

9.0 HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

Scituate will strive to provide a balanced and appropriate development pattern that seeks to preserve community character, enhance fiscal stability, and protect the quality of the natural environment.

In order to properly plan for what a community is to become, an understanding of where that community came from is essential. A Town's heritage plays a crucial role in planning for the future. The physical remnants of that heritage provide a valuable glimpse into history, offering information on how people lived and worked, their values, and the roles they played in the community. It provides us with an understanding of how the built environment has changed over time. Historic and cultural resources within a community are indicators of this heritage and can include structures, properties, places, landmarks, archeological sites, landscapes, and natural areas that the community has determined to be noteworthy and of primary importance for recognition and protection.

The Historic and Cultural Element of the Comprehensive Plan is inherently integrated into other elements of the plan by virtue of the variety in type and location of a community's historic and cultural resources. A community's historic and cultural resources are closely linked with a community's natural and built physical environment.

The Scituate Preservation Society takes an active role in preserving and promoting historic and cultural resources in town. The Society's state goals are 1.) the identification, acquisition, preservation, restoration, and maintenance of historical, educational, and cultural objects within the Town of Scituate, State of Rhode Island, and 2.) to provide educational and informational resources to its members, citizens of Scituate and other interested parties.

The Town's topography and location have significantly influenced its development. Much of the land is now covered by the Scituate Reservoir, and its former agricultural character has been transformed into an essentially suburban community in a rural setting. This element discusses the following topics:

- A discussion of the historic settlement patterns in Scituate ([Section 9.1](#)).
- A review of existing historic districts within the Town ([Section 9.2](#)).
- An overview of existing and suggested sites and structures for the National Register of Historic Places ([Section 9.3](#)).
- A review of issues and opportunities relate to the Town's historic and cultural resources ([Section 9.4](#)).
- An overview of survey results related to historic and cultural resources ([Section 9.5](#)).

The following factors are of high priority to the Town when considering the recognition and protection of the community's historic and cultural features:

- Identify and protect historic and cultural resources of high importance ([Policy #2, #4, Action #1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7](#)).
- Educate residents and property owners regarding the importance of historic and cultural resources ([Policy #1, #3, Action #7, #9](#)).
- Utilize innovative techniques, regulations, and programs to promote the significance of historic and cultural features towards achieving a balanced land use pattern in Town ([Policy #1, #2, #3, #4, Action #2, #4, #7, #8, #9](#)).

9.1 History

Native American hunters and gatherers were present in Scituate for thousands of years before the arrival of European settlers. Scituate was founded as a primarily agriculturally based rural community in the seventeenth century with colonists moving out from Rhode Island's earliest European settlement site at Providence, coming to what is now Scituate around 1700. In the eighteenth century the Town experienced intense agricultural development. With the onset of the 19th century, Scituate was swiftly transformed into a more diversified community of industrial settlements, commercial buildings, housing, and educational and religious institutions. Much of this taking place along the Town's numerous rivers and streams. A significant historical influence on the development of the Town was that of textile mill villages which encouraged dramatic growth. During the last half of the 19th century, agriculture and industry were on the decline and by 1900 Scituate had begun to revert to a rural community again. This effect was felt in other areas beyond Scituate, but a factor particular to Scituate that contributed to Town retaining its rural character was the construction of the Scituate Reservoir from 1920 to 1926. This factor, more than anything else, shaped present-day Scituate, recasting its geography, economy, and population.

9.1.1 Early Settlement and Agriculture

Native use of the land is an important aspect of the cultural history of the community. Little professional archaeological investigation, however, has been done to reveal more accurate information about these early inhabitants.

Colonists came to what is now Scituate around 1700. In 1703 Joseph Wilkinson Settled in the northwestern part of the Town. He is said to have brought the first cow into Scituate and to have built the first barn. Other settlers followed and cleared most of the land and established farms. The century was dominated by an agricultural economy with most of the families in Town tied to the land. Most farmers grew only enough food for their own use and little for purchase of necessities. This simple way of life was reflected in the construction of homes and outbuildings, which were solid and unadorned structures.

