

# SHIRLEY RECONNAISSANCE REPORT

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## FREEDOM'S WAY LANDSCAPE INVENTORY

### MASSACHUSETTS HERITAGE LANDSCAPE INVENTORY PROGRAM



Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation

Freedom's Way Heritage Association

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## **June 2006**

### **Cover Photographs**

Phoenix Mills  
Shirley Center  
Longley Fields, Whitney Road

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## INTRODUCTION

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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.

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## SHIRLEY HISTORY

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Shirley's Native American history dates back to the Late Archaic Period (6,000-3,000 B.P.) with confirmed sites from this period and the Woodland Period (3,000-450 B.P.). However, information about other regions of southern New England infers that Shirley too may have been a place of ancient settlement from the Paleo-Indian Period (12,000-9,000 B.P.). Shirley's European settlement history began when Dean Winthrop, son of Governor John Winthrop, received a land grant in 1655. However, not until 1753 was the district of Shirley set off from Groton in response to a petition filed by 33 men living here at that time who acted on behalf of the approximately 400 residents. The first meetinghouse was constructed on the Common in 1773 and Shirley was incorporated as a separate town two years later in 1775. Other boundary changes occurred in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century and mid 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Agriculture was the mainstay of the economy in the 18<sup>th</sup> century; however there were some early mills beginning in ca. 1739 with a clothier mill on the Squannacook River in a part of West Groton that became Shirley in 1753, and Samuel Hazen's first saw and grist mills on Catacunemaug Brook in ca. 1748. Early roads followed the waterways connecting the mill sites with other parts of the territory. Squannacook Road followed the meandering Squannacook River while Great Road followed the course of Mulpus Brook where grist and saw mills as well as a forge were located from the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century on. Leominster Road, which passed through the southern part of the town, connected Ayer to the east with Leominster to the west and crossed Catacunemaug Brook near Hazen's mills. Shirley Center was the focus of farming and institutional activity with the first meetinghouse, burial ground, town pound and common. Early Shirley roads radiated from this center.

The Shakers had established their own community within the town of Shirley in 1793. The community kept to themselves and built many fine houses and communal buildings that now are within MCI-Shirley. In 1849 the Shakers constructed the Phoenix Mill and Pond, a cotton manufactory at Shirley Village. By the time that the cotton mill was built activity had begun to soar in Shirley Village with the advent of the Boston-Fitchburg Railroad in 1845. The railroad was a linear east-west route making the same connection as Leominster Road and Main Streets. The construction of the railroad brought immigrants, particularly Irish, to Shirley, many of whom stayed to work in the mills. By 1855 nearly 1,500 people lived in Shirley.

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the Phoenix Mill became Samson Cordage producing braided cord and rope. At about the same time the Charles A. Edgarton Company began making webbing and suspenders in its 1881 factory that was substantially expanded in 1896. It too was located on the Catacunemaug on the western side of the village. These companies operated through the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century there were networks of new roads in Shirley Village. An electric trolley route led from Ayer to Leominster along Front and Main Streets to Leominster Road. With the rise of the automobile Route 2 (now Route 2A)

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was improved along Great Road. This and the Leominster/Ayer Road were primary routes while north-south roads remained secondary routes.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century French Canadians came to work at the Samson Cordage (old Phoenix Mills), most settling in Shirley Village due to the railroad and the mills. Moderate growth continued as factories expanded and in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century immigrants arrived from Poland, Russia and Lithuania to work in Shirley's factories.

Camp Devens was established during World War I and converted to Fort Devens taking some Shirley land for housing. The presence of Fort Devens led to a population increase in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. By 2000, Shirley had a population of 6,373 residents.

## **PRIORITY HERITAGE LANDSCAPES**

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Shirley's Heritage Landscape Identification meeting, attended by approximately 15 residents, some representing town boards and local non-profit organizations, as well as several middle school students, was held on March 7, 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.

Four of these priority landscapes describe areas associated with Shirley's industrial history and demonstrate the multiple layers that many heritage landscapes have. Such layering shows the complexity and interdependence of most heritage landscapes. These landscapes, which are listed alphabetically, represent a range of scales and types of resources from individual sites such as a small agricultural structure to the 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial village along the railroad. The descriptions and recommendations included here are an initial step in identifying resources valued by the community and suggesting action strategies.

### **Ayers Creamery**

This unusual stone structure built into a small mound is located on land that was part of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century Ayers Dairy Farm. This farm had been in the Spaulding family since 1806 when Hezekiah Spaulding built the Federal style farmhouse. The original farm included land on both sides of Spaulding Road, the north side of which is rocky and slopes down to Townsend Road. The farm has been divided into house lots so that remnants of the farm are now on separate parcels with modern houses. Along the roadside are the farmhouse on one lot, the foundation of an enormous 19<sup>th</sup> century barn that was part of Spaulding farm on another lot and the creamery on the slope behind the barn foundation on yet

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another lot. The land is mounded on top of the creamery. This appears to have been done as part of construction to cover the top in order to keep it cool as there are no other mounds or drumlins on this rocky slope between Spaulding and Townsend Roads.

The face of the stone creamery forms an approximately four foot façade topped with two rows of cap stones forming a segmental arch that follows the contour of the mounded land. These top rows of stone extend beyond the façade and are made of larger stones than the façade or interior walls. A low wood door on short iron strap hinges is set into the stone façade. At its center the structure is about five feet high. An earthen mound forms the top of the structure and trees, vines and other plant material are growing on this mounded surface. The interior is lined with stone and mortar, has a vaulted ceiling and drops down about five feet below the exterior grade. Along the floor, which is covered by about a foot of water, there are pipes and a faucet head. The interior stone walls have iron stains that extend above the present water level indicating that the level fluctuates. The mounded earth on top of the structure appears to have been fabricated as the land slopes from Spaulding Road down towards Townsend Road and has no other distinct mounds such as this one.



Dr. Harold Ayers, who lived in Groton, purchased the property and operated a dairy farm here, known as Hickory Farm. Ayers remodeled the farmhouse, built a gambrel roof barn and chicken house on the south side of Spaulding Road (still extant) and probably built the creamery. This structure may have been an old root cellar that was converted to a creamery for chilling milk; however it was a good distance from the barn if Ayers used his large 20<sup>th</sup> century barn up on Spaulding Road.

### ***Recommendations***

The Hezekiah Spaulding House was documented on MHC inventory forms in the 1980s; however the Creamery was not documented at that time. Students at the Shirley Middle School gathered information about this interesting resource and presented it at the Heritage Landscape Identification meeting. Additional research is necessary to verify the use of this small interesting structure. The

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Historical Commission and the Historical Society may work together to accomplish this.

- Document the creamery using an MHC Structure Form F and the barn foundation using an Historic Archaeology Form D.
- Measure and draw the creamery as part of additional documentation to be maintained by the Historical Society and the Historical Commission.
- Discuss the possibility of a preservation restriction with the property owner to preserve this structure.

### **Green Lane**

Green Lane is an abandoned 18<sup>th</sup> century dirt road that connects Parker Road near Shirley Center with Great Road at Little Turnpike to the east. The road is privately owned and part of a 35-acre parcel that runs along a ridge. An allée of trees marks the Parker Road end of Green Lane. Presently there is no public access to Green Lane, which is reported to have views of the surrounding countryside. It is one of the only remaining ancient roads that remains in an unimproved condition.

