

Chapter 9: Historic Preservation and Cultural and Scenic Resources

Goals

Celebrate and preserve Sea Cliff's creative community through arts and cultural institutions, events and promotions. Connect villagers to Sea Cliff's past through educational campaigns and programs related to Sea Cliff's history and its built environment. Maintain the attractive historic and unique appearance of the Village. Protect and preserve scenic resources. Ensure that architecture and buildings are in harmony with the Village character while allowing for contextual innovation and creativity in design.

Introduction

This chapter examines historic and cultural resources that define Sea Cliff's special character and built fabric. Cultural resources include arts and cultural organizations, institutions and traditions in Sea Cliff Village. Historic resources include designated and eligible local, state, and national landmarks, nature of built environment, historic districts (although the Village does not have any designated), and contributing features such as buildings, pathways, steps, landscapes, and scenic views. This chapter will describe Sea Cliff's existing laws to protect architectural character and landmarks, the institutions that partner with the community, their efforts, and an overview of Sea Cliff's historic, scenic and cultural assets. The chapter concludes with recommendations to strengthen Sea Cliff's ability to preserve its community spirit and visual character.

Existing Conditions

Cultural Institutions

Historically, Sea Cliff has always been a creative community. After its establishment as a Village, some of its first residents were photographers, actors, architects, and other creative types. This tradition continues today. The Village enjoys a vibrant arts community with artists and makers setting up studios, galleries, retail, and workshop spaces in the Village's commercial districts. Musicians and authors perform in local hangs, Sea Cliff's parks, Sea Cliff Beach pavilion, and at events such as Porch Fest. The Pavilion at Sea Cliff Beach allows for outdoor performances. The Village's 325 Prospect (former Water building) will provide another space for creativity and community to thrive in the Village.

Sea Cliff Arts Council

The Sea Cliff Arts Council (SCAC) was founded in 1999. Its purpose is to support and promote arts and artistic expression in Sea Cliff. SCAC partners with the Village, library, North Shore High School, and local businesses to showcase creativity. Programs include the annual North Shore Art Angels ARTWalk, which showcases North Shore High School student's artwork at local businesses, film screenings, festivals, poetry readings, outdoor craft shows, concerts, and more. SCAC also offers memberships, art classes, workshops, and music lessons. SCAC is located in downtown Sea Cliff at 86 Roslyn Avenue.

Sea Cliff Museum

As discussed in the Community Facilities chapter of this plan, the Sea Cliff Museum is located in the Village Hall Complex, the former rectory of the Methodist church, and was established in 1979. The Museum collects photographs, archives, oral histories, and objects representing Sea Cliff's history. It houses permanent exhibitions, including a diorama of the Village, and special exhibits about life in the Village during different eras (e.g., Victorian times, WWII, and the 1950s).

Architectural Design Review Law

The architectural design review law of Sea Cliff establishes the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) and regulates the exterior appearance of buildings to prevent excessive similarity, dissimilarity, or inappropriateness of design in relation to other buildings in the vicinity. The purpose is to avoid adverse effects on the desirability of nearby residential properties, such as impairment to property values or deterioration of conditions that affect health and safety.

Board of Architectural Review (BAR)

The Board of Architectural Review (BAR) comprises five members who are residents of the Village and deemed qualified by the Village Trustees. The Building Inspector acts as a secretary to the BAR. The BAR reviews applications for building permits involving the exterior appearance of buildings and for subdivision of land. The BAR can specify modifications to the design and vote to approve or disapprove the permit. The Building Inspector may only issue a permit if it is approved by the BAR. The Applicant can appeal to the Zoning Board of Appeals, who may reverse, modify or affirm the decision.

Landmarks Preservation Law

The Village Trustees adopted the landmarks preservation law into the Village Code in 2002. The law establishes the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) and empowers them to recommend and advise the Village on resources to designate as landmarks, among other powers enumerated in the description of the LPC that follows. "Resources" could be places, sites, buildings, or other structures with historic, architectural, engineering, landscape design, aesthetic or other significance. For example, a resource could be a house built in the late 1800s in the Victorian architectural style, a monument in a park memorializing a key historical event, or a park designed by a famous landscape designer. These resources contribute to the education, culture, heritage, archeology, tradition, and economic values of the residents and visitors to the Village. The conservation and protection of resources through landmarking contributes to the public's well-being by promoting stability, appreciation of historical heritage, and education and enjoyment for future generations.

The law provides procedures and criteria for the designation of landmarks and historic districts, guidelines for their conservation and protection, and prevents demolition. Landmark designation does not restrict the property owner's use, development, or modification of their property. It also does not prevent ordinary maintenance and repair of exterior features that won't significantly change the landmark's design, material, or outward appearance.

Local landmarks law allows the LPC to review non-designated structures before a demolition permit can be issued and advise the Village Trustees on whether the resource should be designated. When a structure is a designated local landmark, absent LPC approval it may not be demolished, and options for its preservation will be explored. When an application for a building permit involving a designated landmark is brought to the Building Department, they will notify the LPC to comment and make recommendations to the Building Department or BAR. Their advice is non-binding. The law also has regulations for a hardship exemption when the landmark designation may present economically infeasible burdens on the use of the property.

Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC)

The Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) has seven members appointed by the Mayor and approved by the Village Trustees. Members must include a registered architect, a professional engineer, a member of Sea Cliff Landmarks Association, the Village Historian, Chairman of the Village Planning Board, and two other residents. It can be a challenge for the Village to find qualified volunteers to appoint to the commission. The LPC has powers to maintain a register of local landmarks, conduct studies and surveys and prepare reports on resources to be considered for designation, develop and participate in educational programs, advise owners of landmarks on matters of preservation and restoration, retain consultants, and amend the proposed landmark and historic district map. In addition, the LPC makes recommendations to the Village Trustees on changes to the proposed landmark and historic district map, the development and design of brochures and historical markers, the use of preservation funding, the acquisition of landmarks by the Village, and amendments to resource identification criteria or the rules and regulations of the landmark's preservation law and commission.

Sea Cliff Landmark Association ("Landmarks Association")

The Sea Cliff Landmarks Association was incorporated in 2017 as a non-profit corporation. Its predecessor, the Sea Cliff Restoration and Preservation Corporation, was incorporated in 1973. According to the Association's by-laws, it works cooperatively with the Sea Cliff LPC to identify resources and their significance, to promote the preservation of architectural and cultural heritage, to encourage sound planning and contextual design with the existing built environment, to recommend priorities to the Mayor and Village Trustees, to host public events and raise money for preservation-oriented activities, and to build community support through initiatives and incentives, such as an awards program.

The Association hosts lectures, tours, and other educational events, and shares resources on its website, such as historic photographs and postcards, and information for property owners to research the history of their property. The Association has also been instrumental in working with the LPC and others to develop a database of over 1000 properties in Sea Cliff to inventory, document, and identify significant cultural and historic resources. More about these efforts is discussed under opportunities.

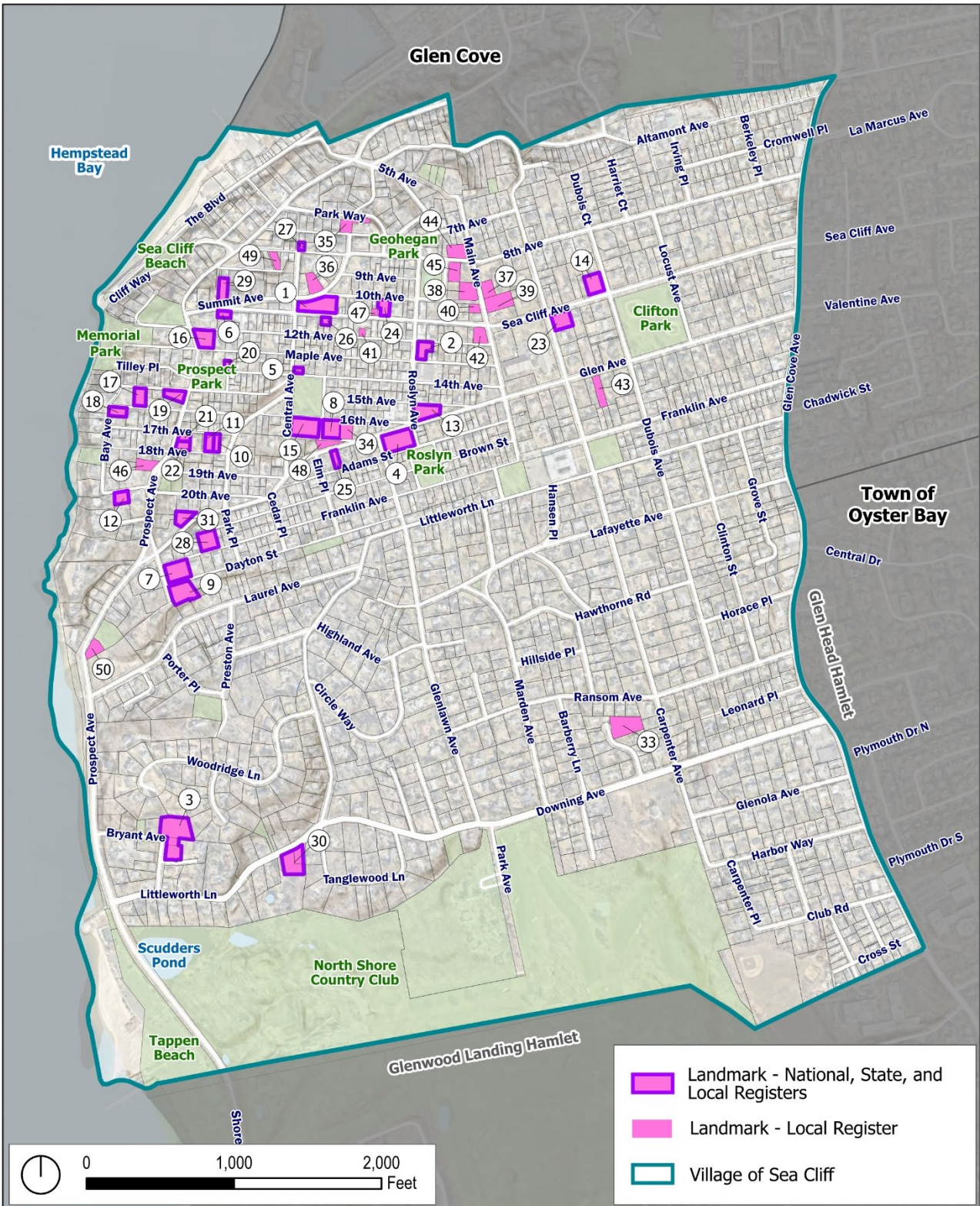
Designated Landmarks

In Sea Cliff, there are 50 locally designated landmarks. A map of designated landmarks is shown in Figure 1. Numeric labels correspond to Table 1, containing information on the location, year built, architectural style, and uses of Sea Cliff's landmarks. Descriptions of a selection of these landmarks follow the subsections on Local, State, and National Landmarks below.

