

HISTORIC AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

4.1 Introduction

To properly plan for what a community is to become, an understanding of where that community came from is essential. Lincoln's historical and cultural resources play a central role in planning for the future. Historic and cultural resources within a community are indicators of this heritage and can include structures, properties, places, landmarks, archeological sites, landscapes, and natural areas that the community has determined to be noteworthy and of primary importance for recognition and preservation. The physical remnants of heritage provide valuable glimpses into history, offering information on how people lived and worked, their values, and the roles they played in the community. They also provide us with an understanding of how the built environment has changed over time. The historic and cultural resources element of the Comprehensive Plan focuses on the protection and preservation of important historic, cultural, and archaeological features of Lincoln. These historic and cultural resources are closely linked with a community's natural and built environment.

4.2 History of Lincoln

Lincoln was home to the indigenous peoples of Wôpanâak (Wampanoag), Nahaganset, Nipmuc, Pokanoket for thousands of years (Native Land Digital, 2023). A rare Paleo-Indian period (10,000-6,000 BCE) site and several Archaic Period (6,000-500 BCE) sites have been documented in Lincoln (Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, 2010). The Town of Lincoln has an important agricultural history, with remnants of the agricultural heritage existing throughout. Farmhouses, barns, and sheds survive in good condition and are further detailed in Chapter 7, *Agriculture*. The Blackstone and Moshassuck rivers had fertile soils and were used for fishing, hunting, gathering, and agriculture. During colonial times, lime mining occurred at the village of Lime Rock. The Blackstone River Valley, a National Heritage Corridor that includes areas in Lincoln, historically supported various agricultural activities such as farming and mills. This area is known for the Farm to Factory transformation, the beginning of the American Industrial Revolution (Blackstone River Valley). Today, agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining directly employ only around 26 workers (or about 0.2% of the population) in Lincoln (U.S. Census, 2021).

Early roads including the Great Road and River Road were laid out along presumed Native American trails along the Blackstone and Moshassuck Rivers (Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, 2010). The land use pattern today is defined by businesses concentrated along the Blackstone and Moshassuck rivers and transportation systems that link them to Providence (United States Department of the Interior). Lincoln was formerly recognized as a rural community, with open space, forested lands, and agricultural areas that continue to have a major influence on its landscape. Land use changes that occurred between 1988-2020 are summarized in Chapter 1, *Land Use*.

4.3 Existing Conditions

4.3.1 Historic and Cultural Resources

Historic resources can be listed on federal, state, and local registers for a variety of reasons, including their architectural significance, their archaeological/historic significance, or because they

reflect landscapes, development patterns, or lifestyles that are threatened. Many historic and cultural resources carry both federal and local protections.

Understanding the levels of protection for historic resources is critical to the assessment of existing conditions and future preservation efforts. These levels are described below:

- **The National Register of Historic Places** is the official list of the country's historic places authorized by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 and maintained by the Department of the Interior (National Park Service, 2023). The National Register of Historic Places and National Historic Landmarks Program provides measures for documentation, certain levels of promotion, and protection from federally funded projects (Advisory Council on Historic Preservation). Historic places are protected from development that includes an element of federal funding, licensing, or permitting. The federal agency involved must document the effects of federal actions on historic properties and consult with stakeholders as outlined in Section 106 (Advisory Council on Historic Preservation).
- **Local Historic District Zoning** is a special zoning area that monitors and guides construction activity in historic areas (Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission). The Town of Lincoln does not have a historic zoning district. The Town of Lincoln has a Mill Conversion Overlay District. The purpose of this overlay district is to, "allow for the conversion of Lincoln's historic mills while preserving the character of nearby residential and commercial neighborhoods; to encourage the preservation, reuse, and renovation of historic mill properties; and promote diversified housing opportunities and uses such as commercial, retail or office use, or a combination of such uses."
- **Preservation Easements** are legal agreements between an owner and the Rhode Island Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission that the historic and architectural character of the property will be preserved, and that the property will not be altered without the Commission's approval (Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission). In Lincoln, Preserve Rhode Island holds a preservation easement on the property of Mowry House and Valentine Whitman House to ensure its long-term protection and preservation (Preserve Rhode Island).

The Town of Lincoln has historically significant structures throughout. There are many buildings, districts, and other structures of historic importance interspersed with modern development. Table 4-1, National Register of Historic Places, and Map 4-1, Historic and Cultural Resources Map, lists properties listed on the federal government's National Register of Historic Places.

