

HARVARD 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 Coordinator

Laura Andrews

Local Heritage Landscape Participants

Laura Andrews
Maud Ayson
Meg Bagdonas, FWHA
Karen Butterfield
Robin Carlan-Calderwood
Milly Chandler, FWHA
Steve Colwell
Marge Darby, FWHA
Marcia Day
Pam Durrant
Susan Frechette
Angela Gaffney
Jeffrey Harris
David Kay
Bruce Leicher
Ian Meisner
Mort Miller
Ruth Miller
Nils Nordberg
Victor Normand
Russell Shappy

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Cover Photographs

View from Prospect Hill
Shaker House
General Store

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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. The final product is this Reconnaissance Report, prepared for each participating community. It outlines the history of the community; discusses planning issues identified by meeting participants; lists planning tools available in the community; and concludes with preservation recommendations. A chart of the heritage landscapes identified by the community is included in the Appendix. While all of the other communities participating in the FWHA landscape inventory identified priority landscapes, Harvard chose not to single out specific areas but opted instead to focus on community-wide concerns.

HARVARD HISTORY

The Native American history of Harvard dates back to the Late Archaic Period (6,000-3,000 B.P.) with confirmed sites from this period through the Middle Woodland Period (2,000-1,000 B.P.). The land along the Nashua River made good campsites with hunting and fishing nearby. During the Contact Period (1500-1620) the Nashaway occupied the Harvard area. They burned the land to keep it open, which made it attractive to European settlers who arrived in the late 17th century.

Harvard was incorporated as a town in 1732 with a population of 325. The town common and burial ground were established soon after. The early economy was largely agricultural, with a pattern of small, scattered farms that raised primarily sheep, cattle and grains. Harvard prospered after the Revolutionary War, with larger farms, improved machinery and crops. As the population increased, existing roads were improved and new ones laid out. New farmsteads were added as families subdivided their farms. By the middle of the 19th century, this gradual process had transformed the town, creating an open landscape of cleared hillsides and broad vistas dramatically different from what exists today. Agriculture remained the major livelihood of Harvard's citizens well into the 20th century.

Three villages emerged in Harvard with Harvard Center as the initial civic center of the community with a focal town common. Still River was an agricultural village formed as a linear settlement along the ridge overlooking the Nashua River. The Shaker colony in the northeast part of town remained active throughout the 19th century, reaching its peak population during the middle of that century.

In 1846, the Worcester-Nashua Railroad began service with stations in Still River and near Harvard Center. This early rail connection contributed to Harvard's continued prosperity, linking farmers to a range of markets. In response farmers shifted their farm production to crops for the urban market, especially dairy farming with butter and milk delivered by rail. By the mid-19th century Harvard was also heavily involved in apple production, which continues today. Industry in Harvard remained small scale. There were three mill areas: one along Old Mill Road in northwest Harvard (now Devens); one along Nonacoicus Brook just north of Harvard Center near the town dump (parts of the race are still visible here); and the shake mill on Sherry Road.

In the late 19th and early 20th century Harvard was a rural retreat that attracted influential individuals, many with unusual ideas, such as Bronson Alcott, Clara Endicott Sears and Fiske Warren. Others came to Harvard in summer, building their summer homes around the Common. Those of more modest means initially stayed with local families and later bought or built summer cottages on the shores or islands of Bare Hill Pond.

Fiske Warren's experiment was actually a form of socialism, in that he felt that land belonged to the community and only the improvements on the land (houses)

could be individually owned. Many people subscribed to this theory and moved to Harvard to be part of the enclaves which were part of a world-wide movement. The idea attracted an unusual collection of residents willing to experiment in life-style and land ownership arrangements. Since so much acreage was included in the enclaves the result was an unusual long-term protection of the landscape. Although the enclaves no longer exist, the sense of community they engendered still lingers.

During World War I the federal government established Camp Devens, later known as Fort Devens, located along the Nashua River in northwest Harvard. Harvard University established an observatory in 1932. The biggest 20th century changes were brought about by the construction of Route 2 in 1950 and Route 495 in the 1960s. In this same period, the largest growth in housing units occurred in sync with the improvement of access to Harvard through highway construction. Between 1945 and 2000 the number of Harvard residents quintupled, reaching a current total of about 6,000.

CRITICAL CONCERNS

Harvard's Heritage Landscape Identification meeting, attended by approximately 20 residents, some representing town boards and local non-profit organizations, was held on May 10, 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 representative landscapes to be visited by the consulting team during the fieldwork.

Unlike other communities that chose to identify specific priority landscapes, Harvard residents were emphatic that the character of their town was defined by the whole town, not by isolated areas. Instead, participants identified a series of critical concerns related to heritage landscapes and community character. These are town-wide issues that are linked to a group or category of heritage landscapes, not to a particular place. They are listed 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.