Local Landmarks

Local designation provides the strongest legal protection for the preservation of historic landmarks because it can prevent demolition and allows the LPC to make specific recommendations on permits and alterations to designated properties, however, their advice is not binding, and it ultimately depends on property owners and the Village Trustees to make informed decisions. The Village Board can reduce or freeze village taxes and advise the Nassau County Board of Assessors to do the same to reduce the tax burden to the extent required to ensure proper maintenance of the local landmark.

Figure 1: Designated Landmarks map



Source: NYS GIS, CRIS, BFJ Planning.

Table 1: Designated Landmarks

ID	Landmark Name	Address	Year Built	Architectural Style	Historic Use	Current Use	NR Year	TG	NR	SR	LR
1	Sea Cliff Village Hall, Library and Museum Complex	300 Sea Cliff Ave.	1914	Late Gothic Revival (Collegiate Gothic), Tudor Revival	church, rectory, church school	Village hall, library, and museum	2005		X	X	X
2	Sea Cliff Firehouse	67 Roslyn Ave.	1931	Tudor Revival	firehouse	firehouse	2003		X	X	X
3	Church of Our Lady of Kazan	2 Willow Shore Ave.	1946	Russian Orthodox Folk	garage	church	2016		X	X	X
4	St. Luke's Protestant Episcopal Church	253 Glen Ave.	1892-1894	Late Victorian	Church	Church	1988	X	X	X	X
5	Central Hall	93 Central Ave.	1894	Late 19 th Century	dry goods store, community meeting hall; later Young Men's Club and Community Youth Center	antique shop; later a child care; currently a residence	1988	X	X	X	X
6	Christ Building (Harian's General Store)	357-359 Sea Cliff Ave.	1891	Late Victorian, Second Empire	bakery, general store, boarding house	specialty store, apartments	2011		X	X	X
7	9 Locust Place	9 Locust Pl.	1880	Queen Anne	summer house	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
8	18 17th Avenue	18 17 th Ave.	1890	Queen Anne	residence	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
9	19 Locust Place	19 Locust Pl.	1893	Shingle Style	summer house	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
10	52 18th Avenue	52 18 th Ave.	1895	Late Victorian	residence	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
11	58 18th Avenue	58 18 th Ave.	1893	Late Victorian	boarding house	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
12	65 20th Avenue	65 20 th Ave.	1893	Late Victorian	barn, carriage house	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
13	103 Roslyn Avenue	103 Roslyn Ave.	1884	Queen Anne	residence	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
14	112 Sea Cliff Avenue	112 Sea Cliff Ave.	1884	Queen Anne	parsonage	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
15	115 Central Avenue	115 Central Ave.	1890	Victorian, Stick Style	residence	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
16	137 Prospect Avenue	137 Prospect Ave.	1875	Late Victorian, Gothic influence	vacation home	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
17	162 16th Avenue	162 16 th Ave.	1873 (1875?)	American Gothic Revival	summer home	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
18	173 16th Avenue	173 16 th Ave.	1880	Late Victorian/Gothic	residence	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
19	176 Prospect Avenue	176 Prospect Ave.	1886	Queen Anne	residence	three apartments	1988	X	X	X	X
20	Harding, Stephen House	182 14 th Ave.	1878	Vernacular Queen Anne	residence	residence	2011		X	X	X
21	195 Prospect Avenue	195 Prospect Ave.	1890	Folk Victorian	residence	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
22	199 Prospect Avenue	199 Prospect Ave.	1890	Late Victorian/Folk Victorian	residence	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
23	207 Carpenter Avenue	207 Carpenter Ave.	1885	Queen Anne/Eastlake	residence	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
24	240 Sea Cliff Avenue	240 Sea Cliff Ave.	1888	Queen Anne	parsonage for the Methodist Church	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
25	285 Glen Avenue	285 Glen Ave.	1885	Second Empire	residence	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
26	285 Sea Cliff Avenue	285 Sea Cliff Ave.	1884	Italiante	summer house	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
27	290 8th Avenue	290 8 th Ave.	1885	Queen Anne	Boarding House	two-family house	1988	X	X	X	X
28	332 Franklin Avenue	332 Franklin Ave.	1888	Queen Anne	residence	apartments	1988	X	X	X	X

