



# Historic Resources

*The Historic Resources Chapter is a new addition to the Durham Master Plan. The chapter focuses on the identification and preservation of Durham's historical resources. It includes a vision for the preservation of historical resources, followed by an overview of Durham's history and past preservation activities. The chapter describes local, state, and federal level tools and techniques that may be utilized for future preservation activities. It concludes with specific goals and recommendations for the preservation of historical resources.*

Adopted by the Durham Planning Board on \_\_\_\_\_

# Our Vision

*Through 2025 and beyond, Durham recognizes that historical resources are irreplaceable and contribute to quality of life and sense of place. We therefore value the recognition, preservation, enhancement, and continued use of buildings, structures, burial grounds, sites, areas, districts, and roads having historical, architectural, cultural, or archeological significance to Durham.*

# Introduction

# Durham's Historic District Commission and Heritage Commission

Historic resources, including archeological, architectural, engineering, and cultural heritage, are important assets in Durham that contribute to the character and quality of life in the town. The town preserves, protects, and celebrates these resources in a variety of ways.

Durham has a Historic District Commission (HDC) as well as a Heritage Commission. The Historic District Commission (established in 1975) is a board of seven citizen volunteers appointed by the Town Council. The HDC, a quasi-judicial regulatory body, administers Article XVII, the Durham Historic Overlay District of the Zoning Ordinance, by:

- ∴ Safeguarding and preserving structures, places, and properties that reflect elements of the cultural, social, economic, religious and political heritage of the Town
- ∴ Fostering the preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of structures and places of historical, architectural, and community value
- ∴ Conserving and improving the value of property within the District
- ∴ Protecting and enhancing the attractiveness of the District to the citizens as well as visitors, and thereby providing economic benefit to the Town
- ∴ Fostering civic pride in the beauty and noble accomplishments of the past.

The Historic Overlay District Ordinance can be viewed here:

[http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/zoning/article\\_17.pdf](http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/zoning/article_17.pdf).

The HDC meets monthly to review proposed changes to properties located within the boundaries of the Historic Overlay District in Durham (see map on page 6 of this chapter). The HDC's purview includes various site changes and modifications to the exterior appearance of structures within the Historic Overlay District including:

- ∴ Alterations to existing structures
- ∴ Additions to existing structures
- ∴ Erection of new structures
- ∴ Demolition of existing structures or portions of existing structures.

The powers and duties of the HDC include (RSA 674:46-a):

- ∴ Perform research and prepare the content of the historic district ordinance prior to its adoption or amendment
- ∴ Adopt and amend HDC regulations
- ∴ Administer the ordinance and regulations within the historic district
- ∴ Ensure districts and regulations are compatible with the master plan and zoning ordinance
- ∴ Assume the composition and duties of the Heritage Commission.

Members of the HDC also serve on the Town's Heritage Commission (established in 2006). The primary duties of the Heritage Commission are to advise and assist citizens, local boards and commissions, state and federal agencies, and others about the historical, cultural, and archaeological resources of Durham. The Heritage Commission serves in an advisory role town-wide. For more information about the HDC and Heritage Commission, see [http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/boc\\_historic/about](http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/boc_historic/about).

## Foundation

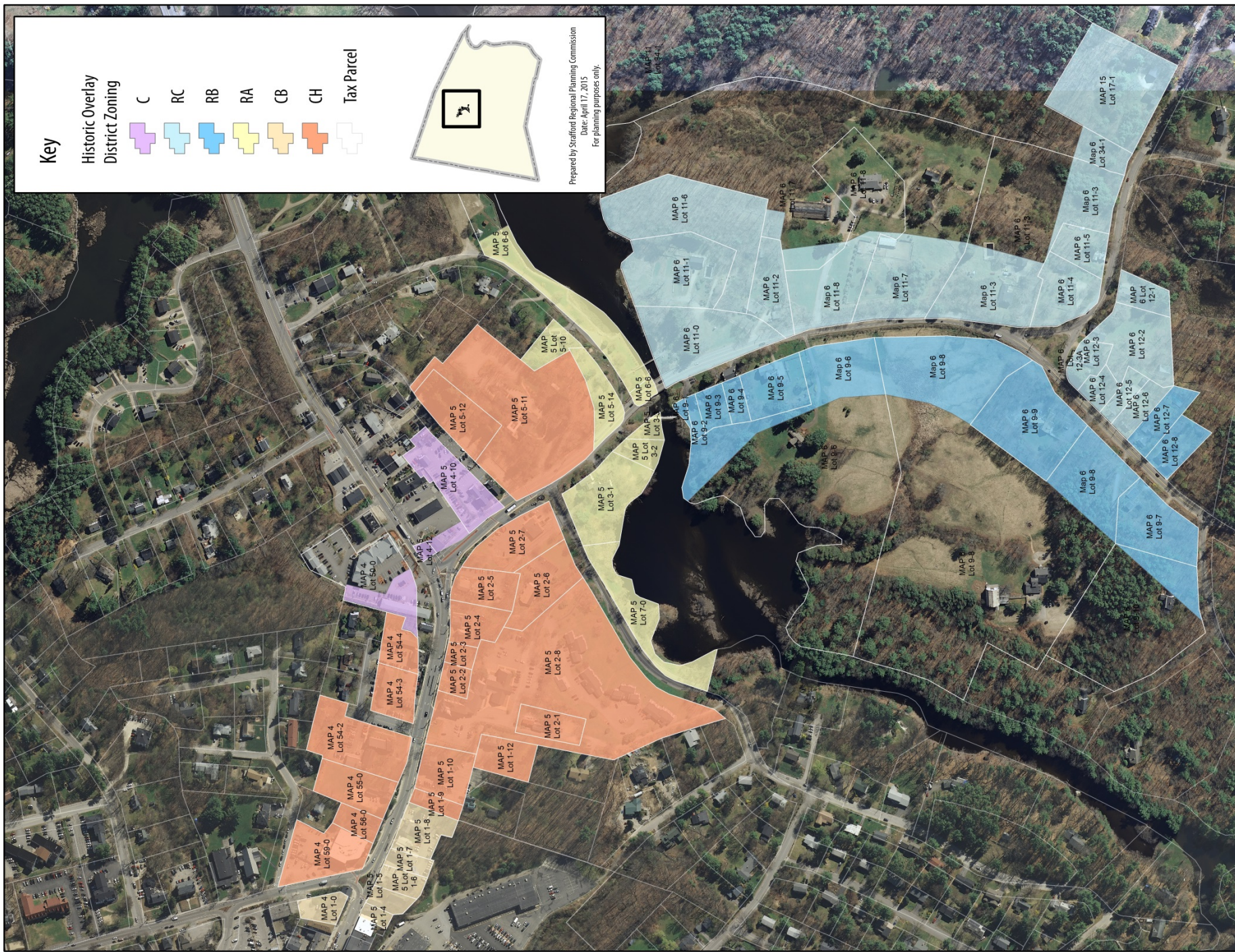
### The Durham Historic Association

The Durham Historic Association, established in 1851, is a non-governmental 501c3 organization dedicated to preserving the history of Oyster River Plantation and the Town of Durham. The DHA has maintained a museum on the second floor of the old Town Hall since 1961. The Association sponsored the reprinting of local histories including the 1913 *History of Durham* and the 1892 *Landmarks in Ancient Dover*. Additionally, the DHA wrote and published the books *If Only Uncle Ben*, *Letters of Mary P. Thompson*; *Durham New Hampshire: A History 1900-1985* and *History in an Oystershell*. In 1976, the Durham Historic Association inventoried and mapped all private burials in Durham (with engraved stones).

