



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLANNING

Webster's identity and significance is unique among New England's historic mill towns. Samuel Slater is known as the "Father of the American Industrial Revolution," bringing British textile technology to the United States and adapting it to create the American factory system. While his initial textile mills along the Blackstone River in Rhode Island were significant, it was in Webster where Slater committed his endeavors, establishing the town in 1832 around the mills and mill villages he began developing in 1812. The mill villages he created were distinctive—company towns embracing family life patterns in New England, employing entire families and providing company-owned housing, stores, schools, and farms in a largely self-sufficient community endeavor.

Slater's sons continued the management and growth of the mill communities in Webster, adapting to competition and conditions over the course of the 19th century. By the early 20th century, Webster's mills remained prosperous, and its mill villages were still readily identifiable as distinct historic communities.

Today, Webster retains much of its historic integrity. While the mill operations are gone, mill sites, remnant site features, and a number of mill buildings are still present. Most importantly, the residential villages surrounding the mills

retain their historic integrity, with resources spanning the 19th and early 20th centuries and representing the entire history of Webster's mill development.

Over the past two decades (the historic East Village mill site closed in 2009), the Town of Webster has been undertaking significant initiatives to revitalize the historic downtown Main Street commercial core and undertake other important community economic development initiatives. Webster's economy is stable and is growing due to a number of factors. The Town has not yet, however, implemented measures fully incorporating its historic villages into its vision for community revitalization, including protection of their historic resources and character while revitalization is underway.

The goal of this Historic Preservation Plan is to outline a coordinated historic preservation program for Webster that embraces revitalization initiatives that have already been undertaken and reinforces those initiatives by broadening the scope of historic preservation activity for the future. Historic building and village/neighborhood resources are central to Webster's identity, significance, and community character. The purpose of this chapter is to briefly describe the basics of preservation planning and to outline and promote the principles of historic preservation that are its essence and core.

This Historic Preservation Plan emphasizes the role of history as a component of community character and identifies ways it can be recognized, strengthened, and enhanced through public and private action. As discussed below, the plan takes a community village/neighborhood approach – examining the patterns and character defining features of Webster's mill villages as an interconnected historic landscape, rather than as isolated elements.

This Preservation Plan seeks to incorporate preservation planning concepts and methodologies into Webster's long-term economic development, revitalization, and growth management strategies. It seeks ways to continue to foster growth and change using historic character and resources as economic drivers.

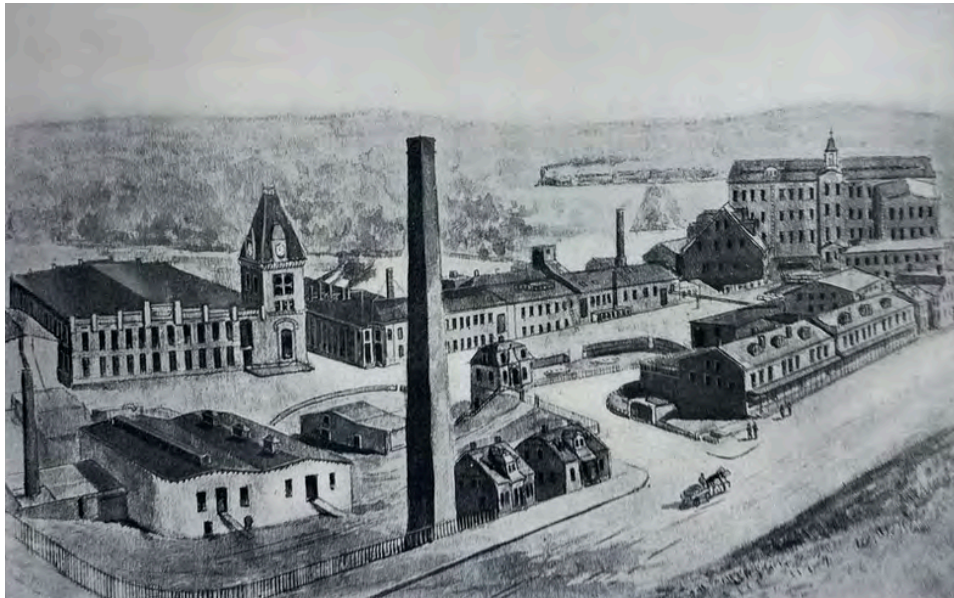
PRESERVATION PLANNING

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

Webster has undertaken measures to identify historic resources throughout the Town, and some initiatives have been implemented to recognize resources and incorporate them into revitalization efforts, such as listings on the National Register and use of federal and state rehabilitation tax credits for several projects. Additional preservation tools and programs, however, are available as well and could be considered for use. Sections of this Historic Preservation Plan assess the Town's past work in the inventory and recognition of historic

resources and in the initiatives that have been taken for their use and protection.