29	362 Sea Cliff Avenue	362 Sea Cliff Ave.	1875	Second Empire	boarding house	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
30	The Crowell Residence	375 Littleworth La.	1871	Second Empire	residence, fish hatchery	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
31	378 Glen Avenue	378 Glen Ave.	1886	Late Victorian	residence	residence	1988	X	X	X	X
32	Sea Cliff Railroad Station*	Sea Cliff Ave.	1868	Victorian	railroad station	railroad station	1988	X	X	X	
33	6 Dixon Ct	6 Dixon Ct.	1902		summer house	residence	NA				X
34	Kitching Cottage	8 17 th Ave.	1892	Queen Anne	residence	residence	NA				X
35	41 Park Way	41 Park Way	1888	Gothic Revival	barn, carriage house	residence	NA				X
36	55 Summit Ave	55 Summit Ave.	1892	Stick	residence	residence	NA				X
37	65 Main Ave	65 Main Ave.	1922	Tudor	residence	residence	NA				X
38	68 Main Ave	68 Main Ave.	1898	Colonial Revival	residence	residence	NA				X
39	75 Main Ave	75 Main Ave.	1878	Second Empire	residence	residence	NA				X
40	76 Main Avenue	76 Main Ave.	~1891	Queen Anne	residence	residence	NA				X
41	86 12th Ave	86 12 th Ave.	~1895	Queen Anne	residence	residence	NA				X
42	92 Main Ave	92 Main Ave.	1892		residence	residence	NA				X
43	119 Glen Ave	119 Glen Ave.	1908	Hipped Cottage	residence	residence	NA				X
44	200 8th Ave	200 8 th Ave.	1908	Queen Anne	residence	residence	NA				X
45	203 8th Ave	203 8 th Ave.	1888	Stick Style	residence, photo studio	residence	NA				X
46	222 Prospect Ave	222 Prospect Ave.			residence	residence	NA				X
47	248 Sea Cliff Ave	248 Sea Cliff Ave.			unknown	commercial	NA				X
48	272 Glen Ave	272 Glen Ave.	1891 (1898)	Italianate/Queen Anne	residence	residence	NA				X
49	307 8th Ave	307 8 th Ave.	~1888	Gothic Revival	servants' quarters	residence	NA				X
50	The Sea Cliff Water Company	325 Prospect Ave.	1891, 1940	Colonial Revival	water pumping facility	community facility	NA				X

*Sea Cliff Railroad Station is located in Glen Cove. It is included in the table because it relates to Sea Cliff's history and was part of the designation of Sea Cliff Summer Resort Thematic Group.

TR=Summer Resort Thematic Group NR=National Register SR=State Register LR=Local Register

Sources: National Register of Historic Places, CRIS, Sea Cliff Landmarks Association.

State Landmarks

There are 31 State designated landmarks in the Village. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is within the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation (NYS OPRHP). The SHPO is responsible for working with the National Park Service (NPS) to administer programs such as the statewide historic resources survey, federal rehabilitation tax credit, certified local government program, state historic preservation grants, federal environmental review, and technical assistance. In compliance with the federal historic preservation law, the SHPO produces a five-year historic preservation plan that outlines the goals and objectives of the State.

The State Register is the official list of buildings, structures, districts, and other resources that are significant to the history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture of the State. The New York State Historic Preservation Act of 1980 established the State Register program. Listing on the State Register gives some protection from the effects of state agency-sponsored, licensed, or assisted projects through a notice, review, and consultation process. Matching state historic preservation grants are available for municipal and not-for-profit owners of registered historic properties. Listing does not put any restrictions on private owners of the registered properties.

The nomination process for State and National designation is a cooperative effort between the property owner, historic preservation organizations, the SHPO, and consultants, to document the history and qualities of an eligible property with professional and archival standards. This process gathers information in databases that researchers and the public can access.

New York State Heritage Areas

Sea Cliff is within the Long Island North Shore Heritage Area (LINSHA). The LINSHA spans from Great Neck to East Marion and covers most of the area north of State Route 25. Some communities have chosen not to participate in the North Shore Heritage Area, but Sea Cliff does. New York State Heritage Areas are state-local partnerships in regions with significant natural, historic, and cultural resources. The program intends to create shared resources and goals for preservation, education, recreation and leisure, and economic development. There are only five of these heritage areas in New York.



Long Island North Shore Heritage Area

Source: NYS Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

National Landmarks

There are 31 National Register Landmarks within Sea Cliff Village. These are the same landmarks listed on the State Register. Twenty-six properties were listed on the National Register as the Sea Cliff Summer Resort Thematic Group in 1988. The Sea Cliff Railroad Station, which is not located in the Village, was also listed with this group because of its related history. The remaining five landmarks were listed between 2003 and 2016 (see Table 1).



A historic home on the National Register located in Sea Cliff.

Source: Sea Cliff Landmarks Association

The National Register of Historic Places, maintained by the National Park Service (NPS), is the Nation's official list of sites worthy of preservation for their historic, architectural, and other cultural values. Listing on the national register provides some protection from the effects of federal agency-sponsored, licensed, or assisted projects through a notice, review, and consultation process. Being listed on the national register gives property owners access to federal preservation tax credits, NPS grant programs, and preservation easements. In addition, property owners can order a bronze plaque to mark their property. There is a sense of prestige in listing properties for owners, neighbors, and visitors.

Federal preservation tax credits offer a 20% income tax credit for rehabilitating listed historic income-producing buildings, such as industrial, commercial or rental residential uses—private, owner-occupied residential properties are not eligible. An owner of a historic property may also enter into an easement agreement with a preservation or conservation non-profit organization to preserve their property in perpetuity while qualifying for tax reductions.

The Historic Preservation Fund provides funding to states, local governments, and non-profits. State governments are awarded based on an annual formula. States must subgrant 10% of their funds to Certified Local Governments.

