METHUEN RECONNAISSANCE REPORT

ESSEX COUNTY LANDSCAPE INVENTORY

MASSACHUSETTS HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY PROGRAM

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

Essex National Heritage Commission

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INTRODUCTION

Essex County is known for its unusually rich and varied landscapes, which are represented in each of its 34 municipalities. Heritage landscapes are places that are created by human interaction with the natural environment. They are dynamic and evolving; they reflect the history of the community and provide a sense of place; they show the natural ecology that influenced land use patterns; and they often have scenic qualities. This wealth of landscapes is central to each community's character; yet heritage landscapes are vulnerable and ever changing. For this reason it is important to take the first steps towards their preservation by identifying those landscapes that are particularly valued by the community – a favorite local farm, a distinctive neighborhood or mill village, a unique natural feature, an inland river corridor or the rocky coast. To this end, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Essex National Heritage Commission (ENHC) have collaborated to bring the Heritage Landscape Inventory program (HLI) to communities in Essex County. The primary goal of the program is to help communities identify a wide range of landscape resources, particularly those that are significant and unprotected. The focus is on landscapes that have not been identified in previous survey efforts in a given community. Another important goal of the program is to provide communities with strategies for preserving heritage landscapes.

The methodology for the Heritage Landscape Inventory program was developed in a Pilot Project conducted in southeast Massachusetts. It is outlined in the DCR publication *Reading the Land* which has provided guidance for the program in Essex County. In short, each participating community appoints a Local Project Coordinator (LPC) to assist the DCR-ENHC consulting team. The LPC organizes a heritage landscape identification meeting at which interested residents and city or town officials offer community input by identifying potential heritage landscapes. This meeting is followed by a fieldwork session including the consulting team and the LPC, usually accompanied by other community members. This group visits the priority landscapes identified in the meeting and gathers information about the community. The final product is the Reconnaissance Report, prepared for each participating community. It outlines the history of the community; identifies the resources and documentation that provide background information; provides a short description of the priority heritage landscapes visited; discusses planning issues identified by the community; and concludes with a brief discussion of survey and planning recommendations. A list of all of the heritage landscapes identified by the community is included in the Appendix.

METHUEN HISTORY

Methuen's distinctive inland, riverine landscape was instrumental in shaping the history of the community from the earliest Native American use of the land to the 19th century factories on the Merrimack and Spicket Rivers to land use patterns that survive today.

Native Americans of the Pawtucket tribe established mainland trails along the banks of the two major waterways that flow through Methuen – an east-west route along the Merrimack River and one in a north-south direction following the course of the Spicket River. There are documented sites from the Woodland period which extends back to about 3,000 years ago.

English settlement began somewhat later than other Essex communities particularly those along the coast. The town was incorporated in 1726 before which it had been part of Haverhill. The first meeting house was constructed on Meeting House Hill (now known as Daddy Frye's Hill) in 1727.

Up until the early 19th century, Methuen's primary economic base was agriculture relying on the Salem market. After the 1820s it was the Lowell market that received Methuen's agricultural produce. The Early Industrial period (1830-1870) was the time of a shift to a mixed economic base of manufacturing and agriculture. The shoe industry and manufacture of cotton textiles predominated until the Civil War when it became difficult to get raw materials from the South. However, manufacturing was boosted by the opening of the Methuen Woolen Co. on the Spicket River in 1865. This led to a shift of the town center to the Spicket River and Spicket Falls.

A discussion of Methuen's industrial history and the development of the community is not complete without mention of three entrepreneurs who changed the face of the town with their generous contributions and with their elaborate estates. Although there were many prominent hat and shoe manufacturers as well as other thriving business owners, the contributions of these three families – Nevins, Searle and Tenney – are highly visible today.

In the third quarter of the 19th century, Charles Tenney (1842-1919) made his fortune in the hat manufacturing business. David Nevins (1809-1881) was successful producing cloth at the Methuen Mills at Spicket Falls. Edward F. Searle (1841-1920), who was born in Methuen, gained his wealth through his wife, who was the widow of the Union Pacific magnate, Mark Hopkins. Upon her death in 1891 he inherited her estate. Each of these industrialists or their heirs hired well-known architects, established large estates and contributed municipal buildings to the town as well as the unique granite wall system that runs through many parts of town, surrounding estates and important town buildings such as the City Hall.

By the early 19th century Methuen's population was around 1,400 and grew to over 4,500 by 1885. Early 20th century growth was nearly threefold with 6,000 residents at the turn of the new century growing to over 15,000 by 1920. In 1917 Methuen became a city at which time it had 25% immigrant population. By the 1940s new immigrants included Syrians, Palestinians and Lithuanians. In 1980 the population was 36,700 which increased to 43,700 in 2000.

RESOURCES AND DOCUMENTATION

Inventory of Historic Assets

The Massachusetts Historical Commission's (MHC) Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets is a statewide list that identifies significant historic resources throughout the Commonwealth. In order to be included in the inventory, a property must be documented on an MHC inventory form, which is then entered into the MHC database. This searchable database, known as MACRIS, is now available online at http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc.

According to the MHC, Methuen's inventory documents 1,517 historic resources dating from 1708 to 1996. Much of the documentation was completed in the early 1980s in preparation for a comprehensive National Register nomination described below. Properties included in the Searles-Tenney-Nevins Local Historic District were surveyed in 1992. This accounts for approximately 160 up-to-date forms.

