TOPSFIELD 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 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.

TOPSFIELD HISTORY

Topsfield's distinctive inland rural landscape was instrumental in shaping the history of the community from the earliest use of the area by Native Americans through the long tradition of agricultural land use that continues today. The rich

agricultural 18th and 19th century farming history and the estates that were established on those farms tell the story of Topsfield's historical development.

Members of the Pawtucket group of Native Americans are likely to have traveled and camped along the Ipswich River and Howlett Brook. European settlement occurred in the area in 1634 on land grants that were part of Ipswich and Salem. The town of Topsfield was incorporated in 1650. The first meetinghouse was built in 1658 north of the present center. The shift to the present center began in the 18th century when the Congregational Church constructed its third meetinghouse on what is now the Common in 1702. The fifth and current meetinghouse was constructed in 1842 and the Methodist-Episcopal Church was relocated in 1853. The advent of the railroad also in 1853 helped to fuel the emergence of a commercial center here.

As in most parts of Essex County, particularly inland towns, agriculture was the early economic base and continued in Topsfield throughout three centuries. In the early 19th century farmers raised livestock, ran slaughter houses and maintained orchards and cider mills. The small rural shoe shops on many of the farms evolved from a cottage industry into four moderate-sized shoe establishments in the mid-19th century with two located at the village center. By the late 19th century, agriculture – particularly dairy farming – resumed its position as the mainstay of the local economy. The Essex Agricultural Society (EAS), established in 1818, was an important force in promoting agriculture. By 1910 Topsfield was the permanent location of the Society on the old Treadwell farm, now known as the Topsfield Fair Grounds. The Essex County Co-operative Society was founded in 1917 opposite the EAS on the Newburyport Turnpike (Route 1). Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries many rural retreats were established by wealthy industrialists. As a group, these rural retreat proprietors became an important stabilizing factor in farming and in land preservation in Topsfield.

Significant transportation routes followed Native American trails. The east-west routes were well established in the 1600s along Washington Street to Ipswich Rd. and along High Street (Rt. 97). The major north-south route, the well-known Newburyport Turnpike (Rt. 1), opened in 1804. Stage travel on the turnpike linked Boston and Newburyport until the advent of the Georgetown & Danvers Railroad in 1853. Railroad service through Topsfield was discontinued in the 1950s. By then Rt. 95 was constructed along the western edge of town. It has affected Topsfield in much the same way as it has other nearby towns, bringing Boston commuters to Topsfield and causing suburban sprawl.

Topsfield's population in the 1700s was low with only 773 inhabitants at the time of the Revolution and growing to just over 1,000 by 1830. By the end of the 19th century the number of residents increased to about 1,200, only to decline again to about 900 in 1920. However, during the second quarter of the 20th century the population more than doubled to 2,200 in 1955. Rapid growth continued during the latter part of the 20th century, resulting in a population of about 6,000 in 2000. Suburbanization due to accessibility and the attraction of Topsfield's rural character are reasons for the substantial increase in population.

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, Topsfield's inventory documents 394 resources dating from 1663 to 1995. Many properties were documented in the 1970s. An extensive recording of farms and estates was completed in 1998 in preparation for National Register work. The approach taken in that project was in similar to the heritage landscape approach recognizing the significance of the overall context of buildings.

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. All National Register properties are automatically listed in the State Register of Historic Places. Topsfield's National Register (NR) program began in 1966 with the listing of the Reverend Joseph Capen House (generally referred to as the Parson Capen House) on the National Register and as a National Historic Landmark. There are 14 First Period buildings on five properties that were listed through the 1990 First Period Thematic Nomination. There is one National Register district; the Topsfield Town Common Historic District. Pending listing in the National Register is a Multiple Property Context Submission, titled "Historic Farms and Rural Retreats of Topsfield" which is accompanied by a district nomination for the River Road-Cross Street Historic Farms and Rural Retreats. Also listed in the State Register are those properties protected by a preservation restriction, drawn up in accordance with MGL Chapter 183, Sections 31-33. A preservation restriction (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 Topsfield Town Hall, which is in the National Register district, is the only Topsfield property for which there is a PR. A preservation restriction on the façade of the house of Topsfield's second minister, the Rev. John Emerson, is in progress.

Local Historic District

Local historic districts, which are administered at the 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. In 1974,

Topsfield adopted the Topsfield Common Historic District which runs along Main and High Streets and contains 37 properties. The boundaries of the National Register district and the local historic district are not identical. All local historic district properties are automatically listed in the State Register of Historic Places.

Planning Documents

The town has begun a master planning process and currently is engaged in developing a community development plan under Executive Order 418 of 2000. Historic and cultural resources will be addressed in this plan.

The current *Topsfield Open Space and Recreation Plan* (OSRP) is dated 1997. An updated plan is nearly completed and will be adopted in 2005. The 1997 OSRP lists goals that are consistent with the preservation of heritage landscapes. The primary goal is to preserve the visual quality and rural character of the town by preserving significant open space and by amending the zoning bylaw to be consistent with open space protection.

