

HISTORIC DISTRICTS COMMISSION



From left, front: Karen Parker, Sue Rettberg, Chair; Isabella Ehrlich, Sarah Mitchell; Rear: Sarah Myers, Karle Packard, Sam Bird, Marta Brooks, Sally Lanagan, Kevin Paulsen

The Historic Districts Commission (HDC) is charged with “the preservation and protection of buildings, places and districts of historic or literary significance” within Concord’s six local historic districts - the American Mile, Barrett Farm, Church Street, Hubbardville, Main St., and Monument Square/North Bridge. Established in 1960, Concord’s Historic Districts Act (Chapter 345) was one of the first such bylaws in Massachusetts, and over the last 49 years the HDC has worked diligently to preserve the Town’s unique historical and architectural character by encouraging the retention of original building materials and reviewing potential changes to ensure that they are in keeping with the character of the District. As part of this process, the HDC regularly reviews requests for Certificates of Appropriateness for changes to exterior features which are visible from the public way.

In addition to conducting project reviews, the Commission also continued its work to update the Historic Districts Guidelines. This year, the HDC focused on refining the guidelines for changes to specific building elements and developed new sections for elements not previously discussed. Individual Commission members volunteered their time to work on these sections, which were reviewed and discussed by the full Commission at several meetings over the course of the year. The HDC also worked hard to address existing violations in all of the Districts and has begun work on educational materials to help property owners avoid these issues.

2009 Annual Report

The Historic Districts Commission held 19 regularly scheduled public meetings on 72 applications for Certificates of Appropriateness. The Commission issued 63 Certificates of Appropriateness. Five of these Certificates of Appropriateness were for extensions of previous approvals. Five applications were denied and nine were withdrawn. Three group site visits were held and several individual site visits were made. There were 17 requests for hearing determinations. No appeals were filed.

HDC Applications by Category (a single application may involve several categories)

A/C equipment	2
Accessible Entrance	1
Addition	9
Amendment to previous	2
Approval	
Bike racks	1
Change Siding	1
Dormer	2
Driveway/walk/steps/entrance	4
Greenhouse	1
Lighting	1
New Handrails	1
Paint	6
Partial demolition	1
Planters	1
Roofs/Gutters/Chimneys/Vents	8
Satellite Dish	1
Sidewalks/Crosswalks/Curbing	1
Signage	10
Stonewalls/Fences	6
Tree house	1
Windows/Doors	7

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Nancy H. Butman, Chair
David Hupper
Valarie Kinkade
Holly Larner
Barbara Lynn-Davis

Hangar 24 at Bedford-Hanscom Field

The Historical Commission voted unanimously not to sign the Memorandum of Agreement between the Federal Aviation Administration, the Massachusetts Port Authority and the Massachusetts State Historic Preservation Officer regarding the replacement of Hangar 24 at Hanscom Field. It has been our consistent position that Hangar 24 is an exceptionally historic structure—possibly eligible for National Register listing in all three

categories—and cannot be replaced. We also objected strenuously to the FAA finding that the “area of potential effect”, if Hangar 24 is demolished, will be limited to the footprint of the existing structure—any potential development of that site will significantly effect the character of Virginia Rd., the Thoreau Birthplace and the Minute Man National Historical Park. We continue to work for the preservation of this historic structure.

Caesar Robbins House

The Historical Commission received notification that the owners of 324 Bedford St.-Caesar Robbins House had applied for a demolition permit. Given the six-month reprieve provided by the Demolition Delay Bylaw, the Historical Commission began working with The Drinking Gourd Project (DGP), to preserve this valuable resource. Over the six months delay period, enough money was raised to move the house, and a relocation site was identified. It became clear, however, that the DGP would need to buy the house in order to ensure its preservation; to that end they applied for a Community Preservation Act grant to purchase the property. The Historical Commission enthusiastically supported their application. The opportunity to buy, relocate and preserve this house in the ‘historic home’ tradition of Concord is tremendous; built by one of Concord’s freed slaves in 1780, the Caesar Robbins house will add an overlooked layer to the interpretation our Town’s history.

