

CHAPTER 2
PLAN OF CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT



HISTORIC RESOURCES

Overview

The Town of Darien has a wealth of historic resources including houses more than 300 years old, and many other historic features such as New England stone walls, cemeteries, monuments, trees, non-residential structures, and open spaces, which may not be historic *per se*, but do have significance to the Town. All of these contribute an important part of the community character, and together, they create a sense of continuity with our agrarian origins. In addition to the Town Historian, there are a number of Town Boards, Commissions, and Departments which are responsible in the area of historic resource protection: The Planning and Zoning Commission, the Board of Selectmen, the Architectural Review Board, the Monuments and Ceremonies Commission, the Beautification Commission, and the Public Works Department. Moreover, there are a number of tools available to protect the many different historic resources.

Policies

Continue the use of the following preservation tools:

Protected Town Landmark Status

Under Section 1051 of the Darien Zoning Regulations, the Planning and Zoning Commission specifically recognizes that certain structures and land areas have value as Town landmarks, and that value can transcend the ordinary application of the standards incorporated in the Zoning Regulations. Therefore this section allows the Planning and Zoning Commission to waive certain regulations and standards for a particular structure or site in order to preserve it and conserve the values and appropriate uses of its environs. A list of Protected Town Landmarks is set forth in Exhibit 2-1. This shows that a number of buildings have been given that designation. In 1979, six heritage trees were given the Protected Town Landmark designation. An Historic Tree Inventory was completed in 2001, and is set forth in Exhibit 2-2.



*Protected Town Landmark,
Little Red Schoolhouse, 21 Tokeneke Road.
(Darien's oldest public building)*



The beech tree on Allen O'Neill Drive.

Demolition Delay Ordinance

Chapter 12 of the Town Code of Ordinances was adopted in 1991 and provides for up to a 90-day demolition waiting period for certain older structures. This period allows the Town Historian and/or the Darien Historical Society time to analyze the structure, and if appropriate, explore methods to preserve, relocate, and/or document its significance.

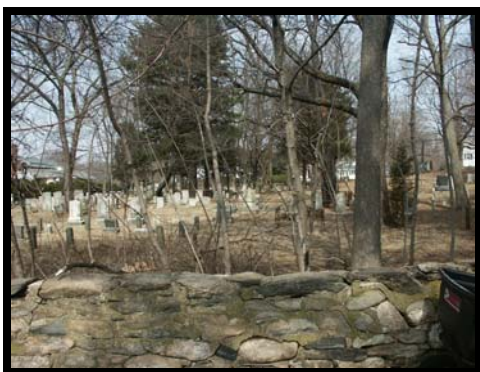
National Register of Historic Places

There are now three buildings within Town which are on the National Register of Historic Places. They are: the Darien Community Association building at 274 Middlesex Road; the Mather-McPherson homestead on Stephen Mather Road; and the Bates-Scofield Homestead on Old King's Highway North.

There is now one National Register Historic District within Darien, called the Boston Post Road National Register Historic District. It is located generally along Boston Post Road and Brookside Road, from Academy Street to just east of Brookside Road (see Exhibit 2-3 on page A2-7).

Cemetery Preservation

Section 19a-315 of the Connecticut General Statutes defines "Ancient Burial Grounds" and sets out regulations regarding their preservation. Within the Town there are a number of cemeteries and Ancient Burial Grounds. Some of these are privately owned, and several are Town owned. Others are small, scattered and on private property. Some of these may not be visible from a street and may be out of general sight so it is important to clarify who is responsible for their maintenance. Exhibit 2-4 shows the location of all cemeteries in Darien. They are listed with further details about each of them, in Exhibit 2-5.



Two of the many cemeteries located throughout the Town of Darien.

The Natural and Architectural Preservation Survey (NAPS)

The Junior League completed this 500 building survey in 1980 for the State of Connecticut Inventory of Historic Resources, and it can provide a starting point for analyzing resources and designating historic structures. This includes historic and architectural buildings of importance.

To make use of the following available preservation tools when applicable and practical:

Village Districts

Section 8-2j of the Connecticut General Statutes states in part “Such districts shall be located in areas of distinctive character, landscape or historic value that are specifically identified in the Plan of Conservation and Development of a municipality”. Potential Village Districts are shown on Exhibit 2-6 in the Appendix.



Prospect Avenue.



Ring's End Road.

Local Historic Districts

Section 7-147b of the Connecticut General Statutes addresses the specific procedures for establishing such a district. Similar to Village Districts, local Historic Districts would only be appropriate in limited neighborhoods where there are a number of historic structures in the same area. Parts of the areas listed in Appendix A2 under Village Districts would also be appropriate for consideration for a Local Historic District.

Scenic Road Designations

Section 7-149a of the Connecticut General Statutes specifically authorizes communities to designate scenic roads. This may regulate future changes such as widening, removal of stone walls and tree cutting on such designated roads. Examples of roads that may be appropriate for such a designation are Hollow Tree Ridge Road, Old King's Highway South, Stephen Mather Road, Brookside Road, and Ring's End Road.



Hollow Tree Ridge Road.



Rings End Road.



Old King's Highway South.

Recommendations

With the assistance of the Town Historian and/or the Historical Society, the Planning and Zoning Commission should identify additional Town Landmarks that are worthy of the Protected Town Landmark designation.

The Building Official and Town Historian should analyze the Demolition Delay Ordinance to determine if this ordinance could be improved.

Within the ten-year time frame of this Plan, it would be valuable to update the 1980 Natural and Architectural Preservation Survey (NAPS). The Geographic Information System (GIS) could be used as a tool in this project, and could reflect changes that have occurred since the original study.

The Planning and Zoning Commission should consider establishing setback requirements for development near cemeteries/ancient burial sites.

Continue to publicize existing historic resources.

Study the use of tools, noted in the above policies section, which may help preserve neighborhoods, including “tax benefits” for historic preservation and/or other regulatory accommodations.

Include clear signage at all cemeteries, and continue to maintain existing monuments.



The monument on Old King's Highway South.



The Frate Park Monument.