Planning Bylaws and Other Tools

Topsfield has a demolition delay bylaw which allows the historical commission to delay demolition of a significant property for up to six months. The bylaw first had a three-month delay which was extended to the six-month period in 2004. There is a scenic roads bylaw that governs the removal of trees and stone walls on over 20 roads that have been designated as scenic. A number of properties are preserved due to the stewardship of the owner-institutions. Bradley Palmer State Park, comprising over 1,000 acres in Topsfield, is managed by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR). The Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary owned by Mass Audubon includes 750 acres in Topsfield and many more in Hamilton. Essex County Greenbelt Association (ECGA) holds conservation restrictions on many properties on the west side of Route 1 near the Ipswich River.

PRIORITY HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

The Topsfield Heritage Landscape Identification meeting, attended by about 24 residents, some representing town boards and local non-profit organizations, was held on July 21, 2004. During the meeting residents identified a lengthy list of Topsfield's heritage landscapes, which is included in the Appendix. Once the comprehensive list was created, the meeting participants were asked to explain the value of each heritage landscape on the list as well as the issues relating to its preservation. Based on the information gathered, community members identified 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 Topsfield. In most instances intensive survey work will be needed to fully document the physical characteristics and the historical development of the landscape. These heritage landscapes, which are listed in alphabetical order, represent broad categories of resources such as scenic roads and the Ipswich River.

Ipswich River

The Ipswich River winds its way through Topsfield from Boxford on the west side to Wenham where it forms the boundary between Topsfield and Wenham on the east. From here it flows north through the eastern part of Topsfield nearly parallel to Asbury Street until it flows under the street and into Ipswich where it works its way to the Atlantic Ocean. Rich agricultural land on both sides of the river has made Topsfield an important agricultural community with much experimentation in farming. Glimpses of the river are an essential part of the community character. The best known views are along River Road where the river flows from Rowley Bridge Road easterly through Meredith Farm to form the boundary between Meredith Farm and the Coolidge Estate on the south side of River Road. Other scenic views are from Salem Road where there is a narrow WPA bridge crossing the river; from the Newburyport Turnpike (Route 1) at the top of Pingree Hill where one overlooks the valley, the river and the Fair Grounds; and along Asbury Street, particularly at the northern end where the river passes under the road into the Bradley Palmer State Park. The banks of the river are varied with rolling meadows and open views in some areas, and wooded marshy edges in other areas. A zoning bylaw titled Ipswich River Protection District preserves the banks of the river prohibiting construction of any new buildings within 200 feet of the river.

Newburyport Turnpike – Route 1

Laid out in 1803 and built by 1804, the Newburyport Turnpike was an important north-south link between Boston and towns north to Newburyport and New Hampshire. One of the toll houses was in Topsfield at Salem Road and in short time hotels or inns were built along the Turnpike, such as the Topsfield Hotel (no longer extant). Stage coaches followed this early 19th century route until they were eclipsed by the railroad as the most efficient mode of travel. However, the

Turnpike's connections among Essex County communities remained an important part of local and regional history. The Essex Agricultural Society, established in 1818, eventually moved to Topsfield and fostered the transportation link between Topsfield and other towns. Early to mid 20th century improvements to accommodate automobile travel are the characteristics that are the defining features today.

The six-mile Topsfield stretch of the Turnpike, known as Boston Street locally, retains its narrow width with one lane in each direction, as it traverses the hills and valleys of the town's topography. This series of hills and valleys is further articulated by the landscape on each side. At the southern end the road rises immediately after leaving Danvers offering a view of the long stretch of road ahead. It then descends into the area known as Death Valley where there are natural habitats, a pond, wetlands and agricultural land. Nike Village, a 1950s Nike Missile site, is on the east side of Rt. 1 on the old Rea farm, hence the name of Rea Farm Road on which the military housing fronts.

The next series of hills contains a core of Topsfield's history with several important farms that were converted to rural retreats by prominent 19th century shipping and railroad industrialists. Farming remained an important function of the land with these same wealthy part-time residents playing a significant role in the success of the Essex Agricultural Society. The hills with broad prospects of farmland, stone walls, farm buildings and houses have names associated with the local history. Witch Hill is at the crest of the hill, just north of Garden Street. The road seems narrower along this stretch only because of the high stone retaining walls built into the banks and the tree cover. The next valley, north of Witch Hill, comprises meadows and pasture land with drainage structures and a cow crossing under Boston Street laid out by surveyor and landscape gardener, Ernest Bowditch. The next hill is named Pingree Hill or Wheatland Hill for the 19th and the 20th century owners of the Perkins-Pingree Farm on both sides of Boston Street and Salem Road. Low stone walls define property boundaries and from here one can see Topsfield Village to the northwest. North of Pingree Hill approaching the next valley is the Pingree sledding hill to the west, an Ipswich River crossing and the Topsfield Fair Grounds, the permanent home of the Essex Agricultural Society since 1910, on the east side.

