

A PRESERVATION MASTER PLAN  
FOR THE CITY OF  
SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS

STRATEGIES FOR  
THE PRESERVATION OF SALEM'S  
HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

AUGUST, 1991

REPORT PREPARED FOR:

CITY OF SALEM  
PLANNING DEPARTMENT  
ONE SALEM GREEN  
SALEM, MA 01970

PREPARED BY:

KIM WITHERS BRINGLE  
NORTHFIELDS PRESERVATION ASSOCIATES  
10 BARR STREET  
SALEM, MA 01970

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## I EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Salem is fortunate in having outstanding historic resources, providing both the foundation for an enriching quality of life for its residents, and the basis for a strong tourist industry. With the double incentive of maintaining our quality of life and promoting a healthy economy, it is clearly in the best interest of the city, and its governing bodies, to do all in their power to encourage historic preservation throughout the community.

Like the natural environment, preservation of the built environment is a delicate balance dependent on the interactions of many forces. We cannot preserve our community merely by preserving its most prominent landmarks. Only by encouraging good preservation in all Salem's older neighborhoods, and by including the preservation of historically and architecturally significant buildings of all types in the day to day processes of city government, will the overall quality of Salem's built environment be maintained and enhanced.

This plan has identified several major areas of concern. High among these is the need to better integrate preservation in the entire process of city government. In a city with such intense concentrations of historic buildings, actions of virtually every city department, board and commission have impact on the quality of preservation around us. Many of the recommendations in this plan involve incorporating effective preservation policies into the workings of these bodies.

There are several strong tools to protect historic buildings and areas; one of the most effective is the local historic district. This plan recommends expanding the use of local historic districts, completing the nomination of many eligible properties and districts to the National Register of Historic Places, and explores other means of better protecting resources, including those historic properties owned by the city.

Education is another high priority of the plan. The more the general public understands the value of our surroundings, the more sensitive they will be to their care and maintenance. It is in the city's many older neighborhoods that the greatest promise of preservation lies if residents understand the value of retaining original fabric rather than compromising buildings with replacement siding, new windows, and other inappropriate alterations.

Procedures and ordinances need drafting, revising, and strengthening for the Salem Historical Commission and other city agencies. Preservation will remain an active part of public policy-making only if it is written into local laws and procedures.

The plan also addresses the management of expanded responsibilities and preservation staffing. If the plan's recommendations are to be

carried out effectively, it may be necessary to change the current structure of the Salem Historical Commission and increase preservation staffing.

A specific timetable is needed for timely implementation. Chapters V and VI provide detailed recommendations and lists of short and long-term goals, listed in recommended order of priority. The prioritized list is intended only as a starting point for a more comprehensive timetable. It is recommended that representatives of the Planning Department, Salem Historical Commission, and other affected departments and organizations work together to formulate a detailed, realistic timetable based on their knowledge of available funding and manpower.

In many instances recommendations apply to city departments, boards or commissions not generally associated with historic preservation. Generally these are listed as projects for the preservation planning assistant, either as a coordinator for one or more other groups, or as the initiator, with the policy or task to be continued by another group.

In order for these recommendations to be implemented, the support of the Mayor and City Council will be necessary. Therefore the first priority will be for the Master Preservation Plan to be officially adopted by the city, and measures taken to assure its implementation in areas outside the jurisdiction of the Planning Department.

## II INTRODUCTION

### A. COMMUNITY PROFILE

The City of Salem is a coastal community located in the southern portion of Essex County. It is bounded to the south by Marblehead, Swampscott and Lynn, to the west by Peabody, to the north by the Danvers River, Beverly Harbor, and Beverly, and to the east by Salem Harbor. Salem is eleven miles northeast of Boston, and occupies eight square miles. It is built on a coastal lowland that has seen significant land filling over the centuries. The coast is characterized by tidal flat inlets, stretches of salt marsh and rocky shores. Numerous bodies of water exist, including Forest River, South River, North River and Spring Pond. The gently west-sloping land rises sharply at the Salem Highlands.

The city's population is approximately 38,700. Salem has a mayor-city council form of government. Its economy consists of a mixture of tourism, various industries, and a service economy related partially to the Essex County courts located downtown. The largest local taxpayer is New England Power Company, with its power plant on the waterfront. Salem is readily accessible by public transportation, with the Boston commuter train and buses running through the city.

### B. Project Overview

Since 1984 when the Salem Planning Department hired a part-time preservation planner, there has been a steady and on-going effort to address the city's preservation planning issues in an orderly and comprehensive process. Through the use of annual Survey and Planning Grants from the Massachusetts Historical Commission for projects conducted by Planning Department staff and outside consultants, the city has completed, organized and analyzed its historic resources inventory, conducted an archaeological survey, and established the Lafayette Street Historic District (local). Numerous other preservation activities have been undertaken under the auspices of the Planning Department and Salem Historical Commission.

In 1990 the City of Salem was awarded a Survey and Planning Grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission to prepare this comprehensive plan for the preservation of the city's historic resources. Matching funds for the project were provided by the Salem Planning Department through a Community Development Block Grant. The Planning Department was responsible for overseeing the project.



### C. Scope of Work

The scope of work for this project identified five objectives, as follows:

1. To develop recommendations on integrating preservation with existing land use planning, zoning, and inspectional services.
2. To develop recommendations on strengthening preservation in city ordinances that impact historic resources.
3. To develop recommendations on ordinances or other protective measures that should be enacted to protect Salem's historic and cultural resources.
4. To develop recommendations on increasing public education and awareness of preservation in the community.
5. To develop recommendations on improving coordination of preservation with local, state and national preservation constituencies.

### D. Methodology

Development of the preservation plan involved three components; research and evaluation of current and past preservation activity in Salem, review of relevant procedures and actions in other communities, and meetings and discussions to identify issues and areas of concern.

The research and evaluation component involved a review of all city ordinances related to preservation, land use, and other related topics, minutes and procedures of the Salem Historical Commission and Salem Redevelopment Authority, and discussions with representatives of many city departments and other local organizations. Work completed in recent years had resulted in detailed evaluation of the historic resources inventory and historic designation recommendations, both of which were modified for use in this plan.

Helpful information on preservation policies and procedures used in other communities came from review of a variety of written material, as well as meetings with representatives from several municipalities.

Finally, numerous meetings and discussions occurred with representatives of many city departments and boards, as well as local preservation organizations. The purpose of these meetings was to solicit suggestions and identify concerns on all aspects of

historic preservation in Salem. Many helpful insights came from these discussions and have been incorporated into the plan.

### III OVERVIEW OF PRESERVATION ACTIVITY IN SALEM

An active concern for Salem's cultural and architectural history has been shown in the city since the nineteenth century. Over the years numerous preservation-oriented groups have been organized, many of which continue to operate historic sites, collect and preserve significant records related to Salem's history, and educate the public locally, nationally and internationally on Salem's heritage. Through city agencies, Salem has provided for the consideration and protection of some of the city's historic resources in the planning and development process. The following is an overview of many of the preservation-related organizations and agencies, and the roles they have played in historic preservation in Salem to date.

#### A. SALEM HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The Salem Historical Commission and Salem's first local historic district, the Chestnut Street Historic District (now part of the larger McIntire Historic District) were established simultaneously in 1971 by Salem City Ordinance 19-63 under the provisions of Chapter 40C of the Massachusetts General Laws. Section 14 of Chapter 40C provides that historic district commissions can also act as historical commissions. Salem is one of the few Massachusetts communities which has a joint historical and historic district commission. Since its creation, new districts have been added and existing districts expanded. There are currently four local historic districts, the McIntire Historic District, Derby Street Historic District, Washington Square Historic District, and the Lafayette Street Historic District encompassing a total of approximately 600 properties. The Historical Commission has the responsibility of conducting design review of proposed alterations within the four districts.

##### 1. Powers & Duties

The Salem Historical Commission has all the powers and duties given to a historic district commission under Chapter 40C. These include the following:

- Recommend and administer the establishment of new local historic districts or changes to the boundaries of existing local historic districts.
- Review all new construction, demolition or exterior alterations to existing buildings (with certain types of work excluded) within the district.
- Issue or deny certificates of appropriateness, non-applicability or hardship as necessary.

In addition, the Historical Commission has the power to have moneys appropriated or donated, and may employ staff or consultants for the following purposes:

- To conduct historic properties surveys .
- To propose additional or changed historic districts.
- To establish and maintain a system of historic markers.
- To prepare maps, brochures, walking tours.
- To advise the Planning Board, Redevelopment Authority, Public Works Department and other City agencies on preservation issues.
- To work with outside preservation agencies, public and private, as needed.
- To advise owners of local historic buildings.

Through the passage of a Demolition Delay ordinance (1986) and an ordinance permitting the occupancy of carriage houses for single family dwelling units (1984), the Salem Historical Commission has additional review powers over these specific matters outside the local historic district boundaries.

The National Historic Preservation Act Amendments of 1980 (P.L. 96-515) created the Certified Local Government Program, a federal-state-local preservation partnership recognizing communities with advanced preservation programs. Salem was certified in 1985. Involvement in the program increases the responsibilities of the Salem Historical Commission to include review and approval of nominations of properties to the National Register of Historic Places and may include a larger role in environmental review and review of tax act projects. In recognition of the increased responsibilities, certified local government communities are eligible for a larger share of federal preservation funds through matching grants from the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Salem has received such funding annually since 1985, resulting in the completion of numerous preservation planning projects.

## 2. Current Procedures

- a. Appointment of Members - The Salem Historical Commission is appointed by the mayor, and consists of seven members and two alternates. Chapter 40C requires that membership be composed of one member appointed from two nominees submitted by the local historical society, one member from two nominees submitted by the American Institute of Architects covering the area, one member from two nominees of the local board of realtors, and at least one resident or property owner from a district.
- b. Application and Review Process - Property owners planning exterior work on a building within one of the historic

districts must apply for approvals prior to commencing the work. The Building Department will not issue a building permit until the necessary approval has been received. Applications must be detailed and specific regarding proposed work to enable the Historical Commission to review projects consistently and thoroughly. A public hearing occurs, at which the Historical Commission discusses the project with the applicant, and hears comments from abutters. The Historical Commission reviews the proposed work to determine whether it complies with the district guidelines prior to voting or continuing the application to a later meeting.

- c. Guidelines - The decisions of the Salem Historical Commission are based on the Salem Historical Commission Guidelines, available at the Salem Planning Department. These criteria provide the property owner with information on treatment of such features as Architectural Trim and Siding; Doors, Doorways, Porticos, and Steps; Fences; Masonry; Paint Colors; Parking Solutions; Porches; Roofing; Satellite Dishes; Secondary Egress; and Windows.

In addition to the guidelines, more detailed advice exists in the form of the Salem Historical Commission Guidelines Notebook, prepared in 1984, and also available at the Planning Department. It provides information under each category of the guidelines, and includes a section on Salem Architectural Traditions, providing a frame of reference for the Historical Commission and property owners seeking guidance.

- d. Comment on non-District matters - In its role as a Certified Local Government Commission, the Salem Historical Commission is occasionally called upon to review or comment on a project outside the local historic districts. Such projects include those that involve state or federal funds or permits, and that may have an impact on historic resources. Recent examples include the Salem Armory, aspects of the Bridge Street by-pass road, alterations to Middle School West (the former Salem High School), and the proposed siting of the South Essex Sewerage District Secondary Treatment plant affecting historic and archaeological resources on or near Winter Island.

