

**Appendix G**

**Recommendations of the  
1986 Wakefield Preservation Plan**

# Needs And Recommended Actions

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This chapter presents the general needs identified as a result of the planning process and the actions recommended to address those needs. The various programs and strategies referenced in the action statements are more fully explained in Chapter 4. In addition, the Appendix of this volume also contains detailed information on a variety of pertinent issues.

## Need #1:

In the past year the Wakefield Historical Commission has made great strides toward identifying the distinct historic and cultural fabric of the town. The completion of an inventory of historic properties was a critical step in this process. This resource-identification procedure should be the beginning of a process that will continue to identify and define the historic built environment; help people make judgments about the resources to be protected; and begin to put in place appropriate mechanisms for protecting those historic resources.

## Actions:

### 1. National Register Multiple Resources Nomination

An important step in the identification and protection of historic buildings is the nomination of properties for the National Register of Historic Places. The Wakefield Historical Commission, with the assistance of a consultant or intern and the Massachusetts Historical Commission, should prepare and submit a Multiple Resource nomination to the National Register for the individual properties and for the four districts described in the Appendix. The districts are:

- Church, Common, Main, and Lafayette Streets
- Prospect Street
- Avon Street and Yale Avenue
- Wakefield Park

We further suggest that the Wakefield Historical Commission apply to the Massachusetts Historical Commission for a matching grant to aid in the preparation of the Multiple Resource nomination.

2. Inventory Supplementation and Possible Additional National Register Nominations

The Wakefield survey and inventory prepared by Architectural Preservation Associates dealt with all buildings built prior to the mid-19th century. Architectural Preservation Associates indicates in their report, however, that they were more selective about the inclusion in the inventory of properties from later periods. In their Report on the Cultural Resources of Wakefield, Massachusetts, they said:

APA surveyed all First Period, Georgian, Federal and Greek Revival buildings in Wakefield . . . . APA inventoried a proportional number of mid-nineteenth century to c. 1915 properties.

It is appropriate that the Wakefield Historical Commission consider further study to supplement this excellent inventory in order to identify any additional National Register-eligible properties. Nominations should then be prepared for those buildings.

3. Demolition Bylaw

The Wakefield Historical Commission should encourage the adoption of a demolition bylaw for the Town of Wakefield. This tool is an important one for the effective protection of historic buildings, and is invaluable for the time it provides to communicate information about and explore alternatives to the proposed demolition of historic properties. A model demolition bylaw prepared for Wakefield can be found in the Appendix.

4. Archaeological Resource Protection

The Upper Saugus River Drainage contains at least two dozen sites with significant archaeological potential. It is probable that artifacts may have survived in and around the wetlands and quarries throughout the Wakefield region. The importance of these archaeological resources has not been recognized sufficiently, and only limited study of these areas has been conducted. More thorough research is imperative. The Wakefield Historical Commission should pursue systematic steps to document and protect these resources before they are disturbed or destroyed. The Ernest E. Tyzzer Collection can be of help in this process. It contains several thousand artifacts from sites along the Upper Saugus River Drainage. It is important that locational information about archaeological sites remain confidential in order to discourage site vandalism. The goal should be conservation of archaeological sites in situ, leaving artifacts in the ground, in context. Any site analysis that may be necessary should be done with the smallest samples possible. The

first priority in the protection of archaeological sites should always be the avoidance of destruction.

#### 5. Local Historic Districts

The Wakefield Historical Commission should consider the formation of local historic districts, consistent with Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws, and having the same boundaries as the four National Register districts. These local historic districts can allow for mandatory design review controls, and can provide broader protection of historic resources than can listing on the National Register. The local historic district legislation should be adopted in such a way that only one historic district commission is established. This commission should also be the Historical Commission. It is recommended that local historic district designation be pursued after completion of the National Register Multiple Resource nomination.