Boston Street (Newburyport Turnpike – Rt. 1) continues north climbing hills and descending into valleys with wooded areas, more high stone retaining walls, some rubble stone walls that are laid into the banks on the side of the road, a Mile River crossing, a Howlett Brook crossing and some commercial development including gas stations, convenience stores, a golf course and an office park campus.

Scenic Roads

Many of Topsfield's roads display some of the most scenic agricultural landscapes in Essex County. Winding narrow roads are lined with stone walls, meadows, wooded areas, views of the Ipswich and Mile Rivers and Howlett Brook and notable architecture. River Road has stunning views of lush rolling

meadows sloping to the river, large 20th century mansions set back from the road and early 17th to 19th century dwellings built at the road's edge. A variety of building types and architectural styles completes the picture. Many roads fit this description. Asbury Street in the eastern part of town has a large meadow at the corner of Ipswich Road opposite the Bradley Palmer Estate entrance and adjacent to the Gilbert Steward Estate which is set back at the end of a long straight tree lined driveway. Farther along the scenic road is the late 18th century Capt. Joseph & Thomas Cummings House, a 1900 barn, a small farmer's cottage, horse paddocks, hay meadows sloping to the Ipswich River, and a fine English barn isolated near the road next to a large late 20th century neo-colonial house. Perkins Row is narrow, windy, and wooded and passes over the Mile River by way of Proctor's Bridge. This early 20th century stone arched bridge has small lookout areas where one can view of the brook and marshland. Farther south is the Proctor Estate, now Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary owned by Mass Audubon. High Street Extension follows the route of the old road near the Wenham border and passes by two 19th century farms, each with a main house, farm buildings, gardens and meadows surrounding the complexes. Wenham Road is narrow, winding and also hilly. The east end is a gateway to Topsfield with a broad meadow at High Street. A couple of 18th century dwellings, the 20th century George and Annie Shattuck Farm, stone walls, wooded areas, and the early 18th century Matthew Peabody House with its large 1875 wood shingled barn at the road edge are notable features of Wenham Road. Several other Topsfield roads – Rowley Bridge Street, Salem Road and Campmeeting Road among others - fit the description of scenic and are special places that tell of the long agricultural history in this community.

Topsfield Town Forest

Located in the northwest section of town is the 49-acre Town Forest accessed from Haverhill Road. The forest forms a stretch of the northeast boundary between Topsfield and Ipswich. The Town Forest is nearly contiguous to part of the Willowdale State Forest in Ipswich. A long dirt and gravel lane leads through the Town Forest to the Waldo H. Smith Town Beach on Hood Pond. Stands of pine trees with some deciduous line the lane into the forest and the path down to the sandy beach where there are swimming docks in the summer and a concrete bath house. The beach fronts on a small cove of the pond, the only part

that is in Topsfield. Most of the 14-acre Hood Pond is in Ipswich. A cart path parallels the southern edge of the pond at the Topsfield town line. The forest has a mix of pine trees and deciduous trees including oak, maple and birch. The Forest has been renamed the John Nutter Memorial Park in memory of Mr. Nutter who lived on Ipswich Road and was active in town affairs as a conservationist.

Village Center

The village of Topsfield comprises the institutional crossroads of High, Washington and Main Streets, the commercial area along Main Street and several residential clusters; one on Grove Street west of Main Street, one east of Main Street between High and South Main Streets, and north of the crossroads, all within walking distance of the many amenities of the village. The Common is broken up into three triangular pieces of greensward, the largest bound by Main Street, North Common and East Common Streets. When the Congregational Church and the Methodist Church (now a Parish House) moved to the center in 1842 and 1853 respectively, each fronting on the Town Common, Topsfield emerged as a quintessential 19th century New England village. The main crossroads at Washington Street from the west and High Street from the east intersecting with the north-south Main Street was the logical place to build the fine Victorian Town Hall in 1873. The 1935 Town Library faces South Common Street and a small triangle at High and Main Streets. These civic and institutional buildings and three residences, most notably the Parson Capen House, a First Period dwelling belonging to the first minister, make up the National Register district.

The commercial area along Main Street is a mixture of domestic buildings that have been converted for commercial use, as well as modern commercial buildings of the 1950s to 1970s. Most buildings along Main Street are close to the street. Several have barns or wagon sheds. Most domestic buildings were constructed in the 19th century primarily in the Greek Revival and Italianate styles. The local historic district includes the National Register district at the institutional cross roads described above and the properties along Main Street recognizing the cohesiveness of this village center.