Agricultural Landscapes

Farming has formed the core of Harvard's economy since the town was founded in 1732 and the presence of agriculture remains central to the town's identity. Orchard covered hills, open fields with livestock grazing, farmstands, fresh picked fruit and vegetables are all part of the experience of living in Harvard. Its farms and orchards constitute its most valued and its most vulnerable resources. Apples are the primary crop, with three large orchards in town, but there are also several specialty farms that engage in market gardening or raise small livestock, such as sheep.

The 1997 report *Planning for Harvard's Rural Landscapes* listed agriculture as one of four key elements that define the rural character of the community. The town's *Master Plan* also emphasizes that preservation of farms, including farming activities, is critical to the rural character of the town. Although some of Harvard's agricultural land is permanently protected through agricultural preservation restrictions, there are many acres that are unprotected and vulnerable to development. For information about preserving these heritage landscapes, refer to **Agricultural Land** in the General Preservation Planning Recommendations.

Dark Sky

Harvard is one of several communities in the Freedom's Way area that mentioned the importance of moderating light pollution at night. This is a particular concern to Harvard residents for two reasons. One is the presence of the Harvard Smithsonian Observatory, which requires a dark sky for maximum effectiveness of the telescope. The other is a large correctional facility to the west of Harvard in Shirley that emanates a bright orange glow from its sodium vapor lights in an otherwise dark and rural area. Interest in reducing nighttime light pollution is known as the dark sky initiative, a national movement that began in the late 1980s to protect the nighttime environment. Goals are to reduce the adverse effect of artificial light including sky glow, glare, light trespass, light clutter, decreased visibility at night and energy waste. This requires partnerships with adjoining communities as often the light pollution comes from afar. Closing of some of the experiments at the observatory is in large part the result of increased ambient light.

Devens

A substantial area in the northwest corner of Harvard became Fort Devens in 1917 and was administered by the US government for many years until the fort was decommissioned in 1996. The former Fort Devens, which is located in Ayer, Lancaster and Shirley as well as Harvard, is now administered by the Devens Enterprise Commission. Devens poses a challenge for the Harvard because it was historically part of the community but has always been set apart with much of the area inaccessible to Harvard residents until recently. Each of the communities will soon be voting about future jurisdiction of the Devens area.

Historic Resources

Planning for Harvard's Rural Landscapes listed historic resources as another of the four key elements that define the rural character of the community. Harvard's buildings are readily recognizable and have long been a source of community pride. Historic houses are particularly valued and are generally well-preserved, especially those located in the villages. Barns, outbuildings, mill sites and other historical and archaeological remains may be more threatened because many no longer serve a current need. Historic landscapes and archaeological resources are usually less well documented and are often more difficult to protect.

Specific issues identified in the Heritage Landscape identification meeting included concern that small houses are being torn down and replaced by larger houses; that barns and outbuildings, like the old barn and shoemaker shop at the Firefly Farm/Coolidge property, are particularly vulnerable to demolition; and that taller tree lines and tall fences on private property block the public view of some of Harvard's finest historic properties and landscapes. For information about dealing with some of these concerns, refer to **Inventory of Heritage Landscapes** and **Village and Neighborhood Character** in the General Preservation Planning Recommendations.



Open Space Linkage

Harvard already has extensive conservation land and open space. Some of it is town-owned; some belongs to organizations such as the Harvard Conservation Trust; and other parcels are in private or institutional ownership. Many of Harvard's large natural areas are regional landscapes shared by several communities and administered by state and federal government agencies. These include Bolton Flats Wildlife Management Area, Delaney Wildlife Management Area, Devens and the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge.

A key goal cited in Harvard's *Open Space and Recreation Plan* is to give priority to proposed conservation acquisitions that create linkage among parcels. This will often require partnerships between various organizations for initial acquisition or protection and for land stewardship. In setting these priorities, there are challenges as some parcels are intertwined; some boundaries are visually indistinguishable; and stewardship of one parcel often impacts another, particularly in wet or agricultural areas.

Scenic Roads and Community Gateways

Harvard residents place very high value on their scenic roads. *Planning for Harvard's Rural Landscapes* listed the view from the road as another of the four key elements that define the rural character of the community. It identified roads as the "public face of Harvard, the threads that tie the town together and the

corridors from which the landscape is viewed.” Important characteristics of Harvard’s roads include their alignment, width and corridor characteristics, with stone walls, farm fences and roadside trees. In addition to the road corridor, the view of land on each side of the roadway plays a critical role in shaping the overall experience of traveling along Harvard’s roads. Residents also expressed concern that the town is becoming less pedestrian friendly.

Harvard residents emphasized the importance of gateways to the community characterized by places on main routes leading to and from Harvard that help define the special character of the town. Many people arrive in Harvard via Route 2, making the transition from a busy commuter route to a rural community as they turn south onto Ayer Road, where the open fields and clustered buildings of the Hazel Farm provide a welcome relief. Similarly, the approach along Massachusetts Avenue from the east provides scenic views of fields, orchards, farm stands and historic buildings as one enters Harvard heading west to Harvard Center. Still River Road is another important gateway for those entering Harvard from the southwest. Each of these gateways contributes to the strong sense of place that characterizes Harvard and emphasizes the importance that the view from the road can contribute to community character. For information about preservation of these aspects, refer to **Scenic Roads** in the General Preservation Planning Recommendations.