### ***Recommendations***

This lane is privately owned therefore not accessible to the general public. Its status as a road is an important issue to understand. Discussions between the Historical Commission and the Planning Board are necessary to plan for the future of this 18<sup>th</sup> abandoned road.

- Document the ancient way on an MHC landscape form including information about how the road was used and whether it ever was a town road. This may require some deed research.
- Explore whether the lane can be used as frontage for new construction. This may require consultation with town counsel.
- Work with property owner(s) to obtain an easement for a walking trail on Green Lane. Easements may be purchased therefore it could be income producing for the property owner(s). Some communities have had the local historical society raise the funds to purchase an easement. While it may be difficult to argue for a conservation easement, a preservation easement (restriction) may be a possibility based on the historic context of Green Lane.

### **Longley Homestead and Fields**

The Longley Homestead, so named for its long association with six generations of the Longley family, comprises a ca. 1786 center-chimney Georgian house and 33 acres of surrounding pasture land and hayfields. The five-bay, side gabled, Georgian house with side and rear ells is one of the best examples of this house

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type in the area and its orientation facing south on a bend in the road and close to the road edge makes it a gateway to the National Register and Local Historic District. The house and part of the land (300 feet back from Center Road) are included in the Shirley Center Local Historic District and the property is included in the Shirley Center National Register District.

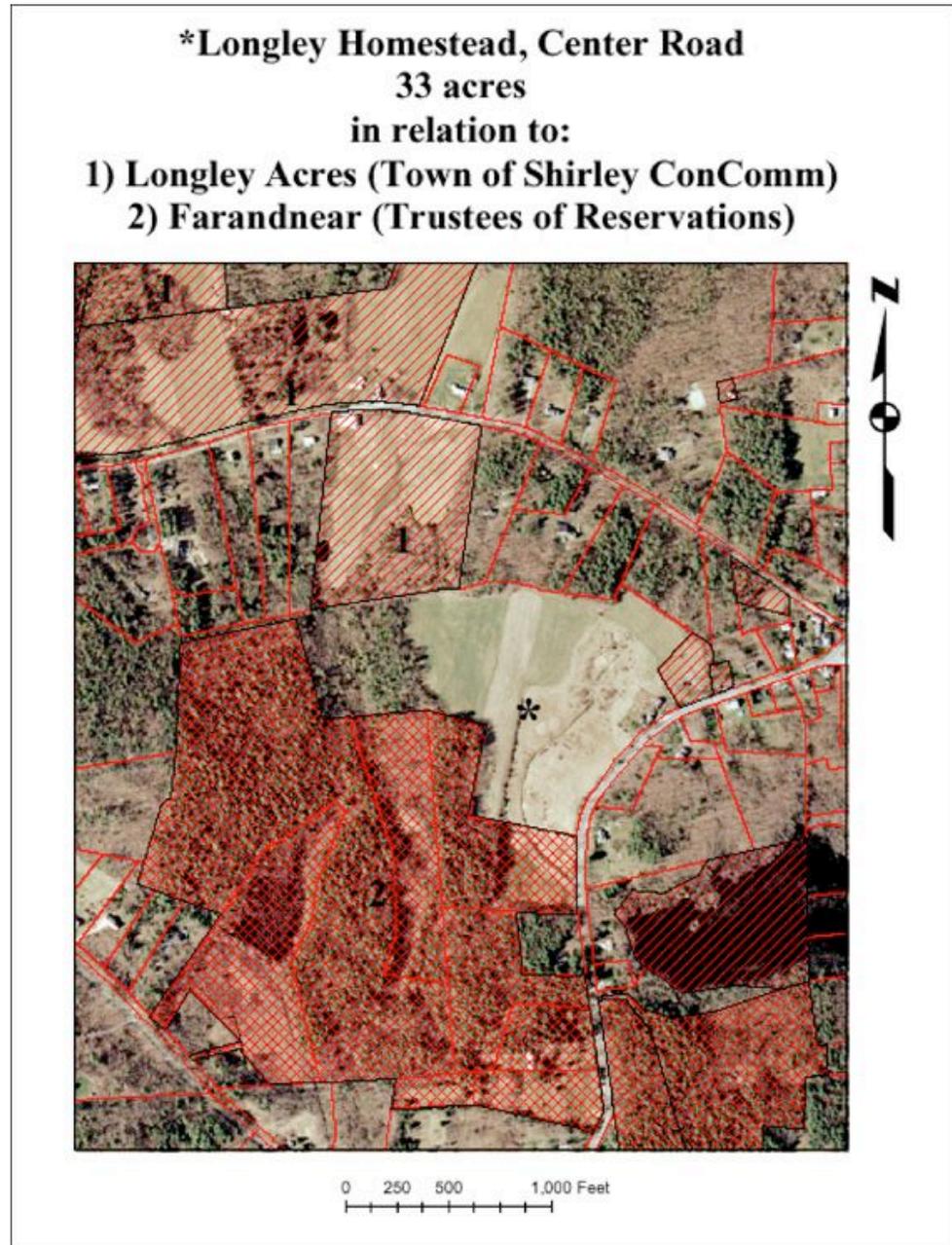
The pasture land and hayfields associated with the Longley Homestead are a critical part of this important heritage landscape. These fields are the link between protected land – the Farandnear Conservation Land donated in 2001 to the Trustees of Reservations with a life estate remaining with Arthur Banks on the south and Longley Acres on the northwest. (See map below.) The Longley Homestead fields, which presently are in Chapter 61A, are not protected and are vulnerable to development should they be sold. In addition the town instituted a sewer district which may accommodate a considerable number of houses on these 33 acres. This would drastically change this scenic gateway to the Shirley Center historic district and would result in the loss of a property that has a long history of ownership and use by the Longley family.

### ***Recommendations***

Partial protection of this important property is not enough to preserve its unique character and scenic quality as an entrance to Shirley Center. Protection of this property will require the partnerships that are inherent in this Heritage Landscape Inventory Program. Passage of the Community Preservation Act would be a giant step towards preservation of the Longley Homestead and Fields. Purchase of this property or purchase of conservation and preservation restrictions to protect this property in perpetuity would be permissible expenditures of Community Preservation Funds. Once the Act is adopted by the town, specific use of funds must be approved by Town Meeting. This property would qualify for open space and historic preservation funds. For additional information on the Community Preservation Act refer to **Funding of Preservation Projects** in the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report. In the meantime the Historical Commission should work with all relevant boards and organizations to prepare for protection of this property.

- Determine how much of the property is included in the boundaries of the local historic district.
- Document the entire property using an MHC Area Form including the farming history and use of the land.
- Work with the property owner to consider conservation and preservation restrictions (CR or PR) in conformance with M.G.L. Chapter 184, Sections 31-33. These may be purchased which would be income producing for the property owner. Some communities have successfully raised money through the local historical society to use to purchase CRs or PRs.

- Work with Shirley Conservation Commission to earmark Land Acquisition Funds to help in the purchase of this property.



