

Communitywide Comprehensive Historic Resources Survey Project

Phase I: September 2007 – June 2008

FINAL REPORT

Submitted to:
The Ayer Historical Commission

Submitted by:
Alene W. Reich
Preservation Consultant, Ayer, MA

CONTENTS

I.	Methodology	3
	Survey Objectives	3
	Assessment of Previous Research	4
	Survey Procedures	5
	Selection Criteria	5
	Research Process	6
	Recording of Resources	7
	Products of the Survey	8
II.	Narrative History	9
III.	Index of Properties Surveyed	14
IV.	National Register of Historic Places Recommendations	18
V.	Recommendations for Further Study	21
VI.	Bibliography	22

I. METHODOLOGY

Survey Objectives

The purpose of this inventory project was to conduct an intensive community-wide survey of historic and cultural resources in the Town of Ayer. This research built upon existing studies and focused on previously undocumented resources. Per the guidelines of the Massachusetts Historical Commission, the survey addressed architectural development, land use, economic development, social and demographic history, as well as significant events and people. Contexts and criteria used to identify the objects of study adhered to the standards of the MHC and research considered social facets such as ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity in addition to the resources themselves.

Historic resources built before 1960 were considered as subjects for this survey, which focused on residential buildings since previous documentation includes mostly commercial buildings, railroad-related structures, and resources at former Fort Devens. Subjects for study were selected from the recommendations of the *Community-wide Preliminary Historic Resource Survey Plan* (2003) by Historic Preservation Planning Consultant Sanford Johnson.

The survey included several selections of landscapes from the *Ayer Reconnaissance Report* (2006), a Freedom's Way Landscape Inventory administered through the Massachusetts Heritage Landscape Inventory Program by Freedom's Way Heritage Association and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. The Ayer Historical Commission plans to use the products of this study to aid the establishment of a Scenic Roads by-law.

Each property was evaluated for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. A list of recommended properties can be found in Section IV.

This inventory serves as a crucial part of Ayer's preservation planning process by providing a foundation for further study and momentum for new initiatives such as the aforementioned Scenic Roads by-law and the establishment of a Demolition Delay by-law. This study also brings opportunities for community awareness, education, and support.

Assessment of Previous Research

Existing Documentation

As previously noted, prior documentation of Ayer resources has focused on the Main Street mercantile district (Filed in the MHC's database as "AYE.A"), on railroad related structures, and on Fort Devens. Thirty-four resources in Ayer Center have been documented and entered into the MACRIS system, searchable on the Massachusetts Historical Commission's website (<http://www.mhc-macris.net>). They include 1 Area, 27 Buildings, and 6 Structures/Objects/Landscapes. An additional 82 properties on Fort Devens have been recorded.

Most of the documentation has occurred in three phases: the Yankee Intern Downtown Ayer Survey (1985), the Hydro-Quebec Survey conducted by Boston University's Office of Public Archeology (1985), and the McGinley Hart & Associates MBTA Railroad Survey (1987-1988). The Yankee Intern Survey does not meet current MHC documentation standards in terms of historical research or architectural description and should be updated at some point. The Hydro-Quebec Survey gives a good general overview of each property and would benefit from additional research for the Historical Narratives. The MBTA Survey meets current standards, although updating the maps with current technology, like Google Earth, would be of benefit. The existing forms were not updated during this study because the priority was on undocumented resources.

The Community Memorial Hospital, Pleasant Street School and the Ayer Main Street Historic District have already been listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Community Memorial Hospital has been rehabilitated as a Volunteers of America senior community. The Pleasant Street School was conveyed from the Ayer Historical Commission to the Ayer Housing Authority in 2008 and carries a Preservation Restriction on its façade and a Conservation Restriction on its grounds. The exterior will be restored as the building is altered for use as affordable housing for aging residents. The Ayer Main Street Historic District was surveyed as part of the Yankee Intern Downtown Ayer Survey and the forms should be updated for use in economic redevelopment projects and rehabilitation planning.

Existing Studies

This study was rooted in two previous studies: *Communitywide Preliminary Historic Resource Survey Plan* by Sanford Johnson and the *Ayer Reconnaissance Report* by Freedom's Way Heritage Area and the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Johnson's *Survey Plan* provided a solid basis for this study, which utilized the areas, time periods, themes, and criteria that he proposed. The priorities set for survey areas were reevaluated at the outset of this project in order to include areas that represented broader historical and cultural diversity. The *Survey Plan* warned of deterioration and the threat of encroachment; after another five years of development and decline it was of greater importance now that these areas are included in the survey.

