

ARLINGTON RECONNAISSANCE REPORT

FREEDOM'S WAY LANDSCAPE INVENTORY

MASSACHUSETTS HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY PROGRAM



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Freedom's Way Heritage Association

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Cover Photographs

Spy Pond
187 Lowell Street
Old Burying Ground

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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. 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 community; 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.

ARLINGTON HISTORY

Alewife Brook and Spy Pond in the eastern part of Arlington were part of an important Native American settlement area known as Menotomy. Varied terrain, seasonal fishing, plentiful hunting opportunities and broad plains for agriculture made this area particularly desirable. Native trails were adopted as transportation routes by European settlers by the mid-17th century. Arlington's location between Boston and western communities soon made it an important early transportation corridor, with heavy settlement occurring along Massachusetts Avenue. During the Colonial Period the economy was based primarily on agriculture and grazing, with small mills along the Mill Brook.

After the Revolutionary War, roads improved, with Massachusetts Avenue still the primary east/west route. The economy prospered with diversified small-scale industrial activity along Mill Brook and a few 18th century houses. Many Federal period houses remain in Arlington. The community was incorporated in 1807 as West Cambridge and changed its name to Arlington in 1867.

With the arrival of the railroad in 1846, and a horse drawn trolley a few years later, Arlington became increasingly accessible from Boston, resulting in substantial growth of the community. The population was 2,670 in 1855, nearly double what it had been 15 years earlier and included a growing Irish population. With greatly improved access to Boston, market gardening became an important part of the local economy. The mid-19th century was also a time of industrial growth, focused primarily along the Mill Brook. The Old Schwamb Mill, which is still active today, was established in 1847 at a site used for mills since the 19th century. Ice was harvested from Spy Pond until the end of the 19th century.

The population continued to grow rapidly in the late 19th/early 20th century, reaching a total of 14,889 in 1915, which still included many Irish immigrants. Easy access by trolley was an important factor in community growth and the town became increasingly suburban. Housing stock built during this period included multi-family housing, particularly two-family and three-deckers, many located in the eastern part of town. Many of the town's institutional structures date to this period, including the town hall, library, several schools and the public works building.

Creation of the Metropolitan Park System in the 1890s led to the preservation of Alewife Brook and the Mystic River along the eastern edge of the community, and the creation of parks and parkways along the waterbodies.

By 1940 the population of Arlington had reached 40,000 (roughly what it is today) resulting in continued expansion of residential areas, with a growing commercial strip along Massachusetts Avenue. Market gardening, which had remained an integral part of the town's economy during the early 20th century, had largely disappeared by this time. Construction of Route 2 along the southern edge of the town diverted much of the through traffic from local streets but also made Arlington more accessible from all directions.

PRIORITY HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Arlington's Heritage Landscape Identification meeting, attended by approximately 18 residents, some representing town boards and local non-profit organizations, was held on March 29, 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. Some of the priority landscapes describe areas that have multiple layers. For example the Battle Road corridor includes the Butterfield-Whittemore House, which is also recognized as a priority landscape in its own right. 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.

Battle Road Corridor

The events of April 19, 1775 are an important historic theme for Arlington and adjacent communities within the Freedom's Way Heritage Area. Four communities - Arlington, Lexington, Lincoln and Concord - have joined together to work towards having the Battle Road designated a Scenic Byway. This designation would highlight the significance of the remarkable group of historic resources associated with this seminal event in American history as well as the early years of the community. Arlington's organizers of the Scenic Byway proposal, who represent a variety of town departments and private organizations, hope to use the Heritage Landscape Inventory program as a catalyst for identification of important historic resources along the Battle Road and a forum for public discussion about the benefits of such a designation, as well as a vehicle for inter-community cooperation.

The Battle Road in Arlington, originally called Concord Road, is now known as Massachusetts Avenue. The following list includes many of the properties with a connection to the events of April 19, 1775, either as features that witnessed the battle or commemorative sites associated with it. They are listed from east to west.

- ***Butterfield-Whittemore House, 54 Massachusetts Avenue*** – Colonial brick ended, hipped-roof house built ca. 1729. One of Arlington's oldest structures. During the Revolutionary War it was the home of Jonathan Whittemore whose brother Samuel was gravely wounded on April 19, 1775. Also listed separately as a priority landscape.