#### 6. Local Landmarks

Legislation is pending in the Massachusetts State Legislature to allow for the creation of Local Landmarks. Should this law be adopted, the Wakefield Historical Commission should consider the creation of Local Landmarks for a limited number of properties having major significance to the community, such as the Lucius Beebe Library or the West Ward School.

#### Need #2:

Residents and officials of the Town of Wakefield have repeatedly expressed interest in and enthusiasm for the historic resources of the town. The Historical Commission, in conjunction with the Historical Society, is in an ideal position to encourage this interest and to broaden awareness of preservation-related concerns by instituting programs and procedures that will educate the public about the historic qualities of their property and encourage people to make appropriate design choices. The Historical Commission and the Historical Society might find it appropriate to co-sponsor some of these programs.

#### Actions:

##### 1. Preparation and Distribution of Information

Printed material can be of great value in educating the public, building an awareness of important preservation resources, publicizing preservation activities, and creating a constituency for preservation issues. A walking tour of historic downtown Wakefield and a style guide have been prepared for the town. It is critical,

however, that any literature have wide distribution and be readily available to the public.

- A pamphlet on residential rehabilitation has been prepared and should be widely distributed to Wakefield residents. A summary of the rehabilitation pamphlet can be found in the Appendix.
- Newspaper articles and other media exposure for historic structures, and continuing coverage of preservation activities should be encouraged. This coverage should include articles or stories explaining the National Register program and the Multiple Resource nomination for Wakefield.

## 2. Educational Programming

In addition to literature, other educational tools should be used:

- Continue and expand preservation and architectural history-related programs in the public schools.
- Sponsor workshops on residential rehabilitation for homeowners.
- Sponsor other workshops, seminars, and special events regularly to educate the public about relevant preservation-related issues.

### Need #3:

In order for the Wakefield Historical Commission to be able to make a significant contribution to and have a continuing impact on the townwide planning process, including avoidance of conflict, it is critical that formal and informal interrelationships between the Historical Commission and other town departments be created or strengthened. These links need to provide for both communication and significant input into decision-making processes. Further, it is important that the zoning, appeals, and city planning processes be implemented with sensitivity to the town's historic fabric and encourage, where relevant, the protection and enhancement of Wakefield's resources.

### Actions:

#### 1. Staffing for the Historical Commission

The demands on the time of members of the Wakefield Historical Commission are great, and as preservation activities increase, so do these demands. The burden of day-to-day activities, follow-up,

technical consultation, and so forth, is most appropriately undertaken by a staff person. The Wakefield Historical Commission should make it a priority to urge the town to raise the necessary funds to hire a professional staff person to serve the Commission on at least a part-time basis. This strategy is more cost-effective for the community than bringing in consultants to do projects year after year. Further, a staff person provides the continuity that consultants, by their temporary tenure, cannot.

2. Participation in Meetings

In order to be effective within the town planning process, it is critical that the Wakefield Historical Commission attend and participate in, when appropriate, meetings of the Zoning Board of Appeals and the Conservation Commission.

3. Representation on Interagency or Ad Hoc Committees Dealing with Planning or Communications Issues

The Wakefield Historical Commission needs to be represented on any ad hoc committees or commissions formed for the purpose of discussing or resolving planning or conservation-related issues or communication issues.

4. Formal Historical Commission Involvement in any Design Review or Demolition Bylaw Procedures

In the writing and implementation of any formal design review process or demolition bylaw procedure, the Wakefield Historical Commission should play a formal statutory review role.

5. Notification of Historical Commission by Building Department, Department of Public Works, or Planning Department

The Historical Commission should be notified by the town Building Department, Department of Public Works, or Planning Department of any projects or decisions that might affect a historic resource.

Need #4:

The improvement of building maintenance and encouragement of building rehabilitation or restoration should be a priority for Wakefield's downtown Central Business District. The presence of a Main Street program and Main Street Project Manager in the town provides an unusual opportunity to improve both the visual and commercial appeal of the downtown area. Efforts to improve the built environment in the Central Business District will enhance the Main Street program, thereby increasing its

potential for positive impact, and will help generate more use of Wakefield's downtown.

