

CHAPTER TWO

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

BRIEF HISTORY OF DOVER

Dover was part of Paulingstown (Pawling) until February 20, 1807, when some 30,000 acres were separated and became the new Town. It is not definitely known by whom the Town was first settled; the assumption is that it was by the Dutch. There are no dates available to determine when they came.

Richard Sackett, while living on the Oblong, could have been the first to use the name of Dover in honor of his home in the mother country.

The Oblong was a stretch of land between New York and Connecticut that was claimed by both. In 1731, the dispute was settled when New York was ceded a strip of land sixty miles long and one and one-quarter miles wide. That part of the Oblong, known as East or Preston Mountain, was first settled by Martin Preston, closely followed by Hans Hufcut.

The Industrial Age came to Dover when the New York and Harlem Railroad finished its construction to this point in 1850. It fostered the growth of the iron and marble industries, transformed agriculture to dairy farms designed to supply milk to the markets, justified the formation of the first bank and brought the first non-Dutch-English immigrants to this vicinity. The last run of a steam train was on September 11, 1952. All are diesel operated now.

The most illustrious "Doverite" is General John Henry Ketcham, born here in 1832. He was a member of the House of Representatives for thirty-four years. His tenure ran from Abraham Lincoln to Theodore Roosevelt, missing only two sessions of Congress--one due to defeat and one due to ill health. He served in the Civil War and died in 1906.

Benson J. Lossing, a prominent historian of the 19th century, was also born here in 1813. He lived on Chestnut Ridge and died in 1889.

The farms, which were prevalent in the late 1800's, have dwindled to but a handful.

One of the most important industries in Dover in the 19th century was the iron industry. To separate the iron from impurities, it was smelted in a furnace. The remains of two of these furnaces can still be seen at Dover Furnace and Camp Sharparoon (Minisink).

At present the two largest employers are Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center and Wassaic Developmental Center.

There are six established churches:

Dover Plains

Second Baptist	1794
St. Charles Borromeo	1846
United Methodist	1852
St. James Episcopal	1894

Wingdale

First Baptist	1757
United Methodist	1855

On the National Register is the Tabor-Wing House Built in 1815. It is owned by the Town of Dover Historical Society and is an example of a wealthy country home of the Federal period of Architecture.

A state landmark is the Stone Church. This is a rocky cave, whose arched opening resembles the entrance to a medieval cathedral with the light filtering through an arched roof. Tradition says that Sassacus, chief of the Pequot tribe, fled to Dover to escape the English and hid in this cave.

John Preston's Inn was located on the "Great Road from New York to Albany and Vermont." The original part was built in 1750. Still visible on the Coach House is a primitive painting with the inscription, "Free conscience void of offence." These words are part of the town seal.

The inn stayed in the Preston Family until 1927 when it was sold, restored, and reopened. Today, as Old Drovers Inn, it is still in operation.

The ultimate aim for Dover's future is to enhance the Town through planning, the preservation of architecture, the planting of trees and shrubs and improving the economic and cultural needs of the community.

As they always have, Dover residents keep looking over their shoulders to see what might be coming up the "Great Road from New York."

Source: Municipal Historians' Book of Dutchess County (1983), Doris Dedrick, Town Historian. For a complete history of Dover see A History of Dover Township, Town of Dover Historical Society (1982).

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Why is preservation of historic structures and other cultural features so important to Dover's future? Throughout this century there has been a growing recognition that examples of America's historical heritage and the lessons to be learned from history should not be isolated in museums or limited to textbook pages. History must be tangible if it is to be understood in the context of everyday life. Nor should history be represented only by places associated with major national figures or events. Local historic landmarks often have great importance for individual families and communities.

Since architecture is perhaps the most public of art forms and the most visible expression of local history, preservation of structures that are architecturally or historically significant often generates a renewed sense of community pride and a focus for neighborhood improvement efforts. Older buildings provide amenities, such as architectural detailing, exceptional woodwork, and quality craftsmanship that are rare in new construction. Restored districts convey a sense of place and community identity that is impossible to replace or recreate once the architectural history is lost.

Restoration projects can also be a catalyst for economic revitalization. There are numerous examples of villages and hamlets that have enhanced their appearance and commercial viability through facade improvement programs. Preservation efforts have often been related to increases in the tourist potential of communities. Historic preservation has provided an alternative to the throwaway economy; it is being discovered that older structures can frequently be rehabilitated and adapted to new uses at a lower cost than new construction. Finally, the escalation of overall property values is almost always a by-product of historical recognition and rehabilitation.

In the past preservation efforts usually focused on a few prominent buildings, such as the oldest surviving structures in a town, mansions, or high-style architectural achievements. This philosophy reflected the long-term influence of the federal government's Historic Sites Act of 1935, which concentrated on individual examples of exceptional national significance, like Washington's Headquarters in Newburgh or the FDR National Historic Site in Hyde Park.