State and National Registers of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the official federal list of districts, sites, buildings, structures and objects that have been determined significant in American history, architecture, archaeology, engineering and culture. Methuen's National Register (NR) program includes a Multiple Resource Area (MRA) nomination completed in 1984 for two districts – the Pleasant – High Street Historic District and the Spicket Falls Historic District – and 39 individual listings. The Arlington Mills Historic District, consisting of one surviving mill building in Methuen and Lawrence, also is listed in the National Register. All National Register properties also are listed in the State Register of Historic Places. Six Methuen properties are protected by preservation restrictions (PR), drawn up in accordance with MGL Chapter 183, Sections 31-33. A PR runs with the deed and is one of the strongest preservation strategies available. All properties which have preservation restrictions filed under the state statute are automatically listed in the State Register. The six properties are the Central Fire Station, First Baptist Church and Parsonage, First Congregational Church, Lawrence Street Cemetery and the Methuen Memorial Music Hall. All except the First Baptist Parsonage also are listed in the National Register.

Local Historic District

Local historic districts (LHD), which are adopted and administered at the municipal or local level, are special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places are preserved and protected by a local historic district commission. Methuen has one local historic district of 160 properties, the Searles-Tenney-Nevins Historic District. Many of the National Register individually listed properties and most of the properties in the two National Register districts are included in this LHD. All local historic district properties are automatically listed in the State Register of Historic Places.

Planning Documents

The *Methuen Preservation Plan* was written in 1997 by Tremont Preservation Associates. Recommendations of the plan are to document the city's historic resources, in most cases by updating the information, and listing in the National Register as appropriate; improving communication with policy makers and consistency of local regulations with preservation policy including the LHD Ordinance, the Zoning Ordinance and the policies of the Housing Rehabilitation Program; identify and preserve archaeological resources; and expand preservation education efforts. In addition there are specific recommendations calling for preservation of the Tenney Estate (now a state park), preservation of the Central Business District through appropriate façade and sign treatments, and preservation of streetscape structures, particularly stone walls, bridges and monuments.

Completed in 1997, the *Land Use Plan* focuses on three priorities: expansion of the city's economic base, open space and natural/cultural resource preservation strategies as growth management tools, and support of diverse residential settings and fostering neighborhood pride.

The *Methuen Open Space and Recreation Plan* dated 2001 is on file with the Commonwealth. In addition, Methuen's Planning and Development Office reports that a draft update is ready for adoption by the City Council. Its recommendations are improvement of existing facilities and programs, protection of unique natural areas, and expansion of recreational facilities.

Planning Ordinances and Other Tools

In addition to its local historic district ordinance, Methuen has a local landmark ordinance and a demolition delay ordinance. The local landmark ordinance has been used only once to designate Daddy Frye's Hill Cemetery. The demolition delay ordinance, adopted in 2002, has a potential six- month delay of demolition of historically significant properties that were built prior to 1875.

Methuen is a Certified Local Government (CLG), a designation that makes the city eligible for survey and planning assistance from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Through the CLG agreement, the local Historical Commission and the Historic District Commission are responsible for engaging in an active preservation program.

PRIORITY HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

The Methuen Heritage Landscape Identification meeting, attended by 10 residents, some representing town boards and local non-profit organizations, was held on June 8, 2004. During the meeting residents compiled a lengthy list of Methuen's heritage landscapes, which is included in the Appendix. Once the comprehensive list was created, attendees were asked to articulate the value of each landscape and the issues relating to its preservation. Based on the information gathered, community members selected a group of high priority

heritage landscapes to be visited by the consulting team during the fieldwork. Each of the priority landscapes is highly valued, contributes to community character and is not permanently protected or preserved.

The following text describes the priority heritage landscapes that are the focus of the reconnaissance work in Methuen. In most instances intensive survey work will be needed to fully document the physical characteristics and the historical development of the landscape. These landscapes, which are listed in alphabetical order, represent a range of scales from individual sites to the river corridor which runs in an east-west direction through the community.

Arlington Neighborhood

The Arlington neighborhood is south of the center of Methuen adjacent to Lawrence and near the Arlington Mills. The larger landscape for this mill workers' neighborhood adjacent to the mills includes residential streets, alleys that were paths between buildings to walk to the mills, and St. George's Methodist Church, which was built by Searles and designed by Henry Vaughn in 1910. The densely developed neighborhood has streets lined with two and three-deckers with flat and gable roofs. Most have been covered with synthetic siding. There are alternating patterns of setbacks with some dwellings situated near the street and others set back more than is generally found in an urban setting such as this. This pattern contributes to a feeling of less density with a more open setting. Residential streets in the area are Carleton, Chelmsford, Camden, Tenney and Phillips Streets, which are between Broadway to the west and Lawrence Street to the east. The neighborhood spills over into Lawrence. Historic resource survey work has been completed for only a small number of properties in this densely developed neighborhood where most of the housing was built to house the workers of the Arlington Mills (NR). Only the mill buildings are listed in the NR.

Merrimack River

The Merrimack River is an important part of the environmental and historical character of the city. It forms part of the southern and southeastern boundary of Methuen except where Lawrence abuts Methuen along the southern edge of the city. Much of the river edge is undeveloped; however it is largely invisible due to private ownership and overgrown vegetation. Access also is limited with many of the once informal points of access disappearing. In addition farm land now is being developed. Glimpses of river are found along Lowell Boulevard and Lowell Street. Armory Street is a small residential neighborhood that borders the river at the intersection of Lowell Boulevard with Lowell Street. Early 20th century dwellings are constructed on the river banks; however, there is no public access from this neighborhood which is directly opposite Pine Island in the Merrimack. West of the rotary before Rt. 93 there is a plot of land recently purchased by the City. Bea's Sandwich Shop was located on this parcel. It has been demolished and now is a deteriorated parking lot. The city plans to create a boat launch which will provide limited access to the river. There is no access, planned or informal, on the part of the river that forms part of the eastern edge of the city.