Certified Local Governments are local governments that qualify for competitive grants. Sea Cliff is not a Certified Local Government. Certified Local Governments must meet eligibility requirements such as having an established Historic Preservation Commission, a local ordinance for the designation and protection of historic properties, an inventory of local resources, public participation in the local preservation process, and some additional requirements. The benefits of being a Certified Local Government include access to grants and direct technical assistance from the SHPO.

Municipally Owned Landmarks

Village Hall, Library and Museum Complex

The buildings that house the Village Hall, Library and Museum at 300 Sea Cliff Avenue were built in 1914 as a Methodist church, Sunday school, chapel, and rectory. The main building—the former church and current Village Hall and Library—is in the late Gothic Revival style and is constructed of beige brick, cast stone accents, a slate roof, and features a square bell tower. The municipality restored the exterior to historic landmark standards in 2014 with funding from an Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) Grant from NYS OPRHP. The former rectory is in the Tudor revival style and constructed of brick with a slate roof.



Source: Sea Cliff Landmarks Association

The complex was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2005 and boasts a bronze plaque recognizing its importance. The Village acquired the property from the Sea Cliff Methodist Episcopal Church in 1968 and adapted it to municipal use in 1970.

Sea Cliff Firehouse

The Sea Cliff Firehouse, located at 67 Roslyn Avenue, was built in 1931. It is a one-and-a-half-story, Tudor revival style brick building with ornamental half-timbering. It has four engine bays, segmental arched openings, and a steep slate roof with dormers. It features a bell tower topped by a slate gable roof. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2003. In 2017, The Village restored to historic landmark standards the windows and exterior of the Firehouse which continues to serve its original emergency response purpose. The project was funded by an EPF Grant from NYS OPRHP. Additional restoration and repairs to the firehouse have been accomplished through private donations.



Source: Sea Cliff Landmarks Association

The Sea Cliff Water Company property (325 Prospect)

325 Prospect, also known as the Sea Cliff Water Company property, is a locally designated landmark and is not listed on the State or National Registers. The 1940 Pump House building at the 325 Prospect property underwent a condition assessment in 2022 with funding from Preservation New York's Technical Assistance Grant program as well as local funds. Current restoration and stabilization efforts at the 1940 Pump House are funded through private donations.

Non-Profit Owned Landmarks

Church of Our Lady of Kazan

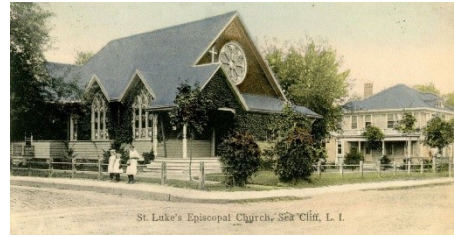
The Church of Our Lady of Kazan is Sea Cliff's most recent designated landmark, being listed on the National Register in 2016. The church is significant for its unique social and cultural history and its architectural design. Russian immigrants began to settle in Sea Cliff around the turn of the 20th century. The Russian community was growing in the 1940s and 1950s due to political turmoil in Russia following WWII. In 1941, ten Russian families established the Russian Orthodox congregation of Our Lady of Kazan in Sea Cliff. A member of the congregation and architect, Boris Riaboff, donated a piece of his property and a wooden garage as a space to meet and worship. In 1946 and 1950, Riaboff designed expansions to the garage into its present form as a church to accommodate the needs of the expanding congregation. The church is designed in a folk Russian Orthodox style, constructed of wood, and marked by an iconic blue onion dome, a bell tower, and a steeple with a gold onion dome and cross. Another Russian artist, Vadim Chernoff, painted the interior and exterior with Byzantine style icons. Members of the congregation carved the woodwork that decorates the building.



Source: WBG Foundation

St. Luke's Protestant Episcopal Church

St. Luke's Protestant Episcopal Church was listed on the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Sea Cliff Summer Resort Thematic Group in 1988. Constructed between 1892 and 1894, it is the oldest standing church in Sea Cliff. Before the church's construction, Episcopal services were held at the Sea Cliff Hotel. The St. Luke's parish was established in 1890. The building is a one-and-a-half-story clapboard structure with a steeply pitched slate roof. It features a prominent rosette window on the northern façade and several pointed-arch stained-glass windows on the side elevations. The interior of the church is also largely intact.



Source: St. Luke's Episcopal Church

Commercial Use Landmarks

Central Hall

Central Hall was built in 1894 as a dry goods store when Central Avenue was a prominent business street of the summer resort. Later the building was used for various uses, including as a movie theater and a Young Men's Club. The Village acquired Central Hall in 1942 and used it as a community center for youth and public meetings. In 1972 it returned to private ownership. The building has most recently been used as an antique shop, art gallery, daycare and, residential use. The structure is a two-story, clapboard-sided, Greek revival building with a low gable roof. It was added to the National Register with the Sea Cliff Summer Resort Thematic Group in 1988.



Source: Sea Cliff Landmarks Association

Christ Building

Located prominently at 357-359 Sea Cliff Avenue, these three attached storefronts with residential units above were built in 1891. The Christ building was originally a bakery with an underground brick oven. Later uses included Harian's general store, a postal telegraph company, and a hardware store. Presently, it hosts a metaphysical supply and psychic reading operation.



