



THE
RHINEBECK
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

P.O. BOX 291
RHINEBECK,
NEW YORK 12572

February 29, 2000

Mr. William Dowden
Town of Rhinebeck Supervisor
Rhinebeck, NY 12572

Dear Bill,

The Rhinebeck Historical Society is aware of the precarious state of the historical property, Wyndeclyffe in Rhinecliff, and understands that you may have received from the Town Building Inspector a recommendation to raze the ruins because it represents a possible danger to the public.

While the Historical Society understands the issue of public safety involved, there are also other considerations that the Town Board should weigh. As you know, this property was built in 1853 by Elizabeth Schermerhorn Jones, a cousin by marriage of the Astors. Her niece, Edith Jones Wharton, stayed in this 24 room mansion on numerous occasions, and wrote about the house and Rhinecliff in some of her books.

Perhaps there are ways that the ruins of this mansion might be preserved and kept as a site that would enhance tourism in Rhinebeck. Perhaps the property owner could take appropriate steps.

The Historical Society would be pleased to work with any group the Town Board might decide to set up to consider solutions to this problem.

Sincerely,

Nicholas V. McCausland

President

cc.: Town Board Members, Town Building Inspector

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New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation
The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza
Agency Building 1, Albany, New York 12238

518-474-0456

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

The National Register's standards for evaluating the significance of properties were developed to recognize the accomplishments of all peoples who have made a contribution to our country's history and heritage. The criteria are designed to guide State and local governments, Federal agencies, and others in evaluating potential entries in the National Register.

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association and:

- A. that are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. that are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. that have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.