The *Ayer Reconnaissance Report* is a contemporary report of land conservation issues in Ayer. It identified important landscapes and scenic areas that need protection and documentation. The efforts of this group can support the enactment of Scenic Roads By-laws, explore easements and conservation restrictions, develop signage guidelines, and address the importance of retaining rural and urban character. Several landscapes from the *Ayer Reconnaissance Report* were included in this survey to contribute to these efforts.

Survey Procedures

Selection Criteria

Selection of resources for this study was based on general criteria concerning the building itself and also included consideration of historical and geographic diversity within the study.

General criteria for selecting subject properties included:

- Cultural and Architectural Significance
- Existence of outbuildings
- Architectural Integrity
- Distinctive or representative design
- Association with important people or events
- Potential threat to the structure
- Possibility for inclusion in a Historic District
- Eligibility for and need for grant funding (e.g.: institutional buildings)

These criteria tended to be prioritized from greatest to least priority, but were fluid based on a confluence of two or more of the above factors while also considering the historical and geographic diversity explained below.

This study aimed to cover a broad range of historic and cultural contexts, with consideration of ethnic, cultural, and socioeconomic diversity. To ensure a range of subjects, properties were chosen that are associated with different historical and developmental patterns of the Town:

- Rail transportation
- Planning and Community development
- Military
- Industry
- Pond-side Development
- Commerce

This inventory aimed to be geographically varied. Buildings and Areas chosen for study were from the following areas of town:

- North of Main Street
- South of Main Street
- West Main St
- Devenscrest
- Pingryville
- Pond areas

Final selection of the subject properties and areas reflected the goals of the Ayer Historical Commission (AHC) and was guided by the AHC and MHC. The final resource list complemented earlier research in that it examined residential buildings, whereas earlier research documented few residential resources.

Research Process

One of the primary goals of the historical research was to establish an approximate date of construction for each resource. The MHC suggested the use of Water Department tie-in records as a possible source, but a representative of the Water Department said that the records do not go back further than the 1960s and that there were no records that would be of use to the study. Likewise, the Building Department began recording permits in the late 1960s. Therefore, neither Water Department tie-in records nor the Building Department permits were used to determine construction dates.

Historic maps and atlases proved to be the main sources of documentary evidence for a construction date and were also used to trace changes made to the subject properties over time. There are limitations to using maps for estimating construction dates: there are five to ten-year gaps between the map publications and the maps do not show the entirety of the town. Further research is necessary to establish more accurate dates, as the limitations of the information available and of the maps often required that “visual assessment” was the primary means of estimating a date of construction.

Another primary goal of the historical research was to research the property’s use, owner, and occupants (where appropriate). Maps, especially those published in 1875 and in 1889 published by F.W. Beers and G.H. Walker, respectively, (*see bibliography for source information*) were the best sources for finding the name of the owner. Owners from these maps were traced, where possible, in the 1860, 1870, and 1880 census records. Records from 1890 are not available; it seems that there was not a complete census that year. Where possible, families and properties were traced back using earlier census records, but less and less information was documented in the preceding censuses. Occupations, land values, and occupants of the household were mostly available through this set of records.

The owners found through this process were traced in the town directories, published in 1907, 1912, 1914, 1918, and 1922. Directory listings included the head of the household, his/her occupation, address, and business address, where applicable.

Of the census data available, street names and house numbers were first reliably recorded during the 1930 census. Scanning these records for the subject addresses, owners names could once again be paired with a property. These names were checked against records from the 1920 and 1910 census records, when possible.

In the few cases in which no owners or occupants were identified using the described means, the online Registry of Deeds was consulted. Containing records that date to 1974, the database yielded little information. Further deed research on these properties is recommended.

Recording of Resources

Forms. Subject properties were recorded according to MHC standards using inventory forms: A: Area, B: Building, E: Burial Ground, H: Parks and Landscapes. Each area form describes the context, architectural character, and historical integrity of a group of resources and provides information about individual resources via architectural descriptions, historical narratives, and a data table. Data tables record the MHC number, Assessor's number, historic name of the resource, street number and street name, date of construction, and architectural style. Building forms document individual buildings along with their outbuildings. Burial Ground forms include the landscape and the general character and layout of the circulation paths and monuments. Landscape forms describe the topography and use of a landscape.

