

# HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

## Introduction

Since completion of the 2008 Master Plan, the Hanover Historical Society has implemented recommendations from the 2007 Historical Preservation Plan and 2010 Cemetery Preservation Plan, restoring the town's historic cemeteries and investing in the preservation of archival resources. The successful conservation of culturally significant and scenic open space resources has contributed to Hanover's beauty and to its residents' well-being.

In that time, however, increasing development pressure, particularly for new housing, has increased concern over the potential loss of the town's historic structures. The historic character and beauty of the town is enhanced by its numerous privately owned and well-preserved historic structures, many dating from the 18th century or earlier. In recent years, the Hanover Historical Commission has initiated demolition delay proceedings for three properties and was ultimately unsuccessful at preventing substantial demolition of those properties. As the master plan update winds down, the Commission is turning its attention to researching and evaluating the significance of the town's historic homes and commercial buildings. In the coming year, the Historical Commission will guide an update to its historic resources

inventory to better document and evaluate the character and significance of those resources.

## Key Findings

- The Town of Hanover has demonstrated success in developing and implementing preservation plans to protect important historic resources.
- Restoration of Hanover Center and the Town's cemeteries has preserved the Town's historic civic assets.
- Efforts to update the town's inventory of historic structures will facilitate additional preservation, especially in the Four Corners commercial area.
- In addition to exploring a local historic district designation for Four Corners, Hanover should explore the use of planning and zoning to promote housing and commercial development to support the continued economic viability of historic village centers.
- Planning efforts for historic centers could target arts and cultural businesses and organizations as well as creative enterprises to mutually benefit these assets.

## Existing Conditions

### Historic Resources

#### Historic Buildings

According to Massachusetts Historical Commission's (MHC) Massachusetts Cultural Resources Information System (MACRIS), there are 340 buildings and sites in Hanover estimated to be of historic and cultural significance. Of these, the following are listed on the State Register of Historic Places, which includes all properties in Hanover subject to preservation restrictions and all properties designated on National Register for Historic Places. If Hanover designates a local historic district, properties within that district will also be entered into the State Register. Currently, the following resources are included in the State Register, largely due to their location within and contribution to the Hanover Center Historic District:



**1716 Stetson House:** The Stetson House, near Hanover Town Hall, was built by Samuel "Drummer" Stetson in the early 1700's. Town Meetings and religious services were

---

<sup>1</sup> Town of Hanover. 1979. Hanover Open Space Plan.

held in the house during its early years, and since 1979 the house has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The house is now owned by the town and is open for public tours under the direction of the Town appointed overseers. A citizens group, Friends of Stetson House Inc., and others aid in the preservation and upkeep of the property. <sup>1</sup> Currently operated as a museum by the Hanover Historical Society, the Stetson House offers the Hanover community the opportunity to learn about Hanover's history. Image courtesy of Hanover Historical Commission.



**1863 First Congregational Church:** The church was built in the style of a traditional Congregational Church to replace an earlier church that burned down the previous year. It represents the centrality of the church to early town life, when religious and civic affairs were closely

intertwined.<sup>2</sup> Both the Congregational Church and the Town Hall were destroyed in the fire and rebuilt in the same year, establishing the architectural and civic character of the Hanover Center Historic District. Image courtesy of Hanover Historical Commission



**1863 Hanover Town Hall:** Built in the same year as the Congregational Church, the Town Hall mirrors the church's Italianate architectural style and the two buildings establish a unified physical character for the Hanover Center Historic District. Designed by architect Luther Briggs, II and expanded in 1893 by architect J. Williams Beal, the Town Hall has been a center of civic life in the town since its construction, housing the town's first high school and its public library until 1907 in addition to the town's government. A \$1.1 million renovation of

<sup>2</sup> MACRIS Inventory Sheet "First Congregational Church," Hanover Historical Commission, 1984.

the Town Hall building to restore its historic façade, cupola, and portico was completed in June 2017, with plans for a second phase of restoration work underway. Image courtesy of Hanover Historical Commission



**1907 John Curtis Free Library:** Designed by architect Edmund Q. Sylvester, the John Curtis Free Library is named for its benefactor, a fifth-generation resident of Hanover who built a successful clothing business and bequeathed both the funds for construction of a new public library and his personal book collection to the town. In addition to its books and archives, the library houses portraits by Hanover artist Edward H. Tindale and a grandfather clock made by John Bailey.<sup>3</sup> Image courtesy of Hanover Historical Commission.

