

DUNSTABLE RECONNAISSANCE REPORT

FREEDOM'S WAY LANDSCAPE INVENTORY

MASSACHUSETTS HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY PROGRAM



Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

Freedom's Way Heritage Association

PROJECT TEAM

Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

Jessica Rowcroft, Preservation Planner
Division of Planning and Engineering

Freedom's Way Heritage Association

Mary Whitney, President
Marge Darby, Chair, Advisory Committee

Project Consultants

Shary Page Berg
Gretchen G. Schuler

Local Project Coordinators

Susan Tully
Mike Wurm

Local Heritage Landscape Participants

Milly Chandler, FWHA
Marge Darby, FWHA
Ed Fahey
Kathy Icenagle
Judy Larter
Jean Phelan
Tim Phelan
Bill Psaledakis
Susan Psaledakis
Ray Sullivan
Susan Tully
Ronald Wood
Mike Wurm

June 2006

Cover Photographs

Field on French Street
Meetinghouse Hill Cemetery
Town Hall

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Dunstable History	2
Priority Heritage Landscapes	3
Blodgett House and Land	
Camp Massapoag	
East Main Street Gateway	
French Street Area	
Mill Street Area	
Red Line Corridor	
Salmon Brook Corridor	
Town Center	
Critical Concerns	11
Agricultural Landscapes (Including Barns)	
Impacts of 40B projects	
Scenic Roads and Views	
Existing Resource Documentation and Planning Tools	12
Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets	
State and National Registers of Historic Places	
Planning Documents and Tools	
General Preservation Planning Recommendations	14
Inventory of Heritage Landscapes	
National Register Program	
Village and Rural Neighborhood Character	
Agricultural Landscapes	
Scenic Roads	
Funding of Preservation Projects	
Conclusion	18
Appendix: Heritage Landscapes Identified by Community	19

INTRODUCTION

The Freedom's Way Heritage Association includes 37 Massachusetts communities that are linked by historic events that helped to shape America's democratic form of governance and the intellectual traditions that underpin American freedom, democracy, conservation and social justice. Freedom's Way communities extend from Arlington on the east to Winchendon on the west. They represent a wide range of cities and towns, each shaped by the relationship between nature and culture.

Heritage landscapes are special places created by human interaction with the natural environment that help define the character of a community and reflect its past. They are dynamic and evolving; they reflect the history of a community and provide a sense of place; they show the natural ecology that influenced land use patterns; and they often have scenic qualities. The 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 or an important river corridor. To this end, the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Freedom's Way Heritage Association (FWHA) have collaborated to bring the Heritage Landscape Inventory program (HLI) to communities in the Freedom's Way area. 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 and refined in Essex County. It is outlined in the DCR publication *Reading the Land* which has provided guidance for the program since its inception. In summary, each participating community appoints a Local Project Coordinator (LPC) to assist the DCR-FWHA consulting team. The LPC organizes a heritage landscape identification meeting at which interested residents and town officials offer community input by identifying heritage landscapes. This meeting is followed by a fieldwork session including the consulting team and the LPC, often 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 this Reconnaissance Report, prepared for each participating community. It outlines the history of the community; describes the priority heritage landscapes; discusses planning issues identified by the town; identifies planning tools available in the community; and concludes with preservation recommendations. A list of all of the heritage landscapes identified by the community is included in the Appendix.

DUNSTABLE HISTORY

Dunstable is a relatively rural town on the Massachusetts/New Hampshire border located along the eastern edge of the Nashua River. The documented Native American history of the community dates to the Late Archaic Period (6,000-3,000 B.P.) with two confirmed sites from this period. In the 1600s the Nipmuc tribe was probably active in the Dunstable area, particularly along the Nashua River and Salmon Brook, and around the ponds.

European settlers arrived in the area in the late 17th century and the town of Dunstable was established in 1673 with a total area of 200 square miles extending from Londonderry, New Hampshire to Chelmsford. The area was unstable after King Philip's War and conflicts between Native Americans and European settlers continued into the 1730s. The boundaries of Dunstable fluctuated throughout the 18th century with large sections split off as new towns, many of which are now part of New Hampshire. Dunstable annexed a portion of Groton in 1747. The eastern portion of Dunstable was set off as Tyngsborough in 1789.

The first meetinghouse in what is now Dunstable was built in 1753 near the corner of Forest and Main Streets, east of the present town center with an adjacent cemetery and town pound further east. The population of the town remained low until the Revolutionary War. Most residents lived on outlying farms and many supplemented their income with lumbering and related activities such as production of shingles and barrel hoops.

After the Revolutionary War the meetinghouse was moved to the site of the present town hall and a village center formed along High and Main Streets about half a mile west of the original meetinghouse site. The population grew slowly and the roads gradually improved, but the remote location of the town limited growth. The economy remained primarily agricultural with a few small saw and gristmills.

Arrival of the Nashua, Acton and Boston Railroad in 1873 made Dunstable more accessible. The town reached a population of 590 in 1850 and then dropped to 408 in 1910 as some residents left for better opportunities in nearby mill towns such as Lowell. The improved transportation system in the late 19th and early 20th century prompted some cottage development but the town remained largely rural and agricultural until the 1950s.

Today Dunstable has a population of about 3,250 and retains its agricultural landscape but the number of working farms is in decline and most residents work outside Dunstable. Large-scale commercial development in nearby New Hampshire and improved access via Route 3 make the town an increasingly appealing place for residential development.