Each form was lettered or numbered for filing in the MACRIS system (www.mhc-macris.net). The areas in this study are lettered F through I. The buildings are numbered 128 through 250. The burial grounds are numbered 800 through 801.

Photos. Prints of color digital photos were provided with each form. Most forms required only one photo of the building in three-quarter view and additional photos were included for properties that had outbuildings. Area, Burial Ground, and Landscape forms required additional photography based on the needs of each property. The digital photos meet revised MHC requirements; they are printed on an Epson printer, with Epson ink, and five-star Epson paper that is of high archival quality. The digital photos are embedded in the individual files and are also provided in individual files.

Maps. Cropped images of the assessor's map with properties shaded were used to show the locations of the properties on the forms. In cases where there were multiple resources or complex configurations (ex: areas and cemeteries) Google Earth maps were provided to give an aerial view.

The resources were documented on a large scale base map that was originally created by the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission. The shaded parcels are labeled with MACRIS numbers, which are keyed to the Index of Properties Surveyed. At this time there is no map available that shows building footprints on the parcels.

Products of the Survey

The products of the survey include a base map, duplicate copies of the inventory forms, National Register of Historic Places Criteria Statement forms, and this final report. The following forms were produced for the survey:

Form A: Area	4
Form B: Building	114
Form E: Burial Ground	2
Form H: Landscapes	1

Total	121
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Copies of the products of this survey have been submitted to the MHC and to the AHC. The archival copies belonging to the AHC will be stored in the Ayer Library's History Room.

II. NARRATIVE HISTORY

This historical narrative is not a comprehensive history of the Town of Ayer. It is meant to expound upon the *MHC Reconnaissance Survey Town Report* from 1980 and to document the general history of the town as it pertains to this survey and its subjects. For the purpose of the inventory, the history of Ayer can be divided into five periods, as suggested by Sanford Johnson in his 2003 *Survey Plan*. The periods correspond with the development of the Town, especially as it relates to the railroad and to the military.

Pre-1844

Groton was founded in 1665 and included the area that would grow to be Groton Junction and later be established as Ayer in 1871. While the ponds in southern Groton were used for sawmills, there was little development besides: “the fact that this area was all one farm by grant to Simon Willard [in 1659] explains why none of the land grants made by the proprietors of Groton were here” (Groton Plantation, 50). Willard’s farm was in the southwest corner of Ayer and over time a few farmers settled in that area, near the Nonaicoicus Brook. John Park, a stone mason from Scotland, was one of those settlers. Park bought 200 acres of land on either side of what is now Park Street in 1730. He built the John Park House (25 Park St, 1791, AYE.145) and the family also owned the John G. Park House (42 Park St, c. 1760, AYE.147).

There was also some early development on the eastern side of town, near the ponds. Mill Highway, a cart path that stretched from Groton to Harvard, was created in 1668. A few farms were settled along the path in the northeast of Ayer’s current boundaries in the early 19th century, including the Smith Farm (Washington St, c. 1800, AYE.243) and the Nathan and Sarah Gallot House (210 Washington St, c. 1845, AYE.244). Mill Highway ran through “Old Common”, which in 1828 had a handful of houses around the triangular green, according to Caleb Butler’s map. The “Old Common” is now the Frederick Carlton Circle (c. 1935-1944, AYE.916) and was an early site of mills and mill owner’s residences. Tim Stone ran one of the few saw mills in town; his appears to have been on the north side of what is now East Main Street across from his house near the Old Common: the Stone-Fletcher House (1 Harvard Rd, c. 1835, AYE. 216). Stone sold both the house and the mill to Calvin Fletcher in the early-to-mid-19th century. Fletcher developed much of this land later in the 19th century, creating the neighborhood between East Main Street and Grove Pond.

Pingryville (AYE.I) developed somewhat separately from the settlement of South Groton between the mid-18th and mid-19th centuries. In the early days the area had a few mills, one of which was purchased in 1820 by John Pingry. The Pingry family had moved to the area at the end of the American Revolution and John Pingry became the area’s namesake. After running the mill and selling it to Charles Snow, who used it to manufacture pencils, Pingry lived as a farmer at 55 Willow Rd, The Pingry House (c. 1855, AYE.248). The oldest building in the area, and one of the oldest in town, is allegedly 62 Willow Rd (c. 1780, AYE.249) that could be of the Georgian era.

