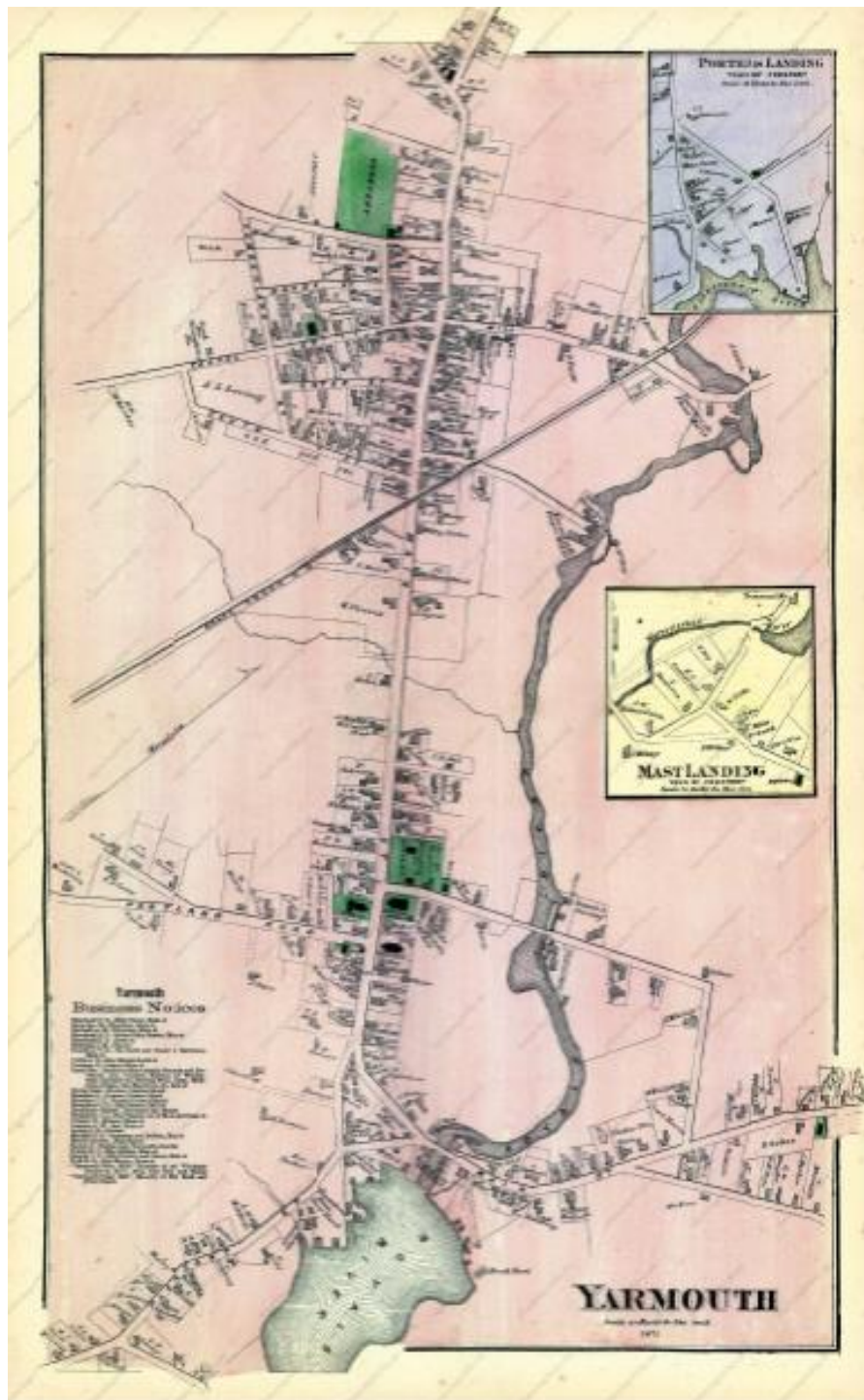


DO YOU KNOW...

