

F. Historical and Cultural Resources

Introduction

North Smithfield's significant historic resources consist of districts, structures and archaeological resources that represent patterns of community settlement and growth from pre-European settlement through twentieth centuries. Most of these resources are fully documented and described in *Historic and Architectural Resources of North Smithfield: A Preliminary Report*, prepared by the RIHPC in 1980. One subsequent inventory of historic resources has been taken by the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission for their 1989 *Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan*. However, this document was based on the earlier 1980 inventory, which remains the most comprehensive record of North Smithfield's historic resources prepared to date. Due to the presence of these documents, this section is not intended to provide a detailed history but rather to give an overview for resource protection.

Completed Goals

The Town of North Smithfield is proud to report the following former goals from the previous version of the Comprehensive Plan as completed.

1. Analyzed the elements of North Smithfield's landscapes and built environment which comprise its cultural/natural resource legacy.
2. Reached a consensus among local people as to what aspects of local landscapes and built environments are most significant.
3. Used CDBG funds for targeted areas where historic home rehabilitation coincides with other community development activities.
4. Ensured the mill's economic viability and reintegration into the Village by allowing mixed uses and innovative ways that combine thoughtful, modern redevelopment with the sensitive preservation of the area's historic elements.
5. Supported the rehabilitation efforts of the Slatersville Mill owners with their future plans for the mill buildings and property
6. Advanced the idea of mixed uses of the property via MU1/MU2 zoning.
7. Housing rehabilitation monies for older homes in the area were identified. A grant application combined historic rehabilitation and housing rehabilitation via the CDBG program.

8. Amended the North Smithfield Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to include Design Standards that includes the minimization of alterations and negative impacts to historic and cultural resources.
9. Amended the North Smithfield Land Development and Subdivision Regulations to include Conservation Developments which can be used to preserve historic and cultural resources.

Work in Progress

The Town of North Smithfield is currently working on the following goals:

1. Protecting archaeological resources as part of the development application review process and working in collaboration with groups of Native American heritage who are interested in the preservation of their Tribal cultural resources.
2. Emphasizing a flexible strategy aimed at protecting a range of cultural assets, including, but not limited to, historic structures.
3. Linking, wherever possible, cultural resource protective actions to other compatible improvement efforts in the Town and Blackstone Valley Region.
4. Continuing the program of upgrading streets and public owned lands to include amenities such as streetlights, benches etc. for the Slatersville streets around the Town Hall area and for Centennial Park. Interpretative signage designed by the BRVNHCC should also be installed and maintained by the BRVNHCC.
5. Encouraging appropriate rehabilitation or adaptive reuse for buildings and areas as a protective measure.
6. Being proactive relative to the reuse of underutilized, significant privately owned buildings.
7. Targeting rehabilitation efforts to home improvement programs in efforts to protect existing affordable housing.
8. Preserving Slatersville historic components.
9. Using Slatersville as a model for future historic preservation activities in Town.

Goals, Policies and Actions

There are several main objectives North Smithfield has identified as crucial for the preservation of its historical and cultural resources. Each goal has several policies and actions that will help the Town meet each objective.

Goal 1: Protect the historical/cultural resources from physical change inappropriate to their character.

Policy: Review impacts of private and public projects on cultural and historic resources.

Action: Adopt a range of land use controls in the Zoning Ordinance to supplement the Historic Area Zoning where necessary.

Goal 2: Pursue a preservation and redevelopment plan for Slatersville that coordinates regulatory bodies and BRVNHCC.

Policy: *RIDOT, RIDEM, CDBG*

Action: Work with the BRVNHCC on the installation of heritage signage.

Action: Obtain information from the Rhode Island Department of Transportation to locate potential threats to these archaeological resources from state road improvements.

Goal 3: Preserve the rural areas of North Smithfield.

Policy 3: Adopt measures and policies to protect rural areas, with an emphasis on preserving rural character and agricultural values.