Special Trees

In addition to the general pattern of forests and open fields that are essential parts of Harvard’s character, Harvard residents noted the importance of specific trees within the community either for their physical characteristics, prominent location or historical associations. These include elm trees in Harvard Center, the oak tree at Codman Hill and Stow Roads, the whipping tree (sycamore) in front of the Pollard House in Still River and the old growth hemlock forest around Bare Hill Pond. In addition, residents noted the decline of several species such as hemlock and white ash. There are some state programs that help communities protect special trees. They are administered by DCR and address planting, protection and maintenance of public trees. Additional information can be found at:

<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/forestry/urban/urbanGrants.htm> and
<http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/histland/publications.htm>.

Views

Views are an essential part of Harvard's community character, especially views from Harvard's scenic roads. As noted above, the roads and the views were featured prominently in the 1997 plan and were highlighted again in the Heritage Landscape meeting. Generally views fall into two categories, those that lie within Harvard and those that are regional in scale. Important views within Harvard include the following:

- Prospect Hill Road at the overlook above the Pergolas and at Fruitlands (This is significant for Harvard and the region.)
- Littleton County Road pastures and horse farms
- Corner of Slough Hill and Woodchuck Hill
- From the overlook below Hildreth House (high tree line)
- Along Bowers Brook
- Heading north along Littleton Road
- From Old Bromfield (partially overgrown)
- From West Bare Hill Road going west out of the woods
- From Dean's Hill
- To and from Bare Hill Pond
- From Ayer Road by the Town Hall looking northeast
- Williams Farm

Regional views involve more than one community. Some examples are:

- East to Boston from Woodchuck Hill Road and from Slough Road
- From Prospect Hill to Wachusett Mountain and Mount Monadnock
- Of the Nashua River and associated wetlands
- From Saint Benedict's Abbey complex to Wachusett Mountain and Mount Monadnock

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- From Still River Road over the Oxbow to Wachusett Mountain and Mount Monadnock

Views within Harvard are less tangible aspects of community character that should be documented in more detail and integrated into town planning documents and priorities. Many are associated with scenic roads. Harvard has less direct influence over regional landscapes. Coordination with the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission and adjacent towns is necessary to: articulate the value of these regional views; identify factors influencing regional views; and develop strategies to address them.

Residents also identified several regional landscapes where change has already occurred. The view west towards the Nashua River was a particular concern because the prison, MCI-Shirley, is already highly visible, particularly at night. Additional large-scale development on the Harvard portion of Devens is proposed that will further impact the view west from Prospect Hill. The old Pitkin Orchard off Old Littleton Road was once identified by 1000 Friends of Massachusetts because it had such a magnificent view of Wachusett Mountain. An attempt to keep the tree line low has failed since ownership has changed.

A related view issue is the future of the South Post of Devens, still under military ownership, but could be acquired by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. This agreement is neither permanent nor binding, leaving the future of a major section of the former Fort Devens still in question. This too will greatly affect the Prospect Hill viewshed. Also related to the issue of long distance views towards Boston, Wachusett Mountain and Mt. Monadnock is the issue of air quality, which, when poor, limits long distance views due to smog.

Village Centers

The fundamental character of Harvard's historic landscape is defined by the contrast between its three compact village centers and the outlying agricultural landscapes. Harvard Center, the largest and best known village, is the core of the community. The town common is at its center, surrounded by civic buildings such as the town hall and library, as well as several churches and the town's oldest cemetery. There are also numerous handsome well-kept houses, most dating from the late 18th to the late 19th century. Nearly all commercial activity in the center has folded for economic reasons over the past 35-40 years except for the village store which is visually important but struggles to survive. Harvard Center is a local historic district and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places. Lack of commercial activity in town is one concern.

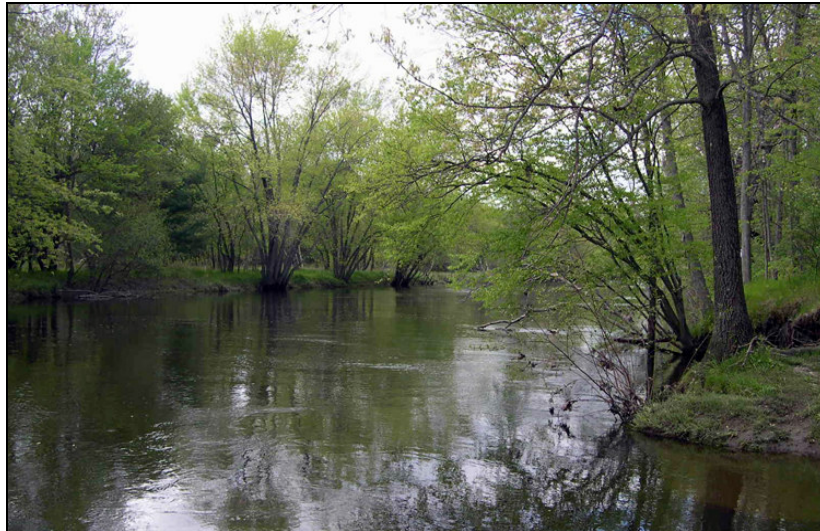
Still River, located in the southwestern part of town, is a linear village extending along Still River Road. It retains early residential buildings and also more of its agricultural character, with farms and outbuildings still prominent. Also noteworthy is the presence of the St. Benedict's Abbey complex, a large religious institution with extensive land holdings. Many of Still River's historic resources have been documented on MHC inventory forms but unlike Harvard Center it is not listed in the National Register and is not in a local historic district, thus it is

vulnerable to change that may not be compatible with the historic character of the village.