During the Town of Durham's 2011 Master Plan Survey, 84% of the 467 citizens who completed the survey indicated that they agree or strongly agree that the Town should preserve historic structures in order to protect and promote historic and cultural character. Seventy-three percent supported the installation of signage to identify historic buildings and historically significant areas, while 59% supported strengthening architectural design standards for the Historic District. Input from the 90 residents who participated in the 2011 Visioning Forum indicates both recognition of both the preservation of historic features and old houses in the Historic District and the danger of losing historical buildings. When asked "What will we look like?," in the future, two survey respondents noted a desire to recognize the history of Great Bay area and Native American culture in this area.



Image 1: *The Falls* by John W. Hatch. A depiction of the Durham Shipyards at the Landing c.1823. Permitted for use by the Durham Community Church.



Map 1: Durham's Historic Overlay District (Source: SRPC)

# Durham's Historical Resources

# Durham's Resources – Historical Context

Located in the seacoast area of New Hampshire, Durham is bounded on the north by Madbury, on the east by the tidal estuary of the Piscataqua River, including Little Bay and Great Bay, on the west by Lee, and on the south by Newmarket. Access to salt water fisheries, timber, and the fertile land along Little Bay, Great Bay, the Oyster River, and the Lamprey River provided the impetus for early settlement in this area. The Abenaki people occupied the land prior to and during the first 100 years of British settlement. Evidence of 17<sup>th</sup> century contact has been found throughout the Piscataqua region. During the last quarter of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the first quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, wars between England and France ravaged the area. Attacks on the Oyster River settlement led to residents' efforts to drive Native Americans out of the Piscataqua region. This area, now the Town of Durham, was a British colony for 150 years and one of the earliest settlements on the east coast of the United States.

## Historical Periods in the Development of Durham

For a list of structures that are over a century old see:

[http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planningandzoning/historic\\_resources\\_chapter\\_-\\_building\\_list.pdf](http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planningandzoning/historic_resources_chapter_-_building_list.pdf)

### **1630-1679: The Settlement of Oyster River Plantation, Colonial and Foreign Trade**

Before the British arrived, Native Americans had long inhabited the area, as documented through archaeological studies and the existence of Indian graves. The first British houses and farms were built along the shores of the Oyster River, Little Bay, and Great Bay. The first mill rights on the Oyster, Lamprey, and other rivers were

Did You Know? Durham's first meeting house was built in 1655.

granted c.1650. The first Meeting House was built in 1655 at the center of Oyster River Plantation. It was situated on the south bank of the river, half-way between Little Bay and the present Mill Pond dam. Events in England affected daily life at Oyster River and its lucrative trade with Barbados and Madeira. Giant pines were felled, hauled to rivers, and then floated down to Portsmouth and shipped out by mast convoy to the British navy. During the English Civil War, the Massachusetts Bay Colony governed the Piscataqua region. After King Charles II was restored to the throne, he issued a commission in 1679 to John Cutt, naming him President of New Hampshire, and local government was restored. *Historical resources include early burial grounds and roads laid out during this period as well as archaeological sites documenting Native American occupation and the first British colonial settlements.*



Image 2: The King's Road from Oyster River Falls to Cocheco



## 1680-1731: The Indian Wars, Local Economy Suffers

Oyster River Plantation was on the front line of wars between England and New France (Canada) and its allies, the Abenaki indigenous people. Indian attacks and killings within the Plantation continued for more than 50 years. William Beard, who lived at the mouth of Beards Creek, was killed by Indians in 1675. The first massacre occurred in 1689 when the Huckins garrison (on Huckins Brook by Emerson Rd) was attacked and 18 people killed. The victims were buried in the field by the high school. The Oyster River Massacre in July 1694 devastated the prosperous settlement. Livestock were killed and crops, houses, and barns were burned. More than 25% of the residents were killed or captured and marched to Canada where they were held for ransom. Some died en route, others were ransomed, and some never returned. The burial site of 15 members of the Adams family has a monument at Durham Point. Oyster River men formed companies of Indian fighters to track and kill the Indians to prevent further attacks. Bounties were paid by the government for Indian scalps. This was a period of great anxiety and the local economy was at a standstill. The last victims were Moses Davis and his adult son, Moses Davis Jr, who were killed near their Oyster River mill by the Mast Road. The graves of Aaron and Love Davis, children of Moses Davis Jr, can be seen on the old Davis farm on Mill Road. *Historical resources include burial grounds, roads laid out during this period, stone bridges, dam abutments, archaeological sites, and buildings built during this period.*



Image 4: A well on the c.1710 Moses Davis Farm

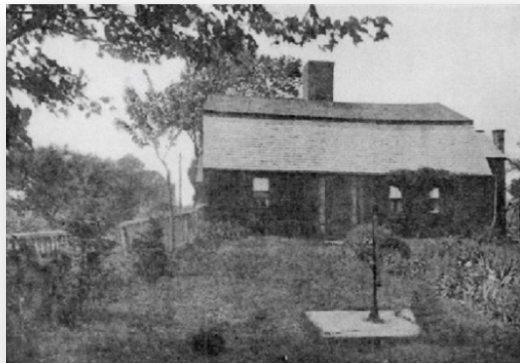


Image 5: The Jonathan Chesley House built c.1716 – 53 Bagdad Road

## 1732-1773: Indian Attacks Cease, Town Charter Received, Prosperity Returns

The Oyster River parish was separated from Dover when the Town Charter for Durham was granted in 1732. The name of Durham was chosen to make a statement to the King. It was a reference to the palatinate of Durham, which held power second only to that of the sovereign. The land area of Durham was reduced by one third when the western part of the town was granted its own Town Charter in 1766 as the town of Lee. As the threat of Indian attacks abated, residents moved to settle new inland towns including Canterbury, Nottingham, Barrington, Rochester and New Durham. The economy recovered, prosperity increased and mills were built at additional sites along the Lamprey, Piscassic and Oyster Rivers, and Crommett, Johnson, and Bunker Creeks. Trade with Caribbean and foreign ports resumed, creating local wealth. *Historical resources include private burial grounds, roads, stone bridges, stone walls, dam abutments, and buildings built during this period.*

Did You Know? The Town Charter for Durham was granted in 1732.



Image 6: The Joshua Woodman House built c.1740 - 247 Packers Falls Road

## 1774-1840: Revolutionary War, American Commerce

In 1774, Durham residents participated in the attack on Fort William & Mary, the royal fort at New Castle that had guarded the harbor since 1632. British colonists committed their first act of high treason when they seized cannons and powder. Durham sent many men to fight the British including General John Sullivan and Colonel Alexander Scammell. In 1794, after the Revolutionary War, the Piscataqua Bridge was built from Newington to Cedar Point in Durham. The bridge was 2,362 feet long and 38 feet wide and linked Portsmouth with the inland towns. The First New Hampshire Turnpike (Cedar Point Road to Piscataqua Road to Main Street to the Lee

line) was built in 1803 to connect Durham with Concord, which became the new state capital in 1808. The bridge and turnpike made Durham a prosperous crossroads for 50 years. During this period, shipbuilding flourished in Durham at the Old Landing and at Meader's Cove. Stagecoaches left from Durham for destinations north, south, east, and west, carrying passengers, mail, and freight. Durham quarries produced the granite used to build the stone mill buildings at Newmarket during the 1820s. *Historical resources include granite quarries, stone structures, burial grounds, and buildings built during this period.*



Image 7: *The Passage of the Delaware*, 1819. Thomas Sully, American (born in England), 1783-1872. This famous depiction from the Revolutionary War of George Washington leading his troops across the Delaware River for a surprise attack on the British troops in Trenton, includes one of Durham's own. General John Sullivan, with the plume in his hat, is seated on the horse on the right. Also shown are General Henry Knox, waving his sword, and General Nathaniel Greene, mounting his horse.

Oil on canvas. 372.11 x 525.78 cm (146-1/2x207 in.). Image courtesy of Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Gift of the Owners of the old Boston Museum, 03.1079. Photograph © to be published 2015.