Action: Enact protections through zoning and other regulations to limit impacts of development on the rural character of the George Street area.

Action: Evaluate other potential options to protect agricultural lands, such as conservation easements through the purchase of development rights.

Action: Consider including the following conditions when providing option of leasing town properties for farming:

- Adding conditions to limit environmental impacts, such as restrictions on the application of chemicals and limitations on farming near environmentally sensitive areas.
- Requiring provision of public access, if such access would improve connectivity to open space or for extending trails, per recommendations in Open Space plan.

Action: Determine the possibility of utilizing the buildings for some combination of these uses: housing (private and subsidized), retail goods or services/commercial, offices (government or private), incubator for new or small businesses, education (for example: daycare), tourism/interpretation use in conjunction with a regional tourism effort with the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor.

Action: Reevaluate the adoption of Historic District Zoning with all affected property owners, both residents and non-residents.

Action: Conservation Development (an option currently being considered) and Development Plan Review (site plan review) as discussed elsewhere in this Update could

require that cultural, historic, and archeological resources be illustrated on any plan for development. The Planning Board should continue to seek guidance as to how such resources should be protected and handled during the course of a parcel's development or redevelopment.

Goal 4: Promote an appreciation and understanding of the value of the Town's historic and cultural resources to its character and vitality.

Policy: Continue to identify methods of educating citizens about these resources.

Action: Work with the Historic Commission and the BRVHPC to provide educational programs.

Goal 5: Continue investigatory work to develop an accurate local and regional context for preservation planning

Policy: Update the 1980 list of National Register eligible properties in the light of changes that may have occurred.

Action: Prepare nomination forms on currently eligible properties and the Slatersville Historic District.

Action: Encourage the nomination of historical properties for listing on the National Register

Policy: Continue to apply for grants that may be used to augment the existing inventory to include important cultural resources such as the cemeteries, Native American campgrounds, and other archaeological resources insufficiently documented and for educational efforts increasing local awareness of these resources.

Early History

North Smithfield's cultural history is evident today in the Town's pattern of development and architecture, much of which dates to the 18th and 19th centuries. Agriculture, once the basis of the region's economy, is now a minor occupation. Nevertheless, the legacy of the Town's agricultural past is still apparent in the historic farmhouses, the stone walls, and the open fields once devoted to agriculture. In a similar way, the manufacturing settlements which sprang up in the latter part of the 18th century have left a rich legacy in the mill villages, characterized by an urban design and architecture of another age.

In 1666, present-day North Smithfield was settled by European colonists from Providence. Prior to that time, the area was inhabited by Native Americans. North Smithfield remained largely agrarian during the early years of the 18th century. During the latter part of the 18th century, small, decentralized milling operations sprang up wherever waterpower was available. The simplicity of 18th century life is reflected in the buildings that survive. Along Farnum Pike, Iron Mine Hill Road



and Old Louisquisset Pike are several surviving 18th century houses. They are also to be found in the Grange Road District, in Union Village, on Grange Road, and Pound Hill Road.

A major route in the pre-Revolutionary period is today's Smithfield Road (146A), (see Map K-1), formerly the Great Road and today marked by milestones indicating the distance from Providence. Several mills, serving the farmers, were located at various waterpower sites in North Smithfield. These most likely included a

gristmill, sawmills initially and a mill manufacturing iron farm tools by the end of the century.

During the 19th century, what had been small settlements began to expand. In Union Village, several large houses, a tavern, bank (the first in northern R.I.), and academy were built shortly after 1800. Later, several substantial dwellings were constructed. After 1851, Union Village was bypassed by the completion of the Providence and Worcester Railroad through Woonsocket. Whereas Union Village grew as a result of its highway location, the other villages grew as mill villages dependent on the waterpower of the Branch and Blackstone Rivers. The industrial transformation of the area contributed to the decline of agriculture as the basis for the Town's economy.