The practice of historic preservation is well developed and continuously evolving. Historic preservation is based upon the federal and state programs noted below and were first initiated to prevent governmental actions from destroying irreplaceable historic, cultural, and archaeological resources in communities, such as actions that occurred during urban renewal in the 1950s and 1960s. These federal and state programs reach down to the local level to encourage grassroots community preservation action in both the public and private sectors. Most historic preservation occurs through local initiatives such as those contemplated in this preservation plan.

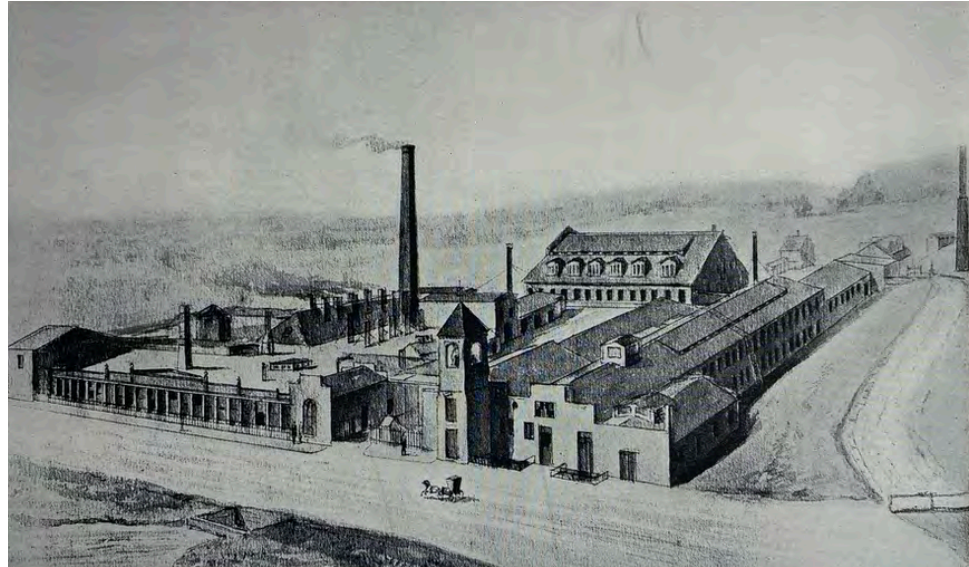


View of the Slater Woolen Mill in South Village in 1876. South Main Street is on the lower right. The Spinning and Carding Mill with the tower on the upper left was built in 1876 and still exists. (Lithographs from *The Slater Mills at Webster*, S. Slater & Sons, 1912)

Preservation can make use of a wide variety of strategies. Most important is the development of the **information** that is necessary to make good decisions, whether in the public or private realms. That is where the identification and evaluation of historic resources comes in. Second is the **communication** of best practices in planning, preservation, conservation, construction, and other areas of activity that enable property owners and the community to assess the best options in the treatment of historic resources. Third is **implementation** of programs and other preservation actions, undertaking and sustaining the measures necessary to achieve the desired goals of historic preservation and enhancement within the community.

The core of any historic preservation plan is the community's historic preservation program. In Webster, this involves the activities of the Town's Historical Commission as well as those of related partners, such as the other Town boards, commissions, and committees as well as private sector businesses and property owners. In Webster, historic preservation should be central to community identity and revitalization efforts.

A broad array of public and private organizations and initiatives are important to the implementation of historic preservation strategies because of their relationships to historic resources as a component of community character and because of their potential impact on historic resources. The broad array of organizations and initiatives is the subject of this Historic Preservation Plan, which takes its cue from historic preservation programs at the national and state levels.