Generally, settlement in southern Groton was sparse until the railroads were established in 1844.

1844-1871

In 1844, the Fitchburg Railroad was built and in 1848 the Stony Brook, Peterborough & Shirley, and the Worcester & Nashua Railroads were built. The crossroads town of South Groton experienced a surge of growth in industry and population. Settlement was largely contained to the downtown area, near the railroad junction: Groton Junction, as it was called. Many houses were built for managers and working class alike and the infrastructure to support the population grew to include new houses, churches, and industries.

Single family residences, like the Solomon Keyes House (5 Elm St, c. 1855, AYE.228) and the John and Bridget Reardon House (6 Elm St, c. 1850, AYE.227) and large multi-family dwellings, like the Thayer – Clark – Walsh House (61-63 W. Main St., c. 1855, AYE.137) were built near the center of Groton Junction to house residents working at the rail yard, tannery, or mills. Some of the more impressive houses were built along East Main Street, such as the Wetherbee-Willard House (21 East Main St, c. 1860, AYE.206), 40 East Main Street (c.1865, AYE.209), and the Benjamin Taft House, (41 East Main Street, c.1860, AYE.210).

The local parish of the Roman Catholic Church was established in 1855 and in 1857 it purchased the land for the St. Mary's Cemetery (Bishop Rd, 1857, AYE.800). The Woodlawn Cemetery (Harvard Rd, 1859, AYE.801) was incorporated in 1859, though the burial ground had been used as early as 1818.

Industrial facilities were gradually built along the railroads outside of the rail yards, including H.O.Bean and the Stevens Machine Company (6 Groton Rd, 1867, AYE.146). H.O. Bean was an agricultural tool manufacturer located on Plow Shop Pond. It was “the town’s first large industry” (Stone, 978). It was purchased in 1870 by The Ames Plow Company, the largest shovel manufacturer in the world. The Stevens Machine Company building was occupied by many different industries over the years: Union Furniture Company (late 19th c.), New England Paper and Stationery Company (c.1900-c.1910), the Ayer Cold Storage Company (early 20th c.), and the Horn Packaging company (present).

Groton Junction rapidly grew to have a larger population than Groton Center and residents of the Junction successfully petitioned for incorporation of Ayer as an independent town in 1871.

1871-1917

Ayer was incorporated in 1871. At the time it was a burgeoning railroad town and even two great fires, one in 1870 and one in 1872, did not stop the town’s momentum. In 1870 Merchant’s Row, the original mercantile district, was destroyed. In its stead, stores were built along what is now Main Street and those burned in 1872 in a great fire, “second to no fire in New England” (Sargent, 3). The merchants and leading citizens of Ayer rebuilt the downtown, much as it is today. After the fire, Dr. James Cook Ayer, a physician and successful pharmaceutical chemist from Lowell, donated funds for the construction of the new Town Hall. Because of his financial support for the town’s establishment, the town was named in his honor.

Despite the rough start, the Town thrived in this industrialized, pre-automobile era and much of the town's building construction occurred during this time. As a massive hub of trade and railroad transportation in the area, Ayer experienced continuing growth of population and industry. Much of the infrastructure to support the influx of workers to Ayer was developed after 1848 and the population and the infrastructure continued to grow through the turn of the century.

There were a few men who owned and developed great swaths of land in Ayer at the end of the 19th century including Edward A. Richardson, Leonard J. Spaulding, Harvey A. Woods, and Calvin Fletcher. Richardson developed areas of Nonaicoicus Park, including Highland Avenue (AYE. 194-7), Jackson Street (AYE.158, 159), and Taft Street (AYE.174, 160). Spaulding was the road master for the Fitchburg rail line and had great land holdings in Nonaicoicus Park, which would approximately be bound by what is now Central Ave (south), Columbia Street (west), Highland Avenue (north), and Norwood Ave (east), including what is now High Street (AYE.191, 192), Holmes Street (AYE.190), and Lincoln Street (AYE.193). Harvey A. Woods, a prominent citizen who was the first to sign the petition for Ayer's incorporation, owned and developed much of Pearl Street (AYE.153-7) and Pleasant Street (AYE. 165-173). Calvin Fletcher created a subdivision from his lands south of Main Street and north of Grove Pond, including East Street, Fletcher Street (AYE.220), Third Street (AYE.218, 219), Oak Street, Maple Street, Pine Street, East Street, and Pond Street (AYE.222).