### **Mulpus Brook Mill Ruins**

Mulpus Brook meanders through Shirley north of Shirley Center in a southeasterly direction from Townsend to the Nashua River which forms part of the Shirley-Ayer boundary. The area near the eastern border of Shirley was known as Woodsville, named for the Woods brothers (Robert E., Moses and Harvey) who were millers in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. A number of mills were

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constructed on the brook near Great Road and Hazen Road as early as the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Great Road has been straightened so that the layout has changed at least two times – once in 1914 and again in 1941 to the current route. Sections of the old road remain, providing access to properties that were along the ancient route; these sections are less used; and one has been truncated as a through road due to the closing of its bridge over Mulpus Brook. There are four known mill sites each with remnants of sluiceways, dams and foundations. They are discussed west to east beginning with the site of Pratt’s Mill, then the site of Harris’ grist, saw and shingle mill, followed by wheelwright shops and stave mill, and ending at Page’s mill and basket factory near the Nashua River.



Pratt’s Mill was on the north side of Mulpus Brook and an old section of Great Road (south of the modern Great Road). Remnants of this mill include stonework of a dam, sluiceways and some mill building foundations. As early as 1780 this was an industrial site using the water power of the Mulpus when it was the site of Solomon Pratt’s forge. He had married the daughter of Francis Harris who owned the nearby grist mill, thus building on his father-in-law’s land and using his water privilege. According to historic maps James Wilson’s Woolen Factory was located here in 1830 and by 1847 he had a carding mill and clothing manufactory. In the 1870s the old woolen mill was known as the “Old Red Mill” and was the site of G. Kilburn’s Turning Mill and Store.

Farther east on Mulpus Brook are the ruins of the Harris-Kilburn grist and saw mills that were first established by Francis Harris and eventually taken over by Jonathan Kilburn. The most evocative ruins on the Mulpus are just south of the Great Road on the northern banks of Mulpus Brook. A number of stone foundations, a sluiceway, remnants of the enormous stone John’s Dam and some evidence of water wheels and gears mark this area which is about 50 feet below Great Road (Rt. 2A). Remnants of a six-foot wide sluiceway running along the upper edge of the brook show the path of the water that fed into a two foot wide

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channel and dropped to the brook below turning a great water wheel. This wheel straddled two foundation walls that jut into the brook. These grist mill foundation walls rise seven feet above this cavity through which the water passed turning the wheel to power the mill. In the mid to late 18<sup>th</sup> century Francis Harris built a grist mill here which had a saw mill added in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century by Harris' son-in-law Francis Dickinson. By the early 1800s the Harris mills, under the proprietorship of Harris' heirs had failed; however they were revived when Jonathan Kilburn purchased them in 1822-23. He added a shingle mill to the saw and grist mills which continued to operate at this site throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Another set of ruins is located just below the Harris-Kilburn grist, saw and shingle mills site. Only modest remnants of stone foundation walls are evident. Joseph Estabrook built a wheelwright shop at this site which he sold to Joseph Hoar in 1819. The Estabrook wheelwright shop passed to Andrew Shattuck in 1835 and to the Woods Brothers in 1847. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century this mill had been converted to a saw and stave mill.

Remnants of the most eastern mill are less accessible due to the thickly wooded area between Great Road and this section of the brook which meanders south of the road on its way to the Nashua River. Here Peter Page built a saw mill in 1836. The Page saw mill was taken over by the Woods brothers, who had the successful wheelwright shop farther west. They were followed by Edwin and William White who added a basket factory to the saw mill where they are reported to have been producing close to 20,000 baskets per year.

### ***Recommendations***

The Shirley Historical Commission and the Historical Society have a fair amount of information including map evidence, historic photographs and measured drawings of the ruins of the most prominent of these four mill sites. Together the two groups can form a public-private partnership to thoroughly research the history of these mills and develop a plan to retain the physical evidence to tell this rich story of the mill development of Woodsville.

- Document all four mill sites using the expertise of an industrial archaeologist to properly interpret mill remnants.
- Work with property owners to acquire easements over property to access mill remnants.
- Develop interpretive plan by researching the manner in which other industrial archaeological sites have been revealed to the public.

### **Phoenix Mill Complex**

This intact mill complex, originally built by the Shakers, is at the intersection of Phoenix Street and Shaker Road in Shirley Village. It consists of several mill buildings constructed next to Phoenix Mill Pond which is an impoundment formed by damming of the Catacunemaug Brook. On the west side of the road,

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which runs along the edge of the pond, is the upper part of the Catacunemaug Brook and its adjacent marshland, an environmentally sensitive area that offers a scenic view from the road and is part of the Phoenix Mill landscape.

The most prominent building is the two-story brick mill building (140 feet long by 55 feet wide) with clerestory windows on its pitched roof and an exterior stair tower. The main façade of this building that faces the pond has had the white paint stripped from the brick, while the rest of the building retains its painted white brick walls. This tower is brick to the roof line and wood above including two stories with an octagonal top which is sheathed in decorative shingles and painted white. The land on which this main building is situated drops off so that it is three-stories on the long east side.

Perpendicular to the main factory and in front of it is a smaller brick building also constructed in 1849-51 by the Shakers. Referred to as the “Office” it is a two-story brick building under a pitched roof. The white paint has been stripped leaving the building a red brick color.

There are several additions to the main large brick factory building. The low single story wing on the east side was known as the “Picker House” and was built in ca. 1875. Large 20<sup>th</sup> century additions are connected to the original mill by enclosed walkways and these additions extend easterly towards the rear of the property. A two-story engine house, which once jutted out from the east side of the main building, has been demolished.

The Shirley Shaker community constructed the two unembellished brick structures described above in 1849-51 as a cotton mill complex. The pond also was built by the Shakers who immediately leased it to the New Bedford Steam Mill, which soon became the Phoenix Cotton Manufacturing Company. From 1885 to 1888 the mill complex was abandoned until James Pike Tolman purchased the complex and established Samson Cordage Works here, producing braided cotton cord. Samson Cordage became Samson Ocean Systems, Inc. and continued to produce cord and rope here throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Today the mill complex is incubator space for many businesses, none of which use the water power. The picturesque setting of the mill buildings on the mill pond is an important feature of Shirley Village. Tall pine trees at the ponds edge screen the parking area and provide a pleasant place to sit at the edge. An earthen dam leads out to the spillway and is fenced off which is necessary due to the lack of safety at the edge of the dam and spillway.

### ***Recommendations***

The Phoenix Mill, also known as Samson Cordage, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Shirley Village Historic District nomination. Preservation of the mill complex requires interaction among the property owner (including owners of the dam), the Historical Commission, the Historical Society, the Conservation Commission and the Park and Recreation Commission to enhance the economic viability while preserving the property and retaining its scenic value and possibly its recreational value to the public.

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- Determine ownership and responsibilities of various parts of the mill complex including dam and water rights.
  - Work with property owners to explore feasibility of allowing recreational fishing and picnicking on edge of the pond.
  - Work with dam owners and appropriate state officials at the DCR Dam Safety Office to plan for necessary repairs to the dam that forms Phoenix Mill Pond.
  - Consider economic incentives to encourage continued use of the mill buildings while requiring preservation of the character defining features of the two Shaker built structures.