After passage of the more comprehensive National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, public support for preservation has now broadened to include historic resources of state and local interest. Moreover, the types of sites considered worthy of protection now include vernacular buildings (more locally inspired architecture not designed by architects), early twentieth century structures, monuments, cemeteries, farm complexes and industrial buildings.

The emphasis has also shifted towards recognition of the contextual relationships surrounding buildings. Intact commercial streetscapes and clusters of older buildings can be designated historic districts. Scenic or culturally important features like stone walls, outbuildings, dams and mill ponds, mature stands of trees and historic landscapes, especially if these elements form a continuous pattern, can be incorporated into districts or designated scenic road corridors. Historic preservation also means the sensitive design of new or rehabilitated buildings in areas of historical or architectural significance.

Protection Measures

Dover has a rich and diverse historical past. Much of the architectural evidence is concentrated in the hamlets of Dover Plains and Webatuck, although there are a number of intact residences, commercial buildings and former industrial sites throughout the Town.

Currently, Dover's historic sites have very little formal protection. Even though many structures in the Town merit further examination of their eligibility, only one property is listed on the National Register of Historic Places: the Tabor-Wing House in Dover Plains, built in the early 1800s, one of the oldest intact houses in the Town. Except for the addition of modern plumbing, heating and electrical systems, there have been few changes made to the house. A classic center hall Federal country home of the period, the Tabor-Wing house features an elaborately detailed front porch and doorway with a Palladian window above. It was purchased in 1977 by the Dover Historical Society who documented the building's history for listing on the National Register in 1982. The building currently houses the Dover Library.

Nomination to the National Register primarily provides honorary recognition, but it can also perceptually change attitudes toward significant structures and districts and give credibility to preservation efforts. There are several other significant advantages attached to a National Register property, including:

1. Registered properties and properties determined to be eligible for the Register receive a measure of protection from federal and/or state sponsored or assisted projects. For example, National Register properties that may be affected by state or federally funded road widening projects are subject to an extra level of review to avoid negative impacts.
2. Projects involving registered properties often receive higher priority ratings for state and federal grants such as the Community Development Block Grant program in Dutchess County or the recent State Environmental Quality Bond Act.
3. Qualifying rehabilitation projects on commercial, industrial, or rental National Register properties are subject to a substantial tax credit under the provisions of the Tax Reform Act of 1986. There are limitations on how much of the original structure must remain and the types of income that can be credited.

Being listed itself does not place control on registered properties. Owners may sell, alter, or dispose of their property as they wish, although there are a few instances in which restrictions may be attached to National Register properties. For example, if an owner applies for a state or federal grant, the project funding is subject to review for consistency with the historic character of the property. Also, under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR), proposed actions on or adjacent to National Register-eligible properties that are subject to agency or local board approvals are considered Type I actions and require a more comprehensive review for significant impacts.

There are other historic preservation techniques, ranging from the power of persuasion through educational campaigns to the outright purchase of critical important historic sites by not-for-profit groups, such as the purchase of the Tabor-Wing House by the Dover Historical Society. Such purchased property can be adapted for public use or restored and resold with protective deed restrictions through a revolving preservation fund.

The most comprehensive protection measures are regulatory in nature. These can only be implemented by local governments, during site plan review by the Planning Board, or often through the creation of a landmark provision or overlay zone in the town zoning law. Specific ordinance language should be based on a thorough field study and designation process.

Dutchess County Historic Survey

In 1986, using Community Development Block Grant funds, the Dutchess County Department of Planning commissioned the Dutchess County Historical Society to conduct a countywide historic survey. The primary purpose of Phase I of the project, which was completed in 1988, was to identify and document all areas of the county that had not yet been comprehensively surveyed, using New York State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) inventory forms, photographs and maps.

The guidelines for the countywide survey used standards provided by SHPO for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, although intact structures or sites of specifically local historic interest were also considered to meet the inventory criteria. Historic resources such as buildings, stone walls, bridges, cemeteries, historic landscapes, scenic views, and potential archeological sites were coded and mapped. All principal structures over 50 years old were color-coded according to architectural integrity and significance. Those that were considered sufficiently intact and distinctive in terms of architectural style or known historical importance to the community were documented with inventory forms and photographs. These structures are not necessarily eligible for the National Register, but warrant further historic research to determine if they merit nomination.

The Town of Dover's preliminary survey was completed in 1988 and finally field checked in 1990. Over 120 sites were identified as potentially significant and worthy of serious consideration during any future planning review process. The history of these properties needs to be further investigated to determine the likelihood of National Register nomination or a designation which would identify the site as being of local importance. Concentrations of intact historic structures on Mill, Market and Railroad streets in Dover Plains, in the Webatuck area, and the buildings of the Harlem Valley Psychiatric Center make these locations the most likely candidates for historic district nominations.

