

# North Hampton, NH Master Plan Historical Resources Chapter



Photo credit: Dan Derby

Adopted June 20, 2023

# Historical Resources Master Plan Chapter

## Introduction

Consistent with the vision of the North Hampton Master Plan, the Town Historical Resources Chapter promotes activities to maintain the heritage of North Hampton.

In 1997, the Town voted to establish a Heritage Commission in accordance with the provisions of RSA 673 and 674. The mission of the North Hampton Heritage Commission is to model, facilitate, and support activities, events, and publications that will connect the heritage of the community with the past, present, and future.

This land use board concentrates on the built environment in North Hampton that has survived climate, topographic, and human impacts and is of an age that reflects the Town's character and history since its founding. Among those structures are some commercial, residential, civic, and religious buildings, monuments, roads, railroad beds, bridges, and graveyards. The North Hampton Historical Society, a 501 (c) 3 organization, works with the Heritage Commission focusing on the history of North Hampton.

Building upon the earlier work as outlined below, the Commission in recent years has made significant progress on several fronts.

Not all historical structures survive man. To document the loss of some structures, the Commission drafted a demolition review ordinance which the Planning Board and voters approved. It gives the Commission 30 days to review the demolition permit, hold a meeting to determine if the building may have historical value, contact the owner, and, if necessary, hold a public hearing to learn more about the building from community members. It does not stop demolition but potentially allows a bit of discussion with the owner. Two historic barns, although dismantled and moved out of town, were saved from destruction.

Assisting with National Register applications and preparing some ourselves has enabled the Commission to play a major role in the preservation and recognition of certain buildings in North Hampton: Drake Farm (Hubbingtons), Centennial Hall, Town Hall, and the original North Hampton Library (stone building, now the Clerk/Collector's Office). That designation also is a major boost for obtaining federal tax breaks or federal or state grants to assist in the repair of such buildings. Another landmark is now on the State Register, Governor Dale Farm, saved by the concerted effort of the Heritage Commission, Conservation Commission, the SE Land Trust, and voters.

The Commission also has been an engaged partner with the Select Board and Town Administration for providing informed advice and recommendations. Two members were major players in the Town Hall restoration project, one the Chair of the committee. The Commission remains active in on-going repair work. It also promotes and evaluates applications for barn easements for the Select Board, visiting the applicant's barn, and providing its recommendation to the Select Board at one of its public meetings. Such easements are intended to encourage barn owners to repair the structure and not permit it to deteriorate beyond repair. The loss of barns is considered a state-wide catastrophe as New Hampshire's rural heritage, a tourist attraction, slowly crumbles.

The basis for almost everything the Commission sets out to do in the near future is the result of a town-wide area survey of historical resources. It was funded by a Federal FEMA grant (Hurricane Sandy) and conducted by a preservation professional, Lisa Mausolf. The Rockingham Planning Commission prepared a color-coded map of historical resources in the Town by age groupings based upon the survey. We now know what exists and where to concentrate our limited resources. Both are available on the Commission's webpage on the Town website. The printed booklet is available in the Library.

## **Major Projects**

- Creation of the Demolition Review ordinance.
- Designation of Town Hall and the 1907 original Library building (Stone) placed on the National Register of Historic Places and the State Register of Historic Places.
- Evaluation of Discretionary Barn Easement applications, making recommendations to the Select Board, and publicizing their availability.
- Creation of Historical Resources Town-wide Area Form.
- Creation of an annual Land Use Boards (Conservation, Agriculture, Planning, and Zoning Commissions meeting with participation of Little Boar's Head) meeting.
- Representation on the Economic Development and Rail Trail Committees.
- Coordination of a Walkway in front of the Stone Building (original library).
- Publication of the Commission's photographs and documents into a collections management application permitting online public access.