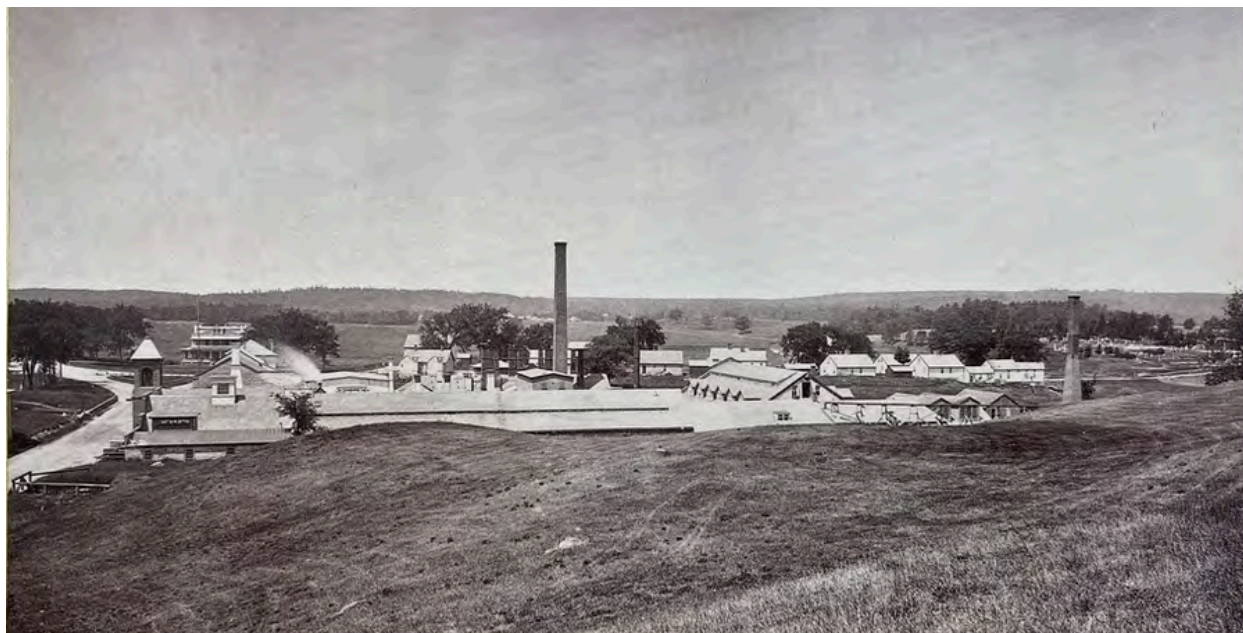
Slater's Cotton Mill in East Village. East Main Street is across the bottom of the drawings. The water supply from Webster Lake is on the right. The tower at center has been preserved. (Slater & Sons: 1912)

NATIONAL AND STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PROGRAMS

Over the decades, the federal government has established historic preservation programs in recognition of its responsibility to protect historic, cultural, and natural resources on federally owned lands and on other lands where federally funded, permitted, licensed, or sponsored activities are undertaken. Together, these programs have evolved into a comprehensive national historic preservation program. Through example and through a network of nationwide partnerships, the federal government provides leadership, encouragement, and support in the stewardship of historic resources associated with our nation's heritage.

National and state historic preservation programs are outlined in additional detail in Appendix A of this Historic Preservation Plan. The cornerstone of the national program is the *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966*, as amended (NHPA). The NHPA establishes as federal policy that the government will provide leadership in the preservation of historic resources and will administer a national preservation program in partnership with states, federally recognized Native American tribes, and local governments. The National Park Service within the Department of the Interior oversees the NHPA/federal preservation activities.

The NHPA establishes a partnership through which State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) in each state administer the national historic preservation program at the state and local levels. In Massachusetts, the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) is the Massachusetts SHPO, and the MHC is the State Historic Preservation Office, managing the statewide historic preservation program. Federal funding is provided to support the work of the State Historic Preservation Office through the Historic Preservation Fund, a yearly allocation authorized by Congress in the federal budget.



