

WESTFORD 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:

Hay Field at Concord and Carlisle Roads
Stone-arch Bridge along Red Line
Horse Trough Planter on Common

CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Westford History	2
Priority Heritage Landscapes.	3
Forge Village	
Graniteville	
Red Line	
Snake Meadow Hill	
Stony Brook	
Town Center	
Critical Concerns	7
Agriculture	
Mill Housing	
Quarries	
Scenic Roads and Views	
Existing Resource Documentation and Planning Tools	9
Inventory of Historic and Archaeological Assets	
State and National Registers of Historic Places	
Planning Documents and Tools	
General Preservation Planning Recommendations	11
Inventory of Heritage Landscapes	
National Register Program	
Village and Neighborhood Character	
Agricultural Landscapes	
Scenic Roads	
Funding of Preservation Projects	
Conclusion	15
Appendix: Heritage Landscapes Identified by Community	16

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.

WESTFORD HISTORY

Relatively little is known about the Native American history of Westford, which has only one confirmed site that preceded European settlement. Algonquin speaking tribes inhabited the area between the Concord and the Merrimack Rivers. The Nipmuc tribe lived along Westford's wetlands, brooks and ponds. Several probable native sites have been identified near Forge Pond. Projectile points found in the vicinity also indicate hunting activity throughout the Westford area.

Westford, located at the northeastern edge of the Freedom's Way area, was originally an outlying part of Chelmsford. European settlers arrived here in the late 17th century and established transportation routes following native trails. The town was incorporated in 1729 with a small village center located on Tadmuck Hill (Westford Center) and roads radiating outwards. At that time there were 78 landowners. As the community grew, the village center remained the focal point, with meetinghouse and residences built around the common.

During the Colonial Period (1675-1775) most of Westford's early residents were farmers living either in the village center or on outlying farms. Westford's population at the time of the Revolutionary War was around 1,200. The town center grew rapidly during the Federal Period (1775-1830) when many of its characteristic buildings were built.

During the Colonial Period an industrial center developed at Forge Village along Beaver Brook in the southwestern part of town. Initially there was a grist mill and later iron was manufactured from bog ore. With the arrival of the railroad in 1848 Forge Village became the site of large-scale iron manufacturing and later woolen products. The railroad also contributed to the growth of Graniteville just to the north of Forge Village, which emerged as a major location for manufacturing of machinery as well as quarrying of local granite. Later production switched to woolen manufacturing. The Abbot Woolen Mill remained active into the 1950s.

The late 19th century was a time of rapid growth at Forge Village and Graniteville as industrial activity increased. Extensive housing was built to accommodate those coming to work in the mills and quarries, including Irish, Scottish and Russian immigrants. It was also a time of civic growth in the town center with new town hall, library and schools.

Despite the presence of industrial activity, life in Westford was dominated by agriculture until the mid-20th century. The number of residents nearly doubled from 1945 to 1960, with the greatest growth in the town center. In the 1960s construction of Route 495 made Westford more accessible to commuters and shifted the focus of commercial activity to the southern part of town along Route 110. Today Westford is mostly a bedroom community with an emphasis on high technology. The population in 2004 was about 21,500.

PRIORITY HERITAGE LANDSCAPES

Westford's Heritage Landscape Identification meeting, attended by approximately 11 residents, some representing town boards and local non-profit organizations was held on May 22, 2006. During the meeting residents compiled a lengthy list of the town's heritage landscapes, which is included in the Appendix. Once the comprehensive list was created, attendees were asked to articulate the value of each landscape and the issues relating to its preservation. Based on the information gathered, community members identified a group of priority landscapes to be visited by the consulting team during the fieldwork. Each of the priority landscapes is highly valued, contributes to community character and is not permanently protected or preserved.

These landscapes, which are listed alphabetically, represent a range of scales and types of resources from individual properties to entire neighborhoods. Several include areas that have multiple layers. For example a neighborhood that is considered a heritage landscape may also include specific features that are individually recognized as heritage landscapes. Such layering shows the complexity and interdependence that are characteristic of most heritage landscapes. The descriptions and recommendations included here are an initial step in identifying resources valued by the community and suggesting action strategies.

Forge Village

Forge Village is an industrial village in the southwestern part of Westford that was established during the Colonial Period and remained an active manufacturing center into the 1950s. The village lies along the northern edge of Forge Pond, which provides the waterpower for the mills. Stony Brook, the outflow from the pond, flows north through the center of the village. The dominant architectural feature is the Abbot Mill complex, a group of primarily brick structures with a distinctive tower that is visible throughout the village. There are several smaller commercial and industrial buildings, but the majority of the buildings in Forge Village are workers' housing in a variety of styles and types, most dating from the mid-19th century into the early 20th century. Another prominent feature of the area is the former Boston and Maine Railroad line that runs along Stony Brook. Forge Village is a compact, well-preserved area that retains its village character.