#### B. SALEM PLANNING DEPARTMENT

The Salem Historical Commission has a staff representative in the Planning Department. A planning assistant whose position includes other responsibilities, she spends approximately 70% of her time on matters relating to the Salem Historical Commission and historic preservation. Responsibilities include:

- Providing administrative assistance to the Salem Historical Commission and its applicants.
- Sending historic district information packet containing an informational brochure, application, and Salem Historical Commission procedures to each district property owner. Assessor's records are checked monthly for property transfers within the districts and new owners receive the information packet.
- Grant-writing, administering and coordinating preservation-related grant projects, including Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey and Planning Grants, National Endowment for the Arts grants, and ACT feasibility studies.
- Planning workshops such as the Preservation Fair.
- Representing the Planning Department and Historical Commission on the Salem Partnership's Historic Resources and Cultural Development Committee.
- Maintaining and preparing the records and documentation required of the Certified Local Government program, such as historic properties inventory files, minutes and annual reports of the Salem Historical Commission.
- Preparing Requests for Determination of Eligibility to the National Register.
- Drafting ordinances and other submissions to the City Council.
- Coordinating historic building re-use projects.
- Representing the city during the Section 106 review process for various projects.

#### C. SALEM REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY/DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

The efforts of the Salem Redevelopment Authority (SRA) put Salem in the vanguard of the national historic preservation movement in the early 1970s. The Salem Redevelopment Authority (SRA) was formed in 1962 to take on an urban renewal project encompassing 40 acres of downtown Salem. Early plans, partially carried out between 1968 and 1971, included major demolition of historic resources and resulted in strong opposition from community preservationists. By 1972, the SRA was reorganized and dramatically re-focused on rehabilitation and preservation rather than demolition and new construction. Plans were developed and implemented first for the Heritage Plaza-East Urban Renewal Project, and later the Heritage Plaza-West Urban Renewal Project, which combined encompass the central business district.

Both plans were written with a strong emphasis on historic preservation. High on the list of objectives was "preservation and restoration of historic and architectural values associated with structures and areas within the Project Area." Goals included creation of "a central city urban environment sympathetic to and conducive of the preservation and enhancement of historic and architectural values associated with an area and building within the Project Area and to the construction of new buildings and facilities

compatible with the preservation and enhancement of such values..." Rehabilitation standards to assure preservation were imposed on properties within the Project Area.

The SRA acquired fifteen to twenty facade easements on numerous downtown properties in exchange for rehabilitation funds. The easements were written to preserve the exteriors of these significant properties, and were taken in perpetuity to be administered by the SRA. At present their administration falls under the review that the SRA has over all projects in the area.

The Design Review Board (DRB) was established as an advisory body to the SRA. Its membership is to represent the following disciplines: graphic design, architecture, landscape architecture and architectural history.

An application must be submitted to the SRA prior to any alteration, construction or demolition within the urban renewal project area. Plans are reviewed and a hearing held by the Design Review Board. The DRB often assists the applicant in fine tuning the plans prior to a non-binding recommendation for approval or denial being made to the SRA. The SRA gives the final approval or denial to the application.

Rehabilitation standards are included in both plans, each having a section devoted to standards for structures with historical and/or architectural significance. (See Appendix). In addition, the plan for Heritage Plaza West states that "The purpose of design review is...to insure that the Secretary of Interior's Guidelines for Rehabilitation have been met."

#### D. PLANNING BOARD

The Planning Board has the responsibility to review development projects falling under the city's Subdivision Regulations, and those applying for Special Permits that require Site Plan, Business Park Development, or Wetlands and Flood Hazard review.

Of particular relevance to historic properties are the projects requiring Site Plan Review, which is triggered by any project over 10,000 square feet, involving the creation or alteration of six or more residential units. Also requiring Site Plan Review are projects over 2,000 square feet in the city's new Entrance Corridor Zones. In order to be approved by the Planning Board a site plan must demonstrate that the proposed development is architecturally compatible with the surrounding area.

While it is possible that historic buildings could exist in areas affected by proposed new subdivisions, business parks or wetlands and flood hazard areas, it is more likely that archaeological

resources might exist in areas impacted by new development projects. Submission of an Environmental Impact Statement is required for a subdivision proposing creation of more than a single-family house. Specific consideration of impact on archaeological or historic resources is not presently part of the review process except where an Environmental Impact process is required.

#### E. CONSERVATION COMMISSION

The Conservation Commission is charged with the protection of the city's wetlands through the review of applications for any work that is to be done within 100 feet of a wetland. In addition, the city holds three properties in trust as conservation land. A public hearing is held on each application, with notification sent to abutters and various city boards. At present the Salem Historical Commission is not among the boards to be notified of a hearing, however wetlands are likely locations for archaeological sites, which are not presently part of the review process.

#### F. PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

The Public Works Department is responsible for providing street and sidewalk repairs which can have an impact on historic resources. They are also responsible for coordinating with public utilities when such agencies' work will effect public ways. Local historic district ordinances are not explicit in requiring review of public works projects, and as a result present policy does not include consultation with the Salem Historical Commission or a clear preservation planning process for any of these undertakings.

#### G. CEMETERY DIVISION

Under the jurisdiction of the Public Works Department is the Cemetery Division, which is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of all city-owned cemeteries, including several of Salem's historic burial grounds. In addition to Greenlawn Cemetery, (still active), these are Broad Street Cemetery, Charter Street Cemetery, Friends' Cemetery, and Howard Street Burial Ground. With the exception only of Greenlawn Cemetery, each of these is designated in the National Register of Historic Places and/or as part of a local historic district. Greenlawn Cemetery contains a chapel (1894) of architectural and historical significance, in addition to the importance of the cemetery itself.

Areas of concern include the proper maintenance procedures to ensure that gravestones are not damaged by lawnmowers and other equipment, conservation of deteriorating or damaged stones, control of access for gravestone rubbings, and proper preservation of historic



settings or buildings associated with burial grounds. While there are informal procedures in place to deal with these, no formal preservation policies exist.

#### H. PUBLIC PROPERTY DEPARTMENT/BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Officially the Department of Public Property, the Building Department has the important responsibility of maintaining city property. This includes a large number of historic buildings (see list in Chapter V) owned by the city, nearly all of which are listed in the National Register, and many of which are also located in local historic districts.

The Building Department is also responsible for the inspection of any construction work done in the city, issues building permits, occupancy permits, sign permits, and the like. A card exists at the Building Department on each property in the city. Properties located in local historic districts are indicated on the card, and any applicant for a building permit is directed to the Salem Historical Commission for the necessary review process and approvals before a building permit can be issued. The Building Department is also responsible for enforcing the State Building Code.

#### I. BOARD OF APPEAL

The role of the Board of Appeal is to review requests for zoning variances and special permits. While the Board of Appeal's decisions have minimal impact on properties within local historic districts, which must undergo review by the Salem Historical Commission regardless of any approvals by the Board of Appeal, their decisions often have impact on historic resources outside the local historic districts. When a property owner is permitted to convert a residential building to a denser use, e.g. from a two-family to a three-family, this usually requires changes to entries and/or the addition of exterior stairs, as well as interior alterations. In the case of an historic building, these changes often compromise the building's character.

While there is no formal process by which design advice is made available to the property owner in this situation, the Historical Commission staff has recently begun notifying the Board of Appeal of historically significant buildings on the agenda prior to each meeting. A copy of the inventory form for each significant property is forwarded to the Board along with a reminder that the Historical Commission is available in an advisory capacity if necessary.

#### J. BOARD OF HEALTH

While the Board of Health's responsibilities and actions seldom have a direct impact on the preservation of Salem's historic, archaeological and cultural resources, a recent action indicates that they occasionally do. New regulations passed early in 1991 relating to exterior painting in Salem prohibit the use of all mechanical sanding methods on exteriors of buildings in preparation for painting. Necessary to safeguard against the hazard of lead paint particles being dispersed in the air, the new regulations may have ramifications on the preservation and maintenance of historic structures throughout the city. Actions such as these warrant the inclusion of the Salem Historical Commission in the public hearing and discussion process. At present the Historical Commission does not receive Board of Health agendas or notification of their public hearings.

#### K. PARK AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

Historically significant properties under the jurisdiction of the Park and Recreation Department include Forest River Park which contains Pioneer Village (now under the management of the House of Seven Gables) and the c.1817 Pickering House, Captain William Driver Park, Salem Willows Park, Mack Park including the 19th century Ledge Hill house, Gallows Hill Park, Highland Park, Salem Common, Fort Pickering, Winter Island Lighthouse, the Witch House, and the National Historic Landmark Nathaniel Bowditch House. At present no policy exists regarding proper preservation and maintenance procedures for these important historic resources.

#### L. MARKET AND TOURISM COMMISSION

The Market and Tourism Commission was created in 1976. Its responsibilities include the supervision of the public marketplace, advising the mayor and City Council on matters relating to tourism, and serving as the rental agent for Old Town Hall, one of Salem's most significant city-owned historic properties.

#### M. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE/SALEM PROJECT

The Salem Maritime National Historic Site was established in 1938 on Derby Street to include the Custom House and several other eighteenth and nineteenth century buildings along the waterfront. It was the first park created under the National Historic Sites Act. Subsequent acquisitions have included the seventeenth century Narbonne House and the twentieth century St. Joseph's Hall. Through the Maritime Site's existence the Park Service has maintained a

presence in the city, operating a variety of interpretive programs for their properties and themes relating to them.

In 1987 the Salem Project was initiated by the National Park Service as a joint venture of government and private groups. Its purposes are to enhance the message of the Salem Maritime National Historic Site through the preservation and interpretation of related resources throughout Essex County, and to assist in the expansion of the county's tourism industry. Through the Federal appropriation of \$13M between 1988 and the present, the project has been involved in planning studies, proposals for redevelopment of the Maritime Site, plans for construction of a visitors' center in downtown Salem, preparation of a transportation plan, and work on a new visitors' signage system. The involvement of the Park Service in these projects brings professional preservation and planning expertise to the city, as well as needed funding.

#### N. HISTORIC SALEM INC.

Historic Salem Inc. (HSI) is a private nonprofit preservation group established in 1944. The organization's numerous activities have included such educational programs as workshops, publications, and lectures. A biennial house and garden tour draws many visitors to Salem's historic neighborhoods. HSI has conducted architectural surveys, and has an ongoing program of markers for historic houses. The group takes an active role in commenting on the impact of all types of projects on the city's historic character. A recent project was the creation of an Old House Restoration Resource Center at the Salem Public Library.

#### O. ESSEX INSTITUTE

One of Salem's oldest cultural institutions, and arguably its earliest historic preservation organization, is the Essex Institute, which was founded in 1848 with the merger of the Essex Historical Society (1821) and the Essex County Natural History Society. The Institute's restoration of the John Ward House beginning in 1910 was among the first historic house restorations in the nation. Through its operation of seven historic houses, its strong library collections on Essex County history, architecture and many other related topics, its museum collections and its active educational programs, the Essex Institute remains one of Salem's largest and most active participants in the preservation of the city's architectural and cultural heritage.