The residential neighborhood east of Main Street on Central, Park, Summer and South Main Streets evolved after the railroad came to Topsfield in 1853. Several substantial Greek Revival and Italianate houses line South Main Street while those off the main road are more modest cottages of one and one-half and two-stories, side-gable and gable front orientation with similar setbacks, displaying predominately Italianate or Colonial Revival features. Sidewalks line the streets and most properties have mature trees, foundation shrubbery and many low garden fences. A similar cluster of modest 19th century houses is found on Grove Street west of Main Street near the location of the former depot. These areas are not included in the local historic district.

PLANNING

Preservation Strategies

Topsfield'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. The town's inland location, rich soils along the Ipswich River and the brooks played a critical role in the community's historical development. Measures to preserve some of the highly valued heritage landscapes are in place. The town already has taken steps to look 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, Topsfield is facing multiple pressures for change that threaten land-based uses and natural resources, especially its farms and estates. 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.

Burial Grounds and Cemeteries

The condition of the burial grounds and cemeteries, particularly those that are municipally owned, are of interest and concern to many. Pine Grove Cemetery is an example of an important cultural resource that is often overlooked. One section of this cemetery appears to be arranged in the same manner that one would find in a late 17th century burial ground.

Large Parcels

Several town boards expressed concern about large parcels of land throughout town that are not protected and that may not be part of a farm or rural retreat that has been documented. Nearly all such parcels are in visible places on scenic roads such as a large tract on Perkins Row, south of Ipswich Road or on Rowley Bridge Road, south of Cross Street. Development of such parcels will change the character of scenic roads substantially.

Newburyport Turnpike

The Newburyport Turnpike, U.S. Route 1, is a main transportation corridor. It is a fragile resource due to pressures to improve it and to develop land abutting it. Transportation needs argue for widening without regard for the scenic qualities of the road itself – the single travel lane in each direction, the stone retaining walls and the tree cover. Private property owners' desires or need to develop land along this corridor compete with preservation of the scenic views, another key feature of the Route 1 character. This route is the type of resource that is taken for granted and whose characteristics are overlooked in transportation planning.

Scenic Roads

Nearly all of the roads in Topsfield have scenic qualities that are irreplaceable once removed. The town adopted the Scenic Roads Act, and designated over 20 roads as scenic. Stone walls, farms, estates, meadows, marshland and rivers, all contribute to the scenic character of Topsfield's agricultural landscapes viewed along its roads. Loss of this scenic quality would greatly compromise these heritage landscapes which add tremendous value to the quality of life in Topsfield.

Village Center

The local historic district does not extend to the residential streets off of Main Street at the village center, or to South Main Street. Therefore, the many modest late 19th century dwellings on side streets and the more elaborately detailed and larger 19th century buildings on South Main Street are not protected against tear-downs and the neighborhood is threatened by large-scale new construction that would be out of character with the center.

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 Topsfield 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 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 the historical development. While thorough documentation of the agricultural landscapes and estates in Topsfield was completed in the late 1990s, there are other heritage landscapes that should be considered, such as those listed in the Appendix. New procedures that are more comprehensive and link properties in a more coherent way than in the past may enhance that part of Topsfield's survey that was completed 30 years ago, particularly the village center. Thus, using the Massachusetts Historical Commission survey methodology, record Topsfield's heritage 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 large parcels that are not part of the farms and rural retreats inventory – Town Forest, etc.

- Document unprotected resources first, beginning with threatened areas.

- Make sure to document secondary features on residential properties, such as outbuildings, garages stone walls, a methodology that was used for the farms and rural retreats inventory.

- Record histories for the First Period dwellings – the 1985 documentation focuses on structural analysis only.

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, continue Topsfield'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.

- Complete more district and individual nominations for the Multiple Property Submission. Examples are the Matthew Peabody House on Salem Road, estates on Asbury Street, the Washington Street district, and the two farms/estates on High Street extension, all areas that already have been determined eligible by the MHC staff.

Agricultural Landscapes

Preservation of agricultural landscapes means preservation of the farming activities, otherwise, it simply is the preservation of land as open space. It is important to know what the features of an agricultural setting are and which features the community treasures in order to make a case for preservation of these settings. Topsfield already has begun to consider some preservation tools that can assist communities in preserving the actual farming activities. At its May 2005 Town Meeting the town established an agricultural commission and adopted a right-to-farm bylaw. This bylaw will assist farmers in carrying out farming activities that may be considered a nuisance to neighbors. Consider other options.

- Adopt a cluster bylaw that requires a buffer between development and farmland.

- Raise funds to purchase development rights on farms or to assist a farmer in the restoration of historic farm buildings for which the farmer would be required to donate a preservation restriction.

- Continue public-private partnerships to preserve farm land through purchase of conservation restrictions (CR) or agricultural preservation restrictions (APR).

- Work with Essex Agricultural Society to develop a master plan for the future of the Topsfield Fair Grounds.