### **President Mill and Catacunemaug Brook**

The Catacunemaug Brook flows through Shirley Village from west to east just north of Leominster Road until it flows under Main Street at which point it heads southwesterly between Harvard Road and Fredonian Street. The mill privilege on the brook is on the northwest side of the intersection of Leominster Road, Main Street and Lancaster Road. Some stone walls line the brook west of where it flows under the stone arched bridge carrying Main Street/Center Road over the brook. A grassy area with some remnant foundations and a few mature trees lies on the south side of the brook between the brook and the mill buildings that are near the road edge.



Two mill buildings at the site date back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The smaller of the two, known locally as Umbagog on the Catacunemaug, is a one and one-half story wood frame building under a pitched roof with a shed roof addition on the west side. This building is constructed over a sluiceway or tail race which is redirected from the Catacunemaug. The mill is built into the slope of land so that the basement level of the mill is at grade on the north side or brook side of the building and the upper level is at grade on the south or road side. Water wheels and gears remain in the building.

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The large three-story wood clapboard President Suspender Company building is a distinctive mill architecturally and historically and is in an excellent state of maintenance. This building, which is a focal point on the western edge of Shirley Village, is dominated by its square clock tower.

Industrial history of this site dates to 1749 when Samuel Hazen and William Longley built a sawmill at or near the site of the smaller wood mill structure. The existing sawmill pre dates 1875 and was eventually purchased by the President Suspender Company and used as a saw mill and box shop. The larger mill structure was built by Charles A. Edgerton, whose father had established the Fort Pond Cotton Mill in Lancaster before moving here. Edgerton ran a tape factory here in a two-story building – the western part of the existing structure. He expanded his mill in 1896 by which time the company was the second largest producer of webbing and suspenders. In 1914 the Edgerton Manufacturing Company changed its name to the President Suspender Company after Charles Edgerton's patent for suspender webbing. In the mid 1900s it became the George Frost Company producing belts, suspenders and garters. Today the factory is known as the President Building.

### ***Recommendations***

Both the President Building and the Hazen-Davis Saw Mill on the Catacunemaug are listed in the National Register of Historic Places as part of the Shirley Village Historic District nomination. Preservation of the mill buildings and mill related remnants on the brook requires interaction among the property owners, the Historical Commission, the Conservation Commission and Park and Recreation Commission. The saw mill building and grassy area adjacent to the brook would make an excellent park and museum in which to display the mill works that remain in the saw mill. A goal of any project would be to maintain the economic viability of the large President Building while preserving the buildings, retaining the scenic value and developing potential recreational and educational opportunity for the public.

- Document the saw mill including the mill works in the building and the remnants on the brook in order to understand more about the saw mill operations. Documentation must be completed by an industrial archaeologist.
- Develop a preservation plan for the Hazen & Davis saw mill and seek funding such as through the Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund to implement plan. Refer to **Funding** section of report in General Preservation Planning Recommendations.
- Explore ways in which the town can develop incentives for property owners to continue the excellent maintenance of this property.
- Negotiate with property owners to consider acquisition of land or an easement on land to be used for a small park. Seek funding to assist in acquisition if property owner is agreeable.

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## Shirley Village

Located in the southern part of town and south of Shirley Center the 18<sup>th</sup> century institutional center, Shirley Village is a linear industrial center that grew up around the mills and railroad. Main Street and the Fitchburg Railroad (1845) are the back bone running through the village connecting it with Ayer to the east and Leominster to the west. Main Street is north of the railroad corridor and Front Street, laid out in 1950s is south of the railroad.



Streets that radiate north and south are lined with mill housing. The Shirley esker, a glacially deposited linear hill, rises north of the village and runs for a long distance parallel to the railroad which was built at the foot of the esker. It is a defining village feature that helped shape the use of the land. The two major mill privileges that were the catalysts for the village development are Phoenix Mill located southeast of the linear village and the President Suspender Company on the western edge. Both are on Catacunemaug Brook and both are discussed above as priority landscapes.

Shirley Village, like Shirley Center, is listed in the National Register of Historic Places; however unlike Shirley Center it is not a local historic district. Shirley Village has good examples of historic resources that make it worthy of its National Register status: the Davis Block (1885), which was built as a hotel, housed the Red Cross during World War I and now serves as housing; the ca. 1936 brick War Memorial Building on Church Street, which houses a World War I caisson; and workers housing on Fredonian Street, Page Street and Phoenix Street among others. A small public park is in center of this linear district. Whitely Park, which is on Front Street, was given to the town by the Shakers.

Most of the commercial buildings along Main Street and Front Street have been substantially altered and several have been removed. However the presence of the railroad is an important feature that maintains the linear plan of the village and provides important activity along this active railroad corridor where the MBTA lists 200 parking spaces for commuters; however only 80+ were counted in the field. Recently installed No Parking signs on the south side of Front Street

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force commuters to park on side streets particularly Phoenix Street next to Whitely Park.



### ***Recommendations***

The Shirley Master Plan already has expressed a primary goal that will appropriately influence the future of the Village: “Preserve the historic form and pedestrian scale of Shirley Village through appropriate design and arrangement of uses suitable for a rural economic center.” The recommendations regarding: design criteria to apply to site plan approval as well as special permits; scale of new construction; and location of parking are worthy of restating here. Each concept will be further enhanced by definitive guidelines. The Historical Commission should work with the Planning Board to advocate for historic buildings and compatible design. In addition, Shirley’s decision to adopt a streetscape program funded by Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds is an appropriate way in which to guide compatible design as long as there are design standards for streetscape improvement whether it is public infrastructure or building facades.

- Develop design guidelines for alterations and new construction with input from the Historical Commission, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Appeals.
- Promote Investment Tax Credit program for substantial rehabilitation of National Register listed buildings that will be income producing.

### **CRITICAL CONCERNS**

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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 range 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.

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## Archaeology

There is a particular concern about Native American sites that are unknown and unrecognized in Shirley. Due to the many water courses, the trails that followed the Nashua River and the Squannacook and Catacunemaug Brooks and the historical record of Native American presence in nearby areas, there may be significant archaeological resources in town. Documentation of these resources is critical due to their vulnerability which is increased by the lack of knowledge. In addition there are a number of industrial archaeological sites that need thorough documentation to increase the understanding of these resources. Thus a professional archaeological investigation is the first step necessary to preserve these resources. Additional information about this documentation is recorded in the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.

## Barns

Shirley's agricultural history is articulated by the remaining barns in the agricultural landscape. An important example is the Hazen-Davis Barn on Lancaster Road, a 105 foot long New England barn of post and beam construction that was a dairy barn in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century built by Thomas Hazen. It was sold to Edward Mott Davis who established an orchard at the old Hazen farm. Across the street at the 1797 Thomas Hazen property there also is a New England barn of smaller proportions. On Whitney Road there is the Whitney-Longley Barn which is a late 19<sup>th</sup> century New England barn with a long concrete block mid 20<sup>th</sup> century dairy barn addition. Several of the Shirley Center houses retain fine barns articulating the farms that surrounded the early Common. Each barn is an example of a threatened resource, some in good condition such as those at Shirley Center, others in disrepair waiting to be demolished such as the Hazen-Davis Barn.



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## Scenic Roads and Scenic Views

Roads are the public face of Shirley, the threads that tie the community together and the corridors from which the landscape is viewed. Shirley has been fortunate to retain the traditional character of its rural roadways. Many still reflect their original alignment, width and corridor characteristics, with extant stone walls, farm fences and roadside trees. In addition to the road corridor itself, the view of adjacent open land as well as rivers and streams from the roadway play a critical role in defining rural character.