#### P. SALEM PARTNERSHIP

The Salem Partnership was established in 1987 as a coalition of public, private, nonprofit and government entities working toward Salem's economic revitalization. Its goals are economic revitalization, promotion of tourism, preservation of historic sites, cultural and educational development, transportation improvements, marketing local businesses, and enhancement of the quality of life. From its inception, the Partnership has taken the view that preservation of Salem's historic resources was a crucial economic development tool. The Partnership as a whole and its Historic Resources and Cultural Development Committee have been active in lobbying Congress for the ongoing funding of the Salem Project, with which they have been closely associated. Other preservation-related projects include the joint sponsorship with several other local preservation groups of a booklet on Salem Harbor, a maritime festival, and an old house workshop.

#### Q. HOUSE OF SEVEN GABLES

This organization's role in historic preservation in Salem has been ongoing since 1908 when the Captain John Turner House was purchased and restored by Caroline Emmerton, founder of the House of Seven Gables Settlement Association. Now operated as a historic house museum in a complex including two other historic houses, the Gables is an organization active in the city's cultural community through its own properties, educational programs, and its role in the management of Pioneer Village. Owned by the city, Pioneer Village was built in 1930 for the Massachusetts Bay Tercentenary as a recreation of the earliest settlement in Salem. After years of neglect, the village has recently been restored and reopened to the public.

#### R. PEABODY MUSEUM

The Peabody Museum is the oldest museum in the city, having been founded in 1799 as the East India Marine Society. Its original exclusive membership was made up of Salem ship masters who had navigated to or beyond the Cape of Good Hope. Among their original objectives was the establishment of a museum of artifacts from their voyages. The museum continues to have a strong maritime focus, and relates to historic preservation in Salem through its strengths in maritime resources and archaeology. The museum also owns several historically significant properties, including its own East India Marine Hall (1825), the Bulfinch designed Essex Bank Building, (later the Salem Boys' Club, 1811), and the Samuel Pickman House (before 1681).

#### S. OTHERS

Salem has a number of other individual historic properties which are open to the public by appointment or on varying schedules. These include the Pickering House, Stephen Phillips Memorial Trust House, Hamilton Hall, and the Gedney House. The nonprofit organizations, foundations and trusts that operate these properties are dedicated to their preservation.

#### IV SALEM'S HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Under the auspices of the Planning Department and the Salem Historical Commission, many properties in the city have been documented and designated. Several techniques exist for the designation of historically and architecturally significant resources, each of which provides a different type of protection. These types of listing are briefly explained below:

##### A. INVENTORIED PROPERTIES

Salem's historic resources inventory has been conducted by a variety of local bodies including the Planning Department and its consultants, Historic Salem, the Salem Historical Commission, and the Salem Redevelopment Authority, over a period from 1967 to 1991. It is now technically complete, although additions and updating are an ongoing process, and includes 3590 resources appearing on inventory forms which are on file at the Salem Planning Department and at the Massachusetts Historical Commission. Among these properties were 3310 buildings, 224 areas, 32 structures, 16 objects, and 8 burial grounds. Below is the survey evaluation taken from the Salem FY89 Survey and Planning Grant Completion Report.

##### 1. Survey Evaluation

The quality and completeness of documentation on inventory forms varies considerably depending on when a form was prepared, and by whom. Generally the earlier forms were less complete, due largely to the less stringent approach taken to survey in the late 1960s and 1970s. Work completed in the 1980s was prepared by consultants or Planning Department staff with expertise in historic preservation and is generally thorough.

##### 2. Geographical Areas

- a. Bridge Street - In 1978 Historic Salem Inc. prepared streetscape forms and some B forms in this area. These generally included photographs, some maps, brief architectural descriptions, and no historical information. A comprehensive inventory of the area was completed by a consultant to the Salem Planning Department under an MHC Survey and Planning Grant in 1985.
- b. Castle Hill - Work was completed by Northfields Preservation Associates for the Salem Planning Department as part of the FY89 Survey and Planning Grant project.

- c. Central Salem - This geographical designation includes the commercial area in Downtown Salem, the residential area included in the McIntire Historic District and residential areas south of the historic district. The area includes inventory forms from 1967-1968, 1974-1975, and 1978-1979. In general, the work from 1967-1968 and 1974-1975 was in the residential areas, and was of similar quality. Most forms have an adequate photograph, a map, and minimal architectural and historical information. The forms in the McIntire Historic District need to be updated.
- d. Downtown Salem - The downtown commercial area was surveyed in 1978-1979 by HSI and the Salem Redevelopment Authority staff in conjunction with the preparation of a Multiple Resource Area nomination to the National Register. In many cases, two survey forms exist from this phase; the HSI form having historical and architectural information, and the SRA form having a good photograph and occasionally a brief contextual statement. These forms need to be used together.
- e. Derby Street - This area includes survey forms from 1967, 1973, 1977, 1980, and 1985-1986. Buildings surveyed in 1967 and 1973 are located within the Derby Waterfront Historic District (local and National Register). These forms generally have adequate photographs, maps, and minimal architectural and historical information. A small number of buildings on several side streets (Becket, Daniels, Hardy) was surveyed in 1977 and 1980. A 1986 Survey and Planning grant resulted in the completion of survey in the area, primarily on side streets. This included new forms for some buildings previously surveyed. Survey forms on Derby Street itself should be updated.
- f. Gallows Hill - In 1978 HSI did survey work in this area. B forms generally have acceptable photographs and no maps. Most have brief architectural descriptions which vary in accuracy, and some have a limited amount of historical information. More detailed historical information was collected for Boston Street forms. Streetscape forms for this area generally included photographs, no maps, brief architectural descriptions, and no historical information. Additional work was completed by Northfields Preservation Associates for the Salem Planning Department as part of the FY89 Survey and Planning Grant project.
- g. North Salem - Inventory forms exist for this area dating from 1978, 1986, and 1989. In 1978, HSI did survey work west of North Street. A small number of B forms was prepared, generally having acceptable photographs and no maps. Most have brief architectural descriptions which vary in accuracy, and some have a limited amount of historical information.

The majority of the HSI forms for this area were streetscapes, which generally included photographs, no maps, brief architectural descriptions, and no historical information. This material was of limited use, and has been updated (1989).

A 1986 Survey and Planning grant funded survey work east of North Street, which was conducted by the Planning Department. Additional work was completed by Northfields Preservation Associates for the Salem Planning Department as part of the 1989 Survey and Planning Grant project.

- h. Salem Common - Inventory forms for this area were prepared in 1967, 1972, and 1987. While the two early generations of forms are characteristically sketchy in historical and architectural information, the inventory for the area was completed and updated by the Salem Planning Department and Northfields Preservation Associates under a Survey and Planning Grant in 1987.
- i. Salem Willows - Work was completed by Northfields Preservation Associates for the Salem Planning Department as part of the FY88 Survey and Planning Grant project.
- j. South Salem - Survey work in this area was conducted in 1985 by Salem Planning Department staff and completed in 1989 by Northfields Preservation Associates, both under Survey and Planning Grants.
- k. Stage Point - Work was completed by Northfields Preservation Associates for the Salem Planning Department as part of the FY88 Survey and Planning Grant.
- l. West Salem - Work was completed by Northfields Preservation Associates for the Salem Planning Department as part of the FY89 Survey and Planning Grant.

#### B. NATIONAL REGISTER PROPERTIES

Many of Salem's historic resources have been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. 13 districts containing 832 properties have been nominated, as well as 29 properties that are listed individually, 105 properties included in the Salem Multiple Resource Area nomination, and 7 included in a Thematic Resource Area nomination. More information on listed properties can be found in the Appendix.



### C. LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

Four local historic districts have been established in Salem. The Derby Waterfront Historic District, established in 1974 contains 130 properties. The Lafayette Street Historic District was created in 1985, and contains 37 properties. The 409 property McIntire Historic District was formed in 1981 by consolidating and adding to the 1971 Chestnut Street Historic District and the 1976 Federal Street Historic District. The Washington Square Historic District consists of 30 properties abutting Salem Common, and was set up in 1977.

### D. NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARKS

There are 8 National Historic Landmarks in Salem - Nathaniel Bowditch House, Gardner Pingree House, Hamilton Hall, Peabody Museum of Salem, Pierce-Nichols House, Salem Maritime National Historic Site, Joseph Story House, and John Ward House.

### E. OTHER DESIGNATIONS

The Massachusetts Historic Landmark program (now defunct) designated 80 Salem properties, and 13 properties in the city have Preservation Restrictions.

## V RECOMMENDATIONS

### A. SALEM HISTORICAL COMMISSION POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### 1. Appointment of members

##### Purpose:

Vacancies on the Historical Commission should be filled where possible by professionals in the disciplines of architecture, history, architectural history, prehistoric archaeology and historic archaeology. Requirements of Chapter 40C stipulate that membership include a nominee from the local historical society, the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects, the board of realtors, and a resident or property owner from one of the districts.

Participation in the Certified Local Government program requires that a reasonable effort be made to appoint members from the disciplines above, and that all Historical Commission members must be able to demonstrate special interest, competence or knowledge in historic preservation. These requirements should be adhered to for all new appointments.

##### Tasks:

- a. Identify which nomination category or categories (e.g. a board of realtors nominee) under Chapter 40C are not currently filled, and which disciplines recommended under the CLG program are not represented.
- b. Solicit names of nominees from the organizations required by Chapter 40C. Staff or the Historical Commission may also recommend a slate of qualified potential nominees to the nominating organizations.
- c. Historical Commission staff should contact resource organizations (listed below) to establish a pool of qualified residents from which to draw nominations. This should be updated periodically.
- d. Appoint new members as vacancies arise, beginning with appointment of an archaeologist.

##### Timeframe:

- Task a - Less than one day
- Tasks b and c - Less than one month
- Task d - Ongoing

##### Information and Resources:

- Nominating organizations under Chapter 40C
  - Essex Institute
  - Historic Salem, Inc.

American Institute of Architects (Boston)  
Greater Salem Board of Realtors

Other potential sources of qualified nominees  
Salem State College  
Historic Massachusetts, Inc.  
Society of Architectural Historians - New England Chapter

Action to be taken by:

Tasks a-c - Historical Commission staff  
Task d - Mayor

## 2. Member training

### Purpose:

The most essential element in an effective, reasonable and consistent historical commission is well-trained members who understand the extent and limits of their review power, and who are well versed in the guidelines under which they operate.

### Tasks:

- a. Provide each new Historical Commission member with a packet of materials containing the following:
  - All City Ordinances pertaining to the Salem Historical Commission
  - MGL Chapter 40C
  - Salem Historical Commission Guidelines
  - Salem Historical Commission Procedures
  - Certified Local Government Guidelines
  - Master Preservation Plan
- b. New members should be given an orientation to the other preservation materials available in the Planning Department, including a review of previous Historical Commission decisions, location and use of the Historic Resources Inventory, and a review of the SHC Guidelines Notebook and Preservation Program Handbook.
- c. Each member of the Salem Historical Commission should attend at least one workshop or conference in each three year term. The Historical Commission should make this a requirement, and its budget should cover these costs. Among the many choices are an annual workshop offered by the Massachusetts Historical Commission specifically for Certified Local Government communities, an annual statewide preservation conference by Historic Massachusetts Inc. (HMI), as well as an annual workshop given by HMI for local historic district commissions. The latter is offered on a Saturday in order to make it easier for volunteer commission members to attend without disrupting work schedules.