Pleasant Valley Area Farms

A small southeastern section of Methuen is framed by the Merrimack River on the east and south, and I-495 on the west and north. The river separates this part of Methuen from North Andover and Haverhill. Merrimack Street (Rt. 110) cuts through the middle of this southeastern section of the city. Once agricultural, the area has been developed with medium density housing in place of many of the farms. However, several remain and provide a scenic agricultural landscape as well as farm stands where one can buy local produce. The land on the eastern end of Merrimack Street comprises the Whirlaway Driving Range on the west side of the road and Simone's Farm which extends to the Merrimack River on the east side of Merrimack Street. The Driving Range was established in the 1930s and continues to be used for this recreational activity. Some consideration has been given to rezoning this land to be compatible with mixed uses particularly multi-housing. The Simone Farm continues to raise flowers which are sold locally. Farther southwest on Merrimack Street are the Bonano farms where vegetables are raised and sold. The Delucia Farm at 264 Merrimack Street is opposite Pleasant Valley Farm and both are owned by Bonano. In spite of the close proximity to the river, there are nearly no views of the river except from I-495. West on Pleasant Valley Street is Mann's Orchard which has been growing and selling apples here since 1877.

Spicket Falls Area including Osgood Bridge

Central to the Spicket Falls NR Historic District is the Falls which is at the heart of the downtown, yet hidden behind former factory buildings. The topography and the configuration of this industrial landscape present a challenge in any effort to feature this historic asset. The 1831 Osgood Bridge is the old Osgood Street crossing of the Spicket River below the Falls. A nearby interpretive plaque tells of this bridge and dam above. The 1869 Lowell Street Bridge crosses the Spicket River just above the 1880 Dam which creates the Falls. Several mill buildings, which have been converted to housing, reflect the history of the thriving textile industry of the late nineteenth century when Methuen Cotton Mills owned by the Nevins was one of the most successful industries in Methuen. The four and five-

story brick buildings with mansard roofs are on the banks of the Spicket River. A small section of the river forms the edge of River Park off Osgood Street below the Falls, bridges and mill buildings.

Sands Bridge and Robert Rogers Homestead Site Area

The birthplace of Robert Rogers, leader of a British irregular force during the French and Indian War, no longer exists but the location of his dwelling is thought to be on a knoll above the marsh land at the intersection of Cross Street and Hampshire Road. It is near the old Sands Bridge, a double arched stone bridge, which is owned by the city but no longer used for travel. The bridge is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. At the presumed site of the homestead is an early twentieth century house with dilapidated chicken coops and piggery on the property.

Searles Bridge and Broadway Area – Tenney Hat Factory Site, Music Hall

The 1912 Searles Bridge which carries Broadway over the Spicket River stands out as a place maker at one downtown gateway. One one side is the Tenney Hat Factory and on the other is the Methuen Music Hall. The bridge's granite walls and crenellated towers are characteristic of the walls that surround the Searles estate and that line many of Methuen's downtown streets. The Searles Dam of the same 1912 date is just above the bridge. Just north of the bridge and Harvey Falls at the dam is the Methuen Music Hall, constructed in 1899 by Searles to house the first concert organ brought to the United States in 1863. Searles had his preferred architect, Henry Vaughn, design the elaborate Renaissance Revival building prominently displayed on Broadway near the banks of the Spicket River. The Selden Mills (225 Broadway) constructed in 1919 on the site of the former Tenney Hat Factory is a three-story brick mill building with a low corner tower situated on the south side of the Searles Bridge at the edge of the river.

Searles Estate / Sisters of Presentation of Mary

The Searles Estate was developed from 1880 to 1920 by Edward F. Searles (1841-1920) who was an interior and architectural designer, and married one of his clients, Mary Hopkins, the widow of the railroad magnate, Mark Hopkins. Searles' first mansion house was constructed by joining two pre-existing dwellings. Known as Pine Lodge it was demolished in 1930. He also built the 1911 Jacobethan residence with connecting hallways and wings, a carriage house, barns, towers, and the 1915 Searles Chapel, now called Our Lady of Sacred Heart, which was designed by Henry Vaughn in the Gothic / Renaissance Revival styles. Vaughn designed many of the buildings on the estate and throughout the city that were financed by Searles. His estate is surrounded by elaborate granite walls with crenellated towers. The estate, including the 75-room castellated building, mentioned above, was sold to the Sisters of Presentation of Mary in 1957 and is currently used as a religious and educational facility.

PLANNING

Preservation Strategies

Methuen's residents place high value on the community's strong sense of place, which is created by its varied natural features and traditional land use patterns. Methuen's inland location on two rivers played a critical role in the community's historical development and the rivers, mills and estates remain among the city's most important assets. The city has already taken some measures to preserve its most significant buildings and natural areas. It is now looking beyond the traditional resources to the landscapes, streetscapes, rural roads, neighborhoods and other natural and cultural assets that define the overall fabric of the community. Like most Essex County municipalities, Methuen is facing multiple pressures for change that threaten land-based uses and natural resources, especially its river frontage and farming areas. Special places within the community that were once taken for granted are now more vulnerable than ever to change.

Planning Issues

In addition to the priority landscapes listed in the previous section, residents identified general issues related to heritage landscapes and community character. Each of the critical planning issues affects at least one of the priority landscapes. These issues are arranged in alphabetical order. Community members also expressed interest in learning about preservation tools and strategies that have been effective in other Massachusetts communities and in identifying sources for preservation funding.

The major issues relating to heritage landscapes are the rivers including visual and physical access, and neighborhood preservation. Also there is continued concern about the loss of agricultural land to residential sprawl. Others noted the lack of connection and dialogue between Lawrence and Methuen even though the downtown areas are adjacent and share many of the same resources and development patterns.

Agricultural Land

Development of the limited amount of Methuen's remaining agricultural land is a concern expressed by residents. It is an issue that bears the attention of planners. The Merrimack valley is reported to have some of the richest soil east of the Connecticut River valley. The few vegetable farms remaining in the eastern side of Methuen are subject to intense development pressures due to the cost of land, high demand of modern residential and commercial construction, and the difficulty of successful farming on limited agricultural land surrounded by development. Some farmland remains in the northwest section of the city off Hampshire Road.