Westford has taken an important step in documenting and preserving the historic resources of Forge Village by listing it in the National Register. The next logical step would be establishing a **neighborhood architectural conservation district**. For information about the benefits of this type of district, as well as other **strategies for preserving historic neighborhoods**, see the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report. As stated in the 2003 Westford Master Plan, a village plan for Forge Village would be a guide for future development that could address important historic preservation issues as well such as design guidelines for new development, for infrastructure improvements and changes to historic resources.



Graniteville

Graniteville is an industrial and residential area north of Forge Village that also owes its existence to the waterpower of Stony Brook and the presence of the railroad. The two primary architectural features are the Abbot Worsted Company Mill #1, a two-story granite building, and the C.G. Sargent Machine Shop, also of granite. The area also includes small-scale commercial buildings, a church, a school and many residential buildings, most dating from the mid-19th to the mid-20th century. The residences are primarily one-and two-family mill workers' housing but on the west side of North Main Street there are also several larger houses on spacious lots that were built for mill managers and owners. Other features include Stony Brook and the Mill Pond, as well as the railroad. The granite quarries that gave the village its name are located in the hills nearby. Most are no longer active. While Graniteville is part of the industrial heritage of Westford, it is less well known than Forge Village and less visually cohesive.

Westford has taken an important step in documenting and preserving the historic resources of Graniteville by listing it in the National Register. The next logical step would be establishing a **neighborhood architectural conservation district**. For information about the benefits of this type of district, as well as other **strategies for preserving historic neighborhoods**, see the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.

Red Line

The Red Line is an abandoned railroad right-of-way that runs through the western part of Westford in more or less a northwest-southeast direction. It was also identified as a priority landscape by Dunstable. One of the most dramatic sections is the raised earthen trestle that carries the railroad over Stony Brook between Forge Village and Graniteville. The trestle is supported by a 20' tall dry-laid stone arch bridge over the brook, built with massive blocks of local granite. Wooden steps constructed by local Boy Scouts lead from the trail down

to the banks of the stream. The trail along the railroad bed extends some distance to the southeast but only a few hundred feet to the northwest as there is no bridge over the former Boston and Maine Railroad tracks where they intersect the Red Line near Town Farm Road.

While some sections of the Red Line have been converted to a trail, other sections have not been completed for several reasons. One problem is that some sections of rail corridor are now in private ownership, making completion of the rail-trail difficult. Another is that some sections require expensive infrastructure such as bridges, which are costly and sometimes raise the issue of liability.

The rail-trail movement is very active in the Freedom's Way area, with many important successes. While the Westford section of the Red Line remains fragmented, sections through adjacent towns are further along. Creation of rail-trails requires patience, teamwork, good negotiating skills and strong community support. The Conservation Commission and the Westford Conservation Trust are logical partners in this work but they should also reach out to others who may be able to offer support, particularly the Historical Commission which can identify historic resources along the route.

- Develop a parcel-by-parcel corridor inventory to determine ownership and where possible to evaluate onsite conditions.
- Seek technical assistance from other rail-trail groups who have had experience in implementing such projects and in negotiating with owners who may not initially be responsive.
- Work with adjacent communities of Tyngsborough and Acton to coordinate issues along the Red Line.



Snake Meadow Hill

Snake Meadow Hill, located just west of Graniteville, was the site of many of Westford's 19th century granite quarries. The southeastern portion of the hill is included in the Graniteville National Register district. In Westford's 2002 *Open Space and Recreation Plan* it was recommended that a nomination for an Area of Critical Environmental Concern be prepared for this area because of its size, value as wildlife habitat, historical significance, proximity to other large parcels of open space and the likely occurrence of rare species. The hill has also been identified as a high priority site for affordable housing.

Snake Meadow Hill is typical of many heritage landscapes in that it has multiple natural and cultural values. It is considered both prime open space and highly desirable for development. Solutions to this dilemma must be multi-faceted. Acquisition of key parcels for conservation purposes is obviously an important, although expensive, strategy that must be used in combination with tools such as creative zoning alternatives and careful land stewardship. Also key to the future of the hill is cooperation among the many stakeholders: landowners, various town departments, non-profit organizations such as the Westford Conservation Trust, abutters and others who use the area.

Stony Brook

Stony Brook begins at the outflow to Forge Pond in Forge Village and meanders northeasterly through the Mill Pond in Graniteville and through several smaller ponds and eventually flows into Chelmsford. It is narrow and somewhat channelized in some places and widens out into broad marshes in others. North of Graniteville, Stony Brook flows primarily through backland and is not highly visible, although there are a few crossings where long distance views are possible. The high granite-arched bridge that carries the Red Line over Stony Brook is one of the most dramatic viewing points.

Stony Brook has both natural and cultural values. Its shores were occupied by Native Americans and it was later used to provide water power for the mills at Forge Village and Graniteville. It is a scenic feature of the town, serves important flood control functions, provides valuable habitat and some parts are used for recreational purposes. Issues founded at Stony Brook are typical of those associated with many similar streams in the Freedom's Way area: water quality, flooding, dam safety, impacts of development, invasive vegetation and public access. Solutions must also be multi-faceted. Acquisition of land along the brook for conservation purposes is obviously an important, although expensive, strategy that must be used in combination with regulatory tools and careful land stewardship. Also key to the future of the brook is cooperation among the many stakeholders: various town departments, non-profit organizations such as the Westford Conservation Trust, abutters of the brook and others who use it.