Timeframe:

- Task a - Less than one day
- Tasks b and c - Ongoing

Information and Resources:

- Massachusetts Historical Commission (CLG workshops)
- Historic Massachusetts Inc.
- Society of Architectural Historians - New England Chapter
- National Trust for Historic Preservation

Action to be taken by:

- Tasks a and b - Historical Commission staff
- Tasks a and b - Historical Commission

### 3. Guidelines

Purpose:

The Salem Historical Commission Guidelines are generally thorough and clear. Several revisions and additions are presently under consideration, and should be approved.

Tasks:

- a. Complete review and approval of proposed revisions to guidelines.
- b. Continue the practice of periodically reviewing and updating Historical Commission guidelines.

Timeframe:

- Task a - Less than two months
- Task b - Ongoing

Action to be taken by:

- Salem Historical Commission

### 4. Enforcement

Purpose:

To ensure that all work in local historic districts follows proper application process and that work is completed as approved by monitoring approved projects and enforcing fines or correction of violations.

Tasks:

- a. Assign a geographical area to each Historical Commission member to be checked monthly for work in progress. Any property owner in violation will be notified that they must apply to the Historical Commission before continuing work.

b. Applicants with approved projects should be given a postcard at the time of approval to be submitted when the project is complete. When received, a Historical Commission member should do a drive/walk-by site visit to ensure that the work was done as approved. If a postcard is not received within six months of the original approval a follow-up site visit, letter or phone call should be made to determine whether the project has been abandoned, delayed or is complete.

c. Establish a system to enforce fines for violations.

Timeframe:

Less than one month to establish/ongoing

Action to be taken by:

Historical Commission

5. Other Procedures

Purpose:

To keep local historic district residents informed of Historical Commission policies and procedures.

Tasks:

- a. Continue the present policy of sending packets including guidelines, application procedures and general district information to all property owners.
- b. Send updates to all district property owners as changes are made to guidelines or other aspects of historic district review.

Timeframe:

Ongoing

Action to be taken by:

Historical Commission staff

B. SURVEY

Purpose:

Updated survey forms are needed in the McIntire and Derby Street local historic districts in order to facilitate Historical Commission review. These forms are generally incomplete and inadequate for use in evaluation of resource significance.

Tasks:

- a. Review the approximately 550 survey forms in the McIntire and Derby Street local historic districts to prepare a list of those

needing architectural descriptions, statements of significance, photographs and/or maps.

- b. If Historical Commission staff does not possess professional qualifications necessary to conduct survey, hire a consultant to conduct survey update. If minimal written revisions are needed, explore the possibility of using students or volunteers to complete photography and maps.
- c. Update photographs and add maps as needed to the approximately 550 survey forms in the McIntire and Derby Street local historic districts. Add architectural descriptions and statements of significance to properties identified in a. If plans are proceeding to expand either district, existing forms in the areas of proposed expansion should be reviewed and updated as needed.

Timeframe:

- Task a - Several days
- Task b - Time will vary depending on funding source
- Task c - Dependent on number of forms to be revised

Information and Resources:

- Massachusetts Historical Commission - funding
- Salem State College - student labor
- Historic Salem, Inc. - volunteer labor

Action to be taken by:

- Tasks a and b, possibly c - Historical Commission staff
- Task c - Consultant, students or volunteers

C. PUBLIC BUILDINGS

1. City-owned Historic Properties

The city owns numerous historically and architecturally significant properties in varying states of preservation and use. In some cases, such as the Old Town Hall, the properties are suffering from deferred maintenance which has escalated to a threat to the property's continued preservation. Fortunately, Old Town Hall is the focus of a joint effort by the city and Historic Salem, Inc. to raise rehabilitation funds and determine the most appropriate and economically viable use of this prominent landmark. At least one building, the Police Station, will be vacated on completion of a new building. In other cases, such as the former Saltonstall School and the former Salem High School (now Middle Schools East and West respectively), proposed alterations may have an impact on National Register eligible properties.

Purpose:

All city-owned historic properties need protection in the form of a firm city policy for their maintenance and preservation. These properties include, but are not limited to:

- Old Town Hall (NR)
- Salem City Hall (NR)
- Nathaniel Bowditch House (NHL)
- Witch House (NR)
- Salem Schools (including former schools still owned by the city)
- Salem Public Library (NR)
- Salem Woods
- Mack Park including Ledge Hill
- Forest River Park including Pioneer Village and Pickering House
- Monuments
- Salem Common (NR)
- Fort Lee
- Fort Pickering (NR)
- Broad Street Cemetery (NR)
- Charter Street Cemetery (NR)
- Friends' Cemetery
- Howard Street Burial Ground (NR)
- Greenlawn Cemetery
- Salem Police Station (NR)

Tasks:

- a. Prepare comprehensive list of city-owned historic properties.
- b. Establish policy for the Salem Historical Commission to review any proposed work on these buildings and participate in plans for any changes in ownership or use. The commission should be notified prior to beginning any work involving an identified historic property owned by the city. Depending on the nature of the project and its funding, review by the MHC and the National Park Service may also be required for properties listed in the State Register or the National Register of Historic Places.
- c. Develop a maintenance and preservation plan for the preservation of these properties. This should include general preservation guidelines for all city-owned properties, with specific guidelines for individual properties to follow.
- d. Prepare an historic structures report for each structure or site. Each report would include plans for stabilization and restoration of the structure or site as well as plans for alternative uses for vacant, underused or deteriorated

buildings that would be sympathetic to their long term preservation.

Timeframe:

- Task a - Less than one day
- Task b - One to two months
- Task c - Several months
- Task d - Long term

Information and Resources:

The maintenance and preservation plan and historic structures reports could be funded using MHC Survey and Planning Grant funds. A similar project in Gloucester, scheduled to begin late in 1991, might be a useful model.

Action to be taken by:

- Task a - Planning Department staff
- Task b - Historical Commission and staff
- Tasks c and d - Historical Commission staff or consultant

## 2. County-owned Historic Properties

Purpose:

To ensure the maintenance and preservation of significant county-owned historic properties located in Salem. These include the Essex County Courthouses and the Essex County Jail, all of which are listed on the National Register and are important elements of Salem's central business district. Their maintenance and ongoing preservation is of the same importance to protecting Salem's historic character as the city-owned properties discussed above.

Tasks:

- a. The Salem Planning Department should approach the county about including these buildings in the proposed maintenance and preservation plan.

Timeframe:

See City-owned Historic Properties above

Information and Resources:

See City-owned Historic Properties above

Action to be taken by:

Historical Commission staff



#### D. Consideration of Project Impacts

##### Purpose:

Many projects or actions involving Salem's city government have direct or indirect impact on the historical or architectural character of the city. These may be private projects receiving city permits or funds, ordinances passed by the City Council, or policies of city boards, commissions or departments.

The city should establish a system to determine if any such projects or actions will have a potential impact on an inventoried or State Register property or identified archaeological resource. The city should then request a non-binding comment from the Salem Historical Commission, incorporating options that accomplish all goals, including preservation, into the earliest stages of the planning process.

##### Tasks:

- a. Historical Commission staff should coordinate with all city departments, boards and commissions to establish a notification system.
- b. Once Historical Commission staff has been notified of an action or project through receiving an agenda or other communication, staff will check the historic resources inventory and State Register for significant properties.
- c. If a project or action may have an impact on identified historic resources or relates to broader preservation issues, the Historical Commission will be notified and a non-binding comment requested.

##### Timeframe:

- Task a - Less than one month
- Tasks b and c - ongoing

##### Action to be taken by:

- Task a - Historical Commission staff, all departments, boards and commissions
- Task b - Historical Commission staff
- Task c - Historical Commission

#### E. DESIGNATION AND PROTECTION OF RESOURCES

The several types of historic designations are discussed in Section IV. Maps can be found at the back of the plan illustrating the boundaries of all existing National Register and local historic districts. Maps are also provided with general boundary recommendations for all proposed expanded and new districts. These are preliminary recommendations which will require further research

by the Salem Historical Commission, the Mayor and City Council, as well as community input prior to final designation.

# 1. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXISTING LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS

## Purpose:

To expand existing local historic districts to include additional properties compatible with the districts and that would benefit from the protection afforded by designation.

## Tasks:

- a. The Salem Historical Commission should establish a timetable for expansion of existing local districts and creation of new local district.
- b. Set up study committees and prepare necessary documentation for the districts recommended below. The procedure for setting up a new district or enlarging an existing one requires the use of study committees (which can be the existing district commission) to pursue the designation. The committee can conduct research, prepare the necessary documentation, and hold public meetings, but the process of setting up or enlarging a district is a time consuming one, and much of the work should be done by staff or a consultant. Districts below are listed in recommended order of priority.
- c. Washington Square Historic District - The existing district boundaries are very narrow, including only some of the properties facing directly onto the Salem Common. A larger area, including side streets radiating toward Bridge Street and toward Webb Street should be added to the district. The FY86 Survey and Planning project examined these boundaries, and made specific recommendations for expansion. These are still appropriate, and are currently being pursued by the Salem Historical Commission.
- d. Derby Waterfront Historic District - Cross streets between Hawthorne Boulevard and English Street, extending south from Essex Street, contain a dense concentration of buildings spanning the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They vary in integrity, but the alterations are largely reversible, consisting primarily of synthetic siding and occasional window replacement. Possible expansion of the district to include this area should be considered. One approach would be to merge the Derby Street and Washington Square Historic Districts into a single larger district.
- e. McIntire Historic District - Existing boundaries are generally appropriate, however 5-23 Summer Street should be considered for addition to the district.

Timeframe:

Task a - Two to three months

Task b - Dependent on makeup of study committee, use of staff or consultant

Tasks c-e - Three to six months for each district

Information and Resources:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

Action to be taken by:

Tasks a and b - Historical Commission and staff

Tasks c-e - Historical Commission, staff, possibly consultant

2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POTENTIAL LOCAL HISTORIC DISTRICTS OR NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

Purpose: To establish new local historic districts or neighborhood conservation districts in areas where concentrations of buildings are significant, possess integrity, and would benefit from the protection afforded by designation.

Tasks:

- a. See Tasks a and b above. Districts below are in recommended order of priority.
- b. Buffum Street - This district spans the nineteenth century, and contains a high concentration of well-preserved buildings from the mid-nineteenth century. Likely boundaries would include all of Buffum Street between School and Mason Streets, with the possible inclusion of several buildings on School and Mason.
- c. Dearborn Street - Like Buffum Street, Dearborn Street includes notable, well-preserved buildings spanning the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with its greatest concentration of fine buildings dating from the mid and late nineteenth century. A Dearborn Street district would likely extend from Upham Street to Lee Street, and should include Southwick Street and several houses on Walter Street to the north and south of Dearborn Street.
- d. Fairfield Street - Rebuilt following the Salem fire of 1914, the Fairfield Street area is dominated by large high-style Colonial Revival houses built by Salem's more affluent residents, and in some cases designed by Boston architects. In addition to Fairfield Street, the district could include part of Cedar Street.
- e. Naples and Savoy Roads - Dating from the 1910s and 1920s, this small self-contained suburban development contains

excellent examples of middle-sized residences in a variety of architectural styles, and reflects Salem's early twentieth century development patterns. Likely boundaries should include all of Naples and Savoy Roads, as well as several houses on the east side of Lafayette Street.