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- ***“The Wayside Inn”, 393 Massachusetts Avenue*** – Colonial, before 1750, with Greek revival colonnaded porch. Was owned by the Cutter family and later by the Whittemore and the Shattuck families.
 - ***Old Burying Ground, Pleasant Street*** – Established ca. 1735, burial place of Revolutionary War soldiers.
 - ***Jason Russell House, 7 Jason Street*** – Colonial house ca. 1740 with later additions. Now owned by Arlington Historical Society and operated as a house museum.
 - ***Foot of the Rocks*** – Site of one of the bloodiest battles of April 19, 1775 when retreating British troops were interrupted by a group of Colonial militiamen. In the early 1800s it was a stopping place for farmers driving to Boston with produce and cattle. Roads to the west were rocky but from here to the east going was much easier. In the late 19th century the Foot of the Rocks was the starting point for popular foot races along Massachusetts Avenue. The area is now a small triangular park at the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and Lowell Street, marked by an inscribed stone and a granite drinking fountain with basins at different heights for adults, children, dogs and horses. The fountain, which until 1913 stood next to the First Parish Church, was donated by the Robbins sisters in memory of their brother Olney.
 - ***Historic Markers*** – Arlington has a variety of historical markers and memorials associated with events along the Battle Road. Some of these date back to 1875 and others were placed during the Massachusetts Tercentenary observations in 1930 and have a distinctive historic character of their own or contain information that may not be well known today.

The list above includes properties that either witnessed the battle or commemorate it in some way. Other sites along the Battle Road that were identified as heritage landscapes but are not directly related to the events of 1775 are included in the chart in the appendix.



Recommendations

The organizers of the Scenic Byway proposal will need to continue to involve all relevant groups within town government (Planning Board, Historical Commission) as well as other organizations such as the Historical Society, tourism advocates, property owners and local legislators.

- Review existing Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) inventory forms for pre-1775 properties along the Battle Road and update as needed. Prepare new MHC inventory forms for undocumented historic resources along the Battle Road, including a thematic area form that encompasses the entire length of the Battle Road in Arlington.
- Conduct a design charette or feasibility study, possibly in conjunction with Lexington, Lincoln and Concord, to build consensus about goals and priorities for the Scenic Byway designation.
- Continue a program of public outreach and communication to community members regarding the Scenic Byway designation. Develop legislative support for designation of the Scenic Byway at the state and federal levels.

Butterfield-Whittemore House, 54 Massachusetts Avenue

The Colonial brick-ended, hipped roof Butterfield/Whittemore House was built ca. 1729 by Jonathan Whittemore and was later occupied by Samuel Whittemore. It is the oldest surviving house in East Arlington, was witness to events of April 19, 1775 and is individually listed in the National Register. The privately-owned house has been altered and the setting has changed considerably as the surrounding area has developed. It is currently being restored in consultation with the Historical Commission. (Note: the photo below was taken prior to restoration.)



Recommendations

The Historical Commission is the appropriate agency to take the lead on preserving this house, possibly working in conjunction with the Historical Society.

- Use National Register status as a tool to explore creative options for preserving the house, while also meeting owner objectives.
- Develop a preservation restriction program in which funds are raised to purchase preservation restrictions on key properties such as this one. Work with property owner to explore the potential of a preservation restriction that could ensure protection of the house. Preservation restrictions are legal agreements between a property owner and another party, which must be a non-profit organization or government body, to permanently protect specific aspects of a property. Preservation restrictions “run with the land” governing present and future use of a property.

Great Meadow/Mill Brook Drainage System

The Great Meadow/Mill Brook drainage system has its headwaters in Lexington and flows through Arlington into the Mystic River watershed. Individual parcels within the Great Meadow system have been addressed in various ways but Arlington residents also expressed interest in looking at this inter-connected system as a whole. Issues include the stewardship of land in one community owned by another community; lack of visibility of the drainage system; the wide range of landscape types along the corridor; managing public use; and landscape stewardship. The various segments within the corridor are described below, beginning upstream.