Granite Wall System

One of the most distinctive and unique features of Methuen is the miles of high granite block walls that were first installed as part of the development of the large estates and were continued around many of the city properties that were the built by contributions of the City's benefactors. Most of the walls now are on city property. The walls are in various states of disrepair with some crumbling and others that appear stabile. Preservation of the walls is critical to the historic character of the city.

Neighborhood Character

Methuen places high value on its neighborhoods, which are defined by housing stock and institutions such as churches, schools and open spaces, and are sometimes associated with specific ethnic groups. Individual residential neighborhoods have their own character often reflective of the period of development and the early uses, such as housing for mill workers, managers and owners. Loss of neighborhood character occurs in many ways. The housing stock, the local church, and small stores that have defined individual neighborhoods are changing with new uses, demolition, new construction and removal of defining features on buildings such architectural trim and stone walls and fences in the landscape.

Rivers

The Merrimack and Spicket Rivers are among of Methuen's greatest treasures, but there are relatively few places where the rivers are easily visible and even fewer where there is public access. Thus the concern of access is twofold: visual and physical. The few glimpses that one has along Lowell Street and Riverside Drive generally are across private property and through trees and thick underbrush. One location at the former Bea's Sandwich Shop is publicly owned; however presently there is no access that is easy to use and well marked and

advertised. Views of the Merrimack along the eastern city boundary are almost non-existent due to private property ownership, much of which is farmland. Only from the Rt. 495 crossing of the river between Methuen and Haverhill is there a glimpse of this part of the Merrimack. In certain places, the Spicket River is more visible than the Merrimack as it courses through the downtown. Views are accessible from the bridges and park; however access for canoeing or kayaking is not possible on that part of the Spicket River passing through the downtown due to the dams.

Zoning in Adjacent Communities

Methuen is an urban community that developed in close proximity to neighboring Lawrence, which shares many industries and overlapping neighborhoods. The physical development of these two communities has been intertwined but their land use controls are sometimes at odds with each other. There is little incentive or mechanism for sharing decision-making regarding the rivers and land use decisions made in one community that can have a substantial impact on another. For instance, incompatible zoning in adjacent communities means that some of the views across agricultural fields or across the river are compromised by allowed land uses on the other side. Cohesiveness of neighborhoods that spill over municipal boundaries preserves the character and requires communication particularly about uses and dimensional requirements, i.e. zoning.

PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

Preservation planning is a three step process involving identification, evaluation and protection. Four useful documents to consult before beginning to implement preservation strategies are the Massachusetts Historical Commission's *Survey Manual* and *Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances;* the Department of Conservation and Recreation's *Reading the Land;* and the Essex National Heritage Commission's *Essex National Heritage Area Plan*. Each publication provides necessary information for the identification, evaluation and preservation of the rich cultural heritage of a community. General recommendations are listed first, followed by more specific recommendations.

Each community will have to determine the best way to implement the recommendations discussed below. One approach that might help Methuen begin the process is to form a Heritage Landscape Committee, as described in *Reading the Land*.

General Recommendations

Recommendations that apply to a broad range of resources are discussed below. These general recommendations are listed in an order in which they are most logically addressed when applying the three step preservation planning process as described above. Thus the goal will be to (1) identify, (2) evaluate and (3) protect.

Inventory of Heritage Landscapes and Other Historic Assets

The goals and methodology of Methuen's 1997 Survey Plan and those of the Heritage Landscape Inventory program are similar and should be considered together. Many resources will appear on both lists. The vital first step in developing preservation strategies for heritage landscapes is to record information about the resources. One cannot advocate for something unless one knows precisely what it is – the physical characteristics and historical development. Document all resources including those that have been recorded in the past since survey methodology has changed substantially since the late 1970s and early 1980s when the bulk of the survey forms were completed. New procedures are more comprehensive and link properties in a more coherent way than in the past. Furthermore, many of the areas for which documentation is appropriate may be considered and studied as heritage landscapes, particularly the estates, the residential neighborhoods and mills along the river corridor. Thus, using the Massachusetts Historical Commission survey methodology, record Methuen's heritage landscapes beginning with the priority landscapes listed in this report:

- Compile a list of resources that are under-represented or not sufficiently documented, beginning with heritage landscapes such as the Fair Oaks, the Town Poor Farm and the Arlington neighborhood.

- Document unprotected resources first, beginning with threatened areas.

- Make sure to document secondary features on residential properties, such as outbuildings, garages, stone walls.

National Register Program

Survey work will require National Register evaluation. This will provide new information about the eligibility of properties. Thus using the information generated in the survey work and National Register evaluation, establish Methuen's National Register program.

- Develop a National Register listing plan, taking into consideration a property's integrity and vulnerability. Properties that are in need of recognition in order to advance preservation strategies should be given priority.

- Consider potential district National Register nominations for the Arlington neighborhood and the Fair Oaks area.

National Register listing can be in the form of amendments to the Multiple Resource Area nomination; however, consultation with the MHC prior to completing documentation is recommended. The 1997 Preservation Plan reinforces this and provides a more comprehensive description of each area that is likely to be eligible for listing in the National Register. The Preservation Plan also recommends listing of several burial grounds, parks and the Searles Estate.

Agricultural Landscapes

Preservation of agricultural landscapes means preservation of the farming activities, particularly in Methuen where there are so few working farms remaining in a relatively densely developed area. It is important to know what the features of these agricultural landscapes are and which features the community treasures in order to make a case for preservation of these farms. Some preservation tools are available that can assist communities in preserving the actual farming activities. Although Methuen's farmland is limited the city may want to consider the following options:

- Adopt a cluster ordinance that requires a buffer between development and farmland.
- Purchase development rights on farms.
- Determine areas where denser development would be appropriate and develop a transfer of development rights from the farms to certain areas that can sustain more density.
- Foster public-private partnerships to preserve farm land through purchase, conservation restrictions.