Westford Center Area

Westford Center is the residential and civic center of the community. It contains a variety of institutional, commercial and residential buildings including churches, schools, library, town hall, police/fire station and museum. The focal point is the large triangular common with rows of mature deciduous trees, lush green lawn and many monuments. The majority of the buildings are residences, most dating from the 19th and early 20th century. They represent a range of styles popular from that period. Many of the houses are set on large lots of more than an acre, have extant carriage houses or barns and mature plantings. Westford Center presents an overall impression of a cohesive, affluent well-maintained New England village. The town center has been designated a National Register Historic District.

Westford has taken an important step in documenting and preserving the historic resources of Westford Center by listing it in the National Register. The next logical step would be establishing a **local historic district**. For information about the benefits of this type of district, as well as other **strategies for preserving historic neighborhoods**, see the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.



CRITICAL CONCERNS

Agriculture

Loss of active farming and development of agricultural property was the single most important landscape issue raised by Westford residents. Many farms that were active until a few years ago are no longer farmed and there are *For Sale* signs and surveyors marks on many agricultural properties. As preservation of agricultural land is such a major concern in Westford, it is important for the town

to address the issue comprehensively and to establish priorities. These will depend on the physical attributes of each farm; its economic viability; the wishes of the owner; and the importance of the farm to the community. For specific recommendations regarding **agricultural landscapes** see the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.

Mill Housing

One of the distinctive characteristics of Westford, as of many towns in the FWHA area, is the contrast between compact village centers and rural areas of fields and forests. Westford particularly values its industrial village centers, two of which were identified as priority landscapes, and recognizes the importance of the mill worker housing both as part of the historic character of the community and as an important contribution to Westford's housing stock. Mill housing is usually characterized by compact houses on small lots and may include multi-family housing. In a community that generally consists of larger more commodious housing stock, it offers an alternative for single people, young couples and people of limited incomes. Westford has already taken an important step towards preserving its mill housing in listing its two mill villages in the National Register. Demolition delay is another tool that helps to preserve older housing stock. For additional information about **preserving village and rural neighborhood character** see the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.

Quarries



Granite quarrying was an important part of Westford's industrial base in the late 19th and early 20th century. The historical importance of this industry was recognized when Graniteville was listed in the National Register with many of the quarries included in the nomination. Quarries are scattered throughout the Westford hills. Most are small, inactive and largely inaccessible. Many have artifacts that reflect the history of the quarry. Some are filled with water. Concerns are two-fold: one is preserving the historical legacy of the quarries.

This was well done in the housing development known as Villages at Stone Ridge adjacent to the Butterfly Place where quarry remnants are well integrated into the design of the area. Another concern is safety, as most quarries are in remote areas and may attract swimmers and younger residents who like to explore such areas.

Scenic Roads and Important Views

One of the many ways that Westford residents see and enjoy their town is traveling along the public roads, many of which retain their historic alignment, narrow road width and scenic views over open fields. Stone walls line many of Westford's more rural roads and delineate the boundaries of former farm fields. For additional information about **scenic roads** see the General Preservation Planning Recommendations section of this report.

EXISTING RESOURCE DOCUMENTATION AND PLANNING TOOLS

Westford 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, Westford's inventory, begun in the mid-1990s, documents about 750 historic resources ranging from 1664 to 2000. These include primarily individual building and structure forms as well as 15 area forms.

Westford has one documented ancient Native American site of an unknown date and three documented historic archaeological sites. This level of documentation is extremely low for the region and 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. Westford has five National Register districts: Brookside Historic District (34 resources), Forge Village Historic District (312 resources), Graniteville Historic District

(199 resources), Parker Village Historic District (30 resources) and Westford Center Historic District (183 resources).

Westford has two properties that are individually listed in the National Register: the Henry Fletcher House and Barn at 224 Concord Road; and the John Proctor House at 218 Concord Road. Both are protected by preservation restrictions drawn up in accordance with MGL Chapter 184, Sections 31-33. A preservation restriction (PR) runs with the deed and is one of the strongest preservation strategies available. All properties that are listed in the National Register and have preservation restrictions filed under the state statute are automatically listed in the State Register. There are no local historic districts in Westford.



Planning Documents and Tools

Westford has several important planning documents that provide a framework for town decision making. The town's latest general planning document is a 2003 update entitled *Westford's Master Plan, Are We on Track, an Update on the Implementation of the 1995 Master Plan*. In general it reports that Westford had made significant progress in implementing the goals of the earlier master plan but still has more to do. Important regulatory accomplishments related to community character and heritage landscapes are: mill reuse bylaw, accessory dwelling bylaw, senior residential multi-family bylaw, assisted living facility bylaw, flexible development bylaw, scenic road bylaw, demolition delay bylaw and a right to farm bylaw.