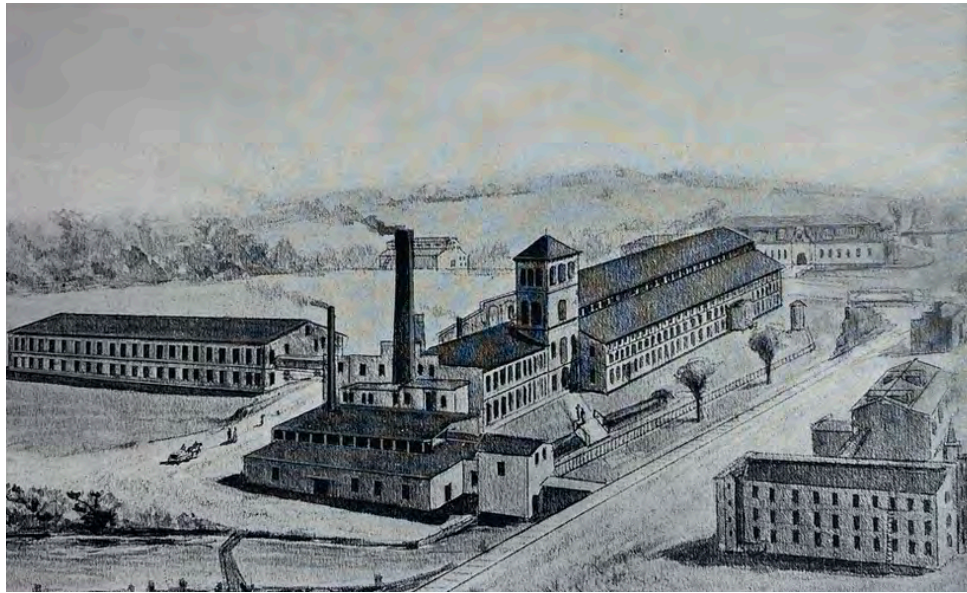
The Cotton Mill in East Village reportedly taken about 1887. This photograph looks west from the vicinity of today's I-395. Main Street is on the left. The tower that has been preserved is visible there. The rest of the mill has been demolished and the site has been redeveloped into a shopping center. (Photos from *Webster Illustrated, Twenty-Eight Views*, undated but photos appear to date to 1887 and later.)

The MHC is the backbone of the national historic preservation program in Massachusetts. It connects the national program to the local level and assures that the program is customized to state and local circumstances and interests in accordance with established national standards.

The MHC manages a number of national level programs in Massachusetts of direct relevance to local communities, including the National Register of Historic Places, the Certified Local Government (CLG) program, federal Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit program, and environmental compliance for federal and state projects.

Additionally, the MHC manages a set of complementary state level preservation programs, including technical assistance to local communities, planning and project grants, and the state Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit. The MHC has developed Massachusetts's State Historic Preservation Plan to prioritize and guide preservation partnerships and actions throughout the state. The plan is available online through the MHC website.

Other state level initiatives support historic preservation as well. The Community Preservation Act authorizes local communities to raise local dedicated funds for open space preservation, preservation of historic resources, and other purposes and provides matching state level funds. The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) has promoted preservation through its early 2000s Historic Landscape Preservation Initiative and other programs. These MHC and DCR programs are discussed further in Appendix A and various relevant chapters of this Historic Preservation Plan.



Slater's Cotton Mill in North Village in 1876 looking north. The mill race, railroad, and Market Street are on the lower right. (Slater & Sons: 1912)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE – WHAT IS HISTORIC?

At the federal and state levels, eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places is used as the basis for coordinating and supporting public and private efforts to identify, evaluate, and protect historic and archeological resources. Listing or eligibility for listing on the National Register officially recognizes the significance of a historic resource or property.

Resources may be individually listed, be part of a thematic listing, or may be part of a National Register Historic District (as opposed to a local historic district). Resources may include buildings, structures, landscapes, archeological sites, and objects.

To be considered eligible for listing on the National Register, a resource or property must meet the **National Register Criteria for Evaluation**. This involves examining the property's age, significance, and integrity. The Criteria for Evaluation are found in the *Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, Part 60*, and states:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures,

and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or*
- B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or*
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or*
- D. That have yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.*

The National Park Service has established a process for the review and evaluation of nominations of properties to the National Register in partnership with State Historic Preservation Offices—in Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Professional staff evaluate each nomination to determine whether it meets the Criteria noted above. In general, a property must be at least 50 years old to be considered for listing on the National Register.



Slater's Cotton Mill in North Village looking to the northwest from Dudley. (Webster Illustrated: undated)

On a local level, properties may be considered historically significant even if they do not qualify for listing on the National Register. The 50-year threshold remains applicable, but the individual property or resource may be relevant to the overall pattern of history or change significant to the community and its landscape, essentially applying Criteria A and C above. In such circumstances, the historical significance of an individual property or resource must be made on

a case-by-case basis and should be the responsibility of the Historical Commission.

Four classifications of local historic resources are suggested:

Class I: Properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places including all related contributing resources.