Image 8: Durham's brick commercial block built C.1825 with entry at the corner of the first NH Turnpike and Newmarket Road – the first Town Hall

### 1841-1892: Durham Industries and the Railroad Era, Land Ceded to Newmarket

In 1841, the Boston & Maine Railroad laid its track northward through Durham to Dover. Due to the railroad, the Piscataqua Bridge was not repaired in 1855 after damage caused by winter ice. Following the arrival of the railroad, the town center gradually moved westward from the falls to its present location on Main Street near Madbury and Mill Roads. The first Town Hall was purchased in the 1840s and altered to accommodate Town Meeting in the 1850s. Industrial sites that were active during the time included the Wiggin and Wiswall Mills; Hall's Nut & Bolt factory and Stott's Candle & Soap factory on the Piscassic River; the Newmarket Manufacturing Co. machine shops at Packer's Falls; and several brickyards and shoe shops. Following the Civil War, the population of the region declined as residents left for the American west or to work in the commercial centers of Massachusetts. In 1870, Durham ceded a large area on its south side to Newmarket. This included land along Bay Road, Newmarket Road, Packers Falls Road, and Lee Hook Road, including the schools in Districts 6 and 9 and the industrial sites on the Piscassic River. *Historic resources include former industrial sites, stone structures, burial grounds, and buildings built during this period.*



Image 9: In our nation's capital, this six foot block of Durham granite was installed in the Washington Monument by vote of the residents in 1850



Image 10: Durham Granite Quarry



Image 11: Mill race at the site of the Wiswall Mills



Image 12: Farm on Mast Road

## 1893-1945: New Hampshire College, Town Acquires Long Term Debt

In 1893, New Hampshire College was relocated to Durham after resident Benjamin Thompson willed money and land on condition that the state establish an agricultural college in Durham. Thompson's purpose was to promote the scientific education of NH farmers, which would enable them to compete with farmers of the Great Plains whose produce was transported east by railroad. For the first time, Durham used long term debt to pay for road pavement in order to facilitate vehicles traveling at a higher speed. In 1911, the Boston & Maine Railroad moved its track west to straighten a curve between the Oyster River and the Madbury town line (the former rail bed is Edgewood Road). From 1894 to 1914, enrollment at New Hampshire College increased from about 100 to 500 students. In 1922, the number of students reached 1,000, exceeding the resident population for the first time. In 1923, New Hampshire College petitioned the Legislature for a corporate restructure to become the University of New Hampshire (UNH).

The Ebenezer Thompson farm, built in 1710, was sold and used for student housing. In the 1930s, fraternities and houses were built along Madbury Road on this farm and the adjacent Jenkins and Woodman farms. Private water systems owned by three residents supplied water along Main Street, Madbury Road and Mill Road. The historic Benjamin Thompson house, used as a dormitory, was destroyed by fire (site of the Post Office). When student enrollment reached 2,500 UNH built a dam on the Oyster River to provide water for its campus and purchased the adjacent land flooded by the reservoir. A sewage treatment plant was built on the Oyster River by UNH to process the sewage produced by the university. A new town school was built in 1936 on the site of the Woodman Garrison (now the Middle School). By the end of World War II, student enrollment was 2,600 and UNH owned 1,500 acres of prime land in Durham. *Historic resources include buildings built between 1893 and 1915.*



Image 13: Madbury Road in 1933 – Beyond are Woodman, Coe, and Young Farms. The Oyster River is visible in the upper right of the image.



Image 14: The Oyster River was re-routed for a new railroad bridge in 1911



Image 15: 1957 Faculty Road and Valentine Hill Road Development



Image 16: 1958 View of Main Street

## 1946-1980: Housing Developments and Oyster River Cooperative School District

After World War II, UNH enrollment doubled to 5,200 students by 1948. Single family housing developments first appeared in Durham, including faculty development on the McDaniels-Hoitt farm and Onderdonk land, Wedgwood development on Burnham-Page land, Riverview Road on the Bunker pasture, Beards Landing on the Coe farm, Littlehale Road on the Emerson farm, and Woodridge development on the Davis farm. The construction of Pease Air Force Base, regulations favoring agribusiness, and the decline of the railroads contributed to the decline of local dairy farming. The Oyster River Cooperative School District was formed in 1954, combining the schools of Durham, Lee, and Madbury. A high school was built in 1964 on the Coe farm. Railroad passenger service ceased, automobile traffic increased and the Route 4 bypass was completed in 1966 crossing the Coe, Woodman, and Demeritt farms. The first shopping center at Mill Plaza was built on the Chesley-Osgood farm circa 1969. During the 1973 oil crisis, Aristotle Onassis proposed an oil refinery on 3,000 acres south of the Oyster River. Resident activists opposed the refinery and this economic opportunity was defeated by town vote in 1974. Spruce Hole was listed as a National Landmark and acquired as conservation land by town vote in 1974. The Durham Historic District was created in 1975 by vote of the town and listed on the National Register in 1980. By 1980, UNH enrollment had doubled once more to over 10,000 students, twice the resident population. Residences along Main Street on Church Hill were sold and converted to student housing.

## 1981-present: UNH State Funding Reduced, Development Accelerates, Conservation Efforts Intensify

From 1981 to the present, enrollment at UNH continued to increase, exacerbating the water supply and student housing crises. The Town agreed to utilize the Spruce Hole aquifer as a water supply reservoir. In 1985, the first industrial park was built on the Demeritt-Woodward farm at Technology Drive. The Lee well was added as another water source for Durham. In 1987, after 255 years of Town Meeting government, residents voted to change the Town Charter to a Town Council-Town Administrator form of government. Farms and rural land northwest of Mill Road and the campus were rezoned to MUDOR (Multiunit Dwelling-Office-Research). New construction on MUDOR land included three student housing complexes and the Spruce Woods-Emeritus elder care facility. UNH purchased more land along Mast Road, and the Bunker neighborhood was demolished. New campus buildings of increased height and scale began to dominate Main Street and Garrison Avenue. Several large student housing complexes were also built downtown, which transformed portions of the village's streetscape. Durham's finest example of a Federal style house was sold and dismantled.

Throughout this period, the town recognized the need to protect land and water resources from development. Conservation easements were established to protect Crommett Creek and the Oyster and Lamprey River watersheds. In 1989, the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve was created to protect the tidal estuary of the Piscataqua River. The Lamprey River was declared a federal Wild and Scenic River and the Oyster River was nominated for the NH Rivers Management and Protection Program. The Mill Pond Dam and Smith Chapel were preserved by local activists. Sale of conservation easements and land acquisition by NH Fish & Game and private non-profits increased. *In 2015 Durham is 385 years old and has been an incorporated town for 283 years.*

Did You Know? As of 2015, Durham is 385 years old.



Image 17: In 1991, Oyster River Bridge was replaced with a new bridge of similar scale with granite facing (Photo credit: Bernie Casey)

### Success Story: Oyster River Bridge

Durham's HDC worked with the NH Department of Transportation to alter the design proposed for the reconstruction of this bridge. The excellent result is a safe modern bridge that preserves the viewscape of the historic Oyster River Falls area. The view was preserved by reducing the proposed height and width of the bridge, maintaining the historic bridge profile, installing granite facing over the concrete, and constructing a separate pedestrian bridge. Town events and ceremonies held at the Oyster River Bridge and the adjacent Town Landing Park are enjoyed by many Durham residents.

## Farm Settlement/Village/Neighborhood Historical Overview (areas of note prior to World War II)

Reflecting initial settlement patterns, Durham has developed into distinct areas of individual character. Durham has housing stock dating from the late 1600s, including a legacy of several characteristic neighborhoods and rural areas. Despite some diffusion of the town center due to construction of the Mill Plaza in 1970 and recent construction of student housing blocks, the town center remains vital and its historic character remains largely intact. This is chiefly due to the adaptive reuse of the historic buildings within the Historic District and surrounding area. Durham also has a varied collection of historic rural areas and neighborhoods.