Westford passed the Community Preservation Act in 2001. It allows a 3% surcharge on the local property tax, with funds matched by the state. These funds can be used for open space, historic preservation, low and moderate income housing and/or recreation. Westford CPA projects have included preservation of historic town documents and renovation of the exterior of the Roudenbush Community Center.

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.

Westford'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 made 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, mill village neighborhoods and other natural and cultural assets that define the overall fabric of the community. Like most municipalities, Westford is facing multiple pressures for change that threaten land-based uses and natural resources, especially its remaining farming areas. Special places within the community that were once taken for granted are now more vulnerable than ever to change.

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

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

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

Inventory of Heritage Landscapes

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

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

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

National Register Program

Survey work will require an evaluation as to whether resources meet the qualifications for National Register listing. Using the information generated in the survey work and the accompanying National Register evaluations, Westford should expand its National Register program to augment the nominations 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. There are three traditional preservation strategies that have been effective in communities similar to Westford: a demolition delay bylaw, a local historic district bylaw (in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 40C) and designation, and a neighborhood architectural conservation district bylaw and designation.

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

Agricultural Landscapes

Preservation of agricultural landscapes means preservation of the farming activities, particularly in Westford where there are working farms whose character is integral to the community's past. It is important to know what the features of these agricultural landscapes are and which features the community treasures in order to make a case for preservation of these farms. Some recommendations lead to the preservation of farming; others focus on ways in which to reduce the impact of development if there is no alternative to abandoning farming activities and selling the land. Westford has already completed one important step, adopting a right-to-farm bylaw.

- Document additional farms that may not presently be included in Westford's inventory of historic resource, using MHC survey forms.
- Develop partnerships to raise funds to purchase development rights on farms or to assist a farmer in the restoration of historic farm buildings for which the farmer would be required to donate a preservation restriction (PR).
- Review zoning bylaw to determine possible changes that might make it more supportive of farming activities.

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- Appoint an agricultural commission.

Scenic Roads

Scenic roads are an integral part of the historic fabric of the community. They are highly valued by Westford residents and visitors alike. Roads must also accommodate modern transportation needs and decisions regarding roadways are often made with travel requirements as the only consideration. Westford already has a Scenic Roads Bylaw (MGL Chapter 40-15C) and has used this to designate ten scenic roads in town. For roads designated under this bylaw, there is review and approval for the removal of trees and stone walls within the right-of-way. Yet, in addition to roadway issues, much of what we value about scenic roads, stone walls and views across open fields, is not within the public right-of-way. Protection of scenic roads therefore requires more than one approach.

- Complete an inventory with descriptions and photo documentation of each of the roads in Westford including the character-defining features that should be retained.
- Adopt design criteria to be considered when approving removal of trees and stone walls, such as a provision allowing only one driveway cut per property on scenic roads. Once adopted coordinate procedures between Highway Department and Planning Board.
- Consider a scenic overlay district which may provide a no-disturb buffer on private property bordering on scenic roads or adopt flexible zoning standards to protect certain views. Such bylaws could be written to apply to the numbered routes also, which are not protected under a scenic roads bylaw.
- Develop policies and implementation standards for road maintenance and reconstruction, including bridge reconstructions and roadway over cow passes, which address the scenic and historic characteristics while also addressing safety. This is an important public process in which the community may have to accept responsibility for certain costs to implement standards that are not acceptable to projects funded by Mass Highway Department. Such standards should have a section addressing the way in which the local Highway Department maintains roads, for example requiring a public hearing if any additional pavement is to be added to a town road during reconstruction or repair. Policies can be adopted by local boards having jurisdiction over roads, or can be adopted at Town Meeting through a bylaw. In developing policies consider factors such as road width, clearing of shoulders, walking paths, posted speeds. A delicate balance is required.



Funding of Preservation Projects

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

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

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

Westford adopted the Community Preservation Act in 2001 with a 3% surcharge on each real estate tax bill. This has proved to be an excellent source of funding for many heritage landscape projects. Westford already is aware of the way in which the CPA fosters partnerships among historic preservationists, conservationists and affordable housing advocates. Many of the recommendations in this report could be funded with CPA money, including survey and National Register projects, professional consultation to establish local historic or neighborhood architectural conservation districts, preservation and conservation easements, agricultural preservation restrictions (APRs) and land acquisition. Additional information about the CPA can be found at www.communitypreservation.org.

CONCLUSION

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

Landscapes identified in this report, especially the priority landscapes, will typically need further documentation on MHC inventory forms. That documentation in turn can be used in publicity efforts to build consensus and gather public support for their preservation. Implementation of recommendations will require a concerted effort of and partnerships among municipal boards and agencies, local non-profit organizations, and state agencies and commissions.

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

APPENDIX: HERITAGE LANDSCAPES IDENTIFIED BY COMMUNITY

This list was generated by local participants at the Heritage Landscape Identification meeting held in Westford on May 22, 2006 and the follow-up fieldwork on June 5, 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.