- f. Salem Willows - The Salem Willows is Salem's only resort area, containing a high concentration of summer cottages constructed in a range of late nineteenth century styles, as well as an area of early twentieth century suburban housing. Due to the district's size and varied integrity, the possibility of establishing a neighborhood conservation district rather than a local historic district should be explored. This would afford some protection for the character of the area while allowing property owners greater flexibility than a traditional historic district.

Timeframe:

Task a - Two to three months for timetable, then dependent on makeup of study committee, use of staff or consultant  
Tasks b-f - Approximately six months for each district

Information and Resources:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

In addition to the general boundary recommendations for the proposed districts to be found on maps at the back of the plan, area forms for most are on file with the inventory of Salem's historic resources, providing more detailed descriptions and historical information.

Action to be taken by:

Tasks a - Historical Commission and staff  
Tasks b-f - Historical Commission, staff, possibly consultant

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EXISTING NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICTS

Purpose:

Expand existing National Register districts to include additional properties compatible with the districts and that would benefit from designation.

Tasks:

- a. Historical Commission staff should establish a timetable for amendments to existing districts, prepare determinations of eligibility for submission to the Massachusetts Historical Commission, and begin preparation of nominations. If it is not feasible for staff to prepare nominations, or if staff does not possess the required professional qualifications,

hire a consultant to amend districts as recommended below in order of priority.

- b. Derby Waterfront Historic District - Cross streets between Hawthorne Boulevard and English Street, extending south from Essex Street, contain a dense concentration of buildings spanning the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The buildings vary in integrity, but the alterations are largely reversible, consisting primarily of synthetic siding and occasional window replacement.

Expansion of the district to include this area would broaden the area protected by the state and federal environmental review process and would make additional properties eligible to apply for federal investment tax credits for historic rehabilitation projects. In addition the honor of National Register listing is a helpful educational tool to encourage property owners to maintain and preserve their historic buildings.

- c. Downtown Salem District - These boundaries are generally appropriate, however expansion could include the north side of Essex Street extending to North Street. Expansion of the district would make additional properties eligible to apply for federal investment tax credits for historic rehabilitation projects, and would afford additional protection through the state and federal environmental review process.

- d. Salem Common Historic District - The FY86 Survey and Planning project examined these boundaries, and made recommendations for expansion which are still appropriate. The additions consist primarily of Boardman Street, a section of Briggs Street, and several properties on Forrester and Pleasant Streets.

Expansion of the district to include this area would broaden protection through the state and federal environmental review process and would make additional properties eligible to apply for federal investment tax credits for historic rehabilitation projects. In addition the honor of National Register listing is a helpful educational tool to encourage property owners to maintain and preserve their historic buildings.

- e. Chestnut Street Historic District - Existing boundaries are narrower than those of the McIntire Historic District (local), and a larger area is clearly eligible. Boundaries of the existing local district should provide a starting point for expansion, but some potentially eligible properties were identified outside either existing district. Areas of

particular note that should be considered include the east side of Summer Street (5-23, and from Gedney Street to 61), Winthrop Street (up to 5 and 12), Broad Street and the adjacent streets to the south, and the west end of Warren Street.

While expansion of this district is recommended, it need not be an immediate priority. Beyond the honor and increased public awareness, the principal benefits of National Register listing are the protection of an environmental review process, and tax credits for rehabilitation projects. Environmental review protection relating to projects receiving state or federal funds, permits or approvals is already in place through the local district's existence, with the exception of a few eligible properties not in either district. Similarly, investment tax credits are possible for projects in local historic districts meeting National Register criteria.

- f. Baker's Island Light Station - The Baker's Island Light Station is a four-property district. The island has never been surveyed, and may well contain sufficiently intact resources to warrant a larger district.

Listing on the National Register would provide valuable protection in the form of state and federal environmental review, without in any way restricting the use or rights of the property owners.

Timeframe:

Task a - Two to three months

Tasks b-f - Three to six months for each district

Information and Resources:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

Action to be taken by:

Task a - Historical Commission staff

Tasks b-f - Historical Commission staff or consultant

#### 4. RECOMMENDED NEW NATIONAL REGISTER DESIGNATIONS

Purpose: Nominate all eligible districts and individual properties in Salem by the most timely and cost-efficient method. The large number of potentially eligible properties makes Salem well suited for a multiple property nomination, rather than undertaking the nominations individually.

Tasks:

- a. Work with Massachusetts Historical Commission to determine feasibility, cost and scope of a multiple property nomination.
- b. If a multiple property nomination is determined feasible and if funding is available, the project could be undertaken in its entirety or in phases. If done in its entirety, a consultant would be required. If done in phases, and if professionally qualified staff were available, the work could be done by the Historical Commission staff.

The process for preparing a large multiple property nomination is complex and time-consuming. It is possible to prepare the initial nomination by having the context of the nomination, (in this case probably a broad version of Salem's historical development, which could be used as the Town Report for the Massachusetts Historical Commission) approved by the National Park Service prior to preparing documentation on any of the specific districts or individual properties. This would make it possible to pursue the nomination in phases while spreading the expense over a longer time period.

- c. If the decision is made not to pursue a multiple property nomination, recommended districts and individual properties have been listed below in order of priority, and nominations should be pursued as time and funding permit.

- i. Recommended National Register Districts

In addition to the general boundary recommendations for the proposed districts to be found on maps at the back of the plan, area forms for most are on file with the inventory of Salem's historic resources, providing more detailed descriptions and historical information.

Salem Willows  
Winter Island  
Salem State College  
Ward and Peabody Streets  
Loring Villa/Convent St. Chretienne  
Buffum Street  
Dearborn Street  
Fairfield Street  
Naples and Savoy Roads  
Derby Estate Area  
Prince Street Place  
Salem Rebuilding Trust Area

ii. Recommended Individual National Register Properties

29 Grove Street - Ledge Hill  
30-36 Grove Street - Harmony Grove Cemetery Caretaker's House  
29 Highland Avenue - Former Salem High School  
211 Lafayette Street - Saltonstall School  
416 Lafayette Street - Dixey Morgan House  
152 Boston Street - Bell-Reith House  
175 Boston Street  
40 Felt Street - James Brooks and John Bell House  
220 Lafayette Street - Walter K. Bigelow House  
395 Lafayette Street - Almy House  
399 Lafayette Street  
418 Lafayette Street  
452 Lafayette Street - Benjamin G. Hathaway House  
19 Cedarcrest Avenue  
1 Devereaux Avenue  
18 Felt Street  
23 Gardner Street  
19 Larchmont Street  
10-14 Lynch Street  
4 Ocean Avenue - Edmund P. Balcomb House  
3 Ridgeway Street  
28 School Street  
100 School Street

Timeframe:

Task a - One to two months  
Task b - One year or longer if project is done in phases  
Task c - Years

Information and Resources:

Massachusetts Historical Commission  
Inventory of Salem's Historic Resources

Action to be taken by:

Task a - Historical Commission staff and MHC  
Tasks b and c - Historical Commission staff or consultant

F. LAND USE PLANNING, ZONING, SIGNAGE AND PERMITTING

1. Zoning Board of Appeal and Other Zoning Issues

Purpose:

To enforce and strengthen existing zoning regulations to afford maximum protection of historic resources and character of historic neighborhoods.



Tasks:

- a. Historical Commission staff should work with the Board of Appeal regarding types of impact to historic resources to ensure that preservation concerns are considered in their decisions. This could be done through a single meeting, by preparation of a detailed memo, or through the joint meeting of the Salem Historical Commission, Salem Redevelopment Authority, Design Review Board and Planning Board recommended below.
- b. The Historical Commission staff should continue recent practice of sending a copy of the historic resources inventory form on any property on the agenda to appear before the Board of Appeal, and continue to offer design review assistance by the Salem Historical Commission if needed.
- c. The Board of Appeal should routinely integrate the following preservation concerns into their decisions:

Approvals for increasing density in residential buildings are a particularly serious concern in historic buildings, which often cannot accomodate additional units without major alterations compromising historic fabric. The addition of a secondary egress often results in exterior stairs or major alterations to interior floor plans that would be best avoided, while creation of needed parking spaces can result in damage to a building's setting.

Current Board of Appeal policy is that decisions should not take context into account, however the Salem Zoning Ordinance states that a variance shall not be granted if it results in "substantial detriment to the public good." In a community so devoted to and dependent on its heritage, the erosion of the historical character of city neighborhoods through inappropriate alterations is clearly a substantial detriment to the public good, and should be avoided.

- d. Another zoning issue is height. The maximum height allowed in a B-5 zone (Central Development District) and by the Salem Redevelopment Authority is 6 stories, while existing downtown Salem commercial buildings are 2-4 stories high. The zoning ordinance should be revised to reduce the overall height in the B-5 zone to remain compatible with the general height of existing buildings, and under no circumstances should variances be given to exceed the existing allowed height. This has occurred in other communities to a degree that has destroyed the integrity of downtown historic districts.
- e. Consider tighter entrance corridor zoning for areas with the heaviest concentrations of historic buildings. Entrance Corridor Overlay Districts have recently been established to

protect and enhance the major entrance ways into the city. These zoning regulations should prove a useful tool. Their principal impact is on sites, regulating fences, curb cuts, parking, landscaping, and signage.

In addition to these controls, it would be valuable to have tighter zoning to protect the entrance corridors with the heaviest concentrations of historic buildings, namely Bridge, North, Boston and Lafayette Streets. The historic character of these streets has been particularly compromised over the years by inappropriate new construction and alterations to existing historic buildings. Since these streets provide the first impression for most visitors to Salem, it is particularly crucial that their integrity be retained to the greatest degree possible. Zoning to control density, massing, setbacks, and height would be useful.

- f. Another alternative would be the establishment of Neighborhood Conservation districts in historic entrance corridor areas. (See Appendix). These would allow review by a commission of alterations, demolition and new construction, and could include criteria relating to the impact of alterations on the district as a whole.

Timeframe:

- Task a - Less than one month
- Task b-d - Ongoing
- Tasks e and f - Several months

Action to be taken by:

- Task a - Historical Commission staff, Board of Appeal
- Task b - Historical Commission staff, Historical Commission
- Task c - Board of Appeal
- Task d - Salem Redevelopment Authority and Board of Appeal
- Tasks e and f - Planning Department with Historical Commission staff

## 2. Signage

Purpose: To ensure that signage is appropriate to historic resources.

Tasks:

- a. Revise sign ordinance to include appropriate preservation guidelines. The existing sign ordinance is outdated (1973), and revisions are in progress. The revised version should be sensitive to preservation issues. Guidelines such as those provided in "Lowell: The Sign Book" are extremely helpful in offering commercial owners and tenants a wide range of historically appropriate choices in designing signs.

Design guidelines in the sign ordinance should be explicit in forbidding signs obscuring significant architectural elements, and should consider the following elements: legibility, size, lighting, color, materials, and relationship to architectural elements of the building or adjoining buildings. Backlit signs are typically inappropriate to historic districts.

Timeframe:

Dependent on timeframe for entire new sign ordinance

Information and Resources:

Lowell Sign Book

Massachusetts Historical Commission

Action to be taken by:

Historical Commission staff with other Planning Department staff

### 3. Permitting

Purpose:

The role of the Building Department in preservation is a crucial one. It is through the Building Department's control of building permits that a project in a local historic district is channeled to the Salem Historical Commission for review and that an owner proposing demolition of an older building is directed to the Historical Commission prior to receiving a permit. The Building Department needs to continue to be vigilant in directing all historic district projects and demolitions of properties over 50 years old to the Historical Commission.