Shaker Village, located in the northeastern part of town, was home to Harvard's Shaker community from the late 18th century to the early 20th century. It is an unusually well-preserved religious village that extends along Shaker and South Shaker Roads. It includes a collection of buildings, structures and land use patterns that reflect the careful craftsmanship and skilled design work that the Shaker community was known for. The Shaker Cemetery and Holy Hill worship grounds also form important parts of the village. Shaker Village is valued by its residents and has been supported by the town through purchase of conservation land in the area. It is a local historic district and is listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

Waterways

In addition to the Nashua River, which forms the western boundary of Harvard, there are a number of small streams. Bowers Brook, which was the site of much of Harvard's early industry, runs north/south through the center of town, joining with Nonacoicus Brook in the northern part of town. Bare Hill Pond, which was identified as one of Harvard's five special places in *Planning for Harvard's Rural Landscape*, is the largest pond in Harvard. Bowers Brook is the main brook that runs north/south through Harvard. It is joined by Noncoicus Brook at the northern end of town. There are several former mill ponds along these two streams as well as in other locations throughout town.



EXISTING RESOURCE DOCUMENTATION AND PLANNING TOOLS

Harvard already has important planning tools in place to document current conditions within the town; identify issues of concern to town residents; and develop strategies for action. This section of the Reconnaissance Report identifies 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>.

Harvard has an inventory of approximately 500 historic properties that includes buildings, structures, sites, areas and objects dating from 1685 to 1993. Community members started the inventory in the 1970s and '80s, but the most recent inventory forms were completed by a preservation professional in the 1990s as part of a more systematic survey.

Harvard has 23 documented ancient Native American sites dating back to the Late Archaic Period (6,000-3,000 B.P.) and 63 documented historic archaeological sites. This level of documentation exceeds many towns in the region due to the richness of the Nashua River region. Recent excavations at Fruitlands by Curator Mike Volmar and others should yield additional information.

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.

Harvard has only three properties that are individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places: Fruitlands Museums (which is also a National Historic Landmark), Still River Baptist Church and the Fiske Warren House, now part of St Benedict's Abbey. There are four National Register Districts: Vicksburg Square at Fort Devens, Fruitlands, Harvard Center and Shaker Village. Harvard has two local historic districts, Harvard Center and Shaker Village.

Harvard also has four properties with preservation restrictions, filed under the state statute, M.G.L. Chapter 184, Sections 31-33: Fruitlands, Still River Baptist Church, Orsamus Willard-Watt House and the Shaker Stone Barn, which includes 1.5 acres of land. Preservation restrictions (PR) run with the deeds and are one of the strongest preservation strategies available. All National Register

listings, local historic districts listings and properties that have preservation restrictions are automatically listed in the State Register.

Preservation Planning Documents and Tools

In 1997 Harvard's Rural Historic Landscape Committee completed a report entitled *Planning for Harvard's Rural Landscape: Case Studies in Historic Conservation* which in many ways was a prototype for the current Heritage Landscape Inventory. It identified four elements that have shaped Harvard's community character: settlement patterns, agriculture, the view from the road and historic resources. It also identified five special places in Harvard: Harvard Center, Still River/Prospect Hill, Shaker Village, Oak Hill and Bare Hill Pond. The report provided suggestions for rural protection strategies.

Harvard's 2002 *Master Plan* concurred with the 1997 report and offered more detailed recommendations for many aspects of the community including land use, open, space and agricultural preservation. It also recommended that Harvard adopt the same culture of stewardship toward historic preservation that it has applied to open space protection. Harvard's current *Open Space and Recreation Plan*, prepared in 2003, focuses on protecting water resources, development of a conservation greenway and preservation of wildlife habitat.

Harvard has a scenic-roads bylaw, enacted in 1974, that includes most of Harvard's roads. It also has a wetlands protection bylaw and in 2001 adopted the Community Preservation Act with a 1.1 percent surcharge on real estate taxes; the proceeds must be used for historic preservation, open space and affordable housing. Many of the recommendations included in this Reconnaissance Report could be funded with CPA money. CPA money has already been used for preservation of back rooms at Town Hall, the exterior of Hildreth House and for a study of the Shaker Drying Shed.

In the northwest part of Harvard, 250 acres are within the Squannassit Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and 1,850 are within the Central Nashua River Valley ACEC as part of the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge which has land in adjacent communities as well.