Table 4-1. National Register of Historic Places				
Name on the Register	Date Listed	Area of Significance	Location	Category of Property
Albion Historic District	July 19, 1984	Industry; Engineering Architecture;	Roughly bounded by Berkshire Dr., Willow Lane, Ledge Way, Kennedy Boulevard, and	District

Table 4-1. National Register of Historic Places

			School and Main Sts.	
Eleazer Arnold House	November 24, 1968	Architecture	Great Rd. (RI 123) near its junction with RI 126	Building
Israel Arnold House	December 18, 1970	Architecture	Great Rd.	Building
Ballou House	August 30, 1984	Architecture	Albion Rd.	Building
Blackstone Canal	May 6, 1971	Community Planning and Development;	From Steeple and Promenade Sts. in Providence to the Massachusetts border in North Smithfield	Structure
Elliot-Harris-Miner House	August 30, 1984	Architecture	1406 Old Louisquisset Pike	Building
Great Road Historic District	July 22, 1974	Industry; Agriculture; Transportation; Architecture	Great Rd.	District
Hearthside	April 24, 1973	Architecture	Great Rd.	Building
Jenckes House	August 30, 1984	Architecture	81 Jenckes Hill Rd.	Building
Jenckes House	October 10, 1984	Architecture	1730 Old Louisquisset Pike	Building
Lime Kilns	August 30, 1984	Industry	Off Louisquisset Pike, Sherman and Dexter Rock Rds.	Structure
Limerock Village Historic District	May 23, 1974	Industry; Transportation; Architecture	In an irregular pattern along Smith, Wilbur, and Great Rds., and Old Louisquisset Pike	District
Manville Company Worker Housing Historic District	April 2, 2009	Industry; Agriculture	Bounded by Chestnut St., Angle St., Railroad St., Winter St., Fall St., Spring St., Park Way, Almeida Dr., and Main St.	District
Old Ashton Historic District	August 30, 1984	Architecture	Lower River Rd. and Blackstone Canal Towpath	District
Pullen Corner School	August 30, 1984	Architecture	Angell and Whipple	Building
Saylesville Historic District	August 30, 1984	Industry; Agriculture	Roughly bounded by Memorial Ave., Scotts Road, Industrial Circle, Smithfield Ave.,	District

Table 4-1. National Register of Historic Places

			and Woodland Court	
Saylesville Meetinghouse	November 28, 1978	Agriculture; Religion	Smithfield Ave.	Building
Whipple-Cullen House and Barn	November 14, 1991	Architecture	Old River Rd. south of its junction with George Washington Highway	Building

Source: *National Register of Historic Places*, <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/nationalregister/database-research.htm#table>

The historical significance and cultural offerings in Lincoln provide a wide variety of experiences for residents and visitors. The Great Road, which served as the main connection between Providence, Hartford, and Worcester during colonial times, includes several historical properties such as the Eleazer Arnold House, the Moffett Mill, the Israel Arnold House, and Hearthside (United States Department of the Interior National Park Service, 1974).

Other local cultural sites include the Hearthside, which was purchased by the Town in 1997 (Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, 2004). Hearthside is a museum that provides guided tours and hosts events (Great Road Heritage Campus). Visitors can also tour historic buildings such as the Eleazer Arnold House, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places for its architectural significance. The exterior of the building consists of rare stone-enders, a unique architectural style developed in the 17th century (Society of Architectural Historians).

Figure 4-1. Hearthside House

Source: *Great Road Heritage Campus*

Figure 4-2. Eleazer Arnold House



Source: Society of Architectural Historians

The Blackstone River Valley, a National Heritage Corridor which includes areas in Lincoln, historically supported various agricultural activities such as farming and mills. The Blackstone River Bikeway provides a scenic route and outdoor recreation for visitors. (Rhode Island's Blackstone Valley).

Although Paleo-Indian artifacts and early Archaic archaeological sites are rare in Rhode Island, a Paleo-Indian period (10,000-6,000 BCE) site and Archaic Period (6,000-500 BCE) site have been documented in Lincoln (Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, 2010). According to the 2022 Neutaconkanut Hill Park Historic Resources Survey, single Paleo-Indian artifacts or small Paleo-Indian archaeological occupations are known from the Twin Rivers Site in Lincoln (Public Archaeology Laboratory, Inc., 2022). Early Archaic archaeological sites were also recovered from the Twin River Site.