Only two of Shirley's roads, Center and Parker, are designated scenic under the Scenic Roads Bylaw; however many more are eligible. Examples that were noted by Shirley residents at the Heritage Landscape Identification meeting are Horse Pond, Lawton, Meetinghouse, Spaulding, Townsend, Whitney and Wilde Roads. Others may be Benjamin, Hazen and Holden Roads. While the character of each road is slightly different, the primary elements are the trees, stone walls and scenic vistas of agricultural land, forest and historic properties.

The scenic vistas noted above are worthy of additional consideration. These views inherently provide the scenic character of roads and are the most vulnerable characteristics. Meadows and hayfields on Whitney Road, Center Road, Longley Road and Lancaster Road form the rural character of these roads and are the noteworthy views. Information on documenting and preserving **scenic roads** as well as the land along the roads is included in the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.

## Waterways

Many brooks and streams as well as the eastern boundary of the Nashua and Squannacook Rivers wind through Shirley creating marshland, wetlands and scenic views throughout the town. In addition there are a number of ponds such as the Phoenix Mill Pond. Tophet Swamp, in the southwest corner of town, is another important natural feature with critical environmental impact. Access to these waterways and maintaining the water quality are critical issues expressed by a number of those at the Heritage Landscape Inventory meeting.

## Wildlife

The sensitivity of natural areas throughout town is tied not just to the land formation or the quality of water in the streams, but also to the wildlife inhabiting those natural areas. Several attendees of the Heritage Landscape Inventory meeting noted that protection of the wildlife in Shirley's natural landscape is critical in preserving the character and the benefit of these areas. Nearly 4,500 acres in the northern part of Shirley are included in the Squannassit Area of Critical Environment Concern (ACEC) which is a 37,000 acre ACEC extending along the Nashua River to New Hampshire. In Shirley the ACEC extends along part of the Squannacook River and Mulpus Brook as well as the Nashua River, all areas with wildlife habits.

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## **EXISTING RESOURCE DOCUMENTATION AND PLANNING TOOLS**

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Shirley 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 some of the existing planning documents and tools that provide information relevant to the Heritage Landscape Inventory program.

### **Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets**

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

According to the MHC, Shirley's inventory documents over 150 historic resources ranging from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century to 1983 (Shirley Historical Society). Most of the work was completed in 1985 when the town undertook a town-wide survey funded by MHC Survey and Planning Grant. Additional documentation of the Shirley MCI campus including Shaker buildings and Industrial School for Boys buildings was completed in the early 1990s as part of a construction project there.

Shirley has nine documented ancient Native American sites dating back to the Late Archaic Period (6,000-3,000 B.P.) and 13 documented historic archaeological sites, most of which are 19<sup>th</sup> century mill ruins. Due to the known information about other areas in the region it is apparent that archaeology in Shirley is underreported.

### **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. There are three National Register districts and one individual listing – the James Parker House (Valley Farm). The districts include the Shirley Center HD, the Shirley Village HD and the Shirley Shaker Village (at MCI-Shirley), part of which is in Lancaster. All are automatically listed in the State Register of Historic Places. One local historic district – the Shirley Center LHD which includes about 2/3 of the NR district – also is listed in the State Register.

### **Planning Documents and Tools**

In 2004 Shirley adopted the *Shirley Master Plan* which contains a discussion 17 of existing conditions, goals and strategies for the usual components including natural, cultural and historic resources. The Resource Protection Goals, at the

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front of the Plan are consistent with heritage landscape inventory and preservation. The action plan details strategies for implementing the goals. Each is worthy of the attention of the Historical Commission, Planning Board and Conservation Commission working together to implement them.

Preservation strategies adopted by Shirley include a Local Historic District Bylaw, a Demolition Delay Bylaw and a Scenic Roads Bylaw. The local historic district bylaw regulates changes made to the exterior architectural features of structures located in the Shirley Center Historic District. The Demolition Delay Bylaw gives the Historical Commission the authority to review and delay proposed demolition for up to six months for properties that are included in the inventory of Shirley's historic resources. Two roads – Parker Road and Center Road – are designated under the Shirley Scenic Roads Bylaw.

Nearly 4,500 acres in the northern part of Shirley are included in the Squannassit Area of Critical Environment Concern (ACEC) which is a 37,000 acre area extending along the Nashua River to New Hampshire. ACECs are places in Massachusetts that receive special recognition because of the quality, uniqueness and significance of their natural and cultural resources. These areas are identified and nominated at the community level and are reviewed and designated by the state's Secretary of Environmental Affairs. DCR administers the ACEC Program on behalf of the Secretary and closely coordinates with other state agency programs in implementing the goals of ACEC designation. Within ACECs, projects with state agency actions, permits, or funding require closer scrutiny through the MEPA environmental review process to avoid, minimize, and mitigate damage to the environment. Local and regional stewardship of ACEC resources is achieved through the shared efforts of citizens and public and private partners and groups who work together. For more information, see <http://www.mass.gov/dcr/stewardship/acec/index.htm>.

## **GENERAL PRESERVATION PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS**

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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.

Shirley's residents place high value on the community's strong sense of place, which is created by its varied natural features and land use patterns that make use of the fertile land. The town has already taken measures to document and evaluate its most significant buildings and natural areas. It is now looking beyond the traditional resources to the landscapes, streetscapes, rural roads, urban neighborhoods and other natural and cultural assets that define the overall fabric of the community. Like most municipalities, Shirley is facing multiple pressures for change that threaten land-based uses and natural resources, especially its remaining farming areas. Special places within the community that were once taken for granted are now more vulnerable than ever to change.

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

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

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

### **Inventory of Heritage Landscapes**

The goals and methodology of Shirley's 2002 inventory project were similar to those of the Heritage Landscape Inventory Program and in some cases have addressed the resources in a similar fashion. Many resources will appear on both lists. The vital first step in developing preservation strategies for heritage landscapes is to record information about the resources on MHC inventory forms. One cannot advocate for something unless one knows precisely what it is – the physical characteristics and the historical development. The resources discussed in this Reconnaissance Report that have not been documented should be included in the next inventory project. Thus, using the Massachusetts Historical Commission survey methodology:

- Compile a list of resources that are under-represented or not sufficiently documented, beginning with heritage landscapes.
- Document unprotected resources first, beginning with the most threatened resources.
- Make sure to document secondary features on rural and residential properties, such as outbuildings, stone walls and landscape elements.
- Record a wide range of historic resources including landscape features and industrial resources.
- Conduct a community-wide archaeological reconnaissance survey to identify patterns of ancient Native American and historic occupation and to identify known and probable locations of archaeological resources associated with these patterns. Known and potential ancient Native American and historic archaeological sites should be documented in the field for evidence of their cultural association and/or integrity. All survey work should be completed

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by a professional archaeologist who meets the professional qualifications (950 CMR 70.01) outlined in the State Archaeologist Permit Regulations (950 CMR 70.00). The Inventory of Archaeological Assets of the Commonwealth contains sensitive information about archaeological sites. The inventory is confidential; it is not a public record (G.L. c. 9, ss. 26A (1)). Care should be taken to keep archaeological site information in a secure location with restricted access. Refer to the MHC article "Community-Wide Archaeological Surveys" which appeared in the Preservation Advocate, Fall 2005 which can be found at the following MHC link:<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/pafall05.pdf>.