Of the several textile mill villages that developed during the 19th century, Slatersville was the first. In 1806, Samuel Slater, who had earlier set up America's first successful textile mill in Pawtucket, formed a partnership which was the basis for "Slatersville" which began operations a year later, as one of the first factory villages in the U.S. The present mill was erected in 1826. The village was designed to be self-contained -- and included additional factories, mill houses, a Congregational Church and a pair of commercial blocks. Much of the village remains today, including not only the buildings cited, but later 19th century additions, such as St. John's Roman Catholic Church (1872) built for the French-Canadian millworkers.

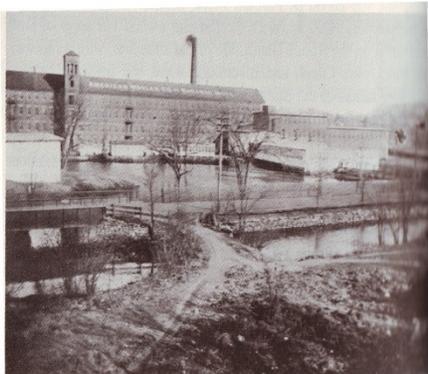
Another extant mill village, Forestdale, was inaugurated in 1825 with a scythe factory along the Branch River. By the end of the century, the Forestdale settlement included a commercial block, a cotton mill, a row of Greek Revival houses, and a one-room schoolhouse. Waterford developed as a village in the early 1800's to serve several mills including Mammoth Mill along Canal Street. The mill's name was derived from its size as the largest mill building in the United States at the time. The mill's ruins are still in evidence.

Transportation improvements during the 19th century stimulated industrial development of that time. These included highways, a canal and rail and streetcar service. By 1875, agriculture had

experienced a gradual decline at which time the census recorded 191 farms, with farmland beginning to revert to forest. By 1900 the Town's population had dipped to 2,400 from its 19th century peak of 3,200 in 1875.

During the first half of the 20th century, the textile industry of New England underwent a serious decline which adversely affected North Smithfield firms. Tupperware's purchase of two North Smithfield factories helped stabilize the local economy in the 1950's. During the same decade, Slatersville village properties, once owned by one company, were sold piecemeal.

The advent of car ownership facilitated North Smithfield's gradual conversion from a self-contained group of settlements to a community functioning increasingly as a suburb. As a result, the villages declined and the countryside became dotted with homes. North Smithfield's access to employment stimulated residential development. This development continued along public ways, as it had historically. However, with the advent of zoning, the development was cited on uniform-sized lots rather than in conjunction with farms. A significant departure from the traditional settlement patterns is represented by the subdivision of tracts of land into lots of like area and dimensions, also introduced by the Town's Zoning Ordinance. These recent land development patterns represented a significant departure from the traditional dispersed agricultural pattern on one hand and the compact mill village settlement, on the other. In terms of "change-factors" affecting cultural resources, subdivision and zoning are among the most important.



Turn-of-the 20th century photo of Mammoth Mill (1864) off Canal Street with the old Blackstone Canal (1828) and Blackstone River in the foreground.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service defines Cultural Resources as evidence of past human activity. These may include pioneer homes, buildings or old roads; structures with unique architecture; prehistoric village sites; historic or prehistoric artifacts or objects; rock inscription; human burial sites; earthworks, such as battlefield entrenchments, prehistoric canals, or mounds. These nonrenewable resources often yield unique information about past societies and environments, and provide answers for modern day social and conservation problems.

Significant Historic Resources

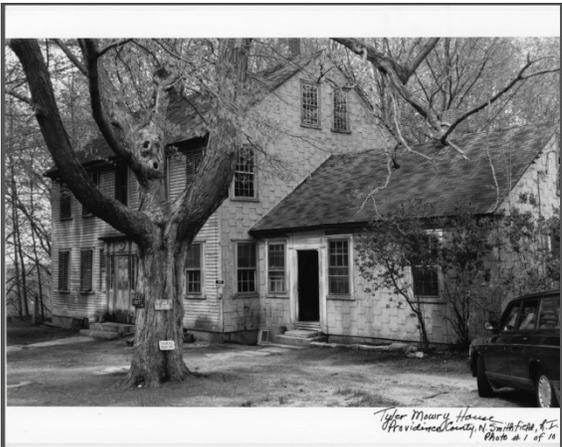
Union Village and Slatersville are both Town designated historic districts, and both are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This section discusses the National Register and National Register Eligible Districts.