These resources should be protected as they help preserve the identity of Lincoln's heritage, tell the story of its past, provide educational opportunities, and contribute to the local economy. The Blackstone Valley Historical Society, comprised of Pawtucket, Central Falls, Lincoln, Cumberland, North Smithfield, and Woonsocket, is dedicated to the exploration, preservation, and appreciation of the Blackstone Valley heritage (Blackstone Valley Historical Society). Several measures listed in Section 4.5, Historic and Cultural Resource Protection, can additionally guide the protection of the Town's many historic and cultural resources.

4.3.2 Historic Villages

The Town of Lincoln is comprised of seven neighborhood villages. A detailed description of land uses by neighborhoods is in Chapter 1, *Land Use*. The mill villages were inspired by Samuel Slater's

Pawtucket mill model, which sparked the Industrial Revolution (Dotzenrod, Learn of Lincoln's villages and the industries that shaped them, 2021). The Albion, Manville, Lonsdale, and Saylesville textile mills expanded over the years with the construction of worker homes, churches, schools, post offices and stores (Dotzenrod, Nicole, 2021). A brief history of the seven mill villages is summarized below (Dotzenrod, Learn of Lincoln's villages and the industries that shaped them, 2021).

Albion

Albion is one of Lincoln's smaller villages that began as an agricultural settlement until the 1820s. In 1820s, the village expanded with mills along the Blackstone River including housing for workers.

Figure 4-3. Albion Mill Gatehouse (c.1916)



Source: National Archives Catalog, Photographer: Kay Westhues, Date: June, 1981

Saylesville and Fairlawn

Saylesville was one of Lincoln's early factory villages. Members of the Arnold family established homes in the village, including Eleazer Arnold and Israel Arnold. The Eleazer Arnold house is located on Great Road which was historically used as a road to travel to Providence from Lincoln (Historic New England).

Lime Rock

During colonial times, lime mining occurred at the village of Lime Rock. The lime business helped Lime Rock grow into a massive quarry village. During and before the lime industry, the village maintained agricultural land in this area. Today, lime continues to be mined in Lincoln by Conklin Limestone Company.

Figure 4-4. Horse Carriage with Limestone



Source: *The Valley Breeze*

Lonsdale

The Lonsdale Company established the mill villages with worker housing in 1860s. Compared to the surrounding villages, much of the activity in Lonsdale was centered on the mill. The growth of the Lonsdale Company contributed to increased development in Lincoln through the 1880s and 1890s.

Manville

Manville village housed mill operations and grew to be one of the largest mills in the country. The mill was devastated by a flood in 1955 and later a fire. Manville remained intact as a mill village.

Quinnville

Quinnville families worked in Berkeley's Mill or lime kilns. The village started with a small cotton mill that has since been demolished. The mill was sold to the Lonsdale Company for storage. The growth of the Lonsdale Company contributed to increased development in this area.

4.3.3 Scenic and Heritage Landscapes

The 2010 Lincoln Reconnaissance Report lists priority heritage landscapes. This list includes agricultural lands, burial grounds and cemeteries, village centers, Native American sites, natural, open space, park areas, transportation, and waterbodies. As an example, the Lincoln Community Garden located on 397 River Road, formerly known as Thibaudeau Farm, is now used for passive recreation and conservation through an Open Space grant from RIDEM and offers scenic views in Town (Dotzenrod, Lincoln Community Garden accepting new gardeners for 2022 season, 2022).

Figure 4-5. Lincoln's Community Garden (formerly Thibaudeau Farm)



Source: *The Valley Breeze*

The Rhode Island Landscape Inventory provides a list of scenic landscape features in Lincoln. The inventory grew out of 1987 legislation directing the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management to establish and maintain a list of scenic areas in the state (RIGIS, 2016). This report was sent to officials in all of Rhode Island's cities and towns to be used as a resource for future open space, recreational, and comprehensive planning projects. The Great Road Butterfly Pond and Whipple Road in Lincoln are listed as part of this inventory (RIGIS, 2016).

Figure 4-6. Butterfly Pond



Source: *The Valley Breeze*

4.3.4 *Blackstone River Valley*

The 2003 Comprehensive Plan includes a Blackstone Valley National Corridor Inventory that describes the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor mission as, “preserving and interpreting for the educational and inspirational benefit of present and future generations the unique and significant contributions to our natural heritage of certain historic and cultural lands, waterways and structures.” The Valley was the birthplace of the American Industrial Revolution and encompasses the Blackstone River, Blackstone Canal, and Providence and Worcester railroad. The Blackstone River Valley is the country’s second designated National Heritage Corridor and the first to encompass two states. The 2003 Blackstone River Valley National Corridor Element Inventory was prepared by the Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission to be used as a framework for identifying Lincoln’s strategy for the Blackstone River Valley. Responsible parties for the implementation strategies included the departments from the local government, private local groups, and regional groups. Actions were integrated into five planning sections including economic development, transportation/access, partnerships and cooperation, natural resource protection, and land use and built environment. In 2003, major areas of concern for Lincoln were the impacts of tourist traffic on Quinville, pedestrian and bicycle safety in Lonsdale, and general circulation issues throughout the Town.