Source: Sea Cliff Landmarks Association

Private Residential Landmarks

The remainder of Sea Cliff's landmarks are private residences. They were all built between 1871 and 1895 in various Victorian, Second Empire, Gothic Revival, Queen Anne, Italianate, and Shingle architectural styles. All were designated on the National Register as part of the Sea Cliff Summer Resort Thematic Group, except the Stephen Harding house, which was designated in 2011. Some residences were originally built and used as boarding houses or hotels and have since been converted into single-family or multi-family homes (e.g., 115 Central Avenue and 285 Sea Cliff Avenue, and 362 Sea Cliff Avenue.) Others were built as single-family or summer homes. One particularly fascinating example is the Crowell Residence at 375 Littleworth Lane which was built in 1874 and operated as a fish-hatching and breeding establishment. In addition to this atypical use, its construction is also unusual, with 12-foot-thick poured concrete interior and exterior walls.



Crowell Residence

Source: Sea Cliff Landmarks Association

Opportunities for Designation

In addition to the list of locally designated historic landmarks, the LPC also keeps a list and map of proposed landmarks. These are eligible buildings that the LPC plans to nominate for local designation.

An example of one of the resources for potential designation is the Stenson Memorial Library. The Library is not currently designated at any level, but many would agree that it has historic, architectural, and cultural value to the Village. The Stenson Children's Library underwent an interior restoration and installation of an ADA compliant bathroom in 2015 using various funding sources, including Dormitory Authority State of New York, Community Development Block Grant, and local funds.



Stenson Memorial Library

Source: Sea Cliff Landmarks Association

The most extensive effort of the Landmarks Association and LPC to identify potential local landmarks and historic districts has been their development of an online database of over 1,000 resources, noting architectural style, year built, alterations, and descriptions. The database also includes relevant documents such as newspaper articles, photographs, and images. While the database can be viewed as a table or a grid, it is not geolocated in a geographic information system (GIS) that would allow for better mapping and preservation planning. The database builds on several past survey efforts, including research conducted for the nomination of the Sea Cliff Summer Resort Thematic Group.

In 2006, the Landmarks Association and LPC produced a Cultural Resources Survey, which laid out a plan of resources to be inventoried and designated, based on extensive research efforts that took place between 2002-2005.¹ These efforts involved intensive documentation of Sea Cliff's resources resulting in building descriptions and forms for three historic districts, including almost 700 resources, and a recommended a list of over 85 properties with designation potential. This Survey was a roadmap for the LPC and Landmarks Association and also provided a reference and recommendations for relevant boards and the Town Council. However, the three historic districts and most of identified resources have not been formally designated.

¹ Sea Cliff Cultural Resources Survey, Sea Cliff Landmarks Association, 2006.

The three potential historic districts identified by this Survey are: Sea Cliff Grove Historic District, Sea Cliff Avenue Historic District, and the Clifton Park Historic District. Sea Cliff Grove was the area originally platted for the Metropolitan Campground Association and the district roughly corresponds to the area north of Littleworth Lane and Laurel Avenue and west of Main Avenue. The Sea Cliff Avenue Historic District runs along the Sea Cliff Avenue Commercial Corridor and was documented separately from the Sea Cliff Grove district due to its district commercial character. As of 2006, nomination forms for the Sea Cliff Grove and Sea Cliff Avenue Historic Districts were prepared for submission to the NYS OPRHP for determination of eligibility, but it is unclear whether these were submitted. Clifton Park traces the boundaries of a residential district subdivided in 1880. It is an area west of Glen Cove Avenue, extending along both sides of Sea Cliff and Glen Avenues, to Carpenter Avenue, and reaching north to 8th Avenue and south to Littleworth Lane. This potential historic district has been partially documented; but at the time, the Landmarks Association and LPC needed to undertake more research before a nomination could be made.

Cultural and Scenic Resources

Historic steps and walkways

One defining feature of Sea Cliff is the public walkways and steps connecting the waterfront to the Downtown and neighborhoods. These were developed between 1880 and 1908.² The boardwalk along the beach, the Central Steps, the Bathway Steps, and the Tilley Steps have been restored and are open to the public. The Ravine Path (aka Fairview Steps) connecting Summit Avenue, Fairview Place, and 8th Avenue was restored and reopened to the public in 2019.

The Cliff Way Steps, a wooden staircase between Cliff Way and the Boulevard, has been closed and reopened from time to time due to the difficulty of their maintenance.

Some additional steps and pathways need restoration.

The 18th Avenue Steps were first built in the 1880s and removed in 1959. They were restored in the 1960s and 1970s, but have been closed since 1989.



"Sea Cliff: Parks, Public Spaces, & Walkways." Sea Cliff Landmarks Association. 2019.

² "Sea Cliff: Parks, Public Spaces, & Walkways." Sea Cliff Landmarks Association. 2019.

The Pinnacle Steps maintained an easement for public access between Tilly Place and Maple Avenue after a developer demolished the former Pinnacle Hotel and subdivided the property to develop two homes in 1987.

The 18 Trails was historically a set of connected pathways leading from the boardwalk to a point known as Pinnacle Point which historically had a fountain and seating. Erosion of the slope has resulted in the closure of the trails. One marked pathway remains between Memorial Park and Maple Avenue. The 18 Trails area between 12th and Maple Avenues contains the remains of the Sea Cliff Inclined Cable Railway terminus, which carried passengers from the ferry up to the Village, where a trolley connection was available to take them to the railroad station.