Burial Grounds and Cemeteries

Methuen has nine cemeteries or burial grounds; one is an animal cemetery; three are municipally owned – Daddy Frye's Hill, Elmwood and Lawrence Street cemeteries. The others are privately owned and date to the mid to late 19th century. The documentation and preservation needs vary for each site. The DCR publication *Preservation Guidelines for Municipally Owned Historic Burial Grounds and Cemeteries* provides guidance on developing preservation plans for burial grounds including identification and evaluation of the resources as well as preservation strategies. Using this guide Methuen should:

- Update survey forms that have been prepared for the burial grounds and cemeteries that have been in use for more than 50 years.
- List eligible burial grounds and cemeteries in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Develop a preservation and management plan for each cemetery taking into consideration repair of stone markers, stone walls and stone fencing related to cemeteries, repair of iron work, removal of invasive growth, ongoing maintenance of plant material. Share this material with the crews that take care of routine maintenance of these properties.
- Advise owners of cemeteries that are not under city jurisdiction about preservation and management plans.

Neighborhood Character

Nearly all preservation strategies address neighborhood character in some manner. As described above, thorough documentation on MHC inventory forms is an important first step in the preservation planning process, followed by National Register listing where appropriate. Two preservation tools that have been adopted by Methuen are demolition delay and local historic district designation (MGL Chapter 40C). Another type of district protection is through a neighborhood conservation district. These strategies may help preserve character in both urban and more rural neighborhoods such as the Arlington and Fair Oaks neighborhoods and the Poor Farm area, which were mentioned as highly valued and of particular concern.

- Extend the potential delay period of the demolition delay ordinance from six months to one year. Revise the standard indicating which properties are subject the demolition review by changing the 1875 date to an age which will advance with each year such that properties that are older than 50 years or 75 years would be subject to the demolition delay. In addition publication of demolition requests reminds residents of historic resources and reinforces the value of local historic resources.

- Adopt a neighborhood conservation ordinance through Home Rule. A two-thirds vote of the City Council is required to adopt the ordinance and to designate Neighborhood Conservation Districts. Such districts are appropriate in densely developed urban neighborhoods where the primary goal is to preserve the overall size, scale and orientation of structures. It is less restrictive than local historic districts. This may be an appropriate tool for the Arlington neighborhood, and possibly the Fair Oaks neighborhood as well.

- Adopt historic rehabilitation policies and programs within the Housing Rehabilitation Program and the Commercial Revitalization Program. Design guidelines for measuring projects using public funds will lead to preservation of historic fabric. Programs such as funding of residing with natural materials and use of historic paint colors may be established with low-interest or no-interest loans that have forgivable loan clauses after a certain period of ownership.

Zoning in Adjacent Communities

In order to preserve community character it is critical to have similar zoning regulations in neighborhoods that spill over into other municipalities. This takes cooperation with other city and town governments.

- Identify impacts of land use in adjacent municipalities by comparing existing land use and regulations at borders particularly in neighborhoods that straddle municipal boundaries and riverside neighborhoods.

- Meet with planning officials in Lawrence, North Andover and Haverhill to discuss potential incompatible zoning regulations to determine if there are ways to solve such issues that may have a negative impact on neighborhood character and on views across the Merrimack River.

Funding of Preservation Projects

Funding for preservation projects is an important aspect of implementing preservation strategies. In recent years, the ENHC has maintained a small grants program for Essex County communities. In addition, both the MHC and the DCR have had funding programs to assist communities in preservation related issues including:

- Survey and Planning Grants administered by the MHC support survey, National Register and preservation planning work.

- The Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF) administered by the MHC funds restoration and rehabilitation projects.

- The Historic Landscape Preservation Grant Program (HLPGP) administered by DCR funds planning, rehabilitation, education and stewardship projects focused on historic landscapes, including cemeteries.

Funding for state programs varies from year to year. When planning Methuen's heritage landscape inventory program, contact relevant agencies to determine whether funding is available.

Cities and towns that have adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA) find it to be an excellent funding source for many heritage landscape projects; however Methuen first would have to adopt the Act. While tricky to pass in lean economic times, the number and types of projects that are benefiting across the Commonwealth are worthy of consideration. The CPA (MGL Chapter 44B) establishes a mechanism by which municipalities can develop a fund dedicated to historic preservation, open space and affordable housing. Funds are collected through a .5% to 3% surcharge on each annual real estate tax bill. The Commonwealth has established a dedicated fund which is used to match the municipality's collections under the CPA.

Adoption of the Community Preservation Act, by a majority vote on a ballot question, fosters partnerships among historic preservationists, conservationists, and affordable housing advocates. At least 10% of the funds must be used to preserve historic resources. At least 10% must be used to protect Open Space. And at least 10% must be used to advance affordable housing. The remaining 70% must be used for one of these three uses as well as recreational needs and can be distributed in varying proportions depending upon the projects that the city believes are appropriate and beneficial to the municipality. Information about the CPA can be found at www.communitypreservation.org.

Methuen is a Certified Local Government (CLG) which means that the National Park Service through the MHC has recognized that the city has a local historic district ordinance and keeps accurate records of its jurisdictions. The city must file a comprehensive report each year stating the number and types of cases that come before the commission. In return the city goes to the top of the list for Survey and Planning funding – a federal funding source of which a proportion must be allocated to CLGs. Methuen may apply for matching funds to work on its preservation planning including inventory and National Register program.

