex and suggested that butternut trees be planted along Butternut Ridge Road and to use the salvaged archway from the old middle school in the courtyards of the new building.



Thompson House Relocation

In October 2015, the Landmarks Commission granted a Certificate of Appropriateness to the North Olmsted City School District to demolish the historic Thompson House at 27501 Butternut Ridge Road by removing it and relocating it to the Frostville Museum. The Olmsted Historical Society was given a deadline of April 1, 2016 to accomplish the move. The Historical Society was able to raise the funds for the Thompson House move, aided by a significant contribution from the school district. The house was relocated to Frostville on March 24, 2016.

Seltzer Display

City Hall and the North Olmsted Senior Center hosted a display case in the second half of 2016 with information and artifacts from the life of Charles Alden Seltzer, local author and mayor of North Olmsted from 1930 to 1935. Items on display included his typewriter and a number of his novels. The collection was on loan from the Olmsted Historical Society and helped to inform visitors to these public buildings more about this notable person in North Olmsted history.

Goals for 2017

- Launch the Centennial Home Program.
- Review the 2009 Historic Preservation Plan and update, as necessary.
- Support planning efforts for Old Town Hall to ensure this landmark building remains in good condition and best serves the needs of the community.
- Investigate properties of considerable local significance for potential as North Olmsted Landmarks, specifically Springvale Ballroom.
- Improve information available to the public through the Landmarks Commission webpage on the City of North Olmsted's website.
- Continue to leverage Celebrate North Olmsted's Facebook page to engage and educate the public about local history.
- Develop new signage for the Butternut Historic District.
- Support the Olmsted Historical Society and its restoration work of the Thompson House.