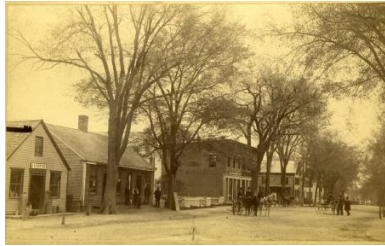
About Yarmouth's Historic Properties?



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1871 map of Yarmouth



What is the background on the Town's current historic preservation work?

Yarmouth's 2010 Comprehensive Plan identified "historic character" as one of 5 key topics facing the Town. The Plan's public process *"heard a common message about the value our citizens place on preserving Yarmouth's historic character."* As a result, the Plan *"proposes policies and strategies to ensure that buildings of historic significance will be maintained while allowing the buildings to be improved, modernized, and expanded."* The Yarmouth Historic Resources Steering Committee (the "Committee") was established in 2016 to assess Yarmouth's historic resources, and develop recommended policies, programs and strategies for their stewardship and protection.

The Town received a Historic Preservation Fund ("HPF") grant through the Maine Historic Preservation Commission ("MHPC") in 2017, to conduct an historic architectural survey of the Village area of Yarmouth. The Town hired Historic Building Consultant Margaret Gaertner to conduct the survey, which was completed in September 2018 and is available on the Town's website at <https://yarmouth.me.us/historicproperty>.

With the survey report in hand, the Committee applied for and received a second HPF grant in July 2019, to develop a historic preservation ordinance, with proposed historic district boundaries, regulations and guidelines. The Committee has been working with the Gaertner survey since September 2019 to verify and refine the initial boundaries for the historic districts and developing a draft historic preservation ordinance. Historic preservation consultants Barbara Vestal, Esq. and Hilary Bassett are assisting the Committee with this work.

Meanwhile, in 2018, the Town adopted a Demolition Delay ordinance, which prohibits demolitions of properties on or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It can be found at this link [Chapter 701, Article IX, Building Demolitions](#).

Tell me a bit more about the architectural survey

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The 2018 survey was conducted by Historic Building Consultant Margaret Gaertner with help from the Yarmouth Historical Society and the Village Improvement Society. The report details the surveying of over 750 historic structures in Yarmouth's village core. The report provides information about nine properties in the survey area already listed in the National Register of Historic Places and eligibility for listing for another 70 individual structures in the survey area. The report also identifies three districts of historic significance eligible for listing: the Lower Village district around the harbor and along lower Main and East Main Streets, the Upper Village district near the intersection of Main and Elm Streets, and the Royal River Manufacturing Company district on Bridge Street.

How do I know if my property was included in the survey, or is in a potential District?