**Publications produced by the Heritage Commission, all available in print form.** *All but "North Hampton Heritage Walks" are also on the Town website on the Heritage Commission page.*

- *North Hampton Heritage Walks.* Co-published with the North Hampton Historical Society and the Little Boar's Head Heritage Commission.
- *North Hampton's War Monument and Memorial Bridge Markers*
- *Some of North Hampton's Famous People*
- *Old Locales of North Hampton*
- *North Hampton Militia Victory at 2nd Battle of Saratoga: The Battle of Bemis Heights October 7, 1777.* Oil painting by Jenifer (Landman) Holbert (former Select Board and Heritage Commission member) hangs in the lobby area of Town Offices.

**Additional Historical Resources / Information produced by the Commission and available on the Town website.**

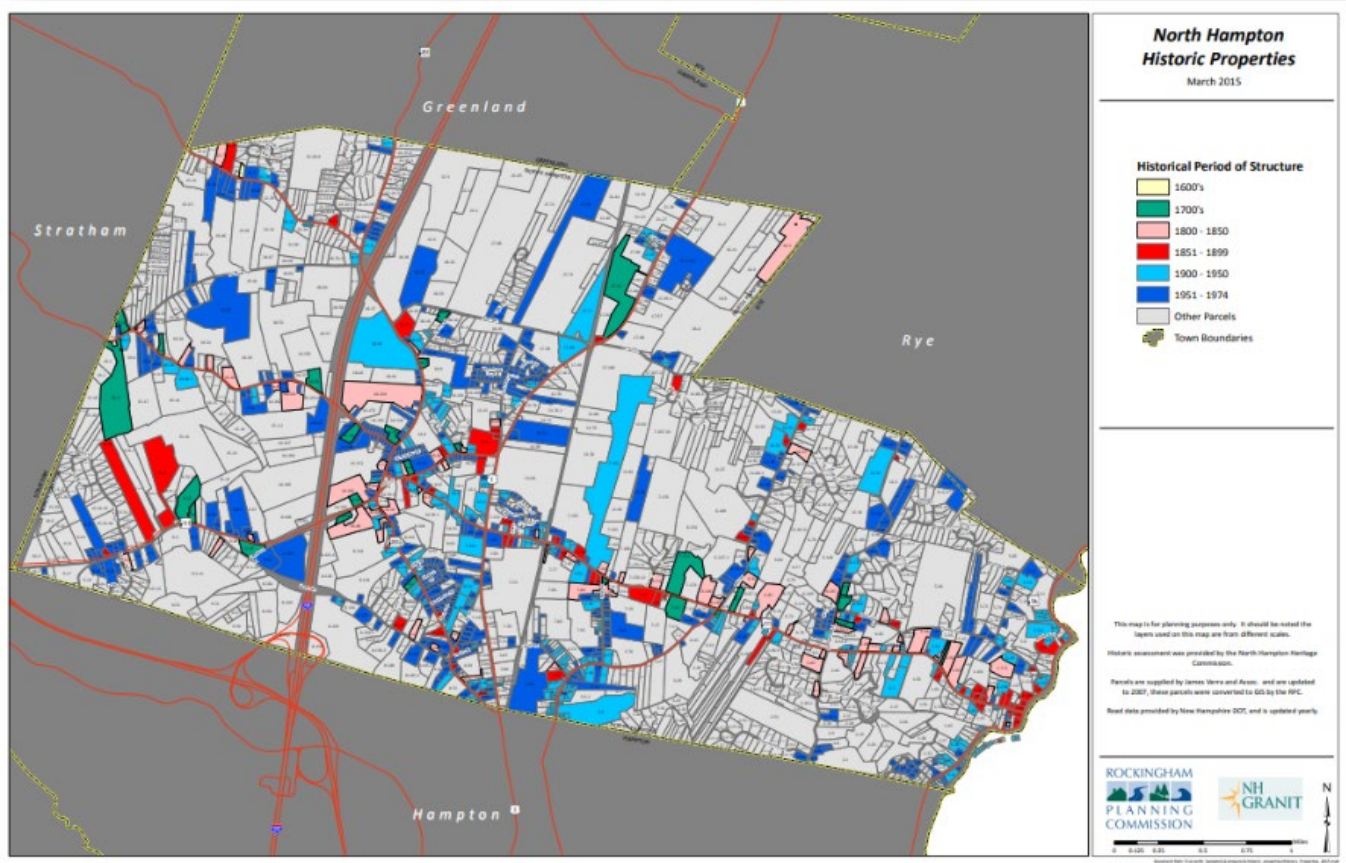
- *Historical Resources Town Wide Area Form* (print copy at Town Clerk's Office)
- *Historical Resources Map*
- *Timeline pre - 1660 - 1975* (on the Historical Society website)
- *One Hundred Historic Houses*
- Town Clerk's Historical Records Project Finding Aid. Records maintained by Town Clerk
- Design and frame box to exhibit town artifacts in Town Hall
- Restoration of historic megalethoscope and slides
- Preservation of Ogden Nash barn board

