

Heritage Check List

Freeman Crosby House, 159 Elm Street

February 3, 2019
DM Palance

For use in reviewing building and modification plans submitted to the Planning Board
The list below provides some of the critical heritage issues to consider and where to find references to answer any concerns.

Advice to homeowners when upkeeping their homes and properties.

Successful alternatives to demolition include: incorporating the building into the design of the project, selling the property to a purchaser interested in rehabilitating the building, or finding alternative sites for the proposed project. If no feasible alternatives can be found, a delay period of 3 months can allow the building to be documented and for architectural features to be salvaged.

Advice to homeowners when modifying or alterations of their house and property.

- Can the existing structure be modified to accommodate the owners desired use of this site?
- What does the proposed change look like?
- Will it be a positive asset to the town and neighborhood?
- Ask to put up a granite memorial to William and Freeman Crosby?
- Repurpose the architectural features somewhere else?

Advice to homeowners on the architectural features and style of their house.

The main house has the symmetry of the older Georgian style with modifications such as the porches on the front and side that are typical of a Federal style due to the broad triangular roof of the pediment. The doors the inside rooms show a mix of Georgian and Federal styles as well. Details for the window muntins are similar to others in southern NH in the 1840 to 1880 period. Overall these features indicate popular and craftsmanship designs from 1780 to 1840. The post and beam structure was commonly built with a multi-flue central chimney having a one room in depth but two floors. These houses, like this one was commonly enlarged by expanding to the rear with a lean-to or added EI like this one. It is likely the chimney was resized to a smaller one to add more floor space. The offset chimney is evidence that most of the middle flue was removed when boilers were added for heating.

Review of demolition plans and a prior heritage assessment.

No plans have been submitted to date

RESOURCES FOR DEMOLITION REVIEW

- Hengen, Elizabeth Durfee. *Preserving Community Character: A Preservation Planning Handbook for New Hampshire*. New Hampshire Preservation Alliance, 2006. See page 9.
- Miller, Julia H. *Protecting Potential Landmarks Through Demolition Review*. National Trust for Historic Preservation, 2006. See www.nationaltrust.org/teardowns/Demolition_Review.pdf.

- Norton Historical Commission, Demolition Delay By-Law Q&A. See <http://www.nortonma.org/documents/Norton%20DemoDelay%20FAQ.pdf>.
- Paulus, Emily, *PROTECTING HISTORIC RESOURCES THROUGH DEMOLITION REVIEW*, PRESERVATION PLANNER, NH Division of Historical Resources, State of New Hampshire, Department of Cultural Resources

Advice to the Planning Board and homeowners of present and potential heritage zones within the town.

The property lies on the outer rim of the Oval Heritage District and qualifies as inclusion.

Advice on potential historical easements on properties.

Few easements exist, one deed of 1913 includes an adjacent property with rights to access the river.

Advice on Milford history of the property and surrounding area.

This is the historical property of one of Milford's Earliest Settlers, The Josiah Crosby Farm. Josiah Crosby was one of the original settlers of Milford coming from Billerica, Massachusetts. His first ancestor Simon Crosby and his wife, came to this new land in 1635 with their son Thomas on the Ship *Susan and Ellyn* from England. Two other children were born to them - Simon in 1636 and Joseph in 1639. Second son Simon married Rachel Bracket and their son Josiah (the first) was born in 1677. Josiah (the first) married Mary Manning and settled in Billerica where their son Josiah (the 2nd) was born in 1704. Josiah (the 2nd) married Elizabeth French and their son Josiah (the 3rd) was born on November 24, 1730. At the time of Mr. Crosby's settling on the farm he had built, the area was known as Monson, later Amherst and finally in 1794 Milford. While a citizen of Amherst Crosby served as a Selectman and then during the years of the Revolution was one of its representatives in the general court and a member of the committee of safety. Captain Josiah Crosby died October 15, 1793 after a long and useful life. His wife Sarah, originally from Bedford, Massachusetts, lived until September 16, 1825.

The property was passed to the son, William. William Crosby, the fourth child of Josiah and Sarah Fitch Crosby. William was born January 29, 1758 in the town of Monson on the Crosby Farm which was a mile west of the meeting house on "the road to Wilton". In December 1775 William served with Lieutenant John Bradford and Captain Taylor in the defense of Boston. It is not known if it was by deed of gift but William acquired at about the age of 25 from his father a deed for a farm, which included the downtown "compact part of which is now the village" of Milford along the south side of the Souhegan River. On January 8, 1784 William bought the land for P100 (Pounds). He married on November 16, 1790 Sarah Shepard daughter of John (Jr.) and Mercy Wilkins Shepard, son of John Shepard from Shepard's mill fame. (John Shepard, Jr. built a house on the north side of the Souhegan River as early as 1757 in the former Montessori school. William and Sarah Shepard Crosby had five children - Sophia, Josiah, John, and twins Frederick and Freeman.