The latter half of the eighteenth century saw the construction of roads, small mills that served a local population, gristmills, and two iron manufacturing sites in Town. This time frame experienced the slow demise of the agricultural economy and although industry dominated Scituate's economy in the 19th century, agriculture continued to support rural areas, most prosperously prior to 1840. Fine and well- preserved farmhouses such as the Federal Style Dexter Arnold House (c. 1813) on Chopmist Hill Road are illustrative of many built in the late eighteenth century.

9.1.2 Industrial Development

The 19th century was a time of dramatic change in Scituate. Rhode Island's industrial transformation stormed the entire state converting sleepy hamlets into bustling and prosperous mill villages. Following the spread of textile manufacturing across the state, cotton mills and bobbin factories formed the cores of several industrial villages. Many of the Town's villages were destroyed for the reservoir project in the 1920s, but three survive. Despite modern intrusions, North Scituate retains much of its original character and architecture, including the Old Congregational Church and former Smithville Seminary. Clayville, once centered around several mills at the Foster Town Line, is now almost entirely residential. Hope, in the southeastern corner of the Town, and the oldest village, had an operating mill until 2007. The remaining mill structures are in disrepair, and several have suffered roof collapses. Despite the continued deterioration of the mill structures, worker housing, a church and other 19th century buildings contribute to a well-preserved mill village.

One other notable industry, quarrying, began in the mid-19th century. The Nipmuc Quarry, a 12-acre site on Nipmuc Hill in southwest Scituate provided large quantities of gneiss¹ for the Providence market.

9.1.3 Churches and Schools

By the end of the 19th century, Scituate's many small churches provided services for residents of most of the villages and for the town's dispersed population. One notable church, the Old Congregational Church in North Scituate, was completed in 1831.

The Beacon Hill Academy on Chopmist Hill, used as a combined district schoolhouse and chapel, and another early schoolhouse the North Scituate Academy (1825), stand today. New school construction and education were stimulated by the passage of the state's Free School Law of 1828. Of the 19 schoolhouses built in response to this law, The Potterville School and Clayville School stand today, reused as community buildings.

Advanced education was limited to several private schools built throughout the Town. The Smithville Seminary opened in 1840 as a secondary school, and despite subsequent changes, this monumental Greek Revival Style building is architecturally perhaps the most distinguished building in Scituate.

9.1.4 Early 20th Century – The Scituate Reservoir

Two events early in this century changed the Town's development pattern, shaping present-day Scituate. First was the decline of agriculture, the abandonment and subsequent reforestation of farmland. Second was the construction of the Scituate Reservoir, now covering about 42% of the Town's area. Completed in 1926, the Scituate Reservoir project created the largest freshwater body in Rhode Island. The creation of the Scituate Reservoir and purchase of a large area of Town to create it, were devastating to Scituate's built environment. Four villages and 1,195 structures were lost to the 23.1 square mile area required for the reservoir. Perhaps because of this loss, North Scituate assumed greater primacy within the Town and civic buildings, schools, churches, and stores were built there. The Scituate Reservoir also disrupted the road pattern, requiring the construction of 25.4 miles of new roads. Many displaced families moved from Scituate. One such grudgingly relocated family, Joslin, built a large rural estate on Field Hill that is one of the most elaborate residential developments of the early 20th century in this part of the state.

Since its creation, the Scituate Reservoir has been the central feature of the Town – a protected natural reservation of woods and ponds. Within its fenced borders are the ruins of former mills, houses, churches, stores and other buildings, old cemeteries, and forest paths that were former roads. Some of these features can be seen from public rights-of way and contribute to the historic ambience of Scituate.

Other changes during this era are associated with early 20th century highway development and increased use of the automobile. The concrete arch Hope Bridge (1929-1930) over the North Branch of the Pawtuxet River and a small former gasoline station and store on Plainfield Pike are associated with this historic period.

