

BHPC-E-2

**VILLAGE OF BELLPORT HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAM**

**BELL STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT GUIDELINES**

**Bellport Historic Preservation Commission  
Incorporated Village of Bellport  
29 Bellport Lane  
Bellport, New York 11713  
(631) 286-0327**

**Adopted 2003**

## 1 BELL STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT

On Bell Street runs the most architecturally unified ensemble of historic houses in Bellport. Of its 15 homes, 11 were built as modest Queen Anne residences in the late 1880s and 90s. The remaining four are from the turn of the century to the 1920s. The two groups do display differences. The Queen Anne style houses have L-shaped plans with Victorian gables facing the street, and typically have porches or verandas; the later residences include a gambrel-roofed Dutch Colonial and two Neo-Colonial symmetrical schemes and stepped variation. The former group dominates the look of the street. The latter houses blend in, all having the same dimensions of width, height, window size, and so forth. House covering is either clapboard or shingles, mostly weathered, some of ornamental patterns and painted white. Moreover, the comfortable relationship of building to lot size and spacing between houses is maintained nearly everywhere. Nor have alterations and additions—enclosed porches, some modern siding and window replacements, small extensions, etc. -- severely disrupted the harmony. The same may be said about landscaping and border definition: foliage varies from simple lawns to modestly extensive plantings, and borders from open lawns to picket fences and hedges. Ample, grass-bordered sidewalks run on both sides of the street.

Playing against the varied uniformity of the houses are a number of non-residential properties gathered towards Bellport Lane. Present is the old Bellport Firehouse, of a size and shape not in disharmony with the houses, moved to the north side of the street in 1976. Standing on the opposite side of the street is the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Bellport Community center, with its Greek Revival facade, and of course next to it the Village Hall (originally a house) on the Bellport Lane Corner. To the east is the large, plain Davis Livery (originally a stable), and further down, the Brown Building (originally the offices of Robinson and Watkins, the firm that mainly built up Bell St), a remarkable example of late 19<sup>th</sup> century commercial architecture common to Long Island Villages (to which was added a small addition to the east, and the 2 ½ story warehouse to the rear currently used by the Historic Society).

It would be hard to find anywhere on Long Island a finer example of the way the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century period was able to informally combine a lovely set of modest homes with a variety of vernacular and period style commercial and civic structures. The streetscape is one of the jewels of the Village and its heritage. It is more than worthy of becoming one of the designated Historic Districts of Bellport.

## **2 PRESERVATION GOALS FOR THE BELL STREET HISTORIC DISTRICT**

Maintaining and enhancing the elements that contribute to the over all setting.

Maintaining the architectural integrity of the historic properties, especially of the front facades and other components visible from the street

Allowing additions and other changes to rear facades and in appropriate ways to side facades to allow the historic properties to be adapted to changing needs and lifestyle.

### **3 DESCRIPTION: ARCHITECTURAL FEATURES DEFINING THE BELL STREET LOOK**

The houses of Bell Street are more uniform than any other ensemble in the Village, especially the eleven 19th-century homes. Although this group followed a rather scheme, even here variety occurred, the plan flipped, or the number of windows varied, or porches diverse. Through time much variation of detailing has occurred, along with modest additions. Nevertheless, the relatively uniform plans and massing of these houses, along with uniform setbacks, narrowly varied lot sizes, produce a striking combination of strong uniformity with lively diversity. The four early 20<sup>th</sup> century homes add to this, having the same scale, setbacks, spacing, etc. The non-residential properties, on the other hand, are all unique examples of their particular typology or style, and contribute a strong element of diversity and liveliness to the street. Thus the following pertains essentially to the houses; the non-residential structures will each require specific, sensitive study in the case of desired changes.

**Sidewalk:** Crucial to Bell Street are the public strips of lawn, sidewalks, and trees on each side through the length of most of the street, and that the sidewalks are not concrete.

**Placement:** Highly uniform.

**Orientation:** All houses are oriented towards the Street (i.e., with the main entrance and facade facing the Street).

**Bordering elements on the Street:** Almost half the houses have picket fences. Five have hedges. A few have no bordering element. Fence style and hedge height varies.

**Visibility:** Almost all houses are plainly visible from the street. Only two (23, 25) are partly obscured in their ground story by hedges. If all houses were to include such high hedges, the streetscape would be lost.

**Lawn and plantings:** No property without some trees or bushes; varies considerably. (The exception is the old Firehouse, with only a driveway in front.)

**Entrance path:** About half of the houses have a picket gate and brick path. Others vary, including a few with no path but an open lawn accessible from driveway.

**House lot relationship:** Houses all have adequate space around them. **House shape:** The eleven 19<sup>th</sup> century houses all have compact L-shaped plans, bent either right or left, and are 2 or 2 ½ stories high. The proportions are such that if the corner of the L were filled up, the house would more or less form a cube. Their relatively steep saddle roofs are oriented so that a gable-end faces the street, forming the main part of the facade and including the entrance. These gabled facades are vertically oriented, their height about 1.5 times their width. None of the houses have been expanded laterally, except for a few walled in porch zones. The twentieth century houses are comparable in plan width, volume and height. None are L-shaped in plan, most are rectangular. 21 has a gambrel roof with its gable end facing the street. 22 and 9 are small colonial structures, their saddle-roofs running parallel to the street, as does the very high roof of 13, which includes dormers and a lateral wing.