- ***Great Meadow*** – This 183-acre wet meadow in East Lexington is fed by Munroe Brook. It includes a variety of natural habitats including vernal pools and is an important wildlife corridor. The Great Meadow was purchased by Arlington in the late 19th century to protect the water supply of the Arlington Reservoir which is downstream. A detailed history is included in Sileo’s *Open Space in Lexington*. The Minuteman Bikeway runs along the southern edge of the meadow. The Great Meadow was also listed by Lexington as a heritage landscape.
- ***Arlington Reservoir*** – This 65-acre man-made lake, which is located partially in Arlington and partially in Lexington, was created in the 1870s to provide a municipal water supply for Arlington, although it no longer serves this function. The reservoir is owned by Arlington and part of it has been enclosed by a berm and is used for swimming in the summer. Water quality and the potential impacts of adjacent land uses were mentioned as one area of concern. Arlington Reservoir was also listed by Lexington as a heritage landscape.

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- **Mill Brook** – Downstream from the Arlington Reservoir, the Mill Brook narrows and flows roughly parallel to Massachusetts Avenue through the center of town and then turns north and flows into the Lower Mystic River. The area through which the brook flows is urban for almost its entire length and much of it runs through backyards so it is primarily visible as it passes north/south streets. The section near the high school passes through a culvert where the brook disappears. There is very little public access although the Minuteman Bikeway does cross the brook. The Old Schwamb Mill is one important public access point and also a visible reminder of the past history of the brook as a source of waterpower for local industry. At its eastern end Mill Brook flows through Mount Pleasant Cemetery and Meadow Brook Park. Along many sections the brook is channelized with crumbling walls and clogged waterway. Issues include water flow, potential flooding, corridor maintenance, public access and interpretation.



Recommendations

The Conservation Commission is the primary municipal agency responsible for oversight of the brook corridor. The DPW has responsibility for maintaining culverts and drains, and the Recreation Department oversees recreational use. These entities need to continue to work together to avoid conflicts in use and to support the protection for this resource. Some possible joint projects include:

- Consider a Great Meadow drainage visioning session and/or management plan organized in conjunction with Lexington, that would look at all aspects of the corridor including stewardship, use and water quality.
- Work with the Historical Society and Historical Commission to document and interpret the history of the Mill Brook, possibly through an exhibit, brochure or interpretive signage.
- Use educational programs to rally resident support of funding through town budget and grants to monitor and maintain this water corridor.

Mugar Property

The Mugar property is a privately owned 17-acre parcel in East Arlington that includes some wetland areas. It is highly visible along the Route 2 corridor and is important to the fragile hydrology of the Alewife Brook area. It is also adjacent to the Alewife Brook Reservation and Thorndike Field. There have been numerous development proposals for this parcel over the years but so far all have failed because of wetland issues and lack of appropriate frontage. This site has been proposed as a priority open space acquisition by the town.

Recommendations

The Conservation Commission is the primary town agency responsible for oversight of wetlands. Working with the Historical Commission, the Historical Society and local land trusts:

- Develop a funding plan for town acquisition of the Mugar property.
- Explore appropriateness of conservation restriction for which money could be raised or which could be donated to the town by owner for potential tax benefits.

Spy Pond and Adjacent Parkland

Spy Pond is Arlington's largest waterbody and one of its best loved resources. It is a 100-acre pond that was used for ice harvesting in the 19th century and was also the site of popular 19th century hotels. Today much of the area around the pond is developed and privately owned so that public access is limited to a few locations. On the southwest side the pedestrian path between Route 2 and Spy Pond is a popular access point that is owned by the Massachusetts Highway Department. The Vision 2020 Spy Pond Committee conducted a three-year project of improvements along this path that included removal of invasive plants, opening up of vistas and construction of stone steps.



On the northwest side of Spy Pond is Hornblower Field, an early 20th century recreational facility that includes concrete bleachers and several playing fields as well as the ca. 1912 Play Fair Arch, which was donated by the Hornblower family. The Arlington Boys and Girls Club adjacent to Hornblower Field provides a variety of recreational opportunities. Spy Pond Park located near the Boys and Girls Club, which was recently renovated, is a popular spot for viewing the pond. Elizabeth Island in the pond is now up for sale. The Arlington Land Trust is interested in preserving it if possible.

Recommendations

The Conservation Commission, Department of Public Works, Recreation Department, Boys and Girls Club, Historical Commission and Massachusetts Highway Department (which owns the frontage along Route 2) all have responsibility for various aspects of the Spy Pond area.