The oldest maps of the town Show that the house on the north side of Elm Street was owned by Freeman Crosby, the son of William and Sarah Sheppard Crosby. Town tax records show the

property being built in 1790's but the architectural and historical evidence points to a newer construction ca 1825. Freeman Crosby died in 1884 and the property went to the daughter, Mrs. James Anderson, she is shown as the owner on the 1892 and 1901 maps. The Alberta Hagar Old House Cards record the next owner as the Rev. F.W Holden in 1907 and then passed to George Simonds in 1913. This owner added rooms new hardwood flooring and a large veranda to the east. The original Crosby Farm was located across the street until recent times as an auto parts store and kindergarten but was eventually demolished to build a McDonalds Restaurant in the early 1980's. George W. Simonds and later Elizabeth Frances Simonds purchased the property in 1913 until 1938 The property passed to Gerald and Juanita Conroy who occupied from 1938 until 1964 for those years the building was used as a hotel and tourist boarding house known at the time as "Maplehurst". The Conroys sold to Anthony Matarazza in 1964. In just one year the property was put into trust as the Ten Star Association. In the early 1970's the property had several owners, then in 1976 the property was sold to Raymond A. and Carol E. Grezeszak who held it until 2008 then taken by the town for a tax lien in 2010. The present owner is the Mengyuan Property Management LLC.

Locate Historical properties on antique maps.

The earliest map that shows the owner's name is the 1854 Woolford-Clark, the house appears on every map since this time. Most of the buildings of the original Crosby settlement have been long demolished. This particular building remains as one to tell of the family of this early settler.

Site assessment of any anthropological activities of early townfolk.

The house is a typical rambling building typical of old NH Farm construction. The main house is near the road presenting its longest side. Newer additions and barns were commonly oriented with the short side to the road. The westernmost portion is oriented this way making it a likely converted barn. The main house contains an open well which stands above the floor with a crude wooden cover with hinges added. The well stands roughly three feet above the floor and it is roughly two feet in diameter. Small round river stones line the outside and are mortared in place with the top rim inscribed "DRINK YE AND QUENCH YOUR THIRST". The source of this saying is most defiantly from the biblical reference of Isaiah 55:1. It should be noted that in 1907 the Rev. Francis W. Holden owned this property for 5 years. The inside of the well is lined with stacked brown clay sections. The depth is uncertain as it cannot be seen from the rim. The foundation is mortared round field stone with a large granite block structure in the basement which may have been the base to a hearth or a cold storage room.

Several curious holes in the poured basement floor show signs of being patched over, one example is a two-foot-wide key-hole shape. The basement shows the remains of a coal bin and single faced hand-hewn floor joists. Wiring is poor and not to code some being knob and tube, some rare pushbutton fixtures. The house contains many original six-panel Christian doors with glass knobs and key locks. Several rooms have fireplaces intact (one unique hearth is built with small round river stone like the well) and the walls are mostly split lath horse hair plaster

popular in the 1830's with some circular cut lath of the early 1900's. Many double-hung windows remain intact with rounded muntin and bubble glass (several broken panes).

The roof of the main house has recently been repaired. It is a sturdy perlined construction with all the roof underlayment replaced with rough-cut pine in the method of the original period, likely several purlins are replaced with the same historical care. The roof and frame are strong, but the interior walls, ceiling and floors are in rough repair. The exterior is fine machine cut clapboard which is largely intact but in need of scrape and paint.

Monitor of buildings and structures on the State and Federal Historical Registers.

The property is marked as eligible for the federal Historical Listing but is neither listed on State nor Federal Historical Registers.

Advice on the preservation of old barns.

The western most el may be a repurposed 22x24 foot barn, no walk through has occurred in this part of the house.

Advise on the activities of prominent Milford citizens in the past and the association to the area.

William Crosby and his twin sons; Frederick and Freeman Crosby

Advice on dedicated Scenic Areas and any property restrictions.

The property overlooks a plans area on the banks of the Souhegan River to the north. Vistas of the rolling hills of Amherst, Mont Vernon and Lyndeborough are clearly visible across the river. The Pack Monadnock and Temple Mountain pass are also visible to the west in clear weather. The location of the property gives an ideal view of the launching of fireworks from the recycling Center on North River Road. The location is an easy 1300 ft walk to Keyes Field and less than a half a mile from the popular Oval District.

Assessment of the age of old buildings particularly those older than 50 years.

Estimated to be ca 1825

Advice on the use and preservation of stone walls on renovation plans.

No known stone walls on the property

References and Resources available:

Milford Historical Society

Historical Maps of Milford including:

The 1846 D. Goodwin Map

The 1854 Woolford/Clark Map

The 1858 County Map

The 1886 L.R. Burleigh Bird's Eye Map

The 1892 Hurd/Boston Map
The 1901 G.A. Worcester Map
The 1904 Topographical Map
The 1924 Sanborn Map
The 1953 Aerial Photo
The 1953 Topographical Map
The 1962 Aerial Photo
The 1968 Tax Map (50 years)
The 1883 Secomb History of Amherst
The 1885 Hurd History of Hillsborough County
The 1888 Livermore/Putnam History of Wilton
The 1901 Ramsdell History of Milford
The 1978 W. Wright History of Milford
Pictures of Milford by C. Thompson, 2002
The Hillsborough County Registry of Deeds
Taxpayer Records of 1829 to 1888
NH State Historical Register
National Historical Register
NH Department of Environmental Services
NH Department of Natural and Cultural Resources
NH Department of Transportation
NH Division of Historical Resources
NH Historical Society
NH Preservation Alliance
New Hampshire Architecture, Bryant Tolles, 1966
Remodeling Old Houses, George Stephen, 1980
Renovating Old Houses, George Nash, 1998
A Building History of Northern New England, James Garvin, 2001
A Museum of Early American Tools, Eric Sloane, 1964