The earliest residents lived on the salt water shore and inland along the rivers and creeks. After 50 years, during the Indian Wars, the settlement pattern reversed as residents moved closer to the salt water shore which provided an avenue of escape in time of attack. After the Indian Wars, residents moved inland once again.

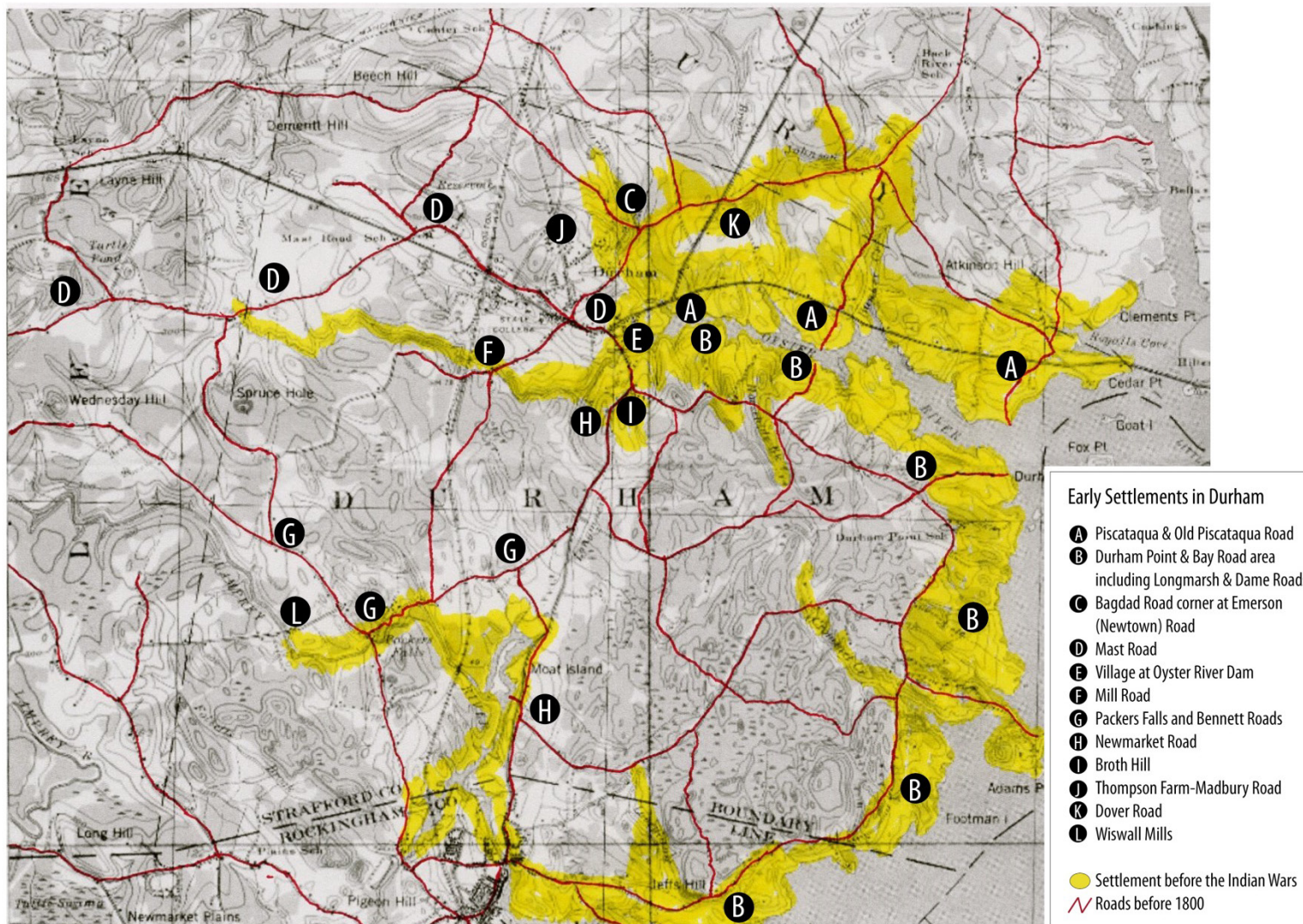


Image 18: Early settlement map of Durham

Developed by Janet Mackie of the Historic District Commission in partnership with SRPC (Basemap Source: USGS Topographic Map).

- A** Piscataqua & Old Piscataqua Road: This area is the site of early farms dating from 1630 along the shore. Ferries transported people and freight across the water to Newington and Dover. Mills were built on Stony Brook and Johnson Creek. A tide mill operated on Bunker Creek. In 1794, the Piscataqua Bridge was built from Cedar Point to Fox Point in Newington, replacing the ferries in this area. The First New Hampshire Turnpike was completed a few years later increasing commercial activity near Cedar Point. Masted ships were built at Meader Cove. After 1855, the bridge was no longer used, causing the area to become quiet and rural for the first time, except where granite quarries operated north of Jackson Landing.
- B** Durham Point & Bay Road area including Longmarsh & Dame Roads: This area is the site of early farms dating from 1630 along the shore. Ferries transported people and freight across the water to Newington. The first Meeting House was built on the Oyster River opposite Bunker Lane in 1655. A tide mill operated on Crommett Creek. The Piscataqua Bridge and Turnpike reduced ferry traffic to Durham Point and Adams Point. From the 1820s granite quarries were active supplying stone for the Newmarket Mills. Later several brickyards operated along the shores.
- C** Bagdad Road corner at Emerson (Newtown) Road: This area is the site of early farms at the junction of the town landing at the head of Beard's Creek, the King's Road from Oyster River Falls to Cocheco (Bagdad Road) and the road to Newtown (Emerson Road), laid out in 1689. Mills operated on Huckins Brook and Tom Hall Brook.
- D** Mast Road: This road was built from Oyster River Falls through Lee to Nottingham, to provide the most level route with the widest curves, to haul the long mast pines by ox train from the forests to the salt water. The best mast pines were floated down to Portsmouth and shipped to England. Early farms were built along the Mast Road and mills operated on the Oyster River near Laskey's bridge, at the Lee town line.
- E** Village at Oyster River Dam: This area developed after Thomas Beard and Valentine Hill were granted mill rights at Oyster River falls c.1650. The area was surrounded by early farms and developed into a village due to the mills and the Mast Road. The Meeting House was relocated to the village in 1714. After the Piscataqua Bridge and Turnpike were built, commercial activity increased as taverns, inns, and livery stables welcomed travelers. Masted ships were built at the Old Landing for more than 50 years by several owners.
- F** Mill Road: This area is the site of early farms and the mill operated on the northwest side of the Mill Road bridge. The road forked west of the bridge; the earliest branch, leading south to Packers Falls, was discontinued after the road was crossed by the railroad in 1841. The later branch leads to Packers Falls Road.
- G** Packers Falls & Bennett Roads: This area is the site of early farms and commerce at Packers Falls and Sullivan Falls as the water powered gristmills, sawmills, fulling mills and later machine tool shops. Bennett Road connected the falls mills with Long Marsh Road, which led to the ferries at Durham Point and Adams Point.
- H** Newmarket Road: This area is the site of early farms and a later road linking Durham Village with Lamprey River bridge, which was the Durham-Newmarket town line until 1870. Before the present road was built across the marsh, the way led from Bennett Road across Shepard's bridge near the Moat. Brickyards operated near the Moat.
- I** Broth Hill: This neighborhood developed at the junction of Newmarket Road and Durham Point Road. Early farms were supplemented by the addition of houses for workers in several trades employed in the shipyards at the Old Landing.

**J** Thompson Farm-Madbury Road: This area was the site of early farms owned by the Jenkins, Woodman and Thompson families. Madbury Road was built almost 200 years after the first farms. When the Thompson Farm was sold in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, houses were built along the road and the 300 year old Lucien Thompson farm and barn were converted for student housing (now the 'Beehive' at Madbury Road and Davis Court).