On occasion sign permits have been granted in local historic districts without the review of the Salem Historical Commission. This appears to be the result of a procedural problem which should be corrected.

Through its responsibility to interpret the State Building Code, the Building Department has the ability to aid in the preservation of Salem's significant older buildings. Article 22 of the State Building Code allows historic buildings (defined as any building listed on the National Register or certified by the Massachusetts Historical Commission) to meet more lenient standards than new construction or alteration to other types of existing buildings. It is recommended that the Salem Building Department use the opportunity Article 22 provides for the preservation of historic buildings to the fullest extent possible. See Appendix.

Tasks:

- a. The Historical Commission staff should review and sign all sign permit applications. The application has a place for a signature from the Salem Historical Commission. This signature should be required before any sign permit is issued, regardless of whether it is in a district or not. This will assure that if a building is in a local historic district the approval of the Historical Commission has been received.
- b. The Historical Commission staff should work with the Building Department to encourage the most favorable preservation interpretation of Article 22 of the State Building Code.

Timeframe:

- Task a - Ongoing
- Task b - Less than one month

Information and Resources:

State Building Code, Article 22

Action to be taken by:

Historical Commission staff, Building Department

G. INTERDEPARTMENTAL INTEGRATION

The tremendous importance of Salem's history and historic buildings to the city's quality of life and to its economy is widely acknowledged and discussed by elected and appointed officials in city government, the business community and the numerous cultural and educational organizations. In order for these resources to be preserved and maximized it is important that all city departments and boards have an understanding of the need for and tools to preserve historic character, and work effectively together to achieve these goals.

1. Boards and Commissions

- a. Meeting notification to Salem Historical Commission

Purpose:

The Salem Historical Commission should be used in an advisory role to any other city board or commission dealing with an issue relating to historic resources.

Tasks:

- a. The City Planner should send a memo to all city boards and commissions requesting that the Historical Commission receive agendas for all meetings and public hearings of all city boards and commissions (Salem Redevelopment

Authority, Design Review Board, Planning Board, Licensing Board, Board of Appeal, Conservation Commission, Board of Health, and others), as well as notification of any city actions with a possible impact on inventoried properties.

- b. A representative of the Historical Commission or its staff should attend any meetings at which topics related to inventoried properties or relevant to broader preservation issues will be addressed.

Timeframe:

- Task a - Less than one month
- Task b - Ongoing

Action to be taken by:

- Task a - City Planner
- Task b - Historical Commission and staff

- b. All-board meetings and inter-departmental staff meetings

Purpose:

Good preservation practices can best be maintained throughout city government if all city boards and departments are in communication regarding preservation issues and other common concerns.

Tasks:

- a. The Planning Department should set up periodic meetings of representatives of all city boards and of staff of all related city departments. These would be extremely useful in identifying areas of overlapping concern, improving communication, and working out solutions to common issues. This is a common practice in many communities, and would be beneficial.

Timeframe:

- Task a - Quarterly meetings

Action to be taken by:

- Task a - Planning Department

## 2. Salem Redevelopment Authority

Purpose:

To ensure that the Salem Redevelopment Authority's role in the preservation of Salem's historic resources is fulfilled. By virtue of its design review control over the entirety of downtown Salem, an area that might otherwise be an important local historic district, the SRA has a powerful and important role in the protection and preservation of Salem's historic

resources no less significant than that of the Salem Historical Commission.

Tasks:

- a. Hold a combined annual meeting of the Salem Redevelopment Authority, the Design Review Board and the Salem Historical Commission to discuss common concerns and clarify preservation guidelines presently in use for downtown. This would encourage comparable design review standards. Along with promoting economic development and redevelopment, the SRA's design review guidelines are clear in setting historic preservation as a major priority. Guidelines for Heritage Plaza West make explicit reference to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation. These preservation standards should be consistently enforced.

Other boards having frequent dealings with historic buildings that might be included in sessions of this type are the Planning Board and the Board of Appeal.

- b. The SRA holds preservation easements on numerous downtown buildings. Records relating to these easements are somewhat confused. It is important that a comprehensive list be prepared, that it be determined whether these easements have all been recorded, and that a policy be established for enforcing their provisions. A preservation easement is a powerful tool for maintaining the integrity of a significant building. The properties under these restrictions should be held to appropriate preservation standards as required in the easements.

Timeframe:

- Task a - Less than one month
- Task b - Less than one month

Action to be taken by:

- Tasks a and b - Historical Commission staff with SRA staff

### 3. Planning Board

Purpose:

To include the Historical Commission in the Planning Board's site plan review process.

Tasks:

- a. The Planning Board's site plan review is required to address the architectural compatibility of a proposed development with the existing architecture of the area. A zoning ordinance change should be enacted which adds the Historical Commission or its representative to the list of requests for

non-binding comment, and uses explicit language regarding compatibility with the historic character of nearby architecture.

Timeframe:

Two to three months

Action to be taken by:

Planning Department

4. Conservation Commission

Purpose:

To enhance protection of archaeological and historic resources under the review of the Conservation Commission. In its review of projects with potential impact on wetlands, the Conservation Commission deals with areas having archaeological potential.

Tasks:

- a. Appoint an archaeologist to the Conservation Commission.
- b. The Conservation Commission should routinely check for potential impact on identified archaeological resources.
- c. Conservation Commission agendas should be sent to the Historical Commission to check for potential impact on inventoried properties.
- d. Historical Commission staff should provide a copy of Salem's 1987 archaeological survey to the Conservation Commission.

Timeframe:

- Task a - Indefinite, depending on commission vacancy  
Tasks b and c - Ongoing  
Task d - Immediate

Action to be taken by:

- Task a - Mayor  
Task b - Conservation Commission staff  
Task c - Conservation Commission staff and Historical Commission staff  
Task d - Historical Commission staff

5. Department of Public Works

Purpose:

To ensure that public works projects with impact on historic resources are reviewed or commented on by the Historical Commission.

Tasks:

- a. Notification of the Historical Commission should be required in advance of any project with impact on historic resources, particularly including any work in historic districts. This would include but not be limited to sidewalk repairs, new street lights, and other public improvements or major repairs. The Boston Public Works Department is required to appear before the Boston Landmarks Commission prior to work in any local historic district.

Timeframe:

Ongoing

Action to be taken by:

Public Works Department and Historical Commission

6. Cemetery Division

Purpose:

To ensure the documentation and preservation of Salem's historic burial grounds. The Cemetery Division has a curatorial responsibility for several of Salem's earliest historic resources, namely historic burial grounds.

Tasks:

- a. City-owned burial grounds have been partially inventoried, but the inventory needs to be completed. Volunteer or student labor could be used to complete this project.
- b. Preservation guidelines should be developed for historic burial grounds including early sections of Greenlawn Cemetery, addressing proper maintenance procedures, policies for stone rubbings, and care and maintenance of related historic buildings (chapel at Greenlawn). Priorities for conservation of stones should be set.
- c. Seek approval of the Massachusetts Historical Commission prior to conservation work on historic gravestones as required by Chapter 272, Section 73A of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Timeframe:

- Task a - Six months
- Task b - Two to four months
- Task c - Ongoing

Information and Resources:

Technical advice is available through the Massachusetts Historical Commission, consultants specializing in historic



burial grounds, and several publications on the subject. Potential funding sources are discussed in the Appendix.

The Boston Experience: A Manual for Historic Burying Grounds Preservation is available through: Historic Burying Grounds Initiative, Boston Parks & Recreation Department, 1010 Massachusetts Ave., Boston, MA 02118

Action to be taken by:

Task a - Volunteer or student labor coordinated by Historical Commission staff

Task b - Historical Commission, Historical Commission staff and Cemetery Division staff

Task c - Cemetery Division staff and Historical Commission staff

## H. PRESERVATION ORDINANCES

### 1. Historic districts ordinance

Purpose:

The ordinance which established the Salem Historical Commission and Salem's first local historic district in 1971 is in need of revision to clarify and update it.

Tasks:

a. Revise the ordinance by closely patterning it after the language in Chapter 40C, and using the requirements for the Certified Local Government Program (see Appendix). This would involve the following changes:

i. Powers and Duties - The CLG program requires that the ordinance specify the following, none of which appears in Salem's existing ordinance:

- Criteria for district designation
- Criteria for review of proposals
- Provisions for enforcement and appeals - The MHC recommends that a time and cost efficient appeals process is to include an intermediate appellate provision in the ordinance "designating a person or persons chosen by the regional planning agency of which the municipality is a member, or if the municipality is not a member of a regional planning agency, one selected by the local department of community affairs, to conduct a review process in lieu of a direct appeal to Superior Court."
- Time limit for review
- Expiration period for certificates - While not required by the CLG program, this is recommended.

-Certificates of non-applicablility - The ordinance should clearly specify that all work in the district, including work not under the review of the Historical Commission, must apply for a certificate of non-applicability before work may commence.

ii. Salem Historical Commission as district commission and historical commission - The intent of the Salem historic districts ordinance is to establish a commission that serves as both the historic district commission under Chapter 40C, and as the historical commission under Chapter 40, Section 8D. However the ordinance makes no reference to Chapter 40, Section 8D, and in citing its powers and responsibilities under that legislation, it omits several important provisions, namely cooperating with the State Archaeologist in conducting surveys and reporting on sites, keeping accurate records of its actions and filing annual reports. While these responsibilities are currently being carried out, they should be stated in the ordinance.

iii. Membership - Chapter 40C requires that the membership include a nominee from the local historical society, a nominee from the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects, a nominee from the board of realtors, and a resident or property owner from one of the districts. These requirements are not stated in the ordinance and should be added.

Timeframe:

Three to six months

Information and Resources:

Chapter 40C

Certified Local Government Program guidelines

Action to be taken by:

Historical Commission and staff

2. Demolition delay ordinance

Purpose:

Salem's existing demolition delay ordinance is in need of revision to strengthen its enforcability and to add several provisions.

Tasks:

- a. Revise the demolition delay ordinance according to Massachusetts Historical Commission guidelines. The most necessary revisions are the following:

i. Purpose - A clear statement of the intent and scope of the ordinance is advisable, and should stress that the delay period is intended to provide time to explore alternatives to demolition.

ii. Expanded criteria - Criteria for review prior to demolition should be expanded to include any building or structure located within 200 feet of any local, state or federal historic district.

iii. Historic Districts Act - A statement is needed indicating that if any provisions of the ordinance conflict with M.G.L. Chapter 40C, the Historic Districts Act, that act shall prevail. As the ordinance is currently written, properties within the local historic districts are included under its restrictions. This sets up a conflict between the demolition delay ordinance and the local historic district ordinance which could result in the Salem Historical Commission having a decreased ability to protect a building within a local historic district from demolition. The commission's review powers over district properties allow the commission to deny an application for demolition, where the demolition delay ordinance merely establishes a delay period in which to explore alternatives to demolition. In these circumstances, the stronger preservation protection of the historic district ordinance should apply.

iv. Penalties for non-compliance - The ordinance should specify fines and/or other sanctions for the illegal demolition of a building to which the ordinance applies. Some communities have penalized for illegal demolition by a combination of fines and a two-year building moratorium.

v. Severability - A statement indicating that all other provisions of the ordinance remain valid if one part is judicially declared invalid protects against the entire ordinance becoming invalid in case of legal action.