9.1.5 Post-World War II

Changes leading up the War included the consolidation of three new schools, replacing former one room schoolhouses. After WWII, residential development increased. Developments such as the Rice Plat in the northeastern part of the Town and Ring Rock Acres in the southeast are typical housing tracts of this period. Most new houses were built by individuals on large, newly created lots along existing roads. Some of the best examples are those along Rocky Hill Road and the eastern portion of Quaker Lane. Scituate's first high school was built in 1956 on Trimtown Road. A shopping center was built in North Scituate in 1974, shifting the

¹ Gneiss is a metamorphic rock that is comprised of alternating layers of minerals. Gneiss is commonly used for building materials, including countertops, flooring, roofing, and exterior walls.

commercial center of the Village to the east. Scituate today is essentially a suburban community in a rural setting. It has few industries and little commercial space. Most residents travel to work outside of the Town.

9.2 Historic Villages

Without a doubt, Scituate's historic villages comprise one of its most significant concentrations of physical cultural resources: North Scituate, Clayville, Hope, and the Hamlet of Potterville. Three of the villages, North Scituate, Clayville, and Hope have been recognized by entry on the National Register of Historic Places. Other villages to note are Chopmist, Rockland, and Fiskeville.

Straddling the Scituate-Foster border, Clayville Historic District contains several dozen structures, predominantly residences, and the sites of several former mills. These 19th century rubber and cotton mills were later condemned and demolished for the Scituate Reservoir project. Today the area is almost entirely residential.

Considered the modern-day Town Center, North Scituate Village includes approximately 110 vernacular buildings on 113 acres, representing construction and design based on utility and need. They date from the eighteenth century onward and are primarily residential. However, there are historically prominent churches and schools as well as commercial and municipal buildings. The district contains two large 19th century cemeteries.

Hope Village, on the Pawtuxet River in the southeast corner of Scituate, is a large, compact village consisting of an abandoned textile mill, mill housing, residences, and other structures and land uses originally associated with the mill. It contains the archaeologically important site of the Hope Furnace, an early iron manufacturing site. The village is significant not only for its history, but also because so much of it is physically extant, including the Hope Mill which was in operation until 2007.

The Hamlet of Potterville consists of the remnants of a linear settlement formerly associated with a spool and bobbin works begun in 1847. It is visually and historically distinct from its surroundings, but lacks the interactive land uses associated with a true village.

9.3 Historic and Cultural Structures and Sites

Scituate's historically significant structures are found throughout the Town. There are many houses, farmhouses, industrial remains, and other structures of historic importance in scattered sites and locations. These sites are often found along early roadways and are sited close to the roadway itself. Often these structures are tightly grouped and have now become interspersed with modern development. Map HC-1 identifies the location of these sites and Table 9-1 below identifies each of the numbered sites from the map.

Table 9-1. Historic and Cultural Site Identified on Map HC-1

Map ID	Resource	Location
1	Andrews Luther Farm	Elmdale Road
2	McGonagle Site (RI-1227)	Hartford Pike
3	Double L Site (RI-958)	Hartford Pike
4	Mill Race Site (RI 1039)	Hartford Pike
5	North Scituate Village	North Scituate
6	Smithville/Seminary Lapham Institute	North Scituate
7	Dexter Arnold Farmstead	Chopmist Hill Road
8	Amos Cooke House	Chopmist Hill Road

Table 9-1. Historic and Cultural Site Identified on Map HC-1

Map ID	Resource	Location
9	Batthey-Barden House	Plainfield Pike

9.3.1 National Register of Historic Places

The *Historic and Architectural Resources of Scituate, Rhode Island: A Preliminary Report* identified historically significant buildings, sites, and areas within the Town. This inventory serves as the primary source for all local historic preservation efforts. Several sites/districts of historical significance are included on the National Register of Historic Places. The National Register listing is assembled and maintained by the U.S. Department of the Interior. National Register properties gain recognition, protection, and financial assistance for preservation or restoration. In Scituate there are 13 National Register listings. This report, written by the Rhode Island Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC) was issued in 1980 and made recommendations for additional potential National Register listings. The Town should reevaluate these locations and determine which have been added and which remain as undesignated to determine the feasibility of listing those properties. The Town should continue to work closely with RIHPHC on this. Table 9-2 provides further information.