Class II: Properties having high historic value to the Town of Webster but not listed on the National Register.

Class III: Properties of historic value to the Town of Webster but whose historic integrity may have been compromised.

Class IV: Historic sites, archeological sites, landscape structures or features, and ruins of historic interest.

The classification of historic resources is useful in evaluating and determining levels of change appropriate to a resource and for the determination of eligibility of resources for certain incentives that may be available and/or protections that may be provided.



Slater's Woolen Mill in South Village looking to the southeast from Dudley across the French River (in the foreground). The Spinning and Carding Mill with the tower that still survives is on the right. Maps indicate that the large granite and brick mill building at center left was constructed before 1911 and is now demolished, but many site features remain. (Webster Illustrated: undated)

PRESERVATION PRINCIPLES AND APPROACH

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

Building and landscape uses come and go, but once lost, original historic fabric can never be recovered. The maintenance and preservation of original historic fabric, features, materials, and design elements, therefore, is central to a sound preservation approach. A key objective of this Historic Preservation Plan is to encourage and promote the preservation and maintenance of historic building and landscape fabric through as many different types of endeavors and in as many ways as possible.

Cultural Landscape Context

Webster has intact historic villages that are small-scale urban landscapes associated with the mills which they served. This Historic Preservation Plan urges the adoption of a cultural landscape approach to historic preservation. Every village or neighborhood area in Webster is a part of the Town's overall cultural landscape. Individual historic resources were constructed within larger cultural landscape contexts and patterns of use. Association with those contexts and patterns helps enrich the meaning and significance of individual resources and provides a broader and deeper perspective relative to community character in Webster.

The clues to Webster's past are evident in the cultural landscape and can be in the form of building types; building layouts, relationships and uses; street patterns; remnant cultural features (such as mill sites and mill ruins); as well as their relationships to the natural landscape—topography, the French River, etc. Historic and cultural landscapes are significant to the understanding of Webster's historical development and are the central component of community character. Cultural landscape methodologies and planning tools are therefore important in preservation planning.

The National Park Service has led the recognition and study of cultural landscapes in the United States and has developed methodologies and guidelines for their identification, assessment, and treatment. In general, the identification and analysis of cultural landscape characteristics and features include:

- Spatial organization and land patterns
- Views and vistas
- Topography
- Natural systems and features
- Vegetation
- Circulation

- Land use
- Buildings and structures
- Small-scale features
- Other special considerations

The National Park Service has developed *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes* which discusses the characteristics outlined above and how to apply the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* to landscapes. Cultural landscape methodologies and guidelines provide a set of best practices that can help the Town recognize and preserve character defining features of the landscape significant to Webster's character and identity.

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



Caption of the original photo reads: "South side Webster, from Wakefield Tomb" in Dudley. At the center of the photo is the tower of the Spinning and Carding Mill (1876) which still remains. (Webster Illustrated: c.1887)

Preservation Treatments of Structures

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

Preservation is defined as the process of applying measures necessary to sustain the existing form, integrity, and materials of an historic property. Work, including preliminary measures to protect and stabilize features, generally focuses on the ongoing maintenance and repair of historic materials and

features. Removals, extensive replacement, alterations, and new additions are not appropriate.

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

In Webster highly significant historic community buildings such as the District Five Schoolhouse and Gothic style Episcopal Church on North Main Street are appropriate for preservation treatment. Remnant mill features throughout the Town, such as mill ruins, raceways, dams, bridges, and the East Village mill tower, should also be preserved.

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

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

Rehabilitation is perhaps the most important and widely used treatment in the field of historic preservation, particularly in communities that are revitalizing and adapting to new uses. Rehabilitation is the appropriate treatment for Webster's historic village residential buildings, downtown commercial buildings, and other historic buildings and structures.

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

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

While a commonly used term, restoration is only occasionally used as a preservation treatment. However, property owners should be encouraged to restore their residential buildings within Webster's historic village neighborhoods where the buildings have been inappropriately altered and where historic features have been removed. Restoration of inappropriately

altered historic residences will enhance historic neighborhoods and encourage neighbors to restore the appearances of their homes.