### **National Register Program**

Survey work will require an evaluation as to whether resources meet the qualifications for National Register listing. Using the information generated in the survey work and the accompanying National Register evaluation, Shirley should expand its National Register program to augment the three National Register districts and single property nomination that already exist.

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

### **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. Shirley has adopted two other traditional preservation tools; a demolition delay bylaw and a local historic district bylaw and designation (M.G.L. Chapter 40C). Another preservation strategy is the neighborhood architectural conservation district that may be appropriate for some areas of Shirley.

- **Local historic districts**, adopted through a local initiative, recognize special areas within a community where the distinctive characteristics of buildings and places are preserved and protected by the designation. These districts are the strongest form of protection for the preservation of historic resources. They are adopted by a 2/3 vote of the Town Meeting and administered by a district commission appointed by the Board of Selectmen. Shirley has adopted a bylaw and has one local historic district at Shirley Center, the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century institutional town center.
- A **demolition delay bylaw** already has been adopted by Shirley; however the parameters for what is reviewed are limited. As the town knows, a demolition delay bylaw provides a time period in which the town can consider alternatives to demolition. Once the process of review under demolition delay has been established (Shirley's demolition delay bylaw is

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less than one year old) the Historical Commission may consider extending the delay period from six months to one year. In addition the practice of sending a better notification for demolition delay hearings is one more way to educate residents about the significance of Shirley's historic resources.

- **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 conservation district designation is appropriate for residential neighborhoods that may have less integrity and where more flexibility is needed. The Shirley Historical Commission should work with MHC staff to determine how a neighborhood conservation district can help to preserve Shirley Village's residential neighborhood.

### **Scenic Roads**

Scenic roads are an integral part of the historic fabric of the community. They are highly valued by Shirley residents and visitors alike and were listed as a critical issue. Roads must also accommodate modern transportation needs and decisions regarding roadways are often made with travel requirements as the only consideration. Shirley already has adopted the Scenic Roads Act (MGL Chapter 40-15C) and designated two roads for which there must be review and approval for the removal of trees and stone walls that are within the right-of-way. Yet, in addition to roadway issues, much of what we value about scenic roads -- the stone walls, views across open fields -- is not within the public right-of-way. The preservation and protection of scenic roads therefore requires more than one approach.

- Complete an inventory with descriptions and photo documentation of each of the roads in Shirley including the character defining features that should be retained.
- Amend the Scenic Roads Bylaw by designating additional roads as scenic.
- Amend the Scenic Roads Bylaw by adding design criteria to be considered when approving removal of trees and stone walls. Add other design criteria such as a provision allowing only one driveway cut per property on scenic roads. Coordinate procedures between Highway Department and Planning Board.
- Consider a scenic overlay district which may provide a no-disturb buffer on private property bordering on scenic roads or adopt flexible zoning standards to protect certain views. Such bylaws also could be written to apply to the numbered routes such as Great Road (Rt. 2A) and Groton Road (Rt. 225), which cannot be not protected under the Scenic Roads Bylaw.
- Develop policies and implementation standards for road maintenance and reconstruction, including bridge reconstructions, which address the scenic

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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 Massachusetts Highway Department. Such standards should have a section addressing the way in which the local Highway Department maintains roads, for example requiring a public hearing if any new pavement width 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 and posted speeds. A delicate balance is required.

### **Funding of Preservation Projects**

Funding for preservation projects is an important aspect of implementing preservation strategies. Both the MHC and DCR have had funding programs to assist communities in preservation related issues including:

- **Survey and Planning Grants**, administered by the MHC, support survey, National Register and preservation planning work.
- The **Massachusetts Preservation Projects Fund (MPPF)**, administered by the MHC, funds restoration and rehabilitation projects.
- The **Historic Landscape Preservation Grant Program (HLPGP)**, administered by DCR, funds planning, rehabilitation, education and stewardship projects focused on historic landscapes, including cemeteries.

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

Towns that have adopted the **Community Preservation Act (CPA)** find it to be an excellent funding source for many heritage landscape projects; however Shirley first would have to adopt the Act. While tricky to pass in lean economic times, the number and types of projects that are benefiting across the Commonwealth make the CPA worthy of consideration. Shirley 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. In addition a preservation restriction program could be established using CPA funds. 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.

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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](http://www.communitypreservation.org).

Towns, like Shirley, which 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**

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The Shirley Reconnaissance Report is a critical tool in starting to identify the rich and diverse heritage landscapes in Shirley and in beginning to think about preservation strategies. Shirley will have to determine the best way to implement the recommendations discussed above. One approach that might help Shirley 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 Shirley in preserving important features of the community's character. The recommended tasks will require cooperation and coordination among boards and commissions, particularly Shirley's Historical Commission, Planning 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 Shirley's heritage landscapes.

**APPENDIX: HERITAGE LANDSCAPES IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY**

This list was generated by local participants at the Heritage Landscape Identification Meeting held in Shirley on March 7, 2006 and the follow-up fieldwork on April 20, 2006. **There are undoubtedly other heritage landscapes that were not identified at the HLI meeting noted above.** The chart has two columns, the names and locations of resources are in the first; notes about resources are in the second. Landscapes are grouped by land use category. Abbreviations used are listed below.

ACEC = Area of Critical Environmental Concern      APR = Agricultural Preservation Restriction  
 CR = Conservation Restriction                      LHD = Local Historic District  
 NR = National Register                                PR = Preservation Restriction  
 \* = Priority Landscape                                 + = Part of a Priority Landscape

<b>Agriculture</b>	
<b><i>Ayers Creamery</i></b> * 5 Spaulding Rd.	Once was part of 13 Spaulding Road – the Hezekiah Spaulding property with the 1806 Federal style house, later known as Hickory Farm. Appears to be an 19 <sup>th</sup> century root cellar converted to a creamery in the early 1900s by Dr. Harold Ayers who ran pipes from a spring to this cellar to cool milk produced as his dairy here.
<b><i>Ball Farm</i></b> Townsend Rd.	Also known as the Comstock Farm. Pasture land with 80 acres on one side of the road and 12 on the other, which has been subdivided by plan only but not yet built. Fine view over the land to Fish and Wildlife land.
<b><i>Cranberry Bog</i></b> Holden Rd.	On the Farandnear Conservation Land which has been deeded to the Trustees of Reservations with a life tenancy to the former owner, Arthur Banks.
<b><i>Hazen-Davis Barns</i></b> Lancaster Rd.	Large New England barn dating from the mid 19 <sup>th</sup> century the Hazen-Davis Barn is 105’ long by 40’ wide. It was a dairy barn until 1910 when property was sold to Davis family who established orchards here.
<b><i>Lawton Road Hayfields</i></b>	Two small fields.
<b><i>Longley Farm</i></b> Whitney Rd.	A town-owned 73-acre site called Longley Acres Conservation Area. Proceeds from haying help maintain property.
<b><i>Pasture and Hayfield</i></b> Center Road	Associated with the Longley Homestead but now under separate ownership.
<b><i>Pasture and Hayfield</i></b> Longley Road	
<b><i>Valley Farm</i></b> Center Rd.	The James Parker House and surrounding farm on Spruce Brook Swamp. Once had a cider mill, hop house and barn. The house was built in ca. 1720 and ca. 1797. Listed in National Register.