**Planning Board, Select Board [SB] and other Board/Commission interactions**

- Proposed and gained approval of the Planning Board and voters for Demolition Review ordinance.
- With approval of the Select Board, hired Lisa Mausolf to do work for the successful nomination of Town Hall to the National Register of Historic Places.
- Organized and managed Town Hall Day celebration.
- Prepared successful nominations of 1907 original Library building to the State Register of Historic Places and to the National Register of Historic Places after gaining Select Board approval.
- Encouraged and assisted Library trustees and staff to hold a Library Day and assisted with the event.
- Recommended that the Planning Board institute a Land Use Boards Summit Meeting now held annually.
- At the request of the Select Board, The Heritage Commission evaluates Discretionary Barn Easement applications annually, publicizing the availability of these easements (information on the Town website), and making recommendations to the Board.
- Secured a FEMA grant through the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources to complete a survey of Town historical resources that could be impacted by serious storms. The result is a Town-wide Area Form.
- Secured a grant from the New Hampshire Moose plate program for restoration of the historic megalethoscope found in the attic of the Stone Building.
- Coordinated with Plymouth State University for the services of a historical preservation intern for Rail Trail research and documentation of the Town campus.
- Provided information and collaborated with Planning Board on demolition review.
- Organized barn survey efforts and collaborated with the Agriculture Commission.
- Received “Consulting Party” status for federal Section 106 requirements (cell towers, Drake Bridge reconstruction). Section 106 requires federal agencies to consider the effects of their undertakings on historic properties and to provide the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) with a reasonable opportunity to comment. In addition, federal agencies are required to consult on the Section 106 process with State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPO).
- Assisted private property owners with the National Register of Historic Places nomination process (Centennial Hall, Hubbingtons).
- Sought and obtained representation on the local Rail Trail organization and Economic Development Committee.
- Ongoing consultation with the Town and Select Board on repairs to the Stone Building and Town Hall.
- Planned and hosted the first regional meeting of area Heritage Commissions.
- Commission members have attended programs offered by the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources and the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance.

### Map of North Hampton Historic Properties:

[www.northhampton-nh.gov/heritage-commission/pages/historic-properties-map-2018](http://www.northhampton-nh.gov/heritage-commission/pages/historic-properties-map-2018)



## A Brief History of North Hampton

North Hampton was originally part of the township of Hampton granted in 1638 by the Massachusetts Bay Colony. It remained as unsettled woods and wetlands until the 1670s when settlement began in two separate areas: Little River and North Hill. The Little River area was developed with mills and farms as early as 1672. In 1675, Isaac Marston built his garrison by the southern end of the Country Road where the “North Division” began. Then in 1688, a garrison by Dearborn, near Exeter Road, and finally 1703, a town-built garrison on the Town Common per the Governor’s orders. The meeting house was built in 1734 on the common and served religious and secular life. North Hampton was incorporated as a town in 1742.