In 1906, the Street Railway Company built the Lowell and Fitchburg Street Railway between Ayer and North Chelmsford. The construction of Central Avenue was part of this project. Connecting the pond area to the downtown by street car lead to pond-side development and to the closing of the Sandy Pond School (Sandy Pond Rd, 1870, AYE.238) since its students could ride the trolley to attend school in Ayer Center. Though the street car provided access, it may have been a forest fire in 1883 that literally cleared the way for settlement; the first summer house was built by Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Taft in 1885. Pond-side development was characterized by small summer cottages of varied styles and features: from a log cabin with diamond pane windows (2 Ledgeway, c.1909, AYE.240) to a simple "camp" house (3 Ledgeway, c. 1910, AYE.241). Edward A. Richardson developed parts of the pond-side area as "Shore Acres" around the turn of the century, including 138 Central Avenue (c. 1920, AYE.235).

Several churches were constructed during this period, including the Methodist-Episcopal Church (12 Columbia Street, 1887, AYE.185), St. Mary's Catholic Church (29 Shirley St, 1880, AYE.141), and St. Andrew's Episcopal Church (30 Tannery St, 1892, AYE.202). St. Andrew's Episcopal Church was designed by Architect Rev. Herman Gaylord Wood, who is credited with the design of approximately 30 churches in New England.

In 1890, Frederick Fanning Ayer, the son of Dr. James Cook Ayer and an attorney in New York, commissioned Alexander Stoddard Jenney to design The Ayer Library (26 East Main Street, 1890-1893, AYE.207). In 1890, Ayer made a generous donation for the purchase of books and also purchased the land upon which to build the library. Jenney was an instructor and faculty member at Harvard University and MIT. He had also been an Associate of H.H. Richardson and an Associate with the firm McKim, Mead, and White.

The town continued to thrive and draw businesses to the area. Robert Murphy's Sons (13 Groton Harvard Rd, c.1889-1906, AYE.200) moved to Ayer in the late 19th century and was built along the rail line. The company began in Harvard, MA in 1850 and was incorporated in Ayer in 1913. Murphy's is "the oldest industry in Ayer" according to Orra Stone's book, History of Massachusetts Industries, published in 1930.

1917-1945

Camp Devens (later Fort Devens and now called Devens) was officially established by the U.S. War Department in 1917, which changed the face of Ayer forever. At the time, Ayer had both the largest rail yard and the largest military installation in New England. The railroad industry began to decline due to the shift toward automobile transportation in the 1920s and the rail yards were closed in 1927. The Camp was made permanent in 1931 and was renamed Fort Devens. The military presence strengthened just as the rail road activity diminished and bolstered the economy.

Though there was not the same pace of industry and development, the interwar period continued to see development in local industry and the infrastructure needed to support a growing population. Ayer was at the center of the Nashoba Valley apple growing district and, with its superior rail access, at the center of the storage and transport of apples. The Nashoba Cold Storage Corporation (81 Central Ave, c. 1920, AYE.199), on Central Avenue stored and shipped apples. This may also be true of Ayer Cold Storage (6 Groton Rd, 1867, AYE.146). The Reggio Register Building (12 Shirley St, c. 1930, AYE.143) was built along the rail line in the southwest corner of Ayer. The original use of this building was not ascertained in this study, but from 1978 until recently, the building housed a manufactory of molded heating registers.

Ayer's growth also extended to government infrastructure. As part of Roosevelt's New Deal, Ayer received state and federal funds to help build two civic buildings: the Nashoba Associated Boards of Health (30 Central Ave, 1936-1937, AYE.198) and the Central Fire Station (14 Washington St, 1934-1935, AYE.176).

During this time, the areas around the many ponds in Ayer were developed, especially Sandy Pond, which was developed by Edward A. Richardson and later by George V. Moore. Outside of the pond-side areas, residential development spread further north in Nonaicoicus Park, ex: 102 Pleasant Street (c.1920, AYE.173); further away from the town center, ex: 54 and 56 Littleton Road (c.1940, AYE.233, 234 respectively); and closer to Fort Devens, ex: 193 West Main Street, c. 1940, AYE.130) and Devenscrest (c. 1935-1944, AYE.G). Devenscrest was constructed before and during World War II; according to the tax assessor's records, 22 Willard Street (AYE. 247) was built in 1939, 1 Willard St (AYE.245) was built in 1943, and 17 Willard St (AYE.256) was built in 1945. The development was built as military housing; some residents say that it was intended to be temporary. According to an Ayer resident, Devenscrest was racially segregated. Allegedly Hatch Street, the only street not included in the Willard Street loop, was built for minority residents. Ayer continued to grow because of Fort Devens, despite the decline of the railroads, and the Frederick Carleton Circle (c.1935-1944, AYE.916) was built to handle the ever increasing Route 2 traffic coming through town.