<b>Archaeological</b>	
<b><i>Native American Sites</i></b>	Unidentified sites particularly along waterways, with an emphasis on Mulpus Brook.
<b>Burial Grounds and Cemeteries</b>	
<b><i>Center Cemetery</i></b>	Part of the Shirley Center NR District and the Shirley Center LHD. The 5.86 acre-cemetery at Brown and Horse Pond Roads faces the Common and is across Horse Pond Road from the First Parish Church. It was established in 1775. The cemetery has many slate stones from the late 18 <sup>th</sup> and early 19 <sup>th</sup> century. A granite post and iron railing fence encloses the burial ground. There is no additional space for burials in this cemetery.
<b><i>Village Cemetery</i></b>	11.84 acres located in Shirley Village it is part of the Village NR HD.
<b>Civic</b>	
<b><i>Civil War Memorial</i></b> The Common	The Civil War Memorial was erected on the Common in ca. 1875.
<b><i>Hazen Library</i></b> 3 Keadey Way	New library is an important community center with “everything that you need” states one student who nominated this.
<b><i>Old Town Hall</i></b> Shirley Center	Part of NR district and LHD in Shirley Center. Girl Scouts and other groups meet here. At the center of important historical sites.
<b><i>Shirley Center</i></b> Horsepond, Parker, Whitney Rds.	NR and LHD. Institutional and residential buildings surrounding the Town Common including the Old Town Hall (1849-50), the Shirley Center Cemetery (1720), the Meetinghouse (1773), Town Pound, Hearse House and home of Benton MacKaye (1879-1975) – Appalachian Trail and regional planner. There are underground utilities, which is an important asset in Shirley Center.
<b><i>Shirley Village *</i></b>	Railroad corridor and village that grew up around mills and railroad.
<b><i>Town Pound</i></b> The Common	Part of Shirley Center NR district (not in Shirley Center LHD as it is just outside boundary). Located at Shirley Center behind and on the east side of the old Town Hall. It was built in 1773.
<b>Commercial</b>	
<b><i>Davis Block +</i></b> Davis Road	Part of Shirley Village NR district. Three-story brick building constructed in 1885 in Depot Square which was a hotel with store fronts, Red Cross office during WW I and now apartments.
<b><i>Roux Market +</i></b>	A place where “kids hang out” states student nominator.

<b><i>Sheila-Ann Diner</i></b> Lancaster Rd.	Also called the Airport Diner it was moved from Clinton in 1967. Was built by the Worcester Lunch Car Company in 1931.
<b>Industrial</b>	
<b><i>Charles A. Edgerton Co. *</i></b> Leominster Rd.	In NR district. This wood frame and clapboard 1881 mill (1890 addition, 1896 clock tower, mid 20 <sup>th</sup> century additions) was built for the Edgerton Company which was established in 1872 to make tape and later suspenders. In 1914 changed its name to President Suspender Company and in the mid 20 <sup>th</sup> century to George Frost Company which continued to make belts, suspenders and garters throughout the 20 <sup>th</sup> century. Today referred to as the President's Building which has been "restored to perfection and symbolized the change in the economy" according to a student's nomination.
<b><i>Mill Sites *</i></b> Mulpus Brook, Rt. 2A, Great Rd.	Several former mill sites with remnants of mills. White Mill was on Mulpus Brook near Route 2A and there were sites off the old Great Road.
<b><i>Phoenix Mills *</i></b> Phoenix St.	In NR district. At the intersection of Phoenix Street and Shaker Road. A three-story brick mill building with exterior stair tower constructed in 1849-51 by the Shakers as a cotton mill. From 1889 it was Samson Cordage Works on Phoenix Mill Pond, an impoundment formed by damming of the Catacunemaug Brook. The mill pond now is important for its recreational use and wetland and small island within the pond on other side of Phoenix Street.
<b>Institutional</b>	
<b><i>Lura A. White School</i></b> Lancaster Rd.	Built in 1937 the brick school displays the Georgian Revival style. Built to accommodate the South Shirley (Village) population and represents the shift away from small district schools to consolidation. It is important to keep this school open so that the Middle School does not become too crowded according to student nominator.
<b><i>Schoolhouse #8</i></b> Church St.	Built in 1848 it is a one-room brick schoolhouse in the Greek Revival style. It was constructed to accommodate the growing number of students at Schoolhouse #3 so that those living north of the Catacunemaug Brook attended this new school. When the Lura A. White School was built on Lancaster Rd. in 1937 this school closed.
<b><i>Shirley Middle School Auditorium</i></b> Perimeter Rd.	A place where students "rehearse, perform and make friends" states student nominator.
<b><i>Shirley Shaker Village</i></b> Harvard Rd.	Shirley Shaker Village, established by United Society of Believers who gathered at Shirley in the late 18 <sup>th</sup> century. As the sect died out there land and buildings were sold to the Industrial School for Boys in 1909. Shaker buildings were reused and the campus was laid out in a "Plan for the Arrangement of Buildings and Roads" by Arthur Shurtleff (later Shurcliff) in 1914. In 1971 the complex was transferred to the Massachusetts Department of Correction and now is known as MCI-Shirley.

<b>War Memorial Building</b> Church St.	Now the VFW Post where the artillery caisson from World War I which belongs to the American Legion is housed. The brick two-story building was constructed in ca. 1936 in the Colonial Revival style, designed by Harold E. Mason and built as a WPA project. The building was enlarged during WW II and has been owned by the town on and off since its construction.
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	
<b>Bull Run View</b> Great (Rt. 2) & Longley Roads	Bull Run Tavern is on one side of the intersection and the Captain Smith House on the other. A covered bridge is behind the tavern.
<b>Indian</b> Great Rd.	A wooden Indian figure which is not the original Indian.
<b>Natural</b>	
<b>Devens North Post Woods &amp; Vernal Pools</b>	Between Walker Road and Nashua River. Unusual cluster of 12 vernal pools in one area, known as Pond's Point Vernal Pools. Connection between Oxbow Wildlife Refuge and town protected lands across Walker Road make it a much larger open space important at the regional landscape scale.
<b>Open Space /Parks</b>	
<b>Ballfields</b>	Near Lura White School. Soccer fields near Center School on Parker Road.
<b>Benjamin Hill</b>	Land on the east side of Benjamin Hill Road adjacent to the town parkland. Also an old farm pond in Benjamin Hill area. The Benjamin Hill Complex includes the parkland, a pool, the Benjamin Hill Ski Area and conservation land.
<b>Fredonian Nature Center</b>	Has gazebo, fishing.
<b>Grassy Area in Village</b>	The grassy area between the railroad station and the Laundromat parking lot is an important character defining feature in the village.
<b>Holden Woods</b> Horse Pond Rd.	Extending from Rt. 2A to Shirley Center and Hazen Road.
<b>Hunting Hill</b> Hunting Hill & Townsend Rds.	31 acres of town-owned land on Lunenburg line. The hill is in Townsend, Lunenburg and Shirley and much of the land is protected by ownership of Department of Fish and Wildlife.
<b>Longley Acres Conservation Area</b>	Meadow. Now conservation land. Also listed under Agriculture for its farming history and present haying of fields.