The transition from a small agricultural community of 600 to the present day began in the 1760s with the construction of what became Atlantic Avenue, connecting North Hill with Little River and Little Boar’s Head.

The coming of the railroad in 1840 and the movement of the Town Hall to an area near the Railroad Depot shifted the town center from North Hill. The presence of the railroad and the construction of an electric trolley increased the development of Little Boar’s Head as a summer community.

Until the period after the Second World War, North Hampton continued to be an agricultural community. After the war, with improved roads, interstate highways, and telecommunications, North Hampton became a diverse populace, growing from 1,910 people in 1960 to 4,538 in 2020 as more job opportunities became available within commuting distance.

Faced with this dramatic growth, the residents' mandate of preserving the Town's rural character and historic properties is critical. This responsibility has fallen to the Heritage Commission, the Planning and Zoning Boards, and other land-use boards.

Additional information on the Heritage Commission website:

[www.northhampton-nh.gov/heritage-commission](http://www.northhampton-nh.gov/heritage-commission)

## Heritage Goals & Actions

North Hampton Master Plan Implementation Table – Historical Resources Chapter							
<b>Master Plan Vision Principle(s) and Strategy(ies) that support this Goal</b>	Principal 1 – Maintain and protect the rural seacoast character, heritage, and natural resources. Strategy B – Maintain and restore historic public buildings, antique houses, barns, and stone walls.						
<b>Historical Resources Chapter</b> <b>TOPIC GOAL 1</b>	<i>Make historical preservation part of the planning process for municipal and town decisions</i>						
	Timeframe	On-going	Expected Outcome	Town and Planning Board decisions consider historical preservation and consult with the Heritage Commission			
	Measure						
			Responsible Party	Timeframe	Cost (if known)	Funding Source	Task Progress, Year: __2021__
TASK 1.1	Survey and inventory historic sites, including those noted in the Historical Resources Town-wide Area Form, including area known historically as North Hill (Centennial Hall, Church, Common), Pagetown, Little River, and Town Hall/Depot village center, and archeological sites such as mills and former roads.		<i>Heritage Commission, with the assistance of the Planning Board, Select Board, Conservation Commission, Agricultural Commission, and Cemetery Trustees</i>	<i>On-going</i>		<i>Grant availability and town budget</i>	Heritage Commission Stone Building walkway project (Private funding)
TASK 1.2	Maintain partnership with Land Use Boards, Select Board, and Little Boar's Head Heritage Commission to facilitate support and conversations on related topics.		<i>Heritage Commission and receptiveness of other boards</i>	<i>On-going</i>			Select Board member on the Heritage Commission, Planning Board member on Heritage Commission

TASK 1.3	Facilitate additional State and National Register listings and barn preservation easement. Encourage and educate private owners about benefits	<i>Heritage Commission</i>	<i>On-going</i>			Develop a communication plan   DOT mitigation for Drake Bridge  Development of the Town Wide Area Survey of historic resources
TASK 1.4	Participate in Rail Trail planning and implementation including pocket park	<i>Heritage Commission</i> <i>With representation on the Rail to Trails Committee</i>	<i>On-going</i>			
TASK 1.5	Monitor Memorandum of Agreement with Department of Transportation for the Route 1 (Drake's) Bridge project to ensure compliance and mitigation is followed and mitigation achieved	<i>Heritage Commission</i>	<i>tbd</i>			
TASK 1.6	Identify historical resources and properties that are susceptible to impacts from coastal hazards. Target outreach toward affected property owners about adaptations they can make to protect their property.	<i>Heritage Commission, Planning Board, Conservation Commission,</i> <i>Coordinate with Little Boar's Head Heritage Commission</i>	<i>On-going</i>			
TASK 1.7	Use existing Town outreach tools to promote findings, goals, and actions of the Coastal Hazards Master Plan Chapters. Create awareness and review coastal land use impacts to protect the community's character	<i>Heritage Commission, Planning Board, Conservation Commission.</i>	<i>On-going</i>			