Specific Recommendations

The following recommendations are offered for specific resources or areas that were either priority heritage landscapes or discussed as critical issues.

Arlington Neighborhood

- Write National Register nomination for Arlington neighborhood as recommended in 1997 Preservation Plan.

- Consider Neighborhood Conservation District designation for this large neighborhood where size and scale are more critical than individual design features of each property.

- ***Granite Wall System***

- Complete conditions assessment of each section of this unusual wall system by determining a manageable length and dividing the system in segments.

- Develop plan to repair using condition and location to list priorities.

- Explore funding sources such as the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund – a matching grant program to preserve historic resources. The DCR Historic Landscape Preservation Grant program also may be used when it is refunded.

- Both require local funds participation.

Merrimack River - Preservation and Access

- Develop plan for river protection and use by analyzing present and potential land use along banks.

- Identify designated access points and assume that public access does exist.

- Consider landscape improvements at access points to enhance access and signage.

- Begin a dialogue with the Massachusetts Riverways Program and neighboring communities to discuss programs such as Adopt-A-Stream and small grants program.

Spicket Falls Area including Osgood Bridge

- The existing National Register and Local Historic District status are strong means of protection; however the nature of the infrastructure, particularly the dam, bridges and river banks, makes the tasks of preservation costly to the city and state.

- Use NR and LHD designations to apply for Massachusetts Preservation Projects Funds (MPPF).

- In order to preserve the integrity of these unique features develop partnerships with State agencies such as Mass Highway and Massachusetts Riverways Program administered by Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game. Often the regulations are at odds with preservation of such infrastructure and it is important to maintain a dialogue to reach compromises that provide safety while honoring the historic fabric.

Sands Bridge, Robert Rogers Birthplace Site

The National Register status of the Sands Bridge may provide opportunity to acquire funding assistance through the MPPF for bridge stabilization. Restoration of Sands Bridge, a mortar-less bridge, requires special attention.

- Develop specifications for stabilization and preservation of this National Register property prior to seeking a contractor experienced with stone conservation and mortarless construction methods.

- Interpretive signs in the area around the Sands Bridge may help to inform the public about the significance of Robert Rogers and the proximity of his birthplace site. A plan for stabilization should be prepared prior to embarking on such a project.

Searles Bridge and Broadway Area

- Develop a Searles Bridge Area National Register nomination including Searles Bridge, Harvey Falls, Selden Worsted Mill building, the outbuilding on the Music Hall property and other historic resources in the area. The Music Hall, also known as Serlo Organ Building, is listed in the National Register.

- Develop master plans for the preservation of key properties such as the Music Hall and the Searles Bridge and Dam.

Searles Estate/Presentation of Mary

- Complete National Register Nomination for Searles Estate.

- Maintain dialogue with owner of estate to plan for any potential change in use.

- Investigate a Great Estates Ordinance that would permit alternative uses in order to prevent development into housing development if the present owner decides to sell.

CONCLUSION

The Methuen Reconnaissance Report is a critical tool in starting to identify the rich and diverse heritage landscapes in Methuen and in beginning to think about preservation strategies. However, it is only the first step in the planning process. Landscapes identified in this report, especially the priority landscapes, will typically need further documentation on MHC forms. The documentation in turn can be used in publicity efforts to build consensus and gather public support for their preservation. Implementation of recommendations will require a concerted effort of and partnerships with municipal boards and agencies, local non-profits, and state agencies and commissions.

Thus, distribution of this Reconnaissance Report to city land use boards and commissions will assist in making this one of the planning documents that guides Methuen in preserving important features of the community's character. The tasks that are recommended will require cooperation and coordination among boards and commissions, particularly Methuen's Historical and Historic District Commissions, the Planning Board, and the Conservation Commission. It also is advisable to present this information to the Mayor and to the City Council, the applicant to the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program on behalf of the city. Finally distribution of the Report to the Historical Society, neighborhood associations, and any other preservation minded organizations will broaden the audience and assist in gathering interest and support for Methuen's heritage landscapes.

APPENDIX: HERITAGE LANDSCAPES IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY

This list is a summary of all landscapes discussed at the Heritage Landscape Identification Meeting held in Methuen on June 8 and the follow-up fieldwork on June 17, 2004. This is a working list and can be updated by the community. **There may be other heritage landscapes that were not identified at the HLI meeting noted above.** Landscapes are grouped by type. The chart has two columns – the name of the resource and the location are in the first and notes about the resource are in the second. Abbreviations used are listed below.

APR = Agricultural Preservation Restriction
LHD = Local Historic District
PR = Preservation Restriction
CR = Conservation Restriction
NR = National Register
* = Priority Landscape

All LHD listings refer to the Searles-Tenney-Nevins Historic District.

Agriculture	
Delucia Farm 264 Merrimack Rd.	APR, 13 acres, opposite Pleasant Valley Farm, owned by Bonnano. See Priority Landscapes – Pleasant Valley Area Farms.
East End Rt. 110	Area close to downtown with remaining farmland along Rt. 110. Near Pleasant Valley Area Farms – closer to downtown.
Griffin Farm North Lowell Street	After Griffins owned by Blanchettes and Bragdons. Buildings are owned by Hickory Hill Golf Course. Griffin Brook borders west side of the golf course and the farm site now is Bank North headquarters. Agricultural and Conservation Zoning.
Loosigian Farm Lowell Street	9 acres. Major flood plain, green houses, along river, abandoned and in bankruptcy – potential access to Merrimack River.
Mann's Orchard Pleasant Valley St.	South side of road west of Hills Pond. Growing and selling apples since 1877. The Mann family came from Manchester-by-the-Sea in 1875. See Priority Landscapes – Pleasant Valley Area Farms.
Nimmo Farm Milk St. & Baremeadow Rd.	51 acres – former dairy farms, no longer a working farm but land remains open.
Pleasant Valley Area Farms * Rt. 110 and Rt. 113	From Haverhill line westerly and southwesterly, old farms with private homes with additions over time. See Priority Landscape discussion.
Raymond's Turkey Farm 163 Hampstead St.	Active turkey farm at former Feindel dairy farm. Old house across the street was a school master's house in early days.