PRIORITY HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Dunstable's heritage landscape identification meeting, attended by approximately 13 residents, some representing town boards and local non-profit organizations was held on May 16, 2006. During the meeting residents compiled a lengthy list of the town'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 identified a group of priority 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.

These landscapes, which are listed alphabetically, represent a range of scales and types of resources from individual properties to large agricultural districts. Some of the priority landscapes describe areas that have multiple layers. For example the town center includes features within it that are also individually recognized as heritage landscapes. Such layering shows the complexity and interdependence that are characteristic of most heritage landscapes. The descriptions and recommendations included here are an initial step in identifying resources valued by the community and suggesting action strategies.

Blodgett House and Land

The Blodgett House (ca. 1726) on Pond Street is one of the earliest houses in Dunstable. It is a 2½-story five bay Colonial house with attached ell that is much different than the original homestead. The house is located back from the road and at a slightly lower elevation. The setting consists of 95 acres of land, primarily woodland. In its early years the house was reportedly used as one of four local garrison houses during conflicts with Native Americans.



Recommendations

This property is valued because of its age, its importance to the history of Dunstable and its large acreage. It has been documented on a Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) inventory form.

- Request National Register determination of eligibility from MHC.
- Investigate whether owner would be interested in exploring preservation options for the property. See recommendations for Village and Neighborhood Character in the **General Preservation Planning Recommendations** section of this report.

Camp Massapoag

Camp Massapoag was established early in the 20th century to provide healthy summer recreation for urban children. It is a rustic camp of about 24 acres in the southern part of Dunstable on the shore of Massapoag Pond. The oldest building is the 1½-story dining hall built in 1919. Most of the extant rustic facilities are hipped roof cabins that date to the 1940s. There is also a gymnasium built in the 1970s. This is a prime piece of real estate on the shore of Massapoag Pond that is of prime interest to Dunstable residents because they currently have no public access to the pond. Another concern is that if the land were ever developed or if the camp intensified its activities, there might be septic system issues that could impact the water quality of the pond, as the camp is directly on the water.



Recommendations

The town has several areas of mutual interest with the YMCA. These include assuring that camp operations meet town regulations and exploring options for possible limited public use or even municipal acquisition if the YMCA's needs change at some point in the future.

- Work with YMCA to address issues associated with the property such as public access, recreational use, historic resources and water quality.

-
- The Board of Selectmen, the Conservation Commission, the Historical Commission and the Parks Department should work together to consider approaching the YMCA to convey their interest in the property and see if they could obtain a right of first refusal.

East Main Street Gateway

Dunstable is one of several communities in the Freedom's Way area that has a distinctive gateway to the town. Most people arrive in Dunstable via Route 3, turning onto Route 113 in Tyngsborough, which becomes East Main Street when it enters Dunstable. The transition from a busy 21st century commuter route to a scenic road that still reflects Dunstable's agricultural past is remarkable. The section of Main Street from the Tyngsborough boundary to Westford Street is characterized by active farms with fields, cows, stone walls and forests interspersed with a range of historic buildings and structures that reflect many aspects of Dunstable's past. These historic houses range from an 18th century tavern to farms and 19th century residences in a variety of styles, most with barns and other agricultural outbuildings.

Among the early evidence of the town's civic past are the two burial grounds and town pound located along East Main Street, as well as the former Winslow School, which is now the home of the Tyngsborough-Dunstable Historical Society. Surprisingly there is no commercial development. Preserving the character of this scenic area and gateway to the town has long been an important goal for Dunstable.

The town has recently completed an important step in preparing a National Register nomination that thoroughly documents the historic resources of the area, as well as its present character and significance. The nomination is currently awaiting review by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. However, while the National Register nomination is an important step, it does not provide permanent protection for the area.



Recommendations

Dunstable may wish to explore several strategies for providing specific protection for this area that would protect its historic character and preserve farming activities.

- Explore local historic district and neighborhood architectural conservation district options and weigh the interest of residents to determine the best approach. Refer to **Village and Rural Neighborhood Character** in the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.
- Consider options for farm preservation. Refer to **Agricultural Landscapes** in General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.

French Street Area

French Street is a short north/south connector road of less than ¼ mile just east of the town center. It extends between Main Street on the south and Thorndike Street on the north. It is a narrow rural road lined with stone walls and a mix of open fields and farmland. Most noteworthy is the old John French House originally built circa 1744. The house was added onto over the years until it became the Federal style house that exists today. The barn, granary and shop were all built circa 1861 by Benjamin French. Now a part of the McGovern Farm, it is an active dairy farm with acres of pasture and meadows surrounding the building complex.



Recommendations

The recommendations for all of Dunstable's rural agricultural districts involve strategies for documenting historic resources, using historic preservation techniques and working with farmers to support active agricultural use.

- Consider options for farm preservation as described in **Agricultural Landscapes** in the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.

-
- While two individual properties on French Street have been documented on MHC inventory forms, it may be useful to look at it as a larger area. Document historic resources of French Street on an MHC Area Form.
 - If French Street is determined eligible, consider listing it in the National Register.
 - Explore local historic district and neighborhood architectural conservation district options and weigh the interest of residents to determine best approach. Refer to **Village and Rural Neighborhood Character** in the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.