APR = Agricultural Preservation Restriction PR = Preservation Restriction
 CR = Conservation Restriction * = Priority Landscape
 LHD = Local Historic District + = Part of a Priority Landscape
 NR = National Register

Agriculture	
<i>Apple Orchards</i>	Orchards are both private and town-owned. An important characteristic of the community, especially in spring when apple trees are in bloom. Tadmuck Hill, Hunt Road and Texas Road were mentioned as locations where orchards can be found.
<i>4H Fairgrounds</i>	Part of agricultural infrastructure in town.
<i>Hayfields</i>	Hayfields at Concord and Carlisle Roads, one in the triangle where these two roads meet, several to the west of there. Hayfields at Hildreth Street, visible from the road. Open fields along Graniteville Road heading towards St. Marks Church from center of town.
<i>Hill Orchard</i> Chamberlain Road	One of the last working orchards in Westford (others are Bonhe's on Tadmuck Rd and Scanlon on Texas Rd.) in Westford. Town-owned, preserved, contracted with farmer to maintain the orchard. Views from road.
<i>Laughton's Nursery</i> Lowell Road	
<i>Meadow Brook Farm</i> Groton Road	Town-owned, APR. Views from Groton Road, open pasture and farmed land. Also known as Gould Picking Farm.
<i>Pumpkin Patch</i>	Pumpkin patches are another important agricultural aspect of the community. One is located at the Day Conservation Land on Graniteville Road.
<i>Stone Grain Silo</i> Elderberry Lane & Acton Road	Located on construction site. Dirt piled against it may impact silo. Westford Historical Commission would like to photograph and research this structure, which probably dates to the early 20 th century.
Archaeological	
<i>Cider Mill Foundation</i> Lowell Road	

<i>Ice House Foundations</i>	At Forge Pond Beach. Now ruins only.
<i>Native American Grinding Stone</i>	Located on Lowell Road at the Cider Mill Pond Conservation Land. It may actually be a glacial feature rather than Native American.
<i>Wyman's Beach Area</i>	Privately -owned land being developed for seasonal residences. Westford Historical Commission working with the developer to preserve at least one house and partially preserve another. Reported Native American meeting ground at Forge Pond. Archaeological survey recently completed.
Burial Grounds and Cemeteries	
<i>Fairview Cemetery</i> Main Street	NR (individual). Established 1702. Town owned.
<i>Hillside Cemetery</i> Depot Road	NR (individual). Established 1753. Also known as North Burying Ground. Town owned.
<i>Pioneer Cemetery</i> Carlisle Road	NR (individual). Established 1750. At corner of Carlisle Road and Old Lowell Road. The last indigenous Native American from Westford, Simon, is buried here. Town owned.
<i>Russian Cemetery</i> Patten Road	NR (individual). Established 1918. Privately owned.
<i>Westlawn Cemetery</i> Concord Road	NR (individual). Established 1760. Also known as West Burying Ground. Town-owned.
<i>Wright Cemetery</i> Groton Road	NR (individual). Established 1819. Originally a family plot for the Wright family and their descendants. Town-owned.
Civic/Center	
<i>Forge Village *</i> West Prescott Street	NR (district). Best preserved of Westford's factory towns, mill, mill pond, factory housing. "Old country character." Multiple housing types, mostly 20 th century. In addition to mills and housing, the area used to have more of a civic center with theater and bowling alley.
<i>Graniteville *</i> North Main Street	NR (district). Factory village located in northwest part of town, more dispersed than Forge Village and not as well known. Sargent Mill 1877, stone mill complex, now has multiple tenants. Includes factories and mill housing, railroad and roads. Mansions overlooking mill pond. Surrounded by quarries and natural areas, endangered species etc.
<i>Parker Village</i> Concord Road	NR (district). Village in southern part of town. This area is important for its agricultural land, scenic views, and the historic restored Parkerville School.

<i>Town Boundary Markers</i>	Granite posts found in various locations.
<i>Town Common + Main Street</i>	NR (district). Established 1723, used as a training ground. Later became more park-like with redesign by landscape architect Bremer Pond in 1919. In Westford Center priority landscape. Focal point of community with many monuments. One resident noted that the cannonballs are the wrong size for the cannon (purposefully to avoid misuse).
<i>Westford Center * Main Street</i>	NR (district). Main civic and ceremonial center of the town. Also includes handsome collection of 19 th and early 20 th houses on spacious well-landscaped lots, many with outbuildings.
Industrial	
<i>Abbot Mill + Forge Village</i>	NR (district). In Forge Village priority landscape, which includes mill, waterway on either side, mill worker homes. Mill rehabbed for housing.
<i>Brookside Mill + Nabnasset</i>	NR (district). The mill has been rehabbed and is now condominiums.
<i>Granite Quarries</i>	There were dozens of small quarries, mostly in the north and western part of town. Many have been abandoned. Names of some of the quarry workers have been carved into the stone (a sort of historic graffiti). Hildreth and Reed Quarry were two that were mentioned. Palmer's Quarry is still in operation.
<i>Sargent Mill + Graniteville</i>	NR (district). In Graniteville priority landscape. Has fallen into disrepair but has lots of potential.
Institutional	
<i>Fire Stations</i>	Main headquarters is located in the center of town. The town built the Rogers Station in Forge Village and took two older stations out of active service. One in Graniteville is now used by the Recreation Department. One in Forge Village has been converted to the Town's Technology Department offices. Nabnasset Station is active. Due to budget constraints the Rogers Station is not manned but houses equipment necessary for fire coverage in that area of town.
<i>Haystack Observatory Groton Road</i>	Radio telescope complex owned by MIT, with large acreage. Half the facility is located in Westford.
<i>Library +</i>	Front of library as seen from the common is important. In Westford Center priority landscape.
<i>Schoolhouses</i>	There are nine remaining historic schools in Westford, including those associated with Westford Academy. All have been documented on MHC inventory forms; one is in the Parker Village Historic District.