Burial Grounds and Cemeteries

Topsfield's burial grounds, which are sparsely documented, include several municipal burial grounds as well as several small family lots on private property. 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 Topsfield should:

- Prepare new survey forms for all burial grounds and cemeteries that have been in use for more than 50 years.

- 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, on-going 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 town jurisdiction about preservation and management plans.

Large parcels

The updated draft of Topsfield's Open Space and Recreation Plan will identify large parcels that are not restricted in any permanent way. Opportunities for the Historical Commission and the Conservation Commission to work together to identify sensitive parcels and to understand them as heritage landscapes will be an important step in preservation, which will rely heavily on partnerships.

- Complete list of all parcels that are sensitive and important to the community character.

- Pursue appropriate preservation techniques including purchase, restrictions, and zoning changes.

River Frontage

The primary concern regarding river frontage is controlling development along the river and maintaining views of the river and marshland. While most of the land is partially protected by conservation regulations and by the 200-foot limitation of building, there are some areas along the banks of the rivers and streams that may be compromised by development.

- Identify areas where river and frontage is buildable, particularly those areas with fine scenic views which are critical parts of the community character.

- Review zoning to assure dimensional regulations that are of a domestic scale.

- Develop design standards that require maintenance of some views when new construction is allowed near the river frontage.

Scenic Roads

Scenic roads are an integral part of the historic fabric of the community. They are highly valued by Topsfield residents and visitors alike. Yet roads must also accommodate modern transportation needs and decisions regarding roadways are often made with travel requirements as the only consideration. Under the Scenic Roads Act (MGL Chapter 40-15C) Topsfield has adopted a Scenic Roads bylaw that addresses the removal of trees and stone walls that are within the right-of-way. Yet, in addition to roadway issues, much of what we value about scenic roads - the stone walls, views across open fields - is not within the public right-of-way. Topsfield took action at its May 2005 Town Meeting by adopting a Scenic Overlay zoning district for Route 1. The purpose of this new by-law is to locate development so as to lessen its visual impact, preserving open space, preserving existing trees, providing additional landscaping, and screening of mechanical equipment, accessory facilities and parking facilities. Other approaches to be considered in the preservation and protection of scenic roads are as follows:

- Complete an inventory with descriptions and photo documentation of each of Topsfield's rural roads.

- Amend the Scenic Roads Bylaw (adopted through MGL Chapter 40-15C) by including design criteria to be considered when approving removal of trees and stone walls. Add other design criteria such as a provision allowing only one driveway cut per property on scenic roads unless frontage is over a certain length (to accommodate for large farms that may have a house driveway and a farmyard driveway). Coordinate procedures between Highway Department and Planning Board.

- Develop policies and implementation standards for road maintenance and reconstruction, including bridge reconstructions, which address the scenic and historic characteristics while also addressing safety. This is an important public process in which the town may have to accept responsibility for certain costs to implement standards that are not acceptable to projects funded by Mass. Highway Department. Such standards should have a section addressing the way in which the local Highway Department maintains roads, for example requiring a public hearing if any additional pavement is to be added

to a town road during reconstruction or repair. Policies can be adopted by local boards having jurisdiction over roads, or can be adopted at Town Meeting through a bylaw. In developing policies consider factors such as road width, clearing of shoulders, the use of berms, walking paths, posted speeds. A delicate balance is required.

- Consider flexible zoning standards to protect certain views. Such bylaws could be written to apply to the scenic roads and other appropriate numbered routes also.

Village Character

Nearly all preservation strategies address village and 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. Topsfield has already employed two traditional preservation planning tools: demolition delay and local historic district bylaws. A demolition delay bylaw provides a time period in which the town can consider alternatives to demolition. Local historic districting is the strongest form of protection for the preservation of historic resources.

- Consider extending the demolition delay bylaw from a six-month to a one year delay. In addition publication of demolition requests reminds residents of historic resources and reinforces the value of local historic resources; therefore add a notification requirement to the Demolition Delay bylaw.

- Extend the Topsfield Center local historic district to include the South Main, School, Park and Summer Streets neighborhood.

- With Planning Board, consider village overlay zoning that will preserve features that are important to the village character particularly size, scale and setbacks. There was an article on the May 2005 Town Meeting warrant that addresses village setbacks; however it did not pass.

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 these programs varies from year to year. When planning Topsfield's heritage landscape inventory program, contact relevant agencies to determine whether funding currently is available.

Towns that have adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA) find it to be an excellent funding source for many heritage landscape projects. Adoption of the CPA did not pass at the town elections in May 2005. Nevertheless, the town may want to reconsider at a later date. The number and types of projects that are benefiting across the Commonwealth is worthy of consideration. The CPA establishes a mechanism by which towns 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 town believes are appropriate and beneficial to the municipality.

