

SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY OF RESOURCES

<u>Historic Resources Added</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Buildings:	124
Districts:	8 (255 contributing buildings; 4 structures)
District Expanded:	1 (9 contributing buildings)
Other (structures, gates, walls, signs)	2 walls

<u>Total Historic Resources</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Buildings	327
Districts	17 (932 contributing properties; 4 structures)
Other (structures, gates, walls, signs):	19
Resources Demolished or Significant Loss of Integrity	31

<u>Periods of Construction</u>	<u>Totals</u>	
Historic Resource	Existing	Demolished/Altered
ca. 1800 – 1850	21	11
ca. 1851 – 1900	53	10
ca. 1901 – 1950	250	10
ca. 1951+	3	0

<u>Historic Resource Type</u>	<u>Totals</u>	
	Existing	Demolished/Altered
Residential	264	20
Agricultural (Farmsteads)	29	9
Commercial	9	1
Educational (Schools)	9	0
Religious (churches, convents)	6	1
Social/Recreational (country clubs)	4	0
Transportation (train station, bridge abutment)	2	0
Industrial (mills)	1	1
Funerary	2	0
Civic (fire hall)	2	0
Landscape Feature (stone wall/ street signs, etc)	18	0
Structures (water tower)	1	0

<u>Color Code</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Historic Resource New	
Blue	73
Green	56
Yellow	6
Historic Resource (Total)	
Blue	241
Green	94
Yellow	30
Demolished/Altered Resource	
Blue	9
Green	8
Yellow	15
<u>National Register Status</u>	<u>Totals</u>
NRE (New)	9
NRL (New)	0
NRE (Total)	30
NRL (Total)	13

The town of Amherst was a rural agricultural community during the nineteenth-century. Building tended to occur along major arterial routes – roads, railroad, and the Erie Canal. Although the village of Williamsville was the population hub, hamlets including Eggertsville, Snyder, Getzville and Swormville developed along the transpiration routes. In the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century a number of wealthy families began to relocate to “country” estates, away from the industrial city. In Amherst, these estates tended to be located along Main Street, where, by the early twentieth-century, people could commute by electric trolley, and eventually by car, to the city. In the first decades of the twentieth century the process of suburbanization began as developers bought large tracts of land, laid out roads and subdivided the area into “estates”, affordable by an upper class. This development occurred primarily in the vicinity of the village and the southwest corner of the town. The rural agricultural, and landscape defined by large estates was becoming defined by a pattern of roads, and housing lots as developers bought more land, constructed more roads and marketed to an upper- and middle-class homeowner. This pattern continued through the post-World War II years when the lots became smaller, and the houses became standardized, lacking the distinction of a National style. The market was primarily middle-class.

The suburban landscape in the 1960s and 1970s saw an accelerated development as a regional office, commercial, and educational center. The impact of growth, and continued development on historic cultural resources is evidenced in large estates being adaptively reused for other purposes, Main Street residences becoming shops and offices, and resources being demolished as new subdivisions are constructed.

Most threatened by continued development are Areas 1, and 2 in the northern part of town. These areas remain somewhat rural with large tracts of open land, and have the greatest number of farmsteads remaining in the town. Also under threat are properties that are isolated nineteenth- and early-twentieth century resources surrounded by contemporary suburban development. There are also cultural resources that are in no danger of being demolished, however inappropriate alterations to, or replacement of historic material fabric will compromise their integrity.

The Town of Amherst has a rich collection of architectural resources that contribute to an understanding of the town's growth, and an understanding of suburban growth in general. This survey has identified 135 potentially significant resources and in addition to those identified in the *Reconnaissance Survey*, 1998. The Updated Reconnaissance Level Survey identified those resources that define the Town of Amherst physically and historically. The following recommendations suggest various tool designed to protect and enhance these resources:

1. Use the Color Code System as a Tool

The color code system is a valuable tool to provide a general comparison among resources. However it should be used as a guide to determine the relative ranking of a resource. For example, there are resources that are designated local landmarks, such as the **School House at 1323 North Forest Road** (ca. 1860; Photo 9-6), that have been determined to not be National Register Eligible. There are also resources, such as the **Brunner House at 2751 North Forest Road** (ca. 1870; Photo 3-12), that may not have been given a Blue ranking in the *Reconnaissance Level Survey*, 1997 and have been determined to be National Register Eligible. **Williamsville High School** (ca. 1949; Photo 8-4) is a local Designated Historic Landmark and National Register Listed. It was given a Green ranking in the *Reconnaissance Level Survey*, 1997. The use of the color code system only as a guiding tool has amplified importance given the adoption of new laws that establish the requirements for the delay and possible denial of the issuance of a demolition permit for certain historic structures in the Town of Amherst¹.