In addition to the sites that are listed on the National Register several sites were listed in the preliminary report as being recommended for placement on the National Register. Those are listed below in Table 9-3.

Table 9-2. National Register of Historic Places

Resource	Location	Date Designated
Clayville Historic District	Foster and Scituate	December 29, 1988
Hope Village Historic District	Scituate and Coventry	August 8, 1995
Smithville/North Scituate Village Historic District	North Scituate	August 28, 1979
Amos Cooke House	Chopmist Hill Road	September 11, 1980
Dexter Arnold Farmstead	Chopmist Hill Road	November 25, 1977
Andrews-Luther Farm	Elmdale Road	June 19, 1985
Old Congregational Church	Greenville Road	January 11, 1974
Millrace Site	Hartford Pike (RI-1039)	September 12, 1985
Moswansicut Pond Site	Harford Pike (RI-960)	September 12, 1985
Double L Site	Hartford Pike (RI-958)	September 12, 1985
Smithville Seminary/Watchman Industrial School	Institute Lane	March 29, 1978
Batthey-Barden House	710 Plainfield Pike	August 28, 1980

Table 9-3. Recommended for Placement on the National Register of Historic Places

Resource	Location
S.P. Taylor House, Ridge Hill Farm	Burnt Hill Road
James Aldrich House, Florence Price Grant House	Danielson Pike

Resource	Location
Former Field Farm	Tunk Hill Road
Joslin Farm	Field Hill
G.P. King House	Field Hill Road
Breezy Hill	Hope Furnace Road
Ralph House	Howard Avenue
Aldrich-Ide House	Ide Road
M. Potter House	Old Plainfield Pike
The Scituate Oak	Plainfield Pike
Brown Homestead	Rocky Hill Road
Aldrich House	Rocky Hill Road
Scituate Reservoir	-
G. Aldrich House	Trimtown Road

The *Historic and Architectural Resources of Scituate Rhode Island: A Preliminary Report* provides a thorough overview of historic and culturally significant structures, features, and areas in addition to those listed here in this plan. Other types of structures worth noting are as follows:

Bridges:

- Clayville Arch Bridge (1932)
- Hope Bridge (1930)
- Wilbur's Bridge (1912)

Mills and Millworks:

- Hope Mill buildings, dam, gatehouse, etc., (1806-1847)
- Peeptoad Pond Dam, Ponagansett Dam (c.1883)
- Seagrove Memorial Observatory (1914)
- (Scituate) Gainer Memorial Dam
- Gatehouse and Hydroelectric Station

9.3.2 Cemeteries

While the Town contains a number of cemeteries, only two, Smithfield Cemetery and New Rockland Cemetery, are recorded in the Historic and Architectural Resources of Scituate report. Scituate has a well-documented historical cemetery listing, separate from the cultural resources inventory, as well as many cemeteries marked by onsite signs. Others are known about by anecdote or recollection.

9.3.3 Archeological Resources

Mapped information provided to the Town under the RIGIS program shows 19 areas within Scituate Town boundaries where the Rhode Island Historical Preservation Commission has identified below ground archaeological resources. Four such sites have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. They include three pre-historic sites along the Hartford Pike on land owned by Providence Water Supply Board:

- Moswanicut Pond Site
- Millrace Site
- Double L Site

Also on Hartford Pike is the McGonagle site, important for 100 years of farming and activities of the Quakers (Society of Friends). The RIGIS map showing archaeological sites is on file in the Town Hall. In addition to recorded sites, there are others that deserve further study. Many former industrial sites, representing the vestiges of active manufacturing villages, are recorded in the Historic and Architectural Resources of Scituate. These include the sites of Harrisdale Mill, dam, and tenement housing, Rockland, and Ponaganset, destroyed by the Scituate Reservoir. One industrial site of potential importance is the Hope Furnace Site (1765); its precise location not determined. It is a rare pre-Revolutionary iron manufacturing company recorded on the Historic American Engineering Record. Its association with regional industry and national events may give this archaeological site National Register significance.