4.3.5 *Historical Cemeteries and Burial Grounds*

The Rhode Island Advisory Commission on Historical Cemeteries has an online cemetery database that lists burial grounds or historic cemeteries in the State of Rhode Island. Table 4-2, Historical Cemeteries, and Map 4-1 Historic and Cultural Resources identify 45 historical cemeteries in Lincoln. According to the 2010 Lincoln Reconnaissance report, some of these cemeteries are not accessible and threatened by lack of maintenance and many of the family burial grounds are overgrown with damaged or missing monuments (Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, 2010).

Table 4-2. Historical Cemeteries	
Name	
	Jenckes Lot
	Jenckes Lot
	Richard Angell Lot
	Jenckes & Briggs Lot
	Ballou Lot
	Friends Burial Ground
	Arnold Lot
	Whipple-Mowry Lot
	Jenckes Lot
	Whipple-Northup Lot
	Olney Burial Ground
	St James Cemetery
	St Stephen's Cemetery
	St Mary's Orthodox Cemetery

Table 4-2. Historical Cemeteries
Mann Burial Ground
Ballou Lot
Ballou Lot
Old River Cemetery
Jenckes-Manton Lot
Wright Burial Ground
Phetteplace Lot
Harris Lot
Sherman Burial Ground
Spaulding Lot
Wilkinson Lot
Sprague-Dexter Lot
Christ Church Cemetery
St Ambrose Cemetery
Darling Lot
Hill Cemetery
Aldrich Lot
Wilkinson Lot
Lapham/Wilcox Lot
Angell Lot
Newman Lot
Follett Lot
Jeremiah Smith Burial Ground
Harris Burial Ground
Hutchinson Lot
Arnold Lot
Pitcher Lot
Allsop Lot
Luther Lot
Turner Lot
McIntire Lot

Source: URI Environmental Data Center and RIGIS

Table 4-2 Historical Cemeteries includes a Native American burial ground on the south side of Lime Rock, Lime Rock Cemetery, Pullen Corner Cemetery which may include Native American graves, Quaker Cemetery next to Friends Meetinghouse in Saylesville, and the Wright Burial Ground in Lime Rock section of Lincoln (Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, 2010).

4.3.6 *Scenic Roads*

The 2010 Lincoln Reconnaissance report states that qualities such as stone walls, mature trees, few curb cuts, and views across fields make a road scenic in Lincoln. Stone walls line roadways along former pastureland and rural areas contributing to the scenic and historic character of Lincoln. Two of Lincoln's priority landscapes, Great Road and Wilbur Road, are historic road corridors (Rhode Island Historical Preservation and Heritage Commission, Blackstone River Valley National Heritage Corridor Commission, 2010).

The RIDOT Roads data provides a list of state-designated scenic highways in Lincoln (RIGIS, 2016). The Breakneck Hill Road and Great Road are listed on this list and mapped in Map 4-1, Historic and Cultural Resources.

4.4 **Historic and Cultural Resource Protection**

There are a variety of measures that can be implemented to protect the Town's many historic and cultural resources. These measures are presented below.

4.4.1 *Zoning Techniques*

Under Title 45-24.1 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, the Town Council is empowered to designate mapped areas for designation of historic district zoning. This empowers a local Historic District Commission to grant or deny permissions for exterior alterations requiring a building permit within the district. Many alterations, such as color or maintenance, would not be affected as they do not trigger building permits.

The Town Council appoints membership to a Historic District Commission by interest or expertise in historic preservation. Each Historic District Commission should have representation from the area affected by historic district zoning, although this is not required by state statute.

The Town of Lincoln does not currently have a Historic District Commission. The Town has adopted a Mill Conversion Overlay District that allows for the conversion of Lincoln's historic mills while preserving the character of nearby residential and commercial neighborhoods. The overlay district is mapped in Map 4-1, Historic and Cultural Resources.

Article X, *Historic Stone Wall Protection and Preservation*, of the General Legislation in the Town of Lincoln creates an incentive for property owners to preserve historic stone walls located in Lincoln since they are a cultural resource and help preserve the rural character of the Town (Town of Lincoln, 2012).