<sup>3</sup> MACRIS Inventory Sheet "Curtis, John Free Library," Hanover Historical Commission, 1984.



**1927 Edmund Q. Sylvester High School:** Named for its benefactor, Edmund Q. Sylvester – architect of the Curtis Free Library – the school's design was intended to complement the library's style and appearance. J. Williams Beal, the architectural firm responsible for designing the high school also designed the Town Hall's 1893 addition, providing an additional connection among the Hanover Center civic buildings. Image courtesy of Hanover Historical Commission.

Additional buildings of historic importance sit outside the boundaries of the historic district. These include the following:



**1759 "Line House" (5 Assinippi Avenue):** The historic "Line House" in the Assinippi section of Hanover, which straddles the Hanover and Norwell town line, was built in the Federal Style as a residence for Elisha Jacobs, grandson of the man who dammed Jacob's pond and owner of a brick factory. Elisha's son was a Selectman and Postmaster in Hanover and under his ownership, the house functioned as a Post Office and Selectmen's Office for Hanover. Since these offices were in the Norwell section of the building it was deemed to be illegal to conduct Hanover town business in another town. The dilemma was solved by renaming the area where the house was located as "neutral territory" with the name Assinippi. This Indian name translates to "rushing clear water" or "rocks over water" and commemorates a nearby Indian Meeting Ground on Third Herring Brook. This same area was also the

crossroads of two Indian Trails: Plymouth Path and Bay Path.<sup>4</sup> Image courtesy of Hanover Historical Commission.



**1887 Station Five Firefighting Museum (1095 Broadway):**

The Hanover Historical Society also manages the Station Five Firefighting Museum building in South Hanover, preserving a building constructed in 1887 as a paint shop and purchased as headquarters for the South Hanover Fire Association in 1910. Owned by the town since 1959, the building is now run as a public museum with exhibits on Hanover's firefighting history open once a month. The museum houses a 1908 fire wagon restored to its original condition using CPA funds in 2016. Image courtesy of Hanover Historical Society.

**Historic Schools**

Hanover residents today are committed to supporting their public education system, and its commitment has a

long and enduring history embedded among the town's historic buildings. The Hanover Academy building was constructed in 1850 as a private school in Four Corners serving the town's wealthiest families. The building continues to occupy its original location but has been converted to commercial use and houses an antiques store. Old public school buildings are preserved today as private residences. The Whiting Street School, constructed in 1879, is the best documented of these buildings, many of which were moved to different locations, incorporated into other buildings, or expanded. Changing education patterns in the 20<sup>th</sup> century generated a need for new schools. The Edmund Q. Sylvester High School was constructed in 1927 to accommodate the growth in students attending high school. Designed by J. Williams Beal and Sons Architects, the school is located within the Hanover Center Historic District and continues to function as part of the town's public education system. It currently houses the third and fourth grades. The Salmond School, which currently houses administrative buildings for Hanover Public Schools, was constructed in 1931 after the original school building on the site was moved to another town. The building housed elementary grades 1 through 6 until 1978. The same firm that designed the Sylvester School also designed the Center School in 1953, and together the two schools reflect changes in architectural design in the middle of the twentieth century.

---

<sup>4</sup> 1996 Street Map and Guide. Hanover Chamber of Commerce.