9.4 Issues and Opportunities

Scituate contains several varied types of physical environments that represent diverse and valuable experiences of place to residents and visitors. There is an ongoing need to educate Town residents about the role that historic and cultural resources play in making up these significant environments in Scituate. Many elements that are within control of the Town and property owners have a direct bearing on property quality, condition, and value. The sections below discuss how these significant environments are threatened and measures that can be taken to properly protect them.

9.4.1 Threats to Rural Character

Single-family residential development and undeveloped open land and woodland bordered fields predominate in much of Scituate, comprising a rural quality of life. Many historic houses and farms in this open landscape were traditionally associated with outbuildings, stone walls, and fences. Large historic farmhouses set on open fields with barns and other structures are a common site, as are smaller historic residences sited close to the road with few or no outbuildings. In both cases they appear compatible with their landscape and surroundings.

Development processes can threaten the integrity of historic houses and buildings as well as the setting in which they are located. An example of such a process is creating additional lots through subdivision. Despite the fact that low density is maintained and site review protects some aspects of character, this practice can have the effect of standardizing the rural environment and breaking the more irregular pattern of house and outbuilding siting that characterizes rural development. If not properly monitored linear strips and grid patterns of housing are superimposed, regardless of the natural features of the landscape on which they are sited.

The integration of new and historic residences constitutes another threat to rural Scituate's character. Often sited close to historic structures, new housing frequently does not mirror the design quality, materials, or sensitive siting of its predecessors, detracting from appreciation of existing architecture, and muddling the perception of historic settlement patterns. Educational efforts to raise awareness surrounding elements of locally appropriate architecture and sensitive site design should be pursued.

9.4.2 Threats to Village Character

Scituate's three distinct village centers, and to a lesser degree its one hamlet Potterville, exhibit the interactive land uses and coherent groupings that characterize typical 19th century New England villages. The Village of

North Scituate perhaps best exemplifies these qualities in its mix of residential, commercial, municipal, and religious architecture, relatively uniform setbacks, narrow side yards, fences and walls, and traditional colors and building materials.

In some areas however, the qualities that lend distinction and cohesion have been eroded by new development, or by alterations to existing buildings that do not contribute to the historic visual character of the Village. This trend is potentially harmful in that, if left unchecked, it can gradually erode the qualities that have allowed North Scituate entry on the National Register.

The Village of Hope provides another interpretation of 19th century New England in its nearly intact illustration of a mill village, housing, and associated development. The Hope Mill Complex, including a 1840s stone textile mill and subsequent additions, ceased to operate in 2007. The last textile manufacturer that used the mill was a weaver of elastic fabrics. The mill buildings have been in



Figure 9-1. Hope Mill, 2016
Source: Valley Breeze (Retrieved on 7/1/21)

receivership since 2008 and are in various states of disarray including collapsed roofs and walls. While they retain the architectural styles and scale of the original settlement, many of the residential neighborhoods in Hope Village are threatened by deterioration. Incentives should be sought for rehabilitating these structures and their associated property in a manner that will not disrupt the cohesive whole of the Village.

9.4.3 Incremental Development

Like many predominantly rural communities with small village centers, development pressure is presently low, but its historic resources may nevertheless be threatened by the development that does occur 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 or incompatible construction. Development which introduces uses without regard for neighborhood character or is otherwise uncoordinated with actual community needs is detrimental to overall community character. As a result of such “uncoordinated” growth, many historic buildings can become separated 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. More sensitive land use controls and other measures to determine where development can best occur, similar to the site plan review process, are needed. Scituate has clearly recognized the desire for coordinated development in creating a comprehensive plan to guide the future it wishes to see.

