

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The Town of Sharon retained ttl-architects, LLC, in October 2007, to conduct the first phase of an intensive comprehensive architectural survey of the Town of Sharon's historic resources (those built prior to 1967). The survey will produce an inventory that documents valuable properties within the town, records their significance to the cultural history of Sharon, and demonstrates the properties contribution(s) to the historic character of the town.

Specific project goals are as follows:

- To conduct an intensive survey of Sharon using the MHC survey methodology and inventory forms.
- To identify contexts for National Register evaluation and to apply the National Register criteria to all resources identified in the survey.
- To submit to the Town a list of individual properties and/or districts that are recommended for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places.

Results of this survey will assist the Town's long-range preservation and growth management planning. Documents will be used to build upon the Town's existing historic inventory as part of a continuing effort by the Town, the Sharon Historic Commission and the Sharon Historical Society to complete inventories of all the Town's historic cultural resources.

Description of the Study Area

The Town of Sharon, located in Norfolk County was incorporated as part of the town of Stoughton in 1740. In 1765 Sharon split from Stoughton and was incorporated as Stoughtonham. In 1783, the name changed to Sharon. Canton bounds Sharon on the north, Stoughton on the east, Foxboro and Easton on the south, Walpole on the west.

Europeans first settled the area c. 1655. The first settlements were located in the southwestern part of town ("Pole Plain") along the Post Road from Providence to Boston. The early economy of Sharon was based principally on the service industry along the Post Road, agriculture, and smelting iron.

By the mid-nineteenth century, the development of the Town began to sift eastward toward the railroad corridor and the shores of Lake Massapoag. Sharon became a summer resort for Boston residents. The local economy was bolstered the tourism industry in the nineteenth century. Inns and hotels developed around the shores of the lake. Recreation continues to be important to the Town. The Town of Sharon has more that 5000 acres of protected open space: including 2250 acres in the Massachusetts Audubon Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary, 1260 acres within Borderland State Park, and 1500 acres in public conservation land.

Selection of Resources for Survey

The criteria for inclusion of a resource in this survey will be based on the Town of Sharon's planning needs. These needs, in conjunction with a resource's association with a significant event; or person or groups of persons that played a significant role in local, State, or national history; its integrity; its location within historical development patterns; and illustration of vernacular & high design of a particular architectural period, type, or method of construction, will be used to select the final list of properties to be surveyed. All properties built up to 1967 will be considered for inclusion. The Massachusetts Historical Commission's *Historic Properties Survey Manual* states a comprehensive plan must address all types of resources. Thus, Sharon's historic context will include typical buildings and sites of the ordinary citizens. Resources that need protection from endangerment by deterioration or the encroachment of development are also to be considered for inclusion in the survey. Within the survey areas, priority resources for surveying will be identified in a windshield survey completed by ttl-architects in the Fall of 2007. During the architectural survey of each area there may be several resources, which may be removed from the list or added to the list. Outbuildings of certain inventoried properties will be included as part of the inventory.

Assessment of Available Research Sources

The Massachusetts Historical Commission MACRIS database lists ninety-six items in the inventory files for Sharon. Of the ninety-six resources documented, there are four areas, nine burial grounds, seven bridges, one site, sixty-two buildings, and thirteen resources within the Borderlands State Park Historic District. Much of the existing documentation typically consists of a brief architectural description and photograph. The most recent forms also have a historic significance statement.

The National Register of Historic Places includes two historic districts, one archeological site, and two historic structures at 41 Bay Road and 188 Ames Street.

The documentary sources that will be used in the Sharon survey are identified in the attached bibliography. General Histories, historic maps, atlases, directories, and town records will serve as the basis for most of the primary research. Historic maps and atlases provide information on the residents, owners, and businesses occupying properties. Town poll records and tax assessment records generally identify street addresses and provide information on lot size and the number of built structures. Early Town Directories and Federal Census records identify occupants by street address only and will be informative when an occupant has already been identified. Vital statistics records and family genealogical collections may provide some information regarding occupants, particularly in the areas where preliminary research indicates many properties were owned by several generations of the same family.

Documentation of Resources

The survey resulted in the production of 126 Massachusetts Historical Commission inventory forms documenting 224 properties and structures in the Town of Sharon. Completed inventory forms were lettered and/or numbered according to the recommendations of the survey and MACRIS (Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System) staff at the Massachusetts Historical Commission. MHC inventory numbers were assigned to all individually surveyed properties, and to properties illustrated and described in the area forms. Outbuildings of certain inventoried properties were also assigned inventory numbers per the request of MHC staff.