### Preservation Priorities

The Hanover Historical Society has identified fifteen additional resources they would like targeted for preservation<sup>5</sup>, including:

- Briggs Stable, 623 Hanover Street
- Phoenix Masonic Lodge, 133 Broadway
- Former Hanover Academy, 195 Washington Street
- Salmond School, 188 Broadway
- Sylvester Co. Historic Barn, 283 Columbia Road.
- Former fireworks headquarters, King Street.
- Sullivan Funeral Home and the open fields, 551 Washington Street.
- The Jacobs House, 2048 Washington Street.
- St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Church Street
- Sylvester Field, 113-165 Washington Street
- Town Pump, 584 Hanover St.
- Myette's Country Store, 1143 Broadway.
- Tedeschi's Assinippi General Store, 2103 Washington St.

Research into the historic and architectural significance of these resources should be included in the update to the historic resources inventory. A full list of historic and cultural resources is included in Appendix XX.

---

<sup>5</sup> "The List: 15 Historic Places in Hanover," *Wicked Local Hanover*, November 25, 2015.

### Historic District

In late 1995, Massachusetts Historical Commission voted to nominate Hanover Center to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). On May 9, 1996, the district was approved by the NRHP and became a National Register District. The district is comprised of twenty properties in Hanover's town center. The district contains a well preserved grouping of buildings and sites, reflecting the historical and developmental core of the community. These buildings range in date from the Stetson House, circa 1716 to the Sylvester School, circa 1927. Other buildings within the district include the First Congregational Church, the founding body of the town; the parsonage of the church, circa 1855, from the Greek Revival period; the Town Hall designed by architect Luther Briggs II in 1863, and expanded in 1893 by well-known local architect J. Williams Beal; and the John Curtis Library designed by another Hanover architect, Edmund Q. Sylvester.

The Civil War Monument, a granite obelisk, designed by J. Williams Beal in 1878 at the age of 23 just after his graduation from Massachusetts Technological Institute, is located in the center of the cluster of buildings. The Hanover Cemetery, with earliest burials from 1727, contains a large number of early slate markers concentrated behind the church, and provides a backdrop to the historic center along the north side of the district.

(<http://hanover.wickedlocal.com/news/20151125/list-15-historic-places-in-hanover>)

Listing of the Hanover Center Historic District provides recognition of the community's historic importance and assures protective review of projects that might adversely affect the character of the district. Listing in the National Register does not mean that preservation restrictions will be placed on the properties by the Federal government. In Massachusetts, properties nominated to the National Register are automatically listed in the State Register of Historical Places. State Register properties owned by municipalities and nonprofit organizations may compete for state restoration funds.

## Historic Areas

### **Cemeteries**

The 2007 Historical Preservation Plan identified the three historic cemeteries in Hanover as priorities for rehabilitation and conservation. The Hanover Historical Commission successfully completed the rehabilitation of all three cemeteries in the spring of 2015. Headstones were excavated, documented, restored through cleaning and repair and reset in the ground. Conservation reports document the restoration work completed for each cemetery. This success highlights the value of the Historical Commission's leadership in planning for and executing targeted preservation strategies that leverage Community Preservation Act funds.

### **Trails and Waterways**

From walking trails along the Hanover branch line of the Old Colony Railroad and threaded through the former site of the former National Fireworks Company factory, Hanover has successfully reclaimed its industrial land for

recreational use and enjoyment. It has embedded its industrial past into some of its most scenic resources. Luddam's Ford, now a park, powered industrial enterprises through the late 1800s, including: a saw mill (1693), Bardin Iron Works (1704), Curtis Anchor Works (1791), a grist mill (1832), a carding mill 1839, and the Clapp Rubber Company (1873). Interpretive signage informs visitors of this history.

### **Historic Commercial Centers**

As traces of Hanover's industrial past are embedded in its natural landscapes, the traces of Hanover's origins as a farming community is embedded in its built landscape. Houses, schools, and commercial buildings dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries concentrate along the town's major thoroughfares and historic village centers. Four Corners and South Hanover, formerly connected along the Hanover branch of the Old Colony Railroad, are particularly salient areas for communicating the story of Hanover's development from lands of the Wampatuck tribe to a colonial farming community, a mixed agricultural and industrial center, and finally a commuter suburb of Boston on the South Shore.