Mill Street Area

Mill Street is a short curving rural road less than ¼ mile long located northwest of the town center. It connects with Main Street at both ends. Joint Grass Brook runs parallel to and crosses under Mill Street and includes a pond that was associated with an early mill. There is also a one lane bridge over the brook that residents value as a distinctive historic feature. Properties along Mill Street include the Davis-Swallow Farm at 95 Mill Street, historically known as the Swallow House, which is a ca. 1825 Federal style building; 65 Mill Street a ca. 1935 Cape Cod style house and the Ferrari Farm at 67 Mill Street, historically known as the Read-Parkhurst House where town benefactor Sarah Roby was born. The 159-acre Ferrari Farm includes a Federal style house, late 19th century barn, hen house and agricultural landscape. The Ferrari house is in poor condition and the owner has been considering the possibility of demolishing it. Local residents and the Trust for Public Land have put together a proposal to preserve the house and adjacent landscape and are currently seeking funding. All three of the properties mentioned above have been documented on MHC inventory forms. The Ferrari Farm has been determined to be individually eligible for listing in the National Register.

Recommendations

The recommendations for all of Dunstable's rural agricultural districts involve strategies for documenting historic resources, using historic preservation techniques and working with farmers to support active agricultural use.

- Consider options for farm preservation. Refer to **Agricultural Landscapes** in General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.
- While three individual properties on Mill Street have been documented on MHC inventory forms, it may be useful to look at it as a larger area. Document historic resources of Mill Street on an MHC Area Form.
- If Mill Street is determined eligible, consider listing it in the National Register.
- Explore local historic district and neighborhood architectural conservation district options and weigh the interest of residents to determine best

approach. Refer to **Village and Rural Neighborhood Character** in the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.

Red Line

The Red Line is the former Nashua, Acton and Boston Railroad right-of-way that runs through the central part of Dunstable. It was incorporated in 1871 and ran from Nashua, NH to Acton. The corridor, which is privately owned, includes stone arched bridges and is valued because it connects important open space in the Mill Street area, particularly the Ferrari Farm. The Red Line continues south into Westford, which is hoping to develop it into a rail trail.

Recommendations

The Red Line represents an important opportunity for open space acquisition that would link other parcels in the northern part of town. The Conservation Commission, the Dunstable Rural Land Trust and the Trust for Public Land are logical partners in this work but they should also reach out to others who may be able to offer support, particularly the Historical Commission, which can identify historic resources along the route.

- Develop a coalition to explore options for acquisition of Red Line corridor.
- Work with other communities and the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments to develop a regional plan and to seek funding sources.

Salmon Brook Corridor

Salmon Brook flows north through the center of Dunstable with Massapoag Pond at its southern end. It is wide and meandering for most of its length, with wetlands and beaver ponds along the edges in some places. Salmon Brook is typical of many heritage landscapes in that it has both natural and cultural assets. It is valued as a water resource, as a scenic feature of the town, as open space and as wildlife habitat. These values led to its inclusion in the Petapawag Area of Critical Environmental Concern, which was established by the state in 2002. The corridor was probably used by Native Americans and was later dammed to provide a source of power for early mills.

Issues associated with Salmon Brook are typical of those that many streams in the Freedom's Way area face: water quality, impacts of development, invasive vegetation and public access. Solutions must also be multi-faceted. Acquisition of land along the brook for conservation purposes is an important strategy that must be used in combination with regulatory tools such as enforcement of wetlands and zoning regulations, and careful land stewardship. Also key to the future of the brook is cooperation among the many stakeholders: various town departments, non-profit organizations such as the Dunstable Rural Land Trust, abutters of the brook and others who use it. Much land along the brook has already been acquired. The northern section, particularly the east side, area is of particular concern to Dunstable residents as it is close to the town center and is highly visible with long distance view at Main Street and Pleasant Street.



Recommendations

Acquisition of land along Salmon Brook is a priority that is clearly articulated in the town's *Master Plan* and *Open Space and Recreation Plan*. The Conservation Commission and the Land Trust are the logical groups to take the lead in this effort.

- Develop prioritized land protection plan that employs a full range of conservation techniques including purchase, conservation and limited development. This effort will be most effective if it is undertaken as a partnership between the town and private conservation organizations.
- Consider whether a stewardship plan is needed for the Salmon Brook corridor.

Town Center

Dunstable's present town center developed after the Revolutionary War although many of the civic spaces and buildings date to the late 19th century. It is clustered around the intersection of Main Street and Pleasant Street. Westford Street is generally considered to mark the eastern end of the center and Highland Street the western end. Just past Highland Street marks the northern end of the town center while Pond Street marks the southern end. The major civic buildings (town hall, library and Swallow-Union School) are located along Main Street, while most of the commercial area is located along Pleasant Street. A distinctive characteristic of the center is that it is still quite rural with mill ponds, fields and barns visible behind the buildings that line Pleasant Street, giving the area an open quality with the countryside extending right into the town center.

Preserving the character of the town center has long been an important goal for Dunstable residents. The town has recently completed an important step in preparing a National Register nomination that thoroughly documents the historic resources of the area, as well as its present character and significance. The

nomination is currently awaiting review by the Massachusetts Historical Commission. However, while the National Register nomination is an important step, it does not provide permanent protection for the area.

There are several issues associated with Dunstable's downtown. One is preserving the historic fabric of the area – the houses, civic buildings, older commercial buildings, common, ponds and burying ground. This is a particular concern because of a proposed 40B project on Pleasant Street that would significantly alter the character of the area. Another concern is ensuring the economic vitality of the downtown area. A third concern is the impact of heavy traffic through the area on Route 113 and West Main Street.