Towns like Topsfield, which have a local historic district bylaw, may apply for Certified Local Government (CLG) status which is granted by the National Park Service through the MHC. After the town completes an application and is accepted as a CLG, it files a report yearly on the status of applications, meetings, and decisions. In return the town is eligible for federal funding that is distributed by the MHC. The matching funds are competitive; however a proportion of the federal allocation must be distributed to CLGs for Survey and Planning projects. CPA funds can be used for matching funds.

Specific Recommendations

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

Newburyport Turnpike

A master's thesis on the Newburyport Turnpike, written in 1994, documents the Route 1 land uses at that time and discusses methods of preservation. The information remains current with the exception of some property descriptions. The town passed the Route One Scenic Overlay Zone at the May 2005 Town

Meeting. This is a major step in planning to protect part of Topsfield's six-mile stretch of the Newburyport Turnpike. In particular,

- Update the identification of key features using MHC and heritage landscape inventory methodology.
- Pursue Scenic Byway designation which makes the town eligible for certain transportation funding to preserve the scenic character.
- Preserve rights-of-way characteristics such as stone walls and tree cover.

Topsfield Town Forest

The Town Forest is under the control of the town and is protected as long as residents believe it is an important resource. Information about the heritage landscape will be the best way in which to persuade residents to use and to preserve the Town Forest.

- Develop brochure about the history, the habitats and the current recreational uses of the Town Forest.
- Encourage school programs that expose children to the beauty of the forest as well as the recreational uses.

CONCLUSION

The Topsfield Reconnaissance Report is a critical tool in starting to identify the rich and diverse heritage landscapes in Topsfield 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 inventory 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.

Distribution of this Reconnaissance Report to town land use boards and commissions will assist in making this one of the planning documents that guides Topsfield in preserving important features of the community's character. The tasks that are recommended will require cooperation and coordination among boards and commissions, particularly Topsfield's Historical Commission, the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission. It also is advisable to present this information to the Board of Selectmen, the applicant to the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program on behalf of the town. Finally, distribution of the report to the Historical Society, neighborhood associations and other preservation-minded organizations will enhance Topsfield'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 Topsfield on July 21 and the follow-up fieldwork on September 21, 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
TTOR = The Trustees of Reservations
CR = Conservation Restriction
NR = National Register
* = Priority Landscape

Agriculture	
Alfalfa Farm 267 Rowley Bridge Street	Once part of Porter family farm – one of the oldest families in southwest Topsfield owning most of land along both sides of Rowley Bridge Street. By 1872 this part owned by Benjamin Conant who operated a large dairy business. Dairy continued after Conant's death in 1906 and eventually reunited with part of farm on east side of road under ownership of Sills. Today land producing grapes for Alfalfa Vineyard.
Connemara Farm 252 Rowley Bridge Street	Once part of Porter family farm and later this part sold to Batchelders. Part of Alfalfa Farm, separated when sold to Batchelder. Built as a gentleman's farm in 1932 by William Sills who purchased both this and the Conant part of Alfalfa Farm rejoining the properties. Sills continued the dairy business started at Alfalfa – see above. Reduced in size after 1980 to 35 acres and called Connemara Farm.
Crowninshield / Peirce Farm 111 & 116 Boston St.	a.k.a. Witch Hollow Farm comprising 27 acres on west side of Rt. 1 and 14 acres on east side (now known as Ern Rea Farm). Benjamin Crowninshield's 1820 summer retreat was converted by Thomas Peirce into experimental farm with farmhouse and large barns (no longer extant) on the east side - across the Newburyport Tkpe. Ernest Bowditch was engineer and landscape designer. Large Second Empire house with barns, pastures, and remnants of gardens.
Cummings Farm 83 Asbury Street	Joseph Cummings and grandson, Thomas Cummings – converted to a gentleman's farm by Daniel O. Earle, later the C. F. Hemenways, and later Caroline H. Taintor who called it Barberry Hill. Now a horse farm with late 18th century house, 1900 barn and 1901 cottage, rolling meadows sloping to the river.
Essex County Cooperative Society South Main Street	Established in 1917 to expand the production of food in Essex County. Essex Agricultural Society leased land and farm buildings on west side of Rt. 1. Remains active.
Meredith Farm 29 & 41 Cross Street	NR-pending. Formerly owned by Coolidge, bequeathed to MIT and sold to Nash. Also known as Bixby Farm, Donation Farm. 18th and 19th farmhouse, arrangement of farm buildings from late 19th and early 20th century, 1900 main house as rural retreat.