Many of the sites which are locally significant relate to Dover's history of commerce and industry. During the early 1800s, the Harlem Valley was a major route for drovers who brought livestock from Vermont and other northern states through Dutchess County on route to the slaughterhouses in New York City. Because this practice brought a constant flow of people and animals through Dover, inns began to be established along the route. One such business, Old Drover's Inn, originally called John Preston's Inn, still stands at the intersection of Duncan Hill Road and Route 6. Old Drover's Inn was built in 1750, with a major addition added in 1805.

The iron industry, which flourished in the Town during the nineteenth century, was one of the most important industries in Dover. Although the operation of the industry died out early in the twentieth century, evidence of its operation still remains today in the form of furnaces which were used to separate the impurities, or smelt the iron. Two of the very few remaining furnaces in Dutchess County are in Dover. Perhaps the most well known and certainly the best preserved of these furnaces is the Sharparoon furnace. This furnace was built in 1881, using marble mined in the Harlem Valley, by the South Boston Iron Company which was located in the nearby hamlet of Dover Furnace. The land is currently owned by the New York City Mission Society and is run as a camp. White's furnace is also located in this area near the base of the slopes leading up to West Mountain. White's furnace used to be part of the Dutchess County Iron Works.

Other early industrial sites with local historic significance include abandoned quarry and mill sites, such as the Marble Works in Dover Plains, Ketcham's Marble Mill, Platt Quarry, Preston Quarry, the Burton Brook saw mill site, Reagan's Mill in South Dover, Preston's Mill in Webatuck, and the Bridgeport Iron Works and saw mill. Although some of these sites remain vacant, other buildings have been rehabilitated and are now occupied as residences or commercial uses. Six additional sites around Dover have also been identified for potential archeological research.

Now that the windshield survey of all the towns in the county is completed, the Planning Department, in Phase II of the project, will organize local meetings to ask for assistance in refining the survey results and generate interest in the National Register nomination process and other local preservation strategies. Table 2.1 provides a summary of the sites documented in the survey.

Table 2.1
DUTCHESS COUNTY HISTORIC SURVEY, 1990
AREAS WITH IDENTIFIED SITES

<u>Location</u>	<u>Map Reference Numbers</u>
Dover Plains and Vicinity	
- Stone Church	12
- Seven Wells	11
- Mill Street	38-45, 59
- Route 22	6, 24-30, 32, 143,144
- Market Street/Railroad Square	47-54
- Marble Works, Mill St.	60-63
- East of Ten Mile River	13-16, 65-68
- Lime Kiln Road	70-72
East Mountain	18
West Mountain	1-5, 7, 143

Table 2.1 (Cont'd)

Central Dover	73
- Dover Furnace and Vicinity	75-79
	81-84
- Old Drover's Inn Area	87-89, 145
- White's Furnace	74
- Sharparoon Furnace	80
Southeastern Dover	
- South Dover	85, 86, 91,
92,	
	96
- Platt Quarry, Old Post Rd.	90
- Preston Quarry, South of Lake Weil	93
- Reagan's Mill, Old Post Rd/Reagan's Mills Rd.	94, 95
- Webatuck	96-103
- Wingdale	104, 105
- Webatuck Craft Village, Preston Mill	106-113
- Deuel Hollow	125-130, 132,
	134-138, 140,
	142
- Bridgeport Iron Works Sawmill Site, (Duell Hollow Rd. & Leather Hill Rd.)	137, 138
Southwestern Dover	114-121, 123,
	124
- Burton Brook Sawmill, West Dover Rd.	122

Note: Map references are those assigned by the Dutchess County Planning Department on their Historic Survey maps. The complete survey documentation and maps are available at the Planning Department.

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS FOR PLANNING

The process of systematically identifying all of Dover's historic resources has begun through the countywide historic survey. The Dover Historical Society has also helped raise the community's awareness of its past through National Register listing of the Tabor-Wing House. Yet more needs to be done.

Preservation cannot be a passive affair. Unless the Town enacts protection measures, the development pressures which are evident in Dover and the surrounding communities threaten to irreparably alter the historic and scenic character of the Town. More pieces of Dover's history will go the path of Jackson Wing's Inn, which was demolished in 1973, and be gone forever. Specific steps that can be taken include the continuation of the historic survey documentation process, resulting in the eventual nomination of eligible buildings to the National Register of Historic Places.

Since the register nomination process can take years and offers only limited protection from state and federal actions, the Town should consider local measures to protect and preserve its historic resources. A local landmarks committee could be authorized to document and designate structures and sites whose age, architecture or importance to Dover's history make them worthy of recognition. Locally identified landmarks can help form the basis for increased attention on compatibility issues in the site plan review process, as well as a potential local landmarks protection provision in the zoning law. Historic markers, honorary awards, model restoration projects and other educational efforts are vital components of an effective preservation program, but in periods of rapid change, only consistently applied regulatory measures will ensure the Town's historic legacy.