**K** Dover Road: This later road crosses Old Piscataqua Road and the King's Road, continuing through Madbury to Dover. The road passes through early farms, past granite quarries and the site of the Town Poor Farm.

**L** Wiswall Mills: This neighborhood grew up around the Wiggin mills, and later the Wiswall mills. It dates from the 1800s, when the bridge was built across the Lamprey River. The last use of this water power was an electricity-generating plant that operated during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

## Preservation Success Stories

### Three Chimneys Inn

The centuries-old Hill-Woodman-Frost-Sawyer homestead with barn and gardens was preserved by renovating and adding new construction, chiefly underground, carefully disguised, and married into the landscape on the north side of the property. Today, this historic estate is a popular meeting place, inn, and restaurant. The Three Chimneys Inn is a good example of the successful adaptive reuse of an historic structure that benefits all Durham residents.

### Mill Pond Dam

The HDC advocated for this endangered structure and brought the historically significant role it plays into focus for the Town. The NH Preservation Alliance recognized the dam as an important historic structure and in 2014 the Mill Pond Dam was listed on the State Register of Historic Places. The HDC, Parks & Recreation and the DHA hosted the centennial celebration for the Mill Pond Dam in 2013. Over 150 Durham residents attended the event.

### Smith Chapel

When this historic town-owned jewel fell into disrepair, town funding replaced the slate roof and restored the magnificent Redding Baird stained glass windows. The Heritage Commission obtained a Moose Plate grant for interior restorations, completed under the direction of the DPW. Smith Chapel was listed on the State and National Historic Registers in 2013 with a Certified Local Government grant obtained by the Heritage Commission. The Heritage Commission, DHA, Parks & Recreation, and Three Chimneys Inn sponsored an Open House for town residents at Smith Chapel in 2014. Town residents may arrange to use the Smith Chapel for wedding ceremonies.

### The Grange

This building, once a town school, was later adapted for use by the Scammell Grange. The town purchased the building in 1981 and leased it to tenants until 2011 when it was sold for renovation to include three workforce housing units. The Grange adaptive reuse project received a Housing Leadership award and a Plan NH award.

# Preservation Activities and Achievements

## 1800 **An Established Tradition of Historic Preservation in the Nineteenth Century**

- 1851 Durham Historic Association receives its charter
- 1876 Celebration of the national centennial
- 1885 Town residents vote to fund the publication of *'The History of the Town of Durham'*
- 1886 First trust fund is accepted by Town Meeting for the care of a private burial ground
- 1892 *'Landmarks in Ancient Dover'* is published by resident Mary Pickering Thompson

## 1900 **An Established Tradition of Historic Preservation in the Twentieth Century**

- 1903 Town funds the first town celebration of "Old Home Week"
- 1910 Bunker Garrison architectural drawings are made by Appleton
- 1913 *'The History of the Town of Durham'* is published by Stackpole and residents Lucien Thompson and Winthrop Meserve
- 1919 Town funds and creates a Historical Pageant
- 1932 Town Celebration of the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Town Charter
- 1938 Historic American Building Surveys completed on the Sullivan House, Pendergast Garrison, Ebenezer Smith house, Durham Town Hall, Durham Town Pound and archaeological excavations at the Woodman Garrison site
- 1961 Industrial Committee Report for Durham concludes that commercial development will not lower town tax rate without destroying the present character of Durham which is valued by its residents
- 1966 Archaeological excavations at the Burnham Garrison site
- 1960 Inventory and rehabilitation of private burial grounds by the Durham Historic Association (20 year project)
- 1972 General John Sullivan House is listed as a National Historic Landmark
- 1975 Historic District Commission is created by vote of the residents at Town Meeting

- 1977 Archaeological excavations at the Lamprey River Pre-Contact site
- 1970 Public preservation activities promoting creation of the Durham Historic District (for several years)
- 1970 Durham Historic Association provides walking tours of historic sites (for several years)
- 1971 *'If Only Uncle Ben. . . Letters of Mary P Thompson 1873-1888'* published by the Durham Historic Association
- 1976 *'History in an Oyster Shell 1600-1976'* written by Philip Wilcox and the Durham Historic Association
- 1976 Celebration of the national bicentennial
- 1977 The New Hampshire Old Graveyard Association founded and incorporated by resident Philip Wilcox
- 1980 Durham Historic District listed on the National Register
- 1980 Durham Historic Association provides walking tours of historic sites (for several years)
- 1982 Town Celebration of the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Town Charter
- 1985 *'Durham New Hampshire: A History 1900-1985'* written and published by the Durham Historic Association
- 1986 Archaeological excavations at the Wiggin-Wiswall mills site
- 1989 Historic District Commission works with owner to preserve the historic building during alterations for Three Chimneys
- 1989 Wagon Hill Farm purchased to preserve 100 acres of open fields, farmed since 1654 – Piscataqua Road
- 1989 Establishment of the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
- 1990 Archaeological excavations at the Hill-Frost-Sawyer house site
- 1991 Archaeological excavations at Oyster River bridge prior to demolition and construction of new bridge
- 1995 Wagon Hill Farm historical building survey
- 1995 Community Development Plan promoting viable downtown while retaining historic structures, with Rouse drawings
- 1996 Thompson Hall on the UNH campus listed on the National Historic Register
- 1996 Durham becomes a Certified Local Government
- 1997 *'Durham Main Street'* established under NH Main Street, an agency of the Community Development Finance Authority

## 2000

### An Established Tradition of Historic Preservation in the Twenty-First Century

- 2000 Master Plan Chapter 4 promotes preserving gateway, rural, and water views
- 2000 Lamprey River designated a federal Wild and Scenic River
- 2003 Beaudet Conservation Easement protects 133.8 acres – Bennett Road
- 2004 Mill Pond Center Conservation Easement protects 9.79 acres – Newmarket Road
- 2006 Archaeological excavations commence at the Field-Bickford Tavern site (4 year project)
- 2006 Heritage Commission created by the Town Council
- 2006 Emery Farm Conservation Easement protects 58.3 acres – Piscataqua Road
- 2006 Langley Farm Conservation Easement protects 88 acres – Langley Road
- 2007 Town Celebration of the 275<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Town Charter
- 2007 Fogg Farm Conservation Easement protects 91.1 acres – Mill Road
- 2008 Gangwer Roselawn Farm Conservation Easement protects 51 acres – Madbury line
- 2008 Smith Farm Conservation Easement protects 28.3 acres – Back River Road
- 2010 Oyster River Dam chosen for the ‘Seven to Save’ list by the NH Preservation Alliance
- 2010 Historic District Commission provides a walking tour of historic sites
- 2010 Archaeological excavations at the Wiggin-Wiswall mills site
- 2011 Beaudet Conservation Easement protects 64.2 acres – Bennett Road
- 2013 Smith Chapel listed on the New Hampshire Register of Historic Places
- 2013 Smith Chapel listed on the National Register of Historic Places
- 2013 Oyster River Dam Centennial Celebration sponsored by the HDC, DHA and P&R
- 2013 Amber Acres Conservation Easement protects 38.5 acres – Mast Road
- 2013 Oyster River Forest Conservation Easement protects 172.4 acres – Packers Falls Road
- 2013 Residents form ‘Friends of the UNH Outdoor Pool’ in an effort to save one of the last surviving WPA-funded outdoor pools in the U.S. (pool demolished in 2014)
- 2014 Oyster River Dam listed on the New Hampshire Register of Historic Places