Recommendations

Dunstable may wish to explore two strategies for providing specific protection for this area, one that would protect the historic character and the other that would preserve farming activities. This area would also be appropriate as a local historic district or neighborhood architectural conservation district, which is less restrictive than a local historic district. For additional information about **strategies for preserving villages and rural neighborhoods** see the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.

- Consider establishing a neighborhood architectural conservation district, which is less restrictive than a local historic district. For additional information about **neighborhood architectural conservation districts** and other strategies for preserving historic neighborhoods see the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.
- Develop design review criteria recommendations (if not regulatory) to help guide development, particularly commercial buildings, in the area.

CRITICAL CONCERNS

In addition to the priority landscapes listed in the previous section, residents also identified critical concerns related to heritage landscapes and community character. Critical concerns are townwide issues that are linked to a range or category of heritage landscapes, not to a particular place. 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.

Agricultural Landscapes (Including Barns)

As preservation of agricultural land is such a major concern in Dunstable, it is important for the town to address the issue comprehensively and to establish priorities. These will depend on the physical attributes of each farm; its economic viability; the wishes of the owner; and the importance of the farm to the community. For specific recommendations regarding **agricultural landscapes** see the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report. Some recommendations lead to the preservation of farming; others focus on ways in which to reduce the impact of development if there is no alternative to abandoning farming activities and selling the land.

Impacts of 40B projects

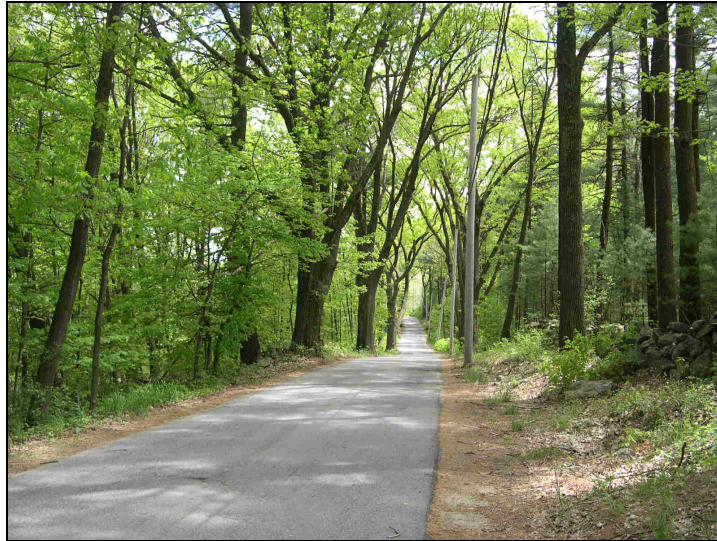
As in most towns in the region, the affordable housing quota in Dunstable has not been met. The state standard is that 10% of the housing stock must qualify in purchase price or rental cost as affordable to families at 80% of the area median income (AMI). This means that housing projects that exceed density and dimensional zoning requirements may be built with only minimal input from town boards. Farmland is most vulnerable to such development. The town has recently completed its affordable housing plan. The best option presently is to begin to implement the plan. Some towns have successfully purchased large parcels which then have been divided into open space and recreation land and a housing parcel on which a cluster 40B development may be constructed with a minimum of 25% of the housing units qualifying as affordable housing according to the state guidelines.

Scenic Roads and Views

Roads are the public face of Dunstable, the threads that tie the community together and the corridors from which the landscape is viewed. Dunstable has been fortunate to retain the traditional character of its rural roadways. Many still reflect their original alignment, width and corridor characteristics, with extant stone walls, farm fences and roadside trees. In most areas curb cuts remain limited, another important factor in retaining rural character. On many of Dunstable's secondary roads, traffic consists of local residents and speeds are low enough to permit use by farm vehicles. In addition to the road corridor itself, the view of adjacent open land from the roadway plays a critical role in defining rural character. In a Massachusetts landscape that has become largely

forested, distant views offer a sense of larger context and connectedness with the land. Dunstable is fortunate to have some of eastern Massachusetts most spectacular long distance views, especially those looking north from High Street towards Mount Monadnock.

Dunstable has a scenic road bylaw but it applies to a limited number of roads. The town may wish to consider adding additional roads. For additional information about **scenic roads** see the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report. Dunstable's rolling topography and open fields with views of distant hills are also highly valued by local residents who recognize that these borrowed views are fragile and difficult to protect.



EXISTING RESOURCE DOCUMENTATION AND PLANNING TOOLS

Dunstable already has important planning tools in place to document current conditions within the town; to identify issues of concern to town residents; and to develop strategies for action. This section of the Reconnaissance Report identifies some of the existing planning documents and tools that provide information relevant to the Heritage Landscape Inventory program.

Inventory of Historic and Archaeological 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, Dunstable's inventory documents about 150 historic resources ranging from 1700 to 1980. Many of the properties have been

documented on area forms, such as the East Main Street area and Dunstable Center, completed in preparation of National Register nominations.

Dunstable has two documented ancient Native American sites dating back to the Late Archaic Period (6,000-3,000 B.P.) and two documented historic archaeological sites. While this level of documentation exceeds some towns in the region, it is likely that there is significantly more archaeology potential in the town.

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. Dunstable has only one property that is currently listed in the National Register, Town Hall. However, there are NR district nominations pending for Dunstable Center and East Main Street. All National Register listings are automatically listed in the State Register. Town Hall also has a preservation restriction, drawn up in accordance with MGL Chapter 184, Sections 31-33, which run with the deed. A preservation restriction is one of the strongest preservation strategies available.