GENERAL PRESERVATION PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

This section of the Reconnaissance Report offers general recommendations relevant to preserving the overall character of the community that would be applicable to a wide range of community resources.

Harvard's varied natural features played a critical role in the settlement and historical development of the community and remain among the town's most important assets. Harvard is also fortunate to have an unusually rich and well-documented collection of historic resources. The town has taken important steps to preserve its most significant buildings and natural areas by establishing land use regulations that support community goals articulated in the town's planning documents. Harvard is now looking beyond these resources to the other natural

and cultural assets that define the overall fabric of the community. Like most municipalities, Harvard is under intense pressure for development. Special places 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. The 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. While Harvard has done extensive inventory of its historic buildings and has documented some other types of resources, there are important categories of resources that remain undocumented. These include farm outbuildings, roadbeds, stone wall networks, cellar holes, small bridges and early archaeological sites, including Native American sites as well as 17th and 18th century sites. Thus, using the Massachusetts Historical Commission survey methodology, the Harvard Historical Commission should:

- Compile a list of resources that are under-represented or not sufficiently documented.
- Document unprotected resources first, beginning with the most threatened resources.
- Document secondary features on rural, agricultural and residential properties, such as barns, 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

Harvard has relatively few National Register listings for a community with such rich historic resources and many of the nominations were completed some time ago. Other properties have been determined eligible but have not been nominated. Additional resources should be evaluated for potential eligibility. The Harvard Historical Commission should:

- Develop a National Register listing plan taking into consideration a property’s integrity and vulnerability. Properties that are in need of recognition and preservation should be given highest priority for listing.



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. Harvard has adopted one of three

traditional preservation strategies: a local historic district bylaw. The other two strategies are a demolition delay bylaw and a neighborhood architectural conservation district bylaw.

- **Demolition delay bylaws** provide a time period in which towns can consider alternatives to demolition. The Harvard Historical Commission should work with MHC staff to develop a bylaw that would best suit Harvard's needs and should work with other town groups to publicize the advantages of a demolition delay bylaw to the community. Many demolition delay bylaws apply to structures that were built more than 50 years ago. The most common delay of demolition is six months; 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. As Harvard knows, local historic district designation and regulation is the strongest form of protection for the preservation of historic resources. The two existing districts and bylaw were adopted by a two-thirds vote of Town Meeting in 1972 and amended in 1973. A district commission appointed by the Board of Selectmen administers the historic districts. As the districts are more than 30 years old, Harvard may wish to review documentation and regulations for these districts, as well as considering additional districts.
- **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 residential neighborhoods that may have less integrity and where more flexibility is needed.



Agricultural Preservation

Preservation of agricultural landscapes means preservation of the farming activities, particularly in Harvard where the character of farms 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 their preservation. Harvard established an agricultural commission and adopted a right-to-farm bylaw at town Meeting in March 2006. These are two important steps towards supporting Harvard's farmers and farming activities. Other preservation tools are available that can assist communities in preserving farming activities.

- Document additional farms that may not presently be included in Harvard's inventory of historic resources, or update forms that focus solely on the farmhouse. Use MHC area forms to convey the historical development of the entire farm.
- Develop public-private partnerships to raise funds to purchase development rights on farms or to assist an owner in the restoration of historic farm buildings (for which the owner would be required to donate a preservation restriction (PR)).
- Continue public-private partnerships to preserve farmland through purchase of conservation restrictions (CRs) or agricultural preservation restrictions (APRs). CPA funding may be used.
- Establish agricultural overlay districts as identified in the *Master Plan*.

Scenic Roads

Scenic roads are an integral part of the historic fabric of the community. They are highly valued by Harvard residents and visitors alike and were listed as a critical concern. Roads must also accommodate modern transportation needs and decisions regarding roadways are often made with travel requirements as the only consideration. Yet, in addition to roadway issues, much of what we value about scenic roads – 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.

- Since Harvard's Scenic Roads Bylaw was established in 1974, Harvard may wish to complete an updated scenic road inventory with descriptions and photo documentation of each of the roads in Harvard, including the character-defining features.
- Update Scenic Roads Bylaw to include design criteria to be considered when approving removal of trees and stonewalls. Consider adding design criteria, such as a provision allowing only one driveway cut per property on scenic roads. Coordinate procedures between Public Works Department and Planning Board.

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- Consider a scenic overlay district that 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 the Scenic Roads Bylaw.
 - Develop policies and implementation standards for road maintenance and reconstruction, including bridge reconstructions that 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 Public Works 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.
 - Develop an educational program for residents and school children explaining the value and importance of stone walls. Theft of stone walls is occurring with greater regularity as the price of stone rises.



Funding of Preservation Projects

Funding for preservation projects is an important aspect of implementing preservation strategies. Both the MHC and DCR have funding programs to assist communities in preservation related issues. The town should investigate which of the following programs are currently funded:

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

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- 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 Harvard's heritage landscape inventory program, contact relevant agencies to determine whether funding is available.