## Architectural Surveys

- 1936 Historic American Buildings Surveys completed
- 1972 Report on the General John Sullivan house
- 1995 Report on the Bickford-Chesley farmhouse at Wagon Hill
- 1995 Report on the Hill-Woodman-Frost homestead by Dr. James L. Garvin, NH State Architectural Historian
- 2000 Report on the Mellen House by Dr. James L. Garvin, NH State Architectural Historian
- 2001 Report on the Israel Demeritt house by Dr. James L. Garvin, NH State Architectural Historian
- 2008 Report on Route 108, Newmarket Road houses
- 2012 Report on Route 4, Piscataqua Road houses
- 2014 Report on the James M Bunker-Fowler house on Piscataqua Road-Williams Way

A town survey of buildings in Durham that are 100 years or older is available at: [http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planningandzoning/historic\\_resources\\_chapter\\_-\\_building\\_list.pdf](http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planningandzoning/historic_resources_chapter_-_building_list.pdf)

## Individual Properties & Districts Listed on the National Register of Historic Places

- 1972 General John Sullivan House (also known as the) Adams-Sullivan House - A National Landmark (<http://www.nps.gov/search/?affiliate=nps&query=general+john+sullivan>)
- 1980 Durham Historic District (<http://www.nationalregisterofhistoricplaces.com/nh/strafford/state.html>)
- 1988 Wiswall Falls Historic District (<http://www.nps.gov/nr/research/index.htm>)
- 1996 Thompson Hall (<http://www.nps.gov/search/?affiliate=nps&query=%22thompson+hall%22>)
- 2013 Smith Chapel (<http://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/13000009.htm>)
- 2014 Wiswall Falls Mill Site ([http://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/AD\\_88000184\\_03\\_26\\_2014.htm](http://www.nps.gov/nr/feature/places/AD_88000184_03_26_2014.htm))

## Historic Sites, Districts & Neighborhoods Likely to be Eligible for Listing on the National Register

Paper copies of many of the National Register and survey forms are on file in the Durham Town Hall, Durham Public Library, and New Hampshire Historical Society. A complete file of these forms is maintained at NH Division of Historical Resources, located at 19 Pillsbury Street in Concord, NH.

- Town of Durham (<http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/>)
- New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources (NHDHR) (<http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/>)
- (NHDHR Inventory link) (<http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/survey.htm>)
- National Register of Historic Places (<http://www.nps.gov/nr/>)

See [http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planningandzoning/historic\\_resources\\_chapter\\_-\\_building\\_list.pdf](http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/sites/default/files/fileattachments/planningandzoning/historic_resources_chapter_-_building_list.pdf) for a list of historic buildings referred to in the Historical Context section (pages 8-15). Other buildings may qualify if they are of architectural or historic interest.

## Individual Properties Listed on the State Register of Historic Places ([http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/state\\_register.html](http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/state_register.html))

- 2006 - Folsom's Tavern – Odiorne Farm ([http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/state\\_reg\\_list\\_details.htm#folsoms](http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/state_reg_list_details.htm#folsoms))
- 2013 - Smith Chapel ([http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/state\\_reg\\_list\\_details.htm#smithc](http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/state_reg_list_details.htm#smithc))
- 2014 - Oyster River Dam ([http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/state\\_reg\\_list\\_details.htm#oyster](http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/state_reg_list_details.htm#oyster))

## Local Historic Preservation Regulations

**Durham Historic District:** The Durham Historic District was established in 1975 and listed on the National Register in 1980. This locally designated historic district was created as an overlay zoning district (see Map 1 on page 6). The Historic District Commission serves as the land use board to administer the district, and reviews and approves alterations to the exterior of buildings and structures and their settings. The Town approved a demolition by neglect ordinance whereby a property owner is effectively required to maintain his or her property in a reasonable condition. If a property deteriorates significantly, the Town may send a notice to the owner that indicates the areas that are deteriorating and stipulates appropriate repairs and maintenance measures that must be undertaken. If a building owner fails to comply, notification is sent to the Town Administrator and Town Council of a breach of this regulation. The Town may cause the maintenance and repairs to be completed, the cost of which shall be recovered by lien on the property.

([http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/boc\\_historic](http://www.ci.durham.nh.us/boc_historic))

## Threats to Historic Resources

Maintaining historic character in an evolving and changing community is a challenge due to:

- ∴ Lack of broad public support
- ∴ Lack of understanding regarding the economic benefits of preservation
- ∴ Diminished funding for preservation at the state and federal levels
- ∴ Newer development that is not built to the scale of historic structures
- ∴ Poorly maintained student housing, which is a particular concern and threat to the integrity of the National Register Historic District.

# Tools for the Preservation of Historical Resources

## Local Preservation Tools

### Locally Designated Historic District

A locally designated historic district is one of the most effective and comprehensive mechanisms to manage change in a historic area. Its purpose is to preserve the significant character of an area, while accommodating and managing change and new construction in accordance with regulations developed by local consensus. A locally designated historic district is a zoning (usually overlay) district. They are established in Durham by the adoption of a Historic (HD) Overlay Zoning District (Article XVII) by the Town Council and administered by the Historic District Commission. The Commission reviews applications for exterior alterations, new construction, and demolition within the district using officially adopted regulations and guidelines. (<http://www.nhpreservation.org/get-answers/community-wide-planning-resources/for-historic-district-commissions.html>)

### Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive RSA 79-E

RSA 79-E is a state program that encourages investment in town centers. It provides a tax incentive for the rehabilitation and active use of under-utilized historical commercial buildings and, in so doing, aims to promote strong local economies and sustainable growth as an alternative to sprawl. (<http://www.nhpreservation.org/get-answers/for-commercial-property/tax-incentives.html>)

### Scenic Roads

Any road in a town, other than a Class I or Class II highway, may be designated as a Scenic Road upon petition of 10 persons who are either voters of the town or who own land that abuts a road mentioned in the petition. All abutters of the road must

be notified within 10 days of the filing that a Scenic Road petition has been filed. Upon approval of this petition, the voters of the town may designate the road as a Scenic Road at any annual or special meeting. Designation as a Scenic Road means that repair, maintenance, and reconstruction work to the roadway should not involve the cutting or removal of trees (defined as 15 inches in diameter or more) or the tearing down or destruction of stone walls without prior written consent of the planning board or board responsible for the local Scenic Roads program. Designation of a roadway does not affect the rights of any abutting landowners on their property, and does not affect the eligibility of the town to receive construction, maintenance, or reconstruction aid. (<http://www.nh.gov/dot/programs/scbp/>)

- Designated as Scenic Roads by the Town of Durham: Durham Point Road, Bay Road, Bennett Road, and Packers Falls Road

### Neighborhood Heritage District

A heritage district is a group of buildings and their settings that are architecturally and/or historically distinctive and worthy of protection based on their contribution to the architectural, cultural, political, economic, or social history of the community. Sometimes a heritage district lacks sufficient significance or integrity to be designated as a traditional historic district. Other times, the neighborhood or political climate favors looser standards. A neighborhood heritage district can be established and operated under the same enabling statutes as a historic district. A neighborhood heritage district is similar to a locally designated historic district, except that the neighborhood heritage district operates under more flexible, less stringent standards. ([http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/documents/neighbor\\_hert\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/documents/neighbor_hert_handbook.pdf))

### Preservation Easements for Historic, Archaeological or Cultural Resources

A preservation easement, comparable to a land conservation easement, is a voluntary legal agreement that protects a significant historic, archaeological, or cultural resource in perpetuity. It provides assurance to the owner of an historic or cultural

property that the property's intrinsic value will be preserved by subsequent owners. An easement grants partial interest in a property to a grantee through sale or donation. A grantee can be a qualifying local governing board, such as the Town of Durham, or non-profit historical organization, such as the New Hampshire Preservation Alliance. With a preservation easement, the owner gives that second party the right to protect and preserve the historic and architectural features of the property. The property remains in private ownership, and the community continues to receive annual tax revenue. If the property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the value of the donated easement is federally tax deductible as a charitable contribution. (<http://www.nhpreservation.org/news-a-events/202-what-is-a-preservation-easement.html>)