- Document the icehouse ruins, the pond itself and Hornblower Field on MHC inventory forms to assure that they are respected as historic resources.
- Seek professional assessment and repair of the concrete structures at Hornblower Field (arch and bleachers) as some of the concrete is spalling. Undertake this work carefully to assure that the historic character of these resources is preserved.
- Since only limited parts of the waterfront are accessible to the public, those that do exist are highly valued. Continue partnership efforts to maintain long distance views across the pond through clearing of vistas. Explore options for acquiring additional pond frontage.

W.C. Taylor House, 187 Lowell Street

The Taylor House, also known as the O’Leary House, is a handsome eclectic Queen Anne structure that was built by J.H. Baxter in ca. 1898. W.C. Taylor, the original owner, was a marble dealer. The house is located on a spacious lot in the Crescent Hill neighborhood near Arlington Reservoir with the house set well back from the road on a raised terrace. Mature plantings of deciduous and evergreen trees as well as a large lawn, shrub plantings and a stone wall along the roadway all contribute to the character of the property. The house has been documented on an MHC inventory form and is located in the Mount Gilboa-Crescent Hill Historic District, which is a local historic district with review of changes that are subject to public view. However, the large size of the lot makes the property vulnerable to subdivision. It should be noted that the adjacent property retains a similar setback and date of construction but is not as elaborately detailed.

Recommendations

The Historic District Commission is the appropriate agency to take the lead on preserving this house, working in conjunction with the Redevelopment Board.

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- Under current zoning, a subdivision (as has been twice proposed) could destroy the ambiance of this site. The Historic District Commission, with help from the Selectmen, has resisted such efforts.
 - Work with property owner to explore potential of a preservation restriction that could ensure protection of the setting. Preservation restrictions are legal agreements between a property owner and another party, which must be a non-profit organization or government body to permanently protect specific aspects of a property. Preservation restrictions “run with the land” governing present and future use of a property.

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. 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.

Non-Traditional Historic Resources

Arlington’s extensive inventory of historic resources was undertaken in the 1970s and 80s and focused primarily on historic buildings. In most cases the buildings are well documented but their settings are not. Residents expressed concern that less traditional historic resources are not well documented or protected. These include the streetscapes associated with Arlington’s historic districts; remnants of stone walls found in some parks and older neighborhoods; remnants of old railroad lines including stone bridges and abutments; waterbodies with historic uses such as Arlington Reservoir, Mill Brook and Spy Pond; and Native American archaeological resources.

Regional Landscapes

Resources shared by several communities include Alewife Brook Reservation and Parkway, Arlington Reservoir, Great Meadow, Minuteman Bikeway, Metropolitan State Hospital, and Mystic Valley Reservation and Parkway. In general there has been good communication and cooperation on most issues to date; however competing interests for funding as well as regulations can make preservation of these assets challenging. Clear and thorough identification followed by cooperative communication and advocacy are essential ingredients.

Stewardship of DCR Lands

The eastern and northern edges of Arlington are bounded by parks and parkways owned by the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority. Arlington residents recognize the

challenging fiscal constraints and technical issues associated with stewardship of DCR lands but are concerned about the condition of these properties. Issues include impacts of MWRA construction on parklands, frequent flooding along Alewife Brook, and poor condition of recreational facilities.

EXISTING RESOURCE DOCUMENTATION AND PLANNING TOOLS

Arlington already has many 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>.

Arlington has an extensive inventory of its historic buildings which was completed in the 1970s and 80s on MHC inventory forms and in a series of publications documenting the history of various parts of the community. Non-traditional historic resources such as landscapes, industrial sites and archaeological sites are less well documented.

Arlington has 17 documented ancient Native American sites and 9 documented historic archaeological sites. Because of the known information about this region as well as the apparent Native American activity in Arlington, 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. Arlington has 1,300 properties listed in the National Register, an unusually large number for a community. These include individually listed buildings; historic residential and commercial districts; multiple resource areas; and thematic resource areas. Arlington has seven local historic districts encompassing over 300 resources. They were established between 1982 and 2002. Arlington also has a number of properties protected by preservation restrictions. All properties listed in the National Register, included in local historic districts and for which preservation restrictions have been recorded in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 184, Sections 31-33, are automatically listed in the State Register of Historic Places.