Hempstead Harbor

Sea Cliff's initial attraction comes from its unique location on a bluff overlooking the Hempstead Harbor. The harbor provides recreational activities like boating and swimming, and it also offers beautiful views and sunsets. Iconic harbor views can be seen from Sea Cliff Beach, Tappen Beach, Sea Cliff Memorial Park, and the 18 Trails Conservation Area. The harbor viewshed includes communities on the opposite coast and Westchester; any development will change the view. Thus, it is critical for Sea Cliff and other communities that border the Harbor to work together to keep the harbor clean and preserve its aesthetic qualities. The historical and traditional ways the harbor has been used and enjoyed are also threatened and worth preserving. For example, pollution in the water affects whether the beach is open and safe for swimming. Another example, the harbor used to be a rich source of shellfish and lobsters; however, their populations have declined. Recent efforts to farm oysters in the harbor may improve water quality and the continued tradition of enjoying local oysters.

The Hempstead Harbor Management Plan, prepared for the Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee in 2004, presented several recommendations to preserve the harbor's historic and visual resources.³ The paraphrased recommendations from that Plan are still relevant today (See box below.)

³ Hempstead Harbor Management Plan, Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee, Cashin and Associates, 2004.

Hempstead Harbor Management Plan, 2004 Recommendations (paraphrased)

1. *Manage threats to the harbor's open space and visual resources.*
 - a. *Maintain and restore original landforms.*
 - b. *Avoid structures/activities that visually interrupt the natural landscapes.*
 - c. *Preserve undeveloped areas that contribute to the visual quality of the harbor.*
 - d. *Restore deteriorated visual elements and remove degraded elements.*
 - e. *Recognize water-dependent uses as important additions to the visual interest of the harbor, support their maintenance, and require measures during site plan review to ensure aesthetic quality.*
 - f. *Promote the use of native plant species to provide visual consistency with the natural setting of the area.*
 - g. *Adequately collect waste to prevent litter from getting into the harbor.*
2. *Preserve important historical resources along the waterfront of Hempstead Harbor.*
 - a. *Local historians should cooperatively undertake a comprehensive inventory and analysis of historic resources to create a single analysis providing for a thorough understanding of the historic importance of Hempstead Harbor as a whole.*
 - b. *Cooperatively assess the adequacy of local historic preservation laws between all Hempstead Harbor municipalities to assess their effectiveness and craft appropriate amendments for each municipality.*
 - c. *Coordinate efforts to install standardized informational signage at appropriate locations around the harbor. Such signage should be directed at providing interesting facts regarding local historical events and people, land and water uses, settlement patterns, and similar information.*
 - d. *Whenever practicable, historic resources should be open to the public.*

Draft

Recommendations/Options for Consideration

1. Support and facilitate the growth of local artists and cultural organizations.

1.1. *Continue to work with the Sea Cliff Arts Council (SCAC), local artists, and creative businesses to provide space and resources to showcase their work and events.*

1.2. *Review the Village Code to consider incorporating provisions to permit arts-related uses, such as an artist's studio, gallery, or workshop, as of right in the Business Districts.*

Currently, a special permit is required to use a commercial space in the business district as a "Workroom of a craftsman or tradesman incidental to the retail sale of such craftsman's or tradesman's products." This could promote the use of Glen Cove Avenue and Downtown storefronts for arts-related uses that will bring foot traffic and enhance and contribute to the character and spirit of Sea Cliff.

2. Leverage arts, history, and culture to promote tourism in Sea Cliff.

2.1. *The Village could develop a historic and cultural tourism program, including activities such as historic walking tours of the downtown, the historic pathways, steps, and the waterfront. Tours could also be related to the arts and culture scene, such as visits to artists' workshops and studios. Opportunities to coordinate local events with tourism activities should also be explored. Potential partners to get involved in this initiative include SCAC, the Sea Cliff Museum, the Landmarks Association, the Gold Coast Business Association, and others.*

3. Strengthen the language in the Landmarks Law and the Architectural Review Law to further the goal of preserving the community's aesthetic and historic character.

3.1. *Revise the standards for approval and disapproval of applications to the Board of Architectural Review (BAR) in the Code.*

Currently, the only parameters for review are the excessive similarity and dissimilarity of design. This approach has sometimes been criticized. In many cases, there is nothing inherently wrong with similarity. A case in point would be a row of brownstones. The Village could add a third provision to ensure that the alteration, structure, building, or site plan is aesthetically pleasing. The provision could specify that the BAR can support as grounds for approval that the design of the structure is not visually offensive or inappropriate due to the use of poor-quality materials, construction, or design—including choice of colors, cladding materials, and height in relation to the terrain and surroundings; that the alteration or construction would mar the appearance of the area or would be detrimental to the character of the neighborhood. What some other communities have done is to ask applicants to provide photos or elevations of buildings adjacent to the proposed project. This allows the BAR to better judge compatibility with the neighborhood.

3.2. *Improve the Procedure for review by the Board of Architectural Review (BAR).*

The procedures of the BAR outlined in the Code should be reviewed to streamline the permitting process and improve communication. When the building inspector sends an application to the primary board that has jurisdiction on such application (Planning Board or Zoning Board of Approval), they could also send courtesy copies to other involved boards so they can make comments on the application within 30 days.

4. Consider adding design guidelines to the Village Code to help homeowners improve their properties in a way that is contextual with the Village's character.