Robert Rogers' Birthplace Site * Cross St. & Hampshire Rd.	See Priority Landscapes. 1730s Rogers' birthplace at Sands' Bridge including surrounding agricultural fields and dilapidated piggery and chicken coops. Robert Rogers was instrumental in French & Indian War and led missions from Fort Ticongeroga into Canada. House site likely was on knoll – surrounding area is wet due to high water table. Present house from 1920s – Colonial Revival with hipped roof, fieldstone foundation and aluminum siding, 2-car rough faced block garage.
Simone Farm * Merrimack St.	APR. 60+ acres. See Priority Landscapes.
Town Poor Farm 430 Pelham St.	NR. 1845 brick Greek Revival cottage with some farm buildings and associated land on the corner of Hampshire Rd., also called Old Town Farm. Across Pelham Street is brick apartment building from 1935, now converted to condominiums. Big barn torn down. Overgrown in parts around barns, once housed and grew food for poor.
Burial Grounds and Cemeteries	
Bellevue Cemetery 170 May St.	NR. Most of cemetery is in Lawrence.
Daddy Frye's Hill Cemetery East St.	NR. Local Landmark. City-owned. Formerly known as Meeting House Hill Cemetery.
Elmwood Cemetery 130 North Lowell St	1772. Some Revolutionary War burials. City owned.
Hillside Acre Animal Cemetery Broadway & Nevins Rd.	4 acres. Originally part of Nevins Estate that passed to MSPCA.
Lawrence Street Cemetery Lawrence St.	NR. Established in 1832. City-owned.
Walnut Grove Cemetery Grove & Railroad St.	1853 – present.

Civic	
Gaunt Square Broadway, Charles, Hampshire, Osgood, & Pleasant Sts.	NR (Spicket Falls Historic District), LHD. Central part of downtown area. Including buildings such as Exchange Hotel, now the Masonic Temple at 275 Broadway (1851/1906 Georgian Revival), Old Fellows Building at 7 Hampshire St., (1899, Renaissance Revival), Old Town Hall at 290 Broadway (1853).
Monument Park Charles & Pleasant Sts.	NR, LHD, Civil War Monument of 1888, other small monuments, memorials for each of the wars. Historically called Civil War Memorial Park at F.A. Wardwell Square.
Stone Walls * 	Unique system of granite walls throughout downtown area. See Planning Issues.
Nevins Estate Broadway	Bird sanctuary, Second Town Hall (also referred to as the Quinn Building, now Police Station), Nevins Memorial Library (NR, LHD, 305 Broadway) with Arboretum surrounding it with unique and rare trees and shrubs planted by Nevins. Library built in 1883 in Romanesque Revival style. The Quinn Building replaced the Nevins Mansion. MSPCA, first farm for retired police horses from Boston.
Industrial	
Arlington Mills Broadway & Chase	NR. Now Malden Mills in Methuen and Lawrence. Four of the five buildings in Methuen were destroyed by fire on December 11, 1995. The remaining building was owned by another company.
Methuen Falls Hydro Electric Plant * Lowell St.	Canal related head gates (infrastructure). In 1987 began generating power here again. Located at Spicket Falls. See Priority Landscapes.
Jute Factory	Old Methuen Cotton Mill – one building was a jute factory in the early 20th c.
Methuen Cotton Mills * 47-55 Osgood St.	NR – Spicket Falls Historic District. From 1826. Same as Spicket Falls Mill Complex. 5-story mansard roof building with octagonal tower, Mills Falls Apartments now, 53-57 Osgood Street is a small 2-story building tucked into the mill complex – was B Building. Methuen Mills of the 19th century expanded by Nevins in the 1870s and 1880s. See Priority Landscapes.
Tenney Hat Factory Site 225 Broadway	1919-1920 construction for Selden Worsted Mills building on site of Tenney Hat Factory.
Institutional	
Churches	St. Thomas Church was the 1st Episcopal Church on Kirk St. – now auto body shop; St. George's Methodist Church on Carleton St. (1904, polychrome brick with grey brick ends); Methuen Primitive Methodist Church at 9 Center St. (1900).

Methuen Memorial Music Hall 192 Broadway	NR. LHD. Historical name is Serlo Organ Hall. Designed by Henry Vaughn in Renaissance and Queen Anne styles. Built in 1899 by Searles to house the Great Organ which was the first organ in America and had been in Boston Music Hall.
Henry C. Nevins Home 100-110 Broadway	NR. LHD. First known as Henry C. Nevins Home for Aged and Incurables. Built in 1906 in Jacobethan Style. Open land along Spicket and steep forested hill.
Edward F. Searles Estate 209 Lawrence St.	Presentation of Mary, a French-Canadian order, now called Pine Lodge. Brick, designed by Henry Vaughn. Searles, prior to his marriage to Mrs. Hopkins was her interior decorator. She was the widow of Union Pacific Railroad treasurer.
Military	
Armory Lowell St.	Battery B, 1st Batttalion, 102nd Field Artillery. Slated to become a regional facility with big addition on the rear. 1912/1917. NR eligible.
Natural Features	
Brooks	Bartlett, Griffin and Sawyer Brooks – flow to Merrimack in western section of Methuen
Forest Lake Off Hampshire Rd.	52 acres including City Beach and conservation area. Had ice houses. See Town Forest listing above.
Harris Brook	Site of former flax and saw mills.
Hills Pond Pleasant Valley & Milk Sts.	Located on Hills Farm.
Merrimack River *	Southern and eastern boundaries of Methuen. River banks are important including views across the river to other communities. Lack of public access to river, bottom land along the Merrimack River thought to be best agricultural land east of the Connecticut River Valley. Site of former Bea's Sandwich Shop now town owned to be converted to boat launch just west of Rt. 93. There are a couple of islands in the river, the largest being Pine Island which is opposite the Armory.
Mystic Pond Rt. 93 & Pelham St.	Ice pond on which there was an ice house. Pond was relocated for the construction of Rt. 93.
Spicket River	From Derry, NH to Lawrence in a north-south direction, three sections divided by two dams: Nevins Pond and Wildlife Area, Section between Lowell Street Dam and Music Hall Dam, and section between Music Hall/Organ Hall Dam and Lawrence. Spicket Falls Dam.
Searles Pond Jackson St.	8 acres. Former recreational pond.

