

Report of The Westwood Historical Commission

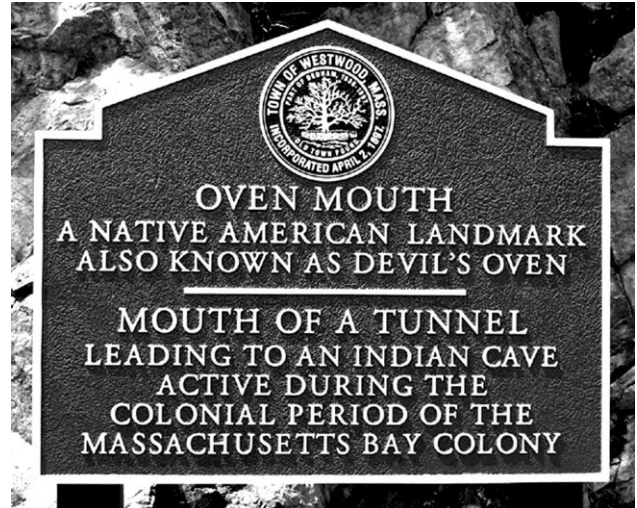
The Colburn School, built in 1874, is the major contributing resource to the Colburn School-High Street National Register District and is listed in the National and State Register of Historic Places. As such, this Historical Commission does not support any plan for the site that does not include preservation and restoration of the Colburn School. In June 2006, The Massachusetts Historical Commission (MHC) has issued a letter and a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) stating that the project proposed by the Library “constitutes an “adverse effect”; but has agreed “to accept the adverse effect” under the mitigating conditions of the MOA. The preservation and renovation of the Colburn School, while retaining it on the site, is required. The proposed Library project, as presented at this time, requires two moves of the Colburn School: first, to the rear during the new Library construction and; second, to it’s foundation on High Street at the site of the current Library. The photo documentation requirement of the MHC’s Memorandum of Agreement has been implemented by the Library. The MHC’s mothballing requirement has been moved forward by the Town with the replacement of the Mansard roof and the installation of protective Plexiglas on all the windows. The slate-gray color of Mansard roof shingles closely duplicates the original gray slate. The replaced window trim was painted an historic color taken from the Fisher School.



The Colburn School with new Mansard roof and Plexiglas window protection completed.

Photo by Ralph Buonopane

With the Highland Glen expansion project completed in the Spring of 2007, the historic native American “Oven Mouth” cave entrance and the rock outcrop area on High Street was marked with a new Town landmark sign designed for the site by the Commission.



New landmark sign at the site of “Oven Mouth”.

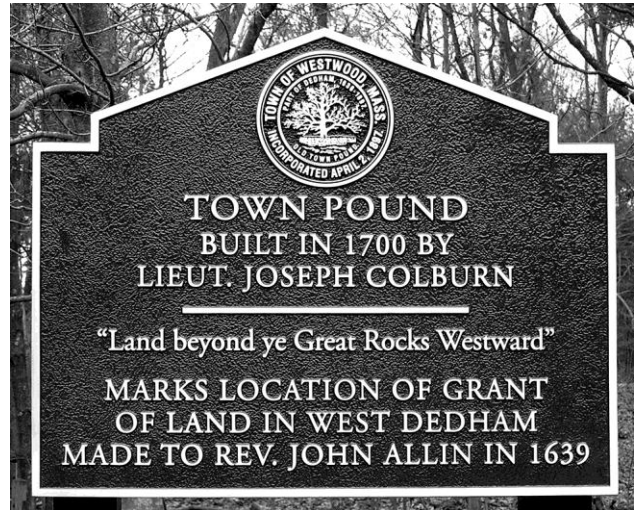
Photo by Ralph Buonopane

High Rock Village, a 118-unit Senior Residential Development, has been proposed for the site of the former “Holbrook Farm and Store” at 1255 High Street. Demolition of the historic 1898 farmhouse and store, listed in the National and State Register of Historic Places, is proposed by the Tremont Redevelopment Corp. The MHC has determined that “the proposed project will have an adverse effect through the demolition of historic properties” and has asked for revised plans that mitigate the proposed demolition. The Westwood Historical Commission concurs with the MHC determination and has provided input to the consultation process. The WHC favors preservation of the House and store and is also concerned that construction will destroy potential native American landmarks on the site and the historic trolley waiting room walls adjacent to the site. This project is currently held up in litigations.

The Commission has been notified by MHC of two proposed wireless telecommunications antenna projects. One is proposed for location in the steeple of the First Parish Church at 248 Nahatan Street. The other is proposed for location on the water tanks at 213 Fox Hill Street. Both projects include equipment shelter buildings in addition to the antennas and appear to be in progress.

The restoration of the Obed & Betsey Baker House is continuing. The Town plans to complete the reproduction of a replica barn to serve as a garage for the DPW cemetery equipment as originally planned and voted at the 2001 Annual Town Meeting. The Historical Society plans to complete the exterior restoration of the building and the landscaping around the building according to the original plans prepared for the 2001 Annual Town Meeting. In the Spring of 2008, restoration of all windows with original or reproduction glass panes and wood sashes as needed is being done. Commission Chair, Ralph Buonopane, has assisted the Historical Society with the exterior restoration. The interior restoration work has been started with paint/wallpaper analysis and photo documentation studies recently completed. The Historical Society plans to restore the interior rooms of the house to the period as best determined from the existing interior ceilings, floors, walls, and woodwork. With much of the original construction remaining, the restoration will provide a fairly accurate historical restoration of the house.

Our town pound, originally built of "timber" by Lieut. Joseph Colburn in 1700, was replaced with stone in 1766. A "Pounder" or "Keeper-of-the-Pound" was appointed as the town official responsible for maintaining the animal pound for the restraint of stray animals mostly cows, horses or swine. In our time, in 1974, Bill Jacobs saw two men carting off stones from the Town Pound, alerted the police, and; after the men were caught, he was named "Keeper of the Pound". Today, the "Pounder" is Ron Chiurri of High Street. In 1900, Lucius Damrell designed the official



New landmark sign at the site of the "Town Pound".

Photo by Ralph Buonopane



Window view from Obed & Betsey Baker House looking onto Veteran's Park at Pond Street.

Photo by Ralph Buonopane

Town Seal that includes his drawing of the Old Town Pound. Although the original oak tree growing inside the pound was felled by the hurricane in 1938, Westwood has the only town seal in the Commonwealth that depicts an existing structure that still can be visited to this day. Even though disputes over ownership of the land around the Town Pound may exist, the area along High Street was marked with a new Town landmark sign designed for the site by the Commission. This sign also denotes the early grant of land in West Dedham to Rev. John Allin.

The Historical Commission, appointed by the Board of Selectmen, is committed to the preservation of Westwood's historic places; acts in the public interest with regard to historic preservation concerns within the community; and works with other Town boards and commissions in planning and implementing programs for the identification, evaluation, and protection of Westwood's historic resources. The Commission holds meetings open to the public and invites input and comments from Westwood residents. This year, the newest Commission member, Michelle Caruso, resigned to continue her graduate studies in historic preservation.

Respectfully submitted,

Ralph A. Buonopane, Chair
 Michelle Caruso Patricia O. Lanning
 William Conley James P. Little Lura S. Provost