Actions:

1. Communication and Cooperation Issues

In order for the Main Street program and Main Street Project Manager to have long-term, significant impact on the downtown area, the Main Street Project Manager must be incorporated into the information and policy-making channels of the town. The Project Manager, for example, should be encouraged to attend meetings of appropriate agencies or boards when they are dealing with downtown issues, and the Main Street Project Manager should be informed of any decisions being made concerning zoning variances, zone changes, Parks and Recreation programs, public works projects, or Building or Planning Department projects that may affect the Central Business District. In this way the Project Manager can effectively represent and protect the needs of Wakefield's downtown.

2. Signage Review

The focus of a signage program should be the encouragement of sensitively designed signage, rather than simply the restriction of nonconforming signs. Designing and choosing appropriate signage, however, requires some knowledge, and to that end, the Wakefield Historical Commission should encourage the use of signage review guidelines. These guidelines will effectively educate those applying for a sign permit about appropriate signage design and will serve to strengthen the existing signage bylaws. The guidelines should be provided to all appropriate town departments and agencies, including the Building Department and the Zoning Board of Appeals, and should be widely distributed to local merchants and businesses. Signage Review Guidelines are included in Chapter 6.

Need #5:

Citizens of the Town of Wakefield have identified a need to maintain, upgrade systems in, and rehabilitate or restore some significant municipal buildings or buildings that are owned by nonprofit organizations. Once these buildings have been identified, thoughtful and careful plans should be made before any work is done. To be effective, the planning process should take into consideration the history of the building, its value to the community, the present use of the building, its future use, and the building's critical needs.

## Actions:

### 1. Identification of Key Buildings Needing Work

When a building needing work is identified, an initial assessment should be made. This assessment should reflect:

- the apparent urgency and scope of required repairs;
- the needs of people to use the building; and
- the density pressure on the building caused by the constancy and quantity of use.

### 2. Planning Process

When a determination is made that a building will be scheduled for work, a careful planning process must be undertaken. In the planning process the following must be included:

- An analysis of the building, including its architectural style and history, the building use history and significance, existing conditions of the building, and recommended changes and/or repairs to the building, should be made to determine the scope of necessary work. This analysis should be keyed to the expected use of the building. Often this analysis takes the form of an Historic Structure Report.
- Once this needs assessment has been made, work can be prioritized by degree of critical need, and if necessary, work can be planned in phases.
- A planning tool like an Historic Structure Report or Historic Building Analysis can be of even broader value in the planning process. In order to apply for the matching grants program of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, for example, an Historic Structure Report must be provided. In this capacity, the planning document can help the grant writer make a strong case for the building in question, and it will serve as a necessary support document in the application evaluation process. Further, an Historic Structure Report can be the basis of a public education program to generate support for raising the funds necessary to do the needed work.

### 3. Looking at the West Ward School

In an effort to demonstrate how this planning process might work, we have written an Historic Structure Report for the West Ward School. (A Table of Contents from that document is included in the Appendix.) This Historic Structure Report is intended to serve as a



model for similar studies of other historic buildings needing work. Discussions with the School Department indicate that some maintenance and code upgrading is planned for the building in the near future. Our analysis shows that the West Ward School is an appropriate candidate for the Massachusetts Historical Commission matching grants program, and the Historic Structure Report recommends that an application be considered. A work plan for the school should be developed.

Finally, it is important to note that the first three of the needs outlined above are of equal importance. The inventory update and Multiple Resource nomination, for example, should not be pursued to the exclusion of developing protection for cultural resources or of forging strong communication links. Current planning theory as espoused by the National Park Service urges that planning, protection, and inventory issues are equally important and should be pursued simultaneously.