Planning Documents and Tools

Arlington is currently in the process of updating its Open Space & Recreation Plan, which focuses on stewardship of existing resources as well as acquiring new open spaces that are currently unprotected. The town has a Strategic Plan for the years 2000-2005 and has completed many other studies that address specific issues. The town's Preservation Plan was completed in 1981. Arlington has a twelve-month demolition delay bylaw that applies to all structures listed in the National Register and/or included in the community-wide inventory.

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.

Arlington'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. Arlington is also fortunate to have a rich 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. Arlington is now looking beyond these resources to the other natural and cultural assets that define the overall fabric of the community. Like most municipalities, Arlington 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*

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- 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 Historic Resources

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. Arlington's inventory of historic resources was completed over 20 years ago and is focused primarily on buildings. Many of the resources discussed in this Reconnaissance Report have not been documented. These include: archaeological features, natural areas with historical associations, water related resources, dams and other structures. Thus, using the Massachusetts Historical Commission survey methodology, the Arlington Historical Commission should:

- Compile a list of resources that are under-represented or not sufficiently documented, beginning with the priority heritage landscapes identified in this report as well as resource categories identified under critical issues.
- Document unprotected resources first, beginning with the most threatened resources.
- Record a wide range of historic resources including landscape features, transportation corridors 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

Arlington has a large number of properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places but most were listed some time ago. Many other properties are undoubtedly eligible. The Arlington Historical Commission should:

- Review the inventory and 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.



Downtown and Neighborhood Character

Nearly all preservation strategies address neighborhood character in some manner. As described above, thorough documentation on MHC inventory forms is an important first step in the preservation planning process, followed by National Register listing where appropriate. Arlington has already implemented two important preservation tools, demolition delay bylaw and local historic districts. Another preservation tool that is particularly applicable to Arlington's historic neighborhoods is neighborhood architectural conservation district designation. **Neighborhood architectural conservation districts** 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. This type of designation is appropriate for residential neighborhoods that may have less integrity and where more flexibility is needed. The Arlington Historical Commission should:

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- Work with MHC staff to determine how a neighborhood architectural conservation district could help to preserve Arlington's residential neighborhoods and downtown commercial district.

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

Cities and towns that have adopted the **Community Preservation Act (CPA)** find it to be an excellent funding source for many heritage landscape projects; however Arlington would first have to adopt the Act. While tricky to pass in lean economic times, the number and types of projects that are currently benefiting across the Commonwealth make the CPA worthy of consideration. Arlington projects that would be eligible for CPA funding would include MHC inventory, National Register nominations, cemetery preservation, open space acquisition and preservation and restoration of public buildings. The CPA (M.G.L. Chapter 44B) establishes a mechanism by which cities and towns can develop a fund dedicated to historic preservation, open space and affordable housing. Local funds are collected through a .5% to 3% surcharge on each annual real estate tax bill. At the state level, the Commonwealth has established a dedicated fund which is used to match the municipality's collections under the CPA. The amount of the surcharge is determined as a ballot question proposed at a town election.

Adoption of the Community Preservation Act, by a majority vote on a ballot question, fosters partnerships among historic preservationists, conservationists and affordable housing advocates. At least 10% of the funds must be used to preserve historic resources; at least 10% must be used to protect open space; and at least 10% must be used to advance affordable housing. The remaining 70% must be used for one of these three uses as well as recreational needs and can be distributed in varying proportions depending upon the projects that the town

believes are appropriate and beneficial to the municipality. Additional information about the CPA can be found at www.communitypreservation.org.

Towns like Arlington 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 Arlington Reconnaissance Report is a critical tool in starting to identify the rich and diverse heritage landscapes in Arlington and in beginning to think about preservation strategies. Arlington will have to determine the best way to implement the recommendations discussed above. One approach that might help Arlington 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 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 Arlington in preserving important features of the community's character. The recommended tasks will require cooperation and coordination among boards and commissions, particularly Arlington's Historical Commission, Redevelopment Board and Conservation Commission. It also is advisable to present this information to the Board of Selectmen, which was the applicant to the Heritage Landscape Inventory program on behalf of the town. Finally, distribution of the report to the Historical Society, neighborhood associations, and any other preservation minded organizations will broaden the audience and assist in gathering interest and support for Arlington's heritage landscapes.