<b><i>Paradise</i></b>	A hemlock grove with a waterfall and shale ledge between Goodspeed Banks and Longley properties. Part of Far and Near, a TTOR property.
<b><i>Power Line Right of Way</i></b>	Important corridor for wildlife.
<b><i>Rich Tree Farm Conservation Area</i></b> Walker Rd.	A town owned forest that once was a farm.
<b><i>The Running Place</i></b> Off Wilde Rd.	A wooded area off Wilde Road which has been called the Running Place by families in immediate area as a place to run dogs. Woodpeckers' habitat.
<b><i>Shirley Middle School Field</i></b>	View across this field to the river.
<b><i>Spaulding Link Trail</i></b>	Trail linking 1,009 acres of Town-owned conservation land and Division of Fisheries and Wildlife land in northern Shirley, Townsend, and Groton with 577 acres of Shirley and Lunenburg Town-owned land and DFW land to the south. The parcel which the trail traverses is the only remaining undeveloped land that could directly connect these two areas. The northern area is the Shirley Pumpkin Brook Conservation Area and the DFW Squannacook River Wildlife Management Area. The southern area is generally the Hunting Hill area. This southern area ultimately connects through the 296 acre Lunenburg Town Forest to the 328 acre Cowdrey Nature Center in Lunenburg. The Spaulding link trail runs south from Spaulding Road along the Shirley-Townsend border, connecting the Shirley Pumpkin Brook conservation area with the Shirley Townsend Road conservation area. The trail is on a parcel identified as Shirley tax parcel 117 A 1.
<b><i>War Memorial Park</i></b>	This park "reminds us of the great veterans" from Shirley states student nominator.
<b>Residential</b>	
<b><i>Longley Homestead*</i></b> Center Rd.	Part of the Shirley Center NR and LHD. Built in ca. 1786 and owned by the same family for six generations. Five-bay, side gabled, center chimney Georgian house with rear ells. Associated with the Longley pasture and hayfield on Center Road.
<b><i>Parker Homestead Center Rd.</i></b>	The James Parker House was constructed in ca. 1720 and ca. 1797 as a First Period one-room house expanded to its Georgian appearance by Parker. Also important for its surrounding agricultural landscape. See listing for Valley Farm under Agriculture.
<b><i>Pound Hill Place</i></b> Center Rd.	This substantial brick Federal house was constructed in 1832 for James Parker, Jr. on land that had been part of the Longley Farm. This property is opposite Valley Farm where Parker grew up. The house was unoccupied in the late 19 <sup>th</sup> century until the Charles Knowles Bolton family purchased and restored it for their summer residence which they called Pound Hill Place. Set back from the road on nearly 40 acres.
<b><i>Shirley Shaker Village</i></b> Harvard Rd.	NR. This is an ethnographic landscape that now is contained within MCI-Shirley. It consists of 11 remaining buildings that constituted the Shaker Village – residences and farm buildings.

<b><i>Shirley Village *</i></b>	NR mill village with railroad, commercial and industrial sites and examples of mill housing from the early 19 <sup>th</sup> century on.
<b>Transportation</b>	
<b><i>Boston to Fitchburg Railroad Corridor +</i></b>	Linear development is an important feature of Shirley Village. The Fitchburg Railroad, chartered in 1842 as a connector between the Charlestown Branch Railroad in West Cambridge to Fitchburg, was extended to Shirley Village in 1844 and the full line was operating by 1845. The railroad is still in operation with a stop at Shirley Village.
<b><i>Covered Bridge</i></b>	Behind Bull Run Tavern.
<b><i>Great Road (Rt. 2A)</i></b>	Western end (from McNiffs') to Lunenburg line.
<b><i>Green Lane *</i></b>	An abandoned 18 <sup>th</sup> century road within 35-acre private property which runs along a ridge. Site of first meetinghouse.
<b><i>Horse Pond Road</i></b>	Scenic quality.
<b><i>Lawton Road</i></b>	Scenic quality.
<b><i>Main Street Bridge</i></b>	This ca. 1880s stone-arched bridge crosses the Catacunemaug Brook and became the link between Shirley Village and Shirley Center as well as the merging of roads from Lancaster, Leominster and Harvard to cross this brook.
<b><i>Meetinghouse Road</i></b>	Scenic quality.
<b><i>Spaulding Road</i></b>	Scenic quality.
<b><i>Scenic Roads</i></b>	Parker and Center Roads.
<b><i>Shirley Airport Lancaster Rd.</i></b>	The airport is in the southern most part of Shirley north of Route 2. Just outside the airport on Lancaster Road is the Sheila-Ann or Airport Diner, a Worcester Lunch Car, built in 1931 and moved here from Clinton in 1967.
<b><i>Shirley Village Train Station</i></b>	Important link for the village with the stop that encourages commuting and “brings family to Shirley to visit” states student nominator.
<b><i>Trolley Infrastructure Tophet Swamp</i></b>	Trolley bed is still visible within the swamp.
<b><i>Townsend Road</i></b>	Scenic quality.
<b><i>Whitney Road</i></b>	Scenic quality.
<b><i>Wilde Road</i></b>	Scenic quality.

<b>Waterbodies</b>	
<b><i>Catacunemaug Brook</i></b>	This brook flows down through Shirley under Main Street Bridge to Phoenix Pond with mill sites along the way. The brook flows through part of the Shirley Village Historic District (NR district). Important medium yield aquifers and municipal water supplies are located along the brook. On Leominster Road there is a storage building on the site of a early saw mill (MHC#158) that spans the brook.
<b><i>Leatherboard Pond</i></b> Leominster Rd.	Man-made pond – impoundment for mills from Bow Brook which connects Leatherboard Pond to Tophet Swamp.
<b><i>Mulpus Brook *</i></b>	This brook flows from Lunenburg in a southwesterly direction to the Nashua River along the Shirley-Ayer border. A number of mills were constructed on the banks of Mulpus Brook. The brook has important wetlands, floodplains and wildlife habitat along its edges. It is categorized as a “medium Stressed” brook, which means that there should be careful review of activities impacting water resources and stream flow.
<b><i>Nashua River</i></b>	The river forms the eastern boundary of Shirley separating it from Harvard and Ayer. It joins with the Squannacook River on its way north to the Merrimack River in New Hampshire. this part of the river is included in the Squannassit ACEC.
<b><i>Squanacook River</i></b>	The river forms the eastern boundary between Shirley and Groton. It joins with the Nashua River. This high-quality river has been designated by the state under the MA rivers Sanctuary Act of 195 as having outstanding resources waters for cold water fisheries.
<b><i>Tophet Swamp</i></b> Leominster Rd.	Located in the southwestern part of town.
<b><i>Walker Brook</i></b>	A coldwater stream of high quality in which native freshwater mussels survive. Brook runs through Rich Tree Farm under Walker Road to the Nashua River at the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge.

# SHIRLEY OPENSOURCE & HISTORIC RESOURCES

## High Priority Heritage Landscapes

1. Ayers Creamery
2. Green Lane
3. Mulpus Brook Mill Ruins
4. Phoenix Mill & Pond
5. President Mill and Catacunemaug Area Brook
6. Shirley Village

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

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

0 0.25 0.5 Miles