Harvard has adopted the **Community Preservation Act (CPA)** and is aware of the number and types of projects that are benefiting from this funding source across the Commonwealth. Harvard projects eligible for CPA funding could include MHC inventory, National Register nominations, cemetery preservation, open space acquisition, preservation or conservation restriction purchase and preservation/restoration of public buildings. The Community Preservation Committee will need help prioritizing requests.

Towns, like Harvard that have a local historic district bylaw may apply for **Certified Local Government (CLG)** status which is granted by the National Park Service (NPS) through the MHC. At least 10% of the MHC's yearly federal funding allocation is distributed to CLG communities through Survey and Planning matching grants. To become a CLG, the town completes an application; after being accepted as a CLG, it files a report yearly on the status of applications, meetings, and decisions; in return the town may apply for the matching grant funding that the MHC awards competitively to CLGs annually. Presently 18 cities and towns are CLGs in Massachusetts.

CONCLUSION

The Harvard Reconnaissance Report is a critical tool in starting to identify the rich and diverse heritage landscapes in Harvard and in beginning to think about preservation strategies. Harvard will have to determine the best way to implement the recommendations discussed above. One approach that might help Harvard 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. 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 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 help make this one of the planning documents that guides Harvard in preserving important features of the community's character. The recommended tasks will require cooperation and coordination among boards and

commissions, particularly Harvard's Historical Commission, Planning Board and the Conservation Commission. It also is advisable to present this information to the Selectmen, who were the applicants to the Heritage Landscape Inventory program on behalf of the town. Finally, distribution of the report to the Harvard Conservation Trust, Historical Society, neighborhood associations, and other preservation minded organizations will broaden the audience and assist in gathering interest and support for Harvard's heritage landscapes.

APPENDIX: HERITAGE LANDSCAPES IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY

This list was generated by local participants at the Heritage Landscape Identification meeting held in Harvard May 10 with follow-up fieldwork May 22, 2006. **There are undoubtedly other heritage landscapes that were not identified at the HLI meeting noted above.** The chart has two columns, the name and location of the resource are in the first; notes about the resource are in the second. Landscapes are grouped by land use category. Abbreviations used are listed below.

APR = Agricultural Preservation Restriction CR = Conservation Restriction
 LHD = Local Historic District NR = National Register
 PR = Preservation Restriction * = Priority Landscape
 TTOR = The Trustees of Reservations

Agriculture	
<i>Arnold Farm</i> Old Mill Road	Sheep farm.
<i>Calkin Farm</i> 146 Littleton County Road	Historically known as the Hosmer-Calkin Farm it was sold to the Hermanns in 1945 and became part of Westward Orchards. Includes ca. 1830s Federal house, large New England barn, dormitory for seasonal workers, apple orchard, two ponds and streams. Sixty-seven acres of the orchard are in APR.
<i>Carlson Orchards</i> 115 Oak Hill Rd.	Active apple orchard with seasonal farmstand. Part is in APR.
<i>Charlie Brown Farm</i> Murray Lane	Also includes early grave. Located adjacent to conservation land.
<i>Dean's Hill Orchard</i> Prospect Hill Road	Adjacent to Dean's Hill, across from Fruitlands.
<i>Doe Orchards</i> Ayer Road	Active apple orchard, 63 acres in 61A.
<i>Double Stone Wall</i> Still River Road	Whitney Homestead, from Common to school parking lot. Was right-of-way for taking cows to Bare Hill Pond, now overgrown.
<i>Endicott Farm</i> Littleton County Road	Horse farm.
<i>Evans Farm</i> Still River Road	Pumpkins and other fall crops, 76 acres.
<i>Fire Fly Farm</i> E Bare Hill Road	Horse farm, 100 acres. 10-acre pasture on East Bare Hill road is protected by a CR held by the Harvard Conservation Trust. Most of the remaining land is in Chapter 61A.

Great Elms Farm Stow Road	
Hazel Farm Ayer Road	Grows hay and Christmas trees. Very visible, a main gateway to the community.
Hermann Orchards Littleton County Road	Part is in APR. Hermann was the original owner, now owned by Conlin/Green family.
Little Rascals Farm	Ayer Road, Sean McLaughlin (under Camel Needle Eye Corporation) owns the adjacent former Hermann Orchard. APR land - 31 acres.
Murray Lane Goat Farm Murray Lane	CR. Located on dead end road.
Oak Hill Orchards	Includes orchards owned by Carlson family and Hermann descendants.
Sheehan's Farm 177 Mass Ave.	A commercial orchard with ca. 1900 farmhouse, barn and orchards that have been subdivided and sold for house lots.
Westward Orchards 90 Oak Hill Rd.	Part is in APR. Historically known as the Houghton-Hermann Farm on top of Oak Hill. The property has an 18 th century center chimney farmhouse and many buildings associated with the apple growing business for which this farm now is well known. Roadside stand/store is on Mass. Avenue.
Whitney Farm Littleton County Road	The Harvard Conservation Trust holds a CR on 20.855 acres of this property, which was formerly Post, Georgaklis/Cahill, and now Barrett, who has horses. An old map has Whitney at this location.
Whitney Lane Farm Whitney Lane	Whitney Lane connects Mass. Avenue and Littleton County Road in the Oak Hill part of Harvard. Ca. 1802 brick Federal house. In late 19 th century, pastures were planted with fruit trees and became a sizeable orchard. Now a horse farm.
Willard-Watt Farm 12 Depot Rd.	Federal house ca. 1800, dairy barn, outbuildings and fields. Most of the Watt dairy farm land is now in conservation except for the Watt homes. Willard farmed the land.
Willard Farm Still River Road	Seasonal vegetables, roadside stand.
Williams Farm Stow Road	Ca. 1790 Jonathan Sawyer house later known as the George E. Morse and later Alexander Williams house. Federal style house, farm was dairy and later orchard.
Archaeological	
Mill Sherry Road	Evidence of old water works. Age and ownership unknown.