APPENDIX: HERITAGE LANDSCAPES IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY

This list was generated by local participants at the Heritage Landscape Identification meeting held in Arlington on March 29 and follow-up fieldwork on April 13, 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
LHD = Local Historic District
PR = Preservation Restriction

CR = Conservation Restriction
NR = National Register
* = Priority Landscape
+ = Part of a Priority Landscape

Agriculture	
<i>Buttrick Dairy</i> 46 Rear Mill Street	Now Brigham's Ice Cream. A small reminder of Arlington's agricultural past.
Burial Grounds and Cemeteries	
<i>Mount Pleasant Cemetery</i> Medford Street	Established ca. 1843. Large town-owned cemetery near Lower Mystic Lake, still active.
<i>Old Burying Ground +</i> Pleasant Street	NR. Also known as Arlington Old Cemetery. Established circa 1735. Includes 18 th century stone wall and obelisk marking the common grave of 12 minutemen who died on April 19, 1775. In Arlington Civic Block. Important Battle Road feature.
<i>Prince Hall Mystic Cemetery</i> Gardner Street	NR. Site of cemetery established in 1864 to provide a burial place for black Americans. It was in use until about 1897 and was then forgotten. In 1987, the area was restored by the Arlington Historical Society.
<i>St. Paul's Cemetery</i> Broadway	1890s, Catholic cemetery in East Arlington along Alewife Brook.
Civic	
<i>Arlington Civic Block +</i> Mass Avenue	NR. Includes Old Burying Ground (ca. 1735), Whittemore-Robbins House (ca. 1799), Robbins Memorial Library (1892), Robbins Memorial Town Hall (1913), Senior Center (formerly the 1893 High School), Winfield Robbins Memorial Garden (1913). Civic center, reflects importance of Robbins family to Arlington. Wrought iron fencing needs repair. Along the Battle Road.
<i>Central Fire Station +</i> 1 Monument Park	NR. Built 1926. Prominently sited in Arlington Center near corner of Mass Ave and Broadway. First octagonal fire station in the nation. Along the Battle Road.

<i>Foot of the Rocks +</i> Mass Avenue	Small park at Mass Avenue and Lowell Street commemorating the site of a Revolutionary War battle. Important Battle Road feature.
<i>Highland Fire Station +</i> 990 Mass Avenue	1928. Located in Arlington Heights.
<i>Play Fair Arch +</i> Hornblower Field	Concrete arch at Hornblower Field erected in memory of Horatio Hornblower. Part of Spy Pond Area.
<i>Uncle Sam Memorial Sculpture and Park +</i> Mass Avenue	1976, Theodore Barbarossa was the sculptor. Monument to Arlington resident Samuel Wilson, a supplier of meat to the US Army during the War of 1812 known as Uncle Sam who stamped government meat containers "US" leading to the association of the government with the name Uncle Sam. Wilson was born in Arlington. Located in tiny park at corner of Mass Ave and Mystic Street. Along the Battle Road.
Industrial	
<i>MDC Pump House</i> Off Brattle Street	Built ca. 1900 after Arlington joined the Metropolitan District. Now owned by MWRA.
<i>Old Schwamb Mill +</i> 17 Mill Lane	NR. This site along the Mill Brook was first used for its waterpower in 1650. The land was purchased by Charles Schwamb in 1864. He modified the existing mill to manufacture picture frames. Mill is now a working industrial museum that continues to manufacture picture frames. Along the Battle Road and Mill Brook.
<i>Park Avenue Water Tower</i> Park Avenue	Built 1921-24 with funds donated by the Robbins sisters to serve as a reservoir. Architect was Frederick F. Low.
<i>Schwamb Mfg. Co. +</i> 1165 Mass. Avenue	Built 1905. Industrial building built by Schwamb family for manufacturing of pianos. Along the Battle Road.
Institutional	
<i>Arlington Masonic Temple</i> 19 Academy Street	NR. 1923, architect was Charles Dunham.
<i>Calvary Methodist Church +</i> 300 Mass Avenue	NR. Modeled after King's Chapel, Boston. Especially known for Bulfinch tower. Along the Battle Road.
<i>Germaine Lawrence School</i> 18 Claremont Ave.	Private girls school with campus setting. Grounds and older buildings are distinctive. Gothic style chapel was designed by Ralph Adams Cram.

