



CHAPTER 4 – PRESERVATION APPROACH

The overall vision, concept, and goals for the Historic Preservation Plan are outlined in Chapter 4, establishing a foundation for the strategies and recommendations presented in the following chapters. This conceptual framework should guide the implementation and further development of the preservation plan by the many partners that share its interests. Going forward, conditions will change, new partners will emerge, and new opportunities will present themselves. The approach outlined here should guide ongoing response and adaptation to both the actions included in the plan and to new ideas yet to be developed.

PRESERVATION PLANNING

Preservation planning is the means through which a coordinated long term program of historic preservation actions may be developed by a community to guide its work over time. The principal responsibilities of a preservation plan are to (1) identify historic resources within the community; (2) evaluate their character, significance, and integrity; and (3) develop programs, methods, tools, and processes for their preservation, protection, and continued use.

The practice of historic preservation is well developed and continuously evolving. Historic preservation is based upon federal and state programs that were first initiated to prevent governmental actions from destroying irreplaceable historic resources in communities, such as occurred during urban renewal in the 1950s and 60s. These federal and state programs reach down to the local level to encourage grassroots community preservation action in both the public and private sectors. Most historic preservation occurs through local initiative, such as those contemplated in this preservation plan. The national and state preservation programs that support local preservation are outlined in Appendix B of this document.

Preservation can make use of a wide variety of strategies. Most important is the development of **information** that is necessary to make good decisions, whether in the public or private realms. That is where the identification and evaluation of historic resources comes in. Second is the **communication** of best practices in

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planning, preservation, conservation, construction, and other areas of activity that enable us to assess the best options in the treatment of historic resources. Third is **implementation**—undertaking and sustaining the measures necessary to achieve the desired goals of historic preservation and enhancement within the community.

The core of any preservation plan is the community’s historic preservation program, the activities of its Historical Commission, Historic District Commission, and related partners. But a broad array of other public and private initiatives are in play as well. This Historic Preservation Plan for Lenox outlines strategies and actions under the topics of:

- Lenox’s economic strategy,
- Planning, land use, and growth management,
- Land conservation and recreation,
- Traditional historic preservation programming, and
- Interpretation and public outreach.

PRESERVATION APPROACH

The preservation approach for Lenox’s Historic Preservation Plan is to be as broad as possible in considering what historic assets are, the roles they play in the community, and the ways in which they can be recognized, preserved, and enhanced. We will strengthen partnerships and use whatever tools are available to achieve our goals of community enhancement through historic preservation.

This preservation plan emphasizes the central role that heritage, historic buildings, and landscapes play in the Town’s quality of life. It recognizes the natural and cultural landscape as the context in which individual resources exist and how assets are inter-related. In short, we view the Town’s entire landscape as significant—a product of human interactions with the environment—and we focus upon the historic attributes of community character Town-wide as valued by residents and visitors.

Such a broad-based approach suggests the potential use of a wide range of tools in the plan’s implementation and the enlistment of a wide range of partners with sympathetic and overlapping interests. With Lenox’s small population, where everybody knows everybody else and those involved in community affairs are accustomed to working together in a variety of ways, this is a natural state of affairs.

The plan emphasizes good planning and does not rely upon regulatory approaches, which have been difficult to get enacted. We will succeed best when we are all pulling in the same direction as a result of our mutual self-interest. So this plan emphasizes engaging the private sector—visitors, residents, businesses, attractions, and non-profit organizations—and making it easier for everyone to do the right thing in terms of enhancing historic resources and strengthening community character.

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Central to this idea is making sure that historic preservation is recognized as an important component of the Town's long term economic development strategy. The plan supports proactive engagement with visitors in ways that support local businesses and attractions. A fundamental concept of heritage tourism is that visitors like to go to places where residents like to be—they are seeking a complete experience and are attracted to places with a rich quality of life.

That is our goal for Lenox. This preservation plan recognizes that community character is an important factor in attracting visitors and new residents and in supporting existing businesses. Lenox's well educated and high quality work force values the community attributes and quality of life found here.

And Lenox's historic character is central to it all. The fundamentals of historic preservation practice are important to Lenox's future. The plan's vision, goals, and guiding principles are outlined below. The principles for historic preservation practice—the Secretary of the Interior's Standards—are then described and should become the foundation for all actions taken with regard to historic buildings and landscapes in Lenox.

VISION AND GOALS

The following vision statement has been developed to guide the preservation plan:

Residents and businesses in the Town of Lenox recognize the central role that heritage plays in our quality of life. We are blessed by the character of our natural landscape and the ways in which our cultural evolution has shaped the places we enjoy. We work together to make our Town a wonderful place to live. We welcome visitors to share in our way of life and appreciate their contribution to our community's well-being.