### **Barn Preservation Easements**

Under a state law passed in 2002 (RSA 79-D Discretionary Preservation Easements), municipalities may grant property tax relief to barn owners who demonstrate the public benefit of preserving their barns or other old farm buildings and agree to maintain their structures for a minimum of ten years by means of a preservation easement. The statute defines agricultural structures to include barns, silos, corn cribs, ice houses and other outbuildings, as well as the land on which they sit. To qualify, the structure must be at least 75 years or and either currently or formerly used for agricultural purposes. At last count, nearly 200 New Hampshire barns and other agricultural buildings in forty-eight towns had been protected in this manner. The law is based on widespread recognition that many of New Hampshire's old barns and agricultural outbuildings are important local scenic landmarks and help tell the story of agriculture in the state's history. Yet many of these historic structures are demolished or poorly maintained because of the adverse impact of property taxes. The law is intended to encourage barn owners to maintain and repair their buildings by granting them specific tax relief and assuring them that assessments will not be increased as a result of new repair and maintenance work. It is strictly voluntary on

the part of the property owner, and it combines established criteria and guidelines at the state level with decision-making and implementation at the local level. (<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/rsa/html/v/79-d/79-d-mrg.htm>)

### **State Preservation Tools:**

**Preserving Community Character:** Programs available include Neighborhood Heritage districts and Preservation Easements.

<http://www.nhpreservation.org/images/stories/pdfs/planningtools%20handbook%20excerpt.pdf>

[http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/documents/neighborr\\_hert\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/documents/neighborr_hert_handbook.pdf)

### **Demolition Review**

[http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/publications/documents/demolition\\_review.pdf](http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/publications/documents/demolition_review.pdf)

### **New Hampshire Preservation Plan 2011-2015**

[http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/documents/nh\\_preservation\\_plan2011to2015.pdf](http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/documents/nh_preservation_plan2011to2015.pdf)

### **LCHIP – Land and Community Heritage Investment Program**

The New Hampshire Land and Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP) is an independent state authority that makes matching grants to NH communities and non-profits to conserve and preserve New Hampshire's most important natural, cultural and historic resources. (<https://lchip.org/remote/>)

### **State Register of Historic Places**

Examples include properties listed in the New Hampshire's State Register of Historic Places. Durham properties already recognized on the State Register are listed on page 23. The program recognizes and encourages the identification and protection of historical, architectural, archeological and cultural resources. Resources may be

buildings, districts, sites, landscapes, structures, or objects that are meaningful to the history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or traditions of New Hampshire residents and their communities. A resource must meet at least one of the following four criteria for listing:

1. Tell a story about an event(s) that is meaningful to a community's history
2. Have an association with a person(s) who made important contributions to a community, professional or local tradition
3. Represent a local architectural or engineering tradition; exemplify an architectural style or building type; or serve as a long-standing focal point in a neighborhood or community
4. An identified, but unexcavated and unevaluated archeological site that is likely to yield significant information about the lives, traditions and activities of former residents.

Generally, an eligible resource must be at least fifty years old. It must also retain enough of its historic character and physical attributes to illustrate the reason for its nomination. ([http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/documents/rpt\\_sr.pdf](http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/documents/rpt_sr.pdf))

Properties that are listed on the State Register:

- Are publicly recognized for their significance to a community
- Are considered in the planning phase of local or state-funded or assisted projects
- Qualify for state financial assistance for preservation projects, when such funds are available
- Receive special consideration or relief in application of access, building and safety codes.



Image 19: The Oyster River Dam was listed on the New Hampshire Register of Historic Places in 2014

## Federal Preservation Tools:

### Certified Local Government

Durham became a Certified Local Government in 1996. Local, state, and federal governments work together in the Federal Preservation Program to help communities save the irreplaceable historic character of places. Through the certification process, communities make a local commitment to historic preservation. This commitment is key to America's ability to preserve, protect, and increase awareness of our unique cultural heritage found in the built environment across the country. The matching grants available to municipalities that have become Certified Local Governments can be used to fund community preservation activities such as surveys, National Register, preservation planning, and educational projects. In some years, grants are also available for architectural plans and specifications, engineering reports, and even "bricks and mortar" work on National Register properties. Resources include "Certified Local Governments Program in New Hampshire," New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources.

([http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/publications/documents/clg\\_nh.pdf](http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/publications/documents/clg_nh.pdf),  
[http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/cert\\_loca\\_govt.html](http://www.nh.gov/nhdhr/programs/cert_loca_govt.html))

### National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the nation's official list of historical resources worthy of preservation. Authorized under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Register is part of a national program to coordinate and support public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect historic and archeological resources. Resources can be buildings, districts, sites, landscapes, structures, or objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture. Durham properties already recognized on the National Register are listed on page 23. Properties can be listed in the Register either individually or as part of an historic district. If a property is part of a district, it will be designated either a

contributing or a non-contributing resource. Each contributing resource has all the same benefits of listing as individually listed properties. Benefits of listing on the National Register, whether individually or as part of an historic district, are as follows:

- Recognition that a property is of significance to the nation, the state, or the community
- Some protection from impacts caused by state or federally funded, licensed, or assisted projects

- Eligibility for federal tax benefits if undertaking an approved rehabilitation project on an income-generating property
- Qualification for federal assistance for historic preservation, when funds are available
- Special consideration or relief in application of access, building, and safety codes
- Strong marketing tool for owners and businesses
- The documentation of the unique features of buildings helps owners make sound decisions on rehabilitation and maintenance.

[http://www.nps.gov/nr/national\\_register\\_fundamentals.htm](http://www.nps.gov/nr/national_register_fundamentals.htm)



Image 20: Schoolhouse Lane burial ground



Image 21: Main Street granite wall

# Key Conclusions

1. Preservation of Durham's history and cultural resources contributes to sense of place and quality of life within the community.
2. Preserving Durham's important historic resources requires identification, oversight, and protection.
3. Tools to protect historic resources include zoning ordinances, historic register listing and districts, easements, development regulations, and other land use strategies. There are a range of tools and incentives available at the local, state, and federal level to preserve historic resources.
4. To protect historic resources beyond the Historic District, a New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources inventory and plan for their protection would be necessary.
5. Although the town has changed significantly over time, it has maintained many of its key historic features.
6. The development and growth of UNH and the town poses a challenge to preserving historic resources. Historic District/Heritage Commission review of development proposals, mitigation of potential impacts of development on historic resources, ordinances review and update, and identification of barriers to rehabilitation and adaptive reuse can ensure preservation of the town's historic resources.
7. Public education and celebration of historic resources helps generate appreciation of and support for historic preservation. This contributes to sense of place in Durham.
8. There is a conflict between poorly maintained student housing and preservation of historical resources in the Historic District.

# Goals and Recommendations

This section outlines the recommendations associated with the key conclusions of this chapter that are intended to strategically guide the Town's historical resource efforts over the coming decade. It's important to note that the goals and recommendations below are not prioritized.

## Land Use Recommendation

Issue: There is a need to identify historic resources in Durham.

*Goal: Identify historical resources in Durham including buildings, stone structures, burial grounds, roads and archeological sites.*

Key Conclusions References: # 1, 2, 4

### Recommendations

#### Inventory

1. Complete a town-wide inventory of all buildings and structures over 100 years old. List buildings and structures by address and map and lot number. Update the existing inventory as more complete data becomes available.
2. Complete a town-wide inventory of historical agricultural buildings with the assistance of grant funded consulting services.
3. Complete a town-wide inventory of historic and prehistoric archeological resources with the assistance of the New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources.
4. Complete historical surveys with the assistance of grant funded consulting services, for buildings, houses, barns, and other historical structures. Identify areas vulnerable to new development and loss of character.
5. Review and inventory all historical buildings owned by the Town and the State to evaluate the condition and status of the resources.