<i>Saint Agnes Roman Catholic Church</i> 24 Medford Street	1874. Gothic Revival church with rectory. Architects were S.B. Howard and Richard J. Shaw.
<i>Schoolyards</i>	Arlington has worked hard to maintain attractive schoolyards. They are civic spaces that are visually important and have strong memories for local residents.
Military	
<i>Battle Road Corridor *</i> Mass Avenue	Battle Road (Massachusetts Avenue) is proposed as a scenic byway. Road itself is of interest as well as properties that witnessed the battle.
Miscellaneous	
<i>Capitol Theater Marquee +</i> 204 Mass Avenue	NR. Theater is visually, socially and commercially important to community. A landmark along Mass Ave. Along the Battle Road.
<i>Regent Theater Marquee</i> 7 Medford Street	NR. Theater is visually, socially and commercially important to community.
<i>View of Bunker Hill Monument</i>	From Gray Street.
<i>WPA Murals</i> Mass Ave.	Part of Civic Block. In town hall and post office. Illustrate the history of the community.
Open Space /Parks	
<i>Alewife Brook Reservation</i> Alewife Brook Parkway	NR (parkway). All DCR land along Alewife Brook, including brook, parkland and parkway. Boulevard Road along west side of river retains original lowland character in heavily filled area. Concerns about stewardship including stream channel, bridges and impacts of construction projects.
<i>Crusher Lot</i> Gray & Oakland	Open space also known as “The Shoe” because a rock formation looks like a horseshoe. Site was used for crushing gravel.
<i>Meadowbrook Park +</i> Emerson Road	17.3-acre park at mouth of Mill Brook, adjacent to Mount Pleasant Cemetery and Lower Mystic Lake. Part of Great Meadow/Mill Brook drainage system.
<i>Menotomy Rocks Park</i> Menotomy Rocks Drive	Established 1896. 35.1-acre park includes Hill’s Pond, fields, playgrounds and natural areas. History of park recently published.

<i>Mystic Valley Reservation</i> Mystic Valley Parkway	NR (parkway). All DCR land along the Mystic that abuts Arlington. Includes brook, parkland and parkways. Much of the Arlington frontage along the Mystic Lakes is private, thus the lakes are only accessible in a few places. Concerns about stewardship.
<i>Mugar Property *</i> <i>Parker Street</i>	17-acre wetland parcel in East Arlington. Adjacent to Alewife Reservation and Thorndike Field. Area is important as a gateway to Arlington from the east.
<i>Reed's Brook Park</i> Thesda Street	Former landfill site in northwestern part of town that has been renovated and is now used as parkland. It has been renamed McClennen Park.
<i>Robbins Farm Park</i> Eastern Avenue	Former horse farm now used for active recreation. Favorite sledding area. 11.1 acres.
<i>Spy Pond Field and Park +</i> Wellington Street	15 acres. Ballfields are known as Hornblower Field. There is also a small park with water frontage. Part of Spy Pond Area.
<i>Summer Street Parks</i>	Collection of park facilities.
<i>Symmes Property</i> Summer Street	18-acre former hospital site, about half of which is to be preserved as open space.
<i>Thorndike Field</i> Route 2	Ballfields located along Route 2 adjacent to Mugar Property.
<i>Turkey Hill</i> Dodge Street	12-acre open space parcel above Forest and Washington Streets in northwest Arlington with MWRA water tower on top. Great view from top of Turkey Hill.
<i>Windows on the Mystic</i> Mystic Street	Town-owned 3-acre open space parcel that provides access to the Upper Mystic Lake. Overgrown and under-utilized.
Residential	
<i>Butterfield-Whittemore House *</i> 54 Mass Avenue	NR. Built ca. 1695 by Jonathan Butterfield, later occupied by Samuel Whittemore. Has been altered. Historic house, being restored. Important Battle Road feature.
<i>Captain Benjamin Locke House</i> 21 Appleton St.	NR. Colonial house, ca 1750. Locke was a captain in the militia during the Revolutionary War. House was used as first Baptist meetinghouse, 1781-1790.
<i>Dallin Art Museum +</i> Mass Ave.	Located in Jefferson Cutter House, on the common at the intersection of Mass Ave. and Mystic & Pleasant Streets. One of several sites associated with sculptor Cyrus Dallin. Along the Battle Road.