1945-1960

The economy of Ayer shifted greatly after World War II, from one which depended on the railroad industry to one that was based on being a commutable suburb of Boston and the home of Fort Devens. Route 128 (which arches around the western suburbs of Boston) was constructed after WWII, which brought areas farther afield into commutable distance from the city. Ayer, being on the rail line, was well-placed for residents to be part of this commuting population.

The economy during this time was aimed to support the soldiers and families of Fort Devens and the military presence is credited with saving the town from becoming obsolete after the closing of the rail yards.

During this period, much of the residential development centered on Sandy Pond and on infill development in the historic neighborhoods. The most recently constructed building included in the survey is likely the Bubble-It Laund-O-Rama (47 Park Street, c. 1950, AYE.149), a post-WWII modernist commercial building. Additional research on development during this period should be undertaken in future phases of the Inventory.

III. INDEX OF PROPERTIES SURVEYED

Street #	Street Name	Name of Building / Area	Map / Lot	Inventory Number
		Eliades Farm	4	F
		Devenscrest	35	G
		Frederick Carleton Circle		916
		Groton Rd Agricultural Area	4	H
		Pingryville	30, 31	I
	Bishop Rd	St. Mary's Cemetery	18/5	800
30	Central Ave	Nashoba Boards of Health	27/43,44	198
81	Central Ave	Nashoba Cold Storage Corporation	27/103	199
138	Central Ave		28/62	235
12	Columbia Ave	The Methodist Episcopal Church	26/22	185
7--9	East Main St	The Oliver K. and Martha Pierce House	26/321	204
19	East Main St	The R.T. and Martha Butler House	27/141	205
21	East Main St	The Wetherbee-Willard House	27/142	206
26	East Main St	The Ayer Library	27/112, 113	207
38	East Main St		27/117	208
40	East Main St		27/118	209
41	East Main St	The Benjamin Taft House	27/157	210
46	East Main St		27/120	211
53	East Main St		27/160	212
59	East Main St	The John and Emma Hosmer House	34/36	213
79	East Main St	The Horace and Ellen Hovey House	34/45	214
81	East Main St		34/46	215
10	East St		34/83	217
5	Elm St	The Solomon Keyes House	27/139	228
6	Elm St	The John and Bridget Reardon House	27/144	227
10	Elm St		27/145	226
37	Fletcher St	The George and Ella Crawford House	34/102	220
6	Groton Rd	Stevens Machine Company, Union Furniture Company, New England Paper and Stationery Co., Ayer Cold Storage	26/97	146
13	Groton-Harvard Rd	Robert Murphy's Sons Company	27/130	200
2	Groton School Rd	Donut Tree, Tiny's Donut, Tiny's Restaurant	19/7	150
16	Groton School Rd		12/9	151
16--18	Grove St		26/323	225
25	Grove St	The Felch House	33/17	224
43	Grove St		34/18	223
	Harvard Rd	Woodlawn Cemetery	35/20,51	801
1	Harvard Rd	The Stone - Fletcher House	34/79	216

Street #	Street Name	Name of Building / Area	Map / Lot	Inventory Number
26	Harvard Rd	The Jonas Stone House	35/52	232
6	High St		26/242	191
12	High St		27/16	192
34	Highland Ave		20/36	194
40	Highland Ave		20/37	195
43	Highland Ave		27/191	196
47	Highland Ave	The Alfred and Lois Richardson House	27/192	197
8	Holmes St	The Holmes-Hart House	26/251	190
26	Howard St	The Fletcher Estate	19/120	184
41	Jackson St		19/96	158
42	Jackson St		19/63	159
2	Ledgeway		15/23	240
3	Ledgeway		15/21	241
12	Lincoln St		26/239	193
54	Littleton Rd		36/21	233
56	Littleton Rd		36/24	234
4	Nashua St		26/249	187
23	Nashua St		19/187	188
46	Nashua St		19/123	189
15	Park St	The John Mills House	26/102	144
25	Park St	The John Park House	26/100	145
42	Park St	The John G. Park House	26/17	147
44	Park St	Kleen-it Cleaners	26/16	148
47	Park St	Bubble-It Laund-o-rama	26/95	149
24	Pearl St		26/335	153
32	Pearl St		19/51	154
34	Pearl St		19/50	155
48	Pearl St		19/44	156
49	Pearl St		19/69	157
16	Pleasant St	First Church of Christ, Scientist	26/155	161
18--20	Pleasant St		26/154	162
38--42	Pleasant St		26/146	163
46	Pleasant St	The Russell-Levitt House	26/147	164
69--71	Pleasant St		19/130	165
73	Pleasant St		19/129	166
74	Pleasant St		19/102	167
76	Pleasant St	The Huntley and Lottie Turner House	19/101	168
79	Pleasant St	The George L. and Belle Osgood House	19/124	169
82	Pleasant St	The Ira and Ethel Drinnell House	19/98	170