This vision is based upon the conversations held in workshops during the development of this preservation plan in which there was widespread recognition of how special Lenox and the Berkshires region is and the role of natural and cultural resources in its vitality, health, and well-being. It is based on the spirit of volunteerism, community, and hard work demonstrated by Lenox residents.

In support of this vision, eight broad goals have been identified that together express the ways in which historic preservation can be incorporated into the strategies and initiatives shaping Lenox's future. These goals have guided the development of the preservation plan's strategies and recommendations presented in Chapters 5 through 9 below.

GOAL 1: Make historic preservation and community character central to Lenox's quality of life.

This concept is the foundation of this historic preservation plan. Together with its neighbors Lee and Stockbridge, Lenox has a fascinating history. Its story is based on the qualities and attraction of the surrounding natural and cultural landscape. People are attracted here and have been throughout the past two centuries. Once they come, they realize what a great place this is to live. Today's residents

are inheritors and beneficiaries of past investments in the character of the Town. Our job is to pass these benefits forward to future generations.

GOAL 2: Use Lenox’s historical identity as a core element of the Town’s economic development strategy.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, Lenox’s economy has been based upon the region’s attraction as a summer destination. While the driving factors and dynamics behind this point have changed over time, it remains true today. Our landscape and our community provide the desired setting for cultural and lifestyle attractions that draw visitors to our door. Our identity is built upon our sense of place and our way of life. It is central to who we are and to our economic well-being.

GOAL 3: Make Lenox’s historic preservation program a model of best practices.

Lenox has a dedicated core group of volunteers who are involved in many aspects of community life and public service. It is a model New England town. Individuals who are interested in the national and local history have dedicated themselves to research and documentation of the Town’s stories and its historic resources. Within the limits available to a community with a small population, we have the ability to create a model program for historic preservation in Lenox. In part it is because we are a small community—we all know each other and have worked together for many years—that we are able to be a model for a New England town.

GOAL 4: Fully integrate historic preservation into Town programs and processes.

Historic preservation is not an isolated endeavor. Our primary points are that community character is central to our economic well-being and quality of life and that historic building and landscape resources are central to our community character. To be effective, we must integrate historic preservation interest and values into everything that we do. This includes collaborating with all Town boards, commissions, and committees on overlapping policies and initiatives of common interest.

GOAL 5: Use planning and growth management as a means of enhancing community character and strengthening preservation of historic resources over time.

Lenox has grown slowly over the past two decades, but growth has been steady and incremental. Growth will continue and will include new development and infill in areas that are already built-up and in remaining open lands. We can use the private and public investment associated with growth as a means to enhance the places where we live. To do this, we need to be proactive in our planning—we need to understand what we want and need—and have the tools in place to leverage new investment toward community betterment.

GOAL 6: Strengthen the relationships between historic preservation and land conservation, environment, and sustainability.

Historic preservation is about more than buildings. It is about community and landscape. Land conservation and environmental concerns are its natural allies. Historic buildings are present within a historic landscape context, whether it is Lenox Village, Lenox Dale, the landscape of the Cottages and Great Estates, or our suburban neighborhoods. Many of the historic farms have become today's forests and open spaces. We need to understand the relationships between historic resources and the natural landscape. Identify natural character defining features that give our landscapes character and work to reinforce them in a positive way. The concept and methodologies of cultural landscapes is an important way to do this effectively.

GOAL 7: Heighten public appreciation of Lenox's history and historic resources through storytelling and other means.

Public appreciation of Lenox's historic and cultural character is already present. It is why visitors come here. We need to take advantage of this public interest and appreciation to promote ourselves and our Town. We need to feed and attract public interest by telling the stories of our peoples and our places. Public appreciation will provide support for historic preservation initiatives that benefit the community.

GOAL 8: Make full use of programs available for historic preservation and community enhancement.

We are a highly educated community with great capabilities. Those who have grown up and/or been attracted here have motivation, ingenuity, and creativity. We have the ability to identify partnerships and programs that can be used strategically for community betterment. We need to make full use of the variety of governmental, non-profit, and private sector programs that are available to us.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following guiding principles summarize the approach taken in preparation of the preservation plan. They should also guide its implementation. Consider these points when assessing progress, developing priorities, and making decisions on implementation and adjustments to the plan.