Niles/Vaughn Farm 278 High Street	Once part of the larger Towne farm until purchased by William H. Niles for country retreat. Owners of 50 years – 1920s to 1970s were Henry N. and Maybelle Vaughn. Mid 19th century house updated in Colonial Revival fashion in early 20th century, barns, remnant garden, some pasture land. Current use is as Valley View Farm which now is a goat cheese dairy.
Perkins-Pingree Farm 45, 49 Salem Road	NR-pending. Also known as Wheatland in 20th c. including Wheatland Field now owned by town on corner of Salem and Rt. 1. 1807 Federal house for Capt. Thomas Perkins, 1836 Greek Revival for Annar Pingree, ca. 1850 stone carriage house, assorted barns and other outbuildings, meadows, pasture.
Topsfield Fairgrounds 207 Boston Street	Essex Agricultural Society property with unique collection of buildings and grounds for agricultural events. Area Form completed in 1998. Meeting attendees requested that individual buildings be surveyed. Concerns over use of fair grounds as venue for unrelated topics such as motorcycle shows, etc.
Towne-Atwood Farm 279 High Street	Owned and farmed by Townes to 1928 – Jacob Alden Towne built 1857 house. Sold in 1928 to Icabod F. Atwood who called it Newtowne Farm. There is a restriction on the corner field of Wenham and High that says it has to be mowed/hayed. Proprietors of Valley View Farm tend to this field.
Towne Farm Fields Corner of Rt. 97, Rt. 35. & Wenham Rd.	18th century Mary Towne House. Gateway to town, critical pieces to remain as open space and agricultural land. 10 acres on each side of Wenham Road with extensive frontage in same ownership.
Burial Grounds and Cemeteries	
Lake Cemetery 82 River Rd.	NR-pending. On Margaret Cummings Estate, private family burial ground.
Lower Cemetery 216 Boston St.	1834. Municipally owned. Also known as the Old Route 1 Cemetery or the Boston Street Cemetery.
Pine Grove Main Street	Municipal. Mid 19th century. 1895 barn with molded paneled posts and decorative shingles in the gable peak which now is parks department machine shop. The old part of the burial ground has slate stones.
Southside Cemetery Rowley Bridge St.	Municipal.
Industrial	
Copper Mines Coppermime Road	On west side of Rt. 95 accessible only from Locust St. in Middleton.

Howlett's Mill Off Ipswich and Campmeeting Rds.	Mill pond formed from Howlett Brook. View from Ipswich Road.
Nike Village Ray Farm Rd.	Nike housing, many duplexes. Missile launching site in 1960s.
Open Space / Parks	
Off Aaron Drive	72 acres.
83 Asbury Street	73 acres on the old Joseph Cummings Farm.
Bare Hill Park Haverhill & Bare Hill Rds.	48 acres owned by the Town.
Death Valley Area pond Off Rt. 1	Potential concern – owned by Beverly-Salem Water Commission.
Fish Brook	Potential archaeology.
Hoods Pond	Off Rt. 97. A Great Pond in northwest corner, partially protected and adjoining Willowdale State Forest, most in Ipswich – swimming beach for Topsfield residents.
Howlett Brook	Flows to the Ipswich River. Site of mill pond and old mill.
Ipswich River	Farms, ponds, vernal pools, Beverly-Salem Wenham Canal. More than 7 miles of the 27 mile long river that flows from Wilmington to the ocean at Ipswich.
Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary 83 Perkins Row	Owned by Massachuestts Audubon Society. Former Thomas Proctor Estate, 720 acres in Topsfield and the rest is in Hamilton and Wenham.
Large Parcels of Open Space	Among those mentioned at the meeting were 293 Boston St. (Map 34/78, 107 acres), 83 Asbury St. (Map 37/3, 72 acres), 30 Boston St. (Map 76,1, 21 acres) 130 Boston St. (Map63/3, 70 acres), 120 High St. (49/56, 69 acres), 120 Hill St. (Map68/48, 60 acres), and others. A full list should be developed followed by making a list of priority areas to preserve.
Mile River	Perkins Row carried over Mile River on Proctor stone bridge.
Moon Hill 24 Asbury Street	Bradley Palmer State Park – outstanding vista.
New Meadows Golf Club Boston St. (Rt. 1)	Private club that once was farmland on Rt. 1. The property is an important visual piece of Rt. 1. Course developed in the 1960s. Off East Street on Wilde Street and Rt. 1.