Issue: The development and growth of UNH and the town poses a challenge to preserving historic resources.

*Goal: Protect historic resources and reduce impacts on historic resources through land use regulations.*

Key Conclusions References: #2, 3, 6

### Recommendations

#### Land Use Regulation

- LU 1. Amend the Site Plan Review and Subdivision Regulations to encourage that all applications townwide include the identification of all historical resources, such as buildings, structures, cemeteries, stone walls, and archaeological sites, both on-site as well as contiguous to the subject parcel. Develop a protocol for the identification of archaeological sites. Include historical resources on the application checklists. If historical resources are present, include the extent of the project's impact and mitigation measures as part of the application materials.
- LU 2. Review and amend the ordinance relating to signs within the Durham Historic District and provide greater detail about appropriate signage.
- LU 3. Require that reasonable efforts be taken in conservation subdivision applications to preserve historic farmsteads within the required open space area.

#### Review and Guidance by HDC/Heritage Commission

- LU 1. Explore the creation of a demolition-delay ordinance townwide.
- 2. Develop a process for review and comment relative to architectural changes or alterations proposed for historic structures and sites considered significant by the Heritage Commission that are owned by the Town, State, or school district.

*Goal: Encourage development that reflects and maintains the historic landscape and viewsheds.*

Key Conclusions References: # 1, 2, 3

### Recommendations

#### Land Use Planning

- LU 1. Research and propose expanding Scenic Road designations in rural areas of the Town, pursuant to RSA 231:157.
- 2. Where appropriate, encourage the protection of historic stonework including bridges, culverts, stone walls, retaining walls, foundations, and gravestones, including field stone burial markers.

Issue: Preservation of historic resources can be an economic driver within the town.

*Goal: Identify opportunities to rehabilitate historic buildings and reduce barriers to adaptive reuse.*

Key Conclusions References: # 2, 3, 6

### Recommendations

#### Economic Development and Revitalization

1. Provide a formal review and comment role for the Historic District Commission or Heritage Commission on each application for a Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive, RSA 79-E. Coordinate with the Economic Development Committee, Planning Board, and Town Council to remove restrictions in the granting of 79-E status when an application involves historic structures.
2. Encourage the rehabilitation of historic buildings that reflects and maintains the historic character of the building.
3. Encourage adaptive reuse that respects character-defining features of historic buildings and structures.
4. Remove any unintended impediments to the rehabilitation and/or reuse of historic properties and align town codes and ordinances with state and federal recommendations and exceptions for historic structures.
5. Promote mitigation measures for historical properties affected by development.

#### Land Use Regulation

- LU Conduct an audit to review ordinances and codes that impede rehabilitation or reuse of historical property. Examine potential impacts and unintentional consequences of energy ordinances that may affect the affordability and structure of historic properties.

## Issue: Historical resources contribute to sense of place in Durham.

*Goal: Educate the public to increase awareness of historic resources and how preservation of historic resources can be accomplished. [to be reviewed 6/25/15]*

Key Conclusions References: #1, 2

### Recommendations

#### Education and Outreach

1. Sponsor informational programs about Durham's cultural, social, economic, political, architectural, and archaeological history.
2. Implement the Heritage Sign Program. All buildings and sites are eligible for this program, regardless of their age or use. To receive a sign through the program, a property owner provides research on the construction date, early owners and, if appropriate, uses of the building to the HDC or HC for review and approval. The signs, which are purchased and mounted by a property owner, will educate citizens and visitors about our built environment.

*GOAL: Identify and promote tools and incentives for historic preservation and rehabilitation.*

Key Conclusions References: #2, 3

### Recommendations

#### Incentives and Tools

1. Promote use of the federal tax credits in local historic rehabilitation projects.
2. Encourage the Town departments to seek technical assistance from the Historic District Commission, Heritage Commission, and New Hampshire Division of Historic Resources when such properties will be impacted by proposed alterations or new use.
3. Develop priorities for the future listing of properties on the State Register and the National Register.

*Goal: Encourage the preservation of historic barns and other significant agricultural outbuildings and protect historic resources through preservation easements.*

Key Conclusions References: # 1, 3

#### Recommendations

##### Protection

- LU Adopt 79-D Discretionary Preservation Easements to preserve agricultural structures and promote barn easement tax incentives to barn owners.

##### Preservation

- LU 1. Promote the use of preservation easements, particularly in conjunction with conservation easements, as a means to protect historic homes and farmsteads.
- LU 2. Consider the preservation of historic farmsteads through conservation and preservation easements when evaluating subdivision applications.

# Connections to Other Chapters

Historic resource issues intersect and align with many aspects of the Town's plans for the future. As a result, they help inform other chapters of the Master Plan. Considerations raised in this chapter echo throughout this document and are especially linked to the following components of other chapters.

## Agricultural Resources

The abundance of historic farms, barns, and farmsteads in Durham reveals the town's agricultural history and past. Many of these historic structures and lands have been preserved. Additionally, New Hampshire College, which later became the University of New Hampshire, was relocated to Durham with the goal of creating an agricultural college that promoted the scientific education of NH farmers.

## Community Character

Historic resources are irreplaceable, and they contribute to quality of life and sense of place in Durham. The development patterns that characterize the community today reflect initial settlement patterns along the Oyster River and Great Bay. The historic character of the downtown remains largely intact.

## Demographics and Housing

In the mid-1900s, increases in UNH enrollment, in part, drove the construction of single family housing developments and conversion of residences to student housing. Over the last few decades, large, new student housing complexes and development in the downtown have continued to alter the downtown. Poorly maintained student housing has been a particular concern and threat to maintaining the town's historic character.

## Downtown Development and Commercial Core

Durham has a recognized historic downtown. Balancing downtown development with historic preservation continues to be a challenge in the town. Preservation activities and achievements include the 1995 Community Development Plan, which aimed to promote a viable downtown while retaining historic structures.

## Economic Development

Historic preservation has economic benefits for the Town and its residents. The Historic District supports economic development by protecting and enhancing the attractiveness of the Historic District to the citizens as well as visitors. Economic reinvestment includes rehabilitation of historic buildings that reflects and maintains the historic character of the building.

## Energy

Adaptive reuse of historic buildings supports sustainability goals by taking advantage of the embodied energy of a building. However, energy ordinances may unintentionally affect the affordability and structure of historic properties.

## Existing Land Use

Durham has a Historic District that overlays portions of the downtown and areas adjacent to Route 108 South. The purpose of the Historic District Overlay Ordinance is to preserve and promote the historic, cultural, educational, economic, and general welfare of the community. In 1980, the Historic District was listed on the National Register. The Historic District Commission serves as the land use board to administer the district. The Commission reviews and approves alterations to the exterior of buildings and structures and their settings.

## Natural Resources

Access to saltwater fisheries, timber, and the fertile land along Little Bay, Great Bay, the Oyster River, and the Lamprey River provided the impetus for early settlement in Durham. Natural resources provided power to the mills and soil for the farms that supported growth and development in the town. The first mill rights on the Oyster River were granted c1650.

## Recreation

The HDC and Heritage Commission have partnered with the Durham Parks and Recreation Department to support celebrations and educational opportunities related to the Mill Pond Dam and Smith Chapel. The Heritage Commission, Parks and Recreation Department, and others, work to balance the use and protection of Wagon Hill Farm, a significant community asset.

# Qualifications

This Historic Resources chapter is intended to provide an overview of highlights in Durham's history, a timeline of preservation activities and achievements that have occurred in the town, and a summary of tools and resources for protecting historic resources. This chapter is intended to provide Durham's decision makers with the best available information. See the bibliography in the appendix for resources and references.

This chapter was prepared by the Historic Resources Master Plan Committee appointed by the Planning Board. Members of the committee include Janet Mackie, Andrea Bodo, Nancy Sandberg, and Linda Tatarczuch.