Planning Documents and Tools

In 1999 Dunstable completed its *Master Plan* which addresses a range of planning issues including land use, open space and resource protection, housing, economic development, transportation and community facilities. Dunstable's latest *Open Space and Recreation Plan*, which was completed in 2005, addresses many of the landscapes identified in the Heritage Landscape Identification meeting. The town has made significant progress on accomplishing many of the goals delineated in the 1999 *Master Plan*. These were goals were similar to those expressed by residents at the Heritage Lands Identification meeting. They include survey of historic sites and National Register nomination where appropriate; designation of local historic districts; protecting scenic vistas and providing better access to scenic sites; protecting the village center; establishing revision to subdivision regulations; preserving the historic integrity of town hall

Dunstable's zoning bylaw includes site plan review, cluster zoning and overlay districts. The town has adopted a six-month demolition delay bylaw and a scenic roads bylaw.

GENERAL PRESERVATION PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations pertaining to priority heritage landscapes can be found beginning on page 3. This section of the Reconnaissance Report offers more general recommendations relevant to preserving the character of the community that would be applicable to a wide range of community resources.

Dunstable's residents place high value on the community's strong sense of place, which is created by its varied natural features and land use patterns that make use of the fertile land. The town has already taken measures to document and evaluate 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 municipalities, Dunstable is facing multiple pressures for change that threaten land-based uses and natural resources, especially its remaining farming areas. Special places within the community that were once taken for granted are now more vulnerable than ever to change.

Preservation planning is a three-step process: **identification, evaluation and protection**. Four useful documents to consult before beginning to implement preservation strategies are:

- Department of Conservation and Recreation, *Reading the Land*
- Freedom's Way Heritage Association, *Feasibility Study*
- Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Survey Manual*
- Massachusetts Historical Commission, *Preservation through Bylaws and Ordinances*

Recommendations that apply to a broad range of resources are discussed below. These recommendations are listed in the 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, (3) protect.

Inventory of Heritage Landscapes

The vital first step in developing preservation strategies for heritage landscapes is to record information about the resources on MHC inventory forms. One cannot advocate for something unless one knows precisely what it is – the physical characteristics and the historical development. The resources discussed in this Reconnaissance Report that have not been documented should be included in the next inventory project. Thus, using the Massachusetts Historical Commission survey methodology:

- Compile a list of resources that are under-represented or not sufficiently documented, beginning with heritage landscapes.

-
- Document unprotected resources first, beginning with the most threatened resources.
 - Make sure to document secondary features on rural and residential properties, such as outbuildings, stone walls and landscape elements.
 - Record a wide range of historic resources including landscape features and industrial resources.
 - Conduct a community-wide archaeological reconnaissance survey to identify patterns of ancient Native American and historic occupation and to identify known and probable locations of archaeological resources associated with these patterns. Known and potential ancient Native American and historic archaeological sites should be documented in the field for evidence of their cultural association and/or integrity. All survey work should be completed by a professional archaeologist who meets the professional qualifications (950 CMR 70.01) outlined in the State Archaeologist Permit Regulations (950 CMR 70.00). The Inventory of Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth contains sensitive information about archaeological sites. The inventory is confidential; it is not a public record (G.L. c. 9, ss. 26A (1)). Care should be taken to keep archaeological site information in a secure location with restricted access. Refer to the MHC article "Community-Wide Archaeological Surveys" which appeared in the Preservation Advocate, Fall 2005 which can be found at the following MHC link:<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/pafall05.pdf>.

National Register Program

Survey work will require an evaluation as to whether resources meet the qualifications for National Register listing. Using the information generated in the survey work and the accompanying National Register evaluations, Dunstable should expand its National Register program to augment the one property (Town Hall) that is already listed and the two district nominations that are pending for Dunstable Center and East Main Street.

- 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 National Register nominations for other areas determined eligible in the town survey of historic resources.

Village and Rural Neighborhood 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. There are three traditional preservation strategies that have been effective in communities similar to

Dunstable: a demolition delay bylaw; a local historic district bylaw (in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 40C) and designation; and a neighborhood architectural conservation district bylaw and designation.

- **Demolition delay bylaws** provides a time period in which towns can explore alternatives to demolition. Dunstable has already enacted a six-month demolition delay bylaw. However many communities are finding that a one-year delay is more effective. A demolition delay bylaw requires a majority vote of Town Meeting.
- **Local historic districts**, adopted through a local initiative, recognize special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places are preserved and protected by the designation. These districts are the strongest form of protection for the preservation of historic resources. They are adopted by a 2/3 vote of Town Meeting and are administered by a district commission appointed by the Board of Selectmen. The Dunstable Center and East Main Street areas might benefit from a local historic district.
- **Neighborhood architectural conservation districts** also are local initiatives that recognize special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places are preserved and protected. They are less restrictive than local historic districts but still embrace neighborhood character. Neighborhood architectural conservation district designation is appropriate for neighborhoods that may have less integrity and where more flexibility is needed. The Dunstable Historical Commission should work with MHC staff to determine how a neighborhood conservation district could help to preserve Dunstable Center and residential neighborhoods.

Agricultural Landscapes

Preservation of agricultural landscapes means preservation of the farming activities, particularly in Dunstable where there are working farms but some are declining and their character is integral to the community's past. 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 recommendations lead to the preservation of farming; others focus on ways in which to reduce the impact of development if there is no alternative to abandoning farming activities and selling the land. Dunstable has already completed several important steps, establishing an Agricultural Commission and adopting a right-to-farm bylaw.