Perkins Row – pond and dam	Scenic views from bridge on Perkins Row of the pond and dam.
Pickle Field Asbury Street	Once part of the Steward Estate at 51-65 Asbury Street. Visible from Ipswich Road and from Asbury Street – Essex County Greenbelt Association.
Pye Brook	
School Brook	
Towne Farm Field Corner of High St. & Wenham Rd.	Listed in agricultural section also. Gateway to town – critical piece to remain as an open hay field. Town officials may want to check to see if restriction is in place. 10 acres.
Topsfield Town Forest Haverhill Rd.	Established in the early 20th century. No restrictions. Check town meeting minutes to understand purchase by town. Potentially vulnerable for 40B project if TM so voted. Not documented. Clusters of pines along dirt road leading to the pond beach. Concrete block bathhouse. Now named John Nutter Memorial Park after well known 20th century resident, John Nutter, who lived at 178 Ipswich Road.
Vernal Pools	Some certified – more work necessary to document and protect. See new Open Space Plan.
Wheatland Field South Main, Salem, Rt. 1	NR-pending. Originally part of the Perkins-Pingree farm – large field on both sides of the Ipswich River.
Woods Pond	In Topsfield Town Forest with most of pond in Ipswich.
Residential	
Central, Park, Summer, Prospect, South Main Street	Residential neighborhood in need of additional documentation and protection – adjacent to present LHD.
Margaret Cummings Estate 82 River Road	NR-pending. Established in 1909 designed by Cummings brother, Charles Kimball Cummings. Tudor Revival house, stable/garage, pump house. Lake Cemetery, Arthur Shurcliff was landscape architect.
John Lawrence Estate 76 Camp Meeting Rd.	1908 Colonial Revival summer retreat designed by Amos A. Lawrence for John S. Lawrence of Boston. Working farm part of estate was on East Street – some buildings remain. High above Howlett Brook near old mill site.
James Marsh Estate 70 Salem Road	Formerly known as Pingree Hill - part of Pingree Farm at 49 Salem Road. Arts & Crafts summer retreat built in 1910, Frank M. Riley as architect for James Marsh of Lynn. 40 + acres. Privately owned.

Bradley Palmer Estate 24 & 36 Asbury St.	Bradley Palmer State Park – owned and managed by DCR. 1902-1904 Craftsman and Tudor Revival stone mansion, 18th century Lamson House, early 20th century garage and other structures on over 200 acres in Topsfield (more acreage in Hamilton and Ipswich) – former estate.
Matthew Peabody House 86 Salem Road	Pre-1744 First and Second Period house with 1875 barn and over 10 acres of fields. Also known as Burroughs House and Chipmunk Farm at corner of Salem and Wenham Roads. Documented and determined eligible for NR by MHC. Owned by MIT – for sale. It is likely that the land will be divided so that the house and barn will be on separate lots.
James Duncan Phillips Estate 120 Hill Street	Donibristle. 100 acre estate laid out for James Duncan Phillips and his wife by Putnam & Allen of Boston. Arts & Crafts main house, arrangement of farm buildings behind – designed and agricultural landscape.
Thomas Proctor Estate 87 Perkins Row	Mass Audubon – Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary. 18th century house updated, farm buildings, and landscape of many components on 720 acres in Topsfield as part of 2,800 acre estate in Wenham and Hamilton.
John Saltonstall Estate 68 & 70 River Road	NR-pending. Several properties along River Road including 9 to 45 and fields in between. Purchased by William Coolidge in 1948 and bequeathed to MIT upon his death in 1992. House at 68 designed by Richardson, Barot, & Richardson and built in 1921. It was published in architectural journals in 1920s and 1930s and will be one of 50 estates featured in book on North Shore Estates – publication Spring 2005. Same house is subject of demolition permit. Delay has expired. Landscape architect was Harold Hill Blossom. Also on estate next to Georgian Revival mansion is a Gambrel cottage dating to ca. 1760.
Town Common and Town Center	Part of LHD and NR district. Consider expanding district.
Arthur Wellman Estate 82 Salem Road	Built in 1905, the Shingle Style building with Craftsman characteristics was designed by Stickney and Austin as country estate for Arthur Wellman of Malden. Gardens and meadows.
Pingree-Wheatland Estate 101-105 Hill Street	Built by David Pingree in 1904 in eclectic style – Colonial Revival, Shingle and Arts & Crafts characteristics. Inherited by Richard Wheatland and later David Pingree Wheatland.
Transportation	
Newburyport Turnpike – Rt. 1	From Danvers to Ipswich. Important road corridor, a historic turnpike with stone walls, trees, bridges, views. Special features such as bridges over Ipswich River and over Howlett Street, cattle pass under Rt. 1 at Witch Hill Farm 116 Boston St. (Ernest Bowditch). Death Valley area south of Garden Street, Beverly-Salem Water Board land. At north end a golf course, strip mall office space (New England Business Park) and industrial space.
Railroad R-O-W	Along Rt. 97 on east side of Rt. 1.

Scenic Roads:	
Asbury Street	Meadows, Ipswich River.
High Street Ext.	Between Valley and Wenham Rds. Farms, stone walls.
Perkins Row	Stone bridge (Proctor Bridge) and winding picturesque road (views of brook).
River Road	Stonewalls and vistas of estates to Ipswich River.
Rowley Bridge St.	1930s WPA bridge.
Salem Road	Farms, 1930s WPA bridge over Ipswich River near River Road.
Wenham Road and Rt. 97 Intersection	Large hay field that is a gateway to Topsfield with a critical view. Once part of Towne Farm. 95 Wenham Rd is 1790s Jacob Towne, Jr. House on 10 acre parcel that is locally referred to as the Mary Towne House for its early 20th century owner. Opposite corner is 92 Wenham Rd., also a 10 acre parcel with a new cape on corner of Valley Rd. and Wenham.