National Register Districts

The following districts in North Smithfield are listed on the National Register of Historic Places:

- Forestdale Historic District: Lies at the intersection of Main Street and Maple Avenue, near the Branch River/Mill Pond dam and mill. The mill housing runs along both streets. As with other mill villages, the value of Slatersville and Forestdale lies not only in individual structures but also in its historic street plan and development pattern, which evolved into service a self-contained community.
- Tyler Mowry House, 112 Sayles Hill Road (8/16/96)- The Tyler Mowry House is an historic house at 112 Sayles Hill Road in North Smithfield, Rhode Island. It is a 2-1/2 story wood frame structure, five bays wide, with a gable roof and two interior chimneys. The entry is centered on the main (south-facing) facade, with sidelight windows and pilasters supporting a complex entablature and cornice. A 1-1/2 story ell extends to the east. The interior of the house has retained much of the original Federal-period woodwork, plasterwork, doors, and hardware. The house is distinctive as a remarkably unaltered house from the early 19th century, lacking modernizing alterations such as electricity and plumbing. The house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996.
- William Mowry House, Farnum Pike (Route 104) (2/10/83) - The William Mowry House is an historic farm house on Farnum Pike (622 Greenville Road) in North Smithfield. It is a 2-1/2 story plank-framed house, five bays wide, with a gable roof and a large central chimney. The main entrance is centered on the main (south-facing) entry, and is enclosed within a single-story hip-roof vestibule of 20th-century construction. A small single-story ell extends to the west of the main block. The interior follows a typical center-chimney plan, with the kitchen and parlor in the front of the house, and the dining room flanked by a small pantry

and bathroom in the rear. The house was built c. 1802-05 by William Mowry, whose family has owned land in the area since the 17th century. The house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.



- Old Smithfield Road Historic District: This historic area consists of a seven-tenths mile section of Smithfield Road (originally Great Road) north of the Manville Road. There are six noteworthy houses, two cemeteries, stone walls, an apple orchard, fields, woods and two brooks. Laid out in the 17th century, the original Great Road joined Providence to Worcester. In this part of North Smithfield, the highway's course was altered in about 1741 to follow what is now

Smithfield Road. Except for an 18th century tavern, the district's features are 19th century. Smithfield Road itself is important as it retains the narrow, winding roadway, lined by stone walls and passing through open fields, woods, and houses.

- Slatersville Historic District: Main, Green, Church and School St and Ridge Rd., Slatersville The district includes the Slatersville reservoir, dams and water-power systems, and 19th century mill, commercial blocks, mill houses, churches, and other buildings along Main Street, Green Street, School Street, Railroad Street and several side streets.