- Document additional farms that may not presently be included in Dunstable's inventory of historic resource, using MHC survey forms.
- Develop partnerships to 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 (PR).
- Amend the cluster bylaw to require a buffer between development and farmland.

Scenic Roads

Scenic roads are an integral part of the historic fabric of the community. They are highly valued by Dunstable residents and visitors alike. Roads must also accommodate modern transportation needs and decisions regarding roadways are often made with travel requirements as the only consideration. Dunstable already has a Scenic Roads Bylaw (MGL Chapter 40-15C). For roads designated under this bylaw, there is review and approval for 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. The preservation and protection of scenic roads therefore requires more than one approach.

- Complete an inventory with descriptions and photo documentation of each of the roads in Dunstable including the character-defining features that should be retained.
- Adopt design criteria to be considered when approving removal of trees and stone walls, such as a provision allowing only one driveway cut per property on scenic roads. Once adopted coordinate procedures between Highway Department and Planning Board.
- Consider a scenic overlay district which may provide a no-disturb buffer on private property bordering on scenic roads or adopt flexible zoning standards to protect certain views. Such bylaws could be written to apply to the numbered routes also, which are not protected under a scenic roads bylaw.
- 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 community 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, walking paths, posted speeds. A delicate balance is required.

Funding of Preservation Projects

Funding for preservation projects is an important aspect of implementing preservation strategies. Both the MHC and 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 Dunstable's heritage landscape inventory program, contact relevant agencies to determine whether funding is available.

Dunstable adopted the Community Preservation Act in 2006 with a 3% surcharge on each real estate tax bill. This will prove to be an excellent source of funding for many heritage landscape projects. In passing the CPA, Dunstable has realized the way in which the CPA fosters partnerships among historic preservationists, conservationists and affordable housing advocates. Many of the recommendations in this report could be funded with CPA money, including survey and National Register projects, cemetery preservation, preservation and conservation easements, and open space acquisition. Additional information about the CPA can be found at www.communitypreservation.org.

CONCLUSION

The Dunstable Reconnaissance Report is a critical tool in starting to identify the rich and diverse heritage landscapes in Dunstable and in beginning to think about preservation strategies. Dunstable will have to determine the best way to implement the recommendations discussed above. One approach that might help Dunstable begin the process is to form a Heritage Landscape Committee, as described in *Reading the Land*.

Landscapes identified in this report, especially the priority landscapes, will typically need further documentation on MHC inventory forms. That 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 among municipal boards and agencies, local non-profit organizations, and state agencies and commissions.

Distribution of this Reconnaissance Report to the municipal land use boards and commissions will assist in making this one of the planning documents that guides Dunstable in preserving important features of the community's character. The recommended tasks will require cooperation and coordination among boards and commissions, particularly Dunstable's Historical Commission, Planning Board, Conservation Commission and the Dunstable Rural Land Trust. It also is advisable to present this information to the Board of Selectmen, who is the applicant to the Heritage Landscape Inventory program on behalf of the town. Finally distribution of the report to the Historical Commission, neighborhood associations and any other preservation minded organizations will broaden the audience and assist in gathering interest and support for Dunstable's heritage landscapes.

APPENDIX: HERITAGE LANDSCAPES IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY

This list was generated by local participants at the Heritage Landscape Identification meeting held in Dunstable on May 16, 2006 and the follow-up fieldwork on May 23, 2006. **There are undoubtedly other heritage landscapes that were not identified at the HLI meeting noted above.** The chart has two columns, the names and locations of resources are in the first; notes about resources are in the second. Landscapes are grouped by land use category. Abbreviations used are listed below.

ACEC = Area of Critical Environmental Concern APR = Agricultural Preservation Restriction
 CR = Conservation Restriction * = Priority Landscape
 NR = Individually listed in National Register PR = Preservation Restriction
 + = Part of a Priority Landscape

Agriculture	
<i>Cow Passes</i>	Three in town, one on the Nashua River Rail Trail, one near Camp Massapoag and one on Red Line Trail.
<i>Ferrari Farm + Mill Street</i>	Part of Mill Street priority landscape. Ferrari farmhouse is in poor condition. The Trust for Public Land is currently working with the town to acquire this property.
<i>Gardner Farm Hollis Street</i>	APR. Located in northwest corner of town.
<i>High Street Farm High Street</i>	APR. Also known as Kennedy Farm. Located in north central part of town.
<i>Idylewilde Barn Forrest Street</i>	Was originally a carriage shed.
<i>J. Larter Farm + East Main Street</i>	130 acres, APR. Windmill, barn and fields. Very scenic. Part of East Main Street Gateway priority landscape. House was moved here from Hollis, NH.
<i>J. Simmons Farm Main/Depot Sts.</i>	Raises flowers, very visible in town.
<i>Kennedy Farm High Street</i>	APR. 83 acres. Located in north central part of town.
<i>McGovern Farm + French Street</i>	Part of French Street priority landscape, also East Main Street gateway priority landscape and town center. Very visible.
<i>“Meadow across from Bill”</i>	Field has APR, also barn which is not in APR.
<i>Mill Street Farm + Mill Street</i>	Scenic area in western part of town that was identified as a priority landscape