- **Fully identify and document historic built, landscape, and archeological resources throughout the Town.** Continue to research Lenox history and stories. Continue to explore every aspect of the Town and the people who lived here and came here.
- **Emphasize community character,** not simply buildings or historic architectural design. Seek to understand the ways historic buildings and landscapes express regional trends and traditions; how they tell a story. Appreciate layers of change exhibited by buildings and landscapes that may be historic in their own right, no matter how well related, or unrelated, to the

original structure, and find the stories that bring places in their entirety to life.

- **Take a cultural landscape approach.** Reiterating Goal 6, emphasize the relationship of historic buildings to their surrounding contexts, both in built-up areas such as Lenox Village and Lenox Dale and in the Town's less developed areas. Observe the relationship between historic resources and the natural landscape. The "whole" (context or landscape) is greater than the sum of its parts. Recognize, enhance, and interpret character defining features—including but not limited to buildings. Estate landscapes, agricultural farms, road networks, industrial sites, and village neighborhoods are all distinctive landscapes with character defining features that give character to the community.
- **Build historic preservation values into all private and public activities.** Build preservation values into everything the community does. It should happen as a matter of course in the normal process of doing business rather than as an added extra layer. Forethought, communication, and good planning will help avoid having preservation issues arise through crises and conflict.
- **Implement a continuing process of upgrading to best practices.** Adopt a perspective that continually upgrades to best practices in planning, conservation, preservation, and community enhancement. Celebrate achievements. Build creative partnerships based upon mutual interests. Try new things. Lenox should be at the forefront of planning, and this tradition should be acknowledged, supported, and continued.
- **Build public support through outreach on many fronts.** Community support is essential in achieving preservation and planning goals. Community support should be sought through as many means as possible by as many partners as possible. Education and communication are key. Residents will not support preservation actions if they do not appreciate historic resources and agree that the resources contribute substantially to the community, its character, and the interests of residents.
- **Encourage grassroots interests and activity** so that preservation happens organically from within wherever possible, through local actions not superimposed regulation. Information, education, and technical assistance needs to be provided to support grassroots interest and activity. Achieving consensus takes time. Support must be patiently cultivated through supportive programming and good actions.
- **Use as many tools as possible,** not just those traditional to historic preservation. Preservation tools are robust, practical, varied, and not all that difficult to understand. But they go further when they are reinforced by other planning tools and investments that are carefully aligned to achieve preservation and strengthen community character and identity. Use whatever tools will work.

PRESERVATION PRINCIPLES AND TREATMENTS

The strategies, recommendations, and actions included in Lenox's Historic Preservation Plan are informed and guided by the principles of historic preservation that have been developed and honed by practitioners in the field over the years. Preservation is a practical discipline that can accommodate growth and change while continuing to preserve the characteristics that make a place special. The principles that have been developed in the field of historic preservation in general recognize the importance of preserving authentic historic fabric to the maximum extent possible.

Building uses come and go, but once lost, original historic fabric can never be recovered. The maintenance and preservation of original historic fabric, features, materials, and design elements, therefore, is central to a sound preservation approach. A key objective of Lenox's Historic Preservation Plan is to encourage and promote the preservation and maintenance of historic building and landscape fabric in as many ways as possible—whether in individual private projects or in larger community initiatives.

The principles of historic preservation are embodied in the topic of *Preservation Treatments* and in *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, both of which are discussed below.

The principles and thinking they convey should guide the actions undertaken as a result of this preservation plan. The extent to which the plan's strategies and actions succeed in implementing these principles in real projects within the community and help to make them widely known and appreciated should be a measure by which the strategies and actions are evaluated.

Preservation Treatments

The historic preservation field uses a variety of terms to describe the treatments that may be applied to historic buildings and landscapes. Although sometimes these terms are used loosely in discussion, they have specific meanings that are important to distinguish. The four key preservation treatments include: Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reconstruction.

Preservation is defined as the process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize features, generally focuses on the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and features. Removals, extensive replacement, alterations, and new additions are not appropriate.

Preservation stresses protection, repair, and maintenance, and is a baseline approach for all historic resources. As the exclusive treatment for a historic property, preservation implies minimal or no change. It is therefore strictly applied only to buildings and resources of extraordinary significance that should not be altered.

In Lenox, highly significant community buildings such as The Church on the Hill, Lenox Academy, The Mount, and Ventfort Hall are appropriate for preservation treatment.

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Rehabilitation is perhaps the most important and widely used treatment in the field of historic preservation, particularly in communities that are revitalizing and adapting to new uses.