Timeframe:

Three to six months

Information and Resources:

Massachusetts Historical Commission guidebook for local demolition delay ordinances

Sample demolition delay ordinances (see Appendix)

Action to be taken by:

Historical Commission staff

### 3. Local landmark ordinance

**Purpose:**

To protect individual significant properties not located within a local historic district.

**Tasks:**

- a. Explore the possibility of either enacting a local landmark ordinance or designating individual buildings as "single building districts" through the existing Chapter 40C process for local historic districts. Either approach would allow for design review and protection of significant properties not located within a local historic district. Individual properties would be designated in much the same fashion as local historic districts, and a similar review by the Salem Historical Commission would occur prior to any alterations, demolitions or new construction.
- b. If a local landmark ordinance is enacted, clear priorities should be established for designation of buildings. Landmark designation is an honor which helps preserve and enhance the quality of life for the entire community. Designation should be reserved for buildings not under the protection of local historic districts. These might include commercial buildings in the central business district, as has been done in Cambridge, significant buildings being transferred out of city ownership, and properties whose owners are anxious to have preservation protection in place.

**Timeframe:**

Tasks a and b - Three to six months

**Information and Resources:**

The Cities of Cambridge, Boston and Somerville are among the communities that have successfully designated individual properties as local landmarks. A model local landmark ordinance can be found in the Appendix.

**Action to be taken by:**

Tasks a and b - Historical Commission and staff

### I. EDUCATION AND PUBLIC AWARENESS

**Purpose:**

Any discussion about preservation education and public awareness of Salem's extraordinary historical, architectural and cultural resources must distinguish between education within the community and education outside it. While there will be overlap between these in many cases, the focus of this section will be on the process of

increasing the interest, awareness and understanding of Salem's residents and those who work here, rather than any discussion of interpretation and programs aimed at tourists and visitors.

An important element of preservation education is getting out the message that preservation involves more than the obvious landmarks. The challenge is in reinforcing to local people that all of Salem's older neighborhoods have wonderful histories, interesting buildings, and great value both for the city's quality of life and for its economic and cultural vitality. Salem has many private and public organizations and agencies striving to get out the word, and their efforts should continue, and be coordinated for maximum effectiveness. Methods should be explored for targeting property owners in all the city's older sections, not just in the local historic districts. It is the areas outside the review of the Salem Historical Commission where the greatest threat exists for buildings to be inappropriately altered, neglected or demolished. In addition to residential property owners, efforts are needed to ensure that the business community understands that preservation is an economic asset, and that technical assistance is available to guide any projects affecting historic properties.

Public perception of bodies like the Salem Historical Commission can be negative due to resentment over the existence of a review process. It is essential to emphasize the successes of a local historical commission, illustrating to the public as graphically and regularly as possible that the Salem Historical Commission's role is to maintain and improve the quality of life for all the city's residents by preserving and enhancing the unique qualities that make Salem a special place.

Below are recommended actions relating to the education issues described above.

Tasks:

1. Workshops, lectures and conferences

The city should continue to sponsor workshops, lectures and conferences jointly with other local preservation and cultural groups. These should be particularly targeted to residential property owners, commercial property owners, or specific areas of the city. Topics could include technical advice on design, rehabilitation and renovation issues, such as appropriate signage and storefront design for downtown. Other topics might address the history and development of lesser known historic neighborhoods in the city, such as North and South Salem. Greater opportunities for public discussion of plans relating to tourism and interpretation of local landmarks would increase public commitment and support for the success of these undertakings.

Timetable:

One or two each year

Action to be taken by:

Historical Commission staff jointly with other groups

2. Publications

The preservation planner, Salem Historical Commission, and other local preservation organizations should prepare occasional publications ranging from simple brochures on a single topic such as how to paint your historic house under the new city painting regulations, or reasons to avoid vinyl or aluminum siding on historic buildings, to more ambitious projects like The Salem Handbook prepared by Historic Salem Inc. in 1977. Prepare simple brochures to be distributed to owners of properties in National Register districts explaining the historical and architectural significance of the district and the properties within it. A similar publication was done in 1980 under the Salem Home Improvement Program.

Timetable:

Several months for each publication

Action to be taken by:

Historical Commission staff, Historic Salem, other groups

3. Inventory forms

a. Increase property owners' and tenants' appreciation and awareness of historic resources by mailing inventory forms to residents and businesses. People are often surprised to find that the building they have occupied for years has greater significance than they imagined. Mailing could be spread over a year and included in city water bills to save postage. This type of recognition can provide the impetus for greater attention to the building's preservation.

b. A complete set of the inventory, including inventories of historic burial grounds, should be on file in the local history room at the Salem Public Library.

Timetable:

Task a - One year

Task b - Two to three months

Action to be taken by:

Historical Commission staff

4. Elementary preservation education  
Appreciation of our built environment can and should begin at an early age. Historic Salem Inc. developed an excellent curriculum on Salem's historic architecture in the early 1980s. The six week program was taught for three years, first in the middle schools, and later in all the city's fifth grades. The classes were taught by volunteers from HSI, with the intention (agreed to by the Salem Public Schools) that the program would be taken over by the school system. The materials included handbooks for the students, training materials for the teachers, and a slide program for each of the six classes. These materials were turned over to each elementary school when HSI ceased teaching the program. Since that time various schools have offered some local history, but the organized curriculum has not been continued. This program was a valuable asset, and the possibility of reviving it should be pursued by the Historical Commission staff.

Timetable:

Less than one year

Information and Resources:

Historic Salem Inc.

Curriculum materials at elementary schools

Connie Arlander

Action to be taken by:

Historical Commission staff

5. Press coverage

a. Promote greater visibility for routine and special city preservation activities through more press releases.

b. Establish a regular preservation issues column in the Salem Evening News. Arrangements could be made jointly by the Salem Historical Commission, Salem Redevelopment Authority, Historic Salem, Inc., Salem Partnership, and other preservation-related organizations to rotate preparation of a weekly column in the Salem Evening News.

c. Invite press to preservation functions (e.g. Salem Historical Commission annual awards presentation).

d. Submit the Salem Historical Commission's annual report or a summary of the year's actions and activities to the Salem Evening News.

Timetable:

Task a - Ongoing

Task b - Ongoing once established

Task c - Ongoing  
Task d - Annual

Action to be taken by:

Tasks a, c, d - Historical Commission staff

Task b - Historical Commission staff coordinating with others

6. Preservation awards

The awards currently given each year by the Salem Historical Commission are an excellent way to encourage and reward good preservation projects. Recently a few awards have been given to projects outside the local historic districts. This practice should be continued as a means of giving recognition to other areas of the city, and individuals who have made a contribution to maintaining the character of the city. In addition, the Massachusetts Historical Commission and the National Trust for Historic Preservation both have annual preservation awards programs for which nominations are solicited. The Salem Historical Commission, and other local preservation groups should take every opportunity to nominate deserving projects or individuals for either of these awards.

Timetable:

Annual

Action to be taken by:

Historical Commission, staff, other groups

7. Public information on available resources

A brochure should be prepared by Historic Salem, Inc. for the general public on sources of preservation information available at various locations in the city. This would complement HSI's work in establishing a preservation collection at the Salem Public Library. These sources include the Salem Public Library, which has a local history collection with several shelves devoted to historic preservation materials; the Salem Planning Department, which has the historic properties inventory; and the libraries of the Essex Institute, Peabody Museum, and Salem Atheneum.

Timetable:

Three to six months



Information and Resources:  
Historic Salem Inc.  
Salem Public Library  
Salem Planning Department  
Essex Institute  
Peabody Museum  
Salem Athaneum

Action to be taken by:  
Historic Salem Inc.

#### J. COORDINATION WITH OTHER PRESERVATION GROUPS

Purpose:

To improve and maintain communication and joint efforts among Salem's preservation organizations and to allow all groups to make full use of each other's resources. To take advantage of the skills and facilities of preservation organizations at the regional, state and federal level.

The local organizations which should be involved with these efforts are:

- Salem Planning Department/Salem Historical Commission
- Historic Salem Inc.
- Essex Institute
- House of Seven Gable
- Peabody Museum
- Salem Partnership
- Salem State College
- Salem Maritime National Historic Site
- Hamilton Hall

Outside of Salem many public and private agencies and organizations exist which can serve as valuable resources for local preservation efforts of all sorts. Training and educational opportunities for individuals, historical commissions, and city employees are available through such organizations as Historic Massachusetts Inc., Massachusetts Historical Commission, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and many others. Technical expertise for specific conservation problems can be found through the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities (SPNEA), National Park Service at the Charlestown Navy Yard, and the Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC).

Research facilities on architectural history, historic preservation and preservation planning are available at SPNEA, the Boston Public Library, the Boston Athanaeum, and MHC. Sources of consultants or interns with skills in various aspects of preservation include the MHC and Boston University's American and New England Studies

Program. See the Appendix for a list of organizations and funding sources.

Tasks:

- a. Each of Salem's preservation organizations and the Historical Commission planning assistant should send each other quarterly updates with lists of projects being planned, underway, or recently completed. This would enable groups to offer each other assistance where appropriate and avoid duplications of effort.
- b. Another means of regular contact among the city's preservation groups exists now through the Historic and Cultural Resources Committee of the Salem Partnership. This committee should continue to include representatives of each of Salem's preservation organizations and the Historical Commission staff. This is an important means of keeping communication lines open between the city and the other preservation-related organizations in Salem.
- c. Meetings of the Historic and Cultural Resources Committee should be structured to include a brief update of each organization's current activities to identify common concerns.
- d. Historical Commission staff should serve on boards or committees of local preservation organizations.

Timetable:

Task a - One to two months to set up, then ongoing  
Tasks b-d - Ongoing

Action to be taken by:

Tasks a, b, d - Historical Commission staff  
Task b, c - Salem Partnership Historic and Cultural Resources Committee

1. Salem Project, National Park Service

Purpose:

To promote the ongoing work of the Salem Project. This National Park Service undertaking has the potential for greatly enhancing Salem's quality of life through physical improvements, understanding of historic resources through improved interpretation of Salem's history, and boosting the local economy through the benefits of increased tourism.

Tasks:

- a. Close communication should continue between Salem Project staff, the Planning Department and the Historical Commission. At present this includes the City Planner and Salem Project

staff working jointly on planning for a new visitors' center, a new signage program, and traffic studies, and comment from the Historical Commission on proposals for work on the wharves. Every effort should be made to press for continued Federal funding, and to maximize the community benefit of this project.

Timetable:

Ongoing

Action to be taken by:

City Planner, Historical Commission

2. Massachusetts Historical Commission

Purpose:

To make use of the Massachusetts Historical Commission's many resources available to municipalities and local preservation organizations, in staff assistance through technical expertise of many types, financial assistance, reference materials and special programs.

Tasks:

- a. Among the programs that could be useful in Salem is the MACRIS system, through which the state is computerizing all available data relating to properties included in the historic resources inventory or listed on the State Register of Historic Places. Salem is among the communities already entered into the system. This database system enables the MHC to easily access information on individual properties, or on types of properties, properties by a specific architect or builder, or of a given style, period, material or use. This is a useful tool in planning for or studying historic resources.