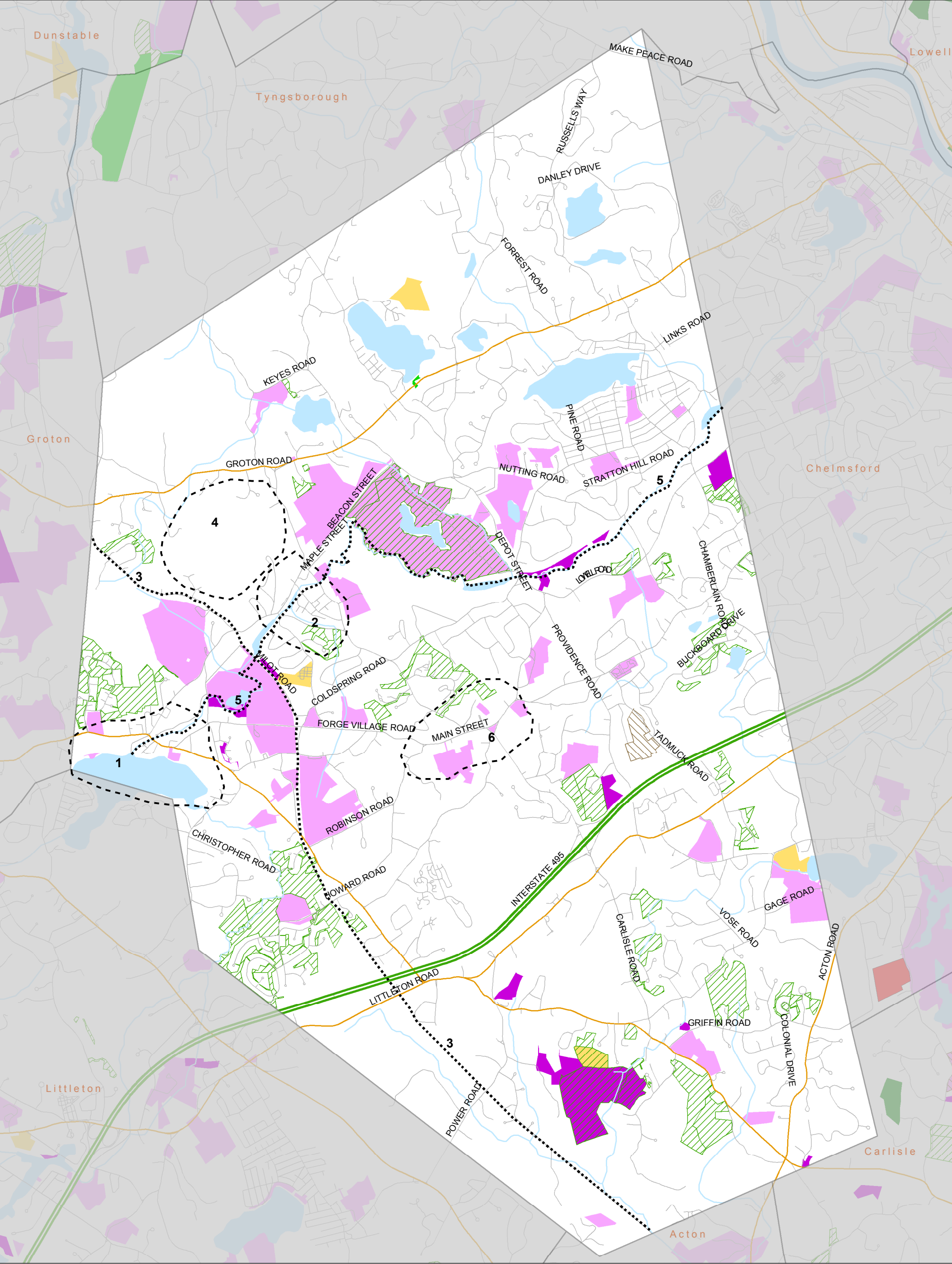
<i>Town (Poor)Farm</i>	Was at one time the Reed Farm (1793). Includes large 2½ story brick house and several outbuildings. At one time was also town jail. Was school administration building, now vacant. No cemetery associated with town farm. Westford Historical Commission is in the process of applying for NR status – site was determined eligible a few years back.
<i>Westford Academy +</i>	Four sites. First two Westford Academy buildings were private. First one is now a museum. Second one is Roudenbush Community Center. Part of Town Center priority landscape.
Miscellaneous	
<i>Monuments</i>	Westford's monuments reflect important events in the history of the community, especially those in Forge Village across from the Village Store near the railroad tracks, which were erected with private funds.
<i>Stone Wall</i>	Very wide well-built wall near Sullivan Conservation Land.
<i>Westford Knight Depot Street</i>	Engraving in a rock. Origins unknown. Vulnerable to erosion.
Natural	
<i>“House & Barn”</i> Off Tyngsboro Road	Two glacial erratics, very large, visible.
<i>Prospect Hill</i>	Highest point in Middlesex County. Overgrown fields, used for pageant at the Centennial celebration for Westford. Location of water tower.
<i>State Heritage Trees</i> Various	Three in town: Catalpa on Concord Road, Library Black Oak, Shagbark Hickory on Conservation Trust Land.
Open Space/Parks	
<i>Conscience Hill</i>	Northwest corner of town.
<i>East Boston Camps</i>	286 acres purchased by town for \$13 million. Town is conducting master plan to determine existing conditions and future uses.
<i>Emmet Conservation Land/Nashoba Brook Sanctuary</i>	Large open space area near Parker Village partially owned by Mass Audubon. Other parts are town-owned or Trust.
<i>Kissacook Hill</i>	With 100-year old water tower and John Gagnon Nature Trail, including granite benches.