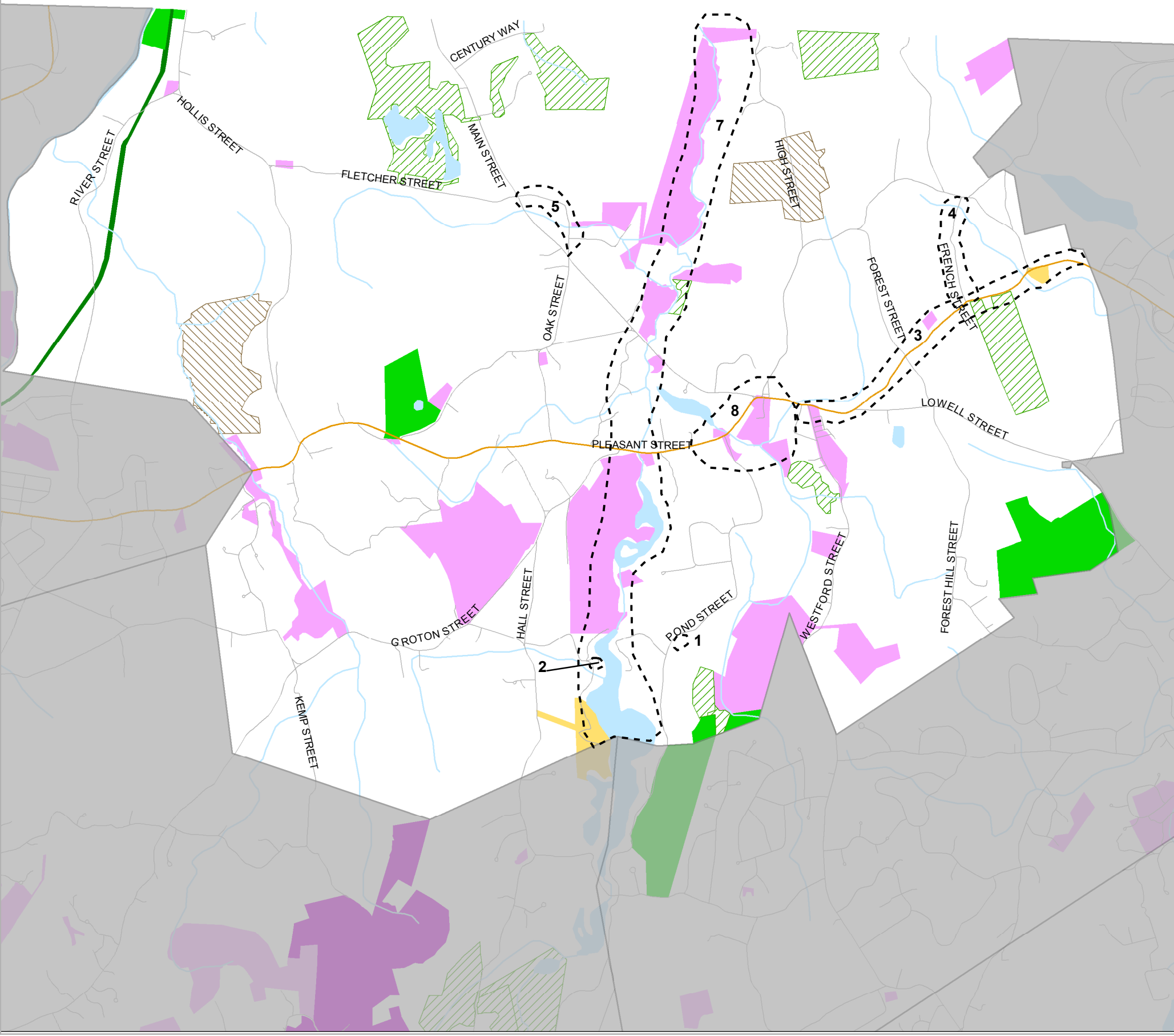
Thompson Farm + 31 Pleasant Street	Part of town center priority landscape.
Tully Farm Hollis and Fletcher Streets	One of two active dairy farms in town.
Archaeological	
Mill Ruins Various Locations	Gristmill, sawmill and ice house ruins at Mill Pond and Massapoag Pond.
Burial Grounds and Cemeteries	
Blood Cemetery River/Hollis Sts.	Town-owned, .25 acres.
Central Cemetery + Main Street	Town-owned, 23 acres. Part of East Main Street priority landscape.
Meeting House Hill Cemetery + Main Street	Town-owned, .5 acres. Part of East Main Street priority landscape.
Rideout Cemetery Fletcher Street	Small town-owned cemetery west of town, .5 acres.
Swallow Cemetery Brook Street	Town-owned, .25 acres. On Davis land.
Center/Civic	
Town Center *	NR pending. Including town hall, Congregational Church, Swallow-Union School, town common, watering trough, bandstand.
Town Common +	NR pending. Part of town center priority landscape.
Town Hall + 511 Main Street	NRIND, PR. Brick Victorian building, 1907. Recently rehabbed.
Town Pound + East Main Street	Adjacent to Tyngsborough-Dunstable Historical Society.