- Three Dog Archaeological Site, (RI-151), Farnum Pike (11/1/84)- The site features Late Archaic and prehistoric archeological evidence and was added to the National Historic Register in 1984,
- Smith-Andrews-Taft-Todd Farm, 670 Farnum Pike, (Route 104) (2/10/83) - The Todd Farm (also known as the Smith-Andrews-Taft-Todd Farm) is an historic farm at 670 Farnum Pike (Greenville Road) in North Smithfield. The farm includes a house dating to 1740, as well as a collection of outbuildings dating to the early 20th century. The main block of the house is a 2-1/2 story wood frame structure, five bays wide, with a gable roof and a large central chimney. The main block has been added to numerous times, with full-size additions to both sides as well as a sloping addition to the rear, giving the house a saltbox appearance in the rear and a total width of 11 bays. Behind and beside the house are arrayed a number of small outbuildings, and a barn which has been converted into residential space. The house was probably built by Noah Smith around 1740, around the time he established a sawmill on Cherry Brook, which runs behind the house and is dammed to form Todd Pond. The farm was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1983.
- Peleg Arnold Tavern, 4 Woonsocket Hill Rd (7/30/74) - The Peleg Arnold Tavern off Great Road in Union Village in North Smithfield is one of the oldest homes in North Smithfield. The oldest part of house was built in the late 17th century by Richard Arnold, one of the earliest settlers in the area. His descendant, Peleg Arnold, greatly expanded the building a century later. Peleg Arnold was a justice of the Rhode Island Supreme Court and a representative to the Continental Congress. Arnold's popular tavern served as center of American military operations in the town during the American Revolution. The house was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.
- Union Village Historic District: This district is a half-mile long section of Great Road (Route 146A), from Woonsocket Hill Road to a point just beyond Westwood Road. Union Village includes fifteen 18th and early 19th century structures as well as twelve late 19th and 20th century buildings.

Significant Cultural and Archaeologic Resources

Other areas worthy of protection are the following “Cultural/Historic Areas” that were included in the 1980 report on *Historic and Architectural Resources in North Smithfield*:

Grange Road: this road was part of the Town’s early road systems and retains its historic character with winding bends, free-standing rock walls and established tree canopy. The road is dotted with historic 18th century homes, foundations and a family graveyard.

Nipsachuck: this 8,000 acre region of southwest North Smithfield is rugged upland, with wooded swamps and wetlands. This largely undeveloped area which extends west of Douglas Pike to south of Rankin Path was an important tribal site associated with Native Americans for thousands of years including during King Philip’s War (1675-76). Existing stone structures and stones were examined by the Narragansett Tribe and identified as sacred ceremonial and potential burial sites

Primrose Pond: this 64 acre former ice pond at the headwaters of the Woonasquatucket River was once used by a saw mill (ca. 1780- early 20th century) and an ice house in the early 20th century. Today the pond is privately owned and is surrounded by private homes with only two non-owners granted boat access. Invasive species and adverse effects on water quality from the surrounding homes are threats to the overall health of the pond.

Wright's Dairy Farm: This 90+acre family owned and operated dairy farm located at 217 Woonsocket Hill Road is a rich agricultural resource that comprises homes, farm buildings, a commercial bakery, and acres of fields planted in corn to maintain approximately 135 milking Holsteins. The farm has been operating since the late 1800s and is considered a cornerstone and tourist attraction of North Smithfield.



Blackstone River/High Rocks Natural and Historic Area: Located along the northern border of Town where the Blackstone River enters Rhode Island is a rugged, and mainly undeveloped section of the River. This area includes High Rocks and continues south to just below Branch River.

Cedar Swamp Natural and Historic Area: This is a relatively large swamp of historic importance for trapping of animals and hunting along Cherry Brook in the north-central part of Town.

Mattity or Mattetokomitt Meadow Natural and Historic Area: An extensive swamp in the southwestern part of Town at the headwaters of the Woonasquatucket River used initially for animal grazing but is now of greater botanical importance.

Nipsachuck Natural and Historic Area: Located in the extreme southwestern corner of North Smithfield, south of lake Belair and west of Nipsachuck Hill, this area was of historic importance during the King Phillip's War in the late 1600s, but is still of geologic interest due to its swamp, irregular "kame and kettle" topography and esker (a long, narrow and steep ridge).

Woonsocket Reservoir No. 3 Natural and Historic Area: Of critical importance as a modern watershed, this area north of Rocky Hill Road and west of Woonsocket Reservoir No. 3 in the southeastern corner of North Smithfield, contains a rich mixture of cultural features and was of historic importance for its farmsteads.