<i>Nashoba Hill</i>	Native American name means “hill that shakes.” Where the Nashoba Ski Area is located.
<i>North Hill</i>	Including view, open space, glacial erratics, Wyman’s Beach.
<i>Snake Meadow Hill *</i>	Including view and quarry. “Three layers of history: glacial erratics, quarry era (stones cut and shipped), later more sophisticated quarry.”
<i>St. Onge Playground</i>	Whitney field next to Roudenbush Community Center. Given to the town by the family of Dick St. Onge, a call firefighter who died in 1970.
<i>Stony Brook Area</i>	At north end, historic road, peak of land overlooking the lake. 450 acres including Stepinski land and East Boston camps (former Fresh Air Camp purchased by the town). Abuts Stony Brook and Keyes Brook, includes pond, bog.
<i>Swede’s Hill</i> Near Brookside, Chamberlain and Lowell Road	Also known as Frances Hill. Area is known as Swede’s corner. “Remarkable stone walls.” One resident reported: “The Lundbergs, who came from Sweden in the 1890s, were stone workers, either cutters of rough blocks for house foundations and stone walls, or artistic stone cutters for grave stones and monuments. One particularly impressive wall is the property line between our property and the Frank’s. It is about 5 feet high, and is all fitted stones, so the wall has a vertical face. Many of the stones are cut, and many are so large they could not be moved by one person.”
<i>Town Forest</i> Forge Village Road	Adjacent to former landfill (which is now becoming a meadow).
Residential	
<i>Abbott House +</i> Main Street and Graniteville Road	NR (district). Located in Westford Center priority landscape.
<i>Brookside Neighborhood</i> Brookside Road	NR (district). Another Westford neighborhood.
<i>Mill Housing</i>	Found in Forge Village and Graniteville.
<i>Nabnasset Cottages</i>	Also called Schushmarket land. As a marketing gimmick, grocery store gave away deeds to small parcels of land (20’ x 25’) in coffee cans. Area grew into a cottage community around the lake. Character of this area is now changing.
<i>Salt Box Farm</i> Wright Lane	17 th century house and farm.
<i>Solomon Keyes Garrison House</i> 16 Frances Hill Rd.	One of the oldest houses in Westford built ca. 1664.

<i>Tavern</i> Dunstable and Groton Roads	The Matthew Downs Hotel, a brick tavern was built in 1855.
<i>Tavern +</i> 2 Hildreth Street	Old Fletcher Tavern on town common also known as the Hamlin Homestead built in ca. 1713.
<i>Windmill +</i>	NR (district). Located in Westford Center priority landscape. Mill owner home in town center with restored windmill.
Transportation	
<i>Blake's Hill Road</i>	Views west from road.
<i>Bruce Freeman Rail Trail</i>	Bikeway. In Spring 2006 Town Meeting approved funding (Community Preservation Funds) for design costs of the Westford portion of the "missing link" between phase I & II. This funding is part of a collaborative agreement with the Towns of Acton and Carlisle.
<i>Cart Paths</i>	A scenic cart path between Graniteville Road and Pine Ridge Road is a protected part of the Tom Paul Trail. Bounded on two stone walls.
<i>Concord Road</i> (Route 225)	Road leading to Lexington and Concord, road character impacted by recent commercial development. Includes Parker Village Historic District. Away from Route 110, the character is "picturesque New England."
<i>Depot Road</i>	View of Stony Brook from Fletcher's Stand (across from East Boston Camps entrance). Also bridge at same location. Many people use Depot Road to get across town.
<i>Dunstable Road</i>	Old country feeling on north side of road.
<i>Frances Hill Road</i>	Rural road with great views north to Mount Monadnock. Oldest house in Westford is here. This road is now designated as a scenic road.
<i>Gould Road</i>	Scenic road with Gould Farm.
<i>Hildreth Street</i>	Hildreth Street is one of ten designated scenic roads in Westford. Agricultural fields along it. Portion of road is in center historic district.
<i>Historic Road</i>	Historic road cutting through Hill Orchard leading to the old schoolhouse on Stony Brook road.
<i>Leland Road</i>	Village road with great views east towards Chelmsford. Reflects character of town center. A designated scenic road.
<i>Lowell Road</i>	Beautiful views across from Cider Mill Pond area, also several historic old houses, one of which is endangered.
<i>Old Lowell Road</i>	A designated scenic road.
<i>Old Trolley Line</i>	Runs northeast from Graniteville, owned by Mass. Electric, which allows trail use. It is used also as a footpath to Stony Brook Middle School and the Veterans Memorial Complex.