2009 Community Preservation Act Applications

Five applications for CPA funds were related to historic preservation. Members of the Historical Commission always enjoy the opportunity these applications give us to review and comment on the many really wonderful preservation projects underway in Town. Of the five applicants this year, we heard presentations from four of them and were given a site tour by one; budget constraints made this a difficult year, but the Commission continues to believe that Concord’s participation in this program is extremely beneficial to the preservation of historic resources in Town.

Celebrations

The West Concord Depot restoration and rehabilitation project (funded in part by a CPA grant) won the prestigious 2009 Massachusetts Historical Commission Preservation Award. Members of the Commission, the

Town Planning office, Friends of West Concord Depot and the CPC all attended a ceremony at the Massachusetts Archives Building in October. Amazingly, this is the second time the restoration has been acknowledged. A group of volunteers began the initial efforts at Depot restoration and preservation that received the first award in the nineties.

This year also marked the expansion of Minute Man National Historical Park to include the Colonel James Barrett Farm on Barrett’s Mill Rd. In June, we celebrated legislation passed by the US Senate designating the Freedom’s Way National Heritage Area—The Landscape of Visionaries and Experimenters. This broad initiative includes 45 communities in Massachusetts and New Hampshire that have made important contributions to the national character of our country.



West Concord Depot

Projects Requiring Historical Commission Review

The Historical Commission has, over the past year, reviewed a number of applications for the construction of new cell towers in Town. Our review process evaluates the impact of a new or expanded cell tower on the immediate neighborhood as well as any potential adverse effect on historic views.

We were also asked by the Massachusetts Historical Commission to comment on the proposed demolition of the Albano Farm on Lexington Rd. This property is owned by the National Park and, as such, required a Section 106 review prior to demolition. The Historical Commission agreed to the demolition of the farm, but asked that the small roadside farm stand remain to preserve the historic rhythm of small farm stands along that section of Lexington Road. The Park has agreed to this request.

Construction of a baseball diamond on Ripley School land also required our review this year; we were happy to be able to agree that the location posed no problem.

The Historical Commission was asked to comment on the renovation of Peter Bulkeley Terrace building; we toured the building with the Housing Authority Executive Director and made a number of recommendations for the preservation of historic details in the building.



*Mass Historical Commission Preservation Award Ceremony
From left: Brona Simon, Director Mass Historical Commission; Gary Clayton, Chair CPC; Mark Boyle, MBTA*

Other Projects

The Historical Commission has attended meetings and reviewed resource materials relating to the development of the Battle Road Scenic Byway. Created by the Massachusetts General Court to “recognize, protect and enhance the unique historic, scenic, cultural, and recreational resources along this road,” the Byway includes the towns of Arlington, Lexington, Lincoln and Concord.

We’ve also undertaken a review of our Historical Resources Masterplan with the hope of revising and expanding it in 2010.

We continue to respond to requests for historical markers for houses in Concord and are pleased that a number of West Concord residents have requested the new West Concord Depot house marker for their homes.

BRUCE FREEMAN RAIL TRAIL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Judith LaRocca, Chair
Harry Beyer
Gerard Boyle
James E. Coutre
Virginia McIntyre
Kenneth C. Miller
Barbara Pike
James B. Terry

The Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Advisory Committee (BFRTAC) focused on three main areas: continuing the 25% design effort with local funding, pursuing Community Preservation Committee funds and State-wide Transportation Enhancement funds to complete the design, and participating in multi-community discussions regarding common trail aspects.

In the spring, the consultant completed and submitted Right-of-Way plans to MassHighway. In late June, the MassHighway 25% design hearing was held. A consulting firm was hired to complete a survey of the railroad spur in West Concord. Based on feedback from the 2008 Town Meeting, the BFRTAC hired the consultant Greenman-Pedersen, Inc. to review the trail crossing of the MBTA line in West Concord and to produce an Alternatives Analysis Report and recommendation. In early 2010, the BFRTAC will review this report and hold a public information session.

The BFRTAC applied for Community Preservation Act funding to complete the rail trail design in Concord. The Community Preservation Committee brought forth a Warrant Article that provided partial funding. Town Meeting approved \$125,000 to be used for advancing the rail trail design.

Concord, jointly with Acton, Westford, and Carlisle, applied for Statewide Transportation Enhancement funding. An intermunicipal agreement was signed by these communities to facilitate the completion of the design of Phase 2A (Acton, Westford, Carlisle) and Phase 2C (Concord) if funding was granted to this