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

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



Caption of the original photo reads: "Webster, from Brandon Hill." This photo appears to have been taken from the top of the drumlin near the Connecticut border with Lake Street crossing the center of the photo and buildings along East Main Street along the top. (Webster Illustrated: undated)

Authenticity and Integrity

Central to the assessment of historic resources and their potential for change are the concepts of authenticity and integrity. **Authenticity** with respect to a historic building is associated with the preservation of authentic building fabric and features. Authenticity is different from historical appearance. An antique chair has great value because it is the real thing – directly associated with a past time in our history. Once lost, it is irreplaceable. A replica of an antique chair has much less value. If lost, it can easily be replaced.

Similarly, a historic building with authentic features and fabric from its period(s) of historical significance is of higher value than a building with contemporary replacements, replicas, or reconstructions. The preservation of authentic historic building fabric is of primary concern with any historic building.

Integrity relates to the degree to which any individual building retains its authentic building fabric and features. Buildings with high integrity can generally accommodate very little change, while buildings with low integrity can often accommodate a considerable amount of change. In the evaluation of a historic resource, the level of integrity of the historic resource should be assessed. Neighborhood integrity can be assessed with respect to the retention of building and landscape features contributing to its character and setting.

Features of a historic building or landscape that contribute to its significance are termed **character defining features**. For a building, character defining features may include materials such as wood, brick, or stone; built components such as windows, doors, porches, bays, or roofs; or detailing embodied into the design and workmanship. The identification of character defining features is the first step in determining how a resource should be treated.

Authentic building fabric and features that result in a building having high integrity should be preserved to the maximum extent possible. Changes to buildings with low integrity are easier to accommodate. Assessment of authenticity, integrity, and the degree of change that a historic building can accommodate must be made on a case-by-case basis.

Secretary of the Interior's Standards

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

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

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

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

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



Main Street looking east across the railroad from the vicinity of Chase Avenue. None of the buildings viewed survive today. (Webster Illustrated: c.1887)

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

The durability of the *Standards* is testimony not only to their soundness, but also to the flexibility of their language. They provide a philosophy and approach to problem solving for those involved in managing the treatment of historic buildings, rather than a set of solutions to specific design issues. Following a balanced, reasonable, and disciplined process is often more important than the exact nature of the treatment option that is chosen. Instead of predetermining an outcome in favor of retaining or recreating historic features, the *Standards* help ensure that the critical issues are considered.

For federal projects and federal agencies, the language of *The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* is codified in 36 CFR Part 68 (the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 36, *Parks, Forests and Public*

Property, Chapter 1 *National Park Service, Department of the Interior*, Part 68). A related federal regulation, 36 CFR Part 67, addresses the use of the *Standards* in the certification of projects receiving federal rehabilitation tax credits.

The *Standards* are published by the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and are available online, including definitions for the four preservation treatments – Preservation, Rehabilitation, Restoration and Reconstruction – as discussed above as well as the individual *Standards* established for each.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standard 3 focuses on authenticity and discourages the conjectural restoration of an entire property, feature, or design. It also discourages combining and/or grafting historic features and elements from different properties, and constructing new buildings that appear to be historic. Literal restoration to an historic appearance should only be undertaken when detailed documentation is available and when the significance of the resource warrants restoration. Reconstruction of lost features should not be attempted without adequate documentation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Standard 8 addresses the importance of below ground prehistoric and historic features. This issue is of most importance when a construction project involves

excavation. An assessment of a site's archeological potential prior to work is recommended. If archeological resources are present, some type of mitigation should be considered. Solutions should be developed that minimize the need for excavation of previously unexcavated sites.

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

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

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

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



Church of the Reconciliation on North Main Street in South Village built in 1870.
(Webster Illustrated: c.1887)

Conclusion

Preservation planning is the means through which a coordinated long-term program of historic preservation action may continue to be implemented in Webster. It emphasizes the continued identification of historic resources, evaluation of their significance and integrity, and protection through appropriate tools and techniques.

Historic preservation is primarily a product of local community initiatives fostered by many decades of interest and effort by private citizens. Over the past fifty years, federal, state, and local governments have established a framework that aids and encourages local community preservation efforts. The Town of Webster has the opportunity to take significant steps in using preservation planning tools and methodologies in documenting and preserving its significant historic building and landscape resources.

This Preservation Plan seeks to incorporate preservation planning concepts and methodologies into Webster's long-term revitalization and growth management strategies and processes. It seeks ways to continue accommodating growth and change while preserving and enhancing historic building and landscape resources.



The Rock Castle School on Prospect Street constructed in 1871, Webster's original high school. (Webster Illustrated: c.1887)