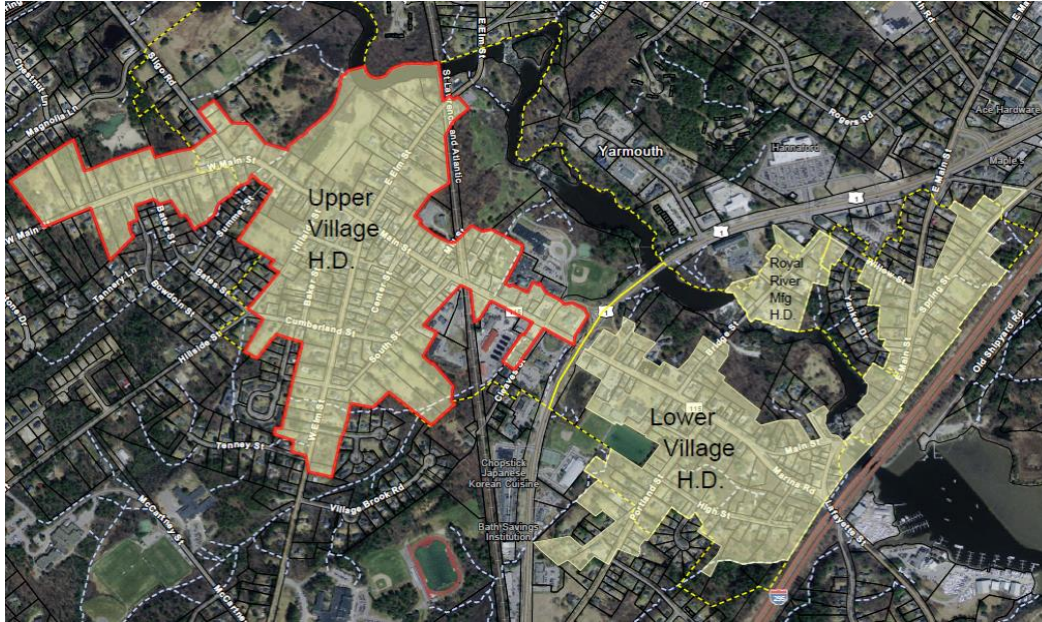
Every structure (house, barn, garage, etc.) over 50 years old in the designated village area was surveyed, per the Maine Historic Preservation Commission's (MHPC) survey guidelines. Each property surveyed is catalogued in the Property Classification Matrix in the report, by street and house number. Lot lines were followed, so that you should be able to locate your property if it is in a potential historic district. The report, the matrix and a map of the potential historic districts are on the Town's website (<https://yarmouth.me.us/historicproperty>).

What are the potential historic districts?

To help preserve the historic character into the future, three potential historic districts have been recommended by Margaret Gaertner, the Historic Building Consultant who conducted the 2018 survey. These are the Upper Village, Lower Village, and Royal River Manufacturing Company (aka Sparhawk Mill area) and are depicted on the map shown below.

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Lower Village Historic District: This District is centered around the former shipbuilding industry at tidewater below the First Falls of the Royal River. While there are no visible remains of the many shipyards that once flanked the harbor, the many high-style Georgian-, Federal-style and later Greek Revival-style houses along the lower end of Main Street, East Main and Spring Streets attest to the great wealth the shipyards generated. Marina Road and the lower end of East Main Street feature smaller-scale houses that represent the working-class employees of the yards. The construction of I-295 physically severed the houses from the waterfront and the site of the former shipyards and serves as the lower boundary of this District.

Upper Village Historic District: This historic district is centered at the intersection of Main Street and East and West Elm Streets. Main Street was the retail and commercial core of the Upper Village while the side streets are lined with houses and the occasional church. Major industries in this area included potteries and other manufactories in the early-nineteenth century, later followed by the Yarmouth Paper Company and the Forest Paper Company. These manufacturers are gone (save for a few artifacts in Royal River Park), however the surviving houses in the area reflect the prosperity these industries created. This proposed District is significant as a remarkably well-preserved collection of buildings with a high degree of integrity. As a whole, they retain the feeling of an intact New England village of the nineteenth century and also represent successive eras of the development of the Town of Yarmouth.

Royal River Manufacturing Company Historic District: This district on the Royal River includes a brick mill complex (the Royal River Manufacturing Company), several residential buildings, two boarding houses, and three barns. All of these structures were historically associated with what was known as the

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Old Cotton Mill at 81 Bridge Street, later known as Sparhawk Mill. The mill is an important contributing building to the District and constitutes a local landmark and icon. The entire complex is significant for its role in Yarmouth's industrial and development history, as a major employer in the Town, and for its architectural significance.

Why is a Historic Preservation Ordinance being proposed?

The Town prides itself on its historic character as exemplified by the Village center and the clusters of historic homes, civic structures, and commercial buildings. This historic town center is largely intact. In recent years the Town is seeing renewed interest in development returning to Main Street. As development opportunities arise, we want to be confident that the historic resources that define our community are preserved and protected.