Mill Ruins Mill Road	Along Bowers Brook. Very little is visible.
Burial Grounds and Cemeteries	
Grave by Charlie Brown Farm Murray Lane	There may be a headstone but location is not obvious.
Harvard Center Cemetery Massachusetts Ave.	NR, LHD. Established in 1734. Historic cemetery in Harvard Center, 3.5 acres, managed by Cemetery Commission.
Shaker Cemetery South Shaker Road	NR, LHD. Established 1792, .85 aces, managed by Cemetery Commission.
Smallpox Grave Poor Farm Hill Road	Grave with headstone is just off the road, enclosed with a fence.
Civic/Village	
Harvard Center	NR, LHD. The largest and most centrally located of Harvard's three villages. Includes town common, town hall, library, burial ground, general store, former inn, three churches (plus one former church now a residence), also views towards Bare Hill Pond.
Hildreth House 27 Ayer Road	NR, LHD. Town-owned historic building in Harvard Center adjacent to town hall. Property also includes six acres of landscaped grounds. Used for meetings.
Shaker Village Shaker Road	NR, LHD. The northernmost of Harvard's three villages which is one of two historic districts in Harvard. Site of religious community from late 18 th to early 20 th century. Well-preserved village includes 15 contributing buildings, 11 sites, five structures and nine non-contributing buildings.
Still River Village Still River Road	Another of Harvard's three villages, located in the southwestern part of town. Well-preserved 19 th century houses, also the home of the St. Benedict's Abbey complex. Has been documented on MHC inventory forms.
Town Common Ayer Road	In Harvard Center NR district and LHD. Established 1733, was originally 30 acres, now is only nine. Includes town pound, powder house, mill stone. The heart of the community.
Town Hall 13 Ayer Road	In Harvard Center NR district and LHD. Overlooking the common.
Industrial	
Slate Quarry Pin Hill	Remains of a blasting project are visible from Mill Road.

Institutional	
<i>Devens</i>	Camp Devens was established in 1917 and remained an active military base until 1995 when the area was designated as the Devens Enterprise Zone. Includes natural and historic resources. These include Colonel's Row (housing), Vicksburg Square (former dormitories), Rogers Field (former parade grounds with viewing stand now used for recreation) and a military cemetery, as well as the Mirror Lakes, part of the Nashua River and a glacially formed esker. Small portions of Devens are in Ayer and Shirley. Traditional boundary makers still exist.
<i>Fruitlands Museums</i> Prospect Hill Road	NR district, PR. Private non-profit museum established by Clara Endicott Sears in 1914. Includes five collections: four museum buildings, trails and archaeological sites, a restaurant and a museum store. Also includes dramatic regional views that include the Harvard portion of Devens (Shabikin), Wachusett Mountain, Mount (or Mt.) Monadnock and the Pack Monadnocks, land south and west over the Nashua River.
<i>Green Eyrie Girl Scout Camp</i>	47 acres between Bare Hill Pond and Still River Road owned by the Boy Scouts and used in the summer for camping. Once part of the Fiske Warren enclaves.
<i>Harvard Public Library</i> 7 Fairbank Street	In Harvard Center NR district and LHD. Soon to be vacant when library moves to Old Bromfield.
<i>Holy Hill</i> Ann Lee Road	Part of Shaker Village, now town-owned conservation land.
<i>Oak Ridge Observatory</i> 42 Pinnacle Road	Owned by Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. Currently operating a new telescope by Harvard astrophysicist Paul Horowitz and the SETI program under Adam Dziewonski.
<i>Old Bromfield</i> Massachusetts Avenue	Originally known as Bromfield Academy, 1876. Was left to the town for educational purposes. Construction has begun on an extension and rehab that will incorporate the old building with a new town library.
<i>South Village House</i> 101 S. Shaker Road	One of two large communal houses in Harvard built by the Shakers. Now a private residence with adjacent stone barn ruins (which are under a preservation restriction). House is in the process of being preserved.
<i>Shaker Herb Drying Shed</i> Shaker Road	In Shaker Village NR district and LHD. Handsome stone building that was partially restored with CPA funds in 2002. Surrounding area is partially protected by conservation land. Town-owned.
<i>Shaker Spring House</i>	Town-owned on conservation land. Access is off Green Road.
<i>Shaker Stone Posts</i>	Rough cut granite fence posts located throughout Shaker Village.