¹ Local Law No. 13-2011, which was adopted on 5/16/11 amends Chapter 83 of the Code of the Town of Amherst, also known as the Building Construction Administration Ordinance of the Town of Amherst to Delay the Demolition of Historic Structures. Chapter 121 of the Code of the Town of Amherst, also known as the Historic Preservation Ordinance of the Town of Amherst was amended by a law adopted on 6/20/11. Both laws establish requirements for the delay and possible denial of the issuance of a demolition permit for certain historic structures within the town.

2. Designate local landmarks and historic districts.

The Town of Amherst's Historic Preservation Ordinance provides for the identification, designation and protection of historic resources. The new law amending Chapter 121 provides an added level of protection that will delay and possibly prevent the demolition of these resources. The current survey identified individual properties that have been determined to be National Register Eligible and National Register Listed. Designating these properties as Local Landmarks would further their protection.

The preservation ordinance also provides that HPC will review plans for the alteration, construction, removal, or demolition of a landmark, and improvement to a landmark site, or a structure within a historic district before a Certificate of Appropriateness is issued. For this reason it is imperative that the HPC designate resources identified as local landmarks, specifically the Districts identified since this will help preserve the character defining features of the town. There is sufficient documentation of the individual developers and builders of early suburban neighborhoods in the *Reconnaissance Level Survey, 1997*, which when combined with the patterns of development identified in the current survey suggests that these districts could be designated as local landmarks with a minimal amount of effort.

The HPC may want to consider thematic designation of individual resources that are linked architecturally and/or historically:

Thematic and non-contiguous districts to consider:

- i. The 19th century stone buildings of Amherst. Two stone residences have been demolished since the 1997 survey.
- ii. Late 19th- early 20th century suburban estates. These are a defining component of the town's history. The Franciscan Missionary/Sisters of the Divine Child, 6380 Main Street, the former Goodyear Estate has been demolished for a new suburban residential development.
- iii. The Tudor's of Amherst. The Tudor style is a character-defining feature in Areas 5 and 6. The style includes large, architect designed examples, as well as more modest presentations of the style.
- iv. Farmsteads in Amherst. The farmsteads located primarily in Area 2 the last remaining from the town's rich agricultural history.
- v. Log Cabins in Amherst. The existence of historic fabric associated with the log cabins identified in the *Intensive Level Survey, 1998* will require an interior survey.

3. Use the information and research from the *Intensive Level Survey, 1998* to complete National Register Nomination Forms.

This document has cross-referenced the properties that were included in the *Intensive Level Survey, 1998*, with National Register eligible and National Register Listed properties. There is sufficient historic research completed in all of the surveys completed to date to nominate properties to the National Register. It should be noted that not all local landmarks are National Register eligible.

4. Comply with State and National Historic Preservation Laws

The survey reports completed to date provide an excellent resource to expedite NYS-OPRHP review for state- and federally-funded rehabilitation projects and projects that trigger a Section 106, or SEQRA review. Laws governing the review process are:

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, directs federal agencies to consider historic resources in their project planning.

New York State has a parallel law for state agencies in Section 14.09 of the State Historic Preservation Act of 1980.

Local environmental review for municipalities was initiated under the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) of 1974.

5. Develop programs for public education and to promote awareness of the value and treatment of historic resources.

The attitude the public has concerning the town's cultural resources, including their own property, is vital if the integrity of those resources is to be maintained. An informed public makes better decisions.

There are a number of approaches to increasing a community's awareness regarding the town's historic resources including:

- Preservation Workshops: historic window repair, masonry/mortar, water problems, wood siding and so on;
- Neighborhood walking tours that provide a history of the areas development;
- Public Meetings and Presentations: people are often unaware of the history in their own backyard;
- Co-ordinate efforts with the Amherst Museum: exhibits, workshops, presentations
- Interactive website with a comprehensive town history, historic resources, programs, linked to National Parks resources. Most people just "Google" it.

- All of the above but at the grade school level. A lot of schools have “expedition” learning programs that look for inexpensive ways to expand the learning experience.

6. Investigate Archaeological Resources

Extensive archaeological investigations have been completed in the town. The rivers and streams, and settlement patterns in the town suggest a high sensitivity for Archaeological resources (historic and prehistoric). Appendix 5, Reports of the Archaeological Survey, Town of Amherst, NY provides a useful tool in understanding the historic and prehistoric resources in the town. This information is vital in preservation planning, land-use planning and development.

7. Use GIS system supplementing this document to facilitate communication with other town boards and committees.

As a final component of the survey, each historic resource was mapped in GIS, and linked to a photograph with information including address; year built; contributing/non-contributing structures in districts; Local Historic Landmark Status; and National Register eligibility/listing data where applicable.