**House size:** 2 to 2 ½ stories, none greater than 30 feet. No one story houses. Maximum house with about 30-35 feet (through L in the case of the 19<sup>th</sup> century houses). Main facades have three, sometimes two bays of windows. We would estimate that the largest house would have a footprint of about 1200 square feet, apart from additions to the rear.

**Additions:** Few houses have the complicated history of additions typical of Bellport Lane. The comparatively narrow lots have prevented lateral expansion. In a few cases of the 19<sup>th</sup> century houses, the corner of the L has been filled on the ground floor with an enclosed space, typically an entrance. In one case, the wrap porch was slightly expanded into enclosed space. Most extensive expansion, however, has been to the rear, virtually invisible from the street (except the rambling structure of 19, visible across the church field).

**Garages:** All appear to be detached structures.

**Roofs:** All houses have pitched roofs. All are saddle roofs following the plan, with the L-shaped 19<sup>th</sup> century houses each having two intersecting such roofs; one house has a gambrel roof. Materials are usually dark composite of varying coloration. Cedar shingle roofs are absent, but visually they certainly would not be objectionable.

**Chimneys:** Most houses have one chimney.

**Eaves:** Most of the 19<sup>th</sup> century houses retain their molded eaves, which overhang about 2 feet. This is a very typical feature, without which the look of these houses is compromised (as in the few cases where the eaves are lost). Although not uniform in projection, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century houses also have eaves. In general, gutters are discrete, and blend into eaves because of placement, size, and color.

**House covering:** Four houses are weathered dark shingle (one, 24, including decorative scalloped shingles in the gable handsomely painted white). The rest are clapboard, a few have clapboard-like siding; white predominates in these, with a few off-white examples, and also one each of yellow and grey.

**Windows:** Windows are virtually all double hung, and with molded frames. There are no picture windows visible. Only a few seem to retain their original multipane form (22 has six over six panels). Most houses have shutters, painted green. One, however, is red, another blue. Two of the dark weathered shingle house have contrasting white shutters.

**Entrances:** Most houses seem to have paneled wood traditional doors, with profiled surrounds; one includes sidelights. Six houses are entered through their verandas. Most of the others have small roofed porches. Generally these have two freestanding supports, either square piers or columns, with mostly gabled roofs, one flat. Only two houses have no entrances porch. Entrances are mostly off center.

In summary, it is to be observed that within the exceptional look of uniformity of the houses of Bell Street there resides considerable variety, mainly in the treatment of various features rather than basic plans, scale, or styles (of which only three are present: Victorian, Neocolonial, and, in one case, neo-Dutch Colonial). In contrast to Bellport Lane, Bell Street even includes, and tolerates, some red or blue shutters, or yellow clapboard. It is important to

realize that it is the general uniformity that permits such diverse accents; were many more of the latter added, the look of Bell Street might fall apart.

The look of Bell Street, in other words, is fragile, as are so many historic districts typically, and needs to be carefully tended if Bellport is not to lose one of its most valued streetscapes.

In today's climate, if Bell Street is to be maintained and with it the sense of Bellport as a unique and wonderful place, a specific and detailed set of architectural guidelines is needed to manage property development. To this end, the Commission has prepared the Guidelines set forth below with the objective of preserving and even furthering the architectural qualities that make The Bell Street Historic District what it is today.

## 4 GENERAL GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are provided as suggested and recommended elements of general design for assisting applicants.

<b>Element</b>	<b>Recommended</b>	<b>Not Recommended</b>
Entrance Path	No gate or “Bellport” picket gate with wrought iron black hardware. Brick walk.	
Entrances	Profiled surrounds. Perhaps a small porch with freestanding supports.	
House Lot Relationship	Balance with neighbors	Crowding neighbors
House Orientation	Towards the Street	Main entrance and façade facing away from Street
House Placement	Uniform with neighbors	Large Setback
House shape	L-shaped cottage	Curved, Polygonal
House Size	First floor footprint less than 1200 sq. ft.	Out of scale with neighbors
House Covering	White or pastel clapboard or natural shingle. Cedar shingles painted white. Modern materials that really look like wood clapboard or shingles.	Clapboard with too little exposure. Modern materials that look artificial.
Garages	Separate barn-like structures in the back	
House Additions	To the back, or perhaps the side; additional massing consistent with existing architectural style	Variances to allow additions to the front or large additions to the side
Roof shapes	Pitched to match existing roof	Flat

BHPC-E-2

Roof materials	Dark colored dimensional shingles. Cedar shingles. Composite shingles that simulate color and texture of natural materials	Metal roofing. High-impact color.
Chimneys	Brick	No chimney. Dark mortar.
Eaves	Overhangs and details of construction and trim to match existing design.	
Gutters	Discrete. Blend into eave.	
Windows	Double Hung. Six over six or comparable. Traditional frames and trim or modern materials.	Oversize windows. Picture windows. Oversize panes (no divided lights.) Windows and doors without trim.
Shutters	Wooden, operable shutters, painted a dark color.	Undersize or inoperable shutters. Windows without shutters.
Entrance Doors	Paneled wood traditional doors with trim.	
Lawn	Recommended	
Plantings	Recommended	Dense plantings that obscure the house.
Hedges	Limited height, below 3 feet	Hedges hiding house.
Fences	Traditional white picket, 30" maximum, green or white baseboard	Stockade, chain link or other fences; Stone or brick walls
Sidewalk	Gravel	Concrete
Exterior Lighting	Incandescent light fixtures appropriate to the residential character of the street.	Glare onto adjacent properties. Any illuminated commercial signs.

BHPC-E-2

Existing Commercial Property	Keep consistent with residences on street.	Any expansion of or additional commercial use.
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