Rehabilitation is defined as the process of creating a compatible use in a historic property through carefully planned minimal alterations and compatible additions. Often referred to as adaptive reuse, rehabilitation protects and preserves the historic features, materials, elements, and spatial relationships that convey historical, cultural, and architectural values.

Rehabilitation acknowledges the need to alter or add to a property to meet continuing or new uses while retaining historic character. New, expanded, or upgraded facilities should be designed to avoid impacts to historic elements. They should also be constructed of compatible materials. Retention of original historic fabric should be a primary consideration in undertaking a program of rehabilitation and adaptive reuse.

Rehabilitation is perhaps the most important and widely used treatment in the field of historic preservation, particularly in communities that are revitalizing and adapting to new uses. Rehabilitation is the appropriate treatment for most historic residential and commercial buildings throughout Lenox.

Restoration refers to returning a resource to its appearance at a specific previous period of its history. Restoration is the process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a property as it appeared at a particular time by means of removal of features from other periods in its history and the reconstruction of missing features from the restoration period.

In restoring a property to its appearance in a previous era, historic plans, documents, and photographs should be used to guide the work. Limited and sensitive upgrading of mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems, as well as code-related work to make a property functional, are all appropriate within a restoration project.

Reconstruction is defined as the process of accurately depicting the form, features, and character of a non-surviving historic property using new construction for the purpose of replicating its appearance at a specific period of time and in its original location. A reconstruction is a new resource made to replace an historic resource that has been lost. Reconstruction is a rarely used preservation treatment applicable primarily in educational and interpretive contexts.

Of these four terms, *Preservation* requires retention of the greatest amount of historic fabric, features, and materials. *Rehabilitation* acknowledges the need to alter or add to a property to meet continuing or new uses while retaining historic character. *Restoration* allows for an accurate depiction of the property's appearance at a particular time in its history. *Reconstruction* establishes a framework for re-creating vanished historic elements with new materials. Preservation and Rehabilitation are the most appropriate and applicable treatments for most historic buildings and landscapes in Lenox.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards

The philosophy that guides the implementation of recommendations included in this Historic Preservation Plan is based on a set of guidelines entitled *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*, commonly called the "Secretary of the Interior's Standards" or simply the "Standards."

The *Secretary of the Interior's Standards* were created by historic preservation professionals to provide guidance in the appropriate treatment of historic resources. The *Standards* were first established by the federal government in 1966 to provide guidelines for the appropriate treatment of buildings and resources impacted by federal projects. Because of their usefulness, they have been adopted throughout the field of historic preservation.

All federally funded and permitted activities affecting historic resources are evaluated with respect to these standards, including the use of rehabilitation tax credits. The *Standards* were developed specifically to prevent unintended damage to or loss of historic resources by federal actions, such as those that occurred as the result of the wholesale demolition of historic neighborhoods through urban renewal as occurred in urban areas in the 1950s and 60s.

An individual set of standards was developed for each of the four preservation treatments noted above. Just as the treatment of Rehabilitation is appropriate for most projects, the ***Standards for Rehabilitation*** are applicable to most projects being undertaken for historic buildings and landscapes in Lenox.

In the language of community planners, *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards* are a list of "best practices" for historic preservation. They are a touchstone for all activities affecting historic buildings and landscapes and help ensure that important issues about the care of historic buildings and landscapes are not forgotten in the process of making decisions about other issues. When the *Standards* are used in the context of a new construction project involving an historic building, they provide a starting point for the discussion of proposed changes to the building's historic character and fabric. They were developed to ensure that policies toward historic resources were applied uniformly, even if the end result may be different in every case.

All preservation activities, whether they are publicly or privately funded, can be informed and enhanced by understanding the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards*. Because the *Standards* outline a sensitive approach for assessing changes to historic properties, they are often included in design guidelines, preservation plans, ordinances, and regulations that govern activities affecting local historic districts. These *Standards* articulate basic principles that are fundamental to historic preservation. Although they have been modified over the years to accommodate changing views of historical significance and treatment options, their basic message has remained the same.

The durability of the *Standards* is testimony not only to their soundness, but also to the flexibility of their language. They provide a philosophy and approach to problem solving for those involved in managing the treatment of historic buildings, rather than a set of solutions to specific design issues. Following a

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balanced, reasonable, and disciplined process is often more important than the exact nature of the treatment option that is chosen. Instead of predetermining an outcome in favor of retaining or recreating historic features, the *Standards* help ensure that the critical issues are considered.

For federal projects and federal agencies, the language of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* is codified in 36 CFR Part 68 (the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, *Parks, Forests and Public Property*, Chapter 1 *National Park Service, Department of the Interior*, Part 68). A related federal regulation, 36 CFR Part 67, addresses the use of the *Standards* in the certification of projects receiving federal rehabilitation tax credits.

