

HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

The Rye, New Hampshire Zoning Ordinances set forth several purposes of the Rye Historic District Commission:

1. to preserve the unique collections of historically, architecturally and culturally significant buildings and structures which characterize the Town of Rye, New Hampshire,
2. to encourage their maintenance and restoration, and
3. to insure that new buildings and structures and alterations to existing buildings and structures, and uses of buildings and structures within the District are in visual harmony with their neighbors in order that a district be preserved which will
 - a. reflect the cultural, social, economic, political, and architectural history of the Town of Rye, New Hampshire,
 - b. conserve and maintain property values in such District,
 - c. foster civic beauty,
 - d. strengthen the local economy, and
 - e. generally provide an opportunity to benefit the education, pleasure and welfare of all the citizens of the municipality.

The Rye Historic District is that area of town from the west end of Grange Park to the intersection of Central and Washington Roads. The District also includes the Brackett Road Massacre Site, the historic Cable House and the Isles of Shoals islands which fall within the State of New Hampshire. The specific Isles included are White Island, Star Island, Seavey Island and Lunging Island [also known as Londoners Island]. The District is comprised of pre-revolutionary, federal and Victorian residential, commercial and municipal buildings.

The structures date from 1724. The customary surface construction material is wood clapboard. The roof shape is peaked.

The Rye Historic District Commission has seven members appointed by the Select Board for staggered three-year terms. The Commission also may have five alternate members appointed for staggered three-year terms.

The Historic District Commission is a regulatory land use commission which votes on exterior changes to the buildings, fencing, walls and signage within the defined District. Citizens residing within the District wishing to construct, alter, repair, move, demolish or change the exterior of a structure, must obtain a Certificate of Approval from the Historic District Commission before obtaining any building permits. An exception exists for a repair which replaces like materials which only requires notification be given to the Commission. Applications for a Certificate of Approval may be obtained from the Office of the Building Inspector located at Town Hall.

In addition to meetings and public hearings on applications for Certificates of Approval, the Commission meets quarterly to develop and review Design Guidelines for guidance for the residents in the District. The RHD also applies for grants to engage professionals to assist with inventories of historic properties in the town to qualify them for designation on the State and Federal Historic Registries. The capability of applying for and obtaining grants has been enhanced since the Commission secured membership for the Town of Rye in the Certified Local Government Program (CLG). The CLG membership opens the door to Federal funds administered by the State of New Hampshire's Division of Historical Resource in conjunction with the National Park Service. These grants provide seed money for larger granting sources, provide opportunities for technical assistance with amending preservation ordinances and chapter of the Rye Master Plan and other preservation opportunities. Rye has already received a grant for preparation of the nomination of the Rye Town Hall for the National Register of Historic

Places and for the nomination of the Second Parsonage to the State of New Hampshire Register of Historic Places, in anticipation of a subsequent application for the National Register. Being a member of the CLG avails town commissioners of educational activities and training, as well as access to research of historic context information. Most important for the Town of Rye at this point in its history could be the rehabilitation or restoration of municipally owned properties individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places.