4.4.2 *National Register of Historic Places Nomination*

The National Register, maintained by the Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service of the U.S. Department of the Interior, is a permanent record of structures, sites, areas, and objects that have contributed importantly to American history and culture.

When federal funds are used for a project that may affect a National Register property (for example, a highway improvement), the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) requires environmental assessments and related mitigation measures to minimize damage to such properties. In addition, National Register listing confers benefits to eligible properties under specific circumstances. For

example, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) may be used for historic rehabilitation for privately owned individual structures.

4.4.3 *Funding Sources*

Grants and other funding mechanisms are commonly used for the protection of historical and cultural resources.

Community Development Block Grants

The CDBG Program provides annual grants on a formula basis to states, cities, towns, and counties. This money may be used for a wide variety of development-related activities which involve cultural resource protection. Such activities include but are not limited to, rehabilitation of privately owned properties if the beneficiaries are at least 51 percent low- and moderate-income households. It is possible to create a residential rehabilitation program combining the protection of historic homes with building code compliance rehabilitation.

CDBG funds may be applied to adaptive reuse projects if there are significant benefits to low/moderate income households involved. These grants have been significant in rehabilitation projects that respect the historic features and character of the original architecture and its setting.

These federal funds may also be used for streetscape and public spaces and park improvements, including the acquisition, and placing of period benches, lampposts, paving, and other amenities.

Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission Grants

Through its Certified Local Governments Program, the RIHPC awards 50% matching grants to eligible communities for a variety of historic preservation activities. In the past several years, these grants have been used for surveys to document local cultural resources, to prepare nominations for the National Register, to protect endangered resources, to develop local historic preservation plans, and for public education programs, activities, and publications. This funding source is available to Rhode Island municipalities that have local Historic Districts, and an Historic District Commission.

Rhode Island Council for the Humanities

As well as the Rhode Island Historic Preservation Commission, this agency provides grants for educational activities (slide shows, videos, talks, books, etc.) relating to increasing awareness of cultural resources among local people.

Historic Preservation Loan Fund

This program is available to properties listed on the state's Register of Historic Places by providing loans to public, non-profit, or private owners. Loan money can be used for needed restoration work or, in some cases, for acquiring and rehabilitating an endangered historic property.

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credit Programs

Properties have to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places prior to project competition to be eligible for tax credits.

4.4.4 *Other Protection Mechanisms*

Partial Fee Acquisition (or Easement)

By purchasing an easement to a cultural resource, an owner obtains less than the full bundle of rights normally associated with property ownership. In so doing, a partial fee acquisition or easement

effectively restricts an owner's right to develop or alter culturally significant resources by limiting the rights of ownership.

Purchase of Development Rights

Related to the purchase of preservation easements, this preservation tool allows a party to purchase the right to develop a property in a limited way. This method is of value in that the site or structure is protected without the costs of full purchase.

Ownership by an Agency, Organization, or Group

The ownership of historic resources by agencies, organizations, or groups may provide an effective preservation tool. In the hands of such a body that has no development agenda and can afford routine maintenance costs, the resource may be more adequately protected than it would be if owned by another type of group.

Friends of Hearthside, Inc. owns and maintains the Hearthside Homestead. Their mission is to preserve, protect, promote and interpret the heritage of the Hearthside Homestead and the Great Road Historic District through living history programs and events. The Friends of Hearthside, Inc. is a nonprofit organization. It is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, allowing for tax deductible contributions and the ability to apply for grants.

4.5 Goals and Policies

Goals and their corresponding policies reflect the desired changes of Lincoln residents for the next ten years, as gathered from a public workshop held in May 2024. Historic and cultural resources are a vital part of Lincoln's landscape. The goals call for increased public education on protecting these resources, including historic preservation principles in land development review, local tourism to the Town, and maintenance of historic areas and scenic views.

Table 4-3. Goals and Policies	
Goals	Policies
HC1. Town Wide Preserve, protect, and maintain the Town's historic, cultural, and archeological resources as a representation of the Town's heritage.	HC1.1. Town Wide Promote and support state, local, non-profit, and other groups in their efforts to inform and educate the community on appropriate mechanisms to protect and manage historic and cultural resources in the Town through research, public education, and public events.
	HC1.2. Town Wide Ensure that the preservation and proper management of historic and cultural resources are considered as part of the land development review and approval process.
	HC1.3. Town Wide Promote the Town's rich historic heritage to attract visitors and other viable economic development opportunities that are appropriate for historic and cultural resources.

	HC1.4. Town Wide Preserve the visual qualities of Lincoln's historic areas and scenic roadways and vistas.
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