The *Standards* are published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and are available online, including definitions for the four preservation treatments discussed above (NPS 2017).

The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation are particularly useful when considering the appropriate maintenance of historic buildings; the alteration of older buildings as necessary for reuse, safety, and accessibility; and the construction of new buildings in an historic context. The ten standards that comprise the *Standards for Rehabilitation* are quoted below followed by a brief discussion of the implications of each. Additional discussion of the *Standards for Rehabilitation* may also be found online.

STANDARD 1 – *A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces, and spatial relationships.*

Standard 1 recommends compatible use in the context of adaptive reuse and changes to historic buildings and landscapes. This standard encourages property owners to find uses that retain and enhance historic character, not detract from it. The work involved in reuse projects should be carefully planned to minimize impacts on historic features, materials, and spaces. The destruction of character defining features should be avoided.

STANDARD 2 – *The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces, and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.*

Standard 2 recommends the retention and preservation of character defining features. It emphasizes the importance of preserving integrity and as much existing historic fabric as possible. Alterations that repair or modify existing historic fabric are preferable to those that require total removal.

STANDARD 3 – *Each property will be recognized as a physical record of its time, place, and use. Changes that create a false sense of historical development, such as adding conjectural features or elements from other historic properties, will not be undertaken.*

Standard 3 focuses on authenticity and discourages the conjectural restoration of an entire property, feature, or design. It also discourages combining and/or grafting historic features and elements from different properties, and constructing new buildings that appear to be historic. Literal restoration to an

historic appearance should only be undertaken when detailed documentation is available and when the significance of the resource warrants restoration. Reconstruction of lost features should not be attempted without adequate documentation.

STANDARD 4 – Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

Standard 4 recognizes that buildings change, and that many of these changes contribute to a building's historical significance. Understanding a building's history and development is just as important as understanding its original design, appearance, and function. This point should be kept in mind when considering treatments for buildings that have undergone many changes.

Most historic buildings contain a visual record of their own evolution. This evolution can be identified, and changes that are significant to the history of the building should be retained. The opportunity to compare multiple periods of time in the same building lends interest to the structure and helps communicate changes that have occurred within the larger landscape and community context.

STANDARD 5 – Distinctive materials, features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

Standard 5 recommends preserving the distinctive historic components of a building or landscape that represent its historic character. Workmanship, materials, methods of construction, floor plans, and both ornate and typical details should be identified prior to undertaking work.

STANDARD 6 – Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture, and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

Standard 6 encourages property owners to repair historic character defining features instead of replacing them when historic features are deteriorated or even missing. In cases where deterioration makes replacement necessary, new features should closely match historic conditions in all respects. Before any features are altered or removed, property owners are urged to document existing conditions with photography and notes. These records assist future choices that are appropriate to the property's historic character.

STANDARD 7 – Chemical or physical treatments, if appropriate, will be undertaken using the gentlest means possible. Treatments that cause damage to historic materials will not be used.

Standard 7 warns against using chemical and physical treatments that can permanently damage historic features. Many commercially available treatments are irreversibly damaging. Sandblasting and harsh chemical cleaning, in particular, are extremely harmful to wood and masonry surfaces because they destroy the material's basic physical properties and speed deterioration.

STANDARD 8 – Archeological resources will be protected and preserved in place. If such resources must be disturbed, mitigation measures will be undertaken.

Standard 8 addresses the importance of below ground prehistoric and historic features. This issue is of most importance when a construction project involves excavation. An assessment of a site's archeological potential prior to work is recommended. If archeological resources are present, some type of mitigation should be considered. Solutions should be developed that minimize the need for excavation of previously unexcavated sites.

STANDARD 9 – New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work shall be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

STANDARD 10 – New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in a such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

Standards 9 and 10 are linked by issues of the compatibility and reversibility of additions, alterations, and new construction. Both standards are intended to 1) minimize the damage to historic fabric caused by building additions, and 2) ensure that new work will be different from, but compatible with, existing historic conditions. Following these standards will help to protect a building's historic integrity.

In conclusion, the basis for the *Standards* is the premise that historic resources are more than objects of aesthetic merit; they are repositories of historical information. It is important to reiterate that the *Standards* provide a framework for evaluating preservation activities and emphasize preservation of historic fabric, honesty of historical expression, and reversibility. All decisions should be made on a case-by- case basis. The level of craftsmanship, detailing, and quality of materials should be appropriate to the significance of the resource.