<i>Fowle-Reed-Wyman House</i> 64 Old Mystic St.	NR, PR. Ca. 1706. Also known as Belcher house.
<i>Jason Russell House + Jason Street</i>	NR, LHD. 1740. Headquarters of Arlington Historical Society. Site of major ambush in 1775. Important Battle Road feature associated with 1775.
<i>Jefferson Cutter House +</i> 1 Whittemore Park	NR, PR. Federal period house, ca. 1817, was moved to present location at corner of Mass Ave and Mystic Street. Now a museum. Includes setting of house which is remnants of town common. Along the Battle Road.
<i>Knowles Farmhouse</i> Hemlock Street	Was last active farm in Arlington until 1989. Now only a 1.2 acre-site with 1848 farm house. Recently subdivided and developed.
<i>Poet's Corner Neighborhood</i>	East Arlington. Owned by Archdiocese.
<i>John Townsend Trowbridge House</i> 152 Pleasant Street	NR, LHD. Ca 1846, Greek Revival, Victorian.
<i>W.C. Taylor House *</i> 187 Lowell Street	LHD. Also known as O'Leary House (1898). Eclectic Victorian, architect was J.H. Baxter. Could be developed because of large acreage.
<i>Whittemore-Robbins House +</i> 670-674 Mass Ave.	NR, PR. Built ca. 1799, with later modifications. Town-owned historic house. Part of Arlington Civic Block. Along the Battle Road.
<i>Woods House</i> 181 Franklin Street	Home of B.F. Woods, who ran the tide mill. Sometimes referred to as Tide Mill House. Located along Mystic Valley Parkway.
Transportation	
<i>Alewife Bridges</i>	Three stone bridges along Alewife Brook, which are best viewed from a canoe. Broadway Bridge (stone), Mass Ave Bridge (brick), Culvert (1939 on). Deterioration in quality of materials and workmanship.
<i>Henderson Street Bridge</i>	Connects neighborhood with DCR land.
<i>Medford Street Traffic Circle</i>	NR. At junction of Medford Street and Mystic Valley Parkway.
<i>Minuteman Commuter Bikeway</i>	Dedicated 1993. Extends from Alewife in Cambridge west along former Boston and Maine railroad bed to Bedford. Three and a half miles of bikeway are in Arlington.

Stone Arch Bridge Bacon Street	Behind Mill Street housing. Associated with old railroad track. Built to carry Lexington and West Cambridge Railroad over Mill Brook, 1846.
Stone Bridge Abutments	Associated with railroad bed. At Brattle, Forest, Grove, Park.
Waterbodies	
Alewife Brook	Included in DCR's Alewife Brook Reservation. Heavily modified natural system. Issues of water quality and flooding.
Arlington Reservoir + Lowell Street	65-acre man-made lake created in 1870s to provide municipal water supply, although it is no longer used for such. Part of it has been enclosed by a berm and is used for swimming. Located in both Arlington and Lexington. Part of Great Meadow Drainage priority landscape.
"Cattail Marsh"	Along Route 2. Owned by DCR/Mass Highway. The former cattail marsh burned a few years ago and the area was taken over by phragmites.
Dr. Herbert Meyer Brook	Small tributary.
Great Meadow + Off Maple Street in Lexington	183-acre area in East Lexington that is owned by the town of Arlington. Includes wet meadow as well as uplands. Minuteman Bikeway runs along the southern edge. Includes a variety of natural habitats. Also listed by Lexington as a heritage landscape. Part of Great Meadow Drainage priority landscape.
Hill's Pond	Located at Menotomy Rocks Park, Jason Street. Named for Mr. Hill who built it in the 19 th century to water his cattle.
Mill Brook +	Includes Reed's Brook, Mill Brook and vernal pools. Part of Great Meadow/Mill Brook drainage system priority landscape.
Lower and Upper Mystic Lakes	Part of Mystic River Reservation owned by DCR. Limited access in Arlington.
Spy Pond *	100-acre Great Pond. Much of the shoreline is private so public access is limited. Icehouse foundations are located in southeast corner. Trail along Route 2 edge is popular. Pond and adjacent parkland are a priority landscape.

ARLINGTON OPENSOURCE & HISTORIC RESOURCES