9.4.4 Threats to Archeological Sites

Scituate has placed several known archaeological sites on the National Register, but there may be valuable resources from a variety of periods in history that are not currently protected. One area in particular that deserves investigation is Hope Village, where there may be many vestiges of former iron and textile mill activity preexisting from the eighteenth through early 19th centuries. Lack of knowledge of other existing sites

is a threat that can be counteracted by continued surveying and use of predictive land use models in areas deemed archaeologically sensitive.

Further study is recommended for those sites that have been identified by the State survey and that may potentially be eligible for National Register listing. Coordination of mapped data with state and local agencies, such as RIDOT and the Scituate Plan Commission can help pinpoint archaeological resources before they are disturbed. A particularly low hanging fruit in this regard is the preservation of stone walls and historic cemeteries. As properties are developed these archeological resources can be threatened. Stone walls are often removed during development and historic cemeteries can be negatively impacted by development within close proximity. The Town should take steps to better regulate these resources during the development process.

9.5 Historic and Cultural Resource Protection

There are a variety of measures that can be implemented to protect the Town’s many historic and cultural resources. These measures are presented below.

9.5.1 Land Use Techniques

There are a variety of land use techniques that can be implemented at the local level to require the protection of historic and cultural resources as part of the land development process.

Historic District Zoning

Under Title 45-24.1 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, the Town Council is empowered to designate mapped areas for designation of historic district zoning. This empowers the local Historic District Commission to grant or deny permissions for exterior alterations requiring a building permit within the district. Many alterations, such as color or maintenance, would not be affected as they do not trigger building permits.

The Town Council appoints membership to a Historic District Commission by virtue of interest or expertise in historic preservation. Each Historic District Commission should have representation from the area affected by historic district zoning, although this is not required by state statute.

Scituate does not currently have a Historic District Commission. The Town has adopted two village overlay districts that regulate certain design parameters for new construction and rehab of existing structures. Each village overlay district, Hope Village and North Scituate Village, have a specific village overlay commission. The Hope Village Overlay Commission is responsible for review and approval of renovations and new construction in the Hope Village Overlay District and the North Scituate Village Overlay Commission is responsible for the same within the North Scituate Village Overlay District. The boundaries of these districts are shown on Map HC-1.

Land Use Regulations

Whereas Historic District Zoning is quite limited in its scope, land use zoning covers a broad array of subjects codified in Scituate in zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, ranging from advisory to mandatory. It is possible to include cultural resource protection in zoning and subdivision regulation. 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.

Promoting infill development in village areas that enjoy historic district designation can be a good way to promote the reuse of historic structures within village areas. This can be accomplished by streamlining the permitting process, while still requiring building modifications to adhere to historic standards.

9.5.2 *National Register of Historic Places Nomination*

The National Register, maintained by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior, is a permanent record of structures, sites, areas and objects that have contributed importantly to American history and culture.

Tax benefits are available to owners of income-producing, National Register listed or eligible properties for rehabilitation work performed in accordance with the standards of the U.S. Department of The Interior. Furthermore, when federal funds are used for a project which may affect a National Register property (for example, a highway improvement), the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires environmental assessments and related mitigation measures to minimize damage to such properties. In addition, National Register listing confers benefits to eligible properties under specific circumstances. For example, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) may be used for historic rehabilitation for privately owned individual structures.

Table 9-3 provides a list of recommended buildings and sites for nomination to the National Register. At a minimum, Scituate should pursue adding these structures and sites to those already listed.

9.5.3 *Funding Sources*

Grants and other funding mechanisms are commonly used for the protection of historical and cultural resources.

Community Development Block Grants

The CDBG Program provides annual grants on a formula basis to states, cities, towns, and counties. This money may be used for a wide variety of development related activities which involve cultural resource protection. Such activities include, but are not limited to, rehabilitation of privately owned properties if the beneficiaries are at least 51 percent low- and moderate-income households. It is possible to create a residential rehabilitation program combining the protection of historic homes with building code compliance rehabilitation.

CDBG funds may be applied to adaptive reuse projects if there are significant benefits to low/moderate income households involved. These grants have been significant in rehabilitation projects that respect the historic features and character of the original architecture and its setting.