Protection of Yarmouth's historic architectural resources has thus far relied on the "honor system" whereby property owners recognize the value of their historic buildings and have generally taken pride in maintaining them to historic standards. This can be a vulnerable situation for the Town if new owners and developers purchasing property have different values than those that have prevailed. Gradual changes can go unnoticed day to day, but over time have a cumulative impact whereby the character and qualities that exemplify the history, architectural integrity and sense of place of Yarmouth may be lost.

The essential purpose of drafting a proposed ordinance is to ***protect and enhance the traditional, historic and iconic village development pattern that provides the distinct architectural and historic character and unique identity of the Town of Yarmouth.***

How would the proposed Historic Preservation Ordinance work?

The proposed ordinance would establish the three historic districts and would also identify several particularly significant historic structures outside of those districts for protection. The ordinance would provide a process to review new development and building improvements therein, to ensure that changes are compatible with the existing historic buildings and their streetscape, context and character. Exterior changes, including new construction and additions are possible. Those that are visible from a public way will be reviewed so that they fit into the historical context of the neighborhood. It would not go so far as to regulate paint color, or interiors, or plantings, or external features which are not readily visible from the street or any public space.

An historic preservation review board (the "Board") would be established, which would review and approve (with or without conditions) major alterations, additions, and new construction within the

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Districts. Review standards for the Board would be based on the published Secretary of the Interior Standards for Rehabilitation, a proven model which is used throughout the country. The standards provide guidance for building owners and the Board. Members of the Board would be appointed by the Council, and would be selected based upon training, knowledge, expertise and experience and demonstrated interest in historic preservation. Actions by the Board would be under the Town's usual notice and public hearing procedures, similar to the Planning Board.

Do other communities in Maine have historic preservation ordinances?

Many other communities in Maine have adopted historic preservation ordinances. Some of these communities are: Augusta, Bangor, Castine, Gardiner, Hampden, Kennebunk, Lewiston, Portland, Saco, Topsham and York. The proposed ordinance is informed by the approach used in some of these communities, with input from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, but has been written to reflect Yarmouth's community goals, local regulations, and historic resources.

What are the benefits of historic protection for a property owner? For the Town?

Property owners will benefit from knowing that all properties in the district will adhere to the same standards, to ensure that the historic character of the neighborhood is preserved. This provides a sound basis for encouraging investment in preservation of architectural features, leading to retention of property values. When looking to renovate, property owners have found that following good preservation practices can be less expensive than wholesale gutting and remodeling. And historic materials, including old-growth wood, are very durable and often irreplaceable.

Communities that engage in historic preservation programs experience high quality development and stable or increasing property values. Yarmouth is a town that is known for its historic village center and residential neighborhoods. In addition to its quality schools, the historic village character distinguishes Yarmouth from other area communities and attracts homebuyers and businesses that value community quality and character. Authentic historic character and resources are precious attributes that contribute to the identity and uniqueness of the community. Once lost, or if not already present, it is impossible to replicate.

In specific terms, and among others, potential benefits can include:

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Benefits for a Property Owner

- Enhanced quality of life, living in a walkable, attractive historic neighborhood.
- Confidence in investing in preserving and improving your property, as all properties in the district will be held to consistent standards.
- Stable or growing property value over the long term.
- Access to historic preservation rehabilitation tax credits for income producing properties, including residential rentals.
- Community pride and sense of place.

Benefits for the Town

- Preserving Yarmouth's reputation as a charming historically authentic New England village which attracts residents, businesses and visitors.
- Historic Districts typically produce greater tax revenue than un-designated, non-historic areas.
- Preservation of quality historic homes and neighborhoods that tell the story of Yarmouth's evolution as a town.
- For income-producing properties, historic designation affords use of state and federal historic rehabilitation tax credits, enhancing economic growth.
- Designated historic districts and buildings frequently spur downtown revitalization creating jobs and additional tax revenues, and utilizing existing infrastructure more effectively.
- Environmental sustainability in keeping with the Maine ethic of "reduce, reuse, and recycle". A rehabilitated and/or repurposed building has less impact on the environment than demolition and/or new construction, and can cost less.