### **Four Corners**

As restoration of the buildings and archival collections located within the Hanover Center Historic District near completion, the Hanover Historical Commission has identified the Four Corners area for its future preservation efforts. It has issued an RFP for a consultant to update the historic resources inventory conducted in the 1980s with additional research and documentation that will allow the Commission to better evaluate the historic significance of buildings slated for demolition. In addition,

the Commission is exploring the option of establishing a local historic district in the Four Corners area in order to preserve the historic character of one of the oldest sections of town.

Four Corners was the original terminus of the Hanover Branch of the Old Colony Railroad. It retains a cluster of buildings constructed before 1850. The recent demolition of the Sylvester Hardware Store at 283 Columbia Road has alerted the Town to the vulnerability of the area's other historic assets. These assets are listed in table XX.

The proximity of the older commercial core at the intersection of Washington and Broadway to the twentieth century commercial corridor of Route 53 along Columbia Road presents a challenge and opportunity in planning for preservation in the Four Corners area. Preserving both the physical structures along with the historic function of Four Corners as a neighborhood commercial center will require attention to the relationship between the auto-oriented commerce along Columbia Road and the smaller-scale retail at the historic village center of Four Corners. Drawing pedestrian traffic down Broadway from Columbia Road and developing complementary commercial uses at the two intersections may help promote continued business viability in the area.

**Table XX: Four Corners Historic Assets**

Date	Building Name	Address
1693	Daniel Turner House	168 Broadway
1712	Percy Bonney Blacksmith Shop	20 Broadway
1727	Wales Tavern	199 Washington Street
1750	Barstow House (1750)	323 Washington Street
1771	Clark House	60 Broadway
1790	Hanover Academy Building	195 Washington Street
1800	Dr. Howes House	31 Church Street
1810	Jothan Cushing House	242-240 Washington Street
1811	Saint Andrews Church	17 Church Street
1849	Saint Andrews Church Rectory	288 Washington Street
1812	Albert Smith House	128 Washington Street
1827	Joseph Eells House	232 Washington Street
1853	Robert Dwelley House	178 Broadway
1865	Laphain House	53 Broadway
1909	Charles Gleason House	96 Broadway
1910	Hanover Fire Company No. 5	207 Broadway

### Fireworks District

The Fireworks District features a cluster of historic houses dating from 1700 to 1881, including a former carding mill at 127 King Street. These assets could help to tell the story of Hanover's industrial past stretching back to the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Efforts to highlight and preserve these historic resources could serve to establish a cultural identity and brand to promote economic development efforts in this district. A list of historic assets is included in Table XX.

Date	Building Name	Address
1700	David Gardner House	590 King Street
1725	Hatch Farm	561 Circuit Street
1765	Stephen Bailey House	408 King Street
1770	Prince Stetson House	615 Circuit Street
1800	Amos Turner House	562 King Street
1800	Hanover Carding Mill	127 King Street
1816	George R. Josselyn House	160 King Street
1835	Hanover House	334 King Street
1860	Cyrus B. Josselyn House	113 King Street
1881	Charles Josselyn House	169 King Street

The Fireworks District represents an opportunity to preserve and promote the town's historic economic assets and enterprises. This District continues to attract a

variety of businesses, and future development that highlights its historic significance could enhance its value as an economic center and business destination.

### Historical Commission

The Hanover Historical Commission is preparing to upgrade their historical resources survey with particular attention to resources within the Four Corners area of town, which is under consideration for designation as a local historic district. Some of the town's oldest structures are located in this area of town including a house dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The Commission has identified 135 structures of particular interest for additional research and evaluation for historic significance according to the National Register criteria. For many decades the Historical Commission has provided leadership in planning for preservation and promotion of Hanover's historic and cultural resources. Implementation of the Commission's 2007 Historic Preservation Plan has resulted in the restoration and repair of many early headstones in the town's three historic cemeteries.