Street #	Street Name	Name of Building / Area	Map / Lot	Inventory Number
88	Pleasant St	The George and Florence Clark House	19/95	171
90	Pleasant St		19/94	172
102	Pleasant St	The Everett and Florence Fowler House	19/87	173
6	Pond St		34/30	222
17	Prospect St	The Wetherbee-Hassam House	27/155	229
21	Prospect St		34/6	230
	Sandy Pond Rd	Sandy Pond School	23/15	238
24	Sandy Pond Rd		28/87	236
97	Sandy Pond Rd		22/26	237
11	School Rd	The Andrew and Elizabeth Swinerton House	34/2	231
7	Scully Rd	The Michael and Ellen Shea House	32/43	132
12	Shirley St	Reggio Register Building	26/56	143
13--15	Shirley St		26/73	142
29	Shirley St	St. Mary's Church	26/68	141
31	Shirley St	Parish Hall	26/68	140
	Shirley St	St. Mary's School	26/68	139
5	Taft St		19/112	174
15	Taft St		19/55	160
	Tannery St		33/33	201
30	Tannery St	St. Andrew's Episcopal Church	26/302	202
30	Tannery St	St. Andrew's Episcopal Church Rectory	26/302	203
21	Third St		34/132	219
33	Third St		34/136	218
7	Union St		26/48	138
3	Wachusett Ave		15/51	242
9	Washington St		26/222	175
14	Washington St	Central Fire Station	26/184	176
21	Washington St	Federated Church of Ayer	26/213	177
37	Washington St		26/196	178
52	Washington St		19/143	179
61	Washington St		19/152	180
78	Washington St		19/126	181
82	Washington St		19/125	182
92	Washington St		19/166	183
210	Washington St		4/3	244
	Washington St	Smith Farm	4/36	243
10	West St		26/119	152
61--63	West Main St	The Thayer-Clark-Walsh House	26/39	137
71	West Main St		26/38	136

Street #	Street Name	Name of Building / Area	Map / Lot	Inventory Number
87	West Main St		26/34	135
126	West Main St		25/13	134
130	West Main St		25/12	133
190	West Main St	Nashoba Courier	32/34	131
193	West Main St		32/16	130
197	West Main St			129
205	West Main St			128
5	Whitcomb Ave		34/28	221
6	Williams St		26/200	186
6	Wright Rd		15/23	239

IV. NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES RECOMMENDATIONS

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of historic and cultural resources worthy of preservation. Each property inventoried in the course of this project has been evaluated for recommendation for nomination to the Register. Evaluation was based on the U.S. National Park Service's Criteria for Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places¹ to identify properties:

- A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or
- B. That are associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; or
- C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- D. That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

All buildings in Ayer selected for recommendation meet Criterion A, as they are associated with patterns of settlement that first included mills and farms and later, the expansive growth related to the rail road. Some recommended buildings also meet Criterion C based also on the architectural features of the building, whether representative, but indistinctive, or of a relative high-style for the Town.

Further study should include Area forms that encompass some of the buildings already inventoried so that Historic Districts can be recommended. While there are many individual properties worthy of listing, there are several areas that should be evaluated for listing as Historic Districts in Ayer, including: East Main Street, Park Street, Nonaicoicus Park (the residential area north of the Main Street Historic District), the Wright Road area on the north shore of Sandy Pond, and the neighborhood between Main Street and Grove Pond.