For additional information, you might also want to take a look at a very readable recent national analysis by PlaceEconomics entitled "Twenty-Four Reasons Historic Preservation is Good for Your Community", available at <https://www.placeeconomics.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/City-Studies-WP-Online-Doc.pdf>.

How does the Village Improvement Society (VIS) Marker Program enter into this?

The VIS set up the Marker Program in 1972 as a means of increasing awareness of Yarmouth's architectural heritage. Eligibility is currently for buildings built before 1910, with other buildings being considered. This is an earlier date than that selected (1940) for Historic Districts or Structures under this

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proposal. Under current VIS standards, buildings must be of special historic or architectural interest to be considered. Markers recognize the architectural and historic integrity of the exterior of the building that is within public view. The building must be in good repair and must display the original architectural intents. Any alterations should not have damaged the original essential form, integrity or quality of the architecture. It has been a program that has inspired residents to maintain an historic feeling to our village and historic areas in the town, and it is anticipated (and hoped) that the program will be continued in parallel to the Historic Preservation Ordinance and its Districts, without being restricted to the areas within the Districts. Many of the buildings with markers are eligible for National Register of Historic Places status. The markers have become a "Seal of Approval" for sites, of interest to owners, neighbors and passers-by alike, and are an important asset in retaining and supporting Yarmouth's historic character.

Where are we in the ordinance development process?

The Committee has largely completed its review of district boundaries, street by street, and building by building. It has simultaneously been working on draft ordinance language, drawing upon the best provisions from other Maine communities historic preservation ordinances, and modifying them to the perceived needs of Yarmouth.

The Committee is now looking to engage in public outreach to present its work and seek feedback on the potential historic districts and draft historic preservation ordinance.

At this time, due to the unfolding coronavirus situation, the originally scheduled PUBLIC INPUT OPPORTUNITIES have been CANCELLED.

The Town is exploring alternatives for sharing the presentations information. Please check the Town website for updates <https://yarmouth.me.us/historicproperty>

- MARCH 23, **CANCELLED** with Maine Preservation Executive Director Greg Paxton discussing the variety of historic architecture of Yarmouth, followed by Historic Building Consultant Margaret Gaertner presenting the findings from the 2018 Historic Architectural Survey .
- APRIL 7, **CANCELLED** a follow-up session will include guest speakers Julie Larry, Greater Portland Landmarks, Deb Andrews, Historic Preservation Program Manager, City of Portland, to present what a historic district might mean for a property owner, and Barbara Vestal, Esq. Historic Preservation Consultant, along with the Historic Resources Steering Committee, to present the proposed district boundaries and draft ordinance text.

How else can I stay informed about this Town effort?

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- There will be a display about the Town's historic resources at Merrill Memorial Library, beginning March 16.
- Further meetings may be scheduled in the vicinity of proposed districts to further solicit comments and answer questions.
- Presentations will be made to the Planning Board and then to the Town Council, with workshop meetings and/or public hearings.
- Copies of the draft Ordinance and the District maps will be available on the Town's website, <https://yarmouth.me.us/historicproperty> .
- Visit the Town website (<https://yarmouth.me.us/historicproperty>) for background information and information about upcoming public meetings about the ongoing work.

How can I learn more about historic preservation in general?

Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Maine Preservation, the Yarmouth Village Improvement Society, the Yarmouth History Center, the Merrill Memorial Library, and Greater Portland Landmarks are all sources of additional information relating to the benefits and the ins and outs of historic preservation, including resources and guides for individual restoration and rehabilitation efforts. Materials are available describing the National Register of Historic Places, and the various aspects of that program on the websites for the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and the National Park Service.