Industrial	
<i>Quarries</i>	Horse Hill and Flat Rock Hill. No longer active.
<i>Transfer Station</i>	Town institution, place for exchanging information. Landfill is now capped.
<i>Woodward's Pond Dam</i> Pleasant Street	Site of old saw and gristmill, as well as ice house in later years.
Institutional	
<i>Camp Massapoag *</i> Hall St.	Ca. 1919 YMCA camp on Massapoag Pond. Large parcel of land with pond frontage.
<i>Congregational Church +</i>	NR pending. In town center.
<i>Schoolhouses</i>	Two of the five one-room schoolhouses are still in use. One was converted to a home, the other is used by the Highway Department for storage.
<i>Union School +</i>	NR pending. In town center across from town hall.
<i>Winslow Schoolhouse +</i> East Main Street	The Sara Tyng Winslow School, moved from Tyngsborough in 1968, is now home to the Historical Society and is part of East Main Street gateway priority landscape.
Miscellaneous	
<i>Hardman Botanical Garden</i>	Private.
Natural	
<i>Forest Hill</i>	Highest hill in town. Great views from top.
<i>Hangman Trees</i>	Two large oaks with horizontal branches that extend out over the roadway. One is on Main Street, the other is on Thorndike Street.
<i>Hound Meadow Hill</i>	There were views to Hollis, NH at one time but area is now more overgrown.
<i>Nuttings Hill</i>	Views.
<i>Pound Meadow Hill</i>	

Open Space/Parks	
<i>Dunstable Rural Land Trust Property</i>	Land trust has extensive holdings in Dunstable and is an important land steward.
<i>Equestrian Trails</i>	Trails throughout the town operate primarily on an informal basis.
<i>Hauk Swamp Conservation Area</i>	Favorite blueberry picking area. Circular.
<i>Larter Field</i>	Recreation facility.
<i>Mill Street Area</i> *	Important rural landscape, includes Davis Swallow Farm, Ferrari Farm, one lane bridge.
<i>Old Town Fields</i> +	In town center behind police station.
<i>Skytop</i> North Main Street	Former ski area on Blanchard Hill.
<i>Spaulding Proctor Conservation Area</i>	
<i>Swallow Union School Fields</i>	
<i>Town Forest</i> Groton Street	
<i>Union School Fields</i> +	Part of town center priority landscape.
Residential	
<i>Blodgett House and Land</i> * Pond Street	House is ca. 1726. Garrison house site.
<i>Elm Haven</i>	Historic house.
<i>Kendall Tavern</i> + 427 Main Street	Built ca 1730, later used as a tavern. One of the oldest houses in Dunstable. In town center priority landscape. Very close to road.
<i>Steele-Flannagan House and View</i> Westford Road	The John Steele House was built in ca. 1740.

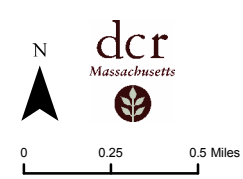
Transportation	
<i>East Main Street Gateway *</i>	Route 113/Main Street from the Tyngsborough line to the town center is a primary access point into Dunstable. Gateway landscape. Town center to Tyngsborough. Very scenic, gateway to Dunstable. Being nominated as historic district (road, farms, historic buildings). Vulnerable to widening.
<i>Forest Street</i>	View from top is spectacular.
<i>French Street Area *</i>	Priority landscape, scenic rural area in eastern part of town.
<i>High Street</i>	Extends north from town center along a ridge. Much of the frontage remains in agricultural use and on clear days there are long distance views to Mount Monadnock.
<i>Mill Street +</i>	Part of Mill Street Area priority landscape.
<i>Nashua River Rail Trail</i>	Built on former Hollis branch of the Boston and Maine Railroad. Rail trail travels 11 miles through Ayer, Groton, Pepperell and Dunstable. It is a 10-foot wide paved surface for the entire length, with a five-foot wide gravel equestrian path for seven miles of the trail.
<i>Red Line *</i>	Including two stone arch railroad bridges in the woods. Privately owned.
<i>Thorndike Street</i>	From Route 113 to Hardy Street, natural, retains rural character.
<i>Westford Street</i>	Views of Steele-Flanagan house, now somewhat overgrown.
Waterbodies	
<i>Black Brook</i>	Greenway along the brook is in initial stages. South of town center. Adjacent swampy area, beavers.
<i>Joint Grass Brook</i>	Meandering river in western part of town with wetlands and beaver dam.
<i>Massapoag Pond</i>	Popular swimming area in southern part of town but with no public access in Dunstable. Was used by Native Americans.
<i>Nashua River</i>	Forms western boundary of Dunstable. Not very visible in town. Water quality is improving. Included in Petapawag ACEC which also covers much of the western part of town.
<i>Salmon Brook Corridor *</i>	Salmon Brook, a tributary of the Nashua, runs north-south through the center of town. Salmon Brook Greenway is about half complete, with about five miles of stream bank in conservation land.
<i>Unkety Brook</i>	Meandering brook in western part of town. Greenway along the brook is in initial stages.
<i>Woodward's Pond +</i>	In town center. Was site of 19 th century industry, dam and sawmill.

DUNSTABLE OPENSOURCE & HISTORIC RESOURCES



Note: Default Legend, all categories may not appear on the map.

DCR	Municipal	Agricultural Preservation Restriction	Interstate
DCRS/DFG	Federal	CR/APR Combination	State
DFG	Land Trust	Other Legal Interest	Local Road
Other State	Non-Profit	State Historic Resources	Rivers and Streams
County	Conservation Restriction		Lakes and Ponds



Dunstable Priority Landscapes

1. Blodgett House and Land
2. Camp Massapoag
3. East Main Street Gateway
4. French Street Area
5. Mill Street Area
6. Red Line Corridor (not mapped)
7. Salmon Brook Corridor
8. Town Center