## CULTURAL RESOURCES

### Hanover Arts and Culture

In addition to historic and scenic resources, Hanover has events and organizations committed to supporting creativity and preserving the town's cultural and historic heritage.

- **Briggs Stable and Big Bay Farm:** These two stables and the equestrian programs they run promote the agricultural roots and identity of the town.
- **Hanover Cultural Council:** The Cultural Council disburses grant money annually to support arts and cultural activities that serve the residents of Hanover. Grants fund programming at the Council on Aging, the Curtis Free Library, and the Hanover Historical Society among others.
- **Hanover Historical Society:** The Stetson House Museum and Historic Firefighting Museum provide event space and educational resources for learning about Hanover's history.
- **Hanover Day:** Sponsored by the Hanover Cultural Council, Hanover Day is an annual event that brings the Hanover community together and features historical programming and educational activities, arts and cultural experiences including a juried art show, carnival amusements, and live musical performances including a battle of the bands. A basketball tournament and Red Sox showcase connects the town to the regional sports culture as well.
- **Hanover, Massachusetts, Garden Club:** Founded in 1929, the Garden Club organizes events and programs that promotes interest in gardening, flower arrangements. The club arranges creative programs including a fairy-house making activity at Hanover Day, seasonal decoration of the Stetson House, and participation in the Art in Bloom event with the Museum of Fine Arts.
- **Creative Industries and Enterprises:** Despite the decline of its mill-based industrial activity, Hanover continues to support light industrial enterprises. It is also home to a collection of small-scale enterprises that support arts and cultural activity and creative expression. Among these businesses are:
  - Laura Center for the Arts (Visual and Performing Arts for youth)
  - American Folk Art and Craft Supply (Fiber-based folk art supplies and classes)
  - Ultrasound Productions (Recording studio)
  - Crossroads Music (Guitar Store and Music Instruction)
  - St. Andrews Episcopal Church Music Programs (Adult and Youth Chorus)
  - Hanover Dance Workshop (Dance Instruction for Youth)
  - South Shore Ballet Theatre

# Preservation Tools and Strategies

## Education and Planning

The Hanover Historical Commission and the Hanover Historical Society are actively engaged in educating residents about the value of historic preservation and in planning and implementing preservation efforts. From exhibits and programming at the Stetson House and Station Five Firefighting Museum to active involvement in Hanover Day celebrations, the organizations actively engage residents in learning about the town's history. The planning efforts of the Historical Commission have also helped the town to leverage funds through the Community Preservation Act to restore the town's many historic buildings, archives, and open space resources.

As the risk of demolition for aging structures in need of significant rehabilitation increases, new preservation strategies targeted at supporting private preservation efforts may be appropriate. For example, the Arlington Historical Commission provides residents with a web-portal with information about the role and function of the historical commission as well as links to an historic structures inventory, instructions on researching house histories, information on preservation loans, and links to external preservation resources. These education tools

---

<sup>6</sup> "Establishing Local Historic Districts." Massachusetts Historical Commission, June 2003, reprinted 2007.

have the potential to have widespread impact as they lower the barriers to preservation for residents across the town. Because they do not concentrate preservation efforts in particular areas, they will not be sufficient to preserve clusters of privately-owned historic resources.

## Local Historic District Designation

Preservation restrictions attached to local historic districts can be an effective strategy to preserve clusters of historic buildings and the historic character of particular areas of a municipality. The Massachusetts Historical Commission highlights that "local historic districts provide a regulatory review process for all changes to exterior architectural features visible from a public way."<sup>6</sup> The district is created through passage of a bylaw by the municipal legislative body. The bylaw should:

- Designate the historic resources to be protected
- Establish protections for those historic resources
- Establish a local historic district commission, and
- Adopt procedures for administering the district.<sup>7</sup>

## Financial Incentives

In addition to preservation restrictions, some municipalities create financial incentives to promote preservation among private property owners. Massachusetts offers tax-credits for historic preservation to owners of income-generating properties as well as

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

preservation loans. Use of these incentives requires that properties be listed on the National Register or eligible for listing on the National Register. Thorough research and documentation of locally significant buildings that are priorities for preservation is important for making these financial incentives available to property owners and developers.