MACRIS could be used to identify commercial or residential properties to be targeted for a facade improvement program. Complete lists of individual properties with any type of historic designation (National Historic Landmark, National Register, local historic district) could be generated, including each property within a district. (See Appendix for the MACRIS profile of Salem).

- b. Another technological advance available at the MHC is a GIS system which is doing computerized mapping of all State and National Register properties. Ultimately all inventoried properties will also be included. The system will be linked to the MACRIS system, enabling it to respond to queries such as a map of all eighteenth century brick buildings in Ward 2. This system could also ultimately be linked to a computer

system within the City to provide a data layer for the planning department.

Application of these two systems would allow the Planning Department to evaluate the density and types of historic resources in planning for a given area or project. For example, in establishing the Entrance Corridor Overlay Zone, it would have been possible to easily produce maps of all historic resources in a given project area, and then use the MACRIS system to create a profile of the ages, styles and types of properties in that area. This would enable the Planning Department to tailor the ordinance to the specific characteristics of the historic resources involved.

Timetable:

Task a - Ongoing

Task b - Dependent on MHC progress with system, ongoing

Information and Resources:

Massachusetts Historical Commission

Action to be taken by:

Historical Commission staff

## K. ARCHAEOLOGY

Purpose:

To identify, protect and preserve Salem's archaeological resources.

The City of Salem was the recipient of a Survey and Planning Grant from the Massachusetts Historical Commission in 1987 to conduct an archaeological survey of the city.

Identified pre-historic priority areas were:

- Salem Neck and the Islands
- South/Forest River Drainage and Wetlands
- Strongwater Brook
- North/Danvers River Estuary
- Salem Harbor
- North Salem

Identified historic priority areas were:

- Site of the Old Planter's Settlement
- Winter Island
- Blubber Hollow
- Essex Street/Derby Street District
- Salem's Historic Cemeteries

- County Jail, Jailer's House, site of the John Ward House, and Howard Street Cemetery
- Maritime Waterfront Underwater District
- Salem Willows

The project collected data concerning the city's archaeological resources and drafted a plan with recommendations for site protection and long-term management. Also included were recommendations for interpretation of archaeological sites. Few of these recommendations have been acted upon. Those that remain relevant are below, in some cases expanded or modified. For further information on implementation of these recommendations, the archaeological survey plan and its author should be consulted.

Tasks:

- a. The Planning Department should establish a process for evaluating impact on archaeological resources and for dealing with review and compliance issues. Alternatives are to develop a cooperative arrangement with the archaeology department at the Peabody Museum to share an archaeologist, or to use an archaeologist from the Peabody Museum or elsewhere on a consulting basis as needed.
- b. Using the archaeological survey, the Planning Department should assess where anticipated development or projects will occur that may affect archaeological resources and address the need for further archaeological survey of those areas first. Any project planned for one of the areas identified above should be carefully evaluated by the Historical Commission staff in consultation with an archaeologist for its potential impact on archaeological resources.
- c. Salem should undertake an archaeological survey of all city-owned property and combine results with inventory of all known sites. The complete inventory can be used for planning purposes.
- d. The city should work jointly with the Peabody Museum, Essex Institute, National Park Service and other interested institutions to encourage other archaeological surveys including an underwater survey and other sensitive areas identified above.
- e. Salem should pass an ordinance to protect archaeological sites not protected by State or Federal law.
- f. Winter Island should become a multi-resource archaeological park to interpret its prehistoric sites, remains of Salem's seventeenth-century fishing community, and Fort Pickering .
- g. A major excavation should be conducted at the original site of the John Ward House on the property of the former Essex County jail. This could then be developed into an archaeological exhibit of seventeenth-century life in Salem.

- h. Forest River Park should include a Native American Village reconstruction.
- i. The city should initiate discussions with Salem Project staff regarding the possibility of expanding the Salem Maritime National Historic Site to include properties located in the Essex Street/Derby Street District. Methods of protecting and interpreting nearby archaeological resources associated with the themes of the Maritime Site should be explored.

Timetable:

- Task a - Less than three months to establish, then ongoing
- Task b - Ongoing
- Tasks c, d, f, g, h - Consult archaeologist for timetable
- Task e - One to two months
- Task i - Indefinite

Information and Resources:

The State Archaeologist with the Massachusetts Historical Commission can provide much technical advice on these recommendations. The Peabody Museum has an archaeology department, and could be a great asset in any archaeological undertaking by the city. Among the sources of archaeologists available for consulting purposes are: the University of Massachusetts - Boston, Boston University, and the Public Archaeology Lab in Pawtucket, Rhode Island.

Action to be taken by:

- Tasks a and b - Planning Department and Historical Commission staff
- Tasks c-h - Archaeologist (consultant or staff) with Historical Commission staff
- Task i - National Park Service, archaeologist, and Historical Commission staff

L. Archives

Purpose:

Public records of all sorts are important historical documents, and should be maintained appropriately. Of particular concern are architectural plans and early building permits currently in the basement of Old Town Hall.

Tasks:

- a. An Archives Committee, ideally with representatives from the Essex Institute, Peabody Museum, Essex County, Salem Public Library and Salem State College, should be formed to address methods of conducting an inventory of historical archives throughout the city, and to look into storage and conservation needs. The committee could be appointed by the Mayor.

Alternatively, it could be formed as a subcommittee of the Salem Historical Commission, with volunteer members solicited by the Historical Commission and staff.

- b. Once established, the Archives Committee should work to ensure the adequate care, storage and organization of all types of city records by seeking necessary professional assistance, funding, and materials. Obtain advice from the Massachusetts State Archives on how best to proceed.

Timetable:

Task a - Less than three months

Task b - Ongoing

Information and Resources:

Technical advice may be available through the Massachusetts State Archives. In addition, grant money may be available from the National Historical Publications and Records Commission by applying through the State Archives.

Action to be taken by:

Historical Commission staff

## M. OTHER PROJECTS

Purpose:

Many other new programs would be valuable additions to Salem's preservation efforts, although time and fiscal constraints may make these difficult to achieve in the immediate future. These could include:

Tasks:

- a. Beautification efforts in historic districts - These might include period lighting, placing utility wires underground, and greater use of brick sidewalks. As funds are available, the Planning Department and Salem Historical Commission should determine which beautification projects to pursue. The Historical Commission should be consulted for assistance in selection of appropriate lighting or any form of street furniture.

Timetable:

Dependent on funding

Action to be taken by:

Planning Department and Salem Historical Commission

- b. Facade improvement programs - The establishment of a commercial facade improvement program funded by a revolving loan pool is

being planned for FY91. Expansion to include residential properties should be a goal. An excellent proposal on the subject was prepared for the Planning Department in 1986, and would still be useful.

Timetable:

Ongoing once established

Information and Resources:

Proposal for a Facade Improvement Program for Historic Residences, Prepared 1986 for the Salem Planning Department

Action to be taken by:

Planning Department with Historical Commission staff

- c. Easement program - The city, through the Salem Redevelopment Authority, already holds numerous facade easements on downtown properties. If a program involving the acceptance of preservation restrictions on properties were to be established it should be administered by the Historical Commission and staff, and should be set up with adequate funding and clear procedures to assure its ongoing enforceability.

Timetable:

Two to three months to establish, then ongoing

Information and Resources:

Organizations which accept easements and have policies which would provide useful models include the Massachusetts Historical Commission, Architectural Conservation Trust, and the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities.

Action to be taken by:

Historical Commission staff and Historical Commission

- d. Preservation funds targeted for low- and moderate-income property owners - Establish programs similar to several in Cambridge targeting funds based on income or area. Cambridge has set aside \$20,000 in Community Development Block Grant Funds for a preservation grant program targeted at low-income areas. These grants, generally for \$1,000, cover work done according to the guidelines of the local historical commission. Applications for funds are submitted to the Cambridge Historical Commission, and plans are approved in a design review process similar to local historic district design review.

A similar program provides a 50% subsidy for house painting for owners with low or moderate incomes. The subsidy also provides technical assistance in selecting a contractor, supervising the work, and selecting paint colors.



Timetable:

One to two months to establish once funds are committed

Information and Resources:

Cambridge Historical Commission

Action to be taken by:

Planning Department to initiate funding  
Salem Historical Commission and staff to administer

- e. Plaque program for National Register properties - Historic Salem Inc. should consider establishing a program of plaques for properties individually listed on the National Register. Similar to the general program of historic building markers HSI has operated for years, this program could easily be started by soliciting property owners identified from the State Register. Historical information normally provided to home owners in HSI existing program could be obtained from the National Register forms.

Timetable:

One to two months to establish, then ongoing

Information and Resources:

State Register of Historic Places  
National Register nomination forms, available at the Salem Planning department or Massachusetts Historical Commission

Action to be taken by:

Historic Salem Inc.

## N. MANAGEMENT OF EXPANDED RESPONSIBILITIES

Purpose:

With the proposed expansion of the Washington Square Historic District, the number of properties under design review of the Salem Historical Commission would increase from approximately 600 to 840. If all other recommendations regarding new and enlarged districts were enacted, this number would approach 1200 properties. This doubled review workload combined with numerous other recommendations of this plan - a more active advisory role in other aspects of city preservation policy, review by Historical Commission members of completed projects for compliance and regular field checks for violations - would undoubtedly prove unmanageable for the Historical Commission as it is currently structured. The plan also calls for staff action on many projects. Several alternatives for managing expanded duties exist, including the creation of an historic district commission separate from the Historical Commission and/or additional preservation staffing in the Planning Department.

#### Tasks:

- a. If significant additions are made to the number of properties in local historic districts, create an historic district commission separate from the Historical Commission. The district commission would handle review of all local historic district applications, while the Historical Commission would be responsible for all other preservation matters currently under the existing Historical Commission and proposed in this plan. Historical Commission staff and the Salem Historical Commission should draft a new ordinance establishing the separate commission.
- b. Increase the preservation responsibilities of the preservation planning assistant to full-time. The work recommended in the preservation plan cannot be accomplished by a part-time staff person. A city with such strong economic, social and cultural emphasis on its heritage has a great need of a full-time preservation planner to ensure that these concerns are an integral part of the planning process. Similar positions exist in New Bedford, Somerville, Newton, Brookline and Gloucester.
- c. In order to provide the best ongoing technical preservation skills for the city, hire preservation planning staff with the academic and professional training to provide the needed technical expertise and to spare the cost of hiring consultants. The National Park Service has strict professional qualifications standards for certain work, including National Register nominations and historic resource surveys; the city preservation staff should meet these standards, since the majority of the recommendations call for staff action or coordination. Partial funding for the position would probably be available through MHC Survey and Planning Grant funds earmarked for Certified Local Governments.

Though much larger than Salem, Cambridge and Boston both have sizeable staffs for their historical commissions. The Boston Landmarks Commission has a full-time staff of seven, including an archaeologist and three staff to administer the 7000 properties in districts. The Cambridge Historical Commission has three full-time and several part-time employees administering approximately 2300 properties in two neighborhood conservation districts and 150 properties in local historic districts.

#### Timetable:

- Task a - Dependent on timing of district expansions
- Tasks b and c - Dependent on availability of funding

#### Information and Resources:

Massachusetts Historical Commission for advice on establishing a new commission.

Action to be taken by:

Task a - Historical Commission staff and Historical Commission

Tasks b and c - Planning Department