4.1. Work with the Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) and BAR to draft and adopt design guidelines for maintaining and preserving historic buildings and encourage appropriate architectural styles, designs, and alterations for Sea Cliff's unique neighborhoods.

The guidelines help educate residents of the Village and owners of designated properties and owners of historic properties not protected under the local ordinance to appropriately maintain and preserve the Village's historic resources and aesthetic character. Guidelines can help property owners understand appropriate alterations and designs for buildings, structures, and site plans that will be in harmony with their surroundings. The guidelines are intended to help applicants and the Zoning Board of Approval understand the Architectural Review process and achieve permit approval. The guidelines can provide examples of excessive similarity, dissimilarity, and appropriateness of design. It can recommend appropriate dimensions, proportions, façade elements, colors, cladding materials, landscaping, and siting.

5. Work with the LPC to consider designation of additional properties on the local, state, and national registers.

5.1. Encourage property owners to consider the designation of their properties and work with the LPC, Landmarks Association, and State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to designate sites to the local, state, and national registers.

Recommendations already provided in surveys completed by the LPC and the Landmarks Association should inform the designations.

5.2. Support the LPC and Landmarks Association in their endeavors to continue their inventory and documentation of the Village's resources—including their recent initiatives to document significant historic landscapes, landscape elements, and archeological resources—to further understand Sea Cliff's history, educate the community, and work together to designate additional properties the local register.

5.3. Demarcate and celebrate designations with plaques.

The Village could help to provide funding to acquire NPS-approved bronze plaques to demarcate properties on the National Register in Sea Cliff. The Village could also initiate a standard signage or plaque to mark locally designated resources.

6. Consider designating historic districts or neighborhood conservation districts.

6.1. The LPC and the Village Trustees could consider historic district designation to enable the preservation of the aesthetic and historic character of these areas in the Village.

The Landmarks Association has documented three historic districts in the Village and prepared forms for their formal designation at the National level. Local historic district designation provides additional protection through the Landmarks Preservation Ordinance, particularly for demolition review, and acknowledges and takes pride in the value of Sea Cliff's historic character.

6.2. *Consider Adopting a Neighborhood Conservation District Law and designating neighborhood conservation districts as an alternative to traditional historic districts.* Neighborhood conservation districts are typically residential neighborhoods with a distinct physical character that may not meet more stringent historic district designation standards but still warrant special treatment. Neighborhood conservation districts differ from historic districts as they are more focused on preserving community character. The BAR could develop design guidelines with community input and review changes to properties within the district.

7. Support the LPC and the Sea Cliff Landmarks Association in their efforts to document and preserve Sea Cliff's unique character.

7.1. *Support the LPC and Landmarks Association by providing tools to conduct their mission.* For example, providing geographic information systems (GIS) software would allow them to geo-locate their database, which can also help the Village to quickly layer the information with other maps for analysis and decision-making.

7.2. *Provide educational materials and technical assistance to historic and designated landmark property owners to access funding, tax incentives, and resources to maintain their property correctly.*

The LPC and Landmarks Association could also develop material on the benefits and ramifications of local, state, and national designation for presentation to other municipal boards to ensure that the preservation of historic buildings (regardless of their designation status) is considered in all planning and development decisions.

7.3. *The Landmarks Association can partner with the local real estate community to educate them about the Village's heritage and encourage the marketing of historic properties to attract buyers who will preserve and protect them.*

8. Promote and facilitate adaptive reuse of historically and architecturally significant buildings.

The Village should consider a flexible and streamlined land use review to encourage the adaptive reuse of eligible buildings. The LPC could develop a list of eligible buildings, typically including buildings originally built for religious or educational uses. 325 Prospect could become a good showcase of appropriate adaptive reuse projects.

9. Access funding and grants by becoming a Certified Local Government.

9.1. *Pursue Certified Local Government status through the State, which provides eligibility for state and federal preservation funding, support from the SHPO, and standard best practices for historic preservation as defined by the National Park Service.*

To be eligible, Sea Cliff must maintain its LPC and may need to revisit its Landmarks Preservation Law to ensure it complies.

10. Identify, promote, and apply for preservation grants and funding opportunities.

10.1. Explore opportunities including, but not limited to, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, Preservation League of New York, New York State Council for the Arts, and NYS Community Preservation Fund legislation.

For example, the National Trust's Hart Family Fund for Small Towns is an annual competitive grant program for towns with less than 10,000 residents. The Mainstreet Program, an independent subsidiary of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, provides grants and resources to help communities revitalize their historic downtowns.

11. Maintain, restore, and reopen Sea Cliff's historic public walkways and steps.

The steps and pathways connect neighborhoods, the downtown, the waterfront, and Sea Cliff's history. These paths, within budget limitations, should be maintained, restored, and open to residents and visitors when viable and practical. The paths should be clearly marked with signage.

12. Preserve Sea Cliff's scenic vistas and the Hempstead Harbor to ensure that the aesthetic qualities are enhanced or restored.

The Hempstead Harbor Management Plan made several recommendations to preserve the scenic and historic qualities of the Hempstead Harbor that are still relevant today. Partnering with the Hempstead Harbor Protection Committee, Coalition to Save Hempstead Harbor, and surrounding communities on a comprehensive survey of historic and scenic resources along the Harbor could contribute to a more cohesive preservation plan.