<i>Red Line and Stone Arch Bridge *</i>	Former Acton/Nashua Rail Line, now a bike trail and foot path that functions as a regional corridor. Includes very large stone arch bridge at end of trail, in Graniteville. One of three rail beds in town. Much of this rail bed is now town-owned with efforts underway to preserve other parts, particularly near the Audubon sanctuary.
<i>Road Remnant near Boutwell Brook</i>	Another road remnant, cart path, now a beautiful trail, bounded by two stone walls.
<i>Road Remnant near Cider Mill Pond</i>	Discontinued 1866, now an easement, marked by double stone walls. This was the main road going to Chelmsford. It is connected to Hunt Road. The part near Cider Mill Pond is town-owned, and the part going through Hill Orchard is town-owned. The area in between the town-owned land is mostly intact and privately owned. Efforts are underway to preserve it.
<i>Salem Post Road</i>	Old road, near Chamberlain Road and Hill Orchard. Visually extends west from Hunt Road and was used to get to the Stony Brook Schoolhouse on Stony Brook Road (still there).
<i>Scenic Roads</i>	There are ten designated scenic roads: Chamberlain, Frances Hill, Hildreth, Hunt, Gould, Leland, Old Rd, Old Lowell, Stony Brook and Vose.
<i>Stony Brook Road & Bridge</i>	Scenic road. Stone arch bridge, valued for its stonework, not protected. “You have to slow down to go over it.” Also, view approaching Stony Brook near 55 Stony Brook Road. One resident mentioned the beaver dam and lodge in the brook.
<i>Stone Arch Bridge Nutting Road</i>	Over trolley line near East Boston camps. Beautiful bridge, slightly smaller than others in town.
<i>Stone Lintel Bridge Off Rome Drive</i>	A solid bridge that is part of a trail though protected conservation land.
<i>Tom Paul Trail</i>	Long and varied three mile trail that goes from Town Hall to the Stone Arch Bridge. One of many off-road trails in Westford.
<i>Traffic Islands</i>	Route 40 in Graniteville (maintained by Graniteville Pride); Patten Road and Route 225 in Forge Village (maintained by Forge Village Improvement Association with private funds); and Depot Crossing.
Waterbodies	
<i>Beaver Brook</i>	Especially good views in the meandering section near Forge Pond. Rich in wildlife.
<i>Burge’s Pond</i>	View across pond is important.
<i>Cider Mill Pond Lowell Road next to Salem Post Road</i>	The dam is not intact so the pond is currently just part of Tadmuck Brook. Very scenic, with foundations of Cider Mill along the brook.

<i>Flushing Pond</i>	Off Groton Road in northern part of town this is considered to be a particularly clean, attractive pond.
<i>Forge Pond +</i>	NR (district). In Forge Village priority landscape. View across pond in fall is very special. Provides power for mills.
<i>Grassy Pond</i>	Kettle hole pond. Conservation land around pond with accessible trail.
<i>Keyes Pond</i>	Off Groton Road in northern part of town.
<i>Long Sought for Pond</i>	Off Groton Road in northern part of town.
<i>Mill Pond Area</i> Graniteville	In Graniteville Priority landscape. Located on Broadway. Also includes monument. Currently maintained by Graniteville Pride with private donations.
<i>Nabnasset Lake</i>	Cottages around the lake are being remodeled, changing the character of the area. Roads are too narrow to accommodate increased use. Zoning laws do not address this issue.
<i>Nashoba Pond</i>	Also known as Kennedy Pond, industrial – was constructed by commercial graveling operation. Now a rich wildlife area.
<i>Reed Brook</i>	Cold water fishery. Was adopted by 4 th grade class in 1998, is used as outdoor educational laboratory. The “Living Lab” program built a boardwalk and granite benches here using Reed Brook as the focus of scientific research for elementary school students.
<i>Stony Brook *</i>	Meandering part along East Boston Camps is especially important, vulnerable to development, views, Stepinski land. Beaver and much wildlife activity.



WESTFORD OPENSOURCE & HISTORIC RESOURCES

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

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

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Westford Priority Heritage Landscapes

1. Forge Village

2. Graniteville

3. Red Line

4. Snake Meadow Hill

5. Stony Brook

6. Town Center