Blackstone River/High Rocks Natural and Historic Area: Located along the northern border of Town where the Blackstone River enters Rhode Island is a rugged, and mainly undeveloped section of the River. This area includes High Rocks and continues south to just below Branch River.

Heritage Landscapes

Blackstone River Valley National Heritage

Heritage landscapes are special places created by human interaction with the natural environment that help define the character of a community and reflect its past. They are dynamic and evolving; they reflect the region's history and provide a sense of place. They include the natural ecology that influenced land use patterns and they often have scenic qualities. Since maintaining the historical and cultural character of the Town is important to its residents, North Smithfield has integrated into the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor. The Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor includes 24 communities in Rhode Island and Massachusetts that are linked by a common geography and by historical events that helped to shape the Industrial Revolution, which is central to America's economic, social and political development. Five Rhode Island communities – Burrillville, Glocester, Lincoln, North Smithfield and Smithfield – have joined together to participate in a study of their shared legacy, a rich cultural heritage that represents the dynamic interaction between nature and culture. The ultimate goal of this project is to help our community identify resources of the landscape that are not currently protected and develop ways to preserve the Town's heritage landscape. For more information on the BRVNHC also see also element K. Slatersville National Park and Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor

Threats to Historical/Cultural Resources

Deterioration/Inactivity

Related to the threat of deterioration is that of inactivity, the “threat of doing nothing”. Without education about local resources and their value, and the benefits of saving them, there is likely to be little motivation to pursue a preservation program. North Smithfield has demonstrated the advantages of historic districting and of National Register listing for a portion of its resources. Building a prioritized program for extending these protections, educating local people and encouraging related activities is a critical goal.

Incremental Development

North Smithfield's historic and cultural resources are also threatened by the development that occurs incrementally over time. Loss of historic character typically occurs in areas that have no growth management plan or where weak land use controls permit haphazard construction. Development or redevelopment which introduces uses without regard for neighborhood character, or is otherwise uncoordinated with actual community needs cannot best take advantage of timing and locational benefits or maximize potential economic advantages of a market area, or provide a climate where ancillary uses will thrive. This type of development can separate historic buildings from the environmental context in which they are best appreciated, creating visual intrusions or conflicting uses that devalue historic properties and negatively affect quality of life. Typical sprawl development including strip malls, cookie-cutter suburban subdivisions with large lots and uniform setbacks lead to a sameness which eliminates open spaces, destroys scenic vistas and detracts from the sense of place. North Smithfield has clearly recognized the need for coordinated development in creating a Comprehensive Plan to guide the future.

Protecting Historic and Cultural Resources

Within Town government, there are several offices and boards which, while not charged with the protection of cultural resources, nevertheless have the potential to be highly influential in that regard. For regulation of all land uses, the Planning Board and Zoning Board have the primary authority. Thus the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations are their primary responsibility. The Ordinance and Regulations have a strong impact on cultural resources, an impact which is often unrecognized.

North Smithfield Historic District Commission

The North Smithfield Historic District Commission is a group of town residents appointed by the Town Council, who have demonstrated an interest in historic preservation and the architectural value of properties in town. The Commission administers historical area zoning to preserve districts and specific buildings of North Smithfield which have been designated by Town Ordinance as historic districts. Within a Historic District, a property owner (including the Town itself) proposing an alteration affecting the exterior appearance of a structure and requiring a building permit, must



Mill, 1917

receive a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Commission. The current regulatory function of the Commission is limited to exterior changes within Historic Districts which would require a building permit. The goal is not to prohibit change but to guide changes in a way that preserves the historic character of the structures and the district. Currently, two areas subject to the regulation of the Commission; the Union Village Historic District and the Slatersville Historic District. The Commission's main responsibility is to ensure that the structures in these two districts and their uniqueness and sense of place are protected and preserved.