The properties recommended for nomination to the Nation Register of Historic Places are found in the following chart:

Address	Name	Inventory Number
30 Central Ave.	Nashoba Boards of Health	198
7-9 East Main Street	The Oliver K. and Martha Pierce House	204
21 East Main Street	The Wetherbee - Willard House	206
26 East Main Street	Ayer Library	207
41 East Main Street	The Benjamin Taft House	210
79 East Main Street	The Horace and Ellen Hovey House	214
81 East Main Street		215
5 Elm Street	The Solomon Keyes House	228

¹ "Listing a Property". National Park Service. <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/listing.htm>. Accessed 14 May 2008.

6 Elm Street	The John and Bridget Reardon House	227
Address	Name	Inventory Number
13 Groton Harvard Rd	Robert Murphy's Sons	200
16-18 Grove Street		225
25 Grove Street	The Felch House	224
1 Harvard Rd	The Stone- Fletcher House	216
6 High Street		191
12 High Street		192
47 Highland Ave	The Alfred and Lois Richardson House	197
8 Holmes Street	The Holmes-Hart House	190
26 Howard Street	The Fletcher Estate	184
2 Ledgeway		240
3 Ledgeway		241
23 Nashua Street		188
46 Nashua Street		189
15 Park Street	The John Mills House	144
25 Park Street	The John Park House	145
42 Park Street	The John G. Park House	147
44 Park Street	Kleen-it Cleaners	148
47 Park Street	Bubble-It Launderama	149
49 Pearl Street		157
38-42 Pleasant Street	Pleasant Street Tenements	163
46 Pleasant Street	The Russell-Levitt House	164
69-71 Pleasant Street		165
73 Pleasant Street		166
74 Pleasant Street	The Albert and Annie Phelps House	167
76 Pleasant Street	The Huntley and Lottie Turner House	168
79 Pleasant Street	The George and Belle Osgood House	169
90 Pleasant Street		172
6 Pond Street		222
17 Prospect Street	The Wetherbee-Hasaam House	229
21 Prospect Street	The Farr-Hasaam House	230
Sandy Pond Rd	Sandy Pond School	238
12 Shirley Street	The Reggio Register Building	143
5 Taft Street		174
30 Tannery Street	St. Andrew's Church	202
33 Third Street		218
9 Washington Street		175
14 Washington Street	Central Fire Station	176
37 Washington Street		178
52 Washington Street	The Lyman and Marie Clark House	179
61 Washington Street		180
78 Washington Street		181
82 Washington Street	The George H.B. and Mabel Turner House	182
92 Washington Street	The Daniel W. and Emma Fletcher House	183
210 Washington Street	The Nathan and Sarah Gallot House	244
Washington Street	The Smith Farm	243
61-63 West Main Street	The Thayer-Clarke-Walsh House	137

71 West Main Street		136
Address	Name	Inventory Number
87 West Main Street		135
130 West Main Street		133
190 West Main Street	Nashoba Courier	131
6 Williams Street	The Christopher and Miriam Willard House	186
6 Wright Rd		239

V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Updating Past Research

The building forms completed during the Yankee Intern Downtown Ayer Survey (1985) for the Main Street Historic District should be updated as they do not meet current MHC standards. When updated, the forms may be more helpful in preservation planning efforts and to obtain community revitalization funding.

The McGinley Hart & Associates MBTA Railroad Survey (1987-1988) should also be updated because the railroad is crucial to the history of the town.

Future Research for Expanding Phase I

One of the shortcomings of the resources available to this study was that little hard evidence of construction dates was available. Especially in the case of the town's oldest buildings, more research is necessary to confirm construction dates. Deed research would in many cases be the next step to find this information and if possible, interior evaluations by an architectural historian would be of benefit. At the end of the study it came to light that the 1856 Walling map has insets that were not available during this study and those should be examined to establish construction dates and determine property owners before 1875.

Many of the individual properties inventoried through this survey should, in the future, be included in Area forms so that they may be nominated to the National Register as Historic Districts. Additionally, the Areas inventoried during this phase should be researched further so that they can be nominated as National Register Historic Districts.

Suggestions for Phase II

Subjects for future study should include properties listed in Sanford Johnson's *Communitywide Preliminary Historic Resource Survey Plan* that could not be included in this phase. It is recommended that future documentation focus on groups of resources and potential Historic District areas. Further research using Zelda Moore's private collection should be undertaken, especially given that she is currently undertaking a transcription project of documents for future use. In terms of technology, if there is a map available that merges plot plans and building footprints, that should be used in future studies.

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