## Recognizing Preservation

### *Preservation Awards*

Recognizing and celebrating excellent preservation done by private property owners helps to foster a culture of preservation. The Massachusetts Historical Society recognizes excellence in historic preservation across the state, and a few municipalities have initiated local awards to recognize the best preservation work in their communities. For example, Cambridge Historical Commission presents annual awards in the areas of “restoration, rehabilitation, adaptive use, neighborhood conservation, landscape preservation, archaeology, and education/outreach.” Criteria include historic and architectural significance, project quality, extent of preservation, and impact of the project on city-wide preservation efforts. The Chatham Historic Commission also runs a local preservation awards program in partnership with the Historic Business District Commission and the Chatham Historical Society.

### *Historic House Tours*

Another method for recognizing local history is through historic house tours. The Hingham Historical Society conducts one of the longest-running historic house tours

in the country as the signature fund-raising event for the society.

## Preservation Partnerships

### *Municipality and Historical Society*

Municipalities and local historical societies are critical partners in the preservation of local historical assets. Historic preservation and conservation efforts in Hanover are heavily dependent on efforts of the Town of Hanover (including the Hanover Historic Commission) and the Hanover Historical Society. These two entities account for most of the acquisition and maintenance required to preserve Hanover's historically significant properties.

### *Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

In addition to preservation strategies through the municipality and local historical society, other communities also have lands conserved and managed through the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation as state parks. The Massachusetts Historical Commission is also an important partner for local preservation activities, and has been an active partner for the Town of Hanover.

### *Independent Non-Profit*

In some cases, independent non-profit organizations have launched for the long-term preservation of historic assets. An example of this is the John and Priscilla Alden Family Sites organization formed by descendants of the Alden family to preserve the Alden homestead as a museum and educational facility.

### Land Trust

Land trusts can be helpful partners in crafting conservation restrictions and privately managed conservation and preservation. The Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts has partnered with private land owners to ensure the long-term conservation of open space, trails, and farmland. According to the Wildland's Trust, "landowners with eligible land may qualify for up to \$75,000 in refundable tax credits from Massachusetts, in addition to federal deductions cited above, for land gifts, conservation restrictions and charitable sales," since 2011.

## Zoning Strategies

Zoning strategies can complement local preservation efforts in two ways:

1. Incentivizing new development projects in areas that are not deemed to contribute to the historic character of the town will lower development pressures on historically significant areas.
2. Adopting form-based zoning codes in areas where in-fill development can strengthen an historic core by promoting new development that is harmonious with the surrounding historic properties.

As Hanover explores opportunities for preserving the Four Corners area and other historic nodes, these strategies can strengthen its preservation efforts.

Zoning and design guidelines that establish a coherent visual identity through infill development can help to

strengthen historic assets. Housing developed within walking distance of Hanover's historic village centers, mixed with adequate pedestrian infrastructure could reinvigorate small-scale, locally owned businesses and preserve the historic building form that gives Hanover its distinctive character.

## Recommendations

Based on research into Hanover's historic assets, the Town's preservation priorities, and the larger goals of this master plan, we would make the following recommendations:

1. Analyze economic development needs for Four Corners district to complement historic asset inventory and local historic district study.
2. Explore potential for developing additional housing in Four Corners area to support local business activity.
3. Extend rail trail from South Hanover to Four Corners.
4. Develop online portal for homeowners interested in preserving their homes with information about loan programs and tax incentives.
5. Educate property owners, particularly farms and stables about conservation restrictions and the Wildlands Trust of Southeastern Massachusetts.

6. Engage arts and cultural business community in planning for historic village centers.
7. Explore options for recognizing private preservation efforts including historic house tours and historic preservation awards.

DRAFT