Regulation

Historic District Zoning: Under Title 45-24.1 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, the Town Council is empowered to designate mapped districts for historic district zoning which empowers the local Historic District Commission to grant or deny permissions for exterior alterations within the district. North Smithfield has designated two such districts, the Union Village Historic District and Blunders Historic District. This designation is the primary, but not the only, regulatory tool available to the Town for the protection of cultural resources. Its advantages are the extent of protection afforded to the exterior of significant structures (both public and private) within a district.

Zoning and Subdivision Regulations: Whereas Historic District Zoning is quite limited in its scope, land use zoning covers a broad array of subjects codified in North Smithfield in the Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision and Land Development Regulations. It is possible to include cultural

resource protection in zoning and subdivision regulations. Common examples of doing so include requiring a Special Use Permit prior to significant alteration of mapped cultural resources or including impacts on cultural resources in site or design review procedures, as North Smithfield is considering doing with the proposed Conservation Development Ordinance.

Overlay Districts: According to the State's Zoning Enabling Act of 1991, municipalities may create overlay districts. Such districts are superimposed on one or more underlying zones and involve a set of additional requirements applicable to the properties within the Overlay District. North Smithfield already uses this tool to protect its aquifers and is considering another overlay zone to preserve and facilitate reuse of several of its mill villages.

Economic Development and Tourism

One aspect of economic development particularly appropriate to cultural resource protection is tourism. The primary focus, initially, should be on increasing local awareness of the value of the Town's cultural resources (both aesthetically and economically). Local awareness then turns into regional and statewide awareness and ultimately potential improvements to the tourist economy. Both the *Cultural Heritage and Land Management Plan for the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor* and *Draft Regional Comprehensive Tourism Planning Component*, prepared by the Blackstone Valley Tourism Council, Inc., are rich with ideas. Local efforts involving culturally related economic development should be coordinated with these two regional organizations.

Preservation Education

There is an ongoing need to educate local residents and property owners about the value of their historic resources and advise them of the direct relationship of the elements that comprise historic character to this value. Choice of unsuitable architectural materials, out-of-scale additions, styles that bear little relation to surrounding New England architecture, and poorly executed craftsmanship can cheapen and degrade structures, often negatively affecting their market value. In addition to the direct economic benefit of well-maintained historic properties (such as those evidenced in Union Village and Slatersville) there is the less tangible but equally important value of community identity and particular character - qualities by which the Town is identified and recognized by residents and visitors. Education relies on ready sources of information on local periods and styles of architecture, where to find architects and contractors skilled in restoration practice, and where to get financing assistance for appropriate materials and technical help.

The Town should harness resources for ongoing preservation activities and new research and documentation in town-wide educational efforts. Education can occur in several forms and be for several purposes. The North Smithfield Historic District Commission has a slide presentation program for residents of Slatersville to increase awareness of the Village's historic assets which serves as a prelude to other activities. Another type of educational effort which is recommended is signing. Signs erected by the BRVNHCC can alert residents and visitors to the existence of a

National Register District. If a walking tour is created for specific sub-areas, such as around the Slatersville Mill and Centennial Park, then signing is essential for self-guided tours..

The schools in North Smithfield have a powerful potential role in educating local children about local history including the architecture, urban design and other types of ancient structures in the community.

Placement on National Historical Register

North Smithfield contains several concentrations of historic structures, industrial systems and other historic resources which represent a cohesive development pattern and which retain many of their original qualities of design and environment. Several of these areas, recorded in the local inventory, are protected by entry on the National Register of Historic Places and one has been designated as a local historic district. These historic districts are shown on Map G-5, Historic Resources, within this Plan Update.

Placement on the National Register, the official inventory of the nation's cultural and historic resources worthy of preservation, affords limited protection from potentially intrusive federally funded or licensed projects through review procedures. Under certain circumstances, it also may provide tax benefits for rehabilitated income-producing properties, and more limited funds for matching grants for restoration of key properties. The establishment of local historic districts provides, through enactment of historic district zoning, more stringent control on the exterior appearances of structures located within district boundaries. A local Historic District Commission rules on the appropriateness of alterations and new construction within districts. The following listings are current as of February 2005.

