



# The Advocate

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Cazenovia Heritage  
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### LEGO®NOVIA Set for May 5<sup>th</sup>!

Can you look back to when you built buildings, forts, and machines with LEGO blocks? Or do you now watch your kids or grandkids build the latest LEGO concoction? On Sunday May 5<sup>th</sup>, from 1:00 – 3:00 PM, teams of children and supervising adults will use these popular building blocks to re-create 50 of Cazenovia’s historic buildings. This is a great family and community event that can encourage preservation of our historic resources. Tickets must be purchased in advance and are limited, so make your purchase now!

And if you’re not able to participate (ie., not a child or grand/parent), you can still be part of the fun by being a sponsor! Sponsors will receive two spectator tickets to the event and there is a range of levels to participate. For tickets and sponsorships, visit Programs & Events on the website, [www.cazheritage.org](http://www.cazheritage.org)



Also, in this issue, take a look at the revised proposal for the 99-103 Albany Street property. You can take a closer look and provide some feedback on **April 22<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00 PM, at the Village Hall** when the project will be reviewed by the Village HPC.



### May is *National Preservation Month* – Be a Part!

In recognition of National Preservation Month, and in addition to LEGO®NOVIA, a Walking Tour of the Neighborhoods on lower Fenner and Albany Streets is planned for Sunday, May 19<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 PM. Ted Bartlett will describe the architecture and development of this community on the eastern side of Cazenovia. Gather before 2:00 PM in front of the Library.

## A Better Paint to Protect Historic Homes?

By Mark Smith

*Fellow Cazenovia Heritage Member and historic homeowner Mark Smith embarked on finding a better solution to repeated house painting. He turned to the past to see if a centuries-old solution might be the answer. Note: your actual house conditions may be different from Mark's. This is Part I of a two-part article.*

I own a historic home, a Greek Revival built between 1820 and 1830. My house was painted in 2016 with Benjamin Moore Arborcoat® Exterior Water-based stain. I had hoped that it would not peel like the unknown paint the previous owner had used. While it did hold up better, after five years, it became clear that the house would need scraping and repainting in a year or two. I wondered, was there a paint that would not peel and could last longer?

### Latex Paint versus Linseed Oil Paint

Latex paints seal the wood with a non-breathable layer of paint. Since wood naturally contracts and expands with temperature changes, it is always in motion. This flexing eventually creates micro-cracks in the shell of the paint, leaving an entry point for water. When modern latex and petrochemical-based oil paints fail, one of two things happen: the water and moisture curl and peel the paint so the moisture that is trapped beneath the surface can escape. Or, the water enters the micro cracks and remains trapped beneath the paint surface, leading to rot. Current acrylic paints now claim they “breathe,” but with varying results. Solving this modern paint problem is one reason traditional linseed oil paint was reintroduced to the Swedish market in the early 1980s. I decided to explore its potential for my house and learned much along the way.

Linseed oil paint applied directly to a wood surface will never peel. When applied to bare wood, the paint penetrates, protecting beneath the surface while allowing the wood to breathe and moisture to escape. (One website on old Norwegian wooden houses states that traditional linseed oil paint can last 15 to 20 years on the east and north facades and 3 to 7 years on the south and west facades of a house before it needs to be renewed with either a coat of purified/degummed linseed oil, which rebinds the pigment, or a fresh coat of linseed oil paint.)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gamletrehus.no/butikk/artikler/historisk-maling-og-fargekart/linoljemaling-1>

I decided to experiment and paint a few sides of my house with natural linseed oil paint, using the Ottosson brand, and contacted the U.S. distributor. I was advised to use a linseed oil paint formulated with zinc due to the moist environment in Central New York since zinc hardens the surface and retards mildew. The linseed oil used by Ottosson is cold-pressed and purified/degummed, removing the proteins in the linseed oil so they do not serve as a food source for bacteria and spores. There are no dangerous Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) in the Ottosson paints because these paints have no petrochemical solvents or chemical industry-formulated binders or additives. And beware: There are some modern paints that mix linseed oil together with petrochemical solvents and may even be marketed as linseed oil paint. Those are NOT traditional natural linseed oil paints!

### Preparation for Painting

In order to get the full benefit of natural linseed oil paint, modern paint should be stripped from any wood surface on which you plan to apply the linseed oil paint. If you do not do this, you may get peeling in areas if the modern paint beneath the layer of linseed oil paint fails. I dry-scraped the house, removing the peeling and loose paint. As I dry-scraped, I found areas beneath the paint where the wood was moist and, in some spots, soft/punky. If you have small cracks and holes in the siding, you can purchase linseed oil putty (also used for glazing windows) to fill them. Paint over the linseed oil putty the same day you fill in the cracks.