<i>Shaker Whipping Stone</i> S. Shaker Road	Located at the driveway of 36 South Shaker Road on private land across from Glenview Drive. The engraved granite stone marks the place where Fathers James and Williams were whipped by local residents. Marker is visible from the road.
<i>Still River Baptist Church</i> Still River Road	NR, PR. 1832, now the home of the Harvard Historical Society.
<i>St. Benedict's Abbey Complex</i> Still River Road	Religious community established in 1958 that includes three separate entities: monastery, convent, and retreat center. Collectively they own 175 acres of land as well as a variety of historic and contemporary buildings. Land is farmed and there is a small farm stand. Dramatic site with regional views over the Nashua River to the west.
Miscellaneous	
<i>Festivals</i>	Harvard has a strong tradition of festivals and special events that are important to the community. Apple Blossom Festival in Spring; Columbus Day Flea Market; Three Apples Storytelling.
<i>General Store</i> 1 Still River Road	In Harvard Center NR district and LHD. Originally called the Gale and Dickson Store, built 1896. Important visual, economic and social anchor in Harvard Center. Only marginally economically viable, may not continue as an active store.
<i>Horse Trough</i> Ayer Road	Late 19 th century horse trough located northeast of town center. Overlooks adjacent conservation land to the east.
Natural	
<i>Dean's Hill</i>	360-degree view, unusually high hill for Harvard.
<i>Drumlin</i> Stow Road	On Williams conservation land.
<i>Magnetic Hill</i> Stow Road	Area on Stow Road where there is an optical illusion: by putting a car into neutral and gliding, it appears to travel uphill or down, depending upon direction of the hill.
<i>Shrewsbury Ridge</i>	Long escarpment underlying Oak Hill that extends from Littleton to Shrewsbury. It is an important feature because it limits development. Oak Hill elevation is 500-600 ft.
Open Space /Parks	
<i>Blomfelt Land</i> Ann Lee Road	This 29-acre town-owned conservation parcel connects Ann Lee Road with Ayer Road.
<i>Brown Parcel</i> Murray Lane	Located in southeastern part of town. 31 acres adjacent to the Great Elms conservation land and an 80-acre CR held by the Trust.

Field Slough Road	Visually important parcel at corner of Slough Road and Woodchuck Road. Will be preserved.
Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge	Along the eastern bank of the Nashua River and western edge of Harvard. 1,850 are within the Central Nashua River Valley ACEC. Also extends into adjacent communities. There are dramatic regional views of the refuge and Nashua River from Prospect Hill and Still River. Access in Harvard is from Still River Road.
Residential	
Fiske Warren House 42 Bolton Road	NR. Shingle style house built 1894. In the early 1900s Fiske Warren established a series of “enclaves,” encouraging communal land ownership that lasted until his death in 1938. One of these was Tahanto on Bare Hill Pond.
Ralph Houghton Garrison House 204 W. Bare Hill Road	Circa 1685. Located at West Bare Hill and Still River roads.
Old houses on east side of Bare Hill	Reportedly associated with Underground railroad. Several houses (39, 74, and 90) on East Bare Hill are near the cave that was used, according to family stories, to hide runaways. (These stories come from an old Harvard family of African American and Native American heritage.) Living relatives of those who participated still relate oral history. No written record. As Carrie used to say, “when a stranger appeared at the table for dinner, you asked no questions. If asked, you said he/she was a cousin and never spoke if it again.”
Pollard House 327 Still River Road	Full name is Captain Thaddeus Pollard House/Isaac Marshall House, built circa 1800. Historic house adjacent to whipping tree.
Transportation	
Ayer Road	South of Route 2 – scenic gateway into town.
Harvard Depot	The Harvard Depot is at the end of the Depot Road that runs under Route 2. From there a resident could access the farms in Shabikin or the center of town. (one mile) Still River Depot is at the end of the road that leads to the Oxbow. Markers at each stop say “Harvard” and “Still River.”
Littleton County Road	Scenic road with farms and woodland, great views across orchards and open land. Tree canopy.
Stow Road	Scenic road with rolling meadows, open fields, stone walls. Includes Williams Pond and Great Elms Farm.

Waterbodies	
<i>Bare Hill Pond</i>	321 acres, Great Pond. Visible from town center, used for swimming, boating, fishing, ice skating, etc.
<i>Bennetts Brook</i>	In Shaker Village.
<i>Black Pond</i>	On conservation land. Accessible from Littleton County Road.
<i>Bowers Brook</i>	The entire Cold Spring Brook system, including wetlands.
<i>Golden's Pond</i> Old Mill Road	Lovely mill pond on mill road.
<i>Wetlands</i>	Extensive wetlands on the Littleton/Harvard border – former Underwood land and Rogers and Sizer land - 54 acres; wetlands throughout town contain development.
<i>Williams Pond</i>	Pond with lilies – donated by Peggy Williams for conservation.