Historical Preservation Planning and Management

The Historic and Cultural Resources Plan will present a strategy and action program that supports and satisfies the broad preservation goals, which are to:

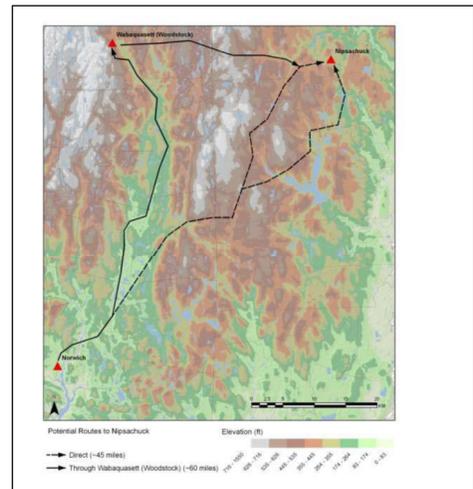
- Increase Awareness of Cultural Resources
- Protect Cultural Resources from Change
- Encourage Rehabilitation/Adaptive Use
- Integrate Planning and Development with BRVNHCC Programs
- Preserve and Protect the Historic Village of Slatersville

Clearly, the 1980 inventory of historic areas and structures must be updated and archaeological resources must be studied in greater detail to create a contemporary framework for historic resource evaluation. Because local resources are limited and the work to be accomplished town-wide is extensive, Slatersville will remain the focus of preservation efforts. As a result, Slatersville could serve as a model for future preservation efforts in other parts of Town. People are persuaded by

tangible results. Adaptive reuse for underutilized areas should be considered and facilitated with routine town activities such as zoning, public works activities, maintenance and code enforcement. It should also be considered in other town-initiated improvements including the protection of existing affordable housing and in upgrading pedestrian amenities. A variety of protection methods should be used rather to prevent haphazard development and guide growth comprehensively. The findings from ongoing preservation activities and research should serve as a basis for a community-wide education program. Such a program could be composed of a diverse group of people from stakeholders, conservationists to concerned citizens. The group's input would build a constituency critical for effective implementation.

The American Battlefield Protection Program and the Nipsachuck Battlefields Project

Two major battles of the King Philip's War (1675-1676) took place in a region of Northern Rhode Island in an area of over 14,000 acres known as Nipsachuck. This area covers the southern region of North Smithfield. However, the specific locations of the battlefields are unknown. In order to preserve and protect the historical importance of Nipsachuck and identify these battlefield locations, the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission (RIHPHC), the Narragansett Indian Tribal Historic Preservation Office (NITHPO) and the Blackstone Valley Historical Society (BVHS) created a research collaborative, applying for a planning grant via the American Battlefield Protection Program to allow the groups to start a multi-year project to identify and preserve the battlefield locations.



The American Battlefield Protection Program seeks to preserve important American battle sites from wars that took place on American soil. The program works with citizens, public and private institutions and varying levels of government to locate, preserve and protect battlefield sites. The main goals of the program are 1) to protect battlefield sites associated with armed conflicts that influenced the course of American history, 2) to encourage and assist all Americans in planning for the preservation, management, and interpretation of these sites, and 3) to raise awareness of the importance of preserving battlefield sites for future generations.

This program enabled the RIHPHC, NITHPO AND BVHS to identify potential battlefield sites, educate local officials and the general public, and reach out to individuals living on possible battlefield areas. The program also brought together Tribal Historic Preservation Offices of six New England tribes whose ancestors were involved in the battles in the Nipsachuck region.

The project has broadly defined the potential battlefield study areas and core areas to include several possible battlefield scenarios. Most of the battlefield study area, with archaeological verification, contributed important information concerning the location of the battles, troop movements and tactics, and the kinds of weaponry used by both sides. The program also recovered information about further sites such as Indian encampments and ceremonial core areas.