



# Preservation League of NYS

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November 3, 2020

Village of Colonie Planning Commission  
Village Hall  
2 Thunder Road  
Colonie, NY 12205  
*Via Email and USPS*

## RE: 1653 Central Ave, Demolition of Former School

Dear Village of Colonie Planning Commission,

I write on behalf of the Preservation League of New York State to express concern regarding the impending demolition of the former Colonie Village School located at 1653 Central Ave. As New York's statewide historic preservation nonprofit, we invest in people and projects that champion the essential role of preservation in community revitalization, sustainable economic growth, and the protection of our historic buildings and landscapes.

Recently, our organization was alerted to the imminent demolition of the c. 1926 former school located at 1653 Central Ave. After reviewing the project documents associated with this approval, there is concern that the historic nature of this building was not adequately considered by this commission as part of the SEQR process. During the SEQR process, commissions such as yours rely on project documents including the EAF to glean important details about the potential impacts of a project. Upon reviewing the EAF, one question in particular stands out: "will the proposed action impair the character or quality of important historic, archeological, architectural, or aesthetic resources?" It appears the applicant selected "no (or small impact may occur)," and it does not appear further consideration of this important factor was addressed throughout the approval process. Undoubtedly, demolition of a 90-year-old building is sure to create a negative impact on nearly all those factors identified and should have received thoughtful consideration under SEQR.

While it is unfortunate that a determination for National Register eligibility had not previously been on file with the State Historic Preservation Office for this building, requesting a determination of National Register eligibility would have been an appropriate step to take to help inform consideration of this application. We invite you to read more here about the history of this school, the importance of re-use of existing buildings, and some success stories of school building re-use across the state (<https://www.preservenys.org/blog/demolition-alert-former-colonie-village-school>).

Further, we encourage the Village of Colonie to take a proactive role in evaluating buildings for historic significance prior to making determinations that forever alter the character of your community. To that end, we would be happy to offer guidance on preparing a cultural resource survey of your community to identify historic resources. Through our Preserve New York grant program in partnership with the New York State Council on the Arts, we are able to fund up to 80% of such surveys for municipalities through grant funding. You can find more on this opportunity on our website (<https://www.preservenys.org/preserve-new-york>) and we would be happy to speak to you further about this at your request.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Erin M. Tobin', written in a cursive style.

Erin M. Tobin  
Vice President for Policy and Preservation

cc: James Carter, State Historic Preservation Office, Survey & National Register