

Chesterfield Historic Preservation Plan
Draft outline and Notes
Chesterfield Historical Commission (10/2021)

Background and Purpose

The Chesterfield Historical Commission was formed in the 1970s, soon after the National Historic Preservation Act was passed in 1966. The Commission worked steadily through the late 1970s and early 1980s developing a town-wide inventory and filing inventory forms with the Massachusetts Historical Commission. The Commission grew inactive for several years and became very active again in the late 1990s. There are now 319 survey forms listing buildings, areas, burial grounds, objects, structures, and archaeological resources on file in the Cultural Resource database. *

In Massachusetts General Law, Section 8 D, the State has charged local Historical Commissions with the preservation, protection and development of the historical or archaeological resources of the town. This includes reviewing all projects involving state or federal funds and making recommendations to the Select Board and other town boards which may further the purpose of historical preservation and protection. These recommendations may include by-law changes.

The current Chesterfield Historical Commission recognizes the need for a plan for preservation of Chesterfield's historic resources. It anticipates creating this plan by:

- I. Reviewing recent historic preservation plans from 3-5 other communities.(3 reviewed)
- II. Developing a list of preservation partners and stakeholders:
 - Municipal departments, boards, and commissions (*Current working partners* COA, Planning Board, Finance Committee)
 - Local elected officials;
 - Residents, homeowners, business owners, other historic property owners;
 - Regional planning and economic development agencies.(*Current, PVPC*)

One of the primary goals of the Historical Commission is to solicit input from these sources and incorporate these views into the plan.

- III. Reviewing previous planning documents and surveys: Master Plans, Open Space Plans, etc.
- IV. Reviewing existing bylaws: Stone walls, zoning, wetlands, scenic roads, signage, parks and recreation. (Current, cell tower setback, stone walls)
- V. Reviewing Historic Inventory Forms:
 - a. National Register Districts:
 - Chesterfield Center National Historic District (including Center Cemetery);

- West Chesterfield National Historic District (including Robinson Hollow Cemetery).
- b. National Register Individual Listings:
 - Bisbee Mill;
 - Gate Cemetery;
 - Ireland Street Cemetery

All properties owned by the municipality or by a non-profit included as a contributing property in a National Register District or listed individually on the National Register are all eligible for 50/50 grants from Mass. Historical Commission to appropriately conserve the property.

- VI. Listing municipal properties which could benefit from a National Register listing, such as the Mount Cemetery (stone wall restoration is unlikely unless it is listed on the NR and a grant is obtained).
- VII. Inspecting annually all municipal properties and listing those properties in need of maintenance or preservation:
 - a. West Chesterfield Post Office (Dunham Library): Trim paint peeling in rear. (DONE Painted entire building 10/21)
 - b. Edwards Museum: Needs some sill work, repair of some clapboards and areas on the eaves, painting, and window restoration. These tasks could be economically accomplished with a 50/50 grant from the state. The CHC has been getting estimates for a proper restoration. (TM passed & Current development of bidding specs)
 - c. Recent acquisition of Russell property must be factored into long term decisions.
 - d. Russell Park: Plantings around dedication stone at entrance are overgrown.
 - d. Town Hall: Electrical boxes on the front of the building are old and should be replaced and preferably relocated to the rear of the building.
 - e. Town trees cut down and not replaced need to be inventoried.
- VIII. Seeking input from preservation partners and stakeholders identified in Step II above. This step will include creating and mailing surveys and convening public meetings.
- IX. Developing recommendations for any zoning or bylaw changes, listing of scenic roads, and possible review of road construction plans to include bike lanes based on review and input from above sources. (Current)
- X. Developing public awareness of historical resources through education, recommendations and materials. Some possible mechanisms include:
 - a. Making informational flyers available on website and in library, store, community center, and at 4th of July parade. (Historic Houses Brochure in center done)
 - b. Hiring a professional actor/storyteller in Civil War costume to tell the story of Samuel Eddy, Chesterfield's Medal of Honor recipient.(*Current*-CHC gave presentation at Historical Walking Tours)

- c. Creating a map of historic houses in the center of Chesterfield. (DONE)
 - d. Creating Chesterfield road sign refrigerator magnets (DONE)
 - e. Printing postcards from old pictures
 - f. Increasing postings on website
 - g. Holding a window conservation workshop in Chesterfield
 - h. Making up a welcome packet for new residents.
- XI. Seeking professional planning assistance through town funding with or without a grant. (*Current*, PVPC)

This planning process is likely to take 5 years. Costs are expected to be low because volunteers will do much of the work.

For information on historical assets go to: www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc

*MACRIS Is the Massachusetts Cultural Resource Information System- a searchable database of information about buildings, areas, burial grounds, objects, structures, and archaeological resources in the state.