These federal funds may also be used for streetscape and public spaces and park improvements, including the acquisition, and placing of period benches, lampposts, paving and other amenities.

Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission Grants

Through its Certified Local Governments Program, the RIHPC awards 50% matching grants to eligible communities for a variety of historic preservation activities. In the past several years, these grants have been used for surveys to document local cultural resources, to prepare nominations for the National Register, to protect endangered resources, to develop local historic preservation plans and for public education programs, activities and publications. Certified Local Government grants are only available to municipalities that adopt Historic District Zoning and establish a Local Historic District Commission, per RIGL § 45-24.1. Scituate could apply for CLG grants once the Town has met all the criteria and been certified by Rhode Island Historic Preservation and Heritage Commission (RIHPHC).

Rhode Island Council for the Humanities

As well as the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission, this agency provides grants for educational activities (slide shows, video, talks, books, etc.) relating to increasing awareness of cultural resources among local people.

Historic Preservation Loan Fund

This program is available to properties listed on the state's Register of Historic Places by providing loans to public, non-profit, or private owners. Loan money can be used for needed restoration work or, in some cases, for acquiring and rehabilitating an endangered historic property.

Historic Preservation Residential Tax Credit Program

This program provides a state income tax credit for approved rehabilitation work within the guidelines of the program. Properties have to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places prior to project competition to be eligible for tax credits.

9.5.4 Other Protection Mechanisms

Partial Fee Acquisition (or Easement)

By purchasing an easement to a cultural resource, an owner obtains less than the full bundle of rights normally associated with property ownership. In so doing, a partial fee acquisition or easement, effectively restricts an owner's right to develop or alter culturally significant resources by limiting the rights of ownership.

Purchase of Development Rights

Related to the purchase of preservation easements, this preservation tool allows a party to purchase the right to develop a property in a limited way. This method is of value in that the site or structure is protected without the costs of full purchase.

Ownership by an Agency, Organization, or Group

In situations where municipalities cannot afford to purchase cultural resources outright, the ownership of such resources by agencies, organizations, or groups may provide an effective preservation tool. In the hands of such a body which has no development agenda and which can afford routine maintenance costs, the resource may be more adequately protected than it would be if owned by another type of group. Support of this strategy, however, can only be obtained through education of the owning agency, since its primary function may not always be preservation.

9.6 Opinion Survey of Scituate: Historic and Cultural Resources

In May 2021, the Town posted an online survey for residents as part of the comprehensive planning process. The survey asked several questions related to the services and facilities provided by the Town and school district. A full summary of the survey results can be found in Appendix A. In summary, the survey results indicate the following principal findings related to historic and cultural resources:

- Of survey respondents 68.3% reported that the preservation of historic character was very important to their quality of life while another 21.7% reported that it was important.
- Most survey respondents reported that the Town has adequate cultural activities, with 62.7% responding that the Town should maintain those at the same level they do now, with 31.1% of respondents indicating that the Town should have more of those types of activities. Only 6.2% responded that the Town should have less cultural activities.

- When respondents were asked what types of activities the Town should engage in 62.4% of survey respondents reported that they would be very supportive of historic preservation efforts, while 26.1% reported they would be supportive.
- Respondents were asked to rank the Town's performance for certain measures. When asked if the Town has done a good job protecting its historic and cultural resources, 13.3% of respondents strongly agreed and 43.7% agreed. 27.7% of respondents reported that they somewhat agreed with that statement while 11.4% disagreed.

These survey results indicate that the majority, almost 90%, of residents highly value the Town's historic resources, but only slightly over half believe the Town is adequately protecting them (57%). The Town will need to further assess how they can improve upon how they protect and value historic resources in response to resident's sentiment. According to the survey result, residents in general seem to feel that the Town provides appropriately for cultural activities such as parades and festivals. Public education to residents on what is currently done, along with input from the community on what other measures could be undertaken as a starting point for this community conversation.