I then washed the areas of the house that still had old paint on them with a linseed oil soap and water mixture to remove any pollution and dirt. One can use either a microfiber cloth to clean the siding and to dry off excess water; or a boat brush can be used for cleaning which has softer bristles than a regular plastic brush (which is too hard) and the handle telescopes for greater reach. Then rinse with a garden hose using low pressure. (In retrospect, I realized it would have been better to wash the wall down first before scraping, as it will limit the moisture the bare wood is exposed to. It is important that the wood is dry to the touch before painting.) With the prep work done, I was ready to start painting.

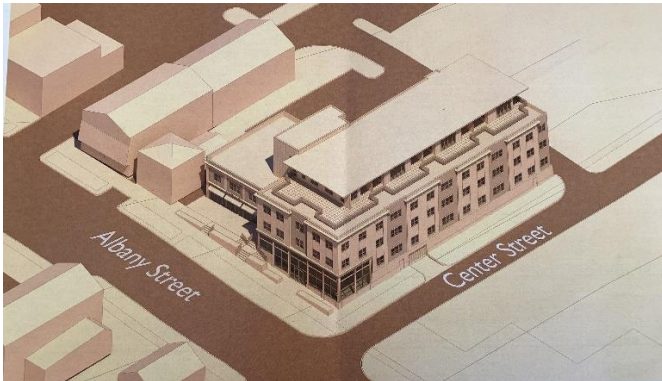
*Next newsletter:* Learn Mark's tips as he applies the linseed oil paint.

## Renew Albany Street! Continues Progress

Two more landlords have shown their support and took advantage of the warm spell in March to improve the appearance of their buildings and to protect against the elements:



A revised concept for the 99-103 Albany Street properties has been submitted to the Village. It will undergo architectural review by the HPC on **Monday April 22 at 6:00 PM**. Some of the elevations are shown below:



Aerial



Looking North on Albany St



Looking West from Center St



Corner of Albany & Center Sts

## ***Preservation Primer – Part III: Preservation Protection in the Village***

The last two newsletters explored what preservation is and isn't. In this issue, we summarize what protection of historic properties means for Village. First, some clarifications (and history):

The “**Albany Street Historic District**” (often called the “Historic Business District”) was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places (“NR”) in 1978. It embraces both sides of Albany Street from Forman to just before Center Street on the north side and the Library on the south side.

Several years later, in 1985, a subsequent application to the NR was approved for the “**Cazenovia Village Historic District.**” This district embraced the earlier Albany Street Historic District and Lorenzo, plus an additional 300+ buildings. Geographically, it is bound on the north, southwest, and south roughly by the Village boundary line, though some excluded northern pockets remain. East, it is bound by Lincklaen, Mill, and Chenango Streets.

As noted before, there are no protections from demolition or significant alteration from being listed on the NR; however, homeowners and business property owners are allowed to apply for tax credits for appropriate improvements to their properties, including even painting and general repairs. Commercial NR properties are also eligible to apply for publicly funded grants.

The **Historic Preservation Overlay District** – what we commonly call the Village Historic District -- was created by law (180-74) by the Village Board in 2014. Geographically, **it has the same boundaries** as the National Register Cazenovia Village Historic District described above.

The purpose of the Village law is to protect and enhance landmarks and historic areas that represent distinctive elements of Cazenovia's historic, architectural, and cultural heritage. It recognizes that doing so enhances Cazenovia's attractiveness to residents and visitors thereby supporting our economy, and contributes to the character of the community.

To fulfill this intent, the law established a **Historic Preservation/Architecture Review Committee**. Among its responsibilities, this Committee is charged with approving applications for architectural actions or changes occurring within the Historic Preservation Overlay District, and issuing a certificate of compatibility prior to the application's approval by the Planning Board. The Committee is also authorized to recommend to the Village Board the designation of additional landmarks or historic districts.

The Village law also calls for the maintenance of properties within the historic district, not allowing a property to fall into a serious state of disrepair or detrimental to the character of the building or landmark (often called “**demolition by neglect.**”). Enforcement and penalties are the responsibility of the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

So, what are the benefits of being in a historic district? First, residents often cite a deeper connection to their neighborhoods and local heritage, increasing civic engagement and pride. Historic designation also helps to preserve neighborhoods by discouraging unwarranted demolition or alteration. Designation also reduces uncertainty for property owners: It is unlikely that a developer will buy your neighbor's house, demolish it, and replace it with an apartment building or a McMansion, both of which potentially could reduce your home's value. In this sense, historic designation can protect your investment in your property.

Numerous studies across the country and over the years have shown consistently that being part of a historic district typically enhances property values, greater than the local market overall and faster than similar, non-designated neighborhoods. Historic districts tend to have less turnover, and residents feel a heightened sense of being stewards of their homes. When development within a district is called for, having a historic district should encourage better quality design, meaning a greater sense of cohesiveness and greater public appeal.

Our Village historic district is a tangible link to the past and a way to bring meaning to history and to people's lives. It is a living, active record of Cazenovia and its residents, while contributing to the identity and attractiveness of the community as a whole. Ten years after the law's passage, we can continue to celebrate the creation of our historic district.