Open Space	
Hampstead Street	Boulder, an original boundary marker for road from 1720s, glacial.
Merrimack Park Rt. 110	Late 19th c. trolley park, across from Armory. Along the Lowell-Lawrence-Haverhill Street Railway Company line. Park built by trolley line. Also could come by boat from Lawrence.
Merrimack Valley Country Club 210 Howe St.	1902. Golf course designed by Donald Ross (designer of early courses in Pinehurst, NC and throughout country) in 1910. Ross designs were responsive to landscape, not contrived. Course in Chapter 61B.
Pie Hill Rt. 213	At confluence at Hawkes and Bare Meadow Brooks, near Rt. 495, impending 40B development with 280 units. One area has the largest concentration of spotted turtles in the area.
Pine Island In Merrimack River	Accessible only by boat.
Spicket Falls Riverwalk Park 48-50 Osgood St.	1.5 acres. Below falls, Spicket River has an S-curve with a stone wall (mortar) on one side. Site of the former Merrimac (later Gaunt) mills. Established in 1996
Tenney Estate & Park 39 Pleasant St.	Grey Court (1890-1893), Carrere & Hastings were architects for building, Ernest Bowditch designed grounds. House destroyed by fire in 1977. In 1951 Tenneys had given 26 acres to town for High School and sold the rest to the Basilian Salvatorian Order of Melkite Rite Seminary. Chapel built in 1960 and Tenney Stable remodeled in 1966. Stone wall enclosed gardens in which grow vegetables, fruit trees. Dairy barns remain.
Town Forest Ridgewood Lane	72 acres, near Dracut. Forest Lake with boat launch and park, forested area, recreational buildings (beaded clapboards), gin mill, a Polish club, ski tow with a building which was burned as practice of Fire Department, stone walls, remnant orchards, dirt road along east side of Lake. At the northwest end of Hampshire Road.
Whirlaway Driving Range Rt. 110	1930s, residential zoning on opposite side of street, interest in rezoning to multi-use zoning.
Residential ***Neighborhoods, Estates***	
Arlington Neighborhood * Chelmsford, Camden, Tenny, Phillips Sts.	See Priority Landscapes. Mills, residential streets, alleys which were paths between buildings to walk to the mills, St. George Church built by Searles and designed by Henry Vaughn. 2 & 3 deckers flat and gable roofs, most sided, some set back, others forward. This neighborhood is off Lawrence Street.
Armory Street Armory St.	Opposite Pine Island on Merrimack River, small 20th c. bungalows, lined with weeping willows. This small neighborhood is between Lowell Street and the river.

Fair Oaks Area	Eligible for NR, Area Form includes East Prospect St., East St., Fair Oaks, Milk, Olive, Prospect, Quincy, Russell, Swan, Vermont Sts. – ca. 1875-ca. 1935. Platted in about 1900, 1997 Preservation Plan recommends NR listing.
Hampshire Road Area Hampshire Rd.	Small settlement of early 20th c. dwellings in agricultural settings, fields, nursery.
Nevins Park Neighborhood	A planned Victorian era neighborhood. Formerly single family dwellings many of which have been converted to 2-family. Some duplexes from the mill days. Between Broadway and Tremont Street – Gage, High and Stevens St, Nevins Rd.
Pelham Street Neighborhood	Princeton St., Clinton Ave., Perley St., Spencer St. – a residential neighborhood with interesting 20th c. modest dwellings on side streets off Pelham Street.
Tozier Corner Howe & Hampstead	Fire Station, Community Church now is a private home on northeast corner. Named after Charles Tozier who owned historic house on corner and carriage house converted to residence.
Woodland Cottage 165 Haverhill St.	NR. 1839 Stephen Barker Greek Revival house with carriage house / garage part of which is an early barn. Across street from Steven Barker School, which now is a YMCA.
Transportation ***Bridges, Landings, Roads***	
Lowell Street Bridge Lowell St.	NR, LHD. 1869 bridge. On the north side of the bridge there was a canoe launch and nearby boathouse on an island above the Falls. Converted from a dry-laid bridge to a mortar bridge.
Osgood Bridge Osgood St.	NR, LHD. 1831 bridge. Highway construction and reconstruction of the bridge are threats to this bridge.
Sands Bridge * Off Hampshire Rd.	NR. Dry-laid, double arched bridge from 1835. West End, near Robert Roger's Birthplace Site. City owned. See Priority Landscapes.
Searles Bridge and Dam * Broadway, next to 192 Broadway	LHD, 1912. Bridge and Dam at Hat Factory, Music Hall (192 Broadway) and Harvey's Falls. Bridge is a 3-arch bridge with turrets on both sides, deterioration of bridge is a concern. See Priority Landscapes.
Railroad	R-O-W now Rail-Trail, twin arches impedes some use of river. Methuen-Lawrence branch of the B&M Railroad which ran up through NH – southern part from Methuen RR station north.
Depot 55 Union St.	1907 construction financed by Edward Searles.